

HEALING
THROUGH ART:
INDIGENOUS
RESILIENCE

SUMMER WILDBILL

HEALING THROUGH ART: OVERVIEW

PAINTING

The goal of the series of oil paintings is to raise awareness about the silence of the MMIW issue. The oil paintings each tell their own story, sharing different perspectives of advocacy.

POETRY

The oil paintings are given a clearer meaning through a series of poems, which correlate to each painting and give further insight into the different perspectives.

ADVOCACY

The goals of each of the paintings and poetry is to advocate for the MMIW movement, while healing and empowering victims.

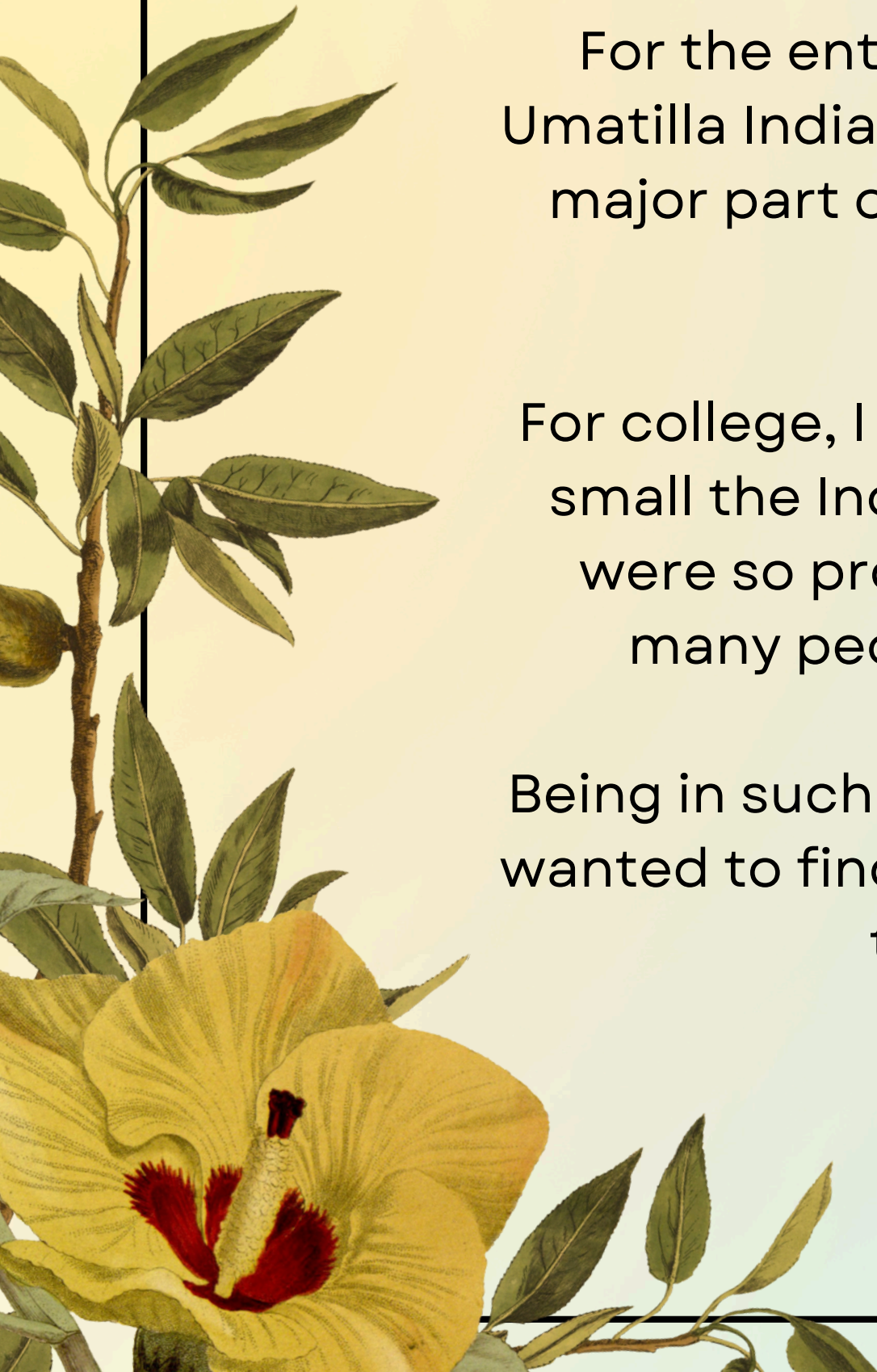


BACKGROUND

For the entirety of my life, I grew up on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Eastern Oregon. For me, my community was a major part of my life growing up and I was involved through being on the youth council and volunteering at events.

For college, I went across the country to attend NYU and realized truly how small the Indigenous population was outside the reservation. Issues that were so prominent, such as MMIW, on my reservation were issues that many people at NYU, or even in New York, had never even heard of.

Being in such a large place where there is a lack of Indigenous community, I wanted to find ways to advocate and bring awareness for Indigenous issues through art in an urban space, such as New York.





METHODOLOGY

I am currently the social media chair for the Native American Indigenous Student Club at NYU, which I feel was an essential part of the developing stages of my project.

I got to meet with Indigenous NYU researchers, and also other Indigenous students, regarding the MMIW movement and figure out ways to reach an urban population to raise awareness.

We decided on doing artwork because New York is very immersed in the art scene it would be a great way to bring awareness and have people interested in the issue.



OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS

Outcome One

Being able to find an Indigenous issue within the community, and share common interest - both professional and personal.

Next Step One

Upload artwork on to digital online gallery.

Outcome Two

Being able to share my artwork at meetings and through social media.

Next Step Two

Continue to create and advocate through art and create a separate art Instagram account.

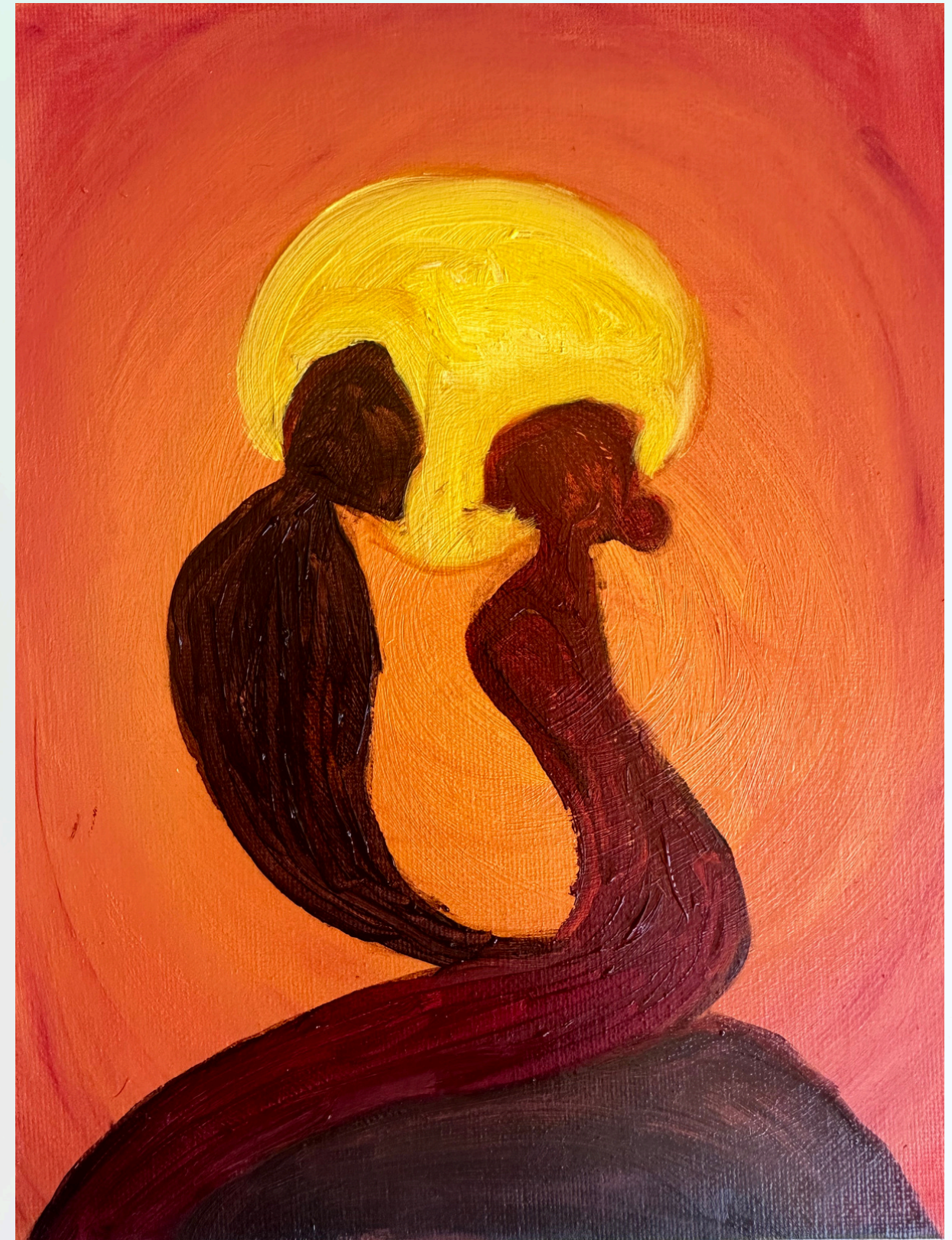
Delicacy

A planted seed to start
A few months pass, and after a cold winter there is sunshine
at last
Then comes rain, and a little sprout
By the month of May, finally in full bloom
A bright red flower sways in the wind
It stands strong planted just beneath
However, someone sees the bright red flower
Sees it for all of it's beauty
Tries to see if they might be stronger too
Strangers come and pick this flower
Only to find out its root was stronger
However, no matter how strong the flower is
The perpetrator seems to always win
Being picked and taken isn't a weakness, for this flower.
The flower knows it's beauty and it's strength
However, the life of the flower is delicate
And it's the negligence of the perpetrator that causes this



Intuition

Two People exist within me
One is present me, one is past me
I call this past me intuition
She knows what will come because she has experienced
what has happened.
Then there is present me, who feels her inside when I
suspect something
Something from the past following from the shadows
This intuition is shared among all women
All Indigenous women who feel the intuition of their
grandmother, aunt
To understand and grieve the pain of loss, but to feel the
intuition within
To help share the message and lessons with your daughter.



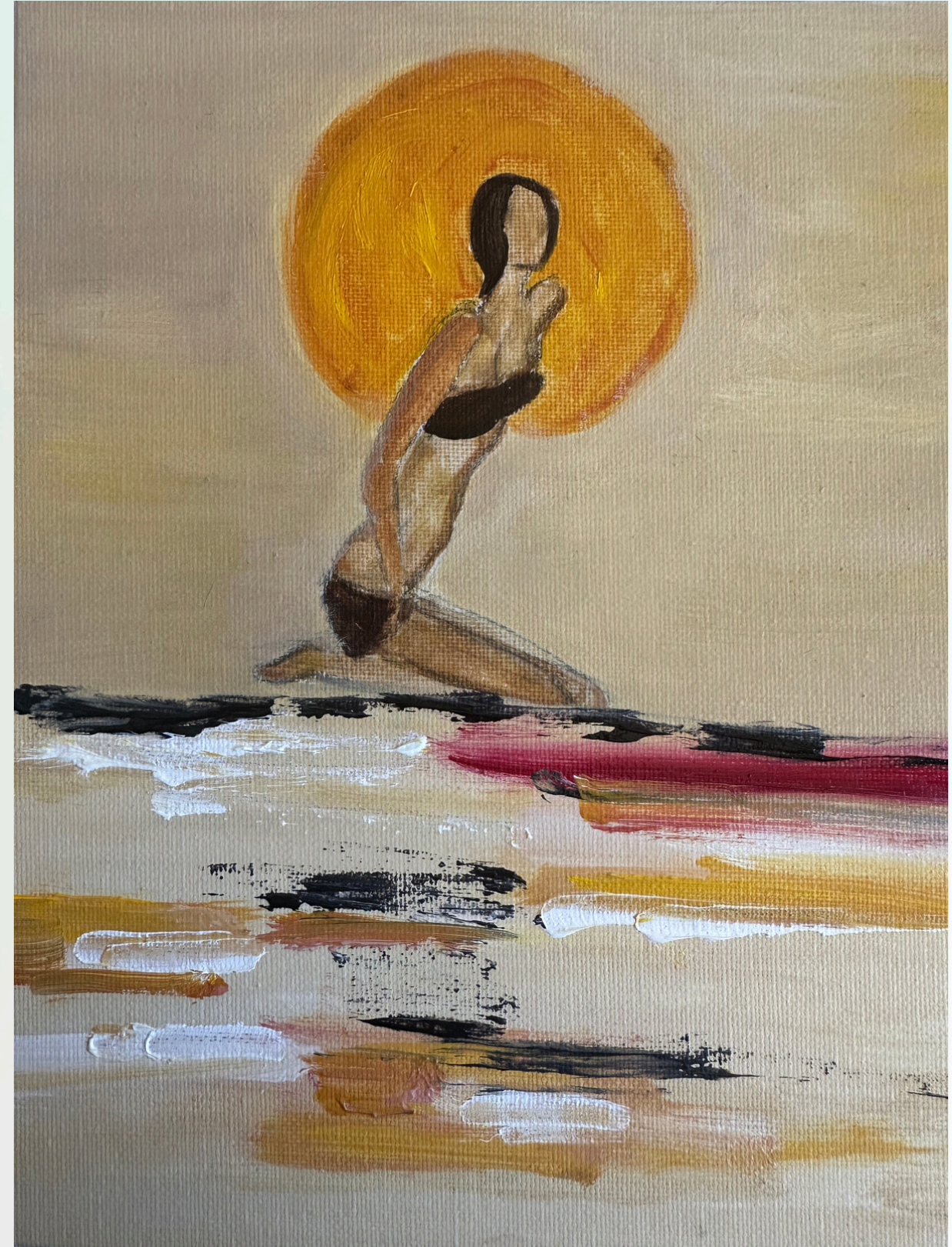
Complacency

I am not meant to be put into this box
The box that tells me what to do
Who I am
Where I belong
I know who I am
I know what I like
I know what I believe in
I don't want to be put into the box of complacency
I am not just told to be in this box
I am forced into this box
Taken from what I know
And me and my sisters
Are forced into the box of white man's complacency



A full sun

The sun doesn't revolve around the earth,
It is the earth that revolves around the sun.
However, my earth stopped moving when you went missing
So I believe the sun revolves around me now.
As you're my sun and my light that continues
That shines not just for you
But for everything and every sister that has also gone
missing.



White Blindness

I close my eyes and open again
However, I still seek darkness
I don't know where to go
Or where I am being led.
My condition is out of my jurisdiction
My eyes are covered
And so are yours
Both by white perpetrators
Who still say they don't believe you





Thank You!

