



Pause for poetry:
Willow Loveday Little

Description

A Centurion Arms Himself Before Battle

By **Willow Loveday Little**

How still the surface of the pond
And how still he stares at tight jaw,
Hewn from the tender rock of youth
To complement stony eyes. Regiment's pride.
His spear, asparagus-like, is held weak-wristed.
Long stemmed hybrid, he is wary of all
That is fragrant—bats away powdery
Petals, repulsed by the posy,
The blossoms bother him
In undoing ways of folly. He was
Suckled by the wolf's great city and
Knows the barbed underside of the bloom,
The thorned stems. Respects
But side-steps a hardy plant.

He practices the smile that is
His visor; he has legions to lead.
Amazement quells the grin, stopped
In tracks as straight as a Roman road,
Awe at how indistinct the shift
Between controlled and unhinged.
One extreme spent, the other chaotic
Ramblings of a beggar is the
Uncanniest of Valleys—too human. He



Aims for genial, segmented down the centre.
How close roses strewn across a doorstep
Are to a restraining order.

Escape by coracle is an attractive proxy
Until recollection flushes his cheeks:
If he conquers, first pluck of the
Scented spoils. Bourbon, Tea, Gallica, Damask,
China, Eglantine, Musk.

The oldest line on crumbling papyrus:
Barely twenty-five, the youngest centurion in
The Empire falls. The heathens split his mask
With hazel wands. His men watch, agape.
The throng: Reine Victoria,
Carefree Beauty, Fantin-Latour, Madame Hardy
Sedona, Sunsprite, Gertrude Jekyll; wild, they
Cow his corpse, smash
Skull like a nut, wailing crowd at war's trophies.

Comatose amid the briars, his dream is cultivar.

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Willow Loveday Little is Montreal-based writer and poet whose work has appeared in *The Dalhousie Review* and *on Write or Die Tribe*. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University and is a contributor to *Graphite Publications* and *Medium*. You can find her on [Medium](#), or at Instagram handle [@willowloveday](#)



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