

Where the Shadows Wait for You

By Jacy Duan - Richard Montgomery High School

i don't remember the first time i saw you,
only that the room forgot how to hold me.

when you smiled, your eyes crinkled
like the pages of a fairytale romance,

but the one that tries to forget its own ending.

you were once punctual,
like daylight staining a room
before the darkness learned its name.
first you stopped arriving on time,
then you stopped arriving at all.

now i practice your name soundlessly,
so the broken, untouched mug of coffee
is unable to reject it;
so the ceiling fan doesn't pause its spinning to listen.

but after all, you told me red was the color of love,
so i never questioned the stain in the margins.
i didn't ask what happens when the blood turns to ash.

only now do i recall that you cannot read this.

not because you choose not to,
but because the words i write
require a pulse to understand.