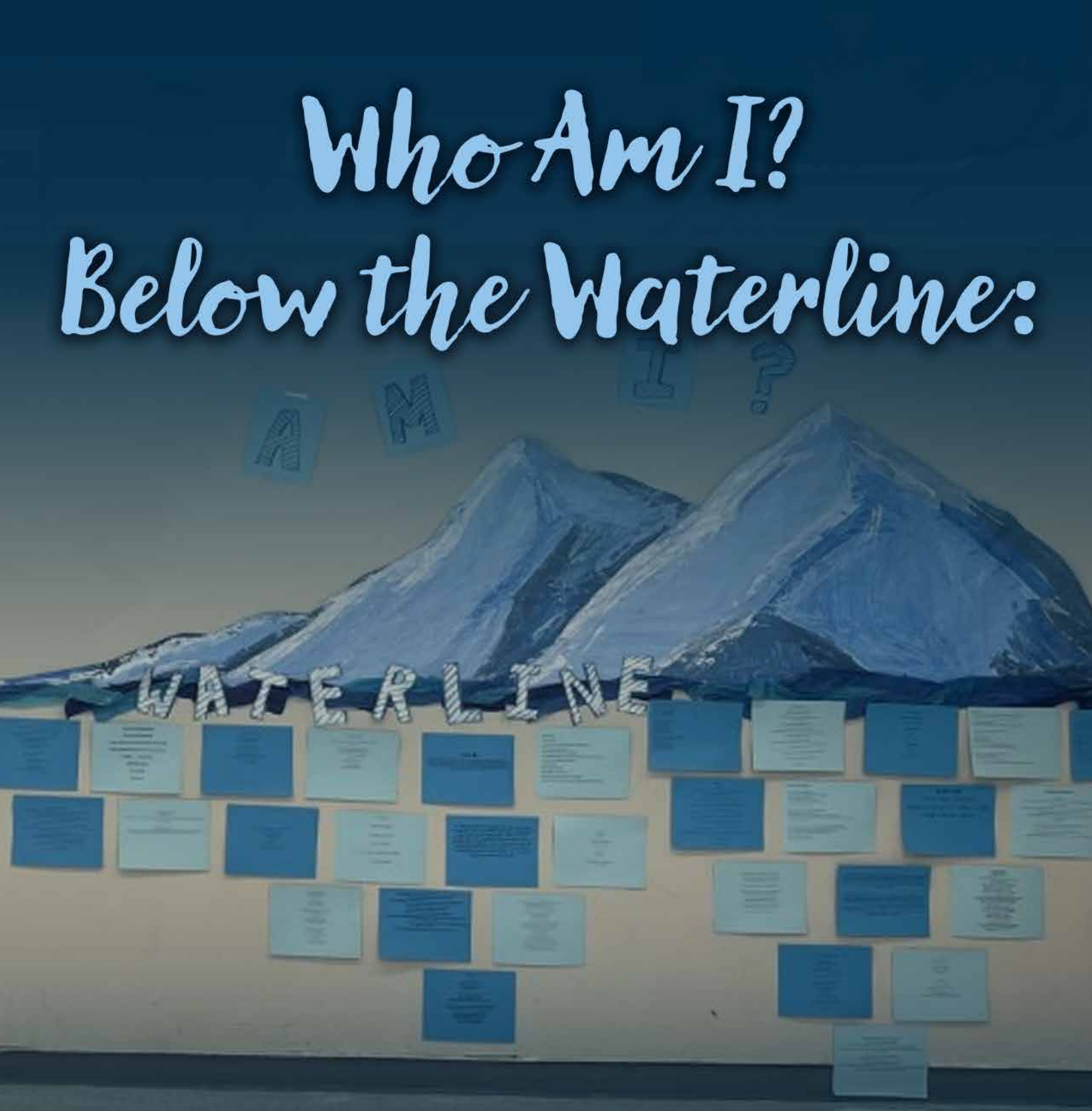
Who Am I?
Below the Waterline:



A portrait of Mount Vernon High School poetry

2022-2023

Acknowledgments

No large-scale endeavor like *Who Am I? Below the Waterline:* is accomplished without the help and support of others. We are deeply indebted and grateful to the following for their blood, sweat, tears, time, talent, patience, suggestions, submissions, equipment, and know-how:

Dr. Pauline Pearce
Principal

Brian Simmons
Assistant Principal
Culture and Climate

Dr. Jamal Doggett
Assistant Superintendent for
Curriculum and Instruction

Jennifer Goire-Peralta
NPFH District Leader

Noel Campbell
Director of CTE

Dr. Eric Brand
Dept. Admin. Humanities

Sonia Flannory
ESL/ENL Instructor

Oluwasegun Omoloju
Physics Instructor

Alexandra Sherlock
English Instructor

Jason Pritchett
Print Production Instructor

Jenifer Cardillo-Rojas
Senior Typist

Jordan Katter
Visual Arts Instructor

Sanam Shams
Visual Arts Instructor

<u>All</u> MVHS ELA Teachers

All of the students who contributed poems, artwork, created layout designs for this publication.



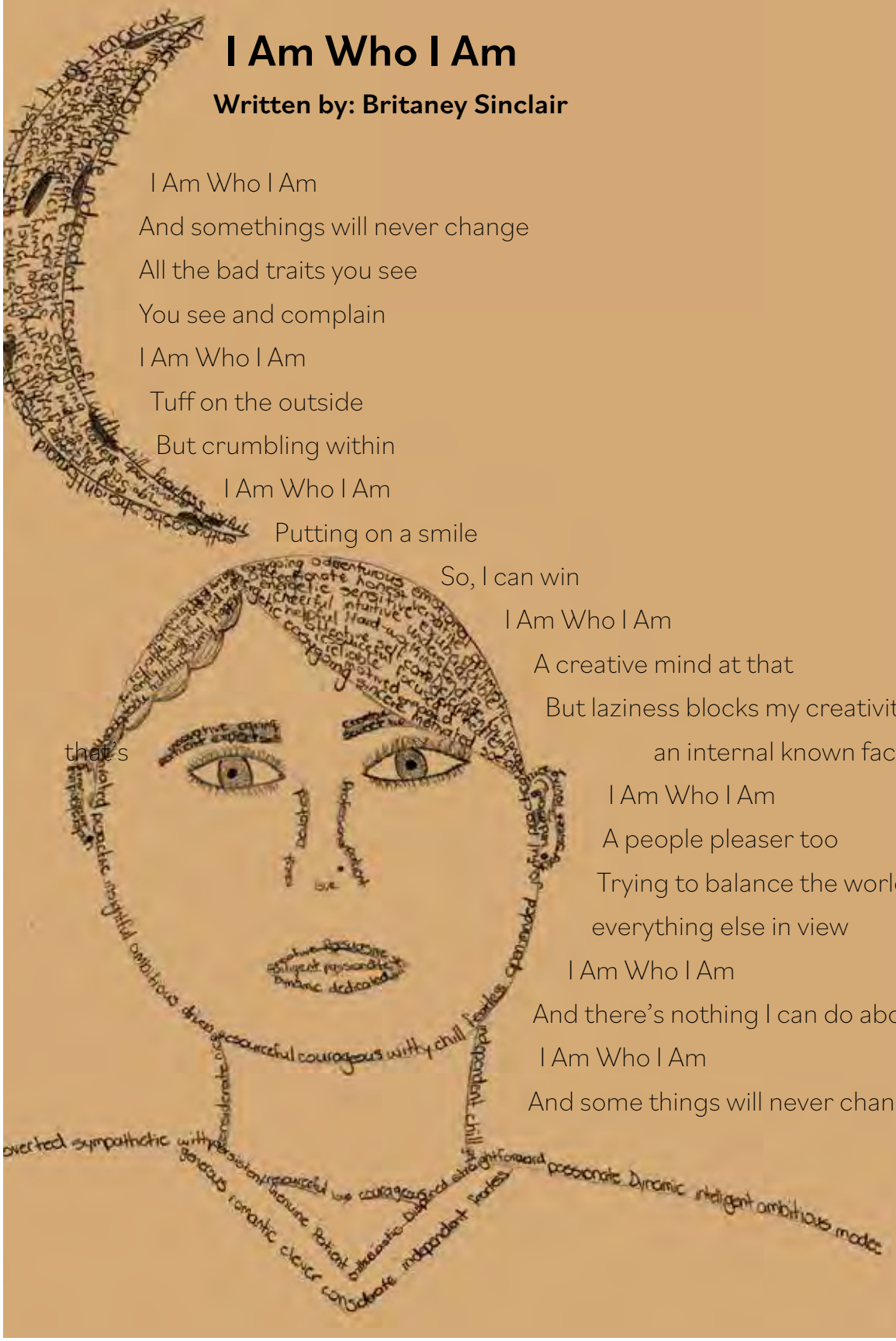
Who Am I?
Below the Waterline:

A portrait of Mount Vernon High School poetry

Mount Vernon High School - 2022-2023

I Am Who I Am

Written by: Britaney Sinclair



I Am Who I Am
And somethings will never change
All the bad traits you see
You see and complain
I Am Who I Am
Tuff on the outside
But crumbling within
I Am Who I Am
Putting on a smile
So, I can win
I Am Who I Am
A creative mind at that
But laziness blocks my creativity and
that's an internal known fact
I Am Who I Am
A people pleaser too
Trying to balance the world and
everything else in view
I Am Who I Am
And there's nothing I can do about it.
I Am Who I Am
And some things will never change.

The **NEW** *Mount Vernon High School* was re-launched in school year 2022-2023 in alignment with the three pillars of Community, Character and Excellence, envisioned by Principal Dr. Pauline Pearce.

At the heart of this once-in-a-generation culture shift, was a commitment to *No Place For Hate.* Throughout the year, myself, ENL teacher Sonia Flannory, Physics teacher Olu Omoloju and many committed students, led by Junior Elena Pjetergjokaj, created multiple school-wide opportunities to make everyone feel included, respected and valued.

The crowning jewel was an ambitious effort for all students in the school to shine a light on the rich, but often unseen aspects of their personalities....**below the waterline.** The result was nearly a thousand student-written personal identity poems. Some were raw, others hilarious, a few tragic....all of them undeniably *real.*

A small but representative sample lives and breathes in these pages. Savor each one and the rich life it represents.

Brian Simmons
Assistant Principal of School Culture and Climate
The NEW Mount Vernon High School – May 2023

Untitled

Written by: Crystal-lee Budhi

I am a person that places value on being a good
student Good grades and with an amazing work ethic
In this this school with crazy drama filled people
It is really hard to meet people who are not
fake like prosthetics

But I mind my business and focus on myself
Because it's dumb to focus on things that
don't concern ourself
Others would agree I'm non-judgmental and
I understand other peoples' pain
And in return it's my empathetic nature they gain
Because the people I see in the outside world, I hate
I find ways to live a different life and escape

In my head I daydream about the celebrity life I live
Because of this alternate life, my head is very active
This world provides fulfillment and joy
But it's sad when I express this world to others they
joke like their playing with toys
There is no other way I find happiness in this world
but this If I didn't daydream my mind would be an abyss

I Am Poem

Written by: Ava Dilone

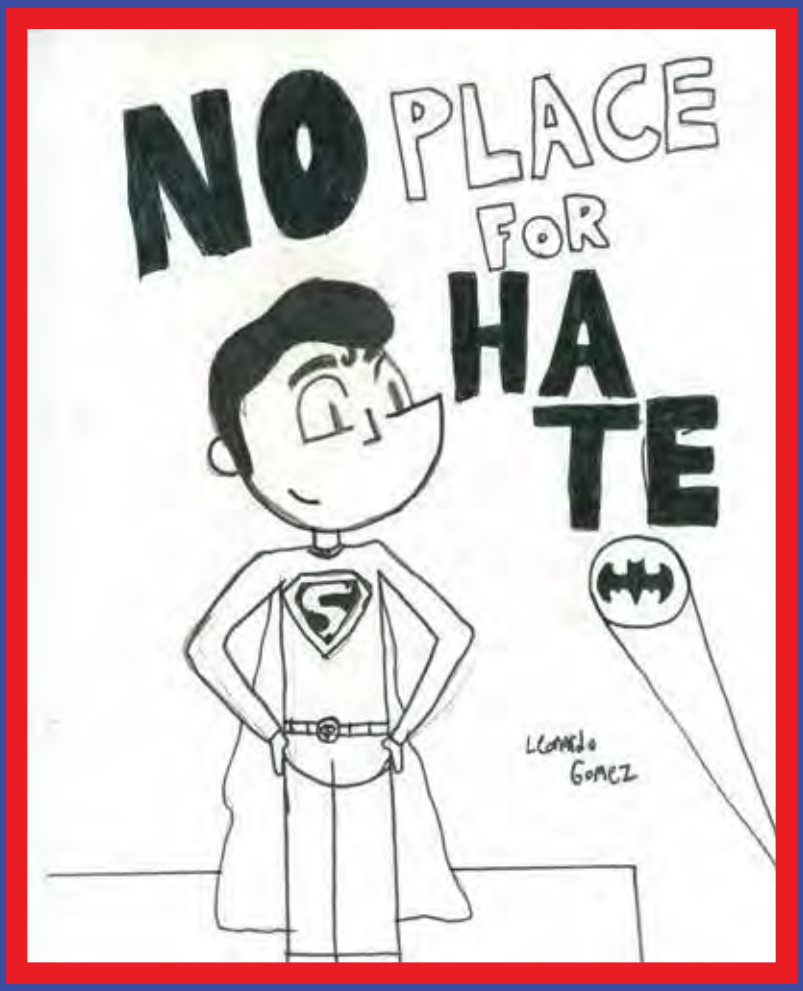
I'm still here, you know
I'm under all your self-destruction and insecurities
I'm still here
Living deep beneath this version of you
Come up for air
There are bright skies up here
I know you feel like you can't right now
But you can
Remember,
You are every version of yourself
That's ever existed
That is existing
That ever will exist



Untitled
Written by: Sajay Mullings

I am brotherly and thoughtful
I wonder what my friends are doing right now
I hear them laughing, crying or being loud
I see them smiling
I want to be a brother for them
I am brotherly and thoughtful
I pretend to be fearless
I feel a weight on my shoulders
I touch a mirror
I worry about the ones I care about
I cry for the people I value
I am brotherly and thoughtful
I understand I can't help everyone
I say try your best
I dream to always keep my bond with them
I try my best
I hope I can help anyway I can
I am brotherly and thoughtful





Untitled
Written by: George Guzman

I am and that's who I am,
how it's going to be,
Your opinion doesn't matter because it doesn't mean anything To me,
I'm brave and strong like my papa told me,
I'm so smart and kind like my mamma says,
I'm out to achieve Ima set the play,
I am who I am,
That's how it's going to be,
I hit the fadeaway,
Just scored the winning game.



Untitled
Written by: Ashton Rumaldo

Ash-

Real, loving, outgoing, and honest, Brother of Brad, Lover of the world, the people closest to me, empathetic music, empathetic people, Who feels calm on his own, who feels joyful with other people, but still the same in both situations, Who needs unconditional love and support from people closest to me, people that match my energy and don't drag me down, and money, Who gives unconditional love and support, empathy, and laughter, Who fears insincerity, feeling stuck, and being misunderstood, who would like to see people be more in tune to their personality, to stop hiding what they feel makes them look bad, to be more themselves, to stop displaying a false image of themselves and to be yourself. Who lives in a world full of false hope but great hearts— Me.

My Truth

Written by: David Ahiamadi



They thought they knew me and they're so wrong But their opinions are dead set, so I just play along Look at David, distracted, undriven, and lazy My mind racing from stress I might just go crazy They've spoken their mind now it's my turn too Been through the mental battles but still pulled through Don't judge from the view of the naked eye It takes a lot to not breakdown and cry He wants the respect, the riches, and success Just give David some time, his mind needs some rest Now that everything has gotten off my chest It's about time to finish up, so I digress

Untitled

Written by: Alexander Ramirez-Perez

I am blue like the fastest-thing alive.
There I said, I'm a wonderful person.
So why bothering to know what is awesome.
I pretend to be blue blur or Sonic the Hedgehog.
Feeling the speed through my head.
Running right below my feet.
Do what I want, and I do it my way.
Got no regrets inside of me.
Going to find my own way and take a
chance on today.

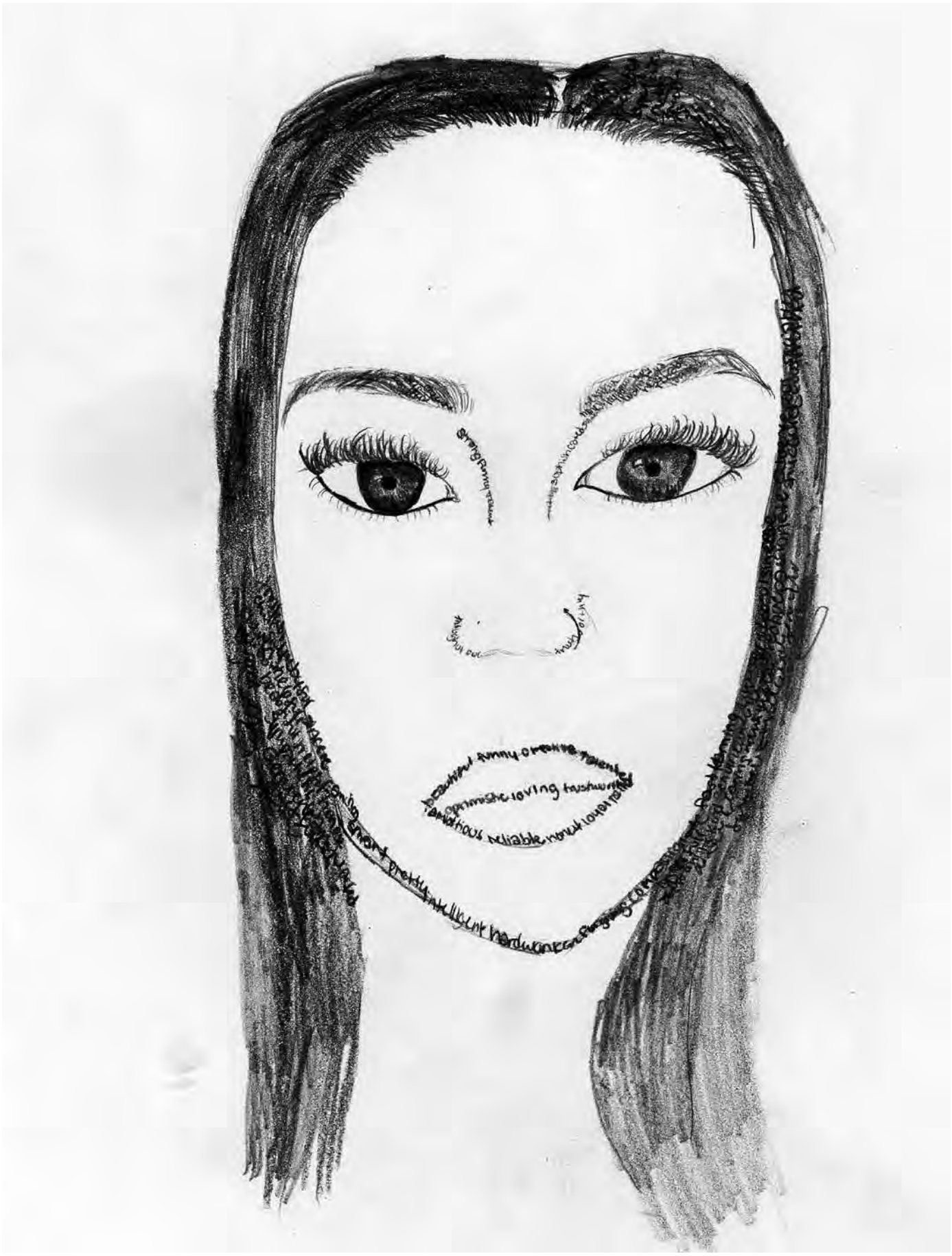



SONIC TEAM
Best Buds!
Way Past Cool!!!
PS4
your too cool
"Got no Rergets inside of me!"
Pac Man
Alexander R.

untitled

written by: alexandra koriel vere

i am smart and open-minded
i am a hardworking student, but wont hold back my tongue
i am outgoing and sweet, but wont take disrespect
when i'm disrespected, i turn cold and quiet
i hate when people act like they care
i hate when people are fake to me and lie
and then people wonder why
dont ask me if i'm ok when you were never there
the best benefit is staying to my self
i am quiet
i am anti-social
i am like a ghost because no one knows i'm there
but i am also happy
i am outgoing
i am smart
i am kind.



Untitled
Written by: Angel Chikwere

I am a girl of her own nature

I wonder why people say different things about me

I hear disgusting things about me

I see different attitudes towards about me

I want to go to their face and confront

But I am afraid I pity them

I pretend to be okay

I feel sick and tired

I touch my shoulders when I feel frustrated

I worry if I could instantly get a mental illness

I cry any secretive place I find myself

But I can't feel small

I understand them

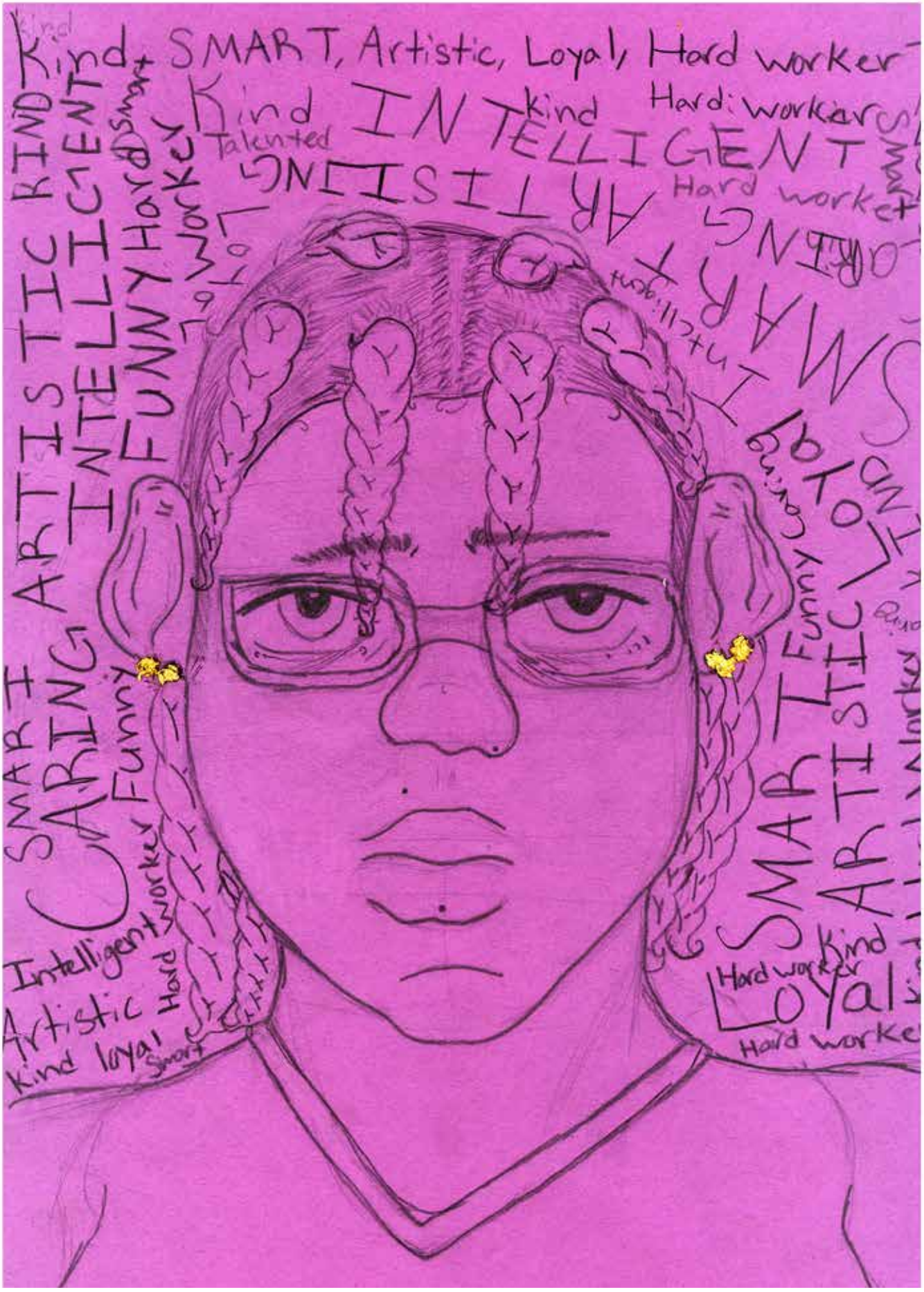
I would I prefer being quiet

I dream on being someone useful

I try to impress people rather than myself

I hope to become the best for my sake

I sincerely wish myself the best of luck


Kind SMART, Artistic, Loyal, Hard worker
Kind INTELLIGENT
Talented
Hard worker
Hard worker
Funny
Intelligent
Artistic
Kind loyal
Smart
Hard worker
Kind
Loyal
Hard worker

Trauma

Written by: Brea J Mosely

Trauma is like a big scar

Scars never heal

People can always say that they are healed from their trauma

But it's never truly fully healed

Just like a scar

It will always be there once you've experienced it in any way.

You can cover it up like you can cover a scar with a tattoo

But it will always be there it's nothin new.

Trauma is something you cannot escape

All you can do is accept that it's there and accept your fate.
Trauma.



My Way
Written by: Aarion Dufrene

Even if everyone tried to take everything from me

Even if everyone tried to stop me

I'm my own oil

I make my way in every situation

In every situation,

I'm reminded that time waits for nobody

I'm reminded that I'm a buzzer beater

And at the end of the day,

I will make the light shine my way

Identity Poem
Written by: Destiny Adair

Identity fraud

More like my identity I lost

Underneath the water line

Sinking, Sinking

Drowning, Drowning

Until my dreams become no more

Until my dreams become dreams differed

Until the stress builds up so high it's an avalanche
falling back onto me

1,000 and 1 responsibilities

But what do I do

Let time pass

Because I'm through with time and times through with me

Untitled

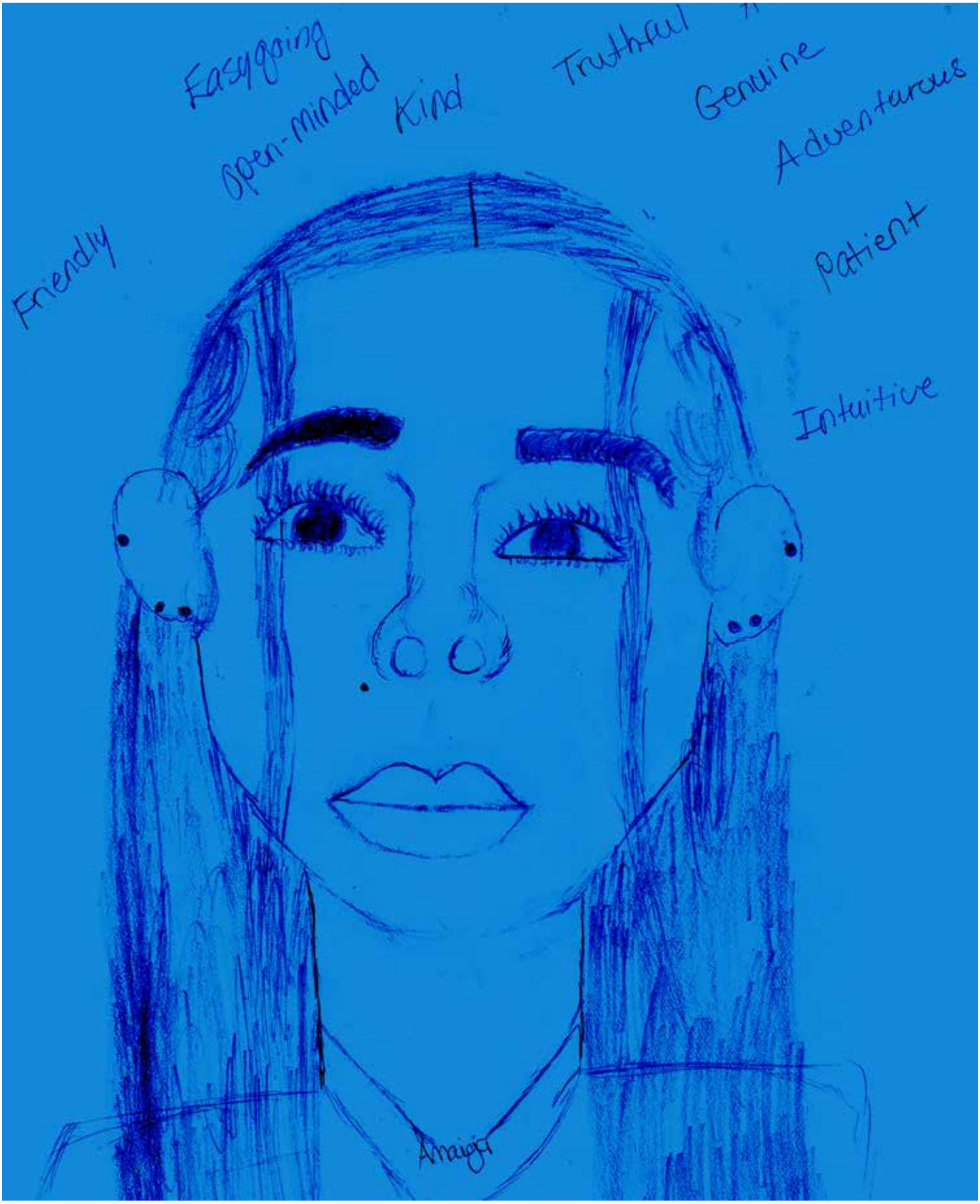
Written by: Tareek Stewart

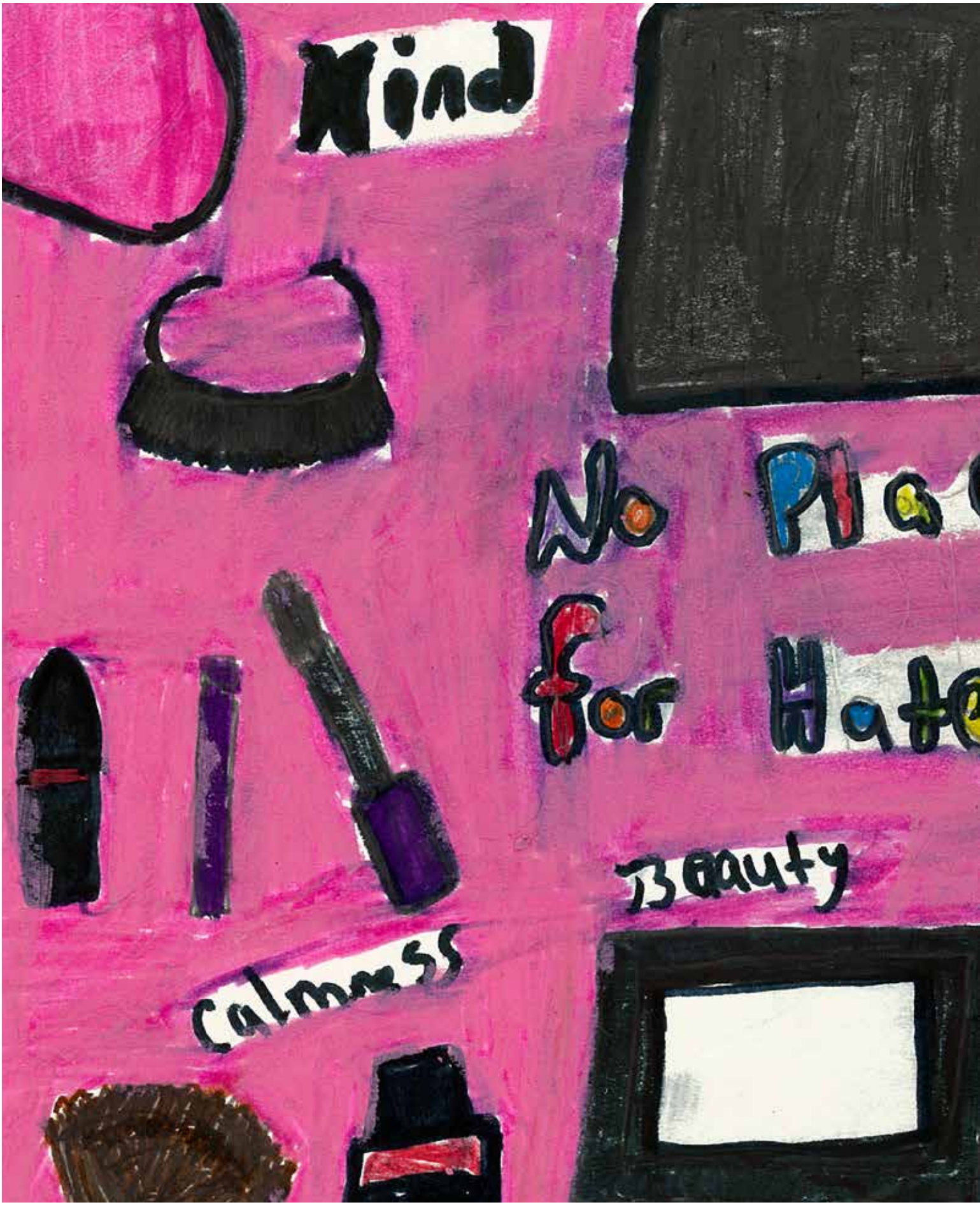
At the edge of my emotions
where the mind rules

All I do there lies a set of insecurities that

All my thoughts pass through a pulse that
has impact and guides me through

Each day interacting with my actions like
an emotional motorway.


Easygoing
open-minded
Kind
Truthful
Genuine
Adventurous
Friendly
patient
Intuitive


Kind
No Pla
for Hate
Beauty
Calmness


Peace
Love
Relax

Alone

Written by: Melane Gonzalez Soto

Melanie is my name.

But if you look at me, I'm not like the rest.

I am an athlete that is quiet.

I'm different.

I speak what I believe

I work for what I earn

I'm strong

I struggle behind doors, but I never give up.

I'm a child of God where I believe I've been created.

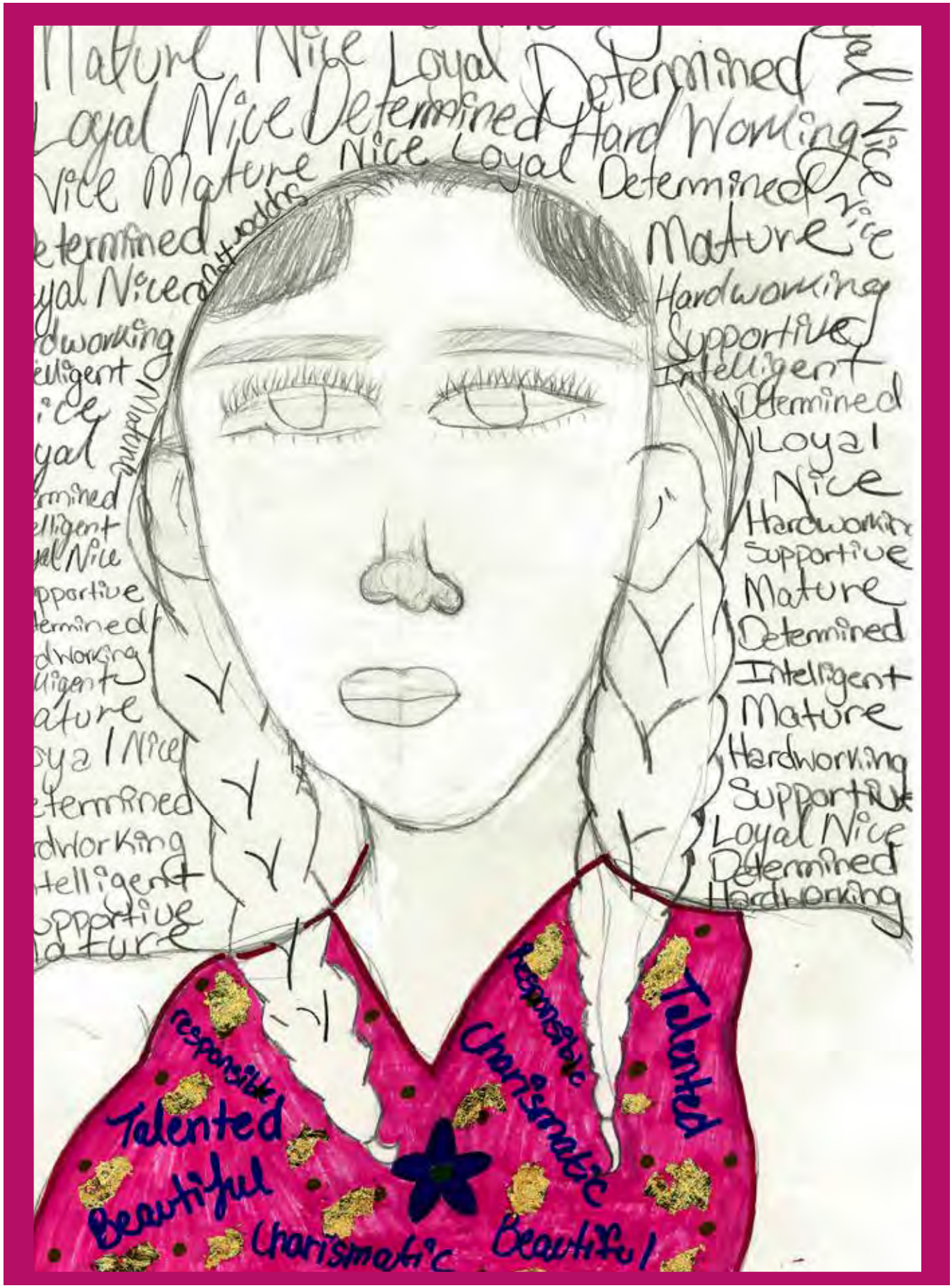
I believe in success.

In the dark I cry I scream out loud

Who hears me?

Nobody, this is why I do things alone.

This is me and my identity.


responsible
Talented
Beautiful
Charismatic
responsible
Charismatic
Beautiful
Talented

I Am A Sophomore

I am a sophomore who likes to sleep

I wonder if the regents are necessary

I hear how they are they are a requirement

I see how important they are to our teachers

I want to graduate and become an EMT, or a Barber

I am a sophomore who likes to sleep

I pretend to be fine when I am not

I feel stressed out sometimes

I worry about not passing sometimes

I am a sophomore who likes to sleep

I understand I need to pass

I say I am fine even when I am not

I dream about life in college

I try to do my best

I hope to pass

I am a sophomore who likes to sleep

The Beach of Life

Written by: Zenae Carolina

Identity Existence

The life of me, A sun-kissed sand-colored cover Keeping my soul
A name that is not embedded in my soul
Memories that will wash away brain like the shore
People you won't know when crossing over is at your door
The beauty of her even in the storms, In the eye of it lies the things that trigger it
But somehow stay silent screaming in the void of space
The trauma your subconscious never forgets, But fails to admit why you fear
Triggered, I'll never forget, But could not articulate the reason I'm this...
My identity, A journey of discovery Of who I am and who I want to be
A reflection of my past, Of my experiences and beliefs
The half to the whole of so many scattered pieces, Endless...
My identity, A beautiful tapestry Woven with threads of love, Of pain, Of hope, And of dreams.
Breathing... a blissful poison.
Is existence next to me?
Will I be done being me?
Peaceful and free.
White noise loud like the wind,
Or was that a little girl's screams?
I couldn't listen, like trying to hear under the ocean sea.
Louder she screams.
The tide comes in, it's like a routine to me.
So I sit, listen, feed, write, and read to me.
Rocking the baby to sleep so she doesn't cry when it's inconvenient to me.
Sun-kissed sand back on the beach,
Floating away, drifting in reality.
A soul doing human things, blooming the seven flowers in spring, then five more.
My identity is not my flesh.
I'm the pearl in the clam, much more than my three-dimensional value.
My identity, like a star, a part of the universe.
Or a jellyfish in the vast mysterious ocean.
My soul.

The beach of life....

Desert Rose

Written by: Julia DeCastro Texieria Almedia

1 desert rose

1 in which thrives in unfavorable circumstances

A rose that no one knows

A rose that bloomed in low chances

1 of which has thorns, and they are sharp they cut and scorn

Through the toughest of hearts

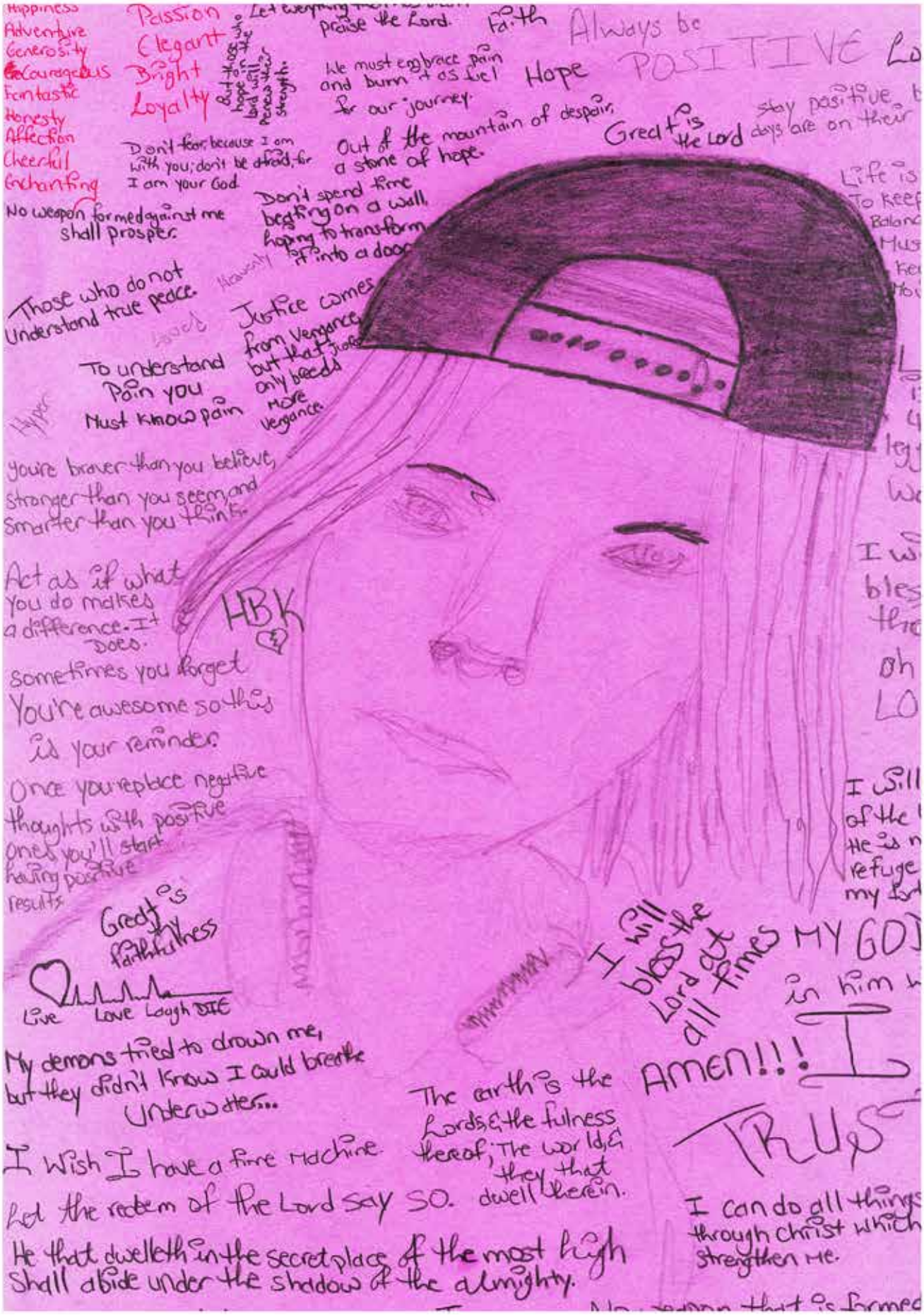
Its petals fall

And 1 becomes barren

Even when its stem is tall

Even when its environment is not foreign

And that is why I believe I am the 1 who will survive this desert heat


Happiness
Adventure
Generosity
Courageous
Fantastic
Honesty
Affection
Cheerful
Enchanting
Passion
Elegant
Bright
Loyalty
Don't fear, because I am with you; don't be afraid, for I am your God.
No weapon formed against me shall prosper.
Those who do not Understand true peace.
To understand Pain you Must know pain
Justice comes from Vengance but that Justice only breeds more Vengance.
You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.
Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.
Sometimes you forget You're awesome so this is your reminder
Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones you'll start having positive results
Great is thy faithfulness
Live Love Laugh DIE
My demons tried to drown me, but they didn't know I could breathe Underwater...
I Wish I have a time Machine
Let the redeem of the Lord say SO.
He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high Shall abide under the shadow of the almighty.
Praise the Lord.
Faith
Hope
We must embrace pain and burn as fuel for our journey.
Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.
Don't spend time begging on a wall, hoping to transform it into a door.
Always be POSITIVE
Great is the Lord
stay positive, days are on their
Life is To Keep Balanc Mus
HBK
I will bless the Lord at all times
MY GOD
is him
AMEN!!!
TRUST
The earth is the Lords, & the fulness thereof; The world, & they that dwell therein.
I can do all things through christ which strengthen me.
I Will
of the
He is
refuge
my
oh
LO

Athlete

Written by: Jaellin Sampson

I am an athlete
An athlete that wants to make it out
An athlete that wants more in life
Someone that has seen a lot
An athlete that has been though a lot
I am an athlete

Sometimes I pretend I made it out
I feel like I can make it out
I worry if I can take family with me when I make it out
I dream to make it somewhere in life
I get sad that I can't help everyone
Sometimes, I pretend I made it out

Purpose

Written by: Wilson Herrera

I feel discontent
There is only so much time
I will find a way

Personal Poem

Written by: Yoselyn Tzun Aba

Patient, honest, gentle, loyal
Brayan, Jeferson and Abigail

I love everything that makes me and my
loved ones happy.

I love everything that makes me forget about reality,
especially four legs.

I fear many things, but the sunsets make me think
that it is still worth staying here.

I need many things, but I think that the most
I need is the hug of a four-legged cat that makes me
feel at home.

They all give me positive things to stay here for,
for example, sunsets give me peace and tranquility
and music makes me forget everything.

I would love to see people from the past, but I can't do
anything since it wasn't me who decided to leave and
no longer fight, why think about what we were if
we are no longer.

Illusion

Written by: Gloria Kasali

I am shy
I am quiet
I do not say no
To outsiders, I am distant
But people who really see me
See a different person
I am wise to observe
I am smart to be cautious
I do not trust easily
I forgive easily
I get hurt if am not smart
I protect myself with an image
To see me
Look past the illusion


Smart
Quiet
Dependant
fun
Talented
Kind
Respectful
Caring
Nice
Helpful
loyal
trustworthy
Honest
Independant

Untitled
Written by: Kaleo Lewis

Calm and quiet I am
Quiet clothes, quiet shoes
Quiet face, quiet mood

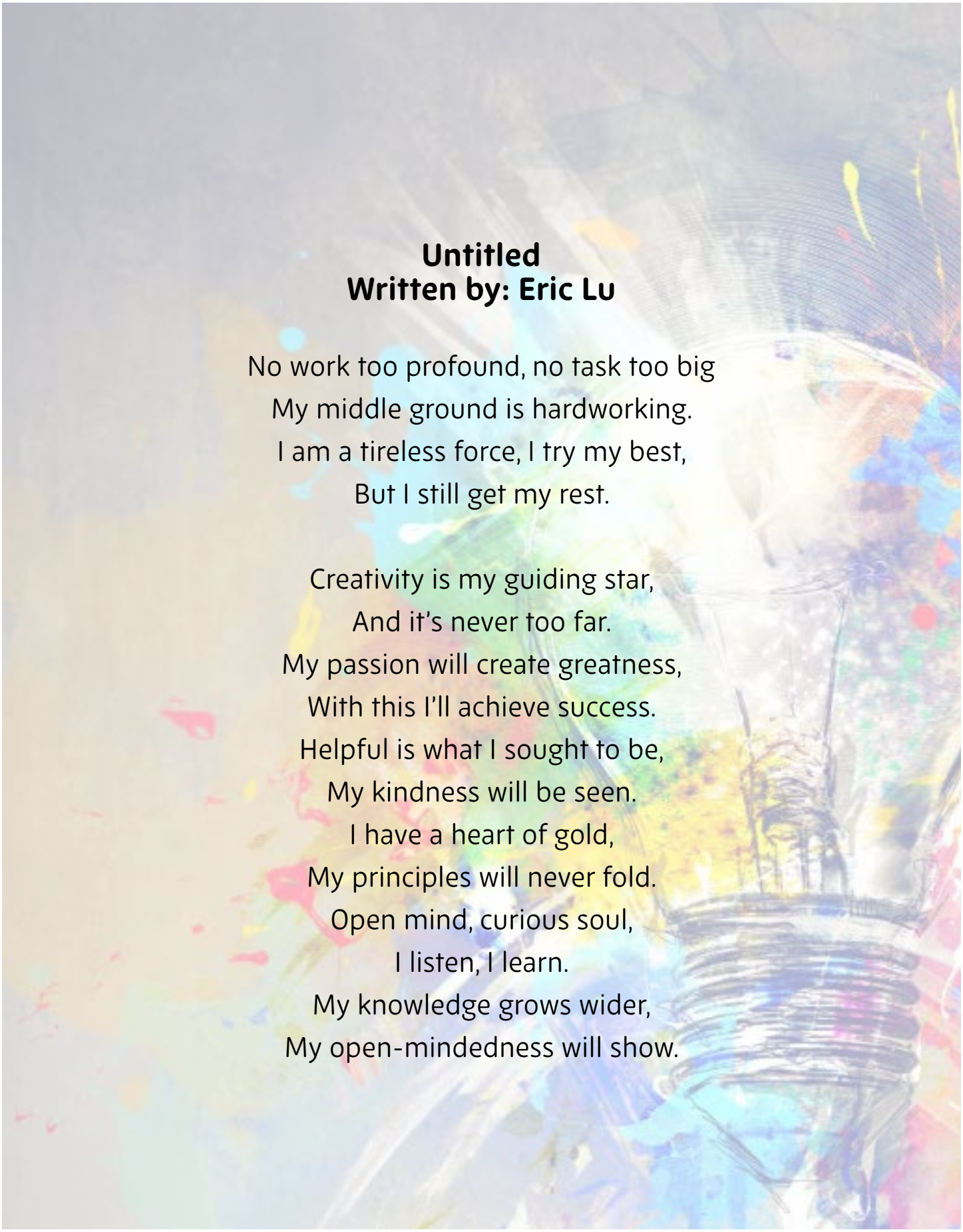
Nonchalant I look
Slouching body, tired face
Slow moving, slow pace

Free Plains I like
Loud Crowds I hate
Simpler times I crave

Video games I love
Sleeping and eating I adore
School, I couldn't hate more

From everyone I'm different
More like them, I'm not
Loving myself, how could I not

if I don't have to do something
won't do it
If I do have to, I quickly will
This life, that's how I live it



Untitled
Written by: Eric Lu

No work too profound, no task too big
My middle ground is hardworking.
I am a tireless force, I try my best,
But I still get my rest.

Creativity is my guiding star,
And it's never too far.
My passion will create greatness,
With this I'll achieve success.
Helpful is what I sought to be,
My kindness will be seen.
I have a heart of gold,
My principles will never fold.
Open mind, curious soul,
I listen, I learn.
My knowledge grows wider,
My open-mindedness will show.

I AM FROM

Written by: Nathan Goncalves

I am from video games. From Nintendo and Sega.
I am from the TV above the optical disc drive. Bright, fun, for the kid's hand to grasp to.
I am from the flowers, in the middle of the wooden table.
I'm from Thanksgiving and love. From Camila and Leo.
I'm from the kindness and acceptance.
From being kind to others and helping people in need.
I'm from my own beliefs, guiding me in my way.
I'm from Mount Vernon. Turkey, mashed potatoes.
From the time me and my family celebrated Thanksgiving.

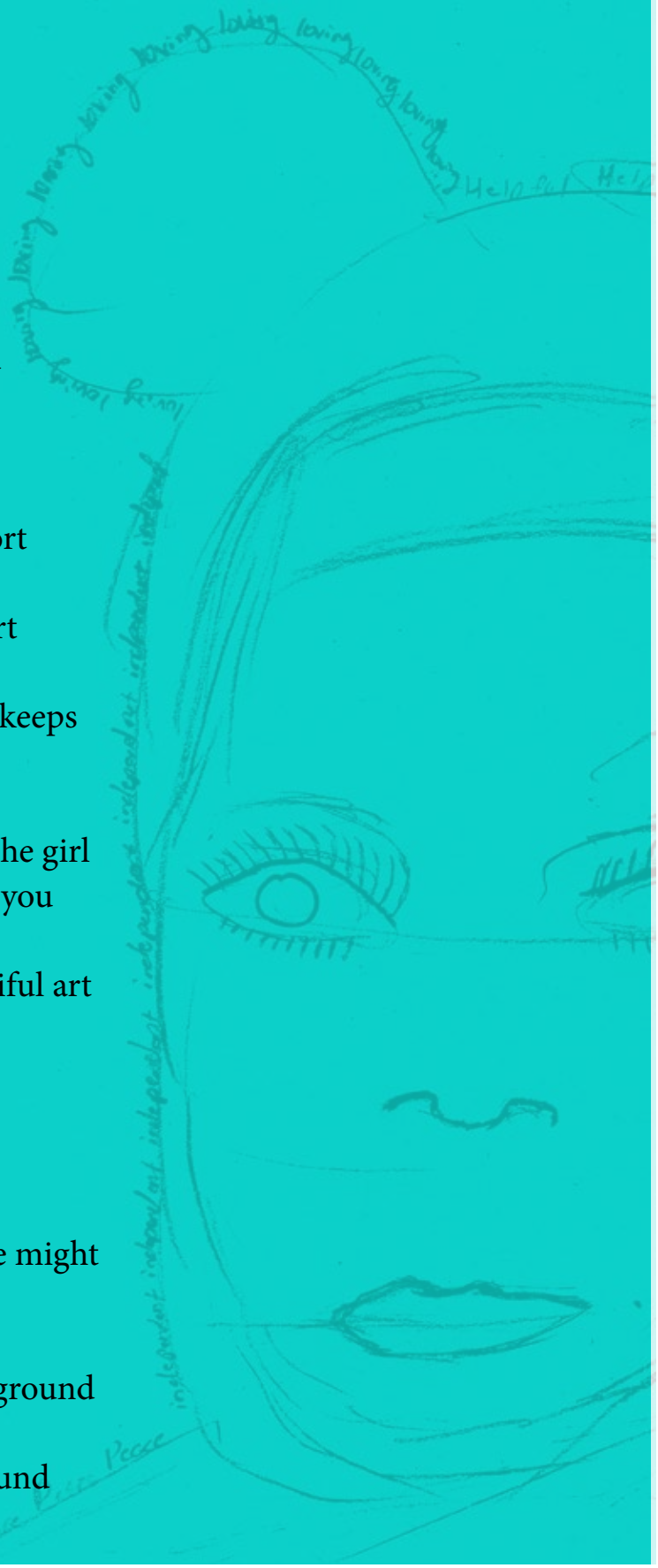
Ghost

Written by: Prince Jones

I'm a ghost
I'm a shadow
I'm lost in my mind
I'm looking for change
I'm a flower that has no change
I'm a castaway

At First Glance

Written by: Kimora Smith-Jefferson



At first glance you see her

A tall teenage girl, who stands awkward

and wears a black t-shirt

You think you see a girl who plays a sport

Who talks a lot till' her breath runs short

She likes to play and jump around, and keeps her head up without a frown

What you assume may not be true, for the girl you think you see isn't really in front of you

Instead, a girl who likes to create, beautiful art for family to appreciate

She doesn't play sports she can't
stand watching eyes

She won't hurt your feelings, instead she might tell you a lie

Her patience runs low like roots in the ground

The girl thought you saw was never around

Written by: Dejonae Lawrence

I am the most indecisive person there is

I think about everything from every angle

I strangle myself in my thoughts trying to make the right choice

I pray to God about everything, some may think that's odd

But that gives me reassurance

Reading a good book, that gives me a rush

I blush for romance

My face flush at thrillers

And my heart is crush at THE END

I am Jamaican

But I am a unique one

I am shy

But bold when I should be

IN THE END

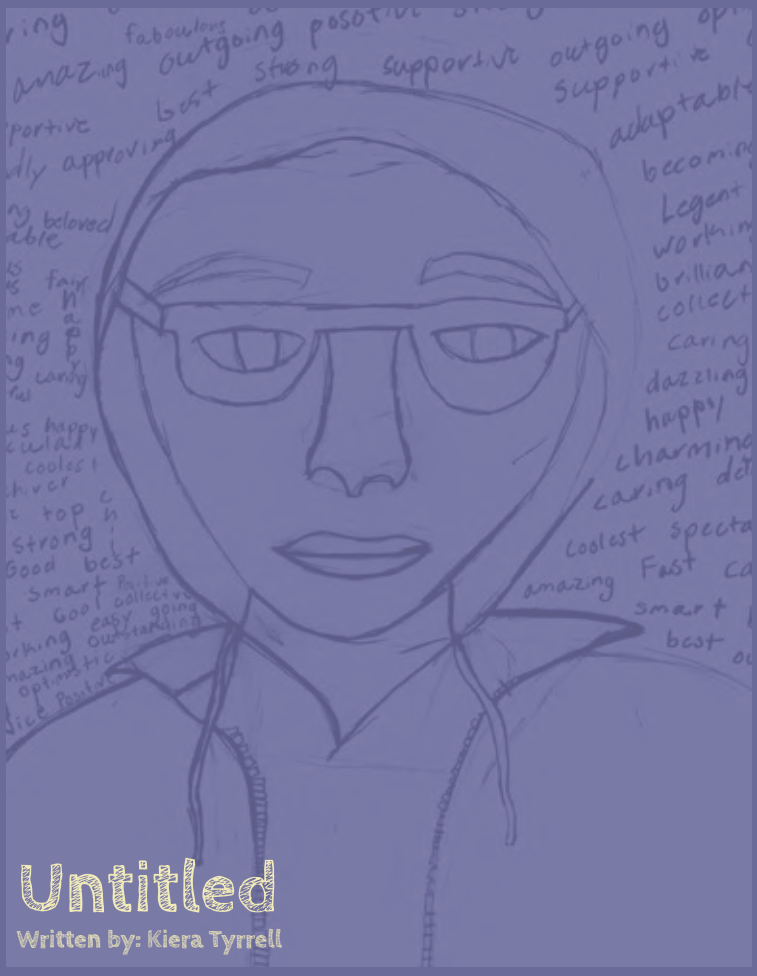
I could not try to be someone else but myself

Self-Portrait

Written by: Carol Fuentes Luna

I understand your opinion of me.
I say I don't want to waste my time.
I dream of going back in time.
I try to do everything the best way I can.
I hope to be enough.
I can be quiet sometimes.
I worry about my future.
I hope they see that.





Untitled

Written by: Kiera Tyrrell

I am an intelligent girl who loves helping those in need
I wonder how my intelligence will grow
I hear the cries of those who need help
I see my brilliant potential
I am an intelligent girl who loves helping those in need
I pretend to know it all
I feel like I'm losing a race against time
I touch the hearts of the helpless
I worry my intelligence won't be enough
I cry when I can't help
I am an intelligent girl who loves helping those in need
I understand I can't help everyone
I say I will continue to try
I dream of being able to help the struggling
I try to better my understand of others
I hope to make an impact on people's hearts
I am an intelligent girl who loves helping those in need



Dream

Written by: Anonymous

Dreams can come true
What if we're not alone
Stars blinking
Some are bright
To run for your
dreams
Dream
On a new a world
Crying
A planet that I never knew existed
Kids that grow up annoying
To see someone you love go
Dream
The world can be dangerous sometimes
Make your dream a reality
Working on the fastest car
Make a dream come true
Someday it will be raining
money Dream

Real

Written by: Anonymous

I am quiet
I wonder where is the love?
I hear everything

I see pain
I want quiet
I am quiet

I pretend I'm good
(not good)
I feel everything
that should be let out
I touch the lives of so many
I worry I'm here for you
I cry, can't be sad anymore
everything happens to me
and in front of me
I am quiet

I say I will be something
(I WILL be something)
I dream too big but I like it
I try to inspire them in a way
I hope everything is good
in the hood
I am quiet

I Am

Written by: Anonymous

I am: A friend, a son, an uncle, a brother, a cousin,
a person with feelings.
I wonder: If I'll die without
accomplishing anything.
I hear: Constant criticism and disrespect.
I see: A lonely boy living in a world and environment
that he just wasn't built for.
I want: To be happy, and to not have to act like everything is okay.
I want to cry and not have to deal with feeling
alone while being judged.

I am: In pain.
I pretend: I'm confident.
I feel: Empty.
I touch: My arm.
I worry: I'm not worth it.
I cry: Myself to sleep.
I am: Broken

I Am

Written by: Anonymous

I am a nice kid
I wonder how I am so mad
I hear a lot of music
I want money
I am chill
I feel good
I worry about school
I cry for nothing
I am good
I understand how I'm late to class
I say hi
I dream for a lot of money
I try to come to class
I hope that I pass
I am me

"I Am"

Written by: Anonymous

I am loving and one of a kind
I wonder what the weather will be like tomorrow
I am loving and kind
I hear music
I see a classroom full of students
I want to be an amazing person
I am loving and one of a kind
I pretend unicorns are real
I feel good when I come to school
I worry that I would never make it in the world
I cry when I'm in pain
I am loving and one of a kind
I understand how to be respectful
I say I can always do it!
I dream about sweet things
I try to believe in myself
I hope that I will graduate in 4 years
I am loving and one of a kind

Mount Vernon Board of Education

Adriane G. Saunders
President

Wanda White
Vice President

Trustees
Orville Gayle
Sabina Kelley
Lorna Kirwan
Marc Lenci
Dr. Lynne Middleton
Helene Thompson-Njenga
Jeffrey Redd

Dr. K. Veronica Smith
Acting Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Jamal Doggett
Assistant Superintendent
for Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Beverley Jones
Assistant Superintendent
for Administration, Climate, & Culture

Mr. Ken Silver
Assistant Superintendent for Business

Ms. Marci E. Tiggs
Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Dr. Pauline Pearce
Principal of Mount Vernon High School



Art Direction: Jason Pritchett | Cover art design: Elena Pjetergjokaj