

BREATHE!

BY CHANTÉ DAVIS

Breathe!

Scrunched plastic bottles line the sidewalks and
beam in the sun on the scorching concrete.
Wrappers and bottle caps and plastic bags invade
the gutters that lead to the neighborhood creek.

Breathe!

The roadways have become ugly wastelands full of basura.
Pieces of string have accumulated onto the branches of nearby trees.
They wrap and stretch around like an abnormal spider web.

Breathe!

Neighbors and the homeless leave their bottles,
flick their cigarettes, throw their chip bags.
Public trash cans are sparse,
and the little bit of green space we have
is covered in materials that will far outlive most of us.



Breathe!

Our low-income community has been defunded
as the petrochemical companies line their bolsillos.
I thought it was supposed to be people over profit but I fear...

B r e a t h e !



But I just can't breathe.
The land hurts, our ocean degrades from our waste.
We are running out of time, I fear.

Breathe!





Inhale the calidó, sticky air that emits day
and night from the pollution facilities
That traps in your lungs and burns the back of your throat.

Breathe!



For it may be the last breath for a brother or sister or
friend suffering from asthma.
For it may be the last time the algae in the ocean
can produce the oxygen of the world.
For it may be the last tree's turn to photosynthesize.

Breathe!



Inhale. Remember your trip to the suburbs.
Remember that first, full deep breath of air you took,
as you glanced upon evergreen rolling hills.
Remember the way your lungs thanked you,
the way your eyes twinkled at the sight of a community
that had been invested in.

Breathe!

Remember the glistening creek, the whistling streams,
the wish of having this back home.

The landscape bursting with colors, so many colors!

Verde y azul y violeta and yellow and orange!

The bright flowers, the overarching trees,
the grass lawns cut to perfección.

Breathe!

The clean gutters, the storm drains free of plastic waste

The thought of the land flourishing again,

And the sea teeming with life under a blue crystalline surface!

Breathe!

Exhale. El fuego that burns in your soul.

Use it to blaze a path to a new future.

A sustainable future, a future of clean seas,

a future of reinvestment,

a future the youth can look forward to.

Respirar.

Tu eres fuerte.

Un mundo mejor es posible.

Breathe.

Inhale, exhale.

A livable future is your birthright.