

Airy Faerie

Special Edition

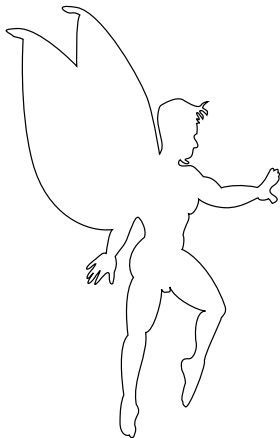
The Shy Faerie - Part Seven of Seven

(Originally published as seven installments Spring 2001 to Autumn 2002)

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The Airy Faerie is a publication of the Denver Radical Faerie Tribe.

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Chapter 7

Faerie Fire

Summer days quickly faded into autumn twilight. Deer Hawk had learned a great deal studying at the temple. Due to his dedication at the temple, he was given a candle ritual to perform during the Samhain ritual. With Dragon's help Deer Hawk had found a small home near the temple and worked as an attendant at the baths. He thought the job was kind of fun, but he was already looking for something else. Dragon had become his best friend, and the two of them were always together.

Besides the main Samhain celebration, the weeks were full of many private parties. Deer Hawk and Dragon had each received a special invitation to the annual pumpkin carving party held at the home of Midnight Iris. So five days before Samhain, they were walking down the street with a pumpkin in one hand and a bag with a treat for the party, in the other. They both started to laugh as they came up to Midnight Iris's house. The small front yard was decorated with several ghosts made of white bed sheets. They were all dressed with wild wigs and outrageous dresses. "She is always doing something to decorate her yard for the holidays," Dragon said as they reached the front door.

"It looks cool," Deer Hawk said and gave Dragon a wide smile. Dragon leaned over and kissed him, just as the front door opened.

"OH save some of that for me!" Midnight Iris said. He smiled and welcomed the two men into his home. He was wearing a short, strapless dress covered in orange and black sequins, and a bright orange wig. The inside of the house was decorated with a number of paper skeletons and ghosts, a few carved pumpkins and several vases full of marigolds. On one table in a black pot, was a small tree with a strand of small purple lights wrapped around its bare branches. Instead of leaves the tree had several small pieces of colored paper tied to the limbs. About fifteen people filled the living room, each one with a pumpkin either on their lap or at their feet. Deer Hawk and Dragon knew most of the people at the party, and were stopped several times for a one handed hug as Midnight Iris led them back to the kitchen. Once there, they set down their bags and pumpkins, Midnight Iris gave them a tight hug and a kiss to properly welcome them to his home. Golden Rod greeted them with a hug and then poured them both a Princess Cocktail. Opening their bags, they added their treats of pumpkin bread and ginger cookies to the spread that filled the kitchen table and spilled over to the counters. With cocktails and pumpkins in hand they went back into the living room and found a seat near the tree with lights and colored paper hanging from it.

"That looks cool," Deer Hawk said pointing to the tree.

"Ah yes, the tree of the dead." Dragon said looking at the tree. "You write the name of a person who has passed away on a piece of paper and hang it on the tree. To honor them, and to show that you remember them fondly, and wish they were here."

"Oh that is really cool." Deer Hawk said suddenly in awe of how many pieces of paper hung from the bare limbs.

"Do you want to add anyone?" Dragon asked.

"Well there was one guy who, while we weren't really close, I secretly admired him."

"Who was that?" asked a familiar deep but motherly voice.

"I'm sorry I didn't mean to interrupt." Lady Primrose said with a

warm smile. She was sitting across the table from them.

"That's OK." Deer Hawk said. "He was one of my sister's friends. His name was Andrew. I saw him being led to be executed for loving men."

"Oh my God that's awful." Lady Primrose said.

"Every once in a while I see him attending Queer at the celebrations."

Dragon was handing him a piece of paper and a pen. "Go ahead and add his name."

"I have already put your father's name on the tree, Deer Hawk, but if you like you may add it again." Lady Primrose said.

"Thanks," Deer Hawk said. "I was thinking about adding his name as well." Without being asked, Dragon handed Deer Hawk another piece of paper.

As Deer Hawk wrote the names, Midnight Iris was telling everyone that it was now time to carve the pumpkins. Deer Hawk tied the pieces of paper on the tree and said a silent prayer, and then he sat down and tried to figure out a face for his pumpkin. He looked around the room and saw Angelo and Seahorse working together on one pumpkin that they shared. Dream Weaver laughed as Grey Wolf played with the stringy orange pulp of his pumpkin.

"OH! Save your pumpkin seeds and we can toast them up!" Jasmine called out.

"Ok everybody! Listen up!" Midnight Iris called out to quite the crowd. "The reason I host this event every year is to carry on the tradition started by my Great Grandmother. When I was young she would gather the family together and give everyone a pumpkin and told us the story of poor Jack. Which I will tell to you now."

Midnight Iris looked around the room making sure everyone was paying attention. "Many lifetimes ago, in a small village deep in the woods, there lived a kind hearted man named Jack. He lived alone in a small house on the edge of the village. One day in the autumn Spite, the trickster king of the faerie spirits, decided to play a prank on the village. Once night had fallen Spite filled the streets with his prank-loving faerie spirits. The spirits would scare, and pull mean tricks on anyone who happened to venture out during the night. Soon people began to fear the night and the darkness. One night Jack found himself in need of some food for supper, and ventured out into the darkness to ask his neighbors for something to eat. His neighbors thought he was a faerie spirit trying to trick them, so in hopes of pleasing the spirits they gave him sweets. As he walked home he realized why he neighbors gave him treats instead food and started to laugh, planning to share the joke with them in the morning. As he neared his home a spirit jumped out at him. Scared, Jack fell backwards and hit his head on a stone. The next thing Jack knew, he was a faerie spirit and standing in front of Angel, the Queen of faerie spirits. When she heard about Spite's nighttime pranks, and how they were terrifying the kind people of his village, she gave Jack special powers to shine like a candle that would light up the dark night. When Jack's spirit returned to his village, Martha, an old friend of his, hollowed out a pumpkin and caved a face that reminded her of Jack. During the day, Jack slept in the pumpkin, and at night Martha would set the pumpkin outside with Jack glowing bright. His first night out, Jack saw the spirit that had scared

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him. Now the spirit did not know Jack was in the pumpkin, he thought that it was lit by a candle. So when he went up to blow out the light and instead saw Jack jump out of the pumpkin, he was scared out of his mind. The spirit flew off into the woods screaming. Soon other trickster spirits came to investigate this glowing pumpkin. Jack turned the tables and played tricks on them, scaring them away. Realizing that he could not protect the whole village, Jack talked Martha into carving more lanterns out of pumpkins for people to light in front of their house at night. Well, Spite and his faeries became so scared of the glowing pumpkins that they left the village alone. So now of days, we honor Jack, and to keep away trickster spirits, by carving pumpkins to light up the night."

"That's not what I heard," Seahorse said.

"Well, that is what my Great Grandmother told me, so in this house that is the way the story goes!" Midnight Iris said with a playful bitchy tone. Everyone laughed.

The rest of the evening was filled with laughter and playful bitching. When it was over Dream Weaver and Deer Hawk created several small fireballs of various colors to light the carved works of art. Some of the guests had carved intricate flowers designs into the pumpkins, and other carved faces ranging from the silly to beautiful tributes to Shael, Kael, and Queer. It was well after midnight when Dragon and Deer Hawk left the party and walked with their glowing pumpkins to the Deer Hawk's home. That night, the two made love by the light of their Jack-o-lanterns.

When Samhain arrived, Deer Hawk was a nervous wreck. In a small private chamber of the temple he paced back and forth going over his part of the ritual.

"The light of life burns...it is a burning..."

"It's a burning lust of desire!" Grey Wolf laughed walking into the room.

"Grey Wolf you're too much." Deer Hawk smiled as Grey Wolf hugged him.

"Hon, you're shaking like a leaf in a hurricane. What's wrong?"

"Well, Forest Hawk feels he should be leading this portion of the ceremony." Deer Hawk explained. "So he and his goons are doing their best to trip me up. I really have to do this right."

"Fuck 'em!" Grey Wolf snapped.

"That's easy to say..."

"No just fuck 'em! Look you know that the only thing motivating them is their own petty jealousy. That has nothing to do with you or your ability to lead the ceremony. The elders of the temple must see something incredible in you to give you such an honor as this. They don't pass the honor off simply because they think you look good in the robes. They believe in your spirit. They believe in your ability. They believe in you. I think you owe it to them to trust their judgment and honor that power they see in you."

"Thanks..." Deer Hawk started.

"Deer Hawk, we are ready to parade out into the square." Dream Weaver said entering the room. "Hey hon, are you distracting our young priest?"

"Trying to give him a pep talk, seems some queers are a bit jealous of his being appointed."

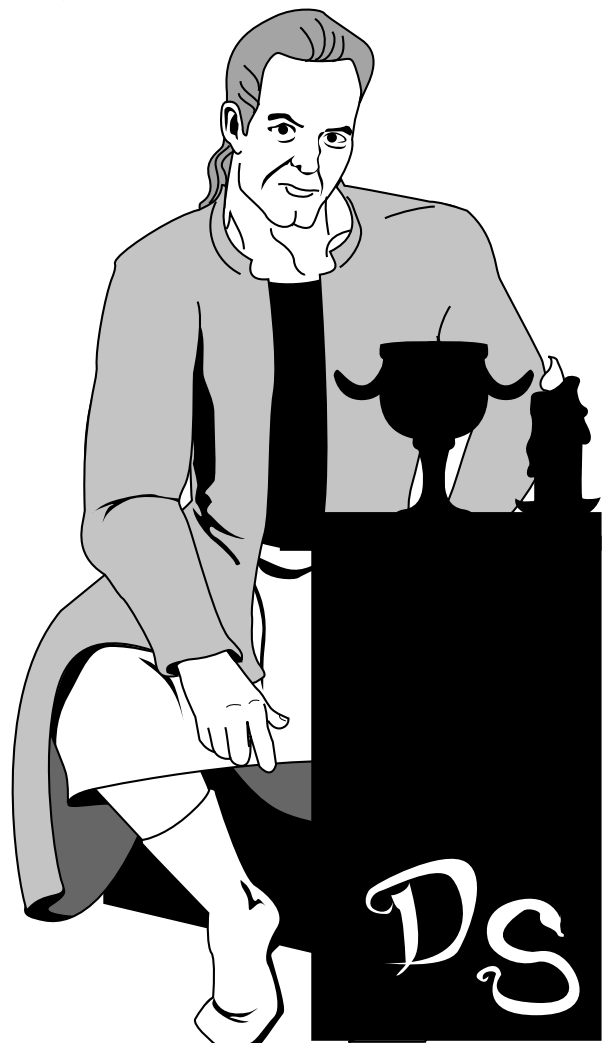
"Aw fuck Forest Hawk and his little temple boys. They don't

even make good sacred sluts." The three of them laughed. "Come on, I have go to get this young priest out to the square or we are not going to have a ceremony."

Grey Wolf snuck out the side doors and joined the crowd that had gathered in front of the temple. He saw Dragon and went to go stand by him just as two sacred sluts were spreading a colorful mixture of autumn flowers and leaves onto the path. Then the area was cleansed with blessed water from the sea and the air was filled with sacred smoke from the incense. The elders paraded out and took their place. Dream Weaver led Deer Hawk out of the temple into the great square. Deer Hawk noticed the flower garland that decorated the high columns and all the vases brimming with beautiful flowers that decorated the square. The table for the gods, and goddess was already set and waiting for the honored guests.

Silver Moon greeted the villagers and blessed the group. Star Child, in his deep voice, gave the invitation to the Gods and Goddess to join the ceremonies. As he spoke a small group of children came out of the gathering and joined him at the base of the stairs. The children held a small bundle of wheat tied into a decorative knot, and called out the name of a God or Goddess inviting them to join the celebration. Angel, Gelan, Huel, Gay, Kael,

Forest Hawk



Shaeel, Queer, Fag, Kara, Lunan, and Spite manifested in all their splendor, and with all of their faerie spirit attendants. As the Gods and Goddess took their seats, the children gave them the gift of the wheat that they were holding. The sun slowly began to set as Dream Weaver and Moonbeam led the opening part of the ceremony, giving Deer Hawk enough time to make himself more nervous by trying to force the ceremony deeper into his brain. As Dream Weaver and Moonbeam left the temple stairs Deer Hawk stood, feeling weak in his knees. Deer Hawk nervously walked up the steps of the temple, and knelt before all the Gods and Goddesses gathered at the table. They all smiled down on him as he thanked them for their presence. He caught the eyes of Fag and remembered how little he liked all the pomp and circumstance around the rituals. Fag winked and smiled down to him. He turned to the crowd and began to remind them of the powers of autumn. He scanned the crowd for his friends, his support. He found them as well as those who he knew were waiting for him to fail. The only person missing was the person Deer Hawk wanted there the most, Fire Dancer. Feeling a bit let down by his old friend he pushed onward. Deer Hawk grabbed a candle and asked that the remaining candles be passed out to the crowd, even to the Gods and Goddesses. As he held his candle in the air several centaurs pushed their way through the crowd as they shouted that they had urgent business with Queer, and the other Gods and Goddesses. As they made their way to the bottom of the temple square, holding three men with blood stained clothes, a faerie spirit flew past them with fiery wings. The faerie spirit stopped by Deer Hawk, and he immediately recognized who the faerie spirit was.

"Queer! We caught these bastards as they were beating Fire Dancer to death!" one of the centaurs called out. The crowd gasped and Deer Hawk's heart sank to the bottom of his chest. The faerie spirit of Fire Dancer flew to Deer Hawk to try and comfort him. Tears filled Deer Hawk's eyes as the centaur continued talking. They gave the graphic details of hearing Fire Dancer begging for his life and the men laughing and mocking the dying man. "We demand justice!" Another centaur yelled.

"Yeah, we killed that fucking pansy," one of the men called out. "And there's a lot more of us who are gonna kill the whole fucking lot of you!"

Deer Hawk's pain turned to anger as he dropped his candle and cried out "NOOOOOO!" Three fire balls shot from his hands and struck the men in the chest, exploding and burning all three to a pile of black ashes. The shocked centaurs were unharmed and left holding hot air. The entire village was silent. Deer Hawk fell to the ground and tumbled down a few stairs before catching himself. He sat on the temple stairs crying. He tried to wipe the tears from his eyes but his hands were still burning hot. Using the sleeve of his robe he wiped away the tears and only then saw what he had done. He stared in silence at the pile of ashes at the feet of the centaurs. Deer Hawk stood and turned to the table of Gods and Goddesses. Kneeling in front of them he cried out begging for forgiveness. "Please understand if it weren't for Fire Dancer I would have died out in the forest. He was my first teacher, my first love. I loved him so much. No one possesses a more gentle and loving soul than Fire Dancer. To hear of such a brutal end to such a sweet, gentle and

caring man...I could not stand to hear them boast...I couldn't..."sobs of grief kept him from continuing.

"Deer Hawk," Kara said appearing before him and resting her hands on his shoulders, her fiery red hair blowing in the breeze. "No one is asking for your apology. I think we all feel the same as you, I feel you have acted wisely."

"Wisely?" Huel remarked, rather offended, standing up from the table. "How can you say killing three men in such violent way, is a wise act?"

"They killed my children," Queer said fighting back tears. "They were not men but cowards who received what they deserved!" Deer Hawk stood up with the help of Kara. "I join Kara in commending your actions..."

"What's happening?" one of the temple sluts cried out. "In the ashes! There is something moving in them." Everyone tried to see what was going on as two burnt faeries flew out of two of the piles of ashes and to Deer Hawk's feet.

"Please forgive us!" they pleaded. "We were so afraid that their anger would turn towards us. We had no choice but to follow them and do as they told us to do." Both faerie spirits began to cry at Deer Hawk's feet.

"I am not the one who can forgive you," Deer Hawk said as tears continued to run down his face. "That is up to Fire Dancer and Queer, I can hold judgment over no one." Deer Hawk said. "But answer me these questions. Did the suffering of Fire Dancer ease your own pain? Did it help to lessen your fears?" The two faerie spirits remained silent gazing into Deer Hawk's eyes. "Can anyone answer my questions? For there are many here who are guilty of this crime. Not to the end of the death of human life, but the wounding of the human soul. Why do we try to ease our pain by inflicting more pain upon others?" Deer Hawk called out to the gathering. "Why do we as faeries seek to hurt our own brothers and sisters? Are we so blind in our pain that we honestly enjoy seeing other suffer?" Several people looked uneasily at the grounds as they felt the pain in their heart turn cold and grow heavy with guilt. Gay and Spite even look ashamed of the pain they had caused. "Why must we mock others who are different? Why must we trip a person who is succeeding more than we are? Or kick them when they fall? Is it right to inflict pain simply because someone has caused you pain?" Again the gathering remained silent. "ANSWER ME!" He shouted. "Is the only way to deal with our pain to cause someone else more pain?" Deer Hawk saw his candle on the stairs. He walked down and picked it up. "There has to be a healing of our own pain, or we will kill each other off with this needless pain we spread!" He held up his candle, "I charge this candle with love and the sweet memory of the life of Fire Dancer! His warm smile, his laughter, his loving embrace, his open and giving heart! I light this candle in honor of Fire Dancer, may his love burn on forever!" a small white fire ball flew from Deer Hawk's open hand and lit the candle. He turned to the gathering. "Charge your candle with the loving memory of one that you have lost. Charge it with love; fill it with the beautiful loving memory you cherish about that person."

For a moment the crowd was silent then a woman called out, "I charge my candle in the memory of Crystal Whiteheart!" The small

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fireball flew to her candle and lit it. Other people called out “I change my candle in the name of Larry Nighthawk.” “I charge my candle in honor of Lavender!” “Sharon Hallson!” The fireball split into two, and then again into thirds, as people began to call out names of lost loved ones. Soon the whole square was lit with burning candles. Deer Hawk noticed the warm glow of the candles even came from behind him. He tuned to see every God and Goddess holding a lit candle. As the fireballs returned to Deer Hawk, Kara asked him what was next. “To the old sea temple,” he replied. “Follow me my dear friends,” he called out to the group. Deer Hawk led them through the village and as they walked through the streets he began to sing. “Dear friends, queer friends, let me tell you how I am feeling. You have given me such pleasure. I love you so.” The entire village sang with him until they reached the old temple. There he placed his candle on the old altar and others followed suit. As the altar filled up some people placed them on the broken columns or on the edge of the planters.

Deer Hawk concluded the ceremony saying, “There is nothing as deep as the pain of losing a loved one. The pain we feel cuts deep and is very real. But there is no justification to the pain we cause to our brothers and sisters. Remember this sight of your love burning bright on this holy night. Let this sight ease your pain. Hold on to the love, honor that love, and let that love fill your soul, fill your body, and fill your every thought. Let the love that is engulfing you shine out from you. Instead of passing your pain onto others, pass the love you feel tonight on to your brothers and sisters. Honor the one you have lost, by sharing both their love and your love for them with those of us left behind. We all have within us the power to heal ourselves and our brothers and sisters. Do not seek to cause pain, but to heal. Do not hold blindly onto your pain, but embrace love. Hold this light, this burning manifestation of love in your heart and let it shine into the darkness of your pain. Feel the warmth of the light flowing around you as the love you shared embraces you completely. Inhale, breathing deeply, and hold that breath, a breath full of light and love. Now exhale the darkness that we all hold inside. Continue to breathe in the light; allow it to fill your being. Get rid of all the dark pain inside. Feel the light filling your soul until the light burst forth from you out into the world. Feel the light coming from your brothers and sisters. Inhale that light; let it flow through you, then back out into the world. Your love is now combined with their love. May the power and light of love flow around us, within us, and flow from us forever. I ask this blessing from the Gods and Goddesses who honor us with their presence here tonight. I humble myself to their service. Blessed be.”

Silver Moon led the final closing and Queer called for the drummers to lead the gathering in a dance to honor death, life and love. The group made its way back to the main temple to dance in the streets around the bonfires that would soon be lit. Deer Hawk stayed behind, as everyone came up to congratulate him on a powerful Samhain ritual. Soon only a small group of Deer Hawk’s friends remained at the old temple. Without thinking, they formed a circle and joined hands: Deer Hawk, Grey Wolf, Dream Weaver, Golden Rod, Lady Primrose, Delphinium, Seahorse, Angelo, Green Gary, Angie, Jasmine, Timmy, Star Fire, Midnight Iris, and Dragon.

Deer Hawk passed a kiss and said ‘I love you’ to cast the small circle. They each spoke of love and their memories of Fire Dancer. When everyone had finished speaking their heart, a kiss, and hug were passed around to open the circle. The group came up to Dragon and Deer Hawk to give them both a warm hug and a kiss.

As the group began to wander back to the festivities Deer Hawk looked at all the burning candles. “What am I going to do about all of this?”

“I’ll help you clean them up, I am sure some of the other guys wouldn’t mind pitching in.” Dragon said. Just as they were about to pick up a burning candle the air was filled with hundreds of faerie spirits. Each one flew to the candle that was burning in their honor, and they inhaled the flame. They were filled with the love and honor that was paid to them by the flame. As the candles went out the faerie spirits began to glow from inside. There was a chorus of “thank you” as the faerie spirits flew away lighting up the sky.

“My God, what have I done?” Deer Hawk said under this breath, as if lost in thought.

“What do you mean?” Dragon asked. “You just led a pretty powerful Samhain ritual, I think Queer was really impressed.”

“No, I just killed three men. Three children of the Gods and Goddess.” Deer Hawk said as he sunk to the ground and wrapped his arms around himself.

Dragon placed his hands on Deer Hawk’s shoulders. “They were three men who deserved what they got. You heard Queer, he said you were right to kill them.”

“Huel didn’t think so,” Deer Hawk stated. “And now I am not so sure I believe my own actions were just. I mean who am I to pass judgment on anyone? I am not a God. If Queer truly thought the three men should have died then it should have been by his hand not mine. I need the forgiveness of Queer, Shaeel, and Kael. Since they are the givers of life, only they can take it away. I am no better than the three men I killed.”

“How can you say that?” Dragon cried! “They killed Fire Dancer, and who knows how many others.”

“They took the precious gift of life from another human, and I did the same.” Deer Hawk explained. “I took on the role of a God and took their life. Whether or not the Gods and Goddesses agree with my action is not the point. The point is, I made that decision myself, without consulting them. I made myself a God. I know I must seek their forgiveness, but the only question is do I disturb their partying or wait until tomorrow.”

“Why wait and let the feeling fester inside of you?” said a soft feminine voice behind them. They turned to see the Goddesses and Gods gathered behind them. “My dear sweet child, your understanding comes a moment too late.” Shaeel said looked directly into Deer Hawk’s soul. “I wonder if you truly understand the effects your actions have had today. You have felt the pain of losing a friend to death. You have witnessed that you are not alone in the loss of a loved one. You have even witnessed that even the Gods and Goddesses mourn the death of a human. But do you truly understand the effects of death? Your thoughts seem to stray only as far as your eyes can see. You see nothing past your vision. I ask you to think of the three men you killed today. Did you for a second

Shaeel, Queer, and Kael



think of their community? Who will light a candle for them? They all have family and friends, but you don't see them, do you?"

"There is much for me to learn," Deer Hawk softly replied. "Please forgive me of my actions. They were done without thought or compassion."

"I think you have learned a great lesson with these deaths," Queer said.

"But his learning isn't over," Shaeel said.

"I wonder if he could learn more in death," Kael spoke. His word sent a chill down Deer Hawk's back, and Dragon grabbed tightly onto Deer Hawk's arm in fear of losing his dear friend. "No need to be so afraid, I merely mean, instead of working in the temple for the living, I think you should be training in the temple for the dead," Kael said with a slight smile.

"That may help you to begin to see the web that stretches far from your limited sight, but still binds you to all your brothers and sisters on this earth," Shaeel said as she turned to Queer. "And what are your thoughts, brother?"

"Continuing his studies in the temple of the dead seems fair. I also wonder if the attention my son and I have given to you has in some way set you up for feeling like you were one of us."

"While I am honored by the attention that I have received, I have never thought myself in anyway an equal to the gods. It was only my anger that caused my actions. I need to learn to control my emotions," Deer Hawk explained.

"Control emotions?" Luna said a bit taken back. "Not even the Gods can control emotions. The best that you can hope for is to not become their slave."

"Let it be known that from this time forth," Shaeel began, "Deer Hawk will study and work in the Temple of the Dead."

"Let it be." Queer and Kael said together.

"Thanks you for your kindness and generosity in sparing my life. I will do my best to learn all that I can, and to serve and honor the Goddesses and Gods," Deer Hawk said kneeling before them. When he raised his head they were gone.

"What a night to start working for the Temple of the Dead," Dragon joked.

"It does seem to fit, doesn't it," Deer Hawk said feeling a great relief for still being alive. He looked out over all the melted candles. "First I have to clean up this mess."

"I can take care of that," A small voice from behind them said. They both turned to see the spirit of Fire Dancer flying towards them. "This is a piece of cake." With a flick of his wrist the candles all disappeared. "Now I have to split my time watching over you and Green Gary," Fire Dancer said as he flew over to Deer Hawk. "And I ain't too sure how much I wanna hang around the Temple of the Dead. That place always gave me the creeps. But first things first, there is a party going on and you two are missing it." The three wandered off towards the festivities. "It's pretty amazing how much your life has changed in less than a year."

"It is amazing how fast a garden can grow once you start working on it," Dragon said with a wink to Deer Hawk.

"Yeah, and I just received a whole new bag of seeds," Deer Hawk laughed.

"Don't tell me this little shy faerie has turned into a gardener," Fire Dancer asked trying to follow the conversation.

"Just in the garden of life" Deer Hawk explained as the three friends walked through the dark streets of the city.

Epilogue

Fifteen years wiser

As Deer Hawk arranged the flowers around the body of Forest Hawk, who had died just the day before, he said a silent prayer. He fixed up the small room for the visitors that would come tomorrow, to say their final goodbyes. He left the small room, locking the doors behind him.

"You've done an excellent job in there, DH," came an old lady's voice. Deer Hawk turned to see Lady Rosemary, the High Priestess of the Temple of the Dead. She was a tall thin woman, with long silver hair that had a blue tint to it. Her character was very gentle and compassionate. "I need to speak with you for a few moments please," she said turning down the hallway and walking towards a flight of stairs. "Did you realize today marks your fifteenth year with us?" She asked as they climbed the stairs up to her office.

"Yeah, I can't believe the time has gone by so quickly," Deer Hawk replied. As he entered her office he saw Raven, the High Priest, looking out the window. The two hugged as Lady Rosemary sat behind her desk. She brought out a wrapped box and handed it to Deer Hawk. "It is a small token of our appreciation for the hard work you have put in here."

"You guys didn't have to get me anything," Deer Hawk said as he accepted the gift.

"Don't be silly, of course we should have," Raven remarked, adding, "Besides we got a really great deal on it. It turns out you worked with the artist who made this gift. His wife died a few years ago, and he remembers how you took care of everything. So in part, it is also his way of thanking you."

Deer Hawk opened the gift, revealing a bronze statue of a beautiful Faerie Guardian Spirit, with open wings as if in mid flight.

"This is really nice," Deer Hawk said fighting back the sudden urge to cry. "I am not sure what to say..."

"Deer Hawk, there is something that we want to talk to you about," Lady Rosemary said with her motherly smile, that somehow always put Deer Hawk at ease. "I am very proud and grateful for all the work that you have done here at the temple. I have never seen anyone more dedicated to the duties that we perform here. Many of the citizens of Sea Temple speak very highly of your compassion, when you help them on their journey of dealing with the loss of a loved one. We are very impressed with your talents..."

"But we are also very worried about how you are doing," Raven cut in as he sat on the desk next to Lady Rosemary. "In the past ten years you have hardly left the temple walls, and we have never seen you seeking counsel on the grief that you yourself have been feeling. Lady Primrose's death must have been very difficult for you, I understand she became very much like a mother to you, once your father had died. Now with the death of Forest Hawk at the hands of some scum who hates queers, I can only begin to imagine the thoughts and feelings which must be burning inside of you. I must imagine these feelings inside of you, because to look at you all I see is a calm quiet shy faerie. This bothers me because in the past when I have asked how you doing, all that you would reply is 'OK' or 'I am fine', and I can only hope that you telling me the truth."

A bit taken back, Deer Hawk, tried to make sense of the confusion in his head so that he could tell them all that was going on

without sounding like a fool. "Well, I am not quite sure where to start." He took a deep breath, "I guess I stopped going out into town when Dragon and I had a fight. He was saying I was more in love with Tamar the god of death, than I was with him. He felt my work at the temple was taking the life out of me, and couldn't understand why I was so dedicated to it. After our fight I went to a bar to try and drown my sorrows. I noticed that some people cleared a space for me giving me lots of room. At first I thought it was because I looked so bad, having been crying and still red faced from fighting. Then I overheard their conversation. They knew me from a funeral they had been to recently and they didn't want to be around me, as the memories were still very painful. Another said he was scared because he thought I was waiting for someone to die. Did you know that people actually believe that Tamar tells us who is going to die next, so that we can go pick up the body?"

"People have many beliefs on Tamar and death. Some see him as a skeleton in a black robe, other see him as an old man with a scythe, bringing in the final harvest," Lady Rosemary said. "I hope you did not let those words imprison you here for over ten years."

He felt ashamed but admitted, "Yeah, I just didn't like people seeing me as some bringer of death, and I feared that my friends would always be reminded of all the ones that we have lost over the years. I could not bear to bring them anymore pain."

"OH sweet confused and sensitive boy," Raven said, looking into Deer Hawk's eyes. "Why did you never tell one of us what you were going through? All of us at the temple have heard those comments, and had people eye us with fear, hoping we will not be carting off one of their loved one next. But we still go out. We have to. Our lives are dedicated to the service of Tamar, but we still know how to enjoy life."

"Deer Hawk, I don't want to make you feel any worse, but please think about this," Lady Rosemary said. "You have pulled away from your friends because you don't want to bring them sorrow over the loss that you have shared with them. Do you not see that you have given your friends more support and encouragement during the hardest time in their lives?" She paused but Deer Hawk did not answer her, he looked a bit confused and unsure of what to say. "My sweet young man do you truly not see the impact your loving comfort has on those around you?"

"I guess I do," Deer Hawk said, head bowed. He knew logically, what she said was true, and could even recall several people thanking him for giving them a strong shoulder to cry on, and a ear to listen to their tales of loss. Yet somehow he did not feel it.

"Sweet Deer Hawk," came a familiar voice from behind him. "I was hoping you would learn how to see the beauty of your soul by now." Queer said resting his hands on Deer Hawk's shoulders.

"My Lord..." Lady Rosemary began, but Queer cut her off before she could raise to her feet.

"Please, let's keep this informal. No need for ceremonies on my account, besides this is Deer Hawk's big day. If you are up for some company, there are some gods who are waiting to meet you."

"I don't think I am ready for this," Deer Hawk said standing to his feet.

"Well, let's see how can I put this," Queer said with a comical

look of puzzlement on his face, “You have until we get down to the courtyard, because they are here now, and Gods don’t like to be kept waiting.

“What?” Deer Hawk cried, his mind feeling like he had hit a wall.

“Calm down sweetheart.” Queer said wrapping his arms tightly around Deer Hawk. “Calm down, we are here to see how you have done over the past fifteen years and it looks good. You still have a few things to work on, but what human doesn’t?”

The four of them quickly walked down to the courtyard, Lady Rosemary, Raven, and Deer Hawk knelt down as they stepped outside and saw the gathering of Gods, Goddess and their attendants.

“You may rise and please, Lady Rosemary and Raven make yourselves comfortable. Deer Hawk, you will come and stand before us.” Shael commanded with a loving smile. “My boy...well now you are hardly a boy anymore are you Deer Hawk? Let’s see this is now your thirty-third year, so I should say, young man.” The gods gave a small laugh, and Deer Hawk could feel his face flush. “I am sorry I did not mean to embarrass you. You know why we are here, so I will be quick about it. Like your friends and teachers here, we are pleased with what you have learned but have concerns that you have locked yourself away, not only physically behind these walls, but also emotionally, within yourself.”

“I am glad to see our brother did not take away your pain and confusion, as he has so often wanted to,” Kael said looking at Queer and giving him a wink. “For you see Deer Hawk, part of the lessons we have wanted you to learn, was how to deal with your feelings and emotions and bottling them up is not the answer. I am afraid you have not fulfilled your lessons.”

“May I speak a moment my Lord?” a tall red haired faerie said flying in between the Gods and Deer Hawk. Deer Hawk could hear Lady Rosemary and Raven give a quick a gasp upon seeing the faerie.

“Yes, please do Tamar; I am interested in what you have to say about this.” Shael said.

Now it was Deer Hawk who let out a gasp. “Greeting my young priest, I am Tamar, God of Death. I am here to let it be known how much honor this young man has...”

“Yes, yes, we know what a wonderful job he has done, there is no one questioning his dedication to you or any of the Gods for that matter. What can you say in defense of his hiding his pain and not seeking counsel on how to grow his own spirit?” Kael said sharply.

“I can say very little,” Tamar began, as Deer Hawk’s heart sank to the pit of his stomach. He knew that he had failed, and feared his punishment. Before Tamar could continue a loud crash was heard from inside the temple, followed by the slamming of the main temple doors. Loud cries were heard from inside the temple.

“Who dares to break into my temple?” Tamar screamed, and with a flash of light from his hands, two men appeared before him. They were terrified, and even more so when they realized they were in the presence of the Gods. “Why are you destroying my temple?” Tamar demanded.

Their face lost all color as they realized they stood before death.

“They want to kill us!” cried one of the men.

“What crime are you guilty of that you have brought so much hatred on yourself?” Kara asked standing feeling the anger of the group of people who were now gathering outside of the temple. The men did not answer but looked at their feet ashamed.

“I’ll tell you their crime,” Tamar said still very upset. “Inside this very temple lies the body of one of Queer’s high priests, Forest Hawk. These two men are responsible for his early death.”

“Queer killers!” Queer roared, “Give me one good reason not to kill you both right here and now!” The room became a loud confusion of voices as Gods and Goddess argued over the lives of the two murderers. The confused arguing was stopped by one small “No!”

Deer Hawk shouted it again, “NO!” Only this time, his was the only voice. He looked around at everyone who stared back at him, “You wanted me to break out of my shell, to break down the walls, then let this be the time those walls break. Queer, I have been in trouble before for interfering in the judgment of the gods, but please hear me out. In the fifteen years I have been here, I have found no



Epilogue continued

release from the pain of death by seeing other's die. I have buried children full of innocence, and criminals whom I am told deserve to die, and all I see is the loss of human life. Death is not a solution. Kill them and what do we have? Only more graves to dig. I know there must be justice, but why must it be death? Where is the justice in a graveyard? The dead do not teach the living how to live, nor can they teach us how to love." Deer Hawk was silent and looked around the courtyard. "Alright, I learned my lesson. I have never moved on past the death of Fire Dancer, and the three men that I have killed. I am still angry that it was only after his death that I knew my father. I want to grow numb to the pain of losing people who I care about, but I never do. It is time for me to look past death and learn the lessons of living. I need to learn how to let the people I love, be there for me, as much as I am there for them. Which mean I need to be more open and start sharing myself with them, as they have shared themselves with me."

"Well, I am glad to see that you have finally learned your lesson," Gay said with a half smile. "And it only took you fifteen years, not bad for a human. However I am sorry to inform you, that this has nothing to do with you. While I can see your confusion, as this does have many similarities to a final test. I can assure you that Forest Hawk was not brutally murdered just to test you."

"True this is not a test, however I think this could be used as a lesson." Shaeel said. "What if these two men take Deer Hawk's place in the temple, they seem very eager to stay here. Let them see and learn the realities of death. This will also allow Deer Hawk to leave the temple and start living again. What do you say Deer Hawk?"

"While I am eager and a little scared about leaving the safety of the temple walls, I still feel a need here; a need that I can fill." He replied.

"How would it be if he were to train these two, and show them what compassion is all about?" Queer offered. "He could train them here during the day, but leave the temple at night? I think I may have a reason for him to leave these walls. Deer Hawk, I hope you remember someone who has been waiting and hoping for the day you leave this place. Dragon, you may come out now." Queer smiled at Deer Hawk and gestured towards a group of faerie attendants behind him. The group parted and Dragon shyly entered the courtyard. When their eyes met, the two lovers lost all their shyness and ran into each other's arms. Deer Hawk let go with a flood of tears as he held tightly to Dragon. He had once again found life and love.

**May the love we hold in our hearts
Ease any pain that may come our way.**

May we seek only to act with love.

**May the power of love
Forever flow around you, in you and through you.**

**Blessed Be.
Dragon-Swan**



Excerpts from "Simon's Journal"

by Orpheus

Based on characters and events in "The Shy Faerie" by DragonSwan

Requiem for a Faerie

Rest in peace.

Are those words of comfort for thee, my friend,
or for me?

You would race the moon on your gossamer wings.
You won that race for you are now the wind itself.
You stir the breath that fills my body.

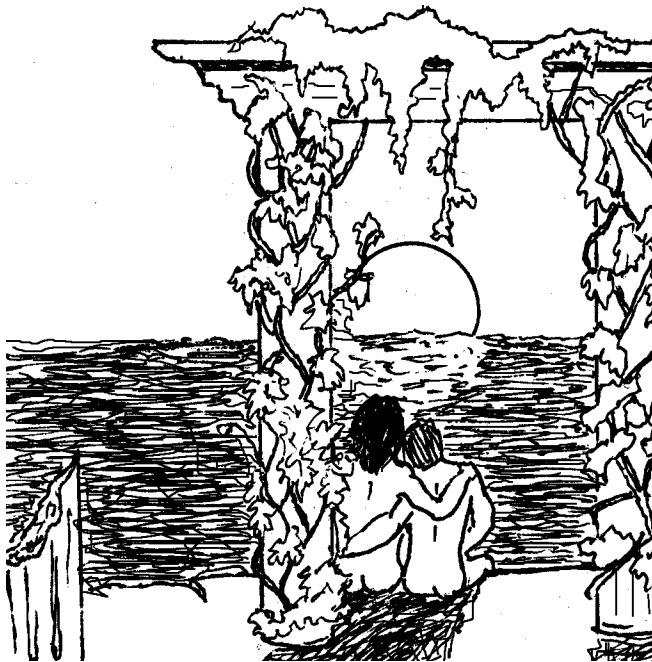
You would stare at a candle's glow for hours on end.
You won the staring contest by becoming the flames.
You are the fires that stir me to passion.

You always wished "if only my tears could do some good."
You got your wish, for you are the rain that falls.
You bring water to renew my weary soul.

You said you would always be there to support me.
You became one with the ground to fulfill your pledge.
You are now the soil to help me plant the seeds of living.

Rest in peace?
I will surely do that
for you will always be near.

But what about you my friend?
Will you rest in peace?
It seems like your work has only begun.



More of the artwork from the original publication



More of the artwork from the original publication

What Have I Done? (II)

I left my family and friends.
I left my home and everything I've known.
They warned of danger and death that I would face.
What did I do by heading into the unknown?

The choice was before me to stay or to go.
To stay, the danger was known, and death would soon follow.
To go meant the danger could be faced and overcome,
And death could be delayed for as long as the Gods would allow.

The unknown danger was real, but the protection was greater.
I called to the Moon and was given a guide.
He showed me the way and sheltered me from harm.
Through him, I found a home where I didn't have to hide.

The death they warned of, alas, was just as real.
It was worse than the fears inside me could foresee.
I learned to care about my friends,
But even their death was not the worse that could happen to me.

I left my home because I feared that others would kill me.
When faced with those that caused the death of my guide,
Without a thought, I took their lives with my own hand
That was the day that my innocence died.

What have I done?