

A Salmon Morn

by Ted Olsson

He awoke with the sounds of robins singing
Donned waders, vest and gathered his gear
As the feeble daylight foretold of luck ringing
For the silver-sided fish awaited his casts there

His chosen spot empty the early bird rules
Although well known others arose too late
The dark stream flowed over rocks to quiet pools
Time taken, surfaces and sounds to contemplate

Across the stream through early morning mists
Large dark shapes and movement caught his eye
Down stream a cow moose and her calf quench thirsts
Then move quietly up the stream ignoring him close by

A sudden ringed rise fast appears in the flow
His quarry made its subtle appearance on time
An emerger on his line his first cast perfect so
The fish took the fly and shot off with the line

The struggle ensued as hard as he'd ever felt
The large fish fled across the current strong
Fought the gear with leaps and fast runs dealt
Rod and reel drag held but dreading a step wrong

Fish tiring reeled in after multiple tries
Landed it cleanly at last couldn't break a fine tippet
Tired he marveled at its beauty, strength and size
The tiny fly taken from hooked jaw's toothed lip

Let the fish revive slowly before setting it free
He watched it calmly swim away to the deep
Thanked the salmon for the fight and memory
Of a sacred contest for this lifetime to keep.

*"His fishing was not a sport,
nor solely a means of subsistence, but
a sort of solemn sacrament and withdrawal from the world,
just as the aged read their Bibles."*

Henry David Thoreau, from "A Week On The Concord And Merrimack Rivers"

