

## Ghosts

The morning fog blurred outlines as it cloaked the damp earth, clinging to the last moments of darkness. We were in awe of the power and grace silhouetted against the backdrop of an early spring day on the mountain.

The day started like any other turkey hunt, early breakfast, hot coffee, and on the road. A beautiful day and a good hike were just what my girlfriend and I had planned. We arrived before daylight and headed to the side hill that a large flock of turkeys had been calling home for the last three weeks. We were tramping through the rain and mist for an hour, stopping to listen for the familiar "gobble-gobble". As we arrived at our set up point, one of the "toms" let me know that they were still there. No other sounds could be heard; we were on time and ready to relax against a tree stump. It was the best part of the morning, the small bird sounds coming to our ears, the thin light of the sun poking over the hill. Soon the whole hillside was ablaze in song as all the animals were declaring that a new day had arrived.

Just across the hill from us, six large shapes appeared out of the mist. Only the persistent fog moved about them, making them seem to disappear like reception on a radio. Their ears were pointed forward and on alert. The scene unfolded before our eyes as we stood stalk still. We could see through the fog for a short time and then it was like a light had been turned off; we were socked in again.

Without warning, first one, then a second and third became visible again. Gradually, all six stood before us not 50 yards away, watching our every move. Time seemed to be frozen while we were in their company. Tendrils of warm breath rose from their nostrils as they tried to identify us. Our hearts were pounding so loudly, we were sure they could hear. We had packed a camera, but did not dare move one muscle in fear of breaking the spell. No pictures could have captured them. This was more than a Kodak moment.

We had no idea how long the elk had known of our presence, or if we had awakened them by our entrance. Just being able to see them lined up in a row like toy soldiers standing at attention caused us to forget the turkeys we had come for. The memories bestowed on us that day were without question very breathtaking. It would seem that an animal weighing over a half a ton would make noise leaving, but no sounds were heard. They vanished as silently as they had appeared. Perhaps they were just ghost in the fog. Maybe they were messengers to remind us of the beauty of nature and in our own lives. Perhaps????