

My introduction to the University Heights neighborhood came through its alleyways. I saw dirt and chain link. Cinder block and a rainbow of beiges. I perceived neglect; a soft, sun-washed, muted palette; a spidey sense of danger; and unloved, unwanted things. But through my plantswoman’s eyes I saw persistant, invasive, rapacious species. Green gangs in the alley.

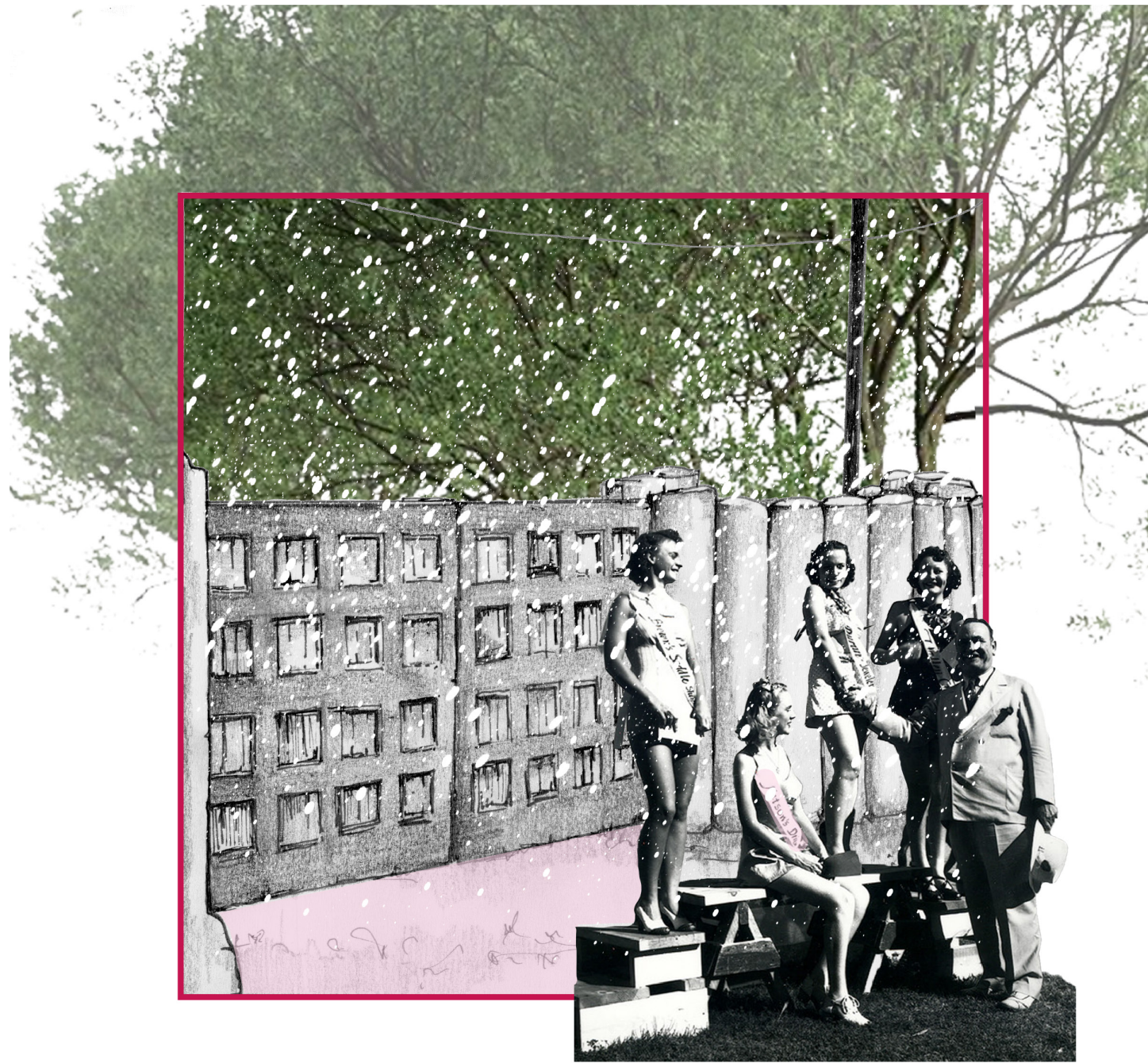
Divided east to west by streets named after mining and ore, gridded north and south by streets named after prestigious universities, and bounded on the north by legendary get-your-kicks-on Route 66, the University Heights neighborhood is a true mishmash of iterations and identity. Once marketed as “The Coming Aristocratic Residence Section of Albuquerque,” it was dubbed 25 years later a “Student Ghetto”. And now?



**COLLAGE ALLEY**  
*Investigating University Heights*

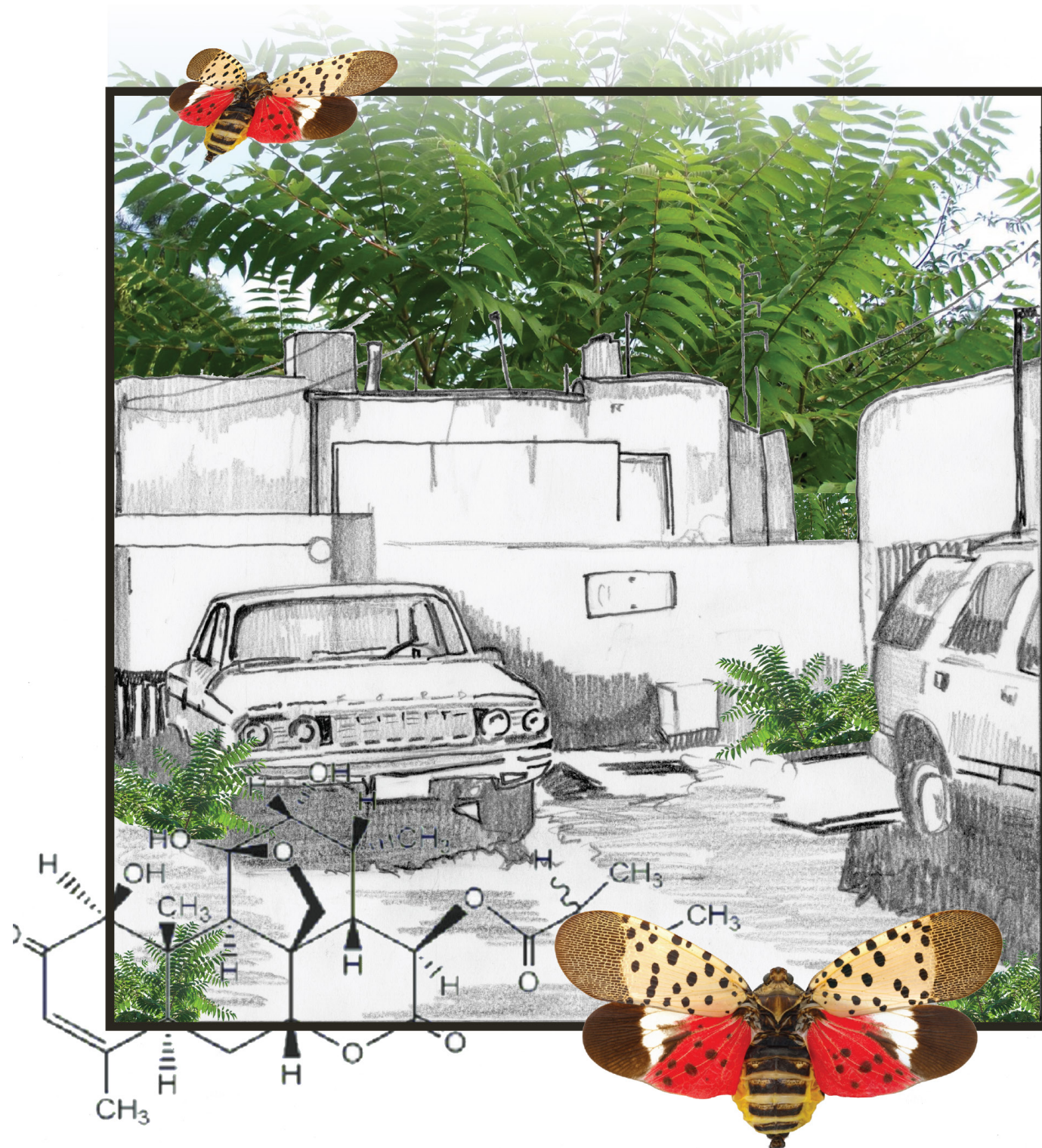
From *Ulmus pumila* (former mayor Clyde Tingley’s hopeful shady Siberian elms), to *Arundo donax* (shown below, which can grow 4” a day and absolutely *eats* water), to toxic *Ailanthus altissima* (which is also lovingly referred to as ghetto palm, baked sewage tree, rotting carrion tree, and tree from hell or heaven) UH’s alleys host the best of the worst.





Former ABQ Mayor Clyde Tingley (posing with some “gals” on his beach) introduced the Siberian Elm to ABQ, large shade trees which also proved to be prolific pollen producers with dangerously weak branching structures, and seeds that disperse all over town. These seeds, or samaras, are often referred to as Tingley Snow, landing and germinating just about anywhere and everywhere, thriving on neglect.





**Allelopathy:** A biological process involving one plant's chemicals completely stopping the growth of a neighboring plant in order to further its own growth.

*Ailanthus altissima*: A foul-smelling tree that kills plants around it and is also the main host plant for the Spotted Lanternfly, which is taking over on the east coast and moving west.



**Arrogance or Ignorance:** "Enhancing" the environment without thorough research and longterm studies of environmental impact, creating a slew of invasive plants.

**Flan:** A gooey, delicious and complicated dessert best left to the experts