Trophic Cascade

After the reintroduction of gray wolves to Yellowstone and, as anticipated, their culling of deer, trees grew beyond the deer stunt of the mid century. In their up reach songbirds nested, who scattered seed for underbrush, and in that cover warrened snowshoe hare. Weasel and water shrew returned, also vole, and came soon hawk and falcon, bald eagle, kestrel, and with them hawk shadow, falcon shadow. Eagle shade and kestrel shade haunted newly-berried runnels where mule deer no longer rummaged, cautious as they were, now, of being surprised by wolves. Berries brought bear, while undergrowth and willows, growing now right down to the river, brought beavers, who dam. Muskrats came to the dams, and tadpoles. Came, too, the night song of the fathers of tadpoles. With water striders, the dark gray American dipper bobbed in fresh pools of the river, and fish stayed, and the bear, who fished, also culled deer fawns and to their kill scraps came vulture and coyote, long gone in the region until now, and their scat scattered seed, and more trees, brush, and berries grew up along the river that had run straight and so flooded but thus dammed, compelled to meander, is less prone to overrun. Don’t you tell me this is not the same as my story. All this life born from one hungry animal, this whole, new landscape, the course of the river changed, I know this. I reintroduced myself to myself, this time a mother. After which, nothing was ever the same.

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