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## Words from the Heart

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WORDS  
FROM THE  
HEART



DANIEL  
CANO



DECEMBER  
20, 2020

To those who've given me the insight of creativity

## The Urn

I could see the stained glass windows illuminate under the moon,  
its false glow lighting the path to the altar.

I could not help but stand idly in the pews, watching men  
and women walk up to a jar.

It was grey and cold, like a battered and forgotten pot  
You only keep because of the memories you have.

I tried to find anyone familiar around me, but the hands covering their  
Faces made the game a bit too difficult.

I heard the slow words of the father, but I didn't listen to them.  
I only wanted to know when the service would end.

My wish was granted as the last words were uttered,  
Its echo silencing the frigid air.

I left with my mother, and tried to speak with her.  
But my words only seemed to act like nails in skin.

I asked what the jar had inside and it seemed  
The question deserved no answer.

She told me through her salty tears that the jar  
Was the last step in life.

I could not comprehend it then.  
I can not comprehend it now.

Like a ring of keys, they close the door of starvation.  
My ghostly granite millstones, breaking away at the grains.

I cherish them more than gold  
Although others have thought to exchange for it.

They sit peacefully, in two neat rows of sixteen.  
So many patterns and shapes, but mine are the most pristine.

I fear I'll lose them,  
Watch them fall as time passes.

So I take care of them.  
Cleaning, picking and brightening to see them glow.

They say the eyes are a window to the soul,  
But with a smile I can know a person more.

# Fortieth Day

To you who sailed the endless storm,  
who saw the grey clouds eat the forgotten blue sky,  
Be blessed as the fortieth day a rainbow was hung from the white clouds.

To you who saved your family,  
Who walked the blazing desert and broke the trust with a stricken stone,  
Be forgiven, for the fortieth day on the mountain shall be your day of peace.

To the people who suffered,  
Who fought and fended off the wrath of giants,  
Be saved for the fortieth day a child who would become king arrives.

To you who held teeth shut,  
Who refused to nourish in the name of sanctity,  
You are the gift for on the fortieth day you rose and became hope.

-Taken from "Fortieth Day" from Dzvinia Orlovsky's *Bad Harvest*

# The Earth, Sea and Sky

The hard earth beneath our feet has seen the steps  
Of so many, she has forgotten the difference between all of them.  
Towers stand erect to imitate the mountains.  
Villages united by history scatter both on sand and snow.  
She has seen man scar her and man heal her.  
Languages of all kinds written in her stones,  
Earth holds our history.

The raging sea has been sailed by many.  
All of his aquatic creatures hidden below the thin, foamy veil.  
Corals and caverns, trenches and straits.  
So many explored by so many who simply wanted to fish.  
Stories of odysseys and some many leagues below,  
Dreadnoughts of steel and plaques of oil.  
The sea has endured our escapades.

The beautiful sky can sing like a beautiful blue,  
Dance with the fervor of a fire's red, yellow and orange.  
Sometimes it sits still, dawning her royal purple.  
Above the sky, her head is full of stars.  
Who hasn't looked up and began to wonder,  
"What's it like up there?"  
She has united us, pushed us to raise our arms together.  
The sky gives us our mysteries.

## Nero's Ode to Ashes

Do you hear the faint songs of the summer fey, how they  
come and dance as a play my gilded lyre. How beautiful  
are they, their skin glistening under the frozen night sky. I  
wish I could dance like them, be free like them. abandon my title  
as emperor of jesters just to live like them. I hear them cry out,  
their sweet voices flowing like wine and honey. Their orchestra plays  
with me as the hot breath of Vulcan praises me. Oh you sweet summer fey,  
let me join you, play for you, be free with you. I have no desire to lord  
over such cold people, worshippers of winter. They roam around  
like an empty cornucopia, no luxuries to ever fill them.  
My eyes, my heart, my soul despise the very essence of them.  
sweet summer fey, let me play and pray to convince these  
heathens why there is beauty in the sound of a lyre.



## The Three Blacksmiths of Alkward

The mouths of many have told that one fateful night, a star fell from the heavens and landed in the wheat field of a local lord of Alkward. When the news reached the lord of Alkward, he desired it to make a beautiful sword. He commanded three blacksmiths to take the fallen star and make a sword. Whoever could make a sword to the lord's liking would receive a royal seal of approval and a hefty bag of gold.

The first blacksmith was Englewud, known for his skill in crafting elegant swords. He took a chunk of the fallen star and studied the beautiful smoothness of the stone. Englewud proclaimed to the lord that his blade would be the most beautiful and that his skill would stand the test of time. Englewud spent two days working on the sword, dipping the hot sword in expensive oil to hear its beautiful hiss. He pulled out the blade and admired its darksheen once more, claiming it was done before he tested its strength. He went to the lord and presented his work, hoping to hear the lord sing his satisfaction. However, as the lord finished admiring the sheen, he swung it at a log and the two watched it shatter. The lord chastised Englewud for his vanity and carelessness for his craft.

The second of the blacksmiths was Thorwald, a man with no taste for the finer things in life. However his swords were said to be strong enough to cut armor. He took a piece of the black rock and weighed it, pleased by its weight and thickness. Thorwlad made an oath to the lord that his sword would strike fear into his enemies. Thorwald took two days to hammer at the hot metal, sweating profusely as the fire slapped at his skin. Thorwald pulled the blade out of his

cheap oil after it gave a terrifying scream. The sword came out lumpy and jagged but as Thorwald stuck a log, he shattered it into splinters. Thorwald presented the sword to the lord, expecting approval and the bag of gold in his hand. Instead a heavy groan escaped the lord's mouth. He pointed out that Thorwald had only created a foul looking slab of iron. Shatter bones it would, but it would also shatter his pride and dignity if he carried it around.

The last of the blacksmiths was Bernhardt, a man of old age and fading eyesight. The lord gave him the last of the fallen star and pleaded that he make him a sword dignified to be carried and used. Bernhardt happily nodded and went to his shop, taking two days to study the stone and another two days to craft the sword. After he pulled the blade from his good oil, Bernhardt admired the simplicity of the sword. He spent a day refining the blade before presenting the blade to the lord. A smile curled on the lord's lips as he studied the work of Bernhardt before he struck the blade on a log, cleaving it in twain. The lord handed Bernhardt the bag of gold, which he used to buy more metal for the future.

## The Maw

I had no source of light on me, not a lantern nor a match to guide me through the night. It filled me with dread of the thought that I could become lost in the thick wheat field. On the other hand, my eyes would not have to see what threatened my life. I had spent my night running from some horrible beast on my way home. The snarls and slobbering still echoed in my head, like a broken phonograph that scratched my mental nerves like a black vinyl record. I took refuge behind a large stone, hoping that to wait out the animal's persistence in finding me. No such luck came to me as I felt the earth tremble around me. The beast's gait seemed to feel like a shuffle, showing no signs of relent. I grasped the stone behind me, praying that the creature would ignore the stone. Once the movement stopped, I slowly opened my eyes to suddenly see a thin line of spit drip in front of me. I held my breath and looked to the right, a three fingered claw grasping the stone like a falcon talon of a rabbits skull. The creature's skin was a deathly grey and like a rat's fleshy tail. I continued to look up and saw the head of the beast, its skin tight against its skull like a malnourished horse. Ahead of me was a canyon, known to have a raging grey river full of sharp stones for teeth. A thought began to tear at my brain. Die at the maw of mother nature, or at the hands of this forged beast. Tears began well in my eyes as I leapt from the stone and broke into a painful sprint, a deafening screech coming from the creature behind me before it began to give chase. The darkness of the canyon filled my eyes as the earth beneath me began to quickly disappear. Leaping into the air, I crashed into the river and quickly resurfaced. I laughed wildly as I realized I was not impaled by the river's rocks. Taken by the will of the current, I drifted downwards towards the small town of Innsmouth a few miles away.



Daniel Cano is a local of Rhode Island with a big love for fantasy, cosmic horror or simply a good story. Currently working on a series of books, Daniel aims to be a teacher in the field of literature, hoping to inspire others in their own pursuit of the literary word.

“Daniel has a knack for creating compelling stories and portraying them in an elegant manner. Every piece written is richly imagined and gripping. He is an undeniably talented writer who composes terrifically rewarding stories that leave you wanting more.” - Ian Elrath

"This author has the unique ability to write in such a way where you are really put into the scene that's being set out before you. It's not just you reading it but experiencing it, through the words, dialogue, or setting that's provided you become part of the world before you." - Conner Rohan