

# Oasis



“Perspectives”



Notes From the Editor  
Volume 2 Issue 2  
May 2019

Our third edition of Oasis had more submissions than ever. Thank you to all who submitted writing and art for this edition! We encourage you to continue submitting, and please encourage others to submit as well. Please realize that if your work is not accepted, it is due to issues of theme and content and not the quality of the submissions. For those unfamiliar with the form, Zines are an informal, community forum for local voices and are designed to be shared.

The editors:  
Colleen Bond and Grushenka Engelbrecht—Castanon are instructors who enjoy working with students and encouraging student creativity.

An announcement will be forthcoming regarding the Fall 2019 issue.

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Front Cover “Dragonfly” by Delia Lopez Holloway

“So Much Happiness”  
by Naomi Shihab Nye

***Everything has a life of its own  
it too could wake up filled with possibilities***

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Louis Armstrong by Jessenia Cruz Laporte



### Gramps Hitches a Ride by Carolyn Dittmer

June 7, 1962: I glance at the kitchen clock as Mom deals another hand of gin rummy. Tick, tick, tick...I wonder if her stomach is as tied in knots as mine is. Tick, tick, tick...

I jump when the timer dings and as she peeks in the oven door, the aroma of Mom's meatloaf wafts into the room. Without looking at me she says, "Let's give it a few more minutes". And I am not sure if she means dinner or something else, as she acknowledges what we both know.

Gramps has been gone all afternoon and he is about to miss dinner. Somehow, I know Mom is thinking what I'm thinking. He wanders, he gets lost, and he trusts everyone.

It is still hot outside despite it being nearly 6:30 p.m. Mom hasn't changed from her nursing uniform and the bright white is a stark contrast to the darkness of my fears.

I think about that day, just two weeks before when our minister brought Gramps home after seeing him tottering along I-40 near the San Mateo exit.

Just then, a rusty blue car rattles up our driveway. Mom and I drop our cards and fly out the screen door. When I see Gramps, stone-faced in the passenger seat, I inhale with relief, only then realizing I was holding my breath. Gramps slowly emerges, as the driver opens his door and collapses out of the vehicle. His shirt is buttoned unevenly and it looks like he must've slept in it. His jeans are stained dark brown in places. Mom and I don't know which one to help first so we split the duties—she goes to help the man while I steady Gramps.

The man stumbles as he asks with slurred speech if he can use "the facilities". We all approach the front door, and I discover the source of Mom's grimace. The man really smells bad. With each word, I catch a whiff of something else and when I go back for Gramps' sweater, I notice several empty Jim Beam bottles on the floorboard of the car.

The man staggers into the house and Mom points the way to the bathroom. Gramps heads off to his bedroom with Mom and I following. At the end of the hall, the bathroom door lock clicks.

"We were so worried about you Dad!" Mom says.

"I only went to the camera shop," he says.

Mom shakes her head realizing that any further discussion will not make a difference. I hug Gramps and tell him how glad I am that he is home. He kisses me on the cheek and busies himself with changing from his walking shoes to his slippers and hangs up his sweater in the closet.

We go back to the living room and wait for what feels like a very long time. Mom walks back and forth, forth and back, until I notice she is making a path in the pile of the carpet. I am mesmerized by the pattern she has made, and I can't take my eyes off her feet until she makes a psst...psst sound bringing my attention back to the moment.

Her face is now so tight that it looks like her skin was washed and stayed in the dryer too long. She points and pantomimes for me to go and listen at the bathroom door.

I inch my way to the door leaning so that my ear is near the jamb. I'm sure I hear snoring! I run to the kitchen where Mom has gone and is flipping through the phone book, anxiously looking for the number for the police.

"I think the man is asleep on the toilet!" I tell her. We laugh, Mom hugs me, and it feels good to know she's not so worried now. She walks back to the bathroom and knocks loudly on the door calling "Mister, are you OK in there?"

It sounds like the lid of the toilet hits the tank when the man says, "Yes Ma'am" and we hear the toilet flush, the water run, and finally the door opens.

The man thanks Mom, and she thanks him. He walks unsteadily from the bathroom to the front door, with Mom following closely. The moment he is out, she locks the screen door, the front door, and slides the chain across the opening.

Gramps has entered the room and looks at her with a confused look on his face. "I haven't eaten dinner, have I?"

"Oh my gosh!" Mom says. "The meatloaf!"

Gramps sits at the kitchen table at his usual spot while I scoop up the deck of cards. I place a bright blue plate in front of Gramps and hand him his fork and knife. I set places for Mom and me, too. Mom opens the oven door and we expect to see a burnt mess, but the meatloaf looks juicy and smells great. Mom glances back at me. I smile, she shrugs, and Gramps yawns.

Jerry Garcia by Mike Parson



**Just A Man, My Dad**

**by Iron Heart Pinkney**

He was just a man like any other

Except that he was my dad

He was like no other man I knew

I remember the smell of him

In the mornings it was

Always leftover alcohol and cigarettes

Not pleasant smells but it was his smell.

When I was young he loved me dearly

He taught me about his construction business

Then the day came and everything changed

Did I mention he only wanted sons and I was a girl

The only difference was that now

I looked like a girl and I was crushed

Now he wanted nothing to do with me and I,

I just wanted him to love me.

The rest of my life I looked for ways to make dad love me

If I was smarter, if I worked harder, if I this and if I that

Nothing mattered now that I was a girl.

I grew up and gave him grandsons; dad loved them

Dad was a hard man and demanded certain things  
No matter how I tried I just never measured up  
Who could measure up to the son a man never had.  
I did well in my job with many promotions  
Many moves around the country always looking back  
Did dad notice where I was in my life now?  
No, dad took no notice of me and I became  
Miserable in my job but I was good at it.  
Then dad became sick, not much at first  
As the illness progressed and the years passed  
He became weaker and tolerated me more  
I now lived half-way across the country but visited  
How I hated the drive to and from visiting him  
It was a long lonely drive but we began to get along  
I would make him coffee and bacon when we were alone  
Both were forbidden by his doctor  
Neither would affect his health; the coffee actually helped  
It was our secret, even though the smell of the bacon  
Wafted through the house and out the open windows  
Carol always knew the minute she stepped out of the car  
She knew he was on his way out and there was no harm  
It was as if she was glad that we were getting along.  
Then came the day I could stand the job no more

I didn't like the work and it didn't change his feelings

I stepped down from my job and moved

To the other end of the country, stopping

To see my dad along the way

Success and money were always important to him

I was tired of living for my job and it was time,

Time to live for me and enjoy life

We had a long talk and dad confessed

"There are things more important than money

And you just might be one of them"

It would sound strange to some but

To me it sounded like "I love you."

He became my friend after that

I had my dad back and he loved me

It was so bittersweet that we lost

So many years but now when time

Was so short we became close.

Now he is gone and I thank God for

The last few years when we came together

Me and my dad.

He was just a man.

**White Sands by Dee Tomlinson**

gypsum dunes rise, a gleaming desert beyond the Valley of Fires  
An illusion of pure-white snow tricks the eye in summer's heat  
So bright it will blind, so vast it can be seen from outer space.  
White sands...holding time: painted sunsets, sweet mesquite.

An ecosystem unique with desert motif of cactus and reptiles  
Sands of time and history that fed Early Man on mammals and mesquite  
The Mogollon passed through leaving pictograms of ancient life  
Travelled from dune to mountain dusting white sand from their feet.

The sands hold secrets; they whisper to the wind and changing landscape  
from antiquity to humans walking the dunes with modern feet.  
Children's laughter fills the air; they sled down snow-like dunes  
While tourists snap photo ops that belie the hot retreat.

White Sands, gypsum dunes breach the Organs and Valley of Fire  
Its vision inspired the hearts of ancient men  
from mountain top to desert basin they followed the summer sun  
Left arrow heads and adorned pots sweet with remnants of mesquite

Unicorn by Daniel Acuna



**Bye to the Winter by Danika Herrera**

My harsh winter, you inspire me to write.

How I hate the way you freeze and destroy,

Invading my day and through the night,

Always dreaming about the day that you deploy

You are more windy, lonely, and depressed.

White frost nips the robins in December

And winter time has us stressed

How do I hate you? Let me count the ways.

I hate your strong fifteen below temperature and annoying static,

Thinking of the flowers blooming fills my days

My hate for you is really dramatic

Now I must say my goodbye with an open heart

Remember my hurtful words when we are apart.

**The Boy and the Bear by Tessa Bond**



## The Sunburst Phoenix by Tina Waldon

Reading Oedipus Rex reminds me of many tragedies I've endured in my life. I will tell you of one such malady where I was Oedipus, the tragic hero and my parents the antagonists like Laius and Jocasta. Herein is a tale of a girl born into a dysfunctional family who suffers abuse growing up. She sees that abuse is not just confined to her family but to neighbors and friends as well. The "bad people" have been abusing kids. Just as Oedipus felt plotted against by Creon and Tiresias, the girl feels plotted against by adults. In the end I learned that duty to oneself is imperative because only by taking care of yourself can you present the best "you" you can be to others.

I grew up in a military family. Moving around so much didn't allow for friendship bonds to last, so I got used to not forming strong ties to people. What made it worse was I didn't have strong ties to family either. We never shared or showed our feelings of love, making me wonder if any even existed. Physical and mental abuse was an everyday occurrence.

My father was present physically but absent emotionally and mentally. I saw him as someone who took what he wanted, when he wanted and how he wanted without regard to anyone else. I saw my mother as someone who wanted to be a healing balm to herself and her children but didn't have the tools or the gumption to know how to deal with the abuse. My father was selfish and unreachable, my mother was weak and naïve. I was a girl who was quiet and reserved, found ways to easily entertain myself, happy being a loner. I was an astute observer but a poor participant. Teachers would often say I did not engage myself well with others.

I yearned for my father's attention, but he was not inclined to consider me worthwhile. On the days he did come home from work, he spent time with me and tinkering around with the cars and gadgets he accumulated over the years. I never realized how that made me vulnerable to attention from other men. I was 8 ½ years old when I met a stranger who would change my life forever. He and two companions showed up at my babysitter's trailer park where I was playing out front. His two companions visited with someone while he stayed out front with me. Here was a man who gave me the attention I was seeking from my father. He thought me worthy enough to spend time with; he engaged me in conversation and made me feel my thoughts and opinions held value; I smiled at him and was thoroughly enjoying my sense of importance. I felt like Oedipus when he solved the mystery of the Sphinx. I thought I had "solved" the mystery of not getting my father's attention--just smile at him! Little did I know this man was "grooming" me for his own pedophilic purposes! The man was a stranger to me

and was only passing through town, so it didn't matter to him if I told someone what occurred between us. I thought what happened was my fault because I smiled at him and he probably took that as a sign of encouragement on my part to continue his "grooming". I was filled with shame and disgrace. I never told a soul about the incident because I didn't want anyone to see me as a dirty, filthy little whore of a girl who lures men with her smile. A few years later I was molested by my father. I knew I didn't ask for that kind of attention from him because I didn't smile at him like I had with the other man. I told my mother later that day what dad did, but she seemed to brush it off as nothing to worry about. Between the ages of 8 ½ to 16 I was raped by a stranger, molested by my father, molested by an elderly neighbor and sexually harassed by my girlfriends' father. I learned that men could do whatever they wanted to with me. I was not worthy to be respected; not worthy to have a voice; not worthy to matter. Oedipus was a child and had no voice in what his parents did to him, he did not have their respect, he did not matter.

My youngest sister, BJ, was my saving grace! I finally told her when I was 35 years old of my experiences. She in turn told my mother who came to me with a story of her own. I learned my mother was molested by a stranger when she was 6 years old. She never told a soul what happened; therefore, since she concealed her own experience, she didn't know how to deal with mine except in the same way. She hid the fact of her molestation from everyone because in her day that subject was taboo. She also told me my father was starving for attention from his dad and never got it. In my dad's family a man didn't show loving or connections because that was considered a weakness.

My sister confronted my dad about him molesting me and had some sway over him calling me to apologize. He asked my forgiveness and I readily gave it. My father didn't show attention to me because he didn't get it from his dad; my mother didn't deal with my molestation because she never dealt with hers. Like Oedipus, I had no control over what went on in my parent's lives that directly impacted mine. Their inability to resolve their own past issues caused them problems in the present dealing with mine.

I believed bringing attention to myself made bad things happen to me, so beginning in my young life I lived as a recluse as much as possible. I had to walk a very fine line between being too secluded and being too visible. Through healing from family, friends and therapy I have learned to value myself. I found my voice, my respectability and my worth. I am a Phoenix rising from the ashes in all my sunburst glory and splendor! I love the reborn me! I survived my tragedies because my sense of self-worth was inherent to my identity as a survivalist.

**To Sleep or Not to Sleep by Gracee Glaven**

To sleep, or not to sleep, that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The dread of a night without rest,  
Or to sleep despite the copious work ahead  
And by sleeping protract it. To rest – to sleep,  
No more; and by a sleep relieve the misery  
Which is felt daily due to improper rest  
That flesh is heir to: 'tis an agony  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To do the homework, to pass;  
To sleep, perchance to dream – ay, there's the rub:  
or in that sleep we lose the chance of scholarly success  
When we have a ginormous work load,  
Must give us rest – there's the respect  
That makes woe of long nights  
or who would bear the whips and scorns of homework,  
Th' professor's unending assignments  
The agony of restless nights, the delight of a snooze  
The complete withdrawal,  
That comes from a hibernation from the real world  
When she herself must take upon  
The terrible burden of assignments without rest.  
To grunt and sweat through a restless night,  
But that the dread of something after high school,  
The undiscovered land of University life, from whose bourn  
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us into stronger individuals  
or the betterment of our society?

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus we lose our much beloved rest.  
In favor of much needed thought,  
And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And fall away in favor of scholasticism,  
as the restlessness awaits.

### To Attend Class or Not to Attend Class by Bowen Perry

To attend class, or not to attend class, that is the question:

Whether 'tis nobler to learn and sit in a cold hard seat

Or to slumber comfortably on in the morning

And by resting my head upon the pillow to become ignorant.

No more; and by to sleep we miss the commotion of the learning

That future is heir to learning: 'Tis the success of my future

To sleep, perchance to dream of a better future -- ay there's the rub:

For in that early morning slumber what dreams may come,

When we attend class and shuffle off the comforter,

Must think of the future,

Education is the key to a prosperous life.

For who would bear the heavy backpack and the large binders,

The long lectures, the endless note taking,

The pangs of the poor grade, the impossible rubric,

The insolence of ignorance, and the difficulties that require us to take what we get,

When he, himself think alone on those thoughts

Such as the random thoughts in the shower,

To grunt and sweat on the way to class

As I lay in the bed I most dread the Compulsory Attendance Law,  
The undiscovered truancy court from who's juveniles never return, puzzles my will  
And makes us rather bear those bells we have than fly to a life of poverty,  
Thus the temptation of slumbering into the morning is shadowed by unfavorable consequences,  
Thus the resolution of laziness seems pleasurable and restful  
I throw back the covers and step into the day.

Hummingbirds by Lylia Ornelas



## Biographies

**Delia Lopez Holloway:** I am a Fine Arts Major at New Mexico State University. Studying Art has been one of the most wonderful involvements in my life. I see how Art can bring beauty, calm, love, joy and then emotions quite the opposite. What an extraordinary thing. With Art all around us and even a part of us, I wonder where we would be without it.

**Jessenia Cruz Laporte:** My major is in Fine Arts. I love art because it is a way to express yourself no matter the language you speak. The "Trumpet Player" is a painting inspired by the artist Mark Goodman.

**Carolyn Dittmer:** I am a retired medical technologist, I have always enjoyed writing. She has written poetry, short stories, and feature articles for the Alamogordo Daily News. Her 10-minute play, "Not for Sissies" was written as a class assignment for Theater 101 and was performed at a Theater New Mexico competition in Ruidoso. Her children's play "The Haunted Garden" was NMSU-A Theater on the Hill's 2017 spring production. She wrote "Gramps Hitches a Ride" while enrolled in "Writing the Personal Essay: Memoir", a Community Education course. She lives in Tularosa with her husband, Ed and her dog, Herriot.

**Mike Parsons:** I'm studying exclusively art. Art lets me express myself in a way that I could never manage with words. This painting gives a perspective of the times we lived in when Jerry Garcia was this age, very colorful but a little confusing.

**Iron Heart Pinkney:** My name is Iron Heart Pinkney; I was born with a different name a long time ago in Nebraska. My maternal grandmother was half Sioux and my Paternal grandmother was raised with her half sister-- a half Choctaw. I learned some of the ways of Native Americans from them; mostly the story telling. I grew up in rural Nebraska on a lake near the Platte River just outside South Bend, which at that time was not even on the map. Through the long winters there was not much to do so I practiced my photography and wrote short stories.

**Dee Tomlinson:** As a writer, I offer you my spirit and share my love for the planet. It is my fervent hope that we will all learn how important it is to take care of it. If they inspire you to take a walk in nature and look at the forest with renewed vision, then these humble scripts are a success. It is a moral imperative today, that we find sustainable, planet friendly methods of existing because we do not own the land but rather, we are stewards that only borrow it from future generations.

**Daniel Acuna:** I'm majoring in electrical engineering. I like art because it takes me away from reality and helps me express my feelings. The painting that I did of the Unicorn was originally just a horse but, I thought it would be better as a unicorn because my niece loves unicorns. So I was thinking about her when I painted that painting.

**Danika Herrera:** I am 21 years old. I have lived in Las Cruces all my life but in May of 2018 my husband and I moved to Ellsworth AFB in South Dakota. My husband has been in the military going on 2 years. I enjoy playing basketball and have played it competitively since 1st grade. I love being active and fishing.

**Tessa Bond:** I'm a fine arts major. I love the amount of expression that can be captured in art; this painting in particular shows the dependency the boy and bear have for each other in a bleak world.

**Tina Waldon:**

**Gracee Gladen:** I am a dual credit student at Alamogordo High School. I am currently working on my undergraduate in biology in hopes to go into either medicine or veterinary medicine.

**Bo Perry:** I am a senior at Alamogordo High School and have been an active dual credit student since my freshman year. I am headed to NMSU-Main in the fall as a Crimson Scholar to study a BA in Government and seek the supplementary major in Law and Society. I hope to continue on to seek a Master of Public Administration, focusing on education policy and reform.

**Lylia Ornelas:** I am currently completing prerequisites for the Diagnostic Sonography Program. I enjoy art because I use it as my creative outlet. I especially enjoy painting because it allows me to try different techniques and textures.

Editor's Note

When my father was 47 years old he was shot at close range with a 44' semi-automatic pistol. The gun smith who shot him, (I suppose I should interject here that it was completely accidental), the EMT's who treated him at the scene, the ER doctors, and doctors who life-flighted him to EL Paso TX from Silver City, NM all thought he would not live. From their perspective he had lost too much blood; the impact was too terrible; the damage too great. But my father did survive, and as such things often do, the event changed his perspective on life for the better.

Thirteen years later when he was diagnosed with aggressive lung cancer and told to "get his affairs in order," he stated that he was grateful he had had thirteen years he wasn't supposed to have had. Perspective sometimes appears dramatically like that, a force like a gun shot into our lives. But other times it moves among the mundane tasks of everyday, asking for our attention. For the thirteen years between gunshot and cancer, how my father perceived the world was a decision. It wasn't easy, and having made the decision once didn't mean he didn't have to keep making it. But the choice was always available, and that was always the true gift.

We all get caught up in the cyclone of events and feel helpless to change, well...anything. And it's true, we can't change much, but we can change how we perceive things, and though that may not seem like a lot, ultimately, it's *everything*: it's the ability to live life with grace; it's the ability to know that no matter the circumstances, our lives carry both humility and dignity in equal measure; it's the certain knowledge that at any given moment, if we choose to look, there in the shadows where we think only darkness resides, there are tiny glimmers of light showing us another way.

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