

Until Then
By Cara Watson

I followed a path that went alongside a fast-flowing river. All around me, birds were singing and leaves were swirling in the early spring breeze. The sun even poked through the clouds and sent trickles of light down between the old oak trees. Just like the birds and the sun, I felt myself rising once again. Rising to greet spring, like a warm hug from an old friend. It was the first time in what felt like forever, that hope itself tickled my skin and invited me into its arms again. The river flowed fiercely beside me like an alley, as it has from the very beginning, but for a moment, I stood still and let it run by me. As the smell of a nearby meadow filled my senses, and a ray of sunlight urged me out of old shadows, I looked over to the wood across the river. A place not yet touched by spring's new sun, still frozen in time under a layer of white snow. To stand in one season and look back at another sent a coldness down my spine. The long winter still lingered in the dark parts of the forest, as I stood here surrounded by spring's kiss. The only thing in between us was the river that flowed so daringly through all the seasons, through day and night, since the very beginning. I wondered how many winters this river had seen, how many passersby's had stood on its bank before me and waved away February's frost. I was reminded that soon again, the snow would cover the river banks, hilltops, and trees. I was reminded that soon again, darkness would swallow up the land and usher us home to our warm little beds. But I was also reminded to live through the entirety of the seasons that come before then. The seasons with light and warmth and sweetening meadows. The seasons where night becomes day and birds sing and whistle. I was reminded that we spend more time outside of winter than we do in it, and when that first frost comes again, we'll take it in our stride like we always do. But until then, I'll leave with a parting toast, and follow the bright path ahead. The river humming and rumbling beside me. Still there, still flowing, from the beginning of time until the end.