

Around the Ben

Student Literary and Arts Magazine

Spring 2024

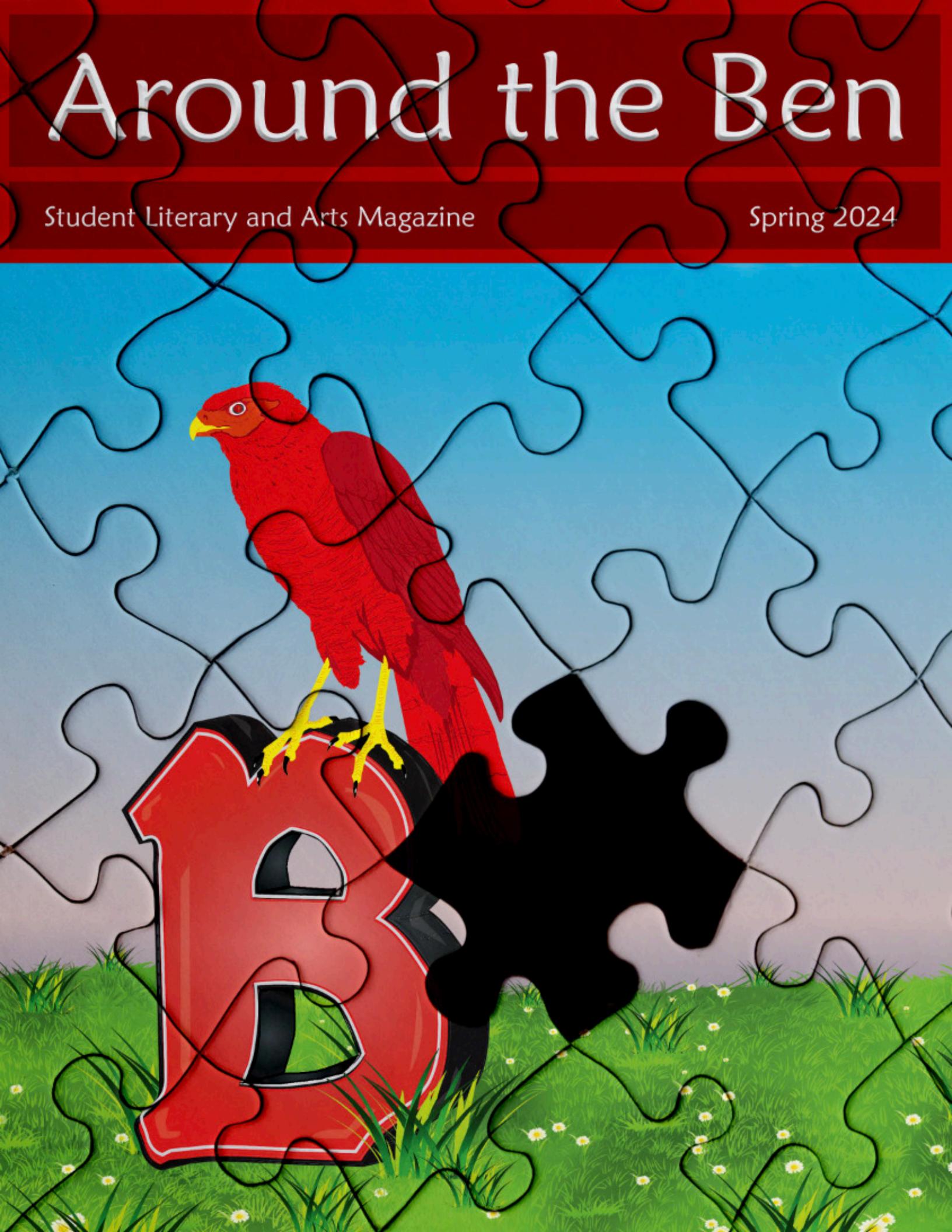


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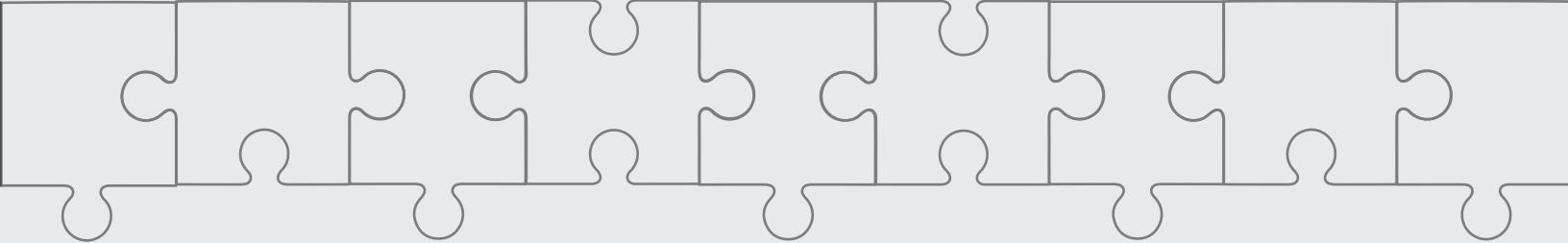
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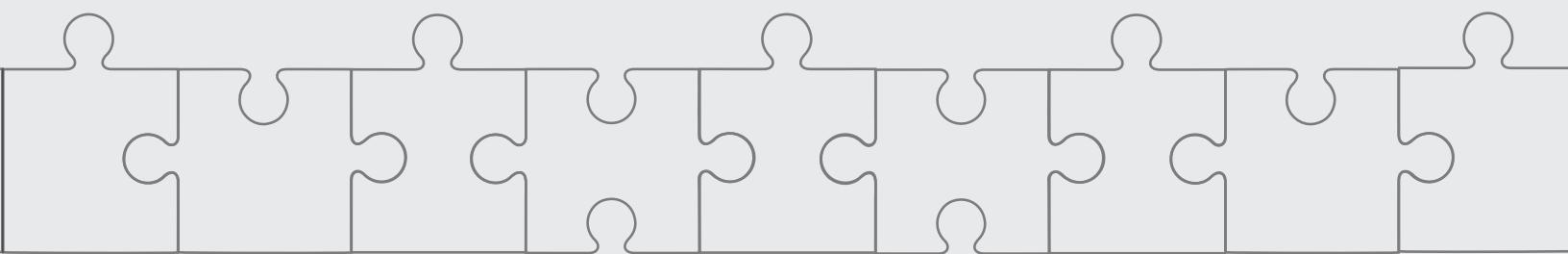
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Front and back covers by Austin Scott
and Alora Alexandra Padilla

Layout motifs by Kanoelani Quintal



HANNAH WOOD

ARTIST STATEMENT

This piece is called RED, which was painted to represent stress and being overwhelmed. I've been feeling that lately, so I wanted to capture it in the most visual and abstract way possible. I wanted it to look lava-like, almost moving downward and slow moving, while also looking kind of stagnant. The orange, red, and yellow were used to really emphasize the fight or flight response we feel when we're stressed.



RED, Acrylic paint on canvas

ARTIST STATEMENT

This piece is called BLUE, which was created for a contrast to RED. It represents optimism and being at peace, which are feelings that tend to come in waves.

I wanted it to look like water, but the water is flying upwards, along with the other elements. The blue, white, and green were to represent rebirth and peace.



BLUE, Acrylic paint on canvas

Home

By Ainsley McMahon

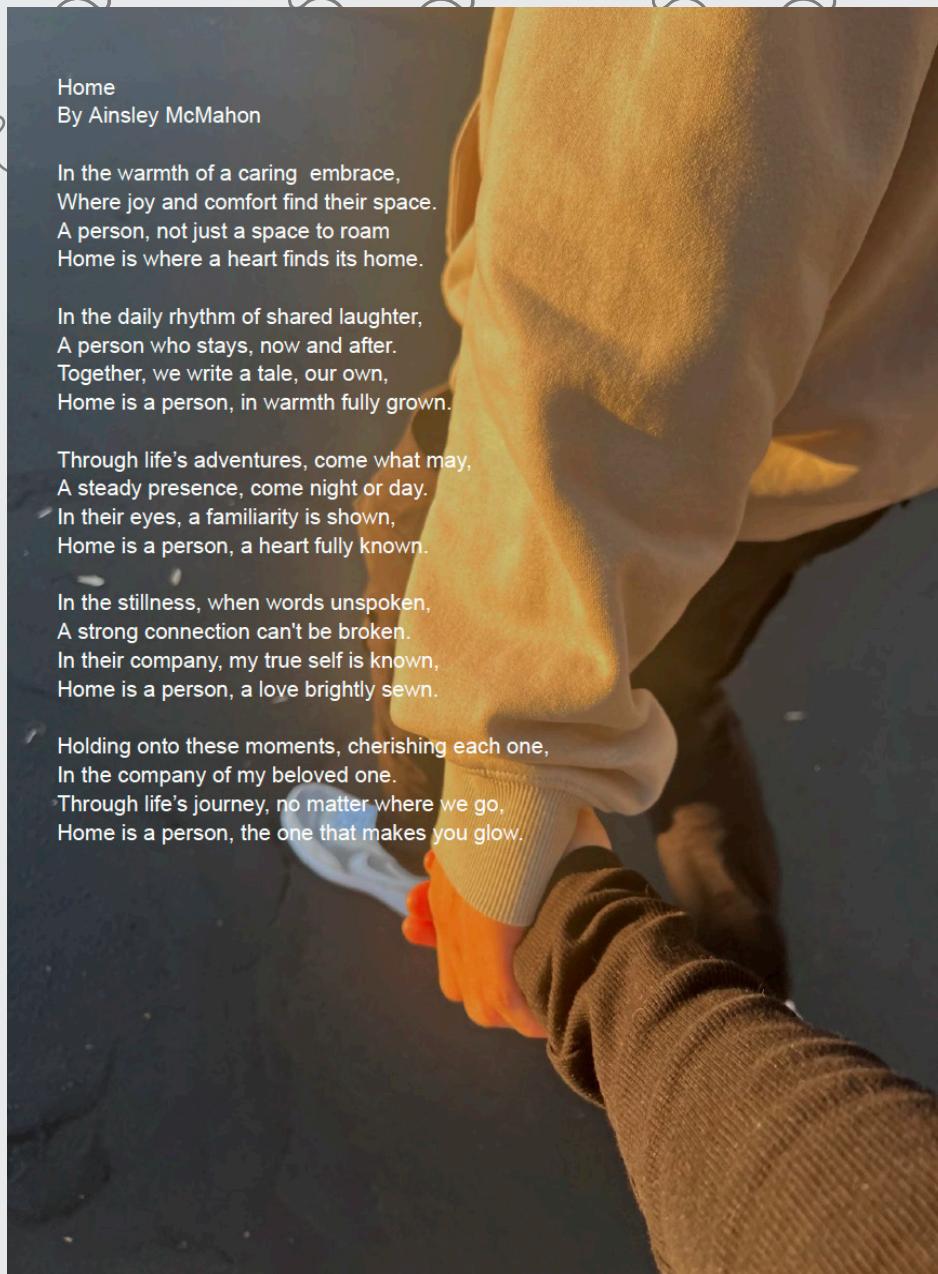
In the warmth of a caring embrace,
Where joy and comfort find their space.
A person, not just a space to roam
Home is where a heart finds its home.

In the daily rhythm of shared laughter,
A person who stays, now and after.
Together, we write a tale, our own,
Home is a person, in warmth fully grown.

Through life's adventures, come what may,
A steady presence, come night or day.
In their eyes, a familiarity is shown,
Home is a person, a heart fully known.

In the stillness, when words unspoken,
A strong connection can't be broken.
In their company, my true self is known,
Home is a person, a love brightly sewn.

Holding onto these moments, cherishing each one,
In the company of my beloved one.
Through life's journey, no matter where we go,
Home is a person, the one that makes you glow.



Home, Poem

ARTIST STATEMENT

My poetry is a reflection of my innermost thoughts and emotions, capturing the essence of my personal experiences with honesty and vulnerability. I want to create a space where others can relate in experiences or feelings, giving a connection and understanding among readers.

Fears

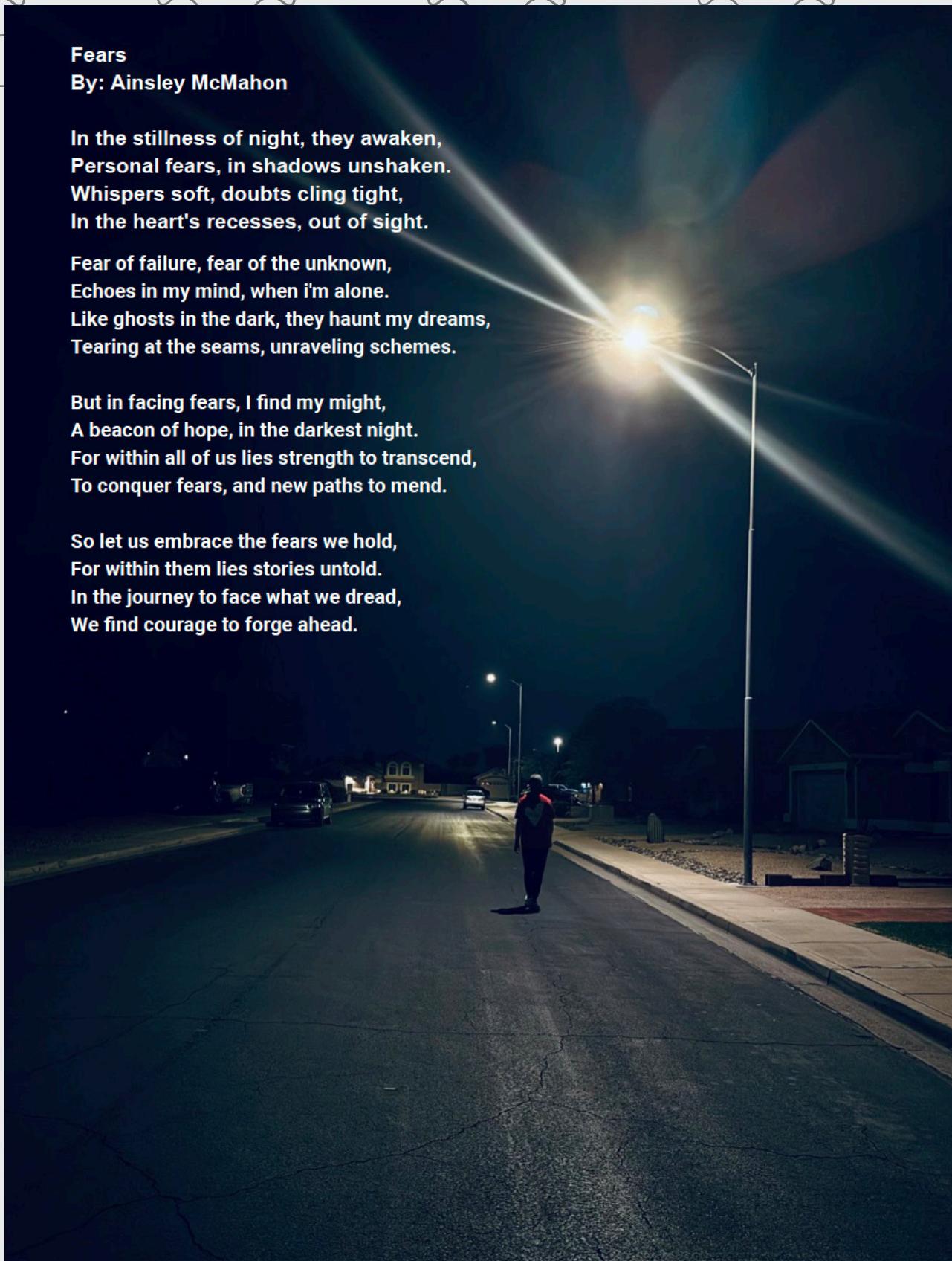
By: Ainsley McMahon

**In the stillness of night, they awaken,
Personal fears, in shadows unshaken.
Whispers soft, doubts cling tight,
In the heart's recesses, out of sight.**

**Fear of failure, fear of the unknown,
Echoes in my mind, when i'm alone.
Like ghosts in the dark, they haunt my dreams,
Tearing at the seams, unraveling schemes.**

**But in facing fears, I find my might,
A beacon of hope, in the darkest night.
For within all of us lies strength to transcend,
To conquer fears, and new paths to mend.**

**So let us embrace the fears we hold,
For within them lies stories untold.
In the journey to face what we dread,
We find courage to forge ahead.**



Fear, Poem



the music in me.

THE PRESSURE BAR

Just as the pressure bar is concealed within the piano, anxiety often lurks beneath the surface. People with anxiety disorders often appear calm on the outside, but carry a hidden tension within, much like the pressure bar that operates inside the piano's body. When you press a piano key, you exert force on the pressure bar. Similarly, in moments of anxiety, internal pressure builds up as you grapple with worry, stress, and fear. This rising pressure can affect overall well-being, the way the pressure bar within the piano influences its performance. The pressure bar is responsible for transmitting the energy from the keypress to the strings, resulting in the beautiful sounds of the piano.

Anxiety, when managed and channeled effectively, can lead to heightened awareness, creativity, and expression.

Many artists, such as myself, harness their anxiety as a source of inspiration.

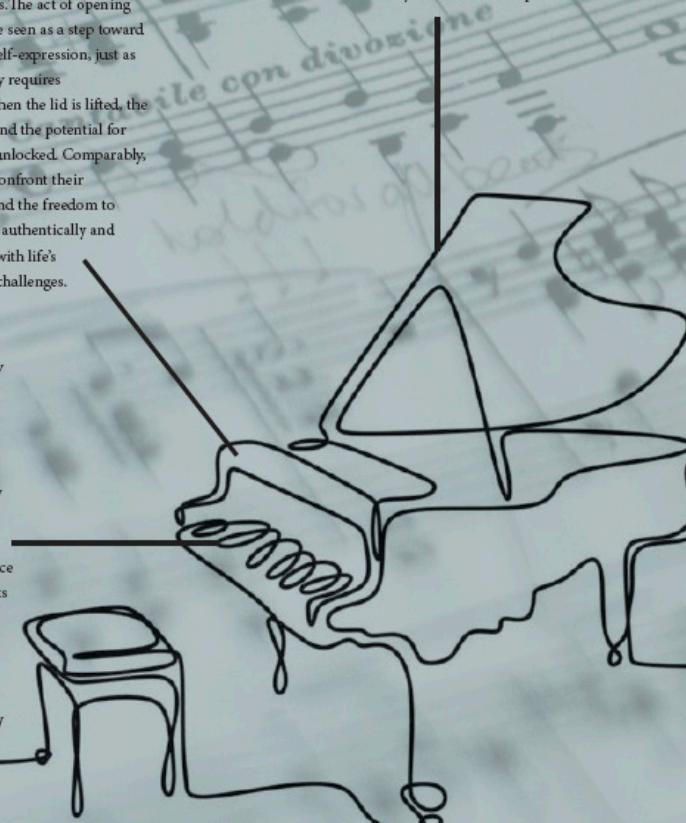


THE FALL

When I feel myself starting to fall back into negative thought patterns, music has always been there to catch me. The fall on the piano is essentially the lid that covers the keys. When anxiety takes hold, it can feel as though a heavy lid has been placed over thoughts and emotions, making it difficult to access and express true feelings. Just as the lid conceals the keys, anxiety can hide our innermost thoughts, making it challenging to connect with others. The act of opening the piano lid can be seen as a step toward vulnerability and self-expression, just as confronting anxiety requires self-acceptance. When the lid is lifted, the keys are exposed, and the potential for beautiful music is unlocked. Comparably, when individuals confront their anxiety, they can find the freedom to express themselves authentically and engage more fully with life's opportunities and challenges.

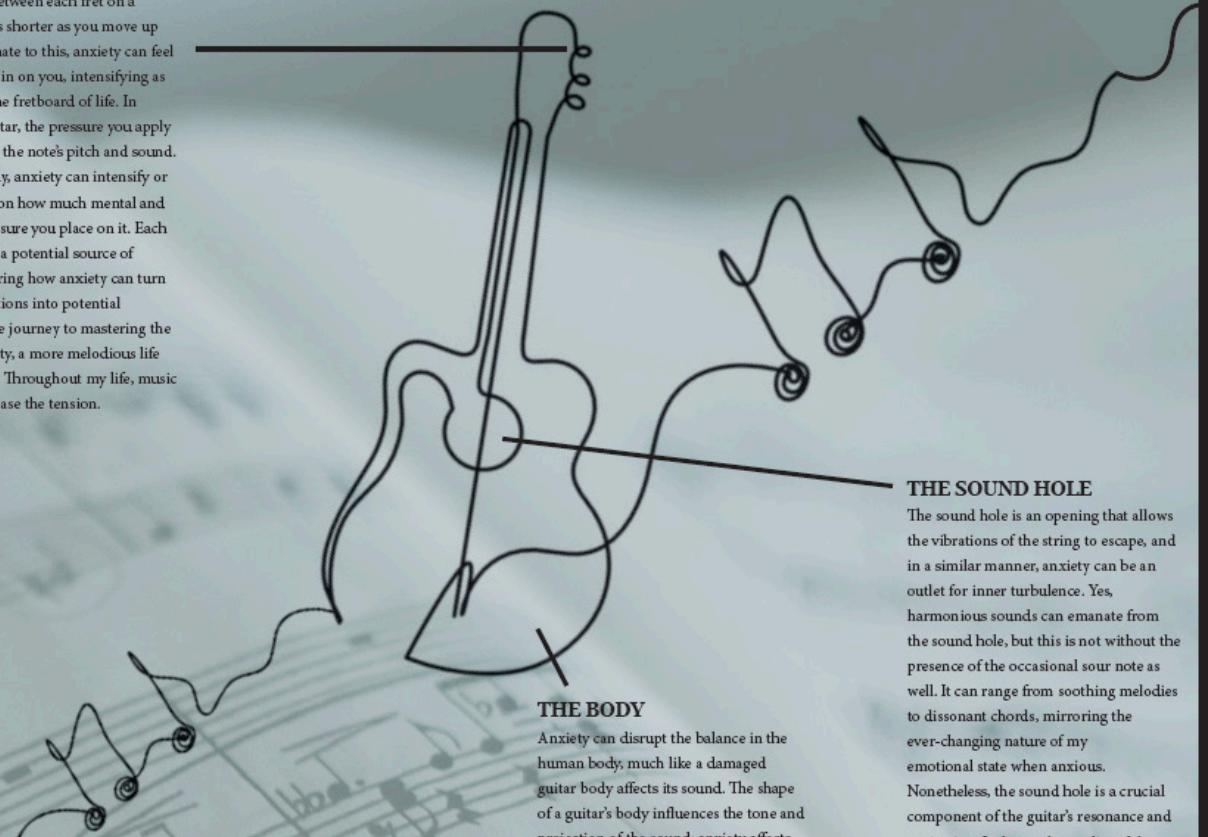
THE KEYS

The ebony and ivory, in perfect harmony they lie, yet in my mind's disarray, dissonance can't deny. The sharps and flats, like racing heartbeats fast, they mirror anxious rhythms, a turbulent contrast. But I remember, in this melody of anxious despair, the keys can be a lifeline, a way to clear the air. With practice and with patience, the dissonance can mend, and anxiety's noise can find its peaceful end. So I let the piano be a refuge, a solace for the soul, a way to release the anxious notes that take their toll. In the symphony of life, I'll find my way to cope, and turn the keys of anxiety into a melody of hope.



THE FRETS

The distance between each fret on a guitar becomes shorter as you move up the neck. Cognate to this, anxiety can feel like it's closing in on you, intensifying as you navigate the fretboard of life. In playing the guitar, the pressure you apply to a fret affects the note's pitch and sound. In the same way, anxiety can intensify or subside based on how much mental and emotional pressure you place on it. Each fret represents a potential source of tension, mirroring how anxiety can turn everyday situations into potential stressors. In the journey to mastering the "frets" of anxiety, a more melodious life can be created. Throughout my life, music has helped to ease the tension.



THE BODY

Anxiety can disrupt the balance in the human body, much like a damaged guitar body affects its sound. The shape of a guitar's body influences the tone and projection of the sound; anxiety affects the human body. People experiencing anxiety often tense up their muscles, leading to physical discomfort and pain. This tension can become a chronic issue, just as an improperly shaped guitar body might lead to persistent sound problems. In a guitar, the strings' vibrations produce sound when they transfer energy to the guitar body. In the human body, the nervous system functions in an identical way, transferring signals and energy to different parts of the body. Anxiety disrupts this flow by overstimulating the nervous system, leading to symptoms like rapid heartbeat, trembling, and shallow breathing. Ultimately, by honing in on my love of music, I am able to be transported to a state where my body feels at ease, even if only for the brief time I am playing.

THE SOUND HOLE

The sound hole is an opening that allows the vibrations of the string to escape, and in a similar manner, anxiety can be an outlet for inner turbulence. Yes, harmonious sounds can emanate from the sound hole, but this is not without the presence of the occasional sour note as well. It can range from soothing melodies to dissonant chords, mirroring the ever-changing nature of my emotional state when anxious. Nonetheless, the sound hole is a crucial component of the guitar's resonance and projection. It shapes the quality of the music produced and affects the way it is perceived by the listener, just as anxiety can profoundly impact how we interact with the world around us. It can influence our actions, decision-making, and how we express ourselves, resembling how the sound hole shapes the guitar's voice. Anxiety, like the sound hole, can be both a source of vulnerability and a source of strength. It exposes emotions and allows us to communicate internal experiences, but it can also leave us feeling powerless. The sound hole's design and location influence the guitar's acoustic properties, just as the presence of anxiety can shape identities and relationships.

music speaks what you
feel inside.

Hallucinations, vertigo, dizzy, mindless haze,
You cast your gaze, but all you see is sorrow.
Looking out to the depths surrounding,
All that you could see was blue, blue, blue,
Fading away into an endless, haunting dream.

My thoughts drifting away, lead me astray.
Mindless thinking, hallucinations in the way.
There's a strange and lonesome island
Within a little town,
And all the birds that fly above must come crashing down,
Down, down, down.

Blue, blue, blue, it's taking over me,
Crashing thoughts inside my head that cease to go away.
Like waves upon the ocean, I'm drowning in my mind,
The flood has yet to come, but I'm already hard to find.

Hallucinations, vertigo, when will it end?
You close your eyes, a haunting dream seems endless yet again.
These thoughts that grow spin me around like vertigo.

“VERTIGO,” SONG LYRICS/POEM

WRITTEN BY AMELIA HABERMAN



“AM I BORN TO DIE,”
(RECORDING HEARD ON AROUND
THE BEN 2024 WEBSITE) IS A
SONG FEATURED IN THE END
CREDITS OF A WESTERN-HORROR
MOVIE. VOCALS, INSTRUMENTALS,
& MELODY BY AMELIA HABERMAN

ARTIST STATEMENT

In my creative journey, I harness the power of expression to transform my inner struggles into outward manifestations of positivity. Every note played, every word written, and every pixel placed serves as a conduit for channeling emotions into tangible creations.

By embracing creativity as my outlet, I not only confront personal challenges but also can cultivate growth. Through my work, I invite viewers to perceive the joy of turning adversity into inspiration, celebrating the transformative power of self-expression.

JAKE VUJOVICH



AZ Nights, Photograph

ARTIST STATEMENT

Making others smile is my inspiration. Whether it is showing the beauty of baseball or the beauty of life, my photographs strive to make everyone see the beauty in everything and SMILE.

Reece's Pieces, Photgraph





Saltwater Therapy, Photoshop photography merge

ARTIST STATEMENT

My photographs focus on capturing the best moments in life, something to reminisce about and look back on. As for my graphic designs, I like to tie my designs around my roots back in Hawai'i. Giving an homage to where I came from.

@kqdesigns_



Reach Your Peak, Photoshop photography merge



Last Shot Wins, Photography Series



Kai in Snow, Photograph

KANOELANI QUINTAL



Silhouettes, Photograph Series





The Lonely Fish, Adobe Premiere

ARTIST STATEMENT

I believe graphic design can be shown in many different aspects and senses. The two pictures shown were taken at an aquarium then edited with Adobe software to bring out and add a different vibe than what the camera took. Graphic design is an invitation to anyone willing to enjoy the different perspectives in life.

Color Burst in the Sea, Adobe Premiere



ARTIST STATEMENT

My inspiration comes from the outside world, based on what I see and do. I am a very visual learner, and with that I create what I see. I work in construction, which has an impact on my style and use of design. However, I also love fantasy and that's shown below. I start with something simple like an eye and build my way from there. It doesn't have to make sense as long as I like it. I also started doing photography and my favorite skill to practice has been capturing moving images. I strive to be different with my works, and I believe I am accomplishing just that.



Eye See It All, Digital Drawing



Trail Behind, Photography



Phoenix, Digital Drawing

AUSTIN SCOTT



Your Own Fantasy, Illustrator

ARTIST STATEMENT

Hi, my name is Austin Scott, a senior at Benedictine Mesa where I'm studying to be a graphic designer. I strive to traverse the world within my mind to make it become reality. As an apostle of inspiration, I believe that anything and everything is possible. Where I have a treat yourself mentally, to give visual dessert to mind.



Favorites on Disney Mountain, Illustrator



Fly With Me, Illustrator



A Gamer's Heart, Illustrator



Circe Thank You Card (front), Digital

ARTIST STATEMENT

Alora “Alex” Padilla is a Graphic Design and Psychology major who runs their own art business called Art of Padilla AZ.



Medusa, Traditional and Digital

ARTIST STATEMENT

Capturing the perfect picture of a sunset is a blend of timing. My goal was to master the fleeting beauty of Arizona sunsets, its radiant colors and captivating atmosphere. I sought a point that offers an unobstructed view of the horizon and interesting foreground elements to enhance the composition. Timing is crucial in sunset photography and you seize the moment when the sky is ablaze with vibrant hues creating a breathtaking view.

Sunset City, Photograph

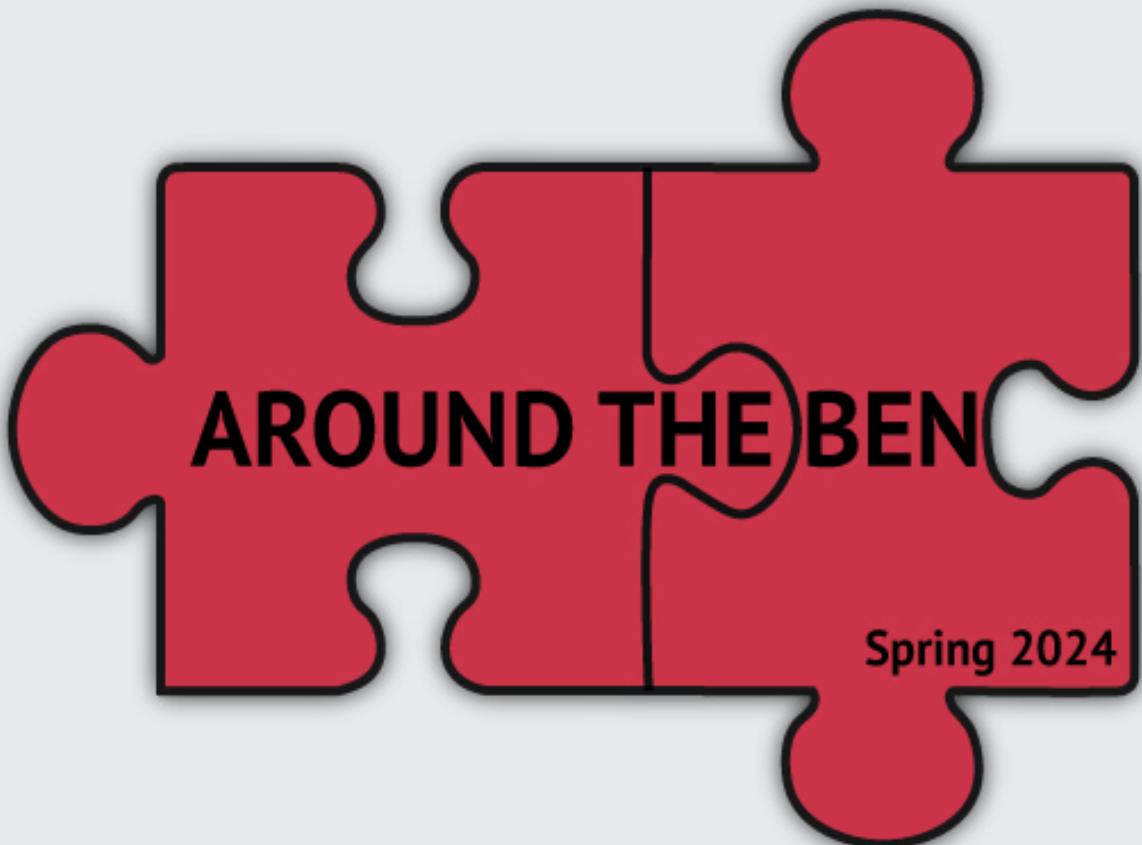




Me, Myself, and I, Pastel

ARTIST STATEMENT

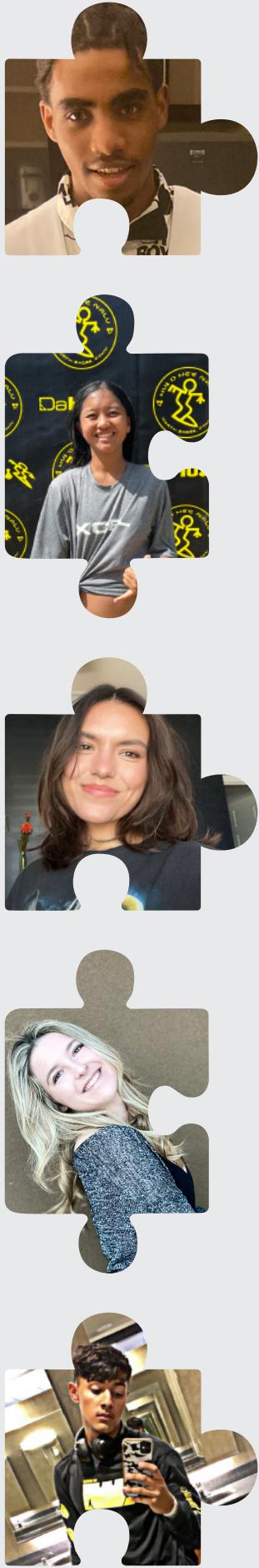
Creating a self-portrait is a deeply personal and introspective process, allowing one to capture their essence and express in the self-portrait. I aimed to capture the complexity of my identity and the layers of my personality.



AROUND THE BEN seeks to showcase the artistic and literary talents of students at Benedictine University at Mesa. This student-run magazine serves as an opportunity to build professional portfolios and experience for post-graduation life.

Adviser: Rebecca Dyer is an online producer/copy editor at The Arizona Republic/azcentral and an adjunct faculty member at Benedictine University at Mesa.

STAFF MEMBERS



AUSTIN

Austin Scott is a senior at Benedictine Mesa, studying to be a graphic designer to traverse the world within his mind and make it a reality. As an apostle of inspiration, he believes that anything and everything is possible, where he treats himself mentally to give a visual dessert to the mind.

KANOELANI

Kanoelani Quintal is a junior majoring in graphic design and minoring in communications. On the side she does sports photography, plays basketball, and coaches. She created the layout and the logo for the Spring magazine. Contact her @kqdesigns_

HANNAH

Hannah Wood is a senior here at Ben U. She is a graphic design major and plays soccer for the women's soccer team. :)

AINSLEY

Ainsley McMahon is a senior at Benedictine University and plays for the women's soccer team. In her free time, when not playing soccer or working on schoolwork, she is relaxing with her dog or hanging out with friends. Contact her at ainsley_mcmahon@ben.edu.

RICARDO

Ricardo Espinosa is a senior at Benedictine University, majoring in graphic design. Outside of school he practices jiu jitsu, soccer and chess. While also working in construction, he looks to implement his designing skills elsewhere.



ALORA

Alora Alexandra “Alex” Padilla is a senior graphic design and psychology major.



JACOB

Jacob Vujovich is a communication studies major and plays on the baseball team here at Ben U. Jacob loves to play video games and work out in his free time.



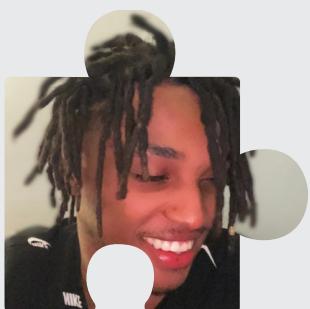
ANGEL

Angel Gutierrez is a junior at Benedictine University, currently studying in graphic design where he creates his imagination into reality. He has been able to become more creative in his artwork and everything he does on a daily basis.



AMELIA

Amelia Haberman, an Arizona native, is a sophomore majoring in communication arts and minoring in graphic design. Balancing both her creative and sporty sides, she plays for the Benedictine University women’s golf team; she is a singer, songwriter, musician, and actor who also enjoys photography, filmmaking, and editing.



DOUG

Doug Shack is currently a senior at Benedictine University Mesa and is looking to graduate with a bachelor’s degree in Graphic Design. Doug is also an artist who primarily tackles real world issues.

**“The artist sees
what others
only catch a
glimpse of.”**

- Leonardo da Vinci



Benedictine University Mesa