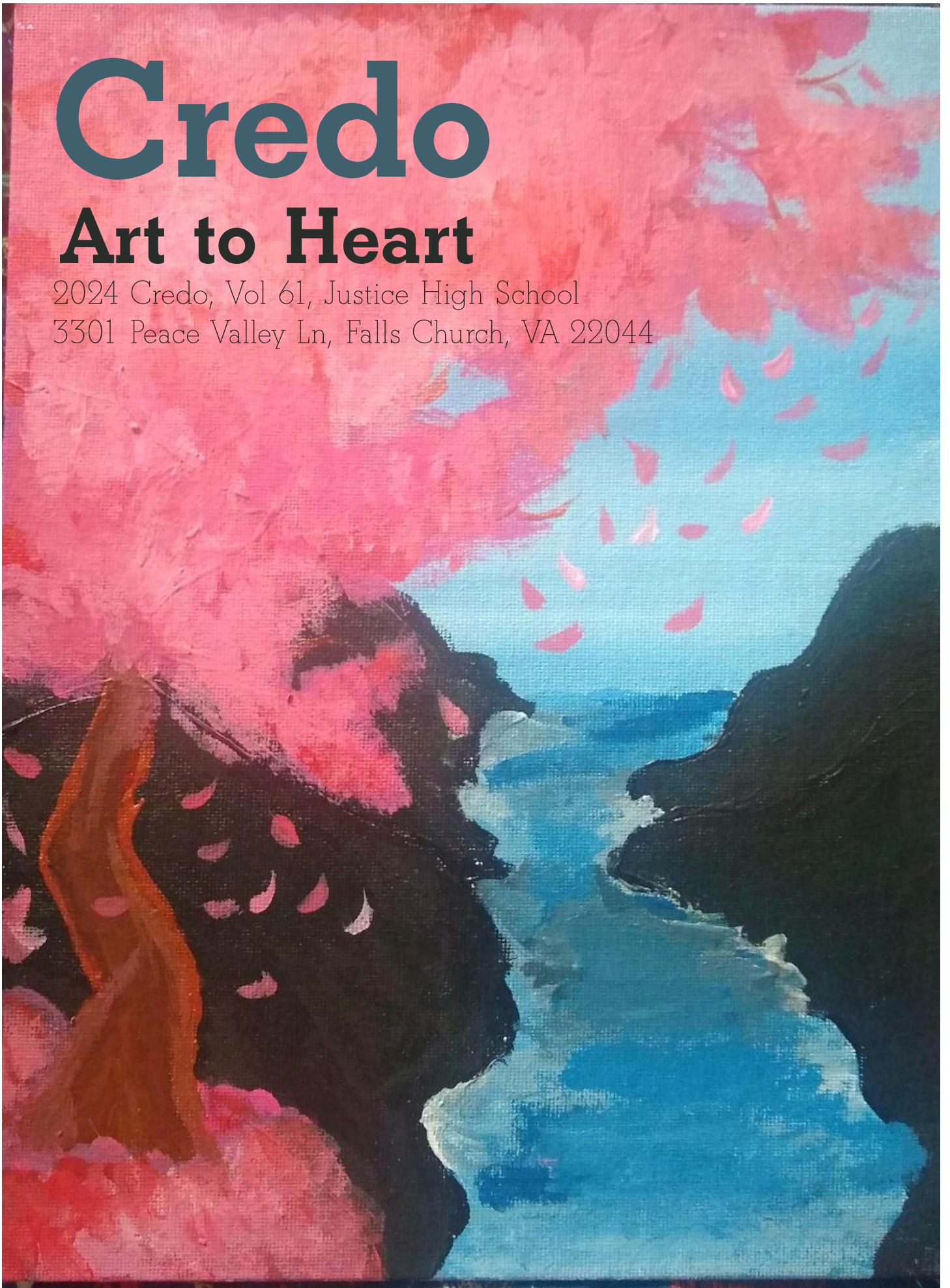


Credo

Art to Heart

2024 Credo, Vol 61, Justice High School
3301 Peace Valley Ln, Falls Church, VA 22044



2024 Credo: Art to Heart

The Justice High School Literary Magazine

EDITORIAL BOARD

Sofi Hemmens

Ariela Ventura

Tyler Crockett

Blue Linden

Graham Sage

Maryam Niazi

Kimberly Jimenez Cruz

DESIGN STAFF

Nate Ross

ADVISER

Christina Dwyer

COLOPHON

This year marked an important step in the return of the LitMag to Justice High School. With an entirely new staff led by editor-in-chief Sofi Hemmens and Advisor Christina Dwyer, the staff would meet each Wednesday afternoon to create the Credo.

The staff advertised and solicited content from the student body through English and Art classes, including Creative Writing. They divided up the task of editing content according to genre, working collaboratively with the artists to sharpen the voice of each piece. From there, pieces were voted on by the staff on whether to be included with the Credo or not.

The theme chosen for this year's Credo was: Art to Heart

Although the lit mag reflects the design ideas of its staff, the staff worked collaboratively with the yearbook editor-in-chief Nate Ross, who designed the LitMag. The Credo was printed and published entirely by the staff, and later distributed in early June.

Prior review was conducted by assistant principal for English Evan Carter.

AN ARTISTIC STATEMENT OF BELIEF

Bringing our community's diverse culture to art

"This year has not been easy for the Justice Literary Magazine. The vast majority of last year's staff members graduated, so for much of our operation, we were flying blind.

I am so grateful for every member of our editorial team. Everyone has put in so much effort and time into curating the Litmag, and it has been incredible to watch. Our editors have worked so hard on this, and have striven to hold themselves and each other to the highest standards. I hold so much admiration for our Litmag team, and I am so thankful that where I have fallen short, there's been someone to pick up the slack.

None of this would be possible without every single member of our team, and that, of course, includes our incredible advisor. Ms. Dwyer has put countless hours into this project, whether that be staying after school with us, mediating our debates, or coordinating with other student journalists. I speak for the entire Litmag team when I say we are so indebted to Ms. Dwyer, and she will be sorely missed.

To close this letter, I'd like to thank you, our reader. Each artist and author who submitted a piece to the Litmag is so passionate about and dedicated to their craft. It shows, in every word, every brushstroke, every line, how deeply art matters to them. I hope you see this, and appreciate it, as much as we appreciate you.

-Sofi Hemmens
Co-Editor-in-Chief

During the club fair at the beginning of the year, I was looking for a group that integrated art and writing despite not being good at either. At a table I saw Ms. Dwyer with a poster that said "The Lit Mag" and I was intrigued. Little did I know that I'd be taking part in "The Lit Mag" with a group of wonderful students and an outstanding advisor.

Ms. Dwyer believed in me and I'm truly grateful. She's kind, honest, and funny. Even though I'm sad she's leaving, I'm so happy she'll be able to make an impact on other people like she did on me.

It sounds cheesy but I am so glad I got to work on this project. Seeing the passion and creativity every writer and artist poured into their piece was inspiring. Seeing how much effort the team put into doing whatever needed to be done demonstrated how much we all care for our goal to showcase student work. I really enjoyed working with the other editors. I especially like looking at the pictures everyone would send of their cute pets. We've all worked long and hard, so I hope you enjoy this year's edition of Credo.

-Ariela Ventura
Co-Editor-in-Chief

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My Mother

By Roselyn Lobo Lemus

My heart
Is too weak
To see my mother cry.
I do not wish
To see her yearn
For her own.
With every gasp she takes,
I wish the oxygen I breathe in
Were transferable
To her.

Like her lungs have collapsed
And mine have stayed intact
Who's allowing her
To go through this pain?
I do not understand
The anguish she feels,

I can be nothing else
But a shoulder to cry on.
I am shrinking
Watching her plead
To the man in the sky
As she stares at the ceiling
She asks,
"Why?"
I now know
I have the privilege to say
"Todo va estar bien, mamá"
The words feel bitter
As they flow off my tongue,
Knowing my mother
No longer has one of her own
To reassure.

South Park

digital art piece
Khadijatul Kubra



Galaxy Dragon

digital art piece
Miekiya Wright

"The Mystic"

physical art piece
Maryam Niazi



A Glimpse of the Cherry Blossoms

physical art piece
Camila Churata

Rhyming Couplets

By Anonymous

Your music is golden threads plucked from
the air
Your voice is the tool used to shape them
with care
Every lyric makes sense in that sweet
filigree
Where 'I' rhymes with 'you', and 'you'
rhymes with 'me'

I'm clumsy, off-balance, I never could
dance
But for you? Well, then maybe I'll give it a
chance
The singers, the writers, and poets agree
That 'I' rhymes with 'you', and 'you' rhymes

with 'me'
We're complements, parallels, two in a pair
Two halves of a whole – what we have, it's
so rare
What a wonderful world, almost too good
to be
Where 'I' rhymes with 'you', and 'you'
rhymes with 'me'

A brand on my soul now, I'll never forget
When our voices first lifted in lilting duet
It feels like it's fate, like it's my destiny
When I rhyme with you, and you rhyme
with me

Wendigo

photography
Tyler Crockett



Two Pirates

poem
Tyler Crockett

I was the captain, you were my first
mate
When I told you my plans you would
nod and smirk
For my dreams and joy you stayed up
too late
Your thanks were squeals as I swung
sword and dirk

My ocean was our muddy old plum
creek
My cannon was made of a spent tank
shell
I would jump overboard with a high
shriek
And shout for you to fire and do as well

Our mighty ship was a dark green
canoe
Our figureheads were a cat and raccoon
We hoarded treasures alongside our
crew
I would go on forever exploring with
you

You built any idea I had
Here's to the pirate legend, love you
Dad.

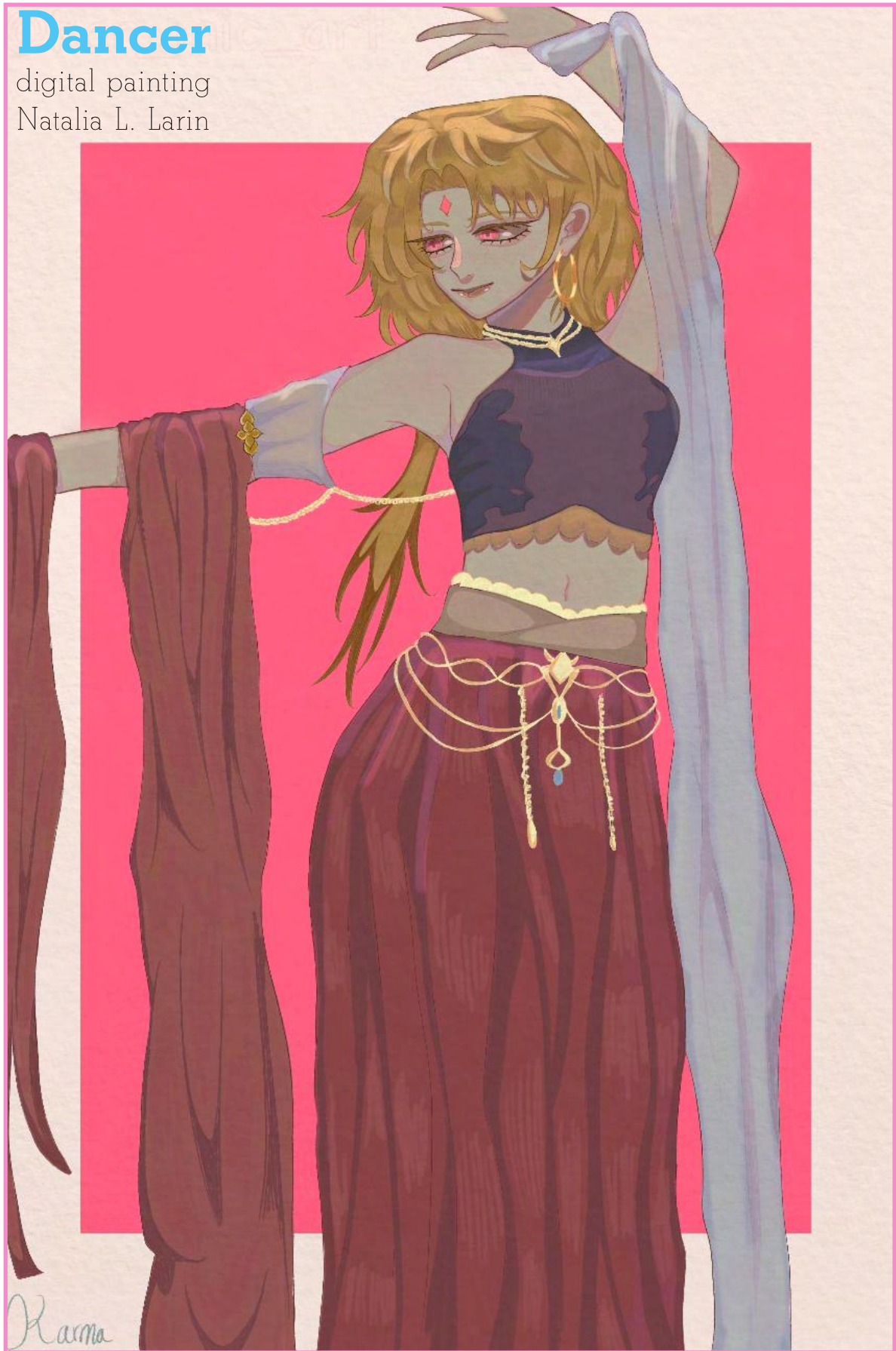


Wendigo

photography
Tyler Crockett

Dancer

digital painting
Natalia L. Larin





Emerald Lens

digital art piece
Leiby Argueta

A God's Light

By Anonymous

I find safety in the darkness
because there is no audience
in the dark.

I escape the light
from my friends' faces
so I don't hurt them
so they don't hurt me.

From where I watch, they are glowing—
haloed in their own suns.

I see no light
from my own face.

Golden-edged hair,
piercing, glowing gems for eyes,
burnished bronze and creamy silk skin.
To me, they are precious;
statuesque and towering,
gods aspire to be like my friends.

I worry that they see no light
from their own faces.

Sin means nothing to me.
Divinity a sham.
What god's forgiveness must I earn?
What chains of absolution must I don?

Heaven's bells ring in their laughter.
The pearly gates are teeth bared in joy.
This, I think, is freedom.

I need no holy cleansing,
no baptism,
no purifying,
because this is holy,
this is purity.

I find safety in the darkness.
But I find purpose in their light.

Dove

By Roselyn Lobo Lemus

The day I was born
A tree sprouted
And it watched me grow

My tears
Its water source
My bones
Its roots

Tree, a stranger
I, a vessel
Us, a life

Smile lines
Its bark
Crows feet
Its branches

Woven into two
Oblivious to the care
Faux hand on my back

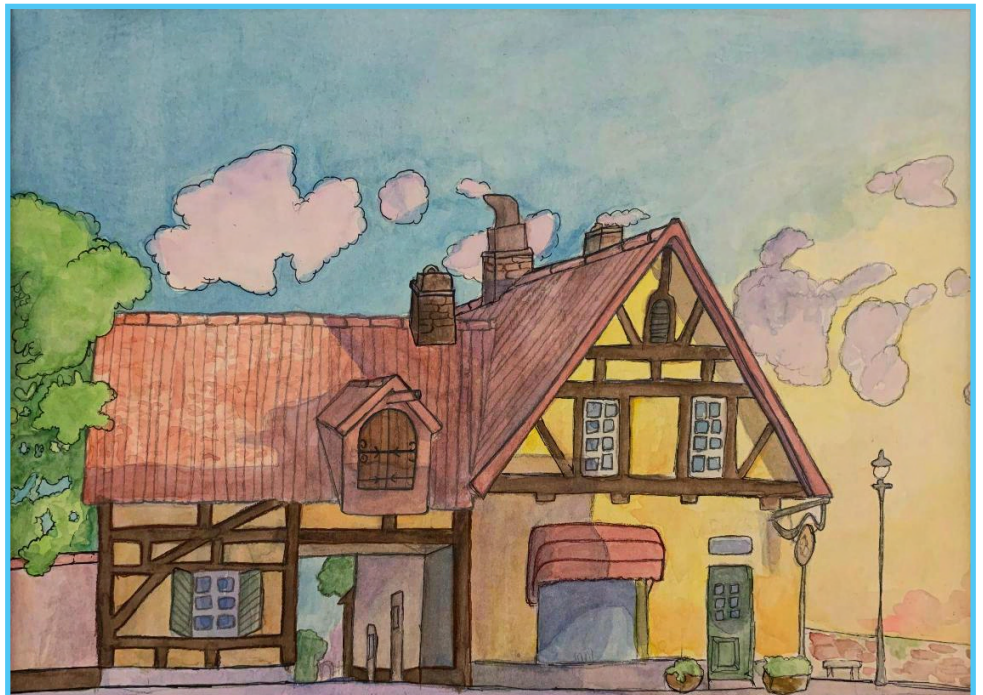
Gracious guidance
Through the suffer of life
Growing old
I became a dove

The day I died
Swaddled in warm wood
Like a baby's first blanket

My tree, my protector
Save me from cold dirt
I now welcome
My ageless rest

Kiki's Delivery Service

physical painting
Khadijatul Kubra



Ingratus the Grateful Raccoon

By Bisma Aftab

There once was a raccoon that went by the name of Ingratus. He lived in his big cave, which was full of odd things like sparkly rocks and large pointy forks given by red men in suits. He was the envy of the village.

Oftentimes, though, he would sigh about, claiming his life was meaningless, worthless, and that he never got the things he desired. That he was very lonely.

And so one faithful day, as the sun rose slowly, painting the sky with vibrant colors and as a breeze blew by, making the grass sway, a soft whistling came about. Ingratus, the raccoon woke. He clambered about in his cave, wishing for friends, more precious geodes, more colorful crystals, a bigger cave, and no chores to do.

While he wished for these things, the green grass outside turned dark. The village abruptly screamed, but Ingratus could not hear them over his ungrateful mumbling. By the time Ingratus finally stepped outside, what he saw devastated him.

The villagers' homes were no more; dead bodies were strewn across the grass and roads like confetti. Smoke filled the air. Ingratus walked through the village time and time again. He would have to stop and weep, as no home was spared but his; no house was left but his.

On this solemn day, Ingratus learned his lesson. He no longer complained about what few friends he had or his popularity; he instead kept those he knew close. He no longer looked at the crystal catalog wishing he had more money to spend, but instead cleaned and loved the ones he had.

He slowly rebuilt his village, inviting more and more raccoons and welcoming each and every one of them. He stopped wallowing away in his cave alone and instead embraced the bright, warm sunlight of the outdoors, accompanying other raccoons to find blueberries for dinner that night.

And through his journey, he learned something. It was quite hard to change.

Sometimes, he just wanted to give up and go back to how he was. But then he remembered. He remembered the poor lives he could not have saved. He remembered the village in rubble and strove to continue. To preserve and work hard. He realized that it was also not just him who forgot to be grateful, but so many others. And so now, Ingratus the grateful raccoon is on a mission to give thanks to those who deserve it. <3

Ingratus the Grateful Raccoon



Ellie and Rat

physical art piece
Zuleima Argueta Soto



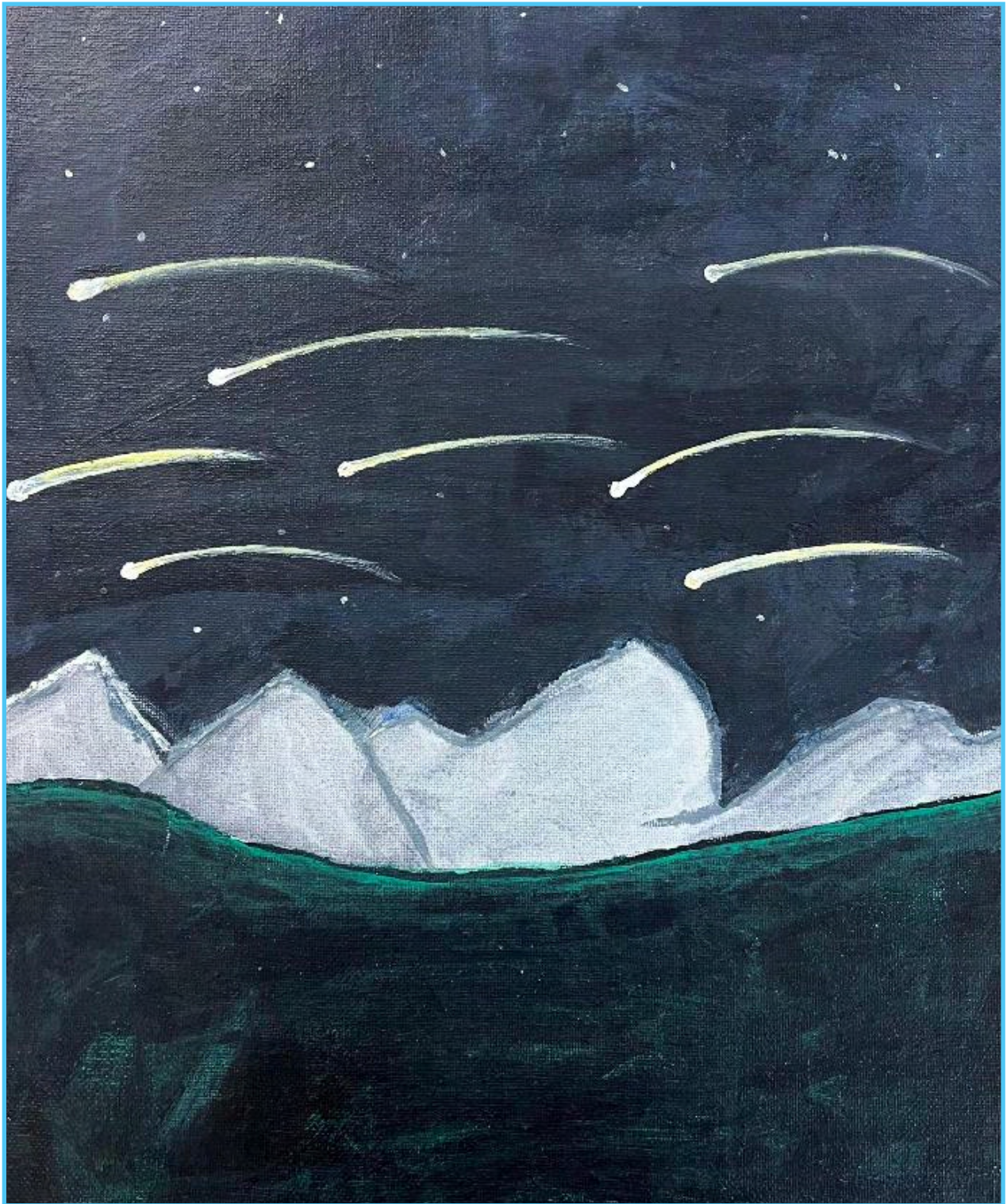
The Royal Flush

physical art piece
Ferdausy Hossain

Take me back to the night we met

physical art piece

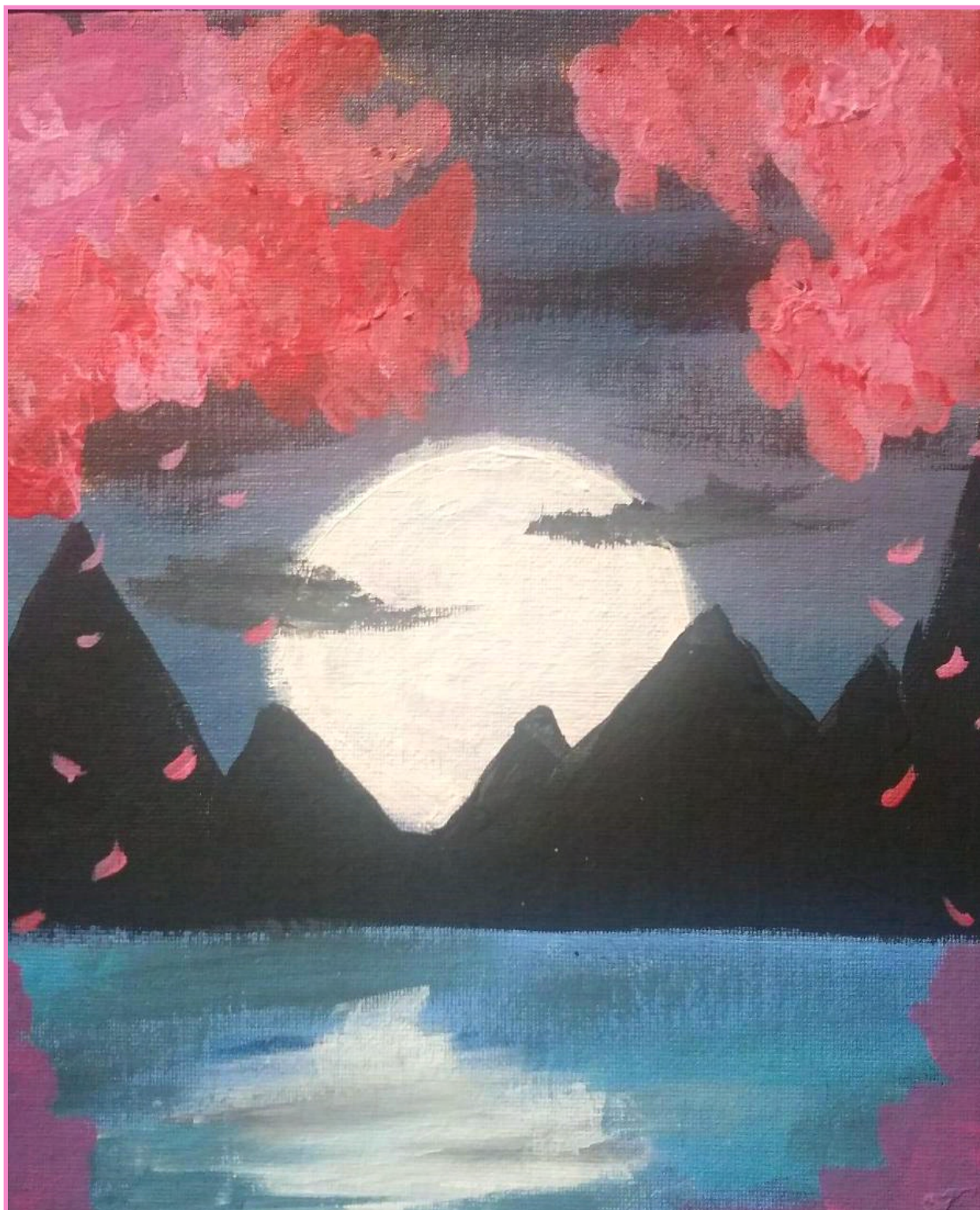
Sherlin Hernandez Rivera



Moonlight under petals

physical art piece

Bisma Aftab



late december early morning

By Anonymous

i want to sit
with you
and watch the sun rise

born from
the inky darkness of night
streaks of violet and orange and pink
slicing across the horizon
bathing the world
in golden peace

different every morning
but the beauty is the same

i want to sit
with you
and watch the sun rise
every morning

but even without
a sun to rise
i would want to sit
with you

the inky darkness
is your eyes
the streaks of violet and orange and pink
are your voice
your laugh

your music
bathing my world
in your golden peace

i want to understand
the way you understand

i want to know
you
the way you know
me

i want to take
your sorrow and
halve it
the way you halve
mine

i want to be
the 'you'
that you
would want to sit
and watch the sun rise
with

the way i want to sit
and watch the sun rise
with you

Yona of the Dawn

physical art piece
Khadijatul Kubra



Amorphous

physical art piece

Piper Koury



Fling of Spring

physical art piece

Jocelyn Nunez



"It's called brain fog,"

By Blue Linden

There used to be a time
when I could remember what I wanted.
Now I don't know what I want
and all my memories are haunted.

The pandemic turned my life upside down,
in all that isolation I think I drowned
But I figured out about who I'm pretty sure
I was,
I saw myself in the mirror, but I'm having
trouble catching up

When I got it, twenty twenty-one December
That's it, it's there, sometimes it's all I can
remember
Ever since it's like I've been navigating a
labyrinth
inside my own brain

When I come up to remember stuff or just
say someone's name
It's a blank spot, no spark, it's a cold, dark

hall
Is my brain now too messed up
to simply remember things at all?
I used to love to speak my mind
now I just hide away
Where once used to be an activist
lives a shadow of that gay

I have a crush on everyone I meet for the
first time every time
cause I'm incapable of remembering their
every little detail

Does the fear of rejection apply to someone
who doesn't reach out,
who can't remember everything?

Where a shadow of that hopeful nerd who
once had existed
lives a shallow, fragile little girl who can't
remember what she did.



Be a Bee

physical art piece
Zuleima Argueta



Mr. Parrot

physical art piece
Camila Churata

Logwalk

photograph
Tyler Crockett



Planted

By Odessa Jansen

I'm tired of breaking my back

Breaking my back for those who don't need
the bones of my suffering

My bones are as brittle as the hearts of
those who need it

Yet as hollow as the hearts of those who
don't

As much as I try to get my head screwed on
straight

My back, my spine stays as crooked as

The d
 r
 o
 o
 p
 i
 n
 g and misguided limbs of
a weeping willow tree

My heart rooted in one place
The soil in my stomach hold the worms
Of envy waiting to push their way up into
my heart, my head and veins

Yet I stay firmly planted in my ways

The weeds of others wrap their way up my
back

Around my waist

Around my head

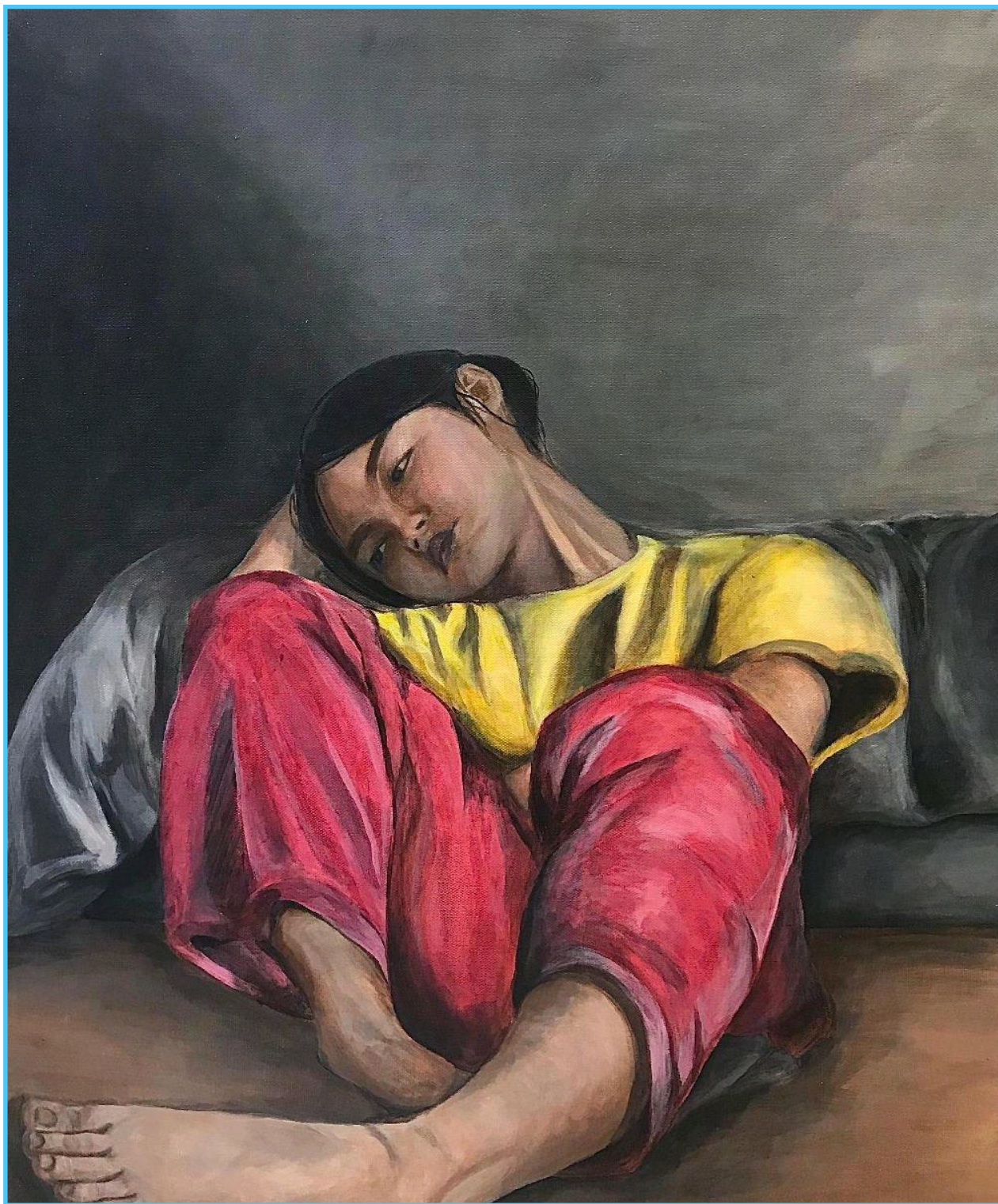
Infiltrating my brain

And Down into my veins

Yet I am firmly planted in my ways

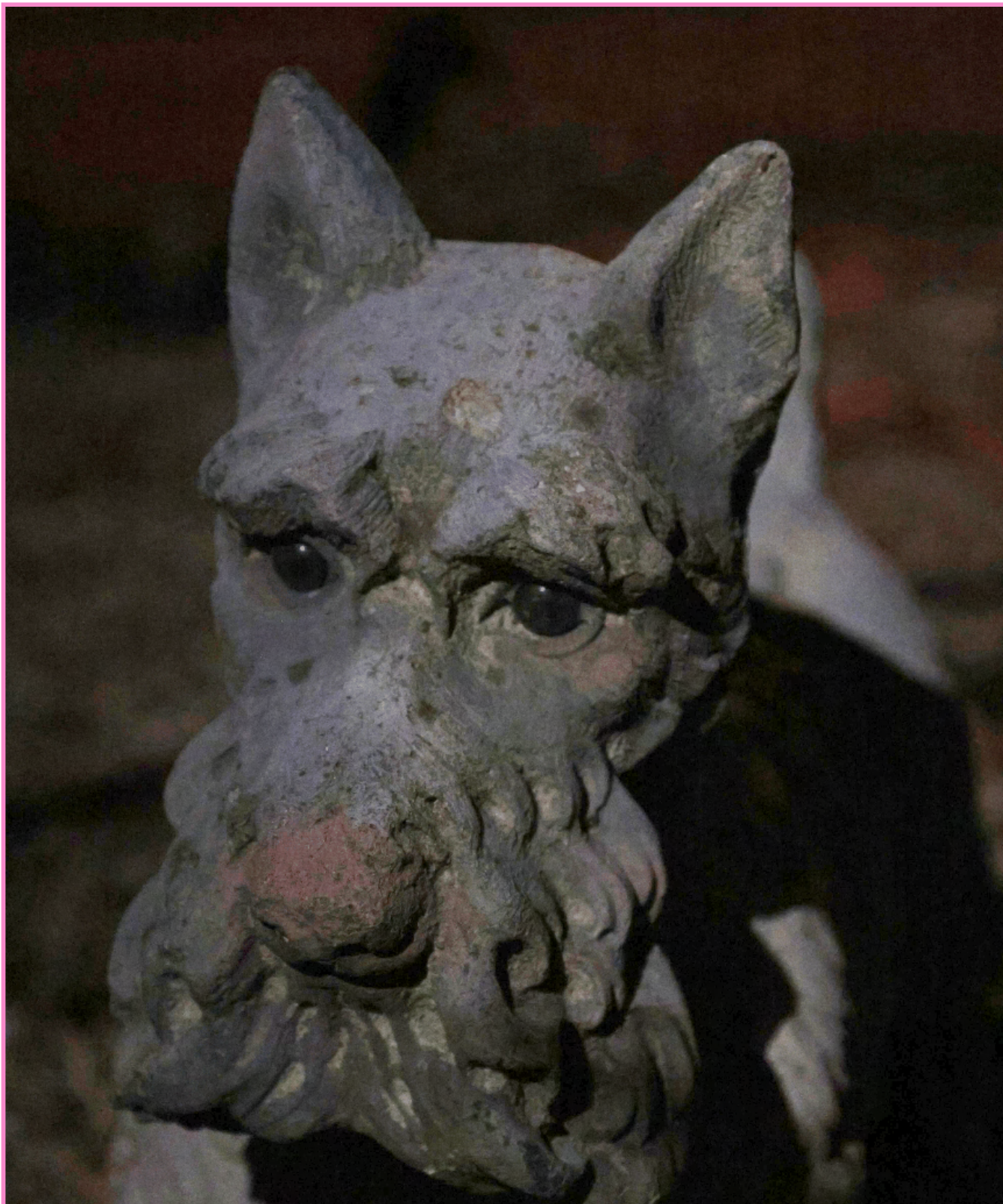
Head in the Clouds

physical painting
Tra My Nguyen



Scotty

photograph
Tyler Crockett



Fire

By Anonymous

I don't like fire.
I don't know if it has always been like this,
if my fear
of seeing the lick of sienna and ochre flame
graze my fingers;
to see the embers of burnt
travel in the furrows of my skin.
even if—
more-so, when—
I want to scream and cry
and burn
and burn
and burn
until there is nothing left of me,
A smudge of black
left on whatever surface I happened to be
on;
for even ashes do not wish to associate
with the likes of
me.

An Urn for my Past Self

physical art piece

Raine Jeff



The Moon

By Elena Valdez-Torres

Moon, my name spoken in on syllable has
much more than people seek
Secluded my secrets run deep
To dark to speak of, wrapped around silent
whispers I so wish to keep
I watch the stars, my personal guide to light
Always approaching softly to wake me, not
rudely like the sun
Who's always there with his cocked gun
of overbearing brightness to much to bear
I stay away, aware of his rays that lay there
ready to suffocate me
To hide away watching as I fall and he does
nothing but rise
Really opening my huge eyes that has always
wished for his demise

Random Guy

digital art piece
Alexander Rivero



