

Section 1

#1 *"The axis of her world was a small, golden locket he had given her. Its etched, sun-facing petals seemed to govern the tilt of her life, dictating the angle of her easel and the turn of each heavy, angelical head on her balcony."*

Strengths: Your metaphorical language creates a vivid picture of how the locket controls her life. The connection between the sunflower petals and her world's direction is clever and beautiful.

Weakness: Unclear pronoun reference → The sentence jumps between "her," "he," and "its" without making it clear who is doing what. When you write "Its etched, sun-facing petals seemed to govern," readers might get confused about whether you mean the locket or something else has petals.

Exemplar: *The golden locket he had given her became the axis of her world. The sunflower etched on its surface seemed to govern the tilt of her life.*

#2 *"He came in once while he was painting, the air growing warmer and brighter with his presence. He stood behind her, his gaze on the canvas—an intense close-up of a spiralling, seeded heart."*

Strengths: Your description of the atmosphere changing shows his powerful effect on her space. The detail about the spiralling, seeded heart painting helps readers picture her artwork.

Weakness: Confusing subject reference → You write "while he was painting" but then describe him looking at her canvas, making it unclear who is actually painting. This makes the sentence hard to follow.

Exemplar: *He came in once while she was painting, the air growing warmer and brighter with his presence.*

#3 *"Gone was the locket from her throat, its absence a pale, untouched circle of skin. In its place grew a new aesthetic, an art of the abyss."*

Strengths: The image of the pale circle shows her physical freedom from his control. Your phrase "art of the abyss" creates a strong contrast with her earlier bright paintings.

Weakness: Vague metaphorical language → When you write "In its place grew a new aesthetic," the connection between removing jewelry and growing art doesn't make clear sense. Readers need clearer links between physical actions and artistic changes.

Exemplar: *Gone was the locket from her throat, leaving a pale, untouched circle of skin. This freedom inspired a new aesthetic—an art of the abyss.*

■ Your piece tells a powerful story about someone breaking free from a controlling relationship through art. The way you connect sunflowers, light, and darkness works well throughout the writing. Your descriptions help readers picture the scenes clearly. However, some sentences need clearer connections between ideas. Also, you can improve by making sure pronouns clearly point to the right person or thing. Additionally, some metaphors need simpler explanations so readers can follow your meaning better. Your vocabulary choices are strong, but sometimes the sentence structure makes them hard to understand. Furthermore, you could strengthen the piece by adding clearer transitions between paragraphs. The ending shows good growth for your character, but the middle sections need smoother connections. Your writing shows real skill with imagery and symbolism.

Overall Score: 45/50

Section 2

Heliotrope and Selene

#1 The axis of her world was a small, golden locket he had given her. Its etched, sun-facing petals seemed to govern the tilt of her life, dictating the angle of her easel and the turn of each heavy, ~~angelical~~ [angelic] head on her balcony. Her canvases were variations on a single devotional theme: a blaze of gold, an unblinking gaze, a study in scorching yellows and ochres. Her entire world, it seemed, was arranged to face a singular, brilliant source just beyond the frame. Life was a study in adoration.

#2 ~~He came in once while he was painting~~ [He came in once while she was painting], the air growing warmer and brighter with his presence. He stood behind her, his gaze on the canvas—an intense close-up of a spiralling, seeded heart. "You know," he said, a low murmur against her ear, "it's the way they follow the light. Unconditionally. That's their best quality." He wasn't praising her art [;] he was praising its subject, and by extension, himself. ~~That adoration had always mistaken~~ [She had always mistaken] his heat for warmth, his intensity for intimacy. She never questioned the deep, cool shadows cast by him, vast and empty spaces where nothing of her own could grow. The turning point was not a thunderclap, but a quiet act of desecration: him, on her balcony, later that week, casually flicking cigarette ash into the soil of the most vibrant stalk. "Such a thirsty flower," he'd murmured, and the meaning landed with a chill. In the quiet after he left, in the blue pre-dawn hours, she found herself craving shade, a respite from the glare.

On the balcony, a slow catastrophe unfolded. Deprived of her care, the stalks grew brittle. The great heads—once radiant—sagged on their desiccated necks until they faced the floorboards in a posture of final, collective defeat. The sight of this silent surrender, a mirror held up to her own spirit, finally

spurred her into action. One evening, with the cool deliberation of a surgeon, she took up her shears and methodically severed each withered stem. As she bundled the dry remains, something fell from a shrivelled head: a single, dark, and perfect seed [which] she caught in her waiting palm.

#3 Gone was the locket from her throat, its absence a [leaving a] pale, untouched circle of skin. ~~In its place grew a new aesthetic~~ [This freedom inspired a new aesthetic], an art of the abyss. Her palette, now rich with ultramarine, obsidian, and the spectral gleam of silver [,] gave birth to impossible things that flourished without a sun, to life that made its own strange light.

Months later, she brought two relics to her workbench: his locket and her seed. Under the focussed blue flame of her torch, the gold surrendered its familiar shape, collapsing into a glowing, anonymous tear before she began to hammer it into a new form. It was not a sun she forged, but the keen light of a waning moon. Into the centre of this silvered crescent, she carefully set the dark seed, enclosing it like a secret.

The new pendant settled against her skin, cool and definite. It rested in the same hollow, yet it spoke a different language. Standing on her now-clear balcony, she felt the moonlight on her face, its clean, quiet light finding a home in the locket at her throat. It was a testament not to a light she had once followed, but to the profound and generative darkness from which she had finally learnt to bloom.