Ophelia's death is often portrayed as a fading away of sanity and life. This interpretation denies Ophelia even the agency of her own suicide. Although Ophelia is interpreted as a weak woman driven to her end by the cruelty of Hamlet, I prefer to see a heroism in her death.

Perhaps she knew more of Hamlet than we give her credit for and, knowing his failings, chose her own tragic ending rather than waiting for him to perish first. Perhaps her death was a revenge on those whom she loved, who chose to hurt her in their own selfish pursuits. Perhaps her death was martyrdom - an attempt to compel Hamlet into action through a brave and selfless act. I prefer to imagine these much more empowering motivations leading to Ophelia's demise. And, if her death was an empowered choice, what state of mind, though tainted by insanity but still acting with volition, could she have had? Besides, if Hamlet's father could come back from the dead, why can't Ophelia?

The violin parts in ophelia's revenge are much like chorused lines of thought, each reaching the same conclusion in concurrent and parallel fashion. The computer presents the material from the violins as either a simultaneous reflection of the violins, slowed and examined more closely, or as distant reminiscences that, like aftershocks, fade over time. The computer does not introduce any new timbres; these thoughts come from the same mind that is coming to one, considered decision.

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ophelia’s revenge
by Kerry Hagan
for two violins and computer

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