

# NIGHT BLOOM:

## A Paean to the Mutant Flowers of Darkness

What strange flowers have we fertilized,  
With blood of remorse and reckless frolics undisguised?

How far has our reckless pollen flown,  
Carried by whispers and shadows overthrown?

Creatures of the night  
aren't bothered by such questions  
as they traverse this space:

Those who in Primal Darkness bloom  
Cherish the sweet agony, revel in the gloom.

In murky glades, where twisted vines entwine,  
Strange petals unfurl, like secrets from the divine.

A spectral garden, lush yet cursed,  
Where thirst mingles with the night.

Don stared at the previous poem, his head shaking in slow, rhythmic dismissiveness. He tossed the manuscript onto the table like it was something stained. "What sort of poem is this?" he muttered, with a voice raspy with genuine distaste.

Aiko didn't look up. She sat perfectly still, gazing at the empty space where the words had been read aloud. "I sense no love the previous poem," she said, her voice dropping to a low, clinical vibrato. She then tightened her grip on her sleeves. "Just a cold, calculated will to power."

"The poem was more than just cold; it was tragic," Cindy interjected as leaning forward into the lamplight. She gestured vaguely at the air, as if trying to catch a fading thought. "Without love... everything we build... it's all just hollow. A shell in this world of decay a mere echo destined to fray."

Bai-Lou, who had been lurking in the corner's deepest shadow, finally commented. The sound was like dry leaves skittering across stone. "It goes further than that," he whispered, a ghostly, cynical smile touching his lips. "Even with 'love'—that fragile little anchor—our entire existence is also eventually dissolves. It's all just dust in the end, waiting for the wind."

— T Newfields

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