

## Walk in the Woods

“Oh come on, Bob,” young Susan said  
    “The sun is shining; let's go out.  
“Tis fine, no clouds are overhead;  
“The Spring has come; 'tis time to shed  
    The winter's blues; for all about  
“The buds are breaking, birds are singing;  
“From the earth are flowers springing;  
“So rouse yourself, you sleepy head!  
    “A walk in the woods will do us good;  
    “Come on, come on. You know you should.”

“A walk's OK,” young Bob replied.  
    “But why into the woods, dear Sue?  
“They're gloomy, dark and once inside  
“You lose your way, for trees misguide  
    “With shifting shapes, and nothing's true  
“To what you thought you saw before you;  
“Not to the woodlands, I implore you.  
“Let's look for gentler countryside.  
    “A walk in the woods fills me with dread;  
    “Let's try the fields and lanes instead.”

“Oh Bob,” said Sue, “Don't be so soft!  
    “Tis Spring, there's life there all around;  
“For bud's are bursting there aloft,  
“A gentle breezes there do waft  
    “And scents and smells do there abound  
“Which fill your senses with well-being  
“And send all doleful thoughts a-fleeing.  
“Don't be a wimp!” young Susan scoffed.  
    “A walk in the woods is just the thing  
    “To stir your heart and make it sing.”

“Ah, life there may be all around,”  
    Said Bob, “but not all meek and mild.  
“For ancient tales do all abound  
“With trolls and witches; goblins found  
    “In hollow trees and all things wild.  
“They may be fancy; yet they surely  
“Reveal a truth, and not obscurely,  
“That dangers lurk in every sound.  
    “A walk in the wood's unsafe and dire;  
    “And not a thing you should desire.”

“Oh tosh,” said Sue, “they lift our hearts  
“And lighten e'en the gloomiest mood.  
“In woods depression soon departs  
“You feel relaxed, each tree imparts  
“Beneficence; and you're imbued  
“With feelings positive and soothing,  
“Uplifting mind and soul and smoothing  
“Away all cares and painful smarts.  
“A walk in the woods will heal your mind,  
“As you at ease begin to unwind.”

“Not so,” said Bob, “for they depress  
“Me through and through; their dismal gloom  
“Pervades my being, bringing stress.  
“They overwhelm; and they oppress.  
“They're harbingers of pending doom.  
“The woods are wild, untamed, primeval;  
“And they disturb; they cause upheaval  
“Which churns my soul, leaves it a mess.  
“A walk in the woods I must forgo;  
“It brings but dread and doom and woe.”

“Oh really, Bob, you talk such rot,”  
Young Susan said. “You are a wimp!  
“Doom-laden they are surely not,  
“But rather calm and peace allot;  
“And they enrich and do not skimp  
“The benefits of their bestowing;  
“Immerse yourself in wellness flowing  
“From nature's ever brimming pot.  
“A walk in the woods will bathe your soul,  
“Wash cares away and make you whole.”

“Not bathe,” said Bob, “but inundate  
“My soul beneath the fearful flood  
“I know will overwhelm in spate  
“And drown my soul and suffocate  
“My mind and chill my very blood.  
“For know, dear Sue, 'twill drive me manic,  
“I'll start to shake and fit and panic  
“In heightened hydrophobic state.  
“A walk in the woods no good for me,  
“For I'm a hydrophobe, you see.”

“Oh dear,” said Sue, “I did not know.  
    “It’s not good news; it’s very sad.  
“Mid birch and beech and ash and sloe  
“Such pleasant walks you must forgo,  
“Nor reap the gains that may be had.  
“For *shinrin yoku*, forest-bathing,  
“With nature all your senses swathing,  
“Does set your heart and mind aglow.  
    “A walk in the woods is how I view  
    “Those Japanese words. So, Bob, adieu!”

Copyright © Ray Brown, March 2020