

# East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

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### lilac (lie-lack)

By: Angela McMahan

I am in a stuck cluster of voiceless screams,  
While yours and the storks rupture ceilings in vibrato.  
Dormant in this plastic penitentiary as you deem to be in yours.  
My color browns,  
But if I were you  
I would just be shading into my soft purple tone.  
Yes, it's okay.  
It's okay.  
We are both cemented into this continuum of confusion and haste.  
I have brought burden upon my soil, too.  
My love.  
The other saplings had needed the nutrients,  
That is certainly true.  
Look where this had been  
If you resembled what gives the soul for dirt.  
In both of your bitter huffing  
You about blew away my peace-offering aroma.  
But it is only you and not the stork,  
Here that sits with me at this table.  
The only of you both  
Who still smells me. Not the browning me of the now,  
But the perky, hopeful me of four hours ago.  
When the heat of day induced the freedom for smiling.  
When light-heartedness directed the hands in careful selection and effortless caring.  
Then you danced me through two of your fingers  
While you two walked toward home.  
Wasn't it you who passed me to your stork?  
You who had cherished  
That very moment went you caught a glimpse  
Of the stork falling victim to summers joyous  
Efforts of happiness?  
But you knew that the stork felt just as so, in such inverted means.  
How, when she danced me was more comparable to a toggling  
With apprehensive struggle.  
Yes, I too have been left as a portion of the sensible and  
More respectable whole.  
Don't think about that now, hear this  
The soil still gives me,  
My demand of water,  
My need of nutrients.  
The soil still bares me,  
My clinging of roots,  
My weightful body.  
But must you remember, what is soil for?  
And at my end, what will it have of me?  
Then why, is your soil drying out the day  
When the possibility of such prolific grounds  
Could be made of it?  
Oh my sweet, oblivious ender.  
The earth cannot replace the soil in which you first took root,  
In which you first grew stem and leaf,  
But it works in strange ways.  
When we are left aside of ourselves,  
And look up at ourselves from the ground,  
It is easier to see the stories' circling.

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### PTSD & Candlelight

By: Shawn Igers

#### Hot Ground Thoughts

Late night,  
incense and an organic coffee.  
The winter shawl is soon to come and  
The earth blanket is ready to fall.  
Winter and its notebook.  
For years it was black tea and hand rolled cigarettes,  
scratchy wool blankets and homemade cardboard book shelves,  
pictures of art work glued to concrete walls with toothpaste.  
I do not bury my soul away from biting winds.  
I polish the hard corners smooth,  
I scour my body with sand and shine pink  
in winter.  
I weep for leathery Floridians.

#### I Don't Have Any Romantic Poems

Two plus two always comes up  
With the word "four".  
Doors are meant to be  
Opened and then closed.  
These things are fixed; what we call reality.  
So, I don't have  
the ability  
to speak sonnets or verbal ballad salads.  
I cook dinners  
and wash dishes.  
I hide from clocks  
because of the mandate of their schedules.  
I know not delusion.  
My apologies to the ring makers,  
the caterers with their ham or chicken dinners.  
My apologies to would be  
grandparents, aunts and uncles.  
I'm sorry but you can plainly see,  
this is me.

#### The Shy Lotus

I sit here, dishing up midnight eggrolls, snow falling  
In the background.  
I envy my cat for his fur.  
I'm a bit retreated. I use my eyes  
but most people ignore that part of communication.  
I come home and spend hours in a corner; sutra  
upon sutra until I wash myself  
of everything ingested or absorbed.  
Behind the locks and doors I feed my contented panda;  
a fat and happy being munching on bamboo.  
But among all the teeth of people I become  
slender and brittle:  
the timid lotus.  
In privacy I dance but still  
walk about softly.  
Unashamed, I drink freely,  
from whatever source avails.

#### Liquid Musings

I am the weary traveler come home,  
the constant traveler at rest.  
My feet and soul are tired and sore.  
I don't hear distant bagpipes calling me  
anymore.  
Those journeys anyway are done but  
I wake to new ones.  
I laugh and talk to my plants these days,  
watch odd movies with subtitles and borrow  
their lines to take to the grocery store.  
I bob my head because there's music in there,  
stuff that vibrates and has to come out somewhere.  
I sit on the back stoop and hear cars  
And wish I didn't.  
I see buildings squatting heavily  
on everything and wish they wouldn't.  
It's not easy, in a shiny realm,  
but I strive with flaw towards the zero-  
self-pursuit of the inward direction never ending.

#### The Season

People huddle, thinking warmth in numbers.  
People huddle, thinking the end of the world is near.  
We ring bells, string up lights and call loudly to one another in the streets.  
We curse the snow and turn up our collars.  
We hate our wives, our very lives.  
We dream of Arizona or Florida; death by shuffleboard.  
But look around you:  
look at the snow balanced carefully on trees,  
look at the tracks left by our feet. Captured moments,  
proof of existence.  
We mark the year with holiday and that's fine.  
Reflection is a great, great thing.  
Let's see, she graduated from college and I graduated from prison.  
She got married and I got a cat.  
But what did we give? And that's where we get stuck sometimes.  
I ask people and observe their hands disappear and their eyes find the ground.  
I hope we can answer that question when it's brought about.  
The year and the people who have populated it have given me yang  
even though we're not that different.  
I've been given another layer.  
We shouldn't say thank you or be thankful  
because of the season. We should smile and be thankful because  
it's Tuesday or because it's raining outside.  
But we don't.  
We watch our TV's and drive our cars. We rush and hurry  
to get to the end of the day instead of the beginning.  
We brush away both tears and happiness to get to  
the fortune of our cookie.  
We're imperfect. Some of us forget to bathe and others  
so compulsive we forget to do other things.  
But someone, in wisdom,  
created holidays where we're supposed to be reminded.  
Giving is the detail to remember.  
It's what keeps the cold at bay.  
So Happy Tuesday.

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## Wallflower

By: Brittany Armstrong

\*This poem, "Wallflower", was written as a two voice poem, the bold (left) and italics (right) being separate and the underlined (center) being in unison\*

Hey, did you know?

She's such a slut.

*She can't find peace.*

He dumped her last night.

*They both cried for hours.*

Do you like my earrings?

*They're stolen from your mother.*

I can't wait till graduation.

*You'll miss it when you leave.*

Hey, did you know?

I know everything there is to know in this school.

I have all the best stories.

*I have all the worst stories.*

Breakups. Hookups. Rumors. Truths.

I'm trusted.

*Clearly, you hate them all.*

Clearly, I know the truth.

I just have to talk.

*I just have to listen.*

*No one even sees me, but*

I can make up what they think; if I want.

*I can know what they think, if I want*

*I'm not important.*

*You'd be surprised what people let me hear.*

*But I guess they know I can't tell.*

*Not when I can only listen.*

I'm a gossip.

You'd be surprised what I can find out.

But I guess everyone knows it's a lie.

Oh well, I can ruin their life anyway.

He's stalking her now.

*He's lost without her.*

I'm ready to kill myself.

*You're too happy for that.*

Don't say anything

*Unless you know someone who's done it.*

*Unless you know the cost.*

Nobody can find out.

*But you want them to.*

*You want attention.*

Don't worry about me.

*I'm just a wallflower.*

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### Haiku Contest Winners



#### First Place: Saori Hiratsuka

I cherish his hands:  
callused skin, strong phalanges,  
his steel wedding ring.

#### Honorable Mentions

Pearl pressed in ones shoe  
Charred dove bedded in ones flue  
Dare I describe you

-Angela McMahan

Her lovely bones hang.  
The bind broke on my neck now.  
Dead salvage of us.

-Angela McMahan

Dead wood aches and moans  
for spring and for sunlight to  
paint its leaves green.

-Alex Grashel

You returned my heart  
For you're a dandelion  
Waiting to be blown

-Martha Jones

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