

“Ekphrasis on the memory of a 23-year-old”

by Sophie Dufresne

I want to rewind time.
To hear your voice just once more.
Before it became harsh and cruel.
The sound of fists against the table.
Of doors slammed shut.

I want to see you smile.
A smile that isn't forced or sarcastic.
One that is inviting and contagious,
Leading to shared laughter
At no one's expense.

I want to hear you say you're proud of me,
And celebrate my achievements alongside yours.

I want memories to be ahead of us,
Not buried, crumpled and forgotten,
Left behind in the dust.

I want to remember the outline of your shadow,
The way it towered over mine.
What did strangers see when they glanced in our direction?
Did they see a picture-perfect family?
A younger sibling on the shoulders of a strong soldier?
Did we fool them or did we simply fool ourselves?

I wish I could recall more than just
The last words you whispered into my ear
Before becoming just a memory.
A death threat I laughed at
As I watched our parable burst into flames.

Sophie Dufresne studies creative writing at Concordia University in Tio'tia:ke/Montreal, Canada. They fell in love with poetry after reading "Hope" by Emily Dickinson in sixth grade and are now interested in the way form informs content (or is it the other way around?). Their brother has been in the army since 2001, but instead of following in his footsteps, they have chosen a completely different life path. They are currently the copy editor of *The Encore Poetry Project*, a local literary and arts initiative