



Dancer and Tree

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Fable



artwork by Tad Richards

The dancer sat pretty, her eyes on the tree.
Why won't you, she asked, come dancing with me?
The tree stood stock still, not once did it stir.
The dancer sat waiting for movement toward her.

She perched on the bench, was patient all day,
and looked at the trunk in a questioning way.
Why won't you try dancing? she asked once again.
If you would just dance, you'd be Lord of the Glen.

The tree finally spoke, shook all of its leaves,
its words like a whisper that bellows and heaves.

What makes you think I'm not Lord of the Glen?
I once was a sapling but that was back when

the grasses were seed and the forest was new
but we settled and prospered while all of us grew.

We grew up to the sky and down into the earth
took root and matured and learned of our worth.

The dancer transfixed, sat as still as the tree,
so sure she was right as right as could be.

But how can you rule if you stand there so still?
You must learn to dance, I'll teach you, I will.

The tree shook its leaves as if in a laugh.
You don't understand. No, not even half
of the things that are needed, and what is a dance.
Is it moving your feet or is it a chance

to express what you're feeling, to sway and to swing,
dancing is movement, it's not just one thing.

I planted my roots so my children could grow.
Then I taught them to dance, and I taught them to flow.

*Now look up at my leaves. No, don't you look down!
Look up. Look up now, at my leaves, they're my crown!
Watch them wave lightly in wind or a breeze.
Watch them move gently, they're dancing with ease.*

The dancer stood up and looked toward the top.
The movement of branches and leaves did not stop.
She raised her hands high and swayed to and fro,
heard the wind's quiet music that moved like a cat.

The dancer and tree moved together as one.
They danced to the moon and they danced to the sun.
The dancer felt hampered by dancing in boots.
She wanted to plant herself deep with her roots.

*I want to stay here, plant my roots by your tree,
where I can dance just like you and be settled and free.*
The tree shook its branches, spread out, filled more space.
Your roots do not have to stay just in one place.

*Give to your offspring your freedom to move.
You don't need to stay here with me just to prove
that roots can grow deep to give children their home.
You can dance freedom dances wherever you roam.*

The music of birds, of the wind, of the sea,
took the dancer off dancing away from the tree.
But she knew from then on, like the growing of fruits,
that tree was still dancing, right down to its roots.