

# VISIONARY

Volume 1, Number 2

June, 1995



## THE STATE OF THE EMPIRE

Welcome to the second issue of the Gay Spirit Visions Newsletter. You'll notice that it now has a name -- **VISIONARY** -- and thanks to Bob Varney of Atlanta for suggesting it. Just as birds live in an aviary, we hope **VISIONARY** will be a place where Visions of Gay Spirit can live and thrive between gatherings. If you would like to let us know what you think about it, please write to "Newsletter Committee" at the address below.

Our intention is to mail **VISIONARY** to everyone on our mailing list for the rest of the year. After the upcoming conference, we will purge our mailing list (for the first time in six years), send the newsletter at no charge to anyone who attends the Fall Conference, and charge a small fee to send it to anyone else. It costs about \$400 an issue to print and mail 600 copies of **VISIONARY**, and we are accepting contributions to defer those costs, if you are so inclined. We also accept advertising, if you have a product, workshop, etc., you want to tell us about.

**Mandala: Weaving Gay Spirit:** Our April 1st gathering had 76 participants, our largest attendance for an Atlanta event to date. For more specifics, see Martin's report elsewhere in the newsletter.

**Passing the Torch:** We have learned from Peter Kendrick that Running Water (the farm and Faerie Sanctuary that is the ancestor to our conference) was finally sold in mid-March. Running Water last hosted a gathering over six years ago, but just knowing it was there gave many of us a connection to our history. Peter tells us, now that Running Water has officially "transitioned," there will be a monetary legacy for Gay Spirit Visions from the proceeds of the sale. We will tell you more about this in the next issue.

**Summer (Non-)Plans:** Plans are iffy for another event before the Fall Conference. We had considered inviting Will Roscoe, author of the marvelous new book *Queer Spirits: A Gay Man's Myth Book* (see Joe's review elsewhere in **VISIONARY**), to Atlanta to speak. His current project, however, prevented him from accepting -- he is editing a book of

Harry Hay's writings with an August deadline. Maybe we'll be able to host him in the fall.

If you're in town on the second Saturday of a month and would like to attend an organizing meeting, you would be welcome. This year, we've met most often at the Friends Meeting House in Decatur (where *Mandala* was held), but occasionally that space is not available. Call ahead, or if you're the adventurous sort, take your chances and drop in.

**Autumn Plans:** *Awakening the Elder Within: A Journey of Soul* will officially convene on Sept. 22, 1995, with Mark Thompson and Malcolm Boyd confirmed as keynote speakers. (Others may be added later). Mark is a former editor at *The Advocate* and author of *Gay Spirit*, *Leatherfolk* and *Gay Soul*; Malcolm's career over the last forty years has included work in Hollywood, in the Episcopal church, and as an author (*Are You Running with me, Jesus?* and *Gay Priest*). Mark and Malcolm are life-partners and live in Los Angeles.

We also welcome back David Sereda, one of last year's keynotes. The gift of music that David brought last year was so nice that we have arranged for his return to offer another concert again this year.

Other things to note about the Fall: (1) Time and space have forced us to consider a limit of 120 people, nine less attendees than last year. What do you think about limiting attendance? (2) The Mountain may have very limited space on the Thursday night before the Conference -- we won't know for certain until closer to September. And, for the first time, they are offering special rates for anyone staying over Sunday night and beyond. Consider this while making your plans. (3) We are actively soliciting workshop proposals. If you have a workshop to offer, send your proposal to "Workshop Committee" at the address below. Include a one-paragraph description of what you would like to offer, how long it would last, and something about yourself. (4) If you have attended a previous Fall Conference and are interested in being a small group leader, call John Stowe at (404-373-0111) or send a letter to Small Group Committee at the address below.

**Long-Range Plans:** With the passing of Running Water, we are beginning to consider what kind of organizational structure would help the Conference to continue and prosper. This has led us to start the process of en-Visioning what our Conference might look like in five years. Should we become a Georgia not-for-profit corporation? A church? A publishing house? Should our Conference go on the road? Sign a long-term contract with The Mountain? Buy the Mountain? Buy property in Atlanta?

If you have thoughts, ideas or energy to put toward any of this, write to "Organization Committee" at the address below.

Those of us who organize this Conference feel extraordinarily lucky to have the opportunity to nurture something so special. Our only task as organizers is to make certain that this Safe Space for Gay Spirit continues to exist. We are the men entrusted with guarding this flame for you; our Fall Conference relights it every year; our other gatherings feed it; this Newsletter tells you (and others) about it. Please let us know any ideas you have to help us. In spirit,

*Al Cotton*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

**June 10, 10AM:** Monthly Planning Meeting, Atlanta Friends Meeting House, 704 W. Howard Ave., Decatur.

**July 1:** Target date for mailing Fall Conference brochures.

**July 8, 10AM:** Monthly Planning Meeting, Friends Meeting House.

**August 1: Deadline** for contributions for fall **VISIONARY**

**August 12, 10AM:** Monthly Planning Meeting, Friends Meeting House.

**September 9, 10AM:** Monthly Planning Meeting, Friends Meeting House.

**September 22 - 24:** *Awakening the Elder Within: A Journey of Soul.*

VISIONARY  
Vol. 1, No. 2, June, 1995  
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P.O. Box 339  
Decatur, GA 30031-0339  
Reader submissions welcome.

# MANDALA: WEAVING GAY SPIRIT

An Account of the April 1, 1995,  
Gathering

by TREEWALKER

King Thackston cast a circle in sand, calling the directions and energies: East, South, West, North, White, Black, Yellow, Red. Calling Father Earth and Mother Sky. Calling all our relations. Calling 74 men from California, Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, Florida, Carolinas North and South, and Georgia.

John Stowe took us through movement and breath work. Al Cotton spoke about *Gay Soul* and plans for the Fall Conference. Duncan Teague was our masterful Master of Ceremonies, resplendent in adrinkra, the traditional mourning cloth from the Akan people of Ghana.

Andrew Ramer took us through a series of movements and imaginings -- snapshot mandalas. See yourself whole, healthy, strong -- What does that feel like in your body? Move around that way. See yourself as hurting, gay-bashing yourself -- What does that feel like in your body? Try to walk around like that. See yourself as male/masculine, then female/feminine, then see yourself as androgynous (Oh, my!) What does each of these feel like in your body. Move around, walk around, sashay around. Are we not the sum of all these and more, and does not our body remember how it feels?

Beyond these snapshot mandalas that Andrew identified, I was aware of others, the mandalas of our groupings. Two or three of us, clusters at break time, gathered to discuss or process, to catch up with old friends, or to bridge out to new friends, mandalas of workshop participants, and shadows of those not participating in workshops.

In all of these mandalas, there appear patterns of light and dark, color and shadow. We danced these changing patterns, these evolving rhythms. We are all of them, and none of them. And just as we re-configured the sand in the center of our circle, so we re-configure the image of ourselves that we see, that we show to others. This is our power when we gather in Spirit: to acknowledge our wounds, and how we carry them in the memory of our bodies, and to then dance these memories, weaving in healing energy, weaving in Gay Spirit.

# ON RITUAL

by Dandelion

First in a series

Some people believe that rituals are like a path through the woods; a ritual's connection to cosmic energy and the Divine becomes stronger the more it is used. Thus, a ritual such as the Catholic Mass, or Wiccan Sabat, which has been performed by millions of people over thousands of years is very strong indeed, and it is true that the power and majesty of a High Mass is apparent even to a non-Christian. At the same time, one should remember that even those rituals whose origins are lost in the mists of time were "made up" by some one at some point.

In contrast to this focus on history and tradition are Neopagan groups like the Radical Faeries who focus more on the intuitive and creative aspect of worship and think that virtually any act can be spiritual if one chooses to call it so and believes in it. Whatever the origin of your rituals it is most important that they have personal relevance and evoke heartfelt response. Nothing is sadder than a prayer so familiar and perfunctory that all the feeling has left it long ago.

Gay Spirit Visions has a wide variety of separate spiritual traditions to draw upon. We weave our individual practices together to create rituals that are both new and traditional. After five years of working and learning together, certain traditions unique to our group are beginning to take shape, but a commitment to creative expression and an inclusive ecumenical form remains a strong guiding principal. This seems important both for its opportunity to bring everyone's beliefs into the process as well as its ability to educate and broaden all of our horizons.

In trying to formulate rituals for personal practice it is important to pay less attention to what is "right" and more to what feels good. The Divine has many faces and all of them are beautiful; worship the one that is most pleasing to you. If the image of the Divine you choose has a well delineated tradition of worship associated with it you may find that to be a rewarding place to begin. Remember, though, that just like friendships or marriage on the human plane, your relationship to the Divine is a personal one that is most special and beloved in its uniqueness, rather than its conformity. It is not the flame of candles burning, or even the words on your lips that is worship; it is the song in your heart that brings joy and delight to the gods.

# TO DEFINE GAY SPIRIT

by JOHN R. STOWE

At our Conferences and other events, we often talk about "Gay Spirit" as if it were tangible and readily defined. Andrew Ramer speaks of our "Tribe of Stands-Between People" having existed since before history. Harry Hay calls us a "distinct, biologically-defined human variant." James Broughton reminds us that we are not outcasts, but "meridian persons at the core of truth."

Presumably, most of us who explore Gay Spirit agree that, somehow, the way in which we perceive the world is unique and different. At the same time, though, we might be hard pressed to come up with an actual definition that would suit us all.

Looking outside, to society at large, we don't get much help. Most of the officially sanctioned purveyors of Spirit don't recognize us at all. Many lay out judgments, distortion, or condemnation. Webster's dictionary, where we usually look for definitions, doesn't have a clue.

That's to be expected. Looking for a definition of Gay Spirit outside *ourselves* is fruitless. Instead, we must search within, comb our *own* understanding and bring forth our *own* answers. Because we are many and diverse, the ways we perceive Gay Spirit will be equally many-faceted and diverse. To discover who we are as a people, we must first examine who we are as individuals. Then, by sharing our personal stories and visions, we can weave the threads of common experience into a more representative fabric of understanding.

As a way to acknowledge and honor our Gay Spirit, I invite you to share your impressions. To stimulate your exploration, let me offer the following questions:

- In your own experience, is "Gayness" primarily a sexual identity, or is it more far-reaching?
- Do you feel you consciously chose to be Gay, or is it something inherent within you?
- How might *you* define Gay Spirit?
- At the level of Spirit, do you feel you are different from non-Gay men? If so, can you describe the difference?
- What questions exist in your life that make you seek out a group such as Gay Spirit Visions?
- What are the greatest spiritual concerns facing you and other Gay men today?
- What aspects of Gay Spirit would you like to explore at future events?

Use your own experiences to answer in whatever way feels appropriate. The research we're doing is part of an ongoing examination of Gay Spirit Visions. If you reply by August 1, I can include excerpts in our next issue. Send your thoughts directly to John Stowe, POB 8468, Atlanta, GA 30306. Thanks.

## Book Review

### **Queer Spirits: A Gay Men's Myth Book** by Will Roscoe.

Reviewed by Joe Chancey

Fans of Will Roscoe's previous books (*Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology*, which he edited, and *The Zuni Man-Woman*, which he authored and which won the Margaret Mead Award and a Lambda Literary Award) will not be disappointed in his latest work. Those, who like myself, started with *Queer Spirits* will want to read the others.

When my review copy arrived in the mail I eagerly took it out of the cardboard mailer like a child opening his biggest present at Christmas or Hanukkah. The book fell open to the story, "The Ugly Duckling," by Hans Christian Andersen and I began reading. Like most people, I was familiar with the story, but I do not believe I had ever read it or heard it read, certainly not in its entirety.

Each myth or fable has an introduction by Roscoe. Sometimes it is background information to help the reader better understand the story. Sometimes, as in the case of "The Ugly Duckling," it is of a personal nature:

... But, of all Andersen's stories, "The Ugly Duckling" seems quintessentially gay, telling the story of a young swan mistaken for a duck who discovers his true beauty only after a series of harsh trials. Every element corresponds to the gay experience of coming out.

I was certainly an "ugly duckling" myself. Like many gay men, nothing would be more embarrassing than to have a picture of the way I look now juxtaposed to how I looked at sixteen. . . . It took contact lenses, the advent of the "clone" look (short hair, tight jeans), and the invention of weight-lifting machines (no coordination required) to change my self-image. But, even more so, it took coming out and the dis-

covery of sexuality to teach me to love my body and to put an end to my ugly duckling days. This was a total transformation of both body and soul--what was ugly became beautiful; what was sinful became holy.

After reading the introduction I didn't expect to be particularly moved by the story, since I already knew it. Or at least I thought I did. Andersen was an excellent writer. The story is beautifully and powerfully written. The only thing which kept me from crying as I read it was the speed with which I raced through it. Roscoe's introduction only served to enhance the effect of the story.

The book is divided into seven sections: Stories for Boys, Rites of Passage, Gay Ways: The Path of the Two-Spirit, The Divine Twins, The Way of Initiation, The Ecstatic Body, and The Circle of Loving Companions. The index is by region. Stories are grouped into fifteen regions with the specific tribe, author or place listed with the story.

Some of the stories have homophobic elements or homophobically tragic endings. Emotionally I would prefer that these stories had been edited to make them completely gay positive. However, I admire Will Roscoe's intellectual honesty in presenting the stories as he found them.

Other stories have very violent elements in them. But myth is symbolic and often the violence is, too. After all, what is more cruel or violent than what the stepmother wanted to do to Hansel and Gretel?

Most myths have been handed down through the oral tradition with changes being made through the generations. When using these stories for various purposes such as opening or closing a gathering or blessing a meal I believe we should feel free to continue the oral tradition and adapt them to our needs by simply leaving out the homophobic elements.

Support your local gay or gay friendly bookstore and nourish yourself by buying a copy of *Queer Spirits*. You might even want to donate a copy to your local library: public, or church or synagogue.

*Queer Spirits: A Gay Men's Myth Book* is published by Beacon Press. 1995. ISBN 0-8070-7938-3.

[Beacon Press is the publishing arm of the Unitarian Universalist Association. As most readers of this publication know, The Mountain: Highlands Camp and Conference Center where our annual Gay Spirit Visions retreat is held, is a U. U. institution.]

## THE STORIES OF OUR PEOPLE

By Andrew Ramer

[The Following excerpts are from Andrew Ramer's keynote speech at the second Celebrating Gay Spirit Visions Conference at The Mountain, near Highlands, N.C., September 21, 1991.]

One of the things about who we are as a People is that we are very different from other people. We are not born to our People--we discover our own People. That is both a gift and a tragedy. As a very little boy, I was told from the time I can first remember who I was as a person, how I fit into the frame of being a Jew.

One of the two or three earliest memories I have of this life is of my mother's mother telling me her earliest memory of her life. She grew up in a very little town in southern Russia, in the Crimea. Their little stream had three little wooden bridges that went over it, and the Jews lived on one side of the stream (a very narrow stream, you could almost stretch your arms across it), and the Christians lived on the other side. And almost all through the year, everyone got along wonderfully and the children played together in the stream and everyone traded, except for around the time of Easter. And every Easter, the Christians remembered--and this I could never understand--the Christians remembered that the Jews killed Jesus, and I can't understand how they had forgotten that he was also a Jew. Every year around the time of Easter, you knew that people were going to come over the little bridges and ford the stream and kill at least one person on the Jewish side of the stream, if not many, every year, to avenge the death of Jesus.

The tragedy is that Easter comes about the same time of the year as Passover. So here at the height of a holiday of celebration, of honoring of peoplehood, you knew that someone in your village was going to die--every year. For as far back as my grandmother could remember, and anyone could remember, there had been Jews living on one side of the stream and Christians living on the other.

So my grandmother's earliest memory was of a year with a very long and cold winter. When spring came, everyone on the other side was angry. And they came across and killed a lot of people in the village, twenty or thirty. And my grandmother's very earliest memory, which she told me as a three year old, was her father taking her after the pogrom to the school on the Jewish side of the river where they had laid out the bodies. There was a partition up, and her father picked her up over the

partition and showed her all the dead bodies and said, "These are Your People."

I never forgot that that was her first memory. That was one of my first memories, and if I had children in this life, that would have been one of their first memories.

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There are many Stories of Our People. Our People have many different names. Sometimes we are called the Man/Woman People. Sometimes we are called the Not Man/Not Woman People. Because of our connection to the air, we are sometimes called the People With Wings or the Faerie People, and because of our connection with the earth we are called Fruit People and the Faggot People, which means the Bundle of Sticks Tied Together People. We have been called the Fixes the Hair People. We have been called the Makes Beautiful Lodges People. Sometimes we are called the Like That People, the Happy People, or the Strange People. But of all the names we have called ourselves and been called, my favorite is the Walks Between People.

Now, after Father Earth (we don't hear a lot about Father Earth, but I'm one of his big fans) had made all the different people, he looked around at all of them in their different places all doing different things and making their different kinds of beauty. And he was very happy. He was happy about everything they were doing, until he saw that every people was staying in its own place, keeping its own kind of beauty. This made him sad. This made him very sad. And he wondered--Who would connect them? Who would bring their beauty from one place to another, so that everyone could know all the different kinds of beauty? This troubled Father Earth.

## **We are not born to our People -- we discover our own People. That is both a gift and a tragedy.**

He did not know what to do about it. So he asked Grandmother Sun. She thought about it, and she thought about it, and she thought and she thought, and she got so tired of thinking that she fell asleep. And while she was sleeping, she dreamed. And in her dream, a new kind of people appeared--the Walks Between People. The people who walk between women and men, who walk between night and day, who walk between the sky and the earth, who walk between the living and the dead, connecting them, carrying their beauty from

place to place. When Grandmother Sun awoke, the Walks Between People were being born among all the other people. This made her very happy, for wherever we appear among the different people, we connect them. And wherever we appear among the different people, we find each other and we carry their beauty back and forth and back and

## **For no one knows where we come from or where we will appear, and they never will.**

forth and back and forth.

Now, by our love, all the different people can see all the beauty that there is. And this makes Father Earth happy. This makes him very happy. For we are a Connecting People, and we are also a Mysterious People. For no one knows where we come from or where we will appear, and they never will. Yes, we are a Mysterious People and whenever they see us, we remind all the other people of the Great Mystery, which is a good thing. A very good thing.

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I have this image of how this world is arranged, and I think it's already obsolete. But I used to think that we knew about the First World and We were It. Then there's the Second World, and They were It, but I don't know where They are anymore. Then there was the Third World.

And some people know about the Fourth World. There is a Fourth World movement, and they've been having meetings ever since the early '60's. The Fourth World peoples are the American Indians on reservations, the Welsh, the Kurds. The Fourth World are people who consider themselves people with a territory, but they are engulfed in some other country that says, "You don't exist. There is no Kurdistan,

this is Iraq." So there's the Fourth World.

I've thought that the Fifth World people must be people don't have any kind of a territory, or had one so long ago that it doesn't count, like Jews and Gypsies, that are still biologically collected, familial people who can tell stories to their children, who will tell them to their children. So that's my idea of the Fifth World.

My view is that we are living in the Sixth World. The Sixth World is composed of all the people that have com-

mon stories, common culture, common language, but aren't born from parents of the same people. I think there are five main Sixth World people. There are the Men Who Love Men, there are the Women Who Love Women, there are the Blind People, the Deaf People and the Handicapped People, and you can belong to lots of these tribes. But if

you've followed the stories of what's going on in any of these other communities, all at the same time, we are all saying, "We are a People." Deaf People are saying, "We have a language, we have a completely unique language, we have a culture, we have a history." There was a man in the late 1800's who proposed that one of the states out in the western territory of this country be created as a state for the Deaf People to live in.

So we're all discovering that there are other kinds of people who don't have a territory, don't have a homeland with borders you can draw on the map and fight to defend, and fight to keep people out, and immigration people to say you can't come in. Our job, as a People--in this room, we come from every other tribe, every other place, every part of the planet, and I think that all of the Sixth World people have this power--is that if we are going to survive on this planet, if this planet is going to survive, we have to learn to not say, "I am Ukrainian, you are German, you have to leave... I am Polish, I am this, I am that."

Look at the break-up of all the countries in central Europe. Now it's like the Middle Ages, and we can't afford the Middle Ages. People who carry the wisdom about how to live differently, to be Bridge People, to be a Connecting People, to be Weavers, are us. We already know this, we have always known this. You can go to any country on the planet, any other city, and within three, four, five, six, seven minutes, and you will find Our People.

Part of our coming together in these gatherings is that we have been isolated from each other for so long. We cannot do that any longer. Not for ourselves, but for the world that needs us. We have a marketable skill. We have wisdom and clarity, we have tenderness, a capacity to love, to honor, to recognize, that is needed on the planet. We have to be, all the Sixth World peoples, in their different ways, have to be the new ambassadors to the entire planet, saying, "We have known how to do this. You can learn. It's not that difficult."

But it means redefining what a People is, so the more that we become public as a People and say, "We are a People," the more that other Peoples--nations, states, tribes, villages, cities--will begin to recognize that there are different ways of defining Peopleness. Ultimately, we are all Earthlings, all human beings. But there are all those in-between places. And we understand them very well. Because we're the Walks Between People.

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I have a vision that we can create lineages of storytellers in our community--that I can tell you a story and you can tell someone else and you can tell someone from the next generation of men coming into Our Tribe and someday he too will then tell some story. Whenever people like Robert Bly talk about what happened to us as men, what a lot of these people say is that we have no valid rites of passage any longer, that say, "This is a boy who now is a Man."

Well that's true for men who love women; but it's not true for us. We have an indigenous, innate rite of passage, which is called Coming Out. And whenever we choose to use it, however we choose to do it, this is organic to what we are as a People. And even in the future, when our parents honor and love us again, we will still be different from most of our parents, and at some point we will have to say, "I am of This People."

**We have wisdom and clairty, we have tenderness, a capacity to love, to honor, to recognize, that is needed on the planet.**

I see something else happening in our tribes and our encampments and our communities. I call it a Coming In ritual. In my vision of it, four times a year, there will be gatherings in all the encampments. And these young men who are living in their little, scattered cities and towns and villages and apartments all over, who got the little maps from their parents saying "Here's the place I found for you," or maybe your guidance counsellor will tell you, "Here's a map and the nearest place is a place called The Mountain," because perhaps we've taken it over by then.

And it'll be spring or it'll be an equinox or a solstice or something and they will come up in this gathering around the fire, and all the people of Our Tribe will tell the Stories of Our People, and these young men will come into the center of the circle and be honored as People Who Have Always Been in Our Tribe, Will Always Be in Our Tribe, and happen to be temporary

ly returning.

So this is my idea of Coming In--it's the balance to Coming Out. Coming Out, I think, is that way [pointing outward]. To me--Coming In is this way

**Now, by our love, all the different people can see all the beauty that there is. And this makes Father Earth happy.**

[pointing toward himself], Coming Back to Us, to Our Tribe, to Our Nation, to Our People, to Our Encampment, to Our Territories, to Our Art, to Our Stories.

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So this is another story. The thing that I rather like about this is that the author's name in English is Blue Hand and he lived in this part of the country 700 years ago and he is quite delighted that I'm here, and I'm quite delighted that he's here, and he's quite delighted that we are here, and this is another one of his stories. Edited. I think you have the right if you're the person sitting at the computer, even if they're the muse. This isn't the way it was received, but it's real close.

This is called Red Oak and the Lodge of Our People.

How I got this story is that I was listening to the radio. Someone, I don't remember who, was talking about the different names of the different months,

and he said that one of the months in the indigenous calendar was called the Moon of the Big Sun, which was in the hottest month of the summer. So I heard this person say, "In the Moon of the Big Sun...", and I didn't hear the rest of his story, because I heard this one whispered in my head, in that part of my brain that is not like other men's brains. In the Moon of the Big Sun, Red Oak came to the Lodge of our Clan, the Walks Between People. He sat in the Lodge with the Men of Our Clan, and the Elders of Our Clan, he smoked with them the pipe made by our clan ancestor, whose name is Comes From Turquoise Mountain. He learned from them the ancient ways of Our People. He learned our songs and our ceremonies.

When the Moon had died and been born again three times, the elders took Red Oak into the mountains. They took away his boy clothing. They smudged him and bathed him and sat with him in

the Sweat Lodge. Then they gave him the clothes of a Man of Our People so that he could live in the world in the Walks Between Way.

Now there was a Man of Our

People named Four Hawks who was drawn to Red Oak. He was drawn to him as the Men of Our People are drawn to each other. And Four Hawks reached out to Red Oak in the way that the Men of Our People reach out to other men. He reached out to Red Oak with his eyes. Red Oak let Four Hawks touch him with his eyes, and he touched him back. Then Four Hawks touched Red Oak with the hands of his body and Red Oak touched him back. Yes, they touched in the Ways of Our People.

Because of the way that Red Oak touched Four Hawks, Four Hawks felt a new life in his body. He grew heavy and swollen til he could not move. The elders and ancestors had to come and feed him. Red Oak sat with him all this time, waiting. And when the Moon had made nine journeys into death and life again, Four Hawks gave birth to a story. He gave birth to the story that Red Oak had made him pregnant with, and this is the story.

In the Last World, there were two men who shared a lodge. Their lodge was painted with the Sign of the Flute Players. This was in the days when Grandmother Sun had gotten so old that it was time for her to die again. She was curled up in her bed so small beneath her blankets that the people could not tell if it was night or day, or day or night. The elders gathered all the people together; they said it was time to go to a new world, but there was so little light that it was hard to find this new world.

In the darkness, no one saw how, with the last little bit of Grandmother Sun's fire, the two men who shared a lodge had taken their flutes and climbed to the top of the mountains. When they got to the top of the mountains, they took out their flutes and they played them. Then, all of the people knew where to climb and they followed the music up the mountain to the New World that we live in today. And it was here that Grandmother Sun was born again.

Because these two men who shared a lodge had played their flutes that way, in our New World--it is still the Men of Our People who lead all the other people to New Places.



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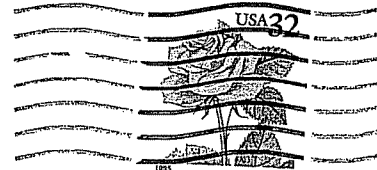
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