

*Pieces
Creative
Literary
Magazine*

Spring 2018



Stigma

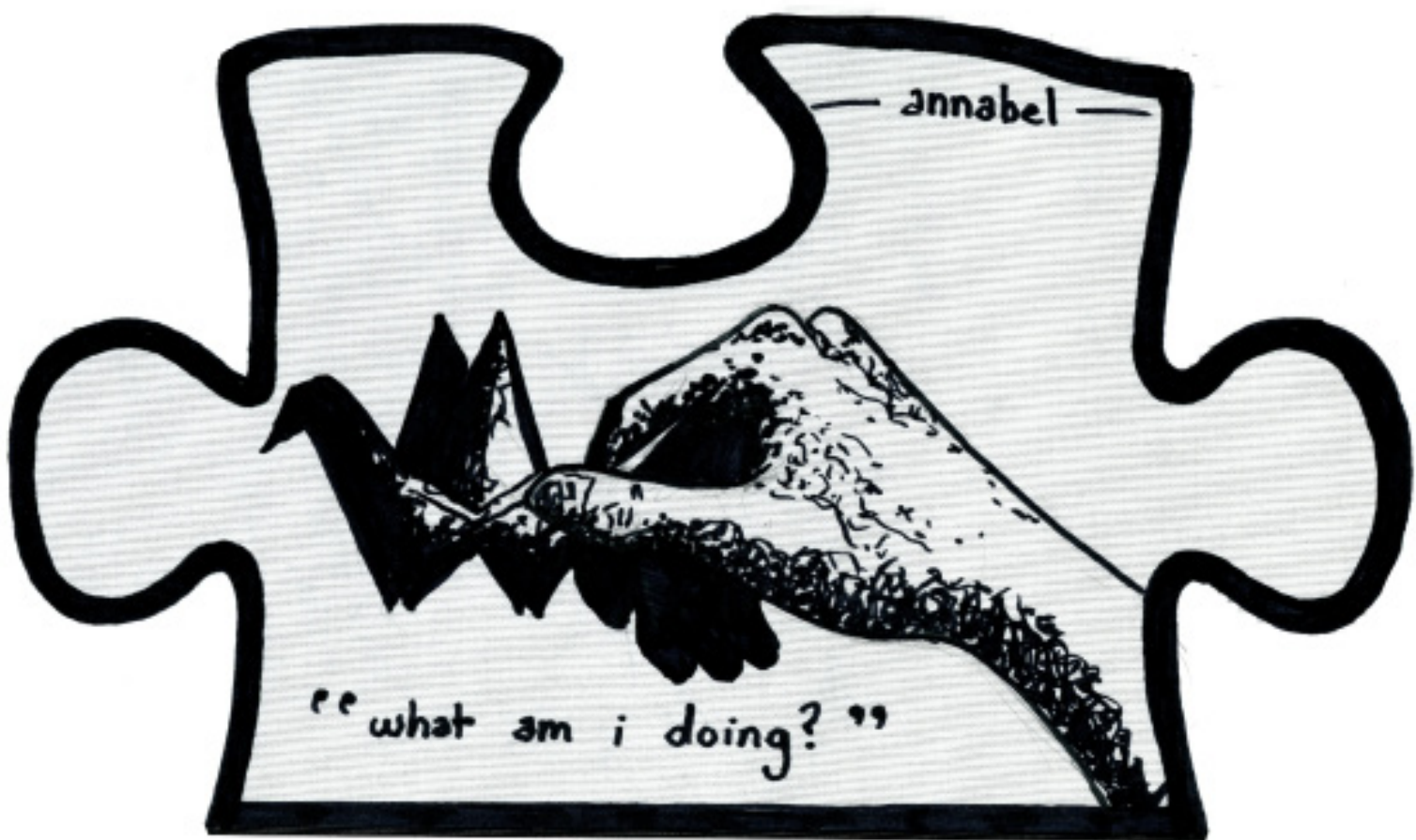
The scar
On my fine heart
Was not physically
there
It was caused by
somebody that
I trust.

Behind the Smiles

See, I don't think you really know about all the pain behind my eyes.
I don't think you'd understand why I bottle things inside.
I don't think you know about all the nights I stayed up late and cried.
I don't think you'd understand these scars and bruises that I hide.

Walking with a smile, swept pain under the rug.
No one gave me attention... what the heck was love?
My heart was torn apart, drug all through the mud.
But I had to keep pushing, for my daddy up above.

My mom destroyed my soul, mentality, and heart.
She never played her role, never played a mother's part.



You never cared about me, it's been like that from the start.
Then you wonder why I left you, we needed to be apart.

Caught up in the mix, everyday fighting demons.
All the friends I thought I had was changing like the seasons.
Left me hanging dry for whatever reason.
Thinking: "Why am I alive? I don't understand the meaning?"

I was struggling just to get out of bed everyday
Depression took over me, but still I sat and prayed.
That God would take over before my hope fades away.
Begging him and pleading him to show me brighter days.

Forgive me, for being in the way,
Forgive me, for telling everyone I'm okay.
Ill forgive you for the games that you played,
It should've never ended up this way...



IllustrationbyGiannaFiordaliso

Poem by Pieces Staff
Photograph by Hana
Kerchner

**I thought I knew you,
But you weren't there,
The eyes are the window to
the soul, but all I see is an
empty house
You left me broken and
hurting, so watch out my
love.
Love is nice, but revenge is
sweeter,
And your coldness leaves
me tasting bitter.**

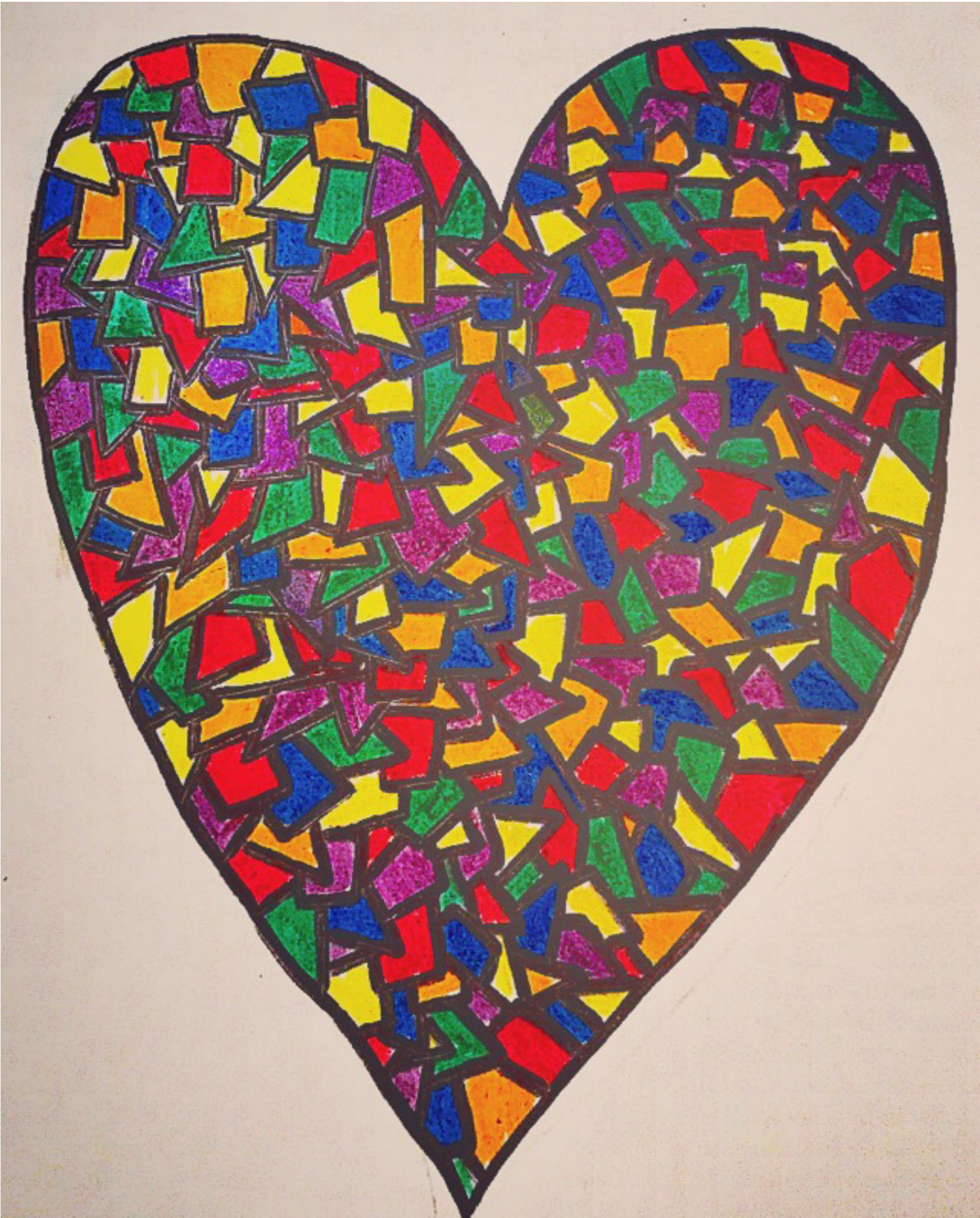


Illustration by Grace Rhoades

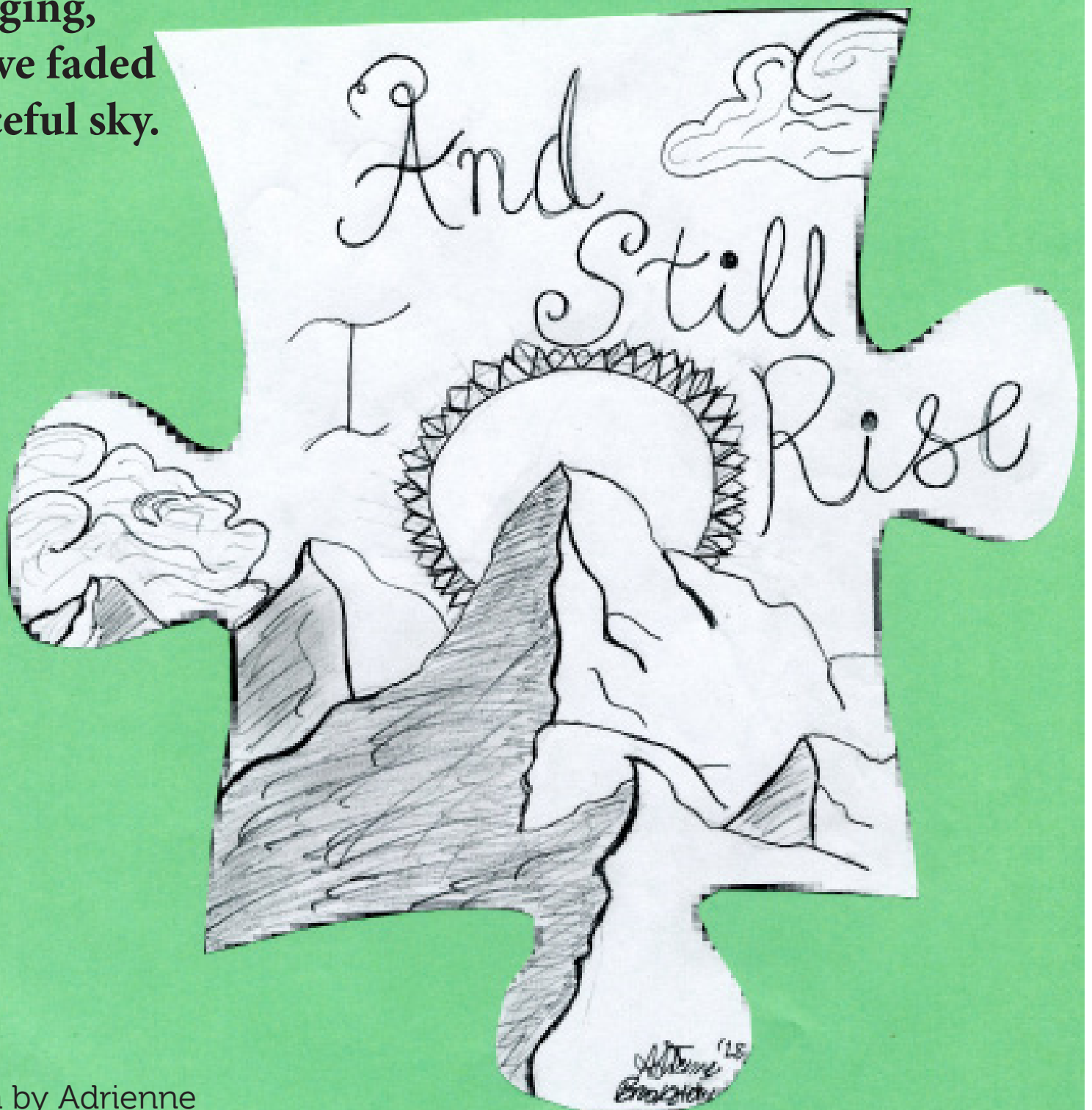
Coming Up Easy

The rain has stopped,
The storm has ceased,
And the sun is washing
Away the darkness.

It happened as fast
As a strike of lightning.
Bold, Bright, and Breaking
The sky.

Now the dawn is upon us,
And the world looks
And feels new.
The light is warm,

The flowers are in bloom,
The birds are singing,
And the stars have faded
Away into a peaceful sky.





Photograph by Taylor Andrews

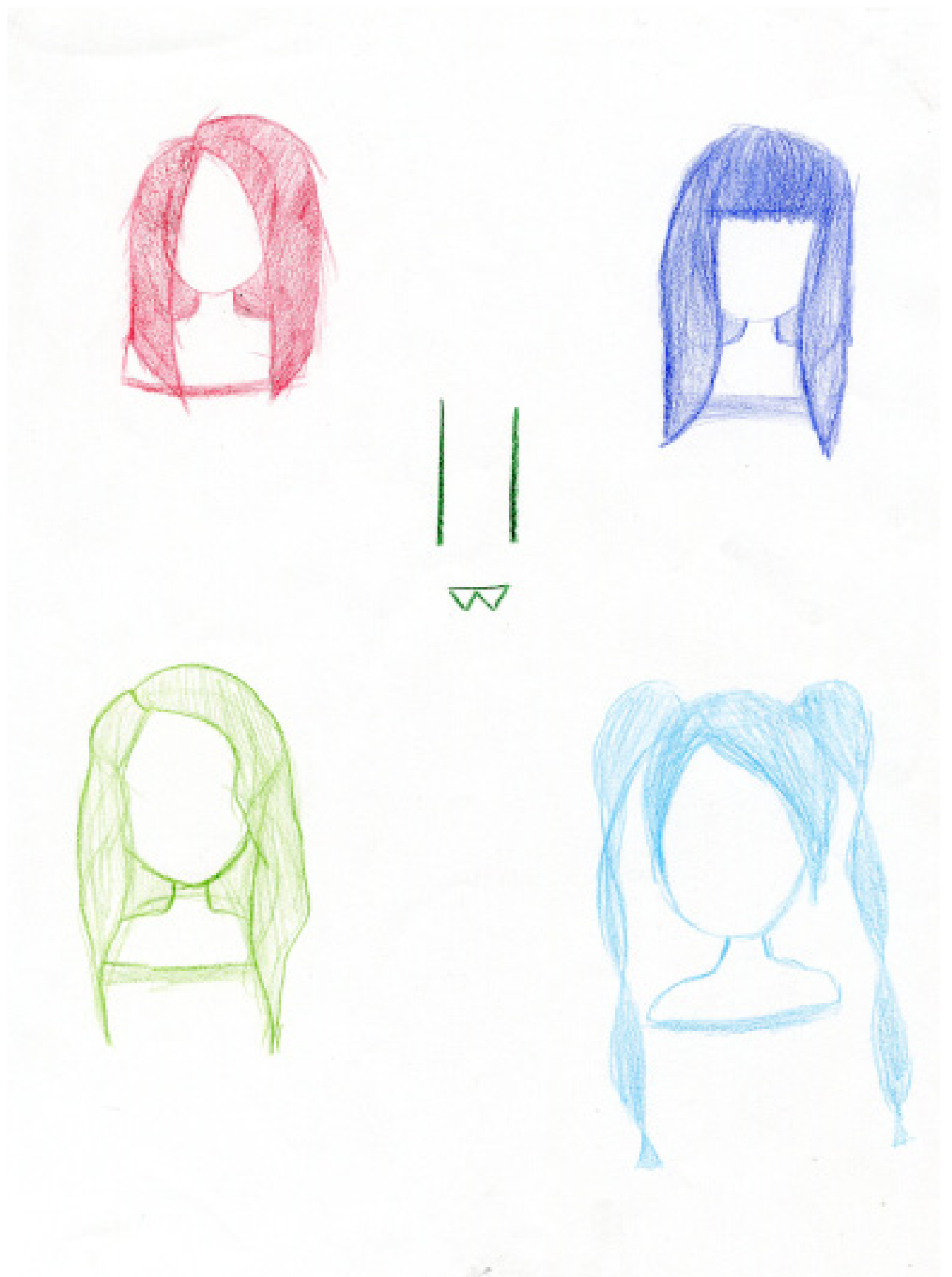
**The flood is back,
Knocking down the fences,
Crushing through the houses,
Sweeping away the silence.**

**Nature has taken over,
Clarity is forming behind the clouds,
Ready to rise again.**

**Her heart is beating to the same old track,
As if it had never skipped a beat.**

**Familiar thumps and familiar sorrows,
Hiding outside your door.**

**Will you
answer the
beckoning
call?
Or will you
remain with
your back
pressed
against the
wall?**



Empathy

Empathy

Closed Minded

The Woman who goes to church every Sunday but disowns her own son when he comes out as gay.

Closed off

The veteran who freezes to death, because no one would look down.

Broken away from others

The high school student who uses racial slurs, when he can't think of a punch line.

The great bridge of humanity collapsing

Categories to clarify just clouts

The world coming together divides us

TV transforms humans into pixels

Individuals with worth and dignity

Become mere images to consume

Far away reality becomes fantasy



*Nothing and no one matters,
in and of themselves.*

*But Always taught the golden
rule*

*“Do unto others as you would
have them do unto you”*

*this seems lost through the
sands of time*

*Human suffering doesn't stop
existing just because it
doesn't affect you*

*The reality of a better
world does not lie with*

*One person or a group of
people*

But all of humanity

*Compassion doesn't end at
borders*

It transcends them

*The people of Puerto Rico
may be an ocean away*

*But the vast ocean of human
experience*

Connects us.

*The value of a human life
does not decrease as it*

Gets further away

*We are all unique but we are
all connected*

*What happens to you, matters
to me*

Empathy.

Poem by John Mahoney

Illustration by Arrington

about being in love (I think)

what's it mean to be in love?

**this has been the subject of many sleepless nights,
of the many times i hurt my neck staring at the stars
what does it mean? and when do i know it's real?**

**is it when i see you
and my heart begins to race,
is it when you laugh and my
heart aches?**

**or is it when it's late at night,
and i'm staring out the window, and i can't sleep
and the stars sing delightful and terrifying truth to me,
that i'm thinking about you, obviously i'm thinking about you.**

**or maybe it's when
i hear you in the songs
that aren't about you,
that aren't even about love**

**when i imagine you're next to me
when you're not, when i
think i hear your voice, but i didn't
when i feel your eyes on me, but they weren't
(were they? just now?)**

**i might not ever find an answer to that question,
in fact, i'm sure i will never.**

**the only thing i am sure of at this point,
when i look at you, is that
i am hopelessly, terrifyingly, wonderfully, positively in love with you.**

Kitty Kitten

**Kitty Kitten,
Lying down,
Didn't dare to make a sound.**

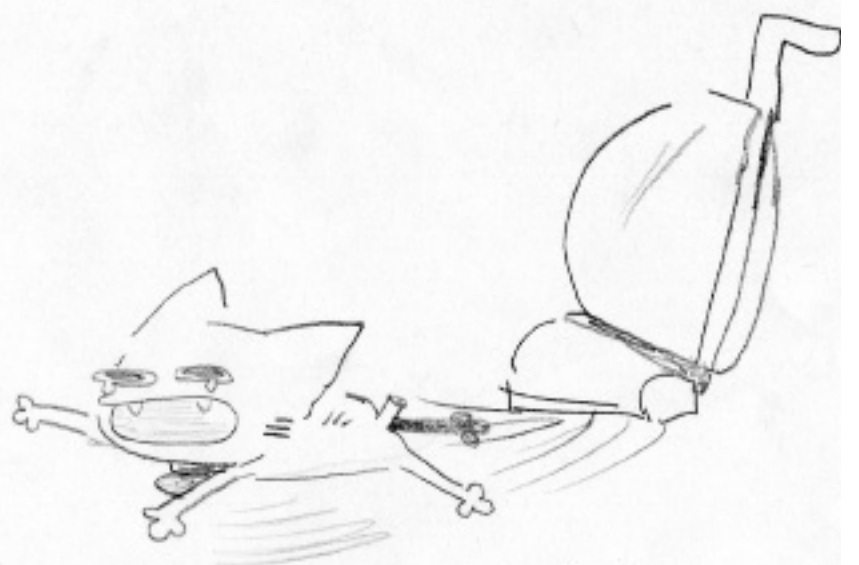
**Tuck the tail,
Hide the paws,
Eyes are open,
Prime the claws.**

**Kitty Kitten,
Starts to run,
What is it he's running from?**

**Moving beast,
Roaring loud,
Glowing eyes,
Blowing clouds,**

**White as day,
Tall as me,
Kitty Kitten didn't see-**

**Kitty kitten smacked the wall.
Running from the Dyson Ball.**



I DON'T KNOW

IF I CAN CHANGE

ANYTHING OR

GREAT

ALL I KNOW IS THAT I'M GOING TO

TRY,

THAT'S ALL I CAN DO

IF I SUCCEED

GREAT

IF I FAIL,

OH WELL

AT LEAST I TRIED

AT LEAST I LIVED FOR ME.

NO ONE ELSE

NOT MY TEACHERS,

NOT MY PARENTS,

NOT MY FRIENDS,

NOT MY PRIESTS,

NO ONE BUT ME

I LIVED FOR ME

I TOOK A KNIFE,

AND, I CUT THROUGH THE RAT

AND MADE MY OWN

WHAT I DID WAS WHAT I WANTED TO DO

PUT THAT ON MY
HE LIVED
FOR
HIMSELF
TOMBSTONE

THERE'S MY LEGACY

WHERE OTHERS LIVED TO IMPRESS OTHERS

I LIVED FOR ME

midnight thoughts

*This uncertainty is eating away at my sanity,
Leaving my chest void of the warmth it used to
share.*

*It's empty. It's dark, and it's scaring me to
the core.*

*Am I even on your mind? Do you dare ever
think of me?*

*Was I your fall back, or another one of your
stupid games?*

Was this all for her?

*These questions keep circling my mind,
Screaming into the void
And waking me up at night.*

*Do I even know you anymore? Did I ever?
Maybe I was blind to the truth,
Lost in your twisted nature,
Intrigued by your charm.*

*My heart is breaking every time the
hour passes,
And I still haven't heard your call.
Are you even trying? Will we make it
through the night?*



Poem by Adrienne
Brookstein
Illustration by Joley
Raposas

Drift

He saw in many people the quality known as apathy. They don't care, he thought. Jonas was like that. He had views that he stuck with, views that seldom changed. He walked into the schoolyard to be greeted by few, ignored by many. Social mobility was hardly a thing in his world. For that reason, he saw arrogance, as well, in many people.

The bell rang when he entered the building. Late, he thought.

He entered the room, the teacher looked up and simply marked something on his clipboard.

He drifted into the land he knew a good deal of, more so than his homeworld. Jonas saw flaws in the both of them. In his "drifting world", he calls it, is simply just black and white, light and dark. The good people are good, the bad are just bad. In his homeworld, people are just in their worlds of their own, it is simply a matrix that connects worlds.

The state of the drifting world was in dire need of fuel. Its fuel was the imagination of whomever contrived the world. It looked like the mind of a bizarre teenage boy contrived it, full of things he'd enjoy that he wouldn't see in homeworld.

He was speaking to Genko, the Secretary in World, when he drifted to the matrix, or reality as it came to be known. It was the bell that got him, first period was about to start. He was the last to leave. He liked to watch everybody leave, he got the essence of what they were like. Even the way they walked revealed information to him. If girls were to sway their hips in an exaggerated manner, they were not worth his time. If boys stood up tall with their shoulders up, they were arrogant.

Back to Genko, he discussed the future of his world. Genko was a greenish, slimy old man. His species was unknown, even to Genko. "The fate of this world as you and I know it," he said, "is unknown, to say the least."

"I see what you mean," Jonas replied, "but I view this world, and its people, as subject to any changes that come their way." He looked out the window after he said this. He saw mountains with steep slopes, men and women, who looked much like Genko, living lives of meaning. Few seemed upset. He saw shuttles above with electricity that powered them, not oil, taking people where they need to be. Houses were exotic, each represented their owner's thoughts, people praised uniqueness.

"Jonas, we were created by you. You are deeply flawed, with that being said, we are flawed."

"I am flawed, I know, but you guys aren't me. You just---"

"Came from you, is it?" abrupted Genko, "Listen, I know no idiot could design this world, but no genius would even decide to design a world to drift off to."

Jonas saw the other side of his world, the side where good was scarce--- no, it was not there. The sky was dark red, men had horns, and technology was indulged upon by the few elite. There were no houses, just people chained to brick walls.

"My worlds are ending." Jonas muttered.

Genko hesitated, "You're exaggerating, homeworld will end after you do."

"But this world will end before me, why?" asked the teen.

"I---I don't know. No worlds last forever. This one just ends before you do."

"So you must end with it?"

Genko paused for a moment, then spoke, "We have accomplished many things, made many people happy. However, I see in you something that doesn't belong in this place, you are in fact held back by it."

"And that is?"

He was in the hallway, in his homeworld. Back to where people put others through mental and physical torture because they're afraid of the torture they may or may not face. This dimension, so to speak, is a place where the physical body's of its inhabitants stay, while their energy is transported to worlds they have created. Their own drifting world.

He saw some people who seemed to be fully there, meaning not in their drifting world. Those people were more like the ones in his drifting world, the bad ones that is. The chains they used to fetter others were different, less cruel maybe, cruel it still was. Words that would be better off not repeating came out of their mouths quite regularly.

Jonas took into account his surroundings. The very aurora was bland, one could taste the apathy in the air, and feel the humid ignorance. He looked to his left and saw two boys passing around some type of device that you could get smoke from. Why those things over the shuttles? he thought. Technology was wasted on humans, it could benefit Genko and his people.

He had enough of that and went to Genko again.

The green elder spoke, "We will drift away now, it is our turn." The world around Jonas turned to pixels that were unrecognizable. The pixels became grains of sand that disappeared as gusts of wind took it away.

He was in homeworld, never to return to his safe haven. The world others would call La La Land was his noble abode. His home, was gone, he was alone and afraid. He was stuck in the matrix, the place where the cruel torture the unnatural. He never could make a new reality, he got caught by the cycle that goes as follows: work, eat, sleep, contemplate, get more sleep, and so on. Genko was a memory, his world was nothing. According to Genko's logic, he was that as well.

Get your hopes up Get let down

*lots of voices in life
tell you to not be so optimistic
to not get your hopes up,
because if you don't get your hopes up, you can't be let
down.*

*these voices strike me to my core
when i fail
again, and again, and again*

*"you've got to stop looking on the bright side, dear,
you're going to go blind one of these days."*

*but i can't.
i get my hopes up.
i get disappointed.*

*i put my faith in faithless people
i put my trust in untrustworthy people
i put my kindness in unkind people*

*i know i'm not going to get any of it back,
the faith, the trust, the kindness*

*but faith, trust, kindness is not in your wallet
you can't spend it all*

*belief is not a waterfall that runs itself dry
and love is not a currency that you will run out of
you can't splurge it all on a bad person
and you can't stare into the deep, deep emptiness of your
heart*

*wondering where it went, where did it go,
where did all of your love go?*

*so i'm going to keep getting my hopes up
i'm going to keep disappointing myself
why not? you didn't stay, but maybe the next one will.
that's why i can get my hopes up
there's always a maybe.*

Poem by Joley Raposas
Illustration by Hannah-Russel

Life has lost its color,
Food has lost its flavor,
Music has lost its beat,
and words have lost their meaning.



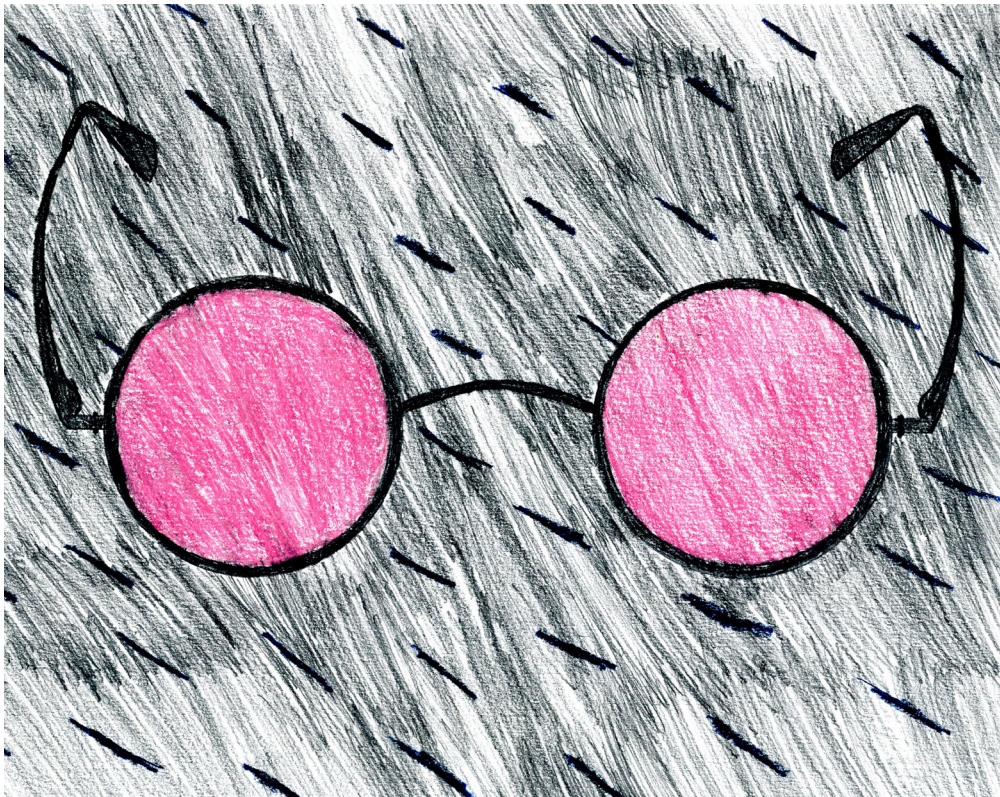
I can't breathe, I can't see, I can't feel the same.
Everything's changed now.

My heart won't move a muscle,
and time feels frozen.

I've become numb
to the agonizing pain that radiates through my chest
whenever I realize that you're gone
and you're never coming back

Photograph and Poem by
Adrienne Brookstein

Rose Colored



WHEN I WAS YOUNG, A BOY AND HIS
FRIENDS
CAME UP TO ME AND PULLED THE CORNERS
OF THEIR EYES BACK
AND LAUGHED.

I WENT HOME AND TOLD MY MOM ABOUT IT,
AND SHE SAT ME DOWN, TOLD ME,
THAT IF ANYONE PULLED THEIR EYES BACK
AT ME,
TO TELL HER, TELL MY FATHER-- WHY?

I DIDN'T KNOW YET-- DIDN'T KNOW IT
HAD TO DO WITH BEING ASIAN.
ALL I HAD EVER BEEN TOLD UP TO THAT
POINT
WAS THAT PEOPLE MIGHT MAKE FUN OF
MY HAIR, MY VOICE, MY PUDGY CHEEKS--
NOT FOR BEING ASIAN.

SO I WAS ANGRY, OF COURSE I WAS AN-
GRY,
WHEN THAT GIRL SANG A MOCKED-UP
STRING OF "CHINESE,"
WHEN THAT BOY WALKED PAST ME AND
SAID CHING CHONG CHING

BUT I WAS ANGRIER WHEN I TOLD MY
FRIEND
AND SHE TOLD ME IT WASN'T REALLY A
BIG DEAL
"YOU'RE SUCH A DRAMA QUEEN,
IT WAS JUST A JOKE. GET OVER IT"

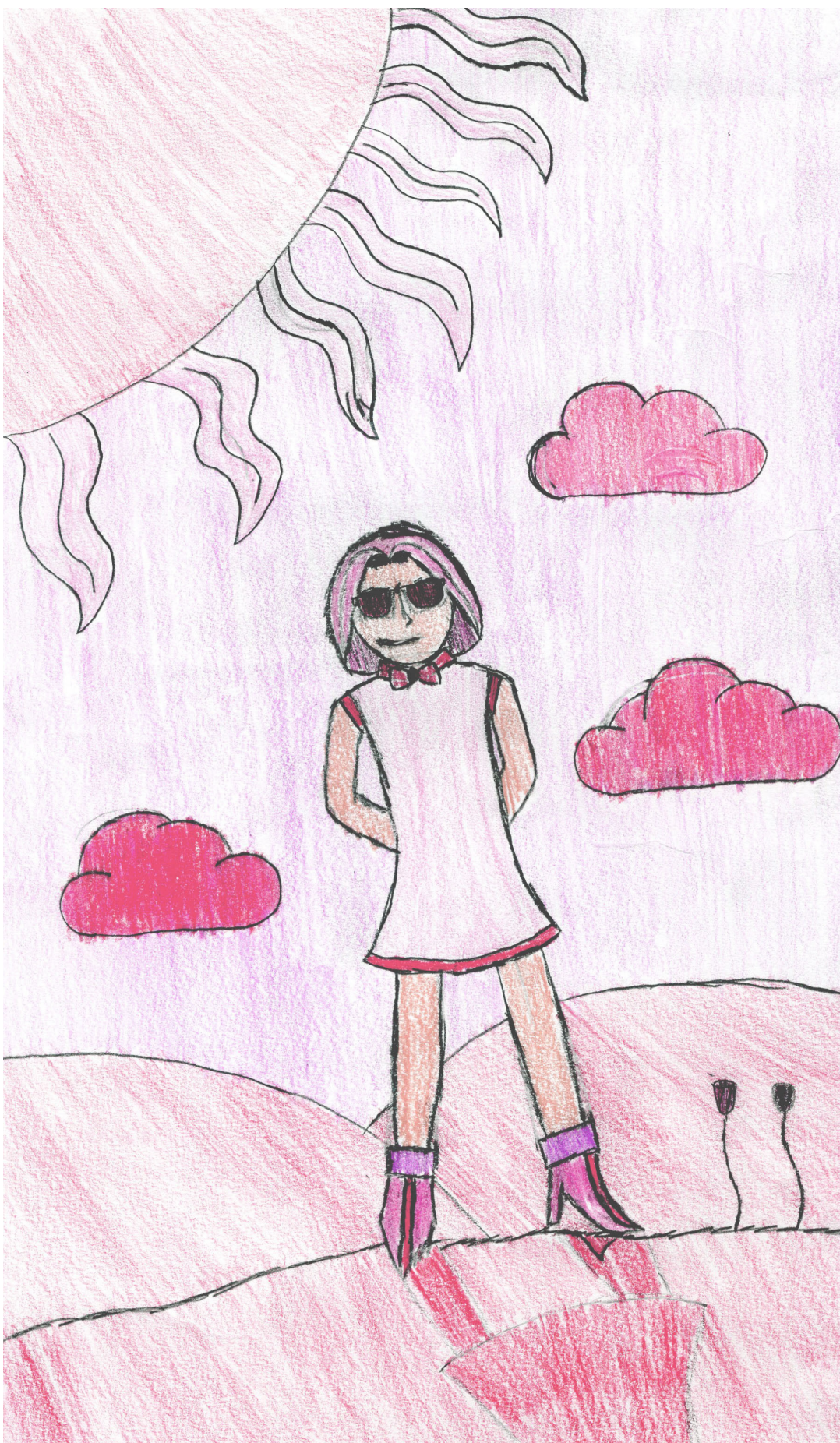
I GUESS MAYBE IT'S EASY FOR THE RED
FLAGS TO NOT
LOOK RED WHEN YOU'VE GOT ROSE-COL-
ORED GLASSES ON.
WHEN YOU THINK EVERYTHING'S FINE
NOW,
WHEN YOU THINK NO ONE REALLY GETS
HURT JUST FOR BEING
WHO THEY ARE.

"STOP BEING SO DRAMATIC,"
BUT YOU SEE MONOCHROMATIC
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE
THROUGH YOUR ROSE-COLORED GLASSES?

"IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL,"
"WE'RE JUST JOKING AROUND,"
I GET IT, I GET IT.

IM JUST ANOTHER ANGRY FEMINIST,
ANOTHER SPECIAL SNOWFLAKE,
ANOTHER MINORITY WHO SAYS IT'S NOT
ENOUGH.

YOU SAY I'M SEEING RED BUT YOU'RE
SEEING PINK
THESE ROSY HIGHLIGHTS ARE NO VINDI-
CATION
YOU CAN'T SEE ANYONE ELSE'S REALITY
WITH THIS DISTORTED REPRESENTATION.



Poem by Joley Raposas
Illustrations by Arrington Scott



Photograph by Taylor Andrews

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