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Robert Bly

THE BOY WHO HAD ONE THOUGHT

Once upon a time there was a boy who entertained one thought only, of protection, and he thought it night and day. It was a green field, with a small river running through it.

The boy walked out one day into the wood, and sat down beneath a tree. The wind said, "The setting hen hides her eggs in the grove." The cloud said, "The mother pelican feeds her chicks with her own blood." All at once he lifted up into the tree, and became a leaf; and his own arms became fluted, so that he was enclosed in his own vegetable longing.

Meanwhile, the horses below breathed their Mongolian breath, and the guinea hens prepared their alchemical treatises, and the ram and ewes lay down among the stones. And summer breathed itself away.

One day teeth came out from the stiffened sand, and crystals clung to the side of the water tank. That night Daddy Long-Legs skated over to the edge of the pond. Now the boy thought his second thought, and fell.