

“Liar’s Springtime”

The flowers had just begun to push themselves up from beneath the softening soil the first time I asked my father where she was. Poppies splashed with crimson sun melted the snow around them, and sugar white daisies waiting to be plucked and woven into crowns sprouted in their shadows. With all the sweetness carried on the spring breeze, it was never enough to mask the bitter edge that clung to his every word.

“She drank a potion that turned her mind into a cage and drove her mad.”

I took this answer, along with all the flowers I picked that spring, and buried it between the pages of heavy books. I collected every explanation he gave me, no matter how wild, how fairy tale they became:

“She was carried off by an iron bird that flew into the sky and never came down.”

“She went in search of happiness and got very lost.”

“She was captured by a paper man in a kingdom far away.”

I never became tired of hearing his answers, even when I grew to understand they sang no song of truth. My father is a poet, a storyteller, and I have never expected him to give me anything more than the seedling words planted in his unconscious. My existence was created entirely out of the tales my father told me. As far as I knew, my life was stolen from library shelves, mixed with the magic of my father’s mind, and born by the ink on his typewriter keys. I was more a character than a daughter, more thought than child, but I never minded existing in his book. Someday, I know, he will grow tired of writing for me. Tired of crafting story after story for a not-so-little girl who can’t stop asking questions. Someday, I know, the cogs in his head will

become rusted and cobwebbed, and tiny slivers of veracity will begin to slip through the growing cracks in his mind.

Will it be,

“She loved the bottle more than she ever loved me?”

Maybe,

“She met a man with a different tongue who spoke words sweeter than I ever could?”

Or,

“She feeds the poppies splashed with crimson, and the sugar white daisies waiting to be plucked and woven into crowns.”