

## "Redlands, the Artist"

There's a certain rhythm at Redlands felt in the soles of my shoes, that basks in my fingertips, and loops continuous rounds in my head— warmth. This beat, once estranged from the fluidity of my movements causes me to sway along with the palm trees that tower over eager smiles, passionate thinkers, this lingering sense of urgency.

Before, I had to groove with the harsh vibes of my city, Another small-town hoodlum who would dance to the melody of gunshots and crying mothers— a harmony I learned to skip to when my grin was toothless. Innocence led me to believe in the atrocities that twirled around with me like a trap, leading me to believe in this masterpiece that did not actually exist.

Redlands. The hum of the sharp blades that tickle my back accompanied with the horns of sunrays, soothes my resting neck. This campus allows for a breathtaking acoustic, the wind carrying tunes of security, I am safe here. I can sing along to the collective force of support from current and past Bulldogs. I can dance freely, let my knees loosely move like oranges that fall in the groves, chant Rah Rah Redlands, pride vibrating in my chest. Redlands is a genre I wish my parents played on the radio during car rides to the grocery store, and while my mother braided intricate designs in my hair. But although the vibes of love and encouragement were introduced to me three years ago, Redlands is the station I won't change.

—Wanita Jones '18