

## Letters, Unknown

*The following transcripts are of letters found on a deceased soldier's body, in the region of [REDACTED].*

*September*

Dear L,

Today I watched the sun rise and I thought about you. The sky was clear and blue, and I remembered those mornings we spent on our hill where the only things which flew overhead were birds and clouds, the only sounds from the chorus of the animals and crisp air which tangled in your hair. There are no birds here, no fresh green grass.

I woke up with blood crusted beneath my fingernails and imagined the way you'd wipe them clean, singing softly with your crinkled smile, and there'd be nothing to regret, no stains on my mind like the blood which seeps into the soil of the fields outside. I miss you every hour of every day, even more when I watch these people die and wonder if someone, somewhere, far away feels their heart break with the weight of a lifeless body falling to the ground. There's no one left to cry for my senseless death, one among millions. I wonder if you'll watch me fall to my knees on the trampled grass and smile, knowing I can finally be wherever you are.

love always,

A

~

*October*

Dear L,

Do you still love me with all the last gasping, desperate breaths, all the blank eyes and cold bodies I'd caused? There aren't any mirrors here, but I know that if I looked in one, there'd be someone else there, with an empty stare and shaking hands which only know the bitter metal of a rifle, the warmth of your hand lost to endless days of mindless war.

I can't hear anything but gunshots and screaming in my sleep. I hope that you've finally escaped them, buried beneath that patch of grass we left behind long ago. I hope you're on our hill, gazing over fields of fresh grass and flowers. I don't remember where we are now. Nothing in this war makes sense, but they won't let me go home. I've begged them, every day, to let me go home. Yet, they force us to march on while we're shot down like waterfowl.

If I were as brave as you I'd be long gone, escaped to some place which has never heard of war, washed away of the blood and dirt.

yours,

A

~

October

Dear L,

I dreamt last night, and there was no gunfire. Instead, I saw all the people I'd killed. Blank faces in muddied olive uniforms, standing inanimate in a river of blood. You were there too, your eyes accusing. I'd never felt so ashamed of my uniform. I'm sorry that I never understood, the way you refused to aim for the heart. I'm sorry I dragged you with me to a place you'd never belong.

~~I hate you for finally leaving this hellish place behind, and leaving me here.~~

And yet, I wish you were still here.

We're still stuck in these miserable trenches, and more soldiers are dying from disease than they are on the field. Everyone's going mad down here with the mud and vermin and stench of rotting corpses seeping from every crevice. There's not been a fight in days; some unspoken truce made when the first hailstorms arrived.

I laid down my rifle days ago, and I haven't seen it since. I hope it's been carried off by the rats, along with every other weapon. Would the war end then, or would we resort to weapons made of branches and stone? Crude weapons for crude war. You'd hate that.

- A

~

L,

Hidden behind the trunk of some tree. Bullets flying everywhere. Hail finally stopped, fighting started again. Endless shouts and gunfire in my mind, though your voice has disappeared. Please don't let me leave you behind. ~~Why'd you leave me behind?~~

Remember I've lost my rifle? They gave me a new one. Threw it somewhere in the dirt an age ago. Wondering how long I'll last without it. Does the blood and dirt and rifles follow, if I go where you went?

I like to think that in another life, we'd be bac—

*[Note: this last, unfinished note was found beneath the collapsed body of a deceased soldier with a gunshot wound to his head. His identity, as well as that of the recipient, is unknown.]*

*We urge anyone with information about the people involved in these letters to inform us by Post, at the address [REDACTED].*

