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Three Poems: “Same Identity, Different Lives,” “Into Obscurity,” and “Community”

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Creative and Literary Works

Three Poems:

"Same Identity, Different Lives," "Into Obscurity," and "Community"

Hyleigh Pan

San Joaquin High School

"Same Identity, Different Lives"

Scorching sun beats down on him
Sweat rolling down his back
Air conditioned cold air blows a chilling breeze down my neck
Not having to worry about the temperature

He makes his way to school
Taking a straining, hour long trek along the Mekong River
Driven to my nearby school
Couple of minutes away from home

He walks into a school with dirt covered floors
I walk into classrooms with gleaming polished tiles

Opening his old books with faded letters
Listening to his instructor
Opening my laptop to the clear font of words
Listening to my teacher

He returns home to the comfort of eggs and sticky rice
I return home to comfort of eggs and sticky rice

Two worlds coincide with familiarity
Yet two worlds apart we are



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“Into Obscurity”

Childhood visits to grandparents
Mixture of Lao and English words spoken
Not being able to differentiate the two
Lao English hybrid was the norm
Wondering if it were a language itself

Annual visits to grandparents
Still struggling to understand the language
Leaving childhood years behind
Lost in the hybrid language spoken

Visiting as a young adult
Attempting to recall Lao key words
Not understanding my grandparents and the others
Having difficulty pulling those words out behind my head

Soon enough
The communicating language faded
Turned into garble and regret

"Community"

Sharing connections past and present
Strong bonds that unite individuals

Unforgettable experiences told through stories
Discovering similarities
Powerful voices to be acknowledged

Sharing the Lao identity
Rooted from the same country
Resulting in accidental familiarity

Though we may not know the ones we have in common personally
We still share one thing within us
Being in the same community

About the Author



Hyleigh Pan was born in Connecticut and is currently living in Southern California. She spent most of her childhood summers in Kansas, where her grandparents owned a Lao grocery store. This was where she interacted with many customers and learned about their lives in Laos.



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