

River Voices

Spring 2019



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River Voices is a literary magazine published by the English Department at Muskegon Community College. It showcases and celebrates the work of current students, alumni, faculty, and staff. *River Voices* is an annual publication.

We encourage submissions of poetry, prose, essays, art, and photography year-round and are currently accepting submissions for the Spring 2020 edition. Please visit: muskegoncc.edu/rivervoices for further details.

We are grateful to all of our contributors and in addition we would like to express special thanks to: Becky Evans, Kevin Kyser, Mary Tyler, Diana Casey, Erin Hoffman, Ismael Enriquez, Ronnie Jewell, Gretchen Cline, Kelli Loughrige, Allison Cooper and Peter Koryzno for their encouragement, support and contributions.

Cover Design by: Alexander Slocum

Cover Art: "A Gondola Ride Through Italy" photograph by Taylor DePouw

Taylor has been interested in photography ever since her 16th birthday, when she received her first camera. She loves taking pictures of people and capturing real life. It's a hobby that she hopes to stick with for a long time.

Artist Statement

One of the most recognizable places in the world, Venice, Italy is a place that seems somewhat out of a dream. We were seated inside a beautiful gondola and guided in and out of the island. We passed other gondolas, like the one in the picture, and were greeted by fellow riders.

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*a long time ago
I stopped letting
people's opinions
influence my existence*

*a long time ago -
I was
Freed.*

- Jasmine Allen

Skinny Dipping in Paradise

Mia McDermott

A girl swathed in moonlight
perched on the edge
 jumped
the water rushed in and
the sand hugged her feet
her ears heard her tongue tasted her nose smelled her eyes saw
her body felt
the water was her earthen womb
the umbilical sand her link
Maternal waves washed virgin planes
as flesh was forged and minds awoke
She floated in the fluid light
just ounces heavy in the dark
And just as the moon pulls on the tides
so too was she tugged alongside
but gestation came too early
the surface water breaking
birthing from the earth a woman
who was anything but dainty
She stood rooted in her birthplace
twining flowing streaming growing
crashing thrashing undergoing
like our capricious mother does
Plates beneath her skin collided
shaping softly rolling hills
Plates beneath her skin divided
leaving yawning rifts to fill
She was the earth the earth was she
and time scarred both irreparably
We chopped off her limbs
poisoned her breath
turned her tears to acid
and infected her skin
Our reward comes from this:

Skinny dipping changes a girl.

In Them and Not in Me

Megan Delgado

The clock above the stove glowered at Cecil with a certain ferocity akin to hatred. It was the only source of light in the kitchen. He walked through the doorway and there wasn't a trace of light, except for the stove, to indicate any sort of inhabitation. The darkness lived and breathed.

Lillian wasn't home yet. Her shoes weren't thrown against the doors and there wasn't a coat hanging from the dining room chair. She had left her coffee next to the coffee pot before she left in the morning. The matte black mug was the only sign that Lillian had been there.

"Your world is supposed to open like an oyster, you know."

Cecil looked into the mirror that was askew against the far dining room wall. He only saw himself. He whipped his head around, as though he were searching for the air under the heavy waves of his anxiety.

"This world, it's supposed to be ours."

"Bennett... You scared me half to death."

"Cecil. It's been too long." Bennett's head was barely visible, hiding behind the strategically organized furniture.

Cecil crossed the dining room, following the voice into the living room. Bennett sat in the middle of the carpeted floor. He was sitting with his legs spread, leaning on his arms like they were pillars keeping him above everything else. Above everyone else.

"How did you know where I was?"

"I always know where you are, Cec. We are two halves of one whole. We're inseparable." Bennett smirked up to Cecil, then stood to meet his eye. He hadn't changed: still was taller than Cecil; still had the almost decorative dark circles under his eyes; still pushing his greasy as hell hair out of his face because he could never bother to get a haircut.

Cecil never turned the lights on, leaving the pair in a room full of darkness and their mixed breaths. His eyes never left Bennett, looking over his gaunt figure.

"If I had known you would eye-fuck me, I would have worn something sexier for you. Maybe shown more skin." Bennett winked.

Cecil blushed in return. "Don't be such a trash mouth, Benny." He turned his head back to the raging stove before asking "Why are you here?"

Bennett sighed heavily, letting go of the breath that had saved him from drowning, before allowing himself to fall into the nearest couch. His legs flew up as his body flew down, both landing on the suede covered couch. Cecil still stood, looking down. His hands were itching for something, but he forced them

to rest in his pockets. They stared at each other for years.

Cecil finally killed the tension, closing his eyes and sighing heavily. “Bennett... I can’t remember the last time we saw each other. It was so long ago, you may as well be a photograph of someone I don’t know. Please. Tell me why you’re here.”

“Come on, Cecil. You know why I’m here.” He crossed his legs.

“If I did then I wouldn’t have come home today.”

“How’s Lillian?”

“Answer my question.”

“She’s doing great Bennett, thanks for asking!”

“Stop joking around, Bennett. I’m asking you a question.”

“And I asked you one. God, who put the stick up your ass? Was it Lillian? Is that a weird sex thing?”

“Bennett.” Cecil sat on the edge of the coffee table and began to unlace his shoes. His fingers like a surgeon, he moved slowly.

“Alright, you remember that one time when you got in trouble with those eighth graders? You had to come to me to help you?”

“No, I don’t...” Cecil’s brows furrowed, his tongue poking through his lips.

“No, of course you don’t.” Bennett began to get up, swinging his legs off the couch and moved to the edge. He looked down at his scuffed boots, almost the same ones he wore when they were younger. “Of fucking course, you don’t.” He began to chuckle to himself.

“Bennett, why can’t I remember that?”

“I’m always going to be there for you whenever you need me. You know that,” he whispered.

“... What happened?”

“Nothing happened. You know what happened. You haven’t said a word to me in how many years? You’ve replaced me with Lillian, it looks like! Tell me, does she protect you like I used to? Does she take care of you like I used to? Does she even know about me?”

“Bennett, you need to stop. You’re getting angry for no reason.”

“No, I think I have every right to be angry right now. You don’t even remember everything that I’ve done for you and yet you have the fucking audacity to—”

“No! Stop! You’re in my house, you don’t have the right to degrade me because I’m happy, I’m getting better and I—”

“If you were getting better then why would I be here right now, Cec?”

The garage door began to open, disrupting the entire house. Cecil stood from where he was sitting. He looked back at Bennett, who looked like he was barely fazed by the change.

Cecil picked up his shoes that he had abandoned by the table and walked them to the coat closet in the kitchen. The doorway from the garage opened and Lillian walked in, looking disheveled and relieved to be home.

“Why is it so dark in here?” She reached for the switch and flicked it on. The house was flooded with a yellow haze of light and Cecil only stared at Lillian.

“I missed you today.”

“That’s sweet,” Lillian smiled at Cecil and placed her jacket on the chair nearest to her. “How was your day?” She moved into the kitchen and began to pull open cupboards.

“It was okay. How was yours?”

“It was long, baby. But I set up an appointment for you down at the offices near Luke’s. They said they had an opening on Friday at noon.” The stove was on and there was a pot placed on it. Lillian was getting ready to start preparing the first thing Cecil would eat today.

“Okay.”

“I also picked up your prescription on my way home, I knew you would forget.” She sent a smile to him behind her shoulder.

“Okay.”

Lillian stopped and looked at him. “Baby are you feeling okay?”

“I saw... When I got home...”

“What is it, baby?” She walked up to him and laced her arms around his neck. “Hey, it’s okay.” She brought his head to her shoulder and he began to shake. “It’s okay. It’s just you and me here. We’re all alone.”

Cecil looked back to the empty couch, then back to Lillian.

Being a Coconut

Steve Wieschowski

At first it was wonderful, being a coconut. The weather, favorable; the company, pleasant.

Coconuts never call each other by names in our manner, but as every story needs a hero we shall call our coconut Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald the Coconut perched in a contented bunch with his coconut friends atop the tallest tree growing on the sunniest beach sitting on the golden-sand coast bordering the happiest island in the South Sea.

The coconuts wiled pristine days above the beach away chatting and watching life go by down below (coconuts are an *idle* bunch!). They watched far over the water and saw ivory gulls dive and pluck quicksilver fishes from sand-kissing waves. They watched closer, in the seafoam, and saw sneaky crabs scuttle after flotsam. But mostly they watched closest, on the beach, as bronzed people leaped in and out of waves, played, laughed, and loved.

“How I would love to meet the humans!” exclaimed Fitzgerald to his friends, “and learn to leap and laugh and love!”

Everyone agreed. How delightful the humans must be.

One day, a stiff wind blew. The tall tree shook. Fitzgerald fell from his perch – plop! – into the soft golden sand.

Trod, trod, trod. Bare feet shuffled toward Fitzgerald.

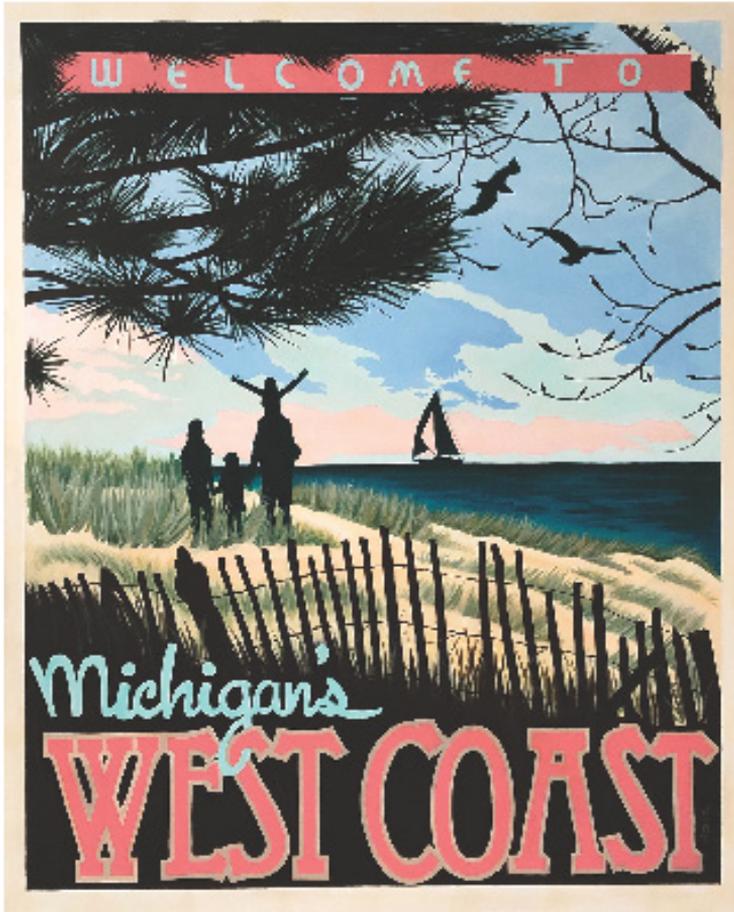
“Hello, human!” called Fitzgerald. “Be my friend! Teach me to...”

But humans can’t hear coconuts. The human lifted Fitzgerald up, split him open with a rock, drank his fluids, and ate his flesh. Fitzgerald died slowly, in horrible pain.

At the end, it sucked, being a coconut.

Welcome to Michigan's West Coast

Kevin Kyser



Acrylic Painting

Kayak Adventures

Tyler Schafer



Photography

Chapel Rock

Kyle Meyer



Photography

Creepy House

Kelli Loughrige



Photography

In Our Village

Elizabeth Robin Carpenter

There is a simple-minded man
With eyes of foggy blue
Who likes to swing upon the village gate
He climbs the neighbor's plum tree
To steal away a plum
Not knowing they would gladly gift
The fruit of jeweled skin
He belongs to everyone
Or so the people say
Yet he belongs to no one
This we know
He has no grace, no fortitude
His gait is slow as mud
He cowers when the bullies come to call
He bats away the rod and staff
That poke and prod his flesh
With bruises on his arms, with bleeding lip
The cruel words that hammer down
Leave wounds that time won't heal
They fester and they throb within his soul
He tries to sooth the loneliness
The sorrow and the shame
One cannot rub away the rust
Of a thousand years of rain

They Said

Diana Casey

Inspired by – Hughie Lee-Smith, Landscape #3

We lived in the mountains. In the village of my family.
Generations all together. They said, we taught each other.
The skills of life. Tending our animals. Cherishing our land.

That woman put the monies from our school in her pocket.
She inhaled something so as not to spend her days in a cell.
Our school will be closed forever, they said.
No more will our children be near. No laughter from the school yard.

The big government wants to close the small post offices.
All our packages, our checks, our communications with the world.
They don't realize the lifeline that our post office was, to, well to everything.
They said, drive the hours to the city.

Tortillas, beans, creamer for coffee are only found in the city.
Or shared from a neighbor. They said we are so kind to one another.
We have become our own store. Our kitchens open as the diner once was.

Communion among all ages in our church. Births, milestones, deaths.
The priest rotates among many villages as ours.
You are invited to faith in the other communities, they said.
So many have moved away, the young to find jobs and experience life.

Pictures to the government agent. Dead cattle on our winter range.
Goat weed taken over our gardens. No water in the ditch for three years now.
Forest fire was the last. Fences burned. No grass. Drought
With our cattle we lived from the bounty of the mountains.
The scientist report, hundreds of years for the land to repair.
They said, it is your grandchildren who will mend your village.
History, in the village cemetery. The stories of our lives.
The gathering of honor is small. It is the passing of our village.
They said.

Untitled

Don Goodman

He named his son Jameson-Bushmills;
His daughter was Tullamore Dew;
If anyone questioned
Their Irish connection
They'd pour out the proof: Here's to you!"

Untitled

Jasmine Allen

I have gone to a place
where the sun doesn't shine -
the only light
comes from the burning
walls of the city square-
the streets lay filled with heads
of all the slain Civilians -
and no one has no desire
other than to kill
the man closest to him

I was about to turn around
and run like hell -
when
something
grasped onto my right leg

I let my eyes follow the side of my body
and clutching onto my leg
for its dear life
was a young girl
“where are you parents child?” I asked
she just looked at me in silence -

I watched
her crow like Eyes -
and could tell they
were being dragged down
by the weight of her Soul -

the complexion of her Skin was filth -
and the rags she wore for clothes
were falling off of her
meatless Body -
you could tell it had been days
maybe weeks since she had a meal

although she was
clearly helpless
she never even bothered
to ask me to save her -

she just held onto my calf as if
God came to her in Visions
and told her I was her Savior -

“who is responsible for this?”
I asked the orphan child -
“who sparked the
obliteration of this place?”
right when I was starting
to think
she just couldn't
understand my tongue -
she opened her mouth and said:
“You did.”

Belize Field Studies

MCC offers ICS 101 BEL / BIOL 101 BEL as an interdisciplinary travel-study course providing students an introduction to international culture and biology through cultural and biological field studies. This hybrid course contains online and on-campus components and includes a seven-day visit to Belize. Emphasis is placed on Mayan culture and the tropical rain forests of Belize. The students study Mayan culture and history as well as Mayan past and current interaction with the rain forest ecosystem.

This course covers classification of organisms, basic ecological principles, experimental design, field sampling techniques and scientific communication. Specific biology topics emphasized will vary from year to year. The course also involves working with local Belizeans, giving MCC students the opportunity to meet people from diverse backgrounds. The course is offered in conjunction with Sleeping Giant Resort in Belize.

The 2018 trip consisted of Kathy Pollack, Ismael Enriquez, Megan Urquhart, Brittany Renchen, Taylor Carlson, Bianca DeLeon, and Kaylynne Dennis.

The group visited Tikal(Guatemala), Xunantunich (Belize), and spent an afternoon in the capital city of San Ignacio. They visited an orchid preserve, explored a cave, tubed down a river, went zip lining, and visited the national zoo. They also helped a Mayan cook make dinner by a river bank near the lodge. The students had time to climb up a tall hill/low mountain to a gazebo and canoe down the river.

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Belize Student Trip

Ismael Enriquez



Photography

Belize Student Trip

Ismael Enriquez



Photography

Belize Student Trip

Kaylynne Dennis



Photography

Belize Student Trip

Taylor Carlson-Harding



Photography

Monsters

Kayla Franklin

Monsters.

Quite funny little things they are
once upon a time, praying from afar
slithering between the shadows
and hissing behind doors
harmless little things they were once before.

Monsters.

Quite horrendous little things they are
once upon a time, disturbing from afar
now clawing at our minds
and whispering terrible little things in our ears;
they've slipped from under our beds
into our heads
and make us crave the
nothingness of being dead.

Me, Too.

Chloe Plescher

The church's gym is sticky and steamy, even with my spaghetti strap tank top and shorts on. Summer is at its hottest, and no air conditioner can handle it. But the kids still play. They run around with basketballs and race on scooter boards, but I stay in the corner with Rose because I don't have many friends. I have Rose, and I have Mr. L, but I only pretend to like him. He is the teacher helper for my 5th grade class, and he talks to me and Rose and plays tag with us every week, even though we don't want him to annoy us.

Right now, he is in a corner talking to grown-ups, but he keeps peeking at me and Rose. We mind our own businesses, though, 'cus that's how you get people to go away.

A few minutes later, a big bouncy ball rolls to my feet, and we can't find who was using it, so that makes it ours. And just like that, a superb idea pops into my mind: when Mr. L turns his head to look back at the grown-ups, I am going to throw it at him! That will teach him!

And soon enough, my wish comes true. He stops watching us and faces the grown-ups again. I hurl the ball with all my might. We hold our breath as we watch it fly, then laugh when it whams against the back of his head.

He spins around and jogs toward us. "Wanna play hide and seek, dolls?" he asks.

Crap. My plan backfired.

"Sure, Mr. L!" Rose blurts out, then shrugs when I glare at her.

"I'll count," he smiles his crooked grin, and as we walk away, he runs his fingertips across my back making an uncomfy tingle in my tummy.

Rose and I stick together, and when he is almost to ten, we duck behind a lunch table leaning against a wall.

"Here I come!"

I can't tell where he is, and Rose whispers back she can't either. With all the kids running, he could be anywhere.

A few minutes pass, and we hope he has given up. Rose decides to check, and she pokes out her head.

BOOM! He lands on both feet in front of her, and she giggles and darts away, but I am not fast enough.

Mr. L pulls me out, and with a "Gotcha, dollface!" he tickles me.

I wiggle, but I can't get away because I'm laughing too hard. He keeps going 'till I can't breathe. When he lets go of me, I run away to join Rose by the doors.

We stand there, quiet, until the bell rings. When it does, I am glad to leave the gym, but then I hear Mr. L calling my name.

"Help me put these away, pretty please?"

I can't say no. Mom always tells me that adults need to be respected and that I should always obey. I nod and hang my head, picking up the toys while the kids run out of the gym.

With him helping, it goes by quickly, till all that's left is a giant bouncy ball. I pick it up, and it is so big that I wobble into the storage closet.

When I drop the ball, the door slams behind me, and the light turns off. He slowly walks closer to me and tugs on the front of my shirt with one hand. The dry fingers of his other hand are underneath my shoulder strap, and it makes my tummy somersault.

I don't like what he is doing, but I can't say no to a grown up.

He pushes his large body against me till my back hits the cinder block wall. It is cold, but my face feels like it's burning. I try to slide pass him, but he stops me with his hand on my shoulder.

He tells me he's gotta do this, but I don't understand what he means.

Slowly, he forces me down. The concrete floor hurts my bony knees. There's no carpet or pillows to make it comfy. But I don't complain. I only look down and listen.

Whoosh. His pants fall to his ankles.

He rests his hand on my head and moves me toward him. Even though I move my mouth like he tells me to, his grip gets tighter every second.

I think happy thoughts while he makes noises. Cute kitties at home, getting new books, opening presents from Grandma. This helps. It keeps me quiet.

Suddenly, he jerks me up and spins me around, so I face the wall. He moves my hands to make them flat against it.

I've seen this in movies when police arrest the bad guys. But what did I do wrong? Is this 'cus I hit him with the ball? I was only trying to be silly. Or is it 'cus my shirt is pretty? It's my favorite, but Mom told me I shouldn't wear it to church because it is immodest. But I wore it anyway because I love it, and it is hot out.

He pets my chest and hips and legs. Then his fingers yank down my shorts.

Whoosh. They wrap around my feet.

"Don't move."

I don't.

"Don't speak."

I can't.

He takes a long time, and it hurts. Each jerk makes me want to scream. 'Stead, I bite my tongue, like I do when Mom yells. I wish she knew where I was. I'd rather she yell at me for being bad than have Mr. L hurting me. It would be faster. It would be less painful.

Mr. L just keeps going.

Cute kitties at home, getting new books, opening presents from Grandma...just keep breathing.

When he is done, he spins me back around and looks in my eyes for the first time tonight.

“If you tell anyone, I will do this to your little sister, too.” He lets go of me quickly, and I trip, hitting the floor with my elbows.

He stares at me, lifting a finger to his lips, “*Shh.*”

I nod.

“Good girl.” He walks out of the dark closet, leaving the door open a crack, and the gym lights help me see.

My pants and underwear are twisted, and there is blood and a sticky, white liquid on my thighs. I dress slowly and stay on the floor for a few minutes.

The concrete is cold, so cold that I can smell it in the sweaty air. I can’t move. My heart is beating too fast, and my muscles hurt. My eyes wanna sleep, and my head wants a pillow.

After several minutes, I can stand and tiptoe out. The gym and halls are empty, but the classroom doors are open, and I hear kids laughing. I stare at the floor and shuffle along, straightening my tank top.

I didn’t know. I didn’t know on the way to church that this was why Mom didn’t want me to wear this shirt.

When I get to my classroom, I only look at the carpet and go to the back of the room, even though my seat is in front. The teacher is talking about a Bible story, but I don’t pay attention. I keep my head down and look at my knees. Bruises dot them. They turn white when I push, then pop back to brown when I stop. My legs are soft and shaky, like Jell-O, like they aren’t mine.

This happened to someone else. It’s gotta be a dream.

The teacher calls on me. She wants me to say the Bible verse.

When I look up, he is there, sitting on a stool and watching. My knees shake when I stand and repeat the verse:

“But the Lord is faithful. He will ‘stablish you and...guard...you from the evil one.”

My eyes get all watery, and my knees shake more. I must have sinned real bad if God didn’t help me tonight.

“Good girl,” he says while I sit back down. His eyes are on me, on my body.

I wrap my hands around my waist...if it even is my waist, and I watch the clock and wait.

Each second, it replays in my head.

Tick.

Door slams.

Tock.

On my knees.

Tick.

Facing the wall.

I feel like I will always be locked inside that closet as his little play doll.

Profile Me

Angelina White

10/28/17

George,

There is a rumor going around that you are being tried for the murder of Clara Hayes. Is this true, my dear? I sure hope you are being safe and making good choices. I always knew that moving to the city was going to get you into trouble. Please write me back as soon as possible so I can put this rumor to rest.

With love, Auntie May

Doesn't matter what way we look at it, she's still dead. It's still my fault. Essentially, the responsibility shouldn't be put solely on me, but I was the one who confessed. Even though I didn't kill her. I didn't, I swear. Except no one will ever believe me because my prints are planted all over the evidence. I was trying to save her. I promise.

10/30/17

Dear Auntie May,

It is true. I am being tried for the murder of Clara Hayes and I will most likely be convicted for it. I just want to say that I didn't kill her, but I confessed. There's no way I could ever bring myself to take someone else's life. Clara is-was very important to me. I was going to bring her home one day to you. Now, unfortunately, that will never happen.

Please, Auntie, do not let the town dog on you for this. It is not your fault whatsoever. I was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, but they will never understand that. They will blame it on you for not raising me to be a "Godly enough man." Do not give in! Do not let them make you crazy. If anything, seek out Sara. She can help you if things get rough.

They will probably read this before sending it to you. You might not even get it, who knows? Either way, I love you Auntie May. With all of my heart. I'm dead serious when I say that I'm sorry for letting you down. Ouch. Bad pun...sorry.

I love you, George

I seal the envelope and address it to My Dear Auntie. I hand it to the man in the sharp suit and he leaves without saying a word. My hands tremble, making the handcuffs rattle and clink against the cold metal table. Shifting uncomfortably, I stare into the mirror. Any person who watches crime shows knows that the mirror is simply a one way window. They're watching me sit here, watching my every movement, finding my tells. Textbook interrogation and profiling 101.

A tall man with a scowl opens the door and walks in. His eyebrows are knitted together as he studies me. I stare back intently, hoping for him to make a conclusion. To profile me. *Do it. Say I'm the murderer and we can all go about our day. I'm sick of this cold room and I'm sick of handcuffs. Let me just get tossed around in a prison for the rest of my life. It's not like I have a will to live anymore.*

"Stop it," he says, intensely.

"Stop what?"

"Deflecting. It's quite annoying."

He sits across from me and starts to shuffle through a folder looking for something. I squint my eyes and crane my neck trying to see what's in the case file, but he has it angled just enough to block my vision. He pulls out a stack of photos and lays them in front of me. They're photos of Clara. All mutilated and dead. My breath catches. *My poor Clara.* My eyes sting as I fight the tears tempted to spill.

"This is Clara Hayes. The girl you murdered."

"I know who she is," I struggle to keep my voice level, "I killed her."

"Stop lying to me, George. I read the letter. Why are you admitting to the murder you didn't commit?"

I stare at the wall past him, struggling to keep my composure. I can't tell him that I didn't kill her. That would make this mess a whole lot worse. He would kill Auntie May surely.

"He's gonna kill her, too," I whimper. "She's the only person I have left."

"Who? Who is he? Who does he plan on killing?"

I shake my head. He's watching, waiting for me to screw up. To give up his name and then she's dead for sure. What if he's one of them? What if he knows that I'm here?

"I need names, George," he says, his voice sounding strained. "I can help you. I just need you to give me names. Or even one name. I just need something."

I can't hold it in any longer and the tears finally spill. I struggle to speak, "M-my auntie. He's going to kill my auntie if I tell."

He gives me a sympathetic look. "What is her name? Is she from around here?"

I shake my head once again, "Marguerite Anders. She lives in Albion, New York."

"That's quite a ways away from here. What about the man you were talking about? What was his name?"

I shrug, not sure what to do. Wiping runny snot on my sleeve, I finally look him dead on since he sat down. I struggle to catch a normal breath as shakes make their way through my body. He gave me explicit instructions: pick up the gun, set the gun back down, call 911, confess to the murder, and then Auntie May would stay alive. Although he said the same thing with the murder before Clara. Clara was supposed to stay alive. But now she's dead. *How am I supposed to know he hasn't already killed my auntie, too?*

"We have some men up there who are going to make sure she's safe okay? They will be to her house in less than five minutes. No one can hurt her. Can you please give us the other name?" he asks, gently.

"Jameson Reed. He's an amateur serial killer," I hesitate, worrying about saying too much, but it all comes flowing out of me like a river. "He dragged me in when we met at a coffee shop. He asked me for directions and then things went bad. He told me if I didn't help him, he was going to kill Clara. So obviously, I helped him. But he killed her anyways. He killed her right in front of me."

The memory floods all my senses at once. The smell of the rain, the sound of all the taxi horns blaring in the distance, the sight of seeing the love of my life mutilated, the way her blood felt in between my fingers. It all comes rushing back like a punch in the stomach. The way he smirked as he walked away. It leaves me frozen in fear as I relive that horrible night.

The man stacks the photos and puts them in the folder. He gives me one last apologetic look and stands up, picks up the folder and walks out the door without saying anything. The door clicks behind him and I'm left to myself once again.

It feels like days by the time he finally returns. In reality it's only maybe been an hour, if that. He brings in a laptop and two other men walk in behind him. The men close the door and the first man sits down with his laptop. He sets it up and turns it around so the screen faces me.

He hits the space bar and a video starts playing. On the video is Jameson in an interrogation room like this one, and there is a woman asking him questions.

“Do you know a George Anders?” she asks.

“Yes, yes I do pretty lady,” he answers with a grin.

“And why did you kill his fiancé, Mr. Reed?”

He chuckles before he answers, “Because pretty lady, he asked me to.”

Untitled

Steve Wieschowski

The Pres'dent parlayed with dictators
While warring on trade with our neighbors!
Revealed here, the reasons
For his various treasons:
He owes Putin sexual favors.

The candidates paid off a vixen,
And gave his odds of election a fixin'
But Trump's hand was tipped
By Cohen, who flipped.
So now Donny is looking like Nixon.

Power Congress

Erin Hoffman



Graphite, Ink, Woodcut
2017

The Colorful Homes of Burano, Italy

Taylor Depouw



Photography

Suns of Different Tides

Jazlyn Francis



Photography

Sunflowers in France

Gretchen Cline



Photography

The Victor

Isaac Zenz

To whom it may concern, sheep have a top speed of twenty-five miles per hour. Comparatively, wolves have a top speed of thirty-seven miles per hour. Once, in a time much different from now, sheep were the grandest of all the other animals. A magnificent breed known as lightning sheep existed. They were given this title since the sheep could run faster than thunder could roll away from a lightning strike. Starving predators could only look on in desperation as their prey flashed by.

Lightning sheep were clearly superior to all others. Therefore, they put it upon themselves to not only be the prime specimen in physical ability, but also in intellectual prowess. Locating a grand place to nest atop a steep, stout hill, the sheep settled down to ponder their queries as self-titled philosophers of all things. The hill was the perfect place to gaze across the entire plain that reached up to the shabby little village hugging its edge. The sheep started to reason to each other everything they could comprehend.

Eventually, the sheep happened across the concept of love. When one of the philosophers noticed how the townspeople in the shabby village would exclusively appreciate a specific individual, he became quite curious. All the philosophers atop the hill started to peer into the village day and night to understand this foreign concept. Over time the sheep became wise to the results of love. Sadly, the sheep could not understand where it came from. How was it found? How was it caught? Choosing a representative, the sheep sent a philosopher to the primitive humans to ask how to achieve love. The chosen sheep raced down the hill, through the starving predators, across the plain, and up to the edge of the tattered village. Locating a human who was in love, the sheep demanded,

“How do I get love? Where does it come from?” The startled villager pondered the question and responded uncertainly,

“I don’t know where it comes from. It just sort of hits ya and you’re in love.” The person thought for another moment and added, “then you just feel it.” Confused by his answer, the sheep started to return to the others to relay his findings. As he raced marvelously fast up the hill, the sheep stumbled on rough terrain and tumbled back down to the base. As he slid to a halt, he rammed his head hard against a boulder. Woozy from the tumble, the philosopher’s head throbbed with a powerful, lingering sensation. The sheep knew what he felt: it was certainly love. The love definitely hit him, and he definitely felt it, so it definitely was love. Exited, and somewhat discombobulated, the truth-seeking sheep raced up the hill.

As all the other sheep learned the peculiar discoveries, they were all particularly skeptical. But, for the sake of unearthing love's secrets, the sheep began flinging themselves off the top of their hill and tumbling mercilessly to the ground. Once the sheep steadied themselves from the fall, they began rejoicing that they had truly found the answer to achieving love! From this point, the sheep started to envy those who were more in love than them. Feeling that they were superior in all things, the sheep deserved more love than the rest of the animal kingdom. The herd would jump off the hill daily. Some even began to feel love all the time, not just after they hit the ground. The love continued to escalate. Some would be filled with so much love they could no longer move due to its bliss. Pridefully, the sheep noticed how the wolves began to sit at the base of the hill enviously and watch as they continued to fall desperately into deeper love.

Months passed, and eventually there was one sole philosopher left atop the steep hill surrounded by bones. Attempting to use his muddled, bruised, and beaten brain, the sheep began thinking. Using all his intellect, he concluded thus,

“Love is harsh, love is a killer, and love is the ultimate competition. But, I am the victor.” And with that, the sheep made a final bounding leap filled with pride that he had become the greatest of all the philosophers! Today, there are no more lightning sheep. Although, there are many fat wolves.

Buchenwald, '45

Savannah Maycroft

*Inspired by – Wedding Rings, Photograph
National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD*

Germany, May, 1945.

There is no joy in the warm spring air
here, with this box
hundreds of lives inside, so many more touched.
every single one has a story
a family, an owner
every ring belonging to a man who belonged to a woman,
to his family, his friends, his work

the hands in the box are American
a soldier, unnamed, crouched down, digging
you can almost hear the clinking of them
lightly, metal on metal
not a fraction as loud as the cries heard just months earlier
according to the footnote, those hands helped to liberate the camp
April 11, 1945, saving 21,000 people
but where are their rings? have they been returned? Is that what you dig for,
soldier, in this box? are you looking for salvation, for peace, down there?
are you aware that you hold dozens of lives in your hands?

I think you must be
for the ones that aren't in your hands must be in your soul,
the heaviest weight of all.

Because I am a lazy poet

Mary Tyler

Because I am a lazy poet

my guy is made to give me
lots of writing assignments
by the coffee pot early
each morning.

I float into our kitchen
where the white 3 X 5 card
leans against my coffee cup:
today's tiny task, and I'm
smitten still. Some days,

and yes this summer
morning, he clips a bud from
our garden and places it
at the altar of coffee:
a green thing meant to woo me
to poetry. But I'm a witless

writer and he knows
I'd rather curl with collies
in bed and read time
away, but his note says,
"Describe *polynomial*.
Poetic and precise.
75 words."

Oh Love, you are an efficient
engineer. This trickery for the woman
who thinks math tastes like dirt, who knows not
one variable, who reckons only that you might leave
a botanical offering by her coffee. To what degree
are we not all prime? To what infinite
expression are we not all constant?
Yours are the two hands I count on, and small
flowers the only weavers of arithmetic
we need. It just adds up.

*My Husband Leave Me
a Writing Assignment, But I Choose Haiku*

Mary Tyler

*Your mom is dying.
You'll need to write about that.
Nope. What else you got?*

Symbiotic

-or The Selfish Woman's Love Poem

Mary Tyler

So what if the rhino is numb
to the reckless Oxpeckers scratching
their spiky talons into his chunky rump?
The thick beast with the thicker hide
doesn't feel all those scissoring pecks
as the hangry birds pull mouthful
after mouthful of fleas and ticks
from the big goon's ears and muzzle. And
so what if, this past March, my girl Collie
snoozed on our patio and snorted

through her sheep-herding sleep
while a male finch dropped onto her
mane, sorted through the hill of white
fluff, and plucked out tuft after downy
tuft that he then flew to his female finch's
nest? The dog's coat was being thinned in time
for what was to become a very hot summer,
the winged thief had rare and exceptional gifts
for his mate, and our back patio became a new
planet to me.

I have since learned, and it is worth mentioning,
that the male finch is frantic to furnish twigs and feathers
and bits of bark for his female. He drops these at her feet
for her to accept or reject, but even when she is pleased
with his bringings, she will often fling them off the nest
just to watch him soar below, retrieve the fine bits,
and work even harder the next time. It seems she likes
to test his commitment, but whenever I share this
information with my guy, he never laughs
the way I do.

So what? Our dogs will be forever dumb. They will never know that their manes are the finest, that we rub their velvet ears and scratch their yeasty bellies so as to stroke away the stupid remark our boss made during our work day. And the daylily is dull to the bee's dusting feet. She is a self-centered simpleton about her own leafy production, but that bee will dip and dance on each stamen as if all the world depends on him. And it does. This is the way of it, Lover.

The way you sometimes place a cup of coffee on my nightstand while I sleep through those too-early morning hours. And this is the way I sometimes wake to find the heated cup but not you, while its steam swirls under my bedside lamp. This is the way. And I know I am sometimes deaf to your footsteps.

So what?

Maybe some mornings it is my job to simply wake and receive.

Dove of Mine

Abigail Postema

Little bird
come make me smile
It's been awhile
since you've come around
I need the song
I haven't heard in so long
will you please sing to me

Little bird
don't fly away
it's not okay
stay on my shoulder
see the skies on fire
it hasn't rained in awhile
people struggle to breath
to believe that they'll be okay

So please tell us
when will the world turn right
and please help us
to fall asleep at night
I don't believe
that we're trying to change at all

Little bird
you've told me this
it pays to wonder
It pays to give
if you do it right
you'll feel alive
it's a shame
people don't try more

They all say
that it's just a game
and it's so easy
to think that way
but more often than not
they'll think that they've got
more than an empty chest

So please tell us
when will the world turn right
and please help us
to fall asleep at night
make us believe
that we can change it all

Long Lithe Shakespeare

Tammy Tolar

The lip of the window sill
held dust an inch thick
thank this sunny day
the rest of the house is brick.
My gaze wandered from that tedious chore
to the lake with its blue-green waves,
and its glistening shore.
I become daft to responsibility
half wacked and out my mind
with fierce vivacity
a flip of the wrist
and spit from my tongue
my work here soon be done!
I long for my tug boat shiny and red
I dig my heels in as the dive is 30 feet deep
Glorified to find the floors did not need my sweep.
I grab the oars for safety sake,
but first I must kiss Shakespeare's brow,
a vow I must not break!
Danger rings for him, this I know true,
to go on wanderlust with me,
may bring Catastrophe.
He cannot swim, my mere cat, and there is that!
So he sits, on that spit clean sill,
Awaiting my return if it is the creators will!

To Remain Silent

Erin Hoffman



Reductive Woodcut, Intaglio, and Chine Colle'
2018

Universal Predator

Alexander Slocum



Oil Pastels

Puppet Master

Alexander Slocum



Watercolor and Pencil

A Scene in a Raspberry Sherbet Forest

Brianna White



Oil Painting

A Moment's Serenity

James O'Banion

In the back of a car
fueled by insobriety,
time dissolves, as the snow,
adorning a drive that never ends.

Lit dimly by the strobe of passing streetlights,
lying quietly out of our minds,

I hold you,
hoping that nothing will wake you,
if but my whisper
at the end of the night.

A thought recurs,
and I can't repress it this time.

I wake you,
and wait for your eyes to meet mine;
I swallow my fears
and speak what I was afraid to;

"I know it's been almost two years now
since our hopes fell between our fingers,
but the time, distance, and lovers aside,
the feeling hopelessly lingers."

A gentle stare –
the most you've ever empathized –
and silence...
loud enough to quake the farthest skies.

You kiss me,
the ambience disintegrates,
and I can't see
whatever it meant to me.

There, quietly out of our minds,
is where I want to stay;
holding you near until night becomes day,
holding you, Dear, 'till my life slips away.

The Intervention

Morgyn Weinert

It was spring, the sun was shining and my thoughts were clear as I was pulling into the long, darkly paved driveway. I was due to meet at my grandparent's house at noon for lunch. This was all the information I was given but, I was excited. Who doesn't love grandma's cooking? The genuine feeling of peace quickly disappeared when I saw the 2017 white, Jeep Cherokee parked in the driveway. This was the car of my other grandparents. Now, if I wouldn't have come out as gay to my family a couple days prior, this wouldn't have been so weird.

I felt my legs shaking as I walked up the cemented path to the giant wooden door, my breath getting shorter with every step. I walked in, shutting the door very cautiously, listening to everything around me before I dared to take another step. I could hear their voices disappearing into the air as I stepped in. Slowly making my way over to the kitchen, dragging my fingers along the gray marble counter tops, I looked at the dining table and saw all four grandparents sitting, their eyes were blank staring into mine. It was as if I was in a house full of strangers. At the center of the dark, wooden dining table was a platter of sandwiches cut into tiny triangles with Lay's potato chips on the sides. Another red flag, because when grandma invited you over for lunch, it was never just a simple sandwich with chips. There was a seat being saved for me dead center between the four of them.

"Come have a seat Moe" were the words from my Grandpa Larry that shot through me.

I walked over and pulled out my chair, still silent. I knew what I was in store for.

"Moe, we wanted to talk to you about some of your recent choices," again coming from my Grandpa Larry's demanding voice.

The wrinkles in his forehead just above his glasses were deeper than usual. Disappointment was written all over his face. I felt three inches tall.

"You know we love you more than anything, don't you?" Grandma Sue said, trying to get my hopes up.

She was so small, it looked as if the dark, wooden chair was consuming her.

"Oh, of course she does," Grandma Shari stuttered, with tears in her eyes and a lump stuck in her throat.

She was wearing her old white spring jacket and little orange knitted scarf. I knew she felt bad for trapping me like that. She always made me feel so safe and loved.

I blacked out, not physically, but definitely mentally. I stared off into the distance, focusing on anything other than their tear-filled eyes. Around me was the magnificent home my grandpa had built for his family, and here, I was destroying it. Not for stealing, lying, using drugs, or getting drunk, but for loving someone they didn't agree with. *How could they have hated me for this?*

I came back to my unfortunate reality somehow and was hearing everything at full force again.

"You're just going through a phase," assumed by Grandma Sue.

Maybe I wish the chair would've swallowed her.

"The devil has you, but The Lord will save you." Grandpa Larry was always bringing God into something.

His voice was less harsh now and more broken. I could tell he had no hope.

"We need you in heaven with us, Moe," cried my Grandma Shari.

Well, I wanted to be with them, too. How could they think that this would change anything?

"You only think you like girls because you've never had a good father figure in your life" was the second great assumption from Grandma Sue that afternoon.

"It breaks our hearts to see you like this," Grandma Shari whispered, after seeing me face-in-lap sobbing.

Their conversation, my "intervention" maybe lasted an hour. Nobody ate lunch that day. Nobody was feeling loved or wanted, especially not me. Sitting there, after their "argument" was over, I remember how very low I felt. Still crying, barely able to speak, I sat there and whimpered my apology to them. I was a wounded dog, kicked around by some teenage boys in an alley. I was the unwanted family Christmas present. I was sorry, so sorry.

From there, I stood with the very last amount of energy I had stored within my bones and walked myself out of that toxic home. I sat in my guilt as I drove away. Following the gruesome intervention, it was all a blur. I'm not sure where I went, who I talked to, or what I did.

All I'm sure of, is from that moment on, I have never stopped being myself. I refused to be somebody that I wasn't, that I'm still not, and I will never be that person for them.

But, I'm finally okay with that.

Prescribe for Me

Shane Connelly

Just one little pill
Is all that you'll need
to be happy and healthy and blissful,
pain free.

Apologies are due
for the gross side effects.
Lucky for you, it was a tiny percent chance
of death.

Talk to your doctor
about your unique condition,
which our biologic will bring to remission.
We gladly offer aid if our price is
too steep.

The class action suit
proved it wasn't our pill
that caused your neurologic calamity...
You should have read
the fine print.

Besides, we have a new pill
for suicidal thoughts, too,
so why don't you
just take it?

Five Minutes is All I Ask

Sean Colcleasure

Characters:

Flora, in her 40s with a blue head band on her head

Jake, in his 30s wearing khakis

DJ, age unimportant. Voice only

Lights come up on Jake walking across the stage, a drink in his hand.

Jake

I'll be right back. I just want to hit the head. (*Yelling*) Don't announce the king and queen before I get back.

Coming out from the shadows.

Flora

Hi Jake, I heard you were back in town. How have you been?

Jake

(*Surprised and noticeably uneasy.*) Flora? Hey. Umm, what are you doing here?

Flora

Looking for you. I ran into your parents the other day and they sort of mentioned you'd be here. (*Moving closer*) I really think we need to talk.

Jake

(*Hurriedly finishing off his drink*) Uhh, I don't think we should be doing this right now.

Flora

Why? What is wrong with now?

Jake

For starters, Karen is over there...you know, my wife. Plus, this is my reunion. So, I don't really have time for this right now.

Flora

Just give me five minutes. It's all I ask.

Jake

I can't.

Flora

Why not?

Jake

Uhh, I think I just told you. My wife's here, plus I don't think my high school reunion is the time or place for this. *(Pause)* And speaking of my reunion, how did you get in here?

Flora

(Dismissive) Jake, please, does that really matter? I'm here, and I really need to talk about what went wrong, why you left me. *(Getting emotional)* I always thought we were good together. Weren't we? *(Silence)* You know that I was always on your side, right? That I was always there for you when you needed me?

Jake

(Taking her arm and moving her into the shadows) Yes, that is true, but that was a long time ago. I'm a different person now.

Flora

I know, I can see that. For Heaven's Sake, you're wearing khakis and a tie. Khakis! What's become of you? *(Taking something out of her purse)* Just look at your snapshot I carry with me. *(Showing him her phone)* You used to be a bit more reckless, a bit more dangerous...cool and now...now, you just look hideous.

DJ

Alright Ladies and Gentlemen, it's almost time to announce the king and queen of this year's reunion. So please start making your way back toward the dance floor.

Jake

Ummm...I've really gotta go. *(Motions his head toward the restroom)* And then I need to get back to my wife and friends.

Flora

(Getting noticeably louder) But what about me? What about us? Weren't we good together? Didn't I always keep my promises to you?

Jake

(Trying to calm her down) Yes, yes, of course you did. You always...wait... what promises?

Flora

Oh Jake, like you don't know...giving you peace of mind, a better way of life, ensuring our future...I mean your future.

DJ

Okay, are you ready? Let's start with the ladies...

Jake

He's getting ready to call the queen's name. I really gotta go. I'm sorry.

Flora

Don't you walk out on me again, Jake. I couldn't handle it if you did. We had something, something special. Don't you remember your first car and all that time we spent together? *(Daydreaming)* That first car looked so good on you. What ever happened to it?

Jake

I sold it to buy our minivan.

Flora

A minivan? You? I can't believe it. I could never picture you that way.

Jake

Flora, I'm sorry. The guy you remember existed a long time ago. My life has changed. I've graduated college, gotten married, had a son. I own a house now, two cars and I'm working as a police officer. I've grown up, matured and...

Flora

That's why I'm here. It's time that you came back to me, Jake. I can do things to make your life better. *(Stepping in closer and taking his hand)* Let's get you back where you belong. You do know you're in good hands with me, don't you?

Jake

(Pulling his hand away and stepping back into the light) I don't know what you're getting at. I mean, do you do this with all of your ex...

Flora

(Cutting him off) No. It's you. Everything that has happened to me...all of my problems are because of you, Jake.

Jake

What are you talking about?

Flora

You were the first to leave me.

Jake

First to leave you...well, I'm sorry, but maybe it was because of this *(Motions to her)*. It was always hard to be around you. You always wanted too much. You were always asking for more.

Flora

It's because I wanted you to have the best of everything. And now where are you? Who knows how you're being treated.

DJ

Congratulations Karen. I think we all know why you're wearing that crown tonight. Don't we guys? No, I'm just joking. It's a joke. *(Pause)* Wow. Tough crowd. Okay, now, fellas it's time to announce her king for the night.

Jake

I couldn't ask for anything better. My life is good, and everything is how it should be. *(Pause)* Look, I've got it all covered, just like I always have.

Flora

But...

Jake

I've moved on, Flora, and so should you.

Flora

But Jake, you know that being in the right hands makes all the difference, and I want to be those hands. Just give us one more shot, please.

DJ

Jake Farmer, who's definitely drunk himself into a better state, come on up here and claim your crown.

Jake

Hey, that's me. I won. Did you hear that (*awkwardly hugging Flora*), I won. I've really gotta go now. Sorry.

Flora

But Jake, what about me? What about us?

Jake

You'll be fine, just like you were with me. You're an insurance agent, Flo. There will always be another guy like me, looking for car insurance. I just needed someone who could wrap all my coverages together at a lower rate. (*Walking away*) It was never personal.

Flora

(*To herself*) That's what they always say. It's never personal. (*Taking notice of somebody off stage*) Hey, hey you, how's your insurance coverage?

Curtain.

Blissful Ignorance

Meghan Whitaker

Black dress black shoes.
Adults slowly wander the
open room emotionless, detached,
perplexed at a situation
no one could explain.

I seek out my best friend
through the murmuring
adults. She stands beside
her brother with a concerning
look of boredom.

“Tag you’re it!!”
We laugh and scream
down the narrow,
echoing halls.
Not a care in the world;
life was good.

Speeches are broken
and choked while we try to
ignore the corpse
that has deep purple
bruises
along his throat.

We joke and giggle
from the secrets we whisper
as they lowered
my best friend’s brother
into the ground;
six feet deeper.

Water Lillies in France

Gretchen Cline



Photography

Force of Nature I

Quinn Yarian



Watercolor Painting

Force of Nature II

Quinn Yarian



Watercolor Painting

Shine Through the Darkness

Brianna Irwin



Photography

Losing Everything

James O'Banion

The lives of my grandparents sang freely,
memories created a constant flow.
Love poured from their hearts to our souls
as the family ranch brought us together.
The ranch made us a family,
with signatures on a wall with every visit to prove it.
There was no better welcome than
Grandpa's signature wave.

Who stole the soul?

Age took over all of us
as the mountain of signatures reached its peak.
Grandma grew too small for the ranch
while Grandpa's age stayed the same.
A sacrifice had to be made, and for Grandpa,
it was *hell or high water*.

The ranch was no more,
and the old souls found their new living space.
The new space was not enough for the whole family.
Memories left behind on that open field,
a thought still lingers while looking back:

Who signed the wall last?

Where's the soul now?

Silence

Sarah Kallik

A deafening silence. Your ears start to ring, just to make sure they still work. One blink, two blinks. It just doesn't seem enough. Rub, rub, rub to the eyes – to the point you rub yourself blind. Opening them once again, they were met with a darkness so deep. Darkness never felt so evil, unencumbered to your existence. It felt safer to keep them shut.

A coward's way out, to blind thyself to one's surroundings and to ignore the inevitable. A peek through one eye seems to swallow your stomach. What is real? Is this sightlessness? You must face the situation you're in. With such a strong force, eyes are sprung open wider than necessary – just to remind yourself they're open. Awake. Conscious. Aware. Real.

What kind of place is this? A quick touch to your torso, to your legs, and again to your face. All was still present, still there, but unaware of the reality. Sitting or standing? Lying down? Jumping or running? It felt as though there was no body to be found; inexistent. Nothing in contact with the ground, nor a chair or a bed. Nothing holding you down. Nothing giving pain. Yet, even worse, nothing giving pleasure. Just uneasiness. Alert to all, yet still so powerless.

Is this what death is? Or perhaps, this is purgatory for the mild. Just vast space that seemed so endless, yet so confining. There's pressure on your chest wall, like cement block that was placed there, that seemed to pull you down, down, down, but going nowhere.

You move your lips, will your body, and try to speak, to call out to anyone for help, to scream at the top of your lungs. To not hear anything, to beg for even the slightest moan. A silent whimper curdles through your blood. Blood that burnt your veins of which it flows in places you never knew before. Frostbite to extremities of fingers, toes, nose, and areas you've always covered yourself in public. The feeling of no clothes, that once warmed you so intensely, suddenly is realized. Grasping upon your body, still there, you think but as soon as you let go, you wonder if you were wrong. You restart the cycle of making sure you were protected. There was no soothing sensation of touch.

There was nothing to be done. So much effort for anything to happen was tiring. This was a bad dream, maybe. The best thing to do is hermit inside your mind to try to sleep, something that never seemed so foreign. In such a case, thoughts of loved ones and good times are brought in for comfort. The flowing hair of theirs was bright, yet the face wasn't quite right.

Splotches. Such a loving face was only reduced to smears. Black, blank streaks on a silhouette coming towards you, something you don't quite recognize anymore. Eyes that you didn't even realize were closed spring open to darkness.

Nakedness. Terror. Alone.

Silence.

The Wife

Abigail Postema

barely woken hands
catch on cold fingers
as they trail down the body
wet prints left behind
making the skin pebble and shy away
five corpulent worms undulate with gluttony
digging
seeking
finding
snatching
still living flesh
into the dark of their maws
into the white of nails
the flesh cries
for what is lost
with red tears
she does not cry
lest they be eaten
by the worms
she must love them
she must love them
she must love him

The Girl is Tired of Her Life

Kacey Pittmann

She constantly listens to her mother's current husband whine and complain about the little humiliations in his life. He talks down on her as though she is the one who will never have a chance at life. A successful life. Cassidy is done with her mother's husband, even her mother. She has been forced to go to doctors who tell her she is depressed and anxious. Then her mother implies that the issues her husband brings up are too much to deal with when Cassidy is so angry. Cassidy used to be angry, but now she just feels like crying herself to sleep. The doctors gave her pills. The counselor tells her to talk to her mother. Cassidy's mother never listens to her and the pills make her stupid. They helped for a little while though. Then they started to look too appetizing. Cassidy stopped taking them daily and started saving them. She tells herself that someday she will take them all with no regrets. Sometimes she almost does. Every time she gets closer and closer to actually doing it; however, Cassidy is too tired of the thought of how life would be if it doesn't work. The next day she will regret not doing it, but she has work to do. She always has work to do.

You Don't Own Me Anymore

Josie Buckingham

Dear Depression,
You don't own me anymore.
Today is the day I finally stand on my two bare feet.
The feet and knees full of blisters
from crawling across the coals of hell that has trapped
my shattering soul for the past six years.
Today I walk up the staircase of self discovery and self worth,
every painful step a symbol of pain
I will no longer feel.

Dear Depression,
You are what my uncle warned me about
when I was 11 years old.
You've held me hostage in my own body,
trapping my screams in my throat.
You stripped my family of an airway
for their plane to land on,
causing a crash of smoking flames and burning bodies.

You stole my mother from me when I was nine years old,
you snatched nonexistent memories of shopping and
staying up late talking about cute boys.
You shredded my shoulder to cry on
when I started to hate the visual of myself at 10 years old.

Dear Depression,
You are the monster that too many people learn to accept,
you are the demon that made it hard for me to accept myself.
You learned I wanted to talk about cute girls instead of boys
and used it against me.
You saw another opportunity for me to break the mirror
and keep my head down.
I was disgusted with myself for years over
something I had no control of.

Dear Depression,
You saw all of my weaknesses when I

was 12 years old and considered me an easy target.
One day at a time
you made the days shorter and the nights longer.
You turned me into an anxious person
who could only eat one meal a day.
You took all of the confidence out of my body
every single chance you had.
You insisted I deserved to be
lonely and alone.
You controlled every part of me and
made me distance myself from everybody.
You knew no one cared enough to notice.

Dear Depression,
Six years later and I have survived
every night you kept me awake,
all of the trust issues you rooted in my veins,
the loneliness I thought was inescapable,
and the anxiety that made me cling to
my bed frame and safe roads.
A nervous wreck walking into school,
going to the bathroom to cry,
running to my car for panic attacks.
That anxious girl you created is
finally ready to kill you.

Dear Depression,
You've created a war in every cell
that makes me me.
You've left scars over every inch of my body.
You insisted on throwing metal shards
into my skin,
and urged millions of tears to shed
from my eyes.
But today, today I perform surgery
on myself to remove every millimeter of you.
Today, I end the six year war
by showing you the exit.
You will not kill me, you will not live inside
the weak parts I leave unguarded.
You don't own me anymore.

Conflicted

Arieanna Johnson

i am curious
(i am ordinary),
like a kitten born stray in the summertime
(like a puppy born confined behind walls of a home),
and i refuse to be held
(please hold me and don't let go),
because there is too much to see in this world
(because i'm afraid i'll get lost and won't find home again),
and i want to see it all
(and my world is here, at home).

Success is a Staircase, Not a Doorway

Stephanie Ewalt



Photography

Sky is the Limit

Christina Homer



Photography

The Palm Tree Poem

Nickolas Ponce

The palms sway
Back and forth they say
Rustling through the air
Sleepy?
Why a hammock of course
That force?
The palms, they just sway
Shaded by long branches
It's just that way
The palms sway
Just in case you're ever feeling gray



The Month of May

Diana Casey



Photography

Serotiny

Steve Wieschowski

She lodged her ember deep inside myself:
a careless cherry flicked on tinder leaves,
a lighted candle elbowed off its shelf.
I choke for air; her smoke is all I breathe.

A careless cherry, flicked on tinder leaves
ignited pools of gasoline to flame.
I choke for air. Her smoke is all I breathe.
The hazard waited; spark cannot take blame.

Igniting pools of gasoline a-flame
the forest, ashing pines exploding, but
the hazard waited. Spark cannot take blame
for landscapes barred, wounds cauterized shut.

The forest's ashen pines exploded, but
their seeds had wanted, waiting for her blaze,
for landscapes barred. Wounds cauterized shut
have healed, but scars will itch in certain ways.

The seeds had wanted, waiting for her blaze,
for lighted candle elbowed off its shelf.
I healed, but scars will itch in certain ways;
she lodged her ember deep inside myself.

Mirrored Abuse

Chloe Plescher

Mother's tongue razors
my wrist again, carving
"fucker" and "liar" I brand
onto my skin. Her words circle
around my hunched back,
where vertebrae jut and my shoulder
blades chop fat.

Forced by church leaders to confess,
I meet threats stitched by her red face.
Father in the corner silent
as my stomach is wrung dry:
I do not feed, cannot feed.
He looks the other way.

The blade swipes
my thigh: migrated scars
hidden. Tears do not fall,
cannot fall. Only the ink
from self-etched insults secrete
the pain, nourish my empty stomach.
With the release dripping blood brings,
I can breathe.
Comforted by the disease,
my illness reflects my mother.

The Stairs

Justin Fairfield

The event was going pretty well. Everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. The big wigs and the small people were all in attendance. No one seemed out of place, but exactly where they should be. Except for the boy with his father. No one seemed to notice what he was feeling. Dread, fear, anger that no one around him understood. Even the father was oblivious. Everyone around was enjoying the party. One might assume that is just how it goes when what they have to fear is out of sight. But, for the boy, the fear was all too real. Here and there the figure darted beneath the floorboards. No one noticed. Right under the feet of everyone, dread and darkness lurked. Still no one noticed what it was that had the boy so frightened. No words could be said. No emotions relayed to anyone big or small. The father didn't notice. The boy could only stare as the shadow crept and slunk around the floor... until it stopped. The dark was still there, but where? Shadow still covered the basement where it was. But...no movement. The boy thought it had gone to sleep, until he lifted his eyes toward the staircase. Eyes of a figure so yellow and hollow looked right back at the boy. No one noticed.

I Don't Know

Casey Deater

I was raised to believe in the lord
I was raised in a strict home
I was raised in a loving family so -
Why should I feel alone?

My pastor says these words
And everyone seems so sure
Oh pastor, am I impure?

The more I see the less I know for
Sure but, shouldn't I know for sure?

So, why don't I?
How can you believe in this great place when you die?
But only if you follow these rules, these ideas, this life.

What if it is all a painful lie?

My church says to believe
To follow the good book
To have a strong faith

So why do I give other religions another look?
I am shook
Rattled with doubt, rattled with questions that
If I asked I would be screamed at for being a false Christian

Why do I have to need permission to think these thoughts?
Maybe they are truths?
Please do not soothe me with lies or
Bible verses that despise others who are different or
Who were led astray

How could Christians hate if you are gay?
How can you *be* if all you preach is hate?

We were taught to love
But wait...

The bible is for all
You don't pick and choose it
It is not something you can just abuse

If I am going to hell for being a loving Christian
Who loves everyone no matter their race, sex or religion

So, yes I guess I am still a Christian
But I am not a Christian who doesn't practice what I preach
So, don't come and say some long speech.

And don't tell me about these preachers, don't call them my leaders
Don't tell me what to think or say or what to speak or even pray
Don't tell me any of this nonsense

Because just like your high horse we all drink from the same
Holy water.

Shanty Town Shimmy

Tammy Tolar

Five-foot four
baby blue eyes
thirteen going on twenty-five
put out to the dope man
by her brother no less
down on Broadway Street
she found no rest
for she held hands
with every man she did
meet and greet
with a lioness roar
she at the door of the oldest
profession known
A looker of lookers
her claim to infamous fame.
Some say Shimmy's
are to blame for taking "their" best,
"Alas" Shimmy has been laid
to rest.
Found by her Father then ninety-three,
who would bury his last babe born?
Rocks in her left hand
twenty dollars in her right
looked like she fought
with all her might
forty years late
a child in bondage No More.
For there was No Shimmy down
Shantytown lane, to Shimmy with again.

Handle with Care

Jeremy Hurt

My warning label reads simply: “Handle with Care.”

But this is where the simplicity stops.

This label must be taken quite seriously.

Not because I am delicate and will tear easily;

but, because mishandling may lead to adverse effects.

If you decide to attempt to carry me my contents shift easily and frequently,
and I become quite the balancing act.

Some days, I don’t function as I should and a long time ago my reset button
fell off.

These days can be particularly frustrating for everyone involved.

Understand the qualifications for my care, they are few, but important.

First, some heavy lifting will be required, for when I fall, I fall hard,
and 215 pounds of dead weight is no easy task.

Second, you must speak in codes and broken sentences.

You see, when I had to piece myself back together, not everything ended up in
the right place and some pieces were lost forever.

I don’t always make sense to those who don’t know what it is like to be
broken.

Third, and this is quite important,

you must be an excellent seamstress,

because there will be days when the stitches in my heart will tear;

especially, those days when I seem to feel

everything

as if my nerve endings were on fire.

So, remember as you read this label, this is for your safety and your well-
being.

This is so you can never say you did not know what you were getting in to.

This is so I never have to tell you,

“I told you so”

when I’m crumpled on the floor floating in a river of tears.

But mainly,

this is so I can keep out all of you

who aren’t as cautious with their hearts

as I have learned to be with mine.

Nothing to Fear

Nicholas Boerema

There is nothing to fear, but the fear of nothing
shocks me awake, and keeps the mind hunting:
Vigilant to threat that never exists,
a nervous twitch, the mortal mind twists
and turns to seek the comfort in systems,
the certainty written in long-held traditions;
But the longest held yet is running its course,
and the dimension of the fourth paints a pale horse.
The rider incites somatic cascades.
The mind must succumb, the spirit degrades.
The race of my heart, the squeeze of my guts,
my insomniatic march through ancestral ruts.
Short-term state, long-term trait.
Trauma of non-being, I must capitulate.

So It Goes

Kera Deverman

moonlight
stay with me tonight
who cares if we might
burn with spite
it's not up to them
just let the world spin
feeling of skin-on-skin
your lips grin
up my flower stem
petals, petals
wind through the window
dandelion blows
roses grow
and so
it goes

Silent Wish List

Emery Trautner

I remember being 10 years old and watching a movie about a girl who received three wishes of her choice. I replayed in my head what I would wish for until my brain was fuzzy and the world spun. *A picnic that lasts forever, and friends who never have to go home. Being the winner of a thousand tickets at my favorite arcade; bouncing off of my parent's bed and flying into the room next to me.* But that was then. I now wish for the reasons and answers as to why talking isn't necessarily communicating. Why women love too much. Remembering what it feels to be alive and believe in something more than you can see. Why I am spoken to in words but I look at you with feelings. Why it is okay to not feel fine. Why people are terrifying, and strange, and beautiful all at the same time. Why a tampon has to sound like a marching band in your pocket. Why I can't remember what I was angry about, or why heaven seems like a metaphor. Why the genie in the bottle is not going to grant me these reasons at all.

Blue Doors - Lectoure, France

Gretchen Cline



Photography

Pointe au Baril

Gretchen Cline



Photography

***Best of Luck, Gretchen...
you will be missed***

When I was humbly asked to write a grand tribute to the one-and-only Gretchen Cline, devoted English and yoga professor (and so much more), from Muskegon Community College, I was speechless and at a loss for words. Please do not get me wrong (*an expression I hate by the way*), but nonetheless appropriate in this case, but how do I limit a few words in a tribute to such a beloved teacher, colleague, and probably the best friend I've ever had? Well, here goes . . .

Gretchen:

Where do I begin? You WILL be missed. No doubt about that! I still remember when we both worked part-time at Baker College, and neither one of us informed the other that we had applied for a full-time position at MCC. Do you remember when we walked into the MCC office (Room 144 at the time) to fill out our final paperwork, only to discover that we had both been hired full-time at MCC? That was twenty-one years ago! And what a loss for Baker College! Wow! How time flies! Anyway, you have inspired so many students, and you have definitely inspired me. The halls of MCC will be all the lonelier without you. I shall remember and forever cherish your cheerful smiles on the days when I was so stressed that I honestly didn't think I could walk into my classroom and teach. You told me and I quote, "Ronnie, breathe in and breathe out, and touch the walls." Hmm . . . still not sure what you meant by touching the walls. But I touched the walls, and all was well!!

Gretchen, I shall never forget our birthday lunches, our love for music (who would have thought we both love the music of Madonna and The Partridge Family), but most importantly I will never forget our friendship. And let's not forget the times I grabbed a Reese's Peanut Cup (or five) and you waved you finger at me and said "Shame, shame, you little whippersnapper." I am all teary-eyed as I conclude this tribute to an awesome teacher, colleague, and a dear friend.

I shall miss my office mate. This is not the end. It's new chapter.

Fondly,
Ronnie Jewell

River Voices

Contributors

Nicholas Boerema is a tentative student with a penchant for knowledge, and a general disdain for the time required to obtain it. He enjoys exploring the beauty and wonderful things of the world through the arts and sciences, although he never thought of himself as being the artist type. He believes that art should serve the creator first, and the rest of the world second. He hopes that one day the rush of society can slow down and allow people the time to truly understand the unique experience and path of life that best suits them.

Josie Buckingham is a STEM major, who loves being outdoors. She enjoys going for long walks, hammocking, and long drives. She writes poetry as an outlet and enjoyment as well. Her favorite food is Italian.

Taylor Carlson-Harding is a Psychology major and is transferring to Michigan State University in the fall of 2019. She loves photography and capturing moments for others to remember. In her free time, she enjoys playing with her corgi puppy named Sassy.

Elizabeth Robin Carpenter loves the theater. She was very involved in MCC's theater program until she graduated in 2018. Robin has also been known to pen a phrase or two, when the time is right. Currently between degrees, she is a part-time bookseller for the MCC bookstore, allowing her plenty of time to pursue her many and varied interests, including (but not limited to) quilting, hiking, singing, the beach, movies, reading, backpacking, crocheting, and sitting around a good campfire. She especially enjoys spending time with all the people that love her. Robin has two daughters, two sons, two sons-in-law, one daughter-in-law, six grandchildren, and one husband. Oh, and a dog named Zoe. Her life is full, and God is good!

Diana Casey is a traveler, one who has lived so many places, and is sure to call many others home. Her autobiography was once titled, "I grew up with two suitcases." One held the few treasures we were permitted to take to the next place we lived. The other is rich with experiences. It is from both suitcases that she enriches her teaching with stories to bring learning to life. She is a teacher. She aspires to live so to have a story and a trinket from all the people and places she encounters. In this time of her life, she is a dabbler in the art of poetry, various arts to display perhaps in a museum, theater, dancing with her dogs.

River Voices

Contributors

Gretchen Cline, Ph.D., E-RYT, is a certified Yoga Therapist, and has studied yoga, meditation, Ayurveda and healing. She completed her 500-hour level II in 3HO International Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan in 2011. In addition, she teaches both Hatha and Kundalini Yoga for college credit at MCC. Gretchen also teaches a variety of other classes at MCC, including Women's and Gender Studies, Literature and Writing. Oil painting is also an important part of her own healing journey.

Sean Colcleasure is a full-time English Instructor at MCC who loves to dabble in short plays. He is also the Editor of *River Voices* with Shauna Hayes.

Casey Deater is a senior at Newaygo High School, who loves to write and admires the Beatles.

Megan Delgado wrote her piece in Mary Tyler's Creative Writing Class. This is her last semester at MCC before she transfers to Grand Valley to major in English. She is planning on continuing her education and earning her Ph.D. Her hope is to become a college professor. She's always enjoyed writing, so being selected for *River Voices* is truly an honor. She intends to continue her writing career throughout her time at Grand Valley.

Kaylynne Dennis is in her second year at MCC. She loves to travel and hopes to do it in her future career in Zoology. Meeting new people and seeing new things is important to Kaylynne, and she hopes through traveling she can fulfill that need.

Taylor DePouw is a current freshman at MCC and is super stoked to be a part of *River Voices* this year. After MCC, she wants to transfer to Central Michigan University to get her Bachelor's degree in English Literature. Taylor loves photography, watching indie movies, acting, and working on 5000-piece jigsaw puzzles. She wants to thank her friends and family for their love and support and being models in many of her pictures.

River Voices

Contributors

Kera Deverman is a 17-year-old writer in the Early College Program at MCC. She has been writing since she was really young, and it has always been her dream to publish a book one day. She hopes that what she has written resonates with you, and she thanks you for taking the time to read it.

Ismael Enriquez has been a teacher for 25 years, and this is his sixth year at MCC. Ismael has also been the coordinator of the Foreign Language department at MCC for five years. His photos were taken from his third trip to Belize, and his second time leading the class with Kathy Pollack, where he teaches the Mayan history component and Kathy does the Life Science portion and then they take a group of students to study and learn in Belize and Guatemala.

Stephanie Ewalt is a 2017 Mona Shores High School graduate and soon to be a MCC graduate as well. She plans to continue her education at Grand Valley State University in the fall where she will study Biomedical Sciences. When she is not tied up with school work or her full-time job, she enjoys the great outdoors. A few of her hobbies include swimming, boating, or camping. Whether it is in the classroom, at work, or outdoors, she is always striving to do her best. Stephanie is also a student editor of *River Voices*.

Justin Fairfield is a recent graduate (May of 2018) from Hope College. He has been applying to occupational therapy schools to receive his Master's Degree. In the future he hopes to be working with kids and/or kids who have disabilities. His writing comes from what is floating around in his mind or from personal experience.

Jazlyn Francis is a nursing student who shares her vision of the world through the camera lens. She finds inspiration by walking the city streets and by swimming the oceans of the world.

Kayla Franklin is a general education student planning to go into veterinary science/zoology, and who is kind of known as the "Crazy animal/crystal/plant lady." She is also a lover of art, so much so, that she gets it put on her body in the form of tattoos.

River Voices

Contributors

Don Goodman is an MCC legend. A Distinguished Professor of Reading, who taught at the campus for over 25 years and co-authored *When We All Went To War*, is an annual fixture at the Michigan Irish Music Festival's Limerick competition, where he often places first, as he did in the Drinking category this past year.

Shauna Hayes teaches English and Literature at MCC and LOVES every aspect of her job. When she is not planning lectures, grading essays or designing *River Voices*, you will find her walking with her husband on the beach or playing with her children in the sand.

Erin Hoffman has been involved in the art community since early childhood. She was first published at age six in a local Fort Wayne, Indiana newspaper, "The Sentinel" for her visual interpretation of "A Sunny Day." Erin is a full-time tenured art instructor at MCC teaching Printmaking, Art Appreciation, Drawing, Painting, Figure Drawing, Contemporary Art History and 2-d design. Erin received her BFA from the University of Northern Iowa and MFA from University of Georgia and both degrees are in printmaking. She uses woodcut, lithography, and drawing as her primary media and has exhibited in over 80 exhibitions nationwide including most recently a solo show called "Reflections From the Cradle of Democracy" at the Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio.

Christina Homer is a Nursing student with a passion for helping people. She loves photography and spending time in nature capturing God's beauty.

Jeremy Hurt is someone who has always had a passion for writing and finds the act of putting pen to paper quite therapeutic. His words are inspired by his life and personal experiences. One day he plans to put together a book of poems to be published for all the world to read.

Brianna Irwin is currently a student at MCC. She is working on becoming a professional photographer. She hopes to take her photography skills out into the world to make a difference by sharing what is seen through the lens. She often finds inspiration through her own personal experiences, taking walks through nature, or looking at the world through various points of view.

River Voices

Contributors

Ronnie (Ronaldo) Jewell was born and raised in West Virginia and attended high school and college in North Carolina. After graduating from graduate school at Western Michigan University, Ronnie was hired at MCC as an English Instructor, teaching both composition and literature classes. He has been teaching at MCC since 1993. This is his dream job: teaching awesome and diverse students! Aside from spending time preparing lesson plans, teaching classes, and grading papers, Ronnie enjoys collecting nostalgic memorabilia from the 1970's: records, albums, toys, television shows, books, posters—anything '70's. He also has four cats, writes music on his piano, and enjoys an occasional glass of red wine by a warm fire. And he absolutely loves horror movies (mainly from the '70's). *Who would have thought?*

Arieanna Johnson, known by her friends, as Anna is a student here at MCC. She finds time to relax and escape through writing. Poetry and nonfiction are her favorite things to read and to write. It's how she expresses herself. She hopes that you enjoy her poem as much as she enjoyed putting it together.

Sarah Kallik is a soul that has survived many dark days but always looks to the next sunrise. She believes our minds are more powerful than we think. The thing is that it's up to us to find the things that bring happiness, even in the smallest things; she might be in a wheelchair, but she pops those wheelies in style.

Kevin Kyser once tied for first place in a middle school T-shirt design contest and was mortified when the judges decided to combine both winning designs. Despite being scarred by this horrific event, he decided to get a degree, enjoy a career, and teach others about the wonder of graphic design.

Kelli Ann Loughrige is a Muskegon native, MCC Educational Support Staff, proud military family member, and alumnus of RP, MCC & WMU. Nature is her solace, and she can never live without creativity.

Savannah Maycroft is a Health Science student who hopes to strike something in everyone she shares her second passion, writing, with. She finds her ideas by yoga and meditation and with the help of her professor, Mary Tyler.

River Voices

Contributors

Mia McDermott is currently a junior at Spring Lake High School, and she spends all of her free time reading. From a young age, she loved the classics and continues to devour them today. If her nose is not in a book, she is most likely hiking or indulging in her *Jeopardy* enthusiasm.

Kyle Meyer is pursuing a Computer Science major and would like to improve the human condition through technological progress. He has a vested interest in space travel and all things tech. In addition to photography, he wishes to learn Violin. Though maybe Violas sound richer... Electric it is.

James O' Banion is songwriter and musician. Communication is his inspiration and intuition is his guide. You don't just communicate with people, but with the world around you. The whole universe is 'alive' in a way, and you notice that more as you open up to it. The sensations and emotions that arise from that interaction, they let you know that it's art.

Kacey Pittmann is currently nineteen years old. Her name means 'brave', which she is decidedly not. She enjoys making sarcastic comments towards her friends, and writing out her frustrations, resulting in a morbid sense of humor, while trying to reign it in despite how well her friends react to it. Scoffing in disbelief is a good reaction, right?

Chloe Plescher is a student at MCC who is transferring to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in English. When she is not writing, she is typically binge-watching *Gilmore Girls* or editing her photography.

Nickolas Ponce is a student at MCC, and a student editor of *River Voices*. He is working towards his degree and every step of the way I tries to be involved. A prime example is MCC's Literary Arts Magazine, *River Voices*, where students submit various different forms of literature from pictures to poems to essays, which are then showcased to the world. He hopes you enjoy this year's edition.

Abigail Postema is in her last year at MCC. Her hobbies include book hoarding (her mother's words, not hers), long walks on the treadmill, watching too much TV, and singing at the top of her lungs.

River Voices

Contributors

Tyler Schafer is a Business major who would like to someday maybe own his own business. He finds inspiration from learning from others and being outside experiencing nature.

Alexander Slocum was born in Utah and is currently a graphic designer at MCC. He loves German Shepherds and enjoys watching sports, especially his favorite team: Michigan! His dream job is to watch, analyze, and talk about sports for a living. Alex is also a student editor for *River Voices*.

Tammy Tolar is an Earth loving, fun poet with a dash of theater would like to visit as many museums of art as she can and create stories from the beauty within. She also loves Wales and would like to visit after graduation for inspiration and meditation.

Emery Trautner is a part of the amazing *River Voices* team as a student editor. She enjoys laughing, learning about new things, and literature, of course. She finds reading to be an important part of everyone's lives and a great way to have a better understanding of the world around us.

Mary Tyler teaches English and Film at MCC. She loves to read, write, and attend live concerts.

Morgyn Weinert is currently a freshman at MCC. When she is not serving at Applebee's, she enjoys traveling, drawing, and getting tattoos that her family doesn't approve of.

Meghan Whitaker hopes to travel to as many countries as she can with only her backpack to experience different cultures.

Angelina White is a pre-med student who uses all of her free time for art. You can almost always find her with a notebook or a camera in hand. Her inspiration is the quirks in her friends which offer colorful substance in her work.

River Voices

Contributors

Brianna White is a writer. She has written a novel, which she continues to obsess over, so it will never actually reach a publishing house. A new hobby she has taken up is oil painting. Her art may not be Bob Ross level yet, but she certainly enjoys making happy little clouds. The time she has between the work of school, jobs, and family, Brianna is a student editor for *River Voices*. If you want to connect with this creator, you will most likely find her in the back of a library, buried in a book.

Steve Wieschowski likes to rhyme and lives with a strange dog called Lara Croft.

Quinn Yarian is a second-year student at MCC who has had the opportunity to be one of the student editors for *River Voices*. When he is not studying, he likes to spend his time cooking, traveling, and doing yoga. He is looking forward to the 2019 edition of *River Voices*.

Isaac Zenz is a person who dreams of sleeping and lives to create a great many things. Although Isaac often focuses on other forms of art, storytelling is dear to his heart. Isaac is currently in his second year of college. Lord willing, he will have a successful art career and not be homeless.

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