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Sad Cafe

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Ixeta Julieta's "^{Julieta: Sad Café} Sad Café" is the winner in poetry of the College of DuPage 2016 Writers Read: Emerging Voices contest, held to showcase emerging voices in our community.

Sad Café
Ixeta Julieta

The light is a strange bright dream entering the ICU. As I pass each room, curtains flutter; the escape of breath. It certainly can't be true but all I can think is that everyone is good and dying. As good as dead.

I'm family, I explain to a purse-lipped nurse as she walks with other intents from your empty room. It doesn't matter. Unsure of myself, I begin discarding napkins and wrappers and bottles, the only evidence of any visitors. Over this mess, I weep.

Hovering near the bed (a sterile cushion of white air between us), I avoid looking. But I remember you believe in the Lutheran way and so I murmur the long-version Lord's Prayer, holding your hand and I am a child again.



On the phone, Ma said the others said they found dozens of empty bottles of “gut-rot” vodka and gin at the house. My only thought: you could play the hell out of a drum kit and all they can see and say right now is how fucking sorry you and your choice of liquor were.

We would sometimes get drunk together. (But I don’t need to explain that it was okay.) At summer fests, you’d buy me a solo cup margarita for every two of your crappy beers. Another time in a bar you laughed, damn near startled but proud as I belted out Eagles lyrics. Hey, kid, what do you know about the Sad Café?

The bite of rubbing alcohol surrounds us, its insistent, insidious cleanliness puncturing everything like a migraine. Your hands are heavy, sallow and forgive me, I call it a night. The steady beat of your collapsing over and over again was there, I know. We all know it from our own and remorse is the broken glass we’ll always fall on, the notes we hear as we hit the pavement every time.



Esos
Acrylic and ink
painting
Candy Melara