

"Oxygen to Fly"

Words by Isaiah Acosta and Musical Composition and Voice by: Rapper Trap House

Critique by: Amy Rogin

Tick, tick, tick...beep, beep, beep. The sound of an oxygen machine echoes hauntingly as it introduces a steady beat. An ethereal, yet commanding voice, floods in with ascending musical notes. That "ascension" sets the stage with rich symbolism of flight and triumph over tragedy. This is his story in his words:

***"I don't care what people think of me
Pride and honor let that carry me
Jaw gone but I love myself
Like a lion to my family."***

These are Isaiah's lyrics that jump in like a one-two punch. They do not just ask you to listen; they demand it! These provocative words are masterfully performed by Rapper/Producer Trap House. As an advocate and philanthropist in his community, Trap took time out of his creative endeavors to add music and a voice to Isaiah's message. It isn't just the richness of his vocals, or the bravado that it required to bolster the words, or even the emotional connection that it required to perform, it was Isaiah's

story that captured the rapper's heart. He added his own creative stamp and Isaiah's vision came to life. A common vehicle of friendship and love of music. This was "Their Anthem." It became a process that is soon to be a message for all of us to look inward.

Musically, the ever-present droning of the breathing machine is a constant reminder to the listener that it could stop at any time; it could skip a beat. Life is like that. The highly staccato rhythm drops in so contrastingly against the oxygen machine that it becomes apparent to the listener that it is a direct representation of the dichotomy of Isaiah's life. He is divided in part by the fragility of the unknown and the freefall into his MISSION...with swagger to burn. This kid ain't backin' down! Isaiah's lyrics:

***"Could've died but I'm still here
Could've cried but I'm still here
Bullies tried but I'm still here
Mother tried SO I'M STILL HERE".***

***"Love everybody like I love myself
Play this game with the hand I was dealt."***

As a critic, I've personally never resonated with rap. However, this song has been on repeat in every environment of my being for the last month. "Oxygen," has now become my

theme song. Actually, I will rephrase: This song is not an anthem, a theme song, or a tribute. For all of these have beginnings, middles, and endings. "Oxygen to Fly" is an "OPUS", because an opus is never-ending. Such is Isaiah's message and perseverance to deliver his legacy.

Isaiah's opus and all it encompasses has become my Oxygen. When you listen to it, and I urge you to do so, you will notice a shift in your awareness. As you breathe in his words, his story, his Oxygen to Fly, you will be thankful for taking in the same breath that this heroic and unique soul has brought to life.

Breathe it. Live it. Love it.