

SWIMM

SUBUD WRITERS INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

Issue Number 10

September 2017



Editorial

Welcome to SWIM 10

It's a good one.

Lots of rich visual material including art by children from Australia, California and England, Aminah's tree (I have it on the wall of my room), dream-like collages from Hannah Kusterer, a fine autobiographical piece by USA SICA chair and world-class cellist Hamilton Cheifetz, lots of good poems including a couple by one of my favorite Subud poets Daphne Alexopoulou, and an excerpt from Salamah Pope's book "Antidote" a passage that I've cherished since I read it years ago. Salamah died recently. May God bless her and draw her into the light.

And... God bless all our readers.

Emmanuel Williams

Note: I'm happy to be able to inform you that the anthology of poetry by Subud members Stefanie Brown and I have been working on now has contributions from over 30 poets from all over the world.

Thanks to SICA Britain for sponsoring SWIM.

Emmanuelriddlemaker@gmail.com

WRITING PROMPT

And here's your prompt for this issue... see the cover for a larger version.

Send your writings (stories, articles, poems) to me at:

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SWIM

SUBUD WRITERS
INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

Published quarterly

Editor:
Emmanuel Williams
Creative: Marcus Bolt

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respective authors

Cover photo:
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Issue No.10 September 2017

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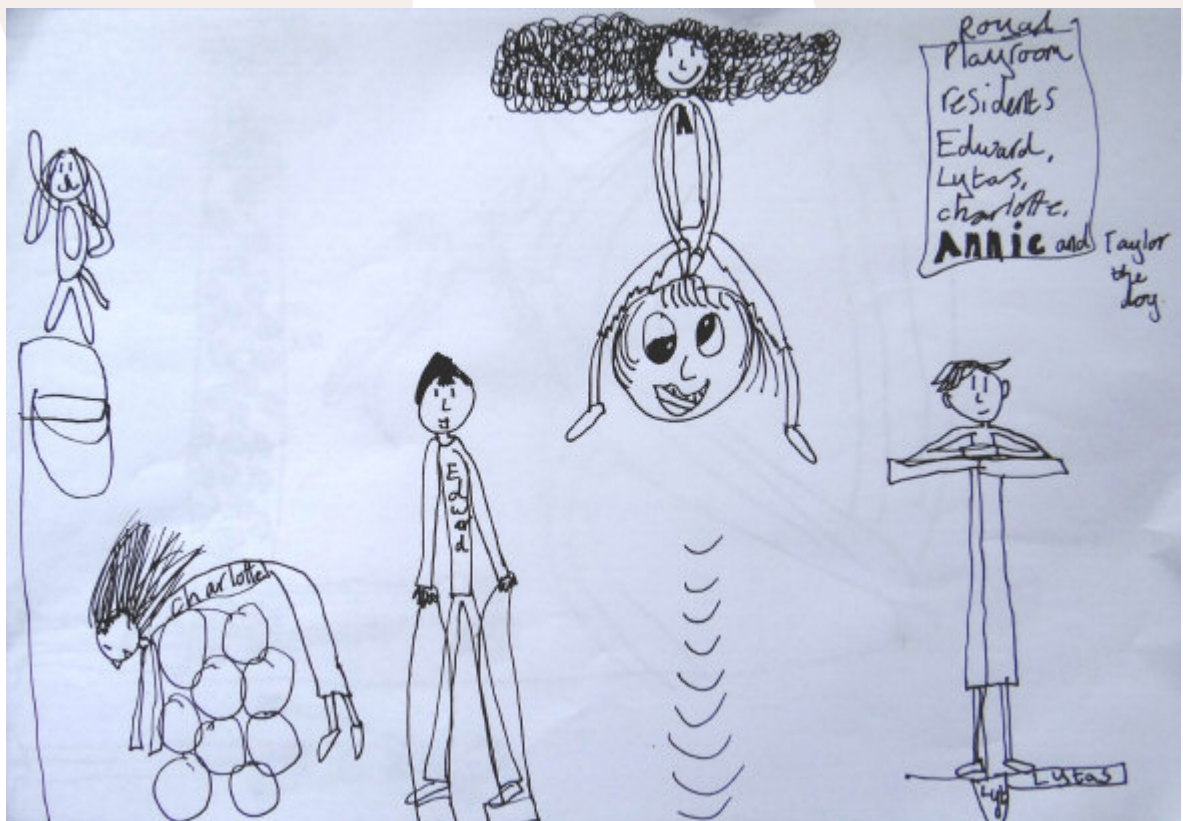
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Painting by Marcia Lynes

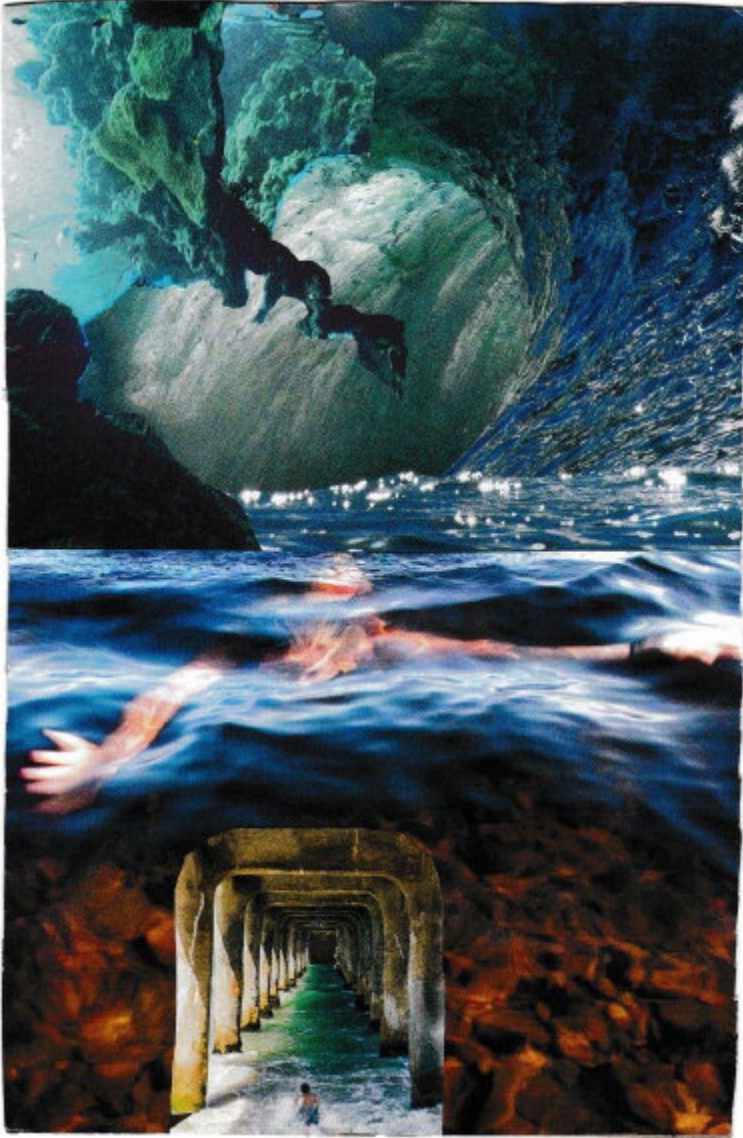


Zebra

Comic Book Illustration by Eli Adamson

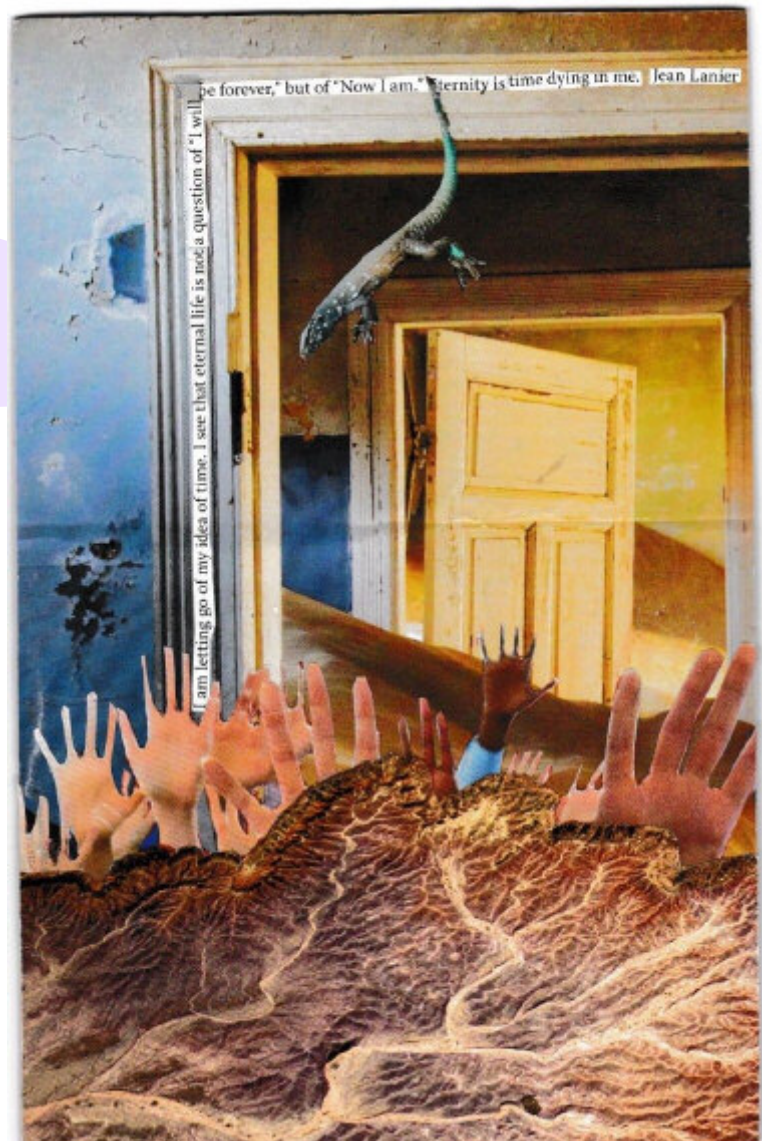


Collages by Hannah Kusterer



The first collage is 'Deep Water',
the second is 'Eternity is Time
Dying in Me'.

Hannah Kusterer



Sunset: *Photo by Hermine Berenger*



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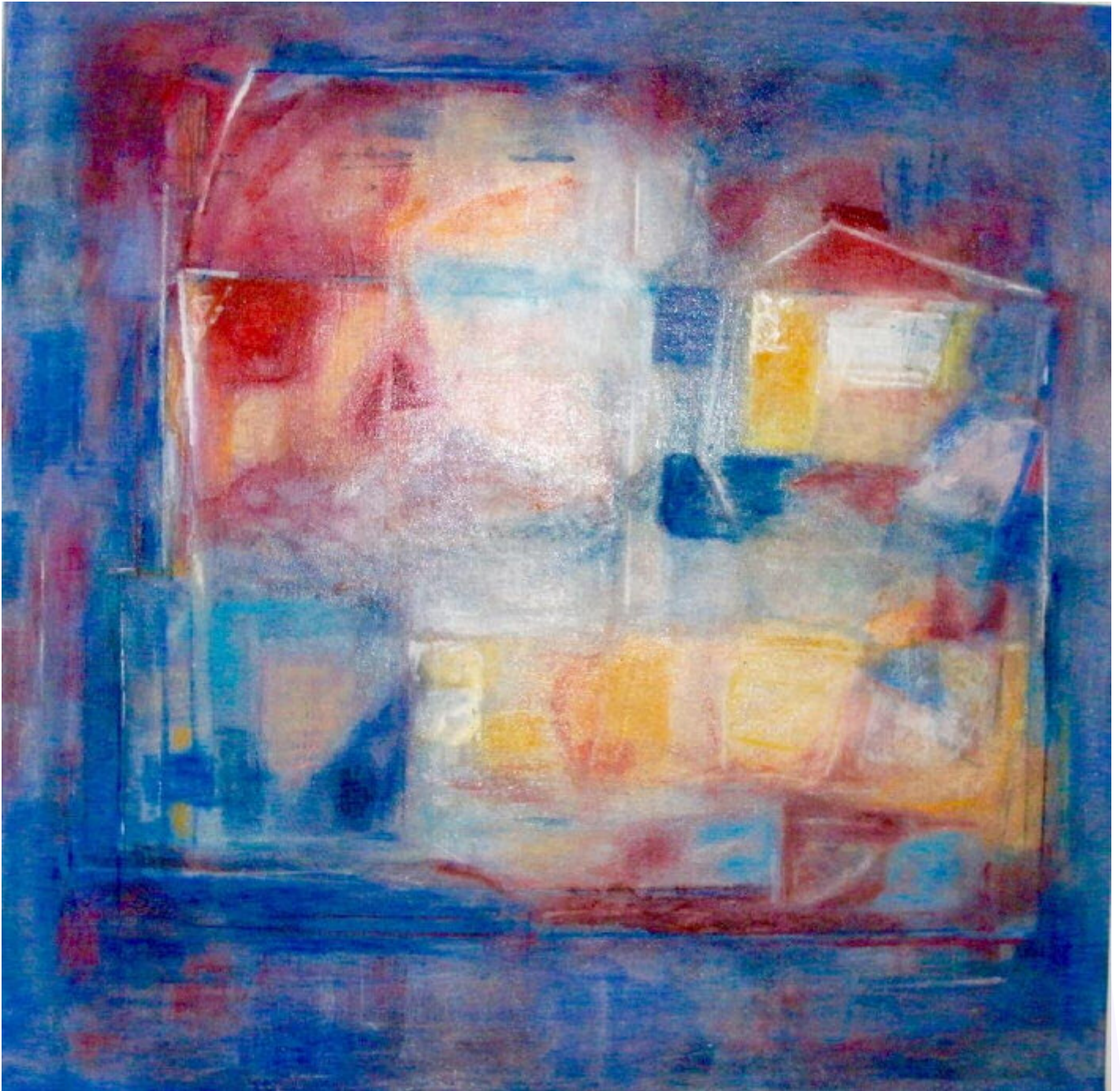


Trees and birds have always held a deep meaning for me... the tree signifies "home" for me and the bluebird is my symbol for the Holy Spirit. This painting was one of the first works after a very long season of great personal loss and recovery.

The giclee print is on canvas with some enhanced hand embellishments. There are touches of pure gold leaf added and the piece is hand signed by the artist. It measures 24 by 30 inches. The cost is \$500.00 plus shipping.

Contact can be made through my email address: aminahulmer@gmail.com

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Priolo Road by *Maya Spall*

Priolo Road was where my husband and I lived in South East London and brought up our 4 sons.

I am perfect – graphic poem by *Frederick Lloyd*

I am perfect

I am perfect

I am perfect

I am perfect

I am perfect

I am perfect

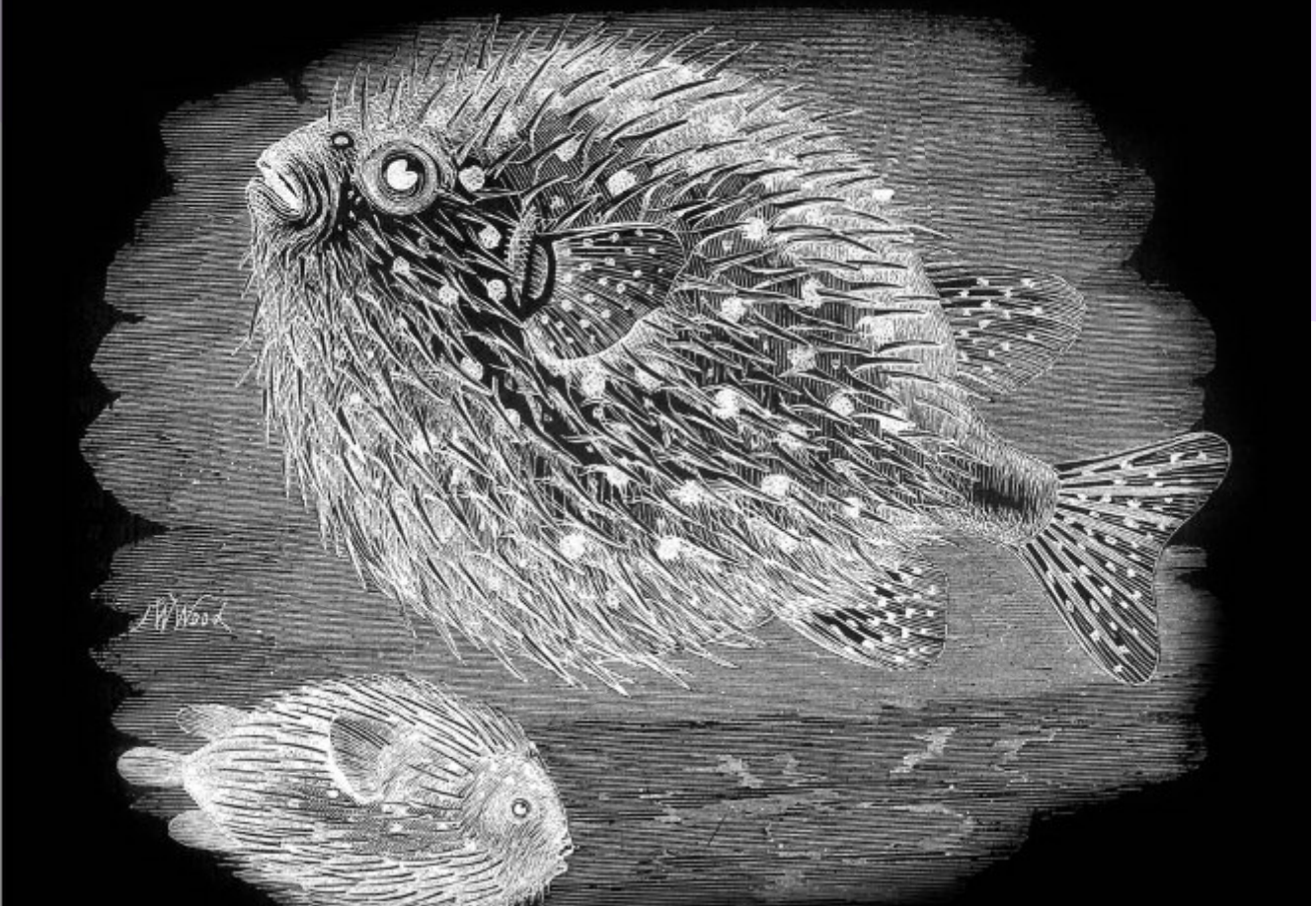
I am perfect

Extracts from '101 stories from deep space' by Fredrik Lloyd

11 : Time 02

When people talk of time 'standing still' they are probably watching it head on, and so don't notice its speed.

It's a common miss understanding. Miss, because it is not an idea married to another yet and so not complete. Under a standing, because most people think, sitting down.



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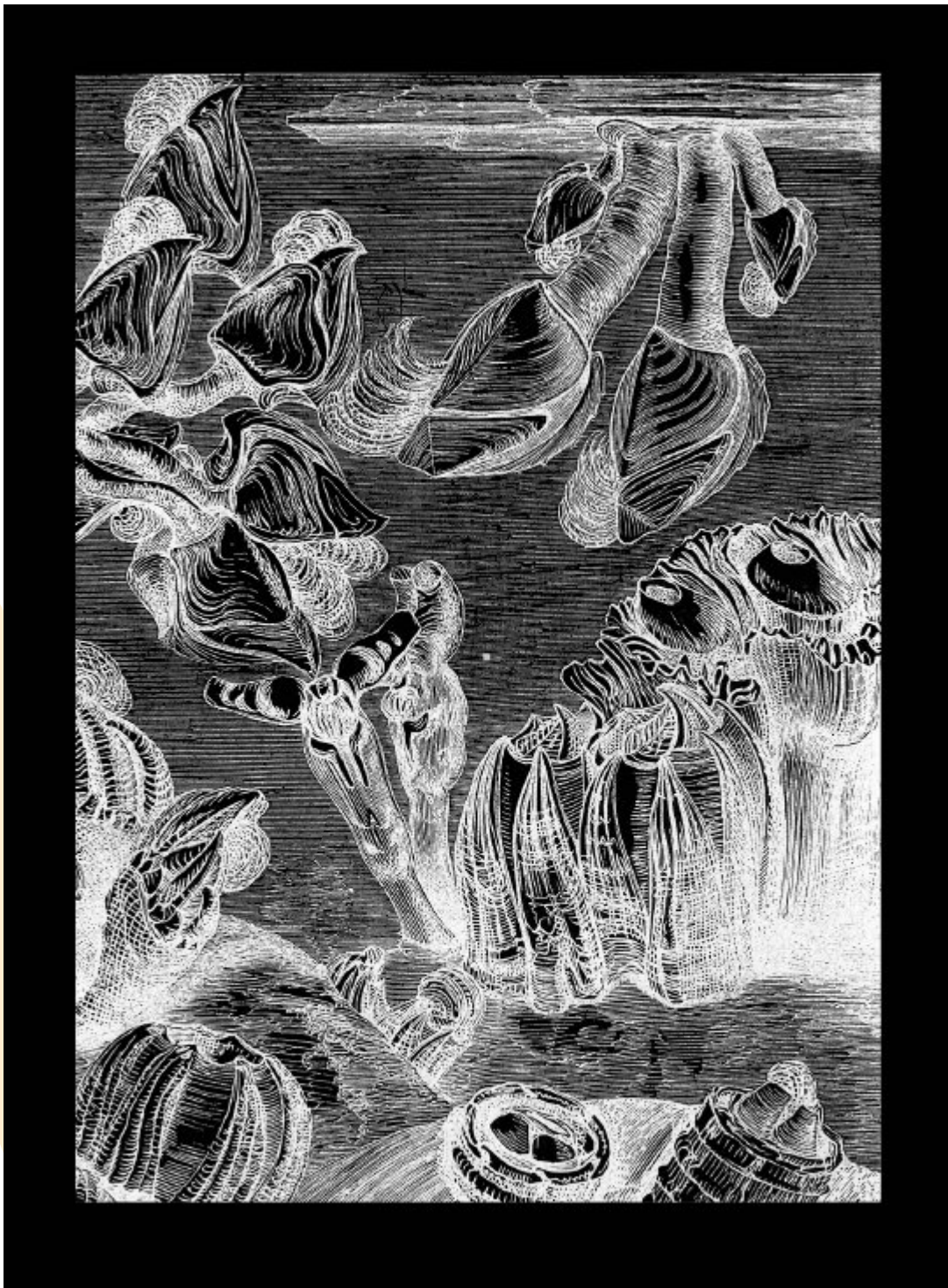


Uri had no teeth.

Instead he kept his mouth full of pale pink wriggling larvae. They digested and broke down whatever food he ate. 'Cheaper than teeth' he stated flatly, but still, he was saving up for some gold Molars. But each time he neared a Dentist, he became convinced he needed one more raiding party, one more sack of nuggets. Then he'd be back and exchange his larvae for gold, for good.

Gold wouldn't try to escape whenever he opened his mouth, wouldn't tickle as much in his sleep. He wouldn't have to keep those blockers in his nostrils at night.

He dreamed of a night when he could snore.



And let's not make the mistake of thinking we live in an aquarium. In a glass box. And that everything 'out there' looks in at us at will. No. That wouldn't work. The ghosts, the spirits, the other beings busy with their lives, don't see us any better than we see them.

We all stumble about in the fog of our own auras. That's how we are all crammed in, one on top of the other (in a figure of speech) without complaining. Why would we complain? When we don't even know the rest are there, or rather here.

A Tale That Cannot Be Told

Why would someone who you know well withhold the most important story of their life? It may be that in the telling, images surface so terrifying and disturbing that they will sob, tremble and fall dumb. In order to survive they have tried to banish certain memories.

If a friend has been an asylum seeker or refugee this could be the case. The story you never hear typically stems from extreme danger, the death of loved ones, and a heartrending decision to leave one's community losing home and valued possessions. There is no certainty about who will survive or where the exodus will take you.

This was the case for Bessie, my father's mother. Her family were butchers, Jews living in Bialystock, in North-eastern Poland. At the time when the 1908 pogroms broke out Bessie was eight years old and was at home with her siblings and the maid. Her mother was working in the butcher's shop and her father was in England visiting his sister and brother. The maid having heard a scary rumour decided to mark a large holy cross on all the windows of the house. The houses on either side were attacked and the neighbours were killed. Bessie said that only the cross, and fortune, saved her life.

When her mother came home she immediately took the children to her mother in Aradoc for safety. Bessie's father, hearing the news, made his way directly to Aradoc and the whole family fled leaving everything of value behind, to find safety in England.

This is one reason I feel a heart connection with refugees and asylum seekers. Behind every face there is a tale most people will never hear.

Stefan Freedman

CELLO LOVE

I began playing the cello at the age of seven, an inspired idea from my mother, who was a fine violinist and loved the cello. After an auspicious beginning, performing concerts starting at the age of eleven, I auditioned for the legendary cellist Janos Starker when I was fifteen, and he said "If an angel should come down and ask you what you want to be, what would you say"? My response: "I want to be like you", which was sincere, since Starker was the greatest cellist in the world, somehow combining an intense, expressive sound with the cleanest, most accurate cello playing in history. He was also a brilliant teacher and helped me to become much more comfortable with the cello after just a few months of working with him. On that first day, after my audition, Starker invited my father and me to sit in the corner of his studio and watch his studio class, basically a master class. His Indiana University students were really impressive, but his demonstrations of the pieces were unforgettably brilliant and beautiful, and he talked fluently while playing even the most demanding music, his speech completely uninfluenced by his cello playing. After a two hour studio class, Starker turned to me and said "Play the Prelude for us". This was the Prelude to the Sixth Bach Suite, with which I had begun my audition. It is notoriously difficult, but I liked to play it boldly, and when I finished, Starker said "Isn't it nice to know that there is good cello playing somewhere besides Bloomington", a rare compliment from my new teacher, received with murmurs of acknowledgment by his students.

Although I absorbed an enormous amount of musical and technical understanding during my two and half years with Starker, my work was uneven due to my own confusion and bouts of depression, so I returned to Chicago when I was 18 to figure things out. Fortunately, I started getting professional work as a cellist, so I was forced to practice and began to earn a living, playing every imaginable freelance job, including Tony Bennett, the Bee Gees, recording commercials, and getting a job in the Lyric Opera of Chicago when I was 19. The singers were musicians like Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne, and the music was incredible. I also toured the U.S. with the Paul Winter consort, playing an eclectic variety of music, some improvisation, and experiencing the exciting and unglamorous life of touring.

Starker was 42 years old when I began studying with him, and he had an active solo career, so he left for 9 weeks to play concerts, and his students studied with Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, who was then 24 years old and Starker's assistant. It was a liberating 9 weeks for me, exploring new pieces with a less intimidating teacher. Tsutsumi also was an incredible and incredibly hard-working cellist with a sense of humor and passion. Later on, when I was 21 and free lancing in Chicago, I was invited to join the Indianapolis Symphony by their Principal Cellist, so I rented an apartment there in January, and two weeks later, the orchestra went on strike and stayed struck for months. Stuck in Indianapolis, I practiced a lot and auditioned for the Pittsburgh Symphony. They ended up offering me a job, and I asked them for some time to decide. I then visited Starker in Bloomington, and he once again surprised me by asking me to play at the end of a long master class, and my performance was a bit shaky. He told me to meet him in his studio where he said "You need to go back to school for two years. Otherwise you will never be comfortable at the instrument. If you need to earn money, work in the summer, and don't come here, because next year I'm on sabbatical, and if I'm not here, you won't practice. Go to London and study with Tsutsumi." It instantly was clear that this was perfect



advice, so I turned down the Pittsburgh job, played Grant Park in Chicago in the summers and spent two very productive years studying again with Tsutsumi in London, Ontario.

Tsutsumi was a wise and wonderful teacher, saying very little, but occasionally something like "Enjoy the cello SOUND!", a seemingly obvious idea but easy to forget when one is trying so hard to play well. He was like a guru, very quiet, often silent for many minutes, but when he did say something, it was almost always memorable. "When you begin this piece, imagine that it is already going in the air and you just join it". He also had a fanatical work ethic. After practicing for 6 hours and congratulating myself at 10pm, I was on my way out of the music building and heard Tsutsumi practicing scales, slowly, which made me feel "It's useless. No matter how hard I work, he is doing more". Humbling but inspiring.

When I was 24 I got a job performing in a trio with a terrific violinist and pianist and teaching at

a college in Milwaukee, and a year later I came to Subud through a miraculous experience which I had not sought. What helped me recognize the reality of what I had experienced was a kind of familiarity with a feeling of being moved, alive and in awe, which I felt when listening to or playing the most beautiful music in the world. Since that day, it is as if there is always a Mozart symphony playing, giving me peace, a sublime sense of joy and sadness, and some added intuitive understanding of the magical power contained in a melody, in harmony and in the structures of the masterpieces. The first few months were characterized by feelings of peace, joy and wonder, and my intellectual doubts were no match for the big belly laugh that followed such internal questioning. During those blissful few months, the other way in which I was inwardly taught or trained centered around the fear associated with playing difficult music. Once I was sight reading a violin part on the cello in a quartet with friends, and it got rather high and treacherous, and I heard a voice say "What are you afraid of? There is no reason to have fear", which surprised and relaxed me, so my ability to play naturally started to improve instantly. (There were, obviously, far reaching effects to the releasing of fear, accepting the peace and unconditional love which was manifesting in many ways.)

Now that I am 67 and have been playing the cello for 60 years, I am finding more and more fulfillment and challenges in playing and listening. When the great cellist Pablo Casals was asked why he still practiced 2 hours a day at the age of 93, he said "I'm beginning to notice some progress". He will always be one of my heroes, and it is an endless, joyful and humbling journey. Starker used to say that developing as a musician is like climbing a ladder that has an infinite number of rungs. When one reaches a certain level of accomplishment, he suggested celebration, but then more steps above appear. A choice presents itself whether to keep climbing or to stop and be satisfied. Stopping has never seemed a viable option to me.

When I was a child, I liked playing very fast, and as a teenager, I felt more comfortable playing Bach. The structure and perfect balance of expression and restraint was a safe world to explore, and more overtly emotional music took me out of my comfort zone. Over the years, my playing has opened up and my priorities have shifted. I now love playing lyrical, slow music, and I have gravitated toward very romantic pieces like Rachmaninoff Sonata. I search for color and emotional power and am most interested in communicating, telling the wordless stories that are so vivid and powerful. The anxiety that naturally accompanies performances has largely disappeared or is easy to channel into extra energy for the stage.

The frustrating aspect of having very deep feelings leads to a desire to share them with others. These feelings are difficult to articulate verbally, and although I love to tell stories about music and musicians, it came to me that the path for me to be able to meaningfully share is to play the cello. Sometimes people have responded in a way that has encouraged me to continue in this direction. Music is a powerful healing force and can bring people together in a profound way. It also contains secrets to life, balance and emotional understanding, energy for work and growth, and perfect harmony. I am very grateful to have had wonderful parents, brilliant teaching and internal guidance.

Hamilton Cheifetz

Marriage

... By now it was 1970. We had three children, we had formally entered Islam a couple of years before, and Thomas was now Abdullah and I was Salamah. Things were getting ready for the fourth Subud International Congress in Indonesia the following year, and Abdullah was busy designing and supervising the building of the new latihan hall. We also had a little bit more money coming in from another job he had, I got pregnant again, and loved it, and retired into myself for the duration.

Two months after the Congress the child was born dead, and exactly 3 months later I got pregnant again. That one I lost at six months, in June 1972. Whatever the physical – or spiritual – causes, (and we became aware of these) they were extraordinary experiences, filled with significance and meaning for both of us. And in the time span of their happening Abdullah and I became closer than ever.

The second miscarriage, especially, induced a radical change in our relationship. Before the fetus was born I had had three months in bed, hemorrhaging profusely. I grew weak and sensitive, so much so that there were only two women I could bear to have come near me. Marianne Kibble and Margaret Wichman used to come and do latihan with me twice a week, while I lay in bed, too weak even to sit up. I was "seeing things", too, even outside the actual latihan. With two exceptions, this was the only time in my whole Subud life when I have seen full-scale, Technicolor visions, and no questions about their authenticity. I felt burdens, both ancestral, inherited, and Abdullah's, lifting from me – burdens I hadn't even been aware of carrying.

For two months I was in a state of almost continual ecstasy. Physically I grew so weak I could hardly lift my head off the pillow but inwardly I was floating, bathed in bliss, and aware of angelic presences. Once the fetus was born, though, my health picked up quickly and within a month or so I was back to my ordinary, pragmatic self again. There was one big difference though; I was now part of Abdullah.

This is difficult to explain first and I found it somewhat odd at first. It felt as though I had no separate existence of my own anymore. I was, for better for worse, no longer an independent person in my own right. My soul, or some other very interior part of my being, belonged to, and was actually an integral part of, Abdullah's being. That took a bit of getting used to: but, like it or not, it seems to be an immutable fact of our life.

We were – and are – one. Not the same, not even similar: but two distinct and complementary opposites within a greater whole. Just as day and night, and yolk and white of egg, belong together inseparably as wholes, I now had no existence other than as Salamah – as – part – of – Abdullah. Then I understood, and full well, why a woman traditionally, and symbolically, takes her husband's last name when she marries. Well, we had now been married some 17 years, but owing to my almost incorrigible self-will, we were only now at long last, really man and wife.

Paradoxically, though, I was now free. Having at last been made, by the latihan, into Abdullah's wife and bound inextricably with him, I was, then externally, free. And, in its wake, this vast and profound change in our relationship brought within me a deep and lasting gratitude for all that had happened to us, through the agency of the gentle Spirit in the latihan.

Salamah Pope – From her book "Antidote" pp 76 and 77.

COOMBE STORY

An extract from 'Concerning Subud' – one of the first books about Subud, in which John Bennett recounts something of what happened one night at Coombe Springs in June 1957.



...Muhammad Subuh, with his wife and helpers arrived from Indonesia on 22nd May 1957, and within a week he had accepted an invitation from our Institute to make his headquarters while in England at Coombe Springs. Many members of the Institute were soon admitted to the latihan, and it seemed possible that all the groups in England interested in Gurdjieff's ideas would join forces in Subud.

(However)... In the middle of June a sense of oppression and foreboding seemed to have invaded Coombe Springs. One evening, there was an extraordinary force present in the latihan. Everyone living at Coombe went to bed with the feeling that they had been witness of some gigantic though invisible struggle. At about three o'clock in the morning, nearly all the fifty or so people living at Coombe Springs were awakened by the sound of an explosion that was like a thunderclap in the very grounds, and yet somehow different. Someone compared it next day to the sound she had heard during the war of an aircraft exploding overhead. It transpired that neighbours in the adjoining houses had heard nothing, and yet one woman living ten miles away telephoned the next morning to say that she had heard the explosion at three o'clock and had somehow connected it with Coombe Springs. Everyone noticed next day that the atmosphere had lightened and that the sense of oppression had disappeared.

When Pak Subuh was asked about this, he explained that evil forces had been resisting the coming of Subud to Coombe, but that they had now been destroyed. Such incidents can mean little to those who heard of them at second hand. They are not 'evidence' of anything; but those who were present that evening could not doubt that some kind of battle had been waged and that the 'good' forces had conquered. This is but one of many strange experiences that occurred both to individuals and to groups of people during the months of June and July.

SEPARATION

I fall off the pinnacle and plummet onto a spike below.
I see my body lying there, spread-eagled, broken. And
Yet it lives. How is that possible? A miracle.
Or is it? This body continues to function, to go about
Its daily tasks, when all inside is broken.

It walks, talks, smiles, whilst I sob inside.
I am but half-present, yearning for
The other half of me.
But you are a million miles away.
Separated by distance and circumstance.

I want everything. I want you here, with me,
To live at full throttle in glorious sunshine
Not to creep about in the gloom.
Since you left, the sun has set
and the shadows lengthen inexorably.

How can I talk of you and shadows
In the same breath? I was alive with you,
Joyous and complete. No. I must stop.
If I dwell on all that you mean to me,
How will I ever keep away?

And so will I take back my heart? Can I?
It doesn't feel possible, but I know I will try.
I dare not look at your face, or hear your voice
For it will scatter the miniscule particles of progress.
And I will be naked before you again.

I will build steel walls around my heart
For it cannot take much more. And yet
How can I keep you out? You, of all people?
I will look into your eyes and in seconds
My defences will be reduced to nothing.

© *Stefanie Brown, 5 April 2017*

She Is Viola

She sings sweetly, strings afloat in waters of concern.

She echoes through wind worn oaks
who tremble in anticipation
leaves fluttering a light

through the madness of brooks that babble with crude rocks
rumbling so that advancing forces are not surprised
by the power of the very oaks that conduct the music.

It is fall. The sky threatens darkness and violence.
The oaks do not move, still, in strength and resolve.

To stand with the light, with pregnant resolve.

To stand outside of time. To stand outside the madness. Slippery rocks do not tempt these oaks.

Voila sings. She plays, standing.
Chorus of cloud, the weeping gives the green its depth.

Sweet viola She.

Clark Turner

Chinese Encyclopedia

Somewhere between the wheels of disaster
and the foliage of dreams
Somewhere between the biographies of driftwood
and the mist of buried cities
Somewhere between the fornicator's last confession
and the scumblehunk's first unsteady steps
someone will be thinking of you
someone will be wondering
why you did what you did
and why you didn't do what you didn't do.

And somewhere between the breaking of the wave
and the breaking of the wave
Somewhere between the first experience of purple
and the last squeeze of the toothpaste tube
Somewhere between the unanswered letter
and the forgotten lullaby
someone will be thinking of you
someone will be wondering what's going to happen to you
when the going gets going and is gone
when there's nothing left of summertime
but a handful of broken shells.

And somewhere between the beginning of the circle
and the end of the Christmas sales
Somewhere between the seven gold keys of the twinklebox
and the grandmothers of Kentucky
Somewhere between songlight
and the moon of the fallen angel
Somewhere between here and there and now and then and impulse and regret and the smells of
Old Bailey
someone will be thinking of the promises you made
someone will be wondering what happened to the dinosaurs
someone will discover your reflection
in the undiscovered pool
and the golden bells of Magnolia
will never sound again.

Emmanuel Williams

Five Riddles

1.

My body is long
My head is a clump
of stiff strong stalks
Every morning
and every evening
I wear a soft hat
I enter the cave
and dance across white stones
making them sparkle.

2.

Strange it is
that I have no tail or head
strange it is
that I have no legs
that I pull on my hot yellow robe
dive between two soft pillows
and disappear into the dark red cave.

3.

Five brothers ahead
One behind with a big bald head.
Try as he may
He never catches them

4.

I am where loud beasts rest a while
ticking to themselves
as though remembering their journeys
Some beasts tag their spot
with warm fluids
Dominant beasts mark their territories
Dead beasts are dragged away
By big beasts.
I don't know where they go
But some of them come back to life.

5.

Sometimes we are together
in a close embrace
Sometimes we are parted
and thrust into dark caves
Sometimes we dance
with the members of other tribes
the hot wet dance
the hot dry dance

Emmanuel Williams

Answers on page 27

Three poems by Marius Grose

Dead Tree

Three springs I came to dead tree
silence speaks to me
no buds to burst, emerald greens

Bone branch against slab grey sky
winds blast wood bone dry
brittle boughs break as winds keen

Three springs more it will not be
when I come to see
the dead tree grows in my dreams

Six more springs I will not be
I'll lay with dead tree
asleep under cloth of green.

Marius Grose



Photo by Marius Grose

Peace Rose

Dig a hole,
Bury blood and bone.
Plant a rose,
Protect it with a stone.
And hope the rose will grow
Transform and draw,
The sap of peace,
From the brute calamity of wasting war.

Marius Grose

Definitions. Divorce.

Divorce: noun, late middle English from old French
the parting of things once together
confusion in the house
a cold side to the bed.

Divorce: Latin *divertere*, turn aside
diverted by another's company
broken vows
broken hearts.

Divorce: unravelling
lives spun together pulled apart
each twist in the thread
an ache of memory
a record of entwining.

Divorce: Past imperfect, future tense
torn pages of a colouring book on the kitchen floor.
black changes to white
chameleon paint
the past smudged to grey.

A heart betrayed, stripped of love
waits upon the lawyer's call
pumps blood through its chambers.

Marius Grose

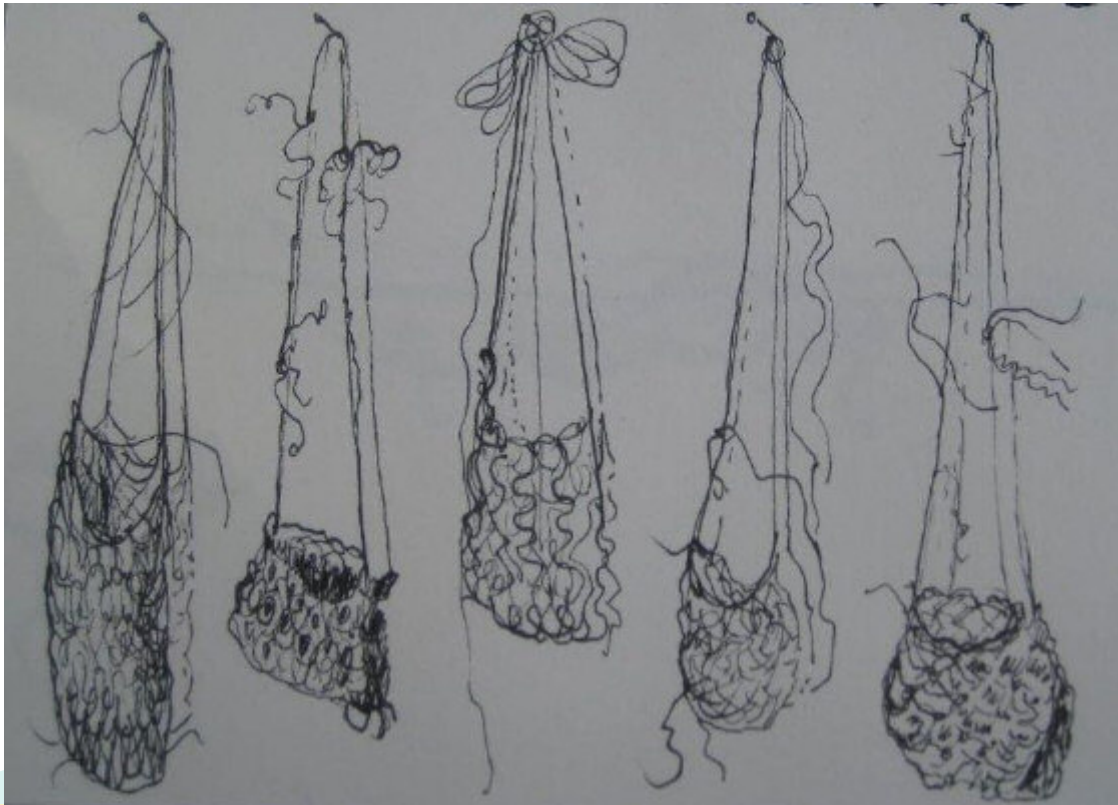
Unnamed Blue

(Sailing near the entrance of Hades)

Un-named blue dives, skims, dances / then
swims itself into the seascape. Escape is not possible.
Turquoise tugs you down to the shallows, movement is tireless
but hands, feet, eyes, ears are not.
On and on it goes, light and colour,
as the danger skims by unfazed.
What is new, shiny, blinding swims nearby, noise spreads evenly like butter,
sand moves noiselessly to fill the cracks.
What's new? Nothing.
Except here is where it all starts from the beginning / and here is where our cells are
filled with old light.
Somewhere to the left I heard the bigger splash but saw nothing.
My view runs this narrow channel and life goes on on either side.
Like truth, a thread you can pull towards you or let it be. I let it be.
Let it be peace and music and subtle prayer.
Ancient terror is a mere whisper in the rising heat, light hovers, wind stands still.
Love's blue stain moves through everything, changing colours and hues to its whim.
Touching the water's kiss to my lips, I breathe out.

Daphne Alexopoulou





Gathering

The scrolling shadows
hang quietly on the wall
and weave strange stories;
cream, tan, brown and gold
as their soft colours connect.

A scrumpled crab apple
a safe nest for a free egg
a secret SIM card
a taste of wild strawberries
saved gleanings from old harvests

Each little basket
a sweet harmony of holes
tied by quick fingers
long fronds plaited together
all unique in their small way

Once they grew so tall
plumed silk hats, green and gold
now all has changed
old yarn tatted like rough lace
gathered into one whole

They are light luggage
for all the heavy hearted;
minding memories
saving their sacred secrets
carrying truth to safety

Mardijah Simpson

*in response to Cheryl Scowen's woven
work: "Gathered" in a version of Tanka*

Answers to Riddles, Page 22

1. Toothbrush
2. Hot Dog
3. Heel and Toes
4. Car Park
5. Socks

SWIM

SUBUD WRITERS
INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

Published quarterly

Editor: Emmanuel Williams

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With thanks to SICA Britain for financial support.



SICA BRITAIN

<http://www.sicabritain.co.uk>