

Artist's Statement

During the Summer of 2022, I felt my life was devoid of purpose due to being unsure of my future and a struggle with an anxiety disorder. In this time, I began playing a game called *Persona 5*, it changed my life. The writing of the game immersed me so thoroughly that everything else in my life and all my worries faded away. It gave me a place of refuge. Through the gameplay I was able to reflect on my life and what I wanted to do. While playing this game I decided, perhaps unconsciously, to abandon my goals at that time and to become someone who could make a piece of art that would affect people, like this game had affected me. From this point on, creating games and writing stories became my lifeline in an increasingly stressful world.

In the past year or so, my time spent working on creative projects has only increased. Currently, I focus on exploring the search for meaning, something I have struggled with. I pursue this through a heavily research-based approach, reading philosophers such as Albert Camus and Friedrich Nietzsche to inform my work. Most recently I have begun to construct an idea I am calling "The Metamorphosis of the Soul". The idea behind it is that the most meaningful thing one can do is stare into the abyss of their own meaninglessness, accepting it and opposing it simultaneously. The process of doing this—yearning for an end but defying the urge—forever changes a person. The concept stems from my personal experience and my own search for meaning in life. I believe that concepts such as this have the potential to change someone, an impact I want to achieve with my writing for at least one person. If can help a single person I will be giving to the writing community what I have gained from it.

The concept of my first story, *An Empty Cup*, was made as a reflection of my own experiences. Through it, I channel my own struggles (such as discontent with the impact of one's actions) and passions (such as music and coffee) into my writing. The story explores a man named Logan's strive to achieve his goals and his

realization that he may not be able to achieve them to the degree he wishes. I tried to mirror my own experience of coming to terms with this through musical inspiration. This lent well to my poetic descriptions, as I could draw from my personal connection to music and my time as a musician. In the conclusion Logan finds joy in the minor actions he does that bring positivity to others lives.

The most personal work I have written is *The Search for Light in an Abyss*. In it I discuss the idea of feeling trapped in a pit with no escape. As the poem progresses the pit shifts to a tunnel with a light at the end. This directly reflects my experience, as the poem is based on an idea I have used to help me through difficult times and my anxiety. I believe through this piece I explored my own emotions and experiences to enhance my work.

My current project is much larger than anything I have tackled before. *A King of Ashes* is a screenplay about a person who must struggle through intense hardship and ask themselves what it is that they are willing to sacrifice in order to achieve their goals. In this work I aim for thorough characterization of the protagonist Iudex, a former noble who battles between achieving vengeance for his family and his goals of making the city he lives in more just. I also intend to create a detailed and intentional world to amplify the themes of sacrifice and social upheaval through elements such as distinct social classes and practices.

Only recently have I started writing; as a result, I have allowed my research to greatly inform my writing style rather than habits. Before writing I studied a lot of sciences and maths and am currently studying computer science. As a result, I approach writing quite analytically and methodically. My work is often thoroughly planned with narratives being mapped out in detail before I start writing. In addition to my teaching experience (through positions such as coaching and tutoring), I find this makes my work quite accessible and understandable to a wide variety of readers. I am constantly

struggling to improve my writing and currently am focusing primarily on my poetic style and engaging, descriptive writing.

Through writing and consuming stories in various mediums I have discovered a great deal about myself. I intend to create works that can achieve this for others, as I believe it is one of the most important and wide-reaching things that can be achieved.