

Constellations by Jason Rhodes

The sun was setting over the horizon, and the warm air was starting to feel cooler. The Shaman proceeded to build a fire where we stood. We have been walking through the forest all day looking for something sacred. The Shaman had yet to tell us what we were looking for, but still trusted us to come with him on this expedition. The sunlight trickling through the trees was now extinguished by the darkness of the night sky. The light of the fire danced around us, keeping us safe from what lies beyond. I looked up at the night sky to see the constellations waking up. They started to prance around the stars as if there were no humans watching them. I looked back at the Shaman. He was chanting in a language I did not recognize, and the fire began to take the shape of an animal: a hound dog. The hound dog sniffed the ground and then pointed with its nose.

The Shaman stopped chanting, and the dog of flames disappeared. He started to walk in the direction the flame dog had pointed moments before. The fire abruptly went out, but the Shaman took no notice. We didn't question it. We just followed him, trusting him with our lives. I looked back up at the constellations. They were still prancing around, except for one who seemed to be watching me closely. I looked back towards the Shaman. He had stopped in his tracks. We made it to the very top of the mountain that overlooked our small village. Here, the land met the sky. All of the constellations looked upon us as if we were the great beings and not them. The Shaman chanted in the same language as before. The constellation that had been watching me fell from the sky onto me. The next thing I knew, my feet were off the ground. The constellation was carrying me into the great beyond. I looked back, but the ground was too far away to see anyone. Once in the sky, the constellation set me down, but I did not fall. I began to change into stars. I am my own constellation now, and it feels like home.