



Personal Strokes

An Artist's Journal

by Aline Fourier



Coming Home



Introduction to *Personal Strokes*

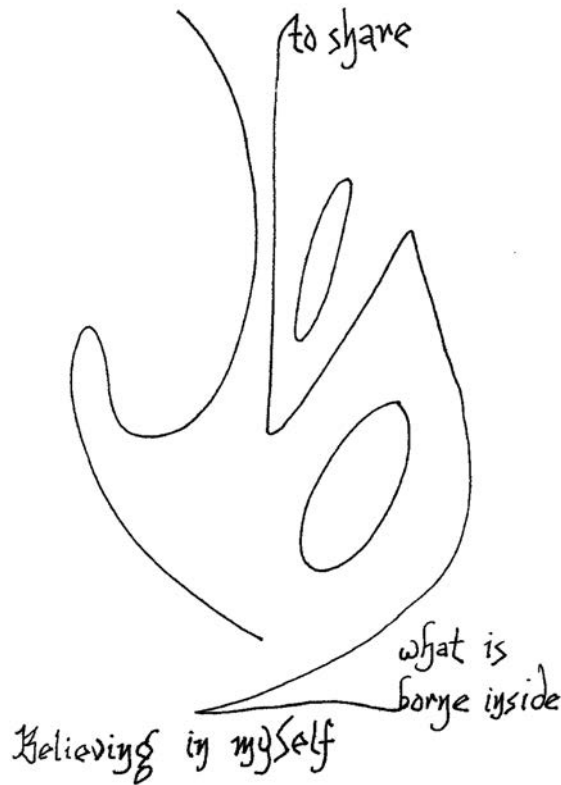
I live in a quiet place where the salty ocean meets the clear waters of an inland stream. It is a place of contemplation, meditation and reflection. It is the place by which I have sat peacefully and not so peacefully to reflect and listen. It is the place where the

earth sings, the waters whisper and shout and the grasses hum the songs of the wind. It is the place where I have created this journal book.

Personal Strokes is about my struggle to be, to listen, to believe in what comes from my deep inner core, to embrace my creations and to celebrate them.

Personal Strokes speaks to the wonders inside us, the doubts we wrestle with, the joy of discovery, the support all around us that encourages us on our journey and the magnificence of the gifts we come to share. It is a universal struggle to believe in oneself enough to trust the gifts we bring into this world. It is my hope that in sharing my drawings, writings and inspirational words of others, this journal will be a place to retreat to and sit with your

thoughts, emotions and questions, a place of quiet to be with your pure inner core. If you are looking for answers, I hope that this book brings you the courage to go to that place deep within yourself where you can listen to the songs that are being sung to you from the dark waters of your being.



Woman of the Marsh

“From earliest times, there has existed in the human imagination a creatrix, a great goddess who brought forth all living things. Her images and stories are reminders of an ancient female gnosis– a special knowledge about the profound intricacies woven into the cosmic pattern of life, death and rebirth. Her story is ours and, in the process of experiencing our own creativity, consciously or unconsciously, we re-enact her mysteries.”

Patricia Reis, psychotherapist

I began this journal, *Personal Strokes*, after “coming home” to the salt marsh where I lived with my husband, Jonathan, for seventeen years. About twelve years before, I was working on a painting of a child holding a golden ball – innocence sitting beside the edge of a pond fed by ocean and stream (see painting on page 1). At this time, we had been looking for a home and a friend brought me to a salt marsh cottage that was for sale. I found myself looking out on a view of a pond fed by the tides and a fresh water island stream. It was the exact image of the pond in my painting! At that moment it became clear that this was where we would come to settle and call “home.” As renovation began on our island cottage, I had a dream about a woman sitting naked on the salt marsh strumming her long pubic hair and singing a song, a song that felt so deeply familiar. Awakening from the dream in tears and upset that I could not remember this so familiar song, I found myself haunted by the dream, trying again and again to remember the song. At the same time, a good friend and photographer sent me some photos he had taken of our home and the marsh. There, staring back at me in the photo of the marsh, I saw the face of “the woman in the marsh” from my dream! I began to feel her guiding me with words and images, organic strokes in pen and ink that moved out onto the white page from some instinctive song within myself. And so this journal was born.



I see you, Woman of the Marsh, stroking your joy in Being here amongst all the natural beauty. I do not have to see my knowing first. I allow myself to feel it moving through me and trust it. I hear her voice calling, as a lover, “come down inside Me, lose yourself in me, and I will show you the way to de-light. Woman, lying within.”



Woman of the Marsh, My Muse

*I know a place where spirit dwells, asleep and well.
Only the face can tell.*





My name woven from the substance of my being.

I draw and paint from my dream myth of the “Woman of the Marsh,” stroking her songs into being. It is my personal myth, my mission statement, “believing in myself to share what is borne inside.” It is a trusting of the process of birth, that we do not need to know beforehand, that in the doing of the sacred task (what comes from our soul, deep inside us, beyond our conscious self) we are led to the revealing of what is inside. It is the opposite of traditional schooling, where we come to absorb what is outside ourselves. When I draw, the repetition of the strokes brings forth the creation from the substance of who I am.

There is something instinctive that expresses itself in doodling – movements that are innate, natural and close to who we are inside – a voice, a song, sound and movement in the core of me – a primal writing from the soul. I feel rocks and dirt and little creatures even though I do not see them in my mind’s eye ahead of time. I am not copying vision. I am moving vision from an inner sense. Can you speak, my hands, from an ancient memory? I feel mountains and rivers, roots and sap, and voices gathered in *repsyncing*. Ancient inscriptions in my flesh, I stroke with love.



“...A way of being...from long ago...when the earth was still sacred. When a woman knew that her task was necessary to the cycles of nature...knew that her devotion within, as she fulfilled the task, reconsecrated the earth and echoed throughout the cosmos.”

Judith Duerk, Circle of Stones

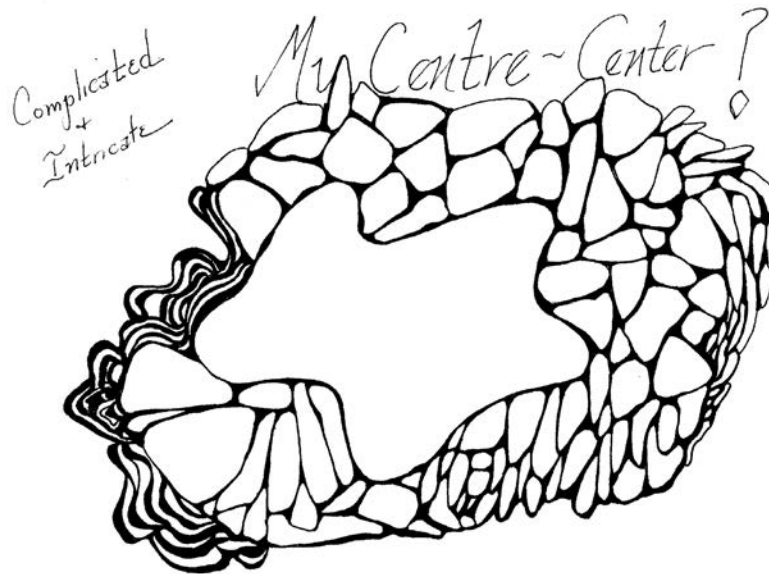
I am sitting in the darkness of my cave. A small fire burns in front of me for warmth and I sing an incantation and spread healing herbs in the redness of the coals. The scents permeate the cave and my body, cleansing the air around me and through me. I am ready to receive the Great Spirit and a bird call in the night echoes my desire. A breeze whispers in the stillness and my hands begin to sway gently across the hot embers, rhythmic motion, my body swaying to the lead of my hands, hands that are old and yet very strong, a blue light at my fingertips. A reflection from the cave walls or something emanating from deep within? Sisters are gathered here to hear what has to be said, to listen to what must be put into action, to see the tapestry being woven before them. It is a very old gathering. We have planned this ages ago, lifetimes past... and with a determination, there is a resilience and resoluteness gathered in this familiar darkness, a friendliness of spirit that runs like a deep river through those of us gathered here, old friends, hearts connected by a garland of wildflowers... and we sit, waiting, understanding the seriousness of this moment and yet strangely lighthearted, uplifted by a vague knowing of what is to come. A gentle breeze reminds us of another time. The blue light has become stronger from my fingertips and it adds a tinge of magic glow to the closeness in this earthspace. Shadow spirits begin to dance on the walls of the cave. Something primal and ancient has joined this gathering and we wait expectantly. We are reminded to breathe deeply of the healing scent by a full voice in our chests... deep, loving, familiar... The fire suddenly flames up, lighting the room so that every crevice and corner comes alive, and before us is a ball of light, its brightness caressing our eyes like a lover pulling us closer, deeper into the center... A wave of calmness spreads all through our bodies and we seem to sit more directly in ourselves. I feel the steady beat of my heart and know the others are absorbed as well. Why are we here? “You are coming closer to that time you have been waiting for,” we are told from within. What are we waiting for? The simultaneous silent resonance of the response seems to fill the cave with its sound... “The dance.”



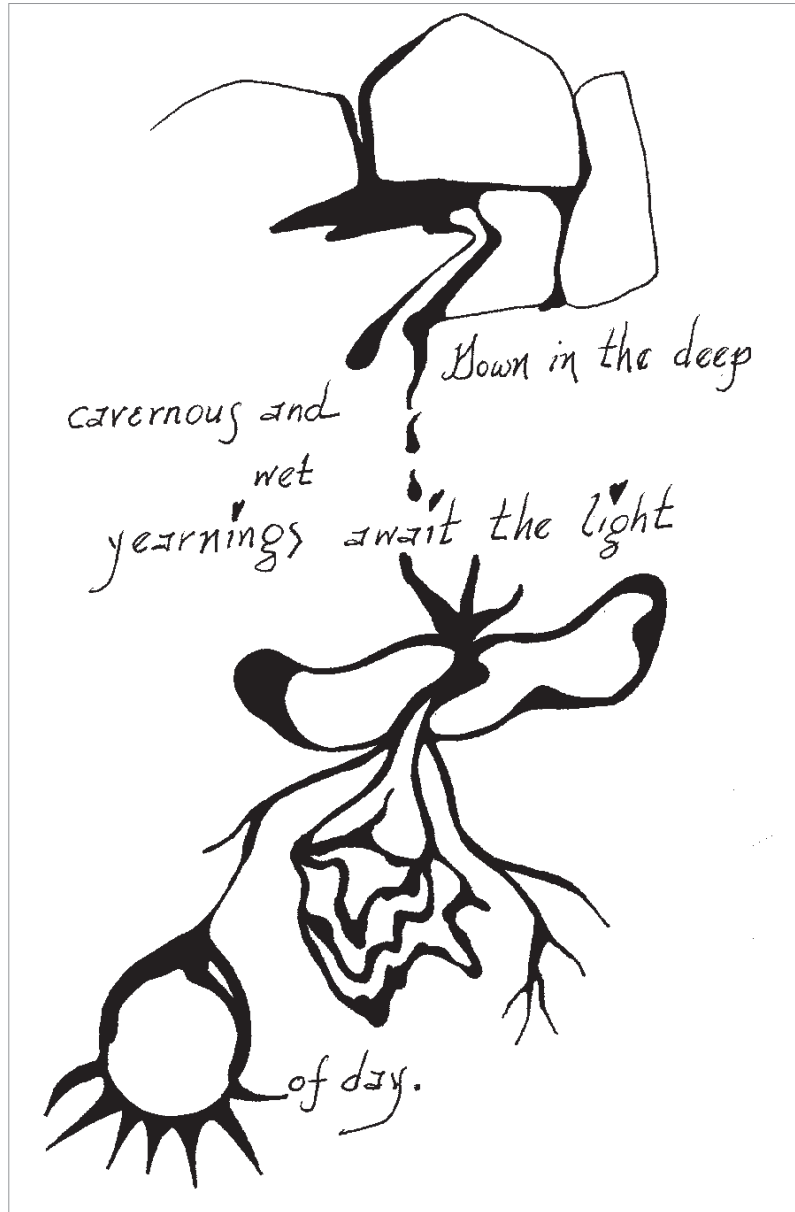
There is a place inside me that no one has touched, deep inside a magic joy, that no one has stayed long enough to see, enjoy, live with. I reach back to the oceans and the stars, waves of light and water dance in my cells... I do not seem to belong here...most of me is somewhere else, some time beyond and inside of things... I am not even sure what that really means and yet there is a longing of lovers in that place, a meeting of sentient beings in paradise.

The world today is too rational a place for me, things are too rationed so that the magic is lost...I live in the world of magic, where you have to linger for no good reason and it doesn't matter that you have none. Maybe I never grew up. Maybe I never learned to stay within the lines, and, if I did, I know that I would die, become mush, "the mush of concession..." Do I know it, or fear it? No, I know it. I would neatly have to pack away the magic, as I have done before, relegate it to the dark basement...Magic dies in the dark. It needs the light, the light of soul in his eyes, heart light...

I think that I have even hidden this light from myself! I have come here to this protected salt marsh, to reclaim my light, to give mySelf back, to sit in beauty, bathe in it and hold it up for others to see. I cannot give you the answers yet. And I wish and hope you will not ask me.



I sit on my opening on the earth and ask for my roots to descend
to the depths of my soul.



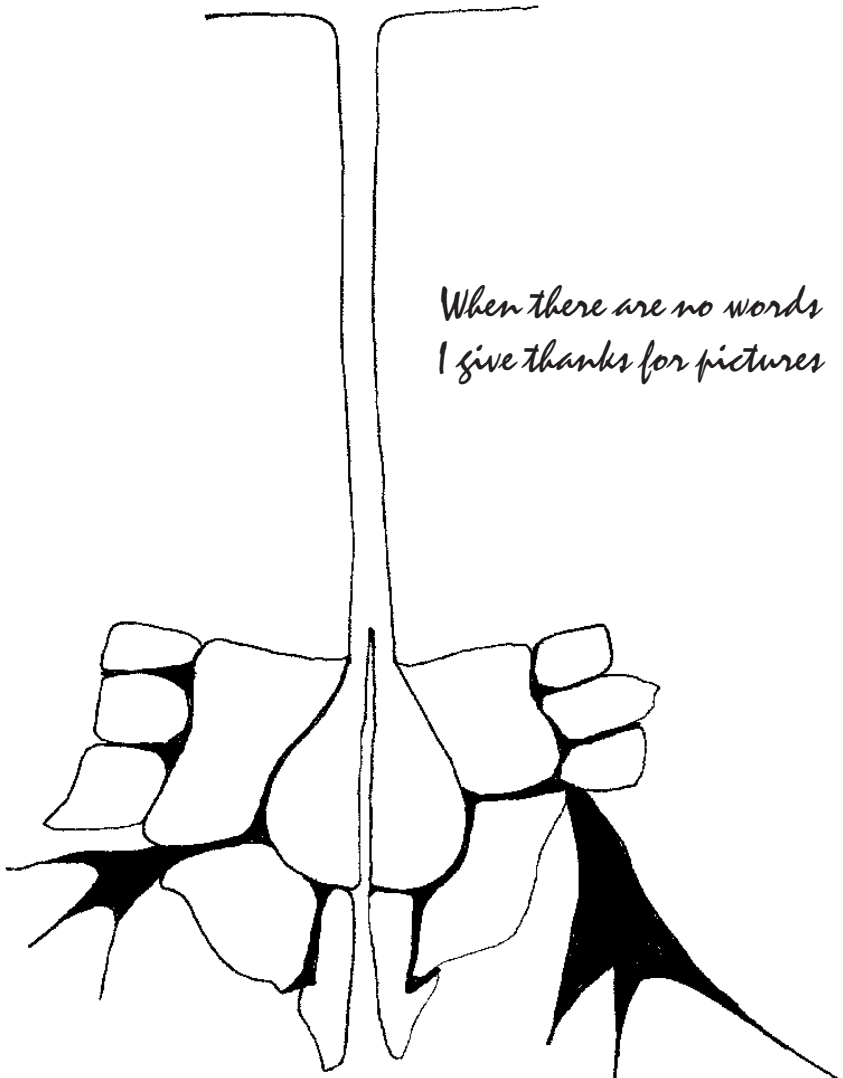
Going to the Bottom of the Well

A journey where rational thought releases its hold,
where the child and the madman play,
a journey I have to make
where thorns tear at illusions,
strip me of glory
and expose tendons to a zephyr caress
that cools the burning,
a lullaby sucks me deeper into memories,
entrails of dead flowers
and I am alone with the secret of lost dreams,
dead fathers and fear...
tears glisten on the walls like jewels.

A lost traveler
I belong to this well,
the cool wet stone seeps in
to let me know the sensations of a body disowned,
blind, fingertips and hands are tendrils
that move along walls worn by the elements,
carefully etched with the knowledge of lifetimes,
the weight of flesh,
the truth about wells...
A sarcophagus reeking with the safe smell of earth,
its dank source fills my nostrils
from some inner core,
reaching dewdrops and roots,
unknown sap nourishes me.

“You’ll change,”
a mother’s warning,
a curse transformed by damp sweetness on my body,
I move deeper in the well
that scrapes my secret places,
scribed hieroglyphs remind my cells to dance an ancient rhythm,
a primal formless drum
repeating orgasms in my bones...
I am...I am earth, shadows of insect larvae
and the hot breath of legends,
helpless and infinite
I am still thirsty...
(Is it possible that we are born whole
and awareness is at the bottom of the well?)





*When there are no words
I give thanks for pictures*

*...and when there are no pictures
I give thanks for words.*

Which way to go? The Way of the Heart



I am honoring my own
starlight



"To face the Dark Goddess is to undertake a process of re-unification, a bringing together of a very ancient sundering." Patricia Reis, "Facing Medusa: The Dark Goddess of Creativity,"
Common Boundary, 1987

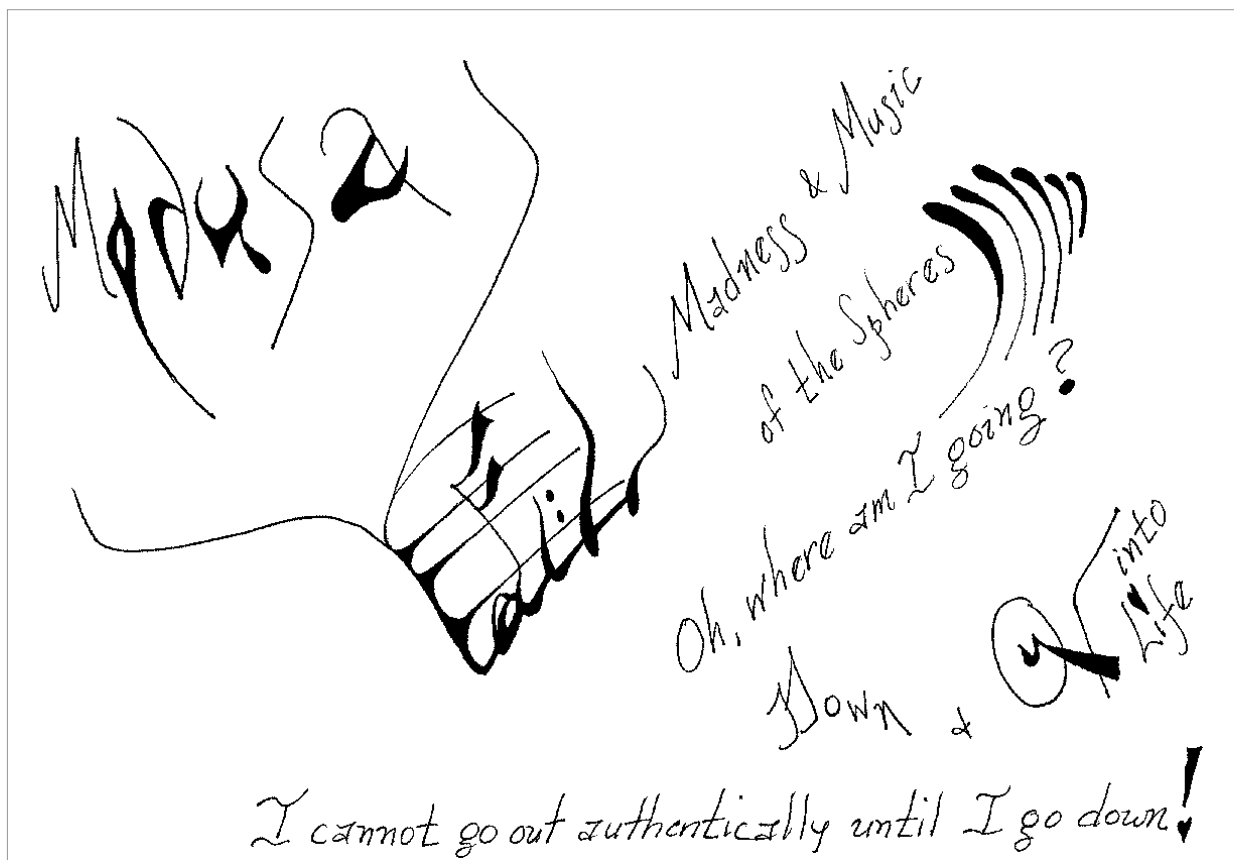


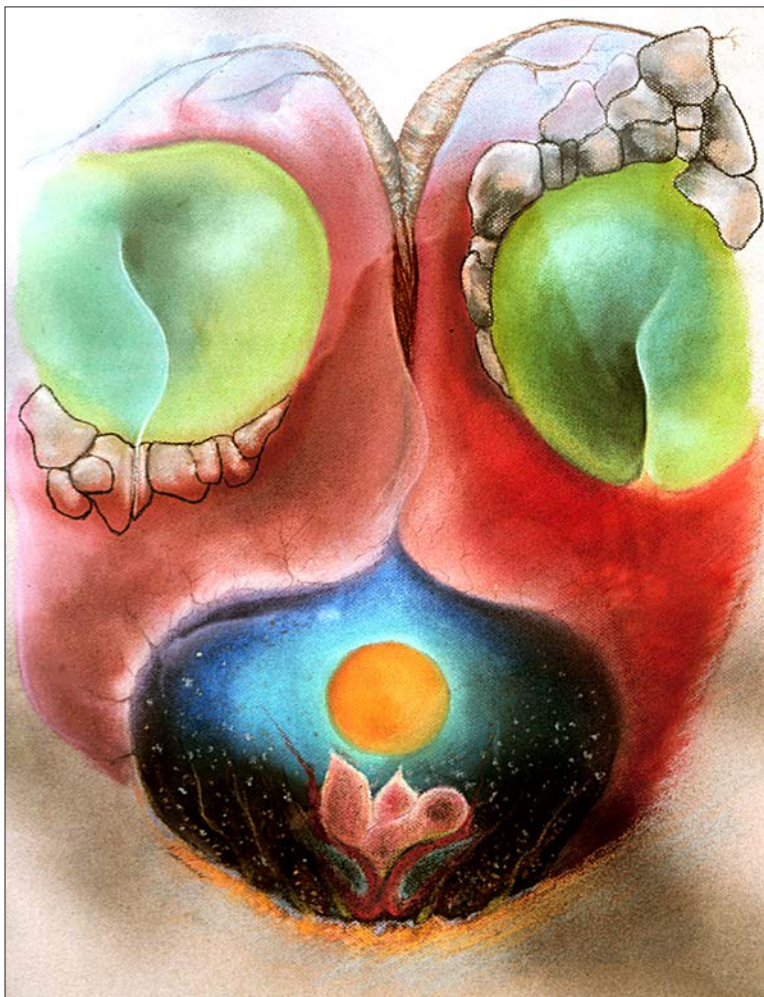
Dark Goddess,
inner world of stone and water
beyond the wall calls the realm of the Great Mother...
I crawl on my belly under the Earth,
deep in the heart of the Dark One
who bears us all...In the Great Womb
rivulets run like veins of gold
through Her womb world,
insects and grubs hobnob in the cave of the ancients,
dampness and dew together...
the deep groans of changing tides and true songs...
I need to see in my mother's face
the lines from where I came
and the spaces where I lie separate and whole.



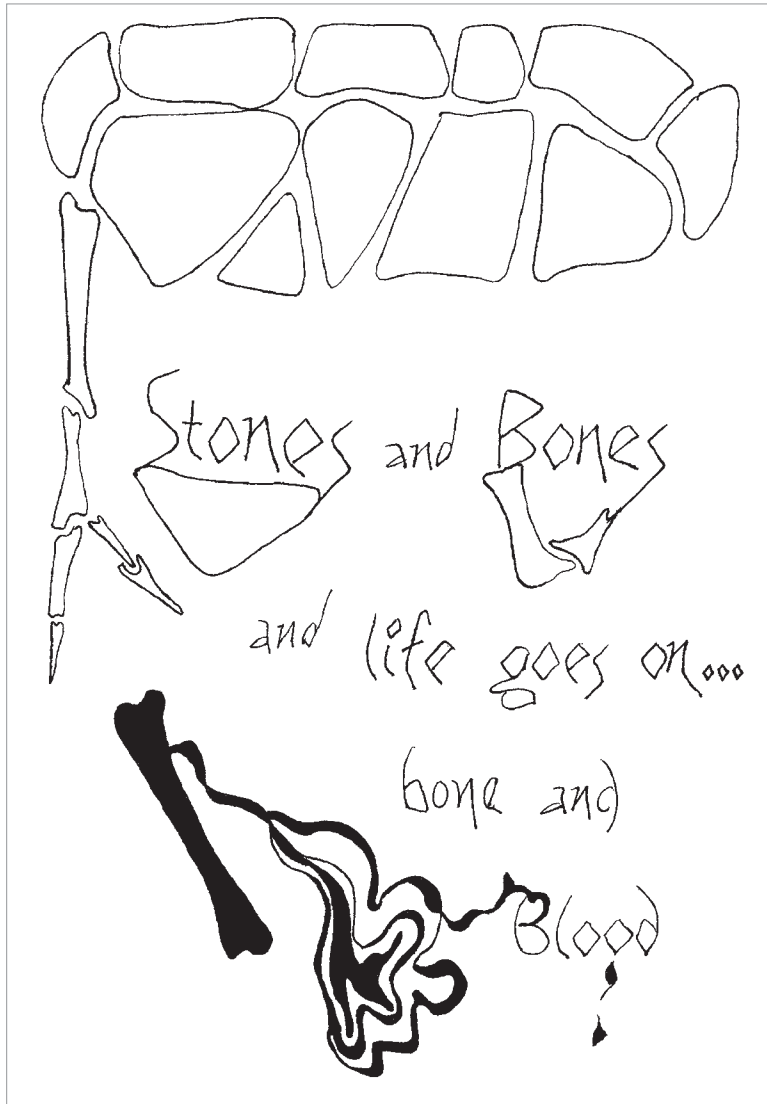
"Today, on both the collective and personal levels, there seems to be an urgent need to remember, recollect and reunite—through the ritual of the creative process—those banished aspects of the feminine psyche, the goddess. Thus, by journeying back through the layers of personal and collective history to face the Medusa, we can begin to revitalize those images and energies, buried in the deepest recesses of our souls."

Patricia Reis, Common Boundary, paraphrasing Meinrad Craighead





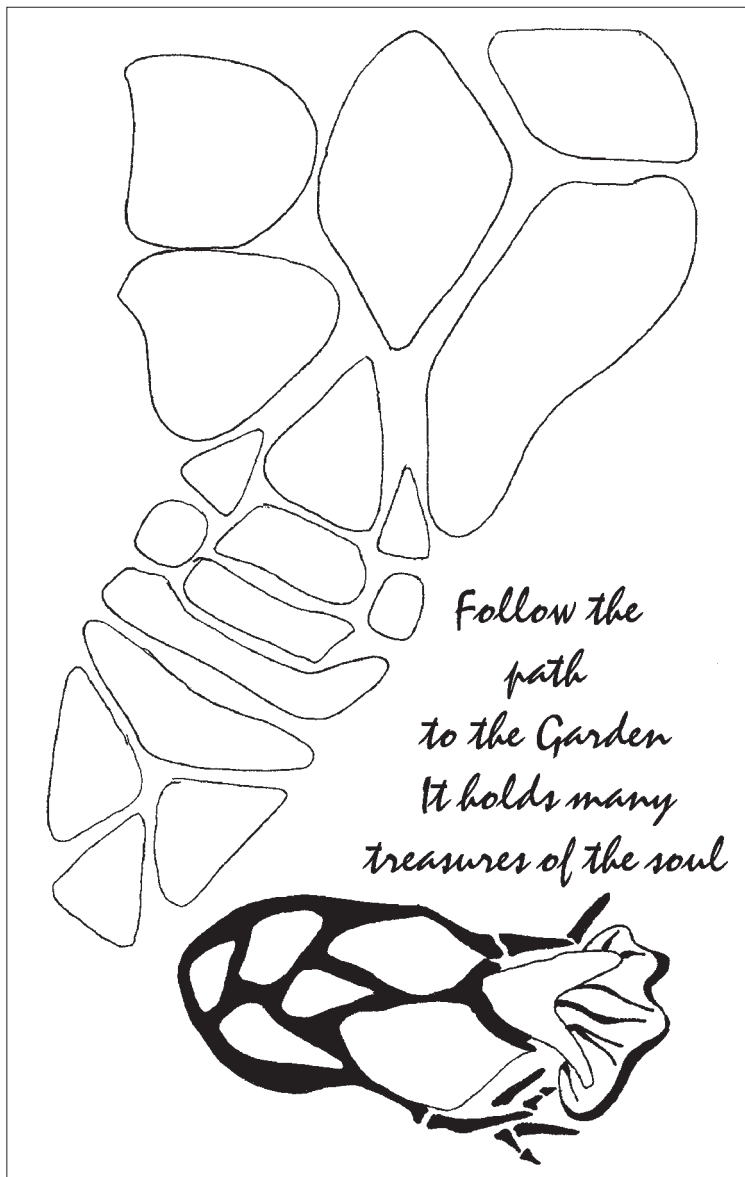
Medusa, Dark Mother Goddess,
your breasts are eyes into my soul
that sing on my bones
spewing gold and light through their brittle whiteness,
soft palms push away the dirt
that has buried me in a too early grave of grey...
I am destined for sunlight.



What do the rocks have to say? Listen to the wind as it moves across the structures of our lives. Wonder, building blocks, strata of history and secrets, she blankets us until it is time, swaddled in softness and warmth, held close to her breast, creases of flesh and leaves descending into trust for what is to come.

"In the garden the soul and nature marry...In the garden, we cultivate yearning and longing and notice tiny desires. Paying attention to tiny, hardly noticeable feelings is the garden way."

Robert Bly, Iron John



bleeding time

vision time



Mother

Roots

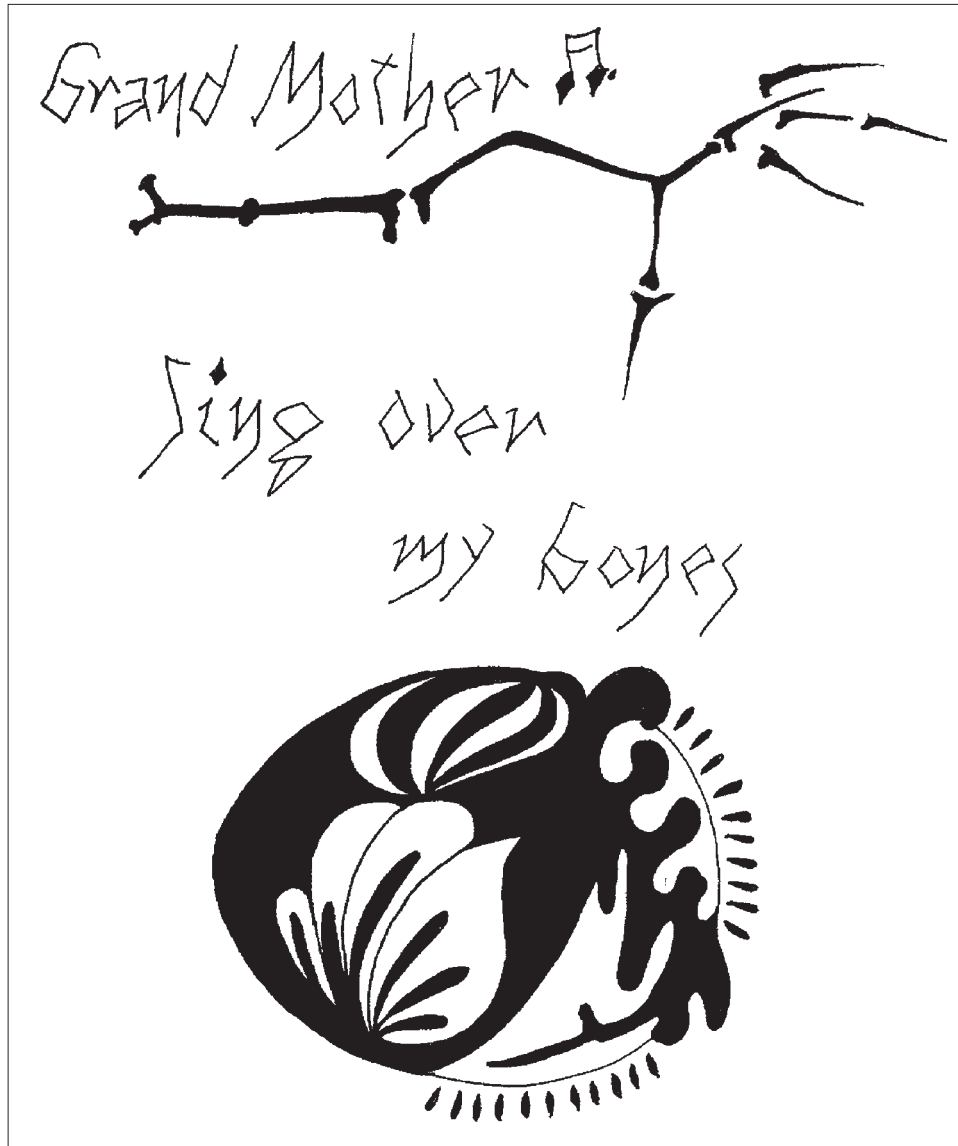
Singing songs

of our

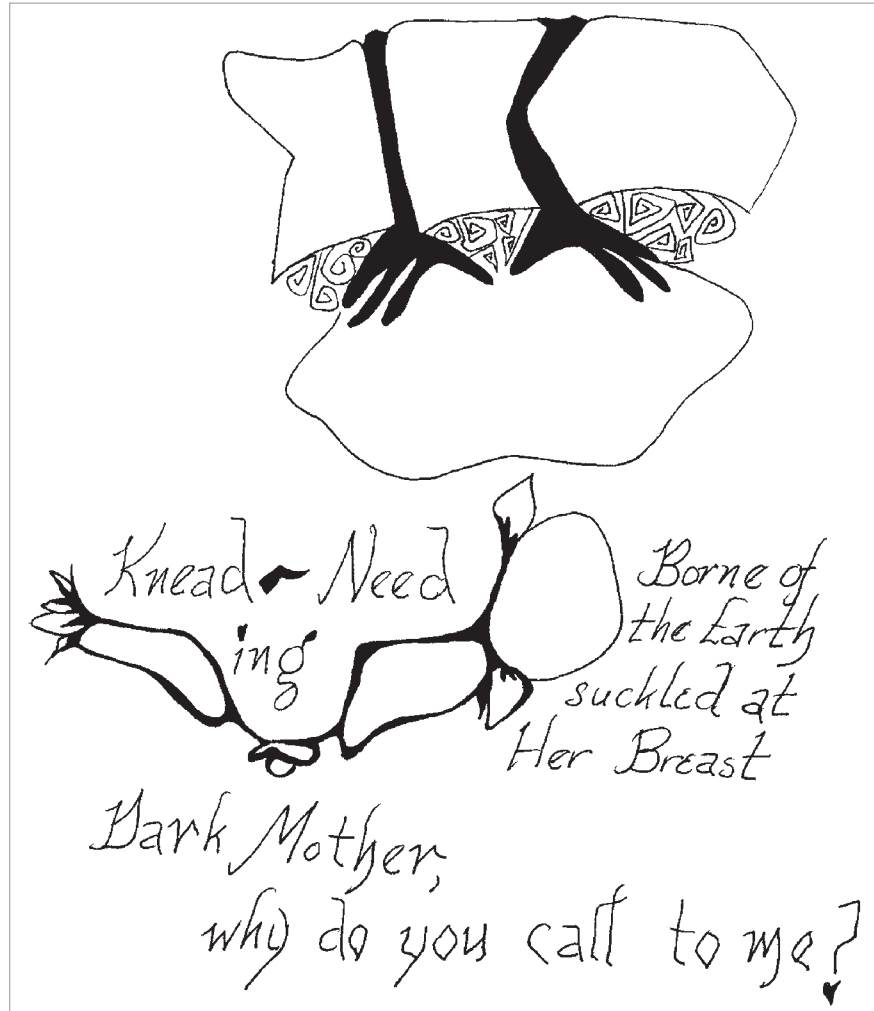
beginnings

wrapped
in sackcloth
and
canonized
with
Joy



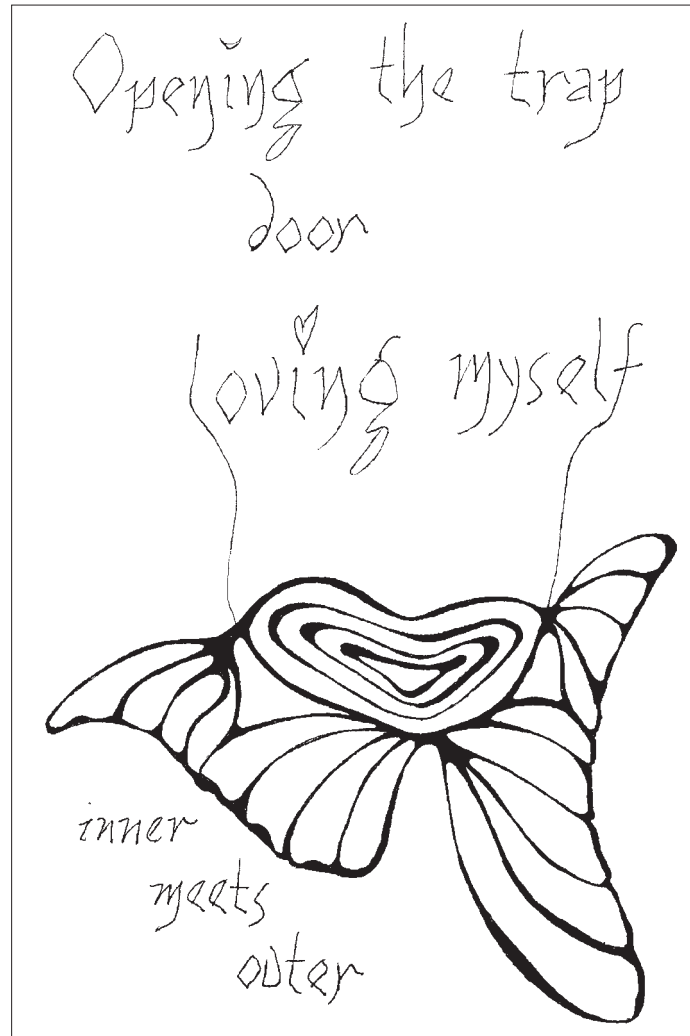


The hills were filled with frolicing song
and the birds captured the songs
and spread them over the earth.



We are grateful to be with the soft rain, the music of peace and weaving, the green of growing things and the understanding that we do not do all this alone. There is a circle of support of all the grandfathers and grandmothers who come before and the soft whispering of the ancestors beyond and above and the swift-footed ones of the lower world who carry our burden with us... Dream, my little one. Allow yourself to be carried on visions not quite formed. Let them move before you and engage you heart. Lift your hands, palms to the sky, for inspiration and let them receive the golden ones, light beings that dance and delight your spirit.





“When we follow the images that rise up from the depths of our soul, it may appear like a foolish path to others, even to ourselves at times. Our promptings start as seemingly adolescent dreams of glory, but they lead to true authority. As we follow this path we become more and more innately who we are because the images that emerge from within us are the expression of our inner self.”

Matthew Wood, Seven Herbs, Plants as Teachers

Creating the Beauty Way

beauty way



*My dream, what is it?
To create beauty...*

Honoring my Spirit



*Stroking flesh, sinew by sinew.
A shell of flesh
Relax into all that beauty as it lovingly leads the way.
It is the Beauty Way.*



The lives of our children are the future of our world. Each child has come with their own unique destiny to live, a destiny that is encoded in their cells that we can help to tickle alive. All that we need to do is to help awaken the messages that they bring with them into this physical existence. That is not a simple task, for there is much energy that moves them away from and distracts them from what they know. How do we rekindle that spirit within the child that has all the messages and wisdom that he or she needs to dance their dance in this life?

Welcome to This World, Little Girl

Welcome to this world little girl
angel hair and soft flesh of life
you are welcome by hearts
that hold you up in their hands with joy,

Yes, joy,

because you are here to be with them,
to share with them who you are.

Welcome to this world little girl
all golden pink lightness
with cells that overflow with bubbles,
smiles and gentle caresses,
like fingertips on rose petals.

Welcome to this world little girl,
do not be afraid to be here
the ground welcomes you,
Great Mother of us all,
the Sun warms you with rays like blankets
and the Trees and Flowers
rejoice with your coming
as do the Four-legged Ones and the Rocks.

Welcome to this world little girl,
you belong with us
and it is your struggles to birth yourself
into being here,
your heart clinging to this earth,
to the sounds, smells and wind of us
that you will give to others.

Welcome to this world little girl,
know that you belong here
as part of something greater
that is moving us all to dance,
to laugh and play with the air of being,
the firm yes of your footprints
on the clay of living says,
“Welcome to this world little girl.”



Tightly held seeds -

*When is it time for them to spill over?
Soon, my child, soon.*

Where am I going?



Knots of power

Woman of the Marsh,

Where are you leading me?



I am a gardener of love.
When I came into this world, no one told me I had a garden.

How do I honor the playfulness of spirit? Everything around me is so serious, so responsible. I do not know how to play. I want to honor my playfulness of spirit. I open my heart to the things that give me joy and tickle my spirit.

Where are you little girl? I'm sitting on a rock, my arms around my knees, letting the sun shine on me, taking in the glistening specks of warmth and watching the chickadees flit from tree to tree. Sunlight is the caress of soft blankets around me.

"You know, you don't have to be doing big things to have fun. You can have fun just being." Who said that? "I did," said the Sun. How can that be that I hear the sun talking with me?

I lay back and watch a piece of fluff moving in the air, back and forth, right over my head. A rock is my pillow. "I am whatever you need me to be." I ask who said that, as I sit up quick and straight. "I did," said the rock. "I am one of the voices of the Great Mother and I have been here since the beginning. I am your support while you live on this Earth and so I am whatever you need me to be."

I lay back again, feeling as though my head now rests on a feathery soft pillow of down. A little chickadee lights on a branch directly above my head and I ask where he is going. "Here, there and nowhere," is the reply, as it lifts up into the air and circles around me, joined by others engaged in similar capricious activity. Lying back again, my hands behind my head, I begin to watch the massive white billows move slowly across the blue expanse above me. Slowly, deliberately, they say, "All good things come to those who wait. Things go round and round in your world and back again. You came into this world trusting. What has happened is that you have misplaced that natural rhythm that you know which helps you feel peaceful, loving and trusting. You learned to move too fast, to only look ahead of you to the future and to miss the specialness of what is right now. There is only Now. Tomorrow is only created from the fabric of what has come before in this moment. It won't really be tomorrow until you're there and then it won't be tomorrow, it will be Now."

"Wait a moment," I shout, feeling an understanding inside, beyond words. My mind needs to catch up with what I already know in my heart. It's funny how much easier it is to listen with my heart than with my head. But I suppose I should also let my mind fully grasp what I already recognize as truth in what those full white puffs of water and air are saying to me. If I act today on what I think tomorrow will be I am missing the Now, the miracles that come in each moment, the tickles of sunlight and wind on me right now.

Suddenly I am aware of the strong warmth of the sun's rays on my legs and feet, almost pressing them into the ground below me. Yes, this is it, right here and now. How good it feels. The soles of my feet have become like sponges, absorbing this wonderful chatter through them, speaking to all the cells of me, tickling them awake. I realize that worry, fear and concern are all future words and have no place in Now. The Land of Now, what is it like?

All at once I feel vulnerable and new, a newborn in a state of wonder about where I am. I place my hands together in front of my eyes, palm to palm, as if for the first time and I remember somewhere deep inside that innocent wonder of discovery. The "adult" in me does not want to admit the newness of this finding, to having lost this sense of simple wonder. I hear this adult voice say I should be involved in more complex things. My whole body recoils from this voice, craving this simple connection as joy food for my cells.





i have something to
say
about the Earth,



trapped
within
my throat

Her songs

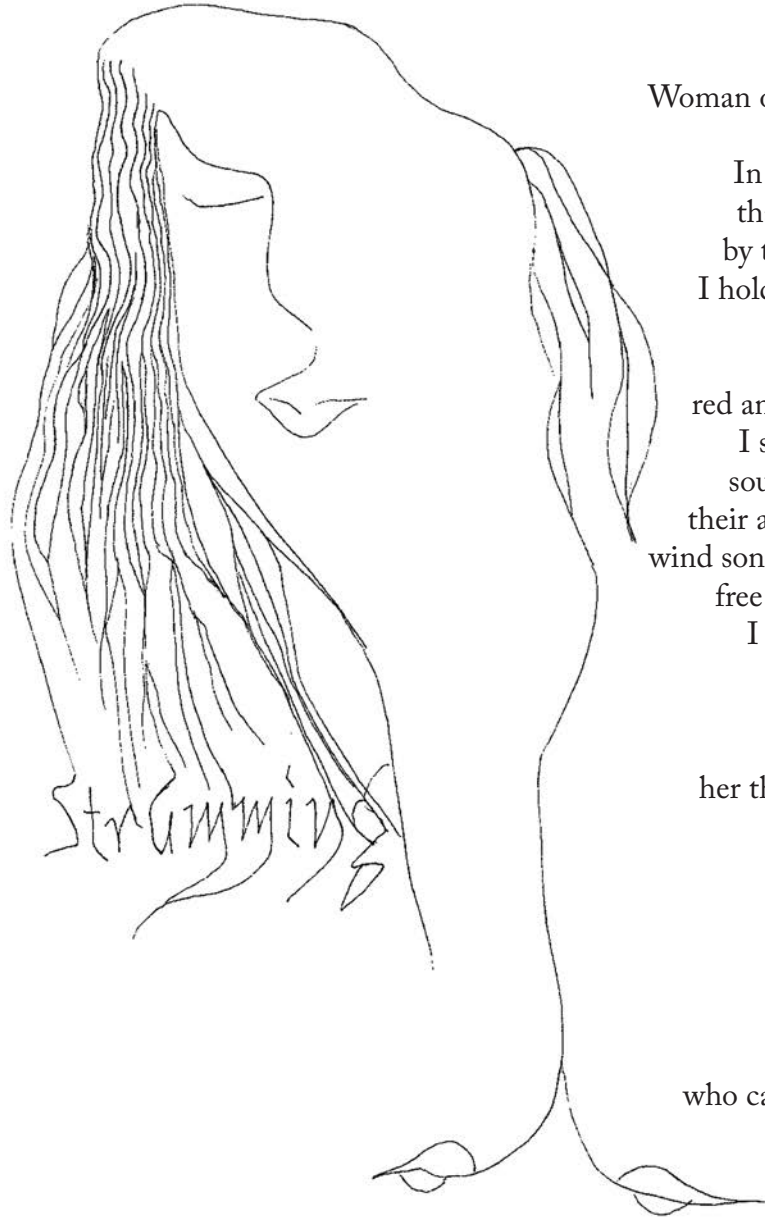
Remembering the Song



Remembering the song, hearing the words, living the message.
The song is a celebration of each and every life form, honoring our worth,
the welcome we receive just because we live and breathe here on this earth.

The song is about connectedness, how each and every life form is connected by threads
of relatedness to each and every other life form, a web of connections.
As we are also connected to that which is beyond, we are also connected to
She Who Bore Us, the Mother Earth.

The song is about the dance we each make on this earth that is uniquely our own.
The dance is our way of allowing our uniqueness to be a part of the whole,
an individual thread woven by our dancing into the whole quilt of living earth.



Woman of the Marsh, I sit in your warm nest,
comfort and love fill me.

In my cupped hands is the flame
that was given to me to caretake
by the Great Father Spirit of Love.
I hold it and watch the flames dance...

blue

yellow

red and orange dancing, moving colors.

I sit here drawing up the sound,
sound-song, my sound, my songs,
their air spirit moves through the flame,
wind song spreading flames of light and color,
free to move and glow for all to see.

I shout, "See me, see me dance
and move with de-light.

She moves through me,
see her in my eyes,
her throne of sound and light dancing
in all living things.

See me, see me smile
from her lap where I sit
enthroned in her warmth,
playing with the flame
all color and light,
supported by the Wind
who carries my songs in his supple arms.



*weaving from the substance
of my being*

Oh, how the song yearns to flow from the source within.
It is a caring, loving being open to herself that gives wings to the songbird within
and is nourished by the freedom.



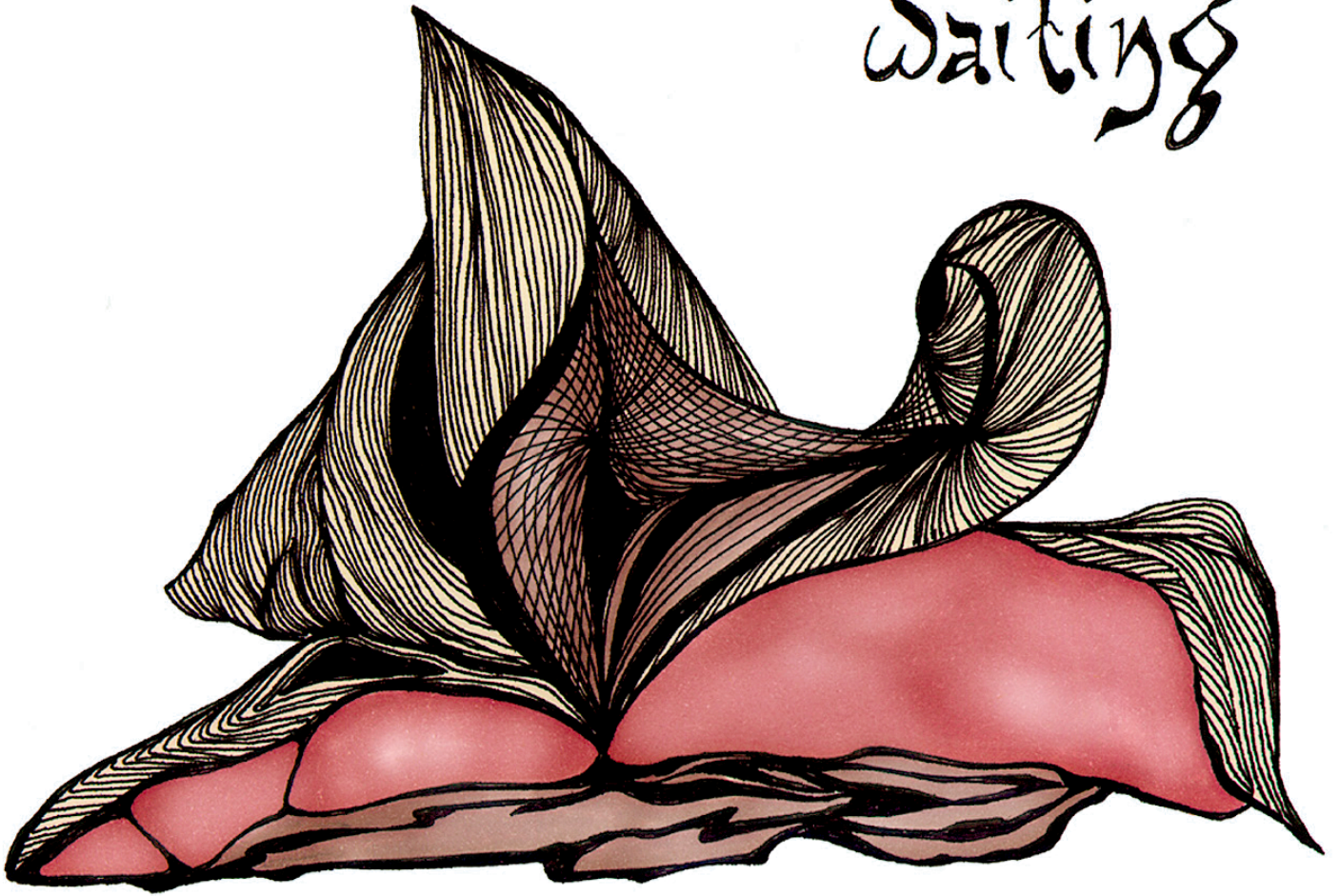
Trust

In the midst of garden green
sit I with hands outstretched,
await the light of little feet,
and sap flows so serene.

Await, await my little one,
the time is almost nigh,
the birds sing of the coming dawn
on your journey to the sun.



Waiting



Sunrise on the Salt Marsh: A quiet holding of dawn, another day suspended in Her Breath, eyes rubbed from their dark bed into wakefulness to begin again.

Being happy alone,
with myself...



I am alone waiting, listening...I am open to a deep knowing...
I am given a heartstone...

“...the essential struggle is private and bears no relation to anyone else's. It (art) is of necessity a solitary and lonely endeavor to explore one's own sensibility, to discover how it works and to implement honestly its manifestations.”

Anne Truitt, DayBook- the Journal of an Artist



At Home In Myself

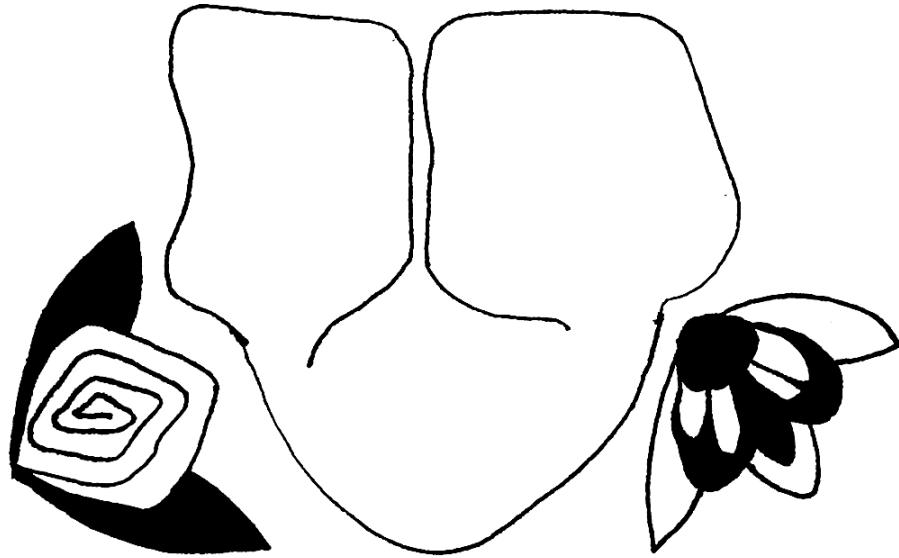


Winter Hands

Winter comes, bone-chilling reminder of the need to sleep, renew the sap that cuddles our cells.







Rage coursing through my body,
electric blue lightning speed,
stomping feet and beating fists
deep throat grunts
beating and stomping round in circles,
a war dance that feeds fire,
blue flames pierce the night of my heart.

I stalk the air
with fists afuming
clear the mists
for my blooming!



self-doubt



fear

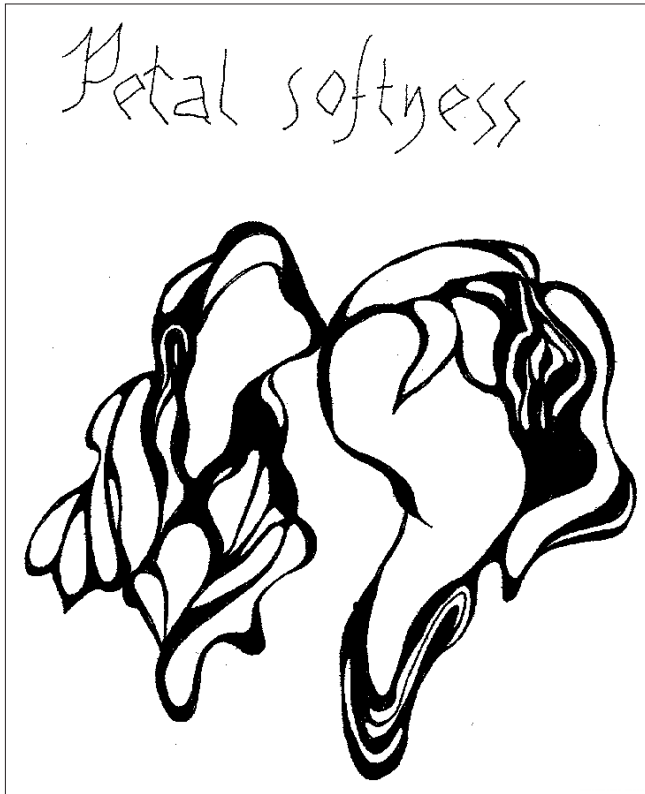


Self-doubt keeps me from feeling the moments. Fear keeps me from dancing with my moments.
...and when I can be as unself-conscious as a trusting child,
intuitively moved to respond in the moment,
I find I am also in touch with the wise woman who knows what is true in myself.



*The Philosopher's Stone-
a solid understanding that rifts and conflicts are
openings for new life to take seed. Use this
earthly life as a stepping stone
to the top of the temple and to the Light.*

There is a lullaby in breath
that inspires in my earth
the expirations of the heavens,
rhyming rhythms of celestial clay.

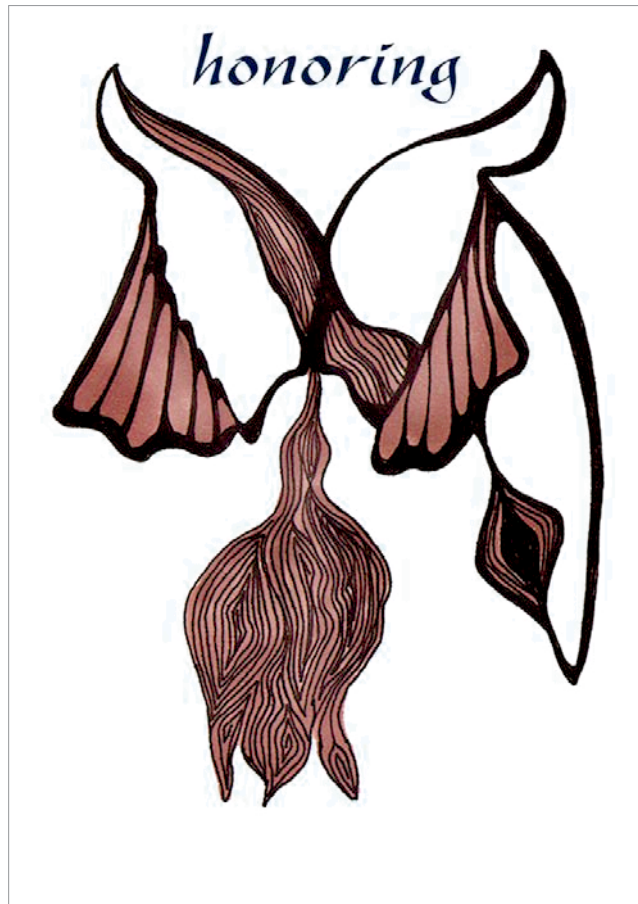


Jump so high, you fool
so we can see the sky
within this Earth.

I ride forward on the rushing stream of words
that pour through me...



Rock me, Mother. Sing me my name so I won't waiver from the sureness of it.

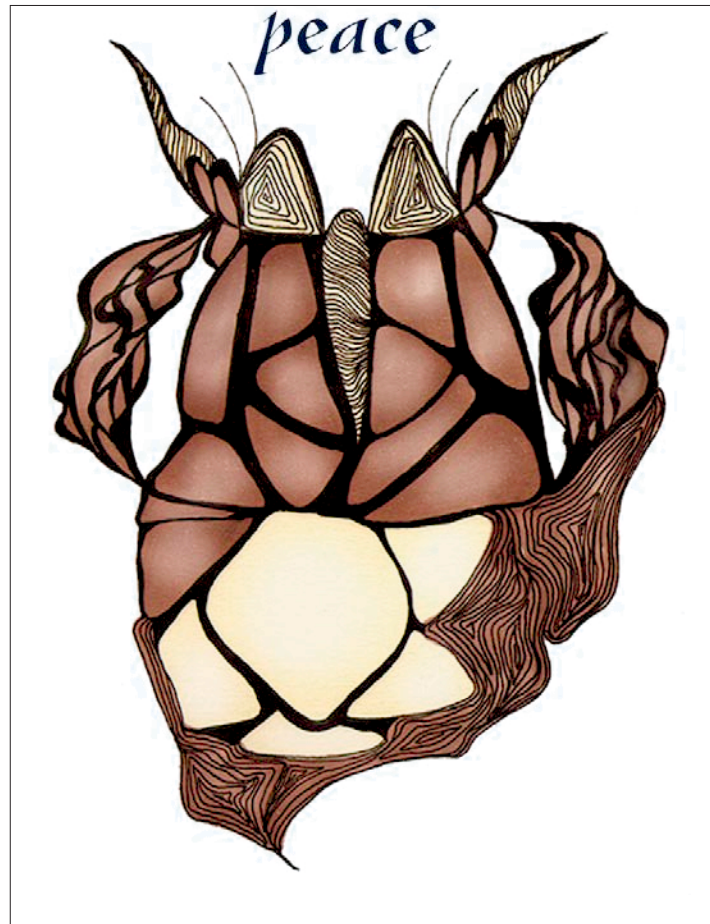


I honor my relationship with you, oh Great Mother.

I sit here by myself and realize that I have choice. I can say I am alone because there is no other human with me. And then I realize the aliveness, the presence all around me, a natural accepting presence that, in Her silence, speaks of communion. It is man who has set himself apart, above, separate from all other life and feels that the only true communication is with his own kind. Not so. The cool breeze greets me tenderly on my face and the birds speak to me. The ocean is always there, as well as the trees and plants and creatures of the earth. They say, "we are immovable, constant companions." And the Sun warms me. What do I share with them?

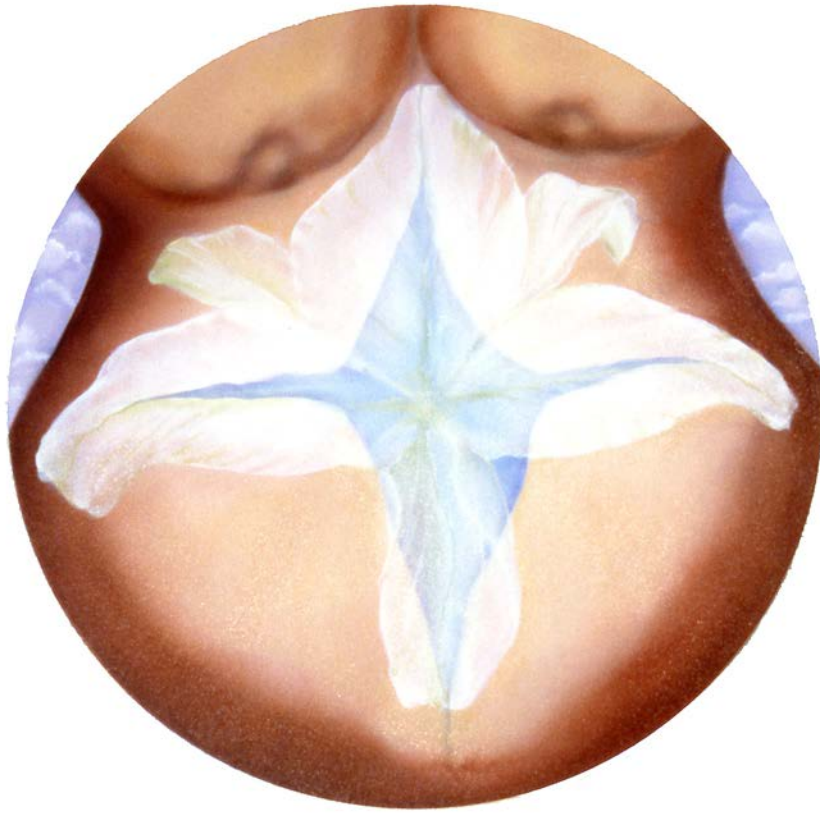


"The first peace, which is the most important, that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us." Black Elk



Come close to my breast and I will share with you the secret beating steady within me. It is one and whole and leads us away from conflict to peace. Everyone wants to belong to one's homeland and to know that one is safe within. It is a longing that beats within the depth of each living being. We have not understood the sounds of its message for we have tried to understand it only with our minds. Its resonance moves through our hearts and knows no artificial boundaries in the physical world. Home is a boundless place, open and free.



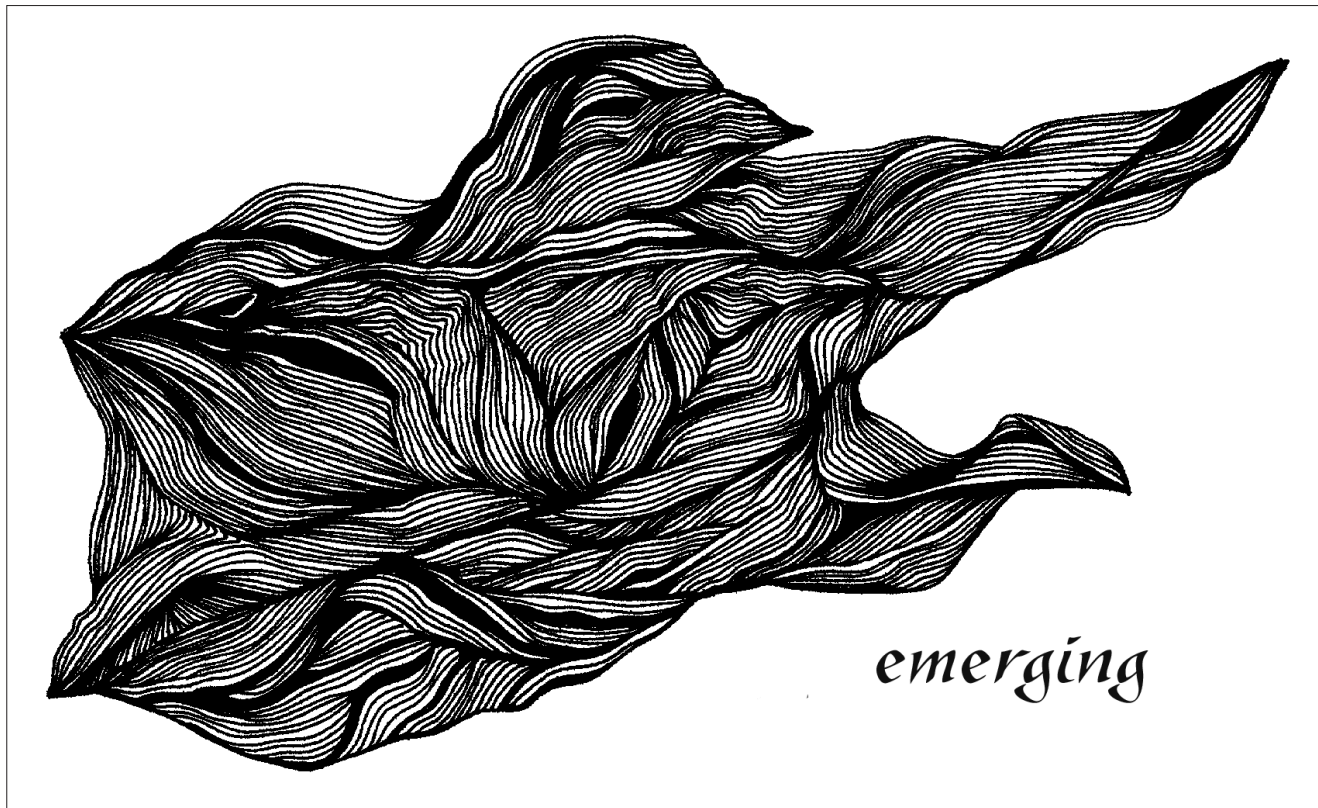


Held by the Earth
the secrets of the garden,
growing takes time,
organic hours, minutes, seconds.
Seasons of decay and nourishment
here by the Woman of the Marsh,
stroking mystery with my finite living,
opening to life beyond the veil,
honoring the unborn potential,
potent point of beginning,
over and over again.



Dreams Develop in Darkrooms

A frightened child lies shivering alone in bleak, enclosed surroundings, cold, damp, alone with the beating of her heart, Anne Frank in her attic, an Egyptian initiate buried alive in an underground crypt... knowing that her personal self is unable to move out with her own strength, and vaguely, that something, someone larger than herself is needed. A small light shines in her heart as it beats, solitary. I want to stay in the dark room and see what develops. What comes from darkness? Sound, life, seeds, rhythm, feelings. I fear, if I stay in the dark, nothing will come and so I push out with my fear. I am reminded of those times when as I lay in bed waiting for sleep and dreams...I love my dreams, rich and colorful... Dreams develop in darkrooms.



"The return to the wildish state periodically is what replenishes her psychic reserves for her projects, family, relationships and creative life in the topside world."

Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estes,
Women Who Run With the Wolves

*Lean on me
when you're not strong...*



And She asks, as a child would...
where, oh where, oh where are you going?
Do you have a little time to be with me,
to play, *rejoice*, listen and hear,
commune with me, tune to me
just for a little while,
so when you return to your important world
you will be refreshed, relaxed, retouched
by She who birthed you and nurtured you
from your first breath.



Drawing forth the earth,
de-light...
an empty basket awaits the green
of all the little things that
light the way with laughter, glee
and grasses wet with rain,
dew of gentleness...
the long-legged egret's
shaggy majesty upon the rocks...
the iridescence of dragonfly wings...
the spirit child waiting
to become whole again.
I am looking for my child,
has anybody seen her?



Listen to the Marsh Sing

"It is the wild singing we are after.. When a woman speaks her truth, fires up her intention and feeling, stays tight with the instinctive nature, she is singing, she is living in the wild breath-stream of the soul."

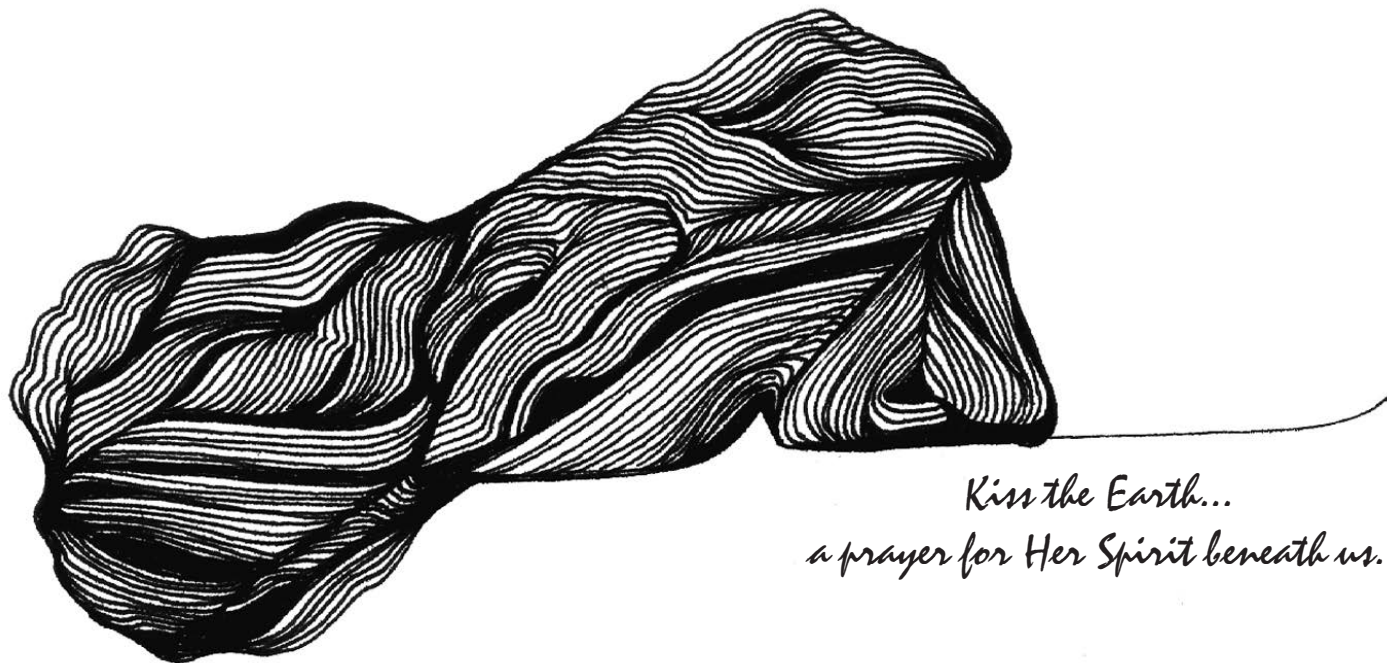
Clarissa Pinkolo Estes, Ph.D., Women Who Run With the Wolves



There was once a little girl who felt very much alone. She sat by a large oak tree that shaded her, her back leaning against the strong trunk. She felt the sap flowing through the strong oak, yet inside her she felt only the steady and lonely beat of her heart. She sat there a very long time, so long that she began to send off tiny roots into the earth beneath her. The wind blew around her, sending her long brown hair flowing in all directions. She thought many thoughts as she sat alone with only the beating of her heart and the wind, which continued to tousle her hair and send these thoughts out in all directions, little seeds falling to the earth all around her. And there she sat with the strong oak at her back, little roots beneath her, the wind brushing against her skin and the steady, lonely beat of her heart. Her loneliness, her thoughts, her fears sent tears down her cheeks, salty wetness that dropped to the earth beneath her. Sometimes the tears came from happy thoughts as well. She would be sitting in her silence and in the distance a young buck would emerge from the trees and graze in the marsh in front of her. Delight would rush from her heart and bring tears to her eyes. But the little girl felt that there was no one to share her world with her. Yes, there were the trees, the birds and other animals, all of nature, but no one like her. And so the longing would bring tears to her eyes and sometimes the briny wetness would fall to the earth beneath her. The girl began to notice that her thought seeds that had been scattered around her by the wind were beginning to sprout and her tears watered them, encouraging their sprouting. She reached out and touched them gently, caressing the small green leaves with her wonder. They were so little and yet so full with possibility. They were so young and yet so intricate, with so many curves. There was so much life in these little sprouts. As she looked and touched and marveled, wonder and delight filled her heart and flowed like sap through her. She felt a bursting in her to share these feelings. She was all alone by the shade of the oak tree, with the wind blowing through her hair and her roots beneath her. Words and pictures began to flow from her delighted fingertips. Words and pictures all around her. Slowly and even suddenly the little girl did not feel alone. She was surrounded by life and it tickled her, sending more sap to her roots that grew full and strong, sending out that fullness and strength deep into the earth. And so the little girl grew taller as she sat with her back against the oak tree, her heart beating steady and full within her. She began to feel the beating of all the hearts around her, other rhythms, different and yet strangely connected. They sounded so full and magical together, all different, all beating alone and together at the same time. Her wonder grew into more words and pictures as she sat, whole and together and alone with the beating of her heart. And the wind carried her words and pictures out across the landscape, adding to the color and life of the earth.



In the Garden, all the air is filled with the songs of birds contentedly feeding at the bird feeders. I cast a nurturing eye over the garden delights. The lupine are just beginning to blush with color and the large bearded iris are almost to bursting as the willow stands gracefully by. The herb garden seems to be more slowly developing as the red leaf lettuce patiently add to their fullness. I have already given a full drink to our new addition, a semi-dwarf McCoun Apple Tree, that I just gave a home in our front yard. It was a wonderful experience creating a home for the four foot tall bearer of fruit, asking questions about what nourishment it needs, how much growing room, sunlight, etc. and allowing the answer to come as I gently stroked her bark and moved her around. It was dance of graceful homing. And then I began to dig her home, clearing a porous foundation bed. I could feel this gentle rhythm being established among the three of us- the Mother, her earth opening, receiving, the tree guiding my hands as to the requirements she desires for her new home and my heart loving the creating. I found it physically exhilarating, removing hard encrusted earth and stone, reaching deep inside Her, replenishing Her with rich dark moist food and lowering into Her a daughter who will sing Her praises with abundance that will feed Her human children. Oh, what a glorious cycle of life as I remember my body bowed to Her, my hands gently stroking Her, my delight in seeing Her daughter at home.



*Kiss the Earth...
a prayer for Her Spirit beneath us.*

“...to sing is to use the soul-voice...to say on the breath the truth of one’s power and one’s need, to breathe soul over the thing that is ailing or in need of restoration. This is done by descending into the deepest mood of great love and feeling till one’s desire for relationship with the wildish Self overflows, then to speak one’s soul from that frame of mind. That is singing over the bones.”

Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Women Who Run With the Wolves

Regurgitation

Spewings, what I can’t digest,
old stuff I half-believed was good for me,
meant for me,
that I took in and made my own
and it sits,
decaying stench of unreality.
Sitting in garbage for so long
I believe it is my home,
and then a green sprout amidst the refuse,
a birthing compost...
Can beauty come from all that brown?
I cry for the lost child and my green sprout keeps growing.

I am an organic gardener
who cannot bear the chemicalization of her earth,
poisons of another visited on innocence.
I vomit out the darkness,
dead bones that cut flesh,
sores on fine linen
and the light catches the dewy wetness of tears.
There is a rainbow growing in my garbage can.

Meet me down here,
help me hear your sound,
oh, voice of me, return,
return and give me courage to sing...
My love, lips of who I am in softness and light,
whiteness turned to tears that wet the parched earth,
rain streaks the pain
and the dryness gives thanks for such abundance.
Accepting grace,
I drink.



Will The Real Me Please Stand Up

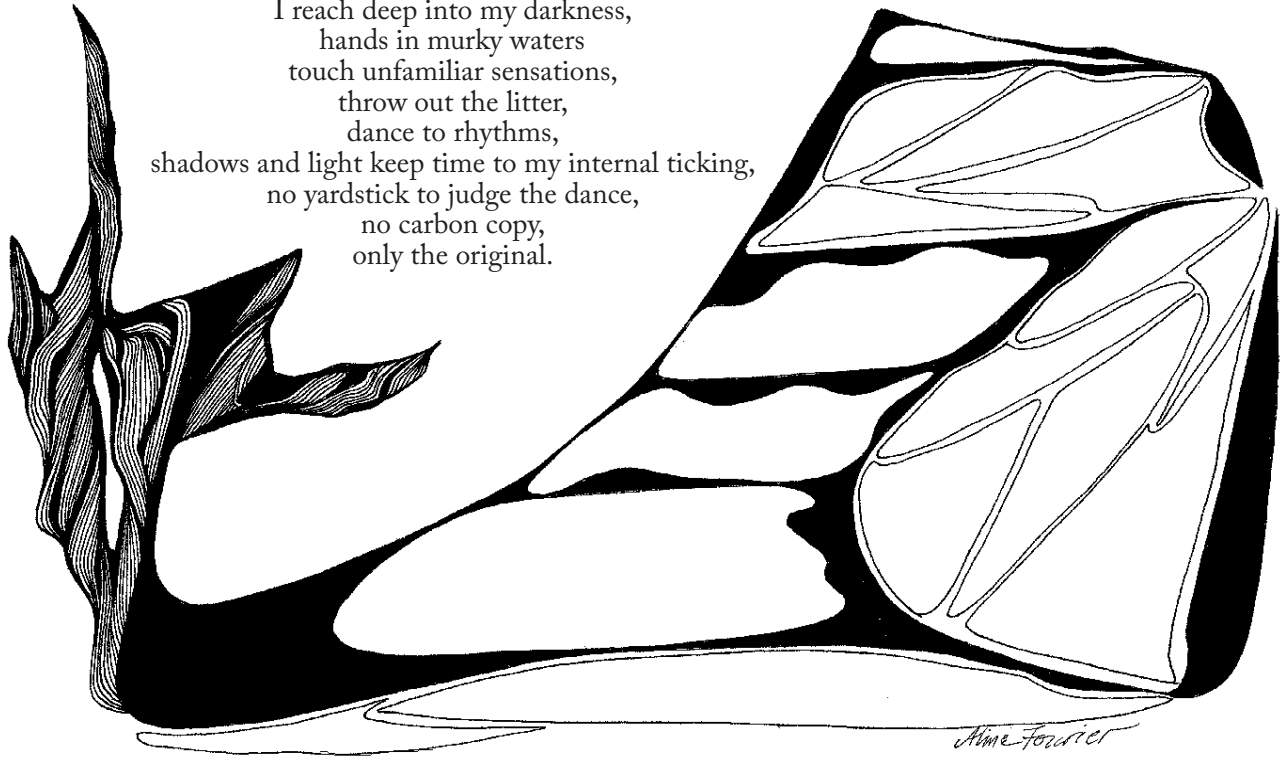
Forty years of travelling, imitating
copying other realities
like a plagiarist.

And now, I yearn, search
travel inside
relentlessly seeking the original novel.

No more fitting into pleasantries
like tight fitting girdles
that pinch and press flesh
into acceptable shapes.

No more taking classes at Arthur Murray studios,
wondering if I am doing
the dance steps right,
conscious of a thousand critical eyes.

I reach deep into my darkness,
hands in murky waters
touch unfamiliar sensations,
throw out the litter,
dance to rhythms,
shadows and light keep time to my internal ticking,
no yardstick to judge the dance,
no carbon copy,
only the original.



The last drops
sing to our bodies
of new life...



"Initially language had nothing to do with words and indeed verbal language emerged only when man had lost a portion of his love, forgotten some of his identification with nature, so that he no longer understood its voice to be his own."

Karen Vogel & Vicki Noble, Motherpeace Tarot



I am back Solitude, forced by Matter to listen to the sounds of surf, buoy-bells and birds, crickets and the wind, imprisoned with beauty. Why do I run from such a profusion of green and perfume to the clutter of confusion and activity? Am I really alone in this beautiful solitude? The purple finch responds. "You are the sounds and smells of the earth, you live in the clouds and the trees and you whisper in the wind." I can breathe easy and be here. The magic lives in this natural world as the wings of the eagle move in the clouds above me. It is the magic of little things.



(Using the word “magic” as a starting foundation, I then stroke it with pen & ink and watercolor letting my hand move without planning ahead and always thinking of the sense / feeling / personal meaning of the word “magic” as I create.)



There is magic afoot in my life. I am in a magnificent garden and the fragrances of the infinite varieties of wildflowers and herbs infuses me with their healing spirit. There are regular pathways that seem to form a pentagram, the star of the physical form on this earth. And then a golden beam of sunlight from above washes over me and my body begins to tingle with delight. Laughter fills my breath and I begin to dance around with childlike glee, skipping along the pathways, surrounded by fragrance and rainbow colors, dancing and skipping and swaying my arms in rhythmic motions of joy and celebration. I lift my arms up to the sky, the heavens, with thankfulness for this birth into human form. I receive a golden ball of light which I gently bring close to me with curious innocence. This golden ball is not solid but still holds its shape from some inner core of power. I feel its resistance to my hands as a statement of its independent nature and I bow in respect and honor to its spirit. A smile of recognition seems to move toward me from its unknown source. I ask, "Why have you come to me at this time?"

"To bring you closer to the Great Spirit," is the answer.

"For what purpose?" is my quick response.

"To come to know the finer art of healing," the reply.

The golden ball begins to circle around me in a spiral from head to foot and back again. I feel an aliveness that tickles every cell of my being. I begin to see colors in all the spaces between things as though there is no separation, just molecules of color, multicolored like the gardens surrounding me, which have now blended into this rainbow-like dot matrix. I look down at my own body and it too has been absorbed into rainbow dots of light. I do not know where I begin or end and yet I am aware that I exist.

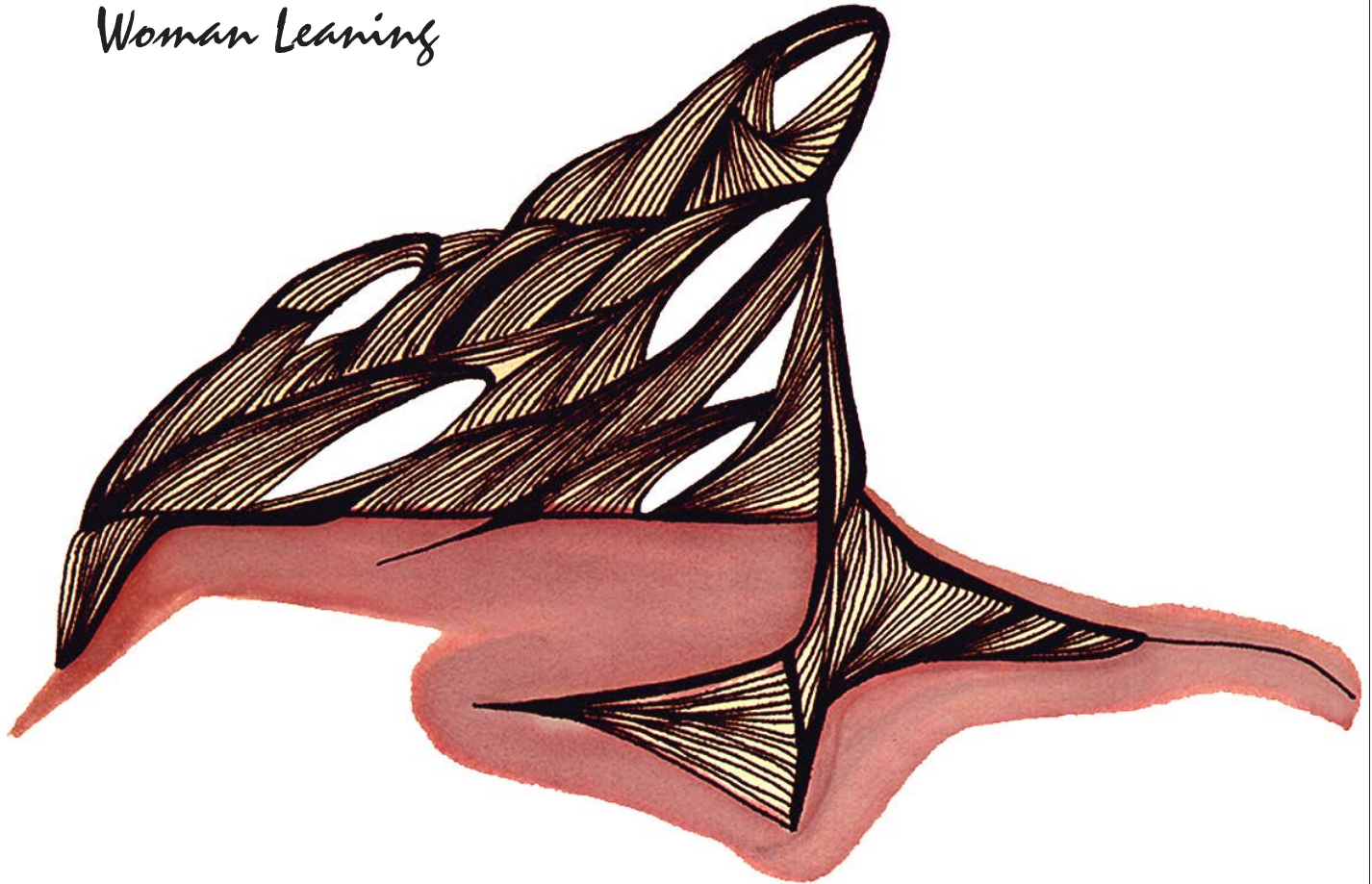
"What is happening?" I ask.

"You are seeing beyond the finite," is the answer. "Knowing and experiencing this you will be able to walk more lightly upon your earth existence. You will not take it so seriously, so heavily. This will enable you to be more open to our energies which bring healing to your planet."

I let myself experience this phenomena, this lightness of being. I feel so different, so much more at ease within myself and on this earth. I begin to rehearse what specific situations would be like with this new awareness. An openness, an availability and lightness of response and more tolerant and accepting attitude seem to be the result. There seems to be more space for specialness, whatever that means. Maybe for magic.



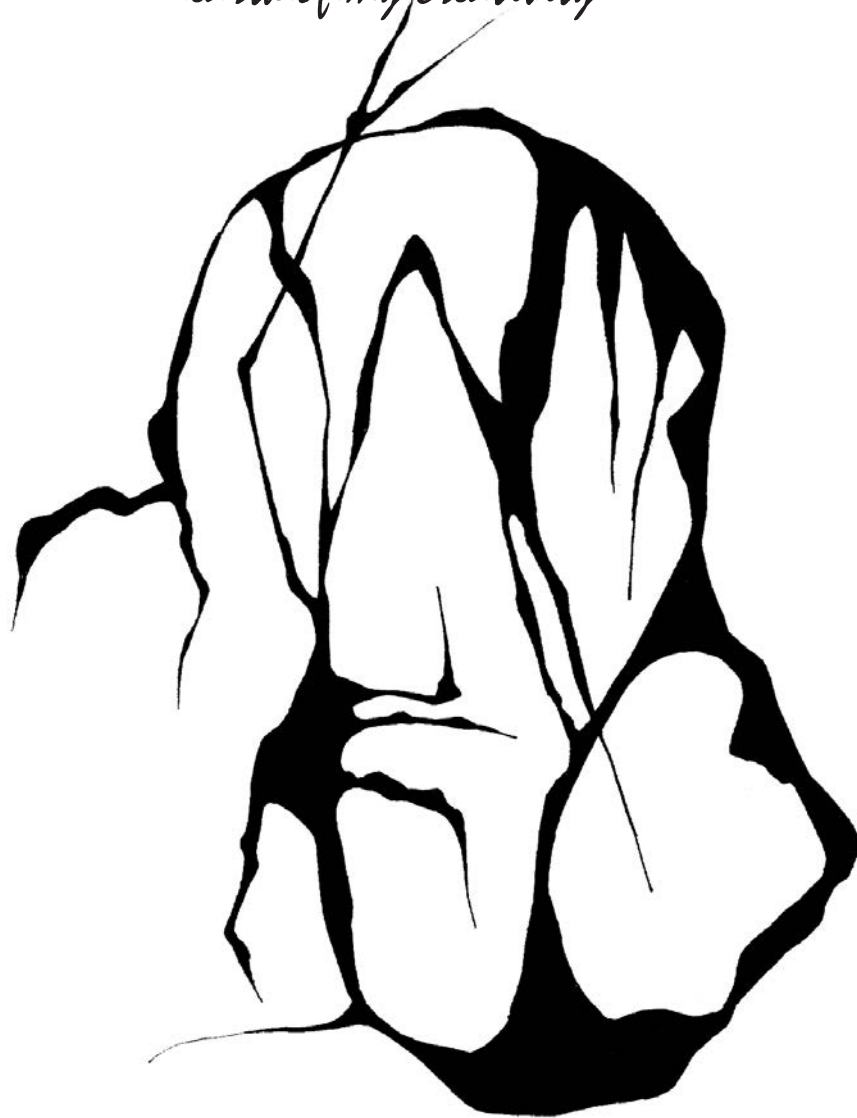
Woman Leaning

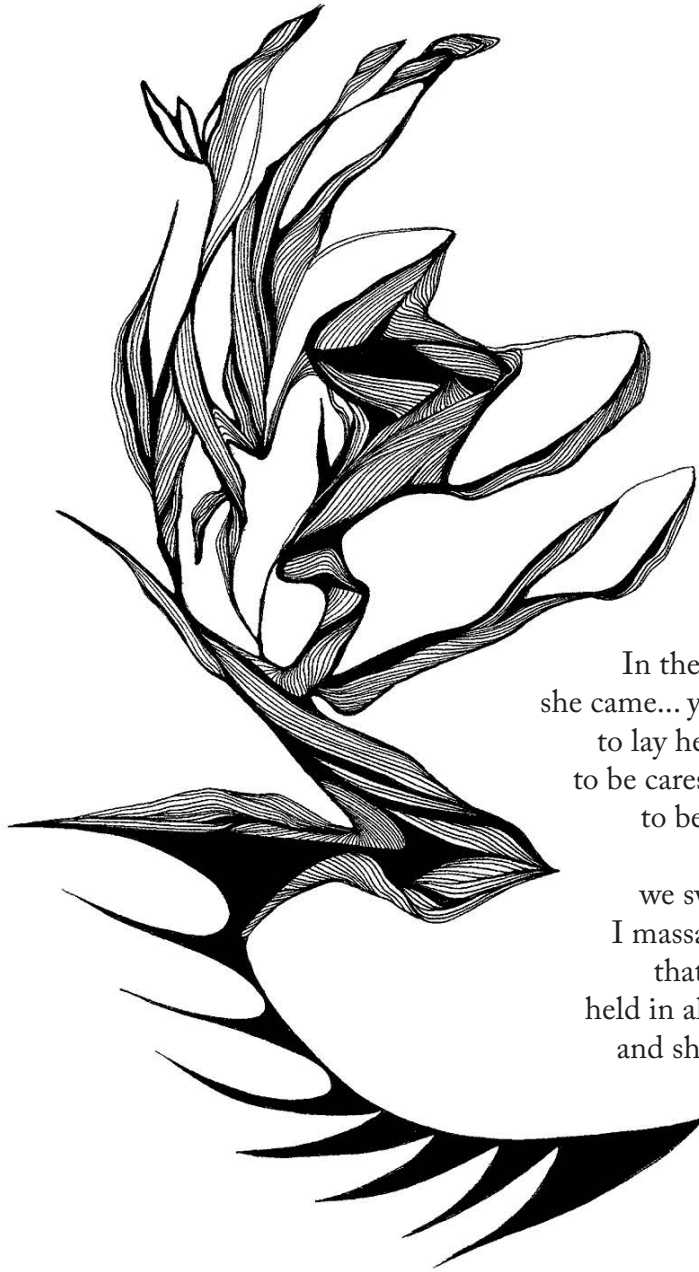


"...to listen and deeply touch the self. As we learn to touch our own bodies with love, so too will we touch the body of the planet. As we dare to allow intimacy within and between us, how can we not open to animal, rock and tree?"

Kim Rosen, Woman of Power

*Oh Grande Mother, break open the
earth of my creativity*





In the forest by a stream
she came... young, barefoot, tentative,
to lay her head upon my lap,
to be caressed, touched tenderly,
to be in cool softness,
safe...
we swam and danced,
I massaged the tight parts
that held the terror,
held in all that loving, longing
and she breathed a sigh...



*Lead me on the path
of making corn...*



It is the little things that hold the joy
the heart in a stone,
the flower under the earth,
roots ascending to the stars,
the eagle suspended, motionless
as the hummingbird flutters nowhere.
Oh, Great Spirit,
help me to see the bowl of creativity at my feet.



Prayer

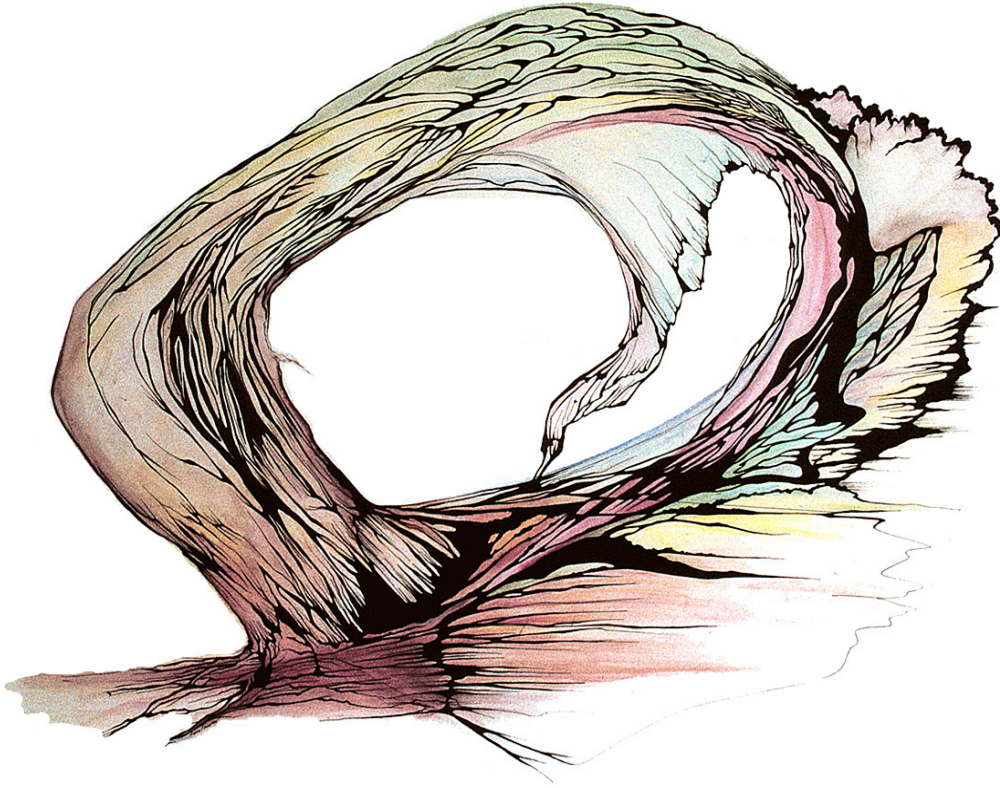
Through each stroke of my pen
I caress even the tiniest creature,
letting them know they are welcome here as they are.

Through each stroke of my hand
I allow the gentle caress of the Mother
to acknowledge and nourish their coming.
Through each line, I open the path of Seeing,
so that each of us may walk our special path
and move to our own rhythms.

I do this stroking out of Love for the Mother,
Earth under our feet, who allows our soul to dance.
With each stroke I trust the Mother of Us All
to show me the way.

folds of earth



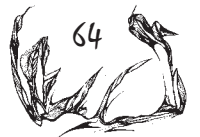


Grandmother Weaver of color and light,
roots of ancient sound that connect word and song,
the song that birds sing and orchids bring,
the rainbow weaver of dew and the darkness of eggs,
under all that flesh I come.

I come to greet the sun
and smell the soil of rich decay,
lay upon her breast so I may live
with heartbeats rooted to her with song and hands,
hands moving to the rhythm of her heaving chest.

I touch her breast, fingers along rivers of hair,
rains of tears and salt for the tongue.

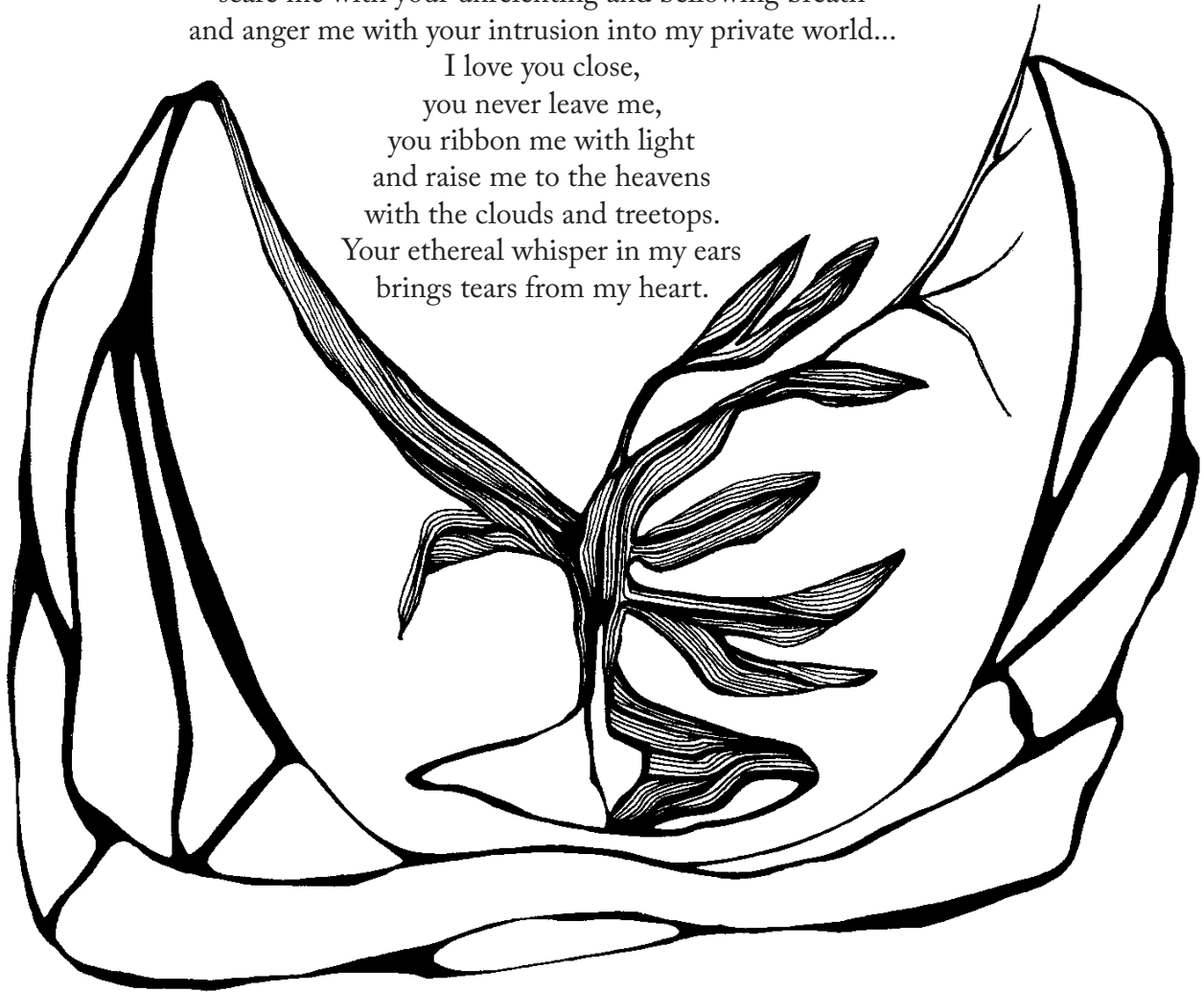
My thirst is quenched with a smile
that holds my face to the light
of so much abundance.



Why am I so scared of your hands?
Maybe I will betray you, your secrets,
misrepresent you,
rush your loving with my mind...

You leak into my home in such unexpected places,
scare me with your unrelenting and bellowing breath
and anger me with your intrusion into my private world...

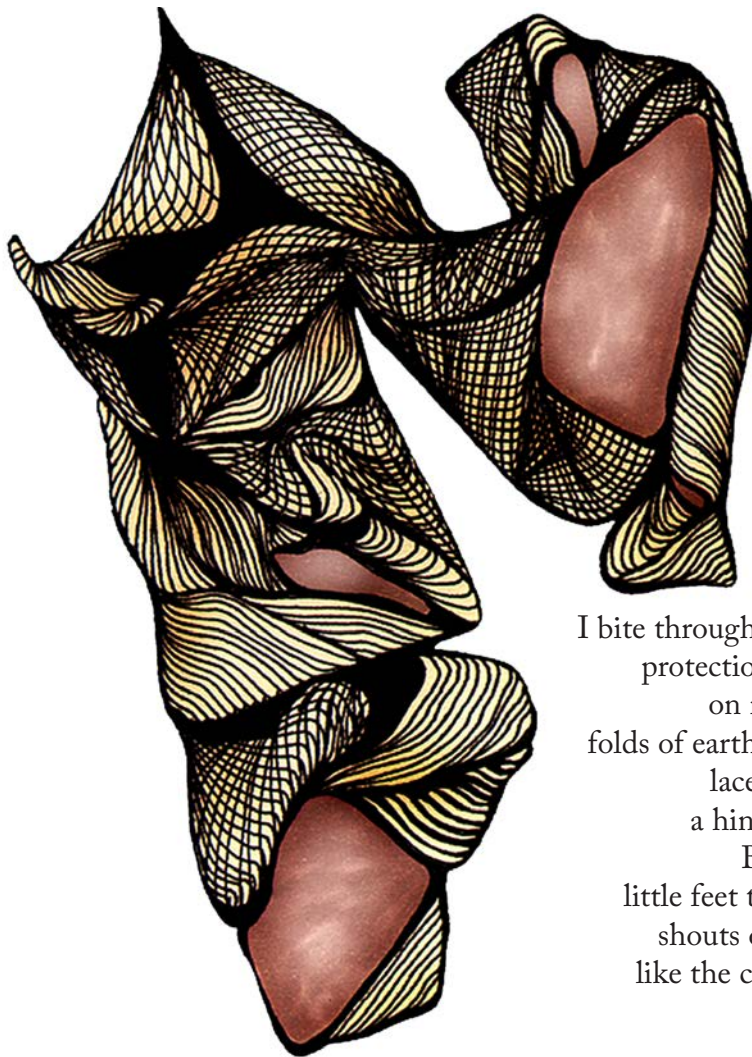
I love you close,
you never leave me,
you ribbon me with light
and raise me to the heavens
with the clouds and treetops.
Your ethereal whisper in my ears
brings tears from my heart.





I am surrounded by a soft blue light that holds my solitude, allowing me to feel comfortable with my aloneness. I am aware of the two photographs on the wall in my study. They have been with me since my separation and divorce, carried with me on my solitary journey. A young Native American girl of puberty age and an older woman who has seen much of life. Two Curtis photographs that seem to be two aspects of myself, the young warrior woman-child and the Earth Mother wise woman. They say, "Keep spinning and listening, weaving the threads into your song. Trust the Great Spirit that growing is natural, change inevitable, and your path an honorable one."





FOLDS OF EARTH

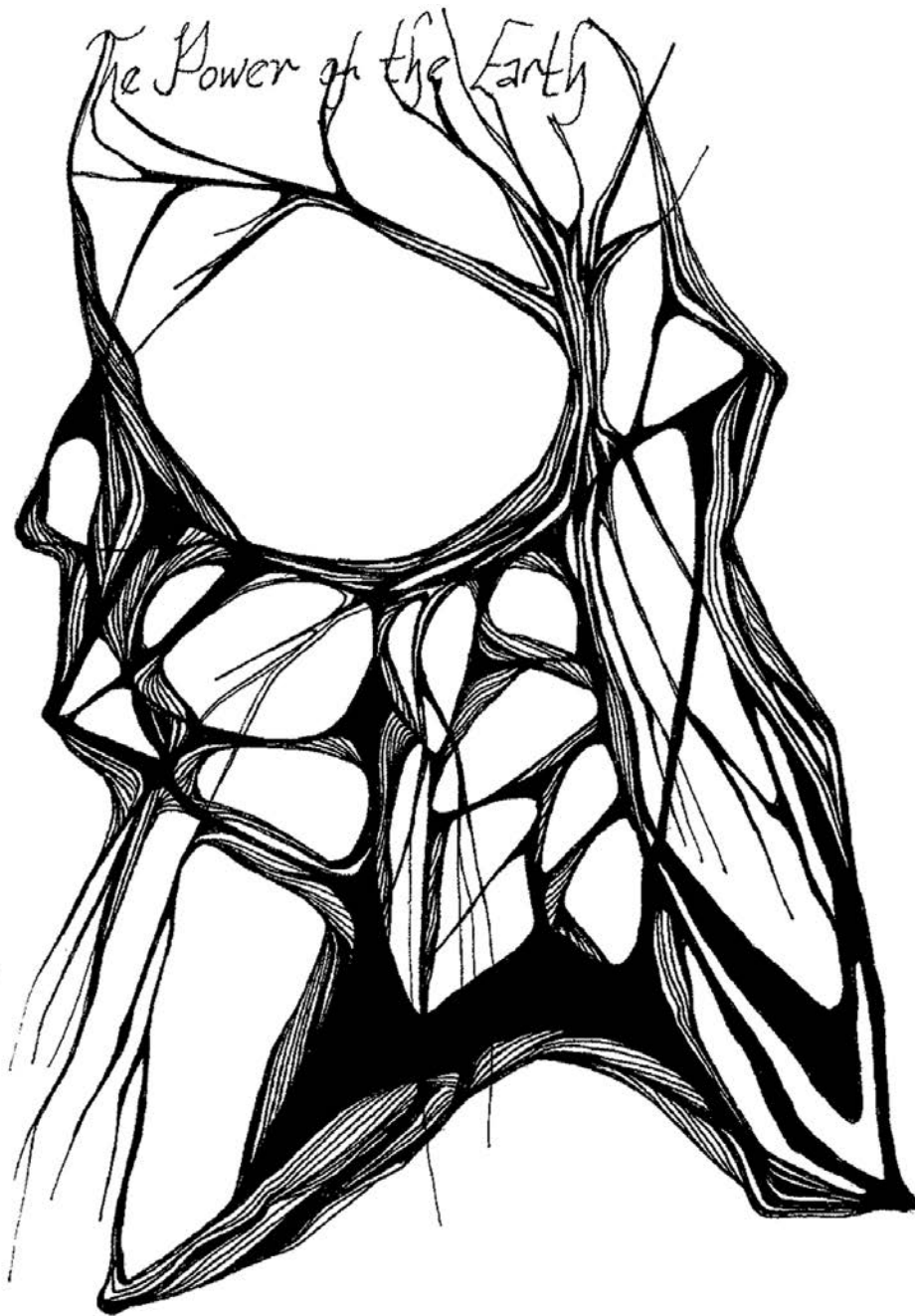
I bite through the tough, gnarled tendons of
protection and age to tenderness...
on my journey I listen...
folds of earth, deep rumblings and courage
laced with tears and sap,
a hint of new beginnings...
Blood flows joyful,
little feet trip over stones in a stream,
shouts of glee startle the silence
like the cawing of a flock of crows...
we are free,
we are free,
going nowhere but here,
going nowhere but here.





Dance into the dark roots of beginnings,
beginnings of color and light,
of rhythms lost in illusion
vines that reach into the heart of stone,
blue water that surges in our veins
and speaks to smell, taste, touch...
our cells dance forgotten songs of connection
with earth,
dark, moist soil mother embrace me.

The Power of the Earth



Over the land the hand of God
moves in all directions,
loving hands
that know purpose and gentleness,
firm prints mark a path
for us to see and clearly follow
with infinite trust and wrestling flesh,
the two forces tangle
in a web of earth and breath
that whispers the outcome
and cries with our struggle
to become mightier representatives of form
that honor where we come from.



Glyphs of Old

I recognize my power,
words and images connected with Her,
the Woman of the Marsh.

Words coming from trees, stone, soil
weave a tapestry of earth,
roots sing through me,
play with me.

I feel a sprouting in my fingertips,
my currents run strong through Her,
pull me down into Her fullness.

I forget my separateness,
the watcher place of loners and aliens.

Roots travel the landscape in pursuit of wetness
and celebrate your drunkenness with new growth.

You have been calling me so long.

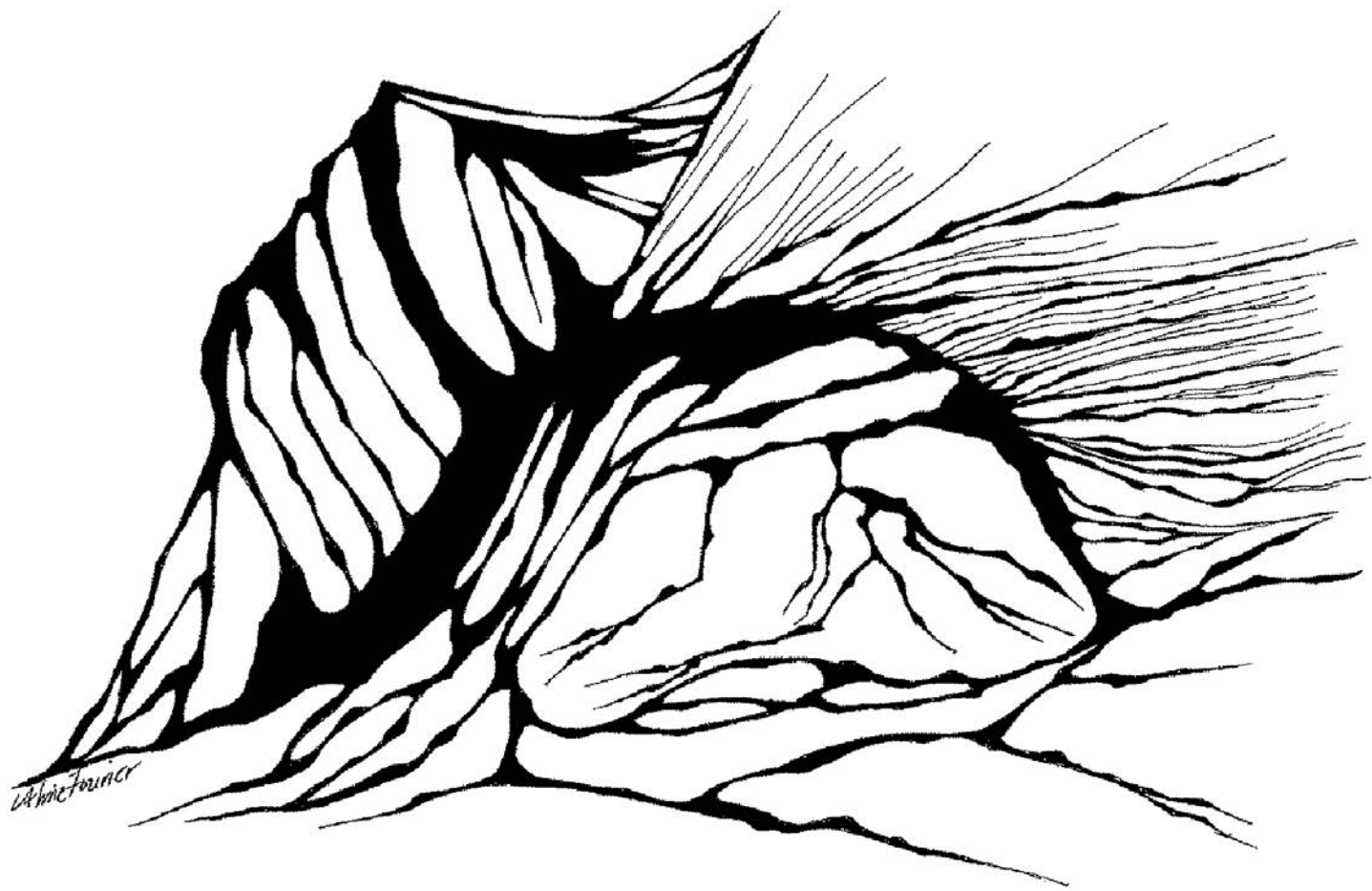
I remember your green splendour after the rains,
the dark scent of conjugal lovers,
your leaves, glistening earrings against dark skin,
take me on your journeys, your unexpected meanderings,
as an obedient lover succumbing to your dark call,
beginnings of fire and ash,
rumblings from the core of mountains, hills, blood,
your currents so deep and old.

I lay back on memory far removed from my eyes,
remembering my power to remember,
to see your rushing waters caress Her brown skin,
Her red skin

Her yellow and white skin...

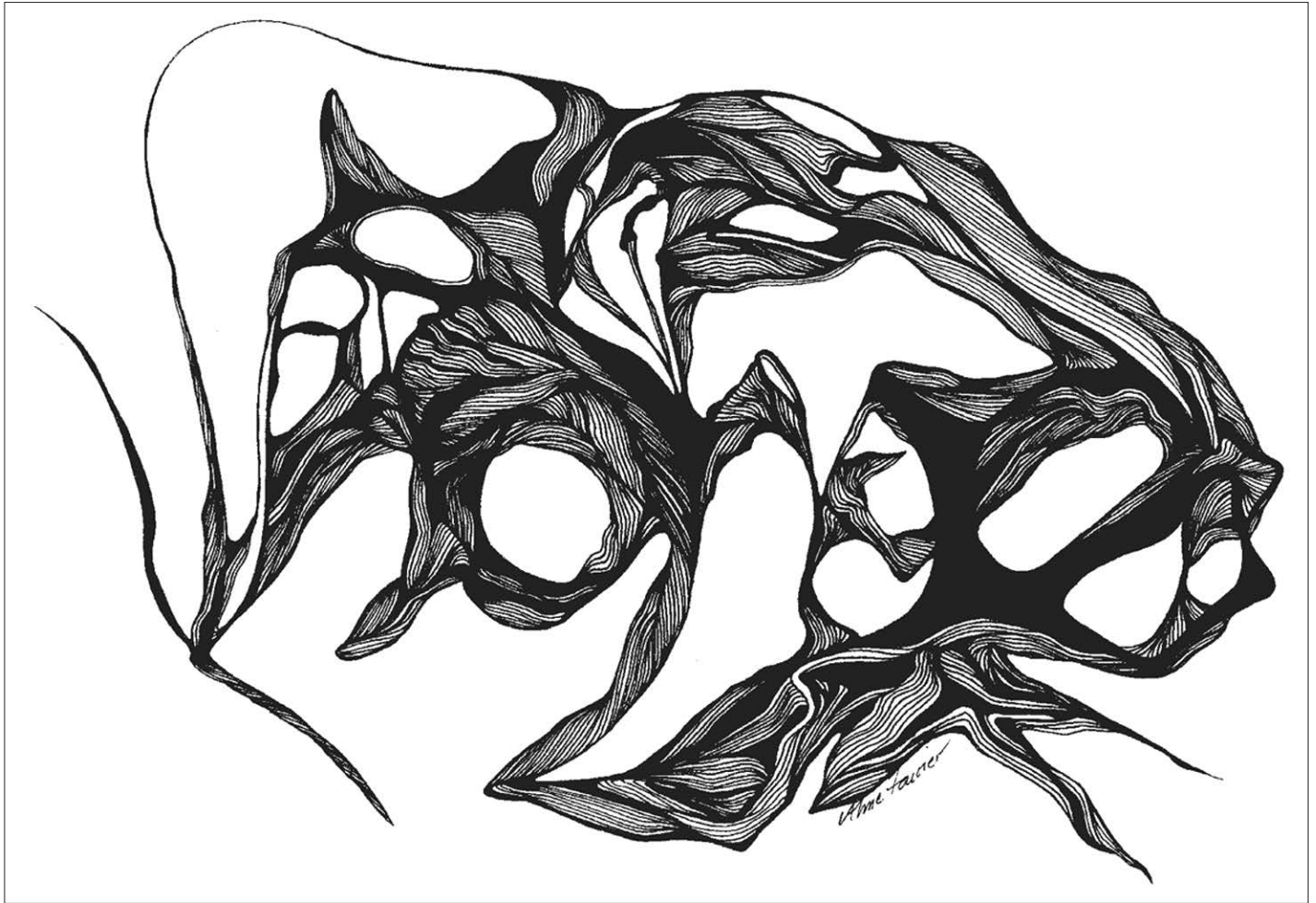
It is all the same to you,
lover after lover,
rushing softly, gently and then with sudden might
across boulders, hard encrusted spots,
softening,
eroding away the roughness.





Mind, do not be moved by
the distractions of the world
to stray and take me from my beloved.
Let me be alone with you,
butterfly borne among the stones,
where I am free to wander,
play with my moving, gliding strokes
and dance on the page...
my own dance,
movements from lifetimes past,
magic moving through my hands
like silt among the stars...
I want to be a careful lover,
to move slowly, listening
to your responding breath,
your heart singing...
I want to stay with you,
discover your deeper places
where you hide from most of the world...
I will touch you gently there,
so you will open a pinata of golden nectar
and infinite specks of dust.
Open, spread your wings and fly...
fly, fleshy splendour
destined for sunlight.

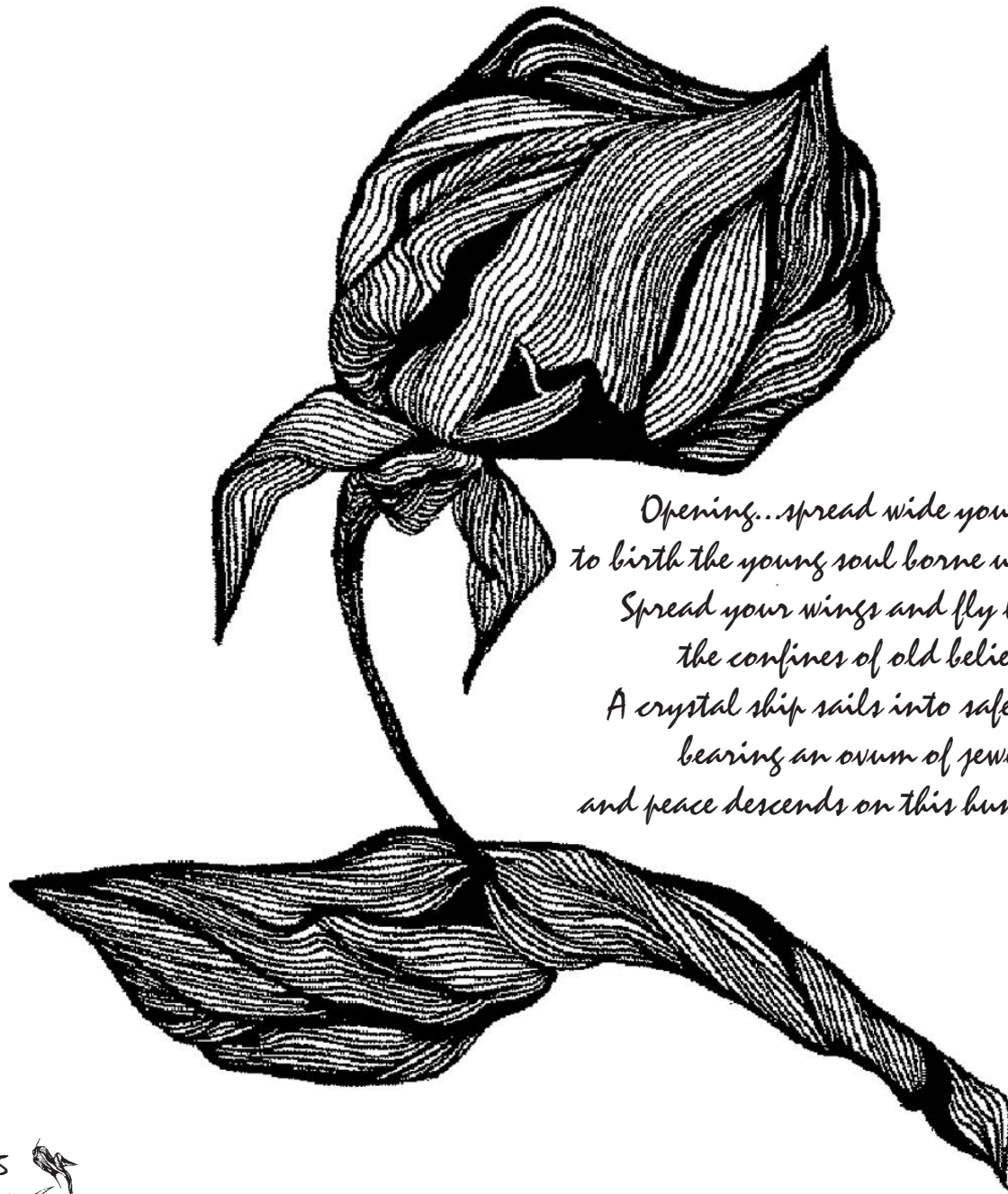




“Tools of a ‘real woman’: Her knife symbolizes her insight, her willingness and ability to cut away the superfluous, making clear endings and carving new beginnings. Her fire-making declares her ability to rise from failure, to create passion in her own behalf, to burn something to the ground if necessary. Her stone carvings embody her memory of her own wild consciousness, her union with the natural instinctual life.”

Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Women Who Run With the Wolves

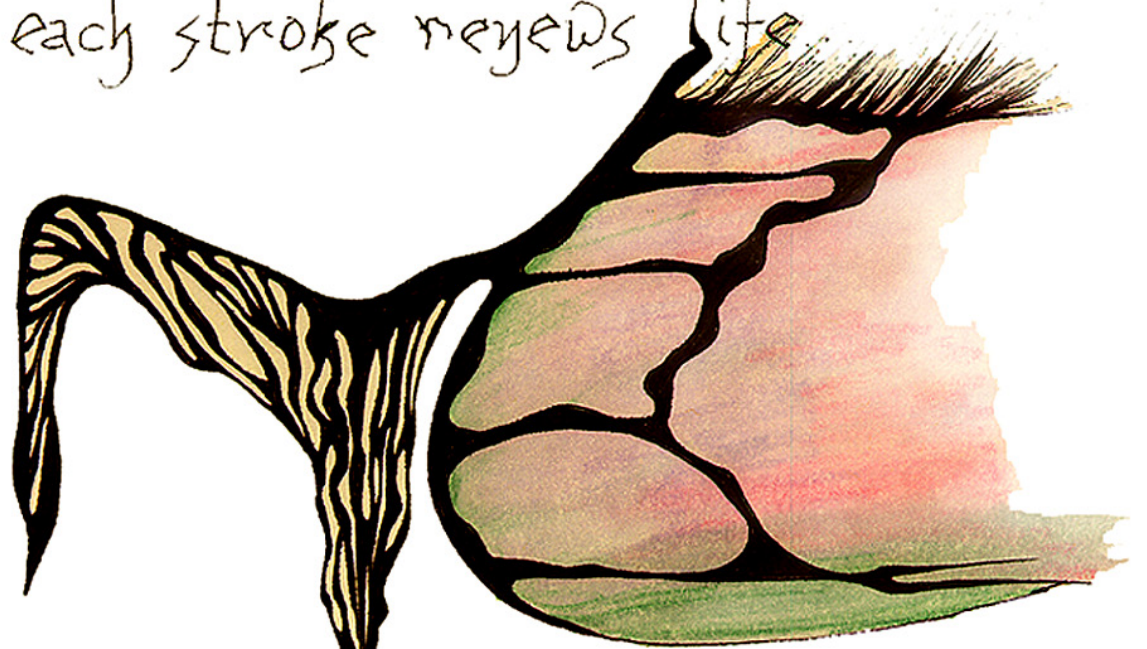




*Opening...spread wide your legs
to birth the young soul borne unto itself.
Spread your wings and fly beyond
the confines of old beliefs.
A crystal ship sails into safe harbor
bearing an ovum of jewels
and peace descends on this hungry soul.*



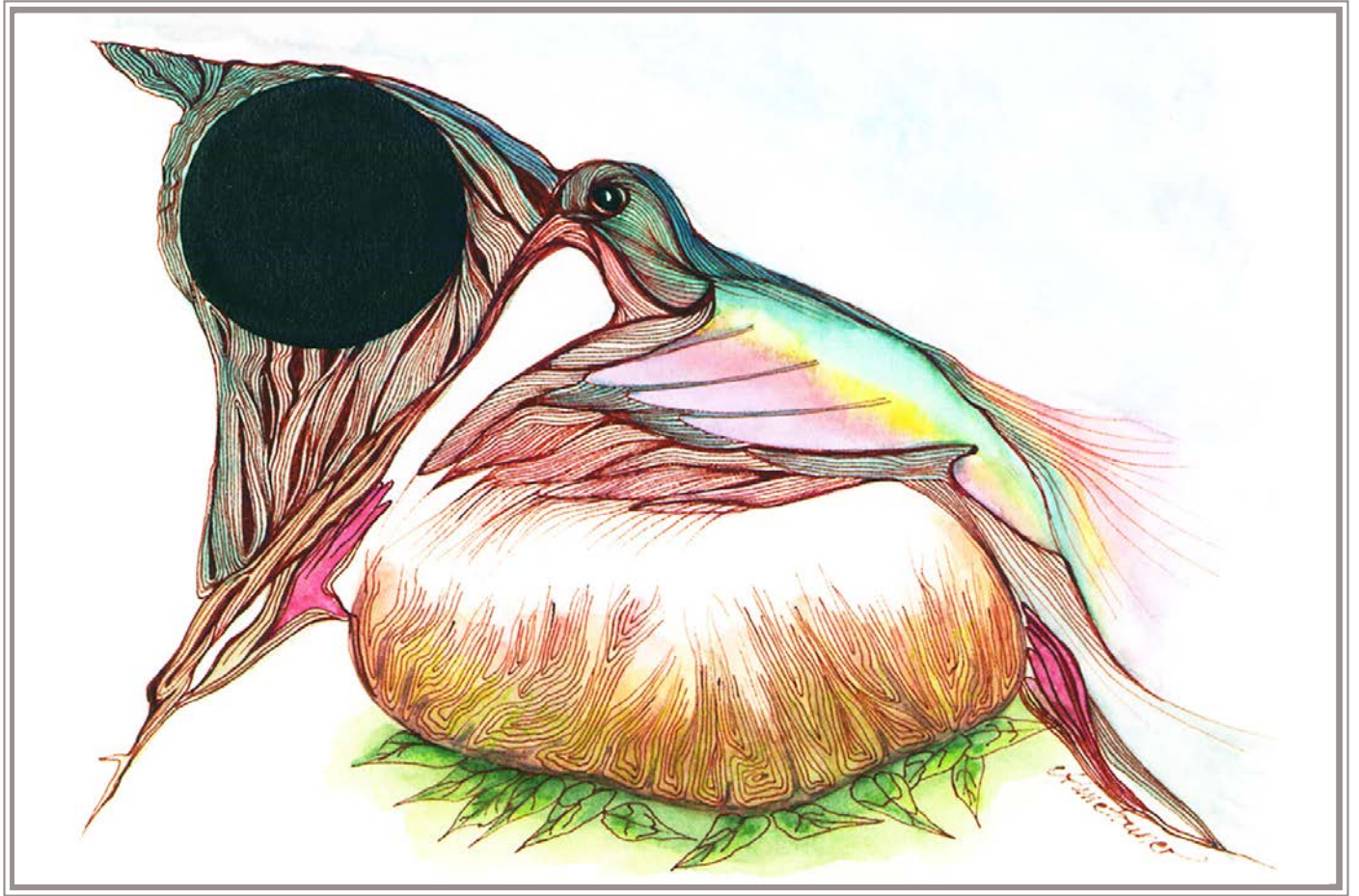
healing with my words, my art
each stroke renews life



from Her source

I am grateful for all the abundance.





Hummingbird

She sits silent on soft green moss,
her head bent, listening...
sounds of earth envelop her,
petal support for the opening bud,
the fairy bird hums her mysterious melody,
little rainbow being with honey songs.
The whisper of wings makes her heart beat
with hope and joy for things to come,
an invitation to the dance.

Hummingbird, keep whispering
while you fill my emptiness with your golden nectar.
I believe in my heart's steady beat
too long pushed away by fear.
Hummingbird, you have entered my dreams,
nesting in my full dark hair,
birthing babies to this world...

*(This poem comes from a delight-filled dream where
my hair was a nest for birthing baby hummingbirds.)*





The Woman Who Lives Between Worlds

I am not of this Earth
nor am I of the Heavens.
I have lived in both worlds before
but Now I am of neither
yet they are both with me.

...her naked body seemed to emerge from the marsh, its deeply rooted grasses wet with the understanding communion of the pond, the stream, the tides. She emerges from green and gold and violet. Gently and boldly, she sits with a comfort of home, belonging, peace, connection, knowing sureness, as if perfection was within her. A godliness of natural beauty and serenity from which she lovingly strokes her world into song, each blade of grass, each insect, each strand of seaweed, each and every stone, shell and twig and animal that comes to rest, commune, hunt... She sings with a knowing about connection, divine and ordinary. She is both human and wild, a bridge that makes her compassionate, passion that comes for all that lives, for she is immersed in the changes, changes of season and tides. She knows nothing remains constant except the beating of her heart, a oneness and constant beating that she honors with her songs, songs of remembering, songs of connection. And if we listen, we also come to know the familiar melodies of the stars...

Medial Woman, with hands outstretched, legs spread to bring up the energy of the earth, soles listening, touching. Medial Woman, conduit of Her Beauty and Power.



Woman Opening

Spread your fiery dress across the landscape,
primal colors that leave no footprints
just an echo of your coming.
Laughing maiden, dancing Grace into form.





*"It is my hope and prayer that this journal that chronicles my opening
will inspire you to appreciate, trust and love your rainbow colors
and invite you to dance to your own inner melody."*

Aline Fourier

