

# **BLOSSOMS ON A BATTLEFIELD**

PART ONE

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## **Prelude**

The forecast releases a retraction  
and the feathers snap from white to black.

The clouds take a wrong turn  
and the fox snatches its glove from the ferns.

Dreams in the richest color  
impose a greater weight.

Dreams of flight and summits  
echo a louder mandate.

The light-footed may better evade the hurt,  
but the incisive reap more from the dirt.

## Winter Warfare

The first, I swim in the glow of growing romance.  
The fifteenth, I plunge into the murk of slow war  
not of my hands.  
I sink and survey the bitter cold of reopened wounds,  
snatched from the warmth of the heart's rich fire.  
Pure summer assassinated, winter resurrects  
the past's ire.

In the snap of a finger, snapped by the cold,  
an unforgettable flame put out in a breath.  
Peach pink sunsets bleed to daily eclipse,  
brimming passion meets cracked, empty lips.

Into the tundra I restlessly trek,  
sifting through a blanket of shards.  
Whiplash aching on my neck,  
a frigid howl biting at my back,  
the storm of my life is in the cards  
in this blood-dripped snow, a land of nightmare.  
I know you're out there somewhere,  
but I can barely walk in this freezing air.

Vultures swoop at the image of your face,  
but I cannot let go yet.  
Night drowns me with each glance astray,  
but my heart cannot give way.  
Seething sirens come and throw their flames  
and scorch the oak roots that affirm my land.  
All the seething sirens invade and steal your name  
and shock the last lantern out of my hands.  
Discord in a tunnel, a grave in my mind.

I scramble across this barren land reaching only for love,  
finding no signs of life in the old field of foxgloves,  
eyes welling up with deep-rooted tears...  
but in this blizzard, what's true I cannot hear.

Impatience drums the clock, distrust sneers over my shoulder.  
Yesterday makes my bed, helplessness puts me to sleep.  
Train of thought derails on ice, twist of fate obstructs my sight.  
I have no glimpse of the pigment of your eyes  
under the stampede of the figments of my mind.

Seething sirens come and wield their axe  
and slash the pillars that uphold my levee.  
All the seething sirens invade and break my back  
and rip the last kiss from my memory.  
I keep my head down to pierce the white howl,  
only the gusts sweeping the ground to behold.  
I know you're out there somewhere  
but I can't see through this winter warfare.

## Rose-Red Ruse

I had walked out of the fog  
to shower in your golden hour.  
I had broken through to the clearing  
to graze and unfurl a new wildflower.  
Searing summer melted with brisk sky of blue,  
breeze and heat breed magnetic power,  
my fire exhaled and stretched and so did you.  
Interlocked honey lips and parallel dreams of postwar,  
the colors of our worlds swirling, no longer two,  
sumptuous sanctuary in skin and our souls' deep waters,  
we found a north star and bloomed wide and new.

You led me to a field of surreal spring flora,  
fluttering with the songs of fantasy fauna,  
doused in saturated red and bronze nirvana,  
kissed with the scent of my paradise's ponderosa,  
flanked by spoils of wine in a regal villa...  
Now I sting from that reverie as if bitten by reptilia,  
and the roses we grew seem replaced by black dahlias.

Well, my dear, whatever you fed me,  
the taste of snake oil still dances on my tongue.  
You opened my eyes to the brightest world I've seen,  
but now a cataract blinds me with a vision so far-flung.  
Down from the sugar rush, daylight steadily recedes.  
It slipped my mind that such love rarely lasts so young.

I'm left in a lovesick hysteria  
from lies white like gypsophila.  
A hurricane heartthrob, your ways so mysterious  
they leave bruises as purple as wisteria.  
Your eyes had their own limitless airspace,  
the sunshine a razor piercing through the clouds.  
But I got so lost in that hazel sunset grace,  
it obstructed my view of a storm coming around,  
and that razor has left cuts on me I can't erase.

We dove straight into each other's souls,  
saw all the shades that paint our hallowed halls,  
our future shimmering with vivid technicolor.  
It was pure and it was true,  
but I sense a poison to such a brilliant hue,  
as the havoc you've wreaked since makes me wonder  
if it was just a syrupy mirage for which I'm a sucker...

The power of my love seems to have cracked you,  
and hell, the allure of yours cracked me too.  
Or at least that dazzling spell you cast on me did.  
I know your past hurt still plagues your heart  
but as you ravage and deceive in departure from our kiss,  
I'm reminded you have a talent for performance art.

If I unplug my dream machine and recharge my realism,  
would I suddenly find more thorns than petals in that field?  
You can't stop the ripples of our natural magnetism,  
but your lupine-laced ooh-la-la feels a bit too unreal.  
I wish I still had an eye on those portraits of escapism  
so I could see if your paint would start to peel.  
Maybe the vibrance of my mind's own prism  
is the only true dictator of what in the world is real.

I wasn't wearing my rose-tinted shades—  
I know a real sight from a deluded daze.  
Such a lost heart can turn on a dime  
no matter the heat of romance's prime.  
But when you leave me so carelessly bruised,  
it's hard not to see it all as a rose-red ruse.

## To Uncage The Heart

I stutter in unease to express a deeper instinct  
under the punishment of unnatural weight.  
Lies and suppression yank like taut strings,  
thunder and expectation rage and deflate.  
A puppet master above orchestrates the sting,  
demons of my own creation they helped create.  
If I take charge and try to cut off the chains,  
is it myself or the hands of power where I take aim?

Scars chase the oxygen out of our breath,  
and the core of the heart cannot confess.  
Façade steps in, the realest voices digress.  
Innocent impulses are forced to redress...  
They demand hiding for expression that defies,  
but for my unfettered passion I won't apologize.

I try to learn the art of uncaging the heart  
from this world of blades and barricades.  
I want to believe that love is noise  
but it suffocates between soundproof walls  
as demonic feedback cracks reason's voice.  
I can't hear within me, I can't hear among us all.

There's a violent brute that forces the night  
and slings a hammer at my love with blind might.  
I unleash every sword, cock every gun,  
and blaze a warpath at it with the fury of the sun.  
But the only victim of the retaliation I wield  
is the shattered mirror in front of me,  
while the departed authors and insidious rulers  
hang over my shoulder and grin as I bleed.

My sightline is squeezed into furious static  
as a primal roar erupts like radar from my lungs.  
My only escape is to a place of fading faith,  
a ground forever shaken by fleeting faces.

A passion in these chains is a needle on a nerve.  
'Please' is the only word leaving my tongue  
while the L word digs its heel into the tip of it,  
never breaching the headwind that halts it.

I might've just located the eternal flame,  
the one that burns from the heights of the heart,  
or the one that burns from the hellscape of the head.  
Only time will tell to which I stake my claim.  
I might be in stride toward the bond of dreams,  
or I might collide with the damnation of furies.  
I lash out to grab the reins and decide the final page,  
but it's out of my hands with my heart in this cage.

Raindrops don't lift from the ground,  
the moon doesn't glow in the daylight,  
a pack of wolves can't be told not to howl,  
a summer wildfire can't neglect its rise...  
Love is a fucking instinct, it shouldn't have to fight.  
From the crippling clash of my shadows' voices  
and the sinister confines decreed by the throne,  
these crude structures of lovelessness,  
at my hands, must come crashing down.



## **Aerodynamic Romantic**

You're dangerous 'cause you're agile.  
You're a catch 'cause you can't be caught.  
Your feather-light twirling ballet freestyle  
propelled my heart straight into the spotlight,  
and took the breath right out of my lungs.  
Shoulda known that spin cycle would reach my head.

I cast a mural of dreams on your dancefloor,  
leaving my dancing shoes at the door,  
lured by all the ways we'd love each other...  
now my heart is splintered by the floorboard  
after tripping over your evasive maneuvers.

Call it a dance or call it a tsunami,  
I'd be lying if I said it wasn't thrilling.  
But spin me, lead me, woo me, trip me, I'm no fool,  
your switchbacks I can see right through.  
Like thriving roses in a field battered by mines,  
poetry this passionate you'll never again find.

I thought love would feel like a spreading flame.  
All I know how to feel is scorching heat.  
I've spent a quarter-life flying against the grain,  
trying to blaze fire into the stream...  
But your free spirit's ethereal art  
surrendered me to the breeze's surge  
and to your wild climate's stop-and-start.  
You're an aerodynamic romantic,  
I'm stuck in your current like blood to a heart,  
and you're putting my fire at risk.

You dropped my heart 'cause you didn't have the grip,  
but you kept it close 'cause our magnets still pull.  
Into our yesterday I continue to slip  
because you showed me my tomorrow in full.  
Your winding, loop-the-looping, top-down ride

spread my soul's wings and let it fly,  
and snatched the shadows out of my mind.  
If only I knew you would hijack the brakes.

I tattooed a heart on the steering wheel,  
not a thought about the seatbelt,  
daydreaming about your luscious feel...  
now I yearn only for what I once felt,  
as I lie on the glass shards of the windshield.

Call it a detour or call it whiplash,  
you somehow put beauty in a car crash.  
You turned right off pristine love lane,  
climbing the rugged hills of demons' pass,  
either reunion or destruction laying in wait.  
Where you go at the fork will expose you at last.

I used to think love was an accelerator to the floor,  
blazing down a straight-away highway.  
The only travel I knew let the engine roar,  
no regard for any red lights or one-ways.  
But one taste of your heart and soul  
and I learned to cruise around the scenic byway...  
and swerve off a cliff with no traction control.

A smile and sweet nothings of effortless allure,  
but a saboteur 'cause your fight-or-flight has no cure,  
you pulled off quite the feat to make me so sure...  
Inamorato mirage engulfs the stage of my soul,  
I stumble dizzied by the speed of your vogue.  
Vertigo swarms the escape route that I race,  
your slippery slopes hydroplaning me into the guardrail.  
You might think there's no blood on your hands,  
but while my fire sparks from the truth of my soul,  
the only fire on you is scorching through your pants.  
Aerodynamic romantic, I'm enthralled by you,  
but your tornado is tearing me apart.  
There's no break from your breakneck twists and turns,

and you're throwing around a combustible heart.  
Lead me with a steady step or its fury will burn.

## **The Bloody Edge**

We try to puncture the night,  
and escape the burdening thorns.  
Specters steal the sunlight  
and chase us back to the edge  
that drew blood only we know.  
Repel, relent, recreate, repeat.

We try to harvest the ripest fruit,  
and find new bounty in our pursuits.  
Hissing whispers of familiar beckon  
and reel us back to the poison  
that wrung the spirit from our soul.  
Release, revisit, recreate, repeat.

You see a shade within their eyes...  
you find where the demons' weapons lie,  
pulled in like a magnet to pain,  
intrigue from which we can't refrain.  
We wade into their darkness  
that we see in the mirror.

The lights that break our scars' anchor  
are few and far between to discover.  
The bones of bridges burned,  
the shards of faces severed...  
ghost towns below linger just off the stern.

Disbelief meets unadulterated love.  
Devils are greeted with kid gloves...  
We try to fly, chained to deadweight.  
We try to feel, locked in our own ice age.  
Wounds take the wheel, wreckage has a date.  
The clock steamrolls, tomorrow is yesterday.  
Like moth to flame, we're drawn again and again  
to the bloody edge.

## The Last Living Blossoms

I dreamt of wild gardens and lush forests  
hugging the cabin beneath the mountain crest.  
The sun is glistening upon the river that's listening  
to our soul's deep-cuts and the doves' sweet singing,  
and just one meeting of irises sends our hearts soaring.  
All summer, we sail across the fertile landscape  
of fireweed, lupines, and lilies wild to the cascades  
indulging in our dreams' grand escape  
with freedom as fresh as the sunrise dew on grass blades.  
The rushing dusk wind carries our bodies,  
our steady hands carry each other's love,  
and we abandon the thorns that made us bleed  
as we glide into the sky alongside the doves.

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I lurch up in my bed, shocked awake from that summer daze,  
bludgeoned by reality, "bombs away" I hear the radio say.  
Jets shred the sky, alarm bells ring, the sky a murder scene...  
It's time to go, where I don't know,  
but this oasis won't survive this nightmare machine.

Everything we know could be ashen to its core,  
but if nothing else, my love must survive this vicious war.  
I snatch the first fistful of blooms I can find  
and run to leave the oncoming terror behind,  
no time to defend that dream garden of mine.

"Life is yours" they all love to say...  
but they're ripping it away from us today.  
The wild roses itch to rise, red and bright,  
but raiders keep plowing them with black and white.  
I don't want to drown in this grayscale doom,  
take me to the technicolor bloom...  
I don't believe in these crooked structures.  
I refuse to feed this broken order.

I try to dodge the venomous vines of hopelessness,  
but how the hell can I find blossoms on a battlefield like this?

Fearing the death of dreams may be premature at 23,  
but growing pains bite away at my heels  
in a world that makes the idealistic spirit bleed  
and where unfettered love is an arduous call to heed.  
These visions of romance can't be the last living blossom,  
but I can't find another escape from the bombs.

I want to give rise to roses from this ruin.  
I want to fly free of all these made-up traps.  
I want to escape all this impending collapse,  
breach hate's gravity and taste a little levity...  
who is it that will come with me?  
I'd do it all alone but I'd rather not  
'cause these days love is all we've got.

I can't succumb to the decay and hurt,  
but this dying flora won't repaint the dirt,  
so I have to plant and give life to a bloom like no other.  
They keep trying to dig up my seeds of color,  
but I can't let love wilt under the sun of my heart.

I look up to the sky as I sprint for cover  
and the hazy rush blurs together the jets and doves.  
My legs rip into the ground with enough speed to lift-off  
to reach the sky and knock the war out of it myself.  
But I'm landlocked, love-lost, no choice but to run off.  
I grip these wildflowers and duck from the missiles,  
never minding my bleeding cuts from the thistles.  
Their petals and roots are singed by the searing heat,  
as I weave to evade the wildfire that won't retreat  
The roar and crackle of this furious battle is deafening today.  
If you're out there, call out to me and show me the way.  
To where these last living blossoms can grow anew, I have to find a way.

## **Dead Meadow**

The deer are starved in the forest.  
The red bleeds off the roses in the extinguished sun.  
Birds of prey swarm the west  
that once harbored dreams of the one.  
Gray ash masks the alpine breeze.  
My lungs choke in the heavy haze,  
I'm drowning in place.

The gold of dusk is covered in rust.  
The evergreens have crumbled to dust.  
Shaded phantoms engulf the airspace  
where I once saw your shimmering face.

The light keeping me awake is going to sleep.  
The grand escape is escaping me.  
Where are you now?

The eyes in the town have frozen and sunk.  
The neon at the diner has lit its last drunk.  
I search for the songs of sanctuary I remember,  
but the lounge piano lost the keys for major.

Silence now echoes through the empty rut  
where pure springwater rivers once rushed.  
Collapsed pines now crush the path in the woods  
where the dream cabin retreat once stood.

The ultimate peak is caving under this gravity.  
The grand escape is escaping me.  
How do I find you now?

Lost, life has been uprooted from the trees,  
so I wade into the vast, fading meadow  
looking for the glow that once bathed my soul.  
Swallowed by shadows, I sink to my knees  
as the lupines wilt and the grass withers apart

and I find a dove laying there with a stake in its heart.