



The **Tuscarora**

Review

40th
EDITION

A Frederick
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Magazine of the
Creative Arts

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.

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TUSCARORA REVIEW

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MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

We are writing this note from our quarantined bunkers from what some are calling the end of the world—but we’re trying to be a bit more optimistic.

This is the fortieth anniversary of the *Tuscarora Review*, which is a very high peak to look down from. It’s an honor to be a part of a legacy born long before us and one that will proceed for decades more. Thirty-nine years of stories, but we still have more to tell.

The pieces shared with us are, by and far, dominated by a sense of loss. Loss of innocence, life, and love alike. It throws into sharp relief our terrifying reality: all of us have so much to lose. It’s a natural result of having so much to love; fear is a symptom of cherishing life.

So as much as many of these pieces are about loss, they are also about love.

Speaking of love—this issue would not have been possible without our wonderful editing team. Our thanks to the ever stalwart Jackie Alvarez-Hernandez, the brilliant backbone of the editing board; Justin Friday, whose bottomless store of enthusiasm lent us bountiful insight; Hannah Cerrito, who, long-suffering, navigated us steady and sure to reality and safety; and, of course, to our fearless captain and professor, Ramón Jones, who taught us more than he could ever know. Thank you, also, to Professor Cookie Redding’s graphics class for making our magazine beautiful.

Last, but not least, we would like to thank our writers: the philosophers, oracles, court jesters, poets, and scholars who are gathered here with us. They were brave enough to tell us their stories and now here they are for you.

So come! Join us by the fire! The show is not yet over—it is only just beginning.

— Karly McQuay & Marcus Pearson Co-Editors in Chief

DEDICATION

Kathyrn Fenimore (1946-2019)



Kathyrn Fenimore

Kathy Fenimore was my friend. Kathy died in November, 2019 after suffering complications following heart surgery. She expected to be home from the hospital in no time, able to resume her frequent visits to Atlanta to see her two granddaughters, whom she adored. She was looking forward to another big trip with her husband, Bob. And we had an Old Math Geeks adventure planned when she became strong again, ready for anything. It was not to be.

Kathy retired from FCC in 2012 and I followed in 2014. Perhaps you don't know us, as change on campus happens quickly; however, back in the day everyone knew Kathy and me. After all, we practically grew up at FCC, teaching together for twenty-five years. I miss her and want to share a little of our history.

Kathy and I were both from upstate New York. People thought we looked alike. But we couldn't have been more different. I was a bossy loudmouth and generally made a pest of myself with the administration. Kathy, on the other hand, worked quietly under the radar. Somehow, we made a good team. She politely listened to my rants and then calmed me down with reason and logic.

So how shall I honor Kathy? It's not enough to say she worked quietly in the background, super-supportive and steadfastly reasonable. I'll add some details.

Kathy was a manager extraordinaire. In the late 1980's, we began offering self-paced developmental math courses in what was then called the "Math Lab." Kathy was hired to manage the lab. It was a gargantuan task involving a gazillion pieces of paper and keeping track of hundreds of students each semester as they progressed at their own pace through the courses. Faculty had to be trained and placement exams had to be created, administered, and scored—all by hand. In the 1980's and 1990's, Kathy had no computers to assist her in these tasks yet her Math Lab hummed.



Math Department Halloween, 2000." Kathy is in the front row, third from left.

Kathy was brave. When the Math Department's long-time Chair, Martin Kalmar, died suddenly in 2000, it was Kathy who served out his term. We were reeling from the loss, in the middle of a major renovation of our space, and needed leadership. Quiet, kind Kathy stepped out of her comfort zone and stepped up.

Kathy was a listener. She was a sounding board for all of us in the department. We felt much better after talking with her. Students appreciated her calm demeanor and felt welcomed in her office. As one faculty member said, "She put everything aside for you and just soaked up all your worry and she made you feel everything was going to be okay."

Kathy was a good sport. The Math Department had lunch together, spoke at conferences all over the country, argued about mathematics and teaching, took students on field trips, celebrated Pi Day, dressed up for Halloween. Sometimes she was embarrassed by our antics but she happily joined in, put on a costume, got on the bus. She loved it all.

Rest in peace, Professor Kathy Fenimore.

Ann E. Commito,
Former Chair and Emeritus Associate Professor,
Department of Mathematics

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*Editors' Choice: selections in fiction, poetry, two-dimensional, and three-dimensional art are judged according to emotional and intellectual depth, strength of observation and imagination, energy, freshness, and precision of language, and/or technical accomplishment.

PHOTO STRIP

Jaqueline Alvarez-Hernandez

It's Tuesday morning. The sky is clear, a warm orange and purple blend with a lemon-yellow sun peeking up over the horizon. As I step out of my house, a cool breeze blows across my face. I stop, letting it brush my bangs out of my face. I almost want to turn back and hide under my sheets.

I don't. I instead step forward and turn left to cross the road, soon reaching Yellow Rose Park where Danny and I had played as kids. It's small, with a dingy yellow slide that still has a puddle of muddy water at its end, rusty monkey bars with chipped yellow paint, and a swing set with only one swing on it instead of two. I stare at it, remembering.

"I bet you can't reach the top!" Danny crowed, a wide grin on his face. I stared at him, wide eyed. We sat next to each other on the swings, our sneakers barely reaching the ground.

"What?" I whispered. "But that's so high..."

"Fine, then don't do it. But I'm gonna tell everyone that you're a scaredy-cat," he teased.

I pouted, cheeks flushing. "No I'm not!"

"You better prove it." he sang, swaying back and forth on the swing.

I huffed, digging my toes into the dirt to start my momentum. I lifted and lowered my legs, making the swing go higher and higher, faster and faster. As I reached the top, I looked down, and time seemed to stand still. Danny was smiling up at me, eyes full of awe and wonder. My heart fluttered. I couldn't breathe. And then my grip on the chains went loose.

Flying in the air was magical. Falling and crashing to the ground, breaking an arm was just terrifying.

The swing set had never gotten fixed afterwards. Danny had laughed at me, even while he helped me get up.

Apparently, I looked funny when I cried.

I can't help but pick up my pace, leaving the park behind. My stomach is roiling. So focused on the sensation, I barely notice a familiar house on the path, pausing in front of it. A blue bungalow house, the porch barren and a "For Sale" sign on the front yard. My

heart sinks as my gaze lands on the wilted rose bushes. Once, this was Mr. and Mrs. Jones' home.

We ran up the path to the heavily decorated house, ooh-ing and aww-ing at the hanging ghosts and carved jack o' lanterns. Reaching the porch step, I turned toward Danny.

"Danny! You ready?" I asked him, beaming. He nodded, eyes full of excitement.

We rang the doorbell, and quickly got into position behind the rose bushes. The door opened, and Mrs. Jones appeared, looking very confused.

"Trick or Treat!" we yelled, jumping out of our hiding spots. Mrs. Jones jumped, before letting out a loud laugh.

"Oh my! You two gave me a good scare there! You pair of condiments, you!" she exclaimed with a wink.

We grinned at her, rushing up to her as fast as we could in our painted boxes. Danny held out his pillowcase with gloved red hands, all eager, while I waited next to him, a smile on my yellow-painted face.

She pulled out her bowl of candy bars, giving us a conspiring grin. "You can each pick two. But don't tell the other kids, okay?" I blinked in surprise. "Why two?"

She smiled at us warmly. "Two of a kind, for the two of you!" In an instant, my face was a color match for Danny's costume. I felt lightheaded, and a dreamy smile spread across my face.

Danny just laughed, already opening one of the candy bars he had grabbed. "Thanks Mrs. Jones!" he called out, turning around to go.

Mr. Jones probably chose to sell the house after Mrs. Jones died last year. The neighborhood didn't feel the same, as if a welcoming fireplace was put out without warning, leaving the room cold and barren.

Danny was sad about the loss of the candy bars.

I clench my jaw, turning away and continuing on. I quicken my steps, ignoring the cars passing by me as I walk down the sidewalk. I grit my teeth harder as I pass by the soccer field where Danny asked me out on our first date.

He had just come from a soccer match—

No.

His green jersey was soaked in sweat, and his black hair plastered to his forehead. His now-chipped tooth peeked out as he

ran up to me—

I speed walk. The field is getting farther away. But not the memory.

“Wanna go out on a date with me?” he asked, breathless. A sweat drop ran down the side of his face.

I gaped at him. Before I could stop myself, I had already stepped forward to capture him in a hug. Ignoring his sweaty arms and B.O., I smiled up at him, feeling as light as air.

“Of course I do! I would love to!” I gushed. “Where to?”

He gave me a wicked grin this time. “The movies. Let’s watch the new It movie.”

I froze in his arms. “Oh...are you sure? I’m not good with horror movies...” I asked him, hesitant.

“Come on! For me?” My heart melted at the puppy eyed look he pulled off. I couldn’t resist.

“Oh, fine. Let’s do it.” I smiled at him, still nervous. He beamed at me in response, pleased.

That had been a terrible decision. I had nightmares for a week afterwards.

I reach our school at long last, slipping through the crowd as I enter. Someone curses loudly, calling a person a fucker for forgetting to do his part of an assignment. The smell of breakfast foods waft from the cafeteria. Sausage. Eggs. Syrup and waffle sticks. The usual. I walk through the hallway, ignoring the gossip and chatter. I turn the corner.

There’s Danny, leaning against his locker. His hair is gelled back, his eyes down on his phone. He smiles, thumbs texting, dimples pressing into his cheeks.

He looks up and sees me. His small smile vanishes for a second. He puts away his phone as I walk up to him. “Hey babe, how’s it going?” he says, mustering a grin. His tooth is still chipped.

The clock on the wall behind him says 7:42. The two girls behind me giggle, gushing about how hot some new kid looks. I look Danny in the eye, then reach into my pocket and take out what I had discovered this morning by my desk, where Danny had placed his book bag the night before. A small thing that easily fell out of whatever pocket it had been in, with its owner none the wiser: a photo booth picture strip of Danny and another girl. A familiar face, that was always there at Danny’s soccer matches. She had long red hair and laughing blue eyes. Brown freckles dotted her nose. And

bright pink lips that were occupied by another's in the last square. Danny's eyes go wide, glancing between the photo strip and me. I take a deep breath before I speak.

"You forgot this," I say.

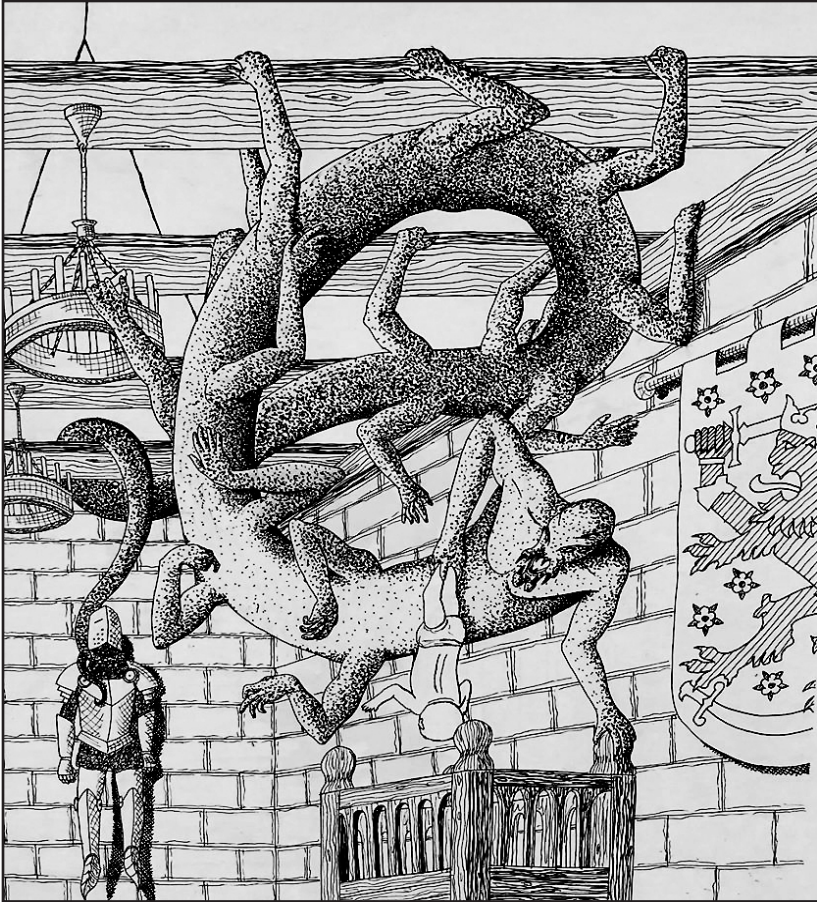


Michelle Rouch, Untitled



Jocelyn Appleby, A Strange Journey





GUERNICA

Jeniell Cortes

As the sky begins its farewell fanfare, as the sun begins its march below the horizon, the local town begins to wind down. Lamps that illuminate the night begin to flicker on, standing guard to fend off the blackness of night at a moment's notice. Children are ushered in by their parents. "Come dear, it's time for dinner," a mother says to her child. For some, nighttime signals their time to rise, but the streets are relatively devoid of life, apart from the occasional farm animal or person. An unremarkable day is coming to a close, another X

plastered on the calendar. Another day closer to December, another cool night to come, illuminated by the tall lamps augmented by the glow of the moon. A normal day by most, nothing special. If only this night could have been as still as any other.

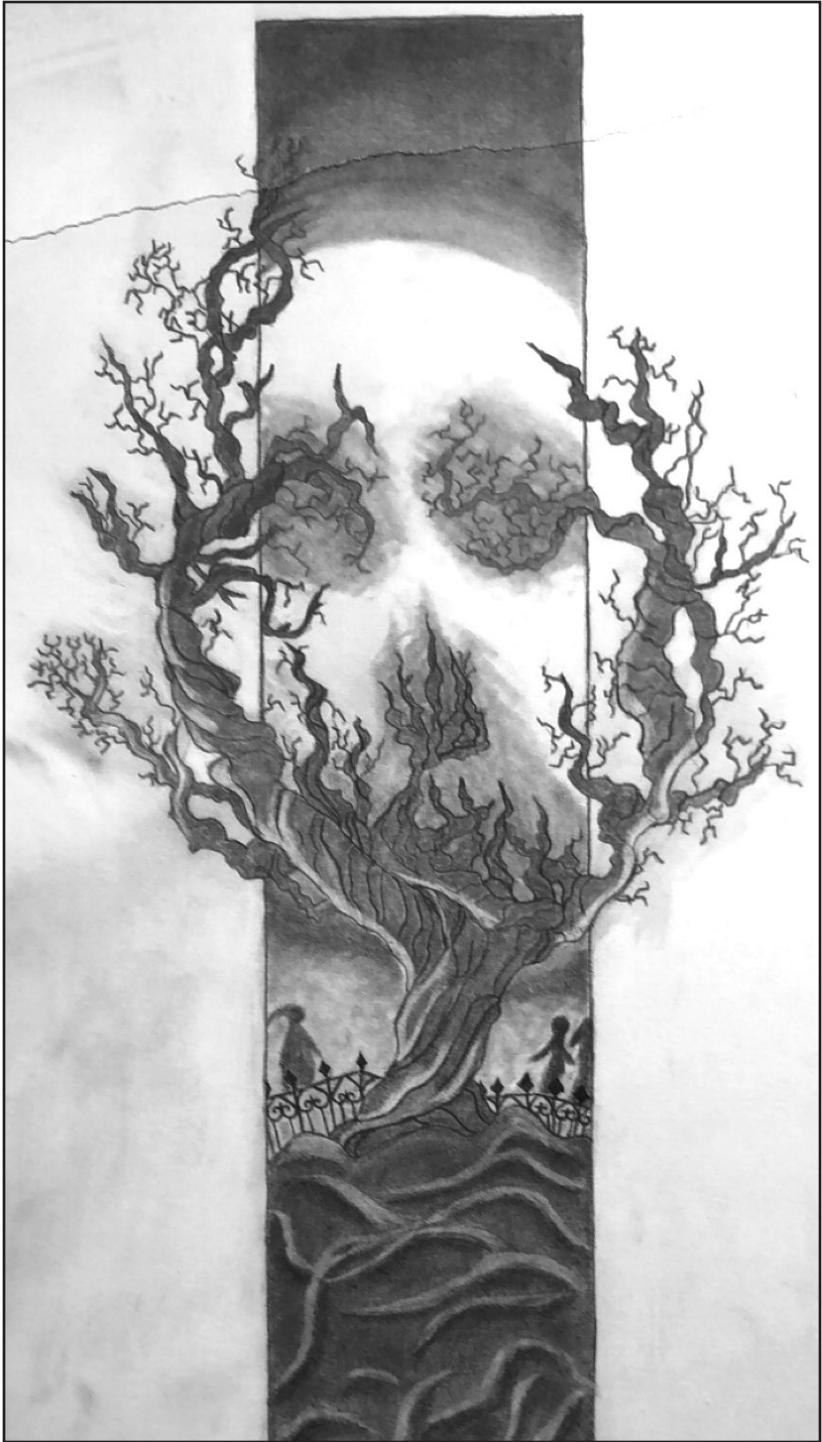
What could have been a stroll in the park was drowned out by the wails of sirens. What could have been barren streets under the glow of the lamps and moon are now crammed with a river of people and livestock, scrambling towards the outskirts. Among the chaos, a child is guided by her mother through the tsunami of people, teddy bear in tow. It doesn't take long before the symphony of despair shifts, sirens replaced by the ever more potent trumpet soli, blaring its fanfare of death and destruction. Not even the accompanying cackle of snare drums in the distance could prevent what was to come.

What once was a beautiful skyline is now a sea of walls and fire, which triumphs over the faltering lamps. Books and calendars burn in the rubble as those that could not make it out scramble about, some even trying to jump out of the buildings. Better to die in the fall than to succumb to the flames. A broken neck is much quicker anyways. The aforementioned river of people now becomes a high-pressure hose, with a regulated evacuation thrown to the wind.

Self-preservation takes precedent, humans unhooked from their social bonds. Livestock, which could have been towing heavy loads about are now trampling over those who appreciated their assistance beforehand. What could have been a group of friends drinking in a pub were now desperately trying to climb over one another just to escape the destruction following suit.

What once was a peaceful town is now a world of fire, consuming flesh at a rapid pace. Discrimination is irrelevant, assaulting anyone without proper indication. Families distraught, bodies lining the ground, houses in ruins. Tales recorded on a canvas, paintbrush shaping horses and bulls into personifications of the people and destruction of Guernica, casualties of the war and devastation.

The stories lost to the fire, the tragedies at the hands of bombings, the fires caused by those that do not have to worry about losing everything at a moment's notice. All stored within the oil-paint upon the canvas, all of which went into every abstract paint stroke. All within a painting, preserving history within the dyes and shapes on the canvas.



Angela Jungbluth, *All Hallows Eve*
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IMPOSSIBLE THINGS

Ashlin Davis

Shadows cannot be swept up
They can only be perceived through vision
Wind cannot be snatched out of the air
Something that must move cannot be tamed
Rain cannot be called upon through song
The universe will not listen

The moon may smile through the clouds
The stars cannot push away,
But the moon cannot be touched.

Go on,
Get in your car and chase the moon.
How many hours will pass before you realize
Your target has eclipsed your reach?
The moon will set before your eyes

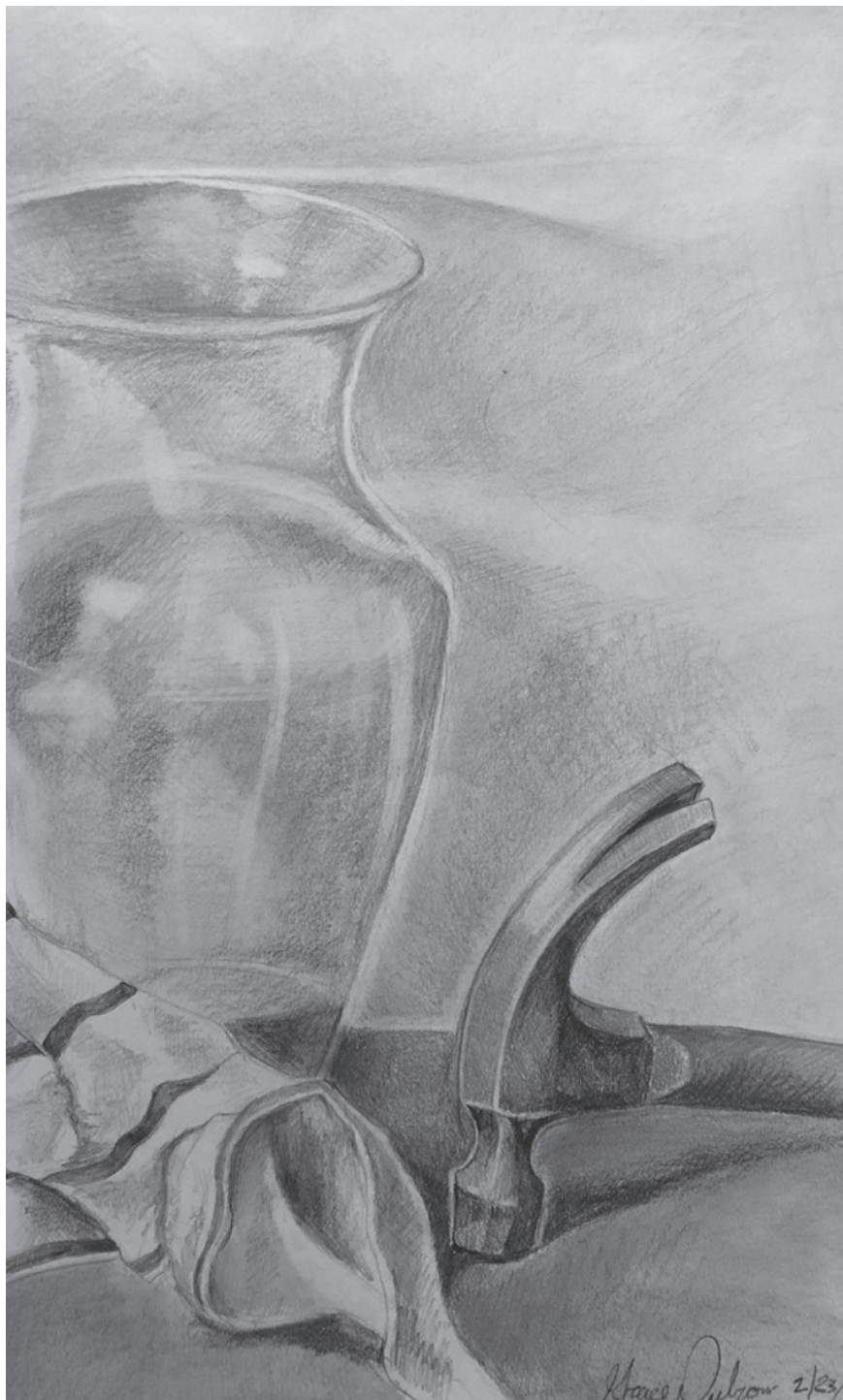
Time cannot be stopped.
It cannot be given
Or spent
Or reversed
Time can only happen,
And it has been happening without you.

My dear friend,
You once said
Remembering is perhaps
The best way to recycle.
I'd like to ask you
What made you think of that
Because if I could ask you,
That's mean you'd be right beside me

How I would love for you
To be able to shake the dirt from your hair
To rise up, and draw the night in your lungs
And be alive again



Madison Ropp, 5 Most Important Things



Grace Dutrow 2/23

Grace Dutrow, Texture

HIDE AND SHOW TEETH AND TEARS

Kat Elizaveta

There are people looking at me. I see this when I look up and catch their eyes. I don't know why they're staring at me, and I don't know what I did. But they're looking at me, and not at her. The girl behind me cries a lot—almost daily. We sit in the back of the class where I feel like a shield to protect her from glances. I'm good at my job because people always look at me, and not at her. Sometimes they smile and let it break into a laugh. She doesn't laugh at me but maybe she should to help stop her tears. Everyone else already seems to. I don't get it, so I don't try to. I catch the word “spaz” coming off of another student's lips when he looks over at me. Next to him a girl does something like shush him, and she leans in to whisper something. She doesn't turn her head or cover her mouth, so I can find the word “spectrum” in the sentence she says, but she's looking at me now and I'm tired of looking at them. I'm tired of guessing what people mean, so I turn away. Behind me, pencil scratches paper and I know the girl is drawing. I can only imagine what she's drawing, but I know it'll be very good. All her art is. I want to turn and peek at it, but I don't want to distract her, so I close my eyes and listen. I let the pencil and paper sounds find their way into my mind and let them sketch a picture of my own. All I can see is her, though, in strong lines and definition. Her picture remains a mystery, but I'll ask her about it.

(Today I tried to talk to her.)

When class ends, I catch her teary eyes. Forcing herself not to cry, I see the tears being fought away like watercolor paint's travels being blocked by pastel. Outside the classroom I walk left, she walks right, but today I walk right too. I follow a few steps behind her...

I don't want to interrupt her....

I am being invasive and turn away. She gets lost in the crowd as she continues walking the other way.

At night I try to make art. Instead I only make a mess. She's in my head, distracting me. I cannot focus, so I think about her. She's pretty and her drawings are pretty too. I have seen her art; it's stylized and lovely. Gothic tones and pretty brushstrokes make the pages come alive. Once I stole a glance at a really nice picture. A leg outlined in the top center. Precise details, but aspects make it appear as though it was done quickly, just not so quickly it looked rushed. It isn't rushed—it's done with care. I can tell this. There were two cuts on it, showing the openness of the body inside, but it was all black with stars. The cuts were outlined red. Blood ran down the leg and created a backdrop for space with planets drawn with fine, refined, and sharp lines. The background: black. In the corner an alien exposed. He almost made me laugh. In class I had stifled a giggle, but she looked at me, seeming sullen suddenly. I think she thought I was laughing at her drawing. I told her I wasn't. "I like it," I say.

She smiles and inquires, "You do?" Her smile breaks wider. "What do you like?"

"I like your picture." And I turn back around.

I want to talk to her about that picture now. I need to know about all the details and study it until I memorize it...I will ask her about it tomorrow.

(Tomorrow has come.)

I want to be here at school today, because all of last evening I was rehearsing in my head what I could say to her. It finally seems like I could make a friend, so I had to practice what to say. I want it to go perfectly, and I want her to talk to me. I want to tell her a memory of a time I learned of aliens, and how the little alien she drew reminded me of it. The story goes like this:

It's three a.m. and outside it's chilly. But the sky is clear, and the air isn't cold enough to burn my lungs so I'm sitting outside on my roof gazing up at the stars. Some nights I can't fall asleep, so I come up here and think about our galaxies. Even when I'm sitting here and still, those galaxies and the worlds within them keep moving. They never stop, like us. I'm sitting here, and I notice a bluish hue in the sky. I focus on it, and it travels nearer to me. Engulfing blue lights fly over my house very low, and my entire backyard lights up like daylight. The light flies past and disappears, but not a second later a wave of energy shakes my entire house. I stay still for a moment before I go back inside.

I want to tell her this story now, about how there really could

be aliens and I want to ask her what she thinks of them. And I want to laugh with her about how silly Martians would think us to be. I didn't realize it until last night, but I think I'm longing to be included in someone's laughter. It's this desire that pushes me to find her and talk to her. I push quickly through the halls until I get to the front lobby where I notice a table is set up. I see her art on it. I think of her. I want her to look at the picture but I can already imagine it visibly. I hate crowds; I jog away to class. She isn't here. I wait. She doesn't show up. I don't know why she isn't here; I want to know where she is. I am shaking my hands in anticipation of her coming.

She does not come.

I don't go to my next class and I opt instead to go to attendance and ask if she's here.

Perhaps they will tell me.

I pass the display from earlier, and I see the drawing there.

Students are teary-eyed...maybe her art is just that good.

(I stop and stare.)

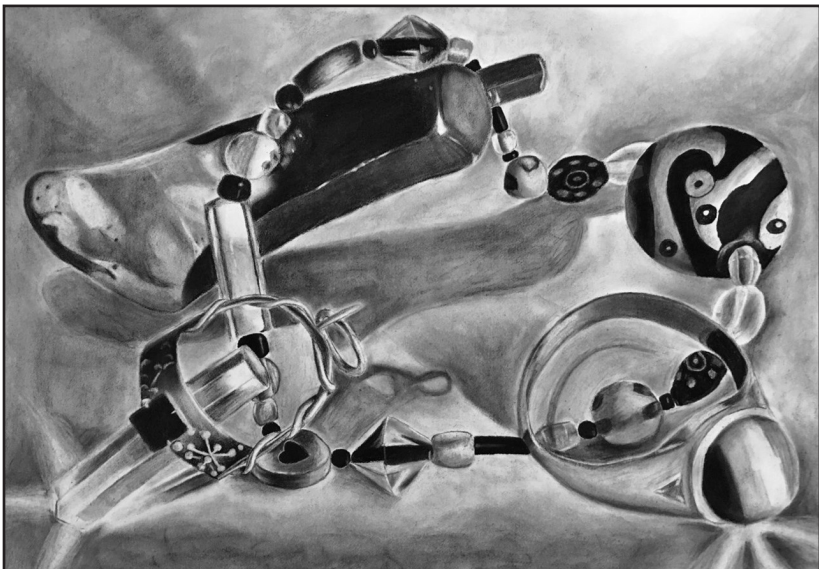
Why does it look like an apology set up for someone who passed away? My eyes pass over the board:

I see her photograph.

She is smiling a beautiful smile.

No, absolutely not.

She must've moved to Colorado.



Rain Potter, An Homage To Jewelry

POEM #78

Carl Wertman

Together,
immersed in the
soothing lilt
of an April night
we lay in love,
our movements
replicated in silver
eddies nuzzling
gently against
the moon

BLACK DOG

Karly McQuay

There is an old god living along the stretch of beach from the dunes to the ruins.

In a land without occupation, it is still undeniable that this one thing is hers alone. The press of her heel into the pink blush of wet sand is an act of possession; it is upkeep when she twirls together lumps of plastic and scoops them up from the rushing salt water sea, spitting and sparking around the exposed wiring of her ankles.

*

Atieno's mother tells her, "Don't get too close. She's not as dangerous as she once was but she's still from a time ripe with craziness and pain. She is an idol of our betrayers." Our ancestors, she means.

"Do you understand, Atieno?" her mother presses.

"I understand," Atieno says, because she is certain that she does.

Often, Atieno listens to the horror stories conjured up around the thing—stories of an unkillable soldier made for ceaseless and thoughtless murder, woman-shaped in order to be useful in all ways and bound to the bidding of her master as a hound. Older children try to scare the younger ones by describing metal crushing bone, the sound such an act might create. Stupid, senseless, scary stories.

But Atieno knows that her mother doesn't want to scare her—she just doesn't want a dead daughter.

Atieno can't fault her for that.

*

The horror stories are not senseless, though. No story is made without a purpose.

They are stories to teach children to stay close to one another, a way to tell them how the Earth died without claiming blame. To teach them about monsters. About prisoners. In their stories, the old god is both Prometheus and the fire he wielded—as well as the eagles which gouged out his liver nightly as punishment for his hubris.

The scary ones are most common. But then there are others, ones that only the very young and the very old tell.

There are always other stories.

*

At dawn or dusk, when the sun does not blister so, the women journey out to hunt and scavenge.

Atieno isn't old enough to go out with them, yet, so she scrambles along with the other younger children to hedge the dunes and stare down at the terrible old thing. She hates this game, truly. Looking at it, her, makes Atieno feel sad and strange, and overwhelmingly guilty for disobeying her mother. But if she told the others that, they would think her a coward.

Atieno is not a coward.

So she follows, careful not to get too far ahead or too far behind, kicking up the stinging warmth of sand in her wake.

*

So let's hear another story, then. This time about love, like most monster stories are, once you get down to the bottom of the well. It's about Pygmalion, it's about Frankenstein, it's about Hans Christian Andersen's mermaid dancing even as every step slices into her feet. It's a story passed down, details worn and weathered like a stone in the surf.

A machine and the magician who did not bring her to life, but breathed a soul into the hollow body. Oil-slick and electric-cracked plastic wrinkling to mirror an aging human—the dilapidated ruins of a cottage where two people might have lived once before the other died. A story of survival, love, and loss. Of protectors.

*

Far out at sea, a storm blooms slow and steady. Wet wind whips off the water and catches up Atieno's braided hair even from this far away, sticky with salt.

Peeking out from behind the pile of rubble and stone which marks the edge of the god's territory, they gaze down onto the beach.

The lone figure stands fixed, staring out at the bruising purple on the horizon. The children dare each other to get closer. Closer still. They giggle with the battery acid bite of adrenaline while the ocean crashes in on itself. The air is thick with electricity.

Thunder rolls into a tremendous roar. Atieno flinches.

"Scared?" a child a little older than her provokes. They are, all thirteen of them, posed like statues, a few dozen meters away from the god on poised toes, hair lashing all around.

"No," Atieno calls back, the sound snatched out of her mouth by the wind.

“Then go get closer, if you’re not scared.”

Atieno scowls. “Don’t be stupid.”

“I bet you won’t get closer than me!” another child brags and hops a few more strides down the beach.

Atieno, blood cold and jaw set, with her gaze fixed on that unmoving ribcage in the distance, strolls forward as well. Her stomach drops.

*

Another legend goes a little like this:

Once upon a time, long ago, before the world went to Hell in a handbasket—before the plagues and famines, the tremendous might of nuclear sacrifice—long before now, but not long before then, there was a whale. The loneliest whale in the world.

It was like a blue whale, but wasn’t one. It was also like a fin whale, but it wasn’t that, either. It had a seven-ton heart and was perfectly healthy. It often swam thirty to seventy kilometers every day.

Whales were social creatures. They traveled in pods and swam side by side conversing with one another. Whales from different regions could have different dialects; foreign pods experienced language barriers.

But the loneliest whale in the world called at a frequency of fifty-two hertz—a call virtually unrecognizable in pitch and pattern to its kind. As a result, it traveled alone.

Communication was not found to be detrimental to its survival; it matured, it thrived, and in solitude the whale grew healthy and strong.

Regardless, recordings picked up all throughout its life the sound of the whale crying out to no one in particular.

*

This close, Atieno can see the breaks in the old god’s joints—the warped panels of her body and the thick growth of wires bulging out in the cracks. It smells like plastic and is so, so, so much bigger up close.

Only a few feet away, now. Its silhouette is uncannily still, poised to perfection—once she may have been beautiful, but nothing on Earth should ever be so still.

The other children crowd around, still laughing and teasing. Atieno is chilled to the bone.

“Touch it, Atieno,” the child from before dares.

This is what hushes them, that touch has become a feasible reality. A solemn, almost holy, terror falls over the children.

*

Long ago, an old legend spurred a tradition among coastal towns in England; it was believed that the first soul buried in a cemetery would be doomed to act as a guide to all the others for the rest of eternity.

It became common practice, naturally, to first bury a dead dog under the cornerstone of a developing church. Then, the dog could act as the guide.

No human soul would have to suffer remaining through to the end of times.

*

They are so close that it becomes a question of gravity, so they inch closer still—closer than anyone’s dared to in decades, close enough that it looms, towering over them as they descend into awed silence.

The children stare up with wide, full moon eyes.

“Why do we call this stupid hunk of metal a god?” a child trills, finally, lashing out against fright.

“What else?” Atieno breathes. “What else can you call a thing that dies slower than the sun?”

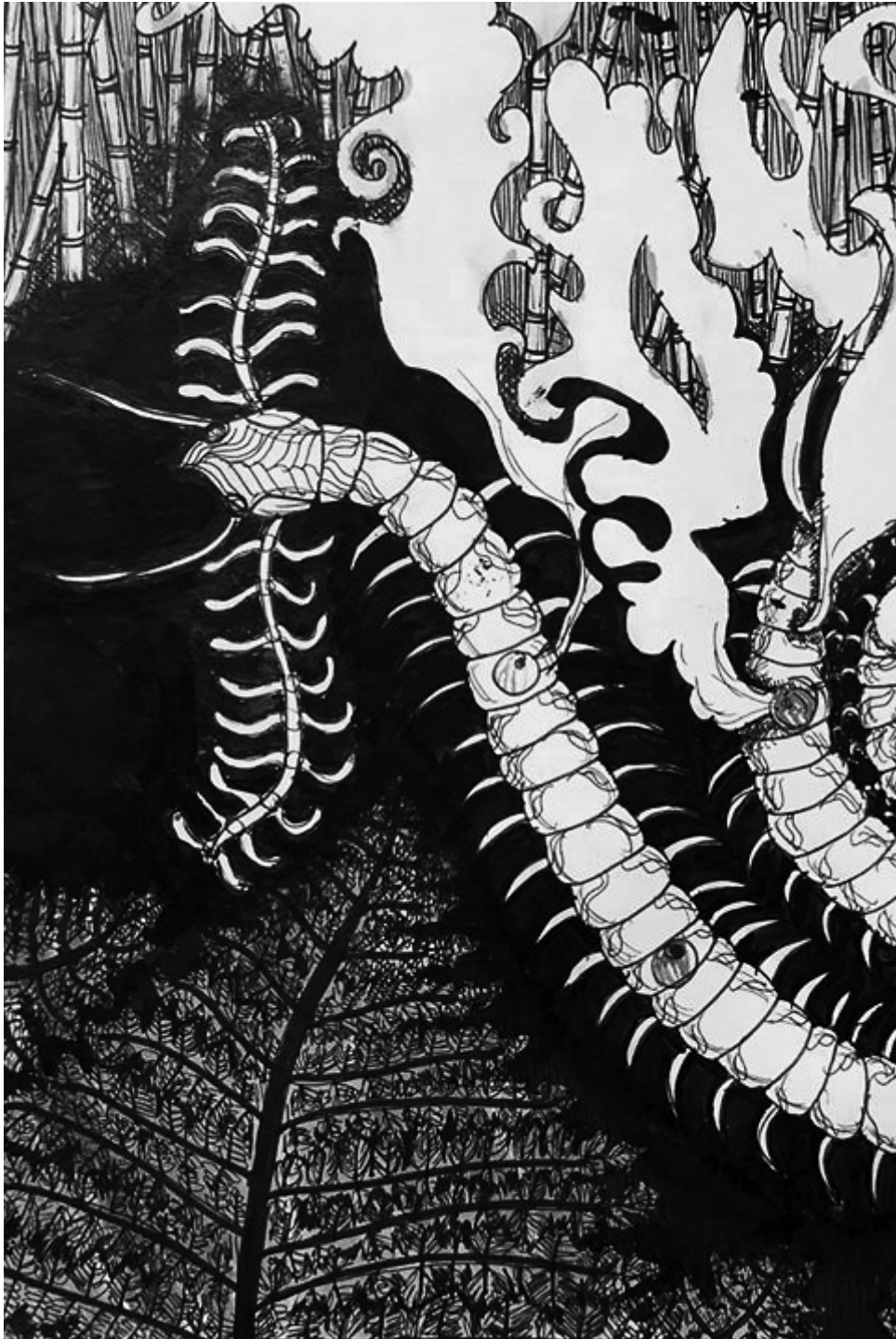
A screech rips through the air.

The god wrenches around to look at the children with a single dull eye dangling precariously from a wire and the black void of an empty socket.

“Lonely,” the god answers. Things click and scrape within her to make such an awful sound.

The children stagger and sprint, screaming—but Atieno is rooted to the spot, feet sunk into the thick wet sand. Dizzied, she leans closer.

The robot grits out, “Human. At last.” Then she stutters to a still, and crumbles into a pile of rusty metal to be swept up by the tide like an afterthought.



, Isabel Walker, Beast Project



THE SHIP THAT SAILS ETERNITY

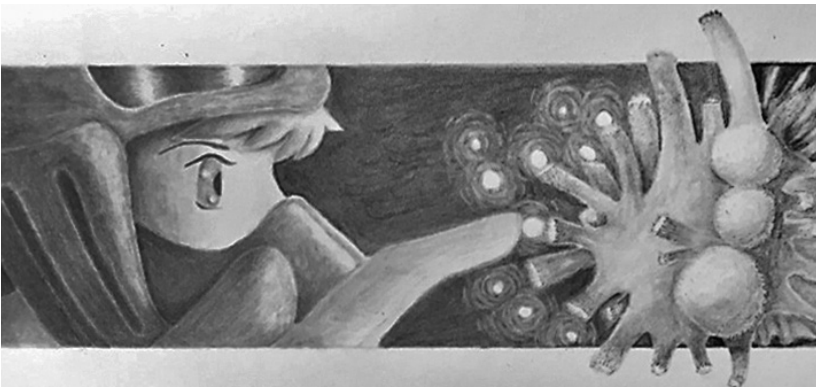
Justin Friday

I raise my sails against the windless void
Crewless, I steer the Legacy, slowly through the endless night.
I have no charts, no light to sail by
The stars long since swallowed by a black unfeeling sea.

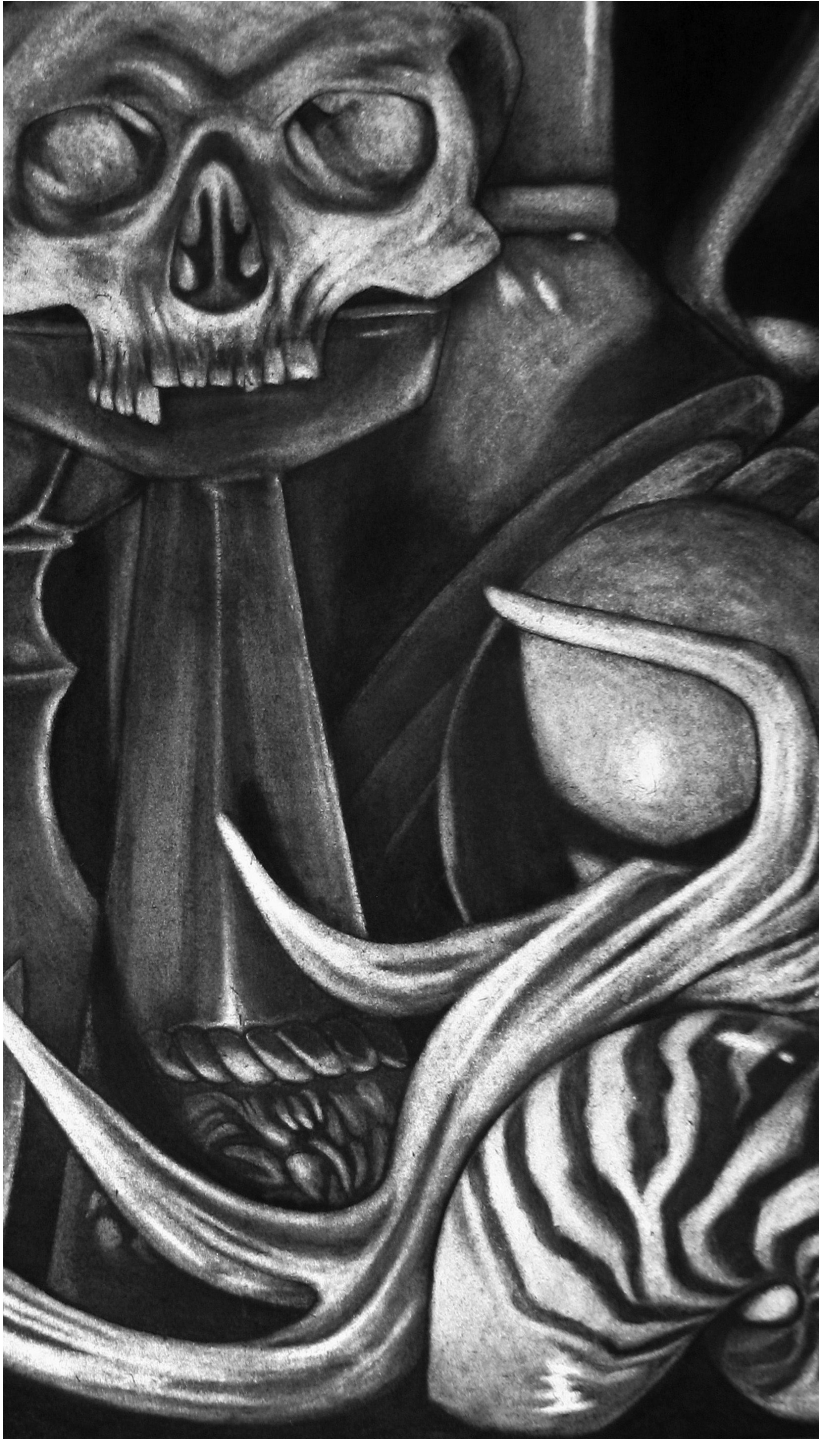
A formless serpent engulfed the horizon, and stretched across the sky
Until the sky itself was gone.
The sun, the moon, and all the heavenly hosts,
Lost forever in the beast's terrible maw.
Leaving only forever in its wake.

So now I wander cold and blind,
Across the sleeping dragon's back.
My life more like a fleeting scene,
That dances through the giant's dream.

So should I curse my onerous trawl and cast myself into the long
dark sea,
Or should I expire at the helm, and fade to dust while my ship
continues to roam.
I can only hope, and faintly dream
That my ship reach the shore of eternity.



Rain Potter, Fungal Forest





Michelle Rouch, Little Things

LEAVING

Fiona McKee

The sun is a pale, slowly setting disk outside the smudged window. The white-painted concrete of the wall feels cold against my back as I lean against it. On the steel table in front of me, my black Labrador lies motionless on a pile of fuzzy pink and yellow blankets. I've been at the clinic for several hours. Maddie's been here for three days.

The vet stands across from me, the table dividing us. She's pulled her hair back in a messy ponytail and is wearing a stained green lab coat. Funny, how those coats are called labs. Like my dog. The vet looks at me, then shakes her head.

"She won't make it," she says.

Maddie won't make it.

"We're giving her medication for the pain," says the vet. There is a little white nameplate on her coat that says her name is Rachel. "She'll be gone by tomorrow," continues the vet.

"Why?" I ask. I know the answer she'll give me: that Maddie had cancer and it was too late when everyone found out. But that's not really what I want to know. I want to, need to know more. I want to know why Maddie has to die, leaving me without wet dog kisses and reverberating barks when I get home from work each day. Why does my world have to change like this? Why couldn't she stay healthy?

"Like I said, she had cancer in her kidneys," says the vet. "It spread, and it was too late by the time you brought her here."

I nod. There's a crack at the base of the far wall. I stare at it.

"Well, I'll leave you with Maddie for a few minutes," says the vet. She walks to the beige-painted door, pulls it open, and disappears. It swings shut behind her, squeaking on unoiled hinges. I stand still for a moment, then walk over to look at my dog.

"Hey there, Maddie," I whisper. Maddie shifts her head slightly at the sound of her name. Her fur is dull and matted, and she is far too thin. She opens her eyes to look at me, and her tail thumps weakly a few times. I think I see a gleam of happiness in her eyes.

"You'll be gone soon," I murmur. "I'll be all alone."

Maddie keeps staring at me. Her eyes are the color of crisp

autumn leaves. I put my hand on her head.

She reminds me of a flower petal, ready to fall at the slightest touch.

“Mom loves you, all right?” I say. Maddie thumps her tail once, weakly, then closes her eyes again. I stand there for several moments, my hand on my dog’s head. My soon-to-be-gone dog. The room is silent at first. After a few seconds, I notice the sound of cars whizzing along the road outside. The clock ticks, although I can’t pinpoint where the sound is coming from. I hadn’t realized there was a clock in the room.

“Hey, Maddie,” I say softly. Maddie opens her eyes again. “I want you to know that I might get another dog, all right?” Maddie, for the first time, whines softly.

“I won’t forget you,” I add quickly. “I just. . . I don’t know. I kind of wanted to make sure it was okay with you, I guess. But I’ll never replace you. Don’t worry.”

Maddie thumps her tail. Suddenly, I smile. I scratch her behind her ears. Maddie always loves that.

There is a sudden knock on the door, and then the vet—Rachel—enters.

“Are you done?” she asks. “I’ll give you two more time if you want.”

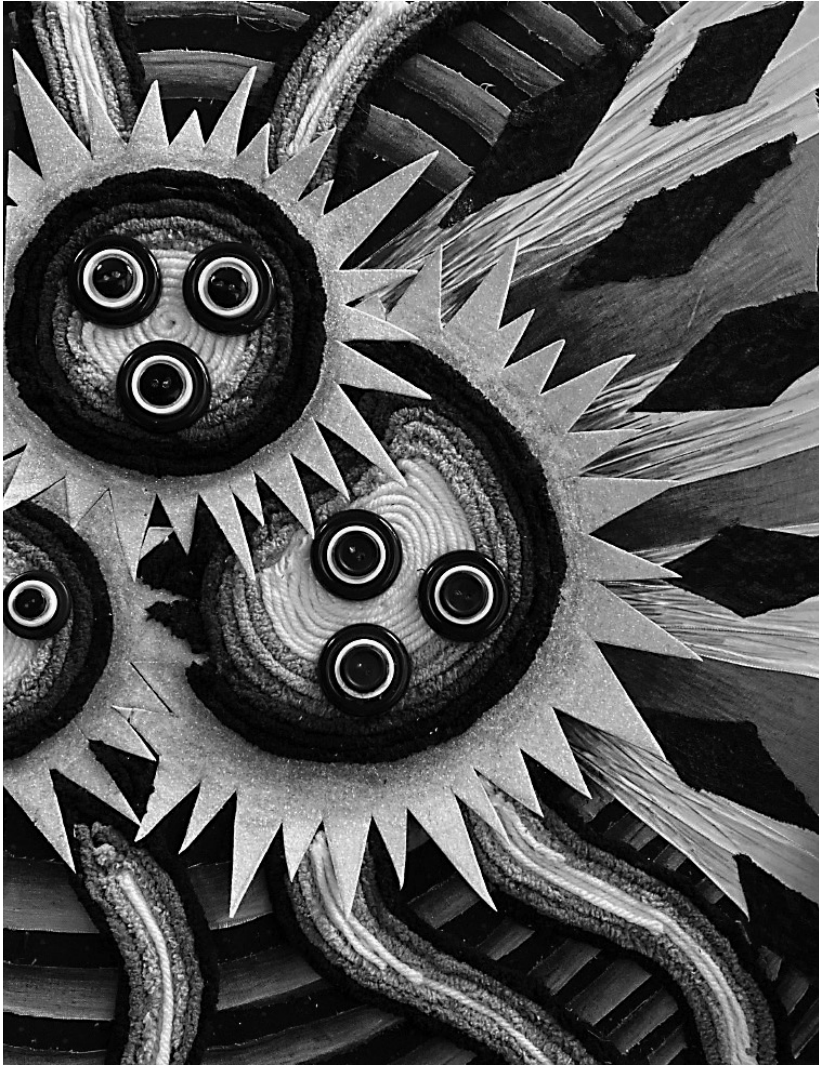
I look down at Maddie. She’s watching me. I nod.

“Yeah,” I say. “We’re done.”

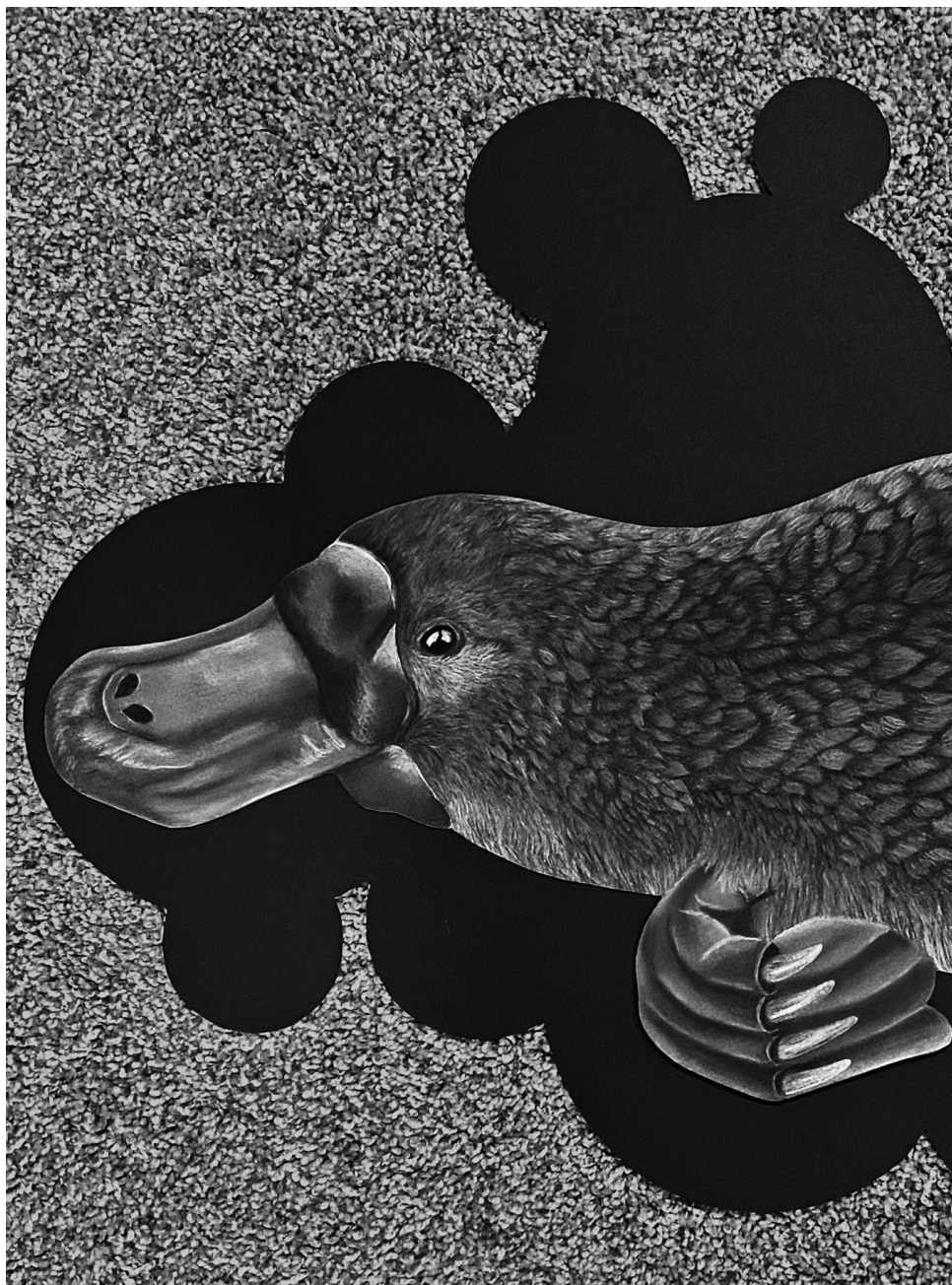
“Well, all the paperwork’s signed,” Rachel says. “You’re free to go when you like.”

I give Maddie a final pat on the head—the last time I’ll feel her fur. Then I pick up my bag and jacket and walk out the door. As I step outside, warm early-autumn air envelops me. Leaves have changed color, shedding their green pigment for a kaleidoscope of cheerful colors. They’ll fall soon, drifting to the ground, their beauty lost to the cold of winter. Maddie always liked romping through the leaves at this time of year. We would go for walks in the park, or hikes up in the mountain.

I reach my car and get in. For a couple moments, I just sit there. That was the last time I’ll see Maddie. Maddie, who’s been with me for ten years. Then I start the car and pull out of the parking lot, driving back to an empty house.



Amanda Smith, Sunbursts



Megan McIntosh, Platypus



RIMELIGHT

Marcus Pearson

Jane's hands sting in the night air, her arms—wrapped in several layers of ragged silk—at odds with her icy wrists. Even with the constant friction of rough-hewn wood digging into her palms, all she feels is frost and wind. She hears nothing but the rustling of autumn leaves and the constant throb of blood passing by her eardrums.

Thunk.

She stops digging.

Jane looks up from the shallow hole, her dark eyes still adjusting to the dim moonlight after taking in nothing but mottled dirt for so long. The trees, while mostly barren or nearing it, blot out just enough light to calm her nerves, though not completely. She takes a step back from the hole, tightening her grip on her shovel, and looks forward toward the treeline. A tense few seconds pass, but nothing other than birch returns her gaze.

A sigh of relief. Hot air turns to rime as it escapes her lips. Jane loosens her grip on the shovel, letting it fall into the upturned pile of dirt next to her as she hunkers down. Taking careful consideration in uncovering her bounty, Jane spends second after agonizing second removing the frozen dirt and stone resting on top, ignoring the numbness left behind in her extremities from her rapidly deserting warmth. Finally she stands back, eyes aglow, basking in her labored professionalism as the old artistry becomes visible once more. The dark oak planks of her prize curve in immaculate elegance around the base, silver linings and inlays coalescing into a familiar lion-graced crest. It's as beautiful as the day she saw it buried.

She pulls up on the coffin's lid. Nothing. Of course.

Moving quickly, as not to waste her already fleeting energy, Jane places her hands under the lip of the lid, scanning back and forth. She moves all the way to the head end before her fingers catch something odd. A loose wooden panel, about two inches wide, resting right in the center. Jane smiles, pulling the false panel out, allowing a previously hidden chained lock to hang freely. Now unobstructed, the small gilded lock attracts the meager light available, shining brilliantly, like a grounded morningstar.

I'm glad I came prepared then, thinks Jane.



Jane's hands sneak into her pockets, retrieving a small leather pouch. She trembles a bit as she inserts the tension wrench, her heartbeat growing louder as she fumbles with the lockpick in her other hand, knocking each pin into place like a clumsy, frozen child. They slide into place without resistance.

I shouldn't be surprised, thinks Jane. I doubt anyone else has tried this lately.

A soft click. She pulls up on the lid once more, hard this time.

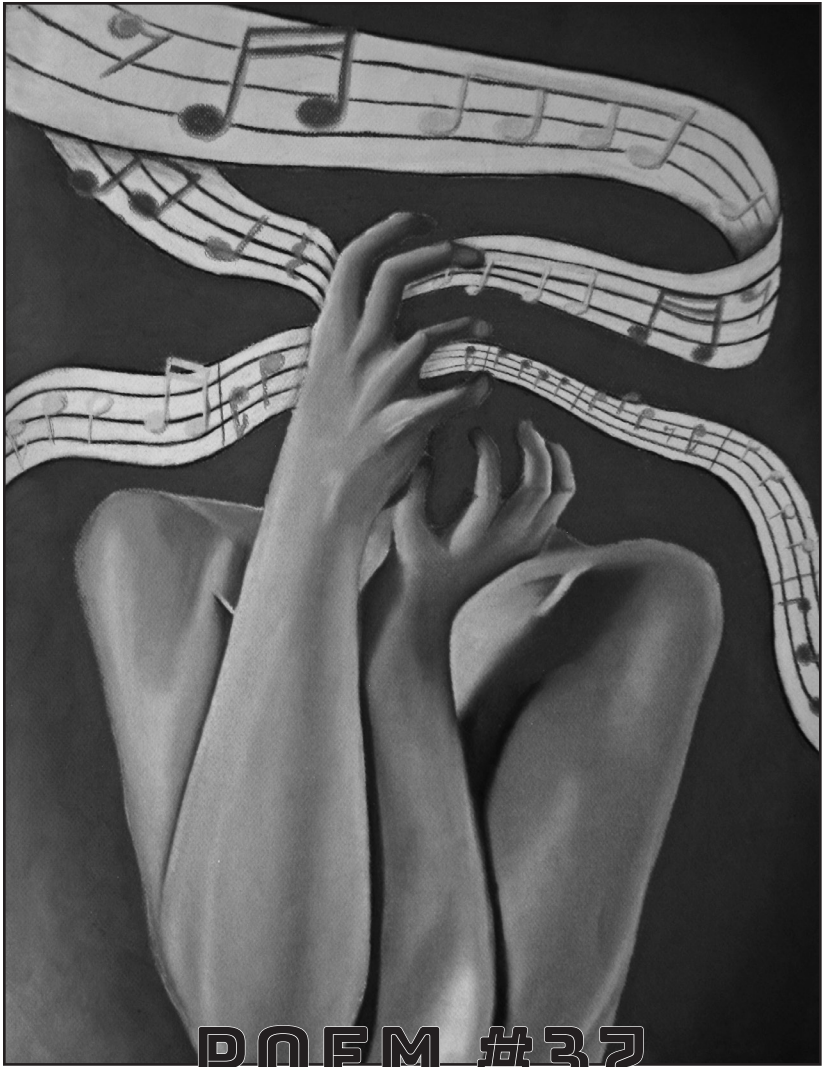
The lid pops off, sliding against the earthen wall. The coffin's purple velvet interior clashes against the muted brown and grey

of the cemetery, but Jane's eyes are focused on the corpse's chest. Sitting on pale, lifeless flesh lies a small dull jade necklace. She picks it up, turning it in her hands. Without thinking, Jane's hands tug sharply, breaking the thin chains keeping it tethered. Stuffing it in her pocket, she begins to step out of the hole, but stops. Jane takes one last look back. Her mother's sunken gaze stares back.

Jane looks away. *Even in death, she's disappointed.*



Tamara Stewart, *Charcoal Study*



POEM #37

Carl Wertman

I saw her only
once, at an
anonymous party,
but each winter
she sits on my
window sill
with the snow

INTERVIEW WITH LISA SHEIRER

Former Professor, Program Manager,
Computer Graphics and Photography

This year, the *Tuscarora Review* had the pleasure of interviewing Lisa Sheirer about her time as a professor at Frederick Community College, twenty amazing years, and her time with the *Tuscarora Review*. Lisa was born in western Maryland, near Cumberland, and currently lives in Frederick. She has a passion for the arts and is currently involved in the Frederick Book Arts, located in Frederick, Maryland. She highly encourages writers and those that enjoy the arts to stop by and see what they have to offer. We had to conduct this interview over a video conference, due to COVID-19, but it was fun and entertaining!

Tuscarora Review: Thanks so much for being willing to do this interview, Professor Sheirer. At what age did you begin to explore the world of art?

Professor Sheirer: Oh wow...that's a great question! I've been making art since I was really little. My mother encouraged me a good bit and they bought me art materials. Clay to make things with, like Play-Doh, and all sorts of drawing tools. They even set up a drawing board for me when I was a little kid. They wanted me to have my own space to make art, so it's just always been a part of me. As far back as I can remember, really.

Tuscarora Review: If you had to pick, what is your favorite kind of art to work with?

Professor Sheirer: That's hard, I don't know if I really could! Because I'm really a person that likes to switch it up, every now and



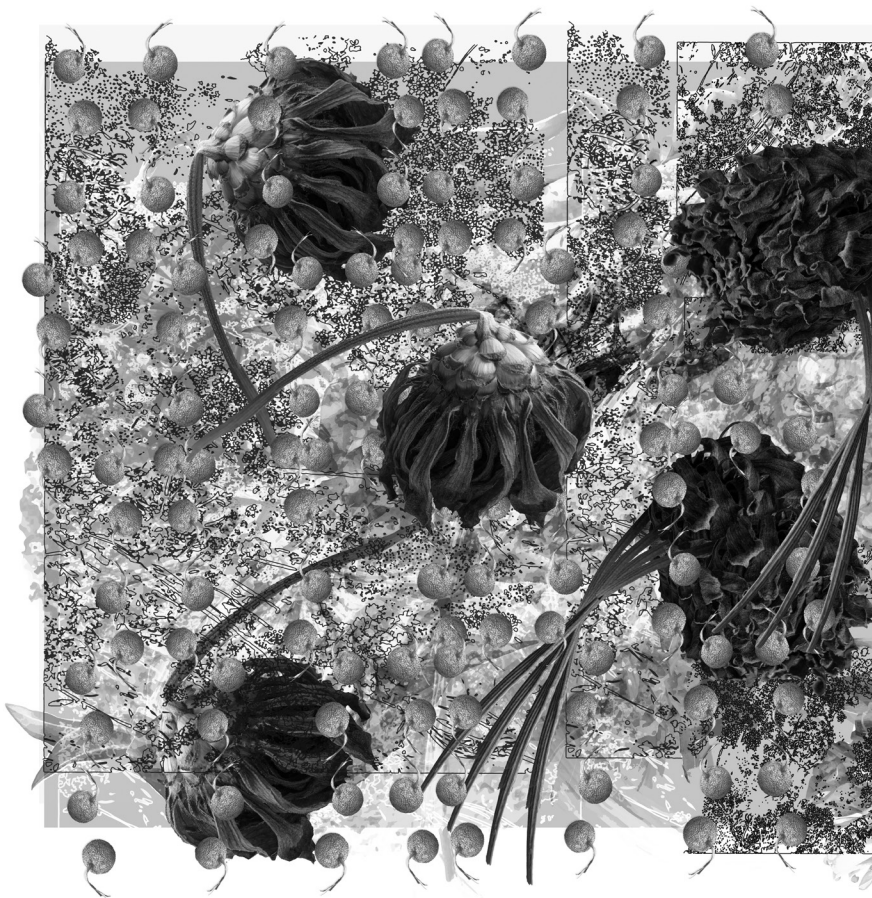
then, so I like trying different techniques and mediums and enjoy the fact that it pushes you a little further, even if you don't stick with it. I'm primarily known for digital work and photography, but I also do sculpture and print making.

I'm also pretty active now with the Frederick Book Arts, it's a new thing that opened up. Writers should really check it out, I'm on the board and we were really just starting to hit our stride when everything happened [COVID-19], this pandemic happened, which changed things, but we really want writers to come when this is over. There, writers can come and do all sorts of neat things, you can take classes on letterpress printing, and book binding. I was getting ready to take a class where we were going to write poems and then design and build a book by hand of our poetry. That was canceled because of the pandemic, but it'll be back! That's located though right in downtown Frederick [Maryland], and it's a really great asset. But anyway, I'm deviating a bit, it's just really, I feel like you can make art

out of anything. I really do. I've been talking a lot to art teachers of kids that are freaking out now because they're a ceramics professor, and obviously their kids at home don't have access to clay and kilns, glazes, so we have been talking a lot about what to do and using the materials that you have. It's been fun seeing what you can come up with.

Tuscarora Review: Definitely. So what classes did you teach at FCC when you were there?

Professor Sheirer: Oh, wow, so I was the program manager for computer design, or graphic design as it's known now ha-ha, and photography. So, I taught pretty much all the courses in that



Lisa Sheirer, Woo No. 4

program. So, like photography, digital photography, we also had dark room, but for this semester I doubt that class is working out too well. It's hard when you can't get into the dark room, but again, there are a lot of alternatives! Anyway, I also taught all of the graphic design classes. From level 1, all the way up to portfolio development, over the twenty years I was there.

Tuscarora Review: What was your favorite part of teaching art at FCC?

Professor Sheirer: You know, my favorite thing, I have two favorite things actually, and they occur right at the beginning and the end of the students' career at FCC. I love when at the level 1



graphic design class, when students start to ‘get it’ and it’s almost as though it snaps into focus or something. They’re just like suddenly understanding things! And, even if they’re not going to be graphic designers, because a lot of the students in the level 1 class are just taking it to fulfill a credit requirement, they begin to see how graphic design really impacts people. That is really great, or they fall in love with the tools, which are almost all digital. That kind of thing, is just really great.

At the opposite of that, if students stick with the program, they go all the way through and create a portfolio of their work. That is just really great. They also have to present it to professional designers, so they really have to think about what they are going to say about their work and how graphic design solves all these different problems and that’s just really wonderful to see. To see them come from not really understanding much about graphic design at all, thinking ‘Oh, I just really love the computer and I’m just going to be on the computer’ to that it is actually a very important communication art form. It needs to communicate things very directly to people.

Tuscarora Review: That’s a lot like what we do in Creative Writing class, which often leads into taking the Creative Writing Practicum course that focuses on the *Tuscarora Review*, things like the editorial board and using those skills. So, you were a huge part of the *Tuscarora Review* for a number of years, and for those reading this interview that may not be aware, what was your role with the magazine?

Professor Sheirer: Okay yeah! Yeah, I worked with the *Tuscarora Review* for nineteen years. Originally, it had been *The Dogwood Tree* and there were two English professors, Mary Noelle and Pam Clark (who’s now Pam Lilly), they were the two faculty advisors at that time. They had asked me, because they had been going to an outside graphic design firm to produce the magazine. So, they had asked me if I would be willing to do it, so I was the graphic designer for it and also in charge of photographing student’s artwork for the magazine and just kind of collecting all the pieces and putting it together using design into an actual publication. So, that’s mainly what I did for a lot of years until they ran into some budget issues and they couldn’t pay me anymore, so I thought ‘Well... why don’t we use graphic

students at FCC?’ because it’s a great experience for them. To have to pull together from so many places, pieces, and pull it all together as a publication.

For the last four, maybe five or so years, we have had students do this and pull together the magazine. The whole class located the ingredients, I have a large binder on a Google Drive, and we put all the photos and edited work, and then they have to put it together. That included finding captions for all the images, and putting together a table of contents, which... well is harder than it seems! Making sure all of it is there and on the right pages. Coming up with a cover design that really fits the interior content of the magazine. So that’s what I was kind of responsible for, either myself, or the whole class. They would each do a cover design, and the whole class would help pick. Although, this year that may be different! It’s such a great project. You’re always working with words when you’re a visual designer, which is very cool. It really gives them a great portfolio piece, too.

Tuscarora Review: What was your favorite addition of the Tuscarora Review that you had a hand in releasing, looking back?

Professor Sheirer: Oh my gosh! I don’t know if I have a favorite. They’re all so different! I don’t really have a favorite. It was really cool when we got the funding to do the color inserts, because most of the magazine is black and white, it’s nice when you can have more color, but yeah, I don’t know. You know, actually, there was one that had a Barbie sculpture on the cover, and that was really, really cool. That was one of my favorites actually! It’s interesting, but it seems that having a face on the cover of some sort seems to be more attractive to people. When they are walking by and see the printed versions, it really seems to catch their eye, the colorfulness. Colorful really is part of the criteria for the cover because the magazine is so small that it really has to scream at people, ‘Hey! Pick me up! Read me!’

Tuscarora Review: For sure, and this edition is a huge milestone, a very special anniversary for the magazine. The 40th anniversary of the *Tuscarora Review*, which is super exciting. So, looking towards the future, as someone that

has poured almost twenty years into that where would you like to see it go? Do you have any things that you'd like to see incorporated into the magazine?

Professor Sheirer: I would love to see the funding for perfect binding. That's the binding that is glued, and has a bit of a spine to it, instead of the staples, which is called stitching. But even more so, I'd love to see more of a connection between FCC, Hood College, and maybe even Mount St. Mary's, where all of those groups come together and make a project. I think everyone benefits from that, students could see that Hood has a really great and strong creative writing program and also puts out a very strong magazine as well. So does Mount St. Mary's, and you could even expand and include Shepherd University, who has another really great magazine with lots of good writing.

I just really feel like those collaborations could be nice for FCC students who are writers thinking about where they may want to transfer too, if they are looking to transfer maybe locally. Also, more of a partnership with writing groups in the area, because there are many in the Frederick area, some of them are really high-level people that have won prestigious awards for their poetry or writing. So that could be another really cool opportunity, for beginner writers to work with more seasoned professional ones. Oh, my goodness! I just... my college professors were just fabulous and I thought 'I'm better suited to teach at a college level than I would be to teach at a grade school.' It was really the teachers and seeing the life that they had, although teaching now is very different. It's much higher stress than it was when I was in college in the '70's.

Tuscarora Review: What is a piece of advice that you would give college students in the arts, especially now, during this pandemic? It seems that life after this will look much different as well, so what is a piece of advice that you would give to young aspiring artists?

Professor Sheirer: I think it's the not knowing what the future will bring, that is tricky. I can say that being sixty-two years old, living through 9/11, the AIDS pandemic, it does change how we are and I do think that for students, you are in college at a good time actually. Because, I think once the economy comes back, there will

be so many jobs opened up that require creative thinking. [huge cat walks in] Don't buy huge cats, that's my word of advice ha-ha! No, just kidding, sorry ha-ha, that's not my real advice. Problem solving is an important skill, and some of those jobs would utilize problem solving to the max. Bank tellers have to be creative, as well as artists and musicians. I'd say, be positive about the future. Oh, and nothing beats a good liberal arts degree. Nothing. Try to keep your eye on the prize, be flexible, be positive.

Tuscarora Review: Last but not least, what is your favorite memory of your time at FCC?

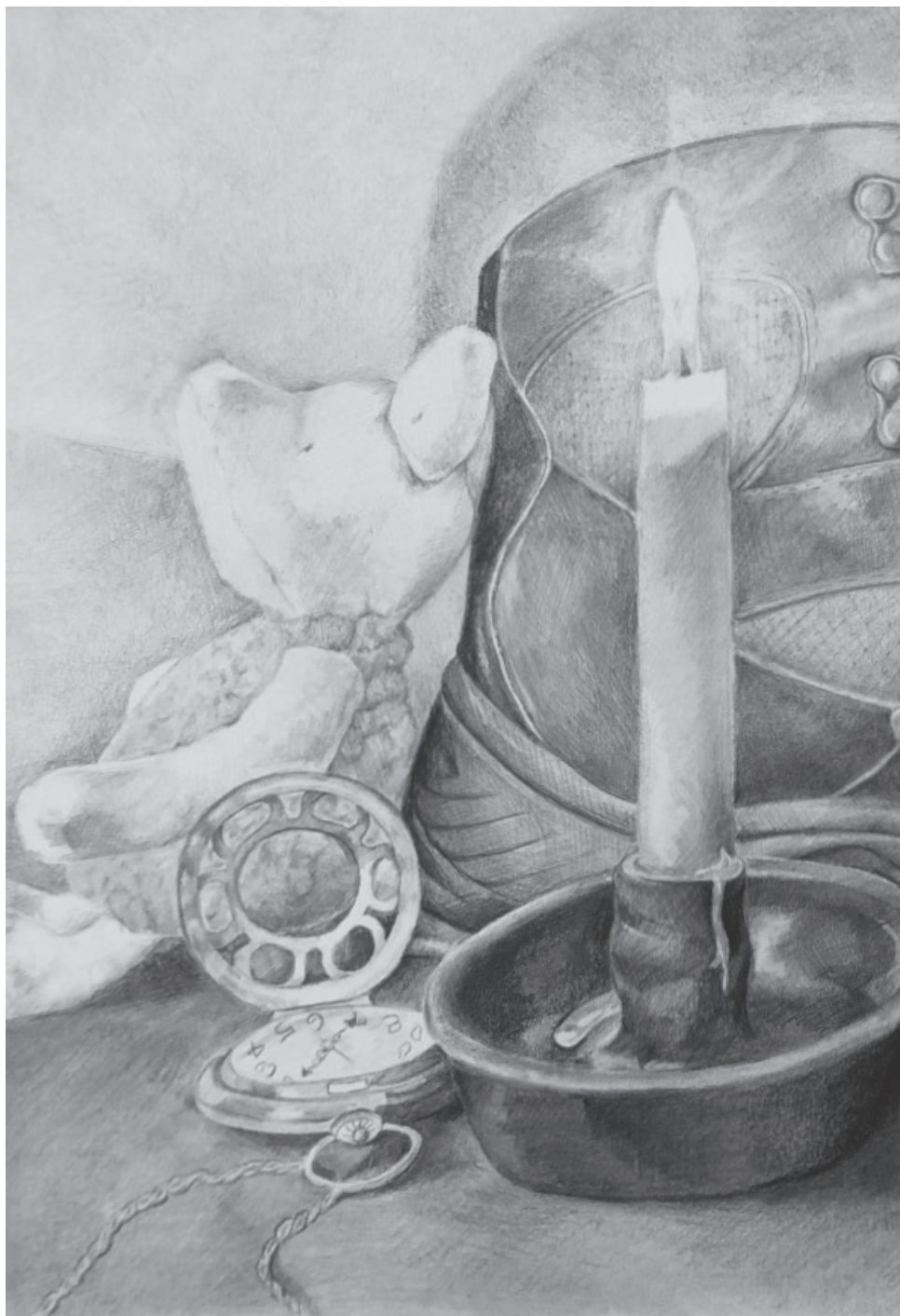
Professor Sheirer: Oh my gosh! Uh...so so many things! I don't know if I have one specific thing, but I just love it when different disciplines come together. So I've really enjoyed my partnership with the English department, and not just with the *Tuscarora Review* but with working with the student newspaper. Oh, I love the student newspaper for FCC! Journalistic writing is just so important, and I highly encourage trying it if you enjoy writing. It's such an important skill, being able to write directly from facts! I just love the collaborations, community college is so fluid, people aren't stuck in their own worlds. There are no better professors on the planet than there are at FCC. I've been to all kinds of schools, worked for a few other schools, but there are none better than the professors at FCC.

Tuscarora Review: Thank you so much, Lisa. This was a super fun interview, and I enjoyed meeting you and one of your cats! Thanks for all you do for the arts.



Michael Pue, Hell's Dystopia





Grace Dutrow, 5 Most Important Things



ICE-CREAM AFTER DINNER

Nycol Lyons

I just can't seem to get over it,
This vexatious desire for stability:
Ice cream after dinner
Driving home with no GPS.
To be needed like a tree's roots
Rather than admired as its leaves.
Roots
Yes, I want to be rooted.
To know who I am and to become it.
To love where I am, not run from it.



Taylor Moles, Beast



Michelle Rouch, *Beast*

Colophon

This edition of the Tuscarora Review is set in Georgia, designed by Matthew Carter in 1993, hinted by Tom Rickner for the Microsoft Corporation. The headlines are set in Bungee Inline, designed by David Jonathan Ross in 2016. Captions are set with IBM Plex Serif, designed by Mike Abbink and Bold Monday in 2018.



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