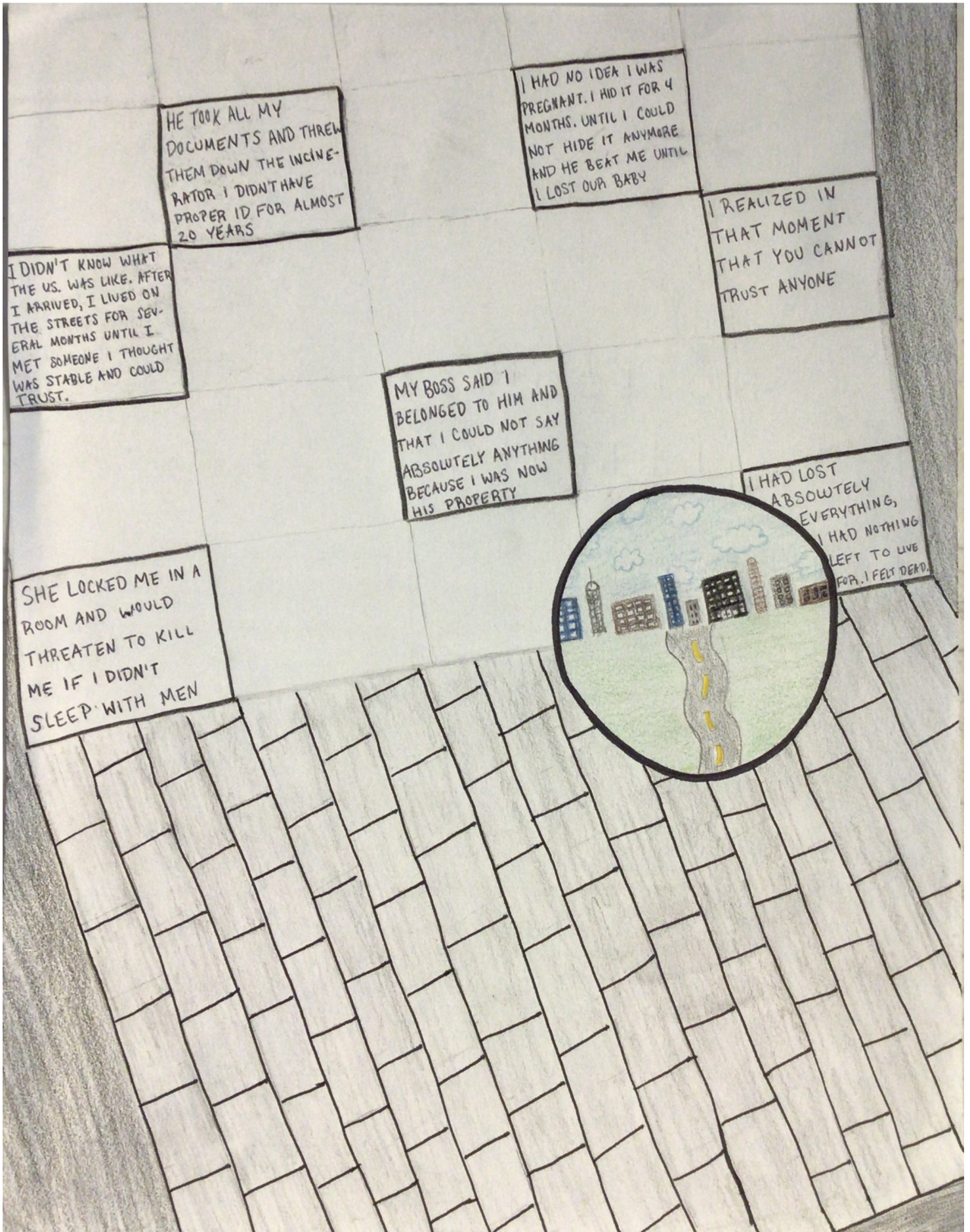




MYKELLE PATTERSON

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This piece is portraying the expectations vs reality of life and experiences of immigrants. There is this room that is in black-and-white with this circle in the middle full of a colorful city. The off-centered circle represents the beautiful way that immigration is portrayed in the country. So many people sacrifice their lives to come to the US seeking better opportunities. While the reality of the situation is, when they get here they feel like they are in the shadows. The black-and-white room represents the common reality of immigrants as they arrive. The checkered tile on the wall is used to show the many quotes of immigrant girls and women during their hardships living within this new country. I watched a video and read about the women and the betrayal, loneliness, and the disappointment they felt here in the United States.

The top tile "I realized in that moment you cannot trust anyone" was said by a woman named Sandra after she had been raped by someone she thought she could trust and now she felt as if she was living a nightmare. Sandra goes on to even add that she didn't know about 911. The next tile were the words of a woman named Ester, who was brought here as a nanny. She says "my boss said I belonged to him and that I could not say absolutely anything because I was his property". She was beaten and raped by her boss and became pregnant. She attempted to hide it for four months and after she no longer could hide her belly, she was beaten all the more until she lost her baby. Ester goes on to say "I had lost absolutely everything. I had nothing left to live for. I was dead in life" (the third tiled) she expressed that she was so broken, sad, and she had nowhere or no one to go to. The fourth tile "he took all my documents and threw them down the incinerator. I didn't have proper ID for almost 20 years" were the words of Stacy, who in one lost all her identity. The very last tile says "She locked me in a room and would threaten to kill me if I didn't sleep with men". This was said by Giselle, a transgender women, sharing her struggles of being an immigrant here. She discussed how she didn't know what the US was like and when she lived on the streets for several months until she met someone who told her they would help her. Giselle trusted her but she was just taking advantage of her vulnerability, she was told that her personal suffering would end. However, she was locked up, beaten, and forced to sleep with men. Each tile has a story behind it, as well as a person who persevered through these hardships and are now able to share their story. My hope for this art is to share their stories as well as bring attention to the fact that immigrants come here for so many reasons but some are coming by no choice of their own, or on false promises. Many immigrants don't know who or where to go to, they don't know who they can trust, and some fear that their own immigration status will be compromised, but regardless of it all, we are all human and no matter where we come from we shouldn't be treated any less.

Sources: thelifestory.org/immigration
npr.org