

Unafraid

By Martha Everhart Braniff

My granddaughters, two feisty little girls,
pad and pencils in hand,
each dragging a collapsible camp stool
through a museum,
searching for the pre-Columbian artifact
they felt most compelled to draw.

Haley, pensive and calm, settled on a Chilean *tigre*,
painted with black bark-juice,
curled and contorted on fringed parchment.
Undaunted by the complex image, she persisted,
not afraid to recreate the cat's intricate details.

Brooke, intense and fiercely independent,
chose a golden funerary mask.
Her skilled fingers, armed with pencil,
cut a wide swath on the paper,
not afraid of large brave strokes
filling up the page.

Alone now, I stand in the Palace of the Governors,
pondering a gold Peruvian mask,
then a flood of memories—

my granddaughters drawing in a gallery,
vibrant spirits
not afraid of challenge,
not afraid of big.

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