

***TCL Expressions*** *Spring 2022*

TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

FRONT

***Storm Over the Beach***

oil, 9.5" x 8"

Jennifer Kassing,  
*Adjunct Arts Faculty*

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TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

**Welcome *Expressions***

The idea and the initial planning of *Expressions* took place before COVID and, like so many other projects, was put on hold during the pandemic, but we're happy to announce the first online publication has arrived! Students, staff, and faculty have contributed works that reflect their hearts, minds, and souls. There's beauty captured in the natural world, in the common every day and in the painful experiences of life, with a little humor sprinkled in.

Many thanks to all of those who shared their talents and parts of themselves! Thanks also to Leigh Copeland for her willingness to take on the project, Mark Rand for creatively piecing together the publication, Mindy Lucas for her skillful editing, Bernadette Macchi for giving the journal its name, and co-editor Russ Keevy for all his sage advice and guidance!

Hope you enjoy!

**Dan Herrin**  
Co-Editor

## **Comfort Zone**

**Dawson Smythe, Career Development**

*“Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” –Neale Donald*

On the day I arrived at summer camp, I looked out the car window into the tall grass flowing through the hills and the trees decorating the landscape. We passed by the fields of cows and horses all sleeping peacefully in the shade of some oak trees. I started getting cold feet thinking about what I was getting myself into. I was about to leave my family and comfort zone and begin a whole new journey. After some much-needed encouragement from my parents, we parted ways, I was thrust into the unknown, about to start a great adventure.

Besides what was listed on the outdated camp website from 2005, I had no clue what we were going to do. This being an adventure camp, we set up at different locations along our route while doing various activities. The first day at camp was a nerve-racking experience. We all gathered in this long cabin with bunk beds lining each wall. It was scary to be in a room with these complete strangers that I was supposed to spend a week in the woods with. That night we introduced ourselves and tried to get to know each other before we left for our trip.

After eating some delicious banana pancakes in the morning, we packed our backpacks and left on a bus heading towards our first activity. By this point, we started having some fun after getting to know each other the previous day. We listened to the pattering of raindrops on the roof and played games until we reached our destination and had to leave the comfort of the bus to stand in the now pouring rain. After the safety talk, I loaded myself clumsily into the kayak along with my friend who, luckily, seemed like he knew what he was doing. Despite the dreadful conditions we managed to have heaps of fun splashing the cold river water at each other while trying not to tip over. The rain really put a damper on our night as we ate soggy meatball subs in soaking wet clothes after trying to put our tents together. We woke up in the morning with the rain still coming down and got ready for the day. Having some tasteless rice, we embarked, drifting through the water watching the raindrops splash at the surface. We occasionally steered through some violent rapids which paralleled the calmer water before it. Unfortunately, we had to stop

and cancel the rest of our kayak trip due to all the rain from the previous day which made it too dangerous.

I was not sure what to expect from this next activity given that I had never gone rafting before. I was excited at first until I saw a sign reading, “Class V Rapids”, which is only second to Class VI on the difficulty scale. As we geared up, fear crept into my mind as I was about to leave my comfort zone for a second time. With our bright red life vests on, we pushed off the shore, and so went my opportunity for escape. The water was calm, and the rain had finally stopped. I learned it was all a trick and the white rapids finally showed themselves. We weaved through the rocks, while a few of us fell out and had to be pulled back in. It was a great experience working together to navigate the rocks. By our exit point, I was the one steering the boat after gaining the confidence to do so.

We drove to North Carolina with our hiking backpacks filled only with what we needed. Even with the necessities though, it felt like they weighed at least 60 pounds. We marched underneath the canopy of pinewood trees listening to the sounds of nature. We played games like “rock, paper, scissors” and had some good laughs along the way. The exciting part, however, was at camp. After setting up camp and building our

tents, the next step was to make some dinner. We prepared our normal rice meal as usual with no issues at first. Then, out of nowhere, the propane canister erupted with bright red flames. It caught everybody by surprise and by this point it was too late to close the tank. We hid behind some trees in case it exploded and as we watched, the immense heat radiated to us. The flames kept creeping higher and higher as if trying to escape from the canopy above. We tried to move the can into a small pond nearby using sticks which moved the flames away from the trees. Eventually, the flames subsided when the propane tank ran out. We looked at each other relieved not only that the fire didn’t spread and create a forest fire, but we could finish dinner after a long day of hiking. Looking back, the non-stop rain from the days before is the only reason it did not start a forest fire.

On the last day, we walked through the forest, the dirt shuffling underneath our shoes. The faint sounds of running water provided our journey with background noise along with the soothing songs from the birds. The wind was blowing gently as I looked to the left to see a group of alpacas staring right back. We talked about that strange sight all the way until we reached the wall. This wasn’t the average carnival rock climbing wall with a buzzer at the top.

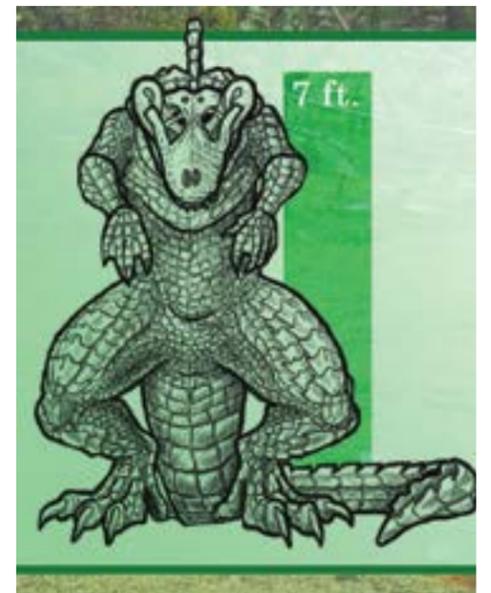
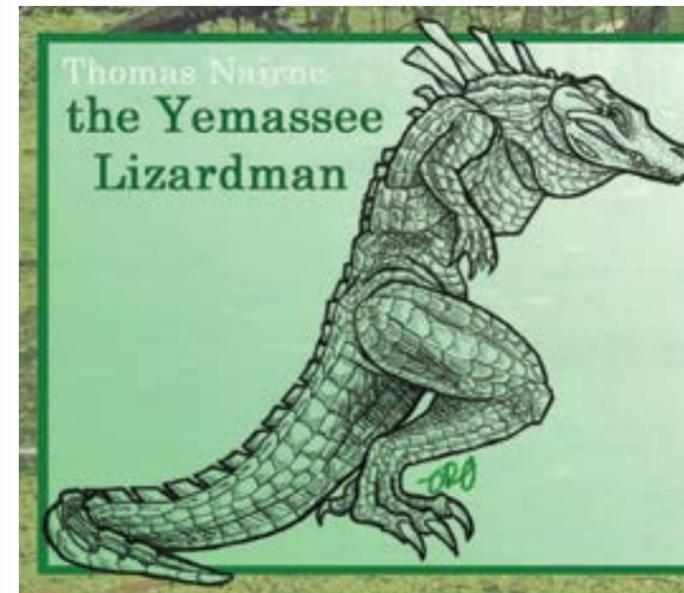
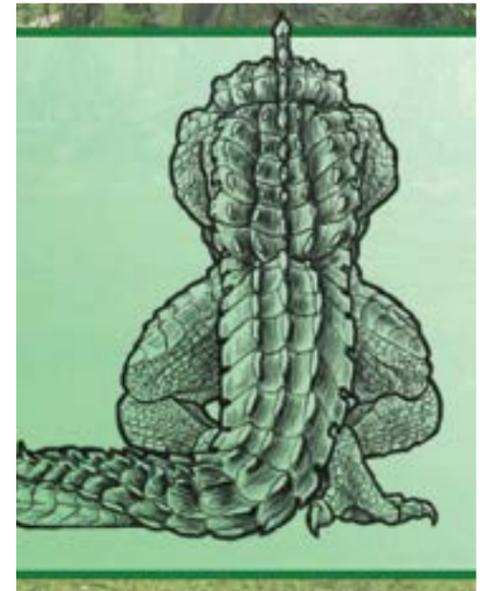
This was a 30-35-foot climb. Watching from below I tried to learn as I could from the climbers. It was finally my turn and I began to pull myself upward. Halfway up I got stuck, trying to hang onto the wall while my limbs grew tired. I searched for a way to keep moving up, but I could not find a place to reach for until I found it. Unfortunately, it was too late, and my limbs gave out on me and I was a dangling monkey. After recovering, I managed to reach the top after a difficult struggle. Even though I had some setbacks along the way, I felt like I started to live. At the top we found ourselves looking far out into the horizon seeing the sunlight bounce off a lake in the distance while the trees reached for the blue sky above. Watching the mountains that break up the

horizon line, I thought to myself, “What a wonderful world” - Louis Armstrong.

On our last night together, we gathered around the campfire as we had every night before. We laughed, told stories, and I thought to myself how crazy it is that I walked into a room full of strangers, yet that moment by the fire, I felt like I was with family. This experience taught me so much more than I ever thought possible. Most importantly though, I realized that if I had not tried these new things, I wouldn’t have had the amazing experiences I had. I wouldn’t have met these people that I will remember forever. Had I not gone on this trip, my life would not have begun, and I would have never broken out of my comfort zone.

## **Thomas Nairne, the Yemassee Lizardman** Jazzmyne Weiss, Arts & Sciences, Administrative Assistant

Thomas Nairne was a European legislator in the young Carolina colonies. In his documenting journals he promised many populations of Native Americans to be treated more fairly in the burgeoning trade economy. Nairne did not live up to this intention and on April 14th, 1715 he was killed by the slighted natives in the Pocotaligo Massacre. This event started the Yemassee War of 1715. He was reported to have been tortured to death for his transgressions. The swamps of the Lowcountry claimed him and condemned him to live among the marshes forever as the Yemassee Lizardman.



## ***Schizophrenic Thoughts***

*Olivia Qualls, Associate in Arts*

Sometimes I see dragons,  
instead of butterflies.

They tell me you are laughing,  
but I hear demons' cries.

The mirror does not tell the truth,  
my face is not my own.

I do not see the world like you,  
my phantoms you must condone.

My thoughts are clouded like the sea,  
a storm that never stills.

The clouds rain down, the rocks,  
they give me chills.

A puff of wind could be an earthquake,  
I stumble up the stairs.

The lights are fading fast my dear,  
maybe I'm dying but no one cares.

## ***Untitled***

*Olivia Qualls, Associate in Arts*

**Crack. Hiss.**  
The sound of my motivation.  
My happy grimace, my sad bliss.

**Grumble. Groan.**  
The pain of false love.  
My broken heart, my soul shown.

**Smash. Bang.**  
The anger on the pavement.  
My bloody tears, my clean fangs.

**Click. Whimper.**  
The sound of a weapon.  
My volatile finger, my betrayed temper.

**Heave. Gasp.**  
The smell of deadly blunders.  
My guilty hope, my screwed past.

**Inhale. Sigh.**  
The relief is a crime.  
My new future, my finished fight.



**The Gemsbok**

Alexis Simmons,  
*Business Administration*



**The Bongo**



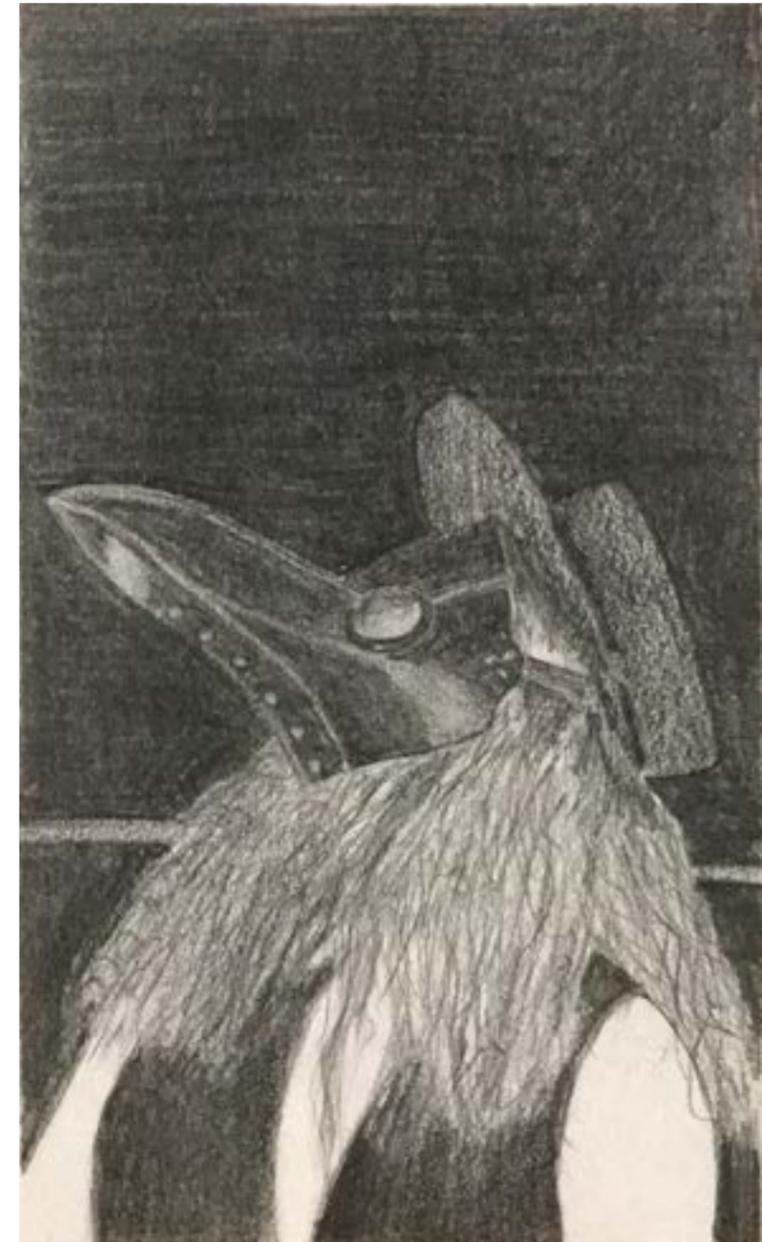
**The Cheetah**



**The Dama**



Kristin Harriott,  
*Career Development*



**Untitled**  
**Olivia Payne,**  
*Career Development*

You grow quietly  
Yet, massively  
The sun glances through every nook and cranny  
The moon rises up from behind your peaks  
Shielding from the wind  
Garnering the rain  
Your beauty is implausible  
But not far-fetched  
And you continue to grow quietly  
Yet, massively

**Stepdad**  
**Russel Carpio, Nursing**

**Nobody will ever compare to you.**  
From the moment you walked in, you were an angel.  
You protected me like I was your own.  
You did not cut my wings, you taught me how to fly,  
and at the end of the day I knew I could always return to your arms.  
You made a joke out of the genes, I didn't have your eyes,  
but I got your strength, and I know one day I will be okay.  
I did not have your last name, but now I wish,  
    legal documents were never our thing.  
From kindergarten through high school, you were always there,  
you drove me each morning and pick me up late.  
You were not a "stepdad" you were my dad, I will always remember you.  
Always in my heart.  
I am mad at the distance, I am mad at myself,  
I am mad that I couldn't see you on that last day.  
My heart is aching as I let you go...  
It is hard to do so, it is hard to move on.  
You were not a "stepdad" you were my dad,  
saying goodbye was never my plan.  
I am grateful for the time that we had, you raised a good daughter,  
I hope you are proud.  
We were running out of time, but we didn't know.  
I wish time was timeless, but we are running on the same clock.  
I will meet you again, but not as soon, I will work for our dreams,  
and make them come true.  
Promise I won't cry, sometimes is just hard.  
I had the best dad, hope you know that.

**Toxic best friend**  
**Jasmyn Torrence,**  
*Surgical Technology*

To be honest I feel like depression is one of my toxic best friends because it's the only person to be around me when nobody else is around and then it tells me I shouldn't call or text my friends because I'm being too needy and then I go weeks or months on end without having contact with them and all I'm left with is them, depression right there by my side always whispering in my ear about what I could do better, how I could do better. This is why I don't have friends.

**Tom & Alex**  
**Clayton Hughes,** *Humanities & Social Sciences*

Tom waited patiently in the back of the bar. He frequented it often and never expected Alex to meet him there. Tom always thought Alex was the worst kind of a snob - a snob of alcohol. Tom had two standards: cheap beer, and good beer. After waiting a few minutes, Alex finally showed up. He found Tom easily in the back of the vacant room. They quickly hugged, said their hellos, and sat for a conversation.

Alex started, "How's my dear friend?"

Tom answered with the usual, expecting Alex would give him some humble brag of barely meeting his expectations for the quarter. "Oh so-so, same old."

The bartender came by and asked Alex what he'll be drinking.

"Same as him," shrugging the bartender off.

Tom and Alex were friends for the greater part of their lives. They were dorm mates, but now in their fifties. They pursued different paths with very different outcomes, but still remained in touch. It's not frequent, but they make it on occasion. Since Alex began his career, their visits grew few. Alex had this annoying habit of frequently looking at his watch when he needed to leave for a late-night meeting, or

hosting a dinner party. For whatever reason, the watch stayed hidden this time, and Tom questioned why.

Alex carried the conversation, prodding Tom to tell him more about his family.

Tom sipped his beer, "My wife's doing well. Just finished her degree."

"Nursing was it?"

"Yep, just finished the program."

"Congratulations to your wife, that's great news!"

"And your wife?"

"She is doing well. Still working at the insurance company, actually."

"Wow! She's been there 20 years!?" Tom asked in a jabbing voice, "Now, I never asked this, but why even bother?"

"Huh?"

"I mean, don't play stupid. You got the money, why do you let her work?"

"Well, because she likes to Tom. She likes to feel fulfilled, useful."

"You don't make her feel useful?"

"Tom, she likes the work, I don't tell her what to do. I don't tell anyone what to do."

Alex's success changed him over the years, he felt he was too high brow for most people, but Tom always kept his resentments to subtle hints

and sneers, ensuring to never offend him - or make himself look weak.

A silence grew in the conversation and they both reached for their beers.

"I went to a therapist." Tom stared at Alex in disbelief. Alex? In therapy?

"I was unhappy in a lot of ways, Tom. I flaunted it, I gave myself high standards - in every dimension. I wouldn't have even come to this bar if you asked me a year ago." Tom's hand was around the fresh, cold glass, but he didn't notice the cold pinching his fingers.

"It took a lot of me. I appreciate you always being there for me. For our meetups. Been a long time, you and I."

He's dodging, he knows what's going on. He's bluffing, he's pitying me.

"Yeah. That's nice."

Alex was now ready for this to end, but Tom followed with questions.

"And your son? He's doing ok?"

"I better hope so" He chuckled. "In college, we were never ok."

Tom nodded and shared the laughter, only his laughter was a bit restrained. Another swig at the beer and Alex had changed his mind about leaving early. He was reminded of their old friendship days in the dorm.

He signaled for another drink, and after three, Tom grew brazen.

"I wanna cut to the chase," Tom was drunk, but it was a sober tone, something bottled up.

"Um, the chase?"

"My daughter is dating someone."

"Ok, you want us to... kill him?"

Alex belted this out with a drunk laugh. The bartender looked over.

"Do you know who she's dating, Alex?" Tom wasn't smiling.

"Now, how would I know that?"

"Funny you should say. It's your son" Alex stopped and put the glass down.

"My son is dating your daughter? They both go to the same university, don't they?" Alex too spoke in a clear and sharp tone. "Yes," Tom said in a thunderous voice. The bartender looked over again.

"I mean, is it really that bad? What are you on about?"

"She's telling me they've been dating for a year." Alex sat up in a flash. The hairs on the back of his head stood. He couldn't believe his own son kept this a secret from him. But more than anything, he was angry that Tom found this out before he did.

"He didn't even ask for my blessing."

Alex didn't answer. He was still in shock. Alex didn't care about the blessing. He knew his son wouldn't take no for an answer.

"Don't act surprised Alex. I know it was you behind this." Alex snapped out of his silence.

"What are you on about!"

"Don't play games with me!"

"I don't know what you're talking about!"

"I'm talking about this!" Tom pointed to Alex's wallet, then grabbed his wrist to reveal a Rolex - but there was only a cheap Timex. Alex pulled away, "Okay, what? What!"

"Oh don't give me that. We both know you love to sit high above me. And then you come in with all your therapy crap. I don't buy it."

"What does any of this have to do with your daughter and my son?"

"Your son is going to be just like you. And he is going to do the same thing you do, he'll flaunt his Rolex, he'll shine his Mercedes next to my Corolla. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, Alex!"

"Tom, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I've made you feel that way in the past. I know, I know. I did, I loved to flaunt, but that's got nothing to do with my son, he's a good kid! And for God's sake, look at me, I go to therapy twice a week! I threw out my Rolex! I don't want to be obsessed like that. To live like that.

And my son isn't me - not the old me, anyway. And I'm not better than you."

"You aren't better than me!"

"I just said that!"

"No you didn't."

Alex knew at that moment he had lost his best friend to resentment, to inferiority.

You're going to tell your son to break up with her. I can't do that. Because my daughter is under the illusion it's real, and she'd forever hate me if I tried."

Alex got off his chair and grabbed his coat.

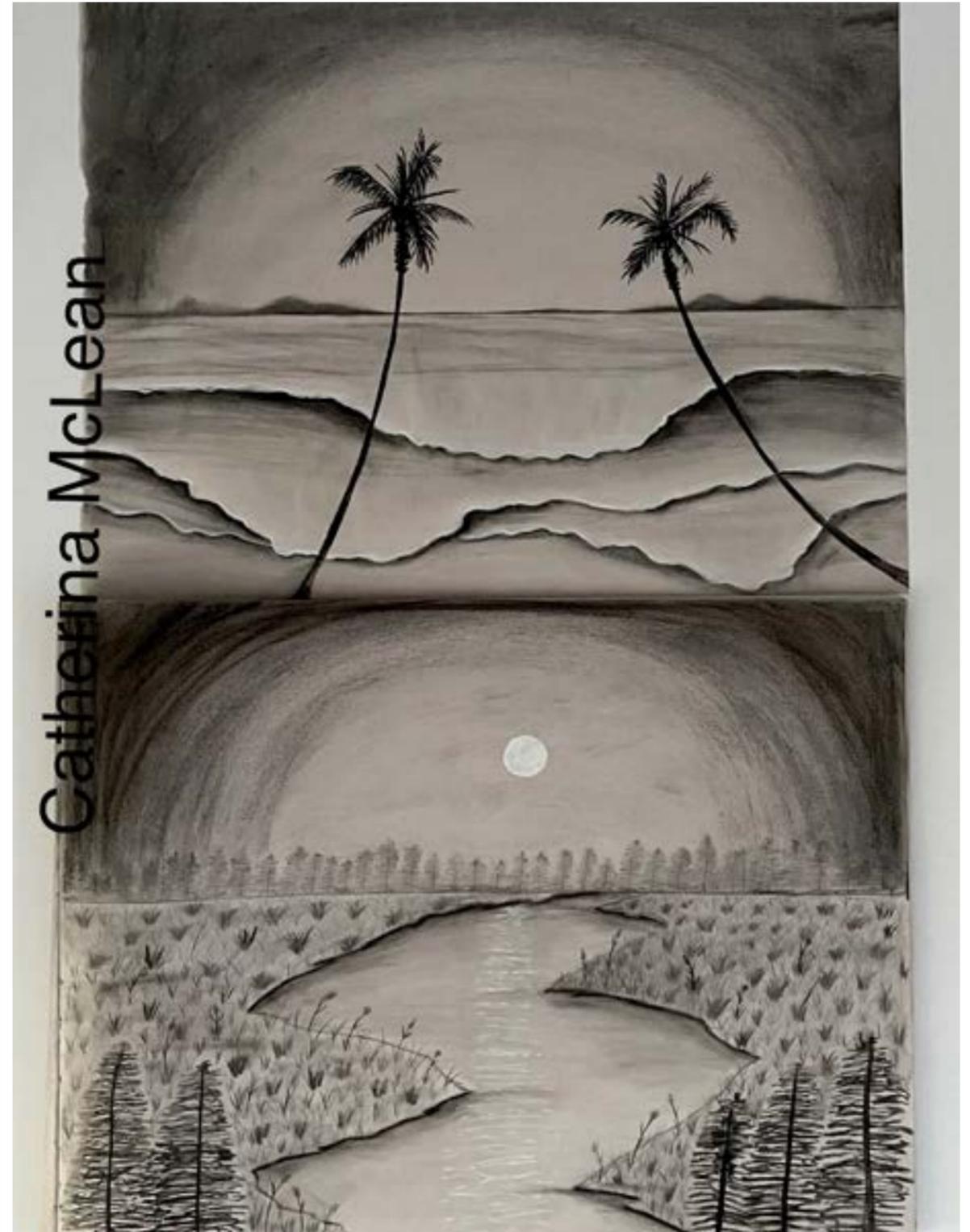
"Ever since your daughter's birthday party four years ago, she's all my son has talked about." Tom stared up at him with glossy eyes, clutching his empty beer glass with a frozen hand.

"When he found out she was going to NYU, he applied. Your daughter and my son used to write letters to each other. You probably didn't know about that because, like me, you were so wrapped up in your own head."

"I'm not gonna get in their way. And you aren't either. They might get married, they might have a family, and I hope you and I would be one, too."

Alex left the bar, and Tom stared at an empty glass, playing Tom's words over in his head. "And I'm better than you."

Catherina Mclean, *Associate in Arts*





Catherina Mclean

**Untitled**  
Olivia Wolfe-Gay, *Career Development*

My father, once a hero  
A man to whom you couldn't say no  
Now with less hair,  
Bound to a chair  
Unable to lift a pen  
Contrary to way back when  
Because of a shaky hand  
Due to an incident, unplanned  
Once mobility and agility  
Has yet turned to humility  
My father, now a man subject to disability



Click to view, or visit  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=cCexf3m0avM&feature=youtu.be>

Denise Charles,  
*Associate in Arts*



Daniel Herrin, *English Instructor*



***As Kind as Thee***

Olivia McKeehan, *Career Development*

So desperate to be loved  
He sat waiting in despair  
For a young lively woman to walk by  
For any woman to care

Roses at the ready  
His palms a little sweaty  
Timidly he walked to each beautiful woman

For each no he got  
His heart began to rot  
For no woman wanted a man  
As kind as thee

As the sun began to rise  
His hope filled up the skies  
For it was a new day

New roses were needed  
The man hastily preceded  
To the only woman he hadn't noticed before

But now the man could see  
That she was as beautiful and as kind as thee  
She was the woman selling the roses



# TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

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