

‘The Sovereign’
-by Rich Butnotfamous

A wintery full moon descends on the forest,
Endless diamonds shine,
Against a velvet night sky,
Frosting ferns and branch alike.

Yesterday's snow now a formidable crust over the treasure some call food,
A majestic stag cracks ice with hoof,
Not for many,
But the few,
Following his tracks.

A timid rabbit, so desperate to eat,
Got a little too ahead of herself,
Attempting to feast,
On the flora beneath,
What this beast,
Reveals in hoof prints,
Such wealth!

The stag butts the doe away from the holes that he feeds in,
Declaring, "I'm king of this forest, there's no need for rushing!
Scraps lie behind me for you in the holes I have left,
Suspend from under my mouth your thieving!"

The rabbit, she rights herself woefully crying,
"My children, they hunger, in fact they are starving,
Can't you spare more of the bounty, O King?"

The stag stamps the ground,
Tyrannical antlers,
Rocking to and fro,
To his might show.

Startled, the doe retreats far away,
To sniff scraps left behind by a self centred way.

Along they continue,
An hour or so,
The stag keeping distance from this persistent doe,
Then a cry just behind him alerted him to,
A bear that had caught the mother of at least two!

The bones of the doe crunched in its maw,
The rabbit defenceless,
By head and by paw,
Wolfed down by the bear,
Who said between mouthfuls,
"O king I have fixed for you this scavenger, dreadful!
Though hasten too,
It is best that you ran,
A meal of you too,
I'll make if I can!"

Bolting through trees the stag did retreat,
Depressed, insecure by the lesson bears speak.

Hating himself,
The stag wandered on,
Hating the feeling,
Of how he'd done wrong.

"Not good enough,"
He whispered in tears,
"I should not have this crown,
A servant of mine,
Put their life on the line,
And another swallowed him down!"

A crow flaps his wings from a branch above, crying,
"O king don't despair, the lesson of dying,
'win or learn' not 'win or lose',
that's how we learn 'flying'!"

The stag, stunned, felt such a relief,
From detaining himself with judgment,
Forged from lack of self belief.

A fire lit inside him then and still to this very day,
The stag more often left more treasure in holes of snow in his wake.

Listening to joy,
Speaking true,
The stag,
As majesty,
Resumed.