

The Chase

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A man awakened to the sound
of singing birds. They flew around
his dripping tent. The rain had poured
all night, but now an eagle soared.
And thus began the strangest day
the man would live, but who can say
what things are odd when life's a dream
and things aren't what they sometimes seem?

The man turned over in his tent,
crawled through the flap, and out he went.
He put on boots to block the muck
and walked some yards back to his truck.
Within his truck, he took his pole,
replaced it with his sleeping roll.
He grabbed his tackle box and bait.
The sun was up. He couldn't wait.

He found a spot to cast his line
and sat down near a lofty pine.
He breathed the cool and clean fresh air.
He closed his eyes, became aware
of what his eyes could never see:
the sound of wind in every tree,
the touch of sun upon his skin,
the memory of what had been.
He'd first gone fishing with his dad.
He'd been an eager, vibrant lad.

He opened both his sleepy eyes
and reveled in the bright sunrise.
But suddenly he caught the sight
of someone running in the light.
A woman's form ran through the trees,
a movement made with perfect ease.

His heart began to pound within.
He didn't know the origin
of these new feelings that arose.
His drowsy mind could not compose
his thoughts, and soon he dropped his gear,
but he felt just a little fear.

The woman's form was far away
but seemed to lure the man to play.
From tree to tree, she moved with speed.
The man began to feel the need
to run and catch the slender form.
His head and chest were growing warm,
and he took off his boots, so he
could chase the form more easily.
But as he ran, she gained more ground.
It seemed he couldn't chase her down,
and after several minutes more,
his lungs were burning, legs were sore.

He made one final effort there,
and as he ran, he gasped for air.
But, finally, he slipped and fell
and lay there in the shady dell.
But as he closed his weary eyes,
he thought he'd glimpsed the splendid prize.
He reached his hand out to the shape.
He knew that she could still escape,
but when he checked again to see,
the woman slipped behind a tree.

With all his effort gone, he lay
upon the ground. He thought he'd stay
and rest until he gained his strength,
but fell into a daze at length.
He heard a voice begin to speak.
He felt alive, though he was weak.
Although his mind was growing dim,
the voice began to say to him:

"The feelings that I brought to you,
the love you felt was overdue,
do not belong to me alone,
for if you'd let them, they'd have grown
and covered this whole forest here,
and you'd have lost all trace of fear.

“I’m now a dryad, but you see
that we can be what we will be,
for all our souls are just the same,
and we can play the body’s game.
If you allowed your mind to be
as free as other minds are free,
then you could take on any shape
if you desired to escape
the prison cell of mind asleep.

“But now you will accept and keep
the body of a man who’s wise,
for when you open up your eyes,
you’ll see your brothers all around,
though you’ll still live upon this ground.
Yes, all our souls are equal, so
we meet our brothers where we go.
Though each one has a different form,
our sameness always is the norm.”

It might have been an hour, or
it might have been a day or more,
but when he woke, the man was glad.
His love for women never had
extended to the rest before.
He wasn’t able to ignore
how love expanded with no end
and everyone became his friend.

He knew that all the creatures were
arrayed with different forms, for sure,
but that those forms were just a mask.
And now it was his only task
to share the love he felt inside
and teach that though the body died
the deathless soul would always be
protected for eternity.
The soul could never be defiled,
for it is heaven’s perfect child,
and when the mind learns to exclude
the false, the mind will be renewed.