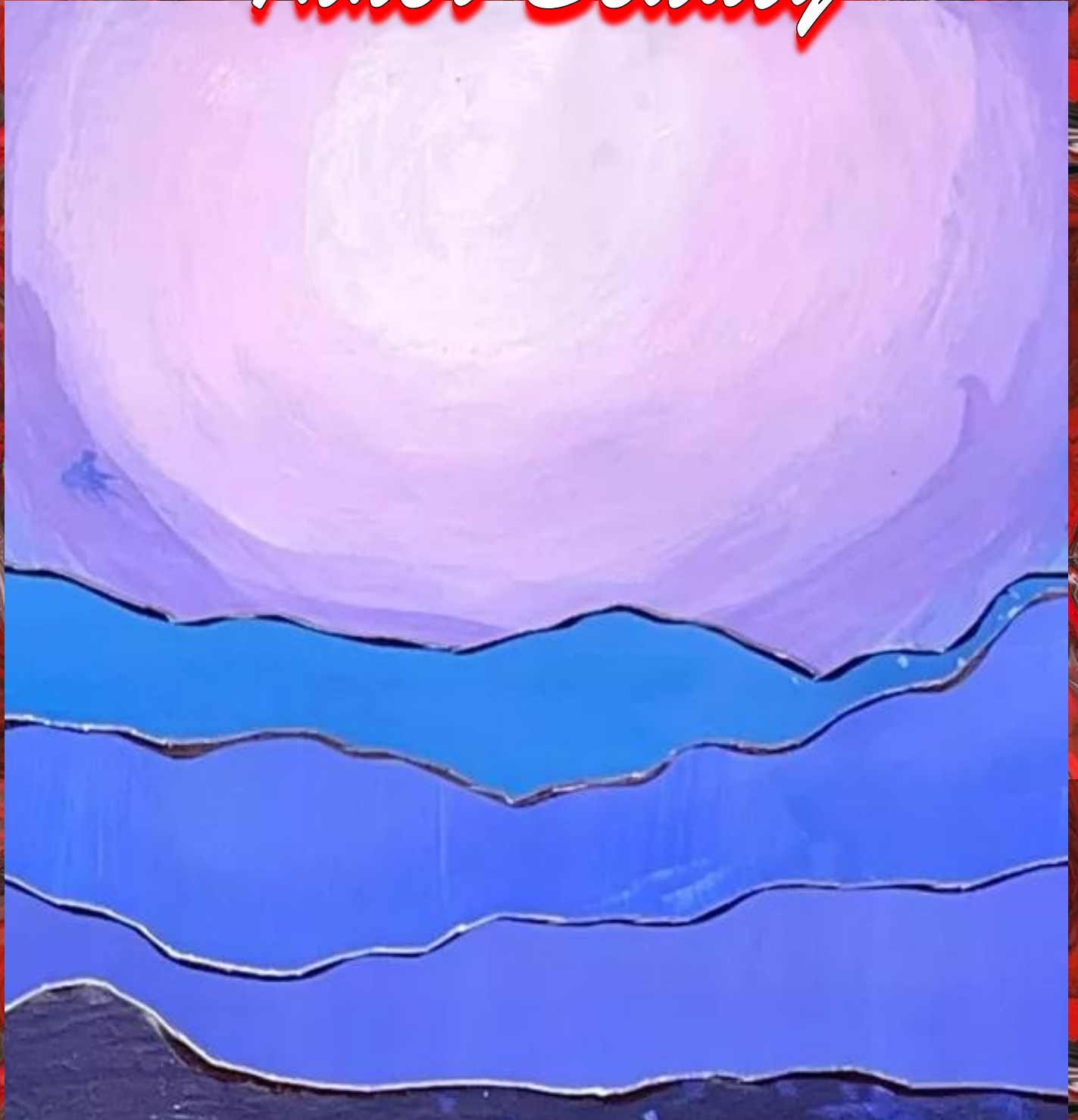


Inner Beauty



Heightened Expectations

Wilson High School 2022-2023 Literary Journal

“Heightened Expectations”

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Perfect

That's what they see and think.
They think she gets good grades because she never fails
Or that she never makes mistakes.
She *is* perfect.

They don't see the struggle of being the perfect student
Or the perfect daughter or friend.
They don't see she's not doing this for herself
but because it's what everyone expects.

They see her as perfect so that's what she pressures herself to be.
She can't skip class or have fun
With the freedom of still being young
Because she *must* be perfect.



Picking Up My First Hobby

Finding my first hobby wasn't hard at all. Football has always been a love of mine and playing it is what I wanted to do the most. I always used to watch my favorite teams play and idolized every aspect of the sport.

One hot summer morning, I finally got the opportunity to play. I was in fourth grade and was waiting to get picked up from my aunt's house by my mother. It was very hot outside, to the point where sweat started dripping down my shirt, as my mother pulled up.

"Get in the car," my mother said to me as she started to put the car in gear.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

She told me it was a surprise, so I didn't think much of it.

As we got closer to where we were headed I realized that I recognized the area – it was the place where I saw kids my age playing football. I didn't really pay it any mind seeing as I didn't think she would stop there.

"We're here get out." Said my mom.

I looked out the window in disbelief as I saw a football field that could probably fit one thousand 'Meres in it. "Wait, why are we here!?" I asked in excitement.

My mother explained to me about how she was taking me to sign up for football.

"C'mon Mere!" My mother helped my little body get out of the car as I rushed with energy. We walked down a path seeing kids doing jumping jacks until my mom saw one of the coaches. "You one of the coaches? My son has been nagging me to sign up...What does he need?" My mother asked.

The coach told her that she needed to have my report card and some money. My mother gave the coach everything he asked for and my first practice started.

"What's your name, young man?" my coach asked.

"I'm Jermere" I answered.

"Well Jermere, Get on the field," he said.

I immediately listened, not wanting to get in trouble.

The sun shined brightly in my eyes as I ran on the field. My heart was racing as a feeling of happiness & nervousness ran through my body. "I finally did it!" I thought, "I'm finally able to become a football player!"

I was excited but I would soon find out it wasn't going to be so easy. I ran to everyone else who was practicing and started getting to know them. They just got done doing warm-ups and it was time to start seeing what positions we were going to play.

"WHY Y'ALL TALKING!?" Said the coach.

A chill ran down my spine as I never expected to be yelled at by the coach. I thought it was all fun and games.

"WE AREN'T GONNA WIN ANY GAMES BY TALKING. GET IN TWO LINES," yelled the coach.

We quickly got into two even lines. The coach called people up one at a time and made one person catch the ball while the other tried to stop him by touching him with two hands.

While in the catching line, I thought about what the coach said. "I guess this isn't about fun, it's about hard work," I thought and instantly started focusing on trying my hardest to put on a good example for myself.

"Sykes, your up!" said my coach. My coach instantly started calling me by my last name the moment he found out what it was.

I stepped up on the line until my coach told me to go. I ran as fast as I could to get the defender off me to catch the ball. I beat the defender and focused as hard as I could to catch it. When I caught it, I ran all the way to the touchdown.

I was happy that I caught the ball and my coach sure was too. "That's what I'm talking about, Sykes!" Said my coach.

By the end of practice, I got assigned to the running back position. I always wanted to be a wide receiver when I was little but, at my age, people never passed the ball and they wanted to use me... so I accepted.

I was an actual football player. Every day after school I would go to practice and enjoy my time playing the sport that I loved. I learned that it was hard work but, somehow, that honestly made me enjoy the sport much more.



My Cousin

She's been with me since we were lil babies
Always been there even on hardest days
At family gatherings when we're seeing
Each other we're planning our weekends' play

We always be spilling tea catching up
On each other and with the things we missed
Even when not together we still plan
On what we could do and where we would go

But since i moved i won't see her at school
Or be able to finish things we planned
Can't go to her quince how we always talked
No hugs saying how we missed each other

Will forever cherish my cousin dear
The person who's trust and love is clear





El Cubano

Caribbean Paradise

Its vast, natural beauty

The long sides and sharp rounded ridges

pristine beaches gently sloping strip of the land that lies along the edge of the ocean

Within what I remember

Something unforgettable

The long beaches that gave speeches

Trees danced the wind

The north is delightful, and I do admire it

But my heart stays in the same Habana

I want to feel the palpitations of my heart after too much sweet coffee.

I want to take another walk on the Malecón and not worry about a thing

I want to feel the sea splash my eyelids

I want to run after the little boy that walked on the seawall who clutched his mother's hand

That little boy was me long ago

I want to see my family again and tell them all about my five years in the US

Tell them about all the places I've visited

Show them how much I've matured and grown

Show my family how much I've learned

How every day I seek for improvement for better following years

They would be thrilled with joy

I always think back to my childhood in Santiago

On *Calle 14* where I once lived, the men finishing their domino game

The woman sweeping the floor with a broom, and she wears

a flower in her hair, showing off, posing for pictures with the tourists.

My grandmother and friends waving at us as we got further in the car

When I want to still be there, but I know I am already far away

Tomorrow, I will be struggling to find the words to explain how I feel

My last day in La Habana and I have left, even before saying goodbye.

Yes, there are American poets

Silenced and oppressed
Their words suppressed, their voices repressed.
A world where false perceptions take the center stage
While reality is ignored and put in a cage.

Maybe if they felt the pain and strife
Of hearing that your lights might go out in this life
Or the tragedy of seeing your brother's light get put out
For being in the wrong place without a doubt

We must understand that life is bittersweet,
A symphony of highs and lows that we meet,
Distinguishing the truth from the fake
Acknowledging the struggle that people undertake

Let's lift up the voices of the voiceless
Who have all been buried without a choice
It's through pain and struggle that we face
So we can unite together and create a better place

Yes, American poets have much to say
So we must acknowledge their voice
Their words and experiences cannot be kept at bay
We cannot afford to silence their voice

Let their words speak from pain and love
So we can learn and listen from their fights
Of injustice below and grace above
And work to make their struggles right

We cannot stay silent, we must take a stand
Against the forces that try to suppress and take command
The truth cannot be hidden anymore
We must rise up and fight like never before

Let's lift the voices of the poets who have been pushed down
And give them a platform to make their voices have a sound
Their words have power to inspire and ignite
A movement that can create a world that's right

I was doing my mom's hair,
And I saw a gray one.
I told her she was getting old.
And she told me:

"I'm only 43!"



communication

“communication; the process where words are shared between two,
the process when you listen, speak or do both;
communication seems like something simple,
something anyone can manage.”

but this isn't always the case.

in some instances, the words that are spoken aren't always the truth,
and the words you thought were being listened to aren't even being heard.

we talk a lot, you and i but lately it feels as if we don't speak at all.

‘you can always talk to me’ you say, but is that what you mean?

when i'm troubled i try to take up your offer but your response doesn't always match
with what you say.

maybe i wasn't listening, or i didn't hear what you said

i try to talk to you about it but it seems as if my actions don't match with what i say
either.

“communication; the process where words are shared between two,
the process when you listen, speak or do both.”

communication isn't always simple,
it isn't something everyone can manage.

oh, how I wish this wasn't the case

but when I think of us I know the truth.

communication isn't always simple.



This is How I Broke My Leg

I was with my mom and my grandma, we were at my football game and it was the 3rd quarter. I was a wide receiver and had run an outside route. When I caught the ball, I made a deep cut planting my foot into the ground and got tackled. As soon as I got tackled, my leg went back and broke.

The bottom of my leg snapped, and my coach bent/fixed my leg by putting it back in place. It obviously made it hurt worse. They had covered it and called over the people so they could see my leg was broken. I didn't know what was happening until I tried to stand up.

My leg suddenly started to hurt much more. The pain was so much at one point I just couldn't take it. It was outrageous. I kept trying to stand up but my friend and my coach kept holding me down.

I could see the shock and fear in everyone's eyes. My mom, grandma, my uncles, and my dad ran onto the field. I still didn't know my leg was broken, just wanted to know why it was hurting. Why were they holding me down? Why is my family on the field yelling and screaming? I just wanted to stand up but then looked at my leg and saw that it was broken.

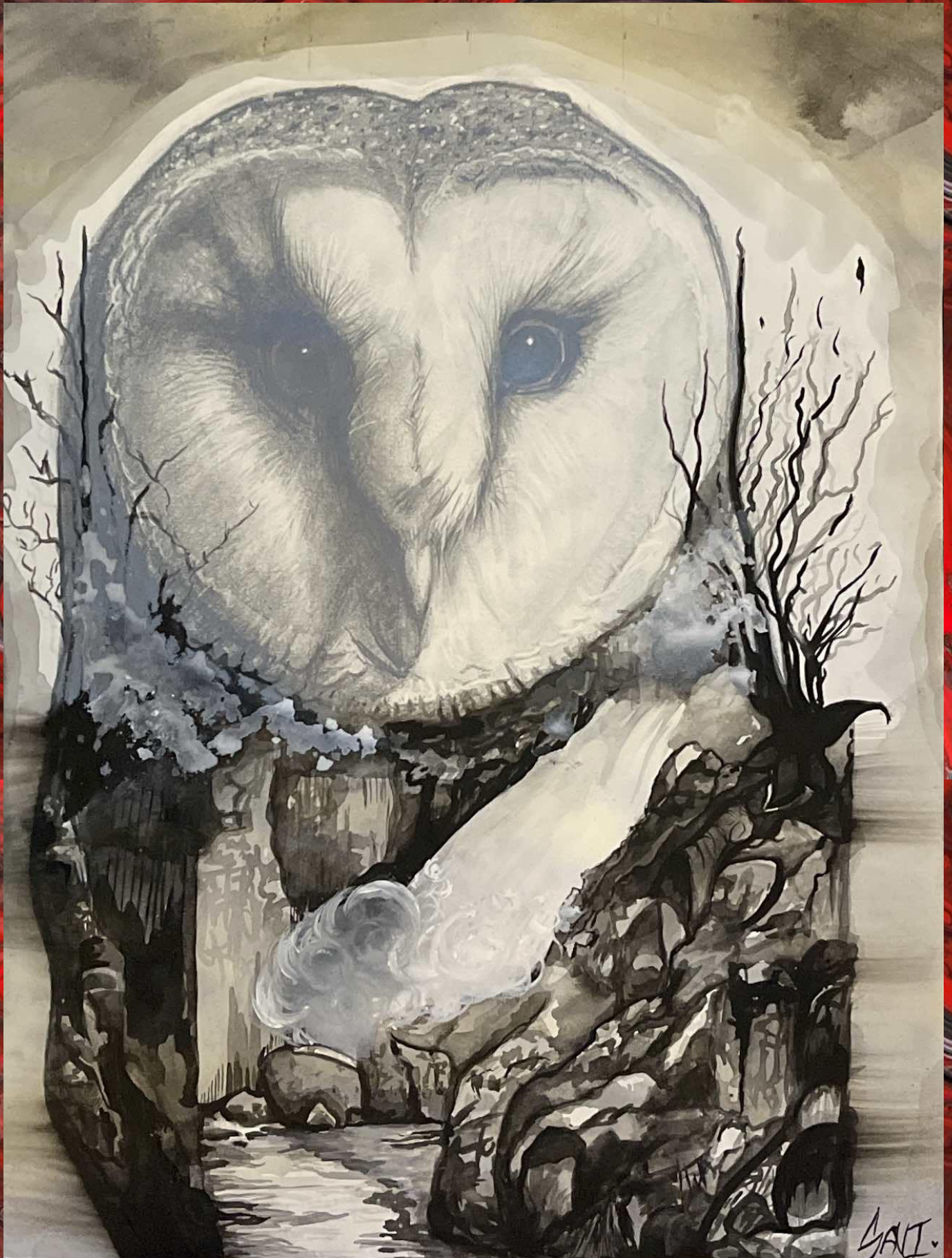
They were trying to get the ambulance and trying to take me to the hospital for my leg. When I got to the hospital, they rushed me into a room and "fixed" my leg back. Then they put a cast on it and started to let it heal.

I sat down a lot, walked on it, and put pressure on it... sometimes. I got in the water to work with it at the same time. Most of the time, I would let it rest. I took medicine so it will heal and not hurt but it always hurt all the time.

I wanted to play football still so I would play catch with my cousins and play the game so I am not bored.

When it started to heal more and more, they said they were going to take the cast off. I was happy because I would be able to play football again. So the next couple of weeks I finally got it taken off so I was back playing football and everyone was happy and we threw a party.

I played my next game and won. I scored 4 touchdowns, had a pick, and then, after the game, I worked out. I was happy that my leg was healed and didn't want my leg to be broken ever again because it hurt. It was boring but I got through it. I kept playing and getting better and better, getting my leg more muscular and more robust so my leg would never break ever again.



Laying down, I tucked in like a cooked shrimp,
I hold tight, one of my favorite pets
As I doze off, my arms and legs go limp,
After resting, my energy resets

I pass out, and I enter a fun place
A place that is only controlled by me
I start building and creating my base
I finally finish making my world

As I am almost finished creating,
A dark shadow thing appears by my eyes.
I started to run but I stood in place
I woke up when it sprinted to grab me

Good thing it was only one of my dreams
I could go to sleep, but I'd rather not.





America's Rates

The Sun shined bright over the bridge
Whilst the water screamed sublime
Fingers go numb, cold air brushes your lips
Now you know it's time

The Sun shined brighter than ambition
That which you didn't have
Overcome with remorse and the penitent expression
Leaving you in the state of contrition

It tingles your ear
The deafening water waves is the only sound
The cool air is all you hear
Everything would be okay, if only you weren't halfway down.

Only thing left standing is your hairs
H2O is what you will soon meet
Lips go dry and crack
Eyes locked shut, but peek to see

Don't be beat by the bridge
Once bound by concrete
Will feel the same once you arrive
Your shadow approaches, empty of conceit

Time's arrow only marches forward
The act has been bygone
Head goes vacant
You left under the sun, by dawn

Approaching the light
Head first, toes at last
With no will, no reason to fight
You'd think I'd be aghast

You leave everyone behind
You don't even bother looking back
You count one, two, three
And you're back to where you were at

All you have done is raise the rates
The raise of rates of the self-took
You are not any different from the others
No, you are far worse
To be given everything and to deny
Is nothing short of being selfish

You threw your life
Thinking you were doing everyone a favor
All you've done is create sorrow and distress

All you have done is increase the number of self-goners
America's suicide rate has only worsened because of you
You, if anything, have caused people problems

Witnesses traumatized by your actions
All you have done is pass your negativity to others
Leading them to the same faith as you

You were given the most prodigious gift
One that each organism receives, life
Yet you would be called dysfunctional
The way that you're so spoiled

It was the only thing that you were completely entitled to
Yet you threw it over the bridge
As if it was another vast materialistic object of the universe

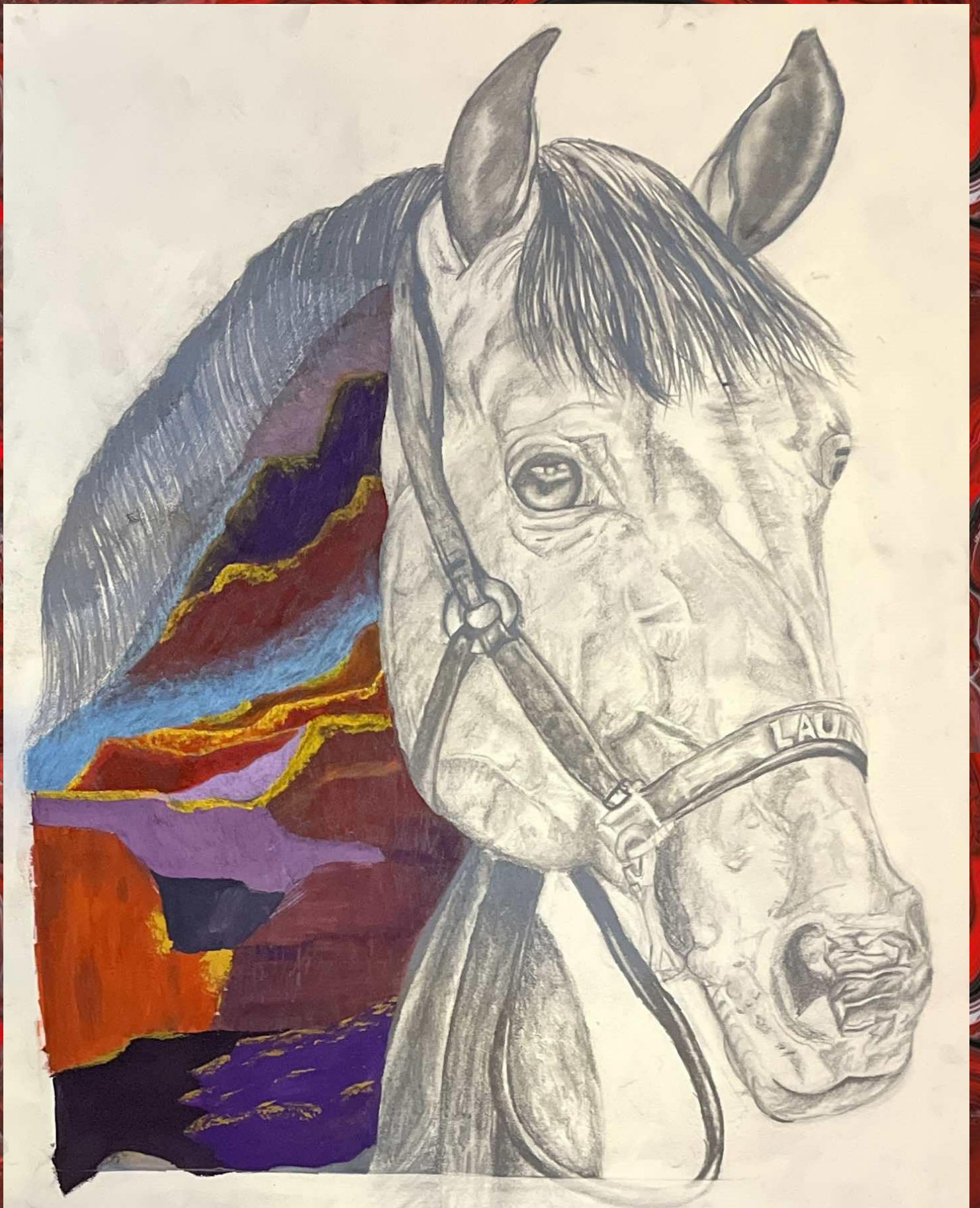
But no, it is the only thing that isn't
Suicide rates increase everyday
Stop it

My Mother Is an Angel

My mother is an angel
A goddess in my eyes, why?
She is the bravest woman I've met
Eye's sparkle like the sun
Hair thin but long and wavy, like the waves
In the ocean, Her smile would lighten up a whole room
How gorgeous and shiny her teeth are with her soft glowy
Melanin skin.

My mother is strong, strong like a brick wall
She's a giver she loves helping others
Other's love helping her in return
My mother has rainy days
She cried, she screamed, she even yells
But she never gave up. My mother is a forgiver
She had people show her wrong but she never gave up
She had people take from us, but she still forgave

My mother is a believer
She believes if you do good,
Good will do back, She is a blessing
Blessing to others, blessing to her family and herself
My mother is a go-getter
She doesn't stop, she's like a person that's
In a dark hallway trying to get to the bright
Light but can't reach it cause of the
Challenges coming at her in life.
My mother, she taught me to never give up
Never stop believing
Chase your dreams
Do good and good will do back
My mother is an angel.



Sunrise to Sunset

Shining bright like a star in the sky at night. Shining down on earth.
Highlighting the violence, shining on the racism and the cruelty of the world.
When I see the sunrise I find peace, there are birds chirping, people driving to work
ignoring the problems in the world.
Cameras clicking because the sunrise is such a beautiful sight with all the different
colors.

From light yellow to dark purple.
The sun wakes us all up. All across the sky, showing the sky, the sky is the limit.
Looking into the sky I have one question... How do all the colors blend so well together?
I feel Zen.

I feel like I can do anything I put my mind to, smile wide from ear to ear with joy, and
sometimes even like a child on Christmas morning, it's truly blissful.
The feelings take my mind all around the world. The thoughts are endless, hopes and
dreams spinning around filling my head, it's a lovely feeling like the sun shining on your
skin.

Skin, the color or texture doesn't really matter, we all bleed the same.
Sometimes I wonder why can't we get along or blend like the colors in the sky. Even
with
The day coming to an end the sun sits stunningly in the sky highlighting the violence,
shining on the racism as the cruelty of the world. Day by day night by night the little
things go by unnoticed. Maybe because we're clueless and don't know what to look for,
maybe we don't want to look? Maybe we grow not to care? But why? The problem is us.
We know our problems but we choose to ignore the problems in our society. The blind
leading the blind/ but our eyes are wide open.

In school they teach you to treat people how you want to be treated so why do people
with higher authority treat certain people differently? THE PEOPLE WHO ENFORCE
THE LAWS TREAT CERTAIN PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY? So, who protects the
people who aren't being protected by the higher authorities? But when the sun goes
down the sky goes dark we all bleed the same.

The day my mom had her first girl, I was 6 years old, my mom was feeling sick. My mom was just all over the place. She was in the bathroom, in the kitchen, everywhere. Everything she did, I had to help do. If she was cooking, I had to be in the kitchen cooking too. I felt like I wasn't getting enough attention but I was happy that I was giving my mom the help that she needed.

I was on the couch and my mom was screaming. She said, "my water broke," so I was scared.

Good thing my dad was there. We got in the car and he was speeding and running red lights but we didn't care we got to the hospital. I couldn't come in because I wasn't old enough so I had to wait outside.

My dad and I went to go and get McDonald's. He was trying to cheer me up because he knew I was a little scared of her birth. I thought it wasn't going to be the same and everything was going to change at some point. Thoughts just flooded my mind just over thinking every single thing. My stomach started to hurt and it made me feel like I was sick. "This is something to make a kid go mad," I muttered feeling anxious.

My mom is having a baby, "You have to be a man", my dad said.

I was starting to man up and trying not to make a big deal out of the situation, making a little joke to cheer me and my dad up, and it worked a little. My dad and I arrived at the hospital and we were just nervous. You can tell by the way he was talking and looking.

We ended up in the building looking for the room number and my dad and I found out my mom was overdue. My dad said, "Stay out here, I'll be right back."

I took a seat and was waiting and waiting and waiting. I was so nervous. I was breaking out in a cold sweat. The bench in the hospital was so cold and there were a lot of bright lights.

My mom gave birth two days later (well, one day and a couple of hours) but it felt like years and years and I couldn't go to sleep at night. Looking at the clock 1:00... 2:00... 3:00... "when is she going to give birth?" My mind couldn't get those simple words out of my mind.

I hear my dad talking on the phone so I walk out of my dark room in to the dimly lit room. I see the expression on his face it widens with joy. He grabs me and said, "let's go it finally happened."

We ended up in the hospital room. There were so many thoughts going through my little head, still half asleep, I didn't know. "What's going on," I muttered.

We enter the room so bright and in my mom's hands is what I think is a baby. I walk up to the loud crying baby still fresh to the world and didn't know how to feel.

Should I love her? I just don't know.

But all I do know is that's my sister.

Misunderstood

This is not a confusing poem
Just simply a misunderstood poem
As you read these words you do not understand
You see me but you don't understand me
You hear me but you don't get me

This is not a confusing poem
Just simply a clarity poem
Between what is said and not meant
And what is meant is not said
My words cannot begin to share what is unsaid

But the words that are said you shall understand
You see through me instead of seeing me
You see what i give you not what i hide from you
You see blindly i see perfectly
You ignore me instead of getting to know me
You misunderstand me
Try to understand me

This is simply a misunderstood poem
Not a confusing poem

