

## Prose Sonnet

(14 lines/sentences, 20 minutes)

Maria Guardino Schreiner

Hammered-in nails clutch to their hole in the wall, tightly wound inside the wooden panel in my basement.

They are evenly spaced all along the wall, by my mother's desk that is cluttered with bills, Excel sheets, and printed-out emails.

From each silver nail hangs a rosary, and there are rosaries of all kinds.

There are black ones of wood and pink ones of glass and purple ones of amethyst that shine against artificial light.

There are some in the corner that are browning with age made of bones, hair, and teeth.

There are ones with crosses and ones with medals of different Saints that my mother knows by name; she recites to me their stories.

*Peter, Francis, Anthony* (but some of them are not Saints at all, like a girl whose name I now forget).

*(She wanted to be a nun so badly, she prayed so hard she died.)*

(Or something like that.)

There are some rosaries with a cross and no Jesus; there are some with a Jesus and no cross- just a crucified Jesus hanging from their links.

There are three that have a cross with a skull and cross bones, which my mother calls a memento mori.

Memento Mori, I have been taught, is the knowledge that we will die- "*la sabiduría de su propia muerte.*"

I gaze at the cross with the skull and crossbones and it blinks at me, fondly.

Ah, yes; Memento Mori.