INSTRESS

Journal of the Arts
2021

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Instress has been published by the students of Misericordia since December 1966. The word *instress* was coined by Jesuit priest and poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. Bernadette Waterman Ward describes instress thus: "Instress is an action of the will—a moral action, for good or evil. Instress is assent, to use Newman's term, to an inscape. To call out an inscape is a pleasure, though not one necessarily leading to God; . . . But the ability to see and instress inscapes is the imaginative faculty that makes love possible." *Instress* at Misericordia is therefore an opportunity of the artistic and literary imagination to make possible something—call it *love* or even *grandeur*—like the following, from Gerard Manley Hopkins' "God's Grandeur":

. . .
And for all this, nature is never spent;
 There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
 Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
 World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

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AWARD WINNERS

The following are the Instress
Outstanding Achievement Award Winners:

Poetry:

Award Winner:
1st place:
For Dante, Love, Beatrice - Lauren Schuster
2nd place: TIE
right person, wrong time - Deidra Cali
dead memories - Peyton Ross

Prose:

Award Winner:
1st place:
The Death of Ophelia - Kayla Binner
2nd place:
Lost and/or Found - Kailene Nye

Art:

Award Winner:
1st place:
Winter Scene - Makenzi Walsh
2nd place:
Butterfly - Megan Oldak

Photography:

Award-Winner:
1st place:
Red & Blue Woman - Megan Oldak
2nd place:
in motion - Alexa Monro

9/19/20

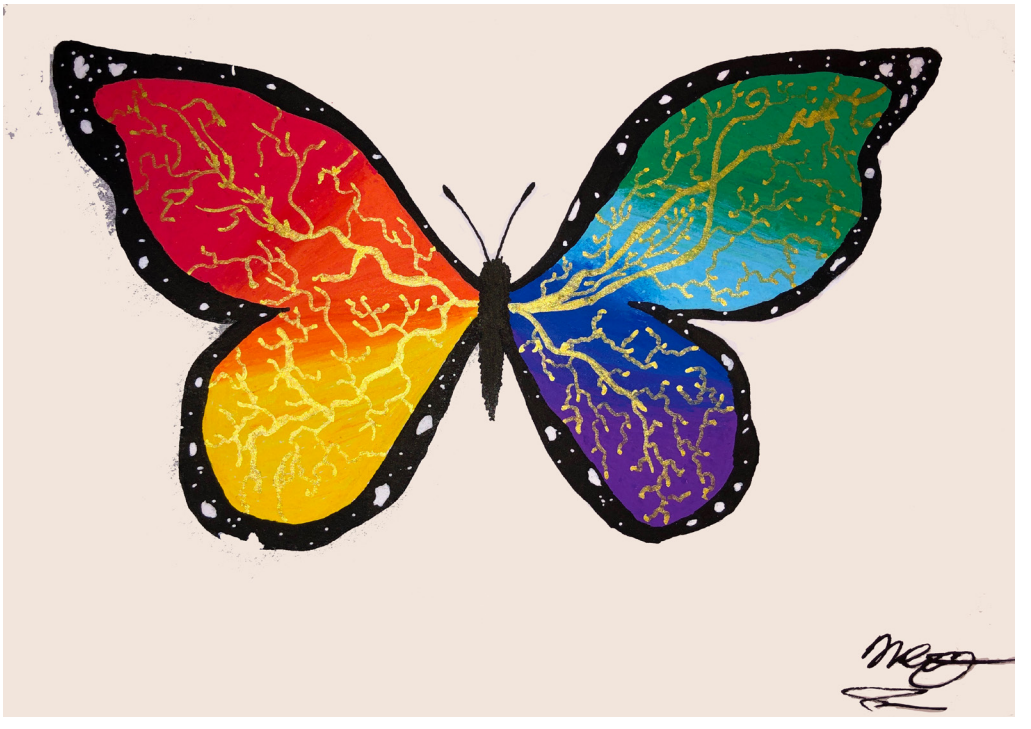
Deidre Cali

what I used to mistake for butterflies
was actually just the soft fluttering of
all
of your red flags.
you said I deserved better,
and I didn't know what that meant.
now I know that it means butterflies–
I deserve butterflies.

Rainbow Butterfly

Megan Oldak

2ND PLACE



What is

Madison Swartout

The company of earth,
Silent, a presence takes shape,
Existent to those who seek.
For which no determinate
Can be spoken or thought of.
Such is the nature of life.
And such are the symptoms of finitude,
Ribbons of thought that cannot be grasped,
That tragically slip through our fingers.
We create a clear boundary,
Beyond which lies only blackness,
And intolerable ambiguity.
And yet, to describe is to limit
The perfect nature of an infinite being.
Our natural tool, our greatest enemy.
Instead, I look around me,
I sense the world, the life,
Its power, its mystery,
Its balance.
And there it is.

Irish Coast

Alexa Monro



For Dante, Love, Beatrice

Lauren Schuster



Love is cleansing, or so I'm told.
I never quite believed it true
until I felt the way your hand
nestled in mine, a perfect fit.

It really wasn't long until
Your voice became my favorite melody,
Your bright, cascading laugh the panacea
To wash away my doubts and deepest fears.

Every sweet "I-love-you"
That you breathe against my skin
Fortifies me, shields me from despair,
Your arms around me, my armour.

If you can love this sinner, darling,
Then I promise I can be a saint for you—
Made pure in the tide of your affections
As you tenderly kiss me clean.

You have sparked a flame within me,
Baptized this lost lamb by your fire.
And little did I know your kiss
Could cauterize old wounds.

Lost and/or Found

Kailene Nye



CHARACTERS

Antonio
Hidden Antonio
Found Antonio
Sebastian

SETTING

Modern day in the town of Illyria, Antonio's bedroom, 12 minutes to midnight, the night after the day of weddings.

The stage lights up, beginning with a single spotlight on Antonio. He is sitting at a desk, face buried in his hands as his elbows dig into the polished wood. He has a window opened and can hear the wind howling, feeling it brush up against him. He ignores it and exhales into his skin. Another gust rushes in. He lifts his head, annoyed, but doesn't turn to look at the window.

The single spotlight expands over the whole stage. Enter Hidden Antonio and Found Antonio

Hidden Antonio: To cry or not to cry...that is the question.

Found Antonio: Of course he's been crying. Why wouldn't he? It was a sad day after all.

Hidden Antonio: (laughing) Sad you say? Sad for what reason? Surely not one he wasn't already anticipating. Why cry over something he was already prepared for?

Found Antonio: Just because he was expecting it doesn't make it any less upsetting. You can be so insensitive sometimes, you know that?

Hidden Antonio: (scoffing) My deepest apologies for being a realist. We all knew this was going to happen, so I see no point in dwelling over it. It won't change what happened.

Antonio: Will you two just stop? Neither of you know what I'm feeling right now.

Hidden Antonio: By Jove, are those tears I see? Don't start this now, Antonio. Would you like me to play some music for you on the world's tiniest violin? Nurture your broken heart with some musical sustenance?

Found Antonio: That's enough. Let him mourn in peace.

Hidden Antonio: Mourn? There's hardly anything to mourn. You know, Antonio, you're really giving Orsino a run for his money with his little act you're putting on.

Found Antonio: Don't you even suggest he's anything like that demanding coward who dares to call himself a Man let alone a Duke.

Antonio: Don't you two have anything better to argue about?

Hidden Antonio: Don't you have anything better to be sad about? I've told you before and I'll tell you again: Men aren't worth your tears, especially the ones you know you can't have. Mourning over them will get you nowhere. Look at where that got poor Viola.

Antonio: But she got to marry the man she loved.

Hidden Antonio: Exactly.

Found Antonio: Such a pessimist. Antonio, it's okay to be sad even if you knew what was going to happen. It just means you were at least hopeful and that's all it takes really, a little bit of hope.

Antonio: I knew better, I did. I...I just hoped that maybe he'd notice me—you know, the one that's always been there for him—over some girl who didn't even fall in love with *him*. I practically saved his life and this is how he repays me?

Hidden Antonio: That's what I've been trying to tell you all along, dumbass. He's ungrateful!

Antonio: He fooled me, that's what he did. He made me think we were so close. I mean, how many people do you know who have become so close to someone over just three months? But as soon as Olivia shows up—who was in love with his sister mind you—those three months never happened. All I get is a pathetic speech on how time racked and tortured him since he lost me. Lost me! He probably didn't even mean that. Oh, tortured, were you?

Hidden Antonio: He's an ungrateful, lying player. No better than the rest of them if you ask me.

Antonio: What did I ever see in him? Maybe it was the seasickness. Maybe I've been at sea for far too long.

Hidden Antonio: You definitely weren't in the right headspace.

Found Antonio: No, no, don't say such things! He cares for you!

Antonio: Enough to marry someone else? *He stands up from the chair and begins pacing angrily.* He just thought she was hot, anyway. Once she realizes he's nothing like Viola, she'll get sick of him and he'll come running back. They always do. But I won't take him. No, sir, I won't save him again. I'll let him drown for real this time. He's going down with this ship!

Hidden Antonio: As you should! Those two may look like two halves of the same apple, but they couldn't be any different. And unfortunately for Sebastian, Viola has the more amicable character.

Antonio: I can't believe I was willing to risk my life for him! Does he know how many enemies I have in Orsino's court? I could have been killed on sight, but I went after him anyway. And all because I thought I adored him?

Hidden Antonio: He probably used witchcraft on you, cast a spell to make you fall for him.

Antonio: I bared my love for him openly and without shame—in front of Orsino might I add—and he doesn't even have the courtesy to acknowledge it. I hate him! Oh, I hate him!

Found Antonio: I can't bear to hear any more of this! Witchcraft, spells? You're speaking nonsense! Antonio, can't you see how much he cares for you? You said it yourself, it's not every day two people grow close over a mere three months. That must mean something to him. He felt he lost you! If that's not a confession of affection I don't know what is!

Antonio stops pacing, looking at Found Antonio. The sharp look in his eyes has softened. Confused, he plops down on the bed with a frustrated exhale.

Found Antonio: You can't say you didn't see something good in him, Antonio, something he only let you see.

Hidden Antonio: Sebastian good? Those two words don't belong in the same sentence.

Antonio: No, he makes a good point...perhaps it was just the vulnerability of the circumstances, but there was a certain softness to him. Someone more genuine than who he was today.

Hidden Antonio: Yeah because he didn't think he was going to make it! He only showed that side to you because he was scared for his own life, not because he cares for you. You'd be crazy to even consider the possibility of him sharing your feelings.

Found Antonio: Then why did he say he was so worried about him, hm? Especially in the presence of Orsino, someone who hates him as much as you hate happiness. You know all about his less than nice history with Orsino. If Sebastian didn't care for him and was using him, he would have pretended he didn't know him to save himself from being guilty by association, but he didn't, did he? People don't usually defend someone they were simply using for survival.

Hidden Antonio falls silent and rolls his eyes. Antonio observes him quietly. Found Antonio sits next to him.

Found Antonio: Love comes in more than one form, you know?

Antonio: What do you mean? That he loves me just not in the way I love him?

Found Antonio: That's exactly what I mean.

Antonio: And that's somehow supposed to make me feel better about this whole situation? To make me forget him just like that and move on?

Found Antonio: No, of course not. Doing that is going to be a process. But what I mean to say is that maybe you can find comfort in the fact that he does care for you.

Antonio stands up and begins pacing again.

Antonio: How do you propose I do that?

Found Antonio: You know as well as either of us that Sebastian can no more help who he is than you can, Antonio. Being himself is all he knows how to do. Why shame and shun him for that? You weren't the only one who saved someone's life that day, you know.

Antonio: What the hell does that mean?

Found Antonio: You know exactly what it means. You think we haven't noticed the change in you since the wreck? You were so rough before, so tortured and hurt yet you refused to show it. But now you smile more than I think you ever have. You're kinder

than even I knew you could be. Why do you think that is?

Hidden Antonio: I hate to admit it, but he has a point. Sometimes I even cringe watching you be so pleasurable to be around. You weren't like that before.

Antonio: Before what?

Found Antonio and Hidden Antonio: Before Sebastian.

Antonio: Let me see if I'm understanding you correctly. You mean to attribute the apparent change in my character to Sebastian, the man who broke my heart without even realizing it?

Found Antonio and Hidden Antonio: Yes.

Antonio: Ha! The first thing you two have ever agreed on and it's this! What nonsense!

Found Antonio: You're telling me you haven't felt any different lately?

Antonio stops pacing, taking note of the way Found Antonio and Hidden Antonio look at him.

Antonio: Perhaps I have...but I'm sure that has nothing to do with him.

Found Antonio and Hidden Antonio remain silent. Antonio looks at them.

Antonio: The first time you two are quiet and it's now? What exactly are you trying to make me admit?

Found Antonio: That you might love Sebastian...

Hidden Antonio: ...more than you think you do.

Antonio: Have we not already established that?

Hidden Antonio: Kind of...

Found Antonio: ...but not really.

Antonio: Why are you two being so cryptic all of a sudden? You're supposed to help me decide what to do, but you're only confusing me more!

Hidden Antonio: I think what we're really getting at is acceptance.

Antonio: Acceptance? Acceptance of...?

Found Antonio: The fact that Sebastian may never see you as you see him.

Hidden Antonio: But that doesn't mean he doesn't love you.

Antonio: You want me to accept the fact that he loves me but not in the same way?

Hidden Antonio: As sappy as it sounds, yes.

Found Antonio: That way he'll still be in your life. It hurts, but trust me, you'll be happier that way. Holding in all that anger and resentment will only cause you more pain, not heal the pain you already have.

Antonio: (to Hidden Antonio) Are you seriously buying any of this?

Hidden Antonio: Well...it would be nice to not be so angry all the time. And you have to admit, having Sebastian around as a friend is better than not having him around at all.

Antonio: I can't believe this.

Antonio sits down at the desk again, placing his hands at either side of his head. A series of knocks on the doors startles him and makes him sit up. He hears the wind outside howling again.

Sebastian: (from outside) Antonio...it's me. Are you there?

Antonio: Oh no, it's him. What do I do?

Upon hearing no response, Antonio turns around to see that Hidden Antonio and Found Antonio have disappeared.

Antonio: Of course, leave when I need you the most.

Antonio exhales a stuttered breath and collects himself.

Antonio: You can't avoid him forever, Antonio. Your happiness is important, too.

He takes one last breath and walks up to the door. He wraps his hand around the knob but doesn't twist it. He looks back again. Hidden Antonio and Found Antonio have appeared again. They both smile and nod at him. Antonio nods back, slower, more cautiously. He tightens his grip on the knob and pulls the door open.

Sebastian: Antonio...

Antonio: Sebastian.

The stage goes dark.

when nostalgia doesn't cut it anymore

Deidra Cali

I need a word for the feelings I have for expired feelings / because calling it nostalgia doesn't cut it anymore / a word for when I don't have feelings for them but I have feelings for the feelings they gave me / we decided to call this friendship / but truthfully I don't know how to be in the same room as you / as in / my eyes go out of their way to avoid yours / I can't say anything else but "hey" / and even then I can't stop thinking about all of the other circumstances in which hello came so easily / back when I would see you every day / bubbling with that intoxicating childlike cocktail of anxiety and anticipation / now anxiety is the lone ingredient / and I am chronically too soft to ever cut you off / but seeing that hourglass next to your name the other day was the closest I could come / I'm not good with goodbyes / I'm not good with the "you deserve better" speech / I'm not good with the "let's stay friends" part / I've heard all of these too many times / forgive me if my shoulder is cold / my circulatory system has been malfunctioning / and the only thing to keep me warm has been that small flickering flame questioning if I ever meant anything at all.

Mom

Megan Oldak



Dear Ainsley

Adam Myers

an original monologue

There is another log in the fire; another lost innocent, another mind shrouded in hatred. The fire builds and builds until we do not know what to think, what to believe, what to dream. Yet those who believe not in themselves, but in the fire, are sure to get burned. Still, they tread on foolish tasks. They become weak-minded and naive. Instead of walking in their own way, they walk the path of the many. In other words, they walk in the path of the wicked. They yearn for answers. They yearn to be a part of the solution. The fire continues to burn, my dear Ainsley.

What comes in trusting the crowd? What comes in following the mobs? Mobs believe that there is strength in numbers, yet their logic is minuscule. Logic. What a word: Giving thought before action. They ask themselves, "Is what we are doing granting peace to the world, or are we just tearing the world into pieces?" That question may forever be unanswered, my dear Ainsley.

I continue to see the smoke cover the sky. There is little left to believe in anymore. The more logs added the more things become awry. Yet here I am, asking the walls to speak the truth for me. Asking the man in the mirror for some evidence that the world will be okay; That "I" am different from what the world thinks of me. I can accomplish anything that any other man could do, yet I am looked down upon as someone who needs help. A miscreant they call me, yet my only crime is that I think, act, and carry myself differently from those bonded by the chains of obscurity. And that's it, that is the fear of the mob, the unknown. They fear what they don't understand, so the fire grows wider, my dear Ainsley.

My last thought is this, if we do not take action, innocence itself will die. The smoke will crowd over all the earth, and the idea of a perfect and caring world will cease to exist. Darkness consumes, and light expires. But there is still hope. The fire may burn, but like a Phoenix, we will rise from the ashes. On that day, I hope we can learn from our mistakes and no longer be afraid of the concept of understanding. We may repair our bruises, stitch the flesh back together from whence we struck so deep. Lift each other instead of burning each other down. If we can understand our wrongdoing, and build from it, then maybe the fire won't be so scary. It shall be more controlled, more respectable. Then we may think of fire as not something that burned the world but something that brought light into the darkness.

May your light burn as bright as the sun, my dear Ainsley.

Monongahela Mountain Pass

Justin Steinberger



Elysium

Lauren Schuster

Graves cannot hold me.
Earth cannot bind me.
The love that you bestow,
So selfless and sweet
Makes Death only the palest ghost.

Death is only the palest ghost.
An insolent shade
Who poses me no harm.
Your love surrounds me,
Softly envelops, shields me in your arms.

Your love envelops; I feel no harm.
I want for nothing.
I find a richness in each burden
You help me shoulder.
Death means not ending, but homing.

Death means not ending, but homing.
Graves cannot hold me.
Earth cannot bind me.
Your love makes Death the palest ghost
And envelops me softly to shield me.

Winter Scene

Makenzi Walsh

1ST PLACE



The 2020 Dundies: Twelfth Night Style

Kayla Binner

CHARACTERS

Feste: awards show host

Orsino: manager at Dunder Mifflin

Viola (disguised as Cesario): an intern

Sebastian: Viola's brother

Antonio: banned from Chili's

Olivia: owner of Dunder Mifflin

Malvolio: salesman

Toby: salesman

Andrew: salesman

Stage Directions:

The entire play takes place in a Chili's dining area in 2020. Characters will enter and exit from stage right, which is assumed to be the entrance to the Chili's. There are three tables downstage, each with two seats. Upstage, facing the audience, is a podium next to a table. The table has plastic awards lined up on it, much like the awards children receive in sports competitions. Except, instead of depicting a sports player, each award has a gold star on top. A projector on a stool is shining on the wall above the table. The slide reads "Welcome to the Dundies!" Server One and Server Two walk through the scene throughout, acting like good little Chili employees.

The lights brighten on the stage. The actors are already on stage in their seats, chatting. Malvolio and Olivia sit at a table and Viola and Orsino sit at another table. Malvolio is really trying to keep Olivia's attention and Viola is trying to keep Orsino's attention. Olivia is distracted by Viola, and Orsino is distracted by Olivia. The third table is notably empty.

Enter Feste to "Celebration" by Kool & The Gang

Feste: Welcome, everyone, to the 2020 Dundies!

Feste runs past tables and has hands out for high-fives. He goes up behind the podium and

holds up a sign with "Applause Please" on it.

Light, awkward applause from gathered actors and, maybe, audience.

Feste puts the sign back down on the podium.

Feste: Thank you, thank you. Wow, great turnout tonight. We have, what, four people here? That's great, that's great. Only missing two so that's... wow! That's better than last year. Glad to see Miss Olivia back on the scene, eh?

Awkward chuckle from people on stage. Olivia looks peeved.

Feste: ANYWAY, we aren't here to reminisce about the past, we're here to celebrate the present! The Dundies is about rewarding our company's amazing workers for what they're most notable for. After all, God give them wisdom that have it. And those that are fools, let them use their talents, for they'll be rewarded for it at the Dundies! First up, we have our best manager, Orsino!

Orsino raises a hand and nods, smiling and looking directly at Olivia, who ignores him.

Feste: This award goes to a man who is good at managing production, but who is best at loving. He does so with adorations, fertile tears, with groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire. If I did love in the same way, with such a suffering, such a deadly life, in his love's denial I would find no sense, I would not understand it.

Orsino: If this speech be the food of love, speak on. Give me excess of it that, surfeiting, the appetite may sicken and so die.

Feste: This year, the award for *Best Simp* goes to... Orsino!

Orsino: Enough, no more! 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.

Feste: Come on up and receive your award, big guy! Many a good humiliation prevents a bad marriage, as I always say.

Orsino reluctantly goes up to receive his award while those on stage applaud. Feste moves away from the podium to give him space to give his acceptance speech.

Orsino: Feste, I'm... I'm ahem, *honored*, to be sure, to receive this award. As to who I am...that is, concerning whom Feste believes I am "simping" for... Oh, when my eyes did see her at first, I thought she purged the air of pestilence. That instant was I turned into a hart, and my desires, like fell and cruel hounds, have pursued me since. If that means that I am a simp, then so be it. Let me be the greatest simp this company has ever known!

Feste: Do you not hear, fellows? Give it up again for Orsino!

Orsino returns to his seat and Feste continues.

Feste: Our next award goes to our new intern, who just joined us this year. He certainly was Orsino's shadow, only leaving the manager's side to deliver important messages to our big boss, Olivia. He may be twenty, but Diana's lip is not more smooth and rubious. His small pipe is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound. All in all, he resembles a woman.

Viola looks meaningfully at the audience.

Feste: Cesario, come up and receive the award for *The Most Feminine Man!* This isn't offensive at all!

Viola goes up to receive the award. Olivia is clapping vigorously, to the disappointment/disgust of both Orsino and Malvolio.

Viola: Thank you, Feste. Um, I really don't know what to say. What I *could* say is "Why, man?" or "Thy reason, man?", but I like this internship and don't want to leave early. So, thank you, I guess.

Feste: Think of it more as an inspiration for your facial hair. Now, may Jove in his next commodity of hair send you a beard.

Viola: Yes. That totally makes me feel better.

Feste: Another round of applause for Cesario!

Viola returns to her seat. Orsino gives her a friendly slap on the shoulder and a thumbs-up when she sits back down.

Feste: Next up, we have the incredible salesman, Malvolio, who is making me doubt the award I'm giving him tonight because of his, erm, outfit.

Olivia snorts, trying not to laugh.

Malvolio: Madam, you have done me wrong, notorious wrong.

Olivia: Have I, Malvolio? No. The only one in the wrong here is you, for your incredibly awful fashion choice. You may be our best salesman, but you are lessening the company's appeal with your ridiculous outfit. Yellow? I mean, really, my least favorite color?

Feste: Anyway, outfit aside, Malvolio's attitude is overall that of a task-driver. He is a stickler for productivity, making our sales soar and our relaxation and overall good work experience plummet.

Malvolio looks incredibly pleased at this description of himself.

Feste: So, to the self-proclaimed tyrant of the office, I present... the most sought-after award of the Dundies...

Malvolio starts to rise, a large smile on his face…

Feste: *The Best Fun-Sucker!*

Malvolio's smile drops. Everyone starts laughing and applauding.

Malvolio: I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you.

Malvolio exits.

Feste: Well, I guess we'll have his award shipped to him. Now, as two of the employees are notably absent, I'll just skip to the next to last award, which is for our lovely boss, Miss Olivia.

Olivia flips her hair and smiles.

Feste: I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't offend her at least twice tonight, and I already did once, so here goes nothing. This award goes to someone who swore off dating and dexterously avoided the advances of a man her age and status before falling for an intern. I am pleased to give you the award for *The Best Coug*—

Toby and Andrew bust in, looking flustered. [See beginning note concerning outfits].

Toby: You, Cesario! What are you doing here? How dare you sneak in after giving this here fellow a black eye.

Viola: Why do you speak to me? I never hurt you, Andrew. You threatened me in the Chili's parking lot earlier, but I never assaulted you.

Orsino: How now, gentlemen? What's wrong with you both?

Antonio runs in from the same door.

Antonio: My friend? Oh, my friend, where are you? If you will not murder me for my love, let me be your servant. My desire, sharper than steel, did spur me forth.

Server One sees him and runs over.

Server One: Not again, sir! You were banned from this Chili's!

Antonio: You do mistake me, sir.

Server Two: No, sir, no jot. I know your face well. You were the one who violated company policy by stealing drinks off of people's tables.

Antonio: Oh, darn.

Server One and Server Two grab Antonio's arms. He hardly struggles. He mostly looks dejected. At this moment, Sebastian enters, rolling his sleeves up.

Sebastian: Alright, where are the two scumbags who ran in here from the parking lot. I have unfinished business with them.

He sees Andrew, grabs him by the shirt, and lifts his other arms as if to punch him.

Sebastian: Try and goad me again, I dare you. I'll give you another black eye. I'll...

He sees Antonio.

Sebastian: Antonio, oh my dear Antonio, how have the hours racked and tortured me since I have lost you!

Antonio: How have you made division of yourself? An apple cleft in two isn't more similar than you and the boy sitting at that table. Which is Sebastian?

Olivia: Two Cesarios? Oh, this is wonderful!

Sebastian: I- I have never had a brother. I had a sister, but I lost her in a terrible boating accident. I was knocked unconscious, and when I awoke, those at the hospital told me that I was the only one saved. How are you related to me? What's your name? What's your parentage?

Viola stands and approaches him. Everyone is standing now. Server One and Server Two have let go of Antonio, and Andrew and Tony are standing off to the side, looking grumpy. Feste is eating some popcorn behind the pedestal.

Viola: I am from Wilkes-Barre. Sebastian was my father and I also had a brother named Sebastian. He died in a boating accident. I washed up on the shore of the river and was cared for by a kindly woman, but there was no news of my brother surviving. Surely, you are a ghost.

Sebastian: I am not a ghost. Everything matches up but... but you're a boy. If you were a woman, I would let my tears fall on your cheek and say, "Thrice welcome, drowned Viola!"

Viola: My father had a mole upon his brow.

Sebastian: And so had mine.

Viola: And he died when I was thirteen years old.

Sebastian: Oh, I remember that day clearly. He died when my sister was only thirteen.

Viola: I guess it really is you. I am Viola! It's crazy that you didn't recognize me at first. Come to think of it, it's crazy that I fooled everyone. I only cut my hair and put on something other than a dress, and you all totally thought I was a guy.

Orsino: You said to me a thousand times that you would never love a woman like you loved me.

Viola: And I'll say it again.

Orsino: Give me your hand and let me see you in your woman's clothing.

Viola: This actually isn't much different from how I normally dress—

Olivia [to Sebastian]: Hey, hot stuff, want my number? I'm rich.

Antonio: While we're all here, I just wanted to apologize about the whole drinking incident. Would you be able to lift the ban on me from Chili's?

Server One: No.

Everyone starts talking over each other. Olivia starts flirting with Sebastian, Orsino and Viola hold hands and stare at each other lovingly, Toby is putting a bag of ice on Andrew's eye, etc.

Feste walks to the front of the stage with one of the awards in his hands. The lights fade. The other characters freeze, and the volume of their voices dim to nothing. A single spotlight illuminates Feste.

Feste: And now, for the final Dundies of the night... This one is for the [man or woman, depending on whoever is playing Feste] who single-handedly reunited siblings, created two couples, humiliated Malvolio, and who, ultimately, hosted the best awards ceremony. After all, this totally was how I wanted this night to go. Obviously. The last award, for The Best Host of the Dundies, goes to me!

Feste holds up the award, the words "Applause Please" flash on the projector, and the lights fade to black.

genie

Peyton Ross

i want to be your genie:
for you to trap me in a bottle by your bed
so that i can watch you sleep;
see your muscles twitch in the dark
and see your eyes flutter open in the morning light.

so that i can feel your warm hands
wrap around my bottle like a python
eager to suck the energy from me,
and i will greet your fingers with open arms
as you tenderly rub my bottle to release me.

so that i can hold you
hostage with my magic
to make you love me as i do you,
patiently waiting for the day you fall in love,
or wish to, and both our wishes come true.

so that i can shower you in gifts,
help fulfill your greatest dreams,
because that is what you deserve.
i want to exist to bring you joy,
so i may watch you smile, shine, and grow.

to be chosen as your servant for eternity
would hardly be a punishment.
please trap me, chain me to you
with this mystical bond.
give me no choice but to stay.

Red & Blue Woman

Megan Oldak

1ST PLACE



Stillness Beneath the Flickers

Logan Padden

As we lay beneath the silence
the world takes on a placid air.
Full of wisdom, kind compliance
for the fondness that lies there.

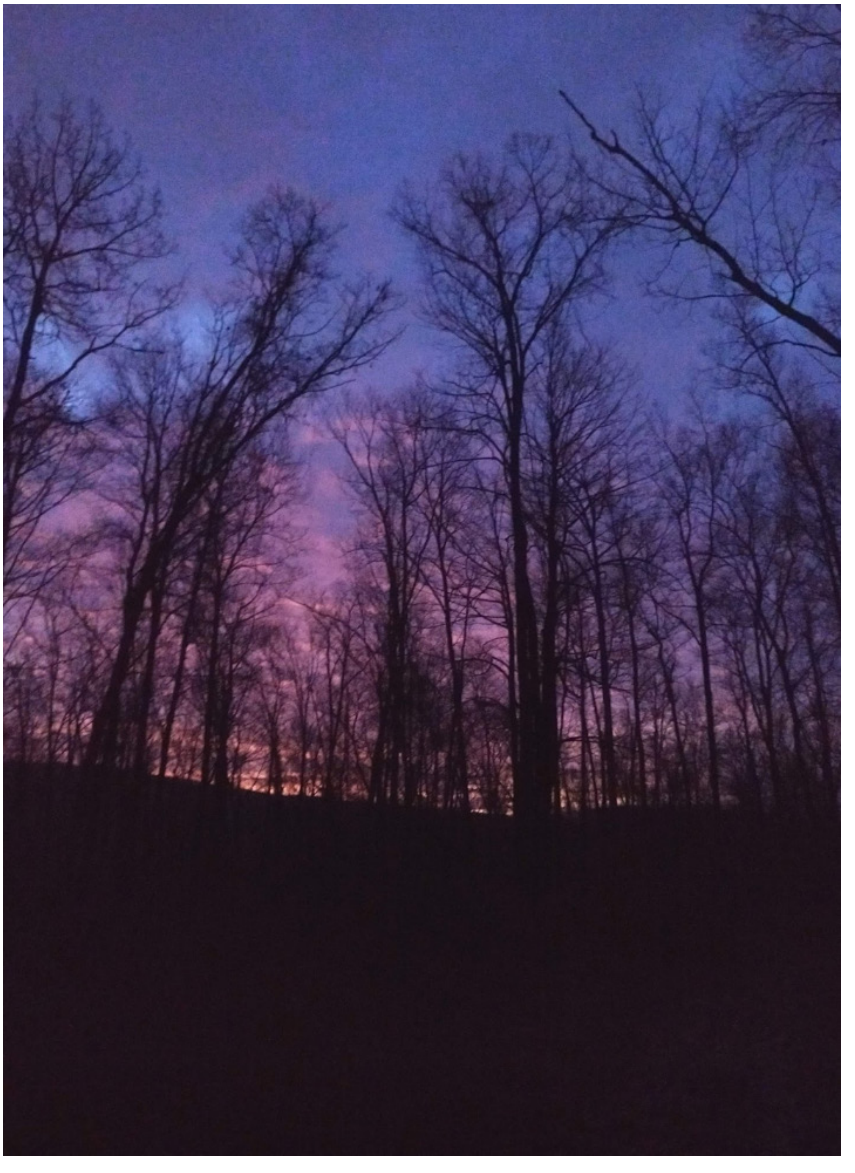
Staring off into your ceiling
watching dancing christmas lights
Every flicker, every feeling
bathed in luminous delights.

I begin pondering, reasoning, trying
to comprehend your sheer perfection.
How I deserve this love undying
this indescribable connection.

I cease wondering as time seems frozen
bathing in love's finest ichors.
Simply grasping every moment
In this stillness beneath the flickers.

Crack of Dawn

Justin Steinberger



right person, wrong time

Deidra Cali



this feels too much
like a cut
that wasn't deep enough
for stitches,
yet keeps bleeding
straight through
bandages.
I think this one
will join the rest of
my metaphorical scars
composed by
all of my "what ifs."
I'm trying to not find so many parallels in us.
but I just can't help myself.
because sometimes I still think about how
when you returned that book to me you said:
"I wanted them to be together."
and I said,
"I wanted them to be together, too."
except I wasn't talking about the book.

Untitled

Makenzi Walsh



for the king

Alexa Monro



dead memories

Peyton Ross



i try desperately to remember you differently,
to erase the paralyzing spectre you became
and to recall the eyes i wrote poems in,
but those brown walls hold no words;
i took my chair when i took my pen
and locked myself out of your mind.

i try to remember you fondly,
to cling to the good moments as a
child grips onto their blanket at night,
yet all i see is the monster under the bed,
claws outstretched, reaching for my arm hanging over the edge,
prepared to drag me down into the darkness.

i try to remember you, i do.
i see bits of you in every pair of brown eyes,
stalking the empty halls, staring back at me.
you cannot rest but neither can i,
there is no rest for the wicked
but there is no rest for the accomplice, either.

i try and i fail to remember your liveliness,
the glimmer of hope you had in your eyes
before you held the knife up to your chest
and i plunged it through your memory.
a grown woman does not write in broken homes
or feed the monster under her bed.

Short Story

Megan Oldak



The Death of Ophelia

Kayla Binner



"One woe doth tread upon another's heel, so fast they follow. Your sister's drowned, Laertes."

– Queen Gertrude

Ophelia stood on the brink between the brook and the solid ground. The hem of her dress was stained. It was a deep brown, the color of the marshy area she stood in. It contrasted sharply with the airy lightness of her soft grey dress. If she knew that her dress was irreparably stained, she did not seem to care. Her hands moved with practiced skill, weaving freshly picked flowers into the semblance of a crown. A song about heartache, about loss, poured from her pink lips.

As the queen walked towards Ophelia, the song echoed in her ears. The melody was honey tinged with poison. It was the calm peace after the silver dagger slipped between the cracks in one's ribcage. Ophelia's voice evoked visions of lost love and unadulterated betrayal. It was out of place in the sun-lit forest, where the brook babbled along its path and the birds warbled. It disturbed the bright cheerfulness of the sunshine pouring down.

A more fitting setting would be a raging hurricane. A more fitting singer would be a siren, her clawed hands tearing a bewitched sailor underwater to suffocate him with her love. As the queen walked toward Ophelia, she could not ignore the prickling sensation of the hairs standing up on her arms. She thought of her son and his fits of madness, his blank stare.

Her jeweled hands tightened on the goblet she carried.

As the queen neared, Ophelia looked up from her work. The sun shone through her mussed hair, causing it to glow in shades of brown and gold. Her blue eyes were as empty as the sky above. They fixed on the queen's face in an unwavering stare. Ophelia's hands stopped pulling at the stems. Her song faded to nothingness.

"There's long purples: that's for admiration." Ophelia spoke softly but the queen heard every word with perfect clarity. The girl held out the flowers in question to the queen. They sagged in her loose grip. "Dead men's fingers, indeed. See how they reach."

The goblet grew heavier in the queen's hands.

"Thank you, Ophelia," she said. She made no move to take the flowers.

Ophelia continued to hold them out. There was a ghost of a smile on her pale face. "I have lots of dead men's fingers. Dead men's fingers and crowflowers. Crowflowers and nettles. Nettles and daisies. Daisies help with breathing, don't you know."

"Yes, Ophelia," the queen said, shifting her weight. "Daisies are helpful with breathing issues."

Ophelia's eyes flitted to the willow tree. "And the willow—"

"I brought you something to drink," the queen said. She raised the goblet too quickly, causing the red wine to spill over the edge. "I heard that you have had very little to eat or drink lately."

"I will hang the crown on the willow tree," Ophelia said. Her eyes remained focused on the tree in question, following the gentle swaying of its low-hanging branches trailing through the brook's gentle current.

"Yes, you should certainly do that," the queen said. "Hamlet brought back this wine—"

"Forsaken love." The crown of flowers fluttered to the ground, forgotten. Ophelia's eyes drifted back to Gertrude's drawn features. "Willows and forsaken love."

"Yes, willows and forsaken love." The queen's voice was a dagger attempting to cut through the dreamy veil covering Ophelia's eyes, but to no avail. The girl's eyes remained a blank blue.

The queen reached forward and took Ophelia's cold hand. She pressed the goblet into it. "Drink, Ophelia. Your brother will be worried if you don't take care of yourself."

"Laertes..." Ophelia said, her voice like the willow boughs swaying lightly in the breeze.

"Yes, now drink," Gertrude said, frustration poisoning her voice.

Ophelia lifted the goblet slowly to her lips, her eyes gazing at a spot in the distance over the queen's shoulder. She took a shallow sip. Her eyes focused back on Gertrude's face.

“I pray you pardon me,” she said. Her lips were stained.

Ophelia stooped to pick up the crown of flowers from the ground and wordlessly turned towards the willow. She left the goblet on the ground without a second glance.

Ophelia moved like one in a dream, swaying side to side with each step. She began to sing once again. The queen stood still, silently watching her.

The girl’s footsteps hardly left indentations in the grass. The brook murmured to itself, its sounds blending with Ophelia’s song. A robin landed on the willow, its bright red plumage like a splash of blood against the cool green leaves. When Ophelia neared the tree, it launched itself off the branch with a shrill shriek.

The queen could not look away as Ophelia began the climb up the willow tree. The branches bent under her weight. Her movements grew more halting and disoriented as she climbed further up the tree.

Ophelia’s foot slipped and, for a second, everything slowed to a standstill. She paused in her descent, her dress fanning around her like grey wings. She still clutched the flower crown, the blossoms spreading out. Then, without a word of protest, the brook enveloped her.

Her dress spread wide in the brook’s slow current. Her hair fanned about her face. For a moment, Ophelia stayed suspended above the water’s surface, her face upturned to the sky. Her hands reached up, but they were not searching for something to grab to save her. They were stretched out towards the wide expanse of blue sky that was beckoning to her.

Her song was haunting. She filled the woods with her music even as her limbs stopped moving and the water began to drag her under. The water claimed her as its own, rushing over her face and pouring into her nose and throat. With a final gasp, her melody ended permanently.

A sole daisy, detached from the rest of the crown, floated down the river.

The queen stood for a moment longer, gazing at the prone figure in the water. The brook was the only sound in the still forest.

“Drowned, drowned,” she murmured.

The queen retrieved the goblet and poured the contents into the grass, where it disappeared without a trace. Then she turned and silently made her way back to the castle.

Heavenly Bodies

Iryna Vanderbeek



Elegy for Ophelia

Lauren Schuster

Lay her out in her Sunday best with flowers in hair and hands folded
on her chest.
Rosemary urges, “Remember me well, and speak tales that dead
tongues may no longer tell.”
Fennel and columbines, blossoms of rue all beg absolution for me, for you.
Wear your rue with a difference, or all wear the same;
It won’t cleanse your hands of the blood or the blame.
A voice still rings, “You promised me, you promised me to wed”
And would you, sweet prince, have honored your oath, had she not come to your
bed?
The violets have withered, the river run dry, and wind tears ‘cross the
moor
As voices echo through the halls— the ghosts of Elsinore.

in motion

Alexa Monro

2ND PLACE



Positive State of Mind

Deron Ranck

V1:

We wish we could see
ourselves better
We don't all love the way we look
We wish we could feel stronger
We like happy feelings
It is what we all prefer
It is the P.M.A. that caused a divide

Chorus:

To some, what is a P.M.A.
We don't all see ourselves the same way
Some have been bullied or treated
wrong
Why should we want to carry on

V2:

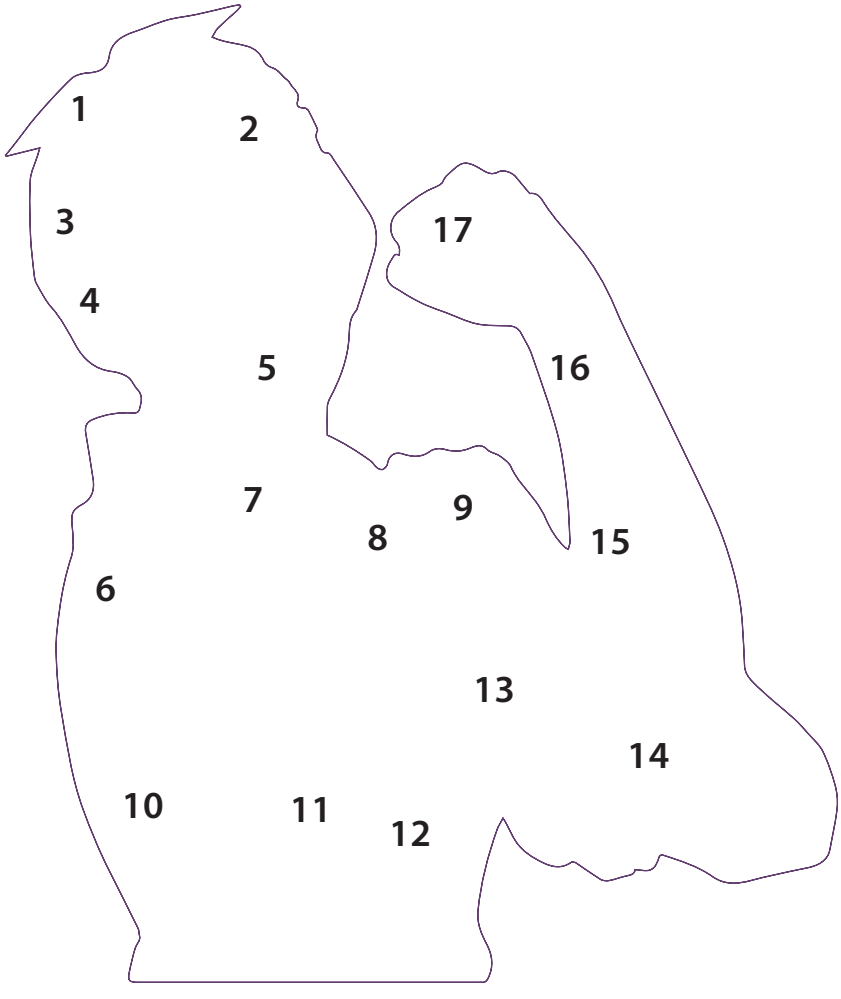
Those who are happy,
always say
You chose to be sad, but that's not the
way
Some have some problems
They can't shake away
For it is very difficult
To want to make it another day

V3:

We just need to step back
And think on the present
We need to be happy
And make our future
pleasant
We all deserve to smile
And make our lives, worth while

Chorus:

To some, what is a P.M.A.
We don't all see ourselves
the same way
Some have been bullied or treated
wrong
Why should we want to carry on
When we see there is no need
For us to continue moving on



1. Rosalind Franklin
2. Rosa Parks
3. Bessie Coleman
4. Ada Lovelace
5. Nellie Bly
6. Grace Lee Boggs
7. Amanda Gorman
8. Frida Kahlo
9. Elouise P. Cobell
10. Sacagawea
11. Dorothy Day
12. Mother Teresa
13. Vera Atkins
14. Anna May Wong
15. Ida B. Wells
16. Katharine Graham
17. Marie Curie

Rosie & Friends, 2021

Rachel Urbanowicz



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