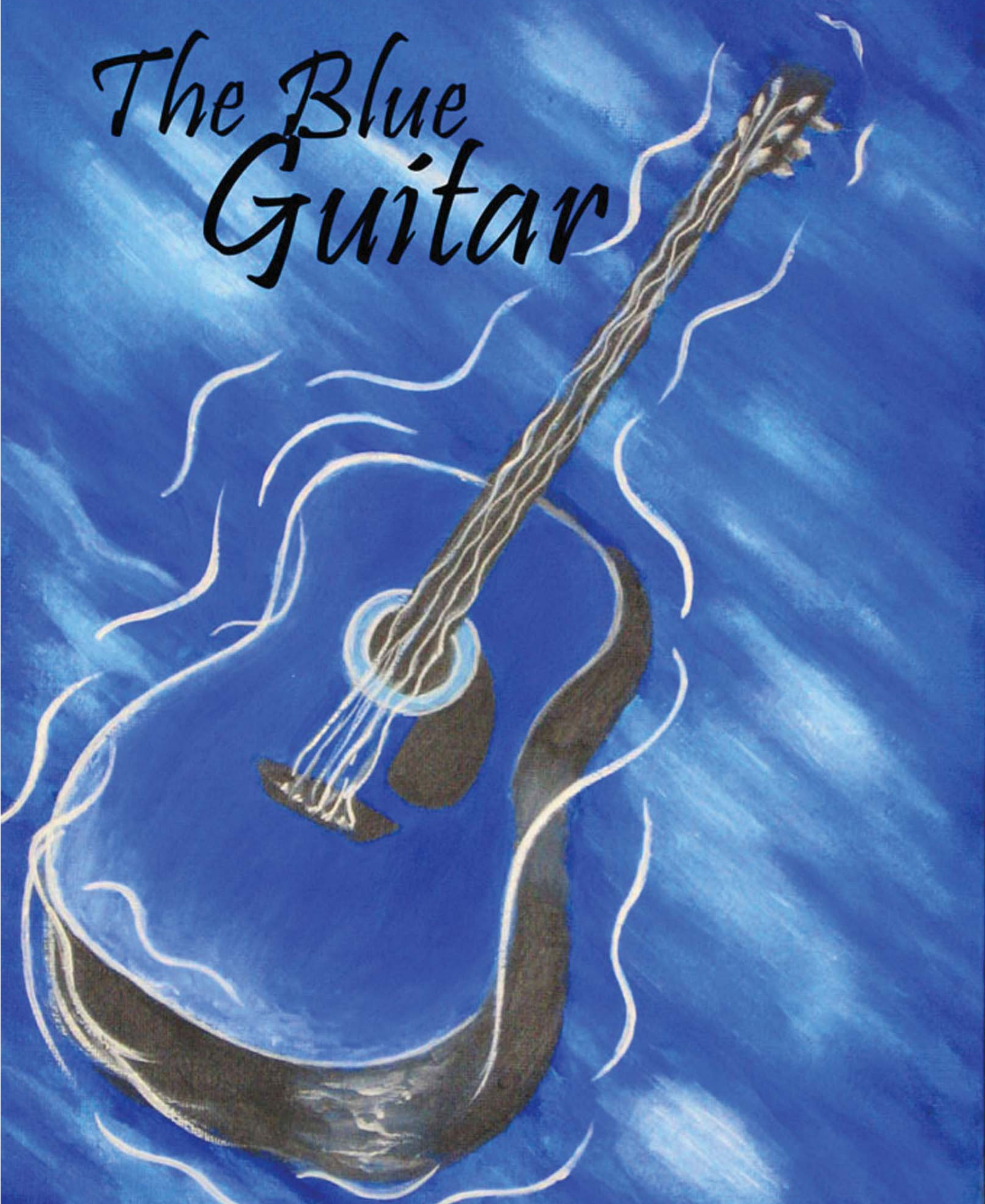


The Blue Guitar



Connection

By Jennifer Fabiano

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Golden fingers of morning sunshine had barely peaked over the horizon as I stepped my slippered foot onto our stone driveway. Low-lying fog had materialized unexpectedly overnight, and the misty, swirling white soup made even familiar objects appear mysterious. My purpose was not mystery detection, however; it was more ordinary since I had forgotten to pull out my trash can last night and knew I had to hurry or I would soon hear the mad rumbling from the collection truck lumbering down the street.

Pulling my robe tighter around me, I noticed a small movement on my right as I walked toward my side gate. At the end of my driveway, a ghostly shape emerged from the mist. At first, I could not distinguish what it was, but then I stopped and so did it. A coyote. Gray and grizzled and scraggly, he seemed gritty but not vicious. He stopped and stared, and our eyes locked as the morning light continued to glow brighter. I inhaled quickly but quietly as I continued to study him. His form was misshapen and it appeared his left front leg was missing.

A three-legged-coyote on a foggy morning in Arizona – not what you'd expect in the suburbs of a large, sprawling metropolis. He took a tentative step toward me but then appeared to change his mind. Back to the misty streets he slipped and I stood alone.

Concrete and asphalt envelop the streets, lots, and even the yards of the homes in our suburban neighborhood. It's as if Mother Nature forgot to visit. Things are different here at our home, however. My Aquarian, water-loving husband has lushly populated our front and back yards with ponds, fountains and pools. Cool, green grass graces the yard both front and back, soothing the eyes. Koi, goldfish, frogs and turtles swim, hop and crawl among the rocks and water. The lush trees and flowering plants attract birds of all types including a pair of bright red cardinals who have made their home in one of our large palm trees. Butterflies and honeybees enjoy the blooming radiance of buttercups, gardenias and tulips in spring and summer. Sitting in the backyard or by the front koi ponds reading or writing, I am surrounded by this inspiring splendor.

All this abundance of nature soothes the soul. It calms me, reminding me of the beauty of our Creator. It connects me to the heartbeat of the Earth in a spiritual way. In the heart of a city, in the midst of noise and concrete, nature prevails and a three-legged coyote can still be seen as a wonder when he visits.



Jennifer Fabiano has honed her writing skills through the communication arts for the past 25 years. As co-owner of a Scottsdale advertising and marketing firm, her desire to branch out from penning strategic plans, corporate branding bibles and radio spots has led her to now write what she truly loves: creative nonfiction. She has been published most recently in *Raising Arizona Kids* and *The Arizona Republic*. Her book is in the works. Contact her at www.jenniferfabiano.com.

Asphalt Haiku – Collisions In The Desert

By Dan Ramirez

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The Cactus Wren And The Cat

House cat on wall,
sunning. Cactus wren attacks.
Startled cat hisses.

One Hundred Years Old

Cactus stands strong.
Red tag. Rumbling tractor.
Contractor must build.

Morning Jog

Twilight. Coyote
jogging along asphalt street,
Toenails clicking.

My Pond

At the pond, clucking.
Feathered exclamation points.
Quail in my yard.

A Summer Swim

Bats flit across yard.
Skim a quick drink from pool. Off
to hunt bugs all night.



At seventeen Dan was discouraged by his family and high school counselor from pursuing a career as a writer. Forty years later, he picked up a pen and discovered his voice as a poet. Contact him at luftpistole@cox.net.