

# Trickster and Fear by Gabriel Hughes

It is often said that fear is the emotion which is of Trickster. Fear of the unknown, fear of that which is yet to come, fear of those things we know are bigger and more dangerous than we are. And it is true that Trickster shows us these things. He shows us our weakness, our fallibility, and that we can and will fail. Trickster is absolutely the God who will show you that there are things to be afraid of. But does that make him of fear?

When I was young I was afraid of the dark. I was afraid of my closet. I was both afraid to have my bedroom door closed and for it to be open. My mind reveled in the sheer possibilities. What is hiding in the dark? What is in my closet? If the door is closed will my parents hear me if something goes wrong? If it is closed am I safe from what might be outside it? Over and over these thoughts raced through my head. But I had to sleep eventually, and each day I woke up with nothing having happened. No monsters, no killers, nothing worth being afraid of.

And it is in this which I find Trickster most often. We live in an age of anxiety, low levels of fear at every turn, and often those anxieties seem founded in reality. What happens if I can't make rent? What happens if my partner leaves me? What happens when my life falls apart around my ears and I am out on the street? But those things do not happen for many of us, we fear for no better reason than to fear. As FDR said "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself"

Trickster does not make bad things happen to us. He is no devil trying to tear us down, destroy us, or warp us. Quite the opposite. The emotion of fear was in our first days one of preparedness. You were afraid of the sounds in the dark, so you built thicker walls. We came from a place where fear was Trickster pushing our minds to come up with solutions to problems. But our problems were so personal, so immediate, and so our fear was easily remedied.

What Trickster is trying to teach us in this modern age is "Yes, what if?" What if we are out on the street? Rather than anxiety over a "what if" we can not control why do we not prepare ourselves for the possibility? Why do we shrink from communities which would help us if we fall? Why do we not train ourselves to survive without the comforts of the modern world? Why do we not build our internal walls stronger and make ourselves into people who can weather the storms that failing economies or uncertain futures bring.

Trickster is not the God of fear. He is the God which stands beside us as the fear roars in our faces, the God which lays beside us as the troubles of our lives lay us low, the God which is first to appear when bad things happen. But this does not make him of misfortune this makes him our most true and valiant supporter. He stands beside us so that we are not alone. He suffers with us when we are laid low. He is the first to appear because he is the first to hear our cries of suffering and realize that he is needed.

In the ancient days Trickster gave us fire to drive off the darkness. He gave us stories to fill our time with lessons and laughter. He gave us a desire to explore so that we might find new lands. All those things which made humanity proud has come from him. We see him as a villain, as the force of ill will, as the nemesis to all we stand for. But in the end he is none of these things. He is our closest and dearest friend, one who has held our hand as we took our first steps and who is always there with a lesson and a sparkle of hope in our darkest hour.