

Feeding Time

Chapter 2.

Sitting together on the bench, in communion and with the breeze of the day clearing the way, Ranger and Dusk somehow recognizing their connection, a moment of warmth and peace in the universe. It was just one of those impossible moments when there is a slight pause in the flow of life, between an inhalation and an exhalation...a rare and wonderfully affirming feeling shared as one...and then the flow moves and with it we are also moved.

Ranger couldn't help but to ask, "Dusk, how is this happening?"

Dusk smiling and speaking softly replies, "It's time, it's just time, and ain't it wonderful! Just imagine being a trapped wood sprite, caught in an indecent posture for a lifetime, and just waiting for someone, for someone like you Ranger, to see me, and maybe help me get free. When they cut my tree down, and me with it, they dragged us to the mill where we were to be cut up. When the saw was ripping toward me I barely missed being cut in half...then they dried us and milled us to be straight, then put us back together as a bench, to be set in concrete here in this park. At least we're in a park and not on the street."

Ranger couldn't help but shake his head, and then said, "Well, how long has this been going on. I mean the park was created over a hundred years ago, and the bench, well, how long has it been since your tree was cut down? How long have you been stuck here on the bench? How long, Dusk?"

"I don't know time, like how long. I know dawn, day, dusk, night. I know new and full moon. I know spring, summer, autumn, and winter. I know morning star. I know these things, but how long time? No. I don't know the loss of meaning in memory...it's always real, now, meaningful...just is.

"You mean that you never forget anything that happens to you?"

"Ranger, what is real is never forgotten, just exists until I concentrate on it again...but it is always influencing me...it molds me."

"Gee Dusk, you mean that all of your memories are real? I don't feel that way. Lots of my memories, I don't even know if they really happened the way I remember them...I mean my memories of things when I was a kid, well, they are just kid memories, I wouldn't want to be influenced by my child memories...they're so limiting."

"Ranger, I have never been a child."

"Dusk, what are you saying. You're an old man, you must have been young once."

"Not young like you're thinking young. I appear to be an old man, but that's just how I appear. My life began fully when my tree sprouted and at that moment I was fully here, fully me. Like, do you think my tree held me in her sprouting leaves and nursed me? I was tiny compared to my size now for I was always, well in her, not just on her. Kind of like how you say you climbed in the tree; you don't say you climbed on the tree. Or the bird flew into the tree, not the bird flew onto the tree. Trees aren't the same as other life forms. No not at all. They contain, they nurture, they protect, they give...Like that Ranger."

"So, you look old, but you're not...maybe not even real, at least to anyone but me. That's too weird. Are you saying that I am hallucinating you? What am I, schizophrenic? Having a conversation with an invisible being...I mean what do other people see while I'm hanging out with you."

“Pretty much what ever they want, or nothing. I’m not sure you exist to them when we’re together. You certainly are the first person to see me, so I just guess I don’t exist to them and somehow when we’re relating you step out of your reality into the one here.”

“That’s hard to believe. If I were to call out to say that person walking this way, I wouldn’t be heard?”

“Don’t do that Ranger, it might break our connection, and I like you, and can’t we just keep it going the way we’ve been doing? Why do you need to know if what I am saying is true...truth is so limiting...its boundaries block all the possibilities of life. Once truth asserts itself, all else is prevented from manifesting. All that potential, your people call imagination or fantasy...and it is, as long as one knows the truth. Give up the truth and anything can exist. Just look at your existence, which is governed by truth, you know, science and technology. All of your thinking is restricted by what is announced as real. If this is real, then that can’t be, that can’t exist. The truth is a trap for your people. They live within its narrow boundaries, and many feel so restricted and frustrated, don’t you feel that way...restricted and frustrated.”

“Yeah, that’s exactly how I feel. That’s why I love coming into the park...fewer restrictions. That’s what’s so cool about nature, so free, so few people, and no real rules.

“Exactly, Ranger, exactly.”

“But, without any rules only the strong rule...or because of rules, the strong rule. What do you think?”

“Probably both. To get into power one must overthrow those in power. To stay in power one must be able to identify those getting stronger and eliminate them. Rules are good for that. So both. Still, power just is. It’s not created. It’s alive, and lives through its creation. People in power are in power because power puts them in power. People taking over other people in power are doing so because power gives them power. Power exists by feeding on the conflict. The more conflict the better it feeds. Much of life is like that...conflict over space. All life on the planet is in competition for space, and what that space provides. The whole planet is set up to generate indescribable amounts of conflict in every form possible. Power eats conflict and enjoys it in endless varieties...kind of like people who have money. They like their luxuries and they like them in variety. Still, at moments, one can feel the freedom from the conflict by walking along a mountain trail, or by skinny dipping in a lake under the full moon, or by walking through a meadow in full bloom with the butterflies and dragonflies on the breeze, or by running through the park during a summer thunderstorm. Those are wonderful moments.”

“Still, Dusk, knowing all this, well, how come it isn’t this way. How come people don’t understand what we talk about? How can the people in power be so damn blind?”

“It’s tough to seek answers to the mysteries, and believe me, for most, the answers are mysterious. If I was a person, and not a tree being, I would also be mystified. The difference is that my memories are alive and alive means just that. Memories are not just mentally stored information. Memories have a life force and they are important to living a healthy life. For one, by living within the community of one’s memories, one is never alone and isolated. Memories go back to the beginning of time. They are being limited by what one’s culture defines as real. In your culture you are blocked from the inherent memories of the ancestors that we are all born with. That’s a tragedy. We have the answers trapped in our minds but can’t get to them...so we have to relearn everything all over again...and it’s usually too late by the time we begin to figure out how things really work. Just look at parenting. By the time parents in your culture figure it out, they’re grandparents. Too late for their children. Woops. But maybe just in time for their grandchildren.”

Dusk, “Wouldn’t we be controlled by our memories then, we wouldn’t be free to explore new ways.”

“Ranger, that sounds like something your culture would say, yet while it has merit, it might not be complete. In your culture everything that an individual learns in life ends in death, well, except maybe what has been taught to the next generation. But a person’s talents end with death. Now, when memories are passed from one generation to the next, then none of the experiences are lost. Every once in a while a person is born in your culture with those ancestral memories intact, thus you get a Mozart, a child being able to compose music. In some cultures these memories of the past are alive at birth. A genius is no more than some one born with the memories intact.”

“I don’t know. That does make a kind of sense in some things, but what about people who came up with the concepts of physics, or developed a new process, or developed something that never had existed before like telephones, cars, computers, you know, stuff like that. Those didn’t come from memories, they never existed before.”

“You know Ranger, from your cultural viewpoint you’re right. Kind of like believing that your culture’s explorers discovered America. Still, the continent wasn’t devoid of humans, so I guess those humans who were already here discovered it first. But, when reading your history books America was discovered in the 1400’s by someone named Columbus. But not really, right? It appears at this time that technology of computers didn’t exist before the middle 20th century, and at present it’s best that your culture believes this, but maybe, it does exist before...but all this about memory kind of came from our conversation about power, and the power is alive and uses it to create conflict, on which it feeds. I know that it sounds crazy, still, in my experience power and conflict is not dead but alive. It enslaves life, and when your culture makes an observation it “realizes” the concept of “The Survival of the Fittest.” Or the strong dominate the weak. The lion eats the zebra. The intelligent dominate the uneducated. This is as it is...but the effort to dominate only creates conflict and that is the ultimate reality of competition. It creates energy and energy is food. Matter isn’t the only form of food. There are beings that eat energy, kind of like trees that take the sunlight and uses it to develop food for itself.”

“But isn’t power energy? Why does power need to eat when its very essence is energy?”

“Great question. Power appears to be energy like a light bulb appears to be light. A light bulb creates light from the resistance and the generated heat of that resistance which gives off light, yet the light bulb isn’t the source of that light. Electricity is. Power is a being, it isn’t energy, but it captures energy and uses it to feed itself. For a person to seek power is natural, but not safe. The personality of the person who achieves power has changed considerably from the being who initially started the journey to gain power. The closer one gets to power, the greater is its ability to transform the person. It is kind of like trying to harness nuclear energy. One just doesn’t stick their hand on a highly radioactive object. One prepares oneself for that experience by wrapping oneself within insulation sufficient to protect one against the radiation. Because people don’t view power like that they get burned or transformed, like how radiation can cause mutations in the cellular structure of some one who comes too close without the necessary insulation. Power mutates the personality, and addicts it at the same time, so no matter how much power one achieves, it is never sufficient. The greater one engages with power the more mutated becomes the personality, and in the mind of the powerful their actions are for the good of all, but for the all, the actions of the powerful are abusive and destructive.”

“You mean power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Still we all need some power to stay alive. We got to eat, and we got to be able to get what we eat, and if there is a shortage, then we have to fight to get what we eat, right?”

“Ranger, there is always truth to what you say. Cooperation is another way of getting something to eat, but what ever is eaten is eaten equally by all in the group. In competition, it is up to the powerful to choose to share, but they don’t always share equally, do they. Why? Because even though it appears that they have so much more, Power gets the lion’s share of energy that someone accumulates. It’s like a drug. The more the power a person gets the more they need to feel the same high. Meanwhile power continues to get so much more of the energy than the person engaged in this activity. That is the way it is. Power corrupts through competition, yet corrupts a lot less when people share and cooperate. That’s how one develops insulation against the destructive force of power. Sharing and cooperating lessens the corruptive force of power. By taking from power only as little as possible, by taking only what is needed, rather than what one wants, one can minimize the destructive hold power has over us. Power is necessary, as you say, but it must be managed rather than allowing oneself to be lost in its clutches where enough is never enough.”

Dusk nods his head and asks, “How can you get people to learn this? How can you get powerful people to stop their grab for the power, and to back off? It seems impossible.”

“Ranger, by awakening the memories. By helping the memories to be alive. By allowing the ancestors a place in our lives. People are blocked from the memories by the influence of power. Power blocks the memories in order to block the context of life. In context of a cooperative society, the seeking of power becomes secondary to the equitable providing of energy to its members. It takes tremendous discipline to approach Power safely. It is always promising a feast to those who seek it. However, it doesn’t describe the famine that the feast causes for those not attending. It promises a limitless supply. Try and tell that to the Indigenous Peoples in regards to the slaughter of the buffalo. Memories that are alive, poignant, vibrant, and connected to our feelings; that is what reveals.”

“How do we do that?”

“I don’t know how you can awaken your memories except as you’re doing by diminishing your drive for power. At some point your mind will be clear of its web, with enough distance from it, and in that distance, memories can begin to have room to visit you. Besides that Ranger, I don’t know, though I wonder a lot about this. Still, the fact that you can see me and we can discuss these concepts together is hopeful, isn’t it?”

“I suppose. Yeah, I suppose so. But, you keep going back to this about seeing you and can’t we just leave that alone. I like the way you talk, but when you talk about being part of a tree and all, well, what’s the point of telling me that? It makes me feel like challenging you to prove that and what would that do for our hanging out like this? I mean, well, come on Dusk, you understand what I’m saying.”

“Why Ranger, how insightful...yes, why do I mention that...what’s the point...why is that important to me to say it and to have you accept it, especially without proof. Proof is so important, for it let’s us know what is true, and then knowing the truth is so very important even if does limit the possibilities of what can be. Hmm. I need to get a better feeling for why I tell you these things. I actually don’t know, although I do have kind of a feeling about why, but only a feeling. Listen, now really half the things I tell you aren’t really true, and I make up half the things I say, and even I don’t know if what I say is real, but somehow for me it explains a whole lot of stuff that is unexplainable. I guess that’s enough for me...even if it isn’t true, yet it

explains how this whole thing works, and even if I can't prove it but it works, then it works and that's what I care about."

The sun begins to fall behind the trees and the wind begins to die down, and people begin to be attracted to food to be found not here in the park, and so they begin to move outward and away. Dinner time, and Ranger feels its call, and as he gets up puts his hand on Dusk's shoulder, and says, 'Well I can touch you, and so that's real enough I guess for me...see you tomorrow, right?'"

"Tomorrow is good...it's always good when there is a tomorrow. See you buddy, see you for sure."

Ranger heads up the path and the shadows extended across the park, and a deepening of the sky slows the rhythm of life for the day folks, and begins to awaken to activity the night ones. People heading home for dinner and relaxation and others starting to feel the flow of energy awakening their senses, bringing them into increasing alertness and movement, movement to carry them to seek, to seek and to hunt for something they crave...night covers the details, vision is restricted, sound increasingly dominates and so does the feel of the unknown. Dusk sits motionless, the bench in deepening shadows, and for a time just the distant sound of the streets surrounding the park, a horn, a siren, the roar of a jet coming in for a landing...then something closer, something quieter coming...and the small feet, the pungent scent of yesterday's spray, and the black white striped figure strutting from the woods bordering the path. Confident, that's what that strut signifies...I'm coming and nothing wants to get into my way...here I come, here I come...stand back and give respect.

Dusk nodding his head, yes, respect, that's all any of us wants...to receive the feeling that we count, that we have a right to be here, and what we are doing is good. Skunk demands respect and there is something in the way it's done...backing it up with a reinforcer that is very difficult to ignore, and woe if one does. Assertive, but not abusive. Skunk doesn't go around looking to spray, just uses it for protection and to let the girls know how powerful he is. "Hey man, your smell knocks me over, makes me see double, causes my heart to pound...you're so strong and well, do you want to?" Straight forward, no doubt about what's the story. So damn simple and decided right here, right now. Now, humans, got to complicate everything, and never quite completely satisfied. Remembering a conversation with a young woman telling me how lazy male lions are, just sleeping away the day, just waiting for the females to do all the work, hunting and all, and awakening only when the kill is made, then bullying his way in to feast on their kill, then rolling back over to sleep...except when he wants some pussy. There was definitely a demeaning tone of voice. Suggested that perhaps there was more to their arrangement than the daytime appearance of an overweight, slovenly puss. Shared that after dark, when her view of the lions was somewhat dimmed, that the male rolled onto his feet and began patrolling their territory, the territory that allowed the females to hunt unchallenged. She replied, "What, you think pissing on all the trees is hard work...that wasn't equal to the work of the females, you know, carrying the litter, caring for the kittens, you know, the real and hard work of life." Hmm, sounds good but is it true...I mean is that all there is to his night time activity of marking their pride's territory. Perhaps, other male lions would want to take over the pride...perhaps the males fought to injury and at times to the death. Perhaps that warranted the right to sleep during the day and to eat when the females killed a zebra, or some other non-fanged food. Certainly a group of females taking down a grass eater wasn't nearly as dangerous as fighting another enraged male lion. She replied, "Why should the females care, if their males are beaten, the stronger outsiders won't hurt them, just take over the pride and everything would be back to normal." Except for

the sadness that the new males would kill all the pride's young. That might be a bit upsetting. She didn't really have more to say at that time, but I couldn't help to wonder about the attitude.

The next day Ranger brought some doughnuts and the kind that made your mouth water, and Dusk liked to have his mouth water, it reminded him of when his tree's sap began to run in the spring.

"Doughnuts are so crazy, they are just about the perfect food, don't you think so Dusk?"

"Pretty close I would say, thanks for bring them, definitely good."

"Been thinking about what you were saying yesterday."

"Really? Help me to remember. A lot of times I don't even know what I am saying...you know, just kind of get into the flow and a lot of times I am amazed by what I'm saying...it surprises me and it sure doesn't just come from me. Maybe it's the memories of my tree that speaks through me."

"That's what I was thinking about. You know, memory, and all the things you said about reaching into them, and well, I want my memories."

"Ranger, that's what impresses me about you. I mean you listen and actually hear what is being said. It affects you and you respond with curiosity. I like that. It's so encouraging for me. Well, memories are retained somewhere. I wonder where?"

"What do you mean Dusk, they're in your head, I don't know, stored in the brain, right?"

"How would I know? Can I see into my head? But, yes, it seems as though the memories are in the head, stored in the brain, but I have often wondered how the brain organizes the memories. I mean, are they just dropped anywhere, like walking into a bedroom where the clothes are just dropped here and there, or are they like walking into a bedroom where all the clothes are either in the drawers of a bureau or hanging from a hangers in the closet? Are the clothes in the closet hanging from hangers with pants in one section and shirts in another section or just mixed together. Are clothes in the drawers just dumped anywhere, or are the drawers organized for different items, you know, socks here, t-shirts there, etc.?"

"I don't know, never thought about it in that way. I think that my memories are like the bedroom where the clothes are just dropped anywhere. I guess that would make it tough to find anything."

"Ranger, maybe you're right. Still I wonder if we can arrange our memories, like maybe a filing cabinet, with them organized by topic, cross referenced, and so on. I mean we can do it in the physical sense, but I wonder if we wanted to, could we do it in a mental sense? If we could, it would be incredible, probably, right? I mean we organize in the physical sense because our brain tells us to, so why wouldn't we be able to choose to do it in a mental sense. Just open up the brain to a set group of memories and pull up the file that was relevant. Or maybe like a computer, I mean the Internet...put in a subject and immediately have access to all memories in websites/files that pertain to that subject of inquiry. I mean if we can do it on the physical plane we probably could do it on the mental plane. It might even be possible to search through the past, in the sense of time before we were born, or even to access other people's memories if they were willing to participate, again like the internet, but an internet of a culture's memories, or even the memories of the people of the world, or even the memory of the earth, the sun, the universe. Wow!"

"Dusk, you are always tripping out, you know that? I mean you keep going and going. How in the hell am I ever going to be able to stay up with you? But, yes, I guess, anything is possible for humans once they set their mind to it. So, probably one could if one knew how to do it. Do you know how to do it?"

“In part, in part. Knowing how to organize the mind is part of the memory that has been suppressed in your modern human culture, or so I believe. Being I’m not really human except in appearance, and because I’m connected to my tree, in the fibers that make up this bench are the molecules of life that are only diminished, but not without life. Of course, to humans in this cultural environment, once a tree is cut down they believe it dies, and in a way that’s correct, but not entirely. I mean actually, in some trees, cutting it down doesn’t kill it at all but instead stimulates new growth such as in certain willow trees. Cut it down and in a month or so new branches start to develop and grow. Sadly, this isn’t true for other trees like pines. They do die once cut down. In any case, in the case of my tree from within which I emanate, my very continued existence is proof that my tree, in this very shape of a bench, still lives. In this life are all the memories of the past that has been passed through the seed from which its tree form grew. There is no confusion as to what it is and all of our memories are organized and available. That’s why it knows how to grow and to remain both an individual and a member of the forest. Human’s that have been raised in technologically advanced civilizations where nature is only a park, a small island surrounded by concrete and steel, with each generation those inner memories are increasingly detached and elusive. Yes, sometimes, they surface as an inspiration, especially for artists, but for the rest, these moments of inspiration have no place to connect in their daily life and so act as dreams that one is affected by, but can’t remember upon awakening.”

Ranger, eyebrows raised, forehead furrowed, lips drawn tight, breathing shallow, heartbeat quickened let out a huge sigh while whispering, “Damn.” Shaking his head slowly, rolling his shoulders, he stood up and started to pace back and forth. Stopping suddenly he asked, “Can this be changed?”

Dusk smiled slowly and then shrugged. “Perhaps for you my young buddy. Perhaps for you. It depends upon what you are open to believing. Belief in something not yet realized is the first step to acknowledgment of one’s willingness to have its presence in one’s life.”

“Hmm. That kind of makes sense. I guess to access my ancient memories I have to believe that they are within me. So, I also guess that even if they are within me I have to figure out a way to organize them so that I can easily access them. How’s that sound?”

Dusk laughing, “It feels like you got it and now let’s see what we have to do to keep on holding on to it. Why don’t we take a break and this will allow your mind to rest and in resting it will begin to grow more brain connections to encourage this development.”

“Huh? What did you just say?”

“Oh yeah. Well, let’s take this up when we get back together, OK?”

“OK. See you tomorrow.”