Thorns and Carnation

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LOVE WILL TEAR US APART AGAIN

On a random Tuesday evening,
When the days settle in,
When I have accepted (the loss),
When the routine hits hard and had to carry on with work.

What is it now? A taste of desperation, the yearning and the pain, Cheesecakes, shawarma and the smile you would feign.

Love, love has tore us apart again.

Maybe I was too young to hold love tight, Sometimes a man gets lost in his own mind, Caught in the whirl of endless what's ifs and doubts, Overthinking every word, until love burned out.

But we are our separate ways now, I don't wish you the best, Because I still wait for that day in vain, When love can tear us apart again.

WORST MEMORY

The worst mistake is not choosing a wrong career, Not the test that you didn't prepare for and failed, Not the girl you didn't ask out, Not the cracks in plans, nor the slips of grace, Not even the shame that time can't erase.

It's the quiet click, I personally fear, The vanishing trace of all you held dear.

"Delete files", yes why not, put it in the trash, And now 3 years of your WhatsApp history, gone in a flash,

For now there's no pain to ponder over, It's all a clean sheet,
Texts all sober (no drunk texts, get it?)

No bittersweet sting of a wound once raw, No reliving the memories with the girl you saw, Just a blank, empty space where memory withdraws.

For with every mistake, you learn and you heal, But delete the memories, no solace you can find, A ghost of a story, erased from your mind.

Most Dangerous

The plunder of hard work isn't the most dangerous

The batons of the police aren't the most dangerous

The fist of greed isn't the most dangerous

To be caught unaware and

be shackled by fearful silence, though terrible

Still, it isn't the most dangerous

To be silenced amidst deceit's uproar

To read by a firefly's light, though painful

To just clench fists and wait out time—though it's painful

Yet this isn't the most dangerous.

The most dangerous is to be filled with dead calm

To be drained of all yearning

To leave home for work

And return from work to home

The most dangerous is that hour (clock)

Which ticks on your wrist

Yet remains frozen in your gaze

The most dangerous is that eye

Which is frozen like ice

Whose vision forgets to embrace the world with love

Which grows fogged by the vapors of darkness rising from things

Which, drinking the daily routine

Is lost in its directionless repetition.

The most dangerous is that moon

Which, after every murder

Rises over deserted courtyards

But does not prick your eyes like chili

The most dangerous is that song

Which, trying to reach your ears

Chants only dirges

Which knocks like a thug

On the doors of terrified people

The most dangerous is that night

Which descends on the skies of a living soul

Where only owls screech and jackals howl

Shrouds the doors and windows in eternal darkness

The most dangerous is that in which the sun of one's soul sets

And a fragment of its dead light

Pierces into the east of your being.

- dedicated to great freedom fighters of gaza

BEST MANGO OF THE SUMMER

Is this really the best I have? Am I the only one oblivious to the fact that this is the best I'll ever have?

How would I even know if this really was the best I have? Would it taste sweeter than the others or would the birds chirp more, Would the trees seem greener, or would it finally not be a bore, Would the roads seem prettier, or would the waves sing by the shore?

Is this really the best I have?

What if this really is the best I have? I can't eat it then, can I?

Should I store it forever and appreciate its view? Am I good enough for the best, for its charm that it drew? Maybe I don't deserve the sweetest mango, only a few do.

As I sat in the crotch of a withering mango tree, Fruits hung ripe, each one a dream to be. Unable to choose the sweetest, the prettiest, the best, the truest view, As they wrinkled and fell onto my shoe. And in the end, the fear of losing you Has finally ended by losing you.

Chapter 5

Last Mango of the Summer

It had been so long since you saw a mango tree. The last time was before the invasion started. It was like an oasis in a desert—golden, ripe, just hanging there in the garden, waiting for someone to pick it. Your fingers itched to pluck it, to taste the sweetness of something that had survived despite everything around you. The rest of the fruit had fallen months ago, but this one seemed a little different.

You stepped forward, the dust of Gaza rising with every step. But just as your hand reached up, you froze. From the corner of your eye, you saw a few resistance members across the street, their jeeps rolling in, their presence a quiet reminder that danger was always near. They came often, patrolling, checking, making sure no Israeli snipers were lurking in the shadows. It was the kind of life you lived now—always watching, always unsure.

You hesitated for a moment. It had been four hours since you left home. Amma must be waiting, you thought. But how could you leave the sight of something so beautiful? You wanted to taste it, maybe, to feel like a kid again, to remember the days before the war, when things weren't always slipping through your fingers.

You reached up and plucked the mango from the tree, the skin firm and slightly bitter beneath your fingertips.

It wasn't ripe, in fact, it was as green as they come. It was almost as if the visions you had of a golden mango arose from the profound void of an empty, desiring stomach.

The taste was sharp, sour—nothing like the sweetness you had imagined. But even then, there was something in the flavor that grounded you—something that connected you to this place, this land that was being slowly destroyed. The taste of survival, maybe.

You stood there for a moment, chewing the mango, the streets around you eerily quiet, except for the faint hum of a drone hovering somewhere above. But then, it came—the siren. The sound pierced the silence, shrill and panicked, signaling the incoming bombs. You froze. Your heart skipped a beat, and you looked around, but there was nowhere to run. The walls were closing in, and you were standing in the open.

Your feet didn't move. You couldn't leave this moment, the only moment you had for yourself.

You took another bite. The ground beneath you trembled, a vibration that felt like the earth itself was shaking in fear. The sirens wailed louder now, the warning growing urgent, but you didn't have time to find cover. The sound of an approaching jet pierced the air, and then the explosion came—louder than anything you had ever heard.

You never got to go back to your family. You never got to show your mother or your brothers the last mango, the one that wasn't ripe, the one that held the last taste of a summer you would never see again.