

## An Ode to Friends Past and Present

Autumn Thompson

### Belated

It's my birthday today  
I'm twenty-two years old  
I think about how quickly the time slips by me  
Old Christmas cards sent in the mail  
Alphabet magnets on the fridge  
Ace of cups reversed

Though I sit  
Alone on the kitchen floor  
Wisps of candle smoke on the stagnant air  
I am not truly alone  
No, never truly

She is small and fragile  
Only knowing of how warm it is to sit next to me  
Where once she knew vast lonely spaces  
And cold empty nights

She knows not of her birth or death  
Not of past and future  
But only of am, are, we and together  
She makes no sound as she settles next to me  
A gentle sigh escapes her as she releases the tension held in her tiny limbs  
Small body  
Small chest  
Heaving small and shallow breaths  
She knows not of her mother  
Or of a family not so long past

Only of my strange, sweet embrace  
And soft coos of adoration  
I envy her for it  
To be so blissfully unaware  
Of her origins  
Of times endless stretch  
For her moments are so swiftly passing  
Fate is cruel with this bittersweet gift  
To know not that my love is unconditional  
But to accept it wholly regardless

So, I sit next to her  
On this day I was born  
Casting sideways glances to blown out candles  
Atop the single slice of cake  
Open envelopes  
Wilted flowers in empty vases  
The soft hum of the dishwasher  
Enveloped in the sweet silence  
Because in this moment  
I too, could not think of anywhere else I would rather be

## After

I awake on a bed of soft green clover  
The air is warm and comfortable  
A pleasant, gentle breeze caresses my skin  
My surroundings are unfamiliar, but I am not afraid  
I am well rested, completely, and wholly at peace  
Meadows span as far as my eyes can see  
Wildflowers whisper on the wind with a distant floral scent  
Snow peaked purple mountains line the horizon while pastel clouds move in a  
slow, graceful dance across the sky  
I feel no pain  
No hurt  
No hunger  
Out of the corner of my eye  
A shadow-like figure slinks silently to softly sit beside me  
Her familiar gracious green eyes, a perfect match to lush fields which envelop us

Hello, my angel  
It has been so long, hasn't it?  
Oh, how I have missed you

We sit like this, quietly together  
And rest under the enteral sunrise

**Autumn Thompson** is a fourth year student at UND studying biology/  
dietetics on the pre-medicine path. When not studying, Autumn enjoys  
baking, writing, and showing everyone pictures of her bunny.