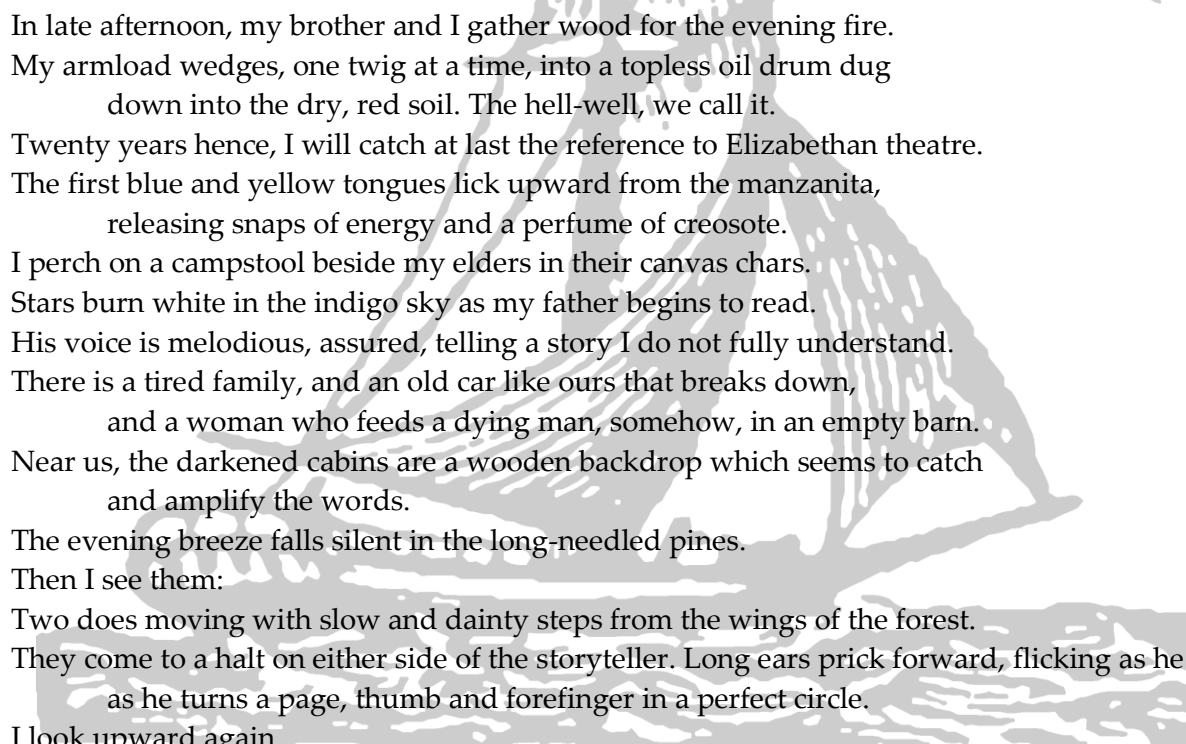




Karen Mathieson, Owner
Karen@SerendipityCommunications.com
Office line and voice mail: 503-297-3262
10940 SW Barnes Rd. #145 Portland OR 97225-5368

Orpheus, Sierra Nevada

By Karen Mathieson



In late afternoon, my brother and I gather wood for the evening fire.
My armload wedges, one twig at a time, into a topless oil drum dug
down into the dry, red soil. The hell-well, we call it.
Twenty years hence, I will catch at last the reference to Elizabethan theatre.
The first blue and yellow tongues lick upward from the manzanita,
releasing snaps of energy and a perfume of creosote.
I perch on a campstool beside my elders in their canvas chars.
Stars burn white in the indigo sky as my father begins to read.
His voice is melodious, assured, telling a story I do not fully understand.
There is a tired family, and an old car like ours that breaks down,
and a woman who feeds a dying man, somehow, in an empty barn.
Near us, the darkened cabins are a wooden backdrop which seems to catch
and amplify the words.
The evening breeze falls silent in the long-needled pines.
Then I see them:
Two does moving with slow and dainty steps from the wings of the forest.
They come to a halt on either side of the storyteller. Long ears prick forward, flicking as he
as he turns a page, thumb and forefinger in a perfect circle.
I look upward again.
The stars are bright rivets holding everything still except the flames, the voice, the hand
and the attentive ears of the deer.

© Karen Mathieson / Serendipity Communications

Please respect this original creation by not printing or otherwise widely distributing it without permission from the author.