

Junior Division, Prose

Kelsey Ross, Burin

**Knickknackatory (an excerpt)**

“Here, drink this.” I open my eyes and she is presenting me with a small, delicate teacup filled with a steaming golden liquid. My eyes may be playing tricks on me, but it seems to glimmer as it ripples in the cup.

“What...what is it?” I ask, staring at it suspiciously.

“It’s your solution,” she said, smiling, “what you came here for, even if you didn’t realize it yourself. Drink it, and your problems will be gone.”

I take the teacup, but I don’t drink yet. “What’s the price, I know there is always a price.”

She giggles, placing her elbow on the table. “We’ll discuss that after.”

Gulping, I lift the brew to my lips with shaking hands. I take a deep breath and down it all in one go.

I don’t have time to process what it tastes like, before I hear the teacup shatter, having slipped through my fingers.

I don’t know another way to describe it other than to say that my mind expands. It twists and convulses, reaching beyond what I see in front of me, beyond everything I’ve ever known. The world around me seems to become false, plastic. The girl before me, that picture of strange beauty, looks like a paper doll in a dollhouse. I feel what she was looking for in my mind. That force that is directing me, separating me from the rest, pulling the strings in this plastic world. I can see it in my mind's eye, can see *her*. She is typing. On her page, the...the words, they’re describin-