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Walking the Snake Trail

Some say that adult birds will abandon their babies if they have a human scent. This was a myth that I was unaware of. At the moment, all I could think was to run. What was a leisurely morning jog became a sprint against the wind. I could hear my heart pulsing in my ears; it played a drum roll that seemed like it would never end. However, I had no complaints. The longer I ran, the farther the distance between my pursuer and me. At least, those were my hopes as I cupped my hands in hopes of shielding one animal from the other: an unleashed dog from a helpless baby bird.

Every morning, 7 am, right when the sun comes up, I fly out the door for a mile jog. It's better to do the hard work right out of bed before the mind has time to reconsider, yet that's not why I get outside so early. No child would ever consider getting out of bed early with their own volition. Instead, I am called outside in the morning. As a muse entices an artist to use their talents, I am beckoned out of my house and onto a nature trail a few blocks away. Every morning, I gravitate towards the magnificent Garden of Eden, which the neighborhood calls the Snake Trail. There are no curves, turns, or loops; no lions, tigers, or bears. Although on the Snake Trail, there is a long dirt road surrounded by trees with small elusive snakes. Children are not allowed alone on the trail. Since there is a road that crosses the trail, running is also prohibited. Thus, every morning, I jog and gaze at the mesmerizing scenery. Vines hang low and spiral around each tree. Flowers that grow in packs of white and purple are littered all over the trail. Trees grow sideways. Feral cats hide in bushes, and birdhouses are found every ten steps. Dogs are also walked on the Snake Trail.

As most pet owners know, Dogs are not tender to fast-moving objects; especially the ones they can catch; especially runners. That morning I hopped out of bed to greet the sun and be on my way. I chose to walk so I could embrace the enchanting view, and it embraced me back. In the golden green of the forest floor, there was something that stood out of the ordinary. A baby bird stayed among the grass far from its family high up in the trees. As any millennial would do, I took several pictures of the bird. It was a fabulous model, and like an intellectual, I let it be. I went on my way and continued my stroll. My head was in the clouds. My eyes saw more than what was in front of me. I was in a trance, daydreaming. Woof woof! The sound burst from the distance. Woof woof! Soon, it was followed by the sound of jingling keys and full stride pounding up and down across the field. Snapped out of my head and into reality, I could see a large dog. It was drooling, and it was coming towards me with full force.

From jogging, I've been chased by many dogs. When chased the same words are always said by the owners "Don't run, he's friendly", then I'm always caught with two options: stop running to find if the dog is friendly or keep running in case it isn't. I've always chosen the latter. Hence, at this moment, my stroll through the Snake Trail, I chose to run. I darted through the forest. The dog ran faster. My heart pulsed a drumbeat I thought would never end. Until I came back to where I was and in a split second decision, I picked up the bird I saw lying on the ground. Most would say to let nature take its course or the common zombie story reference that as long as you're faster the slow guy you're safe; nevertheless, that day I chose to be a hero. I cupped my hands and let the baby bird sit inside as I sprinted through the trail. Outrunning the dog nearly impossible. I knew this, but I outsmarted it. There was a short creek in the woods, and I aimed my whole being for it. I ran fast. The dog ran faster. I hopped each step. The dog leaped with each movement. I drew closer and closer to the bridge with the animal right on my tail then I throw myself over the creek with the bird still in hand. The dog had nowhere to go. It paused for a moment, looked around for a place to cross, then went back to its owner who was frantically shouting its name.

Afterward, I made my split-second way back to where I found the bird and placed it where it needed to be. Then, I continued my stroll. It was a completely normal day. Some say that after touching birds the human scent causes their parent to abandon them. Some also believe that the snake trail is enriched with the most venomous of reptiles. All I hope is for myths to stay fiction.