

# RED ICING

*Mya Destefano* poetry

A sixteen candle serenade, a charade  
for the perverts and the converts  
measuring her worth by the length of her skirt.  
She exists, always alert, to avoid getting hurt.  
Blow.

Make a wish  
for the forgotten years of innocence.  
Slice the cake,  
piercing her like a blade,  
cascading blood like red icing.

A free-for-all birthday  
with insecurities laid out on the buffet.  
Dance with her father, because romanced  
womanhood awaits beyond his pearly-gates.  
Altar-bound after her first date.

New license with her life up for the takes.  
Mental health like a cracked and weathered highway,  
navigate the road less-traveled, no accidents allowed.  
Patriarchy-bestowed freedom awaits.  
Happy birthday.