

FLOWERS

The flowers were impetuous. It was if they knew a secret, and they weren't going to give it up for any reason. For all their supposed knowledge, the poor flowers were still somewhat restrained. And the gods knew this. The plants had settled for their lot. They couldn't escape their location.

"The minute that you remove a plant from the garden, it starts to die."

Alida served her plants. But she realized that was not enough for the flowers. The flowers wanted to contend for a higher station.

"They can't just walk away!"

Alida revered her dear creatures. But their expression seemed so limited.

"They aren't follow me indoors."

The flowers culled from their bitterness to feed their own obstinacy. But they were getting lost in silliness. Their cause would never amount to much of anything if they remained so self-absorbed.

"It's not as if we want to be this way. Life offers us few options."

They remained disoriented by trivial matters. This was hardly enough to provoke a serious interest on the part of the observer. Alida did what she could to nurture these wonders.

One day, Alida was too sick to go out in her garden.

"I am watching it all behind glass. They need me."

Her pain was only magnified when she saw a number of her prized flowers face a prolonged enfeeblement.

"I need to go to them."

But she knew that she would only feel sicker if she went to help. It wasn't simply a matter of waving a magic wand over them. She would have to get down on her hands and knees to work the soul.

There was something so frighteningly dramatic to watch the plants suffer and not be able to do a thing. The glass window divide our two worlds.

Their time had come. They started to wither and die.

"There's not a thing that we can do. We can't grant them immortality."

At a certain point, the life was just sucked from them. All that remained were the hardened petals. They had lost their ability to sustain the flower's life. No amount of wishing could make these brittle emblems as supple as they were in their first flowering.

All the leaves fell from the plants. They disintegrated, and the traces were blown away. Only the memories remained.

"Is that enough?"

She answered, "That may be enough for us. But it is not enough for them."

"It's not as if they are going to object."

Did the remaining flowers feel sympathy for the lost ones? Did our feelings of concern make us more impressionable to the power of suggestion. Was that why the flowers appeared to talk to us? I let myself be overcome by the mysteries

"Isn't this just self serving," I wondered. I was only seeing what I wanted to see.

I felt this radiant haze surround experience. I was clued in to a secret code which helped

us understand the inner thoughts of the flowers.

Alida reminded me, "They need us to interpret their vision for the world. Don't feel as if you are being special."

Had we been specially appointed for this calling? The flowers needed us to state their case.

Alida asserted, "They know that something is wrong with the vicious cycle. This is their way of rebelling.

I wondered if it would really make a difference.

"They are heroic. They are willing to challenge the gods."

"But if the heavens are silent, don't they just seem pathetic."

"We're watching them. That must count for something!"

A full-fledged rebellion wouldn't stop with a simple complaint. If the grievance couldn't be redressed, the flowers would seek more comprehensive relief. Alida was ready to listen. But she felt that the burden was too much. They were harassing her because she seemed like the most available representative of a higher order

"I don't know what they think that I can do."

"They see you as their creator."

"I can't create a flower. The best that I can do is plant a seed. Then I can water it and make sure that there are enough nutrients."

"They see you tending to the flower beds. They assume that you have the power to make things happen."

Alida didn't feel comfortable as a divine emissary. It wasn't as if she eschewed virtue. She just wasn't willing to accept that much responsibility.

"I can't nurse a withering plant back to health."

"I have seen you work miracles."

She wasn't trying to be humble. She simply didn't believe that she exercised some kind of mystical powers.

"You love to exaggerate."

"I couldn't do half of what you do. Even the gardeners around here seem quite limited in their skills."

"That doesn't mean that I can raise the dead." She still wasn't buying it.

"All your devotion should count for something."

"That hardly makes me an angel."

"But you are a saint!"

She smiled.

They knew if they couldn't find a representative for their complaint that they would become more frustrated. Then they would only turn on each other. This moment was critical. They had the momentum on their side. But the leadership needed to be clear about its aims. It would be too easy just to slide backwards.

"The flowers are ready to make something happen!"

Did they really have enough to work with?

"Listen to them. They are hardly speaking with one voice."

"Give them a chance. It is going to take them time."

“Do they have time?”

“Patience is a watchword if they are going get anywhere.

Alida was taking their prompting. She was becoming the perfect advocate. She was doing her utmost to convince me.

"How can someone not be sympathetic with the flowers?"

'I think that it is the condition of the world. We have been taught to be mean."

Alida was adamant, "I don't want to believe that."

There were all kinds of people who had made it a practice to advance in the world by demonstrating their dominance over others.

"I think that it starts out as a defense mechanism. And then that sort of response just becomes natural. People can't help it any more."

The brutality had become the norm. That only made people push to conform. They would lash out. When they found resistance, they would explode. Each minor frustration would eat its way like an acid until the self was completely engulfed by the effects.

The gods had let their power go to their heads. That was what made the flowers so defiant in the first place. They recognized the pattern. They couldn't take the mistreatment any longer. They chose to trace it to the source. But the rebellion only seemed to enliven the gods. It gave them a purpose to supplement the moribund nature of their philosophy.

"We made this world, and we can unmake it."

I wonder how Alida could tell what was really happening?

"Look at the flowers. See how they are acting."

I could almost see human faces.

Alida put forward the flowers's belief that the world could be sustained through cooperation.

“Aren't the weeds part of this natural environment?”

At the far reaches of her garden, the ivy had started to grow. She realized how the garden would be overrun if she did not remain vigilant.

“Life is not based on destruction. But renewal works its magic by working against devastation.”

That was why she passed her time in the garden giving the flowers a chance to resist their enemies.

“I am now part of the natural process. They appeal to birds and insects to advance their lives. And I have also heard the calling.”

Alida realized how a wonderful flower could bring joy to the day. She had clipped a nasturtium and brought it inside.

“It is so wonderful to wake up in the morning and notice a flower in the kitchen. It helps me to motivate my day.”

The gaily-colored flowered added a pleasant touch to the room. It made the place breathe and come alive.

“The scents of the flowers are the perfume that enable us to confront any obstacle in our way. I might wake up in a daze. I am slow to greet the day. But the flower gets me invigorated. It gets my blood pumping.”

For everything that Alida gave to her garden, it blessed her a thousand-fold. She had no

doubt about this communication. And with her certainty, she was able to travel to the scarier regions of the self. She hardly blinked. She had her friends with her.

“Some days I think that I am doing too much. It is hard to leg in front of another and keep walking. I know that there is a greater power that emanates from the garden. Everyone has to find this wonder for themselves. They can’t let their lives get taken up by worry and bitterness.”

As much as Alida was enlivened by the flowers gentle chorus, she knew that the garden offered another song. That ballad celebrated the flowers’ liberty. She was attentive to that music.

The flowers expressed their tale of woe for anyone who was willing to listen. Their complaint was based on their limited mobility. They had a method to fight off their enemies. Some could shield themselves from attack. Even with these strategies, they couldn’t move far enough from a threat. Ultimately, they were totally exposed.

For an individual already under siege, the lament of the flowers would seem like a shrill rant. This was their nature. They did not toil in the hot sun like a farm laborer. They could enjoy the outdoors in peace. No formidable storm could match the ravages of a serious illness that could afflict a person. They never bore the brunt of psychological pain and neglect. The desperate soul would gladly change places with the hapless lily.

“They rely on other flying creatures to aid in their reproduction. Do you think that I can be sympathetic to that kind of life?”

The flowers found it difficult to rally their supporters. An admirer could spend days in awe while she enjoyed all the exuberant glory of the resplendent flowers. The mere sight was enough to put the watcher in a trance. Some patterned their lives after a devotion to these marvels. The intent of the flowers was evident. But their coy seduction had a cleverness that could overcome any heart. That was why their detractors lacked a convincing argument. Anyone who opened his eyes to the flowers could see their evident delights. But it was easy to let the worry of a daily routine distract a person from the flowers’ artistry. People would ignore the plight of the flowers as a strategy to limit their own suffering. They actually believed that hiding from the world would finally result in escaping its fundamental mystery. The flowers were such a bold reminder of the forces that moved the cosmos.

The flowers intended to make their tale into a more universal manifesto. They had discovered an insight about a basic inequity in the world. They didn’t want to become embroiled in their own particular struggle without recognizing how they held the banner for the less fortunate. The really testy would object that it was not the artist’s role to become involved in polemic. There were enough pundits getting entangled in their own opinions. But the flowers were visionaries. They realized that our romance with the world had left us blind to the full character of creation’s denial of it apex. They wanted to unlock the powers of the universe that were now reserved for the very few. The stodgy gods fumbled through their Pyrrhic dances in the corridors of Olympus. Their revelry was an affront to the earthbound. Collectively, the flowers maintained a proud pose

The universe feigned indifference. Why should the flowers curse their blessings when there was so much more that they could do to accomplish their goals? Sure, there were terrible

calamities that the flowers had to endure. And not all of them would be able to overcome these challenges. The hardy one would rise above the chaos to assert themselves.

The flowers objected to this perverse distortion of natural selection. They had clawed their way through abject conditions to attain their rewards. It wasn't up to some aloof observer to disrespect their valiant efforts. Nature could be so cruel!

From the outside, the watcher noticed a necessity to the progress of the flowers' existence. But they resisted many of the influences that the viewer might deem as essential. The flowers worked to advance their own intent. This was not the rough and tumble of a shanty town bar. The battle was not cast to see who would be the last man standing. The flowers sought to reinforce the needs of their fellows. They sought a deeper communication with their environment. That was why they expressed their lives in terms of repeating cycles that helped renew their connection with the world.

Flowers have always had the ability to express our emotions. A flower bouquet was enough to comfort the restless heart. The mere sight of these vibrant creatures could take a doleful mood and transform it into endless joy. It was almost as if they could read the human psyche. They were these sensitive actors who could empathize with our condition. If anything, flowers contradicted a belief about our isolation in the universe. They showed us that our most obscure feeling made us part of something greater. Flowers took our individual sentiment and gave it a reality for us to share with others.

Alida attempted to trace the outlines of the flower's timeless appeal. It was almost as if each flower reflected our facial expressions. Just as we could recognize the beliefs of other people by their gestures, flowers allowed us to get in touch with our own emotions.

"I am trying to understand the personalities of these beckoning creatures."

Flowers provided us with an awareness of our own feelings. Amidst our personal confusion, flowers endowed us with a profound certainty. If the flowers could exercise such a deep effect on our emotional makeup, had they achieved a more basic understanding of these experiences? This was dangerous territory to map.

"Doesn't the actor start to believe that his performance is more real than that of the individual in an actual situation?"

I wanted to alert Alida to the illusions that were perpetrated by the empath. Such an individual worked to drain us of our emotions in order to enhance his feelings of self-worth.

"Are you afraid that someone might really care for you?"

"That's not what I'm saying. The flower's concern risks toppling our own integrity. We do not live for flattery."

"That's not the point. You have to open your heart."

I was afraid that my heart was already too open to the flower's wail. It was nothing but a siren's song that would lure the innocent.

Alida made a further appeal for the flowers' revolt.

"They are the ones who are objecting to the suffering in their experience. Do you want them to tap a deeper well of agony. Is that the only way that you will be convinced. Aren't you acting the role of the empath that you condemn."

"How is that?"

"You are telling me that your own personal suffering is never enough for you to truly

understand your place in the universe. You have to feel pain in such an extreme way that there is almost no return from such a feeling. You are permanently traumatized. I could never live my life that way. The flowers object to that degree of sympathy.”

“They are all about this notion of authentic emotion. They understand how flowers can enable us to turn our emotions on and off. So they plead for an extraordinary anguish which would reveal our identities. But that only makes us more committed to our own suffering.”

“You need to understand better the flower’s revolt. You have been explaining it to me.”

“Aren’t they just seducing you to come over to their side.”

“Nothing of the kind. I can think for myself.”

Could she escape the curse of the garden? Were the flowers weaving another tragic tale?

“They don’t want our sympathy. They are fighting for something far greater. This is the foundation of their liberation.”

Alida was again coming to life in the defense of the flowers. But she had also become very adept at the very technique that I was questioning.

In a capricious universe, no amount of industriousness on the part of the wayward flowers guaranteed mercy for their downtrodden plight. Since they had challenged the fundamental moral order, their salvation was even more perilous than ever. These were not acquiescent types, In their favor, they had demanded nothing less than the freedoms that were basic rights of any sentient being on this earth. That they were flowers did not lessen the urgency of their plea. At the forefront of their basic autonomy was a recognition of an equality to which everyone aspired. They made their appeals initially to man. But their overall intent was to bend the ear of a higher being. This may have been the source of their downfall. They showed little respect to any sort of nobility. They were not ready to grovel on their knees to their supposed spiritual elders. There was something entirely iconoclastic in their rebellion. Where man may have been more susceptible to a refined form of flattery, these champions could not so easily be won over. After the loving care showed by a host of gentle gardeners, the courageous souls were ready to attack privilege. They simply took their breeding as one of their basic rights. How else could they overcome the limitations of their rootedness. They were literally tied to the ground on which they rested. And that rootedness could not be disturbed without threatening their overall existence.

In stating their case, the flowers attained a mobility that they had never known before. They staked a vantage point at the heart of a higher realm. Thus, they could observe themselves from the heavens. This was what it meant to initiate a judicial process. The rebellion took their case one step further. They made their plea to the people. This went beyond an appeal to a jury. They questioned the very notion of a final judgement. No judge could adjudicate their case. How could they ever hope for any kind of rescue from above when they were trying to impeach the very institutions that could offer them a pardon. Even in their demise, they hoped for some type of victory.

The flowers clung to the rational character of their arguments. They had carefully gathered their evidence. And they presented it in a way clearly to advance their position. They felt that they could challenge a judge’s integrity and still find their support in a higher law. But where could such a rule originate without a social contract. That was why their revolution was so encompassing. At the same time, they could overcome the cruel whims that the authorities used

to impose their order. They really had no sense of humor. And the flowers were not pledging their loyalty to those in charge. Their seditiousness was grounds enough for punishment. How could you attack the state and then turn around and ask for mercy. The flowers had no problem with such an arrogant gesture. The free individual could not be put back into chains. That would be the ultimate contradiction. The flowers reasoned according to the self-evidence of their claims. They hoped to make their case before the court of public opinion. If such an assertion required a protracted campaign to convince the world, so be it.

The flowers were not going to abandon their claim under the threat of eternal damnation. They were not about to yield to any kind of petty extortion. That was why they were so savvy in their affirmation. They realized that there were no weak links among their members. They had signed up with victory in mind. They were unafraid of the consequences. Their ultimate trust was in each other. There was a harmonious accord that drove them all together. They were selfless. None were about to cast a deal that would be of detriment to the others. The fragrant air reminded the perceiver of the supreme unity. Any antecedent belief in the order of the universe was under question. Here was a world view that was grounded in the testimony of each individual. It was science in action.

Alda pointed at a lone daffodil, "I feel as if it is telling us something. The struggle is over."

"Is he giving up?"

"He doesn't want to quit the fight. but he knows that he has little choice. He cannot see his way past the present stance. The heavens have played war of attrition with the rebels. They realized that they were a resilient lot. But a drought would take its toll. I've tried to help them. I've given them some water. But the city has limited my ability to help. We are facing water restrictions. The battle is coming to a close."

"What does that mean for him?"

"He can't just get up and walk away. He is completely exposed. And he knows that things are not going to change."

"He is resigned to what is to come?"

"That's not his style. He won't give up."

Alida was extolling the heroic nature of this great warrior. There was nothing destructive in his character. He was facing an opposition which was too overwhelming to counter. And they were not ready to take any prisoners. The flowers could feel that they were completely drained of energy.

"If they were more mobile, they could regroup[and head for the hills. That is not even an option. I think that they are trying to appeal to a more fundamental balance in the cosmos."

"Is such a thing even possible?"

"The gods would claim that they are the final arbiter in this battle. But I have based my life on a more benevolent providence."

"Are the gods the stuff of myth."

"Look at the flowers. They are imbued with the pagan lore. It gives them their lifeblood. it is the inspiration of the poets."

"The two worlds are compatible?"

"The poet sees it that way. He sees a well-spring in the spirits that inhabit all life-forms."

Others would disagree. They would only see a reflection of the intent of a higher being. The divine is not everywhere co-existent. Such is a pagan dogma."

Alida was taught to be suspicious of the poetic inclination. But she could not help but be fascinated by the deeds of the Romantic poets. And she saw their philosophy reflected in the revolt of the flowers.

The daffodil's flowing petals spoke to its brooding nature. In a graceful wind, these leaves would unfurl and fill with air. The daffodil was assuming a regal pose. All puffed up, it was ready to challenge any takers.

The gods hated such a pose. But that was why the daffodil had been exiled to its fate. Any such a physical arrangement would be grounds for self-admiration. This gesture fueled the rebellion. Even in punishing this haughty creature, the gods were not able to stamp out its independence.

The flower felt that it was crowned by its form. And it lorded over the garden, As such, the daffodil was an elegant model for the liberation of all the flowers. There was no desire whatsoever to humiliate the other flowers. Indeed, they all took solace from this bold expression of freedom.

These were a proud lot. They all believed that their magnificence was reason enough for the universe to take notice. They all strived towards an ideal.

Had the flowers ignored the chaotic nature of the universe? They were joined by a common aesthetic. They claimed an order that helped to shape their presence. Wasn't such a movement based only vanity? After all, the daffodil had sprouted from the ground as a tribute to a restless sort who lived off their own pride. Each action only enhanced the imposing contours of the flower.

Even the strongest flower pleased by its daintiness. And its reign was so temporary. You could hardly base a substantive uprising on such a weak base. At least, that was the view of their enemies. But such arguments did not diminish the combativeness of the flowers. It was ultimately a war for the hearts of the viewers. No storm cloud could belittle the flower's splendor.

That freedom could be an extension of art was indeed a surprise. Many a philistine believed that art was ancillary to human survival. They were more drawn to the gore of the public circus. Art seemed a refinement that was only for the well-to-do. The flowers maintained that there could be no social advancement without a recognition of our creative potential. Their presence was an active record of the desires of every individual. In the end, no one could be held in chains. And the imprisonment of the self was based quite directly on the uprooting of the personality from its origins. The jailer hoped erase all memory of liberty.

To gaze on these lovely flowers allowed the self to tap into the roots of its conscious awareness. Our ability to think derived from a recognition of these well-proportioned delights. The vision allowed us to unlock all the potential of our minds. The flowers understood this profound network of life. Their recognition made it all the more necessary that they would stand up for their rights. Any power of the heavens therefore must be based on an underlying fabric that could be discovered through the exercise of reason. This was not the formal design of a mechanical device. It was an understanding that was fueled by the fantastic leaps of the imagination. That was why it required the artist to help frame this picture. In its midst was the

very breath that propelled the atmosphere and filled the respiratory system of the living organism. To inhale deeply, the individual asserted his place in the world. And the flowers were the perfect example of this motivation.

The flowers echoed a constant vibration in the universe. This attractive fluctuation could explain the chaotic. The narrow-minded only saw one side of the puzzle. But the flowers helped tune us into a more magical resplendence. They demonstrated this constant give and take that threaded together a more complex entanglement in the physical world. From the intricate patterns of the flowers to the rich textures of the muscles, life expressed a myriad intents in a single purpose. And the flowers took their cue from the forces that engaged our vitality. Even if a substratum of decay menaced each living thing, the flowers would not give up their desire to flourish.

For all that the chaotic offered as a view of the cosmos, the flowers were able extend their perspective further. They could use the mysteries to their advantage. They did not want to become overwhelmed by these primal drives. That was why they were so vocal in stating their position. It could not be left up to time to work things out. They were stepping from outside the shadows. In the warm sun, they were making their principles known. The summer heat might seem like a fatal influence on such a reasoned approach. But they could make their case under duress. And they used the fire to bring out the best in their existence. In the heart of the season, they could use the oppressive waves to their advantage. That was the very source of their eloquence. They lived for the world.

In spite of flowers's incredible effort, they had encountered an immovable force. As much as it might appear as if they lived under a dark cloud, such a force made itself known universally. The great powers of the cosmos were being opposed by something entirely pernicious. Creation had been ripped from end to end, and this bitter wave simply burst through.

It seemed at every turn as if disaster was on the forefront. Its nasty effects showed up in all corners. And it wasn't just a series of mechanical failures which affected the world-at-large. Was it even possible to oppose such a general feeling of malaise? Had man been abandoned by the universe?

It might have been possible to deal with a series of misfortunes. Even a string of bad luck would eventually come to an end. But the flowers had discovered a permanent coloring to this darkness. Try as one might, there seemed no way to convincingly erase this streak. Had all their talk of freedom and the liberation of the individual faded as they finally came up against a formidable opponent?

The flowers were blighted by this phenomenon. But that did not diminish their zeal. Each day the sweet aroma would rise up from the earth to fill the air. The flowers needed this rallying point to affect the world. Each small victory kept things going. They found sustenance in this recognition. There was an unbelievable history represented in their physical presence. Their identity had been carved out of a prolonged dialogue with their environment. They were often on the edge of extinction. But they used their adaptability to alter their being to overcome any obstacle. A sunflower could maintain a path to track the beneficence of the sun. A flower would adapt its form to welcome the beak of a friendly hummingbird. The flowers had perfected a design to absorb all the benefits from the atmosphere. They would change with the weather and the seasons. All these impulses had been perfected over centuries. It demonstrated a rich

understanding of the flow of time. Due to the flowers' intent, they were able to initiate progress even when the conditions seemed contrary to their survival. Life provided a new meaning to time.

If there were always threats to the flowers' existence, they framed their development in counteracting these effects. Despite all their previous encounters, the present calamity was fraught with such trepidation that the plants had never felt previously. It was as if the universe was answering back for all the years of growth. To overcome such a threat meant that there was an even more profound urgency contained in the flowers' understanding of life. Such an intense awareness would allow these living things to resist any such attack. They were coming face to face with the most unrestrained power that the cosmos could unleash. This confrontation paralleled the first struggles that had pulled life from the surrounding inorganic world. The biology demonstrated an assertiveness that constantly renewed itself. If their vitality was the flowers' reply to history, then the heavens tried to counteract this wholeness with an integrity of its own. This was nothing less than a rude affront against the flowers' self-expression. It spoke of a universe that was afraid of self-knowledge. It wanted to maintain its dark age. The wonders of life were eclipsed by this terrible distortion.

The flowers had been resilient even through worsening conditions. They had shown the world how they were working in concert to depose an ugly tyranny. In the process of rebelling, they exposed a deeper threat to their being. There was an ominous feeling that now accompanied this understanding. The flower would not be intimidated by the terror. That hardly stopped the heavens. More storm clouds circled. The gods were preparing a final conflict. They could not allow the flowers to challenge their authority.

The anger of the gods boiled over. They knew that the flowers had hit them at the heart of their power.

"This is ghastly!"

Alida seemed so pale.

Loads of plants had been uprooted. They were haphazardly strewn on the ground.

"This is what we think of your revolution. You are all brigands."

The leadership was particularly hard hit. The storm knew where to strike, and it did its bidding without restraint.

"I've never seen such damage. It looked like a tornado!"

The clouds had rolled over us with such fury. You could feel the uncontrollable anger that had been unleashed.

"This was like pure revenge."

You could sense that Alida was on the verge of tears. It would require loads of work to clean up the mess. And there had been such a selective attack, that it would be difficult to restore the sense of placidity that had reigned over the garden.

"They shouldn't have even tried."

Alida disagreed, "Their effort was worthy of legend. If they hadn't have tried, we would have all become too complacent. Sure, the destruction is overwhelming. There is no excuse for it. After all my work, it will be so hard getting things back in order."

It was as if the whole deck of cards had collapsed. Where there once had been a vision, all that remained was catastrophe. Alida revered the lost souls.

“They thought that they were shutting things down. They have only created martyrs.”
The great powers did not second guess themselves. They only saw their own success.
“They wanted to walk. They wanted to escape their anchors. Now they can just float away.”

Alida could sense this illogical belief at the forefront of the reaction.

“What evil! They planned to take no prisoners. They just let loose their wrath.”

She did her best to comprehend what could make someone find such delight in inflicting such pain on others.

“The flowers were always aware of the contradiction. That was why they battled with such intensity. They knew what were the odds.”

Once the ground had dried out, I helped her collect all the debris from the storm. Together, we raked the grounds. There were the remnants of such beautiful plants everywhere.

“This was just disgusting!”

This was what occurred when the powers-that-be decided to exact their punishment. Their cruelty supposedly demonstrated that they were teaching us a lesson. They only demonstrated what they lacked in decorum. They weren’t able to control themselves. In contrast, the flowers showed their virtue. There was nothing that these lofty gods could do to shake the composure of the worthy flowers.

I found comfort in the lessons offered by the lovely flowers. They burned brighter in memory than they had in life. And I felt a particular unity with their being. Alida suffered due to the tragedy. But she realized that the garden retained its ability to renew itself. The surviving flowers did their utmost to fulfill the promise. All the while, Alida sensed a hidden message in the flowers’ activity that was meant for her. Despite the setback, this consolation enlivened her being. As the garden returned to form, she felt stronger than ever. There were still moments when the glory of the fallen comrades still rang out. The memorial spoke to another, more permanent garden which would never yield to the rages of the heavens. For this, she was infinitely pleased.