The Eye of the Beholder

With a scream lodged deep in my throat and teary my eyes bloodshot, I threw my bristled paintbrush at my canvas with a ferocity I didn’t know I possessed. Blood red pigment stained the stark white canvas. I could feel my frustration pulse through my veins; my hands were itching to lash out for a release. More. With every brushstroke, the cavity in my chest began to dissipate and I could feel my apoplectic anger evanesce into a dull throb in the back of my mind. With a shaky breath, I scanned over the number I’d just done on my canvas and was astonished by what stared back at me. An explosion of reds amalgamated with varying hues of blue and yellow, portraying my feelings of rage and sadness. I felt transparent, like I was staring into a mirror.

Suddenly, the painting began to morph before my eyes. The watercolors began to bleed into one another, creating layers. Purples and greens began to spread across the expanse of the canvas. I was amazed by the fluidity of the water color, how the ever-changing piece in front of me only grew in beauty with the blending of colors. I was stupefied by how even as new colors emerged, the piece never lost its original intrepid hues of red, blue, and yellow.

That was the moment that I realized I was the paint on the blank white canvas of my life. I had to become the fluid mosaic of the pigment and keep growing. I had to rise with unflinching determination to dive headfirst into the murky waters of life ahead. I turned my back on stolen whispers taunting me for being the only girl in my programming classes. I embraced my passion for science and stopped letting others define me. With that in mind, I began mentoring the local middle school science team, and the students I tutored began winning medals at the regional Science Olympiad competition. I couldn’t believe it. My heart swelled as I saw the difference I was making in their lives, engendering within them an affinity for science. I broke free from the scrutiny of others that anchored me down, for that’s when I was able to fulfill my potential as a rising woman in STEM.

This only fueled my passion, pushing me to compete in hackathons like the MIT’s Blueprint or to participate in the Women in Science and Technology program at Boston College and the National Ocean Bowl at MIT. The euphoric rush that filled me when I competed only left me wanting more.

I felt self-assured in my potential to learn, innovate, and potentially change the world for the better. That’s when I encountered my fascination with robotics. I restarted the school’s robotics team, finally finding the place I belonged. I learned to lead and inspire, \_\_\_ my ability to reinvent the world through technology.

Jumping into these leadership positions scared me half to death, but my mind kept flitting back to the bold pigments that encapsulated my canvas, and I pushed myself to embody those eclectic red strokes. I stepped out of the pusillanimous, self-aware embodiment of who I was to become the quirky, strong, and intelligent young woman I see myself as today. The geeky girl with the thick black frames and obscene Marvel obsession no longer held me back. Instead, I embrace her and confidently strut around school in my black Iron Man t-shirt. I am passionate and tenacious. I inspire and motivate. I am unique and artistic; I am athletic and compassionate. I am the ever-changing fluid mosaic on a bleak white canvas waiting for me to make my mark.