

## When the Lotuses Bloom

He was alive. His mind worked like a clock. The anthologies of a lifetime stowed away on cerebral shelves. His life which was once a pure sheet of white had now fallen prey to what felt like an eternity of rust. The rust was red and oxidized, resembling the same material one would wipe away in snobbish distaste. His soul was that of a Roman Prince, buoyant and lively. The human creature he saw in the mirror so poorly represented his true being. He fantasized about the chocolate hair, always trimmed and neat, with a pair of emerald green eyes to match. Alas, the tresses of oak had long grown out, sliding down the monochromatic scale of grey, until flat-lining at white. His razor sharp eyes had dulled over time and now found themselves hidden behind a pair of coke-bottle glasses. The monotony of the day had become an unholy ritual until the night brought imagination and dreams and sleep brought repose.

It was here that our ethereal hero found respite away from the clicking of nurse's heels and sterile bedding cold and harsh as a Siberian winter. And away from the shocking concept that he no longer lived in that cream colored house by the ocean. It was in the same mindset of rest and enlightenment in which Siddhartha's lotuses bloomed. Eager lids drooped over his sleepy eyes shielding him from reality upon which the lotuses would then blossom.

His years of adventure had come to an uneventful close, sealed shut with handicap accessible doors bowing down to a reluctant punch. His independent quests ending with the moment he had to ask someone if he could leave his own bed. In his sleep, he traveled away from monotonous halls into the wind; his frail feet having no need to touch the ground. As always, he would return the next morning, hanging his hat on the hat-rack of his dreams, and tucking himself back into his physical body. At the current hour in which he lay, the sun was far gone and its younger brother, the moon, had risen to take its place. The man closed his eyes, and suddenly, a curtain of warmth draped over him...

He was a cowboy, his sister a Native American. His tiny shaved head of six years feels the summer heat in each minuscule hair follicle. He whispers in her ear the secrets of which she cannot tell her tribe of the cul-de-sac. A sister's eyes wide as saucers as she learns the codes, the scandals, and tribulations, all the while her blue orbs trained to an older brother. Today's plot consisted of espionage and thievery, and would continue until the dinner bell rang. But for now the only thing that mattered to him was conquering the Indian Chief, and saving the world. With innocence so pure never did it occur to him that he would not always be running wild with his sister. This western crusader's innocence was still a rose in a glass casing; and never did it occur to him that his sister's presence wouldn't grace upon the Earth for eternity. Whilst upon that day when he learned this fact was the day his childhood shattered. Glass fragments of innocence and naiveté fell, the coddled rose falling next to the oaken casket that reeked of perfume. The sun grew brighter, and he left his adolescent self in the darkest corner of his mind.

In this state of melancholy, his mind tucks him under metaphorical wings and flies. Skimming the cavernous regions of his mind, until he swiftly lands underneath the Venetian sun years later. He saw his reflection in the chalice and was introduced to an old friend, himself, and clear mint green eyes. This goblet meets his lips, the wine tasting like happiness mixed with German tears. Snow falls from the cerulean sky, its sheer obscurity made sense. The snow begins to fall harder. The gentle snow turns an ominous grey as it morphed into lethal capsules of metal. Flecks of shining grey cascade downwards towards the stoned pathways. They strike no one; but fall to the dancing feet of soldiers. The sun now lost in the metallic tide, the sky wails like a grieving mother receiving word that the Angel of Death had stolen her son. The wonderfully drunken cries of happiness are lost. The falling bullets each cause a catastrophic sound as they touched the ground. An earsplitting screech resembling that of a bomb falling to earth and a life lost in the warring tide. A nightmare, so it seemed.

The soldier shields his head and runs. Sprinting among the fallen bullets, each footstep a gunshot: quick and deadly. His own mere illusion of happiness was hidden inside the shroud of capsulized death, eons away from where his legs were bringing him. He cannot hear anything but the sound of war. It was the sound of idiocy and pride, the sound of fear. It singed his sun-burned skin.

He crosses the threshold into a café and breaks down in tears. The town in which he had spent so many years of his young life was submerged in flame. Then, as if a holy presence had graced upon the café, a cool aura of serenity fell upon him. A lone tear ran down the chiseled features of his face, landing on a muddied boot. He looked up slowly, his eyes tracing the beautiful woman's figure draped in white silk. At that moment, he was the luckiest man on earth, for she appeared to him like Aphrodite. The man regained his full height, and looked into her eyes. He knew who she was and she felt the same. To him, a wife, and to her, a husband. He saw the divinity of Nature in her soul and the strength of the Sea in her eyes. Her fair skin was like ivory, her hair fragile and that of Titian's finest painting. When earthen green eyes, met those of the sea: The man began to age. His beloved hair grew grey, and his sight softened, but the immortal goddess remained the same.

"I missed you, Darling," the man whispers. He upholds a lone hand, wrinkled and gnarled, he reaches to caress the silken skin of his beloved. He sees an angel released from the heavens and she sees the ineffable sadness that her appearance brings to him. She dissolves before his eyes, his desire to stroke her cheek: unrequited.

And with this resounding image, he found himself awake in reality. His eyes found morning and his heart felt hop and like the delicate breeze that swayed a forest, a soft whisper escaped his lips, "I'll see you in my dreams."