

## Everything

In the distance sat an immense forest. A woman, beautiful as can be, walked by the old stone entrance to the path into the woods. Thick greenery covered the old stone entrance and beckoned the woman daily. Everyday she made the conscious decision to stay on track. She had materials to care for and felt there was no time to focus on her individually. In fact, that is utter nonsense and she is not important enough to think she could take any time for it. The only way to stay within societal expectations is to numb yourself to the what ifs. Actively deterring from the self in order to stay in place. The woman never gave time to the idea that she is nothing, because it was a core belief, a subconscious thought with every passing moment.

Though, there finally comes a time where the woman cannot fight this mental battle any longer. The stone glared at her, angry she even took a minute to think about what's on the other side. The woman was so tired. Why not just take a small walk? She cannot fight the urge to run towards it. Overwhelmed with existence, she walked into the abyss.

The ground was wet with mildew from the heavy air. She tosted the leaves around her with her fingers as she floated through the encompassing environment. She looked to the heavens, as the sky was a beautiful mix of purples and oranges. The first sign of peaceful disturbance was from a small creature. It carried its round body on eight legs, looking tired and weary. The woman bent down to inspect the being. The spider was spinning the web very quickly, but could not get it to stick to the relentless moisture of the leaves.

“Hello, sir” she began curiously, “is there something I could do for you, perhaps?”. The spider stopped abruptly and began to turn towards her. The spider was a sharp black, with a few white details that resembled the sky.

“Oh, yes. I guess it appears so,” he exacerbated, as he finally gave into the water and sat down. “I cannot seem to figure out how to hold my web in place. As you can see, I am very tired and very hungry”. She noticed he did look a bit frail and small. The woman then took a stringed portion of the web, and held it up against the stems with her finger, as politely as she could. He excitedly ran about, attending to the other steps needed to provide himself a dinner.

The woman sat there, holding the web for a very long time. The sun began to set and she had lost her thoughts to a world very far from her. The spider managed to climb to her finger, which snapped her back into her current position. He spoke up once more, saying “thank you for your help, I must be going to sleep now.” The spider then crawled into his web, and finally laid to rest. The woman was a bit stunned at first, wondering what to do. But the answer never changed. She knew what to do. So she left with the rest of her body, leaving her finger in place, so that it could hold the spider into his dreams.

Fiddling with what is left of her fingers, she graciously moved on. Encapsulating the orbs that light up the sky, she fixed her eyes to the heavens. Her feet took each step with cautious confidence, not noticing the open clearing they had just entered. The forest grew quiet, which was the woman’s first cue that she had not been present enough while passing. She jolted back into her body and quickly looked at her feet. The grass was crumpling between her toes. It was not as green as she would hope, but then again felt her hope was rather pointless. Things are as they are. Nothing more. How can there be more if never acted upon? She started her journey again, toasting the weeds on the ground. Suddenly, the ground was moving on its own.

Something was rustling the grass up ahead. The woman froze, puzzled about the incoming interaction. She got overly excited for the impending experience. The woman quickly leaped over, finally realizing what she had been reaching towards. The giant eyes looked at her

in panic as it tried to extend its wings. Soon there were feathers falling, for which she felt bad about. She released the owl and apologized as it left quite a scratch on her cheek and drifted into the night sky. The flock of feathers that had gathered at her feet had an interesting blue tint to them, almost seeming imaginary. The owl was quite beautiful.

Before the woman had a chance to react, a small hushed voice came from below. “Thank you misses”. Looking down, the being was very peculiar, looking both rattled and relieved. She bent down to see what the source was. It seemed to be a small mouse, with daunting, minimal eyes and a quivering nose. The field mouse then perked up, as if to say more. The woman put the creature in the palm of her hand and stood up.

“I came from underground to try and see the stars tonight,” the field mouse began, “but I knew I should not, they like to attack at night”. The woman was concerned as she understood the feeling. Looking up is sometimes all she has. She carefully lifted the mouse to a position where it could see the void, but also be protected. After a moment to make herself and the mouse secure, she also looked to the stars. She had never seen so many reflections at once. The woman then attempted insight on how it was possible. Where was she? What was up there? Is it possible to leave the worrisome home behind? The woman quickly forgot that sudden panic, as it did not really matter anymore.

The small being brought her perspective back to her hand. Moving her other hand to her face, she began to speak to the mouse. “Take this, to keep watch while you look to the skies”. The woman gave the field mouse her eye, as to keep the creature safe from danger during the night. She lowered her palm to the ground and the mouse, gratefully, began to wonder about the heavens as it stepped into the void. The woman promptly stood and walked back into the air, leaving some of her sight at the hands of the pitied creature.

Stumbling across a creek, the woman took a small misstep, and disrupted the flow of the water. The blue streams were rolling over her foot as if upset she was there. The water seemed alive, moving slowly but very surely. The woman admired the water and its courage. How long it took the water to get to her foot was unimaginable and out of reach. She stayed with the creek wading out into the middle to soak in the moonlit beams. The water rushed around her with a crinkling sound, talking to the woman. The woman could not understand, but very much appreciated its patience and hospitality. She ducked under the water to say thanks to everything below, seeing a few small colorful reflections also wading through the creek. The woman silently enjoyed the peace, observing all she could, and then stood up.

Out of the corner of her gaze, she caught a heron. A majestic beast reaching its wings out into the night and shuddering. The woman took steps to meet the beautiful being, realizing there were tears on his cheeks. She walked over and wiped them with her thumb. He looked at her mournfully, and then back to the sky of stars. Up above, there were a dozen herons, flying further and further out of sight. In awe of this, she also stared at the landscape. Though, she had something far more present to tend to. She moved her eye below and looked the bird up and down, finding that his right leg was badly misshapen. He was leaning on his left foot and she assumed he was in pain. His community had left him, as he was too hurt to leave. So, the woman sat down next to the heron, as if in silent support for the heron and his misfortunes. Hours went by. They sat still, but together.

The heron eventually had the nerve to speak. "Thank you," he mustered out, "you are too kind for staying with me." The woman nodded, for she too, had felt immense loss before. The ripping of your body into pieces, that those who left then take with them. Loss is betrayal, anger, and deep sadness. It hurts in an all encompassing mind, until you cannot feel much at all. The

mind is quite peculiar, in that it can fester the worst pains. But that's not important, she thought. That was once before.

She touched the beast's shoulder, and then gripped her right leg. Saying nothing, she pulled and jostled the limb, until it was loose. With one final tug, she ripped the body, disconnecting her mind and leg. The woman then gave her amputation to the heron and shuffled into the water, to follow the creek once more.

As she floated down the stream of thoughts, she finally made it to the bay. It was magnificent. The waves crashed up onto a broken and displaced shore. There was wreckage everywhere, but no beings in sight. The water was strong, pulling her all which way. She was too weak to push back, so she settled into the current.

The woman passed many lost memories washed away by the angry sea. She too, was being washed away by the angry sea. Amongst the twists of the rapids, the once weightless woman lost yet another part of herself. It was different this time. She could not stop it. The beauty of the sea is relentless. It ripped and pulled at her, until finally it was her mind, her mind alone.

This did not matter to her, though, because she wanted to give. She wanted to give everything. Nothing of her physical sense was important enough to keep. Others would need and use her, for the better. The woman did not care about her beauty, as it was worth nothing. Give it to someone who will use it for good, someone who will appreciate the body she's been unwillfully given. The woman wanted nothing to do with the thick border that kept her caged. So, she wanted to give. Everything that mattered to her was up. Everything is up above. The woman could see her hopes and dreams through the stars, and wanted desperately to join them. Everything is up there, she thought. All of relief, pain, and love.

She began to slow, as her body was nowhere to be seen. The valueless form of the woman washed onto the shore. There, she sat still. She had given everything. The physical body was gone, yet she was still here, the troubles still prevail. She began to have the realization that maybe there is nothing more. Things come and go, but how can she move forward? What has she done? There is nothing here, at the end. The woman tried to weep, but could not. For everything was gone.