

The Breeze and I

Silky and smooth as warm water on my skin, the languid breeze lightly brushes me and continues on silently over the rolling hills. Like a trusted friend, it comes to me whenever the loneliness in my soul wells up like a cherished, yet mostly forgotten memory. Dependable and accepting, the breeze never imposes or questions or judges. It just is—honest and real and timeless. “Hello again,” I say, and walk on, my companion ever near.

Clouds are in abundance on this late afternoon, as they so often are these days of my life. Sunlight pokes through from time to time, only for a brief moment, and warms the earth beneath my feet and casts long shadows in the grass. Above me, on reliable and steadfast wings, a hawk swoops on currents of air. I watch the bird dive and then climb, circle, and finally sail away on the same gracious and patient breeze keeping me company. My heart full, my world melancholy, I walk on.

I sit on a rock overlooking a valley of greens and yellows and blues, and rest my weary limbs. The breeze vanishes for the duration of a passing cloud, and then it returns, and it brings recollections of younger days when life was measured not in minutes and hours and days, but in periods of time clocked only by the sun and the stars. Images of a simpler life experienced and lived and remembered. Joy, sadness, fear, wonder—emotions from another time, unfamiliar now after a lifetime has driven them away. I walk on.

Overhead, a jet trail slices white lines across the deepening blue sky, and I watch it soar on its journey to a magical land of promises and hopes and dreams. I lower my head and feel the breeze glide through my hair. I reach down and pick up a dandelion, and then I toss it into the air. For a moment it takes flight, like the jet plane above me, but then it lands softly in the tall grass. The vapor is fading now, the aircraft closer to its destination. Two souls who have not loved in many cold years may soon embrace and love once more. I am happy for them, and wish them luck. With the breeze by my side, I walk on.

I stop at a spillway, dug and poured generations ago by proud men who had purpose, and I admire its focus and the solidness of its concrete. Into the ravine it funnels, as it has since the time of my grandfather. It will continue serving long after I’m gone. Dry now, it will drain the valley again soon, when the rains fall hard. I run my fingers over the weathered engraving and think of my father and mother, swaddled infants when these letters were carved in stone. Their lives had yet to begin, and my life just a distant blip in an unknown future. I walk on.

There is a farm implement in the field, its metal parts long ago rusted to ruin. I watch it sitting motionless, alert, ready to shake off its grime, its years, and plow like it had once before. Stuck and abandoned in the dirt, it is ready, waiting, longing to have usefulness again, to be pulled free. A kindred spirit. I turn away and feel the breeze on my face. I walk on.

The sun has dipped below the horizon now, the sky singed with orange and red swirls. I must leave. I will return to my existence which continues expiring, minute by minute, day by day, and year by year. I am no longer young, and am getting older with each sunset. The breeze soothes the lines in my face, peels away the years, and comforts. But it is gone now, lost like me. And so I say goodbye to the field where I have often contemplated and reflected and walked with heavy steps. I do not say goodbye to the breeze.

The breeze and I are old friends. We will keep in touch. I walk on.