

Steven Koontz

Flash Fiction Inspired by

Guest Artist Recital feat. Baroque Musicians Kang Won Kim, Stuart Pincombe, and

Jung Hae Kim Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> 7:30PM – 9:00PM

The horse, grazing in the pasture under mid-day sun, its thick white mane shimmering, smooth like silk, with a tail to match. The sheep, a fluffy cloud corralled with its flock, munching on the expanse of lush green grass at its feet. The maple tree, a silent observer in the northern forest, providing lodging for birds and sustenance for other woodland animals. Three different creatures with three separate lives, not one aware of the other two.

For years they live peacefully, until one day, their lights go out. For the horse, this is age; both body and mind deteriorate. For the sheep, this is slaughter; a premature termination of its existence in captivity. For the maple tree, this is a blade; rhythmic chopping until one tree becomes two. As each light is snuffed, one by one, the souls of the creatures become dormant as their energy ceases to flow. The horse is not aware of the microscopic organisms that will feed on its corpse, nor is the sheep aware of the industrial processing its body will endure. The maple tree does not know of the lumber mill, where its branches will be cut, and its bark shaved. For these three, there is nothing left, and they enter eternal sleep.

Then, in an instant, the horse, sheep, and maple tree awaken. They do not remember their past because they are no longer themselves, but they are aware of each other. The maple tree forms the body; hollow, yet sturdy; immaculately carved and molded into an entirely new organic form, its surface a golden glaze. Wrapped around the maple tree is the sheep, its guts stretched thin and taught, tawny with a rubbery texture. The horse completes this new trinity with its tail, gathered and flattened into a long strip set apart from the sheep and the maple tree. In the moment of their awakening, the three have no control, but the horse rubs against the sheep and the tree sings as energy vibrates through the trinity. Three different creatures with three separate lives, now eternally bound in a heavenly waltz.