

Rugged Winter 2025-26



Sun and Moon
Painting by Ellie Di Le

My Painting & Melancholic

Poem by Resi Cooper

i have a painting;
filled with beautiful swirls of color,
and personality,
the perfectly imperfect painting of me;
i fell in love with melancholic,
in my heart;
shared my painting with him;
one day,
melancholic tarnished my painting,
with grief,
with words piercing as black paint to color;

i have a painting,
now splattered with black;
all that time to come to this;
how disappointing;
but paint with colors over the black,
i shall do;
to save the perfectly imperfect painting
of
me.



Girl

Drawing by Carys Carlisle



Drawing Collage (Color)
by Lynelle Cantero



Grocery

Drawing by Lynelle Cantero

Death

Poem by Kristen Clifford

Darkness isn't something to be afraid of.

Death said to me.

Why?

I had asked.

Because every time you close your eyes for bed, you're smothered in darkness,

You somehow find peace in that still, solemn silence,

Death had responded.

Then why are we afraid when we are younger?

I had asked, clutching the remains of my childhood.

When you are young, you see darkness as the absence of everything.

Too afraid to embrace her.

Yet too desperate to go without her.

As you grow older, you realize you need that black part of your soul.

You realize you need to have a rough spot on your heart.

You know you can't be perfect,

So you fear true imperfection as a child.

Death's secrets were true.

Even though I hated to admit that.

Darkness isn't something to be afraid of.

I had finally come to terms

With the sincerity in her living words.



Running

Painting by Carys Carlisle



Waterfall
Painting by Dawson Burns

Desire


Poem by Kristen Clifford

Lost in the echo of time,
A solitary soul slips between a rhyme.
His lips sweet as honey,
As he speaks of anything but the desire for money.

For you see, he has been through it all,
Seen every crevice and crack of a brawl,
But he is anything but a brute.
No, he is gentle and careful, even though he's mute.

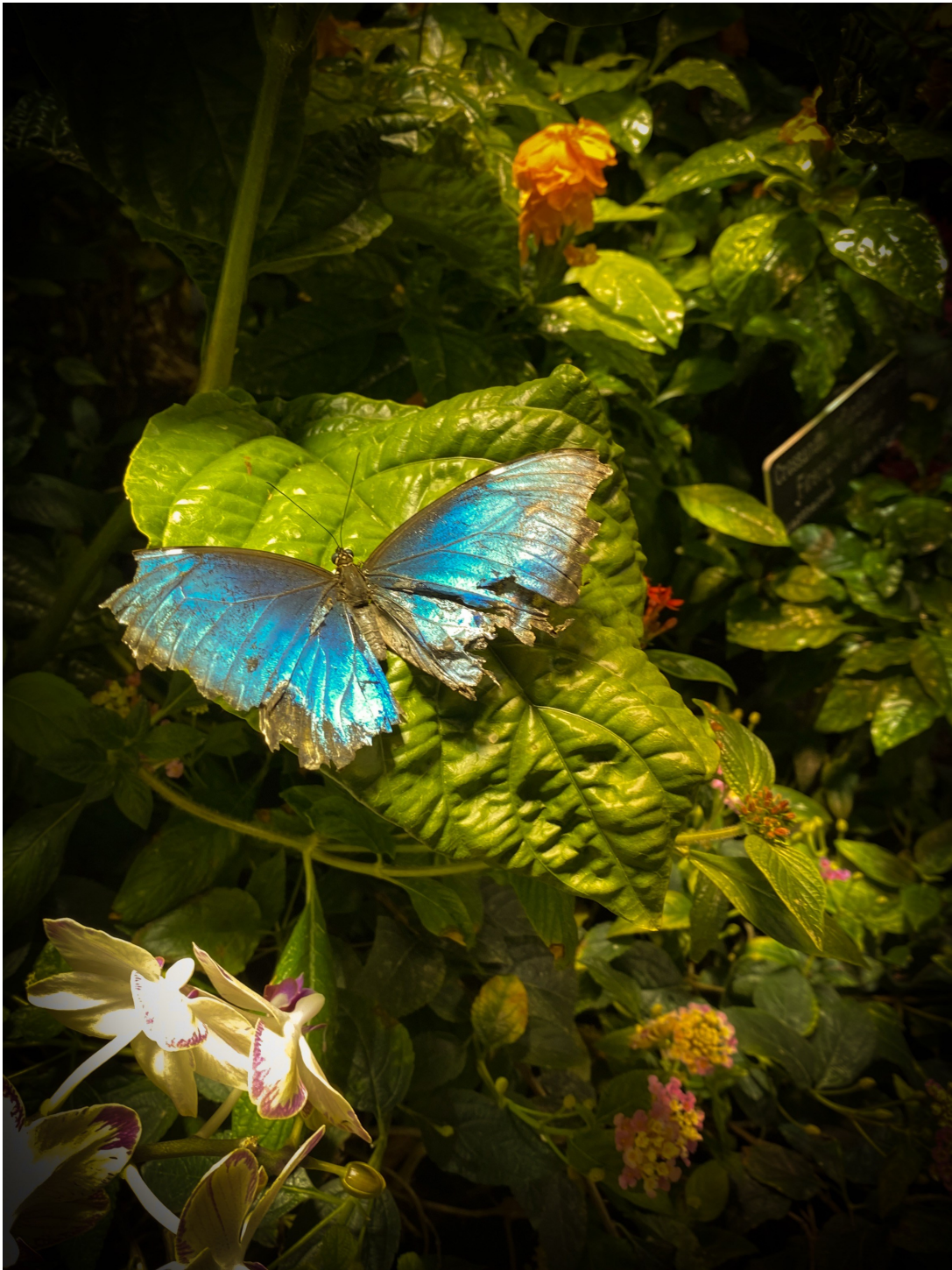
No words need to be spoken when it rests in his eyes,
That look of craving will last even when he dies.

Many try to manipulate this sight,
But none can for the key to it lies within.
Only those willing to sacrifice their heart,
Get the gift of a love so beautifully harsh.



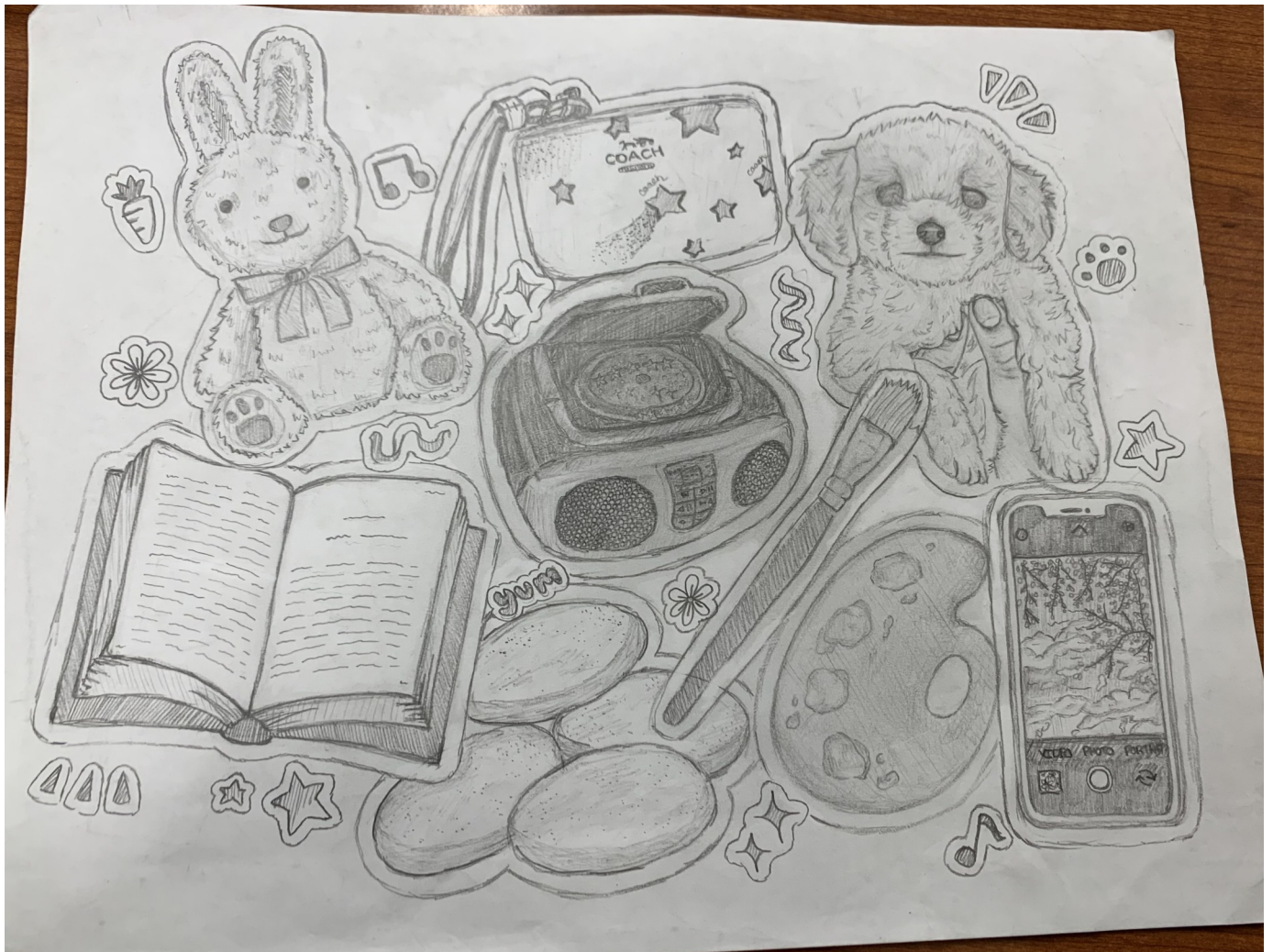
Butterfly

Photo by Ashlyn Carter



Collage (Black and White)

Drawing by Lynelle Cantero



The Heirs of War [excerpt]

Novel in progress by Anonymous

Aloysius

It's been two days since Orphie and I made our plan, and now it's time for the first step: Get out of the castle. I get dressed as quietly as possible so as not to alert the five personal guards my moms stationed on me. Then I tie a rope around my waist, getting a flashback to when me and Orphie jumped out and the rope failed.

Ah, yes, memories. I open the window, set a secure holder in, and right before I start, an owl comes in and drops a note in my hand. I don't think much of it, so I throw it on the ground. It lands on a sharp object and tears open, but I start propelling down anyway. Unfortunately, I'm not very athletic and bonk my head certainly over a million times.

Once I'm down I creep down to the gates to meet Orphie, and I see him waiting out there. I walk up to the gatekeeper and say, "Sup, Charles, can you open the gates? Orphie and I are gonna get breakfast in town." Charles nods, moving towards the gate lock.

"Sure, anything for my favorite Prince," and he opens the gate. As I walk out Orpheus says, "Hey, you managed to get out, huh?" He stands from the wall he was leaning on.

"Yup," I say proudly. "Well, here comes the hard part.... Getting to the border." And I sigh. "Let's go," he says, and we start walking. It takes about three hours. By the time we're there I'm completely exhausted, but we can't stop now. As I try to walk up to the gate, Orphie yanks me and sends me flying into an alley.

"OW! what was that for?" I ask. "You idiot!" he hisses in a low voice. "There's no way they'll let the Prince go through the border, let alone to meet the enemy." I think for a second. "Ohhhhhhh. So, what's the plan?" I ask.



Scream

Painting by Carys Carlisle

The Heirs of War [excerpt], continued

Novel in progress by Anonymous

“Hey,” a voice I haven't heard before says behind me, and Orpheus and I turn around.

“Stand and deliver!” Orpheus sighs as we see a figure coming towards us. It's a girl, I think, maybe sixteen years old. She stands at the edge of the alley, a shadow beneath the flickering torchlight. Her short, messy orange hair looks like it had been set ablaze and left to tousle in the wind, wild and untamed. Black eyes, deep and unreadable as obsidian, scan the dim-lit street with the sharp precision of someone who's lived too long in the margins.

Draped in a patchwork of worn leather and dark cloth, she wears the guise of a medieval thief—not the romanticized kind sung about in taverns, but the real breed. Cloak frayed at the hem, boots scuffed from countless silent steps, fingers clad in fingerless gloves perfect for picking locks or vanishing into crowds. Each buckle and belt seemed chosen more for utility than style.

Somehow the whole ensemble whispers danger and defiance, but she's just a child, much younger than me. “Give me all your valuables,” she says, and before I can speak, Orpheus says, “And why would we do that?” She eyes us. “Cause I'm the one with a weapon.” She pulls out a sword that is connected to her hand with a chain, and I decide to say something. “Look, little girl, we don't have anything—”

Something blasts past my cheek, a stinging sensation as I feel blood dripping down my cheek. “I am not a girl. Until I tell you otherwise.” I'm stunned but Orpheus steps in. “Look we're sorry, but we really don't have anything,” he says, and she -he?- snorts. “Sure, I heard you talking about being a Prince.” Orpheus mutters some curse words.

“So, let's make this clear. Give me some money or you're dead.... or I could hold you for ransom. I like that one better.”

I try to think of a way to get out of this when someone says, “Hey, Venus, you look cute today.” I turn around to see someone the same age as the kid. The figure is half in shadow, half bathed in the dull flicker of a distant lantern. One side of the head is shaved close, revealing pale skin marked with faint scars, while the other bears a cascade of white hair that draped over one shoulder like a veil of frost.

The icy blue eyes caught the light for just a moment—sharp, unblinking, and far too clear for comfort. I see Venus turn a shade of pink as if blushing, but it quickly goes away. Then Venus grits his teeth.

“You really have to be annoying, don't you?” he says. “Yup, I couldn't let you get away with theft, could I,” the new person says and walks up and put an arm around Venus in a half hug. “Sorry about my friend here. It's a pleasure to meet you. I'm Mercury, and this here is Venus.” Venus turns red again.

“Who are you?” I ask. “Mercury, as I said before, at your service. Now let's make this easy, you give me all your stuff and Venus here gets none.” They pull out a couple of daggers. Venus glares, and before I can react, he is behind me holding both our bags.

“Seriously, Venus, again? ... Oh well, these parts are always fun.” Orpheus, Mercury, and I all start chasing Venus. We start running fast on the ground, but as soon as we're out of the alley, he starts running straight for the gate without slowing down. But I have to get my bag back. My circlet is in there.

I'm catching up with him, and I glance quickly behind me. Orpheus isn't far behind me, but he's losing speed. Then there's Mercury, who isn't behind me, but right next to me. We run straight for the gate and suddenly guards appear trying to block our path. One starts to speak.

The Heirs of War [excerpt], continued

Novel in progress by Anonymous

“HALT BY THE ORDER OF THE RO—” and he falls to the ground as Venus uses his face to jump. He's trying to jump over the wall! In that second, I don't think, but I jump as high as I can and grab onto Venus' pant leg.


“HEY!!” he shouts and tries to shake me off. We both land in a heap on the floor, rolling back and forth in a struggle for the bags. I look behind me. Orpheus is surrounded by guards, and Mercury has stopped out of shock.

It looks like we're about to hit the wall, but in a split-second fire propels us forward, and we land on the other side. Venus tumbles away, and I use that one second to grab the bags. “I GOT THEM! See, Orpheus?” I turn to look at him but he's on the other side of the wall, surrounded by guards.

From the corner of my eye, Venus stands up. “HEY! Mercury!!” he shouts. “Get your butt over here! And bring the other guy, I guess.” He then turns to me. “You're lucky if I don't kill you both,” he says with a grimace, and suddenly Mercury appears next to us with ice spewing from one hand, holding Orpheus in the other. He drops Orpheus and I ask, “Hey, you ok?” and he sits there, panting.


“We got across the border.” I laugh, glad to see he's fine, but then a serious look comes over his face as he stands up to look at Mercury and Venus who are arguing. “*What* are you? You guys *controlled* fire and ice. It doesn't make sense.”

Venus scoffs, “Rude much.” Then Mercury says, “We're human, like you. Just...different.” Orpheus turns away. “Thanks for the help, but we gotta go. C'mon Aloysius.” But Venus doesn't miss a beat. “The bags. Now,” he says. “If we helped you, it's the least you can do.”



Orpheus doesn't turn around. He pulls me up, grabs one of the bags and opens it, then throws a loaf of bread on the ground behind him. "I know you. You were the kid always sneaking into the palace to get bread for your brother. Until the fire." And I see tears brimming in Venus's eyes. "C'mon Venus. Let's go." Mercury gives him a hug. I can tell that they're close.

They walk into one side of the forest hand in hand. We walk into the other side, and I ask Orpheus, "I can't believe you knew who he was." "I don't know, either," he admits. "It just came to me." We walk deeper into the woods. "How did they do that? The fire and ice thing." Orpheus shrugs. As we walk forward a large vine blocks our path. We take the other path and run straight into our new best friends, Mercury and Venus.



[Editor's Note: *The Heirs of War* is a novel in progress by one of Bishop Dunne's middle school students. This is one chapter from that work.

Dancing

Painting by Rosemary Keglovits



Glass

Painting by Carys Carlisle





Waterfall

Painting by Ellie Di Le

Paper Boat

Poem by Resi Cooper

Thin sheets of what was one alive
Living with bark and birch
Bent and folded like the branches of growth
You float and sink and yet
Your boat still floats

The boat that shall never be engulfed is nonexistent
Instead, there are only endless rows of shipwrecks that must be re-
built
By you and you alone
Time and time again
But the rocks that could splinter your new vessel become a new path
A staircase more like redemption than ruin
Only you can take what's crumpled and drenched and refold it
Ever shifting as does the heart

Tears, anger, frustration, loneliness, pity, ego
All those rocks thrashing against your hull
You have to learn to take the hit
Smooth the paper
Fold that boat again
You're going to be fine
Growing up can hurt or scare you
But we become new that way

Rugged Winter 2025-26

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Mission Statement

Bishop Dunne Catholic School empowers each student to explore, inquire, lead, and serve through a college preparatory education in a joyful community of faith.



Bishop Dunne Library: A Message from the Librarian



The Bishop Dunne Library is a place for students to explore and discover the joys of reading, as well as a place to learn the skills to navigate a constantly changing, technologically sophisticated environment.

My mission as the librarian is to help students become lifelong learners, equipped with the tools to navigate, evaluate, analyze, and understand the information they will encounter throughout their lives.

Rugged is a platform for students to share their creative work. Like many of the books that are available

to students in the library, these works often explore life beyond the classroom.

But learning is not confined to the school walls. Reading, writing, and creating are joyful enterprises that we encourage in every part of our students' lives.

I hope you enjoy *Rugged*.

Melanie M. Gibson
School Librarian
Editor of *Rugged*

