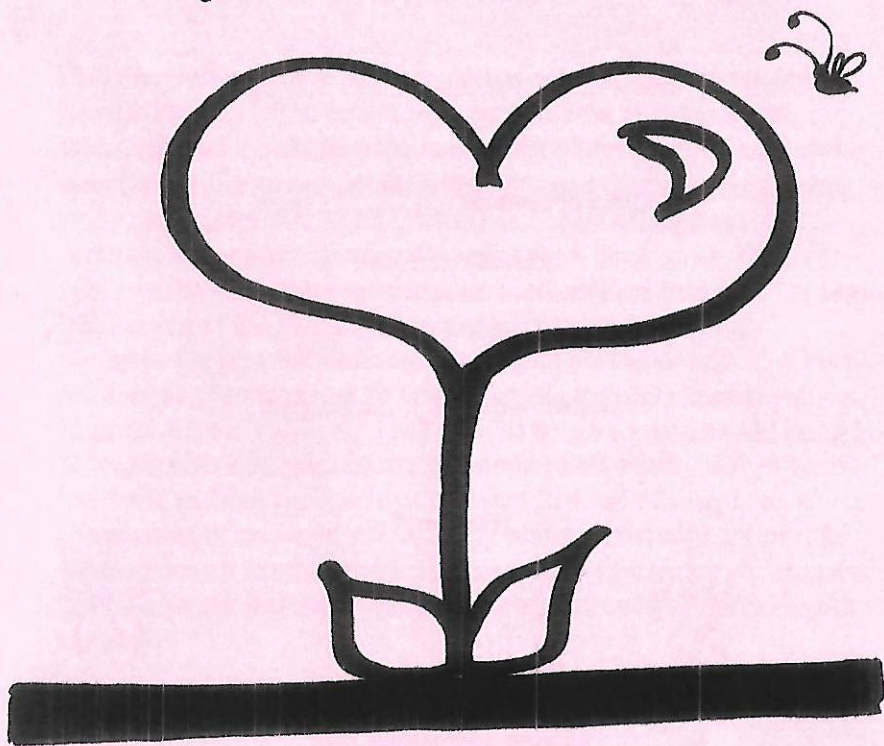


*the* **RAD MAG**



**SUNSHINE**

ISSUE #2 | SUMMER 2021



## contents



Letter from the Editor.....pg 2

A Parade!.....pg 3

Color of Summer.....pg 4

The Cleanup Man  
Alien Pie.....pgs 5-7

Electric Eyes.....pg 8

Important Vibes.....pg 9

Earth Transmissions.....pg 10

What now?


## issue created by

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Anticipation \* \* \* editor

Bubbles in the Backyard \* \* \* mental health support

 = featured in every issue



## Letter from the Editor

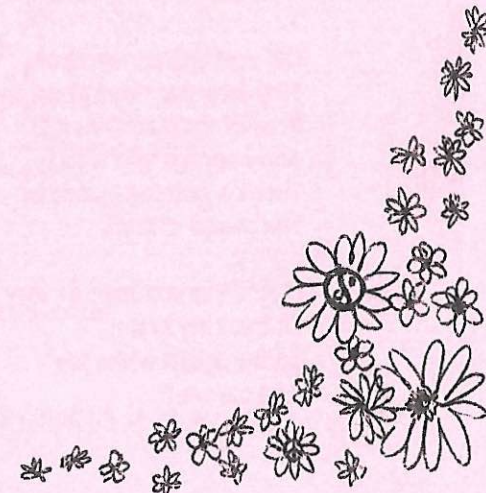


I have been dreaming in summer. Blown-out sidewalks, too-bright, faded billboards in the desert. Heat rising off the street in waves. Which is weird. I don't love the heat – my body is acutely aware of the moment the indoor temperature hits 78° - and I get very, very crabby when heat meets wet meets clothes must come off. And yet, this summer I am ecstatic about pools underneath blazing sun. The way light hits the very tips of water ripples in the breeze. Birds doin' it, bees questioning all the flowers – summer has permeated all of my thoughts. I'm sure my world opening up has a lot to do with it. Maybe my dreams of summer are so bright because my brain knows I will need to squint a bit at the world. I will need to be gentle with myself and the other humans stepping out into the sun. I want to find a way to be in the world without being mad at it. I want to drink it in. My brain knows the opening of my world will be a tizzy of the senses so that beautiful bitch covered it in an aesthetic she knew would entice me yet keep me safe. It's almost like she covered my summer dreams in mental health sunscreen.

This issue is fun and hot and filled with delicious hope.

A little summer salad, just for you.

 Candi



# A Parade!

by Candi Bartlett

Of all the things I miss  
One walks through my mind quite a bit.  
The sunny memory of summer fills my senses.  
The heat on the streets, she fills my heart.  
We wait together  
For a parade!

Batons and marching bands  
Crepe paper floats  
Candy un-safely thrown into the crowd.  
Oh, I can't wait for a parade!

The excitement in the air  
The early spot-getters.  
Corn Queens and  
Car Wash Queens and  
Drag Queens --  
A parade!

Ice cream and popsicles  
Sticky hands and kisses.  
The sound of the marching band  
Just around the bend.  
Kids on shoulders -- pee down backs -  
A parade!

Old cars and convertibles,  
Tiny cars that drive in circles.  
Pom-poms that glisten  
And banners that walk.  
There is nothing quite like  
The sound of it all.

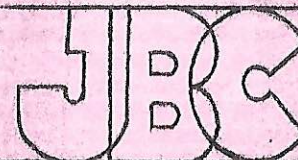
I think this summer, as very much as I can,  
I'll treat my brain,  
To the bright white joy  
Of a parade!

# the Color of Summer

with artsy-fartsy nerd

>>> @jennibcreative <<<

"To me, the color of summer is the vivid green, very fragrant cut grass under my fingertips. It's the refreshing aqua mist of waves crashing around my feet at the beach. The bright, golden glow dancing across my eyelids when I squint up at the sun warming my soul."



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## The Cleanup Man

by Candi Bartlett

It was hot in the desert. Donnie hated hot, made worse when he had nothing to do. Tom drove. Tom always drove. That left Donnie with the package in his lap. He opened the hinged lid on the black, velvet box.

"I don't get why this needs to be handled by an agent as high up as you, Tom."

Tom tried to hide a tiny smile. "It's personal."

Donnie watched the long green finger rock back and forth in the bracelet box. He didn't plan to ask why, or how, the finger was still juicy. "What on earth did you do to owe someone burying a less-than-terrestrial finger?" He snapped the lid shut. The finger made a gross, wet smooching sound when it rocked inside the lining. It made Donnie want to barf. Tom's only response was to slowly look over for one of his branded too-long glances. The look usually meant Donnie was being an idiot. And maybe he was an idiot. He was sitting in a car with his every-confusing, epic mustache-having boss, gently nestling an alien finger in a pretty package. Being a moron was a really good explanation for his behavior.

Donnie was going to say something. Prodding was the only logical step Tom could feel it. The kid sucked in a lot of air before speaking. "I knew a guy who was... awkward."

Donnie sighed. "Like he wasn't from around here?"

"Yeah. Great guy once you got to know him but, hard to get to know." The car rolled along quietly. The highway they were on in the middle of nowhere was as dead as the night around them. No breeze. Nothing to look at. No noise. Definitely deader than the finger. The silence made Donnie uncomfortable. He preferred to drive with music on and the windows down. The last six months indicated that Donnie was never going to drive again. They turned onto a somehow darker road, this one entirely made of desert. The soft gravel under the tires was welcome background noise.

Tom liked the desert under his car. Every now and then it felt like hovering. "The guy worked computers at home base in the '70s. Little, scrawny guy. We ate lunch together one day and became friends. I wasn't exactly popular in my early days. I was," he glanced again at Donnie. "much less lovable then." They met eyes when Donnie's rolled around his skull. "So, the guy was my only friend in the place for a while. A couple of years in, after really getting to know him, I knew he was sad - lonely. He would never ask for my help but, I wanted to find someone for him and I knew the strangest young woman. I didn't know her very well. She rented out shoes at my bowling alley and had the nicest smile."

"You bowled?"

"I bowl. Present tense."

"I've just.... never seen your body move that way," Donnie said. He pictured Tom bowling in his navy blue suit. Somehow, it worked.

"I brought my friend in one night - not league night, they'd never get a chance to talk in that chaos - and they hit it off. It was so fast. I'd never seen either of them actually *happy*. Wedding, apartment, shared debt, the whole happiness shebang was theirs." They finally slowed and Tom pulled the car over near a large cactus. It looked like most cactus, except for the pink flower on the top.

The unusually large, pink, oozing flower.

"Hey, Tom..." Donnie followed Tom to the trunk. Without the air conditioning sweat immediately ran from his thick black hair into his eyes. Still, he managed to keep them on the flower.

"Yes, Donnie, the flower is strange. This stretch of desert is strange. Most of the cactus here are on the carnivorous side."

Donnie started digging where Tom pointed. "That's not true. Is that true? I'm not falling for that."

Tom raised a bushy brow. At least the kid was finally questioning everything. And everyone. "They weren't always this way. Think of the plants here as part of an interplanetary exchange program. These fellas came home... hungry."

The ground was hard under the sand. A few inches down and Donnie felt like he was digging through stone. Maybe the carnivorous cacti were eating something that didn't agree with them.

"So," Tom continued, watching Donnie melt in his suit. "the species the finger belongs to, they don't die all at once. Each cell retains its own stockpile of fuel when they die. First the organs stop working, then each cell survives until its electricity burns out." He opened the box and looked at the finger. It daintily moved around, feeling the silky liner. It moved very slowly. The finger was tired.

Donnie looked over at Tom with a face that begged for the hole to be done. It was three feet deep and as wide as the trunk on their sedan. Tom nodded and they swapped spots. Tom held the finger in his hand. "Over the years we became very close. They were my family for a really long time. Here, these plants and what they do - this piece will be consumed like the rest and no one will ever find the remains." He gently placed the finger in the hole.

"And this is the last piece? His entire body will be gone now," Donnie asked.

"Nah, this is the last piece of Ms. Bowling Shoes. My friend would have done it himself but, he doesn't get around so well these days. The day he got the cane I told him I would help lay his wife to rest. Each and every piece." There was a beat of silence. Then it was more than a beat. "I miss her pie."

"Alien pie?"

"Why does it have to be *alien* pie, Donald? Can't it just be pie?" Tom dropped the final bit of sand back on the hole. The ground looked untouched. The pie chord however... "Apple pie and lemon meringue. The being made good pie."

"Yes, it can just be pie." The more Donnie learned about the job and Tom, the more he felt like he knew nothing about people. Or things. Like pie.

Tom thought about it walking back to the trunk. "There was that one pie made with fruit I didn't recognize. She said it wasn't local."

Donnie nodded. "So, alien pie."

"I guess so." They got in, Tom put the car in gear and turned back the way they came. "Best alien pie in the galaxy."

They landed at another diner, table covered in every slice of pie the place had to offer. By the end of the night, Donnie's highly trained spook skills were sure of one thing.

Tom had the hots for Alien Pie.



**WHAT CASE WILL THE CLEANUP MAN WIPE OUT NEXT?**

**FIND OUT IN ISSUE #3!**



## ELECTRIC EYES

by Candi Bartlett



They hum all of the time but somehow it's louder in the summer. Maybe it's because everything is so bright, so *extra*. It's like everything around you is bigger, closer, and demands more of your attention. In the summer, the electric eyes almost shout for you to pay attention. !! They are not just on roof tops and in store fronts, or stollcally guarding your driveway, they are in our hands and pockets. They roll around the bottom of our bags. Humming. Watching. Vibrating with the heat.

Electric eyes pick up everything you do, every thought you share, documenting your feelings. They don't yet understand intention, though. They can't decipher what you think while you act. They just take the data and send it out to the universe. One constant push notification. Showing your words and actions to the oldest and youngest human eyes. A new zeitgeist is now, the first the future can actually look back on and quantify. Your actions will be used for education and understanding beyond your purpose.

The village is everywhere and everyone.

Now is the great raising.

Listen, you can hear how important your part is.

The electric eyes are humming.

Thought Inspo: "It takes a village to raise a child." – African proverb

• • • Check out the Rad Mag on the web! • • •

>> mini stories and poetry not found in print <<

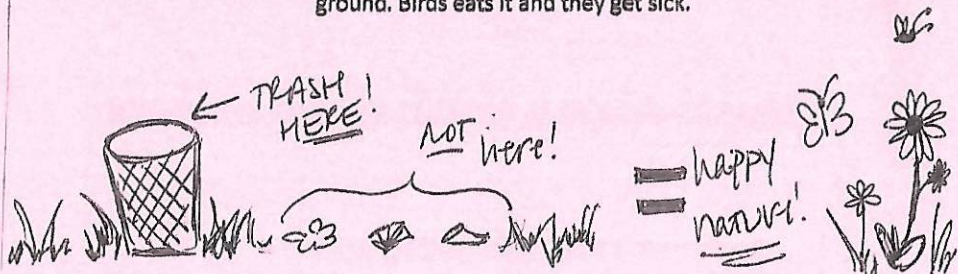


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### IMPORTANT OUTSIDE VIBES

Earth is our home. The worst part of a parade, or any outside fun time filled with people, is the trash. Clean up after yourself. Bring reusable water bottles and snack packages and remember that the vendors and businesses lining your super sweet summer activities are counting on foot traffic – it's been so long! Buy the cookie but leave the paper behind. And seriously, never – NEVER – leave your trash on the ground. Birds eat it and they get sick.



## EARTH TRANSMISSIONS

Yes. That's exactly it. He was super bro-y. Now, I just wanna share a bottle of wine with him, talk about books, have some hot sex, and be in bed by 1030p.

Maybe get up and go to the farmers market.

Splurge on that artisan bread you guys love to have for toast with fruit marmalade on Sundays reading the paper and sipping coffee.

Now I want marmalade.

Yeah ya do.

COME BACK EACH ISSUE FOR

THE STRANGE AND UNUSUAL!

THE PROVOCATIVE AND PERVERSE!

Comic Call

Your illustrations to these words could be featured in Issue #3! Visit [www.CandiPresents.com/the-Rad-Mag](http://www.CandiPresents.com/the-Rad-Mag) for details and watch the art spread.

## What now?

Another paper product has come into the world.  
Before this super sweet zine ends up in the trash, or recycling, or compost heap  
(not recommended: soil that will be used for growing foods)

*the Rad Mag* suggests:

Sharing it with a friend

Using the pages as fun crumpled packing material

Leaving it shuffled into the magazines at your grandma's house

Wrapping a present with it

Wrapping *yourself* in it

Issue #2 printed on 30% recycled paper



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