

## JULES DUVE

### An Autumnal Ascertainment and a Christmas Captivation

It began with four eighth notes: half steps from a B flat to a C sharp, sung smooth and with a swing.

The opening notes of *Early Autumn* projected from my laptop's speaker in the voice of the ever-revered Ella Fitzgerald, a name I had seen but had yet to learn.

With that, a fascination was formed.

Seasonal jazz playlists resounded in my earbuds while the sheet music of *Autumn in New York*, *When October Goes*, and *Autumn in Rome* littered my music stand.

"Have you thought about a winter song?" asked my piano teacher.

"Choose a Christmas song to sing *by yourself*," said my chorus teacher.

Copy paper printed with the staves of *Moonlight in Vermont* sat above stained keys that evening.

A week later, my own rendition of the song—fit with both piano and vocals—sat in my audio files.

Soon followed *Christmas Dreaming*, *Snowfall*, and *Christmas Eve in My Home Town*.

Playing traditional carols and winter pop had never been my glass of warm milk;

bringing vintage songs to life filled me with a satisfaction cookies could never achieve.

Hunched on the wooden bench, ankles adorned in fuzzy socks,

I catch a glimpse in my recordings

of white letters against my old teal choir t-shirt:

*"Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong."* - Ella Fitzgerald

A passion for bebop and motivation from the First Lady of Song:

a path destined to stay right.

**a blaring blunder**

the other girls giggle and twirl  
in their red dresses accented with white  
as my fingers sweep across white keys accented with black,  
an heirloom horribly out of tune.  
adults softly converse over  
common carols  
carefully crafted  
over a month of dedication.  
a note rings out, jarring despite the condition of the piano—  
a natural instead of an accidental.  
a ruined run that emphasizes  
the run in my hand-me-down stockings,  
a broken melody that bothers me  
in the same way the viridian velvet  
brushes against my skin.  
an out/of/place note  
that points out  
my own out/of/place-ness;  
but the dames carry on with their dance  
and the parents persist with their palaver.  
my expression wiped clean,  
my finger pads continue the jingle;  
a slip-up gone unnoticed.

Jules Duve has been writing and singing for as long as they can remember. Now a junior in the advanced choir at their school, they engage with music and literature to their fullest extent. They have played piano and written poetry for about eight years. Along with being published in the *Persimmon Review*, they seek to improve their musical knowledge at every opportunity.