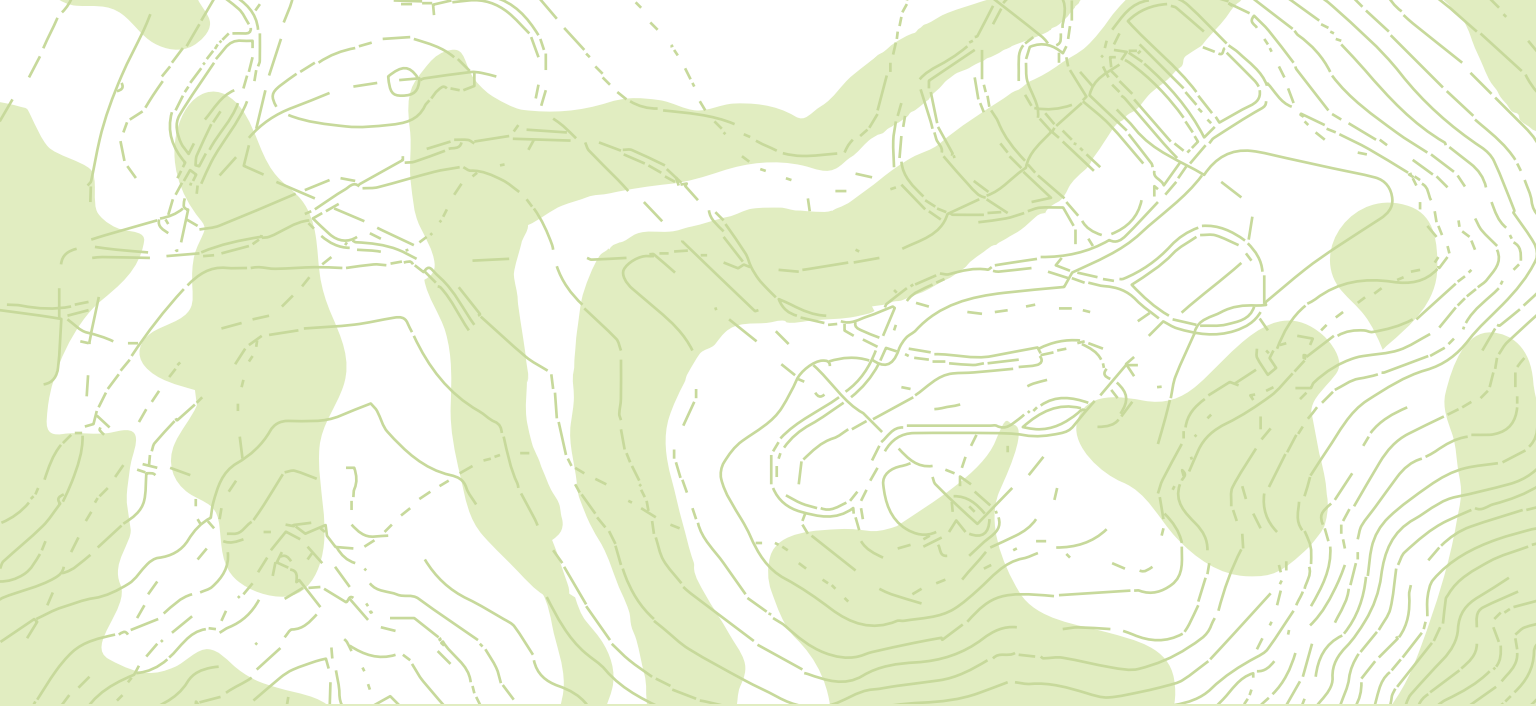


# VOICES

MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE LITERARY/ARTS JOURNAL





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## ***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.

## ***IN MEMORIAM***

This 2022 edition of VOICES is dedicated to Jerome “Jerry” Wendt, our long-time friend and VOICES contributor. Your wisdom and humor will be missed.

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## BEST OF MAGAZINE

Voices 2022 is proud to announce Awards for the Best of Magazine

### LITERARY:

Drexa Unverzagt  
*The River Waits*

### VISUAL ART:

Melissa Ragusin  
*Olive-Earl*

### MUSIC:

Tyler Prondzinski  
*Twenty Years*

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 2022 Dan Risch Memorial Scholarship winners are:

Madalyn LeFevre  
Melissa Ragusin

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To hear this year's selections go to [soundcloud.com/mcc-voices/sets/voices-2022](https://soundcloud.com/mcc-voices/sets/voices-2022) or simply scan the QR code below.



**BEST OF MAGAZINE**

**MELISSA RAGUSIN**

*Olive-Earl*



CERAMIC, 17.5" X 10" X 6"

## **THE RIVER WAITS**

Do not linger over your sepia-colored memories,  
where dust motes dance in shafts of faded sunlight  
and the dry patina of all your yesterdays steal away the now  
of being.  
It's not the truth...

We all have dead dreams that line our pockets,  
ready to weigh us down as the river waits  
our fateful choice.

It would be easy to take that step  
and wash away the pain.  
For the past is a jealous taskmaster,  
devilishly cruel,  
taunting us with ruminations  
and empty hope for what might have been.  
It wants us to believe the best is forever gone;  
our future pale in comparison.  
To leave us haunted by the tattered filigree  
of a younger self, so faint and far away,  
with nothing more to offer but a rueful smile.

Now we are left to defend ourselves  
with the armor we have fashioned by our own hands.  
Hammered together with the wisdom  
that only age and time can give...  
the hard-earned recompense  
of surviving this life.

And still, the river waits for our choice  
as we search for what light remains.  
For we are, who we are,  
and only we can see a past as it might have been  
or imagine a future yet unborn.

**NICKI CARPATIUC**

*Overfly*



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 22" X 26"

ODALIS LOPEZ-HERNANDEZ

*Cactus Dream*



OIL ON CANVAS, 40" X 30"



**JEROME WENDT**

*Poetry*

## THE OLD FARM

What does one say  
with pasture gates long closed,  
no longer containing horses left to run away,  
and the only people having an interest  
are buyers who want to tear it down,  
selling barn wood for stylish walls in new dens.

This lonely proud structure,  
hoarding lingering sheep smells  
discerned solely by the aged nose of one having been there,  
contains but scant remnants of hay  
under a sky poked roof, allowing rain and snow  
through to disturb resident bats.

Surrounding fields lie fallow  
with no productive seasons promised there-  
only Queen Anne's lace  
and Scotch Bloom thistle  
cover the shame  
of time and neglect.

But the land holds silent memories  
of plantings, mown hay, and juicy apples.  
Children lived here.  
There was play, and song, and tractor riding.  
A sweet smell of alfalfa permeated.  
I know this because I was one of them.

My feeble eyes still see  
a little sapling I planted,  
grown now to a canopy of cooling shade  
and comfort to an old owl and squirrels,  
while erosion or decay remains unseen  
by me alone.

A fleeting setting sun  
casts orange and pink reflection  
from the old barn  
onto my craggy countenance,  
giving rise to thought  
that end to both of us is near.

MARY MARIUTTO  
*Faulty Compromise*



OIL ON CANVAS, 48" X 46"

**MARY MARIOTTO**

*Prime-time with Dick Cavett*



OIL ON CANVAS, 28" X 30"

**JONNA KIVISTO**  
*Fungus Friends*



CERAMIC, 7" X 6" X 5"

**PATTY STRICKER**  
*Nature vs. Car/Round 1*



ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 24" X 30"

## GRIEF

It is terrible to survive,  
sometimes. To sell his fishing boat.

Repeatedly, to answer the  
question, How are you? To visit

an attorney, open the Will,  
signed with his name, sealed with a red stamp.

To clean the closets, give away  
crisp button-down shirts, well-worn pants,

khaki and corduroy, golf shorts,  
tennis whites. It is terrible,  
most times, to walk the hall alone.



**DONNA BIESCHKE**  
*Invisible Woman*



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 22" X 36"





## THE GODDESS OF TIME

I once met the Goddess of Time.

It was a peculiar experience, really; I had spoken to her amidst a busy sidewalk on a creaky bench, in a dream, I think. You know, one of those dreams where you can't place reality from twisted thoughts; no clue how it began, where you were, what you meant to do. But I recall one thing: I'd sat down carefully on that moldy bench, avoiding the worm next to my thigh.

She was familiar, in a way I couldn't quite name. Her manner of sitting? Her posture? Her voice?

Certainly not her face, though, for she had none.

No.

What a ridiculous thing to say.

No no. She didn't have just one face; let me clarify. Rather, she wore myriad expressions and skins. Dark eyes turned pale; caramel skin turned alabaster, then deep brown in a matter of a blink, and that face was quickly forgotten and replaced.

But I wasn't alarmed. She seemed to be an old friend. At least, one of her faces surely was.

I'd asked her who she was, and she said she didn't know. She had forgotten her name and therefore lost her identity, though once, she said, she'd been a keeper of time. I asked what she was doing.

"Searching," she replied.

I suppose that was the nature of her loss. To keep looking.

Funny thing, that. Losing your identity but knowing who you once were. As if that could be found if you search behind the cushions of the armchair set dutifully by the west-facing window.

There was nearly nothing memorable about her, only her hands.

They were pits of darkness, peeking through the billowy sleeves of her floral gown.

But they were not frightening; instead, rather beckoning and warm. Yet somehow, I knew that if I stared too long, something would be taken from me, and I too would lose something of value.

I'd torn my eyes away just then to ask how she lost it, and she said it was her punishment. A punishment for forgetting that nothing is real. That reality was but an illusion. A lie. And that letting time conduct that truth was a sin.

Then she had left, I suppose to continue her search, and I glanced down to find the worm closer than it had been before.

## UNMOVING

There stands a house,  
Its world cloaked in snow-  
Hardened by freezing ice,  
Guarded by a majestic oak tree,  
Covered in icicles and their dripping tears.  
There resides a woman.

This tired woman,  
Who lives in that cold house,  
Eyes glittering with frozen tears,  
Pale face as white as snow.  
Wishes she wasn't rooted there like that tree,  
Unable to move trapped in ice.

Hands so cold like ice.  
She has no one to hold, this woman.  
Her only companion that old oak tree.  
To live in such an empty echoing house,  
Surrounded by snow.  
Who can blame her for her tears?

No, she's earned those tears,  
They are the only proof her body is not made of ice-  
And her soul of snow.  
A snow woman,  
Melting in an empty house.  
The only witness an old oak tree.

It guards her, that tree,  
Her and her tears.  
Imprisoned in that house,  
Life unmoving frozen in ice.  
She is so tired, this woman,  
If only she could melt away like the snow.

It touches everything, that snow.  
Even the tallest branches of that old tree.  
"It is unavoidable," thought this woman.  
After all, snowflakes are simply frozen tears,  
Sadness trapped in ice-  
Covering her life in that house.

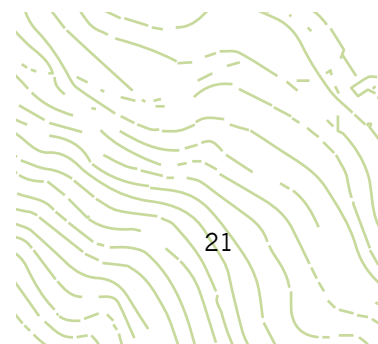
Seasons change,  
Ice and snow melt,  
Tears dry and trees die,  
But still remains this woman trapped in that cold,  
empty house.



**ASPYN PRESSOIR**  
*Afternoon Breakfast*



OIL ON CANVAS, 30" X 40"



## SEQUOIA TREES

I want to see the sequoia trees.  
I long to gaze up at the burning hues  
and picture every pair of eyes  
that have come to do the same  
before me.

Were they cerulean and clear, shimmering  
with the light of adventure?  
Or were they umber and weary  
under the weight of the world?

I yearn to meet the sequoia trees;  
to plant my feet at the  
base of the trunk and  
run my hands over the sturdy bark  
as I learn every ridge and bump—  
committing to memory  
the story of a life  
a thousand years in the making.

I'll stand there so long  
that my heels will sprout roots and  
burrow into the damp earth,  
claiming my home among the brush.  
Ancient branches will twist and  
stretch to wrap me in their embrace,  
welcoming me.

And I will breathe.  
For I am not alone among the trees.

**BARBARA BUNDICK**  
*Russian Cathedral*



CERAMIC, 14" X 9" X 9"

**MADALYN LEFEVRE**

*Tyler Nguyen*



OIL ON CANVAS, 36" X 48"





# PREDAWN

It's 4:49 a.m. and 34 degrees.  
I know this,  
because the computer tells me so.  
It's an ungodly hour,  
meaning if ever there was a god,  
it isn't now.

The room is cold,  
and I expect to see my breath.  
Or steam rising off the dog,  
who looks up blearily and blinks.  
She is soft, sentient, and without sin.  
Though I sense judgment.

Outside, the moon stares down—Shelley's joyless eye  
creating brittle shadows in the yard.  
I remember my rosemary plant,  
which I forgot to cover,  
and feel remorse.  
I hope it forgives me.

Faintly, I hear the clock chime  
five times.  
And I think of all I must do  
when the sun comes up.  
I hope the sun comes up.  
Five bells still feel like a time  
when there is no God.

In my bed, the me-shaped space  
grows cold,  
and I miss that void  
like a childhood hiding place.  
If deep space or death, or 4:49 a.m., were like that,  
there would be less to worry about.

In the basement, the furnace wakes  
like a cat. Or a god.  
I watch shadows soften as the moon  
slips slyly behind vagrant clouds  
as if losing interest in the night,  
or chagrined to face another morning after.

Some people feel energized and efficient  
at 4:49 (or 5:18).  
I am not one of those people.  
There is nothing I want to do  
in a cold, godless space  
that I can't do with warmth and light.

If I walk down the hall,  
avoiding the creaky spot,  
I imagine the air will part,  
repelled by my warm body,  
and close behind me.  
A wake that lingers like fog.

But I don't.  
There's no reason to pace there  
Or disturb the innocent air.  
I'll go back to my cold bed instead  
and hope for sleep.  
Or redemption.

Outside, a shape moves in the yard.  
A coyote.  
Indifferent to me, the moon, or  
the temperature, which is now 35 degrees.  
I know this because the computer tells me so.  
While the coyote stares back like a God.

**HOLT KEPES**  
*Shadownymph*



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 22" X 36"

**JULES FISHER**

*This is Not My House (Body)*



ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 36" X 24"

**HANNAH DALEY**

*Cherished*



PLASTER, CLAY, 7" X 10"

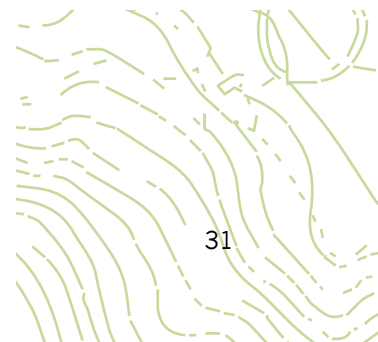
## NIGHT LIGHT

It's back...that manipulative full moon. The cosmic wonder appears early, on its own schedule. It hides, then shines and lingers to guide the nocturnal humans and lesser beings to their work or prey. It has an unfaltering agenda that must be followed faithfully by the tides that ebb and flow. It demands a choreographed and repetitive dance of crashing liquid power, first systematically rising with violent fury, then falling with great ease to cleanse and depart.

This latecomer entices us to peer outside our safe and secure place through a fragile pane, to notice a disjointed tree, a hungry owl, a war-torn field, a sparse horizon. We seek it during a midnight walk, as it takes command, not only of the sky but of its earthly subjects. It simultaneously shines and creates one-dimensional shadows in our pathway. This moon, with all its phases, is both fickle and reliable. And, on special occasions, it toys with us by showing up for an eclipsing date with the sun.

This teasing sphere winks at stars that act as accomplices, then makes its grand entrance through cloudy curtains, revealing itself as the headliner. Its moonbeam seeps through the cracks of a shutter. At first, it glosses over inanimate objects, then finds and illuminates willing flesh. Seductively, it works its wiles by accelerating a couple's pulse, all the while mapping their bodies of muscles, crevices, and arching backs. Later, as the hearts slow, the light moves away.

This bold moon has been and will be a night light, a beacon, and a singular companion to the incarcerated and heartbroken. This silent confidant keeps all our secrets by hearing our confessions of loving too little, hoping for too much in return, and unsung lullabies.



**LINDA CANNIZZO**  
*Unexpected Pleasures*



OIL ON CANVAS, 36" X 36"

## UNTITLED

Look up at skies of vast white energy  
Look up and the tears won't fall  
Instead, they float  
I store my memories in the corners of my eyes  
And every time I cry I lose a little bit of you  
But you fly to the sky, and I imagine  
That every part of you that I once had  
Melts when it gets too close to the sun  
someday you will drip back down to earth  
Float like a feather  
Upon entering the atmosphere  
And when you land  
I imagine that you'll land in a cup of coffee  
Or maybe a bit of tea  
Some writer will drink you in  
And instead of me  
They will get the privilege of telling your stories



## THE ZEN OF BEES

Beholden to no one,  
except perhaps their queen,  
they are compelled to come,  
my industrious bee friends,  
arriving early to my morning garden.  
There to find the open-faced flowers  
full of grace and time,  
promiscuously  
offering their seductive nectar  
buried deep in soft blossoms.

The bees, dressed in their best black and yellow,  
go about their duties,  
as they dart from one flower to the next,  
unaware of the telltale pollen that they wear,  
and the stunning good will of their labors.

My friends carry on undaunted until they hear  
the rumble of thunder on the far horizon,  
in throaty notes of baritone and bass.  
Their work comes to a stop,  
and without complaint...  
they are gone.

The rain follows with its soft patter of fat raindrops  
replacing the sound of thunder with a mellow tenor voice.  
The winds listen too, flirting with the trees,  
who waltz with leafy heads nodding in time  
as a final crash of lightning crescendos,  
sending a sizzling bolt into the ground,  
as if from Zeus himself.

This puts the rain on notice  
that it's time to move along,  
to quench another garden's thirst.  
The thunder trundles off begrudgingly,  
fading pianissimo.

As if on cue, the bees return to my garden.  
Unperturbed by this brief interlude,  
without comment or concern,  
they simply begin their work  
again.

MARTA MAKSYMOWICZ  
*Babayaga*



CERAMIC, 9" X 6" X 7"

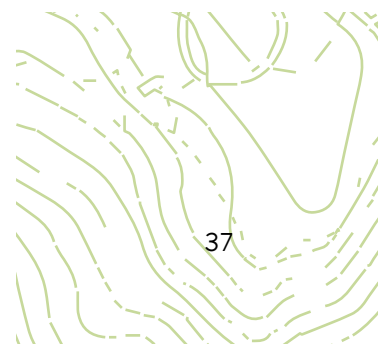




**LIZA SMITH**  
*Reproduction Recreation*



COLLAGE, 25" X 19"



JOHN DIEDRICH

*Lilly*



OIL, ACRYLIC, MIXED MEDIA, 24" X 24"

# MY LOVE

all words you use to condemn  
my love  
my community  
you say hate the sin love the sinner  
as if the way that i love  
the way that i live  
isn't intricately woven  
into every fiber of my being  
like the gently worn threads  
of a carefully knit winter scarf

you see my queerness as something i do  
not something i am  
it's a hard-to-remove stain  
on the knee of your favorite blue jeans  
something that can be scrubbed away  
if you pray just a little *harder*

but no amount of holy water  
can wash away the sacred beauty  
that is us  
for queer love is  
gentle  
and pure  
and kind

that kindness will overcome  
all the hatred you wield at us  
like weapons in this ruthless war  
born out of the spiteful terrain  
that generations of conformity  
gone uncontested  
have cultivated in your head

it will uplift and empower  
the next generation of sinners  
and teach them to  
clasp the hands of their  
friends and lovers  
and raise them up  
to show the world  
our victory

*Evil. Dirty. Immoral.*

*For love always wins.*

**JOHN DIEDRICH**  
*My Pearly Whites*



SILVER, NICKEL, PLASTIC, BONE, 3" X .25"

**KATHLEEN ESCOBAR**  
*Loops and Spout*



STONEWARE, 8" X 12" X 10"





# UNTITLED

Your defense is that, if it does not belong to them,  
Then it is okay for it to be yours  
And I'm sorry if this offends you  
But isn't that just like the white person  
To take and take and take  
Isn't that just like the dreads on your head  
that you say do not belong to the Black person  
Isn't that just like the pilgrims  
Like dia de los muertos  
Like tacos  
Like puppy guarding  
Like the moment we take our eyes off our shit, you steal it  
Like the girl that speaks the language that my tongue was made for  
And somehow, she speaks it better than me  
Like her brother, that tells me that if I just tried harder, I could be like her  
Like the long talks that we have about race where you tell me you are not racist  
And have said nothing for a long, long time  
Like how your grandfather has your same mouth and eyes and nose

but you refuse to look him straight in your face and say the things that he believes are dead

But that he is still alive

In my culture, we believe in the old

The wisdom they have gained throughout their years

In yours

You pity them

Think they have died along with their beliefs

That they are already half-buried in the ground

So, what are they worth the time to fix

You take and take and take these new ideas

generously handed to you

And you do not share

And now isn't that

Just like dia de los muertos

Taco bell

What happened after thanksgiving

You take and take and take and take

And just like with this land that you stole

# UNTITLED (CONT.)

You are afraid to turn your back

Or someone may steal it from you

Pero pobrecito

You must be so tired

You dated a brown girl and broke up because you did not understand

How sad to go to the love of a white woman after

She does not know the remedies to heal your wounds

You have been fighting for so long

Fighting this new idea that privilege exists

Fighting your only brown teacher

Fighting the girl that says she doesn't find cute when you call her ethnic on the street

Fighting and fighting and fighting

For your gun rights

Don't tread on me

But baby

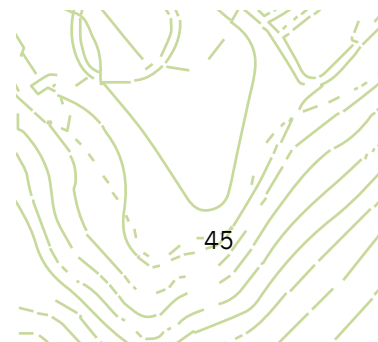
As of the 2020 census

In the year 2060

Non-Hispanic white people will make up 36.4% of the US population

While Hispanics will make up 31.9

So, think about the things you say now because your strong point is behind you  
Our strength has always been in our community  
And baby, it is growing  
This land was never yours but watch as you lose even that  
As for us pocs, take our shit back  
Open the gates where you keep the real owners  
And their throats will sing  
We will not take anything that wasn't ours, to begin with  
But watch as we take and take and take and take  
All of this back  
For our tias  
Our abuelos and bisabuelos  
That could not  
The board is leveling  
So, speak your words slowly  
And listen often  
The earth sings our tunes  
And soon we will hear harmony



**EJ ALBANO**  
*Meridian*

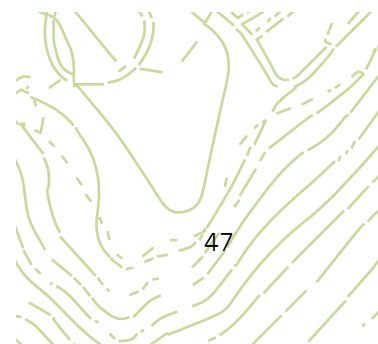


ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, 11" X 17"

LUCY DOLAN

*Fiona*

SILVER GELATIN PRINT, 8" X 10"



# WORDS OF A PART- TIME FLORIST

I kiss plants sometimes.

I read somewhere that plants are alive,

little souls woven into the roots, little lives melded in the leaves, little thoughts swirling in the vines.

And they know things. So much so that they could scream.

But they lost their voices long ago. So all they want is love and attention.

I grew up with my father singing to our money plant, one of five scattered around our house. It was an old song in his quiet rough voice as he watered them early in the morning, the scent of saffron incense still fresh in the air.

*“Jaane woh kaise log the jinke pyar ko pyar mila”*

*I wonder how it was for those whose love found love.*

*Her vines drape the staircase now, a satin curtain of green.*

*“Humne toh jab kaliyaan mangi, kaanto ka haar mila”*

*I asked for a soft petal and got a garland of thorns.*

She curls over the doorway, her leaves like temple bells over the threshold.

*“Khushiyon ki manzil dhoondhi toh gham ki gard mili”*

*I reached for the doorsill of happiness but found the dust of grief.*

I kiss plants sometimes.

Gingerly holding their leaf, like a child's tender hand, and pressing a soft kiss on its palm.

To remind that sleeping soul down in those roots that we know you have something to yell out.

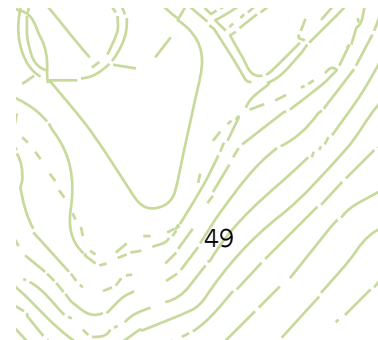
*“Chahat ke nagme chahe toh aahein sard mili”  
I wanted songs of desire but heard only cold sighs.*

Silent spectators, they made themselves. Storing promises, secrets, angry words, and stories deep in their cells.  
They know when Night crept in and Day’s chariot descended, but only after the two held hands in the gold evening.  
They saw nymphs wandering in groves, and young goddesses running across fields.  
They know so much, they could burst, filled to the brim with skeletons tucked away in phloem veins, pushed downward.

*“Bichad gaya har saathi dekar pal do pal ka saath”  
And soon all my friends split away,*

I kiss plants sometimes.  
And sometimes, they whisper back a secret.

*“Kisko fursat hai joh thaame deewano ka haath”  
After all, who had time to hold the hand of the mad.*





**ISABEL BROWN**

*Mummified*



CHARCOAL, 18" X 24"

## A HAUNTED HOUSE

The old house atop the hill,  
abandoned and tucked away from sight,  
gives those who dare entertain a thrill.

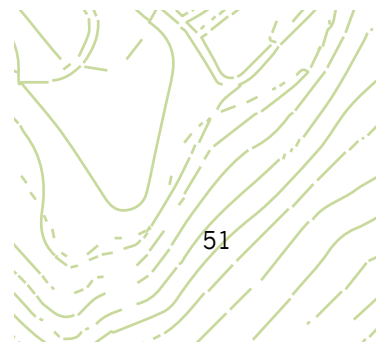
Any courageous souls who can find the will  
sneak to their destination that lies in wait in the dead of night:  
the old house atop the hill.

The spooky legend that is told when the evening is chill,  
with listeners huddled around a campfire at twilight,  
gives those who dare entertain a thrill.

Tales of ghosts with unfinished business roaming the decrepit mill,  
and though no one who's living resides, someplace resonates a light:  
the old house atop the hill.

With ghastly specters stuck within the crumbling home as if time is standing still,  
the cursed legend, conjuring the imagery of bumps in the night,  
gives those who dare entertain a thrill.

Even if you could muster up the will,  
removing all fright from your mind to bravely enter the site  
the old house atop the hill  
gives those who dare entertain a thrill.



JAN BOSMAN

Poetry

## THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Since he was a young editor,  
he has noticed the subtle changes  
in the oaks, the sky, the lakes,  
has trekked all four seasons  
through woodlands and wetlands  
with his Nikon or Pentax  
slung over his back.

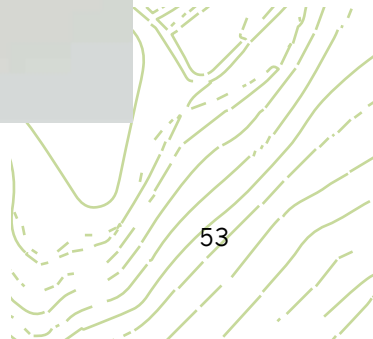
But now he falls, has fallen,  
has put his house up for sale,  
will move into assisted living.  
Though aging, he still enjoys  
changes in the oaks, the sky, the lakes,  
still wants to amble where he once strode.

So, he bought a walker  
with big wheels and a seat.  
It's working pretty well, he says,  
except on the down slopes.  
The coneflowers welcome him.  
They don't care about the walker.  
They just want to have their picture taken.

**PATRICIA VOLLKOMMER**  
*Ceramics Can Blow My Mind*



CERAMICS, 13" X 10" X 3"



# VOICES

*Voices 2022* 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 2022* 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 2022* 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 2022* 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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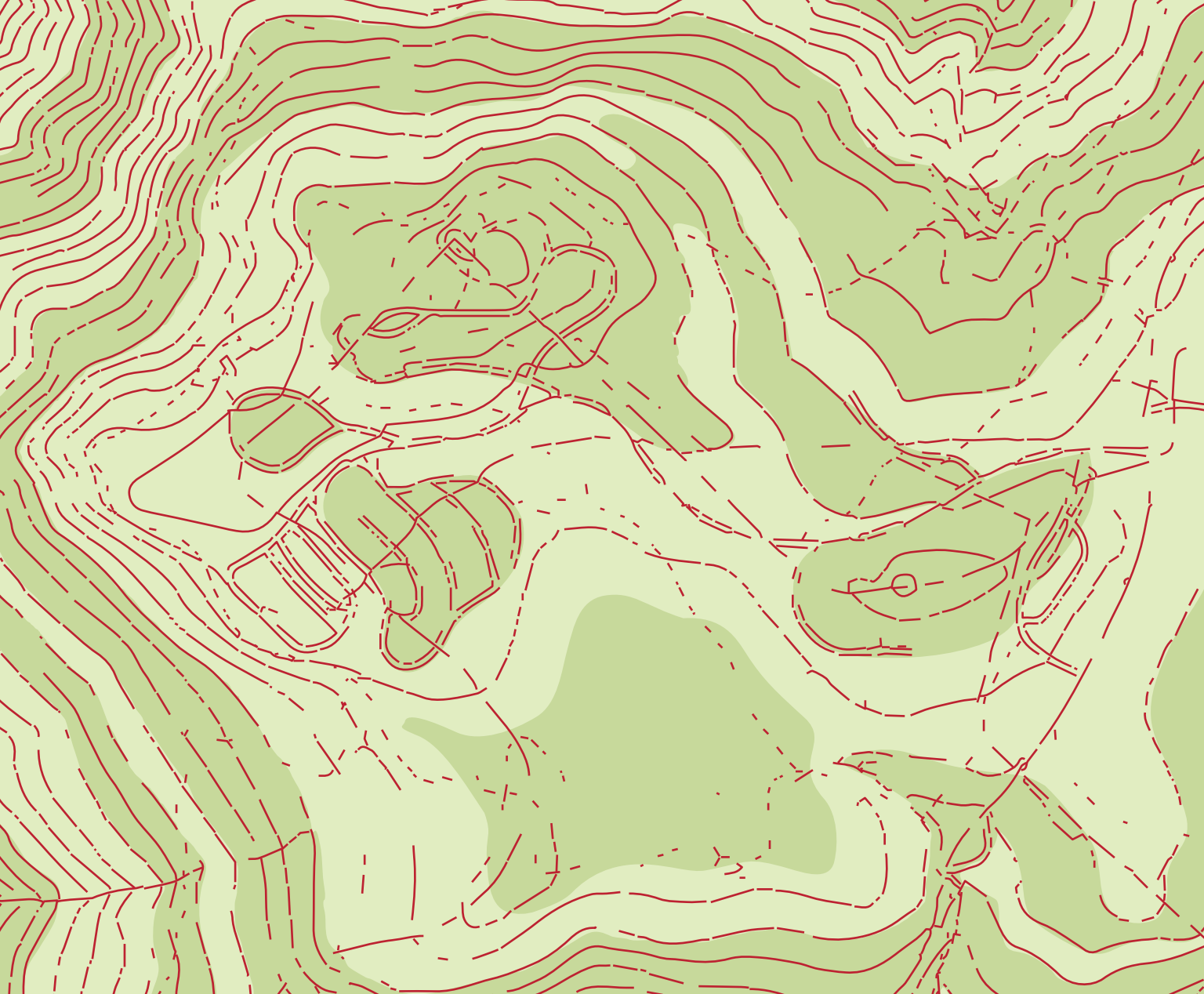
## **SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

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## **COLOPHON**

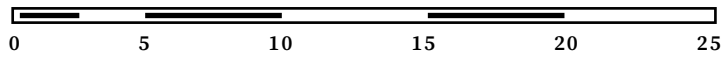
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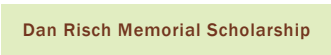
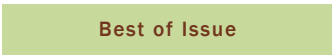


# LEGEND

SCALE OF MILES



- Visual Arts 
- Literature 
- Music 



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