

Memoirs of a Bodhisattva

Short stories by Skip Nelson



SCREAMIN RABBITS

As a young man, my parents moved to Eastern Oregon during my last year of high school. I decided to stay in Kent for the year but then joined them in Cecil, Oregon, where they had purchased a real General Store, that existed on the very historic pathway known as The Oregon Trail.

It was ranch country. There were cowboys, cowgirls, horses, cattle, wheat and sheep.

The area around the General Store was owned by my Uncle John Krebs. He was actually my great uncle, but we called him Uncle John.

There were huge areas of open spaces and rolling hills covered with sage and dry, tan soil.

We had a .22 rifle that had been my dad's as a young man. I decided to learn how to hunt. I would take the rifle, with a couple of boxes of ammo, out with me. I would walk for miles over those hills and roads looking for targets, which, in this case, were mostly jackrabbits.

Being a single shot .22 and the fact that you had to physically remove the shell casing after every shot, the thing that was important was to be very precise in your aim. I got very good. I also learned to walk against the wind so as not to send a warning scent.

One day, as I walked, I spied a jackrabbit about 50 yards ahead. I carefully drew a bead on it and pulled the trigger. He dropped. As per usual, I walked slowly towards my prey. As I approached him, I could see he was mortally wounded but not dead.

As I stood there, looking into his eyes, and he into mine, he let out a scream. It sounded like a banshee. It shivered my soul. I had never heard such a sound in my life and have not again to this day.

It was on that day my hunting stopped. I would never go out with that gun again.

But there is no doubt that being so good with a gun is directly related to my days shooting that old single shot .22. I even shot "Expert" during my Army training.

Peace and Love,

Skip Nelson