

Amelia Mayne - Daffodils

You used to love those daffodils; watering them twice a day, trimming the hedges above so they got more sunlight, and even turning the whole vegetable garden into a glowing sea of yellow. I have the clearest image in my mind of you, barefoot, holding your cup of coffee and semi-burnt marmalade toast each morning, checking on their grassy habitat in the search of new sprouts. Those daffodils needed to be healthier, stronger, and more perfect than last season. They needed to have stronger stems, a brighter complexion, and healthier leaves. But as Summer's heat drew closer, each and every flower would die after just blossoming in what felt like Spring's brief greeting.

A solemn reminder of nature's impermanence.

Remember our goal of moving to that big house, up North? I've never forgotten what you told me: "*We should sell the house with the daffodils included.*" Instead of uprooting them like how your friends had suggested, you're still determined to leave them growing in their current sanctuary. You loved them enough to know that they belonged to the cottage, not to us.

Well, today I picked them.

And I have been picking them - slowly - every day since three months ago. They finally bloomed straight after you went into your coma, so I bring bunches of them to you daily just in case you wake.

And right now, sitting in this chair beside your hospital bed, looking at you, I can't tell if you'll be mad or not. Because after routinely clipping their stems, placing them into my glass jar, and bringing them with me to the hospital each day, it means that all the years you spent catering

to those patches of flowers are now compressed into yet another bouquet in my hands. Every emotion, memory, and experience tucked carefully throughout each petal.

But Spring is slipping away, and soon will take our daffodils with it. And even though I fear Spring will take you too, these flowers somehow ease my nerves. Not just because they are beautiful, but because they remind me of *you*. They remind me of *us*.

Minutes continue to tick past, and my shadow lengthens across the vinyl floor. I always play your Spotify playlists when I'm here, so there's a very scratchy classic of Billy Joel's on at the moment. I never truly appreciated his music, but I've recently come to realise that some of his singles are legendary. Except, I'm not really focusing on him right now - I'm actually staring at your heart-rate monitor. Each *beep* is a rhythmic reminder of the speed at which time's moments relentlessly slip into unobtainable memory; a reminder that Spring's daffodils are - like all things in life - temporary.

I'm now thinking about that cottage of ours. It's lovely and all - with its low ceilings, wooden floorboards and quaint french windows - but we both know that it's not big enough for all the flowers you used to dream of growing. When you get better, I think we *should* move to that house up North. We would have land for endless flowers, especially daffodils. Instead of just patches in our backyard, we would have fields and paddocks and meadows and acres solely filled with your favourite flower.

But right now, I fear that none of this will happen. Because you've been lost in a coma for three months now, and our savings for that dream house are taking a serious blow. Spring is nearly over, the sun is setting once again, and our daffodils are running out. But don't worry - I'll

keep coming back. I will keep sitting here in this chair, holding our daffodils, thinking about how happy you'll be when you wake. You'll wake to see how beautiful you've made these daffodils. And I can't wait to see your face when you realise that.

I stand up, pause Billy Joel, and bring the bouquet of daffodils over to the ceramic vase on your bedside table. I pick the wilted flowers out, and replace them with today's new ones. I then tip the fresh water from the jar into the vase, throwing the dead ones into the bin by the door as I head to leave. For a moment, I simply appreciate the scene. You, the heart rate monitor, the daffodils, and the shadows on the tiles from the setting sun. I take one last glance at you before walking away.

With my empty jar, I make my way back to the parking lot, and it's at this moment when I realise something.

What your daffodils mean to you, is what you mean to me.

With hope, beauty, and life, you are my daffodils.

And I am your jar.

Empty now, but hoping to be full tomorrow.

So day after day, I promise I'll be here.

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