

VOICES

MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE  
LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL 2015

VOICES

MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE  
LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL 2015



# CONTENTS

## VISUAL ARTS

- 6 **GLORIA STEWART** *The Yellow Shawl*
- 7 **CHRIS LOZIER** *Out of the Earth*
- 9 **CASSANDRA HERTEL** *Untitled*
- 10 **MICHELLE MATHIS** :2
- 13 **KIM McMASTER** *Allegory*
- 19 **MARGIE SYCHOWSKI** *Circus Cats*
- 20 **CHELSEA SWANSON** *Reclining Figure*
- 21 **MIKALA KURZBUCH** *Smash*
- 23 **MARY JEAN DEJA** *Three Houses*
- 24 **SKYLAR BUETOW** *King of the Cyclops*
- 27 **ANDY LECHNER** *Candle Holders*
- 28 **BEN ROHRER** *Trophy*
- 30 **JOE FIALA** *Komodo*
- 33 **BRIANNA McDEVITT** *Lightning*
- 37 **RYAN KAVANAGH** *Untitled*
- 38 **THOMAS NEESE** *Elijah Alfred "Natureboy"*
- 39 **SARAH BURNS** *Demon's Peak*
- 44 **MARNIE KNOUSE** *Untitled*
- 48 **RICH GRUSDIS** *Rain on Randolph*
- 51 **KIM McMASTER** *Untitled*
- 52 **THOMAS NEESE** *The Bridge*
- 53 **KATIE SAULT** *Pheidole Morrissi*
- 56 **MYKELA NOWICKI** *Designer Tags*

## LITERATURE

- 5 **EVELYN SILVER** *Secret to Silent Insanity*
- 8 **EVELYN SILVER** *A Weed in Bloom*
- 11 **CARRIE LINS** *Cigarette Memories*
- 12 **KAT CREE** *River-Wise*
- 14 **ALENA HANSEN** *The Artist*
- 22 **SALENA VELOZ** *Drawing Dragons in Notebooks*
- 25 **CASEY WILK** *Hellhouse*
- 26 **JOANNE KEEGAN** *Precious Time*
- 29 **JERRY WENDT** *The Freudian Road*
- 31 **KAT CREE** *The Necromancer of Printers*
- 34 **KAYLEE LEONARD** *Don't Ask*
- 40 **JOHN WASALASKI** *That First Day*
- 46 **CASEY WILK** *Lucy*
- 49 **KAYLEIGH JENSEN** *Turn Around*
- 50 **SARAH PERROTE** *Cancer, Part 4*
- 54 **MATTHEW WASIK** *The Needle Man*

## MUSIC

- 1 **DAVID WHITCOME** *Tradition*
- 2 **DAVID WHITCOME** *Never Ending*
- 3 **ENRIC RIU** *Solitudini*
- 4 **SAM MILLARD** *Nightmare*
- 5 **SAM MILLARD** *Jesus Saves*

## BEST OF MAGAZINE

Voices 2015 is proud to announce Awards for the Best of Magazine

### LITERARY:

Evelyn Silver  
*Secret to Silent Insanity*

### VISUAL ART:

Gloria Stewart  
*The Yellow Shawl*

### MUSIC:

David Whitcome  
*Tradition*

Voices wishes to acknowledge students for their excellence in literature, music and visual arts.

## THE DAN RISCH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Dan Risch Memorial Scholarship is awarded to outstanding and promising visual art students. This Scholarship is generously funded by Dan's family and friends in memory of former MCC art student Dan Risch.

The 2015 Dan Risch Memorial Scholarship winners are:

Marnie Knouse  
Brianna McDevitt  
Benjamin Rohrer

## ***MISSION STATEMENT***

It is the mission of *Voices* to recognize and showcase the visual arts, musical and literary talents of McHenry County College students. *Voices* provides a forum for students to practice curation, jurying, editing, and technical production, which enhances the artistic experience and provides real art-world experience.

---

## ***EDITORIAL STATEMENT***

*Voices* publishes work that reflects the literary, visual, and musical points-of-view of contemporary community college students. Although *Voices* does not organize content thematically, the student editors, who are appointed annually by the faculty advisors in each discipline, select work that represents the contemporary zeitgeist of the McHenry County College community.

## SECRET TO SILENT INSANITY

The trick is to not give them a hint.  
What they don't know can still hurt you,  
But at least they will be unaware  
Of the inner turmoil.

If they be persistent,  
Cover the truth in dirt and goo  
Until even you can't recognize it.

Silence is your best worst friend.  
Let it blanket your being  
And alter their perception,  
Allowing you to be an unfired slab of clay,  
To be molded upon their desire.

Be "loved" by all for who you're not.  
Never whisper your secrets.

I never once stated this would keep you happy or sane.  
I only said it would keep your darkness hidden  
In sights not so plain.





**GLORIA STEWART**

*The Yellow Shawl*

BEST OF MAGAZINE



OIL ON CANVAS, 39.5" X 30"

**CHRIS LOZIER**  
*Out of the Earth*



CERAMICS, 48" X 8" X 8," 38" X 7" X 7," 28" X 6" X 6"



## A WEED IN BLOOM

Still in the best of youth,  
He steals away in the night.

Eyes as dark as his fine gentleman's attire  
Show no sign of the joys of the celebration around him.

Searching for cleaner air, I find myself before the ill-fitting youth,  
And call out to inquire of his purpose.

Turning,  
His clothes a sharp contrast  
To the awe-inspiring, festive lights,  
He says it all in silence by  
Unconsciously or uncaringly revealing  
A face dirtied by impure deeds  
And a single matching hand  
Oddly holding the cloak firmly closed.

I almost speak again to learn what he hides,  
But those dark eyes warn danger

For anyone else who  
Would hold such knowledge.

It is all too plain what his life is.  
Such a gorgeous child turned devil!



CASSANDRA HERTEL  
*Untitled*



FOAM CORE, 12" X 11" X 6.5"



MICHELLE MATHIS

:2



## CIGARETTE MEMORIES

The stagnant stench of a cigarette fills my nose with disgust,  
my memories however are filled with a longing for that time  
so long ago.

As one not to partake in that foul smell's activities  
when it unexpectedly makes its presence in my nose  
I recall those who actively sucked its poison, and blew its stench.

I remember the way I loved them, and the way they loved me  
when I inhale that stench I'm brought back to our Lake,  
and recall the hours we spent there

The happiest times of my life,  
were filled with that smoke  
back then it didn't even cross my mind

When that scent creeps in  
I see the rooms no longer barren,  
instead filled again, with Life

It's at these moments  
that their names still feel fresh in my mouth,  
though their voices, now, have faded from my ears

But that smell,  
that disgusting, putrid smell  
it brings me back

To them.



OIL ON CANVAS, 30" X 40"





KAT CREE

Poetry

## RIVER-WISE

Sitting in philosophy class, thinking  
philosophical thoughts,  
about philosophical things  
cannot possibly be good for me.

My teacher—my philosophy teacher—  
was explaining the concept of Nihilism.  
I'd always thought Nihilism just meant "nothing;"  
nothing exists, no one exists, reality is a void.

But I had it wrong—they do believe in something.  
They believe in simples.  
Molecules are made out of atoms,  
which are made out of protons, neutrons and electrons,  
which are made up of quarks  
and so on and so forth  
until you get to "simples."  
And simples make up everything.

This is why philosophy is bad.  
Bad for me.  
Well—  
bad for my grades.

My professor continued speaking  
philosophical words about philosophical things  
but I couldn't help thinking,  
thinking about Nihilism,  
thinking about simples  
and thinking about myself.

When I die, and my body is burned  
and my ashes are scattered,  
they'll become part of the dirt;  
I've always known how that works.

But if I am "particles arranged woman-wise,"

then could my particles—  
could "I"—  
eventually become something else?

I sat there in class  
eyes unfocused  
thinking about death  
thinking about Nihilism

And thinking that after I die,  
in my "next life," if you will,  
I'd like to become  
particles arranged  
river-wise

If I was a river,  
I could see the whole country.  
I could connect people and places  
that are far apart.

If I was a river,  
I could freeze and lie still all winter,  
and run and leap and dance all summer,  
chattering away with the birds as I flow.

By the time the class ended,  
I hadn't the foggiest notion  
what else my poor philosophy professor had said.

But I knew one thing for certain:  
after I graduate,  
after I live,  
and after I die,

Somehow, in the future,  
I'd want to be  
arranged river-wise.

KIM McMASTER  
*Allegory*



OIL ON CANVAS, 42" X 42"





# THE ARTIST

*It is 1962.*

*Ella loses the feeling in her hands. Numbness rises up her body, paralyzing her with fear.*

*She hears him coming.*

*Images flash across her eyes. Images of bodies skinned and twisted into sculptures. Blood painted on the walls. Necklaces made of teeth. They are memories of The Artist's lair. The lair she just escaped. Only for him to find her again.*

*She hears The Artist coming.*

*Ella realizes Jaspar hears it, too, by the sudden pallor on his face.*

*The footsteps are growing louder. Closer.*

*A dark figure stands in the doorway, casting its shadow onto the grimy, grey tiles. Rain pounds outside. Before Ella realizes what is happening, The Artist steps inside.*

*Jaspar flies to Ella's side as she collapses onto the cold stone floor. As she convulses with fear, Jaspar takes her hand in his. "Shh, maybe he won't hear us," Jaspar's breath is warm on her skin.*

*Jaspar is lying.*

*Ella sobs uncontrollably, like a squealing animal. Confrontation with The Artist always ends one way. Jaspar and Ella are going to be his new sculpture, his new paint, his new necklace.*

*From where The Artist stands, moonlight seeps in from the hallway, faintly illuminating Jaspar curled against Ella's twitching body. There is an eerie silence that Ella's screams shatter. But to The Artist, it sounds different.*

*He hears voices.*

*He always has heard them. They sound angry in his ear, all yelling at once so that it is impossible to know what they are saying. The Artist starts to remember the first time he ever*

*heard them—then shakes away the thought. But it is creeping back. There is a flash and then Ella and Jaspar are not Ella and Jaspar anymore. It is The Artist holding her hand and whispering "Everything will be okay." No, not The Artist. Someone else. It is Abel holding her hand. Holding the hand of his mother, Hannalore. Colors dance across The Artist's vision like northern lights as a headache pounds. The aurora flashes black and white. Cold sweat chills him. The Artist recognizes the emotion that fills the room. Suddenly, The Artist is standing in his old apartment home again. He watches Abel rock Hannalore as she convulses. They do not see The Artist. He is a ghost to them.*

Back when The Artist was twelve years old, he was just Abel.

Hannalore's ebony tresses spilled over her shoulders. Abel possessed the same dark, pin-straight hair. He squeezed Hannalore's hand tightly and assured her over and over again "Es ist ok, Mutti."

But he was lying. Once their soldiers found you, it only ended one way.

The soldiers took Abel and Hannalore to the ghetto. There, there always were rumors about "the ovens." At first it was a joke to the ghetto people. Then the trains that passed through the city started taking people there.

One day, the trains came to take everyone living in Abel's sector of the ghetto. Abel watched the slow crowd, like a sad parade, ambled into the box cars. He knew he did not have much time until they forced him into one of the cars. His heart hammered. He had no idea where his mother was. If he did not find her in time, they would be separated forever. Dashing through the horde, he yearned to see his mother's face. As he headed for

the building they lived in, he glanced at every alley. *Where is she?* His throat tensed until he could barely breathe.

Abel found Hannalore in their room, alone, facing the crude window with her back to Abel. Hannalore sat eerily still, perched on the bed.

"Mama, there you are," Abel sighed in relief. "The trains are here. We have to leave." Though she sat two feet away from him, Hannalore was somewhere else. Her eyes stared out the window as though she was not really looking. Walking to the other side of the bed to face Hannalore, Abel knelt down in front of her. A single rivulet crawled down her left cheek. Taking her small and fragile hands, Abel called softer but louder: "Mama!" Abel only had ever seen his mother cry three times: there was right now, the time they were hiding from the soldiers, and during Abel's father's—

"You have to run away," Hannalore's firm voice shattered the silence along with Abel's thoughts. "There's a hole in the east wall. You need to go now. And don't stop running when you get to the other side."

"I'm not going anywhere without you."

"Abel!" she scolded him, piercing him with her eyes. Abel saw more tears welling, but Hannalore quickly blinked them away. "If you don't go, they'll kill you."

"I can't."

"You can. You're strong and fast. Tell the people on the other side that your name is Abel Cyfer, not Abel Yisrael Cyfer. Tell them you're Lutheran."

"But Yisrael was father's name."

Abel did not escape through the east wall. He got on the train with Hannalore.

When they got off, the guards ordered men and women into two lines that funneled into Buchenwald, a concentration camp. The sectors for males and females separated Abel from Hannalore. A scent similar to road kill wafted out the gates, though Abel sensed the origin was something worse.

Back in the ghetto, Abel could have escaped. He had the strength and speed. His mother was right. He was taller and more muscular than the other boys his age. That was why when he went to Buchenwald, a work camp, the other boys were always disappearing. Abel found them dead in their beds, watched them pass out in the heat and never wake up, saw soldiers hang them for not working. Many of them came and went, but Abel stayed. He was strong, so they made him work in the stone quarries.

Buchenwald was surreal to all who lived there. The evil place of death and torture was set up in a regular German village. The locals went about their daily lives, but through thin greenery, they heard screams and moans and smelled the burned bodies that billowed out of the crematory. The gates of Buchenwald were inscribed "Everyone gets what they deserve," like an entrance to the underworld.

Abel broke his promise to Hannalore. He did not escape. And just as she predicted, he died, in a way; he lost himself. Abel lost himself through his dreams.

All of his life, Abel found solace in his dreams. In his waking hours, he had compulsively drawn and sculpted people, scenes, and stories from his dream realm. Though Abel had no clay to sculpt with or pencils to draw to with, he survived Buchenwald through fantasies.

(continued on page 16)



# THE ARTIST (CONT.)

Abel often dreamt of his father. Yisrael had a booming, infectious laugh and flamboyant red hair. As a child, Abel found his father's mannerisms to be foolish and, at times, embarrassing, but Abel missed him after he died. No matter how much time passed, Abel still expected Yisrael to come home from the family butcher shop every day at 4 o'clock. Abel woke up in the morning thinking they would eat breakfast together—they had the same favorite cereal—but then Abel would remember that his father no longer was a room away. Yisrael was not coming home. He was across town, buried five feet underground.

When Yisrael died, Abel expected the grieving process to be like something in a movie. But, real loss felt surreal. Abel never grasped that he was gone. It always felt like he was just on vacation. Abel kept feeling he would see Yisrael again. Teachers and boys at school did not fawn over Abel and Hannalore, like in the movies either. They tried to pretend nothing happened because they did not know what to do with their pity. Abel sensed everyone felt awkward around him.

So Abel found a way to make people talk to him, to get positive attention.

Art.

His drawings made people happy. And when people were *ooing* and *awing* at his work, they forgot about his father. Art made other people normal again. It made Abel normal again. He found shelter in other worlds he created and brought to life.

If there was any time to disappear into another world, it was now.

One night, Abel dreamt he was in the back of his father's butcher shop, in the sea of hanging corpses. His father was not there. The shop was empty. Abel was skinning a pig when the

lights began to flicker overhead. They made an electrical buzzing noise. Startled, Abel stopped peeling and looked up. The lights did not stop. The room flashed black and white. Abel turned around to check the circuitry in the back of the shop, but suddenly his breath caught in his throat. His knees went weak.

One of the corpses hanging behind him was not an animal. It was a human—a guard from Buchenwald.

The man's dead eyes gaped at him. Rivulets of crusty blood covered his arms. Abel expected to throw up. The corpse belonged to a young guard who did not speak much. Abel figured he was afraid to talk because, when the young guard did, he could not help making jerky hand gestures. The other guards and prisoners laughed at the young man. Abel waited for sorrow to hit him, but he felt nothing. He had run out of sadness.

Most of the Buchenwald guards were not Nazi idealists or trained soldiers. They were bakers, tailors, and farmers, forced into working there as a consolation prize for not being Jewish. They had parents like Abel had parents. They were fathers, brothers, and sons. They were people. And the ones who turned cruel had been swallowed by Buchenwald.

But in that moment, Abel stopped seeing them as people. Buchenwald was swallowing him too. The moans and screams that filled the camp during the day echoed in Abel's ears at night. The ground always seemed to be shifting beneath his feet, like the rubble in the stone quarry. The lights never stopped flashing, as they had in his dream. His hallucinations refused to leave him alone. Buchenwald stayed in him forever.

The concentration camp became a comfortable, neutral place to Abel. Once his fears

melted away, he was free to explore. The rats that zipped in and out of his room sparked his curiosity, so he started to catch them, play with them, hurt them, and watch them squirm. Then life felt not just neutral, life felt beautiful again. There was something indescribable about watching the transition from life to death. Because when a live rat was still in his hand, something felt active inside it. Then the moment it died, it suddenly went stiff. Abel killed rat after rat. He wanted to know why life and death felt so different.

The fifty prisoners with whom Abel shared a room noticed he was doing this. They tried to take the rats he caught away from him. Sometimes they beat him for it. But Abel did not stop. He had to creep around late at night in order to catch them and stay undetected by the other prisoners. The rats always would squeak and scratch, causing someone to hear him. He always was getting caught, which forced him to rush into killing them. It ruined the transition for him, so Abel started to play with the rats after they were dead.

One night, one of the prisoners woke up to see Abel tying a dead rat, by the tail, to his bed frame. Abel expected the prisoner to quickly divert his eyes, but he just watched. "Why do you do that?" questioned the prisoner, his tone slightly hostile.

Abel smiled to himself. "It's art."

"Nah, *kumpel*," the prisoner shook his head. He was missing most of his teeth. "I never seen that before. That is not no art. You no artist."

"It is art to some people," Abel shrugged. "It is to me."

Abel loved his rats. His was addicted to the way it made him feel. But he wanted more. He could not help eyeing the fallen prisoners in

the quarry, wondering if anyone would mind if he cut one open. Abel had never seen inside a human before. Not outside of his dreams.

*What does it feel like when life leaves a human?*

There were certain prisoners and guards that sparked Abel's curiosity. There were many that did not. The ones that did had something interesting about them: a unique pallor or severe cheek bones. Something beautiful. Abel could not help looking and giggling to himself. No one laughed or smiled in Buchenwald. The twisted smirk Abel walked around with parted crowds. Maybe everyone knew what he was thinking.

The guards stopped yelling at Abel. They stopped acknowledging him altogether. They shrank away, having heard the stories of his fascination with rats. The prisoners stopped fighting Abel. They let him make his art. No one touched him. No one talked to him. Abel did not care. He floated through the camp, buzzed by his latest masterpiece.

Three years later, in the University of Freiburg's Psychiatric Center, the memories of Buchenwald refused to fade. They clung to Abel like a pungent smell, choking the air out of him. His icy blue eyes stared blankly at the wallpaper peeling from the corner of Dr. Eberstark's office. She repeated her question. She waited in silence.

Again, Dr. Eberstark sighed "Abel? What's wrong? Why aren't you paying attention?"

Abel answered numbly "...because... there's no point."

"No point in what?"

"All of this."

Abel watched Dr. Eberstark's expression crumple under those words.

"Where is this coming from?" Her eyes slid sadly to the floor. "Just last week, you said

*(continued on page 18)*



## THE ARTIST (CONT.)

you were feeling better. We are getting somewhere, Abel, I promise you we are. What I don't understand is why you feel like giving up all of a sudden?" Her wide copper eyes locked on his.

"Maybe we're getting somewhere, but maybe it's not anywhere worth going to. I still hurt so badly. I just want to forget everything that happened."

"I can't force you to forget anything, Abel," Dr. Eberstark's brows furrowed. "But I can help you accept it, use it to put good into the world."

"Me? Put good into the world?" Abel snickered "That's funny... I don't understand why you can't just drug me."

"Don't you want to remember your mother? Maybe we could find her. I'm sure her support would make this process easier for you—"

"Don't talk about her!" Abel snapped, his head in his hands. "She can't see me like this."

"You're not sounding like yourself." Dr. Eberstark's eyes grew wider now. Her voice grew meeker. Abel hated seeing her like this. He had hurt her. Abel figured hurt was the only thing he knew how to do. "You still haven't answered me. Why are you saying these things?"

"You don't understand." Abel turned his head, hiding his face in shadow.

*As The Artist watches Ella quiver in fear, Abel's response echoes through his ears.*

"When I was the artist, the world was beautiful. There was nothing for me to overcome. There was no pain I had to face. And there's nothing in this world that is worth feeling that pain..."

*The Artist takes a step near Ella. He smells Jaspar's sweat.*

"...It's time to let reality go. It's time to let Abel go..."

*Ella's face is soaked in tears. She stammers out sobs as The Artist stands at her feet. He kneels down in front of her. Jaspar cringes.*

"...It's time for me to just be The Artist now."

*Gingerly, The Artist reaches out to cradle Ella's face is his palm. He smears away a tear with his thumb. To The Artist, he is looking into Hannalore's icy blue eyes, not Ella's.*

*If he could go back in time to that moment when soldiers found Hannalore and Abel in their apartment bathroom, if he could stop it from happening, then he could undo the ghetto, undo Buchenwald, undo all of the pain, and undo The Artist. Hannalore and Abel would have gone on with their lives. They would have been happy. They would have been together. But those soldiers shattered everything. And Buchenwald poisoned his imagination.*

*Ella whimpers. The Artist kisses her trembling forehead and coos, "Es it ok, Mutti."*

*Then he stands up, turns around, and walks away.*

*Ella and Jaspar are frozen in shock. For this first time since he became The Artist, he wants them to go on with their lives. They can be happy. They can be together.*

*And maybe someday The Artist will see Hannalore again. She will hug the air out of him and tell him how much she loves him. She would tell him that she did not care what he had done. Maybe reality would not be so painful if Abel had Hannalore again—*

*Suddenly, the voices are yelling. The Artist slaps his hands over his ears. But the voices are inside him. They refuse silence.*

*He smashes his head against the wall and knows he cannot let Hannalore see the monster he has become.*



**MARGIE SYCHOWSKI**  
*Circus Cats*



CERAMICS, 11" X 8" X 3.5"



**CHELSEA SWANSON**  
*Reclining Figure*



OIL ON CANVAS, 24" X 36"

MIKALA KURZBUCH  
*Smash*



CONTE CRAYON, 18" X 24"



# DRAWING DRAGONS IN NOTEBOOKS

I briefly close my eyes and inhale  
the gritty, metallic scent.

Sighing, I rub my smudged hands together,  
crack my grey and black knuckles,  
sharpen my weapon one last time,

and step onto the white paved floor  
of the dragon's oblong chamber.

The tips of my hair are singed  
as I dodge behind a charcoal rock  
to escape the orange and red flames.

The dragon beats its wings and thunders a roar of rage  
that makes my ears ring, splitting my skull in two.

With a giant leap and a cunning gleam, it soars over  
my protective boulder and flicks its thorned tail,

shattering the rugged stone into  
miniscule fragments of gravel,  
and sending me

                    flying  
backwards.

I scramble up, breathing hard, and turn to face it.

Blue-grey smoke rises in tendriled swirls from its nostrils  
as it advances slowly toward me, knowing  
that I cannot escape

Its cat-like eyes shine with glee as it

deliberately

approaches its cornered mouse.

My back hits the red wall and I realize that I must  
face the dragon head on.

Tensing for my attack, I reach for the sword at my hip  
and grab nothing

but air.

Looking around in panic, I see something glinting  
a few feet away, beneath the beacon of a torch.

I scramble toward it as the dragon advances.

It inhales deeply and lets out a dark, triumphant  
chortle

that turns into a high-pitched shriek  
as I jump on its face, stabbing its jade-colored eye.

It thrashes and writhes in agony when I stab the other,

and as I jump off, I recover my sword.

It hisses as I near, gnashing its pearly teeth,

and in one fell swoop, its head rolls to the ground,  
blood as black as ink seeping from its stump.

Exhausted, I stumble to the decapitated head



MARY JEAN DEJA  
*Three Houses*



CERAMICS, 4" X 12" X 1.5"

and pull out the object  
that saved my life.

It is covered in black dragon blood; I wipe it off  
and hold it up to the flickering flames of the torch:

a silver pencil

reflects the dim yellow light back at me,

and as I glance back at the lifeless dragon

I notice the light blue horizontal lines

that must have  
been there  
this entire  
time.





**SKYLAR BUETOW**  
*King of the Cyclops*



CONTE CRAYON, 25.5" X 19.5"

# HELLHOUSE

It's a strange thing, lightning without rain.  
It's an uncommon occurrence  
But when it strikes – disaster.  
It might be a little more bearable with rain.

An even stranger thing –  
Lightning can attack from underground.  
Like an invisible weed  
It quickly sprouts and ruins what has value to you –  
The way it did to me.

It created a spark that traced itself around the  
c  
o  
r  
n  
e  
r  
  
Of the concrete foundation  
And spilled in through the windows  
like water slithering through the cracks  
of an ancient dam.

The house lit up in a blinding holocaust  
The sunset-tinted arms charred everything they touched.  
Walls crumbled and trapped me inside.

Now, fire surrounds me and tries to cook me.  
Flames lick at me like waves in the ocean.  
They desire to taste me,  
swallow me,  
digest me.

I am in Hell.

It's a strange thing, lightning without rain.  
It's an uncommon occurrence  
But when it strikes –  
It takes everything from you.  
The way it did to me.  
It might've been a little more bearable,  
a little more preventable,  
With rain.



JOANNE KEEGAN

Poetry

## PRECIOUS TIME

Oh time:  
Of all the jewels  
In the world  
You are most precious.

Though  
I cannot  
See or hear or touch you,  
Beckon me  
To your side.

Fleeting time,  
Your seconds  
Die and yield new birth  
Birth and death  
Over and over and over.

Fickle time,  
Tempt me  
As you pass from  
Birth to death  
Again and again and again.

Though  
I cannot  
Keep or pause or stop you,  
Catch me  
On your timely wings.

Oh, Jewel so perfect:  
Pursue me  
To waste you not,  
'Til time stands still,  
And death brings birth  
Eternally!

**ANDY LECHNER**  
*Candle Holders*



CERAMICS, 13" X 8.5" X 5"



**BEN ROHRER**  
*Trophy*



CERAMICS, 22.5" X 8" X 8"



## THE FREUDIAN ROAD

I know it was a mistake the moment it was over. I can certainly see my horizon well enough, and purpose is very apparent, but sometimes my bleakness begets unrest, and I am torn with conflicting thoughts. My day-to-day is often mundane. I walk this earth and I consume. The sun rises and sets, with a sameness clouding any real joy. Still, there is angst and hope and curiosity all tugging on my psyche like children pulling at mother's skirt for attention. There has to be more. Relentlessly wearing down my resolve...no, not resolve; more complacency—eroding me. The power to change waxes greater and greater until it overwhelms caution. I am a driven creature and the incidental diversion becomes a monument, obscuring my rational view. Obsession pervades. I am beguiled. Yes, there is risk. There is always risk, but sometimes it must be wagered against for any true change. And that pervasive "sameness" is powerful in obfuscating any dangers. Confiction causes my hesitation. But a tide of boredom washes clean those thoughts and I decide—not in any thoughtful or contemplative manner, but with a sudden impulse to ac-

tion. It's funny how the actual happenstance can be so serendipitous.

So, resolute, and yet hesitant, I put one foot ahead of another and walk on the asphalt, feeling the night's coolness. At least that feeling is different. Perhaps the journey is the purpose? I'm confused. Slowly at first, and then with conviction, I walk across the road. I have arrived. I consider my new "now." I look to my new perspective. Nothing has really changed. Not better or worse. Oh, dear. It has been all for naught. I should have been happy where I was at.

Now my "There" is "Here," the sameness is apparent. My action was totally unwarranted and I am relegated to walking and eating and letting the same forces build within me all over again. I look at the old "Here" that is now "There" across the road with a wistfulness. Should I have remained? There has been no gain in my venture. I become nostalgic. For what?

A rising sun slides me forward to another day, bringing with it a gentle breeze. I can almost hear the whisper the wind carries:

"Oh, go lay an egg."



**JOE FIALA**  
*Komodo*



LASER ENGRAVING, 33" X 27"

## THE NECROMANCER OF PRINTERS

He drove a rusty little green car,  
That he'd inherited from his father-in-law's father.  
The thing had no air conditioning, and rattled when he slowed.  
But he drove it into the ground, and then took a wrench and some oil  
And he got it back on its tires again  
Like a doctor expertly patching up a kid who'd gotten a sports injury.

He was always good at that kind of stuff, my dad;  
He had magic in his fingers and tools in his pockets,  
And in his car and in a bag on his bicycle  
And scattered throughout the house.

He'd come home sometimes after work  
Struggling to open the door while carrying some new patient  
Some dying construct of plastic and wires and screws  
That they'd consigned to the dumpster because it couldn't be fixed  
Because nothing could be done  
Because it couldn't be saved.

My dad would carry the bodies downstairs to his office  
Set them on top of the filing cabinets  
That served as a combination  
Of work bench and gurney.

They'd lay there for a while, seemingly untouched—  
The lights wouldn't blink, the moving parts wouldn't move  
The man-made creature would be dead to the world  
But I was never fooled  
Because my dad had magic in his hands  
And a house full of tools.

*(continued on page 34 )*



**KAT CREE**  
Poetry

## THE NECROMANCER OF PRINTERS (CONT.)

Then one day, we'd have a new printer  
Or computer, or telephone; it could be anything, really.  
On the outside, it would look the same  
As the dead thing he'd brought home before,  
But on the inside, parts from different units,  
Scrounged from trash bins and spare-parts boxes  
Were spliced together into one functioning whole.

When people tell me now that something doesn't work,  
That it can't be fixed, that it needs to be replaced,  
I usually don't believe them.  
Because I know that there are technology wizards out there,  
Necromancers, like my dad,  
Who can bring them back to life again.





**BRIANNA McDEUITT**  
*Lightning*



OIL ON CANVAS, 30" X 48"





# DON'T ASK

You ask me how I am doing  
although the way the words slip past your lips  
makes the question feel rhetorical.

You ask me how I am doing  
and I am very certain  
you do not want to know the answer.

You ask me how I am doing  
because you care about me  
because you love me  
because you are just checking in  
because it's been awhile since we last caught up...

But I am positive  
you do not want to know  
how I am doing.

You ask me how I am doing, and without second thought  
a few words automatically tumble from my lips.

I am *tired*.  
I am *fine*.  
I am *okay*.

and although there is some truth to my responses  
I withhold the full extent of it all.

I *am* tired.  
I am tired of *being* tired.  
I am tired of the overwhelming suffocation that I feel  
whenever someone asks me  
“How are you doing?”

I am tired of crying so hard  
that I become afraid that the intake of air  
before my sob... was my last.

I want to go to sleep,  
because maybe a little rest is all I need to be  
*fine*.

I *am* fine.  
I am fine with having to deal with my own problems.  
I am fine that my life choices have gotten me this far  
and that I have been what some may call “successful”  
for a person my age.

I am fine without anyone’s help...  
Although an occasional hug wouldn’t hurt...  
and maybe some support would make me  
*okay*.

I *am* okay.  
But I am not good, or great.  
My body trembles with homesickness  
that I cannot even comprehend because  
I can only bear so much time at the one place that should  
feel like home.

I am okay with the fact that I manage my anxiety  
so poorly that I can’t even order my own meals;  
but it’s *okay*...  
because if I have to,  
I can go without eating.

I am okay with the fact  
that I have my own problems  
I need to work on.

(continued on page 38)



## DON'T ASK (CONT.)

But I am not broken.

I am not something you should worry about fixing,  
especially when your definition of “fixing”  
is to tell me I need to get over it,  
that I am being o v e r d r a m a t i c...

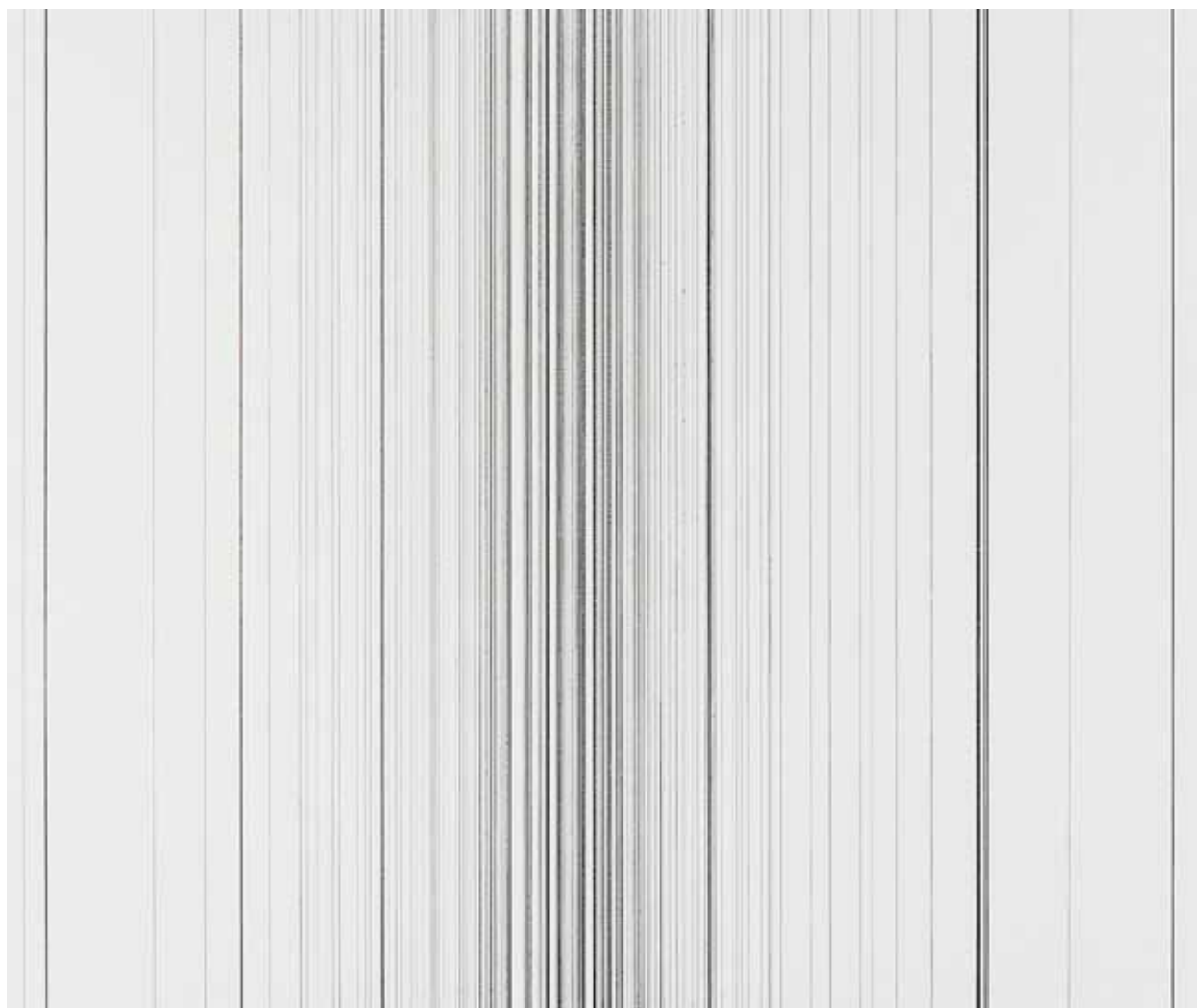
As if you can handle my problems better than I can.

Oh, but trust me,  
if I had an opportunity to hand you  
all of my problems...  
all of my burdens...  
I would.

So when you ask me how I am doing,  
know that I am *tired* of your judgment  
and your anger and your impatience  
but I am fine that you need time to  
“fix” *yourself*.  
but if you do not put time into  
your own problems, then...

I am done.

**RYAN KAVANAGH**  
*Untitled*



GEL PEN ON BOARD, 29.5" X 35"





**THOMAS NEESE**

*Elijah Alfred "Nature Boy"*



**SARAH BURNS**  
*Demon's Peak*



CERAMICS, 24" X 7" X 7"

ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT, 17" X 22"



# THAT FIRST DAY

The ring is a poison; I know that now. Putting it on, you can feel it as your veins drink in the power, you can see your muscles ripple with energy, and you can feel an itch just behind your eyes, as the spark from within starts to crackle. But it isn't worth it. Because the power—the power comes first, yeah. But the pain comes later. And it's never pleasant. Oh, don't look at me like that. We both know that sometimes pain and pleasure are not always dichotomous. If I recall correctly, I taught you that.

I still remember the first time I put the ring on. I was just a child then, no more than twenty-three. I was angry with the world, and hell, why shouldn't I have been? I was a kid, only a few years out of high school, no college, no job, no future. I had just split up with the only person I'd ever love, and I found the ring after four days of wandering the streets, not sleeping, not caring, only stopping to lift a bottle of whiskey from a store that wouldn't miss it. I was good—too good—at finding things that would help me cope with the immediate problems, the depression, the angst, the rage at what I now know is truly an uncaring world. I never thought too much about what I was doing wrong, the things I had done to myself that had put me where I was.

And then, there was the ring. Oh, when I first saw it, it was beautiful, all shining and glistening metal with just the faintest hint of pale green. It positively glowed at me, and I could tell that this, *this* was a treasure made for me. Sure, at the time, I looked at it and saw something that was probably made of silver, something that looked to be at least a hundred dollars' worth of metal. I was just looking to score some cash to buy more whiskey. But that didn't matter, you

see, because the second I picked it up, I *knew*. I knew I was going to put it on.

And it was beautiful. It was wonderful. The second it hit my finger, I felt thirty stories tall and made of pure dynamite. I felt like I could lift the world between my hands and crush it between them as though it were a deflated basketball. In retrospect, I suppose it started changing me immediately, because I'd never thought those kinds of things before. Sure, I was an angry kid, destroying myself, but I was never...

Anyway. I put the ring on, and I felt like a god. I almost felt like it was speaking in my mind, telling me that I wasn't a waste of space, that all the little thoughts that had been chipping away at my brain for ten years were wrong. I had power, nearly unlimited power, and it coursed through me. I was burning, but in a good way, like the warmth that spreads through you when you have a good cup of hot chocolate on the coldest night of the year. I felt like that for the entire day. I ran a mile in six minutes. I never did that, not even at my peak in high school. I ran a mile for *fun*, and I hate running. I just did it because I had the energy to do it, and, after I was done, I almost wanted to do it again.

That night, I didn't sleep. I couldn't. And it wasn't like it was before, when I wasn't sleeping most nights because it's incredibly difficult to get any sort of good rest when you're faced with the choice of trying to hide in the bushes for three hours behind a local grocery store, or finding a small patch of concrete where there are no streetlights or security cameras. I averaged about two hours of sleep a night back then, and, honestly, the best rest I can remember having as an adult were the times I got so drunk that I got picked up for public intoxication.

and tossed in the tank for a night. I slept those nights. I slept better in jail than I ever could on the outside. But no, this wasn't like that. I wasn't miserable, trying to find a little bit of solitude where I could feel safe to let myself relax. No, this was...pure energy.

I hadn't eaten or drank anything since I put on the ring, and when night came, when I normally gave in to the darkness and stole a bottle so I could forget I existed for a few hours, I felt...rejuvenated. The night belonged to me, and it was up to me to control. It was pliable, malleable in my hands. I think I walked nearly thirty miles that first night. I know I walked nonstop for a six-day period once, and before the first year was over, I had walked two thousand miles from Chicago to Los Angeles, and then the twenty-seven hundred to New York City. I did that all in under a month. I never needed a car after I got the ring, because as long as I wore it and was charged up, I could walk as long as I needed to. I never got tired, and since I didn't have anywhere to be at any particular time, or anyone who particularly cared about me, I didn't really care much about where I was. I saw the country. I even crossed the border into Canada and spent a few weeks tooling around up there. Nobody knew. Nobody noticed me. It was like I didn't exist.

Oh, but you noticed the bit about being charged up, didn't you? Yeah, see, there was a minor problem with the ring. I figured it out after about two weeks, but the gist of it is that every twenty-four hours it needed a kind of power-up to be able to still keep me going. And it was addictive. Oh, was it addictive. The first time it happened to me, at the end of that first day, it felt like my joints had been replaced with razor blades, and that I'd been dipped in ice water. It was horrible. And it felt that way for two hours before I...got an image of what I needed to do.

I'm not happy with myself. For a lot of reasons. Before I found the ring, I was most defi-

nately not a saint. I stole things, things I didn't need, and I used them to buy alcohol. When I couldn't do that, or didn't, I just stole the alcohol. I did drugs, I smoked like a chimney, I got in fights. I was on the verge of being removed from the winter shelter system because I was causing too much trouble. So, no, I wasn't a good person, by any stretch of the imagination. But I wasn't...what I became.

You see, the ring needs a specific kind of thing to charge itself up, and it sounds fucking morbid and disgusting, and that's because it is. See, what you've got to do is take the ring, and drop it in some blood. Human blood, yeah. And then in about ten minutes, the blood changes color from dark red to dark green, and you take the ring out, and it's like it never went in. It's not even wet. And then, and here's the real problem: you *drink* the blood. It tastes like, well...the power comes right back, and you feel like a superhero again.

At first, I used my own blood, because it didn't take much, maybe a shot glass of it, and I felt so great after the fact that I could just bleed myself before the power ran out, deal with ten minutes of misery, and then feel great again. But after a bit more than a week, that...stopped working. I don't know why, and I don't want to know. I just know that from then on, I had to...improvise.

After almost two months, which was when I left the Chicago area, I had figured out that even though I had to drink this horrible thing every day, I didn't have to mix it every day. It would take a bit longer to react the more blood I used, but after I mixed it, it would stay effective...well, at least two weeks. What I would do is...acquire a few bottles full, and drop the ring in each one for about an hour to get the reaction to work. It was two hours of misery, but I could find a place that was warm and hidden away, and it would work. It was never pleasant, and it sucked, but it worked, and it kept me going.

(continued on page 44)





# THAT FIRST DAY (CONT.)

I've killed so many people.

It was hard, at first, getting up the courage to actually do it. But I knew that my blood wasn't working anymore, and I...I *needed* the ring. I needed it to exist. So I did it. I walked to Chicago, I found someone living on the street, like me, someone who nobody would miss, and...I killed them. I took a little blood, mixed my "energy drink," and just left the body there. I did that every night for a little over a month, with the only reminder of what I had done being a name and a date, in a little notebook. But then I saw a *Tribune* article which had put together that homeless people were being found dead in gruesome ways, and I realized that I couldn't keep it up forever. So, I made the decision to leave, but I also put together the fact that I could find a way to kill less, as long as I saved more blood.

I killed my way across the continental United States, and I just...kept going. Sometimes, I would stay in a place for a few days, or maybe a week. I would stay a week in a city, then have to kill someone, and then I would have to leave. I wonder, sometimes, if there was a room in Virginia somewhere with FBI agents trying to track an elusive killer down across the country. I imagine that there must have been.

I loved seeing the country, walking the roads that people really didn't travel down. Not that things were always that pleasant. Hell, I remember one time when I forgot to put the ring back on before I drank the concoction, and I felt like I'd just ingested bleach. It felt like hot knives in my stomach, and it didn't stop until I put the ring back on. I think I almost died then. I didn't make that mistake again, though, that's for damn sure. Other than that, things were pretty much the same for a long time.

Things got very interesting last fall, though. I was in Tennessee, seeing the colors

change in Nashville, enjoying myself for the first time in about a year, when a kid came up to me with a gun and asked me for my money. I told him the truth: I didn't have any. I haven't carried money since the day I found the ring. He thought I was lying, and demanded I give him everything I had. Including the ring. And when I told him that, sorry, I wasn't going to be giving that to him, he shot me. Twice, I think.

But of course, to both our surprises, the bullet just kind of...fell down. It hit me, I'm sure of that. I felt the impact, like a very small punch to the chest. But it didn't hurt, it was just pressure. And when it was done, I looked at the kid, and I took his blood. But I learned right then and there that while I'm powered up, I can't get shot. It made me a bit more reckless for a few weeks, and I stayed in Nashville another month, but once the third murder made the front page, I realized that I still had to keep my discipline. And so, I moved on.

That next year was more of the same, heading north in the summer months, south in the winter months, not even really paying attention to the scenery. I went back to a lot of places I'd been before, places where it was easy to find people who didn't really pay attention to what they were doing, places where I didn't have to worry so much about the cops. Hell, I spent the entire winter in Atlanta. Ten people dead over five months? That didn't make the papers at all.

It was just...more of the same, until this past fall. Just a few months ago, actually. I'm not sure what came over me, but I got bored one day, and I decided to sneak into a movie theater and see what was playing. I remembered enjoying movies on some level, you know? I had seen them with my lover before, and I thought, you know, what the hell? So, I went to see a movie, and something in my mind just...set differently, I guess. It wasn't

that I didn't think I could run the world better than the humans in charge could anymore, because I still did, and I still do. It was that I didn't want to—not anymore. I had that brief reminder of what it was like to relax, and I decided that I wanted to relax again. I was sick of always feeling tense, always looking for the cops, always looking for the next kill.

I wanted to be human again.

I spent a lot of time watching sunsets after that, and generally not doing anything. That summer, I didn't even leave the southeast. I was probably at more risk there than I'd ever been before, and I'm sure that I would have been caught eventually, but that was less of a problem. I decided that I could still be careful without being paranoid, and I started to try to...enjoy myself again. Nothing wrong with that, right?

It was like that for the rest of the year. I spent more time in libraries, learning about the world I'd left behind, learning about politics all over again. I stole an mp3 player and used library computers to get songs. I was feeling more human with every day. I was even considering finding some way to actually make some money, find some time to relax, in all of the madness. I was doing better. I was even going to call some old friends, see what they were up to, and maybe even start having social outings again.

And then, last week, I saw the news. I was in Tampa spending some time by the beach, and I...I had killed a young man about, oh, three weeks ago now, and I guess all his family lived in Chicago, and they were poor. This kid apparently had gone away to college, the first of his family to do so. And I killed him. So, his older brother was trying to scrounge up money for a plane ticket down and back to collect his brother's body, and he just couldn't do it; so, in desperation, he took a gun and tried to hold someone up, and it all went south, and...and he shot you. He shot you three times in the chest. You died within minutes, on the same street where we used to live.

I found him, and his blood is within me, now, so, it's not like I let you die in vain. But...I caused this. You left me four years ago, and I reacted so poorly that I...I let this happen. This is my fault. If I had listened to you, we probably wouldn't be together now, but I wouldn't have killed that boy last month, and his brother wouldn't have turned to crime, and you wouldn't be in the ground, and I wouldn't be standing here for a fucking hour, sobbing while explaining to whatever's left of you what I let myself become.

But that's okay. I can't undo the things I have done, but I can give...some kind of closure, I guess. I still have my notebook, with all the names. One hundred and twenty-eight names, but I'll add two more to the list. I bought four years of power by purchasing it against my own body, and I suppose, if I were to keep this up, I could live forever. But I don't want to anymore. And it's not like my desire to be human and have friends and be part of society was ever going to work anyway. I'm a killer, a monster now. This is the only right thing to do.

So, I'm going to take the ring off. I'm going to take it off and I'm going to bury it in the grave right here, and replace the sod, even if it hurts like hellfire. And I'm sure it will. And then I'm going to walk over to the mausoleum over there, and I'm going to sit down, and I'm going to wait. And I'm not going to scream. I'm going to drink the entire bottle of this blood poison that I've got, and I'm going to ride out the trip. It's going to hurt, and it's going to kill me, and then in the morning, someone is going to find my body, and the police are going to find my notebook, with names, dates, and cities, and over a hundred unsolved murders are going to be solved. They may never know why I did it, or why I die tonight. I would love to be a fly on the wall to see my cause of death. And with luck, no one else will ever see the ring again. I'm sorry. I love you.

Please, forgive me.



**MARNIE KNOUSE**  
*Untitled*







OIL ON CANVAS, 20" X 40"



## LUCY

Last night I dreamt you were still my reality  
I dreamt your reality in my subconscious mind  
From the first moment I would hold you  
To the last hug goodbye.

I dreamt your name was Lucy  
And your favorite color would be purple  
Because it would remind you of the violets growing all over the lawn –  
The pop of color in a field of green.

I dreamt you would be four years old  
When you found a passion for ballet  
And would stare at the television for hours as if you were hypnotized  
By the dancers swirling gracefully, feathers in the wind,  
Rewinding *The Nutcracker* and *Swan Lake*, again and again.

I dreamt you would dress up like a princess;  
A light-pink dress with gold edging and roses.

I dreamt you would be sassy  
And when I told you to watch your mouth,  
You'd say, "I can't; my nose is in the way."

I dreamt you'd keep your passion for ballet  
While finding new passions as the years went on:  
Painting, volleyball, physics.

At age eleven you joined the art club  
And entered a painting in the local art show.



You won third place –  
Which is pretty damn good for an eleven-year-old.

When you were thirteen you tried out for volleyball.  
You were the co-captain of the team by the time you made it to high school.

Your senior year in high school  
You stumbled upon physics.  
It had become your career of choice  
But it could never cover up your passion to dance ballet.

Last night I dreamt you got accepted to a university.  
I dreamt you graduated with honors.  
I dreamt you spent weeks shopping and packing for college.  
I dreamt you finally left.  
But you have left.

Through no fault but my own.

You never grew up.  
You're not my reality.  
All I have is guilt and memory.

Only guilt, swallowing me and drowning me like a tidal wave.

Only the memory of your possibility.



**RICH GRUSDIS**  
*Rain on Randolph*



## TURN AROUND

Dead leaves rained down in lost colors of autumn  
A deep moan growled in the growing darkness  
Leaves danced, warning me  
To turn around

Hard on the gas pedal  
Rain beating against in protest  
Wind pushing against, still urging  
Turn around, turn around

Black streaks of wasted makeup  
Slide down stained cheeks  
In time with old jazz  
Wailing in heartbreak  
Broken in the speakers

Only light by cell phone  
Trapped in the depths of the cup holder  
Violently vibrating  
His photo, screaming at me, please  
Turn around, turn around

Misleading promises and wasted hours whip around  
Lifted up and away, entwined  
In the dead of October  
Summer lust lost on the roads behind me  
Never to turn around



CONTE CRAYON, 25.5" X 19.5"



## CANCER, PART 4

I did not choose cancer:  
It chose me.  
I chose a flash,  
Something loud,  
An exit that might be heard through  
Hundreds of years of silence,  
Proof of existence,  
Life after death.  
Light scattered across the edge  
Of forever.  
They said something quick,  
Death calls unexpected,  
And I answered it?  
I did not choose cancer:  
I choose to be free.  
I chose more time,  
I chose more than 3,333 days  
I chose completion,  
A fight over a flee.  
Sunsets across horizons, for forever,  
As far as future evolution might see.  
I did not choose to go slowly,  
I chose more than  
ten thousand minutes MORE time-  
With a KABOOM! at the end  
That rattles your heart cage.  
Precious are the moments  
We rush through,  
Cherish the vibrancy of health

A wealth we cannot possibly define.  
Waking up each day  
Just to watch myself age,  
Gracefully, until I just fall into a  
Final sleep.  
I chose a birth, that lead to death.  
I chose a womb,  
Just to touch the round corners  
Of the universe, while I still exist.  
Chose an honest lie.  
Chose a disordered mind.  
Chose to love a man who'll hurt me  
A million times.  
Chose to be a raging wind  
Opposed to a gentle breeze.  
I did not choose cancer:  
It chose me.  
I chose to expand,  
Chose to outlive the body  
I've felt stuck in.  
I chose to envelope my world  
In a love my body cannot contain,  
I did not choose to spread  
My invisible wings.  
I did not choose to be here,  
Just as I do not choose to leave.  
I did not choose cancer:  
It chose me.



KIM McMASTER  
*Untitled*



OIL ON CANVAS, 28" X 28"





**THOMAS NEESE**  
*The Bridge*



**KATIE SAULT**  
*Pheidole Morrissi*



ARCHIVAL PIGMENT PRINT, 17" X 22"



OIL ON CANVAS, 44" X 26"



# THE NEEDLE MAN

Let me tell you about Farthing Hollow, a quiet little town on the dusty frontier. Now, it wasn't a big, bustling city by anybody's standards, but the people there were earnest, honest, and hardworking.

The kids there were rambunctious like you wouldn't believe: running, shouting, and, most of all exploring. Running through meadows, splashing through creeks, and climbing every tree they could. The parents shouted at the young'uns when they stayed out too late, but, all told, the town was a safe little place.

But there was one place that was absolutely forbidden, one place the parents told their kids to stay far, far away from: the old mine on the outskirts of town. It was opened up back when the town was founded. When miners struck gold, they kept digging and digging... 'til the day they found something else. Something real nasty. Not a single one of those miners were ever found after that day, and the mine was closed off.

The parents would say: "you can splash through every creek you see fit, but never, and I mean never go near the old mine." And the kids listened for once: they could hear the fear in their parents' voices. But, shucks—you know kids—there's always one too big for her britches.

Meet Delaney Carver, a daring, adventurous young lass. Built like a stick with a tumbleweed on top, but with eyes that could strike the boys dead. It's hard to say if she fell in with bad company, or if they fell in with her. Well, it came to be that Delaney and her posse were hanging around the old mine one day. They were all daring one another to go in, not a one meaning what they said. Delaney eventually grew sick of their yellow-bellied talk and said, "Y'all are cowards. I'm gonna go in and have a look myself."

And go in she did, armed with nothing more than a lantern. I have to say, the girl had guts. Delaney only went a little way in before she got scared. Not real surprising; I ain't never met a body who wasn't afraid of the dark, way deep down inside themselves. She turned around to leave, but the exit—in sight just a few moments ago—was

nowhere to be found. Delaney shouted for her friends, but they, too, were nowhere to be found.

Well, she ran through that twisty old mine for a while, shouting for help. Delaney was trying to find a way out, but no matter which passage she took, she always ended up in the same room: A small, little cavern with an underground lake. Finally, exhausted and with nobody to look tough for, she set down her lantern and started to cry. A sad thing to see, and no mistake. After crying for a while, she most likely figured nobody was coming to rescue her. Delaney sat down in that cavern and waited to die.

It was about then that I let out a racking cough—I hadn't breathed for a while, you see, and I was trying to remember how. Delaney let out an almighty scream and jumped back, and I don't blame her; she most likely thought the cavern was empty.

"Hey now," I said in a dry wheeze, "there's no call for that. I ain't gonna hurt you."

"You... you're..." she said, still scared out of her wits. Delaney shone her little lamp on me. "God... how long have you been chained up down here?"

"Hmm," I pondered, my throat dusty. "Can't honestly say I remember." I tried to raise up my arm, but those old chains rattled real loud as if to say "you're stuck here."

"Wow," said Delaney, all hushed. "Do... do you know the way out? I'm lost."

I nodded a little; I was still getting the hang of moving at that point. "Sure do, missy. Can't help you much from down here, though. Mind unlocking these chains for me?"

She asked how, and I pointed to a key hidden in the alcove. Easy to miss, if you ain't looking for it. She grabbed the key and unlocked the chains, which made a racket falling off me.

"Can we go now?" asked Delaney biting her lip and looking at the exit. "I'm scared."

"Girl," I said quietly. "You've got every right to be scared."

That fake human skin of mine was getting a mite cramped, so I shed it. My real body erupted out, and oh



how I'd missed it. Twelve feet of needles and meat, all of it comfy as a worn-in coat. For poor little Delaney, I'd wager it looked like something out of the deepest pits of Hell.

Delaney let out a shriek and tried to run, but I grabbed her by her neck before she could. Little pinpricks of blood welled up where the needles pierced her flesh. I lifted her up in the air, like a mother lifting a misbehaving toddler. I gathered I was holding on pretty tight, on account of the choking sounds she was making.

"Ah, and now I'm me again," I said, my real voice rasping like steel on steel. "Feels nice, I won't lie. Been stuck down here longer than anyone can remember, I reckon." I grinned real wide, and I don't think nobody could have counted my teeth.

Tears were running down the face of Delaney, who was probably wishing she'd never come down into the mine, into my kingdom. She was kicking around with her little feet, trying to get away, but I was holding on tight.

"Haven't seen nobody since those miners that came down," I said thoughtfully. "They didn't let me outta these chains, so I never let them outta the cave. Seemed fair to me."

I reached into one of my empty eye sockets and pulled out a length of yarn, thick as a rope. Delaney was starting to not kick so much, and her face was turning purple. "Oh," I said casually, "back in the day, folks called me the Needle Man." I started winding the yarn around the girl. The yarn stuck to itself and hardened, making a thick cocoon.

Once the yarn reached her shoulders, I set her down on the ground, gently, and let go of her neck—it's not like I wanted her dead or anything. She sucked in a lungful of air and let it out in wracking coughs. For my part, I continued wrapping her in yarn. She finished coughing and started to scream, but that stopped after the yarn covered her face. I moved to cover up her terrified eyes, but stopped.

"Now, I know you're scared," I said, my voice soft. "So I'm going to tell you something that might make you feel better." I covered the rest of her head in yarn, and she started thrashing around.

"I know this is all pretty frightening now, but don't worry, that ain't gonna last. That yarn is gonna sculpt you and make you into something absolutely fan-tas-tic. So, believe me... you are going to love your new body."

I set her down real gentle, and I came around to thinking of what I'd do next. As you most likely tell, I ain't exactly human. Hundreds of years of dark magic will do that to a fella.

I reached out with my mind and found some of the friends I'd made in the old mine. My body may have been chained up tight, but my mind could still wander where it pleased... and there was plenty to find there, down in the dark.

Behind me, crackling noises started coming from Delaney's yarn cocoon. Her bones were moving around into the shapes I wanted them to be in. I grinned. Outside the cavern mouth, I started hearing my friends approaching. It was quite the ruckus, let me tell you—everything nasty that walked, crawled, skittered, and oozed along was coming to join me.

Behind me, Delaney crawled out of her cocoon and tested out her new legs.

"Well howdy, Ms. Carver," I said. "How's that new body feel?"

"Different," she said thoughtfully, her voice hissing through her new fangs. "Better. Feel like I could run a thousand miles without a rest."

"Most likely you could," I said proudly. "I do good work."

By then, my other friends had arrived. They were a motley crew, all fangs, pincers and gaping maws. They filled the cavern, the corridor, and a good stretch of the caves. I had a lot of friends, enough for an army.

"What do we do now?" asked Delaney.

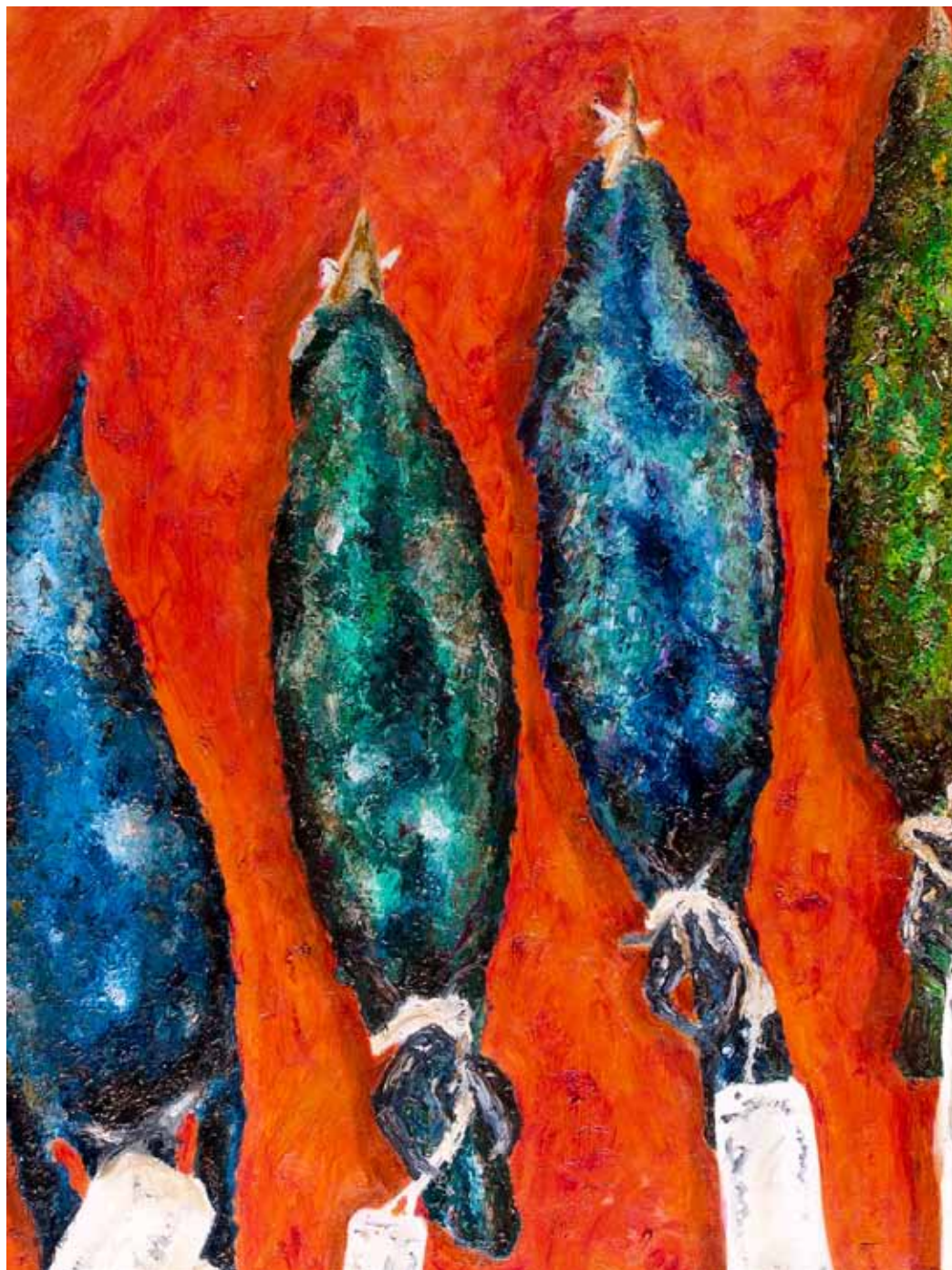
"Well, I reckon the good folks in Farthing Hollow are wondering where you got off to. Let's go meet 'em."

I grinned and walked out of the cavern, Delaney and my friends following behind me.

Farthing Hollow was about to get a lot less quiet.



**MYKELA NOWICKI**  
*Designer Tags*



OIL ON CANVAS, 34" X 26"



# VOICES

**MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE**  
**LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL 2015**

*Voices 2015* is produced by McHenry County College to recognize and showcase the visual arts, musical, and literary talents of McHenry County College students.

The ideas and the opinions expressed in *Voices 2015* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the attitude of the Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty, or the staff of McHenry County College. Materials for *Voices 2015* were submitted by students who have been enrolled in courses at McHenry County College during one or all of the previous three semesters. The pieces selected for inclusion in *Voices 2015* were based on the student editors' opinion of their aesthetic merit. It is the policy of McHenry County College not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, religion, national origin, or handicapped status in its educational programs, as required by Federal regulations. Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to Angelina Castillo, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources.

McHenry County College  
8900 U.S Highway 14  
Crystal Lake, Illinois 60012-2761  
815.455.3700 • <http://www.mchenry.edu>

## COLOPHON

*VOICES 2015* was produced in Adobe InDesign CS4 using a ten column grid. The body texts are set in News Gothic MT and Chronicle Text. Headlines and feature text is set in Mission Gothic.

The cover is printed on 80# Mohawk Loop Straw Antique Vellum and the interior pages are printed on 100# dull coated book. 1,250 copies of the issue were printed by Schiele Group via an offset four-color process.

## VOICES 2015 COMMITTEE

### STUDENT ART EDITORS:

Ben Rohrer  
Katie Sault

### STUDENT LITERARY EDITOR:

Alena Hansen

### STUDENT MUSIC EDITORS:

Tiffany Mazur  
Rodney Rote Jr.

### FACULTY ADVISORS:

Matt Irie • [mirie@mchenry.edu](mailto:mirie@mchenry.edu)  
Amy Ortiz • [aortiz@mchenry.edu](mailto:aortiz@mchenry.edu)  
Laura Power • [lpower@mchenry.edu](mailto:lpower@mchenry.edu)  
Paige Lush • [plush@mchenry.edu](mailto:plush@mchenry.edu)  
Andrew Doak • [adoak@mchenry.edu](mailto:adoak@mchenry.edu)  
Tom Vician • [tvician@mchenry.edu](mailto:tvician@mchenry.edu)

### PHOTOGRAPHER/ADVISOR:

Andrew Doak (assisted by Matt Irie)

### DESIGNER/ADVISOR:

Ryan Duggan

### PRINTED BY:

Schiele Group

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- Dane Walkington and the Friends of MCC Foundation
- Sandra Lang, Gallery Curator
- Ed Risch
- Karen Smith & Paula Long, MCC Bookstore
- Peter Lilly, Coordinator of Professional Development in Technology



# MUSIC

- 1 **DAVID WHITCOME** *Tradition*
- 2 **DAVID WHITCOME** *Never Ending*
- 3 **ENRIC RIU** *Solitudini*  
(Feat. saxophonist Joan Martí-Frasquier)
- 4 **SAM MILLARD** *Nightmare*
- 5 **SAM MILLARD** *Jesus Saves*





MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE  
LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL 2015