FLYFISHING

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Flyfishing is an intriguing sport and art form. It combines the gracefulness needed for casting with the animalistic instincts needed for the kill. Most people do not have the understanding and knowledge of what actually happens when a flyfisherman enters the water. The flyfisherman steps into a new state of mind, or persona, when he enters the stream. He must give total concentration to what he is doing and he must be constantly aware of his surroundings. He must know the stream he is fishing and the habits of the fish which are his prey. He must combine skill, intellect, and patience when fishing.

The morning we begin our look out for a flyfisherman is a cold November morning just after sunrise. We are perched on a bluff overlooking a trout stream, waiting to watch for the ritual known as flyfishing. Soon we spot a fisherman, and as he approaches the stream, we notice how carefully he surveys the water before entering. Like a hawk hovering in the sky searching for mice, our fisherman scans the stream for clues as to where the fish might be. He looks for faster moving water at least knee deep that is clear enough to see the worn down surfaces of the rocks at the bottom.

When he finally enters the water, it is with the utmost care. He glides into the water and gently pushes the ripples to the other side of the stream. From our vantage point this phenomenon of entering the water is ghostly in appearance. Through the trees we can see the mist floating above the water as it seduces this human form into its grasp.

Now that our fisherman has taken his time in entering the stream, he feels the pin pricks on his fingertips telling him that his fingers are cold. The rubbing of his hands together to warm them up is the only sound heard on the stream besides the occasional splash of a trout re-entering the water after jumping for a fly. When his fingertips are warm enough to grasp, the fisherman pulls out his bait box and chooses a fishing lure that resembles any bug or fly he notices around the stream.

After tying his bait to his line, our flyfisherman prepares to cast. He pulls out as much line from his flyreel as he deems necessary. He eyes a spot in the water to his liking and begins to cast. In a smooth continuous motion, our fisherman lifts his flyrod and snaps the line behind him and then forward to the spot he believes the trout are. When he casts, it looks as if he is trying to shake off a long snake that is biting the tip of his flyrod. Then just as soon as the casts starts it stops. The line floats back onto the water like bedsheets that have been shaken and aired out. The only movement noticeable now is the eyes of our fisherman intently following the end of his line.

Without warning he whips his line out of the water and casts again, searching for that allusive adrenalin rush. By now the sun has risen above the bluff and has melted the mist and the crystallized breath.
of our fisherman. The water sparkles like a blue and silver sequined dress being ruffled by a fan.

After our eyes adjust to the sun reflecting off the water, we can see how patiently our fisherman caresses his line, feeling for the slightest nibble that would mean ecstasy.

Suddenly the churchlike silence is broken as a trout flies from the stream, the flyrod and the line following it. The trout re-enters the water and thus begins the flyfisherman's dance. He is ever so careful not to use too much force as the line is fragile and might break. His adrenalin surges as the trout shoots down stream and then instantly changes direction heading upstream. In a euphoric moment that lasts forever, the fish leaves its watery realm and dances in the air with the fishing line. Its strength and beauty are reflected as the sunlight illumines its rainbow-colored sides. Suddenly the trout re-enters the water and time returns to its normal speed. Our fisherman continues to let the fish fight him and tire out.

After a battle that sometimes lasts ten or more minutes, our fisherman breathes a sigh of relief as he grasps the slimy creature in his freehand. He carefully removes the hook and admires the beauty of his worthy opponent. From afar, it looks as if he is cherishing a trophy.

Then out of respect for the strength and beauty of his prey he returns the trout to its stream. From the bluff all we can see is a black form of a fish race off downstream to begin the dance all over again. Our fisherman rinses his hands in the stream to rid them of the distinctively fishy odor. The gleam returns to his eyes as he comes down from his high, searching for that next allusive trout that makes flyfishing worthwhile.