

Indie Lee  
Honorable Mention, Poetry  
2022 Poul Anderson Writing Contest

**Smile, you're on camera**

The person I live inside

is not me

I have more dreams, more desires

more stories

fewer fears

We don't think and feel the same way

Why does she smile without joy

Laugh at jokes that aren't funny

Grin after she trips and falls

Chuckle when she doesn't think her words are good enough

It's like a hundred cameras follow her around

our actions and our feelings

our reactions and our lack thereof

are recorded forever and the moments play back on repeat

in my head

I have to act accordingly because I can't mess up

on camera

I want to feel happy and when I look at the snapshots,

remember I was happy

But fear trickles in and happiness fades

Still, I can't stop smiling.

Confusion,

curiosity,

anger,

and sadness

hidden behind the curtain that is laughter

The voice inside my mind tells me to live bigger but...

Would I still be me?

I imagine one day I'd wake up brand new

People would tell me I'd changed

I might just stand there for a moment

and laugh it off

