

Artist Statement

For my final project, I wanted to combine creative writing with code to create a unique synthesis of my academics and personal interests. I've grown up highly interested in creative writing and the stars, and I wrote poems about connection and relationships in high school specifically about the stars. For my project *Astrological Journey*, coded entirely from scratch in HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, I wanted to tell more of a free-form story about the knowledge I've gained in this class told through my own creative lens. I split my texts into 7 different paragraphs of prose writing exploring a stage of universal creation or understanding. Additionally, each stage introduces a new constellation and poem to represent stages of human life. The project's creative statement is that both astronomical and human life are complex, and since both are finite lifespans, there were many parallels between the two.

Through each poem, I intentionally expressed concepts in language that makes sense from the perspective of the universe or planets as well as from a human's physical and emotional growth through adolescence. I chose the stages to be beginnings, reproduction, structure and relationships, self-centrism, ego death, physical death, and acceptance of finality. From a universal perspective, I follow the science of the universe's creation and the continuous creation of new planetary bodies through collisions (like how the Moon formed from an impact on Earth which we learned in class). Structure and relationships from a planetary perspective speaks to the birth of new planets orbiting their larger originator. The poems about self-centrism and ego death mirror the human understanding of geocentrism and heliocentrism sequentially. Poem six uses supernovas to communicate the beauty of death, and the seventh poem is a love letter to the tumultuous nature of the universe itself.

For the human perspective of these poems, the first two poems more literally reflect birth and human reproduction as means of human creation. The concept of orbits in the third poem ties directly to the family unit and how we orbit our parents, for better or worse. The poems on geocentrism and heliocentrism communicate the ego of a young child and their subsequent ego death when they make the necessary realization that they are one of eight billion people, and the world does not revolve around them, like how we realized the Sun does not orbit us. Poem six explores the pain of losing a loved one or traumatic events, yet how that uncertainty and pain is necessary in the human experience, and poem seven is about the necessity of acceptance.

I also made sure to tie in scientific knowledge that I gained during the class. Poem two's structure stemmed from the knowledge that planetary collisions condense and create new planets, which resembled human reproduction and helped inspire this concept. Additionally, in poem two I highlight the belief held by astronomers like Ptolemy and Aristotle that planetary bodies were created by God, shown by the use of the phrase "heavenly spheres" in the context of planetary creation. Poem three utilizes the concepts of orbits being ellipses and not circles to communicate the concept of flawed orbit: a planet orbiting its parent in an ellipse reflects the negative downside of entering hostile or unsupportive family environments, and this metaphor spawned from my recollection of Kepler and his laws. Poems 4 and 5 were the most direct

inspiration for this project, as they are human interpretations of the cosmos and tie the two concepts together most directly. Using these concepts as poems helped my creative direction greatly. I used the knowledge of the stars we see being dead echoes of energy that we see after large delays due to distance to spawn the idea of the sixth paragraph, where I intertwine pain, death and beauty. The stars are a universally useful and idolized symbol from Earth, yet are simply mirages of death, so I expanded upon this concept for my sixth poem.

I've always found great creative inspiration from the universe and the beauty of stars, so getting to combine class knowledge in my poems with a parallel structure comparing the universe and human lifespans was a really enjoyable medium to express my opinions on human adolescence and our awkward growing stages. I chose a website to grow academically in the process and display my abilities through raw HTML, CSS and JavaScript, and I added a visual constellation overhead of the poems on my webpage to further connect the idea of linear progress of human experience being parallel by the stars. I wanted to express my ideas of human growth and universal parallels in my own medium, so I knew a website where I controlled spacing, display, colors and format was my ideal choice to show my poetry.