

ANOTHER SPRING

Another spring,
Like the many we've seen;

Clear waters in the creek bed
Washing ~~dusty~~ pebbles clean;

Yes, like the ~~many~~ ^{Springs} we've seen.

A fawn skating along a meadow fresh and green;
A morning mist;
The fresh day's scent;

Like the many we've seen.

The quieting noise of rain
Dancing from leaves
Of oak and madrone;

Another spring,
Like the many we've seen.

This spring, alone,
The oak on the knoll---

You know the one:
With the mistletoe,
So proudly there on the hill.

Where children played long ago;
And the fresh grass grew;
And bunny rabbit stopped in its shade
To rest its wiggly nose
Or watch the gliding fawn.

That oak is resting now
Along the length of the hill;

---Awaiting another spring
Like the many we've seen.

And the child remembers it well.
His children, he will tell:

Of the beautiful tree,
Of its shading limbs,
How it rustled--
Whispering in the breeze;
Always a place of welcome.

And a comfort still,
Even resting along the curve of the hill,
Even when no longer resting there on the hill.

Forever nourishing life to all on the hill.

But, Shh!

There's a fawn creeping toward the knoll,
Hesitant ~~but~~ unafraid;
And a bunny's resting near the oak;
A child stands watching,
In awe of all these things.

And, at the oak, so proud and resting,
A gentle rush of air, ^{limbs}
Whispers from its ~~leaves~~, and

Piercing the clouded heavens
The sun has grasped ~~its limbs~~
And illumined the oak
Resting there on the hill.

For somewhere there will be
Another spring
Like the many we've seen.

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THE CHILDREN AND THE SQUIRREL

The drifting snow, falling from the heavens
Brings a freshness to the pines in the valley.
The snow slows and softens the rushing stream
And makes heavy the boughs of tree branches.

One day the deer tread on crackling branches;
With the snow fall, they move in silence.
Clouds of smoke from the chimney of a cabin
Waft the crisp, clear air with a special scent.

Animals of the forest, asleep in the cold;
Their furs chilled at night; their warm bodies in slumber bent;
The fire's smoke in their nostrils...
All of an animal's evening...
Of a winter's event.

In the early morning hours,
In a cabin in the forest,
Young children eagerly rustle with ideas for the day.
Wondering when furry "Mr. Squirrel" will emerge from winter's co
Or when they will see a hungry deer with a frosty coat.

What else to get up for on a cold morning in the snow
But the thought of sharing nature with God's creatures?

Maybe they got up too early!
The forest is yet still!
No smoke from neighboring cabins...
The sun has not yet made the white snow bright.

Or maybe--the children's thoughts--"Nature" won't be out
On this cold, early morning.

And then, a quiet wondering in the children's bristling beginning
A pause--a thought...

No more.
There's a shadow of a tree limb, moving, slightly
In a breeze? No. Mr. Squirrel is aroused.
He has leaped on a branch, out of harm's way,
As curious about the cabin's children as are they about "Nature.

Carefully, fearfully, Mr. Squirrel waits for the tree branch to
But the children know--and they look from the moving shadow
to the branch.

Shh!! There's a squirrel!
What a pretty squirrel!
A grey squirrel, and--like the children--
Ready for a day with "Nature."

The tree branch moves again under its visitor's weight
And then it's still.
The squirrel is gone--
On its way to the cabin.

Curious, but careful, a wise young squirrel
Sees a meal in the offing.
Not "Nature's" meal but one brought by children.

What would children feed a squirrel?
Bread? Sliced, sour dough French bread, of course!
Toasted, perhaps. Some bacon from the breakfast table?
Spaghetti O's from the night before? (Ugh!)
But when is dinner EVER served to a hungry squirrel?

A squirrel can't pick and choose--and won't;
A squirrel's too smart not to know
That any children's meal is better than rummaging in the snow.

So, bravely treading ahead--
Its fur coat still frosty, still cold;
Nature's creature approaches the cabin...
The children squeal delight!
Filling Mr. Squirrel with fright!

Running back to the tree,
Scaling its trunk
Making its branches quiver;
In Mr. Squirrel's mind is a thought..."I'll reconsider

"My bold act of nearing the cabin...
"Stirred movement in the cabin and squeals within...
"I'm fearless and brave, not skittish, like other squirrels.
"But then, the noises and things in the cabin
"Make me wonder and reflect...

"This morning I don't want to forage
"Among pine needles and branches for my morning meal..
"So, I'm going back to that cabin, no matter how loud their squeal!"

So back down the trunk of the tree to the ground...
At the cabin's door in a quick leap and a bound...
Sliced bread or a cracker, or this or that,
To the children's delight--Mr. Squirrel's back!
They quickly approach to give it their snack.

Now Mr. Squirrel's nibbling the bread in its paws...
The children quietly watching--wondering--
How close is Nature in the cold of a morning.

In the years ahead as the children mature,
Their days will blend and be unclear;
But their morning in the forest with Nature
Will always make them pause and remember...

They'll remember the time
Some years ago;
On a frosty morning, there in the snow,
When their minds were a whirl--
They had just served breakfast to beautiful Mr. Squirrel.

But more than that--
In the hustle of their life
And all of its bother
For a moment in time
They shared their spirits with Nature in an intimate way
Just a moment or two on a frosty day.
But never forgotten.

Etched in their mind;
Their discovery of Nature.
A moment with God;
A most cherished find.

LIVING IS FREE

While lying in bed the other night
Reading a book by a tiny light
Outside--leaves falling from the limbs of a tree--and I know
The very best things in life are free.

A loving spirit, laughter and glee,
Are hard to find but all are free,
But challenged, neglected by most of us,
We're too busy to remember--Life is often a lot of fuss.

A sensitive person, with qualities rich,
Can have trampled and torn, that spirit which,
Forgets to remember or loses the wish
To be free of spirit without the anguish.

We sometimes work too hard at life.
We forget the good times, recalling the strife;
And from dawn until dark
We always strive to just earn the mark.

But remember that place of beauty, Behold!
In the days of our youth, too young to be told--
The joys of the child are a flickering flame
They too often flicker out--and adults are to blame.

"Pursue your studies, Time for bed!"
No time for just living--
"Work hard and succeed"
"Don't cry when you bleed"
"Be a man you little kid"

But children can teach us...
Their play in a yard
Among trees and sand--
Playing, laughing, enjoying themselves,
With a freedom of spirit, each little girl and boy
Really knows about life----just Enjoy--Enjoy.

And what does it cost to be a child;
Hands and face dirty, at play in the wild--
Grown-up adults can learn from their youth;
The joy of life is living, in truth.

Let's again learn what we knew as children:
A romp in the garden beneath a tree
The Joy of Living--That's Life--
And it's free!

LOVE IS SETTING FREE

There are many who are heard to say
"Love" means to honor--to obey.
But please listen to me--"Love" is really
setting free.

Do you love a bird soaring on gliding wings,
or one in a cage
Do you love a deer grazing peacefully in a quiet meadow,
Or a mounted trophy on the hunter's wall...
That says it all---

Tell me not that beauty is confined
Because beauty is free.
Tell me not that love is boxed, packaged, caged, a trophy
Because Love is free.

Who is to say "You must honor and obey"
Who is to say "You must love in a certain way"
Who grabs, who keeps, who cages or builds the cage
Who hunts to fell a creature on this earth--
One with primitive instincts and of little worth.

It takes true strength to let go of the thing you Love
To set free the wounded bird after nurturing its health;
To care for one's spirit--not to care for one's wealth.

In nature, God's creatures soon set their young free--
Out the cave, out the nest--be free--it's best
Except Man who captures, cages, kills and controls--
Who desecrates the land, the air and his fellows on earth.

With reckless acts, with smoking weapons, with polluting things,
When Man is through with his war there are no church bell-rings.
Only smoke, ashes, cages, trophies, and so

Is it any wonder Man orders "You must honor and obey"
"That's Love so I say"

But Man is wrong in his order because Love is Setting Free.
To Love, in truth, is measured only in "Being Loved."
Set free your Love and Your Love will return that act of Love.
Rejoice in your Love's success,
Be glad in heart of your Love's good efforts,
Let your Love be free--In your Love believe,
Love is the giver and Love will receive.

Love is only as great as the setting free.