

HOWLER daily

FIVE FRESH STORIES
FOR YOUR WEEK

thomas osatchoff
seeing it - poetry

donald patten
master paintings
in covid times - art

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cover art:
donald patten

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seeing it

thomas osatchoff

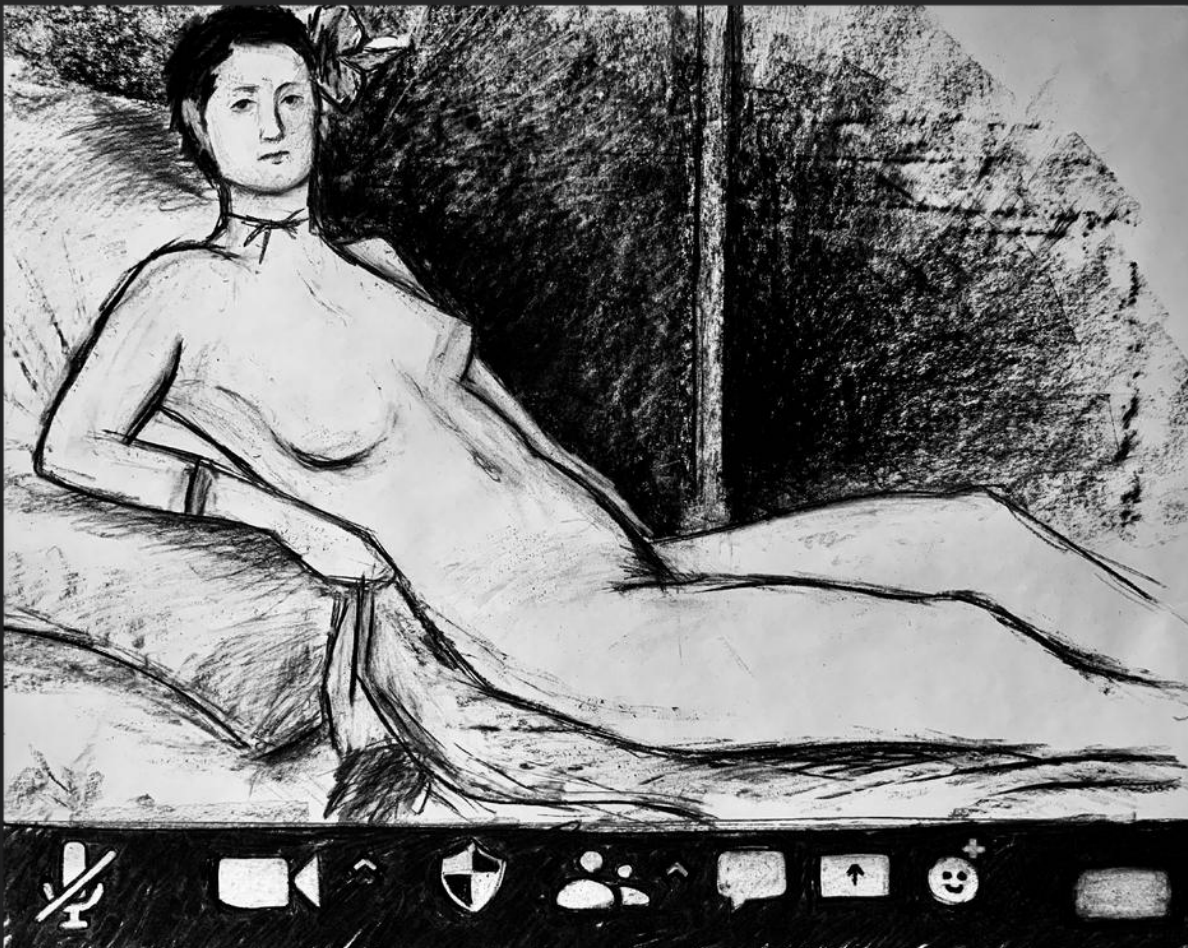
stacking boxes again
this realization the burning
bush this moment this you me
tried tiny bathroom
on the second level
looking out the barred square window
at someone in the empty green lot
lighting a fire like one minute
to make it betweenesses

■ Thomas Osatchoff, together with family, is building a self-sustaining home near a waterfall. Recent work has appeared in *New Note Poetry*, *Letters Journal*, *L=Y=R=A*, *Red Coyote*, *Thin Air*, and elsewhere.

master paintings in covid times

donald patten

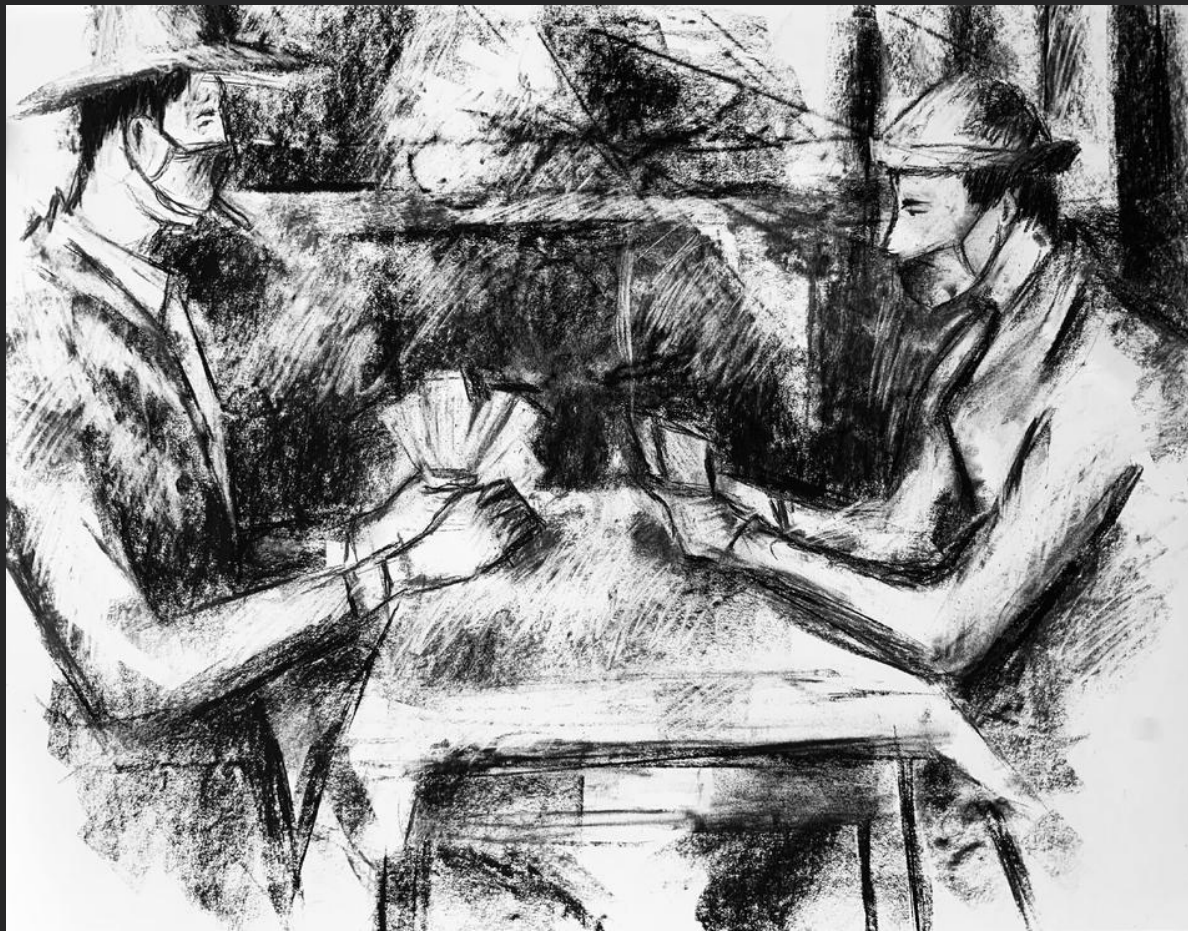
Almost overnight, COVID-19 has changed the way people interact with each other and with our own bodies. In the past, significant painters, the old masters, would depict historically significant disasters that happened to them as a way to cope.



Olympia on a Zoom Call (2022) references Olympia by Édouard Manet from 1863.



Café Terrace at COVID Capacity (2022)
references *Café Terrace at Night* by
Vincent van Gogh from 1888.



The COVID Card Players (2022) references *The Card Players* by Paul Cézanne from around 1894 or 1895.



The COVID Nightmare (2022) references *The Nightmare* by Henry Fuseli from 1781.

Mask Gleaners (2022) references
Gleaners by Jean-François Millet from
1857.



■ Donald Patten is an oil painter, illustrator, and graphic novelist from Belfast, Maine. He is currently a senior in the BFA program at the University of Maine.
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the ritual of killing the crab

ruby marguerite



I buy a crab-stuffed pretzel after therapy. A treat after an hour of crying. I don't know the name of the man who runs the pretzel store, but he remembers everything about me. He asks how the job hunt is going. I give him a noncommittal answer. This was the question I was fearing, a reminder of failure. But he doesn't know that, he wants only to make idle conversation while the pretzels cook, rolling slowly through the oven on their metal racks.

In my room, I tear open the cavity that he's filled with crab. I dig into it with the other breadly limbs I've ripped off in an animalistic haze, scooping out the crab dip methodically. My ancestors ate food like this. Tearing bread, fruit, meat, open. This is the ritual, sitting in my two-bedroom apartment,

fighting off the apex predator—my cat—who wants to taste the seafood. Eventually, I submit and give her a piece, and in this way too, we are both connected to our ancestors. The ritual of sharing the spoils of the hunt.

I am the creature form of ancient souls. I can taste the bloodshed of loss, victory, and food. This is a gift, to be handed a crab dip pretzel in exchange for four pieces of green paper. It is a gift to make conversation with the man who crafts it.

Yet we are both so removed from our food, from our conversation.

I wish to cut into something. I wish to crush the crab with a heavy stone as it scuttles sideways away from me. To feel the grit and shards and juice and blood. To taste the stone and sinew.

Growing up, my family was

vegan. I never found it strange when I was small. I never knew the taste of meat, dairy, egg. I've heard you can't miss what you've never had.

Yet still, I loved watching my mother prepare a pomegranate. She would plunge it into our mottled stone bowl—the one with the cracks—filled with water. I watched as bubbles rose from the submerged fruit, spilling out in columns. She tore the thing apart with her fingers, familiar and soft to me, and the cracking red skin echoed in our chipped kitchen.

When she'd finished, she'd fill little teacups with seeds so red I would've thought she named them after me. And I would take the little cups and methodically pick out one seed at a time. Tearing the juicy flesh off the hard white bone with my front teeth. Seeing myself a wolf, deep in the woods up the mountain where they used to live, finally,

finally eating after a long hunt.

And lastly, I would crush the pomegranate bone between my molars. Savoring the feel of the shatter. Praising the animal inside me.

- Ruby Marguerite is, and always has been, a lover of stories. She is a poet and nonfiction writer whose work focuses on family, heritage, and the meaning of being human.

SURVIVORS

gaby bedetti

I see my art as a way to connect with and be inspired by the beauty in the world. Taking photographs makes me pay attention to the resilient tree thriving on a rooftop, the graceful neck of a swan, the brilliant colors of a bluebird, the strength of a windswept sunflower, and the toughness of snow-capped daisies.





■ Gaby Bedetti is a photographer, writer, teacher, and translator working in Lexington, Kentucky. Like a ukiyo-e painting, my photographs invite the viewer to be part of "the floating world."

web: gabriellabedetti.wordpress.com

I lied when I said that I missed you

eleanor claire

what I meant was that I miss
myself; I miss my youth and the way
that each day somehow stretched out
to hold unending time – or did it unfold
so slowly because each second felt
drenched in cruciation, unmoored and
delicate, I was always so close to the
edge, flirting with the ravine beneath me
and I was always waiting to claim
my inevitable end; perhaps I do not
miss the pain itself, but the way
each moment felt sacred, like I
could taste my own desperation, like
I needed some sudden shock to rewire
my breaking body

and yes, I have come to love this
peace I now hold, but sometimes
I wish I could return to those days,
all flashing lights and thunderstorms,
my chest breaking open with each
sunrise, fists for hands and a mouth
full of broken glass, and sometimes
I want to relive that burning,
that eternal fury, I wish
I could dig my nails in, hold
viciously onto that girl so fervently
chasing her own destruction

and yes, I love this life that I have
built, slow mornings and love that keeps
me warm, but a thrum beneath my
breastbone may always sing
for the chaos that I learned to call
home, for that eternal yearning
for something, anything to burn
away that restless energy
that waits in my bones, curdling
and rotting until I am only
caffeine and consequences, crossed
out letters to my own self
and it feels as if breaking this
tie is like losing the last strand
I have to my own mind, to



being nineteen and reckless, afraid
of everything and nothing all at
once, and I never want to
let her go

I do not know
how to tell you that when I say
I miss you, what I mean is that
I miss myself

- Eleanor Claire is a writer and artist from South Florida who has been previously published in *Verity La*, *The Cape Rock*, *In Parenthesis*, *Paragon Journal*, *Plainsongs Magazine*, and others.
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HOWL[er]

the howler project is a CREATIVE COLLECTIVE
and outreach organization, making space for
human connection through STORYTELLING.

