

WE BLOOMED WHERE THE BOMB MISSED

Oladosu Michael Emerald

A war begins, & someone plants a garden.
 A country shatters, & a girl names her newborn Hope.
 A father learns to braid his daughter's hair
 because her mother is missing. The sky folds itself into grief,
 but the sun insists on showing up.
 On the radio: *another bomb*.
 On my phone: *a stranger mourning his father*.
 On my street: *a dog limping like a metaphor*.
 Tell me this isn't a thread.
 A boy plays the cello in a ruined theatre.
 A wedding happens beside the rubble.
 Someone says *I do* & means it.
 The trees are still blossoming in cities that burn.
 A woman hums while sweeping the ashes from her doorstep.
 My hands tremble at the headlines, but they still write letters,
 still hold faces, still bake bread. I say *hello*
 & someone across the world softens.
 I post a poem, & a man in Kyiv says he finally cried.
 A tree falls in Jos, & my chest aches like it was nearby.
 I think of my uncle who teaches children to dance
 where the power fails, who lights candles like that's enough.
 A boy memorizes every star above his home
 like a way of saying *I will return*.
 My sister keeps sending sunflowers.
 My mother still blesses the rice before cooking.
 There is a kind of defiance in hanging your clothes
 to dry while the sky threatens rain.
 There is beauty in the ordinary that refuses to vanish.
 A friend laughs mid-sob. A stranger pays for someone's medicine.
 The world keeps fracturing, but we keep choosing each other.
 The door still opens. The voice still answers.
 The heart still believes. There is no glamour in grief,
 but there is gold in surviving it.
 The sunflower still turns its face to the light.
 & even now, someone is planting a tree they'll never sit under
 just to prove the world didn't break them.