

'The Warrior'

-by Rich Butnotfamous

Noon in summer,
A heat haze a glimmer,
Oozing humidly in the forest.

Parched, cracked soil,
Mimics the sun's toil,
Across the sky,
A dry,
Southern breeze
Bringing little reprieve.

Three cubs are at play as mama bear stays watchful,
These triplets she bore in the river nip and scuffle.

Despite her best efforts to teach them to hunt,
The smallest amongst them,
One might say the runt,
Has yet to succeed in felling his prey,
His siblings already each caught three fish today.

Try as he might to follow his mother's lessons,
About patience and stalking it just seemed to lessen,
His own sense of self,
Cunning and stealth.

The caw of a crow from a treetop resounds,
"It seems to me, little cub, your little belly so round,
You depend on your mama for food,
Your clumsy attempts to fend for yourself have left me somewhat amused!"

Infuriated by this avian mockery,
The cub dashes off through the trees,
Chasing the crow as it laughs at him ceaselessly.

He ran and he ran,
Unaware of the calls,
Of his mother and siblings,
He would not be warned,
Of the dangers in woodlands,
And the beasts that lay there,
So inflamed was his anger,
He'd no mind to care.

Suddenly realising the crow had flown off,
Left only with rage a stag he did spot.

This was no fish,
No diminutive quarry,
But a prize to suit pride,
And make a fine story!

He charged at the buck,
Ten times his size,
An inferno burning in his eyes,
And landed a bite on its hind leg,
Causing the stag to kick him in the head!

The cub tumbled back and the deer bellowed,
"What are you trying to do little fellow?
Fell a beast that's a king to you,
Don't you see antlers?
Be gone little cub,
Lest they become little bear manglers!"

The cub ran away as the stag stood his ground,
Akin to a doormat the buck had him found,
Deflated the cub had now become,
He just couldn't seem to get the job done.

Alone in the forest,
He wandered for hours,
'Til a rustling he heard,
Amongst the bushes and flowers,
And suddenly before him,
Unaware of his presence,
Was a rabbit just his size,
A test for his patience.

Without saying a word the rabbit seemed to say,
"I won't give in easily,
Though I seem to you prey.
Your anger must quell,
Your attention must focus,
To make a meal of my hide,
And declare hunter status."

The cub felt a surge in his stomach,
A feeling,
That here lay a channel that would lead to his healing,
So he crouched and he crept towards this rabbit so slowly,
'Til he felt the moment come and he leapt in calm fury!

The rabbit had no time to react,
The cub had deftly killed it,
A prize to take back,
To his family as proof of his intrepid pursuit,
Of his distinction from parent,
Dependency now mute.