

Harold and the Purple Shaman

By Kathie Bright

A few years ago a friend and I thought about going to a Halloween. I have a giant, purple, crayola teddy bear, and he wears a very big purple crayola sweater. We thought of going as Harold and the Purple Crayon. (C 1955) Uncoincidentally, but with a purpose, I bought a copy of this book at the used bookstore tonight, October 23. I now realize where my interest and passion for Shamanism began. The book begins, "Harold decided to go for a walk in the moonlight." (In the book, the moon is waxing.) What a wonderful way to start any journey, any visualization, with a decision to do so, a commitment, and with the gods. He walks, between the worlds, and into another. He does not know where he is going, how is getting there. That is what attracts him to the walk, the walkabout, the journey. He creates a moon, and something to walk on. Somehow he finds his beliefs and his gods. "He made a long, straight path so he would not get lost." It is kind of important not to get lost in the Otherworld; however: "He didn't seem to be getting anywhere on the long, straight path" - well ain't THAT the truth. The crayon starts out as being control; the control we all think we have, assume we have, but like all of us, Harold discovers that it isn't really true - for "really" in the Otherworld seems "illusion" here. "So he left the path and the moon went with him." That's what happens, isn't it? When we leave the path we so neatly carve out for ourselves, that's when we find the meaning, the truth, and our gods. As Harold walks, the world he is in is carved out in front of him. Sometimes by his choice, but often he does not know what is coming until he sees what is drawn before him. Example: he draws a forest, but doesn't want to get lost, so he makes the forest as big (or as small) as he can handle. It is said, the gods will not give us what we cannot handle; whether we agree at the time or not is up to us. Harold draws a tree, and later "discovers" it is an Apple tree. How Samhain and witchy of him! He knows the truth can be found in the fruit of life, the Quert (look it up) But Harold wants to protect nature, and what he found, so he creates an elemental, a sylph. Sometimes when we create such beings, they get a little out of hand. "His hand holding the purple crayon shook." He thought he was losing control, but truly just realized the illusion. "But by then, Harold was over his head in an ocean." Oh how the emotions can take over. Fear is one of the worst, as it totally envelops us, feeling as if we are in over our heads, drowning. "He came up thinking fast." That can be an asset, if we respond, instead of react. And a sanctuary was created. "He quickly set sail, and the moon sailed along with him." As he calmed down and flowed with his emotions, he could again hear the gods. "He made land without much trouble." Harold grounded himself, once his emotions were a part of him, no longer ruling him. He wondered where he was, and fed himself. Often the guides in a journey are very pointed and beg "What truly feeds YOU?" There was a lot of food left, so he shared it with his animal guides, a moose and a porcupine. Once we truly look and see what actually feeds us, it is a joy to find it and share it with others. Harold wanted to see where he was, so he created first a hill and then a mountain. The closer he got to the divine, he thought, the further he could see, but couldn't see where he "started." The journey is not always over as soon as we would like. But he kept looking, doubting the direction he now found himself now going. "He was tired as he looked over the other side, he slipped." I have learned (am trying to remember) to trust the present, and not my

expectations of the future. In a journey, you learn this VERY quickly. But he made “lemonade”. Trusting the air element, he didn't fight his path, but created a tool, a balloon, and used the air, and his tool, to help him understand it. Harold again grounded himself, and tried to find his way back to where he “started.” And that's another lesson - we cannot go back to the exact place we started, once we have grown. Like a seed of grain, we grow into a stalk to be harvested and turned into something that feeds the world. Harold again doubted his intuition, what he knew to be true, and asked another guide where to go. All the guide did show was show him HIS path was the right path for him. At the end, Harold remembers not where, but HOW he truly began - always with the moon, the gods, wherever they are. And then he could rest. Rest - just rest. Rest in the path, the walk, the journey. When you don't know where you are, especially when the veils are thin, as at Samhain, remember you are in the arms of the gods. That is where Harold finds home, and rest.