Writhing darkness glides along her blade, dissolving flesh and bone alike. Screams tear the silence in the air as she descends upon the villagers. Some bring pitchforks or axes: mere farmer’s tools. In one beat of her wings, she leaves their bodies cooling on the ground as she soars high into the night sky. The full red of the moon illuminates her from behind, casting her demonic shadow over the burning town like a curse.

As she peers down, a part of her remembers that each death once slowed her blade and pressed sharply into her chest. Now there is just the ever-present numbness that has been her companion since the last one passed. Even recalling his death at her own hands could not break the silence wound so tightly around her heart.

In the distance, ambling silhouettes stand out against the unmarred snow. Their movements are clumsy, the cold and fear slowing them down. The air shimmers with unseen power, her magic reaching outwards in a wave as the sky flickers into black. Clinking her blade shatters the plane, and those distant figures fall to the ground in pieces. Unbidden, she recalls her first time performing it, of the comments her dear friends had made, “that spell will be really good for the ones firing on us at range, it even catches the fliers!” Although she can no longer recall what they sounded like, no longer remember what they looked like, she knows that she does this for them. She saves the world that they took back together.

Glancing back at the moon, she is trapped between despising and appreciating the blood-tinged shine casting the entire world in its glow. She hates the work that must be done to her very core, and yet… Trailing back down, her eyes take in the gray ash falling like snow, the rising plumes of dark smoke, the dark silver of trees, and the dull white of the flames. Distantly she recalls that fire is red as well, or was it orange?

She wonders when it happened, when all the colors in the world dulled to gray, and why only the moon’s red still appears as bright as that first night so long ago. Perhaps she deserves this, perhaps it is her fate. In a few thousand years she will forget what colors once looked like as the weight of eternity presses down on her soul. Until the day she stumbles across a brilliant flash of red and amber that reminds her of someone from long, long ago.