

## Oh Squirrel

You would think it would be easy, wouldn't you? A simple matter but it's not. The wind is the worst, rattling my branches together, teasing me.

"Tell me, tell me."

But I won't for I know of the alliance formed in the dark before midnight, the ghostly white of feathers against the moon. Ah yes, the moon. She too wants to know. While during the day the sun burns away shadows, seeking information for the hawks and buzzards, I hug my knowledge, keep it tight within my bark. Through the days of unfolding buds and spreading leaves I keep the pattern simple, no complex twists and obvious confusions to give clues to those who can climb.

You and I have our own pact and an oak tree never lies, never betrays. So sleep in comfort, oh squirrel, with your babes within your drey, your warm tail their blanket, my trunk the walls of your hall, hidden, safe and secret.

Then as the year turns you will repay me as you always do, taking my acorns to bury in the forest, where you will forget them but they will grow distant from me, even beyond the spread of my branches, my roots.

And all the other trees will ask, "How do you thrive in so many separate faraway places? What is your secret, oh oak tree?"