

WRITING

The Cage We Share

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TYPE**POETRY****GENRE****GRADE 12**

“Look, it’s a cheetah!” a little boy says, as I read the
sign that says

“ocelot.”

The ocelot is pacing in his cage.

His cage may look big enough to the casual observer
but inside, you realize that it’s smaller than you think.

Left, right, up, down.

He stops and looks at me with his yellow eyes.

It is quick,

but at this moment there is communication.

We understand each other.

We are both always called something that we are not.

My own people doubt my ethnicity because of the
color of my skin.

It makes me feel like an outcast,

like I’m in a cage, separated from everyone else.

We are both trapped,

growing more frustrated by the second.

He jumps onto the branch and looks up at the roof of

the cage.

He marches through the patchy grass.

The chirping of the birds plays on the speakers.

The scenery is nothing more than an illusion
to make him think he is at home.

His wicked growl is a death metal vocalization, a call for help.

Left, right, up, down.

No matter how much he sprints, jumps, and climbs,
we are still in the same place,

Feeling hopeless, with no progress made.

Like a nightmare where you run as fast as you
can but stay in place the whole time.

He is trapped, I am trapped.

His cage,

My mind.

Yet we keep trying and trying until someday,
he and I will break free and experience life
without obeying the rules that are made for a man
and finally, prosper



with a new and liberated mind.