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A Death In The Woods

Cover Page Footnote

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A DEATH IN THE WOODS

BY MAREESA FORBES

Camouflaged by the embrace of an ancient willow,
the brim of his black hat pulled low,
his eyes and face were no more than shadow.
The hunter peered past waxy and wavy branches
to the sun drenched clearing that waited below.
The motes in the air danced with pollen to and fro,
floating serenely and switching partners in the midmorning's glow,
carried along and up and down when any breeze would blow,
settling upon the still and crumpled corpse of a rabbit,
whose blood stained the silky white hide of plushy snow.
Meditatively the hunter stared at the bait with hunger in his eyes,
gripping the bow in his hand and sword at his side.
It took but one stir in the bushes to make him come alive,
As its twisted red horns parted through the thistles,
he leaned forward and hunched as if preparing to dive,
when the long-fanged beast looked to the willow and let out a cry.
Its thick auburn fur bristled and it scraped the air with its claws,
A bear-like monster with a barb on its tail and blood on its maw.
At once the hunter let an arrow fly free,
and it sunk with a plunk into the monster's jaw.
With haste he threw aside his bow and with a smile he saw
the beast slowly retreating, tapping at the embedded shaft with its paw.
But when he jumped down and out of the gnarled tree,
the beast lunged forward with uninjured speed
and too quickly it found him before he found his sword,
the hunter had no time to turn around and flee.