

2023

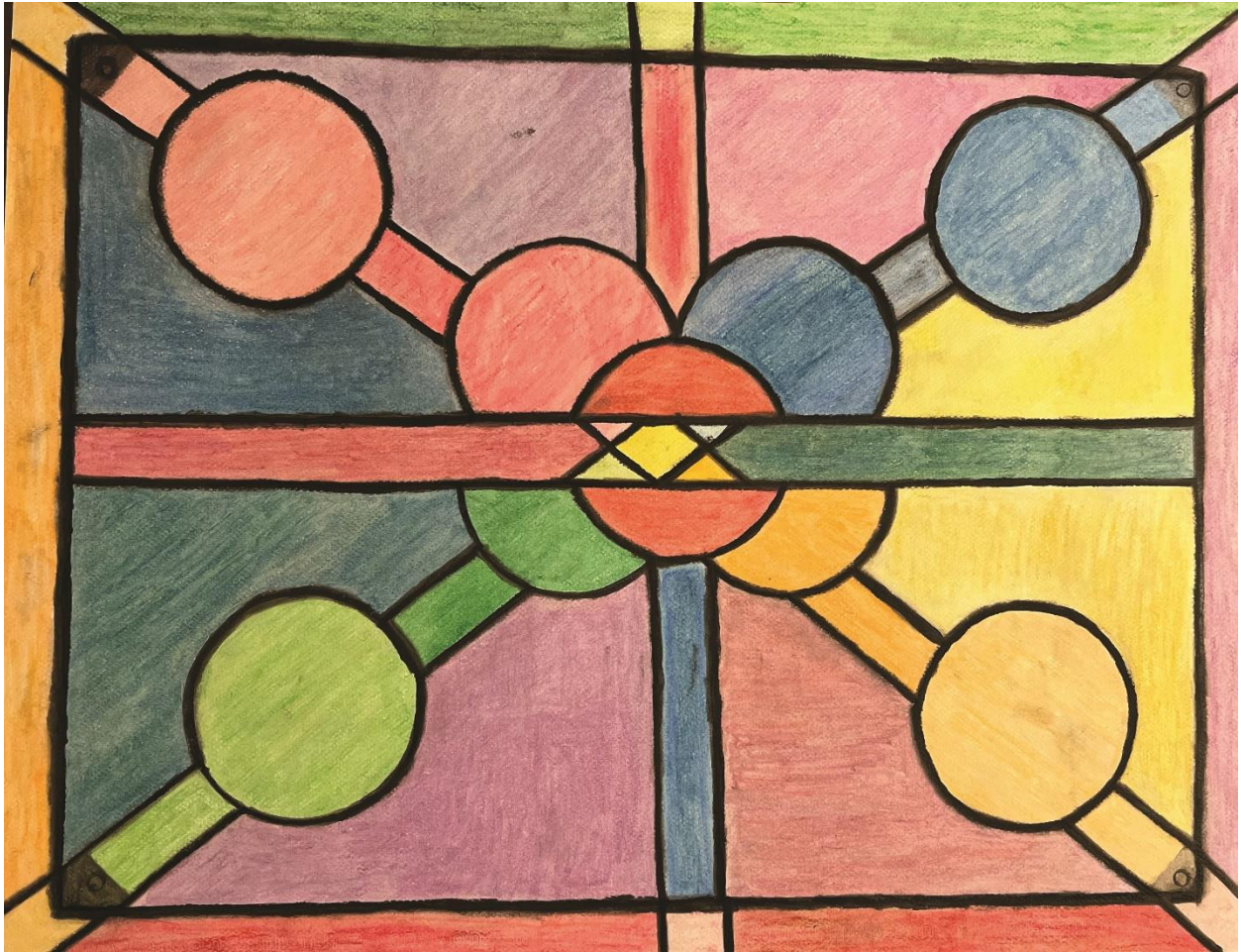
# The Red Hawk Review



Pen & Ink, Corinne Graham

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Oil Pastel, Faith Thomas

## 2023 Red Hawk Review

The 2023 Red Hawk Review is please to announce the winners of our stipends which were generously donate by The Gateway Foundation. Below you'll find a list of everything included in this issue. Winners are denoted in the list. Thank you for reading, submitting, and supporting our mission year after year.

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Oil Pastel – Faith Thomas  
Self-Portriat – Kathrine Noble



Self-Portrait, Kathrine Noble

# Poetry

## **Night**

*Filomena Vulnera*

(Italian & English Translation)

E' notte.

L'oscurità mi avvolge in un abbraccio discreto spiato da uno spicchio di luna che ingioiella le onde e danzando baciano la riva.

I brividi del corpo si fondono con quelli della mente.

Dal buio emergono i volti dei ricordi, mentre nella clessidra della vita, come granelli di sabbia, cadono e si disperdono nei restanti giorni.

L'infinito, dietro l'orizzonte, in cui smarrirsi nella ricerca della luce.

It's night. Darkness envelops me in a discreet embrace spied on by a crescent moon that jewels the waves and dances kissing the shore. The thrills of the body merge with those of the mind. The faces of memories emerge from the darkness, while in the hourglass of life, like grains of sand, they fall and are dispersed in the remaining days. The infinite, behind the horizon, in which to get lost in the search for light.

## **Time**

*Filomena Vulnera*

(Italian & English Translation)

Il Tempo: Maestoso Signore degli uomini e degli Dei:

Noi siamo fatti così: non sappiamo avvertirlo e non possiamo penetrarci nelle sue tristizze e nelle sue felicità.

Noi possiamo solo misurarlo o pesarlo, come una moneta che non verrà mai sotto i nostri occhi.

Time: Majestic Lord of men and Gods: We are made like this: we don't know how to warn him and we cannot penetrate his sadness and happiness. We can only measure or weigh it, like a coin that will never come before our eyes.

## **The Sun Has Set**

*Filomena Vulnera*

(Italian & English Translation)

Il sole è tramontato....

Al di là dei tetti immagino l'orizzonte negato dal cemento.

Un altro giorno archivia speranze e, intatte, le affida all'abbraccio della notte perché le senten vivere nei sogni in cui la mente valica i sentenze della realtà per portarci in quell'angolo di mondo tutto nostro, in cui prende corpo e tangibilità ogni desiderio...

L'alba chiuderà il libro dei sogni e il cuore ricomincerà a coltivare la sentense6, più sentense e dolorosa dell'ieri, scrivendo, con gocce di rugiada, una nuova pagina di vita.

The sun has set.... Beyond the roofs I imagine the horizon denied by the concrete. Another day archives hopes and, intact, entrusts them to the embrace of the night so that they can live in dreams in which the mind crosses the boundaries of reality to take us to that corner of our world, where every desire takes shape and tangibility ... Dawn will close the book of dreams and the heart will begin to cultivate hope again, more intense and painful than yesterday, writing a new page of life with drops of dew.

## **My Autumn**

*Filomena Vulnera*

(Italian & English Translation)

Al di là del vetro sibila il vento che scende nella gola fra le colline corre fra gli alberi ,alzando un carosello fatto di foglie, staccate dai rami che si contorcono in una silenziosa preghiera grondante lacrime di pioggia.

Come quelle foglie, vorrei cavalcare il vento.

Abbandonarmi in questo turbinio, annullarmi nell'infinito per far parte di esso.

Beyond the glass the wind hisses as it descends into the gorge between the hills and runs through the trees, raising a carousel made of leaves, detached from the branches that writhe in a silent prayer dripping with tears of rain. Like those leaves, I would like to ride the wind. Abandon myself in this whirlwind, annul myself in infinity to be part of it.

## **The Meaning of Love**

*Irene De La Rosa Causey*

Love is beautiful like sunsets/sunrises when captured at the right time  
Like when two souls sip on coffee together at a bistro set by the Ocean  
Like Mermaids cry in the sea to be heard/wanted  
Like when two lovers urn for each other's touch  
Like running with passion as tears, roll-down your checks  
Like body, language used like silent love  
Love is like a burning flame that cannot be put out by rain

The Meaning of Peace...

By- Irene De La Rosa Causey

Gazing at the clouds  
Waves crashing on the rocks  
Reading a book on the beach  
Dancing in the rain  
Gems that shine like the sun  
Write a poem or two  
A dove that flies over you

## **A Re-Do**

*Irene De La Rosa Causey*

It is self-talk in the morning  
Connecting with the Creator  
Motivational music for our well-being  
Energy that radiates like a rainbow  
Flowers blooming in a garden  
A dip in the pool to be refreshed  
Smiling with yourself on accepting the unknown

## **Dreams**

*Irene De La Rosa Causey*

Once Upon a Time, I was that little girl that dreamed big, but she forgot about herself along the way, because she helped so many that crossed her path. Now that little girl has grown-up, she has endured some good/bad, which has pushed her even further to make her dreams come true, and nobody will rob her happiness from her to full-fill her Dreams at all cost.



Mother, Autumn Edgington



# Prose

**Gray Walls**  
*Mariah Hernandez*

A year of my life was taken away from me when I was 16 years old. Patterns of abuse were repeated every day for 313 days. Nature was something I always connected well with since I was young, it was all so simple and less complicated than life indoors. Fights, arguments, gaslighting...sadly that's how some humans communicate. Trees, bushes, and plants, on the other hand, communicate by swaying in the wind when it's breezy, joyfully dancing when it's raining, and sunbathing in the sun when it's bright outside. It's all very simple, and it brings me to wonder why can't humans communicate like trees? Or the flowers in the grass, or even the sun slowly sinking at dusk? I wanted to show how nature helped me make a small but difficult decision. Just leave, and be free was what I said to myself. It's hard to leave the people you care about who don't really care about you. It was a small step that I took a few years ago, and it all started when I picked up my green winter coat. It was the day I knew I wanted to live freely without any more abuse. It was the day I took control to save my freedom.

My room was grey. The walls, the dust, the curtains, my skin, it was all gray. No light was lit, the room was dim. I remember everything was cold. No soul lived in it. My spirit was drowned out and silenced. Control had taken over me, but no, not my control, *their* control. The room used to dance, lights were lit, and my art was hung up all over my walls. I had taken them down, because I was too embarrassed and ashamed of what they'd think of it. I turned my head; my bed wasn't made. I used to make it every day because I thought, *a clean room means a clear mind*. Now, my clothes were piled in baskets, for I hadn't folded them in weeks. Papers, papers, paper were everywhere, laying on my floor; unfinished art pieces after another. My paint brushes were soaking in 3-week-old water, still sitting in the same spot when the water was fresh. *I can't just sit and live like this*. Step one: turn on the light. *Just get up*. I hoisted myself up off the floor as the stale, old chips from last night buried themselves in my rug. I turn on the switch, and my eyes grew fuzzy from the bright, yellow light. Looking at my room, it felt like I was seeing my brain on display. Chaotic, unfocused, and lost. Where was the freedom? The freedom I used to have when I would dance, laugh, and create? I was shut down, and I knew I had to do something about it. Thought after thought, I walked around recklessly in circles, stepping over my stale chips. Every crunch crinkled under my feet, but I didn't care. *Where is my coat?* I gently pushed my dusty curtains to see that the world outside looked just like my room. The rain was tapping my window, and the trees were slow dancing side to side. *Should I go outside? It looks like it's freezing outside, and it's rainy too*. I huffed, and picked up my washed out, green winter coat. I thought about zipping it up, but I left it open. My coat being zipped up made me feel even more controlled and suffocated. I turned off my light, and headed towards the front door.

The air was chilly, so I decided to zip up my coat. My backyard had a lot of land. Our shed sat at the edge of the grass, leaving a ton of room to run almost anywhere. My shoes soaked into the grass, but I didn't mind. I ran towards the trees that sat at the edge of our yard. The long rows of bushes split the neighbor's backyard from ours. I got close to the edge, the border, and started connecting with the leaves. They were icy, wet, and could easily be torn. I was careful holding the leaves, and I admired the bright contrasting green. Its color was natural, no dye or anything artificial. It wasn't changed, controlled, or "fixed" to become better. I wished I was the leaf, and started to wonder why I couldn't be natural. Why did I have to fix myself? The rain started to pick up as my mind started to expand. Being in nature was dangerous but exciting for me, and everything was thrilling, new, and life changing. It also is grounding, and causes my

mind to open. *Freedom. I want freedom and no more control.* I looked far ahead and saw a bike. It was either my sister's or my mom's

s, and I just booked it. I ran up the small hill in my backyard and hopped on the bike. The rain was falling harder, and my hair was drenched. I didn't mind, all I was thinking was just *ride*. My shoe slipped off the slippery pedal, the bike seat was wet, and the handles were frozen. Without a care, I glided down my driveway and started peddling. I had no destination, just a path. There were so many paths I could take and I had the freedom to choose any. I didn't need someone to tell me which path to take, it was my decision. My *own* decision. I turned sharply on the highway, and peddled faster. The cars rushed past me, and I glided towards the edge of the road every time I saw headlights in the fog. I peddled faster and faster, and I quickly unzipped my coat. The chilled air spiked through my jacket, leaving goosebumps to run up my arms. Freedom felt *amazing*. I began to think what I was going to do when I got back home. Was I to sit on my dirty floor again? Would I vacuum up the chips? Would I make my bed? Or would I sit in my grey room, all alone, thinking about what I need to do to change myself in order to be loved and accepted? I shook away the thoughts, and the rain cleansed my face. My eyes were open, and I knew what I had to do. I didn't want to be controlled by them anymore. I didn't want them to tell me what I need to do to change. They always wanted me to change, and I tried. I really did try, but it wasn't the right path for me. The right pathway for me was turning right on that highway and gliding alone on the slippery roads.

Peddling faster and faster, I began to grow tired. I was freezing and my clothes were soaked. I turned the bike around, and started to peddle back home. The trees were slowly swaying in the spring showers, and the grass sat still and quiet, splattered with dewdrops. Even though there was a storm approaching, the plants kept silent while they patiently waited. I rode my bike through the sidewalk to avoid any oncoming traffic. I thought about what I was going to do. The first step I was going to take when I got home. All I could think about was a warm shower, and sleeping peacefully in my bed. I smiled at the thought, and took a glance at the sky. Clouds hovered over, protecting the world like a blanket. Feeling safe inside your own bed, knowing a new day would come, and everything will be alright if you take it one step at a time. I took the first step, and that was coming to terms of what I wanted in my life. It wasn't disrespect, pain, or humiliation, it was freedom, happiness, and self-love that I wanted. I heaved the bike up my driveway and set it softly on the side of the house.

I opened the front door to a warm, cozy kitchen, and headed my way towards my room. Flickering on the light, I looked around and started to pick up my laundry that was sprawled all over my floor. One by one, I put it in my basket. I looked at my wall, and noticed how gray and empty it was. I missed my art, and the creativity spark I used to have. I wanted to paint again, and do something for myself and not for others. I stopped picking up my laundry and walked over to my desk. There it was, the folder I kept all my art in. I opened it up and started skimming through the papers, the tape still stuck behind them. I carefully separated the drawings, and tried not to let the tape rip any of them up. I noticed it was still sticky, and I looked around my room for an empty space. There were a lot of empty spaces. I chose the wall on the left side from my door and stuck my drawing of Beetlejuice on the wall. Standing back, I admired what I created. It felt great to think that that was something I could do. It had been so long since I picked up a pencil, that I had forgotten that I could draw. It was an expression of freedom, where your mind could choose whatever you want to do and let your hands do the work. I stepped back and heard a crunch as my heel stepped over a chip. I sighed, and started to pick up the old, stale chips. *I'm going to need to vacuum.*

Nature was what brought me where I am today. I am free from the people who controlled me, and I'm doing well on my own with healthier people in my life. I will always continue to admire nature, and take a step back to simply just immerse myself in it. It helps clear your head from all the disorganized thoughts in your brain. Nature was what brought me to restate my morals and values that I lost for a moment. It helped me remember that I value freedom, and that is what I want most in my life.



Reggie-Cat, Anne Gibson



## **The Nightmare of May 1998**

*Victoria Vick*

For most, their first memories are fond recollections of early childhood, ones they wish to remember. A majority reminisce about their first-time riding a bike or embarking on countless adventures with a childhood friend. For me, it was something of a nightmare that to this day I still can't shake my life was forever changed by May 1998.

I spent my early years in Mechanicsville, New York. It was a sleepy small town, one where everyone knew everyone. And everything about everyone because there couldn't have been more than five thousand people in my one strip town. My mother, Paul (my mother's fling that year), his son Johnathan and I all lived on the top floor of a two-story flat. Our apartment was a cozy two-bedroom. Jonathan had his own room "fashionably" decorated from top to bottom with NASCAR paraphernalia. His room was what one would imagine for a seven-year-old boy hyper-fixated on cars, a treacherous minefield of hot wheels and plastic car ramps. His bed was enwrapped in his favorite Dale Earnhardt Sr comforter and the windows were the same. I shared a room with my mom and Paul. My crib was near-at-hand to their dark wooded bed. Both rooms lead into our family room. The white walls of the living room were lined with dark blue sofas and a deep entertainment center big enough for the Ray Tube. The living room was where we spent most of our time as a family, clear by the drawers and shelves of the entertainment center bursting at the seams with games like Candyland and every Disney or Nickelodeon movie available at the time. The cramped kitchen was to the left of the TV room and our pocket-sized bathroom was to the right. The bathroom is what I could only refer to as a fortress in the aftermath of May 1998.

The date was May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1998, the moment to forever become deeply engrained in me and my small town. The day began like every other spring day, but the following would never be the same. The morning sky was delicately painted with pastel hues of yellow, orange, and red. Birds and insects filled my ears with all different calls and songs forming a unique melody so sharp it cut the crisp air like butter. My mother woke Johnathan first and quickly readied him for the slew of Sunday chores. I was next. My cries were like a horned break in the melody lazily entering through an open window. I was only a little over two, but the unfolding of that day holds as steadfast in me as a ship in battle. She hastily wrapped me in her arms as so to hush the deafening sound of my sniveling. She likewise hastily prepared me for the working day we had ahead of us.

By the time she had us clean, dressed, and fed the laundry mat was open. She scooped me up and with Jonathan, at her heels, we headed out to her Ford Escort. Laundry was our first task of the day. As we were loaded up into the car, one couldn't help but notice the beautiful opera of morning sounds abruptly break off. The silence was an eerie omen of what was to unfold. Nonetheless, my mother continued to stuff the two of us into the navy blue four-door. Virtually nothing could deter my mother from her mission. Thankfully living in such a cramped town, our destination was only a few blocks away. In the short drive, it was almost as if the world was screaming for us to turn around. The sky began to give way to an unnatural nuclear green the town had never seen the likes of before. Before I knew it, we were in the parking lot of the laundry mat. The patrons of the laundry mat must have seen the change in the sky. The whole town had a come-to-Jesus' moment and realized the danger surrounding them. Everyone

frantically gathered their laundry, wet or dry, running out of the store and peeling off in their car to seek refuge at home. Even my mother took notice, and we headed home but, I'm not sure what good that did.

We quickly pulled into a parking space right in front of the stairs leading up to our front door. Despite being slightly defeated, my mom quickly carried us up the stairs. We arrived to see Paul and his friend Craig completing odds and ends around the house. Everyone said their hellos, then Jonathan and I were schlepped into his of to play. Not long after we began to play the storm began. The sky, an even more unearthly shade of green, began spewing rain. The wind followed. I heard the ear-splitting wind picking up the rain and ramming it into the side of the home. As the wind became stronger the wreckage became larger. Sticks soon became limbs and, rubble turned to large debris like deck chairs and grills. All of it is tossed around like that of a child tossing toys in a tantrum.

Similar chaos abrupted inside as my parents realized the severity of the life-or-death situation that was brewing outside. The yelling of my parents was in vain against the debris playing percussion with the side of our home. The next thing I know my mother was dragging Jonathan and me into the living room thinking we would be safer there. While she was setting us up with the armful of toys the terror on her face could be read like an open book. The storm was beginning to climax as it released bolts of lightning overruling the darkness of the sky. Thunder berated our ears right after each bolt like the storm was directly overhead. I don't know what was louder, the debris being whipped at the side of the house or the crackle after crackle of thunder. All I know is that you could no longer hear a person next to you even if sitting shoulder to shoulder. Paul had taken notice and turned up the volume on the television I hadn't realized was on due to all the noise. The TV news station was screaming for all of us in Mechanicsville to immediately take shelter. The storm had reached its apex, discharging a tornado on the unsuspecting sleepy town. The reporter barely got out the word tornado before my mother was screaming for all of us to get in the tub. She would be the only one to make it. As the roof began to peel like a tin can, Paul and Craig became cognizant that there wasn't time. The tornado was here now. Me being the smallest Jonathan was thrown on top of me. Then Paul and Craig were to either side, creating a human shield of sorts. Just as we got into position, the tornado ripped off the roof and planted it on the ground outside. Exposed to the elements we were rained on by all sorts of debris. The last bits of the roof hanging on the ceiling were being rained down on us with each gust of wind. It sounded like explosions were going off outside as everything collided and whirled around with the full force of the storm directly overhead. With each breath in I smelled the faint scent of gas as the stove was being pulled from the wall. As quickly as the tornado started it moved on leaving a path of destruction in its wake.

My mother emerged first. It was a chore for her to leave the bathroom however, she ripped through the mounds of debris in mama bear fashion to check on Johnathan and me. She freed us from ceiling tiles and two-by-fours that were once our ceiling. Paul and Craig stood up first, their injuries clear they took the brunt of the F3. Jonathan mostly unscathed, other than a broken arm was scooped up by Paul to soothe his light sobbing. I, of course, was belting at the top of my lungs although almost completely unscathed. My mother picked me up to console me as we all surveyed the damage. The living room where we were was unrecognizable. The ceiling was nonexistent, and glass was shattered all over the waterlogged brown carpet. There was no longer a wall behind our entertainment center. Light flooded in to show the TV was now screen side down on the floor with movies and game pieces thrown inside and out. As we made our way towards the front door, we passed Jonathan's room. His door was held up by a small piece of

roof that was driven through the door pinning it to the wall. Jonathan's comforter was riddled with various debris and dust from the insulation above. His cars were deeply embedded into the seventies-era panel that was hanging to the remaining walls by a thread. Paul and Craig used their shoulders to free us from the wreckage of our unfamiliar home.

The light was almost blinding in contrast to the earlier sky. The street we had taken that morning was camouflaged with whole trees and their limbs and cars propelled about in whatever way. Live wires and cables intertwined through the twisted and mangled scene. As everyone exited the safety of their homes the devastation of what they just lived through became indisputably apparent. The mutilated homes were mere shells of what they once were. It was a realization to everyone that life would never quite be the same. This hostile storm was a warning of the fragility of life. One that I strongly heeded. Changing my life forever, that day was my first memory and worst nightmare. One I hope I never have to relive, but will always remember.



Lizard, Alyssa Bartos



Dog, Abigayle Sura

### **A Note from The Editors**

Thank you for reading this year's Red Hawk Review. We're looking forward to next year's submissions. We're open June 1 to December 31<sup>st</sup> and this year' we're adding a new "Microfiction" category which includes short stories of 150 words or less.

Thanks to The Gateway Foundation for their support.