



The Proof of Immortality Plant

Dear Friend,

Here is a snippet from Olga's Song, the book I'm trying to write. Hope all is well with you as the shortest day of the year for the northern hemisphere arrives. Seasons greetings and make the new year a happy one.

With warm regards, Jon D.

The Nest and the Proof of Immortality Plant

Heewalker went from stall to stall raking out the droppings from the tan four legged grass eaters. While they munched on servings of alfalfa he had given them, he dumped their water buckets and filled them with fresh water from a hose.

He transferred what he had raked out of their stalls to a one wheeled cart which he pushed in front of him

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from field to field until he had finished cleaning each of the four legger's stalls and fields. Then he circled around right below our favorite tree by the steps and headed out to the edge of the barranca where he unloaded the cart.

At that spot, looking with his back to the rising sun, he could see the whole valley. He paused and stared at the distant mountains. He thought about how we would do the same gazing the day before flying away from the coming cold—how we would sit quietly for much longer than usual, soaking in the view of what had been our home for five moons. We knew he wondered if we did that in case it was our last view of our last sunset here. The seven moon round trip journey that lay ahead could be our last, he thought. It had been such a miracle to him and Sheewalker, who also could not fly, to see our return each spring.

When he returned, he set the cart down near our tree and laid the rake and shovel in the cart. He came up the nine steps and went in the main entrance of his cave nest.

We could hear him greeting Sheewalker. Heewalker recognized the look in Sheewalker's eyes. He immediately recalled the last rare occasion she had had that look, hearing from a disembodied friend who flew in at the speed of thought.

"Doc spoke to me early this morning before sunrise, just about an hour ago," she said in a matter of fact tone. Heewalker could see she was shaken. "He said, 'My house is being sold; there is a succulent in a palm sized orange plastic square pot at the right of the rear porch door; go retrieve it and keep it as a remembrance of me.'"

"He talked just like the brain surgeon he had been," she observed.

The two soon got into their four wheeled cart that sounded like strong wind and thunder combined and drove out the long dirt and gravel driveway to the road with the bridge.

Then they headed right, passing over the barranca, turning left at the corner towards the distant mountains

and down the paved road a short distance to their destination.

Sheewalker had not seen Doc's house for twenty years—not since he became her friend flying at the speed of thought relaying our position and visions during the journey to and from the warmer land. In the warmer land our temporary home faces the setting sun, principally, and the walkers, although they spoke different, cannot fly either. Doc's house was empty. In back Sheewalker found the plant right away.

"I wanted you along as a witness so you wouldn't think I was crazy," Sheewalker said to Heewalker.

"I can see that's the plant," Heewalker confirmed.

When they returned, Sheewalker was carrying the little plant in her right palm and set it down about midway up the steps on the ledge at the side. She wanted to be able to look at it every day as she went up and down the steps.

They both sat down in the middle of the middle step and stayed quiet for a while, stunned at what they had just experienced. But behind Sheewalker's infectious smile was a deep malady eating away at her which Heewalker could sense was there. In the morning sun, Heewalker could see a wrinkle or two creeping into her fair complexion and it briefly crossed his mind that, like Ishmael in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, he would one day also be the only one left to tell our story.

Many orbit's later Heewalker planted the tiny succulent in the center of the garden of his new home at the opposite end of the valley. And it became his remembrance of Doc and Sheewalker and of us yellow, black, and white, and green and white flyers, who also moved along with Doc and Sheewalker at the speed of thought.

The first spring in his new house, Heewalker saw one of us weave her nest up high in the thickly leaved tree branch closest to his upstairs desk window, directly in line with the succulent plant below.

When he had put out mealworms as a treat for her, she had recognized them immediately and her mate had not. When he realized he must have fed her treats as a fledgling the year before at his home with Sheewalker at the other end of the valley, the realization took his breath away. Her mate must have been from the area around Heewalker's new home and she had followed him there, he believed.

Summer became fall and then the winter wind stripped the last dead and shriveled leaves from the tree. The nest was now exposed for all to see, still interwoven with the tips of the cluster of minor branches coming off of the main branch that was closest to Heewalker's upstairs desk window.

In the meantime, the succulent directly below had grown new clusters and had spread out from its original location.

Each year thereafter Heewalker would repeat the story of the succulent and the nest above for whichever friend would listen.

For him it was all the proof he needed of the proposition that what animates each and every living being survives death.