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1000 Paper Cranes

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Do you remember the first time you made me a paper crane? on the front step of our house, from a sheet of week-old newspaper carrying the same smell of ancient libraries that lingered within your mind and drifted about your room, caressing me as I snuck in for just a quick sniff You’d look up from your desk littered with the will of the stars and smile.

You don’t? It’s okay, I know it’s hard, probably frightening too, isn’t it? More frightening than those days when I couldn’t bear to see you lying in bed with tubes like rusted barbed wire shoved down your throat in a prison world that can only bring you pain

But one day, we’re gonna sit together on that dusty front step painted with the bloody red of crushed vanadinite and I’m going to show you all the stories stored within the folds of one thousand paper cranes.

Three paper cranes
one stained flaming garnet, etched with candle burns clawing up the sides with rips torn exactly, so precisely that wings couldn’t leave this godless ground for the girl I was.

one with eyes the color of old pennies and hidden secrets left in back alleyways tail a bit soggy from the tears of troublemakers with hearts of gold pressed under a heavy, foreboding book of unspoken thought for the person I am.

and one folded with sharp edges of ruthless beauty the trembling of laughing violins and manic grins white sheets, embroidered in gold, honey, the first drop of rain on a desert mind for the woman I want to be.
Two paper cranes
   painted in the weeping blue of midsummer’s night sorrow and stolen goodbyes
   layer upon layer, walls of dead onyx ribs suffocating, stiff
   like the feel of new leather armor upon a weary youth who saw too much of the world
for the cruel princes
   who carry around glistening jagged javelins
   made from the colored church glass shards of my mind
   and pick flowers for crying maidens with perfectly fake golden hair
   from the gardens within my watching eyes

Four paper cranes
   made of flimsy motel stationary, grimy from too many hands, one too many nights
   with weakened heads that droop onto my shoulder in weary defeat
   ancient hollowed willow trees standing against a callous winter’s storm
   and tails like needles blunted
   from regretful sorrow, folded without care
   but with the precision of tearful anger
   for friends I hung on to
   too long

One paper crane
   bathed in a sliver of snarling pewter moonlight
   crawling into my bed uninvited and
   drenched in smeared lipstick made
   from the silent waterfalls of my arms
   for the battle scars that refuse to leave
   as I sit waiting, waiting ’til
   iron suns awaken to protect me from
   these thoughts dancing around the sadness in my veins

Five paper cranes
   contorted from early morning clouds drenched in fire
   gathered from mid-July days
   stored in boxes of desire hidden in a shallow grave
   so fragile that I’m afraid to even
   think too long around them
   for the dreams I can’t bring myself to let go
   like strangers I fall in love with
   while passing by on city roads
And nine-hundred-eighty-three paper cranes
for all the desires my voice can’t sing
dying sirens buried between rotting wood and thrashing waters
and all the sins my mind won’t let me think
lonely straw fields where lightning comes to frolic
and all the memories I have yet to make
forgotten libraries filled with books no one has ever read

But I’ll leave one paper crane
that we can make together
for the time I told you goodbye
and you didn’t answer,
I walked out remembering
a figment of your arms
holding me
as a storm wind of rustling wings
carried you away