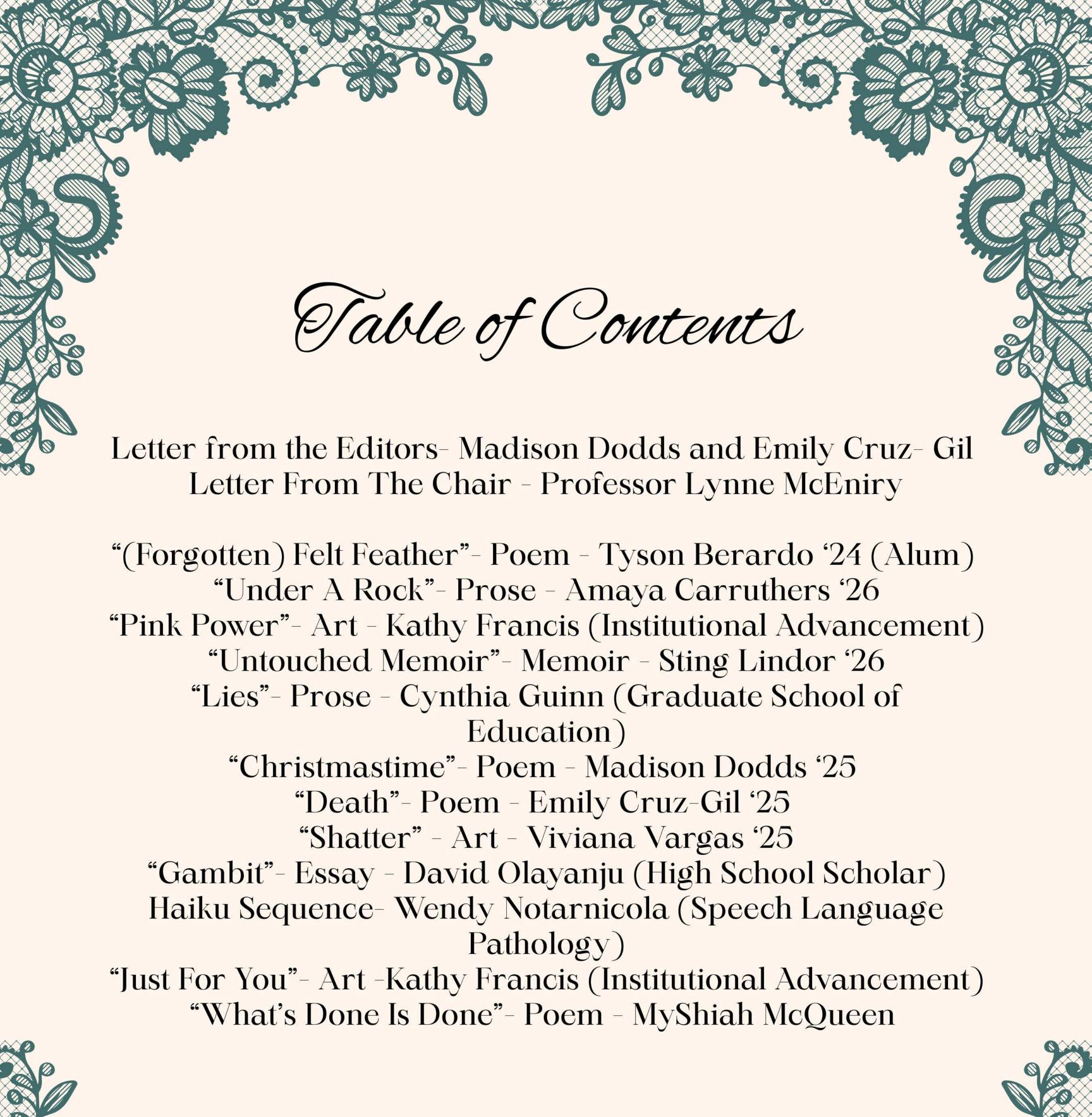


Editorial Board

Co-Editors - Madison Dodds & Emily Cruz-Gil Advisors - Carla Ferreira & Dr. Laura Winters English Dept. Chair: Lynne McEniry

Mission & Vision

The Community Quill, the literary journal of Saint Elizabeth University, is a publication that celebrates the talents of the campus community through a collection of creative writing and art. We strive to provide a space where literary and visual artists can share their work as an expression of their human experience. We welcome students, faculty, staff, and alumni to share their work and collaborate to contribute to our literary community. We encourage diversity and variety in style and voice and will highlight the meaningful work of the community while maintaining our core values of integrity, social responsibility, leadership, and excellence in teaching and learning.





Letter From The Editors

Dear Readers,

Thank you so much for supporting this year's issue of The Community Quill. It has been an honor to have the opportunity to have been published in this magazine alongside many amazing artists and writers in the years prior. It is even more of an honor to co edit this magazine and see how creative and hardworking the SEU community is. This magazine could not have been done without your beautiful images and words. The work from students and staff is the core of this magazine.

Thank you so much for your support!

This issue has given us an insight into what it is like to see how amazing gathering work from a community can be. While we all have different individual strengths, it is when we come together we can achieve something beautiful. This magazine is a product of many individual talents coming together to form something beautiful. As we move forward in the education profession, we will be able to take what we have learned from working on the Community Quill with us. We will be able to give a voice to our students just as we have been given a chance to share our voice here at Saint Elizabeth University.

We would also like to thank Professor Lynne McEniry, Dr. Laura Winters, Professor Jake Rogers and Professor Carla Ferreira for all their support in our passions as well as helping us put together this wonderful issue. This issue could not have been done without your support. You are all amazing people and our time together has been a time of learning and laughter. We can only hope that we become teachers who share the same love for our students that you have shown to us. You are truly an inspiration and have changed our lives for the better.

Again thank you for this opportunity to bring your words and artwork into this year's publication of The Community Quill. We hope you enjoy the 2025 issue!

With Love,

Madison Dodds and Emily Cruz Gil

Community Quill Co-Editors



Welcome to the fifth issue of The Community Quill, the SEU literary magazine—a collection of voices, visions, and creative spirit from students and staff alike. What you'll find in these pages is honest, creative expression by people who care deeply about the arts and are committed to exploring, experimenting, and growing.

This magazine has always been about that spirit—about making space for emerging voices, celebrating effort as much as outcome, and building a creative community here at Saint Elizabeth University. This year's coeditors, Emily Cruz-Gil and Madison Dodds, have remained true to that mission while also bringing their own unique talents, perspectives, and vision to the process. Mentored with love and care by Professor Carla Ferreira, a published poet herself, their thoughtful curation and dedication shine through every page of this fifth issue.

Whether you're drawn to poetry, fiction, essays, or visual art, we hope you find something here that resonates. Thank you for reading and for supporting creative work on our campus.

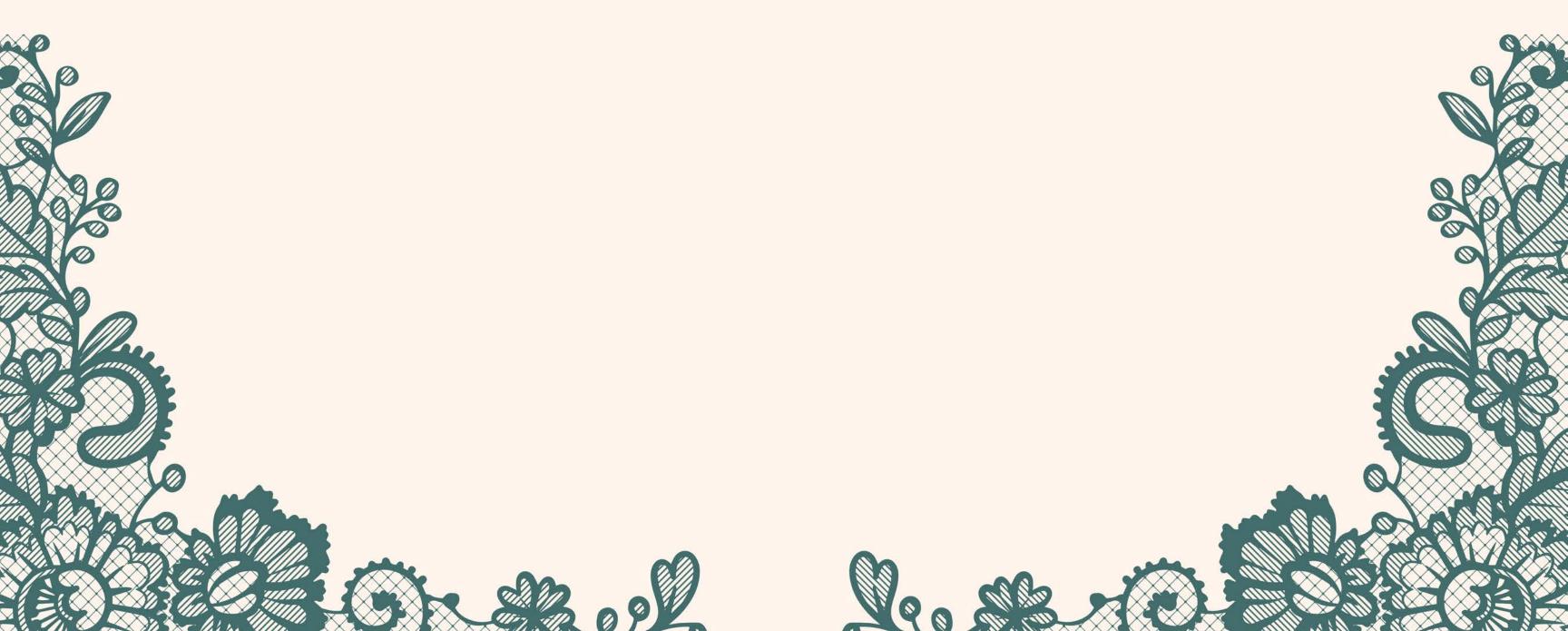
Enjoy!

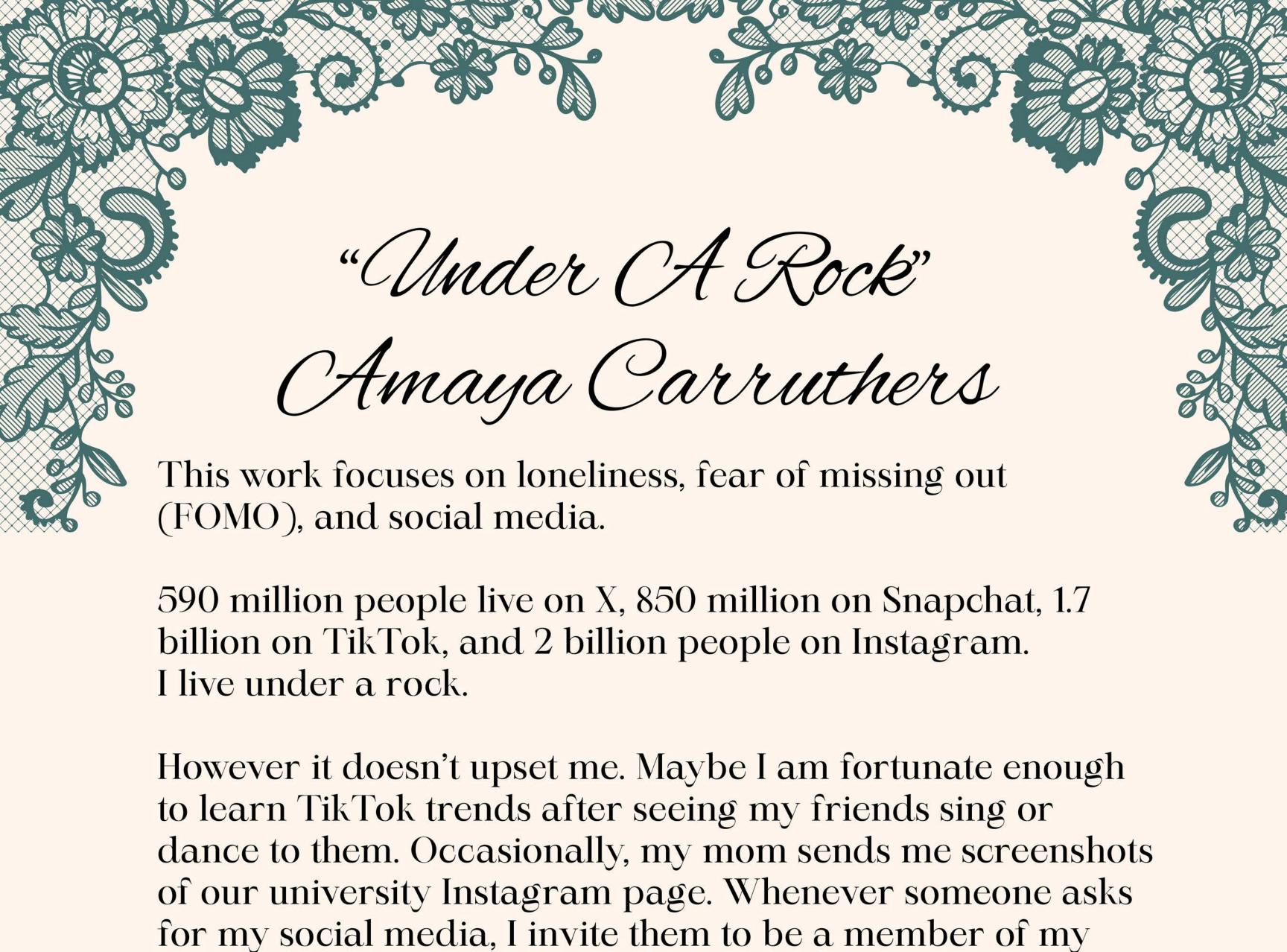




Red radiating in waves orange offering new tones a twinkle of yellow yanks my eye while green glistens in the sunlight. All make way for a blast of blue followed by purely perfect purple.

This cluster of feathers:
forgotten felt and freedom
—frozen by the flow of time—
frolic and frisk with a fringe
of flamboyant fabric.
Flying—above their heads.





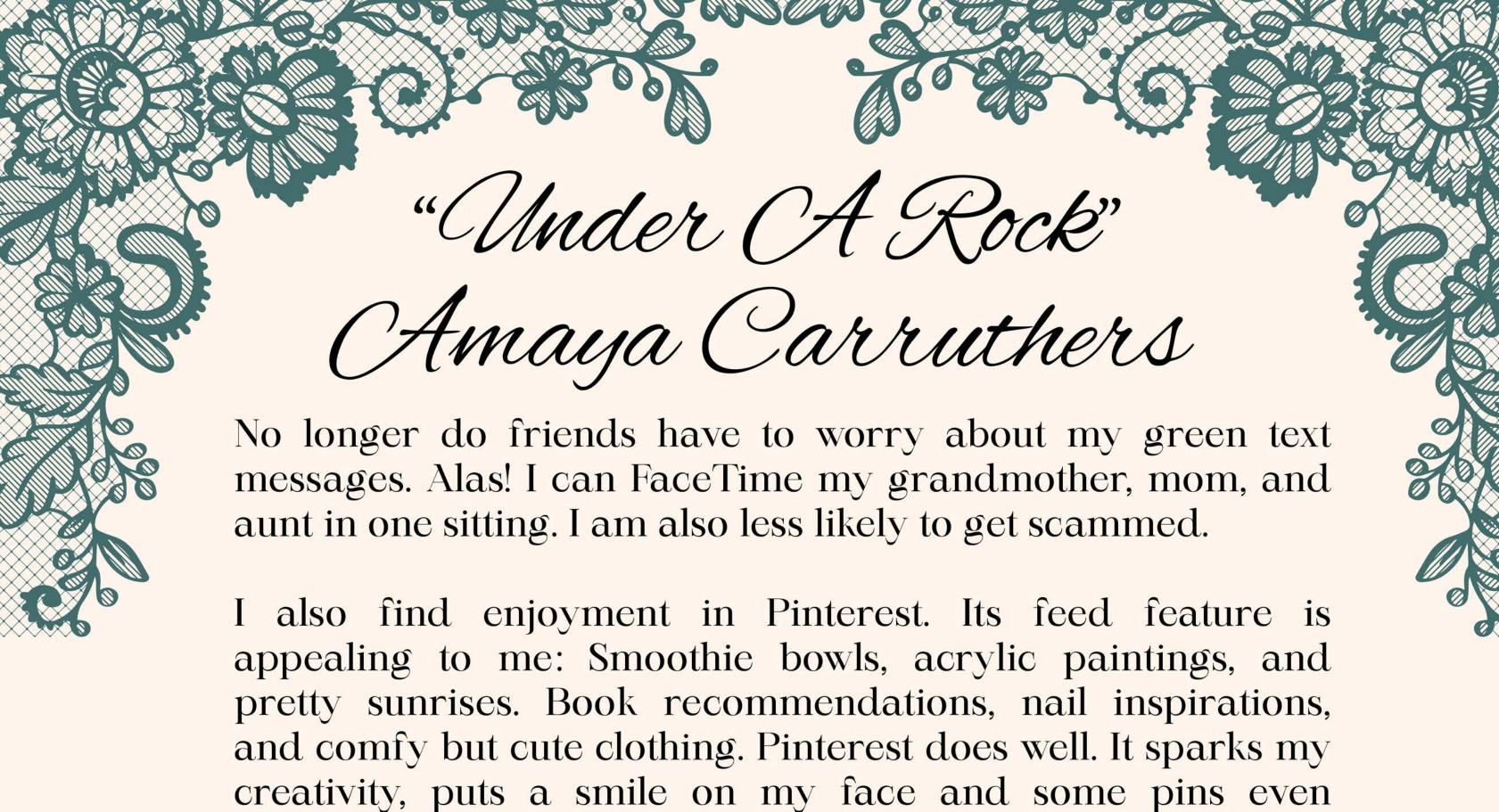
contacts instead.

It is harder to belong when you live under a rock. At least that's what I think.

Still! I have other digital options.

WhatsApp is one of the best social networks a girl could ask for. I have spent hours chatting and FaceTiming on this platform. I regularly check my friends' statuses and sometimes post on my own.

Some may argue that WhatsApp is not social media. I beg to differ. It allows for easy communication and has end-toend encryption so that my privacy is protected.



convict me. On a few occasions, I delete the app though. Feelings of guilt hoard my mind as I wonder if these hundreds of pins are distracting me from life.

On the road, I listen to my Daily Drive playlist. It blends podcasts like NPR News and some of my favorite songs. When I'm feeling nostalgic, I listen to a shared mix that my friend and I created. And if I'm feeling extra, I play Spotify's daylists. Daylists are spontaneous playlists that update three times each day. Two evenings ago it presented me with a "Sad girl playlist."

You see, it gets me.

All three apps do.

So I may not know how to keep up with Instagram feeds or stay updated with the biggest TikTok trends, but I have other digital opportunities beneath this rock.

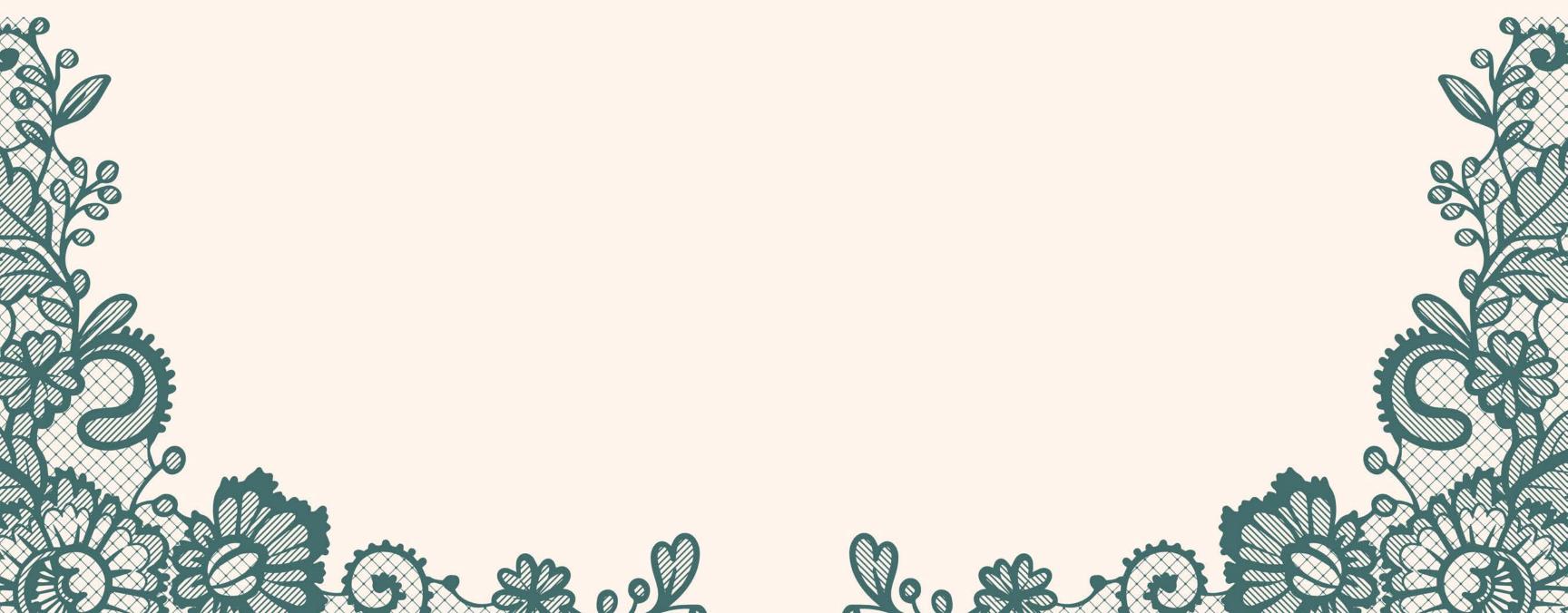
And who knows? Maybe the rock is a good thing. Perhaps the rock wants to protect me. Or maybe the rock is just a rock. An uncomfortable and lonesome rock.





"Grann", what I would give to spend one more minute with you. I can still hear your voice replaying in my head, and remember vividly that beautiful smile you always wore proudly.

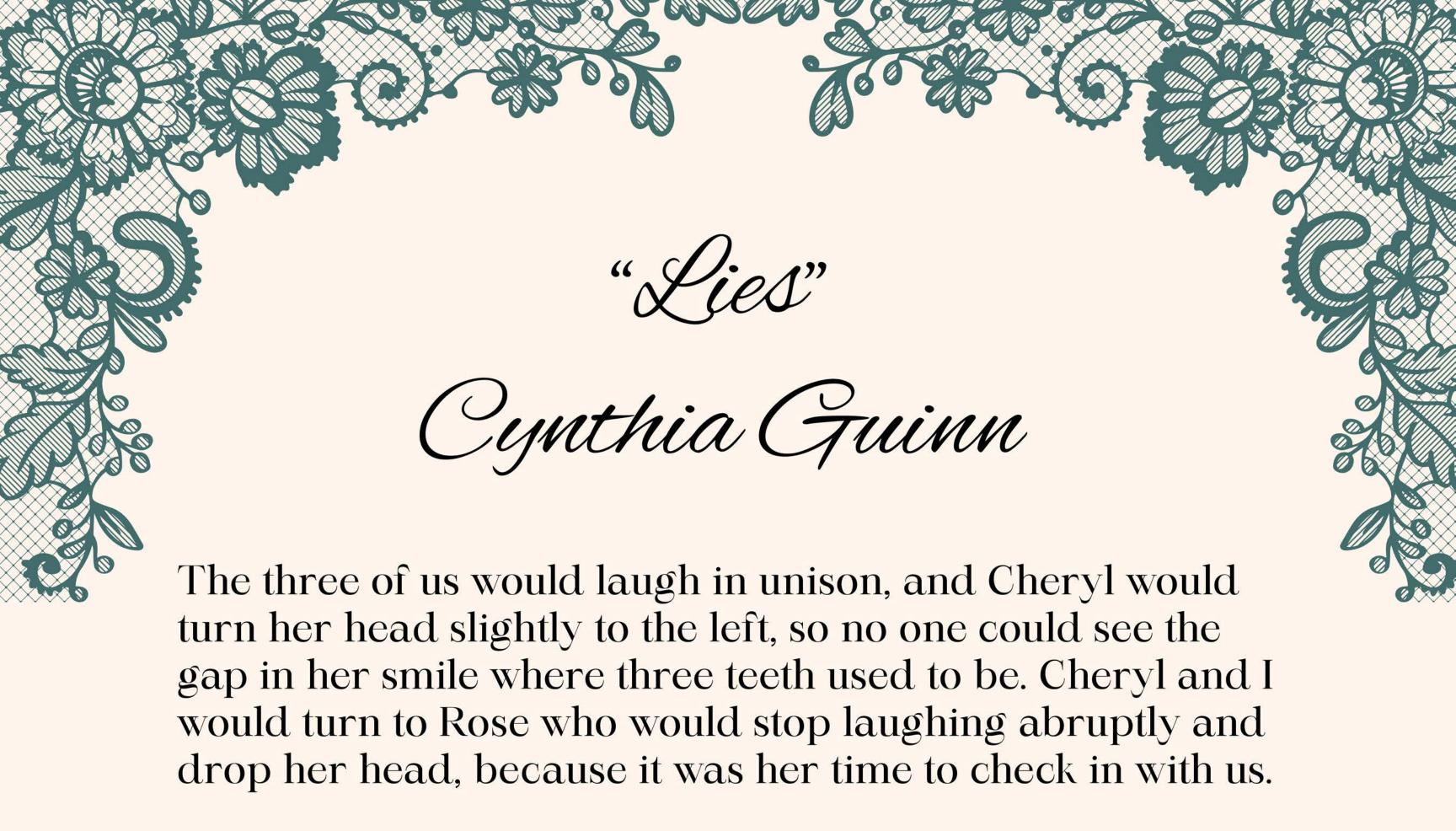
A strong woman, hard working, with such a beautiful soul. Always made sure we were good, even if that meant going to bed on an empty stomach. Not educated, but still liked it when I read you stories. Now, all that is left is the memory of you and what once was.



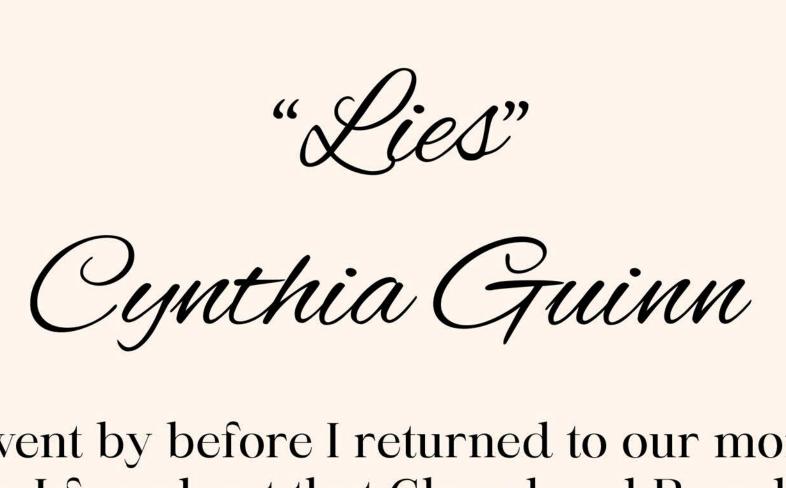


At 66 years old, I am sitting in my parked car on a warm, sunny day, while children play in the playground across the way. My chest begins to heave in syncopation with the squeals of laughter of children running and playing tag. I remind myself for the third time this week, in this same location, to breathe and not cry. I reminisce about the mommy play dates of yesteryear I shared with my best friends, Cheryl and Rose, and I long for the lies. I long for the lies we told to each other, and the ones told to us. The three of us would meet in this same playground when I was a young bride of two years with a six-month old baby in my arms. Cheryl and Jeffry, married for 12 years, had three children, ages 11, 9, and 1. Rose and Marvin, married for eight years, had only one child, age two. We would sit on the bench closest to the swings and stationary horses.

Each of us smiled and shared pleasantries. "How are you, Cynthia?" "I'm doing great, Cheryl, although James travels out of town four days out of the week. How are you doing?" Cheryl would shake her head ever so gently so her long hair (weave, really) would flow from left to right. Then, she would say, "Girl, Jeffry just got another promotion, so I am doing great as well. More money. More shopping."



Sheepishly, Rose raised her head and a smile became etched between her cheeks. She locked eyes with Rose only, and said, "Now you heffas know I'm doing good." I didn't laugh with the others this time. I felt uneasy. My stomach began to churn, and James Jr. began to cry in my arms. Later that evening, when my husband returned home from another four day trip out of town, he packed the rest of his clothes and said he was leaving me. He felt he could no longer live a lie and leave his wife and teenage sons alone. Blocking the bedroom door with my hands outstretched so he couldn't leave, I yelled, "Wait! Wait! What's going on? What other wife? I'm your wife!"



Two months went by before I returned to our mommy play dates, because I found out that Cheryl and Rose knew that James had a wife and three sons living in Haiti and decided not to tell me. Their husbands told them. Our men hung out together at the local cigar lounge throughout the year. Cheryl and Rose asked, "How are you doing, Cynthia?" "I'm wonderful and loving life. How about you?" And, we began again.

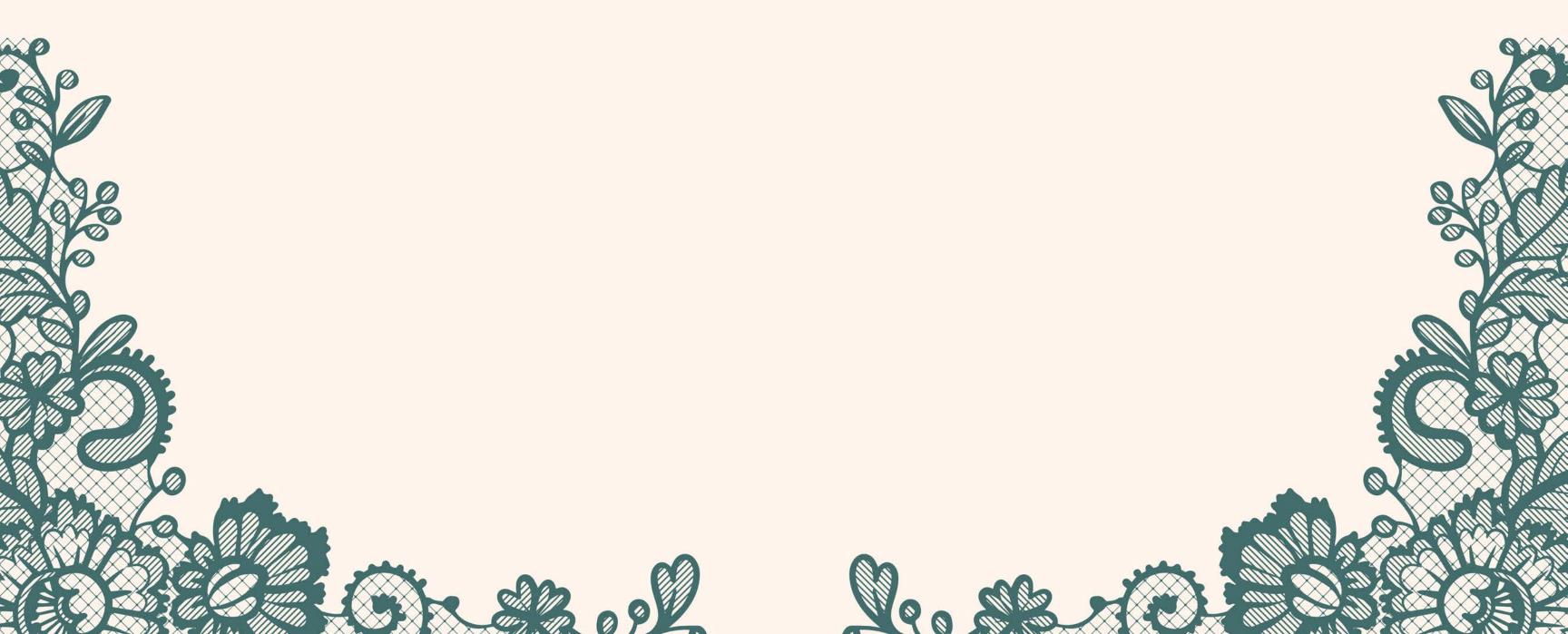
By the time the earth traveled 584 million miles around the sun, or 365.256 days, Rose's husband was being honored at a Father of the Year Gala amidst rumors of infidelity. A possible pregnancy. When Rose didn't show up to one of our mommy play dates, I told Cheryl about what I heard. Cheryl's smile dissipated.

She turned toward me and pointed her finger in my face, and whispered, "Don't you tell Rose. Don't you dare." Rose called me that evening and uninvited me to the Father of the Year Gala and stated that her church had sold too many tickets. Over the next few weeks, my friends shunned me by going to the playground with their kids on the days I had to work. They wouldn't even babysit James Jr. for me. I had to pay for childcare.



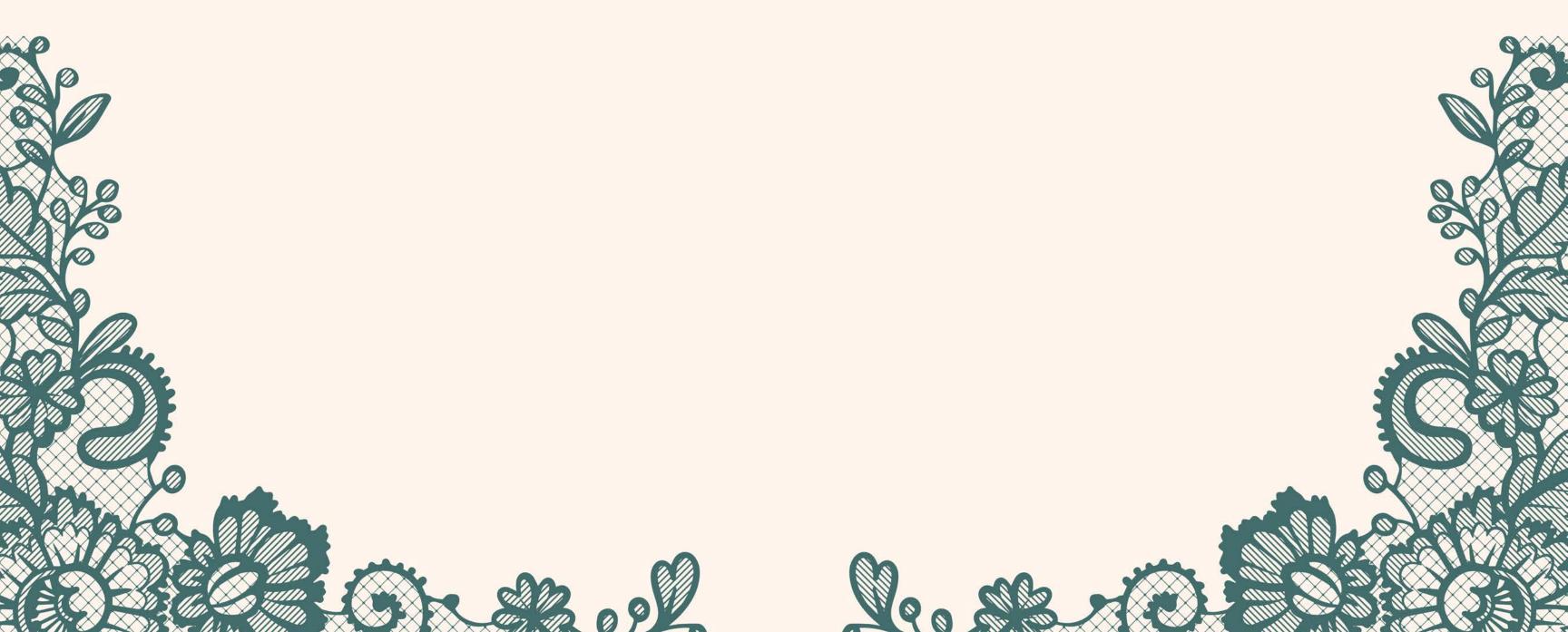
I turned to her flashing my biggest smile yet and said, "Of course."

tomorrow at the playground?"



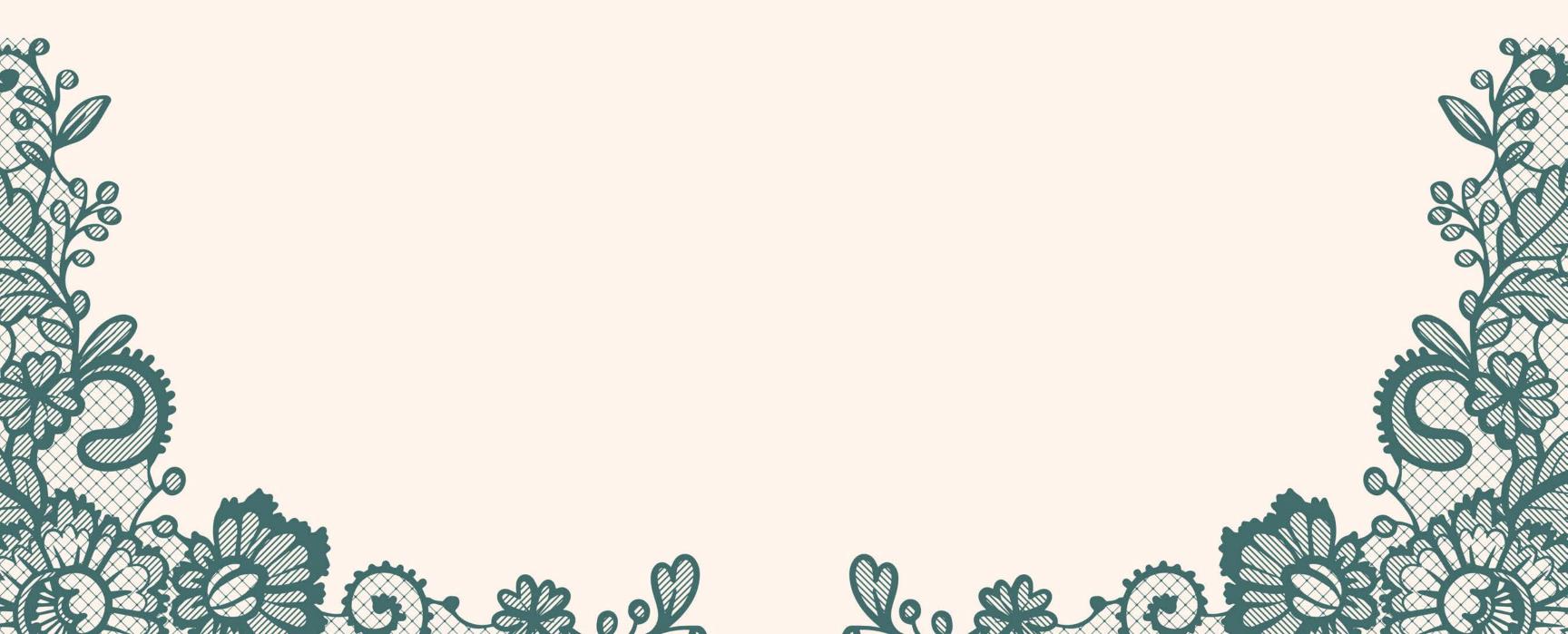


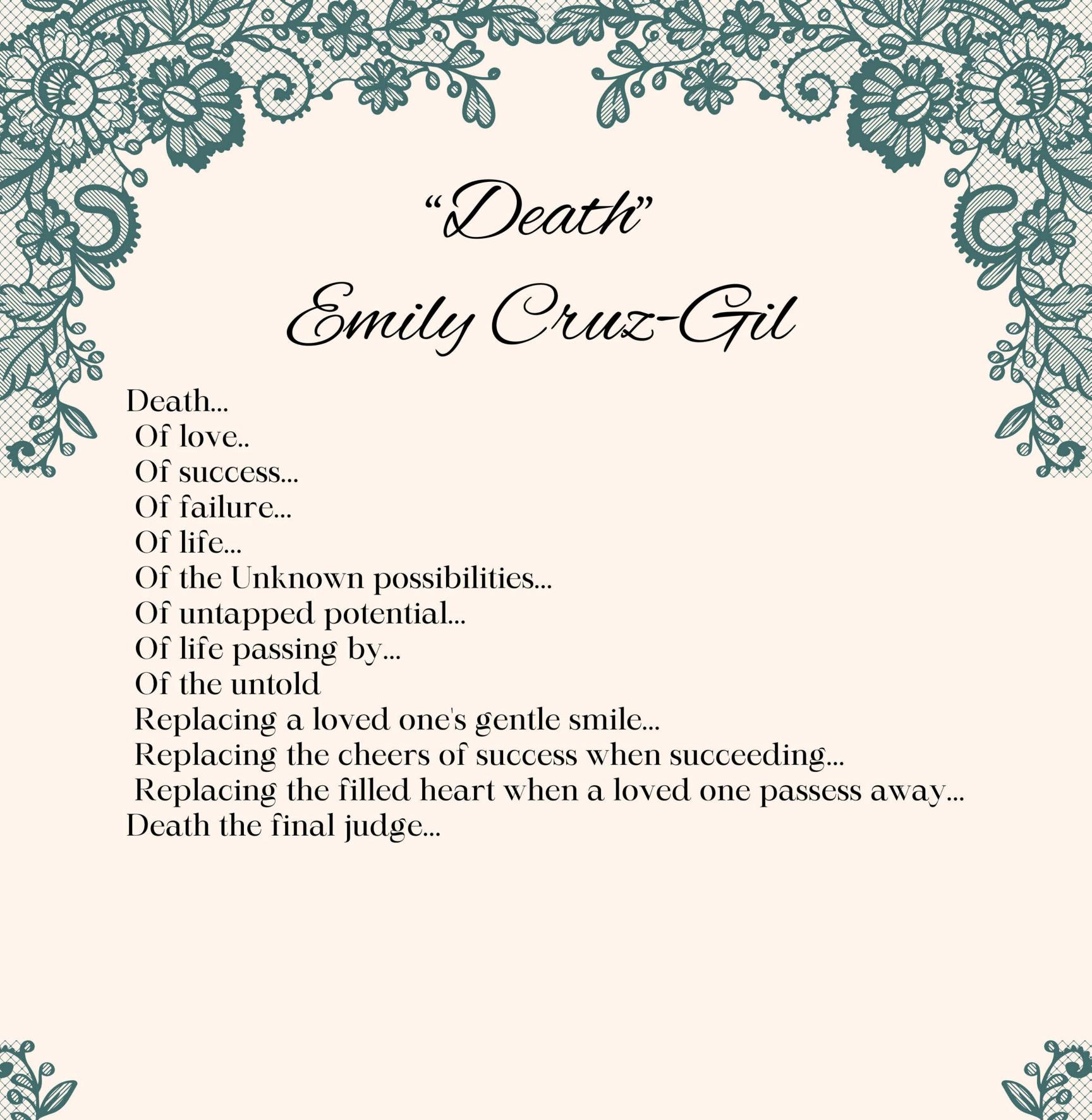
The air is crisp
Your hands are frigid
As you walk into
your warm little cottage
Sugar cookies fill the air
The tree is lit
Fairy lights filling the room
And you're a kid again
Christmastime is here

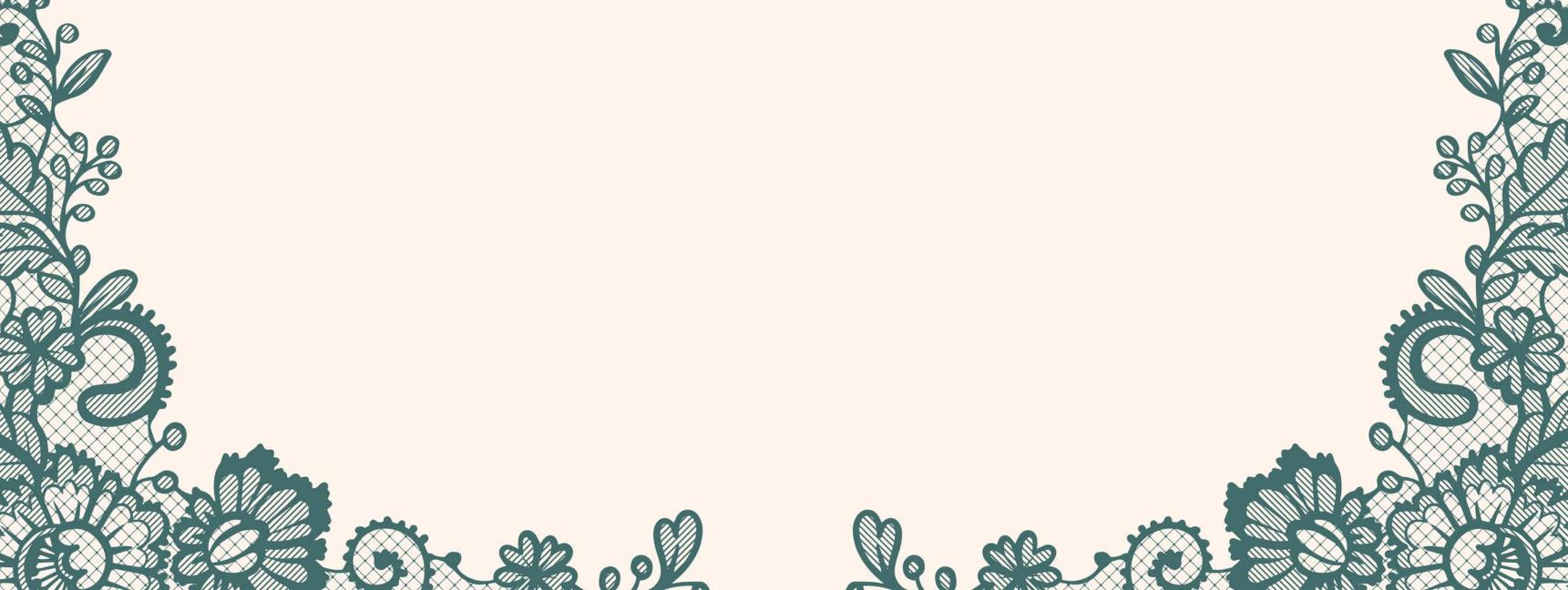




The family is here
Sitting in front of the fireplace
Where Santa will arrive
Once everyone falls fast asleep
Mariah Carey is singing once again,
Cindy Lou Who fills your screen
Christmastime is here again

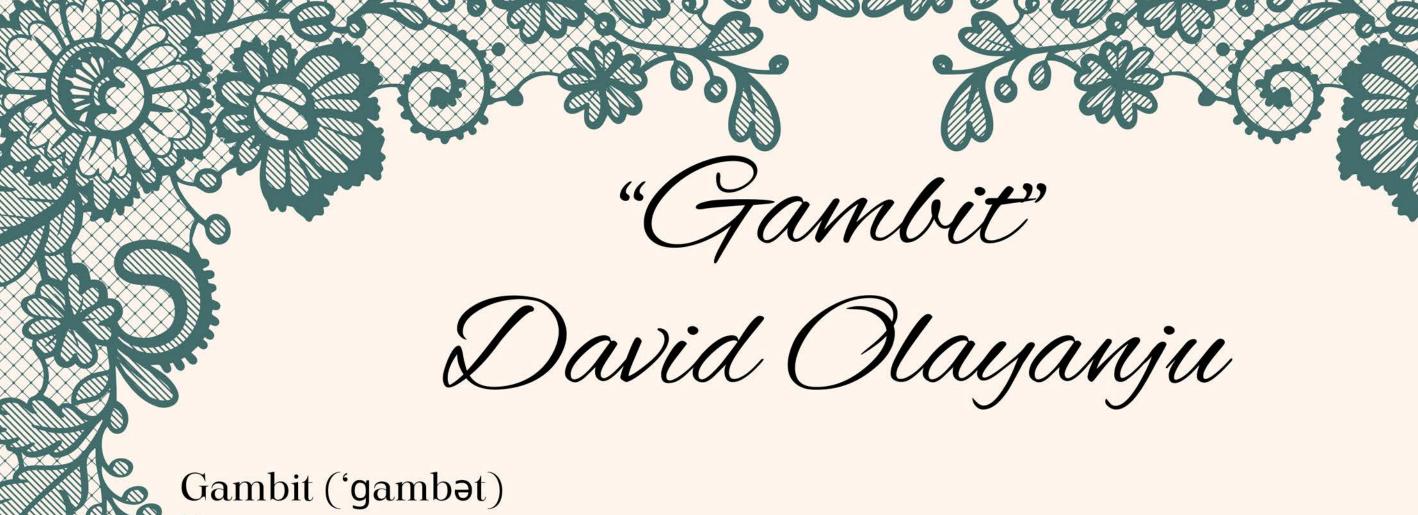






"Shatter" Viviana Vargas



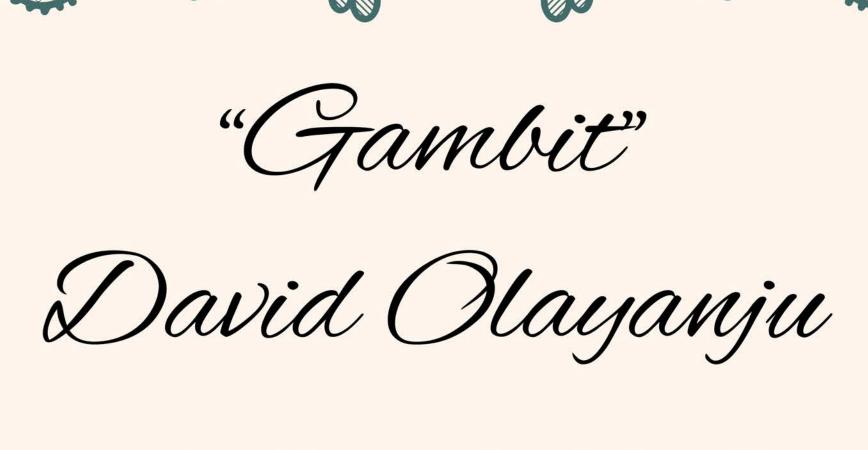


Noun

(in chess) an opening in which a player makes a sacrifice for the sake of some compensating advantage.

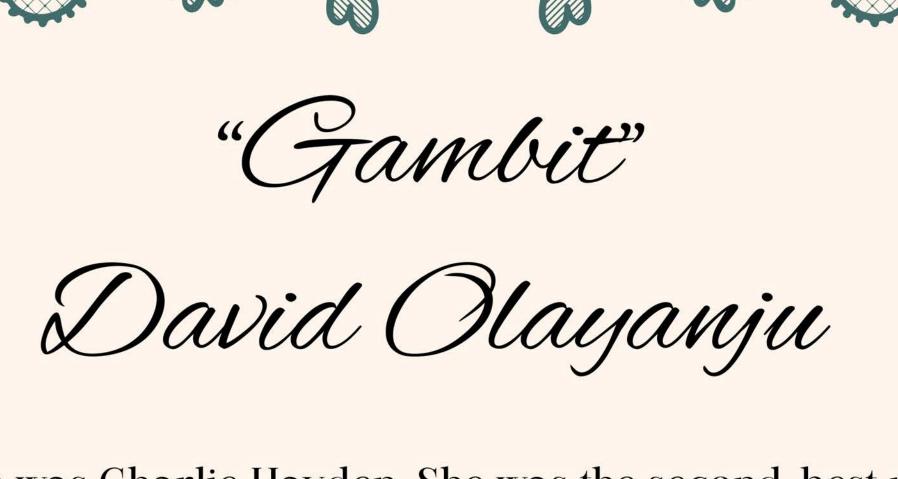
<u>One</u>

Nicolas Larsen woke up at 5:36 am on the dot, per usual. He needed to get out of the house, and quickly. By 6:45, Washington Square Park would be full with some of his favorite people in all of New York City: chess hustlers. Nic, above all else, was a chess player. His great-grandfather, Neil, was a chess player. His grandfather, Mark, was a chess player. His father, Robby, was also a chess player, albeit one he hadn't seen in six years. Out of the blue, he'd left his then 11year-old son, and wife Lisa, and disappeared. No one knew where he was. Not even his own family. Lisa had moved on and was now dating someone new. Nic wasn't a fan and tended to avoid him. He showered, threw on his favorite Chrome Hearts hoodie, a pair of Adidas sweatpants, and his New Balance 530s. Nic had been into fashion for sometime, and could go weeks before wearing the same outfit twice. He grabbed his iPhone 16, house keys, Beats, metro card, and headed to his study. It used to be his father's, but when he disappeared, Nic had taken it over. He grabbed his MacBook, which he used to play chess online and occasionally do schoolwork, and slipped it into his backpack. He grabbed a Pop-Tart from the pantry and fired a quick text to his mother, a nurse who usually left home before her son rose. Heading out now. Yes, I made sure to lock the door. Lisa didn't approve of her son chess hustling, but with work keeping her busy for the better part of the day, there was little she could do to stop him. Nic hopped on the train to West 4th Street and rode a Citi bike to the park. Sure enough, even though the sun was



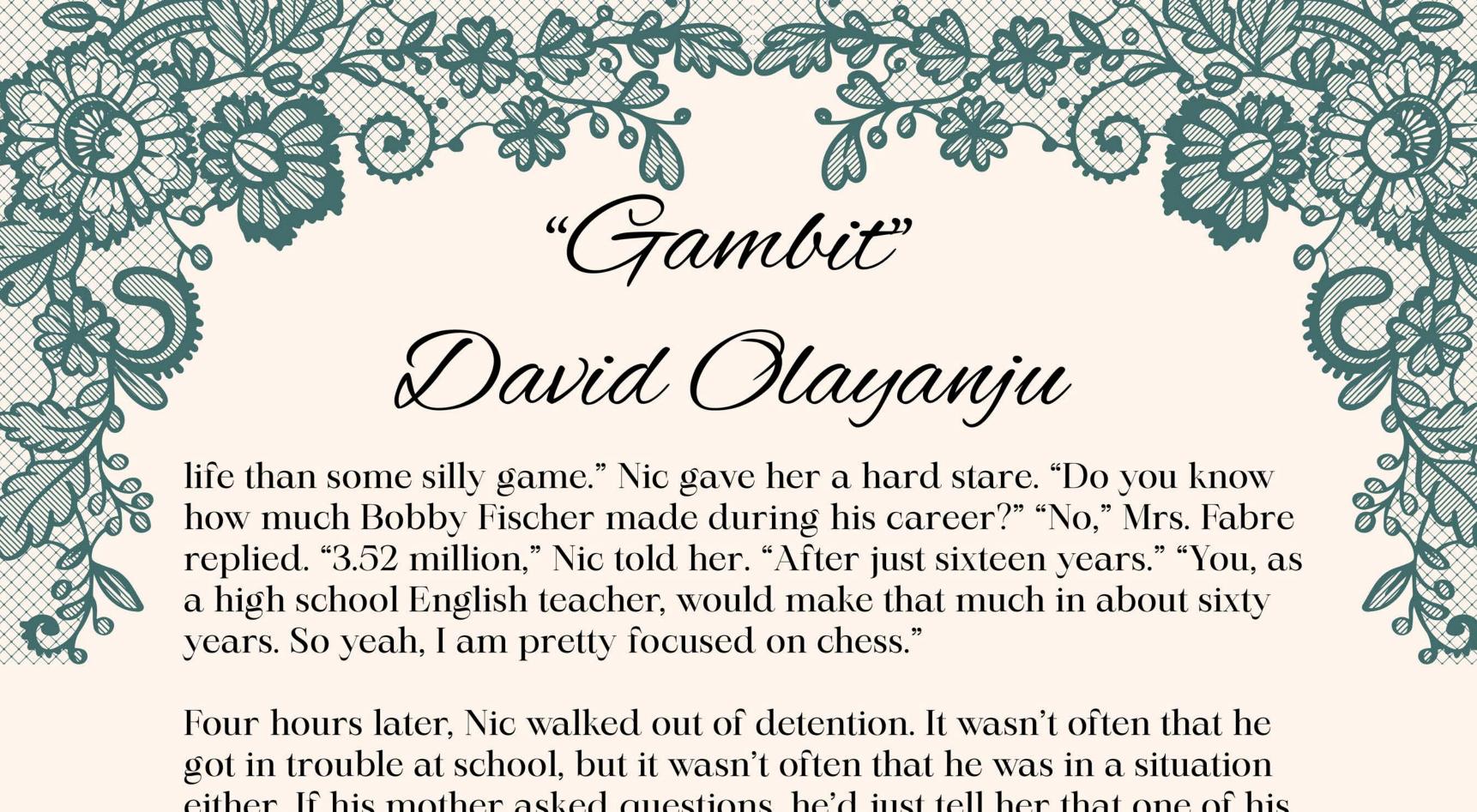
just starting to rise, the tables were already busy. Nic spotted an empty chair across from Quad. Quadir Shelton was one of the regulars in Washington Square, and he'd won hundreds of dollars on those stone tables. He wouldn't take money from Nic though. He was just a kid. Nic wasn't as nice, however. Ever since Nic beat him for the first time at age 14, he'd been siphoning money off of him and most of the other guys in the park regularly. Quad almost always relied on the Mieses Opening, one of the most unique openings in the game. But Nic knew it well, just like he knew almost all other openings and strategies in the game. He controlled the center of the board with his pawns and quickly took charge of the game. Soon enough, Quad cracked, making a costly blunder. Nic pounced and with one move, he tipped the game entirely in his favor. After a couple more moves, Quad tipped his king. "Sheesh," he said, "You're getting good, youngbull." Nic just shrugged. "It's in my genes." Quad reluctantly handed over Nic's earnings, 35 bucks, and the prodigy hopped back on his bike, headed for school.

Nic attended Sagan School of the Arts and Sciences. Tuition was nearly \$60,000 a year, but Nic had earned an academic scholarship, which cut the cost to just \$5,000 a year. Rarely was Nic surrounded by so many like-minded individuals than when he was in the school's chess club. And yet, he didn't get along with them. Most of them anyway. It was a male-dominated team, and Nic was clearly the best. As a result, the rest of his teammates were always trying to one-up him or belittle him. For the most part, his teammates were rich, snobbish brats who had private chess tutors, and were too unathletic to play a real sport, but still wanted to claim they were "athletes".



Then there was Charlie Hayden. She was the second-best player on the team and one of only two girls. On top of that, she was smart, funny, and pretty. Really pretty. She was friendly to Nic, but they weren't exactly friends. Nic was playing Landon Holtsheimer, whose dad was coach. Given this, he was also team captain, even though he wasn't really that good at chess. He did, however, have the biggest ego. Like usual, Nic was easily defeating him. He shot a quick glance at Charlie. She was playing Justin Walter, a freshman and the youngest member of the team. Nic was so busy staring that he didn't notice at first that Landon was speaking to him. "What?" he asked. "Your move," Landon said sharply, "Are you deaf?" Nic slid his bishop across the board. "No. Checkmate."

Nic was a good student for the most part, but he had a penchant for playing chess in classes he didn't like. So when his English teacher, Mrs. Fabre, started rambling about her favorite French authors, Nic opened a new tab on his Mac and headed to chess.com. He'd earned the title of Grandmaster that past summer, and his account now reflected it. His International Chess Federation (FIDE) rating was 2717, but his rating online was more than 1000 points higher. His laptop wasn't very clicky, so it was very believable that was working on his essay, rather than playing chess. When the one-hour period ended, Nic quickly closed his laptop and tried to escape in the rush of students, but Mrs. Fabre stopped him. "Can we talk?" she asked. "Sure," Nic said reluctantly. "You've barely started your paper on Bonjour Tristesse. What's going on?" Nic had barely opened his mouth when Mrs. Fabre spoke again. "You're more focused on chess, aren't you." Nic was irritated by the way she said chess. Like it was a joke. Mrs. Fabre sighed, as if she was disappointed. "Nic, you're a junior in high school. When are you going to realize there's more to



Four hours later, Nic walked out of detention. It wasn't often that he got in trouble at school, but it wasn't often that he was in a situation either. If his mother asked questions, he'd just tell her that one of his teachers suffered a broken ego and blamed him for it. He hopped back on the bike and returned to Washington Square Park. Looking to play some more chess. To his surprise Charlie was there. She spotted him and smiled. Nic sat down across from her. "Hey," she said. "Hi," Nic replied, "You wanna play?" "Yeah," she said. Pawn to e4. Nic had known for some time that Charlie liked the King's Pawn. They'd only played a couple of times, but when it came to chess, Nic remembered everything. "You're late today," she said. "Yeah," Nic said with a slight chuckle, "Mrs. Fabre put me in detention." Bishop to C7. "Really?" She asked. "Yeah," Nic replied.

"What for?"

"She was telling me I need to focus less on chess and more on French literature."

"What'd you say that?"

Nic shrugged and took one of her knights. "I told her that I could make three times as much money playing as she did teaching English. She reacted as well as could be expected." Charlie laughed. "What's funny?" Nic asked. "Someone finally humbled her," she said, "I never thought it would happen." Nic smiled. Not because he thought it was funny now, he just loved hearing her laugh.

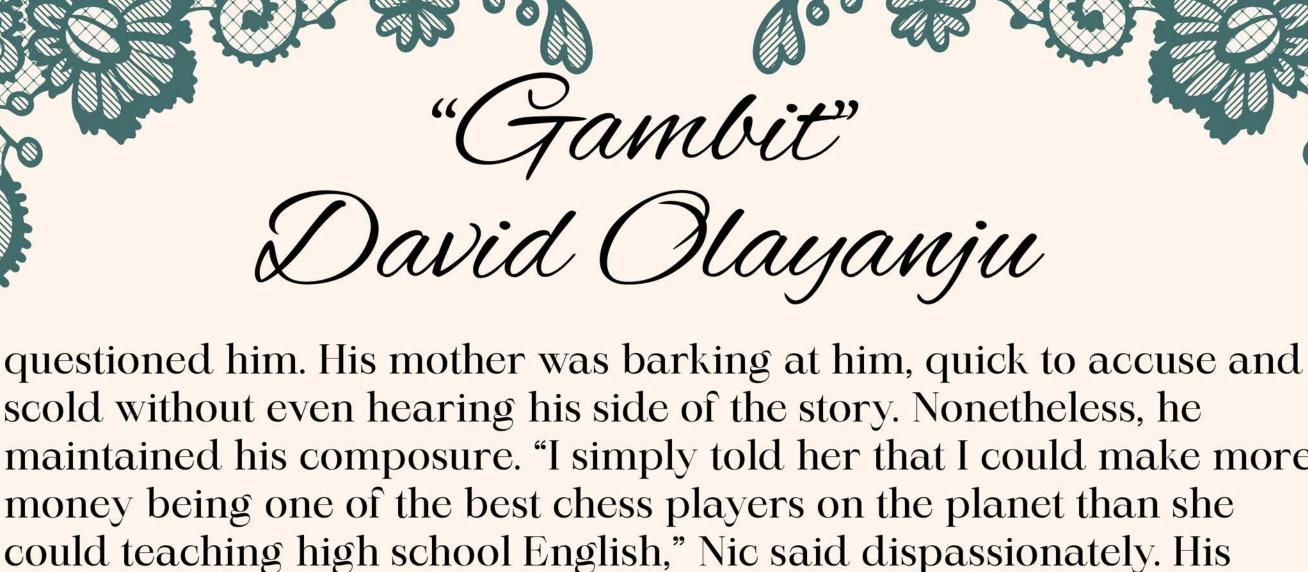
"Gambit" David Olayanju

The game ended in a draw. Nic knew he could have won but decided to show mercy, a rarity for him. He offered to walk home and she agreed. As it turned out, they both lived in the Forest Hills neighborhood of Queens. They took the train together and walked five blocks to Charlie's apartment complex. They talked the whole way. Nic wanted to know more about her. He quickly found out a lot. She had two little sisters, Hannah and Logan. Her dad worked for a Japanese corporation and was often out of the country. Her mom was a nurse at the same hospital as his. She'd been playing chess since she was six, and was a Women's Federal Master as of last April. The more he knew her the more he liked her. By the time they arrived at her doorstep. They exchanged numbers and went their separate ways.

Nic was practically levitating as he walked home. Only for his mother to drag him back down to earth. Even though it was only 6:30 pm, she was home instead of the hospital she worked at. Her back was turned as Nic entered the house. Even without seeing her face, her folded arms indicated that she wasn't happy about something. Nic tried to tiptoe to his study, but wasn't so lucky. "I know you there Nic," she said, still not turning around, "Don't try to hide from me." Nic stifled a sigh and entered the kitchen. He flashed a winning smile and said, "Hi Mom. Why are you so early today?" She replied, "Because your behavior while I'm not around is concerning. What's this I'm hearing about you disrespecting your teacher today in English class?" Nic's face hardened. I was never disrespectful. "Oh really?" his mother said sharply, "What happened then?" "She pulled aside after class and told me I'm focusing too much on chess, referring to it as nothing more than a silly game."

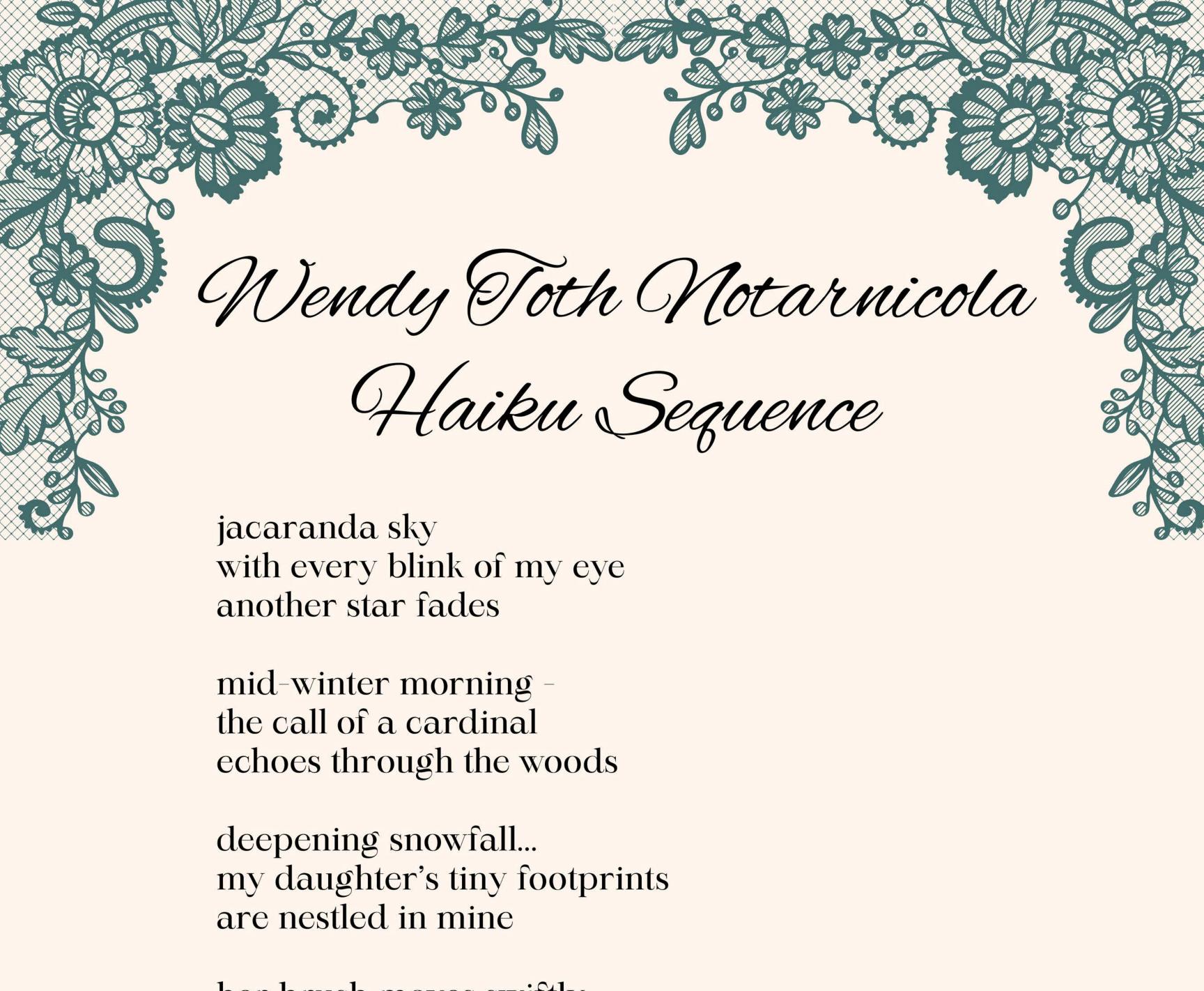
"Then what happened?"

Nic fought hard to hide his frustration. It was one thing when Charlie

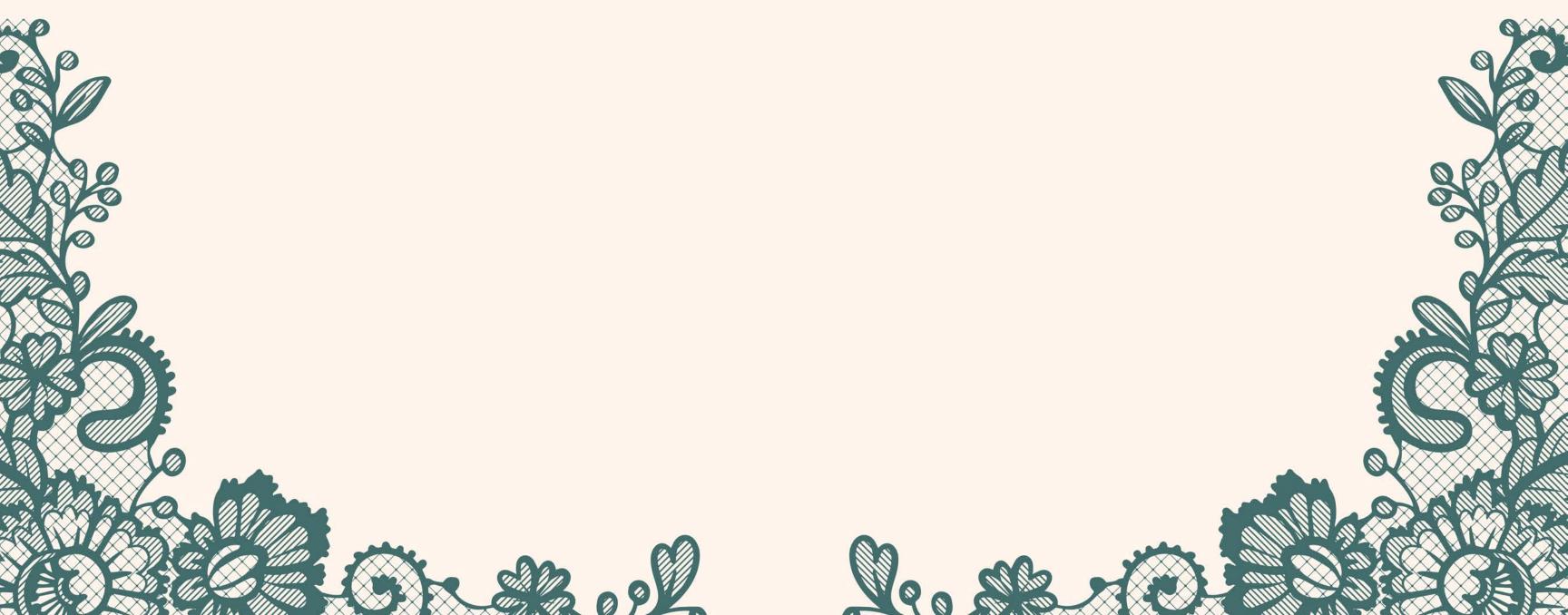


scold without even hearing his side of the story. Nonetheless, he maintained his composure. "I simply told her that I could make more money being one of the best chess players on the planet than she could teaching high school English," Nic said dispassionately. His mother just stared at him. Nic didn't like the look on her face. Ever since his father left, he'd been seeing it more and more. It was a look of extreme disappointment, disgust even. "How could you be so childish?" she asked. Nic was unsurprised by this reaction. Just like always, siding against him. "I'm the childish one? She's the one calling out an A-student for being talented and having a passion. The only reason I was in detention today was because she was butthurt about the reality check I gave her!" "You were in detention because of your insubordinate actions!" his mother yelled, bumping his chest with a finger. She then launched into her typical rant about how she worked too hard for Nic to waste all his time playing chess. She didn't care that he was one of only 736 active grandmasters worldwide. It didn't matter that he was already earning more than \$20,000 dollars yearly off of tournament winnings. Her bitterness blinded her from the good that chess brought her son, and that same bitterness also made their relationship very toxic. As punishment, Nic was barred from attending chess team practices, which he pretended to be upset about. After 20 long minutes, he finally made it to his study. After forcing himself to do homework for 90 minutes, he closed his copy of Bonjour Tristesse and was about to head to chess.com when he noticed a new email in his inbox. Little did he know, the new email would change his life forever.

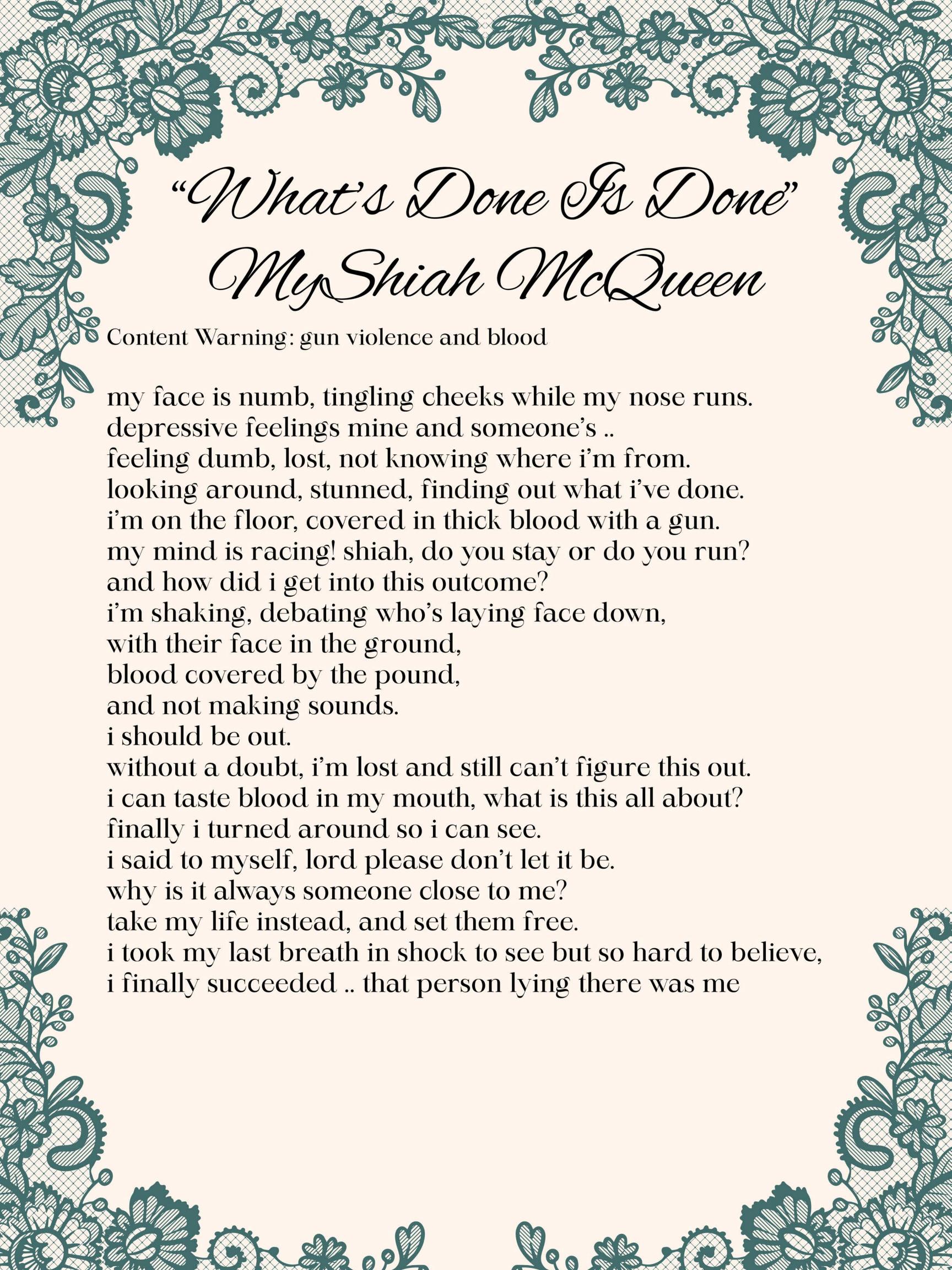
This concludes the excerpt from David Olayanju's short story. To read the full story, please email us at The Community Quill.



her brush moves swiftly across the fresh white canvas... blackbirds in the snow





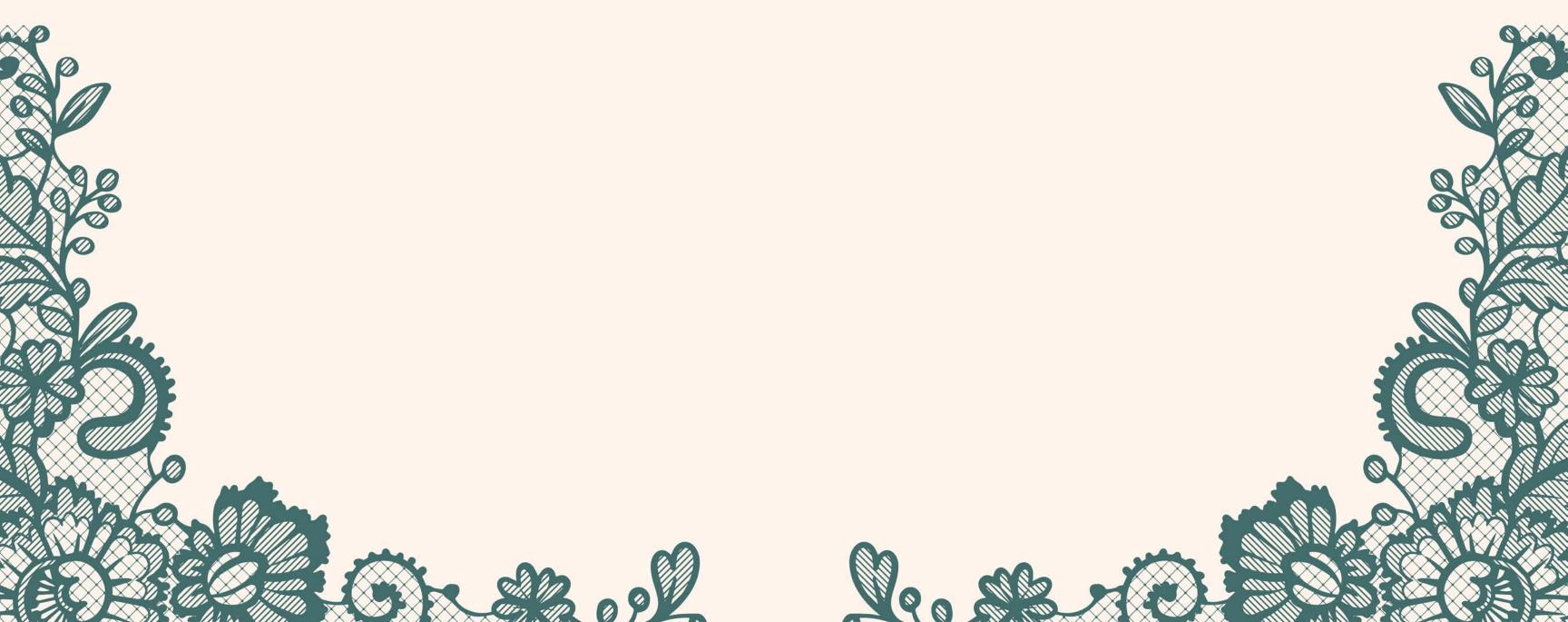


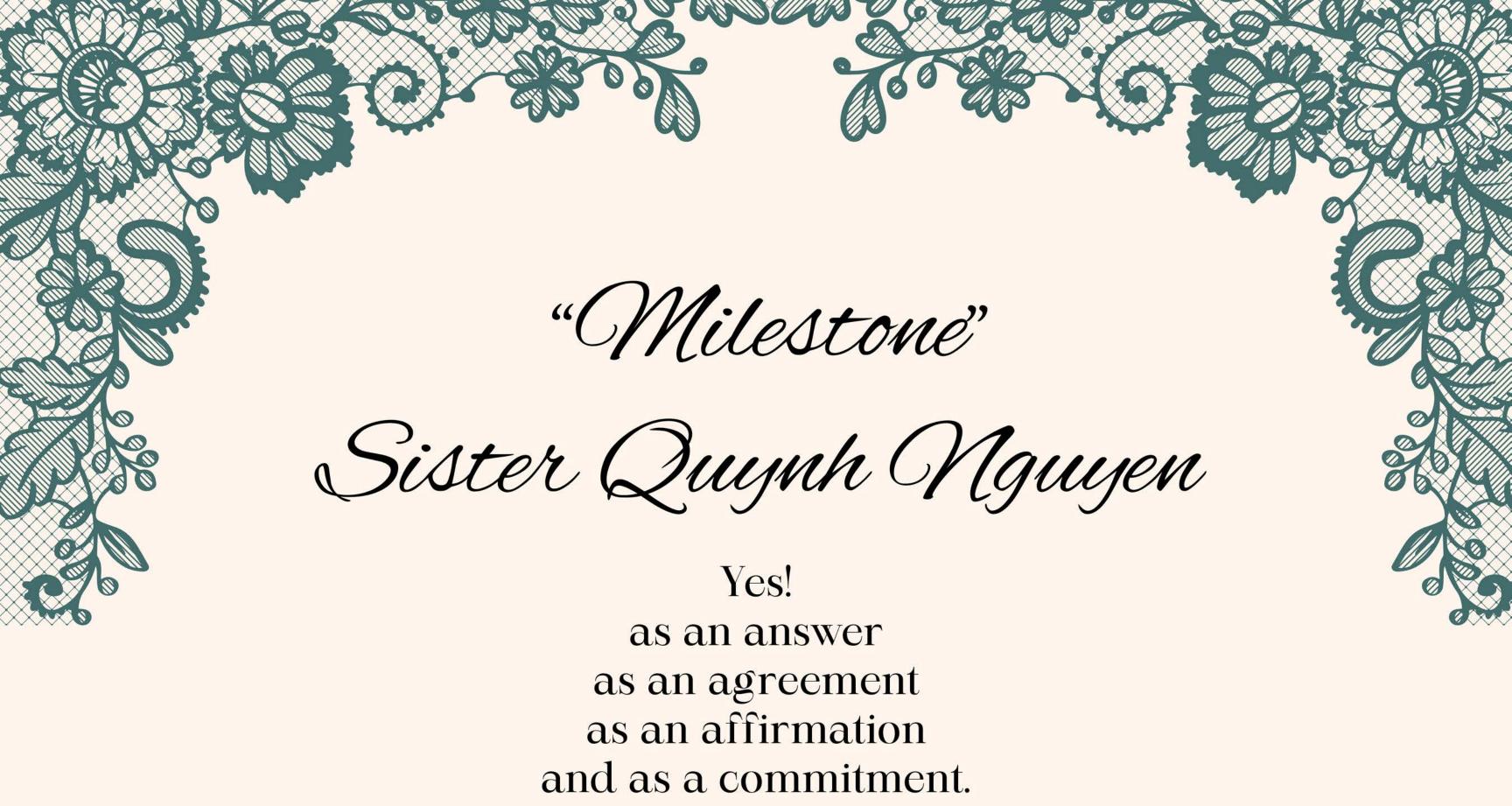


There is a rose planted for you at the top of the highest hill, Touched by the softness of the passing summer air, Kissed by the warmth of a soothing sunny day, And sang to lovingly by the all the mourning doves in the sky, Awaiting your arrival, To be carried home with you.

Hidden in secret one last message remains, One of endearment and remembrance, Detailing just one of the many timelines, Spent walking by your side.

For even when I am gone, A love letter will find its way into your heart.





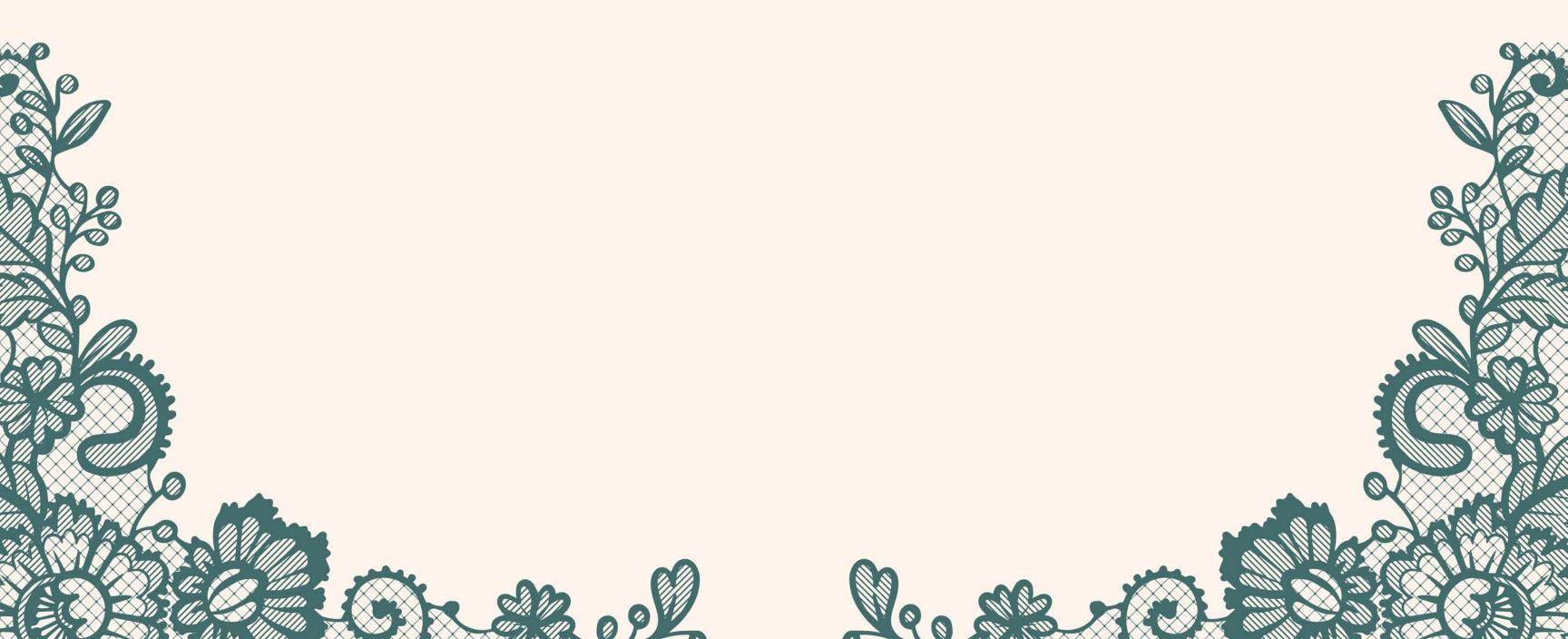
I have decided to embark on a journey to a new land a new environment a new culture a unfamiliar language and unknown people.

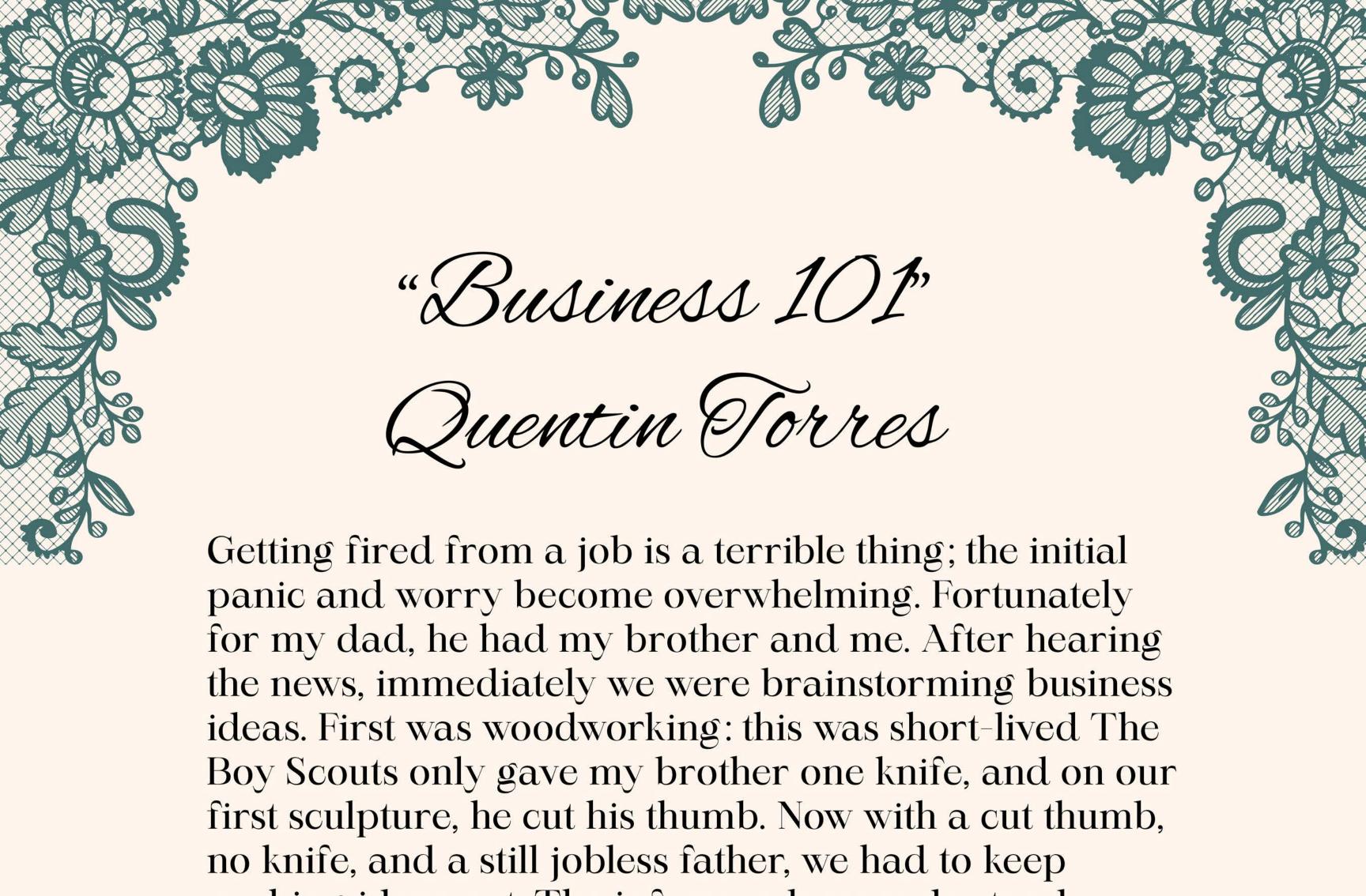
A feeling of alienation
I am afraid
I shy away from others
Immersing myself in thoughts

I am sad
I cry, cry and cry.
But the day will come
reality must be faced
everyone must grow up
Everyone deserves their own path toward their life.



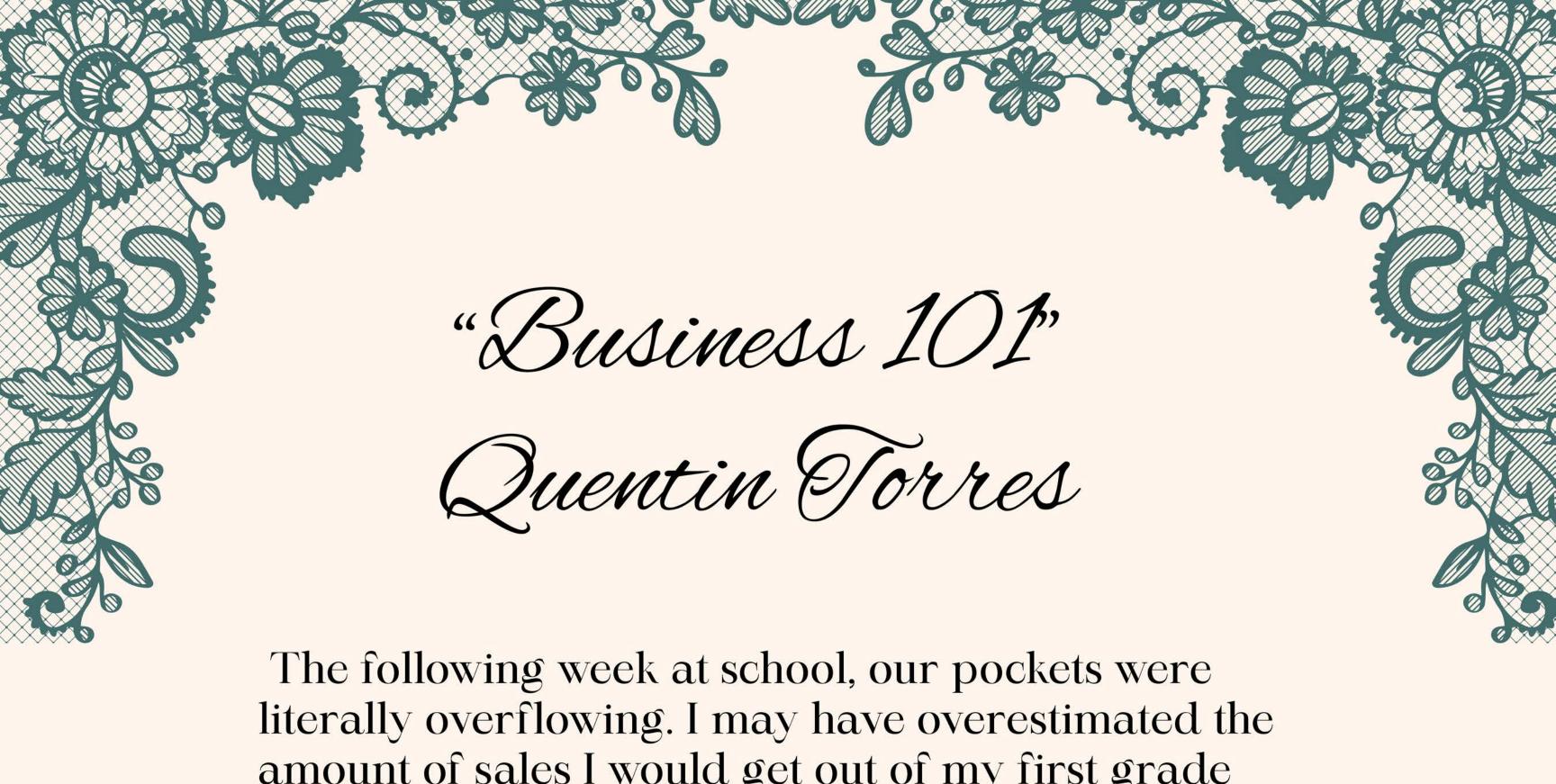
Keep going forward! Keep pushing ahead I believe in myself Confident will guide me Success is within my reach.





pushing ideas out. The infamous lemonade stand definitely crossed our minds once or twice, but in order to find success we needed to be different. That is where our true calling became obvious: rocks.

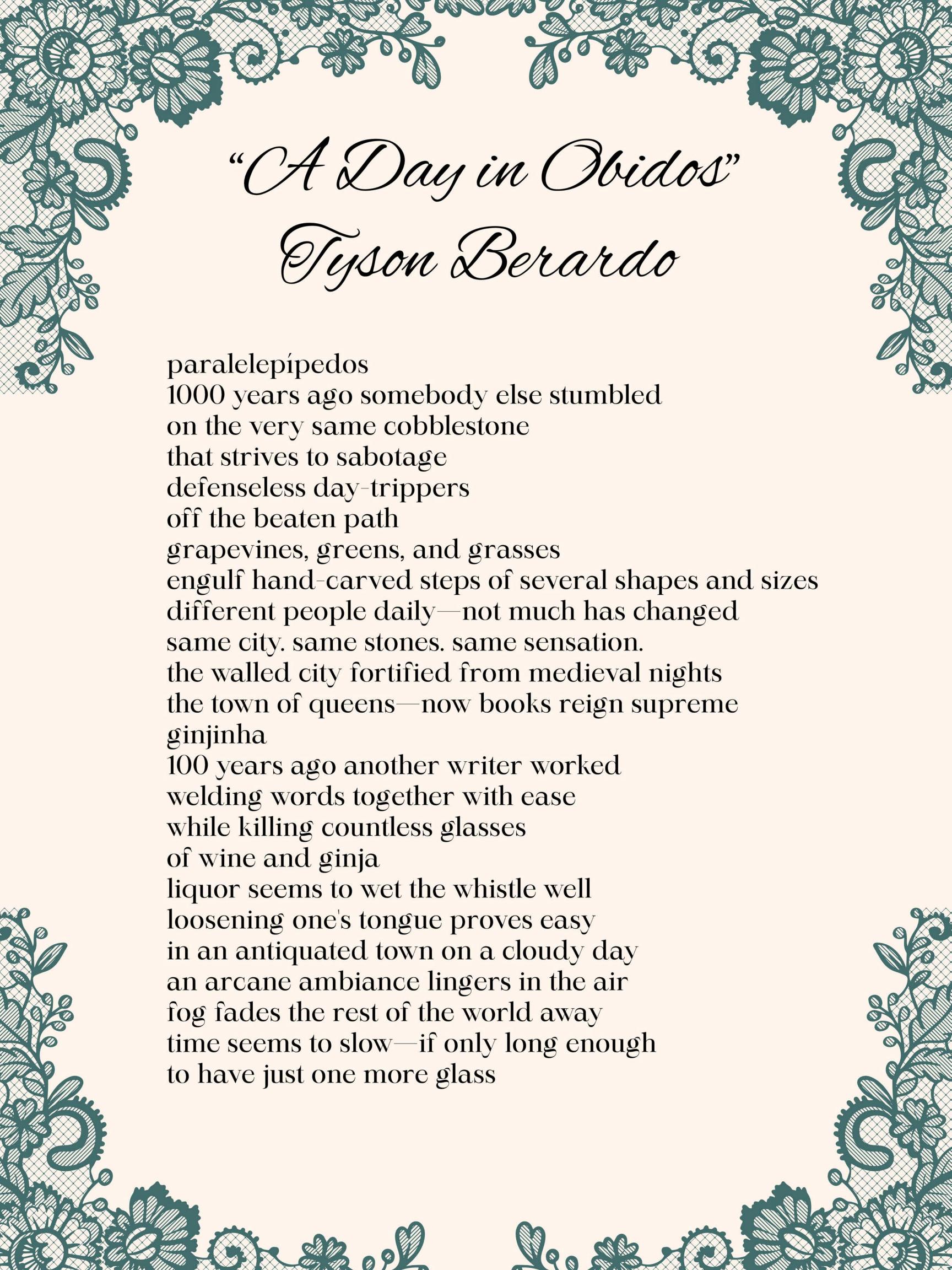
"One Dollar One Rock." With an established slogan, we had to start collecting inventory where it could not have been any easier because we have a rock pathway. When our dad saw us filling our pockets with handfuls of rocks and he asked what we were doing, the only right response was, "We are helping!" Without saying anything further, he went inside for us to continue, which was his best idea.

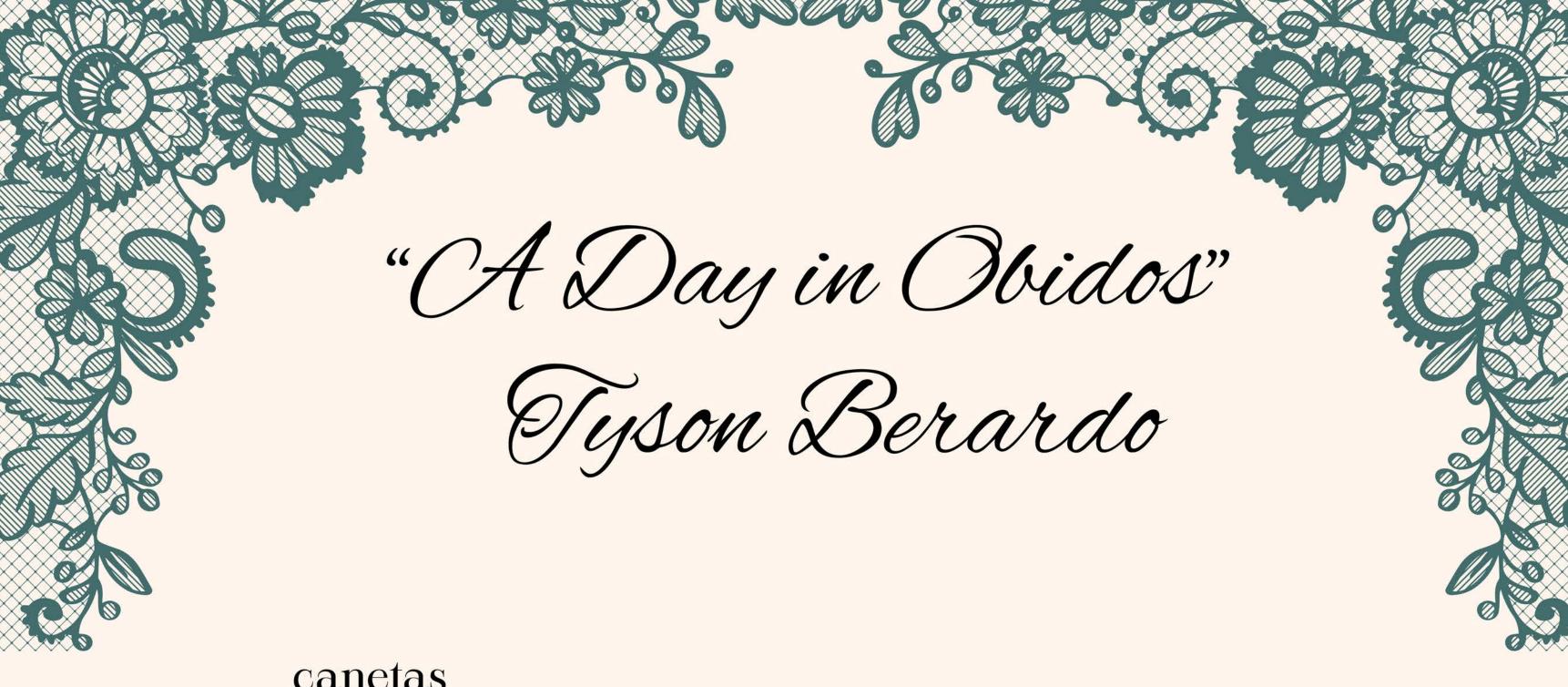


The following week at school, our pockets were literally overflowing. I may have overestimated the amount of sales I would get out of my first grade peers, but I was thinking of success. After the first week, I accumulated two dollars. My friend Connor's mom made a wise investment. But then my brother came to me with three dollars.

Business was booming. What better way to make this known than to give the profit to its purpose? Proudly, we handed the few quarters and dollars to our father. At first, he smiled, but then his face went blank. For the next few minutes he told us how we did not have selling permits, and that we could be sued for our five dollar profit. This led to an uproar of screams and cries and blames that it was my brother's idea. Unfortunately, the business did not pan out so well. Disregarding the consequences, my brother and I kept the money then split it. Our plan of retiring our father with rocks was short lived and jobless he remained.

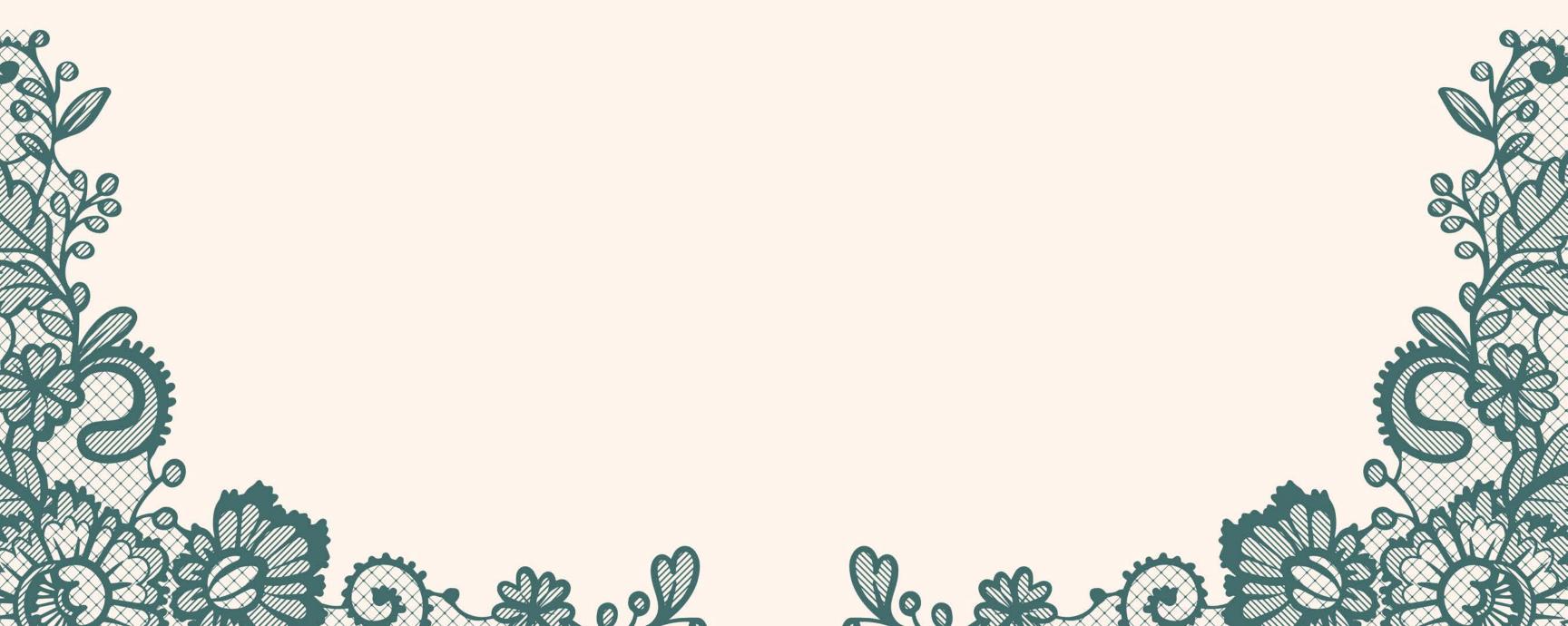






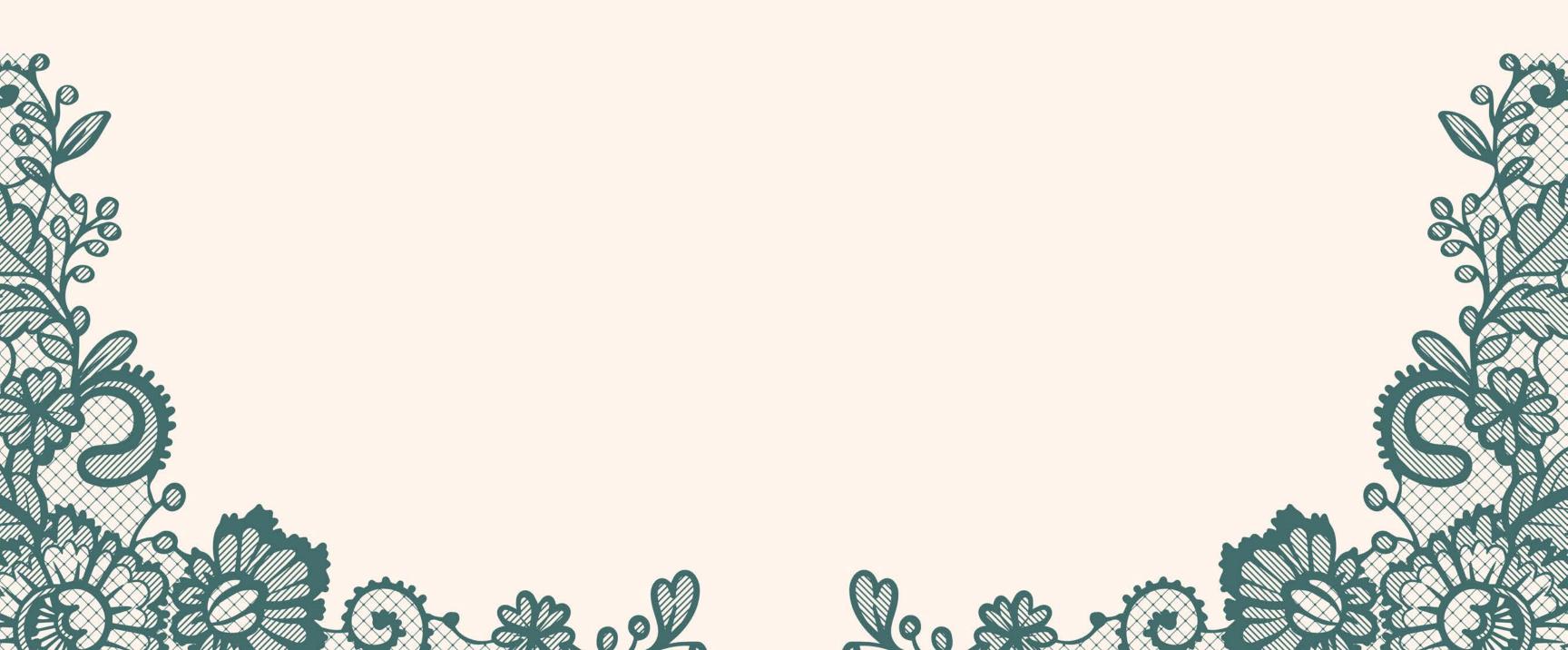
canetas

1 year ago learning to write fumbling phrases left and right praying for purposeful prose and soon finding that leaving words out proves most proficient —or passable at least today however I have found the predominant parts of producing poetry are grabbing a pen picking a page



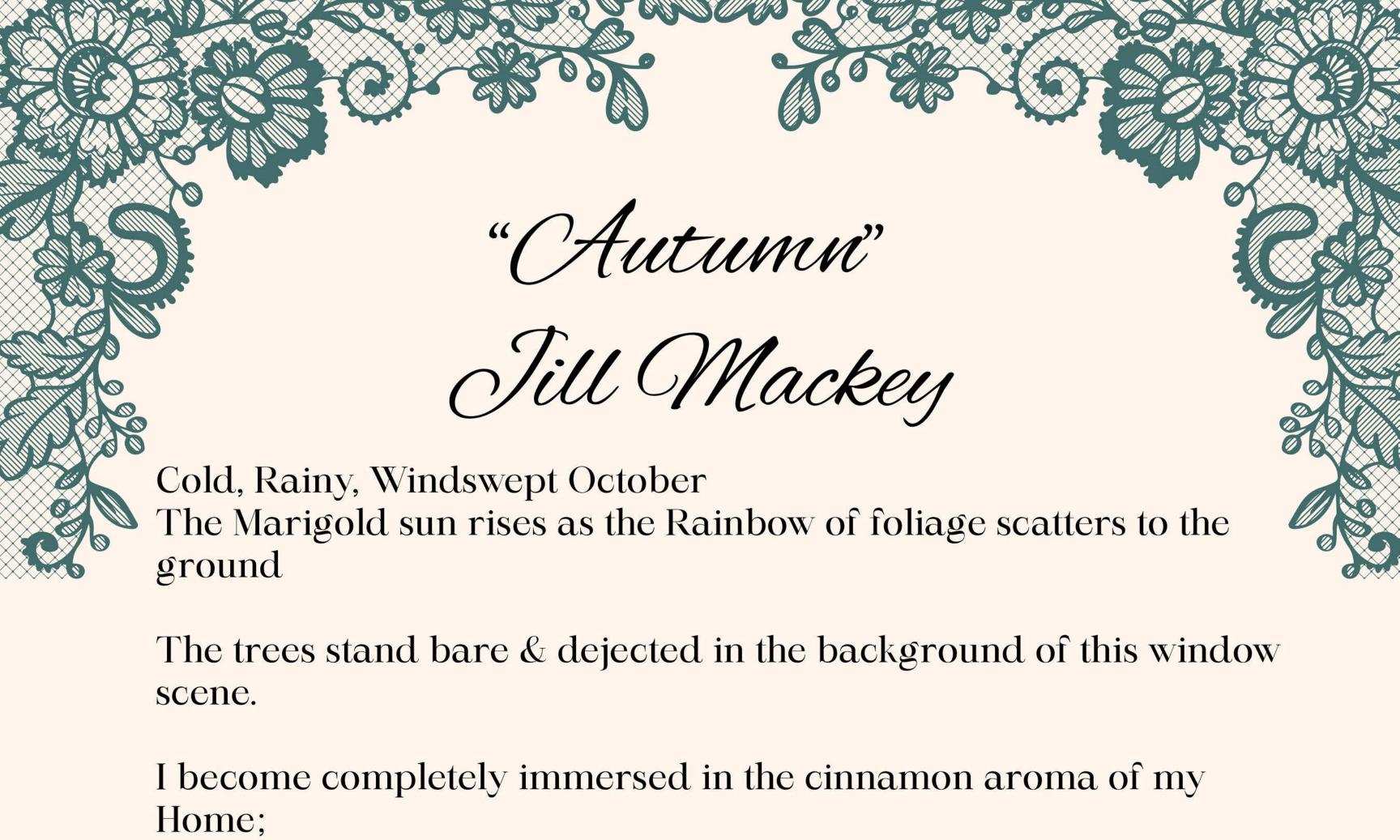


Exquisite, a beauty beyond comparison,
The blush of dawn at the first sight of the morning sun,
The luminous glow of the moon sitting still in the night sky,
The crystalline shine of the oceans,
A beauty that never goes unnoticed,
A beauty never to be forgotten.



"Blue" «Kathy Francis





Quintessential for the season.

Carved pumpkins illuminate the doorways on each block, As darkness falls earlier with each day.

Wrapped in my thoughts, I sit & watch the passerby's scurrying to the find warmth.

My breath fogs up the window as I press my nose against the glass. I'm mesmerized by the colors & the line symmetry of the leaves...

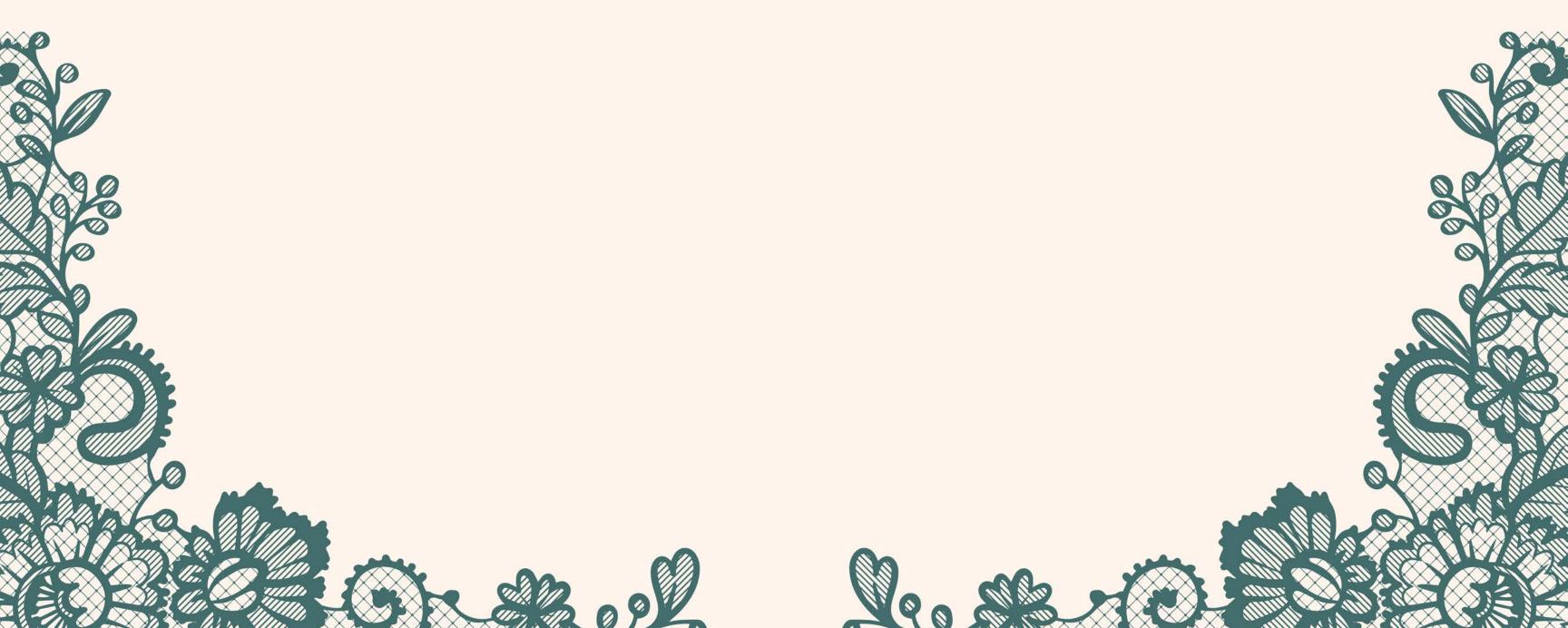
Imagining their story.

Change, an almost always malignant concept, is made somehow inexplicably breathing by those entities of..

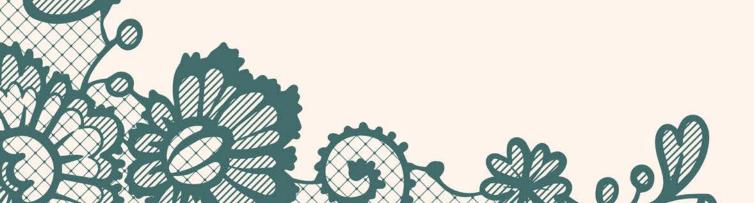
Red Orange Yellow And Green.

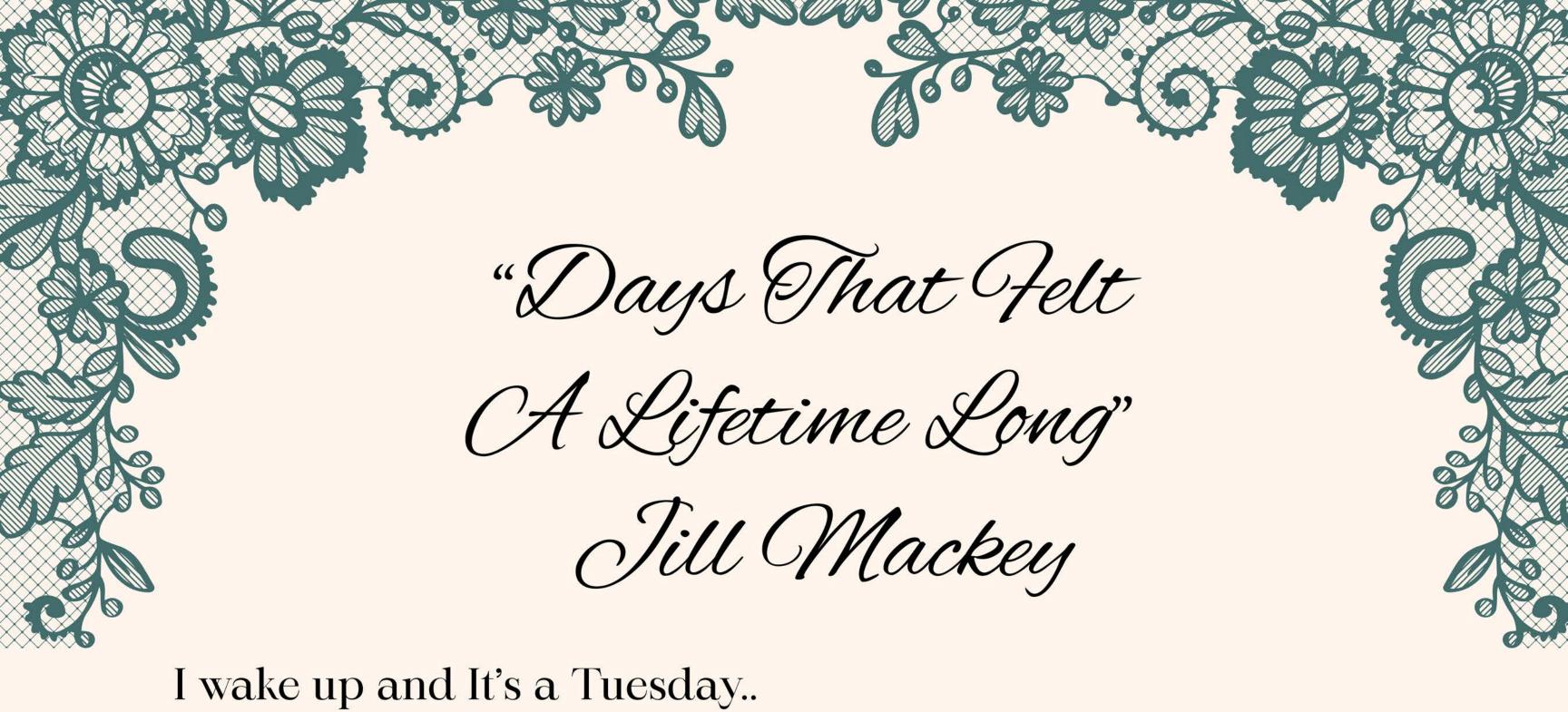


You live in the present, but dwell on the past
Then look to the future and think it's your last
Times ticking as you begin to feel your heart racing
Wishing that both could slow down as your thoughts tell you your aging
Then a Light comes telling you that this is just a journey
The destination you are looking towards becomes a another penny
Matthew 6:34 tells us to live in the present for today is the real trouble
This journey has its ups and down just continue to walk through the tunnel
As you walk, climb, and jump you realize that this journey is like working out
Being consistent to reach that goal without a single doubt
The Light tells you that He is preparing an unbreakable warrior
That destination,
God will shape you for what you thought would take another quarter
But don't be weary
Life is a journey.









I wake up and It's a Tuesday..
However, it's a morning unlike most others;
Malignant and dreary, like that pain that scars my very being.

I'm wrapped up in the impracticalities of my life that I've failed to see how far I've veered off course.

..But this morning in particular, I become cognizant as I stare at my emaciated body in the mirror.

My auburn hair graces my shoulder & Damp; becomes transparent.

My once clear blue eyes have turned grey and doleful.

Unremitting dreams of bitterness and remorse haunt me as I bask in my bleak existence.

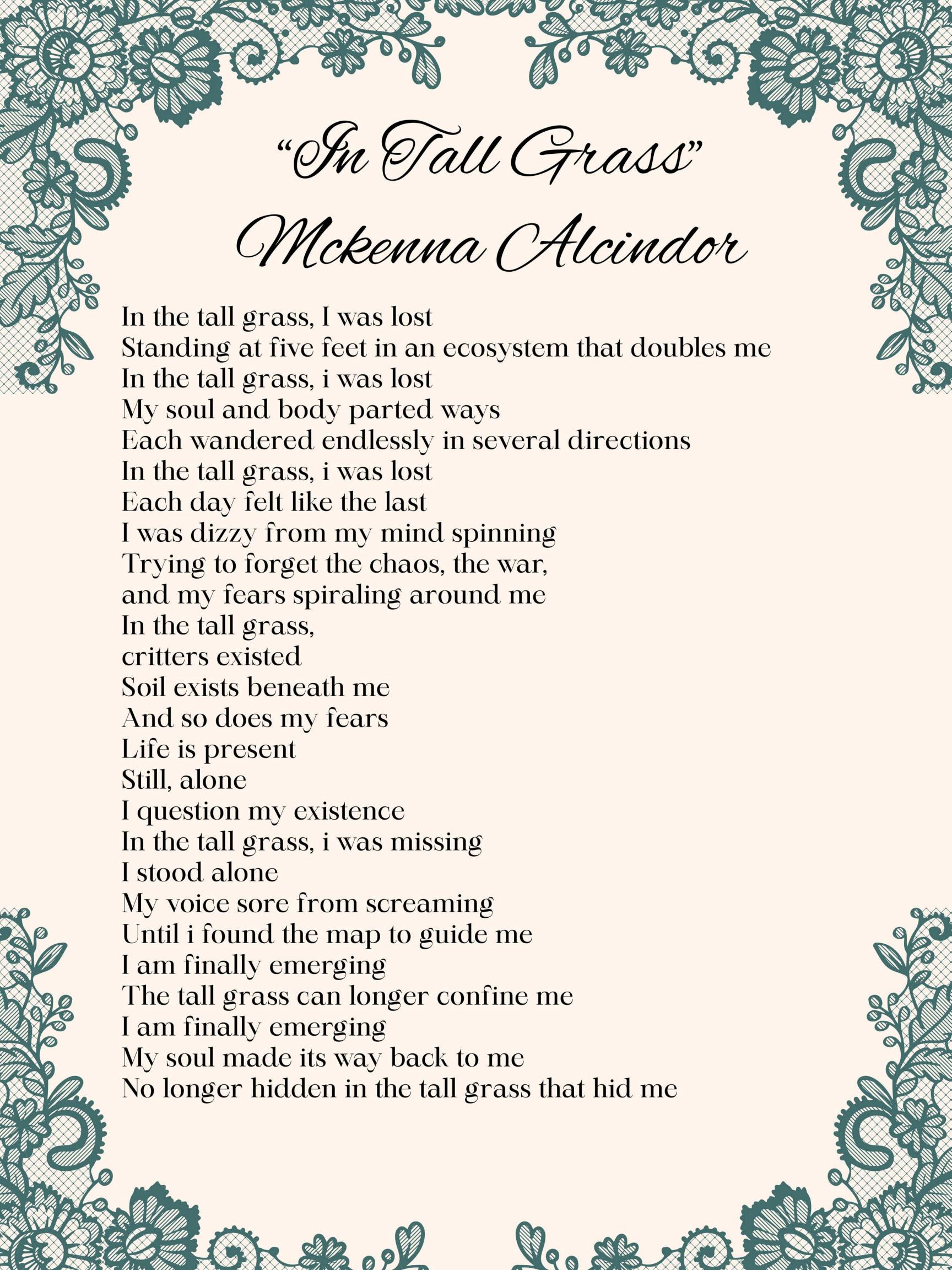
My reflection begins to fade as I transform into something I no longer recognize.

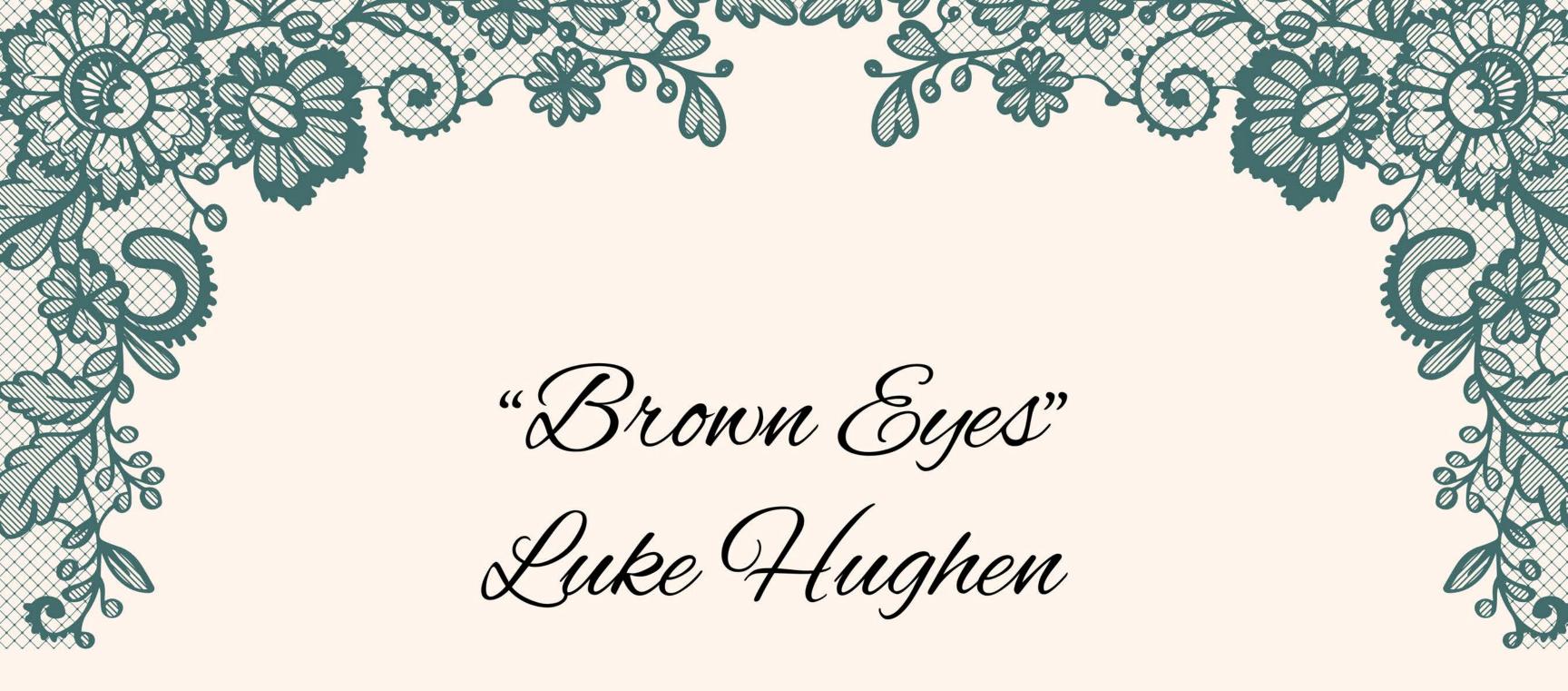
My pale skin rests on my seemingly lifeless body as I wonder what my life has become.



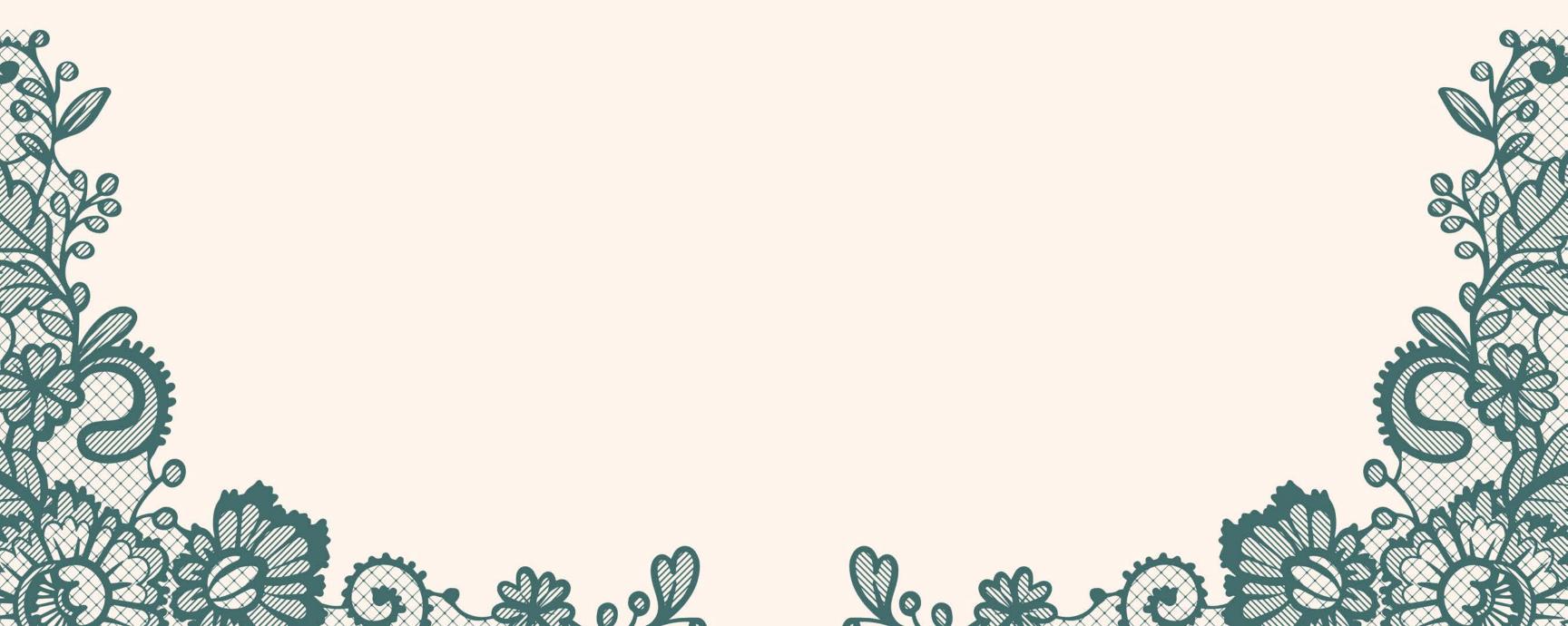
No longer do thoughts of animosity and confusion plague me.
I am free at last.

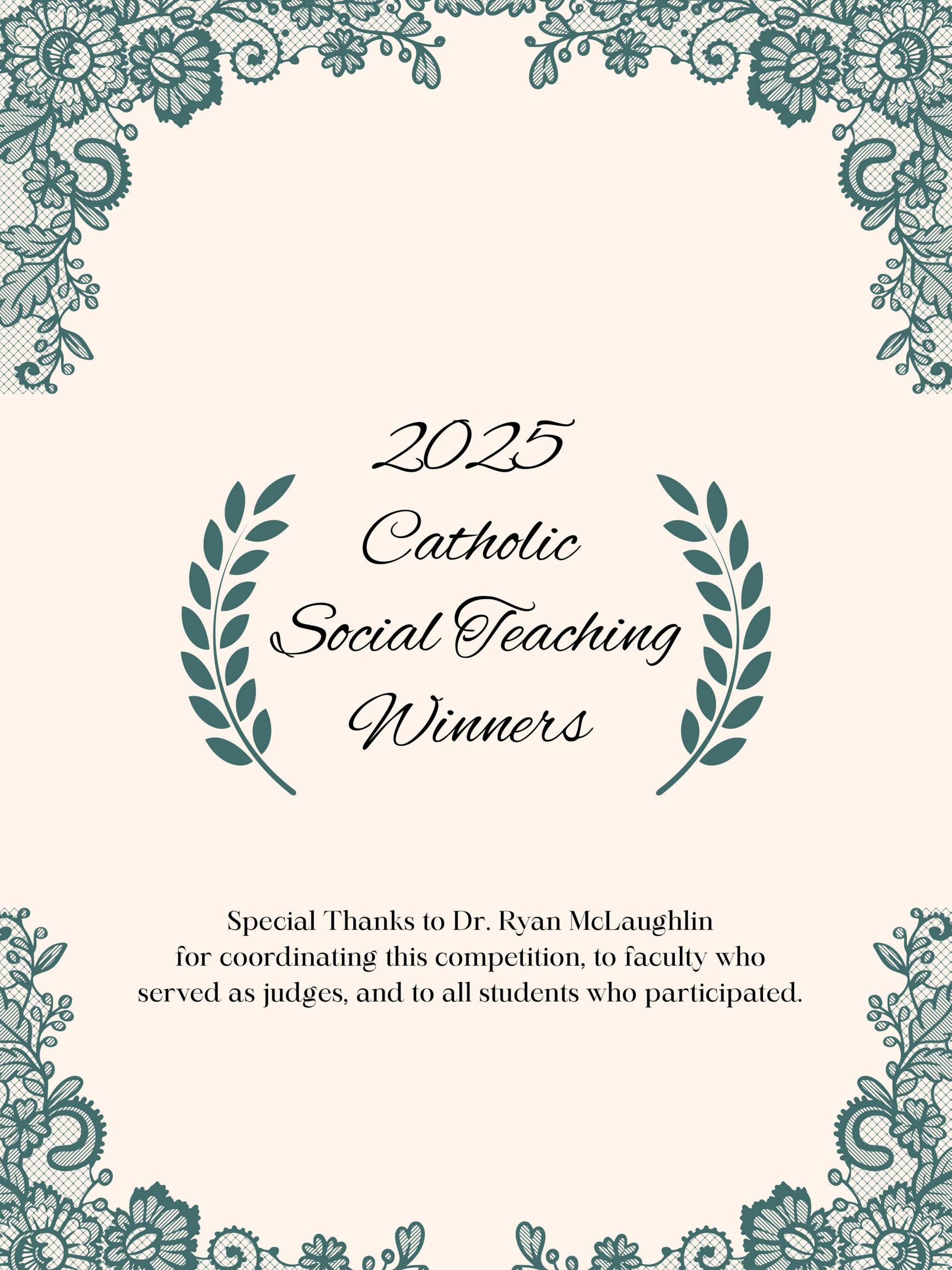
...And I have finally found my answers.





glistening; like the reflection of the mirror shining down upon him His smile, illuminated the dark shadows of the streets His rosy cheeks, filled the void of despair His hair, so ever gently brushes the hand of his mother His heart, so pure; like the sound of a gun His life, so precious; gone too soon.



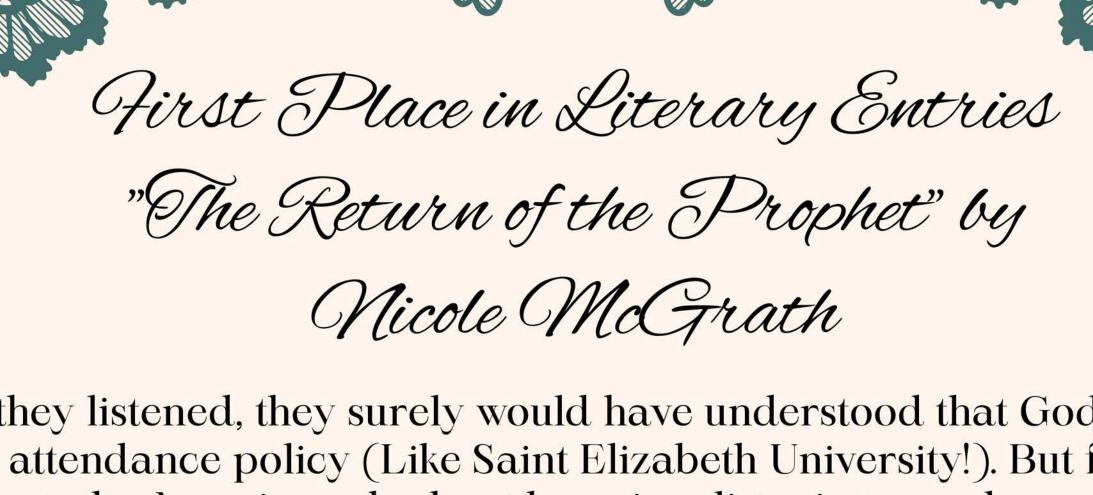




America was at a moral and spiritual crossroads, engulfed by great and powerful storm. Kindness and caring and compassion were being drowned out by o torrential outpouring of hate, and fury, and envy. And shame and blame. It echoed in the jails, and the halls of justice, in the schools and across the college campuses, in the towns and the cities, and especially in social media. It descended from nowhere it seemed, though the people wanted to know who had paved its path, they need look no further than the nearest mirror.

Days of injustice multiplied, the people of America were at a loss. All were overwhelmed by a feeling that morality and justice had deserted them, though the injustices people bemoaned differed greatly, and were often at odds indeed some were not injustices at all. Nonetheless, the hue and cry reached the heavens, as they lamented greatly, and felt there was no sense of economic justice anymore. They toiled and toiled, but they could no longer "get ahead", no longer buy the many goods and services to which they had become accustomed, and thereby shackled. They could make no sense of what was happening to themselves. For them, their world had lost its meaning. But truly, they had lost their way long before this storm appeared.

Many flocked to the Church, as happens in troubling times, for some it was as much out of faith as out of fear. Many others went there simply to be seen, as if attendance was part of Godliness. They no longer feared the words recorded by the Apostle Matthew: "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men" [Matthew 6:5].

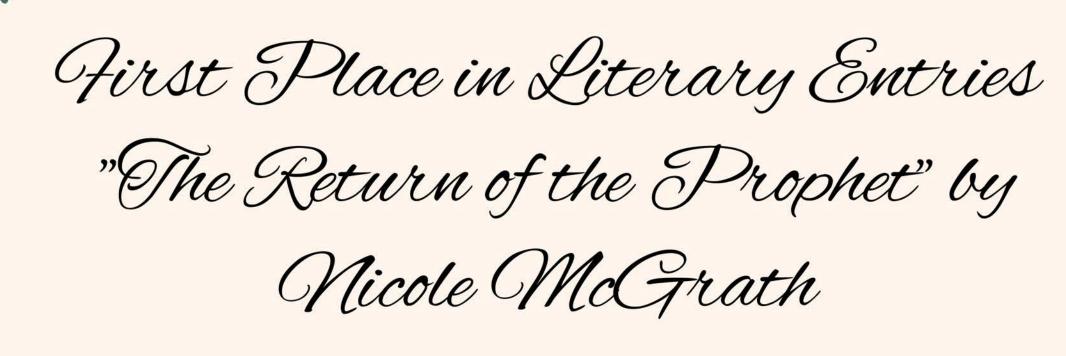


Had they listened, they surely would have understood that God has no rigid attendance policy (Like Saint Elizabeth University!). But for far too long, the Americans had not been in a listening mood, or perhaps they had been listening to the wrong things, the wrong people, amplified by the false idols of social media.

But then, out of nowhere there appeared a humble preacher – in many, many places, seemingly at once. And so, the preacher spoke with the people. In the churches, yes, but also in their town halls, and their recreation centers, all throughout their communities; that is to say, everywhere that he was needed.

When he spoke, he did so calmly. Though they shouted out their complaints and their protests and their demands, and beseeched him: "Why has the Lord not answered our prayers?" The preacher smiled and said, "did you imagine that "thinking of prayers as a kind of magic where if you just say the right words, then you'll get your wish, is not the way. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your pleasures" [James 4:3]. They just stared at him, unsure if he was trying to soothe them or accuse them. To drive the message home, he reiterated his message, explaining that as our Bible says, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" [Philippians 2:4]. But still they did not comprehend, perhaps because they were selfish, or self-absorbed, or simply because they had been taught self-interest for so long that they had forgotten the true meaning of prayer. Serenely surveying his audience - and remember, this was happening in many, many places simultaneously, and in sequence – he began to tell a story.

> The Story of the Job Foreman: A Parable about Human Dignity

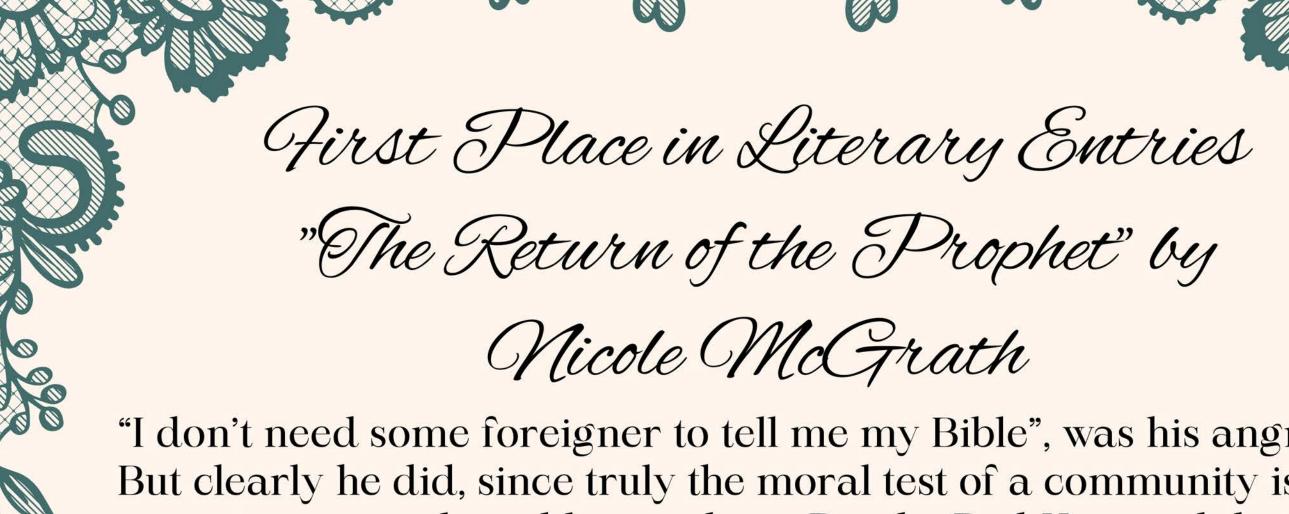


There was a job site foreman named George, who was behind in his construction schedule, and over budget. More than anything, he wanted to please his bosses, and dreamed about how greater company profits would also benefit himself. He put on his bright red baseball cap, its slogan leaving no doubt about his views, and led a fleet of pickup trucks to the edge of town, where many men were gathered. They were hard and lean, eager to work, and hungry, speaking a multitude of languages. He stood on the back of the flatbed truck and addressed the men. "I am willing to pay cash for the day, out of pocket, with no record. There will be a fair amount of work. But I only want "real Americans."

One of the older men in the crowd asked, "Clearly this work is not legally-paid, so why would you care where we are from? Isn't it enough that we are poor, hungry, and needto feed our families?"

George replied, "Because AMERICANS deserve these jobs! Unbowed, another man in the crowd replied, "Are we all not children of the Lord? We need to provide for our families, as does everyone here in America". "If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" [1 Timothy 5:8].

George spit back at him, "Whose words are those, some Communist from whatever land you came from? Believe what you want". The man was saddened, of course, by both the ignorance and the vitriol, reflective of some of the terrible things he had heard in the land of his birth, but replied simply that if George wanted to know more about what people deserve, he might want to consult his Bible.

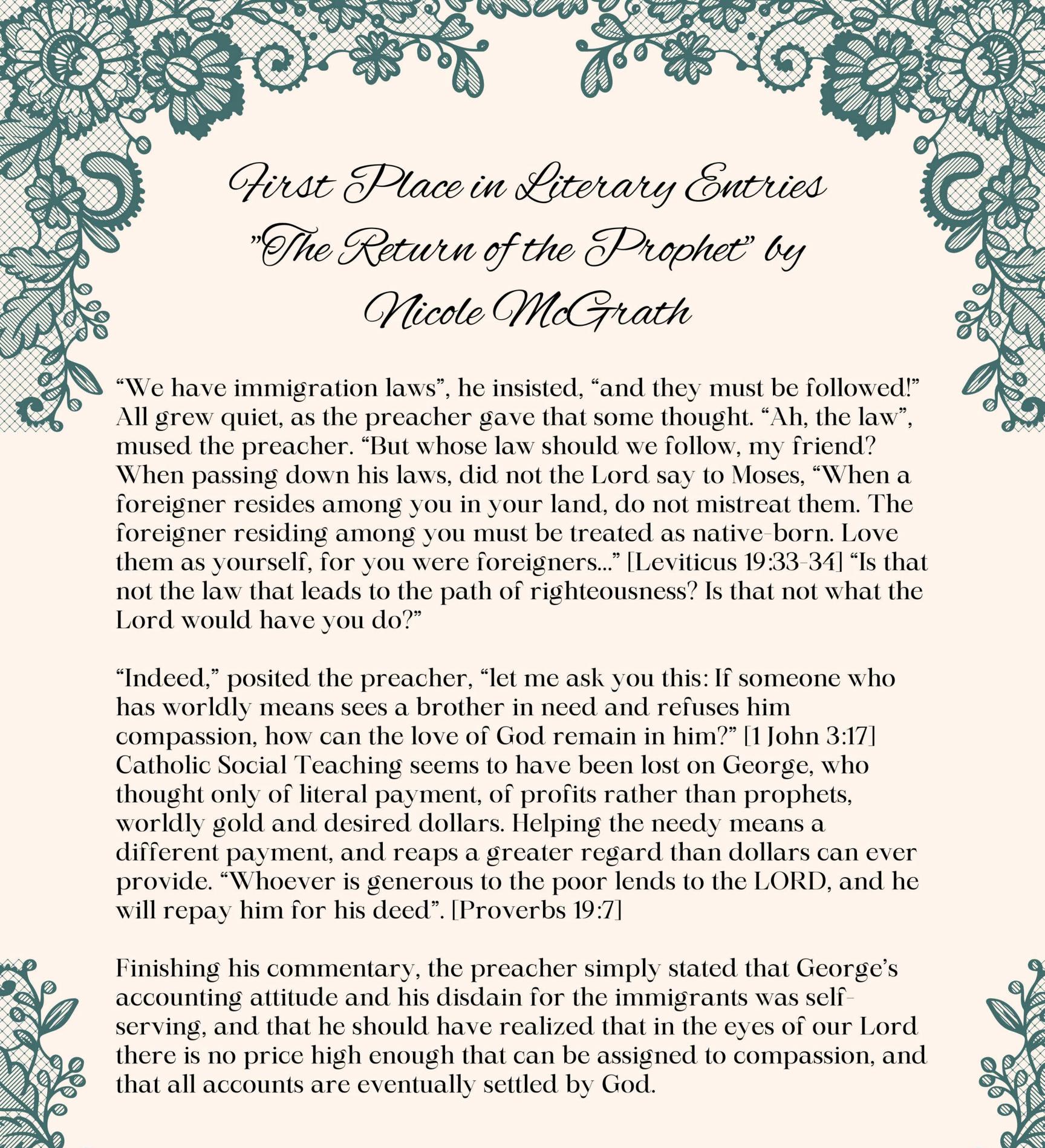


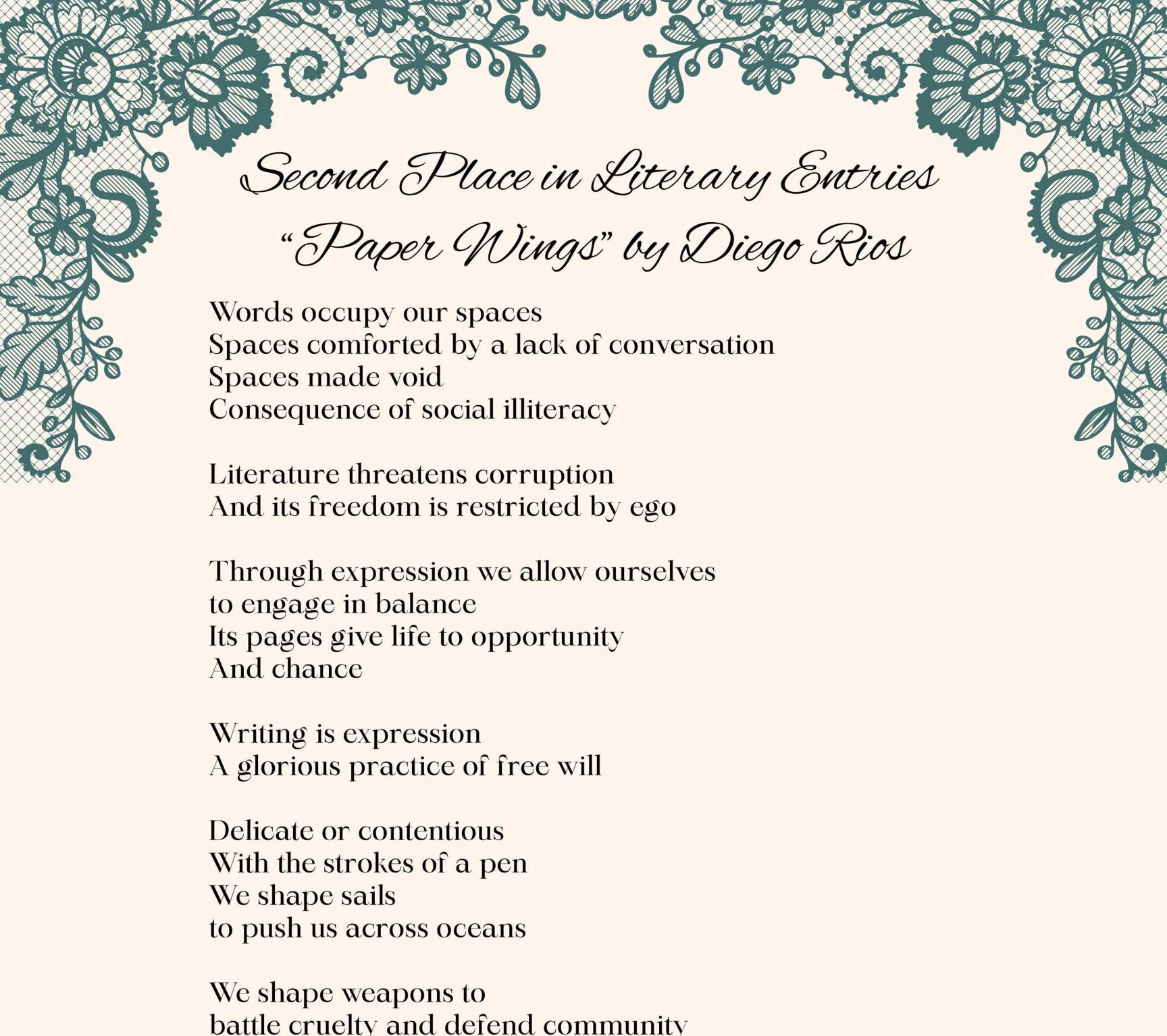
"I don't need some foreigner to tell me my Bible", was his angry retort. But clearly he did, since truly the moral test of a community is how it treats its most vulnerable members. But the Red Hats and their social media idols have forsaken this, if they ever actually believed it. But George wasn't done, as he needed to feel victorious and powerful over the humble workers in front of him. "Why should I pay 'you people', it doesn't help real Americans", he exclaimed, steeped in his angry alleged patriotism.

George left the poor standing on the edge of town, hungry and heartsick at the way they had been treated. Back at the job site, he decided to give the "American" workers many extra shifts, and work them ever harder. He bragged to his bosses that he was 'proud not to pay a penny to those immigrants'. "I saved you money, and I saved our culture", he boasted loudly and proudly, to all who would hear.

A few months later, due to overwork and carelessness, the building site collapsed, numerous workers were grievously injured (including some who laughed along with George's boastful cruelty), bankrupting the company and pitching them, and George, out of work. Meanwhile, those same poor men who George had so 'righteously' castigated, found work elsewhere, fed their families, and continued to thank God in their prayers. The preacher ended his little tale, but perhaps not all of his listeners understood the parable.

One flag-wearing, loutish member of the audience shouted out that George was right, that like a 'good American' he followed God and the law, so why was he punished? Unfazed, the faux-patriot insisted that it wasn't George's place to help people, but to hire workers and protect profits.





battle cruelty and defend community We shape wings to soar where words cannot reach

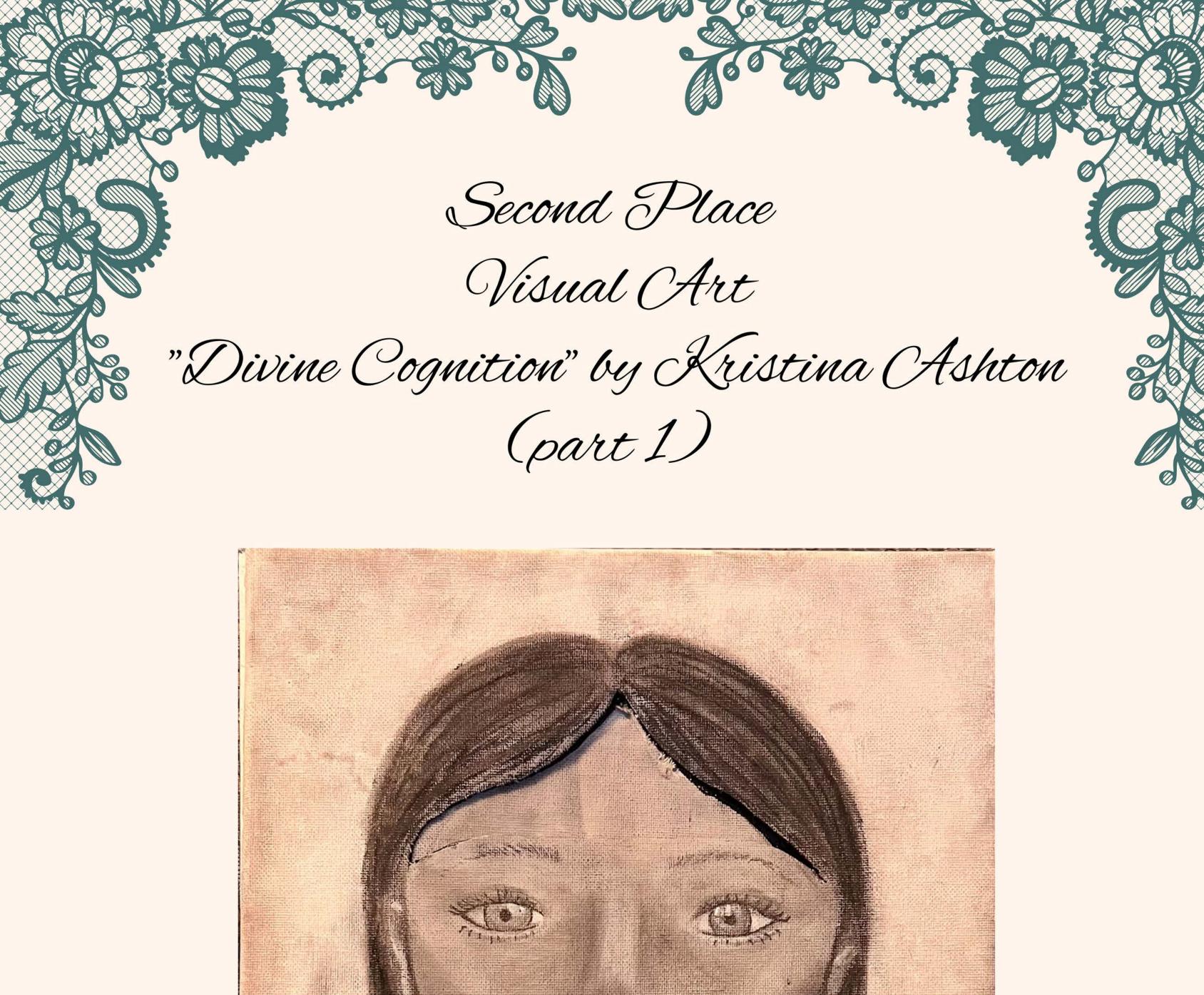
My wings expand to a width unprecedented Backed by fact and experience Both empowered and challenged in academia To take part in a generation

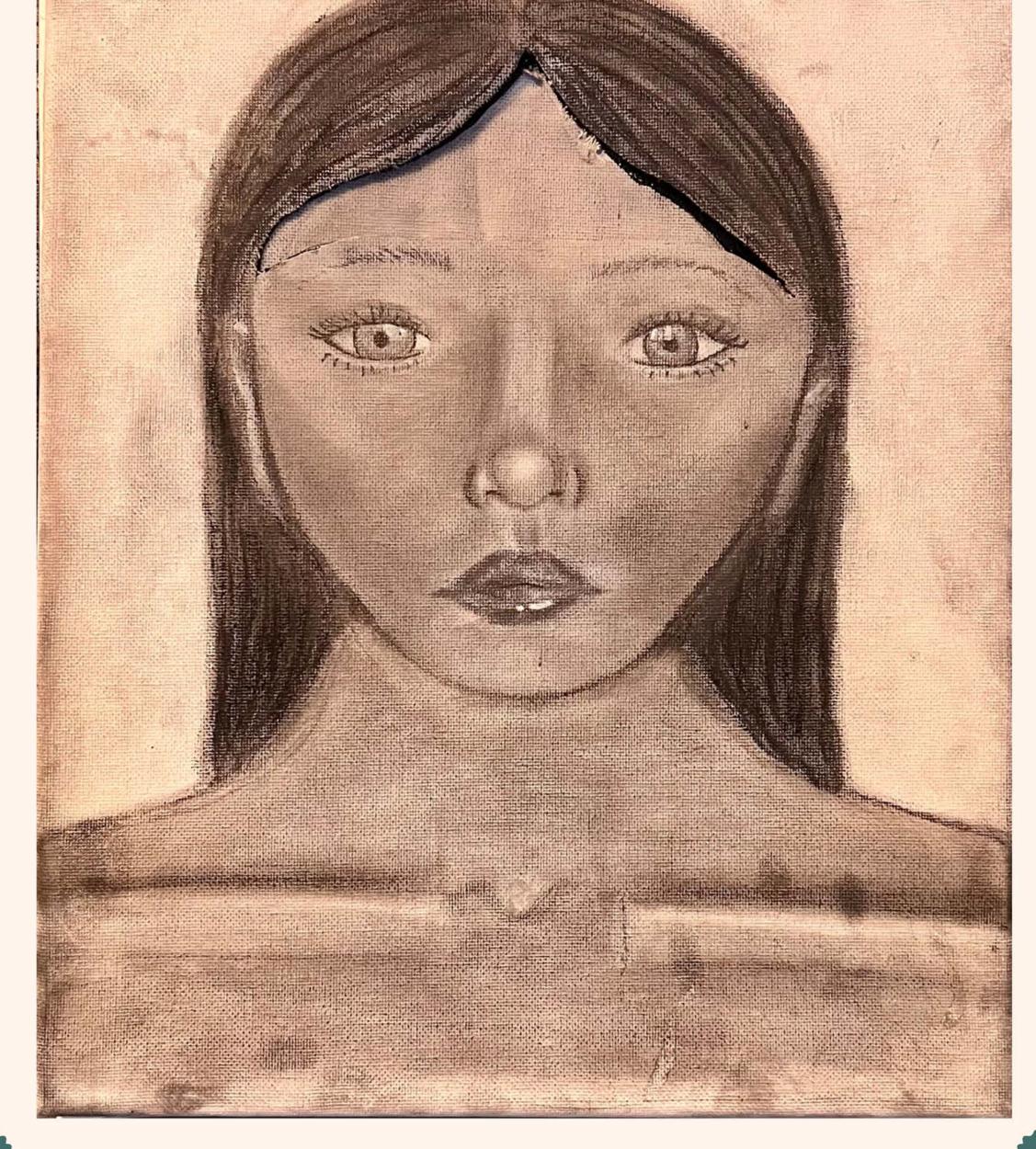
Form new wings Once I inevitably outgrow the old

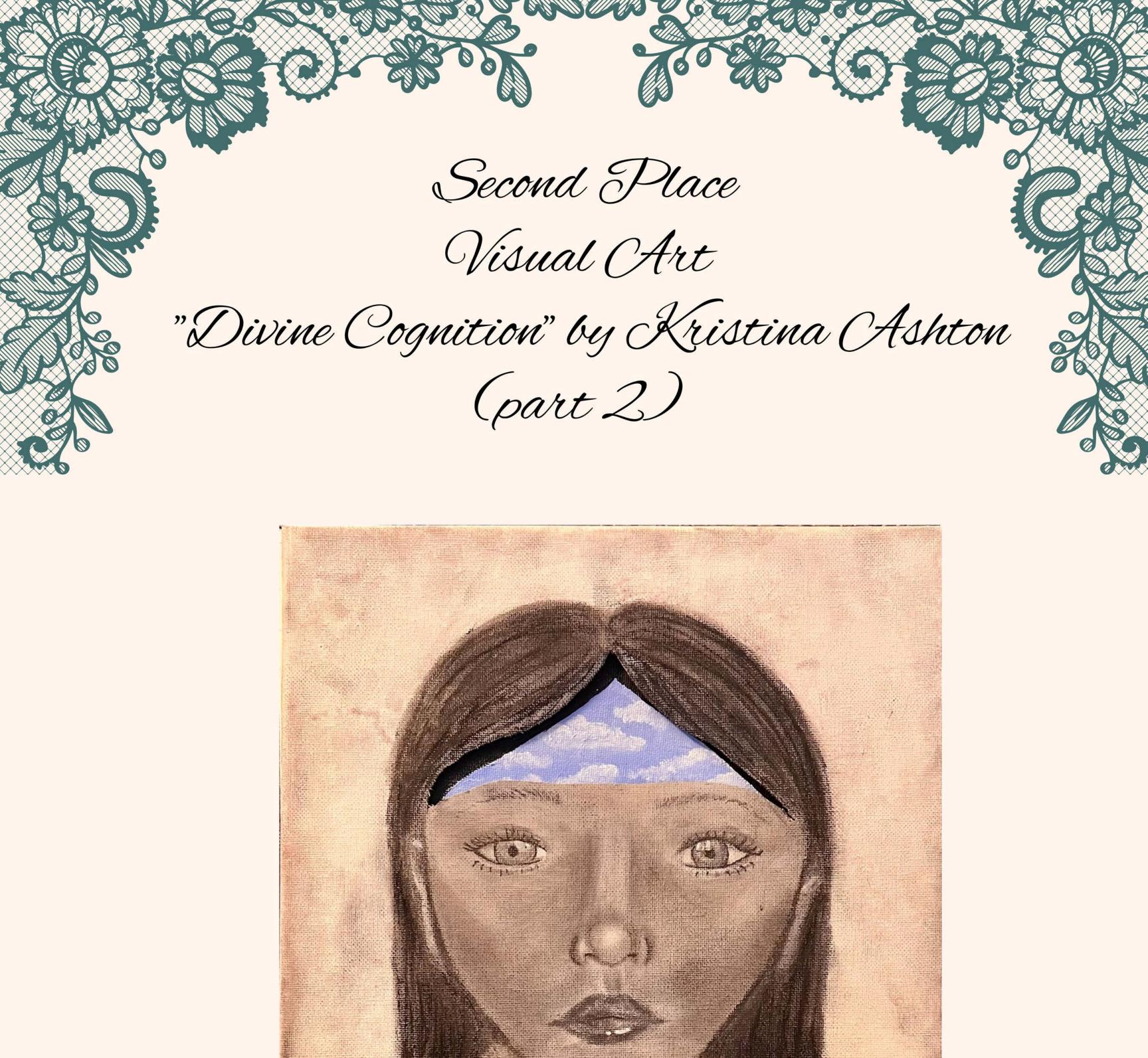


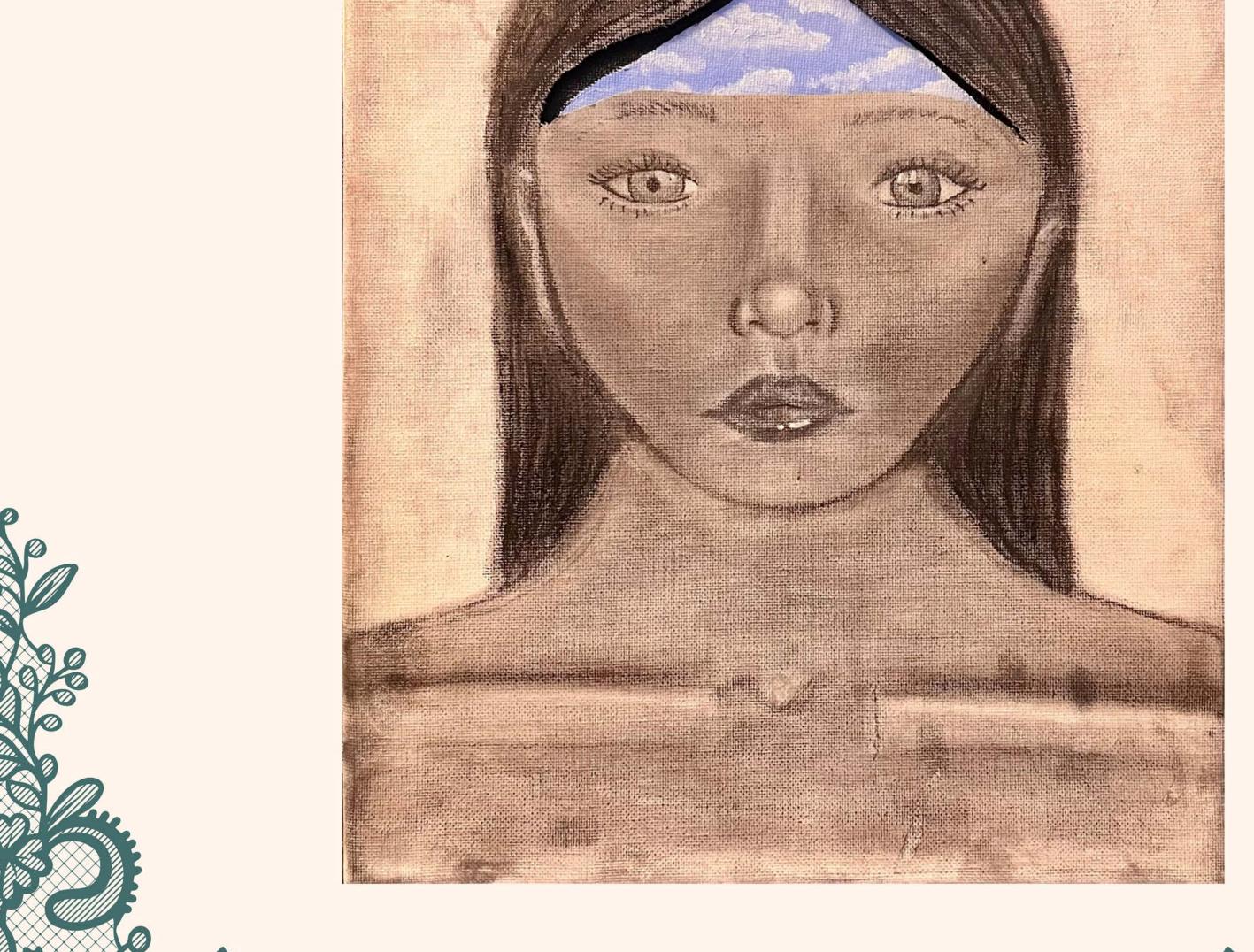




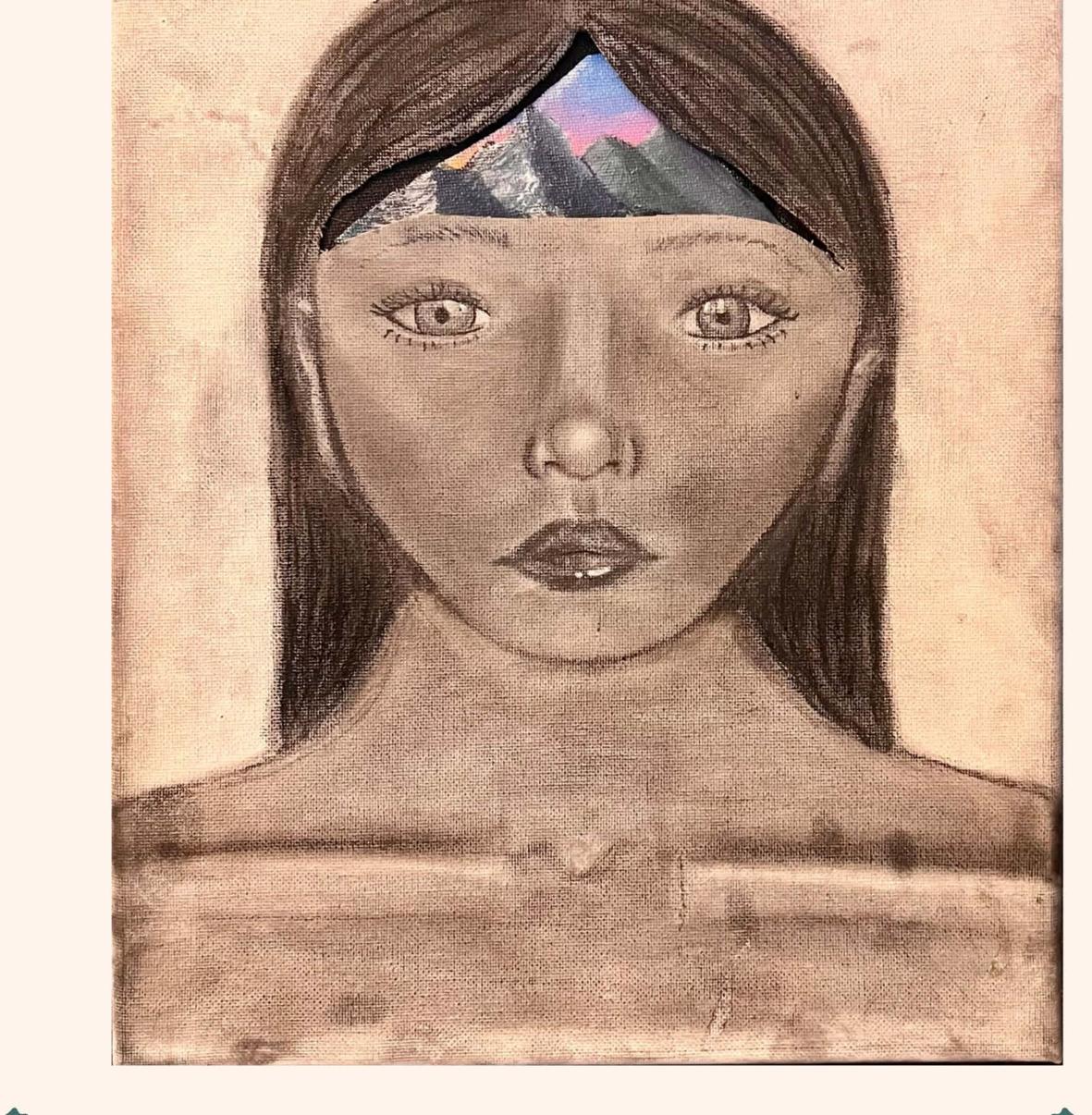




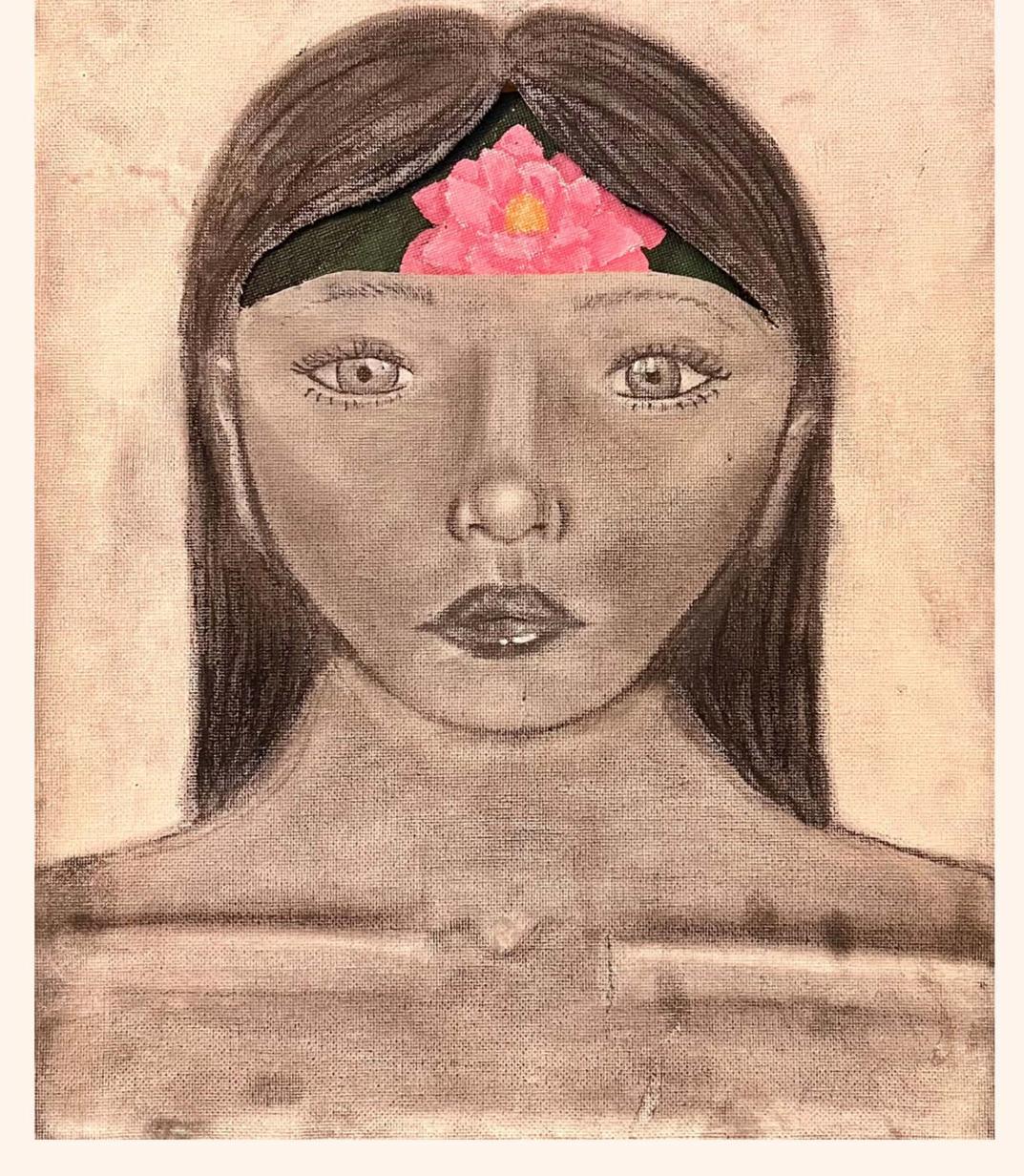




Second Place Visual Art "Divine Cognition" by Kristina (Ashton (part 3)

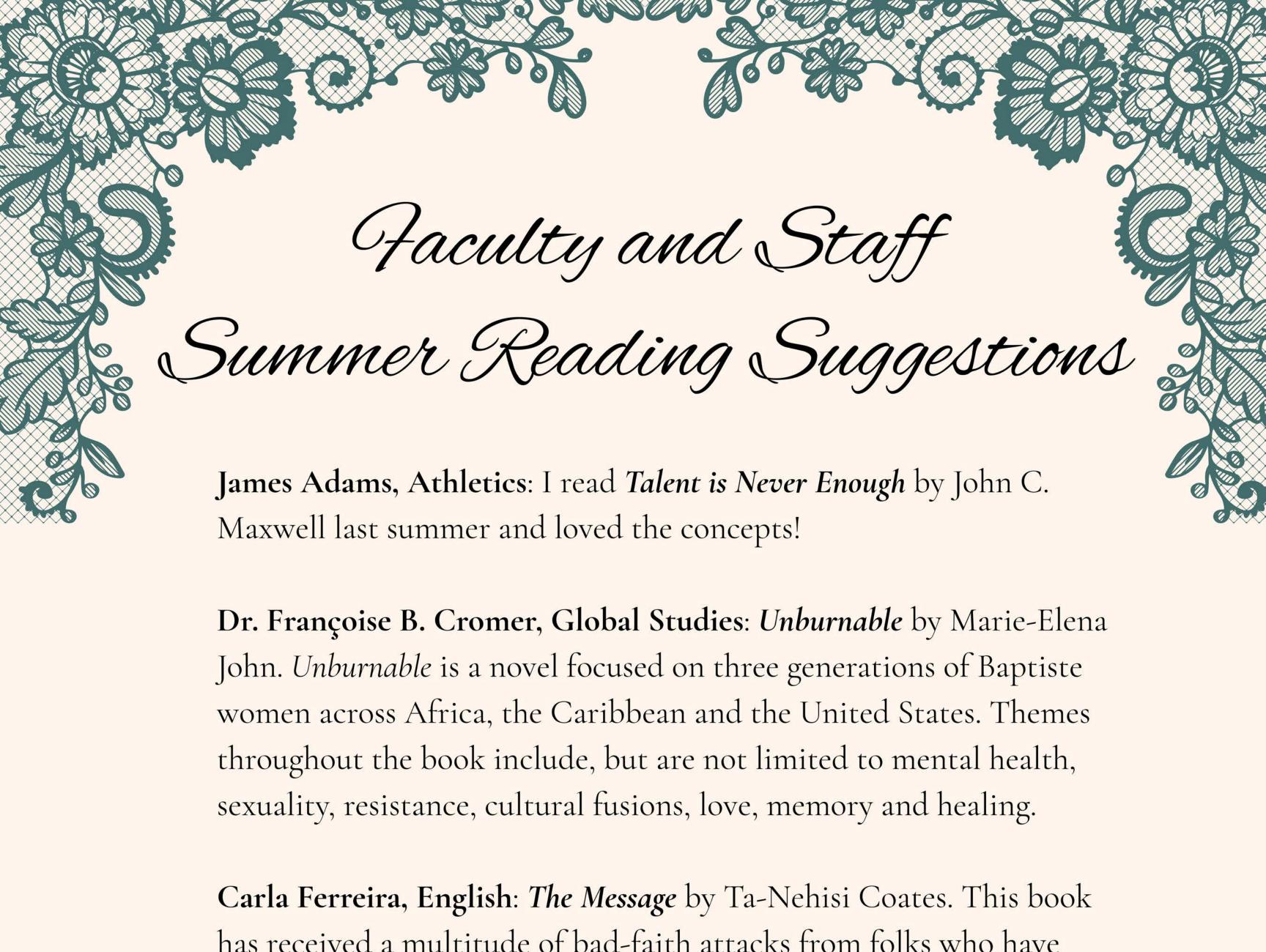


Second Place Visual Art "Divine Cognition" by Kristina (Ashton (part 4)



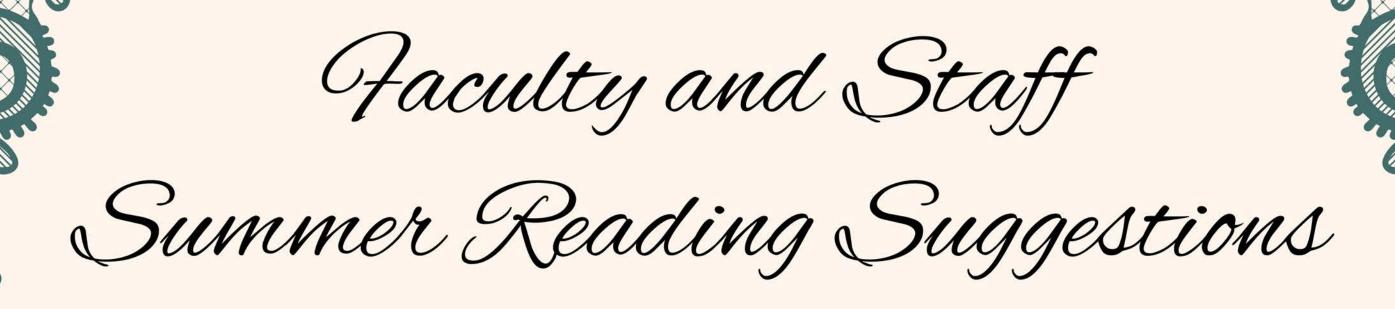






Carla Ferreira, English: *The Message* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. This book has received a multitude of bad-faith attacks from folks who have largely not read it (check out the assortment of one-star reviews on Goodreads!). This only highlights how necessary this brilliant essay collection meets memoir meets philosophical treatise on the state of the world is. While the final section on Palestine should be required reading for every American, it's the first essay on writing, beautifully addressed to Coates' students, that resonated with me the most as a teacher, student, and writer.

Father Joe Farias, Religion: *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch. It's about real life, diligence, responsibility and overcoming hurdles.



Dr. Karen P. Fasanella, Education: James by Percival Everett is a retelling of the Huckleberry Finn classic novel by Mark Twain. The story is told from the perspective of the enslaved Jim. It is a powerful book that evokes many emotions. *A copy of this book is in the Free Library in Santa Maria 11 Student Lounge. There are also many other great books for you to take for your summer reading. Please stop by to pick up a few books! It is always a great day to read!

Wendy Hahn, Business: Educated by Tara Westover. Amazing and unbelievable true story!!

Ellen Lohsen, Psychology: Grief One Day at a Time: 365 Meditations to Help You Heal after Loss by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. Open to any page and you will find comfort, understanding and permission to grieve and mourn in your own unpredictable yet necessary, struggling way; you are not alone.

Lynne McEniry, English: *Traveling Freely* by Roberto Carlos Garcia. This collection of essays could be read one at a time throughout the summer, or collectively for an in-depth exploration of "a multilayered investigation of institutional racism and the inherent exploitations of capitalism." Garcia's essays are at once accessible and profound.



Dr. Glen Sherman, Psychology: *Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor Frankl. Why read? A classic, compelling account of how people find meaning and remain hopeful even in the most dire of circumstances.

Dr. Laura Winters, English: Writing in the Dark by David Grossman. Brilliant essays about the soul destroying qualities of the desire for revenge. One of the living writers I admire most. Wise and compassionate.





It is a joy to welcome you again to the Community Quill. As you read these pages and view this art, you will encounter many different lives. We read to not only understand the world around us, but also to better understand ourselves. And so we come together in the spirit of community and solidarity, at a time where writing our words and sharing our art is more important than ever. In this year's magazine, our writers and artists share their visions for a more just future and in so doing, they help to create it. Please join us in this necessary work.

As faculty advisor to the Community Quill, I am deeply grateful for our student editors Emily Cruz-Gil and Madison Dodds whose ingenuity and care for this work helped this magazine come alive. The English Department faculty, including our department chair Lynne McEniry and our professor Dr. Laura Winters, are very proud of how they have grown as English majors. We wish them success and joy in their futures as teachers and we know that their future students will be lucky!

I want to especially thank Lynne McEniry for her guidance and attention to detail in helping us prepare this journal, for her compassion and for her wisdom throughout the school-year. Many thanks also to Dr. Ryan McLaughlin for his extraordinary work with the Catholic Social Teaching Competition. The Community Quill is proud to showcase these stunning and compelling creative works which shine a light on urgent issues as well as our shared values.

Much has been said about artificial intelligence, especially within the last few years. As a writer, teacher, and a human being, I think we need more than ever to pay attention to and celebrate human intelligence: not merely wit, but wisdom; not merely logic, but grace. Words matter and so does silence. May this journal inspire you to use your words to challenge injustice wherever you see it and to bear witness to not only tragedy, but also beauty. Women's suffrage activist Helen Todd spoke of the human need for "bread for all, and roses too": substance and joy.

Here is the Community Quill: bread for all, and roses too.

With gratitude and hope, Carla Ferreira



