



VOICES
FALL 2012



Voices

Presented by Rock Valley College Journalism 139 students

Voices is produced each fall and spring semester by students enrolled in Journalism 139 under the direction of Professor David Pink, with the help of Instructor Scott Fustin.

Submissions are accepted from current students, alumni, faculty, and staff. All submissions are assessed anonymously, and current student winners in art, prose, photography, and poetry are awarded prizes. Acceptance, publication, and awards are based on artistic quality as perceived by the student editorial staff. The views or opinions expressed in this magazine are those held by the artists and authors.

Current and past issues of *Voices*, submission forms, instructions, and deadlines are available at rvcvoices.com.

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poetry

Dylan

Jennifer Marsh

So I have this plan right....
When I grow up I'm going to marry
Old school 1960's rebel poet Bob Dylan.
With his curly hair and scratchy so annoying it's almost sexy voice.
And we're going to make pretty babies named
River and Rain and he'll write songs about them.

We'll live on a hippie commune and spend our days
Making headbands out of flowers and deciphering the lyrics to American Pie.
And he'll love me....I'll love him
Because that's the way this shit works.
I'll be his muse.

(But I think maybe I'm afraid....)

that eventually this beautiful thing will become boring, as most beautiful things do.
And it will be like that one day he drove her around on Lake Shore drive
And she was staring out of the passenger window in awe
Of the concrete and steel and glass.
And he looked at her...confused... what are you looking at?
Ohhh. Yeah, I forgot...you're not used to seeing it every day.
Yeah. It'll be like that.

Like that day you pull your phone from your pocket and you've lost all your contacts.
And then you realize that you don't actually know anyone's number.
And that will be the irony of my life.
I'll be married to Bob. Fucking. Dylan. And it won't be enough.
That eventually I'll let my guard down
Stop trying so hard
And I'll turn into that awkward girl in the corner
The one that tries to join your conversation but never knows what to say
And Bob Dylan will find somebody more
...
Interesting.

You're Impossible

Rebecca Roman

You're the incarnation of complication,
The connotation of frustration.
I fear it was my inclination to temptation,
My expectation of such sensation
That caused the manifestation of our situation.
There's no limitation to my irritation—
Imagine my devastation at your exclamation!
When you have such interpretation of my every quotation.

It's in this confession of my wanton aggression,
I feel the oppression of our indiscretion
And a depression at the suggestion
That you're in possession of my obsession.
It's my suppression of your transgression
That allows for the redemption of your comprehension
Though I keep my apprehension over your possible rejection.
It's all a reflection of my horrible misdirection.

It Looked Better on Paper

Jacob Sisouk

Award
Winner

Tell me what you're writing down,
with your pen, on your paper, now.

Is there something else you noticed?

Now I'm a whole new diagnosis.

So if the pharmacy, can sell to me,
the sanity, that makes your job so easy,

Prescribe me some scribbles.

Illegible to the kid,

Inside my head.

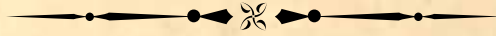
Inner City Hauntings

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Courtney Kendall

At age fifteen, Diandra knew all too well
the frustration that came
when she couldn't get her baby
to stifle its cries for her loving
at two in the morning,
after she'd spent the darkness
at her best friend's house,
putting her nose to too many
countertops, hoping to find her sanity
in a life full of mistakes
and midnight makeout sessions
in the back of his car.

She wishes she could rid herself
of too many demons
floating around in her bloodstream,
making her veins heavy,
and her heart slow.

But when she looks into the mirror
all she can see are the bulletholes in her eyes
left the day she saw her father
writhing in the street,
the blood around his head
a perfect halo
painting the muddled image
of the thug life
he chose at eighteen
as the only way he knew how
to provide for his family
on the streets of Brooklyn
when all he wanted was out
of the rat-infested apartment buildings
and the cigarette cloud
of frequent attempts
at amnesia.



So she cries
to the razor she calls a paintbrush
leaving perfect little designs
Picasso would be proud of
hoping to hide the ghosts that pulse
between the temples
where her goddess
is suffocating
from too much wrong adventure
and not enough breaths
taken in the sunlight.

Last Thursday night,
when she couldn't stifle
the cries from the baby crib
Diandra figured a little whiskey
in the baby bottle never hurt anyone
so she cradled him in her arms
breathed kisses in his formula
and prayed the Lord to keep
him silent while she slept
the afternoon hours away
in regret,
tangled in the blankets
on an adventure only her brain,
high on pixie dust,
could feel between the memories.

Maybe instead of being afraid
of the monsters hiding under the bed
she should worry
about the spirits dwelling
beneath her fingertips
when all she wants is to find peace
at the bottom of her wine glass.

Becoming Realities

—•—•—•—•—•—•—
Teresa Doherty

Across this weary world
Evil has taken might
And so he had to leave her
To fight, one fateful night

Her heart she thought was broken
As she stood and watched him leave
But she knew he would come back
That, she did believe

Every night at moonlight
She looks up to the sky
Willing time to race on
To hurry it on by

Across the cold blue ocean
Her lover sits alone
He prays for his return
To his one and only Home

She carries on her days
Pushing, dragging through
But sure as sure, come the night
She watches, ever true

And on one ordinary day
Of what seemed of no surprise
That lonesome, fighting soldier
For the last time closed his eyes

But as they lowered him in the ground
Buried beneath the sand
No one sought his lover
No one held her hand

Because, every night at moonlight
She looks outside and sees
All her fondest wishes
Becoming her realities

He'll come back to her
Her heart has always known
And so she sits and stares at stars
Waiting for him to come home.



photography

Eucalyptus Bubbles



Audrey Peterson



Mr . Thompson

Carmin Berchiolly



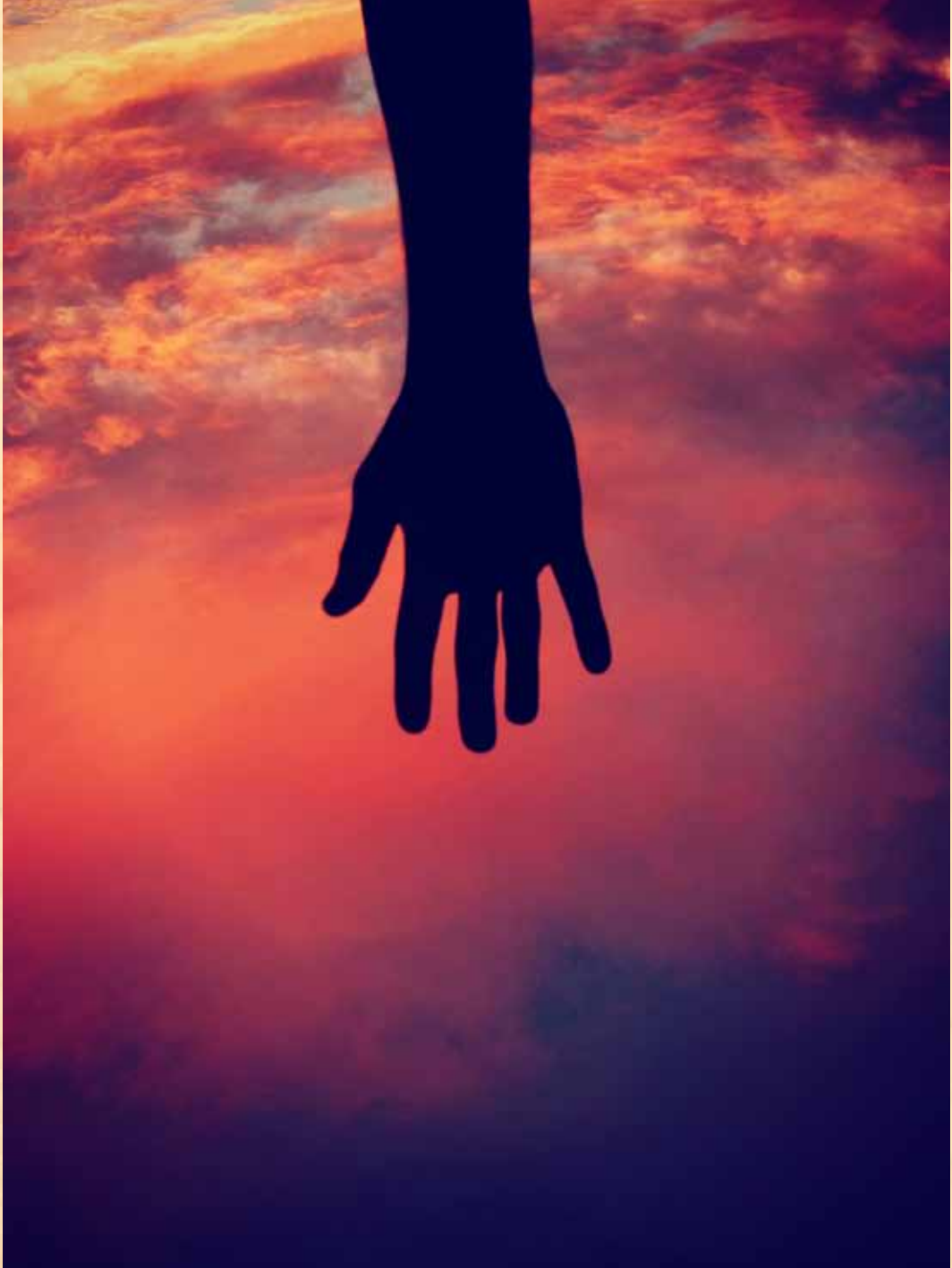
Shades of Brown and Grey

—•—❧—•—
Sierra Hilbert



Reaching

Sierra Hilbert



Tunnel

Sierra Hilbert

Award
Winner



Sunset in the Toad's Eyes

Justin Ahlquist





art

Trapped

Illiana Durbin

Award
Winner



Time to Go

Shawanee Younvanich



Trash Talk

Stephen Ramberg



Illiana Durbin





prose

Five Words

Kayla Downey

Award
Winner

"Lady, I've always loved you."

Those five words captivated my mind so deeply that I unintentionally began to dispose of any sense of morality I had left. His eyes pierced through my soul as he spoke. Each word was tinged with that June evening's whiskey, but all that mattered was the very moment we were reveling in. And with my level of intoxication steadily rising, I believed his revelation as if I had known all along. That was after we watched the sun set a little too effortlessly, sitting just a little too close to each other near the dam. We opened up our hearts a little too much as we swallowed each drop of alcohol a little too quickly. And by the time the bottle was empty and the night had closed in, it was just a little too late to put out the flame we'd sparked once again. And then we made our way down the ever-winding path to the cemetery, where we connected ever so intimately. And I knew it was wrong with every ounce of my being; every ounce of the warm, brown liquid still pulsing through my veins. And as we undressed, he kissed me so passionately that lust overrode every inch of newfound guilt. And everything was all too perfect to remain that way.

"I never told you before?"

Those were the five words he would never fail to slur, which always followed his continuous promise that he'd always loved me. He smelled of sweat and rum as he tried to convince me all too physically. His low, husky voice encouraged me to just believe him; just please him. I could sense his built-up reservations that he did his best to keep locked inside, and I was all too afraid to disagree. That was after we'd finished a bottle or three, a little too adolescently. We would run away together a little too often and end up in our own private sanctuaries, a little too hidden. And our time spent with one another never failed to end a little too soon as I resorted to my bedroom alone, anticipating the next time he'd return. And I always knew he would, though I was never entirely sure of when. And we would share each other secretly as we swore to never tell another soul. And I did my best to never say a word as he ignored continuous calls from his girlfriend who he, as he kissed me

softly, swore he didn't even love. And I never told him how much he really meant to me.

"It's never been about sex."

Those five words completed a truthful statement, though the factuality of it swiftly began to fade. Maybe two years of buried desire were laden with an overpowering sense of greed. His tongue began to taste more and more bittersweet against mine as his touch became stronger and far more persistent. What was once never about physical pleasure became solely the epitome of it, and I failed to notice until it had already happened. That was after the seemingly endless amounts of liquid intoxication we ingested in the privacy of his home, a little too incautiously. He would then lead me to his bedroom and we would succumb to each other's needs, skin on skin, a little too fervently. He'd then ask me to do a little too much for his own personal pleasure, but I abided by his wishes a little too easily. And then he'd take me home again a little too early, refusing to even come inside. And I started to get used to the cycle. And he started to use sexual, demeaning words instead of telling me I was beautiful. And he started to take me home while the night was still so young, just after I'd satisfied him. And as he started to make up excuses as to why, I started accepting the fact that he was lying. And as he kissed me goodbye with frustrated lips, I started to realize that he wasn't the person I thought he was. And even though I started to wake up, all alone, feeling overwhelmingly shameful, I still assured myself that I could trust him.

"You trust me, don't you?"

Those are the five words I could only ever have one answer to, even though I doubted myself each and every time. I knew better than to let him drive intoxicated while he could barely keep his hands on the wheel. I was well aware that his significant other would find out the truth eventually, even though he continued to tell me she didn't matter. My mind eventually became numb from weighing trust and disbelief, and I was so exhausted from it all that I just gave in to his every request knowing full well that he was merely one big

fucking lie. That was before he stopped calling me and failed to respond to my messages, which I was just a little too disappointed about. His promise to always be there for me was a little too implausible and I was a little too quick to have faith in it in the first place. I was a little too naïve when I chose to trust him. And he took advantage of that a little too often. And I told myself I didn't care if I heard from him again or not. And even though his absence caused me to feel contemptibly empty, I didn't try to contact him. And even though I believed I'd feel a sense of relief without him in my life, I didn't. And the last time he kissed me, he did it so quickly and without feeling that I don't really even remember it. And I didn't even ask him why he was so withdrawn.

"I don't even know you."

Those are the five words I would say to you if I ever spoke to you again – if I could even build up enough confidence to let them leave my mouth. I'm finally able to see through to the person that you really are, and your beauty has proven to only be external. The constant memories of your smell, your taste, and your touch will forever suffocate me, and the sound of your voice, no matter how harsh, will always ring deafeningly through my ears. I still reminisce in the thought of you a little too frequently, but I fear it's a little too late to ignite the flame again. I'm still haunted by the memory of the last time I saw you, a little too long ago. And now I constantly loathe myself for loving you just a little too much. And I still wonder if you ever even think about the paths we once traveled together. And I wonder if I'll never hear from you again, because you feel it's better that way. And even though I once started to dismiss the compulsive memories from interrupting my thoughts, they didn't fail to resurface, all the more vivid than the time before. And you haven't kissed me passionately or even carelessly because you haven't been around to kiss me at all. And as I do my best to tread through this polluted water of remorse, these five sentences continue to captivate my mind so deeply that I'm questioning if I ever had any sense of morality in the first place.

The Onion



Ira Jelnov

A perfectly white, round-hipped onion begs to be properly cooked. First, one must delicately, like a man would his wife on their wedding night, peel back layer after layer of the onion's white skirt. Then, as the pure center is chopped precisely, a melodic crunch rings in the ears and strong juices perfume the air. So overcome with emotion at the process which is underway, tears cannot be held back. Once the onion has been gently but firmly cut into perfect geometric squares, with great care each piece will be gently layed down into a bath of warm oil over a gentle fire, set as low as possible. Not one slice of onion will be allowed to fall to the ground. The faintly glowing flame will not permit the squares to be rushed or to blacken with the marks of abuse or impatience. No, indeed the onion will mature at its own pace. For hours, the cook will patiently watch over the transformation that is about to occur, which will be as splendid as a butterfly emerging from a cocoon.

Great care and patience will produce the proper results. Slowly the pieces will simmer to perfection. The pure white will be transformed into a rich golden color. The strongly stinging juices will be lulled and calmed until a magnificent aroma of surrender fills the air. The squares will become soft and tender as they are romanced by the gentle flame. Very simple and yet so rich and refined is the process. It requires only patience; yet so many continue to abuse the onion with their restlessness and unwillingness to wait and to allow it to reach its intended state: golden and sweet like the first sunrise of summer.

Crusty Sack of Bones

Trevor Nelson

I had to hide Jupiter, the frog that I caught last week in the pond behind the abandoned mill where the older kids smoke cigarettes and screw around, because my mom wouldn't let me keep him under my bed in the box for my Sunday cowboy boots because she's scared of frogs and snakes and cable guys with teeth that look like pieces of dog food that I feed my puppy, Wicked Caesar, who lives the garage now on account of he ate my dad's leather bolo tie and peed on Grandma Wilson's new dress when she came to visit last week, and I showed her Jupiter, and he got loose and hopped on the couch until Caesar saw him and tried to bite him, so I beat Caesar with the mop, and he got so scared that he had to pee, and Granny's flowery dress, the one she's so proud of because she got it for cheap at Sears, must've looked like the flowers in the park where I play catch with Caesar because he ran around her four times, stopped, and peed on her legs while she talked to my mom about my dad not taking my mom to Sizzler on their anniversary last week, and Granny didn't notice at first, but when she did, she screamed like a bee stung her on the lip like one did last summer when she was eating watermelon in our backyard, and she blamed the bee sting on my dad, and when my mom saw Granny's dress dripping dog pee and Jupiter hopping on the couch, she slapped my face and told me to put Caesar in the garage where he belongs and to get that dadgum frog out of the house before she beat me with a stick from the acorn tree by the shed, so I took Jupiter to my pal Cornelius' house to see if I could keep him there, but Corny said his mom would whoop him good

if she found another frog in his room, so he told me to hide Jupiter in the field behind the 7-11 because no kids go back there on account of the old guy with silver tape on his shoes and cockleburs in his beard who sleeps there sometimes, so Jupiter would be safe, and he wouldn't run away because I could shove a stick in the mud and tie his leg to it with an old shoelace, but Corny said I'd have to go there every day and dump a soda can full of water on him, or he'd shrivel up into a crusty sack of bones, but I didn't believe him on account of the time he told me that puppies need to eat thistle and cardboard, so I fed Wicked Caesar a ripped up Fruity Pebbles box covered with barbeque sauce and prick-ers, and his belly swelled up like he was ready to birth a baby rhino, and he almost croaked, and I got grounded for two weeks for listening to Cornelius, so I didn't listen to him about pouring a soda can full of water on Jupiter because I thought it was dumb, since nobody pours a soda can full of water on a frog when he's living in the pond behind the empty mill, so I just tied him up and left a couple dead flies for him to eat, and when I snuck over there to play with him after school yesterday, the dead flies were laying next to a crusty sack of bones.

What We Are

Ronnie Thompson

There is a lot of discussion among the philosophically inclined about what we are in terms of basic biological, evolutionary terms. But it seems to me that this mode of thinking avoids the biggest problem in the subjective human experience, which is what should I/We do (or how we should live)? We can say we are driven biologically to act in this manner, or we compete for such and such a reason, but is philosophy to serve merely as an dialectical hype-man for science?

What philosophy and philosophers must do is address something far more serious, which is the condition of our finite existence as opposed to the infinite nothingness that squeezes our lives on both ends. This complete negation surrounding our lives requires us all to say "I'm going to die and experience nothing more of consequence for my actions, and all memory of human existence will be erased by eternity". What, in the face of that can be done? It seems the height of insanity for us to both say the former and then place any value on what comes after this moment, for it is only now we can be, and we must choose to accept what we are as abstracted from this metaphysic reality. And what are we? Nothing, and we create nothing, and we value nothing. All human activity is drowned in meaninglessness outside of the moment by an eternity of absolutely nothing.

The moment, which gains meaning through our relation to others, must remember this tension between our finitude and eternity which renders our

finitude outside of judgment in terms of what comes after and what we create with it. And in that moment that denies the next, when face to face with another human being, what unity might be found? How can I judge my fellow man, except perhaps with pity that he continues to be insane --that is to place his value in the future which erases all value-- when to us and everyone else, everything that man has done is no more valuable in the face of meaninglessness than the whole history and future of the entire human race? What is left but acceptance when judgment is made insanity and nonsense in the hearts of man aware of their fate? But it might be asked "But what of tomorrow, will we all stop going to work, will we end human progress"? To the former I would say (admittedly a bit tongue in cheek) to consider the lilies of the valley, and to the second I'd say that I have explained in the preceding why that becomes nonsensical.

Winner Profiles

Written by Aurora Campbell

Jacob Sisouk

Jacob Sisouk never studied poetry in a formal setting, but stumbled upon it by means of song writing. Three years ago Jacob picked up a guitar and began to express himself through the music he wrote. Initially he was strictly a songwriter. However, at times, Sisouk would begin writing lyrics to accompany a tune he had been working on only to scratch the music and decide that the lyrics looked better on paper.

With his creative tendencies, Sisouk is typically inspired to write poetry by something as simple as a single word or phrase that he hears in passing. "If it strikes me as prevalent [or] it's really relatable to either me or other people, I'll try my best to write something about it," he says of the process, "Usually, it works pretty well."

Though Sisouk appreciates being recognized for being published, that was not his main intent behind submitting to Voices this semester. He explained how he is often inspired by other bands and artists. He hopes that, in being published, he will be able to inspire other people in the same way.

Sierra Hilbert

Sierra Hilbert developed an interest in photography at an early age. When her parents began buying disposable cameras for her, they were perhaps unaware that they were introducing her to the hobby of taking pictures. Despite the low quality of a disposable camera, Hilbert was always excited to have her film developed and see the resulting photos. This enthusiasm has not drifted as she has grown, in both age and skill.

In her early years Hilbert focused mostly on capturing vacation and summer camp moments. However, now she can be found photographing a much wider range of subject matter. Shooting everything from portraits and macro photographs to landscapes and abandoned buildings, Hilbert is intent on capturing anything that she finds beautiful.

Though Hilbert does not know if she would like to pursue it as a career, she certainly intends to keep photography as a hobby throughout the rest of her life. It is a hobby she plans to pursue in the future, capturing special fleeting moments.

Illiana Durbin

Looking at the pieces that she has produced, some may be surprised that Illiana Durbin was not originally interested in the field of traditional art. Driven by her desire to study her first passion, photography, Durbin took a required art class during her first semester at Boylan High School. Though she enjoyed art, it was when Durbin was introduced to the medium of colored pencil that she decided to dive into it.

Interlocking her two passions, Durbin often takes the approach of first photographing her subject matter, then proceeding to develop an extraordinarily realistic replica on paper. She has a preference of doing so with portraits. Durbin appreciates the challenge of capturing the emotion displayed on her subject's face, whatever that emotion might be.

Though Durbin is only in her first semester, she has already developed plans for studying art after transferring out of Rock Valley College. The possibility of integrating her interest in psychology into her passion of art has occurred to her and she has begun to consider the career choice of art therapy. Durbin has also considered the possibility of majoring in graphic design and minoring in photography. No matter which career path she decides to wander down, Durbin is determined to keep art a prominent part of her life.

staff



Top: Christopher Babbitt, Kiersten Johnson

Middle row: Aurora Campbell, Dulce Ramirez, Keisha Howerth

Bottom Row: Amber Church, Natalie Mork

ROCK VALLEY COLLEGE