

ISSUE #21, 2024-2025

ATLANTIS ABLAZE

THE OCSA LITERARY MAGAZINE

Yin

&

Yang

Our Staff

Co-Editors

AMY FLORES & CAITLYN LUNGSTRUM

CONTENT

RILEY GIGSTEAD

ISABELLA PEREZ

DINA SANTIAGO

LAYOUT

ANALIAH BROWN

AMY FLORES

CAITLYN LUNGSTRUM

SAMUEL VALDES

MARKETING

KATE ASBRA

ASHLEY BAEZ

MAXWELL EVANS

ROWAN MCCLURE

ALYSE STEVENS

CAMDEN TONER

CONTACT US AT



@ocsaatlantisablaze

@ocsacr



ocsaliterarymagazine@gmail.com

A Note

From The Co-Editors

This issue, Yin & Yang, explores the beauty of balance—the quiet harmony between opposites. Each piece in this collection speaks to the dualities we carry, and together they form a profound mosaic of voices that honor the chaos and calm within the human experience.

In between the unpredictable nature of testing, graduation, and construction, we've found the beauty of balance as we continue creating the celebration of literacy that is Atlantis Ablaze.

We thank you for being a part of this journey; we hope Yin & Yang resonates with you—and reminds you that even in contradiction, there is connection.

Yours in creativity,

Amy & Caitlyn

Co-Editors, Atlantis Ablaze



Kate Asbra

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Staff Pick

This issue's Staff Pick is "A Broken Form" by Isabella Perez. This piece was selected because of its excellent imagery, complimented by its creative contrast between the fragmented and the whole. The rich word choice and hyperbole woven into this poem speaks to the thematic complexity of Yin & Yang.

Isabella Perez is an 11th grade Creative Writer at OCSA. She is an avid poet and artist who loves illustrating the connection between visual and written art.



Isabella Perez

A Broken Form

Isabella Perez - 11th

Frightened and intrigued

By the polars within me

Blood hot, heart cold

Striking yet smooth

A stab and a caress

Chaos undressed to its bare form

I am a million halves

Made into a whole

Unfortunately,
water can
never
hold fire

Amorous Opposite

Isabella Perez - 11th

Sun.

I trace your silhouette with delicacy

I've learned that everything I touch

is cursed to heaps of ash

Thus, I bid myself to part from you

dearest crescent, lunar-kissed primrose

To see you engrossed by my flames

would destroy me beyond recognition

The Earth shall plummet into an endless daze

without your glow gazing upon it

Moon.

We were never meant to be

a truth that haunts me

shrouded by my own darkness

This line between us is guarded

by the warriors of my shame

To allow myself to extinguish your light
I couldn't bear to exist
Warm-hearted flower, you fuel me
even from across the universe

Mortal Eternity

Dina Santiago - 11th

Naturally, they are akin to the moon and sun, expect they never meet at either dusk or dawn. It is a constant pull of light and dark; a dancelike battle, the rhythm of dripping blood, the sharp clash of swords fiercely swung.

He looked celestial – pale skin and hair of midnight tides, reminding me of the best of home. He had a quiet passion, a quiet neediness masked by self-assured movements. His eyes became a shadow of hers, often far but never gone.

Breaking the ice, she complimented the way he carried his dreams with dedication. The boy caught sight of the sunlight that dripped from the girl's lips. He was in awe of the orange fire, sizzling and crisp. Her eyes were lit ablaze before even learning his name. He held a kind of somber solitude only

alluring to those who relish evasive company.

I thought of them as moth and beacon. She was sinister, in the way she flickered with desire to burn him. She wanted to overwhelm him with unconditionality only natural to those made of sky. It was endearing, the way she kept the orange

hidden from him - tucked beneath fingernails, blooming in quick glances. It was charming, the way he tried to distract her from his darkness. Always alluding to the exciting danger of a black hole and the silver stars that surround it, but never the cost of entering its clutches.

I am not meant to watch the way I do. My design is to interfere if the supernatural magic of connection overbears human logic. Yet, they felt my presence. They felt the static difference in conversation. Have I seen you before? I feel like I've known you my whole life. You're not real, you can't be real.

I understood why she fell for him. He was a blank canvas, worn at the edges and aching for attention. She was a starving artist, inspired by all the ways she could bend light in his darkness. It became a burden quickly, her single purpose was to light the fire of a thousand suns, just to watch the glimmer through his eyes. Amber meteorite, a raging trail, never satisfied.

Although I'll never soar higher than the crust of heaven, I find I don't regret my choice in becoming a vessel tethered to them.

The boy, with a well-hidden smile says, "I've never met anyone like you. It's like you're me if I wasn't me."

cont.

cont.

The girl, with a proud smirk, “Yeah. It’s like, I’m you if you were born me.”

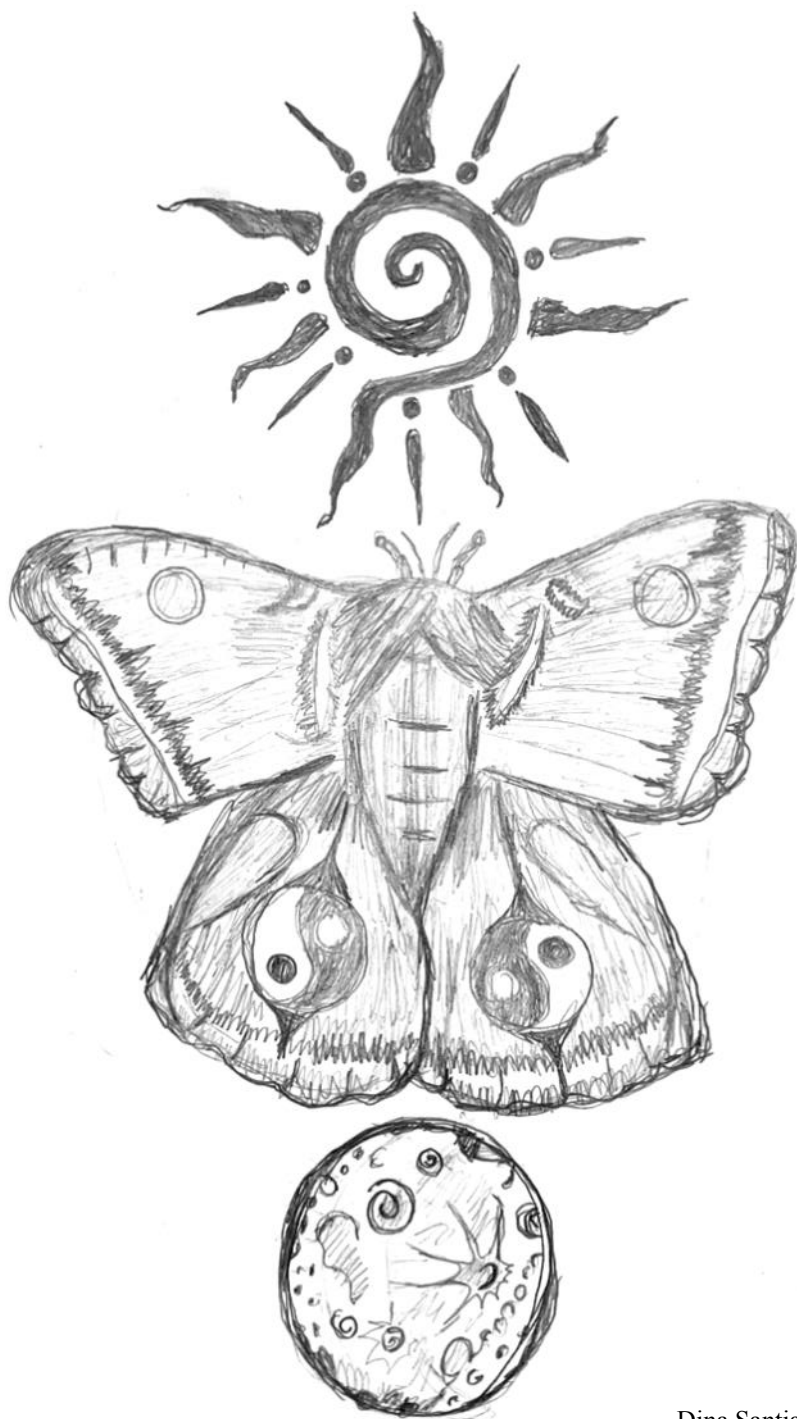
He nods with shyness, hands fidgeting as if he could find conversation nudged between his wrinkled fingers. I am almost as earthly as them, impulsive in my choice to give up the above. Now all I must watch is his meaningful glances and her poor attempts at ignorance.

The boy with a well-hidden sadness says, “I’ve never met anyone like you. It’s like...it’s like you don’t even know me.”

The girl, with a thunderous cry, “Yeah, you never let me.”

Between her teeth hid a piece of his darkness, bitter words and slights poking through her lips. At the cusp of his jugular vein lay a bright orange light, it streams through him with a roaring passion - kept him always wanting. It is never ending, their bloody dance, years pass and it lives on, an echo that starts from within, loud only to ears who bear the secret.

The sun and moon revolve around the past: a framed husk of what you used to be of them. They teach me something I thought was hypocritical to the laws of science: love’s eternity can only be found at its end.



Dark Dew

Ashley Baez - 11th

Crescent white

Waves of clouds

Grasp for

Their lover's

Soil soft hands

To only be met

With sharpened blades

Of grass now damp

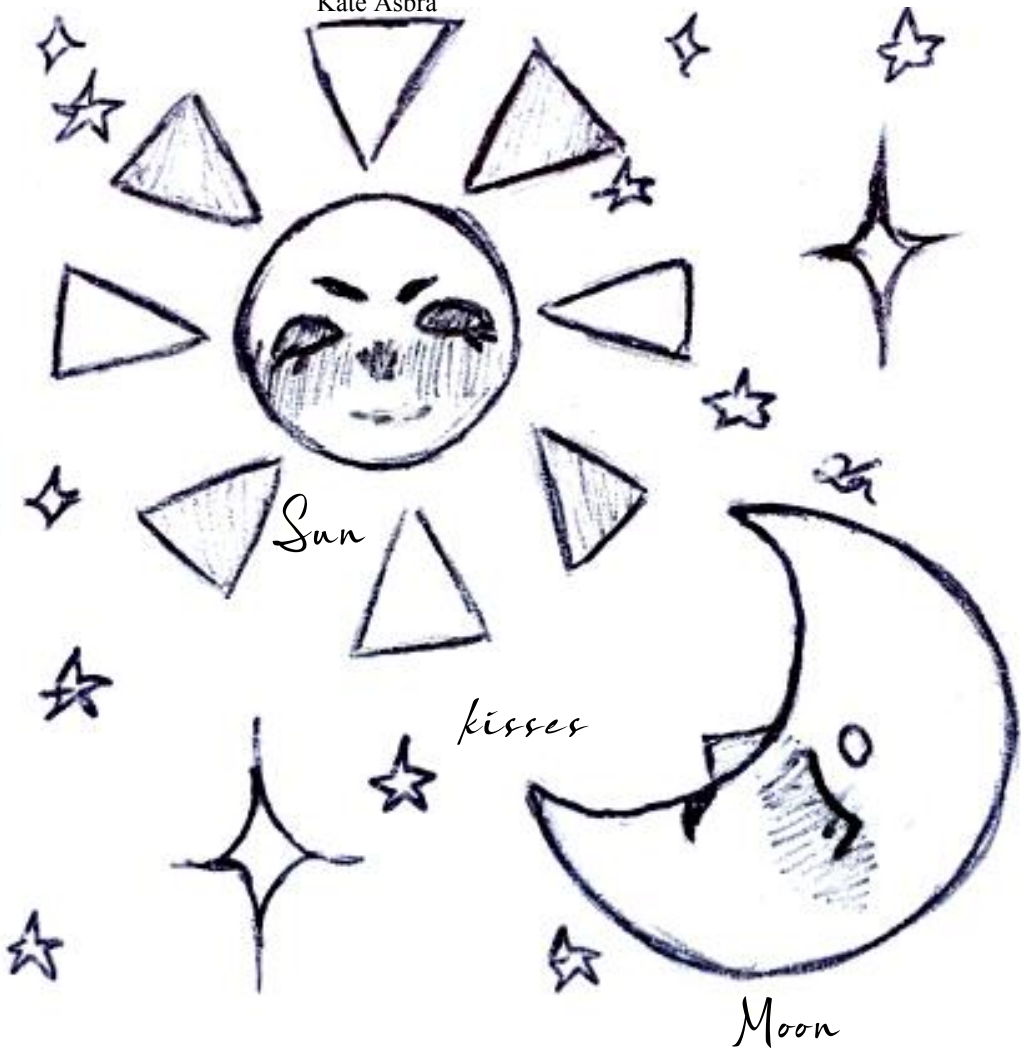
With dark red dew

Corrupted

Maxwell Evans - 11th

I don't regret my choice,
I chose to stay with you,
To let your darkness corrupt me
And in turn my light corrupts you

Kate Asbra



one last time

Caitlyn Lungstrum

Eternal

Maxwell Evans - 11th

When I'm alone,
In this vast void,
The only thing I remember
Is your name

Throughout time
No matter how long it passes
I always remember your name
Its place in my heart.

I love to hear the sound of it
I speak it to myself
When I feel lost in eternity
You make me found

Chaos Uncoiled

Alyse Stevens - 11th

Life

Something beautiful

Yet filled with chaos

You get pushed and pulled around

Told do this, then do that

Oh, and don't fall behind on your tasks

Everyday falls farther into chaos

Body and mind stepping closer to destruction

Spiraling further into the abyss

But among the chaos something shines

A star, a glimmer of hope

A silent tranquility

It strips you of anxiety

Holds you close and mumbles songs

It makes the world seem bearable

For once humanity doesn't seem so bad

For once life is alluring
For once there's harmony in screams

But for there to be peace
There must be agony
A light eventually showing itself in a tunnel
A hope to the helpless
It makes the world seem bearable

For once humanity doesn't seem so bad
For once life is alluring
For once there's harmony in screams

But for there to be peace
There must be agony
A light eventually showing itself in a tunnel
A hope to the helpless

Uncle Mitch

Nika Smith - 7th

Leah was a non-believer.

Though the phrase could mean many things, in this case, Leah was a non-believer in herself.

Leah was an orphan; despite the fact her father, technically, was still alive. Anyone who broke her mother's heart was as good as dead in her eyes and in her soul.

Leah remembered the connection she felt in her mother's embrace. As if those comforting arms were made to fit only her. What used to be a joyous memory was now a cause of grief and sorrow to Leah, for she felt that, without her mother holding her, the world was inhospitable.

But three years ago, after her mother had fought a two-year battle with cancer, Leah lost that lifeline forever. She would never forgive God for what he stole from her.

Now, Leah lived with her grandparents in a trailer park. Meemaw and PawPaw were bright people. Their cheerful personalities and vivid style fit well with the sun and lush greenery of Florida.

Leah matched neither the sun, nor the flora. Once, there had lived a sparkle in her eyes that was the window to her bright soul, but that soul had been tossed around, then torn apart by a hurricane of anguish.

Leah lived just to make it through the day. Wake, school, sleep, repeat.

She had no friends. Many had tried to reach out to her, but she had recoiled from them all. She pulled up her hood and left them all standing there, hands still outstretched.

Because she'd lost all she wanted, she was never

able to enjoy life like she once did.

She drifted, never noticing the world around her. The same world that had so cruelly robbed her of all she had known.

But one moment can change everything.

Or in Leah's case, one person.

Uncle Mitch.

When he came to visit, Uncle Mitch brought along confusion to Leah. He was a smiling man, which dramatically clashed with his tattoos, leather jacket, and red bandana.

Leah had only met her mother's older brother twice before. Once, when she was very young, so young that she had no memory of the meeting, and again three years ago when he spoke at her mother's funeral. She didn't remember his words, but she remembered that, through his tears, he smiled when recalling his sister. But that day was a haze Leah blocked out.

Before her sickness, Leah's mother nostalgically told Leah stories about her childhood adventures with her brother. One key detail from those stories flouted forward in Leah's mind. Uncle Mitch had raging dyslexia, so he had to work twice as hard as most people.

Leah thought that this should make him mad at the world. She noticed that, instead, he enjoyed everything. He seemed unable to find anything wrong with the world.

That idea was foreign to Leah. She was unwilling to find anything right.

There was something else about her uncle that puzzled her. He cried. He cried about everything. But not in the way most would think. He cried for joy.

When they took him to the beach, he didn't even take his Doc Martens off before he ran into the waves.

cont.

cont.

Once knee deep in the water, he opened his arms to the sky and looked to the sun, sobbing.

Later, when Leah asked what had upset him, he simply said the beauty of the world had overcome him in that moment.

Leah had never heard anyone talk like him before. She found these ideas strange- unfamiliar.

One day, she looked outside the trailer window, and there was Uncle Mitch, running in circles, skipping around barefoot, arms outstretched like airplane wings.

Why does he do that? Leah asked herself. What's the purpose?

She joined him outside, determined to get to the bottom of his strange behavior. But when she tried to talk, he interrupted her.

"Isn't it beautiful?" he asked, before lying down in the grass, leather jacket and all. "Your mother and I used to play in grass just like this."

Those words were like an arrow to Leah's heart. Her legs failed her, and the invisible force of the strike seemed to pull her down to the grass next to him.

She noticed how soft the grass was as it brushed against the skin exposed by the rips in her jeans. She had never felt it before, but it was like a pillow. In fact, Leah had never even noticed that there was a patch of grass here at all.

Until now.

She lied down and turned to face her uncle, whose eyes were closed. The grass parted to fit her perfectly, like it held the love of her mother. The sun above bounced off the green blades, creating a spectacular masterpiece of light.

A strange feeling overcame Leah, one that she

hadn't felt since she was in her mother's arms.

Uncle Mitch reached for her hand, and she took it. His grip was firm, yet gentle, just like her mother's.

For the first time in a long time, Leah felt like the world had a place for her.

Leah felt like she belonged.

Polarity

Rowan McClure - 12th

The belief that opposites attract lacks substance
For those that differ betray the doctrines
Of which we've always known.

To contrast is to offend
The words of the great and holy
You were borne of his word.

Those who differ are impure
From the doctrine's 50th line
In which children are taught
"My life is not mine."

"Opposites must attract"
Speaketh he of the sky
Yet the opposite of which he spoke
Is the adversary of the many.

Different Eyes

Riley Gigstead - 11th

Around one side of the corner
There are walls of light
The other abysses of darkness

Life exists in both
But they just live with different eyes
Not with different hearts



Two-Faced Coin

Kate Asbra - 11th

Don't you hear it?

The voices in the crowd

Just another face, just another number

Another tight, woven life

Another string to pull

Another dollar in your pocket

You can't hear them, can you?

Not over your own voice

Never over the sound of coin

Can't you hear them cry?

Why do you ignore them

Far too focused on scratching out

The face on your dollar bill

Removing the great creator from your words

In place of your own selfish things

Twist every promise to make something great

Play on the nostalgia of the masses

Until the jingling in your pocket blocks out
their noise

Mom and Dad

Sophia Driskill - 8th

He was from a small family,
A mom, a dad, a brother
Both immigrant parents,
Who divorced when he was young

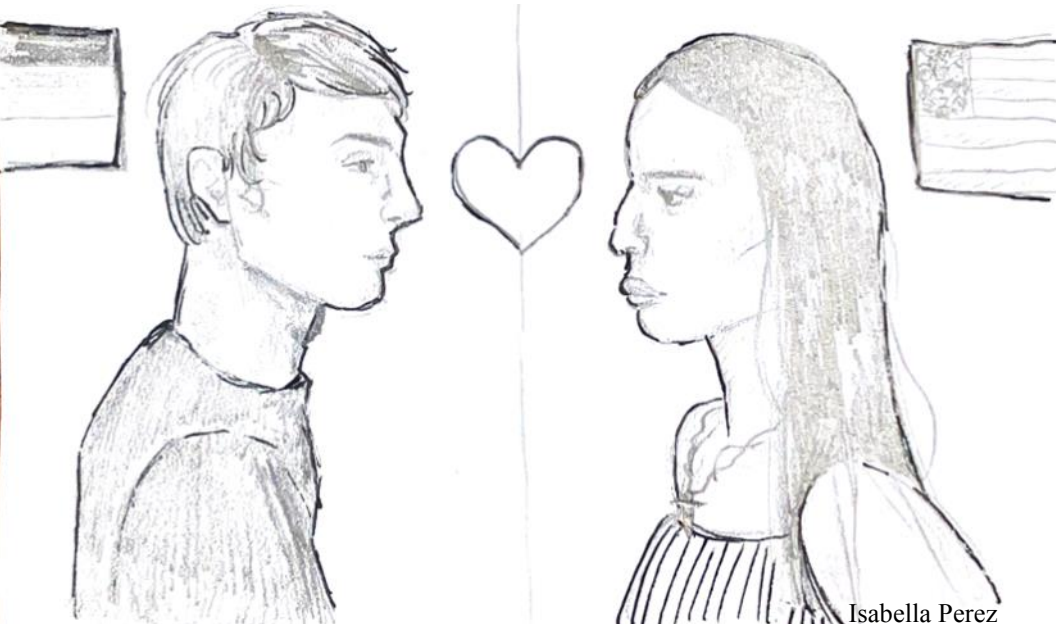
She was from a bigger life
In the English countryside
3 siblings who were much older, who moved
out when she was young
Her family was devoted to church,
they lived in the same small town her whole
life

They met through a sport
Funny story actually,
But he proposed a year later
In their tiny London apartment

My dad's father never met their child

They found out she was pregnant at his funeral
Months later the child was born
And their family was started

My mom is the life of the party
My dad is quiet and reserved
The pieces of them are who I am
They are both a part of me



Above and Below

Samuel Valdes - 10th

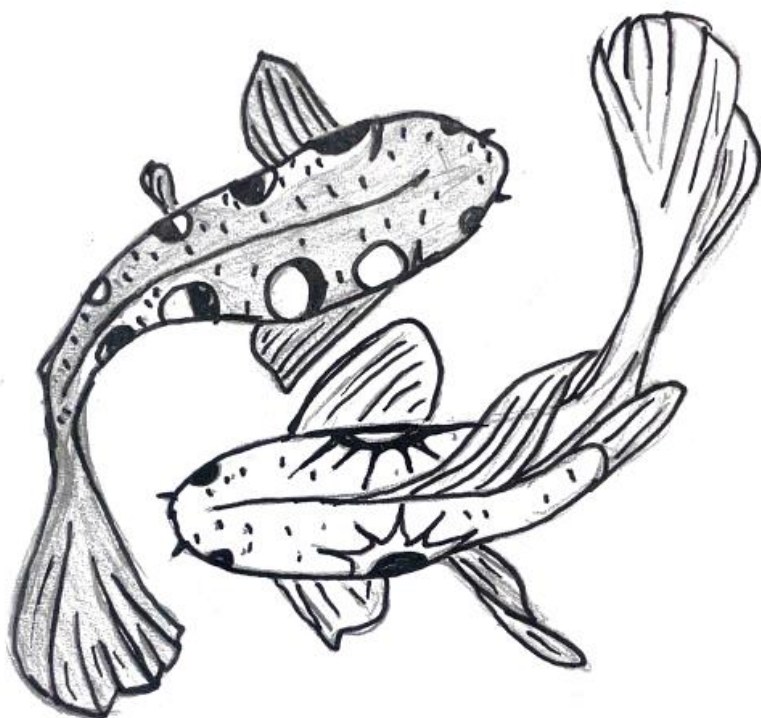
When you gain
You lose
Part of something
Part of yourself
No matter how trivial
It may be people will change
Warp, like a rapid wind
Till you can look up
At someone so below you
So pathetic in their endeavors
And look up
To someone
Who is little less
Then a seraph
You can chase that person
That goal, that dream
Of rising above and above
The senseless crowds

Though, the more you chase

To be above

The more you sink

Below



Souls

Maxwell Evans - 11th

I look into your eyes
And I see the one I want
The one I'm bound to love
The one I'm bound to fight.

We are cursed to meet in every life
And condemned to fight in every life
But I will always wait for you
Standing by the gate waiting for you

I love you; I will always love you
You're my other half,
And even if you tear me apart
I will be bound to you forever.

Walking Contradictions

Ashley Baez - 11th

Created by stardust that flows from
Our strings when snipped
We were born disgustingly perfect
A balance of tangible mortality
And untouchable soul
Rusted blood
And golden ichor
Afraid of life
And the embracer of death
We were born human
To love one another
With each hand
We hold
Just to break its bones
And hate as strongly
Made to create memories
That could last lifetimes
To only forget and tear down

Their chance to become memorable
We balance the weight of our worlds
Dropping it tirelessly
To pick it back up again
We were made like this
A neat pile of contradictions
And a mess of perfection
Born beautifully human

Silence's Sound

Samuel Valdes - 10th

Blaring

Senseless screaming

Of unintelligible words

Ringing

Overwhelming wailing

With no end

But it trickles

Slowly fading

To silence

Pure empty quiet

More deafening

Then the stillness

Louder than the words

Cried out

39

Yang & Yin

Caitlyn Lungstrum - 10th

They say the universe has order
They say that everything happens for a reason
Everything has its own season
Its own season but everything should still be
The same
It should always be yin and yang
Sunshine and rain
Joy and pain
They should always stay that way
Right?

Or does yin and yang
Rotate, revolve,
Twist, twirl
Swivel, swirl
Into yang and yin?

Until they switch back again

Chaotic, constant change

Plagues-

No, blesses the universe

Every change happens for a reason

The chaos lends way to opportunity

Alterations to the very universe itself

Somehow we're all given the chance

To put the planets in place

Order the stars for our own success

Nothing is permanent

But why would we want it to be?

Take Me by Your Opposite

Mirelys Fleites - 8th

Take me by how I announce myself

As my mask doesn't hide what you want to see

I reflect another version that you can't even
comprehend

Another version that isn't your hypocrisy

Despite your efforts to appear smart witted

I put that away

Only for the sake that you won't like what I have to
say

For what I say,

Travels back to the sources that you despised using

The sources you claimed are very quick for you to
choose

On the eyes of those that will honestly,

Just benefit you

Though, I won't question your ability to prove

Yet understand that it's on my mind
That's why I decide
To rather keep it to myself
I don't answer what I don't know
I don't agree when I think it's false
I don't describe details that shouldn't be spoken
I can't put myself in the perspective of the broken

If I did not experience others pain
How could I as an individual
Compare myself to it in any way

How can I possibly sit with a straight face
Stating that I went through something similar
Your trauma sounds familiar
When did it become a competition to live a dreadful
life?

In fact, take me by your opposite
Don't worry,
I won't admit that I'm completely different from your
views

Atlantis Ablaze

cont.

But I would prefer sticking to my words

Then finding what comes out of my own mouth

Absurd

In simple, I am the opposite of your image



Kate Asbra

Your

silence

plays—

I

dance

entranced

Alive

Isabella Perez - 11th

I waver between worlds
A ghost in the walls
transparent, hollow
Haunting a past love
for the chance
of being reborn

I trace invisible skin
with the blades of reality
This world is my own
to sense, to touch
To feel the pain
and love it anyway

But love is as fleeting
as the temporary form I inhabit
The Earth continues to spin
with or without me in it
It's time I take my shaking hands
and steer it the other way

It's time I choose a side--
to live, or to die

Beneath the Surface

Amy Flores - 10th

Our souls are reflections of the sea
stretching their trembling arms out
holding us to a duality of drifting and sinking

We're plunged into untamed waters
leaving behind rippled rings to ebb,
slowly disappearing from the surface

Fragments of us scatter, diving deeper,
slicing through bleak, hurting currents,
where hazy surges and murky waves churn

Reasoning dissolves, slipping away
like the aftertaste of olives brine—
a trace of residue clinging, salted skin

Strands of seaweed coil around our bodies,
anchoring us to the ocean floor, beyond saving,
while, on the surface, blue hues twinkle
to the reflection of the sun
a fleeting glimpse of what lies beneath

Black and White

Isabella Perez - 11th

Black and white
The shadow to the light
If you need me, that's where I'll be
Hidden from the gash of reality
I was taught to face fear
for all that it is
Waking up in the morning
and basking in the sun
Golden light on skin
illuminating what I try to hold
within layers of reinforcement
Concrete kisses at my shame
Terror caresses what I name
my biggest fear; to live unafraid
Moving from the black
into the white

Petals and Winters

Ashley Baez - 11h

Spring's warm

rigid petals

soften under

Winter's gentle

cold hands.

Wilted

Samuel Valdes - 10th

Wilted petals
Upon cracked concrete
Sidewalks scraps scattered
Along abandoned roads
Forsaken desolate stems
Long since drained of their color
Fall
And no longer rise
Though it's pollen
Like a silent rising sun
Carried along a quiet wind
Will sprout
And wreath
It's roots
Into the ground once again

Duality

Rowan McClure - 12th

Having traveled mountains high and oceans blue, I had yet to birth my own hue. From the stars you fell to my lap, a lone splotch of paint in a canvas white. Many years had I spent in attempts to grow. Yet never in my life did I truly know the beauty hidden within my soul. You, my blue, live as my key. To unlock the colors within me. A dazzling red becomes my sight as I stare up at your home, the darkness of night. You, my blue, remain my dual. From the moment I was born from earth and seed, we existed to meet each other's need.

Faltering Future

Samuel Valdes - 10th

Like mirrors
Laid and shattered
You look flawed
A distilled pale imitation
Of yourself
That abandoned afterimage
Flowing so effortlessly
In every moment before
And every moment after
In every reflection
You look at
Do you ever regret,
Leaving yourself?
The past versions
That inevitably worm their way
Back into your future
Do you regret
Locking away that burden
To cross a bridge another day
One that will only ever rot
And break

Consciousness

Maxwell Evans -11th

I look into the souls of others
I see their faults and failures
Their virtues and deeds
I pass upon my own judgement

I don't listen to the reasons why,
Never understanding their purpose.
I always wonder what they thought
When they committed their act

Did they think it through?
Did they have time to?
The duality of good and bad
I look at them objectively

Why am I the one who can judge them?
Why must I not look at what happened?
Can't their fate in eternity be changed?
Is everyone set in stone?

Hatred

shows who
you
really

Love

Gradient

Caitlyn Lungstrum - 10th

When did it change to greys?
When did the black and white
Blend together
Swirling and twirling
Until
They are one

I stop
Breathe
In, out
In, out
In, out
Outside has always looked the same
In the shade of black and white
Change to a shade of grey
Okay
I can stop
Breathe
In, out
The world is done shaking

Grey

Gradient

Shift and shake the shades of

Change

I can't stop and

Breathe

Yue and Yáng

Alyse Stevens-11

The autumn air was crisp and fresh this morning. The morning that Yáng had been awaiting for several days on end had finally come. He marched happily towards the school building, which was a second home to him. Several other people smiled and waved towards him; their grins just about as beautiful as the scenery surrounding them. These little bonds and moments with people were what made life worth living. But among everyone he saw and spoke to on the regular, there was someone who never bothered to give him as much as a thought. But he noticed her. The girl went by the name of Yue, and oftentimes it seemed as if she lived in her head. Yue was odd, quiet, and honest... too much sometimes. Her eyes sometimes sparkled, but were mostly black and empty, void of goals and empathy. She was strange in a way Yáng didn't like. It was rather easy to envision her in pitch black not doing anything. But on the days her eyes sparked she'd be sweet, caring, and sympathetic. Yue was complicated for lack of a better word. She changed like the date and lacked consistency. Yáng hated change; hence, he disliked Yue; a girl who never seemed to make up her mind about who she was.

The colder weather had only just begun to set in when Yue returned to school as usual. In all honesty, it wasn't even remotely a place she wanted to be. It was a place that was hardly designated for learning at this point, more so for forming relations with others. That was an activity Yue found no point in.

Yet, there was one person that stood out from everyone else. A boy named Yáng who was considered the “popular” boy of the school. As his name suggested, Yáng was bright and energetic, like the sun. So hopeful and optimistic it was toxicating. At least to Yue it was.

Everyone else seemed to adore his chatter and playfulness. He was the type to always be outside in the summer months but curled up on stone slabs in front of an open fire during winter. His golden hair matched the flames colors too, and that damned spark in his eyes is likely what ignited it. There wasn't a thing Yue liked about Yáng. No, it was all disdain and plethora's of revulsion.

Abruptly a bell rang, and class began. Yue's professor began to write on the board a few words, all of which shielded by his back. It took a few moments for him to turn around again. The board read *Group Project. Yue's heart dropped to her stomach when she saw her name paired with Yáng's. In unison, Yue and Yáng rose.*

“May I change my partner?” They questioned together before turning to stare at each other.

“No one can change,” He sternly replied. Reluctantly, Yue grabbed her bag and moved beside Yáng.

“I guess we're together,” Yáng tried to politely remark, though his resentment was obvious.

“Well, just come over to my house later so we can finish this up. Ok?” Yue groaned.

“Fine.”

That night Yáng stood in front of Yue's door. Did their professor *really* have to assign them as partners?

cont.

Yáng slowly knocked on the wooden door before it quickly opened. “Finally,” She rolled her eyes while dragging Yáng up towards her room. “We have to get going.” He nodded silently.

As the night progressed, Yáng found himself getting along surprisingly well with Yue. They laughed together and worked quite well. Yue wrote down everything while Yáng researched and rehearsed it all. What was a mutual dislike and stern loathing for each other slowly grew into an understanding for each other. A harmonious friendship beginning to blossom. Though they never let anyone else besides themselves know.



her

light

is born

within

the

thunder's

storm

Chaotic Neutral

Carter Lue Hemphill - 8th

In the world there is both order and chaos
For life to exist they must coincide
To give and take equally
Without chaos there is no purpose, without purpose
there is no order
Without order there is no chaos
With both, life may have all it needs to thrive
With one, life begins to crumble
With only chaos, chaos becomes order
With only order, the lack of chaos becomes the undoing
of the order itself
If the big fish always catches the small fish the big fish
runs out of food
If the small fish always gets away the big fish will stop
chasing
If everyone wins no one wins
If no one wins everyone wins
But life isn't just extremes
The combination of everything is balance
But balance is still flawed
Balance is not always equal
Balance is not always peaceful
And at its best balance is net neutral
To live is to be in the cycle of gaining and losing bal-
ance
Even though balance is not perfect

Broken Chains

Samuel Valdes - 10th

Chains
Digging ceaselessly into me
Dragging
Yanking my legs
Deeper
Perpetual senseless dread
Rotting
I feel like I'm rotting
Like my hands fizzle to nothing
But their unmoving bone
With those chains
Unmoving chains
Through them
And I can't move
I can't raise my body to speak
To cry out something
Because I'm scared
Of something I can never begin to realize
But there's a glimmer
A single strand of yearning
That forces the muscle
To cling to my skeleton
So, I may stand

another *face*,

another *mirror*,

another *reflection*

Hurricane's Eye

Samuel Valdes - 10th

Serene scenery
Radiant green
Dolloped by dew
Silent, still
Battered by wind
Warped by the ever growing
Rampant rain
The roar of a constant storm
Little more than a step away
In the center
Of terrible
Seething storms
There's tranquility

Destruction and Restoration

Camden Toner - 11th

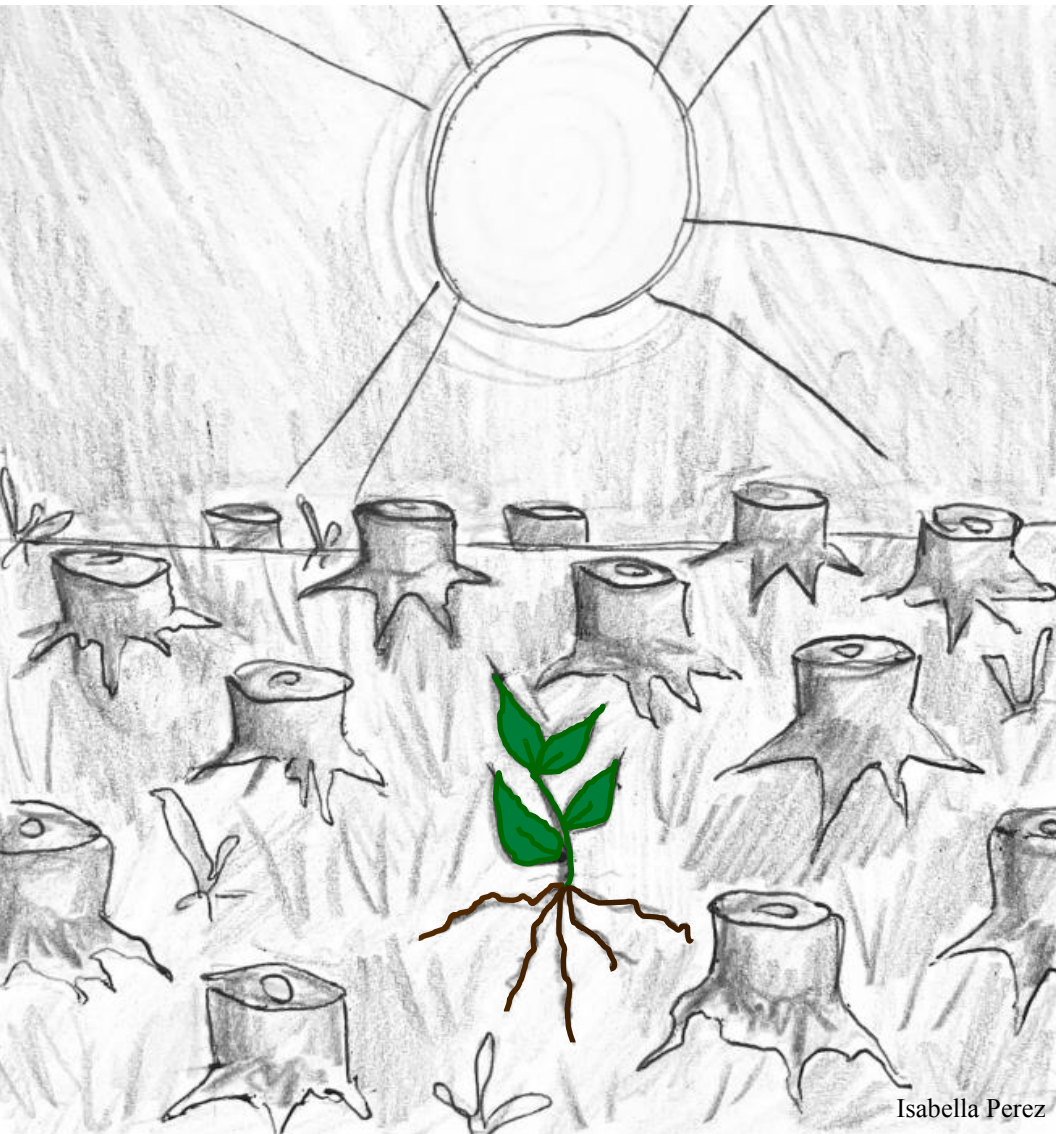
A world of bountiful resources
Left ravaged by us
Nothing left but the barest of bones
Left on the brink of death

But as we consume
And move
Leaving destruction in our wake
A single seed will sprout

From that seed
Will arise a mighty tree

From the ruins
The last bits of life that remain
Will find a way to restore itself
To its former glory

We may return
And tear it all back down
But a few seeds
The few sparks of life that remain
Will regrow





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