Hey! We’re Okay. How are you? Pete Leki

This is a time of year that is a little spooky. Because it seems like every thing is dying. The leaves are falling. The wind is swirling around. Smoke and fog drift around and the trees groan and sigh in the winds. It always seems as though someone is trying to talk to you. That’s why people all over the world think about their loved ones, their relatives and friends that have passed away. Even about their pets. This is a story that explains why we feel that their spirits are all around us in the Autumn.

A long time ago, a bison stood in the middle of a prairie enjoying the warm sun on its back. A mosquito landed on its nose and took a drop of its blood!

At that exact moment, part of the bison became “mosquito.” And that mosquito had within itself, a tiny bit of bison.

The mosquito was so happy. She was full of blood and buzzing along in the setting sun. A small brown bat swooped down and ate her! As soon as he did that, that mosquito became part of that bat. And that bat now had, as part of its own self, a little bit of mosquito. And in that bit of mosquito was a tiny bit of bison!

The brown bat ate a lot of mosquitoes that night and was feeling good. When the moon came up, bright and full, a Great Horned Owl woke up, stretched its wings and swooped down on the bat and ate it!

At exactly that moment, the brown bat became a part of the owl. And the owl became part brown bat, and part mosquito, and a tiny bit of bison.

All of these creatures were now living inside of that magnificent bird. He lived a long time and finally, one night gave it up and fell off his branch into the leaves that covered the forest floor.

Pretty soon an earthworm found the owl’s body and tunneled through, eating the old muscles and leaving behind rich castings. Part of that owl became worm! And even that worm had tiny bits of bat, and mosquito and bison inside! And in it’s castings, too.

The roots of an apple tree discovered those castings and took in the rich food and right there, became part worm, owl, bat, mosquito and bison! All of them were part of that living tree.

And when a little girl reached up one day, and picked a pinkish-yellow apple, and bit into it…

She, too, right then, became part apple, part worm, owl, bat, mosquito and bison.

And that is why, when you think of your relative or friend that has passed away, truly, really, they are still in this world: part of the trees, and birds, and air, and flowers. They are all around us. And maybe those dancing leaves and clouds, that singing bird and crying tree: maybe that is the sound of our ancestors saying: “Hey. We’re okay. How are you?”

That’s the beautiful thing about Fall.