

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
Team](#)

Poetry

[back](#)

Not Knowing
By: Eric Hagen

Shelter
By: Eric Hagen

A Lesson From Pops
By: Jon Vreeland

Rodney King Is Not Dead
By: Jon Vreeland

Interior
By: Martha Jones

Meanings
By: Martha Jones

A Breath
By: Chris Warren Smith

Grandpa and I
By: Barbra Becket

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
Team](#)

Not Knowing

By: Eric Hagen

[back](#)

"My father-in-law died last night, but no one cares if you lost someone. It's deadlines, deadlines, deadlines. I need to meet these deadlines, go to New York to be at his funeral and be back here to keep my appointments by Monday. Everybody wants something."

— — —
The world doesn't stop; the deadlines
still need to be met.
So you push onward, dragging
behind you the anchors of chemo treatments, surgeries and endless
doctor appointments. You pull with you: lost sleep and bruised jaws
from nights spent clenching teeth. You wake up sore and hurt,
but the requirements on your time don't stop.

You still have meetings and planning,
kids' after-school games and dinner to make,
you lift the chains one at a time, pulling copies of homework
up to explain (again) the lessons, pulling covers up
to a chin, telling them not to worry, that words like "cancer"
take less effort to say than "sweet dreams" and like nightmares
it will all be distant memory soon.

You push the edges of your lips
into dry smiles and thank the concerned,
knowing they are searching for some way to help
not knowing what to do, you knowing you need their help
not knowing how to take it, unwilling to admit that in the hours
you get up and sit at the edge of your mattress, you bow your head
into your hands and wonder when the dawn will come.

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
Team](#)

Shelter

By: Eric Hagen

[back](#)

There is an outline in the frame of my door,
half-caved in on herself, curls falling
to cover her face, hinting only shadows of lips
quivering and teeth clenched like the cold world
come down around her.

She begins by way of apology, a rapidly shaken
head bowed, trying to make an exit. "I'm sorry,
I know you must be busy," and "I shouldn't have come"
A small hesitation in breath, "I'm sorry."

What can you say to the leaves shaking in spring breezes?
That sunlight's warmth exists even in dark places, the way love
seeps through root and soil to feed the soul, it's wanting to grow
through the guarantee of storms?

She steps forward like petals turning to face the dawn, I assure her
there is nothing I am currently doing that cannot wait. I watch
as thunderheads build, her eyes flashing, then saturating
as masks of happiness we were both taught to wear are pulled away.
Spring showers roll across cheekbones, down the valleys
carved by the weight of long nights,
arguments between divorced houses and lost sleep.

I cannot do anything but keep her roots down, waiting
as we seek shelter from the weather, knowing
like so many others, she will need this to survive.

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Submit](#)[Meet the
Editors](#)[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)[Previous
Issues](#)[Join Our
Team](#)

A Lesson From Pops By: Jon Vreeland

[back](#)

When I was a child, about ten years old
my report card came back
and I had a couple of C's
My pops threw me in his giant white dually,
drove me through Long Beach and Compton in Los Angeles County.

I didn't know where we were going
(His truck smelled of construction but not cigarettes)

We listened to the same music every time he turned on the radio,
The Mamas and Papas
The Doors
The Stones
Jimi Hendrix
He claims to have been a hippy back in the 60's
Bellbottoms
Music and festivals
Peace and Love
Make Love Not War was their Code
Marijuana is what they Smoked

"A lid of grass for the right winged long hair please"

When we made it to Cherry Avenue
he made a right
We zigzagged slowly through the neighborhoods
through the run down streets and alleys and a world I had never ever
seen

"With grades like those you will live here, with the blacks"
he told me "you will have no money, and if you ever do the blacks
will take it from you"

He showed me the liquor stores
The people standing on the streets corners
People laughing and having powwows on the porches
as we cruised slowly past their homes
Pops staring
pointing
like we were on Safari.

He told me the men were standing guard.

"you see that one there, he is standing guard so they can do drugs inside
and beat their women and to let them know when the cops are coming"

The "guard" was not a man but a kid, who looked scared out of his mind,
like he didn't ask for this life
I was only 10 but saw the good in these men.

And I could see the stereotypical dreams
and there were thousands and thousands of screaming fans.
Colors and screams and shouting and cheering and celebrating

Still I was terrified

He made me think we were driving through a war zone
and this is how every black man and woman is,
and all I wanted to do was to go home
back to the beach
Back to
suburbia del blancos
But my dad wanted me to see what happens when I get C's
on my report card

"You will live in the neighborhoods with the blacks
and drug dealers and the rapists and the terrible racists and bigots."

My dad wanted to make sure I knew that
they were the racists
that they have run down their own cities
and live in these neighborhoods because
they hate whites;

"even though we have done everything to help them!" He said,
as if these people, God's children were another species
Another brand of flesh and blood

After an hour of terror and intimidation
(teaching me his perception of what he calls
"The Ghetto")
Molding my brain to the right side and damning the rest)
we hopped on Pacific Coast Hwy and drove through
Long Beach
Seal Beach
Sunset Beach
through the white neighborhoods and beaches

my dad smiled when we reached our hometown, Huntington Beach
like we had returned to paradise,
he looked at me as if he was saying:

"See I told you so, us whites have it all together,
and we are lucky"

We listened to the same music on the way home
he tousled my hair
told me he loved me but to get my grades up
(and he will get me the 1989 Upper Deck baseball set
with Ken Griffey Jr's
rookie card
which was worth a hundred bucks itself).

When we got home he sent me to my room to do my homework
and all I could do was stare in utter confusion
at my piece of dead tree as I waited for dinner,
where my dad says the same prayer as he does every night.
With the same closing line every time:

"And may others be as fortunate as we, in Jesus Christ our Lord Amen"

[back](#)

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Submit](#)[Meet the
Editors](#)[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)[Previous
Issues](#)[Join Our
Team](#)

Rodney King Is Not Dead

By: Jon Vreeland

[back](#)

Did you hear that Rodney King died?
He drowned, and of course they claim
King was loaded.
I wonder if he's finally at peace?
I wonder if God put him on a special list
of people who really got it bad
while serving their Life Sentence,
a list for the one's chewed up and spit out
by the white supremacists wearing
badges and carrying guns
Treating people like animals

I saw the tape
I was a child and saw the tape because
my dad watched the trials every day.

"See! He's getting up he's getting up!!" he said
as Rodney's limp body bounced off the concrete from
blow after blow by the cops who were later acquitted.

"But dad they are using excessive force! Why are they hurting him?!"

(I'd like to think I knew that word when
I was hairless and confused;
confused on why my dad hated Rodney King).

"Because he's trying to get up!"

"But there are so many of them and he's barely moving!"

"He's trying to get up Jon."

When I saw Rodney King
on Dr. Drew's Celebrity Rehab,
about twenty years later,
smiling with his two daughters
who he tried to have a relationship with,
and to the best of his ability,
I knew his soul was good.
I knew all along that
Rodney was no different than
Yours Truly:
a man with problems
issues
with tons of damaged love in his heart.

I watched those white cops beat the
be-jesus out of King while my dad
claimed he was trying to get up
(get up and do what? I can only imagine what he presumes)

Rodney King is not dead.
I think about him every day and wonder if his
Daughters are doing well.
I wonder if he forgives those officers and judge
And jury who found these officers
Not Guilty of an act that even a 10 year old knew was more than wrong

Even then I knew my dad was worse off than King
as he held his pom-poms
And taught his little boy the
true meaning
Of what I call...Futile Hate.

[back](#)

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
Team](#)

Interior

By: Martha Jones

[back](#)

The inside of me is too large
so I gasp,
as the earth's air balloons my lungs.
Cells shred,
as oxygen covers my skin.
I'm alive.

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
Team](#)

Meanings

By: Martha Jones

[back](#)

Let me drum to the heart of America.
We say the bigots are in office,
But we look at one in the mirror every day.
We say we the people, but we really mean
The government should. We're not fighting against
the rich, the government, the oppressors-
we're fighting against what we've done.
You. Me.
We are the government.
We fill ourselves with society's words
While we let our intellect drown.
Stop. Do you hear that?
Silence.
Let the silence remind you there's a spot for you.
We hate the media and distrust it
Yet we consume it every day.
Why don't we value our time more than that?
You. Me.
We are society.
We have one chance to make a difference
yet we've created boxes to live in and
we don't remember what it's like to have neighbors.
You. Me.
Wake up.
It's time to start a new beat.

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
Team](#)

A Breath

By: Chris Warren Smith

[back](#)

A breath of fresh air
Contains Argon. Non-reactive
Elements that have been here for thousands of years.
Fossil remains of Christ and the Buddha.
Yes. You breathe the same air that they did.
What if air had color and we could witness us sharing this gift.
You could see my breath exiting me and entering you.
We could see that this life force that sustains us also connects us.
Perhaps even more fascinating is the mere month it takes for one breath to circum-
navigate the globe and returns to us.
You give it away and it comes back.
Pure love from our creator.
So take a breath. Take a deep breath.

East Fork: A Journal of the Arts

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-
Spring
2022](#)

[Previous
Issues](#)

[Join Our
Team](#)

Grandpa and I

By: Barbra Becket

[back](#)



Video unavailable
This video is private

