GREAT BEAR PATH

One cold wintry evening, I slipped into my warm bed and drifted off to sleep. Soon I was dreaming. In my dream I saw a very old woman bent over a shank of a bone on her fur-robed lap. She was scratching onto the surface of the bone. She was marking the passing of the seasons, the Moon phases, and the times of bounty onto the bone. As I approached her, she held up the bone for me to see across the eons of time. I saw the cycles of life, as I would a map.

As I drew closer, I realized that she was the dreamer and I was the dreamed. She had created my body out of her songs and bone dust!

When I reached her side, she stood up in the shaggy hides of a Great Grandmother. She beckoned me to follow her. As I followed her I could see her true self in her footprints. It was a Bear Mother! She led me as she had always done before. I realized that she has dreamed us all into being while she lay sleeping in her den. She has taught us what is safe to eat and where the waters flow. We have sought shelter in her caves. She has guided our steps around the Earth who's seasons conduct themselves according to the courses she has charted. She created a world, all in endless, vibrating motion.

Then, ahead of me she turned to face me. She waved her paws in circles saying, "Life, Death, Rebirth." She huffed and I could smell the scents of earth, blood, musk and honey. She motioned out over the valley ahead. There I saw the trees grow green, turn amber, lose their leaves and then sprout again. I saw rhythms everywhere. I saw beauty everywhere. My pulse surged into my ears and I was throbbing with life.

Then Great Bear Mother turned to me and growled, "Gr-r-r-r-r-r... Follow the Path. Follow the Path of the Bear." I whispered in reply, "Yes, yes, yes," as the constellations wheeled rapidly overhead as we, mother and cub disappeared into the darkness.

... And so is the story of the Great Bear. And as we look up to the evening sky, we are reminded of this story, as we see the constellations of the Little Bear and the Great Mother Bear.