Awaiting Summer

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A single candle burned low upon the desk. Stacks of schoolbooks lay discarded, spilling from the scarred surface to litter the cold stone floor. By the feeble candlelight, one pen was moving still, scratching pensively across a rumpled page.

Starlit summer star—
Hold me to your inky breast
My summer star—

The pen paused, and melancholy blue eyes turned to gaze out the nearest window. Beyond the great City of the Sacred Dragon Isle, the endless heavens wheeled in their eternal dance. But it had been autumn. Why did he remember that time with all the warmth and light of summer?

Aghast at his own selfishness, the fair-haired student stared at the words left behind his disobedient pen. Should it matter if his beautiful Tchoriye loved him best? Being loved a little surely was better than not at all. Angrily, he bent over the page, and the pen gouged the next words deeply into the parchment, the ink seeping in like blood upon the thirsty earth.

I flew too near the sun one summer
Dwelt within the vaulted sky
The white-gold fire seared me, broke me
Cast me toward the earth to die

The image of two smiling green eyes pierced the shadows of his musings, and he felt deeply ashamed. What would his lover say of his moodiness? Possibly that he studied too much and had too little fun. Sometimes he felt that he would shatter under the pressure of his classes, and at other times he wished he would. Yet, always the thought of that beautiful smile sustained him.

My wings had never borne such weight
As when you caught me as I fell
All breathless summer in your eyes
I learned of heaven—

Yes, heaven—love, tenderness, and joy so deep it was nearly agony—but also the constant pain of inevitable loss, of self-imposed exile.

I learned of heaven and of hell
The fruits of heaven were your lips
Ambrosia on your tongue
Your touch, your breath, your beating heart
Two spirits became one
And then came hell, one soul, two halves
Rent asunder by my will
My selfishness, my helplessness
Brought early winter's chill

But even winter would not have been so bad. Fondly, he remembered how two warm bodies intertwined to stave off the cold of an autumn morning. His desert-bred bones had shuddered in the arms of that smiling child of the wilderness, and yet he found himself longing with all of his heart to shiver again, just to feel those arms around him once more.

Summer star, return to hold me
Tell me that you love me still
Teach me, reach me, make me yours alone

That seemed a selfish request to make of a born wanderer. Fortunately, his beloved would never read these words. Even so...

Forgive me, dearest, if you will
The fool I am
I understand
In time summer will return

In time. With the turning of the seasons. So why was that not soon enough? Well, he would make a poor king if he could not even curb his selfish impulses in so small a matter. Scrubbing his eyes dry, he convinced himself that it was only the candlelight that brought the unbidden tears.