

# IMAGES

## THIRTY-FOUR

20

A Literary  
& Fine Arts  
Magazine

20





# IMAGES 2020

**A LITERARY AND FINE ARTS MAGAZINE**

by the Students and Staff of  
Monroe County Community College



## **Front Cover:**

Oil Lift Portrait II • Illustration Techniques • Elliot Hurley

## **Back Cover:**

Saucers • 2-D Design • Brandon Szpargowski

Sponsored and Published by  
The Humanities/Social Sciences Division

*Note: This publication may contain mature subject matter.*



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the thirty-fourth year of the compiled creative efforts of our community of students. With this being only our second issue as editors together, the publication of this journal is the highlight of our academic year.

In this issue, our hope is for you to see what our students are doing in our classrooms at Monroe County Community College. We hope you take time to immerse yourself within these now published MCCC student works.

We would like to thank everyone involved in making this volume a reality. To the contributors: thank you for your courage and willingness to submit work for everyone to view, consider, and remember. To those who work behind the scenes— Kevin Cooper, Rachel Eagle, Joe Verkennes, Doug Richter, and Miranda Gardner (student editor), we appreciate you, and we hope you know there would be no Images without your help.

From now through next February, we will be accepting submissions from MCCC students to feature in the thirty-fifth volume. We collect these submissions through our magazine's email address: [images@monroeccc.edu](mailto:images@monroeccc.edu).

**Jenna Bazzell**  
*Assistant Professor of English*

**Therese O'Halloran**  
*Assistant Professor of Art*



- Sparrow Monotone
- Watercolor II
- Shayna Montri

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- Acrylic
- Painting II
- Cassy Fallon



# The Graveyard

I sit beside the swing set gazing through the pine trees bordering the back part of the playground area. Gummy bears in my hand, I sneak a red one into my mouth. The sweet strawberry taste tingles my taste buds. A few feet to the right of me, my friends Charlotte and Sophia whisper about who-knows-what. I turn my vision back towards the trees. As I stare through the bushy branches, I catch bright white figures of stone jutting from the ground on the other side of the trees.

“Hey,” I call out to my friends. “Do you guys see those graves behind the pine trees?”

My friends glimpsed over at me then to the trees.

“Yeah. What about them?” Charlotte mutters.

“Well, we never have been in the graveyard, so how about we sneak in and see who’s all buried there.” I look over to Sophia, then to Charlotte, quietly waiting for their answers.

“I’m in!” Charlotte answered.

I sweep my gaze over to Sophia, who quickly looks away.

“I don’t know.” Sophia mumbles as she fiddles with the seam of her pink Minnie Mouse sweater. “Hasn’t Mrs. Clark told us that we should never go into the graveyards?”

“Uh...well...yeah...but just because she told us we can’t, doesn’t mean that we have to follow what she says. Besides, she’s not the principal.”

“Yeah, but she can still tell on us.”

“Come on, Sophia! If we sneak behind the pine trees, no one will know.” I assure her.

Sophia’s lower lip puckers as she looks over to the trees. After a few seconds, she huffs.

“Oh...okay.” she mumbles.

“Yes!” I quietly exclaim as I clap my hands and bounce on the balls of my feet. “All right. Follow me!” I stroll over to the pine trees and duck under the branches, not waiting to know if my friends were coming or not.

Once I reach the graveyard with my friends in tow, we huddle in a group and meander around the rows of gravestones. Sophia splits from the group and stops and stares at a grave that has the last name Krug on it. “Susan Kuurruug...krooog...Hey! How would you even say that?!”

I stoop beside her and glare at the engraved name. “Beats me.”

“Hey! This one has my last name on it!” exclaims Charlotte, approaching a gravestone with the last name Truman engraved at the top. I immediately hush her as I glimpse over at the pine trees to make sure no one heard us.

Passing my friends, I begin to read the names off on the tombstones. Krug. Calvin. Smith. Krug. Krug. Simons. Krug. So many Krugs! I halt at two graves that are close by to each other. They both had the name Krug etched in them. Wow. They got to be all related, especially if they’re in the same graveyard. I couldn’t help but think of my mom and dad, my brother, my grandparents. I don’t want them to die like these people.

Shaking my head, I dawdle over to a wire fence that runs along the right side of the graveyard; it separates the yard from a cow field. A monarch butterfly flies along the top wire of the fence and lands on the wooden post. I reach my hand to touch its soft-looking wings, but my fast hand movement startles the butterfly. It flies in the direction of the cows. As I admire the brown and black cows, I hear a slight rustling sound in the distance. I peer over my shoulder. The branches from the tree border start to quiver.

“Quick! Hide!” I call out as quietly as I could so my friends could hear me. Luckily, they both hear me. Sophia dashes over to hide herself behind a tall gravestone, tripping over her own feet in the process. Charlotte crouches by a small grave, which from my view, would not be able to fully hide her. I rush back over to the two Krug graves and shelter myself behind them.

I peer over the stone, seeing if someone has found us or not. I catch a glimpse of salt and pepper short hair as a figure pokes their head through the pine trees. The figure continues to crawl under the branches, revealing gray denim jeans and a matching denim jacket. Oh nooo! Not Mrs. Clark! Anyone but Mrs. Clark. I whip my head back behind the gravestone I am hiding behind. I look over to Sophia. I couldn’t see her face, but from the way she’s shaking, I’d guess she’s trying her best not to cry. I could not see Charlotte, but I knew that she would be biting at her nails to try to calm herself down at this point.

Footsteps on dry grass echo throughout the graveyard. The wind picks up and starts rushing past the grave I am hiding behind; the scent of apples and cinnamon along with bitter coffee waft around my nostrils. The footsteps approach closer. Just as I thought Mrs. Clark would walk past the grave I am sheltering behind, shouts coming from the playground ring through the air. A few kids began calling for help. The footsteps suddenly stop behind my Krug graves. I hold my breath, praying that we will not get caught. A sigh sounds from behind my graves and the footsteps retreat, heading back towards the trees.

As the rustling of the branches stop, I slowly gaze over the graves. Mrs. Clark is nowhere to be found. I get up from kneeling on the ground to find that the lower part of my jeans is covered with mud. I grimace as I try to rub the brown muck off my jeans. Looking up, I see Charlotte and Sophia approaching me. A frown adorns both of their faces.

“Hehe...Fun, right,” I say as I try to bring a smile to my face.

“Sure. Almost got caught thanks to you,” chides Charlotte.

“Hey! You thought that this was a great idea anyway so don’t go blaming...”

“Guys,” Sophia quietly interrupts, “Can we just go back to the playground?” I look over to see tears welling up in her eyes. Sophia grabs both Charlotte and my hand.

“Okay. Let’s go.” I sullenly agree as I lead my friends back to the pine trees.

• Autum Palmer



# Riverwalk

The city lights dance along the street yards across from me. The street where cars zoom at night despite the cops who lurk in the shadows. The chaos of revving engines, squealing teenagers, and sirens are too much for my ears to handle. As well as the putrid exhaust fumes that cauterize my nose. The busy four-way street is not as peaceful like the bridge I am on, which is a walkway above the river. One where I come often, to stare through the wooden beams into the black hole below. No one knows I am here or of all the other times I paced this old, broken bridge. We have a lot in common, I think. Both of us are worn and rusted, with pieces of us chipping away at the slightest breeze. I watch the pieces swirl in the wind. It doesn't take much for those tiny scraps to be carried down into the still water. So, it must not take much more to carry the rest of my pieces down with them.

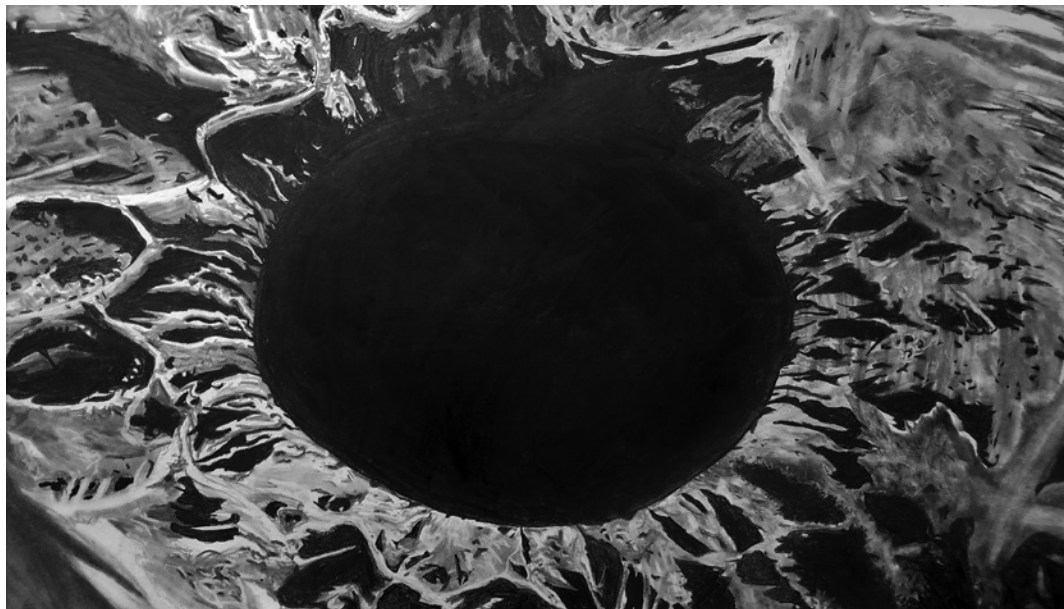
My hands brush the chain-linked fence that fills the gaps between the wood. It's meant to keep people from falling below. I think it's funny. Something supposed to keep others safe, but someone so desperate to tear down that safety net and join the calm water. The fence can't keep these horrible thoughts out. But the river can. It's not like anyone would notice anyway. If I let the river swallow me up and take me somewhere far, far away, everyone would be glad: the people who betrayed me in middle school, my dad who tells me how much of disappointment I am, my best friend who never has to deal with my problems anymore. My best friend is the only one who really cares. She cares so much... more than anyone ever has. But she doesn't need me. I just make things worse. My eyes flicker to the water one last time. The beads of light bobbing in the water are reaching out to me. As I shift my weight onto the wooden beam of the bridge, a light buzz taps my pocket. Slowly, I lower myself down and reach for my phone. A message on the screen reads, "Hey, wanna grab some food?" It's her. The blood in my body begins to run cold. I can't do this to her. I glare at the water below. If the river tastes as bad as the bitter tears that seep in my mouth, I want no more to do with it. As I type "sure" into the bright screen, I tremble down the planks of the rusted bridge and refuse to look back at water's gaze.

• Tiana Howard



- **Untitled**
- Watercolor
- Ramona Hoefer





• **Untitled** • Drawing II • Caleb Turner



**Untitled** • Ceramics I • Susan Chinavare

## Sisterhood, alphabetically arranged

- A. Asshole: The not-so endearing nickname for all of your siblings that you love more than you can put into words
- B. Brooklyn: Asshole #1, also the one who made me a big sister Bethany: Asshole #4, also the baby. So, your favorite by default.
- C. Chicken: Mostly enjoyed in nugget form, often chased around the farm when the children were left unsupervised for long periods of time.
- D. Dalton: Asshole #2, also the only boy so by default, the family favorite.
- E. Elefun the Elephant: Hasbro's floating butterfly catching game from 2009 causing many fights
- F. Fighting- The only way the four of us knew how to interact for about 5 years. See also, x-ray, WWE
- G. Girls Only- Signs typically put on the bedroom doors of pre-teen girls. Term also used to torment Dalton for years, and even currently so.
- H. Hopscotch: the best way to spend summer mornings, even if you end up with scraped knees in the process.
- I. Isabella: Asshole #3, your mother's only other child. So she gets no rules while you try and make them for her anyway
- J. Jell-O: Sub-par dessert usually served around the holidays. Also makes a good projectile when you're looking to annoy any human within range
- K. Kinetic Sand: Incredibly messy, often only played with for hours at a time, months apart from one another
- L. Loser: The worst title to receive among the sibling group. Allows other siblings to mock you until the title becomes passed to another.
- M. Makeup- Cosmetic products typically used to enhance appearance, also used to torment Dalton, and sometimes our father.
- N. Nerf Guns: The absolute best Christmas present one could receive, often taken away shortly after opening for "not acting appropriately" while using them
- O. O
- P. Polly Pockets- Small, hard plastic dolls with weird, rubbery clothing. Wildly popular in the mid 2000's/2010's range.
- Q. Queen- Living in a home dominated by women, it was what all of us tried to be. Typically this resulted in many ridiculous arguments
- R. Ratatouille- Disney's 2007 film about a cooking rat. Commonly watched at home because for months it was the only movie the youngest would agree upon without throwing a fit.
- S. Sister- The one title you have for life giving you the highest sense of fulfillment, and the most joy.
- T. Tiny- The way all of your siblings looked when they were first born. Although, the youngest is still incredibly tiny.
- U. Underwear- Sometimes placed on the head instead of the behind. When on the head, you will instantly become a superhero, and receive a towel cape around your shoulders.
- V. Video Games- Primary source of entertainment from 2010-present. One of the best ways to bond because it helped build teamwork skills
- W. WWE- Our dad's favorite show to watch every Monday and Friday. After his passing, its something all of the siblings still tend to enjoy every so often together. This also inspired several fights and trying out all of the 'cool moves' we saw the wrestlers doing.
- X. X-Ray- Often the result of fighting. Thankfully none of them resulted in broken bones, just some fractures.
- Y. Youngin'- perpetual nickname for every sibling younger than you, often passed to the newest sibling from the no longer youngest.
- Z. Zoo- The place where the majority of our family time was spent. Often on carousel rides, cheese sticks, and running from the monkeys as they charged at the glass. Many pictures followed often of you holding your small army of siblings.

• Vic Gerard



# Sibling Rivalry

Michelle sits at the local Leo’s Coney Island tapping her foot vigorously. She checks her phone again, 3:25 pm- Sarah was now almost a half hour late. She sips her cooled coffee distracting herself from how hungry she is. Just when she is picking up the phone to call her, she sees Sarah’s bland librarian ponytail bob through the door.

“Hey, sorry I’m so late. Jared of course took my van to run to the store without letting me know so I had to wait for him to get back,” Sarah says as she plops into the booth across from Michelle.

Jared is Sarah’s husband of five years and it’s pretty typical of him to not consider her needs when thinking of his own.

“It’s fine. Let’s just get right into it,” Michelle responds as she rolls her deep brown eyes, “Todd got called into work so I’m going to need you to bring Zach to Gram’s house on Mondays.”

Zach is the youngest of Sarah’s three children and is the only one of them not old enough for school.

Sarah was startled by the suddenness of the approach. She raises her eyebrows that are perched over her perfect round baby blue eyes.

“Is that starting tomorrow?” Sarah asks, “That’s short notice, dude, I can’t even arrange to go into work late in order to get the kids to school then drop him off before I have to be there.”

“I told you this was a possibility for Mondays. Just leave a little earlier and drop him off first. Grams and I will both be awake already. You know Todd gets notified late about working, most of the time he doesn’t find out until 10pm the night before so I’m lucky he even had this much notice,” says Michelle.

Todd is the father of Michelle’s son, Jackson. They co-parent well but his on-call work schedule makes sticking with set parenting times harder. Add this in with a lack of babysitters and it’s almost impossible for Michelle to keep a steady job while going to school.

This leaves Michelle with only having Grams to help.

Sarah saw Michelle’s eyes turning to slits in anticipation of the fight that is heading their way.

“Dude, Jess has to be ready before I get home from work because she has dance, damn it Michelle. Thanks for screwing me over on that too,” Sarah snips back.

Jess is her middle child, and only daughter, who is in her second season of dance.

The waitress interrupts and refills Michelle’s coffee. She smiles politely and mumbles a quiet thanks.

“Can I get you anything?” the waitress asks Sarah. Sarah looks at Michelle with eyebrows raised.

“Did you already order? Seriously?” She sneers.

“Um yeah, can you just tell her what you want, please, so we can get our food.”

“I’ll take a diet coke and a bacon cheeseburger with fries, thanks,” Sarah says a bit rudely to the waitress. Michelle shoots her a sympathetic closed-lip smile.

“Sarah, you’re being ridiculous. Bring her dance stuff when you drop them off and Grams can get her ready to go.” Michelle starts tapping her foot again.

“I can’t trust her to get her ready on time. Now I’m going to have to leave early from work and get in trouble just to even make it out there on time,” Sarah responds, biting her lips and breathing heavier.

“So let me get this straight, you trust Grams enough to trust her with all 3 of your children’s lives, but you don’t trust enough for her to dress one of them in their dance outfit?” sneers Michelle with a twinge of maniacal laughter edging her voice, “Oh, that’s rich.”

Sarah clenches her jaw like she always does when someone pisses her off with such a painfully valid statement.

“Well...She would also have all the kids for a while, you know?” she hastily retorts back.

“Yeah...and?? I’ll be home from class at the same time that they’ll be getting here after school so it’s fine. Stop acting like a god damn princess who never has to compromise!”

Michelle crosses her arms and slouches back in the booth tapping her foot faster and faster.

“Oh I’m the one acting like that?” exclaims Sarah, bringing her hand to her chest signaling herself. She motions towards Michelle with a pointed finger, “You’re the one who won’t let her watch all of the kids together. We wouldn’t be having all of these issues if it wasn’t for YOU!”

Michelle’s salty glare fell upon Sarah’s unmanicured nail. She shoots straight back up in her seat and slaps Sarah’s hand away.

“Get your damn finger out of my face,” Michelle spits venomously through clenched teeth, “Do you not realize how hard this is for her or do you just not give a fuck AT ALL? She can’t safely watch them all together, all the time Sarah Lyn Marie.”

“Yes, Michelle Elizabeth, I do understand which is why I was contemplating leaving my job so I don’t have to listen to you complain about her watching any kids other than yours! You can’t even make an exception to your stupid rule even though my only other sitter had back surgery!” yells Sarah.

“I already compromised tremendously since it is MY rule that she doesn’t watch them all at once. I have taken Jackson to work and to school meetings with me already and it’s only been a week,” Michelle retorts, “You act like getting up a bit earlier is going to kill you and I’ve had to do it on so many occasions.”

“Maybe if you ASKED instead of demanding, I wouldn’t be such a bitch about it. You don’t make anything easier since you won’t compromise your stupid rule.”

“Yes, because asking would have made no difference because you would have said no and we would still be exactly where we are. But yet I’m SO demanding giving her up 5 days out of the week and reconfiguring MY entire schedule for YOUR babysitter emergency. But one day is too demanding for you to freaking compromise, right?” Michelle scoffs.

She leans forward putting her elbows on the table in front of her. Her hands starts waving around frantically in tune with her anger.

She raises her voice a bit as she continues, “Stop being ignorant and realize that Grams isn’t young and capable like when she watched us all growing up. You have three kids, Sarah, THREE! You should have known better than to keep having kids since we have hardly any family and the little we do have refuse to help. That is a lot to handle for her, let alone with mine added to the mix. If you want to jeopardize YOUR kids safety, that’s on you but the whole world doesn’t revolve around you and your kids.”

“I tried figuring out other things and I couldn’t. I can’t be late and I work in an office so I can’t take them with me I already asked. Also, do you know how difficult it is getting them up in the morning? More than half of Benny’s meltdowns are in the morning,” Sarah exclaims.

Benny is Sarah’s oldest son who is eight.

“Oh you know Jackson has even bigger meltdowns since Todd and I split. I’ve still waken him up way earlier PLENTY of times to drop him off to people. You act like we should all bow down because you have 3 kids and you never feel that you should be inconvenienced in the slightest way because of it!” Michelle yells a bit too loudly.

The area around them hushes as the screaming gets the attention of the other patrons. They both slump back into their seats with flushed faces of embarrassment.

“I knew you would throw it in my face that I have three kids,” Sarah leans in and whispers harshly.

“Well I wouldn’t have to if you didn’t act like it gave you an all access pass to entitlement,” Michelle responds quietly, “ I understand, it’s hard. I only have one kid and almost no babysitters. I can’t even rely on you, my own sister, for help. Not even when I absolutely have no other option and now you won’t even give an inch on your needs even though I have compromised the most this entire time? It’s bullshit, Sarah.”

Michelle’s stomach was growling in hunger, maybe she should have waited until after they got their food to talk to Sarah about this. It definitely isn’t helping their attitudes. What is taking the food so long anyways?

“Listen, I have compromised enough with this. I have had no problem dropping Jackson off to babysitters and leaving earlier or packing extra for it. It’s called parenthood. I have no other option and it would be ridiculous for both me and Grams to waste gas in two separate cars driving back and forth to your house on the other end of town when we live at the same damn house. I’m just letting you know I already told Grams that you’re dropping Zach off to us in the morning. Whether or not you do is completely on you,” Michelle states in a tone of finality.

They stare at each other in awkward silence and stabbing glares as the food finally comes.

• Brittany Hanner



# My Secret Place

Alive.  
The light in the woods are dimming  
Reaching my camp, I take a deep breath.

Alone.  
I had, over time, started to build a home here.  
A table and chair sit out in the open, a tent beside to sleep in.

Alert.  
The chirps and rustling of nature keep me aware.  
No human sounds reach me, though I always listen.

Alive.  
This is my haven, I never want to leave  
As I start a small fire to warm me.

Alone.  
Here nothing can touch me, no one can find me. I think.  
And after months of preparation, today I've chosen to stay.

Alert.  
Smoke burns my throat as I inhale the bitter air.  
A loud crack draws my attention as I look towards the noise.

Alive.  
The crack could be nothing, a deer stepping on a branch.  
Still my heart races, blood pounds in my ears.

Alone.  
Leaving my table, I crawl into my tent to hide.  
In there I imagine myself invisible under course wool blankets.

Alert.  
I hear shouts, and light floods through the thin tent wall.  
My eyes prickle, dry from holding them wide open.

• Juliet Jeffs

# Balloon

If I was a balloon  
Released into earth's atmosphere  
I would not care  
As long as I was tied  
To you

• DJ Bloxson



• **Untitled**  
• Painting II  
• Cassy Fallon





- Glass
- Painting 1
- Elliot Hurley



Loon on Lake • 2-D Design • Jacqueline Foshag

## Good friends

I regret following him into my bedroom.  
I regret closing the door.

He put his hands up to his lips  
He smiled.

*Follow me  
Shush...*

I regret following him into the closet.  
I regret closing the door.

He put his hands in his jeans  
His eyes matched his sheepish smile.

*Why are you so scared?  
Good friends do this all the time.*

I regret looking into his eyes.  
I regret saying "okay".

His hands remained still.  
He waited. He watched.

*How about I go first,  
Then you go next?*

I regret backing into the wall.  
I regret saying no.

He grabbed at my wrist.  
He clenched his teeth.

*Don't you want to be a good friend?  
Come on, it's me.*

I regret giving him a chance.  
I regret feeling with my hands.

He took deep breaths.  
He pressed into me.

*It's not so bad, see?  
I told you it's not so bad.*

I regret the crumpled fabric, butterflies on my floor  
I regret not saying stop.

His eyes glanced around.  
He couldn't help but laugh.

*What the hell is wrong with you?  
Why do you look like that?*

I regret staying quiet.  
I regret holding my breath.

He went back to himself  
He tried to finish quietly.

*Everyone wants this,  
Lighten up, you'll see.*

- Jessie Stamper



## August

Just as I am, August akin;  
to the sunrise at eight o'clock,  
rays quenching our sins just as the  
lilies bloom with their vibrant wings.  
Just as I do, August begins.

Just as they are, we are unmoved  
towers of the Windy City.  
The clamor of traffic doesn't  
faze our greenlights; there's no stop signs.  
Just as the city lights, we shine.

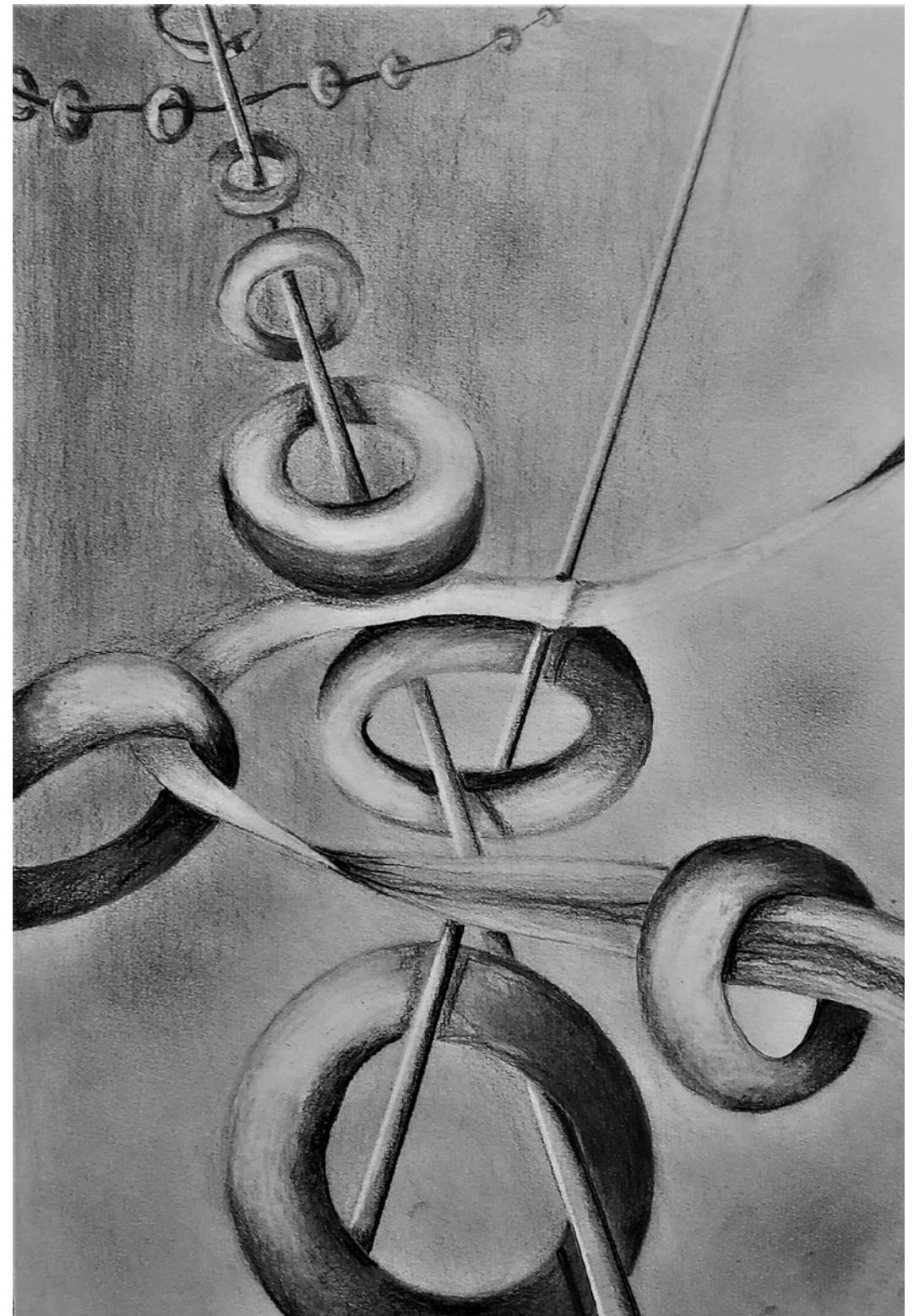
Just as the fish, we swim freely,  
nothing to ever hold us back.  
With you there always protecting,  
reaching your loving arms outward.  
Just as waves, they reach the ocean.

Just as the sand that's beneath me,  
you are the warmth and affection  
Miami palm trees preserve  
and shoreline waters diminish.  
Just as these footprints, you lead me.

• Lily Miles

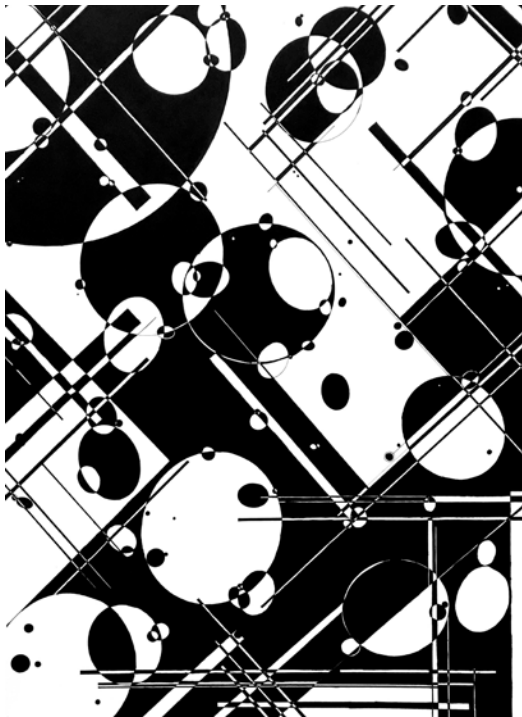


**Steam Powered Heart** • Art Fundamentals • Rose Tibai



**Untitled** • Art Fundamentals • Kathy Gibson





- Composition with Lines and Circles
- 2-D Design
- Elliot Hurley

## Lush

Inebriation  
was my greatest regret.  
Your kiss a Serpent's Bite,  
luring me just to leave me on the rocks.

I stirred at the thought of you,  
like the ice in my glass.  
Your heart seventy proof, and  
I didn't even desire sobriety.

except

When you begged me to  
put away my spirits  
to lift those of yours,  
I thought beyond the rim of the glass.

I drank blindly  
so that I didn't have to face you.  
Little did I know,  
you were the frosted bottle on my fingertips.

Your whiskey scent,  
your misleading hands  
kept me at that barstool  
when I should've been detoxing.

except

I got drunk off the pain,  
the tinge of apple cider on my tongue,  
burning on the way down  
with nothing to chase it.

I used to never drink, but that clink of ice  
when I stirred my glass was addicting.  
Why couldn't anyone stop me  
from taking another shot.

- Lily Miles



- Noton image with cut paper
- 2-D Design
- Bethany Fultz



- St. Paul's Methodist, Monroe
- Painting II
- Gary Gudes



- Untitled
- Painting II
- Elliot Hurley



# Hours

“I need you to take a few hours this Saturday.” My manager tells me, arms crossed and foot tapping. She doesn’t even ask. Her crusty hair is like an aerosol helmet, and the caked makeup under her eyes stifles spots created by years of sleepless nights. Thoughts of homework, chores, and trips to the hospital race through my head at her request.

“I’m sorry... I don’t know if that day would really work for me.” My sharp intentions always dull when I speak. I try to say what I mean, but it never works.

“What do you mean? What are you doing that day?” Her words are always sharp, but behind her heavy makeup and viciously ironed clothes, something is wrong. People talk about her failing marriage, distant children and second job when she isn’t here. Now, I’m starting to believe them: her perfect facade is starting to crumble.

“Well, I guess I might be able to.” My heart sinks at my own words, but I see a flicker of relief in her eyes and her shoulders relax.

“Good. See you then.”

~

It’s Saturday, and the filmy IV bandages from the hospital still dot my upper arms, so I wear long sleeves under my faded work shirt to avoid questions. While I think of the stacks of homework waiting for me tonight, the kitchen door opens and it’s the manager. There’s a tight-lipped smile plastered on her face, but her eyes are like cracks revealing the deadness inside. The tick-tock of the wall clock is the only noise I hear.

“Good news! New hire!” Her voice screeches like a cheery ringtone that goes off during a funeral, but I force a smile anyways. A new hire means less hours for me, less hours for her. But I can’t keep my smile for long, so now we both look like clowns with grins painted on. A crackly voice announces over the intercom that the mall is now closed, and the awkward moment snaps like a brittle stick. At home (that night??), I lay in bed, thinking of what I need to do the next day but knowing that thinking about it will only make it harder to sleep. School, work and the hospital vie for my attention like my little cousins on Thanksgiving, pulling at my clothes in all directions. Even with less hours to work, the seams are starting to rip.

~

It’s Saturday again, and everyone’s bent over the schedule. A blank Saturday is staring at all of us, stretching the silence out and making us fidget. My manager looks at me, then back at the Saturday. Her acidic hairspray stings my nose, so I lift my head and tell her I’ll take it. Her wrinkled brow relaxes with relief, but a few seconds later her shoulders start to hunch again. She has to leave for her second job, and as I watch her go out the door I see her eyes. They’re watery and bloodshot, unguarded for a moment. They sharpen again once she realizes I’ve caught her, then the door slams. I can’t unsee her frightened eyes, though. Sometimes they look at us like we’re lions in a cage—if we learn how to twist the bars, it’s over for her.

~

Two weeks later, the door opens again. It’s her. I draw my neck in like a turtle on the chopping block: today’s the first time I’ve seen her since her husband left, and I don’t know how to handle it. I heard he took the kids and she blew up over the phone with him at work—her other work—and lost her job right then and there. Her drawn-on eyebrows look like squiggly centipedes today, not the perfect lines she usually draws. She doesn’t even bother smiling, and her eyes are more bloodshot than ever. I try to look somber, but I can’t suppress my own relief—my scars have healed. The IV patches are gone. The doctor said I won’t have to come back, and next week the semester finally ends. I have more time to work than ever, but it doesn’t really matter anymore. Because she does, too.

~

As the days and weeks crawl by, I see her more and more often at work. She’s like a shell of her former self, hunched over the counter with watery eyes. We tiptoe around her while she cries into the cleaning bucket. She tells me to take Saturdays off, so I sit at home while the hours go by. I stare into their emptiness just like she stares into her empty house when she gets home at night. The hours we used to struggle to push off on each other are coming back to haunt us. We fight over who gets to work on Saturdays, who gets to pick up the shift on Tuesday afternoon, who gets to come in early on Sunday to open. It’s a game we won’t admit to playing, trying to steal the hours from each other, but a game where we’ll never let the other win. Because we both know if we sit at home and stare into the emptiness, they’ll start eating us alive.





Untitled • Drawing II • Ramona Hoefer



Untitled • Art Fundamentals • Blake Bolton

## Chutes and Ladders

My father was a brick.  
 My mother a balloon.  
 One would pull me up,  
 while the other dragged me down.  
 My father was a nail.  
 My mother a tire.  
 Was I the wheel or the board?  
 My home was a teacup  
 broken but repaired, pieces in place  
 but cracks still there.  
 Shouts and shaking were my only lullaby.  
 Screams and sirens were the songs I awoke too.  
 Work was my play and play my work.  
 Relaxing was the most tiring activity.  
 My house was a store but nothing for sale.  
 My father a maker of masks but none were given freely.  
 My mother a servant of her own volition.  
 My father a leader or dictator, I did not know the difference.  
 My hatred for things I never knew grew.  
 I listened with my eyes and saw with my ears.  
 I was a chore, a goal, a pawn, living in fear.

• Caleb Skrobowski





Competitive Parents • Illustration Techniques • Elliot Hurley

## Side Effects

I stand behind him draping a towel around his trembling shoulders  
Silently studying the long tufts of dark gray intertwining with shades of white

Elvis starts singing softly around us

I flip the switch and the buzzing begins,  
mixing with melodies of the king  
creating a calming cloud of comfort around us

A raspy cough escapes his chapped lips  
And a shaky hand halfway covers them  
I sway, focusing on the task ahead  
He begins to hum along

My left hand glides gracefully along his hair,  
clumps coming out between my fingers  
hair clippers following closely behind in my right hand

His hair offers no resistance and falls  
effortlessly in melancholy piles at our feet  
It takes all I have not to float to the floor with it  
But I carry on

Still swaying softly, I melt into this moment  
tracing every inch carefully  
along the wrinkles of his fragile skin  
Slowly making my way around, perfecting every detail

The humming begins to crack

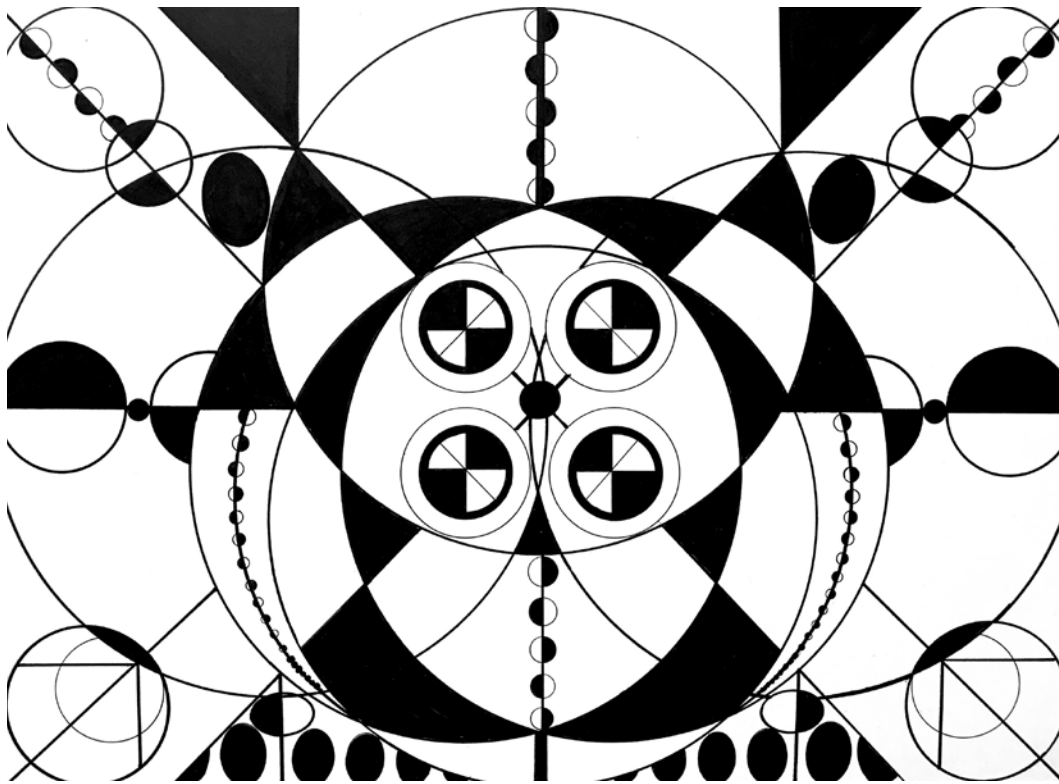
Finally I face him, blue eyes brimming with sorrow  
and mine brimming with tears  
He tries to smile between sunken cheek bones

I help him stand, like he did for me all these years,  
And together we turn to the mirror  
His hair now matches the eyebrows that have long vanished

The humming stops and Elvis now sings alone.

• Brittany Hanner

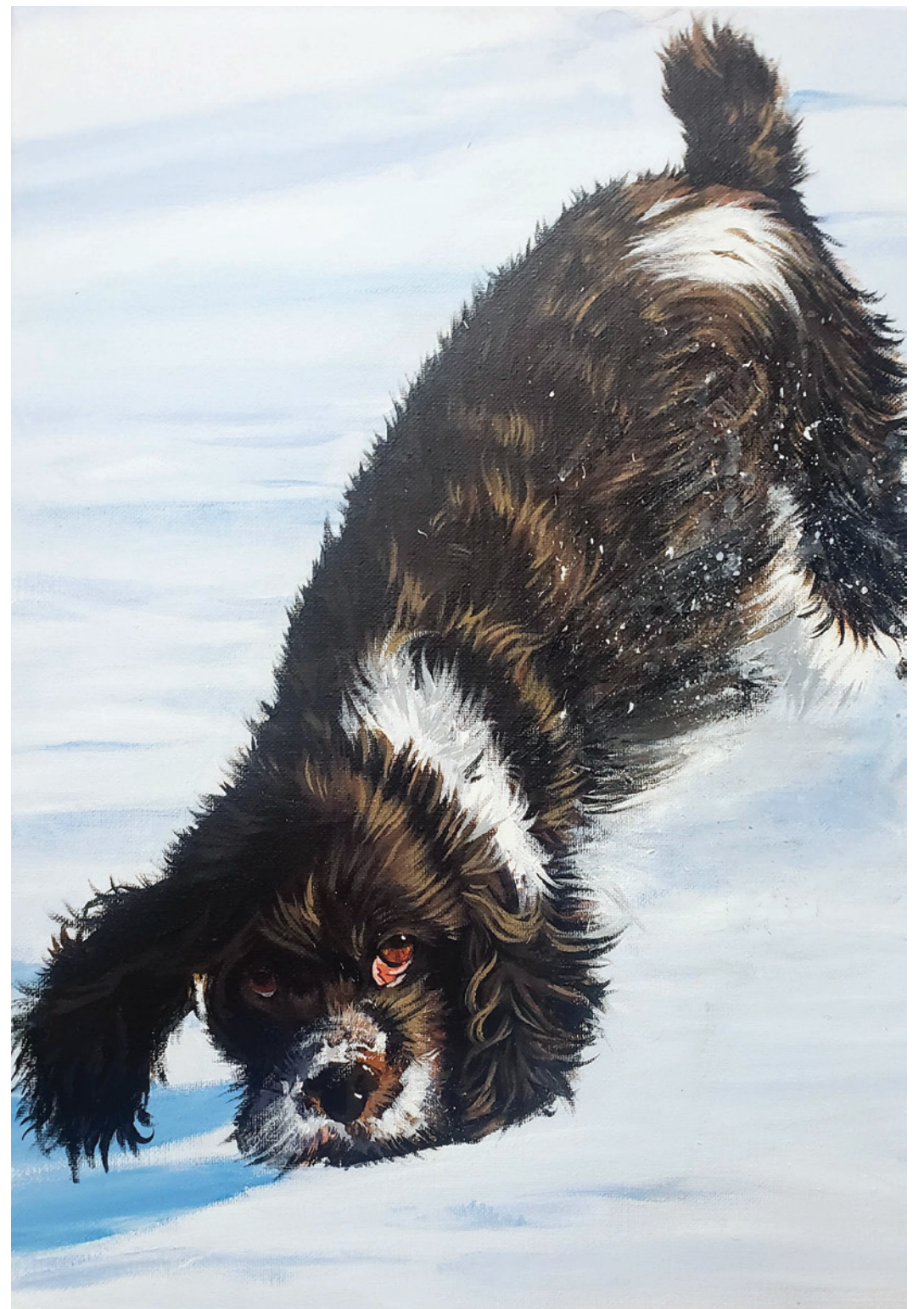




Design-o-mania • 2-D Design • Susan Westerdale



Composition with Lines and Circles • 2-D Design • Jacqueline Foshag



• **Untitled**  
• Painting II  
• Kimberly Okler



# Travelling Alone

On every trip I take, Anxiety walks me to the car and sits shotgun while I turn the keys in the ignition. The gentle rumbling when the engine starts helps lift my mood. Early morning mist collected on the windshield falls in waves as the wipers push it to each side. But the wipers can't reach the top. A small triangle formed by quivering droplets sits behind the rearview mirror, unreachable by the blades that criss-cross my blurry vision. It glistens in the new morning light as I drive away from my house. The early-morning world is steeped in blue, like I'm driving on the ocean floor.

On every trip I take, Fatigue makes sure I don't leave my coffee sitting on the counter when I leave. It keeps my head from nodding as the highway rolls under me at speeds that vary with my mood. Sometimes I play music if I'm lucky—data is in short supply and I can't waste it on a few moments of respite from the silence. Most of the time, the only noises I hear are the roaring semi-trucks and my phone telling me to keep right at the fork, or go straight for twenty-five miles. Left, merge, then a speed trap ahead.

On every trip I take, Impatience grumbles in my ear during a traffic jam. A sea of brake lights in front of me is uncrossable except for those who have time. I join the throng and wait, sometimes turning on the radio to see what's ahead. Stop, go, stop, go: merge, stop again. Then the cloud of cars clears and everyone rushes ahead to make up for lost time.

On every trip I take, Anxiety taps my shoulder when highway starts to widen: the city is coming and we both know it. Green traffic signs hang off of crumbling overpasses, watching over the pitiful slivers of grass by the exit lane. Trash litters the thin median. Trash is always in the city, but so are the colorful murals painted on the sides of abandoned buildings. By this time, I'm usually hunched over with my eyes bulging out, trying not to miss my exit. I have to drive in loops on entrance ramps till I wind up three miles behind and ten minutes late. Then I enter the labyrinth. I drive through a web of streets while my palms sweat and slip on the steering wheel. My destination is never far away at this point, but I make it further by driving around the same blocks over and over.

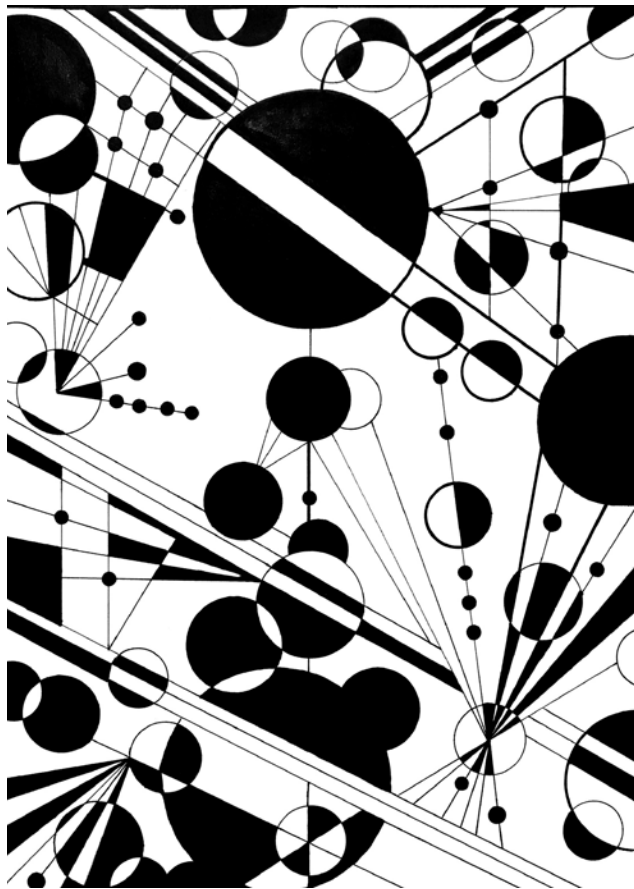
On every trip I take, I carry too many loads back and forth from my car while Fatigue sits on my shoulders, weighing me down. The lot attendants stare at me. Sidewalk flies under my feet as I hunch my shoulders and stare at the ground. Can't look at others—no, they might think I'm up to no good. Finally I find the place and have to walk by giant heads or metal sculptures that cast gruesome shadows on the walls. That's when people start streaming past. Like a raging river, they swirl and eddy near support pillars and giant glass maps of convention centers. Caught like a piece of driftwood, I float along the stream till I see the sign telling me I'm where I need to be. Anxiety lets go of my hands and says he'll see me later. We wave goodbye and drift away. The hours crawl by, slowly at first, then quickly around lunchtime. I usually don't even have time to eat, so the black hole grows inside my stomach and growls at me to throw something down. If I'm lucky, there's a granola bar in my backpack for a quick recharge.

On every trip I take, I'm alone once Impatience lets go of my hand. I'm alone when I walk out of the building and into the city. I'm alone at the bus stop, the train station or the parking lot. I'm alone in a cold plastic chair while I stare at the jolting floor of the bus or the train, straining my ears at every announcement to hear if it's my stop. The crackly voice is never clear. It's a guessing game at this point while I line up at the doors, and I'm alone in the crowd.

On every trip I take, Anxiety is waiting on the platform when the crowd spills out of the train like water from a knocked-over cup. Night has fallen but fluorescent streetlights and blinkers force the stars out of the sky. Now it is only a vague gray. In the yellow half-light, I make my way to the hotel or rental house. Anxiety is too tired to keep up by now, so Fatigue joins me and follows me into the elevator or front door of a stranger's house. I sink into the bed, however soft, and fall asleep within seconds.

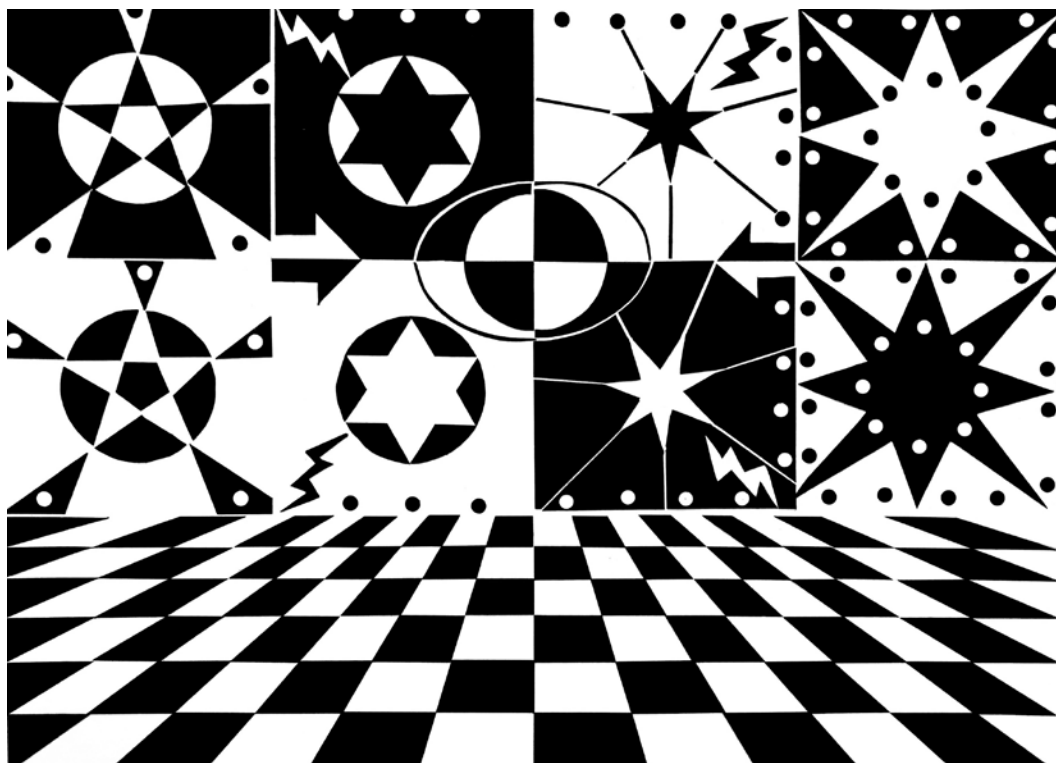
• Seth Nisely





• **Untitled**  
 • 2-D Design  
 • Julius Krause

**9-Color Bezold** •  
 2-D Design •  
 Blake Bolton •



**Bezold with cut paper** • 2-D Design • Thomas Gerweck



• **Untitled** • Art Fundamentals • Jessica Trumball



# Tennis Playdate

Brisk air rushes about at the park. Sunshine filters through the burnt red and orange maple trees that surround the tennis court. A red picnic pavilion borders one of the longer sides of the court; it is packed with people celebrating a special occasion with purple balloons and streamers running along the posts and roof of the wooden structure.

Josh pulls his white beanie over his deep chestnut curls and most of his short forehead. Some curls escape from the beanie, budding at the sides of his head. He slouches back against the tall metal fence that lines the court; a blue and white tennis racket lays on the ground right next to him. He loosely grips a small dictionary in his left hand, half mindedly brushing his right thumb over the book’s pages. Loud whistling sounds out, making Josh startle a bit. He looks towards the parking lot. A sinking feeling forms in his stomach as he spots his expected “friend”.

Micah strolls up to the tennis court; a smile surrounded with deep-pitted dimples is etched on his face. His baggy green MSU sweatshirt covers up his scrawny upper body. Black sports pants barely reach the tops of his ankles. His navy-blue sports bag swings wildly as he whips it back and forth along with his skipping-like step.

Josh glares at Micah. “You’re late.”

“Wassup, bro!” Micah calls out. As he walks over to Josh, he chucks the sports bag right at Josh.

Josh quickly leans to his right; the sports bag barely missing his left shoulder. It hits the metal fence and topples onto the green court right beside him. “Well, I’d appreciate not having an object flying right at me,” Josh remarks, shoving the bag away from him as he gets up, grabs his tennis racket, and heads to the left side of the tennis court.

“Eh, that happens sometimes,” Micah sarcastically states as he leaps towards his bag and pulls out his racket. He starts heading over to the left side of the court when he realizes that Josh was already walking towards the same side. “Can I play on the left side?”

“Nope.”

“Why not?!”

“Cause I’m already over here.”

“Fine. Whatev.,” Micah shrugs his shoulders as he dawdles over to the right side of the court.

Josh takes several tennis balls from the cart beside the net and puts most of them in his huge pockets of his black sweatpants. He strides over to the service line and serves the ball to Micah. Thwack! “So how long will I have to play with you again?”

Thwack! Micah hits the ball right at the net; it rolls right back towards him. “My mom said she’ll pick me up at around...five-ish.”

Josh glances at his watch, shock washing over his face. “Woah, that’s like... three hours away.” He slumps his shoulders.

“Uh...yeah. She says that she needs me to get out of the house and out of her hair.”

Micah reaches down to pick up the ball. As he makes his way back towards the base line, he stares at the ball in his hands. A frown replaces his smile, making his dimples disappear. Just as Josh was about to ask if he was alright, Micah’s frown forms back into a smile. “Oh well! That means you get to spend your wonderful afternoon with yours truly.” Mockingly taking a sideways bow, he places his hand with the tennis ball over his heart while his other hand holding his racket swings out to his side. After a few seconds, he quickly jumps up and serves the ball over the net. Thwack! The ball almost lands near the back-right corner of Josh’s end of the court.

“Um...alright.” Trying to get that weird scene out of his head, Josh thinks of what Micah has said about his mom and the way he seemed...almost sad for a second. Josh has never seen Micah get that down before. He usually is this bubbly kid that annoys the heck out of all the other kids at tennis practice. The whole thing just didn’t seem right. Moving towards the ball, Josh swoops it with his racket. Thwack! The ball falls on the other side, hitting the ground close to the net. He glowers at the ball and watches as Micah dashes towards the front of his side of the court.

As the ball hits the ground, Micah reaches the front part of his court and volleys the ball over the net. His usually big smile seemed to get larger from the effort he put into his hit. “You see that Josh? Coach Dave would be proud of me! You think he’ll let me join the tennis team this spring?”

“Sure, Micah,” Josh mumbles, not really paying attention to what Micah was going on

*continued on next page*



about. Thwack! Josh effortlessly hits the ball to the other side of the net. He intently watches as Micah struggled to get to the ball. It bounces by the far-right side of Micah's part of the court.

"Well...I know I can make the team. Some of the other kids in tennis practice said that..." Micah pauses as he rushes over to the ball, hitting it up in the air. Thwack! "...I'm not good at certain tennis drills and..." Shock broke his huge smile into a gaping hole as he watches the ball fly way over Josh's side of the court, over the tall fence and trees, and hit straight into the pavilion. Cries and shouts of surprise explode from the building. Some people ran out of the shelter, looking around. Micah's racket clatters on the ground.

Josh gawks at the scene in the pavilion. "Now you've done it." He eyeballs Micah questionably, "What were you saying about not being good at certain drills?"

Micah continued to stare at the pavilion. "I...um...you know what, I think I'll call my mom to see if she can pick me up like...right now," he picks up his racket and races toward the tennis court's exit.

"Woah woah woah," Josh yells out to Micah. "You can't just leave now. You'll have to clean up that mess with those people over there."

"No thanks. I'm good." Micah pulls out his iPhone from his back-jean pocket as he makes his way towards the exit.

Josh glances at Micah's sports bag, then back to Micah. "What about your—".

"Keep it man. Give it to me at tennis practice tomorrow." Micah shouts as he bolts in the direction of the parking lot.

Josh watches Micah as he proceeds to run to the parking lot while talking to someone on his phone. Micah gets to the parking lot and looks back at the pavilion. After a few minutes, he hangs up and approaches a group of brown bushes. He sits down beside them and places his head in his hands.

Guilt jumbling in his stomach, Josh gathers his belongings, along with Micah's racket and bag, and quietly walks over to Micah. Once Josh gets to the bushes, he places the bag beside Micah and sits next to him. He pats Micah's back.

Micah removes his hands from his face and looks over to Josh then at his bag. "Thanks bro." he murmurs. After a couple minutes, Josh hears Micah mumble something.

"What?" Josh says as he leans closer to Micah.

Micah looks over to Josh and sees tears bead down his left cheek. "I'm sorry for having my mom make you hang out with me. I know you weren't happy the moment you saw me enter the courts." He gazes over at the road thirty yards away from us. "No one's ever happy to see me. Not even my mom."

"I'm sure your mom's just having a bad day or something," Josh reassures. "And I was quite happy to see..."

"No. Stop. You weren't. Don't try hiding it." Micah wipes the tears from his cheek.

"Fine." They both sit and watch the vehicles fly by left and right on the road. After a few minutes, Josh looks over to Micah, clears his throat and quietly asks "So, what's happening between you and your mom?"

Micah squints over at Josh. "Not telling you." He looks back at the road.

"Uh...sorry. Just...thought that...since you brought up your mom and her not liking you, I thought you might want to talk about it."

"Nope."

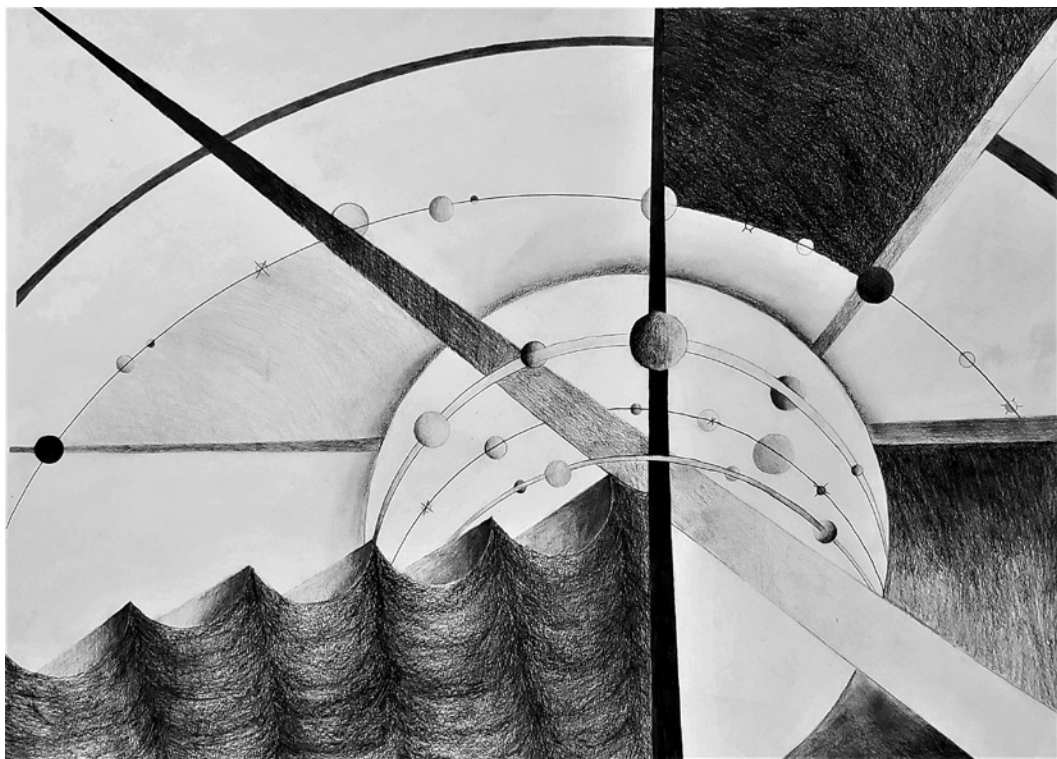
Feeling a bit hurt that Micah won't talk to him, Josh takes his phone out of his pocket. The clock on his phone reads 2:34 PM. He could go home early since it looks like he and Micah will not be playing tennis anymore today. Josh gets up and slings his racket over his shoulder. He turns around to acknowledge Micah. "Well, guess I'll see you tomorrow then."

"Oh. Um...sure. I guess." Micah looks down at his lap and pouts. Just as Josh was about to walk away, Micah calls to Josh. "Hey, um...could you stay here with me til my mom picks me up."

Josh sighs. As much as he wants to go back home, staying with Micah would be the best thing to do. Josh turns back to Micah and shows a small smile. "Sure." He sits back down beside Micah and they continue to stare at the passing vehicles.

• Autumn Palmer

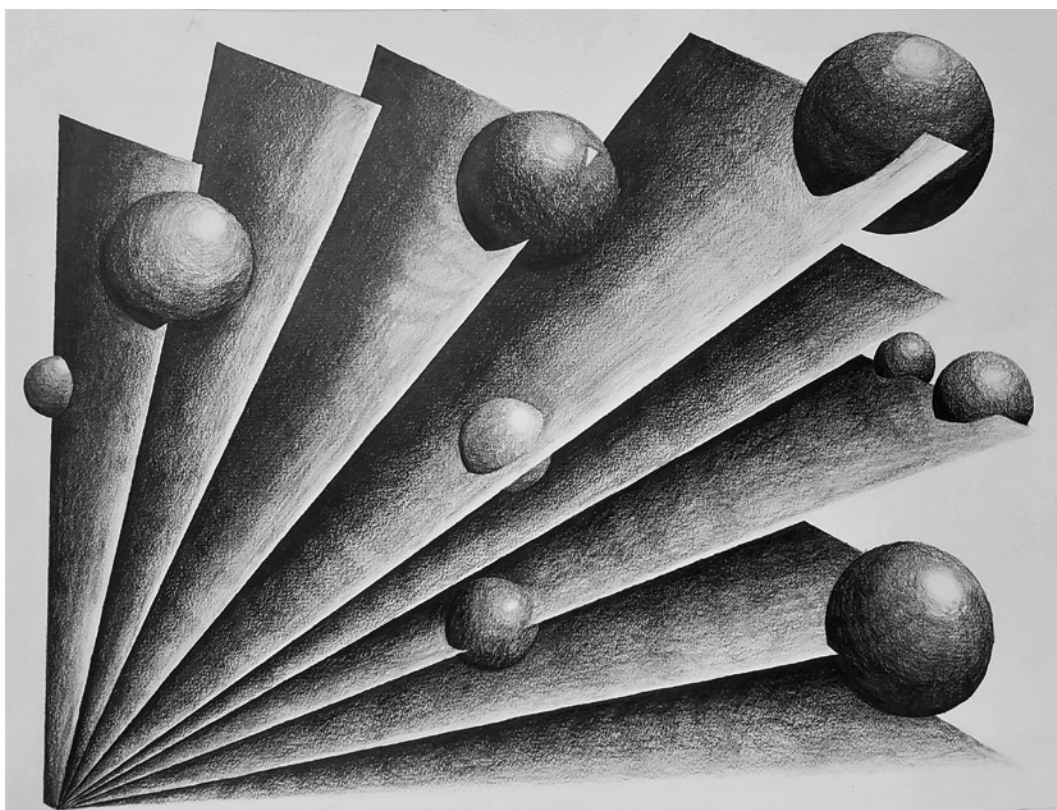




Untitled • Art Fundamentals • Abby Nisley



Untitled • Drawing I • Aurora Reynolds



Untitled • Art Fundamentals • Rose Tibai



Untitled • Drawing I • Rebekah Ballmes



# Letters floating in blood- not soup

## ABRASION

You never understood how someone could wear down and become the thing they said they would never be. Ignoring lines drawn in the sand. Lines drawn in blood. You heard what they said, how it's a process, one thing leads to another and you wake up a completely different person.

## BANDAGE

Protection is vital. Clean, wash, wrap, and repeat.

## CAT SCRATCHES

Make sure your excuses are believable. Cat scratches, fist fights, falling down a flight of stairs. Self-harm can be disguised as many clumsy accidents.

## DREAMS

Dreams, dissociations and delusions. They're all the same when examined under different lighting.

## ENDORPHINS

You realize what's happening, right? Positive reinforcement. Add a reinforcer and increase the behavior. Add endorphins and become addicted. How can something that feels this good be wrong? Soon you won't know how to stop then you won't know why you'll want to.

## “FLORDIA”

On a school trip heading south, everything slowly heats up. Your face burns with embarrassment. Before you even arrive, classmates begin to shred layers of winter clothing like snakeskin until all that is left is tight tank tops, exposed bra straps, miles of clear smooth skin. You realize that here, you will not have the safety of long sleeves. You tug your sleeves down farther.

## GOOGLING “HOW TO TAKE BRA SELFIES”

You don't really know what brought you to this point, But there you are in only a bright red bra, sitting on your bed at 3 AM using snapchat to talk to a boy. He wanted you to “show Daddy your tits” You were never into the “Daddy” kink, but doesn't it feel nice to be wanted? Doesn't it feel nice to be seen?

## HOME

“Home” is the beginning of a conversation some people are afraid to start.

## INTENTIONS

Hopefully it's not surprising that intentions matter.

## JARRING

Someone once described what they saw as jarring. You'll never forget the look on her face as she pulled her child closer to her side. It was a hot day; the humidity was through the roof. And there you were, in jeans and a sweatshirt with the sleeves rolled up ordering a hot coffee at a Tim Hortons. How bold of her to assume you cared.

## KINOCK

He used to knock on your door. Fast, quick little taps with his fingers. Alerting he was just outside. Alerting there was no escape. The knock meant to pull down your sleeves and smile.

## LOCATION

Location is very important. Both on the body and in the world. Brief anatomy lessons can be like looking at a map of a city you've never been too. Learn where your veins reside to possibly avoid uncontrollably bleeding out.

## MONKEYS

Animals in captivity can show signs of self-injurious behavior when there is a lack of enrichment.

## NOTHING

Would it be painful to really become nothing?

## OCTOBER 28TH

Eighteen lines. Eighteen was your favorite number. Eighteen was the year you could leave. Raise your razors and cheer to the day it all began.

## PRESSURE

It's important to apply pressure to a wound that won't stop bleeding. It is possible the injury is severe and may need assistance in clotting. Apply constant pressure and do not remove soaked through gauze, apply fresh pads on top of the soiled ones to promote clotting.

## QUITTING

See above under E- ENDORPHINS.

## RISKY BEHAVIORS

Risky behaviors can vary anywhere from speeding, to overeating, to suicide attempts. risky behaviors may be an indication of something much more than just a distraction

## STAPLES

Even though you may have guns and knives in your home, remember that anything can be used to inflict pain to oneself.

## TRAZODONE

Taking 350mg rather than 25mg of this antidepressant before bedtime probably will not hurt you, however you may experience unusual side effects like extreme heart palpitations, uncontrollable regret and inability to wake up.

## UNDERSTANDING

While many people will find it difficult to understand, there are a few that will connect with you through these shared interests and struggles. It is important to understand the people who chose to not understand you simply are in a different place. It is a waste of energy to worry about appeasing them.

## VODKA

Does taking 14 shots of vodka mixed with green tea count as risky behavior?

## WORK

Many jobs have a dress code so it's important that you are able to dress accordingly. One time, three jobs ago, your boss covered your arms in saran wrap and told the whole crew that you were next to useless for the day. Knowing a workplace dress code before working can save you from unnecessary stress.

## XENOBIOTIC

Think about how many people around the world are sitting on their dingy couches, in dingy apartments, injecting and swallowing whatever they can to possibly feel alive. Does the body recognize the very things that set them free is killing them at the same time?

## YESTERDAY

When googling “yesterday” the only thing that pops up right now is a movie about being the only person alive to remember the Beatles. Thinking about yesterday is tricky sometimes. Eventually everyday runs together and “yesterday” really happened two weeks ago. Only to find out that two weeks ago you were in middle school, listening to the Beatles for the first time and hating it. Does yesterday exist at all?

## ZILCH

“How many pills did you take?”, “How many years has this been going on?” “What did you do?” All of these are good examples of questions where the answer can be meaningless. If you do enough and say enough that means absolutely nothing, what will you become?





- Anne Hathaway's Cottage
- Painting II
- Emily Gibson

# CONTRIBUTORS

## Writers

- |                               |                            |                               |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| DJ Bloxson – page 10          | Tiana Howard – page 4      | Autumn Palmer – pages 2, 30   |
| Vic Gerard – page 7           | Juliet Jeffs – page 10     | Jessie Stamper – pages 13, 36 |
| Brittany Hanner – pages 8, 23 | Lily Miles – pages 14, 16  | Caleb Skrobowski – page 21    |
|                               | Seth Nisley – pages 18, 27 |                               |

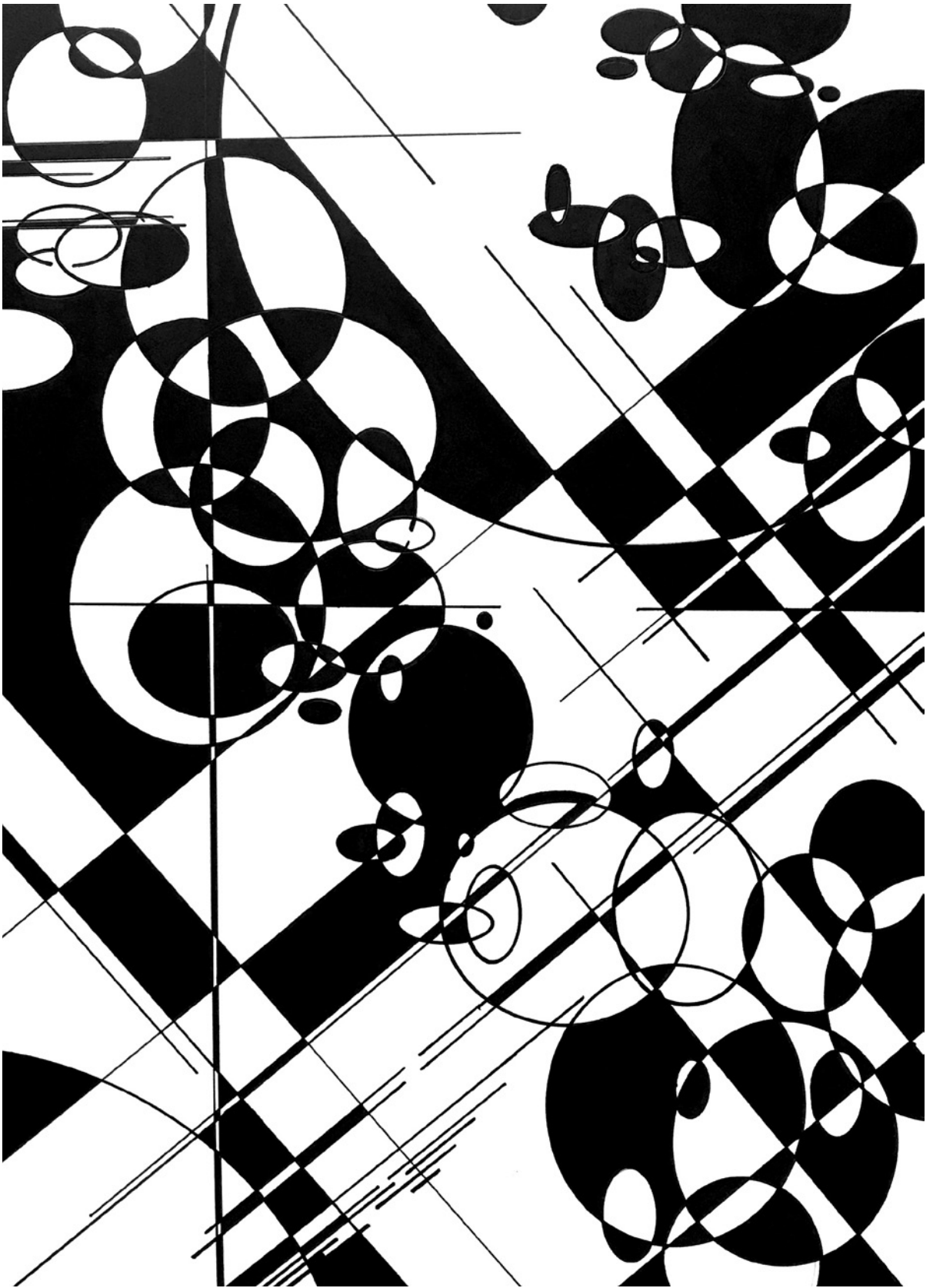
## Artists

- |                                  |  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Rebekah Ballmes – page 35        | Kathy Gibson – page 15, 38                         | Abby Nisley – page 34            |
| Blake Bolton – pages 21, 29      | Gary Gudes – page 17                               | Kimberly Okler – page 25         |
| Susan Chinavare – page 6         | Ramona Hoefer – pages 5, 20                        | Aurora Reynolds – page 35        |
| Cassy Fallon – page 1, 11        | Raven Hoskins – page 39                            | Brandon Szpargowski – back cover |
| Jacqueline Foshag – pages 12, 24 | Elliot Hurley – front cover, pages 12, 16, 17, 22, | Rose Tibai – pages 14, 34        |
| Bethany Fultz – page 16          | Julius Krause – page 28                            | Jessica Trumball – page 29       |
| Thomas Gerweck – page 28         | Katherine Mahn – page 1                            | Caleb Turner – page 6            |
| Emily Gibson – page 1            | Shayna Montri – acknowledgments page               | Susan Westerdale – page 24       |



- Untitled
- Drawing II
- Raven Hoskins





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