

V O I C E S

MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL

2021





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EDITORIAL NOTE

During normal circumstances the *Voices* faculty advisors select student editors to curate, jury, edit and assist with the technical production of the magazine. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the content in this year's magazine was chosen by the *Voices 2021* faculty advisors.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

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 work selected represents the contemporary zeitgeist of the McHenry County College community.

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BEST OF MAGAZINE

Voices 2021 is proud to announce Awards for the Best of Magazine

LITERARY:

Raleigh Sullivan
Is Dead, Is Dead

VISUAL ART:

Donna Bieschke
Classroom Fall 2020

MUSIC:

Logan Waite
The Damsel Under My Bed

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 2021 Dan Risch Memorial Scholarship winners are:

Annelise Darville
Allison Stroyan

N T S

MUSIC

- 1 **LOGAN WAITE**
Reversion
- 2 **SAVANNAH DUDZIK**
Per la Gloria d'adorarvi (by Giovanni Bononcini)
- 3 **ANGELINA RUBINO**
The Lone and Adventurous Wanderer
- 4 **LOGAN WAITE**
The Damselfly Under My Bed

To hear this year's selections go to
soundcloud.com/mcc-voices/sets/voices-2021
or simply scan the QR code below.







ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT

STEVE BARCLAY

Covered Man



GRAPHITE, 24" X 18"

IS DEAD, IS DEAD

The river's tent was always broken:
White linens on water's edge,
Soiled with brown land and river's breath.

I was sure I was once the water,
But perhaps I was the fire.
He called the river to cleanse,
He called the fire to consume,
Perhaps he called only to me.

The altar was collapsing, and the stage was sinking,
Its wood rotting,
The termites congregating,
Its bed eroding.

The Preacher before the pulpit,
The king before his subjects,
A politician with a platform.
The fire started here.

I wouldn't wash his feet, Mrs. Porter
And neither should you.
Oil and tar and feathers,
Barefoot with no shoes.

Still, he passed the plate,
Asked for all they had.
When it returned,
He asked for laying of hands.

The fault with hands is they wander,
Discovering sweaty bodies and naked breast,
Exploring empty pockets.
Unreproved, undesired.
Taking for heaven, folding to ward off Hell.

He spoke to empty pews,
Rats beneath them, termites inside,
Flies above and bodies below.

"The Devil all the time,
Is dead, is dead.
In Jesus name, Amen."
Men like him drive only hearses
And never hold funerals.

I waited by myself, beside the water's edge,
Taking the Preacher by the hand,
I carried him downstream.
Broken fingernails, we wash these dirty hands.

To put out the fire sermon,
To cleanse the sinner,
To stop his song,
We drown.

O how the moon shone brightly
As I bled into the baptismal.
"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I die before I wake...
Is dead, is dead."

Amen.

KATHIE JAGMAN

Light Reflections

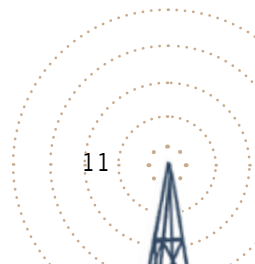


OIL ON CANVAS, 24" X 18"

DONNA BIESCHKE
Tree Trunks



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 42" X 28"



COOKING LESSONS: INDIAN STYLE

“First, you have to make the dough, but it’s very easy.” My neighbor Kanchan eyed me expectantly as she began to assemble the freshly ground wheat flour, salt, and water that would make up the dough for the chapatis. “Two parts flour to one part water and a pinch of salt.” Chapati is an Indian flatbread similar to a tortilla, but made with wheat flour, called atta. In North India, where I lived for almost a year, chapatis were served with every meal and often took the place of fork and knife, being used to scoop up the luscious, creamy dals and spicy curries. It was a staple found on any table, and they were made fresh daily.

It wasn’t that I didn’t know how to cook, although my neighbors may have disputed this claim at the time, given our propensity to eat at the guest house every evening rather than cook at home. It was simply a matter of me being a ‘fish out of water.’ Traveling to India with two small children was a task in and of itself, but navigating my spartan apartment kitchen was another obstacle entirely. Gone were the conveniences of microwave, oven, mixer, food processor, and toaster oven and in their place a simple stove with gas burners, a pressure cooker, and a series of pots and skillets. Ok, the stove did have a small oven attached to the bottom, but the thought of baking anything when the daytime temperatures outside were close to 100 degrees quickly put me off that idea. In addition, gone were the convenience foods I so often relied upon when dealing with a 5-year-old and very picky 3-year-old. Convenience foods were a rarity where we

lived and were outrageously expensive when you could find them. Hence, our tendency to eat dinner at the guest house in our complex, which served a delicious Indian buffet alongside Western dishes to entice our kids. Plus, it was dirt cheap. A bonus!

I neatly measured out two cups of flour into a bowl and added 1 cup of water with a generous pinch of salt. Kanchan had taken the wheat to the stone grinder in town that morning. The idea of buying pre-ground flour was unthinkable to her. Every morsel of food in her kitchen was fresh, local, and lovingly prepared by hand. The soft, silky feel of the flour mingled with the cool water and easily formed a slightly sticky ball between my hands. I mixed it thoroughly and then began to gently knead it under Kanchan’s watchful eye. I felt the dough pull together into an elastic ball, and I placed it back into the bowl with a warm towel covering it. “We just need to let it sit a few minutes, and then we can cook the chapatis,” she said.

While we waited, Kanchan poured a cup of steaming chai and added a generous amount of milk and sugar. Handing me a cup, she turned as our neighbor Shanti entered. She was not about to miss the entertainment of the American attempting to make chapatis.

“Ah, there you are! We have the dough made, come come for some chai.” Kanchan handed Shanti a cup, and we sat at the small round table, chatting over warm glasses of the sweet, milky tea. Our children were at school and

would not be home until later that afternoon. Husbands were busy at the refinery nearby. Our job was to manage the house, do the weekly shopping at the various markets in town, take care of the children, and see to the meals for our families. Although my feminist, American self may have internally balked at the idea of ending up a housewife for 9 months, there was something beautiful in the day-to-day routine of living in Jamnagar. The gorgeous colors of the fabrics of our salwars that kept us cool even during the heat of the afternoon, the wonderful, enticing smells of spices and earth, the peace and beauty of the ancient temples and marketplaces....and the time.... glorious time to read and visit and reflect. Time to immerse myself in a completely different culture and way of life.

“Ok,” said Kanchan rising from her chair near the counter, “I will show you one, and then you will make the rest.” She sprinkled a bit of flour on the pristine countertop, pinched off a small knob of dough, and deftly rolled it into a perfect circle with a small, wooden rolling pin. Flipping it into a hot skillet on the gas burner next to her, she stood for a moment while the first side cooked. The dough sizzled in the pan, and the glorious aroma of fresh bread filled the room. When the bubbles began to subside, she flipped the chapati with her thumb and forefinger to allow the other side to finish. Once it was done, she picked it up gently and placed it directly on the gas flame. With a slight whoosh, the bread puffed up into a large ball and then quickly deflated back to its original shape. Light

brown spots appeared on the surface and cracked with the heat. When she was satisfied with the look and smell of the chapati, she placed it on a warm towel next to her and then motioned for me to come.

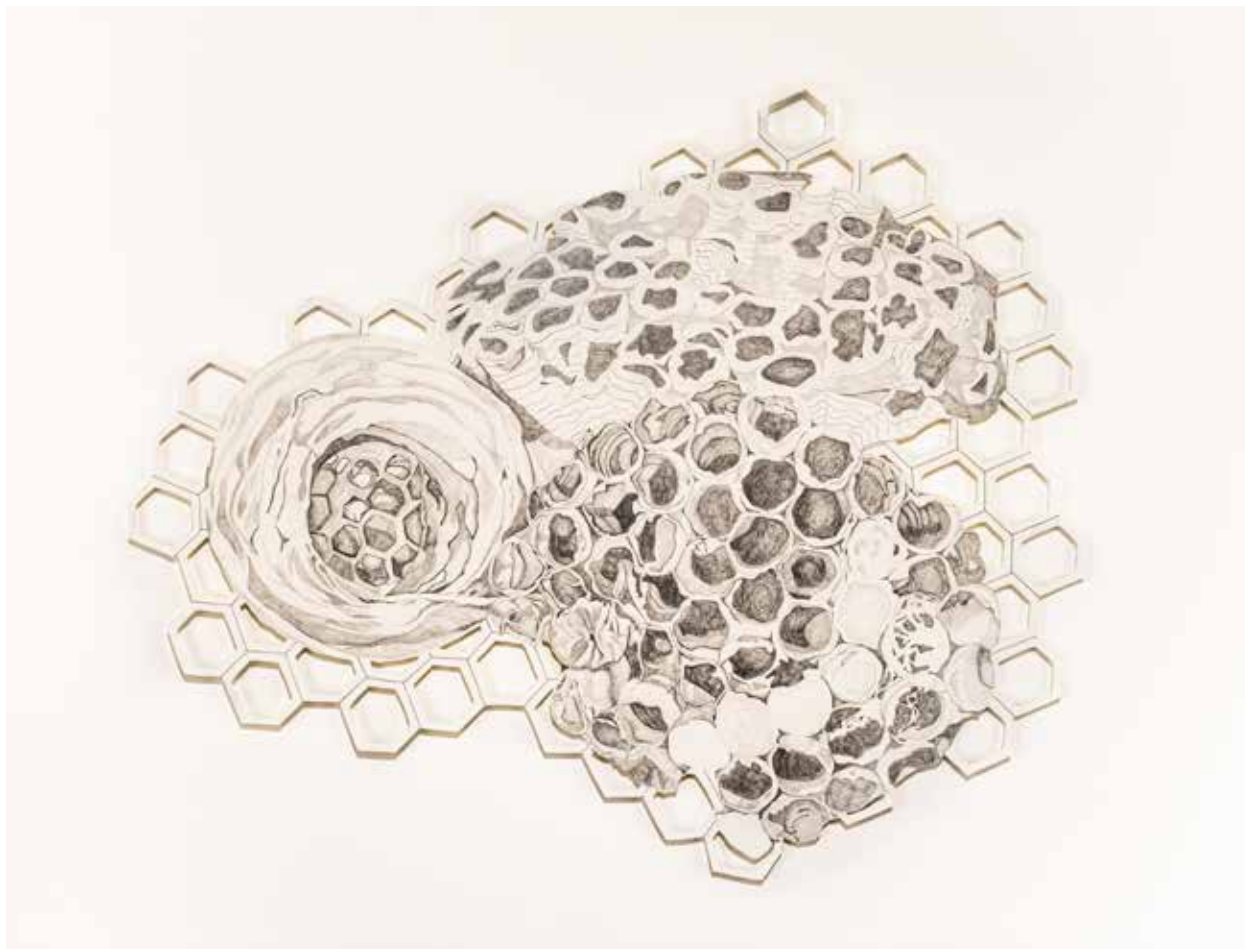
Pinching off a similar serving of dough, I attempted to mimic Kanchan’s graceful movements. I grabbed the rolling pin and slightly flattened the piece of dough with the palm of my hand. But when I started to roll it out, the chapati, rather than forming into a perfect circle, stretched and pulled into an oddly shaped blob that refused to cooperate! The more I rolled, the more the misshapen blob deformed! Shanti began to giggle, and soon she had Kanchan laughing along with her. “It’s ok!” they both sputtered as I tried pulling the dough by hand into a circle. The frustration must have shown clearly on my face, for Kanchan, still giggling, embraced me in a loving hug. “We’ve been doing this since we were young, and it takes practice. Every day we do this!”

With their encouragement, I continued through the rest of the dough. I had a nice stack of abstract art, the final chapati coming close, but not quite, to circular. Kanchan spooned a bit of ghee from the container on the counter and spread it onto a warm chapati. She rolled it up and handed it to me. “Here, taste.” My teeth sank into the fresh, chewy bread, and the sweet, oily ghee oozed from between the layers and onto my tongue. At that moment, a sense of peace and happiness washed over me. This was home.

Shanti smiled at me, “Tomorrow, we make dal!”

ALISON BAGGIO

Wasp Nest Trio

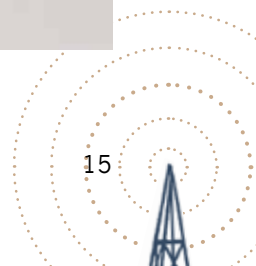


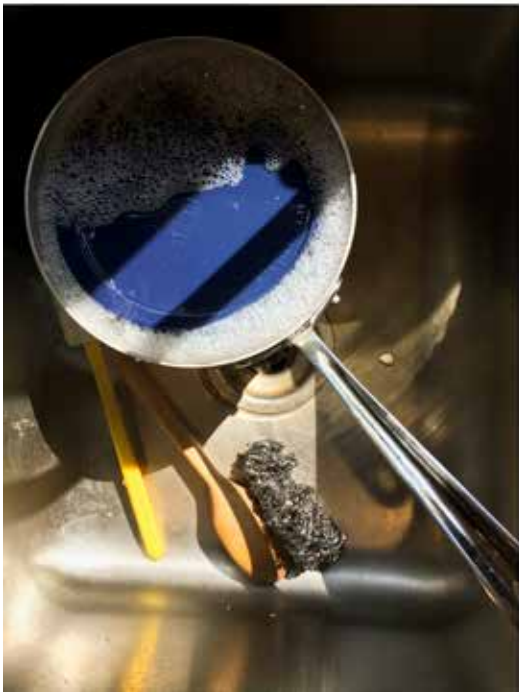
GRAPHITE, 30" X 42"

KATHLEEN ESCOBAR

Model for a New Time

STONEWARE, 7" X 4", 4.5" X 4", 3" X 3.5"





DIPTYCH ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINTS, 14" X 11" EACH

DENISE HOOVER
My Kitchen Sink



MICHELE CRISCI

Winter Leaves



CERAMIC, 7" X 6" X 3"

TIGER LILY

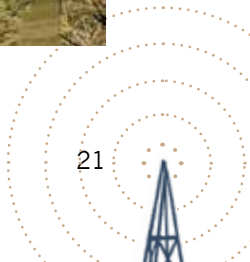
In loving memory of Catherine Hannon (Feb. 19, 2002-Nov. 22, 2020):

When she left for Neverland,
Tiger Lily never meant to leave
A mark behind.
But when she got up,
So swift and quiet,
A feather fell in her place.
This feather flittered past noses
And flicked in eye sights.
Hands reached out to catch it.
Most came close.
A few caught it first grasp.
They cradled it in palms and
Held it up to moonlight.
After moments pass by,
They let it go.
Tiger Lily never meant to leave
A mark behind.
When she did,
We all caught our glimpse,
But knew to let it go.
The feather wasn't meant for here.
It too was off to the
Second star on the right.
It was off to catch Tiger Lily.

STEVE JARMAN
Unceded

ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 20" X 30"





CLINTON

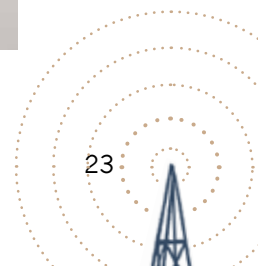
I come from the water
The river dark, dank and deep
Water swirling, churning, carrying me along.
I come from the smell of the factories
Belching their toxic emissions from giant smokestacks
Blue-collar, hard work, salt of the earth.
I come from the woods
With their canopy of trees and dark spaces
Hunting game for dinner and leaves crunching underfoot.
I come from the vast farmlands
Rows of cornfields creating a giant maze
Hayrides, detasseling, drinking in secret parties of wild youth.
I come from the wide-open sky
Brilliant blue on bright summer days, clouds drifting
And at night strewn with stars to guide my dreams of escape.
I come from the town itself
Crumbling walls, Victorian splendor, ignoble decay
Full of bars and churches calling the faithful.
I come from a simpler time and place
Big hair, red Reeboks, neon colors, and naive
Cold War and computer startup, technology surge.
I come from family
A patchwork knitted together with thin, fragile threads
A daughter, cousin, niece, mother, hoping, wishing, dreaming.

JOSIE ROCHELL

"Ya don't say!"



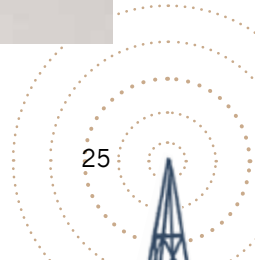
CERAMIC, 11.5" X 5.5"





CERAMIC, 7" X 9" X 9" EACH

JONNA KIVISTO
Covid 19 – Jan., Feb., March



CHECKING MY TEMPERATURE

Every day I take my temperature—
early morning, thermometer
in my mouth for a minute.
I wait for the beep. Religiously,
I record the results on a chart:
97.1, 97.5, 97.3. 97.0.
Then, I click on the news

and my emotional temperature rises:
more lies, more hate from Karens,
more pandering, more pardons, more
deaths from the pandemic, hospitals overflowing,
openings, closings, disrespect for science,
disrespect for distance, disrespect;

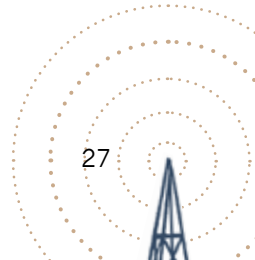
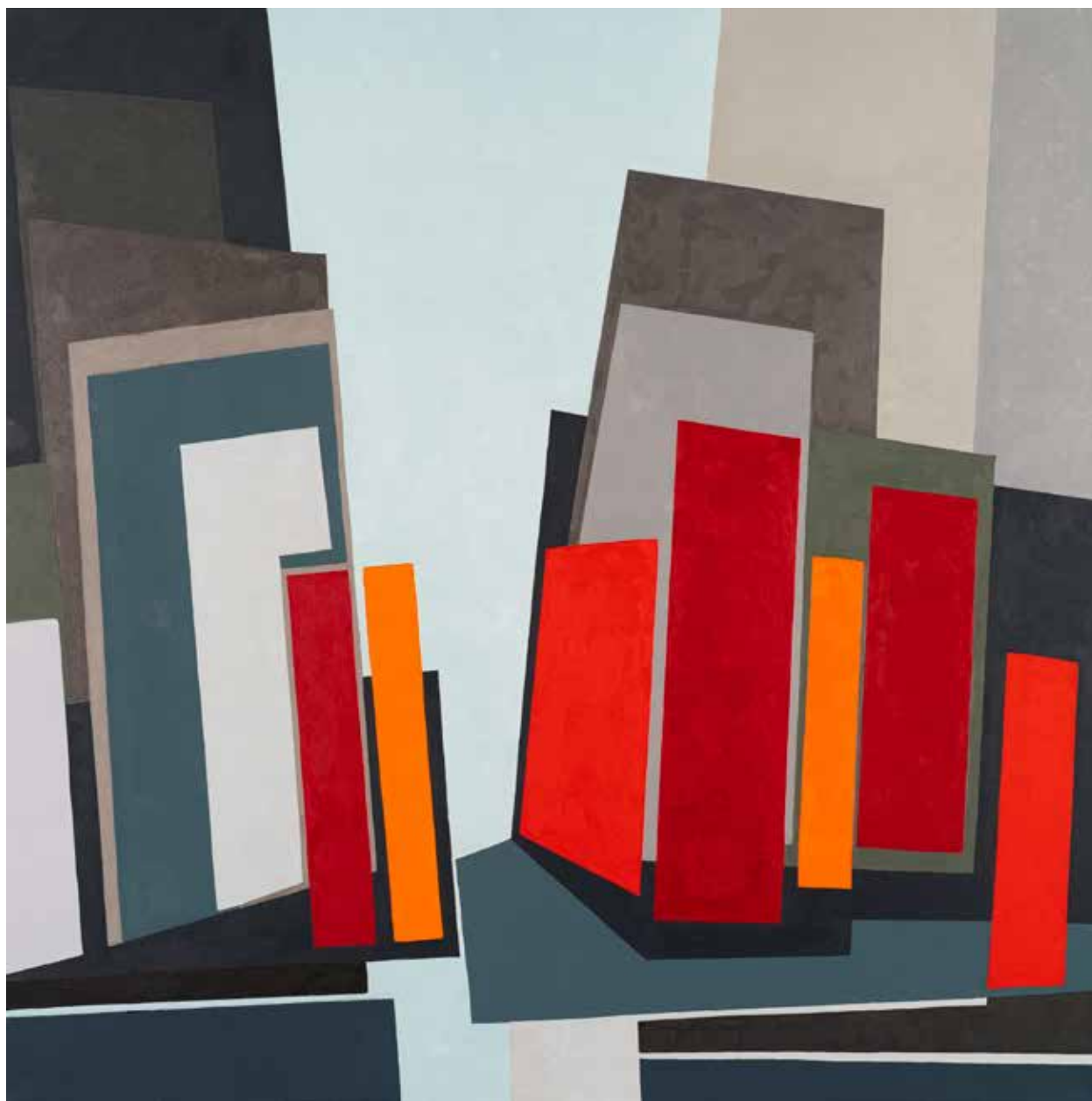
and I step outside. I seek relief in the garden,
but I feel the temperature of this hot July:
92, 95, 90 that feels like 100,
air quality unhealthy. I shelter in
the air-conditioned house. I pray
for rain to fill the rain barrel,
to fill the birdbath, to cool the planet.

My children advise me not to open a window,
not to mow in the heat of midday.
They advise me to sit,
to breathe, to meditate.
They advise me to cool down,
to lower my temperature.

“Which one?” I ask. “Which one?”

MARY MARIUTTO
9th Street Show 1951

OIL ON CANVAS, 44" X 44"

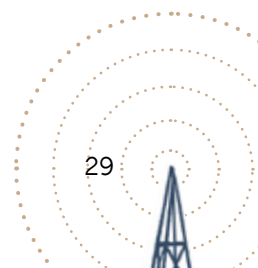




JANE AMBROSO
Self Sufficient



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 13" X 19"



ALISON BAGGIO

Hive



WOOD AND FIBER, 20" X 27" X 25"

BROKEN

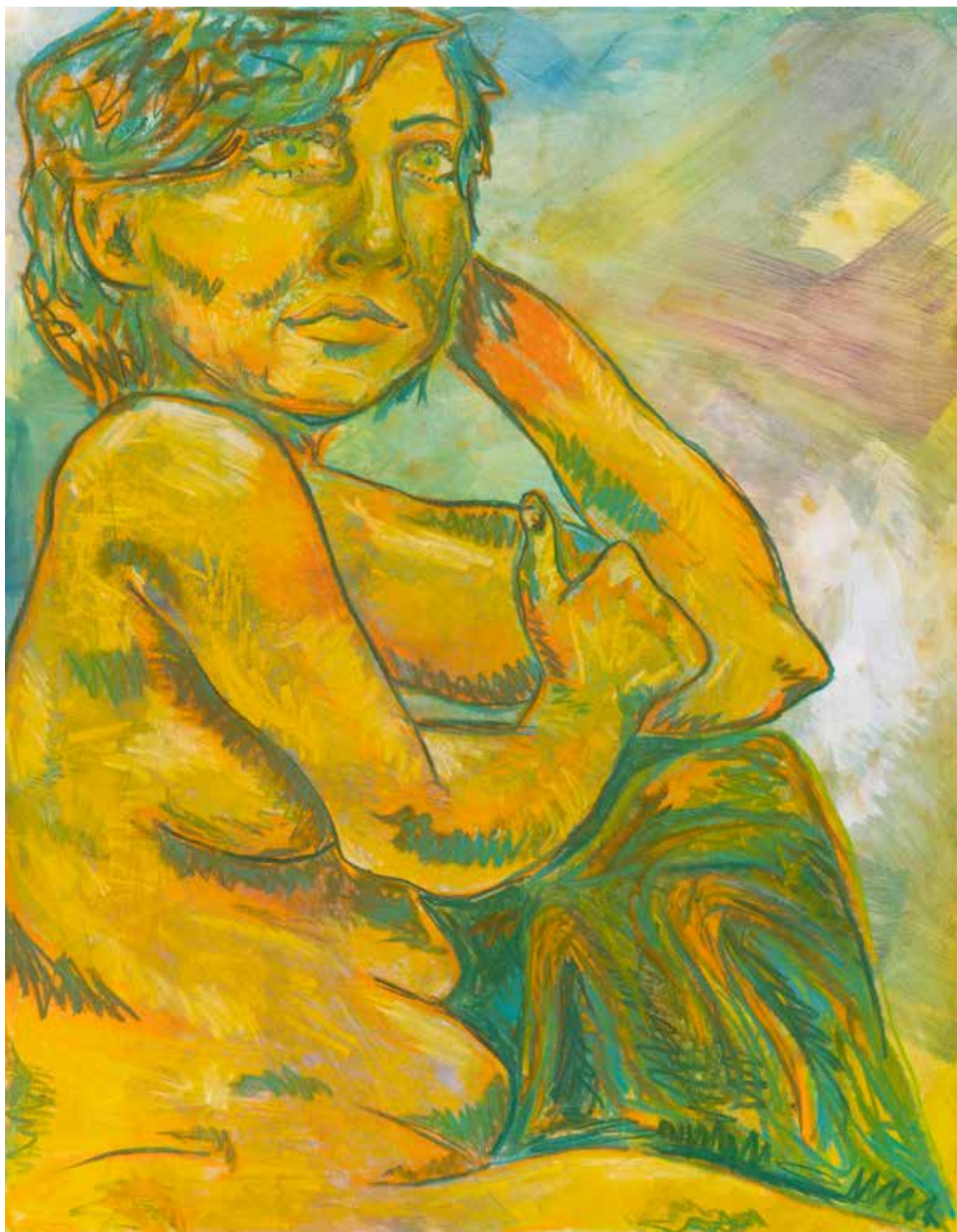
she hears the glass break before she sees it
her silhouette arrives in the doorway
standing in that familiar way
arms akimbo, fists firmly on her hips
trouble will follow
and we know it
we are criminals
carelessly cruel as only children can be
we left the victim on the dining room floor
shattered crystal shards, still devastatingly beautiful
catching the sunlight on its ragged edge
as excuses, like sawdust, choke in our throats

she kneels to collect the fragments
lifting them up like a baby bird fallen from its nest
she cradles what is left
it had been her Grandmother's vase we were told
never to be touched
a precious relic from another life

she did not speak
or look at us
we stood breathlessly, waiting, powerless against her pain
there was no judge who we could surrender ourselves to
no penance to be handed down
no atonement offered to forgive our sins
instead, we were sentenced to carry the burden of our misdeeds
all the days of our lives

AMY DAVIS

Kim



CHALK PASTEL, ACRYLIC, 24" X 18"

A LANDLORD'S LAMENT

I wonder at my own prejudice
as I plan to evict the sparrows out of their nest.
The one they built so assiduously under the patio awning.
I watched them labor tirelessly for days in early spring,
gathering leaves, twigs and dried grass
to stuff into that small space just above my door,
safe from the elements, to raise their brood.

I admired their work, honestly, I did,
but they are such messy tenants,
what with their haphazard droppings left here and there,
vandalizing the patio floor with abandon.
And all the while, they remained blissfully unaware of my distress
as they gathered daily to chatter away with more of their kind.

Yet, standing on the ladder to complete my deed,
second thoughts filled me with doubt
as I was forced to examine my soul.
Would I have chased away a robin,
with her bright chirping song?
Or a cardinal, snobbishly regal as a papal son?
Or a yellow finch that flits through the air
like a glittering piece of sunshine?

In the end, I climbed down
and put away my ladder.
The look resignation in my eyes notified the world,
that there will be No Vacancy
under the awning outside my patio door
where my sparrow tenants have come to stay.

THE VIOLET HOUR

I picked its petals because it plucked mine,
Because I do not hope to know again,
Because the meadow has been salted.
Why would I mourn the vanished bloom?

I saw him there beneath the willow,
The man with paper and with scythe.
A tent beside a concrete river,
A house for a false preacher,
A faith healer.

I took a step into the water,
Because I did not know before,
My hair still smelled of lilacs,
My hem still tattered and white.
Why would I doubt my foot before she falls?

I saw him light a cigarette there,
A man with smoke and with perfume,
The congregation fell before the altar,
The incense worshipped too.

Poised to speak a silent word,
He pointed to the rafters,
“A new revival is drawing near,
By prophecy, by prayer,
By living waters, by tents by rivers,
I ask you still to stare.
Find your penance! Seek your freedom!
Call it out by name,
Worship here at my feet, you’ll never be the same.”

I lifted the veil to see the light and saw only darkness,
Because I do not hope to be blind again,
Because water is growing colder.
Why should I drink the poisoned Eucharist,
When they are consecrated and consumed?

I saw faithful people, eyes to the sky,
I saw hands in unsuspecting pockets,
Riverbeds with empty bottles and cigarettes ends.

He called upon the sinners there,
Lifting high a rose,
“He loves us, He loves us not.
Whomever is predestined goes.”

I sink beneath the violet hour,
Because riverbeds erode,
Because proverbs and wayward currents,
Because I do not hope to know again.
Why should I mourn the vanished bloom?

I am glad to be scattered.

ANNELISE DARVILLE

Green



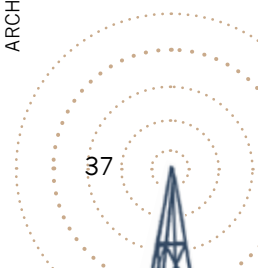
OIL ON CANVAS, 23" X 18"



DAVE MILLER
Kinetic Potential



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 30" X 53"



SOMETHING'S UP

Most people would say
that I'm pretty measured, under control,
that I cope well with adversity:
No knee-jerk gun purchases
no hoarding
no stockpiling.
But I'm picking my nails
and tearing at my cuticles.
Something's up.

I saw my daughter twisting
her hair again and again
glancing away from my eyes,
then, twisting her hair.
She's worried about children
who have returned from vacations
with friends in Florida and Colorado.
Her frown signals quarantine.
Something's up.

I used to pop into a local market,
pick up one or two items,
hardly noticed the other shoppers,
touched what I wanted to touch,
moved at my leisure.
I might have held the door
to the egg cooler for the next guy.
Now, I walk a zigzagged path
to the apples, broccoli, bread,
stand six feet from everyone—
most wearing masks.

I'm masked, too.

On Sunday, go-to-church day,
I wear pajamas for a service
held on YouTube or Facebook.
The pastors love us from afar,
use Palm Sunday for a show
of hand palms not flora.
I fidget as they differentiate
between Hosanna, "Help Us, God,"
and Hallelujah, "God, be praised."
Something's up.

Weekdays are quiet:
few airplanes rock the sky.
Few cars swish by with few places to go.
During my afternoon walk,
I merely nod "hello"
as I slink past a cyclist or young parents
with their newborn son in a stroller.
At dusk, no gathering,
no raucous music,
no drunken laughter,
just a crow's caw as it flies to its night roost.
I will await the cardinal's whistle
in the morning.

COLETTE PINKOWSKI
Disappointment



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 42" X 28"

FELICIA POCIUS

Untitled

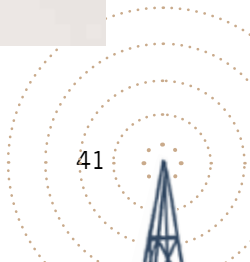


CERAMIC, 12.5" X 7" X 5.5"

LINDA CANNIZZO

Octopot

STONEWARE, 10" X 7" X 6"



ON MAKING YOUR BED

Spoiler alert: Yes, I make my bed. But I'm not here to judge. Turns out what I thought was a fairly exclusive 3 a.m. contemplation about tidiness takes up its own subculture on the interwebs. Pages and pages of debates, scientific studies, and Pinterest posts extol the virtues and proper display techniques of both made and unmade beds. Who knew?

If you believe one survey of 2,000 Americans conducted by market research company OnePoll, people who make their beds tend to be adventurous, confident, and sociable, while people who don't make their beds are shy, moody, curious, and sarcastic. If this is true, then I should not be making my bed.

The survey also found that bed makers tend to be morning people who wake without alarm clocks, while those who don't make their beds tend to be night owls who love their snooze buttons. Again, as a bed maker, I'm doing something wrong.

My own impulse to make my bed is rooted in childhood. House rules and the threat of punishment turned this daily chore into a ritual that followed me to college, where (thankfully), my roommate agreed with the mantra my German-American mother drilled into my brother and me early on: an unmade bed makes the whole room look messy. Except she said "ferschimmeled," which I'm not sure is a real word or a German hybrid she made up.

Now 90 and suffering from arthritis that makes it hard for her to walk to the kitchen some days, my mom still makes her bed every morning. Meticulously. With assorted decorative throw pillows and hospital corners. How can I not?

"When I was growing up, I never saw my parents' bed unmade," she recalled. "They always made their bed first thing...so it never occurred to me not to. And I just can't stand looking at something unfinished," she added. "Even if nobody else sees it, it's a matter of self-pride."

My 57-year-old brother, who texted me a photo of his neatly made bed from his waterfront bachelor pad in Florida, still listens to his mother.

"I guess I was trained well," he laughed. "I find a messy bed a major turn off. Who wants to go to bed at night in a messy bed? I want my sheets neat and pleasant looking."

But we of the bed-making ilk are not without rivalry. For every bed-making ambassador, there is a fan of the ferschimmeled. And the reasons for not making their beds are just as varied and logical. They include rebellion from childhood rules, lack of time, sleeping spouses and lounging pets, as well as good old indifference.

"I just don't see the point of making it; I'm just going to rumple it up again," said a former officemate.

"I do not [make my bed]," posted one of my Facebook friends. "I don't like doing little things just because society thinks they are proper. I sort of enjoy not doing it...lol."

Rebellion and logic aside, I remain validated by popular opinion. In an informal Facebook survey, 51 out of 64 people who participated make their beds. That is almost 80 percent of people roughly my age who are middle class, college-educated, suburban, mostly democrat, gainfully employed or retired, mostly Caucasian, all (but one) female, and friends with me on Facebook.

OK, not very scientific. But still, it was kind of fascinating to take that biased little foray into all those bedrooms, albeit virtually.

“I make my bed every day, throw pillows and all,” posted one friend, who is also a former police officer turned fitness trainer. “It’s my first task of the day (after coffee), and it gives me a good start to go take on the rest of the day.”

“Every day!” said a former coworker. “I like to have some neat calm in a chaotic life.”

In between the two extremes, there are the fluffers, the flingers, the air-er outers. Those who toss-up the duvet and call it a day.

“I used to make [my bed] all the time in college, but now I just fold back the blankets neatly and leave it open,” said a high school friend who even posted a picture of her neatly folded-back sheets. “It’s healthier because the damp from your body has a chance to dry out.”

She’s not wrong. According to a report published by BBC News, the average bed may contain more than a million *Dermatophagoides farinae* and/or *Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus*, also known as dust mites. These microscopic beasts (technically arachnids) don’t bite or sting; they’re scavengers that feed on the dead skin we shed, and their waste is an allergen that can trigger asthma-like symptoms in some people.

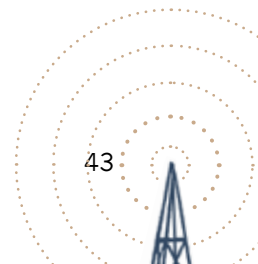
However, dust mites can’t drink water; they absorb it through their exoskeletons from the surrounding air, so they dehydrate easily unless the relative humidity is rather high. They also like temperatures between 75- and 80-degrees Fahrenheit. Exposing them to air and light after you first get up is enough to kill any mites you might have. Though, according to a recent paper published by entomology expert Debbie Hadley in the online educational site ThoughtCo, “House dust mites are actually quite rare in

homes, despite all the scary claims about dust mites accumulating in your bedding.

“In the U.S., dust mite problems are largely limited to homes in coastal areas, where heat and humidity tend to be higher. If you live in the interior areas of the country or more than 40 miles from the coast, you probably don’t need to worry much about excessive dust mites in your home,” Hadley said.

All that is to say, I’m not considering potential dust mite parties as an argument not to make my bed in Illinois.

Though I will admit, we American bed makers are a bit fanatical about our bedding, with our excessive thread counts and Egyptian cottons, our seasonal bedspreads and matching shams, not to mention an overabundance of pillows. Conversely, the first time I traveled to Germany, I was captivated by the way they dressed their beds and the German practicality behind it. Whether you checked into a small inn or a larger hotel, your bed would be equipped with one firm, functional pillow; a crisp cotton bottom sheet so taut you could bounce a pfennig on it; and a perfectly weighted eiderdown comforter (summer or winter weight available) encased in a simple cotton duvet, which was folded neatly lengthwise and placed precisely on top of the bottom sheet. Easily made, easily aired. No top sheet. No superfluous bedspread to harbor the flotsam of former sleepers. No extravagant mound of excess pillows you had to find a place for when you went to bed. When you made your bed, you just flipped the comforter up like a parachute, let it settle gently in place, and folded it over. Or, you could drape it quaintly out your window to air out, because, in addition to their minimalist bedding philosophies, those Germans love their giant screenless windows. I shot multiple rolls of film (this was predigital) capturing spacious German windows flung open and festooned with brazenly draped comforters or occupied



ON MAKING YOUR BED (CONT.)

by sturdy Hausfraus leaning on muscular forearms, taking in the fresh morning air and surveying the tourists below. But I digress.

For me, making my bed is therapeutic. Even if I don't do anything right or productive for the rest of the day, at least I've made my bed. And I know I said I wouldn't judge, but I can't help it. How do you feel civilized without making your bed and donning clean underwear? During a childhood play date, I can remember the shock and horror I felt when I saw my friend's unmade canopy bed. "How does she get away with this?!" I wondered. Later, upon revealing this scandal to my mother on the drive home, she, tongue-only-partially-in-cheek, said, "Just be grateful I care enough to nag. Not everyone has a mother as perfect as you do." Mom's influence carries on. Today, I'll go out without wearing makeup or a bra (or both), but I'd never let someone into the house when the beds are unmade.

"If you make your bed every morning, you will have accomplished the first task of the day," said Retired U.S. Navy Admiral Seal William H. McCraven in his now-viral 2014 commencement address at the University of Texas. He told students that the importance of making your bed every day was one of the most powerful lessons he learned during his time as a Navy SEAL and the first step to changing the world.

"It will give you a small sense of pride, and it will encourage you to do another task, and another, and another. And by the end of the day, that one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed."

He added that adopting good bed-making habits is like a prologue to your success story. "If you can't do the little things right, you'll never be able to do the big things right," he said. "And if by chance you have a miserable day, you will come home to a bed that is made—that you made."

Plus, making my bed is also a pretty good incentive not to crawl back into it—something that holds a lot of temptation during these pandemic times. Sure, the couch sings its own siren song, but there's something a little less loserish about dozing off on the couch than there is closing the blinds and literally going back to bed after breakfast. And, as a skilled napper, I must eliminate the extra temptation.

These days, I'm not even ashamed to admit how much I look forward to bedtime. Is there anything more inviting than a neatly made bed outfitted with soft flannel sheets, fluffed pillows, and a voluminous down comforter on a cold night? There is not. Every evening, I crack the window over my bed, turn on the electric blanket to preheat the sheets, and make one last patrol around the block with the dog. Then, ablutions complete, I can finally slide my cold, tired self into the soft warmth of that cloistering cocoon...it is bliss.

And here's a little pro tip: In the morning, I premake the bed while I'm still in it. I pull the sheets and comforter up neatly past my chin, then, with practiced precision, flick them back into a perfect triangle. Now it'll take about three seconds to flip everything up, straighten the edges, and fluff the pillows. I myself let the bed air out (die *Dermatophagooides pteronyssinus!*) while I feed and walk the dog and get ready for the day. Only then do I return and make the bed, add my throw pillows (thanks, Mom), and (full disclosure) a small Pooh Bear, so it's like a neatly wrapped package waiting to be opened when I go to bed that night. Sweet dreams.

MELISSA RAGUSSIN
Rodeo Star



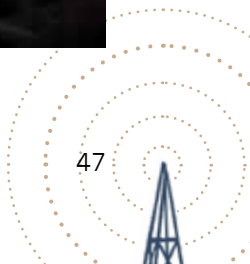
ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 23" X 20"

ALLISON STROYAN

In Profile #2

ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 11" X 17"





THE TILTED GAZE

What does it mean to let go?

The child struggles, finding balance, and a hand lifts from the seat of the magenta bike.
The car is back in the garage after too many “slow downs” accelerated to a shout.
The dorm door is closed after all is complete and the walk to the car is bittersweet.
The trip arrival determined, and Find Friends tapped off.
And the phone conversation ends with “Love you, darling.”

What does it mean to let go?

The cool wisp of breath exhaled onto the cheek.
The accepted kiss signals more.
The embraced arms drop from the shoulders.
And when feminine and masculine complements rather than competes.

What does it mean to let go?

The casual texts are not returned.
The mixed flower bouquet is refused, the door banging shut.
When anger turns to indifference.
And the empty wine bottles clash and clink when disposed.

What does it mean to let go?

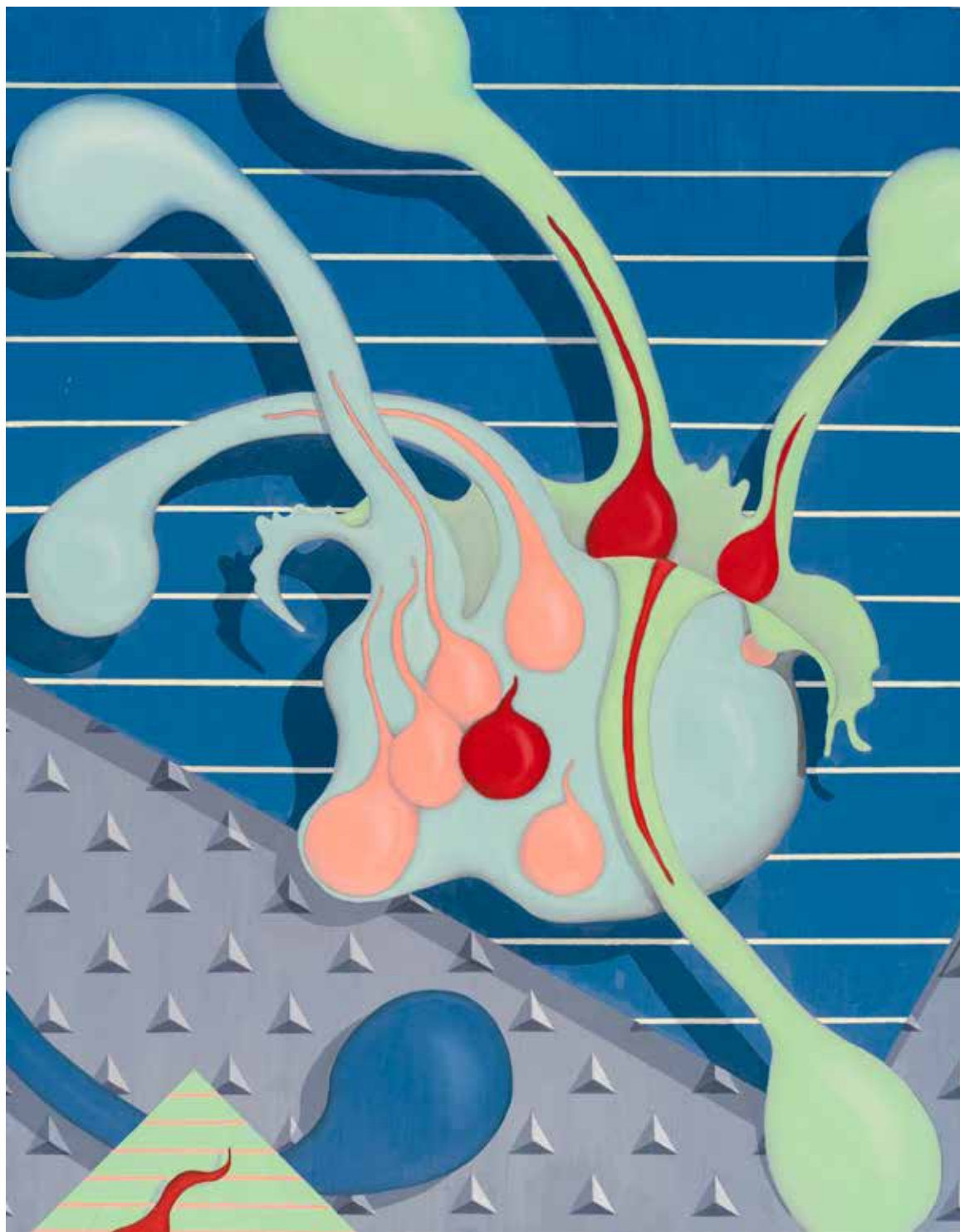
The single choir bell tapped and its lingering vibration stills, pointillism another way.
The word or sentence revised again and again, until the writer says enough.
The match struck, the wick lit and its flickering flame of amber and blue distill focus.
And when both beauty and loss are understood as two intertwined.

What does it mean to let go?

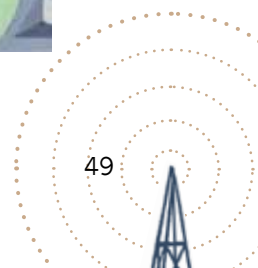
The cheek cradled on one's elbow.
The book set aside to savor the author's words, and the gaze tilts upward.
The bathwater's height and heat perfected in steamy delight.
And the head finds rest on soft cushioned comfort in the darkened room at night.

What does it mean to let go?

The tears temper after a month when your little dog was put to sleep.
The missing serviceman's body is never found.
A ventilator shuts off, and the tears can't be stopped.
And the annual weeding and planting of flowers ends at a headstone now skewed in
the ground because what is remembered and carried sustains the most.



OIL ON CANVAS, 38" X 30"



VOICES

Voices 2021 is produced by McHenry County College to recognize and showcase the visual arts, musical, and literary talents of McHenry County College students.

The ideas and the opinions expressed in *Voices 2021* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the attitude of the Board of Trustees, the administration, the faculty, or the staff of McHenry County College. Materials for *Voices 2021* were submitted by students who have been enrolled in courses at McHenry County College during one or all of the previous three semesters. The pieces selected for inclusion in *Voices 2021* were based on the student editors' opinion of their aesthetic merit. It is the policy of McHenry County College not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, religion, national origin, or handicapped status in its educational programs, as required by Federal regulations. Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to Michelle Skinder, Assistant Vice President of Human Resources.

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2021

V O I C E S

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