

I once walked. I now lie sleeping on well-trodden ground until it is no longer just sleeping. My body sinks millimeter by millimeter into a welcoming bed of mud. I embrace the moss as it creeps into the crevices of my body. I greet the grass with unyielding acceptance as it begins to sow and grow. I will not panic as my blood clots into stagnation, and my breath turns vile and sour. Birds will peck at my pores, bugs will nestle into my eye sockets, and I will welcome them all. I will welcome the decay, and let myself rot away because it is a peaceful thing to return to where you once belonged, and where you will soon belong again. It is a good feeling, to feel like you can become a part of something so much bigger than yourself. It is an even better feeling to know you were always a part of it. I have always belonged to the Earth and it has always belonged to me. And although I will decay, parts of me will always remain.

In the depths of the garden grows my soul.

My tears are glimmering snail trails climbing gradually up the bark of ancient oaks. They flow in gentle fatigue. They are patient and waiting, hiding within me like prodded antennae, fearful and shaking. They are as meek as dew resting on rosebuds. They lie in a smooth bed, with pillows of petals and stems to support their delicacy.

My hands push the turbulent wind that tangles through the leaves. It caresses blades of fresh, jutting grass with kind, uncalled-for palms, a soft fleeting kiss, do they feel it? My hands form a bowl, collect water from the stream, and pour it upon the plants. The plants lap it up gratefully. They grow, bloom, and intertwine, becoming my giant flourishing mess of earthy hues.



My heart is the throbbing hiss of the waterfall. Spitting and surging in a snake-like slither, winching through the garden. It ebbs and flows over pebbles and stones with stubborn determination. It refuses to stop. My heart is the flower, rare and indescribable, growing in the crack of a crumbling wall. It grows, even though it shrivels weakly in the sun and wilts with the rain, it refuses to stop.

However, at some point, I gave up on caring for my garden. I grew sloth and ignorant. I thought that if it had managed to survive so long without me then it could easily go back to the way it was before. I was wrong. For too long it went without my maternal tendering. Not only did I cease to look after it but I also began to hurt it. I slashed at the ancient oaks and built huge metallic dams to hinder the flow of the river. My garden was torn to pieces and somehow I didn't expect consequences.

But soon I found that my tears were no longer snail-trails, and my hands didn't push the wind. My body was no longer a haven for bugs and birds and lonesome Bacteria.

My body had ceased to decay, and now it was on fire.

Instead of vines entwined around my body, I felt wire and bars. I had left my Garden of Eden and was now imprisoned in Dante's unspoken tenth layer. I waited for the mercy of the Earth, but that mercy didn't come. So instead of returning to where I belonged, I found myself in an endless cremation. Trapped in an eternal cycle of prickly heat, my body would never be free, my soul was not growing in the depths of the garden, it was shrinking and withering, turning into soot and ash, but it refuses to die.

I begged the Earth for a sip of water, "Just a ~~drop~~ drop, to heal the wounded soul of an old friend."



But what reached my parched, charred lips was something ashy and molten. The Earth could not take me now.

I would give anything for things to go back to the way they once were. Oh, how I dream of once again following numbly to the Earth's siren call. But I have made far too many mistakes and far too little amends for my actions to ever be reversible.

Through the boiling and blistering, I glanced upwards longingly at the Sanctuary I once took for granted. I yearned for the comfort of the garden, yet its gates remained closed to me.

The garden lies empty. All is gone. Dead. Withered. Aged. All evidence of life has vanished, except one thing. All that is left is a silhouette, smouldering, and black. A scalding scar against the earth. It is the charred remains of where my body once lay decaying. An eternal reminder of what could have belonged to me, and what I could have belonged to.