

Whispers from the Wood:



Dreams

Volume XII: 2023-24

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The Desires of a Young Mind

Dandelion

Goodnight,
Sleep tight,
Don't let the bed bugs bite.

Wish upon a star,
Count sheep,
But don't count too far.

Let your imagination run wild,
But not too wild,
It's too much for the mind of a child.

“Think big”, they say,
But not too big,
There has to be room for the rest of us to obey.

There were spoken promises in my ear
As I fell into my own world of visions
Your voice chimed in to interfere

So much for trust
Apparently in adulthood,
A sense of betrayal is a must

I've been put in this box,
With endless combinations
Of keys and locks

A darkness so suffocating,
Resulting in thoughts so elevating.
Now my only salvations,
Are my aspirations.

I strive towards unattainable dreams
My desire to achieve
Swings me between extremes

Back and forth
Between failure and success
This feeling that I'm being prevented
From my ability to progress

While my dreams may be unattainable
And my realities unachievable

There's a future I envision
And there's nothing that will stop me
From executing with precision

Dreams Don't Discriminate

S.E Draper

A villain has dreams too.
He wishes with all his heart
For more money to go to puppy factories,
Just so he can kick the dogs.
He might seem like a terrible person,
But despite his name and actions,
He dreams like the rest of us.
Yes, he's just like you.
Even though you might not like to admit it.
Even though he plots for total world domination,
Ties damsels to train tracks,
And always has his phone on during movies,
He blows on every dandelion he finds
And he wishes on every shooting star,
Praying that his dreams will come true.

Why Dream?

D. Ross

Why Dream?

I dream to be on TV one day.
Directing a movie with my name on display.
Film writer, actor, editing, it doesn't matter,
In these dreams, I escape, leaving reality to shatter.

Why Dream?

I dream to game develop.
Crafting games that make players hearts envelop,
My name linked to games, keeping players involved,
If I crafted life in a game, too many problems to solve.

Why Dream?

I dream to fight crime,
With Superman and Batman in their prime,
Neighborhood Spidey, safeguarding my ville,
Bringing justice to the world, because no one else will.

Why Dream?

To flee from life's disasters and schemes,
To find solace, where reality's grip seems extreme,
Many dead and it's all over TV,
It's only a coincidence that they usually look like me.

Life's hardships sting, and we all crave the serene,
That's why we dream, seeking peace and not another
crime scene.

Not saying we're all twins, it could be
Him, he, her, and she

Mothers crying,
Brothers from all over getting hurt.
People dying,
In some cases, you can't even hide in the church.

Rest my eyes or sleep, they're synonyms of getting away
from that noise
The underlying life, white light, bright, time to rejoice
Forced to sleep and dream away without our poise

Why Dream?

Frankly, now, I don't have a choice.

Strokes of Blood

Sav Dycus

The first time I saw Nesrin, I was six years old. Gray clouds hung above the small playground I had been playing at that day, though the gloomy atmosphere matched that of a cemetery rather than a children's park. The swings creaked with animosity as each breeze brushed past, and the once brightly colored equipment rusted under the heaviness of time. I was a lonely child, happy to be outside the house even if I was alone. My mother had wandered over to a nearby store, preoccupied with her errands, and had left me to myself.

A little girl, roughly my age, had found me digging my hands through the half-empty and aged sandpit. At first, the figure looming over my body had startled me. I was so used to playing alone, I had never imagined I'd find a friend in this dilapidated section of my small town, let alone meet another child my age. My curiosity got the best of me as I glanced up

at the girl. Her blonde curls, which had been tied into two small pigtails, had stood out to me along with the joyful smile plastered on her face.

“What’s your name?” I asked, grains of sand still filtering through my fingers.

“My name is Nesrin.”

The girl had begun walking away from me, but I felt a strange inclination to follow after her. This was the beginning of a long friendship, one of the only meaningful ones I’ve ever had in my lifetime.

After that day, I stumbled upon Nesrin almost everywhere I went. We had grown up together despite barely knowing anything about each other's personal lives. We bonded over the simple, innocent things in life and I grew to enjoy her company no matter the silence. When I entered middle school, I realized how much our appearances had changed over the years, yet our personalities had stayed as a constant part of our existence.

The first time I learned something significant about Nesrin was when I was twelve years old. We were sitting side-by-side on the tall, oak fence that rested in my backyard. I still remember the dull sky that stretched above us that day, along with the tired breezes that desperately lingered in the air. My feet swung methodically as I basked in the silence my childhood friend and I shared. I had been wanting to break the silence for a while but couldn't find the words to start a conversation with her.

Eventually, she spoke for me,

“Can I show you something?” She asked in a quiet voice.

I nodded almost immediately. I felt a rush of curiosity, the same childlike curiosity I had felt when Nesrin and I had first met.

She lifted her small bag off her shoulders, placed it gently on her lap, and sifted through it for a few seconds. In her hands was a brown book; the water damage and multitude of colors drenching the pages helped me figure out that it was some sort of sketchbook. Without speaking, she held the book in front of the both of us, quietly overturning the cover to reveal some of her paintings.

The first piece of artwork was a bird. It had different hues of red feathers and a pitch-black beak. I recognized the paint to be some kind of watercolor, which fit extremely well with the small details she had drawn with black ink. I was amazed by her talent, especially because she had never spoken about it until this day. I couldn't find the words to compliment her, so I let the silence linger.

The next page she flipped to had a watercolor painting of a forest, it looked quite similar to the forest behind my house, the one we often hung out at. The only difference was the color; this forest she painted was deep red. The once ripe and lively leaves became a mix of deep cerise-colored bunches, each held up by a crimson trunk. I was still very impressed by her work.

This time I complimented her, "You are really talented.". My words resulted in her smiling, which made me feel content.

Before this day, my only interests consisted of talking with Nesrin and reading. I never felt inclined to create anything artistic, but after she showed me all her paintings, I felt as though I needed to

pick up the same hobby. After thinking for a long time, it became a dream of mine to be a painter; it became my dream to paint even half as good as Nesrin.

After she finished showing me her sketchbook, I told her I had to go home because I saw my mother's car pull into our driveway. From the fence we were sitting on, I had a great view of the street in front of my house. Nesrin understood, she hopped off the fence in an instant and was ready to part ways with me. She had never met my mother before, although I had wanted them to meet many times before. She always insisted that she couldn't, and I never understood why. I never fought her on it, I figured she'd want to meet my family eventually.

I started painting for years after that, even showing Nesrin the sketchbook I had bought. She always smiled and complimented me when I showed her the new painting I had been working on each week. It became our little routine and I grew to love it. Sometimes she'd even give me tips on how to improve my skills. Looking back on it, I'm glad I began painting at such a young age.

The last time I saw Nesrin was when I was 17 years old. Of course, I didn't know it was going to be the last time I saw her. I wasn't ready to leave my childhood best friend behind, but it had been inevitable from the very beginning. This day was surprisingly beautiful, the sky was brighter than usual and the air felt alive. Nesrin and I were silently sitting in my backyard when she abruptly spoke, "Can I show you something?"

I felt the same childlike curiosity as every other time she had asked me that question. I quickly nodded and stood up after her. This time, though, there was an eeriness to the way she moved and the way words drifted from her mouth. I trailed behind her as she led me into the forest behind my house, I became more scared than excited as we traveled deeper into the woods.

Eventually, we came to a sudden stop. I looked over Nesrin's shoulder as she stood frozen in front of a seemingly specific tree. I merely glanced at the tree, but that was enough to notice what was lying against its bark. I brushed past Nesrin to get a better look, my heart beat faster as my eyes focused on what looked like a skeleton sitting against the stump. The bones were aged,

and all flesh and organs had long been decomposed. I was terrified. I ran back to Nesrin and hugged her.

“Why are you showing me this? Is that real?” I asked, but deep down I knew that the skeleton belonged to a real human, and I knew that I probably didn’t want any answers to my questions. A sudden force pushed me away from Nesrin, it startled me and almost made me forget about the human remains in front of us. She had pushed me off of her, pointing behind me to the skeleton. I looked, even if I didn’t want to, and realized that there was a sketchbook lying on the bones.

She walked past me and picked up the book, flipped through the pages, and replied to me, “It’s real. This was me.”

I got a glimpse of the pages she flipped through, they were all paintings I swore she had shown me before. It took me a second, but it clicked. That sketchbook belonged to Nesrin, and the human remains resting next to it did as well.

“But you’re here right now. You’re right next to me!” I shouted in disbelief.

I was angered by this game she was playing with me, and half of me wanted to believe her but what she was telling me was impossible.

Nesrin didn't reply to me. Those were the last words I ever heard from her. She dropped the sketchbook onto the grass and began walking away. I wanted to follow her, just like I had wanted to break the silence all those times before, but I didn't. The one time it truly mattered, I could not break the silence. I heard the crunch of the leaves underneath her feet get fainter as she escaped farther and farther from me, never once turning back to say goodbye.

Once she had disappeared between the trees, I retrieved her sketchbook from the grass and sat down next to her abandoned skeleton. I flipped to the last page, grabbed a pencil from my bag, and began sketching.

Surrealist's Art Room

Raymond D.

Golden clouds glimmer
Where dull mist-shrouded meadows
Creative minds thrive
And with newfound liberty,
Awakened will be our hearts



Surrealist Purple by Aliya Bates

My Dreamcatcher

Myasia Morris

Woven net on a willow hoop,
Wonderfully spun,
You hang above me while I rest.
Collecting all my thoughts
That happen to be in my subconscious mind
When I sleep.

Decorated by purple beads and white feathers,
Taking everything that I had once feared,
And storing it in your web of good spirit.

You guide me,
You have saved me from the bad,
That I couldn't protect myself from,
And held me in your web,
Cuddled me,
And caressed me
In my sleep.

Between the Heavens and Earth

Killian Chambers

Watching the fire crackle against brick, sparking up envy deep inside her with a low, dim flame. In this dreamscape of solitude and loneliness, she watches orange and yellow flicker into light. She will wonder, even through its emptiness, if the flames are lonely. Sitting upon comfortable, cradling cushions, easing into a state of calm. She has a job, one that resides deep in a library stretching on more than a mortal could understand. Shelves lined with books full of hazy fantasies, hopes, and wants, bound with magic, locked away. She is the dream keeper, gifted, pitied, and lonely. But she is who she is, and she cannot change it.

She will taste and drink
The warm wine of loneliness
Feeling her bones ache
With the swarm of solitude
She, the dream keeper, alone



Untitled by Autumn Melrose

Apollo

Cerastes

A forest of blood red trees, locked away behind a cold, steel gate. It was never to be opened. The tragedy that would rush out could tear the consciousness, the dreamscape apart, and she needed to protect both of them. This was the only way.

At least, that was what Andromeda believed. It's what she's been believing; however, ever since they met Ferrero and Apeline had been in control without many accidents. She's been confused, wondering that maybe she's gone about this all wrong.

Were those gates worth opening? Were those chains worth unraveling? Maybe the child and her could come to an understanding. It was rather lonesome, just her before these steel bars. The metal rattled with a creak, rust and leaves ruffling from the forest's overgrowth. Hesitancy in the god's footsteps, ears twitching while the gate shuddered closed behind her.

A river ran of blood and tears, coursing throughout the trees like veins. The god felt a little unsettled at the horror of the environment - how could only a child imagine this up? What dreams did she have that this was her dreamscape?

Faint cries rang out from deeper within, cries she'd heard before, cries she ignored. Guilt stirred. Following the noise, heart near shattering at how utterly broken these sobs sounded out.

It was just a girl, just a teenage girl.

How could a teenager girl sound like her heart had been torn out in front of her?

Parts of her muscles and skin were missing, the bone marrow visible while blood seeped from the edges of the wounds, hair maddened and body clawed up. As if someone had chewed her and spit her back out.

The diety was reluctant to step forward, what if this broke something in the consciousness, for them to interact? The mind was typically unstable but it grew more so with how close she got.

It didn't seem like they could exchange words, like it'd be a useless effort to do so.

The young girl caught eye of the older, throat ripping out a scream and backing up against a tree, wincing in pain. She looked like she wanted to say a million things, but nothing would come out.

Fear was such a natural thing to her, scared at the twitch of a cricket, frightened at the smallest noise, shrieking at a shadow in the corner of her eye unmoving.

The individual standing before her seemed so confused, so unsure. Her throat was choked up, she couldn't beg for forgiveness or mercy now — as if her pleas had meant anything before. She doesn't remember the pleas, but her tongue does. The way the words slide and hiss through her teeth with familiarity, she'd begged for her life before. Over and over, she had.

She'd begged to go untouched, but to be at peace was a blessing unreachable to all, especially herself. Peace was a forgotten delusion to her.

The way the taller sat down near her had her on edge, what was she planning to do? She seemed pitiful. What does that mean?

She shrank as the figure edged closer, her long hair tainted with the blood from the river. She didn't seem to mind, why? This was a dream built on her suffering. Why pity her? Why not disregard her as all the others did when she ran?

She doesn't remember what she ran from.

The other's hand reached out and she flinched violently, body scraping against the course environment of the bleeding forest.

The hand reaches her anyway.

It is gentle in a way she is unfamiliar with, no touch has ever caressed her fingers with this amount of sincerity and tenderness.

Her body does not relax.

The hand becomes an arm, and she is enveloped in a hold. A secure, soft hold she's never experienced.

Apeline's head is held to her chest, and she can hear her heartbeat. She can tell Andromeda's trying, unsure of what would help her, and that she can appreciate, even if she is unknowing of who she is or why she's doing this.

She is familiar with the crushing weight constantly put on her whenever she tries to escape, to open her eyes.

She knows these same hands that cradle her now, are responsible. With that heartbeat, she can also hear the beat of her guilt.

Cradling her, every movement caused a flinch, a spike of fear. She had hurt her once before, again and again. Not this time, not anymore. The harm only this child could cause to the consciousness.. yet, all she had to do was open a warm palm out.

The way she had ignored a peaceful resolution all this time, perhaps the tragedy that burned in her stomach might've been deserved.

Even now, neither of them know who either of them are. She does not know the girl she holds. She doesn't know herself.

The younger seems not to know herself either, or the one who caresses her body now. They don't know anything except the hurt that has stricken their heart, mind, and souls. They have hurt each other even now, even in confusion.

Peace will continue to be unfamiliar, but perhaps this hurt is something one could endure together.

Was this a dream they both desired? Or a state of mind they've both reached? Twin dreamscapes merge, minds become one.

My Curious Mind

Malia C-M

Conspiracy of the mind
Each thought refined
While my body unwinds
Pull back the blinds
Of my curious mind

Once, twice
My thoughts present a fright
Every time it's precise
Unconscious even I fight
Again and again I pay the price
Of my curious mind

When my eyes thread shut
The lines of contemplation
Continue to remain uncut
Creating a whirlwind of isolation
All violently clouding
My curious mind

Night after night,
I sleep with all my might
To clean my concern
Of those I deal in the daylight
I just wish to rest
My curious mind.

Wish Upon a Star

Ty Shenk

I let the light graze my skin
As the wind whispered your name
Sweet certainty coated my ears
I knew you before we met

Under a shooting star
My wishes spoke to the sky
Someone just like you
To hold worn hands
And memories sewn into skin.

I plead to the moon
For a smile brighter than any star
To fill my every thought

My hands intertwined
Two eyes sealed tight
A feeling of magic in my chest

As soon as you spoke
With your honey-like voice,
A beam was sent into my heart
Made of pure starlight

Escapism

Batool Mokhtar

Your paragraph a hidden realm, lost in the consciousness of our minds. In the quiet depths of the night, I often find myself slipping into this domain, embarking on a journey known only to those who walk the fine line between reality and dreams. I become a wandering traveler and the deity of this dimension; this world becomes my oyster. The landscape shifts beneath my feet, responding to the whims of my imagination. Mountains rise and crumble, rivers turn into glistening champagne, and the once aligned stars rearrange themselves to my bidding. It is a realm where the boundaries of reality dissolve, and I become free to discover the deepest recesses of my desires and fears. Yet I am still an observer, watching this new found world shape itself to my desire.

A fleeting respite
As the waking world dissolves
My fulfilled canvas

Seeds May Gleam

Batool Mokhtar

In shadows deep, where hopes grow dim
A void within, an absence grim
There lies a space, an empty seam,
Where once did dwell a vibrant dream.

It slipped away, like a morning mist
A fleeting spark, too soon dismissed,
Leaving behind a vacant space,
A hollow ache, a silent chase.

No longer do the stars align
No guiding light, no grand design,
The canvas of the night, it seems,
Is washed in pale and colorless dreams.

Yet in this absence, do we find,
A canvas blank, a chance to bind
New visions to our restless hearts,
To paint anew, to play our parts.

For from the void, new dreams may rise,
Unseen by ever watchful eyes,
In absence, hope may yet redeem
The beauty of a vibrant dream.

So let us not despair, my friend
When dreams depart and seem to end
For in their absence, seeds may gleam
To sprout a new, wondrous dream.



Untitled by Ava Guthrie

my dream, your nightmare

M. Cahoon

Some people say that your trash may be another's treasure.

What you dislike, someone else could see it as a beauty that nothing else could ever compare to.

Your disgust is another's infatuation. Your rage is another's joy. Your aspirations, another's fear.

It doesn't matter what it is. There will always be someone who opposes it, who sees it as an abomination.

No matter what.

You could wish for equality, social justice, or civil rights.

You could wish for kindness and a lawful world.

Somebody else would stare into the ashes of civilization with a callous grin, and then proceed to light another match.

No matter how big, how small, you will always have an enemy. Someone who prays for your downfall, who will do anything to make sure your aspiration will drown under antagonism and perish.

You'll always have someone who wakes up every morning and wishes you didn't.

Bad Black Boy

Justin Starling

"He's a bad black boy."

People always wonder why he rebels.

'Cause he's a bad black boy with a story to tell.

'Cause he wants what he wants and he can't get it.

No, he has so much to say, yet no one will listen.

So he fights the whole system for the slightest attention,

And when he gets close to someone they become so distant.

Angry at the world and disappointed in himself.

When he picks up the pen, the world he hates starts to melt.

And with that pen, he starts to spell

A bad black boy, with a story to tell.

A Lens for You

Taylor Bowden

I saw you last night
But not in your own flesh,
Or from my own eyes
Nor did I get to touch you
The way I saw you, you'll never see me.

It felt like my favorite movie
A familiar movie
One where no number could count
The repetitions of your face.

But I knew it wasn't real
I knew I only had a couple more minutes of seeing you
Where you smile at me without lust
Where I get to see you and filter out
The reasons you shouldn't even be on my mind.

I learned to live with this film
That my lingering feelings stream in my dream
I learned to live with you internally like vitals
I learned that it's now out of my control, seeing you
My own head projects the images of you and me
That I wish I got to see in person.

They remind me that I never will.

But they force me to latch onto you
I grasp onto the fading sight as I wake up
Coming back to the reality
Where these scenes stem from inside my brain
And die when I wish them to come true
You've invaded my fantasies,
All that you've left me with.

Naive Natures

T. Trinh

Floating with the eminence of sweet nothings,
Laying within the boundless seams
We find ourselves gravitating towards the subsequent dream
A closure without commitment to seal it
Time passing, unraveling blankly in wits
We lay awake under these stars
Dreaming with our pupils, the state of swelled scars
Their luminance parallels that of solidified spells

Whispers from an evening star that bounds us
Imagination, hand-in-hand with fixation
The narrative's glimpses mimicking starfall
A wondrous gaze mirroring fragile melodies
Catching themselves in a daze, drifting from memory
As the naiveness matures into free-floating entities



Dreamscape by Aliya Bates

The Girl in the White Dress

Cam Brown

She walks towards me slowly. So slowly. So excruciatingly slow. Her white dress flows behind her, waving in the wind. I ache for her. Yet, just as she's close enough to touch, to hold, she keeps walking. My head snaps quickly in her direction to see her walking towards the cliff. I instantly turn and reach for her but she just keeps walking. I cry out and lunge for her when she takes her last step, plummeting into the abyss. And I, like the lovesick fool I am, dive after her. We're falling now. I try to reach for her yet she's still too far away, but the faster we fall, the closer I get to her until, finally, *finally* my arms close around her.

She gasps, "No. No, you shouldn't be here. You shouldn't still be sleeping."

It feels like we've been falling forever.

She begins to hit my chest, "No! No! No! Wake up! Wake up!"

"W-what are you talking about?" I stammer.

She grabs my face and looks me dead in the eye.

"Wake! UP!" She screams.

"But I don't want to. I want to stay. With you."

"You can't! If you stay, you'll die! Wake up!"

"But what about you-"

"I'll be fine! WAKE! UP-"

I gasp as I sit up quickly, beads of sweat falling promptly down my neck. I blink a few times, the dream already slipping from my mind.

“No,” I say aloud, “I want to remember. I need to remember her!”

“I knew her powers were going to be a nuisance to me,” a voice in the corner mumbles.

My head snaps toward the sound, “Who’s there?”

“No one you need to concern yourself with, human. I’m only here to do damage control for my daughter’s mistakes,” the voice spits.

My eyes widen as a man-like creature with large black wings steps into the light and toward me.

“Don’t fret, little human. This will not hurt.”

He reaches a hand out to me, his nails black and sharpened to points. I scamper back, needing to get away.

“Run all you wish, human. I am a god. You can not run from a god.”

I grab the baseball bat from beside my bed and point it at the creature.

“Get back!”

The god scoffs, “I am Morpheus, god of dreams. A mere baseball bat does not scare me.”

I try to fight, wildly swinging my bat. But he looms closer until his hand grasps my head.

“Sleep, human. Return to the land of dreams, and forget about my daughter.”

My eyes flutter close and I return to the soft embrace of sleep.



Goddess of Dreams by Hayden Gress

Adventurer's Dream

Jasmin Maconber

In dreams of grandeur, I take my flight,
An adventurer's heart, bold and bright.
Through forests dense and mountains tall,
I heed the ancient wander's call.

My vessel's sail catches the wind's embrace,
As I journey to some far-off place.
To seek the treasures the world conceals,
In the heart of nature's deals.

Beneath the stars, I make my bed,
Where dreams of ancient tales are spread.
In the quiet of the darkest night,
I find the courage to take my flight.

With every sunrise, a new path unfolds,
In search of stories yet to be told.
An adventurer's dream, my guiding star,
In every corner of lands near and far.

Through peril and storm, I'll gladly roam,
For in my heart, adventure finds its home.
To wander, to wonder, to dare and scheme,
Such is the essence of an adventurer's dream.

Lost in Reverie

Domo Ratcliffe

In the realm where shadows play and moonlight gleams
There lies a world awash in wondrous dreams
A place where thoughts take flight on silken wings
Where fantasy and reality intertwine and sing

In dreams, we journey to the distant past
Revisiting moments we thought could not last
We dance with ghosts of loved ones we once knew
And in the nights, our spirits renew

In dreams, we scale the highest peaks of hope
Reaching towards horizons where there are possibilities
and hope
We dare to be heroes, fearless and strong
In the universe of dreams, where we all belong

The canvas of imagination unfolds
Painted with colors and stories that are untold
We sculpt our destinies and shape our aspirations
In the tapestry of dreams, our heart desires.

So close your eyes and drift into the night
Embrace the magic and let your dreams take flight
In the world of slumber, we were forever free
In the boundless realm of dreams, where we truly see.

Kettle

Iden Williams

You're vigorously dancing among the clouds
Wondering,
How'd I end up here?

As you closed your eyes one last time,
I poured your soul into my heart
Because without at least a piece of you,
I don't know what I'd do.

Even as I fall into slumber, you're still here
Supporting me.
I couldn't be any more grateful
Because no matter how deep I plummeted
You've carried me to the top,
And I'm far beyond the flowers.

Finally free of the strings you bound me to,
I seep in this pool of appreciation
And boil with passion and love.

The bitter nightmare finally subsided
And all that remained
Was the sweet taste of your memory.

Hello, It's You

A. Phinney

The curtain opens and low lying fog pours from the stage. A telephone booth stands upstage left. From the fog a GIRL sits up, she is dressed in all white. She pauses before standing. When she does, noise immediately erupts and PEOPLE wearing all black flood the stage, walking back and forth.

She tries to stop the PEOPLE who pass. None of the PEOPLE acknowledge her.

GIRL: Hello?

PEOPLE: *(echoing back in unison)* Hello?

GIRL: Hello?

PEOPLE: *(repeating in unison once more)* Hello?

GIRL: Hello?

PEOPLE: *(now all speaking separately so that their voices overlap one another)* Hello... Hello... Hello... Hello...
Hello-

(The PEOPLE continue to speak as the GIRL continues to try and stop them. A WOMAN dressed in a pink jacket walks among them. She appears and disappears within the crowd. The GIRL spots the WOMAN, following her, attempting to track her down. Finally she catches up to the WOMAN, grabbing her arm. The WOMAN stops and turns to her. All the other PEOPLE exit the stage.)

GIRL: Hello?

WOMAN: Honey.

GIRL: Mom?

(The lights change to represent winter.)

MOM: Why aren't you sledding?

GIRL: *(She picks up a sled out of the fog)* I am *(she pauses, beat)* I've missed you.

MOM: Come home.

GIRL: I can't.

MOM: You could?

GIRL: I know. *(She pauses again, beat)* It's cold.

MOM: It is. Where's your coat? *(beat)* Here, take mine. *(The WOMAN takes off her pink coat and puts it on the GIRL)* Go sled!

(The GIRL turns and begins to sled. She runs into a BOY, dressed in blue with a blue bracelet)

GIRL/BOY: *(In unison)* Sorry-

BOY: *(embarrassed)* Hey, where have you been?

GIRL: I just- *(looks around for her mother)* I don't know.

BOY: Well, I missed you.

GIRL: I missed you.

BOY: I made you something.

GIRL: Me? *(The BOY takes the bracelet off his wrist and places it on hers. She admires it for a moment before looking back to the boy)*

BOY: Well... do you wanna-

PEOPLE: *(offstage)* Hello?

GIRL: *(turning her head in that direction)* Hello! *(talking to the BOY again)* I gotta.

BOY: Oh-

(The GIRL leans over and kisses the BOY on the cheek, he blushes before exiting SR. The GIRL stands up and begins to look around where the voice came from)

GIRL: Hello... Hello?

PEOPLE: *(Now all speaking from offstage overlapping each other)* Hello. Hello. Hello.

GIRL: Who?

(The group of PEOPLE pour in from either side of the stage and sit in front of her, all facing the GIRL)

PEOPLE: Us.

(The GIRL looks around anxiously)

GIRL: I don't-

PEOPLE: *(In unison)* I'm waiting.

GIRL: I can't!

PEOPLE: *(In unison)* Waiting!

GIRL: *(Now shouting at the people)* I don't know! *(she collapses to the floor. The WOMAN walks to her)*

WOMAN: Pick yourself up. *(The WOMAN helps her up.)*
Your coat, it will shield you. *(The BOY enters and walks over to the girl)*

BOY: You got this. The bracelet, you're beautiful.

GIRL: *(Turning back to the audience with a new found confidence)* Hello.

PEOPLE: *(In unison)* Who?

GIRL: I- *(she is cut off by a loud ring from the phone booth in the back. She crosses to answer it. The PEOPLE, BOY, and WOMAN exit the stage. She picks up the phone and answers it. LACY enters wearing many colors. A pink jacket, a blue bracelet, purple pants, green shoes, a yellow bow. LACY picks up the other line opposite of the GIRL)*

LACY: Hello.

GIRL: Who?

LACY: It's you.

GIRL: *(looking around)* I'm here.

LACY: I'm here.

GIRL: How? *(the girl crosses over to LACY and starts inspecting her)* I don't look like you.

LACY: You don't look like me, but soon. *(They both turn. The stage once again fills with the PEOPLE, now all dressed in rainbow colors, each individual wearing a different one. The GIRL emerges from the crowd, now wearing all different colors.)*

GIRL: *(now standing in front of the PEOPLE all walking behind her)* Hello.

PEOPLE: Hello.

GIRL: It's me.

Blackout



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