The Stone Circle

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Rubi Romero *Pray*

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, "Pray," First Prize (Visual Art)

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Burned

by Amara Burghard — First Prize - Poetry

Smoky air,
Searing heat,
Painful wounds
on scorched skin.

The Remains are burning;
Ruins collapse in every direction.
Flames so bright
they drown out
the tiny flicker
of a little child's light.

Lungs are aching,
eyes so soaked,
no vision remains.
Can't speak, can't move.
Clinging to life,
but no hope to light the way.

The child lays among rubble,
begging for help.
Sacrificed on the alter
of arrogance and ambition
for a father
who never was one.

Handprints

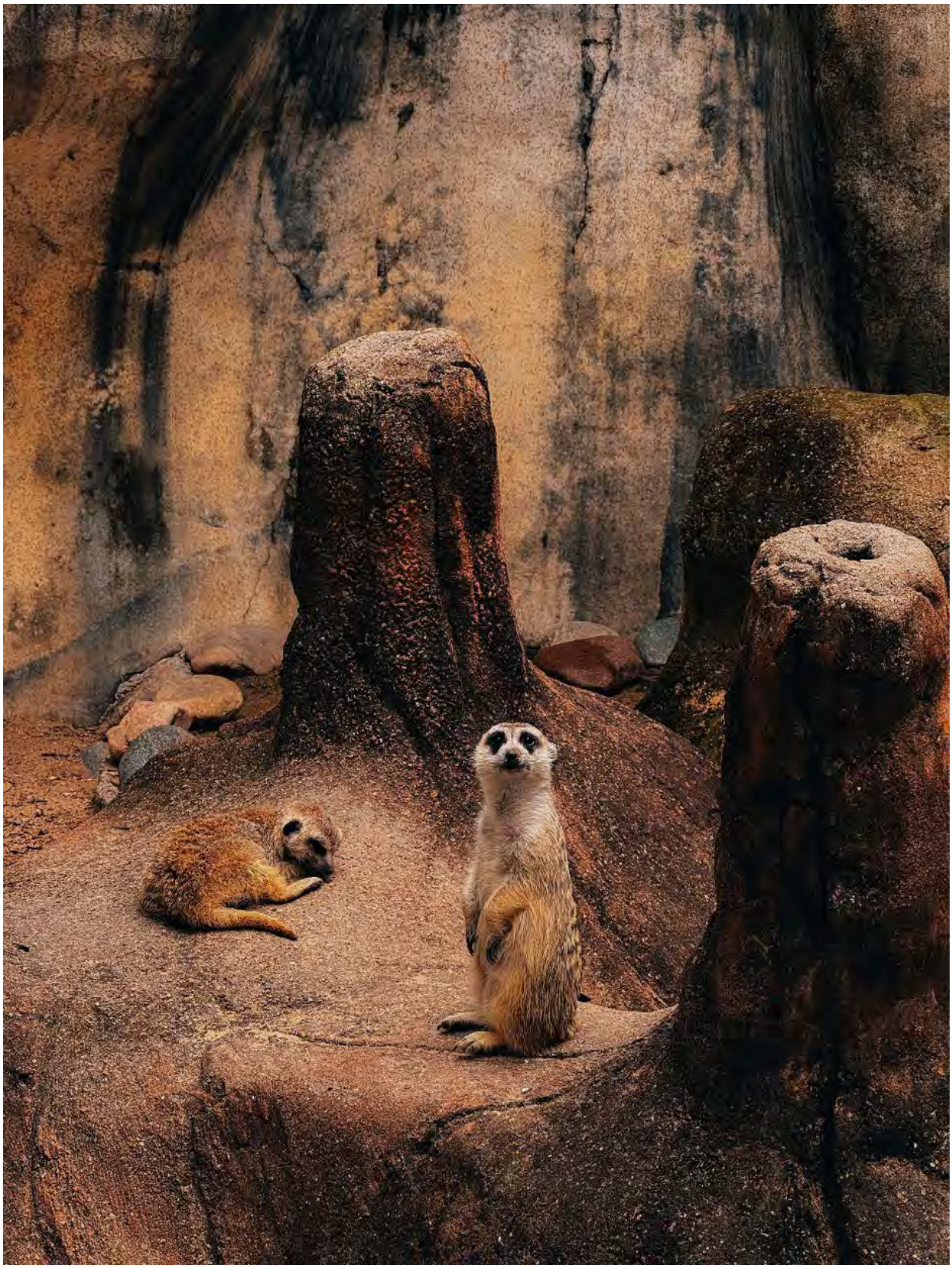
by Biff Webster — Second Prize - Poetry

I wipe down the glass.
It's what I do before we close,
along with emptying trash cans,
cleaning coffee urns,
restocking cups and lids,
Scrubbing the countertops.

I have my duties,
And throughout the day,
I get mad
When the children press their hands
on the glass display cases.

But at the end of the day,
as I wipe away hundreds of tiny handprints,
I remember that each one
belongs to a tiny life
that's just beginning,

And I can't help but smile.



Catherine Bolin
Second Prize, Visual Art

Beyond the Glass
Fall 25.1 Issue

Coahuilteco

by Maria Fernanda Cabendez First Prize - Poetry (Fall 25.1 Issue)

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 found you there.
Where I am from, my love is ~~rare~~ queer.
Never did I think I would be myself.

Wake Up!

by Carolina McNeill — Second Prize - Poetry (Fall 25.1 Issue)

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 (Fall 25.1 Issue)

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*

Ecstasy

by Amara Burghard

Glamorous gold domes from above–
Sparkling shine, sailing down.
Warmth around me–
The beats of bodies,
Rhythmic and synchronized.
Steps and stomps on smooth stone tile
Atmosphere heady with aromas;
Perfumes and feasts fill the evening air
with illusory love, exquisite imitation.

Treble, bass, tenor, soprano
They permeate the garish room,
Pushing the Elegant Ones on.
They slink and spin,
Swing and sway
Together with the symphony of the eve.

Gowns adhere to glistening skin,
Flowing and fleeting of fire, frost, and fern,
Sleek silk and satin shifts softly slip,
Draw gazes of those with sly eyes.

Suits stand sturdy and strong,
Pillars for the Light and Lively to lean on.
Yet the Ones who wear them
May crumble and collapse from
Their conniving consciousness.

Fabric with colors of shadow and sun and
Teardrops and knots of vibrant memories;
Glimpses into secrets made known
Due to a simple choice of cloth.

The night grows long, yet lingers
With the lithe footfalls
of Ladies and Lads.

This was the first for some
And the nth for others.

An experience of the young
And a taste of euphoria,
The mix of fantasy and ecstasy.

A Poet at Midnight

by Biff Webster

A poet at midnight,
A swan on a lake,
Undisturbed and tranquil–
Make no mistake.

A baron in his tower,
A smuggler in his cove,
They've taken their places.
The cook has his stove,

And the smith has his forge.
The wounded at rest,
One thing's certain:
They're where they work best.

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.

Jenny Kay
Second Prize - Visual Art

Broken Promises

Laura Stathatos
Third Prize - Visual Art

City Heights

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.

Amara Burghard *Sunset Tree*

Amara Burghard *Magnificent Moon Morn*

Laura Stathatos *Patriotic and Proud*

Save a Little

by Amara Burghard

Save a cent,
Save a dime,
Save a little
all the time.

Add a little,
Add a lot,
on the dollar,
on the dot.

Over years,
it grows and grows.

Be wise with choices.
Be smart when spending.
Be mindful with money.
Be thoughtful with time.

Balance what you have
with what you have to gain.
Balance your earned tender,
with your precious time.

Balance money
with your memories.

Choices have consequences–
some good, some bad.
They can make you rich;
They can make you poor.
Choice of current cash
or cherished memories.

So, slow down and think.
Spend time to save
and always strive to:

Save a cent,
Save a dime,
Save a little
all the time.

Add a little,
Add a lot,
on the dollar,
on the dot.

Over time,
build something
with your life.
Use a balance of
money and memories.

Yuto Goto

Coin for a Laugh

Catherine Bolin *A Dog's Purpose*

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.

Poem

by Biff Webster

There's a common rhythm in the great divide,
One that everyone can feel.
It keeps us in our wand'ring stride
And tells us how to heal.

The rhythm is many things
Hard to master,
Impossible to control.

This rhythm, this love,
whether it is a love for your brother down the street,
or a love for your sister down the coast.

It may come from the tepid swamps of the bayou country,
Or from the great, huddled masses of our cities
Soaring over the grassy plains of a continental humanity
Toward some greater love of unity and communication

The great divide is a uniquely harsh place:
The winters, colder than ever,
freezing its travellers right to the marrow.
The summers, scorching and sweltering,
bring any living creature to its knees.

The divide with its rough terrain,
Its jagged hills and narrow mountain passes,
navigation is all but impossible,
often forgone,
seen as an inevitable failure,
a fool's errand.

The great divide:
equally as hard to master
and impossible to control
As the very thing that crosses this boundless division.

The rhythm
of the divide.

Which came first?

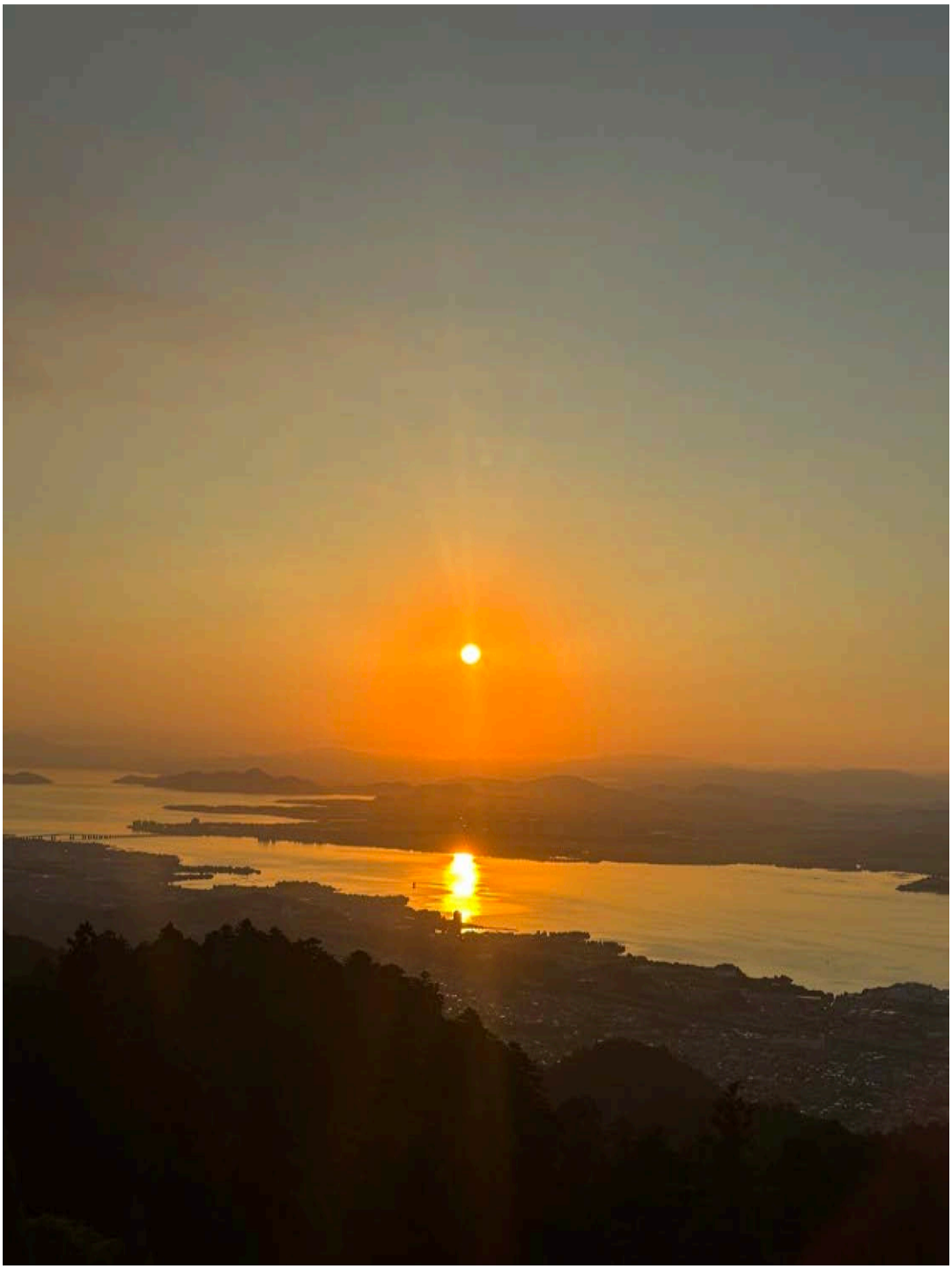
Catherine Bolin *Hope on the Horizon*

Rubi Romero
First Prize, Visual Art

Fear
Fall 25.1 Issue

River Ward
Third Prize, Visual Art

Growth
Fall 25. 1 Issue



Yuto Goto *Peaceful Horizons*

Logan Williams *Midight Counsel*

Logan Williams *Westminster Abbey*

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Thanks to all of our student artists and writers for their contributions to this issue, and 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.

Allan Paz *The Vaine*

Laura Stathatos *Vacation Getaway*

Submission deadline
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Rubi Romero *Wish*