

Harvest Moon

Itty-Bitty Short Story

by Dale Thele

"A good companion shortens the longest road."

Turkish Proverb

In the wee hours of one particular Sunday morning, the time when proper folks are snuggled tight in their beds absorbed in a realm of illusion and dreams. I lay in my bed where sleep had eluded me. I stared blankly at a ceiling I knew existed above, but unable to make out its details in the dark. Void of the will to slumber, I rose out of bed. I threw on my clothes and slipped out of doors into the darkness of the early morning hour. I was greeted with fresh clean air. I enjoy this particular time of night, or should I say, morning? That magical hour just before dawn erupts into a new day. I knew not where I was going; I followed my feet as they moved of their own volition toward an unknown destination.

As I strolled in the tranquil dark, random thoughts wafted from one abstract notion to another. There was nothing specific on my mind. I didn't ponder long on a single thought before it sailed away and another floated into its place. I enjoyed the movement as my legs transported me to new and wondrous parts unknown.

I paused when I came upon a trickle of water. A shallow brook babbled lazily. Reflective sparkles like glistening diamonds floated along the flowing surface. I looked upon the place, a quiet retreat, one I was unfamiliar. I had no recollection of having been in this locale before. Had it been five minutes? Or half an hour? On the other hand, had it been hours that I'd been walking? I had no particular place of importance to be, so I relished a pleasurable rest on a cool flat boulder.

Great, aged trees cast dark shadows, which bordered the serene clearing, where I settled. In the light of the intense full moon, I was alone with a menagerie of unrelated thoughts while nestled within a delightful paradise tucked away from the ravages of civilization. Crickets and katydids fervently

complained to the moon for shining much too bright and then paused as if expecting the glowing globe to convey an apologetic reply. A nearby brook babbled its own incomprehensible language of gurgles, akin to a gentle coo of a content baby.

Across the shimmering rocks of the meandering brook, a tentative bandit neared the water's edge. Balanced on its haunches, the furry creature gingerly reached its front paws into the water. The raccoon fastidiously washed its face clean, except for the permanent black mask which spread across its beady little eyes. Satisfied, the fluffy ball of fur waddled back into the black shadows to disappear in the enveloping foliage.

A rustling startled me. I spun to investigate the cause of the disturbance. A careless skunk frolicked in the tall grass, a mere few yards away. The creature did not appear concerned by my presence. I was more than aware I was visible in the moonlit clearing. Black and white fur emerged and vanished in the abundant vegetation as it played with invisible playmates only it could see. The animal rolled and tumbled in its own whimsical game. I became mindful of the white stripes as they neared the boulder where I sat. Slow and deliberate, I withdrew. I kept a sharp eye on the animal and wondered if it had intruded into my space, or was I the intruder?

My legs led me away from the peaceful oasis to return to the familiarity of civilization. I wandered along a sleepy city sidewalk. I took in the view of modest homes and small shops, dark as their occupants slept. Street lamps cast variations of my shadow on the ground to my right, then my left, occasionally it followed behind and other times the shadow led my way.

In silence, a new shadow joined that of my own. Our shadows merged as we strode side by side. Sometimes we'd brush easily into one another. I initiated an easy and pleasant conversation. Not knowing each other well, I kept the topics light and general. Maybe he concurred with me, maybe he didn't, that I will never know. He volunteered nothing in exchange. Together we walked, with no predetermined destination or goal in mind. The moon's reflection glistened from his large dark eyes. From his relaxed jaw, a lengthy tongue dangled from the side of his muzzle and he had a wagging tail. He looked content with our casual and uncomplicated relationship.

We walked for some time when suddenly; he licked my fingers with his wet tongue. We paused and gazed into one another's eyes. For a moment, I expected him to contribute something profound and thought-provoking, but he didn't speak a word. There were no words, which could have adequately expressed our thoughts. I experienced a pang in my heart as I observed him turn and move in the opposite direction. His tail wagged like a pendulum of a grandfather clock. I proceeded on my journey but only for a few moments, then I looked over my shoulder at my former companion. Had I said something to offend my companion that caused him to abandon me?

He must have sensed my hesitancy, for he too turned to look at me. Our eyes locked as if something should be spoken between us. All I could muster was a melancholy smile. He nodded as if to agree with me. Wistfully, we turned away from each other and each of us took up our respective travels toward separate destinations.

Fate allowed two lonely souls to cross paths and share a few moments of uncomplicated companionship when each had craved the company of another. A few moments in time, void of expectation or commitment, a few minutes of unexpected companionship under the radiant glow of a full harvest moon, among a dark sky of twinkling stars.

With an erect posture, a modest hop in my gait and a warmth in my heart, I proceeded on my journey as the hint of the eastern light ushered in the birth of a remarkable new day.

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by **Dale Thele**

Published by Dale Thele

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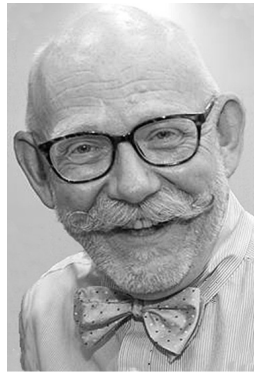
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Dale Thele

Pronouns: He / His / Him

associates with "*Bitch*" before morning coffee

Most of Mr. Thele's life has been a lengthy series of compulsions strung together by atrocious acts of stupidity and boredom. After raising heck in a sleepy north-central Oklahoma oil town for eighteen years, he ventured to Oklahoma City University on a quest for higher learning. He quickly learned "higher" education meant "elevating" one's mind with the aid of either a reefer or a bong, along with ample amounts of alcohol. Years later destiny lured Mr. Thele to Austin, Texas, where he currently lives vicariously through characters he conjures up in twisted far-fetched fictional adventures.

His writing career began in 2008, influenced by authors like Timothy James Beck, Michael Thomas Ford, Mark Kendrick, and Bryan Healey.

Originally writing under an assumed name, today, Mr. Thele writes under his given name, penning mostly Southern Fiction which often includes an LGBT character or two; currently under contract with Fountain Literary Press. His works have garnered him the honor of being an Amazon Bestselling Author.

If you enjoyed HARVEST MOON, check out my other works at

<https://www.dalethele.com>