

## **The Legend of Joeabb the Frog**

A creek in the woods, wandering lost,  
ripples beneath the low hanging moss  
and carries fallen leaves for a ride  
that swirl in the eddies and raft on the tide.  
They rush to and fro to the swampy lows  
then slowly unfold in a pool of shadow.  
And only by chance do the leaves arrive  
at the hidden pond where Joeabb resides.

Here, the sunlight is filtered by shade  
of trees in the water, their trunks colonnade  
at the edge of the pond like sentries at guard;  
banishing all who would venture this far  
to spy on creatures asleep on the logs,  
that swim in the cattails or slog thru the bog.  
Or perhaps the reclusive Joeabb the Frog  
the once famous tenor, ghost of the fog.



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Leagues to the south, as the blackbirds fly,  
at a green lily pond in times gone by,  
a young Joeabb, just tadpole to frog,  
soon discovered his gift from the fog;  
a beautiful voice, hauntingly tender  
with range and power - basso to tenor.  
Those who heard him were staggered with awe  
and news spread quickly of Joeabb the Frog.

Come evening, the pond was symphony hall,  
crickets would fiddle, hoot owls would call,  
heron and egrets swooshed in the shallows  
and frogs by the scores puffed their bellows.  
Birds of all feathers flocked the trees,  
lightning bugs lighted the mist magically,  
a lodge of beavers thumped hollow logs  
but all would go still, for Joeabb the Frog.

It seems he would sing to the night, unaware  
that a throng of listeners had gathered there  
and often his eyes would drift to his maid,  
a spotted she-frog, he called Lilyjade;  
crooning sweet tones for her alone  
as if his songs were a lover's poem.  
And after the throng of the gathered had gone,  
they'd snuggle together to wish on the dawn.

Joeabb rejected the trappings of fame;  
refused the gifts, ignored the acclaim.  
Offers of travel to sing on the lake,  
though tempting, he thought, tempted the fates.  
Until he was nudged by his own Lilyjade;  
with a goodbye kiss, he was whisked away.  
And night after night he sang for her sake,  
while millions listened around the great lake.

The fog rolled in, his tenor voice soared  
and those so impressed by this frog troubadour,  
thundered a cheer that rippled the lake  
at the end of the concerts of Joeabb the Great.  
At dawn, he would vow to the great beyond  
that soon he'd return to the green lily pond  
where surely his mate ponders the dawn  
and lingers with fading stars to wish on.

At the final performance, a fierce wind blew  
and everyone, looking for cover, withdrew.  
Joeabb, impulsively headed for home  
and wrestled the gales of the night alone.  
He arrived along with the calm of day  
and met by the creatures who weathered the fray,  
he saw his pond completely transformed  
and heard cruel stories wrought by the storm.

Heads bowed when he called Lilyjade,  
for she was swept by the hurricane's rage.  
Joeabb searched thru the woods for leagues  
and refused to accept what the others believed.  
He swam the swamps and the waterways,  
journeyed further and wider each day,  
and after months of the same, on and on,  
he never returned to the green lily pond.

Some say he's lost, others he died;  
fell in a cavern, buried alive.  
Some say he found a moonbeam in blue  
and climbed to the sky for a better view.  
But in truth he repaired to this swampy glade,  
so cloistered by backwater bramble and shade  
and began a song so incredibly strong  
that time itself refused to move on.

When the mist comes from the trees beyond  
he croons to a moon and a love that is gone  
and endeavors to conjure his Lilyjade  
from the ghostly haze that glides the glade;  
certain that when his voice becomes pure,  
she'll respond from beyond the misty moor.  
But the fog only drifts thru his sad serenade,  
years into decades and age upon age.

Now, a thousand years have gone by;  
his voice so pure, just a note makes you cry.  
And so, the angels who bring forth the dawn  
were moved to tears by his woeful songs.  
With a touch they placed this hidden pond  
between the here and the great beyond  
and nestled the souls of two little frogs  
who live forever in love in the fog.

On warm summer evenings while lying your bed  
or rocking the porch with stars overhead,  
you may hear a voice so incredibly pure  
you'll clutch at your heart in rapture, assured,  
if you close your eyes and breathe the night air  
you'll drift with the mist that lifts you to where  
a blithe little spirit sings in the fog  
and you'll hum along with Joeabb the Frog.