

This piece is inspired by Monet's extensive collection of paintings called "Les Nymphéas" which use the waterlilies in his garden in Giverny, a place renowned for its beauty, as their subject matter. These paintings were created at a time where the artist had just lost his wife and was now alone with only the garden as a reminder of the life they had had together.

Les Nymphéas

The world is not yet awake in Giverny. Pale midsummer rays are only starting to spill over the garden wall, warming the blades of cut grass and illuminating the infinite stream of water that lays still. The world cannot affect this utopia's purity, it never has and it never will. Any suffering is dispelled on entry and worries melt away into the clear waters. In this garden the only sorrow is held by the water lilies and a grieving artist who is alone: with a garden as his only companion.

Much like the garden of Eden this place is divine in every way. Hard to believe a mere mortal could design something so effortlessly perfect, as if a god of some form had not simply cast their gaze over it and, on a whim, lay the most heavenly place on Earth. No blossom is out of place and no fallen leaf is a mistake. There is a sense of purpose in every aspect of the garden giving it a sense of balance that is near impossible to achieve. How can an idyllic scene so stunning be real? How can it hold so much emotion?

The artist has come to know this place well. It sounds absurd, but it has become a companion after all these years. Branches of trees, reach out their lichen covered twigs in embraces on dreary days and irises beam at him in hope of sparking inspiration when creativity is slow to bloom. This lack of inspiration is rare, however, because not a day goes by where something does not draw in your interest. The garden is a playground of beauty and sprawls on forever, to the point where you rarely see the stone walls that encase this wonder of nature. You are transported to a new world the minute your foot steps through the archway entrance. Noses are immediately filled with the sweet smell of wildflowers and new shoots of plants, eyes reeling from the sheer amount of beauty they are taking in. Even in the bleak months of winter, glimpses of the sublime still thaw through the bitter cold.

A spectrum of colours dance in the river; the focal point of the garden. Purples and blues swirl in an elegant storm on the surface while the shadows of willow trees playfully twist in the sun over the liquid mirror. They interact in harmony with each other, I suppose much like everything in the garden, entrancing the onlooker in its magic. All while white lilies sit undisturbed on their pads, like streaks of paint on a canvas. The crowning jewels of the garden. They know something we don't. They have the power to unsettle the calm waters.

The lilies used to bring solitude and happiness to this paradise they call home, but now in their petals blooms a lifetime of memories. The smell that was once so beautiful, so tender, now is tainted with melancholia. Mourning a life that could have, should have seen their next flower this summer. Deserved to hear the river a final time and would have longed to feel the sun on their skin once more. It was unfair. Selfish of the flowers, ruining their innocence by standing as a constant reminder of a tragic loss. It has burdened the rest of the world and now the garden. A

reminder of her. But they felt the same absence as the artist did. How couldn't they? In a place so perfectly planted every loss, no matter how small, is felt in such gravity. She was an integral part; the gardener herself. The garden was still gorgeous but its soul had died with her earthly body. And in doing so the artist will always know something is missing. He just doesn't know what that "something" is. He just knows he has to find it.

So he paints.

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