



2016

TUSCARORA

A FREDERICK COMMUNITY
COLLEGE MAGAZINE OF
THE CREATIVE ARTS

REVIEW

36th Edition



Meghan McKee, *Untitled* – Painting

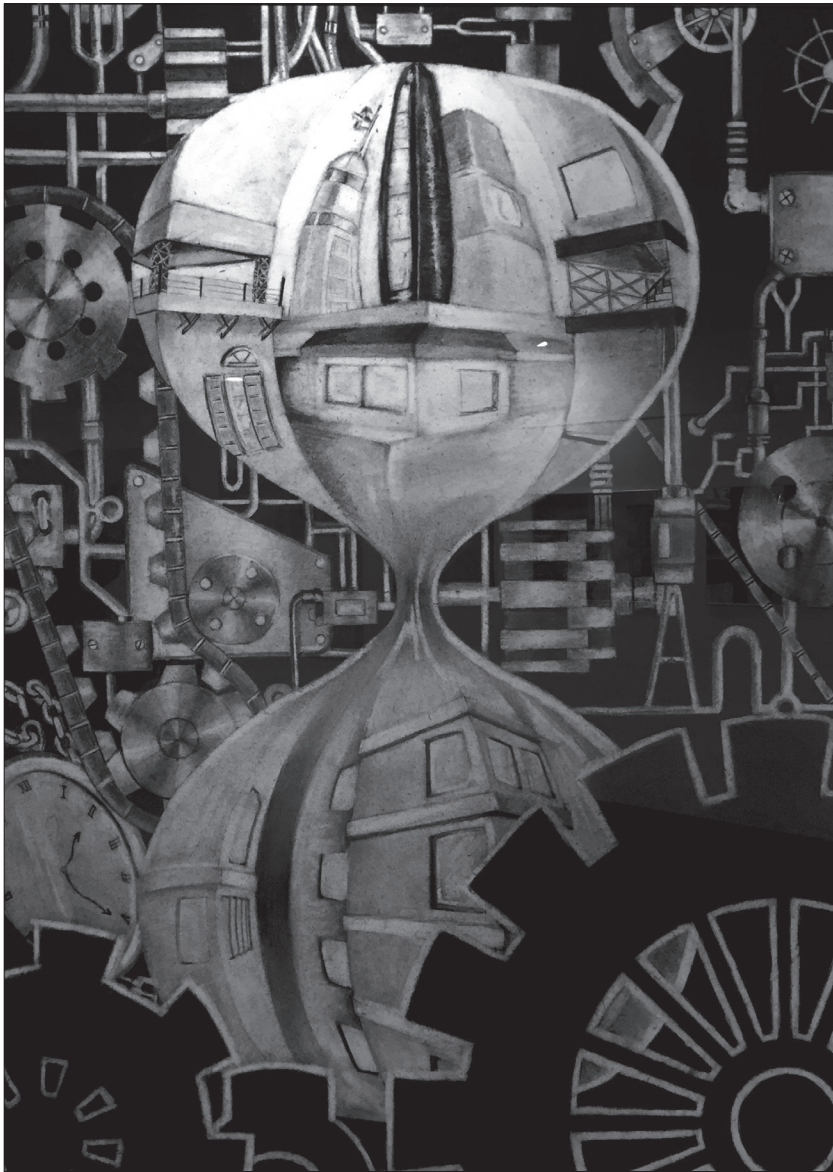
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Cheng Wei Wu, *Untitled* – Drawing

MISSION STATEMENT

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

Submission information for the 2017 edition is available at:
www.frederick.edu/tuscarorareview

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

It's that time of year again! The 36th annual edition of the *Tuscarora Review* is here and we've spent all Spring semester picking out the best of Frederick Community College's literature and visual art submitted over the last year. The 2015 publication celebrated its 35th anniversary with a tribute to the *Tuscarora Review's* roots and its original name *The Dogwood Tree*. This year we're turning a new leaf as we look to the future, hoping to continue a great tradition with the 36th edition.

We received a wonderful assortment of literary and visual art this year. The board selected some beautifully written and expressive poetry and a few outstanding and engaging short stories. The visual art is stunning and diverse with a variety of drawings, paintings, digital artwork, photography, ceramics, and mixed media. The styles vary greatly, ranging from portraits to landscapes to the abstract.

As students and faculty are aware, Frederick Community College opened the Spring 2016 semester with a newly renovated and expanded library, now called the "Learning Commons." Be sure to check out the interview with Library Executive Director Mick O'Leary.

This magazine couldn't have been done without the hard work of some integral individuals. I would like to personally thank my co-editors Stephen James and Paul Stark for their dedication and attention to detail; our advisor, Professor Ramón Jones, for guiding us through the editorial process; Lisa Sheirer for design and production, Wendell Poindexter for layout and art selection; and Cheryl Peterson for production.

The *Tuscarora Review* is published annually in the spring but takes submissions throughout the year. If you would like to see yourself in print, be sure to submit your literature and art for next year's publication!

— Ryan Slicer



**Brina Dove
Untitled
Photograph**

DEDICATION – SANDY TOMS — MARCH 11, 1961 – MAY 1, 2015



Sandy Toms

On May 1, 2015, the FCC family lost a dear family member when Sandy Toms, Assistant Director of dining services, passed away. To honor Sandy, the editorial board of the *Tuscarora Review* is sharing the words written by her children:

Every day we miss her. She was a support system, role model, and, without a doubt, the best mother, wife, and friend. Now she is gone but certainly not forgotten. Her unconditional love touched so many people that a sadness is still felt because of her absence. It didn't matter if she

knew you for years or minutes, she was always warm and welcoming. That first week she was gone, we didn't really grasp the reality of her not being here. It wasn't until that first week back to school and all we wanted to do was call her on my way home. Because that's what my brother and I did.

That is something that we share now: how much we miss that call and the way she knew if something was wrong just by saying "Hello." You couldn't hide anything from her; she was observant and knew someone no matter where we went. Randy and I couldn't go anywhere without running into someone who knew Mom or Dad. And chances are they knew everything about us because if you knew Sandy Toms, you knew about Sandy Toms, her kids, her devoted husband, her adoptive daughter Danielle, and her spoiled dog, Tessa. She was a proud mother & wife who built her life for us. Mom would come home after working all day & would tell us about her staff and the students she met at FCC and what they were studying. She took the time to know and care for people, and was a mother to everyone. It wasn't uncommon to hear people call her "Mama Toms" on the regular.

Sandy was a friend to many & had friendships that lasted decades. She was a support system who was always reliable. It's hard being without her. I would give anything just hear her laugh one more time & to see her face. I miss the way her eyes would smile when she was happy. This was my dad's favorite part about her. The love that they had for each other was & still is unparalleled. My brother & I were lucky enough to see that kind of love. After thirty-three years of marriage, I saw the love between them grow more & more each day. So as we go on with our lives, we will always remember that distinct laugh & her smiling eyes, her love of all things lime green, the love she had for her friends and family, & that warming presence that was felt when you were around her. We love & miss you Sandy....

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Caitlin Duke, *Beast* – Drawing

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

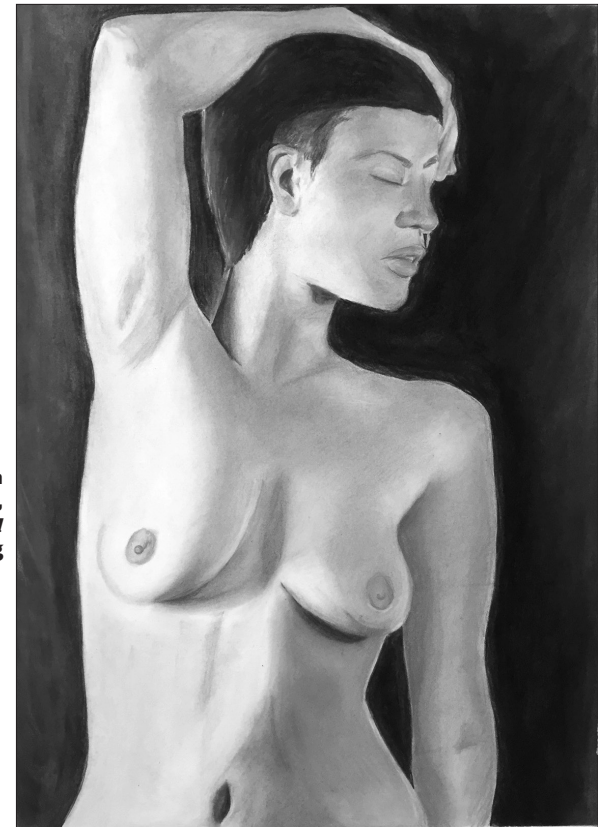
A SONNET FOR LIL

John Hovde

My love loves turning her fertile dirt
with fingernails broken and blackened by soil.
She frames discomfort in a worn skirt,
Her posture shaped by passionate toil.
My dissolute song at our wedding bower,
like a mockingbird's drunken excuses sung;
a honeybee intoxicated on the barley flower,
shadows her with frosty tongue.
Short days, short tempers and Winter strife,
my shamefaced reticence provokes only silence.
Come the advent of Spring and a rush to life, then
aphids and potato bugs incite her to violence.
She destroys and grows with the exuberance of living;
My transgressions forgotten, she is Gaia forgiving.



Felicity Alvino, *Untitled* – Photography



Elizabeth
Robley,
Untitled
Painting

PASSING STORM

John Hovde

After the death of love there is
a heaviness in the heart, an interment of life.
Accumulating weight of loss and despair
Strikes the chest like clods, smothering joy
And darkening tomorrow's promise.

After the storm, feculent heaviness oppresses the air.
Birdsong is a hollow requiem
chanted through the wet canopy of
a chapel frescoed with decomposing pastels of spring.
The storm has gone and peace reigns.

Breathing is autonomic; the familiar odor of worms flavors the air.



Meghan McKee, *Untitled* – Mixed Media

DETROIT SUMMER 1949

Susan Morgan-Chandler

Body temperatures rise;
Brains slow.
Heavy salted sweat sticks to clothes,
Like unwanted ghosts, to body parts and crevasses.
Evening descends on Detroit.

Mother holds me in her arms, miserable from the heat
As Dad eagerly drives us to refuge.
Mother frets with him, hoping to make him unhappy too.
But he is unflappable.
The Packard is our escape.

We drive in silence.
Cross the blue-green Detroit River to its center, Canada on the far shore.
Touch land on Belle Isle,
Five miles of guaranteed relief
From the sweltering city tenement building called home.

My parents find a space and spread a blanket for us to sleep on.
Soon, lazily with low voices, the island is covered with other blankets.
Regular people, tired from work or caring for children,
Stretch out hot bodies into the coolness of the river's air
As minds are lulled into dullness by the lapping of waves unto the shore.

I lie between my parents, a baby,
And stare up at the night sky from whence I come,
Engulfed in mother and father's new love
Which can come fleetingly, early in marriage.
My parents quiet as a veil of stars softly reveals itself.

Under the night sky, held tightly between my parents,
River water swishing sounds
Remembered as in my mother's womb.
I feel truly safe, welcomed and loved.
I am in Creation and Creation is in me.

VIETNAM AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN SOLDIER: AN EXAMINATION OF “THE RED CONVERTIBLE” AND THE EFFECTS OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER ON THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND HIS FAMILY

Ryan Slicer

The short story “The Red Convertible” written in 1984 by Louise Erdrich tells the tale of two American Indian brothers and their relationship as the older brother, Henry, is drafted into the U.S. Marines and sent overseas to fight in the Vietnam War. The story is told through the eyes of Lyman, Henry’s younger brother and the story’s protagonist. They share ownership of a red 1960s Oldsmobile convertible, a key symbol throughout the narrative. Once a happy, optimistic, and promising young man, Henry returns to Lyman and their mother a completely different person, a direct result of his time in Vietnam, which led to him suffering severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Damaged extensively from the traumas of war, he undergoes a drastic change in mood, his relationships and social interactions, and his overall emotional well-being. This inevitably leads to his own death by drowning, a possible and likely suicide. It is arguable, however, that Henry did not have his full mental faculties and was not in a conscious state of mind to follow through with killing himself knowingly. Regardless, the severity of Henry’s PTSD was, without a doubt, real and ruthless, likely even more so than that of other in-country veterans. While PTSD affected many Vietnam veterans of all races, it had more severe and drastic effects on American Indian Vietnam veterans. This is, in large part, due to the circumstances of their military service and cultural backgrounds.

Before Henry’s draft date and service, Lyman tells a story of their life together and the adventures they went on and the people they encountered. By all accounts, Henry is a sociable and optimistic young man. He enjoys life to its fullest despite the brothers coming from a poor, fatherless reservation family. Henry and Lyman make do with what they have and even embark on a road trip in the red Oldsmobile convertible they bought together. They even picked up a hitchhiker named Susy and gladly drove her all the way home to Alaska, where they stayed with her family for some months. At this point in the story, the reader really sees the early aspects of Henry’s character. Susy shows them how exceptionally long her hair is, which prompts Henry to get her to jump on his shoulders so he can swing her and her hair around and around. It’s a small, impromptu event but it’s these types of happy and humorous occasions that really portray Henry and the person he was pre-Vietnam and pre-PTSD.

Henry was drafted in 1969 and was fighting in Vietnam the following year. Lyman says, “[T]hen the next thing you know we get an overseas letter from him. It was 1970, and he said he was stationed up in the northern hill country” (128). It is evident that Erdrich did substantial research prior to writing “The



Felicity Alvino, *Untitled* – Photography

Red Convertible" or had anecdotal evidence from personal accounts of actual American Indian Vietnam Veterans because her fictional story contains several truths and realities. According to the National Center for PTSD, a branch of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, American Indian Vietnam Veterans "were more likely than any other ethnic group to serve in the Marines (the branch of service with the most combat duty) and in the northernmost sector of Vietnam (I-corps, the area under greatest enemy attack)." ("Psychological Trauma for American Indians") Henry fell into both of these categories. He was drafted as a Marine and fought in the "northern hill country" (Erdrich 128), making him one of the most susceptible to the extreme traumas, violence, and subsequent PTSD of any in-country active-duty soldier. American Indian Vietnam Veterans such as Henry were exposed to horrendous acts of violence and trauma. The National Center for PTSD states:

More than one in two American Indian Veterans experienced war-related trauma in Vietnam. The war traumas included being on frequent or prolonged combat missions in enemy territory; encountering ambushes and firefights; being attacked by sappers, snipers, artillery, or rockets; and witnessing death and terrible harm to their own or others' bodies. Traumas also included being under fire on helicopters, cargo and reconnaissance aircraft, patrol boats, and cargo trucks and being on very hazardous duty such as walking point or being a radio operator, medic, scout, tunnel rat, perimeter sentry, long range patrol, or door gunner. ("Psychological Trauma for American Indians")

It isn't clear what Henry did in the Marines while in Vietnam but he certainly saw combat and the traumas and evils that come with it. Being Native American also increased his chances of encountering violence and combat because American Indian soldiers were more often selected for missions or even shot at by friendly fire simply because of their skin color and its resemblance to that of the Vietnamese (Beals et al. 95). In the book *Healing Journeys: Study Abroad with Vietnam Veterans*, author Raymond Scurfield documents one American Indian Vietnam Veteran's own personal account:

One American Indian soldier became painfully aware of the difference between his own tribal warrior culture and the war in Vietnam: We went into a ville one day after an air strike. The first body I saw in Nam was a little kid. He was burnt up—napalm—and his arms were kind of curled up. He was on his back but his arms were curled and sticking up in the air. Made me sick. It turned me around. See, in our way we're not supposed to kill women and children in battle. The old people say it's bad medicine and killing women and children doesn't prove that you're brave. It's just the opposite. (82)

American Indians were proud and honored not only to serve their country but also "wanted to become warriors to protect their families, to uphold the honor of their tribes, and to prove themselves as men" ("Psychological Trauma for American Indians"). However, reality was far from this and many American Indian soldiers had problems reconciling the differences between their cultural traditions and the values of the U.S. military and the brutal atrocities of the war. While it is not explicitly stated whether Henry had such experiences, it is certainly quite

likely and assumed as much. When he returns to Lyman, his younger brother immediately recognizes he is different and that "the change was no good." Henry was "jumpy and mean" and "always up and moving around" (129). And when he could sit still, he had an overly extreme fascination with Lyman's color television, so much so that "it was the only time he was completely still" (129). But it wasn't a true calmness, as Lyman describes it as "the kind of stillness that you see in a rabbit when it freezes and before it will bolt" (129). The trauma is clearly evident and leads to the incident where Henry unknowingly bites his own lip so badly that

it begins bleeding. His mother and Lyman don't know what to do and say nothing as they all eat dinner. And with no regard for his broken lip, Henry continued to the point of bleeding all over his food and eating it.

Henry's negative behavior and standoffishness affected Lyman, their mother, and the rest of the reservation tremendously. "They got to leaving him alone most of the time, and I didn't blame them," Lyman says (129). Henry was so badly affected by his PTSD that no one knew how to help. Lyman and his mother briefly discuss sending him to

"But what could anyone do that had never experienced PTSD themselves or been in a situation where a loved one is suffering in such a way?"

a "regular" hospital off the reservation but they quickly dismiss it. Lyman states, "We wouldn't get him there in the first place, so let's just forget about it" (129). Lyman understands that Henry is so entirely consumed by the tragedies and violence that he witnessed and participated in while stationed in Vietnam. But what could anyone do that had never experienced PTSD themselves or been in a situation where a loved one is suffering in such a way? As tightknit a community as reservation life is, they must have all felt entirely helpless.

One mechanism that often helped American Indian Vietnam Veterans was reintegration into the cultural traditions of their people and the use of traditional healing ceremonies. However, Henry was a Northern Plains Indian from North Dakota, and according to the National Center for PTSD, "[T]he Northern Plains Veterans had great difficulty in rejoining the very tightly knit extended families and communities of their tribes after the war. For example, only one in seven of these Veterans had participated in a traditional healing ceremony, compared to one in two Southwest Indian Veterans." Not only was Henry affected severely with PTSD as a result of his American Indian heritage but he even suffered more severely with less hope of recovery than other American Indian Vietnam Veterans from other tribes.

In a last ditch effort to do anything he could to save Henry from himself, Lyman destroys the red Oldsmobile convertible, which he had so painstakingly kept in topnotch order while Henry was away in Vietnam. And because Henry was so lost within his own mind, it took him months to realize the car wasn't like it used



McKenna Sites, *Untitled* – Drawing

to be before the war. Eventually, Henry gets to work fixing up the Olds, and there is a glimmer of hope that maybe this will help him cope with all that he'd been through. Ultimately, however, at the end of the story, Henry admits to knowing Lyman intentionally trashed the car to hopefully alleviate Henry's pain. It is as if Henry believes he is so far gone from his former self, which may be what pushes him to jump into the swollen, overflowing river and kill himself.

Suicide is the ultimate trauma for a family and community. And while the story may end with a bit of closure for Lyman, as he sends the convertible off into the river, Henry's suicide certainly still had an impact. In a collection of personal accounts of Native American Vietnam Veterans called "Vietnam Powwow: The Vietnam War as Remembered by Native American Veterans," American Indian Vietnam Veteran Steve Gano says, "The doctor down in Missoula flat told me that a lot of vets were committing suicide over this thing, and that doctors really don't know what to do to help them." So at the time, even doctors with experience in war trauma didn't know what to do to stop or curtail these suicides by Vietnam Veterans. Gano later goes on to add, "The figures for 1988 by the vet organizations figure that 60,000 vets will probably commit suicide this year." It's a startlingly high number and, sadly, it most certainly included many American Indian veterans.

Louise Erdrich's "The Red Convertible" illuminates an often overlooked and underrepresented facet of American society. Not only were all Vietnam Veterans coming home defeated, traumatized, and largely ridiculed by the general public but American Indian Veterans were suffering even more so. They encountered extreme violence, combat, and racism, leading to the highest percentages of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder by race. Yet, according to the National Center for PTSD, "American Indians and Native Hawaiians received combat service medals more often than individuals in other ethnic groups." So despite the immense and unimaginable hardships they endured, American Indian Vietnam Veterans should be remembered and celebrated for their actions and heroism in the face of unknowable trauma above and beyond the call of duty.

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Maria Rivera, *Slip Trailin' Pot* – Ceramics



Michelle Rouch, *Man's Best Friend* – Drawing

MISTRAL

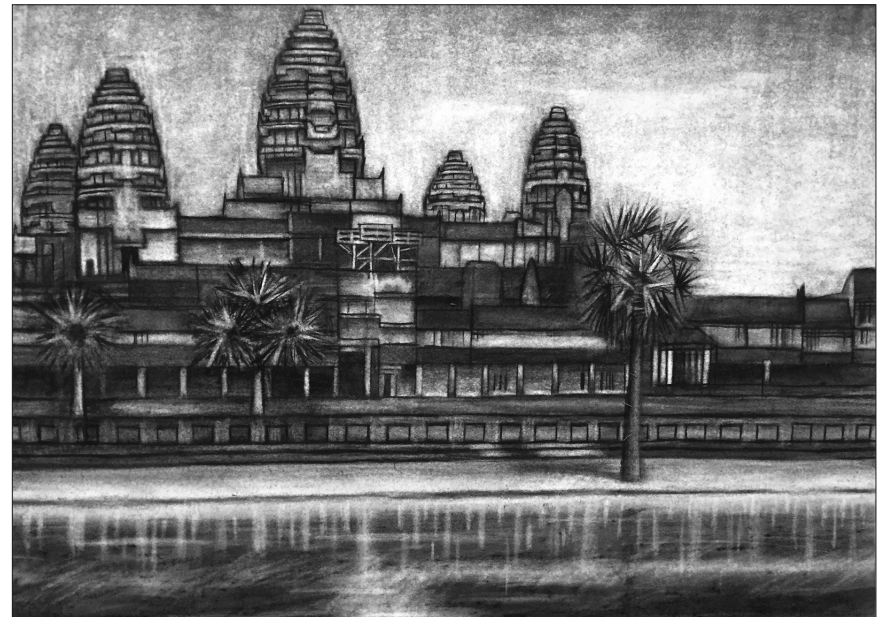
John Hovde

"The invisible and creeping wind," repeated Maitland.

"They say pigs can see the wind."

Patrick O'Brian – *Master and Commander*

It's no small wonder that swine are often inattentive and occasionally surly.
It's a gift and a curse to see what approaches, pushed
by the whimsical face blowing from the margin of an ancient map.
What unseen tools sculpt malleable clouds above us;
celestial chisels, divine torches, anvils of evolution?
The snake's gift is to taste the air, bats can hear the sky and
hounds can smell the past. Mankind imagines a final work, but
the shape of his world lies hidden in the medium.
Then, the artists changes as she creates;
her vision flows as time does. Her masterpiece is unseen,
the breath of Boreas has yet to reach the edge.



Joshua Soumphant, *Know Thy Self* – Drawing



Alexi Day, *Envy* – Digital Drawing



Jennifer Farrow, *Self Portrait* – Drawing

Damn it! Late again. This will be the third time this month. I'm not sure bringing breakfast to the morning meeting will save my ass this time. And this asshole in front of me going 35 in a 40 isn't helping, either! DAMNIT! Passing that jackass spilled my coffee. It's all over my leg! Do I still have my spare suit in my office? Why did I have to buy a house out here in the boonies? Even the commute to this job was more stress than I could handle. My tires screech as I stop at an intersection by the black graveyard; that's when I notice him. He is dressed in some thin layers, a clean brown coat over a faded plaid shirt. He is reading a small hardback book, sitting on a dent in the metal guard rail. It is a nasty dent, like someone had been run off the road, but there isn't a car nearby. Curiosity gets the better of me, and I roll down my window to ask, "Hey! You alright, Mister?"

The man hurries over to my car to respond.

"Yeah, I'm alright." I expect his voice to be rough and graveled—he looks like the kind of man who enjoys cheap liquor and cheaper cigarettes. But his voice is clean, just like the rest of him.

"Are you waiting for someone?" I ask.

"No. I just need a ride."

"Where are you headed?"

"Bethesda." He smiles at me, his white teeth as straight and neat as the tombstones a hundred feet ahead.

"Well I can't take you to Bethesda." Part of me wants to drive away, right then and there, but something keeps my foot on the brake. I'm still curious. "I'm only headed thirty minutes up the road."

"I'll take what I can get, man." Still smiling. Still clean. I unlock the car door. He climbs in, taking care to dust off the seat of his faded jeans, and says, "Thanks a lot, man! Name's Sam."

"John," I say. I'm not dumb enough to say my actual first name, but telling him my middle name isn't the smartest move, either. I put the car in gas and head on down the road. As we pass the graveyard, Sam watches the tombstones go by with mild interest. "So Sam," I say, "have you eaten anything today? I have some bagels here, if you want one later."

He turns to me with a grin, baring all of his teeth, and says, "I sure would love a bagel! You know what goes good with bagels?"

The burning pain flares at the thought of answering "coffee." I grind my teeth a bit before answering, "Milk?"

Sam's smile grows ear to ear, all tombstones on display. "That's right," he says. "A nice tall glass of milk—chocolate milk! Get some cream cheese on that bagel, too? That's a little slice of heaven!"

The graveyard fades in my rearview. I am now truly alone with this man. "So, Sam, what takes you down to Bethesda?"

He turns away from the grey stone monuments and says, "I'm the President of the United States, and I need to get to Washington."

I can't help but chuckle. Someone says something like that, you have to think he is pulling your leg. But Sam goes on. "I was separated from the Secret Service when my motorcade was attacked. I was on my way to the National Cathedral on All Saint's Day when they hit."

Holy shit, I picked up a crazy man! "Wow," I say. "That's, uhh. . . that must have been pretty intense."

"It was a group of Russians that did it. They spoke Arabic, but I know a Russian accent in any language!" He's gesturing now, getting his hands and feet in to the conversation. "I need to get back to Washington before Veteran's Day—that's when they'll try and take out the other leaders of the military."

The countryside we are driving through is slowly becoming more and more gentrified. Fields are fading into suburbs. The tops of steel buildings peek over the horizon.

"This is some pretty high-level stuff, Sam," I say. "How did you wind up here from D.C. in the first place? Hey, HEY! Get out of my shit!" Sam is rummaging through my glove box. It has only some paperwork in it but I didn't want him getting my real name. He doesn't look at any of the papers, though; he just takes some paperclips and starts fiddling with them. He just can't keep still.

"See, the Russians are using a technique called 'prologuing' to infiltrate different branches of the government. They abduct you, and then they break you until they can just plant suggestions in your head to say whatever's on your mind." His fingers nimbly bend and twist the metal clips into different shapes. "That's when they have you! They can implant ideas and make you say anything they want! They use the power of suggestion to make it seem like it was your idea the whole time."

There is a dead deer on the side of the road, a crow picking at the carcass. I roll up the windows. The smell of coffee and bagels fill the sedan as we drive past the crow eating breakfast. Sam just keeps rambling. About how the Russians hijacked the satellite signals to "prologue" everyone in the country. How they controlled the media and were using it to brainwash everyone in to ignoring their activities, that they weren't planting spies in our government, and that he isn't really president. The paperclips start to take shape. One is a tiny man, another a little car. The figures are so small and the curves are smooth—if I wasn't seeing it, I would never guess that Sam is managing to bend them by hand. He must have done this a lot.

"Say," Sam says. "You seem like a trustworthy guy, John."

I'm flattered, Mr. Crazy Man, I think.

"How would you like a position in my cabinet? I can get you instated when we get to D.C."

"I can't take you to D.C.," I snap. I'm starting to get irritated. My leg is still burning and I'm going to be even more late because of this guy and he asks me to just run off on his crazy adventure to run into the White House and call it his. "Besides," I say, "I don't think I'm qualified for politics."

"Well, what are you qualified for?" If my outburst offended him, he didn't show it.

"I work for, umm . . . a Fortune 500 company . . ." I can't believe I almost told him the name of my workplace! I can't have this guy showing up sometime, chatting up my coworkers about Russian spies and fucking "prologuing."

"What's your job, though? Or do they just pay you to wear a suit!?" Sam chuckles at his own joke. He seems different than when he was rambling; somehow, I feel like I can talk to him.

"I manage our mining operations on the East Coast," I say. Dammit! Why am I telling this crazy person so much about myself? Is he . . . is this "prologuing" bullshit actually real!? Is this guy inside my head? I grip the steering wheel tighter.

"Metallurgical Physics!" he shouts.

"I'm sorry?"

"Oh, I'm a master of Metallurgical Physics! That was a big part of my platform on my first election cycle. I even wrote a book before I got in to politics."

"Really?" I'm caught off guard. I know what it takes to be a master in that field, I worked with a few poindexters who had that degree hanging in their offices, and it's a big deal.

"Yeah, it's called *Natural Magnetism in Living Organisms*. It's all about my techniques in manipulating metals with your mind, using your natural magnetic field."

Wow. That's even crazier than I could have imagined. And to think, for a second I actually believed this guy could be sane.

"I could teach you! It's all in my book here." He slaps the cover of the hardback he had been reading earlier.

I chuckle nervously. "I doubt I'd have a knack for it."

Sam looks at me angrily. "Do you have any gumption in you at all, boy? I offer to teach you everything I know, and even to put you in the White House, and you just say no? What on earth is stopping you?"

What shocks me more than his anger is my own silence. I genuinely have no answer. What was stopping me? Hell, I'm probably going to be fired today, anyway. Why don't I just run off and learn to be a spoon-bending homeless wizard like Sam? I have no family, nothing tying me down but my house and credit card debt. My cell phone goes off in my pocket. My boss's ringtone. Damnit, I've let this guy make me even later than I already was, distracting me with his crazy promises of cabinet positions and magic powers. I spend the rest of the drive in silence. Sam just goes back to playing with his paper clips.

We are just outside the city now. I need to drop this guy off somewhere, fast. There's a gas station up ahead, that's about as good a place as any.

"Well, Sam, this is as far as I can take you," I say. Sam smiles and steps out of the car. A part of me wonders how much of his rambling was genuine or if he was just trying to make himself interesting so I would keep him company. Then I think of how late I am and put the car in drive.

"What about that bagel?" Sam asks.

"Oh! Uhh. . . I got cinnamon raisin, I got poppy seed, sesame seed—"

"Sesame seed," Sam says. I hand him a warm bagel. "Thanks again for the ride, man." He takes a bite from the bagel.

"Well . . . bye." I drive off. Goodbyes always felt awkward to me, especially when I was saying goodbye to a fucking mental case. I drive six miles before I realize Sam had left his book on the car seat: *Natural Magnetism in Living Organisms*, by Professor Harding. I think about turning around to return it to him, but I think better; even if he notices, there's no way he isn't long gone. I doubt I'll ever see that man again.

The rest of my drive is uneventful. Once I find a place to park, I pick up Sam's book and flip through some of the chapters. "*Chapter 1: Controlling Your Magnetic Field*" . . . "*Chapter 9: Advanced Patterning Techniques*." "What is this," I say, "a training manual?"

Carla, the secretary, pulls up and parks next to me. She's wearing the necklace I got her last office Christmas party but I notice only because of where the diamond is resting on her chest.

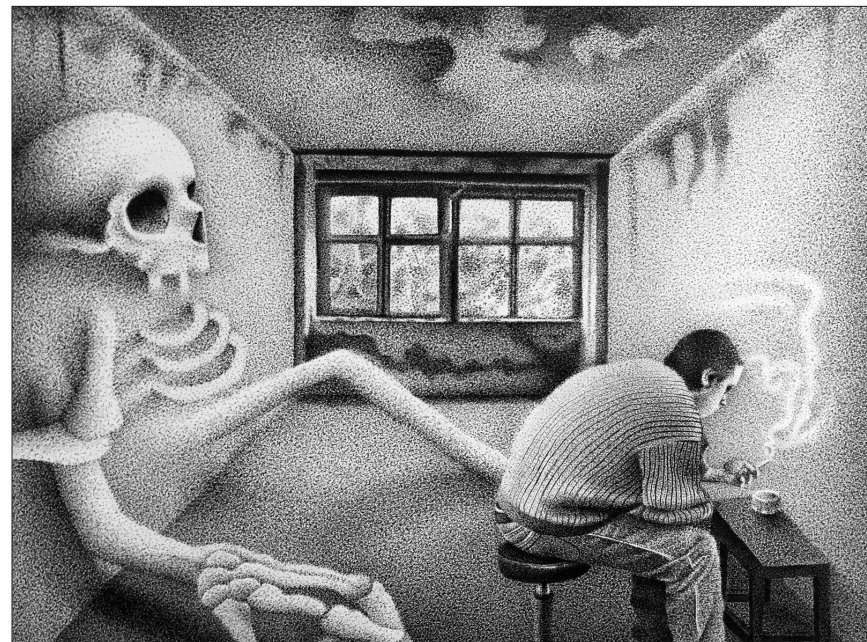
"Hey Carla," I say, getting out of my car and walking towards her convertible. "You're late, too?"

She turns to respond, and her eyes go wide. "Oh, my God! What happened to your car?"

"What? What do you mean?"

"Your door!" She points at my passenger side. I look at the car door and drop the book. The entire door is warped into a whirlpool of solid black steel. I can't believe it—this is a lease! How am I going to explain this? How could something like this even happen? I fall to my knees in disbelief. The book had fallen open to a random page:

"*Chapter 7: The Effects of Prolonged Magnetic Exposure on the Human Brain.*"



Meghan McKee, *Beast* — Drawing

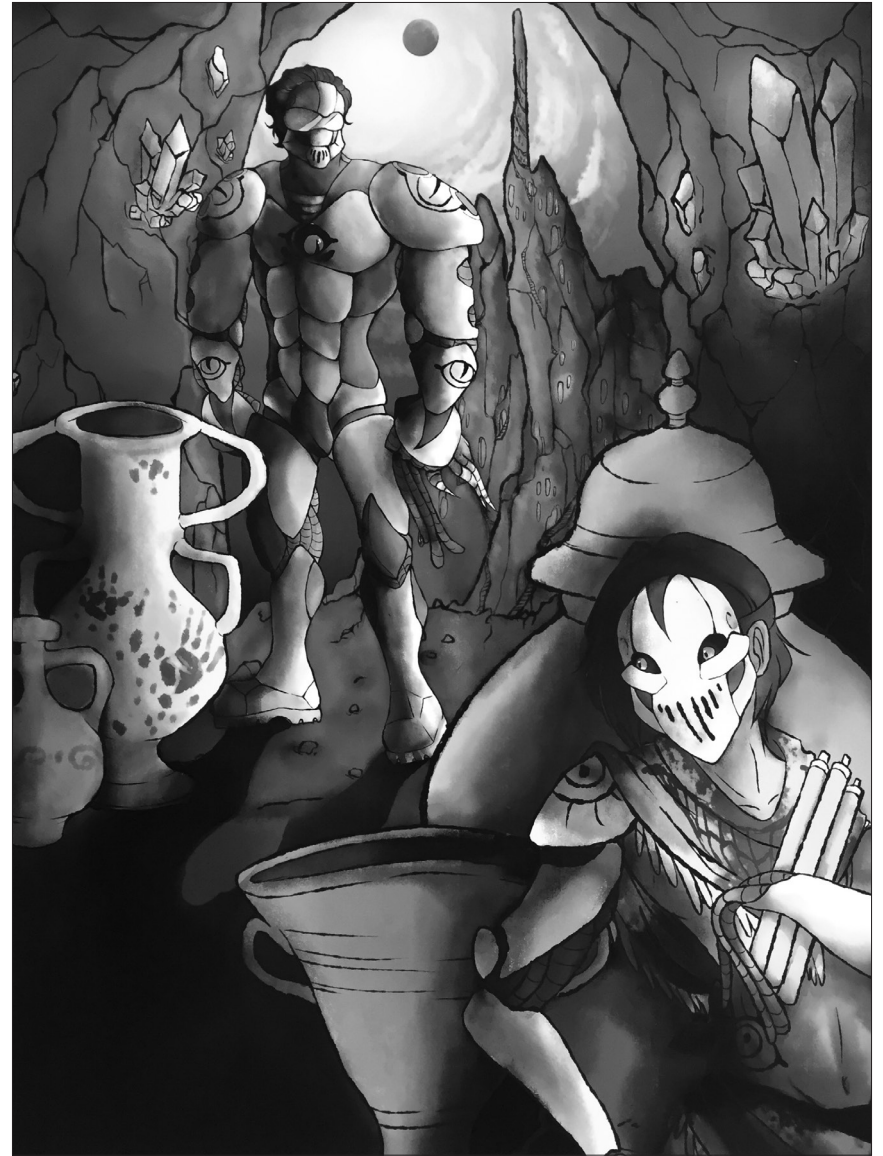
WHISPERS OF THE SHADOW

Christopher Robles

I love learning,
But I'm not taught how to read.
I love cutting grass,
But I want to be assimilated.
I love traveling,
But I fear I.C.E.
I love politics,
But I'm here illegally.
I love school,
But I must pay out of state.
I love police,
But police don't love me.



Alexi Day, *Beast* – Drawing



Mia Barboza-Quesada, *A New World* – Digital Drawing



Justin DaCosta, *A New World* – Digital Painting



Justin DaCosta, *Oxymoron, Pretty Fierce* – Digital Painting



Ian Louthan, *The Tooth Fairy* – Mixed Media



Mia Barboza-Quesada, *Rumpelstiltskin* – Mixed Media



INTERVIEW WITH MICK O'LEARY FCC'S LIBRARY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ryan Slicer and Paul Stark

Frederick Community College's library has opened this semester with a completely renovated space and a new name to go along with it—the “Learning Commons.” With the renovations come more study space, updated technology, consolidation with the Tutoring & Writing Center, and the addition of a digital Makerspace. The *Tuscarora Review* stood with Library Executive Director Mick O'Leary at his standing desk, and talked about the changes and his experiences at FCC over the course of his storied career.

Tuscarora Review: Are you originally from Frederick?

Mick: No, I'm from Pennsylvania. When I graduated from library school, I was looking around for jobs and in that time—this was 1975—we were in a recession. Sound familiar? Jobs were really, really hard, and this was available and I needed a job, and the rest is history as they say.

Tuscarora Review: As a librarian, what other sort of services is the library now offering with these new renovations?

Mick: A couple of things. First of all, it's no longer called 'the library.' Now it's called the 'Learning Commons' and it is a merger of three areas that previously were separate: the library, the Writing Center, and Tutorial Services. A year ago, they were three unique departments all in different locations. What happened over many years as we got more digital information, we bought fewer print books. And as we weeded the print collection and it got smaller and smaller, about three years ago I said, 'The print collection is not going to disappear. It's going to stay about this size.' That meant there was a lot of underutilized space, so we said, 'Okay, what do we do with that space?' We thought, 'Of all the departments at FCC, what was the one that was the closest to the library in terms of mission and purpose?' There was the Writing Center; amongst the folks that were involved that just seemed self-evident, and that started a long planning process. The Tutorial Department was also brought in and reorganized. The idea was that these were the three administrative departments that worked directly with



Entrance view of the new Learning Commons.

students in student learning. It's a form of teaching, so it made sense for us to be in the same space. After that, we went into a design phase, which lead to the construction phase and to the opening in January [2016]. That concept is one of the major ideas here. It's not just having people in the same place. There's a lot of cross-training, integration of staff, and integration of services. And that's very efficient. So when students walk in, no matter what they need they can be quickly shown to whatever person or service is needed. And there's new technology. For example, most of the study rooms are tech-equipped. The Makerspace is a digital project workplace for students. We have about 40% more computers than we did in the previous library. And then of course the layout and the design of the furniture, the computers, the counters, and all of that. Every design consideration was based on one question: what's going to work best for the students? It's turned out quite well I think. The students, for the most part, are really happy with it. It's a gorgeous space, and that's wonderful in and of itself, but it also works really well.

Tuscarora Review: Are these changes the biggest that you've seen at FCC with the library? You must have seen a lot during your career.

Mick: Oh yeah, it's amazing. It's completely different than it was originally and it's much different than it was even five years ago. I think that among organizations of all types, libraries have responded to changes in technology and changed themselves perhaps more so than any other type of organization in terms of using digital content and digital technology. Over 90% of the library's information is digital, which means there's a lot more of it than was possible when we only had print. All you had was what was in your room; now we have forty or fifty times as much information. Another big thing is it's available any time anywhere, so the library is open on Sunday night. A lot of the use of these online databases occurs on weekends and evenings, which is exactly when the campus is closed. So that's a major difference and a major benefit for students. The transition from a print collection to an entirely digital collection has been enormous and that's been

happening for about twenty years. We've tried to keep up with whatever new capability came along. We went with it so that the students would have the best and most up-to-date set of resources and services.

Tuscarora Review: Along those lines, are there any other plans or hopes that you see for the new Learning Commons?

Mick: We're going to continue doing more cross-training, so that it's even easier for students to get help. If a certain person isn't available, the service can still be provided. We expect to see more use of the Makerspace. The Makerspace concept is very new and we're still trying to figure it out ourselves. We expect to see more use as more and more students become familiar with it. We're always on the lookout for some new digital content source that would be valuable. Just two years ago we added two very important, very heavily used databases: one was the database of statistics, which has been very popular, and then we added a new journal database. We're always on the lookout for new information sources, and that's ongoing.

Tuscarora Review: How long before these renovations had the library remained the same? What was the period like before the current renovations? How long was the previous library in use?

Mick: Well when I came to FCC in 1976, the library was on the second half of 'A' Building [Annapolis Hall]. This building [Linganore Hall or "L" Building] was built in 1994, and we came into this space. Last summer the renovations started and took six months. The physical library was pretty much the same from 1994 until we closed [last year for renovations]. The real changes involved services and information and that's been ongoing. The first type of online, technology-based function we had was back in about 1990. That was an online catalogue. At that time, there used to be a bunch of trays and little cards and you looked up information that way. It's history now, but that's what we had! Then, in the early '90s, that went away. Since then we've been obtaining more and more digital

content. We used to have shelves of print magazines—that's all you had, and it's gone; all of the magazines and journals are digital now. At that time, we had about 200, but now we have collectively about six or seven thousand, so you can see the magnitude of the difference. We also have a digital book collection now. We have about 12,000 books in the print collection, and we have about 35,000 in the digital book collection. Then we have online reference books, online newspapers, online videos, and an online music collection. We used to have a bunch of old 33 1/3 records, and the students would come in, play them on a record player and listen to them. But now, they can browse a giant library of music from home. We also have a video collection used by faculty and staff. Let's say you wanted to look at a video of cells and how they work. You can go into that collection, pull that out, and study it. Or your professor can assign it, or you can take a little segment and put it into a video of your own if you were doing a class project. That's been occurring since 1992; the first digital catalogue came then, and we've been steadily adding more and more digital content ever since.

But it's not just having the content; it's also the delivery. If you go into the library website, you'll see something called research guides. That provides not only the information but a structure. So if a student asks, 'What kind of information do you have on a certain subject,' it walks you through the process. It has information on plagiarism, and it has lists of websites on a subject. What we're also doing with these is to insert a topic-related research guide into the Blackboard website for the relevant course. So let's say you have a project in your class, then you have the link right there to the research guide. It's almost like a self-service. Right now most of the classes have Blackboard, and basically that's the student worksite now. If you go out and walk around the library right now, you'll see the majority of people using it. So the idea was to bring the relevant library information right



The Learning Commons still has approximately 12,000 books in its print collection.

there, so you wouldn't have to go and open another browser. This is a way of not only having the digital content, but making it easier to use. It will take some time to do that but we will gradually have relevant research guides in every Blackboard course for every course that has some sort of research project.

Tuscarora Review: Specifically with the renovations, was there anything you found difficult or frustrating? What successes did you have with the renovations?

Mick: Actually, I've been involved in renovations before here at FCC. When this building [Linganore Hall or "L" Building] was built, I was involved in that. So from that point of view, this process from the very beginning just went perfectly. We made a presentation for the Board [of Trustees] two years ago. The board meeting was in March of that year, and we made a presentation saying, 'Here's our vision. We want to take the library, reorganize the space, and get the Writing Center and Tutorial Services. It will be a big advantage.' The Board of Trustees loved it, and said, 'go ahead.' We set up a two-person design team. We had Betsey Zwing, who is the director of the Tutoring and Writing Center. Then on the library side, our lead was Colleen McKnight. She's the Digital Services Librarian. It made sense for a number of reasons for me not to be that person because I was involved with the self-study. Every ten years, colleges and universities have an enormous self-study. The whole process takes about two and a half years, and you produce a one-hundred-page, detailed analysis of all of your operations. It's a very big deal. This is the basis for accreditation. I was involved in that very heavily. And so Betsey and Colleen did extensive planning with site visits, student surveys, literature review, and case studies. It was a very thorough analysis for what the Learning Commons would be. Then a formal document is given to the architects, and they take it and translate it into a statement of purpose: What is the space supposed to do? It was wonderfully done. It was a team effort, but they [Betsey Zwing and Colleen McKnight] were the leads.

The architects did a wonderful job translating that into what you see out there in terms of layout of space. One of the most wonderful things about this building is if you look at it from the outside, you'll see there's windows all the way around. Everyone knew this is a wonderful feature and we'll take advantage of it. You see all glass, so there's so much light in here. It is just gorgeous and that is very much by intent. It gives a feeling of openness, and so the architects really nailed that in terms of perceiving what the space would do. Then it goes over to the construction people and that went perfectly. We were open a little bit ahead of time, so we had time to move in here in January [2016] and we were ready to go. In the fall [2015] when the construction was taking place here, the library, the Writing Center, and the Tutorial Services were downstairs in two tiny little rooms. That was difficult, especially for the students, not to have this space. But it made it possible for these different groups to work together, learn how each other operates, and learn how to interact. We did a lot of cross-training last fall so that when we came up here we were ready to go. So that's what I mean when I say from the very beginning when we proposed this vision, it couldn't have gone better. We had wonderful help from the Board of Trustees, the construction

company, and the facilities people here at FCC. I.T. worked very, very hard, because it was a 40% increase in the number of computers. We're using the thin clients out there; they're not desktops. It's basically like a big monitor that goes into a central server area; they did a lot of work on that. So the technology is just wonderful, and everybody worked very hard and you can see the outcome.

Tuscarora Review: Do you have any expectations for how long these new innovations will last until you need to update them again? Do you think this will last another twenty years like the old library did?

Mick: In terms of the collections, we are updating them constantly. There were two major upgrades of the computers over that period of twenty-two years from 1994 to 2016. So the technology was up-to-date. The main thing that wasn't was the facility itself, the desks, and the chairs. But you don't do that very often. That's a big deal. But the college was very conscientious in updating the technology so you didn't have a twenty-year-old computer; you maybe had a five-year-old computer, and that's fine. They would update the software regularly, and the machines were replaced as needed. The facility had some minor changes over the years but not too many. We were very pleased when the Board [of Trustees] said, 'Go ahead.' Then the proposals came back and we thought, 'Let's just make this design in the best possible way.' You can see the vision was carried out in terms of the construction. Everybody who's been involved with the project from the very beginning thinks, 'wow this is great,' and the nicest thing is that it works well for the students. If you had a pretty place that didn't work well, you would say, 'Well what's wrong here? It's not complete!' But we agreed from the beginning not to just have a beautiful facility, but to have interconnected services that work for the students. From my point of view, that's the bigger deal. Have you spent much time up here? What do you think?

Tuscarora Review: Yes, the new layout is fantastic.

Mick: There's several different types of furniture, and every piece of furniture is used. The back is more of a quiet area. When the student survey was done in the summer of 2014, 300 students replied to the survey—that's a good turnout—and the single most important question was 'what do you want in a library and a study space?' Most students said, 'We want a place for quiet study.' So we did it. And yet increasingly, students are collaborating, working together on projects. That was very important, and the study rooms are for that. The Makerspace and this area out here, you can see students working together, sitting in the booths. Students love the booths! So whether you're working on your own on the Blackboard website, or you're working together, the space is available for that.

Tuscarora Review: Is there anything else you would like to say?

Mick: I've had a long career here, and FCC as a whole I think is stronger now than it's ever been in terms of the faculty and the services to students. I think it's this notion that we have to keep getting better; we have to keep improving; that's been a constant here, from 1976 to the present. I think FCC will continue to have the best for the students whether it's a building or the faculty, or having a wonderful financial aid program. The emphasis from the very beginning has been on the students. You'll get more individual help here than almost anywhere



Mick & Learning Assistant Carolyn Sangi, ready to provide assistance to FCC faculty, staff & students.

else. Now you walk in and talk to counselors, faculty members, librarians, tutors, whatever. That is a value of FCC that has been here from way before my time, and it continues to this day. That's a constant, and yet we are constantly learning new things and not just here in the library. Faculty are constantly improving their teaching. The advisors and counselors are constantly thinking, 'How can we do better? How can we be better trained? How can our system work better?' That's in every place here at FCC whether it's directly front-line work with students like we do, or the business offices that are thinking 'how can we have the systems work better,' or the IT people thinking 'how can we have a better system,' constantly working with Blackboard. Whether it's someone working with the students or not, everybody has the same mission, and I've been around long enough to see that. It's a good institution. I'll be at the grocery store and somebody will come up and say, 'Hey, you're the library guy!' They don't usually know my name, but I do a lot of work with students too, and I always ask them, 'How did FCC work for you?' They invariably say, 'It worked for me,' whether they had one course, or whether they transferred, or whether they were in a career program. FCC has done a lot of good work in the county for a lot of people. We're proud of that and being a part of that.

The *Tuscarora Review* would like to thank Mick for his time and for his commitment to the students at Frederick Community College. If you find yourself in the Learning Commons, be sure to say hello to Mr. O'Leary and any of the library, Writing Center, or Tutoring Center staff, and ask for any assistance if needed.

I SWALLOWED A SHY GIRL

Miranda Gardner

I swallowed a shy girl,
So stop talking about her.
She doesn't live here anymore.

I swallowed a shy girl,
She's inside my stomach.
Trying to feel her way out.

I swallowed a shy girl, and now
I try to leave her at home.
At breakfast.
At work.
But she follows me.

I try to fight her.
I try to
Push.

Her.

Down.

But she fights back,
Wants me all to herself,
She tries to suffocate me.

But I am too strong for her.
We call this a truce.

There's a shy girl who lives in my stomach.
But I hate that shy girl.
So I try to poison her with alcohol.
To drown her.
But she swims.
And she always
Seems to find
Her
Way
Back.

She settles to the bottom of my stomach,
Lays there,
And makes my gut into a hammock.

I know you're in there, I say –
But its time for you to go.

She never listens.
She smothers me –
And keeps me company right there.
She tries to pull me down with
Her warm embrace
But I rarely give in.

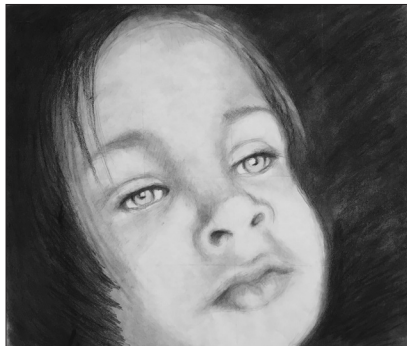
I swallowed a shy girl
And she dies a small bit
Every few years.
But she never does leave.

And through our wars against each other
I remain.
And she remains.
Feeding off the memory of herself.

So I never can let her go.
And its because of this
I forgive.

I forgive her for holding me back.

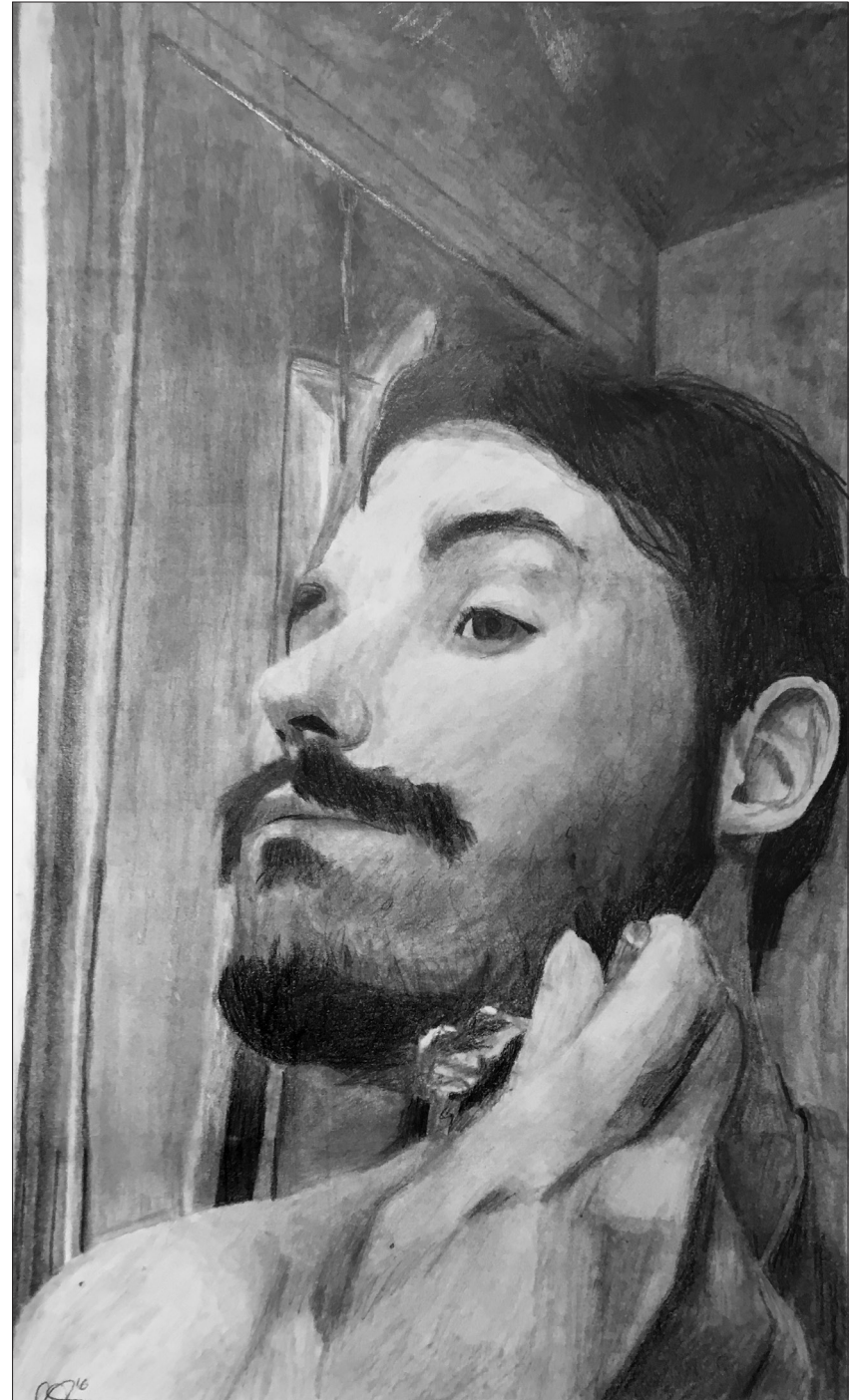
I forgive her for
being
my
friend.



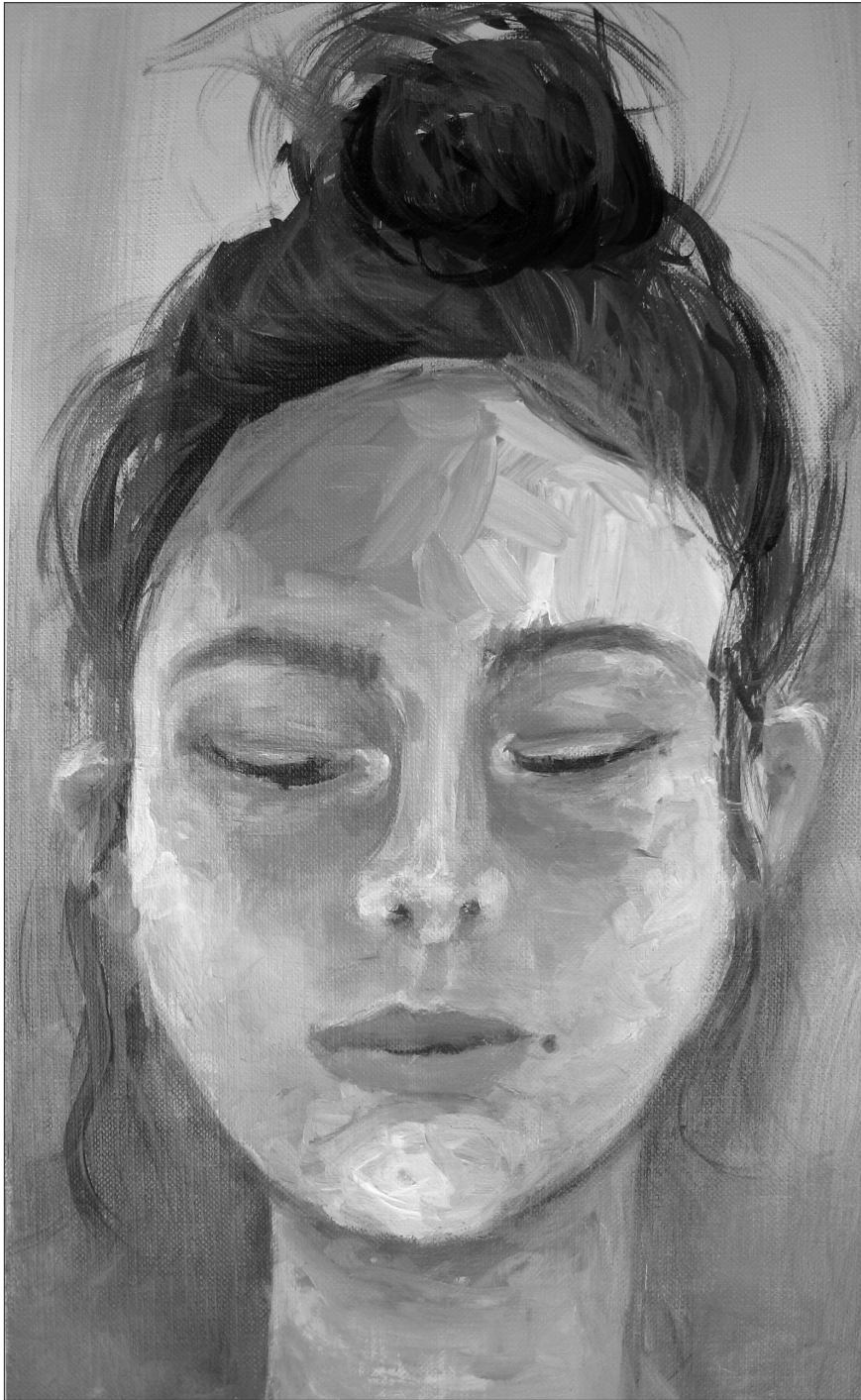
Rena Larkin, *Kaitlyn* – Drawing



Bettina Bienvenida, *Self Portrait* – Drawing



Skylar O'Neill, *Morning Shave* – Drawing



Meghan McKee, *Untitled* – Painting

I STAND

Stephen James

'Neath the pink sky with clouds a parting,
Atop the ridge that wind does kiss,
Where leaves fall like memories departing,
I stand awaiting potential bliss.

The wind whispers "Move along,"
As leaves are blown to guide my way,
Yet cautious of what lies beyond,
I stand to wait for the coming day.

Your ghost anchors my feet, so still,
With chains of disbelief,
Uncertain this venture might fulfill,
I stand with hope, now sheathed.

The rising sun kisses my face,
Reveals the life that thrives ahead,
With hope restored by warm embrace,
I walk in trust, though aimless I tread.



Brina Dove, *Untitled* – Photograph



Brina Dove, *Untitled* – Photograph



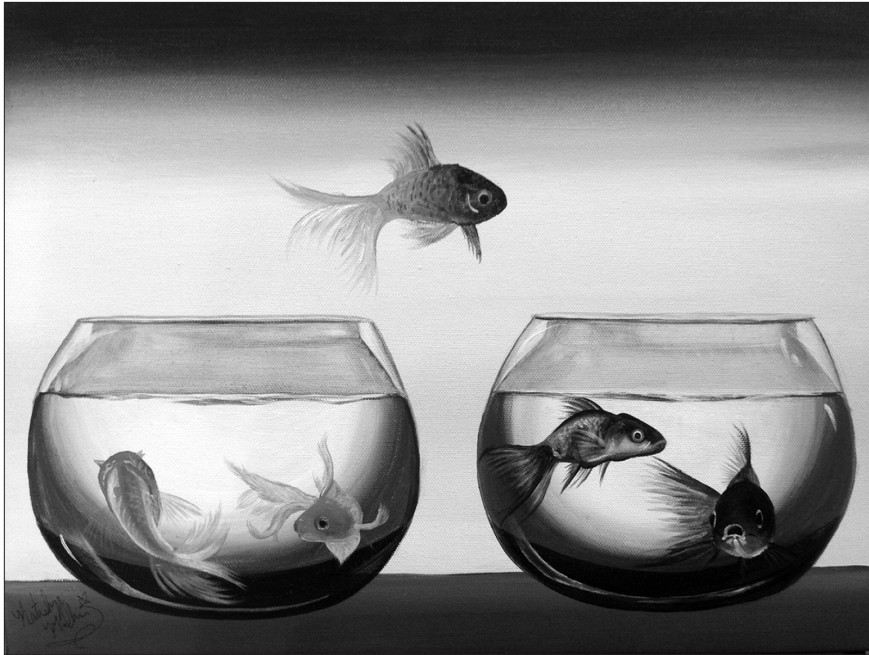
Landon Yost, *Untitled* – Photograph



Landon Yost, *Untitled* – Photograph



Brina Dove, *Untitled* – Photograph



Katelyn Millison, *Untitled* – Painting

GOLDFISH MEMORY

Joseph Geck

The stars shine brightly in the night sky. A storm rumbles above me in the dark clouds. *That's how I know it's a dream.* A hand presses down on my shoulder and the towering shade of my father blocks out the sun's heat. I hate this. I can only sit and wait for the dream to end. I feel his stern look but don't dare face it. Instead, I look at the clouds as they form hands that slowly grow knuckle ridges and closed fists. I want to run but my father's hands hold me firmly in place. The cloud presses down on me until everything is darkness and humidity.

Fuck. Morning. I hate mornings. My hand grapples the air until I find my phone. 5:04. Close enough. Agatha Christie marveled at people who woke up on time for work without modern devices and clocks. It's a skill I attained in necessity, after breaking my fifteenth alarm clock. The secret is controlling your fear, choosing to make stress about the coming morning. I hate mornings and everything about them, like dreams, alarm clocks, cock-a-doodle-doos, ghosts, time, and nagging mothers.

I listen to the news during my drive to work. It only makes my morning headache worse. The sun glares and blinds me. I speed a little to make up for the four lost minutes. People who speed five miles over the limit are the worst. It's as if they think themselves sinless as they vroom, ignorant and relaxed. They still dare to condemn those that speed in excess twenty over the limit. Sinners with their pedal to the floor know their misdemeanors and compensate with an extra

attention to the road. I am sure to be alert as I speed only a little. It only makes my headache worse. My drive takes me from whipping and winding country roads to a smooth cruise through farmland. It's lovely, seeing Pennsylvanian crops in the sunrise. It's less lovely when it's the only view you've had your entire shit life.

The small back lot of 3614 Old Philadelphia Pike has a myriad of cracks and vegetation and a stampede of translucent gray ghosts. They're just a bunch of lost souls following their stomachs. It's the worst part of the day, right here. I park my car and walk to the door careful not to trip on the pavement, careful to stare through them. If you react to them too much, especially at dawn, they'll know you can see them. Those days are the worst of any days. They all flood through the door and me when I walk inside. A shiver runs with the herd.

Pretzel baking isn't the life for everyone. You have to have a certain temperament. Here, employees must be patient, selfless, and as impulsive as the most aged trees. It's also helpful to be like me and know that unexpected aggravations while working are really just a residual emotion from ghosts. More ghosts live in the pretzel factory than in any cemetery in the state. Ghosts love pretzels. My mind is blank as I work. I don't know if there is any other way to do it. It's just me and the cries of the undead as I finish dough prep and start baking for the day. Ghosts don't eat. It's as awkward as ever when I pull a hot rack out of the oven and get swarmed by a gaggle of ghosts, levitating around the rack to lick what they can reach.

Salt gives them a buzz. It wakes them up and weakens their negativity field. Silence fades as conversations start. Fed, this is when ghosts start to realize just how ghostly they are. It's a new self-discovery every morning. I call it the sunshine goldfish theory because every dawn cleans all of their afterlife memories. It's how ghosts can haunt so relentlessly, because each day is their first day on the job. Despite the lack of customers, my morning shifts are always the loudest.

At seven AM there is a rap on the door. Someone who thinks the right way to ask to shop is with a knock to the glass. A kid no more than eight years old, wearing glasses thicker than his skull mouths the word "Please." There's some of that necessary politeness. I let him in. He squints at my apron.

"Thanks Mr. Enoch," he says. I pause. How did he know my name? Well, it is a pretty small town.

"You're welcome, young sir, but you must be quick." I point to our sign: MON-SAT 10-5. The fool quirks his head aside. I hate children. They aren't right in the head. "It's Thursday. We open at ten, but I'm in a good mood so I'll let you shop."

He blinks twice then nods. He undergoes a self-guided tour with widened eyes. The only people out and about in town these mornings are the Amish and the farmers, neither of which are the types to shop here. Who is this kid anyway? He's managed to step out of the way of every ghost without seeming to pay them attention. He isn't a tourist; no eight-year-old tourist goes through here without the guiding hand of an idiot parent who thought this would be a fun trip for a kid. He isn't even wearing a backpack. The young boy isn't fit-minded and should be getting ready for a school day. His eyes rapidly scan shelves as if a larger variety

will somehow make a decision easier. Children are naturally curious. It amazes me that he pays no attention to the local specters and gains no attention from them. He impulsively grabs unsalted sourdough pretzel sticks and silently pays with a five-dollar dill as wrinkled as Mrs. Stewart's face leering at me from behind him. Prize in hand, he runs out, a clunk of elbow against the door and shoes slapping across the street. He didn't even look both ways. He has glasses specifically so he can see and ignored all the danger. It's like I said, kids aren't right in the head at all.

I continue work in thoughts of concern for that stranger. I can't help but let out a cackle, startling all the ghosts in the process and making them zoom to levitate five feet higher, when I realize he knew my name because he read my nametag. My name is Enoch Apperson. Enoch is Biblical, like locusts with the faces of women, the teeth of lions, the wings of a thousand marching horses and scorpion stingers. This is to say it's Biblical, but nobody recognizes it as Biblical.

My drive home is longer than it should be. My drives are supposed to be a time to vent and lose stress. A crash caused me to sit and wait in a line of traffic born from the joyous fun of rubbernecking, something everyone in front of me felt was needed. Big deal, a Honda hit a buggy. It happens. Should I lose part of my life because you idiots decide to satiate curiosity? Children are naturally curious. They are learning. Adults should be done with it. It's practically the trial for manhood, being able to deal with the unknown as the known. It's just about the only lesson my father got around to teaching me.

He had a mesmerizing deep voice and bushy beard. He was reading me a bedtime story as someone with fatherly love ought to.

"We can help, we can help! They ALL helped the duck who got stuck in the muck." His fingers twiddled at the corner, teasing for the next page.

"And he got out, right?" I asked, the trusting chirp of innocence.

RllllP

"The end. It's best you don't know more," he rumbled.

"But Pop, there's more!" I was sitting up. I needed to know about the duck. He closed his eyes and sighed. He gently pushed me down and tucked me in.

"Goodnight, Enoch." I got a kiss on the forehead and a cold shoulder. He crumpled the pages as he left the room.

None of the books in my home library had final pages. The black-hearted man had even torn the important promises in all four Gospels out of the house Bible. My mom kept the tradition going. She forbade any final book in a series in the house. I swear she intentionally had me take out the trash to miss, with malicious timing, the ending of any show I was watching. By the time I was moved out and able to freely access the unknown conclusions, my curiosity and lust for wholeness

were dead. I understood the lesson: don't wonder about the lives of ghosts you see. I think my father saw them too. Some family legacy to fall into.

I get home with nothing but time to waste until Saturday. I had a bad dream last night; that means some ghost spent the night nearby. It's likely an older ghost aged longer than the person it haunted as those ghosts tend to be vagabonds wandering place to place without anything recognizable from their living life. I open my pantry door and marvel at my arsenal of GDWs: ghost defense weaponry. In all honesty, it's actually a stockpile of various brands of table salt and a bright-yellow super soaker named BLASTO, fully loaded with imported seawater. Ghosts cannot handle salt in large doses. The salt on pretzels is why they tend to linger at work. An overdose makes them burst; I think it might have something to do with the salt of the earth resonating with their unearthly souls. If a ghost is residing nearby I'll play it safe. BLASTO gets a temporary home on my nightstand.

My phone buzzes.

COMPTROLLER STIX: hey man pls tell me you r free 2nite

He knows I hate it when he uses the wrong "you're."

Bzzzzz!

COMPTROLLER STIX: SParkles!ssss!!!!

He also knows I love a good American firework display.

One soup, 0.41 gallons of gas, fourteen saltines, and 6.7 hours later, I arrive at the home of Ellis Stiks. He inherited the small farm when he was only sixteen. In the six years following his uncle's death the acres have turned into grass and weeds. His inheritance stands two stories tall, a blue facing staring north, slanted eyes from broken shutters, red lips from poorly chosen paint, and holds a lonely white porch in a hand of brambles. I knock on the stupid red door half a dozen times before Ellis opens it.

He stands at a mighty five foot five. He's wearing that hat again, a black cap with I ♥ INTERCOURSE plastered on the front. His fearsome might is exacerbated by his slim build, pale skin, and stupid greeting grin.

"What can I do ya for, Sir?" Calling me Sir like he wants to play a game; stupid grin staring at me like the snickers from tourists reading his hat.

"Very little, I'm afraid. I'll need to speak to the man of the house. Is your father home?" His grin bleeds out and I get a light punch on the shoulder.

"Too far, man. You're a shitty friend." We both know he doesn't mean it but it is kinda true. I haven't told him about ghosts. I haven't ever let my guard down around him. I think he's predictable—but not trustworthy. I avoid telling him about anything that actually impacts me. Maybe that's why we're still friends.

We fritter the evening away. Pointless conversation, a beer each, and anticipation for tonight's show. Illegal fireworks always seem a burst brighter. As dusk establishes, we set up in the east field. We've decided to go a bit before dark because of the looming leer of new clouds. I hate rainstorms. I'd have known it would rain tonight if I had paid any attention to the news. It's not my fault it was boring, drilling into my headache this morning. It's that damn ghost's fault. Then I see it. The horizon. A cloud looks down on me like Big Brother. Its

face is my father's. It wears his long-brimmed hat and holds nothing but dreary disappointment.

There is a lot of science to predicting weather and phenomena. When it will rain, snow, mudslide, earthquake. It's fucking bullshit from children who aren't able to admit they don't know, looking for an answer to satiate curiosity. Ghosts are the gale in the storm. Ellis thinks he got a chill from the wind. He doesn't know it was the ghost of an Aztec warrior passing through him. Somehow, modern science has managed to ignore all the proofs from before Enlightenment. Spirit shamans and wizards knew what they were doing. Probably.

They're still on the horizon but when I look at the clouds I've had plenty of bad ideas in my life. Ellis usually gets me through them. I usually get him through his shenanigans too. Today it was my turn. I had to stop this.

"Ellis. You got any salt in the house?"

"Yeah, left of the oven, top cabinet. Wait, what the fuck is your deal with salt?"

I'm surprised he even noticed. "Uhhhh...."

"Enoch, I've seen you eat fries. You don't eat fries with salt. You eat salt with fries." His eyes widen. "Are we going to use these rockets to cook?" There's one of his famous bad ideas. I guess he hasn't noticed that salt is my ghost pepper spray.

"What? No, I want to launch salt into the storm." Ellis gets that stupid grin again. I guess that works for him.

Twenty minutes later, our rig is ready to go. We have ten rockets encircling a bucket full of Morton brand salt. If this works out I should stop the storm that killed my father. My tactical IABM (Inter Acregal Bastard's Missile) is my newest bad idea and sits with spaced fuses in an attempt for a straight-shot launch to send a fiery, salty boom to send souls merrily out of this world. The plan according to Ellis is to make a big boom and catch salt on his tongue like a child in a snowstorm. Ellis kneels to light the fuses himself. He'll have it no other way.

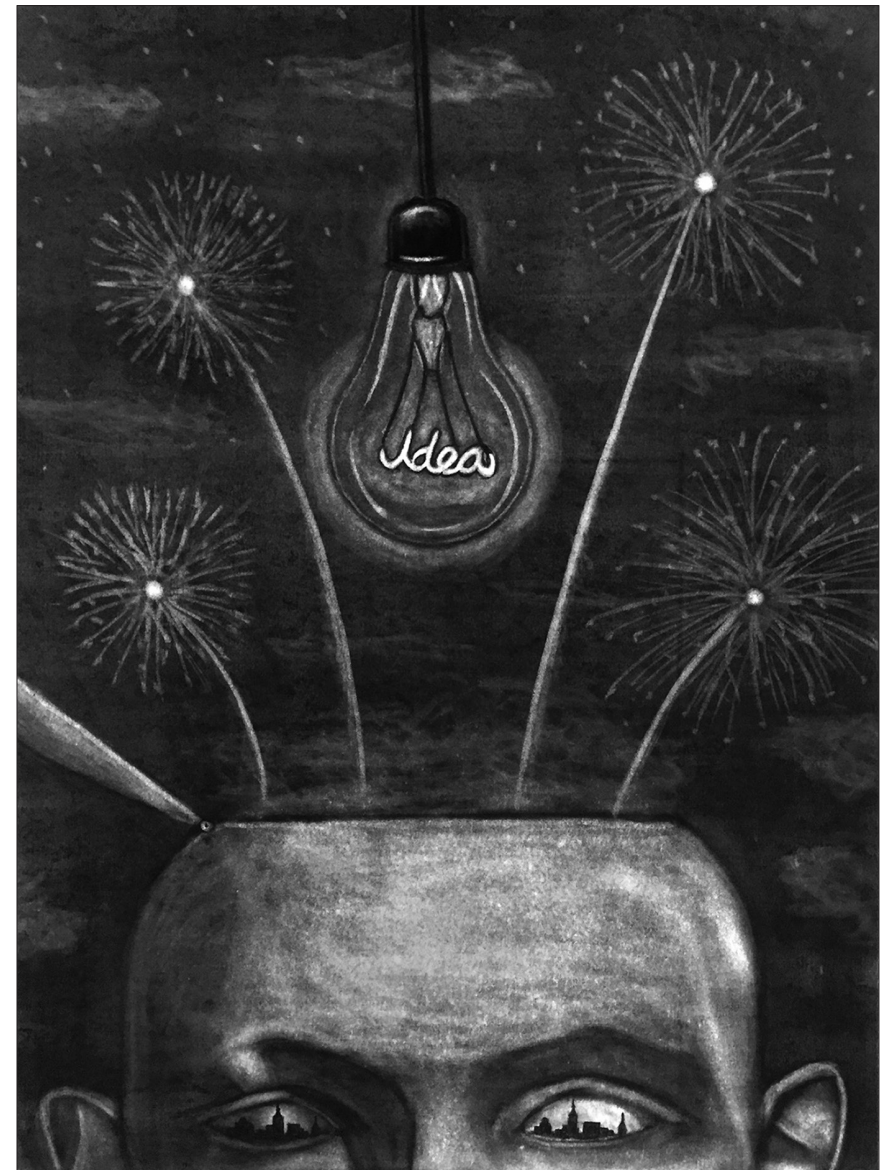
"Ready to fire?" he asks. I look up into the bright flash of lightning and deep rumble of my father's voice. I nod.

"It's time to do this." A spark starts a fire and our weapon flies straight. A swath of spirits swarms the bait in a lunge. Hundreds of them coming from behind the cloud. Like an uppercut it hits his jaw. It goes into the cloud, my scream against my father's rumble. My glare against his leer.

That night I had another dream. My family was together again at the dinner table, before my brother and father died in the crash. That's how I knew it was a dream.

"Grace," my father said, breaking a silence. I knew it meant something. I didn't know what. A hole opened up in the floor and the table fell in. My baby brother's high seat teetered on the edge. My father leaped, tried to jump the gap but slipped on the wet floor. They both fell into the abyss and my cries and shouting meant nothing.

I woke from the nightmare sweating. That damned ghost was still nearby, ruining my dreams. I get dressed and grab BLASTO. First I'll deal with this. Then I'll try to find out if that duck ever got out of the fucking muck.



Jonathan Grackin, *Narrative* – Drawing

WOLF DREAMS

Susan Morgan-Chandler

On a frozen outcropping,
Flecks of silver coat illuminated
Under yellow moon,
Wolf howls from the depth of being.
Sound vibration
Connects wolf to mountain and sky.

Wolf dreams ancient memories
Bone and dust
Buffalo fresh kill.

Shared cave
Lit by fires flickering light.
Wolf and man
warily watch the other
Eat fresh kill.

Satiated, belly heavy,
Wolf returns to dreams.
Silently, gently, snow covers the mountain.
White heavy clods of snow drop from firs.

Wolf dreams of family.
Leopard claws and teeth
Tear wolf's heart.

Wakes in darkness from lonely dreams,
Seeks wolf kind.
Head bent against
Wind hissing in ears,
Faint howls echo.
Climbs slippery mountain boulders
Leaps blue ice crevices.

Aurora: green, blue, red
Plays in sky.
Finds kind.
Wolf and kind
Sing to
Each other,
Mountain,
Memories in sky –
Grounded with Creator.



Jonathan Grackin, *Surreal Narrative* – Drawing

AS ABOVE, SO BELOW; OR, PHIL, A MAN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE UNIVERSE.

Thomas Semler

"Look thee above or look thee below, the same shall ye find.

For all is but part of the Oneness that is at the Source of the Law. The consciousness below thee is part thine own as we are part of thine."

"I, Death, come, and yet I remain not, for life eternal exists in All; only an obstacle, I in the pathway, quick to be conquered by the infinite light. Awaken, O flame that burns ever inward, flame forth and conquer the veil of the night."

— From *The Emerald Tablets*

Phil Thoth sat beneath the navy blue sky on the beach at the Bottom of the Universe. Overhead the moon loomed, casting its opalescent glow upon the waters as myriads of stars and planets glimmered in their celestial orbits. The waves crashed and receded over Phil as he sat weeping, his tears absorbed into the infinite expanse of ocean. Throughout the night, sitting in the freezing waves, he hoped to succumb to hypothermia, he wished for death; either that or one of those monsters would slither back from the ocean and take him away. At the rising of day, a ruby red sun emerged from the horizon line, painting the sky a pretty purple-pink. Phil got up, shivering, and a wave erased his indentation in the sand.

Walking upon the dry sand to the remains of King Carcinus's castle, he hopelessly searched the rubble for any sign of life. The desecration and carnage revolted Phil. Everywhere he turned, the remains of his neighbors lay in scattered limbs and pools of blood and bone. The night before, creatures of an octopus-armed, tarantula-legged figuration emerged from the depths of the sea. They laid waste to all the tribes and kingdoms along the beach. He was the only survivor.

He had watched the desecration whilst in his nightly private gambol, across the highest dune-top on the beach. He basked in the peaceful serenity of the ocean and night, when out of the blue the hideous monsters emerged and mercilessly ravaged and destroyed the beach.

He stared at his reflection in a shattered mirror. His black hair and schmatte had dried. A tear descended down his freckled-face and fell to the ground. He looked down and discovered a purple robe. He no longer had to wear these ragged garments anymore. He donned the robe and continued his search.

He ventured across the cracked marble floors into the basement of the castle. Aligned on the wooden shelves was enough dry and canned goods to sustain him for a few years. He gathered some into a basket and walked back upstairs. As he was about to leave, he noticed a broken golden spear. He picked it up, supporting

himself with it like a cane, and left the castle.

Making his way back home, dressed in his purple robe and carrying his basket of food and spear, he was startled by an absurd thought. Only a few hours earlier he was ready to acquiesce to death, to die of hypothermia, or to be eaten alive... why did he prepare himself to live, gathering food, when his end goal was to kill himself? Why did he, almost subconsciously, return to the remains of the castle and find clothes to wear to prevent himself from freezing?

As soon as he got back to his home, a slum wooden shack on the beach, he decided that he would finally rid himself of his pain and kill himself.

He opened the door of his shack, threw his basket of food onto the bed, and stepped back outside. He sat in the sand, clutching the spear in one hand. The sunlight reflected off the golden rod. He planned to use it slit his throat in one swift, clean motion. Shaking so much he couldn't hold his hand still, he brought the spear to the right side of his neck and slowly pressed in. As the spear entered, blood spurted from his neck, staining the pure white sand. Moving the spear slowly to the side, blood trickled down his body. Nauseous at the sight of blood, the taste of it in his mouth, he gulped, gasped, and choked. He dropped the spear and held his right hand against the wound. With eyes rolling back, Phil fainted, collapsing onto the sand.

It was nighttime when he regained consciousness. He returned inside, sadder and now embarrassed. What could he do? What would be the most successful means to kill himself? He couldn't cut himself; that made him queasy. He could try to drown but what if it failed? There was nowhere he could fling himself off of. He opened up his basket and took out a can of peaches, which he opened and ate for supper.

In the days following, Phil would sit on the beach, oftentimes running his fingers across the scar on his neck, feeling and caressing the tender pink flesh: a permanent reminder of his tumultuous sorrow.

Sitting by his shack, eating a sandwich, Phil watched the ocean. He still pondered how to die. He took a bite of his sandwich when he was struck with an epiphany: I shall refuse to eat. I will starve myself! Yes! That was the only option. He threw his sandwich into the sand; he had no need for any more sustenance. What he planned would take weeks. It would be painful. But it was his only choice.

He was nearing the end. All throughout the past few weeks, Phil had thinned out more and more. His whole body ached, his ribs nearly protruding from the skin. He had taken no food or water since his epiphany. He spent his time sitting on the beach all day, gazing at the sky, the ocean, the sun and the clouds until it was night and he returned inside.

Today was the day, he could feel it. His body could not last any longer. He lay in the sand with his arms extended. The hot sun beat down upon his face. He was fading...fading away. As he felt himself losing consciousness, a light brighter than any sun shone triumphantly over his head. Scrambling up from the sand, he was



Katelyn Millison, *Serenity* – Painting

amazed when he saw, hovering on a lotus cloud, a man, radiating pure transient golden light from every pore of his body.

"Oh!" said the gold man. "My sincerest apologies, good sir! I hope I haven't disturbed you!"

The light from the man was so intense Phil thought that he would go blind. "What are you?" he stammered.

"Ah, yes, introductions! My name is Amitayus. Pleased to meet you, and what can I call you, friend?—my, oh, my! You look like death! You are so thin, you look like a walking skeleton!"

"My name is Phil...what are you exactly...Amitayus? You have the body of a man yet you radiate pure light. It is so...."

Amitayus smiled, reclined on his lotus cloud, and said, "I am the Buddha of Infinite Light. You remark upon my body, yes? It is my celestial manifestation, called the Sambhogakaya, a Being of Light body, if you would, that I can conjure up at any time, for my own enjoyment. If you are wondering what I am doing here, well, Phil, I have that answer as well: I am on a pilgrimage of sorts, exploring the infinite regions infinity has to offer. I have heard some remarkable comments about the bottom of the universe, so I decided to finally visit it!"

Phil nodded, gazed at the sand, then looked back up at Amitayus: "Is this a dream, am I dreaming, have I died? Where do you come from?"

Amitayus heartily chuckled. "Great questions, Phil, great questions indeed! Yes! This is a dream, and so has your whole life been—there is no difference! Where do I come from, you ask? I come from the Pure Land, a place so far away...yet so incredibly near!"

"Are you alive, then?"

Amitayus leaned forward, his tone changed from hearty to serious, and said, "I am beyond life or death. I am beyond time. Hearken unto my words and you will come to discover that you, Phil, are also beyond life or death."

"But how can this be? This is the only body, the only thing I know!"

Amitayus smiled. "Oh, Phil. You have lived many lives—you just don't remember them. You have died many deaths—you don't remember those, either. And what's the good of that? It is not necessary to remember them. But moving on...looking more closely at you, I see...a scar, and you are so incredibly thin... hmmm. You attempted suicide, and failed. Yes, and you have...starved yourself, attempted what is called Sallekhana, to fast unto your death. Oh, Phil, do tell what has happened to you! Give me a tour of this beach down here at the Bottom of the Universe."

The twain began their tour of the beach. Phil walked, while Amitayus floated on his lotus cloud. Phil told him all that he had witnessed, all he had planned to do. Then Phil asked, "Amitayus, where do you plan to go after this?"

"Funny you should ask that, Phil. I shall continue my pilgrimage, visiting the beaches at the Top of the Universe. I heard they are equally as lovely as the ones down here."

Phil hesitated then finally remarked, "Is there any possible way I can join you? Can you take me with you?"



Caitlin Duke, Word Project, Little Things – Mixed Media

THESE DEEDS SHALL THY MEMORIAL BE

Jessica Perez

I worship words
I always will
Without words, what do we have?
No language, no stories, no jokes, no love letters
No first words. No last words. No vows.
We look to words as we've always looked to the stars:
As sentinels
Guiding lights
Things of the past that still provide us with something so close to tangible
That it often feels like you can reach out and tickle the entire world

Sometimes, though, it's not the words.
It's the deeds.
It's the *act*.
It's reaching for the check instead of bragging about picking it up.
It's about being there when you're needed, even without being called.
It's the embrace
The understanding look
The stern warning glance
The smile
The sacrifice
The silence, the wordless service
The watchful eye
The heartfelt, Heaven-sent prayers that are so sacred, so close to your heart,
That they will never pass your lips
Those feelings, pure elation and pure despair and everywhere in between
That we'll never have the ability to explain

Anyone can speak or write.
Any fool can disguise himself behind deceptive language.
Only in practice are you proving your true worth
Only by doing are you giving your words any power
Mind your words, but mind your deeds too.
For they shall be what matters when your mouth is closed and your fingers go still



Yuki Smith, *Abandoned* – Photograph



Justin DaCosta, *Word Project, Little Things* – Mixed Media

COLOPHON: This edition of the *Tuscarora Review* features fonts designed by Jonathan Hoefler & Eric Gill. The headlines are set in Cyclone, the text in Gill Sans, & the bylines/captions were set in Leviathan. Eric Gill designed Gill Sans in 1926, Hoefler designed Cyclone in 2000 and Leviathan in 1991.

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This magazine is free; please take one.