

Orange Sunset Ending

(Parody of "The Passionate
Shepherd To His Love")

(Trần Nghi Âu Cơ)

You and I are separated by a forest full of
imperfect Christmas trees and sneaky trails
of broken pinecones and unforgiving pebbles.

Each day we fight the angry branches snapping
at our faces, leaving razor red marks
that will never fade.

Our struggle is a cliché: silent figures on a
movie reel, passionately declaring carefully scripted lines
just to push Time forward towards an orange sunset ending.

But *we* are not a cliché. We are two parts of the same
breath of air, both drifting in temporary
loneliness. *Temporary.*

We will have our day by the sea; the long mornings spent
counting drops of coffee, the gray afternoons simply lounging
around, letting the music sink into our skins, inspiring goosebumps.

We'll take intricate walks leading nowhere. The mischievous
wind will fiddle with the buttons of your shirt and
waltz with my tangled hair.

The shop owners and children will lean out of their windows
to stare at us, to stare at the warmth of our bliss, everyone exhaling
a simultaneous *ah*; our own version of the *Girl From Ipanema*

One day, we'll find our orange sunset ending.

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Being Nicer

(Trần Nghi Ân Co)

Jessica said I hurt your feelings when my eyes rolled up at the sky and my nose wrinkled in annoyance the day we walked past each other in the Student Union.

She said you looked crestfallen. She said it in her

“I’m disappointed” voice. And that’s the only reason why I invited you over for oatmeal cookies and mint chocolate-chip ice cream. I even wore my new Converse, freshly red like a deliciously unbitten Crayola crayon, eager

to please and easy to break. I wore ‘em just for you. I even dug out that dusty tube of love-me-cherry flavored lip gloss from the lumpy caves of my backpack and brushed my hair with a real brush. But then you had to go and ask me if I had

feelings for you. The word slithered up the sleeves of my special occasion cashmere sweater like a cold winter’s handshake, leaving goose pimples. No. No, I don’t.

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