

GRASSLANDS EXCERPTS

EXCERPT I-

Upon closing my eyes, my vision shifts. Dollops of bright color pop in and out, syncing to the harmony of an invisible melody, and an intricate scene is being painted before me. The oleaginous colors mix rapidly, the furious red and the deceptive gold; they become one, and then violently tear apart in circles, forever. In the eye of the storm, the cool air calms me down, and each pigment falls into place with time. I catch sight of a big blue sky with white alpine clouds hanging over the distant horizon, a mighty gust of wind racing through the tall and scattered trees of acacia, the soft feeling of wet grass underneath my bare feet, the fresh scent of pink hyssop growing in abundance, and the gentle, humid touch of dew that follows after a torrential downpour. This is a corner of nature that will never let me forget that I am a part of it, a place where happiness does not come in the form of elusive moments of distraction. And just like all moments, good or bad, the melancholy joy I feel is also a fleeting sensation. If I can sleep forever, this is the dream I want to live in.

EXCERPT II-

Waves of conversation keep flowing, but an unknown force keeps me from drowning in them. I try to stay on the precipice of my emotional cliff, safe with my thoughts, but the futility in trying to avoid the inevitable is not lost on me, and no divine providence can save me from the destructive march of time as it gets louder and louder, until the deafening eruption mutilates my ears. I feel no pain, of course. Ink from dry scrolls recovered from lost glass bottles that drift onto the shore read ancient messages from only a few moments ago. Unfinished dialogue of conversation, urging me to surrender myself. The tone shifts from the morbid to the comedic, from the casual to the polemic, and from the disassociating to the captivating. Sooner or later, the waves will break again. And again. Each time stronger than before. And I will eventually float away.

EXCERPT III-

The duo steps out of the car and into the night. They walk at a brisk pace, taking a left turn at a three-way intersection. They start to face eastward, staring ahead at a single road disappearing into the hilltops. Miles observes the serene landscape; the hills' soft curves are not clearly visible in the night, but their undetectable presence in the dark removes every ounce of trepidation from his footsteps. He stands tall and walks with an unwavering look in his eyes. With his right hand, he feels the weight of the gun in his jacket. No matter the outcome, these hills will stay the same, and the same grass

and trees will remain shrouded in that familiar darkness until the time comes when the morning sunlight permits that same beauty to be beheld once again. This fact is reassuring to Miles because the indomitable beauty of the hills shall forever go unchanged, with its every inconsequential detail working hard to make up for the world's ugliness. Even the ugliness of his own heart shall be countered swiftly by this indifferent landscape.