

Kay Porter

Memory of Ryu Hayabusa

Soaked by rain he stared out over the edge
of the roof. Below he saw some of his
enemies and he knew where first his sword
would strike. Vengeance had been silenced for too
long, but now they would all learn by his hand:
debt to vengeance paid. He made his way down

to the ground below, he brought the first down
silently as he landed. His sword edge
gleamed like a facet in a ruby. Hand
swift, he threw stars and the three men on his
left fell. An alarm sounded. Men began to
emerge from the building. Work for his sword

started. Whistling through the air his sword
found purchase. The rain continued on down
and found steel on its way. They fall, some two
at once, and he made his way past the edge
of the battlefield. Routinely, his sword
cleared his path. Vibration numbed his hands.

Wave after wave were brought down by his hand.
Red mixed with clear and ran from his sword.
Lightning flashed. Rumbles of thunder reach his
ears over the clamor of the men. Down
they crumble to his vengeance and he edged
closer toward his purpose. He knew all too

well that victory and defeat were close. Two
men, the last left standing, rushed him. His hands
deliver fate. They fall beneath the edge
and victory is quiet. He looked down
to survey the damage. Few got past his
guard and found flesh. Blood pulsed and stained his

left thigh and he felt the burn, felt good to
be alive. He must bring their Master down!
Entering the building he found him, hands
together on steel. Their dance began, swords
flashing quick as lightning as edge met edge.

Swiftly, his victory was brought to hand.
Returning to its leather sheath, the sword
brought down, gave peace to owner and edge.

Ōkami Amaterasu

The white wolf walks along the narrow dirt road,
the yellow of the dirt that lies ahead reflects
the sun's harsh rays but what follows behind
is the miracle. Green grass and pink flowers
sprout from the dirt her feet touch. Withering
trees come to life as the air that surrounds
her blows through the brown leaves.
Crops, dead where they were sown,
begin to reach towards the sun and ripen.

The people she passes shrink
back in fear from the effects
the wolf has on her surroundings.
They whisper to each other
and avert their eyes as she passes.
She mourns the crops that will be left
to die once again, the trees that will be cut
down, and the grass and flowers trampled.
No one trusts what they don't understand,

but she gives the people this gift anyways.
She hears the cries and prayers
of those who are starving and knows
it is the role of a god to provide.
One day, a man will brave
his fears of the unexplained
and bite into the shiny, red apple
from the tree beside that very same road.

It will be the best fruit he has ever tasted.

Aboard the Normandy

The hot, glowing stars and planets
on the Galaxy Map
are cold to the touch.
Shepard picks where to defend.
So many must be lost,
to save so few.
Does every commander feel this guilt?

Earth is where the war began,
the purple hull of the Reaper ships
gleamed in the midday sun
as the red eyes of their cannons
focused on city after city.
The smell of burning,
concrete and flesh and wood,
signaled to those that still lived
that the Reapers had won control.

Earth is where the war will end,
Shepard promises the fleet
of a hundred different races,
all fighting to defend against this enemy.
This enemy who will do the same
to other homes if they are not stopped.
They prepare for travel
through the mass relay,
but will it be enough?

Aboard the *Normandy*,
James and Kaiden talk shit as they go
all in on a last hand of poker,
Garrus hums a tune his youngest son sang in the fourth grade play
as he cleans his "Black Widow,"
Liara lies in wait for Shepard under the soft, white sheets.
Everyone is preparing for a last stand
against the enemy who had shown them to fear
what lived in the blackness behind the stars.