

A Memoir

by Justin McAfee

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...she smelled of sunflowers.

The sunset painted the clouds in long, violent strokes across the sky. Reds, violets, and oranges spilled over the heavens. The air was thick with the smell of coming rain. So thick you could choke. Within the evening haze, I felt Time's misguided hand dragging me into the brewing storm.

The quickly ceasing raindrops echoed throughout the house. Her footsteps sounded from the kitchen. Her voice shook as she spoke. Their words, carefully crafted but distorted by emotion, are carried off in to the hollow recesses of the room before I could understand. A violence underlies their words, an uneasiness, a strange tension, a vastly growing fear.

It was early April and the cherry blossoms were just beginning to bloom. Their soft pinks collided with the royal blue of the sky creating a naturalistic and flagrant magnum opus. I could see the bridge ahead, and a woman with a parasol staring down into the murky water. My mouth was dry.

"It's all so very strange this time of year," she whispered.

I nodded my head.

The cold embrace of winter slowly recedes revealing the vibrant life thriving below. It leaves as quickly as it comes . . . this is when we met, I think. Or maybe it was in the fall when the leaves dry out becoming crisp yellows and reds and oranges; they evolve into something more beautiful in death.

A firework sonata lights up the sky, and her magnificent blue eyes. Under the cloak of night I felt the electricity boiling in my fingertips; I was falling in love.

“It doesn't make sense to start this way. It is all too disjointed. There isn't any connectivity. Is it even linear?”

I looked in to the mirror at the wound on my face, inflicted by the dull razor. I didn't try to clean it, but instead, I watched the blood dripping from my chin in to the marble sink. The room began to spin, but I was too mesmerized by the blood to pay attention. I coughed

“I love you.”

Snow danced fleetingly outside the window. The only source of light flickered from the candle flame licking the air casting long, trailing shadows about the room. Her thigh was ghostly white, I remember, I think, I believe, and the exposed flesh was smooth. When the candle had finally burned down, we couldn't help ourselves but to keep the warmth going.

The vivid pink parasol was unforgettable. The way in which she whirled it about her shoulders, the shadow of it spinning around her frame, was hypnotizing. The parasol's ends, adorned with frills and jewels, glinted in the evening sun. The water moved gradually; our reflections drew out across the surface until joining together on the opposite bank.

“...Even without coherence, the beauty of it all is present, and yet, it is all so strange.”

I looked at her body, swollen with death, void of a presence, and my knees began to give. The trees all melted, their limbs melding to the earth, and the clouds fell apart until there was none left in the sky. Her ring, still wrapped around her finger, was a faint glimmer in the pool of black cloth.

The train left at a quarter past two, but I could not bring myself to leave her side. I was hers to do with as she pleased. My free will came unhinged and I found myself shackled to her presence; she is both oppressor and lover, and I am a slave to her will.

He raised his hands and she flinched, angering the beast more. He struck her down again and again, her face bloodied, her teeth cracked.

Spring is in the air.

I put my hand atop of hers and we wept. It was unknown how long this lasted. Days? Months? Eternities, maybe?

“The characters are without depth. They are embodiments of ideas rather than human beings.”

The cough started a few months ago. At first, it was a nuisance but soon it became debilitating. I told my doctor that I was beginning to spit up blood. He looked at me sternly.

I stepped into the rain. My sordid face cleansed. My bloody hands renewed. My spirit, in some ways you could say, replenished. I opened the door with her screaming behind me not to leave, to never let go. I stepped in to the rain. Her lip quivered as I kissed her softly. A tear brimmed up in the pocket of her eyes as I pulled back and turned around, walking to the door. She began screaming. I stepped into the rain.

“There are some sacrifices we can't just walk away from!”

I nod my head.

“...cyclic...”

“I don't know you anymore.”

Our bones cracked underneath our pallid flesh; we are suffering from the frigid air. She nuzzled her head into my chest.

“I love you, too.”

With my last breath, I try and think back to a simpler time. Maybe now I could understand the traumas and the moments of splendor. I think back to Her, or maybe forward, and could feel her step out of mind and into the room. Her perfume lingers in the air, and I try to remember the smell. I think, ...

