

## MOUNTAIN METAPHOR

This fantasy begins, in a meadow, a beautiful, beautiful meadow on a lovely, golden day; the sort of day that sometimes comes at the end of summer. You think summer is over, and the autumn wind and rain are here, and all of a sudden there is this wonderful golden day. The sky is that particular shade of blue that only happens on days like that. The sun is warm and nurturing. There's a soft breeze, that rustles the leaves in the trees and whispers throughout the grass in the meadow. There are colorful little wild flowers growing everywhere and everything smells wonderful. Over on one side of the meadow there's a grove of trees, and as you look at that grove you wonder how many shades of green there are in nature: light green and dark green, gray-green, and blue-green, apple green, forest green, olive green, and perhaps here and there a flash of scarlet or gold. You wander over towards the grove of trees, but before you reach it you find, to your surprise, that there is a small river between you, and the grove, just a little brook. You hadn't seen it because of the tall grass in the meadow. You look around and sure enough, you find a little bridge or some stepping stones or a fallen log, some way to cross the brook; and as you step onto the bank on the other side, you sense that there is something different about this other side of the brook, hard to define, elusive yet somehow enticing, inviting you to explore. You begin to wander through the grove of trees. It is so lovely. The sunlight filters through the branches, making filigree patterns on the path; small forest flowers peek out from behind mossy tree trunks and sheltering ferns, there are tiny reflecting pools of water, perhaps a squirrel or chipmunk, the song of a bird. There is a wonderful sense of serenity and peacefulness.

You wander through, soothed and comforted and somehow strengthened by this calm peace. After some time, you notice that the smooth path has changed a bit. It's a little narrower, and seems to have a slight slope upwards, and you think to yourself that it is probably time to go back; but for some reason you continue to follow the path. And as you follow it, you notice soon that it is definitely changing, in fact, it has become quite steep, and the trees have somehow closed in so that the sky is shut out. The further you go, the steeper the path becomes, now just a trail, and the trees become closer