



# **O CASTRO LITERARY & ARTS MAGAZINE**

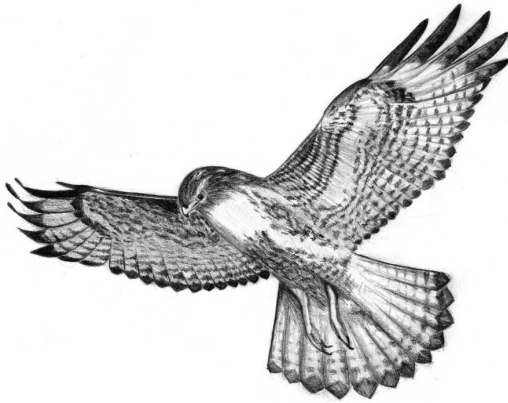
**WINTER 2024**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Untitled photograph by Mateo Fernandez	Front Cover
Yearn to be a Hawk by BSV	1
Midnight Thoughts by Laia Rodríguez	2
Reflections by Mila Aveiga	7
Heaven on Earth by Anonymous	8
Untitled by Alina Wilson	9
Life by Iker Álvarez	10
New World by Iker Álvarez	11
Knight Moonbeam Avery Wilson	12
Death by Iker Álvarez	13
Stranger by Iker Álvarez	13
Life by Iker Álvarez	13
Multi-Faceted Reflections by Mary Hallissey	14
Untitled by Avery Wilson	17
Prize Winners	17
Season Haikus by Ariadna Pazos	18
Untitled graphic design by Alina Wilson	Back Cover

Yearn to be a Hawk  
by BSV

Living as a hawk is what I yearn to one day do;  
With tinted plumage and silk feathers;  
A life huntsman through and through;  
Pointed fangs at my disposal,  
to tear any haunting saddle in the way-  
Gliding past my neighbours with charming sway;  
Praising the season's wonderful hatchings  
The nimble toddler's bodies in the future dispatching.  
But I would not have the remembrance of human pleasures;  
The first view I had of my former school only meant for leisure-  
Walking on the meadow filled with tinted buds of May;  
The many licks on a chocolaty ice cream amidst a tenuous day  
Thus the desire to have another soul is useless,  
Because it would not have such exclusiveness.



## Midnight Thoughts

By Laia Rodríguez

Who are you when they're not around?

When the voices are gone

And you listen to your favourite song

When ur feelings are the only sound

When you're alone

You do what you love

You remember how it felt

to not hide in the shadow of them

Did that ever feel wrong?

When you're locked inside a fantasy

A dream you can't escape

When you're a child enjoying life

Whenever you're not scared

Do you laugh the same way?

Do you feel nervous when you show your true self?

Do you wonder

Will they love you?

Will they get scared?

Will they hug u?

Will they stare?

Will they tell you they'll always be there?

Do you know who you are?

What if they do?

Do you believe closure is possible?

Do their words ever seem true?

Will they see right through you?  
Is there actually a right one for you?  
Who could save you from these feelings  
You are too busy healing

Maybe that's what love is  
They know you when you don't  
They guide you when you're lost  
They make you know it's not your fault  
They make you actually feel hope

But still,  
Was there a moment when you felt like it was all wrong?  
What you liked was odd  
What you missed was gone  
What you hoped for was lost?

That made you wonder  
How can such a beautiful thing  
End up being just a lesson?  
Why do we feel wrong  
When we love something they don't ?

I want to feel complete  
How do I do it when you're not here?  
I loved you in your best  
I supported you in your worst  
I was there for you  
But I think that you forgot

I will never be the same  
You were blood,

love,  
Friend

Now you're just an everyday reminder to me  
To not love too hard  
To not love too deep  
To not trust too much  
To not trust too quick

When I see her brown eyes  
That same warm melody starts playing  
It's all in my head  
feels so real still  
I can feel it  
Yet not touch it  
I can dream of it  
Yet not have it

Makes me feel like I'm home  
Makes me dodge their thorns  
Even sometimes makes me believe  
I can give and also receive

Will I ever be the same?  
Will they be able to fix me?  
Or will I just have to live  
With them never guaranteeing it?

Reflections  
by Mila Aveiga

Reflect upon my heart  
Before it's broke apart  
You own my reflection on the mirror;  
Dearer than any other sinner  
I see my reflection on the window  
I have reflections of my own  
I only see if I am true to my reflection  
Isn't it the reason for my deflection?  
I am heading in misdirection  
Everything but not your rejection  
All I want is your attention  
End with the agony of my reflection  
There is no desire to see more  
Your imperfections are clear to the eyes' perception  
What you reflect to me are perfections  
These reflections rot my core  
Raskolnikov suffers less than me,  
And Baudelaire pities me,  
Are you even there for me?  
Like glass shatters on the floor  
You are the reflection of my soul  
My mind has declared war;  
And you are the one I'm waiting for  
*Amor vincit omnia* screams my spirit  
Sometimes you are like Achilles,  
Other times you are like Buchanan  
I reflect what I see, so I decide to quit  
My reflections eat away my mind  
I want your reflection on my mirror  
My heart needs to find your kind  
I know you are my killer  
So break my reflections now

## Heaven on Earth

by Anonymous

As I ventured deeper into the dense forest, the huge trees loomed overhead, their gnarled branches intertwining like a tangled web, blocking out the sun's golden rays. Amidst the shadowy labyrinth, a sudden glimmer of sunlight revealed a small cabin nestled within a small clearing. Its red brick facade stood out from the natural colors of the forest. Approaching the cabin, the resonant thuds of a heavy axe disrupted the calm forest, echoing like a drum. The sun, unblocked by any clouds, cast a warm, golden glow upon the vibrant garden that surrounded the cabin. A group of wildflowers burst into a riot of color, their petals were swaying gently in the breeze, while a flock of birds added a chant to the serene scene.



## Untitled

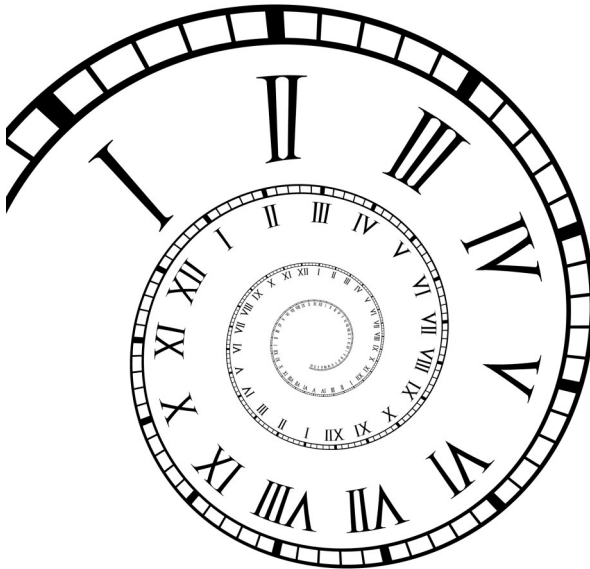
by Alina Wilson

Frigid wind sprinted around the dark, damp forest. If someone listened close enough, they could hear what sounded like wicked laughter through the trees. A slight patter of rain started to fall, soon turning to the deafening plunge of heavy drops of water. The eerie moonlight was blocked by ebony clouds. The roaring boom of thunder echoed through the murky night. Crack. Lightning flashed down into a small clearing, singeing the moist moss beneath. Where nothing once stood, a girl - clad entirely in a dress as black as a raven's plume - was standing in the burnt grass.

Her scarlet, un-kept hair was tied back into a long ponytail nearly touching the ground. The face her hair's grimy bangs framed was haggard, and her once-bright eyes were sunken. If one was able to catch a glimpse of her face, they would find that the pallor was not from poor health - but from little exposure to light. In her gloved hands she held a large hat that had many hand-made patches on it. Just like her hat, everything she wore was inky black. An obsidian dress drooped across her frail form, and black boots covered her feet. "Corvi, you can come out now," she called in a voice that was sweet but morphed from years of hardship. A pitch-black raven flew into the clearing, and landed on the girl's arm, held out specifically for him. For the minutes following, both the raven and the girl alike bobbed and nodded their heads like they were in a conversation. The girl sighed, visibly contented with the interaction. "Ok Corvi, run along now," she said, her voice slicing through the serene forest like a knife through butter. "I'll see you tomorrow!" The girl waved into the darkness of night, beaming with contentment.

Life  
by Iker Álvarez

As time passes by,  
week by week, day by day,  
less time there is until we die.  
The wheel of destiny  
spinning and spinning,  
no time left for dreaming,  
of little angels, of forever resting.  
And life,  
an unstoppable force,  
that to the end makes us dive,  
frees us from being slaves



New World  
by Iker Álvarez

One day I will win  
Respect and love to begin  
A new world, a new life  
With two children and a wife

One day I will be  
The one that solutions to things see  
To make the world a better place  
And to all the problems be able to replace

One day I will rise  
When the future all my decisions denies  
And at that moment they will all know  
That God isn't above, but is below

One day I will reign  
All the things that I had gained  
That made all to respect  
To not disobey nor object

One day I will suffer  
The solutions that I'd discovered  
And discover a new way  
To save finally my life and stay

One day I will think  
That to everyone I put in *risa*  
So finally the new world  
Will be towards nothing thrown

# Knight Moonbeam

By Avery Wilson



## Death

by Iker Álvarez

Death. A kind friend that waits for our arrival. That knows our final destiny and, patiently, stands all alone in front of heaven's gates with his arms opened. We, waiting for a sign that indicates peace and kindness for eternity. Eventually, its light to some appears. Only the ones who truly think that they have seen him and that their life is worthless will be able to find death before he finds us. Death, the one that is represented as a bad person, hugs us innocently, with our fear vanishing slowly as we start realizing that people exaggerate when telling us that dying is horrible.



## Stranger

by Iker Álvarez

A strange shadow hidden by mystery waits at the door, staring at the soul that betrayed its own body. You, a worried boy, wait for a signal of hope and peace so that all of this ends as soon as possible. With all your strength you grip the only thing you still keep from the accident: your lucky charm.

## Life

by Iker Álvarez

Life. A thing that we live, that we come from and we eventually leave. We can't escape from it and at the same time the door to death isn't locked. We are free to go and we aren't. Only life itself can let us escape, although life doesn't deprive us from dying. No one has ever achieved the impossible: to be free from life's force and yet bound to it, and yet we do, in a peaceful way. Life is complex and yet easy to understand. Confusion, its ally, keeps us under his control, until we die...

## Multi-Faceted Reflections

by Mary Hallissey

### Societal Reflections

Reflections; a reflection across a wave, the ripples spreading out in concentric circles, the pools of tranquility within an ocean of life, the pearls from a necklace cascading down a mountain-side. The mirror of life is deemed to be the vehicle of introspection, reflection and extrospection within the bilateral niches of the human conscience. Oblique and cross-strata examination can be used as a device for 'reflection.' The synecdoche of the word reflection is, encompassing both its literal meaning and the broader meaning with which it holds; reflection is the act of contemplation, of retrospection, of looking upon past events, and this is analogous to the physical aspect of reflection. To duplicate the original copy, to form a replica which manifests the qualities and ramifications of past events. The evanescent nature of reflection is constituent to its intangibility, it is akin to a realm far from proximity, beyond imagination, beyond phantasmagoria.

As society is like a delicate vase, the broken shards of the vase reflect distinct niches, people, places, strata. The fine carvings and intricate patterns of the vase reveal the interconnectedness of the niches. The reflection between these niches is the fundamental basis of society, the movement of people, ideas and concepts. If our society was to be a linear structure, in which each chronological event in history was cast upon the line in arbitrary intervals, the reflection of each of these events could be entertained by an extraterrestrial being; perhaps the being would behold the following umbrella terms: socio-economic, political, environmental and historical reflection.

### Environmental Reflections

Socio-economic reflection can be defined as the social footprints, footprints of our actions, the leaps and bounds of our memories, our marks on the face of humanity, on earth. With the future being shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and humanity's responses to it, critical insights are more important than ever. Even prior to the pandemic, progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was mixed. Subsequently, taken together, these reports issued dire warnings and calls for urgent action to step up progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, with the overall message that business as usual would not be enough, and that the window of time within which to act was closing fast. The reports also underscored that vulnerable populations—those in countries in special

situations, in conflict and post-conflict settings; migrants; women; older persons; youth; persons with disabilities; and indigenous persons, among others— continued to be at risk of being left behind. In the contemporary socio-economic climate, there are a plethora of issues beyond the tip of the ice-berg; I still sense the shafts of light bathing every corner of my town, but the natural beauty was suppressed by a filter of melancholia, fed by an amalgamation of profound economic and societal issues that bobbed on the surface of the vast ocean of national “culture,” internal and external problems.

The 7th Sustainable Development Goal, ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is a potential physical manifestation of ‘Reflections;’ our everyday life depends on reliable and affordable energy. And yet the consumption of energy is the dominant contributor to climate change, accounting for around 60 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions. Countries can accelerate the transition to an affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy system by investing in renewable energy resources, prioritising energy efficient practices, and adopting clean energy technologies and infrastructure. The usage of smart grid technologies and real time optimization and automation technologies is also a feasible solution to this contemporary issue; smart grids are equipped with smart metres that allow bi-directional communication between the utility company and consumers.

## Our Reflections

Amidst vast mountainsides, along the skyline and traversing through the silhouettes of foliage against the backdrop of the sky, windmills stand in serendipity; each anchored in a pool of tranquility. Lapping waves converge and the rhythm of the wind is reinforced. Shafts of light bathe the landscape in a hue of gold; glinting edges converge at vertices as solar panels are lined up in uniform, recurring patterns. Spectres of light dance upon the panels, reflecting the light; translucency is propagated through the air, and the light is detected, subsequently providing energy. This simple, seemingly futile mechanism propagates the basis of all—life. Light is life, and vice versa. Throughout centuries, light has been synonymous with hope; symbolism which imbues every branch of human nature. In primitive eras, when darkness encapsulated all corners of the world, light was a spectre, a glimmer of hope. Light was energy, warmth, potential, the spectre upon the horizon which induces fixation. Enabling one to push the question marks further beyond the distant horizons, into the dark, obscure unknown. Personal reflection is likewise a major constituent to this theme; peering at oneself in the mirror reveals a plethora of things: one’s lineage, origins, and a rather distasteful feeling of sonder. As energy circumstances within the world fluctuate, one can imagine a young child, living

within an impoverished household, the glimmer of hope absent from their eyes. Dull, sombre, slow. The specks of dust are suspended within the air, dancing and held in place in an uncanny, eerie manner. The spectres of dust are akin to bubbles in the air. Encapsulating each moment, each child, light reflecting upon each one. The child's head hangs low, fingers intertwined as they peer into the mirror. Perhaps a portal to a nether world would suffice, a world where energy is bounteous and perpetual, the grass perpetually greener.

### Utopia and Dystopia; Two Sides of The Same Coin

Aristotle's school of thought provides a derivative dogma: The Allegory of the Cave. Without taking action to alter our current energy situation, we are merely prisoners within the cave, viewing the shadows of the 'real objects under the sun,' exterior to the cave. The absolute truth is on the outside, the key to 'utopia.' These mere reflections on the back of the cave are falsehoods, enshrouded in darkness and oblivion. The phrase, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts," is reflected in our world today. In contemporary society, this can be applied holistically; each individual is constituent to the bigger picture, the frame of our being is the current state of the world. Interconnectedness within society is the aspect that makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Individually, we are weak, blinded and uninformed. Oblivious to the gravity of our actions, influences, and collective power. It starts with one person, akin to a domino effect, to instigate change. This is reflected in the butterfly effect; one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind. In the distant future, if one was able to visit the world, what would they behold? A dystopia of uncanny scenery, or a utopia? From the first steps of an infant, movement is marked as waves of energy that contribute to the vast energetic field of humanity encapsulating the earth. Through the eras along the vast timeline of the universe, we make our marks, our movements, creating a sense of sonder and sublimity as we permanently etch our footprints on the planet, creating a timeless and beautiful painting. Through the looking glass, we see a kaleidoscope of colours reflecting our own movements back at us. Maybe a reflection with a hint of Nihilism, a future where energy has been exhausted. Kafkaesque-like barren lands, lost in a sea of precedent, once glimmering hope. The embroideries of our actions commence now, the intricate designs akin to jewels upon a piece of cloth. The future beholds much to come, much to anticipate, and much to reflect upon. History is a construct of echoes, and the overcoming of this is the spectre upon the horizon.



# PRIZE WINNERS

## CONGRATULATIONS TO

MATEO FERNÁNDEZ for BEST NATURE PHOTO  
(10 HPs to York)

ALINA WILSON for BEST GRAPHIC DESIGN  
(10 HPs to Cambridge)

KNIGHT MOONBEAM by ALENA WILSON for BEST ANIME  
(10 HPs to Cambridge)

WINTER by ARIADNA PAZOS for BEST HAIKU  
(10 HPs to Cambridge)

DEATH by IKER ÁLVAREZ for BEST PROSE  
(20 HPs to Oxford)

MIDNIGHT THOUGHTS by LAIA RODRÍGUEZ for BEST POEM  
(10 HPs to Oxford)

## Untitled

by Avery Wilson

The wind was howling, summoning the screams of previous ghosts. A sudden blast of wind pushed all the dark grass to the side, making it sway and dance in a crooked manner. The abandoned field had been vacant for years, the ancient hill standing silently above it. A dark mist covered the ground, leaving a sense of fear in the biting air. Suddenly, a figure appeared on the hill, invisible a second before. The wind ceased to wail, as if the ghosts had run away in fear. The person was no fool to the area - she was the causing factor that made it a graveyard for weary souls.

Her long, dark cloak, void of all color but black, grey and a tiny ounce of red, rushed into the night sky. No eyes could follow it into the tar black night as it blended in, disappearing as it lashed around in the violent gusts of wind. A long sword was pinned tightly to her side, looking as if it was sharp enough to cut anything like butter. Tiny pieces of crimson dotted her outfit and adornment, but the dark grey and intense black was overpowering. Long spikes pierced from her shoes, covering her legs in inky black destruction. Small claws ran over her fingers, as sharp as her sword. Her hair was cut razor sharp, the flat lines of the black waves flowing next to her cloak and beyond her triangular, sable bamboo hat. Over her face was a truly menacing sight. A round, circular mask surrounded her face, with a long, bright smile reaching over it. It stood out against her dark appearance, unsettling anyone - or anything - that looked at it for too long. It was the mask of a killer, and all her victims knew it before their last breath. Her entire presence was a deep and sinister omen, cursing and crushing all that stepped before this dreadful and almighty assassin.



Season Haikus  
by Ariadna Pazos

Autumn-

Coloured leaves swirling,  
Autumn's beautiful carpet,  
Nature's final blaze.

Winter-

Icy breath escapes,  
As cold air bites at my skin,  
Nature's frozen dance.

Summer-

Tropical sunlight,  
Sweat twinkling, ice cream melting,  
Lazy days of warmth.

Spring-

Raindrops fall gently,  
Birds sing in a melodious tune,  
Blooms dance in the breeze.





# O Castro Literary & Arts Magazine

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