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# This is Where

*Poems on Place and Memory*



**COMIE SOTIO, 14**  
from "FAMILY PRIDE"

My life is like a package  
Full of surprises  
That I don't like  
I never wished for this  
I never wished for that

If you ask for my age  
It does not matter  
Because my experience  
is a larger number

my experience is a larger number

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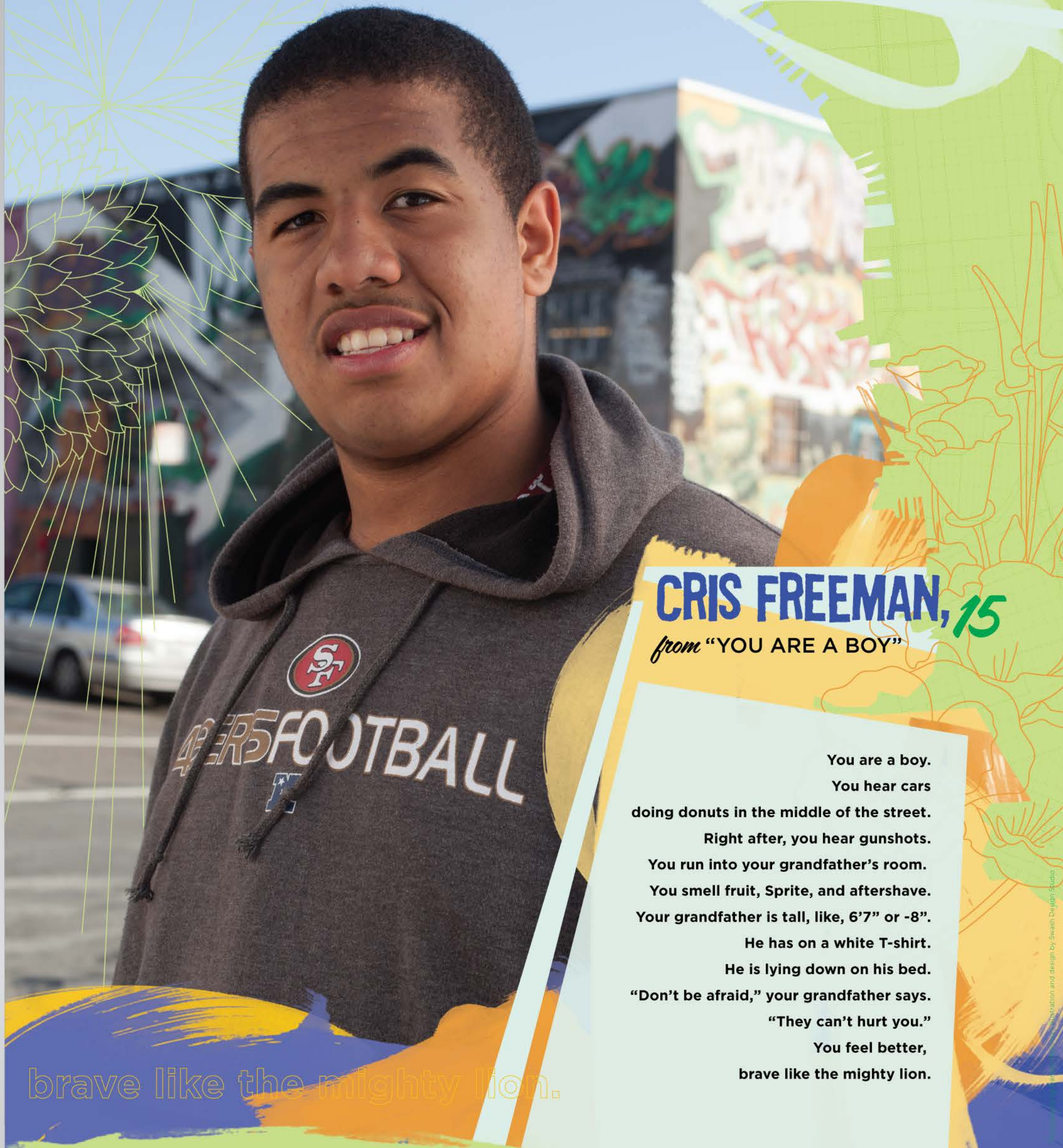




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**CRIS FREEMAN, 15**

from "YOU ARE A BOY"

You are a boy.  
You hear cars  
doing donuts in the middle of the street.  
Right after, you hear gunshots.  
You run into your grandfather's room.  
You smell fruit, Sprite, and aftershave.  
Your grandfather is tall, like, 6'7" or -8".  
He has on a white T-shirt.  
He is lying down on his bed.  
"Don't be afraid," your grandfather says.  
"They can't hurt you."  
You feel better,  
brave like the mighty lion.

brave like the mighty lion.

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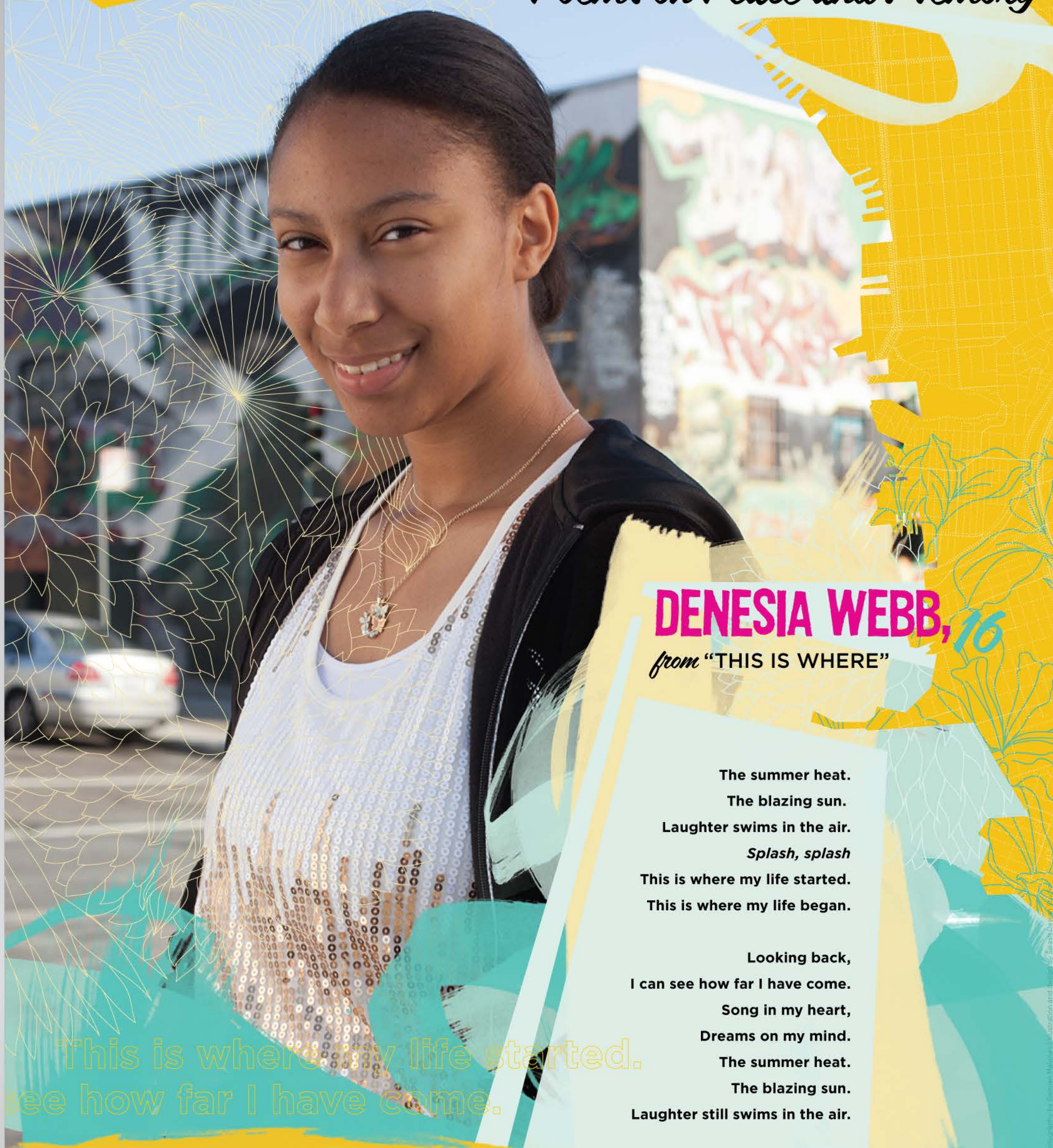




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**DENESIA WEBB, 16**

from "THIS IS WHERE"

The summer heat.  
The blazing sun.  
Laughter swims in the air.  
*Splash, splash*  
This is where my life started.  
This is where my life began.

Looking back,  
I can see how far I have come.  
Song in my heart,  
Dreams on my mind.  
The summer heat.  
The blazing sun.  
Laughter still swims in the air.

This is where my life started.  
I can see how far I have come.

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**FA'AOLATOTO  
GRIFFIN, 14**

*from* "BEAUTIFUL ME"

Memory is all but a dream  
When you find yourself in reality,  
Realizing you had it all  
Wrong from the beginning.  
Stepping on our graves each day  
And waiting for something to change...

when you find yourself in reality  
waiting for something to change...

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**HADIYA SMITH, 14**  
from "FITTING IN"

Snickers, whispers, and laughter  
surrounded me as I sat. I felt so out  
of place. I didn't belong.  
But I am the color of rich redwood bark.  
It doesn't matter about being  
dark-skinned or light-skinned:  
We are just people,  
African Americans.

the color of rich redwood bark

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**NEHAD  
ABDELWAHHAB, 17**  
*from "LEARNING TO FLY"*

*I found my voice  
In this city my mind broke free*

This is the city where I found my voice  
Here I opened my mouth  
And to my amazement lyrics bled forth  
In this city my mind broke free  
The pen took control  
And words flowed from me

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**TROI REESE, 15**

*from* "BAYVIEW'S PURPOSE"

The girl ran away in her dreams,  
Deep in the valley beyond content.  
She thought she was everyone  
else except herself.

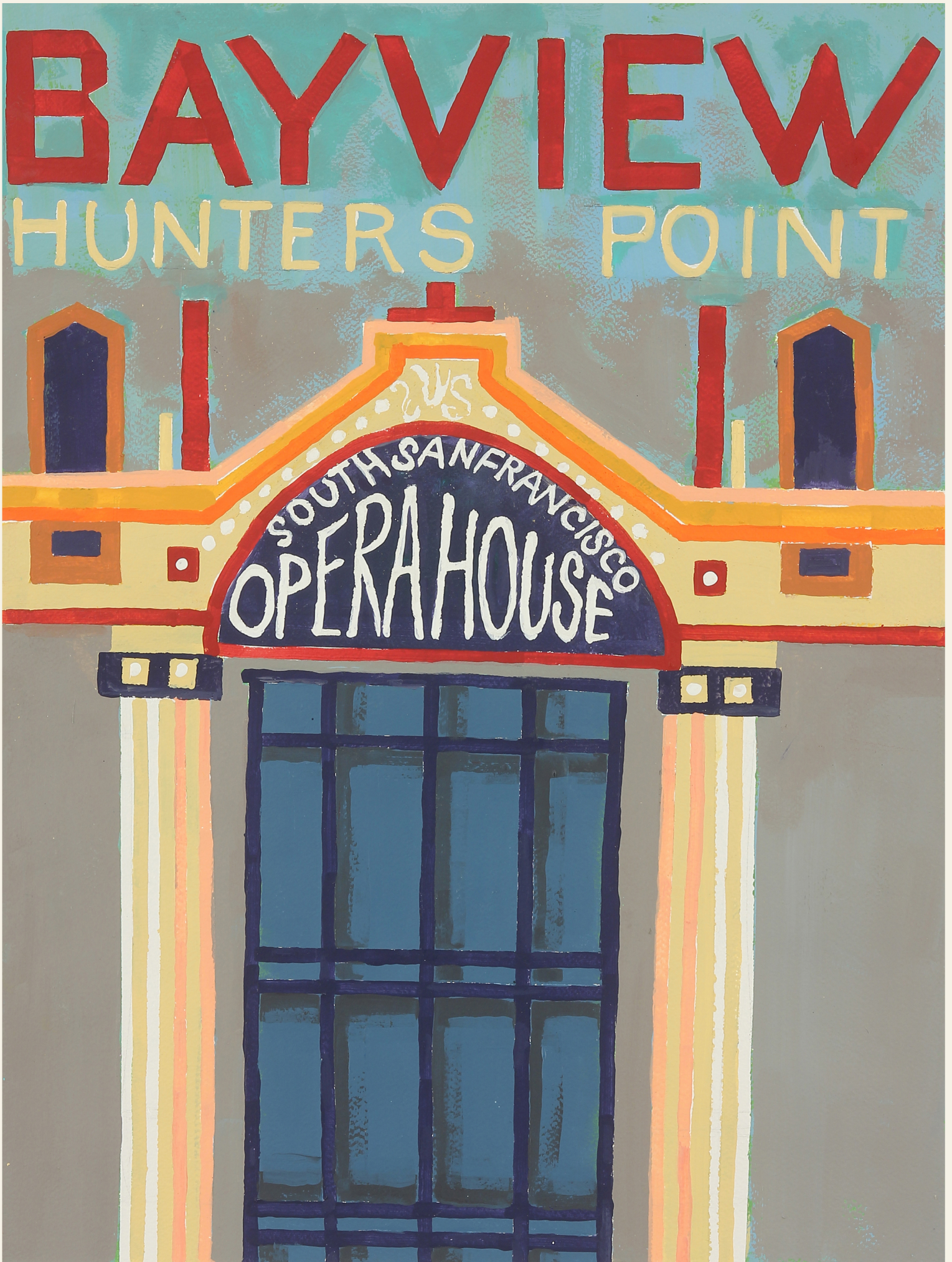
She had to know her power to know herself.  
The Bayview taught her this secret.

She lost  
and then found  
herself in the Bayview.

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