

Remembrance of My Eldest Sister

I was taking an introspective walk the other day in the woods up near Calistoga, California. The land hasn't changed much since the late 1800s and early 1900s when the loggers came thru and cut down all the giant old growth redwood trees to prove lumber for the building of San Francisco and the other Bay Area cities. The forest has changed in the last 100 years as remnants of the giant redwoods are now surrounded by full grown pine trees that have grown up in place of their fallen brethren. There is a stillness to the land that continues to beat the rhythm of the old redwoods. A beat measured in years if not centuries.

During the walk over hills, through leaves, and over a small creek brought low by a summer of heat and drought, I reflected on the life of my eldest sister who had passed away earlier this year. I looked for images in nature that reminded me of her.

The hawk riding the air currents high above the valley below reminded me of the freedom that she so desired but never dared to take. The hopes and dreams that she had locked inside of herself and never let out. Her hopes and dreams that she had passed onto her daughters, but not for herself.

The running water in the creek reminded me of her laughter and humor as it splashed to the sea. The sulfur spring above the creek was used in the past by native American Indians and more recently by visitors from the Bay Area. It reminded me of the depth and strength of my sister's powers and her unlimited potential. The energy swirling underneath the spring reminded me of each of our close connection to the Tao and to nature.

I picked up a small piece of petrified redwood representing the past and a sprig from a redwood sapling representing the future and to her new life. The pieces of petrified wood and sapling together represent the full circle of life and death - the end of one life is the beginning of another.

As I slowly climbed up from the valley floor, a soft rain began to fall. The essence of my sister was all around me and inside of me. There was wetness on my face. I don't know whether it was from my tears or from the rain. But there was a lightness in my heart for rain represented transformation and a new beginning for all.

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