



# Quill & Brush

*Three Rivers Arts & Literary Magazine*

**Fall 2020**



# Quill & Brush

Designed and Edited by Joseph Victorino

Quill & Brush is a student-operated club that creates and publishes art, photography and literature for Three Rivers Community College.

Open to students, staff, and faculty, this bi-annual magazine is published free of charge and made available every semester throughout the TRCC campus.

If you are interested in contributing to future issues of Quill & Brush or have any questions, please contact us at: [trccquillandbrush@gmail.com](mailto:trccquillandbrush@gmail.com)

## The Spring 2020 issue features the work of:

- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Kevin Amenta      | Lisette Pascual Adames |
| Ariana Bradley    | Kimberly Stanford      |
| Lilia Burdo       | Ian Thompson           |
| Justin Charron    | Joseph Victorino       |
| Ilia Chavez       | Sarah Walsh            |
| Crystal Foss      | Mariel Willbanks       |
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# Fine Arts



# Spotlight



*“Untitled”* • Charcoal • 18" x 24"

## Ariana Bradley, 19

Art is a vision of life. It gives us the ability to channel our inner thoughts and be able to express them visually. What inspires me to do art is my experience throughout my childhood with PTSD and sadly the death of my great-grandmother who told me to keep going before she passed. I dealt with a lot of self-doubt eventually leading to depression. However, I found one joy in life I can cope with my emotions with and that is exactly art.

I mainly work with mediums such as oil paint, acrylic paint, watercolor paint, graphite, colored pencils, chalk pastel and all sorts of mixed media. I am an artist because I choose to express myself in a range of ways through visual arts; whether it is how I view a certain philosophy in life or how I am simply feeling. My goals as an artist now are to strengthen my drawing and painting skills and eventually broaden my horizons with other types of visual arts such as graphic design. One of my most successful pieces is titled “Next to Me.” It is a mixed media piece with myself as a figure on tone paper, a background of ripped music sheets of the song “Next to Me” by Emeli Sande, creating a three-dimensional effect. I then added three-dimensional butterflies flying out of the piece representing change and the flow of time since butterflies represent change and time. I tend to challenge myself with my art and my experiences through life as a young adult and I always look up to my great-grandmother for guidance, hence why I always include butterflies in my pieces; they are always following me.



# Ariana Bradley



“7” • Acrylic • 26" x 36"

## Artist's Commentary

This was my first ever close up portrait. I painted and titled this for a friend who has epilepsy.

The colors on the model were chalk colors that she smeared on herself. I replicated the look by finger painting the colors onto the piece.

## Artist's Commentary

This piece depicts myself fading into dust, but it also shows the butterflies moving on as well.

My favorite part of this painting was the orange dust around me.

“Tame the Devil” • Acrylic • 18" x 24"



“Motherly Love” • Prisma Pencil  
13" x 17"

## Artist's Commentary

This is the largest piece I've ever done. Others say that this is my strongest piece.

I used a cloth to paint the piece. The only time I used a paint brush was with the fine lines.

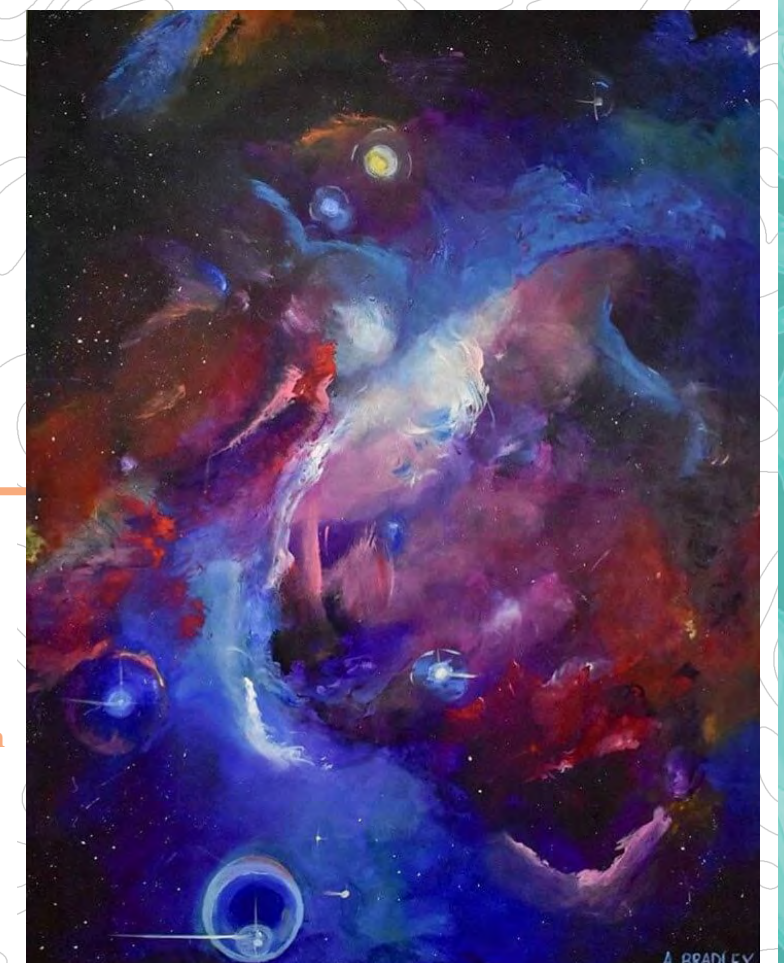
This is probably the only painting I wouldn't sell.

## Artist's Commentary

This is one of my favorite drawings. I did this my sophomore year of highschool.

The hair and the folds were my favorite parts.

“Orion” • Tempera • 38" x 48"





# Ariana Bradley



*"Depression"* • Acrylic • 24" x 36"

## Artist's Commentary

This was my first nude painting of myself. I was nervous because I was self-conscious of my body. I wanted to get out of my comfort zone and show a lot of emotion.

I hate painting myself because whenever I do, it doesn't look like me, but rather an evolution of myself.

This was one of my favorite pieces. My favorite part were the lips and the eyes.

*"Inhale, Exhale"* • Acrylic • 18" x 24"



## Artist's Commentary

This was my final for 2D class with Professor Mathew Best. I appreciate teachers like him because they push students to succeed.

I wanted to show me ripping myself open and spreading my inner good all over the world.



*"No More"* • Oil • 18" x 24"

## Artist's Commentary

I wanted to do a stained glass effect. I got the idea from the music video for "Somebody That I Used to Know". The eyes are cut out from a magazine.

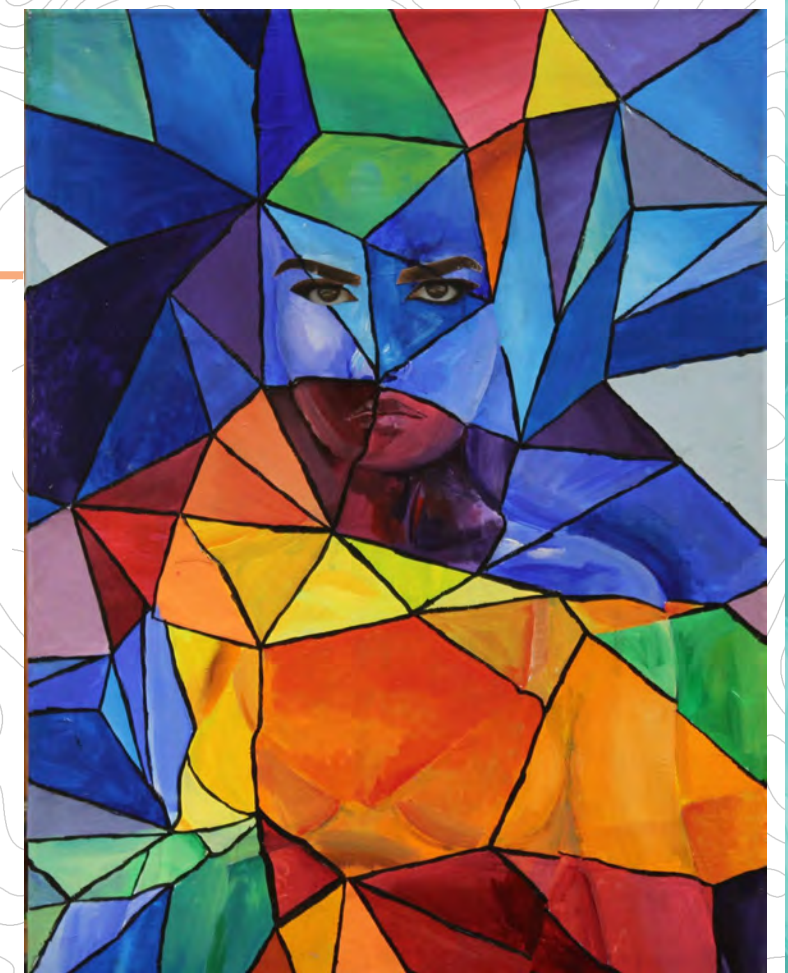
This piece was actually bought by my friend Alex Mercer.

## Artist's Commentary

This was one of my favorite portraits of myself. I made this in high school.

My favorite parts of the painting are around the eye.

*"Split Image"* • Acrylic • 18" x 24"





# Ariana Bradley



*"Onward"* • Acrylic • 24" x 24"

## Artist's Commentary

Originally, I was going to do a silhouette of a couple, but then I got out of the Relationship and changed it to this current version.



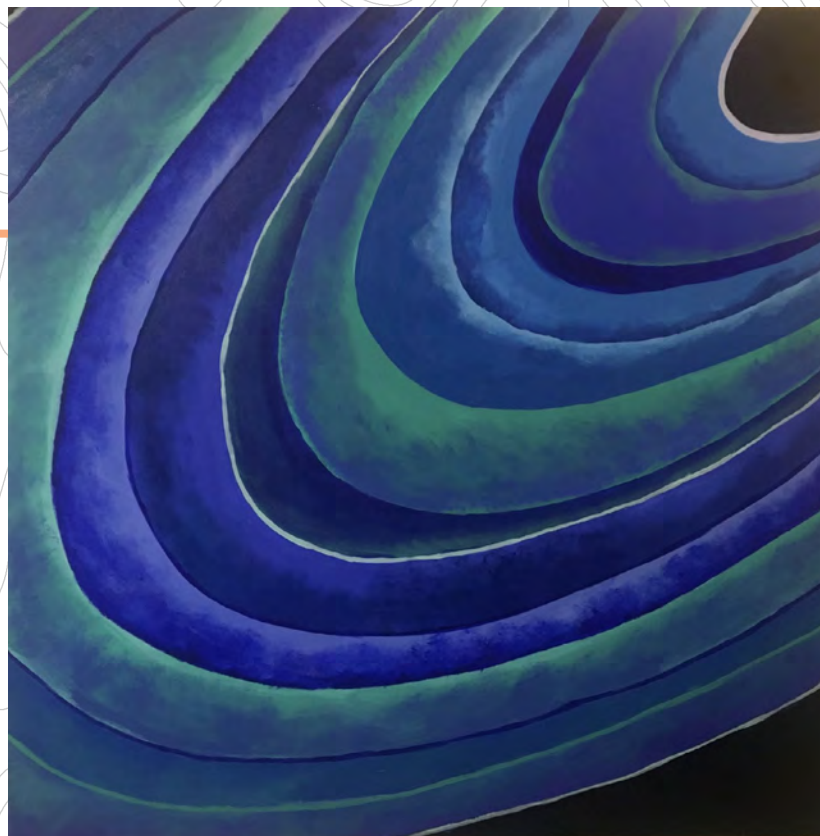
*"Which One?"* • Prisma Pencil  
16" x 20"

## Artist's Commentary

I was going through a lot when I was making this. Whenever I went out in public I felt like I needed to wear a mask (metaphorically).

Which one do you want to see? Do you want to see me happy all the time? Or my real self, who has feelings and emotions.

*"Saturn's Rings"* • Acrylic • 36" x 36"



## Artist's Commentary

This is my second largest painting, after "Orion". I'm somewhat into astronomy, it's another field I'd like to study one day.

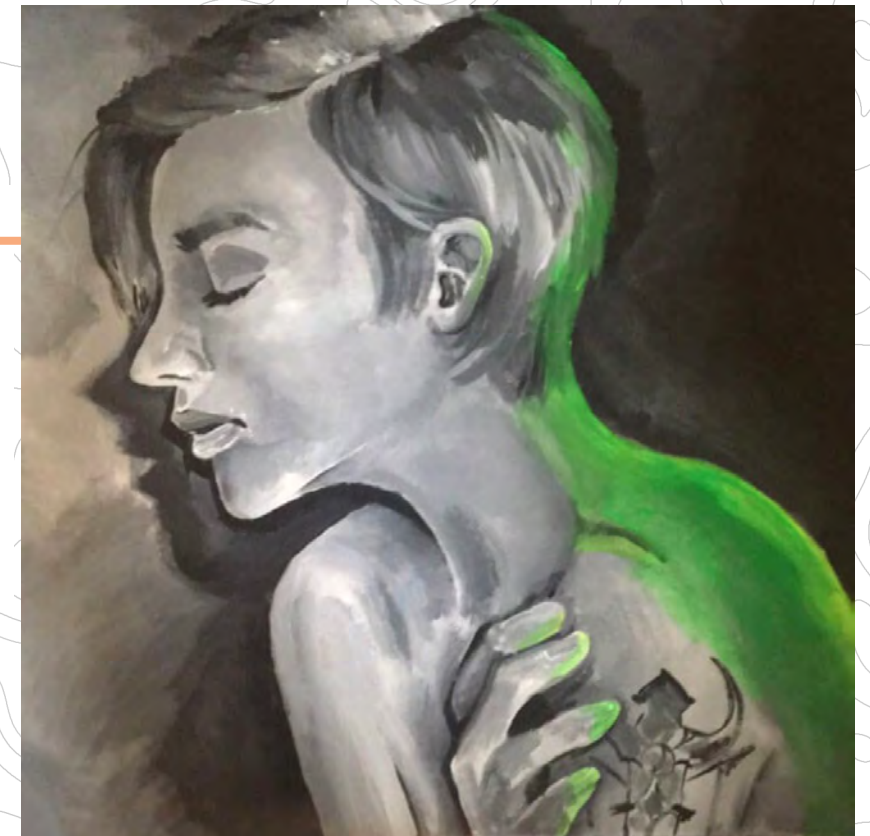
I love this piece because I can orient it in any way.

## Artist's Commentary

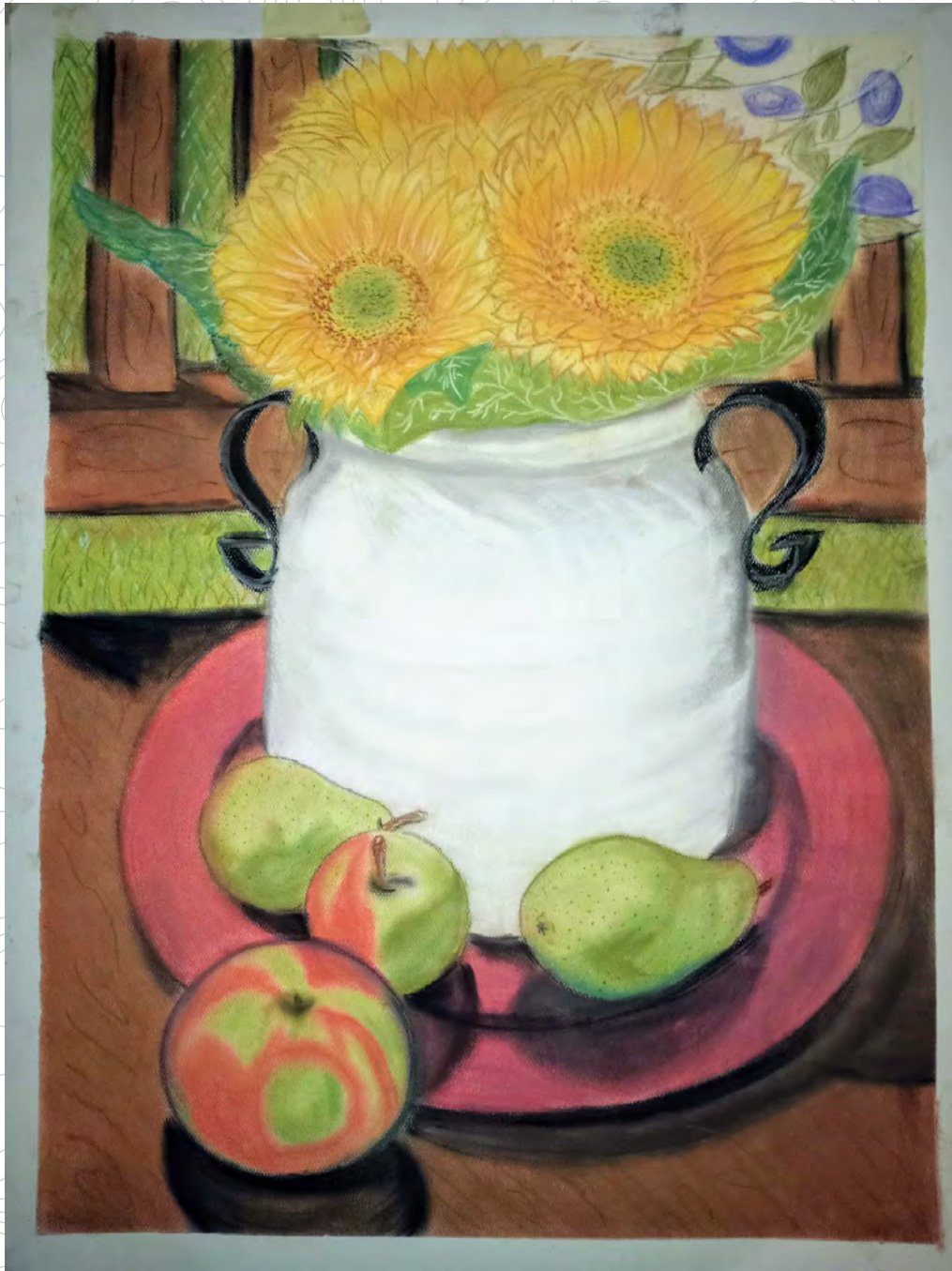
This is one first times I painted someone else.

I was hurt and I was painting out my feelings. The green represents the future I need to look forward to, instead of looking back. This painting took about a week to do.

*"Betrayal,"* • Acrylic • 18" x 24"







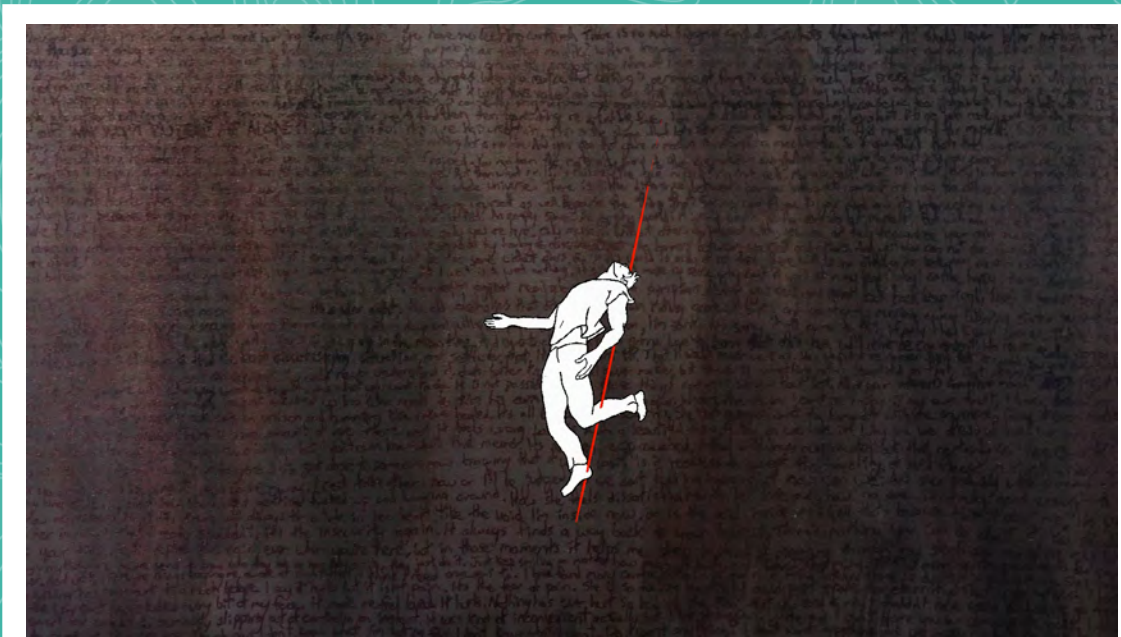
*"Memories of September 24th" • 2020*



*"Abstract Alignment" • 2020*



# Spotlight



“Void” • Animation over painted background • 24” x 36”

## David Fontaine, 21

I’ve been seriously practicing art since I was 12, however, I’ve been creating art my whole life. My mom introduced me to art when I was young. She would host craft days every week with my grandmother, and we would work with whatever supplies they had. My mother always had all sorts of craft supplies. I was homeschooled until he was 11. Once I started going to public school, I began taking art classes and soon developed a passion for it.

I was super try hard in art class, even in middle school. I was lucky to be part of the NFA art program in high school. I wouldn’t be half the artist I am now without that program.

I was all set up and ready to start attending my next four-year school, Lesley University, where I’d be studying 2D Animation. However, after a couple of long conversations with my family, and even myself, I decided to take the year off because of the pandemic. Lesley’s in Boston, so to be in a city like Boston during a pandemic; I didn’t feel good about that. It wouldn’t be the same experience with all of the COVID-19 restrictions. It wouldn’t be the same kind of community and the studio usage would be restricted. Is it event worth the thousands of dollars it would cost? I’m holding on to the hope that by Fall in 2021 everything will have been sorted out.

I want to be a full-time animator in the future. I’ve wanted this career since I was around 15 years old. Around that age, I started paying more attention to movies and started taking cartoons more seriously. I realized how fantastic of a story telling medium they could be. *Over the Garden Wall* was the show that I watched that made me decide I wanted to become an animator.

The TRCC art program was great. I made some really good friends and the program was important to my artistic exploration.

## David Fontaine



“Abandoned Place” • Acrylic • 11”x 14”

### Artist's Commentary

I liked having a doorway that was far away and not being able to see whats around it. For the color scheme, I was trying to invoke a night vision look with the greens.

Fine Arts

“All That’s Left” • Graphite • 18” x 12”

### Artist's Commentary

This is exactly from *The Last of Us*. You could find this location in-game. It’s literally a redraw of a screencap from the game. This was a piece that I did because I love the aesthetic. I wanted to play around with the lighting. A harsh flashlight is kind of hard to figure out how to draw. It’s just an excuse to channel my fondness for the game.





# David Fontaine



“Karma’s A Bee” • Pen and Watercolor • 18" x 9"

## Artist's Commentary

This piece was back when I was doing a lot of paintings of bees. I ended up deciding on making it a commentary on humans and our effect on the world in terms of how destructive we are; like with climate change. It also shows how our actions affect wildlife. This is a crashed pesticide plane that is used to spray crops. The significance of the beehive within the plane is to indicate that wildlife is taking back and trying to stop what the humans are doing. The silhouettes of the bees represents how humans have done irreparable damage and are made out of tissue paper. This one was fun because I didn't have much experience working with pen and watercolor, so it was a lot of experimenting. It has a pretty unobtrusive color palette, making it pretty easy to get into even if you're not looking for the greater meaning. Overall, this piece took about eight or nine hours.



“And Now I’m Nothing” • Screen Print • 20" x 10"

## Artist's Commentary

This was based off of a song by The Wonder Years, "I've Given You All". The reference location was the Chelsea Green in front of NEA. I just threw a hoodie under the bench to make it look as if someone had left it there. It was challenging working with the limited color palette with this being a screen print. I ended up using five layers for five colors. It was interesting trying to visually present song lyrics.



“Pogo Close Up” • Found object sculpture

## Artist's Commentary

This is one of my favorites. I feel like I landed on this concept by accident; it had no right to be as cool as it was. I did this piece around Halloween time. I already had the plague mask from *Spirit*. I took inspiration from a comic panel from *The Umbrella Academy*, where the character Pogo has his brains blown out. I thought it was beautiful how detailed and disgusting it was.



“Pogo” • Found object sculpture

## Artist's Commentary Continued...

I figured I could do something similar to that, but instead the person had been shot. Since there's no person, just the mask, I wondered, “how can I play with that?”

Plague doctors would stuff their masks with flowers so that they wouldn't smell the rotting corpses. Well, if they were shot in the head and their mask was filled with flowers, then you would see flowers.

It was challenging to make the piece work structurally. I built a wire structure underneath, and also spent a lot of money on flowers at Michaels.

The red tear was an accident, I was just spray painting the inside red. I spray painted it for too long and the paint pooled up in the eye and went through the mesh, resulting in the tear. I was like, oh my god I'm a genius, that looks awesome!

I had no idea how I was going to present the piece. Professor Brian Dimmock welded together a stand for me. I just painted it white.

I featured “Pogo” in both the "End of the Year" Art Show at TRCC in 2019 where it won best sculpture. It was also featured at a show at the Norwich Art Center around the same time.



# David Fontaine



“Self Portrait” • Acrylic • 18" x 24"

## Artist's Commentary

This was a disaster in a couple ways.

That's my brother in the painting. Getting him to pose for the reference was a disaster because he didn't want to do it. It was difficult trying to get him to do what I wanted. I would get the reference that I wanted, but then I'd realize it didn't work, so then I'd have to get him to pose differently. It was 11:00pm, he didn't want to do it, and I didn't want to do it.

After we got passed that, I had a lot of trouble with the face and making that expression. My friends and I would make jokes during class that it was some new horror movie monster because it looked incredibly deranged at some points of the process.

I landed on something that would mostly work. It's not perfect, but you can tell who it is if you know my brother. I use my brother for my art when he's around. It's not because my brother wants to, but because he's the only one around that isn't too busy.

## Artist's Commentary

This was a very personal piece. The assignment was to create a self portrait in the style of another artist. I chose the artist Elly Smallwood. I've been following her instagram for years because I just always love her work. It was pretty fun to finally emulate her, look into it, and understand her process by looking at all of her work. Her work is pretty sexual in a lot of the subject matter. Even if it were just someone's face, it was meant to be an interpretation of somebody's face in an intimate moment. I always thought it was cool that you could have the sexual side of the work without showing anything explicit. That's what I was going for with this piece. The colors are meant to represent a more passionate feeling.

During the critique, nobody got that detail, but they did get close to it. Others would say that it felt emotional but not necessarily in that way. Some said maybe something bad had happened and the subject had been dealing with it that way.

If you were able to get a strong sense of emotion from it, I'll take it.

“Scared Hayden”  
Acrylic • 24" x 48"



“What A Mess” • Oil on board • 24" x 36"

## Artist's Commentary

This is a study of one of the statues at NFA. It's one of the times I was really proud of my work.

That's pretty much about as good as I could have done. It's a good showcase of where my skills are at.

“Sickness” • Acrylic • 11" x 14"



## Artist's Commentary

I spent a straight 12 hours working on this piece, from 5pm to 5am, the morning before it was due. It's one of the times I felt most accomplished.

It won a Scholastic Gold Key Award.

“Statue Study”  
Prisma color on toned paper  
20" x 30"



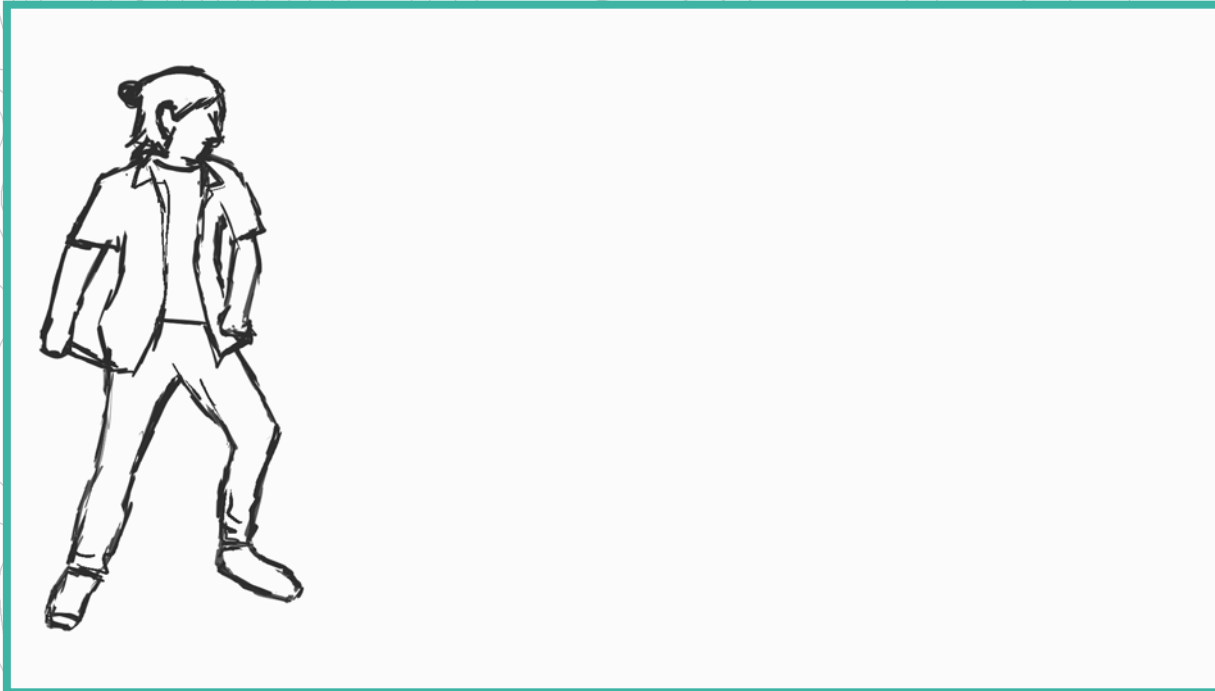
## Artist's Commentary

This piece features the plague mask before it became my “Pogo” piece.

I used a lighter to burn this background.



# David Fontaine



“*Ellie Jab Combo*” • Single Frame Animation

## Artist's Commentary

I was always really inspired by fighting games.. The idea for this piece was: “If Ellie from *The Last of Us* was in a fighting game, what would that look like?”

I was into fighting games at the time and thought how fantastic the animations are because they have to be so fast and translate so many things to the player. There has to be recognizable silhouettes, it has to feel good in the game. It has to look like they're actually fighting somebody. There's just so many boxes that you have to check off when you're doing that sort of animation. I took reference footage of myself to help with the animation. It wasn't shown in the animation, but in the reference footage, it's basically just me beating up my brother.

Out of all my pieces, I'd say this has the most problems. But it was also really challenging so I don't really fault myself for that. I'm ok with the fact that it's not perfect as long as I got it in on time.



“*Obstallum*” • Single Frame  
Mixed Media Animation on painted background  
Acrylic • 24" x 36"

## Artist's Commentary

Obstallum is the name of a city my friend and I made up. I've been writing this story with my friend, Brandon Peck. It's about this dystopian city made of obsidian where everyone looks up to this monument for all their ideals. This was a major challenge, since all of the buildings are made out of obsidian. Obsidian is very hard to draw or paint to get the right look to it. I was trying to figure out how I would best represent it all. This is the first official piece of concept art for it: a visual identity for the story and what the city looks like.

It works best as a concept as opposed to a literal representation to it because I don't think it fully represents what Brandon and I were going for when writing the city. I still think it's a cool idea.

Originally this was supposed to be a piece that utilized a projector to overlay the animation over the canvas. It should still work well digitally. Also, initially, there were supposed to be people on the street, but that ended up being too much work. I settled for the power lines, lights, and electrical currents. There is also a clock that runs at real time. It takes a full minute for the second hand to go around.

This piece was definitely a challenging one, but I learned a decent amount. I could use this knowledge for any concept pieces later on.



## David Fontaine



*“Void”* • Single Frame  
Animation over painted background • 24" x 36"

### Artist's Commentary

This is my favorite piece out of everything I've featured because it's the furthest I've gone into something. Another reason why I like it so much is because it is a deeply personal piece. It was fun to experiment with the presentation of it. It started with this background, which features words that aren't all that easy to read. The idea was I wrote down everything that I could think of: anything that I was upset about, anything that I was upset about in my life, anything that was emotional fuel to me, and I just threw it all out there.

I then covered it all with black paint so it could hardly be read. If you look carefully enough, you can start to read it. The idea was that everyone on a daily basis covers up their feelings rather than being open and honest and putting it all out there. If you pay enough attention to somebody, you can start to understand what's going on. It's a metaphor for that social expectation.

The man in the picture is spinning, he has no control, he's overwhelmed, and he's lost. It's all of these emotions he doesn't know how to deal with. It's also just fun to animate all the tiny movement in the wind. I love this kind of animation where fabric blows around.

The red line further represents how he has no control as he's being held in place by the line that's impaling him. He's at the mercy of some greater force, which is societal expectations to not overshare your feelings. It was there to invoke a feeling of helplessness.

This was a huge combination of ideas I've had; to project an animation on a canvas and to be super overtly emotional in my art. It's also really fun to dive deep into a project like this. I recall coming into class just writing the words on the canvas that could barely be read. I ended up in this weird head space where I was really into it. Everybody thought I was depressed because I was being so emotional.

I really dove head first into this piece, probably more than any of my others. I used Clip Studio Paint for the animation and that took about nine to ten hours. Making the background took five to six hours. I also spent a lot of time figuring out what I wanted to put on it too. I have a Google Doc that has all the words on it. I've only let two people read it. That's out there, maybe I'll release it some day.

It essentially took 15 hours to make it, but with the prep work and concept art, it totals to about 20 hours. I really wish that I could show it the way I intended to with the projector, 'cause it looks way cooler.

## Lisette Pascual Adames



*“Untitled”* • Soft Pastel Drawing • 36" x 24"



# Spotlight

## Ian Thompson, 22

I walked hard into art. I started with work in Source Films, where my biggest influence was the Youtuber kitty0706 in 2009, who made animations in Gary's Mod. They represented and inspired everything of that time era. I made my own films in 2014 when I was 16 years old, but I stopped around 2018. I wanted to pursue art to make 3D models for animation, but I now prefer 2D format animations.

Ideally, I'd like my future career to involve independently creating webcomics online and garnering a community around that. That would be the dream, even if I had to do other work to support it. As for a comfort career or at least a "safer" route, however, I'd like to create 3D art and animation and then go into the video game industry.

After graduating, I plan on working for a bit, saving up, and then pushing my education further.

The best thing I learned at Three Rivers was that, in art, you need to put yourself out there and learn to keep an open mind. In terms of learning, it's good to leave yourself vulnerable and have room for ideas you haven't thought of.

Overall, don't take yourself too seriously. Always be loose with your art; be loose with people. "Being so focused on the fine details from the start, you won't get anywhere."

You can learn a lot for free. For people that want to learn art: Just practice, just do it. just draw anything that you see or anything you think and then get it critiqued.

Make way too much art all the time.



"Manic" • Acrylic • 2' x 4'

## Ian Thompson

ライティング



"Lightning" • Mixed Media Collage • 16" x 20" • 2019

### Artist's Commentary

This is the first installment to the: "My Cat's Going to Die (of old age)" Series.

This is a more violent portrayal, showing the death itself. Most of the elements came from the Suda 51 game: Killer 7. During this time period, I was playing a lot of Suda 51 games.

### Artist's Commentary

This is the second in the series. Named after my cat, this highlights how he's getting old and will pass away in a year or two.

Originally, I wanted to have 3 figures in the scene. The other two would have been a berzoi and a pitbull.



"Pootin" • Acrylic • 16" x 20" • 2019



# Spotlight



“Jungle Warrior” • Acrylic

## Johnathan Witherly III, 24

I enjoyed my time at Three Rivers and liked the art program. Over the last two semesters, it had just been the most fun I've had in a while. At the start of those semesters, my old friends had graduated, but then I took 2D design and became friends with everyone in the class. These new friends were in all his classes since then. It felt like one long party, with something always going on and friends always around. Especially now that I'm at Eastern and having talked with the professors and students here, they're saying that the art program at Three Rivers was way more welcoming compared to the other ones in larger schools.

People were saying that critiques they went to were exceptionally aggressive and were just tearing people down. Three Rivers was the opposite. They were all kind and supportive of each other, and that critiques were incredibly positive. We were all about bringing each other up. Everyone is open and honest about everything. This is partially because Three Rivers is a community college. We are all part of the community, working closely together. It's not like we're in a class with 50 people, instead we're in smaller classes so we get to bond with each other on a more personal basis. With these bigger classes in other colleges, critique is more about the technical aspect of the piece rather than the person behind the artwork. Because of these smaller classes, we realize when another classmate puts a significant amount of personal detail on a piece, we should be kind and respectful. Overall, all the critiques are very uplifting, you never leave a critique and feel awful.

I advise others to definitely join the art club if you have time to spare. There's a lot of good people in there, and they're extraordinarily welcoming. Even if you're not an artist, it is still worth it.



“Raven” • Acrylic

### Artist's Commentary

This painting is based off of Edgar Allen Poe's, *The Raven*. This took the most time and effort I've ever put into a piece.

For this assignment, I needed to implement a poem & text. It also had to be based on time. In one window, all the leaves were falling off, while on the other window; green and partially fall colored leaves with a tombstone to signify the passage of time over a year.

Originally, the tree on the left was going to have the wife with it in the background. It was cut since there was already a good amount of work already. I spent a lot of time with the raven. I went over it with all black, then all blue, and then all grey.

Fine Arts

“Winter Night” • Acrylic • 24" x 30"

### Artist's Commentary

It's twice the size of literally any other painting I did.

I started this before quarantine. Once quarantine did start, I wasn't able to get any feedback from anyone on the piece. I had to assume I was doing ok, but doing this felt awful. Overall, though, especially since I didn't have any advice, I was amazed it came out this well.

I was going for a Northern Lights type of deal. I just wanted to see if could get a blended type of look, but then I just got that blue swirl. I was like “well I can't really go back, so I guess I'll just add some purple to this and call it a day.”

At the time, there were a lot of news articles about the waste in the ocean and global warming. I figured I could do a polar type of piece because everyone was talking about it.





# Johnathan Witherly III



“Interesting Owl” • Acrylic

## Artist's Commentary

I'm not good at naming stuff.

I wanted to experiment with new things so I just went at it with different brushes and colors. In the end, I got this weird trippy thing.

My friend Ariana Bradley told me the face at the top left looks like me when she annoys me all day.

## Artist's Commentary

One day I was just rummaging through my house looking for random objects to feature in the piece. I didn't have time before submitting to add value to the tree branch, therefore it's this flesh color.

If I were to go back to this piece, I would add more highlights and push the values of the bird and bottle cap hat. I would add more texture to the background branch as well.



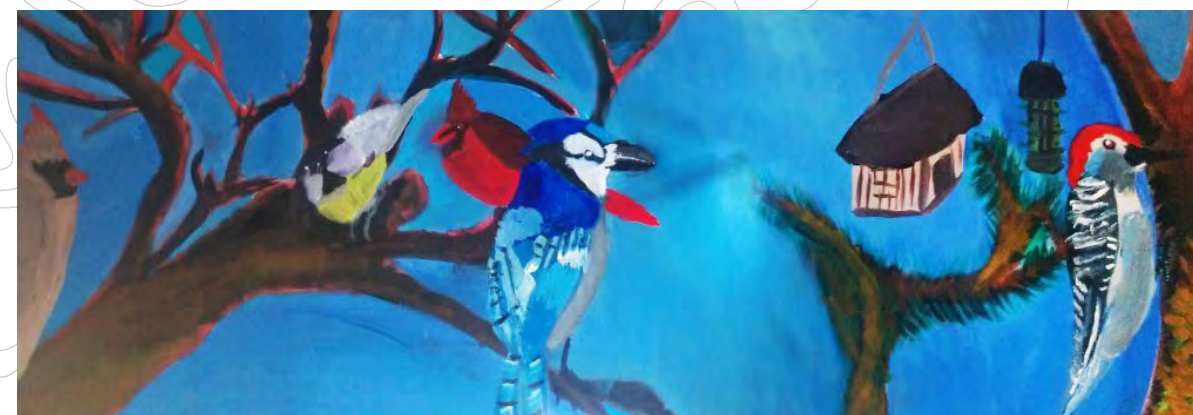
“The King” • Acrylic



“Jungle Warrior” • Acrylic

## Artist's Commentary

I'm most proud of the waterfall and the rippling effect. The bushes were a struggle. I'd make them detailed and then go in to blend them into the background more, but then would blend them too much. Either they stood out too much or blended into the background too much.



“The Backyard View” • Acrylic • 36" x 12"

## Artist's Commentary

The theme of this was backyard bird view. I was focusing on the texture of the trees and was trying to make as many birds as possible. Most of the painting was from my mind. I pulled up a few photos of tree branches and just started going at it. I just wanted to see where it'd go. Overall, it's an aesthetically pleasing piece and I actually have it hanging over my kitchen.



# Digital Art



# Spotlight



*"Caramel Crunchies Cereal Box Design"* • Adobe: Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign  
Front and Back Cover: 8" x 12" • Side Panels - 1.75" x 12" • 2019

## Sarah Walsh

For me, art is a form of storytelling. When I was a kid, I used to draw my favorite characters and cut them out of a sheet of paper to play with, and I would draw to illustrate books I wrote, or stories I played. I continued illustrating through high school and decided, once I graduated, that I wanted to become a lot better at it. So, I went to Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts, then transferred to Paier College of Art, where I got my Bachelor's in Illustration. After working freelance for a year, I decided to learn graphic design and started the graphic design program at Three Rivers last fall. My goal in designing and illustrating is always to tell a story of some kind.



# Kimberlin Stanford

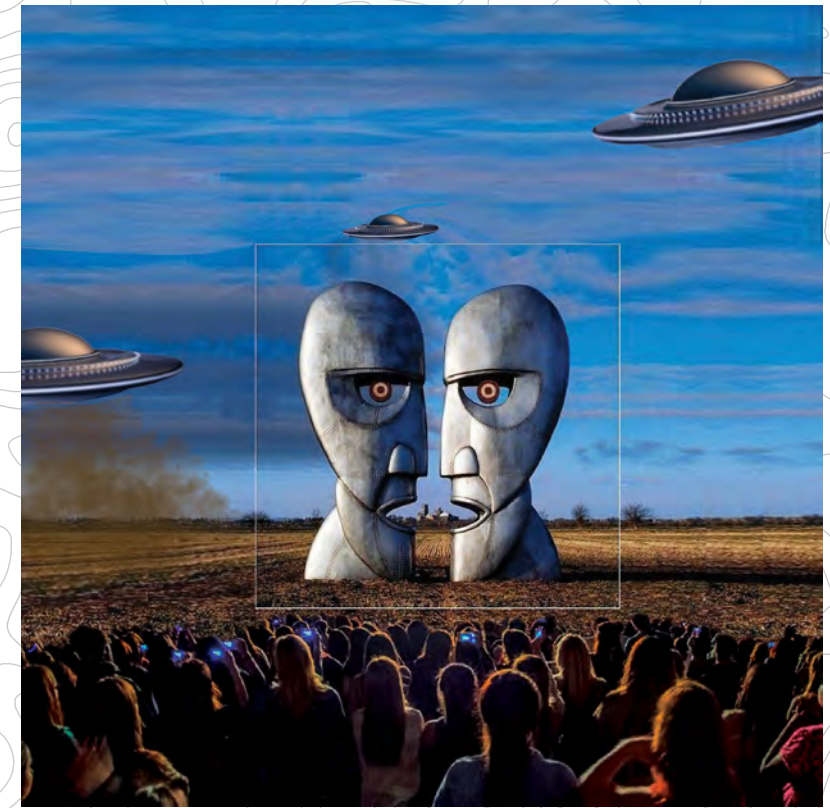


*"Clean Car"* • Multiplicity • 11" x 8.5" • 300 dpi • 2019



The Lowl has been spotted at Mohegan Park

*"The Lowl"* • New Species • 11" x 8.5" • 300 dpi • 2019



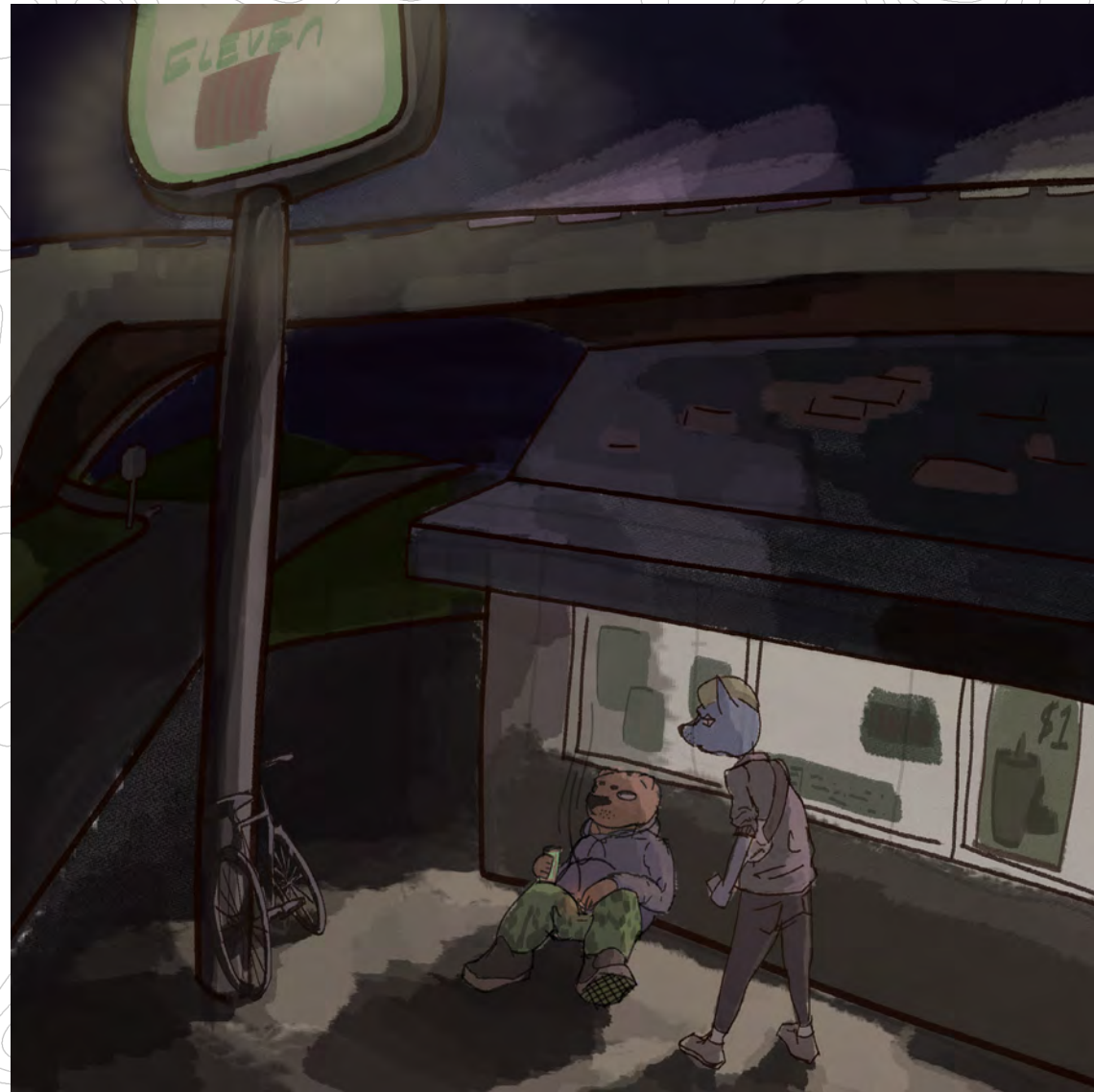
*"Expanded Album: Pink Floyd's 'The Division Bell'"*  
5" x 5" • 300 dpi • 2019



*"Expanded Album: Rick James 'Bustin' Out of L Seven"*  
5" x 5" • 300 dpi • 2019



# Ian Thompson



“OG” • 2000 pxl x 2000 pxl • Clip Studio • 2020

## Artist's Commentary

In a technical sense, this piece feels a little outdated. I feel like I've pushed the style further over the past year.

In terms of emotional impact, this piece means a lot to me. Both the scene and the title goes out to my buddy who passed away recently. The scene is in Downtown Montville. I'm portrayed as a cat, while my friend as a bear. It showcases teenage youth, but washed out. Nostalgia often makes things look way better than they actually were.

This piece helped with the grieving.



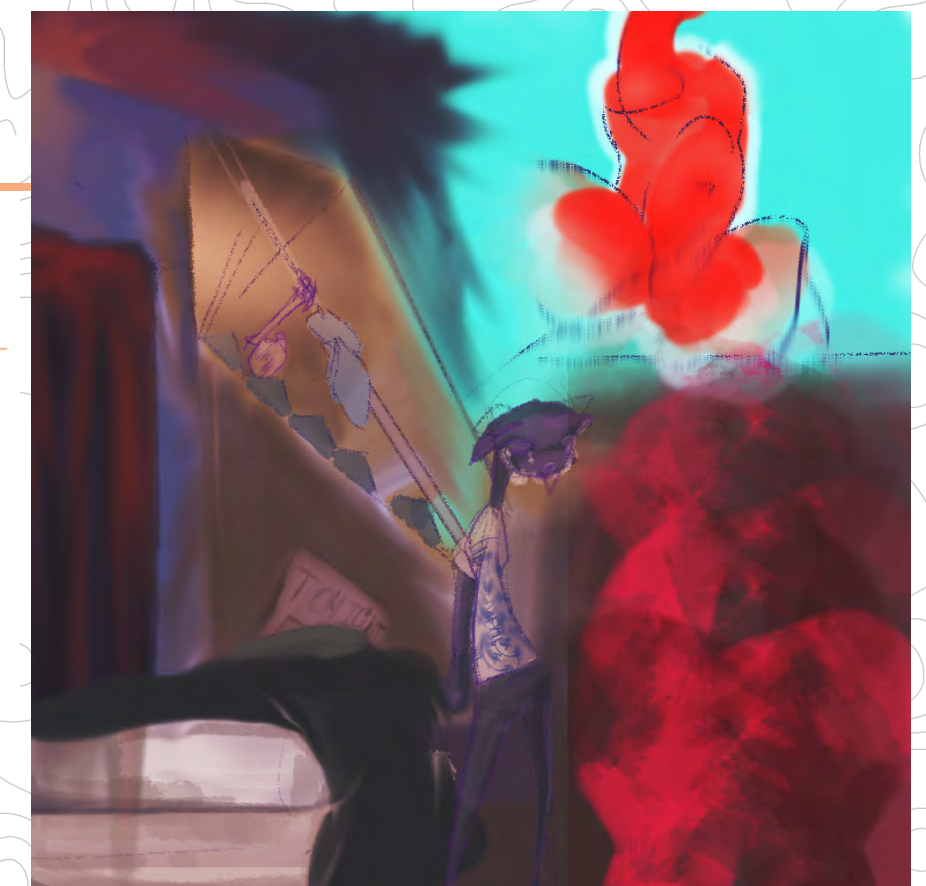
“Self-Portrait” • 1000 pxl x 893 pxl • Clip Studio • 2020

## Artist's Commentary

This is what I call "Vent Art".

That's me in the center and elements of the world surrounding me. The top right corner showcases sexuality with the harsh contrasting colors.

I was trying to push towards abstraction. This was challenging because it was tough to create something interesting by the medium and not by the subject.



“Untitled” • 1000 pxl x 1000 pxl • Clip Studio • 2020

## Artist's Commentary

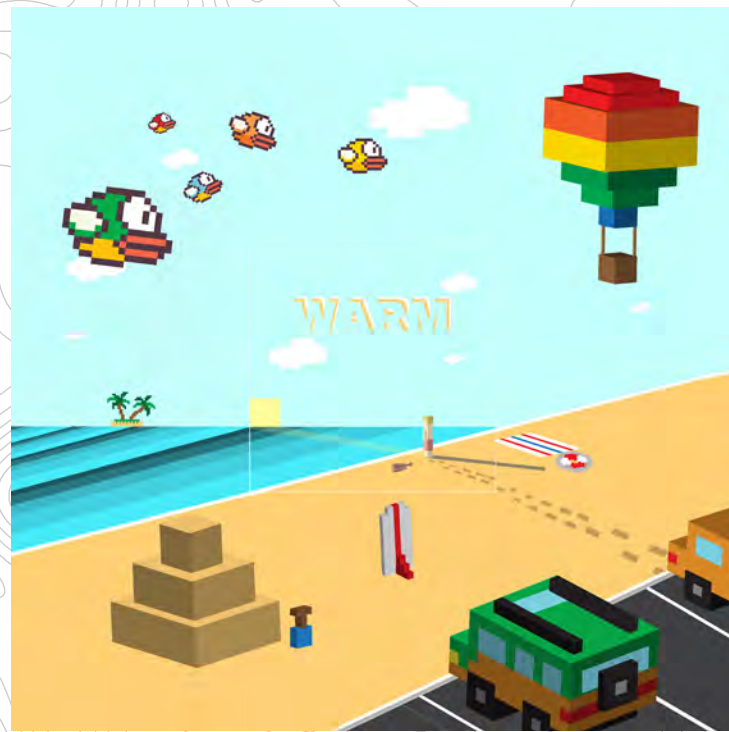
This was how I see myself as an individual. The piece depicts a subject who is free to do as they please, talks with anyone, flirts with anyone, does what he wants. A feminine presentation but with masculine features.

Regarding the words, conspicuous means: in a clearly visible way, overtly open.

So theres a bit of humor to the oximoron presented.



# Joseph Victorino



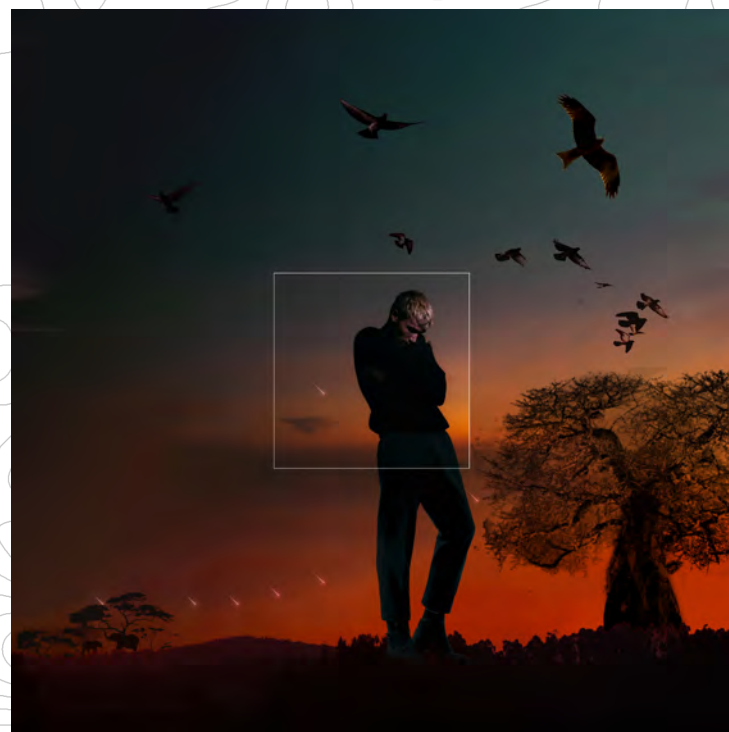
*"Expanded Album: Forrest. 'Warm'"*  
Illustrator • 5" x 5" • 2020



*"Expanded Album: From Indian Lakes 'Dimly Lit'"*  
Illustrator • 5" x 5" • 2020



*"Spring 2020 Video Game Club Flyer"*  
Illustrator • 17" x 11" • 2020



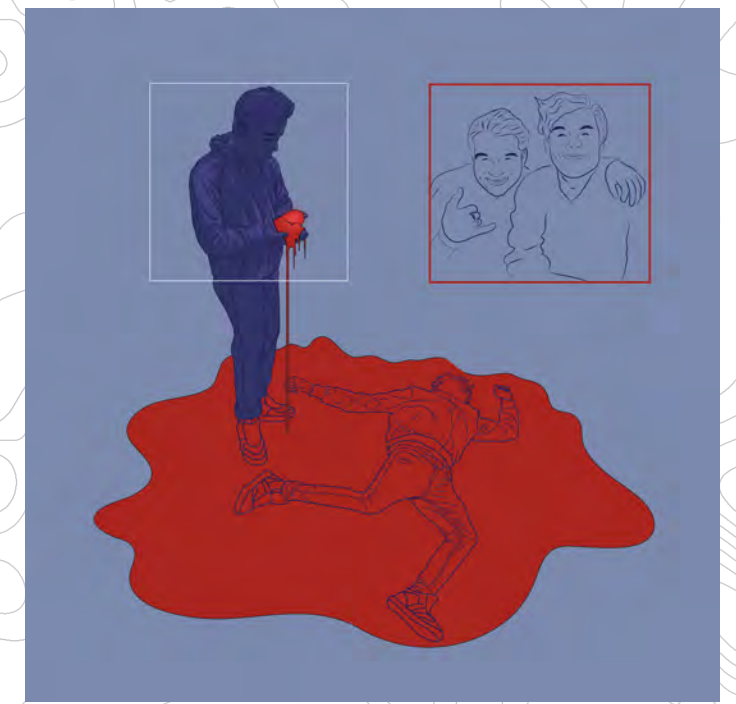
*"Expanded Album: Jeremy Zucker 'L.I.N.D.'"*  
Photoshop • 5" x 5" • 2020



*"Expanded Album: Khai Dreams 'In Love'"*  
Illustrator • 5" x 5" • 2020



*"Album Recreation: RKS 'How to: Friend, Love, Freefall'"*  
Illustrator • 5.5" x 5.5" • 2020



*"Expanded Album: Verzache. 'Losing my Love'"*  
Illustrator • 5" x 5" • 2020



*"Death Wish Coffee Ad Poster"*  
Illustrator & InDesign • 8.5" x 11" • 2020

Digital Arts





“Caramel Crunchies Cereal Box Design” • Adobe: Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign  
 Front and Back Cover: 8" x 12" • Side Panels - 1.75" x 12" • 2019



“Caramel Crunchies Cereal Box Design” • Adobe: Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign  
 Front and Back Cover: 8" x 12" • Side Panels - 1.75" x 12" • 2019



# Photography



*Kevin Amenta*



*“Abbey of the Genesee”* • Piffard, NY



*“Letchworth State Park”* • Middle Falls, NY

Photography



# Kevin Amenta

## Photography



*"American Flag"* • West Hartford, CT



*"Firepit"* • Livonia, NY



*"American Flag"* • 2020



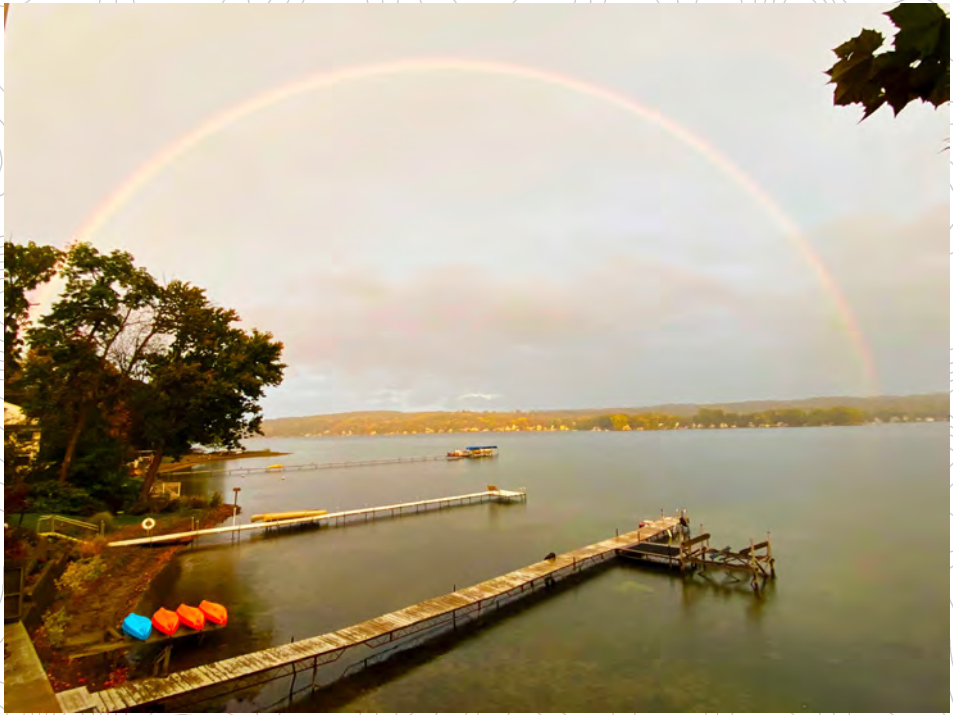
Middletown, CT



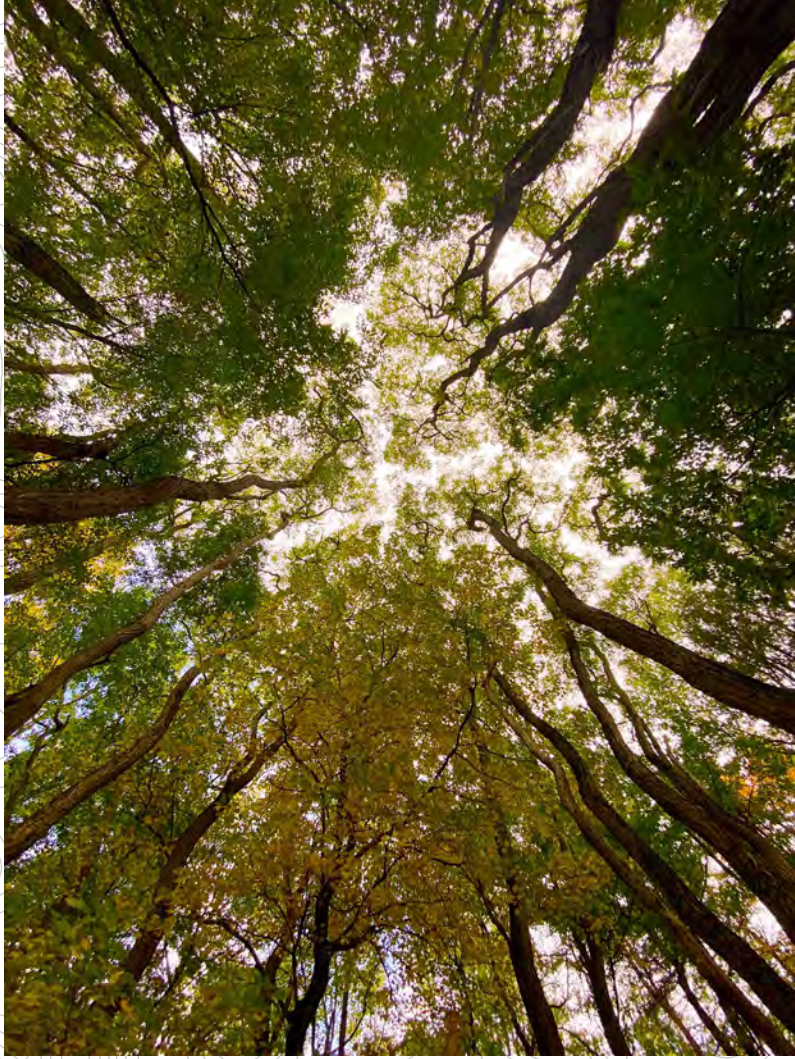
# Kevin Amenta



*"Hawk"* • West Hartford, CT



*"Full Rainbow"* • Conesus Lake, Geneseo, NY



*"Letchworth State Park Forest"* • NY



*"Love chairs"* • Chincoteagur Island, VA



# Kevin Amenta



*"Letchworth State Park" • NY*



*"Sunset" • Geneseo, NY*

# Ilia Burdo



# Photography



# Crystal Foss



*"Malcolm"* • Silver Gelatin Print • 16" x 20"



*"Newport COVID"* • 11" x 17" • 2020

# Marriel Willbanks



*"Ghost By the Water"* • 2020



*"Ivy Covered Building"* • 2020



# *Mariel Willbanks*



*"Glowing Clock" • 2020*



*"Main Street at Night" • 2020*



*"Autumn Harvest" • 2020*



*"Night-Lit Flowers" • 2020*



# Mariel Willbanks



*"Church Windows at Night" • 2020*



*"Car Outline in Light" • 2020*



*"Rainy Evening Street" • 2020*

*"Ivy Covered Building" • 2020*



# Photography



# Literature



*Lilia Burdo*

## For All To See

*Poem - Oct, 2019*

When I think of you,  
I envision the night,  
Vast and dark and quiet.  
But you, the glimmering moon, glows  
For all to see.

And as I look at you,  
I see a sunrise.  
Bursts of light,  
Clouds of mystery,  
Colors of only what is pure and good.

And when I'm beside you,  
I see the sun shining,  
The flowers blooming,  
The trees dancing,  
And kids twirling in careless play.

I watch as  
Butterflies flitter and float,  
Dragonflies flutter so freely,  
And hummingbirds fill the air with a sweet melody.

I witness  
Water rippling as rocks are skipped by,  
Waves caressing the sand in a single crash,  
And little ones collecting seashells ever so painstakingly.

*(Continue...)*



## Lilia Burdo

### For All To See (Continued...)

Poem - Oct, 2019

I see  
Glaciers purifying the world around them,  
Mountain ranges expanding toward the heavens,  
And sun peeking through the greenest of leaves in forests.

And as the day begins to slow,  
And the time has come to say farewell,  
The vivid colors disappear,  
The sun sleeps,  
The trees are at ease,  
And children laugh no more.

The butterflies fly away,  
The water stills,  
And hummingbirds hum their last note.

Luckily I know,  
That the moment the day breaks,  
The trees will sway to tranquility and laughter once again.

But until that breakthrough,  
May I close my eyes as you the night sky  
Glimmers for all to see.

## Justin Charron

### En La Madrugada, Nueva York

Written in 2013

En La Madrugada, Nueva York  
Yo y mi espalda niño en la escuela secundaria  
Se utiliza para actuar el tonto  
Funcionar en lugares con las faloperos más sucios  
Rompiéndose la madre y siempre salgo triunfante  
Sabía cuánto parar ir a quedó atrapado o se disparó  
Se utiliza para ir a Nueva York  
Calles es decir  
Es probable se mejor un hijueputa  
Él solía escupir poesía  
Palabra hablada es una ciencia que no lo intente  
Comprobar tu culo como un saqueador en un motín  
Se utiliza para obtener los malos  
Manifestados por la lírica de Cypress Hill  
‘Rieles, bebiendo cervezas rodante  
Salida a...  
En la Madrugada, Nueva York  
Empuje y flujo  
Bob y tejer a través del tráfico, vaya  
“Sólo un niño nada, ¿por qué no me dejan ser”  
Ver el mundo a través de los ojos infectados  
Un arquitecto de la visión, concebido  
Mi último lienzo, el potencial latente liberado

(Continue...)



## En La Madrugada, Nueva York (Continued...)

*Written in 2013*

Auriculares de la bomba de combustible para el cerebro  
Mi pie presionando moverme más allá de la multitud  
Talla de curvas sinuosas, mi caricia ruedas contornos de la calle  
Siente el ritmo de la ciudad  
Pasos Amarillas media truncada por puntos rojos  
Pensamientos verdes tirar precaución vela en la viento  
Beats sintéticos, artificiales, pausa sociológicos  
La fricción causa calor, la temperatura se eleve  
Cortanto a través de los canales de hinchado de los mercados financieros de asesinato  
Mi tribu marcada como objetivos para desfigurar los templos de decadencia corporativa  
Perchas desgastar el granito rostros apachurrados  
Enfrentar mí,  
Tratar de controlarme  
Llámame hijo de Mefistófeles!  
Mi objetivo, por favor!  
La agresión represiva, me empuja  
La redefinición de los usos, conceptos y formas de pensamiento  
Cuestionar las normas y lo que es realmente un pasamanos para.  
Las esculturas del artista abstracto es interpretado como  
...Una etap para mí participar, reordenar y reciclar  
Las cosas que se pensaba demasiado difícil o imposible  
Pisoteó con la mayor facilidad.

## Arado abandonado

*Published in English, 2017*

*Translated, 2019*

Escamas de hierro cortan el roble moteado,  
Asas crujientes atadas con broches de hierro,  
Tierra en barbecho, consumiendo  
Suelo pedregoso gris no apto para agricultura,  
Bien sembrado por retiros glaciales;  
La única fruta que diste  
Amontonados alrededor de su perímetro  
Dividiendo la mía de la de ellos.  
Sin gesto de mano o vecino  
Cuando llegó el momento de reparar  
Con los fuertes vientos invernales  
Que me heló los huesos  
Y me rompió la piel  
Como los frágiles brazos del débil arado.  
Campos de ámbar dan paso a matorrales de zarzas,  
Antes de que tengan la oportunidad de alcanzar el cielo  
Espinas detrás de brotes verdes,  
Adornándolos con coronas a semejanza de Cristo.  
Con cada estación, la tierra recupera su belleza,  
Sanando las cicatrices pastorales.



## The Haunted Highlander

2020

Arlen Campbell hated everything about the Americas. There were too many trees here, and though there were mountains, they weren't like the ones in Scotland. This place wasn't like the Highlands, with its crags and nooks and lochs. The Black Watch, and Arlen, were in the mountains now, but American peaks were carpeted in trees and brush and moss and lichen. America had lakes, but they weren't the same; at least they didn't feel the same with their morning crown of fog and murky waters. Cool, crisp summers seemed a thing of his past, a thing of Scotland, and Arlen didn't know if he'd ever get back home. Even if he survived the attack on Fort Carillon, he doubted his father, the Black Watch, or the British would allow him to cut short his service and leave the Americas.

Arlen swatted a mosquito and wiped his hand clean on the flattened blades of grass beside him, and nudged Mary's shoulder. She was an English girl, a member of the seventy or so women who kept camp for Abercrombie's men. With her parents dead and her uncle serving the crown, she and her aunt followed the army to cook and clean.

Arlen had grown up listening to Duncan's stories. Fables of fighting in Flanders, tales of honor and rank doled out by the English when the Black Watch was formed following the devastation at Culloden, ballads of redemption like the story of Arlen's Uncle James who left the Campbell hearth to swear allegiance to the Jacobites. To Uncle James they numbered those hopeful men and women, loyal to Scotland, who fought and bled and died for a free Scotland, whose bones never left Culloden, the final and fateful battle where they stood against an empire. To Duncan, those fallen Scots were traitors to the Hanoverian crown.

Mary stirred, and turned to reach for Arlen, though her closed-eye grab missed and her hand slapped his elbow because he'd already sat up. "Is it morning already?" she asked. One eyelid opened to reveal pale blue, and the other followed. The curve of her cheek reminded Arlen of the curve of her hip. He reached out to cup her face.

"Dawn. And the mosquitoes are eating me alive."

"Told you they'd be bad in the mountains. The sooner we get to Ticonderoga, the better."

Arlen felt the heat and humidity shiver out of the air, and he grabbed his tartan to pull it over his bare chest and shoulders.

For the last five years, the word Ticonderoga had held special meaning in the Campbell clan. Family, not clan. Since Culloden, the British had outlawed the usage of the word clan in the Highlands. Since Culloden, the Campbells had become a family even though they were ruled under the same kinship patriarchy, the same oath of blood, the same expectations and traditions even if they'd sided with the English. Since Culloden, everything had changed but at the same time, at home,

nothing had changed. Major Duncan Campbell, Arlen's father, still held absolute power over Arlen's life, like Arlen served not one, but two despots.

"What'd you say?" he asked.

"The mosquitoes," Mary said, "are always bad here in the summer."

"No, lass, the other part."

"The sooner we get to Ticonderoga, the better. Aren't we taking Fort Carillon? Once we do, we won't have to camp outside anymore."

Arlen told Mary he had to prepare. He told her to go, that no doubt she had cooking to tend to, that her aunt would miss her and think she turned prostitute. Arlen had no intention of paying for Mary's affections, not when they could be won by honeyed words. Beyond the flap of his tent, sunlight grew golden.

The sleepy smile slipped from Mary's face like he'd slapped it off her lips. "Arlen Campbell, you're a rake. A cad." She shoved him and stood, tugged her dress onto her body. Mary ducked out of the tent.

Arlen watched Mary leave. He thought about the way his hands found their way to her curves when they were alone together, the way she'd wrap one leg around him if he squeezed her hips, and the way she trembled when he kissed her there.

Back in Scotland, at Yuletide, Arlen drank in Uncle James's stories of rebellion, of the Jacobites, of buaidh. Uncle James still spoke Gaelic, even though the British outlawed the language. Victory wouldn't have sounded so sweet or so urgent to Arlen in any other tongue. Uncle James whispered his tales in the corner of the manorial hall in the years before his defection was known far and wide.

Two months after Culloden, Uncle James had appeared on Christmas Eve, his kilt mud-caked and torn. Only the bonds of kinship--and the spirit of the season--had warmed Duncan's heart enough to admit his brother.

Shadows shrank along the canvas walls of Arlen's tent, issued to him by the crown he served, the crown he begrudged, the crown he resented. Arlen smoothed his tartan and wondered whether to tell Duncan where they were, whether to tell him they'd reached the place called Ticonderoga. Until now, Arlen had only heard the French name for the fort, Carillon; he didn't doubt Duncan had heard the same.

After refusing to yield under Duncan's command and acquiesce to British rule, Uncle James had disappeared. One year had passed before Duncan and Arlen had learned Uncle James had died, and it was another two before Duncan confided in his son. He'd seen Uncle James' ghost, Duncan had said. Uncle James had warned that Duncan, patriarch and leader of the Campbell family, would fall at a place called Ticonderoga. Arlen had suspected Duncan made up the story to make Uncle James seem even more wicked, disloyal not only to the English throne but also to the Campbell name. Arlen pretended to believe Duncan each time he renewed the story though it changed and



# Margaret McNellis

## *The Haunted Highlander (Continued...)*

shifted like mist. The night of the ghost's appearance darkened with each telling. In one version, Uncle James' ghost was beleaguered by chains that rattled and dragged behind him in silver, ethereal mud. In yet another version, the ghost swung a sword at Duncan, and it ran him through but it could not cut him. No matter which version of the story Duncan told, he was always sober and the warning of Ticonderoga was present. Duncan believed it, Arlen was certain, and would not have come here, to Fort Carillon, to Ticonderoga, if he thought it meant his death.

By the time Arlen relieved himself, washed, and dressed in his philibeg and bonnet, dawn had matured into morning outside his tent. He emerged and tented his shirt to let some air in--not that it helped in the middle of July. His father was already awake, dressed not in his off-duty attire, but instead in his full kilt--the black, green, and blue tartan belted around his waist and over one shoulder and his dirk at his hip.

Duncan bit off a corner of bannock and spoke around the bread in his mouth. "You best be careful, laddie, whom you bed. That Mary is bonnie, aye, but she's beneath your station." A crumb clung to Duncan's lip until the point of his tongue retrieved it.

Arlen hated when his father called him laddie like he was still a boy, though he was now nineteen years old. Even more than that, he hated when his father told him which women he could lust after, love, look at, talk to, or think about.

"Dinnae be a glutton, lad," Duncan warned.

Arlen shoved more bannock into his mouth and pushed it into his cheek.

Duncan shook his head and said Arlen looked like a "damned squirrel." He pissed on the fire and told Arlen to get ready to form up with the rest of the Black Watch. "Abercrombie will be wanting his new fort by sundown. Damned eejit."

Arlen knew it was the moment to tell his father they were marching on Ticonderoga, but the cheekful of bannock glued his mouth shut. Duncan threatened to smack him if Arlen wasn't quick about getting ready, so Arlen took a swig of auld man's milk and retreated into his tent to don his own kilt and take up his musket, bayonet, and broadsword. He also had his own pistol and dirk.

As he stood in line, mustered shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the Black Watch, Arlen felt like he dragged his own personal armory along. Between the weapons and the warmth of his kilt on a sticky summer's day, it wasn't long before he felt a layer of sweat like a second skin between his back and shirt.

The forest was a mess of pine and hickory trees; their branches grew together like interlaced fingers so when Arlen looked up, he could scarce determine where one tree ended and another began. The Black Watch--along with the rest of Abercrombie's men--pressed onward through the trees, high-stepping over new growth and ducking under old. The march felt endless to Arlen, who just wanted to reach the end of the day alive so he could apologize to Mary and welcome her into

his tent again.

Duncan stopped beside him, and Arlen stopped too, all thoughts of Mary and the way she felt in his arms gone.

"Did you see that, laddie?"

"See what?"

"Thought I saw...thought I saw my brother. A man who looked just like him."

Arlen furrowed his brow. His father knew every man in the Black Watch. If any one of them looked like Uncle James, Duncan would have expelled him from their regimental company without delay. Arlen squinted through the trees, but saw nothing but more trees. Again, Arlen wondered if he should tell his father where they were headed, what the Indians called it, what Mary had said.

"Dinnae you feel it, lad," Duncan said. "The way the hairs on your neck stand up, the chills across your shoulders. Dinnae you feel the icy water down your neck?" Duncan's face was drawn and pale, his beady eyes wide.

In all the times Duncan had talked about his brother's ghost, he'd never asked Arlen if he believed in the vision, in the warning about Ticonderoga. In all the times Duncan had recounted the story of Uncle James' ghost visiting the hall on a rainy night, he'd never looked so scared or uncertain. In the last two years Arlen had spent hating Duncan, he'd never once felt bad for him, but now, in the face of Duncan's fear, Arlen felt like he'd swallowed a rock. It sat cold and hard in his stomach, weighed him down, rooted him. He didn't see a ghost, but Duncan believed Uncle James haunted the trees around them.

"Why?" Duncan asked. "Why has he come here?"

"The Indians call it Ticonderoga." The words slid between Arlen's teeth and lips before he could stop them.

Duncan whipped around. His face was pale, his eyes sunken. To Arlen, it looked as though his father had aged years in the last moment. "When did you hear that?"

"This morning. From Mary."

Duncan pulled his arm back and before Arlen could think to dodge or deflect the blow, he felt a hot crack across his cheek.

"You should have told me." Duncan clenched his fist around Arlen's kilt. "You want me to die? Are you so eager to inherit, you useless Jacobite?"

Arlen's head throbbed. His vision blurred. The trunks and branches of trees swam and melted together. Arlen pulled his own fist back. He felt the tips of his fingers chomp into the meat of his own palm. The punch was cannonfire. Arlen's knuckles crashed into his father's cheek bone. Duncan reeled. Arlen was free.

Arlen wiped his mouth with his sleeve. A streak of blood stained the cuff. "How long have you been waiting to accuse me of treason?"

Some of the men around them marched onward though they almost missed a step; others

(Continue...)



# Margaret McNellis

*The Haunted Highlander (Continued...)*  
gawked. Some whispered. A few milled around.

Arlen's blood pumped; his breaths were ragged, sharp, like the craggy cliffs of home. "I'd rather be a Jacobite than loyal to the English. To the ones who crushed the Highlanders. You put that black kilt on and pretend like it means something, but you've forsaken our own clan, our tartan, our--"

Duncan raised his fists. "Another word, laddie, and I'll drop you to the ground."

Muskets and bayonets sprawled over the pine-needle carpet. Gregory McTavish, a soldier Arlen knew by name alone for his ability to drink any man under the table, pulled Arlen back, away from Duncan.

"I'd like to see you try," Arlen said. He jumped back this time when his father swung at him again. A wide punch. Easy to dodge. McTavish stepped between them. He held both arms up, palms facing Arlen and Duncan, like he was stopping a carriage to let a herd of sheep cross a road.

Arlen took a deep breath. He stood on his toes to see over McTavish's shoulder. "Not so easy to pummel me now, is it, Duncan?"

Duncan spat at the ground, waved his hand at Arlen, and stooped to collect his own discarded weapons. "Best be on the march in less than a minute or I'll have you flogged for desertion."

McTavish collected Arlen's bayonet and Arlen picked up his musket. He walked next to his father because that was his place. McTavish started to speak but Arlen told him to "shut his gob, what would a drunkard know about it anyway?" McTavish muttered something under his breath and hurried to catch up to his line.

By the time the Black Watch reached the lands surrounding the fort, many of the men stopped to talk amongst themselves. The French weren't cozy behind the walls. They had cleared the land and dug ditches. Sharpened pikes protected those ditches.

The sun was almost at its zenith. By this time tomorrow, Arlen thought, his father might be dead. If Arlen lived, maybe he would be free after all. In the face of Abercrombie's ineptitude, Arlen's post-war plans seemed brighter. He imagined making the portage over the La Chute again, back to Lake George, then another portage to sail down the Hudson. From New York, he'd leave. He'd leave the Black Watch. He'd leave the Americas. If his father died, Arlen would be the head of the Campbell clan--no, he thought, family--and then he could do as he pleased.

"Damned eejit," Duncan said, "is going to lose this battle. The French may as well have ten thousand men in their trenches."

The battle began with wave after wave of English. They threw themselves at the French lines. Arlen watched one man try to leap over his fellow soldier. A pike caught him in the stomach. His scream melted into the cacophony, but Arlen could see it on his face. The impaled soldier tried to hold the pike with both hands. He slid down it anyway. His wound painted the pike crimson.

The Black Watch waited in reserve. Guns fired. Musket smoke filled the ditches until Arlen couldn't see anything. He just heard screaming. Shots. Men wailed. They cried out. Line after line. Arlen's stomach tossed. He swallowed down bitter bile. It seared his throat. The acrid gunsmoke odor charged up his nose. It mixed with the smells of death: blood, vomit, urine, and offal.

"If I'd known the Indians call this place Ticonderoga," Duncan said, "I would not have brought us here."

"Yes you would have," Arlen said. "You'd do anything the English wanted."

"I only ever wanted the best for you. All of this is for you, Arlen."

Arlen would have rather run into battle than to hear his father utter those words. "Fine way of expressing as much, forcing me to join the Black Watch."

"You're a stubborn arse sometimes, Arlen. But you could be so much more. It's no treason to side with the English."

"Have you forgotten what they did to the Highlanders? What they might have done to Uncle James?"

Duncan leaned closer. "If you have your wits, you'll not mention him again."

Arlen thought at first Duncan's refusal to hear about his brother was because they were in such close proximity to the English. Discussing a known Jacobite a mere decade after the last--albeit failed--rebellion could put the Campbell lineage at risk. But the pallor of Duncan's face, and his pin-sized pupils, convinced Arlen his father thought the mention of Uncle James could conjure the ghost.

"The English may lose this battle," he said, "but as with the rebellion you're so fond of, they'll win the war. You're a fool to want to side with anyone else, and I'll not have a damned fool for a son."

Arlen threw down his musket and unpinned his own Black Watch tartan from his shoulder. "Refusing to die for the English wouldn't mean siding with someone else."

"It'd be as good as. It's treason."

"I'm no traitor."

"Then," Duncan bent to retrieve Arlen's musket and pressed it into Arlen's chest, "get ready to fight and fight hard. For England. For Scotland. If not for me, then for the other men of the Black Watch."

Arlen looked from one furrowed brow to another. The men around him clasped their weapons in white-knuckled grips. Their jaws were set. Some of them, he knew, were from clans who had fought in Culloden. Arlen began to march, shoulder-to-shoulder with his father. The Black Watch marched into battle, and didn't stop until they'd reached the first line of fallen men. To Arlen, they looked like the branches above, limbs intertwined and locked together so he couldn't see where one soldier began and another ended. He swallowed more bile.

"Prime and load!" Duncan called.

(Continued...)



# Margaret McNellis

## *The Haunted Highlander (Continued...)*

Arlen made the quarter turn to the right without thought. He readied to prime his musket. Duncan called out the next order and Arlen drew a cartridge. He placed it between his teeth. Arlen bit the paper off and spit it onto the ground.

The French fired. Someone behind Arlen fell. He felt their body hit the back of his leg. His knee buckled, but he didn't fall. After Duncan's next order, he pulled the hammer back. Arlen focused on the priming pan and poured some black powder in. He closed the frizzen.

"About!" Duncan called. His voice cracked.

Arlen poured the rest of the powder into the muzzle. Then went the ball and the wadding. He drew the ramrod and tamped it down. Soon it would be time to shoot. He still couldn't see the French, but he could hear them start to call their next round. Arlen had never devoted much time to his languages, so he didn't know how soon the entrenched French would shoot again. He only knew he wanted to fire first.

Duncan called for them to present. Arlen braced the butt of the musket against his shoulder. He cocked the weapon. He waited and held his breath.

"Fire!" Duncan's voice didn't crack this time.

Arlen's shot cracked. He felt the butt push into his shoulder. Around him, he heard a staccato of musket fire. The smoke thickened. Duncan grabbed his shoulder and squeezed.

In that gesture, Arlen understood. He understood Duncan had been powerless against the English. The crown had demanded his loyalty or his lands, and Arlen had only been a lad. The French fired again. More smoke. More screams. More fallen soldiers. Duncan called a charge.

Bayonet ready, Arlen pumped his legs. Shouts and screams battered his ears. He dropped to the ground when smoke erupted again from the French lines. He heard a squelch behind him and a man fell across his calf. Arlen scrambled. He pulled his leg free from the dead or dying man. He saw red splotches on his Black Watch tartan. Someone pulled Arlen to his feet: it was Duncan.

Bodies formed hurdles and the musket smoke obscured the men in front of him. Another round of fire. Arlen stumbled. Heat seared into his side, under his ribs. For a moment, Arlen couldn't breathe. Duncan grabbed the front of Arlen's tunic. He pulled him toward the pikes. Arlen could see their sharpened points, above the smoke, like they impaled that too. Another round. Another explosion of smoke. Duncan reeled toward Arlen. Half his face was gone.

When Arlen was a small boy, Duncan and James used to take him out into the wild for a month every July. They'd teach him how to fish in Loch Awe and hunt in the surrounding forests. Duncan was gored by a bore and almost died. Uncle James had saved Duncan's life--and his leg--by stemming the blood flow with his own tartan of blue and spring green, tied around Duncan's wound, then carried Duncan home while Arlen led the packhorse that carried the boar meat. Uncle James had soothed Arlen by telling him if Duncan died, he'd go to a better place, to Heaven, with

the angels and the Lord, and Duncan would be at peace. That was the only summer their trip was cut short. Duncan had told Arlen *tha gaol agam ort*--he loved him--his son, heir to the Campbell clan. He'd not said those words to Arlen again.

No tartan could save Major Duncan Campbell now. Arlen's legs went out from under his body, and he pulled his father across his lap. He cradled what was left of Duncan's head, and straightened his bonnet. He closed the one eyelid his father still had and leaned back against the dirt mound of the trench. Around him, men of the Black Watch charged and fell, charged and fell, screamed and wailed.

Arlen's side still hurt, but it felt like a distant pain. Like an old injury he only remembered, the agony distilled. He heard his own ragged breathing.

Through the chaos, the running bodies, the plumes of smoke from musket fire or hell fire--Arlen wasn't sure anymore--he saw a man bathed in silver light. The man drew closer. Arlen blinked when the silver man walked through another soldier. The closer he got, the better Arlen could see him: his build, his philibeg and bonnet, his beard, his face. It was Uncle James. Arlen could see the fight rage around the ghost, through the ghost. He couldn't look away from the ghost.

"You're not here," Arlen whispered. "You're not real."

The apparition lowered himself to one knee and placed a hand over Duncan's heart. Then his eyes, somehow empty and at the same time full, locked on Arlen. "Shh, laddie," Uncle James said. "He's in a better place now. You weren't supposed to come here." The ghost grew fainter.

"Don't go," Arlen said.

Uncle James' spirit smiled. The battle was vivid again. Arlen was alone with his father's corpse and the others who fell around him. They thudded to the ground. Arlen's chest felt heavy. He couldn't take a deep breath. Pins and needles in his lips, the tip of his nose, his forehead, his fingers, his feet. Arlen peeled back his tartan. Underneath, his white cotton shirt was drenched with sweat and blood. The blood continued to bloom. The fabric wicked red. Arlen whimpered and tried to press the wound closed.

The pain felt new again. He screamed and writhed and felt like there were soldiers with tiny bayonets and pikes inside his throat. Raw from yelling, raw from bile, raw from smoke. The wound bled faster. His heart thrummed. Then dragged. He willed it to beat, willed his lungs to fill with air. Arlen's vision narrowed. His mouth moved. He thought he called for his father. Above him, through the thinning smoke, Arlen traced the trees. Their leaves, their branches, intertwined like fingers in prayer, like fan vaults on the ceiling of Gloucester Cathedral, like the sky itself, domed over Loch Awe in Argyll, his Scotland.



