

Cycle of

A full moon is visible in the sky, positioned above a field of tall, dry grass or corn. The sky is a deep blue, suggesting dusk or dawn. The moon is bright and circular, casting a soft glow. The field in the foreground is dense and textured, with the tops of the plants visible against the horizon.

Life is like a mirror, you can't look forward without a reflection to the past. With each advancing year I look less eager to the finish, hesitating to rush the inevitable. In my youth, a naive rush to the next whatever clouded my ability to completely appreciate the now. So this year as I stride firmly to the future, I will walk quietly so as not to dull the details of the moment. To me the process of the hunt encapsulates the cycle of life. Each spring brings forth a new beginning for those fortunate enough to survive. The summer, depending upon the climate, can be either a season of plenty or a time of drought. For those of us fortunate enough to be there in the fall we find a time of moderate conditions bejeweled by nature's full palate of colors. With the winter, there is a cold and final harvest that removes those things not destined for the future.

So as I rise in the predawn darkness to begin my first hunt of this year, I must leave the warmth and comfort of my house and family and start the cycle one more time. As I fumble through the process of filling up the truck, checking the inventory, loading the dogs, and eating my breakfast, it is my decision on how I will approach this day. Do I cram the junk in, throw in the dogs, and rush ahead so that someone will not beat me to the spot? Or do I take the time to prepare myself and my equipment so that I can enjoy each and every aspect of the day? I think that for this year, I will fold and pack my gear so that it is ready for the task or stored

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correctly for the future. I will appreciate the warmth of the wool and the dryness of the gore-tex. I will think back fondly as I clean out and restock my hunting coats and vests. I will better prepare my dogs and pay more attention to their needs. I will run my hands over every inch of their coats, checking for lumps and stickers, remembering the magic of their puppyhood and how much they are like their mother and those before them. Will this be our greatest season, their best so far, or will this be our last time together? So with my equipment ready, dogs prepared, I will prepare my hunter's breakfast, appreciating the aromas of the hickory smoked ham and the dark warm invigoration of the coffee.

Breakfast enjoyed, I will load the dogs and begin my journey, taking time to marvel at how bright the stars shine as I leave the city behind. On arriving at my place I will pause for a while soaking up the warmth and the quiet before I give thanks, not just for this moment, but for my memories and the promise of the day. As we move into the field, I will notice the sparkle of the frost and the beauty of the dawn, and if the overpowering splendor of it all causes a lump to form in my throat; that's alright for it means that I am here and ready to receive the divine gift of this day.

*~ by Richard Biby
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