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For my process in creating this image, I started by drafting physical sketches of what I wanted to include. I knew that the main themes I wanted to use in this were the ideas of distance between Appalachia and the rest of America; especially the government, the idea of loss, of life, nature, and culture, and the idea of hopelessness, that many Appalachian Americans have felt at the hands of American government and other prominent companies throughout time. To convey the idea of distance between the two groups, I used a cliff with the Capitol building and a few businessmen in suits looking down at a sea with hands rising over the 'waves'. The waves were really a happy accident; The original image was a picture of the Appalachian mountains that I went over with the smudge tool to give it a misty effect, but I feel that the final image works really well for the theme. For the theme of loss, I used an image of a traditional Appalachian quilt fading as it reached the top of the image, as well as the hands reaching out of the 'water'. Even the mountains being turned into water could apply to this theme, to represent the loss of much of the mountain landscape to strip mining and other man-made issues.

The biggest flaws that stick out to me in this image would be the variation between image quality throughout the collage, and some elements are awkwardly spaced. I feel that the image quality takes away from the overall image and makes it seem more rushed and lazily done than it actually is. My favorite part of the piece, and what I think works strongest overall would be the use of the fading quilt in the background. By using this, I feel like it gives the whole image a deeper sense of depth and facilitates in moving the eye throughout the canvas.

As a person hailing from Appalachian Kentucky, this work and themes surrounding it resonates really heavily with me. I have witnessed and experienced many of the issues included in this image, especially the sense of loss. Many of my relatives have lost their homes, their health, and their lives at the hand of the issues brought by large coal and factory companies that have made a home in the mountains. I wanted to make this piece as a kind of memorial to my family still living in Appalachia, and by knowing that quilts are a prominent way that people show honor or remembrance for loved ones, I knew I wanted to include one as an aspect in the final image. I feel that the quilt in the image has a dual use in this image by both displaying a sense of remembrance, and signifying loss of Appalachian culture, as the image fades as it reaches the top of the image, and in hand, the governmental and business world.