She then saw a breeze, as the ethereal bee flew by. She then felt the breeze she saw before.
The Clock on the Mantle
Unwound today,
First time in forty years.
Her room was warm from the shimmering sun
When she rose, rather late, it appears.
Venerable silence
She thought, and smiled
And had her coffee alone.
And glanced at his untouched
Supper dishes.
What feculence in his fine home!
Then, as habit,
She went to wake him
Then laughed as she saw what she'd done.
Closed his door,
Called for arrangements,
And made the day's breakfast, for one.
By the light of the lampshade it falls faintly down.
Shielding the stubbornness of the winter ground.
How did it know
The grass was cold
When it placed its pure blanket down?
Soon, the wind rises and detours its peaceful flight.
But the grass need not worry or feel fright.
It need not despair
Of the chilling air.
For its cover is secure and tight.

Still, nature's cold blanket finds its way
To cover her creations in peace where they lay.
When spring begins
There's life again
And the grass comes out to play.

I can still hear mother
telling the officer the purpose
of a privacy fence in the first place,
while a 4 year old black
boy screamed "bitch" across the yard.
I wasn't home when it happened
but I could feel it when I got out
of the car that night. The neighborhood
kids were next door playing basketball
cutting the air with profanities.
Mother stood inside washing dishes,
windows raised. She could tolerate
no more, picked up the phone
and dialed the officer. The black neighborhood
children cut their eyes at me
for weeks and never spoke to mother.
She tried telling me that in town
it was a river that separated us,
that most black kids couldn't swim
to save their lives,
But I have waded the river's banks
in the heat of August and know its potential
to pull a child across it, wringing from his shirt
any former prejudice.
When I was younger, I was absolutely sure of what I wanted:
An egg girl
To be my fragile, giggling possession.
Now I'm sure you know these girls, because they are painted
eggs and you'd remember that.

What I got, after all was said and done, and indeed one
never "gets" these things, was a small rubber ball girl,
suitable for use in life's game of jacks.
This, I'm convinced, is grace, not justice, for a fool on a
hungry sidewalk.
She got off the train with her teacher's contract in her hand. With her, she had two bags, $42 in cash, and a box of picture and slate supplies for the Ladies Aid Society of Bethel, Vermont; a society made up of mostly women who formed a close-knit community. The supplies were the gift to her. She was the gift to the town.

She was supposed to be met by Mr. Holdbrook, who was a most distinguished man in the town. He was a teacher, and she knew he was a man of integrity and intelligence. She was glad when she saw him. He was tall, thin, and had a distinguished carriage. He introduced himself, and she was thrilled. He was the kind of man she had always admired. He was a man of substance and honor. She was glad to have met him.

They walked to the train station, and she was amazed by the size of the town. She had never been to a place like this before. She was excited and a bit nervous. She was about to leave everything she knew behind and start a new life. She was determined to make the best of it.

They talked about the city and the people. Mr. Holdbrook told her about the people and the places she would be visiting. She was eager to learn as much as she could. She was determined to make the most of her time in the city.

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It was a morning reminiscent of the spring, even though it was only early March. The sun's warm rays touched the air, forcing the thinning chill of the night to retreat and places more suited to its color. As the sun climbed higher and higher, signaling the beginning of another day, the entire forest seemed to come alive with activity. In the clearings of the woods, long strands of grass began to sway like metamorphoses keeping time with the wind as it blew gently back and forth. It was true, reflected Lou Mitchell, as he stood on the balcony of his lodge, which overlooked the National Hunting Preserve, a perfect day for the hunt.

Lyons Mitchell was a child of the hunt who had taken up the sport early in his youth, about the same time that the Olympic Committee had declared hunting an official sport. Actually, there was never a time in his life when Mitchell could not remember hunting. He had vague memories of hunting as a child with his father; before the war. After his father's untimely death, Mitchell, who was only twelve years old at the time and, like most young boys, cared for his father deeply, had clung to the one activity with which he could associate his deceased mentor. That was twenty years ago. Now, a world renowned hunter and winner of three consecutive national hunting championships, Mitchell was about to face the most exciting challenge: any hunter could ever dream of undertaking: he had been invited to spend twenty-four hours in the National Hunting Preserve.

To be invited to the Preserve, as it was called, among the more proficient hunters, was an honor second only to winning the World Hunting Exhibition, which was held once each year in Kenya, Africa. During the World Hunting Exhibition, in which the twenty best hunters of the year were invited to participate, twenty animals of the same breed were tagged and then released into the Kenya Preserve. The tag which was attached to each animal had a specific serial number. Each hunter was then, in turn, assigned a serial number corresponding to the number found on one of the animal's tags. It was then each hunter's task to, aided only by binoculars and a weapon, track down, shoot out, and kill the animal whose serial number he had been assigned. Of course, it was difficult to distinguish between the animals; as they were all of the same breed, and the use of traps was encouraged so that each hunter might more closely examine the animal's tag, for should one of the hunters carelessly kill any animal other than his own, he disqualified himself and the hunter whose game he had killed. The disgrace of this disqualification was enough to destroy one's career as a professional hunter forever. Of course, the hunter who first arrived at the entrance of the Kenya Preserve, which covered over two hundred square miles — with his designated animal's tag still intact and serial number in no way defaced — was declared the winner and awarded the grand prize.

Hunting at the National Hunting Preserve, located deep in the woods of Minnesota, was similar in most respects, except that only one hunter was allowed on the Preserve at one time, as this much smaller range covered only twenty square miles, which was just enough space to provide a challenge for a single professional hunter. Hunting at the Preserve was by invitation only. In this scaled-down version of the World Exhibition, one animal, chosen at random by the Preserve's officials, was released from their private stock of game, reputed to be one of the best in the world, was released into the preserve six hours before the current hunter was scheduled to arrive. The guest hunter was then given twenty-four hours from his actual time of entry into the Preserve to find his animal, kill it, and return to the front gate of the National Preserve; scoring the points of his game. If, within twenty-four hours, the hunter had not returned, the entrance to the Preserve was scaled and the professional staff of hunters employed by the Preserve began a search for both the hunter and his animal. Sometimes, although all activity in the Preserve was meticulously monitored, these searches could go on for days.
to track and kill his game in only eight and one-half hours. If he acted quickly, Mitchell related, the record could be captured by some one more deserving than an American, demonstrating to the world once and for all the supremacy of the American hunter.

Carefully, Mitchell reached into his pack and removed his crossbow and a sleek metallic arrow. This special arrow, available only to professional hunters, was made of a special metal alloy which enabled it to fly farther, faster, and more accurately than its intended target. Carefully, he nocked his bow, placing the shaft of his arrow against the already taut string of his weapon, now ready to spring into deadly action. Cautiously, Mitchell eased toward his prey, arms glinting in the warm afternoon sun. He cocked to himself; he was within twenty yards of his beast, yet the poor animal did not even sense his presence.

How easy this would be. Shyly, the famous hunter raised his weapon toward his target. Suddenly, as he was about to fire, a glint of sunlight from Mitchell's arrow caught the beast's eyes in the face and, in a flash of fury, it had disappeared into the dense underbrush which lay just past the clearing.

Mitchell cursed himself, first for his stupidity and second for his arrogance. Now, he would have to start over from the beginning. At least this time, he thought, he had one advantage; he had seen the direction of the animal's flight. Mitchell, anxious to make up for lost time, nocked his crossbow and headed in the direction to which the beast had fled.

Three hours later, Mitchell stood perpendicularly in the afternoon sun, asking himself where the hell his animal could have gone. He had searched in every conceivable hiding place within a two square mile radius, and yet there was still no sign of his game. Sometime, Mitchell thought to himself, night would fall and he would have to waste eight valuable hours while he waited for sunrise. There was no moon hanging in the dark.

With a sigh of frustration, Mitchell made his way back to the clearing where he had first spotted his animal. He was thirsty, and the clearing provided him not only with liquid refreshment but an excellent place to camp. Also, Mitchell realized, with some luck the animal might return to this area with the hope of quenching its thirst, and if it was indeed foolish enough to attempt this, he would be ready.

It was evening. The twilights of birds had become the chirping of crickets. The sun, growing ever dimmer, cast an orange glow across Mitchell as he lay his bed down under the sleepless sky. Mitchell had already built himself a small fire from some wood he had found near the brook, which he was surprised to find bound together more than any wood he had ever seen.

Mitchell stepped back, admired the fruits of his labor, and smiled. Not only had he managed to set up his camp in less than two hours, he had also managed to set traps along a ten yard perimeter of the place where he had first seen the beast. These traps were very simple, and designed not to hurt the beast should it stumble into one, but simply designed to implant into whatever part of the animal that it touched a small transmitter, about the size of a pinhead. This transmitter, after approximately two hours, would begin to emit a signal which Mitchell could detect with a small receiver which he carried in his pack. Also attached to each trap was a small beacon which would begin to flash, signaling that the trap had been sprung, at the same time that the small transmitter began to emit its signal which would show the bear's proximity to Mitchell. Of course, if the animal should stumble upon him at some point during the night, Mitchell had his crossbow ready.

It was now dark. Mitchell's only light came from his fire, which cast its golden warmth across Mitchell's bed in his protest from the chill night air. For a while, the evening's most precious stars sparkled coldly. Secure in his place, Mitchell consumed a small part of his food, lay across his bedroll, and began to dream.

The sun, which shined with urgency on Mitchell's eyes, served as a natural alarm clock enough to cause him to bolt up with a start. Mitchell hurriedly checked his watch and discovered that it was only sixty-three. Luckily, he had not overslept. With a sigh of relief, Mitchell rose from his bedroll and began to collect his equipment. First, he restored his bedroll to its original spot atop his pack. He then closed the wood, which had been reduced mostly to ashes, with water from his canteen. Finally, Mitchell carefully slung his crossbow across his back and headed for the stream where he had placed several of his traps. It was just as he had suspected — two of his traps were flashing with a white beacon, indicating that they had been sprung.

Mitchell removed his tracking device from his pack. He smiled when he saw that it was receiving two signals, each originating from within one foot of the other. According to these transmissions, the animal was moving at the approximate speed of five miles per hour in the direction of south by southeast. Mitchell fumbled for his compass and turned to face the direction in which the tracker indicated the animal was moving. He smiled with delight as he saw that his compass had pointed him toward the mountain range. Hecently, Mitchell refilled his canteen and started for the mountains.

As he started off in the direction of his animal, Mitchell thought as to the rest of his expedition into the Preserve. He had five and one-half hours left. The mountain range was about a one and one-half hour walk from his present location. Allowing one hour to track his animal once he reached the mountains and an additional two and one-half hours to return to the Preserve's entrance, he should arrive exactly on schedule.

Although the range was somewhat difficult, it was no more so than Mitchell had suspected that it would be. With little effort, he scaled the mountainous, all the time watching with satisfaction as the animal's signal grew stronger and stronger. At last, after a climb of some four hundred yards, he reached a small cliff, which measured about ten yards long by five yards wide. It was here that he paused briefly to turn and survey the Preserve from this new perspective. The breathtaking view, which enabled him to see everything for five miles, stunned him for just long enough to make a permanent impression on his mind. Mitchell would have stayed longer, but his concentration was broken by the sound of a low grog. He turned to discover a natural opening in the mountain. It was from the face of that sound which he had heard ever since. Mitchell looked at both his tracker and his watch. He still had plenty of time. It was only nine o'clock and the tracker read that the animal lay only some one hundred yards straight ahead.

Obviously, this was the animal's lair. Mitchell hesitated. He had heard the tales of old, about the hunters who had followed their animals into their lairs with the intention of killing them, only to become hopelessly lost. Some unfortunate men had unexpectedly stumbled into their intended game, and the hunters had rapidly become the hunted.

As Mitchell reflected on several ways to flush out his game, he suddenly remembered that he had brought several flares. One flares strategically placed about every hundred paces should provide him with sufficient lighting and mark his path, so that he might easily return to the cave's opening. As for being prepared, Mitchell thought as he drew his loaded crossbow, that would not be a problem.

The cave, thought Mitchell as he stepped inside, smelled rotten, as nothing he had ever smelled, like rotting meat and a mixture of moldy fruit. The air was cool and damp, and in the distance, he thought he heard water dripping softly into a pool. Perhaps just a touch of apprehension, Mitchell began the procession to where his quest would inevitably end, passing only once every hundred paces or so as he remembered, to drop a lighted flare.

The low grog which Mitchell had heard at the entrance of the cave sounded again, this time closer than Mitchell would have liked to believe that it was. He checked his tracker, which read that the beast was less than twenty-five yards away. Mitchell raised his crossbow.

After walking for what seemed like an eternity, but could have been no more than fifteen yards, Mitchell came to a fork in the cave. He
stopped and checked his receiver again, which
read that the heart still had no record.
According to his tach, his average for
the day was 160 bpm, and he was
breathing deeply.

A sudden thought made Mitch
shudder. What if the bear, for some
reason, decided to attack? No, Mitch
resolved himself, even if the bear
was waiting for him, his arrows flew faster
than any other animal could spring, and Mitch
confident with this new realization, he
headed back towards the forest.

Mitchell continued his search, and
finally found the bear within the
forest. The bear was large and
aggressive, and Mitch knew that
his arrows would not be enough to stop it.

As the bear advanced, Mitch
remembered the advice given to him
by his mentor. He kept calm and
slowly backed away, speaking softly
to the bear. He knew that the
bear was used to being hunted, and
was not afraid.

As the bear finally stopped,
Mitchell drew his bow and
released an arrow. The bear
stumbled forward, and Mitch
knew that he had killed the
animal.

Mitchell turned and walked back to
his camp, where he found his
friend, John, waiting for him.
They both knew that they had
been successful in their hunt, and
were excited for the meal to come.

As they sat down to eat, they
laughed and shared stories of their
adventures. They were both
happy to be able to share this
time together.

As they finished eating, they
looked out at the stars, and
realized how lucky they were
to have each other in their
lives.

They both knew that they
would continue to hunt together
for many years to come.

The next day, they
headed out to
continue their
search for
wildlife. They
were both
excited for
what the day
would bring.

As they walked
through the
forest, they
offered silent
prayers for
the health
and safety
of all
creatures.

They knew
that hunting
was not
without
risk, but they
were determined
to continue
their
journey.
over the small identifications which the processing would attach to his animal. It read:

Serial number: 0257089
Name: Legras, D.
Type: Agitated rape and murder
Sentence: Prison
Termination date: 3 March 1923

Mitchell shifted the bookcase that was behind the door and looked out for the boy. He could see the road, but it was still a short trip. Perhaps he would come back. Somehow, he could never quite shake the feeling that the animals knew whom they were. He had never been able to kill enough of them to feel safe, but even now he had abandoned the thought. The world was a vast place, full of people and things. He could not help wondering what would become of the animal. For just as a demonstration of the fact of his existence, what would happen to the dog? After all, it was the only one of those responsible for the destruction of the animals who could have been murdered. He felt against something with no ability to move. He had never known another name. He could not think of the ultimate challenge. Of course, he was a

Mitchell closed his eyes.