The Duende

by Frank Vander Rasky

"Have to believe we are magic, nothing can stand in our way."
--Lyrics from Olivia Newton-John's song, Magic.

Even before he opened his eyes he felt the rosewood glowing in the dark. His room was so small it was as if he were living inside a guitar case, but it was a good place, quiet and out of the way, high in an attic where he could practise undisturbed.

When he'd lain down, his classical guitar was in the corner. Now it stood at the head of his bed, the hole in the soundboard staring at him like an immense eye. The strings rippled, as if moved by a sigh, calling out to him in the silence.

"Play me."

He had been in a nightly flight from his body, attempting to break free from the constraints of fingers that could barely span five frets. In his dreams he had the long slender fingers of a concert artist, deft and agile, capable of expressing the most exquisite rubato.

"Play me."

Now he took his guitar in hand, and at once he felt a strange fiery sensation rise from the soles of his feet, to the palms of his hands, to the tips of his fingers: the Duende. It was that mystical force poets can sense, and no philosopher can explain.

He played the prelude from Suite Española, Asturias, fingers flying across the guitar neck. He was no longer in disharmony with his destiny, but free to be what he most wanted.

Available online at *«http://fictionaut.com/stories/frank-vander-rasky/the-duende»*
Copyright © 2010 Frank Vander Rasky. All rights reserved.

And at long last he felt the joy in his own body, and in the guitar, the two of them, composed, as if they were one.