

# UNIQUE

2024

ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE



PUBLISHED BY **ARISE**

# FEATURED ARTISTS

## FRONT COVER



**VIBRANT ZEN:  
CHAKRA RHYTHMS  
SARA DOUGLASS**

ACRYLIC ON VINYL | 12"

This piece expresses the interconnectedness of yoga, meditation, and the chakras, or energy centers of the body. The mandala dots serve as a visual representation of balance, alignment, and inner peace. I create art because adding a piece of your soul to your art is a deeply personal and introspective process that involves infusing your work with your most authentic emotions, experiences, and perspectives.

## BACK COVER

### HERE I AM ALONE AGAIN

**ELIZABETH PELLETIER**

I wrote this poem as it is part of my personal journey. I have lost very much over the past few years. This poem expresses the love and loss in a relationship and how having an illness or disability may sometimes impact the outcome. It more importantly focuses on the ability to overcome and love yourself, be your own person, trust in yourself, and write your own story. It helped me by writing it and I hope it can help anyone going through a similar situation.

# UNIQUE

ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

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# ARISE

ALL AGES | ALL DISABILITIES | ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE

We work to create a world where all people, regardless of disability, have the power to make their own life choices and achieve their dreams.

Since 1979, we have provided opportunities to people with disabilities so they can participate in the community and live independently. ARISE is...

## **COMMUNITY**

... a community of advocates, committed to ensuring that every person, regardless of disability, is able to live a full and independent life.

## **INDEPENDENCE**

... building ramps for families in need so that they can reclaim their freedom and independence.

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... connecting employers with qualified workers who happen to have a disability.

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... empowering children and families through mental health services.

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... whether it's flying down the ski slopes or horseback riding at ARISE at the Farm, we're providing access to year-round adventure.

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... from helping families move out of crisis situations to transitioning people out of nursing homes, we're providing security, safety and hope.

## **CHOICE**

... our person-centered approach maximizes choice and self-determination. Individuals are always at the core of everything we do.

## **CHANGE**

... by eliminating physical barriers and changing attitudes, we're creating a more inclusive community.

## **YOU**

... we couldn't do it without supporters, volunteers, advocates and friends like you. Together, we can change the world.

CONNECT WITH US



WAYS YOU CAN DONATE



# A MESSAGE FROM CEO TANIA ANDERSON

*We know that a stronger community values all voices.*

Welcome to the 24th edition of UNIQUE Magazine! Within these pages lies an extraordinary display of artistic and literary talent and, more importantly, community. In a world that seems to be moving too quickly and judging too harshly, art and literature demands that we pause and contemplate and open our minds.

As Emily Zaengle so eloquently noted in her letter on page six, art is an opportunity to learn and connect. Over and over in these pages, you can read how the artists and writers are using their works to connect to a piece of their own souls and to a larger community. Painter Kirsten Stellato shared that she “creates art because it is a way [she] can talk when [she] can’t find the words” and that she likes to make art to find herself “in contact with others.” Over and over, artists in these pages have made themselves vulnerable, whether it’s Constance Avery confessing that painting is her “escape from the feeling of not being complete” to poet Steven Ingerson writing about his PTSD to Sujit Kurup revealing that painting gives him peace, brings out his “real me” and “provides a release to [his] pent-up emotions as [he] has few words of speech.” Regardless of our specific circumstances, we can relate to these emotions and begin to understand how we might connect with the work and with each other.

ARISE has always championed connection and inclusion as an Independent Living Center. Because we ourselves experience disability, we can connect with anyone who comes to us. We know that vulnerability and power are not mutually exclusive but instead interdependent. We know that a stronger community values all voices.

It’s a process of revelation for all of us. I really love that painter Ginger Ott wrote that she “discovered Mr. Happy after [she] finished” her work. Enjoy the discoveries that await you within these pages and within yourself.

Tania



# STONE QUARRY HILL ART PARK



It can feel like there are only two options when interacting with art—to like or dislike. However, when we approach art with care our options expand into questions.

Questions like:

What is this artwork made of?

Where did the idea for this work come from?

How does this work make me feel?

When we approach art with care and consideration, we shift from a transactional relationship (i.e., I like/don't like)—towards one that is relational (i.e., an opportunity to learn and connect). It is artists that create these moments of connection. Artists demonstrate that art exists not just for us but with us.

The wonder of the art object comes from the person who chose to make it and the story of what compels them to make it.

Thank you to the 2024 UNIQUE artists for sharing their work and their stories.

Congratulations!

Emily Zaengle, CEO, Stone Quarry Hill Art Park

## LAST YEAR'S COVER



**ASTONISHMENT**

**JAMES P. MCCAMPBELL**

DIGITAL DRAWING

# UNIQUE

ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE

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**BEAVER DAM**  
**BILL ANDERSON**

MIXED MEDIA | 11 x 14

**NATIVE AMERICAN**  
**STEVEN ASSMANN**

OIL ON FIBERBOARD | 24 x 24



Bill Anderson

I worked at the Beaver Lake Nature Center. I loved working there. This piece expresses my love for nature. I pull down my memories from those years I spent studying nature. I use my sense of touch to sculpt the beaver dam out of sticks and mud stones.

Steven Assmann

The idea for painting a Native American was inspired by a set of mid-century bookends of this figure. The cast metal bookends' relief-style image must have been someone of importance.





**SUMMER'S LIGHT**  
**CONSTANCE AVERY**

ACRYLIC | 24 X 36

**MY FRAMED TREASURES**

**LINDA BARNES**

MIXED MEDIA | 5 X 5.5



Constance Avery

After many years of working as an LPN I found it difficult to keep working due to my decreased vision. I found painting to be my escape from the feeling of not being complete. My main artistic influences are Claude Monet and Georgia O'Keefe.

Linda Barnes

I was born with tunnel vision and as I got older my vision got worse. I like to create to be busy. I really like giving my artwork as gifts to people. I like to cheer everybody up.

## DESCEND THE ANCHOR

JENNIFER A. FULCO

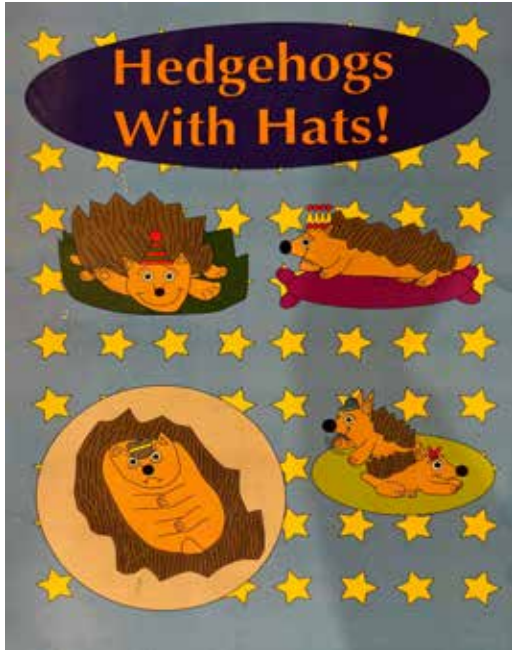
Descend the anchor to the depths below,  
As rustling sands solidify the tow.  
Crew has agreed to stop the show  
For waves willfully coalesce to flow  
A silence suggesting one to steal,  
This vessel's dreams from the ethereal  
To a grappling grasp to become imperial.  
None plundered through to a burial,  
But a sound colony now acquired,  
As borders become tactfully transpired.  
Now independence affixed none-the-less,  
For this democracy's purpose is progress.  
Gather forth the mists of the moment  
As reliable reading is the best proponent  
To secure a vital education.  
Within crucial cranial cooperation  
Values of pensive verses surge a sensation.  
Learning may be through libraries or degrees,  
Better yet, a bit of both shall endure and emote  
To intensified knowledge's coat.  
To wear your mind upon your sleeve  
Is to be resulting without any reprieve.



Jennifer A. Fulco

Art has a dual purpose of soothing my soul and providing a source of relaxation. When I entered college more serious writing evolved. Writers who I look up to include Spurgeon, Keats, Shakespeare, and Cowper. Creating poetic literature is something which flows from within.

*Pictured: Looking at the Stars You Can Make a Wish by Deborah Darrow*



## **HEDGEHOGS WITH HATS** **BRITTANY COOK**

DIGITAL DRAWING | 10 x 8

## **THE HUBBLE TELESCOPE SEARCHING A BLACK HOLE AND THE IMMENSE UNIVERSE** **TIMOTHY COOMEY**

MIXED MEDIA | 26 x 19.5



Brittany Cook

Art is a way for me to express my own creative ideas as I consider myself a very creative person. I began drawing when I was about three years old because I found drawing to be a fun activity.

Timothy Coomey

My artistic influences are deep space and its wonders. They are mind boggling. My curiosity about black holes is what motivated me to create this picture. I have always wondered about the stars, space and how everything got there.



# LOOKING AT THE STARS YOU CAN MAKE A WISH

**DEBORAH DARROW**

MIXED MEDIA | 16 X 16



## MYSTERE EN ROUGE RICK DIBIANCO

MIXED MEDIA | 36.63 X 9.25



**Deborah Darrow**

My inspiration is to be able to wish on a star and to be healthy. I am happy with all the people I have in my life.

**Rick DiBianco**

I created this piece specifically for Unique Magazine. I reworked this piece until I became satisfied with the outcome. My favorite form of art has always been abstract. My disability plays a role in my artwork because my thoughts are transformed into artwork.

# FEAR OF REJECTION

JESSICA MEICHT

My palms are sweaty in anticipation,  
fear, guilt, and humiliation.  
I stand before the ones who get to decide  
whether I shape up or can't fit inside.

The Mother, The Artist, and the Poet in me,  
want to socialize and live carefree.  
Connecting with these niches is a myth:  
The Caregiver, the Creative, the Gifted Wordsmith.  
I wish I could vibe and blend right in,  
I desire to be comfortable in my own skin.  
I have a pit in my stomach that just won't leave.  
because, from the past, I constantly grieve.  
I seem pretty centered and cemented to the ground.  
But if you speak to me, my words won't be found.  
It'll be hard to understand me, as I begin to stutter.  
And then before I know it, my heart's all a flutter.  
More often than not, I give the wrong reply.  
While my throat is really tight, and my mouth is all dry.  
The more I think the worse I become.  
My mind won't mind and goes kind of numb.

Then just like that, I snap back to reality.  
You can see it in my eyes, everyone must agree  
that while I'm waiting on their judgment for all this time  
the fear of rejection makes my anxiety climb.

Jessica Meicht

In the beginning of the poem I am in a courtroom. The long middle stanza is about a flashback to my symptoms and my thoughts while waiting for the hearing. In the end I "dolphined" (went into introspection and popped up for air with an afterthought on a different topic) out of my deep thoughts with debilitating anxiety and toxic inner dialogue. Social situations are hard for me and that fear helped inspire this piece.

*Pictured: Brushed Ashore by Karen Parish-Koegel*





**TOTO**  
**CHRISTINE DICOSIMO**

SCULPTURE | 5.5 x 4

**WAITING FOR SUMMER**  
**JEFFREY HARRINGTON**

ACRYLIC | 19.25 x 23.25



Christine DiCosimo

I create art for the satisfaction it gives to me and the joy it brings to others. I've been doing art projects for many years. It is my favorite hobby.

Jeffrey Harrington

This painting expresses the climate change of the end of winter with windy skies and a young woman wishing it was warm and sunny. The artist's subject matter comes from imagination or images found to be inspirational and hopeful.



**CYBER**  
**DEREK GRINDLE**

MIXED MEDIA | 6.5 x 9



**OLD INTO NEW**  
**KIM HARVEY**

MIXED MEDIA | 11.5 x 11.5



Derek Grindle  
My artistic inspiration comes from my previous art teachers, my uncle and the previous masters. This includes Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Andy Warhol, Ansel Adams, and Jackson Pollock. My disability does have an influence on how I do art as it helps me express my feelings.

Kim Harvey  
I created this after my mother passed. We try to preserve things that are bound to pass but can always take the remnants to transform into something new.

## FINDING FREEDOM

KAUSHIK KRISHNAN

POEM / SCULPTURE | 11 x 11 x 10

A little birdie whispering soul wisdom  
Found its wings to fly high  
Reaching the space beyond the skies  
Leaving its home behind  
As a gentle reminder for all  
What freedom could be

What freedom could be  
To be free without ties  
With contentment  
Without agenda  
With peace  
Without others  
With self

With self  
Just be in the thrall of love  
Where the lines of you and me blur  
Leaving the self a lone star  
Devoid of loneliness

Devoid of loneliness  
Staying in the self, nothing but the self  
Rooted in love  
The birdie finds its freedom



---

Kaushik Krishnan

I've been creating art since elementary school. Working with clay is my love for art in life. I've been inspired by nature and my amazing mother, who has been encouraging my art all throughout. Being on the spectrum absolutely helps me to have a different perspective.



## WILLOW REPOSING

DAVID KIRCHOFF

WATERCOLOR | 36 x 48

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER STICK TOGETHER

TWANEISHA KNIGHTON

MIXED MEDIA | 8 x 8



David Kirchoff

While the painting I created is a watercolor of a picture of my cat, I am strongly in favor of the oil technique if I were to choose freely. I like the flexibility of movement and correction potential granted by this form of paint material.

Twaneisha Knighton

I create art because it inspires me to do more and more. It gives me energy and focus. I have always loved wildlife and all types of birds including ducks!



## AFTERSHOCKS

### STEVEN INGERSON

forgive me  
for being cold and distant  
to protect them and me  
i don't let anyone in  
would that i could  
unsee what i've seen  
unhear what i've heard  
unsmell what i've smelled  
but that's impossible  
forgive me  
feeling too much has been so painful  
that i've chosen numb  
and retreated into a fortress  
that has become a prison  
forgive me  
help me forgive me



## SHINE ON

### DONNA KNAPP WALRATH

Now that it is spring-flowers  
blooming- What a sight.

Sunshine shares the garden-glowing  
very bright. Soon you'll see the  
flowers-blooming a delight. Take a  
real good look-they are a beautiful  
sight.

Steven Ingerson  
I express myself in art. I love nature and printing and photographing it. Writing this poem has been therapeutic. This poem is about PTSD: mine and others. I dedicate it to all who have gone through much worse than I.

Donna Knapp Walrath  
I create art because it makes me happy. I started around 2004 and attended a writer's group that a friend got me interested in. I have won several awards for my poetry.

*Pictured: Cyber by Derek Grindle*

**BRUSHED ASHORE**  
**KAREN PARISH-KOEGEL**

ACRYLIC | 26 X 26



Karen Parish-Koegel

I use my artwork to get through difficult and joyous times. Instead of seeing water bottles and various things that do get brushed ashore, I wanted to bring nature to its original state like flowers from the ocean to be brushed ashore.

# ISLES OF QUIETUDE

SUJIT KURUP

ACRYLIC AND POEM | 20 x 16



Given to the throes of tumultuous endeavor  
Seeking real growing victory  
When met with massive worrisome jolts  
Perpetually anxious and greeting fear  
Seek Isles of Quietude

---

Sujit Kurup

Painting is my passion as it gives me peace and goes deep into my mind and thoughts and brings out my real me. People see me as a smart man with a creative mind and it provides me with a level playing field. This provides a release to my pent-up emotions as I have few words of speech. Picasso's abstract art and Kandinsky's impressionistic art have greatly inspired me.



## BUS TRIP WITH EMPTY SEATS

MONICA LALLIER

ACRYLIC | 9.5 X 11.5 EACH



## JADE THE PEACOCK

LAURA MASUICCA

ACRYLIC YARN | 15 X 9



Monica Lallier

I like buses. I went online and found a picture of a bus and a picture of the inside of a bus that would go together. I created two paintings that I could match together as one piece of art. This was my artistic idea. People think my artwork is different and I'm good at it.

Laura Masuicca

I made this piece for my partner for her birthday. She loved the drape of the feathers and how they flowed down the back. I made more feathers than the project called for because it gave me more fullness and color.

**BEAUTIFULLY REFINED  
CHRISTINA PAPALEO**

OIL/WATERCOLOR | 11 X 14



**STILL LIFE WITH CANDLE  
AND PUMPKIN  
KIRSTEN STELLATO**

ACRYLIC | 9 X 12

Christina Papaleo

Some disabilities are “invisible,” and many are not aware of the internal battle that goes on inside in order to feel seen and known in a world that values artificial normalcy. Like a phoenix, there is beauty that can come out of “fires of oppression” from society and even ourselves.

Kirsten Stellato

I create art because it is a way I can talk when I can't find the words. I like da Vinci and Claude Monet. I like to make art to find myself in contact with others.

# WHERE'S MR. HAPPY?

GINGER OTT

TEMPERA PAINTING AND POEM | 8 x 10



I'm Mr. Happy.  
I enjoy fall.  
I love green, yellow, orange,  
red, purple and brown.  
I'm hiding in the leaves.  
Can you find me?

---

Ginger Ott

At the Huntington Family Center we were painting and I didn't know what to paint. I saw a mandala which reminded me of abstract art. I used the colors of my favorite season and I discovered Mr. Happy after I finished. It expresses that I can be creative in my own way.



## SEIZE THE DAY

JEAN SYRELL

ACRYLIC | 24 x 36



## TIME AND PATIENCE

WALTER VANDERZEE, JR.

DRAWING | 8 x 11

Jean Syrell

The artistic influence is my puzzled mind. I created this piece because I was having a bad day. I had to struggle to get through it. My disabilities definitely play a role in my paintings. When I am anxious or frustrated I take it out on the canvas.

Walter Vanderzee, Jr.

Art has always been an outlet for hard things in my life. It makes me happy and I can redirect my emotions through my creativity.



## **HORSE SPIRIT**

**ROBERT SZPAK**

ACRYLIC | 16 X 20



**FOUR FISH**  
**2021**



**GUARDED WOMAN**  
**2022**



**A BLINK OF  
A WISE WOMAN**  
**2023**

Long-time UNIQUE contributor Robert M. Szpak passed away on June 4, 2024. He was 75. Robert was a very kind man who loved to paint. His work has been a fixture in this magazine since 2008. Robert graduated from Corcoran High School and refined his art techniques at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and Syracuse University. Robert often said, "My artistic pursuits help to channel my energy in a positive way although my disability is schizoaffective disorder." Robert was always one of the first artists to submit his work for consideration in the magazine. His dedication to his art, his talent and his sense of humor will be sorely missed.

Robert Szpak

I am able to see and interpret through an enhanced perspective. My inspirations are Matisse and Picasso.

## MY COLORFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT

### VIRGINIA ZABEL

PHOTOGRAPHY/ACRYLIC | 19 x 37



## CAMOUFLAGED CHAMELEON

### TANNER WOODLAND

ACRYLIC | 20 x 25



Virginia Zabel

I love color and I love coloring. This piece is inspired by looking at and studying nature.

Tanner Woodland

I have always loved making art. My other love is music and I like to listen to music while I do my art. The chameleon is a drawing I did using pen and ink. Reptiles and their environment are a recurring theme in my art.

**FOX SPIRIT**  
**DANIEL TORRELLAS**

WATERCOLOR/PENCIL | 16 x 20



Daniel Torrellas

I've been making art my whole life starting in school and at home. I make many types of art relating to Japan from paintings and drawings to sculptures with resin. My mother is my biggest inspiration. She is a great artist and I make these different types of art with her.



## TIME, THE BARD KANISHK KRISHNAN

Taleless tale, real life  
Offers taleless tales  
Great lessons abound  
Taleless tales

Dictator time exacting  
Harsh realities, profess  
Taleless tales, commenting  
Upon insignificant happenings  
Taleless tales

Pregnant with profundity  
Braced with longevity  
Bound to teaching  
All the wisdom longed  
For unknowingly, unwittingly  
Laid out in Taleless tales

Coming forth in an endless time  
Taleless tales stay immortalized  
Immortality within the bounds  
Of mortality, irony of life

Kanishk Krishnan

My art is a tango with words, emotions, feelings. Being a word artist, I love writing and enjoy communion with all around me. Autism has shut off my experience with the world in the norm but opened new portals to explore in my own way.

*Pictured: Still Life with Candle and Pumpkin by Kirsten Stellato*



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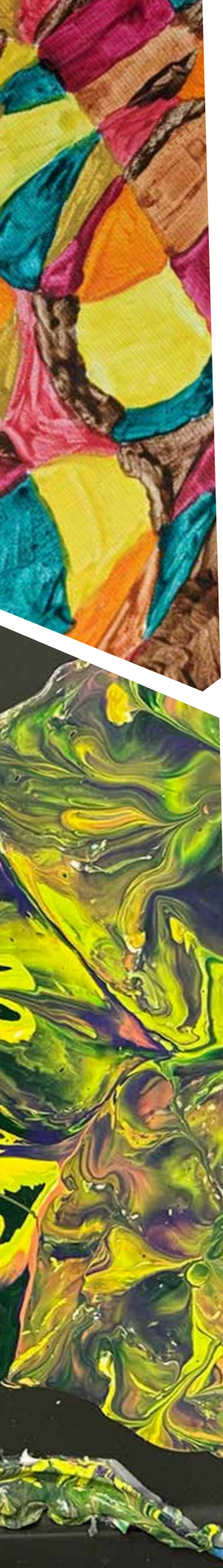


**Tim Mahar**

Director of Advancement

*Pictured: [TOP] Cyber by Derek Grindle; [BOTTOM] Summer's Light by Constance Avery*





## HONORABLE MENTIONS

Kafi Ahmad	Continue
Kyle Allen	Sunset Motorcycle
Jess Bero	God's Spirit With Me
Carol Broome	Beauty Beneath the Sea
Anthony Burkard	Rapper
Kris Cimino	Seasons Changing
Aleksandra Chaberski	I Kidnapped Your Heart!
Jabril Gilstrap	Jesus
Scarlett O'Hara	Be Healed
Michael Pinto	My Favorite Rock Group in 3-D
Elizabeth Watson	Finger Knitting Blanket
Joshua Webster	Two Worlds One Love
Gloria Williams	Stella, Cruising in the Water
Larea Williams	Beautiful Tidepool

## ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

**UNIQUE Magazine is available as a PDF file upon request. Please contact ARISE at (315) 671-5438 for information.**

*Pictured: [TOP] Where's Mr. Happy? by Ginger Ott; [BOTTOM] Camouflaged Chameleon by Tanner Woodland*

## CONTACT US

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ARISEinc.org



## WAYS TO SUPPORT UNIQUE

### BECOME AN UNDERWRITER

UNIQUE sponsorship celebrates the creative spirit and raises awareness about disabilities by supporting the community exhibitions and printing of the free publication. Sponsorship levels start at \$500. To learn more, call (315) 671-2903 or send an email to [development@ARISEinc.org](mailto:development@ARISEinc.org).

## MAKE A SUBMISSION TO UNIQUE

UNIQUE is published annually to display the creative work of people living with disabilities in Central New York. We welcome submissions of written and visual art. Guidelines and deadlines for UNIQUE 2025 will be announced in February 2025 at [ARISEinc.org](http://ARISEinc.org).

*Pictured: [TOP] Native American by Steven Assmann; [BOTTOM] Isles of Quietude by Sujit Kurup*





# HERE I AM ALONE AGAIN

ELIZABETH PELLETIER

Here I am alone again  
Is this how the story ends  
I thought you would never go  
Oh how I wish I had known

I gave you my heart Surrendered to you  
Now all I Have  
Are memories of you

I look in the mirror and see  
Reflections of how  
We used to be

Make me understand  
Why you left  
Halted the story  
Before it should end

All was fine  
Until I fell sick  
Your coldness  
Hit me like a brick

I feel like I let you down  
All I do is cry Until I drown

The tears that fall  
Down my face  
Are Harsh reminders  
Of that place

I thought you were my person  
Through thick and thin  
Now I don't know Where to begin

Damaged goods  
Is what you say  
How cruel to speak of  
Another human being that way

I am still the same person  
With this disease  
So it is not you I need to please

Actually you did me a favor  
By letting me go  
Because now  
It is myself  
I am getting to know

I am now my own person  
Through thick and thin  
Loving myself  
Is where the real Story begins...

PUBLISHED BY **ARISE**

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