

## Robin's Eggs

The world cracked and fell apart. Audrey Rose had been sitting on a tree branch holding hands with the man she decided to love. Their fingers were entwined, two worlds meeting through flesh. She knew his body, the hairs on his chest, the comfort of his chest. Yet something felt uneasy. Without warning, the landscape was gone. They held tight to one another until their fingers slowly slipped apart as they spiraled out of control into a void.

Audrey Rose landed alone. The world a moment ago covered in snow was now a wasteland of mud, reds and browns sucking at her toes. Even as she stood, blades of grass, bright as a newborn life twisted around her feet, withering and dying before life was fulfilled. A gnarled old tree, bark twisted and rough, reached out to her. Standing under time itself, Audrey Rose felt a quiet wisdom within. She embraced the tree. Branches that had before been barren blossomed with tiny buds. If they would bloom, Audrey Rose wouldn't see. The corky bark, dead tissue enveloping the trunk of the tree started to flake and shape into words. You cannot find love. Love finds you.

Audrey Rose thought about the stranger, the black baseball hat, the eyes, the lips that had never belonged to her; things that had been shared with her only a moment before they would be shared with others. The branches began to crash down from the tree. As clouds gathered, crossing the sun, Audrey Rose was left in a world that was neither here nor there. As blood flowed through her, her mind raced between thoughts faster than she could digest. Her heart was strangely silent. The blood began to flow from her body, tiny droplets oozed out her pores, soaked into the earth. As she looked up, the clouds opened and blood rained from the sky. Opening her mouth, Audrey Rose filled her body again.

Moving through the rain, Audrey Rose stumbled, looked down. A brick, red and bright had tumbled her. Behind, she turned and the man stood there. As they looked to each other, they stood alone. The bricks multiplied, like rabbits, forming a wall between them. Audrey Rose tried to tear it down, but the bricks weathered, had been there for years, could not be torn down. Audrey Rose climbed the wall, held out her hand to the stranger, but he did not reach back. He stood with a satisfied smile on his face. His fists were clenched. They did not feel the tears that ran down both their faces.

Behind him, barely discernable, a shadow stood, a female form, too close to him. The shadow was nearly inside him, he inside her. Together they lived by the highs and lows, the peaks and valleys of the letter of his first name: M. On the ground, a million yellow roses sprouted, petals beginning to unfurl. Before they could fully bloom, they died. Golden velvet littered the ground, withered and disappeared. Together, man and shadow disappeared into one.

Jumping off the wall, away from him, Audrey Rose landed in the mud. The blood had dried from the sky, dried on her skin. She lay down, used her hands to slather mud over face, fingers, toes, body, until she was covered with the mud. The clouds parted and the mud began to harden against her body as she ran away. Caked mud began to chip, flake off, fall of until her flesh showed again, bit by bit, naked and pure. She lay down to rest.

When she awoke, flowers covered the earth. Glacier lilies with eyes as bright as the sun padded the darkness below. A robin's nest was twisted into her hair, the mother no where to be found. As Audrey Rose tried to untangle it, the baby blue eggs shifted and fell. Four toes were covered in yolk and broken shell, all that was left of shattered lives. The sun shone down on her.

-Do not attempt to recreate the events of Audrey Rose's life. They will result in internal and/or external death or at the very least a yeast infection.