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Samson

I wish that you could see past the black shadows. In the crevices of the unknown are the seeds of the future. He doesn't believe me when I say, "You are the backbone to any given circumstance." He chooses to believe in only coincidence. That nothing but fate keeps this life force animate. "But how do you worry?" I asked him one morning. "Always," he replied. And I sat back into my seat of righteousness while he peered across the skyline in search of one answer. "My body is uneasy in these streets," he often whispered to me as we walked, slowing his pace to just behind mine. "I've had too many encounters with That Which Could Not Be Predicted." He stopped, grasped his chest and heaved. "The worries of tomorrow, I cannot know them all." Then he stood, slowly, and kept walking. Making a joke about how often I stare with my big worried eyes.

I never felt his fear. We come from two different ways of life. His—always laid out for him. His parents taught predictability, resourcefulness, lifelong sustenance and polarity. From mine I knew grace, vision. My mother raised me alone, with all the wisdom a mother could offer. Her riches were in wisdom, which she often shared without prompt. "Know yourself, and you will never be lost in the world." That was her favorite. "Make peace with the unknown and God will always reside within you." That was mine. I kept hoping that one day my mother would learn the consequences of her freedom meant we were often left fending for ourselves. Alone, these tiny spheres of light over which we held no control, glowing and shrinking and waiting to be stamped out.

My lover was no different. A sphere of light within his own chest, of which he had little knowledge, only fear. His intuition loud but uneventful, his heart tortured by the catastrophe of What If. I often sang to him in the morning, to remind him of the inherent beauty of each day. Danced with him after supper, and prayed endless prayers over bedtimes, through the night. Our house sat on the edge of a mountain, overlooking a desert valley where the sun set and illuminated all that god had supposed to place here. Us. We'd have magnificent feasts with friends and loved ones, where he always ensured no food was wasted and there was always money left over in the bank. He rests in a body of total control, a masquerade for the reverberating fear of sudden failure. A calm and delighted whip to the thought of misbehavior. He remained in the realm of the certain, and only deigned to leave when a fool he would be perceived either way. "Questions," I asked him, "What questions?" And then he ran away. My lover left a note on the door that said, "I am not here, I don't know where I've been, but I intend on coming back. No—I intend on arriving."

I then got a taste of how worrisome a certain life can be, caught in between paranoia and pain. I wished for him to be back. I sank with the stars, prayed over breakfast, I always made sure there was money left over in the bank. Three months later he returned—haggard, jaded, and out of touch with the world. “I never found him,” he said. And burst into a cry that lasted for quite some time. His life was more painful now than it had ever been. I carried his light, and he slept where no one could see him. I can tell the broken spirit of a man, and this was not present here. This was a man who so desperately wanted to be whole, and forcing his body into narratives unfit for his own understanding. And then it subsided, slowly but surely the pain subsided. He rose with me, we ate together. He prayed unconquerable prayers. His demeanor changed. Each night he led me to our room where we made love quietly, for he was discovering his own self in the makings of mine.

I was a strong woman throughout all of this. I found no reason to weaken my knees at the height of his spiritual career. I dove into my own work, looking for ways to strengthen my spirit, in order to rise to the occasion. I myself confronted my fear of loss. I had no way of knowing if he would come back to me. I studied the law, construction, read books on grief, and collected my taxes. On a hot August night, he looked into my waning eyes. I am not sure what passed between us as we stood on opposite sides of the room facing our chosen destiny. He had given everything to me, and I shared every piece of my love with him. And he walked to me with the openness of a man who could not be broken again. We met in the center. I collapsed into him with pleading tears, cries for anger, and a disheartening vow to never ascend. I broke my sound with inhalations of his body, his smell, the distance of his grasp. I felt quite like my mother did, never fending for herself, only free.

We shared something brilliant that night, in every way. In the morning he left me with a son and passed on. I recall his stories now whenever I am teaching to large audiences. I keep him with me every place I go. He sings with me in the mornings now, straightens my back whenever I am slouching. I laugh when I meet him in my prayers. Our child often asks me why I weep with the stars. And I teach him what his father knew so well. To live is to die, my love. To live is to die.