

Escape to Everywhere

10 August 2017, Anno Domini

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The right choice was, of course, a mystery to me. To her, I hope, not so much. I've never been able to muster enough bravado to attempt something like this. The furthest I've ever gone was a poetic item back in high school. I can sort of remember the start...

*The turning of a rock
For the rising of a star.
The ticking of a clock
To reach love afar.*

If memory serves, that poem didn't bring me very close. The girl I chased back then was not in the least literature-oriented. She enjoyed the typical things of her age; makeup, loud friends, popular music. I, on the other hand, was more of an introvert. I suppose the only real thing that drew me to her was my craving for social affection.

I swerved to the left to avoid a cyclist on the path, swinging the violin higher than could be considered safe. I'd like to tell you how it was passed down to me from my royal parents, and how musical talent was a staple in my family's blood. Alas, I've never been known for my etiquette or blue veins. Truth be told, I picked the instrument up from a second-hand shop down the road from where I lived. The violin was decades old, however. At least, that's what the shop's owner told me when I browsed his emporium of overpriced knick-knacks. Now that I think about it, he probably spun that whole tale to get me to buy something. Wouldn't be the first time I've been played.

Back to the matter at hand, I suppose. I carried the bouquet in my left hand. I got a fluttery stomach at the thought - having had weeks to think about this, I even planned the positioning of the flowers. She was left-handed. Not usually significant by itself, this characteristic was brought to attention by the fact that she always opted for a handshake when greeting others. The idea was that, instead of meeting another palm, she'd have a bunch of petaled greens thrust into her grip.

Half my face scrunched up as I rounded a corner to the glare of the setting sun.

*Morning after morning
Await night after night;
Unrelenting groaning
From staying in the fight.*

Her house was a couple blocks down. On more than one occasion during my walks down this road have I considered knocking on the door, if only to hear her voice or see her smile. Then I would remember my own awkwardness and dismiss the idea. Today, however, I made an effort to arrange a meeting beforehand. She seemed happy about it, which surprised me. Although I guess I should be a little more open-minded, considering recent events. We happened to bump into each other at a quiet party not too long ago. My desires might have caused me to imagine it, but I swear she was sticking close to me throughout the night.

A grin crept onto my lips, and I let it overtake me with a full smile. For the short remainder of my walk, I played with the idea of mortality and the shortness of it all - our lives are but a whisper and then... nothing. Love was indeed a valuable end-game for everyone.

*What joy to have
When all is dust?
What love to calve
When all is lust?*

Before I knew it, a silver knocker was in my hand, clumsily sharing space with the primrose bouquet. The metal connected to wood, and I hastily brought the flowers to my back - she wouldn't go for the handshake if she saw them prematurely, right?

A delicately balanced tone answered from inside, "I'm coming!"

I fought the urge to scratch the itch that was growing on my nose. I watched my shadow evaporate as the sun dipped below a building behind me, followed shortly by the soft pitter-patter of liquid cloud splashing on the ground.

Liquid cloud. What a quaint way to put it. It wouldn't be wrong to say that I was excited... nervous... expectant? Hopeful, of course.

A shambled jingle of keys later and the door was unlocked. First I saw her silvery eyes peer from the newly-made crack in the wall. "You're here!" Her head ducked back to open the door further.

I couldn't help baring my teeth in happiness, my crow's feet undoubtedly making a funny impression on my eyes. I didn't even bother calming myself. I was prepared for her hand--

--but would never again touch it. In an instant, all too quickly, my face fell blank. The smile vanished and the crow's feet flattened. Outstretched before me was not the hand of one whom I might've called my beloved, but rather the rippled arm of a man who clung to her like a father to a daughter. No, it was more than that. They resembled the stereotypical high-school couple moments before a prom night. She had an arm wound around his waist, as did he to her. The situation didn't need explaining.

I pardoned myself for the unwarranted interruption, and left under the guise of some last-minute excuse. The violin found itself in some side-street dumpster, and the bouquet met a similar fate. I trudged through a now-heavy rain, chewing myself out for being so foolish. I looked up, finding the moon amidst the darkened clouds. And then I remembered the end of my poem, and saw why I stopped chasing that girl in high school.

*Day is a lie
And life an illusion;
How could you die
When all is confusion?*

I deceived myself with a false hope. Again I let my craving for love delude me. Where to, if not the endgame? Was I to wander alone, endlessly going from place to place without purpose? The introvert in me wanted to get out, escape from the madness within. Everywhere but here was suitable for an ambitious soul. The rain seeped through my shirt and wet my chest. The cold somehow calmed me. Maybe I told myself the sky cried with me, that it cared about my circumstances. How petty I was, a fool with a house and food who shed a tear when his ideas were proven false.

I must be cruel to wish my sorrowful self to live with another. Why should anyone else have to put up with me if even I want to crawl from my skin and hide away? There is nowhere away from myself but all around me. I cannot escape here or there, to one place or another. The opposite of nowhere is everywhere, and that is my destiny... an ever-drifting husk content with nothing but distraction from itself.