

Maria Nelson

“Echoes of Alexandria”

I would have found you.

Too-old and not-so-young and flame-flickers-nearer person. A mistake of the refractions of light. Superconductor. Misplaced moralities, realities, neutralities.

Would you have heard me?

Too-quiet and not-so-loud and purple-blue-any-color fingernails, person glowing in afternoon light. Reality that flickers with uncertainty and things that were are near and can never be reached.

Walking away is so easy to do, easier still to walk away from you, to tell me and myself 'I never really cared' when caring is all that I hold, when the signs I used to read in the sky can only tell me how wrong I was and have always been, how waterfalls cannot be made of fingers, how your eyes can never have brimmed with things nearer to life than tears.

You won't cross bridges without looking twice, without thinking of Billy Goat Gruff, without looking for demons under the bridges-you-really-will-never-cross. Umbrellas may keep the water off like raven's wings, but you'll never know the warmth that comes from feeling something, anything--as long as there's no focus, or determination, or glow in your eyes (glows like your not-good-for-the-environment light-bulbs) like mercury that spilled in chemistry--silver roiling on the floor (sweetness that may never be broken). Your world is the same, and it's always the one of falsehoods and 'I'm all right's and 'it's okay's and perfect faces being perfect, burning memories to the ground, polishing silver in the dead and the heat of the night, pretending that there are prophecies written on the mountains outside your front door.

It's a total lie that I'm telling myself, that the world is, was, real and that I ever knew that colors danced in the northern sky, that colors danced in the crowded gym of drunks and adolescents (was there a difference?), that colors

danced on the beach on the day the sun drowned. Who saved the sun? Nobody. So who was there to save you? Who indeed. The sun had already died, and we could not see to find you. Perhaps that's the end then? That you seclude yourself in yourself, that is to say the yourself that you will never show.

You've never seen your own beauty, painted in paints of every color imaginable, paints that bleed out in the water, swirl against silver then drown in the pale specter of sun caught in your eyes. You know themes of madness painted in hues unimaginable and you've never seen my eyes to touch the themes I hold. You're a Chinese food, corset-wearing-rocker-quetzal-buddha girl lost in the smokes of divinities, incenses and distillations of never-really-happened dreams.

Keep loving your love that has never loved you, in the way that friends could love you more, in the way that a simple flower may conceal grandeurs greater than known in Xanadu, that place you and us and we and they and everyone may never see, and will never see. Starbursts of color flashed before your eyes, you saw your soul given up to eternity hundreds upon hundreds of times but you never saw the realities of those visions, and with every foretelling you etched that writing deeper, gave of yourself further, fell into madness faster.

And faster faster faster faster faster.

Now there is nothing left. Do I have to be with you to know you in the ways I never really knew you, or can I see the end of your final memoirs in the light behind your eyes, the lack thereof and the blue thereof. Short white dresses, chunky orange shoes and camouflage jackets that you cast away as you cast away yourself in the ways that you are not seen and cannot be seen, and the veils that swirled to the floor when you danced. Nothing left. Because the soul dies a slow death, and you have to only stoke the fire, higher and higher, until it is so great that the very ghost of the sun has been extinguished and you no longer see into the eyes of those who once cared, cared beyond imagining and beyond hope, cared for and about you until they were left after the storm, trampled into the pavement like petunias secluded in their terracotta pots.

Ensnared in gold, you're a nightingale of the river, ragged and tousled with fading gold plumage, bleached nearly white by harsh and flashing lights.

I would have found you.

I would have walked through the snow you threw to blind the heavens eyes, but I could see through the shield of yourself, and now there are left only adjectives to describe you: just a little too mad for a world of sanity, just so lonely beyond imagining, beyond feeling, beyond hope, and hopeful, hopeful beyond the abilities of even the children whose huge eyes pierce through paper to enter the hearts of those who never knew a thing at all of starvation or deprivation or need.

I cannot be what you need. I fear nobody can. I fear the wolves at the door who howl for your soul and your health and your heart, the wolves you go with and dance with and burn with and twirl with. So twirl, twirl through whatever you ever knew. Twirl past those who once knew you.

I know you are losing control. I know you are losing me, and you never even held me with your soaked, pale fingers. I know I am losing you and I never really had you, I never really knew your beliefs.

So now what are we left with? The ones who would know you and care for you; the ones you push and rail against and tear at with your sharpened tongue.

We are left with an echo in the corners of our minds that hopes and dreams will never fill; an echo in those parts of our minds once reserved for ideas and imaginings of what you had the potential to be. And that's an echo of a name you never became, and a dream that you never believed. Destruction is the echo that rebounds within our minds; fires, like the ones that ravaged your namesake city, that destroyed that knowledge of all the knowledge carefully destroyed before by the ramblings in the dark, by the slots in your sunglasses, by the kites you speak of when you are lost to us and you speak of nothing else.

You're lost,

you and your echoes of Alexandria.