

Abrac-Zin6!

SUMMER 2015

FREEDOM

COVER ART BY SAM IRELAND

ISSUE NO. 8

In Travel:
Shannon Dillon
AUSTRALIA
TO ST. JOHN

#LOVEWINS

USA CELEBRATES
SCOTUS RULING:
Same Sex Marriage-
NOW LEGAL NATIONWIDE!

**THE FLAT STANLEY
PROJECT**
A PAPER FIGURINE
GLOBAL MOVEMENT!
Create Your Own
Flat Stanley INSIDE!

FREE RUNNING
with NYC
PARKOUR ARTIST
KEITH HORAN

**Happy
Homecomings**
Soldier/Family Reunion
Photography
by Kimberly Porter

IN FASHION:
DARIUS CONWAY
Featuring
Avinash Patel
Photography

**UNIQUE
BODY PAINTING!**
BY CHARLY MAGAZINE

THE ART & MUSIC
OF RAE CAULEY
**EXCLUSIVE SONG
DOWNLOAD INSIDE!**
"LIVE FREE"

PLUS:
Deviant Poetry
Recipes, Stories,
Artwork,
Film Reviews
and More!



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CREDITS

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(Graphic Designer & Columnist)

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By Šárka Lacinová
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"THE NY CRUNCH" BY SAM IRELAND (UK)
SEE PORTFOLIO HERE
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**LISTEN TO OUR FREEDOM
PLAYLIST ON SPOTIFY!**



Comments? Questions? Email Us! info@abrazine.com

"Abra-zine!"'s mission is to showcase and promote the amazing artistic talent and inspiration from all over the globe! We find all of our contributors through word of mouth, personal connections, or through surfing Google, Facebook, or my personal favorite, Deviant Art! At anytime throughout the issue, when you see the interactive buttons, please click on them to take you to a contributor's external websites. Below are just a few of the common ones you will see!



Editor's Note



HELLO WORLD! ...

Do you remember when you were born? (Well maybe not...) but besides the point! We all came into this world as this itty bitty being, rocking our proverbial "birthday suit", without a care or burden in the world. We came into this world with no obligation, and the only worry we had to cry about was the gust of cold air that had surprised us as we exited our loving mother's womb and our families lovingly welcomed us into their lives. We were living beings, and we were able to just BE.

As young children we used our imaginations and created our own characters or worlds in our own minds. We created magnificent masterpieces with our Crayola beginner's palette paint sets and some of us may have even drawn on a wall (or 10). We danced naked and sang at the top of our lungs, we kicked, we screamed, and we might have even picked up on a few cuss words along the way (sorry Mom!). We felt free to express ourselves and just be who we wanted to be, in that very moment as we felt inspired. (And children don't need much to get them inspired!)

As we grow a little older, we go to school. We interact with teachers and disciplinarians who put restrictions on when and what we can say, who we can talk to, when we can go to the bathroom. We interact with peers who make the judgement call about what your worth is in regards to the rest of the school population. We become increasingly more aware of the world around us and the freedoms we have lost since our innocent days of playing "make believe" on the playground. Judgement creeps in and we stop drawing, painting, singing, dancing, speaking up, because we are so jaded by this certain standard that society has set up for us, that we forget how it once felt to be that uninhibited child.

That is why I wanted to make this issue. This issue is for anyone who ever thought they weren't good enough, or that they or the things they created have been judged. Issues like this are what make my position as editor so special, because I literally get to give EVERYONE a platform and a VOICE to be FREE to speak their minds, to share what they've created, and to tell us their stories regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual preference, etc., no matter where in the world you are from. Freedom is that feeling that we can do anything in the world, living by our own means, and not having any ties that bind you to a lifestyle that makes you feel constricted.

In this issue, we creatively touch on all aspects of FREEDOM. We break free from relationships that no longer serve us in a positive manner, we quit our jobs to start our own businesses or move to a completely different part of the world to find our own path in life. Some of our contributors found Freedom through usage of their own bodies as their canvas, creatively painting them in bright colors and free flowing patterns, or adorning themselves in flags to honor their own Freedom through their sense of patriotism and pride. Some just like to run and scale buildings to feel FREE (yup, we covered that too!) In this issue, our contributors scrap society's warped standards, and they are singing, dancing, painting, and speaking their minds for the world to hear!

Also we do not forget to pay tribute to those who have fought and died for the freedom of our countries. Our soldiers remind us every day that FREEDOM is worth fighting for, and for some it is even worth dying for. We are all entitled to living the lives we see fit for ourselves. Our soldiers also remind us that life is short, so instead of hiding in the shadows of self doubt due to society's standards, allow yourself to BREAK FREE from your chains, rise up and FLY like the beautiful phoenix that you are! Only then, can you really begin to LIVE! Let Freedom Reign!

God Bless All Nations! Enjoy this issue!

Justina
2020

4th of July 1997 :

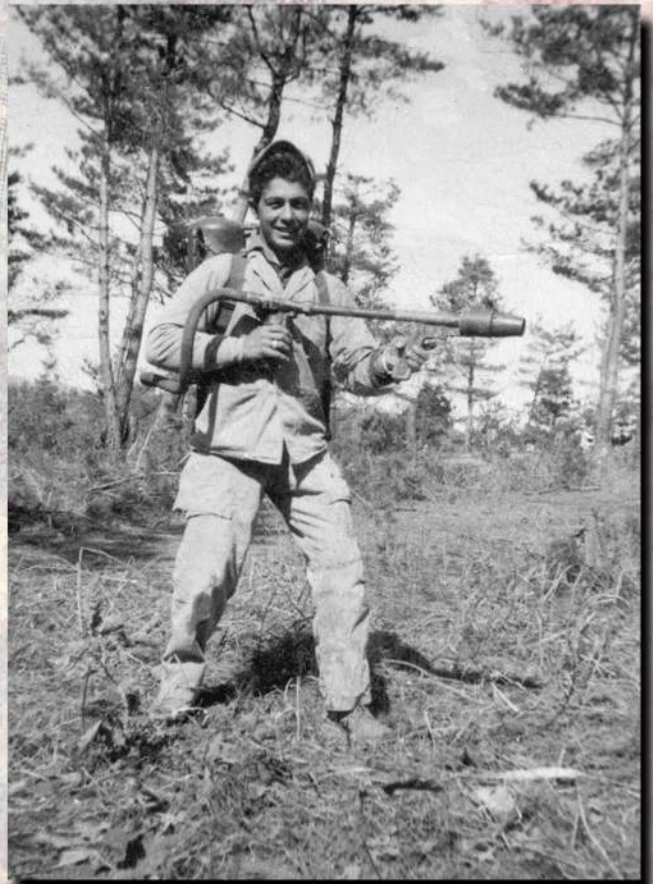
A Day of Remembrance A Memoir By Justina Carubia

I'll never forget the 4th of July of 1997. It was a hot summer day, and my parents had brought my brother and I to their friend's house for a picnic to celebrate the patriotic holiday. The Conways were a group of 3 sisters that my parents had grown up with (Laura, Dawn, & Renee), and they used to babysit me and my brother when we were really little from time to time. We absolutely LOVED being around them, because they had always encouraged our talents of singing, dancing, theater, and art. Their mother was equally awesome, such a sweet and welcoming lady who's laugh I will never forget. She has unfortunately passed on since, many years ago. Anyway, on this day, I was about 13, and my brother about 11 years of age. We had spent the day swimming in their pool, playing with the other kids at their picnic, and jumping on their neighbor's trampoline in the next yard that was only separated by a row of shrubs. We feasted on an array of BBQed foods, refreshing watermelon and other summery fruits, as well as quenching lemonade. We caught fireflies as the sun began to set, and as it got darker out, my brother and I decided to put on one of our many theatrical performances for the company. Mrs. Conway edged us on with her clapping and cackling smoker's laugh. We were having so much fun, that we didn't even mind that our parents weren't even there all day. Why wouldn't they be at such a magical gathering of the sorts?

My grandfather on my mom's side had been dying of Cancer for the past 6 months or so. Everyday for those 6 months, we went to my grandmother's house in Elizabeth, NJ so my parents could do whatever they could to help her take care of him. We brought him pots of soup, watched tv with him (his favorites were Laurel and Hardy or Abbott and Costello) and just kept him company as he lay in his hospital bed in their living room. This was the first person this close to my brother and I to ever become this ill. It was such a helpless feeling, and looking back, I can understand why our parents had decided to leave us in such a fun environment for this very day. It was nearing the end, and they didn't want us to have to witness things getting worse. When you're that young, you know what death is, but you don't quite understand the concept of it. You think that you, and everyone around you that you love, will be around forever. The jolly guy with the big beer belly, who would serenade you with Frank Sinatra's entire catalogue on Karaoke night, and charm you with his best Donald Duck impression, the guy with the loud boisterous voice who was the life of the party, it was hard to imagine my grandfather who was once so full of life, just wither away and just not be there one day.

Around 9:00 or so, they had finally come to pick us up and caught the end of one of the many dance numbers we had performed that night. They thanked the Conways graciously for watching after us while they tended to my grandfather. We left the party and we had gone to my other grandparents house (my dad's side), on the other side of Elizabeth. The fireworks had just started to light up the night sky as we arrived. We were still on a sugar high and raving about what fun we had at The Conways. My parents put the car in park, and turned around to look at my brother and I, with tears in their eyes. "Pop Pop went to heaven today", my mother said. I can't even describe the shock that came over us. This was so completely expected, but the only question we could ask was WHY?

Looking back, I know that my grandfather couldn't have picked a better day to go in peace. He fought as a marine in the Korean War in the 1950s where America had fought on South Korea's behalf. He had watched so much destruction around him, and he even received a purple heart which is the military decoration for those wounded in action. He was a proud soldier of our country and it was so like him to want to leave this world in the most patriotic display of beautiful fireworks cracking through the sky like loose cannons. My brother and I had cried for what seemed like forever that night, and we sat on the front steps of my grandmother's house on that hot summer night, knowing that each firework was a message directly from him. He wanted us to know that he was going to be ok. And in that moment, we knew that he was.



This Issue is Dedicated in Loving Memory of Salvatore La Spata.



Art:
"Lady Liberty"
By Holly Bradly
(Chicago, IL)

"The only way to deal with an unfree world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion."

-Albert Camus



Cover Artist Sam Ireland

Sam Ireland is a United Kingdom based artist who spends most of his time these days working for a theatre company designing their artwork for various shows. He also loves hanging out with his dog! You can find him on his Instagram and Deviant Art pages at the icons below!

The NY CRUNCH

AZ: Hi Sam! Please tell us what inspired this piece, and how'd you create it?

SI: The piece was originally created around the time when the economy was going downhill. I used mixed media to create a sense of chaos in the piece: acrylic, watercolours, ink, chalk, glass and tissue paper. "

AZ: What makes you feel free?

SI: I'd probably have to say just going for a walk with my dog, Duncan.



www.exist-theatre.co.uk



Art By
Jarrod
Bartholomew
South
Yorkshire,
UK



MAIDENTRIP

FILM REVIEW

Editor's Choice



Imagine this. You are only 14 years old and you just set sail on a journey around the world, on a boat.... ALONE. Sounds like a scary and impossible feat, doesn't it? Well it is actually very quite possible, because this is the true life story of young Dutch Captain Laura Dekker. In 2013, Laura was the subject of a documentary, MAIDENTRIP, directed by Jillian Schlesinger, which chronicled the skipper's 2 year adventure as she aimed to become the youngest person to ever circumnavigate the globe alone by boat. She traveled in her boat named "Guppy" ,from Gibralt'r to the Canary Islands and across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, passing the Panama Canal, crossing the Equator, and stopping at many beautiful islands such as Bora Bora, Galapagos, Moorea, Tonga, Fiji, and Vanuatu. Her journey continued through Australia and South Africa before she completed her 123 day full circumnavigation of the world, with her arrival at Sint Maarten.



You might be thinking that since this story is the subject of a film, that the girl had some sort of boat following her, a support team, if you will, but she had no such thing. She did not have anyone waiting on standby, nor did she have a camera crew, as she shot all of the footage you see of her journey in the film, herself. One highlight of her footage consists of her getting emotional about the beauty of a dolphin sighting in which they were swimming along side her boat. She also docks in many beautiful exotic locations which are excellent to see through the eyes of someone experiencing other foreign cultures for the first time, at such a young age.

Along with any challenge, especially one as epic as this, the adventure did not come without its set of obstacles. Along her journey, Laura vlogs and gives regular updates about the sailing conditions; sometimes there is no wind to propel her forward, or the boat is too rocky for her to prepare meals for herself. She also has a brief segment in the Indian Ocean by Africa where she had to reroute for fear of being overtaken by pirates. (Could you even imagine the thought of possibly taking on real pirates alone, as a 14 year old? That is FRIGHTENING!) Holidays come and go as she also battles much loneliness, and calls to check in with her family every now and then. The biggest challenge of the whole adventure was a 10 month court battle prior to her embarkment, to try to stop Laura from attempting her dream, deeming her too young of doing such a crazy thing without any adult supervision. Her parents were being accused of negligence by the court and the public, and many accused the young girl of being crazy, spoiled, and arrogant. Critics voiced their opinions that she needed to be locked away in a house for insane children. Some haters even wished that her boat would sink. Why would anyone be so cruel? Because when we find the courage deep down inside of us to dream and even DO the impossible, it awakens the jealousy of people who are too scared to chase dreams of their own. They often try to tear down the dreams of the bold and brave, but their opinions don't and shouldn't matter. Laura didn't listen to any of it. She followed her heart and she didn't let any of the negative feedback stop her. For that alone, she remains an inspiration to anyone out there who has a dream to find their own personal FREEDOM.

If a 14 year old could be so brave, why can't we, as adults? I highly recommend this film to anyone who needs a hefty dose of inspiration. It's a highly inspiring film which showcases the reality of the highs and lows of any normal person following their dreams of finding their freedom. Things aren't always perfect, sometimes the ride is a bit turbulent, or even stormy, but Laura proves that if you push through all of that, you can make it to the other side with a story to tell and lessons to teach for generations to come. I give this film a 5 out of 5 stars! If you have Netflix, go watch it now!

STRAWBERRY SOVEREIGNTY CAKE BY DARIUS CONWAY



Darius Conway resides in Keyport, NJ where he enjoys cooking and trying new recipes. He is also working on creating a new fashion line! See more of his recipes on his Instagram account @Chefchild!



Replacing some ingredients in the most traditional semi-homemade recipes can change the whole outcome and what you are putting into your body. Replacing key ingredients with healthier ones can make even the not-so-healthiest of dishes amazing and fulfilling. I learned to cook semi-homemade growing up, watching Sandra Lee's Semi HomeMade Show. This cake is a dedication to her (and anyone else battling the disease) as she fights her ongoing battle with breast cancer. This recipe is also a great way to be a bit healthier and on time to your 4th of July Picnic! This cake is best enjoyed with glass of Almond Milk or Scoop of Bryer's All Natural Ice Cream. Being semi-healthy on big holidays such as FOURTH OF JULY will make sure you are fulfilled, but not regretting your decisions with the food you are eating. This is a beautiful and tasty cake anyone can make.

INGREDIENTS

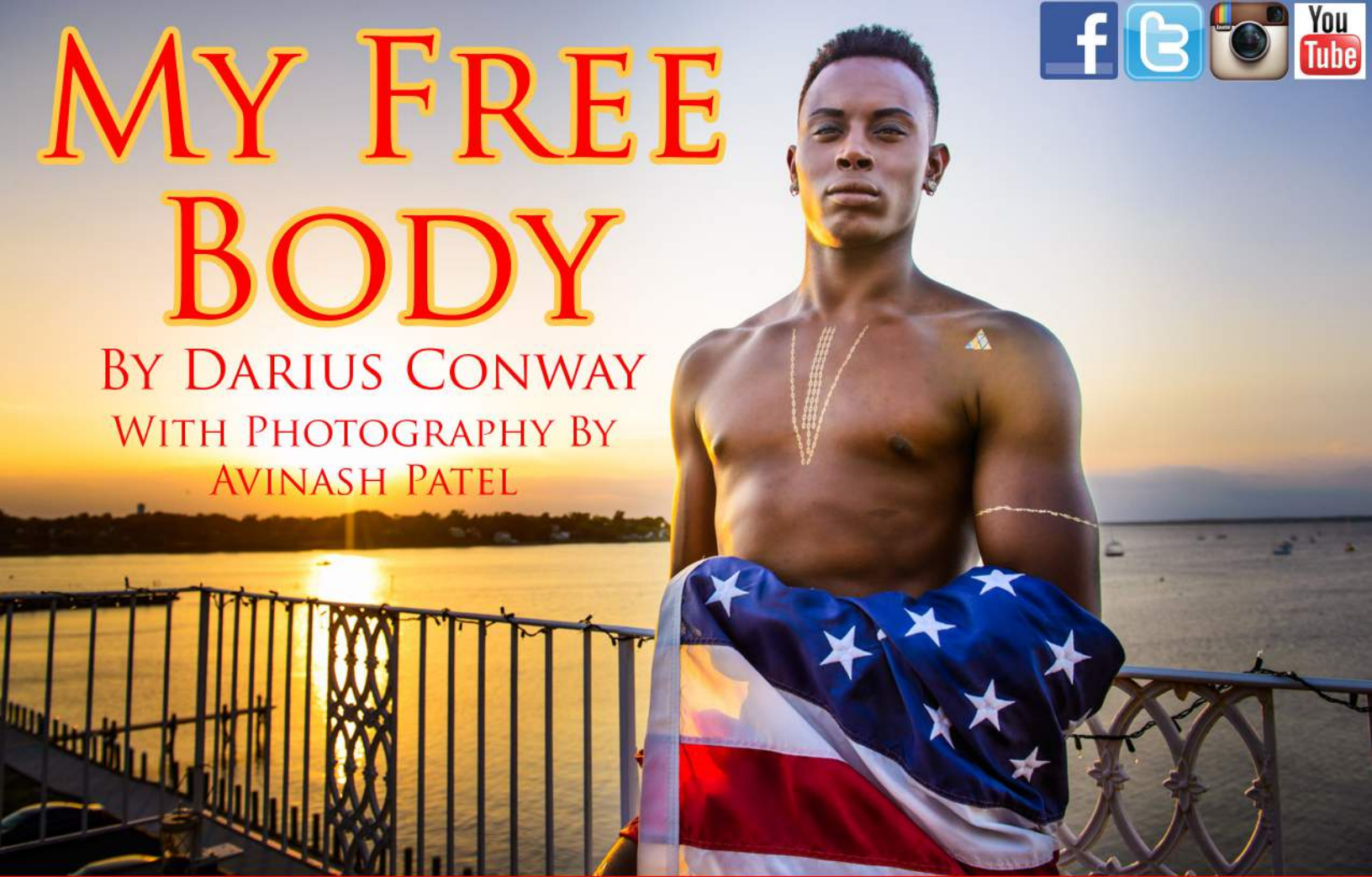
- 1 BOX STRAWBERRY DUNCAN HINES PINK VELVET CAKE MIX
- 2/3 OF CAKE MIX FLOUR
- 1/3 GLUTEN FREE FLOUR
- 1/3 COCONUT OIL
(INSTEAD OF VEGETABLE OIL)
- 2 EGGS (INSTEAD OF 3)
- 1 CUP OF WATER
- 1 CUP OF CHOPPED MIXED BERRIES
- 1 CUP OF CHOPPED STRAWBERRIES
- 1 CONTAINER OF CREAM CHEESE ICING

DIRECTIONS

1. PREHEAT YOUR OVEN TO 375 DEGREES.
2. MIX THE INGREDIENTS AS IT SAYS ON THE BOX BUT WITH YOUR REPLACED INGREDIENTS.
3. I ALWAYS MELT THE COCONUT OIL IF NOT ALREADY, IN THE MICROWAVE OR ON THE STOVETOP BEFORE ADDING.
4. TOSS YOUR MIXED BERRIES INTO THE BATTER AND PUT IN DESIRED PAN(S) AFTER MIXING.
5. PLACE IN OVEN FOR ABOUT 24-27 MINS.
6. WHILE COOKING, MIX CUP OF STRAWBERRIES WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING. MAKE SURE IT IS BLENDED WELL.
7. ONCE YOUR CAKE IS DONE, LET IT COOL FOR 5 TO 7 MINS AND COAT WITH THE SEMI-HOMEMADE FROSTING.
9. ADD A WHOLE STRAWBERRY AS DECOR AND TREAT.

MY FREE BODY

BY DARIUS CONWAY
WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY
AVINASH PATEL



Throughout my life I have been a free-spirited person. I personally believe everyone is born "free", but through society, and cultural, traditional, or personal influences, we have hidden our freedom of expression through the body. My body is a temple and I respect and honor it in many different ways. Respecting my body is a big part of how far I have come in the entertainment world. I have danced my whole life and always flaunted my body for the applause. I know that can be a weird thing to imagine for most. A child flaunting their body for an applause? I grew up dancing and playing sports like cheerleading, so I had to use my body in a positive way to get the crowd yelling. Stomping, clapping, jumping up and down, and shaking my hips to the latest dance songs on a stage in front of hundreds of people for a score gave me a rush. It was something that continued to be a part of my life in the transitions from my child years to college years as a cheerleader, and eventually to the real world as a model and dancer.

The real life experiences are what defined me as person and how I would use my body. In the adult world anyone could persuade someone to use their body in a way they are not comfortable with. I have been at that point. I seem to express my body in its full glory and take pride in that, but I have limits that I set, to the public eye. Like some women or men, I do not pose full frontal exposing my whole nude self. Some might call me a hypocrite, but those are my boundaries. I am proud that I have kept that form of art to myself and the world of modeling/dancing. The limits one creates for themselves are what defines who they are as an artist and sometimes even as a person.

I have a traditional outlook about my body. Although I love tattoos on most people, and believe that they all have very interesting personal stories about them, I do not have any. I do not have a desire to have one and that is also a boundary I have with my body. It is one blank canvas to the world of tattoos and I am sure that I am a tattoo artist's dream! One thing I do have many of, are scar stories. I have had a nose job from three cheerleading breaks, 2 chin stitch sets, 3 sets of stitches in my hand, a titanium plate sewn into my arm, and many other childhood scars. I guess you could call me clumsy, but I feel that my body tells many stories and it defines who I am and who I am free to be. I use these stories to pass the time as I entertain new friends. It is my life's work.

I love showing my body because it shows that I can bare it all. It shows how far I have come after losing 50 pounds, going through depression. I use to be an athletic build, at 165 lbs and gained so much weight because I was depressed. Depression will take the best of you, but you must find a way to get it under control. I fought it and still fight it everyday to be free inside. I battle with depression on a regular basis. Working out, staying active, and eating mostly clean and healthy is the best way to keep your spirits high. I believe what you put in your mouth for your body, is extremely important and makes a world of a difference in your overall outward attitude and appearance. You have to treat your mind and body great in order to feel and be great. It is an everyday job!

No 'body' is perfect, but everybody is. Believe in yourself and your own motivation for your body. Society will have one crash diet after another, in efforts to chase the next trend. Do what is best for your body. My three key things are: water, sleep, and exercise. Get a lot of those three everyday and you have the building blocks to a healthy body and mind. Treat your body good and it will treat you to a life full of freedom.



PHOTOGRAPHER AVINASH PATEL

Avinash Patel, better known to his friends as "Avi", hails from the little town of South Plainfield, New Jersey. He is an engineer by day, and back in 2010, he began to take interest in photography as a hobby, which resulted in him teaching himself everything he implements today. He began taking things a bit more seriously when his work caught the eye of many friends who wanted to pay him for his marvelous work! Currently, he loves working with his clients and being creative to bring them really unique and beautifully shot pieces they can use in their portfolios or memory books.

Avi has covered all areas of the photography realm, shooting everything from product stills, to food and corporate events, engagement and pregnancy announcements and even models and portraiture. He also loves shooting candid and does artistic concept shoots for fun. He is currently working on building his photography business and hopes to shoot a wedding sometime in the future.

Would you like to work with Avi and get some great shots of you or your milestone? Please visit his website link to the left, and get in touch with him through his contact link on his menu bar!



www.AvinashPatel.com

WATCH EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEWS AND BEHIND THE
SCENES FOOTAGE OF DARIUS'S
SHOOT ONLY ON...





LOVE EQUALITY

IT'S ABOUT TIME.

Some of Abra-zine's past and present contributors, along with thousands of others, recently took to their social media pages to show their support of the latest Supreme Court of the United States ruling, on June 26, 2015 which states that same sex marriages are now legal nationwide! Many put rainbow filters over their Facebook profile photos in support of the decision, regardless of their own sexual preferences. Even those foreign to the United States were showing their support which displays a powerful message of global unity. It is only a matter of time before more countries jump on board with equality for same sex marriages. This may go down as the most beautiful day in American History that our generation will ever live to see.



Landmarks all over the country were illuminated in rainbow colors in support of the ruling. The White House, The Empire State Building, The Disney World Castle, & the Niagara Falls were just few of the many to let the rainbow shine! This is a world where opinions run rampant, and there is always going to be negative feedback or those with hateful views on things, but this ruling was a huge step toward making this world a more loving and accepting place. In the words of John Lennon, "It matters not who you love, where you love, why you love, when you love or how you love, it matters only that you LOVE."

See the following page to see some of our contributors showing their support to the victory of the Gay Community!

"ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE"

KARINA BERALDO
SAO CAETANO DO SUL,
BRAZIL



LINDA LINDBERG
BILLESROLM,
SWEDEN



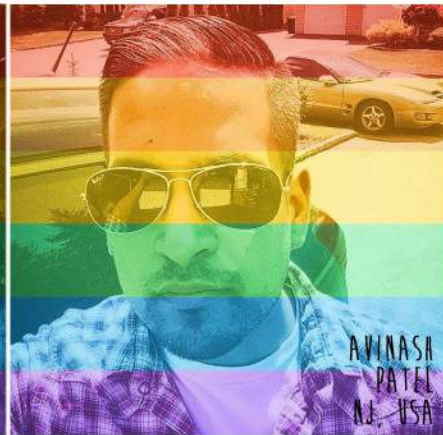
KYAN BOWMAN
CLEVELAND, OH
USA



RENEE AVARD
FURLOW
TX, USA



VINCENT
CARUBIA
LA, USA



AVINASH
PATEL
NJ, USA



JUSTINA
CARUBIA
NJ, USA



LEYNA
LYON,
NJ, USA



NICOLE LEE
SF, CA,
USA



JENNA Z
NJ, USA



JONATHAN
KERTIS
NJ, USA



MICHELLE
CICCIA
PA, USA



AMBER SMITH
SEATTLE, WA
USA



LAURA
FLASHBERG
NJ, USA



"Together we stand. Together we fall. One nation. One love. Freedom is a basic right that the human race needs as one. I can now be completely free with pride for who I am."

-Darius's excitement on the latest SCOTUS ruling of nationally legalizing Gay Marriage in the USA.

Keep Up With Darius's Whereabouts on His Official Website!

WWW.DARIUSCONWAYINC.COM

REMEMBER THIS DAY ...

6.26.2015

USA SUPPORTS
GAY RIGHTS!

#LoveWins

WWW.ABRAZINE.COM

HAPPY HOMECOMINGS

With Kimberly Porter



NJ native and Ex-Army Girl, Kimberly Porter's life changed drastically when her husband decided he wanted to enlist. They uprooted their lives to Fort Drum, NY where his unpredictable and grueling hours left her with many challenges to face, including raising their 3 children alone. She chose to see her hardships as more of a blessing, when she focused on her photography as a way to help other Army Wives. She captures the raw emotion and happiness in that very moment that every one of them so desperately hopes and prays for: Their Reunion. Today we sit down with Kim to learn more about her life as an Army wife, and take a look behind some of the most memorable reunion shoots she has done for her fellow Army families.

AZ: Hi Kim! Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

KP: I was raised in South Plainfield, NJ and I am 30 years old. My husband and I have been married for almost 9 years and back in 2010, he enlisted in the the US Army. Fort Drum, NY was our first and only duty station.

AZ: Please tell us a little bit about your life as an Army Wife... How did you get involved in the army way of life, and did you meet your husband through your own work in the Army? What has kind of been your journey with that, and what is your life like on a daily basis these days?

KP: My husband and I met back in 2005-2006 working for Walt Disney World. I was fresh out of the Army, myself, but sustained injuries so I got discharged from the Army. I was a Theater Major, and worked in Entertainment at WDW, Florida. I performed as a "friend of Pluto" and his height range of characters. My husband was a "friend of Goofy". We were both in the College Program and enjoyed every bit of it. It all started one day when he boldly chatted with me and we found out we had the same exact birthday. Plus we were in the happiest place on earth... who wouldn't want to fall in love under those circumstances! In 2009, my husband decided he wanted to join the Army. His job is an Intelligence Analyst. Fort Drum was our first duty station. Being I am an Army Vet, it made adjusting to the lifestyle easier because I understood the circumstances to which we signed our lives into. My life in the Army with our 3 children, 2 having special needs, his hours unpredictable, deployments, hurry up and wait, has well... been an experience! With the Army, you never know. But honestly, I have been blessed to be able to focus on my photography business, and be home with my children so they do not need childcare. We live on post, which is great, the Army has been pretty good to us.

AZ: That must be an extremely hard lifestyle to maintain! Please give us a little bit of insight on the challenges you and your husband have had to face during his time in the army.

KP: For most of 2012, my husband's unit kept saying that they were not going to take Michael and his shop. So we planned and I got pregnant with our third baby. I have premature babies, so I knew this one would be high-risk. That November, after I found out I was pregnant, Michael found out he was officially deploying. So in December, we had to drive down to his parent's house in TX where my daughter, son, and I would be living because I could not continue the pregnancy alone up in NY. I was strong and adjusted well, which I was surprised, but again, because of my experience in the Army already, I understood what I had to do and what to expect. What was hard was not having Michael around to experience our son going through the milestones, my experiences at the doctors, those little moments in life that he had to hear through the computer chat screen or the broken connection phone line. It was a struggle for him in all aspects. In order to get in contact with him for the birth of our third child, I had to call the red cross in order to get in touch with him to let him know I was in labor. He had a few minutes to get on the phone and Skype with me for a small while... and had to hurry back. He missed the birth, but he got to see me on the day of the delivery. It was incredibly hard not having him at my side. He is my rock. Today, I make him his breakfast smoothies with fresh fruits, veggies, flax, and other goodies that he wants in it, and lunches are a gamble of whether or not he will be home. In the Army, duties of the day change. Your location changes, details assignments are asked of you, and you never really know what will go on because generally, they may tell you one thing that is going on, but it hardly happens that way.

AZ: How do you think this sort of lifestyle affects your children, and what are your hopes for them as far as the future? What would you want them to know about their parents when they grow up?

KP: My children are really young, and luckily won't have much memory of the moving around. However, regression occurred with our first son. Babies and toddlers are use to routines. And when you take one or two major parts of their routine, they could end up regressing from progress. Or at least a temporary set back. Imagine you are used to seeing your daddy come in the house from work at a certain time, pick you up and play with you, smiles across the table at dinner time, giggles and stories at bed time... and the next day, nothing. They won't know how to adjust. It takes a while, but it can be hard for children in the Army. Michael's plan is to get out and go into law enforcement. Jesarose is going into first grade and we want to be established in a location without the moving around so they are use to their district, teachers, and friends. I would like to be back in NJ around friends and family.

AZ: Please tell us a little bit about the photography career you have found for yourself during your time as an Army Wife, You take wonderful pictures! When did you begin to dabble in the art form and what drew you to it?

KP: I have always been interested in photography. My first film camera was in the 90s. I also learned out to make my own camera. I went through high school as an art focus meanwhile taking pictures as a hobby. My Aunt was into Photography and she was a major source of knowledge for me. She would go to places with me and we would check to see if we had the appropriate exposures, angles, focal lengths and why. She would check my settings and make sure I fully understood why I had to have them at a certain way. I had joined a photography group of experienced photographers that would be rather rough with their criticism, but at the same time, I learned quick because of them being forthright. I started my KP line almost 7 years ago. It started out as freelance, before the Army. In 2011, it became K.P. Expressions Photography. I enjoyed working with soldiers and their families by providing portraits, homecomings, and started my journey as a wedding photographer.

AZ: At what point did you begin to take your hobby a bit more seriously and make a career out of it?

KP: Before my husband joined the Army, I was doing head shots and portraits. I enjoyed it, and then got encouraged to upgrade my gear. From then, the portfolio expanded. 2011 was a great transition into it. Facebook was my go-to for clientele. In early 2014, I joined the PPA (professional photographers association) and surrounded myself with certified professionals.

AZ: So you do this wonderful thing where you do photo shoots of the homecomings of Army husbands, reuniting with their families. How did you get into this, and what gave you the idea that this is what you wanted to do?

KP: One of the couples that I photographed had asked me to document their homecoming, which was wonderful. Crystal Reed was my first homecoming, and it was an amazing experience. Being that I know what it is like to be the soldier coming home, as well as the spouse waiting on the embrace of her soldier, I could fully relate to the emotions tied from both sides. I was hooked. I started receiving calls and getting booked for homecomings.

AZ: What kinds of things go into preparing for a shoot like this? Are any of these instances surprises?

KP: I sit down with my spouses prior to the event and get to know the families. For me it is important to get to know them because I share their emotions, feel their excitement, and ease their nerves by fully explaining what happens at the events and how I do what I do. At the events, I become the shadow so I can get as natural of expressions and moments as possible. All because I got to know the families and how they may react. It is all timing and making it a personal experience.

AZ: What range of emotions do you go through while you are behind the camera capturing these moments of joy of these reuniting families? Do you ever just tear up a bit, or break down in that happy cry? Or do you like to keep things professional?

KP: I would imagine it would be hard to not get a bit emotional being a part of these families' special moment...I do share their feelings and acknowledge them, but I am focusing on getting the right angles, exposures and making sure that the shot is taken. I always get the feelings of remembering how it was standing there looking for their family as the soldier, and how it feels as the family member.

AZ: What is the most rewarding thing for you, about doing these shoots?

KP: Homecomings are engaging at all levels between the families and myself. Being vet and also now an army wife, it really is wonderful to observe the emotions they go through. These are really emotional experiences for them and that I get to share that reunion with them, is truly amazing.

AZ: Do you think you have personally found a sense of FREEDOM through your newfound career? And if so, how so?

KP: It is finding the expressions and the best creative angle for the sought out image. And it is what the military have fought for. To keep us free. I also think of freedom through an emotional/spiritual perspective. Not allowing the negative emotions/choices/people trap you. Happiness is a state of mind you choose to be in. And it is great to live in that positive moment with he families. Just happiness.

Abra-Zine Asks Kim:

Q: What does FREEDOM mean to YOU personally?

A: I saw a quote back when my husband was returning from deployment that always stuck with me. "Freedom for me is knowing that you reap what you sow, and then sowing without the fear of the harvest." -Feyisayo. It is the liberty to make certain decisions, both political and personal, because politically sometimes that is thin ice to walk on.

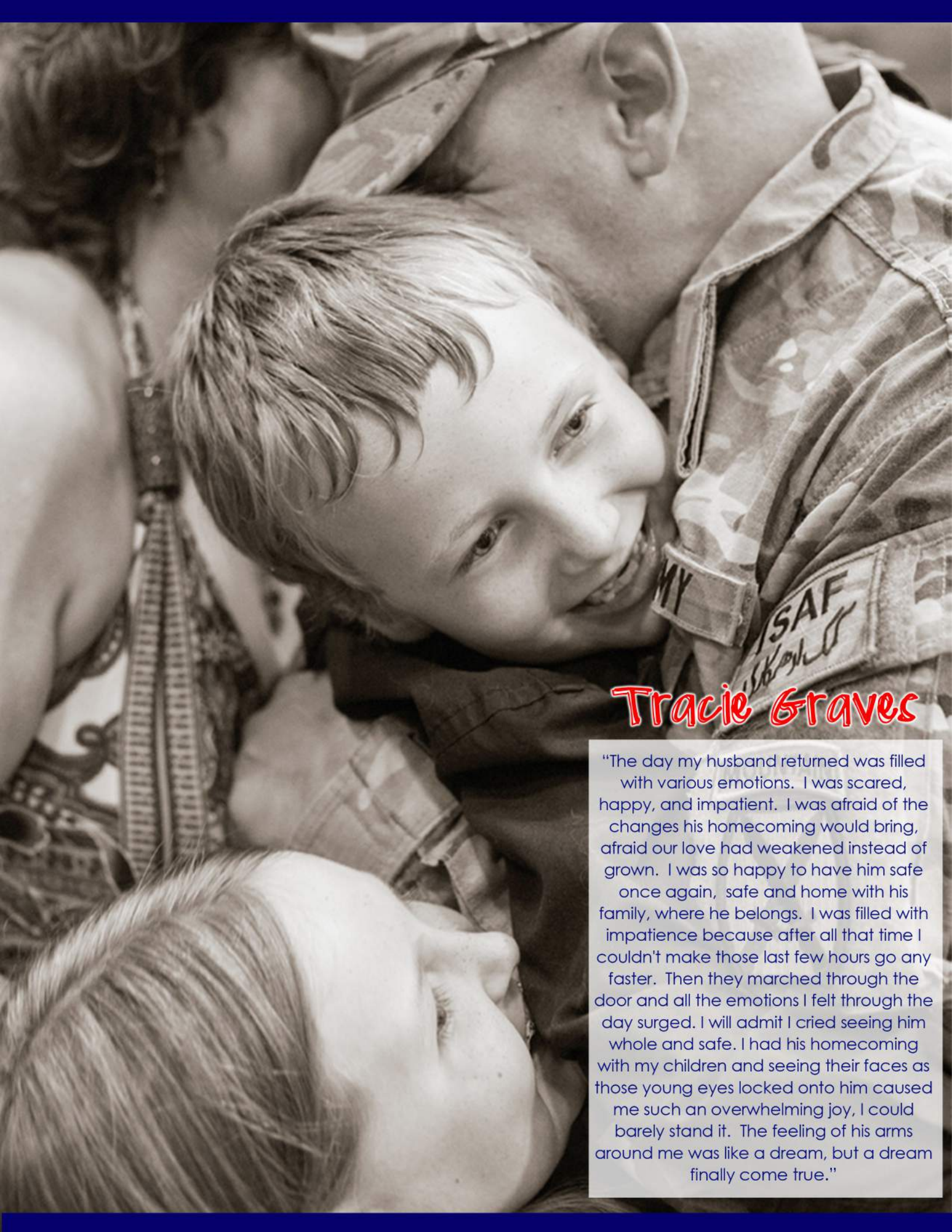
Maria Guadalupe Andrade

"After nine long months of Skype chats and phone calls. I was a nervous wreck getting ready to see my husband for the first time all over again. I showed up with my two little boys. The last time he saw them, one was barely walking and the other in my arms. I just knew that with all the missed milestones, I had to have someone to capture this moment. When I first saw him I forgot about everything I was worried about: my hair, my outfit and even that I had brought a photographer. I looked for him in the crowd and we ran to each other. I grabbed his face and embraced him making sure the moment was real. Thanking God that he was safe and home. Even in the moment of happiness I knew that there were others that did not make it home. I was blessed to have my family home and was very thankful."

Anjelika Hammer

"Deployment was the scariest, most infuriating, overwhelming time of my life. Everything was scary, even the little things. A call from him in the middle of the day instead of at night made my heart race and a knock at the door would leave me frozen in fear. But homecoming was by far the most amazing, breathtaking, magical, moment that I will never forget! Touching him for the first time in nine months made me shudder uncontrollably because even though I had dreamt of this day a million times in my head, there is nothing in this world that compares to a second first kiss!"





Tracie Graves

"The day my husband returned was filled with various emotions. I was scared, happy, and impatient. I was afraid of the changes his homecoming would bring, afraid our love had weakened instead of grown. I was so happy to have him safe once again, safe and home with his family, where he belongs. I was filled with impatience because after all that time I couldn't make those last few hours go any faster. Then they marched through the door and all the emotions I felt through the day surged. I will admit I cried seeing him whole and safe. I had his homecoming with my children and seeing their faces as those young eyes locked onto him caused me such an overwhelming joy, I could barely stand it. The feeling of his arms around me was like a dream, but a dream finally come true."



Mandy Smith

"This deployment was a little harder than the last, simply because Logan had gotten so attached to our youngest baby and I now had 3 kids to tend to in his absence. His redeployment was January 22nd at midnight, it was about -33 degrees and there was no heat in the hangar. The cold only added to my nervous excitement to finally see him again after 9 months. I remember them opening the hangar doors and the soldiers marching in. They went through the formal speech as my anticipation grew, then they released them. At that moment, everything around me became slow motion, my sights were geared looking for one face, the only one that mattered to me at the time. We found each other at the same time, eyes locked and I went running into his embrace. It ranks in the top ten moments of my life. There's no greater test of love than a deployment...and we passed."



Want Kim To Shoot YOUR Homecoming Moment or Other Event?
Visit Her Website Below to BOOK NOW!

WWW.KPEXPRESSIONSPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



Artwork By
Holly Bradley
(Chicago, IL, USA)



9/11/01

NEVER FORGET

Where were you during 9/11, 2001? If you live in the U.S., what was your experience? Did it affect you directly, or do you know someone that it affected directly? How do you think it's changed our "Freedom" or the way we view it? If you don't live in the U.S., has the occurrence affected you or your country?

ABRA-ZINERS WEIGH IN...



I was on the bus home from school when it actually happened; I was leaving early because I didn't feel well. I knew nothing about what was happening then, but when I got home, I made a few sandwiches and went to watch the TV. On every channel they showed planes flying into buildings, it took me awhile to fully understand what was happening and how many lives were actually taken. It actually took me several days to fully understand. Living in Sweden so far from the WTC, it felt very unreal, but it was there on every news channel, radio station, and newspaper. Everyone was talking about it for weeks, and it was the same when the Tsunami in Phuket happened. My mom followed the news very closely, and even though she doesn't understand English very well, she did watch the American news channels all the time, because they showed more about it. - *Linda Linzy Lindberg, Billesholm, Sweden*



When my husband Marc & I planned our honeymoon to Hawaii, I wanted to leave on Tuesday 9/11 but there was nothing available so we had to leave on Monday 9/10 very early the next day of our wedding. When I was watching the TV in Hawaii at 4:30 AM Hawaii time, I couldn't believe what was happening. I just kept thinking about a co-worker at that time who's son worked in the WTC. I kept calling work and finally got through and found out he was running late that morning, thank God. When we flew back a week later, we flew over the WTC and it was still smoking. It was so sad. We stopped in Chicago but I kept thinking what if we did get a flight that day like I had wanted. The flight on the way back from Chicago to Newark was eerie. There were only a few people besides, us on a big commercial plane. - *Gina Giordano, Elizabeth, New Jersey*



I was in 3rd period French class when it happened. It was scary because I couldn't understand how it happened. My uncle was in the city that day and we were terrified. He did get home. It bothers me how people get so worked up at airports going through security. Over 10 years of the same security... take off your shoes, belts, no liquids. I fly A LOT and it's second nature to me. I'm not bothered by it. I'd strip down to my underwear if they thought it was a precaution that should be taken. - *Nicole Aguilar, San Francisco, CA*



I saw the smoke from our high school. I met up with my friend Matt at his locker and we talked about what happened. My Dad use to work in the WTC. A friend back then was due to work at the Old Navy in te North Tower that day, but she was late for work. Another friend was supposed to be on one of those planes that hit the tower but she missed her flight. It actually encouraged me to enlist into the army versus wait for JRTC. It was a horrible day. The air smelt and the sunset for the next couple of days were hazy due to the smoke. The colors were brilliant, but tears fell ...lots of tears. - *Kimberly Arend Porter, Watertown, NY*



Let me first preface this by saying that I am in Texas. I was on my way to work - I heard the interruptions on the radio, but I could not comprehend what was happening because I just wanted to focus on getting there. (Driving was not my strong suit and I do not drive at all now). Once I got there, the three of us that worked there had the radio on and then I really heard what was going on. My heart sank. By this time, the second plane had hit. In the days that followed, as the news came out and more information was received, some people began treating me a bit differently. My Dad was born in Karachi, Pakistan. - *Renee Avard Furlow, Round Rock, TX*

Tell us about YOUR 9-11 Experience. Email info@Abrazine.com

La Nostra Storia

THE TRUE STORY OF FREEDOM
THROUGH THE EYES
OF AN IMMIGRANT'S CHILD

Written by Roy Carubia

New Jersey native, Roy Carubia is a desktop publishing manager for IEEE's Spectrum Magazine. In his spare time, he loves watching superhero action flicks, illustrates digital rockstar portraits, and listens to The Beatles as he plays his ukulele.

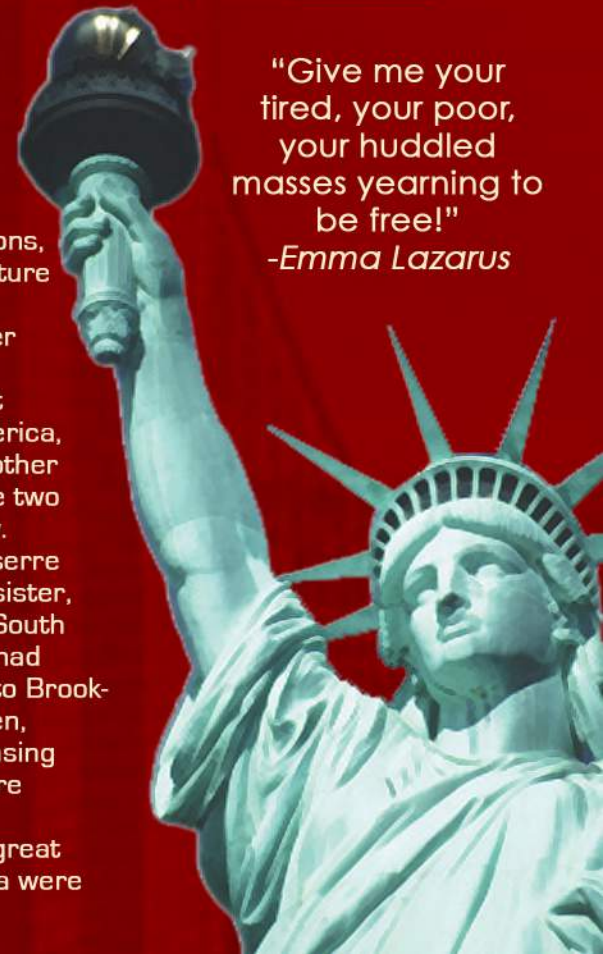


INTRODUCTION

From 1892 to 1954, over twelve million immigrants entered the United States through a gateway to the new world known as Ellis Island, a small island in New York Harbor which sits in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty. They came in search of a better life, Irish, German, Polish, Russians and Italians... they came. This is one family's story that begins with three men and their journey, a journey that would bring them hope, tragedy and triumph. Across an ocean they would come, Vincenzo, Girolamo and Rosario Carubia, Italian immigrants facing a future of uncertainty with nothing more than the well wishes they had received from their family in their native land of Sicily. There were others that came before them and more that would follow, for the world was changing and it would be through the hard work and perseverance of these immigrants that would make up the backbone of this nation we know as America. They came for gold and some may have found success that would bring them riches, but for many what they found was much more than gold and riches—They found FREEDOM!

THE LAUREL LINE

Sometime during the early 1900s three men set sail to start a new life in America. Leaving his wife behind my great-grandfather Vincenzo and his two sons, Girolamo and Rosario Carubia, left their small town of Ribera, Sicily to find a future in construction. They arrived at Ellis Island and went through the customary procedures that so many immigrants would upon arrival. Vincenzo and his older son Girolamo passed their physicals, and were allowed to enter into America. Rosario however would be refused entry due to his poor eyesight and was sent back to Sicily where he remained with his mother Caterina. Upon entering America, Vincenzo and Girolamo would find their way to Scranton, Pennsylvania, where other family members would welcome them. Scranton was now their new home. The two men quickly established themselves as masons through the help of their family. Vincenzo was one of five brothers, three of them, Luciano, Giachino and Baldaserre were living in Scranton, the other, Calogiro, remained in Sicily along with their sister, Caterina. Vincenzo and Girolamo took up residence at 1500 Pittston Avenue, South Scranton. It was in Scranton where Girolamo met his wife Domenica and they had their first child, Caterina, who died shortly after birth. The couple soon moved to Brooklyn where Girolamo began a Construction business and had three more children, Vincenzo, Baldaserre and Rosario (Vincent, Barney and Roy). Due to the increasing demand of the automobile industry during that time, roadways and bridges were developing rapidly and what better place to have a construction company than Brooklyn, New York. Girolamo and his family were enjoying a fruitful life in this great land of opportunity while Rosario's struggles in the small Sicilian town of Ribera were in sharp contrast to the success of his older brother.



"Give me your
tired, your poor,
your huddled
masses yearning to
be free!"
-Emma Lazarus

Meanwhile back in Pennsylvania on the afternoon of Tuesday, August 24, 1915, an elderly man boarded a Laurel Line train at the Wilkes Barre Station. My great-grandfather Vincenzo was returning home from what may have been a day's work when he arrived at the South Scranton station shortly before 2 o'clock. He walked along the station platform and apparently turned onto the tracks. As the train started, he was struck, killing him instantly. He was fifty-five. Upon hearing the news, Girolamo took the next train to Scranton, to Cusick's morgue where his father's remains were being held. His body was badly mangled and was unrecognizable. He was identified by the ring he was wearing and a book that bore his name, which were found amongst his clothes. Girolamo was now left with the task of burying his father. Vincenzo Carubia was laid to rest along with his granddaughter Caterina who had passed away at birth just three years before. Following the death of his father, Girolamo returned to Brooklyn. There were many roads and bridges to be built that would bring him much profit. But the years that followed brought bad times; the nation experienced World War I and not long after that came the great depression causing many banks to fail. Girolamo suffered a great financial loss as a result of the failing banks and his family no longer enjoyed much of the comforts they were once accustomed to.

Girolamo suffered a stroke and died a few years later on Friday, July 9, 1954 at the age of sixty-five. Some say that the stress of his financial losses took their toll but nothing could possibly compare to the loss he felt on that ill-fated day of August 24, 1915 on the Laurel Line from Wilkes Barre to South Scranton. So many immigrants would come to America where "the streets are paved with gold". I don't know what Vincenzo and Girolamo found but when I travel to New York and cross those bridges I can't help but think of my great-grandfather Vincenzo and his son Girolamo: The men who "paved the streets with gold".

THE SEARCH FOR "THE EMERALD CITY"

After being refused at Ellis Island, a discouraged Rosario returned to his awaiting mother and went back to his hometown of Ribera, a small farmer's town on the southern coast of Sicily. Ribera didn't offer much opportunity. Although Rosario did find work as a mason, it paled in comparison to the success his brother Girolamo had found back in America. Success came in another form to Rosario when he married a Sicilian seamstress. Serafina Renda was one of five sisters, small in stature but her reputation overshadowed that of her new husband's. Together they would have three children, Caterina, Domenica and a son Vincenzo. Their upbringing was as normal as it could be for three children growing up in a small farmer's town in Sicily. Young Vincenzo would play soccer, attend scouts and spend time with his grandmother Caterina.

One night, an earthquake waked the family. As the ground beneath them shook, Nonna Caterina instinctively fled the house with young Vincenzo by her side. Frightened by what was happening, the old woman wet herself as she ran from the house but her concern was for the boy who after all was her husband's namesake. The house may have crumbled and the earth beneath them split in two but on that night a young boy was safe in his grandmother's arms. By the time he was ten, Vincenzo, like his sisters before him, would follow in his mother's footsteps and take up the tailoring trade.



The Carubia Clan somewhere in Pennsylvania early 1900's, Vincenzo is seated top right, Girolamo is top left.



Rosario and Serafina on their wedding day in Ribera, Sicily.

LUCIANI
BORN AR...

MARAMELLA SCALIA ← RELATIVES - SCALIA'S + URS

MARAMELLA ← RELATIVES - GARMELLA
1908

HAD 2-DAUGHTERS + 1-SON
DOMENICA, BRIGITA, + GIRO

GIRO ← VINCENZO - CARMEL
(VINCENT) (CHELE

B-29-18 D-8-24-
WED, 70
TERINA TRUFALE

2-SON
GIRO CARUBIA,
B-12-22-1908 SUN

15 D-7-9-1905
WED, 70
DOMENIC

19 B-9-24-
74 D-7-22-

R 1-DAUC
CATERI

VINCENZO
(VINCENT
B-3-19-
D-4-

1923
1985

1-5
VINCENT
4-1940

My parents Giuseppina and Vincenzo Carubia, on their wedding day.



Domenica Carubia in Brooklyn, NY.



The Scranton Times

TUESDAY, AUGUST

OBITUARIES

OLD MAN KILLED ON LAUREL LINE

UNIDENTIFIED PASSENGER STEPS OFF TRAIN AT SOUTH SCRANTON STATION ONLY TO MEET DEATH ON RAILS

An aged man, who has not been identified, was killed by a Laurel Line train near the South Scranton station shortly before 2 o'clock this afternoon. The man boarded a train at Wilkes-Barre and got off at the South Scranton station. He walked along the station platform and then directly in front of a train, his body being terribly mangled.

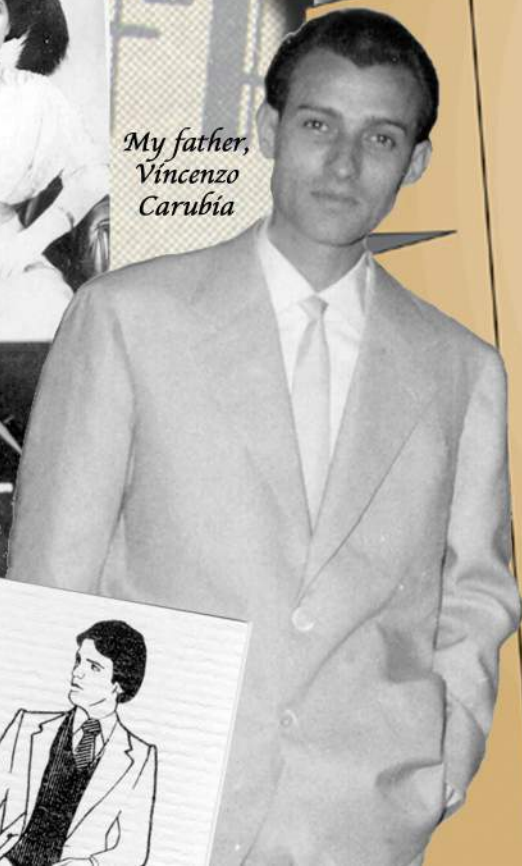
The train was held up for some time at the scene until the body could be recovered. It was taken to Cusick's undertaking room.

The man was about sixty years of age. The name, Vincenzo Carubia, was found on a book in his clothes.

Below: Girolamo and Domenica enjoy a happy moment, unaware of the hard times that lie ahead.



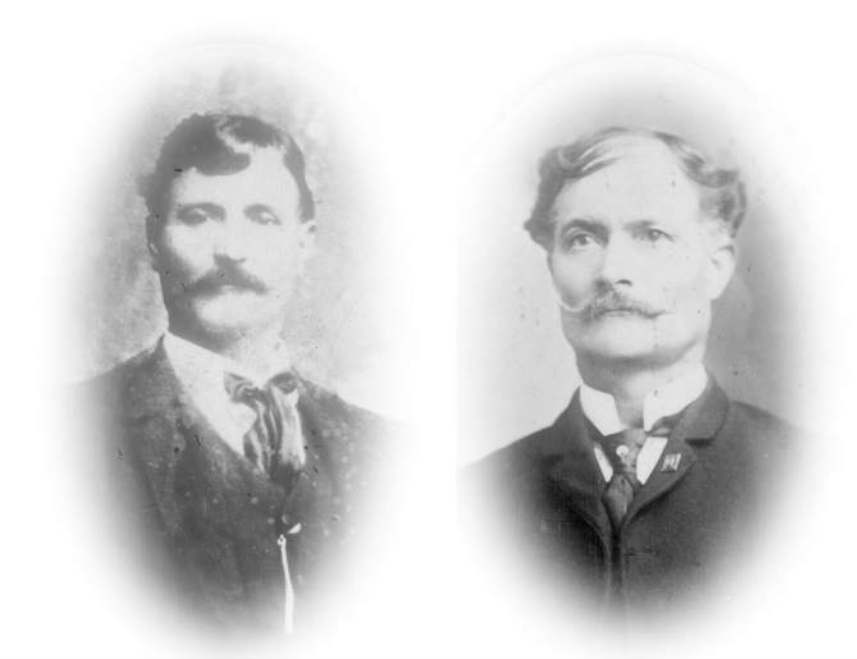
My father, Vincenzo Carubia



VINCENT CARUBIA, Prop.
Vincent's
CUSTOM TAILOR SHOP
DRY CLEANING
ALTERATIONS
For Men - Women & Children



31 EDGAR ROAD
IZABETH, N. J.



Vincenzo Carubia (left), Born: June 29, 1862, Died: August 24, 1915 and his brother Baldasere Carubia (right), Born: September 9, 1856, Died: March 10, 1940, were among the first Carubia ancestors to make their way to America as immigrants during the early 1900s.



The Carubia family 1951, Left to Right: Giuseppe Lauricella, Domenica Lauricella, Vincenzo Carubia, Caterina Gatto, Vincenzo Gatto. Seated L to R: Serafina and Rosario Carubia with grandchildren Carlo and Dina Lauricella.

But once again fate would step in and by 1939 Adolf Hitler had invaded Poland. A Fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini, was leading Italy and Europe was in turmoil. On December 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the world was once again at war. In the summer of 1943, America together with allied troops launched a large-scale invasion of Sicily.

One night while returning from a local dance, an eighteen-year-old Vincenzo heard the sound of planes in the distance. As he turned the corner on to another street he could hear the bombs dropping behind him as he ran for cover. He made his way safely back home frightened by what had happened, but amidst his fear came relief, the Americans were coming! In six weeks Sicily was liberated and on June 6, 1944 allied forces launched a massive invasion at the beaches of Normandy known as D-Day—the liberation of Europe was under way. By the spring of 1945, Adolf Hitler would take his own life as allied troops made their way into Berlin. In August of that same year following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese would surrender. The war was over!

With the war now over a twenty-one year old Vincenzo could pursue his career in tailoring but war torn Sicily offered little opportunity. Although his reputation as a tailor would surpass that of his mother and two sisters, his plan was to conquer America, like his Grandfather before him. But first he was to start a family of his own. Like his father it was a Sicilian seamstress that caught my father's eye, Giuseppina Manto a saddle stitcher's daughter. Her parents being strict and she only sixteen was difficult to approach and therefore a plan was needed. While riding his scooter with a cousin they would stage a breakdown and knock on the door of the Manto house for assistance. The two met and the "rest" as they say is "history." They were married on October 6, 1952 and as for the scooter, it received minor repairs.

They soon began a family by having two girls: Serafina was born on October 1, 1953 and Maria Paola on January 9, 1956. By 1958, with another one on the way and family needs increasing, my father felt it was now time to prepare for that trip to America. The wheels were in motion and everything in place but he couldn't afford boat tickets for the entire family. So his original plan was to go alone and send for his family after settling in America. In July of 1958 he boarded a bus that would take him to the port at Palermo where he would set sail for America. With him were my mother, my two sisters, two uncles Andrea and Peppino with his young son Carlo.

The ride from Ribera to Palermo was long and tiring, with steep winding roads through mountains and hills. Soon after departing my mother became ill and being seven months pregnant made the ride even more difficult. Giuseppe Pace, a friend who happened to be traveling to Palermo on business grew concerned and when learning that my mother would have to make the journey back to Ribera he grew even more concerned. "You're not going to travel back to Ribera in this condition", he said.



Despite hard times, my father, Vincenzo Carubia, enjoys his childhood.

When he asked why she wasn't going to America with her husband, he was told that the family could not afford the additional expense. He offered to pay the way for my mother and two sisters. But another problem arose, my mother's passports and documents were in Ribera and furthermore, she had no extra clothes for the trip across the ocean. So Giuseppe Pace devised a plan. Upon arriving at Palermo, my two uncles were to rent a car, and were instructed to return to Ribera, find the passports and clothes and bring them back to Palermo. But when they arrived at the house they found that the documents were locked away in an armoire. While Zio Andrea was busy gathering clothes, Zio Peppino grabbed a hammer and smashed through the armoire. Grabbing what they needed, the two men sped off for Palermo where my parents and two sisters were waiting. They arrived just in time as the boat was preparing to depart. Zio Andrea's wife, Nicolina, was in Ribera picking strawberries when she was told that her sister Giuseppina was boarding a boat to America. "No" she replied "my sister is returning from Palermo after seeing her husband off". She was then told that her husband Andrea had returned to gather her sister's things and that she was indeed leaving for America. She walked home that day crying as her younger sister Giuseppina was on her way to America.

Seven days later they arrived in America. As they entered New York Harbor in the warm presence of lady liberty, they wondered who they would find to greet them in this strange new land. They sat patiently for hours, my father paced as my mother sat sobbing clutching my two sisters closely by her side, but no one came. Finally it was announced on speaker that a family had arrived from Sicily and were waiting. Out of the distance four figures emerged, it was Domenica and her three sons Vincent, Barney and Roy. Girolamo Carubia's family had been at the other end of the dock awaiting the arrival of their cousins. They took them in slowly introducing them to this new land they would soon call home. My father quickly went to work as a tailor in a clothing factory in Elizabeth, New Jersey and two months later on September 26, 1958 a son was born, Rosario Vincenzo Carubia.

Things were now looking better until November 22, 1963 when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas while riding in a motorcade. His funeral service was viewed by the entire nation as it was brought into our living rooms through the magic of television. I was five years old. But on February 7, 1964 as we huddled together on the living room floor it was that same television set that introduced us to The Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show. The Beatles restored that youthful spirit that was lost just three months earlier in Dallas as their music entered our homes. We would watch Abbott and Costello, I Love Lucy and The Three Stooges, and every Thanksgiving morning, The March of the Wooden Soldiers was a must.

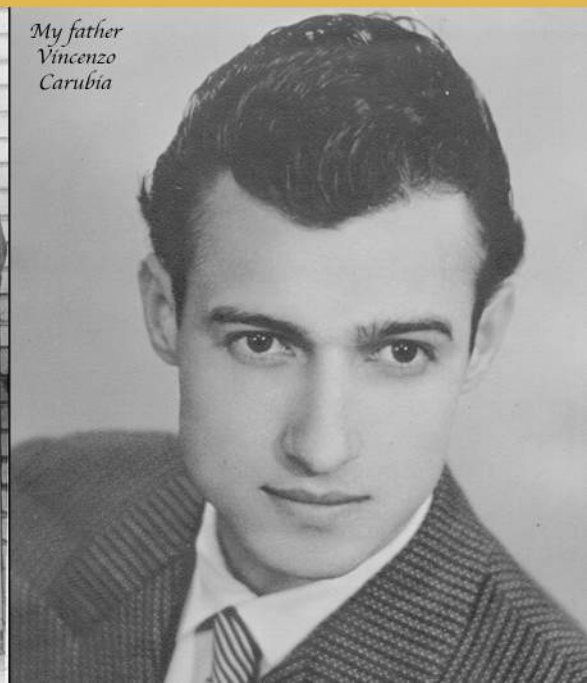
The spring of 1964 brought more joy when my grandparents came to visit from Sicily. They stayed with us through the summer and together we would take many trips, my favorite being the 1964 Worlds Fair. My father must have been proud to show his father how life in America was treating him. But my father didn't adapt to the factory environment and he soon found himself working in a fine men's clothing store, which suited him much better (pun intended). He established enough clientele that allowed him to open his own tailor shop bringing him the financial stability he envisioned years ago in his small hometown of Ribera. As for my two sisters and I, we had a good upbringing with many comforts that our parents didn't have, And although Vietnam wasn't our war, we beat the Russians to the moon, it was good to be an American! He had traced his grandfather's footsteps but where his grandfather may have failed, my father succeeded. He had established a reputation for himself as a fine tailor; his only misfortune may have been not being in the right place at the right time. With a little more luck he might have been mentioned in the same breath as Versace and Armani, but during that glorious time, Vincenzo Carubia would be the finest tailor anyone had ever known.



*My mother,
Giuseppina
Manto*



*My Grandparents- Nonna
Serafina, Nonno Rosario and I
in Elizabeth, Nj 1964*



*My father
Vincenzo
Carubia*

THE HOMECOMING

By 1968 my father had opened his own tailor shop and was now reaping the fruits of his labor. He had decided that now was a good time to return to his homeland and in July of that year he closed the shop for the summer and purchased airline tickets for all of us. The long boat trips across the Atlantic were now a thing of the past being replaced by air travel; a trip that once took seven days would now take seven hours. We touched down at Sicily's Punta Raisi Airport, a small airport located in the island's capital of Palermo. As we exited Alitalia's DC-10 we were greeted by many relatives that were eager to help us with our luggage and take us to Ribera. I experienced first hand the suffering that my mother endured nine years before, when she and my father took that same route from Ribera to Palermo. The drive took hours through winding roads and steep mountainous terrain before finally arriving in Ribera.

When we finally arrived, more relatives and dinner greeted us. For my father it was a triumphant return for he had achieved what his father and grandfather set out to accomplish and failed, he had conquered America. And like some mythological hero, he had returned in triumph. People came from all over town to see him. But for me, I had discovered new cousins in this remote corner of the world, and of course there they were, Nonno Rosario and Nonna Serafina looking larger than life as their home at 93 Corso Margherita, would become the central point of our trip. Ribera was nothing like I've ever seen; underdeveloped and somewhat remote it lacked many comforts that I was accustomed to. I awoke to the sound of peddlers selling fresh fish, eggs, fruit and vegetables. It was interesting to watch the shepherders work the sheep through town and the fishing boats come ashore in the morning. But Sicily is beautiful with breathtaking landscapes. At times I wondered why anyone would want to leave such a beautiful land. We spent the entire summer there, eating the food, listening to music and bonding with cousins, it became one of the most memorable vacations for me. But the summer ended and so it was time to leave. There were some tearful good-byes as we left and the long ride back to Palermo was worse without the excitement we felt when we were arriving. But it wasn't good-bye forever we would make regular trips back, each time the distance appeared shorter especially for my parents who returned almost every year during the 1980s.

Nonno Rosario surely found satisfaction with the success of his son. He died peacefully in his sleep on August 19, 1972 at age seventy-seven. I still have the pocket watch that he left for me and it remains one of my most treasured memories. Nonna Serafina would have the pleasure of seeing her son on a more frequent basis. I would see her for the last time in the summer of 1979, she died in 1989 she was eighty-eight. My father came to America in search of a better life and found it for all of us. And, like so many immigrants before him, he found the "Emerald City" at the top of the hill only for it to lead him back home. We're all in search of that "Emerald City" at some point in our lives and when we find it we should never forget where we came from because after all... "There's no place like home".



The Carubia Family Left to Right: My sister Maria Paola, my father Vincenzo, me (Rosario), my mother Giuseppina, and my sister Serafina



Breaking The Cycle:

**My Journey Away From Co-Dependency
and Destructive Relationships**

By Michelle Ciccio

Artwork By
Holly Brady
(Chicago, IL, USA)

**So...he's an Alcoholic, and I'm
Co-Dependent. Where do we go
from here?**

Both Rob and myself come from families of generation after generation Alcoholics. While I drink very rarely, and socially, he went the other way and became a full blown alcoholic. I don't like not feeling in control, he on the other hand uses alcohol to numb the anxiety, worry, and fear. Alcoholism is truly a family disease, and all suffer, not only the addict. So here we are. Thirteen years together with an extremely funny, smart, compassionate, 8 year old daughter. I swore to myself I would never get involved with an Alcoholic, because I was going to be the one to break the cycle. He hid it well for two years. Then I thought I could change him. I thought two whole years was a lot of time invested in someone and it would be a waste to breakup. I was 21 and naïve. I believe everything happens for a reason, and know that I may not have my daughter had we not stayed together. Who knows how my life would have been? It's not even worth wasting the time or energy thinking about all the "What ifs."

I'm sure you have heard the term "Co-Dependent" but never really fully understood what that meant. You can be co-dependent with many relationships for a variety of reasons, not just with spouses and addicts.

MentalhealthAmerica.net says, " Co-dependency is a learned behavior that can be passed down from one generation to another. It is an emotional and behavioral condition, that affects an individual's ability to have a healthy and mutually satisfying relationship. It is also known as "relationship addiction" because people with codependency often form or maintain relationships that are one-sided, emotionally destructive, and/or abusive. Co-dependent behavior is learned by watching and imitating other family members who display this type of behavior. Yup. That's me. A classic Co-Dependent and Enabler. Add in the addict and you have a recipe for an unstable, emotionally chaotic home life. Last Fall, I had had enough and gave him an ultimatum: Rehab or get out. He chose rehab. My daughter and I celebrated Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years without her Dad. It was very difficult, but she started seeing a therapist and I made extra effort to make sure she had support from me and even peers. We joined a group called Celebrate Recovery at a local church. It's a family recovery group whose slogan is "Where you can find healing for

hurts, hang ups, and habits." We liked it. It felt like a family of damaged people coming together for healing. We all have something that needs healing or fixing, right? We established this "family" mainly so Rob could have a group to come back to, but quickly found this was actually more about mine and my daughter's healing. I had many "aha" breakthrough moments that made me understand why I do certain things, or feel a certain way stemming from things that happened in childhood. I was really focusing on working on my recovery, all while trying to make my daughter feel secure and loved and know that her dad has a disease and he's seeking help for it, just like if he had Cancer.

I explained to her that Alcoholism is a disease, just like my Multiple Sclerosis. Now, if I chose not to listen to my body and my doctor, and not take my medicine and started having permanent MS symptoms that would be my fault for not seeking treatment for my disease. I explained HOW alcoholism is a disease, but Daddy needs to choose to seek treatment or not. That is his choice. Alcohol is awful because many times the alcoholic's brain gets so affected and their thinking so distorted that they feel that they NEED to drink or they will die. That desire to survive takes precedence over eating, sleeping, and even their own family. They are in survival mode, and physically and mentally feel they need it. We had many long talks about the disease and how if he doesn't stay sober it has absolutely nothing to do with her. Well, he has been back from rehab almost 5 months, and I had kicked him out about a month after he got home. After a week or so he started sneaking drinking again. I kicked him out, thinking it would make him hit rock bottom and it would sink in that he was going to lose us. Nope. Then he got kicked out of the place he was staying because he continued to drink. He came back from break at work black out drunk and ended up getting fired. He has no recollection of that day, and the scary thing is, he drove around for hours after he was sent home. About two weeks ago I let him move back home as long as he continues his recovery, remains sober, and tries to find a job and contribute around the house.

Everyday is a struggle not only for him, but also me, our daughter, and even my family. My family has to deal with the ups and downs and are thankfully helping me a little financially. The whole "family dynamic " is off. We feel like we have to "walk on eggshells" not to upset Daddy. I have to choose my words and actions carefully. It almost feels like being imprisoned.

Recently, I have chosen to stop the cycle, protect my daughter, and be a role model for her. Not only as a strong woman and mom, but also to show her she does not want to end up like Dad, or be in a relationship with a partner that is an addict. I have found immense freedom over the past few months with everything I have learned from attending Celebrate Recovery, Al-Anon (for family and friends of Alcoholics), leaning on advice from people from support groups, and reading. Normally, I would be a basket case, trying to control every detail of his life, my life, and our daughter's life since things feel so out of control. Anything I could find and take control over I would, until now. I have learned I cannot control what he does. I can only control how I react to it. THAT alone is one of the most freeing things I have ever put into practice. Learning how to stop trying to control others and care for myself has been probably the best piece of advice I wish I knew many years ago.

If you are struggling with an Alcoholic family member or friend, I encourage you to find a Celebrate Recovery group near you, Al-Anon, and also the classic book published in 1986 by Melanie Beattie, "Co-Dependant No More." Please know you are not alone. 1 in every 12 adults has addiction issues, and I suspect adding in teenagers the number would go way up. Alcoholism used to be the dirty family secret that no one spoke about and hid in the closet. We would be embarrassed by the actions of the alcoholic when our friends came over when we were children and teenagers. As adults, we started making excuses for the addicts in our lives. We wanted to "fix" them. You CANNOT fix anyone, but yourself. Support them, yes, but start working on fixing your own self. Until we are perfect we cannot fix anyone else. Also, please remember if you are in an alcoholic relationship, children are involved the damage that is being done to them. Many children develop anxiety, control issues, feelings of isolation, guilt, and anger. Children of Alcoholics are four times as likely to become addicts as an adult. Children are not stupid. They are very aware of the subtle, or often not so subtle changes in behavior with their alcoholic parent. I have found age appropriate honesty, counseling, and journaling very helpful for my daughter, and myself.

Alcoholics Anonymous has the "One Day at a Time" philosophy, and I have found this very helpful for myself as well. Live one minute, one second, one day at a time. Do your best. Help your loved one get treatment if they want to change, if they don't, you must detach with love.



Michelle and her daughter Maggie (Poconos, PA)

Focus on your own healing, (and of course if there are children involved) focus on what makes you feel joyful and free. Stop making excuses for them, stop doing everything for them. Seek help for yourself, breathe, and set yourself FREE from the chains of Alcoholism.

Are you or someone you know struggling with addiction and would like to seek help?

Click Below to find a rehab that works for you!



NEED REHAB
overcome addiction once and for all



Find Freedom In Your Dreams

By Nicole Aguilar



I think we've all been there. That stuck feeling. You want to do great things, but some outside force seems to be holding you back. Are the muses not singing? Is it lack of motivation? Are you just too comfortable with the status quo? What we all need to learn to do is manifest our dreams into reality. Life is not going to just hand you a Hawaiian vacation. You have to want to go; then make a plan to go. That forward motion is what gets you what you want in life.

If you have dreams of starting your own business or just leaving a dead end company, think about what is holding you back. Safety, money, people?? Then, start to worry about yourself and not all the outside forces that tell you "NO". Because you CAN and you WILL. Surround yourself with people who have done what you want to do. Their energy will be infectious and start to fuel your dreams. There will still be days that you doubt yourself, but don't let that stop you. You can do anything and find freedom in your dreams. Whether it's creative or financial freedom you seek, setting your intention into motion will help get the universe on your side.

I dreamt of starting a health and wellness website for a few years. It wasn't until I finally said, "I'm doing this", did the universe start presenting me with more opportunities for growth. I started budgeting money so that I could pay people to help me build my dream. If you can't do this, then I suggest budgeting your time and become a "do-it-yourselfer". Any way you dive into your dream is a way to bring it to fruition. There is no right or wrong way. Over the past few months, I've had an overwhelming sense of freedom from just working on something that I love. Everyone should feel that bliss.



Nicole's Site is Coming Soon!
www.NikkiNurtures.com

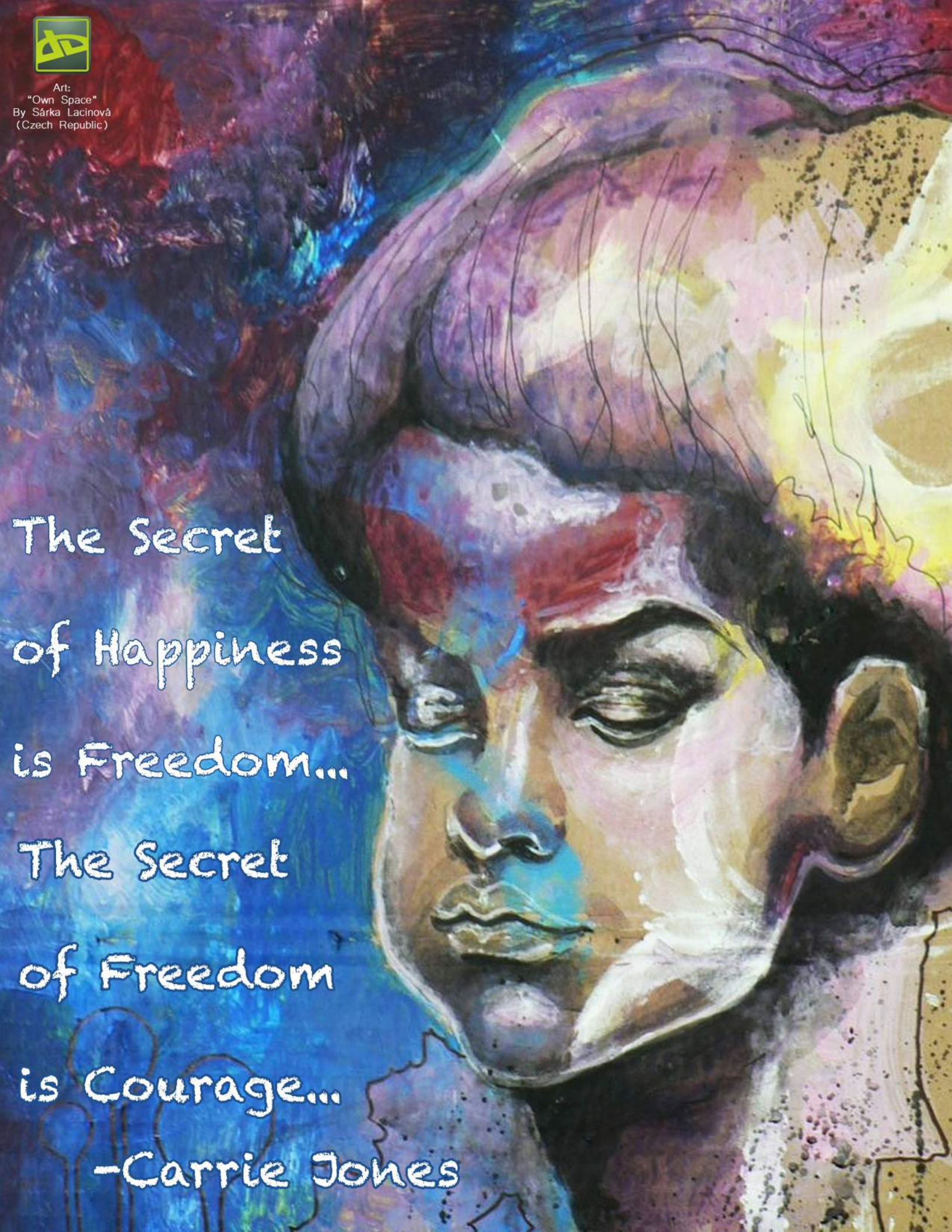


Art:
"Own Space"
By Sárka Lacinová
(Czech Republic)

The Secret
of Happiness
is Freedom...

The Secret
of Freedom
is Courage...

-Carrie Jones



Charly Magazine's

FREESTYLE FIGURES

Self Expression
Through Body Painting

"It makes me feel free to be able to express and celebrate all aspects of my existence, and to share what I have learned so far with the world. It enables me to continue to evolve and grow as an artist and as a human in this life."





Photos by E'an Nigel
Model: Toyvion Meadows

By Justina Carubia

Self-taught Dominican Republic artist, 34 year old Charly Joaquin Dominguez has been a creator his whole life. The NYC (Harlem/Washington Heights) native recalls, "I created without even paying attention. All my old notebooks are tagged up, almost every page has some doodle art or graffiti on it." He is mostly known around his circuit for his bold and unique "BODY" of work, which is meant to be taken quite literally. Charly uses the bodies of human models as his own personal canvas, painting them in bright colors and tribal patterns. It is no surprise that he gravitated toward this medium, being that his first love since he was a child, was an art form that involves expression through the movement of the human form: dance. This expression outlet could have very well evolved into the art he produces today.

Body art for him first started out as part of a spiritual process that the artist would only use on himself, for himself. He practiced trance meditation which brought about many of his transformations. He found that the more he incorporated body art into his photography and other mixed media pieces that he displayed, the more others were drawn to volunteer themselves as a human canvas to him. It all seemed to happen quite naturally and took him by surprise as he didn't expect for it to become what he was known for. He tells us, "It has taken on a life of its own, but I love working with the human canvas."

He schedules his models a day or two in advance and asks them to shave or buzz excessive body hair, unless they are working with it. They are also asked to bring a towel and soap if they are washing paint off, or loose fitting old clothes if they are leaving the paint on. He likes his models to be a part of the creative process giving them the option of color preference, but generally he likes to freestyle. He works out of The X Collective mainly, which is a shared artist studio in the Bronx, where they also host their exhibits. He also likes to go to outdoor and other locations to get inspiration from creating on new grounds. After he paints the models, he works with a variety of different photographers who admire his work, who he feels so privileged to be in the company of. The length of each shoot varies depending on the photographer he is working with, but on average it takes anywhere from 30 minutes up to about an hour, to capture each model he has painted. The most models Charly has painted in one session, was about 10 models.

He ensures us that it takes a certain level of intimacy and trust to stand nearly (or even completely!) naked in front of someone for hours, just to be painted (It takes anywhere from 1-4 hrs depending on detail and the persons height/body). It really is a mystical experience for both the artist and model involved. Charly prefers to paint his models fully nude, but he always leaves it up to them to bare as much as they are willing to, out of respect for the comfort level of the human canvases before him. They all vary in levels of comfort, as everybody is different.

The "bare" process can be very vulnerable for most and in those moments, it's very easy for models to become embarrassed, or feel awkward.



Photo by Curu Necos-Bloice
Model: Charly Joaquin Dominguez

When painting his models, Charly starts with a creme or water based paint, then uses acrylic body paint!

Photo By: Dre Antar
Model: Eric Astrop



I have been labeled a pervert and have had a lot of speculation regarding my intentions on creating my works. But I don't care. I pay attention to the people who are looking at the beauty and suggestion of the work." He explains that sexuality will always be double edged sword in our society because people have misused and abused it. Many who have had negative recordings or experiences interpret the artist's work according to the limitations of their own painful experience. He insists, "I view it as freeing, and many of my models have expressed it as a liberating experience as well."

Charly believes it is a freedom to create on the body. It enables us to free ourselves of being inhibited, hiding behind society given labels, and/or expectations of what our bodies should look like. He has worked with every body type, race, and every gender and it has been a freeing experience for him to transcend prejudices and other limitations when it comes to humanity. He encourages others to think that FREEDOM begins as a mindset. And just when you think you have become free there are layers ready to be unveiled and new awakenings to explore. "It is a life and introspective process which we are mirrors to as a people."

Charly is currently working on a coffee table book "The Charly Magazine", which is a promotional zine online that started out as just an online community. It started to take on a life of its own, and he is now doing a series of fundraisers to create printed publications and film a docuseries. He started this venture and running it with the help of many artists, photographers, and potential contributors. He plans to release the book this year and have an online version of it released on a quarterly basis, unless the demand significantly increases. In between that venture, he plans to work on future independent and collaborative exhibits such as with The X Collective in the Bronx. Although Charly wishes to do art full-time, he is not at a place where he can call it a full time job. He currently lives in subsidized housing, and takes on odd jobs as he finds them. He also has an extensive work history working as a social service provider for underserved marginalized communities ie LGBT, MICA Homeless, and People of Color communities.

The most awkward thing for Charly has been working with heterosexual male models because there is always an underlying tension when it comes to painting certain body parts. He says, "I try to assure them that I see many nude people in front of me and every waking thought is not about having sex. Instead, I forget about the nude body and really want to see the transformation. My attention is focused on seeing the artwork come to life."

The human body can sometimes be considered taboo, or a controversial subject, especially when used in works of art. Charly explains, "Because I have always been comfortable with nudity, and having been a nude model and subject many times in my own art and in the works of a few photographers, I was a bit naive to the negative responses of some of the people who have witnessed my work."



Charly is currently working on getting his official website up and running! www.TheCharlyMag.com is coming soon!

He is also available to be commissioned for original artwork, installations, wall/mural art, parties, events, and wearable art projects. [EMAIL: TheCharlyMagazine@Gmail.com](mailto:TheCharlyMagazine@Gmail.com)



Photo by Charly Magasin Documentaire
Model Shawn Gomez Covington

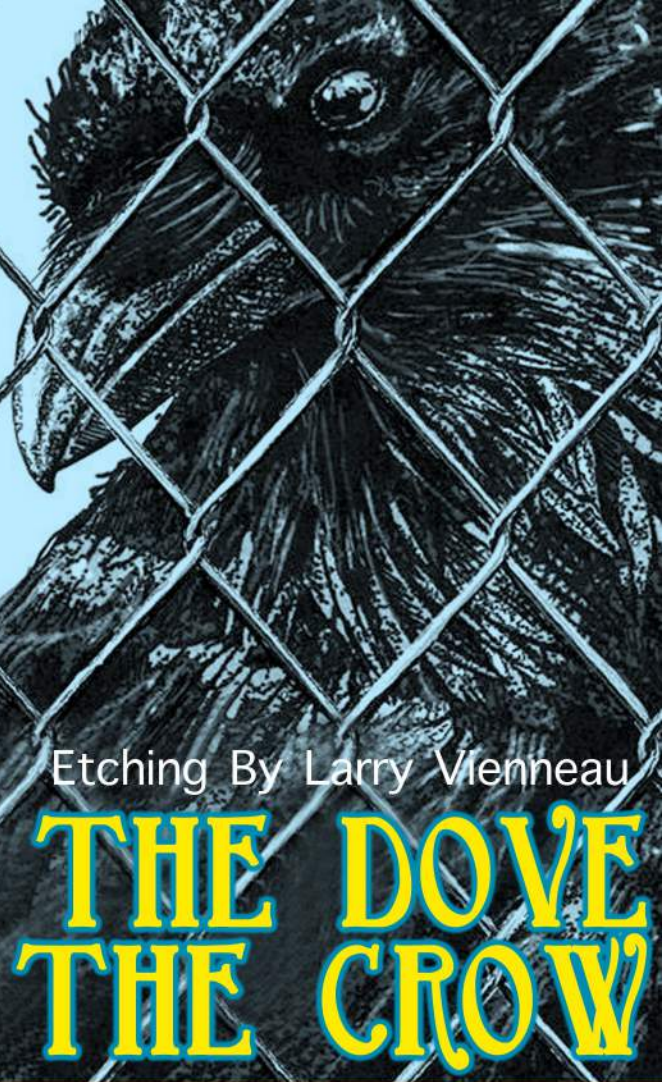


Rachael Tree Talker Caringella is a mixed media artist, illustrator, intuitive oracle and all around mystic from Salt Lake City, Utah. Her favorite mediums are pen and ink, watercolor, pastels, acrylic and oils, mixed with the magic of lunar cycles, crystal grids and energy work. An artist for as long as she could hold a pencil, Rachael loves to create mystic and mysterious art that bridges together light and dark, magic and "reality". Rachael is a born illustrator who loves to capture scenes and themes through the use of symbology. (See her complete bio on her website listed below!)



THE DOVE AND THE CROW, Etching, 5 inch by 7 inch, 2014

“This is one of the most famous and most illustrated of Aesop’s Fables. Most illustrations show the caged dove with the crow outside looking in. I used the perspective from the inside of the cage.”



Etching By Larry Vienneau

THE DOVE AND THE CROW



“A Dove shut up in a cage was bragging about the large number of young ones which she had hatched. A Crow hearing her, said: "My good friend, end this ridiculous boasting. The larger the number of your family, the greater your cause of sorrow, in seeing them shut up in this prison-house.”

Moral of Aesop’s Fable:

TO ENJOY OUR BLESSINGS,
WE MUST HAVE FREEDOM!

I often find inspiration from a traditional or historic accounts of the raven. First I decide on my title. Having a title helps me with the image and mood of the piece. Humor is often important but I also select titles that force the viewer to think more about the imagery. Next I look through references to find the right pose or gesture for the raven or ravens. Then I spend hours doing preliminary sketches, followed by a series of drawings using pencil, traditional gouache (opaque watercolor), ink and charcoal. My next step involves using digital technology. I scan the drawings and rework them with Photoshop. This digital tool allows me to adjust the value of the drawing and I can even move and reorganize the image. I use filters if needed. Next I print the drawing from my computer and continue to draw with the traditional tools. I repeat this process several times so the traditional and new technologies merge seamlessly. In 2009 I began working with photopolymer etching plates. In the past an etching involved coating the plate with a petroleum based sealer, then emerging the plate into vat of acid, cleaning with solvents, recoating, and more acid baths. The process was extremely hazardous to the artist as well as the environment. In 2009 I began working with newly perfected and safe photopolymer etching plates. These are UV light sensitive printing plates, which are exposed in sunlight and processed in tap water!! In the past I would have spent 20-40 hours creating the printing plate. Now I use that time to do my finished drawing. I use my computer and printer to transfer my drawing onto a transparent sheet of plastic. This serves as my negative for the exposure to the sun! I use the photopolymer process to transfer the original drawing to a printing plate from which I can hand print an edition. Finally, I write a narrative. This usually takes me the most time of all!



Artist
Larry Vienneau
(MA, USA)

LADY "LIBER-TEA" Dena K. Miller



"Fairy Gypsy Goddess, Dena K. Miller has created yet another beautiful spirit filled piece for our magazine this season. As most of you know, if you have been reading our past issues, Dena has taken a huge leap toward her dream of opening up a magical Tea Shoppe. There are dreamers, then there are doers, and Dena has done it! She had her GRAND OPENING for her Tea Shoppe this past June 1, and she has given us a little insight as to the thoughts and feelings she is going through as her dreams become a reality. She quit her day job, she is her own boss now, and if that doesn't scream FREEDOM, I don't know what does! Dena, we are so proud of you here at Abra-zine! We hope your journey and new Tea Shoppe continue to bless you and all those who visit it, in the many many years to come. Now please follow the magical tea pot below to watch/listen to Dena recite her poem LIVE on her youtube channel, to the mystical scene of glowing candles and soothing chimes and ambiance." (-Justina Carubia, on behalf of all our readers and contributors)

~Freedom To Be~

by Dena K. Miller

Freedom to be
Freedom to see
Freedom to know it is time to be me
Building a dream by giving my all
No worries if ever I fall
The freedom that's found
Is a gift so profound
To do what has been calling
With no fear of falling
Moving forward with love
This dream is sent from above
I will follow that dream
To see what it means
And know that its Freedom
Is so meant to be!



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The Art & Music of Rae Cauley

"With the Flap of
A Butterfly Wing"
Medium: Micron
& Colored Pencil



"I've always felt that my main purpose in this life has been to help inspire others to be the best they can be, to do what makes them the happiest and to never give up on their dreams. Through my art and music, I feel I've been able to do just that. Using both my own experiences and others as inspiration, I try to create positive thought provoking imagery and a sense of calm to my listener and or viewer. The love I feel for what I create is constant. And the response I receive from those whom I've helped and inspired through this love has completely changed my life." (Rae Cauley, Westfield, NJ)

TAKE BACK

Take back
Take back your soul
Don't you know
it's worth more than a pot a' gold
Take back your heart
Before you let it tear you apart
Take back you faith
So your spirit is yours alone to re-create
Take back your mind
Don't cha' know if you don't you'd go blind
Take back your goals
Don't you know they've always been in your control
Take back your love
For those who are unable to rise above their own
Take back your soul
Don't you know
it's worth more than a pot a' gold
Take back your heart
Before you let it tear you apart
Take back your love
For those who are unable to rise above their own

LIVE FREE

Take a beep breath in
Don't be afraid
The truth is yours to mend
Take a deep breath
And jump in
Don't let your mistakes
Leave you in ruin

Close your eyes tight
And take flight
Don't look down till you're
Sky high -

Live free my friend
Live free till the end

Take a deep breath
And jump in
Don't let your mistakes
Leave you in ruin

Live free my friend
Live free till the end



LISTEN TO RAE CAULEY'S
ORIGINAL MUSIC ON HER
SOUNDCLOUD PAGE
[HERE!](#)

ABRA-ZINE EXCLUSIVE
DOWNLOAD "LIVE FREE"



Artwork By
Holly Bradley
(Chicago, IL, USA)

Freedom vs the Familiar

by Renee Avard-Furlow



Gradually I slipped and lost my footing
 And then the ground under was shaking
 Even before the loss, all was wrong
 And feelings had to go in storage
 Surrounded in some crucial times
 A psyche so wounded in many ways
 Slowly suffocating and left so young
 Defenses introduced as then-friends:
 Anxiety, claustrophobia, fear, loneliness
 And a best friend soon shared the space
 As the pain moved close and settled in
 Scared and trapped inside with a monster
 Age was a factor and time went slowly
 Lies and shadows could not be stopped
 A slow get-a-way was already planned
 Patience rewarded as I told all I knew
 I didn't hold back though my voice shook
 Shining the light on the fabrications
 The realizations of the truth of who I am
 I found a strength in a person I never knew
 A person that I never thought I could be
 I stopped the cyclical nature of this pattern
 It was passed on and on and I didn't want it
 At first you just stay and become so numb
 Then it is all about relying on what is offered
 Because somehow that is worth your soul
 Turning the corner after desperate separation
 More of the same would be laying in wait
 Seeing the keys to this trap wasn't enough
 I needed to know the one resulting in an escape
 To find the way to freedom, and not the temporary kind
 And when I found my out, I set off with a deep sigh
 The unknown was mapped out in front with no real plan
 Even that was not scary compared to the known
 Transition is still change no matter what is said
 Even the good can be discombobulating
 Rewarded with a life granted sacred and true
 This little girl was rewarded safe passage
 After all of the discomfort, the fear, the blood
 The broken emotions, and the manipulation -
 I didn't give up, didn't give in and I stood tall

I felt the change as I situated myself
 Among a space I felt comfortable holding
 Within me grew a home that could not fall
 Since working so hard for every breath taken
 The freedom found was more than the result
 It was my life, my soul; it was my very essence
 My independence day is every morning
 And with my life being everything it is and more
 This is my freedom, showcased a day at a time.



Renee Avard-Furlow is a seasoned published Texan writer, with a book of poetry out later this year, as well as other collaborative projects in the works. She also runs a successful blog, sharing writings, reflections, offers to others for spiritual services and publishes the "Magic Musepirations" monthly. Follow her endeavors at

WWW.RENEEAVARDFURLOW.COM



BREAKOUT



Poetry By Michael Aguilar
18, California

Michael's favorite hobbies include producing music, poetry, songwriting and reading. The ability to release raw thoughts and ideas through crafting careful words and art are what make him feel FREE!

Born with the artistry,
Drawn without permission
Because he guides his own flight and position,
Waging the fight in search of harmony.

There's this urge he has.
To see them freed.
If only he could satisfy it.
That's all he needs.

Living in a world where nothing could phase a sinner.
Even the most extreme wouldn't change a beginner.
The tired player borders on burnout but his light stays bright,
Even it meant taking over the computer from byte to byte.
Don't pry into broken heartbeats.
Besides the red sea there's more to see.
Searching for something else, digging deep
And shooting for that goal like the ball in varsity.
Everything flies free and lonely before the touchdown.
Years after the blessing will the success still be around?
Even confetti means nothing later if it's blasted just for now.
Without a heaven there's just a busy town.



Art Below By
Vincenzo Carubia
(29, LA, CA)
"Evolution of Healing
A Broken Heart"
Acrylic on Canvas





Art "Surreal"
 Šárka Lacinová
 (Czech Republic)

WHAT IF I WASNT



Poetry By Ash Flame-Frost
 20, Kent, England

Inside, I might be made of broken butterflies
 And the tiny shattered pieces of glass
 That you forgot to throw away

And I'm screaming for
 something I buried in the garden,
 Dirty and covered with rust,
 It's coming through

I'm not supposed to live like this

Maybe I could be the giggle at a funeral,
 If I had the space to breathe,
 And let myself fade out, blend in,

But it's only one sided, and I
 Wasn't ready for this.
 I don't want to live
 In a dying world like this one

But I'm sick
 I'm tired of waiting for another,
 That might not be what I want

What you don't know can't kill you,
 But I know- that's not the truth
 And I sometimes wish
 There was nothing

I am held down, I am free!



Q: What makes you feel
 FREE?

Ash: "Being alone in the
 forest. If I were able to
 express my ideals living
 in the best of both
 worlds, the air between
 the sea and the sand
 are the first step into
 something unknown."





BENEATH FAIR AND FINE TRAVELERS



POETRY BY WILLIAM WRIGHT
24, SAN DIEGO, CA

IN A SLOW
CRAWL TO ENVY
I GROW PARCHED
WITH HELLISH DESIRE

FOR THE PRECIOUS ZEAL
OF FAIR AND FINE TRAVELERS
EVER-WAFTING
TRUE TO THEIR BREEZE

IN BOYHOOD I SIMMER
DERAILED BY SILENCE
IMMOBILE
UNWILLING
TO LIFT MY SEETHING EYES

AS I SLOUCH
INTO THE PALMS OF COMFORT
TAKEN BY SLOTH
AS DESIRE
SLAVES, BENEATH MY SKIN



Writer,
William
Wright

Q: "WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL FREE?"

WILLIAM: "WRITING POETRY IS THE ONE THING THAT MAKES ME TRULY FEEL FREE. IT'S MY ROUTE OF ESCAPE FROM THE ILLS OF THE WORLD."



TOP ART BY JARROD BARTHOLOMEW
42, SOUTH YORKSHIRE, UK
(ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HIS BOOK
"BEYOND TOMB MOUNTAIN")

SEEKING FREEDOM



Poem by Emmett Facas
19, USA (undisclosed)

TOXIC
FRIENDSHIP
ZERO
ACQUAINTANCE

STRAWBERRY RED DRIPS
TO THE CLASHING OF KISSES
WITH JUST A FEW WISHES
MOST NIGHTS I'M SPEECHLESS

TAKEN FROM ME ALL I'VE SOUGHT
STRIPPED FROM THE BONE
TIL YOU'VE GOT
WHAT IT IS YOU WANTED
UNTIL YOU WERE CAUGHT
WHAT WILL MAKE IT END,
MAKE THE PAIN STOP?

TOO MUCH HEARTACHE, TOO MANY SAD THOUGHTS
I MISS YOU KNOWING I REALLY OUGHT TO NOT
HOW IS IT WITH ME YOU HAD BEEN SO ROTTEN?
I HAD TO CUT THE STRINGS TO RELEARN TO TIE KNOTS

FOCUS, PRIORITY, TRIVIALIZING, DEFEAT
FOOLISHNESS, SUFFERING, HOSTILITY, DAYS SO BLEAK
SCRAPPING AWAY THE MEMORY OF YOU IN ORDER TO HEAL
BEGONE FROM MY EVER-FADING WORLD
SO I CAN ONCE AGAIN FEEL

BE GONE FROM MY EVER-DARKENING REALM
FOR THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO STEAL

BE GONE FROM MY EVER-WITHERING WORLD
SO I MAY ONCE MORE FEEL.

Q: "What makes you feel FREE?"

Emmett: "Not being mentally confined by the perspective of society. I personally feel free having broken away from what everybody else thinks (with the exception of influences, which is only human) and took time to form my own opinions. The hope I continue to place in my oppressors, believing they are better people who will stop hurting people like me, makes me feel free!"

TO BE FREE



Poetry by Lien Notori
14, Connecticut

Q: WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL FREE?
LIEN: "I FEEL FREE WHEN I LOOK AT
THE OCEAN. THOUGH I MAY BE SMALL,
THE WORLD IS BIG TO
EXPLORE!"

SAND ART & PHOTOGRAPHY
BY VINCENTO CARUBIA
29, LA, CALIFORNIA

I come back home
To the place I'll ever know
Where the grass is green
And the sun shines
And clouds line the sky

And do all I've ever been taught to do
And follow the rules I've ever been
Taught to follow

And live the life I've ever lived

In a place so perfect
And stagnant
With no troubles

Sitting by my cherry blossom tree under
The budding beauty

Dreaming of life beyond the borders
Where stories drift from
Of peoples
Places
Far far away

I wrap my arms around the cherry blossom
Tree as days come and go
And every dawn the beauty falls with

Grace all brown and laced with woe
The beauty one by one says its goodbyes

And every night I lie tossing and turning
As tears stream down my face

Wondering how many will be left
Next morning

So one day I tape the beauty to the tree
But the wind comes and carries them away
Blowing them straight out of my hands
And that day I sit there
As the sun comes up

And the petals dance in the sunset
To the unknown
Joyous and laughing in the breeze

So this is what it feels like to be free...

THE MAGIC OF FREEDOM

A Poem & Photo Series
By Veronica Mather



Veronica Mather is 41 and lives in Australia's high country, Victoria. She is a writer and keen photographer who is passionate about animal welfare.

**The Magic of Freedom
Is inside us all.
Listen to your heart.
Follow the dreams
Your soul so desires.
Daydream,
Explore and reflect.
Trust.
Freedom is
That tingling feeling
And the flutter of butterflies
In your stomach
That confirm
You are on the right path.**



THE PHOTOS DEPICTED ON THIS PAGE
ARE FROM VERONICA'S 3 PART PHOTO
SERIES TITLED "REFLECTIONS OF AN
ANGEL". YOU CAN FIND MORE OF HER
PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE LINK BELOW!

WWW.REDBUBBLE.COM/PEOPLE/LOVELARC

Jade Wing Poetry

(Australia)



FREEDOM

She broke the rule of staying put
Refused to accept her situation
Pushed the boundaries
Again and again

Paper and pen,
Brush and canvas,
Were no release
The irony stung too much to be ignored anymore

The sky beckoned,
To she who was bound by gravity,
The clouds teased and the stars sang
Of a freedom she did not have

She dug in, again and again,
Determined to be up where she belonged,
When she fell down, it was straight back up for her,
No waiting around for life to give it to her,
Experimented, trialed and errored

Until she at last had her freedom, as it was,
Though side-effected, it was perfect -
She could now soar above the clouds that teased her,
Sing with the stars that sang to her,
And greet the sky that beckoned her
She had her freedom

SUMMER RAIN

The fragile, beautiful sound of beating wings
In the wake of a summer storm

A glimpse or two of fleeing grey

The crisp scent of fallen water,

Each drop crystal clear

The puddles on the pavement,

As gum-booted feet travel to and fro,

Folding umbrellas and shrugging off raincoats

The lingering smell of hot drinks and sweet snacks

Roads dampened as wet tires traverse the bitumen,

Spray and droplets rolling down windows

The sensation of fleeting warmth

A returning sky, blue and feathered with white

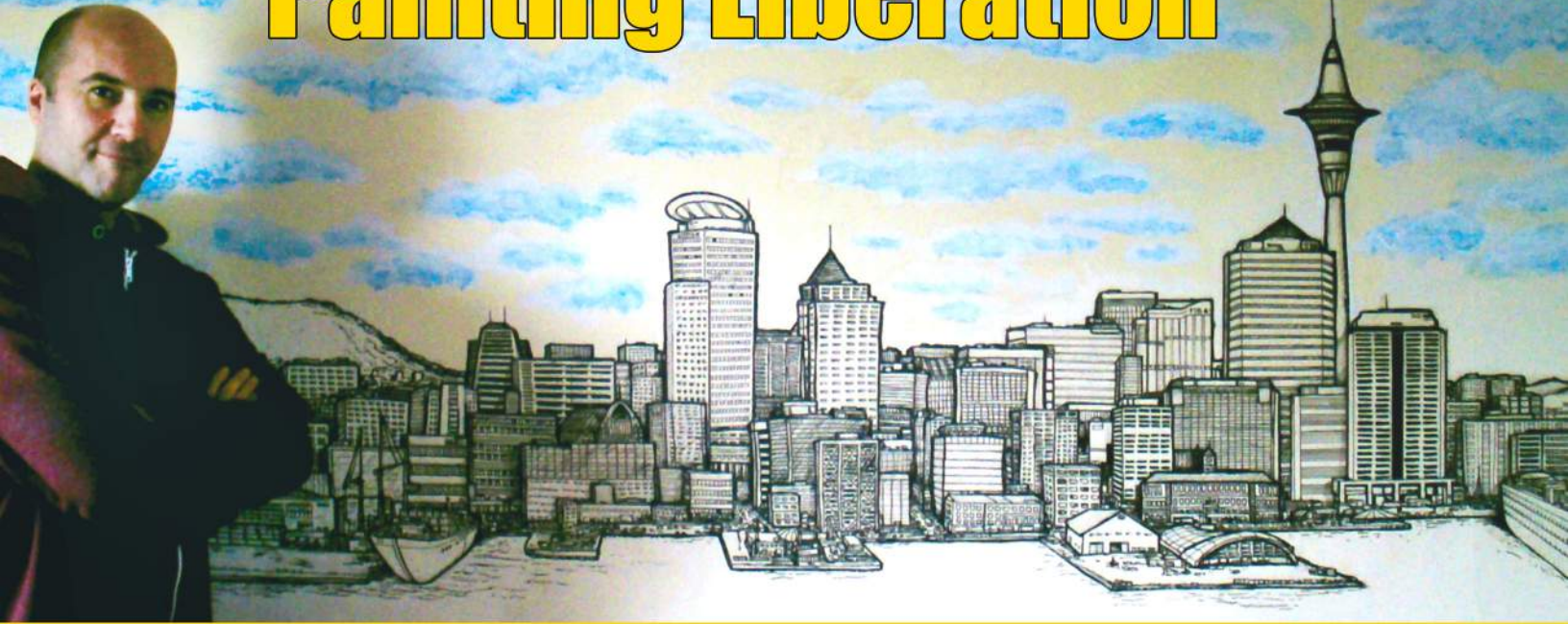
Streaks of golden yellow light,

Warming your face and chasing away

The elegant melancholy of summer rain.

Jarrold Bartholomew: Painting Liberation

Photo: UK Artist Jarrod Bartholomew in front of his mural of Auckland, New Zealand. The city was drawn in pen and ink, the clouds were painted. The mural took weeks for Jarrod to complete!



42 year old, South Yorkshire, UK native Jarrod Bartholomew had gotten so inspired by the mere concept of contributing to the Abra-zine! FREEDOM issue, that he took his paintbrush to the canvas once again in order to create yet another beautiful piece to add to his Bellydancer series (previous page, top). He had created the new piece in the same style as his "Imogen Violet" Bellydancer piece, also featured in this issue. He informs us that he creates these dancer paintings as a result of getting frustrated with trying to paint something in a more controlled way. The painter tells us, "Sometimes, the painting just isn't working, no matter what I try to do to fix it. Then I find myself letting go, freeing up my style of painting, going wild with colour and form. It's exciting, fast, and rewarding."

Dancers have such an uninhibited way about them that their free-flowing means of movement and self-expression is very inspiring to artists like Jarrod. It's almost intuitive, as Jarrod also lets his intuition be guided by the paint, having no plans for the end. He paints until the piece FEELS done. Jarrod works in Acrylics and Oils and sells his beautiful works of art in Etsy shop which you can find and purchase by clicking the Etsy button below!

Jarrold also loves traveling, writing, and creating art pieces around these other passions. Above is a photo of Jarrod in front of a mural he did of Auckland, New Zealand. It was done in pen and ink with painted clouds, which took him weeks to finish but resulted in a rewarding end product. He also pens illustrations for books he has written, including "Dragon Water 2" and "Beyond Tomb Mountain". You can find all of his work to date on his official site below!

www.jibartholomew.weebly.com



Whatever
comes
I'll
take
it

zame obci vlastni identity... jme deti osudu... osud je králen
Onud nás vodi na prováscich jako loutky...
joi poraten... vsepi se... skus to...
my own freedom? fuck it!!
Whatever comes... I'll take it!!! I'll do it!
... je cherché...

piano... possess...

imagination
takes you everywhere

could open up the sky...
things we never said...
better left alone...
... here it comes...

aski
who a
you?

my illusion, my mistakes...

© Sárka Lacinová

impossible
nobody else...

You will never be forgotten...
down your eyes and slow down...
all you need is here...
... I'll see to sign...

and

who?

Are you satisfied? Are you
... moonlight

IMAGINARY HAPPINESS



Poetry By Dagmara Podolecka
15, Poland



**Why?
Why not lie?
Why fight for truth?
Why live with my youth?
Why not let it go?
Why not forget it all?
Why is it bad to run?
Why can't I do what I like?
But what...
What if I broke free?
What if I ran from tragedy?
What if I left it all behind?
What if I created my own life?
Would you?
Would you let me live in my world?
Would you let me hide from hurt?
Can you understand I want this?
Can you let me do what I wish to accomplish?
Can you accept my queer ways?
Please, let me go astray
I want to stray away
Allow me to let death delay
I want to live in a lie
I want to do what I like
I want to close up and cry
It's the only thing that makes me happy inside.**

**Q: "What makes you feel FREE?":
Dagmara: "Art. Only art!"**

Dagmara loves making and admiring art, reading fanfiction, and spending time with her sister!





At Liberty to Daydream



Šárka Lacinová

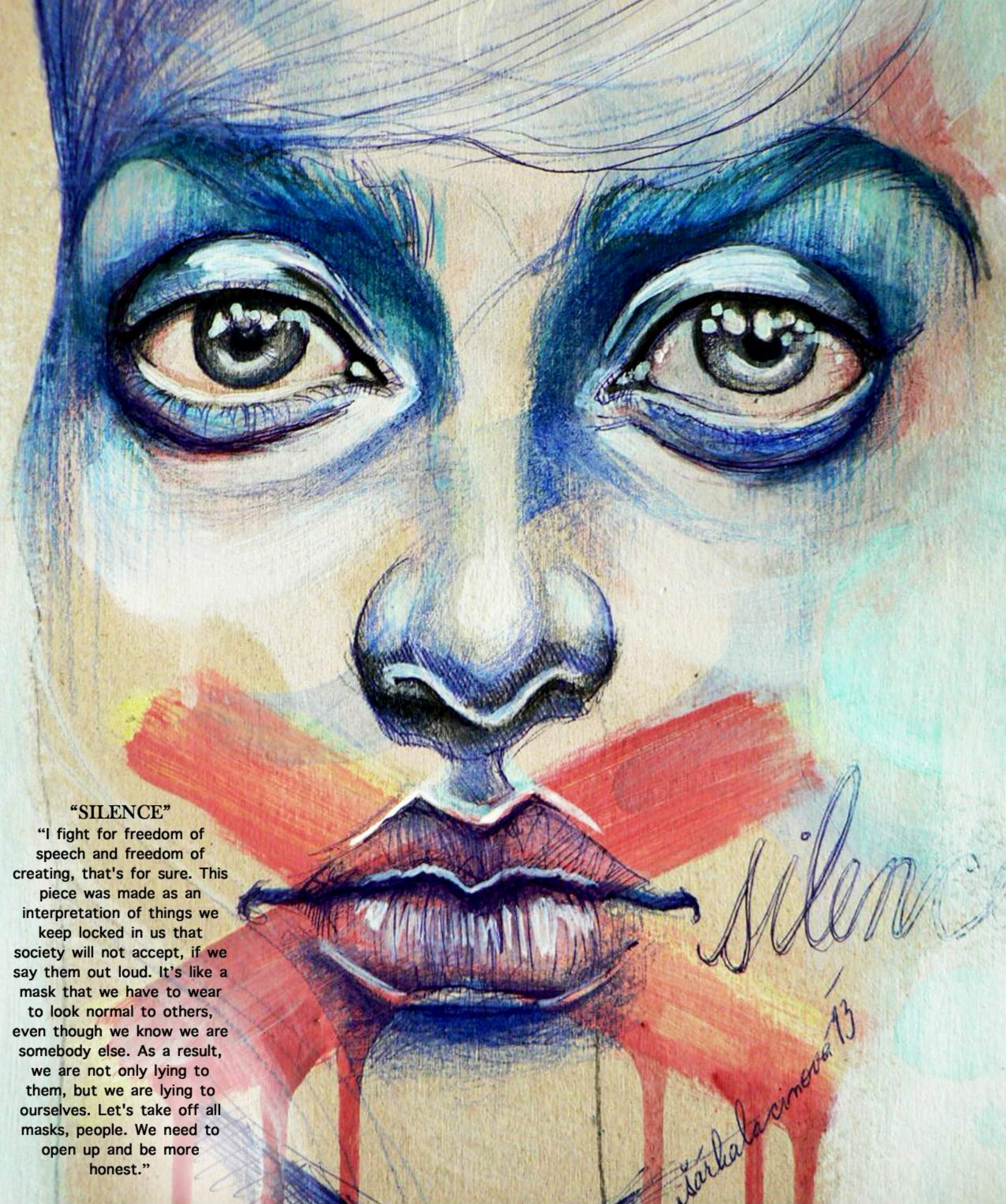
25 year old street artist and Czech Republic native, Šárka Lacinová has been an artist since she was at the precious age of 3 years old. At this young age, she had already started to draw while daydreaming of one day being a painter, illustrator, or fashion designer. She used to do a lot of fan fiction and fashion sketches, and even made her own comic books as a hobby, which she continued throughout high school. This was also where she had improved her painting skills and came to the realization that this was what she wanted to do for the rest of her life. Šárka began to build an imaginary world out of the daydreams she would have, which were the main source of inspiration that fueled her creative process.

As young Šárka's head had always been in the clouds, it is no surprise that one of her biggest artistic influences has been the Surrealism genre. She looks up to many contemporary street artists like Miss Van, Fafi, Tatinga, Star Fighter, Cryptik, and Banksy just to name a few. Music also plays a big part in the creation of her pieces. She compares it to that of a drug addiction, unable to function without it. Her favorites to listen to while creating are Wild Nothing, Shakespeare's Sister, Hurts, Muse, and The Piano Guys.

Just like in music, her works are mostly about emotions, whether they are good or bad. Šárka explains, "Emotions are like chemical reactions for me and I study them to the deepest point. Sometimes you need to go very deep to see what you want. I have experienced a big stage of depression, and I can say that was time when my best works were made, in moments of frustration..."

She let her inspiration guide her toward an education, and before she knew it, the daydreams she once had as a child started to come to fruition as she began studying Art and even Fashion Design at University. Šárka's passion for Art and Fashion eventually led her to combine both elements into her own unique line of handbags in which she places her artwork on cloth bags that she sews herself. When asked about her process in creating these one of a kind pieces, she tells us, "I wanted to design something that I would need, myself. The bags are something that are both stylish and useful. They are hand painted with textile markers that last a very long time." She also has done some hand painted shoes, and placed some of her prints on T-shirts in which she paints her works on paper first and then prints it onto the shirt, digitally.

The young artist has done interesting commissions, from huge mural paintings on stage for a rock festival, to painting the interiors of fashion stores. The more she takes on these kinds of projects, the more it inspires her to make art her full time profession. The future she sees for herself is her hiding away in her own studio where she can create or making new pieces of art.



“SILENCE”

“I fight for freedom of speech and freedom of creating, that's for sure. This piece was made as an interpretation of things we keep locked in us that society will not accept, if we say them out loud. It's like a mask that we have to wear to look normal to others, even though we know we are somebody else. As a result, we are not only lying to them, but we are lying to ourselves. Let's take off all masks, people. We need to open up and be more honest.”

silence

Warkalacina 13

“We all have to find something that makes us feel free, even if it is just a five minutes of day. I feel free when I create. Some prisoners find freedom through making art, and even when conditions around you are bad, you can found that little piece of the world, that is only yours and gives you hope. Some use ritual, praying, or imagination to feel free. I use art.”

RUNNING FREE

with
Parkour Artist
Keith Horan

When 30 year old NYC native, Keith Horan came across some Parkour videos on YouTube one day many years ago, it sparked a passion in him that would change the way he viewed the entire world. His dangerous superhero-like stunts have gained him much attention on the interwebs, but most importantly they have taught him that real FREEDOM can only come from being FEARLESS and going after what you really want in life! Today he gives us a little peek into the crazy fast paced world of a Parkour Artist from his new home in Florida, where he has been residing since 2013.

Par-kour: noun: parkour; noun: parcour; plural noun: parcoures

1. The activity or sport of moving rapidly through an area, typically in an urban environment, negotiating obstacles by running, jumping, and climbing.

AZ: Hi Keith! Can you tell us a little bit about Parkour? How would you define Parkour, for our readers who have never heard of the term before?

KH: Parkour more or less is being able to safely move through your environment (on foot) as quickly and efficiently as possible. Key word being "safely" in my opinion. Of course it may take a few fails before you learn what is or isn't safe.

AZ: How did you get into this hobby? Was it something that just came naturally to you, or was it more of a commitment you decided to make, and had to go through extensive professional training to pursue?

KH: I was doing Parkour as a kid, I just didn't know it back then. I was always running, climbing or jumping onto or off of something...but I was always more into the mainstream sports. Baseball, football, hockey etc. It wasn't until I saw some videos on youtube that I found out about Parkour. Once I saw it, it instantly clicked with me. Although I started training some things on my own after seeing what was out there on youtube, it wasn't until the 4th of July 2009 that I would say I "officially" started training Parkour. I ran into some people in Rockaway Beach NY who were out training. They welcomed me to train with them, and I haven't looked back since. I'm still great friends with these people and I am very grateful to have met them, shout out to "Team Underworld" of NYC.



AZ: Is it just a hobby, or would you say it has evolved into something you could make a living doing? If not, what career is it that you are pursuing to make a living off of?

KH: For the most part is it just a hobby. I have had some paying gigs here and there but I have always done it for fun and other benefits that come along with it. It's a big part of my life so I'm always excited when I introduce someone to Parkour for their first time and they fall in love with it as well. As far as career I've been in Local 1 plumbers Union up in New York City since 2006. I enjoy the work and it has benefited me greatly. Sometime in the future I have a couple business plans in place (non plumbing related.) For those who do make a living off of it, it's usually through endorsements, stunt work, competitions, instructing and teaching or other things along those lines. So yeah, there is potential in that sense. Some people have already opened their own gyms exclusive to Parkour.

AZ: What kind of regimens do you stick to in order to maintain your physical condition for such a sport as Parkour? I would imagine it is quite demanding physically!

KH: The majority of my training is explosive body weight movements. They can really improve your Parkour, which is physically demanding. As demanding as it is physically, I would say it can be even more demanding mentally. Your body is really capable of more than your mind would allow you to believe at first. Other than explosive movement, I also like to do slow and even static training or lower impact stuff, like working on balance.

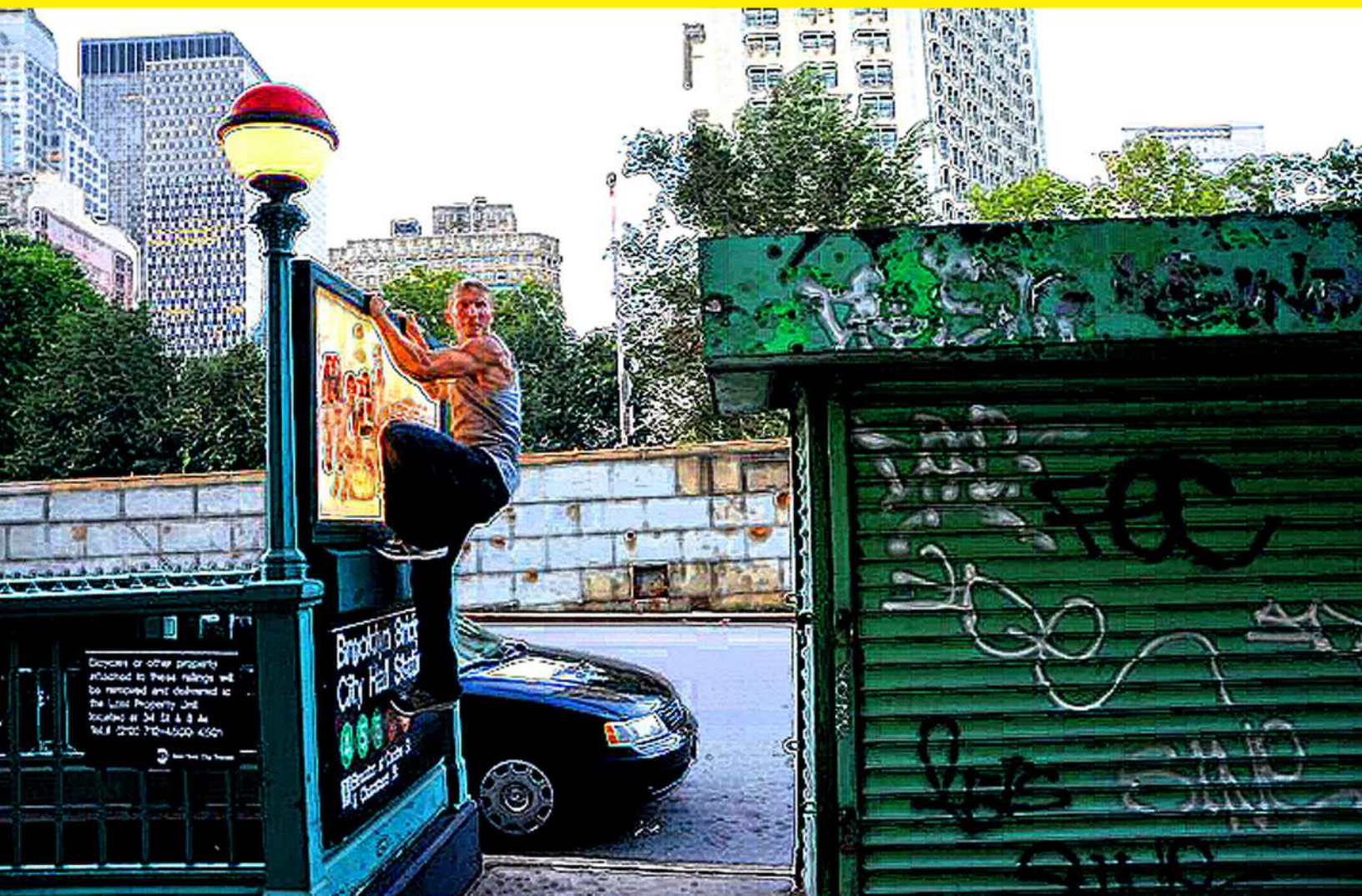
AZ: What are your favorite Parkour maneuvers to perform and can you explain what it entails?

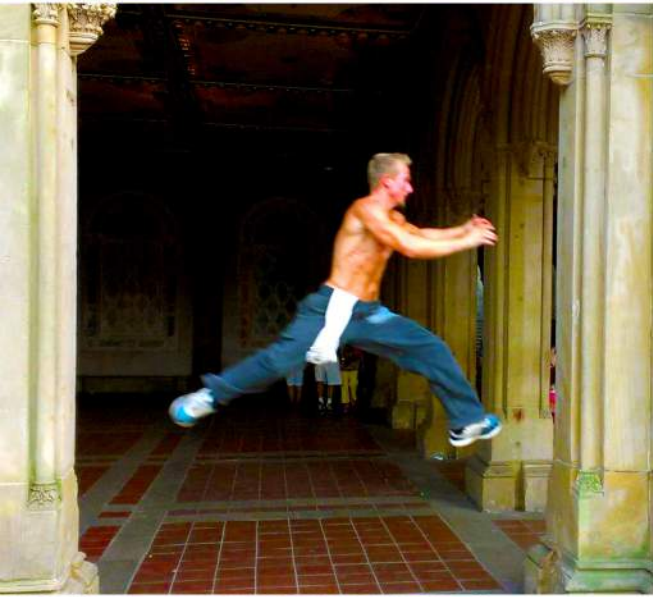
KH: Precisions, particularly from one bar or pipe to another. A precision is when you jump, kick off, or swing from one object to another and land precisely where you were aiming for. What makes it fun on bars is that there is basically no room for error. If your jump is too short or too long, you will miss entirely. I also love reversing out of a cat grip into either another cat grip or precision. Basically that move would be you hanging on a wall. Hands are gripped on the top or the side of the wall, and both feet are planted against the face of the wall. In a fluid motion you then start to turn 180 degrees with your torso while one foot drives you up on the wall and the other foot pushes you toward the object you are now shooting for.

WATCH THIS VIDEO AT 1:50 TO SEE THIS MOVE

AZ: What is the highest building or platform that you have jumped off of, and have you ever gotten an injury from any of your attempts?

KH: When I first started doing Parkour, I was under the impression that you needed to do some sort of training at a decent height to evolve and develop greater skills. So I have been up to heights that if I fell...it was game over! However, these days I've found that you can train at much safer heights and still get in effective training. As with any type of sport, no matter how good or safe you are, injuries can and will happen. I've had some bruises and sprains here and there but every single one was a learning experience.





See Keith in action and Subscribe to his YouTube Channel!

"Most of my photos are stills taken from a video (which half the time I set up on my tripod) or by a random person I happened to be training with that day. That's usually how parkour jams go. You let someone hold your camera while you do stuff and at the end of the day you end up with tons of stuff. Parkour shooting is done very guerrilla style, especially when a taxi blocks the cross walk. They usually end up getting vaulted over, which makes for an awesome picture." (Keith, on his Parkour photo shooting process.)

AZ: Would you say that Parkour is an "Art" Form?
KH: You certainly can say Parkour is an Art form. I like to think so. There are no exact guidelines that work for everyone in Parkour. Everyone has their own interpretation and spin on things. Watching some Traceurs is like viewing art if you appreciate the movement. Some call it the art of motion or the art of movement.

AZ: Our theme this issue is about FREEDOM! How would you say Parkour ties into themes of Freedom? I would imagine jumping from building to building would make you feel somewhat uninhibited...

KH: You are totally correct. I don't think I've ever felt more free than when scaling a wall well over two times my height. To be able to free your body and move through your environment with no resistance is the goal. Overcome any barrier that may try to restrain you. That can be a roof gap as you mentioned but it is certainly not limited to that. It could also be as simple as a tall wall, a row of bushes or even a puddle that spans half the street. Why walk around these things when you can overcome them easily with no damage to yourself or whatever you are going through or over.

AZ: What kind of fears did you personally have to break FREE from in order to pursue such a potentially dangerous pastime?

KH: The main fear I've had to overcome is the fear of failing. There are so many ways to progress and grow with Parkour, and if you're afraid you may not do something your first time then you will be missing out. Once you're able to step out of the box and realize it's ok to mess up, you will benefit greatly.

AZ: What does being FREE personally mean to you?

KH: Being free is something that is so obvious of a human right that it can easily be taken for granted. To me, being free means being able to get up every morning and live your life as you please. Make your own decisions on a daily basis and pursue your own dreams.

The ultimate dream would be to have the ability to be completely self sustaining.

AZ: What advice could you give to our readers who are trying to pursue their own passions that make them feel a sense of Freedom?

KH: Go for it. Only you can dictate your life. If you can impact the world in a positive way, you should. Don't be worried about failure. Embrace it and learn from it. Nothing can hold you back but yourself.

AZ: Is there anything else you would like our readers to know about you or Parkour?

KH: I appreciate a lot in life that I never thought twice about prior to Parkour. It's changed the entire way I view the world. So if any readers out there are curious on how it would be to try learning Parkour...Do it! Don't be intimidated. Start off slow and stay within your own boundaries. Parkour isn't about jumping from building to building, it's whatever you make out of it. Next time you're walking on the sidewalk and see two cracks spaced nicely apart, try jumping from one to the other...and then take it from there.

AZ: What do you like to do when you're not doing Parkour?

KH: When I'm not doing Parkour I'm usually thinking of things I can build to help progress my Parkour. Aside from that I like to write and play guitar. I enjoy designing and building things from scratch. My biggest ongoing project as of late has been dedicated to my backyard pond. When I first moved into my house there was a pond in the front. Eventually I stocked it with a few fish and then I realized the pond was pretty boring, so I decided to build my own. At first it was just going to be a home for the fish, but it has evolved from that. I've turned the entire section into a courtyard to protect the fish from the big predators, and I've added tons of plants and rocks to the bog area to encourage the local frogs, toads, lizards and snakes. It's a great little ecosystem now. Plants, fish, frogs, tadpoles, insects, spiders, snails, etc.

AZ: That sounds like fun! Thanks so much for chatting with us Keith!

KH: Thanks so much, it was a pleasure!



FLYING THE COOP

*A Journey of Self Discovery
From Down Under to Paradise*

By Shannon Dillon



30 year old Shannon Dillon has lived in South Plainfield, NJ her whole life, where she has booked bands and worked in a sign shop for a little over a decade. Just turning 30 has proven to be the most exciting age for her yet, after a couple of opportunities have crossed her path this year. So far in the past month she has traveled and toured Australia, and moved from her small suburban town that she has known her whole life, to her new home in paradise on the island of St. John. - the biggest move of her life, thus far. Today Shannon talks to us about how everything fell into place for her, and gives us a little insight about how she chooses to live her life and embrace her new found FREEDOM!

About 10 years ago at a Christmas gathering, my uncle showed us pictures of his most recent trip to St. John which is a very small island in the Caribbean. It is a US territory along with St. Thomas and St. Croix and if you are a US citizen, you do NOT need a passport to visit which is ideal for US residents who want to visit an exotic location without the hassle of acquiring one. Soon after falling in love with the island through my uncle's photos, my family booked our first trip there and since then we would go at least once a year, if not more. Traveling to St. John definitely changed me the first time I visited. Everyone smiles and says hello there, unlike what I was used to in New Jersey for the most part. I definitely talk to more people than I did previous to visiting the island. I also learned to not be in a rush in my home state and have adopted the slow paced island mentality of "When I get there, I get there." The first time I visited I certainly knew that one day I would end up there, I just didn't know how or when. Me and my mom visited this past January and found out my main friend on the island's roommate was moving out within just a few months. I sort of said, "Can.. I... be.. your roomie?" He told me to go home and think about it for a few weeks of course, so I made a PRO/CON list. Of course the cons were leaving every single person I know, but I also know that I can always come home to visit and they can always visit me. The deciding factor was that it was just an opportunity that I could not see passing up, especially since I've been wanting to move there for so long.

Once that decision was set, another travel opportunity had come my way. 2015 sure has been pretty beautiful to me so far! When I was around 23 my best friend and I decided to visit Las Vegas and we happened to stumble upon two very fun and awesome Australians while we were there and we just kept touch throughout the years. My friend told me he was going to AUS a few months ago and I invited myself along since he was staying with one of my friends who I met in Vegas. Best decision YET! Luckily my friend Scott, who was awesome enough to have us stay at their apartment, also took some time off to show us around. We traveled to the Great Ocean Road which was only a few hours outside of Melbourne and stayed a few blocks away from the beach for a few days. I am a huge beach lover so I was in love with the Great Ocean Road (GOR) from the beginning. It's such a crazy road to be on, lots of twists and turns, but every new turn you make is a new gorgeous view. On the GOR, we definitely went koala "hunting" - as in searching for them! It was a very fun experience. You just have to keep your eyes peeled for the tips of the trees and when you do find one it's like finding a needle in a haystack. We saw some wallabies in the wild but no kangaroos outside of visiting the Targona Zoo.

We did a lot of sight seeing, including the London Bridge and the 12 Apostles (yes it's a VERY touristy area, but if you TRY REALLY HARD to pretend there is no one else around, it is beyond words!). I'm happy I got to see a lot of the city, the suburbs and The Great Ocean Road. We also checked out numerous other beautiful beaches, before taking a few days to fly to Sydney, which was gorgeous in its own way but not like Melbourne at all. The harbor where the Opera House is, is absolutely stunning! It's a great place to day drink/eat and just admire the view, which is exactly what we did! I also really enjoyed The Rocks area in Sydney, which were very old structures and very intense settings for bars. There are lots of Asian restaurants which I thought was extremely strange but the food was so absolutely delicious. I love Thai because I am vegetarian and they can replace tofu with meat with mostly any meal. I am also a huge fan of Korean dishes (I love kimchi) and their curry was absolutely to die for. Their breakfasts are also very tasty but simple. My favorite was poached eggs on toast and maybe a side dish of greens. I think they are more creative with their dishes as well, adding in more veggies than us Americans normally do.

I honestly loved everything about Australia. The people are very friendly and happy for the most part and it was good to see so many different aspects of such a beautiful continent. When I was there, I kept saying, "Everything is just better here!" It is way more gorgeous and pristine in real life! Even though the pictures do a good job, it's nothing like seeing it in real life. I highly suggest everyone save up and make the trip! We were there for about 20 days and I must say I wish it were longer. I definitely am looking into getting a working/holiday visa in the near future, but now it was time for me to head home and say my goodbyes as I geared up for my big move to PARADISE. It was hardest to leave my mother of course; we are the closest I think you can get to being a Mom and Daughter. However, despite the distance, she has been nothing but supportive of my move. She said she doesn't want me to get to an age where I said, "I should have made that move in my 20s." I am grateful she respects and supports my decision, plus she has a free place to stay whenever she wants!

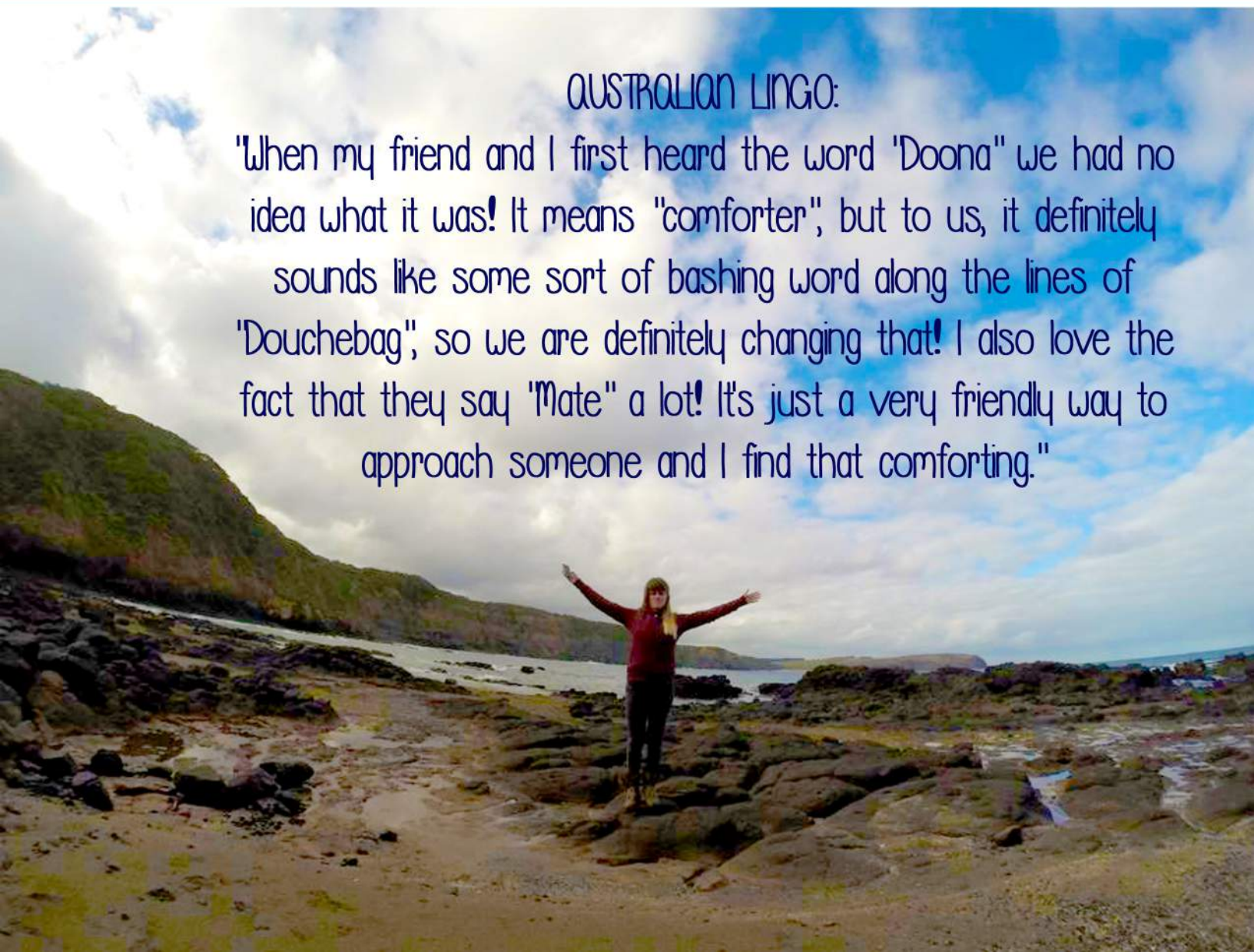


I definitely want to stay in touch with my friends and family at home in NJ but you will not see me glued to my phone like everyone in the US is. While living in such a gorgeous place, I want to keep my eyes glued to the scenery and engage in many conversations as possible. I want to experience new things and develop new skills that will help place me in a job where I can interact with people on the island, whether they're locals or visitors. Hospitality is a huge way to make a living and I do not mind taking part in that, as long as I can pay my rent, I'll be smiling. There are so many different things to do on the island as well as other islands. I surely want to get over my fear of depth of water, silly right? Maybe I'll even purchase my own dinghy so I can explore super secluded beaches! There are also a ton of gorgeous hikes that I have yet to accomplish (although I have done a few) and I'd love to volunteer at the St. John animal shelter (you can volunteer to walk dogs daily which I think is lovely). Kayaking is also something I'd like to start doing, basically I want to try everything!



AUSTRALIAN LINGO:

"When my friend and I first heard the word "Doona" we had no idea what it was! It means "comforter", but to us, it definitely sounds like some sort of bashing word along the lines of "Douchebag", so we are definitely changing that! I also love the fact that they say "Mate" a lot! It's just a very friendly way to approach someone and I find that comforting."





Coral Bodies
at the Salt Pond
in St. John

"I just said to my friend last night, 'I feel FREE!' I think I have finally reached that age, where I can make a conscience decision to better myself and my life without feeling bad about hurting someone..."



I just said to my friend last night, "I feel FREE!" I think I have finally reached that age, where I can make a conscience decision to better myself and my life without feeling bad about hurting someone. That may sound very selfish to some, and I completely get that. I am definitely NOT saying I am not going to miss my mom, friends and family, I am going to miss them so much, as well as my jobs. However, as far as I know we only get one chance on this planet and I want to see everything I can and take advantage of my time while I am still here. Honestly, TIME was the main factor that allowed me to grow and develop the courage I needed to make this move. When I first visited the island I was under 21, now I will be 30. I was always afraid to leave my home and the familiarity of everything. Not to say I'm not afraid still, it's just more of a positive thing at this time in my life. I'm so excited for this new part of my life, this new adventure, and I honestly cannot wait to have friends and family visit to show them around!



Follow Shannon's Journey on her
Instagram Visual Blog :
[@stillhavemyyouth](#)
Comments or Questions?
Email Shannon at shannidill@gmail.com

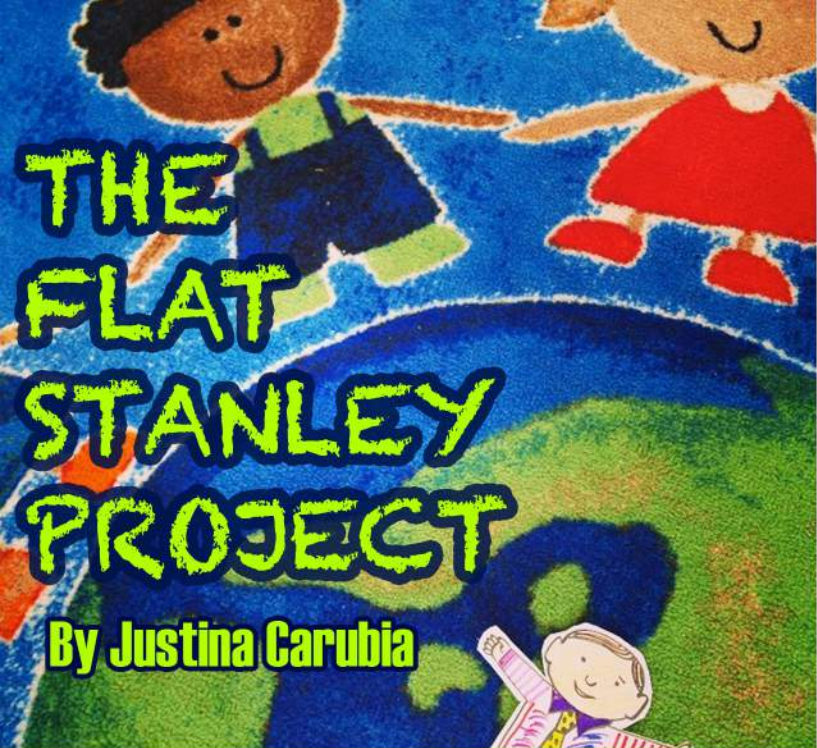


So are you trying to make your own decision about moving out of your comfort zone?

In my personal experience, making a decision to move anywhere takes time (for me anyway). For others, it might certainly be different, but if you fall in love with a place and you know you can make a living there, why NOT make the move? Even if it's for 6 months or a year, you can say, "I lived in _____ for _____", and THAT, I think is amazing. Traveling I think is the best thing a human can do for themselves. You meet so many new people from all over the planet and you learn so much from that. And the FOOD! I'm obsessed with eating as well as everyone else I assume and I love a good Bloody Mary (I can guarantee you St. John has the top Bloody Marys). Australia has some learning to do in that department, but that is the most negative thing I can say about them!

So go for it and make that move! You never know where it will take you!





This past winter, my cousin who lives in North Carolina had gotten in touch with me about involving me in a school project for her daughter Ava's class. The assignment was The Flat Stanley Project. I have never heard of this project before, but apparently it's a huge movement that I must have been sleeping under a rock for throughout my grade school years. Either I was oblivious or my school was just as unaware and failed to jump on board with this fun and educational affair!

For those of you who are just as in the dark as I was for my entire childhood life and my whole adult life up until this past March, I will shed some light on who this so called Flat Stanley. Who is this "Stanley" dude, and WHY is he "Flat", are the most popular notions to wonder. Well, Flat Stanley is a 1964 children's book series written by Jeff Brown, originally illustrated by Tomi Ungerer. The whole premise of the book began with a boy named Stanley Lambchop and his younger brother Arthur. One night, their father gives them a big bulletin board to display pictures and posters on which he hangs above Stanley's bed. Well, that night, the board fell on top up Stanley, resulting in him becoming flat. He survives the accident and rather than being sad about his new physical alteration, he decides to use this new feature to his advantage. He is now able to visit his friends by being mailed in an envelope, anywhere in the world that he wants! The series featured his many different adventures! When Brown had passed away in 2003, many authors jumped on the bandwagon, sending Stanley to even more places around the globe: Mount Rushmore, Egypt, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Africa, China, The Alamo in Texas, and France, just to name a few.

The books had sparked the interest of Canadian 3rd grade school teacher Dale Hubert of Ontario in 1995, which had inspired him to start The Flat Stanley Project. He started this project to encourage his students to write letters to each other, documenting where they have been with Flat Stanley. Most found it fun to plot Stanley's travels on maps, and enhanced their knowledge of geography. In 2005, more than 6,500 classes from 48 different countries had taken part in the Flat Stanley Project. Hubert even received the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2001, for the project.

When I did my research on the little guy, I was extremely excited to take part in such a global movement! It also enabled me to get creative in planning daily adventures that I would not have otherwise made myself go out and do. During Stanley's stay with me in my hometown of South Plainfield, New Jersey, I took him to some of the hot spots my town is known for. We went to The Bagel Pantry that has the BEST pork roll egg and cheese sandwiches (a New Jersey staple!). We also went to Spring Lake Park, and visited our Firefighter Memorial Site complete with a gnarly helicopter with teeth. We also danced in the snow, dressed up like favorite movie characters, had some corned beef and cabbage at a local pub for St. Patrick's Day and journeyed to a Pennsylvania Winery! We also stopped for a photo opp on the New Hope-Lambertville Bridge, overlooking the Delaware River! The view was most stunning!

Often we get so comfortable in the daily grind, that we forget to seek adventure in the little moments of life. So it may just seem like a dumb little 3rd grade project, but I found so much more value in it, than just carrying around a little paper guy for 2 weeks. It also had inspired me on a much grander scale, and gave me the itch to travel to more places I have never seen before! This past June, I had went to see the Niagara Falls in Ontario Canada, which was a great homage to where the FSP had started! I wish I could have brought Stanley along with me!

When I had Stanley, I took him to work with me where I introduced him to my students and explained his story to them (coincidentally enough, this past Monday when I went to work, the actual school had decided to do their own Flat Stanley Project and had all the kid's projects hanging up in the hallway!) It made me so happy to see more schools jumping on board with this. When I saw this, it made me feel like an old friend I had seen walking around the neighborhood, I was so happy to catch up with my dear friend Stanley. And even though I had to send mine back to my little cousin Ava in North Carolina after my time with him was up, I knew that one day we would meet again for more adventures! Oh also, I heard back from my cousin, and she, aka I, got a lovely grade! :-)



1) STANLEY ARRIVES IN THE MAIL FROM NORTH CAROLINA! 2) MY FIRST SELFIE WITH STANLEY. 3) STANLEY DRIVES ME TO WORK! 4) STANLEY GETS HIS FIRST DOSE OF JERSEY TRAFFIC. 5) STANLEY'S NOT TOO NAPPY WITH JERSEY GAS PRICES! 6) STANLEY GETS HIS FITNESS ON! 7) STANLEY VISITS SPRING LAKE PARK IN SOUTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY. 8) STANLEY VISITS THE SOUTH PLAINFIELD FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL. 9) STANLEY CROWS DOWN ON A PORK ROLL EGG AND CHEESE - THE OFFICIAL SANDWICH OF THE GARDEN STATE. 10) STANLEY'S PORK ROLL SANDWICH IS FROM SOUTH PLAINFIELD'S HOT SPOT THE BAGEL PANTRY. 11) STANLEY IS FESTIVE AT RAILEY'S HARP AND PUB ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY WITH CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE AND A GUINNESS! 12) STANLEY HELPS ME PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON OUR SPRING 2015 DREAMS ISSUE! 13) STANLEY DOES SOME WINE TASTING AT HOPEWELL VALLEY VINEYARDS IN PA. 12) STANLEY STOPS AT NEW ROPE TRAIN STATION FOR A PHOTO OPP. 13) STANLEY OVERLOOKING THE DELAWARE WATER GAP FROM THE NEW ROPE TOLL BRIDGE. 14) STANLEY AND I ENJOY OUR FAVORITE MOVIE "CORALINE" TOGETHER...HE OPTED FOR THE WIG. 15) STANLEY PACKS HIS BAGS AND CAN'T WAIT ALL THE ADVENTURES THAT AWAIT HIM! BYE STANLEY! IT'S BEEN FUN!

FIND MORE OF MY VISIT WITH FLAT STANLEY AND OTHER TRAVEL ADVENTURES ON MY INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT @STINABEANAFOFINA!

FIRST CLASS

Dear Ava,

I wanted to tell you a little bit about my stay with cousin Justina in New Jersey. She is from a small town called South Plainfield, where they have helicopters with teeth, and the best Pork Roll Egg n Cheese Sandwiches I only ever had! The Bagel Pantry is a town staple! I also went to work with her and met all of her lovely students where they sang a silly rhyme song about my name. They must think it's funny or something. We celebrated St. Patrick's day at Hailey's Pub in Metuchen and had corned beef and cabbage. That was yummy! I must say, I ate very well on this trip! It's a good thing that she has guest passes on her gym membership because if I didn't get in my workouts, I wouldn't have come back so flat!

Anyway, we shared our love of Tim Burton movies and Coraline which we watched a few times. We didn't do as much as Justina had wanted to because she had work all week and was in production for her magazine (Qbrazine.com) which features Artists and Storytellers from all around the globe. She hopes to feature me in her summer issue! How exciting!

Last weekend her boyfriend Ovi, surprised us with a trip to a winery in Hopewell. My personal favorite was the White Pinot Grigio. We then drove over to Lambertville (NJ) and New Hope (Pa), which I had fallen in love with! We did a little country driving, and drove over the Delaware River Bridge which connects the 2 towns and actually the 2 states. It's crazy that you can just walk 15 minutes over the bridge and be in a completely different state! New Hope was great! I can understand why she loves it there so much! It is very artsy, there are quirky little shops everywhere! We stopped at the Triumph Brewery right by the train station for some dinner. I got to take a photo in front of the train! I had a delicious risotto with mushrooms, peas and duck sausage. It was quite interesting! After dinner, we walked a long the pier behind the Bucks Country Playhouse which sat above the Delaware River. The lookout here was beautiful and it was a bit of a gloomy day toward dusk, so there was some fog rolling off of the River that was just a bit chilling!

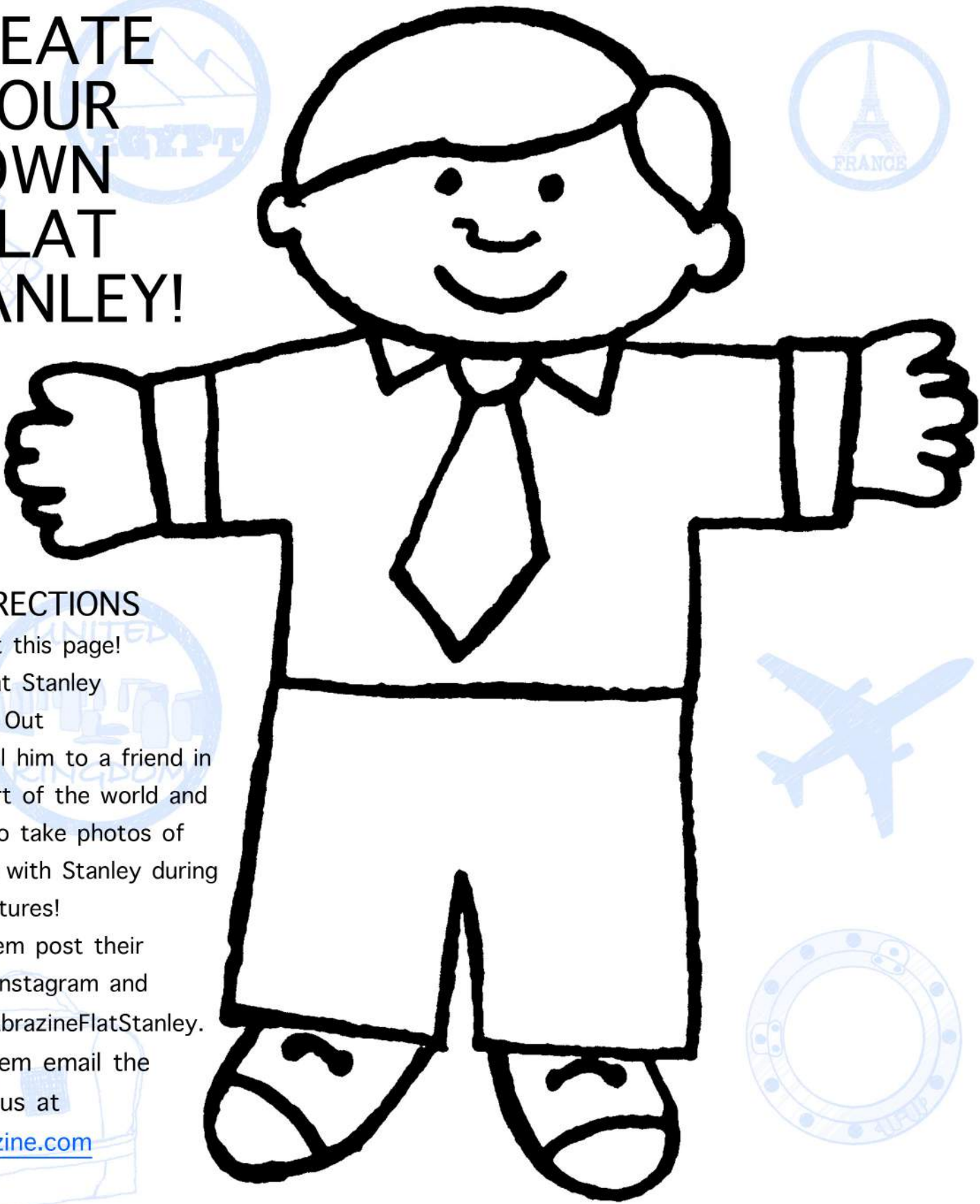
Maybe next time I visit, I will be able to get over to New York City! It is only about a 45 minute train ride from where Justina lives! That is the beauty of where she lives! New Jersey gets a bad rap from horrible shows on MTV and Bravo. But if you just visited there and saw the beautiful state first hand, you would see all the wonderful things it could offer you. If you live in Central NJ, you can drive about an hour in any direction and get either the country, the city, or the beach. The only downside to this state is the freezing weather at this time of year, and the prices. It is one of the most expensive states to live in, and probably because of the convenience of all of the wonderful things to do around there. I would visit again in a heartbeat!

Love,
Stanley

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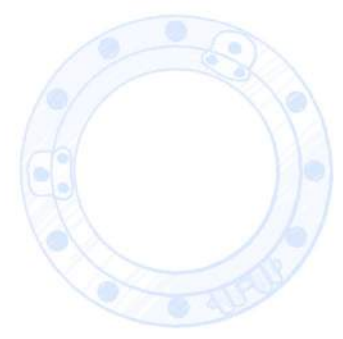
CREATE YOUR OWN FLAT STANLEY!



DIRECTIONS

1. Print out this page!
2. Color Flat Stanley
3. Cut Him Out
4. Snail Mail him to a friend in another part of the world and ask them to take photos of themselves with Stanley during their adventures!
5. Have them post their photos to Instagram and hashtag #AbrazineFlatStanley. or have them email the photos to us at

Info@Abrazine.com



Don't have a friend in another part of the world? NO WORRIES! You can find a person to send your Flat Stanley on www.FlatStanley.com. Just creat a free account and click the Exchange tab to look through the database. You can either send yours, or receive one from someone else! You can also upload your Stanley photos on the site's database where you can see how much fun your Stanley is having with your recipient (or vice versa). The possibilities are endless!

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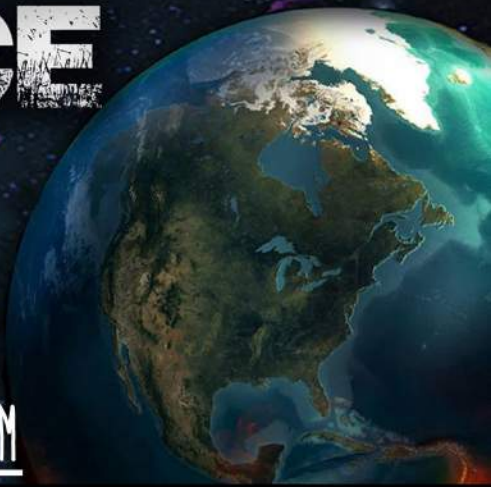
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Submit to the Fall 2015 Issue

We will be celebrating the theme of

THE DAY OF THE DEAD

The Day of the Dead (Dia de los Muertos) is a holiday traditionally celebrated throughout central and southern regions of Mexico, to honor, pray for, and remember their loved ones who have passed on and embarked on their spiritual journeys. Unlike the darkness that surrounds death in European and American cultures, the Mexican culture celebrates death in a much more colorful and lively manner. The traditions connected to this celebration of spiritual afterlife, include building private altars called *Ofrendas*, and leaving gifts for the deceased such as sugar skulls, marigolds, food, beverages and the deceased's possessions.

In this issue we will celebrate our Fall season in a more colorful and lively manner through this theme! We are looking for all kinds of submission pieces such as art, poetry, lyrics, music, stories, vlogs, how-to instructional pieces, meditations, prayers, affirmations, inspirational quotes, photography, recipes, arts n' crafts projects, art videos, tips and tricks for the fall season, Halloween costume or makeup ideas, travel stories, ancient folklore, spiritual experiences, etc. We will also accept anything not theme related, but still seasonally appropriate (Halloween, Autumn, Leaves, Fall, etc.) If you have an idea for a piece that is not on this list, send it to us at Info@Abrazine.com!

**Before Submitting, Please Read Our
[Complete Submission Guidelines HERE](#)**

Thanks for Reading!

E

Art: "Imogen Violet"
(Belly Dancer Series)
By Jarrod Bartholomew
South Yorkshire, UK

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Art:
"Feel So Free"

By Šárka Lacinová
(Czech Republic)



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