

A Golden Ocean

Feet flying over the rough terrain of the forest floor, a single thought pierced the haze of his clouded mind:

I do not want to die a caged man.

The brilliant red and gold hues of the dusk sky were a vibrant contrast to the desperate, mud covered soul stumbling through the darkened woods. He knew it was only a matter of time before his captors caught up with him. He knew, yet he could not find it in himself to submit to the inevitable; to die at the blood-stained hands of his subjugators. The fervorous score of a single thought accompanied his frantic flight through the trees:

I do not want to die a caged man.

In a world that so greatly valued the submission of its people, an innominate man, strangled by an ostensibly decorous culture, was fighting a battle against that sentiment. A corrupt nation had cost this man everything. His hopes were ashes in the furnace of a twisted and tyrannical society. A man, destroyed, tortured, and enslaved. The egregious sins of a civilization founded on ethical principles. The irony of this was seemingly lost on an entire population. It was not lost on this unknown man. This faceless, nameless individual was the leader of a movement unbegun. And, as he arrived upon the edge of a staggeringly tall seaside cliff, a single thought branded him with its white-hot intensity;

I do not want to die a caged man.

A cliff at the edge of the world. A sea of liquid gold, reflecting the colors of a fire-bright sky. Promises of prosperity and felicity played in the waves, a siren's song. The man was caught in its allure, eyes brimming with unshed tears of sorrow and despair, his ears replete with the cacophonous shouts of his captors. He was trapped. A man bound by the laws of a youthful, tempestuous country. Liberty had been fought for and won, but not for all. Not for him. He suddenly knew what he had to do, what he *must* do, to free himself from the cage.

A single step forward, and he was at the brink. He thought about what had brought him to this moment. And, as he stepped forward, over the edge, he knew. It was that single, unrelenting thought. A desperate hope. A declaration, whispered to a golden ocean.

"I will not die a caged man."