

This is a poem and illustration from the upcoming book *100 Little Stories of Big Moments* published by The Permanente Press.

Most of the stories and poems were written by clinicians in 15 minutes in writing workshops about meaningful moments in their work and life of practicing medicine. Professional artists were asked to create a visual representation of the story.

Ode to a Dead Hawk

Robert Sigafoes, MD

Perm J 2018;22:07-079

E-pub: 07/20/2018

<https://doi.org/10.7812/TPP/07-079>

What brought you down today, my noble friend?
I found you motionless, lying at the base of the tree you loved,
Speckled tan and white and gray, resting on the brown, moist leaves,
As the cerulean sky faded high above you.

No arrow pierce, nor bullet wound, nor predator marks
Fouled your head or breast I found.
No feathers lost around you lay; no blood to stain the soil was there.
In peaceful rest, with beak upon your chest, you were transfixed.

Oh, how often have I seen you land on perch above,
Scattering the smaller birds like vassals before their king?
Or bathing in the water stand for an hour in the sun, your oil casting
Rainbows on the water, like the highway on the first day of rain.

My rabbit and I were not afraid of you, nor you of us.
We marveled at your majesty, your watchful eye, your turning head,
Your dappled colors in the morning light,
Still so resilient in the night.

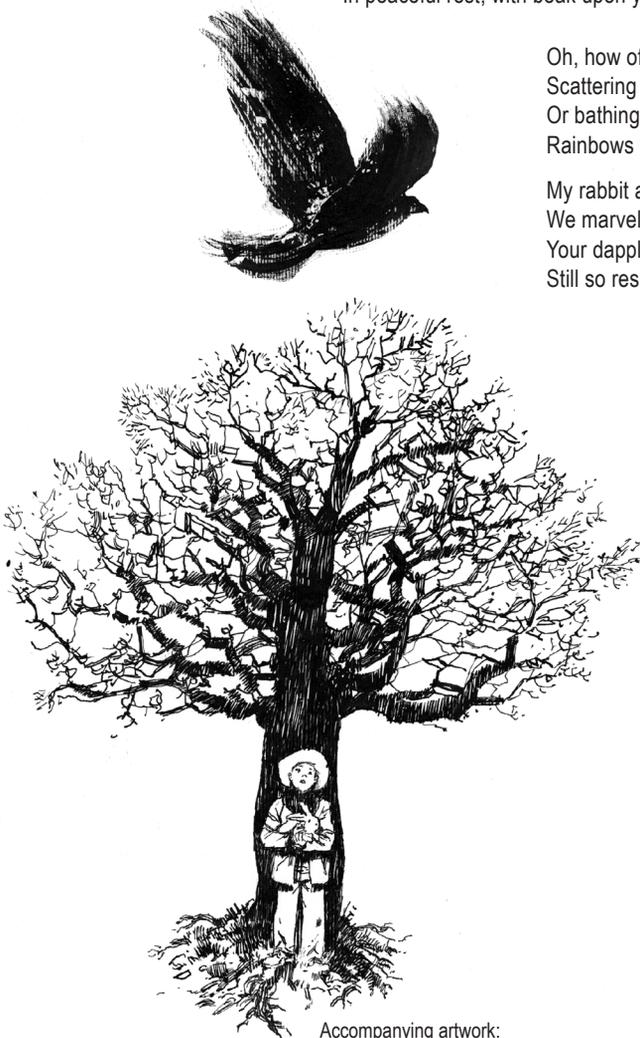
What brought you down today, my noble friend?
Was it the death we all must face? The death that comes with time,
When exhausted wings fail to lift us still, and we put head to breast
And take life's rest upon the bed of moist brown leaves.

Then sleep my friend beneath the mound of rocks I made for you,
Tan and white and gray in the morning light.
Sleep the simple, restful sleep of peace, that comes to all who through
Their very beings, bring joy and beauty and love to each of us. ❖

How to Cite this Article

Sigafoes R. Ode to a dead hawk. Perm J 2018;22:07-079.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7812/TPP/07-079>

The poem "Ode to a Dead Hawk" was originally published in leaflet, 2009;1(1). Available from: <http://leaflet.thepermanenteppress.org/2012-09-07-07-54-29/volume-1-issue-1/item/ode-to-a-dead-hawk>.



Accompanying artwork:
Ode to a Dead Hawk
by Joe Infurnari