

**miniMAG**

**issue204**

*slow is steady; steady is fast*





MÖBIUS  
PARADIS

## stone cold oak

Joe Bisicchia

you lose your leaves  
and put out your fists  
and feign to be mean.

all this

while you dream  
of the soft green  
at your fingertips.



## Old Medford Ave.

Danielle Rufrano

We found a baby in the road once.

It was dark and cold, and I don't know how my dad even recognized the crawling figure. People always speed down Old Medford Avenue despite it being residential. It's parallel to the main road, where travel is staccatoed by traffic lights that never sync. So, people rebel by ignoring the stop signs on this one.

Not my dad.

We called him the snail—not only the name of the cargo holder on the roof of our minivan, but also his one speed.

My dad pulled over to the side of the road, hazards blinking, and I stayed in the car while he picked up this baby, not dressed for the weather. Not an animal or paper bag filled by wind.

A red truck pulled up behind us, and a man ran to my dad. A stranger. They walked from house to house searching for the baby's family.

One house with a storm door, weak latch, bright lights, a party—claimed the baby. They didn't know the baby had gotten out, crawled across the cold, brittle grass, across the uneven asphalt, stranded on the yellow solid line.

I didn't say anything. There was the soft click of his seatbelt, the grinding of gravel beneath his tires as he pulled away from the curb. Slow. The same. He dropped me off at my friend's house for a sleepover. He said goodnight.





## ODE TO THE POND

John Grey

pond water,  
a tiny world  
rippling

but magnifies  
grass  
algae

fluorescent  
oxygen  
locked in drops

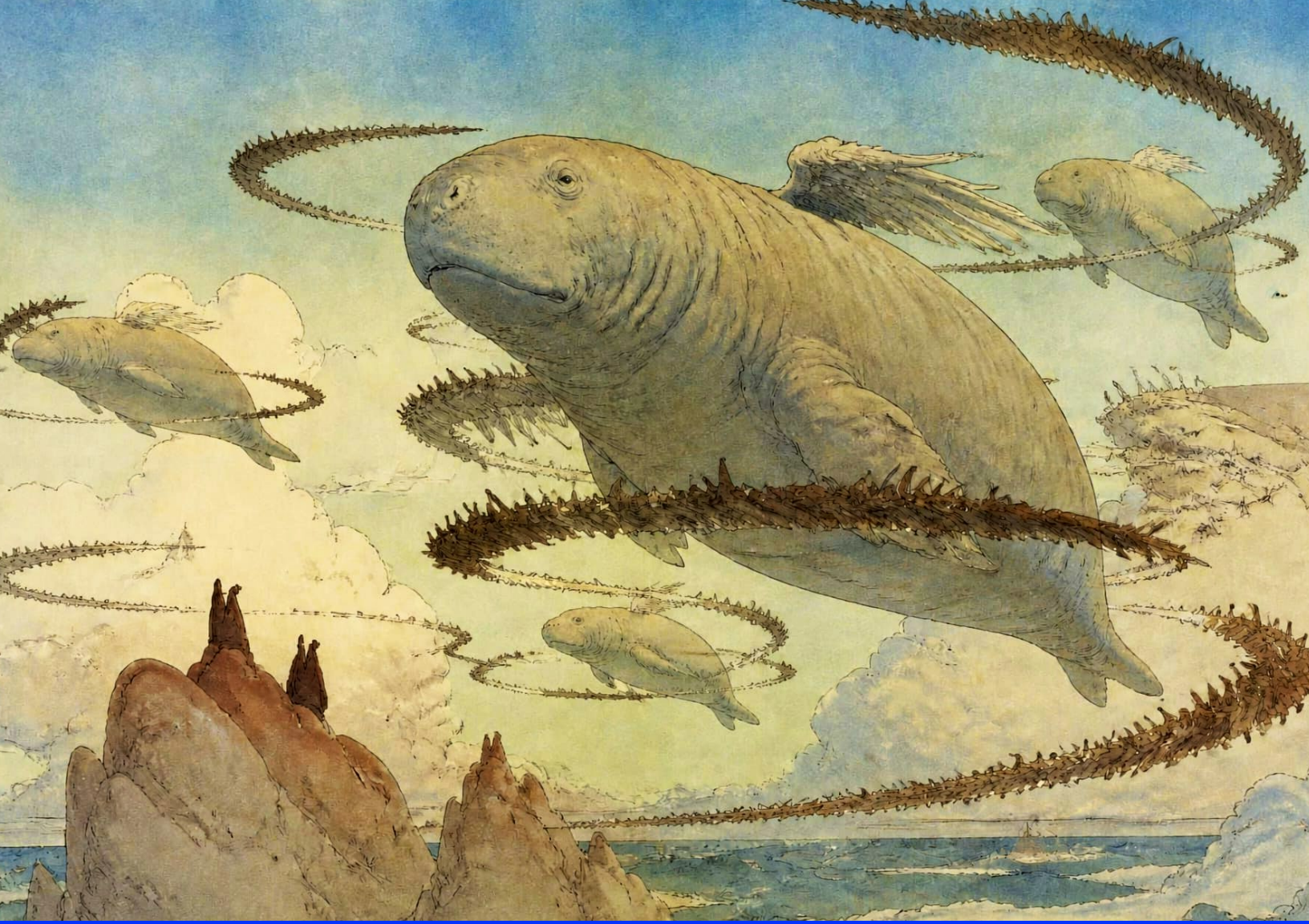
green, brown,  
portrait  
in spheres

surface larvae  
floating,  
dragonflies hovering

frog on  
lily-pad  
burst to pink

childhood circles,  
murky water,  
tadpoles

tiny hands,  
their inevitable grasp,  
scooping up water-bugs



## Life Will Test You Before It Blesses You

Rae Greenwood

Well, child, I will say,  
Life will test you before it blesses you.  
It will test you every day,  
And every hour,  
And every minute,  
As you walk your daily path.  
I've been tested over and over,  
Collecting my losses in a dusty jar,  
Scrubbing my tear-stained face raw,  
And sewing shut another wound.  
But I stand myself up and face the day,  
With courage in my heart,  
And a small glimmer of hope.  
Blessings will come, child,  
But not before the tests.  
Keep your eye on the prize,  
And let a better tomorrow fill your mind.  
Life will test you before it blesses you,  
And what a worthwhile blessing it will be.



## Reincarnation (V4)

Michael Lee Johnson

In the next life, I will be a little higher up the pecking order.  
No longer a dishwasher at the House of Pancakes  
or Ricky's All-Day Grill, or Sunday night small dog thief.  
I will evolve into the Prince of Bullfrogs. Crickets don't bother me,  
Swamp flies don't bother me—I eat them. Alligators I avoid.  
I urinate on lily pads, mate across continents at will.  
And for my dishes, let the river clean them this time.  
If there are complaints, toss them to the wind—they won't find me.  
Someone else from India can wash my dishes locally for me.  
Forward all complaints to that religious office of Indian affairs.

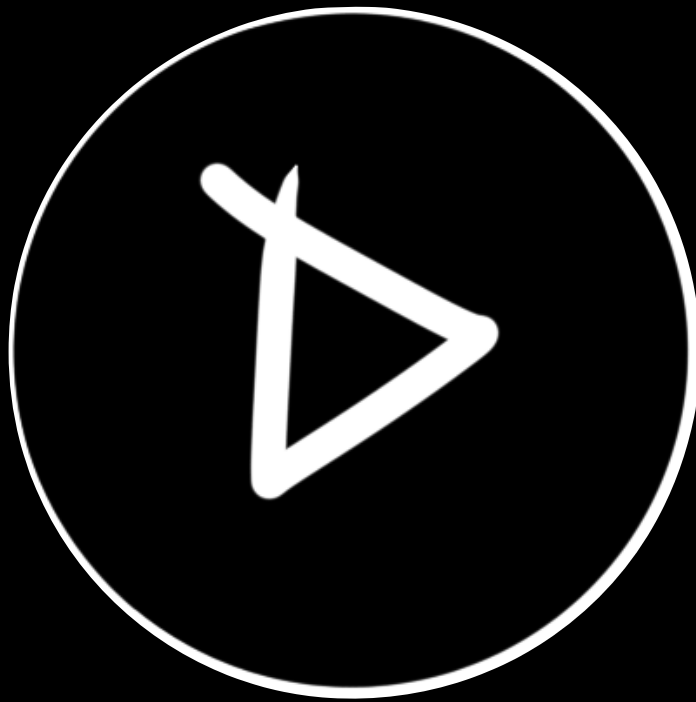


## STEPS

Diane Webster

Steps invite  
the stepper upward;  
come escape  
to a bigger, better life.  
Steps trudge  
the stepper downward;  
trapped in a declining maze  
of challenges unlearned.

Unless you stand  
on a hangman's scaffold  
where the better life  
yawns a noose  
thirteen steps  
from where you began  
then reprieved  
before the black hood  
descends  
and sprinting down steps  
that pardon all offenses  
covered in dust  
as you dash away  
happy to live  
on ground level.



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“stone cold oak” by Joe Bisicchia  
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Website: <https://joebisicchia.com/>

“Old Medford Ave.” by Danielle Rufrano  
Insta: @duskandrubies

“Palmistry” by Jerome Berglund  
Insta: @berglundjeromehaiku  
Twitter: @BerglundJerome  
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/JeromeBerglundPhotography/>

“ODE TO THE POND” by John Grey  
Book: [Subject Matters](#)

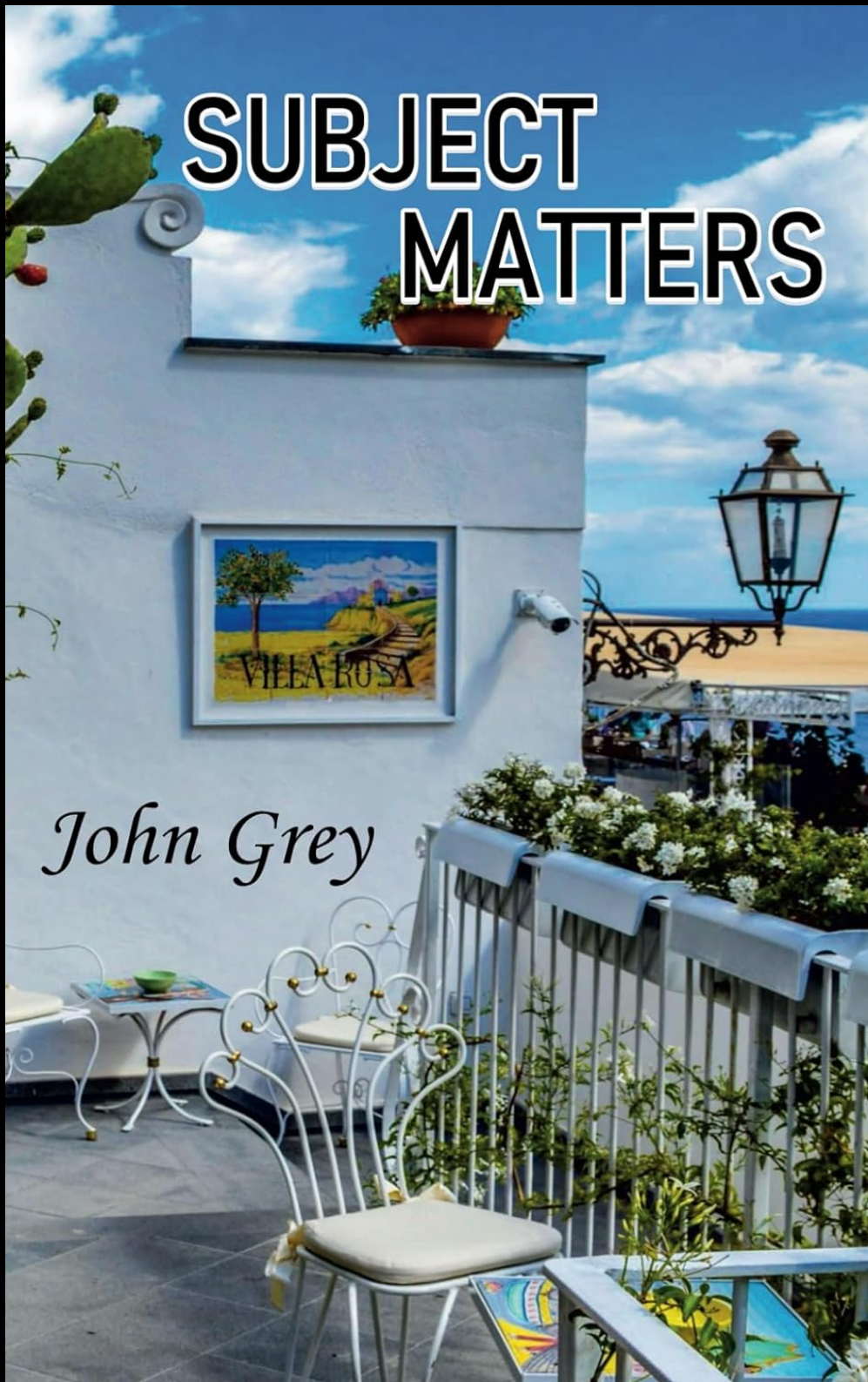
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Insta: @Greenwood0125  
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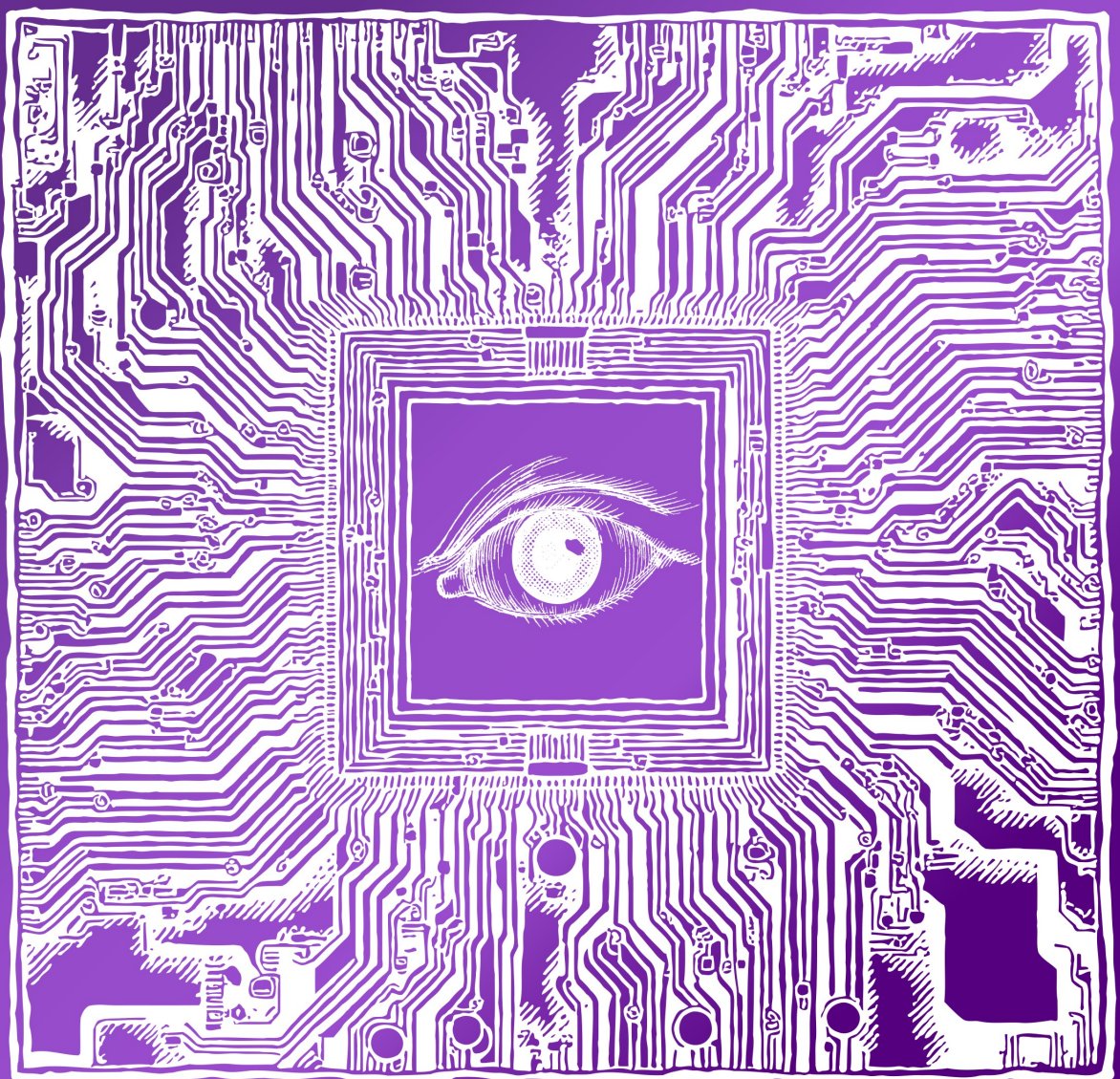
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*John Grey*

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The screenshot shows the homepage of 'Chill Subs'. At the top left is the logo 'Chill Subs'. The navigation menu includes 'Browse', 'Features', 'Community', 'About', 'For Editors', 'SLUSHPILE', and 'Support us'. On the right, there are 'Log in' and 'Sign up' buttons. The main headline reads: 'Get published. Promote your work. Grow as a creative.' followed by the subtext '(All without having a mental breakdown)'. Below this is a book cover with the text 'DON'T GO BREAKING EXHAUSTING MAKE YOUR CREATIVE LIFE NOT SO BREAKING EXHAUSTING'. At the bottom of the main section are 'Log in' and 'Sign up' buttons. A yellow callout box on the right contains statistics: 'We list 4134 submission opportunities for writers, 1478 for artists, with 1188 contests and a community of 9080 creators who've tracked 31249 submissions. We've been around 443 days and there's plenty more on the way.' with a 'See all statistics →' button. A footer note says 'We're building a submissions manager!' with a 'Learn more' button.

Chill Subs

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## Get published. Promote your work. Grow as a creative.

(All without having a mental breakdown)

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