

Feathers & Bones: *The landscape as self-portrait.*

Who am I? Who are we? : What remains when our bodies are burned or buried in the ground? Does the soul continue? Does the spirit exist? Is death final?

The death of both my parents, being written out of the family will, and turning 50 forced me to review my road map for living. Individually, these profound life altering events can be devastating, even more so when they happen almost simultaneously.

Childhood recollections of promises made and personal expectations of entitlement came in an instant as flooding imagery. What I had always perceived to be my reality also erased. Identity, responsibility, loyalty, family, respect, achievement, self-esteem, and the concept of LOVE all flipped upside down. Who was I really? It was like walking in an earthquake...the ground unsteady, everything internal and external crumbling.

The geography of where I live has always been a great source of comfort and is my temple. In the Native American Culture, the source of your personal power is received from the ground where you walk. Feathers are symbols of trust, honor, strength, wisdom power, and totems fallen from eagles who fly closest to heaven. These are all personality traits I inherited from my family and value most. I purposely choose the Diptych, a format from medieval religious art to create new icons for my meditation and prayer.

As a photographer, Composition has always been my subject matter. I manipulate the photographic elements of line, shape, color, and form as a language much the same way a writer uses nouns, verbs, and adjectives to express the deepest parts of myself. Perspective, focus, composition, and depth of field become tangible references used to create the vocabulary of my inner life and to make introspection, visible.

There is a pain so utter it swallows substance up,

then, covers the abyss with a trance

so memory can step around, above

upon it, as one in a swoon travels freely,

where an open eye would drop him,

bone by bone

"Hope" is the thing with *feathers* -

that perches in the soul -

and sings the tune without the words

And never stops at all.

Emily Dickenson