

### **The Wanderer**

One day while I was walking  
through the woods, into the trees,  
I came across a little boy,  
who asked to come with me.

His hair was the colour of the brownest bark,  
his leaf-green eyes did baffle my heart.  
I couldn't help but wonder who  
was this boy that I not knew?

I, confused, asked his name,  
but he said, "There's none to gain.  
For having one confines you,  
and I'd rather not be bound too."

I, intrigued, asked him why  
he wished to come with such as I.  
"The reason," said he, "You'll eventually know,  
but only if you let me go."

So I, amused, let him come.  
His tread was such a quiet one.  
For a while we had walked,  
and but silence had we wrought.  
'Till no longer I could hold my tongue,  
the question within burned to be rung.

And so I asked if he had a home,  
for one so young shouldn't be alone.

He laughed, "I'm not so young as I seem,  
for I am part of the Wanderer's Dream."

I sighed and couldn't help but wonder,  
"What is this dream of the Wanderer?"

He laughed and then he made his reply,  
"You shouldn't worry, now look at the sky.  
See the world of endless blue?  
See the clouds dotting it too?"

Wanderers are quite like those clouds,  
and of that we are quite proud.  
We roam where'er the wind doth take,  
and most ties do we forsake.  
Many of us are not what we seem,  
and we are those of the Wanderer's Dream."

This did naught but baffle me more,  
and my questions were without score.

I asked him about his own story,  
whether it was of pain or glory.

He only laughed yet again,  
"My tale will naught but boredom rend.  
Please relay your own, I pray,  
it'll surely keep the boredom at bay."

I turned my gaze to a far-off place,  
letting my mind drift off to space.  
Quietly I did reply, "I wish to have a diff'rent story,  
than the dream of the fam'ly that b'rthed me.

"For the girl you see, she's new to me.  
She came to be when I fled to the trees.  
So narrowly I escaped a life  
that t'would only be full of strife."

"What's the source," said he, "of that fear?  
What caused you to leave a home so dear?"

I then looked down, faced the ground,  
my thoughts towards "home" they were bound,  
"I'd rather not speak of what I've left behind,  
as I've left to create a life that was *mine*."

"Besides," said I, with a wicked grin,  
"your own story you'll tell me when?"

"How clever!" he chuckled, shaking his head,  
"Mayhap this is why I travel with you instead."

There was something about this strange boy,

that made me think his age was a ploy.  
For never once had I known a lad,  
with such wit and knowing as he had.  
And for months we did travel and explore,  
no further our histories did we implore.  
Instead we talked, we laughed, we wandered,  
all great myst'ries did we ponder.

Never did I learn his real name,  
and so to me Elwood he became.  
I called him such because of his strange features,  
for oft' he looked like a forest creature.

Nearly two years we lived in this haze,  
our thoughts like the stars at which we gazed.  
By this time I could so clearly see  
he was not human, for how could he be?  
Not once, not at all, did he age,  
and his youth never turned a page.

Nor did he once utter a single complaint,  
but bore all the travels with patience of a saint.  
How could a boy no more than twelve or ten.  
know so much more than a multitude of men?

Never once dare I ask to confirm my thoughts,  
and avoided the answers I subconsciously sought.  
Somehow I knew as soon as I did,  
I'd lose the companionship of the kid.  
That above all did I fear,  
for to me he'd grown oh-so-dear.  
I also knew that without his aid,  
I'd've not survived long in the Wanderer's trade.

So hard I tried to hide my thoughts,  
alas, he knew me too well to think it was naught.  
"Tell me, dear, what is your affliction?  
You seem to lack your usual conviction."

I cast my eyes to the ground,  
"I fear to tell you, to utter that sound.  
What I've discovered, I wish not to show.  
I'm afear'd once you know what I know,

you shall leave and never return,  
for once you know what I did learn..."  
I could not speak further, no sound came out.  
I felt the tears start to come about.

His brow furrowed, and in his eyes,  
was a look that he couldn't disguise.  
A look of sadness no youth should know,  
and it broke my heart to see him so.

"I knew," he said, "it could not last much longer,  
to be able to spend my days with this dream of a Wanderer.  
But since you don't know my true name,  
it is with you I can remain."

My eyes widened and so did my smile,  
"Does that mean you'll stay a while?"  
Away went my fear, swift was relief,  
his reply chased away my grief.  
A few months passed with-out incident,  
tho' I should've known 'twas merely coincidence.

One night I chose to retire early,  
for a stranger we'd met had left me surly.  
I could not stop thinking of the threat,  
the words of this stranger I could not forget.

He said I was little more than a common whore,  
for refusing to settle, to marry, to have children and more.  
'Tis disgraceful for a girl as old as I  
to choose to wander 'stead keep house 'till I die.  
That I must be some heathen  
and the one true god I do treason.  
That I must be some loathsome witch  
with the curses and spellcraft I do stich.

With his harsh words, I felt like crying.  
It made Elwood livid, I won't be lying  
when I say I'd never seen such powerful fury,  
oh, did he send the stranger running with hurry.

It was this that weighed heavy on my mind,  
for it was all too clear he was not of my kind.

No mortal's anger could make the trees quake,  
or cause the ground beneath us shake.

I felt I knew him less than I thought—  
but our time together couldn't be bought.  
From the time I fled my home years ago,  
little did I guess how strong our bond would grow.

Despite what I had seen today,  
our parting I sorely hoped to delay.  
Loath, was I, to let that moment come,  
'Twas then I realized my heartbeat's drum.

The world fell still, I saw clearly the truth,  
I'd fallen in love with no human youth.  
The fact washed o'er me, setting my thoughts alight  
I very much doubted I sleep that night.

So I lay there for hours, felt the fire burn low,  
though my eyes were shut, his were upon me, I know.  
At some hour past midnight, yet long before dawn,  
he got up, kissed my forehead, and then he was gone.

I slowly got up and bolted after him,  
my eyes all the shadows they did skim.  
I soon heard voices, strange new ones,  
I knew I had to listen before they're done.

The first was melodic, a woman unknown,  
begging and pleading filled her tone.  
"Brother, I beg thee! Please return home!  
Your absence pains mother like I ne'er known!"

I dared not move closer as the other spoke,  
"Sister, I *will* not, lest my promise be broke!"  
His voice was foreign, yet so similar,  
to the one I now found oh-so-familiar.

"You made a promise?" she gasped, "How could you?  
Oh please, oh please, say it's not true!"

"I do not regret that I can't, sister dear,  
I'm wandering with someone well worth my years.

You of all know I loath to be still,  
and that is all mother ever lets me will!  
I have fallen in love, I'll not be swayed,  
so tell her I'll not return today!"

I clutched at my heart as it skipped a beat,  
and *her* voice sounded, wrought with defeat,  
"Brother, oh brother, can I not you persuade?  
Are you sure it is here you'd rather stay?"

His voice was much softer as he replied,  
"Sister, oh sister, 'till the day she die."

"You're doing naught but causing your own pain!  
She's merely a mortal, day by day her life doth wane!"  
Through gritted teeth she bitterly spoke,  
"How do you know she returns your oath?"

I stepped then from the bushes, crying out,  
"But, Elwood, I do, I do, without any doubt!"

Before me I saw a man, hair colored like bark,  
and leaf-green eyes bore straight to my heart.  
Neither said a thing, not a sound was heard,  
that is, until *she* dared speak a word.

"Elwood?" she repeated, completely confused,  
then her eyes widened, her voice was amused,  
"Gipsy, did you not tell her your name?  
You've been lying, you should be ashamed!"

I gasped, through my head played the words from that day,  
so clearly I swore he could've said them today.  
*"But since you don't know my true name,  
it is with you I can remain."*  
In his eyes his thoughts mirrored mine—  
his sister's slip had cost us our time.

I could do nothing as tears slid down my face,  
silent as his footsteps as he approached with slow pace.

His sister, mortified, disappeared with a flash,  
The fire in my heart now seemed cold as ash.

The curiosity of which I'd foolishly took part,  
had broken, no shattered, my poor, stupid heart.

"Darling, oh darling, not much longer may I stay,  
but every moment I've spent shall leave nay.  
I have lived thousands upon thousands of years,  
but I'd give them all up to erase your tears."  
scarce above a whisper was his voice,  
and his eyes told me he had no choice.

"Out of all the years, out of all the lives,  
these last two were the only one's I've been truly alive."  
His lips met my own, his hand brushed my womb,  
"Don't forget me, for I'll ne'er forget you."

I blinked, then he was gone, the only sound...  
my wail rang through the forest, the promise bound.  
Only heard by nature's unhearing ears,  
I had come to live my most awful fears.

*"And so, my son, don't let others your spirit break."  
I soothe, the small boy of seven stilling his shake.  
Running a hand through his bark-brown hair,  
chasing away his worrisome cares.  
I wiped away the tears he'd cried,  
I drew in and released a content sigh.*

*His leaf-green eyes peered up as I reply,  
"You shouldn't worry, now look at the sky.  
See the world of endless blue?  
See the clouds dotting it too?*

*Wanderers are quite like those clouds,  
and of that you should be proud.  
We roam where'er the wind doth take,  
only the most precious of ties do we not forsake.  
Neither you nor I are what we seem,  
for you are the son of the Wanderer's Dream."*