

Winter Hawk Jack

by Robert Crisman

Jack the winter hawk swooped like a man.

He swooped on the sparrows, their chickies, and bling. He laughed at the fear in the eyes of the gray geese among us. He put it out that he killed Cock Robin and spit in his blood as it rushed down the gutter.

Some hardshell lowroller once told him, fly in the sky and get hard or you die...

Jack played the game according to corporate dictate, with the steel-plate facade and sewer-rat ethics big business demands. Success in the mix, i.e., manhood, is measured in dollars, just as it is at all levels here in this banker's wet dream of a country.

Jack played businessman, dig it? An MBA right out of Fool School.

He thought it was Cool School...

Hawk-nosed and hawk-eyed, Jack wore hawk's plumage.

Jack, man in black, sporting manicured talons, his smile an iced knife.

A winter hawk, baby! He swooped from the sky. He showed *no* fear. Too many hostile takeover artists, waiting to bust through the chinks in his armor.

Takeover artists... They looked for the chance to cut off his gonads and bury his ass in some landfill out in the dingles.

The shadow of raptors! The *snick* of long knives!

And meanwhile age crept like a snake.

Jack began to fear shadows. The shadows shrouded the sun. The neon winked out of the skies he called home.

Jack wanted to *sob*. But he murdered his tears and hid behind dope. And as the years passed the dope stripped him.

He'd pray to Jesus, or some other fetish, in cold, lonely rooms at four in the morning, when all the note-taking snitches and spies had clocked out for home and no one came knocking, not even to laugh at him kneeling there shaking. His last ghosts remained, but they

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could no longer even be bothered to care.

Jack fell from the sky, hawk no more. He snatched and ate dead things in gutters.

Jack, carrion crow.

Above, buzzards circled.

