

## *First Love (You Are The Epiphany)*

*by Jé Maverick*

Gentle soul - you have sought it, sifted  
and panned for it, dug and rummaged  
as though it were a set  
of mislaid keys - or eyeglasses; as though  
it were a treasured pen  
you'd dare not sign your name without.  
And so it is - gentle, restless soul -  
that you feel empty without it; that you wear  
a sparse coat, sewn from the cold of experience;  
that you are one forced smile from hardness.

You sit beneath memories.  
Often you prune them. Always -  
always, you keep the cuttings.

Gentle creature - it was summer.  
You found the pearls of who you were  
in some bright strangers unexpected smile,  
and with happiness, a happiness  
lighter than the song of birds,  
strung them to the necklace of your youth.  
Bliss flared! The measure of a day declared itself  
with each stray breath you failed to take:  
your skin beneath a first exploring touch;  
the eureka of a stolen kiss; the cushioned  
warmth of first loves perfect womb.  
How you opened! How you poured  
another soul into your own! You unfurled  
a woman, a still pool  
deep with the light of the world, and  
you knew solace.

You sit beneath memories.  
Often you prune them. Always -  
always, the canopy regrows.

Gentle traveller - innocence finds no bearing  
from the stars. Who knows where first love cracked  
and bled like an egg into the earth?

You seek for the ashes of  
a burnt relief in coal cellars; keep vigils  
by untended fires; search for love in hearths with  
fires devils can't possess.  
And so it is - gentle, restless fool - that you cry to  
feel real; that you feel heavy in your flesh;  
that you are drawn like a magnet to the edge of blades.

You lie beneath memories.  
Often you sing them. Always -  
always, the eulogy returns.

Gentle pilgrim - you have covered distance enough  
to know of pearls and casualties; of hidden  
barbs and swifter amputations; of seasons that become  
mass graves filled with rotting days.  
You have loathed sunrise and the snarling night,  
have torn apart the breasts of men to search  
for your own heart in the cavity.  
And so it is - gentle, tired soul - that you have grown weary  
of wandering; that you are tired of the empty search  
and of faintest hopes receding;  
that you ache for songs that ache for never being heard.

You will dig beneath memories.  
You will dig for your secrets.  
Always, you will sing them. Always -  
always, your own first love is *you*.

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