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## Bleeding Ink: Creativity in Grief for Resilience

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Gabriel Sayre

5/11/17

Honors Project Summary

Bleeding Ink: Creativity in Grief for Resilience

**To begin, I will give you this optical lens for the simple reason of shifting perspectives. Not only that but it brings my art pieces to life. Unfortunately, since these are all photos it will be difficult to access its full potential as it is to be done in person. It is also fun to look through.**



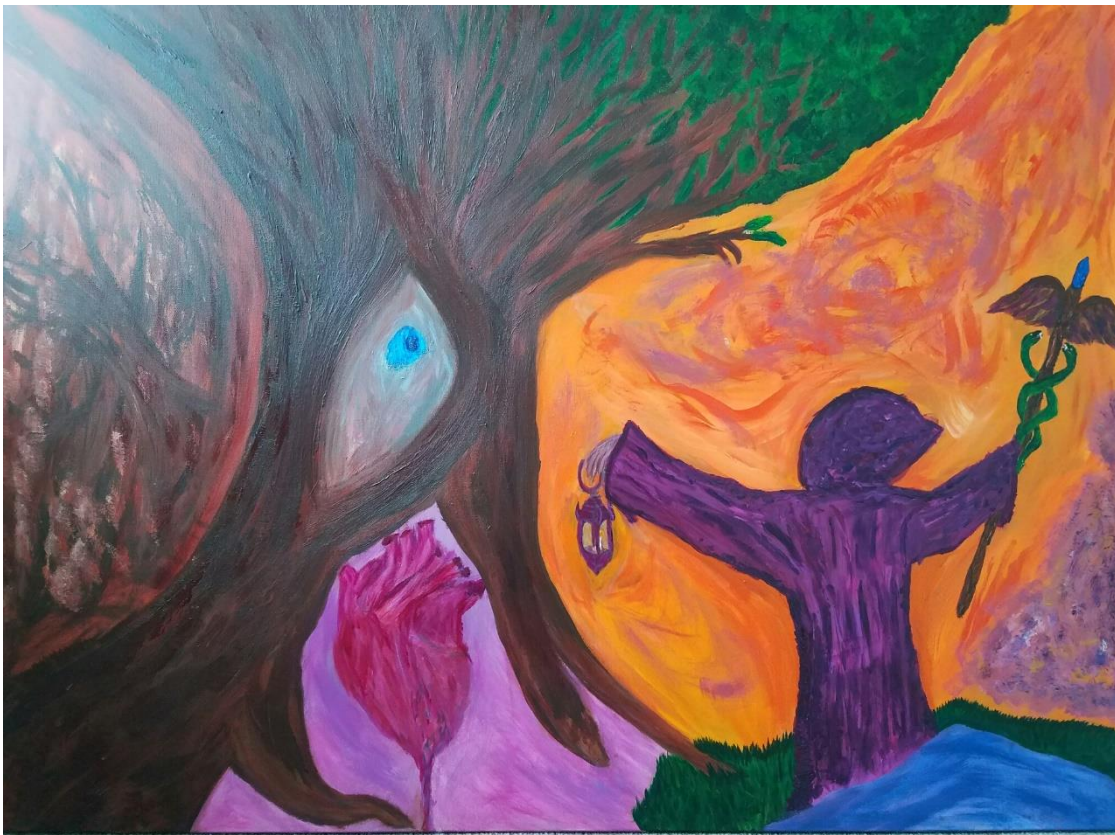
**This part of my journey began with the death of my father. A few people would apologize to me after saying this but the truth of the matter is if he did not die, I would not be the same person today.**

**After he had died, there was a fiery hurricane of emotions revolving within me. I had no idea what to do. One day, I chose to draw on a lined piece of paper. Slowly the drawing grew from still lines to lines with movement to an image that I could only describe as a filled in Rorschach. Think of the ink blots psychologists use. Instead of black in the middle, there were spiraling intricate designs that took several days (or longer) to complete. At this point, I had felt inspired. Upon my next visit to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, I bought a black moleskin journal.**



This is the first image of my Black Book, where I had begun scribing my bereavement into. On the left is where I placed my most intense emotions that I could not handle within myself. Within the right side, I brought into play a character to help me along my journey. Above the character is a heart. In grief, pieces of the heart seem to go missing as we miss our loved one.

When deciding which page to paint for my honors project, few had competition with this one because as the first page it implied all the others that follow. The painting itself feels like the next scene to this drawing rather than a mere replication.

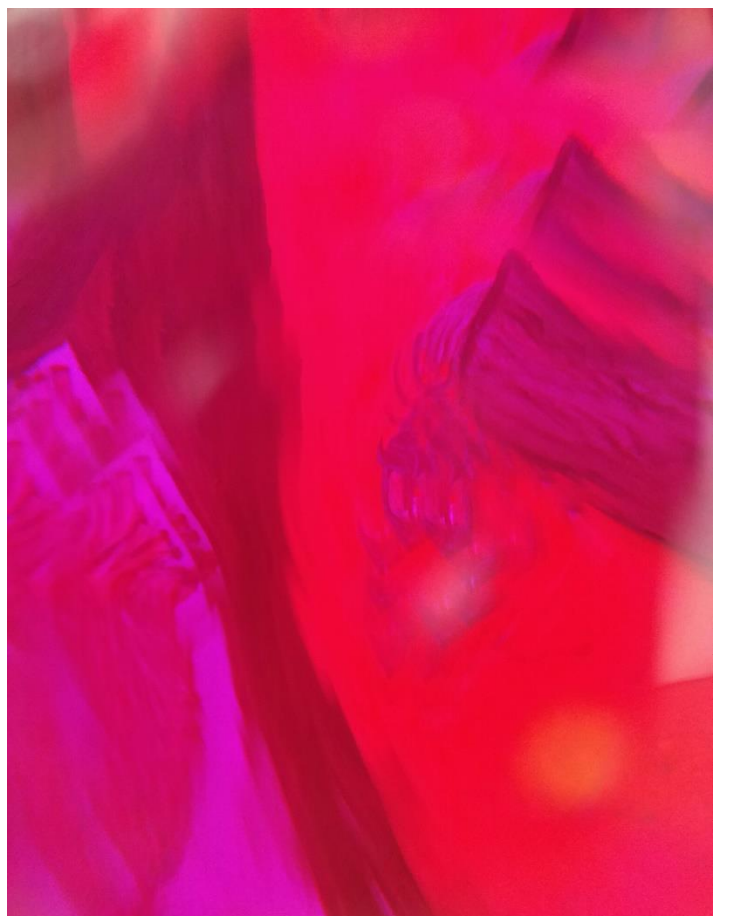


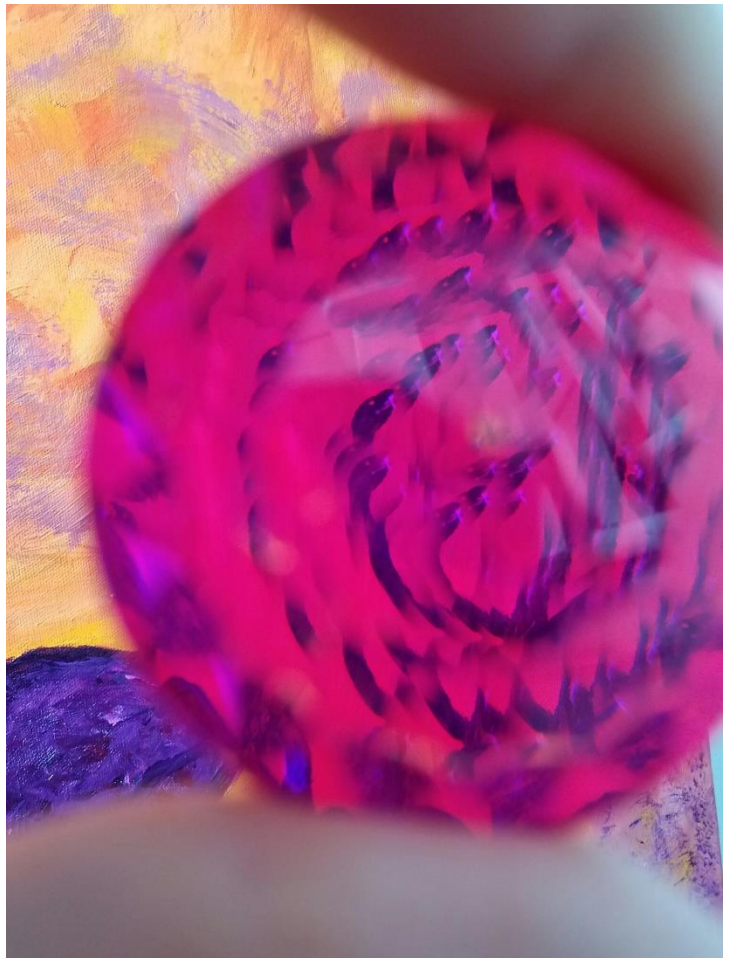
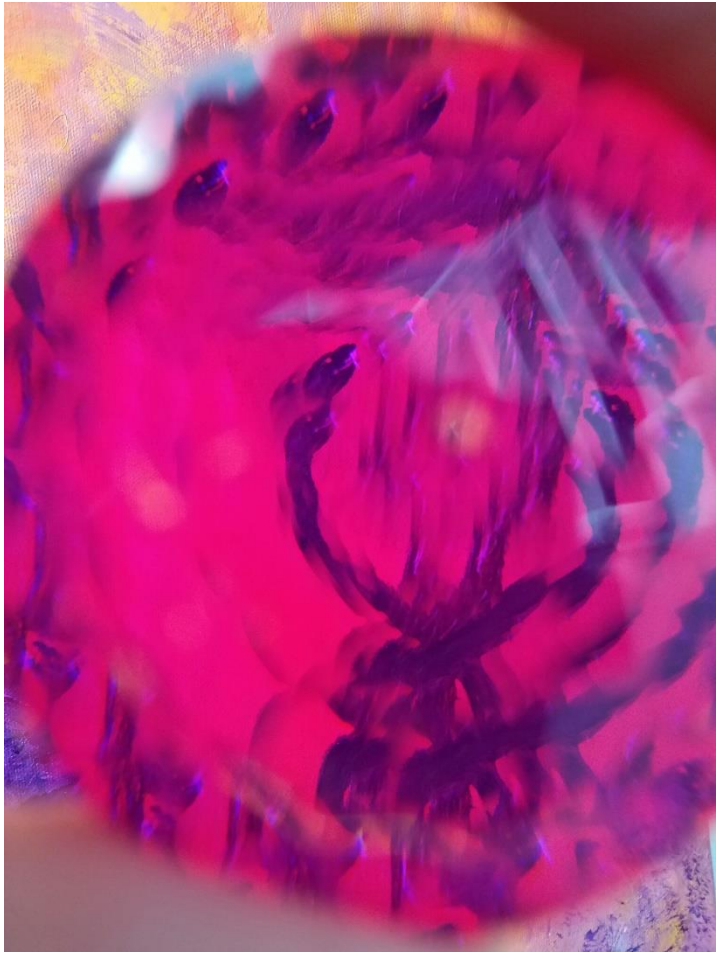
**Up to this point my paintings have almost been purely abstract. Putting symbols and solid shapes into my paintings was a relatively new concept to me yet I am greatly satisfied with the results of my project. The symbols are as follows:**

- ❖ **Bag of bereavement** - The odd almost see-through multi-colored object to the right of the person is the bag of sorrows one already had leading up to the event. In one class I took freshman year, this concept was called the Grief Backpack by Carolyn Hames. This grief satchel is what makes it harder to get up in the morning. It is all the heartbreak we have endured and all the hardships to come. No matter who you are, you have one following you. Sometimes it is invisible and other times it is so heavy that it is all a person looms over.
- ❖ **The figure** – Keep in mind this could be anyone. This means it can be you, me or even the person who had died. Take notice to the left hand and how it has a neutral skin tone because I want to accentuate the point that it can be absolutely anyone. It could even be the grim reaper as someone speculated during the event.
- ❖ **The Caduceus** - is represented by the staff in the right hand. The Caduceus is a symbol of healing, most recognizable as the symbol hospitals or clinics use. This symbol has many forms and is found all over the globe but originates in ancient India, where it is associated with the Kundalini energy. The snakes on the staff represent vitality, movement and secret knowledge. The wings carry the intentions of the healer to the higher powers. Overall, the staff represents spiritual healing and growth.
- ❖ **The heart** - This symbol is consistent with the original drawing only its placement had changed from being held above the character to being beneath the tree. Remember how I had mentioned that this painting felt like the next scene to the image? This is one of the elements that brings this to view because the person no longer has the heart. The person had either lost it or given it away.
- ❖ **The Tree** – is symbolizing conscious perspective and growing toward the light. In the center of the tree there is an eye focused upward toward the light. While the eye is directed toward hope, it is a cold blue because it knows the sadness to come. The heart lies under the eye. One must dig to the roots of the experience to initiate healing for what has been lost.
- ❖ **The Lantern** - This is a more ambiguous symbol but it is what wraps the whole painting together. The right side of the image is almost glowing with light casted from the lantern, while the left is hidden behind the shadow of the tree. Considering the tree represents perspective, it represents what one is focusing on during bereavement. The bereaved just want to feel better, to feel whole again. Yet throughout this process, we blind ourselves to the deeper issues like the grief satchel behind our backs or the unprocessed grief hidden behind the shadow of the tree. That left side is all the heart's inner darkness and woe. Out of fear, the left side is suppressed. Within my art I explored that left side, and that is why am I who I am.



## Optical Lens Tree Fun







From here on the following Images and Prints are context for the painting. These came later in my journey yet source from the same black book.

**This image is about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> into the Black Book, representing a darker part in my journey. The prints tell another story.**





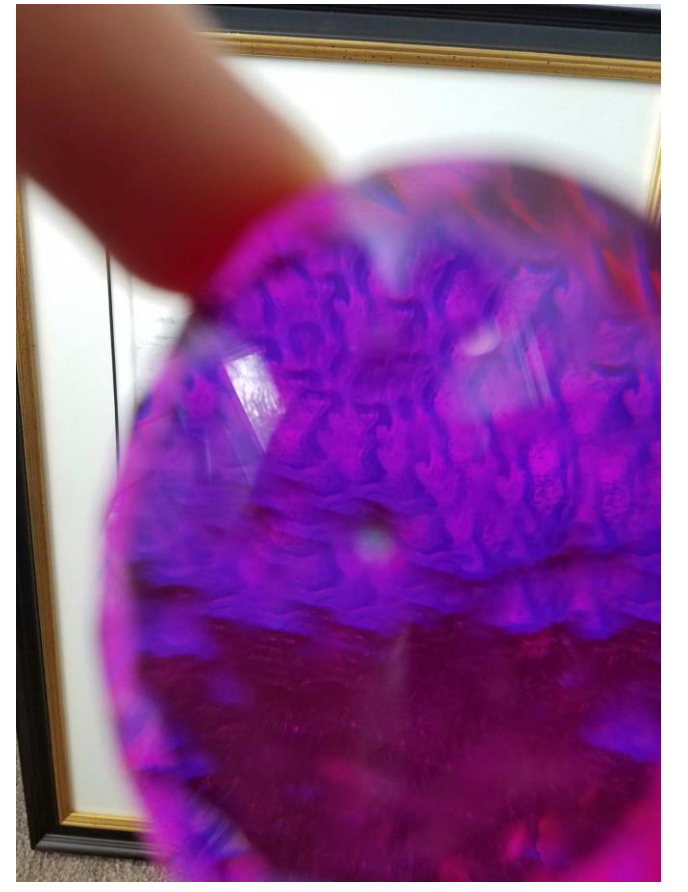
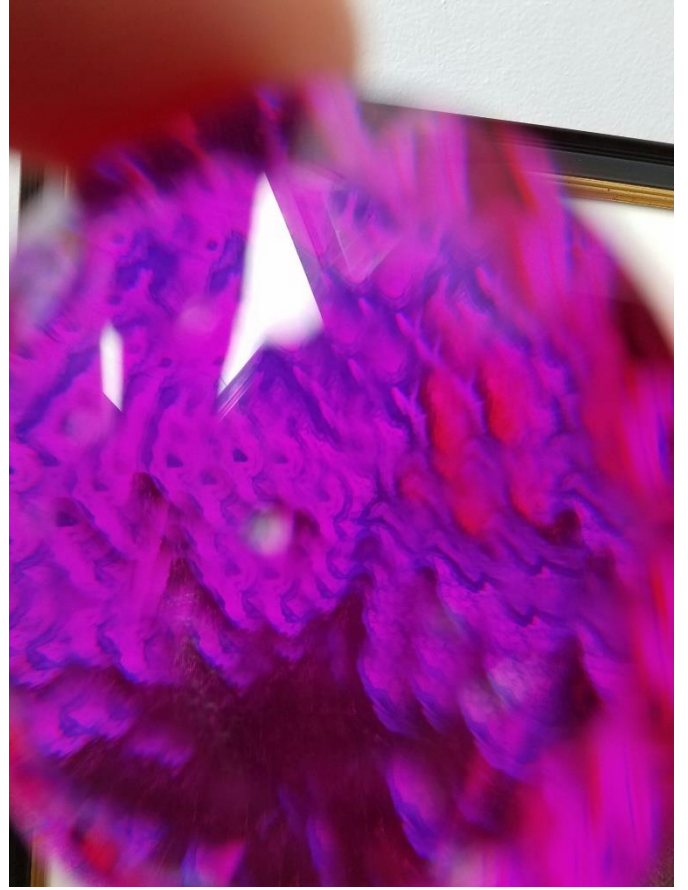
**In context of the series, this print would represent the moments leading to the loss. Everything is bright, there are sky, sun and nature appeals above and a clear cut golden path to the future. There is darkness but it goes unseen.**





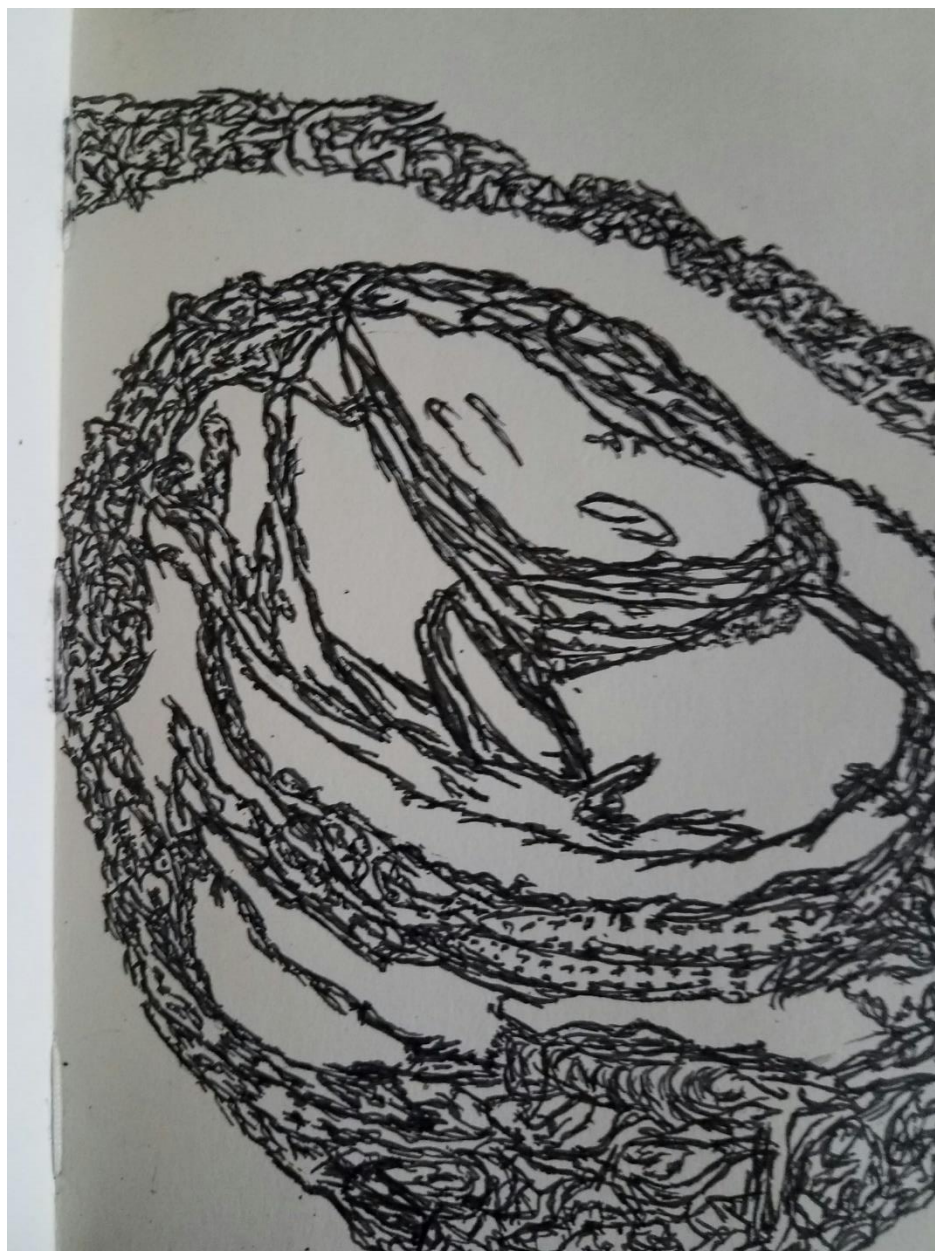
**This Print represents the moment of loss when all color fades. At this moment in time, even the once golden road seems be clouded by the surrounding darkness. The once golden goal is no longer in sight as well. The future path is no longer clear and the destination may have even changed.**

## More Optical Lens Fun





**This drawing is about halfway through my Black Book. At this point in my journey, the darkest part of my grief has subsided. There is a great deal of negative space in this one showing that light is beginning to illuminate the darkness.**







**At this stage in the journey, one can make the decision to grow or be diminished by the loss. At the center is where the decision is made and from there it spirals and grows through the darkness until the center diamond (representing the core loss) shrinks into a smaller and more manageable form (upper right).**



**Here is where we take the loss deeper into ourselves. The loss sinks into the depths of the deep ocean within the mind's subconscious, where it is no longer afflicting but instead it is settled itself as part of who we are.**



**May my imagery and experience act as a guide for understanding loss as well as offering a potential path to healing for the bereaved. Be well, you are loved.**

**Last bits of optical fun for the road**

