

>Of Instinct, Sicun and "Special Effects"

>Angel Fury

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>I know a woman who could say she was born first of a woman and then again, after a short death, through her father's insistent breath. But she is not Athene. I do not know her as well as I would like to though in this life she is the root of my being, the Self my spirit breathes through and the one who experiences the dilemma and contradictions (irony?) of being a spirit embodied in flesh and personality. She is a poem the Great Mother is writing and I the one who experiences 'the special effects'.

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>While many people go through their lives searching for their soul's purpose, I find my Soul and her healing dreams to be a most comfortable residence. It is the 'Self' that is a baffling experience of the mysterious, at time close enough to reflect upon her own existence, at other times defiant and instinctual, aware only of her own need to survive this affair, that job, some unexpected blow to ego.

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>The Lakotas say that Great Spirit gave each being a gift that makes it unique, a 'medicine' that its spirit 'gives' the whole. We humans have been given "Sicun" the ability to reflect upon our own beingness, to consider consequences and special effects, to use our minds to discern and speculate. Psychologists call it metacognition. We are not simply instinctually one with the whole of the ecosystem and the orders of creation, but also able to perceive and laugh at our own follies or misguided attempts to control the nature of our own infinite unfolding.

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>In my dream I am a fox running through the long grasses of the wetlands at dawn. I am a cleaver red-tailed, swift-pawed Self on the marsh edge and I am also the timeless Soul weaver/dreamer reaching out with compassion and love to touch her, to caress her, to be near her wild beauty. I know we are one and I am her bliss. It is for this union I live and delight.

So it happens that just when she is almost within reach she turns and looks at me, and I see She has a dead pheasant hanging in her mouth. It is dripping with the blood of a fresh kill. Before I know it I am clapping my hands, screaming, "NO! NO!" as loud as I can. At which point she bounds off with her gift and glory still clamped tightly in her jaws. And I am left to remember that I, too, am an animal. I can not be one with my Self until I accept this...life feeds upon life. The death of one form is the key to survival in the next.

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>Perhaps that is why my soulmate first appeared to me in this life as a gray bundle of fur, purring, then crying in her sleep upon my slightly burned nine year old breast. (As I write this the voice of the wind grows so loud it shakes the timbers of the roof and they groan like a bear angry to be woken.) Her eyes were not yet open and so she slipped in and out of my dreams with ease, trying to let me know that we had survived, yet another folly.

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>I was not sure then if I wanted to survive. The world as I knew it was a dense, dangerous and tiring place while the other worlds as I experienced them after my short death from an accidental electrocution were full of light, comfort and ease. Yet, she licked my fingers and brought me back to a place of concern for the living. Her living, in fact. My brother had put her in my bed as he left for school that morning, saying, "I caught her mother in my trap. Take care of her until I get back. If she dies -- it will be your fault. Try feeding her with this bottle. I can't get her to eat anything."

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>Clearly, it was her hungry belly that made her cry. It didn't matter that my first response was, "great, we can die together." She broke through my silence and my refusal to be an individual. She demanded that I be both a part of the oneness and also a separate, responsible being. She did have needlelike teeth and so she slipped in and out of my dreams of bliss, swishing her tale, turning stillness and light into form and adventure until we were both running back to the consciousness of our empty bellies and our tentative chances of survival.

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>She taught me many things, like how a fox laps milk from birth and doesn't suckle. She taught every day until I got it that the same creature that purrs can also bark and bite. As she approached her adolescence, she taught me how to bury whatever was valuable and to come back to it when I was really ready for it. She even showed me how you could dig yourself out of the pen some humans put you in without them ever knowing. (As long as they see you there, they think you stay there when they aren't looking.)

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>Yes, she taught me how to become invisible, how to hold stars in my mouth and how to laugh through my tears. To me she was as brilliant as the sun. Even when she no longer returned in the daytime to her pen, she would come bounding across the open wheat fields of North Dakota's Red River Valley and onto the hay mound where I sat in my childhood ponderous of life and death and pull the ribbons from my braided hair.

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>She gave me my life back, a taste of the magical familiar and a love again for that which is finite. And then she was gone. Like too many true

loves, the needs of her life and her own measured cycles were undeniably different from mine. Yet I can still see her there as I did when I first opened my eyes to her. Lying on my breast, a bundle of vulnerable, seemingly powerless fur, demanding that I take action and control, that I get out of my own way and wake up my heart to its path of compassion, my will to its stubborn refusal to die before the Self has learned to live.

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>And again I see her, running through mist and veil, beckoning me to follow...her bushy red tail straight behind her, her expert snout sniffing out the path I should follow...leaping over fallen limb, climbing across low branches, bounding through dense forests of emotion, hiding from predators, eyeing potential prey: mindless of limitation, mindful of eternity.

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