

Art with a Heart

“Give me more blue,” says the girl
whose corn rowed braids coil beneath
the collar of her uniform blouse. Hands outstretched,
she grabs for cerulean scraps, hoping the tattered
paper can transform her collage of black
and neon green into sky.

Sydney with turquoise glasses stares
across her pasted page while glue coats
her acrylic daisy nails. Noticing her white
horizon, I tear more colored construction
strips, but she tells me today is overcast
and pushes the pile away.

I peel plastic from purple glue sticks,
but shreds keep collecting on the concrete
floor of this hundred- year-old boiler room
splattered with finger-paint and splintering cracks.

Across the table, Allison coils her honey
hair in circlets thumb-wide and talks of Tennessee
hills she sketches so steep that houses have no space
to stand on the sides. “How can anyone live there?”
I ask, but she gives no answer, only clutches a charcoal
pencil and draws a cluster of specks
in a valley below.

Vienna Wagner