

Walking in the Land of Shadows with a Grin on Yer Face

Or

The Self Lodge, the Sacred Fire and I

Or

How Coyote Stole the Darkness from the Shadows and Returned them to the Night (The difference between Shadows and Background)

Dedicated to Panther Rose--My heyoka teacher of the Mirror Way who first taught me when she said, "No one can teach the heyoka way."

And to Starfire, My Dreaming Rose Woman.

To the Pathway of Acceptance and the Pathway of Desire and their crossroads between-the-worlds.

And to All who walk heyoka. May you not get caught.

Coyote walked out of his barn one day and looked at the sun. He remembered how he had stole the fire and the tobacco and brought it to the people. He was forgetting that the fire and the tobacco were given to him freely. (Coyote liked to Remember and to Forget in ways that made life interesting.)

He turned around and saw his shadow and raised his hand and waved saying, "Hey Shadow! Nice Day!" But then he looked longer at his shadow and began to wonder if his shadow was facing him, in which case his shadow was waving back at him with his left hand and saying, "Bad Night" or was facing away from him and pretty much saying and doing the same thing Coyote was. Coyote got confused wondering if his shadow was denying him or just letting him see himself.

Coyote grew so confused that he began to remember the day he was born and in his remembrance returned to the Self Lodge where it all took place.

In those days Coyote was named "I" and lived in the Self Lodge which was so big that he had never found the walls. Sometimes he wondered if it had walls. In the center burned the Sacred Fire. The Sacred Fire was male to the darkness "outside" (or at least the imagined limits) but somehow seemed female to "I".

As Coyote remembered when "I" was born it seemed as if, before, he had always been one with the Fire and the Fire had been one with him. One day he had just kind of "woke up", started thinking, and had thought that he was "I" and that "I" saw the fire. And while he thought about this he heard the fire speak and say "Light, Love, Freedom, Joy!"

"I" was startled and looked around to see where the voice had come from and saw in the place behind him a shadow of "I" and it was a darkness and in the darkness lived Doubt and Fear and Bondage and Pain. But "I" realized, at the time, that it was just "I's" background of desire for the Sacred Fire and realized that he had been given the shadow to use as a background to enable him to see the Fire more clearly and to hear its song. To give its original wordless emotion a form. I realized the shadow had no power in itself, and without fear, turned back to enjoy the Fire. He adored the Fire as the Goddess and thought, perhaps, he was a god, seeing as how he had been privileged to See the Fire and to Hear its Song. So "I" believed he was god and became a god in his belief and in his emptiness and spoke to the Fire, saying "More!"

Instantly the Fire responded (knowing "I" to be god in his belief and in his emptiness and in "Her" emptiness and desire) and grew very large, engulfing "I" in the Fire's flames as she sang "Light, Love, Freedom, Joy!" until "I" had returned to the Fire and died a good death in ecstasy.

After awhile (no one knows how long) "I" awoke again and found himself staring at the Fire and remembered he had done this before and wanted to hear the Fire sing again. Sometimes "I" would have a different name but it was always "I" underneath, and always "I" would

say "More!" to the Fire and the fire would respond and engulf "I" (or whoever) and sing a beautiful song. Sometimes the words would change and be "bliss" or "happiness" or "pleasure" or just "love" but it was always the same song with different words, the song at the core of being and becoming. The song whose reflection can be seen today in the direction Being always Desire to go deep down inside (but often has so much trouble doing.) Always it was the song of the primal Desire within life and being and becoming.

Over and over this went on and each time a different version of the one song was heard and each time were there more and more "I's" found sitting around the Fire when "I" awoke. Each "I" would be wearing a different body which reflected their own particular version of the one Song.

As time went on, and more and more "I's" filled the Self Lodge, they began to talk more and more amongst themselves and each time they came and went (saying "More!") they spent less and less time listening to the song of the Sacred Fire.

They were all different and all the same but they sat in different places and wore different bodies. And as they talked more and more amongst themselves they turned more and more to face each other and spent more and more time talking about the Song and Each Other than listening to the Song itself.

And as they turned more and more towards each other they would catch glimpses of the shadows behind them and, because they spent more and more time wondering about the differences of the song and the sameness of the song, they listened less and less to the Song itself.

To the degree that "I" did not See the Sacred Fire and Hear it's Song, to that degree were Doubt and Fear and Bondage and Pain born within the Self Lodge.

The many "I's" did not look at or hear the Sacred Fire. They would face it, in fear of the shadows behind, but they would sit with eyes and ears closed, afraid. Afraid that they would have to change their Ideas and Beliefs and Desires that now clogged them and prevented the entrance of the Song. And afraid of the Shadows. Afraid They would be WRONG.

They would not say "More!", they were afraid to die. (Some even took to saying "less", thinking they could prolong life by denying it.)

They would not look at the Shadows and their Fear invested the Shadows with the vitality of the Sacred Fire which "I" had originally Desired. The Shadows became the Biting and Gnawing Ones, always sneaking up from Behind, always denying the Sacred Fire and the "I."

Doubt (Ignorance) and Fear, Bondage and Pain were born and ruled the "I's" in the Lodge of Self. All the children of Shadow came---sickness and hatred, jealousy and many, many others. All the denials of Sacred Acceptance and Sacred Desire were born in the Lodge of Self.

The "I" that was Coyote was not virtuous or brave. Was more afraid than all the rest. Completely obsessed by Doubt and Fear and Bondage and Pain. It was all he could see. It was in his great fear that he would not even turn from the shadow and run, like most of the "I's." And in his fear he walked backwards into the fire and died.

This time when Coyote "woke up" it was different. Having forgotten the way and having remembered it again made it all different than if he had never forgotten it. And he was different than those who had not remembered. It looked pretty strange to Coyote when he looked around the Self Lodge at the other "I's" and the way they were behaving.

And to the other "I's", Coyote seemed pretty strange.

You see each time an "I" was engulfed in the Fire and died what was Spoken in Truth of Desire was heard. And each time an "I" "awoke" and found itself looking at the Fire, what was desired was offered to "I" in accordance with the degree of Truth of Acceptance of the "I."

When Coyote had awoken this time he heard the Fire sing him six Medicine Songs that could lead himself and others back through the Shadows to the Fire. And one other Song which was Silence. The Fire had put Light in his eyes (I) and he found that if he stared at things long enough and hard enough, things got holes in them. And the Fire gave his nose knowledge, that it could smell the Fears and Doubts and Shadows. And the Fire said, "healing!" to Coyote.

Coyote didn't remember having had said anything to the Fire when he fell backwards into Her but she must have seen his Fear and Doubt and Bondage and Pain and heard behind them his cry for escape.

So when Coyote awoke, he carried these gifts and he carried these gifts to the people. Some were able to enter their Truth of Acceptance and receive the gifts of the Fire Coyote gave them. And with these ones Coyote could, with his eyes and nose (knows) and his ability to eat Shadows (because he was not afraid when he remembered the Fire), help them open their eyes and see the Fire again and to hear It's song.

Many were afraid of Coyote because he was always doing strange things like staring off into the Shadows and Sniffing, or walking Backwards. And because when Coyote stared at them they were afraid he might put holes in their Ideas and Beliefs which they substituted for their vision of the Fire and the sound of Her Song.

Sometimes Coyote would catch a Shadow in someone or something and drag it out so the people could see it. And if the people were ready to See, they would Understand and take back their light from the Shadow and turn the Shadow around and send it back to the Night. And if they were not ready they would call Coyote a Black Magician.

Other times Coyote would forget what he had remembered and then he was just plain obnoxious and irritating (which didn't help his reputation any) and he would usually end up hurting him-Self and have to go back to the Fire again and say "More!"

All this Coyote remembered as he stood outside his barn and stared at his shadow (which was still there even though the Sun had set.)

So he waved "goodbye" to his shadow and turned-it-around and sent it back to the Night.

Coyote rubbed his back and remembered how he had hurt his back a week or two ago and as he did this he heard his shadow say "goodbye."

Coyote grinned.