

IMAGES

THIRTY-TWO

20

A Literary
& Fine Arts
Magazine

18



Frida Kahol • 2-D Design • Cora Talkington

IMAGES 2018

A LITERARY AND FINE ARTS MAGAZINE

by the Students and Staff of
Monroe County Community College



MONROE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

enriching lives

Front Cover Photograph:

Morning Flower • Independent Study • Kathy McDonald

Back Cover Photograph:

Numbers • Painting I • Brooke Lambrix

*Sponsored and Published by
The Humanities/Social Sciences Division*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the thirty-second year we have compiled and published the creative efforts of our community of students, faculty and staff.

As in the past, we have been so impressed with the level of quality, effort and vulnerability of the work submitted for this year's edition. It is our hope that you find the paintings, drawings, sculptures, poems, narratives and stories included in this volume to be moving and inspiring examples of the creative spirit that shines throughout our college community.

We would like to thank everyone involved in making this volume a reality. To the contributors (listed on the last page): thank you for inviting us into the depths of your heads and hearts. To those who work the behind the scenes— Paul Hedeem, Rachel Eagle, Kari Jenkins, and Miranda Gardner (student editor), we appreciate you, and we hope you know there would be no *Images* without your help.

We are already gathering material for our next issue. From now through next February, we will be accepting submissions from MCCC students, faculty and staff to feature in the thirty-third volume. We collect these submissions through our magazine's email address: images@monroeccc.edu.

Michele Toll
Instructor of English

Therese O'Halloran
Assistant Professor of Art

Produced by
Monroe County Community College

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Donut Still Life • Painting I • Brooke Lambrix



Macro Painting • 2-D Design • Christi Ruff



Peacock Pot • Ceramics I • Kathleen Gibson

Fear and the Peacock Pot

Have you ever wanted to accomplish something but didn't know where or how to start? I have felt that way often. It begins with anxiety and ends with fear: fear of not being good enough, fear of ruining a project in which you are invested, fear of failing and looking foolish. It doesn't happen every day, and certainly not with ordinary tasks. It happens when your desire to learn, create, or experience is greater than your skill set.

The blank paper, canvas, or lump of clay stares at you and dares you to make it something else. It demands beauty, emotion or utility. Certainly, it needs you to communicate with others in a way that is beyond words. But speaking, reading, and writing have been my life as an elementary educator: communication with words is my comfort zone, not the visual arts.

Here comes the fear part. This is a beautiful clay pot that took almost six weeks to build and now needs carving and glazing. All I have is an image of a peacock in my head. A simple image of a peacock and an elegant pot— How to merge the image with the pot? First comes a sketch. The image still isn't right. The sketch is too simple for such an elegant pot. It doesn't fit the feelings I have for this pot.

It takes me a day (and I am lucky it only took a day) of thinking to realize the conflict I was experiencing between the sketch and the pot would become the fuel for a quest of a better design. The next few days every spare moment was spent looking at peacock images and reading about their habits and habitats. Many sketches were drawn and an idea emerged into a plan. I would not carve a peacock into the pot. The pot would become the peacock! The results were very satisfying, and fortunately, the glaze worked too.

Anxiety, fear, and conflict don't seem like tools for success, and they are probably not if you stop at anxiety or fear. But in my experience these are the tools that grow my skill set. They become the motivation I need to learn something new by trying something out of my comfort zone. It's always easier to keep doing what you're good at instead of risking failure to learn new skills.

One of the greatest artists, Pierre August Renoir, said, "One must from time to time attempt things that are beyond one's capacity." That is why he was great. He possessed the desire to push the edge of learning further than where he was comfortable — Far enough to create tension within himself until it becomes inspiration.

Learning to embrace creative tension isn't easy, but the rewards are great. It usually doesn't happen quickly, but with diligence and focus the rewards do come. For me the rewards have been a renewal of confidence that I am able to keep learning and communicate in a new way-- the artist's way.

• Kathleen Gibson

Dandelions

The sun sits on my skin, and the faint breeze carries the sweet smell of spring to my nose

Laying in the fresh field of newborn dandelions, I force myself to relive the painful memory you left for me here

Breathing in the same air that entered our lungs once before, I come to realize--

These bright yellow dandelions seem pleasing to the eye, but the truth is, they are just another common invasive weed

They sprout wherever underpinning is available, painting the grass an exquisite portrait of sunshine

But as soon as their season is concluded, they immediately turn to cotton seeds and float away without a second thought

Settling to their new destination, they carry the wishes created by the messenger

And they remind me of you

How you painted me the illusion of jollity and merriment

But the truth is, you were just another common weed

Waiting until your season was over, and leaving without a glance back

Now, on your way to your next journey's end

And all I can send with you are the wishes of your own freedom and happiness

As time passes, I find myself leaving the dandelion field and sitting by the river where you tried to mend what was already lost

And I will myself to carry along with the breeze --just like the cotton seeds of a dandelion

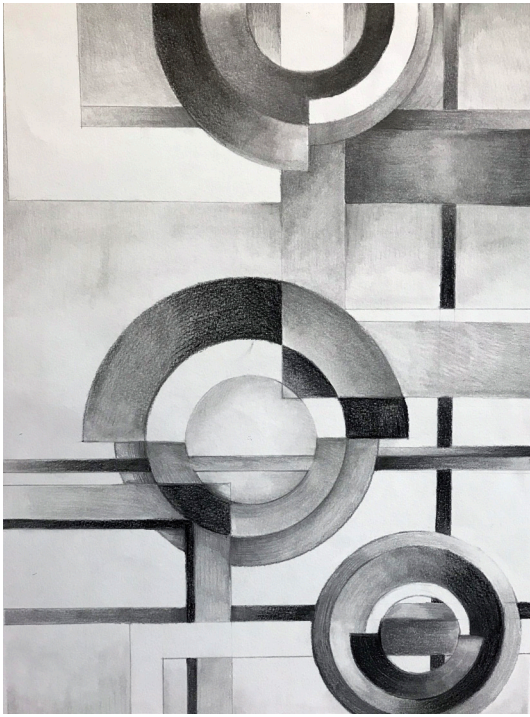
• Shea Byrne



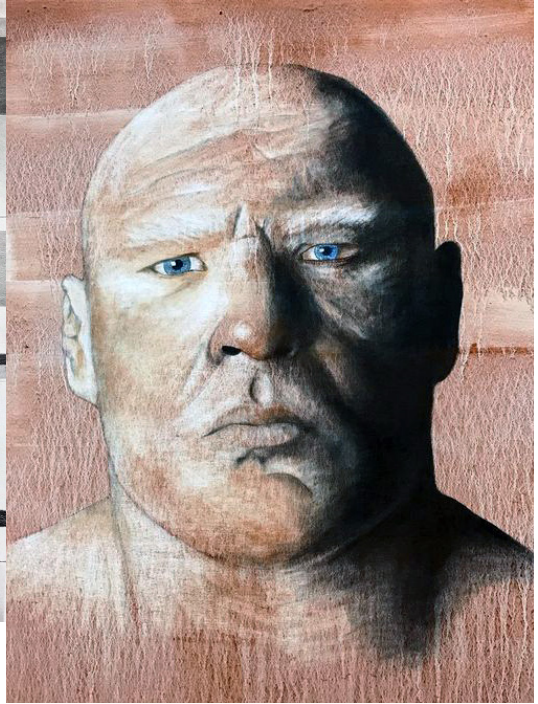
Self Portrait •
Drawing II •
Daise Justice



Self Portrait •
Drawing II •
Susan Grant



Non-Representational • Art Fundamentals •
Jessica Collins



Questioning Man • Illustration Techniques •
Mckenzie Whited



Hard Edge Painting • Painting I • Kayla Engle

It's Complicated

My mind obscures the craving
To achieve sublime mediation,
And yet I am so disoriented
With tainted thoughts of
Relentless greed,
Chaos our world prolongs,
And malleable pasts that
Shatter my every effort
To break through
This caged cerebrum.

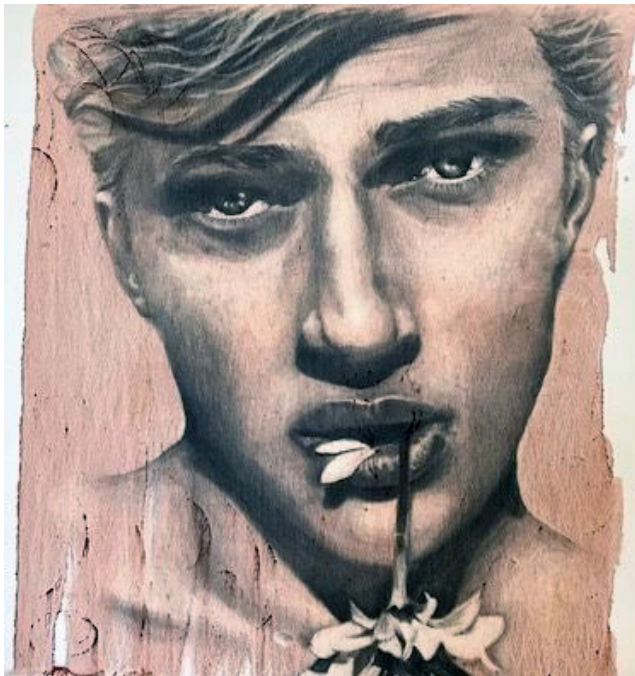
My body aches
For music to move me
Like a canvas begs a paintbrush
To perform art,
And I stand confined,
Disregarding all of my wants,
Transforming my body
Into a place
Where home is no longer a feeling.

My heart is pulsing shouts to
My body and my mind
To escape this strangled air,
And to reach skylines with my fingers,
Embracing their vibrant energy.
As I sink into this silenced spirit.

I am meekly employed by this stalemate—
This chained existence,
This boot camp routine—
I'll either ascend from it all
Or enable its infiltration
And yet,
I am so astoundingly captivated
By this seemingly impractical pursuit
Of truly Living.

How do I emancipate myself?

• Brooklyn Wright



Flower Child • Illustration Techniques • Melissa Yoder

Monophobia: An Aspect of My Life

Will the clock ever stop ticking? That's what I wonder. Hours, that's how long you've been gone. You said you'd only be gone for a bit, but so many hours are longer than a bit. Tick tock; another minute passes, and you still aren't back. Monophobia, also known as autophobia, more accurately, the fear of being alone. My biggest fear, a fear I dread. My monophobia takes over; I freak out because what if you don't come back? What would I do then? Every minute is like a sharp pain, a tear in my heart. A text would help, just tell me you're okay and that you'll be back. I get so sick to my stomach at the thought of being alone for a long time.

Can you feel the emptiness in the pit of your stomach? I feel it; I can't eat, the emptiness is too much. Maybe you can't even see it in me, but I have a drastic case of monophobia. I carry a fear that I can't get over. When will someone be back? Just someone, anyone. Don't leave me alone, please. My hands are scarred up from picking at them so much; a scratch for each moment I'm alone. Please come back. The weight of this fear is too heavy for my shoulders to carry. The fear of being alone is too much for me. I can't handle it. My empty stomach, my scarred up hands, and the shivers I get worrying about how long you'll be gone, but more importantly how long I'll be alone. The monophobia eats away at me. Will I break into tears? I might. I can't stand being alone. I dread it.

I run my scraped up fingers through my deep ebony brown hair. My body is as cold as ice even though I am bundled up in clothes. My skin is tanned from the warm summer sun that once was; although, now it's winter. My archaic, deep wine red, sweatshirt droops from my body, and my midnight leggings stick to my legs, as they try to suffocate me. My worn, tattered, Converse are back-laced tightly against my ankles as a sense of security. I am a space on the couch, all alone. My lips are cracked, and on the edge of bleeding, from the nervous lip bites that I tend to do. I am heavy—not physically heavy, but I feel heavy in sorrow and suffering.

As I sit alone in an empty, old house, I wonder about the stillness. I wonder about how the cold wooden floors feel against my feet; and how the wallpaper on the walls is peeling at the seams. The house is so still, empty, except for me. The cool breeze of the ceiling fans cause a slight shiver to come over me, but at least they cause enough noise that it is not dead silent. I sit on my ragged brown couch and turn on the sixty-inch television. I click through channel after channel, just to keep my mind busy. Hours have passed since you left, and it's beginning to get late. As I stare blankly at the TV, I wonder why I'm still up waiting for you to come back. Sleep is a blissful escape from pain. I should be in bed.

When the TV starts to bore me, and I can no longer sit and mindlessly watch, I get up off of my lone spot on the couch. I drag one foot in front of the other to just get myself across the room. I head to my cold sterile looking bathroom; it reminds me of a hospital. I look into my dirty mirror and realize that I look like a mess. I look almost as sick as I feel. I've given up on you coming home tonight. I brush through my soft hair and brush my eggshell teeth. I head up to my frigid, petite room. I lay in my room; the fan is on to drown out the sound of cars passing that aren't yours. The clock reads 11:11 p.m., and I wish you would answer me. I know you won't so I go to bed, praying that I'll see you or at least someone in the morning.

Monophobia is a part of me. I don't know how long I will feel like this, and I don't know how to stop feeling like this. What I do know though is that I do not want to be alone, ever. I cannot function by myself, nor do I want to. Maybe I'm holding onto this, either way, I can't be alone because it is too much for me. Maybe one day I won't feel so alone.



Macro Painting • 2-D Design • David Skrobowski

Eleven Roses

For Dawn

There standing in a crystal vase
Eleven stems of green topped each with a face
The faces of eleven years all passed behind
Reminding us of treasured memories gone by

Some are sad with times of trials
Some are somber with moments of grief
Most are happy with memories of joy
And the brightest one shows how we started it all

Yet one stem lay all alone
Its face covered like it was ashamed
When asked why
The little rose began to shine

I am the face of the year to come
And I do not know of my ending
But I do know this above all else
I will be loved as much as those already standing in the vase

• Kyle R. Petee



Skull Portrait • Life Drawing • Jessica Collins



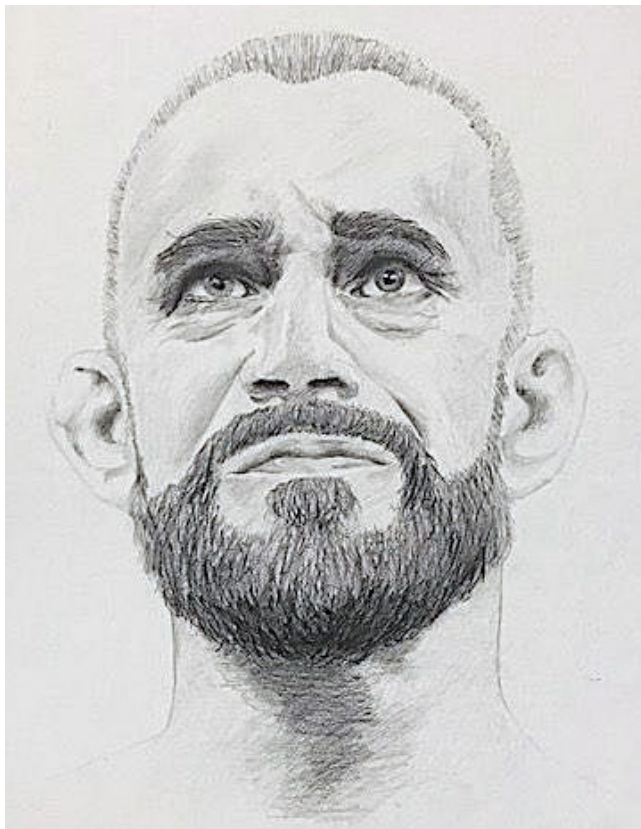
Buck •
Painting | •
Brooke
Lambrix

Duck Hunting

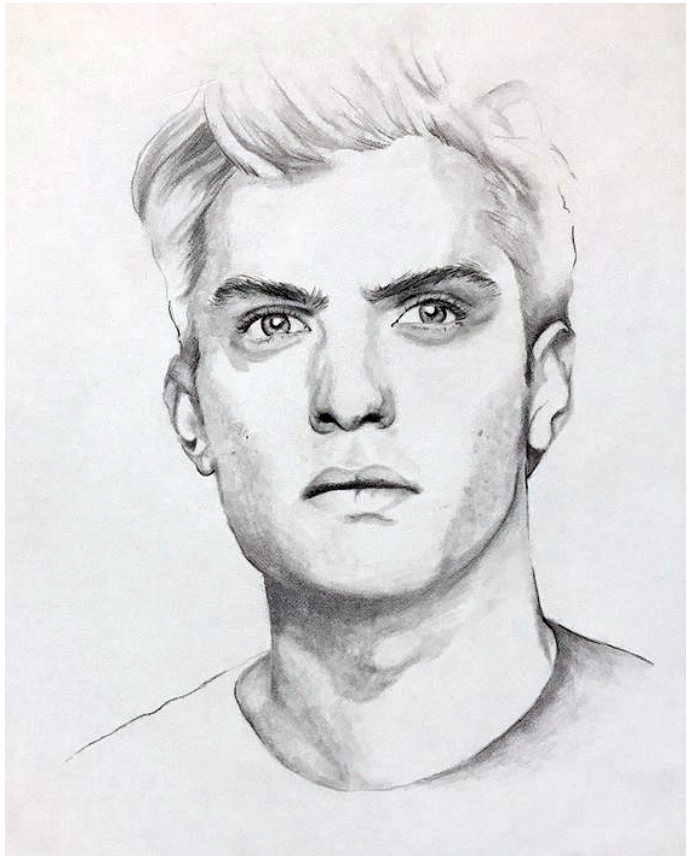
Load the boat
Push off the dock
We race against
The ticking clock
Birds a flight
Are far from near
Hurry. Quick.
Snow and ice
Pelt my face
As waves break
In steady pace
Beach the boat
We go ashore
Unloading outfit
A welcomed chore
We set the trap

We lay and wait
For unseen sun
To bring our fate
Behold the time
Has finally come
We hide away
We grasp our guns
As keen eyes
On the horizon
As fingers tremble
As muscles tighten
Murmured whispers,
“BIRD” they cry
Over the water
In the sky
Fast approaching
All stand still
Wings come beating
By God’s good will

• Van Brinkley

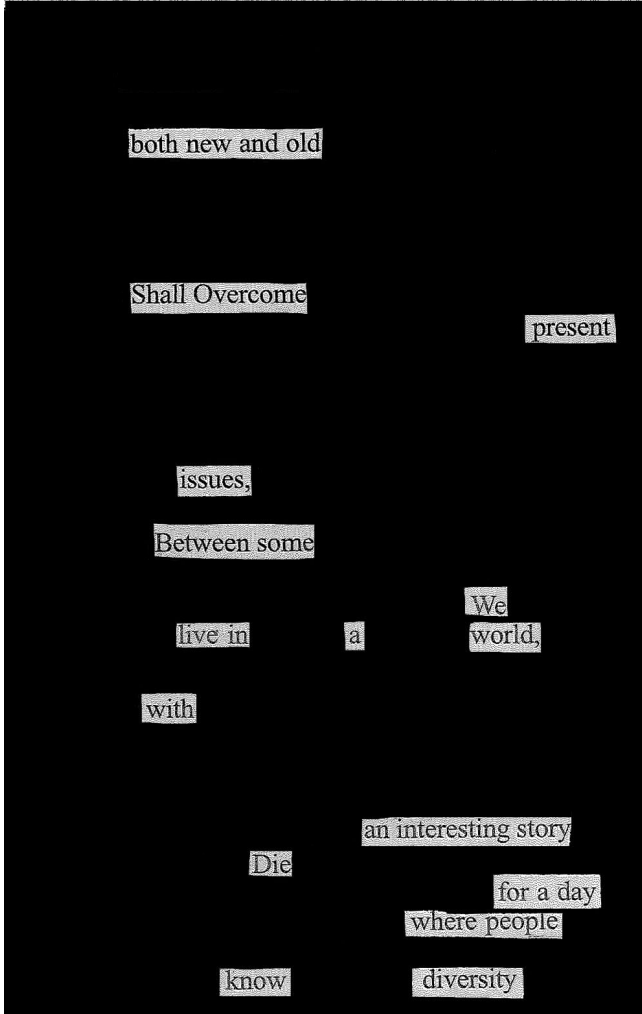


Portrait • Illustration Techniques • Mackenzie Whited



Pencil Portrait • Illustration Techniques • Melissa Yoder

differences



Blackout Poem by Miranda Gardner
Original Article by Cassidy Maier

Untilted

Nature cries for the bitter
Weary, and broken down
How much time has been lost?
We will never know
Nature cries for the broken
The ones who can't sleep
Pushing everyone away
No matter the cost
Nature cries for the weary
The ones who are weak
Who hide in the shadows
Never to speak
Nature cries for the dreary
Who stare at the rain
Looking at lost time
Never the same

• Paige Zilke

Sunflower, Paradise 42779

This is Home.

The place that shies away in the dead of winter
while celebrating the life of summer.

The place that houses those who do not speak
but cheer with their electrifying yellows.

Those very ones who are friends with the bees.

In this place,
there is no hatred.

All residents here only feel the love of dancing.

In this place,
children stare at the sun with admiration
all the while
adults stand tall and proud.

The dancers do not care who you are
They will dance with you whether you are one of them or not.
They will not spite you nor fear you.
They will always remain vulnerable and inviting.
They will dance for you.

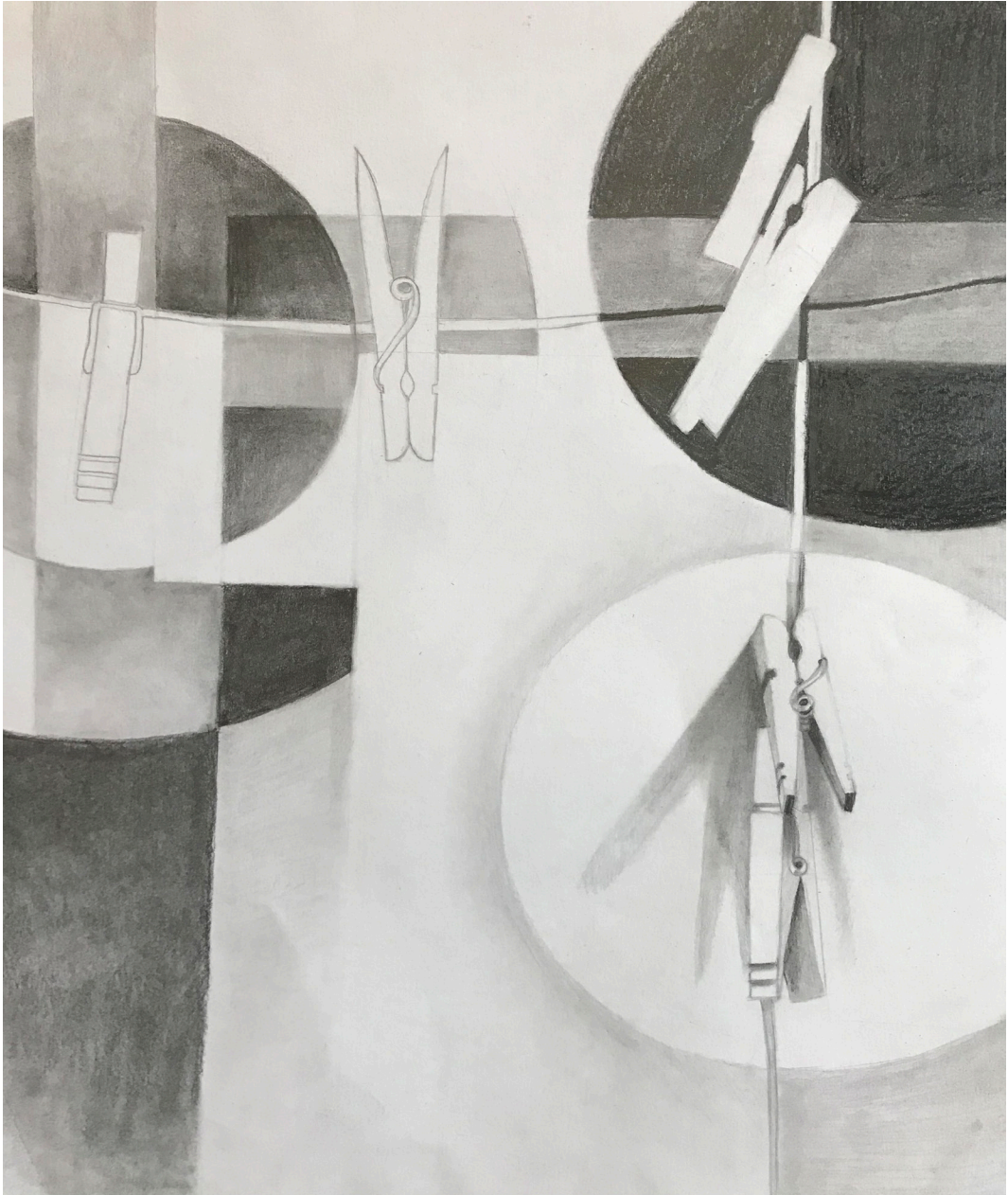
In the place that houses those who do not hate,
you will dance.

For this is home.

• Jacob Huber



Yellow Flowers •
Painting II •
Kathy McDonald



Clothespin Compositions • Art Fundamentals • Jessica Collins

Mother Earth

Hands in the dirt, toil of Earth
Common man, can you hear her?

Her plants are dying, her sea is sick
Hear mother cry out

Grasp at the petals, watch as they fall
Common man, can you feel her?

The air is bitter, the core is raging
Feel mother grow ill

The moon is red, the sun is black
Common man, can you see her?

The wind is still, the skies are gray
See mother go quiet

Resources taken, pollutants sent out
Common man, can you still hear her?

Laid to rest by your life, return to Earth
Mother Gaia is gone now

• Basil Wampler



Fern Forms • Watercolor I • Kalen Hengy



Long Pose • Life Drawing • Cheyanne Abel

Waves of Love

Does the ocean ever get lonely?
It always sends waves to come kiss the sand,
But the sand does not respond,
And the ocean continues to send its waves of love.

It always sends waves to come kiss the sand,
But the unappreciative grains do not kiss back,
And the ocean continues to send its waves of love,
Because the ocean is determined.

But the unappreciative grains do not kiss back,
Why does the ocean consistently send love?
Because the ocean is determined.
Does the ocean ever get lonely?

• Hannah Warnke

Deep

An Ode to Solace

A breath of salty air,
Cold ocean water kissing at her feet,
Icy tendrils of Neptune's hair entangling her
ankles,
As tattered masts of lost ships, and siren's calls
beckoning her into the Deep.

Her olive skin now porcelain and white,
Her hands wrinkled with Time's touch,
Her bosom heaves as she catches her breath,
That Death stole from her while she was
Drowning in the Deep.

A bouquet of roses in her hands,
Crushed velvet laden bed,
Laughter of angelic children growing louder,
Deafening her peace she thought she would find
Only by reaching the Deep.

A kiss from a loved one,
A smile from an enemy,
Nothing can reach her where she has gone,
An open casket now closed and entombed,
Yet she still floats out at sea,
In her mind she is forever at peace
As long as her heart
Drowns in the Deep.

• Jazmyne Sitter

We Play Soccer

We play soccer.
We have smelly lockers.
We do fitness.
We hope you don't witness.
We laugh lots.
We take shots.
We put in hours.
We empower.
We practice plays.
We have seen better days.
We travel far.
We have many scars.
We always have a ball.
We are in for the long haul.
We play soccer.
Is it a shocker?

• Claire Kolar

What is True?

Do you remember
the days we
sat together
laughing and talking
so close
 almost
touching
I want you back
in my life
 so much
 it hurts
the tears I have shed
could fill vials
the pain is still there
 sadness
creeps over
me like
an old song
all that is left
in black and white
after so many
memories of you
how you touched/ moved me

• Barbara Mauter

Recall

There's something I miss
 It's lost in the mist
Of a person you once were.

 I can't quite recall
What she looked like... At all
And her name is no more than a blur.

There's something I need
 In a place long decreed
Gone and impossible to travel,

But it's something I once possessed
 And I just may never rest
And my mind may begin to unravel.

 Although, I can't say
The loss left me dismayed
For it was something I never truly had,

And although I'd quite like
 To recall your past life
I can't quite say that I'm sad.

• Ryleigh Byrne

Growing Up

Heartbeat pumps, lungs breathe in
 Welcome to the world

Take a bump, graze the skin
 Your world has unfurled

Call her name, show a smile
 Mark lines on the wall

Grown to fame, passed a mile
 You're no longer small

• Basil Wampler

The Hidden Tickets

Tenacity is a great quality to have! It was my determination and the love of music that enabled me to find tickets to one of the best nights of my life.

Songs are supposed to make you feel something, which is the reason my favorite singer is Martina McBride. Her powerful music has helped get me through some very difficult times such as a divorce and the death of a parent. So, when tickets became available for Martina McBride's "Shine All Night" tour in Columbus, Ohio on February 21, 2010, it was no surprise that I quickly purchased two tickets for the fifth row at Nationwide Arena. These were the best seats I could find. I was hoping the venue would have been closer to home as it was during the winter months, but I was not going to miss out on an opportunity to see her.

It was after I purchased those two tickets that I found out about Martina McBride's Twitter scavenger hunt, and that she added a show in Detroit on Thursday, February 18, just three days before we planned to see her in Columbus. She was going to personally hide tickets on the day of the show and tweet clues to their location, encouraging fans to get involved. I quickly called my girlfriend, Lisa, who was going with me to see Martina in Columbus, to tell her about this. She said, "We need to try to find those tickets!"

For a month we studied what kinds of clues she would tweet and if there were any patterns, so we would have the best chance at finding those tickets. I was thrilled with the possibility of getting up close to my favorite vocalist and role model.

The day I had been waiting for had finally arrived, and it was cold and snowy. We bundled up, got into the car around 11 a.m., and headed to Detroit. In examining her patterns, I was positive we had at least 45 minutes before she would tweet her first clue. About 15 minutes into the trip, my phone startled us as it alerted me of a notification. It interrupted the chitchat and giggles as we made our way down the highway. I was astonished and disappointed to learn it was her first clue. I thought, at this point, it was impossible for us to be the ones to find the tickets.

I told Lisa, "we should just turn around and go back home because this is going to be a huge waste of time."

"No, we are not turning around," she said. The clue read "If you come here, you've hit the bullseye." Immediately, Lisa suggested Target. I began looking up the nearest Target to the venue, put the address in the GPS, and we started to head that way.

After another 20 minutes or so, the second clue came. It said, "As I have mentioned before, this is my favorite pastime." Shopping is what came to mind. Shopping at Target? It was clear by getting another clue that no one had found the tickets yet. As we got closer to Target, we became more and more restless. We started to consider that we may have a chance.

We held our breath waiting for another clue. It felt like an eternity. We were getting especially close to our destination when another notification came. It said, “As you may have guessed, my favorite pastime is reading and some of you may know the name of my favorite book.”

I screamed, “I know it, I know it!” Being such a loyal fan of Martina McBride’s, I knew her favorite book was *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy.

Lisa and I had a plan. When we got to Target, we were going to slowly walk into the store as if we were casual shoppers so as not to bring attention to ourselves. However, after parking, we both jumped out and ran into the store frantically looking for the book and magazine section, completely ignoring our original plan. There were about ten people nearby, some looking at books and others looking for videos. My heart began to pound, and my palms started to get clammy as I meticulously searched for the book, meanwhile keeping a watchful eye on the people nearby. After spotting it, but without knowing where the tickets may be, I started to pull all the copies of *The Road* off the shelf. Standing up behind the last book was a large white envelope with handwritten directions by Martina on it as well as her autograph written in black marker. I stood for a moment in disbelief, and then began to laugh and cry all at the same time. Four other people had been optimistically looking for the same tickets and I could sense their disappointment as they congratulated us. I could not believe we found the tickets and that soon we would be sitting in the front row watching my idol. As directed on the envelope, we retweeted a code to Martina so that she knew the tickets had been located and no more clues were needed. As we had time to waste before we needed to be at the arena, we stopped at a restaurant even though it was very difficult to eat due to the excitement.

At last, it was time for the show. I gave my tickets to the usher who took us to the front row. He said, “Wow, where did you get these tickets?”

I said, “Martina herself,” with a smile. After Sarah Buxton and Trace Adkins took the stage, Martina descended from above on a blue crescent moon singing “Concrete Angel”, a song based on a true story about a little girl abused by her mother and killed. Watching her get closer while listening to her strong vocals gave me chills. I lip-synced to every single song she sang. Her singing was moving and powerful, and the energy was high. There were beach balls being tossed around and yellow and white streamers falling from the sky, which I brought home. As if this night could not get any better, Martina said she had one more surprise. She brought Detroit’s very own Kid Rock on stage. They sat on stools right in front of Lisa and me performing the song “Picture” as I watched in awe. They were so close, I could have touched their shoes.

This night was one of the best and most memorable nights of my life. If I would have given up like I initially wanted, I would have never experienced such an unforgettable and meaningful moment.

• Kristine Jasmund



Snake Eye •
Drawing II •
Daisie Justice



Macro Painting •
2-D Design •
Cora Talkington

Eighteen

Our marriage can now legally buy smokes, scratch offs, and pornography. It can change its name, join the military, and get a permanent tattoo.

Our marriage can sign contracts, get sued, and be charged as an adult. Our marriage could leave for college and change majors six or seven times, costing us a fortune; Christ, our marriage could even get married without our legal consent.

It has grown before our very eyes and has reached the age of majority.

Flipping through the photo album of our marriage, we can see it stretch and grow, take its first halting steps – two flat tires in Arkansas – flounder through its adolescence – water main breaks here and on Elm – and learn to stand on its own two feet – surviving the loss of family members.

I think of us at this age: you, before meeting Larry Pike, and me, before reading Charles Simic. Both of us not yet realizing the power and beauty that poetry can have in our lives.

Sure, we read it in high school, but it wasn't until college where its true worth emerged.

It was literature that connected us; stolen lines of poetry that trussed us together before we even knew each other.

And I think about myself – my younger, clueless self – and realize that our marriage is like that, too. It is young yet. For all that it has seen and done, it is young yet.

Our best years are ahead of us; our verse is not yet done.

It is far from over, in fact.

• Scott McCloskey

Exploring the Unknown

Have you ever been so scared to do something, but so glad you did it? In 2016, 67 million U.S citizens traveled out of the country. Many people traveled in the sense of getting away from their everyday life. But, I happened to be traveling in order to fulfill a lifelong dream. I traveled to the Bahamas on a cruise ship with my boyfriend's family, and even though I was scared to death, I knew that I had to make the best of this once in a lifetime experience. I was mostly scared because I have never been out of the country before and I had no idea what to expect. Although the Bahamas are very close to home, they made me feel as if I was getting a glimpse of another dimension.

I set foot into the security section of the port which stripped me of my belongings to ensure that I did not possess anything that would put me or the surrounding passengers in danger. Things started to move fast and my upper lip began to sweat, almost like the last bit of water dripping out of the sink in the middle of the night. I buckled under the pressure of the unknown. Numb, no words or actions. My brain shut down, and I could only think about every situation that could possibly go wrong. I could sense the worries in the air, I could tell who was adventuring for the very first time. Trying to take my mind off things, I began to scroll through my social media. Then I sent my farewells to my loved ones back home before distancing myself from the world for five days. We started moving closer to this gigantic world floating on water. I told myself everything would be perfect in the end, this would all be worth it. The hard part was almost over. My boyfriend reached for my hand, and we began taking our first steps into an entirely different world.

Setting foot on this boat changed everything. The atmosphere was like nothing I've ever experienced before. This ship was overwhelming my senses with each different sight, smell, and sound. The first sight that I experienced was a spiral staircase that was positioned in the center of the entranceway, which resembled the swirls of a golden lollipop. An incredible glass elevator was located between the spirals of the staircase, and took each passenger wherever their heart desired. The glass created a great illusion that made everything feel so much bigger than it actually was. Sounds on the Lido deck included the sizzling of the fresh meat on the charcoal grills, and the intense chopping of fresh vegetables. I knew that there would be many firsts experienced on this trip, and I couldn't wait to get started.

Our first port that we adventured was called Nassau, Bahamas. We woke up before the birds that morning to get an early start to our day. We wanted to be able to do all that was possible in the little time that we had. It was my first time out of the country and I had no idea what to expect. We

got off the boat, and had to go through another security section before entering the town. This time, the security was a bit different. I witnessed guns that were loaded and guys that were not budging for the sake of anything. It felt as if I was in the middle of a war. I had no clue what was going to happen or why they were standing there with loaded guns. I started to feel really uneasy about the situation, so my boyfriend's family redirected me and told me that it was nothing to worry about. They told me that it was more for our safety, than anything, and that there was nothing to be worried about. We finally got passed security and now it was time to enjoy the port. Nassau was a small town filled with so much to do. There were designated checkpoints that included sights that were crazy to see. The houses and shops were so close together that it was almost as if they were holding hands. There were small markets and huge stores placed randomly throughout the city. Purses, bags, jewelry, quilts, souvenirs, anything you could think of, they had. Everything that was sold was made by hand and sold by the creator. You could see the indents of their fingers rubbed off from the hard work put into these beautiful items. The port showed me how a developing country can adapt to such a large tourist population, and it was a very humbling experience.

The smell of wood and pine blazing to make statues, the homemade food, the beautiful and unique patterns of the quilts. This was their life and it was the biggest competition to them. That is what they lived for.

The second port was Half Moon Cay, Bahamas. The world warped into a place where only the sun, sky and water existed. This was truly the most breathtaking sight to see. All it had was a beautiful beach filled with white, sizzling sand and the clearest blue water. There were miles and miles of water, so I couldn't see where it ended or if it even did. We spent six amazing hours in this gorgeous place. I never wanted to leave. The water was at the perfect temperature from the sun beaming down above us. There was just the right amount of water to explore and relax the entire day away. The hint of salt from the ocean wasn't overbearing at all. The sky was painted with the most beautiful shade of turquoise, and there wasn't a cloud to be seen. It felt like a dream, almost as if none of it was real. The smells of sunscreen wafted through the air. I took in all of the commotion that surrounded me, and nothing seemed to matter. The world seemed to be perfect on that day.

Traveling out of the country is a must if you desire to experience the unknown. You don't hear much about anything outside of The United States, which makes it feel like there is no world outside of our daily lives but ours. But, it is truly an adventure you must experience, and a once in a lifetime dream. This journey had made me realize how fortunate I am to be able to live the way I live, and. It is crazy that two places in the same area can be so different. Such a change in lifestyle and a huge eye opener. I was really scared to take on this trip, but I am so glad that I did.

• Paige Gipson

An A-C-T Test Supervisor Proctor's Love Poem

In order to read this love poem,
I need to see
proper identification,
need to fill in your name
on the roster on page 61
of the Room Supervisor's
Administration Booklet,
need to, in fact, have
you sit facing the front
while maintaining three
feet of space (head to head and
shoulder to shoulder) between
you and everyone else,

not that there will be anyone
else reading this love poem,

but rules are rules,
and the A-C-T has
given me clear and outlined
procedures to follow and
forms to complete.

Are there any questions?

While reading this love
poem, you may not engage
in any of the following
prohibited behaviors:
copying any parts of this poem,
doodling in the margins,
chewing tobacco,
talking, or sighing, or in any way
expressing verbally any emotions.

When reading this poem,
you cannot go back to a
previous stanza or continue
to the next until you are told
to do so.

You may use a calculator –
unless it's the TI -89 series – to
tabulate any of the figurative
language in the poem. If the poet,
for instance, writes, "my love burns
exponentially, a sun turning supernova."
You may have to solve for X, may have
to compute the increasing rate of heat,
may have to, in fact, graph the rate
at which the super charged
astronomic event compares to the heart
of the betrothed.

You will have 30 minutes
to read and respond to this
love poem. I will give you
a five minute warning when
your time is almost up.

THERE SHOULD BE NO TALKING
at this point.

Remember to bubble in your
reaction; carefully fill in
each oval completely,
erasing any stray marks.

When I recollect the poem
and your response, you,
unfortunately, cannot discuss
this poem with anyone after
the testing session is complete
because this and all things involving words,
language, and thoughts are owned
by A-C-T.

Failure to comply with these,
rather, humble requests will
result in the complete and utter
ruination of any possible hopes
you may have for future
happiness in this world – or
the next.

You have heard the saying
“Hope springs eternal”?

It’s true,

unless, of course,
you cross A-C-T
incorporated.

We will find you.

We will make you pay.

And you can forget about
college.

When we’re through with
you, even your safety
school will shun you.

Are there any questions?

Your time starts now.

• Scott McCloskey



Macro Painting • 2-D Design •
Alex Hewitt



Macro Painting • 2-D Design •
Easton Aitson

Why I Wear Black

I love the color
Of stately ravens,
And lustrous,
Ceramic glaze.
Of prowling panthers,
And obsidian blades.

It’s the color of elegance,
Of mystery,
And of power.

I’ll stop wearing it
When they invent a shade stronger.

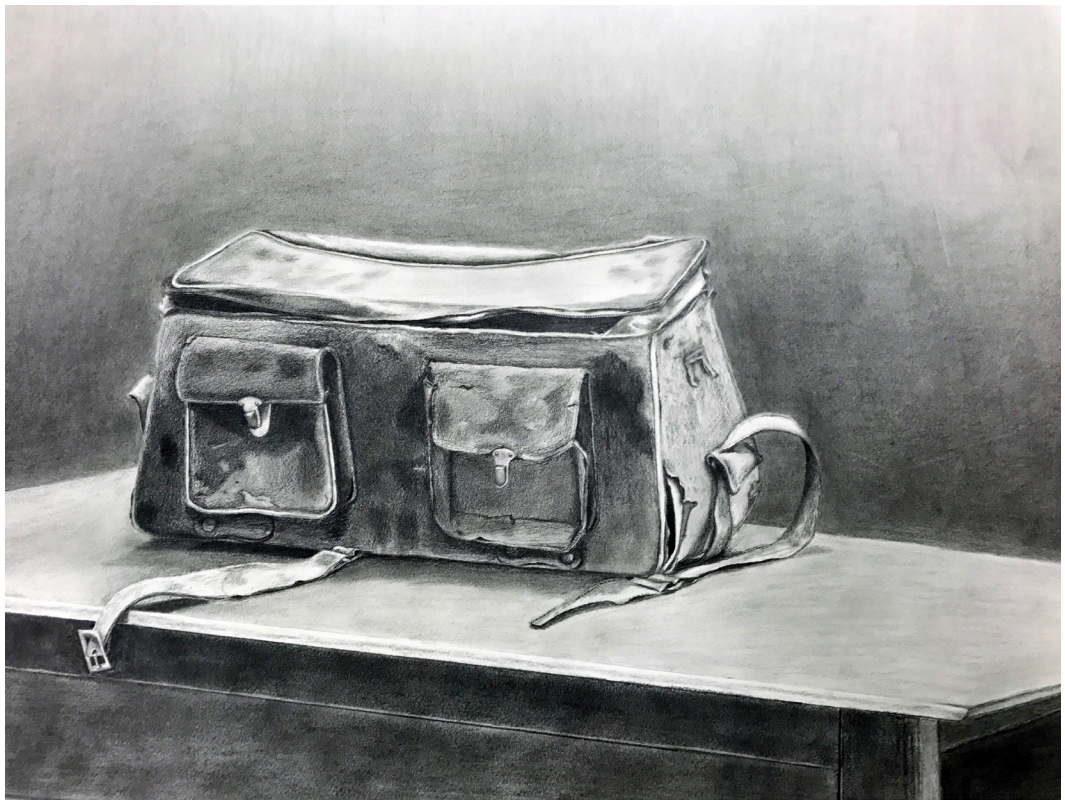
• Emily Gibson



Flying Enigma •
2-D Design •
Wyatt Lams



Purple Flower •
Watercolor I •
Kalen Hengy



Leather Bag Still Life • Drawing I • Amanda McCormick



Still Life • Drawing I • Amanda McCormick

Terrible, Terrible Processions

I can't remember a time when I looked at the moon and didn't think of my sister. When I look at the moon, like my vision, my thoughts become vague and bright—my notions fleeting and intense. I am consumed by emotion and that dim glow that somehow halts the pitch black of night. I see her in that brightness. I see her everywhere, but the soft light is what still keeps her alive. I want so badly to let go. I want so badly to *never* let go. I don't know if she would want me to let go. She doesn't haunt me; the moon does. It casts a light on my past that no sun could. Pitch blackness is not banished, but accented by its glow. It's telling me that it knows. It's offering to forgive me for her. But that's what only she can do—and can't do. I can't remember a time when I looked at the moon and didn't feel an odd sense of calm. My sister still finds ways to illuminate her truths. Not the real truths. It wasn't my fault.

She was doing the dishes. She was nine. I was lonely and a little bored. I was six. I begged her to take a break and keep me company. She had trouble saying no to her little brother. We went to our room, and she picked up a ragdoll. She put on a show for me, making the doll sing songs she made up on a whim and dance in what was, in my six-year-old mind, a beautiful style of ballet. Her songs were about sunshine and making friends. I took a turn with the doll. My songs were about how the doll could not feel the warmth of sunshine nor of friendship. My sister frowned at me. Just then, there came a shout from the kitchen, followed by floorboards thundering at the impact of purposeful feet.

A boot swung into wood.

A door slammed open.

A ragdoll thrown across the room.

The dishes were not done.

She apologized over and over.

"It was my fault!" I told them. They urged me not to lie. I tried to wrap myself around her, but was pushed off and out the door. From the hall, I could hear yet more thunder.

A wrist grabbed.

A girl lifted from the floor by one arm.

A ragdoll thrown across the room.

When we were young, my sister and I would invest all of our time in the endless forest near our house, letting our days dwindle down to nothing as we hid in rough-barked trees, and laid in fallen leaves and sun-warmed grass. When we grew older and less imaginative, we would go for long runs together—just the two of us, flying across clearings and gliding between trees. When we grew yet even older and no longer needed to purge our brimming energy, we would sit against one tree for hours and hours talking. I loved our talks. I loved them even more than I loved climbing to the tops of trees and chasing each other through branches before falling into soft piles of leaves when I was younger. She told me about places neither of us had ever been and would never go. She taught me how to daydream aloud. Our imaginations began to resurface.

Even on the days she was a ragdoll—which were frequent—she was vibrant and determined. This almost angered our parents. In their mind, she'd never learned her lesson. I was never taught "lessons" in the same way she was, and I never understood why. Protecting her was impossible, and reasoning with them was futile. I've always thought there must have been something wrong with them. They liked to claim that there was something wrong with me.

She was wonderful. She was perfect. She loved stories and creation. She had hazel eyes that brightened when she laughed and orange hair that got tangled up when she laid in the grass. I've never wanted to protect anyone else so desperately—to shield anyone from the world and its terrible, terrible processions. She deserved the world, but not a single bit of that which it had to offer. That's why I liked her worlds better.

She spoke slowly when creating them, sometimes with her eyes closed. She articulated carefully and moved her hands fluently, gesturing tales I couldn't in a million years. She once created a world in which there had never been any wars. It was beautiful. Then she revealed that in this world, there had never been a chance for war because there were no disagreements because there were no choices. There were kings and ordered executions in succession and enforced peace.

While she spoke, she showed me how to braid grass and flowers together. I made her a thousand crowns and necklaces, and she wore every single one with the utmost pride. I imagined her wearing a real crown someday, and the world not having wars *or* enforced peace.

I never got to see my visions through. She was not given a chance at fixing the world, or even at fixing me.

"Leave them be," she told me. "You just can't change anything. Soon enough, we'll leave, and I won't need rescuing."

"But—"

"It's for the best. For them to take it out on me, rather than using you or leaving us." I failed to see how their absence would be a bad thing. She told me she would be just fine and I would too, if only I didn't try to put a stop to it. If only I would sit idly by like a good little boy. If only I stopped trying to understand. It would all be easier that way.

She was wrong. Every word of it. That was the only time she had ever been wrong. I hated her for saying it, and I loved her for meaning it, and I hated myself for listening to it. I could only listen for so long. She didn't know when I stopped.

On a spring evening graced by warm air and an orange fading sky, I sat with my sister at the edge of the forest. She looked lovely as the shadow of an oak passed over her slowly, covering first her dainty feet, then moving over her long slender legs, trailing up her pale fingertips to her arms, caressing her shoulders and soft neck, and finally casting a darkness over her face before it passed. I did not like that brief moment when her smile was hidden. As she lay there outstretched, she explained to me how the sun was not traveling, but the earth was, in order to allow the sun to visit everyone. I asked her if it even visited the people who didn't deserve the sun. She said everyone deserved the sun.

I disagreed.

Very suddenly, I said, "Let's run away. Please."

"Don't be silly," was all she replied.

I wished the earth would travel slower, prolonging dusk, so that maybe when the stars arrived the sun could still remain, because she deserved it most of all. So she could see the tiny twinkling white lights and the infinitely stretching orange one at once, the sky switching from warm to cold, whether it be abruptly or subtly or with the change marked by an inexplicable emptiness.

Before I could ask her if this was possible, a shout came from the house, across the fields, to where we sat by the forest. The bold, passionately angry voice had called her name. I held her arm and urged her not to oblige it. She insisted that she must.

"You shouldn't worry. It will be over soon."

That was the second time she was wrong.

While she was gone, I laid down in the grass, grateful that the heat was holding when the light was not. I hated that she thought she had to endure this. I wanted to punish them for making her. I knew we could do something about it, but she wouldn't hear it. I wanted her to feel as safe at all times as I felt in the worlds she created. I took solace in her mind and in her eyes, wishing she could do the same. I wished they would leave her alone. I wished she wasn't quite so level-headed. I wished she would help me fix everything.

I sat up in the grass, upset that I was holding when she was not. To my surprise, she never came back to me at the edge of the forest that night. I spent the entire night sitting in the grass. I refused to believe it would last that long and continued to wait.

As the sun returned, carried by the movement of the earth, I remained at the edge of the forest. The stars had long since fled. A shadow once again passed over the spot in which my sister had sat, but in the opposite direction. Had she still been there, it would have covered her face first. I wished she would have been. I wouldn't have minded her expression being hidden for a brief moment that time, for I knew it would have held the downward turn of her rosy lips, accented by drops of morning dew in the corners of her eyes. After hiding her face, it would have moved down her sweating neck, to her shaking shoulders and arms, and at the same time over her white knuckles clenching the knees of her legs drawn up to her chest. Finally, it would have trailed off her feet with her toes curled into the damp grass. She would have been staring into the sunrise, trying to forget. I would have been staring at her, trying to remember. Even in terror and pain, she was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. I needed her to be sitting there under her oak. I made a decision in that moment.

When I saw her next, she was more battered than ever. Her skin bore colours unnatural to a pale girl. The purples and blues were in deep, full shades. She looked more beautiful than ever. She also looked haunting. She smiled at me, wiping crimson red beads from her lip. She spoke nothing of her colours, even as the red kept reappearing. I suspected that part she had done herself, from biting at the pain. I told her that everything was going to be alright soon. She almost looked afraid. Although she said nothing, that was the third time she was wrong.

That very same night, I carried out my decision. We needed to run away. I was too old now to sit idly by. No more throwing ragdolls. No more purple, blue, or red. No more. We were ready for freedom, and although my sister didn't see it, I knew we could have it. If only we reached out our thin pale hands, grasped the inevitable, and took what was ours, we could have it all. She may not have understood the way I did, but she would come with me. I would make sure of it. Our escape was an irrefutable necessity, and I would make her see.

And so I did it. My execution was flawless. In the deep blackness of night, I did it. No one heard a thing. I was meticulous and subtle, and I did it.

In fact, my sister didn't even know until I told her.

She was sitting outside in the garden alone, as she often did when she could not sleep at night. I ran out to her. I cautiously found where she was in the dark and hugged her tightly, hearing her gasp in surprise then feeling her soft hands on my back. I could barely see her as she smiled at me and asked what I was so happy about.

"We've done it!" I told her.

She stood up and looked at me quizzically, "Done what?"

"Don't you remember? We've run away!" I shouted and jumped up and down in my ecstatic pride and excitement. She tried to hush me for fear our parents would hear.

"No!" I cried. "We are far, far away from them now that we've run away. They're gone!"

"But... we're still home." She still didn't understand. Of course she didn't. She was too busy being level-headed all the time.

"That doesn't matter. All that matters is that we're free and they're gone."

It was then that she backed away and looked at me. Her eyes fell to the deep, full purples and blues on my knuckles. Then the glint of silver caught her eye. Next she saw the drops of crimson red still falling from it.

"What have you done?" she asked me.

"I already told you. We've run away."

She sprinted in the house. She still did not understand, but perhaps seeing it would help her to. I heard her scream. She must have been delighted! I waited for her to come back and thank me, so we could bask in our new freedom together.

In seconds, she was back outside. "You haven't taken us away! You've killed them!"

"No, I've freed us!"

"How could you have done this?" she nearly screamed at me. She stepped toward me and reached to take the knife from my hand.

I pulled my arm away. "What do you mean? I did it for you!"

"For me?! You couldn't possibly think that's what I wanted all this time? How could you..." All the while she was still grabbing for the knife. She paused before saying, "Please... please give it to me. Please, you're scaring me. Please give it to me."

"What?" I couldn't believe it. After all I'd done for her? This was the fourth time she was wrong! How many times was she going to be wrong? "*I'm* scaring you? Didn't *they* scare you? Of course it was for you. Everything I've ever done has been for you!"

Even still, she didn't understand. Her beautiful, still bruised face held an expression of horror. Her mouth was quivering and her hands were shaking. She was grabbing at my wrist, still trying to wrestle away the knife. I was unbelievably angry with her. Her ingratitude astounded me. As she struggled to free it from my hands, she kept trying to reason with me.

"Stop trying to be level-headed!" I shouted and pushed her. Once again, I heard her gasp in surprise, then I felt her soft hands on my back. I looked down. The knife was in her stomach. My eyes and mouth widened together as she held onto me in shock and terror. I looked down at the handle protruding from her stomach, then back up at her face. Again down at the handle. Then back at her face. No. No. I had not done this. I could not have. My beautiful and faultless sister. In just as much shock as her, I slowly reached up a hand to her cheek. I touched it softly and caressed downward, unable to utter any words of comfort or apology.

Faultless? I asked myself. She'd been wrong four times now. After what I'd done for her, she questioned me, scolded me, and insulted me. I felt my soft touching of her face turn into a strong grip on her chin, my thumb pressing hard into her cheek. I twisted the knife, driving it deeper. This time, it was conscious. Intentional. She did not deserve me. Not anymore. For the second time that night, I heard her scream. It was a loud and desperate shriek. I saw her eyes wet and heard her whimper. She was trying to say something.

"Brother..." she could barely choke out.

I reverted to shock at what I had done to the sister I'd always so dearly loved.

I dropped to the ground with her, catching her in my lap. I held on to her. Again, I had no words. She clasped my hand, lying there in my arms and choking on yet more crimson red. She was already becoming more pale. She stared upward at what would be her last sight. I followed her gaze, hoping it would be the divine meeting of the sun and stars she had always deserved.

It was night. The sky was clouded.

Shining through the darkness and haze, I could see one thing. The moon.

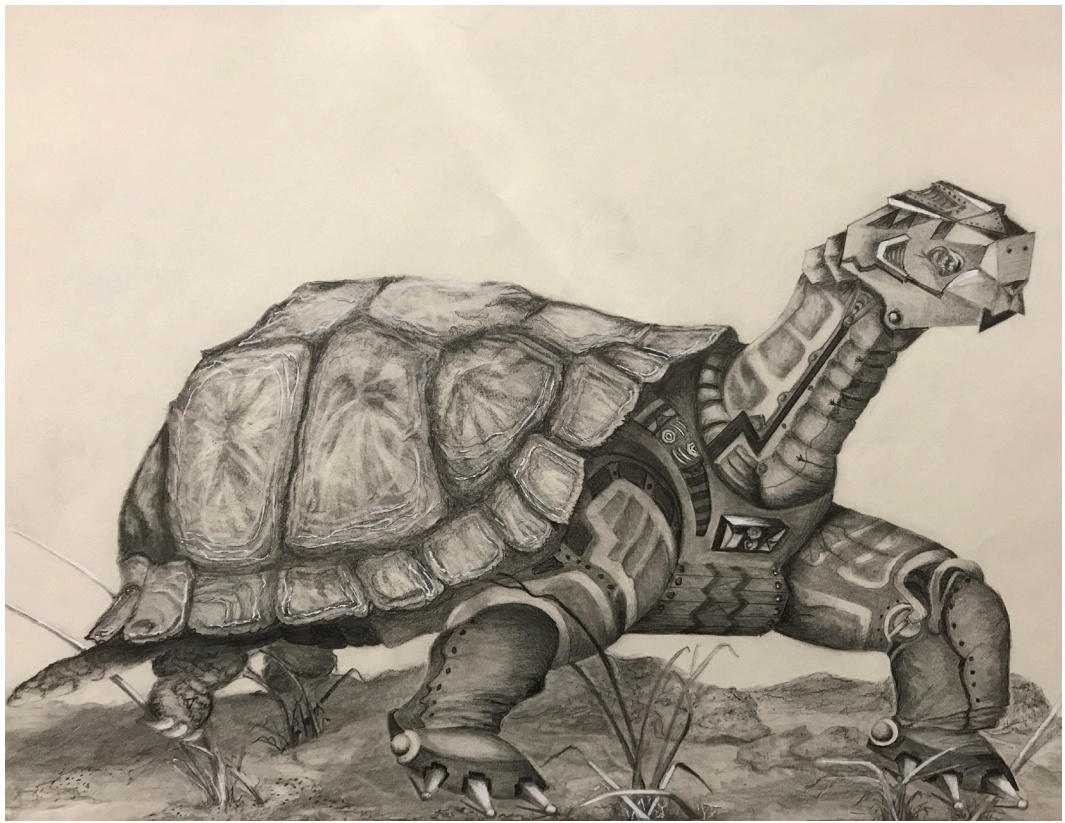
It was okay now. She was finally safe.



Mechanical Animal • Drawing II • Daisie Justice



Mechanical Animal • Drawing II • Carmen Lozano



Mechanical Animal • Drawing II • Kathleen Gibson



Michael • Drawing II • Cheyanne Abel

Dear

He called me "dear" using the same manner and frequency
With which a cadet calls a drill sergeant "sir."
That's not to say he screamed "Dear, yes, dear" with a hand raised in salute
But monotone, following or preceding nearly every spoken thought
He called me Dear.

It was void of meaning.

I wasn't dear to him—I didn't know him,
But his lips seemed insistent on uttering the endearment each time they parted.

Perhaps they used to call someone else that

With an unmatched vibrancy and passion,

And perhaps they no longer could.

So he was always looking for someone to call Dear

His tongue constantly dancing against the roof of his mouth to say that word one
more time

Just one more time.

So maybe to him, everyone is Dear,

Everyone, his drill sergeant

And he, a longing cadet.

I don't know if she existed; she's merely a theory

But he made me miss her... How he may miss her.

Whether she be dead, or missing, or a glimpse in a blinding array of lights.

I never learned his name

We did not speak of anything meaningful or personal

But I hope he finds a new Dear—if he even lost one.

If I am to meet him again, I hope he gives me a new name.

• Ryleigh Byrne



Mechanical Animal • Drawing II • Megan Engle



Mechanical Animal • Drawing II • Madison Hurley

Dysfunction

When is a house considered a home?

Is it the number of days spent in it
or is it the quality of a few?

When is a man considered a Father?

Is it when he impregnates a woman
or is it when he can love their child?

When is a boy considered a brother?

Is it when he is born with another child
or is it when he can be leaned on?

When is a person allowed to break down?

Is it when they are told they can
or is it when it all becomes too much?

When does a person die?

Is it when they stop breathing
or is it the last time someone says their name?

Some people are often criticized
for asking too many questions.

It's not their fault.

All that is known to some,
after the most important people in their life die,
is that nothing is definite.

• Jacob Huber

Rain

Alone I wait, sitting on a bench,
Hopeful a familiar face will appear.
Just to see his smile once more,
Suspenseful, yet hopeless years pass.

Still alone, I wait sitting on a bench,
Where we used to talk and laugh,
No more do we talk.
No more do we laugh.

No more do we walk the same path.
You left me and this world behind
A little too soon,
given no time to say goodbye.

You left this world fast
and flew to your eternal destination,
Abandoned only to sit on a bench and remember.

Remember a life that once obtained happiness.
Remember a life once filled with love.
Remember the faint scent of cheap perfume.
Remember the fact you disappeared and left me stranded.

When you cry, it rains,
When it rains, I cry too.
At least then we get to do one more thing together.

• Kaylin Eighmey

My First Word Was Mom

A commentary on the struggles of having a learning disability, and the importance of support and family.

It starts small.

It starts with a single hair entangled in the cotton of my shirt, a pale strand where my curls touch death, the mark of a pen I can't remember using. Sleep refused my body, and yet school refuses my mind. My eyes dart around the room like a bomb squad, when will the silence end? When will my peace sprout flowers which turn to ash?

Someone calls my name.

I shake my head, a habitual reassurance that yes, I am here. Yes, I am here. The cards in my hands are made of blues and reds and whites- playing cards of a game gone too long. The brown mess of my hand has ruined the clean paper, my touch has corrupted what was clean. The letters swim across my eyes before fading to swirls and lines of nothing.

I am reminded of swimming as a child, the swaying waters cutting across my vision as I grasped at effervescent blue.

I was not a gifted child. I did not graduate at seven. I could not rival the music of Mozart. There was only one person I raced behind, my legs hitting soft grass until I collapsed. There was only one I wished to beat, only one competition I endured--

A race against myself, against my expectations and insults.

As a baby I was placed in an oxygen tent, somewhere safe and warm. I imagine I was frightened- me, a small pink armful of fingers and feet struggling to breathe. I have long left the bright lights and sounds of safety. Yet my mind is consumed by the mumbles of a million words, the slaps of books against tile, by a single hair entangled in cotton.

Was I frightened in that oxygen tent? Did the walls comfort me, or close me into a room of strangers? I wonder if I was safe, surrounded by blue and white clothed, faceless people. I was taken from my parents, just a baby beneath a man's gloved hand.

I wonder if I belonged there, wriggling in that bright tent. I wonder if I should have stayed there, if I'm not there now-- just a mess of fingers and feet covering her eyes and ears. My cooling lips had been parted by a white tube, pushing air into my stubborn little lungs.

I had a difficult start to a strenuous journey. In the beginning I squirmed and cried until I suddenly couldn't speak a word. These days passed beneath the warmth of soft skin and green eyes, the love of an auburn haired woman.

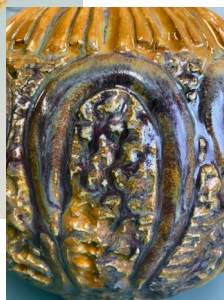
I grew perverse to any who was not she.

I surrounded myself with a small group of a kind, leather skinned woman, a child of four years, a young man with my hazel eyes, and the auburn haired woman. The road laid before my feet curled with vines and thorns, but yonder, such perils lay a rose to encourage my hardships.

Letters grew tails and numbers wore horns. The fear of my mind plagued my learning. My wandering eyes gathered attention.

Thorns and taunts and shoves pulled tears from my eyes, but the softness of a rose petal gave me an identity and the auburn woman gave me a home.

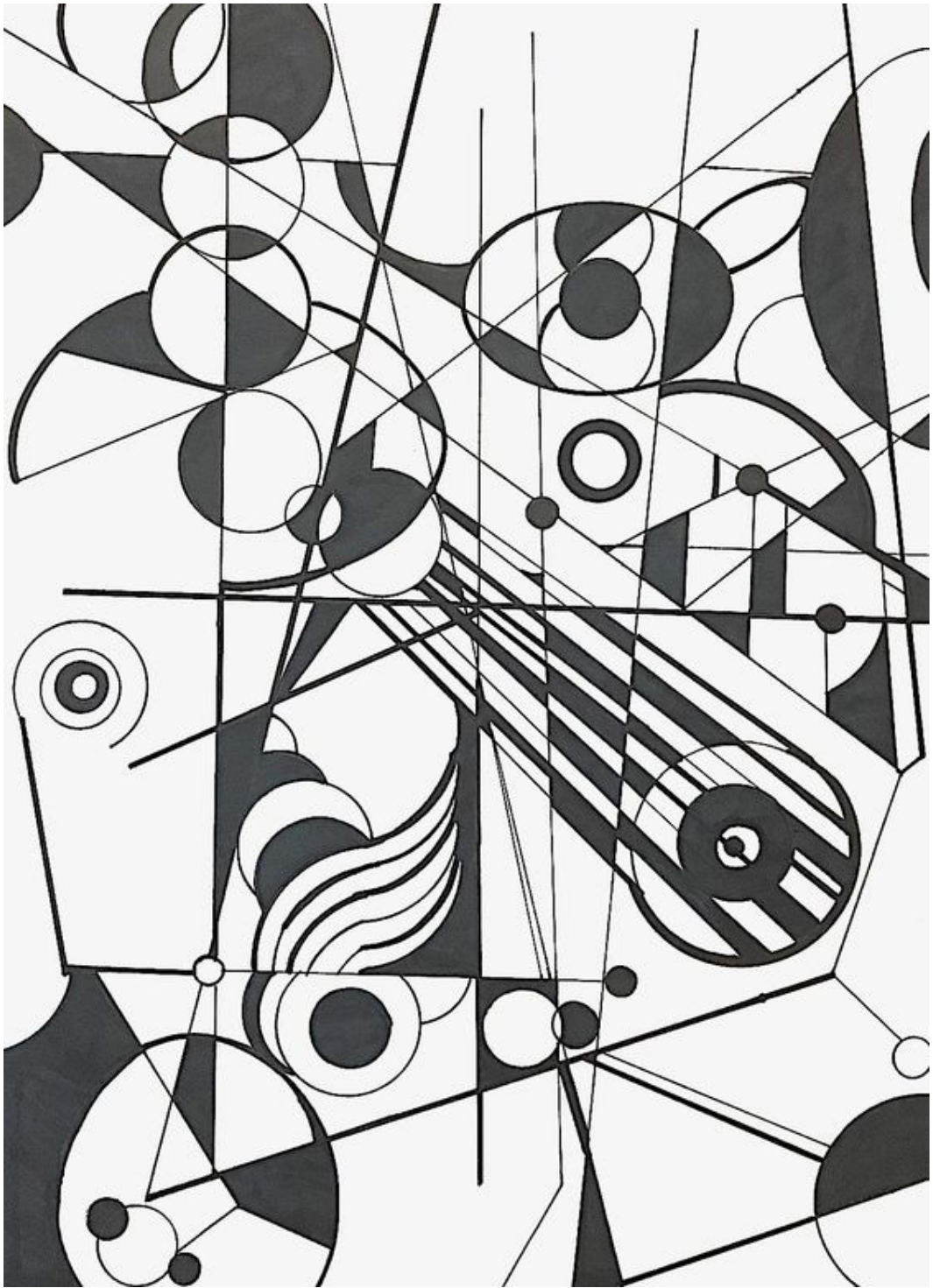
My first word was mom.



Ribbon Pot • Ceramics I • Kathleen Gibson



Untitled • Ceramics I • Kathleen Gibson



Abstract Composition • 2-D Design • Alex Hewitt

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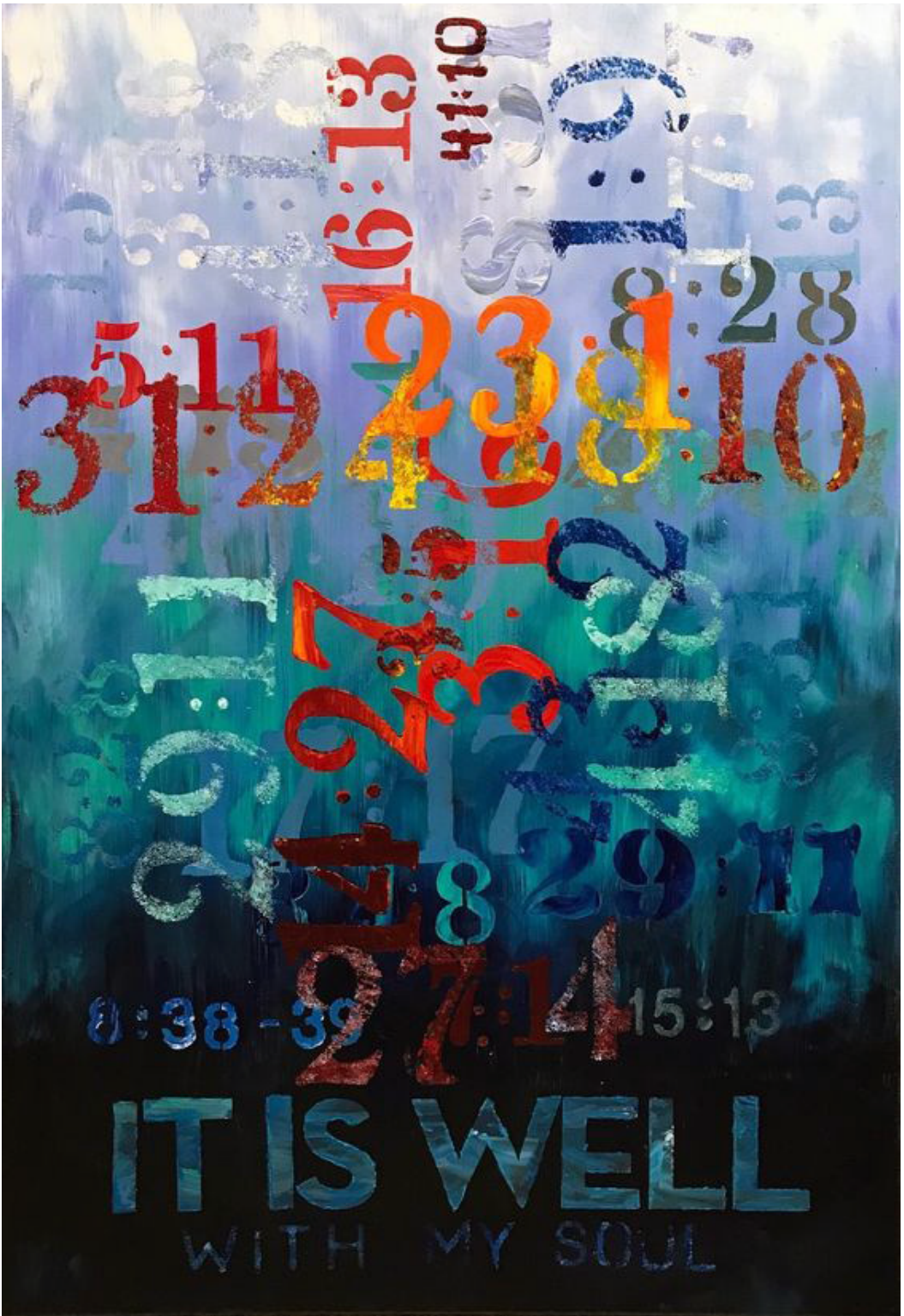
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MONROE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

enriching lives