

The Bear & the Bird

The bear journeyed through the forest as twilight dissolved into night. Only the moon peaked light through the dense canopy, illuminating parts of her path. Its pale glow was like a flickering lantern, for when the trees swayed and pressed toward each other the light went out, leaving her to continue forward in darkness. When she lost the light the branches turned cruel, reaching out toward her to block her path, tearing through her fur. She roared and retreated until the wind pushed the leaves apart and she could see her way forward again. But then came a long stillness. The stillness created a seemingly perpetual darkness. The brush reached out for her, imprisoning her in place.

Then came a rustle from above. It was not one that provided light through the trees, but instead a shadow darted ahead. She recognized the tail feathers of the bird and called out to it. It darted back toward the bear and perched above the thick underbrush so her silver feathers settled untouched.

The bear looked up and asked the bird, “How are you able to avoid the clawing branches?”

The bird tells the bear that she simply flies.

“I cannot fly.” Says the bear.

“But you can climb, I’ve seen the way you lift your cubs into the canopy, surely you can lift yourself.”

The bear blushed with embarrassment. In her frustration her thoughts circled through frustration and not possibility. The bear scratched the trees back and sunk her claws into the thick trunks. She easily pulled herself up and up and up. And as she pushed through the canopy she revealed a night so clear and bright she had to squint. She bounded over the trees atop the canopy as if she could fly too until she felt familiarity in her bones. She slid back down into the dark brush

and was this time met with a comforting darkness of rock. In the back of the coolness lay her cubs, stirring in patience for her return. From her vantage point she made out a silver streak that flew by the mouth of the cave, and she then laid down beside her cubs and rested, letting her spirit and mind take the flight she knew she could feel.