

March 2020

Perennial



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Detail of *Another Man's Treasure* by HCCC Faculty Laurie Riccadonna

(NOTHING ON) THE SURFACE IS PERMANENT

By

Karen Galli

7 twelve plates, once a supercontinent until convection currents pulled it apart – are flowing distinctions, five times over.

When the cracks erupted and water filled between, the plates craved unity and searched of their broken crusts. Perimeters have always sought to reshape, plates continue to grow where they pull apart, shrink where they collide together.

1

If the world we live in requires that we figure out the details of here and now and you and me, I wonder what you will choose when I've given everything I've given.

At the end of something near, is it truly near or are you standing on the sidewalk next to a puddle?

You see, our hearts condition disbelief, fear that this is the last of the bunch, or don't think this is the ending to remember. But I diligently wait for people to tire and someday you'll walk away.

That promise requires me to hang on to things that I can live with, without you.

2

These interactions contour Earth's surface – oceans form where magma rises, cracks widen and plates tear – water becomes a conductor force, continent to continent, filling gaping lines in faults.

3

Embed the stillness of existence into sudden thought, camera in hand – this is how I see you. The photographs, they deflect your usual never wanting notice.

With a dial of the aperture, everything before you, behind all else ceases to be clear. Your teaching me the mechanics embodies a reflection of what you see in what I could become, if you allow me to be what you want me to be.

4

Adjoining continents resist the edges of water, so water reciprocates nebbishly filling oceans, and in instances dehydrated plates crack again.

If the ocean plates should subduct, chains of volcanic islands form and become a string of beautiful islands, like the Philip-

pinos or say, in our city, all the places we've ever been.

5

Theorists and cynics alike believe that we are born the person we are to be – our entities over a lifetime will repeatedly restructure themselves into the cerebral form we currently are. So, at four, we exhibit the proclivities that distinguish you from me. Then you are already you, the you that everyone will some day meet, or the you that only you will have met.

And, if a big part of me is the you that I learn to love?

6

Eventually the plates again will unite, melting back into the mantle, recycle knowing nothing on the surface is permanent.

These are the explanations of things we must carry.

Karen Galli is an Instructor in the English Division. Her poetry explores identity and ambivalence. Her other love is educational technology tools.



SHE

By

Jennifer Franqui

She can be a mother, a daughter, a granddaughter, a great granddaughter for she is the gateway to life.

She can be the venom that brings you hatred, and heart-break.

The venom that steals your peace, your joy, and your happiness.

Or she can be the antidote that nurtures your heart and soul with all that

was taken away. Whether she was born one or transitioned into one, her essence

of power and beauty is still there. Whether it's a he, another she, or they, her love is limitless.

She can do whatever her heart desires. No one can tell her otherwise, not even man himself.

She is beautiful, creative, innovative, caring, loving, passionate, powerful, wild,

Seductive, courageous, and everything in between.

She is a woman.



Monika Sosnowski's *Emma's hand on branch*

Jennifer Franqui is a Against Ableism club. Franqui Computer Arts major here at HCCC. She is also the first spare time. president of the new Students



A Woman of Substance

By

Linda Tiscornia

A woman of substance
has no limitations

Her determination is like
the last leaf that clings to a
branch on a windy fall day

Adversity just gives her at-
titude; survival is part of her ge-
netic code

Life with its disappoint-
ments, failures, loss of love

Fortifies her with hope
drawn from within her soul

Strength imbues from the
spirit of her ancestors

Some qualities she will em-

ulate, others she must avoid

Mistrust her softness, her
vulnerability, for underneath
there is a supernatural creature
that has evolved

Into this woman of sub-
stance

Is this world ready for her?

*Linda Tiscornia is a retired
high school teacher of Math-
ematics. She is currently an Ad-
junct Professor of Mathematics
at Hudson County Community
College.*

*Being a cancer survivor,
Linda expresses her feelings
through poetry.*



Mahogany Venus in Blue/Gold

By

Iliana Quintanilla

I've fallen for you over
and over. So much, that part of
me wants to let you go.

I know you're every wom-
an but on your own, it's as if I'm
meeting my orisha.

Your scent's like tea tree
and jasmine / palo santo / cin-
namon & honey

I like your shadows. I can
see your sunken places / the in-
finite.

Love/power and modesty.
This is about you for you.

But since I'm fawning over
myself, here, you should know:

I see you in my friends. I
see you in myself. Tobacco and
Chanel.

You're leaving the ocean
and the rain suddenly sparkles.

Did I say I love you? I do.

You're not anywhere/ no
clothes define you/ no expecta-
tions on you. Just you.

I think I'm praying to you.
If God is real, you would be it.
And I know that sounds preten-
tious,



Danielle Friedman

but maybe it should be true.
Spread your crown to us. Heal
us.

We need you. I do.

When kisses feel like war.
And hugs feel like lies.

When I cry midday in the
back of a car. I need you.

And if I hurt/ no one sees it.
And if they did/ there's no con-

sequences.

You're everything and ev-
eryone. Love and fairness. Safe.

You're not unreachable/ ab-
sent/ high-handed. You're there
waiting to move, mesmerize,
dance. Still God. Never
small. When I believe in you, I
am alive but not dying.

Never settled. Hey, profes-

sor, God's a woman.

*Iliana Quintanilla is an
HCCC English major. She
wrote this poem in response to
the painting "Mahogany Ve-
nus in Blue/Gold" showing at
the 2019 HCCC Student Art
Exhibit, Dineen Gallery. It
is published here with her
permission*



My Mother Was Not an Angry Black Woman. She Was Just Sad.

By

Sharon Benjamin

“Don’t Call Me Hot

Tamale” is an article that I use in class. Its essence is the stereotypes laid upon Judith Ortiz Cofer, an educated Latina, who is an established author and speaker. Nevertheless, she is often viewed as “just another Latina female.” My students and I have a lively discussion about the various stereotypes associated with other genders and ethnicities, and invariably, the “angry black woman” makes its way into the lineup. This got me to thinking about a conversation that I had with one of my sisters after my mother’s passing and how we ceremoniously “mislabelled” my mother as being a “mean/angry black woman.” After rereading, Ortiz’s article,” I revised my stance on what appeared to be my mother’s demeanor. I take it back. **My Mother Was Not an Angry Black Woman. She Was Just Sad.**

“I always wanted to be a teacher,” were words my mother repeated up to the end of her 75 years of life in October 2002. “How could that possibly happen?” you might ask. You see, at the young age of 16, with only an eighth-grade education, my mother, Hattie Lee Croom, married my father, 27-year-old, Lenzie Marshall, Sr., who had a third-grade education. She gave birth to her first child when she was 17; her second at 18; third at 20, and on-and-on to age 28, when I, child number eight, was

born, ending with my last sibling when my mother was 40 years old.

Most of my formative years were spent in a four-room house with no running water; wood-burning heaters and stoves that often lacked enough fire wood; a toilet down the hill and a slop jar at night; that, on cold winter mornings, greeted us with fro-

birth, late July. Imagine being a fully pregnant, 28-year old, ready to deliver, and working in the hot Southern sun. I don’t know how she did it.

“I always wanted to be a teacher” were Mother’s famous words. She talked about her teachers’ influence on her life – their values, morals, and instruction. Knowing and real-

much was lacking – education, skills, and abilities. Mother was more adept at handling the meager funds that were brought into the house. She would scrounge money from our field work and from her scattered domestic jobs to buy and store food for the winter. It was a never-ending journey for her. It was my mother who took the role in opening credit accounts at furniture and clothing stores to buy us new bedding, school clothes and supplies. She also kept up with the one-dollar-a-week newspaper subscription. She wanted more. **My Mother Was Not an Angry Black Woman. She Was Just Sad.**

Sometimes my father worked on construction jobs in other states. My mother was left to fend for the house – for safety and for nourishment. Imagine that. A young woman in the South, living in the country with no driver’s license, no transportation, a house full of children, and no telephone. It’s difficult for me to fathom my mother’s inner turmoil, the nights she must have cried herself to sleep, or not slept at all, only to rise the next morning to the same bleakness.

It showed in her face - an expression of worry. Some termed it “a mean look.” There must be a lot of Black women who have been mislabeled as “Angry Black Women” whose plights might have been, or are somewhat, similar to my mother’s on some levels, and, perhaps, even more dreary. If you have never walked in the shoes of a Black woman, don’t try to diagnose her “condition.”

(Continued on page 22)



Katherine Niewodowski's *The Spheres 34*

zen water in the water bucket. We had to thaw out the pump in the backyard by building a fire around it to get water. Mother rose each morning to make breakfast – fresh biscuits and whatever else she could put together for a meal. I don’t know how she did it. And, she kept on doing it – winter, spring, summer, and fall. **My Mother Was Not an Angry Black Woman. She Was Just Sad.**

Besides home labor, my mother also worked in the fields chopping and picking cotton, fruits, and vegetables. I was told that she was working in the fields up to the time for my

izing her own situation, Mother encouraged my siblings and me to study, to get an education, to learn proper penmanship, and to respect our teachers. Although my mother never learned to drive, somehow, she attended parent/teacher conferences, school events, and graduations. My mother wanted more for us than she ever enjoyed. **My Mother Was Just Sad.**

My parents were married for almost 53 years before Daddy died in 1995. I do believe that Daddy did the best that he could with what he had in terms of knowledge and resources, but, unfortunately, so

A Mother's Day Tribute

“A Brief Biography of Hattie Lee”

By

Sharon Benjamin

There was a young lady,
Who didn't live in a shoe.
She had a lot of children,
But she knew what to do.

Seven boys and six girls,
Thirteen in all,
She nurtured each one,
In her high-pitched Southern drawl.

Although at times,
Not much food for a meal,
This young lady had a way,
And she certainly had a will.

She always found something,
She gave us what she had,
Made the food stretch for us all,
And she never called us bad.

After we had been fed,
We sat patiently at her feet.
We weren't whipped and sent to bed,
But she gave us another treat.

She gathered us children,
All around her knee,
We all gathered closely,
In order to hear and see.

The one book we had,
Hattie Lee opened with pride,
She read with excited emphasis,
And we put distractions aside.

Little did she know,
That with just an 8th grade education,
While she didn't travel far,
Her influence would span the nation.

Not just her children,
But her next of kin,
Are reaping the benefits,
Because her time, she did lend.

Children she wanted to teach,
Was what Hattie Lee always said,
Now, even in her death,
Thousands, she continues to reach.

And, now I say, “Thanks,”
With gratitude and pride,
To my mother, Hattie Lee,
Whose influence,

will forever abide.

Sharon Benjamin is a New Jersey transplant from the farmland of Tennessee with over 30 years of teaching experience. She retired from public education in 2013 and now works as a speech, composition, and reading adjunct. You can connect with Sharon on Facebook - “Randall Sharon Benjamin,” and on LinkedIn - “Sharon Benjamin,” where she has published over 60 articles covering such topics as marriage, family, education, and self-help. Sharon is also a children's author.



Katherine Niewodowski's *The Spheres* 33

Arranged Marriage in a Life and in Fiction

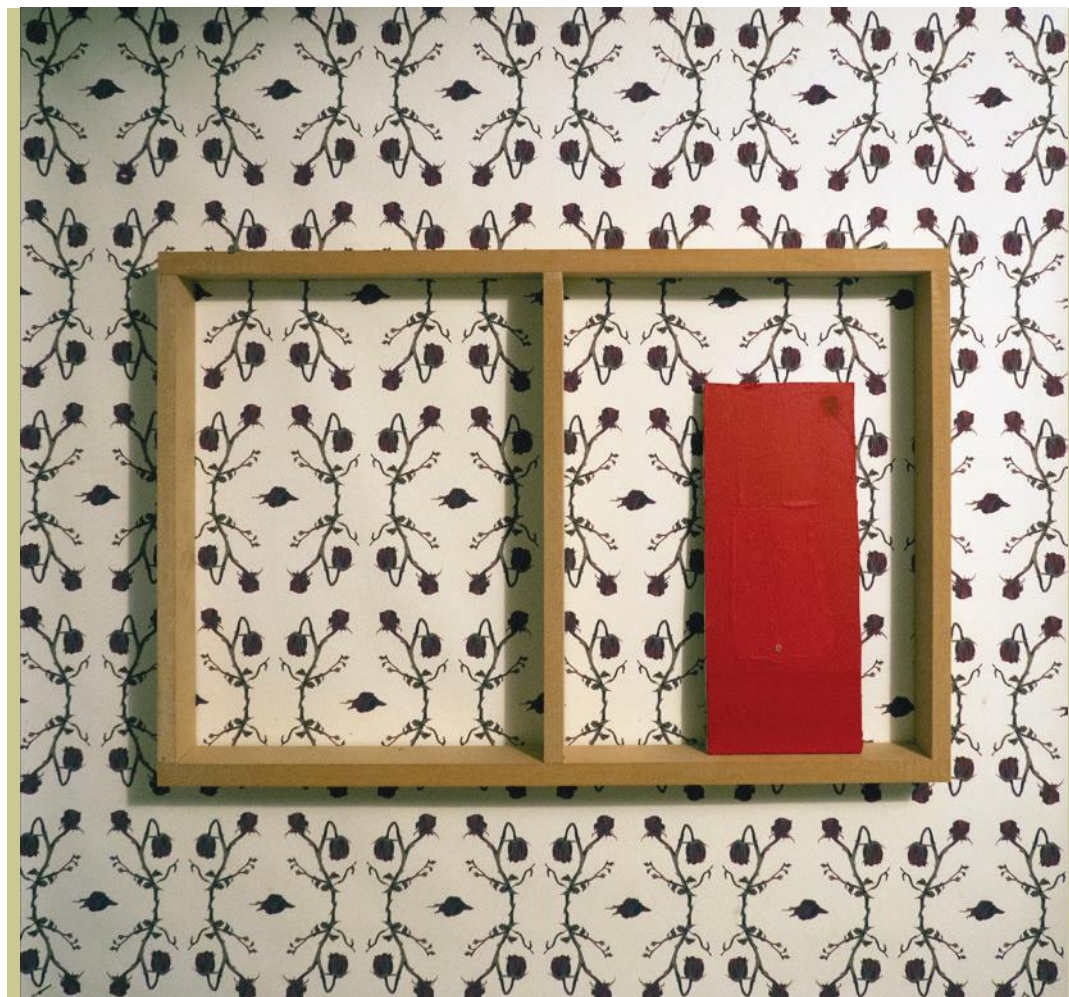
By

Linda Joy Miller

At the beginning of Jhumpa Lahiri's short story "The Third and Final Continent," the nameless expatriated 36-year-old narrator had been living and working in London as a bachelor for five years. The year was 1969, and like many of the young Bengali men among whom he was living, the expat had travelled to London from India to educate and establish himself abroad. Soon, the expat was offered a job at a library at M.I.T. in Boston—a job whose salary would allow him to support a wife. A quick marriage was then arranged for him by his elder brother, and so on his way to Boston the expat stopped briefly in India in order to marry a complete stranger named Mala. In the story, the expat claims that at the time, he thought about this marriage "with neither objection nor enthusiasm." It was simply a "duty", something that was "expected of every man."

Immediately following the wedding, the expat went ahead to Boston without his wife. It is no surprise that by the time Mala arrived in Boston six weeks later, the new couple was no more acquainted with each other than one would be with a new neighbor. The story goes on to describe in detail the first weeks that the couple spent together in America, the awkward painful loneliness of two people thrown through custom into matrimony and through geopolitics into a new country with neither family nor familiarity to support them.

I read "The Third and Fi-



Taryn Pizza

nal Continent" last fall. It was required reading for an undergraduate Princeton University course called "Multi-ethnic American Short Stories". I was auditing this course through the Princeton University Community College Faculty Program as part of a sabbatical from HCCC. I had chosen it in the hope that it would both provide new content for my own courses and add to my understanding of the immigrant students that our institution serves. Mala was a fictional character in Lahiri's story, but how many Malas have sat at

a desk in one of your classrooms or in mine?

Twelve or so years ago, there was a young Indian woman in one of my ESL writing classes who had arrived in Jersey City as a young bride a few years earlier. In the Indian tradition, her marriage had been arranged, and she had left her own family to begin a new life in a new country with virtual strangers—her husband and his parents. At the beginning, she was extremely angry about being uprooted from all that had been familiar to her and she fought

hard against acclimating to her new situation. She gave her husband the cold shoulder. She didn't talk much or eat. She was sullen and determined to stay that way forever. Though her dejected attitude did not change for many months, her husband was not unkind. He more or less left her alone. One day, she got very ill. She had to be hospitalized and her condition was precarious. During her illness, her husband was beside himself with concern and doted on her both in the hospital and once

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ATTITUDES

By

Sibyl Ponder

*A*ttitude tells a lot
About a person's life
It can pinpoint all kinds
of inward things, especially strife.

Attitude will affect the
way a person thinks
An attitude will determine
whether he soars or sinks.

Attitude towards others
Comes from self-esteem
Really thinking well of
self will cause you to beam.

Attitude can determine whether
you win or lose.
Positive thoughts will brighten
every path you choose.
Take time throughout the day
to check your attitude,
and if you evaluate things correctly,
it will be one of gratitude.
Gratitude for all the things
That you possess
How by life itself,
You have been blessed.
Gratitude that you can hear,
and think and smell and touch,
And never really experience lack
Because you have so much.

Remember, it's your attitude
that can reject or compel.
So let your attitude be
one that will fare you well.

Sibyl Ponder is an adjunct instructor in the English/ESL division at HCCC. She has been an educator for over 35 years and has worked at HCCC since 2012.



Woolpunk's *Walking Palm*, 2018, Yarn and Found Repurposed Tree Branches, 14 feet tall

My Memere's Prayer

By

Angela Hebert

*M*y grandmother, or in French Canadian/Acadian parlance, my Memere, knows that I don't share everything. For her, life is challenge; one, in her estimation, we should never give up on nor complain about. If we do concede, give in, even for a moment, then we might be taken down. It's an ancestral value that is imposed on me, powerful and for this reason, almost impossible for me to dismiss. The resolute and good-humored great-great grandparents Belonie and Elise, come to mind. Belonie didn't let go as the milking cow dragged him around the field not wanting to enter the barn for the night. So, he opted instead to be dragged pell-mell like a water skier tethered to a speedboat.

When I accepted mobility and orientation training with a long cane after I decided finally to be registered as legally blind, I declared, "This is great!" to my surprised instructor. "I can move safely down these uneven sidewalks! Let's go!"

Blind in my right eye since birth, and always at the cusp of legal blindness in my left, my life-long visual impairment was now visible to the public. It was then that I had a telephone conversation with my Memere. Not about how severe my sight loss had become. Not about my disability being visible to the public. I'm sure Memere would have cared less what people thought. She would have been worried though that I hid my foldable white cane in my bag at work, using a walking cane



Monika Sosnowski's Footprints, Van Buskik Island

instead until I was off campus. She would also understand that I didn't have energy to mop up others' emotions, if I used the long white cane I needed on campus. I had already been grabbed by well-meaning strangers in Penn Station. One had asked to pray over me. While my colleagues might not have been so uncouth, most human beings experience discomfort around a noticeably visually impaired/blind person. My capability in all things would likely be questioned. Memere and I know what the world is like.

Not everyone would be like the marvelous students to

whom I had, out of necessity, disclosed my status. Keep raising your hand, and you might get a very tired arm, I advised. "28 BOLD!" with fists in the air, was their rallying cry on assignment days. Then ones who would venture, with me, a blind joke or two. Thank you.

Instead, although all this was transpiring, I asked her about my father's time at the Sacred Heart Brothers, a French Order in Rhode Island. My father left our town, Biddeford, Maine, to become a Brother at the age of 12. To this day, I still have his scarred black trunk with his name HEBERT stenciled in

bright yellow. He had left the school after only a month. I had been told that Memere had visited him, travelling from Maine, and he had been so lonely and homesick, sitting on the edge of his little bed, head bent and crying, that she had decided to take him home. Perhaps I wanted to hear what drew him to join the order. Had my 12-year-old father sought spiritual solace?

Once registered as legally blind, it is still possible to experience sight that worsens. Mine was worsening on a weekly basis. I needed to hold on and to not panic. This time Memere said something she had never

said before in all of her recollections of this story.

"They didn't want him anymore."

"What do you mean?"

"Because of his sight."

"What, Memere? What?"

"He couldn't keep up with the other boys and do what they could do. Make his bed perfectly at 5 am, and all the rest. So, they said I should take him home."

I had never heard this before.

"Really, Memere?"

Had I told any family member about my registered blind status and had word gotten back to her? No, I hadn't.

"They didn't know how to help him. It made him feel terrible. He was very sad for a long time. They were wrong to do that."

"That wasn't right," I managed to say. In fact, I felt so much I couldn't speak.

"No. It wasn't. And you know all the things your father ended up doing. Getting jobs. Raising his family. Becoming assistant grocery manager after stocking shelves."

She spoke defiantly.

"He did everything he wanted to do. But they didn't know about that."

This first time of hearing this: a small keyhole opening in one of the many doors behind which was my secret. My father died from causes related to Marfan syndrome in 1975. I inherited Marfan from my dad. His 33 years of life had impacted us all. I could pretend in a way that I hadn't heard my Memere really. Perhaps she had been, although never confused, momentarily confused. Or maybe I was.

I think my grandmother had always known that my having serious visual impairment was not easy and that the world is harsh. She had al-

ways known, and it was I who thought keeping my real status, my real needs secret was necessary.

Why would I think such secrecy necessary? Besides the family training? Perhaps because 70 percent of people who are blind or visually impaired are unemployed. Maybe because one of the few colleagues I confided in at the end of that semester of teaching with the white cane folded in my bag, had said, "How will you teach?" although we were standing in the classroom where in minutes, I would do just that.

And because when I informed the college that I needed time for eye surgery, my job was threatened. I had had other leaves due to Marfan. Each time, I experienced personal anguish. I hated the feeling of being yanked out of the game. Initially it was suggested that if I took a leave, there might not be a position for me in the Fall semester. Not an unexpected response, unfortunately, as those living with a disability know. And the cause for years

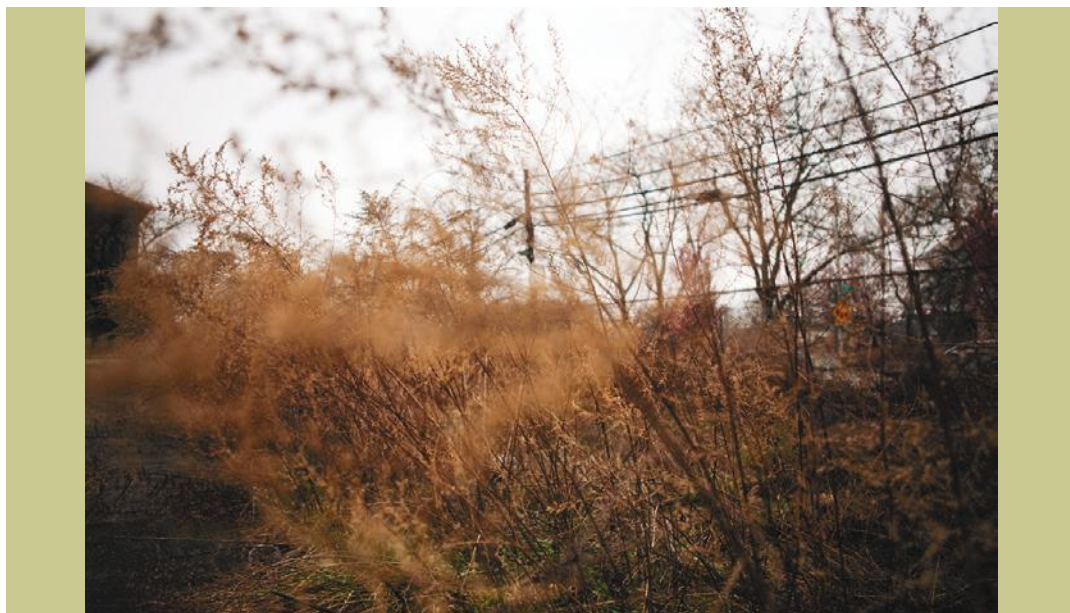
of reticence.

After weeks of stress and confusion, and with the unflagging dedication of then Recording Secretary, now President of the PA, Michael Ferlise, a process became clear. Michael, through those weeks of uncertainty, was an ally of great sensitivity and humor, who best of all, knew to laugh at my blind jokes. He not only did all he could to help me keep a position that is my life's work, but he offered me understanding and support almost daily. My family and I feel such gratitude for him. I was to fill out leave paperwork through NJ State Temporary Disability. Thank goodness my husband could help me with completing the form, as the form was not made accessible for a visually impaired person.

Simultaneously, I had received training in mobility orientation instruction and assistive technology from the NY State Commission for the Blind, while also searching for a surgeon who might agree to undertake an eye surgery, complex, due to the fragility of Mar-

fan tissue. That search ended on our second visit to the Harkness Eye Institute at the Columbia University Hospital. Drs. Lama Al-Aswad and Jason Horowitz brainstormed, as Columbia Fellow, Dr. Wang, my husband, Don and I listened. Until Don piped up: "What about femto-second laser surgery?" The two great surgeons began to consider it, until it was obvious that they were both excited. They would give it a try. Dr. Al-Aswad indicated it was an out-of-pocket expense. 1200 dollars. I was told Don had taken out his wallet and was proceeding down the hall to put down half. Ever practical, Dr. Al-Aswad told me our money would be returned, if it didn't work. Dr. Horowitz drolly said he would be honored to be on stand-by should the lenses of my eye need to be "fished out" – a possible complication. Laser procedures, common in the general population, were controversial in the treatment of people with Marfan syndrome. On February 22, 2017, the surgery Dr. Al-Aswad performed, without the

(Continued on page 24)



Monika Sosnowski's Weeds

Who You Callin' a Bitch?!

By

Alyssa Smith

Do you hate me?
Do you wish to see me in pain?
Your words cut me deep.
Look as the blood from my soul leaks
out onto my face.
The blood you spill with your scornful
tongue.
Eyes swollen from tears.
Body plagued with the years of inher-
ited fears.
Does my strength scare you?
Am I a threat to your survival?
Do you wish to see me beaten down
further into the ground?
Place your hand upon my chest.
Do you feel that?
Do you feel the heart that beats for
you?
For us?
Feel my skin.
Do you feel that?
Do you feel the skin that you kiss and
caress?
The skin that you tell me is beautiful,
and yet, I am still not good enough?

Do you feel my embrace?
The embrace that cradles your tension
and silences your anguish?
Place yourself inside of me.
Do you feel that?
The warmth that surrounds you?
The warmth that melts you into me?
Do you feel the depths of my love?
Do you feel the space through which
future generations will pass?
Am I just for instant gratification?
My full lips.
Full breasts.
Thick thighs.
Soft hands.
Do you see me?
Can you see me?
Are you so blinded by the years of tor-
ment upon your head?
Are our struggles not intertwined?
Am I not your sister?
Your partner?
Your mother?
Your soldier?
Your confidant?
Your peace?
Your sanity?
Your queen?
Pierce me with your tongue, hot, as the
day is long.

Cut me with your insolence.
Beat me with your neglect.
Tear from my chest the heart that
bleeds and beats for you.
My brother.
My father.
My partner.
My protector.
My king.
I ask of you, Who You Callin' A
Bitch?!

Alyssa Smith is a graduate of HCCC (Spring 2016) with an A.A. in Early Childhood Education. She furthered her education by studying and obtaining a B.A. in Women and Gender Studies from NJCU in Spring 2019. Alyssa plans to create a career in service to others by earning a Master of Social Work with a law track. Realizing all too well the detriment of others telling the story, her experiences with Blackness, womanhood, working class status, aspiring scholar—among other identities—has led her to succeed and pen her own narrative. Audre Lorde's quote, "Your silence will not protect you" has inspired Alyssa to find her voice so that she may support others in finding their own.



A Mother's Dream, a Daughter's Opportunity

By

Cathie Seidman

In high school I played three sports, field hockey, basketball and softball. But what I really wanted to do was to play on the high school football team in my senior year. I could throw a 30-yard spiral after all. Some of my guy friends on the team came with me to speak with the

coach.

"Coach, I want to play football." "You can't" he said. "You're a girl and the rules don't allow girls to play." Title IX was passed the year after my senior year. I could have played then if I was still in high school.

So, I became the statistics taker and reported the games to the newspapers. It was fun. I was part of the team, so I was the only girl on the team bus. How cool! Until I rode the bus from

an away game. The smell!

My daughter was a great soccer player in high school. In her senior year the football coach approached her and said "I hear you have the strongest foot on the team. Would you be willing to be our extra point kicker?"

When she came home and told me she was asked to be the extra point kicker, all I could think was do it, do it, for me but I let her make the decision without any of my input. When she told

me she wasn't going to do it, my heart sank!

Cathie Seidman is a Professor and the Coordinator of the Criminal Justice Program. She has been teaching at HCCC for 19 years. Cathie is an attorney and is a former Assistant District Attorney in Kings County, Brooklyn, NY. She also has a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from the Rutgers School of Criminal Justice.



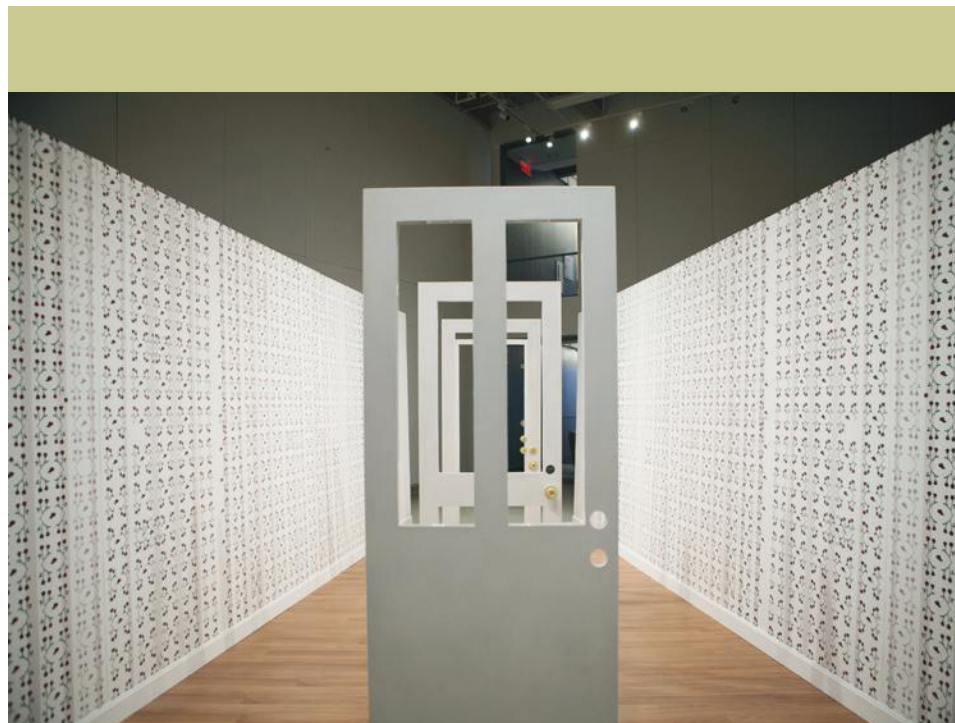
A Knee Weary Soul From Hoboken

By

Cathleen Sova

A knee weary soul from Hoboken
Knelt before Intel's PC
"Pray without ceasing,
Not pray without seizing"
Read the baffling sign on the wall

Cathleen Sova is a part time Librarian at Hudson County Community College. As of 3/21/20, Cathleen has worked at HCCC for 14 years. Cathleen has an M.S. in Library and Information Science from Pratt Institute and a B.A. from Rosemont College



Taryn Pizza

Episodes of Life

By

Adriana Soto

I try remembering my greatest childhood memory
The one I recall, I was only two
Sorry I dropped my red juice on my white shirt mom
I didn't think that would cause him to hurt you in such a painful way
Please know, that day it hurt me too.
So many episodes too hard to count. I remember,
But instead I choose to forget
No shoes, no food, so young, so pure, I remember you say
So hard, no choice, that's why you had to stay, you would say
Thus, I choose not to remember
Grew up understood more, but mom I was only seven

Purity robbed and stained
Childhood gone never experienced
I understand, you had to work, unaware it was happening
So instead, I choose to forget
Don't pity me I am strong now
Don't judge my young appearance
I was always mature -I had to be
Grew up understood more, but mom it started when I was only twenty
I said I would never feel trapped like you
Episodes occurred too many to count
And that one day I woke up still alive, God gave me a second chance
I made the right choice- thanks mom
That day I also choose to forget
Questions unanswered
Left alone to forget
Hoping one day I won't choose to forget
Instead remember that's what made me stronger

Grew up understood more,
Pure eyes, young hearts, my boys
A man that protects me
I am sorry I couldn't protect you long
Don't pity me I am strong now
I'm young and mature
An episode I choose to never forget.
Dedicated to women who have experienced sexual assault, domestic violence. There is always a bright light at the end of the tunnel.

Adriana Soto is a Student Success Coach at HCCC. She graduated from Rutgers University with a bachelor in English; Minor in Spanish and a Masters in Non-Profit Management. She has been in the field of Higher education for several years and enjoys working with college students and higher education professionals. She is also a wife, and a mother to two boys. In her free time, she enjoys crafts, event planning, and writing poetry.



Dear Pope Francis

By

Karla Aybar-Reyes

The mangoes in my fruit basket
Have been ripening for over a week now.
I pick them up
Often
Throughout the day and press my nose to their stems,
Willing them to sweeten.
And I guess there's a metaphor here somewhere
About timing
Or restraint,
How the waiting is part of the process
And sweetness takes time.
So this morning,
I pour my coffee
Slowly
Into my cup
Without spilling a drop
And somehow,
It feels like a prayer.
Is there a patron saint for patience?

In which she prostrates herself before the god of- what?

By

Karla Aybar-Reyes

I have not worshiped sanctities or deities
since finding you.
You sit atop an altar
among my mother's psalms
and grandmother's rosary;
they do not leave home without these things.
Are you with me
even now?
Can I hold you in your absence?
You are so far-
I sometimes forget that we are separate entities.
The chasm between us, so full of things unsaid
that even sighs spring
Stillborn
from my lips.
I look for you in every sacred thing.
Are you the daybreak,
Are you my setting sun?
Yes.
Once, I sought contrition
before you, on my knees.
Oh, holy void—

Karla Aybar-Reyes is the Administrative Assistant for the HCCC Libraries. She was born in the Dominican Republic and raised in Jersey City. After graduating from HCCC, she received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from NJCU. She loves gallivanting the globe with her partner, but her absolute favorite place to be is in her kitchen.



Monika Sosnowski's *Untitled, Van Buskirk Island, no.2*

Death & Dying Journal Entry

By

Therisa Heywood

*A*s a future health care professional, my job as a nurse is to care for my clients. To help them return back to their normal level of functioning or to assist the clients in learning how to function with their new-found capabilities after stabilization. I believe it speaks volumes when I say no nurse truly expects their client to die. People talk about sex, birth, growing up, but we don't talk about dying. Death and dying is an evitable part of life that most people feel uncomfortable talking about. Talking about death and dying gives the impression of a taboo. Forbidding people to talk about death and dying are included in some religions.

I am first generation Trinidadian-American. A portion of my life, I grew up in the countryside of Trinidad & Tobago, also I grew up in the city when I came to America. My mother raised me in an environment where talking about death and dying is okay because it is a part of life. My initial thoughts were that I would feel comfortable with talking about this subject. I felt prepared, due to the fact that my mother was always so open about the topic. Then the instructor surprised me with an exercise that allowed everyone in the room to go around and talk about their personal experience with death and dying. All the students went around and spoke on their experiences and it seemed it was my turn very quickly. Yes, I know that death is a normal part of life, but I was not prepared to unveil my

personal feelings and experiences with death due to the fact my experiences were only with close loved ones. This exercise made me unravel emotions that I had buried and tried to suppress. I thought this exercise was a clever way to get the students to emotionally connect with death and dying and to feel the reality of it and I do appreciate the exercise.

For most people, dealing with a dying loved one is an immensely difficult task. The burden gets heavier when you have to make decisions on the type of end-of-life care your loved one receives. It is arbitrary to the dying person and for the family members to have to make such an impactful decision. Healthcare providers are also forced to make decisions for their clients. For example, it is possible that a dying client can become unable to ascertain that he does not wish to have any measures that will prolong his life but just wants to die peacefully and the healthcare providers and loved ones are doing everything in their power to save the client's life due to the fact that they are unaware of the client's wishes. To gain more control over decisions regarding the nature of their death, people are increasingly signing living wills, health care proxy and durable powers of attorney. The readings from class have altered my perception on how important it is for everyone to have an advanced directive. Giving yourself the power and remaining in control of your own health individualizes and sets forth the dynamics of how the transition from life to death occurs.

As nurses, we must first reflect on our own emotions and beliefs about death and dying as



Taryn Pizza

to not put our opinions on our clients and their loved ones. We will respect the dignity of the clients, family and caregivers. Display sensitivity and respect for clients and the family members' wishes. Use appropriate interventions to accomplish client goals while alleviating pain and symptoms. Nurses should always advocate for the clients and attend to their physical, emotional, psychosocial and spiritual needs while keeping the family included in the client's plan of care as indicated by the client.

Therisa Heywood is a senior scholar in the Nursing Program at HCCC. She has been studying nursing since 2018 and is a prospective graduate of 2020, making her a second-generation graduate. Therisa is also a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success. As a member of the NSLS she intends on using her acquired leadership skills to better aid and serve the community. She will accomplish this goal by furthering her education and collaborating with others to provide competent care.



“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

By

Iesha Craddock

*I*n December of 1998, I made a decision that will forever have an impact on my life. The decision to become an educator teaching the children from my hometown of Jersey City, New Jersey was one of my greatest accomplishments. Twenty years later, I’m still teaching for the Jersey City Public Schools, while leading and advocating for my students.

My teaching journey has been a constant learning experience with great levels of determination, perseverance, and gratification. I love teaching because of the impact that I make on my students’ lives by igniting a spark in them so that they are encouraged to work to their full potentials; the love of my students gives me the desire to teach and reach my students. I get to be surrounded by lots of love and the love always outweighs the hate. I also get to watch my students grow from adolescents into adults; it’s really funny when I have them again at HCCC and they say, “Professor Craddock, everything you told us in middle school was correct.”

I like to incorporate lessons my students can relate to while producing amusing moments they will never forget. Laugh-

ter plays a major role in my students’ classroom experience and in insuring their individual growth. I love being able to create a positive and peaceful work environment for them. Being able to inspire them to do their best is a goal I strive for every school year. I want to create lasting memories that my students and I will cherish forever.

My students’ ages range from 11-15 to 18 and up in the higher education realm. They are all unique and special in their own ways and for the most part, they just want to learn so that they can achieve the skills

and goals required to move onto the next grade level.

When I made the decision to become a Jersey City public schoolteacher, I also decided to teach as a college professor. I began my adjunct professor role at Hudson County Community College. Both of these career choices have given me the opportunity and balance needed to teach adolescents and adults here in Jersey City, New Jersey. My days consist of my constantly saying, “Stop, keep your hands to yourself, and I will wait for you to quiet down.” While my college courses be-

gin with me shouting, “Who’s ready to learn?” The response from HCCC students: “Me!” All of my students are very dear to me, and I love every chance that I have to educate them. If you ever are having a difficult time and just finding it hard to get through the day, stop by one of my classes. My students will make you laugh and make you understand the true meaning of life. The little people, too, I see during the day, bring me a tremendous amount of joy and gratitude.

Yet everyone is entitled to

(Continued on page 23)



Monika Sosnowski's *Looking through a glass door*

Contributions of Muslim Women in the American Workplace

By

Fatima Koura

For years, the majority of Americans have displayed little understanding of Muslim American women in our country. Following the tragedies of September 11, 2001, popular perceptions about Muslim Americans and the traditions of the Muslim culture as a whole have radically come to the forefront and for many been amplified or exaggerated. As an example, the headscarf worn by Muslim women has come to symbolize many different things to Americans, many of which is based on fallacy and bias. Frequently an object of controversy, the stigma of the headscarf has far surpassed the intentions of the wearer herself.

Approximately ten years ago I was questioned by a male colleague regarding whether or not I was allowed to speak to him because I was a Muslim woman. This led me to consider not only the tradition marginalization of women's voices in the U.S. but propelled me to also venture out on a journey to interview Muslim women who wear the headscarf. My research is a means to understand not only how stereotypes affect Muslim women in the workplace, but also how these women are actively shaping a new paradigm.

The active, engaged participation of Muslim American women in the labor force has received little-to-no attention. I have therefore made an effort to document intersecting elements that structure the lives of hijab-wearing (headscarf wearing) Muslim American women. My goal is to be inclusive and offer



Monika Sosnowski's *Remain*

an overview of Muslim American women's experiences, augmented with narratives and existing theories on identity that will help us better understand not only the women themselves, but new and existing theories on religious symbols in the American workplace. Whether the reasons are religious, personal, or social, the research provides the opportunity to look into the lives of individual women with diverse backgrounds and professions while exploring how they form a sense of identity.

In this research my intention is to get a deeper understanding of the lives of Muslim women living in the United States, in hopes of moving away from stereotypes to form a better understanding of an under-represented group. In recent years, Muslim women wearing the hijab have grown more prevalent in the American workplace. In addition, a Gallup Poll reveals that Muslim-American women are one of the most highly edu-

cated female religious groups in the United States. We have also recently seen Muslim American women breaking the mold or glass ceiling and becoming the firsts in many public jobs such as Ilhan Omar the first congresswoman elected to office in 2018 and Tahera Rahman the first woman to appear as a newscaster wearing a headscarf. The outcomes of their experiences demonstrate the paradigmatic shift in thinking about Muslim women wearing hijab in the public sphere.

The workplace is particularly interesting to me because it is a place where we cultivate personal relationships. Most workplace relationships evolve as we get to know and connect with our employers and co-workers due to the fact that most individuals spend the majority of their awake hours in the workplace. In many cases relationships are created with customers, clients, patients, students, etc. As such, the workplace provides an ex-

cellent opportunity to develop meaningful relationships. When we are at work, we often share pieces of ourselves by communicating our personality, skills, knowledge and abilities. One of the best ways to create positive relationships is to let others know who you are and what is important to you (or what you value).

According to Pew Research, only 38 percent of Americans know someone who is Muslim. The same survey indicates an American who personally knows a member of a group tends to rate that group more positively. The question about Muslim Women has been at the heart of Islamophobia. If we can dismantle the bias felt and expressed when it comes to Muslim Women and their contributions and commitment to the US, we can begin to dismantle the perception (or misperception) of Muslim Women.

Muslim women wearing

(Continued on page 24)

When a Woman Asks Herself – “Am I Guilty?”

By

Anshuma Jain

When a woman asks herself, “Am I guilty?” often the answer is “YES.” Women experience many emotions. They at times (read quite a few times) find themselves feeling one particular emotion: guilt. And learning to live with guilt in a happy way is what a woman should seek.

In different phases of her life she has different types of guilt surfacing and she moves with that burden of guilt in her mind.

A daughter is busy with her class assignment that is due tomorrow; she has so much to do and seeing her sick mother cooking dinner makes her feel guilty for not being able to help her. She is not intentionally neglecting her mother. She knows that, but as a daughter, she feels guilt.

As a daughter, as a friend, as a colleague, guilt is part of her life. Then this guilt becomes even more prominent in the married phase of life with children.

A working mom often finds herself in situations when she is needed in two worlds: work and home. While working on an important sales presentation for a whole week and then cracking the deal, the VP Sales lady grabs a big account for her company. But, back at home, her son is sick. Arriving home late at night, she feels guilt for not taking care of him when he needed her. And then, after these situations occur frequently, a volcanic eruption of emotions just flows. In spite of her successes, she might quit the job.



Taryn Pizza

The next morning, she is a homemaker happily having breakfast with her family and serving each one their favorite breakfast. Her children and husband leave for the day very happy, bidding her goodbye. So now, she is happy, right? She no longer has the guilt of not being there for her family, but. . . But that happy and guilt-free mode lasts only for a day, a week, or at max. a month, and then she finds herself back in another type of guilt. She is not aspiring to her dreams of being a professional. She is not utilizing her degree and skills she acquired with a

lot of hard work and dedication. Looking at all of this going to waste, she is swimming back into guilt.

So, in crux, a woman has to live with guilt and it's only you my woman who has to decide with which guilt you want to live. Compromising on which aspect, will make you feel less guilty? Guilt is an integral part of women's lives. Understanding that it is alright to be guilty, that guilt has both positive and negative aspects, while focusing on the positives, may help.

The Women's Mantra is: "Be happy in spite of feeling

guilty!"

-Written By - A happy Guilty Woman

Anshuma Jain has recently joined HCCC as Human Resource Administrator. She is a family person who loves bonding with new people. Also, she is a creative soul who looks for creativity in every sphere of life. Due to her love of art, she runs a small business of hand-painted and hand-embroidered shoes and handmade gifts named Beyond Handmade.



My First Year

By

Anna Krupitskiy

It is hard to believe it has been a year since I first set my high heels on the Hudson County Community College campus. I remember it being an unusually cold January day for my all-day campus interview and an opportunity to meet various constituents of the College. I made my first couple of friends at HCCC on that day. At the end of it, as tired and overwhelmed as I was, I knew that I really wanted this job. After clicking my heels, like Judy Garland, I was most grateful to be offered the opportunity.

As any newcomer, I had to first listen, observe, pay attention and learn the institutional culture of the College, of what was expected of me, and the Office of Human Resources. I tried not to advise too quickly or hastily, and had to begin new relationships and collaborations, and to build a new support network. Building meaningful connections was made much easier over love of food and cooking, challenges of parenting small children, or of exploring the hidden gems of New York City.

There are many takeaways from my first year as Vice President for Human Resources at one of the most diverse, vibrant, urban community colleges and higher education institutions in the country. Since that first day, I had even more opportunities to meet, connect with and listen to various staff, faculty and students of the college. I took an invitation to teach a class, which as an administrator, provided a brutally honest perspective on the challenges and joys of peda-

gogy. Yet, the most significant impact of the college and one that stands out the most, every single day -- the humans of HCCC.

I learned that the talent at the college is infinite with a great number of people who

a former butcher about her outlook on spirituality and the role of religion. I got to know those that travel the world regularly and get excited talking about their experience of a recent trip to Paris or Iceland, and those who are saving up for their first

others. I shared my own goals of pursuing a PhD with doctoral students, EDD hopefuls and those that just recently defended their dissertation. I reminisced of early immigration memories as an almost teenager and struggles of assimilation to the United States.

HCCC employees care most deeply about students and their lives. Yet, they are in various different stages of their own lives. Some are expecting mothers. Others are looking to start a new chapter by considering retirement options. Some employees just recently got engaged and are in the midst of wedding planning craziness. Others take care of their elderly parents. A few are looking to buy their first home, a step towards improving one's quality of life.

We also have many proud parents, parents of small children who will soon be crawling out of their cribs, and those with adult children that are off flying to the other side of the country to start a new life. We have single moms and dads. We have aunts, who mother their nieces and nephews like their own children.

At this stage of my professional life, I have never been so grateful for the village that helps me balance my personal and family life with this tremendous role. It would be difficult to find meaning in this work without the daily "my mama" hugs from my little ones. It would be amiss for me not to share how much I hope that both my daughter and son are able to see a working mother as an ordinary course of their day. I would not be able to do this and parenting two small children, however, without the support of my wonderful hus-

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Taryn Pizza

are most fully and unabashedly committed to fulfilling the mission of HCCC and the success of our students. I discovered that we have artists, musicians, singers, poets, advocates, rebels, models, drummers and writers. I met a former high school dropout who is now looking to pursue a PhD program. I spoke to

trip to Scotland or Spain.

I sat across from stamp collectors and black and white cinema enthusiasts. I held heated exchanges with Game of Thrones fans, theorizing about the last episode. I listened to passionate descriptions of the love of bachata dance from some and country music from

In Search of Joy...

By

Patricia Jones-Lewis

*M*y dad was a stoic, serious kind of man; he spoke to very few people in the neighborhood. He worked, came home, and worked again. As children, the eight of us knew that he was not one to play games with. But I was the last of the gang, and I tried him every chance I got!

Patty was often my pet name; Patricia was almost never used, but as a teen, on the evenings that I wanted to go to the neighborhood bazaar, the church raffle, or the community center 'fundraiser', daddy called me Par-ty. "That is your name for true."

He would say in his thumping West Indian accent. "You always want to go to a party." He would grumble a number of times, not telling me no, but not alluding to yes. The neighborhood boys called him Grumble—behind his back, of course.

And then, there was Mommy. She too knew that I always wanted to be out with my friends, but I was her Patty, her last child, her spoiled Penguin. My sister, her Joy.

Mommy found ways to soften the grumbles, quiet the stomps, and ease the air. She usually insisted that Frank take me to one of my many events; after all, he was older than Patrick, two years my senior, and Joy, two years Patrick's. Frank could keep an eye on me. So the parties came, and I enjoyed losing Frank in the crowd.

But Joy. Yes, Joy. My only sister. My mother's daughter. Joy was her first girl, her sixth child, her 'daughter' as she melodiously called her name. Be-



Taryn Pizza

fore Mommy went away to the States, I used to cry when she jokingly said she had seven sons and one daughter. I was always counted as a son, of course. After all, my mother had one Daughter.

When Mommy lived away, working to send home money to help daddy take care of us all, Joy had to wash. Saturday morning was laundry. Monday through Sunday, dishes. She would load the outside sink with all our clothes, fill it with water from the pipe, and sprinkle the white powdery all (our) purpose Breeze, making certain to get enough in-between each piece of clothing, mixing and building

the lather before beginning the task.

The jukking board sink became an extension of her young arms. But, ah, the smell of Breeze would transport me to times spent with Mommy and memories of when she was home, when she taught me to wash my dolls' clothes, when she hung them on the line, when we watched them dance to the rhythm of the wind—before she went away...

But now Joy was in charge of washing, and she had to do the wares too. She'd be perched on a stool, too-short legs tiptoed to reach the dishes in the deep concrete sink. After each

meal, she washed all the plates, saucers, spoons, and cups from the gang of us kids and daddy. And I'd sit and watch (too small to help) soaking in the smell of the Caribbean Breeze and yearning for Mommy.

I'm often lost back there, back then in the memories of Mommy, of Joy—my only sister. Neither of my many brothers nor I could hold a candle to my sister's power, to her love, to her endurance, to her strength. All of which she learned from our mother.

I recently lost my mother. I am still numb. But the pain in my gut, the weight on my chest, the emptiness in my soul are magnified beyond any feasible explanation because I lost Joy—my joy, the year before. Who am I to call? Who am I to cry with when it is now my job to wash—to hold the rest of the family up and together, like she?

After all, "ain't I a woman?"

It left me. She left me, just when I needed her the most.

So, I remain, in search...

Patricia Jones-Lewis is a long time Professor at HCCC who emphatically bases her teaching on fusing personal experiences, queries, and curiosities to academic writing, research, and communications skills. Patricia is an avid non-fiction reader who is constantly working on writing short narrative pieces as she strongly believes in writing to heal. Her experience only enhances her passion for sharing/teaching self-empowerment through self-reflection and written expressions. She is the proud mother of three and grandmother of one glam-baby!



In the Age of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Some Food for Thought

By

Dorothea Graham

Prejudging people is one way to impact upon someone's self-esteem and add undue pressure even if you think the statement you are making is a compliment. Here's a prime example. In Judith Ortiz Cofer's essay "The Myth of the Latina" she writes, "you can leave the Island, master the English language, and travel as far as you can, but if you are a Latina, especially one like me who so obviously belongs to Rita Moreno's gene pool, the Island travels with you." She then goes on to say, "This is sometimes a very good thing..." She says "sometimes." Yes, sometimes people are of the opinion that if you are of Hispanic de-

scend whether male or female you are very sensual and sexual. Sometimes people of Hispanic descent might even think this is a positive stereotype. Yet this type of comparison is negative and should not be made because you cannot lump all people of the same ethnicity/culture together using the same criteria. This can also cause self-loathing because if a person is of a shy, quiet nature, they would not like to be approached as though they welcome sexual advances. It could make them very uncomfortable. They would probably want to crawl into a shell or stick their head in the sand to avoid confrontation.

The same so-called positive impressions that people draw about you can also be not so positive. I have a male relative who is 14 years old and nearly 6 feet tall. Everyone who meets

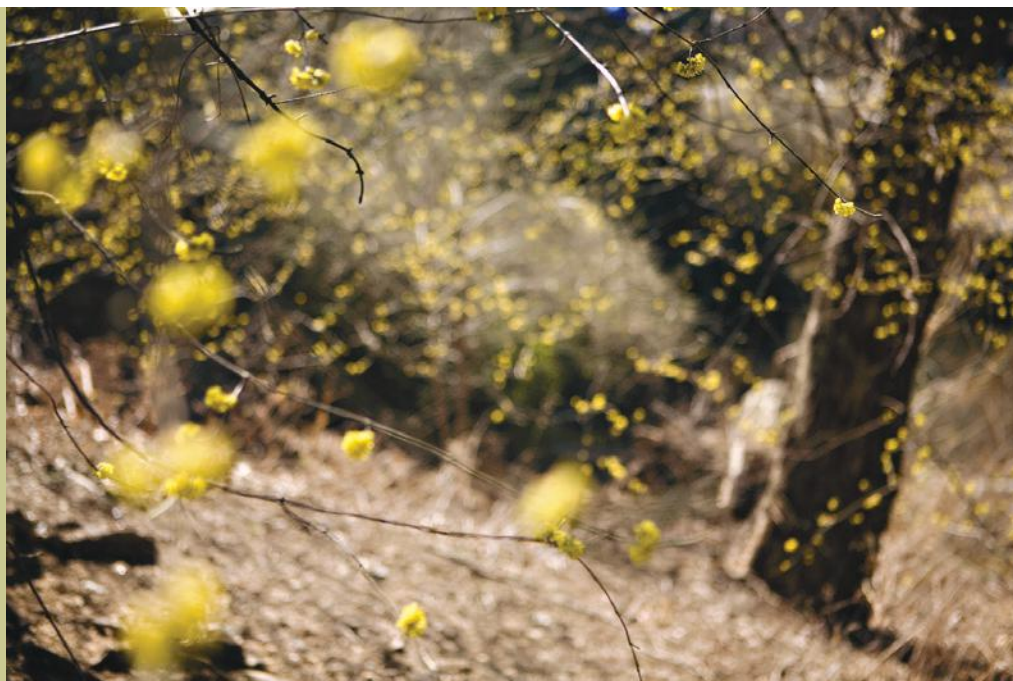
him no matter what ethnicity they are, will ask him "do you play basketball?" He tells them, "no, I don't like sports. I want to be a scientist." This is something that he has been saying since he was about 6 years old. Luckily these intrusive questions asked based on his size have not impacted his quest to be a scholar and not a sports star. There is nothing wrong with being an athlete, however, when you are lumped into a group just because of your race, physical attributes or both, this is where the negative comes in. This is one of those times when someone is stereotyped by others and that includes family (i.e., his own father) who would love nothing more than to have an only son who plays sports.

Another instance of this kind of "good stereotyping" is also at issue in Ted Gup's Who

Is a Whiz-Kid? Gup talked about his experience with his newly adopted son who was of Korean descent when the Korean shop owner made the assumption that the boy would be good in math. Gup wondered, "suppose he should turn out to be only a mediocre student, or, worse yet, not a student at all." This is a prime example of "good stereotyping" gone bad. Mr. Gup raised a valid point and I agree with him in that regard. Obviously, you would like to know that your child does well in school, however, no one would be happy if their child felt pressured because of their racial ethnicity or was made to feel inferior because of their background.

It is important for us to avoid stereotyping even if "positive". This will allow us to view other people as individuals. When it comes to those old so-called good stereotypes, why not just form a new more positive opinion based on what we've learned in life, not based in a lack of imagination, or societal assumptions? Hopefully as we embrace diversity, equity and inclusion these issues will resolve.

Dorothea Graham-King is an Administrative Assistant in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at Hudson County Community College. She started here in November 1999. She has always had a love for writing whether it be short stories or poems about family and events in her life. She has many other hobbies such as cooking, singing and creating personalized greeting cards.



Monika Sosnowski's Yellow Buds

Koral Booth

By

Koral Booth

I've always had a passion for learning and if I knew then what I know now, I wouldn't change a thing about the choices I've made in my life. I am who I am because of them, because of the people who came into my life and who stayed and also because of the people who came into my life and left; they all taught me something. Good or bad, hurt or love, I take those lessons with me through all walks of my life. Education has always been important to my parents, so it was always important to me and I loved learning, so college was never a no for me. I just believe that my timing was off. I tried college when I was 17, and I failed miserably. Something that no 17 or 18-year-old knows is that college is a completely different world from high school, and you have to be ready and I wasn't, so I ended up coming back home after two years in Virginia. I thought about going back, but life happened and then it was a goal that seemed unreachable. But when you really want something, nothing is ever truly out of reach. It's just a matter of how badly you want it, and a question of are the sacrifices worth the rewards? I had made plenty of sacrifices already. What were a few more?

When I decided to return to

school at the ripe old age of 37, I was scared to death, but I knew it had to be done. Not only were jobs asking for a bachelor's degree to be a receptionist, but I had four sons and I couldn't work for anybody's \$9 an hour. That wasn't going to feed my family. I struggled with the idea for a long time, and I even got a few licenses in the meantime. I got certified in medical billing and coding and got licensed in

registered, and went to my first class all in that same day. I got very discouraged by my math scores. I had to go into basic algebra and even though I was upset, I didn't quit. I wanted to, but I didn't. I knew I would get to where I needed to be eventually. So, I continued with the idea that I was just going to go to class and go home. Yeah, right! During my second semester, I got an invitation to join

I've received for this club has been so abundant that I didn't know what to do with it. But that's just the way everyone at Hudson is, because Hudson is a family.

My professors, the people I've had the pleasure of working with and learning from, the people who have helped me grow personally and professionally, the guidance, the push, the level of accountability, the support, and most importantly the love, have all helped to mold me into someone I never thought I'd see. I have been given so many opportunities that I never saw coming, the blessings that I never expected because I didn't think I deserved them, Hudson has been exactly what I needed, especially when I lost my mom in the spring semester of 2018 and my dad in the spring semester of 2019.

It has been three years now and I can't believe that graduation is in only four months. At one point I was so afraid to leave Hudson. I was scared of the unknown, scared of starting over, but I'm not anymore. When I was scared and afraid, it was because I didn't know what to expect. I don't have that feeling anymore, because I know Hudson and my professors, and mentors have done more than prepared for my next steps. They have prepared me for my next life, and I am forever grateful. The feeling now is more a feeling of leaving my family,

(Continued on page 25)



Danielle Friedman

massage therapy, but none of those careers were fulfilling. I was always in school because I loved learning and taking the steps to get a degree, instead of a license or certification, seemed like the logical next step.

I remember the day I decided to go back to school. I woke up feeling trapped and I had already been trapped for the past 20 years. I couldn't stand the thought of that for another 20 years. That day just happened to be Hudson's One-Stop day. I called my mom and asked her to babysit, while I went to get everything done. Of course, she said yes, and I went and tested,

The National Society of Leadership and Success and the rest is "Herstory".

I went on to join EOF, Phi Theta Kappa, Sigma Kappa Delta, the Literary Club. I became a Peer Leader and graduated from The Emerging Leaders Program. But one of the things I am proudest of is, The Later in Life Leaders, an organization that I felt necessary for non-traditional students to give them the support they may need in an environment that is geared more towards the student coming straight out of high school. The club is near and dear to my heart and the amount of support

Temporary Tattoos

By

Lisa Bogart

Sailing is my passion. It is a sport I wanted to participate in and learn since I was probably seven or eight years old. When I was young and fortunate enough to spend summers on the Jersey Shore, yacht clubs were, and usually still are, the only places to learn how to sail. Yacht clubs are expensive and were not in my family's budget. My mother did spend hours and days trying to track down sailing lessons that satisfied me and the family budget.

Thus, I spent far too much time saying, "this summer I will...". And so, summers kept slipping by.

The summer before Hurricane Sandy hit the Jersey Shore so devastatingly, I finally took a sailing lesson. It was wonderful and terrifying. I was not afraid of the boat or the water. I'd been on so many different boats over the years. And while I have a huge respect for water, I was comfortable enough with my knowledge of the Barnegat Bay. What I was terrified of was being out of control of the boat and having no idea how to work with the wind.

I took several more lessons that first summer. I had aching hands after each lesson as I clinched the lines (ropes, in sailing terms, that control where and how the sail is positioned) along with the rudder and tiller, which steer a boat. I cannot say they were the most enjoyable outings, but I was hooked and determined to learn to sail successfully.

The boats I have most often sailed are pretty common.

Known as a one-design dinghy, Sunfish are very common. They are small, inexpensive and one person can comfortably sail the boat. After my first summer of sailing, I bought a 1970's era Sunfish complete with barnacles, several holes in the sail, and a rickety but serviceable trailer. It cost me slightly more

sons that I learned quickly was that although I could move the boat around almost by myself (a Sunfish hull weighs around 135 pounds), it required strength, determination, a few colorful words and resulted in the acquisition of my new summer "tattoos": bruises.

So, those beautifully col-

of sailing.

That second summer came with plenty of successfully flipping and then getting the Sunfish upright and sailing again. And, getting to know the boat on land as well. I cleaned it innumerable times on its trailer, even completely replacing the lines (ropes) successfully.

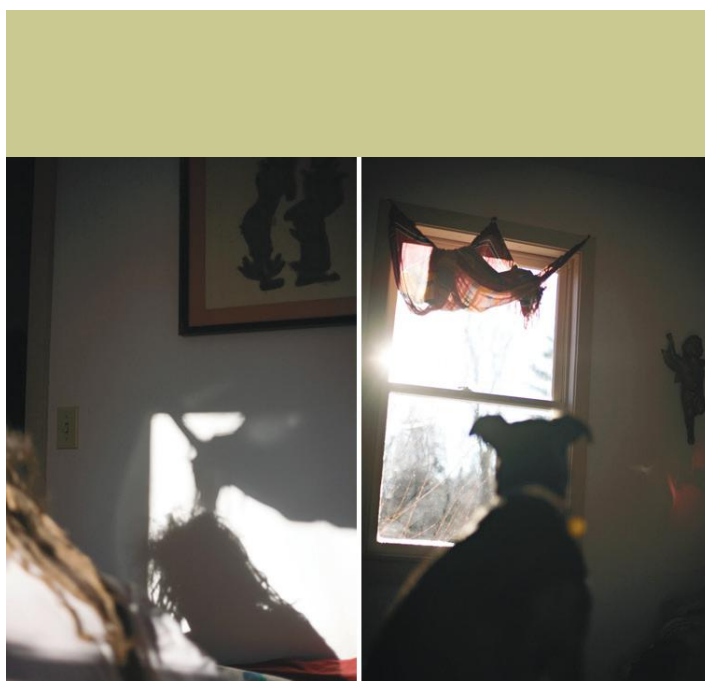
Then there are of course the boom mishaps. That's the crossbar at the bottom of the sail that allows one to move it back and forth, and theoretically, one is supposed to move oneself gracefully from one side of the boat to the other as the sail is maneuvered likewise. The tiller and sail sets are to remain in one's hand while ducking out of the way of the boom, or owww!

Yes. The boom hit me many times that summer, giving me blossoms of color at my hairline or producing a knot somewhere on my skull. I successfully did this more times when the boat was sitting on land that year. Of course, no one truly needed to know about my clumsiness. Rather, I did and do display those blooms of color as proof that I AM SAILING.

One of my early "successful" summer tattoos came from standing on a dock. Rather, in between parts of a dock. I managed to wedge a leg down in between the bolted portions of a floating dock. I had multi-colored blotches up and down my entire leg for quite a while. For a non-athlete such as myself, it was like gaining some sort of a medal or trophy, except it kind of hurt in the process. And I don't recommend it.

Every sailing season has come with it some degree of progress. I have found a club

(Continued on page 25)



Monika Sosnowski's *Peter, Ruby and morning light*

than half the cost of the boat and trailer to have a hitch with electrical connections, installed on my SUV. No one has ever been deemed as being completely sane when it comes to boat ownership, but what passion ever is?

More lessons continued that summer, and the learning curve was even higher as I now had a boat to learn about. No more casually stepping into one that was fully rigged and ready to sail. One of the les-

ored things on my arms, calves, knees, thighs and other less visible parts of my body, were and have become my normal from April to October. They are colored purple, yellow, green, blue and I'm not sure what else. They are the badges that I proudly wear as each week, I flip a hull, get it on a dolly (land/beach trailer), put the boat in the water and rig it up (set it up sail). And then, I have to do the reverse at the end of a day

Conjuring Thoughts and Theories...

By

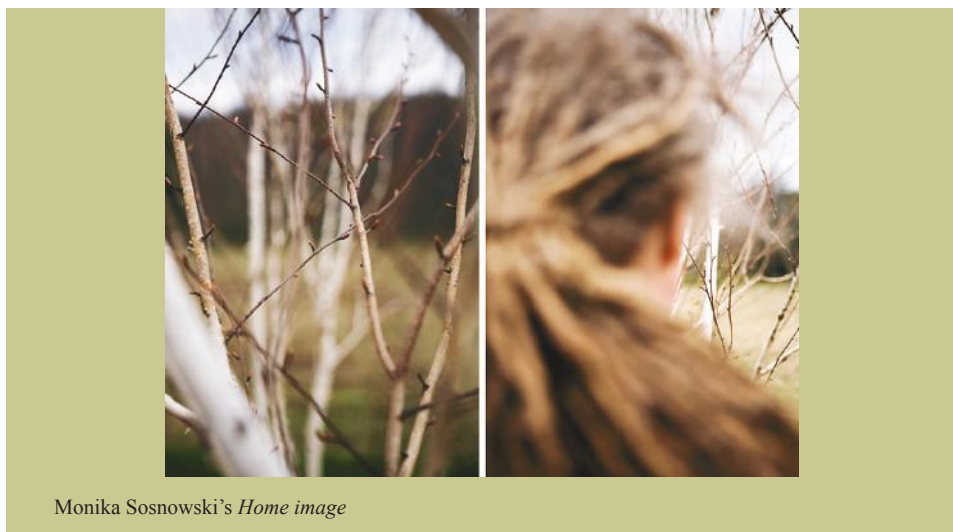
Hope Guirantes

*C*opa Vida
Pulling seeds into our fertile soil
To germinate
Break through
Push out
Nurturing and loving to
Bring forth new nations.

Fountain of youth
That others search for and never find.
Always misunderstood
The true meaning of
Eternity and eternal life.

Elixir of Life
An exquisite vessel
280 days
6720 hours
Flowing outward
Fifth element
Birthing...
The Philosopher's Stone.

The Moon
Controls the tide
The Sun
Gives light and warm
The breeze
Swirls and caresses



Monika Sosnowski's Home image

The rain
Pours down and washes away.
Conjurer
Alchemist
Nurturer
Lover
Giver
Healer
Woman
Thou art magical
There is no other like you.

About the Poem

This poem came about after reading
Lucile Clifton's, "won't you celebrate me",
Patricia Spears Jones' "Painkiller" and

Clarissa Pincola Estes "Lobobo." Mixed
in were thoughts of my daughter and the
flow of creativity in all of its forms. How
as women we are so magical that we forget
how beautiful and amazing it is to have the
abilities that we have and therefore take for
granted.

Hope Guirantes is a Jersey City native
entrenched in the creative activities of her
hometown. In her spare time her imagina-
tion runs rampant with all sorts of stories
and ideas too numerous to list. Happily
working within Academic Affairs, she
sees her role as an administrative as-
sistant as a wonderful vocation.



My Mother Was Not an Angry Black Woman. She Was Just Sad.

(Continued from page 4)

You don't know her story. **My Mother Was Just Sad** - sad that her dreams were not realized; sad that she became laden with family and life's responsibilities before she could enjoy her life; sad that she was left on a number of occasions while my

father went off to work for meager provisions that were never enough; sad that, at the end of her life, she "always wanted to be a teacher," but it never happened.

My Mother Was Not an Angry Black Woman. She Was Just Sad.

Sharon Benjamin is a New Jersey transplant from the farmland of Tennessee with over 30 years of teaching experience. She retired from public education in 2013 and now works as a Speech, Composition, and Reading Adjunct at HCCC. You can connect with Sharon on

Facebook - "Randall Sharon Benjamin," and on LinkedIn - "Sharon Benjamin," where she has published over 60 articles covering such topics as marriage, family, education, and self-help. Sharon is also a children's author.



Arranged Marriage in a Life and in Fiction

(Continued from page 6)

she was released. This young woman explained to me that in the face of her extended indifference, her husband's genuine concern for her during her illness, his warmth and kindness had melted her heart, and she fell in love with him.

Some weeks after Mala arrived, Lahiri describes an incident that turns the tide between the young couple in the fictional story. When Mala laughs at one of her husband's comments, it marks the end of strangeness between them and ushers in what the expat narrator calls "a honeymoon of sorts." It is the

moment when the soft vulnerable humanity lurking within each of them becomes apparent for the first time. The ice is broken, intimacy takes hold, and they go on to have a long and loving marriage in America.

I am sad to say that I do not remember the name of the young Indian student who long ago gifted me her story of the love that can grow between strangers in a strange land, but when I read the words "Mala laughed" in Lahiri's story, the memory of this student and her story came like a flood back to me and cracked the shell

of my own heart. It reminded me of the many personal and poignant details students have generously shared over the years, the cultural lessons they have taught me and how I have been changed by their stories. I once shuddered at the idea of arranged marriage. I judged it. I thought it was an old way of doing things, uncivilized, unenlightened and especially bad for women. As I sat staring at the words in the fictional story, I felt a longing for my old student. I wanted to tell her that I remembered her story, that it was both unique and yet somehow universal,

that it had affected me, stayed with me and taught me something, and I wished hard that I could remember her name. But though her name was lost to me forever, I was consoled by the conviction that like that between the expat and Mala, hers too was likely to be a long and loving marriage.

Linda Joy Miller is an Associate Professor of ESL. She teaches ESL writing and reading and has a particular interest in bringing the personal stories of HCCC immigrant students to light.



“Cultivate the habit of being grateful for every good thing that comes to you, and to give thanks continuously. And because all things have contributed to your advancement, you should include all things in your gratitude.”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

(Continued from page 14)

a bad day. When my middle school students have bad days, they most likely go home and rethink about everything that happened during the day. They often realize that they owe the class and me an apology. A student in sixth grade wrote one apology that I framed. When she came back to my class in eighth grade, she was so impressed that I still had her letter. I had framed it, and had put it on my Wall of Fame:

To Ms. Craddock

*Dear Ms. Craddock,
I apologize for my very bad behavior. I apologize for giving you an attitude and yelling at you. You are a teacher and I should respect you. It was very stupid of me to give an attitude and yell at you like that. It is an honor to be in your class. I want to thank you for being a great teacher. My behavior failed you, my parents, and myself. I realize my mistake and I only hope that somewhere in your heart you can forgive me for being so rude and disre-*

spectful. From this day on you will not see that kind of behavior ever again.

Truth be told, I never saw that behavior again from that student.

Growing up in an inner city can sometimes be beneficial, and at other times, difficult. I always explain to all of my students that it's cool to receive an education. Being smart will lead you to all the right places in life. You can create opportunities in your life that will always carry you to your next

positive and productive level.

Iesha T. Craddock started working as an English Professor at Hudson County Community College in August of 2007. Currently, she's a Middle School Social Studies teacher, English Professor, Professor for the Continuing Education Dept. at New Jersey City University and a mother. Ms. Craddock enjoys educating her students and seeing them blossom from adolescents into adults.



Contributions of Muslim Women in the American Workplace

(Continued from page 15)

headscarves actually have a unique opportunity to dispel stereotypes without even having a conversation. While it is known that topics like religion in the workplace can be contentious and one that many avoid, the mere wearing of the headscarf can also be viewed as a door opener to broach this conversation. If such things happen, we now have a forum for these professional Muslim women to discuss their personal lives, ambitions, and

expectations while disarming the many inaccuracies regarding religion, faith, and nationalism towards the U.S. As a result of my personal experience, I realize that people are surprised to learn that my headscarf does not hinder my success. Ultimately, our goal is to move away from conversations **about** Muslim women to conversations **with** Muslim women. Upon reaching that point, we can then actually build relationships. Then, and only then, can we move away from the focus of the headscarf to the focus

on our social contributions.

Fatima Koura is an adjunct professor at Hudson County Community College. She has published work focusing on Muslim American in the workplace. She has also presented her research on academic platforms in the United States and abroad. She is also the founder of The Working Hijabi an initiative that highlights the lives of Muslim American women.



My Memere's Prayer

(Continued from page 9)

need for Dr. Horowitz's intervention, was the first one of its kind on a person with Marfan at Columbia University.

My life was changed entirely.

I am now allowed to apply for a driver's license for the first time in my life. But first, as Dr. Al-Aswad told me for many months after surgery, "You need to learn to see! As a child does!" My brain read the information my new sight provided as danger.

My brain caused me to express a child-like excitement, frenzy and fear upon my first seeing the ocean. "Lines! Lines! Where do these lines come from!" I yelled at Don repeatedly. "Is this an unusual day for the ocean?" Don struggled to understand me, as I kept pointing and yelling, making a scene. It occurred to him, after he patiently asked me questions, that I was speaking of the breakers. "No, this isn't an unusual day," he said slowly, realizing, only then, that all those hundreds of beach days

we had spent together, he and I both never knew that I was missing the lines, the details. Those days had been beautiful, and now, the ocean's beauty with sight was overwhelming and unreal. Both glorious and terrifying. Two years later, I am still learning.

If the surgery had not been the unexpected success it was, I might not have been welcomed to remain an Instructor of English at HCCC. My rights as a federally protected person under the law might have needed to be defended. No matter I had existed already: a tenured professor with serious visual impairment and legal blindness with 18 years of service. No matter that superb assistive technology exists. No matter, most of all to me, that my students had succeeded and flourished. Likely, it would have been a fight.

If I could imagine it all differently: I would ask for accommodations early on and not go it alone. But it did not feel safe to do so. Nor did much impetus for change or com-

munity support seem to exist. Somehow, I have to believe that now is the time when action on inclusion and the rights of the disabled will be honored on our campus. Students Against Ableism, a new student club I helped to found on campus, will hopefully work on making HCCC a safer community for students with disabilities. As well, the President's committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion is doing good work in creating campus safe spaces and unity. All of us, together, must create a campus environment in which people with disabilities feel considered and confident.

I have yet to share all of this with my Memere. Over the phone, I kept it simple, telling her of a surgery that has given me sight. She cried. Between sobs, she said, "I prayed your whole life for this." As she had prayed for my father, sending away for oil blessed by Brother Andre of Montreal, so she could anoint my father's eyes nightly.

She is nearly 100 years old, and she still knows that I have

the family's spirit of resilience within me. I held on, even when the struggle seemed hopeless. She told me this part of my father's story when I needed it the most.

He had been rejected by the Brothers because of his poor vision.

It had hurt him terribly.

He went on to thrive.

To heck with those who are ignorant.

Forget hiding.

Do work with pride.

Amen.

Following the completion of this essay, Memere, Therese Sylvester, died on April 8, 2020. This piece is dedicated to her memory.

Angela Hebert is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at HCCC. She has been a member of faculty since 2001. A poet, with the pre-requisite 2 cats, as well as a history-making and history-loving husband. Go to <https://www.marfan.org/> for more information.



My First Year

(Continued from page 17)

band and partner, my invincible mother, and my daughter's friends' moms who gladly offer school pickups whenever I'm unable to do so.

Whenever I was asked about my new job, I would often compare it to a roller-coaster. There were moments of definite joyful highs, and challenges that had me duck down low. It has been a ride with many lessons learned, which only instilled my commitment and love for my

job. I am enthusiastically excited for the unceasing journey of what is ahead for all the growing initiatives and President Reber's vision, with the support of a brilliant executive team, a rock star Human Resources team, and the people of HCCC.

Most significantly, I am thrilled about the opportunities HCCC offers this incredible community. I could only hope that over this first year I began to affect the College and its people in a way that promotes

compassion, kindness, cultural infusion and diversity of perspectives. Yet, I am only one year in the deep, while others will be recognized for their 40-year service to the College.

Anna Krupitskiy serves as the Vice President for Human Resources at Hudson County Community College since March 1, 2019. Anna dedicated the past 10 years to higher education administration with various roles in human resources

and academic affairs. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Public Administration from Pace University, a Juris Doctorate from New York Law School, and a Masters of Law from the University of Essex in the United Kingdom. Born in Ukraine, and having grown up in Brooklyn, NY she now calls Fair Lawn, NJ her hometown, where she's joined by her husband and two kids (no dog yet).



Koral Booth

(Continued from page 20)

because I will miss them. Grateful doesn't begin to describe the way I feel. But I can show how grateful I am, by making my Hudson family proud.

I am a mom of four sons, and I believe that I didn't get a girl because I was entrusted with the responsibility of having

a part in raising the next generation of great men. In the fall, I will be attending Saint Peter's University and enrolling in their Dual-Degree Program to get my bachelor's degree in Communications and my Master's degree in Public Relations with a minor in Urban Studies. I plan to also pursue my Doctorate Degree in

a Higher Education.

Koral Booth is an EOF student, a member of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Sigma Kappa Delta Honor Society, a graduate of The Emerging Leaders Program, A Peer Leader with the Office of Student Life and Leadership, a Senator on

Student Government, President of The National Society of Leadership and Success, President of The Later in Life Leaders which is a club for non-traditional students, a member of Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society for non-traditional students, and a proud recipient of the CCOG Grant.



Temporary Tattoos

(Continued from page 21)

in Northern New Jersey where I get to sail with some extraordinary sailors, most of whom are men. However, everyone is kind (for the most part), very generous with their knowledge and keep me motivated to continue to improve as a sailor. The biggest constant is not the wind. In fact, that can be the ficklest aspect of sailing and what keeps

it so interesting and challenging.

For me the biggest constant is those temporary tattoos of color that I wear happily branded on my skin from April to October.

Lisa Bogart is a librarian at the North Hudson Campus of HCCC since September 2019. Prior, she was the Library Director at Eastern International

College in Jersey City. Helping students to utilize all the tools available to them to gain knowledge from academically acceptable, verifiable and credible information and then communicate it using established formats such as APA or MLA, is a passion for Lisa.

When she does not have her nose buried in an eBook, Lisa enjoys volunteering with her

undergraduate alma mater, seeing how many browser tabs she can keep open at once and sailing any chance she can get. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies from Skidmore College and received her Master's in Library and Information Science through Drexel University's online iSchool.



Artists' Bios

Laurie Riccadonna

Laurie Riccadonna's *Another Man's Treasure*, our cover (bio below may be edited)

Laurie Riccadonna earned her Master of Fine Arts in Painting/Printmaking from Yale University School of Art and her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting/Drawing from the Pennsylvania State University.

Ms. Riccadonna's work has been featured in a variety of solo and group exhibitions in the New York metropolitan region. Laurie's work is included in a variety of collections such as Memorial Sloan Kettering Art Collection, Hudson County Community College Permanent Art Collection and a variety of private collections.

Ms. Riccadonna has attended artist residencies at the Fundacion Valparaiso, Mojacar, Spain, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Vermont Studio Center and the Women's Studio Workshop. She is a two-time recipient of the NJ State Council on the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship. She was awarded Yale University's Ely Harwood Schless Prize. Currently Program Coordinator/Professor of Fine Art at Hudson County Community College, Ms Riccadonna resides in Jersey City with her husband and two children.

Woolpunk aka Michelle Vitale

Woolpunk's "Walking Palm" was created for an exhibit *Morir Sonando* at Knock Down Center, NY in 2018. It was recently exhibited in the Art

and Social Activism Festival in Manhattan. Walking Palms are trees found in the Amazon, over-used for flooring purposes. They hold the unique ability to actually re-root due to their above ground root system. This enables longevity and is the ultimate sign of strength, sustainability and resistance. Unfortunately, the trees are on the verge of extinction, along with fifty percent of Amazonian vegetation due to deforestation.

The piece is fourteen feet high and is made of yarn and found, repurposed tree branches.

Danielle Friedman

Danielle Friedman is a New York based fine artist. Upon earning her degree in Studio Art from Brandeis University in 2009, she moved to Mexico City as a recipient of the Mortimer-Hays Traveling Fellowship to design and produce a line of handmade fluorescent oil paint. She earned her MFA in Painting & Printmaking at Yale University in 2015 & has completed residencies at the Dumfries House Scotland, the Fountainhead in Miami and as a Roger Smith Fellow at the Vermont Studio Center. "Through a diaristic practice, I paint interior domestic space and the layers within it - investigating how color, mark and image become symbolic forces. I think about painting as a container of time, memory and material and aim to transport the viewer to a deeply emotional and psychological space. As an artist and educator, I care about personal style and story in order to generate human connectivity, sensorial ex-

perience and an elevated visual literacy."

Katie Niewodowski

Katie Niewodowski grew up on the west coast of Florida and has lived in Jersey City since 2006 where she makes her art and owns a personalized portrait company, Petitraits.

She is a professor of Visual Arts at Hudson County Community College, Montclair State University, and Stevens Institute of Technology. She received her BFA from Ringling College of Art and Design in 2002 and her MFA from Montclair State University in 2005.

Inspired by the structure of cells and the universe, Niewodowski's art is a meditation on the phenomenon of life and the creative structures that perpetuate it. She explores repeating patterns in nature, the interconnectedness of all living beings, and the portal into these networks that the process of art making provides.

Taryn Pizza

Taryn Pizza is a New Jersey-based, interdisciplinary artist and educator. Her work is an investigation of liminal space, often resting somewhere between fiction and reality. Pizza's multidimensional pieces and installations are an alteration, deconstruction, and narration of place. Her interests lie in time, impermanence, and absence in a search to uncover and reveal a multitude of truths surrounding forgotten histories of home. Through subtle layers, small

details, and rendered space, she questions the way in which our minds portray experiences of the past through ever shifting realities.

Monika Sosnowski

Monika Sosnowski is a Polish-American visual artist based in New York. Born in Detroit, Michigan, she grew up in Poland and the United States. The duality of this experience has strongly influenced her artistic sensibility.

Working primarily in the tradition of straight photography she contemplates the nature of being in time and place. In her long-term projects, she explores the intricacies of perception and the response to given phenomena as effected by personal experience.

Her subject matter is the everyday wonder evoked through a combination of landscape, still life, and portraiture. Themes of loss, the fleeting, fickleness of memory, patterns of chance, possibilities of fate, and a fragmented self echo throughout. Desiring coherence she looks for traces – presence in absence and absence in presence; the in-between and the beauty it reveals.

Monika Sosnowski has been a Visiting Artist at Bennington College in Bennington, VT and at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, NY.

Her work has been exhibited at, among others, LABspace, Hillsdale, NY; Smack Mellon Gallery and 111 Front Street Galleries, both in Brooklyn, NY; Eyes on Main Street, Wilson, NC; AC Institute, NYC; The Arts Center Gallery in Saratoga

Artists' Bios



Laurie Riccadonna's *Another Man's Treasure*, 2019, oil on canvas

Springs, NY; Ferrin Gallery and Storefront Artist Project, both in Pittsfield, MA; Gallery 51 in North Adams, MA; and Sohn Fine Art Gallery in Stockbridge, MA.

Monika Sosnowski received an MFA in Photography from Hunter College in New York City. She is an Adjunct Professor at Hudson County

Community College, she has also taught photography at IS183 – Art School of the Berkshires and is a Teaching Assistant at the International Center of Photography in NYC. She is married to the artist Peter Dudek. They have a wonder dog named Ruby.

Nature of Seeing project statement:

Nature of Seeing: A meditation on perception, presence and memory. As a visual notation of being in a particular place and time, this work is about looking, looking for, looking at, and looking again and again while being seduced by the splendor of light and wonder. The images are shaped by time and circumstances between the mo-

ment captured through the lens to when finally manifested as photographs (objects and otherwise). What is first noticed and observed gets extrapolated and its meaning considered as an interplay between narrative and abstract aspects.





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The Perennial

is an independent faculty publication of the Professional Association's Newsletter Committee. It provides an open forum of debate and critical discussion of issues facing our college, students and faculty; an academic community dedicated to teaching, research and publication. The newsletter receives its funding from a portion of our faculty members' union dues. The Perennial editorial board remains independent from the union's executive committee. The March 2020 edition marks the Perennial's 34th publication.

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This special issue of the
Perennial, meant to amplify
the voices of women at
Hudson County Community
College during March, a
month to celebrate Women's
History, was unfortunately
delayed due to the
coronavirus pandemic and
the failing of men.



Submit
items to:

The Independent Faculty Voice

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Items and suggestions
can be emailed to
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