

Save Me From What I Want
by Marissa M.

This isn't right, I told myself as I walked through the steel metal doors of the Medical Wing. *This isn't right*, I told myself as I sensed my mouth telling my parents that I wanted to be a doctor. *This isn't right*, I told myself as I marked, "Health Science Major" on my choice sheet. *This isn't right*.

I stared up at the panoramic portrayal of my life that was drawn in ink and watercolor. These small pieces of artwork had made me feel as if I was living my life with vibrant colors, golden suns and lush, lively grass. But as I look down at the blaring yellow piece of paper that was forcing me to make my selection, I knew that my life would eventually cause me to feel that my existence was monochromatic and waning, and I knew that I couldn't reverse the fateful choice that was about to be made. All of the counselors' words were revolving in my head, telling me that this was "my choice." Even if their words are true, I can't shoulder the burden of carrying my parents' distress. I felt like I was being preyed on, except instead of the predator having menacing claws, it was my parents' words that forced me to feel fearful. "*Health Sciences, Health Sciences, Health Sciences,*" the predators whispered into my ear. Stop, stop, make it stop.

In my heart, I accepted that painting was my real passion- watching the colors swirl together into a masterpiece of true caliber will always seem like a magnificent utopia, which manages to draw me away from a colorless life that could eventually become real. In my head, I choose to obey my family, who I thought had my best interests at heart. Just as the colors in a painting can become muddy and brown, my head has become chaos as well. I feel like paint, being pushed around by the water, forced to be a soft pink when I'm truly a regal red. Everyone I've ever known has told me to decide with my heart. But what if my heart is clouded by the silly conclusion that I could make a living out of painting? I'm allowed the freedom to choose the colors that I mix together in my paintings- but lately, that feels like the only constant in this disorganized mess.

"Have you made a decision yet?" My parents asked as they cautiously entered my room. I realized that while choosing Performing and Visual Arts would make me happy, it would become a source of resentment for my them. And as I looked into the eyes of my exuberant parents, I made my choice. The paints had dried, the water had stopped moving, and I was forced to stow away my passion for painting. I knew that my life was going to be drab and dreary once I said the words that bound me to the future I never wanted. I compel myself to imagine a life of sterile hospitals and robotic movements. As hard as I try, it's hard to keep the vision of the finished piece in my mind when it still looks like nothing I want it to be. "Congratulations," my mom says softly. I weakly turn the corners of my mouth into a smile.

I remove one of the paintings on my wall and I stare at it. I stare and stare and stare until I don't know what to do anymore. So I cry. I cry so hard that the painting becomes blurred and the image starts to swim under my gaze. I remember when I spilled water onto one of my paintings. Back then, I hadn't realized how much it hurt. Now, as I feel the water wiping away all the traces of a beautiful life and leaving behind a waning human being, I understand how painful losing yourself can be.

Fifteen Years Later

I can still remember their hushed voices, persuading me to choose the Study of Medicine. I used to believe that becoming a person of prestige in the medical world was my true fate. I now know that my true calling won't make me dread going to work in the morning. My true calling won't make me cringe when I hear, "Dr. Rowe." My true calling will make me a queen, reigning over my paper and declaring the water to move, declaring the paints to revolve around each other, and declaring all of it to stop. But running away to a kingdom will never be enough to help me escape this dreadful reality. "I want to be a doctor," I say to myself. *This isn't right.*