Boundless Love and Hopeless Mornings *by Teajai Travis*

The morning sun exorcises shadows from the quiet of my room while I wrestle between the musical ciphering of harvesting squirrels, and the enlightened bellows of mystical birds. The swamping blades of a gas-powered mower dance in the empty spaces of time and breath; I am hypnotized by wandering daylight as its crawls over my parched skin, weaving through baby fur, and arm freckles. I think about the tangled strings of life that brought me to this moment, my naked legs entwined with hers. We nestle our bodies beneath a vintage white duvet that is lightly stained at its corners.

My beloved is gently resting in a dream that keeps her body still and her heart soft. I've handled life with little care, mindlessly spinning unmuzzled spells into the wind and thought little of the mess I'd made. I thought even less about cleaning the messes I'd been aware of. I am now in the cradle of a boundless love, contemplating the hopelessness of mornings. Not because the perfection of the arriving sun shortchanged the sacred trappings of my windfall life, or that I take for granted the luxury to meditate with natures soundscape. I find myself sealed in a purgatory of comfort that perpetuates an unrelenting addiction to war, and beneath the calm of my karmic comfort I am a cry so consuming it defaults to silence as not to shatter the sky.

I can feel the tortured prayers of war victims spilling from bodies that self-contort to trap life long enough to imprint their legacy upon stars that over consume their trauma. I wonder how stars can be so protective of my privilege, making sure those traumas never slip through clouds and rain upon my home, built so far away from war machines. I wonder if a war machine knows it's a war machine, and then question myself, and the unknown lives I neatly tuck away in my dreams.

In the background of a local cafe, I heard a radio broadcast about bombs being dropped on hospitals in Gaza. While at the gym I spent an hour running on a treadmill that faced a muted television. Placed in a merciless CNN loop, were images of deceased children being carried in the arms of broken children. Several times I sat in the parking lot of the gas station near my home and selected lottery numbers while the CBC reported Palestinians were without food, water, and gas. Tonight, I'll sleep beneath the blue glow of the moon. I'll wrap my fingers between the fingers of my beloved, and I will pray for peace. My contemplations will be consumed by the munificent calm of my lover's touch, the arresting collage of autumn leaves pressed against our bedroom window, and the absurdity of being still and safe in the illusions of freedom and grace.

When I rise with the sun, to indulge in life's mysteries, I will appear unbothered by hopeless mornings. The deconstruction of my fleeting apprehension will haunt the empathetic traumas I've neatly curated in the quiet ancestor vault of my subconscious. These malignant ghosts will manifest into afflictions that will tickle and warm my body. They will feel like the morning sun climbing over my skin, the comfort of an entangled love beneath the weight of an aged duvet, and I will chew the dust of war and complacency while heedlessly waiting at the gate of my maker.