

Red Clay Journal

Volume 1 Issue 2
redclayjournal.com

In this Issue:

Art by Adam Pupchek & Jan Rasch
Poetry by Ted Jackins, Samuel J Fox,
Sha'nee Wasson, & Kristie Darling



Adam Pupchek: "Curious George's Emporium of Strange Art"
Multiple Mediums on 24x48 Canvas, 2023

When I Consider Becoming a Patron Saint of Something

Samuel J Fox

Much of this life I've only gotten wrong
because I ignored love as a safeguard
against the eventual. I've never called myself
saint of infatuation with bruised souls,
saint of the skinned kneecap with hands
holding a bouquet of wildflowers and weeds,
saint of the poems returned to sender,
saint of photographs hidden in a shoebox,
saint of the sunrise stained blue
because someone is gone,
saint of the quiet dusks
filled with cigarette smoke,
saint of the painting
that feels prematurely abandoned,
saint of tiny tragedies
every day that go unnoticed.

Listen: if you love something and it leaves,
let it be its auspicious, terrifying self.
I'm not saying it will return; but, when grief
starts handing out one-way tickets to heaven
realize there is no better heaven
than the unfinished one here.
Here: where love seizes all things into the holy.

Monsters

Ted Jackins

The world is full of monsters,
And those who hunt them.
The true trick is to not
End up a monster,
Yourself.



Jan Rasch "Desert Dance" Acrylic on Canvas 18x24 2023

Mystery

Sha'nee Wasson

Where there is mystery,
There is great wonder.
To know little of the abyss
Is to have no reason to fear it.
The fear of living is an albatross.
A spirit sprouting flailing wings
Desperate for intoxicating air to breathe.

Beyond the Pale for Cormac McCarthy

Ted Jackins

Architect of American
Sentences,
Your shadow looms
Large
Over the fading
Desert of literature's
Skeletal remains
Which stretches out
With ghostly fingers,
In order to pluck
The sun from
The very sky.



Adam Pupchek "Dripping Toward Sovereignty"
Mixed Media on 48x24 canvas, 2023



Wilted

Sha'nee Wasson

How beautiful be the flower in bloom.
How it releases wilted energy
And learns to live again.
Sunlight in her veins
Warms the flesh of the phoenix.
Warming winds bending trees.
Branches dancing under pink skies.
She is the conductor of clouds
Moving them forward with pointed petals.
A stem of a spine straightening
Learning to grow and love upright.

Kristie Darling

Those loose atoms orbiting us...
are they blind bits or the all-seeing visualites
who name the names of planets
and tomorrow, the new millennium's song?
Is the cosmos a naturally inhaling
thing that recycles purpose
and exhales metadata
and the molecular prosperity?
We know by viscera and sweat
that we're morphed of an unaccountable
precision flung every which way,
sluiced and sifted through again.
And again.
When do we realize we're aligned
with wakened advantage that cares
and frames wisdom, that holds
on to crazylove like a clamoring?
For me, I don't have a sense
or need to think I'm not
identical stardust to you...
the same flotsam as you.
Isn't this the manifest?
Seemingly apart, an idiom finally
seeing the light of all this,
our one journey, simultaneously invoiced
stapled, stacked, slipped inside ourselves
like stationery, co-mingling breath...
sucking the same air until the air stops for you
then for me.
I study the stars' traipsing at night
and stay too intrigued to fight against
considerations that you and I are churning
the latest of my lives raggedly
into the still bowl of yours.
Stirring it up and back again...repeat again...
a million times more again, we're just casting feelers
that anticipate the moves.
I say we keep on just like we're doing it now—
staying awake at night without needing
to sleep...dreaming out loud instructions
how to live it loose...
how to become another time.

Do you write poems, essays, or stories? Do you do photography, paint, or even sketch? Send us some of your work! Our guidelines are online at www.redclayjournal.com or query us at redclayjournalstl@gmail.com!

Adam Pupchek "Diptych by Day"
Mixed Media 18x12, 2023



Love-Worn Sonnet

Samuel J Fox

A slow-motion car crash explosion on repeat, I fold
into the familiar tragedy of remembering I lost you.

I recall how the tequila we drank, under the single bulb
illuminating the deck, undressed us while the moon
turned our knuckles white to grasping: tiny, frigid ponds.

Later, the rain stuck to me: an ancient, worn tuxedo.

I recall you reading my zodiac sign to me among
the rusting patio chairs. Your voice, timid, was a song
about earthly desire and the failure of our fathers.

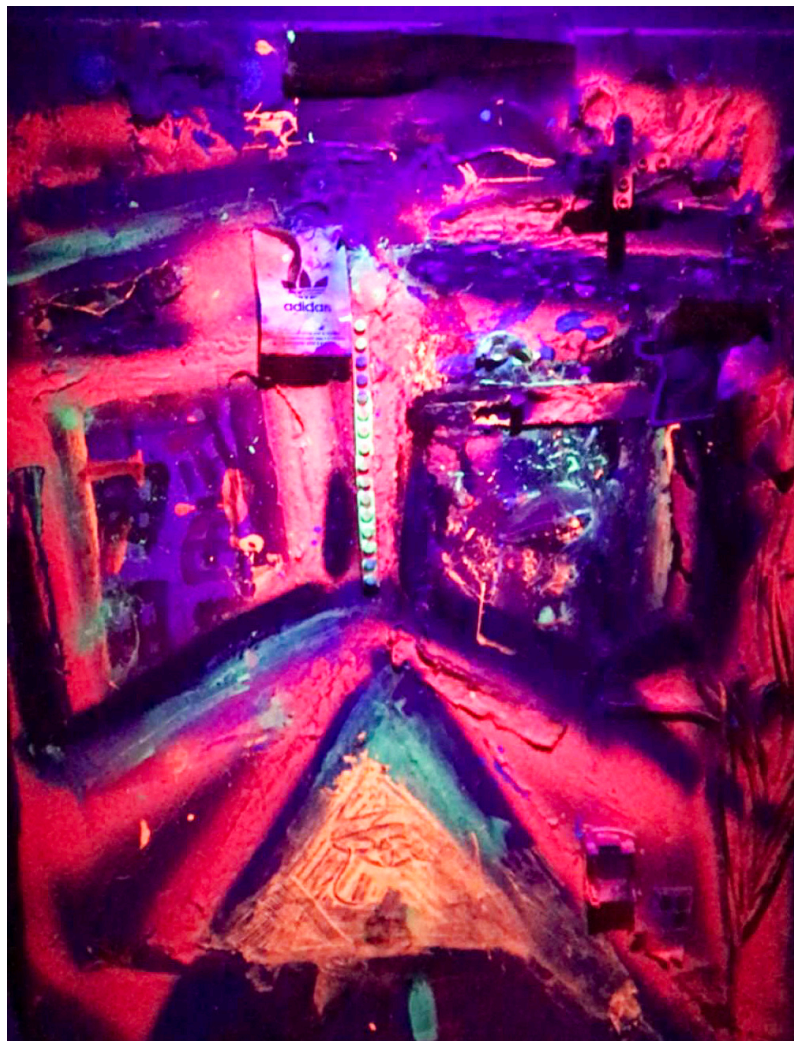
Now you are nowhere I know of, silent at this distance.

You sucker-punched me with your beauty, my throat
a bell ringing obnoxiously loud. Do I dishonor
you by moving forward? Do I dare remember, from rote,
the gossamer of your hands; or their soft resilience?

Coffins

Sha'nee Wasson

Some days feel more like coffins.
Nothing of you belongs to the world,
but everything is cradled in silk
to beautify the pain.
You are surrounded by mourning.
The grief felt in the fear of new beginnings.
The blood boils in rhythm
with a once felt heartbeat.
How the song ends-
a tune fading in fiery emotion.
And for once-
everything is still.
Peace remains in bones
which have spent so long
looking for a place that feels like home.



Adam Pupchek "Diptych by Blacklight"
Mixed Media 18x12, 2023