As a child, my favorite story was *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, a little brown flip-book of a bald boy in a blue sleep-suit who drew his world into being with a purple crayon as he walked through the otherwise blank pages. There was something about Harold's crayon that was beautiful to me as a child, and again as a young adult when I purchased the book for a second time, and flipped through the white space to watch Harold's story unfold in simple, violet lines.

I believed as an adolescent, and still believe, that much of the lives that we live are drawn in with a crayon (or pen, colored marker, anything permanent and lasting) that we carry in our own hands. As a writer of poems and snippets of prose, it made sense that the words I wrote were somehow both prophecy and memory: a recollection of what I wanted, what I had lived through, where I was going, and where I had been. What was shocking, however, was that upon walking into the adult world, I discovered that not every artist, crayon in hand, starts their story with a blank page. My time at Evergreen has only solidified a truth that I had been reaching for since stepping into adulthood; we all draw different stories because not one person is handed, at birth, a clean white piece of paper.

I journeyed to Evergreen from Vermont in July expecting a basic education that would carry me toward a career in publishing or non-profit development, in a place that wasn't as secluded and lonely as the small private college from which I had transferred. Hoping for a program revolving around poetry or American literature, what I found instead was *Caribbean Cultural Crossings*, a program that dragged me by the ear into world literature, post-colonial theory, and social politics. After one quarter, it became impossible to look at literature as a European and American phenomenon; I decided, instead, to devote my time to the study of written and oral story-telling, colonial societies and blended cultures, and the histories and politics that surround those places.

Since then, I've delved into French history in *Dark Romantics*, with a focus on the French colonies and modernity. During my time abroad in the spring, my focus will be on immigrant populations in Paris and other French cities, particularly those on the Mediterranean in close proximity to Northern Africa. What I have found has only further proven my theory that unlike Harold, each baby is not gifted a little blank flip-book at birth, to fill with a violet crayon path. As in Caribbean scholar Michaeline Crichlow's essay on migration, we each carry cultural suitcases containing artifacts of the places that we've been, the words of our parents and their parents before them. These artifacts leave marks.

This, for me, is the most beautiful and resonant thread that stretches through history and literature. In poetry, fiction, and historical texts, it is possible to track the path of the author, to find in their work a reminiscence of the page they were handed at birth, and what was scribbled on it. And if that scribble was a black mark, to discover how their purple crayon showed through, and how they made it to the other side.

I don't know yet where my violet path with take me, or what obstacles stand in the way of the lines I'm drawing through white space. I know that I seek to spend my life reading works that too often go unread, discovering the history behind the words, looking for that path through space and the doodles and scratches that shaped the path of the author and his/her fictive or autobiographical creations. Perhaps I'll draw a line straight through toward professorship, or non-profit work, or travel in far-off places. Probably, like most, my line will veer and twist and loop-de-loop. My hope for my work is to further open my mind to the spots and scribbles on the pages of the authors I read, to discover more and read more, to both walk my own line and simultaneously write it into existence. I seek meaning in our violet scribbles. I hope, in my lifetime, to hear so many stories that by the end of my days it would be impossible to stop and take count, and for a career that allows me to listen.