Sparrow

I was returning from a hunt and walking along the garden alley. The dog ran ahead of me.

Suddenly it slowed its pace and began to creep, as if scenting game before it.

I glanced down the alley and saw a young sparrow with yellowish down around its beak and fluff on its head. It had fallen from its nest (the wind was violently swaying the birches of the alley) and sat motionless, helplessly spreading its barely sprouted wings.

My dog was slowly approaching it, when suddenly, tearing itself from a nearby tree, an old black-breasted sparrow dropped like a stone right before its very muzzle — and all ruffled, contorted, with a desperate and pitiful chirp, it hopped twice toward the toothy open maw.

He rushed to save it, he shielded his little one with his own body... but his whole tiny body trembled with terror, his voice grew wild and hoarse, he froze, he sacrificed himself!

What a huge monster the dog must have seemed to him! And yet he could not stay on his high, safe branch... A force stronger than his will cast him down from there.

My Trezor stopped and stepped back... Evidently, he too acknowledged that force.

I hurried to call back the bewildered dog — and withdrew, in awe.

Yes; do not laugh. I felt reverence before that little heroic bird, before its loving impulse.

Love, I thought, is stronger than death and the fear of death. Only by it, only by love is life sustained and set in motion.