

## The Day White Peacock Gave Up His Stunning Colors

by Nettie Farris

There's something about September that lends a sense of expectation to the air. The sky seems so far away, though the goldenrod, having overgrown the fencerow, leans in, as if to say, *something's coming, something's coming*. Corn is standing in the field. It can hardly keep still. Who can say what the day will bring?

One bright fine morning, Peacock, who is the slowest bird in the world, was making his way through the rotting fruit when he stumbled upon Dewdrop, glittering in the sunlight. He stood on one foot, looking down on what he thought must be a nugget of pure gold (though the color of dew, truly, is more akin to silver). This drop of dew radiated into a perfect circle (or might I say sphere) and was cradled within the middle leaf of a piece of clover. Peacock had never seen anything so beautiful! It formed quite a contrast to his right foot, hovering there, on the brink of extinguishing it, for you see, a peacock's feet are not his best feature. Peacock adjusted his stride, moving over Dewdrop, and continued on his way, but suddenly the day weighed heavily upon him. Crows caw-caw-cawing, roosters cock-a-doodle-dooing, hens peck-peck-pecking until he thought they would never stop. Even the peahens unsettled him; and the peacocks (his brothers and uncles) strutted about, disrupting the barnyard with their stunning colors.

So he gave it all up. Slowly, very slowly, a rich palette of color dripped from Peacock's skin, down and out through the ends of each feather. He looked down at the ground, where the colors were all running together, becoming mud; then he looked up, where a cloud was forecasting the weather. This cloud was in the shape of a feather. Peacock made his way back to the apple tree where he liked to sleep. He could feel his wings tingling. He jumped up onto the lowest branch. He climbed higher, and higher, until he could almost see the sky. He thought he might even be able to fly there.