Passing Spring

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ALTHOUGH the sun has been set for three hours now, there is still a promissory brightness in the West, clearing the sapphire air along that horizon, tinting it yellow, but dying, darkening as the enormous indigo blackness draws up and over. But even this mantle, splattered eastwardly with specks of light, glows a little; the cottonwood and willow around the pond edge are fine-threaded laces jutting stiffly up, painted in dead black on the sky.

There is a light rising in the South, cold, fiery Martian red, showing in the dusk sky just above the horizon. A light — surely not a star, yet like a star through the trees — but vacillating, now brighter, stronger, more brilliant than any star near it, more brilliant even than Venus in the light expanse west; then it fades to a spot, a speck of red light, then swells again. A light rising in the South. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, but definitely moving up through the trees. A flashing red light.

What is it?

Are you . . . afraid?

Listen. A dog is barking in some farmyard not too far away, and a pastured cow bellows. Just a dog and a cow.

Lie down in the new grass you have crushed beneath your feet and smell its greenness and the warmness of the earth and of that rotting log and the sulfurous stench of the pond's mud.

Listen. A mouse scurrying, crackling through leaves in that litter of broken, bleached ragweed. Just a mouse. Frogs are calling in the black pond water, unseen; trilling, chuckling, cricking, scraping on combs. Can you hear the grass growing, pushing the leaves?
Look at the moon’s reflection on the water—a blotch of white, gleaming, changing shape, sending out streaks of light after skating insects; spots and lines of light in their wakes, flashing towards the image, merging with it again, or gone.

There is a straight gash of red farther out on the pond from that light that has risen now far above the trees and is arcing overhead, speeding past stars. A plane, a jet; you can see clearly the flame streamers of the jets and hear the thunderous roar that is following miles behind it. Just a jet.

It is already falling, diving into the northern horizon, passing stars, slower and smaller. Then down, nearly out of sight in the trees, and Venus sparkles whiter in the darkened West, surrounded by a myriad of tiny glints of light.

And if, in an hour or two, there were a growing, formless splash of silvery lights spraying electrically all around, fountain-like down from the zenith, kaleidoscoping colors, mother-of-pearl, you would not see or hear much else until it passed.

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In The Summer

In the summer,
The grass on the hillside is powdery silvery green
And speckled with gentian and white and blue phlox.

It comes to me,
Down the slope, running and tumbling, stumbling, bubbling down
To the dusty path, waving and bowing, calling in whispers.

I step from the path,
And it flows all around me, shimmers, fondles, trips my legs,
And I drown in the depths of a sea of summer grass.

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