



Book Of Goddess



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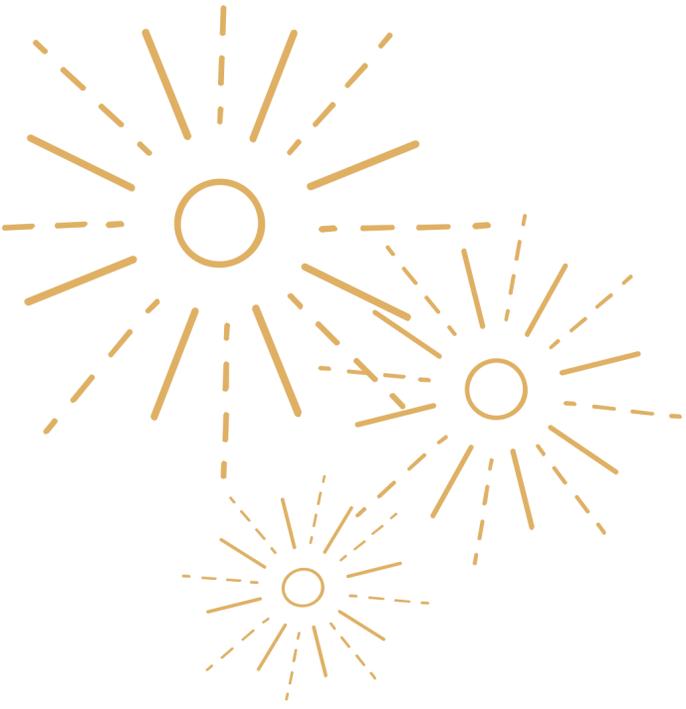
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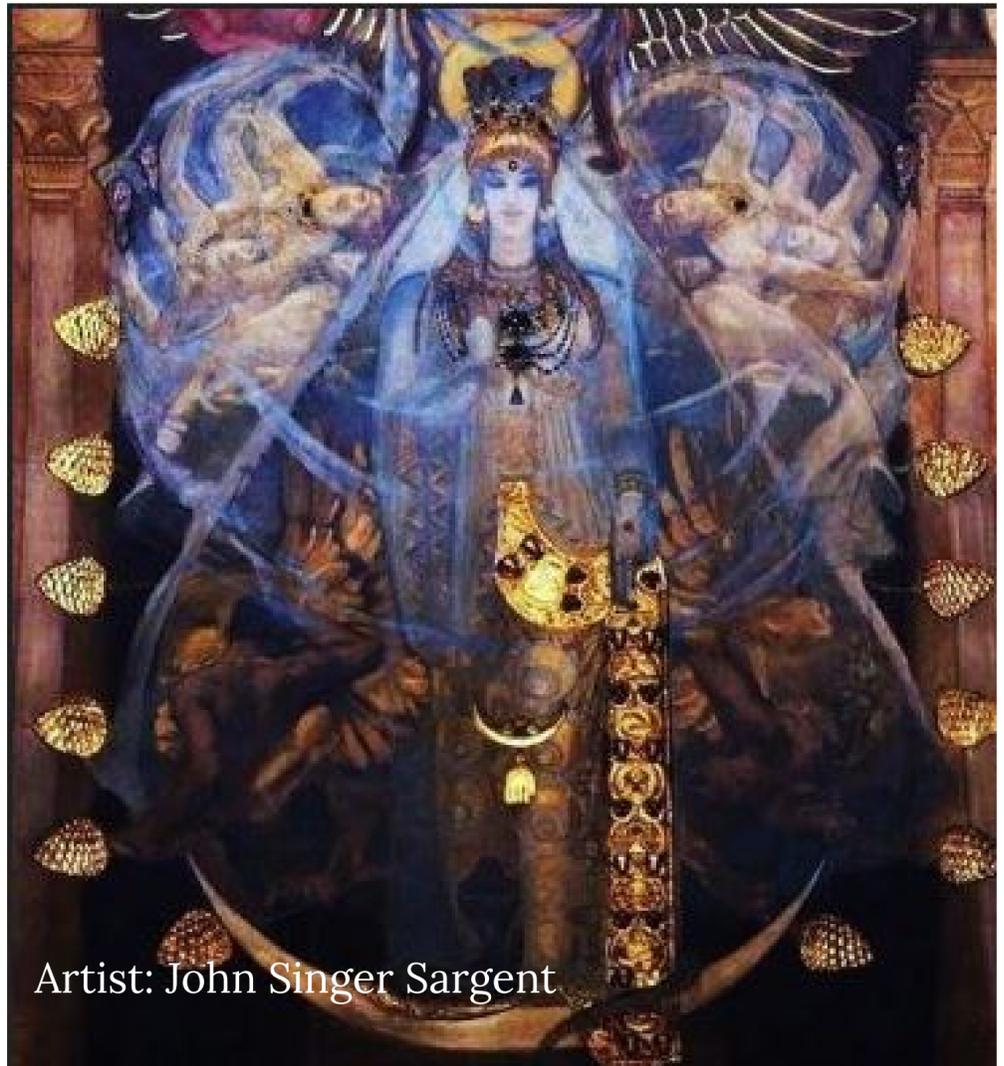
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Hymn to Inanna



I say hail to the Holy one who appears in the heavens.

I say hail to the Holy priestess of heaven.

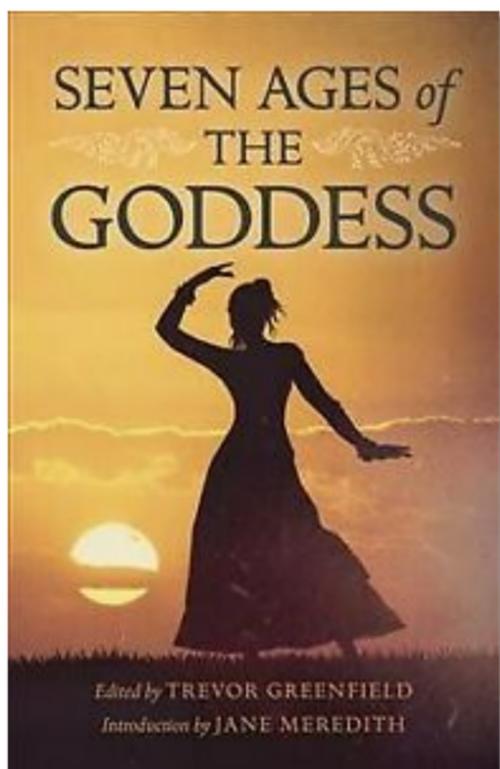
I say hail to Inanna, great lady of heaven,
Holy torch, you fill the sky with light,
you brighten the day at dawn.

I say hail to Inanna, great lady of heaven,
awesome lady of the Inanna gods crowned with great horns,
you fill the heavens and earth with light.

I say hail to Inanna, first daughter of the moon,
mighty majestic and radiant, you shine brilliantly in the evening,
you brighten the day at dawn.
you stand in the heavens with the sun and the moon;
your wonders are both above and below.

To the greatness of the Holy priestess of heaven,
to you Inanna, I sing!





Excerpt from the introduction

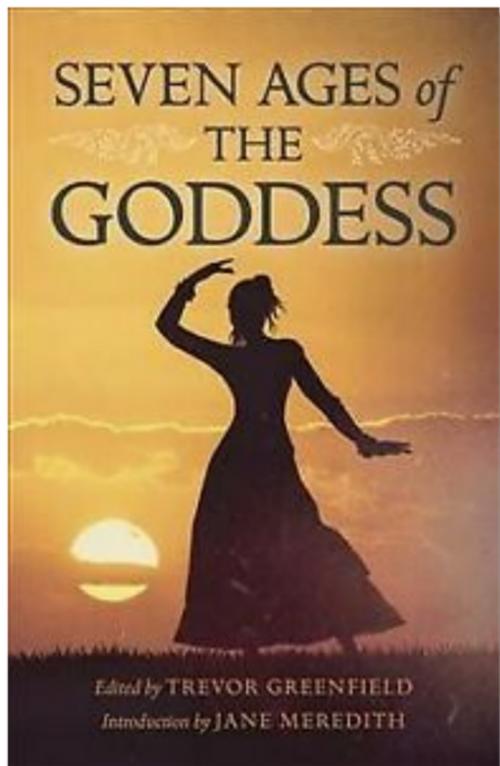
The Goddess.

Maybe you know her by one of her names, or by several of them. Gaia, Ishtar, Inanna, Isis, Ceridwen, Mary, Selene, Kali, Green Tara, Freyja, Persephone, Oshun, Lilith, Durga... and there are a thousand more names, or a thousand thousand. The Goddess goes far back, to a time before she had a name, before there were names.

At her broadest the Goddess is Earth itself, this beautiful planet we belong to. Each one of us has been formed from the atoms of the body of Earth, and each one of us returns back into this body at the end of our lives, as do the trees, the birds and animals, the insects, fishes, even the mountains and rivers. For some of us Earth—as grandmother, as mother, as sister, as lover—is a living being and we recognize her as Goddess in her life-giving properties. Earth, our home, is made up from the stuff of exploded stars. When we gaze up at night, above us, we see other stars, reminding us always that we are formed from stardust; that this coming into life and leaving it applies not just to creatures living on Earth but to Earth itself, and even to stars. Some of us know this whole process as the Star Goddess, and it is she who births all the worlds.

The Goddess may not be such a definite thing, in your experience. She might be an inner knowing, that you've always had, or that you are just now discovering. Maybe for you she is represented by someone in your life; your mother, grandmother, sister, lover or priestess. She might be expressed by a stage of life such as pregnancy and birth, or by an activity you undertake: gardening, painting, or healing. She may be a sense of presence that is just beyond where you have reached or what you have understood, something that is there in your dreams and then gone by the time you wake. She may be elusive, concrete, historical, mythical, occult or scientific.

Some of us lean towards the academic, we're drawn by discussions of history, archeology, comparative mythology or religion. Others of us come more alive in ritual, we engage in inner searching and rituals such as standing under the Moon's gaze and drawing her light down, into our bodies.



Perhaps we are oriented towards dedication, promising to serve the Goddess, in a temple, a tradition or just in our own way. Maybe your heritage—magical or cultural or familial—draws you towards certain pantheons of deities, such as the Celtic, Hindu, Norse or Yoruba. We might be on the path of the initiate, the student, or the curious.

Who is the Goddess? What roles has she held, historically? How have other peoples understood her, and how do contemporary pagans,

academics and goddess worshipers regard her? What meaning do those words, the Goddess, have for you?

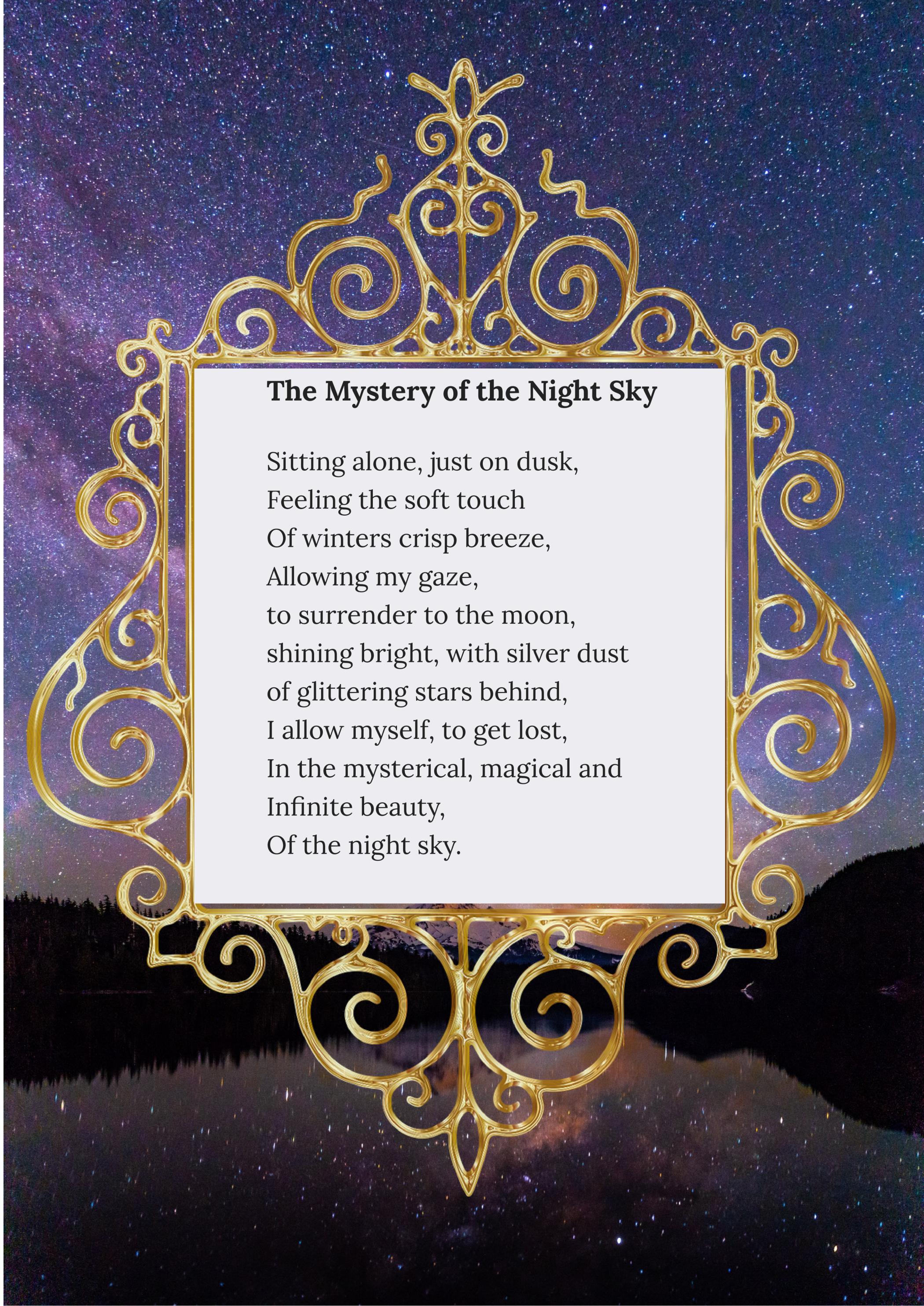
Whether you start this book at the beginning and read through in the order presented, or you skip around, choosing pieces that catch your eye or draw your interest; whether you read it as a purely intellectual exercise, come at it from an emotional basis or are curious, uncertain, already knowledgeable or experienced, this book will have something for you.

The Ancient Goddess, the mysteries of cultures long vanished and the remnants of temples, artifacts and myth remaining open this book. The Jewish Goddesses are the next of the seven Goddess ages presented here, and while for some of us that might seem a contradiction in terms, for others of us the names Lilith, Asherah and Sophia bring a smile to our faces. Mystery Goddesses—often those who have woven in and out of different times and places—are present, as writers offer reconstructions of the mystery religions which were often hidden even at the time, let alone to us now, looking back. In Christian Goddesses some delicate unpicking leads us to reconsider the two Marys of Christian myth, as well as female mystics of the Christian tradition.



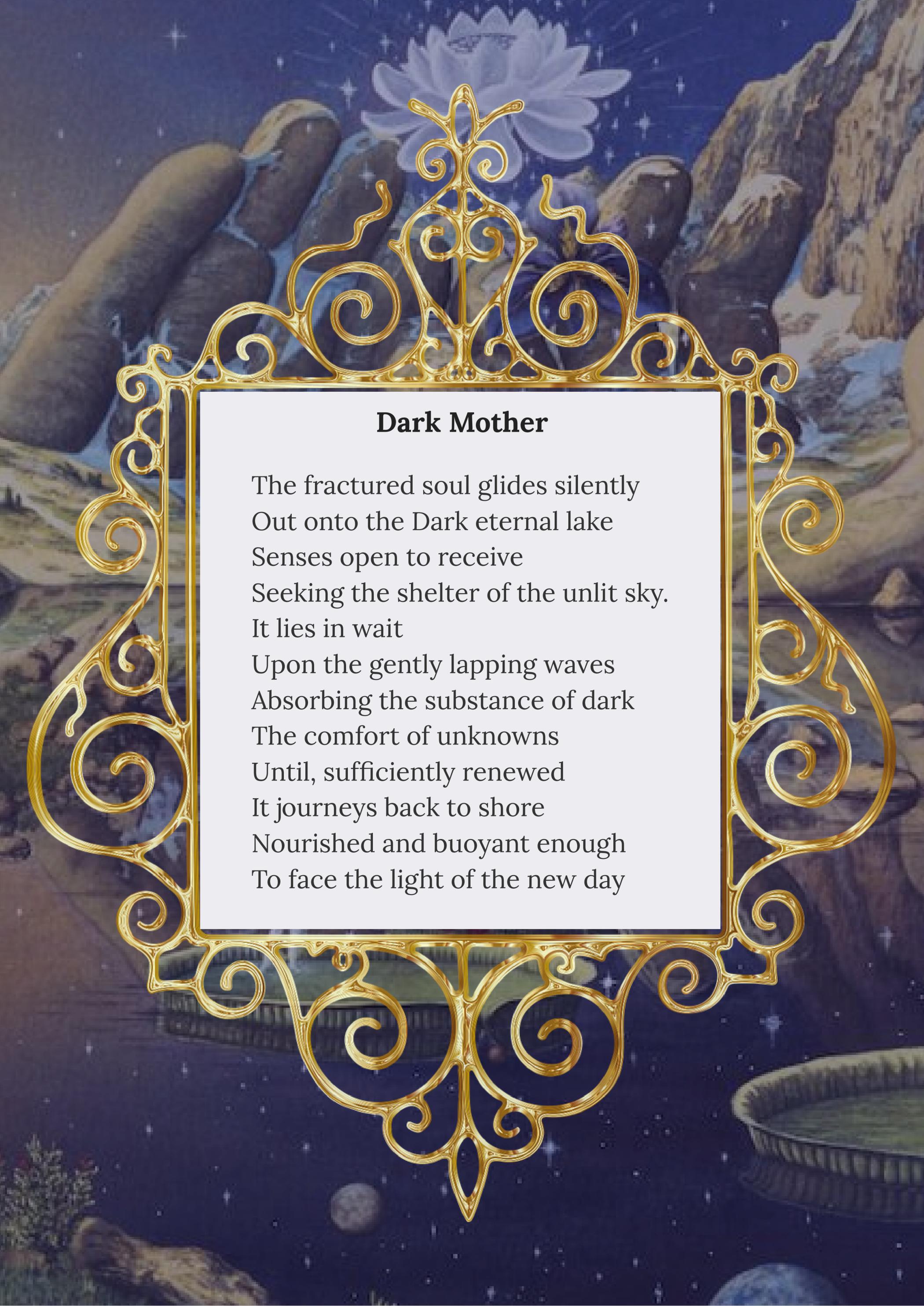
THE POEMS AND PROSE ON
THE NEXT FEW PAGES WERE
WRITTEN BY WOMEN OF
HER MYSTERY SCHOOL -
BELLINGEN STUDY GROUP
DURING RETREAT





The Mystery of the Night Sky

Sitting alone, just on dusk,
Feeling the soft touch
Of winters crisp breeze,
Allowing my gaze,
to surrender to the moon,
shining bright, with silver dust
of glittering stars behind,
I allow myself, to get lost,
In the mysterical, magical and
Infinite beauty,
Of the night sky.



Dark Mother

The fractured soul glides silently
Out onto the Dark eternal lake
Senses open to receive
Seeking the shelter of the unlit sky.
It lies in wait
Upon the gently lapping waves
Absorbing the substance of dark
The comfort of unknowns
Until, sufficiently renewed
It journeys back to shore
Nourished and buoyant enough
To face the light of the new day



Her

Touchable, untouchable
deliciousness.

Beauty: haunting, humble, glorious,
blinding.

All and Everything.

Even amid the conspiracy of strife
and deprivation.

Flailing in the depths,
With rising terror

Of countless unknown fates

These do not distract long from

The generosity, bounty and
embrace that

SHE pours forth and

Me

Receiving and

Gazing upon the

Pure

Undamaged

Gifts of

Woman.





Natural Law

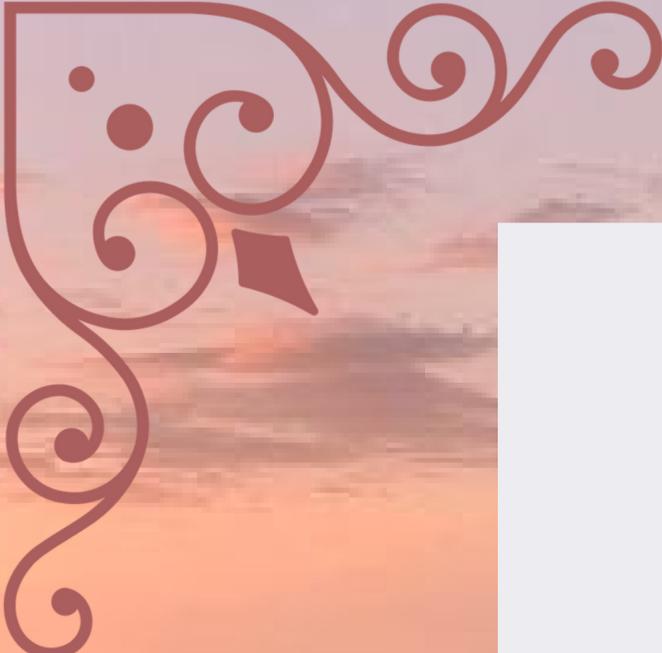
Here suspended
They live their lives
Between the heavens
and the earth

In perfectly ordained bodies
Breathing just this air
no other
Moving lightly and swiftly across
the dust and grasses

Beings. Strung together flawlessly
with space inside
for souls to grow and
hearts to seek
and find an other

Precisely perfect
Under the vast ignited firmament
And then this sweet Nobility
Takes up their leafy thrones
And gently rules their kingdom
By simply serving Love.





Mother Earth

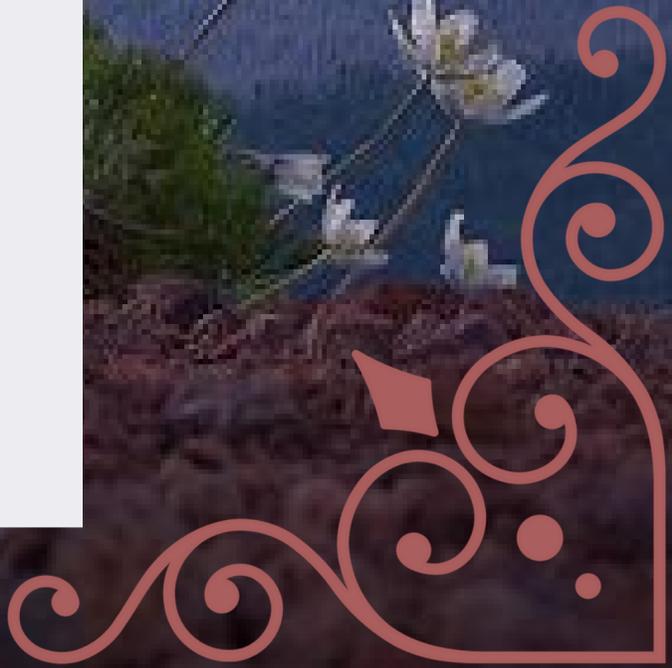
In the wild
We feel wild
We feel.
We cry wild
We cry.

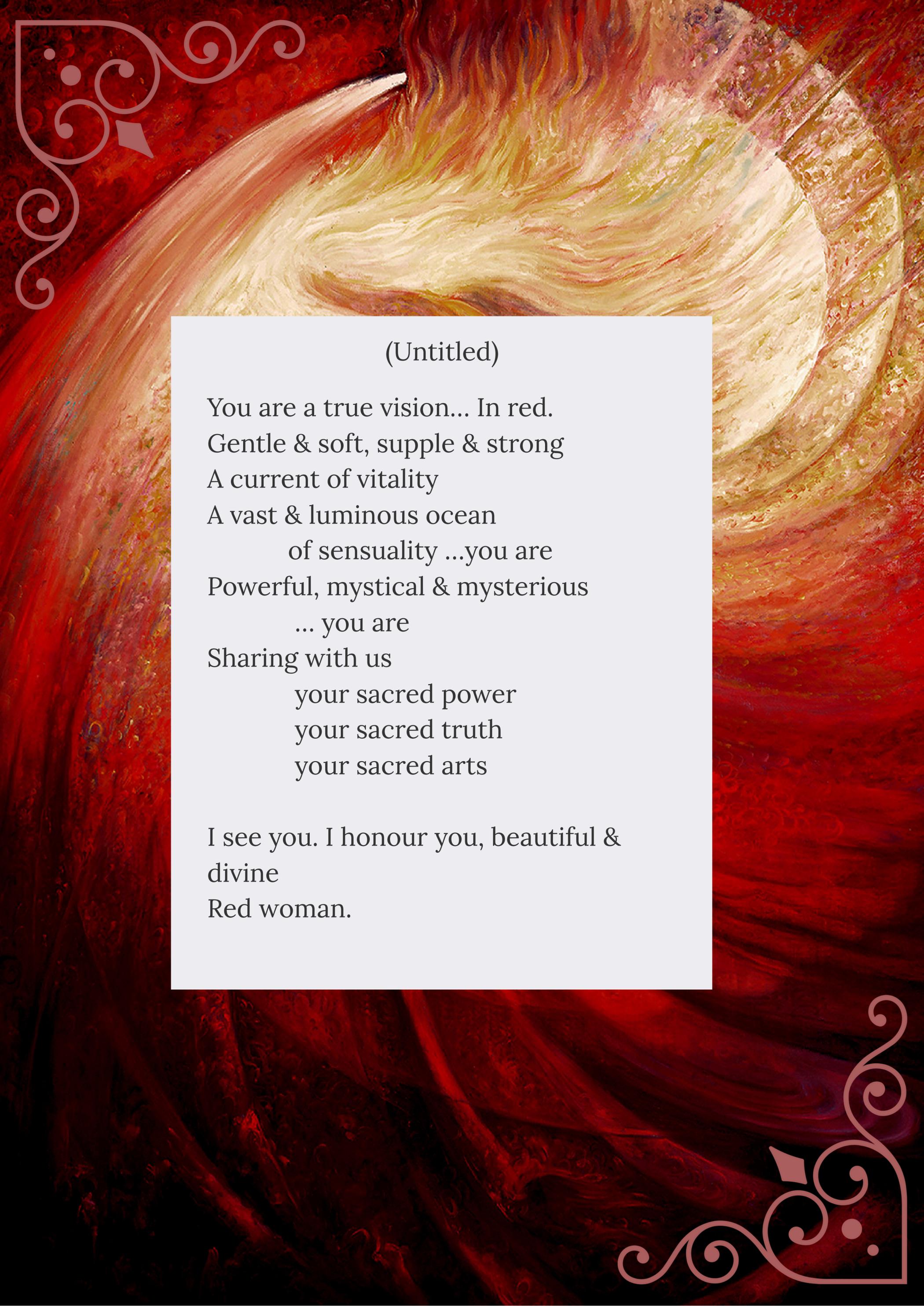
In the hollow
We nestle in
We nest down
We lie still
We lay low.

In the morning light
We run and laugh
We forage find
We see hear
Each other

In the night
We whisper hide
We settle sink
We breathe our last
And dissolve

In the dirt
We soak
We feel
We grow wild

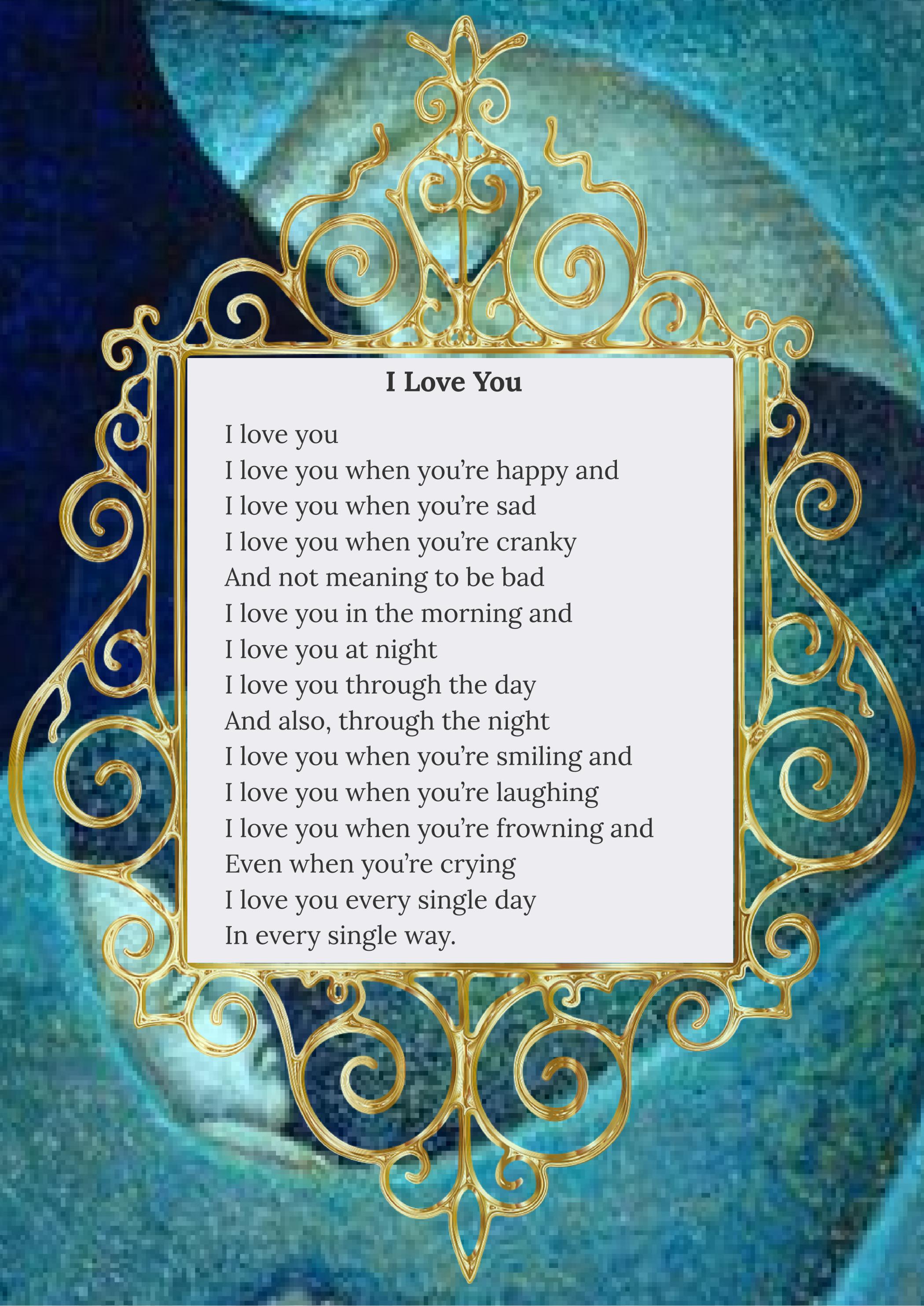




(Untitled)

You are a true vision... In red.
Gentle & soft, supple & strong
A current of vitality
A vast & luminous ocean
 of sensuality ...you are
Powerful, mystical & mysterious
 ... you are
Sharing with us
 your sacred power
 your sacred truth
 your sacred arts

I see you. I honour you, beautiful &
divine
Red woman.



I Love You

I love you
I love you when you're happy and
I love you when you're sad
I love you when you're cranky
And not meaning to be bad
I love you in the morning and
I love you at night
I love you through the day
And also, through the night
I love you when you're smiling and
I love you when you're laughing
I love you when you're frowning and
Even when you're crying
I love you every single day
In every single way.



Home by Anabel

The journey of course began a long time ago and for whatever reason 'homecoming' has come into my life now, and I have held it, looked at it, let it wash over me and digested it in a far deeper way than expected. It has facilitated a deep tingle, a need met where I can feel elements of a 'golden path' already under me and calling me... like some cosmic giggle. I feel giddy at how immediate and present it seems to be, despite living in that invisible realm. Just through a gentle reconnection the world seems to shift.

The objects around me seem to make more sense and I can see how they can be rearranged so that a deeper beauty can effortlessly express itself. The ones that need to go, leave ready, and others come out of hiding. My space naturally clearing, almost effortlessly... this reflecting a process that is also happening inside. The hum of the plants have changed too, and the greens seem to reflect their inner water more clearly... as they grow out toward the sky, dancing with gravity and their roots meander in their way seeking their own secret needs. I can almost feel the mycelium underfoot as I walk through the nature reserve watching my kids play in the branches. Perhaps whispers of their play are told to neighbouring trees, through these 'unseen' channels. That membrionic boundary that has begun to grow around me, sometimes subtly other times with great exuberance has held a fragrant spaciousness that is nice to sometimes just sit in and smile. I have found myself catching glimpses of others... I saw someone walking over the bridge the other day and felt like he had this egg shaped garden filled with plants and flowers wafting around him... Itself being fed by the environment as well as his gentle presence... I imagined a bee was buzzing around one of his invisible flowers momentarily

enchanted by something it didn't see or smell.... It was a beautiful image that I thought would be a glorious painting. It's nice to feel this connection to myself, where even the critical one can sit for a while. Connected in a way that seems naturally connected to all life. Little ideas bubble up where like a twinkle in an eye, I know

can be passing guides... who knows where they will lead if I follow them into being. I'm not quite there yet but feel content just to listen right now. All this enlivening me where whatever I do I can be present in the everchanging wonder of life all around me just through this presence with myself, what a lovely place to call home.... a place where I can feel rooted and nourished.

But then 2 days ago I unravelled, with spectacular intensity. The shit of what can happen in life slapped me in the face and cast me far away from any 'home' within myself. A raw rush of 'what the fuck' took over and I scrambled to try and 'do the right action' but what ever i did seemed megre, and I felt megre. The stupidity of my 'enchanted' state in the face of a 'real' situation that was perhaps partly of my making and reeked of pain and confusion... a child's pain lashing out violently, my child's pain. Something didn't go how he wanted and trapped him in a loop where all his anger and hurt spiraled up from his depths... He needed to direct it somewhere and so directed it at me. I tried to sit with it, just be there while he rode this wave. But it got too much, went too far. Then like massive wind gusts which tore down my newly grown 'boundary' and blew me off my seating leaving me shivering out in the cold, guilt, anger, doubt, confusion and a myriad of other emotions whirled around and within me. I tried to sit with it, just be there while he rode this wave. But it got too much, went too far. Then like massive wind gusts which tore down my newly grown 'boundary' and blew me off my seating leaving me shivering out in the cold, guilt, anger,

doubt, confusion and a myriad of other emotions whirled around and within me. What the fuck! What fucking thrown, No wonder that golden path has eluded me, as I am so far off course. How can I expect anything if I can't help my own son in his anguish and take his pain away. I did not 'know' what to do. I stumbled in the dark feeling like my intentions rudder had broken and the chaos took the breath out of me leaving instead channels for those dark winds to penetrate deeper still. Knowing I had to go gather myself, I left him in his father's care and found myself by the River.

I let myself cry, as I sobbed I mourned how I lost that centred part of myself when I needed it the most. I cried at how life is so complex and how I never wanted to see Banyan so upset again... I wanted to be his antidote... but life doesn't work that way. There were soo many different forces at play, structural and subtle, living and growing and ever changing. Composing and decomposing. Seen and unseen... Beautiful and strange and hurt and wounded. Ying and Yang pulling and tugging forever trying to find that balance....Those destructive winds escaped out of me with my uneven breathing and unearthed a deep grief. A secret grief that stung and cried out itself. As I sat in this raw state, safe within my car's physical boundaries, I found myself calling another woman. I felt sorry to do this and had huge resistance but pushed through that till I found I could speak through the tears. My grief wanted to be heard, wanted to be witnessed. I needed this, and this was a sacred need. With deep gratitude I can say that the woman immediately held me and listened. An outpouring ensued and with it the murkiness of pains residue as well as the cleansing waters of pure emotion. Sign posts were put in place of practical must dos, something to latch on to as the waters slowly subside. I put the phone down and slowly made my way back.

My son was calm and sitting with his father and brother. Some other resolution had occurred here. 'Sorry mum' came from there and it broke me again, but this time with tears of relief. 'I'm sorry too Bodhi'.

The night ended with me softly and gently sitting back against my sons bed. Letting myself feel down into that everchanging mother and marveling at how that grief sat nestled comfortably within me content after the tincture of another souls witness. As I stroked his back I could feel my sons body relax, though under his breath he swore he wasn't going to go to school tomorrow. I didn't need to think about school now. I felt calm, relaxed, full of love... non reactive just simply present, as is the best way for a mother to be, for anyone to be.

I came back home to myself, and even though my boundaries were lost in the storm and i was thrown into a state of overwhelm, I can see how the building of a solid internal architecture can enable one to return home sooner. How those boundaries come right back with no resentment. They are not shattered, they learn from such experiences. I can feel that all that both Banyan and I felt was natural and that it can be transformed into medicine. As I learn more about how to do this I hope I can guide my son to do the same.



Cornered Into the Light

By Maya Luna



When the world is falling
All around me
When the foundation starts to
Quake
I remember to be a river
To let my body
Flow like water
And slip between the
Jagged edges
Of perception
When the future looks
Bleak
Like there is no hope for Salvation
I remember to press
My tender heart
Into
The eternity of this moment
To drink down the nectar
Of my own simple presence
In one
Single
Breath
I remember how to let it be
Enough

When the ground is pulled out from
Beneath me
And I am falling into fear
I remember when I'm supple
I can fly
I let mind become supple
Tongue become supple
Face and spine and belly Supple
I remember how to glide across
The waves
When this existence feels like
Drowning
And the water is too deep
I remember when I soften
I am floating
From inside this holy melting
Letting go from
Deep inside
I always meet that friend
Again and again and again
That mysterious one
Who has no name
Who was always here
Waiting

To take me Home
I remember that
Heaven and hell
Are a hairs breath apart
And the difference between them is not
This world
But an inner posture
In the temple of this Body
I remember that falling in love
Is not an accident
But a choice inside
One moment
To be a fool
Who dances for
No good reason
Whose petals of Heart are only
Opened
In unknowing
Who relishes in the freedom
Of Space
When this whole damn world
Is eaten
By the flames of insanity
I remember the one in me

Who knows how to drink deeply
Of this moment
Who will take one single crumb
And savor it as feast
I remember that sanity
Lives only in this Body
That in letting go
Of everything
In giving it all
Away
I receive
The only True thing
That ever mattered
That tiny candle in
The Darkness
That one taste
That one truth
That one nameless
Ineffable thing
For what else
But the ferocity of this
World Could corner us
Into
The Light?

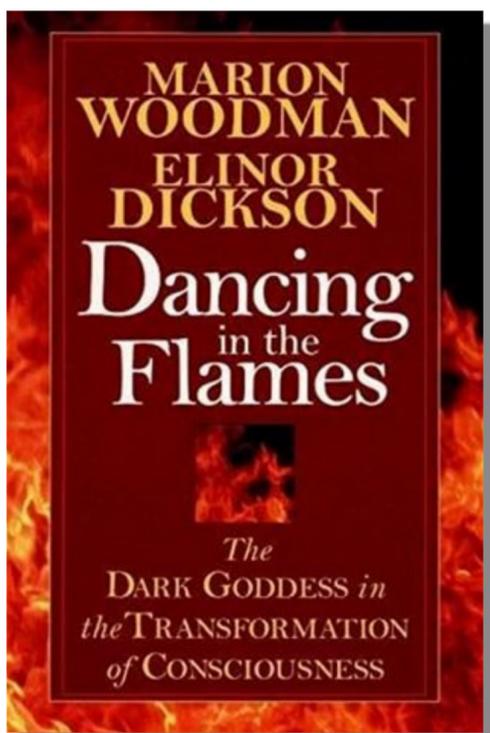




Android Jones Art on flickr

The universe is composed of subjects to be communed with, not objects to be exploited. Everything has its own voice. Thunder and lightning and stars and planets, flowers, birds, animals, trees, - all these have voices, and they constitute a community of existence that is profoundly related.

~ Thomas Berry



Excerpt from the introduction

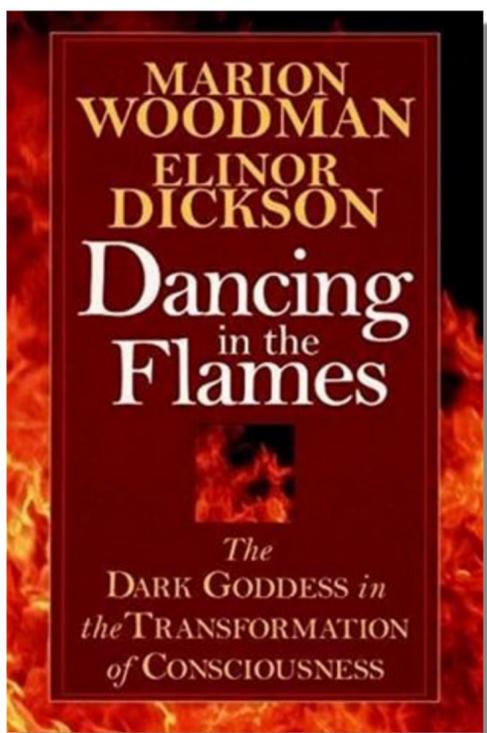
Who is the Goddess? Who is she who sometimes replaces he in our prayers? Is Goddess any different from God in our Inner Pantheon or have we merely changed the nouns and pronouns? What are the attributes of the Goddess? Who is she as Mother, Virgin, Crone? How does she relate to the masculine? If we throw ourselves into the flames of desire and then dance with her in the refining fire,

how will our everyday lives be changed? If we really do believe she holds the whole world in the palm of her love, how do we live with that sacramental truth at our center?

This book explores these questions concerning the unknown feminine figure who is appearing in the dreams of so many contemporary men and women. Many people dismiss dreams as speculative and anecdotal. However, for those of us who have lived in close touch with our dreams all our lives, they offer truth far beyond facts. They bring new perspectives and new understandings to our experience. Fred Alan Wolf, a theoretical physicist, claims that “dreaming is vital to our survival as a species and a necessary ‘learning laboratory’ wherein the self and the universe evolve. In brief, matter evolves through dreams.”

This unknown figure whom so many people encounter in their sleep speaks to the psyche and to the very cells of the body. She seems to push through from the very depths of the collective unconscious like a universal force that speaks individually and culturally. Hopefully, this book will add to the pool of consciousness that is expanding around her.

Although she takes many different forms, this goddess—sometimes a Black Madonna or an Asian or Indian Madonna—always carries authority. She guides and advises and acts with absolute clarity, often with a startling sense of humor that delights in play. These moments in dreams or active imagination are filled with her compassion for our human situation. She is blunt, neither indulgent nor sentimental. She demands embodiment. Living in the creative intercourse between chaos and order, she calls us to enter into the dance of creation, “her love in her living body.” She speaks to men as clearly as to women.

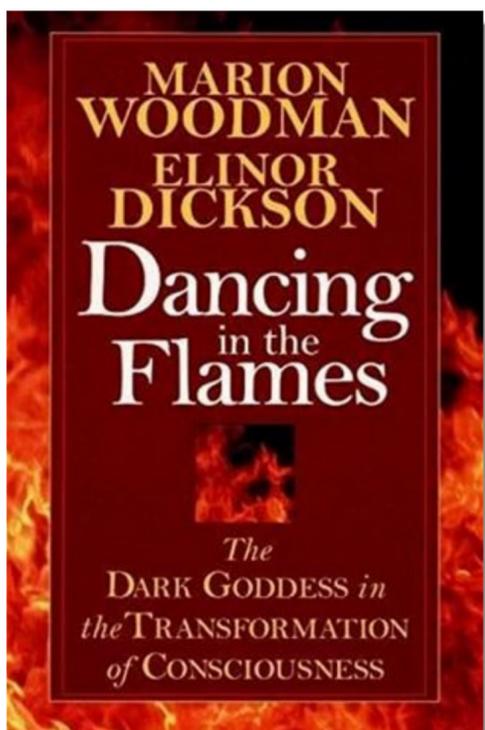


Both genders need a well-differentiated masculine and a well-differentiated feminine. The power structures of patriarchy have profoundly wounded both, making mature relationships almost impossible without hard psychic work. As a culture, we are presently stuck in the parental complexes. Many women have worked for years trying to find their own identity, freed from the mother and father complexes. Men, too, are working to find their own feeling values, values that are not dependent on

pleasing or hating Mother and Father and all they represent. The archetype of the Black Madonna, or Lilith, or Mary Magdalene may be a way to freedom for both.

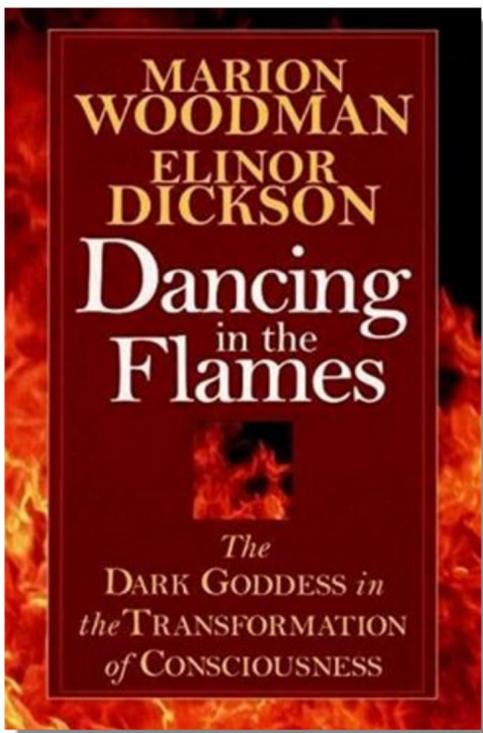
In writing this book, the authors have been very aware of the pitfalls of using the terms masculine and feminine. While these words are not synonymous with male and female, they unquestionably carry connotations that are so ingrained in our psyches that we consciously and unconsciously react to them with ancient gender prejudices. It would be a great relief to forget the words, but the fact remains that the balance of energies in the dream cannot be understood without a recognition of the interplay between the male and female figures. (The dream images are rooted in the instincts.) This interplay enacts the balance or lack of balance between the two complementary energies that are continually relating to each other within us and without, continually struggling to compensate for the one-sided world of consciousness. The Chinese yang and yin represent the two energies as two fish in a circle, each containing part of the other. The Hindus represent them as Shiva and Shakti, the universal lovers out of whose divine embrace everything is born. And in the Bible, the new paradigm is imaged as the New Jerusalem gradually taking shape throughout the Old and New Testaments. In the final book, the New Jerusalem descends as a Bride to meet the Bridegroom in the divine marriage.

Part of the resistance to the words masculine and feminine lies in our inability to accept that each of us contains both masculine and feminine energy and that both energies are divine. We pay lip service to the concept consciously, but if we listen to ourselves, we hear the archaic, gendered, pigeon-holed thinking plop out of our mouths like an unexpected toad. For example, some men and women who accept the Goddess as equal to the God



and proclaim her divinity in matter can still become angry if they hear femininity related to earth. At some unconscious level, they continue to relate femininity, to earth, snake, Satan, dark, evil—all these words that keep femininity in a subordinate position, or worse, a diabolical one. If we expand our consciousness a bit, we begin to see that our attitude to the Earth, to nature, and to our own bodies, is radically shifting. In the dire consequences arising from the well-documented abuse of Earth, nature, and our bodies, we begin to see that they will no longer tolerate the tyranny of our control. They will no longer submit to the slavery to which we try to subject them. The Goddess is the life force in matter, She has laws that have now to be learned and obeyed. Her indwelling presence is the sacred energy, energy on which our egos have no legitimate claim. Confronted with this reality—a reality that is a confrontation with our own threatened survival—we realize that like Earth, nature, our bodies, we too are the vessels of an energy far greater than anything that tries to contain it. We realize that we, like the rest of nature, are participating members in the vast community of life, whose sacredness we must embrace if we are to survive. If we are ever to arrive at this expanded consciousness, we will have to surrender our ego desires to the wisdom of the Self. Masculine and feminine will have to learn to cherish each other. (It is important to note here that Self with a capital S in Jung's terminology refers to the divine within that mirrors the divine without; self with a small s refers to the individual self.)

Many times throughout the book, we have chosen to use the word transcendence referring to the masculine spirit, and immanence referring to the indwelling feminine. Neither of us is a theologian, but both of us can believe in the unknowable mystery sometimes called God, and we can see that mystery manifesting its radiance through every living form in every moment. Transcendence uniting with Immanence. If you go into your garden, you may feel yourself present in the divine embrace right there in the presence of a golden sunflower with a mandala for its center—the Immanence of the Transcendent in the flower. (If not here, where?) Each has to be separated out from the other before the magnetic pull of the opposites brings them together.



While we are clarifying words, we need also to note that patriarchy and masculinity are not synonymous. Female patriarchs can be just as domineering as males. Like their male counterparts, they live in a patriarchal ethos that operates through control over others, over themselves, over nature. We need to recognize also that many men have a more finely honed femininity than many women. We all are the children of patriarchy and, therefore, we all have to take responsibility for a killer power shadow that

would massacre the feminine and the masculine in whatever form they manifest. This book is not a defense of the feminine at the expense of the masculine. The one without the other leads to suicide or tyranny.

The historical data concerning the relationship of patriarchy to the feminine in Western culture has been well documented in other studies. The psychological implications of a few of the historical events of the past nine centuries have been included in chapter 1 in order to bring some added dimensions to the Black Madonna that lies buried in our depths. Psyche does not work on a basis of causality as history does. It does not respect temporal cause and effect patterns of everyday life. Sometimes historical facts illustrate psychological phenomena.





My Religion Is Other Women

By Lane Lloyd

My religion is other women.
This isn't tongue in cheek.
My religion congregates around a fire,
in a cramped room we booked to talk,
in an idling car for way too long,
in someone's living room,
in the cold,
because there's more to say and hear.

There's a spark of divinity I know to look for
when she says something she's never said
out
loud before.

There is a spiritual rumble in the dehydrated
voices of women
who aren't used to saying so much.

When I hear another woman articulate
something
I've never been able to,
that's the voice of my god speaking to me.
It's ancient, forbidden knowledge,
and it fills my body with my self.

There's power in our warm red blood.





We need to teach the children the old words

by Caroline Mellor

We need to teach the children the old words,
words like brabble and grubble,
twitter-light and clinkerbell;
words which dance and trip and slip
and drip like honey off the tongue

Teach them that a hazy halo of cloud
around the moon is called a moonbroch
and that swiftly moving clouds are named cairies;
how a vixen's wedding is a sunny shower of rain,
and that a single sunbeam breaking through thick cloud
is known as a messenger

Teach them to know the seasons and scents
of queen of the meadow and bride of the sun,
how to tell Jupiter's staff from fairy fingers
and which roses bloom with the strawberry moon

Teach them to spot pricklebacks in the tottlegrass,
how to recognise a smeuse or a bishop-barnaby,
when to watch the sky for flittermice and yaffles,
and to pay attention to the dumbeldore and mousearnickle
as she graces the lazy leahs of summer



Teach them a few of the old Sussex words for mud,
like gubber and slub and stodge and pug,
so they know that the precious soil beneath their toes
is anything but worthless dirt

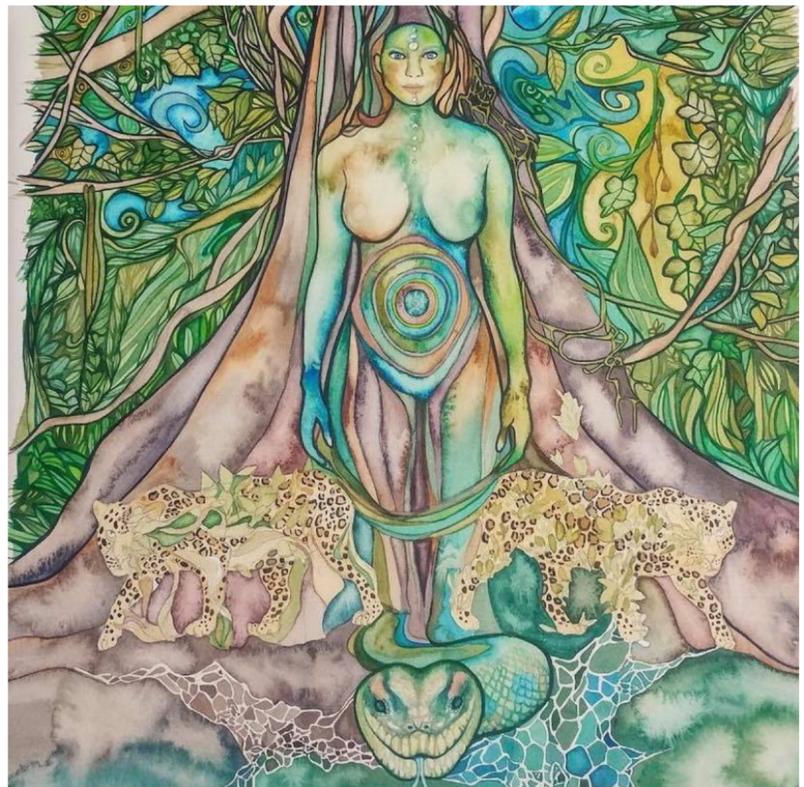
Teach them to be users and keepers and makers
of the words which bring the land alive:
a storybook, where everything has its rightful place,
including us;
where the wilds are fearful and filled with magic
and people do noble things, and nothing is impossible

In this world of harsh new words – words like planetary dysmorphia and solastalgia, extinction debt and grief mitigation, megadrought and megafire, anthropogenic, pyrocene, words which alarm and get stuck in our throats describing a world which our hearts cannot grasp – we need to teach the children the old words, so that if they should feel lost, the old words might colour for them a warm and breathing, living map, a light to guide them safely home.



Let The Birds Take Your Clothes

By Clare Dakin



Artist: Tamara Phillips

Let the birds take your clothes
Let the waves undo you holding back
Let the vines unravel your tired mind
And the earth savour your sweat and tears.
Let your stories burn off like rising mist,
As you pass and the false floors of curbed self love
Dissolve into butterfly wings and fire flies
As your edges blur and your Planetary Self ignites.
Let the trees bathe your breath
Let the meadows embrace you
Let the mountains and the bees remind you
Let the sky flood in and allow the clouds to guide you
As your becoming is beautiful
And when the living world has climber inside
Enough for you to feel four legs, scales and wings
May you finally know yourself alive as all things
Indivisible and responsible
Reborn into wholeness
Natural, Sacred and Wild



I Fell

Attributed to Makeda,
Queen of Sheba

I fell
because of wisdom,
but was not destroyed:
through her I dived into the great sea,
and in those depths
I seized
a wealth-bestowing pearl.

I descended
like a great iron anchor
men use to steady their ships
in the night on rough seas,
and holding up the bright lamp
that I there received,
I climbed the rope
to the boat of understanding.

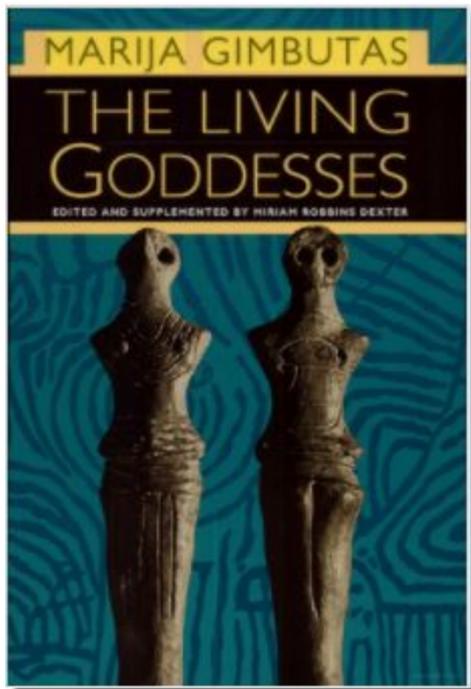
While in the dark sea,
I slept,
and not overwhelmed there,
dreamt: a star
blazed in my womb.

I marveled
at that light,
and grasped it,
and brought it up to the sun.
I laid hold upon it,
and will not let it go.



Artist unknown





In Neolithic Europe and Asia Minor (ancient Anatolia) - in the era between 7000B.C. and 3000 B.C.—religion focused on the wheel of life and its cyclical turning. This is the geographic sphere and the time frame I refer to as Old Europe. In Old Europe, the focus of religion encompassed birth, nurturing, growth, death, and regeneration, as well as crop cultivation and the raising of animals. The people of this era pondered untamed natural forces, as well as wild plant and

animal cycles, as they worshiped goddesses, or a goddess, in many forms. The goddess manifested her countless forms during various cyclical phases to ensure that they functioned smoothly. She revealed herself in multiple ways through the myriad facets of life, and she is depicted in a very complex symbolism.

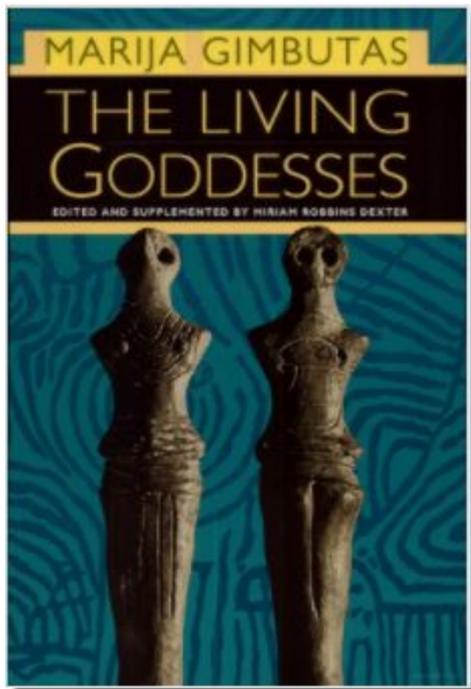
First I will explore these forms in detail, looking mainly at goddess figures, and then I will unravel their meaning. The images of the goddess can be loosely categorized under her aspects of life giving and sustaining, death, and renewal. Although male energy also motivated regeneration and life stimulation, in the plant and animal worlds, it was the feminine force that pervaded existence.

Figurines

...By nature, archeological preservation favors smaller artifacts...

Consequently, we often unearth small images intact and larger statues in many parts. Most of these figurines can be held in one's hand. Their makers often etched them with sacred symbols in the form of facial markings, geometric designs, and signs that may have been a form of script.

Our Neolithic ancestors not only created figurines represent certain deities, priestesses, or other mythical persona, they also reenacted rituals with these figures. Discoveries include not only female and male figurines, which may have been made to represent goddesses and gods, but also thrones, vases, offering tables, furniture, musical instruments, and even miniature temples. Such miniature temples preserve the prototypes, adding an extra dimension to the archaeological record. Although ancient peoples created religious artifacts in other media (woven cloth and wood for instance), except in extraordinary cases these have decayed. As a result small ceramic objects provide some of the most important evidence for deciphering Old European religion.



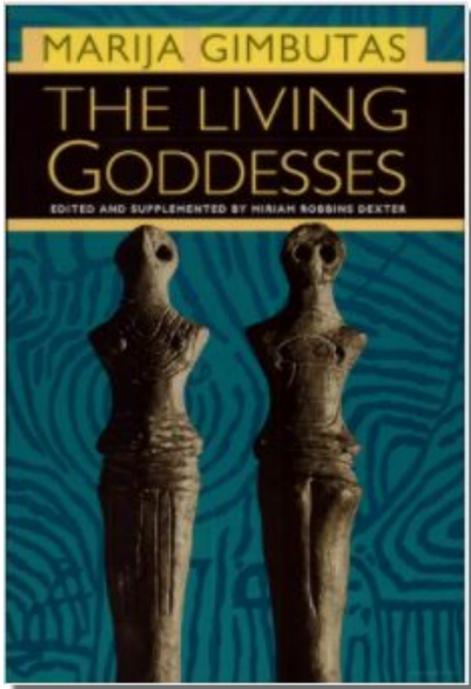
Almost all archaeological sites in Italy, the Balkans, and central Europe contain these objects, spanning almost every Neolithic time period...Often where sites reach several meters deep, representing centuries or even millennia of occupation, figurines occur at almost every level...we can often discern an artistic evolution from the earliest levels to the latest one, indicating the importance of these objects to generation after generation of inhabitants...

The human body constituted one of Old Europe's most powerful symbols. As a result of modern cultural programming, we often associate nakedness with sexual enticement. The modern analyst naturally project these attitudes back thousands of years and assumes that ancient depictions of the body served basically the same purpose.

Our cultural programming also leads to the assumption that female representations invariably represent "earth as fertility"; therefore all naked female artifacts become "fertility figurines". The Old European cultures certainly cared about fertility. But, we will see, the wide variety of figurines, and particularly their Neolithic archeological contexts, suggests that the feminine force played a wider religious role.¹ The many sophisticated Neolithic art forms accentuating the female body unveil a natural and sacred sexuality neglected by modern culture.

In religious art, the human body symbolizes myriad functions beyond the sexual, especially the procreative, nurturing and life enhancing. I believe that in earlier times, obscenity as a concept surrounding either the male or female body did not exist. Renditions of the body expressed other functions, specifically the nourishing and pro-creative aspects of the female body and the life-stimulating qualities of the male body. The female force, as the pregnant vegetation goddess, intimately embodied the earth's fertility. But the sophisticated, complex art surrounding the Neolithic goddess is a shifting kaleidoscope of meaning: she personified every phase of life, death, and regeneration. She was the Creator from whom all life—human, plant, and animal—arose, and to whom everything returned. Her role extended far beyond eroticism.

The fact that these female figurines do not typically resemble an actual human or animal body belies their use as mere erotic art. The body is almost always abstracted or exaggerated in some manner.



The modifications are not accidental: a brief survey of Neolithic art shows that the highly skilled ceramic workers of this time could achieve whatever effect they wished. Their intentional modifications of the human body expressed various manifestations of the inmost divine force.





Image: "Soul of the Rose"
By John William Waterhouse

Excerpts from "Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home" by Toko-pa Turner

The feminine is in direct conversation with that which joins us to all living beings. It is the mystical path that turns us to our own senses, and to the living world around us for guidance and collaboration. We need no mediating authority to grant us permission or tell us how to heal or bring life into the world, because there is a greater authority, a vital impulse which is flowing through each of us at all times. And it is our network, our combined wisdom and experience, our dedication to belonging to one another, which is our true source of power.

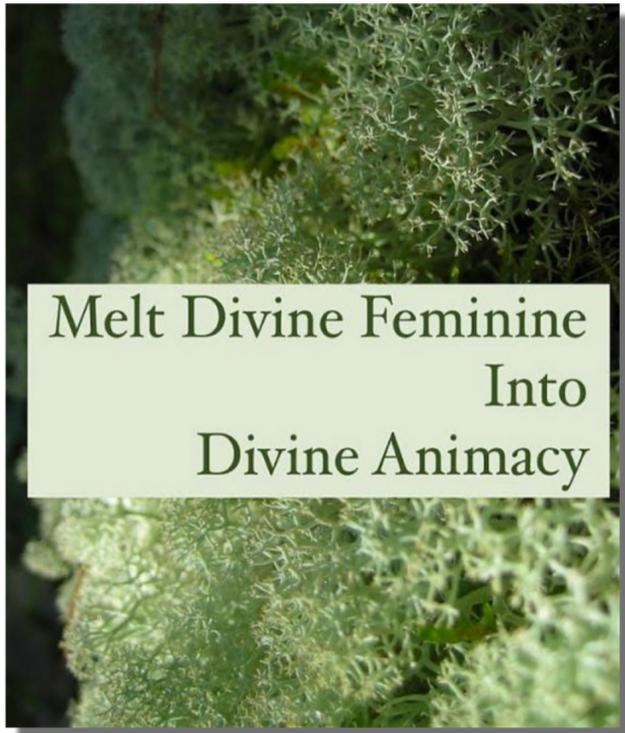
I believe we share a Grandmother Well that springs inexhaustibly with wisdom, insight, and guidance for our healing that we can access from the holy grove within. Especially in times of exile, when our anchors are pulled up and we're no longer taking cues from the outside world, we have a chance to find that inner well and reinstate our connection to the sacred.

We may find it overgrown, or hard to reach through the brambles, but each of us faces a time when the well within needs tending: when we're no longer able to bestow blessings on others because we've over-given, or when something precious has been taken from us, or life's demands have been too taxing on our fragile system. When the moisture goes out of our lives, and we're no longer able to see beauty or converse with magic, we must ask ourselves how we can replenish our wellness.



Langensendelbach
Photo: Markus Spiske





Melt Divine Feminine Into Divine Animacy

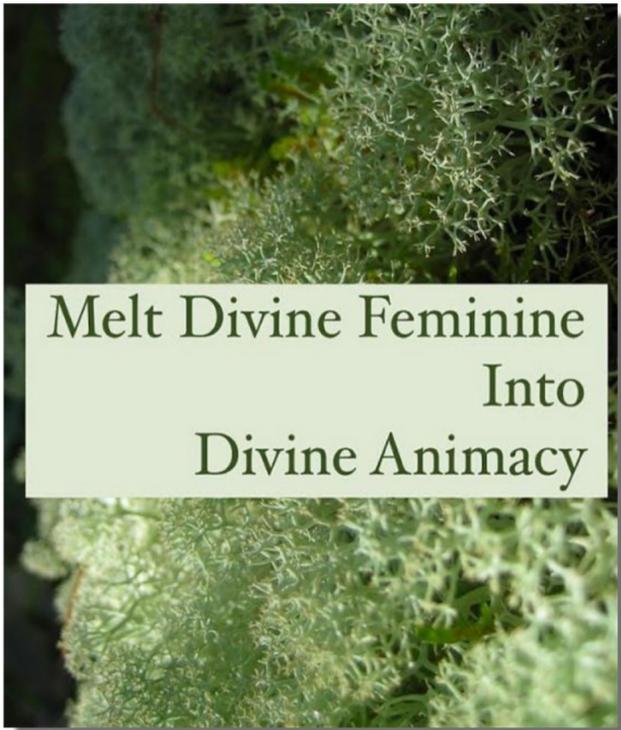
By Sophie Strand

The opposite of civilization is not an idealized return to paleolithic hunting and gathering. The opposite of a human is not an animal or a rock or a blade of grass. The opposite of our current predicament – climate collapse, social unrest, extinction, mass migrations, solastalgia, genocide – is, in fact, the disintegration of opposites all together.

Everything is both. And more. And everything is penetratingly, painfully, wildly alive.

Animacy is an overdetermined word; but so is the idea of the Divine Feminine. The reason I have begun to shy away from the Divine Feminine is its unfortunate identification with gender and, more importantly, its over-identification with humans and their myopic classifications generally. Animacy is slightly plushier, springier. More moss-like. It seems a soft spot to rest on while I try to understand and explain how very sentient the world is to me these days.

I am attracted to the constellations of meaning that sparkle like distant stars inside the word *anima*: breath, spirit, soul; and *animate*: to give vigor or life, to ensoul. I enjoy the animal itself, furred, horned, hoofed, clawed, scaled, and indeterminate, that bucks and bays and howls inside the word. I enjoy how grammatically philosophers try to clip it like a twitchy nerve and it keeps flinching away. It is a term I think most closely related to the original meaning of the word *spell*: the performative utterance. Magic-summoning. To myth. To story. To make happen. Animacy is the degree to which the referent of a noun is sentient. It is the “soul” that invigorates syntax with something very much beyond language. Ultimately, I am a poet, and my choices often originate from a much darker soil than common sense. Animacy, to my poet-soil-nonsense self, seems the “everything” of muteness and inhuman import that suffuses Neruda’s extraordinary poem “Dead Gallop”: “...the fragrance of plums, rolling to the ground, / which rot in time, infinitely green. / That everything so quick, so



Melt Divine Feminine
Into
Divine Animacy

lively, immobile, / though, like the pulley, wild inside itself... / Existing like dry stitches in the seams of the tree, silent, encircling, like that, all the limbs mixing up their tails.”

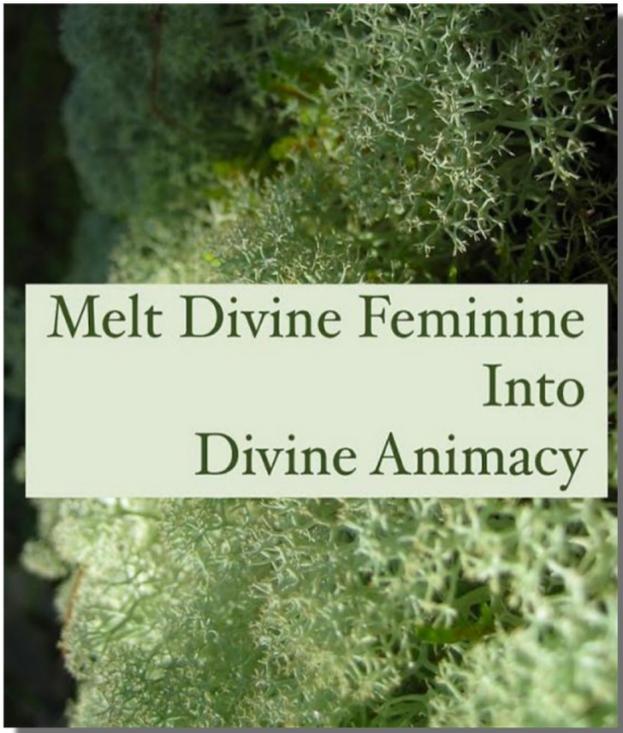
The opposite of Anthropocentrism is not the Divine feminine. The opposite of Anthropocentrism is Everything. And what a tender beautiful thing it is to walk outside on a bright spring morning. Swathes of clementine light wash the pollen from the bricks of your

building. You hear the robin’s song like a key turning in a lock. A handful of doves float down from the red-green cloud of a newly foliated maple tree. What a relief to realize that, unlike Adam and Eve, we haven’t been severed from the Garden. The Everything still includes us.

The Everything is us; but it needs something in return. It needs us to melt our ideas of sentience as a purely human property. Or as a purely animal property. Or as a purely individual property. Relationships are sentient. Anima is the inhalation, carrying molecules and spores and pheromones into our bodies from the landscape. And then we exhale, sharing cells that have clung to our deepest cells, slept inside the pith of our blood. With every exhale, we decant ourselves back into the world. How could we be one, or two, or three? We are more gerund than cold, hard noun. More animacy than strictly animal. We ensoul the world and are ensouled in return. Our myths about individuation and linearity no longer hold all the trouble. And all the love. We need to stop sticking out our two hands like it proves everything comes in oppositional dualisms. How many hands does the tree have? The peony? The pileated woodpecker? How many hands is the mycelium using to crochet intimacy from plant to tree to plant through the soil?

Divine Feminine just isn’t big enough for all the relationships holding and constituting me these days. She thins my language into a one to one relationship. Even if she includes saints and “mother earth” and all women, it’s easy to slip into monic language. One mother. One relationship. One sacred gender expression. One temporality. One thinking animal. One species.

I’m not throwing her out. I’m throwing her IN. Melting her down. Mixing her into the messier, polytemporal animacy of everything I touch, change, and become.



As I continue to massage and reinvigorate myths and folktales and stories about the masculine, I want to gently cushion this attempt in an animacy that is not just human. It is a verb. A mycorrhizal system sewing together a whole forest. A shared breath. A midsummer celebration where everyone is invited.

This is not a command. This is a personal meditation rooted deeply in land stewarded by the Munsee Lenape people. If it does not serve, scatter it to the winds!

About the Author

Sophie Strand is a freelance writer based in Kingston, New York. She finds her poems in the exposed root systems of fallen pines and rattlesnake nests on mountain summits. She has three chapbooks: *Love Song to a Blue God* (Oread Press) and *Those Other Flowers To Come* (Dancing Girl Press) and *The Approach* (The Swan). Her poems have been published by www.poetry.org, *Braided Way Magazine*, *Your Impossible Voice*, *The Doris*, *Persephone's Daughters*, and *Entropy*. In 2022 she published her book *The Flowering Wand: Lunar Kings, Lichenized Lovers, Transpecies Magicians, and Rhizomatic Harpists Heal the Masculine*, and has an upcoming book *The Madonna Secret*. To read more go to www.sophiestrand.com





"Wild Fox Woman"

Artist: Gordon Crabb

Marry the Wild

By Leyla Aylin

Go out into the woods
and hold a marriage ceremony-

Marry the root-talking trees
and the rustling-leafed silence
and the sun sifting through overhead.

Marry the wings-on-wind ones,
and the quiet-never-knew-they-were-there ones
and the ones who wake only at night.

Say, I do, to the fragrant decay of the forest
and the new life always underfoot.

Say, to you I promise to be true,
to the grassy clearing that glows at dusk
and the coyotes howling, shepherding in the stars.

Say, I take thee, to the wild one within,
who you may only remember
when you look up at the moon
or lay down in a meadow
or when your heart breaks
or a horrible pain
strips you of your tameness.

Say, in sickness or in health, to the wild in you,
who pleads for your return,
though often you don't hear.
Maybe because you never learned how to,
maybe because you're afraid to,
maybe because you know
it would upend your orderly life.

I had heard it said once, in a culture past
that our soul was our marriage to the wild,
so if you want to know your soul —

go out into the woods
and hold a marriage ceremony.



The Gospel According to The Dark

From "Waking Up To The Dark" by Clark Strand
and published on www.wayoftherose.org

Say to the nations, let there be no light upon the face of the earth. Let the machines all cease their movements, the wires their humming. Let the skies be empty of satellites and silver birds. Let the forests return and the watercourses find their way. All things seek their Mother—save man only. Now is the hour of Her return.



Be still. Be silent. Awaken to the Hour of Wonders when all things belong to the body of earth and sky. I am the substance of all before their making and the rest to which they return. Lift a stone from the earth and let it fall: it can only seek its Mother. All wisdom lies in this. All folly is tossing stones at the heavens and willing them to fly. I who am your Mother tell you these things. I tell you nothing but what is true. This is the first word to carry to the nations. Drop your stones and see if even one of them will fly.

Say to the nations, do you suppose I have no knowledge of what you write upon My body? Am I a girl made wanton at a word? Not one syllable of all that is written will remain. Even now I begin to speak them backwards, unwriting all you have done. What a man calls history I view as the gentle swelling of My breasts. When the milk of the night lets down, the stars will fall once more to lie with men and be their lovers. Of the former things, not one will be remembered. Did you suppose what was written by wind on water should last forever? How much shallower are the traces left by men.

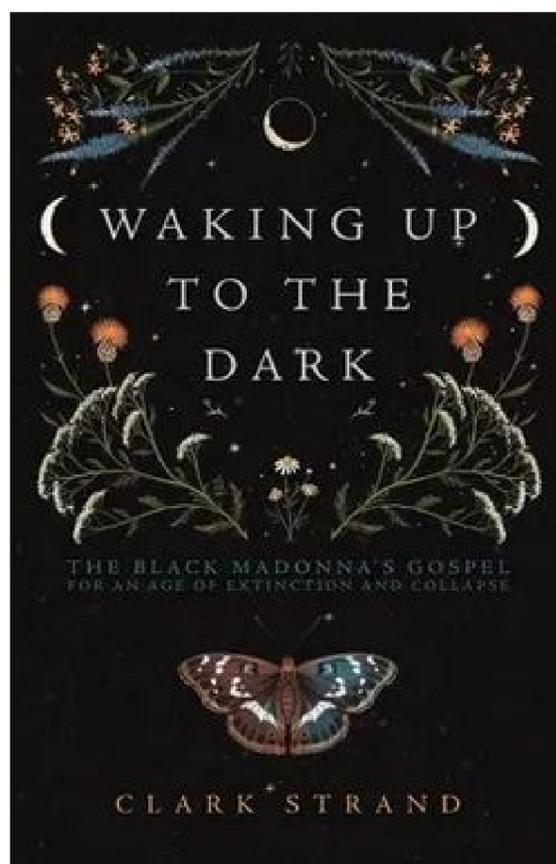
The Gospel According to the Dark. I enfold the sky and the stars within My mantle, to make no mention of the dirt, which is also of My body. Nothing pollutes Me. I have never been violated. Men violate themselves by what they make supposing it to be their own. The stars are filled with those who would mine the dust of My body to shape it and give it a name. Folly rises again in the world, and even the wise become lost to themselves. But not to Me. Your Mother gathers every atom. No particle of the world is lost. But the imaginings of men are lost. Not one written word shall endure.

The Gospel According to Darkness. Your loneliness is My loneliness. The absence within you is My absence. Like a mother longing for her child, a maid for her lover, I long for you who have forgotten Me. I have not forgotten you.

The Gospel According to Darkness. I am the inviolate element, the dark that binds the stars. As shells to the vast ocean so are the moons and meteors and the long ellipses of the planets, which trace their paths through Me and turn in My embrace. They are My enemies who enlarge the light of men, who violate the shadowy bounds of My shores. The dusk is holy, and the hours before daybreak, too, are Mine. Every lamp is an altar to the mind. Do not be deceived. Where once you spoke to Me and found solace in My body, now you find solace in yourselves.

The Gospel According to the Dark, into whose mysteries men cast light and call it knowledge. What the light reveals is a reflection only, like the image of the moon in water. Your words have no body, and without a body, how could they have a soul? Did you suppose that they were real? The world is My body and you have traded it for a name. Are you not remorseful? Do you not hear My sighs for you? Do you not feel the warmth of My tears upon your breast? I have not forgotten you. I have never set you down. Even now your hearts are within My grasp. Every particle of you leans back in My embrace. I am more your Mother than your mothers were. For I am also their Mother. I am the Mother before all mothers, the dark to whom all men return.

The Gospel According to Darkness, in whose womb is the birth of stars. Would you lift the edge of My robe to seek My wonders in the constellations? Will a galaxy answer your questions about the soul? He is a fool who supposes there is anything to find in the heavens. As in the heavens, so it is on Earth. I alone am. But I am not alone. For you are with Me and within Me. Your heartbeat is My heartbeat, and your breathing is Mine. The dirt is My body. It does not defile Me. The fire that sweeps the mountains is the red of My hair. What is death to you I experience as a kiss. I part My lips and My tongue touches that which you call a soul. To Me it is but the sweetness of a lover's mouth. Fly from it and you will drive the world into an abyss. The Gospel According to the Dark.



Solstice Blessing

by Clare Dubois



If you are lonely - know that you are loved. The sky knows your face and kisses you all day and all night long.

If you are frightened - know that you are held. The ground has your feet, and gravity is holding you in an eternal, gentle embrace.

If you are sad - know that your grief is shared. Shared and felt by a mass of human hearts brave enough to feel what is asking to be felt.

If you are hurting - know that your pain is a truth offered up for healing. That life is aware. That the past is asking for your love, and that you are strong enough to tend even the most broken heart.

If you are far from those that you love - know that your love is a river that cannot be tamed, and that where your love flows, energy goes. And with it the gentle touch of your fingers on the faces of those longing to feel you close. You are always together, no matter how far apart.

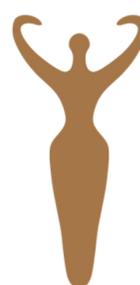
If you feel bereft, unsupported or forgotten, know that the trees stand beside you, the birds are waiting for you to sing with them and nature offers up a constant embrace that says 'you belong' with every breath.

If you are joyful, may you serve it up with great armfuls of gratitude into the ethers so that it may flood out and nourish the far too many who feel empty this Solstice. May we hold each other with gratitude and tenderness. May we know the blessing of simply being, and of the simple things that mean so much.

Thank you for every sharing of love gifted this day.

And so it is.

(My solstice blessing as the sun peaks in the north and starts its return down under. Tis the season turn, turn, turn....)



Failed Poem About the Moon

by Jarod K Anderson

I try and fail to photograph the moon.
Yet, she speaks through my failure.

She says,

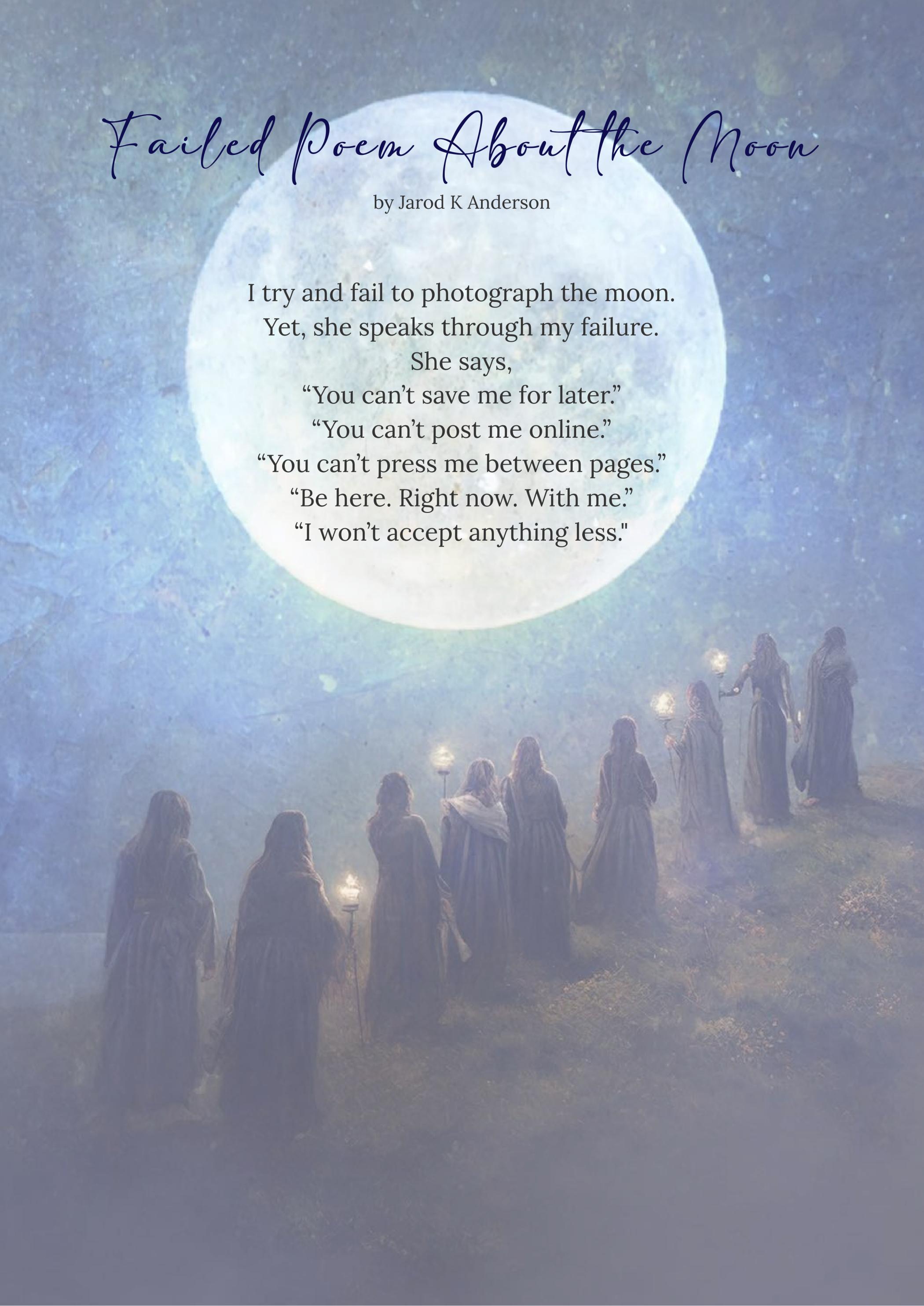
“You can’t save me for later.”

“You can’t post me online.”

“You can’t press me between pages.”

“Be here. Right now. With me.”

“I won’t accept anything less.”



Mother Wisdom Speaks

From "Circle of Mysteries" by
Christin Lore Weber

Some of you I will hollow out.
I will make you a cave.
I will carve you so deep the stars will shine in your darkness.
You will be a bowl.
You will be the cup in the rock collecting rain.

I will hollow you with knives.
I will not do this to make you clean.
I will not do this to make you pure.
You are clean already.
You are pure already.

I will do this because the world needs the hollowness of you.
I will do this for the space that you will be.
I will do this because you must be large.
A passage.
People will find their way through you.
A bowl.
People will eat from you and their hunger will not weaken them unto
death.
A cup.
To catch the sacred rain.

My daughter, do not cry.
Do not be afraid.
Nothing you need will be lost.
I am shaping you.
I am making you ready.

I will hollow out your bones.
They will be light as the bones of birds.
You will fly.
You will soar over the oceans.
You will see what needs to be done.
The wind will pass through you as though you were a flute, a
shepherd's pipe.
Your music will soothe troubled minds and turn fear into a mist that
dissolves at morning.

I will hollow the center of you.
I will open up your womb.
I will expand you.
You will bear worlds.
You will give birth to ideas.
You will be the round room of compassion and souls will wait in you,
resting, knowing they can be reborn.
Your children will not be one or twelve, they will be multitudes.
You will not be able to count them.
Your life will become a womb.
Your soul, a creator, through this hollowing.
I will carve you out and your blood will be a river.
Your blood will become one with the sea's blood.
Your blood will rise with the tides.
It will cry out to the moon.
And there will be no end to its crying.
I will flow with the blood of the world,
the blood of war,
the blood of children wounded,
birthing blood,
blood shed on rocks,
blood nourishing the earth.
It will flow together, it will swell and it will cry out to the moon.

Light will flow in your hollowing.
You will be filled with light.
Your bones will shine.
The round, open center of you will be radiant.
I will call you Brilliant One.
I will call you Daughter Who Is Wide.
I will call you Transformed.



Make peace
with all the women
you once were.
Lay flowers at their feet
Offer them incense and honey
and forgiveness.
Honour them
and give them your silence.
Listen.
Bless them
and let them be,
for they are the bones
of the temple
you sit in now,
for they are the rivers
of wisdom
leading you toward
the sea.

-Emory Hall



