

Dandelion *and the* Wind



Dandelion and the Wind

Prologue

To some, the dandelion is nothing more than a weed. An intruder in gardens, a nuisance in fields. Something to be uprooted, cursed, forgotten.

But those who have lived close to the land know better.

The dandelion is healer, survivor, teacher. Its root, deep and stubborn, carries bitterness that cleanses. Its leaves, sharp and green, nourish the body. And its blossoms are like bright suns scattered across meadows that can be gathered into wine, golden and fragrant, tasting of both earth and sky.

Children love it best. They pluck its seed heads, those fragile globes of white, and blow. Seeds scatter, caught by the wind, floating away to places unseen. Wishes rise with them, unspoken prayers riding currents stronger than hands can hold.

In this, the dandelion carries its truest wisdom:
that life must be released to continue,
that grief, like seeds, must one day scatter.

In Ireland, on the edges of windswept fields, women once gathered dandelions in aprons and baskets. They boiled blossoms in copper pots, stirred sugar and lemon into the water, and left the liquid to ferment in dark cupboards. Weeks later, when the wine was ready, they poured glasses of golden memory and passed them around the table. Laughter mingled with the taste, songs lifted, grief eased for a moment by sweetness.

But traditions fade. Hands grow still. Fields go untended. And sometimes what is lost seems too heavy to carry.

This is the story of a woman who returned to her grandmother's cottage in Ireland, where dandelions bloomed wild and uncountable. In their roots she tasted her sorrow. In their blossoms she remembered her lineage. And in their scattering seeds she learned at last to release her grief to the wind.

For dandelions teach us this:
we do not heal by holding tighter.
We heal by letting go.

The Meadow of Memory

The sea was the first to greet her.

It stretched wide and restless at the edge of the village, gray waves rolling in endless rhythm, their foam breaking white against the rocks. The sound was low and constant, not loud, but insistent, like an old story repeated so many times it became a pulse beneath the air. A rhythm older than language, older than memory.

Brigid inhaled deeply. The air carried salt and peat smoke, the tang of the sea mingled with the earthy breath of turf burned in hearths. Beneath it lay something sweeter like the faint perfume of gorse blooming yellow along the hillside, sunlit and honey-rich, even in the wind.

And the wind, well it was everywhere. Not cruel, not harsh, but firm. It pressed against her coat, tugged at the strands of her hair until they whipped loose and stung her cheeks. It seemed to speak without words: *You are here. You have returned.*

Brigid walked on, boots crunching gravel on the narrow road that wound upward from the station. The sound of her steps echoed oddly in her ears, like they belonged to someone else. The city had muffled her, held her in its heavy silence, but here every step seemed to resound, claimed by the land itself.

Stone walls lined either side of the road, old and lichen-covered. Their tops were feathered with tufts of grass that bent under the weight of the wind, bowing toward the earth. Beyond them the land opened into wide fields that rolled toward the sea cliffs, sheep grazing idly. Their white wool scattered across the green like torn pieces of cloud.

And then she saw them.

Dandelions.

She stopped without meaning to. Her hand went out to the wall, fingers gripping the cold stone. Her breath caught.

They stretched across the fields in every direction, maybe thousands, perhaps millions, their blossoms lit like tiny suns against the emerald grass. Each one trembled on its stem in the wind, bowing, rising, bowing again. Sunlight struck their golden faces and for a heartbeat the entire meadow seemed lit from within.

Her chest ached. She had not seen dandelions this way in years. In the city they grew in cracks of pavement, stubborn and small, stamped down by feet and tires. Here, they were unbroken. Here, they were radiant.

The cottage appeared just ahead, perched on a rise above the fields. Small and square, its whitewash faded by years of storms, the slate roof weathered but still intact. Smoke no longer curled from its chimney as it had in her grandmother's time. The windows were dim, shutters rattling faintly with the wind.

Brigid stood before the door for what seemed a long time, unable to cross the threshold.

The last time she had walked into this house, her grandmother's laugh had filled it. She could still hear it if she let herself, low, warm, bubbling up from deep within, spilling into every corner like light. The table had been spread with bread and butter, jars of jam, the scent of soup thick in the air. And always, there had been a small glass of golden liquid at her grandmother's elbow; *the wine of the poor man's sun*, she'd called it. Dandelion wine.

The memory rose so sharply she almost turned back down the road. What business had she here, with her heavy silence and her grief pressed tight into her chest?

But the sea roared behind her, steady and endless. The wind pressed at her back, urging her forward. At last, she stepped across the threshold.

Inside, the air was cool, touched with dust and the ghost of old peat smoke. Shadows pooled in the corners. She set her bag down quietly, as though careful not to disturb anyone, though no one remained.

Her footsteps echoed softly across the floorboards as she moved from room to room.

Here was the kitchen, where her grandmother had stood at the stove, apron tied snug, wooden spoon in hand. The shelves sagged now with empty jars, once filled with jams, syrups, cordials, herbs. She remembered the neat rows of colored glass, sunlight striking them until the walls glowed. The long table bore its scars still with knife marks, dents, faint stains that no scrubbing had ever erased. Proof of use, proof of life.

Here was the bedroom, low-ceilinged, the bed neatly made though no one had slept in it for years. A quilt lay folded at its foot, each square stitched by hand. Brigid touched it with trembling fingers, remembering her grandmother guiding the needle, patching torn fabric with patience, teaching her the rhythm of mending: *in and out, pull and smooth, nothing wasted*.

Each room carried absence like a weight.

She did not weep. The grief inside her was too heavy for tears, like a stone pressed deep into her chest, immovable, lodged where nothing could reach it.

It was the meadow that drew her back outside.

The blossoms seemed to call; not with voices, but with the stubborn brightness of their color. She stepped down into the grass, her coat tugged by the wind, her boots sinking into damp soil. The sheep lifted their heads to watch, their eyes dark and round, before bending again to graze.

She crouched low among the dandelions. Her hand hovered above the nearest bloom.

The stem trembled, its yellow face wide and open. Fragile, she thought. Too fragile. To pluck it would be to break something irreplaceable.

Her grandmother's voice rose in memory, strong and clear despite the years:
"Pick them while they're bright, child. Before the sun goes down, before they turn to seed. Gather their gold while you can."

Her throat tightened.

She pinched the stem between her fingers and pulled. It came away easily, almost too easily, its juice staining her skin pale green. She laid it into her apron. Then another. And another.

The wind bent the meadow, blossoms swaying in waves, and she moved slowly through them, each pluck a small surrender, each blossom a weight of memory. Her apron grew heavy with gold. Her hands grew sticky, pollen staining her skin yellow.

By the time she returned to the cottage, the sun had lowered, stretching shadows across the fields. She stood in the doorway, staring down at her apron full of flowers.

They looked too fragile to become anything lasting. Too fleeting to hold meaning.

And yet, she remembered her grandmother's shelves of jars, the dandelion wine that glowed like summer sun even in the bleak midwinter. She remembered the laughter that rose around the table when it was poured, voices lifted in song, grief softened for an evening. Fragile things could endure, if tended. Fleeting things could carry memory longer than stone.

She spread the blossoms across the table, their scent faint, grassy, almost sweet. The sight of them filled the quiet room with a strange, delicate light.

She pressed her palms flat against the wood, closed her eyes, and whispered, though no one was there to hear:

"I don't know how to do this without you."

The words cracked, her voice rough from disuse. Silence followed, heavy and whole, wrapping her like a cloak.

Outside, the wind stirred.

And in the meadow, thousands of dandelions bent low and rose again, as if answering.

The Bitter Root

By morning, the blossoms she had gathered were already folding inward, their golden faces dimmed. She touched them lightly where they lay across the table, petals loosening at the edges, faintly fragrant. Their brightness seemed to fade as quickly as joy, here for a moment, gone before one could grasp it.

She drew back her hand. Fragile things. Fleeting things. How could such delicate blooms make anything that endured?

Her grandmother's voice rose within her: *"The flower for joy, the leaf for cleansing, the root for truth. Never forget, child. The root is the truth of the plant."*

The root. Bitter, deep, hidden in soil. Unseen until one stooped to pull it.

She stared at the meadow through the kitchen window, the wind bending stalks of grass, sunlight flashing over dandelion crowns. Something in her stirred. She could not rely on the blossoms alone. She needed what lay beneath.

She tied her apron, took a basket, and stepped outside.

The air was sharp, laced with sea salt, damp earth, and the faint sweetness of grass newly warmed by sun. The meadow trembled in the breeze, dandelions bowing and rising as if in chorus.

She knelt by the wall, pushing her fingers into the soil. The earth was cool and damp, clinging to her skin. She dug until her nails scraped something tough and fibrous. She pulled, and the plant gave way, bringing with it a root long and pale, branching like veins.

It smelled of earth, sharp and raw. She turned it in her hand, remembering how her grandmother would scrub and slice them, roast them dark in a pan until the kitchen filled with an acrid, bitter scent. She used to wrinkle her nose as a child, making faces at the harshness of it, but her grandmother only laughed, pressing a steaming cup toward her.

"Drink it. You don't need to like it. You only need to know it. Bitterness teaches."

She dug another, and another. Soon her basket began to fill with roots tangled together, soil heavy on their skins. Her palms ached, nails rimmed dark. The labor steadied her, gave her hands something to do while her chest carried the weight of what words could not.

By midday, her body was sore, her back tight, but the basket was half full. She stood and looked down at her work of a collection of unlovely roots, pale and knotted. They looked like nothing, and yet everything began here.

Back inside, she washed them in a basin, the water turning brown, soil clouding and sinking. She scrubbed until they were clean, laying them out on a cloth. With her grandmother's old knife she cut them into thin pieces, the blade rocking against the board, each slice a small offering.

She lit the stove and set a pan upon it, dropping the roots in. Slowly they browned, the kitchen filling with a pungent aroma; earthy, sharp, acrid. The scent reached into her chest, unsettling her grief, stirring memory.

It was winter again in her mind, the stove hot, her grandmother bent over the pan. The old woman's hands moved steadily, never hurried. Steam fogged the windows, rain streaked the glass, and a cup of roasted root sat before her. She remembered sipping reluctantly, bitterness coating her tongue, and her grandmother watching with knowing eyes.

"Sometimes life is sweet, sometimes bitter," she had said. "But both keep us alive. To shun the bitter is to shun half the truth."

The woman stood in her kitchen now, eyes stinging from the smoke, tears rising not only from the scent but from the truth of it. She had shunned the bitter too long, tried to hold only what had been sweet, until grief taught her otherwise.

When the roots were roasted, she poured hot water over them in a pot, watching the liquid darken, deep brown spreading like ink in paper. She lifted the cup to her lips, inhaling the acrid scent.

The first sip was harsh. It bit her tongue, tightened her jaw. But she forced herself to swallow. Warmth spread heavy in her chest, grounding her. She set the cup down, breath trembling.

And then the tears came.

Not sobs, not storm, just a quiet stream, her eyes burning, cheeks wet. The bitterness had unlocked something. It was not pleasant. But it was necessary.

"Bitterness teaches," she whispered into the empty room, echoing her grandmother. The words cracked, but they carried.

That afternoon she returned to the blossoms from the day before, limp now but still useful. She picked through them, removing the green bases with careful fingers, remembering her grandmother's patient hands. The work was tedious, but meditative. Her fingertips turned yellow, her lap filled with discarded stems.

She set water to boil in the copper pot, steam hissing like breath. She poured the petals in, watching them swirl, their golden color bleeding into the water. She stirred in sugar, lemon peel, a handful of raisins. The scent shifted, softer, almost sweet, like sunlight caught in steam.

As she stirred, memory crowded close. The kitchen filled again with her grandmother's presence, laughter bubbling, spoon moving in the same circle. She saw her at the table, pouring liquid gold into jars, sealing them with wax. She heard voices of uncles, cousins, neighbors, all raising glasses, laughter spilling into the night, grief softened by warmth.

Her throat closed. She stopped stirring, gripping the spoon until her knuckles whitened.

"I miss you," she whispered. The steam rose, wrapping her words, carrying them upward.

She poured the liquid into jars, lining them along the shelf. They glowed faintly in the fading light, like suns caught in glass. Fragile, yet enduring.

She sat long into the night, staring at them. Her hands were stained, her chest still heavy, but something in her shifted. She thought of the roots that were bitter but grounding. The blossoms were fragile but bright. Together they held more than either alone.

Perhaps her grief, too, could hold both.

She opened her journal and wrote slowly, her handwriting uneven:

*"The roots remind me that grief is bitter.
The blossoms remind me that memory is sweet.
Together they may become something I can hold."*

She closed the book, blew out the candle, and sat in the darkness.

The jars gleamed faintly, and for the first time she felt less afraid of the night.

Ledger Fragment

*"The bitter root grounds me.
The golden blossom lifts me.
Perhaps, between them, I can live."*

The Village Winds

The jars had begun to hum with life. Not in sound exactly, but in presence. Each time she lifted the cloth from the cupboard, she felt a faint stir in the air, a subtle hiss of bubbles, like the jars themselves were breathing. The golden liquid shifted slightly, petals swirling slow, as though stirred by an unseen hand.

It unsettled her. It comforted her.

Sometimes she sat by the cupboard for hours, candle guttering low, listening for what could not be heard. It was not silence anymore, not the heavy silence of grief. It was ferment; a living, unpredictable silence, restless with change.

But jars alone could not sustain her. The shelves of her kitchen were bare. Flour nearly gone, salt down to a handful, matches in their last box. The cottage was filled with memories, but memories could not bake bread.

She would need to go to the village.

She rose early, fastening her shawl against the sharp wind. In her basket she placed her purse, a folded cloth, and though she hadn't planned to, a small jar of petals she had not steeped. They glowed faintly even in the dim light of dawn, as though carrying the meadow's gold within. She hesitated before placing it, uncertain why she felt compelled to bring it, then tucked it deep beneath the cloth.

The road wound down toward the sea, narrow and stony, lined with old walls. Grass sprouted from their tops, bending low in the wind. Sheep grazed beyond, their heads lifting briefly to watch her pass. The sea roared in the distance, gulls wheeling, their cries sharp against the air.

Her boots struck the stones in steady rhythm, but her chest was not steady. Each step brought her nearer to voices, to faces she had not seen in years, to the possibility of pity. She kept her eyes on the ground, the basket heavy on her arm.

Halfway down, she paused by a patch of dandelions that had already gone to seed. Their globes trembled in the wind, perfect and fragile. She crouched, plucked one, held it close.

As a child she had blown dozens like it, sending seeds flying, making wishes she could not remember now. But her hands trembled as she held it. What if letting go meant forgetting? What if scattering meant losing the last pieces of what she still carried?

She placed the clock gently in her basket, unblown, unable to release it. Then she rose and walked on.

The village square was alive when she arrived. Stalls crowded the cobblestones, bright with cloths and baskets. Fishermen called prices, the scent of tide still clinging to their catch. Women bargained for butter, men hefted barrels of ale. Children darted through legs, clutching crusts of bread, laughter rising.

The air was thick with salt, smoke, and frying oil. It was overwhelming after the solitude of the cottage. She tightened her shawl, head low, and moved quickly among the stalls.

Flour first. Then salt. Then a wedge of cheese. She paid in silence, coins pressed into hands without words. The vendors glanced at her, curious, cautious, but did not speak beyond what was needed.

She thought of leaving, her basket already heavy. But her steps carried her instead to the fountain at the square's edge. The stone basin trickled with clear water, moss soft at its rim. She sat on the low wall, resting the weight of her basket, trying to slow her breath.

The wind pressed through the square, tugging at cloths, lifting the smell of fish and bread. She loosened her basket's cloth to check her purchases. The jar of petals caught the sunlight and flared.

A boy stopped before her, perhaps eight or nine, hair unruly, cheeks flushed with play. His eyes fixed on the jar.

"What's that?" he asked.

Her chest tightened. Words caught.

The boy leaned closer. "Flowers?"

She nodded slowly. "Dandelions," she managed, her voice rough.

The boy grinned. "We blow the white ones." He darted to the fountain's edge, plucked a seed head, and ran back, holding it out proudly. "Here."

She stared at the trembling globe in his hand.

He lifted it toward her lips. "Blow!"

Her throat ached. She hesitated, but the boy's expectant eyes held her. She drew breath, shaky and thin, and blew.

Seeds scattered into the air, caught by the wind, spinning bright against the sky.

The boy clapped. "See? They go everywhere!"

She watched them drift until they vanished, her hands trembling. Something loosened inside her; painful, but freeing. Letting go did not erase. It carried onward, farther than she could reach.

The boy laughed and ran off, already chasing another clock. She sat still, the jar of petals warm in her lap, the image of the seeds burned into her chest.

“Dandelions,” a voice said.

She looked up. An older woman stood nearby, basket heavy with greens, hair tucked beneath a scarf. Her eyes softened as she nodded at the jar.

“I’ve not seen that in years,” she said.

Brigid swallowed. “What?” Her voice cracked, but it carried.

“Petals. My mother made wine with them when I was a girl. Sharp stuff, but sweet at the end.” The woman’s lips curved in a small smile. “I thought the tradition gone.”

Something stirred in her chest, fragile but alive. She held the jar closer. “Maybe not.”

The neighbor’s hand brushed her arm gently, then withdrew. “Good,” she said simply, and moved on.

She walked home slowly, the basket heavy but her chest lighter. The sea wind pressed against her face, carrying the cries of gulls, the hiss of grass bending in waves.

At the wall where she had tucked the unblown clock, she paused. She lifted it from the basket, studied its trembling form. Then, with a steady breath, she blew.

The seeds lifted, spun, scattered far across the fields.

Tears filled her eyes, but she did not turn away.

That evening she set the jar of petals on the shelf beside the fermenting jars. She lit a candle and opened her grandmother’s ledger, the pages yellowed and soft. With careful hand she wrote:

*“The child reminded me: seeds must scatter.
The neighbor reminded me: traditions can return.
The wind reminded me: release is not forgetting.”*

She pressed her palm against the words, then closed the book.

The cottage was silent, but not empty. The silence felt like breath now, like ferment. Alive.

The next morning she rose early and went to the meadow. Dew clung to the grass, the sea gleamed pale gray in the dawn. She walked among the blossoms, crouched low, and plucked another. Her apron began to fill again, slowly, steadily.

This time, her hands did not tremble.

This time, she gathered not only for wine. She gathered because she had remembered: what was fragile could endure, what was fleeting could carry farther than stone, and what was bitter could, in time, sweeten.

Ledger Fragment

“May the wind carry what I cannot hold.

May grief scatter, like seeds, and grow where I cannot see.”

The Quiet Cupboard

The cupboard had become the heart of the cottage.

Each morning she rose and went first to it, pulling back the cloth that hung across the shelves. The jars glowed faintly in the dim light, golden liquid shifting slow. At first she had only stared, uncertain if anything was happening. But then she began to notice.

Tiny bubbles clung to the glass, rising in lazy streams. A faint froth formed at the rims. Sometimes, if she leaned close, she could hear the faintest hiss; soft, like breath released.

The jars were alive.

And she began to realize, so was she.

Not healed, not whole. But moving, changing, restless in ways she had not felt in years.

She would sit at the table with her tea, listening. The ferment was not loud, but her body knew it was there. It unsettled her. It comforted her.

Wine demanded patience. That was the first lesson her grandmother had pressed into her. *“You cannot hurry the bubbling, child. You cannot scold it into sweetness. You must wait, and trust.”*

So, she waited.

She learned the rhythm of tending the jars: stirring gently with a wooden spoon, wiping the rims clean, covering them again. She began to write their progress in her journal of dates, colors, scents. She treated them like companions, each jar its own presence, each one a small sun held in glass.

Her journal filled quickly.

“Day 4: The bubbles are stronger. Alive.”

“Day 7: The scent is sharp. Still bitter. Still me.”

“Day 10: The waiting grows heavy. But perhaps the waiting is the work.”

Her handwriting steadied as the days passed. Her voice, on paper, felt less hesitant.

At night, the silence of the cottage no longer felt suffocating. It felt like ferment; restless, alive, unpredictable.

Sometimes she lit a candle and sat by the jars in the dark, watching shadows play across the glass. She spoke aloud to them, her voice low, unsteady but real.

“You are bitter now. But you will not always be.”

“You are waiting. So am I.”

“You are alive. So am I.”

Each word carried weight, rising into the air like steam.

The silence answered her not with emptiness, but with presence. The jars fizzed faintly in reply.

With the jars alive, her memories began to stir.

At first it was her grandmother’s laugh she heard, warm, bubbling, wrapping the kitchen in its sound. Then other voices rose; cousins arguing, neighbors singing, her grandfather humming tunelessly as he whittled by the fire. She had not remembered these sounds in years, but now they pressed close.

And with them came harder memories.

The day the news arrived. The words spoken that broke her life in two. The silence that fell afterward, sudden and absolute. She had not spoken of it since. She had locked it inside, buried beneath her ribs like a stone.

Now the ferment bubbled against it, unsettling the silence she had clung to.

One night she pressed her palms flat to the table, tears stinging her eyes. “I don’t want to remember,” she whispered. “I don’t want to open it.”

The jars hissed faintly, bubbles rising. Alive. Insistent.

She closed her eyes. Perhaps remembering was not a choice. Perhaps, like ferment, it rose when it was ready.

The storm came without warning.

Clouds rolled in from the sea, black and heavy. The wind howled against the walls, rattling shutters. Rain lashed the windows, hissing down the chimney.

She lit candles, their flames bending, trembling. The storm unsettled her, stirred something raw in her chest. She could not sit still.

She wrapped her shawl around her shoulders, lifted the latch, and stepped outside.

The meadow bent beneath the rain, dandelions flattened, their golden heads battered. Grass whipped against her legs, the sea roared. She walked out among them, soaked to the skin, her hair plastered to her face.

She fell to her knees in the mud, hands pressed into the earth, sobs tearing loose from her chest.

“I can’t hold it anymore!”

The wind swallowed her cry, but she kept speaking, louder, rawer.

“I am tired of silence! Tired of carrying this stone! Tired of pretending I can hold what broke me!”

Rain and tears mingled, streaming down her face. Her body shook, her chest heaving. The storm raged around her, but within her another storm raged harder.

And then, in the corner of her vision, she saw them.

Dandelion clocks, shaken free by the wind, scattering into the air. Fragile seeds spinning away, luminous against the storm.

She wept harder, but something loosened. The dandelions released what they could not keep. Perhaps she could too.

She stumbled back inside, dripping, shivering. She went straight to the cupboard and pulled a jar into her lap, cradling it as though it were a child. The golden liquid fizzed faintly, alive.

She pressed her forehead to the cool glass.

“May you change as I must change,” she whispered. Her voice cracked, but it held. “May you sweeten what has been bitter. May you hold what I cannot bear.”

The jar hissed softly in reply.

She sat on the floor until the candle burned low, the jar warming against her body.

The storm passed by morning.

The air was washed clean, sharp with salt. The meadow glistened, heavy with dew. Many blossoms were crushed, but new ones lifted their faces already, bright as suns. Dandelion clocks shimmered silver in the early light, trembling at the edges of the field.

She walked barefoot into the grass, cool earth soft underfoot. She plucked a clock, held it close, and blew.

The seeds scattered in the wind, glittering in the dawn, carried out toward the sea.

This time her breath was steady.

This time it did not feel like forgetting. It felt like prayer.

From then on, her days carried new rhythms.

Morning: tend the jars, write in her journal, walk the meadow, scatter a clock into the wind.

Evening: sit by the cupboard, sip roasted root, speak aloud what she had not dared before.

Her journal filled with pages of release:

"Grief ferments. Alive. Messy. Changing."

"Seeds do not die. They travel."

"Release is not forgetting. Release is letting the wind carry what I cannot."

Each page lightened her chest, each seed carried her sorrow farther than she could see.

One night she stood at the doorway, candle in hand. The meadow stretched silver beneath the moon, thousands of clocks shimmering. She stepped into the grass, lifted one, and whispered:

"This is for you."

She blew gently, seeds rising like stars, drifting toward the sea.

Her breath caught, but not from sorrow. From wonder.

The silence around her was no longer a cage. It was space. It was presence.

Ledger Fragment

"The wine ferments.

The silence ferments.

The grief ferments.

All are alive. All are changing.

Release is the only way forward."

The First Pour

One morning, the bubbling was gone.

She had grown used to it, the faint hiss, the whisper of ferment alive in the cupboard. Each day the fizz had answered her silence, a companion to her breath. But now, when she lifted the cloth, the jars were still.

The liquid glowed golden, clear now where it had once been cloudy. The froth at the edges had vanished. The petals had sunk, their work complete.

The wine was ready.

She stood with her hand on the shelf, staring at the jars. A strange unease rose in her chest. She had waited so long, tended so carefully. To pour would be to cross a threshold.

What if it was too bitter still? What if it disappointed? What if she was not ready to taste change?

But jars were not meant to remain sealed forever.

She took one jar, set it carefully on the table. She found a clean glass, its rim chipped but still sound. Her hands trembled as she tipped the jar, liquid spilling in a steady stream.

The wine caught the morning light, amber and gold. It glowed as though the meadow itself had poured into her kitchen, as though every blossom she had gathered now shone again in this single glass.

She lifted it.

Her reflection shimmered on its surface: a face lined by sorrow, eyes shadowed by years of silence. And yet a face alive, steady, waiting.

The first sip was cautious.

Bitterness came first, sharp, cutting across her tongue. It startled her, almost made her pull back. But she forced herself to swallow.

Then, slowly, sweetness rose. Faint at first, then curling around the edges of her mouth, lingering.

Her eyes filled with tears. She set the glass down, pressing both hands to the table, her body trembling.

“This is what grief becomes,” she whispered. Her voice was hoarse but true. “Not gone. Not erased. Bitter still. But softened. Sweetened. Alive.”

That evening she wrapped one of the bottles in a cloth and carried it to the village.

The square was quieter now, dusk settling. Stalls closed, lamps flickered in windows, smoke rose from chimneys. She walked slowly, bottle heavy in her basket, her heart louder than her steps.

At the fountain she saw the neighbor who had spoken of her mother’s wine. The woman sat resting, basket of greens at her feet.

Brigid approached, pulling the bottle free. Her throat tightened, but she spoke: “I made some.”

The neighbor looked up, surprise bright in her eyes. Then slowly she smiled. “I thought no one still did.”

Brigid poured into two tin cups the woman carried. They raised them together, clinked softly, and drank.

The neighbor sighed, eyes closing briefly. “Just as I remember. Bitter first. But then...” She opened her eyes, smiling again. “Sweet.”

She nodded. “Yes.”

Something shifted in her chest. For the first time, she felt less alone in her remembering.

The boy from the market found her the next day. He darted to her cottage door, breathless, hair wild. “Is it true?” he asked. “You made wine from the yellow flowers?”

She hesitated, then opened the door wider.

He stepped in, eyes wide at the rows of jars, the glowing bottles. “It looks like the sun in glass,” he whispered.

She poured him a sip, watered down in a cup. He tasted, nose wrinkling, then grinned. “Bitter! But not bad.”

She laughed; a sound that startled her.

The boy blew a seed head he had carried in, scattering it across her floor. “See? It goes everywhere.”

Her chest ached, but it was not only grief. It was joy.

Word spread slowly, then quickly.

A man came, remembering his grandfather's jars. A woman arrived with her daughter, curious. Children pressed noses against her window.

She began to teach them; how to gather blossoms, how to separate the green bases, how to wait. Her kitchen filled with voices again. The table, once silent, now bore laughter, argument, song.

They drank the wine together, raising cups, eyes bright. Bitter first. Then sweet.

And in their voices, she felt her grandmother's laughter again; not as ghost, but as continuation.

One evening she carried a bottle to the meadow. She sat on the low wall, basket beside her, the sea roaring in the distance.

The dandelions glowed in the setting sun, thousands of faces turned gold. She poured a cup, lifted it, and drank. The bitterness no longer startled her. The sweetness no longer felt fleeting. Both belonged. Both were necessary.

She poured a second cup and tipped it into the earth at her feet. "For you," she whispered. For her grandmother. For the one she had lost. For all the voices that had gone silent.

The earth drank deeply, dark soil shining.

She plucked a white clock, trembling and perfect. She held it close, whispered:

"This is for me."

Her breath was steady now. She blew.

Seeds scattered into the wind, spinning silver in the dusk, carried farther than she could see.

She watched until the last disappeared. Her chest lifted, lighter than it had in years.

Release. Not forgetting. Carrying onward.

That night she opened her journal, lit a candle, and wrote one final entry:

"The wind will remember. I only need to release.

The dandelion root for bitterness.

The blossom for sweetness.

*The seed for release.
Grief scattered. Memory carried. Life continues.”*

She closed the book, set her pen aside.

The cottage was quiet but no longer hollow. The silence was full.

She leaned back, listening to the faint hum of bottles on the shelf, to the wind pressing against the walls, to the sea beyond.

And for the first time, she felt ready.

*Final Ledger Fragment
“Dandelion root for bitterness.
Dandelion blossom for sweetness.
Dandelion seed for release.
Grief scattered, carried by the wind.”*

Dear Reader,

Thank you for stepping into the pages of *Dandelion and the Wind*. This little story grew from a simple image: the resilience of a dandelion and the unseen force of the wind that carries its seeds. To me, the dandelion has always been more than a weed, it is a teacher of persistence, of quiet beauty, and of the way life insists on beginning again, even in the cracks.

This story is about what it means to be rooted and what it means to be carried. It is about the strength we don't always recognize in ourselves until change sweeps through us, and the way healing sometimes arrives in places we never expected.

If these pages stirred something in you; a memory, a breath, a sense of your own resilience; I hope you carry it with you. And I hope you know, as the dandelion knows, that nothing gentle is ever wasted.

Thank you for reading, for pausing here, and for letting this story walk with you. I invite you to discover more of the short stories in the **Bitter Sweet** and **Apothecary Press** collections; each one another seed on the wind, waiting to take root in its own way.

With gratitude,

Davilyn Atwood
The Apothecary Press

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All herbal references are offered for storytelling purposes and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Readers should always consult with a qualified healthcare practitioner before using any herbal or natural remedy.

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