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Bells for Her

by Melissa Allen

*"I've got your mind I said she said I've your
voice I said you don't need my voice girl
you have your own but you never thought it
was enough to so they went years and years
like sisters..."*

TORI AMOS

He fell in love with her a millennium after I myself had.

This in itself was not overly unusual, as everyone was in love with Delilah. Her touch left behind an intoxicating perfume that addicted mortals to her every whim. Even those of the female persuasion, as myself, were not immune. I still believe that were I a man, I would fling myself at her feet for pure love of her unattainability and absolute kinship with Botticelli's nubile Madonnas. But Titian himself would have set aside his auburn pastels for a chance at the gold Botticelli had barely acknowledged.

Only, I had fallen in love with him a second before her music had asked his shadow to dance.

Which was, in itself, unusual. For I was wary of anything that transcended my sphere of existence and was deeply personal and often subscribed to neurotic philosophies. Hermione, who had to think about smiling

and was infatuated with the Muse and Samson. He did have lovely hair, but that was long ago. I handed her the shears non-sanctimoniously from beneath my betrayed palms when she beckoned for them. Was it only right that the two people I loved the most would kill each other?

I can never say that I was passionately jealous of Delilah. Unless her prowess at the cello counted. Mine was a subtler, perverted knowing that was oblivious in her presence, or to those who had caught the scent of her perfume. She cast aside men like water, through her open fingers. Calluses had formed upon the tips from where they had tried to hold too long and she flung them aside. Being one of the sundry of Delilah's junkies, I welcomed the roof of her occupation, and she was amused with my easy adulation. I often donned my rose tinted glasses for her in my childish exuberance, and forgot to clean the lenses.

It is strange how sentient beings come to mean so very much to oneself. My temporary infatuation had slipped from its sheath a scian and made deep incisions into the fleshy core of my soul. Had I vaguely thought that he could love another, I would have dug the temple posts free and run through the vacant fields recoiling from the emotions that were too new for true comprehension, while I remained so raw from their honest pummeling.

I had never known love, and its cliched innuendoes and nuances frightened me, while its mawkish rotes of poetic sentences had seduced me. And I felt all of Sappho when her love was sluiced by the boatman Phaon. And perhaps there was an internal suicide, a death of the psyche. But the Muse would never allow for death eternally. And it rose up again--battered, and bearing a pasted armory. Fought valiantly if fighting was necessary, and fled unabashed when fleeing was apropos.

Delilah laughed at Samson's consecration of her self, and his gentle way of glowing when he spoke her name. He had never glowed when he spoke my name, only glowered that I did not seem to revere him as the rest of the world. And strangely, it was I who lifted the first handful of dirt over his finally realized head. Delilah tucked the shears underneath the folds of her mourning gown and watched as I moved about him with exaggerated footsteps, the ground coming apart under me and covering his dead eyes from the cold sunlight. The bells of St. James a mockery of our pretended atheism.

Slowly, eventually, I turned from her. Although I would never stop loving her. I found my seclusion in the Carolinas. No one had touched her perfume there and I was unpainted, unknown there also.

I still carry the strands of his hair in my front pocket. And the dark, dry lock curling beneath my fingers is all that remains of his passionate, shadowed personae. Delilah had won, and I went on.

When the bells were for her, then I would finally break away from her clamping grip, and although bruised, release her from the places inside that loved her like he had.

Bells for her.