



Dragonharping - playing harp at Vashon's Labyrinth Tour last fall.

## The Tree Letter

New Moon leaf from Forest Halls  
begun February 17, 2007 ...  
completed March 22, 2007  
by Jane Valencia

And so my first Winter Quest came to an end!

And what was that quest? To make a pair of deerskin boot--that's the "acorn" of it. But

what was the "tree"? Let's go back to the details of the challenge.

### Forest Halls Folk College Winter Quest/Challenge:

What are your deepest dreams for your life? Is there a piece of one that you can pursue right now? What if you were part of a circle of Questors pursuing the treasures of their own dreams alongside you? For one lunar cycle we will challenge ourselves to learn a skill, accomplish a simple quest, or focus on a discipline or idea that supports a deep dream that we have for ourselves ....

I wrote this about my Quest:

"For myself, my Winter Quest is to make a pair of deerskin boots, in "harper blue" with Celtic knotwork design. This is part of a larger idea of being a "Dragonsinger", inspired by various aspects of one of

my favorite books as both youth and adult **Dragonsinger**, by Anne McCaffrey. So as I research how to make native footwear, order the skin, and attempt creating the boots, I will also be weaving in my mind what I think a Dragonsinger is in my magical world, and how this might translate itself into our outer world."

### What is a Dragonsinger?

In the **Dragonriders of Pern** series by Anne McCaffrey, dragons and their riders fight Thread-- a deadly organism-- to save all Pern from its ravages. Harpers of the Harpercraft Hall are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that ancient knowledge and teachings are preserved, so that the social weave can maintain its strength, as well as to support the dragonriders in their quest to keep Pern safe from Thread. In addition to those tasks, the Harper Hall also acts as idea-bringers to all of Pern--wrapping new ways of thinking, or details of momentous events and decisions into the messenger of song or tune--which are then specifically taught and performed throughout Hold and Hall.

The term "Dragonsingers" soared into my mind one day--at first I envisioned it to mean a guild of individuals who would caretake and carry songs and the stories of those songs--that supported a rewoven fabric of our culture, a creation or recreation of a culture of belonging. We would experience songs as homeopathic remedies, as the one thing you might offer when there is nothing left to offer. Songs can be mirrors, then can be threads that help you find your way home to your heart, or weave you back into the lifebreath of your community.

So in this scenario we are not destroying Thread, we are offering a renewed, life-giving Thread. It is the Thread of compassion, of heart, of healing, of strength, vision, nourishment, celebration, and silliness, your own delightful work. Songs may be the blessing of the ancestors, and the fiery light of the youth. Songs can remind us of our animal nature, even as they offer the breath of silences and the hum of the stars. Dragonsingers offer intentional song-- heartsong--whatever is the sounding that needs to be heard, even if that song is harsh, or keening, or anguished. We sing so that others too may find heart to sing.

My vision of Dragonsingers, or Dragonartists, or Dragonriders or .... (you fill in a name!) has expanded to include all expressions of our heartsong--anything we do with the intention of offering a Thread for a reimagined fabric of our culture, of being with one another and with our nature, with nature herself. I may specifically work with song and other 'magical' essences. Your essences may be the seeds you plant, your conversations, the boxes you craft by hand -- in short, anything you offer with the intention of heartfelt Thread.

## Dragonriders

On Pern, Dragonriders have a life-long, deeply connected partnership with their dragons. Upon hatching from their eggs the dragonettes will flop around, seeking a youth to partner with. When that individual is found, Impression occurs, and the two hearts become joined. The youth must feed the dragonette quickly and carefully, and take care



of it-- oiling its hide, bathing it, etc.-through its youth. Eventually the dragon becomes mature enough to care for the rider in turn, sensing when his partner is troubled or needs rest, offering the deep love of absolute mutual and never-of-any-doubt devotion.

The dragons are enormous creatures bred over centuries from very small "fire-lizards" to fly against the Red Star's damaging Thread, destroying these organisms with the out-breath of flame. Dragons have the inherent ability to fly *between*--teleporting themselves and their riders from one location to another in an instant, or even teleporting themselves and their riders backwards and forwards in time. Dragons also have the amazing ability to carry anything that they think they can. If the belief is there, they can move even enormous objects with little effort.

Fire-lizards, the cousins and forebears of dragons, can be impressed by anyone. Unlike dragons, they can exist on their own, without partnership with humans. To impress a fire-lizard, one need only be present at the time of hatching, and have gobs of food on hand to stuff in their ravenous mouths. While a rider will only partner with one dragon, an individual may impress any number of fire-lizards--assuming they can keep up with their appetites! Afterwards, fire-lizards can be trained to sing in harmony, carry messages and small objects, and perform simple sequences of tasks. They also possess a collective memory. Cataclysmic or highly-charged or deeply emotional events imprint themselves on *all* fire-lizards, and any recollection of that event will trigger a response from them--even if that event happened hundreds of years before.

So now we return to Dragonsingers. Who and what are they? That's for us to discover, but my thought is that the Dragon is our own

unique "heartsong", woven -- in our Guild and understanding of ourselves -- of inspirational essences that have impressed themselves upon us. These manifest in the form of "fire-lizards"--or songs. We will carefully nourish relationships with a song/fire-lizard or several at a time, and these we will introduce to one another. Thus, each one of us will caretake a particular 'fair' of songs over time, discovering their abilities and beautiful/powerful nature, and offering them when they are needed. By teaching the song to Dragonsingers and others, we enable the song to fly "between".

The Dragonsingers Guild is about imagination, and belief. That a song can be just the right medicine for a troubled heart, a devastated habitat, an aching world, to initiate a necessary change.

### ***A Dragonrider Community***

What if the thing you love to be or do was a carrier of change, the one thing that is needed to heal, bless, reweave a piece of the world? What if the different things you offer were the "fire-lizards" embodying essences that are not limited by time and space when you intentionally offer them? The Dragonriders of Pern are dedicated to life--to protecting their planet from life-destroying Thread. Here on Earth, Dragonriders are dedicated to healing the planet by offering life-affirming Thread, the essences of our heart. It is my "Dragonsinger Guild" idea expanded to include anything we love.