

THE LOOKING GLASS

LAURALTON HALL'S LITERARY MAGAZINE • 2023 EDITION



*Illustration by
Sophia Salazar '23*



Watercolor Painting
by Lane Pinto '25

Behind My Back

Every day, during recess, I am the sole girl playing basketball. Whether it's sharp darts of rain or buckets of pouring shine, all ten of us travel outside to the charcoal blacktops with rusted baskets and no nets every day.

I'll watch my friends gallop past me to the swings, something I never found interest in. Sometimes I catch the herd of girls laughing and pointing at me; they laugh and make fun of me as if I can't hear them, so I just pretend I can't.

If you're on Mark's team, the best athlete in the school, you'll probably win the game. Mark is softspoken; he doesn't like to boast or brag as Louis does. Every game, Mark utilizes this move that no one else has, one that made Louis stumble over his untied shoelaces. Mark bounces the ball off the edge of his fingertips in his right hand then shifts his hips to the right, wrapping the ball around to the opposite side. "The behind-the-back," Mark replies, after I ask him what his special move is called. Behind the back. Sounds self-explanatory, right?

I can barely sit through the rest of the day, running out of school, all the way home after the bell rang. I drop my bookbag on the blades of grass and snatch my favorite basketball, my ancient tablet, and get to work. I bounce the ball off the edge of my fingertips in my right hand then shift my hips to the right, wrapping the ball around to the other side. Finally, I mastered the behind-the-back.

When I go back to school and use my newest move during recess, everyone cheers and is hyping me up; even the girls on the swings.

When the girls who made fun of me complimented me, I just pretended I couldn't hear.

~ Maddie DiNatali '25



Photography by
Sarah Higgins '26

My First Dramatic Reading; The Feeling of a Lifetime

I'm standing in front of the class. My eyes are cemented to my paper. I can't seem to face the crowd. The tension in my shoulders prevents me from moving my arms. "Whenever you're ready!" Mr. Allen says, but his words seem to pour out in slow motion.

I have dreaded this moment for days. The nervousness dripping from my forehead starts to blind me. I'm gripping the paper like it's a golden ticket and forcing the words out of my mouth. The sounds of the paper crinkling fill the room, almost overpowering my quiet, soft voice. I'm staring into the eyes of peers who sit in the front row, pleading a silent cry for help.

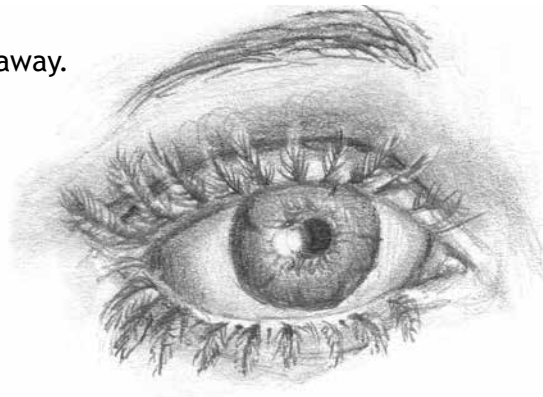
My feet shift from one before the other to all at once, stumbling like a pirate with a peg leg. The mistake starts to make my brain run wild. All of a sudden, my words are trapped in this bubble that just won't pop. The shaking of my hands starts to violently move the paper. Not only am I at a loss for words, but my eyes scour the page with no sight of the line I'm on. My eyelashes flutter like wings as I desperately search the page for my spot. I find it!

It feels like I just remembered my way home. My feet remember their rhythm, My voice turns into this instrument I'm not familiar with; moving up and down in an enthusiastic tone. My eyes fall off the end of the page, a breath of relief leaving my body, and the tension in my shoulders slowly withers away.

The worries from the night before seem silly now that I have survived the lion's den. The question of whether or not I failed is still sitting like a pit in my stomach, but as my grade is returned to me, the pit becomes this cocoon that lets out a million butterflies. All of them flying around my stomach, leaving me with this burst of energy that grabs hold of my mouth, pulling it into a wide grin that's extending from one ear to the other.

I hope this feeling never goes away.

~ Ava Casceillo '25



*Illustration by
Ava Sasaki '26*



"Emilia Blue"
Digital Artwork by
Melita Maurati '25

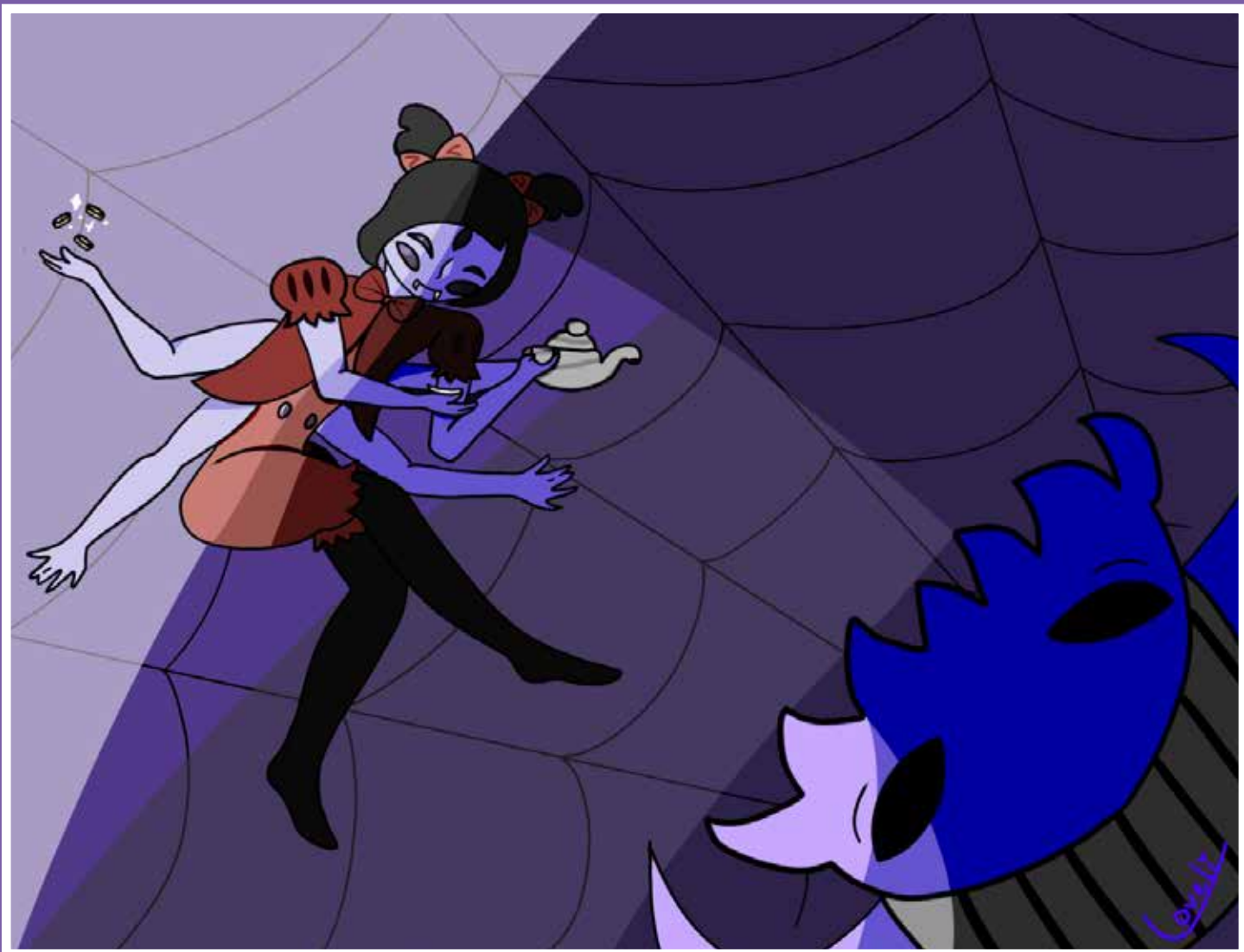
My Beautiful Dangerous City

I am a girl.
A girl who lives in a city.
A city that is seen as dangerous.
Dangerous, disgusting, and dark.
The dump of a city with the dumb children.
Sitting in the vacant and dark rooms of the diminishing houses.
I am a girl.
A girl who lives in a city.
A city that is filled to the brim with love.
With the chatter of the children who have ideas that span a million miles.
And the mixing pot of the cultures that I hold in my heart.
I sleep in a bed next to a window.
A window that fills my ears with the sounds of love.
The sounds of children laughing, the sounds of cars driving,
the sounds of school buses and ice cream trucks.
I smell the food of the Chinese restaurant.
The Chinese restaurant that lays next to the Korean restaurant.
The Korean restaurant that sits next to the Greek diner.
The Greek diner that rests next to the Jamaican restaurant.
And the Jamaican restaurant that lives next to the tiny Colombian bakery.
So in the city that remains dangerous, disgusting, and dark
to those who only use their untrained eye, there are people.
People who at their best can see my winding roads
and foggy mornings, as beautiful, unique, and loving.
So I continue to be just a city to most, but to some,
I remain another world,
a world to escape to when everything else is crumbling in their hands.

~ Graysen Byrnes '24



*Illustration by
Holly Thorndike '23*



"Spider Dance"
Digital Artwork by
Melita Maurati '25



Acrylic painting by
Meredith Daniels '25

Solstices, Skyscapes, and Soul-Searches

I am Grace.
From the land of stargazers,
Of dark, dreamy Drake.
Where an ethereal stream envelopes this cold,
idle neck of the woods,
And radios blare faint fantasies,
And windows let it in the whispers of whistling wind,
And thunder stirs in the heat of summer sounds.
I find my slumber, starry-eyed,
in my tower under the limitless sky,
In my cloudy, clear lullaby.
My celestial sleep escapes and the lightning begins,
My inner hurricane whirls, whisps and wins.
I am awake till daybreak,
My day has begun with a small hazy sun.
I am here,
and I am there
like sunshine, storm cloud,
and starlight.

Grace Kulaga '24



*Watercolor by
Merrill Moccia '25*

Nocturnal Eyes

Nocturnal Yellow eyes Bright and Wide,
Piercing like the Sun, Busy Days, eat-sleep-play. Life is pretty Fun!
The sun has set my Cloak of Black will camouflage my mischief.
Humans are Mad when my behavior's Bad- Whatever's broken they'll fix it
Catch me if you can! I dart from room to room
leaps and bounds and then Pounce-to wake you up for food.
Daylight breaks my human wakes-abiding beckoned Calls.
Now I sleep, my slumber's Sweet until the nighttime Falls

~ Madelyn Saxer '24



*Watercolor by
Malulani Mountcastle '23*



*Pen and Ink
by Maria Banka '25*



*Photography by
Sarah Higgins '26*

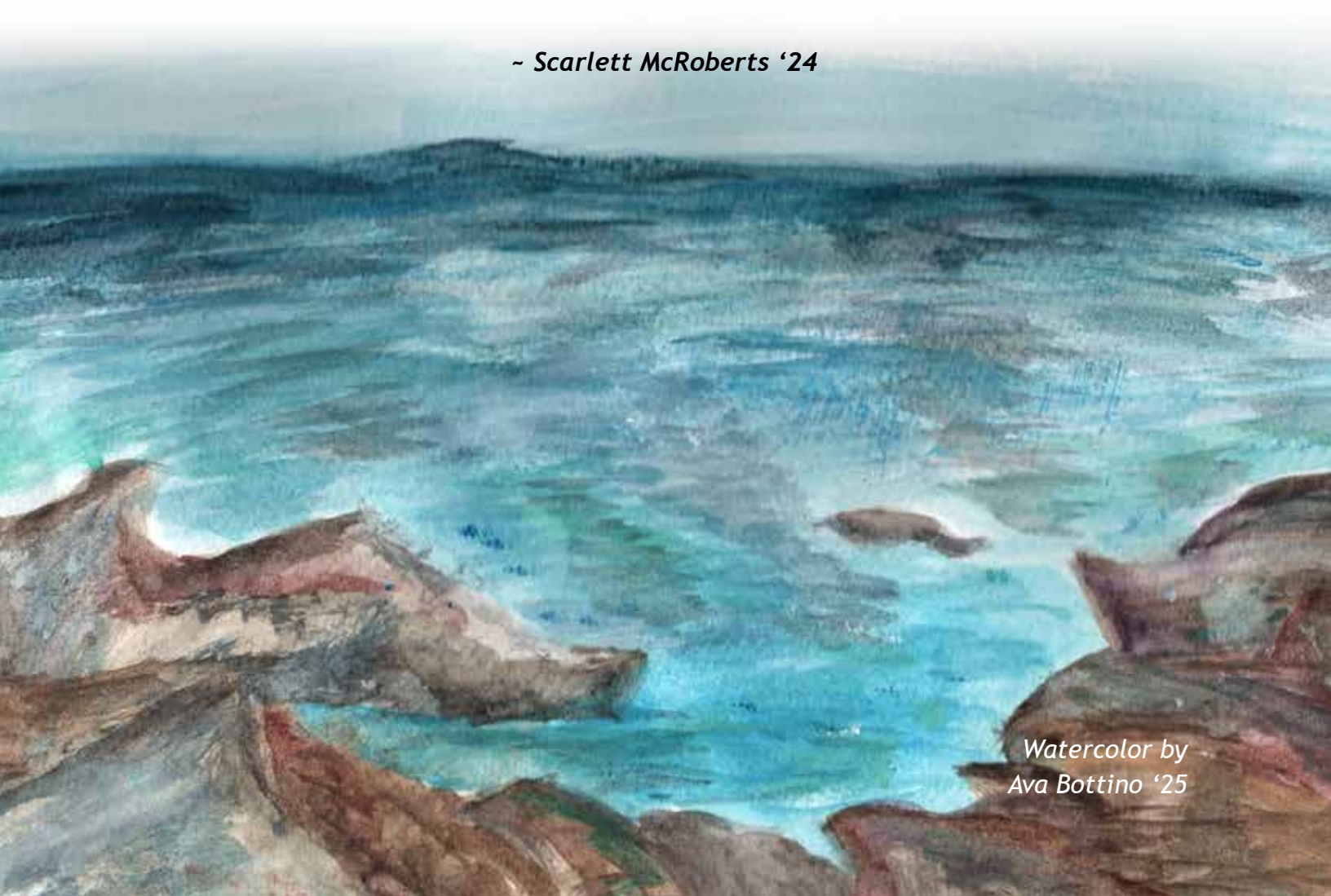
The Deep

Along the coastline of the East
The sea grass whispers
And the birds caw in Peace
Politely saying -“Hello Mister”

The indestructible sea
Claps Her hands
As you walk alongside
She Applauding - as you stroll on land

Sand and shells -
like salt beneath Your feet
A compact crab scurries by -
He looked so discrete
And it left you pondering - Why

~ Scarlett McRoberts '24



*Watercolor by
Ava Bottino '25*



"Journey's End"
Watercolor and marker
by Sophia Salazar '23



Acrylic Painting by
Ava Sasaki '26

Winter's Rain

Swift falling Snow,
The Crunch on my feet below.
Crunching on the Ground -
Winter's rain is Found.

The children are dancing,
Like sugar plum Fairies -
They Dance through the night,
As more Snowflakes take flight.

The truth is in the name,
It is pure fallen Bliss -
Snow is Winter's rain;
A bright and white Kiss.

~ Teagan Ryan '24



*Watercolor by
Malulani Mountcastle '23*



Acrylic Painting
by Jenny Wu '24

Wu

Cape Cod

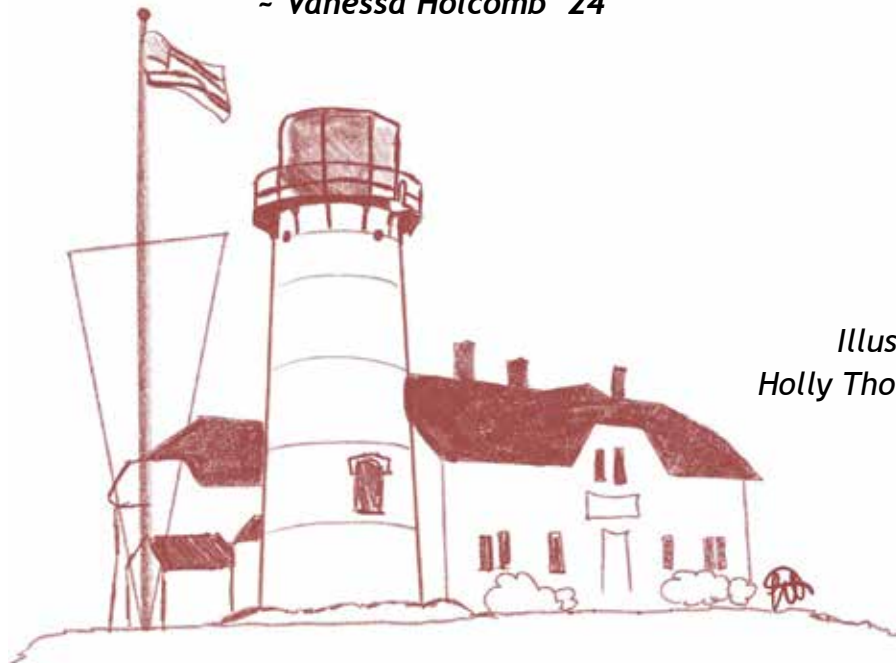
The Quiet Town has not much to say
beautiful things do not need to ask for attention.
Peek out the window to see your brother at play
like the wildflowers that grow in any direction.

The Quiet Town Listens
Lets your laughter fill the air
hear the waves climb up the shores
lowly reaches your grandma on a beach chair.

The Quiet Town does not Judge
Walk to the candy store in a swimsuit
Indulge on homemade fudge.

The Quiet Town has not much to say
Simply soaks up each time spent
Sees you one season a year
and Treasures every moment.

~ *Vanessa Holcomb '24*



*Illustration by
Holly Thorndike '23*

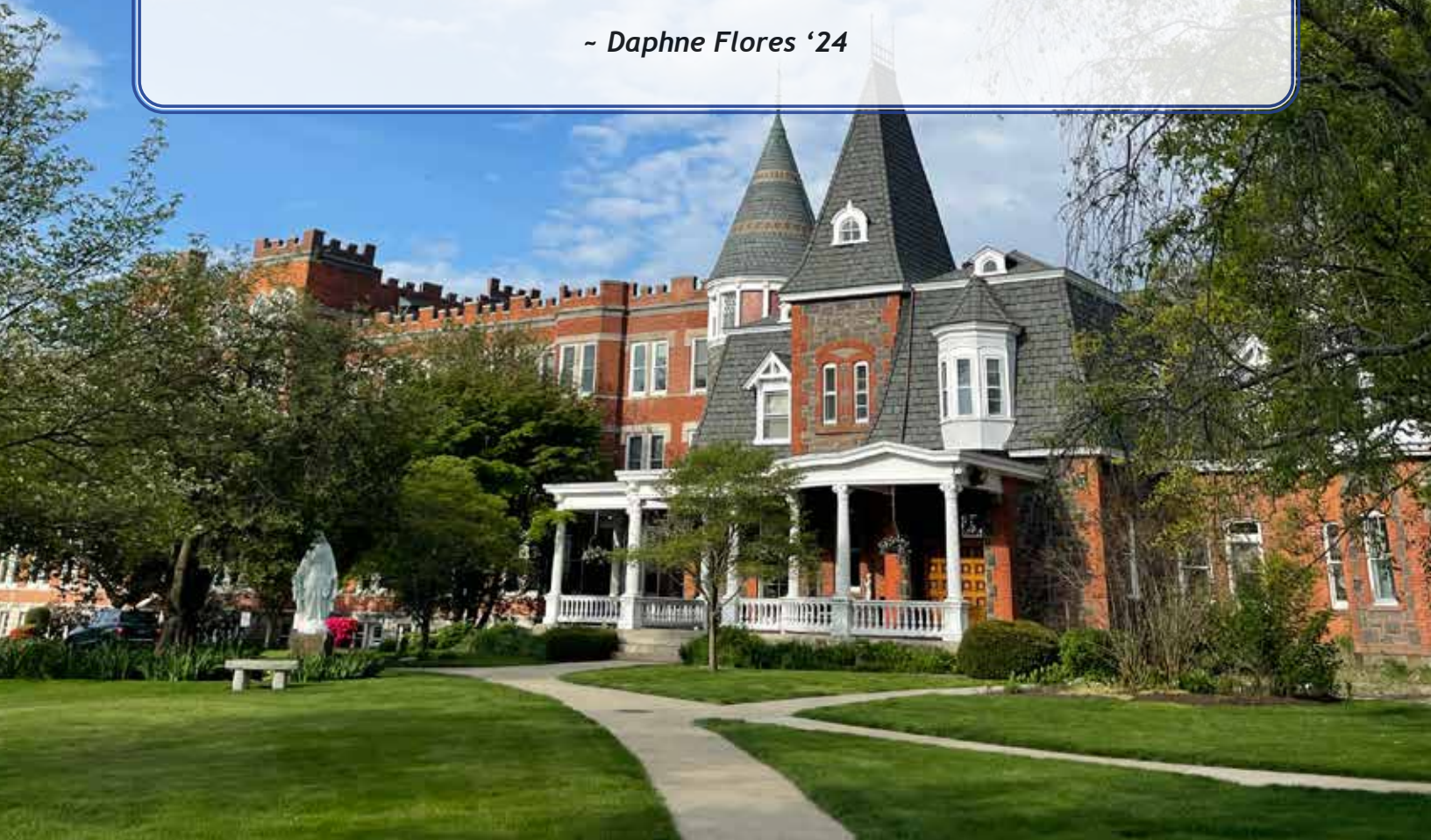


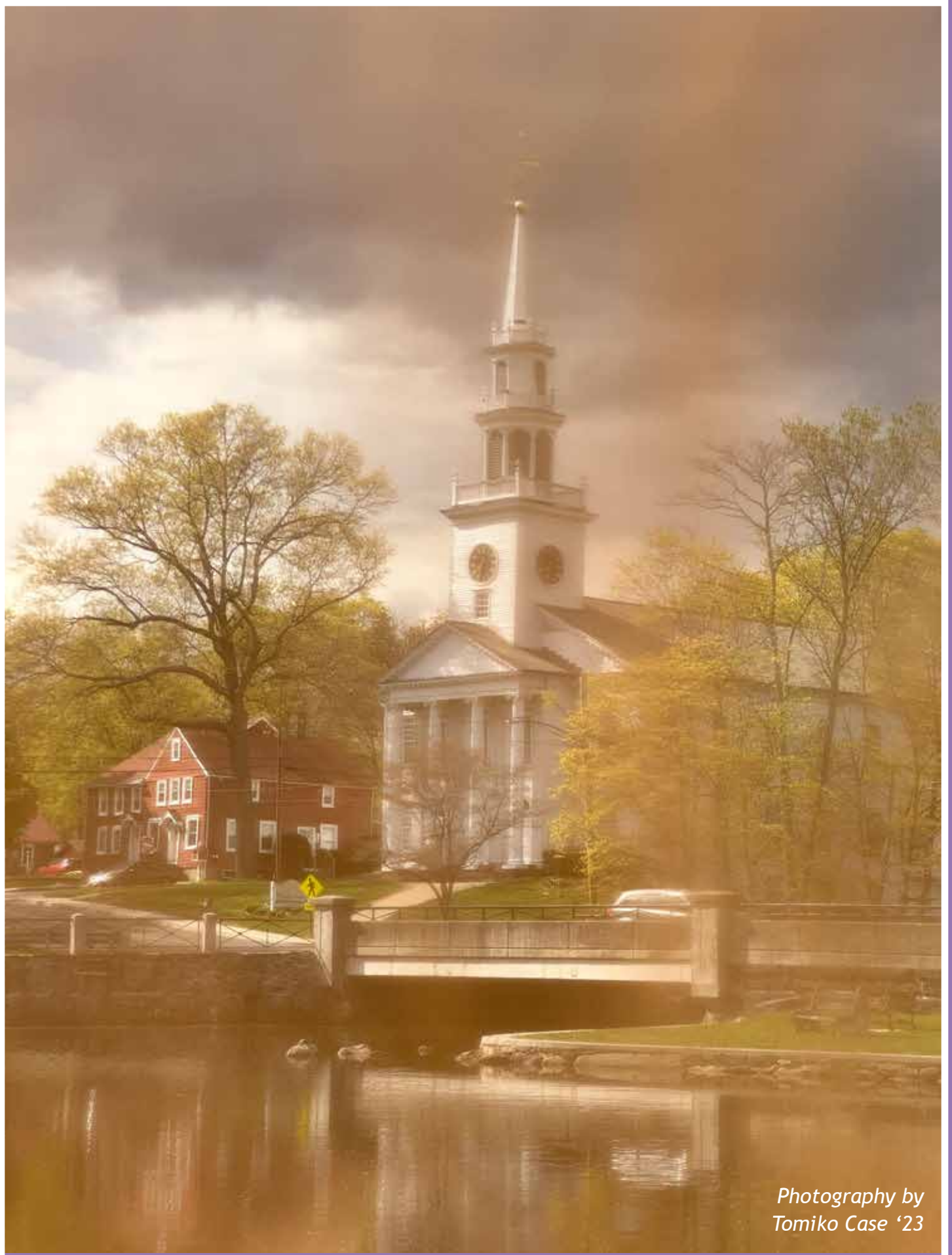
Colored Pencil Illustration
by Hailey Black '23

A Luralton Morning

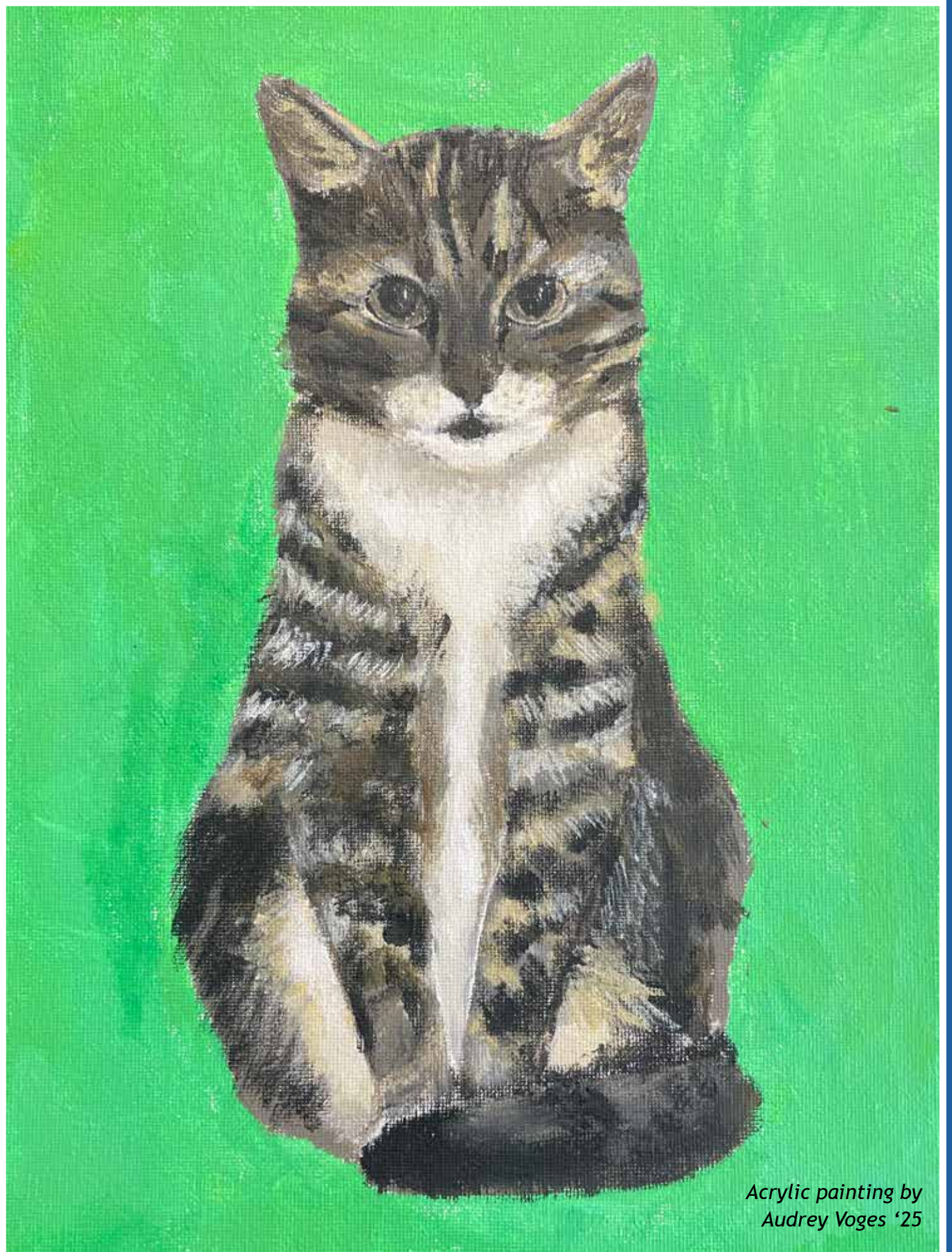
I appreciate the enchanting sounds of Luralton mornings,
Those of the girls' chattering, extending to the classrooms,
clothes and coffee they discuss all day long,
The teachers' shoes, strolling on wooden surfaces or greeting others as they pass,
The sounds of frozen cars, rumbling as they proceed on near the school building,
The dinging of doors, detectable by the diligent folks in the main office,
The various printers around, printing documents of quality for their interested
students waiting to be given a lesson,
The weighty backpacks pounding the classroom floors, causing clangs to be heard all
around,
The loudspeaker buzzing daily with news and announcements, as a bee shaking
a flower for pollen,
The eagles' high pitched screams, heard around campus, from the tall trees to the
small humans below,
After a second of stepping in the structure,
All the sounds surrounding the campus make me awake and aware,
Wherever I am present, these sweet sounds make me grin and feel cheerful

- Daphne Flores '24





*Photography by
Tomiko Case '23*



*Acrylic painting by
Audrey Voges '25*

Worthy

Speak from the Heart
And know your Worth.
Stand tall and proud
Above the crowd —
This will give you great Mirth.

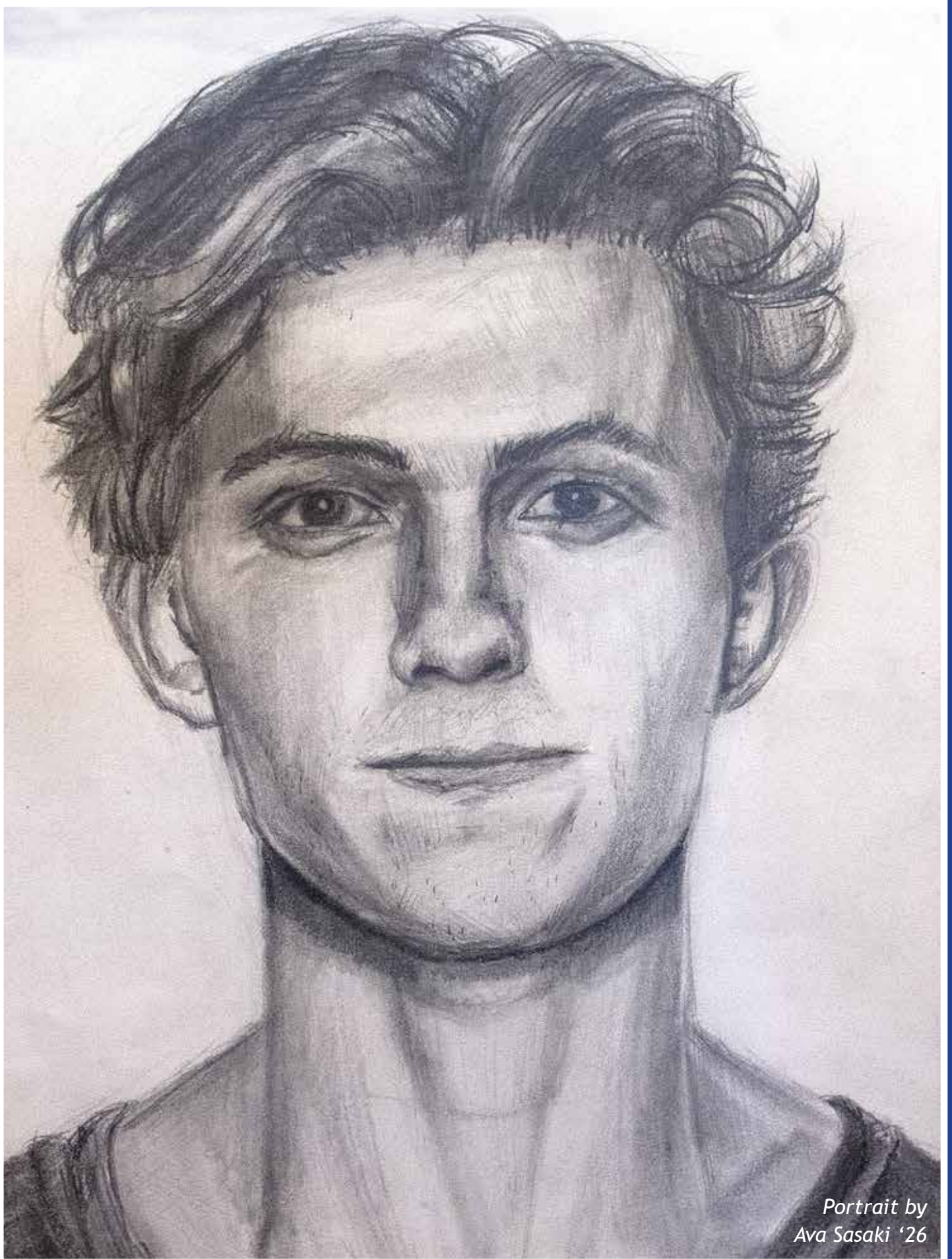
As Brave as a man could be
She longs to be Free.
Her words Echo and ring about —
Forgetting any and all doubt.

A young girl
Who once a Shadow —
Sees herself a Rare pearl —
Knows her worth
And wants to change the World.

~Taylor Mann '24



*Watercolor by
Malulani Mountcastle '23*



Portrait by
Ava Sasaki '26



*Photography by
Sarah Higgins '26*



Acrylic Painting by
Annie Zhu '23

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Scholarship Essay

by Colette Burke '23

The essential actions of a good citizen are dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism. In this day and age, we see a lack of these fundamental qualities in students and adults alike. With these guiding principles being instilled into young students, we could be able to realize a growing sense of patriotism.

Through the learning of dependability, students realize what it means to be there for others and for their community. Being dependable to people is what earns you respect. Dependability is not only being somewhere physically but writing someone back or responding to a letter. If we could see a rise in this, students would realize how important it is to earn this respect. We respect people not only because of what we say but because of the actions we take. If we fall down on the job of being dependable, people lose respect for us, and it is a difficult thing to earn back.

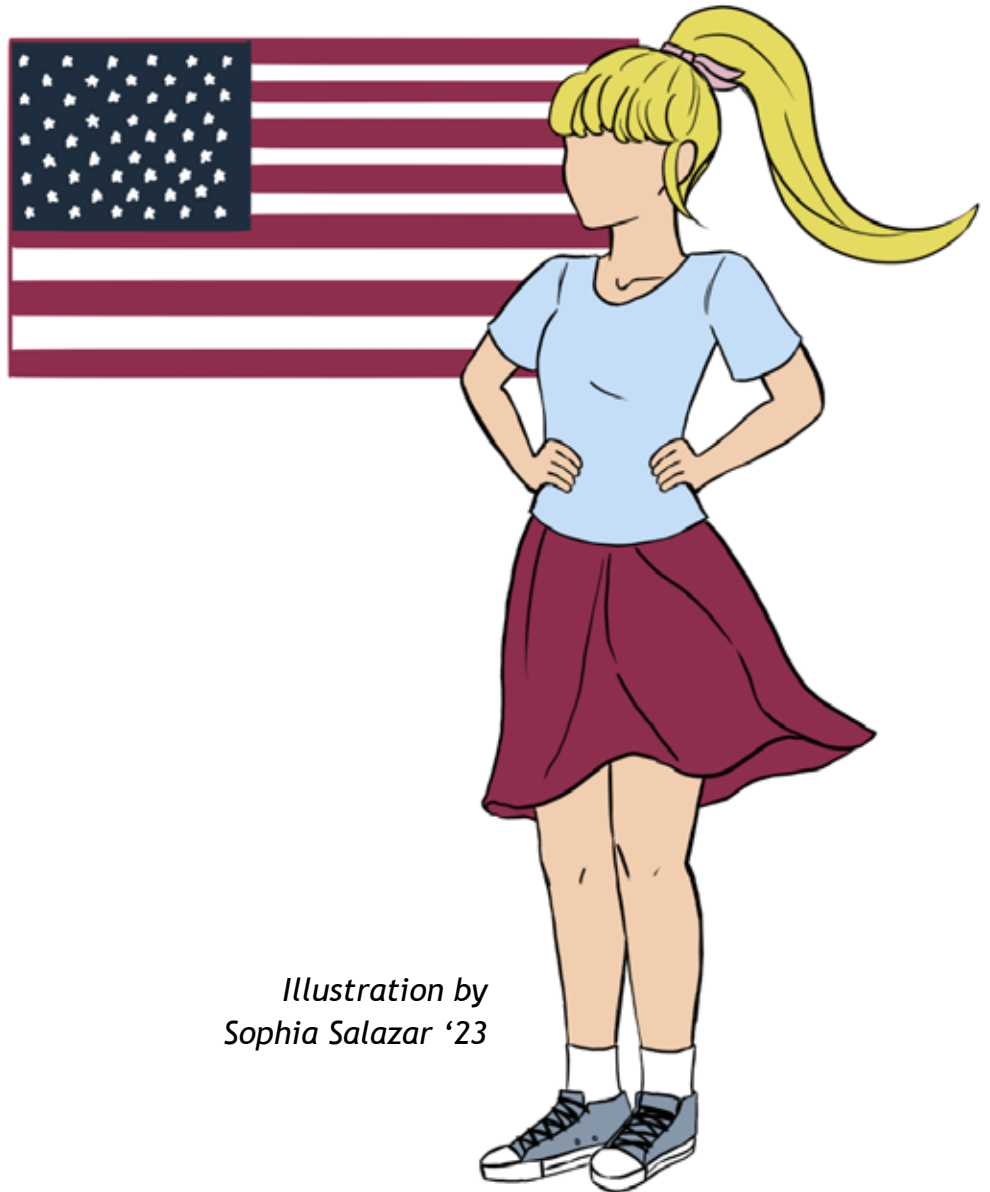
Through service, students learn what it is like to give back to the community. However, it is not enough to set requirements for students. You cannot mandate what the student needs to do. You have to make the student understand that they can enjoy the work they are doing. Many kids perform community service because they are required to do so—never because they truly enjoy it. Affording students more and more options that fit into their interests is the only way to begin. Educators and adults should frame proper incentives so that students experience the world of community service in a way in which they enjoy.

In leadership, students learn what it is like to be looked up to and what it will be like to lead and manage in a professional venue. With leadership, you learn how to be dependable and also what it is like to depend on others around you. Working in groups and on projects allows everyone to share in a leadership role. Leaders are both dependable and organized, and you should be able to look up to them.

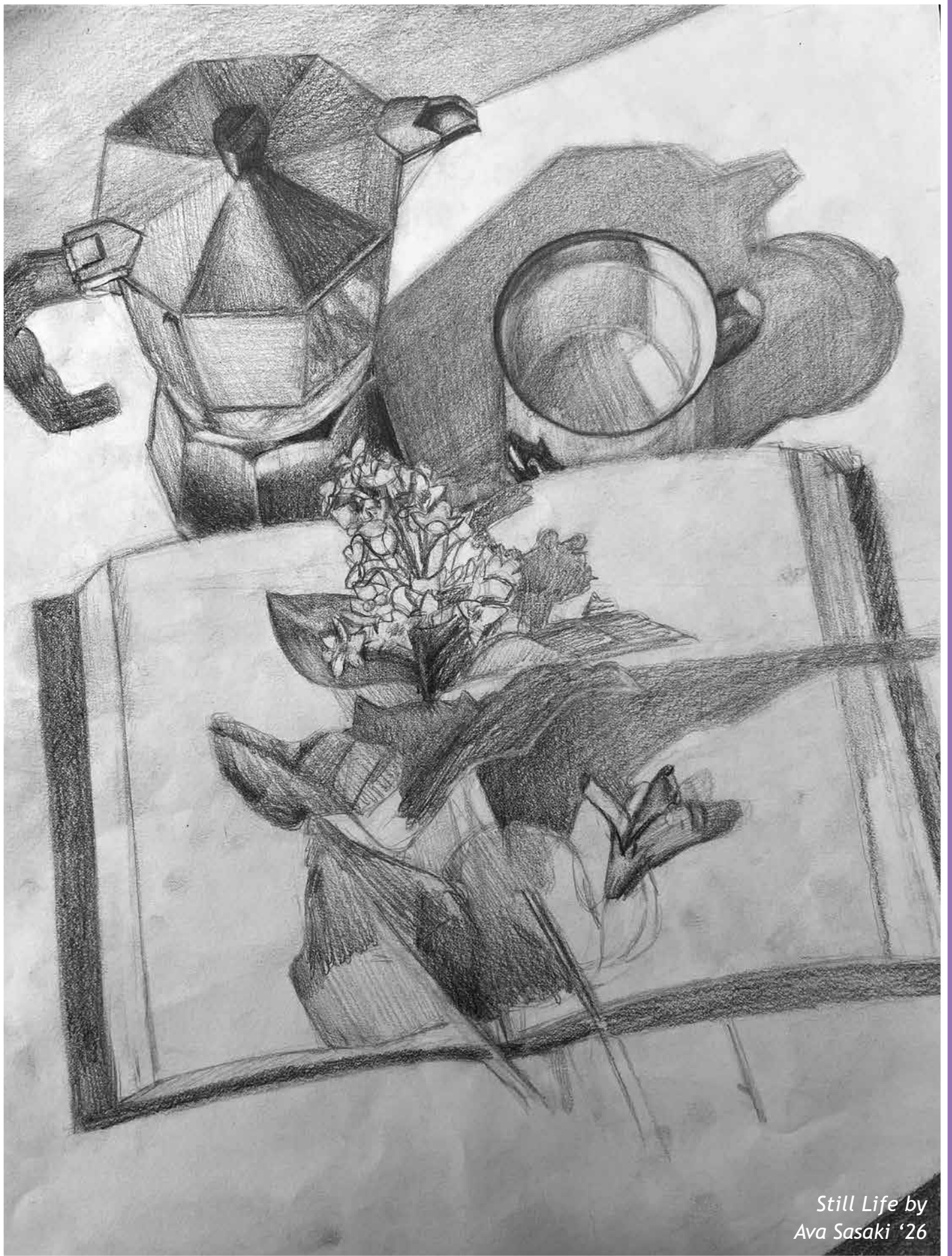
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Finally, the abstract of patriotism. This is a quality that the world does not see much of anymore. There should be patriotism in every good thing we do. We may not think of it, but we are actively contributing to society, therefore, actively contributing to America. Many students do not know the true meaning of patriotism. They do not understand how to be patriotic. There needs to be patriotism in everything, whether or not we truly know it. This is the best way to ensure patriotism.

In everything we do, we must respect others and respect ourselves. We must realize that we need to be dependable so that others can rely on us, and we can rely on them. In service, we should enjoy and find meaning in what we do. We shouldn't approach service opportunities to secure credit: there should be personal pride associated with every good action we take. In leadership, we learn how to be responsible in a professional world and what will be demanded of us. And with patriotism, we exhibit pride in what we can do for our country—from the smallest action to the largest.



*Illustration by
Sophia Salazar '23*



Still Life by
Ava Sasaki '26

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The Looking Glass is published annually to celebrate the creativity of the students at the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy, Lauralton Hall

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