

A piece of you, for a piece of me.

It's how every interaction we have ends up. We dance, we drink, we lie about the happiness we have. You always seem to be doing well.

I, somehow, always manage to match the mood.

Ten years since you left, five since your first kid, and one year removed from our last rendezvous.

I come back every year to see the remnants of my dying lineage, to experience the languid gloom of listening to their...prattling lies.

Every year you wait for me at the station, always in vivid and macabre claret-red wear. Our eyes meet and your hands immediately dash to their tiny buttoned pockets, as that sideshow clown smile creeps across your lips.

The conversation is tit-for-tat, because what's the point? I'm the last person who made you feel passion, and you're the last person who gave me a sense of belonging; words just can't convey that.

I answer your body's cries in ways that only an old love can. I assuage the pain that you've contained. Each caress reminds you of the fragmented and broken past we share. I lightly kiss the pangs of your past that you so desperately want to take back. Our love was a cacophony of tears and drunken howls; yet you crave it so, and maybe I do too.

When you touch my shoulders, I forget about night I made my choice, the night I turned and ran away from it all. Every light peck your tainted lips press upon me, circles me back down the drain of a past best left behind.

When the holiday morning comes, I notice your ring carefully back on its bony pedestal. My clothes are on before morning, and we even read the paper side-by-side.

The morning is always cold when we step out from that dingy two-star hotel, even though I'm layered up. I put on my shades, you settle your scarf. A peck on each cheek, and a short hug to finalize this...
transaction.

This type of usury is usually so difficult, how I love the holidays...

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