



# Little Brother's Place in the Sacred Circle (Part II)



Written by **Titos Menchaca**  
Photography by **Lance C. Bell**

Finally, the two spirits reach the fourth wind  
And make their final transformation – into the  
form of two hawks

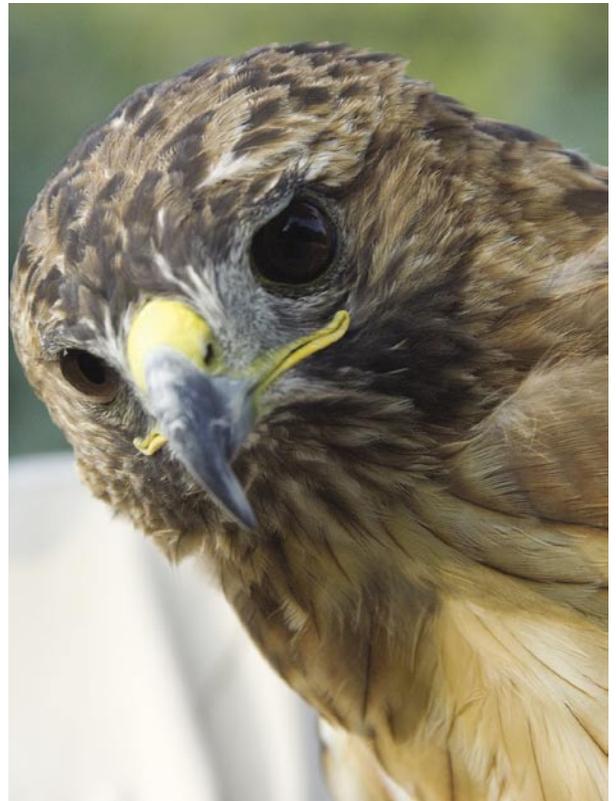
Flowing on warm currents high into the sky  
Each now unburdened by the constraints of the  
earthly realm

There, they call to each other  
Their harmony bringing completeness  
Through life's circle – the flow of joy and heartache,  
love and fear  
Beyond life... even beyond death.

—*Two Hawks* from “Tale of the Four Winds”

In the preceding passages of this tale, a Shaman Summoner calls forth a spirit from the elements of the earth. In time it is joined by another and after some struggle, they find harmony with one another. Soon it's time for them to transmigrate into a physical form, manifesting as wolves — the Second Wind. They run through the forests, calling to each other, celebrating their newfound physiques and becoming socially aware. The next transformation — the Third Wind — takes the spirits into human form, where they learn the use of tools and to act as stewards of the planet. At last, the circle of knowing is complete and the spirits can finally become free — their ultimate freedom expressed by their transformation into the two hawks.

The progression these spirits take in the vision of this seer should not come as a surprise to anyone with even a cursory awareness of nature. Hawks, as related in a previous article, have had an almost numinous association with mankind throughout recorded history. In Egyptian lore, Isis is said to have shapeshifted into a hawk to save Osiris. Horus carried Hawk medicine which allowed him to see the “unseeable.” The Celts believed Hawk empowered a person to examine in depth that which is positive so that it may be integrated into the person's life as well as that which is limiting so it can be released.



But why are hawks so often endowed with magical, mystical powers in the minds and myths of men? To even begin to answer that question, one must take into account their considerable physical attributes. Certainly, they have talons that can break bones and are specimens of aerodynamic perfection as they dive toward their prey at well over a hundred miles an hour, but the first trait that comes to mind is their eyesight. A hawk can spot a three-inch mouse in a field from a thousand feet in the air — that's over three football fields up. Imagine a person with 20/20 vision and a pair of 8X binoculars fastened to their eyes. Now you're beginning to, ahem, see the picture. Add to that the fact that they can see an added light spectrum beyond human faculty; one that lights up the urine trail of their unfortunately weak-bladdered prey like a luminescent roadmap.

With so much to admire about these creatures, it's easy to see why falconers are so enamored of them.

“I like to call them ‘flying tanks’ because they are so tough and adaptable to almost any condition,” says falconer Luther Huff of Cumberland, whose female red tail, Laser, has been with him for the past seven years. “In essence, you have a front row seat of a perfect hunting machine

in action.” Much like a boxing maven might appreciate a ringside view of the sweet science of pugilism.

“I’ve been a hunter all my life. But, as a falconer, you realize you’re the one along for the hunt. You’re like the bird dog and your bird is the hunter,” he adds.

### A DIFFERENT VIEW

However, not all cultures have adapted the art of falconry. In many Native American traditions, for example, it would be seen as infringing upon the animals’ natural state of being, thereby disrupting the natural harmony of both the bird and its keeper.

Very often, hawks are considered messengers. Shamanistic traditions have Hawk (or Little Brother) carrying prayers, gathered from the smoke of burning sage, to pass on to (Big Brother) Eagle, who then lays them at the feet of the Creator. While some tribes view their appearance as a bad omen, many simply interpret a visit from a hawk as a sign to pay particularly close attention — say, to your surroundings or to the unfolding events in your life.

Still others see the lessons from Hawk and other animals as metaphors, informing them on how to live their lives in a better, more harmonious way. This is known as *knowing the animal’s medicine*. For example, bears go inside caves to sleep for long periods during the winter. Bear medicine, thus, teaches the individual to be introspective and to look inside themselves for answers to their most personal queries. The mouse, whose world is not much broader than the few feet in front of its face, teaches us to slow down and pay attention to the necessary minutiae of our existence. To know Mouse medicine means to master the management of the everyday details of life. Recalling part one of this series, a family of Harris hawks hunts as a unit — some flushing the prey so others can swoop down and make the catch, on which they all consequently feed. Observing and understanding that instinctive spirit of cooperation, and incorporating it into one’s practice, would seem to be a useful skill in getting projects finished at work or home.

Beyond having a casual knowledge of animal medicine, however, is a kind of earth-based astrology where those born within certain full-moon cycles during the year are said to have a stronger affinity for corresponding *medicines*. According to the Chippewa medicine man Sun Bear, those born during The Moon of the Budding Trees — roughly March 21 to April 19 — are the people of the Hawk Clan.



Lou Huff, falconer, with his red tailed hawk, Laser.

*(Note that these are not the groupings of familial kinship commonly referred to as clans. These are elemental clans, determining one’s relationship solely to the elements — animal, mineral and plant. An intense study of the **medicine wheel**, obviously far beyond the scope of one article, is necessary to begin to fully understand the healing and spiritual qualities of these elements.)*

It is commonly understood within this paradigm, then, that Hawk people are fiery, energetic and spontaneous; often considered to have the gifts of deliberation and foresight. Being born in the time when the earth and all its life is awakening from its winter slumber, Hawk people may have

flashes of brilliant ideas and plunge quickly into new projects or the exploration of new philosophies. They often have the energy to set ideas into motion. Endowed with the ability to “see the big picture”— much like an actual hawk can from its lofty vantage point — Hawk people may see a great opportunity but not all of its accompanying details. This is where a healthy dose of Mouse medicine can help get a project finished.

Fire is the earth element often associated with Hawk people. This fire can be the catalyst for an intense inner drive and zestfulness that may sometimes burn them out, draining them and causing a need for replenishment. When this happens, the warmth and solitude of a good campfire or the chance to bask in the warm glow of Father Sun can have remarkable restorative affects on those of the Hawk Clan. Warmth in the sense of having close relationships with others is also a trait of Hawk people, causing them to feel intense loyalty and love toward family and close friends. Lastly, the colors associated with the Hawk clan are red and gold; red representing the color of vital energy and gold standing for illumination, wisdom and enlightenment.

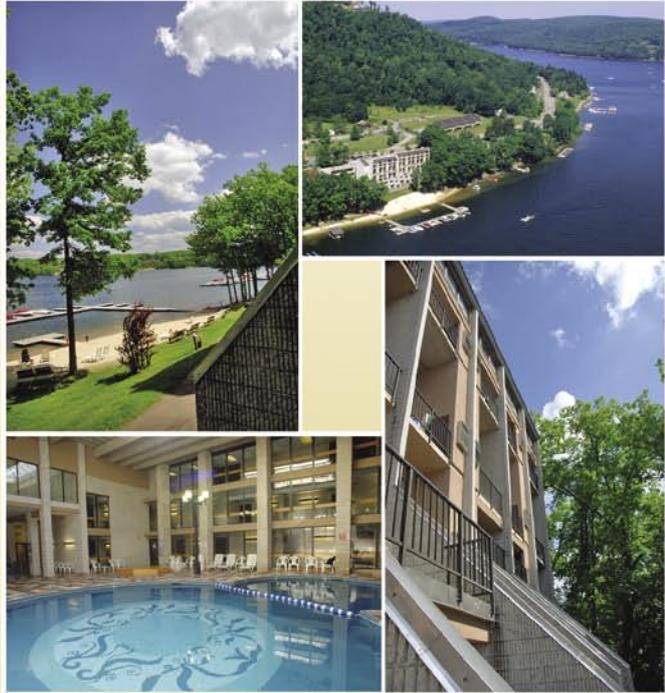
In closing, it is important to remember that this cursory review of earth medicine, the Medicine Wheel and Hawk medicine in particular is far from exhaustive and, in fact, barely scratches the surface of a very deep and fascinating subject. It is hoped that curiosities are piqued and appetites whetted by this introduction into a realm where prayers are conveyed... the realm of the Fourth Wind... the realm of Little Brother — the hawk.

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**Titos Menchaca** is an actor/composer/freelance writer of Native American (Choctaw/Apache) descent currently based in Austin, Texas. His lifelong study of Native culture began with the stories of his maternal grandmother, then continued formally at the University of Texas and through his work at the Smithsonian Institute as part of the production team of the CBS documentary *500 Nations*. Titos cites the late Choctaw film maker Phil Lucas and the former Shawnee chief and educator Joseph Rain Crow among his mentors.

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