**WHEN YOU’RE YOUNG**, no one listens to you. Because you’re young. What could you possibly know or have to say about the world around you, that holds any real value? What have you seen? What have you done? Who even are you at this point? Go out into the world & gain some experience. Travel & dream & love & learn & struggle & break someone’s heart & have your heart broken in return & discover what it is to be defeated & wake up & get out of bed anyway. GO! LIVE! Once you’ve done that, come back to me and at that time maybe possibly we can start thinking about what it might be like to take your thoughts under consideration.

So you do.

You live.

You give this world your best shot.

You master a craft.

You climb the ladder.

Any ladder.

You learn when to compromise and when to stick up for yourself.

You extend your hand and help other people on their journey.

You do the things you were told to do.

You think **“Now’s my moment. The moment when people will finally hear me.”**

You open your mouth to speak and as you begin to invent sound you hear a mighty **“SHHHHHHH”** coming from all directions.

Because you’re old. And, when you’re old, no one listens to you. What could you possibly have to say about the world around you? This world that has changed so much. This world that has moved on and will continue to move on with or without your participation. What do you know? Have you kept up? Do you even know what’s going on anymore? Do you know who this person is? How about this person? Take a step back and let the young people handle this.

So, you do.

You take a step back.

Several steps actually.

So many steps you wind up in a cave somewhere.

Are there even caves where you live?

There are now.

Because here you are.

In one.

You take in your surroundings.

Darkness. Silence. Solitude. Lonliness? Peace? Both perhaps?

You walk deeper and deeper into the abyss and think

**"Maybe I live here now. This place isn't so bad."**

Until a sound stops you in your tracks.

A voice.

Both familiar and completely foreign.

Singing beautifully.

You follow it as it grows louder and louder.

You reach the source.

A figure:

chin lifted,

mouth wide open

and pouring from it is the sound that led you here.

As well as something a bit more staggering.

A great wave of color

(magenta, turquoise, chartreuse, blood orange)

spills from between their lips.

It lands on the cave floor and a garden grows.

Lush vegetation appears and snakes up the walls and fills every corner.

Light pours in.

The figure stops.

The mouth closes.

But the space remains alive and forever changed.

You call forth,

**"Hey."**

The figure turns around, a bit startled.

They look sort of like you, actually.

A bit worn down.

A bit grey.

A bit world weary.

Your eyes meet and they look at you for a long moment before finally saying,

**"Oh sorry...I didn't know anyone was listening."**

***-J.***