



In Fondness of Dying and the
Tragedies of Existence

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CHAPTER 1: SPILLED MILK

In the moments of pleasure, I think fondly back to misery. Misery in its lightest moments are what mold true character.

*Why is it in our failure that we find ourselves, find
the ingredients to our stamina, the means to carry on?*

The importance of strength can come in many forms and with many fraying tendencies. It also tails fortune, for all lessons, though occasionally cruel, are personal love letters of life.

Ah, cruelty, my old familiar friend. How I seemed to lust after you for what seems like eons. Through love and life alike I followed you like a sick alley kitten follows strangers home, only to be kicked to the side with steel toed boots.

But soon you brought me in with beckoning and bony hand, lathering me in oils of cynicism and doubt, distrust and masochism. My naked body began to drip in the glory of it all, like a rotten wedding dress freshly plucked from the muck.

I would lay with cruelty, spinning in low threaded, unwashed sheets. Sweat and tears would pour from me in salty waves as cruelty would ravish my body. Singing to it with lonesome chorus, I would wake up with aches of body, mind, and heart. Soaked in my own confessions, I

would step to the alter night after night, bowing my body to the whims of my oppressor. That was until one sweat soaked evening, the key broke in that disastrous door, and that unhappy world refused me entry.

Me?! The one that painted walls with selfish prayers for the sick sixth sense? How dare the abuser deny me the threshold that I wore down to smooth wood with my black and blue?

But alas, the day came, and I walked into the sun so bright with no other choice for the brittle walls I built with my pathetic partner began to wither and die, crumble and burn like the lands of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Believe me, I tried to stay, to perish with the grotesque castle I built with my own hands. Though there was something within me that wouldn't allow it. Like a big bellied spider flees from her pulsing sack of offspring just before the wood chipper makes mulch of the bit of oak that had been her place of rest since she herself burst forth- I began to run into the arms of the unknown, broad daylight.

How horrid! I attempted to shield my serpent eyes, hissing like an Egyptian Asp. What was this ethereal existence?! The beams began to curdle my thin blood and cause my transparent skin to burn like cleansing sage. Thick, potent, pillars of sacrificial smoke rose from beneath my talons, embers burned my womb from within. How I hated the day- how I hated the experience of beams licking my skin!

Bring me the putrid hold of agony, for the warm cradle of dawn is not for this nymph of the cavern, golem of the deep.

But somehow I survived the new day, and new skin, though soft, began to grow from beneath the char. Like a cicada grapples onto the old cypress, my scaled previous form stuck to the earth as I peeled away. I broke from the barracks of my thick shell like a walnut from its cratered place of rest.

Many times I tried to dress myself back into my old robes that now reeked of decay. How dare happiness crawl on its golden belly into my soft vulnerable skin?! The audacity of it, the pure audacity. Soon I was looking into the mirror and couldn't recognize myself anymore. The twin that I leeched life from began to grow, gain life, acquire traits that made me heave and quiver with unease! How she would hold her hand to me, always asking for my company.

Refuse! Refuse the right hand of God, I am no meager manifestation, I am no means to be the ying of yan. Ahh, but the brutal, chipped tusk boar of me soon subsided. How the Mary in me wooed the Judas, I will never know, but as she washed his feet, I could feel him begin to weep, and as she embraced him, he became part of the table once more.

For some, happiness is a trait they're born with, like a charming cleft chin, or dishwater blonde hair. For me it came with a battle, and I have scars that pour forth from time to time, never truly healing. Does that

make me less of a mortal? I can't be sure, for existence itself until the dying day, isn't anything to be sure of either.

CHAPTER 2: FOX AND FOX, NO HOUND TO BE FOUND

Why is it, do you think, that we began to lie? I remember many of what they call ‘white lies’ and they puncture my sleepless nights with their annoying pointlessness.

A lie, is a lie, is a lie.

I remember once while at a club in the dreary downtown of Brew City, that I faked an accent all the night long. I'm still to this day not quite sure why I did it. Was it to try and present myself as more interesting? Possibly I just wanted to be out of my body for a moment, I honestly can't recall what grievance made that decision a part of that nights rather uneventful festivities. In itself it was like powdering a black eye, despite lying to myself and others, the blood was still pooled ever so brightly beneath my usual leer. I was lying.

For myself (and believe me when I say, that pride plays no role in these recitals) I sometimes enjoy lying immensely, simply to see how far I can get to the bull before he bucks. Don't ask me why, for I wouldn't have an answer for you- at least not one that didn't circle like pastry beaters and offer no definitive.

Do you think we began it like a gunshot? All at once? Or teetered down the hourglass in granules, one by one, until the grains were countless?

Personally I'd like to believe that a big, fat grub of a lie was emitted and devoured all at once. I like the portrait that paints, because that must mean for a length of time that the belief just came naturally, possibly until the stories became too outlandish or the tale spindler was caught in his jester-like actions.

Is that too far fetched? I mean for generations beyond court ordained scribes we as upright humanoids trusted in the glory of Gods and deranged deities to determine our worth. Someone must have began the tall tales, and when those around them began to believe they just decided to go with the flow.

Humans are strange in their need to believe in something, anything. Whether it's that there is a man in a well trimmed white beard, and unstained flowing robes on a throne awaiting them at the end of their blessed days, or that the sun will simply rise come the shrill caw of the crow just before the star pulls up beyond the horizon.

Most need the strange notion of promise, that a friend will arrive promptly to pick this said person up from the airport, or that a lover will be true until death do they part.

I have found in my personal life, that promises -like cow manure- are shit.

The point in making promises to yourself (or others) is a well licked loli, unappetizing though appealing to those eager enough to bite. If you wish to do something, think not of futuristic words that would simply satisfy

an unchallenged ear, but swing your blade and do it. Or don't, keep the sword sheathed, for it matters not.

All these explanations and excuses to try and wring some sort of notion from your actions not quite fulfilling the expectations of others is the quarry in a land of well tilled lies.

I really am no snake to speak, because I still see disappointment in the eyes of those I am fond of from time to time, and it pangs the bits of stitched heart that still flutter now and again.

One of my employers once told me of his mothers death, how the days that rang up until she lay there still she managed to convince herself that soon she was going back home. He didn't have the heart to tell her that she would never return to her well worn bed with pin-pricked hand-made comforter and the mattress that she made love to her husband on for the last time many years previous when he still breathed earths air, and didn't seep into the silk lining of a coffin not far from where the hospital stood. He didn't have the heart to tell her, knowing she didn't have the heart to take it.

So who's lie was worse? The lie of a man to his dying mother? Or a woman lying to herself of the feebleness of her body, and nearness of the netherworld?

The answer is neither, and both.

Lying is a confusing, tempting being of touch-and-go tangibility. The ironic truth of the matter is that with lying truth is an unsatisfying

satisfactor. His mother did die in that starched hospital bed, and a man from London totally called me out on my (though convincing) fake accent that strange night in Downtown, Milwaukee.

CHAPTER 3: MEMENTO MERENGUE

I dream quite frequently of flying, though I'm surely not the first. In these dreams I wear little to no clothing and ride an Ash tree branch into wet spring winds. Now, in my realistic realm I can see, taste, touch. I am even gifted with a leg turned remembrance when I wipe the dreariness from my ever changing eyes.

A broom they called it. An old crones ash-handled broom.

Now I wouldn't begin half way into this story, without satisfaction of prologue, but with a brilliant and sudden buzz. There would be bees floating around my face, as if shaken from some day spell of drifting mind I would erect my mostly bare body from the ground and, with the dull end of my flying apparatus I would stand in the wind.

The gusts would whip my hair all about me, and I would feel the smile that was already placed on my face begin to grow. I was never full of fright to what may have placed it there in the existence that was before I inhabited the body I seeped into sometime during my night.

I would then turn my broom like a baton, and place my cushioned, bare, bottom onto the wood. I stroked the ends lovingly, like a virginal new wife who had only heard tales of phallic members. Then, after straddling it with my tiny feet, toes gripping the green ground, I would

kick off in a sudden sprint. I would flee down a hill that resembled so closely the one that lead up to the barn of my childhood home.

Then, though wavering I would begin to lift off from the ground, touching back down once or twice before finally speeding off into the sky.

I would travel with murders of crows, speeding through a sea of black. My steed slithering steadfast through the gusts.

It is only in the deepness of dreams do I feel free, floating with frivolity in the fire sky.

I remember the grace of masculine cedar that billowed from the boughs below. How the world became alive as I bested above it!

It was only when my journey took me to the sea that a sadness would fill my familiar heart. As I reached the wretched water, I could feel the magick begin to slip from my bare bosom. I couldn't steer away though, it was as though curiosity bestowed itself upon my ash branch, and it wouldn't allow me to stray from its predetermined path.

As I grew closer to the ever foaming body of salt, I could practically feel the mouth of it watering to suck me beneath with strong undertow.

Fear did not live within this body, and as I reached just beyond the beach, I fell, and just before my skin touched the break, I too turned to foam and became part of the water.

Then I would wake, and reality reached my dazed eyes, and I would understand that I was no longer a witch of the wilds. I would be sad to not swim with the sea.

Such is the way of dreams.

CHAPTER 4: A PALLET MUCH TOO UNPALATABLE.

Great matches burn so brightly. But as we stood before our flame, the fear of the dark was too much for you. So in your fear you grappled at a stick who's embers burst out long ago and since kindling still remained there, you ignited the bit with our fire.

I wasn't enough for you.

So in your moment of weakness I left the handle of our torch.

You could have it.

I don't fear the darkness as you do.

I doused the last of it in my oil.

It wasn't much, but it was all I had. But at least, when the fuel ran out, you would have had me.

Now we both remain nameless in the dark. One scrambling for kindling all too soaked in water and earth, while I stand silent in the deep.

I like the dark.

There isn't anything left to lose here.

CHAPTER 5: SAPLING AND SAWDUST

When I was younger, I lived in an old farm house, miles away from city lights and the sounds of sirens.

I would hear my parents scream and the sound of rough hands on reluctant skin couldn't be kept out no matter how hard I pressed my hands into my ears. My fear would draw me to the furthest corner of my room, and I would feel for serenity in cold, dew kissed glass. When my hands found my escape, I would open my window and climb outside.

Sometimes the night was petrifying, wind so strong it would threaten me off my sill and into the ground below.

I knew it wouldn't really do it though, I could tell by the way the world outside would beckon me away from the turmoil of my own home. I would then slip from the sill, onto the sunroom below, and from that safe distance jump into the long grass below.

The ground was always softer at night, when dew would soak the bottom of pajamas and make my bare feet squeak slightly.

I would put hands down into the earth and push them hard as I could into the soil around clumps of weeds and pull at the flora with an anger I only vaguely remember.

I would pound my small fists into the bare spots in the ground until my hands bled, spitting profanities I didn't know the meaning to.

Something about the dark made everything seem far away.

The pain, the terror of my own home, the smell of burnt dinner that I wasn't allowed to eat- none of these things were real when I left my room and traveled into the night.

When I would stand up, I would be covered in dirt and my body would be shaking. Before my mind could tell my body no, my adrenaline would push my feet forward and into the cornfield that sat in acres behind the large bushes of lilacs my mom had planted when I was born.

As I would push past the large bushes, I would flee into the stalks of corn. It was the middle of the year so they were still so green, and cut me as I ran past them. I never felt much of anything as I ran, not the thorns in the pads of my feet, nor the cuts in my hands, pain didn't exist as I ran through the moon lit green.

The corn was taller than I was, but I could still see up into the sky. It's sometimes hard to believe a sky can be that clear. I remember the sounds of cicadas and grasshoppers everywhere.

Before I knew that it was bugs that made that sound, I thought it was just the sound of the night

The night.

The night grew fuzzy as I would run forward, towards an old tree.

An old tree.

I had my first kiss there, it's where I went to cry.

So young yet still so afraid to cry in front of anyone.

Don't let anyone see, don't let anyone know.

I would run into the tree like it was an old friend, throw my arms around it and fall to my knees.

It would hold me back, and with that moment, I would feel the weight of the world fall from my shoulders and into the roots below it.

No questions, no apprehension, just understanding.

They cut down the tree the year I turned twelve.

I remember not seeing it in the barren corn field in the beige littered barren field, it was fall.

We left the house behind their year. I remember nothing but that tree, running to it with a sadness I had never known before.

I looked down at the stump, it seemed so small, and frail.

I knelt down next to it and put my hand into the soft mud.

I lost ring there when I did that, silver, a token of first communion.

I don't miss much about that house, but when I think of what else was left behind, I get feel a sadness cling to me, clutching at my heart like an old friend.

CHAPTER 6: BELLY SWINE

Red stained napkin crumpled so tightly in my absent small hands.

My face, pale as old milk stares into my sunken caverns, tired and cloudy. Once these caves held almond globes that overflowed with question and now only seeped a milky gray.

I traced the features of my rounded chin, with the fingers flowing off my free palm, that faded into gaunt features, little shadows without end.

I feel the creature crawling in my depths, name yourself new devil.

I know nothing of these breasted bare grounds inked with days of angst and rebellion, where emotion used to lie and now simply reflect adventurous expeditions no longer existent. Like a gas that creeps odorless I wait for recognition if only through coughs that paint my hands pink with mercy.

Pennies, I taste pennies as I lap my lips clean. A familiar task now, like the breath of a home seen though vacant with fists of abusive fathers and locked lips of absent mothers-

I swallow.

A dry suckle at the walls of my throat like leeches at my skin-I see it, flowing into my barren belly, fluid into fluid, it will find no warm embrace there. The gallows of my gut grind through dry hunger, but the food has no taste and the drink proves no use.

My toes grip through the strands of my black hair, that now lay on the floor in wisps and tears- I'm no longer moving as my mind lies dormant contemplating the stimulating pressure of my hips grinding into the cracked ceramic of the broken sink that sucked the ring from my brother on the day I was born last year.

Tap

Tap

Tap

The blood from my palm, torn open from my nails carving small perfect moons into the blushing flesh, pouring crimson through the napkin that now seemed so full with the liquid that supplies rare color to my cheeks and pressure to my mind-

Release.

The pain isn't there as I wanted it to be, catharsis I try so hard to still find in my eyes still almond shaped but blind-

Who are you new devil?

I see.

I see.

You're me, you've see through my would-be eyes and cut off all my hair-
You've swallowed my blood and sit in my gullet like a wolf getting fat off
the thick thighs of young sheep. I should tell you to leave, but I greet you
like old friends, embrace you in the torment of my heavy bare breasts
that once held a heart made of gold and worth love and the lungs that
breathed deep the air of new day now prickle my nerves and beg me to
refrain-

I need you new devil, for the whispers you lick into my ears with the
only sensation that still seems so real. I feel the creature crawling in my
depths, name yourself new devil, I'll call you Belly Swine.

I've starved you till your pallet favored the flesh of my wounds,
draining the memories of my caverns licked clean and then sewn to save
some till later, let me bait you with the thought that I bathe in the milk
from my skin and the gray from my eyes, this is all for you new devil, my
loving Belly Swine.

CHAPTER 7: ETHEREAL ENIGMA

A pot boiled violently over the hearth in the fireplace, spitting some kind of broth over the stone-laid floor. Sitting nearby was an old crone, hidden beneath layers of tool and fabric. She was fiddling with a bone tool, hooking loop after loop of fragile thread into a large doily that was folded on her lap.

Her milky eyes broke from their haze as the lid from the kettle broke free and fell to the ground. She rocked her body back and forth for a moment, attempting to heave herself from the tiny stool she was seated on. When she finally managed to settle into her feet, her body creaked and moaned in disapproval as she shuffled towards the sound.

Her sharply curved back made her appear smaller than a child, her shrouded head almost in parallel to her hips.

Hands searched on the ground for the run-away lid, and clasped onto it tenderly when it came into reach. The old woman lifted it with all the strength she could muster to place it on the mantle, and licked her lips as the smell of the broth finally reached her dampened senses.

“It's ready....” She croaked, pulling an old, dirty looking spoon from beneath one of the many folds of her coverings.

With trembling hands she stepped forward, spoon held outward and into the heat, inching her feet dangerously close to the open flames. Her fingers curled tightly around the handle of her utensil and she dipped, dipped into the broth and drove the spoonful into her mouth with a startling effect.

Spoonful after spoonful made its way to her mouth, spilling around her lips and into her long grey hair that strung in long wiry strands that stuck out everywhere.

In a sudden moment she cried out in a dry heave, falling to her knees.

The fabric of her skirt caught the flame and became engulfed in an instant, burning through her as she screamed in agony. Her crooked arms flailing around in the midst of her torment before falling to her sides. The charred, now naked body slumped as the last flame turned to ember in a puff of smoke.

Then -a break in the silence- it began as a crack, her fingers twitching beneath the layers of burnt flesh. Her head rolled in a circle, magenta color splitting in creases beneath the black of her skin. Her right arm lashed up around her neck in a flash and tore at her still-cindering skin. Beneath the sticky mess of the death, light began to shine through. Pale

skin began to show as she pulled more and more of the cooked meat from her body. She would pull it in strips, then whip it into the still bubbling cauldron, simmering with steam as it hit the remaining broth.

Within short moments, a beauty sat engulfed by the light of the fire, long raven hair drenched in sweat billowed around her as she panted in exasperation.

A knock at the door pulled her blue eyes from the dance of the flames, and she darted from the ground to a dusty closet near the pantry. She blew on them, giggling in delight of the strength of her new lungs. Dust settled on the ground and she flung the doors open, revealing gorgeous colors and dresses embedded with flowers.

She slipped her heavenly frame into the fabric as it draped over her like a crown for her body.

Almost forgetting about her guest, she pranced to the door, and opened it with a sultry smile.

“Can I help you, young man?” She said with breath, letting her sweat glistened chest glimmer in the moonlight.

He could hardly break his gaze from her body as he quickly shot his eyes up to meet hers, shaking off the spell he was coming under.

“I'm lookin' for the witch of the wilds, I desperately need her help 'mum. Might she be 'ere?”

“Ahh yes, my...grandmother passed yesterday eve. I will be taking over for her here. Please boy, come in. You must be tired and famished. I just finished up with some stew, come in and stay awhile.” She smirked and beckoned him inside with a finger, shutting and locking the door behind him.

CHAPTER 8: OCHRE AND ORE

The blood moon brings about a night of celebration, devotion, and sacrifice. A metallic smell fills the air as I watch my sisters slip small blades made of solid iron into the sides of their breasts and spill their offerings onto their bare skin and into the earth.

I do the same, barely feeling any pain, but still fall to my knees, swaying from side to side as I hit the warm earth. There are several bowls of ochre in different hues, lit lightly by the licking light of the pyre burning in the middle of the forest clearing.

On the fire burned a homunculus form of the goddess, her pigmented clay body could deceive any onlooker as a human sacrifice, one of the sisters perhaps, but tonight all eight of us shed for the sacrifice, for the mother.

I could hear drumming, but could no longer see anything but shifting shadows.

The inhalant I had breathed in just minutes ago was taking its full hold on my senses.

My body writhed to the sound, bucking to the pounding of hands on
taught dry skin, rubbing my own blood over my flesh while mixing in
handfuls of earth and pine needles.

I smelled of birth, I smelled of the sacred iron.

The moon bleeds for me as I do for her.

My sisters and I get up from the ground and begin to dance, our
naked bodies lit by only fire and the light of the mother moon.

We circle the funeral pyre as we call out for our goddess to be reborn,
dousing her light in the ochre we gathered, making the flames fly higher,
pleasing her warm light.

The pounding became overwhelming as I lost all sense of time and
existence, my body no longer my own, becoming one with all that was
and will be.

CHAPTER 9: THE SCENT OF THE SEASON

The coarseness of his voice resonated till the buttons of my blouse could no longer hold fast. Within moments, or decades I fell into him, like potters hands into slip. He cut me with his teeth bared, glistening white. I was merely taught leather, a canvas, to his artistic touch.

A willing sacrifice.

A lamb to the slaughter.

CHAPTER 10: A GATE AND A GAZE

To be gallant, fierce without inhibitions, and a woman of true tenacity. This is what I desire within the depths of my being. To live in moments, and experience each day as though it truly were my last.

I want to remove my armor and place it on the ground to rust.

Can you tell me why it's easier to take on the road alone, dragging a shield into each confrontation with lethargic legs? Fearless nature and invincibility have always seemed tangible when I stare into danger, but when it comes to matters of the heart I crawl feebly into it with no knowledge of where to place my feet.

Why romanticize the dashing death if the thought of his hold both baffles and betrothes? I want to live, so that my death is that of a sigh, a welcomed relief and refuge.

If life was held with regal regard, as the warriors of old once portrayed, would death still be this damned second son? I believe not, the contrary

even. I see an embrace and a congratulatory pat on the back. How I made it to the finish line with lore to leave, legend to feed to the linguists.

There is no shrouded bone, or even a toll at the River Styx. No, not for those that willingly wild the woes from their lives, live as our enlightened consciousness allows.

I welcome the shroud of the unknown, send it sweet nothings in the mundane moments of the day. How I love thee, unexplored terrain, the final frontier awaiting my feverish feet.

