The Ballad of the Moon and the Stag

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In homage to those whom I loved beyond all and who are no longer with me

Cast:
   Chorus
   Moon
   Stag

Prologue

Chorus So black this night, only the moon does shine.
The night is black indeed and one sees nothing but the moon, the moon.

Moon Midnight has passed. They should have come. Yes, coming...

Chorus But the stag comes alone.

Stag I thirst, but cannot halt.

Moon Stop! Do not run.

Chorus The hunt draws near.

Stag Yes, the hunt draws near!

Moon Stop! Drink some water! And then run on.

Chorus The hunt draws near.

Stag Listen—they come! Pursuing me...

Moon And her?

Stag She...

Moon Why are you alone?

Chorus The hunt draws near. The hunt draws near.

Stag The hunt draws near!

Moon I will hide you—they will not find you. But tell—I feel there is something to tell.

Stag Yes, something happened.

Moon Speak, do not stay silent! With bated breath I listen.

Chorus With bated breath I listen. With bated breath I listen.
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Act

Stag

Once my antlers
— they were smaller then—
entangled
in branches.
I struggled.
In vain.
I called
Help! Help!
In vain.
Only the echo replied.
One hour, two went by.
Only the echo replied.
Then someone came
— it was she.

Moon

So you became friends.
And then?

Stag

Every night, every day
I with her.
From morning until morning
she with me.

Moon

You came at dusk
to the river
— I saw it all—
Drank water,
then, under the stars,
you lay down so sweetly,
she with you...

Stag

Yes, she with me,
I with her.

Moon

Thus— one with the other—
until morning,
when I departed.

Chorus

Until morning, when it departed.
Until morning.

Stag

By day
we searched
fresh grass.
We rested
in the shade,
and played:

she ran away—
I found her,
I ran—
she followed.
Until today, when...

Chorus

The hunt draws near.

Stag

The hunt...

Moon

They will not find you
this night.

Stag

But in the morning
they found...

Moon

In the morning?

Stag

I sensed
someone watching.
Among the branches
of the trees
a pair of eyes
spied on us.
We stood up and set off.
Then the call of the horn
reached us.
They were many
with guns.
Hounds bayed.
We ran
— they pursued:
I do not remember
for how long.
But a gun blasted out
and she fell.
I stopped.
Her tear-filled eyes
searched
the clouds above...
She had been wounded
in the heart.
I licked
her blood
— hopelessly.
After a minute— she died.
And again the calls!

Chorus

The hunt draws near.

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Stag
The hunt!
It was the hunters calling.

Moon
And you ran away.

Stag
I ran away.
The hunters followed.
The bounds bayed.
Throughout the day, until evening, and in the evening they lost me, but searched, still search and will keep on searching me.

Chorus
Throughout the day, until the evening, throughout the evening, throughout the day, throughout the night.

Epilogue

Moon
You chose this way —to run far away. Will the way lead you to safety at last?

Stag
They wished to kill.

Moon
You chose this way —to run far away —to leave your love, your lady love.

Stag
They wished to kill me too! Did it have to be thus? Must it be thus?

Chorus
I do not know.

Stag
Maybe it is more logical to die...
So many words unsaid.

Chorus
The hunt draws near.

Stag
I will go.

Moon
Whither?

Stag
To die.
So many words unsaid will perhaps be spoken at the end...

Moon
Do you not fear?

Stag
It does not matter.

Moon
Must it be thus? Will it have to be thus?

Chorus
I do not know.

Stag
I go.

Chorus
And he went.

Moon
The time has come for me to go too.

Chorus
Morning comes.
The moon departs.
Sunrise.
A lightening of the horizon.
The hunt draws near.
The bounds are baying.
The horns are calling.
It is morning.

Translated by Krys Ungar from the original which was written in Esperanto, the international language.