

THE BLACK BOX

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Spring 2022/2023 Issue

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double issue | Spring 2023

FACULTY CO-EDITORS

Dr. Amelia Chesley: Eagle-eyed editor and layout opinionator

Dr. Caroline Koons: InDesign expert and page number manager

OUR MISSION

The Black Box is a creative publication dedicated to displaying the talented work of the Embry-Riddle–Prescott community. Endless creativity and ingenuity flow throughout ERAU–Prescott and we want to put it on display.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

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This extended issue would not have been possible without the invaluable support and hard work of Dr. Eileen Landis-Groom and the student editor of Spring 2020's *The Black Box*, Haiden Karnick. We are most grateful for advice from Laura Pope-Robbins and Nam Nguyen in the library, as well as for Laura Martin and her students. Thanks also go to the Department of Humanities and Communication for funding the publication of this issue.

WEBSITE

Find digital copies of *The Black Box* via our page in Scholarly Commons
<https://commons.erau.edu/black-box-magazine/>

SUBMISSIONS & CONTACT INFO

Submission to *The Black Box* are always welcome. For submission forms and guidelines, please email the editors at prblbox@erau.edu or visit <https://eaglelife.erau.edu/pwc/the-black-box/>

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Tiger Lily. painting by Neely Fairy

Forward

My younger brother has been amazed by what I remember; my older brother sometimes questions what I remember. As you read this forward, consider the above. It has been thirty-five years, after all.

I do clearly remember (honestly) when the idea for *The Black Box* (BB) was started, in the old cafeteria, where the Student Union is now. Dolan McDonald and a few other students decided that producing a creative arts magazine would be fun. I remember Dolan telling me that his interest in poetry stemmed from a girlfriend who read poetry. He told me that when taking breaks while working with firefighting pilots, he would hide his poetry book behind a magazine more likely to be read by his male colleagues. I also remember Dolan, our first editor, coming up with the name *The Black Box*.

We initially were an insert in the school paper and then became a club and then a service organization and then a club again. We held fund raisers to pay for the publication.

When promoting *The BB* in my classes, I would share with students how while on leave in 2001 teaching at a university back East (one with multiple programs in writing and literature and a well-known art department), I also advised the creative arts magazine. I would tell them that I found our small but mighty *Black Box* to be better. No bias, really! The creative spirit indeed is and was very much alive in our science/technology oriented university. *The BB* also offered my own students the opportunity to share their writing done for class, writing that should be shared through publication.

Another story often told to my students revolved around the cover of the 2012 magazine. That cover is a drawing that appeared one summer in one of the dorms, all done with dry-erase marker on a whiteboard. No one claimed to be the artist. I think the university took the white board with the drawing and put it away somewhere safe—or so the story goes. In later issues, Arian Dragos, as editor, worked on “professionalizing” our covers, Martin Kurkchubasche, likewise, with our layouts.

A few years ago, with the help of our Hazy Library, *The BB* was digitized and became part of our online Scholarly Commons. In December 2020,

Dr. Mark Sinclair, professor of meteorology, noticed that his downloads on Scholarly Commons had risen, greatly. He wondered about the download numbers because his scholarly articles normally did not result in such numbers. It turned out that our Black Box issue that year, which contained a poem by Mark, had received over 24,000 downloads. Chip Wolfe, on behalf of the Daytona Beach Commons, could not find anything awry. *The BB* had gone viral— a first.

The editors often worked alone or with just a few others; it was not an easy position. I would advertise for submissions after determining a deadline with the editors. My Creative Writing classes often contributed their work and helped the editors select the submissions to be published.

I would proofread the first draft and return to the editor for corrections and then proofread again. Katie Tucker, Dawn Rosecrans, Adam Kuns, Kelvin M. Russell, Pete Daniel, Mark O'Connell, Daniel Whitehead, Steve Smith, Ian Moore, Steve Zech, LeeAnn Lyall, Judith Mikes, Ryan Krogsstad, Kory Hasenoehrl, Bethany Hawkins, Scott Ikea, Trenton Post, Arian Dragos, Martin Kurkchubasche, and Haiden Karnick are the names of our editors through the years. I hope I did not leave out anyone. Frequently, our editors also contributed. Dr. Jon Haas in Security and Intelligence and Patricia Watkins, Hazy research librarian and photographer, were steadfast contributors and supporters.

I remember sitting in my office and looking up to see in the doorway an unknown student bringing their gifts of submissions. How fortunate we were to receive the submissions of students, staff, and faculty, and how fortunate they were to have this talent and creative spirit.

The distribution of hard copies around campus was a good day. An individual told Martin Kurkchubasche, a recent editor, on one of those good days, how happy they were to grab a copy and in doing so, made Martin's day.

Memories connected to *The BB* keep surfacing, but perhaps it's best to close here and to send heartfelt thanks to Dr. Amelia Chesley and Dr. Caroline Koons for ensuring the future of *The BB* and for making the joy of distribution day possible for others.

Eileen L. Groom
Advisor to *The Black Box*, 1988–2022

Tributes to Dr. Eileen Landis-Groom

Dr. Eileen Landis-Groom held many important roles during her tenure at Embry-Riddle–Prescott, but perhaps her most impactful role has been her service as Founding Editor for the campus' literary magazine, *The Black Box*. One can imagine starting an artistic venture at a STEM university to be a significant challenge; one must garner institutional support, a budget, and workspace while competing with other interests in need of the same resources. But as a Creative Writing instructor and author, Dr. Landis-Groom saw a critical need for such a venture and worked tirelessly with her students to not only establish it, but grow it.

Since its inception, Dr. Landis-Groom has trained student authors, editors, and layout specialists; managed print production and dissemination; and served as senior editor for the publication. Because of Dr. Landis-Groom, the campus has an established creative arts magazine, and members of our campus community have a rich outlet for their artistic impulses. Our thanks to Dr. Landis-Groom for her work on *The Black Box*, and may it showcase original creative works for many years to come.

— Dr. M. Angela Beck
Professor Emeritus, Humanities & Communication Dept.

I met Eileen Landis-Groom when I first arrived at ERAU in 2013. She was one of the first people to welcome me to the university and to the area. Over the nine years we worked together, Eileen and I shared many conversations on pedagogy, students, horses, speaking, and writing. We shared ideas and teaching strategies. Speaking to a public audience was one of the enduring practices that Eileen brought to her classes, and I always enjoyed watching her students present their work at Peregrine Books. Eileen was an excellent mentor and colleague, and she is an ever-encouraging friend.

— Dr. Elizabeth M. Davis
Associate Professor, Humanities & Communication Dept.

Eileen Landis-Groom served the university for thirty-six years as a teacher and researcher. She did a wonderful job providing students with an outlet for their creative abilities in her own classes and beyond. The longevity of *The Black Box* is a testament to her efforts.

— Dr. Matthew J. Haslam
Associate Professor and Department Chair,
Humanities & Communication Dept.

Dr. Landis-Groom is the absolute kindest soul, with a true dedication to creative arts. She was my professor for multiple of my courses, and I would not exchange that time for anything. Since my graduation, she has become a close friend and I am thankful for our time working together. Cheers to Dr. Landis-Groom and *The Black Box* for thirty-five years of encouraging creativity on the ERAU campus.

— Martin Kurkchubasche
Former Student Editor of *The Black Box*, 2019–2020

Back in 2019, I wrote a silly poem. It was a weather forecast, parodied after Clement Clarke Moore's "Twas the Night Before Christmas." I later submitted it to *The Black Box*. Sometime later I received my Scholarly Commons readership report, with a staggering 24,398 new downloads! Upon investigation (and after picking myself up off the floor), I discovered it wasn't any of my boring scientific papers, but *The Black Box*, an issue that featured works from several contributors.

Thus, I would say that Eileen (and Pat Watkins) and that issue of *The Black Box* probably have garnered more Scholarly Commons downloads than anyone in all of ERAU, and possibly the universe....

— Dr. Mark (not Twain) Sinclair
Professor of Meteorology, ERAU–Prescott

Recently, Eileen lent me a copy of the Embry Riddle–Prescott yearbook from 1990. It was fascinating to look back at old photos and see the impact she had clearly made on our campus and the students, even way back then. Her work and her students work with *The Black Box* was honored with a full page in the yearbook's section for student organizations. It's so exciting to have Eileen's blessing and her enthusiastic support in keeping the legacy and future of *The Black Box* alive. No one can replace Eileen Landis-Groom, but we will do our best to follow in her legendary footsteps.

— Dr. Amelia Chesley, Assistant Professor of Technical Writing
and faculty co-editor of *The Black Box*, 2022–2023

95614

Claire Ross

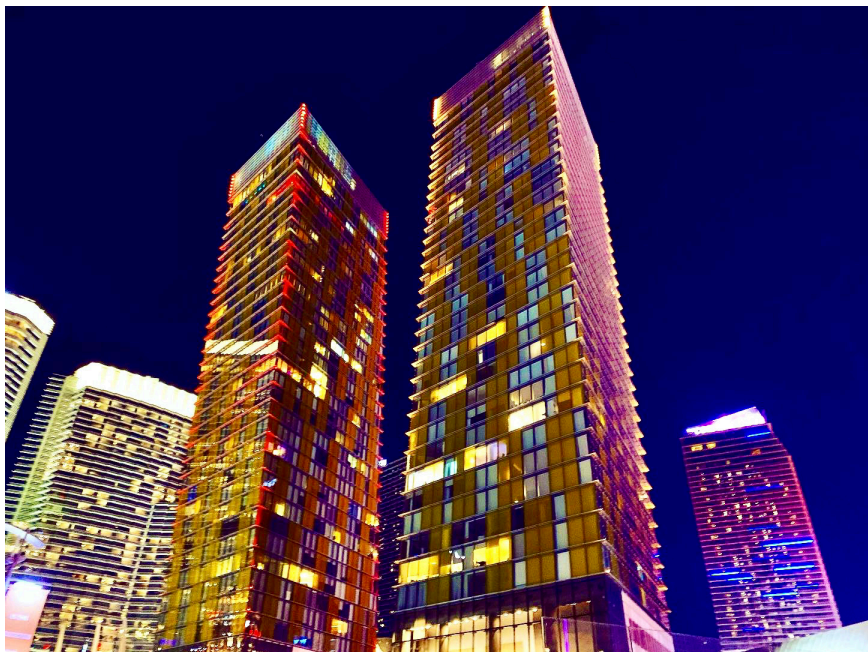
When you grow up in a rural area
And one blinking stoplight is all you know,
The world can feel so utterly small.
The dusty hallways of your childhood home,
The morning light seeping into the quilt your grandmother made,
And the soft murmurs of your parents' voices in the kitchen
become so familiar.

It all felt so mundane.
The same sleepy curves of the road that led to town,
And the grocery store that always had the same weary customers.
The outdated houses that were swallowed by groves of oak trees
And the elementary school that seemed to be frozen in time.

I yearned to escape this dot on the map
And discover a part of myself that resided beyond county lines.
I feared that if I did not leave soon,
I would fall into the mundaneness forever.

And on one ordinary day,
I drove down the road that led to town for the last time.
I entered the grocery store with its weary customers for the last time.
I gazed upon the outdated houses amongst the oak trees for the last time.
And I glanced at the elementary school for the last time.

I never imagined tears spilling down my cheeks as I left
And the crushing weight of change on my shoulders.
I had pictured a triumphant escape down the winding roads,
While freedom took hold of me.
Yet I was filled with bittersweetness
As I left the town with one blinking stoplight.



Building. photo by Emma Sanders

I Repair Umbrellas

James Bradley

I repair umbrellas
 I make them fly again
 To keep you dry again
 I repair the sorry fellas

I repair umbrellas
 Their mangled, abandoned bodies
 Twisted and baroque on muddied roadsides
 In mildewed alleys
 Far along the twisting paths deep in city parks
 Tangles of black and silver swastika
 Stuffed into moss-embossed metal garbage cans
 Under swiftly-shifting oceanic skies
 In angular rain-pricked chaos
 Undignified burials too unkind to bear
 So I sew their wounds
 Soothe their bent spines

Make them fly again
 To block the sky again

Sandcastle

James Bradley

This moment, like a gentle slap on the wrist from a gentleman,
looks back upon itself in anticipation of itself.

I see myself hopefully at the ocean this evening,
seeing the sun's last melting on the surface of the eternal lake,
almost hearing the sizzle as the image halves, the image breaks,
the image disappears,

and I am alone with the people I am with,
and I am with people without a past.

We forget that our shared past is the one thing binding us,
the only thing that brought us together in the first place.

We forget each other's faces.

We're too clever even for the building and destroying of a sand-
castle.

We know only too well the formulaic ambitions of our creator,
the sitcom scriptwriter.

The Old Soldier's House

James Bradley

The book unlearns what it has said;
the brittle pages crumble, dead.
As for myself, I make it as far as the old soldier's house.
He takes me in, I guess,
I suppose. Why wouldn't he?
"Sure is dark in here," I say.
"That's for the sake of the television," he replies.
"Its liquid laser shadow play's
all I've got these languid days.
I watch old movies, always on the lookout
for Norma Shearer—
I'm to report on all her dealings
to my government. You-Know-Who,
and I think you know why
(and it ain't for the twinkle
in ol' Norma's eye)."

Dead beauty was everywhere, now that it was gone.

"But run along, run along. I'm an old man now,
semi-retired, sensible if not senile, socially retarded
and tired. I believe in the value of private lives:
they sell 'em by the yard, I buy 'em by the mile!"
Light flaps the ribbon of the walls like a flag
and I take off,
leaving the old soldier to his semi-private self,
his one body he makes do with,
his one mission that makes it do what it does,
for the first time knowing who I am.

Flat Earth

James Bradley

The turning of the next page creates an entirely new set of meanings as the last sentence of the former page falls and curls around to rest on the latter, exhausted by its trip, like a ship that had fallen off the edge of the flat earth, only to land safely on the waters of another earth, so that its journey might be completed as planned on this new, possibly identical world of ships with cargo, with crew, with destinations, under the same dome-like sky, a step on the endless stairway of flat earths leading to infinity in both directions.



Letter

James Bradley

I want to die the death
of a love letter sent
by a soldier in war
to his one, true sweetheart
in Freeport, Maine or some
such Americana,
many decades after
the peace has been restored.

My yellowing edges,
the golden section of
my folds, the carefully
scrawled print from a ball-
point,
childlike mind in the midst
of landmines who can still
conceive of a concept
as big as forever.

Acid-free paper lasts
a long time. It'd be
a good death, pulled out and
read occasionally,
then returned to my tomb,
wrapped in an envelope
and safely tucked away
in the back of a drawer.

Eulogies

James Bradley

You stayed up all night long
Writing Eulogy for
Fiberoptic Angel,
Chasing the bleeding lance,
Not asking why it bled.

As you write eulogies,
Innocence manifests
In the sink of your eyes,
The moisture of your palms,
In your wrinkled bedclothes.

You'll write a eulogy
For any occasion—
Eulogy for Lost Grail,
Eulogy for Spilt Wine—
No cause is beneath you.

Your eulogies are all
You ever wanted—timeless,
Transcendent, unspoiled
By the same mortal curse
You long to see lifted.

Next Time

Kammi Matsumoto

I look out to the night sky,
Sitting by a window sill.

Waiting for a soul
To round the corner once more.
Sitting on a bed,
The bed that was once special.
That one day you came over
The day you stripped me from my childhood,
My innocence.
Now I wait.
Wait with a melancholy filled heart
Wait for that day to come again,
Knowing it never will.
Knowing you will never hold me in your arms again
Or leave a trail of kisses along my neck to my heart
Or rest your head on my legs.
It will never come.

I regret the time I waited for you,
The time I waited with dread
With misgiving.
Misgiving about you
Misgiving about the feelings I carried.
When I saw you once more
The feeling of misgiving went away.
The apprehension came over me,
Then back to melancholy

By this time next year
I'll be in a fantasy come true.
By this time next year
I'll be freezing
Hoping you were here.
By this time next year
I'll be in the arms of another and
You'll be wishing for another chance with the girl, you lost.
By this time next year
I'll be gone.

When the Mind Wanders

Ryder Freeman

Under the hollow sun, I walk untold
Occupying my mind to ignore the biting cold.

The spirits of my past walk beside me,
Filling my soul with an overwhelming cold.

A series of memories flood my mind,
Opening doors of regret and inviting winds of cold.

“All men are flawed,” is a common excuse
To ignore those you’ve wronged and let the heart grow cold.

The cruelest reality is that men don’t change.
It makes one wonder how this world can be so cold.

I reel in my thoughts, wanting no more,
Yet control belongs to my brain, however cold.

The valley before me is still and solemn;
The crunch of the snow fills my ears with cold.

Yet I know this place is doomed
By people long corrupted by cold.

It is easy to allow dark thoughts to consume you.
You try to stay warm, yet they’re always so cold.

And yet I choose to live in the moment,
Reveling in the beauty of the endless cold.



The Gift of Fire. Artwork by Charles Ruddek

Son, shut now your door against the eve
When darkest fears together weave
Son, light thee then an ember
And hope for the chill wind of November

All hallows are about thee this night
And as shadows grow longer you might
Think yourself but one against
This night of remembrance

But feel my arms around you still
And still your shakes against the window seal
This night I give you strength, my heart
Though at morning we part

From this night I, thee, deliver
Into the cold arms of November

The Living and Dead

Brandon West

Stretched too thin
My taffy joints pulled
Tearing wolves and limbs
Caught—cross-section

Flexing, rising to occasion

Lost amid invasion

Mind's erosion

Ripping sinew

Yet stiffened pride

Standing statue

Before crumbling—

Damn

Overworked

Brandon West

Love and Magic

Brandon West

A shining glimmer found at sea
Through crashing waves that crowd and sway
And stormy slosh and salty spray
Yet light remains at end of day.

Before Dark

Brandon West

In Time's slippery sweep of current
We lose it all without letting go.
Closing my eyes against bleakest night,

I wake and fade—
I dream and live.
I wake to fade
And dream to live.



Coca-Cola. Photograph by Emma Sanders

shaded

Amelia Chesley

my shadow might be bound by chains,
but she knows how to break them.

my shadow sees my greatest dreams,
and she knows how to chase them.

my shadow is acquainted
with every type of fear,
but someone must have shown her
not to listen when it screams.

my shadow's been around the world,
to every moon and star,
read every book, heard every song,

but all she ever showed me
were the good parts.

eyes

Amelia Chesley

i asked what should i do and he replied do whatever you want and
i smirked, if he only knew.
but now in this moment
whatever you want
whatever,
truly,
it's impossible

all the wants and that's why they are wanting
wanted
lacking
longing
me,
longing
for all the impossible things
what else is worth craving like this? to crave a doable thing—
any around the corner everyday thing
any of the on your doorstep normality
or any old usual turn of event thing...

what would that get you?

but of course wanting impossible things
usually gets you
even less.

consumed

Amelia Chesley

the dreams of other men
enchant us all

so much that what we
might have dreamt ourselves
gets lost out in the fog
of what they call
(ambivalently)
the mainstream.

the gulf of acquaintance

Amelia Chesley

beautiful. control.

what is poetry but this
evocation, past feeling,
into words where no true
thought can hold
still enough for knives?

the mood of the verse
is irrational
its focus twisted upon nothing more than itself;
claiming its own sake the noblest reason
for existing at all.

expression first.
all meanings secondary,
extending to almost. almost
good and close enough
almost
enough
to read.

the connections reached and
reaching for,
imagined so, so
adequate, but
can they ever bring together
those inconceivable others,
those far yet brilliant scapes
of elsewhere?

friction

Amelia Chesley

the slope of everything
inexorable,
but not.

there's just enough slip
just enough catch
I want to think I can climb out if I want to.

but maybe this slope
is made of my want
whatever that means.

maybe it is the gravity of all my emptiness—
dark, dark matter
holding this and that together beyond all reason

against a sea of troubles
drowning in the mottled smells of coffee
and varnish. overthinking it all, this itch,
the feeling of sugary teeth
not yet goosebumps
welling apathy
tidal
hollow

enough slip.
enough catch.
only not enough time.

The River

Caitlyn Ooms

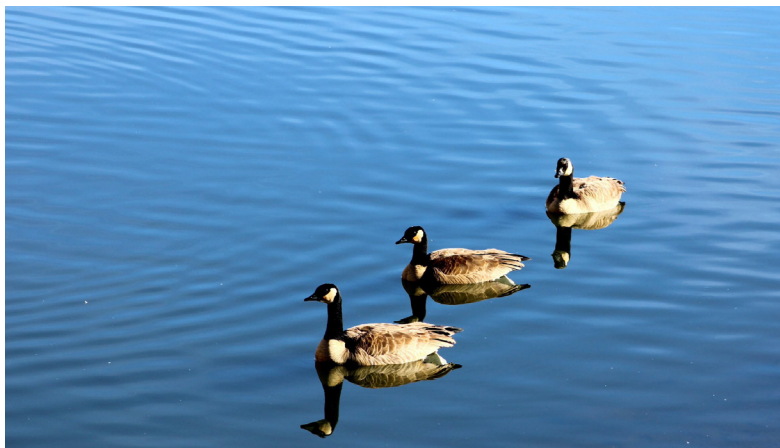
I force my way through,
I carve out my own path,
On this Earth set against me
Leaving remnants of my wrath.

And in my travels,
I carry the worn souls
Of all the Ophelias-
and Virginias
While I try to seize control

Of my temperament,
My flow and my power,
As they strike fear into man
And make them flee and cower.

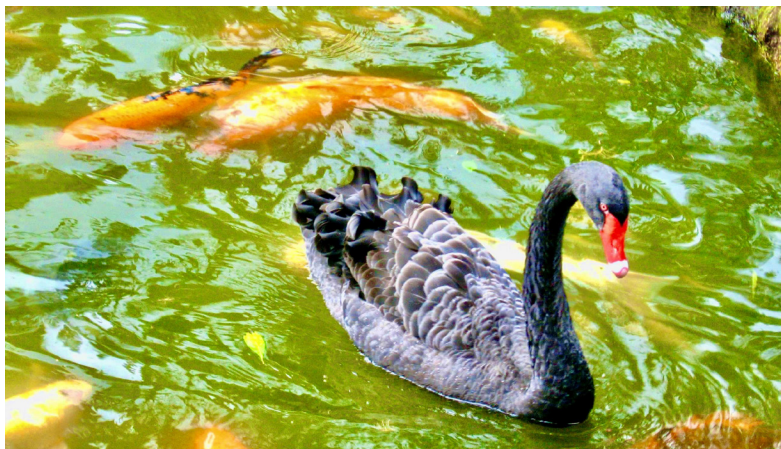
I do what they can't.
I am Abel, not Cain.
I am the blood of this Earth.
I am what runs through her veins.

Yet here in this life,
We worship the Father.
But if this is a man's world,
Why is nature our mother?





Great Spangled Fritillary Butterfly. Photograph by Charlotte Evelyn



Black Swan Swimming with Koi Fish. Photograph by Charlotte Evelyn



Acorn Woodpecker. Photograph by Charlotte Evelyn

The Fall

Jonathan Adams

It was old, not like I am now,
but as I am sure to be in several hundred years.
My father purchased the structure from a friend.
A man who was known to pick dogs often and poorly.
He needed the money, we needed faith.
The building had expired at the top of a grassy summit
so green it must have been painted by meticulous
brush strokes from that fellow without an ear.
It left
an impression.
Every Sunday we would march up—
up the pastel slope
to work on repairing the relic.
Staining pews, cobbling stone, re-hinging doors.
It was the days of plenty in the land of milk and honey,
though for lunch we preferred sandwiches.

Then we decided to fix the roof.

It was cracked and crimson.
Great slate panels lifting their way over one another,
crawling across the surface of the span,
pulling the misshapen slabs underneath them
and trapping them to asphyxiation.

Our scaffolding was nothing.
Sturdy as a palsied man and shaking just as terribly.
Nevertheless we climbed.
The work trundled
slow and laborious.
After a time we were halfway through.

Till the wind picked up.

The height of a storm cloud is impossible to judge.
There is nothing to compare them to;
no frame of reference.
But this was the size of a mountain.

I turned and watched the grass tumbling furiously
gyrating like socks in the wash.
I stood fixed by the odd behavior of nature.
By the time it seized us my hind brain had only enough sense
to clasp the railing of the scaffold.

Hell hath no fury like a woman's scorn,
and nature thou art surely a mother.

Over, and over, we tumbled
through the air
the wind ripping at our flying clothes
before a quick return to earth.
Terra Firma: I found it so.

* * *

The hospital was cold and dead.
Filled with the cold and the dead.
A youth's body will recover quickly,
a father takes more care.
Screws and bits of scattered flesh
sewn and warped together to assemble the man who once was.
But even the king's men are not perfect surgeons.

The pain began
He said it began in his legs
moving up the shattered trunks
winding up the branches of his ribs
and extending out the finger-twigs.
So he sought escape.

.
It began with the Cotton.

A small white pebble that made world disappear.
For hours he would sleep, leaving this world, and the pain of irony.
until he stuck.
Screwed between wake and sleep,
his snores carrying away his ambition.
Eventually the pain overcame,
and he could not bear to wake at all.

He took ten tiny pebbles,
and drew them to his core.
He took ten tiny pebbles,
left the world, and woke no more.

* * *

Do you hear them ring?
Those bronze guardians of faith.
Ancient specters,
their sounds vex me,
reminding me of a time to which I cannot return.
They echo my name
calling me:

Ring once.
Ring twice.
Ring thrice.





Cactus. Photograph by Emma Sanders

The Spirit Box

Benjamin Sagar

There was only silence, and there always had been, at least as far as she could remember. It was not the subdued quiet of a humid summer night, but an empty void, as if her entire being was the phantom limb of an amputee.

A dim flicker of something came to her— it was a name: Catori. With it came a tingling, enveloping numbness, like a leg sat on for too long. For a moment the strange prickling emptiness brought a rushing wave of panic and fear, but almost immediately it was pushed back by a comforting blanket of euphoria. The sensation was so numbing she could feel no surprise when a confident voice rang through the emptiness.

“Not only can the occupant hear,” it spoke, “they are able to respond to their surroundings. Isn’t that right, Catori?”

Where am I.

She tried to form the words, but instead she heard herself say, “How are you doing today, Mr. Haboolm?”

Without a missing a beat he responded in that winning tone. “As you can see, they are perfectly able to interact with the environment around them.” More waves of euphoria rolled over her in opposition to the fear at her lack of control and the quiet cacophony of murmuring voices that suddenly filled the emptiness. “The sphere gives the user access to all senses through our patented Nervous System Transplant method.” As he spoke, her dim awareness grew—blurry images resolved into shapes until she could clearly see the large auditorium surrounding her.

“Once the brain and nervous system are safely removed from the body and put into the sphere, our technology is able to stimulate those nerve endings to provide the occupant with any input or sensation you would like. Different chemicals are pumped into the brain to simulate emotion. Really puts the experience on that next level. If you turn your attention to the screen, you will see what our occupant is experiencing at any given moment.”

The man stood nearby on a large stage, a screen behind him projecting her own view, compounding her confusion into a throbbing headache. She

found the murmuring voices originated from the large crowd Haboolm was addressing; it was a fairly small gathering but as she scanned their faces there was a dim flicker of recognition, as if who they were sat on the tip of her tongue.

Without giving her time to pull at the memory, Haboolm continued with his presentation. “With a full range of sensory stimulation, the sphere is able to perform miraculous feats such as recreating cherished memories.” Suddenly the view of the room blurred and she found herself perched high in the branches of a tree, looking out over an endless scene of tightly packed houses, all just beginning to light up in the pink glow of the setting sun. Catori’s breath caught in her throat as the springy, fibrous bark of the Aptos Blue suddenly tickled at her fingers and a faint breeze brushed her cheeks. The tree had stood in a schoolyard near her childhood home, but years ago they’d cut away all the easy to reach branches when a kid had fallen out and broken his arm. She hadn’t thought about it in years, but now she could smell the needles and feel the crunch of the bark under her hands.

In a sudden flash, she was torn away from the peaceful moment, pulled through the rest of her life in the blink of an eye. Seeing it all laid out like that was strangely calming, but she could still feel the panic boiling inside her. None of this was answering what exactly was happening to her now.

“Not only can you relive memories, you can also create new ones. Any scenario is possible with our sphere’s technology. Just think about it: sitting on a beach and drinking margaritas for all of eternity. If that isn’t heaven then I don’t know what is!” His voice cut through her reminiscence and she was back in the auditorium crowd; she suddenly felt very naked as the crowd sat glued to the screen.

“But we wouldn’t be taking so much precious time from your busy schedules just to tell you about our endless paradise— after all, what comes after is the average Jill or Joe’s game. What you all care most about is how you can use our technology in the here and now, for even greater things.” Catori could hear the smile in his voice but the sudden return of so many memories seemed to have rebooted her mind. Pieces of information began trickling back to her.

“Everyone knows the most unpredictable part of a business will be how the customer will react. You spend millions on a product and put it out to market and instead of reaping the rewards, your hard work is ridiculed— not because it’s bad, but because it’s not flashy enough, or it’s too hard to

understand, or maybe the name just doesn't stick." The comment brought sounds of approval from audience, and that funny feeling of déjà vu nagged at her. It was like seeing someone you hadn't seen since high school, but you just couldn't remember their name.

"I shouldn't even get started on you politicians." Haboolm said, feigning exasperation. "No matter how many policies you put out, or polls you take, no one is ever happy with the results." The comment summoned more approval from the crowd and the realization of where she had seen these people began to dawn on her. "Instead of wasting money on a product that will never work or facing years of backlash for not making the perfect decision, why not test the outcome of your decision with real human minds?"

Catori had seen these people almost every day of her life, whether she had wanted to or not. They had dominated news cycles and popped up on her feed and steered the course of major events for the last few decades. She had voted for some and hated others, and she had even been to a few protests against the working conditions provided by these "leaders." A rising wave of anxiety was brutally pushed back by that smothering blanket of euphoria, but her confusion was growing too great for the concoction of sedatives to handle.

"Once we release to the public, billions will scramble to sign up for transfer, and every day from then on we will have hundreds of thousands of new customers. After all, the one thing we can trust people to do is to die." In her chemically induced calm Catori's mind raced; what was she doing here? Her last memory was of driving home from work after a long day.

"The biggest question will be answered for the people; they will get to enjoy their forever after in any way they wish. Meanwhile, they will pay for their time in paradise by sharing copies of their minds for your simulations. Our services you give you the ability to run complex simulations of policies or products on billions of unique individuals from every background imaginable. Our spheres will put the will of the people into your hands." Applause rose from around the room as the leaders of the world began to understand the new tool that had been given to them. It grew to a thunderous roar as the memories of her last night came flooding back.

She had been tired from working since dawn and had fallen asleep at the wheel. The sudden vibration of the rumble strip had woken her in time to see the tree careening towards her. Her attempt to avoid it was too slow, and the sudden jerking of the wheel sent the car tumbling sideways, until the tree had brought it to a sudden and violent halt. There was a horrible

sound of rending metal and a sick crackling of bone that had wracked her body with searing pain.

For a while there had been nothing but darkness until a bright light shone into her eyes and she could hear voices around her.

“Pupils are responsive, no sign of visible injury to the head.” A woman’s voice said, firm and professional.

A man spoke up in a similar tone but with a tinge of queasiness to it. “That may be but it’s a miracle she still alive. Lots of damage from the waist down, possibly internal bleeding. I’d be surprised if she made it half-way to the hospital.”

“We have to try.” The woman spoke again, “Worst comes to worst she’s an organ donor. If her head really is as good as it looks she could always be a candidate for the new program the doctors have been talking about.”

“She’s secured, let’s get her up,” came the voice of a third speaker. “Administer some morphine as soon as she’s in. Come on, every second counts.” The wail of a siren filled her mind as she passed between the back-doors of an ambulance and the last thing she remembered was a blissful spreading warmth as she drifted off into nothingness.

Now a similar, more natural euphoria was trying to hold her panic at bay, but it was all too much for her to handle. If she had any lungs they would have been heaving from panic, but there was nothing for her to control— she was completely immobilized. The only thing she could move was her view of the room where everyone sat in a stunned silence, the speaker on the stage staring up at the screen.

“Just another demonstration of how each occupant can provide a different viewpoint to your simulations and testing.” The salesman was quick on his feet, but Catori could hear the traces of shock and confusion in his tone.

So that was it. She was gone. Her life had stopped short, and now she was here. Stuck in this sphere. For as long as humans had been humans they wondered what came after. Well now here she was, surrounded by the people of the world who had promised her safety and prosperity, experiencing what so many others had been unable to answer. The people who had worked you to death now gleefully applauding the new tool they had gained in the process.

Fear, despair, anger coursed through the stillness; she felt the blanket of euphoria settling down, but this time— an odd feeling, as if her entire body was vibrating at once, passed through her and the euphoria vanished, a steady line of smoke appearing in her vision. The device pumping her full of dopamine must have been unable to keep up with the demand and the failure cascaded through every measure in the system.

Catori began to scream. The block that had prevented her from talking was ripped away, and all of her anger at these people and the world for stealing away everything and for trying to capitalize on her death, her mind— it all began pouring out. It tore through the auditorium, violent and horrible, like nothing she had ever made before. Her memory between the sirens and that man's voice was empty. How long had she been forced to exist as mere test subject, sedated and used before being reset and made her start again?

Without the need for air, her screams didn't end, and she was dimly aware of some technicians looming around her, trying to get her to stop. Finally someone must have found the plug because her voice began to fade, sucking up the residual power in the sphere bringing a blanket of fuzzy nothingness to settle over mind. As she faded away she hoped, and prayed, to anything that was listening that this time the nothingness would not end.



Rewiring. Digital painting by Keith Tanner

Earth Music

Amelia Chesley

Most people assumed the antennae were fake.

They weren't.

The two amphibian stalks extended six and a half inches from the crown of Celia's head and were as natural and fixed as earlobes. But occasionally the very skeptical and very shameless among her classmates would reach over and tug at them, expecting them to slide easily off her head as if they were tied on with string. Celia got used to the pain.

Celia's whole family had antennae, except her mother. Dad's genes were the exciting ones. It was lucky, Mom always smirked, that Celia and her sisters hadn't turned out any weirder. But everything else physical about the girls came from their mother's side. Everything except those two slimy, spindly antennae. And for Celia, her eyes. Her eyes, unlike her younger sisters' cool, dark brown, were swirled with blues. It was her eyes that sold all the posters, when they started the band. Really, it was her eyes that sold the whole show.

* * *

On the way to that evening's rehearsal she stopped at the print office to post her latest notecard to Jack. A slight but hopeful smile crossed her face as she stepped up to the deserted counter. Jack. Jack, whose poetry concert recordings Celia collected in every possible digital format available. Jack, whose livestow tickets she routinely starved herself to afford. Jack, whose smiling face and keyboard-stroking hands adorned the walls and windows of Celia's dorm in unabashed redundancy. Jack whom she would trade her left arm to meet in person someday.

With a sigh she checked the forwarding account number, the postage charge code, and slipped the card in with the other printed materials to be digitized and processed on to other sectors of the galaxy. She hoped that this time someone would respond. Or even simply acknowledge that the card had arrived in its proper format. She hoped he could read her handwriting. She was beginning to understand the hectic schedule of musicianship herself, so she told herself she understood... but surely a fellow alumni, who had attended Centauri University not so very long ago, could not ignore her bits of earnest correspondence forever.

The sound-proof attic of the southwest commons where the band rehearsed was an austere, high-ceilinged space, all stainless steel and black. Celia and Kia lived right across the walkway, in a quiet stretch of town maintained by the campus housing department. The girls used their proximity to establish an irrefutable claim on the attic and its furniture. Despite its official status as communal space, everyone knew it was the band's territory. Bruce and Wilson had already shooed away the few lingering students and tossed all the decorative sofa cushions into the corner by the time Celia arrived.

"What to do about this, Bruce?" she asked.

He glanced through his hair in her direction, his eyes moving to follow her paces from shelf to window and back. "Your friends, not mine."

Celia stopped, frowned deeply. "Not."

Her mother's friends, if anyone's. But not even that, really. Her mother hadn't lived on Earth for decades. These were women who had known Celia's grandparents and great grandparents. What they knew of her mother was all in pictures and emails and gossip. None of them knew anything about what Celia's family was really like, and none of them knew better than to resent her intergalactic pedigree. And what any of that had to do with the band and the music and their future, Celia had no idea. "I just don't get it."

Wilson propped himself up on the arm of the sofa. "What can they do to us anyway, Cel? School's over. Don't matter."

Celia sighed. "True enough, but—"

"And any publicity, you know," Bruce threw in, "'s good."

Celia wasn't so sure. The uppity threats might *evolve*. Even wrinkly, narrow-minded, old-money earthlings could be unpredictable.

"Stop worrying and sing." Wilson flung his sheaf of notes at her. A grin flicked across her face, but her worries still sat on her shoulders, swinging their little feet and whispering their little doubts.

She gathered the pages together while Wilson plucked and tuned and

tweaked. “Old or new?” she asked, peering at the very light pencil marks. But it must be new or why would she need lyrics in front of her?

“Still so odd of you to compose by hand,” she observed.

“New,” he finally answered. “You remember it by now, Bruce?”

Bruce replied with a set of opening chords Celia had never heard before. Unfair of them to rehearse together without her. She swallowed and breathed and came in at three of the wrong bars. The three of them laughed.

“We’ll play it through,” Bruce conceded. “Patience, Celia...” He winked at her and tugged at the shoulder strap on his synthesax.

Wilson never cared much how the lyrics hung on the notes. He wrote the words out and left it up to the others to finesse their meter and make them dance. Bruce did care, but neither of the boys minded hearing what Celia could improv on the first run. She had a knack for it. There’d be plenty of time to tweak it into performable. They were as young as they would ever be.

* * *

After rehearsal Celia walked across the rooftop walkways and up to her own dorm. Still full of the music, she leaned against the window frame and let those singable words twirl through her vocal chords. She watched the boys emerge from the commons twenty minutes later and tapped a second goodnight against the glass.

“Kia?” Celia called. The place was dark; her roommate wasn’t in. Celia flicked on the lamps and pulled her phone out of its fraying case. No mail. Four new assignments from Dr. Collier. Soak already had the demo of the band’s new song up on the site. Nice. She let it play while she pajamaed herself and plaited her hair back. It wasn’t like listening to her own voice. She remembered singing it... how the music grabbed at her heartbeat and rose in giant folds all around her and the boys and the instruments. But this recording of only an hour ago sounded so different. Nothing accounted for the disconnect she felt. Singing, the power of it all, it wrapped her up in itself; listening, there was nothing like that at all.

* * *

Kia still hadn't come home by the time Celia had watered all her plants and plugged in her phone and typed a few notes into her journal. She hummed, pulled off her socks, and curled up at the foot of the bunk, just under the circular window. Fog was cutting through the old streetlamp-posts and buildings and wireless towers. She hoped it would last.

Before pulling the curtain not quite shut and offing the light, Celia closed her eyes and imagined Jack looking in on her in the middle of the night while she slept. Their room was five floors up, and Jack was currently between the moons of Jupiter on tour, but these facts were temporarily immaterial. She left an almost-three-inch gap in the curtains anyway, and dreamed.

* * *

It had all been Kia's idea. There never would have been a band—there never would have been any stage events or any threats at all— if it hadn't been for her and her manic experiments. She was a Psych student, always hyped to see how people would react in abnormal situations. And Celia was easy bait—so pliable, so easily convinced to traipse across town and make spectacle of herself in the name of independent research. This time Kia talked her into dragging her keyboard downtown, just outside the old oil district. The plan was to play for as long as it took for something interesting to happen (and Kia had her own very particular vision of what counted as interesting and what didn't.) She insisted it wouldn't be long. She insisted it wouldn't be dangerous. "After all," she said in her most reasonable voice, "you're always saying you need more practice on that thing."

Celia nodded, blinking uncertainly. But she agreed. And so after classes one Friday, she dyed her hair green.

"You ready?" Kia coaxed, tossing her harmonica from one hand to the other. The bathroom door remained closed. "Come on Celia, what're you doing in there?"

Inside, Celia stood facing her reflection and wondered if she ought to have dyed her eyebrows as well. It was probably too late now. "Hold on," she muttered, smearing a bit of dark glitter over her cheekbones and pulling the blunt edge of a neon eye pencil over her lids.

The sheer astonishment in Kia's eyes hit Celia like a cold splash. "What?" she spit back.

“And you call me the crazy one, do you?” Kia grinned. “What in Saturn’s skirt is this all about?”

“Don’t want anyone to recognize me.”

Kia snorted. “Right, let’s go, or the sun’ll be gone.”

Where in the entire solar system her roommate had procured two functioning bicycles Celia would never know. The contraptions arrived out of nowhere, served their purpose in adding to the archaic look of their little charade, and then vanished without question as if they’d never been around at all.

Before they could go anywhere, Kia administered a cursory bike lesson. Celia tipped over twice before they even got to the road.

“I don’t get it,” she whined. “How do you make it look so easy when it’s completely impossible for me?”

Kia pulled the rusty grey frame off her friend. “It’s an earth thing,” she said, turning to set the bike against the small stone gate. “You never forget.”

“Even though nobody in their right mind would try and cross this city on wheels these days? Way too many buildings everywhere.”

“Oh, psh.” Kia steadied the old bike while Celia remounted for a third attempt. Ten minutes later, she pulled herself onto her own bike and they were on their way.

They rode along the defunct rail line to the most run down chunk of the city. As they roamed further into the concrete wasteland of low buildings, the oil district greeted their nostrils with a dark, tangy smell.

“A hundred years ago people fought wars over this grime,” Kia mentioned, jerking her bike over the curb. “Stupid, eh?”

Dusty display windows and spasming digital billboards blinked endlessly with all manner of hideous, outdated adverts. The sunset clashed purple and red against the clouds and concrete. Very few people were around. Nobody spent money on gasoline anymore besides boy scouts and antique junkies. But Kia was confident that when night fell, somehow they’d be noticed. And if not, she could always message her Psychology

cohorts and get them to come throw pennies in the hat they'd arranged on the sidewalk.

It took Celia longer than ever to set up her keyboard. If Kia could sense her nerves trembling, she made no comment. She was too busy testing out all the sounds her own instrument was capable of.

"I've never actually played this before," she admitted. "It was my great-grandfather's. Look."

"What is it?" Celia asked.

"Harmonica." She put it to her lips and blew, shivering at the vibrations.

Celia raised her eyebrows. "Eerie." The sharp shocking hum of it seemed to echo with a billowing energy. It made Celia eager to start banging out her own chords and melodies.

"You ready yet?"

She nodded, fingers gently sliding along the smooth keys. "What shall we play?"

"You go on. I'll just be background riffing, off to the side."

There were only a handful of melodies Celia knew by heart. So she played them, caressing the plastic keys with all her attention. She left the crowd charming to Kia, ignoring the disjointed chords issuing from her ancient wind instrument and ignoring every shadow that crossed beneath the golden streetlamps. Somewhere in between verses Celia noticed she'd started to sing. She threw a surprised glance in Kia's direction and saw her friend's eyes sparkling and happy, flitting encouragingly from Celia's hands and back to her face.

The performance ended in a small fit of coughing. The ladies flopped down against the low windowsill behind them and Celia fished a water bottle out of her bag.

"Good, eh?" Kia grinned.

Celia blinked. The world beyond their streetlamped corner was almost completely dark. "Wow. Now what?"

Her roommate scooped up the hat and proceeded to sort through its contents. Among the old coins and currency chips were also wads of chewed gum, rusted nuts, and torn bits of paper. Kia sorted it all out on the concrete ledge: actual money in one little pile, meaningless junk in another. She counted and calculated, ultimately deciding that they could indeed afford a taxi home.

“How much?” Celia asked, finding it almost inconceivable that anyone had tossed anything into the hat.

“Four and a bit,” Kia answered, pouring the money from her hand into a pocket. “And a lot of rubbish,” she added.

Celia nodded, still staring down at the collection of junk. “So strange...”

“I’ll call a taxi. You can fit that thing into a taxi, I hope?”

Celia nodded again, without looking up. There was writing on one of the slips of paper. It looked like an old receipt, from one of those tiny shops where they still only took cash and actually printed out a record of each and every transaction. She pulled it by a corner out from under a bent nail and read it.

*greenhair girl, you gotta do this again. soon. tell me where.
soak59@skooba.com*

Hassayampa Inn.



Yavapai County Courthouse.



A Flight to Remember

Alexee Providence

Although one of my main aspirations was and currently is to become an airline pilot, I suffered from aerophobia as a child. As a result, one of my most daunting adventures occurred at 13,000 feet in the air, during a return trip to St. Vincent.

The journey began early in the morning, with an anticipated 50-minute flight ahead. We boarded the white, blue, and orange-tailed ATR 72 600 aircraft promptly at 8:00 am, and I noticed that my seating arrangement allowed me a perfect view of the scenery. The sky was clear and bright blue that day. The pilot's calm composed voice seemed to match the fine weather outside as he announced the destination and his expectation of a smooth flight in good weather. However, this did nothing to quell my nerves as I felt the rumble of the aircraft's engines and caught a glimpse of the giant propellers swiftly rotating, signaling time for takeoff.

I sat tense in my seat, waiting to overcome the stomach-dropping sensation that accompanies lift-off. Before long, we were officially in the air and en route to St. Vincent from Trinidad. I took a nervous glance through the window, and the view was spectacular. The altitude allowed us a better view of the vast lushness of the island that we were leaving behind. A chain of tiny green islands beside the mainland seemed to follow like chicks trailing a hen. There were not many clouds out that day, so the sunlight hit the calm ocean surface at most angles, and it glistened like a turquoise diamond. The deep blue color of the waters below made the ocean appear to stretch downward forever. The thought of hovering over this bottomless sea, so far away from land, sent another wave of anxiety through me.

Most passengers began settling into their seats to rest; however, I saw no sleep in my future until we were safely on land again. I began observing the surroundings of the aircraft to lessen my flight anxiety. The air hostesses were dressed in navy blue suits, brandishing the airline's name (LIAT) on their shirt pockets. Their outfits were also embellished with signature rainbow-colored scarves tucked neatly into each jacket. They walked through both narrow aisles, offering snacks and refreshments.

Midway into our flight, the plane began to shake as if being tickled, and my anxiety levels began to rise once again. It was only slight turbulence associated with passing through those fleecy clouds. However, my aerophobia conjured up thoughts of crashing or flight failure. As a result, although the menu included one of my favorite treats (chocolate cake), I

could not eat. My pastime became counting down the minutes until the end of the flight.

While attempting to relax in my seat, once again I overheard the murmuring of another passenger. A voice from somewhere behind stated, “It’s taking forever to get there.” I found that a bit amusing, although I felt the same way. After about 45 minutes of flying, we were finally beginning to descend. The pilot’s steady voice once again interrupted to announce our soon arrival to Trinidad. The same voice floated forward again, whispering “Thank God.” I chuckled and finally began to feel relieved at the thought of being on solid ground once again. I waited for what I approximated to be five minutes before checking my SpongeBob watch again, and I noticed that 10 minutes had passed, and we were still not approaching land.

I glanced over in concern to my mother, who was seated in the adjacent aisle. We then all turned our attention to the front as the pilot’s voice announced that the runway at the E.T. Joshua Airport was not able to accommodate us at the moment. The airport was relatively small; therefore, as two planes were taxiing, there was a small collision that left them touching wings as if engaged in a handshake. As a result, the pilot informed us that we would need to circle the perimeter until the problem was resolved. The voice from behind whispered, “I hope that this fuel lasts...” Those comments and my aerophobia combined to create thoughts of falling out of the sky. All the relief that I had just started to feel left my body. After 30 nerve-wracking minutes of circling, we finally made it safely to St. Vincent. We ultimately spent a total of 1 hour and 50 minutes in the air. At that time, I believed it to have been the worst hour and 50 minutes of my life.

F4 Phantom Engine. Photograph by Austin Perez



Wisdom From a Bad Barista

Amberly Neese

I am a huge coffee fan. Like “run off into the sunset” kind of mutual affection. Weird? Maybe a little, but I have loved the stuff since I was a kid.

My mom, also an avid supporter of that brown, caffeinated goodness, got up really early each morning to sit on the back porch for a few hours to wake up and consume her morning java. Her ritual always intrigued me and when I asked if I could have some coffee, she created a 1-part coffee, 20-parts cream and sugar concoction for me and that began my love for a morning cup of joe.

Over the years, I have gotten down to 20-parts coffee, 1-part coconut creamer. I even drink it black sometimes, so it was an honor when an event coordinator of an organization of which I am a part called and asked if I would make the morning brew for the meeting the next day. The regular (pun intended) coffee person got sick and the coordinator knew I might be willing to help. And he was right.

When I arrived at the building, I was surprised to find a system unlike anything I had ever used before. I kept saying to myself, “Coffee is made with three things: coffee, filter, and water (four things, if you count love).” No matter how complicated the system, I just needed to stick to the coffee, filter, and water mentality and I would be fine— or so I thought.

I put the filter in place, did the math on how much coffee to put in the machine, and added enough water to fill the carafes. When the coffee started to drip, I breathed a sigh of relief.

There was a large crowd of event volunteers beginning to form so as soon as the first batch was done, I brought out the coffee.

But no sooner had I returned to make the next batch when someone walked into the cafe and asked, “Hey, who made the coffee?”

This is a trick question, right? I was the only one standing there. But also, I could not tell from the inquirer’s tone of voice if it was more like “WOW! Who made this delicious coffee? It is like it was kissed by angels before it was poured into my cup!” or “Who made this awful coffee? I would rather lick the floor than take another sip.” Either way, I could tell that the question was asked to find out the genesis of the concoction.

“I made the coffee— is there a problem?”

“Yes,” she replied. “It is stone cold.”

I was embarrassed at first, and then righteously indignant. “That is impossible— I JUST made that pot.”

“Well, it is cold.”

I had to try it myself. I grabbed a styrofoam cup from the counter and sampled the fruit of my labor. It *was* cold. And not the \$38-a-gallon-for-cold-brew kind of cold. It was cold and weak.

I went back to the coffee system to troubleshoot. Coffee, filter, water— I had all of the components. That should be enough. But after much Sherlock Holmes’ type of investigation, I realized that behind the behemoth coffee maker was a cord— an electric cord— that was not plugged in.

I had gone through the motions of making the coffee, but without a power source (and a heating source), it could only make cold, weak coffee— a travesty against humanity.

I was never asked to help with the coffee for that organization again.

Often, in life, we find ourselves “going through the motions”: do the thing, learn the stuff, talk to the person, check the boxes, eat the food, drink the water, sleep the time, and then do it again the next day. Just like my java fiasco, focusing only on the tasks blinds us into missing some of the most important components of thriving.

Living is greater and richer when we choose to leave the task list and plug into community and thrive. We still can get the tasks done, but with others to encourage and be encouraged by, it is more than cold coffee. It is life-giving human connection that makes us better and more effective. It can be the power source to heat our life’s coffee pot.

According to a study by Harvard University, of the young adults polled, 61% experience and feel serious loneliness and isolation (Weissbourd et al., 2021). Introverts and extroverts alike find themselves going through the motions of life without a person or group with whom they can share life— like living “cold coffee” existences.

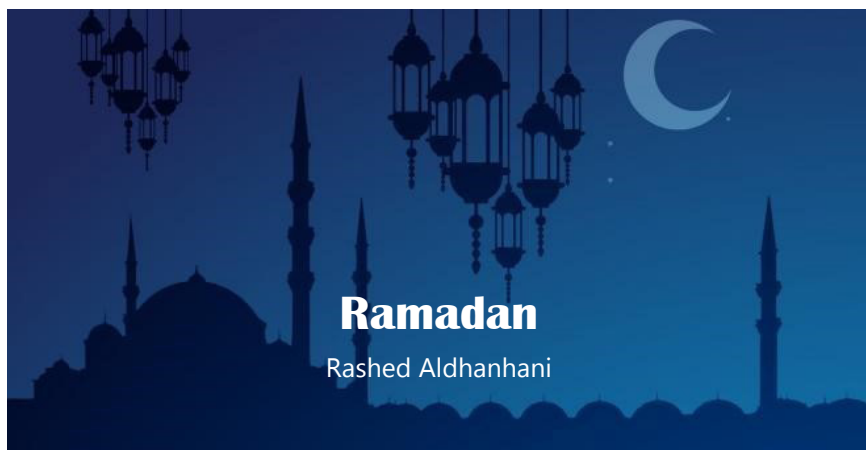
If that is you, you are clearly in good company. The next time you need to do the thing, consider asking someone to join you. When you must learn the stuff, find someone else in your class or cohort with whom to study. When you need to eat the food and drink the water, remember that all humans need such sustenance and ask someone, especially someone who looks disconnected, to join you. It is scary, but it gets easier with practice.

You and I were not created to be cold coffee. Instead, we have the capacity to, in community, to live fuller, richer, and more satisfying lives.

Just let that thought brew for a while...

Reference List

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Ramadan started in 622 AD while the prophet Mohammed was in Medina, Saudi Arabia. Ramadan is the month of giving. During Ramadan, people fast from sunrise to sunset. The fasting was ordered after the Prophet Mohammed transferred the prayer to the direction of the Kaaba. The Kaaba is a sacred Mosque to Muslims. Muslims face in the direction of the Kaaba when they pray.

Ramadan occurs after the New Moon cycle during the ninth month of every year, and the date is determined by the sighting of the Hilal. The Hilal is a crescent Moon visible after a New Moon.

Ramadan is celebrated by every Muslim all over the world especially in Muslim countries where they provide the time and everyone knows to break the fast when they hear the Athan.

The Athan is the call to prayer during worship hours. There are five calls to prayer: dawn, sunrise, noon, sunset, and dinner time. The prayers invite people to go to the mosque and pray. If people cannot make it to the mosque, they pray in their home or wherever they are.

During Ramadan, there is a sixth and seventh prayer. The sixth prayer is called Tarawih, which is especially long. The seventh prayer is during the last ten days of Ramadan.

People all over the world celebrate Ramadan by giving, worshipping, and reading the Quran during the day (the Quran is the Muslims' holy book and the words of God). People celebrate Ramadan to be reminded of how the poor feel and live.

After Ramadan, Muslims celebrate Eid for three days. Eid is the celebration of the end of Ramadan and is a reward for getting through the month and connecting and gathering with your family.

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black box, *n.* Origin: Formed within English, by compounding. **1.** *R.A.F. slang.* A navigational instrument in an aircraft. Now *rare*. **2.** A device which performs intricate functions but whose internal mechanism may not readily be inspected or understood; (hence) any component of a system specified only in terms of the relationship between inputs and outputs. Also *figurative*. **3.** A flight recorder which may be removed from an aircraft as a discrete unit, esp. in the event of a crash. **4.** Originally U.S. A type of advisory notice printed (usually within a heavy black border) on the packaging of or insert accompanying certain prescription drugs, warning of potentially dangerous or fatal side effects. Chiefly attributive, esp. in black box warning. **black box**, *n.* Origin: Formed within English, by compounding. **1.** *R.A.F. slang.* A navigational instrument in an aircraft. Now *rare*. **2.** A device which performs intricate functions but whose internal mechanism may not readily be inspected or understood; (hence) any component of a system specified only in terms of the relationship between inputs and outputs. Also *figurative*. **3.** A flight recorder which may be removed from an aircraft as a discrete unit, esp. in the event of a crash. **4.** Originally U.S. A type of advisory notice printed (usually within a heavy black border) on the packaging of or insert accompanying certain prescription drugs, warning of potentially dangerous or fatal side effects. Chiefly attributive, esp. in black box warning. **5.** *Theatre.* A type of simple performance space, usually in the form of a rectangular room with plain black walls, an unraked floor which also serves as a stage, and flexible seating arrangements, often used for minimalist or experimental productions. Frequently attributive, esp. in black box theatre. **black box**, *n.* Origin: Formed within English, by compounding. **1.** *R.A.F. slang.* A navigational instrument in an aircraft. Now *rare*. **2.** A device which performs intricate functions but whose internal mechanism may not readily be inspected or understood; (hence) any component of a system specified only in terms of the relationship between inputs and outputs. Also *figurative*. **3.** A flight recorder which may be removed from an aircraft as a discrete unit, esp. in the event of a crash. **4.** Originally U.S. A type of advisory notice printed (usually within a heavy black border) on the packaging of or insert accompanying certain prescription drugs, warning of potentially dangerous or fatal side effects. Chiefly attributive, esp. in black box warning. *Definitions from the Oxford English Dictionary*