
Second Place, Poetry, Grades 10-12

“blossom,” Nina Smetana

i am from music,
from stuffed animals and velvety curtains.
i am from the playhouse
(backyard, never-clean, full of potential
that never blossomed.)
i am from the flowering orchids,
from petunias the colors of spring.
i am from friday nights and my mother's nose,
from anne and norman and my father's hands.
i am from laughter
and open ears.
from the tooth fairy's letters and
'stop mothering your brother.'
i am from hanukkah candles,
the ones i fought with my brother to light,
the ones that shone like twinkling stars through the darkness.
i'm from the sixth floor and the eleventh floor,
from apartments and houses,
from cafe latte cake and convention grill milkshakes.
i'm from the constant retelling of my grandfather's tales
the ones that droned on and on without end
the ones that he wouldn't be himself without
and from my great-grandmother's constant wish to feed us;
'you're too skinny' she would say lovingly.
picture books and photographs
shelved near the front window
childhood memories i forget to remember
as i lose the ones i remember to forget.
they tell stories
stories of me
but also stories of before me,
stories of the people i love
and of the people i've lost.
i am from me, but i am also from them,
we fuse into one.

Nina Smetana is in 11th grade at Saint Paul Academy and Summit School. Nina's interests include theater, piano, cross country running, and spending time with family and friends.