



Upstream

Colorful Koi fish navigate a jagged path through the darkness of the universe, symbolizing the journey of the soul, swimming against the current of life's challenges and obstacles. This journey through space and time is never a straight line. It's a story about the virtue of perseverance and courage against seemingly insurmountable odds.

Chinese and Japanese cultures have a myth of a humble carp (the ancestor of the Koi) looking for enlightenment, and in search of the vastness of a new world with new experiences. As the Koi swam upstream, moving against the powerful current, it encountered many obstacles as the unrelenting pull of water downstream tried to pull it back. As the Koi overcame each obstacle, it became stronger and more confident in its journey. Eventually it arrived at a magnificent waterfall where there were other many other Koi. A few tried to ascend the waterfall and failed. After many years and many attempts, the one Koi succeeded. He was rewarded by being transformed into a dragon with golden scales.

I used a Yin Yang symbol used in the painting to depict two Koi swimming in an eternal circle, representing the interconnection of all things, the balance of Darkness and Light, and the positive and negative forces in Nature.

Unlike the fish, the lone human swimmer in the painting has to use even more effort to move forward against the current because he is out of his element. Yet the message of the allegory is clear, the swimmer can achieve great things through the inspiration of the Koi's example.

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