

APRIL SHOWERS: Elegy for a Radioactive Spring

Ah—
the perfumed breath of spring,
the heady sweetness of cherry blossoms,
and then satsuki's green hush.

The air feels newly baptized,
crystalline and cool,
as if the world had suddenly remembered
how to breathe again.

Rejoice, for these fleeting weeks,
no matter how tightly winter clenched its bruised,
gray fist, or how infinite the suffocating
shroud of cold and darkness once seemed
for now, linger.

Watch the ghost-white petals unravel in the slow, rhythmic rain.
Spring never promises permanence,
only beauty.



An-Yi stood perfectly still, her gaze fixed on her sleeve where the rain gathered into heavy, silver beads before sliding into the mud. "What use are umbrellas," she asked, her voice a hollow chime, "when the rain itself is laced with fire? When every drop is radioactive?" Her tone was deceptively calm, but her eyes scanned the dark puddles with a frantic intensity, as if expecting the water to pulse with a sickly, neon glow.

Chariya offered a small, tired shrug—a motion born of exhaustion rather than indifference. "It makes no difference at all" he whispered, his voice barely rising above the pitter-patter on the pavement. A sudden, sharp gust of wind rattled the charred skeletons of the cherry trees overhead. A blizzard of petals loosened, drifting down in a silent, swirling cloud; they were exquisite in their abundance, yet profoundly unsettling, like beautiful snow falling on a fresh grave.

Bhāraté adjusted his jacket, his fingers trembling slightly as he pulled his collar tightly against the damp. He spoke with a practiced, careful restraint. "The state-sponsored broadcast insists the isotopes are decaying—that the air is healing." He paused, looking toward the jagged skyline. "They say it will soon be safe for 'adapted survivors' to emerge from the shelters for long cycles." He recited the words like a hollow liturgy, the way one repeats a headline they are neither brave enough to believe nor strong enough to challenge.

Chariya exhaled a long, shaky breath, his eyes following a single petal as it tumbled into the gutter. "There will be no return to normalcy," he said, the resignation in his voice as heavy as the lead-lined walls they had left behind. "At least, not while our hearts still beat." He spoke with a quiet finality, as if sensing that his own internal clock was winding down toward a still midnight.

The rain continued its steady, indifferent descent. Petals dissolved into the gray sludge of the gutters, turning to a pale, translucent mush. Spring marched on—indifferent, exquisite, and utterly lethal. The pink blossoms clung to their shoulders and umbrellas like delicate, glowing against the backdrop of a semi-obsured sky.

- T Newfields

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