

Olivia

## **Midnight Sun**

### **Suddenly**

When we first met,  
I would have bet  
                  together we'd never be right.

But then on that kiss,  
I knew I could miss  
                  the taste that your lips left on mine.

### **Him**

His name echoes around my skull;  
The rounded letters roll gently, teasing me  
The harsh ones nearly knock me out.

Their sound haunts me like  
A perfect ghost -  
Can't sleep, can't eat, can't move without them  
Whispering  
Distracting  
Calming

Claiming.

### **Labyrinth**

Eyes across the room and confusing smiles,  
I couldn't want the heavens more than I want you.  
As I stare into the emptiness around,  
Something intertwines your path and mine.

But you're not sure if it's me you adore.  
And you worry I will not be worth it,  
When we lose ourselves in one other -  
Our heads clouded with cheap wine and kisses.

### **Wings**

Every night we were drawn;  
                  the moon innocent,  
His eyes pulling me.

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### **'Til the end**

Night time walk by the river,  
Think I need some more liquor,  
Hold my hand when we're close to the edge.  
Exam dates and deadlines,  
Get them out of my mind,  
Cold. Move me closer to you.

Cigarettes and movies,  
Awkwardness and boobies,  
Drunk, we've got to make this last the night.  
Living for the weekends,  
Begging for the next trend,  
Sunk. When's that next assignment due?

Cold feet but hot cheeks,  
Voice breaks when you speak,  
Tucked into bed in my arms.  
Photo frames and poetry,  
Hearts pound uncontrollably,  
Fucked. In this 'til the end.

### **Us**

Cheeseburger kisses filled with late night laughs  
And goodbyes "til tomorrow" in the rain  
Giggles in your armpit,  
Tickles through my ribcage,  
I promise not to leave until I'm sane.

Scrapbook dating back to the first 'I love you'  
When I drew a stupid heart next to your name  
Cuddles into play fights,  
Amaretto and happy sighs,  
Alone could never be the same.

Bubble baths at 3AM, parents asleep  
The radio quiet, I steal another kiss  
Tired eyes and lazy love,  
Perhaps this is perfection,  
I dare you to want for more than this.

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### **Summer**

There's sun screen on my back and  
mud between my toes,  
The wind in my hair and  
ice-cream on my nose,

We shelter in the beach hut,  
then race across the sand,  
Splashing in the creek; our little chunk  
of wonderland.

There's a clear blue sky above,  
goose-bumps on my skin,  
I know it's not the weather,  
it's the way you pull me  
in

Your eyes are even greener than the seaweed on the shore,  
I look at them  
and realise  
we never could get bored.

Perfectly tanned tummies  
A pair of wandering hands,  
It seems I couldn't be happier  
and I'll never understand

And I sense that you too feel it, as we stare  
into the blue.

### **Touch**

Pleasure illuminates the two.  
Fluttering under hypnosis  
The fires don't burn her.

### **The Ocean**

Love slumbers  
Your hands torment my heart –  
Voices sweet,  
Doors locked.

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### **Saturday**

Ready to go out and we start to get undressed,  
When he knows it's naughty it always feels the best.  
Clean underwear on a dirty floor,  
His breath could move the moon.

Our thoughts get lost and time stands still,  
Where we are just doesn't matter;  
Light bulbs flicker in a quiet room -  
Hold tight or I won't come back.

### **Mouth**

Later now, yet it still feels early,  
Out for hours when minds are lost.  
Voices raised, couples argue,  
Strangers forget to hesitate -  
Before their lips lock.

Their teeth clash, as do our words,  
And rage deepens as glasses empty.  
Somehow the tongue behind these quips,  
Appears to still belong to him -

The mouth that spoke so tenderly.

*Word count: 613*

## **Illuminating**

He taught me how to live with beautiful expectation. At first it was easy; with a seemingly everlasting summer stretched out before us, an infinite blank sheet laid to the horizon, waiting to be coloured with memories.

But this was before the storm came – before our people began being stolen into the depths of Coracinus. Up to this point I have believed Lute was right, that one day we will take back our land and come together once more, but now it seems that I have been taken too far into the darkness. I will never again feel his fiery lips pressed against mine or the warmth of his arm against my back.

The horrors are getting worse now, I'm not sure how much longer it will be before they take me. It is starting to become clear to me that love alone cannot always keep us in the light, despite what Mother used to say. I'm starting to believe that our previous generations were deluded, although they never experienced terrors anything like these.

When Luta and I first met in the lush gardens of Viridis the fire within him was small, yet raged with insanity, like a lantern in a soft breeze. Flickering, wild and begging to be kept alive, his passions danced for my reaction. I could have turned his flame to a tiny wisp of grey with nothing more than a simple exhale, but I wanted to see how hard he could fight.

At first he was not dangerous, but only the tiniest spark is needed to begin an inferno. I should have blown out the flame whilst it was still small enough to control, but the electricity of his touch overcame my senses. It felt strange to begin with, our roaring flames intertwining for the first time in the most chaotic state in all of Colorazione, losing control as soon as the flame appeared. Perhaps the fairytales are true – 'love should only be allowed to blossom in states of tranquillity,' – perhaps we were damned from the moment we set eyes on each other.

Soon I realised that my light burned almost brighter than his. His flame had been teasing me for months and suddenly it had gotten close enough. An intense insanity was ignited within me.

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The house is silent but for the muffled sounds of his breathing against the pillow. Lazily I roll into his knowing arms and slide my fingers between his, wanting to stay in this strange state of altered consciousness for eternity. We would never have to leave our perfect bubble. The bubble that exists every time our eyes meet or hands brush, the illusion of perfection as we forget anything else exists but us. It is a place where our imaginations and subconscious become entwined. It is place that is ours to create and to conquer - a place that will be ours forever.

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Rubbing my nose against his broad shoulder I begin to feel his heartbeat pulsate through his body and resonate with mine. Surrounded by the smoky embers of the night before, our chests and stomachs rise and fall at an identical pace; we are one. My eyelashes flicker against his warm skin, as our slumberous eyes ease open and our lips meet, creating a gentle glow of heat.

“Morning,” he mumbles, still kissing me, the flames gently licking our soft touch.

As he draws away I say nothing, but stare wondrously for what must be the millionth time into the beautiful green depths of his iris, effortlessly exploring his deepest secrets as they swirl into delicate turquoise wisps. His pupils growing, staring intensely back at me, a quiet smile appears across my mouth - Lips together, eyes wide.

I roll over slowly, a tired happiness filling me, his breath hot against my naked back. I giggle softly as he wraps his arms around my waist, pulling me close and biting down gently on my shoulder as I knew he would. The darkness seems distant as we bathe in light.

“I love you.” He whispers before drifting back into a doze.

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Something similar would occur every morning that fiery summer. Sometimes I would awaken first, sometimes he – it never mattered. We were inseparable.

Thinking about that summer used to inspire me to attempt to get home, to escape, but now the darkness is too powerful and I fear that reliving these memories will take me to the end sooner, as I am noticing that those of us that show signs of hope are chosen. Especially the young, as we are thought to be the most dangerous for the darkness. Why I have not been drained yet confuses me greatly, and gives me the sickening feeling that I am wanted for something far, far worse than humiliation.

Sometimes I dream that I am home in Molocinus, sharing stories with Luta in the attic, listening to the distant sounds of Mum singing along to the radio and Dad clattering pans around the kitchen - and the Ancrocs always know. They monitor our brain activity for colour whilst we sleep and there’s always one waiting outside the metal cell when you awaken, ready to punish you with electricity. It numbs your mind and stops your thoughts making sense for a while, but somehow I always manage to resist remaining in that state of confusion and psychosis for too long.

Gradually the people in the cells around me are being replaced. Each time I wake up, I am surrounded by a crowd of new faces, each wide eyed and hopeful to begin with, peering out from behind the bars – but soon even the children look old.

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Waking up never becomes easier.

Mother and Father were taken by Corantius years ago now. It tore me apart, but Luta filled me with hope. I believed they were alive somehow, or had escaped and were in hiding perhaps, but now the light is fading for all of us. I've seen what the Anrocs do to those that hold onto the colour of our lives in Colorazione - a more disgusting fate than I could ever have imagined before I was thrown into this cylindrical cavern of hatred.

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Suddenly I awaken, filled with an overwhelming sense of excitement and anticipation. The sun shines brightly through the white lace curtains above my bed, the light dancing carelessly across my favourite rug. I take a deep breath and slowly relax, savouring the sweetness of the autumn breeze floating through my window as well as the unmistakable smell of homemade pancakes.

I rub my eyes and notice two shiny balloons tied to the end of my bed frame. The huge numbers glisten in the morning light; a birthday tradition. If a little tacky, I do take a moment to smile softly as I wonder over the efforts Mother must have gone through, to find the helium balloons with the economy in the state that it is, and to sneak into the room late last night without waking me up. Despite the rumours of the darkness coming, I know we must make the most of the time we have left in our home before the resistance helps us to true safety. 'Eighteen' I mumble through my breath with a laugh, kind of wishing they had stopped treating me like a child years ago, but mainly relieved that there is still some sort of regularity in my life – my parents will always do everything they can to keep me safe and happy.

Without warning, a huge bellow followed by a deafening crash brings me out of my contented daze. Angry and destructive male voices echo through the walls and send a shiver from my shoulders to my fingertips. I begin to shout out for my parents but a strange and unknown power prevents me, choking me, and the sound sticks in my throat.

Racing over to the window my chest tightens and my cheeks flare up as I see Mother being grotesquely handled by men dressed in black all over, showing nothing but their eyes, with ugly humps out of each of their backs. She resists admirably, managing to take down two of them with a single swift movement, but in a second she is surrounded and fully restrained. I want with everything within me to turn and run down the stairs, to help fight them, but then she looks directly at me. Half a second of eye contact and a fraction of a head movement later I know what to do - what she wants me to do, and what I need to do.

I stay at the window for another frozen moment, taking what I know will be the final look at my parents for a very long time, as the sun disappears all of a sudden and darkness looms. Father emerges from the house held round the waist by one of them and wielding a burning saucepan which he forces an Ancroc's face into. Still by the window I watch the scene as

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Mother spits mightily over one of the most brutish of the men, but then I hear footsteps. Marching in unity up the stairs, the noise quickens my thought process as it sends panic blazing through my head.

With no time for upset, anger or pain I leave all emotions at the window as I tear myself away from the darkness that spreads through the house. I run out onto the landing faster yet more quietly than I ever thought possible, the uniformity of their paces becoming louder and closer every second. The hatch that leads to the attic is open already – strangely - and so I attempt to jump the incredible height without wasting time with the ladder. I hook my right hand onto the frame and will myself with everything I have to pull the rest of my body up, but I know I don't have the physical strength.

A hand emerges from the dust and pulls me in. The hatch is shut just at the moment that the footsteps come to a halt. Luta puts his hand across my mouth to stop my noiseless shakes becoming an explosive cry and holds my quivering body in his arms. The men begin to confer below us in their booming but undoubtedly stupid voices. I stiffen as I realise that it is too late.

'Where's the girl?' One roars to his comrades. A chorus of confused excuses and apologies respond, before an unintelligible shriek silences them all. A calm, matronly voice vibrates through the building like it is being played on speakers surrounding the house, 'Apologies for my outburst boys, but I do remember clearly stating that the girl is not a priority. We shall return for her when the time is right. All out, let's move it along.' Her false charm makes me feel sick. Luta and I sit in silence for what feels like forever, until we are certain that we are alone. I dare to look at his face for the first time and see that it too is wet with tears.

'What's going on?' I finally whisper, my entire self nothing but a shadow of what it was just a single hour ago. After what seems like an eternity he finally replies, 'There's too much to explain Malva. They're in the Resistance, your parents are in the Resistance.' The words rushed out like molten lava, unstoppable and deadly. Suddenly it hits me. Not everyone knows about the Resistance. We are the Resistance.

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Each cell is jet black from floor to ceiling, and empty but for a luminous spotlight hung in the centre – colourless. It is as if the colour is being gradually drained from us as time passes. Time is somehow irrelevant, however, and the only thing to remind us that it still drags on is the deafening regularity of the screams.

As I dare to peer out from behind the bars of my personalised prison I see faces. The building is a cylindrical tower with twenty or so cells on each level. The levels stretch as far as I can see both upward and downwardly – the chances of escaping are impossible. Even if I were to make it out of this box there would be no where to go, and the Ancrocs would catch

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me in their great unfolding wings before I was anywhere near to hitting the ground, and reaching the sweet haven that might be death.

A disturbingly familiar sound begins in the centre of the arena that is our prison. It is time for the next performance. I used to pretend to be asleep or just force my eyes to keep shut, but now I've learnt it is not worth the punishment - shock treatment.

The chosen victims were removed from their cells just moments ago, but already it seems that the darkness has overcome them. This session is being conducted directly on my level. Sometimes we are lucky and the platforms somewhat block our view of the hideous acts, but not today.

A young man just a little older than me is tied to the platform by each limb, the blood stained ropes straining him to his limits. My heart sinks as the light in each cell flickers off and the torture begins, and his fire is put out forever.

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