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SHANE RUTH

Discover Devotion

The twists and turns in the life of Hale DeShazer sound like the plot of a spiritual-thriller. But taken together, they show us the mysterious ways of devotion.

Do you remember the story when DeShazer went climbing on Bounty Mountain in search of the Necklace of Legend? On the very first day of his hike, just at the crack of dawn, a falcon swooped down beside him, with mighty wings making a warm wind beneath. Hovering above his head, the falcon whispered: "On this mountain you will break through emotional levels of illusion. You will swirl through astral-planes, glamour, half-truths, and the myth of after-life. You will learn to cry on command."

It wasn't long before DeShazer was half way up the mountain. He had been busy surveying the landscape with hungry eyes, finding his center. At one point, on the edge of a fragile cliff, he was spellbound by the mouth of a dirty cave and knew he would slip into the 4th dimension. It was here that DeShazer got dizzy, lost his footing, and grasped for a hold on anything. He started falling with a dusty landslide under his feet. The panic caused a flashback, to the time when he went over the edge of Crystal Falls, in a specially designed steel drum, and lived to tell about it.

As he was falling in the drum, DeShazer carved a bird out of an old piece of wood and to calm his nerves he sang an old hymn from church called "His Way With Thee." The song went like this: "His power is your key; His blood can cleanse, you see; His wings can set you free; 'twas best He had His way with thee." The dirt, sticks, and debris kept crumbling beneath his body in a dry tangle of grey and brown. Helpless and falling faster, DeShazer discovered that Bounty Mountain had turned to ice. Like a glacier on land, the entire block of earth was frozen water and had split down the middle, revealing a ravine so deep he could see only mist. Knives of ice fell all around him. Gravel turned to sharp razor shards. His face covered in sleet, DeShazer was falling deeper, and a bonanza of silver blessed him, as if a thousand chandeliers were falling on him, then turning into acres of diamonds. Just before the blackout, the falcon reappeared, descended with him, and said, "Hale, oh brave climber, tender and true, I see your thoughts, your new vibration. A higher voltage is singing inside of you!"

It was then that DeShazer realized he was no longer falling. He was ascending, his body rising in a space filled with wonder, like a prism bursting with light. The acres of diamonds turned to stars. He was flying face up in the safe night of heaven. Moody shades of pink and brown surrounded him.

What happened next I'll let Mr. DeShazer tell you himself:

While I was ascending, my memory was pumped with pure love, and then I had a violent flashback to when I was a soldier in the War. It was the day that horror gripped my heart. I saw my lifelong friend and comrade fall on the battlefield, as bullets filled his body. With gunfire over my head in the trench, not knowing if he was dead or alive, I ran across no-man's-land to rescue him, hoisted him over my shoulder, and brought him back to our company's trench. By that time, in the safety of our squadron, my best friend died in the cold, moist mix of rocks and mud. But all I could think about was when I first got to him on the field, and before lifting him up, he was still breathing. He looked into my eyes and said, "Hale, I knew you'd come for me."

"Discover Devotion" is the first solo exhibition of the work of New York--based **Shane Ruth**. The exhibition will feature a 10 feet by 5 feet wood veneer sculptural installation entitled "Crystal Falls."

In the project space: an installation by Boston-based **Brian Burkhardt** made of hundreds of carefully crafted butterflies marked with the patterns of commercial entities such as Burberry or Louis Vuitton. Interested in how plants and animals are forced to adapt to contemporary society, Burkhardt was recently named as one of the "10 Artists to Watch" by *Boston Globe* magazine.

For more information, please visit the gallery's website or contact C. Sean Horton (Director) at 212-989-8700 or sean@freightandvolume.com.