As I wrote a very sad poem, my daughter sat next to me, also writing a very sad poem. Hers was made of scribbles, but I could see the sadness in the jerks of the pen on the page, in the flourish at the end of each line.

Oh Mama, she said. This is the saddest poem I’ve ever written. I said, I’m sorry. This is also the saddest poem I’ve ever written. It’s so sad that I had to write it in French, and I don’t even speak French. We sighed. These poems are so sad they don’t even make sense, she said, which was when I realized my daughter was no longer a child. As I turned to look at her, she was already sprouting the beautiful petals of an exotic flower with only a few short days to live.