“At That Hour”

At that hour when all things have repose,
O lonely watcher of the skies,
Do you hear the night wind and the sighs
Of harps playing unto Love to unclose
The pale gates of sunrise?

When all things repose, do you alone
Awake to hear the sweet harps play
To Love before him on his way,
And the night wind answering in antiphon
Till night is overgone?

Play on, invisible harps, unto Love,
Whose way in heaven is aglow
At that hour when soft lights come and go,
Soft sweet music in the air above
And in the earth below.

James Joyce

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Poetry



“Young Dead” Logan Shaver

the lost would be walking but for
black powder in reach,
under command and
in demand by decided
masters of their own fates.
red splatters the lonely homes
on the side streets,
and the young dead that still walk
walk only cause rest is a synonym
of weak
in the land of angels.
there’s more bullets than
people in paradise,
more rights than humans;
but surely all those gunshots must mean we’re safe.
go ahead, listen to the reaping-
hear the cry ring out
as the line of Morta’s blade tugs
another thread not worth keeping.
beyond those golden gates,
the bleakness of a heart
lies for the bearer to wear alone,
even beneath the weight of a thousand eyes-
this discovered by those few souls
who mustered cries, and
watched as blurred wings
swooped idly by.
the good, kind folks pile the bodies via the normal means and tradition,
stuffing refrigerators full of
roses and scarred minds,
numbing them with the sickly scent of drugs and promises
before they frost and die.
its from this freezer

of drying hearts and
sweetened words
the march starts, the young dead
rolling through the toll of another day.
in the morning yellow i see
the child of the brimstone cross,
the child of the wrong-place, wrong-time womb,
and the child of the birthright tomb of stigma,
their husks wakening to walk down skeletal streets, waiting,
just waiting,
till they fall inanimate once more.
i see one's hand wipe a fallen eyelash
from their cheek, cause none of their
wishes ever come true.
i see the wind carry
that broken dream to the sunrise,
those still in sleep too mired in life to live
and too
tired of death to die.
when dawn next breaks,
ringing on the breeze is a song of bells.
i hear the pop of flame,
take in the smell of fresh graves,
and see the young dead that still remain,
walking.



"My Muse" Elijah Curtis

Oh, My Muse
I imagine you
As a constellation of divergent thoughts
Forming from the recesses of my lonely mind.

Oh, My sweet Muse,
The Pied Piper of my heart,
Singing the sweet song that makes me dance
From this reality of ashes,
To the golden reveries of my faraway dreams

Oh, My sweet little Muse,
You are the remedy to my extremities.
I share my meals and songs with you,
When I feel so fatally by myself.
Other people spend their time,
In desperate company of others,
But I know with you,
It's always true,
Fun and fancy
And full of blue,
Because you are my one and only.

Oh, My sweet and soft little Muse,
I've carved out your rounded cherubic face,
From the silky dots that float around my eyes, as the darkness turns into pixels on a computer screen,
creating a wave of indescribable color.
I prefer my sight when my eyes are closed,
As only then I can see the ghost of your visage,
A soft whisper from the ether marking your name,
My Felicity.

Oh, My sweet and soft little Muse of light,
You are all I have.
A warmth in the cold of isolation,
A moonlight guiding me through this everlong darkness.
You've told me your hobbies, tastes, and fears,
Even your blood type,
So that I can tell you mine.
Please swing me round and round,
So fast that the streetlights blur into
A collage of stars that reflect in your eyes,
And your laughter becomes the cacophony
That is the symphony The synthesis
Of my existence.

Oh, My sweet and soft little Muse of blurry lights and starry nights,
Can I tell you a secret, if you promise you won't be mad?
There are times I see the others, with their others,
And I envy their tender, authentic connections.
Thankfully, I don't need them, do I?
I have you.
Only you.

Oh, My Muse.
I cry every day from the cold of always having been outside.
You use my tears to water the flowers,
Of a garden I will never see
Until I finally decide to be rid of it all,
And join you across the sea,
Felicity
May this flimsy rope be my ferry,
To the land where I will see you finally.
Please let my ugly, divergent colors
Make the portrait of your faraway face.
My Muse!
My Muse…
Felicity, where are you?

“first poem written since July last year” Aubree Zimmerman



Nothing conveys exhaustion more
than an empty document.
On some level it feels like
proof that the end of the world is
in fact as world-ending as it seems.
But the sun will rise one day
and I will feel the feelings less
and I will come out the other side
battered, bleeding, but alive
though with nothing in my hands
but bottled tears and bottled ink.
Exhaustion cannot be inaction.
Force applied by what’s outside
breaks on dug-in heels inside.

Untitled Sydney Curry

It's hard for me to talk to you
When you make me feel stuck on glue
Millions of words go through my head
All of them seemingly left unsaid

I write down all my secrets
And keep them tucked away
Yet sometimes I wish for
More

But I'm not the one
Who gets all the fun
So, I keep away
And never get the opportunity to say
The secrets I wish I could confess

"Starlight" Aubree Zimmerman

The skies bleed;
clouds hang heavy with red
and I lay here,
drinking liquid starlight
from a can of Coke,
spinning beauty
from the mundane.

"Honeybee" Aubree Zimmerman

You buzz like a honeybee 'round in my heart
I will melt, give you sweetness to soften your guard.
I'll be your Polaris, I'll hold my hand steady,
give you a soft place to land when you're ready,
hold you near in the warmth as the chilliness settles
and the sun dips beneath the green overgrown nettles.

“The Sisters of Mercy in Dallas’ Light” Anthony Sisco

Through Dallas fields where gravestones rest,
The Sisters walk in habits blessed.
With hands so gentle, hearts so wide,
They bring lost souls to peace with pride.
Among the oaks, the candles gleam,
A golden glow, a hopeful dream.
Their voices lift in hymns so bright,
A song of love, a guiding light.
No soul forgotten, none alone,
They kneel by names etched into stone.
With whispered prayers and laughter sweet,
They turn the graveyard’s chill to heat.
For love outlives the earthly stay,
And mercy lights the darkest way.
So if you pass where roses grow,
Know joy still walks where lost souls go.

“Out of All the Lights” Logan Shaver

Out of all the lights...
Do you remember me?
I was the firework,
The pretty colors
That made you smile for a moment
Till I slipped from your mind,
Into an inky black sky.
I can only hope
Someone takes a quill,
Sticks it into my void,
And writes what few moments we enjoyed
In starlight,
Because I don’t know how
I’m gonna leave my mark otherwise.
So please,
Look up,
And remember me,
Because I don’t wanna be
The supernova
That ended its run
As a black hole in your memories.

"The Sound of Distant Songs" Logan Shaver

I catch only the tide of distant echoes that sweep along the waves of darkness,
longing for those who made them,
their luminosity,
their symphony,
the life they cry out,
the future I am without.
there is only a single dying lantern
in my sea of clinging fog, hanging from the branch
of my gnarled tree.
I sit upon it and sing in recompense,
hoping for their light to touch me,
hoping for them to find their way to me,
but I am drowned by the deafening ocean that surrounds this island.
I am a songbird,
and I call out for another,
who is not there.

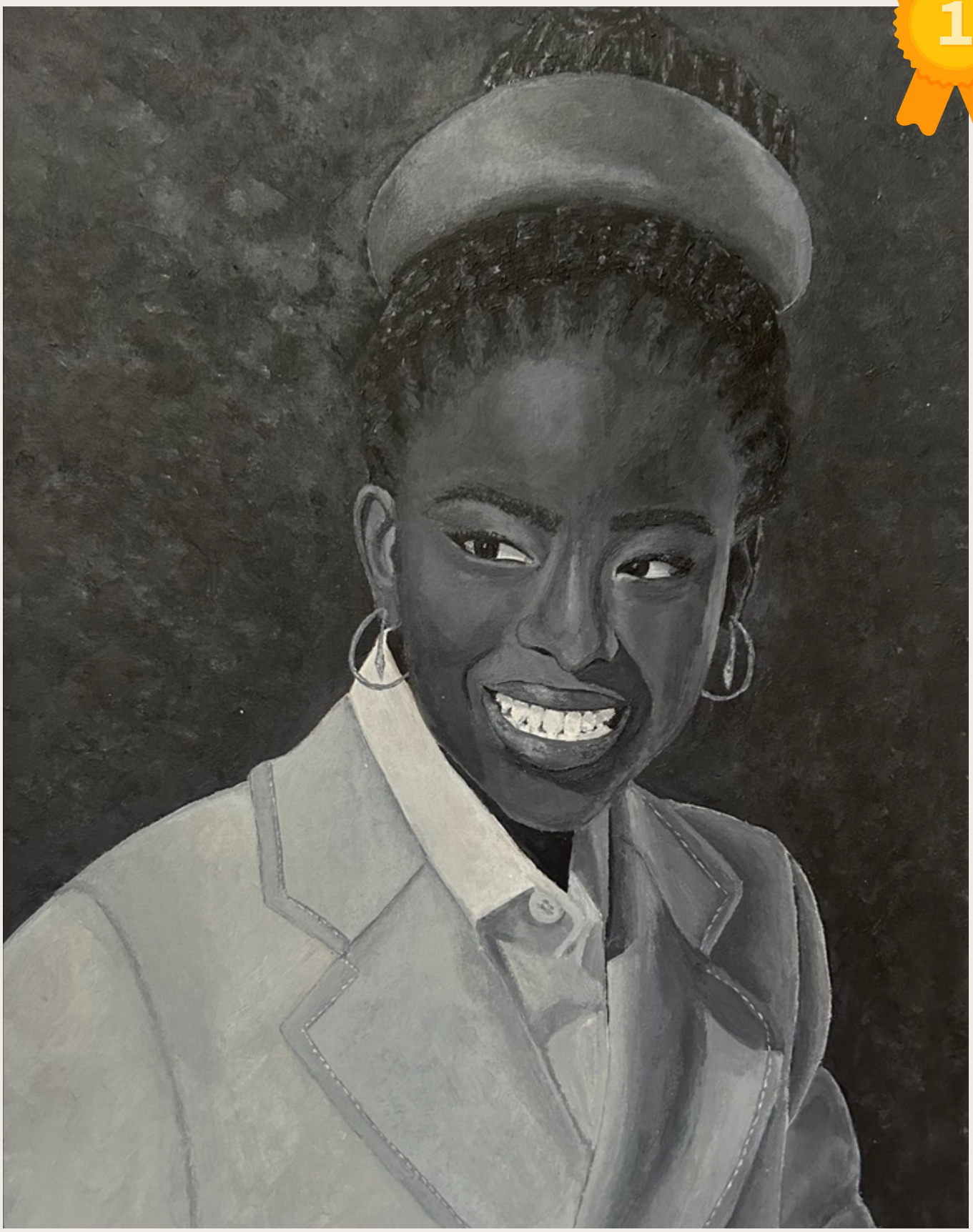
“Ode to the Bluebird” Elijah Curtis

And When You’re Gone,
Falling through the slits
In-between my fingers,
Even though I held you so tight
I won’t mind.
I suppose that’s what you wanted.
Dripping off of me like
Cold water in the shower.
You were always like that,
Weren’t you?
Always running ahead,
While I lagged behind.
I just hope that as you shine,
You can see a glint of me
In those diamonds you call eyes.

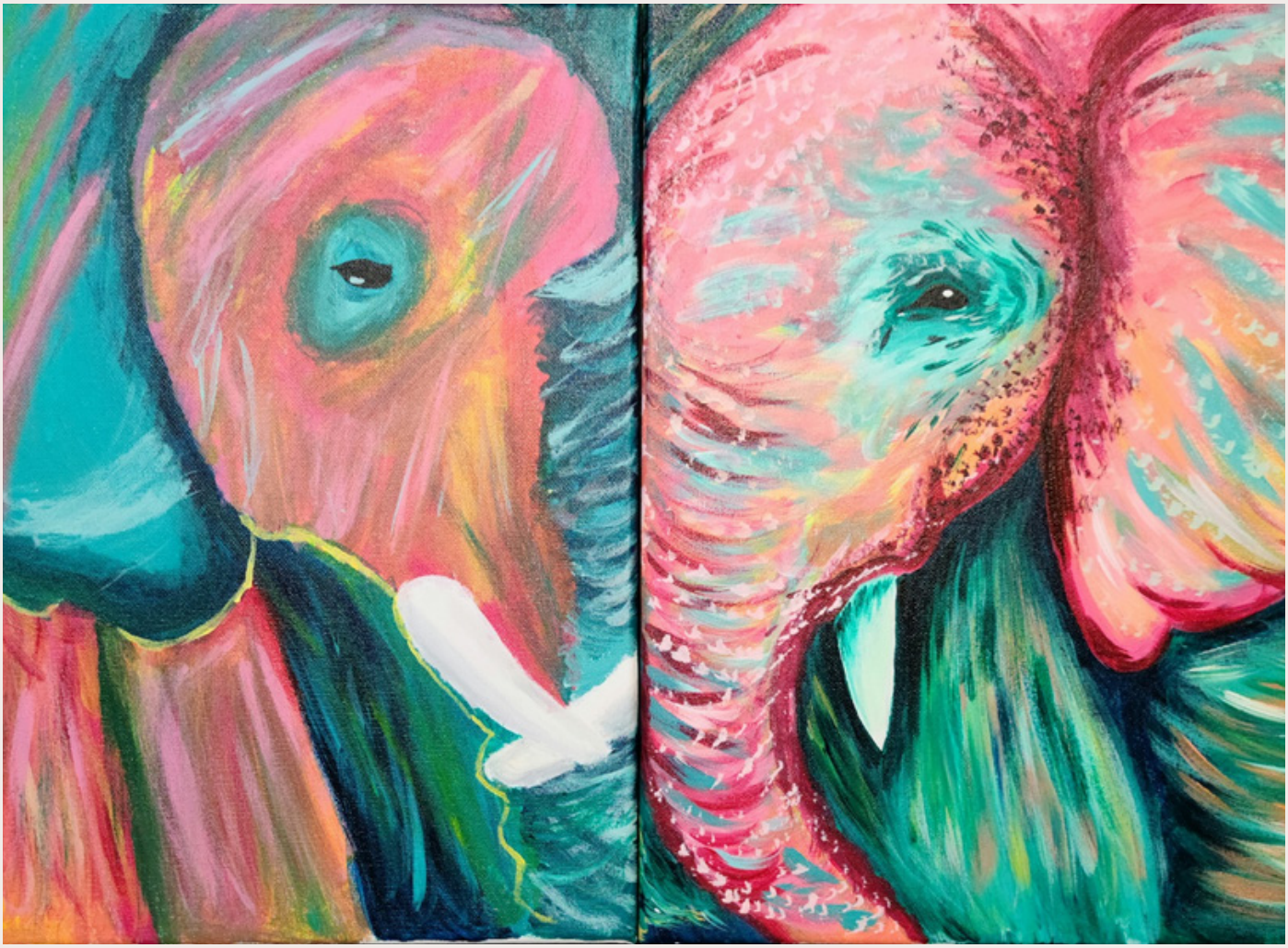
I worked so hard
To make you smile.
All it took was a look from you
To do it for me.
But I won’t mind.
I suppose that’s what I wanted.
To give all of my heart and soul,
Just to see a glimpse of yours.
You always smiled so bright,
Didn’t you?
Always spreading the joy,
While I was made to annoy.
I just hope you’re better off,
Gliding through that cosmic sky,
Those angel wings giving you flight.

Now you're really far away,
And I'm just another blurry face.
An abstract color in my shape,
As you soar into cosmic space.
Don't worry though,
I don't mind.
I suppose that's what we both wanted.
I never really meant much anyways.
And things like this weren't meant to last,
You've always wanted this to be brief,
Haven't you?
Now I am a distant reverie
Formed from a distant memory,
I just hope that When You're Gone,
I made you smile from afar,
As you became one with the stars.

Art



Acrylic painting "Amanda Gorman" Avery Fortuner



Acrylic painting "Elephants" Alana Hadden (left) & Antonio Ferraro



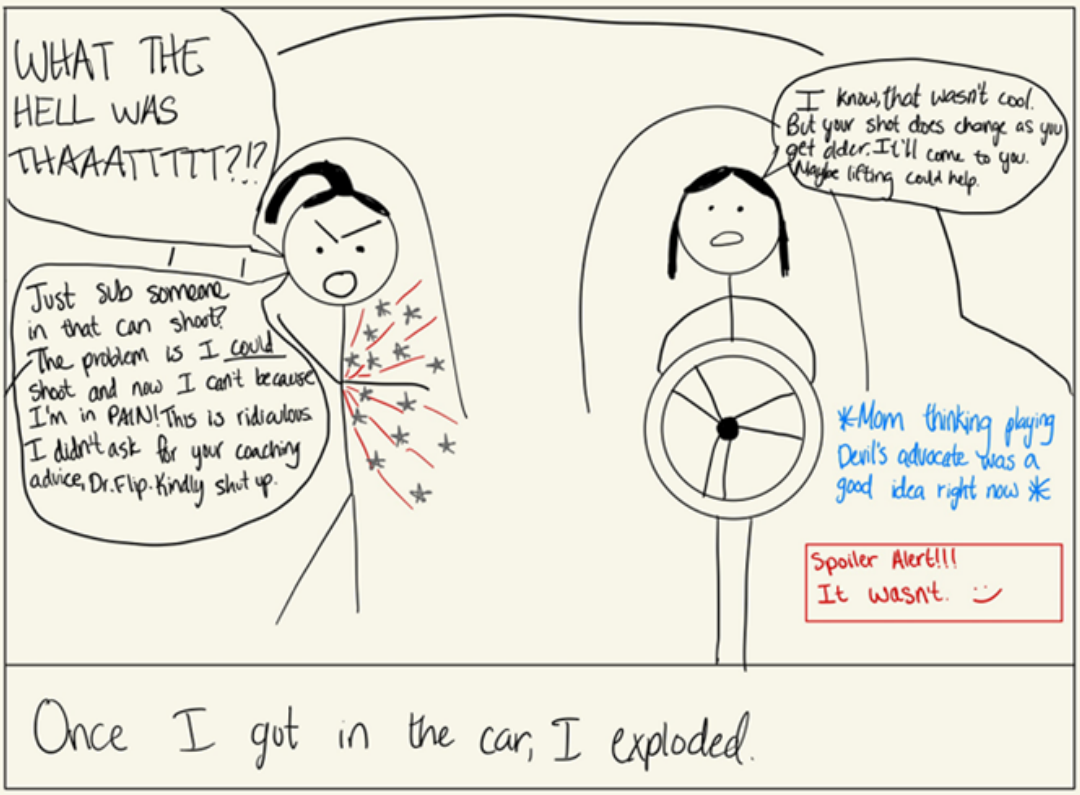


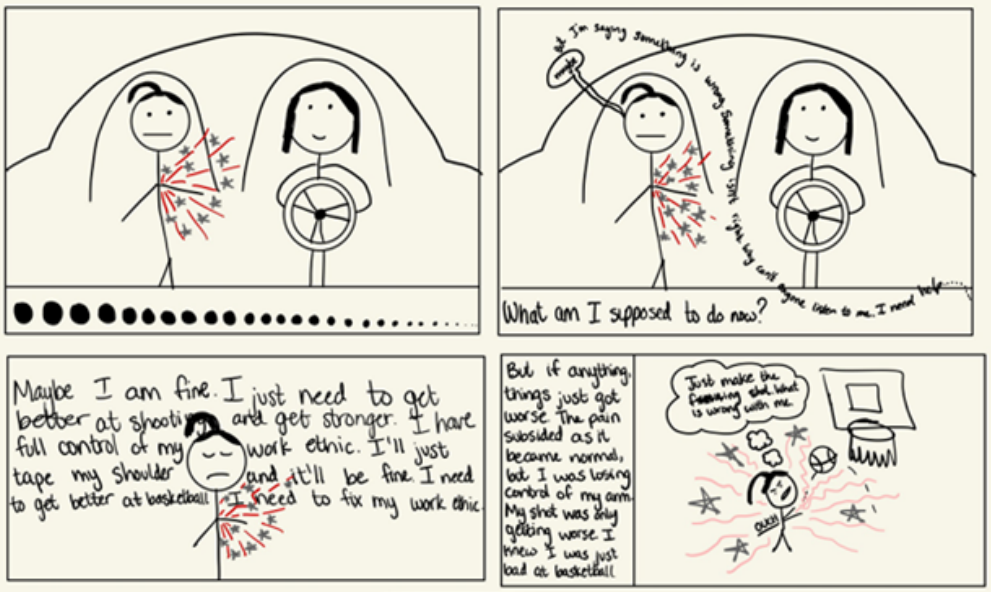
My Journey Through Diagnosis

Anna Cholakis


YEOWW!
YEOWW!
YEOWW!
YEOWW!
Just don't play—can you do that?
What...?! I can't just not go. I can't let my team down. I need to play, I don't have time to just wait.
You're telling me my ONLY solution is to not play and wait to see how I feel?? There has to be another option. The only option isn't an option for me. How am I supposed to get recruited if I can't even play? What does he mean, is it important?! YES. There is no way that I'm the first patient with this issue, how does he not have another idea?!?
Okay then, you'll just have to put up with it until the season is over. Try a brace and go to PT.
Well this is GREAT.
That was SO stupid, Mom! He didn't even listen to what I was saying. How is there no option that allows me to play without pain. No one else has to do that I can't just wait out the season?
Yeah sweetheart, I know this bedside manner wasn't the best. Maybe it wouldn't hurt to listen to the experts.
Oh...
Should I just listen to the doctor?
I started physical therapy. I loved going, I really trusted my therapist. I kept playing basketball and there was some improvement, even though I kept rolling my ankles.
You have the most flexible ankles I have EVER seen! But I think you're getting stronger!
Josh!
Oh?
YAY!
WTH does flexible ankles mean? It didn't sound like a compliment...
I'm sure it's fine!
I just moved on and didn't think anything of it. Josh didn't say anything, it's fine! :)

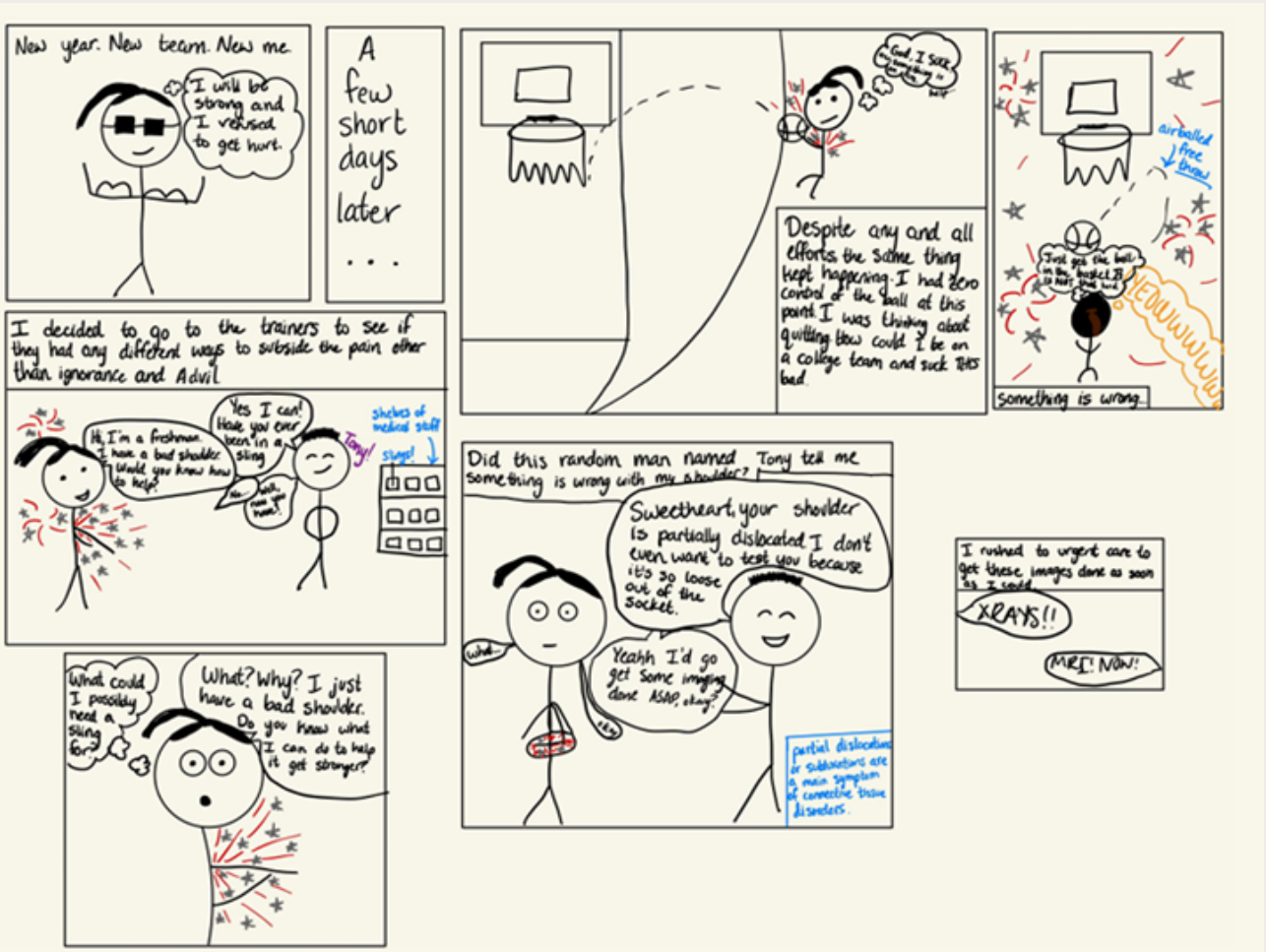

I went back to playing like normal! For about a year, I was all good! I was managing my minor injuries and playing well. I did experience some pain, but every athlete is obviously sore.
YEOWWWW
Then, one day I was warming up before practice and noticed a sharp, ripping pain under my armpit. It felt warm, like hot lava was being poured down my arm. I couldn't control where the ball was going. I kept airballing and I didn't know why.
Some time passes and my shoulder is still in so much pain. My shooting is only getting worse. At first, I thought I just pinched a nerve and it would go away. But after a few weeks, I had a feeling it wouldn't resolve itself.
Something is WRONG.
I decided it would probably be a good idea to get it checked out. Something didn't feel right.
I think I need to go to the doctor.
Oh, okay. Let's go.
I need answers. NOW. I know something is wrong. I can't move. I can't shoot the ball. I have no control over my arm. He will help me.
Hi! I'm Dr. Flip! I hear you got some shoulder pain!
Hi! Yes, it's not fun at ALL. I have no control over my arm.
This is so much better than last time. I like him already. I'll finally get some answers.
A few moments later..
Dr. Flip performs a physical exam. He is very nice and even mentions that he used to play basketball in college. This just proves that he's listening and will have some sort of answer.
Coming from a player myself,
yes, yes! Tell me, doc!
If you can't put the ball in the basket, your coach just has to sub someone else in that can, you know? No hard feelings, you gotta do what you gotta do to win. I don't think there's anything seriously wrong with your shoulder. I mean, you are getting small, so you could try some strengthening and the pain should go away.
Dr. Flip gave me his two cents...
Clearly, I was shocked.
Did this man just say that to me? There's actually no way.
I WAS able to shoot. And then this happened and now I can't. That's why I'm here because. Something is wrong. Something feels so wrong I need help.
But could he be right? Am I being dramatic? percentage?
I thought he would understand. He was nice this time. He even played basketball. How could he think nothing is wrong except my shooting
Of course! Good luck this season!

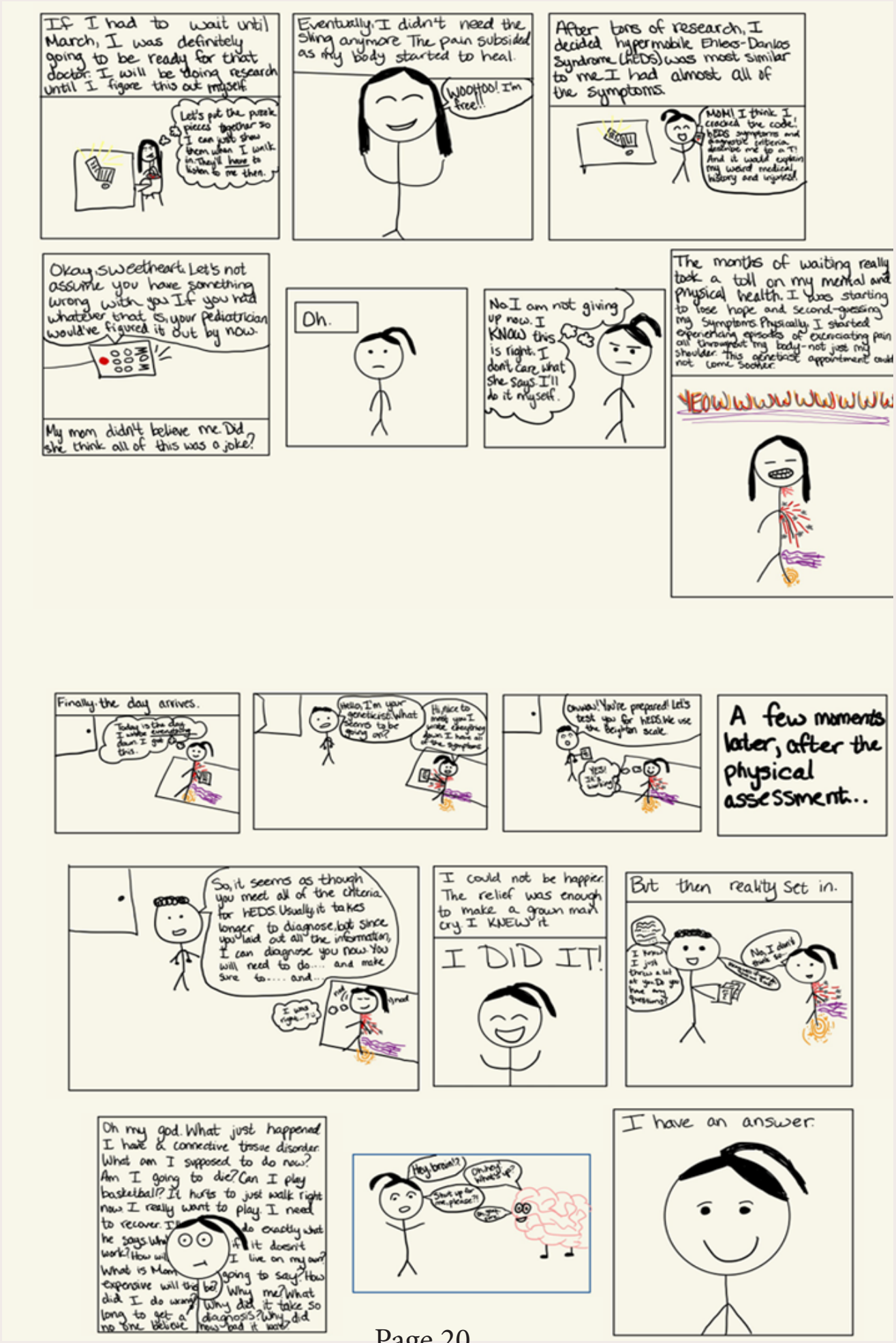




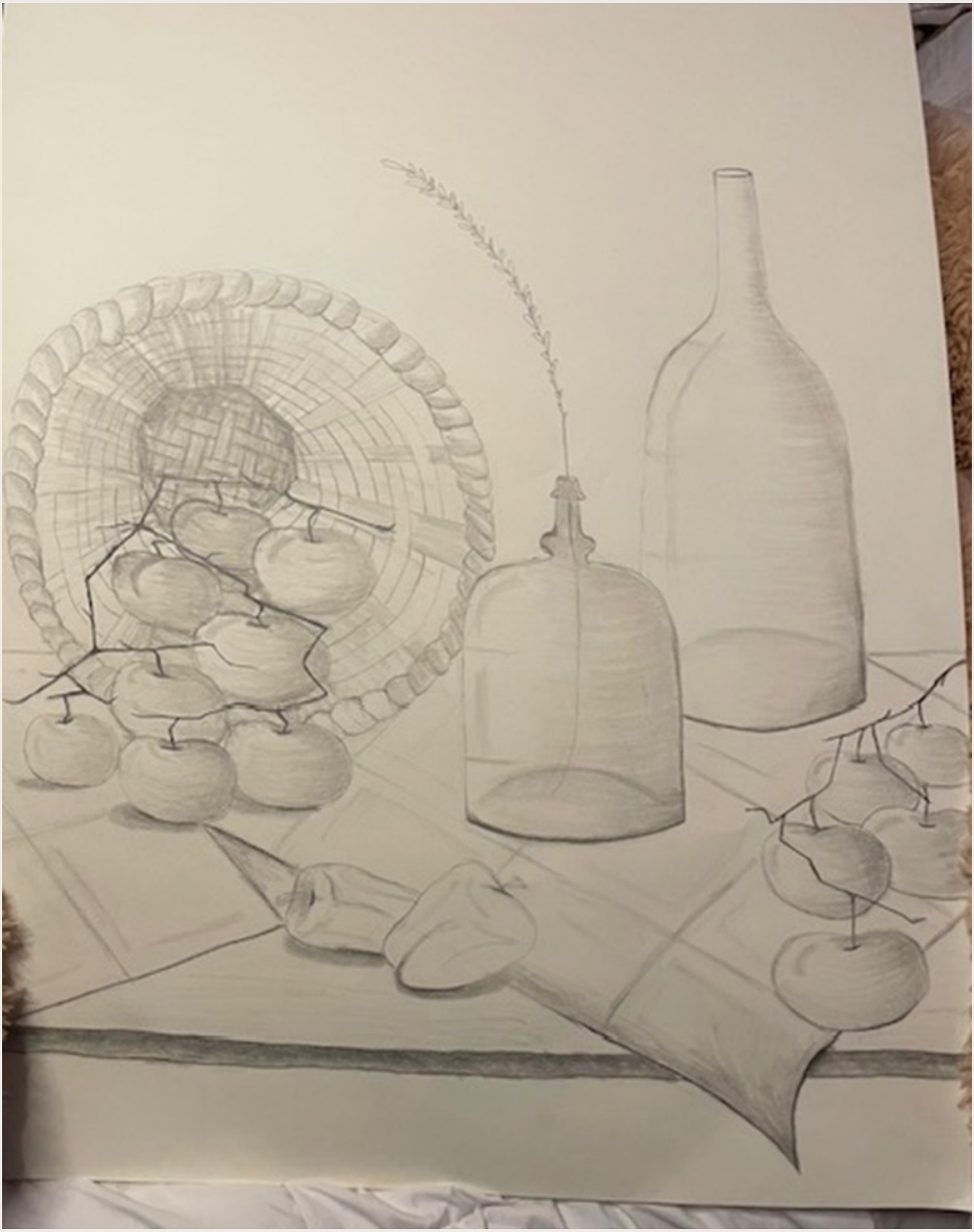
I kept playing! There wasn't a problem, why would I stop? Everything was fine, I just didn't know if basketball was my sport anymore.

Flash forward to college!! →


New year. New team. New me.
I will be strong and I refused to get hurt.
A few short days later . . .
Despite any and all efforts the same thing kept happening. I had zero control of the ball at this point. I was thinking about quitting. How could I be on a college team and suck THIS bad.
airballed free throws
Just get the ball in the air. Maybe it'll hit the rim this time
WEWWWWWW
something is wrong.
I decided to go to the trainers to see if they had any different ways to subside the pain other than ignorance and Advil
Hi, I'm a freshman. I have a bad shoulder. Would you know how to help?
Yes I can! Have you ever been in a sling
Tony!
shelves of medical stuff
stupid
Did this random man named Tony tell me something is wrong with my shoulder?
Sweetheart, your shoulder is partially dislocated. I don't even want to test you because it's so loose out of the socket.
What
Yeahh I'd go get some imaging done ASAP, okay?
partial dislocations or subluxations are a main symptom of connective tissue disorders.
I rushed to urgent care to get these images done as soon as I could
XRAYS!!
MRI! NOW!
What could I possibly need a sling for?
What? Why? I just have a bad shoulder. Do you know what I can do to help it get stronger?
And after a long couple of weeks, I was able to find out some answers.
So, looking at your XRAYS and MRI, your shoulder isn't broken. But, you did tear your labrum and the muscles around it. There are about 8 tears total
Excuse me, WHAT?!
There were so many emotions coursing through my veins.
I tore ligaments in my shoulder?! And the muscles around it?! That's like surgery-level serious. How long has it been torn for? Is THIS the reason I've been in pain? Why did it take me being in that much pain for them to do something? This doctor just saved me. But I'm out for the season. That sucks what happened to new year, new team, new me? But I finally know what's wrong. And I was RIGHT. I wasn't normal. I knew something. I knew it.
And then the doctor did something that no one else had done before. She started to investigate further. She asked me questions about what was happening.
Hmm, did you say how you hurt yourself? Usually an injury like this involves a pretty traumatic blow to the shoulder.
Oh, well I've had a bad shoulder for a couple years now. It just started hurting one day.
Hmm. That is strange. The fact there was no mechanism of all makes me think of connective tissue disorders. Has anyone asked you about these before?
Oh. Hmm. No, no one has said anything. I've only heard of them through tiktok
Alright then, let's get you checked out. You do show some signs like hypermobility and frequent subluxations* Let's see what's happening to your shoulder to cause the tearing. And if you do have a connective disorder, surgery will only be 30% effective, so we normally don't recommend it. Best of luck in your journey, young lady!
*partial dislocations
Things just got real.
Oct. 2022
right shoulder connective tissue disorder
expected March 2023
surgery not recommended
I have to wait until March?


If I had to wait until March, I was definitely going to be ready for that doctor. I will be doing research until I figure this out myself.
Let's put the puzzle pieces together so I can just show them when I walk in. They'll have to listen to me then.
Eventually, I didn't need the sling anymore. The pain subsided as my body started to heal.
WOOHOO! I'm free!!
After tons of research, I decided hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (hEDS) was most similar to me. I had almost all of the symptoms.
MOM! I think I cracked the code! hEDS symptoms and diagnostic criteria describe me to a T! And it would explain my weird medical history and injuries!
Okay, sweetheart. Let's not assume you have something wrong with you. If you had whatever that is, your pediatrician would've figured it out by now.
My mom didn't believe me. Did she think all of this was a joke?
Oh.
No. I am not giving up now. I KNOW this is right. I don't care what she says. I'll do it myself.
The months of waiting really took a toll on my mental and physical health. I was starting to lose hope and second-guessing my symptoms. Physically, I started experiencing episodes of excruciating pain all throughout my body - not just my shoulder. This geneticist appointment could not come sooner.
YEOWWWWWWWWW
Finally, the day arrives.
Today is the day. I will be energizing down. I got this.
Hello, I'm your geneticist. What seems to be going on?
Hi, nice to meet you. I think I have hEDS. I have all of the symptoms.
Oh wow! You're prepared! Let's test you for hEDS. We use the Beighton scale.
YES! It's working!
A few moments later, after the physical assessment...
So, it seems as though you meet all of the criteria for hEDS. Usually it takes longer to diagnose, but since you laid out all the information, I can diagnose you now. You will need to do.... and make sure to.... and...
I was right...!
I could not be happier. The relief was enough to make a grown man cry. I KNEW it.
I DID IT!
But then reality set in.
I have an answer.
Oh my god. What just happened. I have a connective tissue disorder. What am I supposed to do now? Am I going to die? Can I play basketball? It hurts to just walk right now. I really want to play. I need to recover. I
do exactly what he says. Wh
if it doesn't work? How wi
I live on my own? What is Mom
going to say? How expensive will the
be? Why me? What did I do wrong?
Why did it take so long to get a
diagnosis? Why did no one believe
how bad it was?
Hey bro!?
Oh hey! What's up?
Shut up for one, please?!
Oh, yeah. Sorry.

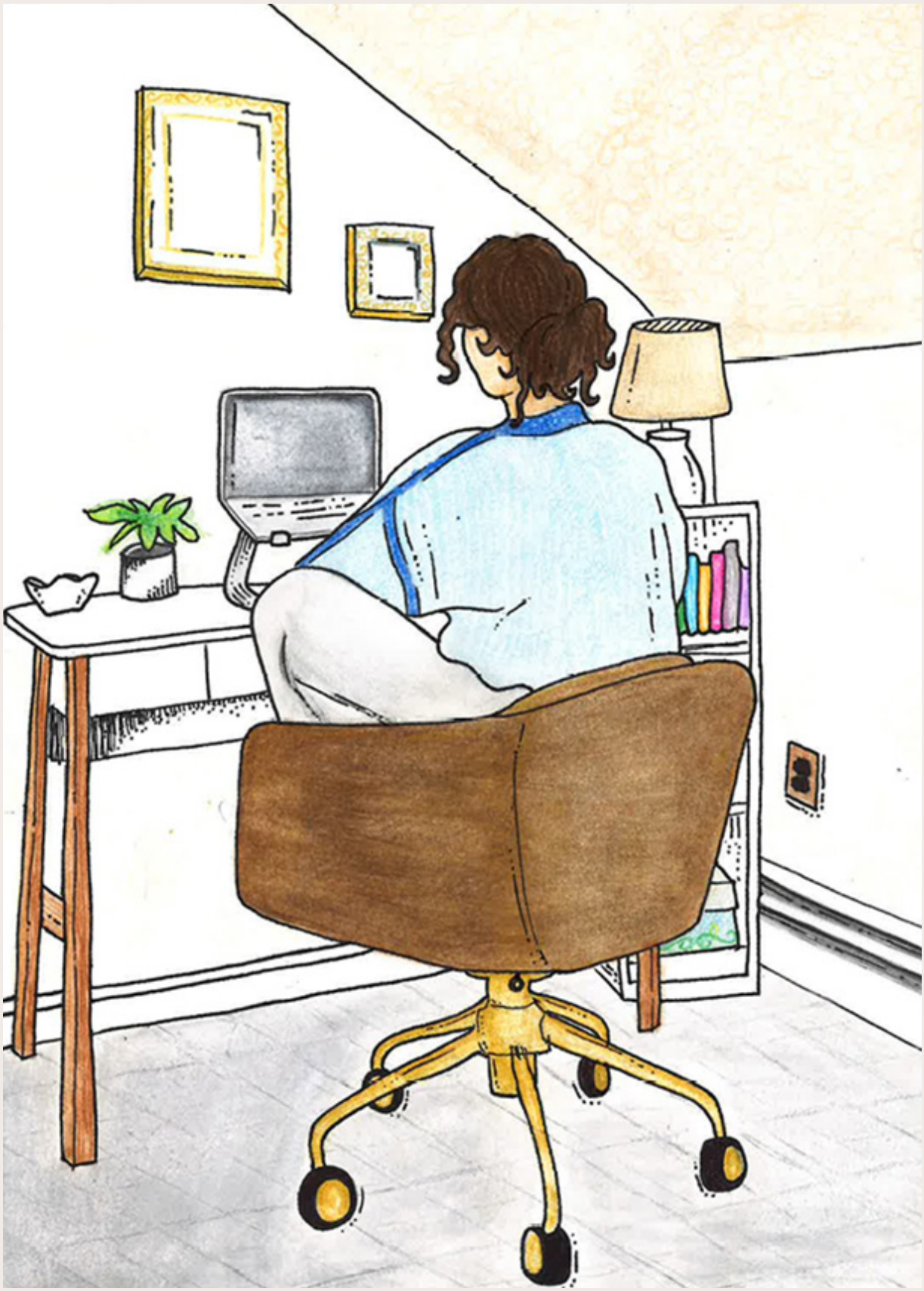

War is over. Now I can start my journey home, even if it's difficult.



Pencil drawing "Comfort" Makenzi Walsh



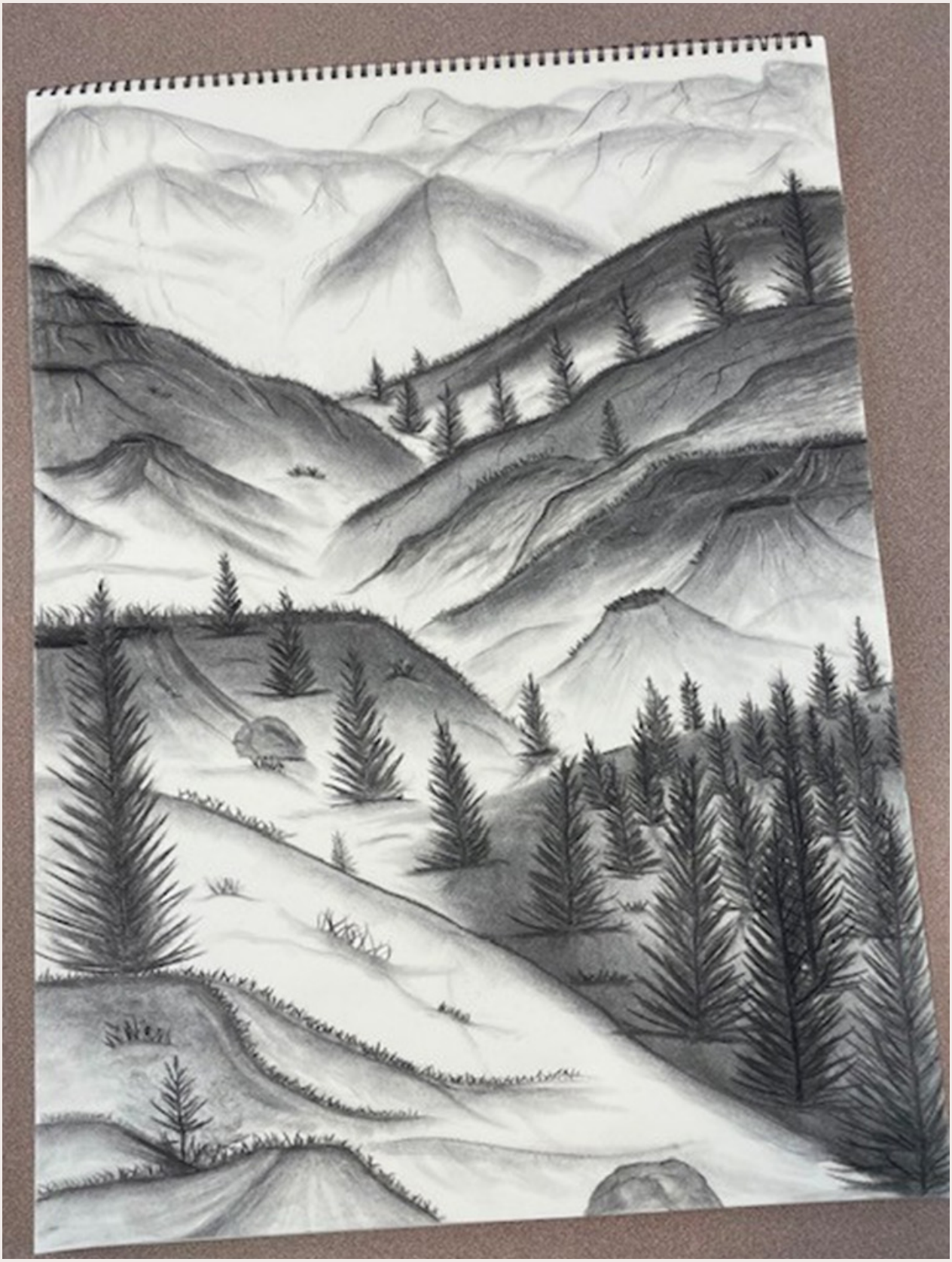
Drawing "Corium" Antonio Ferraro



Drawing "Narrative Essay Writing Space" Tempest Willequer



Acrylic painting "Marilyn Monroe" Avery Fortuner



Charcoal drawing "Harmony" Makenzi Walsh

Photography



Black and white photography "Wandering" Juliana Romero



Photography "You Never Know What You Might Find!" Louisse Beattie



Black and white photography "Cervantes" Antonio Ferraro



Photography "Blank Canvas" Abigail Backes



Photography "Festive Perspective" Abigail Backes



Photography "No Splash Zone" Nicole Zurawski



Photography "Journey into the Unknown" Hunter Wesolowski



Photography "Journey into the Unknown" Hunter Wesolowski



Photography "In Full Bloom" Abigail Backes



Photography "Motionless in Light" Abigail Backes





Photography "Monforte" Antonio Ferraro



Black and white photography "Mongui" Juliana Romero



"There is Nothing as Terrifying as the Human Mind"
Veronica Shults

The young man sat hunched over, his head resting in his left hand as the pointed joint of his arm cut into the unforgiving surface of his desk. His right sat on top of his mouse slowly scrolling down. The only light in his cramped, single dorm room was the piercing blue glow of the laptop before him, shielding his tired eyes from the various empty cups of ramen and empty red bull cans that littered the remaining surface of his desk. Before him on the screen sat his thesis. A complete fifty-six pages of carefully produced data and painfully extracted research. A testimony to the last five years of his life, his magnum opus and his key to a bright future. He had spent the past three days carefully editing the document, culling the tangents and run off sentences as he pieced together a streamlined version to present to his professors and finally earn his doctorate. As he combed the document one final time, he heard a shuffling in the darkness behind him. The young man twisted around, his greasy hair falling in his face as it was displaced. He glared into the darkness of the room, barely making out the silhouettes of the prison-like furniture that came with the dorm. Just as he was about to return to his work, a sinister, creeping voice whispered into the air,

"~Joshua~" the voice gasped.

The voice came from the closet, the door of which was slightly ajar. Through the gap in the door the young man could just make out the pressed suit he had picked out just for his thesis presentation. He waited a few seconds, and when the voice did not speak again, he turned back to his thesis. He felt uneasy as he worked, his skin crawling with anxiety as a barely audible hum started beyond the doors of the closet. Unable to focus, the young man pulled open the bottom drawer of his desk and removed the hammer from his small travel tool box. He stalked over to the offending piece of furniture, and as he raised the hammer in his hand high above his head and made ready to open the door, a hand reached out from the gap and grabbed him by the collar. The hand was more bone than anything, the decaying skin barely hanging on by the remaining connective tissue. In shock, the young man brought the hammer down on the hand with all his strength. Over and over he