

## Night Talk

I was finally tired enough. Sleep was a hair away from overwhelming me. I lay down, facing the French doors that lead out of our bedroom, across the small deck, and into the woods. The woods are full of many things. In the upper reaches of the trees you can see stars hanging from the branches. I like to pray, falling asleep, watching the stars in the branches of the great pines. But a breeze, not a constant one, but often there, called me. So I grabbed a blanket, and made for the mud room door, not wanting to leave through the bedroom doors. I didn't want to wake my loved one. I opened the door slowly, so that it would squeak just a bit. This squeak always accomplishes one thing. It brings the four-legged one.

The two of us slipped out. The waxing moon hung low, throwing light on just the upper reaches of the great oaks to the north of the house, and giving everything else just enough illumination to provide definition, and easy walking. (It can be so dark some nights you can't see your hand two feet from your face.) We headed for the lounge chair. I slid on to it, pulling the blanket up over my legs, straightening it out. The pawed one panted next to me, anticipating. Getting the blanket just right, I called her, patting the spot between my legs, "Okay, come on. You can come up now. Come on. Come on up. Come on."

It didn't take much urging. Up she came.

Not very often (because six months out of the year we are under snow or real cold) do we get to stretch out on the back porch with just a light blanket in the night. The calling breeze came and went and came again. There were moments of stillness, not lasting more than counting to ten. It wasn't strong, but it had some punch to it, and a rhythm. The trees swayed to the rhythm, trading small talk, living things well over a century old. The moon's presence on the top most branches gave them a silver hood, on the top of an immense old fashion cloak of darkness. They talked of soothing, and living, and coming into the season of high summer, when things grow the best, and the greens of their leaves change from the light life renewed green of spring to the hearty rich past emerald of deep summer. They laughed and traded stories with the stars.

The stars were, well, as they always are. Bits and pieces of wonder, pinpricks that are in reality, millions of times the size of our planet. I don't see them as well without my glasses anymore, but I can feel them better. The moon was low enough that her light didn't dominate her heavenly sisters, just giving a lighter than usual background, instead of the deep blackness of past midnight space, a softer blue black, laced with a good dose of silver, forming an iridescent backdrop against the mighty evergreens and massive oaks. All of them were singing and talking the tune of their Creator.

Between exchanges of the giant ones, a night bird sounded solitary. She, or he, called out in her proper sequence, filling her ordained spot, in the night meeting. A single frog, it was too late in the season for the spring peepers so I'm not sure what kind it was, called out to her. But she paid the frog no mind, and sang for her love of life in her own way. I am sure there were many of the creatures of the night out and about. But the speaking of the wind and the trees shut out any padding of clawed feet and paws across the forest floor; and the leaves, needles and twigs that carpet it. I know they were there because my four legged one was quickly off the lounge and pacing nervously back and forth.

I thought about all this life, this special moment in the middle of the night, and the lovely lighting effects of the moon and the stars, and the fact that I was one of few, if any, that experienced this, it being in the very deepest part of the night when most people are very much asleep. I wondered about the night creatures. Why were they night creatures? Was it because of the great break, when we chose to disobey? According to The Book, we were the masters and they were our friends doing our bidding. When we chose me, over God, when we chose to disobey, was that when the creatures fled from us in panic, changing from living in the light to the dark, knowing what we became in wanting to be like God, ungod?

The trees said, "Maybe", and on that I put one leg over the side of the lounge, then another, pulled my stiff self up, grabbed the blanket, called to me hairy friend, and went to bed. As I dosed off I thought maybe that's what happened. When we tried it without Him, we lost the touch. Getting back together takes listening to Him, and taking the time to be together with His creation, listening. Think about what would happen if we tried that with humans, with each other. Listening. Wow.

Clement