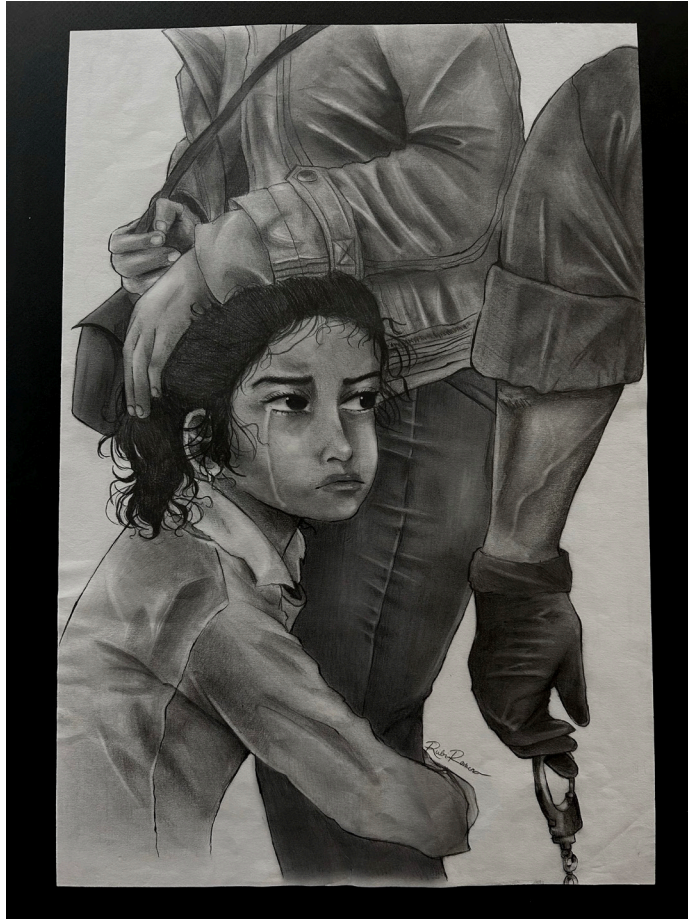


The Stone Circle

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Rubi Romero

Fear

McLennan Community College
Journal of Literary and Visual Art

The Stone Circle is a semiannual literary and visual art journal published every fall and spring by McLennan Community College (MCC) in Waco, Texas. Visit www.mclennan.edu/stone-circle/ to read previous issues of our magazine, contact an editor, and find information about submission guidelines, writing contests, and events.

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Cover Art: Rubi Romero, "Fear," First Prize (Visual Art)

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Coahuilteco

by Maria Fernanda Cabendez

First Prize - Poetry

We wear our pride in different ways.
You have your flag,
and I hold her hand.
Your beliefs persecute us,
But in each other we hold our faith.
Despite the Bible Belt, we still remain.
One state under God with Our love indivisible.
That southern drawl that grips my soul.
Our queer love is judged where we are from,
But through them all you sway my heart.
South of the border I was scared.
Came to the reddest state,
And I found you there.
Where I am from, my love is rare queer.
Never did I think I would be.

Wake Up

by Carolina McNeill

Second Prize - Poetry

Here we stand on opposing sides once again.
How I wish you would wake up from your rage-fueled rampage
And see the truth and what harm you've caused!

We were once brothers,
But now we are enemies who are in war-torn territories,
Fighting for eons with no winners,
Only fallen brethren and soldiers.

Was it worth it?
Was destroying our home, brothers, and sisters worth it?
All so you could try proving that we should follow you
And your broken ways?

You will never win.
You will never be satisfied.
Yet I still hope for you to join me one day...
In there, it's still you - it's always been you.

Wake up.

I Have Time, I Swear

by Landon Cox

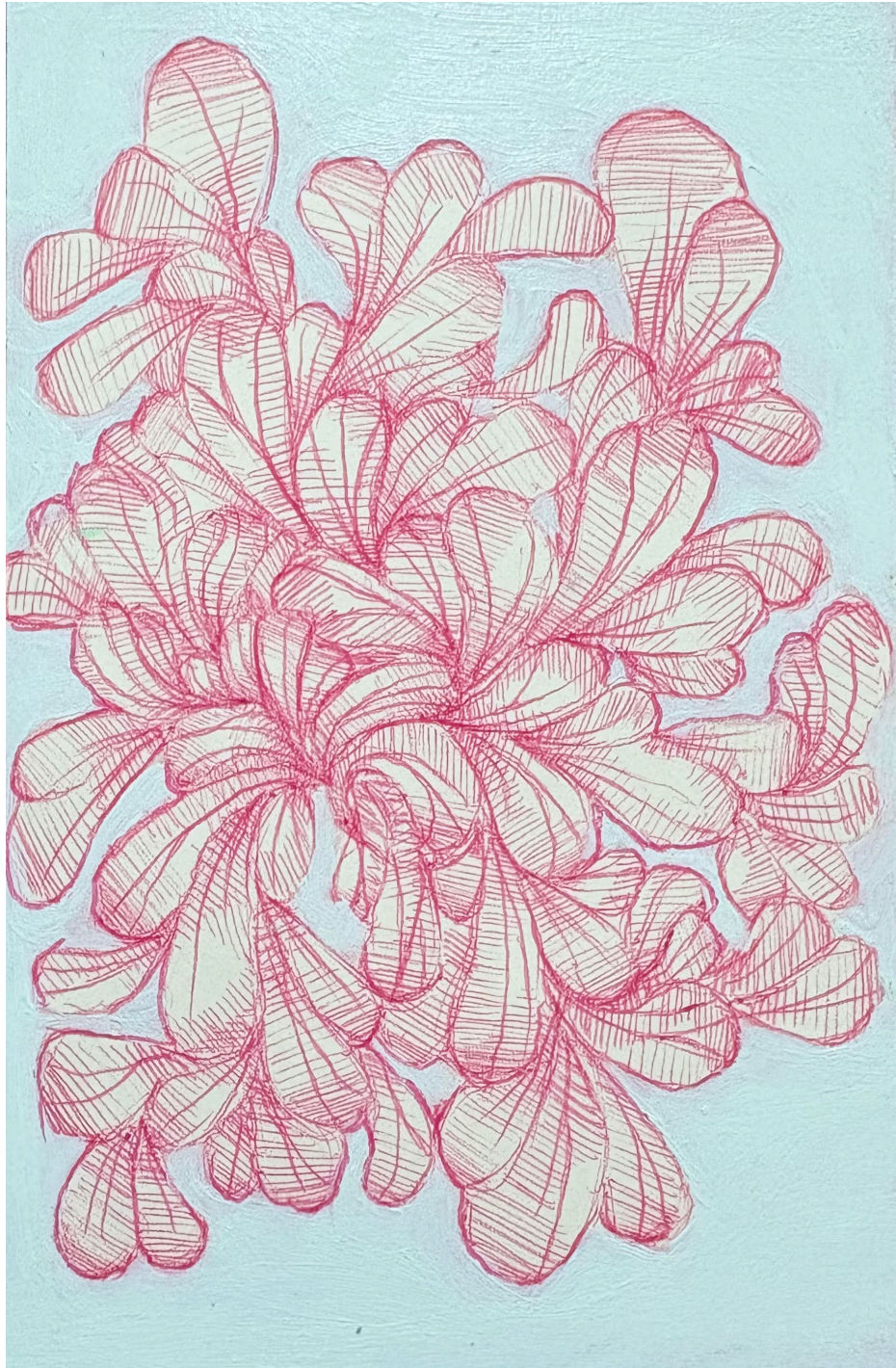
Third Prize - Poetry

My list of to-dos is quite long,
Perhaps long enough for a song.
But wait, what's that?
Did you want to chat?
A detour won't steer me too wrong.

A movie, a book, or a game—
My bandwidth is open to claim.
A minute or two,
And then I am through.
They're worth it; I'm hardly to blame.

The sun outside has retreated.
Nothing has yet been completed.
I'll just bring to bear
Raw order, I swear!
This clock is not yet depleted.

To sleep, though, should not be a crime.
It's morning when I'm at my prime!
So, after a rest,
I'll be at my best,
And surely, there's plenty of time.



River Ward

Abstraction



Catherine Bolin

A Dog's Purpose



Maranda Jane

Quiet Mornings

The Murder at Campus

by Amara Burghard

Rough, Raw breeze blew
Auburn autumn leaves
Grave, gray ground

The chill of the air
In mid-late October,
Foreshadows weather soon unfair:
Leaden, overcast sky.
Students' souls sober,
The bold black birds cry.

Swooping, sailing
On swells of wind,
Onyx feathers unailing
Omens of death
Tear through skin
The flying creatures of theft.

The tricksters gather 'round
On laurel green grass and pavement,
Hopping over campus grounds,
Perching on lights, in trees,
Few places perpetually left vacant.
None know what one foresees.

Dismal, dark shadows stretched
Fatal Fall's earth
Midnight, maligned murder.



Catherine Bolin
Second Prize - Visual Art

Beyond the Glass



River Ward
Third Prize - Visual Art

Growth

Waiting in the Wilderness

by Amara Burghard

Frostbit fingers fiddle fondly
With infantile flame.
The savior spark shines
In the dreadful, dreary dark.
Here, Hope is hospitable
To the humble heart's hearth.

Hold on, little one.
Hold on a little while.

Cruel, cold, crumbling cabin,
Surrounded by shimmering, slushy snow.
The simple shelter, a shield of safety.
Cedar scents cement themselves in the scene,
Covering like a comforting quilt,
Consoling a quaking kid.

Do not abandon hope in this hardship.
Do not forsake the flame.
Do not stand in sardonic sleet
Lest a savior-someone shows and saves.

Keep waiting, little one.
Keep waiting.
Time ticks on.
Hold tightly to hope.
Enfold the fragile flame.

Your hero is heading your way,
Hiking through harsh highlands,
Hoping to hold you close.

Hold on, little one.
Hold on a little longer

Keep waiting, keep watching
Keep hearing, keep holding to hope.

Your Hero is here to take you home.



Allan Paz

The Vaine

Forever in a Moment

by Logan Williams

Late-night talks, when the world feels right.
You whisper in my dreams; I chase them in flight.
With every secret, we build something light.

Lost in the dance, making magic with every glance.
Let's swirl through this night, just you and I.
No need for forever, just a spark and a sigh.

No strings attached, no labels, no ties,
Just you and I, forever entwined.



Amara Burghard

Magnificent Moon Morn

Anything for Him

by Carolina McNeill

Tragedy strikes again.
Once lost, is now found, only to slip away from my tight grasp.

Xylotomous till the very end,
In my heart, mind, and soul,
Callus and unforgiving.

Lovable to me,
Only if he opened his eyes sooner.

Villainous to many, vituperative to me,
Exploitative by nature, though I know why,

It isn't his fault - *never* his fault,
Nobody understands him like I do.
He's broken, *hurt*, in need of someone to depend on,
To depend on *me*.

I love him now, even if he's gone for good,
Even if he treated me like the ground he walked on.
I would still do anything for him.



Catherine Bolin

Hope on the Horizon

An Echo, Not the Sound

by Catherine Bolin

One day,
I wish to adorn stripes
And not remind my mother
Of her dear, old friend,
Emily.

I hope to have a laugh in a pattern all my own,
And not a cackle reminiscent of my father's

I tap my foot
To the beat others have demonstrated for me,
Stumbling along the dance of life.

I am a culmination of others.
I am not my own.



Yuto Goto

Coin for a Laugh



Yuto Goto

Peaceful Horizons



Amara Burghard

Radiant Resin



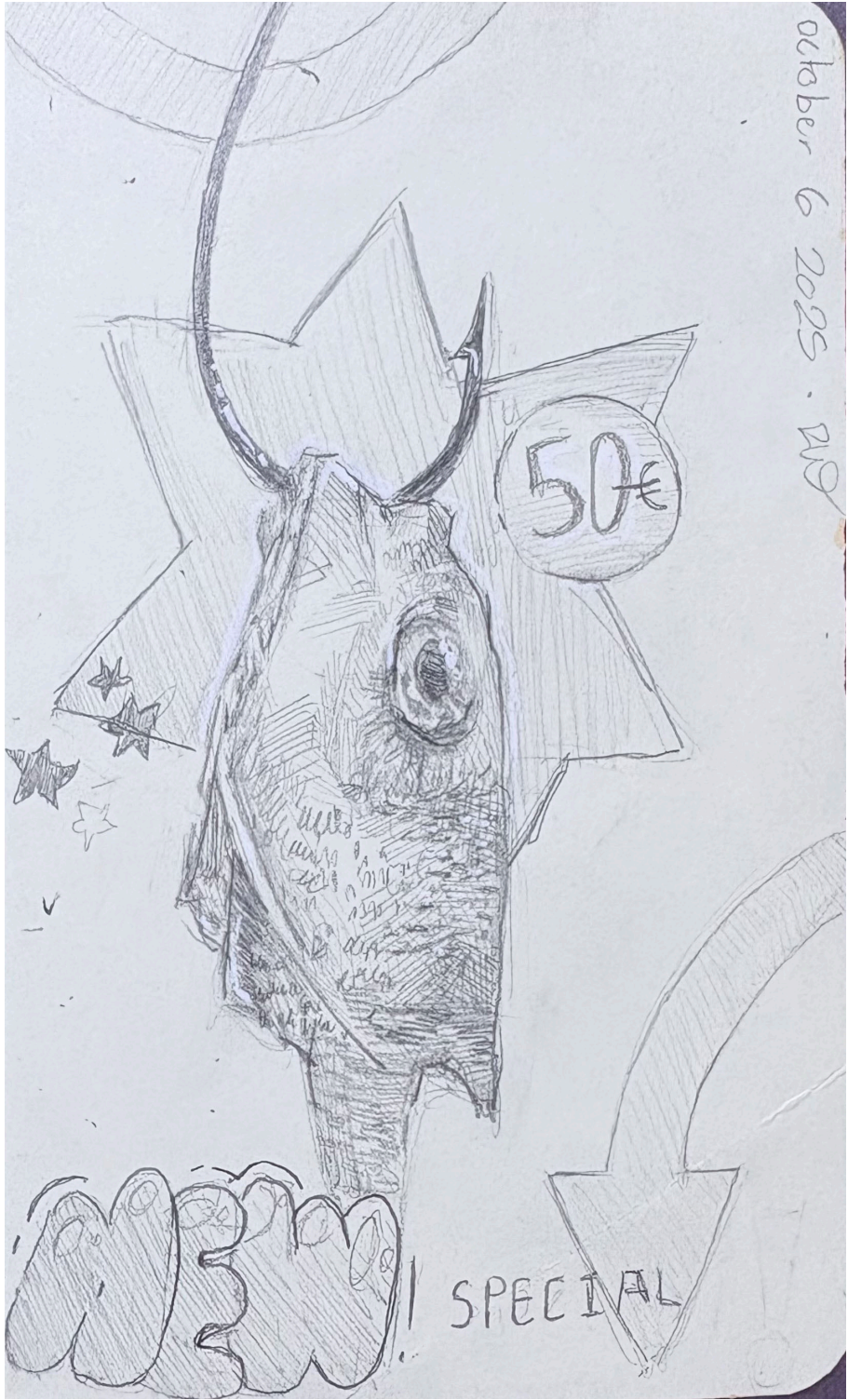
Yuto Goto

Doggy Paddle

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Thank you to all the faculty and staff whose donations to the MCC Foundation make this magazine possible. Without your support, we would not be able to fund our prizes and recognize our students' exceptional talents.



River Ward

Sale



Logan Williams

Westminster Abbey

Submission deadline
for Volume 25, Issue 2 of
The Stone Circle:
March 6th, 2026



Logan Williams

Midnight Counsel