

The Raven
by Judith Hanson Lasater
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I saw a dead raven lying on the sidewalk today.

It was much longer than I had thought a raven would be, and intensely black, the kind of blackness that can draw you into it forever.

Its feathers, formed in flawless quills, were arranged in perfect overlapping layers along its sleek body.

Was it injured? Or did it just fall suddenly from the sky?

Its shiny eye was open, and the sharpness of that eye still echoed the life that was suddenly gone.

What happened to God's raven?

What caused it to give up the joy of soaring over its dominions and plunge downward?

One moment soaring like a king, one moment falling to mother Earth in a last act.

Is this the last act of life? To fall suddenly, to give up freedom, height, motion, purpose, love, and just to fall back into the arms of the Earth from which we came?

Where is the line between soaring and falling?

How can we soar with courage when we know the falling is coming?

This is the mystery, for we must soar, we must fly, we must live totally before we fall.

This raven fell with grace, whole and beautiful, into stillness and end.

Perhaps the falling is part of the soaring. Perhaps the falling is not a mistake.

Perhaps we miss the beauty of the falling because we can only see and admire the soaring.

Kingly raven, thank you for the total rightness of your being, the adventures of your life that I could read in your splendor as you lay so still.

Thank you for reminding me how beautiful the fall can be.

May mother Earth catch my fall as exquisitely and elegantly and lovingly as she caught yours.