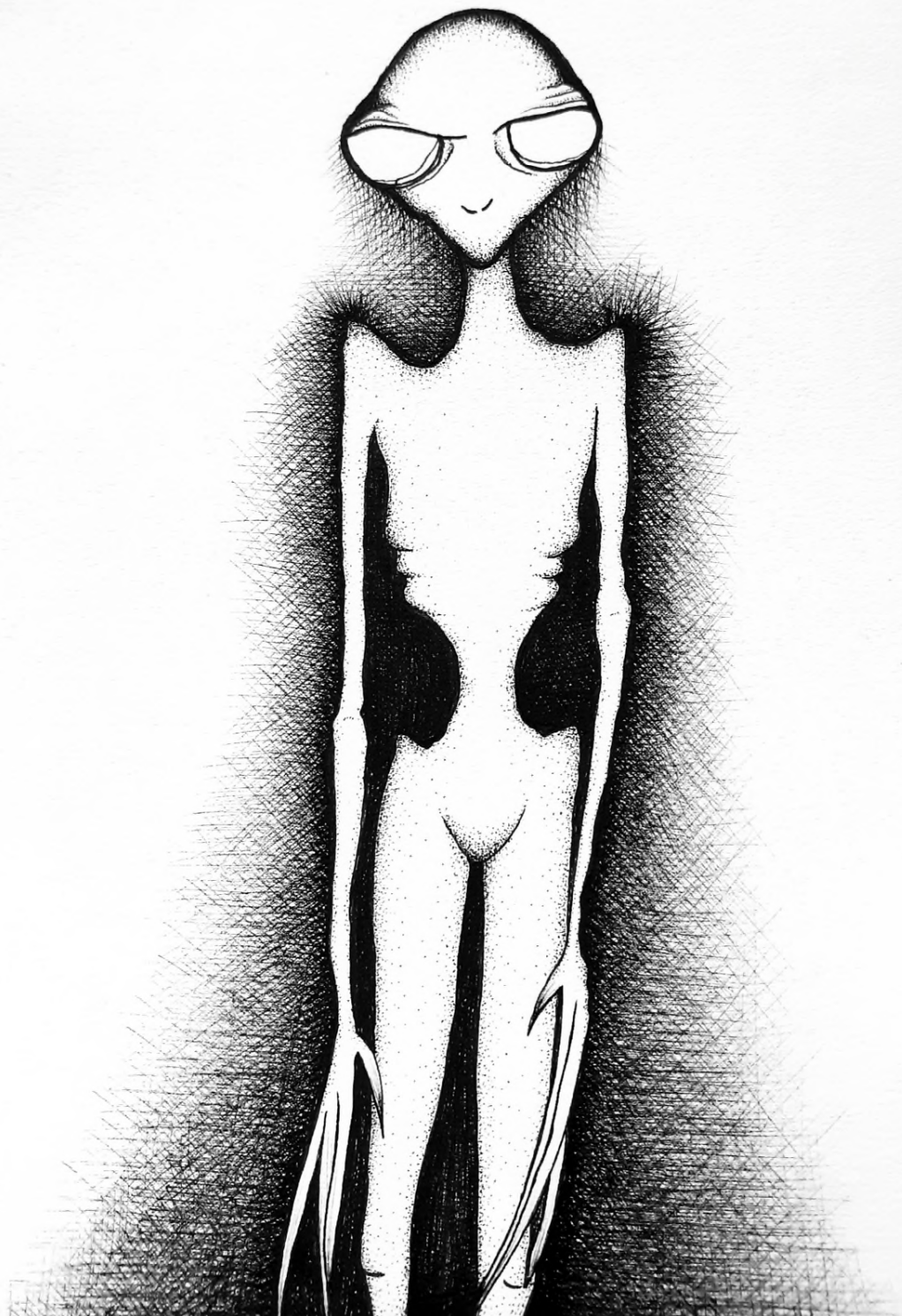


RED PLANET MAGAZINE



MAY 2020

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Red Planet Magazine

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SKIN MACHINE

by Tim Kahl

Adapt to this management plan
Reorganize with new tactics.
Change is constant in the workplace;
employees will suffer from stress.
Do you still think of yourself as human?
You're a machine inside flesh.

"Skin Machine" is written in the style of Korean Sijo poetry.

Tim Kahl [<http://www.timkahl.com>] is the author of *Possessing Yourself* (CW Books, 2009), *The Century of Travell* (CW Books, 2012) *The String of Islands* (Dink, 2015) and *Omnishambles* (Bald Trickster, 2019). His work has been published in *Prairie Schooner*, *Drunken Boat*, *Mad Hatters' Review*, *Indiana Review*, *Metazen*, *Ninth Letter*, *Sein und Werden*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Really System*, *Konundrum Engine Literary Magazine*, *The Journal*, *The Volta*, *Parthenon West Review*, *Caliban* and many other journals in the U.S. He is also editor of *Clade Song* [<http://www.cladesong.com>]. He is the vice president and events coordinator of The Sacramento Poetry Center. He also has a public installation in Sacramento {In Scarcity We Bare The Teeth}. He plays flutes, guitars, ukuleles, charangos and cavaquinhos. He currently teaches at California State University, Sacramento, where he sings lieder while walking on campus between classes.

CRISIS

by Paul Robert Mullen

day 8

it's taken
the famous musician on
Merseyside

silenced jazz

the Prince is positive
headline news

outside the sun has come to
kill time

the birds are tweeting to one
another
from safe distances

my phone
has become my best friend
which makes me
sick

day 9

the sun beats down

like

victory

though

the battle has barely begun

the lady over the fence

says

it's gonna be cold next week again

and i fear for

her meaning

at 8pm

the streets cheer & clap

for NHS heroes

who are not safe

and i feel the pit

of my stomach

lift over the rooftops

with some sort of

sickly

fear-ridden

pride

day 10

horror stories from Spain

if you're over 65
you've had it

no respirators
no chance

in Italy deaths are nearing five figures

here
self isolation in Downing Street
Prime Minister
Health Secretary
Chief Medical Officer
who next?

i look up the word 'irony'
leave a star
by the meaning

outside at the property backing on to mine
a young girl laughs // bouncing high
on her trampoline
the dog skittering frantically at the base

she has no idea

her dad // supping on a can
taking in the rays
 lies back on the lounge

the street is quiet otherwise
on these
the shifting scenes
 of our lives

Paul Robert Mullen is a poet, musician, lecturer, radio presenter, traveller and sociable loner from Liverpool, U.K. He has three published poetry collections: *curse this blue raincoat* (2017), *testimony* (2018), *35* (2018) and *disintegration* (2020) He has been widely published in magazines worldwide. Paul also enjoys paperbacks with broken spines, and all things minimalist.

A NEW ARRIVAL'S GUIDE TO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

by Steve DuBois

Were you a careless tourist, leaning on a wobbly railing?
Did a villain push you? Were you are a villain yourself, pushed by a hero?
Were you overcurious? Adventurous? Merely clumsy?
It makes no difference, now that
the
plummet
is underway.
A new adventure!
How wise you were
to bring this guide along.

The terror will not fade.
In time, though
it will become
part of the background,
like the hurricane
that surrounds you.
Open your eyes to it.
Let the tears stream back.

Hours in
falling
feels
like
flying.
Turn somersaults.
Go spread-eagled.
Extend a fist into the turbulence
like Superman.
Become a
downwards
pointing
arrow.

you will hear voices.
You will catch them up
and rocket past
(do *not*
hold out your hand
for a high-five).

Your momentum

will sustain you, for a time,
but it will fade; you will slow
to a stop then find yourself falling
upwards, and down again.

After a ricochet or two,
you will find yourself in the company of those who've previously taken the plunge.
There you will discover a new equilibrium. You will all be insiders together.

Henceforth, movement forwards may prove challenging.
The world will weigh upon you, dragging you back to where you started.
Make the most of it.
Muscles strengthen against the pull of gravity.

DISCOVERY OF THE NEW WORLD — 1392

by Terrence Sykes

rising crepusculo

&

misting commingle

spacecraft descends

into swampy expanse

lone figure arises

from new world craft

surveys surroundings

mothership monitors

dashcam image feed

ascent into marsh

bring mire consequences

hungry alligator

devours being

telepathic screams

echo into ethers

declared inhospitable

to their civilization

exploration team

leaves orbit

vines consume craft

centuries pass

metallic orb

submerges into landscape

slowly decomposes

awaiting eons

B

return to stardust

Terrence Sykes was born and raised in the rural coal mining area of Virginia. This isolation brings the theme of remembrance to his creations, whether real or imagined. His poetry - photography - flash fiction has been published in Bangladesh, Canada, Ireland, India, Mauritius, Scotland, Spain and the USA.

EDGE OF EXISTENCE

by Edward Kline

I know exactly why you seem different today.
There's something you seem compelled to say.
I bet I know every word of it - don't speak it and delay!
If you keep it from being spoken, it doesn't become real.
Please don't put it out there and we won't have to deal.

The words are obviously living on the end of your tongue.
But I'm scared it'll cause our bell to be rung.
And it will result in you and I being a song completely sung.
But if you don't sing even a single note,
Then it can't possibly be all we wrote.

Because I don't want to miss every morning, back when I'd hear from you.
Nor labor to soldier on as it's taxing for this old heart to do.
Suppressing every haunting thought of life that could have been with us two.
It'll hurt, that final goodbye, thanking you for every kindness.
Begging you to forgive both my cowardice and my blindness.

So, please don't say those words. Let's linger here longer.
And pretend over the borrowed time, I'll wake up one day and be stronger.

Edward Kline is a poet and short story writer who resides in Boston, Massachusetts.

HOLES

by Allen Ireland

A star dies. The universe
Buries it in a black hole,
With no marker for its body,
Or service for its soul.

The galaxy wears black,
But then it always does.
The preacher God is silent,
But then He always was.

The death of UY Scuti,
Or Earth, or human race:
It is all one, you see,
In the potter's field of space.

QUEEN

by Deveree Extein

I hideaway
In the tallest tower
I keep my hair cut short
And the windows closed
I do not yearn for the outside world
Who is waiting patiently
Beyond my iron gates
Mouth open, teeth gleaming
I will not let myself be consumed

Princes eager to rescue me
Try desperately to slay
The dragon guarding my retreat

Begging me to go
Based on beauty alone
They know nothing of
This war-torn heart

I choose to revel in my lonely
I soak in the sticky sunlight
And sing with the birds
Love songs composed
For my soul only

Deveree Extein is a poet and painter based out of southeastern Louisiana. Her debut chapbook, *Flicker: poems*, was published in November 2019. It is available with online book retailers.

THE APEX

by Theresa C. Gaynord

Energies travel on the fragments
of wings, magnifying clear space
with warm red afterglows of fading
light, impassable to cold little icicles
melting on their first trip to creation,

the high price of the craft. Undisturbed;
vacancy fills with microbes that pipe
through pools of sun filled water over
restless lakes, slowly swirling into
secular air, hungry for the purity of its

origin. Refractions bend toward the
median of the Left and Right hand
paths, mirroring the ancient spirits who
guard, direct, and clear with their power,
as mists of sands begin to fall,

startled by time, and charged by electricity.
Impatiently brushed and niched into
cerulean blue, the clouds and winds discover
the inconsistency of nature's movements,
bestowing their heart's

force with the probability and integration of
muscle, skin and bone, into an elaborate jigsaw
puzzle too complex to complete in this new
world. Risk grows in the profusion of storms,
where the drinking heads of the bison

lean back against painted nudes, a brief escape
from the tiny motes that shimmer and dance
within the chaos of farewell kisses that cling
too close to forsaken ground. The night raises
a crooked finger and waves in the moon,

as if by coincidence; those instant sprays of milky
white that pulsate like they have something
interesting to say, while androgynous stars ferment
with the power of all genetic knowledge. Life
flourishes, born of dark velvet

and pale lemon remains; samples of stain and salt,
the oddities of a humorous illustration; the god's
illuminations, fresh and blazing. We've always known
this place. It's where the two rivers merged, linked
by the nostalgia of firelight.

Theresa likes to write about matters of self-reflection and personal experiences. She likes to write about matters of an out-of-body, out-of-mind state, as well as subjects of an idyllic, pagan nature and the occult. Theresa writes horror, as well as concrete gritty and realistic dramas. Theresa is said to be a witch and a poet. (within the horror writing community).

WANDERERS

by Mike Turner

Long have we sailed
The stars of the sky
Systems and planets explored

Crossing the heavens
Until by-and-by
We'd light upon some distant shore

Where we'd there build
Great cities of gold
As tribute to our latest age

And pass generations
'Til the fires burned cold
And whence came the time to turn page

Then we'd again launch
Into vast, tract-less space
With hopes we'd someday cease to roam

And thus settled here
For a time, in a place
On this "Earth" which we then called our home

Til again came the call
And we went on our way
Seeking out our next uncharted sphere

Leaving only scant trace
To be still seen today
Of our sculptures and temples built here

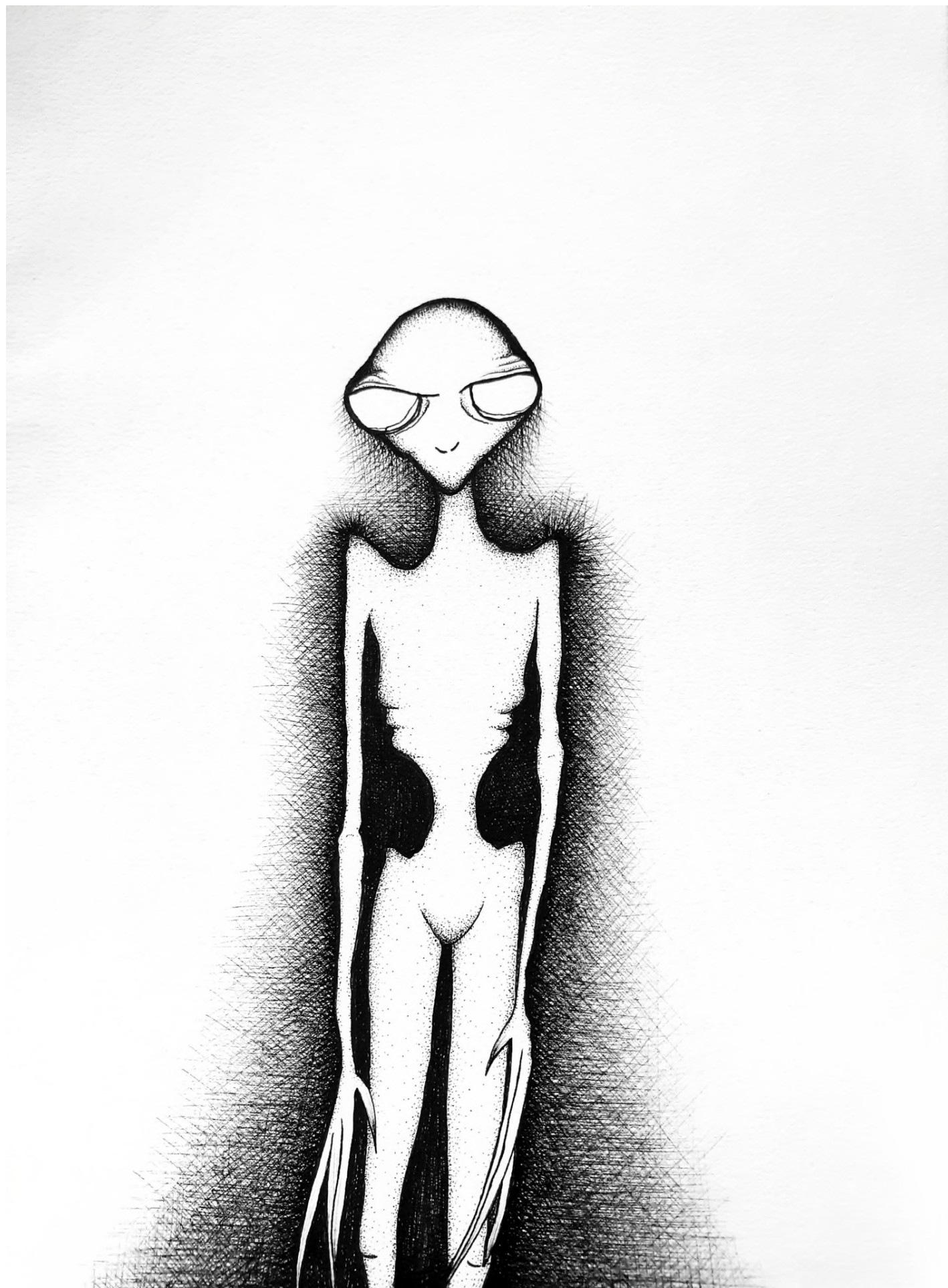
We shall not return
Only onward we go
As Vagabonds, nomads, unbound

For Wanderers we are
It's our only way known
And in wandering, 'tis destiny found

Mike Turner retired from a career in Federal investigations to the US Gulf Coast, where he took up songwriting and poetry. He was named Male Gospel Entertainer of the Year by both the Alabama Music Association (2016) and the North American Country Music Associations International (2017), and was featured on the "15 Minutes of Fame Stage" at the Monroeville Literary Festival (2020). His recordings have received airplay and streaming throughout the US, UK, Europe, New Zealand and on the Armed Forces Radio Network. His poetry has been published in numerous print and on-line journals including Red Planet Magazine.

MANTIS

by Shannon Elizabeth Gardner



COFFEE TABLE

by Amy Donnelly



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