

Voices of the Night

LOUISE CASH

At night near a pond, myriads of tiny voices echo through the surrounding darkness. Mosquitoes fly low over the water, making a humming noise. All around, the crickets are singing in their monotonous way, "chirrup, chirrup." Fire flies flit here and there, blinking their little lanterns so as to illuminate partially the surrounding blackness of the night. The low, deep croaks of the frogs are audible above other sounds. A loud splash is heard as one of these creatures jumps from a lily pad into the inky black water of the pond. A small fish leaps for a moment into the air, then returns to the mysterious black water, causing soft ripples to go out to the sides of the pond and splash lightly on the edges. Somewhere overhead the high shrill call of a night bird is heard and answered by its mate.

Throughout the night hours,

these tiny creatures continue their conversations. Then, little by little, as the flaming sun rises, these voices gradually fade, so that nothing is heard but the guttural croaks of the frogs. The hungry mosquitoes have flown away in the pursuit of human prey. The other insects have either gone elsewhere or have hidden themselves in the verdure surrounding the pond. The fish, preferring the muddy bottom where food may be found, have left the surface of the water. Only occasionally can the tail of one of them be seen.

For a while all is peaceful. Then as the bright yellow ball reaches its peak, high in the sky, the restless silence is broken by the tramp of human feet, making their way through the undergrowth toward the pond. All the small creatures scatter as these giants, these intruders, these inhabitants of another world invade the sanctuary of the pond. Only when night falls do the voices of the night communicate with each other once again.

Tahj

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ing I went out in the yard to feed Tahj her salmon. I called and called, but no streak of fur came bounding across the hedge. We searched every hiding place in the yard but still no Tahj. Finally, we gave up and went out on the front porch to see if she was asleep on her favorite cushion. No, she wasn't there. I sat down on the steps and stared out into the twilight. All at once I saw her, sitting right there on the walk. She blinked those luminous eyes at me and began to purr.

"Look, Sonny, there's Tahj!" I said, overjoyed.

"Where?" he scoffed. "You're seeing things, Beth."

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When I looked again, she was gone. But it was Tahj; I know it was. I never saw her again after that night, but she'll come back, I'm sure. An ordinary cat may be content with nine lives, but Tahj wouldn't settle for less than ten.

Unborn tears
Nourish the dreams
That never see the light of day.
—Joyce Ellis.



Draft-Bait

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had to answer to no one; he dithered about all he wanted to do. Being at college made a small difference but none of any importance. There is a little studying involved in maintaining his goal, but he is still his own boss.

After being flattered at receiving a personal letter from the President of his country, beginning, "Greetings," our hero can imagine the great torture involved in arising before daybreak every day to the horrible sound of a bugle instead of the voice of a popular singer on the radio. He will not forget those sweet words whispered at the last dance by the best girl, even though that arrogant sergeant does continue to bark out unnecessary commands. Taking rugged calisthenics will not be like playing through exercises in gym class. Throwing grenades instead of baseballs, shooting rifles instead of basketballs, diving into foxholes instead of swimming pools, and dodging batonets instead of boxing gloves are all things that enter a poor boy's head as he reluctantly awaits the uncle's message.

Maybe a boy in a uniform is more appealing to the girls than one in the customary sweater and levis, but the brave one knows that girls are not everything. The average young man in the armed forces is looked upon as one performing a glorious duty to his country at the time of need. The one waiting for his call, however, is positive that heroes are born, not made.

The older folks make the statement that the most enjoyable time of life is the later teens. This may be true to some people, but not to the young man who is waiting to be inducted into the military sight-seeing agency known in the world. Being in college with little to do, plenty of girls, and friends, people do not seem things that wishes to give up for a vacation in Uncle Sam's army. Most would rather find an empty mailbox after day.