

Issue 28: Winter 2015/Spring 2016



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Welcome to Goddess Pages!

A journal of Goddess spirituality in the 21st century

She Changes Everything She Touches

Welcome! In this issue we have another in Susun Weed's excellent "Be Your Own Herbal Expert" series and a fascinating article from Marcia Tucker about the Daughters of the Moon. Mari Ziolkowski provided a moving piece: "Heart of Kali" and Isabella Lazlo, co-editor of the welcome new magazine "She Who Knows", celebrates women's voices. New to Goddess Pages is Nicole Schwab, who writes about Athena in her "She of the Brilliant Eyes".

A very welcome last-minute short story from Carolyn Boyd helped me balance articles and fiction against poetry—not that I ever mind good poetry, there is just a lot of it, much from writers new to the magazine, and also old favourites Annelinde Metzner, Sheila Rose Bright, Susa Silvermarie and Susan McCaslin—enjoy!

All the migration to new software is finally complete and I've been busy trying to raise the magazine's profile—almost too successfully in some ways, as we've been sent so much poetry for this issue... all of it well worth reading, so enjoy! But for future issues we can accept only one poem at a time, except for very short ones of just a handful of lines.

Every issue except the very first (which will be available soon) is now available as a PDF download for a small fee—I don't sell enough of these even to pay for the cost of producing the magazine, as I do make all the content free to read online I don't make anything like enough to cover costs, let alone make any profit. If you enjoy the magazine, with all the back issues provided online for nothing and as PDFs for a small fee, please do consider making a donation. At the very least it will help us to keep going, pay for web hosting fees and all the other costs. Please note that I charge nothing for my own time and energy and regard the magazine as my gift to Goddess.

And on the above note, I would like to thank long-term reader Pat Perkins, who handed me a donation of £40 during the last Glastonbury Goddess Conference, much to my surprise and delight—that paid for some hosting fees and also for renewing the Goddess Pages domain name for a further year. Thank you, Pat!

Wishing you the happiest of New Years,

Geraldine Charles
Editor

About our Cover Art



Jubilation by Anya Heller

With vibrant hues of reds, oranges and yellows, *Jubilation* captures the passion of letting go and fully opening up to life, lost in the joy of the moment.

Inspired by Matisse and Marie Laurencin, Anya paints minimalistic expressionistic figures, at once sensual and innocent, in highly colorful dynamic form. She began mining her artistic jewels twenty five years ago as a stained glass artist, then a stained glass mosaics artist and finally, for the last 10 years a painter, a medium that has greatly broadened her creative flow.

Anya resides in Delray Beach, Florida. Her images are available as giclée reproductions, canvas prints, and prints. For more information, see www.anya-heller.artistwebsites.com.

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She of the Brilliant Eyes

by Nicole Schwab

There I stood before the Goddess. As her timeless gaze fell upon me, I shuddered. She was a pure combination of power and gentleness. At once fierce warrior, undefeated, and gentle guardian, bestowing her love and wisdom upon her people. Beyond anything else, in that instant, I realized I was receiving an image of the feminine I had forgotten existed.

As I stared up at the monumental bronze statue, crafted by blessed hands more than two thousand years ago, I wondered what our lives would have been like if we too, as a civilization, had grown up to cherish and worship such an image of woman. Strong and courageous, intelligent and wise, protectress of arts and science, crafts and inspiration... she embodied the fierce strength of nature, the utmost refinement of the mind, and the all-seeing wisdom of an open heart. All in one being. Whole.

Who wouldn't want her as a role model? Where had that image and the felt truth that accompanied it disappeared?

The night before going to her city I had dreamt of an owl. White and awe-inspiring, she had flown straight at me, swooshing down silently over my head to drop a feather before disappearing into the night. I had picked up her gift, and wondered upon awakening what omen I had been graced with.

And here I was, a few hours later, in a museum by the sea, staring at the Goddess, whose companion - engraved on either side of her plumed bronze helmet - was none other than the owl. A mystical ally who helped her see in the dark, unravel the secrets held by human hearts, and lift the cloak upon the mysteries of time.

Athena is her name. She of the brilliant eyes. Standing before her in that room charged with energy, I felt an urge to trace her footsteps, and bring back to light the majestic roots of what she embodied from under the fallen pillars of our patriarchal history.

And here is what I found. Athena's origins can be traced many thousands of years back, to Minoan Crete, a civilization known for its reverence to the Goddess. There, she was a Sun Goddess. In her later and better-documented appearance in ancient Greece, she became the respected and beloved Goddess of wisdom.

The Greek legend has her spring fully formed and armor-clad from the head of her father Zeus, to take her place among the twelve Greek Gods that lived and ruled from Mount Olympus. Yet she retained the Cretan Sun Goddess' brilliant eyes and mastery of the cosmic fire, as she alone was allowed to wield her father's sacred lightning bolt that was said to steer the course of all things.



Temple of Athena Pronoia in Delphi
Photo: Peter Maerky

In many ancient cultures across the world, the lightning bolt grants one the ability to see, the gift of journeying beyond the boundaries of our limited consciousness and retrieve the messages waiting for us beyond the apparent. This is one of Athena's facets and gifts.

She held a special place in the hearts of the Greeks of 500 BCE. It is the name of her sisterhood - the plural form of Athena - that gave its name to Athens, a city imbued to this day with the ethereal shreds of magic that continue to float down from her temple, the majestic acropolis.

Since I first wandered amidst those ruins as a child, I have been fascinated with Athena. Perhaps because if we humans are to be fashioned in the image of a God - or vice-versa... I wanted to find a Goddess who was worthy of my devotion, in whose image I would be proud to be fashioned. Perhaps because my name is related to Nike, the winged Goddess of Victory that Athena holds in her right hand, which is none other than an exalted emanation of her own power.

But there is so much more. As I started tracking the past and present of this form of the Goddess, I quickly found myself in Delphi, the ancient site renowned for its famed Oracle, whose words influenced historical decisions and mythological figures across the centuries.

The journey to Delphi feels like a journey deep into the feminine. And the further one walks, the more incredibly coherent the puzzle starts to become. The myth tells us that the name for Delphi comes from the word for "womb", and that this sacred shrine of stunning beauty lies at the navel of the world - the ultimate feminine vessel of creation, where all is in potential waiting to be manifest.

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The site was chosen as the place where two eagles, released by the God Apollo, crossed in the sky. Interestingly, modern scientists have discovered two geological fault lines that intersect right under the temple, bringing myth and science together in an eerie way. This could also plausibly explain the trance-inducing gases that were said to have risen from cracks deep within the earth, just below the Oracle's stool – until centuries of earthquakes shut them.

Below the ochre cliffs glowing in the evening sun, amidst a few remaining columns, I could easily imagine the women who sat on the three-legged stool in a time long past, voicing the truth for those who came from afar. They were chosen from the neighboring village, generation after generation, to become the temple priestesses, and be initiated as the Oracle.

The Oracle may have inhaled mind-altering vapors, or she may have chewed bay leaves, as different versions of the story suggest. In any case, she learned to journey through the far reaches of her consciousness and bring back powerful prophecies. The fall of kingdoms, the crafting of laws and the fate of Oedipus were equally spun from her sometime cryptic messages. And just like Athena, the Oracle could see into human hearts, and unravel the mysteries of time.

It is of no surprise then, that the famous maxim, "Know Thyself" was inscribed upon the lintel of the temple, for all to ponder as they prepared themselves to receive the Oracle's truth. Two words that survived the march of the centuries and still ignite the power of our imagination, prompting us to revisit what it means to "know".

For the knowing that the Oracle invites us to, reaches far deeper than the workings of our intellect. It is the knowing of Athena. The knowing of the owl. The knowing of a deeper truth. The innate connection to all there is that pulsates at the heart of our being, begging us to remember who we are.

As I meandered through these ancient ruins, going deeper and deeper within, I wondered about Athena. The Oracle certainly had her foresight. But what about the Goddess? Why were these priestesses speaking in the temple of Apollo? Where was the divine feminine, in this sacred site dedicated to a male God of reason, a God that seemingly represented the blinding light of the intellect?

The interesting part of the story lies not in that which is recorded and displayed on the panels that dot the ancient site. The interesting part of the story pulsates beneath the apparent, in the empty spaces that have been omitted.

As the ancient pilgrims embarked upon the last stretch of their long and sometimes perilous journey to Delphi, skin burned by the sun, the taste of salt lingering on their tongues, their eyes were suddenly soothed by a forest of

greens and silver: a grove of olive trees – Athena's sacred tree and gift to her people. A vast sea of emerald that stretches to this day along the ancient paths, from the shore up into the hills.

As they emerged from beneath the treasured branches, with their questions and offerings, the first temple they came upon was not the temple of Apollo. Neither was it the sacred spring where they would wash away all impurities of heart and mind. No. It was none other than the circular shrine to Athena Pronoia – Athena of foresight. In other words, Athena, the One Who Knows.

Ironically, no one knows much about this circular temple, a masterpiece of ancient Greek architecture. What is certain is that when we modern seekers stumble upon that forlorn site outside the main gates of the archeological compound, we suddenly find ourselves in a field of soft stillness, absorbed in a spiral vortex of intense energy cleansing heart and soul, awakening memories of a distant time; leaving us with a taste of nostalgia for what we once knew.

We are prompted to start digging into the past, going further back in time. And we find that the temple of Athena Pronoia was built upon an earlier shrine devoted to the Mother Earth. We find that there was a time before the Greek history that we know, when the Oracle at Delphi was the Oracle of Gaia. When women priestesses served our Mother Earth, connected to the primordial well of creativity from whence all life comes into being.

A time when the snake-like son of Gaia who guarded the entrance to the shrine of Delphi gave his name to the Oracle – known as the Pythia. A time when this same snake, companion of the Cretan Sun Goddess, reappeared on Athena's shield.

Somehow, at this powerful site in nature, the energy of Athena and that of Gaia – Sun Goddess and Mother Earth – came together, weaving a mysterious tapestry of feminine form and energy that still works through us when we open ourselves to their presence.

And while the details remain shrouded in mystery, what is clear is that we belong to a lineage that pre-dates the age of enlightenment and its austere excesses, plugging us back into the awesome beauty and power of the feminine.

Snake and owl, earth and sun, we carry in our bodies the memory of a tradition rooted in the Earth as our mother, where the brilliant eyes of Athena unveil our hearts to ourselves, and bring back to life the power and grace of the feminine.

Where we can behold the Goddess that is an image of all we can be.

Be Your Own Herbal Expert

Healing sweets: herbal honeys, syrups, and cough drops—Part 1

by Susun S Weed

Honey

Honey has been regarded as a healing substance for thousands of years. Greek healers relied on honey water, vinegar water, and honey/vinegar water as their primary cures. An Egyptian medical text dated to about 2600 BCE mentions honey 500 times in 900 remedies. What makes honey so special?

First, honey is antibacterial. It counters infections on the skin, in the intestines, in the respiratory system, or throughout the body.

Second, honey is hygroscopic, a long word meaning "water loving". Honey holds moisture in the place where it is put; it can even draw moisture out of the air. A honey facial leaves skin smooth and deliciously moist. These two qualities - anti-infective and hygroscopic - make honey an ideal healer of wounds of all kinds, including burns, bruises and decubita (skin ulcers), an amazing soother for sore throats, a powerful ally against bacterial diarrhea, and a counter to asthma.

Third, honey may be as high as 35 percent protein. This, along with the readily-available carbohydrate (sugar) content, provides a substantial surge of energy and a counter to depression. Some sources claim that honey is equal, or superior, to ginseng in restoring vitality. Honey's proteins also promote healing, both internally and externally.

And honey is a source of vitamins B, C, D and E, as well as some minerals. It appears to strengthen the immune system and help prevent (some authors claim to cure) cancer.

Honey is gathered from flowers, and individual honeys from specific flowers may be more beneficial than a blended honey. Tupelo honey, from tupelo tree blossoms, is high in levulose, which slows the digestion of the honey making it more appropriate for diabetics. Manuka honey, from New Zealand, is certified as antibacterial. My "house brand" is a rich, black, locally-produced autumn honey gathered by the bees from golden rod, buckwheat, chicory, and other wild flowers.



Raw honey also contains pollen and propolis, bee and flower products that have special healing powers.

Bee pollen, like honey, is a concentrated source of protein and vitamins; unlike honey, it is a good source of minerals, hormonal precursors, and fatty acids. Bee pollen has a reputation for relieving, and with consistent use, curing allergies and asthma. The pollens that cause allergic reactions are from plants that are wind-pollinated, not bee-pollinated, so any bee pollen, or any honey containing pollen, ought to be helpful. One researcher found an 84 percent reduction in symptoms among allergy sufferers who consumed a spoonful of honey a day during the spring, summer, and fall plus three times a week in the winter.

Propolis is made by the bees from resinous tree saps and is a powerful antimicrobial substance. Propolis can be tintured in pure grain alcohol (resins do not dissolve well in 100 proof vodka, my first choice for tinctures) and used to counter infections such as bronchitis, sinusitis, colds, flu, gum disease, and tooth decay.

WARNING: All honey, but especially raw honey, contains the spores of botulinus. While this is not a problem for adults, children under the age of one year may not have enough stomach acid to prevent these spores from developing into botulism, a deadly poison.

Herbal honeys

Herbal honeys are made by pouring honey over fresh herbs and allowing them to merge over a period of

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several days to several months. When herbs are infused into honey, the water-loving honey absorbs all the water-soluble components of the herb, and all the volatile oils too, most of which are anti-infective. Herbal honeys are medicinal and they taste great. When I look at my shelf of herbal honeys I feel like the richest person in the world.

Using your herbal honeys

Place a tablespoonful of your herbal honey (include herb as well as honey) into a mug; add boiling water; stir and drink. Or, eat herbal honeys by the spoonful right from the jar to soothe and heal sore, infected throats and tonsils. Smear the honey (no herb please) onto wounds and burns.

Make an herbal honey

- Coarsely chop the fresh herb of your choice (leave garlic whole).
- Put chopped herb into a wide-mouthed jar, filling almost to the top.
- Pour honey into the jar, working it into the herb with a chopstick if needed.
- Add a little more honey to fill the jar to the very top.
- Cover tightly. Label.

Your herbal honey is ready to use in as little as a day or two, but will be more medicinal if allowed to sit for six weeks.

Herbal honeys made from aromatic herbs make wonderful gifts.

Make a Russian cold remedy

- Fill a small jar with unpeeled cloves of garlic.
- If desired, add one very small onion, cut in quarters, but not peeled.
- Fill the jar with honey.
- Label and cover.

This remedy is ready to use the next day. It is taken by the spoonful to ward off both colds and flus. It is sovereign against sore throats, too. And it tastes yummy!

(Garlic may also carry botulinus spores, but no adult has ever gotten botulism from this remedy. A local restaurant poisoned patrons by keeping garlic in olive oil near a hot stove for months before using it, though.)

Make an Egyptian wound salve

"I thought at first this would be dreadful stuff to put on an open wound . . . Instead, the bacteria in the fat disappeared and when pathogenic bacteria were

added . . . they were killed just as fast," commented scientists who tested this formula found in the ancient Smith Papyrus.

- Mix one tablespoonful of honey with two tablespoonsful of organic animal fat.
- Put in a small jar and label

Increase the wound-healing ability of this salve by using an herbally-infused fat.

Make a remedy to counter diarrhea

- Fill one glass with eight ounces of orange juice.
- Add a pinch of salt and a teaspoonful of honey.
- Fill another glass with eight ounces of distilled water.
- Add ¼ teaspoonful of baking soda.
- Drink alternately from both glasses until empty.

Make Dr. Christopher's Burn Healer

He recommends this for burns covering large areas. Keep the burn constantly wet with this healer for best results.

- Place chopped fresh comfrey leaves in a blender.
- Add aloe vera gel to half cover.
- Add honey to cover.
- Blend and apply.

Best to make only as much as you can use in a day; store extra in refrigerator.

Fresh plants that I use to make herbal honeys

Anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)
 Comfrey leaf (*Symphytum* off.)
 Cronewort/mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)
 Fennel seeds (*Foeniculum vulgare*)
 Garlic (*Allium sativum*)
 Ginger root (*Zingiber officinalis*)
 Horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*)
 Lavender (*Lavendula* off.)
 Lemon Balm (*Melissa* off.)
 Lemon verbena (*Aloysia triphylla*)
 Marjoram (*Origanum majorana*)
 Oregano (*Origanum vulgare*)
 Osha root (*Ligusticum porterii*)
 Peppermint (*Mentha piperata*)
 Rose petals (*Rosa canina* and others)
 Rose hips (*Rosa*)
 Rosemary (*Rosmarinus* off.)
 Sage (*Salvia* off.)
 Shiso (*Perilla frutescens*)
 Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)
 Thyme (*Thymus* species)
 Yarrow blossoms (*Achillea millefolium*)

to be continued next time ... (herbal syrups + more)

Celebrating Women's Voices

by Isabella Lazlo

We are living in incredible times, when a new wave is surging, washing over and through the old paradigm. No area of life is left untouched. Rising within this wave is the voice of the feminine, that which has been quieted, shut down and ignored is now awakening. Rumbles from the belly of the Earth mother herself, calling us to stand up and speak from our hearts. Within this rise of the feminine which can be seen through the numerous and inspiring projects emerging all over this beautiful planet, is the voice of woman. Women are rising, remembering our sacred innate connection to the Earth, reclaiming our shared voice and power as we gather in circles, round fires, in fields, woods, village halls and sitting rooms.

Together we are an undeniable force, a power as ancient as the Earth herself, together there is nothing our hearts will not achieve. Together we are changing and challenging the face of Politics, Law, Education, Community, Family life and Celebration. Helping to bring the connected heart back into our world. Girls and Women across cultures rising up, speaking out and calling for change. Each voice is an inspiration and a support to our own. We believe in each other, help each other with that next step and through each woman's unique story is reflected the true power and beauty of woman.

What if we recognized the power of our voices and had the courage to stand up and speak out about the abuse and atrocities that we see all around us and in the wider world? What if we can heal the fear and betrayal in our cellular memory from an age-old abuse and suppression of the feminine, what would our world look like? These are the questions that many of us are living today, the journey of reclaiming the innate power and wisdom of our voices as women.

These are not easy questions to live. In a world where corporate industry can appear as an all-powerful monster that is standing for something quite different, our individual voices can seem small and insignificant. But we do not stand alone and we are not small in number: it is my belief that the more we recognize that what we represent is vast then the sooner we will see the façade of the corporate castle begin to crumble.

In these times of great change, in every local area across our globe individuals and organizations are dedicated to creating new ways of living and relating on this Earth. Something is emerging, something that recognises our inter-connectedness, that values the subjective experience as essential to the whole, that includes the body, the emotions, and the earth and that utilises these as a guiding force. Living in a paradigm where our connection



Pussy Riot at Lobnoye Mesto on Red Square in Moscow

Photo: Denis Bochkarev

with the earth and our subjective roots and intuitive authority have been cut and severed, it is vital, with the current level of devastation and destruction on the Earth, that we reconnect to this source, reconnect to the earth, our mother beneath us and reconnect with our own deep feeling knowledge and wisdom.

When we acknowledge and recognize this feminine essence that is shared and mirrored between women and the earth, then it becomes clear that women's liberation from the conditioning of patriarchy, the return to our natural embodied feminine wisdom, are not separate from the ecological movement, but deeply interwoven and connected.

Women are rising, waking up, and remembering the sacredness of our bodies and the wisdom that we carry in our bellies. We are saying NO MORE to the violence towards women, children, men, the blessed animals, forests and the Earth herself, IT NEEDS TO STOP, NOW. As we awaken, what is the world of our dreaming? From the place of deep connection within ourselves, of honouring life, honouring our innate cycle, our wounding as well as our gifts, from this place true alchemy is possible and a new world is waiting to be born...



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I Can Hear Them Drum: Daughters of the Moon Turns 15!

by Marcia Tucker

Opening Ritual. Allison calls together the flotsam gathering of royal blue-adorned women on the patio of the main hall at Piersol Group Camp at Meeman-Shelby State Forest outside of Memphis, Tennessee. The outline forms an amoeboid shape, prompting the traditional singing of Trudy's famous "We are a polygon, within a polygon, and we go on and on... and on and on and on..." (Sung to the common chant "We are a Circle".) This is Daughters of the Moon, 2014.

On Saturday, a collective of women gather in one of the Triangle rooms, spilling out onto the patio in a randomly wandering circle. It's another amoeboid shape, but a very different one. We sit facing outward instead, and each of us holds a scarf and a pillow. Rootz gently guides us into a place of safety, leading each to turn and face the woman beside her to whisper the assurance: "You are safe here." Then to the other side... and we rest in that safe space. Pillows become a manifestation of our younger selves, a baby girl, toddler, elementary schooler, teenager, young woman. As directed, I and the others wrap our scarves around the pillows, symbolically wrapping our Inner Girl in care and love.

Then the journey begins. This is Rootz's Healing the Inner Girl workshop. She herself has been on this journey, led there by a trusted friend. Now she guides us to go back to a time when our Inner Girl has been hurt. We all have hurts, of course; some severe, some mild. Because we do not face each other, we can allow our faces to express our pain as we remember those dark times. There are tears which will be brushed away later. There are even muffled sobs, but we do not see from whom. We are all safe here.

I remember a time when my kindergarten teacher put me out in the hallway... and I didn't know why. I only knew that this little brown-haired girl in pigtails was a good child, but something happened and blame had fallen onto me. I was anxious and frustrated. In later life I would feel the same hurt of being misunderstood over and over again. I relive that feeling as I hug my pillow; no tears for me, but the sharp, bitter feeling returns. I AM a good child.



"Crones Chorus Line"

From left: Pam Schmidt, Shari Yetto, Debbie "Nanny Og" Lodge, Leela Patterson, Anne Pelloth, Bonnie McKinney-Moss, Marcia Tucker

Later when Rootz has deftly brought us back to our strong selves, the healing having begun, we get up and move toward the balcony on the patio to view the bright Spring day, trees leafing out and light glinting on the pond below. We chant softly: "I will be gentle with myself, I will love myself. I am a child of the universe, being born, each moment." There are smiles now, and much warmth between these sisters who have traveled the path of healing together.

It all started in Trudy's kitchen in late Fall, 1999 with a tendril, a seed, a germ of an idea, really. Surrounded by multi-green, paint-sponged walls, piano to the side, and cats everywhere, three Mothers gathered to recall the successful women's mysteries led by one of them up north and to discuss the possibilities in this area. Hence the idea of a women's spirituality retreat in West Tennessee would blossom voluptuously into the Daughters of the Moon. Over fifteen years of its existence it would see death, birth, tragedy, triumph, and a new age of young Maiden Daughters ushered in just this year. There in the House of Mama Dragon, Amanda Riley, Trudy Herring, and Annie Pelloth would spark a sisterhood into being. Later they would become our core Crones as well.

The treatment of who Trudy, aka Mama Dragon, was would take an entire article in itself, but it will suffice it to say that our Dragon Lady, who followed the Trickster Coyote, was Storyteller, Priestess, and Crone to all of us Daughters and though we lost her in 2010, it will be

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impossible as long as memory serves to miss her vibrant presence here.

The first Daughters retreat was held in April of 2000 at the Mississippi River Camp which featured cabins threatening to slide into a ravine and a Goddess Tree in the middle of the field, evoking Her image after a lightning strike. There were twenty women meeting in the lodge, including founding leaders Trudy, Annie, Amanda Riley, Linda Gaia Ivorywitch, Virginia Larkin, Nancy McGee Lee and Cedarwoman. Trudy's sister, Annie Pelloth, led the first journey meditation about Healing the Womb. As it was very cold that April night, they'd had to grab their mattresses and sleep in the large common area – the first Daughters slumber party. That was the start of a community that would become home to many women over the years, a safe haven and source of sisterly comfort to be indulged in to completeness every April.

At the other end of this stretch of time, the Daughters of the Daughters have now come to join their mothers in ritual, not merely attendance, the next generation who will carry on our traditions and the bonds and love we have developed in this place at Meeman-Shelby State Forest along the Mississippi River. Six 13-year-olds this fifteenth year have been swathed in green plastic which they gleefully ripped off (cocoons, you see) and then barely stood still while their mothers adorned them with their new wings during their Maidening Rite. To witness the jubilant flight of the New Moons (their chosen group name) was to see the new era of Daughters all ripe to carry on what has been built before.

Zephyr, when asked how she felt about getting her wings, declared, "I feel really awesome; I finally made it! I wanted to be a Maiden for a long, long time!" Her proud mother, Virginia Larkin, is now one of the permanent, core Council members who run this four-day festival of women.

The premise is simple – to gather and communally share in the three Aspects of the Goddess, Maiden, Mother, Crone, in a haven of safety and love, celebrating Divine Feminine Energy in each of us. Each year, a representative is chosen for each Aspect and they are involved in the Council for that year to plan the festival and to lead workshops and rituals for that Aspect. It is a celebration of the passages of life that all women experience, which is why Daughters of the Moon has enjoyed the presence of women of a wide variety of faith traditions.

During my first Daughters eight years ago, we made banners of cloth flags representing many Goddesses. Mary and Sophia flew high alongside Durga, Kuan Yin, Artemis, Inanna, and Asherah and others. This year on our traditional Goddess altar in the main hall, a new

entry joined her sisters, the fantastic Goddess of Gaps and Cracks in all her weirdly and strangely feminine bubblyness. The hearts of every Daughter are on that altar, too, our unique and individual Goddess energies blending into an amalgam of sisterhood, shared warmth and trust, and the bonds of friendship.

We wear blue, a royal blue that is universally dubbed "Daughters Blue". Council member Nancy recalls that founder Trudy started that tradition. "Trudy thought it would bring a sense of unity -- a sense that we were all there for the same purpose and all on the same level. And 15 years later, she was so right. You see how people start posting sales on blue dresses the weeks before festival -- and we all have a few blue things here and there and it seems like during the rest of the year when that color blue crosses our paths we think about each other... and the lessons we've learned over the years. It's a much more powerful thing than I imagined it would become... but of course Trudy knew what she was doing. And it's kind of funny because I think it freaks people out when they wander onto the campsite and there's nothing but women wearing the same color blue."

When asked what she expected of her first Daughters in 2006, Amanda C. told me, "I was told there was going to be a bunch of women there and from my experiences that's not a good thing. I found the most loving group of people I've experienced in my entire lifetime. They helped me open up to myself and accept me as me, flaws and everything."

I was in a bad relationship at the time – it was a balm to me, a great relief. It helped start the healing process before I even knew I need it to happen."

Amanda's favorite memory is the Kuan Yin ritual led by Tzaddia Morningstar a few years later. "I made Kuan Yin laugh!" she explained with a chuckle. Though she had been crying going into the ritual, she suddenly laughed, causing the channeling Tzaddia to laugh with her. "Laughter is my healing medicine." Many remember the Kuan Yin rituals for their powerful healing energies. Paula shares: "One year, I had been particularly beset by health worries, and as I went through the cleansing waters, I started crying as I had not for years."

(Overheard on the Patio at Closing Ritual - "Who wants to release Air?" - meaning releasing the quarter at the end, of course. Vonnie immediately piped up, "I've been releasing Air all weekend!")

Council member Virginia shared that the founders' original vision for Daughters of the Moon was "wanting women to connect more with each other, learn about themselves and each other, what it means to be a woman, how we evolve pretty much from the moment we come out, breaking down the barrier between

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women, being helpful to one another and building community, becoming women to lean on one another". Many workshops are centered around these things, from this year's Healing Your Inner Little Girl workshop by Rootz to last year's Menopause Tea Party to Trudy's ritual in the third Daughters of the Moon where she "birthed" the community through a Sheila Na Gig.

Allison Hancock, also one of the three permanent Council members, said, "Women come with such an expectation of having a spiritually fulfilling time that they make it happen; it's more about personal growth." When asked what has surprised her the most, she replied. "The number of non-Pagan women that have come and have a wonderful time! Christian, agnostic, atheistic – and have as wonderful a time as those of us who work with Goddess. They bring neighbors and sisters!"

Inclusivity is important. We are also all colors. We are all ages (after 13 or onset of menarche, though nursing babies are always welcome). We are gay, straight, bi, pansexual, asexual and all things in between. We are cis, trans, intersex, genderqueer: a spectrum of gender expressions and identities. We are all ranges of mobility and mental and physical capabilities. Regarding the ages of the new Maidens, Nancy McGee Lee shared: "We found this year that it's going to be interesting because some are really ready, and some just aren't. But all the girls born after we started the festival are starting to come of age now. And especially the ones that have been hearing about it their whole lives are really into the experience and made us all proud!"

Frequently mentioned as a favorite spontaneous activity at a past Daughters was the Junkfood Picnic. It started with one woman setting out a blanket in the field, spreading out some snacks she'd brought, inviting others to come share them with her... and ended up ballooning to ten blankets, a wide variety of snacks shared by others, and over fifty women! Allison laughs that they tried to schedule one for the next year, but it was one of those happy occurrences that had to be organic. That brilliance just can't be planned!

Most food for the retreat is brought by the participants – items for sandwich fixings, soup ingredients, breakfast, salad fixings, and this year an item for the Mexican buffet. The staff only has to purchase key protein and other items this way, keeping the cost of registration lower than other similar festivals. At the end of the weekend, those who may be more needy are invited to take leftovers home. This communal approach to meals also serves to tighten the bonds.

And there are Kitchen Goddesses. For many years, Shell was the sole Kitchen Goddess, running a tight ship; many of us have the favorite image in mind of her

grilling steaks out on the patio. She retired from that august position last year with much gratitude from all of us. Now Kaedi and Hava have replaced her and have found their stride. With care for dietary needs, they have come up with creative menus and kept all happy. Since it's unknown what items will be donated for soup, for example, it's an adventure to come up with the variety of soups – they came up with five kinds for Friday night supper! An additional Coffee Goddess is assigned to keep the pot going at all times.

Allison Hancock explains more about the organization that produces Daughters of the Moon, a formula which has worked very well for the retreat, honed over the years. "The council is made up of all the women that plan the event every year, including those that are voted in each year. We are the 3 permanent members and the rest function as staff. Annie serves in an advisory capacity, she is on the Facebook group and weighs in on decisions, like Leela, Shell, Flame, Michelle, our kitchen witches, etc. As long as they support Daughters and work they will remain on the list, but if they cease to be helpful or break off from the community, they are replaced by another willing to work. Our revolving council is a beautiful thing, in my opinion. It keeps everyone fresh and active."

We have seen the death of our Sister Daughters... we have seen births.

In the span of a year and a half, we lost three of our Crones, including DoM founding member Trudy Herring, aka Mama Dragon. Trudy and Tzaddia Morningstar (Crone Representative in 2008) and Mallorie Gareis (Crone Rep in 2009) were lost to us with an incalculable loss to the West Tennessee Pagan Community; all were clergy. At the following Daughters in 2011, the tradition was begun to feature an Ancestor Altar in memoriam to our dear Sisters who have crossed over. Just like the jars that we each put out to receive little notes from our Sisters through the weekend, jars were put out for notes for our lost Crones; notebooks containing those notes from the Sisters to them have been compiled to share in our new Ancestor Room. Since then, the altar in that room has expanded to allow representations of our beloved Mothers, Sisters, Grandmothers who have passed as well.

"There's never too many women to pass around a baby," declared Amanda C. who had brought her 2-month old baby with her when she first came to Daughters in 2008. This year, "Big Mama" Jess brought her newborn Alexandria who slept blissfully (during the day at least!) in the arms of many Daughters.

During Opening Ritual, the question was asked of the group what comes to mind when you think of the Mother aspect of the Goddess. Responses were called

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out: "Creation" "Nurturer" "Caregiver" "Leadership", etc. Then after a long pause, "Sleepness Nights" from this year's Mother Representative Jess who gave birth not even two months ago.

The only Daughters that council member Nancy has missed was the weekend she gave birth to Mairead. She recalls: "I had a home birth planned, and started having contractions on Monday, so I was sure I'd make it. ... but by Friday I'd had 2 days of 5-minute-apart contractions and the midwives had to transfer me to the hospital. I wore my blue robe and refused to wear the hospital gown. They did the c-section in my robe and all."

Favorite images of Daughters of the Moon over the years include:

- The Goddess flags
- Trudy and singing "We are a Polygon..."
- The Kitchen Goddesses
- The Table of Jars
- Altar of Goddess images
- Leela and the Breakfast Puja
- Triangle rooms decorated
- Drumming and chanting around the fire
- Wearing of the Blue
- Leela's "drive by" croning (2010)

Annie Pelloth recently asked on our Facebook group: "How has Daughters of the Moon changed your life?" Here are some of the wonderful responses:

Alice R.: "DOM is teaching me about service too. The first year I came, I washed dishes for hours on Sunday morning, and I was wet and filthy and so happy. This year, opening up and tending the Ancestor altar was such a joy- I was unprepared for how much I loved it. And I could name 100 other things that DOM has given me- it is life-changing!"

Holly E.: "I have attended 2 DOMs. The first (2013) is where I learned all about shielding. That year was a learning experience for me in many many ways. 2014 DOM changed me. I am a very OCD/anxious person who is more comfortable in my own group. I made the challenge to myself to speak to every single person...not just speak, but learn something about each person. I learned that just a simple self introduction opens the doors to friendships I cherish today. I learned that a group of women CAN be together without the snarkiness and all the judgments. All of a sudden it was OK to feel whatever I was feeling, it was okay to DO whatever I felt. The whole time I felt FREE - free to finally be me. I also learned that women will quietly support you when you are completely breaking down over a hummingbird. These sweet, supportive women will bring sugar water for the injured and kleenex for my tears. I was so

comforted by all the support...no matter what. I left this year feeling calm, accepted, and strong."

Elizabeth McClellan: "DOM taught me so many things but most importantly that the arguments that trans women don't belong in or ruin the energy of women's sacred space are lies, that the Goddess tells people who they are, not us and that our trans sisters make our sacred space better by bringing their unique paths and experience to a place where they are loved and respected."



Affirmation Jars to be stuffed with warm, fuzzy notes

When I was just a baby witch I had read about women's festivals and couldn't wait to be old enough to go to one. Then I read about a women's festival treating trans women like garbage and intruders and swore a Mighty Oath to the Goddess that I would NEVER go to a women's space where trans women were not welcome. The Goddess provided one that disproves every lie the transmisogynist pagans tell about why they have the right to exclude a woman from women's sacred space. To be a part of that, to know I can invite my trans sisters without fear when there are so few safe places for them in general or in the religion, is so meaningful to me and I'm grateful to Trudy now and forever for having spearheaded that policy when it was nascent & feelings ran high. '

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Heart of Kali

by Mari P Ziolkowski

You the one who Opens Hearts. You who defy this westerner's preconceived ideas and bring me to the ground in surrender, time after time. Heart opening, tears flowing. You the dark one, Kali awesome power.

You who are the creator of worlds – whether through lovemaking with Shiva, or through menstruation – you the Cosmic Creatrix, Black Time, Mother of Worlds, Dark Mother, Dark Matter. From whom all is breathed out, and to whom all returns.

You who slay the demons of oppression, greed and war on the planet when no one else can, in consort with your sister warrior goddess Durga. You who lick up the blood of demons to stop them from multiplying. You who shake the worlds with your bloodlust dance until you recognize your lover Shiva laying on the ground, and invite him to play with you.

You who are the energy of worlds, that which expands and contracts, that which allows involution and evolution of consciousness. You who are Kundalini, coiled energy at the base of the spine. You who rise with your three red eyes and tongue up my spine to my 3rd eye and out my crown when I am altered, when I feel the energy, when I am meditating, when I am making love.

You with your matriarchal tribal origins – warrior goddess who loves when she wishes, who calls us to love our fierceness, to honor our bodies and sexuality, who loves menstrual blood on the altar - who calls us forth on the wild woman path, the path of witches and Sybils, yoginis and Tantrics before us.

You who are Tantric Wisdom Goddess, who comes to us as we chant your name, whose image brings the ecstatic, whose geometric yantra can induce trance, who takes possession of her teachers and even her devotees. Who teaches us to pay attention to the energy, to come back to our power, our selves. Who shows us that the whole universe is within us.

You inducer of altered states - who gave me the star pillow as I floated up through the ceiling to visit you in dream-time. Who caused me to wake in the middle of the night with my body vibrating and my tongue sticking out. Who raised the sensual energy again and again, making love to me in meditation, until I really got it - the link between sexuality and spirituality. Who saved me in dreams only when I called on you and Shiva at the same moment. You who came through me as electric current, blanking out my waking consciousness. Who



allowed the dream-time Voudou Loa to channel through me.

You, with your necklace of skulls, challenging me to confront my fears, calling me to meditate in the cremation grounds, bringing me so many dream-time images of skulls. Until I was no longer scared, and welcomed them, welcomed you.

You sky dancing Dakini – who scared me with your dance on top of the twin towers, until I understood that you were absorbing all back into yourself, including the demons of greed and destruction, including the fear of those who died, so that all were free to fly, so that all could come to you. You who help us confront our fears, our mortality, our death.

You Kali Maa, who came to me through my anger and rage at patriarchal authority - at those who try to control, or bind the power of women here and now, in this time - and in all times. You who confronted me with my shadow, so I could flex my warrior muscles and absorb my shadow self! You call us to look the beauty and terror of creation in the face and recognize it is all you. And that we are 'all that.' You who slay my demons and blow my heart wide open. You who rise again and again in the fire of my emotional cremation ground - you who devour my density, you who allow release.

You the dark one, Kali. Awesome power*

* Salutation from May Sarton's "Invocation to Kali", *She Rises Like the Sun* ed. Janine Canaan (Freedom, California: Crossing Press, 1989)

Seeds on the Wind

by Carolyn Lee Boyd

In the garden of She Who Creates, tucked into a very remote corner, grows a small, water-blue planet whose inhabitants call it "Earth." The soil is rich but most of what grows there appears on the surface to be only straggly stems fighting each other for a place near the dim light. But yet, somehow the most spectacular blooms emerge from the planet by the billions every day.

She Who Creates has planted Earth's patch of the garden so that the breeze will catch its blossoms and carry them to the farthest reaches of all that is. "Like seeds on the wind," she whispers as a cloud of them rises from the Earth to make their way across the cosmos.

Everyone elsewhere in the universe waits anxiously for Earth's exquisite blossoms to drift for eons to come to their planet. When each one lands, it is enshrined and lovingly cared for, each drop of sap savored, every molecule doled out so that it will do the most good.

While the baby was being born in the great field, the mountains enclosing on three sides like an embrace, the sun's light was a more luminous amber and the petals of the flowers shone a deeper crimson than they had just moments before. The very soil on which Irini squatted vibrated as if the Earth herself were shaking with jubilation. She gasped with the last push, then sank to the ground and smiled in this one moment of contentment and peace. Her midwife, Melanie, finally cut the cord, then handed the new daughter to her mother.

"The soldiers will be here soon," Irini said once she had recovered. "I know where we can hide till they have passed by on the way to the city. No one will bother looking for us. We aren't military. We'll just disappear." Melanie, Irini, and the baby climbed back into their jeep and drove off the road and across the field towards one of the mountains, their tracks covered by the field's wild Medusa-like brambles. They finally arrived at the cave's opening at twilight. Melanie brought Irini and baby inside in a wheelchair, hid the jeep in a nearby ravine, and carried in the food and water they had hurriedly tossed in the back as they made their escape from a refugee camp when the first grenades fell.

Irini directed Melanie through the cave's labyrinth of rooms until they came to one with a stream and small openings that let in just enough sun for them to see. Once they were settled they had nothing to do but wait, and so spent their hours talking. "I grew up playing in this cave with the other kids from my village just down the road," Irini said. "I found this room when I was about thirteen and made it my secret sanctuary from the world."

Irini pointed to a large, flat stone with shadowy objects against a wall. "That was my little altar like one dedicated to Mary in our church," Irini said. In the center of the stone was a doll decorated with beads, ribbons and a crown made of aluminum foil. Around her were small offerings of toys, sparkling rocks, and twigs that had once held flowers. "You can clear it off if you need to."

"No, I like it," Melanie said. "There's plenty of room on the floor to store what we need. Will you go home once this is all over?"

"I have no home to go to," Irini replied. "A year ago I lost everything. One afternoon I had a sudden desire for an orange, which had just come into season. I walked to the marketplace, bought my orange and ate it just as the bombs began to fall. It was a surprise. We knew the war was nearby, but we never thought it would reach us. Our city had nothing either side could want. By the time I got home to my apartment, the whole building was rubble. I had nothing but the clothes on my back and a little money in my pocket. I guess I was in shock. I walked until I came to the ruins of an ancient temple in the old part of the city. All that was left were three walls and the statue of the old goddess, thousands of years old.

"I looked up at her and realized that we weren't so different. She had lost everything, too. No one worshipped her anymore and once the fighting came to this part of town she would most likely be destroyed, just like everything in my life had been. But, for right now we, the descendants of the people she had nurtured and given life to, were still alive. We had forgotten her but she still gave the grain, the fruits, and the beasts that kept us alive. I realized that what I had was what she had given me — my mind, my spirit, and my body that can give life. So, I decided to become a mother, and within a week or so I was pregnant. It all happened fast, for sure. I found out at the camp clinic, and from that moment I stayed there. Later the doctor told me that she didn't know how that happened, that I shouldn't be able to conceive, but I did, and here I am. And here you are."

Irini was silent, indicating that it was Melanie's turn to tell her story. "I'm ashamed to say that I came looking for something that was in my own mind, adventure maybe, or the feeling of being part of something more important than my everyday life. When I signed up to spend a summer here after medical school, I knew you didn't have fancy facilities, but, in all honesty, the war wasn't supposed to cross the border and come into your country. I thought I'd spend a couple of months kind of camping out, then go home with stories to tell. Still, as I think

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about it, I guess I'm just doing what women in my family have always done. My mom went to the big city to be a poet out of college. My grandmother joined the navy as a nurse when she was 20. My great-grandmother went to the wilderness when she was 18 to teach children to read in a one-room schoolhouse. I guess we all wanted to wander the world before we settled down into what we thought was real life. I just never expected bombs to be falling on me."

"Maybe you should have read the travel brochures more closely," Irini said.

"Maybe you should have gotten yourself born thousands of years ago," Melanie replied, and they both smiled.

At first, the women hid during the day and ventured out for food and water at night. Soon they could no longer hear the sounds of battle as the war moved on leaving them uncertain what they would find if they left. So, they foraged for berries, nuts, and greens, eventually finding some fish in a nearby stream that they caught with a homemade net. The baby needed only her mother's milk. No one in the outside world seemed to remember the cave or them.

Beyond the symphony of sounds that is night on the mountain, they sometimes heard a voice speaking as the wind blew through the openings in the cave. Without words, it left behind knowings to eat this or that plant for medicine, or to head deep into the cave because a storm was coming. Sometimes the voice would tell them poems that were half sounds and half shadows that would appear on the walls as the sun passed overhead.

Eventually, they left behind humanmade time except for the changing of the seasons and the growth of Irini's daughter. They slept when they were tired, ate when they were hungry, worked when they need to replenish their stores. They eventually named the baby Bella, for she was indeed the most beautiful creature they had ever seen.

One morning they once again heard gunfire in the distance. The war had turned around and come back to their mountain. They knew that their sojourn in the cave was over and that they needed to make their way back to the worlds they had left behind to try to find more permanent safety.

Just before they entered the nearest town, Irini stopped. "Take her, please," she said, handing over to Melanie the sleeping Bella as her tears fell on the baby's face. "This is no place to bring up a child. Take her home with you. Bring her up someplace safe. Say that you found her in the rubble somewhere and you want to adopt her because she has no mother. I will work here in this country,

my home, so that someday she can come back and live in peace, with or without me."

"What will you do?"

"I won't make war, but I'll speak out, I'll organize, as long as I'm alive."

And so, Melanie brought the baby back to her country's embassy and told her made-up story. No one remembered that Irini had ever lived or had been pregnant. With no one else to care for Bella, the country of her birth cared not at all what happened to her and so she went home with Melanie.

Once Bella was safely Melanie's legal child, Melanie made a recording of her laughing and posted it on youtube, hoping maybe someday Irini would see and hear it. She had no idea that millions of lightyears away, far in the future, beings she could not even imagine also watched and heard the clip and smiled.

Fifteen years passed before a fragile security came to Irini's small nation. Melanie and Bella never knew if Irini had survived the war. She brought Bella home for a visit, as she had promised Irini she would do. On their last day, Melanie and Bella visited the cave and found the altar with the small goddess still on it.

"Would you like to bring it home with you? It could be your memento of your mother," Anna asked.

"No, I think I'll just leave it here," Bella replied. "This is where it belongs. Maybe, sometimes, if she's alive, my mother comes here and she would miss it if it were gone." Bella did leave a note for her mother that was gone when they returned for another visit the next year.

Sometimes Earth's blossoms are creations — a painting or song, a thought or idea, even a video of a baby laughing. Sometimes they are gifts humans give to themselves or one another bought with heartache and pain. They may be acts of courage that no one knows about or they may be memories passed down through generations as inspiration. The people of Earth each make the blossoms a hundred times a day without realizing their uniqueness, beauty, and infinite value across the universe, just as rosebushes endlessly create roses that are transported over oceans to grace palaces and museums.

When She Who Creates crafts the humans, She reaches into her own being and molds them from an infinitesimal piece of herself. Only She and the humans know all that the people of Earth sacrifice, more than beings on other planets will ever be able to fathom, to make the blossoms, but it is the people's nature and they can do nothing else. The stuff of the blossoms is what humans are made of. The blossoms go by many names on Earth, but the universe calls them "freedom."

Goddess Pages Poetry

Grand Canyon Pilgrimage

By Lisa Wersal



"Where are you from?" they ask.

Before they tell us anything about the pottery we are
admiring:

sharp blade etching, clay essence,
singed horsehair stain,
Yucca leaf brushing;

Before they speak of honoring ancestors, of adhering to
traditional methods;

Before they unlock the code of encrypted symbols:

kiva steps, hallowed mountains,
thunderbirds,
beneficent lightning;
They ask,

"Where are you from?"

"Minnesota," we say. Land of sky-tinted waters, where
rains

are plentiful, the growing season long enough
for

steady yields of corn, alfalfa;
Black loam, nutrient-rich—our backyards sprout
fragrant lilacs, crisp rhubarb,
tart apples.

But here, the parched soil and massive rocks are blood
red,

the heart of the Earth exposed,
its beat palpable.

Pilgrims flock here in droves,
to likewise have their hearts
laid bare,
to be reminded of who they are.

We find them wherever we go, and we, too, feel com-
pelled
to ask,

"Where are you from?"

"Maryland."

"Las Vegas."

"Idaho."

"Outskirts of Chicago."

"Everywhere – a 'military brat.'"

Some speak languages that give away their origins:

French, Italian,

Japanese, German, something that sounds

Scandinavian,

another, Slavic or Russian.

A silent group of men with shaved heads and saffron
robes look to be

Tibetan Buddhist monks. Women wound in
bright saris,

jangling with gold bracelets, chatter in Hindi.

Couples in

distinctively drab Amish attire, smile and nod
Pennsylvanian.

Here, we are all in agreement – Natives, immigrants,
locals, transients – all admiring the same

vistas, straddling jagged crevasses,

trudging arduous snaking

trails, descending to

concealed canyons,

our feet blessed

by the same

crimson

dust.

We

test our

limits of exertion

and exhilaration, awestruck

by senna, rust, magenta; The Earth

crying out, summoning; Innermost cores

opening, melding, sacred renewal of primeval

fiery bonds; Mother Gaia needn't ask – She

knows

Where we're from.

Poems from Susa Silvermarie

Your Benevolent Face



Thanks to sculptor Foosiya (Freddie) Miller for "Untitled" which appears in The Goddess Pages issue 27

Mother!
I watch your sculpted expression
soften into Divine Flesh.
You call me
to crawl into your arms.
With love in your voice
that soothes my human cares,
you rock me and croon.

I feel you, Beautiful One,
shine your eyes of kindness
upon me. You give
comprehension!
quick and true,
that all is unfolding
the way You
have intended.

Great Mother,
your benevolent face
receives me as novice,
greet me as daughter,
meets me as equal,
and welcomes me,
oh welcomes me!
all the way home.

Cleanse Me of Certainty

The river is swirling, swirling.
The banks are far from my sight.
The fast waters frighten me.
Sequana! Goddess of the River!
The rushing waters toss me about,
I am their plaything.
Without your strong hand,
the great flow takes me under,
my knowing is gone,
my long years are as nothing.

Sequana, guide me!
Though I cannot see my way,
I turn in trust to you.
Cleanse me of certainty,
and unbending destinations.
Fast-Flowing One,
right the vessel of my life,
set me in the flow.
Teach me surrender
to your swift transformations.

The Quietly Singing Thing

When aloneness looms
like a giant shadow on the ceiling,
when it windmills its many arms
and it shouts in both your ears,
connection is still the true thing,
the quietly singing thing.

As air is always there in your lungs,
belonging is always close and true.
When you have dangled singly,
and flailed as if
separation could be credible;
when you have foolishly forgotten

your own dear clan of earthlings,
when, myopic, you have imagined
you are a star without
a neighbor in the cosmos,
then you must listen,
and fix your attention,

for belonging will call you,
though it be by whisper or by sign.
Connection will beckon you
softly back,
into the soothing hum,
into the big-bodied whole.

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Sorceress

by Atiya Walker Dykes



She married the black
and white creating
gray, and took
the middle path
surpassing 50 shades.
She was death and life
light and dark
succubus and archangel.
She mastered
alchemical processes
in the laboratory
of self to bring
brightness forward
out of darkness
by putting her
best foot forward
controlling her right
brain, integrating
it with the left.
She is now Lilith
and Eve, Osun
and Meenakshi
part yogini part
fairy.
She is the
triple goddess
and the Black
Madonna the
definition of magician,
the beautiful sorceress.

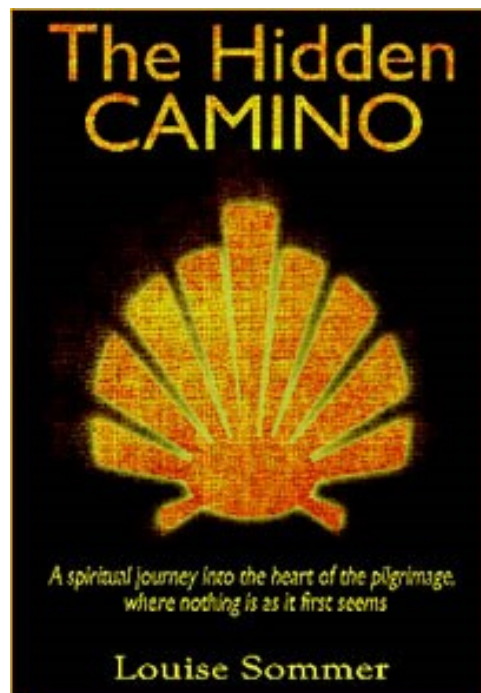
Not The Kind of Girl

By Atiya Walker Dykes

I'm not the kind of girl they like
I write my own songs and sing my own
verses. Nothing here is scripted
sacred but never scripted.
I speak revolution in my softest
voice and carry its flame in
my eyes.

My body carries the spirits of
my grandmothers and great-grandmothers
before me. "Sometimes they speak Swahili
Iroquois, and Cherokee to me
Don't forget yourself girl
remember the clan mothers
had the first and the last word.
Don't let nobody steal your voice.
I'm not the kind of girl they like
I bring witches wisdom to the table
the kind they tried to extinguish
during the burning times, the
kind they tried to cut away with
bayonets and long knives.
Sword and bullets can never kill
soul and mine is ancient.
That's why I dance to my own
drum, speak my own words
and never fear my own voice.

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Triple Luminosities

by Susan McCaslin

Persephone Texts Home

Swept into Hades' Hummer, she feels her hairdo take a tumble.

Voodoo conjures up an ice palace of perpetual frost where uncle Helios, sun god, never dips.

Swing low, vile chariot!

Hades' sideburns gray before her eyes.
Tapping her Blackberry
she hears no signals penetrating cyberspace.

The ground sinks and swells,
tar sands slide under his wheels.
No time for lilies and sweet boys.

Too fast, too fierce, the down-turning hours,
where tossed like a sheaf of torn grain
she ramps up screams for her mother.

Locked in a black box she falls exhausted.
Starved for colour and light, she dreams that first night
of changing her name from Black One to Magenta.



Demeter Complains of the Siphoning Off of Her Essence

Chariots grid-locked everywhere:
cars as they call them now,

rows and rows on freeways,
teeth gnashing, horns bellowing.

Rather than opening my garner's
to the poor, they divert my corn crop

to the production of "alternative fuels,"
ethanol to drive their trucks and SUV's.

Manuela can't sell tortillas anymore
because the price of corn has doubled.

The world they call "developing"
devolves, while they scarf my essence like a drug.

Corn production feeds mills,
not the hungry.

I found this on the world web:
"Filling the 25 gallon tank of a truck

with pure ethanol takes over
450 pounds of corn, enough calories

to feed a person for a year."
And the nitrogen fertilizers

poured on those cornfields
create nitrates in the Mississippi

that run down to the "dead zone"
of the Gulf of Mexico

killing thousands of marine species.
Why is it no one seems to be saying,

stop, whoa, woe!

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On Approaching the Nefertiti in the Neues Museum, Berlin

No postcard rivals the delicacy
of her brows arcing past Sirius

contoured chin ibis neck

linen lines pressed under eyes
elegance thrown on world's throne

Museum guard signs: no cameras allowed
I fumble to thrust mine in a bag

see it tumble to the marble floor
lens cockeyed in its case

(hundreds of crafted shots irretrievable?)
All those dark stabs at seeing

Still hot memory holds what it holds:

chiselled face from deep time quietly gazing out

and in



(Continued from page 11)

More than anything that makes me proud to proclaim
that I'm a Daughter of the Moon."

Lori Smith Banks: "I have always been afraid to shine, though I long to inside. When I come to Daughters, each time, I shine a little more after I leave. It is like a divine polishing cloth after the fires of life. I am hugged and loved by all my sisters, and each time I come away with a little more courage to show more of myself and to share my light a little more. You all help me remember a little more of who I am, and help me to forget all the things I have been taught that do not serve me. I love you all."

For myself, and I believe many share this feeling, it's purely the energy. There's something beautiful and sacred and rich and incredible when women gather for spiritual, sacred, or communal intent. It's a bubble, a sphere, a cradle of warmth that penetrates, soothing the scars and fears and pains of daily life in a space of safety. "You are safe here." Safe, calm descends. Safe, hearts ease. Safe, spirits feel welcome.

And we sing: "I can hear the drums, hear the drums, hear them calling. I can hear the drums of the Daughters of the Moon. I can hear the songs, hear the songs, hear them singing. I can hear the songs of the Daughters of the Moon. I will rise and dance, rise and dance, I am dancing, I will rise and dance with the Daughters of the Moon."

Rootz tells of the time at Daughters when she'd sought some solitude one afternoon. She headed out to the field with her drum and a blanket. Passing the row of cars along the side of the road, she noted one with the door open. Upon investigation, she found a baby in its carrier in the seat, asleep. So... Rootz took the baby with her, leaving her drum behind in the carrier... and she and the baby had a nice peaceful nap in the shade on her blanket. She knew the mother would see the drum and know who had her baby with her.

That kind of trust isn't built easily in our society. Or in our communities and churches. It's a magic that has its own wonderful power to it. Women believing in women, women trusting women, women nurturing women and each others' babies. Entrusting each other with our true and honest selves, we open ourselves and allow a healing that might not be so easily generated in other contexts.

Daughters... is our happy and chosen context every April.

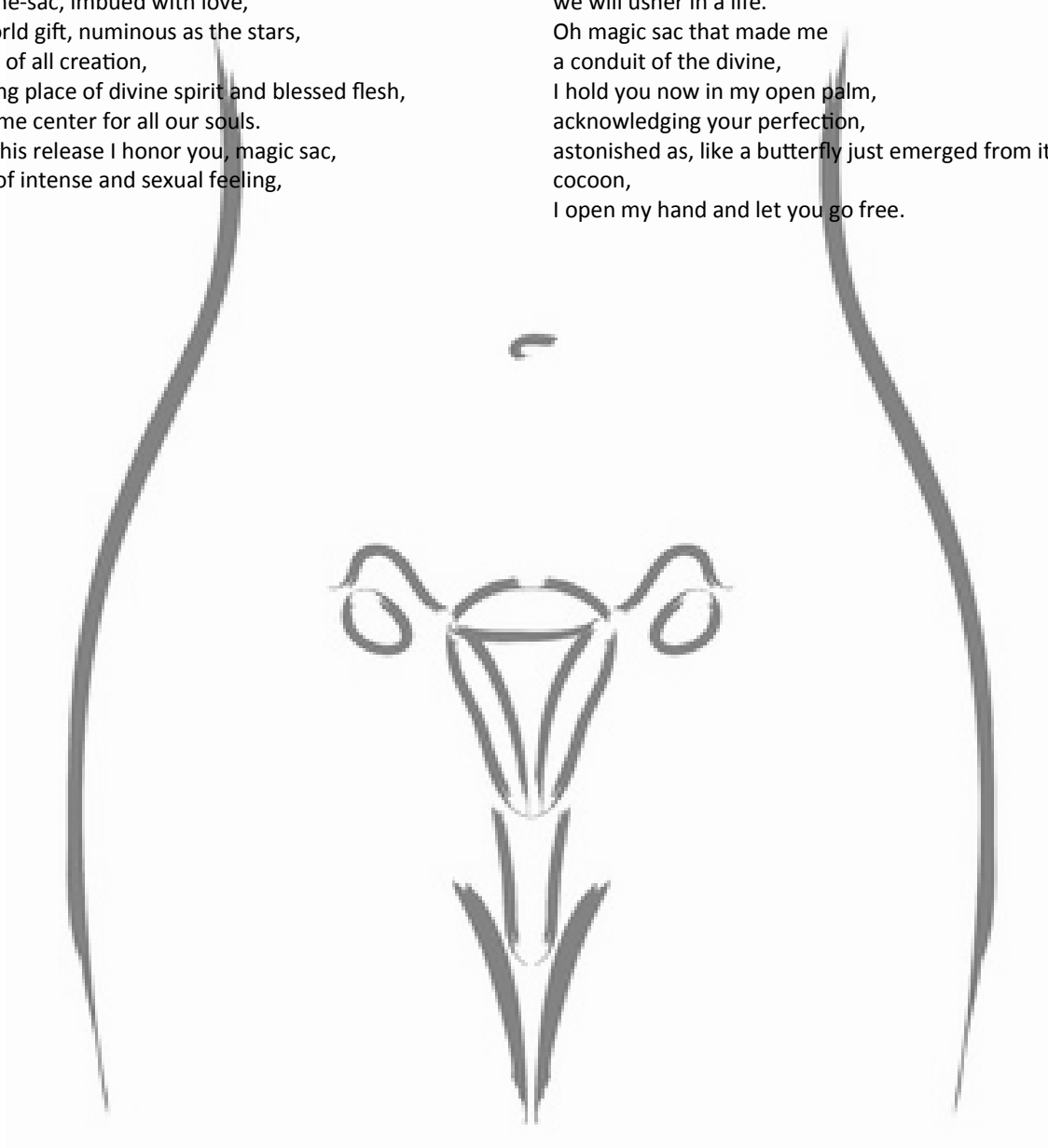
Festival date for 2016 is April 14 – 17. There is a website for the 2015 DOM festival at <http://daughtersofthemoonretreat.com/> and a Facebook group to join at www.facebook.com/groups/152564631471494/

The magic pouch

by Annelinde Metzner

I have released my magic pouch.
Fathom this- the miracle sac nestled in my abdomen
where spirits come to Earth and find their destiny.
This wondrous space that expands exponentially
to accommodate a new human being!
I have released my uterus!
Here I am to honor you, oh alchemical gift,
carrier of the species, deliverer of DNA.
Oh place of pure regeneration!
Miracle tubes where fertilization occurs;
Ovaries, hatchery of the round perfection of femaleness,
oak-split egg basket where my mother and grandmother
held me tenderly too;
cervix, precious tunnel that, entranced,
widens a thousand times for human birth.
Oh wine-sac, imbued with love,
Oh world gift, numinous as the stars,
womb of all creation,
meeting place of divine spirit and blessed flesh,
welcome center for all our souls.
With this release I honor you, magic sac,
locus of intense and sexual feeling,

dark cave I have loved and honored all these years.
Woman's divine chamber
which we must guard from violation,
our own and our sisters',
which we pray for and protect
throughout our lives.
Sanctuary and cauldron of mind, spirit and flesh.
In letting you go, I hold you up,
I see you now for what you are.
I prostrate myself before you.
Oh womb who has made of me a shaman,
as all women are!
I have offered my body for the incarnation of souls.
If women deem it right and good
for all of us and for ourselves,
we will usher in a life.
Oh magic sac that made me
a conduit of the divine,
I hold you now in my open palm,
acknowledging your perfection,
astonished as, like a butterfly just emerged from its
cocoon,
I open my hand and let you go free.



Three Poems from Frances Roberts-Reilly

Hecate's Supper

You know these roads -
Here at the crossroads,
Where Hecate's hounds
Howl at night.
Her supper upon her altar,
A placation -
An offering to the goddess of the darkening moon.

The moon waxes, waning.
The way home is through the cave,
Inwards, into the darkness.
Here your cells transmute,
Cell by cell,
Like her supper
Decomposing on the altar.

So I eat sparingly, with caution
Measuring every morsel that enters my mouth
Because I will be transformed. I will.

Let the gods feast upon my eyes, my fingers, my bones,
That my body may atone
And repent for my transgressions.
My goddess: Why hast thou forsaken me?
Hecate hear my cries, as you heard hers.
For I am like Persephone abducted into Hades' shades.
I too have eaten pomes seed, corrupted her sacred fruit.

Now, I am lost to the infernal compass
That has measured out every
Shore, cave and mountain,
All length, depth and height
That philosophers have petrified into monoliths.
I am writing blindly,
I am writing in this gloomy silence,
I am writing to you,
Queen of all that is unheard, unseen and unsaid.
To you, veiled sister, ancient Hag

Tribal grandmother of the underworld -
Be the magnet for my compass,
and like a tuning fork that tones,
Tone, vibrate unmined ferrous forms
Shaping them into signs.
Ciphering all the stories of my unknown existence.

Spell me a path like Gretel's trail,
Lit sublunar, uncanny yet true.
I come, with shivering hand,
Into the Labyrinth,
Oh holy One,
Crone of the blessed crossroads,
Lead me,
Take me,
Home



Wing'd Heart

Naiveté says, a women's heart is a white wing,
Flying high and free in the clear blue sky.
Yet hers is a downward winged spiral. A descent.
Hooked by the Underworld; the dark earth
The sinewy roots, caverns and wet rocks.

In a tattered, ramshackle heart-space, tears drip.
Bloody and boned, a wolf howls.
She rests here awhile. Boots under the bed,
Wipes the mascara from her face,
Brushes feathers from her matted hair.
Checks out her heart. Is it still in one piece?

The quest is a secret unrest that gnaws at her roots
Breathless, she muses,
"Am I imprisoned or free?"
Unlocks the chamber, the archive of the heart
An angel with broken wings remits -
"Here on the valley floor, growers are caterpillars."

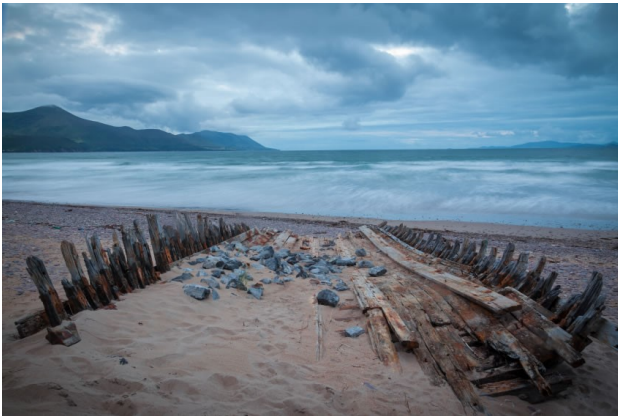
She honors the truth; a circle of birth, death and rebirth.
Against all odds, the masks fall away. Shedding,
She dissolves into endings. The world disappears
Into a haze of dazzling darkness. A butterfly wing unfolds
Fleeing its earthy cocoon for open skies
In a silent searching flight.
The wing'd heart of compassion.

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(Continued on page 22)



SKELETON WOMAN

Cremator of bones



With automatic hand
Your oar, strokes amorously.
Your boat
Gliding on the river.

Have you sailed these waters
Where Daimon's breath
Takes your ardent sails
Against all willpower?

In my mirrored
Crone's milky eye
These white coral bones
Beneath
Slowly caressed
By the whispering current;
Draw you into my arms.

Now the water refracting
Lustrous shards of moonlight
A Chiaroscuro, transmuting and inverting
Inky blue-black-white water.
Rippling towards the sea.

I
The incubator of bones
Cracking open
Thy boon
Amethysts light Violet
From within;
Gems Of the first water.
I sing Abraxas' charms, and
Girdled in heliotropes,
Fire Opals and red coral.
Offering my wise marrow
Bid you to my boney bed.

After the bonfire,
Under the fire pit embers -
My fingers
Glow into words.
Writ large
Upon your soul,
My name: SKELETON WOMAN:
Cremator of bones

By the waters
You sit down and weep
At your back
You hear the chunk, chunk of my bones.
You see our bodies naked
On soggy colloidal soil -
Our bones scattered -
Cast in runes
Across the sky.

In my bones I hear
Nothing.
The water's skin
Shivers with sorrow. And beneath
A requiem laments -
Floats and rocks the waters.

It is I,
Bone Gatherer, Bone Woman
Dancing on
The elemental edge of longing..



Musings of a Shaman

by Daniel McIlvenny-Cox

Love Letter to Our Lady

A void of grating scales,
seeps electrifying purple fumes.
Tiamat's crimson blood drips like jewels of Gaia.
The sound, all that is, the sound - rushing, echoing like
stars both born and dead.
Ninhursag's loneliness drops like a black stone.
Life burns in the belly of Kishar.
The Great She, adorned in severed heads and fragile
hearts.
Coatlicue, decked in evergreen and serpent skins,
dancing the creation.
Tierra Madre, show us your red sole that treads upon
our hearts.
Giver of life Pachamama, I love you.
I love you, love me.
I forgive you, forgive me.
I'm sorry, we're all sorry.
Hold me in your void Mother Mary.
Let me be soothed by the rushing and the grating of
scales.



Pachamama—patron Saint of the Pampamesayoc,
by Daniel McIlvenny-Cox

Smoked Black by Candle Light

An ode to the Black Madonna of Glastonbury's White Spring Chapel

The scent of old damp stone.
Your very image,
Smoked black by candle light.
A gentle light flickers against your face.
Your very image,
Smoked black by candle light.
Small flecks of gilt still shine.
Your very image,
Smoked black by candle light.
Christ child, beloved one.
Your very image,
Smoked black by candle light.
Tears, so many tears.
Your very image,
Smoked black by candle light.
Peace, let there be peace.
Your very image,
Smoked black by candle light.
Your face, O your face,
Smoked black by candle light.

About Daniel's Pachamama image:

Daniel writes: "The woman is the Divine Feminine of the Q'ero people: Mother Earth, Tierra Madre, Dragon Woman, the imagery was taken from old descriptions of her that I found.

The Pampamesayoc are those who built the sacred sites of the earth, from the pyramids of the Divine Masculine to the stone circles of the Divine Feminine. They are the Gatekeepers of these sites, the altar keepers.

We as shaman of the Inca tradition carry our altars with us, our mesas: sacred bundles of Kuya (sacred stones) wrapped in holy cloth, seen at the bottom of the painting.

The Chakana - the Inca cross - around her neck is a sacred symbol in our tradition. Different parts of it represent many different things; the earth, the four directions, the ocean, the mountains, the three worlds. The central hole represents the eye of God, the hole we go through at death. As a whole it represents life and even the human energy field.

I began using my fingers to paint the background, using earth soil and red ochre rock, I then drew her form, then brought her to life with chalk and charcoal. The still life of the Mesa is my own Mesa, coloured with coloured pencils."

Mother Song

by Sheila Rose Bright

Two and a half years ago my mother Jean received a terminal heart diagnosis. Since that time she & I became very close, as I helped support her to face and to prepare for her death, saying, doing and singing all the things I would want to do if I were able to be present to priestess her death but which was unlikely to happen. [She did indeed die alone in her own bed, of a heart attack as we expected, at Lammas 2015.] Of course this led me into preparing myself to lose her. *Mother Song* came out of our shared process and my anticipatory grieving last October. I sang it to her over the phone and recorded it for her.

I wrote *I Miss You* about 6 weeks after she died. It comes out of my intense grieving for the woman who was not only my mother but in her final years had also become one of my closest friends and a cherished part of my support network. Several months later I am blessed to be able to say that for me all is going as it should; although it's a painfully hard path to tread, it's a huge rite of passage which we all face.

Mother Song



1. You are my mother
And you have been there for me
For almost sixty-one years [all my life!]
Loving me steadily
From tiny baby
To ageing and much wiser crone.

2. You've always been welcoming
Holding, encouraging
Supporting me as I go on my way
Letting me grow
Moving further away from you
USA, Cornwall
And simply not calling you...

3. I know I've not always
Been nearly as loving
Not wanting to meet
My own shadow reflected in you
But now that I'm older
I'm happy and proud to say
How very like you I am.

4. When I was little
You cared for my body
Did all that you could for me
Back when I needed you to
I have needed you terribly
Often abandoned you
For a new lover or life.

5. Now you are old
And your body is failing you
Now you are tired and wanting to die
And I must find strength
To be there when you need me
And there as you leave me
To go on without me alone.

6. Soon I may lose you
My precious good mother-friend
Nobody knows me as deeply as you
And I know how I'll miss
All those late evening phone calls
And warm stripey socks made of love.

7. Now it is my turn
Stay strong as you grow from me
Give you my blessings to leave, say goodbye
It's so hard but I'll do my best
Knowing you're ready
To go on your journey
And parents should always die first
Yes it's right for you to die first
Leaving daughters to grieve
For the loss of their very first love
Leaving daughters to grieve
For the end of their very first love.

©Sheila Rose Bright
October 2014

This really is a song! You can download a PDF showing [the music here](#) and one day soon we hope to provide an audio download so those of us who don't read music can also have a go.... Ed)

(Continued on page 25)

(Continued from page 24)

I Miss You (for Jean)

In the waking light of day
I think of morning glories
I remember your joy in them
And I miss you.

In the busyness of noon
Absorbed in all I want to do
I am your passionate zest for life
And I miss you.

As the sun sets and darkness falls
I finish work and clear my desk
I recall our evening phone calls
And I miss you.

In the middle of a sleepless night
I think of how alike we are
Support we shared as crones
And I miss you.

As autumn comes
And I scuffle through the falling leaves and tears
I know you welcomed cooler weather
And I miss you.

In the depths of winter
Short cold indoor days
I'll wear the stripey socks you made me
And I'll miss you.

When spring comes round in blossom
And primroses and daffodils return
I'll know how your heart leaped to see them
And I'll miss you.

In the heat of summer
I'll be swimming in the sea
Feeling the ecstasy you shared with me
And I'll miss you.

In the passing of the hours
And the turning of the seasons
I still feel our great love
And I miss you.

I celebrate the many things
You loved about this earth
I will enjoy them for us both
And I'll miss you.

September 2015

(Continued from page 27)

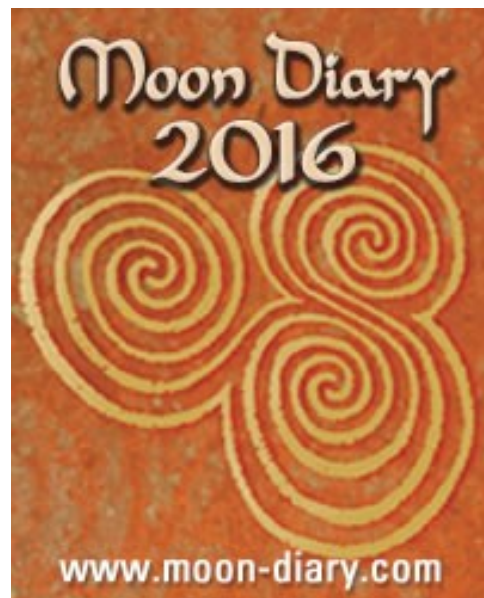
undertaken, the day-to-day recounting of the walking itself, interesting people met and the mostly supportive community of pilgrims. There are also useful practical suggestions for those planning a similar pilgrimage, with an appendix containing ideas for preparation and even a packing list. There's also a short but useful reference section with books, websites and DVDs/TV programmes to look out for, plus a [companion website](#) with lots more background and a gallery of pictures.

As a former Catholic Convent girl I particularly appreciated the author telling off a group of Catholic priests who, while other pilgrims were sitting on a terrace peacefully reading or quietly conversing, loudly discussed and defended the Church and went so far as to question that the thousands of children who have been sexually abused by Catholic institutions were telling the truth. Sickening.

I'd strongly recommend this if you're thinking of walking the Camino, with only the most minor quibbles: the occasional spelling or grammatical error, hardly fair as English is not the author's first language and it's mostly written very well. I would also have loved an index! I'll close with a quote from one of the author's walking companions: "Now I realise that it is the Camino that has plans for you! Not the other way around". (p152)

You can obtain the book [direct from the author](#) and it's also available as hard copy or for the Kindle from Amazon.

*<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monomyth>

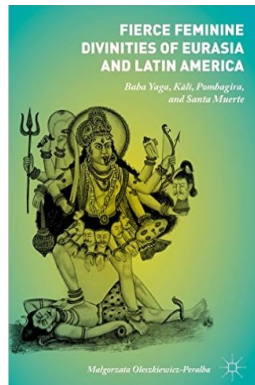


Goddess Pages Reviews

Fierce Feminine Divinities of Eurasia and Latin America: Baba Yaga, Kali, Pombagira, and Santa Muerte, by Malgorzata Oleszkiewicz-Peralba New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

reviewed by Barbara Ardinger, Ph.D

Prof. Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, who is a professor of modern languages and literature at the University of Texas at San Antonio, opens her new book by telling us how the goddesses named in the title—and their worshippers today—are marginal and liminal. The term “liminality,” she says, referring to the work of Victor Turner, comes from two Latin words, *limen* (“threshold”) and *limes* (“limit”) “and indicates a state in between structure, which is characterized by ambiguity and ambivalence and is usually connected to marginality, inferiority [and] ritual powers” (pp. 3-4). The four divine figures discussed in the book, she continues,



may be seen as embodiments of liminality and marginality with many of their attributes, such as being outsiders and being connected to liminal activities (e.g., messenger, trickster, sexuality). They are also perceived as dangerous, uncomfortable, rejected, or representing the rejected, but at the same time attractive, as they embody wisdom, magical powers, and the truth of human condition (p. 5).

Chapter 1 is titled “Baba Yaga, the Witch from Slavic Fairy Tales.” The sections of this chapter—“Liminality”; “Death, Fragmentation, and Transformation”; “The Bird Goddess”; “The Serpent, the Dragon, and the Life-Death Threshold”; “Sacred Colors, Helpers, and Horses”; “Womb and Tomb: The Initiation Hut, the Oven, and the Mortar”; “From Matriarchal Goddess to Contemporary Witch”; and “Stones and Embroideries”—show the depth and breadth of the author’s research. She gives alternate names for Baba Yaga in several languages and shows the goddess’s connections to (or descent from) the Neolithic bird and snakes goddesses and explains how she lives today only in fairy tales and folklore.

Chapter 2, “Kali: the Ultimate Fierce Feminine,” opens with prayers to “the ultimate creator, preserver, and destroyer” who is the “epitome of the types of goddesses we are looking at in this book” and “in many ways the opposite of what we think of in connection with the word ‘woman’ or ‘goddess.’” Kali, the author writes, is “the primordial wilderness and chaos, original form of all things and eternity, but also change—time, destruction, and death” (p. 53). The sections of this chapter are “The Ten Mahavidyas,” “Fragmentation and Periphery,” “The Goddess Dhumavati,” “Kali and Other Fierce Divinities,” “Possession Trances,” and “Diasporic Kali.” Of the Ten Mahavidyas (Great Wisdoms) given in Tantric Hinduism and Buddhism, Kali is “foremost” and represents “destructive power that is simultaneously purifying and transforming” (p. 55). Information about the diasporic Kali in this chapter is especially interesting.

Chapter 3, “Pombogira, the Holy Streetwalker,” is the first of the two chapters about newly-created, popular Latin American goddesses. Sections of this chapter are “Background,” “Origin and Name,” “Characteristics,” “Types of Pombagiras,” “Gypsy Entities,” “Umbanda, Exus, and Marginality,” and “Origins of Pombagiras: The Yoruban Awon Iya Wa and the Portuguese *Bruxas*,” Whereas Baba Yaga and Kali are ancient and European, the goddesses presented in Chapters 3 and 4 are modern Latin American goddesses who meet the needs of people who live near or at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. Because Prof. Oleszkiewicz-Peralba lived in Brazil for several years, her research is less from the library than right out on the streets, where people see Pombagira as both a trickster and one of the most powerful entities of the newly-invented Umbanda religion. But she, too, has deep roots, as we see when she is compared to the feminine deity of the Gnostic text “The Thunder, Perfect Mind.” Most of the illustrations in this chapter are photos taken by the author, and Table 3.1 shows the “Continuum of Afro-Brazilian religions” from 19th-century Spiritism to varieties of Umbanda and Candomble (p. 93). The author concludes this chapter by noting that because the people who worship and appeal to Pombagira live in a society that is often lawless and unfair, they have little access to “law and order” or medical care. “Individuals are not permitted to take justice into their own hands, even in the face of blatant and obvious... injustices. ... Pombagira is out to remedy that” (p. 101).

But if life is difficult for the poor people of Brazil, it seems to be worse for poor Mexican people, even those who live in the U.S. Santa Muerte is their new goddess:

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The unofficial saint, Santa Muerte or Holy Death, another contemporary manifestation of a fierce liminal deity connected with marginality, inferiority, outsiderhood, and ritual powers, ... can be traced to the Tepito neighborhood in Mexico City's marginal *colonia* Morelos, in mid-twentieth century, where it started as a personal cult that spread widely about 20 years ago and reached an unprecedented popularity in the past ten years (p.104).

In Chapter 4, "Santa Muerte, Death the Protector," we learn about the skeleton we most often see in Day of the Dead displays. The sections of this chapter are "Portrayals and Names"; "Methods of Devotion and Devotees"; "Devotional Centers, Transnationality, and Scope"; "Death and Contemporary Mexican Society"; "Historical Antecedents"; "Death in Mexican Arts and Folklore"; and "Santa Muerte, Pombagira, and the History of Latin America." People build private and public altars to Holy Death and ask her for favors and sic her on their enemies. Again, because there is almost no scholarly work on Santa Muerte, Prof. Oleszkiewicz-Peralba did real-life research out on the streets, in *bo-degas* and other stores, and in people's homes. As in the other chapters, most of the illustrations are photos she took herself, including an altar in the trunk of a low-rider car. (Such altars are very popular.) Although Santa Muerte is "traditionally" shown wearing the robe of a Franciscan monk, photos also show her in traditional bride's clothing, surrounded by decorations, in semi-disguise as the Virgin of Guadalupe, and clothed in dollar bills. People dress this skeleton figure to express their own beliefs and desires. Here are a few lines from an invocation to Santa Muerte:

Lady of death
Skeletal spirit
Most powerful and strong ...
Make repent all his life
The one who harmed me or gave me the evil eye
And may it turn against him right away.
For the one who deceives me in love
I ask that you make him come back to me
And if he does not listen to your strange voice
Good spirit of death,
Make him feel
The power of your scythe... (p. 122)

The book concludes by repeating the connections among these four goddesses and their importance in the lives of people most of us hardly ever notice. The illustrations in the book show us not only what these goddesses look like but also the altars people build to three of them. Prof. Oleszkiewicz-Peralba's publisher may not have served her well, however; although she reads and writes at least seven languages (see footnote

5, where she lists languages she's translated herself), there are errors in idiomatic American English that require us to reread some sentences. There are also paragraphs that are so long as to be unwieldy. But there is a full and useful index and the bibliography is 15 pages long. This book deserves to be on the bookshelves of anyone interested in goddesses outside the usual Greco-Roman, Norse, and Germanic pantheons. Five gold stars!

"The Hidden Camino", by Louise Sommer

reviewed by Geraldine Charles

I feel the life in me, therefore I am. (pg 58)

I took this book with me on an overnight trip, not expecting to stay up into the small hours to read it from cover to cover, but found it so engaging that that's exactly what happened.

Louise Sommer, who works in psychotherapy and has a passion for the roles of women in European history, had a series of powerful dreams and other synchronicities calling her to the pilgrimage, just the sort of thing described in Joseph Campbell's well-known "Call to Adventure" in the Hero's Journey.*

The dreams were beautifully described and I felt I was being drawn into the adventure too, not difficult as the book is well-written and, I must admit, pressed many of my buttons – I've long wished to walk the Camino but there are so many things on the bucket list! If you have an interest in Goddess, Pilgrimage, the Magdalene, the Grail, past life memories, the Templars, symbolism and mythology, serpents and dragons, women's history or, of course, Black Madonnas, you will find this a fascinating read. I'm also an inveterate old church visitor and can barely pass one by unexamined when travelling.

Far better than any formulaic Dan Brown novel, the book has much to tell us and also hints at mysteries to be explored: the meaning of the Camino's scallop shell symbol, and connections between Cybele and Mary Magdalene to mention but two. As a person who loves to walk alone, or at least in silence, I also had a great deal of sympathy for Louise Sommer's decision to do this for much of the way – it's a wonderful meditation, and ideal for people who find it difficult to sit in a chair for very long.

The book is multi-layered, and contains much besides the fascinating spiritual aspects of the journey

(Continued on page 25)

Contributors

Annelinde Metzner resides in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, USA, where she devotes her work to the reemergence of the Goddess. Annelinde's poetry has been featured in the We'Moon Datebook as well as in Goddess Pages. She composes solo songs, chamber and choral music and produces concerts of her music and poetry including dance and puppetry. Her songbook of 21 praise songs for the Goddess called "Lady of Ten Thousand Names" is available at her poetry blog, "Annelinde's World". She directs two choirs, offers workshops and teaches privately. Annelinde can be contacted at annelinde@hotmail.com.

Atiya Walker Dykes resides in Philadelphia, PA, US with her husband and 3 children. She is a photographer and poet, and enjoys reading and research, belly dance practice, sci-fi, and good music.

Barbara Ardinger, Ph.D. (www.barbaraardinger.com) is the author of *Secret Lives*, a novel about crones and other magical folks, and *Pagan Every Day*, a unique daybook of daily meditations. Her monthly blogs appear on her website and on Feminism and Religion <http://feminismandreligion.com/>, where she is a regular Pagan contributor. She has been writing for the Llewellyn annuals since 2004, and her work has also been published in devotionals to Isis, Athena, and Brigid. Barbara's day job is freelance editing for people who have good ideas but don't want to embarrass themselves in print. She lives in Long Beach, California, with her two rescued Maine coon cats, Schroedinger and Heisenberg.

Carolyn Lee Boyd is a New Englander who writes fiction, poetry, essays, reviews, and memoirs celebrating the spirituality and creativity in women's everyday lives. Over the past three decades, she has published in women's and feminist literary, art, and spirituality magazines, both in print and online. You may read her occasional musings and published writings at her blog, www.GoddessinaTeapot.com. When she isn't writing, she grows herbs and native flowers, raises a family, and props up her constantly falling-down Victorian house.

As a child, **Daniel Milvenny-Cox** daydreamed of distant lands and enchanted forests. Being spiritually aware at a young age was confusing and often challenging; being gay didn't help matters either. The descent into the underworld is always perilous, and his own decent came at a cost, at aged sixteen he called death, and death came that night in the form of meningitis meningococcal septicaemia. Twenty four hours later he was in resus. Despite what the doctors and surgeons told him, he made a full miraculous recovery, limbs intact. But something changed, still the journey was long dorm in the underworld, but something new was born. The journey lasted for almost another two decades before he found his true calling, in the form of a healing with a shaman - death was finally removed. And so it began, the path of shaman-hood, the path of a

healer and the quest to portray the image of the Divine Feminine for all to see, through art and poetry, bringing Her back into our culture and society; back to our hearts and soul.

Daniel lives in Berkshire where he practises shamanic healing sessions. He lives with his husband and their 20 month old son, and a cat called Smudge.

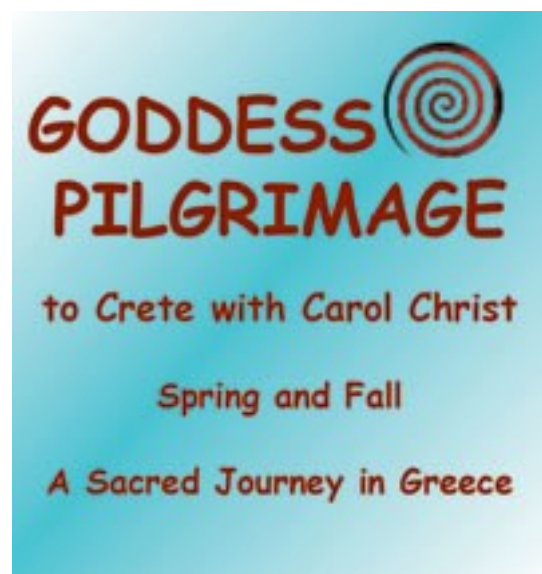
Frances Roberts-Reilly is a poet, storyteller and filmmaker. She has published numerous short stories, articles and poems and she has been a guest author on CBC Radio. Her *Green Man* chapbook is published by Ontario Poetry Society (TOPS), and her poem *Song of the Rose* was awarded TOPS Most Popular Poem in 2007.

The League of Canadian Poets featured her poems for National Poetry Month and she was twice invited to contribute her poems in honor of Lt. Col. John McCrae author of the famous WWI poem, *In Flanders Fields* in celebration of Canada Day on July 1st.

Born in England of Welsh Romany ancestry, she came to Canada in 1977. She began writing seriously in 1972, whilst working at BBC television in London, England. After making award-winning documentaries, she earned an Honors degree in English Literature at the University of Toronto. She makes her homes in Guelph, Ontario and Gulfport, Florida.

Geraldine Charles is the founder and editor of *Goddess Pages*. She is also a Priestess of the Goddess, a founder member of the Glastonbury Goddess Temple and a former Glastonbury Goddess Conference ceremonialist.

A web designer and all-round computer person, Geraldine is responsible for a number of websites. In her spare time she writes articles and poems and loves researching Goddess in mythology.



Isabella Lazlo is Artist, Facilitator and Co-Editor of 'She Who Knows Magazine' a new and revolutionary magazine for women that offers a more reliable and accurate reflection of who we are as women than most mainstream magazines at this time. Her work is in service of the new world we are dreaming. www.shewhoknowsmagazine.com, www.ancientfuturedreaming.co.uk

A former university instructor, **Lisa Wersal** is now a writer, musician, and quilter. Her previous work has appeared in a variety of publications, including *The Edge*, *Art Times Journal*, *SageWoman*, *Crone Magazine*, *the Phoenix Spirit*, *Believing Ark*, *Minnesota Women's Press*, *Ars Lyrica*, and the *Minneapolis StarTribune*.

Marcia Tucker has been a practicing Eclectic Pagan and Taoist for twenty years and a Unitarian Universalist as well for five. She is ordained Pagan clergy through the Southern Delta Church of Wicca-ATC and currently facilitates her local group, Circle of the Phoenix, as well as co-facilitates the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) group at Neshoba UU Church in Cordova, TN. She lives in Jackson, TN with her husband of eleven years and the Winged Corgie (their beagle/Cardigan Welsh Corgi mix who believes she can fly).

In the interest of healing self, others and the planet, **Mari Ziolkowski** has been following the call of earth based/divine female energies for 20 years. Drawn to walk a heart path in the midst of the beauty and paradox of the earth plane, Mari continues to be engaged by the personal and planetary need to rebalance the feminine and masculine energies. Find out more about her work at: www.spiritmaa.webs.com

Nicole Schwab is an earth-loving, deep-thinking author and social entrepreneur who spent the last twenty years living and working across cultures and horizons. Her first book, *The Heart of the Labyrinth*, gives voice to her engagement on behalf of a world that values and honors the feminine principle and is rooted in our connection to the Earth as a living being. She wrote it beneath the mystical ruins of Delphi, Greece.

For more on Nicole and her blog, Spread Your Wings, see: <http://nicoleschwab.com>.

You can read the Goddess Pages review of her book [here](#).

Sheila Rose Bright was initiated into the Dianic tradition in 1983 and has walked a Goddess path with her sisters ever since. She is a Priestess of Brigid and Crone. Singing is one of her greatest joys; she has dedicated her voice to Brigid and she is an ardent collector of sacred songs and chants.

At Samhain 2012 she crossed the threshold into old age with magical croning celebrations in Avebury and Glastonbury. She is now looking forward to retiring from her accounting and astrology work. 'Being free to create a life doing what I want to do and thinking about what I want to think about should lead me to A Better Cronehood (ABC).'

She is/was co-organiser of the Goddess in Cornwall Event, co-founder of [Goddess Alive! Magazine](#), and the author of numerous Goddess-related articles and the booklet *The Eleusinian Mysteries – a Modern Pilgrimage* (available from the [Goddess Temple website](#)).

Susa Silvermarie writes: "I'm grateful to live my life as an artist in Asheville, North Carolina. I have an MFA in Writing for Children from Vermont College of Fine Arts as well as a Masters in Social Work degree.

In 2014 I launched an e-book of my out-of-print narrative collection called *Tales from My Teachers on the Alzheimer's Unit*. I've been a mail carrier, a preschool teacher, a social worker in the field of aging, a massage therapist, a medium, a human rights monitor in Guatemala, and a storyteller, among other occupations. I've been called "a spoken word artist known for her engaging and accessible performance style, and for original work that delights the senses while calling the spirit," and my poetry has been widely anthologized.

I love to travel, but when I'm home in the Blue Ridge Mountains, I sing in Sahara Peace Choir, attend a Buddhist sangha, hike in these beautiful hills and blog on www.susasilvermarie.com. Praise Her!

Susan McCaslin is a Canadian poet who has published thirteen volumes of poetry, including *The Disarmed Heart* (The St. Thomas Poetry Series, 2014), and *Demeter Goes Skydiving* (University of Alberta Press, 2011), a volume short-listed for the BC Book Prize and first-place winner of the Alberta Book Publishing Award. Susan has recently published an autobiography, *Into the Mystic: My Years with Olga* (Inanna Publications, 2014), about her relationship with the Canadian mystic Olga Park (1891-1985). In 2012, she initiated the Han Shan Poetry Project as part of a successful campaign to save a local rainforest outside Fort Langley in the Fraser Valley. Susan, who completed her Ph.D. in English at UBC in 1984, is Faculty Emerita of Douglas College in New Westminster, B.C. Susan has a new volume of poetry forthcoming from Quattro Books (Toronto, Oct. 2016) titled *Painter, Poet, Mountain: After Cézanne*. www.susanmccaslin.ca.

Susun Weed, green witch and wise woman, is an extraordinary teacher with a joyous spirit, a powerful presence, and an encyclopedic knowledge of herbs and health. She is the voice of the Wise Woman Way, where common weeds, simple ceremony, and compassionate listening support and nourish health/wholeness/holiness. She has opened hearts to the magic and medicine of the green nations for three decades.

Ms. Weed's five herbal medicine books focus on women's health topics including menopause, childbearing, and breast health. Browse the publishing site www.wisewomanbookshop.com for books, DVDs, audio downloads and gifts. Visit her site www.susunweed.com for information on her workshops, apprenticeships, correspondence courses and more! Go to: www.wisewomanmentor.com for Susun's free herbal ezine and also mentorship offerings for those who want to go deeper.

Write for us!

As ever, we would be really interested to receive your submissions. In general, we're looking for Goddess-focused work from all over the world and do ask that contributions are not too 'new age' in tone. We intend this journal to reflect a woman-centred, non-patriarchal Goddess spirituality – and submissions from Goddess loving men are also very welcome. If possible, please keep articles and fiction to around 2,000 words – or write first to discuss. We are also happy to receive reviews of Goddess-focused books, music, film, events – anything that can be reviewed really! However, please write first as we might be planning something ourselves. We try to keep reviews to around 500 words, although that certainly isn't essential if the material can't be adequately covered in such a short review. Of course, if you have something you'd like us to review, don't hesitate to get in touch.

While preferring work that hasn't previously been published elsewhere, that isn't a complete no-no, so please check with us. Wherever possible, please submit work electronically, in plain text (within the body of an email is fine). Please don't send articles in Microsoft Works format as we can't read them!

If your article includes photographs or other images then by all means indicate where they should go but please also send high-resolution images where possible. We also need to be sure that we have rights to publish any pictures you include, so please let us have details of ownership and rights.

Submission dates are as follows:

Winter/Spring: 31 October

Summer/Autumn : 30 April

Poetry

We are sent so much poetry that we can now accept only one poem at a time, and as we're part-time we don't have the ability to read, critique, edit or advise. Please also note that we prefer a slightly more formal style of poetry - that certainly doesn't mean it has to rhyme - but too much poetry (in the editors' view) is really prose broken down into verses, and in the worst cases the sort of jottings that really ought to be confined to one's personal journal

Length of poems isn't a big issue in an online journal although we may need to discuss length for the printed version.

See the [contacts page](#) for details of where to send your work. We do have a more detailed sheet of notes for contributors, available on request.

Advertising in Goddess Pages

We welcome advertising for suitable products. Ads are currently only being accepted for the online magazine.

Rates are as follows:

Banner Ads

Banner space is available on most pages of the website – banners rotate so that a different one is seen every 30 seconds or so. A maximum of three banners will be accepted, to give each one a fair chance of being seen! Banners are online adverts that are "clickable" to take the reader to the advertiser's website. Only goddess-related products, please.

Maximum banner size is 500 pixels x 100 pixels.

Banners, per issue : £25 (€28, \$40 approx) – discounts for multiple issues.

Small Ads

On the left-hand side of the online magazine you should see, below the menus, a number of small ads – these are approximately 200 x 250 pixels and cost £10.00 (€12, \$16 approx) per issue, with a discount for multiple issues. We reserve the right to show small ads on a limited number of pages, but they will always appear on the front page. At the editor's discretion, some ads – for groups, or free events – will be free of charge. We can help with design and layout of adverts if required. For further information, contact editor@goddess-pages.com.



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e-mail : editor@goddess-pages.com
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