

Reflections

By

Natasha Peters

About the author: An only child since the age of six, Natasha Peters spent most of her formative years traveling the world in the company of four-legged friends and leafy companions. She supplemented these with various characters of fiction, from Huck Finn and Bilbo Baggins to David Copperfield and Jean Valjean. It is no particular wonder then that she has decided to become both a veterinarian and a writer when she grows up. Of course, having already spent more than three decades on the planet without growing up does seem to make the likelihood of her ever doing so rather questionable.

Stepping over a puddle, I see a world reflected. I view a deepness seemingly not existent in this world. However, the proof of its existence is at my feet and the deep well of it stills my soul. In these brief moments, the oneness of all is inescapable. I do not reflect back as in a vacuum. In the watery image lives not only my body, but a host of leaves, a vault of sky, winged brothers and sisters cleaving through the pale without pausing to look at their reflections. Of all of this, I am a part and it is a part of me. With this

thought, the weight of my world is lifted. How can it not be when I am thus reminded that it is not solely my weight to bear?

As we wall ourselves off from nature, it is easy to forget this truth. It is easy to let our physical isolation impose a spiritual one as well. Instinctually, some of us try to abate this. We surround ourselves with potted plants, with domesticated animals, with captured moments of wild nature, alive in paint or film or little cells of color on a television screen. How much easier to simply step outdoors after a rainstorm and drink in the view that shows us our true place in the world?

However, to do so is to remove those blinders that allow us to believe that humanity is a world apart. Most of us cling to those blinders as to a life raft. We start inoculating our young early with religions that say spirituality can only be found inside buildings. With a truer spirituality, children revel in puddles.

I walk along a forest, pathless, wandering wherever my feet take me. Raindrops glisten on the boughs overhead, leaves shed their wet burdens as I pass underneath, and a stillness meets my ears. It enters my heart and calms my thoughts.

In the aftermath of the storm, all is quiet. There is a pause before the birds resume their wordless melodies. They wait, making sure the deluge is over before daring to call to each other again. Crickets who had taken cover from the rain, slowly work back up to

their full chorus of chirping cries. A bullfrog, enjoying the wetness, sings out his joy. I talk to no one, but listen to everything. Nature is my companion.

She speaks to me of joy. She tells me of the peace that can be, a peace that embraces only the violence that is necessary for survival, a violence without malice. A peaceful violence, if you can understand me. She talks to me of the interconnectedness of all things and my place in her world. She is the one who stills my soul.

Can this stillness be taken back into that artificially separated world of man? Can it survive soundbites and pop moments? Can it live in the soul of one and spread to others?

The world depends on that answer being yes. Not just the world of man, not just the world of nature, but both worlds. They are inextricably intertwined. The fate of both rests on our awareness of this; it depends on our awareness of ourselves. To be truly aware of one is to be aware of all. And once we are aware, how can we help but love?