

Mosaic - Literacy Narrative

On the first day of school, a young white girl asked me,
“So... what are you?”

Like I'm a riddle with a missing piece.
A picture you couldn't quite piece together.

At the time I didn't understand
the multifaceted ways of my identity.
So I looked down at my hands
and saw shards of glass
pressed into the grout of my skin.
I understood then: I was fractured.

Brunette with the brown eyes
But skin pale as clouds
They looked at me weird
even asked “Are you Chinese?”
Because I was...
Different.

But how could I blame them?
When my passport claimed me American
but my face carried three countries.

Broken pieces glued to my skin,
glued to my tongue,
glued to the way their eyes pinned me
like they were trying to solve a puzzle
with no picture on the box.

Couldn't pinpoint my origin,
so they labeled me “other.”

And in childhood?
I believed them.
I believed that different meant broken,
so I bleached my hair pale,
popped in contacts to cover my tale,
Painted with stories that didn't feel like myself

Just to fit into my “American-ness”

Years later, filling out college forms,
That question found me again:

“What are you?”

They wanted one box to be checked
One color. One tongue.
But what I did instead
was check them all.

Because these broken pieces you see on me
are fragments fused together.
I am not broken
I am Mosaic.

I am the spaces between Spanish and English,
the rhythm of Mexico,
the savor of Venezuela,
the hustle of America.

They see fragments.
I see a collection.
They drew lines on maps to divide me,
but my blood doesn't read borders.

So I raised my voice and yelled “Objection!”
I refuse your checkbox collection.
Because I am a thousand shapes fused together,
each piece a gift from my ancestors.

I am Mosaic.
So when my mamá asks, “¿Mija, ya comiste?”
I answer, “Sí, mom, I already ate, pero gracias.”
And when my family calls from Caracas
I flip to “¿Qué pasó, chama?”

They call my tongue broken.
I call it Mosaic.
A tongue raised on survival and sacrifice.

I am Mosaic.
A thousand voices glued together by history,
by abuela's prayers,
by mama's sacrifices,
by the dreamers,
by the refugees,
by the hustlers.

So don't ask me to choose one box,
one color, one tongue.
Take a step back,
and see the cathedral glass.
See the masterpiece.

Not broken.
Not fractured
Mosaic.
A masterpiece in pieces.

When the World Stopped, I Began - Literacy Narrative

As crazy as it sounds, COVID became a kind of literacy sponsor for me. When the world stopped, so did my responsibilities. For the first time, I was stuck in my room with nothing but silence and hours stretching endlessly ahead of me. Yet in that stillness, I found freedom. I could finally shape my days with no pressure on my routine. I read books that actually excited me, painted beneath the slant of light that would spill through my window, and made little videos of my art with no meaning other than joy.

One afternoon, I sat in the corner of my room, brush in hand, painting an old pair of sneakers to revamp them instead of throwing them away. My mom walked in, studied them for a moment, and smiled. “You should post those online,” she said. So I did. I began recording my process with no filter. The brush strokes, the splatters of paint on my desk, the way an old shoe transformed into something new. Sometimes it was just a sketch day, sometimes a pair of custom sneakers, sometimes a big canvas.

Around July, a classmate messaged me asking for a custom pair. I filmed the process, edited the TikTok, and uploaded it before heading to the gym. Mid-workout, my phone buzzed nonstop. When I glanced down, I saw my video had gone viral. Comments stacked by the second, messages asking for custom orders, and my artwork was suddenly out on the internet, reaching strangers from all across the world.

That moment changed something in me. I saw firsthand the power of social media—not just to showcase art, but to build a brand online. I started to really get into digital literacy, learning trends, sounds, editing styles, etc. I expanded from TikTok to Instagram, then launched a website, teaching myself technologies I had never touched before. But it wasn’t only about uploading images, it was about telling stories. Storytelling lured people in, and the numbers showed it. I had millions of views, hundreds of thousands of likes...For a while I felt like I was flying.

But that didn’t last long. The more I produced, the less I cared for myself. When school reopened online, I was juggling deadlines and a booming business, and I began to slip. My inbox became a sea I couldn’t wade through, orders piled up, and assignments slipped through my fingers. I felt like I was drowning in my own success. Eventually, I hit a wall so hard it left me paralyzed. My biggest enemy wasn’t the algorithms or the orders—it was me. My impossible expectations crushed me. My voice dimmed into silence.

So I stopped. Not in surrender, but in reset. I knew I had to rebuild slowly. I shut down the business and turned toward education. I bought a professional camera, downloaded Adobe Creative Cloud, and declared Digital Media Production as my major, pairing it with Art Entrepreneurship. At FSU, some of my professors became huge mentors, showing me how to turn raw creativity into crafted stories. Every project made it clearer that I didn’t just want to tell stories. I wanted to tell stories that captivated.

That's when I added a second major: Editing, Writing, and Media. It was like opening another window into myself. I discovered that the same creativity that fuels my art could also flow through words. Just as I can spend hours layering paint on a canvas, I can spend hours unscrambling my thoughts onto a page. Writing became another kind of painting but this time with language instead of color. And in both, I discovered the same truth: when I create, I come alive.