

Throughout the lush green fields that stretched for miles and miles away towards north, every living thing murmured and swayed and chuckled silently in the warm air. The fresh aroma of springtime curled all around, and the sun shone softly in bright, golden patches.

It was the intruding of the young girl that shattered the quietness of the warm afternoon. Her big eyes were rimming with agitation, and with a big sigh of hopelessness, she collapsed face-first into the soft grasses of the field, her thin body heaving with uncontrollable sobs. The flowers all nodded and bobbed their heads in perfect understanding, and the wind blew soothingly in the girl's ear, to comfort her. But still to no avail; the damsel continued to weep, her tears soaking up the cool earth. The meadow held its breath, waiting patiently for their victim to cease her pitiful cries, and, a few minutes later, she finally stopped.

Lifting up her heavy head, which framed tangled yellow locks on her pale face, the girl drew her bare legs to her chest. She looked with blurry eyes all around the expansive spring meadow as her breathing rasped in her throat. She had never been here before, yet the setting gave her a sense of feeling that she had been here for a very, very long time. She listened to the quiet rustle of leaves that were quivering on a branch of a big oak tree. One of the leaves curled and cringed under the branch as it trembled terribly in the whistling wind. The girl's heart pounded, and tears spilled and flowed once more. How long, how long will the leaf endure? How long will the leaf manage raging wind and rain before it withered and evaporated to dust, gone? How long will she endure?

The young girl shuddered and looked up at the empty blue sky. It seemed the same way that she felt: Empty. Nothing seemed to fill her hollow cup; all that was ramming in her heart was hopelessness and despair. The damsel gulped and slowly, slowly stood up. The field rustled and bustled in the calm breeze, but inside the girl's head was just the opposite. Inside was a tumultuous storm of maddening, questioning thoughts.

"Who am I?" the girl called out to the sky. The wind swallowed up her words and whisked them away, away, along with loose flower petals dancing in the sky. The girl's hair

blew in her face, and the wind blew harder as the girl's bubbling cauldron of anger spilled over. She ran. She ran and ran and ran, as the wind whooshed along with her. All she saw were blurred colors of yellow and red and green and brown and blue that rushed quickly past. Her floppy tennis shoes pounded on the crumbly earth, and her shoelaces lashed at the girl's ankles like snake tails. The young girl's heart pumped with new adrenaline and speed, her eyes watered from the whistling wind, and her breathing was short and ragged. But the girl kept running. It made her feel invincible, like she was running away from all of her problems and questions and fear that was gathering up in her chest. Now her agitation was temporarily being replaced with speed. The trees waved at her encouragingly, the birds who were settling down to roost cheered and squawked out directions on which way to go. The girl actually did not know where she was going, all she knew was that she had to keep moving, farther and farther away...

A flash of brown rushed by her feet, causing her to stumble. She lurched forward to reach for something to grasp, but it was too late. Already she was rolling down, down the hill, with loose weeds and twigs tangling up with her hair. By the time the gravity of down-pull was finished, the girl's head bashed against a tree. Hazy images flew around in her head as she groaned remorse. For a moment she stayed huddled in the transpired shape that possessed her, then she stretched out her body carefully to check for any signs of external pain. She was in a disheveled state; her elbows were all scratched, and her dress was filled with muddy dirt and wet grass. Her head was throbbing, but other than that, she was fine. There was nothing broken. The only major pain was her left leg, which was dripping out bright red blood.

The damsel stared at this, at the red berry-color liquid that was squelching out from her gash, and immediately a flood of memories washed through her. She remembered a story she heard, so long ago that the memory of it was faint and frayed at the edges. The girl picked at the cut and thought. Seven years old was, a bitty little girl who still held on to her mother's hand and peppered her with an incessant amount of questions.

'You talk too much,' her mother had snapped at her one day as she was dragging her out of the church. 'Some questions are just not meant to be answered.'

‘But how,’ the little girl panted as she tried to wrench away from her mother’s painful grasp. ‘How do we believe?’

Mother never answered her question; she had just set her thin mouth in a pursed line and said nothing. They never went back, to the chapel that seemed to be swelled both with joy and hope. The girl now shuddered and leaned her head against the tree’s bark. Here she was, fourteen years old, and still she had questions that swarmed like bees in a hive. She felt hopeless, all alone in the silence of the meadow, and most of all, she couldn’t confer her problems to anybody. ‘You talk too much,’ her mother had said. The girl’s questions that used to be spoken aloud eventually died, like the final breath of a long winter.

The brown flash, which was the victim of causing the young girl to stumble, sniffed and stood on his hind legs, staring at the girl for a moment. The girl looked back at the black eyes of the squirrel, and her heart pounded. She felt so lonely that she didn’t care if she was contacting with a squirrel. She had an eager epiphany that the squirrel wanted to talk to her, and that she should respond. Desperate, the girl leaned forward in expectation.

But just before the girl could utter one sound, the squirrel lifted up his bushy tail and scampered up the tree trunk like a bolt of lightning. The girl’s throat almost choked up with tears until she happened to look up. The squirrel was frisking back and forth, from the tree trunk, to the tree branch, and back again, while communicating with squeaks and squeals. The girl wiped her eyes and gasped in astonishment, “Why, the squirrel wants me to follow him!”

The girl quickly covered her wound with her dress sash and tried hard to ignore the painful slice through her leg. Carefully but excitedly the girl boosted her body and her stiff leg against the tree trunk, eager to meet up with the furry creature. The squirrel kept darting back and forth, squeaking, “Come on, hurry up hurry up! There’s so much to see, see, Come on!”

The girl laughed and threw her strong leg over the lowest branch. There she heaved on up and up, while the squirrel looked on anxiously. With a few more heaves and grunts and boosts, the girl was finally at the highest branch of the tree. Her left leg pounded, but she didn’t even

notice. The girl was so proud that she had accomplished something she had always wanted to do, climb a tree! And she did it with an injured leg too! The girl laughed and gasped with pleasure for a few long moments, then she quickly looked around. Where was Little Squirrel?

A brief chattering gave her the answer. The girl turned behind her and was so amazed at the sight that she almost fell off the tree branch. A concession of squirrels and birds stared back at her, all huddled up in bundles and nests of twigs and hay. Some of the younger squirrels scampered around the treetop with Little Squirrel, squealing happily at their game of chase. Some of the larger birds squawked angrily at the squirrel's antics above them, but most of the animals were content, cooing softly in their snug homes.

The girl stared at this, her eyes all thoughtful and lucid. Seeing all of these creatures made her feel so sustaining and calm with peace washing all over her. She sighed and plucked off a brand new flower bud from a branch, and she twirled it rather absently in her fingers as she watched the peaceful scene. As she stared, she remembered yet another memory quote that was buried so long ago. 'See how the wild flowers grow, they don't work or make clothing...but even King Solomon in all of his glory was not dressed like these flowers.'

The girl looked more closely at the plant that she held so carelessly. She looked at the soft pastel colors that blushed brilliantly on all sides. She traced the crafted velvet petals, how they extended in perfect detail, and unity. How excellently created it was! Not with one blemish, not with one wrinkle. And this was just a tiny, newborn flower bud...

The girl stared carefully at the arrangement of animals. 'Look at the birds in the air. They don't just plant or gather crops...but your Father who is in heaven feeds them.' The birds who rustled sleepily in their nest revealed their full plump tummies. There was never a scrawny bird that the girl has seen. She closed her eyes and replayed the last verse, quietly, in her heart, 'Aren't you worth more than they are?'

The damsel looked down at her wounded leg, which was almost healing from blood. Now she remembered. She remembered the story, the truth, of the blood of the person who came from

above, to soothe and save all who were hurt and all who were in sorrow. The young girl remembered, now, even the reverent name that rustled faint in her ears like a kiss, as her late daddy from long ago had whispered, ‘Jesus loves you very much, my darling.’ And Jesus did love her. She remembered, oh, the young girl remembered.

The girl had her legs continue to dangle from the strong branch as she stared out to the wide world in front of her, rolling out like a carpet. Peace clothed her as it had clothed the leaves and the birds and the squirrels. Every living thing had their purpose, and they knew who gave them that purpose, and they were content in knowing that their Heavenly Father would take care of them. For how did the birds know how to protect their young? And how did the leaves know when to fall from the trees, or the squirrels to collect their provisions for winter?

The young girl shut her eyes tight. The sun was beginning to set, and the sky was tinted with a faint orange along with a faint blush of pink. On cue, the crickets began to tune their instruments for the nightly concert, and stars started glittering down at the girl’s hair, turning it into a shimmery golden.

The girl’s eyes were spilling with tears, and her heart was reverberating so fast that she couldn’t breathe. Troubles and her familiar doubt rose up in her like a flowing creek, but the girl held on to her raft. She was not going to slip and drown anymore. She had been freed from her spiritual blindness, and now she saw, saw everything that wanted and needed to see.

“Jesus,” she whispered to the scarcely breathing world, up towards the heavens.

“I give my heart back to you.”

The frogs, crickets, leaves, raccoons, every living thing, every living thing that dwelled in the freshness and coolness of the whole wide meadow, responded to the girl’s life-changing utterance, and it filled the girl with everlasting hope. Carefully, she shinnied down the tree, limping on her left leg. It still felt painful, very painful, and she knew that if she walked on, it will hurt, and she would want to give up, but it was still healed. Her Wound was now healed.

The girl glanced back up at the tree, where the birds and squirrels were snuggled up in sleep, and she looked all around her, in the peace and freedom that was as clear as day. She was ready. The girl grinned up to the sky and called out in the light of the dark, “Thank you!”

She took a deep breath, and with encouragement and hope that finally filled her chest, Charity finally turned towards home.

Using references Matthew 6:26, 28, and 29