

the  
pottery  
of our lives

The pottery room always smelled of dried mud and sparks of imagination.  
The whirl of the potter's wheels blew electric fumes  
and breaths of clay as I walked through the tinted doors.  
I'd sit down with our mom, and you with our dad,  
and we'd embark on our journey.

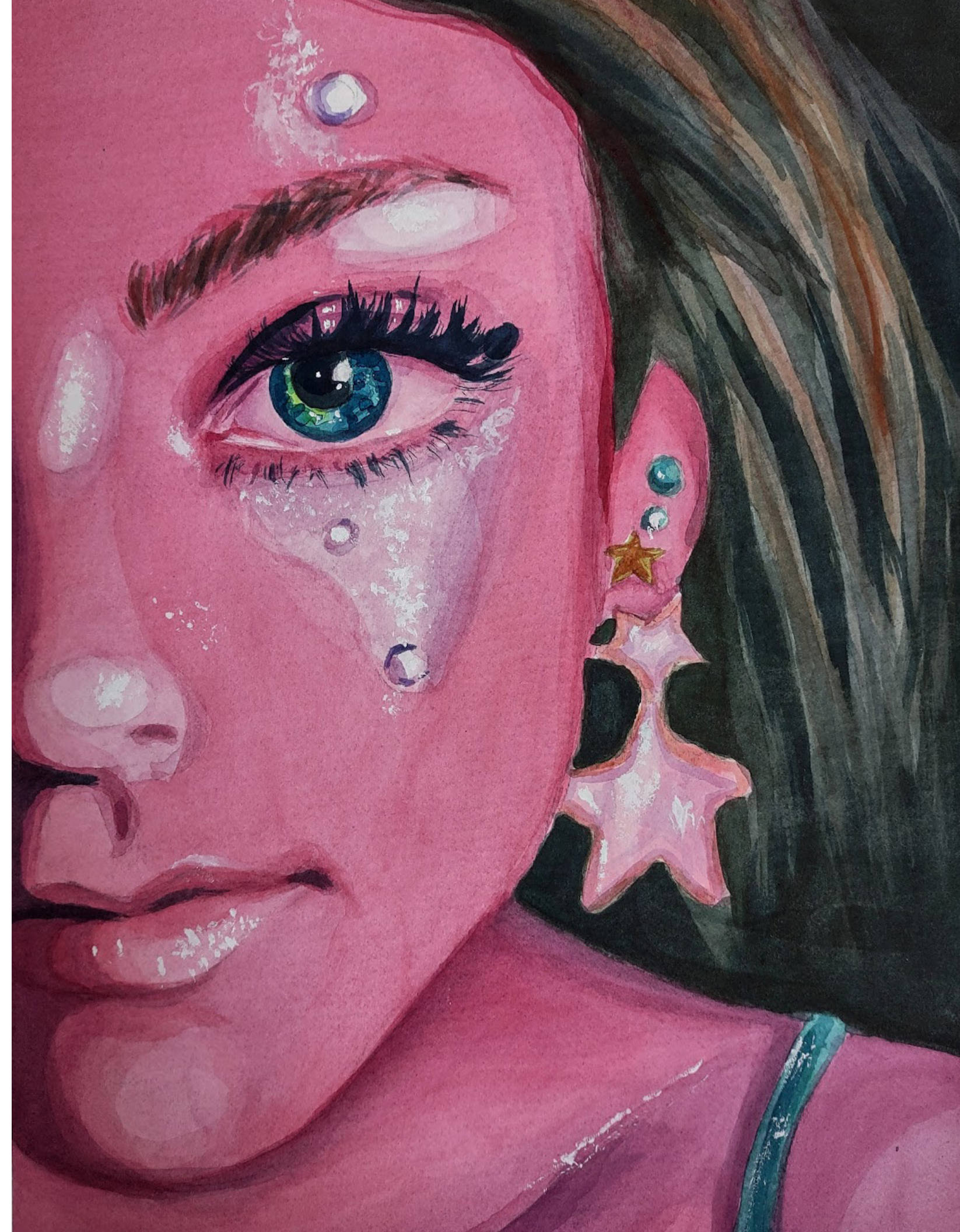
Ten years later, I wonder if your memory of our relationship  
has become the wet clay  
I once molded with my two tiny hands,  
slippery, fickle and susceptible to cracks from the air.

When I slip into unconsciousness,  
I dream of us playing Candy Land in our playroom,  
me holding your unwavering gaze in the ER,  
and you moving into college when no one thought you could.  
But when your eyelids close, do you sleep untethered by the bonds of sisterhood?  
You didn't even text or call on my birthday.  
*How could you not remember?*

So I slide that lopsided pot of clay into the kiln of my memory  
and set the temperature to molten hot.  
As the furnace coaxes into fruition the bowl meant to hold our connection,  
I rip it out while the embers still hiss with intensity.

Now I settle into a dusty chair, alone in that old YMCA pottery room.  
I take out my brushes and acrylics that have decorated tears onto the milestones of my life,  
and set to work.  
I begin to paint our relationship with the echoes of our lives,  
hoping that someday you might include me in yours.

- Audrey Henderson '23



## A PLACE BEYOND **DANDELIONS**

I know of a place beyond the dandelions,  
beyond the shamrock-green grasses of day,  
where gnarled shadows loom and nightshades bloom,  
and the leaves are shriveled and gray.

I know a place beyond the sunlight,  
beyond the gentle stares of lilies,  
where crows squawk and silence stalks,  
and lakes churn with dark eddies.

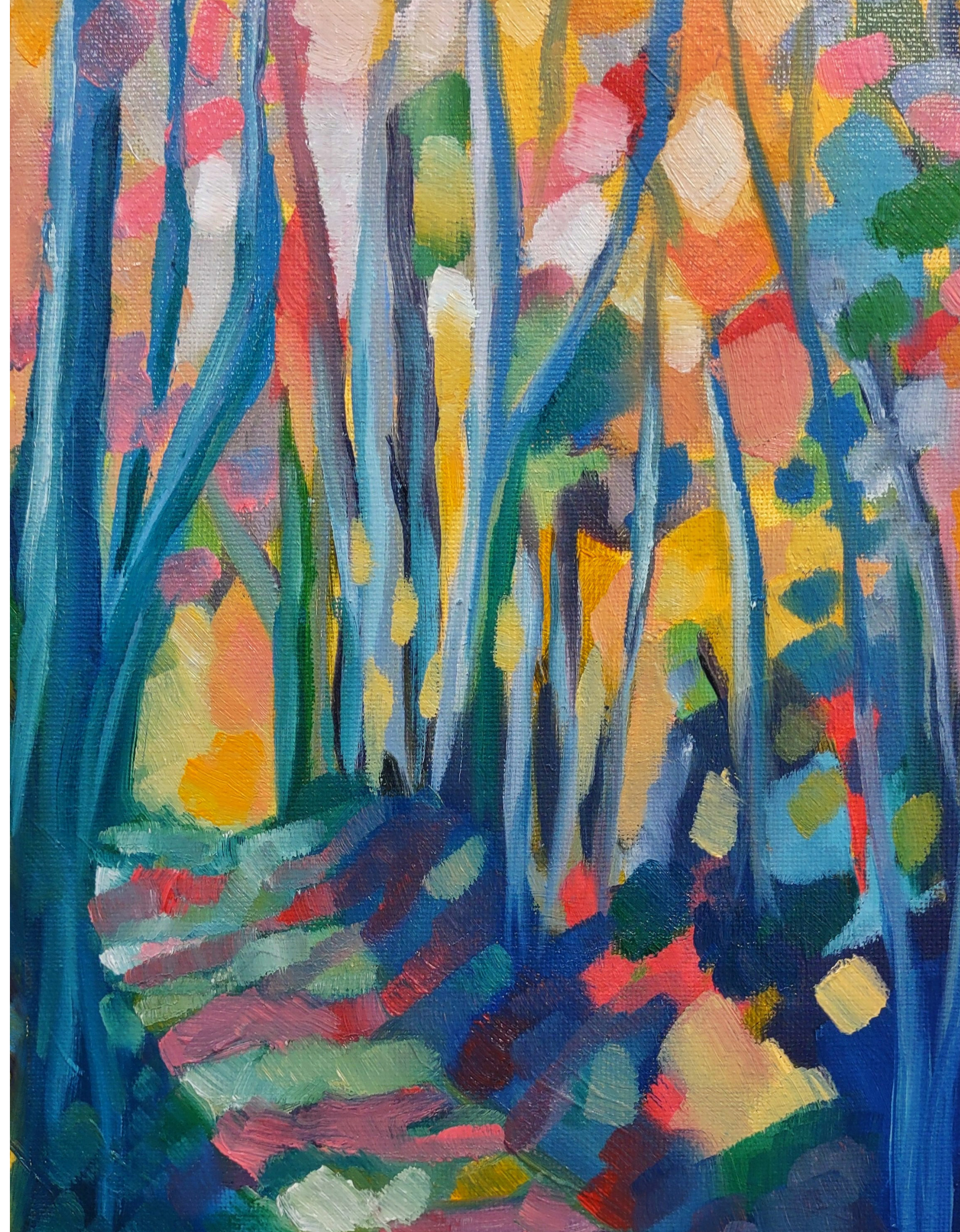
I know of a place beyond the meadows,  
beyond the smitten smiles of sunflowers,  
where the forest rules and the air is cool,  
and one can lose his way for hours.

I know a place beyond the garden walls,  
beyond the trimmed lips of tulips,  
where the trees don't stare and the stars don't care  
if you're a gardener or shoeless.

I know a place beyond the city,  
beyond the bright billboards and floral lights,  
where shadows sleep and grapevines creep,  
yet the crickets whisper songs of light.

Let us go to the place beyond dandelions,  
beyond the carved, silent smiles of weeds,  
where the river flows and the frog croaks  
to the sanctuary in the reeds.

- Ankit Biswas '26



## A BLANK CANVAS

LIV KNIGHT '23

**M**y love for art began as soon as I was able to hold a crayon. Using my imagination and having the freedom to create alternate realities has always been fascinating to me. Whether it was drawing imaginary characters, the scenery around me, or wild fashion ideas, I loved the process of turning whatever came to mind into something tangible. It was from here that my passion for art truly began to flourish, and I started to take a sketchbook and pencils with me everywhere I went. Wanting to encourage my interests, my parents enrolled me in the Holt School of Fine Art, where I have been taking classes ever since.

Pursuing this ability to create guided me all the way to my eighth grade year in Honors Art. It was the beginning of autumn, and all the leaves were changing colors, from vivid green to deep reds and yellows. I remember heading out into the woods to paint, hearing the crunch of the freshly fallen leaves beneath my feet and watching the wind twist the branches of the trees. I felt inspired to paint vibrant, abstract works as I admired the colors woven along the branches and the cerulean blue of the skies. These days spent outdoors with my paints and canvases enhanced my

appreciation of the creative process, which I took with me into my high school years.

Looking back at all the projects from each of my high school art classes, one in particular remains the most memorable. It was my junior year, and my art teacher announced we would be participating in the 2022 Recycle the Runway competition. I could not suppress my excitement. The same girl who used to sketch fashion

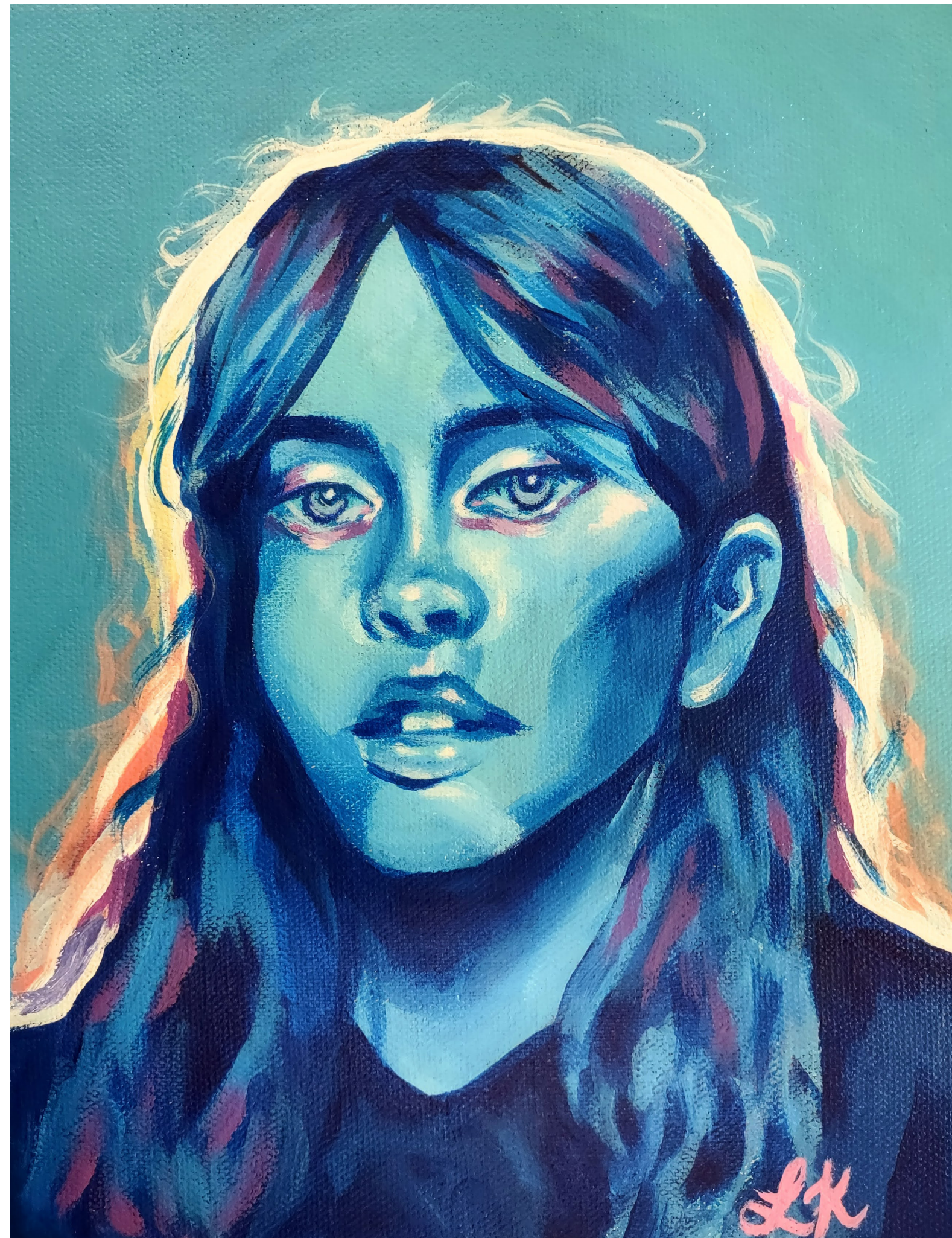
“ I strive to be the type of instructor that I would have wanted as a young student

designs in her spiral notebooks was now being asked to bring them to life. I exchanged glances with everyone in the room, and we all had similar expressions of delight in our eyes. We immediately began compiling ideas for a dress and sketched out what we envisioned. This project was like nothing I had ever produced before, and it opened my mind to a new aspect of art. Regardless of the challenges faced in the process, it allowed

me to construct a wearable, functional dress that originated from my own drawings.

Now, I am an instructor at the Holt School of Fine Art, where I enjoy working with all of my students and watching their love for art grow in the same way that it did for me. Engaging with each of my students and getting to know them, as well as their unique styles, is so special to me. Having the opportunity to help them improve their skills reminds me of the valuable guidance I received from my teachers in my early years. I strive to be the type of instructor that I would have wanted as a young student. Back then, I never would have imagined I would one day be an instructor, let alone how rewarding it would be.

That same three-year-old girl coloring with crayons would be astonished to see where this passion for art has taken her. That same girl who used to draw outrageous fashion designs in her little yellow sketchbooks would not believe you if you told her that years later she would make an award-winning dress from her own designs. That same girl cannot wait to write the next chapter of this story as she continues to follow her passion 🐾



# CAROLINA

Carolina is rolling hills and country roads,  
wheat fields just behind my neighborhood and,  
on either side of faded street lines,  
potholes on the highway.  
Pop country blares from the Silverado beside me,  
and a cool breeze surrounds my face.  
Carolina is rich ground throughout the state,  
perpetual weeds,  
red clay,  
red brick houses,  
red peppers in my mother's backyard garden  
in the heart of pine trees and wooden fences.  
Carolina is wide lawns  
freshly mowed in a criss-cross pattern,  
Range Rovers and Chevys filling the driveway,  
white brick ranch-style houses,  
gated, code-protected communities,  
and Lululemon-wearing housewives congregating  
over wine in the rich neighborhoods.

Carolina is thunder waking me up at midnight,  
hail the following hour,  
perpetual "flash floods,"  
and my dog hiding in the closet.  
Carolina is snow days,  
opening the blinds to look out the window  
every twenty minutes  
thinking it's slowing down,  
turning the television to a news channel.  
*I thought they said three inches.*

Carolina is light blue and yellow,  
late Friday nights and early Saturday mornings,  
the comforting familiarity of CBS football theme music,  
mashed potatoes and brisket for dinner,  
eating over foldable trays in the living room,  
and slow moving, grocery-shopping Sundays.  
Friendly exchanges in Walmart and CVS,  
and my dad insisting that I don't tell him the Chiefs' score yet.  
Carolina is college basketball,  
sitting with my dad,  
betting on our homemade brackets,  
usually cheering against Duke.

Carolina is queso made from Velveeta,

store-brand tortilla chips with homemade guacamole,  
Frank's Red Hot drowning my wings,  
and fountain Diet Coke with the good ice from QuikTrip.  
Carolina is collard greens and cornbread at Thanksgiving,  
but my grandma doesn't approve.  
Her midwestern recipe box doesn't  
have a divider labeled "soul food."  
I think mine will.  
Carolina is sweet tea from McDonald's,  
old ladies calling me Honey when they ask me a question.  
*People are so nice down here.*

Carolina is hot Septembers,  
temperate Aprils and Mays,  
humid Junes and Julys,  
Duke Energy power outages,  
and my mom leaning on the counter  
covering her face with her hands.  
(They said they were fixing the Wifi at noon.)  
Carolina is seasonal events "on the lawn,"  
vendors selling candles and ugly, handmade birdhouses,  
live music from local bands you've still never heard of,  
cowboy boots and beards running across the stage,  
and bad covers of Metallica and Led Zeppelin.

Carolina is the beach in May,  
hot sand and salt in my eyes,  
sunscreen running down my cheeks,  
the mountains in November,  
snow at my feet and warm soup on the stove,  
wet socks and boots scattered at the door  
and everything in between.  
Carolina is aggressive drivers,  
droopy eyes on the way to the airport,  
Cook Out milkshakes after soccer practice  
and the Charlotte skyline at sunset.

Carolina is urban areas full of creative individuality  
and a melting pot of culture all around my city.  
Carolina is: *There's no place like home.*

- Sophia Broz '23



*Among Friends*, Liv Knight '23  
watercolor

# KALEIDOSCOPE MOMENTS

— ILANA WANG '23 —

As a glass prism takes white light and refracts it into a rainbow, I take parts of my weekly routine and create a kaleidoscopic version of color-filled days.

The fiery red sunset after the thunderstorm appears, illuminating the sky. “Mine! Mine!” I scream while diving for the ball. Instead of the expected pass, I get a mouthful of sand and a bruise on my lower left hip. Wednesday nights of beach volleyball and captivating sunsets become a weekly tradition for my friends and me. In the words of my friend Emma, it is perfection.

The sweet, buttery aroma of my orangish-brown pancakes topped with a gooey maple glaze are an obsession for me. To my friends, family and co-workers, I’m known as a “pancake enthusiast.” In fact, I distinctly remember making pancakes every day during my AP exam week as a good luck breakfast. But, no matter what I do, I feel content knowing I started my morning off right with a stack full of pancakes.

The yellow and white icon in the second row and third column of my phone is my second most used app. I’m talking about the Apple-installed Notes app. It’s essentially my brain written down, containing everything from my dreams and aspirations to scattered one-sentence grocery notes and

reminders. No matter what thoughts are going through my brain—whether I need to de-stress, set a to-do list, or just plan out my week, I turn to Notes to jot it down.

Green is the color of most people’s favorite coffee chain: Starbucks. However, I get my daily dose of “caffeine” through Spotify. Whether it’s pulling up my “Pound the Alarm” playlist on early school mornings or skipping songs until I find one I like, Spotify is always

“ I’m able to push myself towards my ambitions without losing sight of myself or the present ”

playing in the background.

Laughter bounces off the blue walls of a warmly lit restaurant. Another weekend full of hungry customers, taking orders and finishing side work. Looking up and scanning my co-workers’ faces, I realize I am fortunate to have found a job with people I could call my family.

Stretching on an indigo-colored turf, I look around and breathe a sigh of relief as my constant swarm of thoughts fades away. Like many others,

I struggled with my body image and the societal pressure to fit in. At first, going to the gym was just for that reason. Now, I can genuinely say that my 8 a.m. or afterschool workouts are something I look forward to as they are a way for me to clear my head and unwind.

Eleven years ago, a violet collar speckled with white flowers was clipped around an eight-week-old lab retriever mix. That was the moment I found my best friend. Since then, our early morning jogs and late-night strolls have become my favorite part of the day.

All these events mesh to create a kaleidoscope of color that is my weekly routine. These colors may seem somewhat ordinary, but they are parts of my days that I love and look forward to. In a fast-paced society so focused on routine and commonality, it can be easy for me to get caught in the middle of it. By focusing on the little things, I’ve learned to create a balance in life where I’m able to push myself toward my ambitions without losing sight of myself or the present. I believe that finding this balance in life is essential in helping me achieve my future goals of going to medical school and becoming a doctor. But for now, I will take this balance to college and create a new kaleidoscope of colors with the new friends I make and the new atmosphere around me 🐾

*Rebel Rebel*, Liv Knight '23  
acrylic

