



Romantic Inevitability, 2023, still life artwork by Alyssa Thorne

To mark the departure of Diamond and the tenth year—and with love.

E.W., *Heptonstall*—ENGLAND

4 Aug. 22

Romantic Inevitability (2023) still life art, arranged and photographed by Alyssa Thorne

*Her cheekbones were charred [. . .] Her hair [. . .] death certificates, waiting for signature.
Her hips were the roof of his house fallen in. Her eyes were seven years of cries.*

— Ted Hughes, from Capriccio planning materials, British Library archives

This commissioned still life piece, created by artist Alyssa Thorne and inspired by Effy Winter's poem, "Romantic Inevitability," draws from the tradition of Selam, the language of flowers, and pairs together rose and pink iris to symbolize everlasting devotion in love. The intention was to arrange a work of art that would capture the fragility of love and devastation of a romance overcome by sorrow and loss. This piece reveals the tragic nature of the romantic martyr. In March 1969, rather than suffer a life of despair, separated from the man she loved, Assia Wevill took her own life. "[. . .] she was past the point of no return, and did not wish to be saved," (Koren & Negev, Lover of Unreason, 2006). Romantic Inevitability is a confessional composition; it is a reflection on the grief, death, and cremation of Assia Wevill, and her all-consuming love for English poet Ted Hughes.

*I have lived on the dream of living with Ted—and this has gone kaput. The reasons are immaterial.
There could never be another man. Never.*

— Assia Wevill, from a letter to Lonya Gutmann, January 1969

Appearing in this still life is a representation of Assia's locket, referred to by Hughes in his poem "The Locket," as a metaphor for her demise: "You were half-blissful. But on occasion / you'd open / Your death and contemplate it" (Hughes, Capriccio, 1990).

"The locket itself, with its two halves locked together, provides a symbolic image for the dualities in [Hughes'] poem: life and death, the shifting balance between two lovers, and the shifting balance of power between the woman and death. [Hughes'] poem seems to suggest that [Assia's death] was fulfilling a nightmare vision she had always carried with her. He believed that their futures were linked and "juggled" with them, as if maintaining a delicate balance which might at any moment fall apart."

— Ann Skea, from 'Poetry and Magic: Capriccio'

Effy Winter, 10 July 2023

Alyssa Thorne



Romantic Inevitability Poetry Broadside, 2023, artwork by Georgia Lingwood; photography by Alyssa Thorne

Romantic Inevitability (2023) Limited Collector's Edition Broadside
Poetry by Effy Winter, with artwork by Georgia Lingwood

*Romantic Inevitability—the black destiny to be lived out [. . .]
She accepted it—penance and identity all in one.
He [Hughes] would neither be with Assia nor release her.*

— Jillian Becker, from a letter to Harriet Rosenstein, March 1974

Romantic Inevitability Limited Edition Broadside was printed in anticipation of Effy Winter's forthcoming book ASSIA, a poetry collection inspired by Assia Wevill and her love affair with English poet Ted Hughes. Published in an edition of fifty copies on matte paper, numbered and signed, featuring artwork by Georgia Lingwood.

"Romantic Inevitability" is a reflection on devotion, loss, and despair. Though the love between Ted Hughes and Assia Wevill endured for many years, their relationship suffered a cruel fate. After a final quarrel with Hughes in 1969, Assia Wevill took her own life. She was cremated and her ashes were buried in the woods behind Lumb Bank in West Yorkshire, England. While there are many veiled layers to this confessional poem, "Romantic Inevitability" paints an image of the day of Assia's cremation and the demise of a passionate romance which left a lasting mark in literary history.

The artwork for this poem draws from the tradition of Selam, a language involving the exchange of flowers between lovers as a way to share sentiments in secret. English ivy, camellia, hawthorn, and yarrow are portrayed in this piece, alongside a captured songbird.

Our life together was so complicated with old ghosts, and dozens of near-separations over the years, but we belonged together so completely and so deeply, that her repeatedly testing me, saying that we'd better separate for good, were just like a bad habit, part of our old difficulties, and so when she repeated it on the last day over the phone, it was nothing new, nothing we hadn't got over dozens of times before. I feel now my life has gone completely empty [. . .] —if only I had given her hope. I've no idea what I'll do now. Assia was my true wife. It's with me every minute of the day and night.

— Ted Hughes, from a letter to Celia Chaikin, April 1969

Effy Winter, 10 July 2023



Romantic Inevitability Poetry Broadside, 2023, photography by Alyssa Thorne

EFFY WINTER is an American poet and scholar specializing in literary studies with a concentration on the lives and work of German writer Assia Wevill and English poet Ted Hughes. A nominee for The 2018 Pushcart Prize, her poetry has appeared in numerous publications. In 2022, she began pursuing her academic work in England, dividing her time between London and West Yorkshire where she studies confessional poetry at The Ted Hughes Arvon Centre for Creative Writing.

Learn more at <https://effywinter.com>.

*Romantic Inevitability Art Print Set is available for purchase at <https://effywinter.com/shop>.
Print sets are limited. Only fifty copies will be sold.*