

Is. S. Brandano.

# Voices

Spring 2015

Cabo Fi



Cabo de No.

Manitoba

Africa.



Presented by  
Rock Valley College  
Journalism 139 students

# Voices

Spring 2015

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 Professor 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 [rvvoices.com](http://rvvoices.com).



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# The Staff



**Back row, from left:** Mariah Oakley, Nick Green, Ryan McNealy, Willy Kent, Drew Wilcox.  
**Middle Row, from left:** Ashley Gaddis, Jenae Boren, Alex Williams, Sandra Vaughn.  
**Front Row, from left:** Rebecca Denham (Managing Editor), Samantha Allen and Kevin Kuri







# Water Glass

by Erika Parrish





Life Burst  
by Leslee Scurlock





# To the Girl Who Laughs a Little Too Loud

by Alexander Presson

I want to see you naked.

I want to see your insecurities slowly slide off your shoulders,  
like how innocence slides down childhood playgrounds,  
trusting the catch at the bottom.

I want to see the shadow of doubt in your eyes be out shone  
as the light in your smile gets brighter.

I want to see your hands uncurl from tightly clenched fists,  
the way a flower bursts open,  
petals outstretched and ready for the sun.

You don't always have to be the funny girl with the best puns,  
or the girl who hurts people before they hurt you.

You've covered yourself with so many designer labels and other people's expectations  
that you're not sure if you even own your soul anymore.

A walking sponsor display for alcohol, drugs, bad decisions, and regrets.

The love you give is a magnifier for pointing out the insecurities in others,  
and your lovers are the burning bugs on the hot sidewalk.

When will the weight of the world on your shoulders be too much?

I want to see your back straighten,  
as the tension of the arrow is released from the bow.

I want to see your anger flow out of your mouth and disappear;  
to be the breath exhaled on a cold winter night.

I want to see your skin soak up a healthy compliment  
after years of being under body armor  
that you reluctantly put on to battle the world.

Make up is your war paint for a battle between anorexic models and self worth,  
and so far you are losing to photoshopped magazine cover girls,  
selling your body to be popular.

All you can taste anymore is stomach acid as it eats away at your throat,  
choking down the cries for help before you can taste them on your lips.

The mask you wear is cracking under the pressure of the lies that are fighting back,  
but you hold it together by laughing too loud so people don't hear the breaking.

Until you are alone in your room,  
the only place you can let the beast off your back.

You hide your best kept secrets in a box in the darkest corner,  
praying that, one day, you can show the world the strong woman you really are.

I just want to see you vulnerable.



Madame III  
by Jada Hauser





# My Lady Trembles

by Ross Enderle

I wish my love were not so blithe,  
for I alone see through her lies.  
and there behind her carefree eyes,  
lie centuries of stormy skies.  
my lover's laugh is a wondrous thing,  
but to me the sound is heartbreaking,  
for I alone know her boundless delight  
is an expertly strangled tremble of fright.

Why my lady trembles at night I know not,  
for she surely is safe here with me, is she not?





# The Market

by Scott Fustin





# Fruit Punch

by Rebecca Denham

If I am a peach,  
Like you say that I am,  
Then that emptiness I'm feeling  
In the space between my stomach and my  
Uterus  
That place that is described as my core  
That void  
Is where my pit would be,  
In the pit of my stomach?  
You took that, didn't you?  
Where did you put it?  
I think you did one of two things:  
You either planted it in the dirt  
Of your parents' backyard  
Because you wanted more from me  
And I didn't quite meet your expectations  
Or you put it in your room,  
Left to be lost in the perpetual whirling of  
Your possessions;  
You don't want to remember where you put it  
Because you want to forget  
the first time you met me  
picked me  
from the  
peach tree  
I think the  
Point is you always preferred apples.  
The point is I was never what you needed,  
Simply too curious to not try a taste.



Vintage Day of the Dead  
by Brianna Smith





# The Woman's Way

by Jessica Fluegel

Breathe in, breathe out, they'll say  
Just wait, girl, it gets better  
That's the woman's way  
Breathe in, breathe out, they'll say  
Through blood each one must pay  
No tears, don't be a fretter  
Breathe in, breathe out, they'll say  
Just wait, girl, it gets better

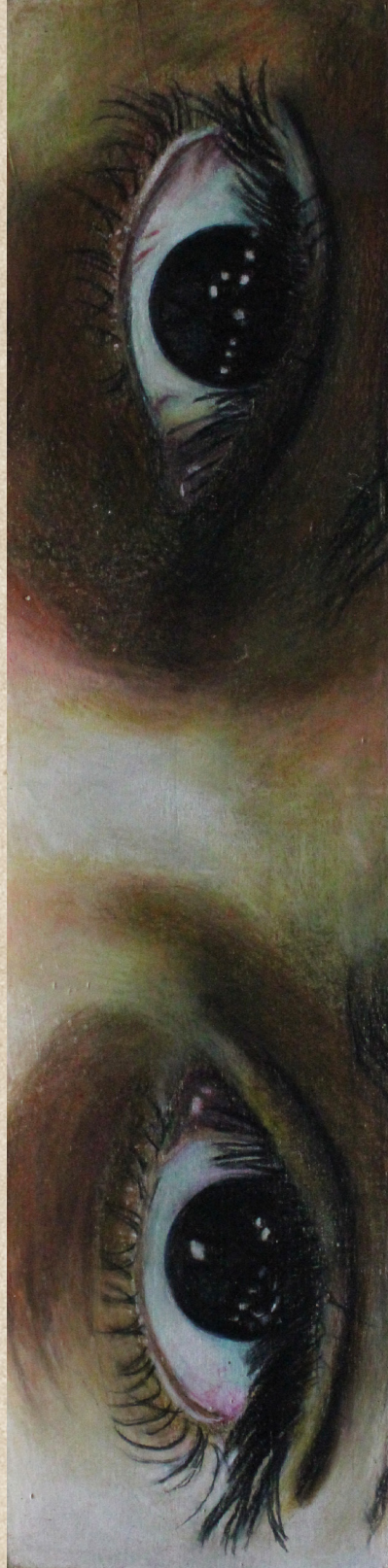
Breathe in, breathe out, he'll say  
Just wait, girl, it gets better  
That's the woman's way  
Breathe in, breathe out, he'll say  
For pleasure demands its pay  
You'll get through, you'll get wetter  
Breathe in, breathe out, he'll say  
Just wait, girl, it gets better

Breathe in, breathe out, she'll say  
Just wait, girl, it gets better  
That's the woman's way  
Breathe in, breathe out, she'll say  
One last penance to pay  
One last push, to be the letter  
Breathe in, breathe out, she'll say  
Just wait, girl, it gets better





I Should Get More Sleep  
by Stephan Jimenez





# Sit

by Jessica Capriola

Pool, women, darts and drinks  
Where a soul sinks  
Running away, forgetting and falling  
Where eager ears miss the calling  
Bad day? Sit  
Celebrating? Sit  
Bored? Sit  
Minutes to hours to days and more  
Time wasting away outside the door  
Free spirit flying high while the bars are being built  
Wrinkles hold the glass that's being tilt  
Pain? Sit  
Regret? Sit  
Lost? Sit  
Skin thinning and sinking into bones  
Eyes dark, heavy as stones  
Shaking hands crave poison to make them well  
The love potion won with its spell  
This seat was an escape now this seat is a hell  
Trapped! Sit  
Suffering! Sit  
Alone! Sit  
No pool, no women, no music, no door





An Exhibit of Self-Suppression and Humiliation  
by Sabrina Gessert





# Princess Perfect

by Emily Minarik

Once upon a  
time there lived a  
princess who had  
perfect hair, and we all got to  
watch as a perfect prince swept her off her  
high-heeled feet. She showed us all how she  
wore a sparkly dress to make a boy like her.  
But meanwhile, she was waiting for  
somebody, somewhere to save her  
from the vilest witch of all –  
Herself.

Despite the fact that Princess  
Perfect had an insufferably small waistline that  
was physiologically and proportionally impossible  
for the human body to sustain, our princess could have  
hated herself too. Yet, little girls across the land looked up  
to our perfect princess, ingraining in their minds that Princess  
Perfect was beautiful. All because she looked like that. Perfect.





# Ominous Strom Cloud

by William Wight





# The Last Good bye

by Ross Enderle

I wander down some distant shore  
that's been by mountains shadowed o'er,  
and there beneath those shadely heights  
I've stayed on many astral nights.  
To lay upon the bone-strewn sand,  
and wait for you to take my hand.  
And with Pluto I'll seek a bed  
or any place to lay my head.  
For Hades' rent has long been due,  
but I defy him yet, for you.  
Nocturnal now has dimmed his lamp,  
I hear the black all 'round my camp.  
As the embers of my fire die,  
they wink from life, and spring to sky  
Whispers still persist of your song.  
I had hoped you wouldn't resist for so long.  
A kinder man might wish godspeed,  
but this is the last good bye I'll ever need.



Life As We Know It.  
by Alejandra Mercado





# A Vision of a City Unfolded

by Broderick Hooker

Canto I.

Chasing madly after winds  
Chasing madly for the end  
Of a tapering river  
Tapering madly towards a vanity  
Or perhaps tapering towards unnerved vitality.  
Where some spring sits.

Tapering through a prairie,  
Following through the dark and the light.  
Keeping record of the age  
In it's powerful and muddy might.

I set before the river a mighty city.  
I forged it out of the clay and mud,  
I breathed unto it.  
I saw the rains come upon my city.  
The river burst forth, and grew in mighty waves and sunk all and every  
Vessel that set forth on weighty  
Currents that pull all things to their undue bottom  
Where they sunk.  
And the mud washed away, my dearest city.  
"Away with it, away"  
So mocked the crowds  
Perched high in their trees.  
Branched and dead,  
Splintering branches holding shadowy multitudes.  
"Away with it, away."  
In shouts and caws.





"Away with it, away."

So gripped the talons and claws.

"Away with it, away."

Still.

They flew about the flooded mess.

They fluttered with their shadowy wings.

They circled overhead in a sinister ring.

Upon the foamy brown wash of rainy silt,

They grasped and clawed at the mud.

Only to drip away.

Back, back into the river.

Oh how skins and black feathers shiver

When their talons cannot put back together,

What the river tore apart.

And they depart.

Circling again in their sinister ring

Where a vile song they may sing,

At piles and dung-heaps

Where once the mighty stood.

Their floating sinister ring

Mocked the Holy Wheel,

Spinning towards some indefinite end,

I follow as it reeled.

Reeling, reeling! High above floodplain

High above the muddy ruins,

A vortex of smoke and rain,

Mixed with the multitude of crows.

I shall avert my gaze before they peck out my eyes.

I shall loosen my stare to fix instead upon my city,

Sunken in the the silty brine.





What a vast thing to view.  
Vast indeed, and too few  
Heads poking and hands prying  
For air I heard none crying.  
My breath was now just fog among the mist.  
Never again will it kiss  
Life into a city  
That settles beneath my feet.

I pray, dear St. Lucy, shield mine eyes  
With the platter that held yours.  
I pray for sight and vision.  
For a singular eye upon a tree,  
Not dead in the distance  
Poking its branches from the river to get a good look at me.

The reeling of the thousands  
Drew me with the current,  
Past my poor drowned city  
And through the swirling torrent.  
The fresh green living stretched out it's staff over the sea  
That was the field that day.  
And I gripped upon it,  
Before the river swept me away.  
Climbing the rough hewn branches,  
Blessedly on the living stretches.  
All flows beneath over and into the firmament.  
Tell me it is not permanent,  
Dear tree on whom I sit.  
Whether the mud swirling beneath, or the birds swirling above,  
Shall forever turn and blow so quick.



Through the cave that was the sooty clouds,  
Cracked and broke aloud  
An arrow, a beam, in splendor  
What a joy it is that light so tender  
Can fall upon the darkness reeling and swirling above my head.  
Above my head, a dark ring around the bright  
Day framed by night.  
Night around the day,  
And in the swirling and the turning,  
I saw a city built of clay.

A splendid beam of day, fixed upon my breast,  
So struck me in the heart,  
To bleed upon the rest.  
Blood and Water.  
Blood and Water,  
Flowing from the Side.  
Blood and Water.  
Blood and Water,  
Awash the purging, flowing, ringing tide.

It sets alight the living tree.  
It sets alight underneath and above me.  
It sets alight the city that unfolds in the swirling and the turning.

Canto II.

In the window of reeling shadows  
A spiral of rows and rows  
A river flows again with ready and powerful pulse.  
Sparking the flint of sight in the window  
Ignites the image out of nothing,



Ex Nihilo.

Along the river, it's shores and banks  
Sit in squalor, our Romulus and Remus.

Romulus, well dressed child of the West,  
Where leaden caves carve out their hills,  
Comes him,  
Venturer with his plow,  
Turning up the soil  
Of vast inward plains.  
Remus, with a face of darkened sky  
Held on Romulus' chain.

She wolf,  
Capitoline Mother  
Suckling pioneer brothers,  
Who draw in nourishment by the river.  
When the wolf lies down with lambs,  
To dust she returns  
And outstretched hands  
With the seeds in their palm  
Bloom and blossom the field in the springtime balm.

Sprouts of wheat and corn,  
Fed by Our Dear Tiber,  
Give no occasion to mourn,  
As work wears down the fiber  
Of the rope drawn around Remus' neck  
Romulus may hack it away  
As brothers they lower their gaze  
Upon the valley, day by day  
As the river brings its years in waves.



# Hydrotex

by Monica Mendoza





# A Lesson in Moderation

by Samantha Allen



i stayed in the shower  
with the knob cranked  
the hottest it would go  
until the streams of water  
on each side of my head  
felt like hands cupping  
my face like a lover  
and the steam rising  
from my reddening body  
lapped thirstily at the ceiling  
and the heat made my  
heart pour itself into my throat  
searing my vocal chords  
trying to escape like it  
was a prisoner and i could  
barely  
even  
breathe

when i got out i confronted  
a trembling crimson blur  
in front of a thick fog so  
i pushed the condensation  
away from my shape and met  
a human being, so flushed  
from a shower 40 minutes  
too long, looking, at a brief  
glance, like someone covered  
in blood





The Hue of Thy Musicke  
by Zoe Maynard





# Unexpected Descent

by Darcy Breault

Outside autumn moves across the heights of nature.

Covers the ground to cradle those that await rebirth.

Inside, I spread the horizon across our table,

set out bright white plates for seven guests.

They have brought darkness of deep roots

with them, intend to stay through cold crisp mornings.

You enter, escorted by the ever-distant sun

and sit down alongside the day's burdens.

In feast the unexpected guests raise their glasses,

Full of wine, red as our fall.



Deer on Point  
by Mariah Oakley





# Fox Hunting

by Darcy Breault

Today smelled stagnant, bitter.  
Your skin slowly reddened,  
I read Pablo Neruda's poetry aloud,  
a gesture to help slow  
our busied thoughts.

As you raised the green umbrella  
I wanted to seduce you in the heat.  
The taste of salty sweat is not  
sweet like spring, rather bitter  
in the closeness of the sun.

But heat between us, is not the same as  
heat surrounding us. Only after we've  
endured the distance of our hallway,  
or the specific side of our bed  
do we realize the season has changed.



Winter's Sentinel  
by Zoe Maynard





# Heartstrings

by Joshua Luebke

There is a string from my heart to yours.  
Once strong as steel, now dwindled down  
to feeble wool.  
Frayed.  
Tattered.  
Eroded into something so simple,  
so intricately delicate  
that mere proximity can bring torment or alleviation.  
Every inch of distance between us  
brings my heart to whimper  
of the string pulling it from its place in my chest.  
Yet our languid disregard for what has become so agonizingly painful  
keeps us moving farther away in search of “things”.  
Things which can only bring pain.  
This pain which, someday, will summon us back together;  
Or snap,  
Like a too tight rubber band.





# Spare Time to Practice

by Stephan Jimenez





# Language

by Alexandria Palmeri

With every movement the tip of the pen made between those blue lines  
she lost herself.

Each word was a kiss, a gentle touch to the skin.

She made love with language.

The curvature

the structure

and build of each letter showed how she felt.

When you read her words you heard her

gentle voice,

whispers from the pages.

Erased words.      Hesitation.      Start over.

She wrote lovely.

Language.



Street Lights  
by Danielle Juhre





# Angel's Wings

by Susan Huntley

The sun shining, diffused through winter sky

The color of silver angels

The sky is like a marble floor, cold in winter,

Veins of clouds stretched from wall to wall, the horizons are the edges

Of this large room.

I did consider the color of the sky

As being the same as silver angels

And the winter tree branches

Put me in mind

Of tangled eyelashes.

Walked out late this afternoon

Dead weeds and empty branches,

I notice and mark nests.

Birds are fat round punctuations

On the written line of trees.

Cardinals haunt the creek,

Fast to fly when we approach.





Raku Vase  
by Brianna Smith





# Brother Atheist

by Gabriel Dansdill



Brother atheist your lips they must be parched  
trudging in the sands of your arid, thirsty heart.  
You kneel before the quanta, photon and the quark  
scratching formulas on the holy, nuclear ark.

You stand outside the circle of man's only hope  
you hang religion with your scientific rope.  
I weep to see you ossified, outside alone.  
You cannot hear the singer with your ears of stone.

But the singer was here before you took first breath  
his song is quiet like a breeze, immense like death.  
His song is wider, than your widest, wildest dream,  
deeper than your deepest impulse pulsing, unseen.

You ask to enter in the company of men  
the author of acceptance you can not usher in.  
I call you brother but you for kinship yearn,  
we are not kin until our father's name we learn.

There is a genealogy from which we rise  
you were born of atoms - an accidental splice.  
We are born of light in every cell a trace,  
we know because we see with eyes beyond our face.

There is a force within the solid mass of flesh,  
a fisherman whose net is made of finest mesh,  
an artist who has writ his name upon our door,  
shattered through the glass of thought - revealing more.

Upon the ancient wood the universe does bow,



He forged a seal with love and placed it on his brow,  
a seal that burns our core, it rents the heart in two;  
one heart we give to him and one we give to you.

Your heart he has not won, the air for you is still  
still I will give you water, warm you from the chill  
I will hear your weighty words hoping for the time  
you come to seek the author of your words and mine,  
a sword will cut away the stone, and you shall hear  
a song that calls your heart to crack, piercing and clear.

Say, brother atheist, our time upon this gravel  
is but a journey we are called to travel.  
We require sustenance, and shelter on our way  
and we seek companions for the bitter day.  
The men of proofs who posit man as a mere speck  
are not the ones I chose to walk with on this trek.

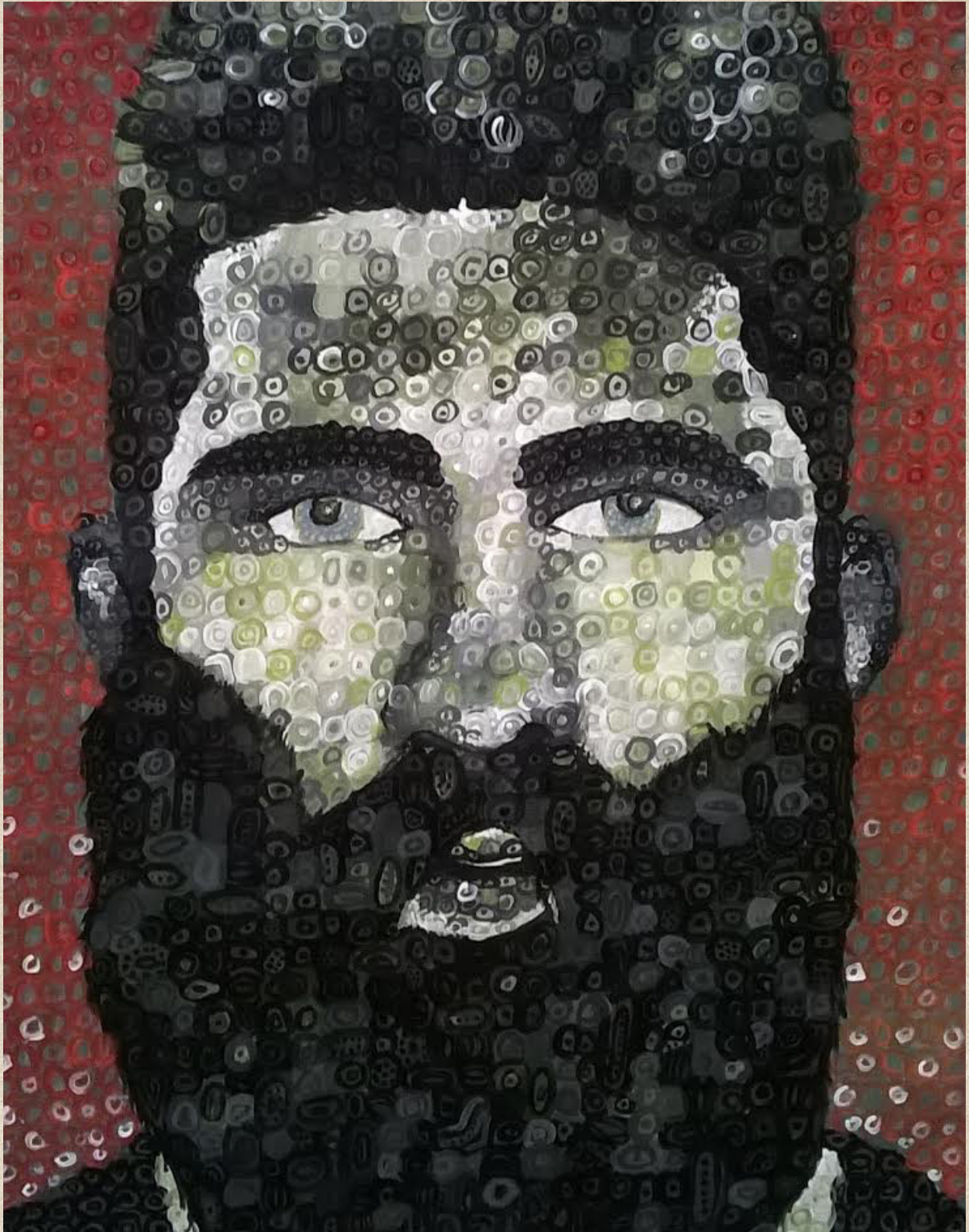
I would choose a jester, a troubadour, a child,  
carpenter, donkey, poet, lady - strong and mild,  
a knight to give me courage in the times of trial,  
a weaver, to gather up threads and sit awhile.

I will walk beside you and share my simple bread.  
You bring pencils pointed, a compass sharp, erect.  
I will bring my jocund friends to help carry me,  
they bring no thesis bold only the light to see.

Through fraternity we cling to memories shared:  
Times of trial, tribulation, and grievances aired.  
A beautiful indulgence to our story's start.  
I will cherish through the end when our paths must part.



Chris John Millington – The Bearded Man  
by Cristiaan Jackson





# The Unfinished Letter

by Ross Enderle



*March, 17th, 1863*

My dearest mother, I cannot tell you what has transpired here. Many awful things are happening at every time of the day and night. Let there never be another war such as this, for it would surely end us. I fear for us, I fear that we have lost God's favor, and that He bends us to destroy one another, that he might wash His hands of His mistake. I know it is a blasphemy, but He will know my heart whether I write it or not- but perhaps my small blasphemy will go unnoticed here, where hellish things walk in the light of day, and where men call out to God, and are ignored. Oh mother, there is such agony here. It is an affront to every human sense. One's head never fully stops aching from the abuse of the ears by cannon shell. One's mouth is always dry with fear. One's body is at all times both at the verge of collapse, and painfully awake. But the worst part of this dreadful affair is the smell of the hospital tents. There is a ghastly stench which attends the dying. It is as if their pain is so great as to have its own sickening odor. The doctors here do what they can, but. I do not think any of the men in those hospital tents expect to live. Some of the soldiers here, the ones who have lost friends, curse the doctors for their inadequacy. I know not what to say.

You asked me how Jordan Ullman met his end. Why would you ask me such a thing? Did the tinderbox which served as his coffin not tell you all you needed to know? So it is with all those unversed in this bloody affair of killing. You ask and ask, as though by repetition of inquiry, you might lessen the offense of your maddening idiocy. Jordan Ullman died during a Confederate night raid. If you were a soldier, the very word would dissuade you from persisting. But you are not a soldier. And so I must explain to you the horrors that you are too blessedly stupid to understand.

The night Jordan died was much like this very night I write to you upon. We were all around surrounded by a heavy fog. Here there is a fog

like no other. The locals tell me that it comes from the Devil's Hollow, which is a dense little grove of wood. They say it is the smoke from the Devil's cooking-fire. They say it is dark with the blood of damned men. But they are simple farmers, and I attach little weight to their superstitions. Still, on the night Jordan died, I would have believed that the Devil was among us.

Jordan was the watchman. He stood just behind the little berm which protected our cannon, and peered out into the cold mist. There ought to have been another man with him, but that man had died the day prior in a skirmish some ten miles away, and so was not of much use as a watchman. Perhaps if that man had not died, if he had been there with Jordan... No, there is no use to such thoughts. Jordan Ullman died alone, and in the dark, and that is the way it had to be.

Oh mother, do not ask me to think of that night! Let Jordan's mother be kept awake wondering about his death until her own, but ask me not for the horrid truth! If you must know a truth, then have this. If I survive much longer I will know more dead men than live ones.

I learned the full story of Jordan's death after the fact, for I was awakened by the same explosion that killed him. The poor fool. I should first mention my own part in the defense of our camp, for it is my action then which allows me to recount to you now. When I jolted awake to the sharp smell of gunpowder, and the echoes of cannon fire, I jumped to my feet, knowing that death was walking among the men. In that damned mist I lost precious time grasping blindly for my saber. I keep it next to my bed, leaned so I can seize it in a moment. After taking hold of its handle, I cast about for my pistol. It had been covered by a blanket when I jumped from my bedroll. I heard men shouting, screaming. I heard cannonballs ripping through the camp, followed a moment behind by a rumble of aggression. After finding my pistol, and hastily loading it in the blinding mist, I ran towards the sound of the fight.



Not a moment after did a shell land on my tent, ripping it to pieces. I write to you from the tent of the sergeant. When I reached the crux of the shrieks of war, I cast about wildly with my saber, pointing my pistol, and staring head-achingly hard into the deadening fog.

Oh mother, in that fog I saw horrible things. I saw an artillery emplacement, and walked towards it, only to be blown back by a screeching wail of fire and smoke. Shards of burning iron peppered my face and hands. The cannon had exploded from a misfire. When I regained my feet, I saw that the cannon's crew had been shredded by the furious blaze of sharp metal, and that while their shins remained where they had labored, the rest of them had been crushed and splintered into such small pieces that if not for the ground, which was coated slick with red gore, you might never have known that men stood there.

The smoke from cannon fire only worsened the hellish conditions. I heard a man screaming, and turned to see a soldier running towards me, with fire clinging to his face. I stabbed the man through his chest, and blood spurted forward from his mouth, extinguishing the flames on his chin. I do not know what side that man fought for, but I do not think it matters.

We were hard-pressed that night, mother. I cannot recall how many men I killed, only that they all died as quickly as I could make it. I do remember that my pistol misfired, and that because of that I was nearly bayoneted in the stomach. A Confederate had charged out of the fog, screaming the wordless cry of panic and rage that every soldier knows, and as I raised my pistol, I saw the mindless animal in his eyes. Or perhaps I only saw my reflection. But my pistol misfired, and as I stepped back, I tripped and fell. The Confederate pursued me, stepping up and raising his musket. But just as he was about to bear down on me with the bayonet, he disappeared. A hail of grape-shot disassembled him in front of me. I was too numb then to realize the man was

standing just where I had been, but I think now he took my place. The Confederates tested us to our limit in that cursed fog, and thank God they ran out of men before we did.

There was a commotion the next morning. I walked from where I had lain, face-down in the wet grass, to the berm where Jordan had stood watch. It was then that I felt truly hopeless for the first time. From what we could tell, the Confederate advance troops had managed to sabotage a few of our cannon. Jordan was stabbed through the back by a Confederate bayonet, and he lay on the damp ground, bleeding his life into the dirt, while the enemy had stuffed gunpowder in the cannon, and pointed them into the camp before firing them as a signal to the waiting regiment. The thought of Jordan Ullman, the thin, sickly boy who had cried and wet the bed all through training dying on the cold ground alone struck me with the most acute sense of heartache I have ever felt.

Now, that fog has returned. The sergeant is asleep and snoring. I hate him for it, because in between his obnoxious snores I can swear I hear footsteps outside the tent. Someone is creeping through the darkness. Someone is whispering out there. I know it. Someone has seen the light in this tent, and is now watching, waiting. Someone has just slid a bayonet out of their pocket, and is standing outside my tent! The sergeant has stopped snoring. All seems quiet. I should blow out this candle mother, but I am afraid of the-







N. Canaria.

Insula Fortunata.