

Amazing Grace

(After the Supreme Court ruling on June 26th, 2015)

Laurel Lancaster

Second Place—Poetry Competition

Maybe we should've stayed home.

Maybe we should've kept our heads down as we walked through the chapel doors.

Should've stared at our shoes, heels clicking on the cold marble tile.

Shouldn't have looked them in the eye, trying to cool white-hot stares with brimming baby blues.

Shouldn't have heard their whispers that whipped across our skin, stained-glass swears cutting deep into our souls.

We should've sat in the back row, out of sight but not mind.

Instead, cheeks flushed with hellfire, we marched straight to the front, to our usual pew.

As I knelt before my God, starving for spiritual strength, a beggar for my daily bread, I thought about my family.

Would they care enough to come claim me?

Or deny this disgrace their daughter had become?

Because my kind of love is not allowed.

When we rise to raise our voices towards heaven, we still stand alone.

No one dares to come closer, to offer the compassion they so praise, provided it stays on scripture's page.

But I pray neither for mercy nor for forgiveness.

I refuse to confess my so-called crime.

And I will endure whatever death they wish upon me.

Because I know.

I know there are those who want to clip my wings.

To lock the Pearly Gates and send me spiraling down the staircase.

To condemn their sister as a sinner and throw me out onto the stones.

This I know.

I know, but I do not care.

Because *she* is holding my hand.

She with stars for eyes and sunshine for a smile

She with the voice that puts angels to shame

She is the one holding my hand.

And when we are linked together,

We cannot be broken.



Juliet

Priya Sanipara

**Honorable Mention—Sculpture
Ceramic**