

THE

RECORD

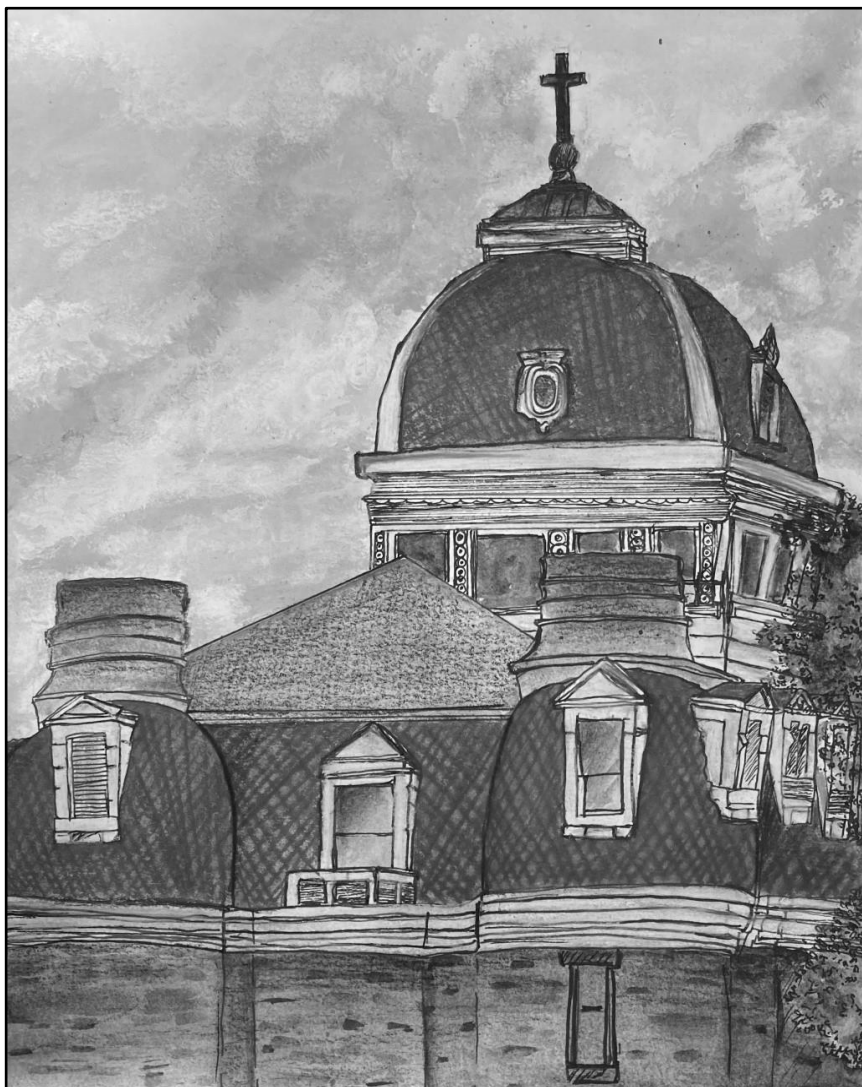
2021



THE

RECORD

2021



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Trinity

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Wipe the tears from your eyes.

You're the number one prize.

No matter how you are characterized, you're a diamond in disguise.

Regardless of your body size or the color of your eyes.

You are a Queen on the rise.

You are a diamond in disguise.

Whether you wear your hair dyed or maybe you eat fast food fries.

You shine brighter than the stars in the skies.

You are a diamond in disguise.

When people tell you you're a five, tell them you're allergic to their lies.

Your personality and beauty question all negative replies.

Every day you thrive as a diamond in disguise.

Although others may not see the true beauty that lies inside.

It's one that is undeniable to many, one that creates a bit of pride.

You will never be denied when you have God as your guide.

Through his eyes you're described as a diamond in disguise.

It's never a surprise when you spread positive vibes.

You brighten up people's lives.

You are a diamond in disguise.

I see you pull up in your ride.  
Don't need to have a guy on your side.  
Your success is one perception that won't hide.  
You are a diamond in disguise.

No need to push aside your pride.  
You already know how to provide.  
Let your beauty shine from inside.  
You are a diamond in disguise.

Come on ladies, get in line.  
As women, every day we will rise.  
Throughout the night we will shine.  
As women we are diamonds in disguise.

The winter dance comes and goes year after year  
just like how flowers bloom and blossom and blow away their last breath of air  
time and time again as life strikes again  
as pain and pleasure fade and flourish as one's mind wanders  
and one's mood quakes and shifts in the midst of the daylight and the night sky

We cannot control the way the way the rainbow whisks its true colors before us  
but we can control what colors of the rainbow we choose to chase and cherish  
although sometimes our emotions do get the best of us  
in our worst and scariest of times where life seems to unwind towards us  
slowly and ungraciously

Sometimes the blues sweep our hearts up in sorrow  
and we cannot escape the pain that is sadly true that leaves us somber  
weeping and soaking in the sunlight  
and weeping crested in the limelight and darkness of the night sky

On the other hand yellow can seep through in the sea of blue  
and help your heart hold onto hope and happiness  
when you can no longer see it in a sea of crying eyes  
of sows that have lost their way at the wits end

Whipped and ripped apart by the war of their world and in their hearts  
because you know that hope is everlasting wandering in your heart  
haunted by tragedy and unrest but hope still holds on  
stronger than the pain that plagues one's heart

I SMILE	CEDRIC HARPER
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Mother said I aged sweetly.

Though we are oceans apart, the heart is at home.

I thank modern inventions, for I was able to stare upon the image of my mother's beauty.

Four years have fought my poor soul.

Mother comforted my aching heart when I seemed to fail at many tasks. She knew not what troubled me because I dare not make her worry.

I was missing her and called suddenly a day after a semester had ended.

I noticed her pale face.

I thought maybe it was due to the glasses I wear on my face, but I soon noticed more.

Her face wrinkled, her eyes, they do not sparkle for me anymore.

I told her I would call back.

My eyes teared; old, mother is getting old.

My father had always loved Westerns. Two of his most prized possessions were a cowboy hat and his cowboy boots. I always questioned his love for Westerns as there weren't any people of color usually in those types of movies. His response was always clear and simple. He said, "I watched them because my father watched them. I bonded with my father over them and I loved them because he did."

His cowboy hat was brown, tall, and had a rounded crown. His boots were shiny, they were run-down, toasted brown with a pointed heel. He wouldn't leave those boots and hat alone. It was almost as if they were a part of him. Wearing those boots and hat meant that Grandpa was right there in the room again. I noticed it on a wet, foggy Saturday afternoon. The local television station was doing a 24-hour Western movie marathon and my father was very excited about it.

I was seven, and the only thing that interested me at the time was Barbie or Polly Pocket. But to my recollection, neither of them guest-starred in those movies, so they obviously didn't pique my interest. I heard my mother upstairs watching a rerun of *Friends* and my siblings were doing whatever teenagers did. I slowly made my way down the stairs careful not to make a sound, in case my father invited me to watch a 24-hour marathon of cold, aggressive men shooting each other to prove their worth. As I peeked around the corner, I saw my father sitting on the padded, grey worn-out couch.

His smile was as big as a child's on Christmas day. On his head was the cowboy hat and on his feet, the boots. His lips were moving along with the characters on the screen. I don't remember if it was the smile on my father's face or the fact that at that moment his cowboy ensemble actually looked cool, but I joined him. I moved quietly from my hiding spot and went to go sit next to him. Neither of us said a word but I did take the hat from my father's head and place it onto mine.

From that moment I understood his love for Westerns. It wasn't about the hat or the boots. It was about the feeling he got, the memories he remembered when he watched them. I wanted to have those memories too, and I do.



Our house was the last house on the back-end road of a small village. The “locals,” as we called them, were fisherman, farmers, and housewives. On the corner of Ocean Blue Drive, sits a two-story stone-walled house with three pillars carved around the doorway. We're a family of three. From the outside looking in, everything looks picturesque.

My father is standing in our backyard, with his withered doe eyes carrying two large buckets of water. I glare at him, making a motion with my hands to come inside but he says nothing. He places the buckets of water on the ground, making sure to pull a drape over the top to avoid mosquitoes. The sweltering Caribbean heat wraps softly against my neck and I can tell it may rain this afternoon. From the top of the stairs, I can see my mother carrying freshly washed linen and a look of exasperation. Inside the house, my father is shifting around the kitchen, gliding on white and black glossy tiles. Pots, pans, porcelain dishes all clatter together, constantly disrupting my thoughts. He doesn't notice our loud chatter, instead, he continues rolling his hands in circular motions with dough between them. Presses it firmly against the wooden slab and puts tiny holes at the top. Shifting his weight from one foot to another, he leans on the counter for support. Subtle hints of lime and tamarind float around the house. I offer to help, wash the fruit, set the table but he shakes his head and there is a silence between us.

My parents have been separated for many years. Still, we indulge in this habitual family dinner. I should consider myself lucky that it is the only sense of normalcy in my childhood. Of course, this was ten years ago. I am grown now, and I often wonder if deep down they hate this dinner as much as I do. We gather around the table in hushed and frigid voices as if this will save their marriage. The white tablecloth is tugging at my thighs, nagging me to say something but I never do. We all laugh, our mouths full, but the sound is small and empty.

MY DAILY WALKS WITH DEATH	SADE HODGES
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Sometimes I feel like death walks with me  
 She comforts me like a mother does a baby  
 She lets me know that it's okay to BE  
 Miserable, melancholy, and filled with dismay  
 Filled with pain, anguish, and disdain  
 Rippling and writhing throughout my body  
 From my crown down to my feet, opium poppy  
 It's my chosen drug, addicted to feeling numb  
 Depression is heroin, slow and lulling, I succumb  
 Anxiety is cocaine, it's like a rush when my mind is racing  
 Always up, moving, and contemplating  
 While I live in my abyss of mental torture  
 Ever so carefully on the tight rope, not to tiptoe over  
 She spectates in the crowd like my biggest fan  
 Waits for me in anticipation, in the stands  
 Once the show is temporarily over  
 And my mind has become coherently sober  
 She promises me that one day she will take my hand  
 Lead me to Valhalla, the promised land  
 While I attend another attempt of mental rehab, I lean on her shoulder  
 I talk to her, hoping to receive some type of permanent closure  
 She lets me know, no matter where I go  
 She always walks with ME

EXHAUSTED

CEDRIC HARPER



THE RECORD ASKED	WHAT PASTIME HAVE YOU TAKEN UP IN QUARANTINE?
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Breonna  
Butler

During the pandemic there were many changes I had to overcome, including losing my voice for a year. However, I was able to utilize my spare time by playing music with my Ibanez signature Steve Vai JEMJRL electric guitar. As I play, I realize that whenever I'm enduring any struggle, my blessing is just around the corner.



Sister Ann  
Howard

You ask, what did I learn during the pandemic? So many things, including how to take walks with attention and how to savor that morning cup of coffee at leisure, and to invite Jesus into my day, sincerely and with intention. Also, I learned to assemble and sew face masks. This photo was taken by my community member, Sr. Geri McPhee, last March 29, 2020, as we had set up a workshop on our dining table and we set to work. Over the year, we have made over 500 masks and distributed them to friends and families, neighbors and students. Keep safe and wear a mask!

NOODLE'S FAVORITE PILLOW	ANDREA PORTILLO
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MASTHEAD	2021
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