



chasing butterflies

Lisa Zhang '22

Once, I chased a butterfly to the edge of a frozen field. I followed behind as it fluttered past snow-powdered boughs, wondering how its paper-thin wings could withstand the icy numbness of the Colorado winter.

Behind my house was a patch of woods, and behind that was a meadow, usually verdant and sprinkled with blue columbine but graying with winter frost at this time of year. Farther out was a lake, already starting to thaw at the center but still frozen at the perimeters. The wintry chill had not yet departed, but the sun-soaked skies were slowly dissolving the remnants of the last snowstorm. Icicles longer than my fingers hung from the eaves and bare branches of the Gambel oaks in my yard.

I spotted the butterfly one morning by the edge of the woods. It was a mourning cloak, a striking maroon with royal blue spots like rhinestones and ochre edges like lace trim. Against a backdrop washed with silver, it was something fresh, something I had never seen before in my few short years on this earth.

It was partly the way the sunlight shone on its iridescent edges and partly just the instinctive curiosity of a child

that drew me toward it, the type of curiosity that burgeons from the safe and familiar and compels you to reach out and seek elucidation. From the comfort of this crystalline landscape sprung an inquisitive mind, flourishing under the surveying gaze of time-honored centerpieces: lofty pines and imposing firs, conifers of immortality, holding steadfast to the same soil year after year. I trailed behind the mourning cloak intently, hoping to catch up and get a closer look at the anomaly. Though it floated freely beyond the range of my outstretched hand, I still pursued, clinging on with a childlike determination that could never be extinguished.

At last it disappeared into the shadows beyond the field, and I found myself by the edge of the pearly lake. My curiosity had taken me far, and from the distance I heard the sound of my mother calling, her voice pulling me back like a rubber band. It was time to head home, but that didn't mean leaving behind a perceptive mind and an appetite for inquiry.

My tendency for self-initiated exploration has never ceased. Each day I find myself still chasing novelty, still chasing butterflies 🐾

La Mariposa, Amy Zhang '23
ink and watercolor