

SADÉ SARUMI

WILTED



A collection of reflections about flowers,
weeds, and heartbreak.



WILTED

Poems and Artworks by Sadé Sarumi

One love that turned out to be a weed,
burying itself in the foundations of every loveless
decision that came next. Followed by my favourite
flower, a love that bloomed fast, and wilted faster. The
rush of sapphic euphoria that blurred into grief before
I knew it.

Two different kinds of heartbreak.
Two different types of love lost.

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Reflections: Flowers are a lot like relationships

There's a sort of poetry to the fact I stay giving, receiving, and collecting flowers. It's a continual cycle of trying to keep something alive because I love it. A hobby good for now, knowingly not good forever. A mix of wishfulness, privilege, indulgence, and redundancy.

Still, you invest your efforts while the flowers last because bouquets are joyous and pretty to keep. Then you repeat your efforts anew once it all proves futile, as if this time could be any different. Though you've learned how to care better for your flowers now, so this bouquet should last a little longer. And it doesn't, well, the search is exciting when you know what you like.

Except my flowers died again, as they'll always do. For the first time in a while, the logician in me takes over, and I question pleasure's mortality. For the first time in a while, I hesitate—do I want to do this again? To water an eventual death? How similar that is to love and relationships.

Staring at another lifeless vase,
because everything dies in the end.
Once all my efforts are dead,
do I care to start again?
Is this enjoying life,
or just rehearsing loss?

Background

My first real relationship began when I was 17, and ended at 22. It followed the script of most childhood sweethearts: friends first, met the family, became family, then spoke of starting one. You know how it goes when you're young and dumb, just learning to love. Five long years I spent learning all the ways I loved him, half a decade of my formative years, eagerly gifted to him.

I would have given my life for his a thousand times over. He knew that, unfortunately, and let me die a thousand deaths proving it. So, when I asked him why he loved me, all he could figure was, "because of how much I know you love me." Except I could have filled libraries with stories that became folklore, passed down through our generations, speaking of my love for him. Surely, I was owed more?

I remain indebted to the straws that broke the camel's back. Much like his growing contempt, I had grown familiar with their weight, as hollow and narrow as they were. When my legs gave out all those straws came tumbling down, and with them fell the tunnel vision I had been peering through for years. I was done.

I realised I had been in love with a man who barely existed; a carving I had etched in my own mind. I had created an idol out of him, and a fan out of myself. So with that, I mourned the character I created and let the feelings fade with the fallacy.

He fell in love with someone else immediately, and I fell in love with myself again. It worked out for the best, I think. I'll be 25 soon, and there've been a few things since, but nothing like a heartache. Not until her, at least.

See I heard no heartbreak hits like the first, well that's a fucking lie! His departure lifted a weight, but hers, hers buried me.

The Timeline: After Love's First Heartbreak.

First, there was the guy I met hiking;
a rebound on paper, though it never feels that way,
does it? Next there was the man twice my age. We met
in the gym and had no reason flirting like we did.
We went back on fourth on the morale of our age gap but in
the end, I think he gave me part of my youth back.

Next came the pretend boyfriend who safeguarded
me on a night out. He did his job so well, he even shared the
same name as my ex (eek). He would drive an hour into
London just to take me out to dinner by my house, then drive
himself the hour back. A series of small stories in-
between bigger ones. Fleeting connections that filled the
space.

But then there was her—the sweetest taboo.

In the corner of a dimly lit room, like every industry after-
party, she leaned across the booth and we exchanged
names and compliments. She came out of nowhere and hit me
like a truck. A truck I didn't see coming on a road
I shouldn't have crossed.

A crossing in a road I'd already driven past,
paying no mind until it was time to turn left. Like the
familiar warmth of an unexpected home, an
indescribable connection and the contagion a smile. I
crossed the personal with the professional chasing that
spark, then her love came crashing into me like another
hit-and-run. I soon discovered being heartbroken by
choice is a unique kind of confusion. Most heartbreaks
follow dying love, but others follow the kind that's too
overwhelming to embrace.

As I write this I consider, how much of the story
was pre-written? How many of our actions determined
by the previous traumas we're attempting to
safeguard ourselves from. Or was none of it real?
Questions I grapple with and wrestle. Spiraling down a
daisy chain. Now I find myself writing about her, rather
than to her; filling pages with words I'll never say,
about feelings I'd rather not face.

First there was the weed
who I took too long to leave.

NOW I KNOW

He was the weed that stole the nutrients from my soil and killed my beautiful garden. She was the flower I couldn't keep alive, but it's ok, I guess everything dies.

WHO'S PREEING WHO?

You're like a weed,
spouting uninvited.

I removed you once,
and each time you come back
you convince yourself it was you who left.

1 removal

2 removal

3 removal

Four.

How long will you keep playing this game for?



"DID THE FIRE BURN OUT YOUR MEMORY?"

Living at rock bottom,
then you dragged me to the basement.
Handcuffed by love,
kept around for entertainment.

Then you changed all your passwords,
switched off your location.
Caught you out loud, caught you so brazen,
yet blamed it all on me, knowing I'd take it.

Convinced me I saw wrong,
so the rain hit.
Blinded this time by my tears
hearing you imply I caused it.

I put fire to the flame
the time I was assaulted?
So I swept it under the rug,
believing I deserved it.

Then two years later,
did it happen all again?
Because you grabbed me by the collar,
like you had me by the chain.

Now we're scrapping in the corridor,
running through the home.
You're putting on a show
because I picked up your phone?

Rarely seen you angry,
but you're really seeing red.
Tryna pull it from my hand
as you push me to the bed.

Locked in the bathroom,
hiding in my own house.
Plus the family is home
so we're gathering a crowd.

Sounds bad, don't it,
when I actually write it down.

Confused as hell,
why am I hiding behind a wall?
We always share phones,
I don't understand it at all.

Passwords, laptops,
banking apps, all of that.

So the way you flinched?
Immediately suspicious.
Then you accuse me of embarrassing you!
Like I was the one being malicious.

Said it was a knee-jerk reaction.
Said you had nothing to hide.
Ironically, I've no proof if you lied.

Cause your phone wouldn't open.
Convenient, I wonder why.
Maybe it was my shaking
that kept messing up my tries.

Doesn't matter anyway,
I soon said my goodbyes.

SINK
OR
SWIM

SINK
OR
SWIM

HEARTBREAK IS AN INTERESTING THING

Part 1

My first heartbreak made me climb mountains!
Mountains that were road trips, flights, ferries from home,
like a bird escaping a cage.

I thought my first heartbreak would drown me,
thrown into open waters, life jacket ripped
as I fell. Convinced I couldn't swim...
but that was another lie as well.

So when he got bored and I deserved more,
he watched, bemused, as I made it ashore.
All those years spent in drought
made that water a welcome flood.
So him pushing me over the edge
almost felt like love.

Chronically dehydrated,
I'd forgotten a headache wasn't normal.
So being held under
almost felt thoughtful.

19.07.22 DIARY ENTRY FOR A WEED

At some point, you have to realise the fault is not all mine. I may take us in circles bringing up the same problems, but that's only because you keep the car engine running. What's distressing is you have all the bullets needed to blow the tires out, but because I'm the one behind the wheel, you just watch. Even though I'm screaming for help. You tell me I shouldn't have gotten behind the wheel to begin with. You put me down for being there and tell me I'm stupid. You leave me to deal with the broken car alone because you must think I deserve it.

Maybe you just want to watch me to die.

WHO'S BLUFFING?

You might think it's a bluff when I say that I'm done,
but once the penny drops you are not the one.

WEED

Things I gave up to love you:

Loving myself

FLOWER

Things I gave up to love you:

Keeping you

and then I met a flower



PAINTED FOR YOU

I play with my candle,
thinking of you.

Occasionally, when I get too near the flame,
those pretty red tips I painted for you
fill with pain.

I know I'm not ready,
but I just can't help it.
So used to blowing the candle out
before it's melted.

I've spent so much time on candles:
love potion after love potion,
lavender or lime?
You'd think I knew what I wanted this time.

For the most part, I do,
though when it comes to you,
all I can think about is abandoning you too.

So at 01:05, I blow you out,
still burning with doubt.

FINDING SHELTER

I serenade you in the night,
and in the morning, you send
poems my way.

Sheltering in your arms,
from the love bombs you drop on me,
wrapped in a duvet we both hide beneath.

Playing home in a place
that's neither yours nor mine.
We both know we're running—

out of time.

A MOSQUITO'S LOVE BITE

I stay till it gets dark,
because I never know when to leave.
Perseverance disguised as achievement,
even when there's no more
good to come.

Only mosquitoes come out at night.
Tomorrow, I'll confront the kisses I'm covered in.

PEN PAL

You said you wish you could put me in your pocket, but
it didn't feel like you wanted to be followed. It felt like
you were walking away.

I would have come otherwise.

I would have followed you city to city,
hotel to hostel, to curb.
As long as I were with you
I could've gone around the world.

I think you're used to feeling alone.
Why else would you build
then abandon a home?

If I'm not your friend,
then you're not my pen pal.

BLINDSIDE

You should have worn a hi-vis
when we first met.
Instead, you dressed for a funeral.

Then you snuck up like the Grim Reaper,
ready to take me in my sleep.
Like all the life you gave
was never mine to keep.

I couldn't paint this picture,
even if it were art.
How could you give a nights notice
to abandon the heart?

You told me before we slept
like I was blindsided by death,
and in the morning, once you left,
I barely heard from you again.

If I made you so happy
why did you leave so soon?
Couldn't let go in the night
but still gone by noon.

All those words, all those confessions,
now seem unreal—
an ideal built on things you didn't feel.



LIKE A FOOL

Guard up,
hands down,
with my heart on my sleeve like a fool.
Same team, fighting each other.
Was it hurt me before i hurt you?

Overwhelmed, but so elated,
adrenaline: it's a temporary high.
Then fight or flight kicks in
and you leave without saying
goodbye.

HURRICANES START FROM A BREEZE

You were a breath of cool air
to a summer's night in need of relief.
But just like July's breeze,
your presence was brief,
and you left with ease.

That breeze became a hurricane
and knocked me off my feet.
Fooled by the way you wrapped around me,
keeping me complete.

Summer fell through our fingertips,
I guess we escaped Septembers shadow.
We always knew our time was borrowed,
but I never expected such sorrow.

Blinded by the fog,
disillusioned I was safe,
until you loosened your grip
and sent me to my grave.



TEMPORARY TERRITORY

Was I just temporary territory,
a stop before you roam?
Now I'm left here wondering
were you to ever call this home?

Was my city just your playground,
my time another game?
I thought loving women would be different
but the hurt is all the same.



PEOPLE AND PLACES

It's funny the way places stand out to you once
you're no longer seeing the person who brought
you there.

Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye:
two places that remind me
you barely said goodbye.



SENT

SENT

SENT

SENT

I type.
I rewrite.
I delete.
I unsend.

I type.
I rewrite.
I delete.
I unsend.

I type.
I rewrite.
I delete.
I unsend.

I type.
I rewrite.
I delete.
I unsend.

My ego tells me
you will never hear
from me again.

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So I type,
I rewrite,
I delete,
I unsend.

So I type,
I rewrite,
I delete,
I unsend.

So I type,
I rewrite,
I delete,
I unsend.

So I type,
I rewrite,
I delete,
I unsend.

And I do that process
again and again.

And I do that process
again and again.

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And I do that process
again and again.

SENT

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I delete.
I unsend.



SACRIFICES

I'll amputate before I irrigate,
better lose a hand than my heart.
Calling for help? It's too late.
Nothing left to change.

So I tear my fingers off,
afraid they'll reach for you again.
You meant it when you
said I wasn't a friend.

Blind, stupid,
naive, dumb.
You're only my first,
but I'm not your last one.

**Holding hostage an exchange we
will never make.**

**Keeping our silence
as we choose to walk away.**

HEARTBREAK IS AN INTERESTING THING

Part 2

That first heartbreak was like breathing fresh air.
This, however, it's like breathing smog.
I'm choking, looking for a pocket,
I see myself die and you watch it.

I'm not sure where all the air went.
I wish we could've tried again.
I wish I felt smothered in your love instead..

How did things go up in smoke
so quickly?
You and your love surprised me
differently,
like a fucking bomb
counting down
silently.

Her love covered me in gasoline;
our situation handed me the match.
But to my surprise, she fled out back,
lit the flame, and left the flat.

TOUCHING BOTH WALLS

I needed advice, and by accident, I turned
to someone who knew you—intimately, I learned.

I knew the community was small,
but you're not even from my city.
Of all people I could've asked!
What a fucking pity.

I described our situation,
they asked me for your name.
Turns out I was just another girl
you made to feel the same.

And they say:

"She's hot and heavy."
"This is her game."
"There's nothing to gain,
but maybe she's changed?"

Apparently, I dodged a bullet.
'Cause you don't want to be alone,
but you always get up and leave.

Sound familiar?
It's just what you did to me.

Apparently.
Apparently.
Apparently.

Congratulations,
I guess.



TRUST YOUR FIRST

Making you smile was
part of the night
I can keep to

WE'RE
ALL
OVERWHELMED
OK?

you differ
liking you th
And if they are fu

It's OK I f
+ um hot
de.

OK
F

NOW YOU'RE A DAISY

She likes me!
She liked me not?

She loves me?
She loved me not.

She misses me?
She missed me not.

She lied to me!
She lies a lot?

Now I'm spiralling down a daisy chain.

An abstract artwork featuring a collage of textures and colors. A large, dark, swirling shape on the left side resembles a thick brushstroke or a stylized eye. The background is composed of various shades of green, yellow, and brown, with some areas appearing to be painted or stained. The text "WEARING YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE IS A HORRIBLE FASHION CHOICE." is written in a hand-drawn, black, uppercase font across the center. Below the text, there are faint, stylized words "Wait" and "Don't" in a similar font. The overall composition is layered and textured, with some areas showing signs of wear or age.

WEARING YOUR
HEART ON YOUR
SLEEVE IS A
HORRIBLE
FASHION
CHOICE.

Wait
Don't

ANGEL NUMBERS

Angel numbers

At 02:02

Half awake

Yet thinking bout you

YOU FUCKING ACTOR

DID YOU GET YOUR OSCAR?
READ YOUR LOVE TO ME
LIKE WORDS OFF A SCRIPT.

WAS YOUR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
THE SCREENWRITER?
BECAUSE HOW SKILLFULLY
YOU STRUNG TOGETHER A LIE.
MADE ME THINK IT WAS HARD TO SAY
GOODBYE.

TURNS OUT THE LOVE WAS BUT A FILM,
ONE REHEARSED AND
REHEARSED BEFORE.

FEELINGS YOU RECYCLED,
LOVE REUSED ON ME,
THEN I REUSED WITH YOU.

'CHARMING AS FUCK' YOU SAY I AM.
TELL ME, DID I PLAY THE
LEADING ROLE WELL?
TELL ME! WHO WROTE THE FILM
YOU CAST ME IN?

CAUSE YOU SAID I WOULD RUN
ONCE YOU FELL,
AND CRUEL TO YOU,
YOU SAID IT'D BE.
NOW IT SEEMS THAT'S
WHAT YOU DID TO ME

SO I UNRAVEL THE FILM WE MADE.
YOU WILL NEVER CAST ME IN UR FILM AGAIN
FUCK YOUR ASPIRATIONS
WHAT A LIE WHAT A LIE
A FILM NEVER MADE TO SEE OUTSIDE.

SORRY YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL BUT MY EX JUMPED OFF A BRIDGE!

So I could lose all my blood,
and you'd tell me your ex was my neighbour,
who needed your flowers more?

Because as I recover from the wounds
that you left,
still, you don't check.

I can't breath
and I choke
and I do it all alone.

Naive and stupid,
to believe you ever cared.
I pick the fucking bear,
over silly love affairs.

BTW

Telling me you didn't message because a text felt cheap is like letting me starve because pasta wasn't good enough to serve. Except you've cooked for me before, so there really are no excuses.



CAUTION



"I HOPE WE CROSS PATHS AGAIN"

We probably will at some art event,
but what do I do if I see you?

Your plus one will be a half-assed apology,
about how you never meant to hurt me.
I'll pretend to believe you,
or I will tell you that I don't.

You will stare at me like I'm art,
and I'll ignore you like the frame—
those details you only see
when looking again.

Tuesday will come.
Maybe you too.
But now, they'll never know
about me and you.



DIN'T NOWHERE

Shit Gets Dark
Sometimes

But fuck it,
I Bought
Candles

TOLD YA...
LIGHT

I love
me so
ALL OK



TUNNELING

My candle started tunnelling;
I know why it happened.
I was tired of waiting
and growing impatient.

I should have let it burn.
I should have put myself to sleep.
I got tunnel vision on the wax
I wanted to keep.

I knew blowing you out wouldn't save me,
but we were so close.
Next time around,
I burn down my home.



DO FRAUD



FRAUD

"Happiest I've been" yet you got up and ran.
I bet you don't even buy the story you span.
No need to lie. I'll be fine. Just make sure you
know what's buried inside.

PAINT



SKRPP

QUES ST. E.1

BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

BROKEN

Don't cut your nose to spite your tongue,
you don't have a leg to stand on.
So I've severed my hands
to save my heart,
and here we are.
Broken.



**AND SO I ASK,
HOW DO YOU SEE ME?
WHO AM I TO YOU,
REALLY?**

**A DISTANT STAR,
BRIEFLY LIT.
OR JUST A FACE
YOU'LL SOON FORGET.**



FAVOURITE

She never did know that lilies
were my favourite kind of flower.

A note to say, this wasn't how I wanted to make you my muse. I'm sorry if I've made you uncomfortable. I'm just unpacking my feelings, one spray paint can and poem at a time.

I know you're a writer too, so I'm hoping you'll understand. Congratulations on your immortality, my lil edwardian boy.

Sadé

