



SOFIA SABELLA | PROSE

# THE TIRED CASTLE

I could feel the weight of my soul and the world around me when I was young. My mother often took me to a magic forest with fairies, pixie dust, and magic pathways, all the things of a young child's dreams. But the grand willow trees were the most magnificent part. Their arms would open to welcome me, and their billowing leaves would sing songs with the wind, whispering my name. They loved me, and I was in constant awe of God's creation. However, their true perfection came from within. I slipped under their gaze beneath their looming skirts, where I felt the safest, surrounded by their arms, hidden in a hug. I danced to their songs, searched for the mystical creatures, and hid from the outside world. If you ever dared go farther than the weeping willows, which often I did, you found a tall but tired castle, the only thing truly left from the distant, outside world. Trees climbed up the white stoned walls, and a small brook kissed the floor, slowly breaking it down. I knew the princesses had lived there, dancing the same steps I did. Nature loved and nurtured them, just as she loved me. In those moments I felt truly like the sun—bright, beautiful, happy. Now I look back at these adventures with a melancholy sense. I went back to the forest once, but it transformed into a concrete road. The trees are brick houses, and my castle, now an exhausted fortress. Before I was old, I could embrace nature, love nature, feel the freedom of her, back when I was truly happy.

