

# V O I C E S



MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL





**VOICES 2020  
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STATEMENT**

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It is the mission of Voices to recognize and showcase the visual arts, musical and literary talents of McHenry County College students.

Voices provides a forum for students to practice curation, jurying, editing, and technical production, which enhances the artistic experience and provides real art-world experience.

**EDITORIAL  
STATEMENT**

Voices publishes work that reflects the literary, visual, and musical points-of-view of contemporary community college students. Although Voices does not organize content thematically, the student editors, who are appointed annually by the faculty advisors in each discipline, select work that represents the contemporary zeitgeist of the McHenry County College community.

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## BEST OF MAGAZINE

Voices 2020 is proud to announce Awards for the Best of Magazine

### LITERARY:

Grace Armstrong  
*Empty*

### VISUAL ART:

Francesca McGinley  
*Force of Nature III*

### MUSIC:

Fallen (Jonathan Roa)  
*Dark Prophecy*

Voices wishes to acknowledge students for their excellence in literature, music and visual arts.

## THE DAN RISCH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Dan Risch Memorial Scholarship is awarded to outstanding and promising visual art students. This Scholarship is generously funded by Dan's family and friends in memory of former MCC art student Dan Risch.

The 2020 Dan Risch Memorial Scholarship winners are:

Ryan Grandt  
Francesca McGinley  
Gloria Stewart

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To hear this year's selections go to [soundcloud.com/mcc-voices/sets/voices-2020](https://soundcloud.com/mcc-voices/sets/voices-2020) or simply scan the QR code below.



P.S. GIVE THE BOOK  
A FLIP THROUGH AND  
WATCH THIS CORNER.



## EMPTY

I didn't think I was broken  
when I started going weeks  
eating only oxygen for breakfast.  
Twenty-three and a half pounds ago,  
with at least fifteen more to lose.

Maybe it started because I wanted to be beautiful.  
But at some point, I started wishing  
to get so small that I'd stop existing.

I wanted to be nothing.  
Miles and miles of skin,  
dark, dead eyes,  
and velvet bones.

At fifteen,  
I built a life on  
sixty sit-ups and a salad,  
convinced 350 calories a day would  
assuage me.

But really,  
all I wanted to be  
was absolutely  
empty.

Doctors said if I kept starving  
I could stop my heartbeat,  
by then I had already decided  
I was not afraid of dying.

Dizzy. Weak.  
Half a human now.  
I lay on the cold bathroom floor,  
curled into my rib cage,  
breathing through my mouth.

I still don't know  
why there was something  
so seductive about  
being empty inside.  
It felt like I had nothing to lose.

Except maybe my life.

**BEST OF MAGAZINE**

**FRANCESCA MCGINLEY**

*Force of Nature III*



GRAPHITE, WATERCOLOR PENCIL, 30" X 22"

FRANCESCA MCGINLEY  
*Force of Nature I*



GRAPHITE, WATERCOLOR PENCIL, 30" X 22"



**MORGAN SCHILL**  
*The Painted Lady*



OIL ON CANVAS, 36" X 30"



## JOE & STEVEN

Simplicity. My navy blue buttoned-up shirt, my cup of creamed coffee, and my job at the weigh station. The weigh station was built on the state line. A 400 square foot building with parallel rows of chipped vinyl siding. We're the port of entry for the trucking company down the road. Today is Friday and Fridays are egg sandwich days. It's Joe's turn to pay. I drive my grey Ford Fusion up into the station's paved lot at 6 AM. The sky is still dark for the farmers. Fields of crunchy corn stalks surround the building. There's a parking light lit right above them casting a hazy orange tone against the tall corn. The rumbling of a near-by combine harvester, the slap of cold wind against my rough beard, and the taste of warm coffee down my throat. This is the beauty of a Midwest morning.

I take the original key for the station and twist it into its fitting rusted slot. A click. A snap of old lights. A push of a computer button. A flick of heated warmth. A spin of the radio dial. The station's wooden structure sets out a deep creak. It's waking up. Though, my attention has shifted to the late appearance of Joe. His roaring motorcycle drowns out the running combine harvester. Joe celebrates every Friday by riding his polished motorcycle to work. I don't trust it. Bikes cause trouble, but his motorcycle has become an element of simplicity. He and his Harvey bike crawl up next to the door. The station shakes along. My stomach growls for

a gooey egg sandwich. Leather boots stomp into the station. A stained brown bag is tossed into my lap. I peel the bag open. I ask him the routine question.

"Did you change the sign?"

He plops down on his chair. "Yep. Flipped it on the drive-in."

We smile at each other. I'll never tire of his yellowed, crinkled smile. Sunrise makes her appearance on time. Her golden rays stretch against Joe's worn wrinkles. I catch myself staring. I shift my focus to the computer monitor. I don't think Joe noticed. Trucks start filing in. They curve around the worn traffic cones and sit in our makeshift roundabout. Their trailers carrying boxes of commercialized goods. An 18-wheeler is the first to drive onto the axle scale. Our scale is cemented above the paved lot, so Joe and I track the weight amount inside the station. Our stationed officer, Dan, is pushing for an In-Motion Axle Scale but I'm not too keen on it. It'll ruin the routine with its fancy gadgets. My computer monitor flickers a neon "35,900 pounds." Joe waves him on with a mouthful of cheesy eggs in his mouth. A deep chuckle fills my stomach.

The weigh station is winding down. The local morning radio show is over, the sunrise has lost all of her vibrant colors, and our egg sandwiches have been devoured. Our shifts are

never long at the station. We're flexible for the element of surprise. The constant change in schedules is never easy for me, but it's doable for the sake of the weigh station. I shut down my computer monitor. Joe grabs his motorcycle helmet. We shuffle around to close up; in sync with our routine habits. Everything is in place. I lock up the weigh station at 9 AM. Joe climbs aboard his black bike. I won't see him until Wednesday. My fingers mesh into one another; fiddling with time.

I say out to Joe. "What do you think about Dan's proposal? The In-Motion Axle Scale?" His hand leaves the key in the ignition. "I don't like it. Ray told me they're inaccurate and break easily."

"Yeah, I don't like it either. Just something about all that new technology doesn't sit right."

"We'll fight Dan on it then. Sound good?"

I can't see Joe's face through the helmet, his reaction leaves me relieved. I give him a nod in agreement.

"See you Wednesday, Steven. Coffee on me."

His motorcycle revs alive. His feet knocks the kickstand up. And, as Joe turns onto the highway, he slows down to switch the metal "OPEN" sign to the "CLOSED" sign. A small smile grows on my face. Another successful morning.

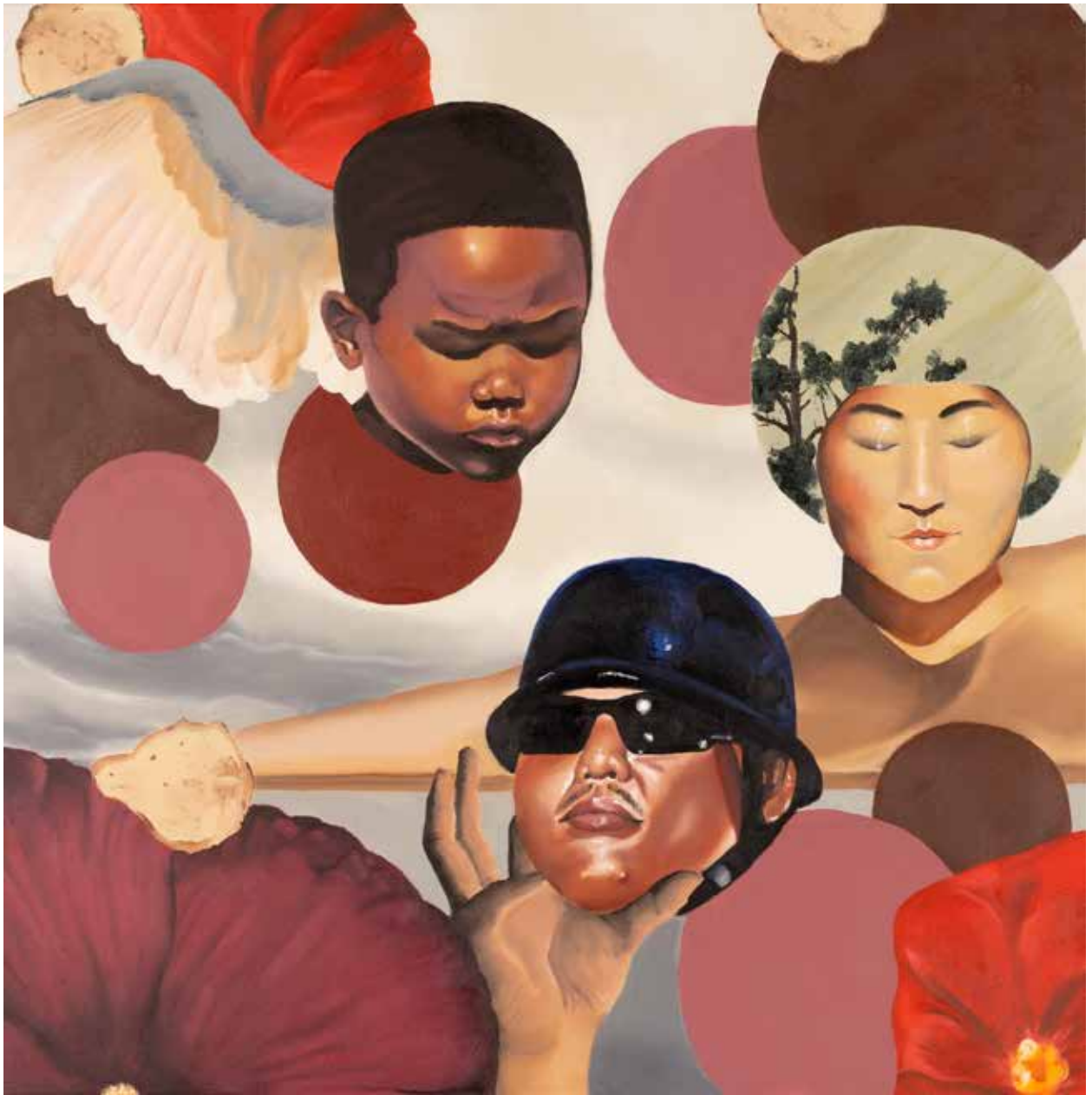


CHEYENNE TURLEY

*Luna*



STERLING SILVER, 1.25" X 1.181" X .157"



OIL ON CANVAS, 26" X 26"



**GLORIA STEWART**

*Movement*



ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24" X 18"

# SUNDAY MORNING

Footsteps down the hallway,  
Echoing the fap, fap, fap, sound of his worried feet.  
Our bedroom too far away, a terrifying distance in the dark  
This gauntlet where ancient childhood monsters roam  
The small voice whispers, "I'm afraid."

We hauled him up into the middle of our bed,  
With a practiced scoop known by sleepy parents everywhere  
Where he burrowed down beneath a well-loved quilt  
A trembling heap of elbows, knees and feet  
To find sanctuary in our size and in our heat  
A fortress strong, his monsters did retreat—  
Vanquished, they would win no battles this night.

Morning came and midnight terrors had flown,  
Sunday comics were fetched, coffee mugs retrieved  
We carried them back up to our room  
As carefully as waiter in a posh hotel hoping for a tip  
We wiggled back into rumpled sheets, competing for the best spot  
To see the inked pages of the newspaper that spread across our laps  
Snuggling close, his familiar sleep scent lingered, warm and sweet.

How was it that his limbs had sprouted and grown overnight?  
Like eager springtime branches, hungry for the warming sun  
And then, without warning,  
Like the low, dark growl of a dog in the middle of the night,  
Bristling at some unseen intruder  
It was we who were afraid  
Too soon, we knew, he would fight his monsters alone  
Beyond the safety of our bed.



**PATTY STRICKER**  
*Tornadic Blurts*



ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24" X 30"



LINDA CANNIZZO  
*Attraction*



OIL ON CANVAS, 38" X 30"



# NIGHTLY RETIREMENT

My copper chariot carries me  
Through the darkness of a fresh dusk  
Heralded by the ascending moon.

It comes to a halt at my slightest touch  
Like a well-trained pet that knows  
When to heel.  
Stepping forth from that reliable wagon,  
I venture forth,  
Through the gates of my shining, inviting residence.  
Beyond the door into the warm interior within.

Greeted by those of my blood,  
News of the day is swapped and exchanged.  
The words of trials and tribulations  
Fly forth like drops of rain  
In a downpour of shared experience.

After time passes, I take to the stairs,  
Raising myself so high,  
To sink myself low again.  
I enter that sanctuary of many days and nights,  
That chamber of comfort and calm,  
That I like to call my true home.

With a flick of a commanding finger,  
I put an end to the long gleaming light set above me,  
Before approaching that long comforting companion,  
In all its wrapped cloth and stationary stature.

With not an ounce of hesitation, I let myself fall  
Into the embrace of that tender companion,  
Wrapped myself in said cloth and stature,  
With the fervor of a drowning man,  
Desperate to lose himself on solid ground.  
Instead I drown in my own fading consciousness,  
Waiting until the light breaks to repeat the cycle anew.

**JORDAN FIKE**  
*Les Fleurs*

SILVER GELATIN PRINT, 10" X 8"



REBAR TIE WIRE, 13.5" X 9.5" X 4"



**JESSICA ESSA**  
*Scars of Being Bound*



## CACTUS GIRL

As we sit and drink our coffee,  
you smile across the table,  
but your eyes search the room  
for a more delicate and fragrant trophy,  
and I wonder if I am your “good deed” for the week.

When I was young,  
I fed on loss and empty promises,  
and I grew prickly to keep away the pain.  
I have learned not to dig my roots in too deep.

My skin is thicker now,  
and I know how to survive  
in empty places  
without the luxury of rain.

I wait, because I also know,  
with the right care,  
even a cactus can learn to blossom.

**KATHIE JAGMAN**  
*Gramma's Hands*



OIL ON CANVAS, 24" X 18"



PATTY TRAINER

*Sweet Tea*



SODA FIRED STONEWARE, 4" X 4.5"



## COLOR IT BROWN

When did I first notice the white threads  
in my son's hair? Was it when he  
leaned over the sink, rinsing out the pan  
that had held grilled flank steak  
for a family dinner?  
Was it when I hugged him  
as he sat on his sofa  
watching a cooking show?

Where is the plain brown hair  
of the child who caught polliwogs  
and wore high-topped corrective shoes?  
Where is the plain brown hair  
of the teenager who rode his three-wheeler,  
shaggy hair flattened under a baseball cap?

When his head isn't shorn, white flecks  
dot his temples like pieces of lint  
from an old sweatshirt.  
I want to color those flecks  
with permanent marker  
and watch him run to the yellow school bus  
one more time.



**MICHELLE MATHIS**

*Eight*



OIL ON CANVAS, 24" X 18"

ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 17" X 11"



# MOTHER EARTH

One dandelion fuzzy parachute floats at wind's discretion,  
grounding to make good on my promise  
to give tomorrow's reality,  
providing food, pollen, and even joy in continuation.

Chicken feathers drop on ground with no  
germinating hopes; still fulfilling my legacy  
as decomposition fills needs for welfare  
fueling future planetary tenants.

A meteor big enough to overcome friction  
crashes into Siberia, creating catastrophic climate failure.  
I still reserve a few through decades of darkness and cold,  
My survivors valiantly evolve to new existence.

Global war causes nuclear Armageddon,  
cities wasted, radioactive grounds abound,  
most is lost, but most is not all.  
I can still struggle to rebound; rebuild and generate hope.

Now consider human disregard and denial,  
pillaging and raping environment, resource to regenerate,  
unending destruction. Too many beloved species extinct,  
violated atmosphere and scorched sacred grounds beneath.

Denying every deadline,  
my home goes beyond needing paint,  
and becomes first unbalanced derelict,  
and then just wasteland bereft.

No water, no air, no life  
From this there is no future at all.  
I end.  
Mourn me now before it's too late.

**MARIANNE HOULE**  
*Fledgling*

GLAZED PORCELAIN/YARN, 9" X 6.5" X 1"







## THE END

I felt apprehensive when I walked through the door,  
even though the bright sunlight was streaming through the window.  
My heart beat fiercely as I approached the bed,  
as I walked past the smiling nurse.  
I knew this could be the end  
and this would break my heart.

I wanted to quiet my beating heart.  
I wanted to escape back through the door.  
I wanted to evade her end.  
I wanted to open the window.  
I wanted to plead for help from the nurse.  
I wanted to avoid what lie in the bed.

An old and dear friend lie in the bed.  
When I saw her, it squeezed my fractured heart.  
I felt faint and reached for the nurse.  
She patted my hand, then exited through the door.  
I prayed to God as I stared out the window,  
to avoid looking at my friend, who was fighting the end.



Why God? Why must this be the end?  
Why are you taking this woman in this bed?  
I wish she could enjoy the beauty outside this window.  
I want her to know how much she means to my heart.  
I pray she could walk unencumbered out the door,  
and no longer need help from the nurse.

A figure appeared. The nurse,  
constantly providing pharmaceutical comfort until the end,  
administering drugs, then walking out the door.  
All the while, my dear friend lie dying in her bed.  
I heard the deafening beating of my heart,  
as my tears fell, while I gazed out the window.

The relentless sun streamed through the window.  
We were alone, without the nurse,  
and I let words flow from my heart.  
I told her I didn't want our friendship to end.  
I begged her to rise from the bed,  
and walk her cocky ass through the door.

But sun continued to stream in the window and she never walked out the door.  
She remained lying still in the bed, receiving medication from the nurse.  
This would be the end, and this day would break my heart.



**JANET GAFFNEY**  
*The Eye of Horus*



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 11" X 17"

**JANET GAFFNEY**  
*The Rapture of St. Veronica*



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 11" X 17"



**NICHOLAS HUGGER**

*Ash*



STONEWARE, 15" X 7" X 7"

**RYAN GRANDT**  
*Western*

ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE



## SCRAMBLED EGGS

I make the world's best scrambled eggs. No, really. It is one of the few parts of my morning I actually enjoy.

It started in 2013, I think. I was living in a little 1600 square foot ranch-style home – hardly bigger than the condo I had moved out of, but it had a lawn to mow, and room to plant some tomatoes.

The handkerchief-sized, galley-style kitchen was the site of many failed cooking experiments, as well as the two-person kitchen table where I spent most of my day working. I had just started my law practice and was doing some freelance writing on the side to make ends meet. Sitting at that little table in that little kitchen, I wrote quite a bit. Unfortunately, it was mainly boring website content about how to make more boring website content or articles for local plumbers about what to look for in a local plumber. But, I was lucky to have a number of different clients, so I could change up my workday just enough to keep myself from falling asleep at the keyboard.

The problem? I was frequently exhausted. Half of my clients were located in America, but some were in England, so I had to keep hours for both. This meant I got just enough sleep to sustain your average gnat. So, still young and naïve, I did some research about how to have more energy, so that I could power through each day.

All of the websites said the same thing: don't give in to the siren call of coffee!

I felt fairly smug that, in my mid-twenties, I had yet to succumb to the stuff.

In all of my naiveté, I decided to listen to the words of wisdom I found on Very Official Looking Medical Websites™. Rather than turning to coffee, I resolved to work more vegetables into my diet.

But I couldn't just start by buying an extra bunch of broccoli at the grocery store each week, oh no. That would have been far too easy. I decided to go all-out: I signed up for a local community shared agriculture (CSA) program. For a monthly fee, you get a box of vegetables every other week during the growing season. All of the vegetables come from a local farmer, freshly picked and usually still dusted with the dirt they grew out of. They are a far cry better than the ones you can get at the grocery store.

Unfortunately, as we came to realize, it can be hard to commit yourself to that much produce, and, at the time, we were only two people getting enough vegetables for four. Furthermore, despite the sudden uptick in vitamins and minerals, I found myself confronted with the same fatigue issues as always. This may also be because I spent half of my life looking up new recipes for all of the vegetables we had coming in (hint: soup), leaving precious little time for much else besides work and sleep.

Needless to say, the veggies lasted one summer. I'm proud to say, I managed to use most of them, but keeping them

from rotting was a full-time job, and many of my more unique efforts ended up in the compost pile.

But, that summer, with the veggies, came the *eggs*.

Have you ever had farm fresh eggs? I hadn't. Well, let me tell *you*.

It starts with the shells.

At the grocery store, you might peek inside the carton to make sure those uniform little white orbs remain flawless and unbroken. If you're feeling adventurous, you might pick up a slightly more expensive carton of brown eggs.

Farm fresh eggs, though? I'll say this: the first time I opened a carton, I was surprised, mildly offended, and extremely delighted.

Did you know that you can get real, fresh, natural eggs, straight from the chicken, with a *green shell*? Because I sure didn't.

As I examined my carton, I was a bit confused. Why were the eggs all different sizes? Was there something wrong with the ones that weren't quite perfectly rounded? And... faintly smudged on that light brown one over there... was that... chicken poo?

It took a few conversations with my egg lady, as I came to call her. I had to do my own round of Google research, just for some peace of mind.

I learned that chickens can lay all different shapes, sizes, and colors of eggs, depending on the chicken. There are a lot of factors that go into how an egg comes out and what the shell looks like, so a chicken might not produce identical eggs each and every day. That said, the color a particular chicken lays will always be the same, based on the breed.

And chicken poo?

Well, it turns out that washing eggs fresh out of the chicken is actually a bad idea.

There's a coating on eggs, colloquially called "the bloom," which keeps them from absorbing bacteria. If you wash the bloom off, it can push bacteria into the pores of the shell, particularly if it's done under warm water, where the pores can expand. That's what can lead to salmonella and bad eggs. So, no washing eggs until right before you're about to use them.

Despite the extra maintenance required, after a few weeks of cooking with these suckers, I have to say, I was hooked.

While the shells themselves are a delight to behold, the next time you get a chance, just look at the yolk of a farm fresh egg. They are a bright, vivid yellow, almost orange, and super thick and rich. If you want a fried egg, then fresh is the way to go – the yolks don't break nearly as easily as the grocery store variety. And the *flavor*. If you think eggs are rubbery, gross things, then I challenge you to reconsider. Because one carton of these bad boys will have you singing a different tune.

(continued on pg. 42)



## SCRAMBLED EGGS (cont.)

As I perfected my egg-cooking abilities, I learned more about the chickens they came from. Some lay eggs in the traditional colors we all know: white and brown. And an Easter Egger might naturally produce a green, pink, or blue egg. While a nice, perfectly formed egg is a lovely sight to behold, sometimes they can come out a little abnormal, either slightly lopsided, or even containing multiple layers of shells. Commercial farms filter these eggs out, which is a shame – they taste just as good as their perfectly formed counterparts.

I had delightful, CSA-delivered eggs for several years. I even visited the farm a couple of times, meeting the chickens who reliably supplied my breakfast each morning. After a few years of this, though, I received the unfortunate news in early Spring of 2018: my egg lady was retiring at the end of Fall.

While I was disappointed, the news came at an opportune time: I had just acquired a little 39-acre farmette out in Harvard, Illinois. My first project? A lovely, diverse little flock of fluffy chickens.

I quickly became emotionally attached to the tiny, cheeping balls of fluff, who started their lives in a rubber bin under a heat lamp in my laundry room. Some of them were quite spirited, zipping away from my hand if I tried to catch them, while others quickly got used to me, hopping willingly onto my arm for pets, treats, and cuddles.

I named each and every one of them, sticking to one primary theme: The Fellowship of the Egg. I named the first chicken we ever got Frodette. The bravest chicken is, of course, Sam. The tiniest chicken is dubbed Pip. And the pretty pullet who enjoys perching on my wrist the most is Galadriyolk. Her sister, Arhen, tends to be a little more standoffish, but they are both beautiful adult birds. There are now twenty-five of them in all, and they all have their own distinct habits, cliques, and personalities. Now, they live outside in the backyard, in their own protected coop and run. Some of the most fun I've had in the past year is just sitting in the chicken run, watching them all mill and mingle around. I call it "watching chicken TV."

Then, once they started laying – oh, those eggs! I have fresh eggs every day, usually less than 24 hours old, with some of the most vivid yellow yolks you've ever seen. Have them with a cup of coffee, if you're looking for a quick energy boost.

And, truth be told, that's my secret to perfect scrambled eggs: get them fresh, each day, from your own sweet little flock. Feed them well, love them well, and enjoy the happiness they can bring to your life each day.

And, go easy on the salt.



DEANNE FERGUSON  
*Curve Box*



STONEWARE , 9.25" X 5.5" X 5.5"



KENDRA TRAUTH  
*Elio*



STONEWARE, 17" X 6" X 6"

MARY THERESE KOLODZIK  
*Self Portrait With Dress*



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 11" X 17"



**JANELL MAYER**  
*Deer*



STONEWARE, 27" X 28" X 4"

# WE ARE STILL HERE

Do not reside in the shadow of fear,  
Certainty of the end will fall today,  
Leave your anguish, we are still here.

When black clouds of mind roll near,  
Shifting your vision to shades of gray,  
Do not reside in the shadow of fear.

Attempt after attempt, all in reverse gear,  
Forces you no option but to pray.  
Leave your anguish, we are still here.

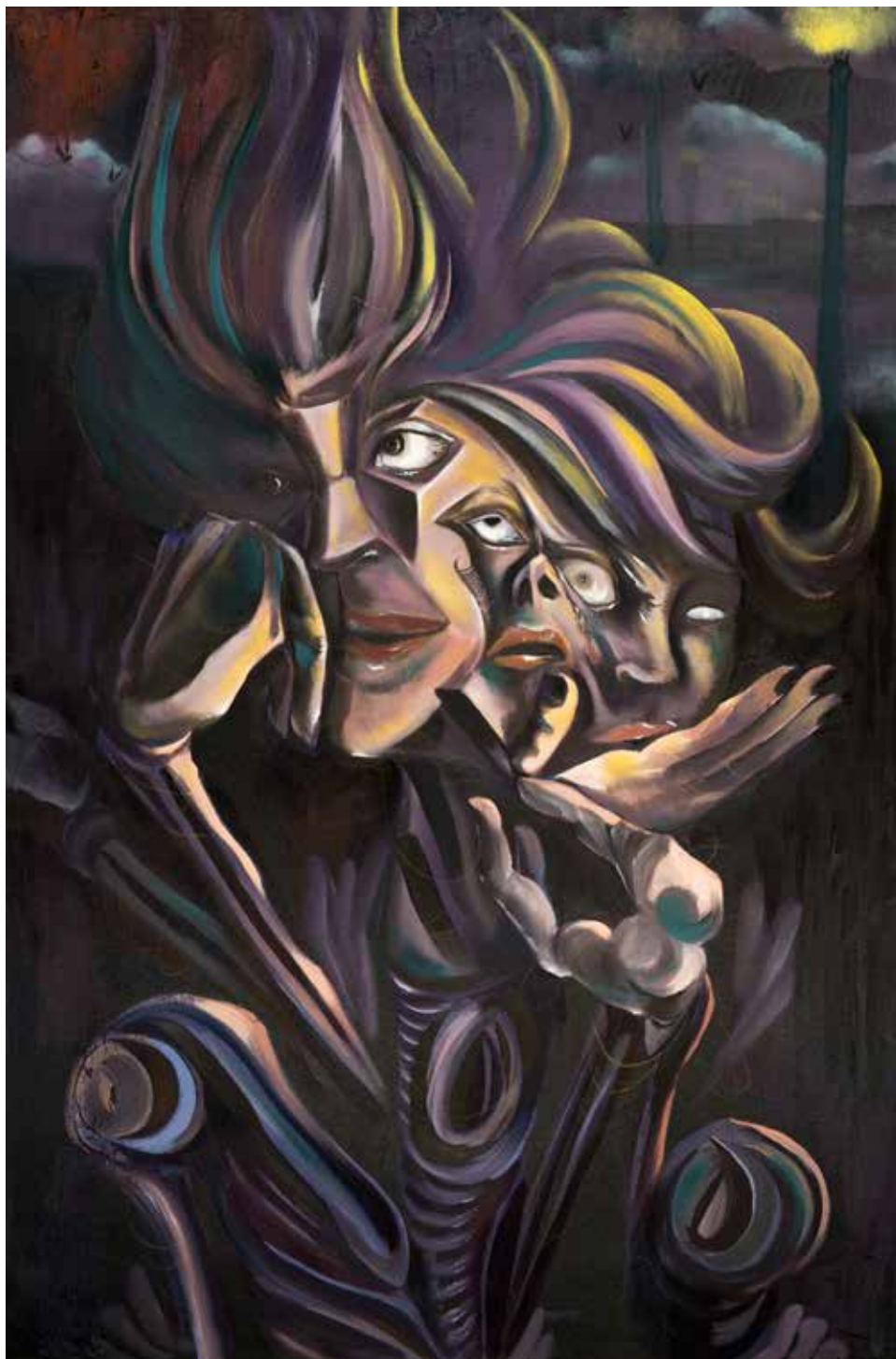
Look hard, a glimmer of hope may appear,  
Stay focused now or love will stray,  
Do not reside in the shadow of fear.

No need to wallow, my dear,  
Those around you will not go away,  
Leave your anguish, we are still here.

Grab your family, grab your friends and crack a beer,  
Let's toast to you, like it's your birthday.  
Do not reside in the shadow of fear,  
Leave your anguish, we are still here.



**RACHEL GARRISON**  
*Snerd's Girlfriend*



OIL ON CANVAS, 36" X 24"

**GINNY HATWICH**  
*Ethereal Vision*



PORCELAIN/TERRA SIGILLATA/HORSE HAIR, 6" X 5" X 5"



# VOICES

*Voices 2020* is produced by McHenry County College to recognize and showcase the visual arts, musical, and literary talents of McHenry County College students.

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## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- Christina Haggerty, VP of Marketing, Communications and Development
- Sandra Lang, Gallery Curator
- Ed Risch
- Audra Buckner and the Friends of MCC Foundation

## COLOPHON

*VOICES 2020* was produced in Adobe InDesign using a ten column grid. The body texts are set in Chronicle Text and Source Code Variable. Headlines and feature text is set in Source Code Variable and Faction Black.

The cover is printed on 100# dull cover and the interior pages are printed on 100# dull coated book. 2,500 copies of the issue were printed by Brandaids.co via an offset four-color process.







*V O I C E S*

MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL