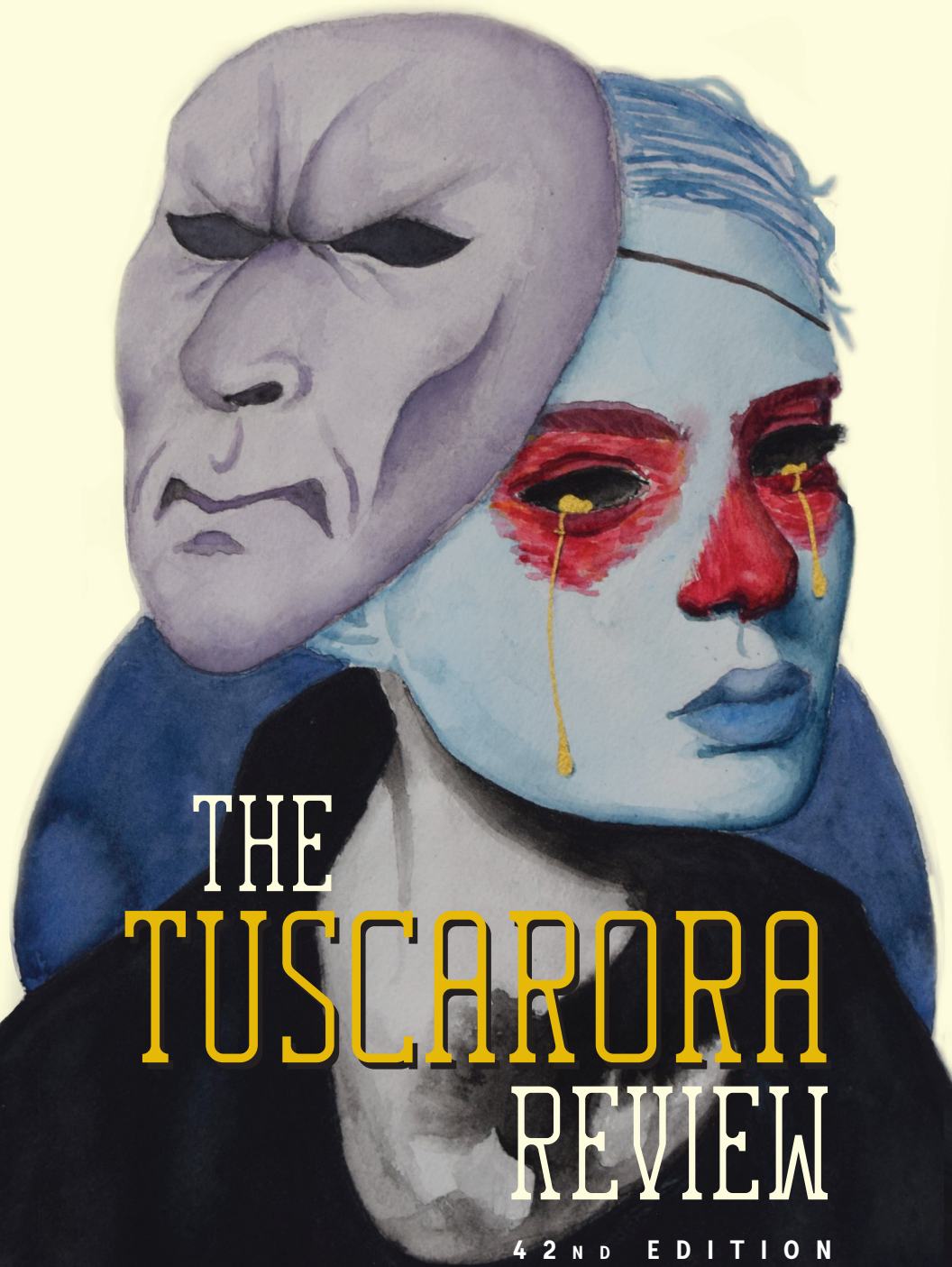


A FREDERICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAGAZINE OF THE CREATIVE ARTS



THE
TUSCARORA
REVIEW

42ND EDITION

Mission Statement

The mission of the Frederick Community College magazine of the creative arts, *Tuscarora Review*, is to provide an annual showcase for the outstanding literary and visual art created by the College community.

Submission information for the 2023 edition is available at: www.frederick.edu/tuscarorareview.

Pictured on the front cover:

SELF PORTRAIT, ALTER EGO

Yasmeen Diawara

Watercolor

The *Tuscarora Review*

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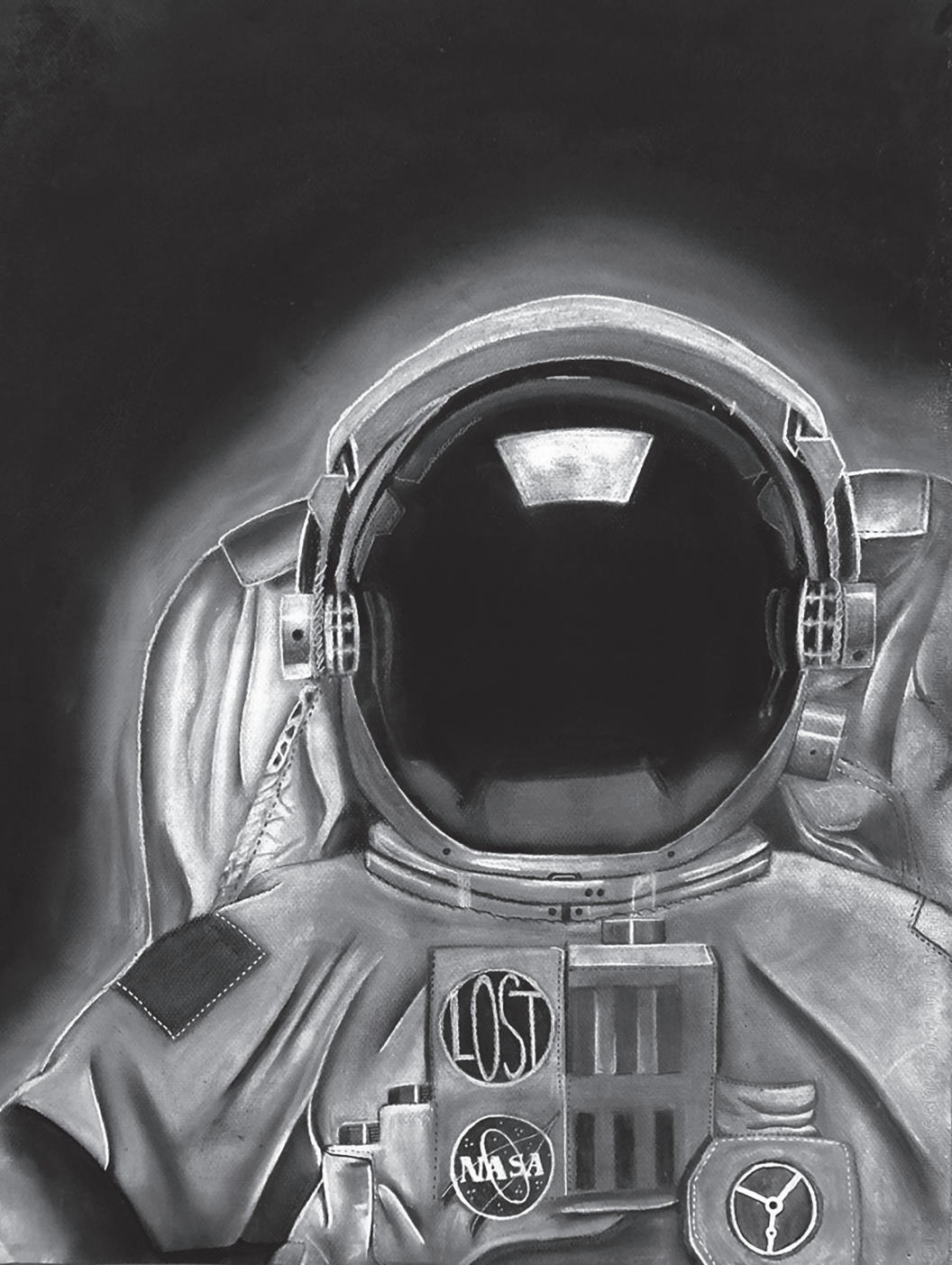
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ENTERING THE FOREST OF SOULS **Daphne Scimone**

Digital



LOST **Gemma Carioti**

Pastel

Dedication

“It is, after all, not necessary to fly right into the middle of the sun, but it is necessary to crawl to a clean little spot on earth where the sun sometimes shines and one can warm oneself a little.”

— **Franz Kafka** (*Letter to His Father*)

The experience of mental illness is one of life’s great complexities. Hundreds of thousands of people suffer, and yet to speak about one’s mental illness or disorder is still incredibly stigmatized. Many pride themselves on knowing the symptomology and yet don’t know how those same symptoms truly play out in a person’s life. When reviewing work, we noticed a theme of pieces forged under the strain of different mental illnesses or challenges to wellbeing. In this edition of *Tuscarora Review*, we decided to showcase the complexity of mental illness by highlighting pieces that showed both the universal experience and the unique perspective of stories to be considered.

For the suffering, lonely, sad, anguished or grieving, we seek to bear witness to your experience.

For the depressed, anxious, bipolar, disassociative, schizophrenic, obsessive compulsive, and for those with post traumatic stress disorder and other disorders named and unnamed, we empathize with you.

For those who are kind without expectation, those who advocate, those who share their art, and those who provide care for the ongoing fight for mental health, we thank you.

For everyone who has been impacted by the mental health crisis, we hope these works reflect your stories and give you space to share your own. ■



PLS NO TOUCH **Grey Simmons**

Acrylic

A Letter From the Editor

There is a lot to be said about the *Tuscarora Review*. It has connected generations of FCC students, faculty, alumni, and community members for forty-one years. It belongs to all of us; it immortalizes our stories, and it speaks to the diversity of the human experience. Some say that “there is nothing new under the sun,” but the *Tuscarora Review* constantly proves that there is a rich well of new stories to be shared. In this year’s edition, our goal was to amplify the voices of those often pushed aside.

This year, we were honored to receive a plethora of high quality submissions. If your work is not reflected in the publication, I can almost guarantee you it’s hanging on one of our walls or hiding in a notebook to be read again. We commend your brilliant work and thank you for sharing a piece of yourself with us so courageously!

This edition would not have been possible without an amazing team of people. Firstly, I want to thank Professor Magin Lasov Gregg. Thank you for trusting me with the enormous role of being the editor-in-chief. Your unyielding support, guidance, and knowledge has been paramount in both my growth as a writer and as a person.

To my art director Eileene, thank you for connecting me with Michelle Wichman so we could shine light on her program and its students. Thank you for your artistic eye and showing us how to evaluate artwork. Your deep love of education inspires us all!

To my copy editor Lynne, thank you for constantly correcting my abhorrent lack of commas, for painstakingly editing the publication, and for providing such rich detail into graphic design. Your skill impresses me daily, and I am a better writer because of you.

As we look to the future, we hope to spread awareness of what this publication means and why it is so important to FCC. We also hope to continuously push ourselves to the highest standard of integrity—to be true to who and what this publication represents. Every story is valuable and worth telling, no matter how long it takes for it to see the light of day.

We proudly pass off the forty-second edition of the *Tuscarora Review* to you, enjoy!

—Katherine Weinhold, *Editor-in-Chief*

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Colophon

The magazine cover is printed on 80 pound Endurance Gloss Cover, the four color inner pages are printed on 70 pound Endurance Gloss, and the inner pages are printed on 60 pound Finch 94 Smooth White Offset. The fonts used are Open Type—Andes Family, Andes Condensed Family, PostScript—Berkeley Oldstyle Family, Open Type—Rustica Slab Regular, True Type—Wingdings.



GAMING CHARACTER **Leticia Parada**

Digital

The Power of Comic Books

BY MICHEAL HUNT

Most adults have memories of parents reading classic books to them at bedtime such as *The Gingerbread Man* or *The Hungry Caterpillar*. However, that was not my introduction to reading. I was more interested in the web slinging superhero swinging his way through New York's crowded streets. I saw Spiderman and knew that comic books were more my reading style than boring traditional children's books. The vibrant illustrations and heroic characters were enough to hook me from the early age of four and have not lost their appeal twenty something years later. I was engrossed in the heroes' and villains' rivalries and was always cheering on my favorite protagonists to come out on top and teach the bad guys a valuable lesson.

At four-years-old, I could not read books on my own and my mother was working fulltime to provide a life for myself and my sister, so she did not have the time to read to us. I did not have a huge interest in reading until that Spiderman comic ended up in my little hands, opening a love for reading I would not soon forget. It was so easy to understand even without being able to read it word for word. I knew the action that was being portrayed on the pages in front of me. The way he leaped between buildings and slung his web at the villains, trapping them to the nearest structure, made me want to get my hands on more and more comics.

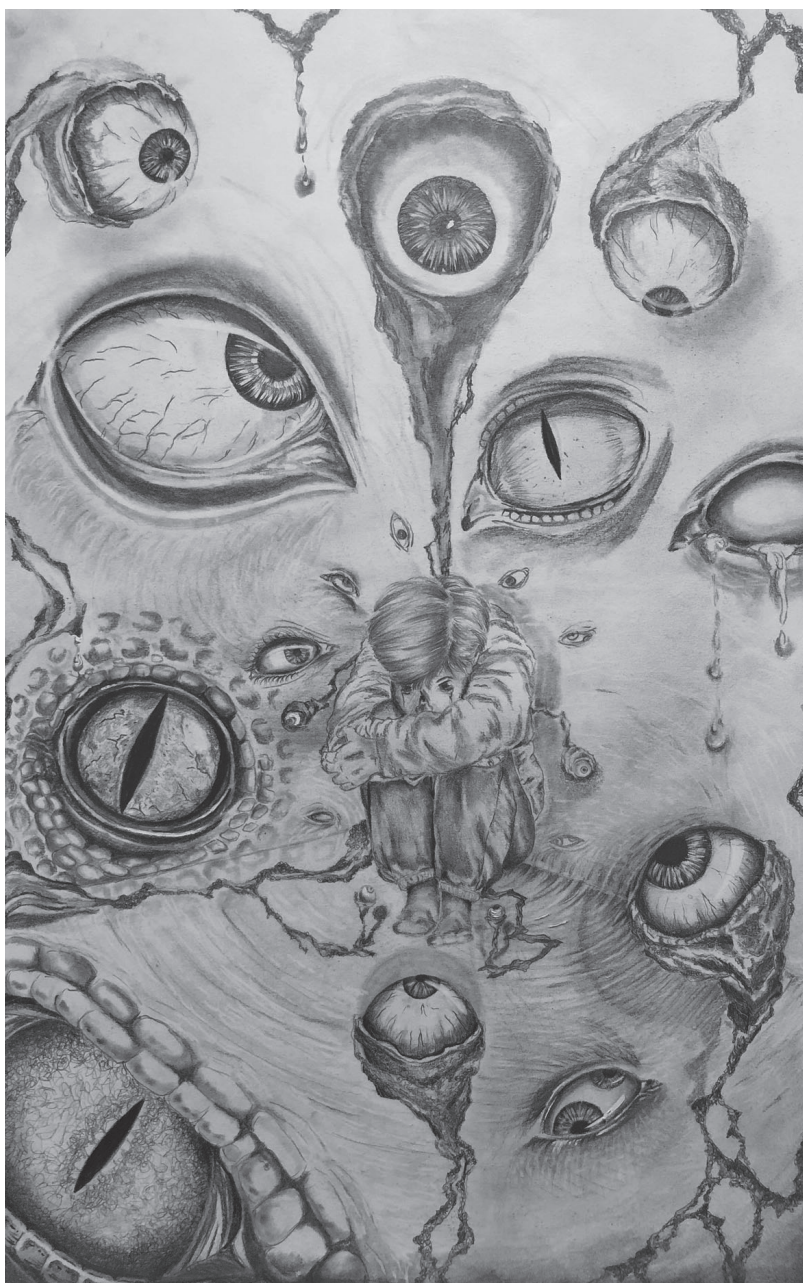
The thought and time put into creating a comic was not lost on me. I even tried my hand at writing my own comic, *Reign*. I was only eleven or twelve when I decided to create *Reign*, so it was obviously not Stan Lee quality, but I put a lot of thought and energy into this character. He was pushed into a vat of water by the school bully, was resuscitated, and unknowingly acquired the superpower to control water. With a wave of his hand he could wipe out an entire block with a sudden flash flood, taking out his nemesis in the process. I was not one to write without it being for a grade, so I was surprised to catch myself reading and writing all because of a comic book years prior to this attempt to author my own

comic. Unfortunately, I discovered a character with the same name and concept already existed when I played *Mortal Kombat* with a friend, but I still think I did an exceptional job for how young I was!

When I was a teenager, I noticed the movies I saw, books I read, and video games I played with my buddies somehow all seemed to relate to mythological gods and goddesses. Taking the information I learned in class, I began to wonder if the characters I grew up loving were largely based on Greek mythology. I was surprised to learn that many of them were, in fact, made in the likeness of the mythological beings I was learning about. With that information, I decided to start learning more about the gods and goddesses and how they were later portrayed by someone else centuries later. I was fascinated by how Aquaman and Poseidon were as much alike as Wonder Woman and Hera. I had no idea that comics would lead to a new appreciation for Greek mythology.

Not only did comics help to improve my reading skills and knowledge about Greek Mythology, but they also had a profound effect on my personal life. When I met a girl who was interested in sitting in the apartment and watching all of the Avengers movies with me, I knew that there could possibly be a future here. Seven years and two kids later, I am married to that woman and have weekly family dinners watching the newest episode of *WandaVision*. I was not expecting something as small as a fondness for comic books and superheroes to become a bonding experience in my marriage. We have a large collection of DVDs and can always pull one out for an impromptu date night inside. My daughter is even partially named after an object in the first Thor movie, and she chose to name her cats after *Guardian of the Galaxy* characters. The family I created is just as engrossed with comic book characters as I am.

Looking back at that four-year-old boy flipping through the pages of a Spiderman comic book, it is unbelievable to see the grown man I am today calling my daughter's name and being reminded of that little kid. I can not see an end to my love for comic books, movies, games, or knowledge I have gained from those interests. I had no idea something as simple as a book filled with colors and sound effect words would end up influencing so much of my life. I am forever thankful that four-year-old me chose to look at comic books. I would not have had many of the bonding experiences that I have had today if it were not for his making that choice. ■



FEAR OF EYES **Leticia Parada**

Graphite



BEAST **Victoria Garofolo**

Pen & Ink

Hand-Me-Downs

OLIVIA WILHIDE

My feet shot across the pavement, propelling me forward with a force I never knew I had. I ran so hard. I felt as though the ground might break beneath me. I wasn't sure if my goosebumps were from the frigid air of that April night or the horror of what I'd just seen. Darting between streets, I leapt over stout shrubs just as my brother jumped hurdles at his varsity track meets. I wondered what his mile time was these days. I ran past the library where I used to spend days curled up in a corner, immersed in novels the size of my torso. Nothing I read could have prepared me for this. As I rounded the corner towards the ancient post office, I noticed something breaking the silence that lingered throughout the streets, footsteps.

Except they were not made by my hand-me-down lace up sneakers. They were footsteps that slapped against the pavement.

They were undoubtedly connected to a big, slimy body. They were after something they intended to catch. They were footsteps that were hunting. I buckled down and increased my speed, zooming past the school, the Lutheran church, and Mr. Manley's Plus Size Boutique that was one bad month away from going bankrupt. I quickly changed tracks and juttet myself down Milton Road.

Keene Park was murky and decrepit, but I could hide here. I slowed my pace as I trudged along the gravel path lined with dying lampposts. Usually, I avoided this part of town. The park is known for housing lost souls who bore lacerations and bruises as battle scars of addiction. When I was younger, my brother would take me here to play by the river, a secret we kept from my mother. I no longer heard the slapping footsteps, so I huddled behind a patch of unkempt brush.

I've lived in Crane for my entire fifteen years of life. In the nineteenth century this town flourished as the home of a popular textile manufacturing plant. The Connecticut River that flowed through it made a great trade route and the town thrived. Now in the twenty-first century, the town was anything but established. The river flooded in 1983, leaving many home-

less and jobless. Most never recovered. Now the abandoned factories produce nothing besides degenerate teens, loitering within them and painting graffiti on their walls. It seemed a new shop was boarded up every week—shopkeepers unable to market to the dwindling population.

I laid in the cover of the shrubs for some time, exasperated, confused, and disturbed. Images of the ghoulish creature frolicked in my head with its wet scaly skin and dead black eyes. As gruesome as the creature was, its voice was what pricked the blonde hair on my arms to a point.

I was snapped out of my nightmarish visions by the sound of weight crunching into earth. Urgency plummeted into my consciousness. If I was quick, I could slide down the west hill and plop myself alongside the river where there was a small dirt path that led back to Main Street. It was about a twenty-foot distance to cover and I would have to expose myself. Quickly and without thinking, I hurled myself out of the bushes and towards the plummeting hill.

The slapping footsteps followed in pursuit. I flung my body down the incline. My feet thudded into the ground with a crunch followed by a surging pain that sprouted from my right ankle. I had almost certainly damaged it. I couldn't see where I was but the sound of the gushing river told me I was where I needed to be. Before I could tend to my wound, I heard the scrape of scales against dirt.

When I glanced back my eyes adjusted enough to see a large dark lump gliding down the hill behind me. I turned to run, but the pulsing pain in my ankle didn't let me get far before I collapsed into the thick mud. The creature landed with a thud and stalked towards me. Standing at least seven feet tall, it towered over my crippled body, surveying my limitations.

It was then that the creature spoke in its distorted, yet hauntingly familiar voice. "Geez, you almost outran me there, little brother! You sure you aren't gonna sign up for track next year? Continue my legacy?"

"You're not my brother. You're not James." My voice shuddered with my body as I spoke.

"Hey now, I'm still James! I'm just a little different now. Soon you will be too," He said with a wink. The smell of sulfur began to invade my nose. "It's better this way. I even got my mile time down to five minutes, six seconds. Pretty impressive, huh?"

"What happened to you?" I tried to slide myself back, but pain shot up through my ankle again.

“Well, you see it’s a family thing. Skips a generation so Pops doesn’t have it...but you and I got lucky.” His mouth expanded to a grin, revealing his sharp yellow teeth. “We always grew up hating this town, but now I see it’s actually a place of opportunity. You’re still growing up Jack, and you have a few more years to go before you reach maturity like me.”

I noticed a spotlight dancing over the hill with a herd of voices behind it. “They’re coming for you James. Maybe we can find you a doctor or a scientist or, or *something* and they can...” My negotiations were cut short by an agitated gurgling that bubbled from James’ throat. He gave me a knowing smirk and offered me his favorite brotherly line.

“You’ll understand when you’re older.” It was then that the monster threw himself into the black river, plunging deep into the vast expanse of water.



Now on my eighteenth birthday, I sit on the bank of that same murky river. It’s been four years since and I’ve still not seen James. I’ve tried to forget him and what happened that night, but I can’t help but think of my brother, as I pick those familiar green scales from my own skin. ■



BEAST **Miranda Pallindo**

Pen & Ink

Mona

OLIVIA WILHIDE

Mona calculated her breath just as Dr. Fultz had taught her. Inhale for five. *Exhale for five. Repeat until panic fades.* The evening dwindled as she pushed the faded green shopping cart along the neat aisles of the grocery. She had been in the store not ten minutes and already found her hand in her purse, her fingers instinctively across the glossy prescription bottle of Valium. It would have been longer if that man at the deli counter hadn't been staring at her. Mona closed her eyes, took two more deep breaths, and retracted her hand from the bag with reluctance. She promised Dr. Fultz she would try to go out in public at least once this week, and only use the blue pills for emergencies.

Mona was a petite woman. She wore a pale, bare face framed by a mousey head of hair with more scraggly grays than other women in their thirties. Mona had been avoiding the grocery. She had also been avoiding the doctor's office, the mechanic, the laundromat, and her best friend's thirty-fifth birthday party. However, she had been running precariously low on food and the thought of yet another peanut butter sandwich for dinner sent her gut turning. So yes, the groceries needed to be bought. Mona had calculated many routes around her agoraphobia, and late-night shopping was one she knew well.

Mona walked down the dairy aisle in search of her favorite soy milk. She stepped only on the black tiles that checkered the floor and counted them as she went. Her ritual was suddenly cut short by the shrill whines of a child. A tired mother was standing with a manic little boy. She was critically reviewing the ingredients of a colorful cereal he'd retrieved. The duo was situated right in front of the only soy milk the grocery carried, the only kind Mona's lactose intolerant body could handle.

Mona hesitated by the French cheeses and tried to give the impression she was examining their prospect. She flexed her hands open and closed, retaliating against the familiar tingling sensation spreading throughout them. Her throat began to tighten. She tugged the neck of her scratchy

sweater, swallowing hard. Mona knew her fears were irrational but she couldn't shake the panic. With her eyes cemented to the tiles, she continued forward to the milk. Inhale for five. *Exhale for five. Repeat until panic fades.* Now only steps from the mother and child, Mona's feet struggled to complete their steps. Her blood steamed and her skin tightened. Turning around was an option, but she couldn't take another morning of milkless, bitter coffee.

With one final repetition of breathing, Mona quickened her pace and charged the bright, white shelves. "Excuse— excuse me..." She muttered to the woman.

"Hm? Oh, pardon us." The mother shuffled her son on to the next aisle, barely taking her eyes from the cereal box she was scrutinizing. The boy offered Mona a cautious look before following his mother's direction. Mona quickly grabbed a carton of soy milk and tucked it in her cart amongst fresh garlic, organic eggs and her favorite white macadamia nut cookies. She smiled as she did this, her neat grocery list now had perfectly straight lines through every item. She held her tingling hands firmly on the plastic handle of the cart and rehearsed the lines she would say to the cashier. *Hello. I'm well, thank you. No, I do not have a rewards card. Yes, I will be charging credit. Thank you, you too.*

Filing into the checkout line, Mona's focus gravitated towards the girl in line ahead of her. An attractive young woman with long dark hair, held in a perfect wave. She wore a dress that Mona's father would never have let her wear at that age. The girl paid Mona no mind, not even a glance over her shoulder. It was better that way. She probably would've thought Mona looked foolish with her disheveled French twist and dated leather boots. The girl presented the clerk with a magazine featuring another attractive young girl and "10 Tips to Win Him Back." Mona smoothed the scraggly hairs behind her ears.

Mona placed each item onto the circulating belt as she fantasized about being the brown haired girl. She imagined all the parties she would attend, all the men she would date. There was an abrupt tap on her shoulder. Whipping her head to the left, she saw that a lanky man had joined in line behind her.

"Hey, mind if I grab a pack of gum?" He asked, motioning to the colorful packs on the shelf to the rear of her. It felt like the air had been sucked from her lungs. Her face cemented into a wide eyed stare and unable to find the words, she shifted her stiff body forward as the man reached around her for a pack of spearmint gum. Inhale for five. *Exhale for five. Repeat until panic fades.* As her body temperature rose, she returned her

now numb hand to her purse, this time enlisting her second hand to open the bottle's lid.

Before she could regain composure, she was up next in line. Dropping the retrieved pill back into her purse, she felt the self-doubt pile in her brain. Her items were rung up one by one, confirmed by a beep with each scan.

"Your total is \$55.67." The cashier said. Mona fumbled through her purse for her wallet. As she pulled it from her bag, the wallet slipped from her grasp and fell with a thud onto the floor. Bending down to get it, Mona felt the weight of tears in her eyes.

Inhale for five. Exhale for five. Repeat until panic fades. Except now Mona's counts of five quickened, her breath began to hitch as the tingling sensation spread through her legs. Turning back to the clerk, she jiggled her bank card out of the wallet, avoiding eye contact and furrowing her brow so that no tears could escape. The pubescent boy completed the transaction, seeming to take no notice of her shaking hands and deteriorating composure. She could feel the man behind her staring.

"Thank you for shopping with us ma'am." The boy recited.

"You too," Mona replied. "I-I mean, um, thank you." Mona always said the wrong thing. Frantically grabbing the loaded bags, tears began to flow. She situated the groceries into one arm and quickly pivoted towards the exit. Mona's free hand sifted wildly through her purse as she exited the automatic sliding doors.

As she extracted the plastic bottle, the lid released itself and an explosion of pills littered the parking lot like confetti. Mona's tears now turned to heavy sobs as she helplessly watched all but one roll downward into a murky puddle of rainwater. Mona looked at the last remaining pill, and hiked her bags up on her hip. What a catastrophe, just for a simple grocery trip. ■



RISE **Daphne Scimone**

Graphite

The Matriarch

JOSEPHINE RENN

We stand beneath the open sky as the pastor commences his eulogy. God begins to cry. His tears flow through the clouds and shower us with melancholy. The pastor tells tales of our great grandmother in youth and in happiness, but I focus on the approaching thunder more than his words. In the distance is an oak tree on the side of the cemetery path. Its branches sweep above the darkened gravel and embrace all who walk beneath it in shadow. My great grandmother had a tree like that in her backyard. I used to climb it when I was little, scraping my knees bloodied and raw in the process. I won't be able to see that tree again. The land will be gone soon, the farms sold off to the city. One day I'll see her again, in the kingdom of the Lord. But that tree will wither and die without a resting place beyond the pearly gates. Hot tears well in my eyes and I absorb the scene around me; my dad is crying openly and my mother is staring at her black shoes. In my arms, my baby is resting against my bosom, whining but unaware that she lost her great great grandmother last week. My cousin is fiddling nervously with the strap of her funeral dress. Her silent tears disappear into the earth. My aunts are wailing as they stare emptily at the casket of their grandmother. My grandmother is clutching my grandfather as distant relatives place wilted white roses on his mother's coffin.

Generations weep in unison for the loss of the matriarch. ■



LULL **Grace Turner**

Pastel

Night Ride

FIONA MCKEE

I ride alone in the murky light of late evening, gliding along behind the pool of illumination my industrial-strength headlight casts. The sun has long since set, leaving little but a blood red glow half hidden by tree silhouettes at the edge of the horizon. Everything around me is enveloped in milky garnet darkness.

There are no sounds except the harsh rush of wind past my face. There is no last shushing of crickets, no final *zub-zub* of cicadas. They've been gone for weeks now. It's the time of year when it's just too chilly for insects to stay out, when birds are on the brink of migration. It's too late for most people to be out, too late for cars. Days are for knitted sweaters and cozy old sweatpants. Today is odd, though. One of those days where it's just a little too warm and hazy for late October, where you can race the wind on your bike with only a light jacket.

I ride lanes I've walked countless times over the years, going uphill and turning left at the stop sign, cutting through the night as I spin onto Redden Lane. I turn my head to the side, so the wind stops singing in my ears for a minute, and listen instead to my bike rolling smoothly across the macadam. The sound is familiar, a comforting whir of rubber against pavement. The bright circle of my headlight dances along next to me, across driveways and perfect green lawns and manicured gardens with neat rows of bushy plants. Those plants bloom in the summer. Only leaves remain now.

My headlight usually splices through the darkness like a knife, but tonight it seems muted. I study the light as I ride, watching it rush through the air before it hits the road and grass and trees. The circular pool of light is rough around the edges, blurring where it should be sharp. Maybe it's foggy, though it wasn't just a few minutes earlier. There's an odd quality to those things at the edges of my vision, everything a tone softer, like looking through an uneven pane of glass. When I turn, my headlight ruins the effect and everything turns harshly bright.

My bike glides downhill, less silent now that I'm not pedaling it. The wheels turn, click click click click, as they carry me down the road. The comforting sound is nearly drowned out by the wind roaring in my ears. I pass houses with strings of lights wrapped around trees and porch railings. With Halloween in three days, decorations have materialized. Little candles glow in the windows—electric lanterns with orange plastic flames.

It's dark enough now that I slow down hard before I turn onto Palo Road, its presence indicated by the crimson stop sign beaming back at me in reflected light. The street is dark, no windows glowing. I wonder where the people are. No one sleeps at seven in the evening. Maybe they're all out. Probably not.

The night is too warm and too quiet. The fog turns a familiar landscape into something odd and alien. I glimpse a lonely house light, a set of orange lanterns flickering like flames, and suddenly think of the winter holiday season, the lights people put up. The air smells like woodsmoke, a scent that usually reminds me of bright fall leaves and hot chocolate. In the murky night, though, it is ominous. Riding alone in the almost-dark, I'm reminded of an apocalyptic Christmas. Too warm for December, too foggy, but with lights and fires ready. ■



SELF PORTRAIT **Sara Hartfiel-Carr**

Watercolor



LITTLE THINGS **Gloria Mondo**

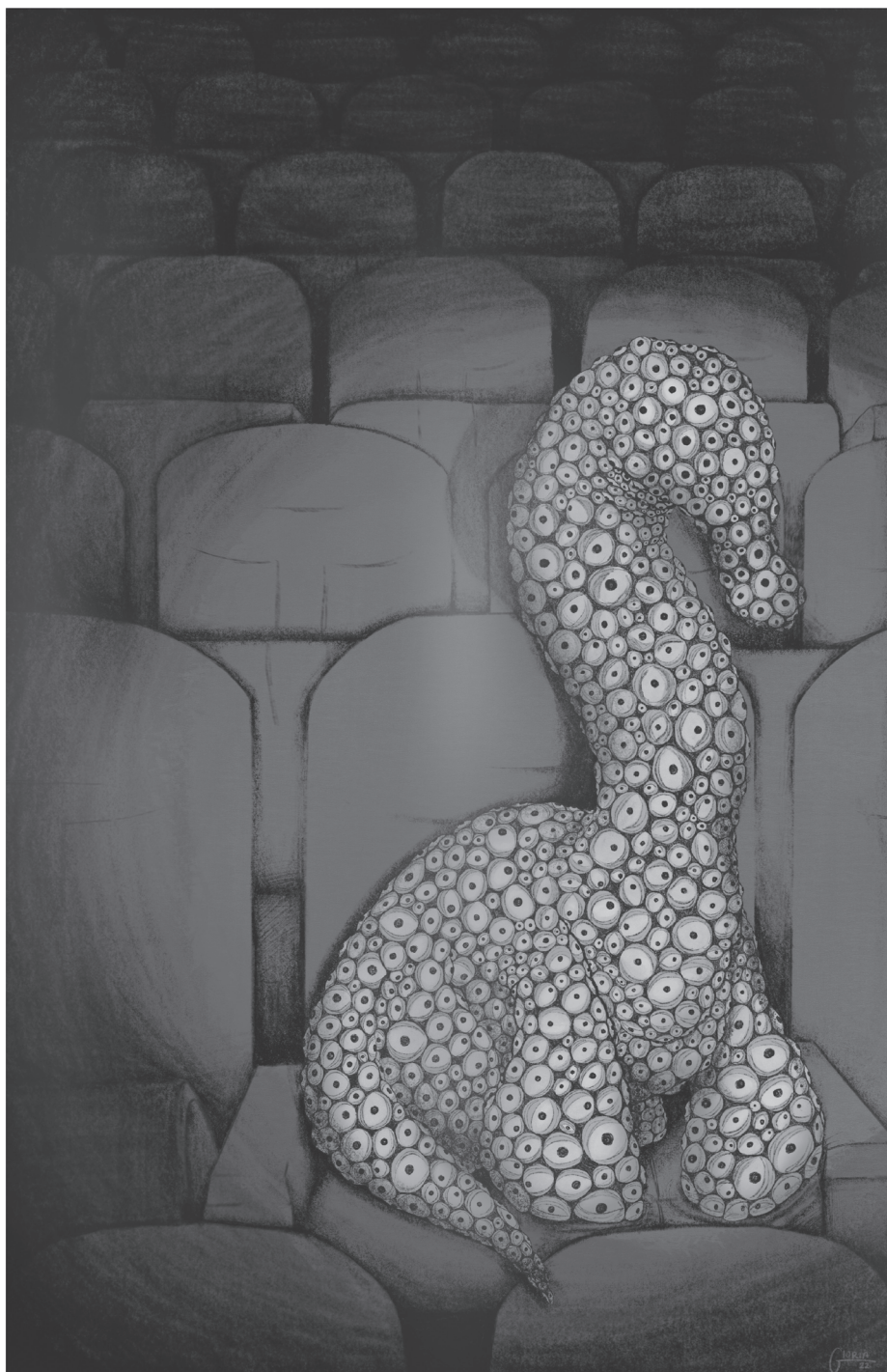
Colored Pencil





SPOONS & TINES **Daphne Scimone**

Acrylic



OMMETAPHOBIA **Gloria Mondo**

Digital



NARRATIVE **Yaretzi Velasco Lopez**

Graphite

The Form

THOMAS CAMPBELL

Name

Can we start with an easier question?

Date of Birth

I was born on April 29th. A million years ago. At least it feels like it. I'm a Taurus. I don't know if I really even believe in zodiac signs but I heard Tauruses are supposed to be stubborn, and that makes sense. It was cold the day I was born. It snowed the night before, which was rare for April, and there was black ice on the roads. My mother had to walk to the hospital. Walk. Imagine being in labor and having to walk to the nearest hospital just to be in labor for eight more hours. Brutal.

Marital Status

Please. I don't think I'd be here if I were married.

Address

Well, I feel like I'm living in hell.

Occupation

Currently? Nothing. I was a waitress for a little bit, but it turns out that trays are heavy and I can't tolerate people for more than an hour. I wish I could say I made a huge scene with a very passionate speech about chasing your dreams and demanding respect and then quit on the spot. Instead, I got fired for dropping trays on a customer. I was also a receptionist at a tanning salon. I was supposed to get really pale women to buy really expensive tanning packages. However, after dozens of incredibly rude customers I was ready to quit, but I got fired for a low number of sales. Apparently I'm not that personable. Then I was a student aid and that didn't do me any good. In fact, it cost me money.

How Did You Hear About Us

It's kind of one of those things you just know. Like the change of seasons...or Hiroshima.

First Day of Last Normal Menstrual Period

I don't remember the specific date but it was about seven breakdowns ago.

Was Your Last Period Normal

Yes. It was uncomfortable, draining, and an overall miserable experience, but at least it came.

Pregnancy History

There is no pregnancy history and hopefully no pregnancy future either.

Which Birth Control Method Are You Currently Using

Not a reliable one, that's for sure. I was on the pill but I kept breaking out, so I stopped taking it. I guess I thought condoms would be enough because they prevent pregnancies and STDs. That sounds like a win-win. But if there isn't one around, what do you do? Stop? I mean that's the mature thing to do, but it's very easy for passion to overthrow maturity. Passion usually wins. Maturity is for after sex when you have to pick up the pieces by yourself.

Person Responsible for Bill

That would be me. I'm taking responsibility for it all. One woman taking full responsibility for two people's mistakes.

Person to Contact in Case of Emergency

Oh. Mom, I guess.

Does This Person Know About Your Abortion

No.

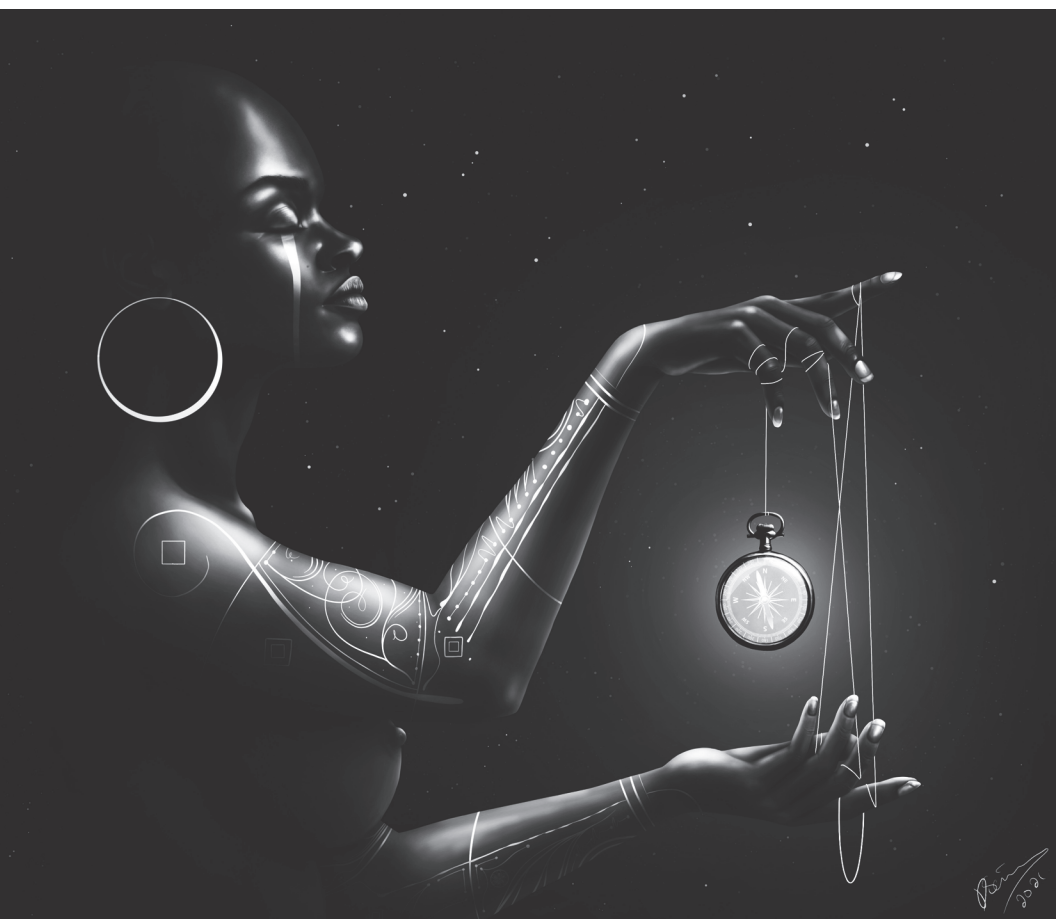
My mother is a very complicated woman. She got married right out of high school and just like that she was knocked up. She used to dance but never became a dancer. She was president of the visual arts club but never became an artist. She decided there were things in life more important than a fulfilling career. Husband. Kids. House in the suburbs. Gardening. Christmas decorations. Golf. Home cooked meals. Coasters. *The Tonight Show*. Clean floors. Grandkids someday. Not today, but someday. And maybe I even appreciated that when I was younger. Then I grew up and

I pitied her. When she was my age she was raising a child. If I had this kid, I'd be just like my mom. But once, during an argument when I was sixteen, I declared with my outside voice that I would never end up like her. That's the main reason I went to college. It's not the best reason to get an education, but it worked. And what's the alternative? Have a child? Just because you get knocked up at twenty doesn't mean you have to give up your education, but how would that work? I haven't even had this kid and already I'm inconvenienced. I'm missing an exam today because I'll be too busy getting an abortion. Does Planned Parenthood write sick notes?

So no, my mother doesn't know I'm here. To be honest, if things really do go awry today the last thing I'll need is another lecture from her. I can hear her now. Screaming at me about how I'm flushing my life down the toilet. It cost her and Dad so much money to put me in college and this is what I was doing with my extra time? Can I really be this irresponsible? I can't even handle a student aid job without finding some way to get into trouble. I can't take anything seriously. Not my education. Not my work. Not my relationships. What am I gonna do, sleep my way through life? I really can't tell which one of us is right here. Am I in the process of throwing my life away or was she the one that discarded her own life along with her paintbrushes and ballet shoes?

Have You Thought About Your Other Options Thoroughly

What other option? Husband? Kids? House in the suburbs? No. Being maternal is not hereditary. ■



ZEN **Daphne Scimone**

Digital

Rags

LYNNE REGULES

She wishes to be twenty women at once. Much work is to be done, about the laundry, about the rags, about the children. She folds each shirt with straight creases and handles them so carefully it seems she's worried the fibers will decompose in her hands. Chicken dinner sits frozen stiff in the fridge. It is dark, but it is not quiet. Children run around the house like beetles. Looping music from the grocery store buzzes in her head. She worries she'll dream of stocking shelves again.

When she sleeps, she dreams of paper blue landscapes and galloping deer. Men with spotted white horses travel over vast plains to cities that spring from the ground like pillars of salt. A grand ceremony awaits. She is twenty women at once, with twenty bodies in gilt gold dresses and forty hands and tens of silken tapestries to attend to. She can do it all, she can move and she can lay them down in one flat stack which she places on her head to be carried across the hall. Children flutter around her like greyhounds and heed her commands when she asks for quiet.

The groin vaulting of the dining hall is lofty and new light pools on black tile. She rolls out a single powder green runner across an infinitely long dining table. Another self catches the runner and adjusts it, while a third sweeps around the table and places down ceramic plates and silver forks. Crystal glasses, heavy blue napkins, lush flower arrangements are all set in place with a flurry of sweeping gold skirts. Bread and fruit and rosemary chicken thighs are brought out on platters the size of the moon. She sits down at one of the peripheral seats around the table, while her other selves welcome hungry travelers.

Glasses clink and her dress is made of the heaviest silk in the room. "The food is wonderful.

They talk of the most important things, the most pertinent topics, and she knows exactly what to say.

"More water, more wine please."

Her children sit quietly beside her, chewing their chicken with their mouths closed and placing their napkins on their laps.

“How did you manage all of this?”

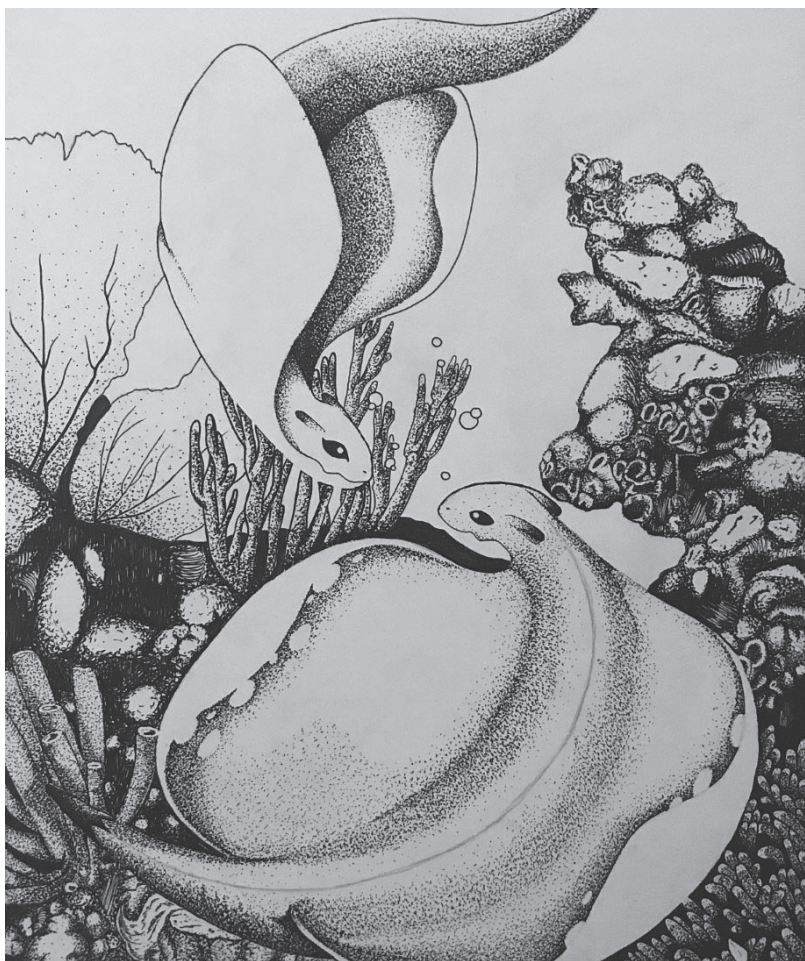
One self comes up and taps her on the shoulder. She turns and glasses shatter.

She wakes up with one body and two hands and no gilt gold dresses. A pile of youth size cotton t-shirts lay in a basket on the floor. Outside, dogs bark and cicadas buzz. ■



PLAIN **Alvaro Negrete**

Colored Pencil



BEAST **Alvaro Negrete**

Pen & Ink

Water Stains

EILEENE ZIMMER

It has been hanging above the keyboard,
the painting, rather a print of the painting,
ever since I moved into this house.
This is the eighth house it has hung in,
the first was in the house in Etna.
But I don't look at it often; it is just there, like a piece of furniture
to be noticed when needed
or just in passing,
sometimes when playing the keyboard.
But today I paused and saw it,
the three young boys walking through a meadow,
faces indiscernible,
backs to the viewer,
each wearing a hat.
Again, reminding me of my boys when they were young
and we lived on the farm,
before we moved to Etna,
with the chickens and goats,
barn loft for playing,
and fields to walk through.
Then I noticed the water stains all over the matting.
I was angry when they first appeared.
It was in the house in Etna,
that converted carriage house
with easy access upstairs and down,
inside and out,
for boys to run through
and have water fights.

Those water fights were forbidden but I could never stop them
I had yet to arrive from work
they were careful about that,
just the consequences—
 water bottle on stream,
 water dripping from walls,
 and those water stains.
When I took the print to be matted and framed,
I was advised not to put it behind glass
 as I had those boys at home
 and the glass could get broken
 what with brotherly shoving,
 throwing of balls and other things,
 general clumsiness.
Yes, I had those boys at home and now a matted print
without glass,
but with water stains. ■



ALONE **Miranda Pallindo**

Watercolor

white walls, white curtains

BY FIONA MCKEE

white walls, white curtains
look for the door to go home
don't
find it
the people wear faces that change
do i know you? no i don't
i can't find my glasses
i want to see my children
you did, they say, you did
no i didn't
old bouquets in vases wilted lilies and gladiolus
it is all the same here, the chrysanthemums keep standing
where are my glasses?
a person visits me today
he says he is my son but he is not
i do not know this person
who has tears in his eyes
i talk to the other people here
we talk about the show that's on the television
we talk about –
then we do not talk
what were we doing?
they tell me i live here
but i do not know where i am
i do not know who they are
i do not know why i am standing in the hallway
they hand me my glasses
say they found them
in the bathroom
white walls, white curtains
look for the door to go home
don't
find it ■



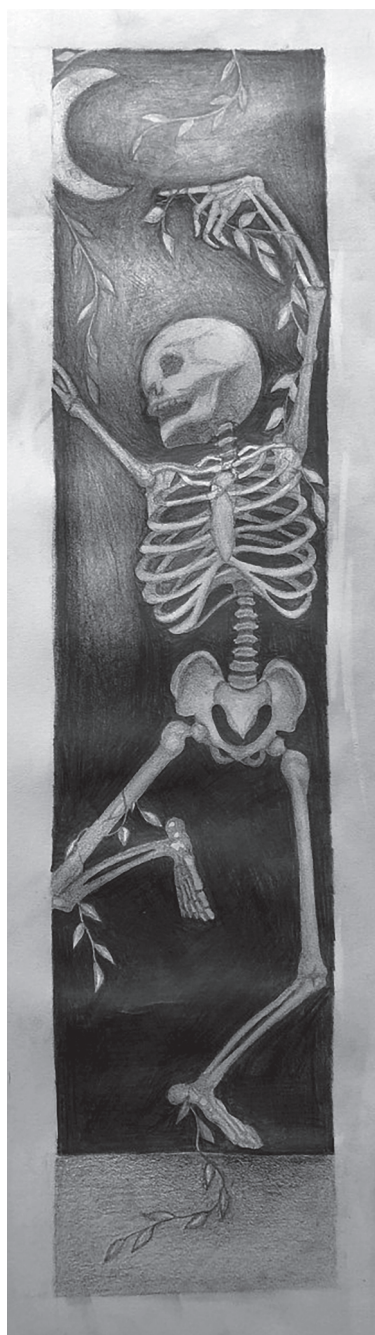
SNUFFING OUT THE LIGHT **Daphne Scimone**

Charcoal

Consuming Fire

BY KAITLIN WACHTER

Her hand grasps steel,
Steel strikes flint—
The spark awakens
Then sputters, lacking fuel
Tinder, dry, held in reserve, is slowly swallowed
Stoking, growing light.
Her soft breath encourages the flicker
To flourish
To trace the paper
Takes patience.
But it's heavily rewarded with a spreading tongue of flame,
Dancing
On the perilously thin edge of kindling.
Bark, brushed by flame
Peeling, curling into itself
Splitting, leaving open to air the vulnerable skin,
White with verdant tinges.
The blaze, no pity shown
Consuming, in tiny bites
The logs placed across,
Pinning down the kindling, shuddering—
Soon the air is crackling with overwhelming heat,
Ash rises and flame roars,
Victorious. ■



DANCE WITH
DEATH
Madeline Scott
Graphite

Not Sick Enough

KATHERINE WEINHOLD

Dear Doctor,

I'm afraid I need to cancel my recent appointment. I have been reliably told I don't need to keep it. My recovery time was much longer than we all expected, but everyone saw how much I needed to sleep. My friends and family understood when I canceled plans or ignored phone calls. I'm on the up and they say I look strong now. I'm all better.

My devastation at not being sick anymore was simply from laziness. I just didn't want to go back to work. Everyone reminded me that when they get a cold, they always wished it would last a little longer so they could stay home. My email to you requesting further care was outlandish. I realize I can't have any of the issues I previously mentioned.

I have been told that people with depression can't shower, but I do every day. I was also told that the depressed can't even get out of bed. But since mine is always made, I must be fine. They also told me people with ADHD have horrible grades. I have a 4.0, so I just need to focus more and the symptoms will go away.

I also apologize for the rambling about the funeral at the end of my last email. It's been six months, hasn't it? It's selfish of me to bring it up anymore. I certainly don't shower just to feel the heat, or get out of bed just to ignore the questions. I don't dwell on the crushing weight of failure, and I don't need to get high grades to assign myself worth.

My comments about "staring at a screen, thoughts screaming at me, legs bouncing in time to the rhythm of my intrusive thoughts" was really an over reaction on my part. I see that now.

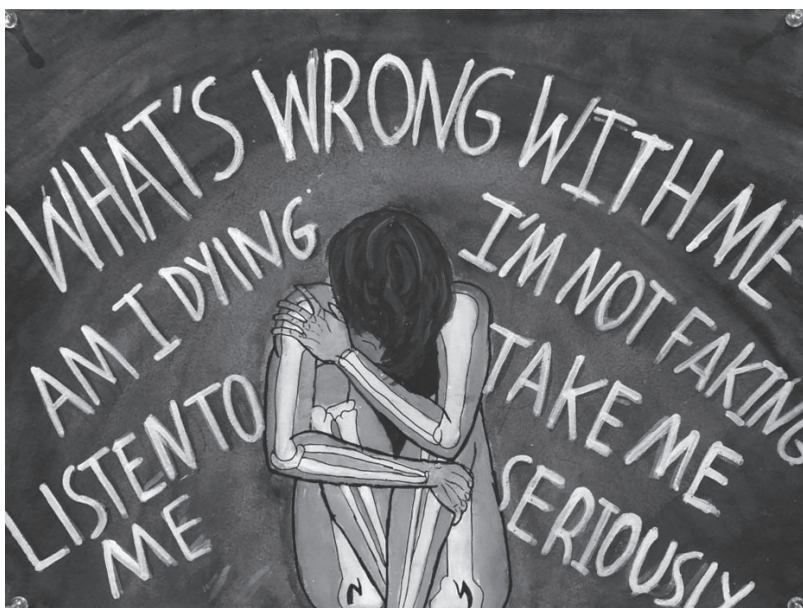
My friends tell me I look just like I did before I caught the bug! They see no deep, black bags underneath my eyes, no hollowed shell of my old personality. They don't see how I flinch at loud noises or how late work piles on my desk. They have never seen me wince at the mention of that one name.

They all told me how crazy I sounded in my last email to you. I'm sorry I gave you such a fright. I must've been coming off the medication you gave me still. That's what they all said. Well, I'm all better now! I'm in tip-top shape. I don't miss being sick at all. A month of bed rest and healing isn't something to miss, or so I'm told.

So great news, I'm no longer sick enough to need your care. Thanks for the help. See you for next year's flu!

Sincerely,

Your (Impatient) Patient



NARRATIVE **Gray Monk**

Mixed Media

INTERVIEW WITH Michelle Wichman

*The Intake/Assessment Specialist for Basic ESOL
(English for Speakers of Other Languages)*

BY KATHERINE WEINHOLD

Those much wiser than me have said that stories are the lifeblood of humanity. They are how humans connect with one another, how we teach the next generation, and how we express emotions that could otherwise never be conveyed. The vocation of a storyteller is a time held honor, a vital cornerstone of humanity. However, what happens when stories are left out of a dominant narrative? When some experiences fall through the cracks, does the blood of the community run thin or does it stop flowing all together? In a publication designed to amplify the voices that do not always receive a platform, we wanted our interview to highlight a part of FCC we felt seemed invisible to most students.



For this year's interview, I had the honor of sitting down with Michelle Wichman to learn not only her story, but the stories of her students. Michelle Wichman is the Intake/Assessment Specialist for Basic ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). The program is intended for new residents to the community to help people learn to live and work in the United States through learning English, as well as skills related to U.S. culture, work, and life. The program also teaches lessons in civics to help people both live in the community and be good community members.

The "standing goal" of the program, as Michelle called it, is to serve the community and its people: to understand who's in the community, where they are, and how the program can best serve them. While this

goal remains, others can shift over time. According to Michelle, “Living through the pandemic makes you think about what’s the most important in this moment. For the past year, student welfare has been really big and has been really important, because people are suffering in lots of ways. Education is important, but life comes first.”

In a program that seeks to help students in so many facets of their lives, the benefits are vast. The number one benefit, through Michelle’s eyes, is the confidence that comes from being able to communicate. Along with that, “Students really appreciate that we are here for them, that we value their presence and contribution, and that we are looking to support and to foster that. We have some programs that are meant to be a bridge into a specific career, or into the training for a career. Students really appreciate that because they are ‘real world’— practical and effective. Students can learn vocabulary and soft skills, about industry or career fields, and ideally, move into that field.”

As the intake specialist, Michelle focuses on bringing in new students to the program and helping them progress through it. She laughed when she told me the first thing her job involves: paperwork. “Today it’s electronic,” Michelle said, “a great improvement through the pandemic!” Her job entails placing students into the correct classes and assessing their progress. Ideally, this assessment happens at the end of each class period. From there, Michelle can make decisions and advise regarding the student’s future in the program, whether the student needs to move forward within basic ESOL, or if they are ready to move on from the program. Multiple people support all these processes, notably a transition specialist. While some ESOL students are focused on getting their GED, many of them move from ESOL to GED to college classes at FCC. A transition specialist is a vital support for these students.

The needs of the students in the program are wide ranging and include economic needs, housing, medical care, mental health care needs, technology needs and others. As Michelle said, “It runs the gamut from A to Z.” Some students in the program have lived in the United States for a long time, while some have only been here a few months and are still trying to establish themselves. For example, the program will soon be accepting Afghan refugees that will be entering the local community. “There’s going to be a variety of levels among those students as far as their English level goes, but that reflects our whole program,” Michelle explains. “So, we have students who speak very little English in a literacy level, to students who are well educated and maybe even speak well in English but still, there’s more to learn.”

I asked Michelle how long she'd been with the program. My question was met with a slight smile and glance to the ceiling as decades of information filtered through her mind. Her story with adult education started roughly thirty years ago, after she left her job teaching German to high school students. She found her passion through working with adults which quickly led her to ESOL. Michelle, "a teacher at heart," chose to move into the intake assessment role from the instructional specialist role as she felt a lack of contact with the students: "I felt I could support the students more intensively than I was in that role and more directly." She moved into her current job in 2014, three years after the ESOL program left FCPS and came to FCC. For Michelle, her dedication to the program is all about teaching and has been since she first studied education.

With such a long career, one would think Michelle has seen it all, but she told me how often her students surprise her: "I think in good ways it always surprises me what students are capable of. I really believe in students, and I believe that they're capable of many things." When the pandemic hit, Michelle worried that the extra barrier made success "really far out there and difficult, but students prove all the time what they are capable of. **Assumptions are never good to make and don't belong anywhere in education...** [The students'] tenacity is amazing. I guess I shouldn't be surprised by that but sometimes I don't know if I could keep doing it for that long."

The tenacity of the students in the ESOL program was a common theme in our conversation, and the longer we spoke about the number of barriers these students faced, the more I understood why Michelle was amazed by her students. By the end of the interview, I was in awe of them too.

This fiscal year, there are four hundred and seven students enrolled in basic ESOL. Among those students there are sixty-five countries represented and thirty-seven languages spoken. The top three languages are Spanish (hundreds), French (dozens), and Burmese. Chinese recently has moved to a very close fourth. Michelle believes these statistics to be a reflection of the current Frederick community. Her seasoned career in ESOL gives her a unique insight to these numbers as she has seen them shift and change over the years. She stressed to me however that every program in every county is different, but she doesn't believe it's an exact match of the communities. As Michelle said, "We'll take everyone. We want to see more of everybody."

As we spoke about languages, I reflected on how language is born in deeply rooted cultures. This fact prompted me to ask Michelle if having a deeper understanding of cultures along with the languages themselves is vital for helping the students.

“It is vital, but I don’t think people need to learn in depth about multiple cultures because that’s very difficult,” she said. “I think what people need to learn, the way people’s attitudes need to open up, is just to understand that culture influences how people think and act. We need to be open—**this is a difference, it’s not a nuisance**. We need to be careful about how we react to things that make us feel uncomfortable. I think having exposure to other people’s cultures, experiences that open you up to other cultures, and put you out of your comfort zone in a different setting is valuable. If people are open to that I think it’s probably one of the best ways to learn to interact with people from other cultures.”

The ESOL program is unique, with incredible diversity in its ranks. I asked Michelle how she supported a student body with such a wide array of languages, cultures and people. I also asked if she found the program to be standardized or individualized.

“In some ways it is a little bit individualized because we kind of do what we need to do,” Michelle explained. “What we find is that sometimes the person who speaks a rarer language is the one who needs the most support just because they don’t speak any English whereas a lot of times with other students you can get by with some English. We also have bilingual and multilingual staff, although we certainly don’t cover the widest array, that changes depending on current staffing.” Additionally, Michelle mentioned the translation tool of Language Line (or something similar) and remarked that she would like to see all student support services equipped with something like it, adding that “The most student-friendly approach for nonnative speakers is that they should be able to speak in their first language.”

The students in this program have the world stacked against them at times, from the struggles of everyday life to earning certifications or degrees, all while facing language barriers. Michelle firmly believes that “these are some of the most tenacious, motivated students.” But she sympathizes strongly with the amount of challenging barriers that these students face.

As someone who has seen these struggles first hand, I asked Michelle next how she addresses some of the barriers her students face.

Michelle was quick with her first suggestion, “childcare.” While she understands that FCC has been ramping up in this area, she still expressed how large of a barrier childcare is to a vast majority of her students. Her second suggestion was less straightforward, and it was aimed at the whole nation, not simply FCC. For many students, they come to the United States with degrees, credentials, and experience. However, as a nation, we do not have a lot of programs to move people smoothly into those same fields in the U.S. An example she gave me was the medical field: “It’s just difficult for someone who is an M.D. somewhere else to come to America and get recertified. I understand it’s complex, as it should be. There should be a system but we just don’t do a really good job of capitalizing on that... If people want to work in their field of expertise they should be able to. I wish we had better support for moving them quickly into a career that took advantage of their credentials.”

As we moved into a discussion of solutions, I offered her my own suggestion for breaking down barriers. I asked Michelle if she thought whether having more teachers who spoke some of the programs’ common languages and teaching classes in those languages would be a help or hindrance to their learning English.

She responded with excitement, as this idea has been on her mind, and it’s an area that will probably evolve and develop in the future in all of Adult Education (grant programs), which is what education should do—continuously evolve to meet students’ needs better. One consideration is always how to match what happens in the classroom with what happens “out in the real world.” Michelle clarified: “Some employers want to know that the students have a high school diploma or a GED because they want to know that the students speak English fluently. So, if we taught X, Y, and Z in Spanish, would they be able to go out and work and get a job with an employer? I don’t know. It depends on the reception of the real world when the students get there.”

As we spoke on “real world” problems, we transitioned into a conversation regarding how the world sees her students. I asked Michelle: what is one thing you wish people outside of your program understood about the ESOL program?

“Well, I think there are a couple of assumptions,” She said. “I think that a lot of people assume that you have to speak the student’s language to communicate with them. It’s often possible to communicate in English. Most students know a few key words and phrases and you can build on that, depending on what you need to convey. I think that people look at

the students as being different, being sort of their own population unto themselves which of course in some ways they are. For me personally one of the most valuable influences over the length of my career is that I live in this community. When I was a teacher, they were my students, but the students are my neighbors, my fellow parents—their kids go to school with my kids: they're my peers. I think if we think about the students as our fellow community members, and we don't think about them as the 'English students' with this label or a certain connotation, it changes how we look at them and interact with them. For me personally that's been really valuable."

When I asked Michelle what the FCC or Frederick community could do to support the students or staff members in the ESOL program, her answer was the last thing I expected. At first, her answer was a light hearted "Hire them, give them jobs!" However, when she began to elaborate, I had to pause to collect myself.

"See them," she said. "I think a lot of times our students feel invisible out in the community and that hurts them. I've definitely had that experience where students are shocked when I know their name." She smiled sadly at me, adding "I see the pain in your eyes. That's the pain in my eyes." "They're like, 'Oh, you know my name!' and I'm like, 'Yes, I know your name!' That one takes my breath away when students are just so thrilled. You know they are a little bit invisible, a little bit anonymous, and if we treat students like individuals and see their personality, their background, their credentials, it changes the experience of FCC for them."

My final question to Michelle was a standard, open ended "is there anything else you would like to see reflected in this interview?" Her answer will forever stick with me as one of the most respectable, kind views humans can have towards one another. It has also become my definition as to why it is so important to tell everyone's story.

"I thought a lot about whether or not I should tell you a specific story," Michelle began. "But it's not my story to tell. There are lots of really touching stories and really sensational stories but they're not my stories to tell. I don't want to tell the extreme story because what's really important is the day-to-day, head down, working hard, just going about their business. It's them getting up in the morning and going to work just like I do. That's what's important about these students. They live and work alongside us, and we want to just see that as our neighbors I think is the most important thing."

She paused for a long moment before smiling warmly at me, no doubt with her students on her mind: "Everybody is amazing, right?" ■

Editorial Board Biographies

Katherine Weinhold has called herself a storyteller for as long as she can remember. Writing, acting, directing, making short films, and other creative outlets guide her life. Currently, Katherine is in her final semester at FCC and (if she's being honest) she's not sure what her next move is. However, she knows that there is more to life than just picking one career. She aims to accomplish a wide array of things in her life, from serving her country to publishing a novel—she hopes her future will reflect her many interests and passions.

Eileene Zimmer is a compulsive learner, having just completed her fourth college degree. She received an AAS degree in accounting from FCC in June 2021. Previous degrees include bachelor's and master's degrees, and an associate's degree from the College of Southern Maryland. It was the degree from CSM that put her on a path of studying and creating art. She recalls writing her first poems while roller-skating as a young girl along the sidewalk of her neighborhood. She has written poetry or verse throughout her life. She is an advocate for community colleges where she has been allowed to explore learning and creating in a supportive environment.

Lynne Regules is an artist, writer, and current senior at Governor Thomas Johnson High School. She is a third-year in the Academy for the Fine Arts (AFA) with a focus in digital illustration. The AFA has given her the space and support to craft a portfolio with the guidance of her peers and teachers—an experience she wouldn't trade for the world. Outside of school, she enjoys research, swimming, tennis, and cooking. However, she spends much of her time taking care of her three parakeets: Dmitri, Pierogi, and Levi.

As an English professor, **Magin LaSov Gregg** loves encouraging FCC students' self-expression and connecting students to the wide range of human experiences that creative writing and literary art explores. Her essays have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *National Public Radio*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *Hippocampus Magazine*, *River Teeth's Beautiful Things*, *Pithead Chapel*, *The Rumpus*, *Literary Mama*, *The Manifest-Station*, *Under the Gum Tree*, *Bellingham Review*, *Full Grown People*, *Solstice Literary Magazine*, and multiple anthologies. She lives with her husband, Carl, and four rescue pets in a slightly haunted house in downtown Frederick.



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