

# New Life

## Part One - In the Woods



It was literally a breathless moment. The wind storming through the tips of pine trees, suddenly died. It was as though the creator had ordered again, 'Be still ! Listen !' Even the chattering blackbird paused his grubbing among rotten leaves. In the silence we heard the cracking of pine cones, warmed by the spring sunshine and opening to dispense the seed the squirrels had missed, or wisely left for a new season. Strengthening sunlight reflected on the bark of silver birch and filtered through a thousand brittle twigs. It caught the first celandine, egg-splashed in grass bowed with heavy, frosted moisture. Then all at once the blackbird shook water from his wings and squeaked into the undergrowth; the wind took up again and once more we heard the running of the snow-filled stream against the sighing of the pines.

In silence and in sound it seemed the whole creation was at the edge of a miracle - waiting to be re-born. Beyond those sounds to which our hearing was adjusted, we sensed a million, million other voices; buds stretching to burst, thirsty roots sucking at the water-laden soil; sap surging under the bark; chicks pecking their freedom from the shell; and everywhere seeds - seeds waiting to die and to be re-born. Everything was echoing a song of new life in response to those penetrating rays of sunshine. We thought how love can bring its own divine spring-time into human life across our world. The seeds of love are all around us.

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## Part Two - In the City



The one un-broken street lamp had turned itself off as the morning light increased. Dawn came late into this square, enclosed on all sides by flats four storeys high. A light wind moved the branches of the sycamore tree, savaged by the games of young children. It lifted the edges of last night's take-away boxes and rolled a drink can back and forward against the kerb. A solitary black and white cat made its morning round of open waste-bins. It had rained. The dampness darkened the grey concrete walls, accentuating the scars from burned-out cars now towed away, and gave a sinister air to the partly hidden stairways and one-way balconies. The atmosphere suggested decay and neglect, crime and rough justice. It felt as though we were inside a prison, or maybe in the middle of a wrinkled old seed.

But there is life in the seed. Lights began to appear in the flats around us. A door opened on the ground floor to let out an early-risen cat and from somewhere unseen came a friendly morning greeting. It was from two carers who had arrived to rouse and bath the lonely bedridden old man at number forty-two. More lights came on, doors opened and closed, people left for work, cars started, and we could imagine the scenes inside many homes. An elderly lady is wakened by a telephone call from her daughter, to see she is all right and get the shopping list; a mother lovingly bathes and feeds her baby, forgetting the brokenness of the previous night; a little boy picks up the card he's made for 'Gran's' birthday, ready to deliver it on the way to school. Up on the fourth floor a young man takes a few minutes to read from his scriptures before he gets ready for college.

