

## Feeding Time

### Chapter 1.

The old man sat there quietly, sat there on the bench, under the tree that now had leaves, before a month or so, before, none.

The squirrels know him. The pigeons they also know that he brings a bit of this and that, not to be missed, they fly above him as he leaves his apartment each day. They know him, his habits and the sound of his soft voice.

Children play on the teeter-totter and the swings, some flying high; screams of excitement from the little girls, the boys with wide grins, teeth bared, hair flying on them all. Then, some are being swung and cry...they don't like it, as they should, should they like it even if they don't like the sinking feeling in their tummy.

Older children ride by on bikes, scooters, skateboards, and in-line skates...some more careful than others. The squirrels dart to the end of the bench for their quick bite, then scamper back to the branches and the birds, they just shuffle under the bench when the quick ones moves by with barely a notice of the old man.

One boy, a teenager by looks, turns up most days and seems to wander on the very edge of vision, sometimes just the top of his head showing over a bush, sometimes a side view as if he is looking at something else. The old man wonders silently, not to look too directly, but just enough that he can't help but to notice. For a month now the adolescent comes and walks the periphery of the old man and the feeding of his friends, and it does seem that he is somewhat closer now than before.

The squirrels and the pigeons come, and now a boy on his way to becoming more, comes; comes at his own pace...and why not, and besides the old man comes every day and would, whether the teen comes to circle or not. Sometimes the old man wonders if the teen is like the squirrels and the pigeons...coming to watch him eat, wondering if there might be something for them...and with each passing day, week and month, one day coming right up to his open hand to feed...could the teen be hungry too?

Hungry too, for peanuts and pieces of day old bread...no, then hungry for something else? Maybe just fascination of the feeding and the closeness of the animals and birds...or attracted to him for something more? What's more important then feeding and finding food to feed upon? Food isn't the only stuff that brings hunger on. In fact the old man muses that he believes the squirrels and pigeons don't need the food he brings any more than he needs to feed them because of their hunger...rather it is for the experience of being so close and familiar with this wonderful animal family. Maybe the teen would like to also be part of this family.

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Every day, after school, its time to not go home. Home, the last place on earth to go back to, at least until feeding time. That's what draws me back to the darkness in my life. I go there because I'm weak and helpless. No matter what they do to me, back I go to be fed and so that I can sleep in my bed...the bed they provide for me; not really my own, not at all.

The park is what draws me...I don't care the weather or season of year; it calls to me and to it I go. It's full of people I don't know and better, who don't know me. But everywhere are not people, just mainly along the paths and in the grassy meadow...not

amongst the bushes, the trees, except sometimes when some are doing things that they don't want seen.

Some people I see often enough to recognize, not by name, but by their exercise uniforms, the shorts and logo t-shirts, the tights with baggy sweat shirts, the baggy pants low and hip and grungy shirts...the joggers, the inline-skaters, the bikers, and the skateboarders. Some I see often enough to know that they are family, mothers with babies and toddlers catching the afternoon sun...but none know me for I am unseen. Unseen is best; then I'm free.

There is this old man who sits on the bench with overhanging branches that provide shade on the hot afternoons, and the birds and squirrels that hang out with him. He's there everyday and the animals never seem to tire of his food...the same everyday. Everyday is the same with him...the overhanging branches, sitting on the bench...I wonder if it is his. How does one get to own a bench in the park? I don't know if I want to get old and just sit on a bench in some park, then again, I'm a teen who sits most of the day at a desk at a school...does that mean that I own that desk? The teacher says, "Go to your desk." Maybe it is my desk. Nah...

The park has paths and these paths lead into and out of the park and yet some paths lead only around the park. Its big, the park and once in a while it changes...like when the sun sets the park begins to change. Things that could be seen from far away dim and then vanish, and colors...they too dim from clear and bright to gray. Then the lampposts light up and cast a yellow film and sometimes on a windy and clear night I can see the stars and even the moon...when the moon is full it would be better if they didn't turn the lampposts on...then the light could be silver. In the wintertime it gets dark enough for me to be there before I have to go home for dinner...its cold but I don't mind, the cold keeps the air sharp and cuts away all the pollution. Maybe the wind helps also.

The leaves come and go and in between they are so many kinds of green...but my favorite is autumn when the colors spread. Even better when they begin to fall and then the colors are above and below as well as all around...then I'm walking within, and as they fall they even fill up the space between. I like to see them when they have leaf races. The leaves seem to all pick up, first a few then many and swirl madly around then dash, flipping and flapping across the field with the wind like a wave that the leaves all ride. Then suddenly they all fall to the ground, the colors shimmering as if the leaves were alive getting ready for the next mad dash...leaf races...I can watch them for ever, except of course they aren't there for ever, only in Autumn. I hope that I am always here each year to watch them...they seem to have so much more fun when someone watches them play.

The old man turns his face to the setting sun...to catch the last rays, but with closed eyes to protect what's left of his vision. All his life he watched the sunsets only to have the sun begin to close his eyes even when they were open. A soft smile spreads across his face as he remembers so many amazing cloud formations like playing a game, the clouds racing to catch the sun's rays, the last of the day to illuminate the sky, with the multiple blue colors from turquoise to deep marine a back drop to the painting of the heavens. To him the sunset begins after the sun sets, which is when most people turn away to leave, and then ten to twenty minutes later the celestial tendrils of color first catching the lower parts of the clouds spread their magnificence. White, then yellow, then like orange and pink to red and then to purple and by the time purple, the sky behind is

already dark and the darkness following the colors can be seen then overhead in the western sky following the blanket of colors as they slip progressively lower until just a hint on the horizon. When younger he also turned to leave when the sun set... then as he aged he could stay longer to see the mystery unfold... the true setting of the colors. Aging is when he began to truly appreciate what he saw yet upon which he could not focus. One day he saw, the day before, no.

When young, the flowers he saw but only in passing. One year he was to go on vacation but his car broke down. His friend loaned him his Volkswagen van, an old one... it ran, but his friend said better stay below 50 mph. Better to stay at 45 mph. How can you get anywhere going 45 mph, but that's what he did and what was burningly frustrating for the first day became less so, as he began to notice things he saw only fleetingly when going 65 mph. At 65 mph he hated stopping even to take a piss, for then the cars he passed would come up and pass him... what was the point of passing cars only to stop and to let them pass him. It was upsetting to pass a slow truck, then to stop for something to eat, and to get back on the road only to come back up on that slow truck... There was something terribly wrong with time and speed, that losing the race because of the need to stop. Seeing something interesting on the road couldn't be stopped for of course, because that slow truck was coming up from behind... never stopping but wondering what was missed... well at 45 mph stopping shockingly was not only possible, and yes, it could be done... Hey, where did all of these wonderful sights come from?

At 45 mph stopping was OK, already being the slowest driver on the road and time wasn't being lost because no one had been passed. In fact driving slow means that everyone in front is pulling away so there is always room in front, never another car close... like almost the road is forever emptying itself in front... so stopping, yes. And to see flowers, one has to stop; so stopping was the very beginning of the new life.

A memory of walking in the Mendocino forest in Northern California and seeing this crazy beautiful flower and getting so excited, and my friend, a Native American who was living under the fall of a redwood said, "Really seeing it and being excited is great, yet how is it that it isn't seen every day?" Yeah. Exactly. But it was many years later that the man was finally moving slow enough to see. Still, it could be even slower, and in time, time will be not just the passing of events.

Thoughts and images so profound, lost now found, holding one's attention, then fading. Wonder where thoughts, images and feelings go when they fade from consciousness.

The man sees the teen, head poking through the bushes, a shadow falling soundlessly, a movement caught against the stillness of the trees. Should the catching of his eye be right? Catch the eye, see the soul... will it scare him off or act to draw him near? He looks so familiar, could it be me, he feels like me years ago... the past visiting the future, meeting in between in the here and now. Too weird, too strange... too dreamed and hope for. What would be said... I do want to say so much... but is this real or am I slipping into the change of the world beyond? Who cares, I have never cared to step out of the way of the mystery... Come here myself, come here if you will, having come this far, come the rest of the way to me. I have so much to say, so much to share, so desirous of another chance to live it right... a chance I wasn't given, and only learned way too late... but learned and ready to share. Come to me, come to me, come to me. Nah, who

am I kidding, with come to me stuff...he probably wouldn't want to sit with an old man, especially an old man of himself.

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Looking at the old man I feel that he is so familiar, but probably its because I see him every day, but still, I am drawn to see him, maybe he won't be there today I think on the way to the park, yet he always is. So familiar, and I like that...to have something familiar and looked for, someone who won't hurt me, won't make fun of the way I experience the world...the way I dream. But that's true because he's more like a tree than a man. I wish I could just go over to him, sit down, and say, "All right. I'm here. Why am I here, and why am I sitting next to you?" He'd probably say, "Why do the squirrels and pigeons visit me? I'd say, "You don't feed me." He would look at me and laughingly say, "Oh really, are you sure that I don't feed you, feed you me each day?" "Old man, I would say, you're stranger then even me." That's what we would say...I guess. I wonder why I need to guess, why don't I just go over to him or at least sit on the bench and see what he does...maybe tomorrow...why ruin a good thing?

Still, life happens in mysterious ways, so they say...whomever they are, that's what they say...and it's to them we listen. Have you ever fought against an urge, day by day you win, then one day you wake up on top of the world, and then from some unseen source, the urge is re-stimulated and then its like stepping unexpectedly on ice, ice on a slope, and no matter what you do, the slip turns into an unstoppable slide, and nothing you can do can stop it. Yet this is not always for the worse. Sometimes we are thrust into places we fear to go, and there is also there. Nothing that can stop the inevitable and when we finally open our eyes we find that, hey, its not so bad...in fact I like it. Hmmm, I wonder what all the fuss was about?

The next day, that afternoon, after school the teen finds himself actually sitting on the bench, true the far end of the bench, but on the bench. He doesn't look at the old man, but he is there. The old man's eyes roam and then stop on the silhouette of the teen, the boy, the teen. Time is collapsing and collapses as he says, "You know, you're a lot braver than me. You came, I just sit." The head of the boy turned just enough for his eyes to slant up, face still down, but tilted just enough to see the old man from the side...there, but not quite. The leaves shivered as the breeze picked up, the teen's hair shuffled across his forehead. "Should we share names? My name is Dusk," said the old man.

The sun was beginning to dip in the sky, the shadows just starting to extend. The squirrels and the pigeons were wondering if they should come down, what with the strange human sitting there on the bench, acting is he wasn't sure that he should be there...nervous, anxious, yet too strongly attracted to get up.

"What kind of name is that? Never heard anyone called that. You make that up or what?"

"You're right. No name really, just how much of me is here...which part of me isn't. A description...still, that works, a name that describes where I am and where I am not."

"That's too weird. A name is just a name. Like my name is just a name, you know. Like my name is Ranger, just Ranger. It doesn't mean anything but what my strange parents named me...Ranger. I am no Ranger, just a name."

"You know I like your name...Ranger. It has the feeling of adventure, of unusual and unexpected moments. Yes, it's some name, not just John, Peter, Paul, James,

Matthew...it has substance, character, and its even a bit dangerous...like what if you really were a Ranger?"

"I'm no Ranger...what are you talking about...its nonsense."

"Yeah, well, nonsense, but still it has character and I like character...like how you came to this bench, unexpected, but yes, like you came into this experience, bold in the effort, but not fully accepting the act of coming...not knowing why but couldn't stop the doing. Maybe a ranging of a different nature, but all in all, still you are here, and you came from there. That's ranging. I wonder what you are here to see?"

"I'm not here to see anything...just saw you sitting here forever and I felt that I knew you somehow and now that I listen to you, I do. You're weird, and that's what people say about me, that I'm weird...but that's OK, being weird brings me to strange places, thinking strange thoughts, and having strange experiences...just like being here with a weird person like you."

"Why, thank you Ranger for the compliment...that's a very nice thing to say. It's very rare that someone recognizes me so completely. You know, dusk is between here and there, neither here nor there, neither here nor not here...just in between and it in the in between that I find my freedom to travel to different worlds, different places, different knowledge, and definitely different experiences...like sitting here with you is definitely different. Don't you think so?"

"Why did I come?"

"You know, Ranger, we each seemed to have felt a calling. When I saw you every day, just an eye looking out from behind a bush, the top of your head as you peered from under the branches of those trees, it seemed, well it seemed that it was like in my world where everything in it is part of me and I am part of everything...like the pigeons and the squirrels, well, they are squirrels and pigeons, but to me they are just another form of me that I take in the world. They seem to come for the food, but I experience they come to reconnect to me, and the food I feed them is just what is required in our physical reality for that to happen. So you to me, and maybe me to you, we recognize the sameness in each other, and we couldn't help but come back together...me from your future, you from my past. Does that make any kind of sense?"

"No, yes, I don't know what the hell you are talking about, but yeah, it does make sense, and that's pretty far out. How did you get to learn how to talk like that?"

"Over a long time, over a long time, Ranger."

"Well, Mr. Dusk, I got to go...I can't handle any more of this just now, but how about tomorrow. You want to?"

"Yes, Ranger, I would like that...tomorrow then. Be happy until then Ranger, be happy."

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In all of the spiritual books the concept that is common is the...search for a means of unifying...to diminish the hold of the duality on life...to seek the state of awareness that allows one to become indistinguishable from all that is perceived. So too is this story of Dusk and Ranger. That night both dream, but in the morning the dreams is as mist to the rising sun. Later in the day, for that is the time that Ranger and Dusk come together they meet on the bench...nothing happens until they are both on the bench, so one might suspect that the uniqueness in their relationship emanates from the bench, and not

necessarily from either of them. It is the bench that they share and in that sharing so they too are able to share.

“Dusk, you are one crazy old man, yet that doesn’t bother me...still all that talk about me being your past, and you being my future...because when I think about it, it doesn’t make any sense, but then later when I’m not thinking about what you said, it all seems to make sense...but on my way over to the park, well now that I’m thinking about it again, its too crazy. Do you get what I’m saying?”

“Questions are so easy to ask, but not so easy to answer. Ranger, there are times when I don’t know what the hell I’m saying, and if I do know what I’m saying, I often don’t know what I mean, and if I do happen to know what I mean, I often can’t remember what the hell I’m talking about. Worse, half the things I say I make up, and even if they make sense that doesn’t mean what I’m saying is true. So no wonder when you think about what I say it’s confusing, but then thinking isn’t always the best way to understand yet it’s the way we’re trained to perceive...thinking I mean.”

Ranger’s eyes begin to cross, and he sighs wondering, what...I didn’t smoke on the way over here...no magic mushrooms, no acid...so? “Do you do drugs? It sounds as though you are tripping when you speak. You’re so far out that what I’m hearing is like from another world or something.”

“Hmm, no I don’t do drugs...though in the past I may have tried a thing or two, or three...but now, well at one time I was trying to get into a permanent high, so I did as much as I could, and then a lot more...hoping to put myself into permanent orbit, but no...always gravity grabbed my ass and finally I couldn’t keep awake, and no matter how high I was before...well except for the time I couldn’t come down, though I wanted to...but that wasn’t the kind of high I wanted, not to come down from...those, the one’s I wanted not to come down from, I always did...so no I don’t do drugs anymore, not for a very long time, just sunshine, breezes, water swimming, walking and just breathing in a good way...play a bit of music too, write a bit...dance a bit...besides a few hundred other things I do...just like when I was high, but I’m not...well I am, but not from doing.”

“Why did you stop doing drugs?”

“Because once I woke up to the possibility of life, doing only psychedelics, mind expansion, I found that they were putting me back to sleep...true a different kind of sleep, like being awake but in addition to the basics like breathing air, drinking water, and eating food, I couldn’t get by with out the drugs...in order to stay awake I was putting myself asleep, asleep into an illusion of wakefulness, a dream that I felt could only happen when I was asleep doing the drugs. No. That is not why I started to do them. I started because I knew I was dead and it was time to be reborn, and that’s what they did when I first started...they woke me up. Visually first, auditory next, then physical touch...then intuitively...wakeful, aware, and conscious...scared the shit out of my self for the first longest time with what I was becoming aware of, but not knowing how to assimilate the insights. Overwhelmed and, well, that’s enough about me and that stuff. What about you? Do you do?”

“Dusk, just pot, maybe some shrooms, maybe some acid, but nothing heavy, nothing that will erase the few brain cells I have up and running. They calm me down...otherwise I’m too hyped up...can’t hold myself together like when I take a bong-rip. You know what I mean?”

“It’s great having something in life that can take the edge off. Some people meditate, others, play sports, or do art. What’s the difference as long as it works?”

“My mother thinks that I have attention deficit, you know, ADD. She’s convinced, but what I don’t get is that she meditates, and she does that to keep herself calm. Great. But, that doesn’t make her hyperactive...life is stressful for her, so she meditates...I don’t get why people are so quick with the labels...You don’t run right, so there must be something wrong. That’s bullshit. She thinks I need therapy and medication, but she’s absolutely against drugs. What the shit? What the hell does she think medication is...just because it’s prescribed doesn’t make it not a “drug? Can you believe the hypocrisy?”

“Yes, I can believe the hypocrisy...it’s everywhere...its part of the duality of life...the right is wrong and because of its power, it can’t help but feel it’s right. Watch out when hypocrisy has power...it devastates. I wonder at your ability to resist the control that hypocrisy extends in the relationship with your mother?”

His eyebrows frowning, more puzzled than frowning, Ranger closes his eyes, and looks a long way. “Power gives hypocrisy reality, right?”

Dusk smiles and nods his head and then shares some more. “Power is the enforcer...it makes reality out of dust. It coerces the boundaries beyond it’s own history...like the indigenous peoples live a certain way for thousands of years, every generation living more or less in the same way...clubs and knives, you know, the personal me against you weapons...the weapons of manhood...then spears and bows and arrows, the distance weapons...still kind of personal, but less so, then just like that, suddenly, from nowhere comes explosive powders and the ability to craft guns and cannons...the impersonal take-you-out weapons. High technology is suddenly dropped into the hands of the “blacksmiths, who the day before were beating crude metals into crude weapons, and “magically” mass destruction is in the hands of the “nobility.” Now, does that make sense? I mean the suddenness of it all. Yesterday common technology to make crude iron works, then in the middle of the night, that culture’s blacksmith has a series of “dreams” and in it some mythical being reveals to the smith first the “magic” of copper, then another night bronze, and then again iron, and finally steel. These “dreams” each led to more deadly tools of death and each vanquished the prior...steel eating iron, iron eating bronze, bronze eating copper. Guns, bigger guns called cannons, one day cars then tanks, another moment airplanes then jets, then bombs that are dropped then missiles, an abacus then a slide rule, then computers...Dreams?” Hardly.

“I can see that. But what are your getting at?”

“Check this out, Ranger. Long before the Europeans, the Japanese had the highest sword craft, the Chinese had the explosive powders and crude cannons, the two technologies could easily have combined to create guns...but no, they didn’t. Only in Europe was technology truly explosive. Why? Because in Europe there was no philosophy of balance as there exists in the East. For the people of Asia, their reality was created from the belief that nature is sacred, and it has a natural flow, and that flow is Divine. In Europe there is no such philosophy of life, where a balance between humans and nature must be in place. In Europe, from The Bible comes the philosophy that “mankind” has dominion over the earth and its animals and plants...as a result power, control, and thus greed is the core of their created life experience. To me, Ranger, the defining difference between the West and the East is that the West has no boundaries, and

lives in excess, and in the East where people are really innately no better than those in the West, but for the self-imposed boundaries that allows them to live more maturely, more generously with nature, and thus technology was less developed. It is the lack of boundaries on technology that creates the ability for power to destroy beyond the ability to recover.”

“What does that all have to do with my mother?”

“Well, Ranger, we were talking about your mother believing that you have ADD, thus she believes in ADD. She believes that you need medication, thus the influence of the pharmaceutical companies, the high tech companies to create the illusion of the ADD kid, and hand-in-hand is the medication to “calm the storm.” Your mother acts as an agent of the pharmaceutical company by believing in their propaganda and with her position as your mother, utilizes her power to enforce the illusion of ADD, which is just generally an active child in an artificially restricted environment, the classroom...and thus power creates reality out of an illusion...thus your conflict with your mother...she represents the illusion, and you represent a lack of acceptance of that illusion over your intuitive awareness of the truth, or reality, which is that kids are active and don’t belong in school. They belong in the natural reality that existed when they were developing their ability to walk, explore, and engage in unrestricted relationships with their peers, their animals, and their environment. Your mother wants you to fit into the creation of power, and she wants you to be part of that experience by you fully participating in the illusion and the benefits it offers those who are willing to cooperate.”

“Gee Dusk, you make my mother sound like she is evil. She really isn’t.”

You know, it probably does sound like that, yet she is no more aware of what she is doing than any other caring mother in this society who wants their child to succeed. They aren’t consciously participating in power’s illusion, she just wants you to fit in, and can only solve the problem of your “lack” of cooperation with the thoughts that she has been taught, which is you must have ADD and medication is the solution.”

Ranger looks away, sees the squirrel on the limb overhanging the bench, sees the pigeons waddling near by...then turns back to Dusk and says, “I’ve got a headache. I got to go...see ya.”

Dusk watches him, watches him moving away, getting smaller and smaller, then in the distance he follows the path around a bend, and like that, he’s gone. Dusk, shaking his head slowly, and sighing mutters, “I’m so damn brilliant...I blinded that wonderful boy...yes I did...laid it all out, clear as sunshine, and blinded him, drove him away. Why can’t I turn it on just a little bit, so he’d want more...no I got to dump the whole load on him all at once. Once I get going the going gets gone.”

The squirrel running back along the overhanging branch, and down the trunk leaping the last couple of feet and sprints over to Dusk and with expectant eyes hunches up on his back legs. Frowning isn’t going to do me any good, mused Dusk, and lifting the bag of crumbs, reached in for a handful. “Now my friend, its time for you isn’t it? At least I can’t mess up with you; at least as long as I have something you want. Hmm. I don’t overfeed you, I wonder why I can’t do the same with Ranger...not overfeeding him with all of my wisdom, for that’s exactly what I’m doing, overfeeding and wasting. Can’t believe that at my age I haven’t figured this all out. Discouraged, yet not defeated...too dumb to be defeated. What a relief it would be to finally accept defeat. I fought my best but got beaten. Could have been killed or maimed, but just knocked



unconscious and left for dead. Recovered, and back into the fray. Into the fray of knowing the answers but not having the ability to transmit them so that they can be received...what a curse.”

Squirrel seems to nod his head and not surprisingly, chatters in agreement. “See my little friend, there was this genius named Einstein. He actually could see how the whole universe was held together, but could never devise a math to transmit his vision of the Unified Field...could see it yet couldn’t share it. How lonely and the depth of frustration must have been excruciating. Now, there was this other guy named Freud who had internal visions and in his excitement to share it came to believe that the best place to seat his new field, called psychology was within the University. However when he applied for a seat within that institution the deans demanded that psychology, the true nature of which is entirely intuitive, be rendered intellectual, thus a science, thus having a place within the culture of the University. Thus the end at the beginning, for there is no honest way to rationalize an intuition. Thus was I thrust. The vision that cannot...as yet be communicated due to the limitation of consciousness that houses the human mind. It isn’t the vision that is too expansive, rather it is the awareness that is too limited, or something like that.

Squirrel moves around stuffing his cheeks, twitching this tail, moving ever closer. “I know, I know. Take it slow, but once I start, it is like stepping down a slope that is covered with ice. Perhaps I need mental metal cleats to control my progress. Hmm, I wonder how to build into my mind cleats? Wow, this could be the beginning of something. It isn’t just what I want to share that is so important as is what the listener can receive. I wonder how to determine the listener’s ability before I begin sharing. Gee. Squirrel finishing the crumbs lifts his tail and takes a dump then scampers away.

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Ranger couldn’t get Dusk out of his mind as he walked away down the path, going around the bend, and losing himself into the fading sounds that had fallen like hail on his head. Illusions, power, the power of illusions and the insistence of his mother to have him fit into the illusion...so she could feel good about her self or was it her need to have his involvement in it? The child must prove the parent right or else the parent punishes the child. This is really too much, thinks Ranger. I wonder if this can all be true, that her calling me ADD is just a way to get me to fit into the illusion, that, like school is really relevant and I’m just supposed to sit there, body inert, while my mind does all the work. She really does believe that if I don’t do well in school that I will have a bad life. It panics her when I pull down poor grades. But school is just bogus...there is no reality to it, just an abstraction of reality. I hate the abstractions...I want to get into life now, not when I’m old, like after I get my Masters or whatever. It’s too much, that Dusk talks and talks and it all sounds right, but is it, and why does it sound so good to me when I can’t really know it from myself?

Kicking leaves as he shuffles along. He can’t stop his mind and so he drifts further into the dwelling. I wonder if he’s any different than he says my mother is? He tells me something because he believes it, but is it any more true and is he doing anything different than mom when he wants to convince me that what he says is the way it is? Isn’t he just proving to himself that his perception is correct when he gets me to agree with him? I wonder what he’ll do if I don’t agree...will he label me also...call me immature, or maybe a flake? Hell, who is he anyway but some guy that never seems to

move and just feeds squirrels and pigeons. To hell with it...to hell with it for now anyway. With his hand buried deep in his pants pockets, he moves beyond.

Another day, maybe tomorrow...The wind blows for real this day, with the leaves shaking and baking on their stems, dancing wild like, twisting and turning, and the pigeons soaring up and suddenly down, then cross ways, and a crow fighting its way up breeze with its head down, shoulders/wings digging deep and being tossed about, and the squirrels hanging on the down wind side of the trunk, and Dusk slouching wondering if something could be calling, "Hello, this is your local branch. Calling Dusk...Dusk you there?" Dusk rearranges his collar, pulling it up, not because its particularly cold, but rather to keep any flying thing from working it's way into his shirt. Its actually a warm day with the humidity already too high and it being one of those summer days when the wind brings the afternoon clouds to bang and yell their way across the sky...to drop the greening rain...time to be one with the weather...it usually passes quickly enough, with the sun breaking out in time to dry up and the clean air for another hour or two before sundown.

Coming off the subway, Ranger can feel the rush of the wind coming down the stairs as he ascends. The sky is graying up quickly, and he wonders why not just forget it today. Dusk probably is headed home early what with the rain coming. Still one of the best times to be in the park is when its pouring because everyone splits for shelter, and in the midst of millions I can be alone...walking with just the wind driven waves whipping across the pond, and the wetness cooling me down...and my shoes plowing like a giants splashing up the puddles like they were lakes, and my giantness dominating the landscape of the little people, aha...yes, into the park to catch the first drops and watch them cascading down through the trees and throw my shirt around my waist and run with arms spread, smile gleaming, and laughter bursting forth...Yahoo!

Out of breath, collapsing down onto the sodden grass, lying back to extend the moment, huge drops falling at high speed slamming into his chest, and feeling just great to be wet, to be dripping wet, to be suddenly wet, and enjoying rather than running away, to hide, to shelter oneself beyond the reach of the life giving rain. How weird and confused are city people, umbrellas, raincoats...hiding from the essential, the elemental, the power of the creative, the nature of existence is feared and fraught with anxiety...to get wet, oh no, I'm melting, melting, melting...into what? Into the essence of our beginning, fearful of our origin, to get wet is to be miserable, to be found out, caught, to be exposed, to be out of control...great, the best feeling of all. To be out of control, to have no control at all, to be held, to be lifted, to be tossed into the air...and to laugh instead of shrieking in terror, because the tossing and the catching is all in fun, as I come down into my father's arms, caught in his hands and brought face to face both laughing and eyes lit up in delight. Great days then...tears now mixing with rain, and the thunder masks the gulping of air as shoulders heave with great abandonment...Dad, lost in the chaos, never to be found except by chance in a summer storm. "Shit, I wonder where Dusk is anyhow?" Getting up Ranger heads to the bench, heading to someone who listens and explores with him in actually a pretty good way.

There Dusk sits wondering if Ranger is really a ranger, or just named Ranger. When he sees him coming out of the dim background of the summer rain, a smile lights his eyes and even his lips and he begins to hum a "diddy do wop" rhyme. "Hi de hi de ho, Ranger," quips Dusk.

“Yo. It figures that you would be here, sitting, nah, not sitting. You’re not sitting; you must be growing out of that bench. Damn, can’t believe it. Come on Dusk, get up...let me see you separate.”

“Can’t do Ranger, you see I am a wood spirit, got caught when they cut my tree down...caught taking a crap...yeah we crap also though it shouldn’t be that way, and when my tree was cut down, I wasn’t done, and when you’re not done, well you’re not about to get up...and that’s why I still can’t get up...because once the tree is killed, well I’m supposed to be dead too, but if you’re crapping at the exact moment, well then, stuck forever, just like that, so here I do sit, but never through if you know what I mean...I’m caught in the in between, just for some reason you can see and talk with me.”

Ranger looking at Dusk for a long moment, laughs and jokingly, or maybe not entirely joking says, “Dusk. You shitting me?” Dusk smiling back says, “Well I’m shitting, but not you.” They both break out laughing, and probably the bench is laughing along with the trees, oh I can hear the laughing of the wind and the rain too, and the grass is swaying in laughter, laughing so hard that drops of rain-tears are pouring off and the earth is sucking it all up and that’s how it is. The earth knows all...its been around a few times you know, nothing like this though in a very long interlude. A sense of release, of relief, a leaf leaning against another captures some drops, to the bird a sip, to a bug a quick bath, a reflection of the sky who looks down and with a final crash of thunder, lights up the day with arrows of warmth cascading through the branches causing the land to dance with an effervescent display of a zillion crystals splitting the light into all the colors of joy and an intense awareness and clarity.

Ranger feeling a bit weak from the earlier exuberance and a lot of laughter collapses onto the bench or the shitter or what ever it really is, and that’s how Ranger and Dusk really came to appreciate their reflection seen in each other. An oath, a toast of rain and laughter...nothing need be held back...a truth of recognition and acceptance. Ranger opens his mouth to express his commitment, but nothing comes out...and Dusk leans to hear and nothing comes in...there are things that just can’t be expressed, but are spoken and heard only in its own silent way. Bullshit, just kidding. Dusk reaches out and Ranger extends his hand also, and they take each others in a depth of melding...The old leaving but not yet, and the young coming-on, joining in confidence in trust that can only be shared dripping wet.

