

Tulips bloomed out by my garden, bowing down and rising up to the tempo of fall's wind. The slight creeping noise of window rust harmonized tenderly with my breathing. I laid down on a twin sized bed with sheets the color of pomegranates and snow pillows whose color resembled my own. My long chestnut hair was a sea of waves, spread out creating a tangled ocean over my small bare chest.

I closed my eyes and sunk. I sunk deep into my bed's frame, through the home's floor through the garden, the dirt- sunk until I was buried, until the sheets that cradled my body were hovering over my goose bumps. I opened my eyes and woke up clutching my throat keeping my breath from escaping my body. An alarm sounded and I came to feeling as if my night had lasted no longer than a single second.

My 12 pound cat, Mel, whom my little brother had named after Mel Gibson, came into my bedroom wearing a little bell that played an arrhythmic tune. He jumped into my bed and lain next to me, warming me with soft dark grey and black fur. I smiled and looked out my window to see curved wood create nature and leaves fall into messy piles of ginger chocolate. I took a deep breath, stretched and dragged myself out of bed. I walked to my flat's bathroom in which I had laid out a black crewneck, dark jeans and a pair of black leather shoes with half-broken buckles. I quickly changed and grabbed a dead-rose colored bag right before walking out into the hall.

I went down three floors through the concrete box of a staircase and found myself outside in front of a foreign palette of trees. I reached in my bag for a cigarette and lit it as I walked to the corner store to buy flowers for Louis.

"Guid mornin' Tori!" Giorgio, the gardener said to me as he picked up the usual.

"Mornin' Gio." I smiled and helped his elder body get up from his garbage disposal stool that looked as if it had been taped together by a very disabled person.

"Hou ar ye holdin' up?" He handed me over four sunflowers.

"Been bett' but I've also been worse." I reached in my bag to pull out money to pay but he stopped me.

"Ye know his flowers ar always on me."

"Ye've been so grand. I can't thank ye enough." I gave him a compassionate hug and began walking away. The big leaves of the sunflowers tickled my hand and I couldn't help but

smile because for a very brief moment it felt like Louis was back at the flat with me. He was my little brother and my favorite person, which that meant a lot considering the fact I usually didn't enjoy the presence of younger company. He passed a little over a year ago when he was only seven in a car accident. At first, I tried pretending he never existed to begin with, that he had just been a character on my favorite novel but eventually time caught up with me and I had to let him go. Every other Sunday since I go visit his grave and leave three sunflowers on it, I don't like staying long. Whoever said that visiting a cemetery alone seemed mysteriously romantic clearly doesn't know shit.

I reached out to call for a cab.

"Welcome! Hou's it gaun?" A woman with smudged red lips and fishnet gloves asked.

"A'm fine. An ye?"

"Goud. Can a gie ye a haund?"

"I'm headin to Sterling Old Town Cemetery- FK8 1EA."

"Okay, shud be quick." She adjusted the mirrors and her hat.

"Great. Thank ye."

Out the window was a seamless photograph waiting to be shot. The broken walls of Scotland were charmingly ancient and the rain slowly began to paint the town. We turned left.

"Who ar ye visitin'?" The cab driver asked, curiously.

"Brother."

"Oy, I'm serry eh. Must be tough."

"Yeah, well, it happeens, ye know?"

"I know."

The rest of the drive was quiet. She turned the radio volume up to a monotone radio station, playing numb harps and string instruments I couldn't manage. About ten minutes passed and she stopped the cab in front of my destination.

"How much do I owe ye?" I asked, pulling out my wallet.

"Eight pounds."

I handed her over the money.

"Thank ye again, and I'm serry about ye brother."

“Thanks.”

I closed the door and walked in, tripping on the rare pebble. The place was particularly lonesome that day, only about three other people there besides myself. Nobody was interested in anybody else’s presence. One lady about early 30’s stood over a grave, sobbing. Further down and close to my brother, I saw a guy about 19 sitting and writing, with a hot drink next to him. I walked by and slightly nudged my head, acknowledging his presence, which I was a bit uncomfortable with. I liked visiting my brother alone.

A grave down I stood in front of a pretty tombstone that read Louis’s name and date of birth and death. I placed the flowers in front of it, kissed my hand and then reached out to the smooth boulder before walking away. I heard the guy who was sitting down scoff and slightly chuckle.

“What’s yer deal? Ye come and ye go?” He called out.

“Excuse me?” I turned around, angry at the fact he had the nerve to comment in on such a thing.

“Ye come, leave a flower and that’s eet? Ye can tell ye loved him.”

“Ye don’t have a right to say anytheng. What I do here is my business, go back to sitting like a creep and writing ye prying bastard.”

He laughed as if I had barely jabbed him and closed his journal.

“I didn’t mean to be rude or anytheng, I just don’t understand what the point of ye coming here was if ye were only going to stay for a couple of seconds.”

“Because he knew I loved him regardless, what’s ye sitting there for hours gonn do? Here’s the answer, just as much as my fifteen seconds.”

“Oh, I see, it’s yer ol’ boyfriend and now yer with someone else and ye feel guilty because ye know ye still love him, but ye can’t be in love with the dead. Tragic.”

“Yer a god damn cunt ye know that right? That’s my little brother in there- ye know? I don’t have to answer shit to you. So goodbye and go to hell.”

He looked at me like someone who had known you for years, gave me an endearing mischievous smile and shrugged.

“See ye around.”

“Hope not.”

I walked out of there quickly with his words burning the curves of my mind. What was going there for ten seconds even good for? It's not like he saw me, not like the flowers were going to bring him back. If I was going to pay my respects to him I would do it eating chocolate ice cream at the deli down the street and watching old American films. So I stood at the edge of the congested street waiting for a cab. I turned back and let go of my brother for a while, setting the thoughts of him free I lit another cigarette and stood in the middle of the drizzle that was Sterling, Scotland.