

---

---

HEALING ARTS  
*Materia Medica*  
**Dressed for the Party**  
**Remembering his death—for R. (1985–2015)**

*Midge Goldberg, BA, MFA*

Chester, NH, USA.

Your ruffled shirt is what I noticed first  
at your mom's birthday party. We conversed,  
and you were quite the gentleman, to flirt  
harmlessly with your mother's friend, alert  
the bartender to fill my glass. You nursed

your ginger ale, decanted wine, dispersed  
the waiters with one gesture, and, well-versed  
at being host, you served us all dessert  
in your ruffled shirt.

The boy in you, though, teased, snuck up and burst  
balloons and laughed. Your brown eyes held your thirst  
for fun, for dares, for playing in the dirt;  
skinned knees; bruised heart; and other kinds of hurt  
to come—your only shield against the worst  
your ruffled shirt.

---

---

**Corresponding Author:** *Midge Goldberg, BA, MFA, Chester, NH, USA*  
(e-mail: [midgecg@aol.com](mailto:midgecg@aol.com)).

---

J Gen Intern Med 31(10):1262  
DOI: 10.1007/s11606-016-3677-3  
© Society of General Internal Medicine 2016