

Halley's Comet (By: Shivali H. Patra)

I was ten when the sky cracked open,
and fire spilled out like molten glass through the sky.
The air smelled of caramel and dust,
and I was scared of how bright the world could get.
You found me near the cotton candy stand,
clutching my ticket to the Ferris wheel like a liferaft.
And, you laughed, pointed upward, and said, "*It's just light.*"

At eighteen, we unlocked the door to our college dorm,
boxes piled high with mismatched dreams.
We burned toast, studied late,
and talked about how the comet would return
when we had learned a thing or two about the world.
We promised to still be watching.

Years slipped by like songs on a playlist,
some we replayed, some we let fade.
We built our lives on different streets
but never missed a birthday, never missed a call.

We wove our days into a ribbon that tangled through time.

And, just like that, seventy-five years passed,
and the comet came again, arriving exactly as promised.
We sat side by side in folding chairs,
the same sky glowing over our wrinkled hands.
You nudged me, grinning.
"*It's just light,*" you said.

And I laughed—
because after all that time,
you,
my very own light,
were right.

Author Note: I wrote this poem after hearing Billie Eilish's "Halley's Comet" for the first time. I have always believed that songs hold stories, so whenever I find a song I like, I look it up on Genius and read the lyrics and the songwriter's inspiration. When I came across the name Halley's Comet, I realized I didn't know what it was. I searched it and learned about its history, and the idea of someone living long enough to see it twice fascinated me. This poem grew from that thought, but it also became the story of two best friends who carry each other through a lifetime, all the way to the moment the comet returns.

Fun Facts!

- ❖ I actually entered this poem in the 2025 Scholastics Art and Writing Awards, and this January, I was informed that it had won a regional honorable mention!
- ❖ I'm very inspired by poet Rupi Kaur, and one of her signature marks is that she accompanies an inked sketch of a symbol representing her poetry. Ever since, I have tried to do something similar, but I'm still searching for my very own unique trademark!



Image Credit: dreamstime.com