

# The Flying Trapeze Artist

(a fable about transition, letting go and metamorphosis)

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Standing in the dark at the base of the ladder, he checks his hand grips, takes a deep breath and starts the familiar climb. As he gets higher, the sound of the circus crowd becomes a murmur and eventually fades away from his mind as he focuses his attention upwards on the platform that draws him like a magnet. Reaching it, he stands motionless, listening to his heart pounding in his chest, partly as a result of the long climb but mainly because of excitement. No more rehearsals, this is the moment he has been waiting for. *This is IT!*

He hears a growing drum roll. *Here is my cue!* Stepping to the front of the platform, his muscles trembling in expectation, he grabs the bar and waits for the light to pick him out of the darkness. Suddenly, the spotlight is turned on, blinding him and projecting his giant shadow onto the roof above. One last deep breath and, just as the drum roll stops, he lunges forward confident in his abilities developed through years of training, knowing that his partner is somewhere out there hurling in his direction to catch him. The spotlight follows him as he describes a long arc through darkened space. Suddenly the light loses him (or he loses the light) and darkness engulfs him. Fear rips through his gut as he starts the upwards part of his trajectory. His mind is racing: *What happened? Who turned off the light? Did I get it right? Am I on course? Where is my partner? Should I carry on as planned? Should I just hang on?*

Darkness everywhere, one large black hole full of unknown. He is almost at the top now. His hands are moist; his forearms burn from holding on to the bar. His mind says hang on but an inner voice urges him to let go. He looks ahead, desperately hoping to catch a glimpse of his partner. Nothing but empty darkness! As he reaches the top of the swing, he finds himself letting go without second thoughts. *I am a trapeze artist and flying is my goal!*

He continues his upward flight into the void, arms outstretched, eyes trying to pierce through the darkness. Nothing in sight yet! *There is no turning back now!* As he reaches the peak of his trajectory, panic strikes: *There is nobody out here for me! There is no safety net! I will crash and die! Serves me right for wanting to fly! Wake me up! This must be a bad dream! Why did I let go of the bar? I really had to be crazy!*

He is now plummeting towards the ground and, after what seems like an eternity, he spots something glowing on his left. His trained mind quiets and, forgetting his panic, he finds himself reaching for that presence, trying to make out what it might be. And then it happens! Coming from nowhere in particular, light starts dispelling the darkness and he makes out a magnificent eagle soaring up to meet him. *What is an eagle doing here? Where did the light come from? Where is the circus? Where is the crowd? Where am I?*

The brightness intensifies; darkness recedes at the speed of light. There is no up or down anymore, just space and the eagle. Drawing on his inner strength, he stretches out fully and reaches out for the eagle that is growing nearer. Now he can almost touch it with his outstretched hand. *What is happening? What are those feathers doing on my arms? Where are my hands? Where am I?*

## **Who am I?**

Two eagles are now soaring together, absorbed in the sheer pleasure of free flight. As they climb effortlessly on a river of light, reaching into uncharted spaces, mindless of anything but each other's presence, the trapeze artist cannot help but wonder: *What if I had not let go?*

**You don't have to be crazy  
but it sure helps!**

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