



She Dreams in Color

by t.g. rafter

The last feeble flickering golden dregs of sunlight sank beneath the darkening horizon. The cool twilight gardens smelled of lilacs and lost time as Kahlan flitted barefoot among the trees, over the soft carpets of mosses and grass toward the river.

It was her peaceful haven, there by the dark, sluggish waters, cloaked in purple shadows and wistful, distant memories. It was where she and her brother had played together during their childhood, and later where they would come to talk or just to be alone together. Why did he have to die, she whispered to herself. Why couldn't it have been me?

In the blue evening silence, she hurried beneath the shadowy boughs, a wraith of mystical beauty in her nightgown, its folds of satin snow cascading from her shoulders.

How could I? she asked the night. How can I fall in love when my brother never will? Why can't I help myself? And then what of my brother? she cried brokenly. He deserves a sister who will always be there for him. I can't love anyone else—can't be bound by other commitments. That love will only take me away from him. God, let me die now! Why do you keep us apart like this?

The only response was a gentle breeze upon her face, brushing aside her tears and tendrils of fallen hair. She wiped her hands across her face and ran on, felling the hot wetness of tears fall down her cheeks.

Now even the fiery gold of sunset had faded from the sky, leaving only shades of violet and indigo and aquamarine. A second star joined the first in the heavens, close but equal points of radiance. Like twins, she thought. Like my brother and I, born together. Born together and he died alone. How can I ever forgive myself?

At last she was running along the mossy banks of the river where the ground sloped down to the water's edge. When she could bare it no more she leaned against a tree, pressing her cheek against it and caressing it in an ecstasy of despair.

The empty feel of the cool bark beneath her fingers awakened the old memories within her. They filled her soul with such a pang of aloneness that she clutched her side and fell against the tree, weeping bitterly. She must have sat there, crying her heart out against the cold coarse wood for more than an hour, for when she looked up, taking in deep, shuddering breaths, the twilight was almost gone, fading fast into the encroaching void of night.

Her pale hands slid into the folds of her nightgown, which still shone clearly in the gathering gloom. When her fingers brushed against the cold, metallic object hiding beneath the fold of cloth, they encircled it and brought it forth into the non-existent light that heralds the end of twilight. The sharpness of the knife's blade drew droplets of blood from her hands. She watched with detached interest as they fell to the ground, seeping into the dark earth.

Crawling forward, she knelt beside the dark, quietly whispering water of the river. Parting the front of her gown, she revealed the soft curves of her breasts to the chill night air. She listened as the currents sang to her in melancholy voices, beckoned her down towards hidden depths. It was more of a brook really. Why had she always thought of it as a river?

She cast her consciousness back over the timeless sea of memories within her, over times with her brother, when she had been happy. She remembered clinging to him, crying over a pain which seemed trivial to her now, and how he held her and made her feel okay. How they used to stay up late into the evenings, discussing matters both deep and whimsical. She remembered how he died...

I love you my brother. I love you.

With a shuddering sigh, she was decided. She held the knife in both hands before her, a shapeless blur in her tear filled vision, and with a jerk, plunged it deep into her breast. The pain was biting, searing. Warm blood poured out over her hands.

She swayed on her knees, tears streaked her cheeks, blood ran down over the contours of her breasts. She fell forward into the stream, choking on her tears or her blood, she couldn't tell. The pain was now a dull ache, her lifeblood steadily flowed away from her.

Consciousness was leaving her— darkness claiming her vision. She couldn't even feel the pain anymore. There was only a dull impression of her life flowing out from her, mingling with the dark water in which she now lay, sweeping her into the void of darkness which surrounded her on all sides, holding her safe, warm, still.

As the full moon rose, silvering the dew upon the grass, shedding fragments of broken light upon the rippling surface of the brook, her last drops of blood seeped into the crystal waters, to be carried away forever.

Perhaps she awoke from this sleep of death into the arms of her brother, protectively holding her close, comforting her through the long darkness of the night. And perhaps, in time, their souls were allowed to return from whence ever they had flown, to dwell beside the river where they always truly belonged, together.

