The Ballad of the Moon and the Stag

Ljubomir Trifončovski
Bulgaria

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.
The Ballad of the Moon and the Stag

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:

Chorus  The hunt draws near.

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!

Moon  In the morning?

Stag  But in the morning
they found...

Moon  They will not find you
this night.

Chorus  The hunt draws near.

Moon  The hunt...

Stag  The hunt draws near.

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

Stag  Between the Species

Summer & Fall 1995 159
**The Ballad of the Moon and the Stag**

**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.

**Epitaph**

**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 mere 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.

---

**Between the Species**  
160  
Summer & Fall 1995