

Junior Division, Poetry
Jessica Crocker, Torbay
Dancing in New York (Stonewall Inn, 1969)

Nobody can know how we dance
How I tenaciously wrap my arms around you
Naively believing that we can be safe forever
That the world has nothing on this

The day they came, our hearts screamed for security
We've sang this song before, in the key of compliance
Masquerading for our safety
Exiting with metal bracelets

We never asked to be in this mess
Invisible until they want to hurt us
Nobody can see how we dance
How I grab your hand and hope we're not next

This night bled into morning
Sunlight burning brightly over the bar
The anger never stopped
Cold like the bricks we aimed to throw

She housed the kind of fiery anger that destroyed buildings
They fostered rage cold and indignant
She couldn't hold still, I couldn't hold her still
A hundred hands forming fists

The clock made twelve orbits
Six days, six nights
The silence was finally deafening
Ash from the fires now at our feet

It's a crime to dance how we dance
A love that's far from ephemeral
I get closer to you than they could ever approve
I taste the cola on your breath

It took a lot to dance how we dance
In the streets every year after now
In the contravening eyes of the world
Taking our places where we have always belonged

One day we will be happy
The day that we will love without fear
The rainbow is ours
And we don't need to fight to prove who we are