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*from* Beneath the Bitter Brine

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Whistles of air wisped across the mouth of the flute in an unprofessional, airy tone. Emily had been complaining on and off for the past couple weeks that she wanted to play her flute, but the doctor told her it would offset the healing of her shoulder. Samantha finally grabbed the flute on one of her trips through Emily's belongings, thinking she might remember how to play a few notes from her two years of playing in junior high. At least Emily could watch her play. Samantha's own Swiss-cheese memory of how to play wasn't enough, even if she did remember how to hold her fingers for some of the notes: she sounded terrible. ¶ "Oh, give me that before you hurt yourself," Emily reached for the flute as Samantha dropped it from her mouth; she pulled it from her reach. ¶ "Sh," the curtain cut them off from Emily's roommate, but aside from the risk of injury, Emily would play a lot louder than Samantha's airy attempt. ¶ "Good grief, Sam, if I had followed in your footsteps, I wouldn't have a future." Her bittersweet sarcasm meant she was teasing her, but Samantha saw more of the sister she used to know in that statement. She never understood why the two of them had such different inclinations.

 Caitlin Paynich