

#002-F

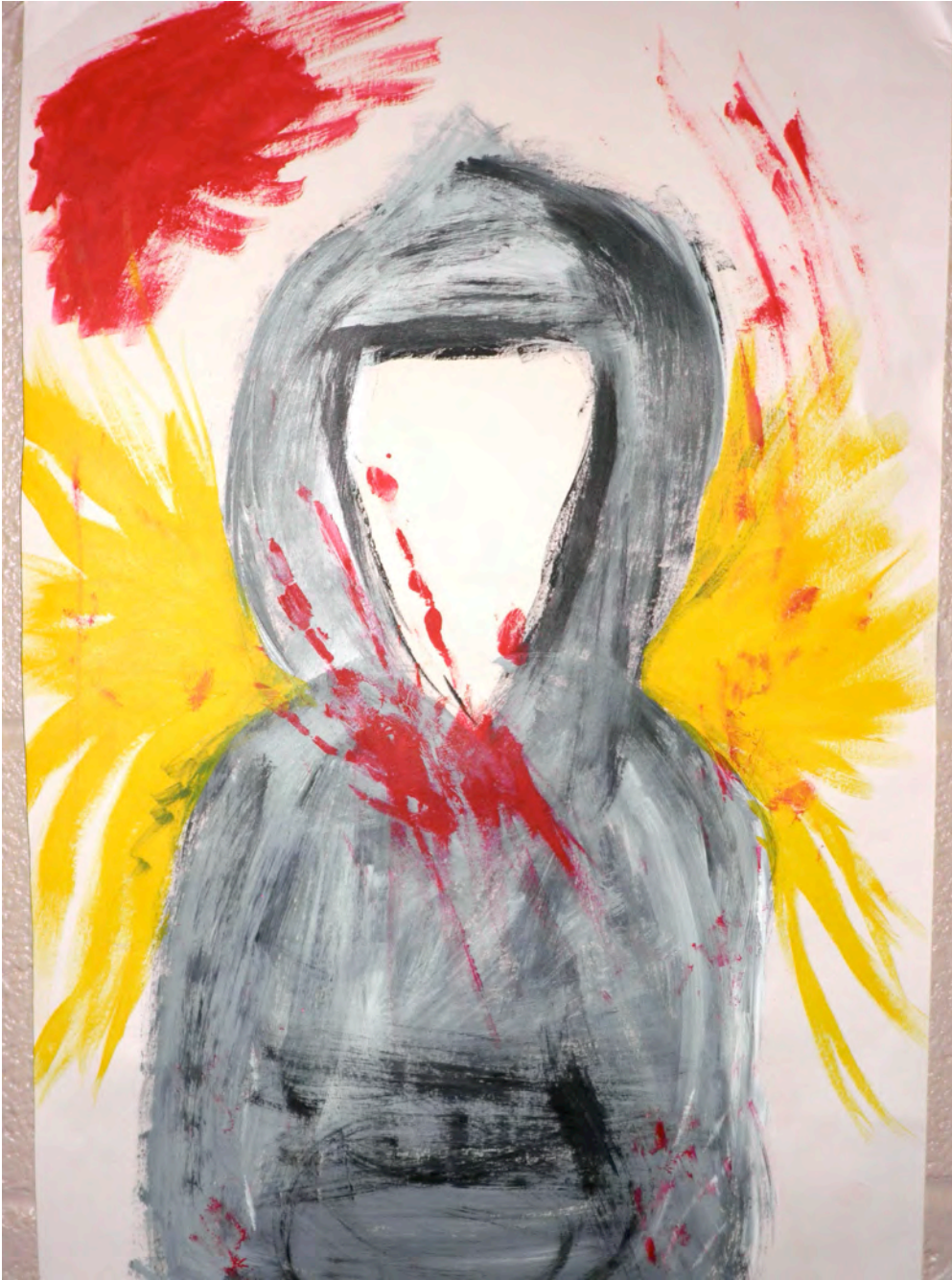


**Painting #1 Affirmation:** *I am consumed by the light and dark of my life. I am engulfed by the darkness that holds me close. It protects me, acting as a constant reminder for where I come from and who I am. Am I this darkness? How can I let darkness plague me? It rules over the empire I oversee. I must let the light in-drink it, smell it, breathe it, let it be me. Dark light-bright light-be true. My pain-body weighs heavy on who I have become. Unfortunately, my pain-body has granted me the most valuable lessons in life. My pain-body is not meant to haunt me, I must learn to accept this part of me and put it away. I must try and move past my pain-body, blanketed upon my soul. I see my pain-body in things, objects that are mute, but speak volumes. I see it in broken glass, chairs, doors and*

walls. I am howling, screaming, and sobbing towards the sky, hoping and praying that the light will win.

This painting is the most honest depiction of who I am. It is everything that I am and everything that I have been through. I recognized my pain-body when I lived with it at home, but it was only until I came to college and lived without it that I realized how I wanted to live every day. Our pain-body has the power to not only live in things or people we see every day but it also lives in our mind. I am not sure which is worse anymore. In painting number one my hands have painted what has been present in my life for a long time. I have this continuous battle between light and dark. Maybe as people, we should stop fighting light and darkness. Maybe I need to accept both as being present in my life because I have no control over the darkness but the light is mine.

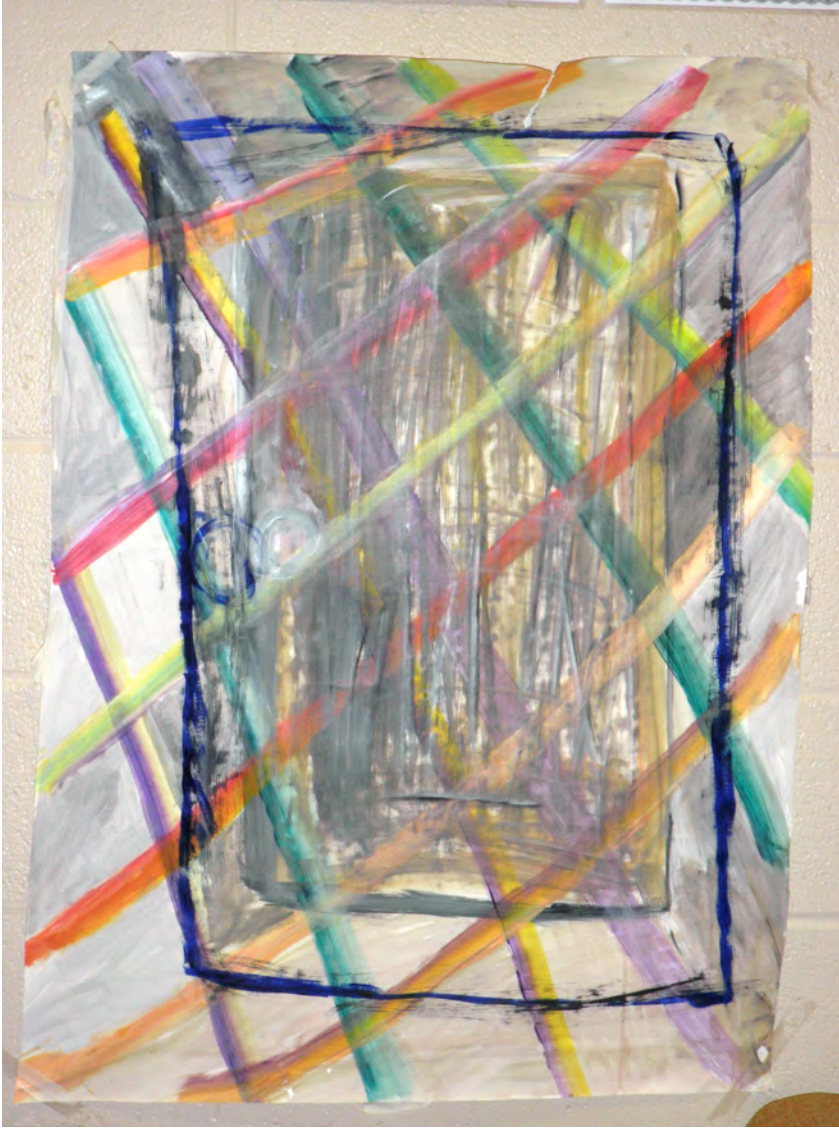
The problem with the darkness in the painting is not that I do not recognize that it is present, but I have no power over eliminating it. It is literally out of my hands and I no longer have control over how it ruins those I love. The darkness is in my family too and although I have recognized that it is there, they have yet to walk away from the cycle. It is hard to watch and let go of a darkness that made you relate to your family. It was the only thing I had connected with them. It was my life line and now that I recognize the darkness, it has placed a distance between my family and me. I want the light to win in this painting but the darkness must win a little bit too.



**Painting #2 Affirmation:** *I am injustice without a face.* Justice should not discriminate. Justice should not give pieces of it to certain people based on what they look like, how much money they make, or their power. Justice should be for everyone. Justice is displayed beautifully in constitutions, books, and speeches, but that is where justice stays. It does not move from those spaces and it never finds the light in the darkest places. Every day human rights are being violated and we never

stop to take a moment and look at people who suffer every day. We are responsible for these injustices and we are in charge of them. Our hands are marked with blood yet we feel powerless, “It is not our job to stop injustice,” “What am I going to do? I am just one person.” This is what we tell ourselves and we believe it and so we remain silent in a world screaming. We are in charge of not letting history repeat itself but no one teaches us a different path, a different way, a way of change. Here we are, in a world of pointless wars, a confusion of power. “With great power comes great responsibility. Why? Because power is an illusion. The desire to yield that is weakness; an exercise in ego. The fact is that all you really hold when you hold power is all the rope you need to hang yourself” (Unknown Author). We all want power and we are hungry for it and so we take other people into our hands, we hold them there, and crush them. What we fail to realize is we crush ourselves too.

This painting is about a boy named Trayvon Martin and the untold story of his life. He will never have a voice to speak for his injustice, but I can speak for him. I am upset at his injustice. We are labeling his story as racism on one side and self-defense on the other. Yet while we are labeling what happened, we are forgetting that justice is faceless because it should not discriminate. What does this have to do with me? What inspires me is justice and change but what angers me are stories like this one. How do we recognize that we are subjecting ourselves to injustices every day? We are allowing people to take advantage of one another, treat each other inhumanely, and in a dehumanizing way. We do not understand that our self-worth is just as important as others. We must pull ourselves out of our little bubbles of selfishness. Making ourselves aware of the injustices around us is the first step to bringing forth justice.



**Painting #3 Affirmation:** *I am many doors waiting to be opened.* These doors are doors of opportunity, success, failure, happiness, sadness and many others; all of which will make me who I am. The doors are shielded with a colorful fence of obstacles. You want to get through the door? Well, you need to get through the obstacle covering it. Don't be fooled, behind the door may be another obstacle. We think that opportunities should only lead to positive things but our greatest opportunities are found amongst the darkest of situations. We must find the power within ourselves to find them. When we finally get to the doors of our life, what makes us think we will be brave enough to walk through them? Who teaches us to walk

through these doors? Those we have been lucky enough to surround ourselves with are our teachers. They show us what our lives can look like if we walk through the door and some, unfortunately, show us what our lives will look like if we do not. I have been surrounded by many teachers. They have pushed me, inspired me, hurt me, cursed me and loved me. Yet, all of my teachers have helped me find the strength within myself to not only open doors but walk through them.

I painted a door because I am about to go into a world where many doors will be waiting for me to open. I love having choices in life but choices have plagued me this year. Whether it is a choice that I must make in the classroom or a choice to stay in NY or go abroad, I have been completely conflicted. How will I know that I have made the right choice? Unfortunately, only until I open and walk through a door will I know. That is the difficult part of opportunities; sometimes we only know they opportunities after we chose to go through the door Should I go? Should I stay?. I am scared and excited all at the same time but I do not want my fear to control my experience. Being fearless is a challenge but I have done it before and I will do it again.



neglected. All of us are searching for attention that cannot be reached. Cancer is watching and laughing at us. I cannot let it win. I will not let it win. If cancer ever finds itself within me, I will not lose. I am too strong for that. I have power and strength. Cancer has beat me down enough and now I can leave it where it is; on the floor, alone and dirty.





**Painting #5 Affirmation:** *I am strong and powerful.* I embody many people; the strong and the weak, the successful and the failures, the thin, heavy, curved, short, and the tall, the brown, dark, yellow, orange, the voiceless and the outspoken. Layers and layers of cloth show the many patterns that encompass an Indian woman. Who is an Indian woman? She is a temple of respect and value. She is a woman of power that does not manipulate, hurt, or oppress. She is a woman of sharing and caring. She is me and I am all that I can be of her. She has no face or no one kind of beauty. She is not blonde and blue eyed and she is not famous. She has a different kind of fan. Her fans are made of those who stretch their hands out to the sky for help; for she takes them.

This painting encompasses the woman I want to be. I do not know what I will become or what I will look like when I get there, but I see myself as being successful. After the long journey I have taken through many roads, I have seen many things, but this painting shows me that I

have more to see. I do not need to be defined nor do I yearn to be defined. I am content with never knowing how I will define myself but I want to be successful and I want to be someone. I want to represent Indian women and their dreams. I want to show that we too can be powerful and strong. We can bring justice home and make decisions that affect the economy in a positive way. We can make decisions and be confident about them. We can smell fear and we are not intimidated by someone stronger than us, more intelligent, for we open our arms to learn from them. I want to represent all kinds of beauty, not just one. I want to represent what cannot be defined because to define me places a limit on my soul and who I can become.

**Conclusion:**

After viewing this series of paintings, I observed that I have grown drastically since I started college and especially since I started this year. I feel more solidified in where I want to go in my career and I am really proud of that. I know I want to create change in the education system but I am afraid I will get lost in all the clutter of manipulation and politics. If I hold on to who I am and my ultimate goal then I can do anything.

I never know what to call the darkness in my life and it only makes sense now to call it “pain-body.” My pain is very present in my life and I am not afraid to show the world my pain-body. In fact, looking back at my first painting, I was never aware that I would be so open to displaying my pain-body. It was an honest painting and I do not regret painting it but I pity the girl I am when I am in that state. I do not want to be subjected to being in that state anymore. In order to do that I need to really bring to life what my pain body is and how I can be rid of it with light. I remember doing the meditation exercise where I held a pain-body in my one hand and an opportunity or a place where I want to be in my other hand. I wanted to cry after that exercise because both my opportunities and pain-bodies are actively present in my life. They both weigh the same. My

past has defined me in the sense that it has made me stronger and confident to take on other obstacles or opportunities that come my way.

I have never thought to paint what cancer looks like in my life. It is interesting that when people look at that painting they feel happy because of all the bright colors but it is the exact opposite to me. I am done with cancer and I am tired of it because it haunts my life. Yet, I have grown up tremendously because of it. It has torn my family apart but my family was torn before cancer. Now that I am about to move back home, I think I have new obstacles to overcome because I have changed and my family is still in the same cycle of hurt. I must now cope with watching them continue in the cycle, and I cannot intervene in helping them anymore. I used to be the mediator between the injustices that I faced at home every day but I cannot go on being that because then I let my pain-body win. I will have many chances to fall back into the system and I do not want that for myself. It would be a disservice to everything I learned of myself and I cannot give it all up in one moment.

It is going to be a hard long road from here because I have to let go of saving the people that I love and let them learn how to swim on their own. A few will swim, some will tread water, and some will drown. I will be watching but continuing on through life. I will encourage them to keep swimming but I must go on myself. My paintings have started with me drowning and screaming for help and have ended with me swimming. One day I will reach the island, a new world for myself, and when I get there I will build a new foundation. I cannot wait to start anew because I have been waiting and fighting for a long time. Finally, I am ready.

