



Pitch Black



Monsoon



Citrus



Cool Peri

Journey Planet

*Pen and Ink*

Issue #52



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Thank you for the art that was provided for this issue. Chris Garcia, Sara Felix, Ann Gry, Vanessa Applegate, Helen Montgomery, and Marguerite Smith and all the lovely picture of pens and mail from John Dodd, James Bacon, Ann Gry and John Vaughan.



# Welcome

Ink. Versatile memory sharing art medium.

Welcome to this issue of journey planet.

I'm really so pleased that Sara Felix came onboard to co-edit this issue which looks at ink.

I've loved Sara's artwork over the years and as her own work in ink developed and then Chris also started to use ink as an artistic medium I realised that there is an incredible bond between these fluids that become permanent on paper and our experiences and memories of the now. Ink can be incredibly joyous and beautiful incredibly artistic and then in a sense I probably end up using it for a very normal things, sending thanks, well wishes or just catching up.

I find myself writing much more than I anticipated this year, sending much more post some of which is just to keep in touch, some of which is in response to incredible kindness, post this year has become so much more important, could I have a long list now of all the things that I did not anticipate arriving which I've turned up, it's been absolutely amazing to see si-finds so willing to share and I work really hard to reciprocate.

My letters are adorned with thanks to the Royal Mail, An Post, the USPS with an added tag line of '...in gloom if night...' as I watched on and saw that service dreadfully undermined in an act of anti-democracy.

I've used ink to create rainbows, anavar so started my own decorated envelopes which I describe as 'soiled ink art'.

I'm very grateful to all our contributors here they gave us time during this tricky year and it's lovely to see such wonderfulness. Chris and I are especially thankful to Sara for coming on board to co-edit this issue we are so impressed with the wonderful layout the extensive use of art and also helping us to find and solicit such great pieces of work. Sara is an incredible force in fandom, especially so when it comes to the promotion of artists, running the Chesley awards her own work being recognised as a Hugo finalist and when she's asked to make incredible awards we are very lucky and grateful to have such a versatile artist give their time to this fanzine.

We'd love to hear from you, as you read or enjoy this fanzine, know you're not alone, at any stage if you would like to contribute and be part of this wonderful ongoing fun endeavour that is Journey Planet please do contact us and we'll be happy to tell you what themes are upcoming if you wanted to contribute. Do not ever feel that you've missed an issue or a chance to contribute we can always find space referring back and also so things we love do recur.

Email [journeyplanet@gmail.com](mailto:journeyplanet@gmail.com)

Please now enjoy this fanzine and once again we'd love to hear from you,

James







# Alcohol ink

By Sara Felix

This feels a bit daunting, where to start? Hi, I am Sara and I am an artist. And that is why I was brought on to guest edit this issue, oh that and I love ink.... flowing, vibrant ink. I am an artist who works in a lot in ink. Abstract, spacey ink. Bold colors and big puddles of ink. Blowing ink around on the page using blow dryers and straws and canned air then layering more ink with brushes on top of that. There are plenty of artists who use ink in a controlled manner but for me ink is a medium where the release of control is what makes it so satisfying. I let the ink do what it wants because ultimately it does. The ink does what it wants and I get to admire its beauty.

Did you ever do that project in school with markers and coffee filters? Or sharpies and alcohol to make tie dye?

Growing up I was always fascinated by chromatography, the separation of mixtures into its individual components. Alcohol inks are a blend of pigments and dyes that separate and dry at different rates and that mixture of components is what makes some colors more interesting than others. Blacks bleed into greens and purples and blues. Some greens have a lot of yellow, blues and purples have pinks that create halos of color. And there are the metallics. One of my favorites....a sheen of copper overlaid on a background of blue from the dyes and particles in my favorite color Blue Raven Bronze. Each ink reacts differently making each piece unique.

My work in this medium has been a lesson in letting go. A really valuable lesson that has especially helped me in 2020 and with my art in general. Not trying to control all aspects of my life has been a very very helpful skill. I am not a neat, precise artist. And with my kids I have short bursts of time that I can focus. I have a hard time drawing small details and for me the fun is the sweeping colors in a piece. I don't have to be fussy about how the color moves or how the straw blows it around. I can put it on the page in the general placement that I would like and it reacts differently to other inks almost every time. So I have no preconceived ideas of what a piece will look like when it is done.

At first there is a puddle of ink on the page, maybe multiple puddles that start to move slowly outward. Then the ink is blown or the paper starts to tilt and the ink starts to separate into different colors and that is when the piece really starts to get interesting. Adding more alcohol the colors tend to bleed and change and within that I see a universe or a pattern that the piece is based on. There are moments in each piece where I find it awful and think it can't be saved. But more manipulation of the colors on the page and then the final piece emerges and colors move and details are added.

My art is truly mixed media with alcohol ink, acrylic inks, acrylic paints, spray paint, glitter, and sometime topped off with resin. The building of the layers is what makes a piece have a depth and more interest than just



one layer of color.

And now I have added spin art to the mix. The kids art toy has become a favorite of mine. There is some method to the spinning as the speed controls how the ink flows outward but you never really know what the ink will look like until you completely stop the wheel.

Like many artists I have a bit of imposter syndrome. I don't paint beautiful landscapes or create intricate illustrations. I blow ink around. I let it run together and separate into other colors. And I embellish the colors and find a beauty in that process. When a piece works it brings a happiness to my heart that makes it all worth it.



Alcohol ink, acrylic, and watercolor resist



Texture paste, acrylic, and alcohol ink





# Iroshizuku Take-Sumi ink for instance. My Favorite.

By James Bacon

Early March 2020 and I am looking at my ink bottle as it goes down. I love how it goes clear and the ink lowers and so one can see that soon it is time to replace it. This is no problem, I have two silver boxes in my desk. I was in Broomfields in Boston, my usual source but availed of other things, because I had those boxes in my desk.

Mid March. Things have been going odd in the World for some time now, and I need to consider consolidating living arrangements and making a move perhaps in support of those more vulnerable to me. I am writing letters, more than usual, but wanting to personally connect with friends and fans, as I know how, and I know how much joy a letter, card, and in this instance, some comics are. I am settling things and open the drawer, I see a nice silver brand new box, and open it and there is an empty bottle in it.

Of course. I keep the Iroshizuku bottles, they are a lovely bottle, very high quality and nice looking, an oval shape to look down on, so nicely shaped and also have a coned lower depression part that allows one to get the nib in deeper, just in the middle. I asked Linda Wenzelburger to make me some Dublin 2019 ink, and I cleaned off a bottle and badged up bottle and box accordingly with the Dublin 2019 logo's. This was charming and I loved it, until the bottle went astray, likely taken by a decent person who thought it was available as I was in fairness giving away fountain pens, all mostl green and stationary, also green.

No problem, I reach to the other box. I open it. An empty clean bottle. I worry. You see, this is what I do, I keep them for future just in case, and indeed, in the lid I have noted who I was with, or where they came from and in some cases who gifted them to me.

There is an older slightly used Box, and so I pick that up, maybe this is the one, nope.  
Another Empty Bottle.

The Box I have been using then, could well be 3 bottles ago, although I think I have used more, because I know I have been using it for nearly 6 years now. And that ties in with when I got my Mont Blanc 146.

I usually am very dismissive of products that say they do something wonderful, and I had been an exponent and have written before about my love for Jonhao's especially as a great pen for \$5 or less. Now when I got my second hand 1982 Mont Blanc 146, I happened to be in Boston not long after, and I had heard about Iroshizuku and dismissed in. My waterman, parker, and Conway Stewart Inks were fine...

Then I got a bottle. I realised that like my Mont Blanc there are some standards that are worth paying more for. \$26 at the time, which was about 3 times the cost of any other ink.

But why.

When I purchased the ink first, as it is an expensive



Ink I was in Boston, and the sales lady, whom I trust, said that there were additives to the ink, that helped it flow. At nearly the same time, I was also put onto a new Paper - Claire Fontaine Triomphie, which I was assured would not bleed. And so at \$10 a sheaf, I was buying expensive ink and paper for my cheaply purchased very expensive pen.

Pilot say 'Draw your inspiration from Nature's breath and allow iroshizuku inks to take you on a poetic journey. A veritable ode to Japanese landscapes and homage to the art of writing.'

'Iroshizuku inks are available in 24 sublime shades opening a door to a world of infinite refinement. The name "iroshizuku" is a combination of the Japanese words "iro" (colouring) expressing high standards and variation of colours, and "shizuku" (droplet), which embodies the very image of dripping water. Each ink name derives from the expressions of beautiful Japanese natural landscapes and plants, all of which contribute to the depth of each individual hue. Enjoy Japan's rich and subtle colour aesthetic as you write. Each beautifully presented bottle offers an opulent and luxurious edge to your creative and everyday writing.'

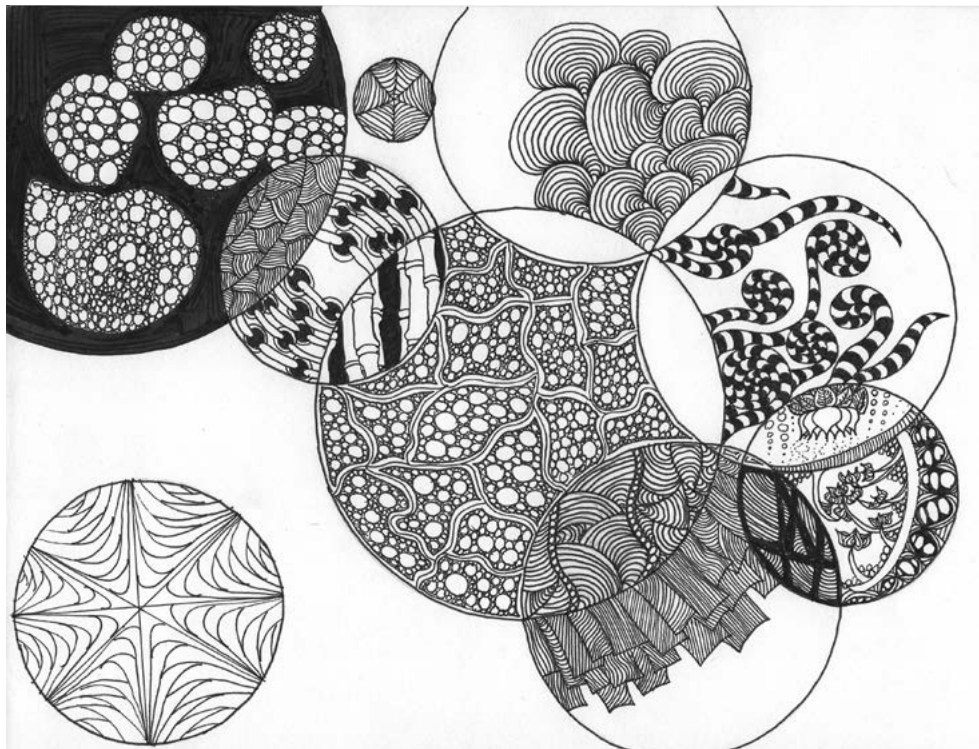
Sounds fab. Although I note, no mention of magic lubricating type ingredients. The translations include 'Sunset' 'Moonlit Night' and 'Morning Glory'.

My ink of choice, Take-Sumi is black. Now Take could be Bamboo, and Sumi can mean ink, well painters ink, I think and there could be a connection to Bamboo Charcol. A Lagedly.

Anyhow. It is just so lovely in the pen. There is a consistently nice and high flow rate and with the MB nib, it feels like a dream. I tested this by doing a clean out and using Mont Blanc ink, and there just was no comparison. And this is true of a number of MB inks I have purchased, they are lovely, but the flow does not compare. With my Conway Stewart 28, it flows heavy, but even wet, it holds strongly on Triomphie, and I love it for that. The nib feels so smooth. For years now I have been using it, and there has been no clogging or issues. It will bleed through on most paper, and there can be feathering, which I spent a lot of time avoiding, but with finer nibs and a lighter hand, it is lovely on most papers.

Consistently I get good service from this combo. And thanks to some research and support from the Sheffield Hallam Print shop, I have headed paper that it is fine with.

So, I looked online, pondered getting post at this time, and decided to buy online and locally in the UK from a decent ink and pen shop and so, I had some. A lovely ink.





# ENABLER

By John Dodd

I was thirty eight when I first gave away a pen, it's been eight years since that day, and to date, I've now given away more than two hundred more pens...

Why?

Because I love to write, and as with anyone who enjoys something, you enthuse about the things that you love, and you find likeminded people to share that enjoyment with. When it came to pens and writing though, I took a different path.

The first pen I gave away was a Jinhao, and that's a name that's likely to come up quite a bit in this piece, because they're pens that look expensive, whilst really not being expensive at all. I remember the day well, I was running a convention (which is what I do when I'm not writing), and someone asked about the pens I was carrying with me.

A brief aside here, I'm a writer, and I believe in the adage of always carrying pen and paper with me just in case an idea comes to me and I have to note it down. That day I had a Rhodia notepad with me, the aforementioned Jinhao X750, a Pilot Metropolitan, and a Kaweco Sport.

The question was, why so many pens?

My answer, because when you're dealing with fountain pens, it's often better to have several pens available just in case there's a problem and they don't write the

way they should. As much as I love fountain pens, I understand that they're not as constantly reliable as many more sophisticated pens, although that's a part of what I love about them. When you're using something that might not be a hundred percent reliable, it's a choice you make, rather than going for the thing that might be the better tool for what you're doing. I know my space pen is far more reliable than the fountain pen I use every day, but I also know that the space pen gets far less paper time than the fountain pen despite that...

I let the person write with all the different pens, and I noticed that they liked the Jinhao far more than the others. The thought occurred, as with many people who use fountain pens, I had a wide variety of them, most of them cheap and cheerful, workman pens, and here was someone who didn't have a pen, but was enjoying writing with them.

So, I gave them the pen...

Total cost to brighten someone's day? About a quid...

Well worth it...

The following day, I ordered a replacement pen and thought nothing more of it.

Next convention, I got asked about the pens again, this time I ended up giving away the replacement Jinhao and the Wing Sung that was next to it.





And restocked

Next convention, it was the replacement Jinhao, the replacement Wing Sung, and two more...

And restocked

I should point out that I'm not rich, not by any shot, but the pens I give away are cheap, and weeks, months later, I would see those people still using those pens, and usually they'd have another pen (or two, or three) with them. We'd talk about their new pens and the inks they were using, and they'd curse me for getting them into writing with fountain pens.

Enabler is the word whispered about me when it comes to pens...

And I'm alright with that...

After a year, I'd started to get the idea that people liked different sorts of pens, and so I widened the variety of pens I took to conventions. People liked different colours of inks, so I started widening the variety of inks I took to conventions. It hadn't started as an intention to give pens away, but it was rapidly becoming one, and with it came a bit of a study. There were patterns in the types of pens that people liked using, patterns in the inks they liked, the colours they preferred, the paper they liked to use.

I started noting down which pens people liked, for my own curiosity than anything else, and the process I used to see what sort of pen they liked was simple.

Start with the most popular pen for their gender, then work through the different variations.

That may seem strange, but bear with me on this, over the course of the last eight years, I've seen a pattern

that women tend to prefer pens that are heavier and thicker in the barrel, with wider nibs that allow the colours to show more on the page. Men, on the other hand, tend to like very light, often very narrow pens, and colour is a fine thing, as long as it's Black. There are always exceptions, but watching the results tally up, the pattern very much becomes clearer.

The first question is how the pen feels in the hand.

Too light, too heavy, too broad, too narrow.



Testing Kit

Many (more than eighty percent) will say that the pen feels fine.

I should point out that most of the people who've had pens do have the very English problem of being overly polite about the pens they're using, not understanding that I don't care if they like a pen or not, what I need is the truth of it.

And so, I always have several pens standing by, in fact, the testing kit looks like this at the moment...

(and yes, I'm also a gamer, but dice are only given away in full sets, to new gamers, and they don't get to choose

like this...)

As an example, I start them with the Jinhao X750 (Right hand side, number 2), and they think it's too heavy. The next two pens to be picked out are the Wing Sung 3008 (Right side, number 7), and the Jinhao 991 (Right side, number 4) because they're the lightest pens in the set. If they're too light, we move to the Muji aluminium (Left side, number 8) and the Pilot Metro (Right side, number 3) and so on, till we've judged the weight of the pen that they like to use.

At this point, it's all about the weight of the pen, paper has not been brought out yet, it's literally how the



pen feels in the hand, before nib even gets exposed to the air. Putting the pen in the hand and seeing how the balance of it feels can sway the decision before anything else gets brought into it.

Then we check the feel of the pen on the fingers when it comes to writing. Whether the person likes a triangular grip, a circular grip, wide or narrow, rubber, plastic, metal, the list goes on. What I'm looking for here is that they're happy with how the pen feels when they're putting it to the paper. If the fingers move well on the pen, if it sits right in the hand, if it gives them impetus to put it to paper or not...



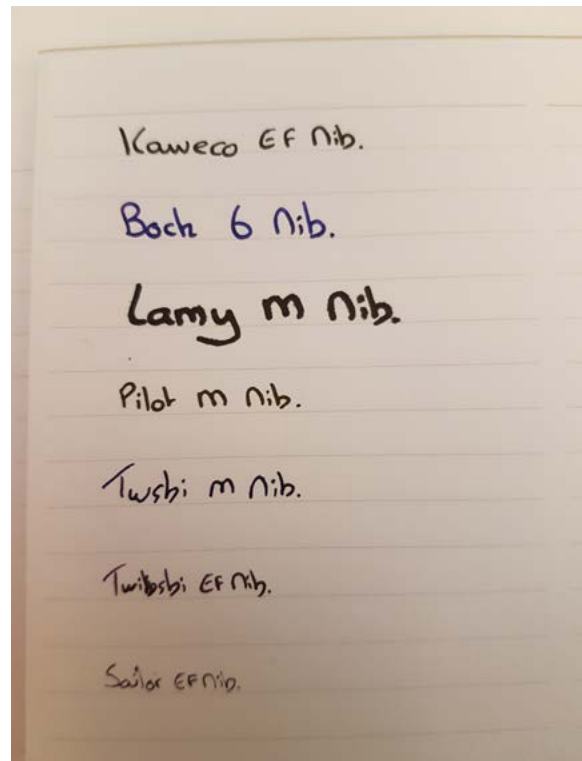
It's not always possible to marry up the barrel and the nib, but even when I don't have the right combination, I know that there's going to be a pen out there with that particular combination. I just work with the tools that I have.

Then we see which nib they prefer, going back across the different pens to see how they feel on the paper, then on different paper, because writing on paper designed for fountain pens is a glorious thing, but it becomes utterly different when you find yourself writing on paper that sucks all the ink straight out of your pen and onto the page in one large blot... Some pens (the Hero at the bottom of the image for example) are very much easier to use because of the way they work, the nib being double sided and flat, rather than leading in from the feed on the pen, allowing the pen to be used at any angle and as a result making it similar in use to a ballpoint or rollerball.

In terms of nib widths that have been handed out, my data is as follows.

Nib Width	Total
Extra Broad	2
Broad	47
Medium	142
Fine	20
Extra Fine	3

The differences between nibs can be quite extreme, particularly as nibs come in several different sizes, and there are differences between Japanese nibs and European ones, as evidenced below. The Kaweco, Bock, and Lamy nibs are all European, the Pilot, Twbsbi, and Sailor nibs are all Japanese. By and large, a Japanese nib will be thinner compared to a European nib of the same size class (as evidenced clearly by the difference between the Kaweco vs the Sailor, and the Lamy vs the Pilot.), most people find EF nibs too scratchy on the page, but there is a marked drop off as the nib becomes less of a pen and more of a felt tip (as evidenced by the particularly wet Lamy Nib there...)





And when all of this is done, we move on to Ink, because a part of the whole fountain pen experience is in the wide variety of inks that are available to write with. I only carry the basics with me when I travel (A blue, A black, a red, a green, and through long experience of what people like, a purple), but to put perspective in the choices of inks, here are just the Diamine inks I have at home.



And when all this is done, and the person testing all the pens finally has the pen that they like the most, invariably they ask me what pen it is, so that they can find one themselves. My response is always.

“But that’s not my pen, that’s yours...”

I do not accept payment, I ask that people pay it forwards, for I do believe that handwriting as an art, as a practiced skill, is dying out. Once a required subject, it’s now an antiquated practice that is now lost to many and that is not taught in schools as much as it once was. After all, I can write at fifteen to twenty words a minute, more if I take no care in it, but I can type at more than a hundred words a minute and correct them on the fly as I do.

In terms of business use, there is no question as to which is the faster and more efficient way of doing things. But something is lost when the individuality of the person writing is not shown upon the page, you cannot tell if the person was happy or sad from the inflection on the page, from the angle of the writing upon the page, from the way they wrote their letters upon the page. But that’s graphology, something I could write about for equal numbers of years.

And for all those curious, the numbers from my

restocking history, from the point at which I started counting. I haven’t included all the pens for which only one was given away (mostly because those were gifts, rather than giving pens to strangers), and I haven’t included all the pens that I never replaced.

Pen Type	Given out	Pen weight (g)	Barrel	Grip
Wing Sung 3008	46	24	Medium	Triangular Plastic
Jinhao X750	32	37	Medium	Round Rubber
Jinhao 992	21	13	Medium	round Plastic
Jinhao 991	19	13	Narrow	Round Plastic
Wing Sung 698	17	14	Medium	Round Plastic
Wing Sung 6359	15	22	Medium	Triangular Plastic
Hi Tec C	12	10	Narrow	Hexagonal Plastic
Schneider Slider Edge	9	13	Medium	Triangular Plastic
Jinhao X450	7	45	Broad	Triangular Rubber
Hero 616	6	17	Medium	Round Resin
Hero 901	4	50	Broad	Round Resin
Jinhao 250	3	38	Medium	Round Metal
Pilot MR	3	25	Medium	Round Resin
Jinhao 159	2	45	Broad	Round Resin
Kaco Edge	2	59	Medium	Round Metal
Muji aluminium	2	20	Narrow	Round Metal
Faber Castell Loom	2	32	Medium	Round Metal
Pilot Cavalier	2	22	Narrow	Round Metal
Pilot Penmanship	2	9	Medium	Triangular Plastic
Monami Olika	2	12	Narrow	Round Rubber
Tombow Airpress	2	27	Broad	Round Plastic
Noodlers Ahab	2	12	Medium	Round Plastic
Namisu Nova	2	30	Broad	Round Metal

Of the top pens, the 992, 991, and 698 were popular across both genders, but the 3008’s all went to men, who said the X750s were too heavy, and the X750’s all went to women, who said that the 3008’s lacked good balance on them.

X750 – Most popular pen for Women

Jinhao 3008 – Most popular pen for men

If you see me at a convention and you’ve got a pen, come talk to me about them, I always enjoy talking about writing and the act of pen to paper. If you see me at a convention and you haven’t got a pen, come talk to me about them, there’s every chance you’ll leave with a new pen in hand and likely some ink on your fingers...

But be wary, I’ll never apologise if you end up buying many more after we’re done talking...



# In Praise of Doodling

By Helen Montgomery



I forgot how to doodle.

Weird, right? I hadn't even realized it had happened until the internet pointed it out. I was browsing around and came across an artist by the name of Alisa Burke, who was offering a class called "Doodle It Out". Basically, she provides 30 doodling prompts and tips.

"Why would anyone need a doodling class?" thought I. Yet as I watched the ad, I realized that I had, in fact, fallen out of the habit of doodling. I had forgotten. How had this happened?

As a kid I was always doodling. Friends and I would write and pass notes in class, and there were doodles galore on all of them. Later in school there would be doodles all over my notebooks. I remember in college discovering the Staedtler duo markers – one end was a basic felt tip, Sharpie-esque, and the other a brush-style tip. Those markers went everywhere with me. My notes in college classes were over-the-top colorful, as I would use different colors for the actual note taking, plus the doodles in the margins. I had a sketchbook that I would fill with random doodles. If there was a piece of paper I was writing on, odds were good there were doodles.

I've always been more of an abstract doodler. Occasionally things like flowers, but mostly shapes and patterns were my thing. Swoops and spirals and flames and circles and triangles. Draw a big scribble of shape and then fill in the smaller sections with

different doodles. It was soothing and repetitive and helped me focus on what I was hearing as opposed to daydreaming and no longer listening. I created some beautiful images that made me smile.

In my first jobs, I would often doodle while on the phone. The notepad I was using. The big deskpad calendar. Covered in doodles. I had to be careful though – there were forms I would fill out, and those couldn't be doodled on. Wouldn't be professional. I clearly started reining in the doodling, being more conscious of it.

But wait! Back to school now! I went back for my Masters Degree in Social Work, and suddenly the options for doodling were wide open again! But no. Now I was working again, so the doodling had to slow down. I couldn't doodle on a patient's assessment form, or in their chart. I could (and did) doodle all the time on my deskpad calendar though.

Ah...there's the change now. Electronics. Technology. Suddenly I was using the computer a lot more often. Hard to doodle on a screen with your keyboard. Fewer phone calls, more emails. Taking notes on a computer instead of in a notebook. Ah...smart phones. Now I'm checking Facebook or playing a game on my mobile phone when I'm on hold on the desk phone.

The years went by, and I forgot.

After seeing the ad for Alisa's class, I started looking



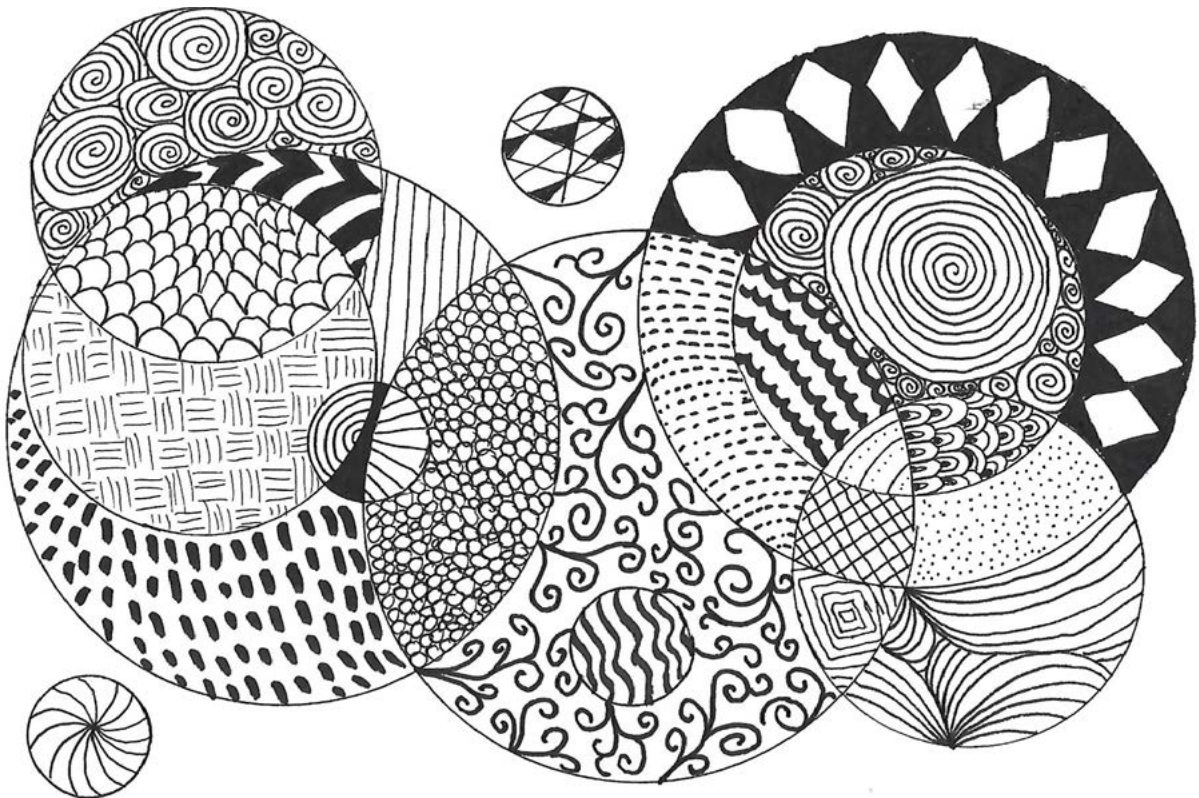
for doodles. On my desk are two notebooks. One from Dublin 2019: An Irish Worldcon and the other for the Chicago in 2022 Worldcon Bid. Filled with notes from meetings in-person and virtual. Unless asterisks and checkmarks and the occasional swoopy arrow connecting two ideas, not a doodle in sight.

Unacceptable.

Yes, I signed up for the Doodle It Out class. I'm loving it – playing with new pens to see what kind of marks they make and so many familiar, but temporarily forgotten, patterns. Listening to music or podcasts while covering pages in marks and swoops. Circles and spirals and rectangles. My old college favorite of a scribble with different doodles in each section. They're all back, and new ideas as well.

I'm currently using 6" x 9" watercolor paper and Faber-Castell Pitt Artist Pens in Black and Sepia.

I'm still not doodling spontaneously yet. It's a much more mindful exercise currently, but I hope that my notebooks will soon start to show signs of doodling run amok. It makes my brain happier.











harvest  
MOON  
IN  
MONOCHROME

-ANN GRY 2020

## Photos of soviet-time nibs and pens









# A Southpaws Guide to Pens

By John Vaughan

Filmmaker, screenwriter and fountain pen fanatic John Vaughan gives us a brief rundown on his personal choice of top ten pens!

I have not used a ballpoint pen since the summer of 1987! I was fourteen years old when I bought my first fountain pen, a cheap Oxford, and discovered for the first time that the very act of handwriting was not a dull repetitive chore but an art in itself (an even more interesting experience since I am left handed and learned a very distinctive handwriting technique in order not to smudge the ink) and I have never looked back since. The first draft of every screenplay or story I have ever written (including this article) I write in longhand. Why? Because writing it before typing it makes me as a writer consider my words more carefully. If it doesn't work as the pen spills the ink onto the page, it most certainly won't be any better when I type it out. Over the years I have used Sheaffers and Parkers, Crosses and Lamys and even Jinhaos from China, all in the search for the pen that offers the most comfortable writing experience. That search and obsession will probably never end. However here are the ten pens that I currently use day to day.

## 10. Rotring Tikky Graphic. ( 0.7, 0.5, 0.3)

“Hang on!” I hear you cry, this isn't a fountain pen, this is an art pen and not even an expensive one at that!” and you'd be right. I started using these pens while studying art in school about the same time as I brought that Oxford, but as writing experiences go, this is a pleasure with a constant feed of ink, no

skipping(unless it's nearly completely empty) and no feedback. And unlike fountain pens, if you lose it, it's a case of just going into the nearest large supermarket or office supply store and picking another one up.

## 9. PILOT Metropolitan.

The cheapest fountain pen on this list at not even \$20 and yet for its price it is surprisingly substantial even coming with a squeeze converter for ink.(There are far more expensive pens out there that you have to pay extra just for the converter.) Nib sizes can be ordered from fine to a stub and the writing experience? Let's just say I wish this is the pen I had in school.

## 8. Italix Churchman's Prescriptor.

This is available from only one supplier (Mr.Pen) All metal with an architect's nib, this is the heaviest pen I have and yet a joy to use, thanks to its unique posting system. A lip secures the cap so tightly that once on it's never going to fall off and which balances the pen in your hand. The nib ensures a beautiful, constant wet flow to the paper perfect to use with print and calligraphy and let's face it, a very handsome looking pen that makes the statement “Take away your ballpoints and your felt tips! I use Fountain pens!” and sometimes that's all you want.



## 7. Waterman Perspective.

A Waterman was my first proper “grown up” pen, no more just buying the pen in a box and hoping for the best. This was the first time I went into a specialist pen shop and was asked to try the pen out before I bought it. Eleven years ago, myself and my wife went to Normandy and on the last day there my wife decided since we were in France, the home of Waterman, she would buy me a new pen. She discovered two things that day. First, in Normandy you buy a good pen at the bookshop (which makes perfect sense) and secondly, the Waterman Perspective. A beautiful looking pen whose lines evoke the height of the art deco era and a superb writer right out of the box.

## 6. Lamy Scala.

Just outside my top five is the Lamy Scala. Not much to say about the Scala because it is simply an excellent writer. I have had this six years and it has yet to fail me. Its design is simple yet stylish, it posts well and is not too big in the hand while it's levered clip system is both aesthetically pleasing and practical at the same time. If I was giving someone their first fountain pen but wanted to make it a bit special, this is a good place to start.

## 5. TWSBI Diamond 580 AL.

The perfect everyday pen from Taiwan. Superior to their legendarily cheap Chinese rivals Jinhao and Hero. Yes, they are made of plastic (looking like a reinforced translucent Bic) and have a reputation for cracking hence why I went with the slightly more expensive (€5) aluminium reinforced model to prevent such mishaps and all I can say is for the price...bloody hell! Writing with this is buttery smooth. The pen glides over the page with little to no feedback, and it even comes with its own maintenance kit. The only complaint is posting. Yes, the pen is designed so the cap posts, but the result is so large and top heavy it could become unwieldy. If you don't post, the pen is on the large but comfortable side. Oh, and if you look at the photo, you will think to yourself “But John, you said it was translucent?” well it is. That colour is the immense amount of ink the pen holds. I was so impressed, I bought a second one.

## 4. Waterman Expert.

What I like to call my dialog pen, as I write all dialog with this in a rich green ink. (The ink of spies. The legend is, as a tradition, all signed documents by the head of British Intelligence are done in green ink.) It's the classic fountain pen cigar design, perfect for use either posted or unposted and a superb writer. Again, if you are interested in starting to use fountain pens and want quality at an affordable price, this is the perfect model to start with.

## 3 Waterman Carene.

The last of my three Waterman pens. This stands out for its unusual inlaid nib design (made from rhodium plated 18 carat gold). The Carene is not a cheap pen but what you pay in price, you get back in quality. Posted or unposted, a beautiful writing experience that almost (and I emphasize the almost) equals my number one choice.

## 2. Faber-Castell e-motion Stealth.

My spy pen. A mixture of style and substance, the e-motion stealth stands out because of its all black design. It looks like something Napoleon Solo would have used in The Man From U.N.C.L.E. (Even the clip looks cooler due to the fact it has a set of teeth sawed into it.) It's heavy, due to the fact it's all metal, so you may prefer to use this one unposted if you are writing for any length of time but then again writing with it is a pleasure. A quick side story, just before Christmas about three years ago, I dropped the pen and damaged the nib. I rang Faber-Castell to find out where I could get it replaced. They gave me a list of shops and dealers online and wished me luck. After spending Christmas with my in-laws, we returned home to find the post had arrived and in it, a parcel containing a new nib free of charge from Faber-Castell with a note wishing me a happy new year and the message “Try not to drop this one!”

And, at Number One, it's the....



## Montblanc Meisterstück Platinum-Coated Classique.

I know what you're thinking. You are paying for the name when it comes to Montblanc and I believed that too until I tried it. In fact, I would never have owned one except my wife purchased it for me as a gift. This, I think, is the perfect mix of quality, style and substance. The pen uncapped or capped feels comfortable in the hand thanks to its manufacture from a lightweight resin. It feels when you hold it like the perfect size and in looks screams classic. What about the writing experience? Simply put, second to none. Like I said, the Carene comes close but writing with this even straight out of its packaging, has yet to find its equal in my book.

And that's it. Those are my top ten pens. You might not agree and that's alright because what may suit one person may not suit all, as in life so it is with pens but I do hope my little guide has helped you in some way in advising your own choices. Now, if you will excuse me, I have my eyes on a nice Visconti fountain pen, made from the volcanic lava of Mount Etna in Italy and before you say "But surely you have enough pens?", it's like I told you, it's an obsession that will never end... probably!

## 10. Rotring Tikky Graphic



## 9. PILOT Metropolitan





8. Italix Churchman's Prescriptor



7. Waterman Perspective



6. Lamy Scala



5. TWSBI Diamond 580 AL





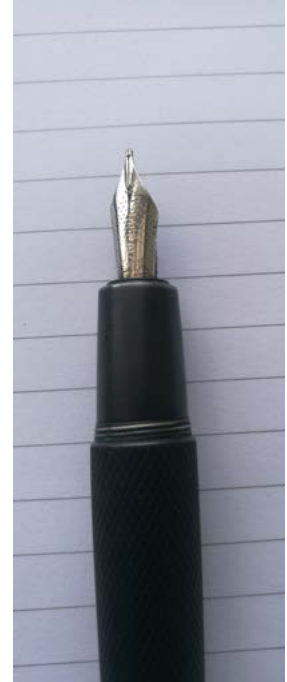
4. Waterman Expert



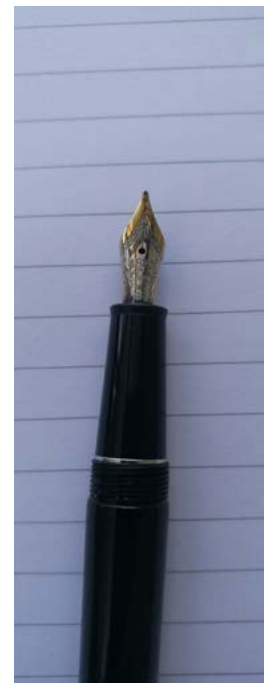
3 Waterman Carene



2. Faber-Castell e-motion Stealth



1. Montblanc Meisterstück Platinum-Coated Classique







# The Ink Stuff I am doing

By Chris Garcia

I am not an artist, so when I remembered that this issue was coming up, I decided to try and make some work for it. I love Pen Culture, from super-high-end pens (see my other article) to ink stands (I have an awesome Stag's Head one) to ink itself.

Oh no, I don't like using ink! It's so messy and typing is so much easier, but I love the concept and the artifacts.

My loving wife Vanessa is an artist. She's pretty dang phenomenal (and dang phenomenally pretty!) and one day, I was at an estate sale, looking for old tech stuff and among the myriad old calculators, LP records, and 1970s kitsch was a large bag FULL of ink and pens. Just full of 'em! I gave them to Vanessa, but she only had room for some of them in her kit, so I took a small box full of ink and a bunch of pens for my own, and tucked it into my closet.

So, when I remembered we were doing this issue, I pulled em out and started to work with the inks.

Now, I can not draw. I have hands with stubby little sausage fingers with minimal dexterity, and 0 hand-eye coordination. That is a bad combo for arting. Still, I gave it my best shot.

The inks were from the 60s through the 80s, so some of them I had to reconstitute. I started by adding a few drops of water, and then vodka to others. This thinned it out and actually allowed a bit of color to appear, even in the one labeled "Just Black" which ended up kinda purple. The blue I had usually just looked black,

but when I added a couple of drops of vodka, it was a lovely light blue, the color of a transit system trim in a high-class city. My brother-in-law gave me a dropper bottle of ink that was a light red, so I was off to the races with 3 basic colors.

Now, as many folks know, I'm big into Abstract Expressionism, and especially into two artists - Helen Frankenthaler and Franz Kline. Frankenthaler did paintings on unprimed canvas, which gave her work a distinctive bleed effect. I figured getting that effect with ink would be much easier.

I was wrong.

Since I was working on paper, there was bleed, not it wasn't to the level that gave off the impression of a great spreading mass. Instead, it just made everything look muddied.

Kline, on the other hand, was the perfect model.

Much of his work in the 1950s was concerned with zipping across the canvas with lines, through my favorite, Figure 8 at the Anderson Collection at Stanford, works with swooshing circles. There was a certain glyph-like feel to much of his work, and I often will fill pages of notebooks with nonsensical letters that seem to be trying to imitate language.

So, I started with that idea, and did about 50 pieces pretty quick. I'm also doing an issue of Claims Department about Abstract Expressionism, so I started

adding oils, gouache, and even tempera to many of the works, but the ink ones, my gateway drug, were easily my favorite because they had to be simpler, and there was another reason.

Paper towels.

Now, when I would apply ink, I would often put it through newspaper or paper towels to give it a little textural effect. I've often put a page on top and squish them together to make an impression of the first page on the second, mostly to soak up extra ink. Sometimes,

I'd place the paper towel on a work and the ink soaked up by the sheet of Brawny was much more interesting than the one on the page.

And thus, here are my works created for this issue of Journey Planet. I call this series Secondaries, Ink on Paper Towel.







# Pen Dragon

By Rhonda Eudaly

Pens and pencils can be a relatively inexpensive (or not) habit depending on your tastes. I have always loved all things ink and graphite ever since I was old enough to hold one. To this day I have never figured out which came first – my love of office supplies or my love of writing. Any excuse to buy a pen and paper, because what good a new pen without something to write on? Right?

About 10 years ago – I had to go through my website archive, and yeah, wow – I started reviewing pens and pencils on my website. At first it was to justify the pens I already had and then became the justification to get MORE. Not that I needed an excuse, because if I lost all internet ability, I would keep buying them. But honesty, I'm not a collector, that's my husband, Jimmy. He has a love of one specific mechanical pencil (the Pentel P-200 series – specifically the P-205). Me? I'm a Pen Dragon. I have my treasure trove of pens and pencils, markers and highlighters. I love my pen trove

I have thinned out the trove once or twice. I always have good intentions where it comes to thinking I have “too many”. I have a plastic tote – medium sized – that overflows with writing instruments of all types, colors, ink and lead varieties, and price points. A few of the more expensive ones live outside the bin because, come on, I do care.

Real collectors or pen snobs would be appalled by my trove. I'm a practical Pen Dragon. I use the pens I buy. There are very few “mint in package” pens in my

trove (because I bought spares of some “collectible” types for that purpose). I'm not gentle with them. They're made to be useful. They're made to do work. And, for as much as I love that new pen and paper sensations? There's equal satisfaction in a used-up pen, a stubby pencil nub, or an empty ink reservoir. Because that means I did something with that pen. I created something – even if it's crap words that day or my next published story. Whatever it is, I created it with that pen.

Ink is also part of my psyche. I didn't realize how much as during the recent pandemic. I started out using multi-pens with classic black, blue, red, and green – but mostly the blacks and blues – because my day job had me running full bore and I needed to have everything at hand. But as we progressed, as I had time to deal with (or not) emotions, I found myself gravitating to the brighter colors – pinks, greens, purples – the more vibrant the better, like neon hues. Then I even shifted to inverses - white, gold and silver on black paper. Making with words bright and cheerful in the gloom that surrounds us.

I don't know if it's going to help in the long run, but I am finding my creativity coming back bit by bit. I'm finding a little joy in seeing words on a page that I don't get composing on a keyboard. Is it because I have bright inks? Maybe not, but whatever it is, it's part of the journey.



