

Teeny Tiny

by Matthew Murrey



Painting: "Forest" by Åsa Antalfy Eriksson (www.aszelaartiv.com). "Teeny Tiny" was written by Matthew Murrey for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, May 2015, and selected by Eriksson as the Artist's Choice winner.

It took forever for the light
to fade. All my manhood,
that old overcoat, was gone,
and I was no more than five
setting off through the forest.

They say in a vacuum a feather
falls like a stone. They say
you see your life pass before you
when you're at death's door.
They say *jawbone walk*
and *jawbone talk*. They say
things I'll never understand.

I remember a story of a tiny boy
and his two older brothers lost
in the woods. They found shelter
for a night in the house of a stranger
who kept sharpening a long knife,
who kept calling up to the loft,
"Who is awake, and who is asleep?"

I couldn't stay awake forever.
Even here the feather finally lands
on the needed path, the heart
has a weight all its own,
and every step I take erases me
just a little more. See,
you can barely see me.
What I'm trying to tell you is
it wasn't a light at the end of a tunnel,
and it wasn't as scary as the scrape
of a knife being readied on a stone.
Then again, it wasn't a walk in the park either.

