

2012  
Fourth Annual

# Art Tales

A Unique Contest  
for Creative  
Writers



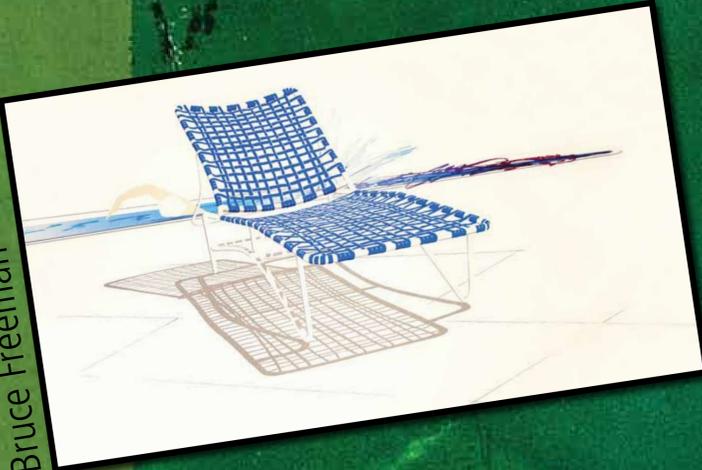
Lee Hodges



Cassandra Jones



Joseph Piasenti



Bruce Freeman



Carol Rosenak

CITY OF  
**VENTURA**  
PARKS, RECREATION &  
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

# Art Tales

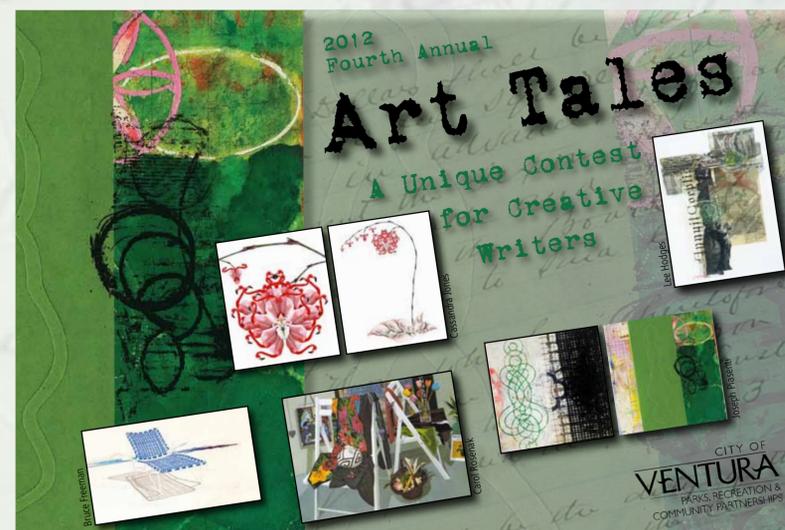
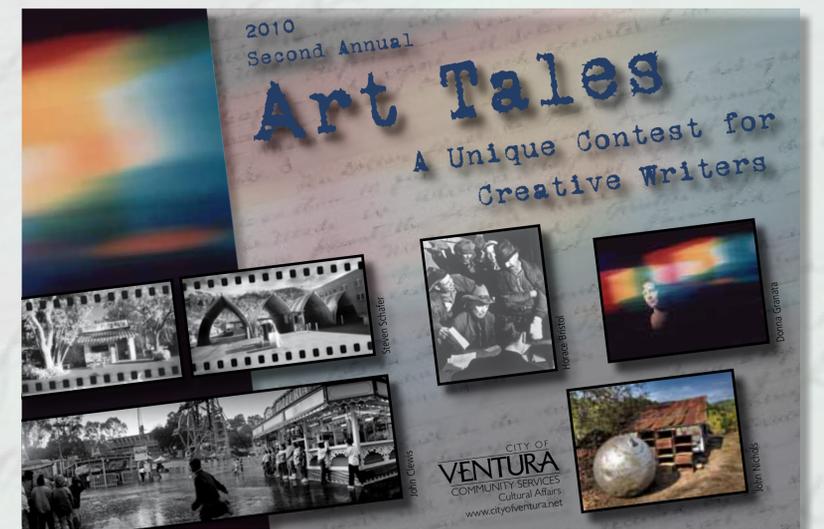
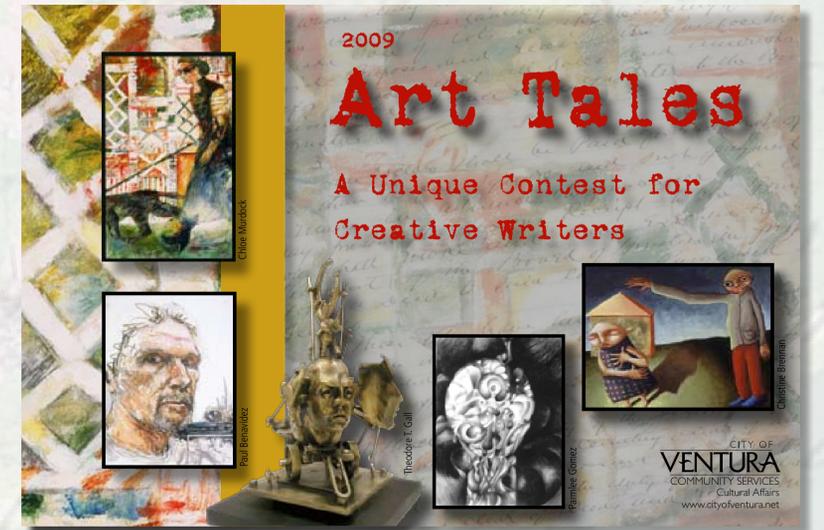
## About the Contest

Beginning in 2008 the City of Ventura, in partnership with E.P. Foster Library, has sponsored “Art Tales,” a creative contest for local writers inviting them to submit an original short story or poem inspired by selected works from the Municipal Art collection on exhibit at the Library.

In the contest writers are asked to interpret an artwork broadly using a technique called *ekphrasis*. This method, which literally allows one work of art to inspire another, has been in practice for over 2,500 years, giving a fresh “voice” to art and offering a unique and symbiotic exchange between two creative and inspired minds.

Using this method, for example, a writer today could compose a poem or story that interprets the enigmatic smile on the *Mona Lisa*, painted more than 500 years ago.

Winners over the past four years have risen effectively to this challenge, producing some extraordinary literary responses, including these five prize-winning works from the 2012 contest.



## Art Tales 2012

First Place

Youth Fiction

### Creating This

By Sarah Yenney

Creating this,

Beginning with a simple red A,

Just the letter A,

What else?

Then, the imagination and colors begin to pour  
out of my mind like tumbling graceful raindrops  
past a bright, glowing rainbow hovering above  
my head,

A splash of this,

A dash of that,

Over time, different thoughts arise, starting to cover up the old ones, just like  
new photos in a family album of memories,

Colors seem to be fading and washing away among the deep sea of creativity,

But the music of the painting keeps flowing in the ongoing salty waves,

Just like new, fresh notes, swirling through the air, waiting to be caught by an  
ear like a fishing net and heard, there are new colors waiting to be

seen and admired,

The rest not gone forever, still lingering around ghostly and mysteriously,

The art is life,

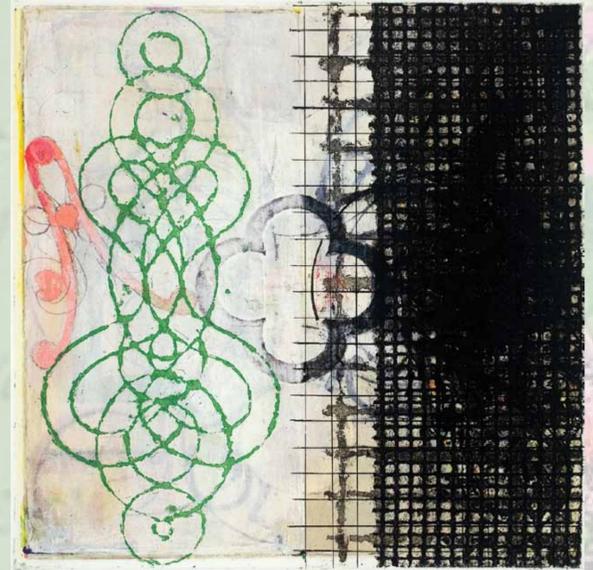
As you go through life you may discover new interests or travel on different  
paths, swing open different doors and trigger them with different keys,

Changes will happen,

That is just fine,

As long as you always remember who you truly are inside,

Just like the colors on the artwork, your true self will never abandon you,  
a loyal friend.

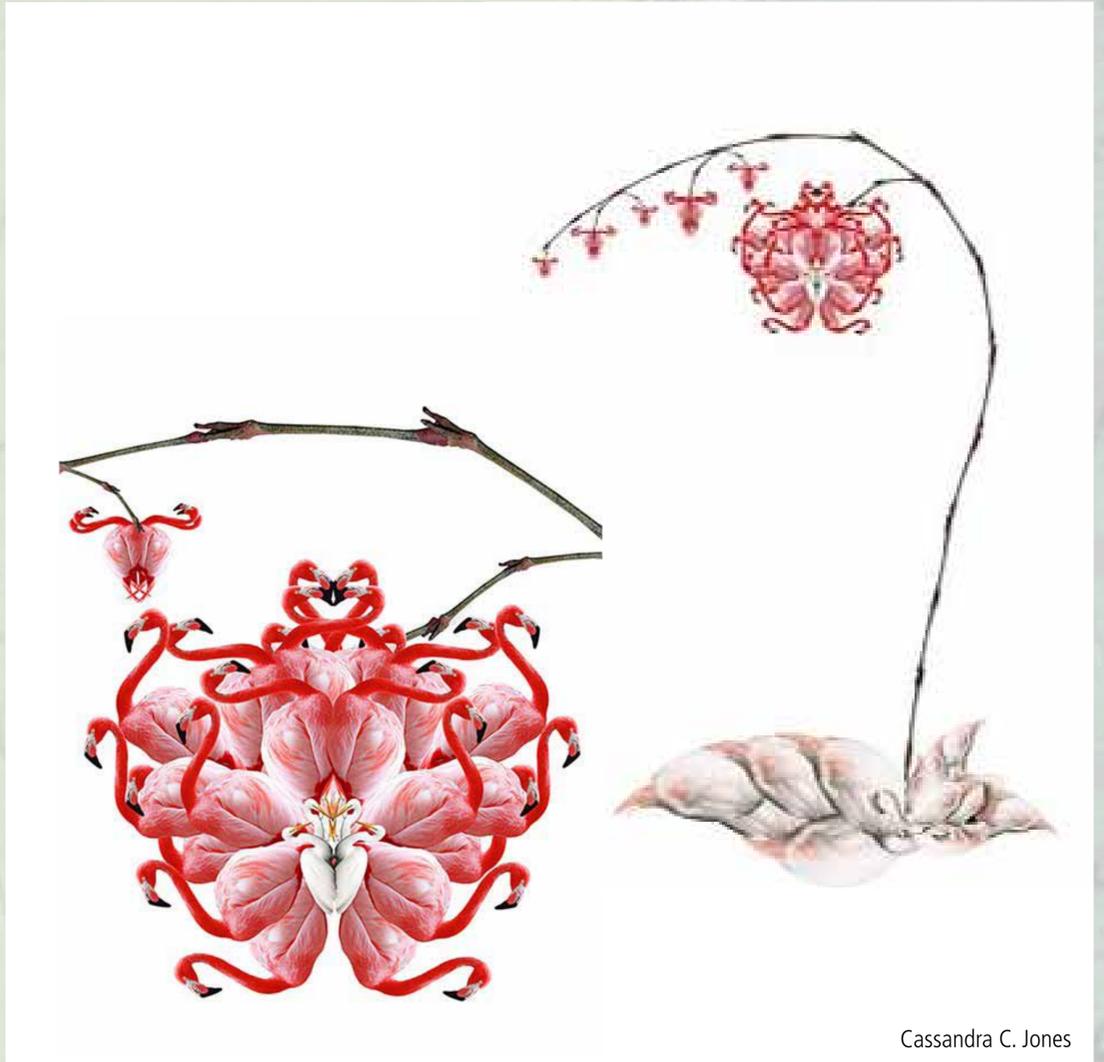


Joseph Piasentin

**Art Tales 2012**

Second Place

Youth Fiction



## **The Flamingo Mystery**

**By Alexandra Avila**

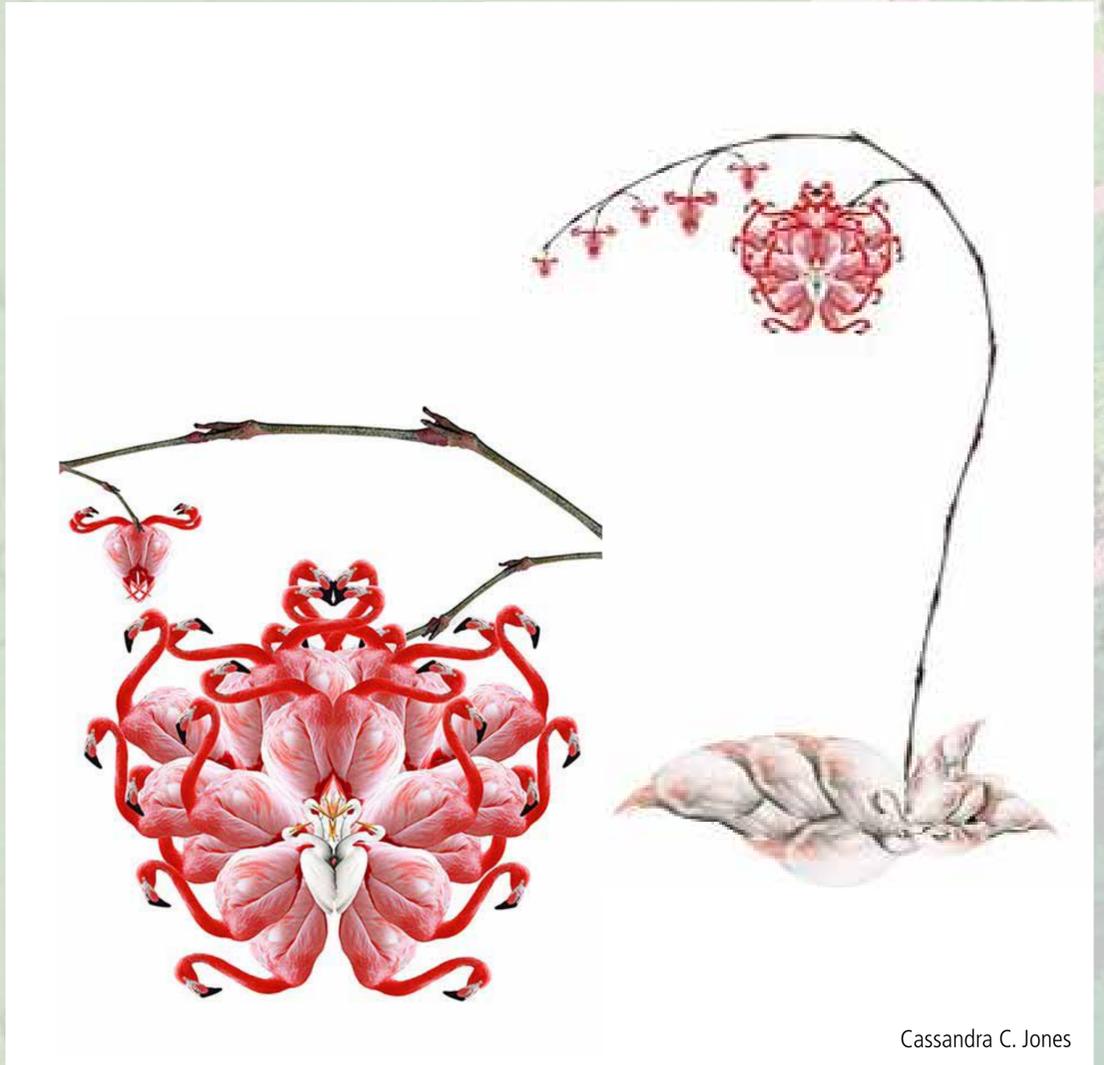
The Orchid Tree started off as a baby flamingo, and grew up into a teen flamingo. One day when she was eating dinner she felt strange. The next day she looked and felt even stranger and that night she stayed up worried until she saw her feet turn into roots and her legs turning into branches. She was more worried than ever before saw her body turn into a leaning branch. She thought it was finally the end of her life, but then when the magic hit her face she knew she was turning into a flower. Today she is still alive, beautiful.

Inspired by "Rara Avis Orchids," 2007, archival C-print by Cassandra C. Jones

**Art Tales 2012**

First Place

Youth Poetry



Cassandra C. Jones

## **Deception Flower**

**By Connor Ames**

A beautiful flower that hangs by a twig,  
almost as if it hangs by the fate of the world.

Beautiful flower that might not be there long,  
beautiful flower be strong.

Beautiful flower with soft colorful petals,  
soft as a moonlight sky.

Beautiful flower might not be there long,  
beautiful flower be strong.

Now up close I see I've been deceived,  
flamingos replace the flower I once believed.

There once was a flower that I believed  
but now I know I was deceived.

Inspired by "Rara Avis Orchids," 2007, archival C-print by Cassandra C. Jones

**Art Tales 2012**

Second Place

Youth Poetry

## **As Their Red Tails Collide**

**By Makayla Ann Pratt**

As their red tails collide,  
They shape the form of one.  
They come together, side by side,  
until their form is done.

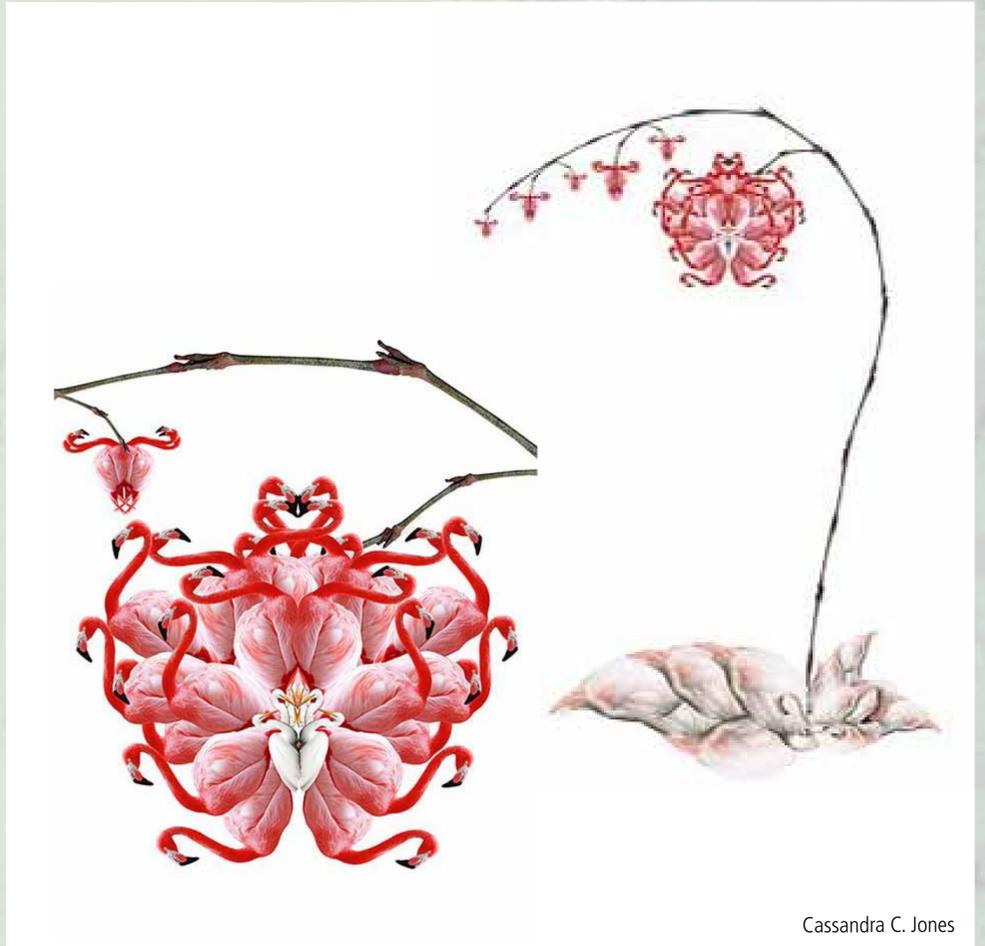
On the top, they'll never stop  
until they all succeed.  
Their beaks can drop, their necks can pop,  
Their feet might even bleed.

While on the bottom, they form the leaves,  
until they're all so very pleased.  
As their red tails collide, they've made their shape,  
and now they can all happily escape.

And as they scatter, as nothing matters,  
they've made an orchid, and have never been gladder.  
Then I woke up, for it was just a dream,  
And all their colors go down the stream.

And as for the orchid, it soon will die.  
And all that I will be able to hear, are the  
beautiful flamingoes' cries.

Inspired by "Rara Avis Orchids," 2007, archival C-print by Cassandra C. Jones



Cassandra C. Jones

**Art Tales 2012**

First Place

High School Fiction



Carol Rosenak

## **I Love You, I'm Sorry**

**By Annabelle Warren**

Excerpt

... She had left it as though she were still in there. Sunlight was bursting through the windows, casting a halo on every object in the room. The dress I had bought for her on her 24th birthday was draped over a chair, and cheap plastic tulips in a waterless vase adorned the seat of another chair. Her favorite glass ornament of a hummingbird hung just above a basket of crops she had picked up from the farmer's market. No doubt they were intended for a still life; she hated turnips. Her art took up the vast majority of space on the walls. Each piece was just as delicate and vivid as the next, each stroke was a story in itself. Every move she made was a burst of color and light; the perfect paradox to my own gloom. The air of the room was still thick with her sweet strawberry perfume ...

Read the full story at [www.cityofventura.net/arttales](http://www.cityofventura.net/arttales)

Inspired by "Chairs Series IV," 1992, oil on paper by Carol Rosenak

## Art Tales 2012

Second Place

High School Fiction

### Colors

By Kienna Kulzer

Excerpt

...A wild room, yes, but nothing compared to the world outside that open window! Setting the cherries down, she took the colorful shawl from the chair. It was so beautiful, almost mesmerizing. The soft fabric danced against her fingertips as gracefully as a ballerina. She threw the shawl around her herself, the colors flying like the wind and settling gently on her shoulders.

Her reflection in the window caught her eye. She didn't look plain or forgetful; she looked dazzling and daring and interesting. The shawl hung around her thin frame, masking her cut-off shorts and tank-top in a beautiful veil. Unable to stop herself, she did a little twirl and watched the vibrant colors spin around her like tropical birds.

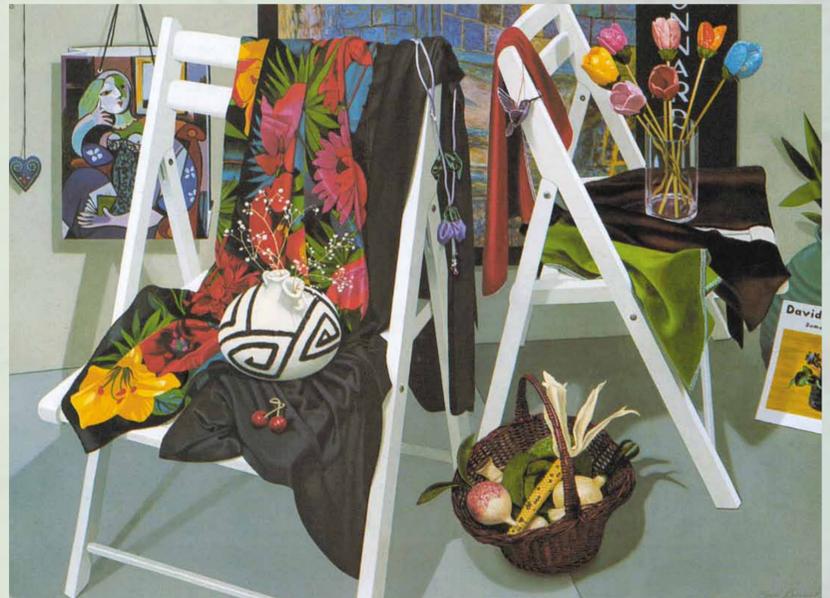
She headed towards the door. The night was still young, it was summer time, and tonight she was not plain or boring. Tonight she was going to be spontaneous.

"Emily, where are you going?" the walls seemed to whisper.

I can't hear you, she thought. And I'm going to go on a little adventure.

Read the full story at [www.cityofventura.net/arttales](http://www.cityofventura.net/arttales)

Inspired by "Chairs Series IV," 1992, oil on paper by Carol Rosenak



Carol Rosenak

**Art Tales 2012**

First Place

High School Poetry

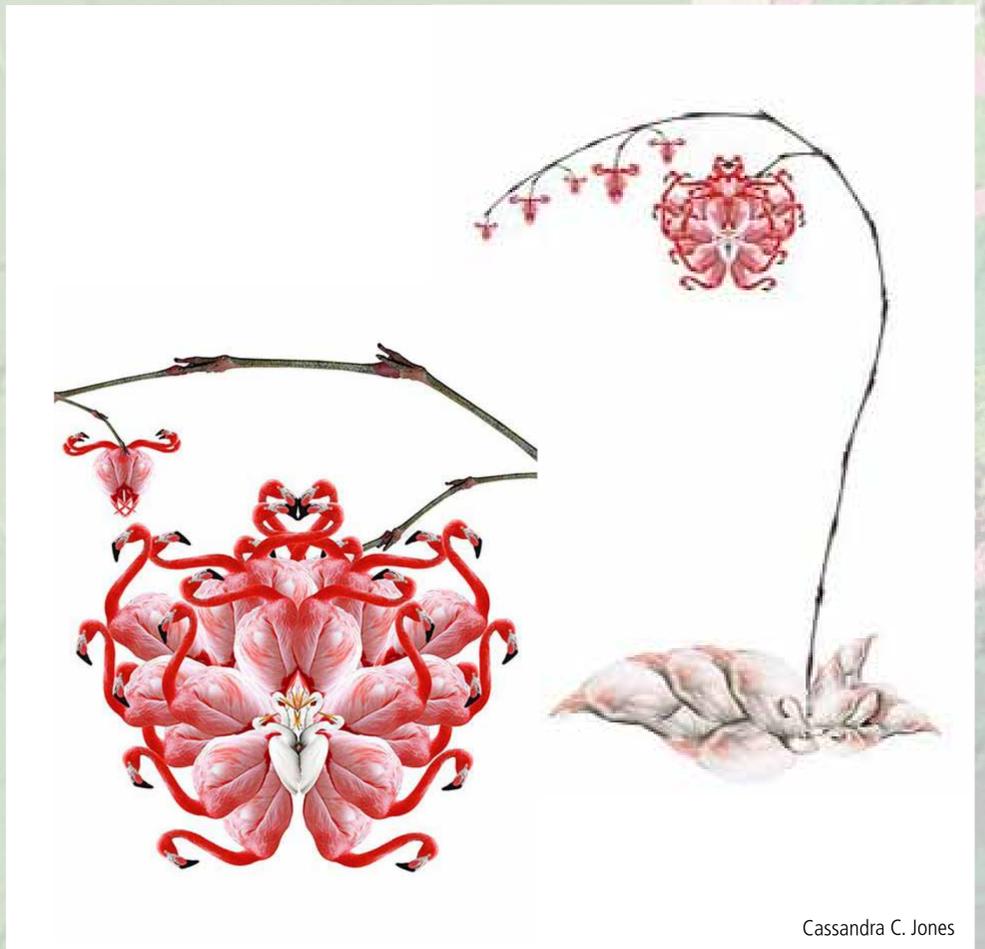
## **Flowers of Life**

**By Garrett Pupa**

It is beautiful spring,  
Time for people to sing  
and flowers to bloom  
ah but soon  
the most beautiful will arise  
and when you see inside  
a hidden prize!  
One that cannot be seen by the naked eye

Yes it is a flock,  
a flock of the most beautiful birds  
They really do cause quite a stir  
The whole animal kingdom really was quite in a worry  
trying to get their spring coats washed in a hurry  
boy it makes them wonder  
how are they supposed to compete with that!

Isn't it amazing  
that life itself  
is the most beautiful flower of all



Cassandra C. Jones

## Art Tales 2012

Second Place

High School Poetry



Carol Rosenak

### What the Chairs Saw

By Cece Castañeda

Perhaps it was better that halfway through picking the tender young onions and corn  
You decided you did not want to spend your life waiting, and unborn.  
So in a flurry you carelessly threw on us the vibrant cloth  
And got together all you couldn't care to leave behind.  
Not among it all is the  
Hummingbird trinket, nor the septet of tulips:  
They are signalers of spring in nature's birth  
But in your own life, they sat untouched, gathering dust.

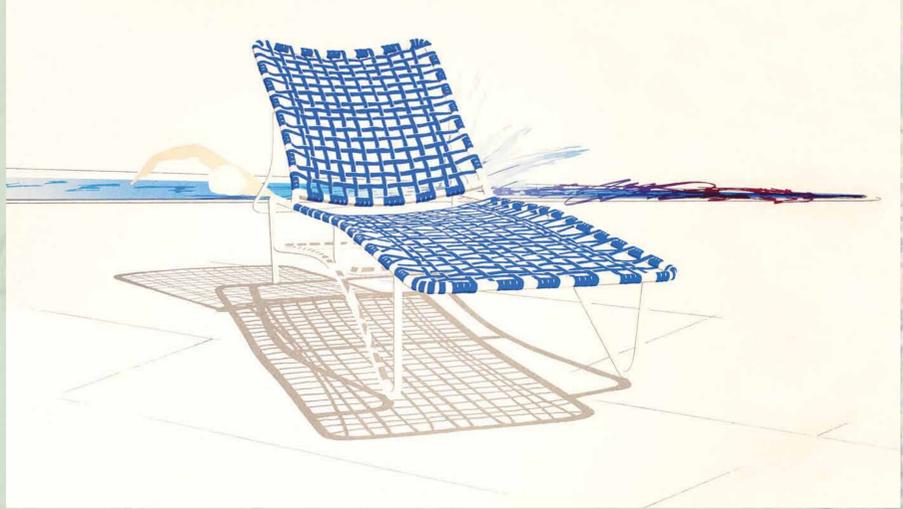
So go then, and we will be waiting here  
If the day ever comes that you want to return and rest your weary self.  
Sturdy and pure, we will stay here remembering the day  
You realized that your life was like a pair of ripened cherries.

Inspired by "Chairs Series IV," 1992, oil on paper by Carol Rosenak

**Art Tales 2012**

First Place

Adult Poetry



Bruce Freeman

## **Expectations**

**By Maggie Westland**

A sun sieve, blue as the sea  
sits cool on a beach bleached  
clean as papyrus

invites me to shadow its  
shade, block ray's  
dissolution.

A blue mesh melds  
with the waves, weaves  
patterned precision

its ribbons entice and  
excite, extend promise  
of leisure.

I am there in the splash  
in the hurry to move  
across canvas

my arm like the arc  
of the sun in the last  
grasp of evening

taking my leave  
of land and its sands  
of allusion.

*Inspired by "Chaise Lounge," 1983, limited edition serigraph by Bruce Freeman*

## Art Tales 2012

Second Place  
Adult Poetry

### Blind Faith

By F. Albert Salinas

She's bronzed,  
Upright, blindfolded,  
scales swing from her left hand.  
She raises a double-edged sword.  
Her armpits are shaved.

You exit the Ventura County Jail,  
stop at the Lady Justice water fountain;  
spit clings to her cheek.  
She's a sculpted erotic personification  
of the morality of judicial systems.

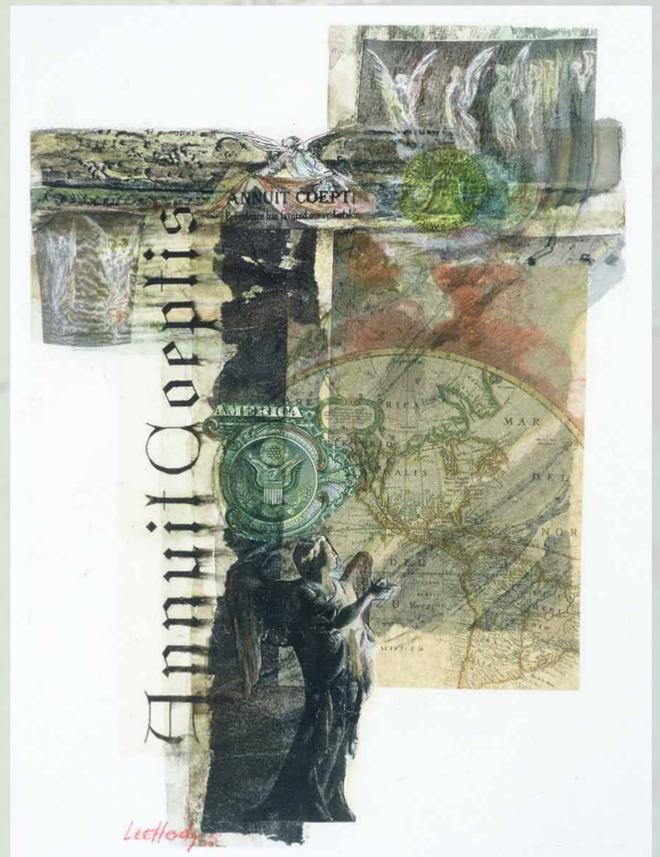
Hunched forward  
under the weight of the world.  
Her arms outstretched for balance;  
Scales of justice sway  
from pierced wrists.

Lips vandalized, spray-painted  
a glossy blood red smear,  
Legs bound in gold chains—  
Carnation pink toenails.  
She wears US map cut out pasties.

Her breasts glow brilliantly.  
She is propped by a sword  
at her abdomen or  
committing Seppuku.  
The sun rises behind her.

You hear a zipper,  
The basin of the fountain  
glistens golden,  
Toss in a good president  
and make a wish.

Inspired by "Approved," 2001, mixed media on paper by Lee Hodges



Lee Hodges