

# THE SOULS REALLY DO COME BACK: A CHINANTEC PROOF TEXT FOR ALL SAINTS DAY

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This is the tale that the Chinantecs use to reenforce their belief in the return of the souls at All Saints. It is cleverly put together and artistically narrated. The setting is nearby in the town of Usila where Chinantecs of a related dialect live. The storyteller tries to gain sympathy for the poor dead woman who returns home struggling along with nothing more than her grinding stone as a gift. A note of warning is also added in the death of the villain husband. "You see what happens if you don't observe All Saints Day!" Then, of course, the witnesses are always unavailable for direct testimony—those who see the souls always die. There is also the added touch that even though the woman may not have been the most industrious of wives, she still deserves to be remembered, "so don't try to get out of your responsibility by making excuses!"

The story was dictated to me and recorded on electromagnetic tape in 1958 by Anastasio Martínez who resided at that time in San Juan Palantla, Oaxaca.

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## TEXT

1.  $k\ddot{i}^w$   $kwe^{a2}$  to  $ka'lia'$   $h_j^{p1}$   $hw\ddot{u}^{p2}$  za  $ma^2liy^{p2}$ . 2.  $iw^3$

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## INTERLINEAR TRANSLATION

1. one story happened Usila they-say long-ago. 2. word lay-down

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## FREE TRANSLATION

This is a story that they say happened long ago in Usila a story told by

zyi<sup>12</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ma<sup>3</sup>ka<sup>1</sup>ha<sup>1</sup>lé<sup>2</sup>. 3. ha<sup>2</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ?e<sup>n12</sup> hwú<sup>22</sup>za, za<sup>2</sup> ?i<sup>22</sup> hmíy<sup>2</sup> hmay<sup>3</sup> ?a<sup>1</sup>la<sup>2</sup>hía<sup>1</sup> ku<sup>2</sup>té<sup>12</sup>. 4. ?a<sup>1</sup>cyi<sup>2</sup> ?i<sup>2</sup> hī<sup>n</sup>w<sup>2</sup> ma<sup>2</sup>cyā<sup>2</sup>za, ?i<sup>2</sup> hmo<sup>12</sup>za ta<sup>3</sup>. 5. ?a<sup>1</sup>cyi<sup>2</sup> ?i<sup>2</sup> hī<sup>n</sup>w<sup>2</sup> ma<sup>2</sup>cyā<sup>2</sup>za, ?i<sup>2</sup> ?no<sup>1</sup>za ka<sup>1</sup>la<sup>2</sup>hía<sup>1</sup> ?e<sup>2</sup> hī<sup>23</sup> ko<sup>3</sup>sa ?a<sup>1</sup>cy<sup>2</sup> zyi<sup>2</sup>néy<sup>2</sup> mi<sup>3</sup>ka<sup>1</sup>hō<sup>1</sup> hī<sup>2</sup>guw<sup>2</sup>za.

6. mi<sup>3</sup>cyā<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>3</sup>máy<sup>13</sup>za. 7. hwú<sup>22</sup> ha<sup>3</sup>máy<sup>13</sup>za mi<sup>3</sup>ka<sup>1</sup>tí<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>3</sup>ha<sup>1</sup>kye<sup>n13</sup> hmí<sup>22</sup>lay<sup>3</sup>, ?e<sup>2</sup> hmó<sup>23</sup> tyá<sup>3</sup>, hwú<sup>22</sup>za. 8. ca<sup>3</sup>-ha<sup>2</sup>?<sup>13</sup>niw hmí<sup>2</sup>zí<sup>2</sup>. 9. hmí<sup>2</sup>zí<sup>2</sup> hi<sup>1</sup>lya<sup>2</sup> hwú<sup>2</sup> za<sup>2</sup>. 10. hmí<sup>22</sup>lay<sup>3</sup> hmo<sup>1</sup>za. 11. ca<sup>3</sup>ha<sup>2</sup>?<sup>13</sup>niw ?lay<sup>3</sup> mi<sup>3</sup>cyi<sup>1</sup>.

12. hī<sup>n</sup> ka<sup>1</sup>hwú<sup>22</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>, za<sup>2</sup> ?e<sup>n12</sup>, ti<sup>3</sup>hmi<sup>2</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>, ti<sup>3</sup>hmi<sup>2</sup> cyi<sup>2</sup>? ?éy<sup>2</sup> yé<sup>22</sup>, ?a<sup>1</sup>cyā<sup>2</sup> hmi<sup>2</sup>zí<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>13</sup>hni. 13. ?a<sup>1</sup>cyi<sup>2</sup> cyi<sup>2</sup>. 14. ?a<sup>1</sup>cyi<sup>2</sup> ?ow<sup>3</sup> cyi<sup>2</sup>. 15. ?a<sup>1</sup>cyi<sup>2</sup> ka<sup>1</sup>hnyú<sup>2</sup>? ?éy<sup>2</sup> hmay<sup>3</sup> ka<sup>1</sup>gwa<sup>1</sup> hmíy<sup>1</sup>gwiy<sup>1</sup>. (16. hī<sup>n2</sup> ka<sup>1</sup>?a<sup>1</sup>za ?lay<sup>3</sup> hī<sup>2</sup>guw<sup>2</sup>za.)

people have-come. 3. one person drunk they-say, person drinks water day all, only one drunk (affirmation) person he-walks day all completely. 4. is-not thing that he-anymore is that he-does work. 5. is-not thing that he-anymore is, that he-provides all what more thing is-not inside after-died his-spouse.

6. there-was one his-daughter. 7. says his-daughter after-arrived where-nears All-Saints, what? will-you-do father, she-says. 8. Won't-you-wait-for souls. 9. souls come-home say people. 10. All-Saints they-do. 11. Won't-you-wait-for my-mother.

12. so said person that, person drunk, her-father person that, her-father child that that-is, is-no-one soul I-shall-wait-for. 13. is-not nothing. 14. is-not money is. 15. is-not acquired that day arrived-here earth. (16. so he-indicated defunct his-spouse.) 17. says-he, there

those who have been around (and who therefore know): There was a drunk, they say, a person who was always drunk. He went about drunk all the time. He no longer worked or provided the necessities of life since the time of his wife's death.

He had a daughter who said to him one day when All Saints Day was approaching, "What will you do, Father?" she said. "Will you remember the souls? People say that the souls come back home. They celebrate All Saints Day. Will you remember my mother?"

Then that fellow said, the drunk, her father, the father of the girl that is, "I'll not remember any souls. We haven't anything! There is no money.

17. hwú<sup>2</sup>za, ná<sup>12</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> ci<sup>12</sup> káw<sup>3</sup> kyo<sup>12</sup> ?ly<sup>2</sup> zyi<sup>3</sup>si<sup>2</sup> ná<sup>12</sup>.  
 18. ha<sup>3</sup>ná<sup>3</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> ka'gwú<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>. 19. ka'gwú<sup>2</sup> tí<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup> hmay<sup>3</sup>  
 kaágwá<sup>1</sup> hmiy'gwíy<sup>1</sup>. 20. ?a'cyi<sup>2</sup> ta<sup>3</sup> ka'hmo<sup>1</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>. 21. hí<sup>n2</sup>  
 ?a'cyi<sup>2</sup> kow<sup>3</sup> cyi<sup>2</sup>. 22. ?a<sup>2</sup> nyi<sup>3</sup>kyi<sup>1</sup>hni kow<sup>3</sup> ?i<sup>2</sup> lá'hni ka'  
 la?áhia<sup>1</sup> ?i<sup>2</sup> ?nyu<sup>12</sup> hmay<sup>3</sup>.

23. hí<sup>n2</sup> la<sup>3</sup>ka'ñia<sup>1</sup> la<sup>2</sup>hí<sup>n2</sup>w<sup>2</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> za<sup>2</sup>. 24. ?nyo<sup>12</sup> bá<sup>3</sup>  
 ha<sup>3</sup>máy<sup>13</sup>za ka'hnyaw<sup>1</sup> ka<sup>2</sup>hwu<sup>3</sup>. 25. ka'hnyaw<sup>1</sup>za ka<sup>2</sup>hwu<sup>3</sup>  
 ka<sup>3</sup> ?é<sup>12</sup>. 26. ka<sup>2</sup>hwu<sup>3</sup> ka<sup>1</sup>zó<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>3</sup>máy<sup>31</sup>za la<sup>2</sup>hí<sup>n2</sup>w<sup>2</sup> bá<sup>3</sup>

27. ?éy<sup>2</sup>na, hmá<sup>2</sup>la<sup>2</sup> ?i<sup>2</sup> ?e<sup>n12</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup> ?i<sup>2</sup> ñia<sup>12</sup>za.  
 28. ?e<sup>n12</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> za<sup>2</sup> 'ia<sup>12</sup>za ta<sup>3</sup>la<sup>2</sup> hmay<sup>3</sup> hí<sup>n2</sup>w<sup>2</sup>. 29. ?a'cyi<sup>2</sup> hí<sup>n2</sup>w<sup>2</sup>  
 cyá<sup>2</sup>za hmi<sup>2</sup>lay<sup>3</sup> new<sup>12</sup>, hmay<sup>3</sup> new<sup>12</sup>.

30. hí<sup>n2</sup>w<sup>2</sup> mi<sup>3</sup>ka'ñia<sup>2</sup> hmay<sup>3</sup> hwú<sup>2</sup>za, hmay<sup>3</sup> kyo<sup>12</sup> hmi<sup>2</sup>zi<sup>2</sup>  
 la<sup>2</sup>z<sup>2</sup> ?i<sup>2</sup> zi<sup>2</sup>lya<sup>1</sup> hmi<sup>2</sup>zi<sup>2</sup>, hí<sup>n2</sup> hwú<sup>2</sup>za, ka'hnyo<sup>3</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>.

(affirmation) stands rock of that hearth there. 18. there (affirmation)  
 sat that. 19. sat tight that day arrived-here earth. 20. is-not work did  
 that. 21. so is-not money is. 22. where? shall-I-go-fetch money that  
 I-shall-buy all that wants day.

23. so just-walked like-that (affirmation) he. 24, herself (affirmation)  
 his-daughter acquired little. 25. acquired little dough tortilla. 26. little  
 found his-daughter like-that (affirmation).

27. now-he, only that drunk (affirmation) that that he-walks.  
 28. drunk (affirmation) he walks-he during day that. 29. is-not so  
 he-is All-Saints is, day is.

30. so after-arrived day they-say, day of souls actual, that go-home

That woman didn't acquire anything when she was here." (That's how he  
 referred to his dead wife.) "There stands her grinding stone at the hearth  
 there," he said. "That's where she sat. She sat right there all the while she  
 was here. She didn't do a speck of work. So there's no money. Where would  
 I go get the money to buy what you need for a holiday?"

So he just went on that way, and the daughter herself tried to scrape  
 together something. She managed to get a little tortilla dough, but that's  
 about all.

As for her father, he just continued going around drunk. He was drunk  
 during the holiday. He didn't even know it was All Saints.

31. ɲó<sup>12</sup>za hwu<sup>12</sup> hĩa<sup>1</sup>nuw<sup>2</sup>. 32. ɲyi<sup>1</sup>kyí<sup>2</sup>za kway<sup>3</sup> wú<sup>2</sup>za.  
 33. ha<sup>3</sup>zyéw<sup>1</sup>za hĩ<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup> nyu<sup>2</sup>núw<sup>1</sup> hĩ<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup>, ka<sup>1</sup>nĩwza hwú<sup>2</sup>za  
 ʔe<sup>3</sup> ɲyi<sup>2</sup>ʔo<sup>12</sup> za<sup>2</sup>. 34. ɲyi<sup>2</sup>tyow<sup>2</sup>za ku<sup>2</sup>mĩa<sup>2</sup> ɲyi<sup>2</sup>tyow<sup>2</sup>za  
 ʔi<sup>2</sup> zĩ<sup>2</sup>lya<sup>1</sup>za. 35. ku<sup>2</sup>mĩa<sup>2</sup> zĩ<sup>2</sup>lya<sup>1</sup> za<sup>2</sup>. 36. hĩ<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup> lê<sup>2</sup>za  
 hwú<sup>2</sup>za, ʔa<sup>2</sup> bí<sup>2</sup> tia<sup>1</sup> ɲyi<sup>2</sup>ci<sup>2</sup> ku<sup>2</sup>mĩa<sup>2</sup>. 37. ʔa<sup>2</sup>tĩa<sup>1</sup> ɲyi<sup>2</sup>-  
 zyí<sup>12</sup>za hĩw<sup>3</sup> ɲyi<sup>2</sup>zyí<sup>12</sup>za, ɲyi<sup>2</sup>ʔo<sup>12</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ɲyi<sup>2</sup>ʔo<sup>12</sup>. 38. hĩ<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup>  
 ka<sup>1</sup>wiy<sup>2</sup>za gyu<sup>2</sup> ʔma<sup>2</sup>. 39. lê<sup>2</sup>za ha<sup>1</sup>nĩw<sup>2</sup>za ku<sup>2</sup>ri<sup>2</sup> ʔa<sup>2</sup>tĩa<sup>1</sup>,  
 háy<sup>12</sup>za ʔa<sup>2</sup>tĩa<sup>1</sup>. 40. hĩ<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup> mi<sup>3</sup>ka<sup>1</sup>háy<sup>1</sup>za hwú<sup>2</sup>za, zĩ<sup>2</sup>lya<sup>1</sup>  
 hwe<sup>12</sup> ʔlay<sup>2</sup>za zĩ<sup>2</sup>lya<sup>1</sup>, za<sup>2</sup> ni<sup>3</sup>kye<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup> lyo<sup>13</sup>, za<sup>2</sup> ni<sup>3</sup>kye<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup>  
 ka<sup>1</sup>la<sup>2</sup>hĩa<sup>1</sup> ʔe<sup>2</sup> jí<sup>2</sup> ʔi<sup>2</sup> cyi<sup>2</sup> hmĩy<sup>1</sup>ywXy<sup>1</sup> ni<sup>3</sup>kye<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup>za, ʔi<sup>2</sup>  
 ka<sup>1</sup>háy<sup>2</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ʔiy<sup>2</sup>, za<sup>2</sup> cya<sup>2</sup> hmĩy<sup>1</sup>gwiy<sup>1</sup>. 41. hĩ<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup> ni<sup>3</sup>-  
 kye<sup>2</sup>w<sup>2</sup>za tĩw<sup>2</sup>, ʔwu<sup>2</sup>, ka<sup>1</sup>la<sup>2</sup>hĩa<sup>1</sup> ko<sup>1</sup>sa ʔi<sup>2</sup> hmo<sup>12</sup>za kyo<sup>2</sup> hmi<sup>2</sup>zi<sup>2</sup>.

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souls, so they-say, sobered person that. 31. he-goes road forest. 32. he-goes-to-fetch firewood he-says.

33. where-he-arrives then forest that, he-heard they-say how! shout people. 34. they-stand-up noise they-stand-up that they-go-home. 35. noise go-home people. 36. so he-thinks they-say, where? (affirmation) is standing-up noise. 37. where-is? they-lay-down words they-lay-down, shout people shout. 38. so he-climbed up tree. 39. he-thinks he-will-go-see correctly where-is, he-sees where-is. 40. so after-he-saw they-say, are-going-home many great-people are-going-home, people they-carry loads, people they-carry all what more that is earth they-carry, that surrendered people that, people are earth. 41. so they-carry bananas, oranges, all things that they-do of souls.

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Then when the actual day arrived when the souls return the fellow sobered up. He went out into the forest to get firewood, they say.

When he arrived out in the forest, he heard something, they say. My! What a lot of shouting! Somebody was going along home really making a big racket. So this guy says to himself, "Where is that racket coming from? Where are they talking and shouting so?" So he climbed up into a tree. He thought he might be able to hear just where the noise was coming from, or see where it was. And they say that when he looked he saw hundreds of people going along carrying bundles of all kinds of things. They were carrying home what was given to them by the living. They had bananas and oranges and all the things that people prepare for the souls.

42. ha<sup>2</sup> za<sup>2</sup> záw<sup>12</sup>kala<sup>?</sup>, záw<sup>12</sup> cyi<sup>3</sup>kē<sup>1</sup> fwú<sup>2</sup>za. 43. za<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup> hwú<sup>2</sup>za, káw<sup>3</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> cí<sup>2</sup>kwa<sup>?</sup>12 za<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup> za<sup>?</sup>12. 44. káw<sup>3</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> kye<sup>w</sup>2 za<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>. 45. ?yi<sup>2</sup>. 46. ?o<sup>12</sup>za. 47. hwú<sup>2</sup>za, káw<sup>3</sup> la<sup>2</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> ka<sup>1</sup>e<sup>1</sup> hí<sup>2</sup>guw<sup>2</sup>hni hwú<sup>2</sup>za. 48. ?i<sup>2</sup> la<sup>2</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> kyeíw<sup>3</sup>hni hwú<sup>2</sup>za. 49. ?i<sup>2</sup> la<sup>2</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> ka'háy<sup>?</sup>1 hí<sup>2</sup>guw<sup>2</sup>hni. 50. ?i<sup>2</sup> la<sup>2</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> ?yi<sup>2</sup> hwú<sup>2</sup>za cay<sup>?</sup>12 za hmi<sup>2</sup>zí<sup>2</sup> hyá<sup>12</sup>za.

51. hmi<sup>2</sup>zí<sup>2</sup> hyá<sup>12</sup>za ní<sup>3</sup>kye<sup>w</sup>2 lyo<sup>13</sup> hí<sup>w</sup>2, lyo<sup>13</sup> zyo<sup>1</sup> ka'la<sup>?</sup>1hia<sup>1</sup>, lyo<sup>13</sup> má<sup>1</sup>, lyo<sup>13</sup>. 52. ?i<sup>2</sup> kí<sup>?</sup>2 ?i<sup>2</sup> gia<sup>?</sup>12 za tí<sup>3</sup>kye<sup>w</sup>2 za zí<sup>2</sup>lya<sup>1</sup>za. 53. kə<sup>?</sup>2 cyi<sup>2</sup> hwu<sup>12</sup> hí<sup>w</sup>2, hwe<sup>12</sup> ?lay<sup>?</sup>13 za hwú<sup>2</sup>za. 54. hí<sup>w</sup>2 ka'háy<sup>1</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>, za<sup>2</sup> ka'gia<sup>1</sup> ta<sup>?</sup>1?2 hmíy<sup>2</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>. 55. mí<sup>3</sup>ka'hnyi<sup>1</sup> hí<sup>w</sup>2 hwú<sup>2</sup>za, za<sup>2</sup> ka'hə<sup>1</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> ?éy<sup>2</sup>. 56. dó<sup>3</sup> ka'táy<sup>1</sup> bá<sup>3</sup> hmi<sup>2</sup>zí<sup>2</sup>. 57. dó<sup>3</sup> ka'hwú<sup>2</sup>za híw<sup>3</sup> hí<sup>w</sup>2.

42. one person goes-also, goes behind they-say. 43. person that they-say, stone (affirmation) rolls person. that goes-home. 44. stone (affirmation) carries person that. 45. heavy. 46. she-cries. 47. she-says, stone this (affirmation) indicated my-spouse she-says. 48. thing this (affirmation) I-carry-home she-says. 49. thing this (affirmation) surrendered my-spouse. 50. thing this (affirmation) heavy she-says she-tells souls she-accompanies.

51. souls she-accompanies they-carry-home loads those, loads good all, loads food, loads. 52. that chew that eat-they they-carry-home they-go-home. 53. as is road that, many great-they they-say. 54. so say person that, person walked drinks water that. 55. after-appeared then they-say, person died (affirmation) that. 56. because took-home (affirmation) souls. 57. because he-said word that.

Then there was one person going along at the end of the line. They say she was going home moving a stone over the ground end over end. She was taking home a grinding stone! It was heavy, and she was crying. "My husband indicated just this grinding stone," she was saying. "This is what I have to take home. This is what my husband gave me, this heavy thing," she said to the souls with her.

The other souls were taking home all kinds of good things, food and such, things to eat. As far as the eye could see, there were hundreds of them. And that fellow who used to go around drunk saw it; but they say that he was dead the next morning because the souls took him for saying that.

58. la<sup>2</sup>'hī<sup>w</sup> hiw<sup>3</sup> ka'zyi<sup>1</sup>za hwú<sup>2</sup>za, mi<sup>3</sup>ka'gwá<sup>2</sup>'za hī<sup>w</sup> ha<sup>3</sup>nye<sup>3</sup>za hī<sup>w</sup>. 59. la<sup>2</sup>ηzó<sup>2</sup> ha<sup>2</sup>lya<sup>2</sup> hmi<sup>2</sup>zía<sup>2</sup>. 60. hwe<sup>12</sup> ?lay<sup>2</sup><sup>13</sup> hmi<sup>2</sup>zī<sup>2</sup> ka'hē<sup>2</sup>za. 61. ha<sup>2</sup>lya<sup>2</sup> hmi<sup>2</sup>zī<sup>2</sup> hmīy'gwiy<sup>1</sup> kmay<sup>3</sup> tia<sup>12</sup> hmī<sup>2</sup>?lay<sup>3</sup>. 62. dó<sup>23</sup> la<sup>2</sup>'hī<sup>w</sup> ma<sup>2</sup>ka'liā<sup>1</sup>, hīw<sup>3</sup> zyi<sup>12</sup>za. 63. ma<sup>2</sup>ka'ηyi'ηē<sup>2</sup>za hī<sup>w</sup> ma<sup>2</sup>liy<sup>2</sup>. 64. hī<sup>w</sup> za<sup>2</sup>za hu<sup>3</sup>ná<sup>3</sup> ka'hē<sup>2</sup>za hmi<sup>2</sup>zī<sup>2</sup>. 65. la<sup>2</sup>'hī<sup>w</sup> ma<sup>2</sup>ka'liā<sup>1</sup> hwú<sup>2</sup>za. 66. la<sup>2</sup>'ná<sup>12</sup> bá<sup>23</sup> liā<sup>12</sup> kwe<sup>23</sup>to ná<sup>12</sup>, hīw<sup>3</sup> zyi<sup>12</sup> za<sup>2</sup> ma<sup>2</sup>ka'ha'lé<sup>2</sup> hmīy'gwiy<sup>1</sup>.

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58. that-way word laid-down they-say, after-he-arrived-home then where-he-had-been thus. 59. truly return-home souls. 60. many great souls he-saw. 61. return-home souls earth day reaches All-Saints. 62. because that-way has-happened, word they-lay-down. 63. they-have-experienced thus long-ago. 64. so they-die if they-saw souls. 65. that-way has-happened they-say. 66. that-way (affirmation) is story that, word lay-down people have-come earth.

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They say that that's what he said when he arrived home from the forest. The souls really do come back. He saw hundreds of them. They do come back to earth on All Saints Day. That's what they say happened. They had these experiences long ago. But a person dies if he sees the souls. That's what they say happened. That's how the story goes that the people who have been around tell.