

SeedBroadcast



agri-Culture Journal

Cultivating Diverse Varieties of Resilience #18

SeedBroadcast



PHOTO CREDIT: SEEDBROADCAST

18th Edition

SeedBroadcast Journal

We would like to thank all who generously contributed to our **18th edition** of the bi-annual **SeedBroadcast agri-Culture Journal**. The next edition will be in the Autumn of 2022. We invite you all to consider sending a submission. This could be a drawing, photograph, story, recipes for climate change, poem, action (what can we all do to keep the seeds alive), or an essay, with relevance to the essence of seeds, seed saving practices, climate change, and food sovereignty.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.
Each of you holds a wisdom and it is this wisdom we hope to share.

Please include a short bio, images should be at least 300 DPI 4" x 6" and include your mailing address as we will mail you a stack of printed copies to distribute in your own locale.

**THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS
SEPTEMBER 26TH 2022**

Send submissions to seedbroadcast@gmail.com

You can keep up with our actions and encounters with other seed lovers at on our website www.seedbroadcast.org and follow our blog at <http://seedbroadcast.blogspot.com/>

We want to thank our fiscal sponsor LittleGlobe, our supporters Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Climate Change Solutions Fund, the Puffin Foundation, Native Seeds/SEARCH, Albuquerque Museum, our SeedBroadcasting cohorts especially the farmers that have allowed us into their fields and lives.

To our partners in Seed: Climate Change Resilience,
Aaron Lowden and the Acoma Ancestral Lands Farm Corps Program,
Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico
Dr. Larry Emerson and Jennifer Nevarez of Tse Daa K'aaan Lifelong Learning Community in Hogback, New Mexico.
Beata Tsosie-Peña of Santa Clara Pueblo and the Española Healing Food Oasis
Ron and Debora Boyd of Mer-Girl Gardens, in La Villita, New Mexico
Land Arts of the American West,
Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance
Sarah Montgomery of Garden's Edge
Albuquerque Museum
Rowen White, Sierra Seed Coop
Native Seeds/SEARCH
UNM Art & Ecology

Carol Padberg, Carla Corcoran, Mary Mattingly, Sophy Tuttle and the MFA students of Nomad9 who created the inspiring insert for this edition. To all those gracious humans that shared their poignant seed stories, Ana Ruiz Díaz, Toña Osher and Chris Wells for building our relationship to community actions and seed activists from Meso-America, Whitney Stewart for graphic design, Paul Ross for distribution, Glyn Wilson-Charles SeedBroadcast super intern, Bill Mann, HawkMoth Farm, Rick Ferchaud for endless hoeing and digging, the many individuals for their continued support, and to the amazing anonymous donors that continue to support our work. And huge thank you to the soil, microbes, birds, sun, wind, rain and to our seeds that continue to inspire and give us hope. Thank you for joining with us in keeping these seeds alive.

SEED=FOOD=LIFE

"Take these seeds and put them in your pockets so at least sunflowers will grow when you all lie down here."

Ukrainian women offering sunflower seeds (the Ukrainian national flower) to an armed Russian soldier in the city of Henichesk, in the Kherson province of Southern Ukraine. February 27th 2022.

The cranes know that spring is on her way. They fly northwards in huge flocks that circle and sing the song of warmth to come.

The seasons are turning once again towards the light signaling that it is time for putting our hands in the earth to prepare the growing beds for our seeds.

What might this action unearth?
What are we giving back?
Are our gifts true and honest?

If you did not know already, we are at a crisis point. The pandemic, the uprisings, continued violence to other humans and our mother earth, unprecedented weather patterns, that threaten our very existence. The way we place one foot in front of the other has shifted.

Did we ever imagine this?

All can be over whelming and out of balance. We need to muster up the courage to dig deep into finding meaningful ways to ground ourselves back into this world. These ways might be different for all of us but each of us holds a responsibility to act in accordance to the reciprocal laws of nature.

We at **SeedBroadcast** have been learning from the incredible capacity of our seeds, are dedicated to what they teach us and in return offer our kinship to keep their nurturing stories alive and in good health. We believe and are acting on keeping the seeds alive.
Might you?

We too are seeds...

SEEDBROADCAST holds the belief that it is a worldly right to be able save our seeds and share their potential, to be able to grow our own food and share this abundance, and to cultivate grassroots wisdom and share in her radical creativity and resilience.

We seek to reveal the culture that has been lost in agriculture and believe that seeds are witnesses to our past and hold potential for our future. Seeds have their own story to tell and it is up to us to listen before it is too late.

SEEDBROADCAST encourages communities to keep local food and culture alive and vibrant through working together in creative and inspiring ways. We spend time with people on their farms, in their gardens, at seed exchanges and at community gatherings to dig deeper into the, often, unheard stories of local agriculture. Our traditional farmers, avid gardeners and local organic food growers are inspired by the seeds they sow and save, they take notice of what grows and what does not, they learn from the seasonal shifts, experiment with when to plant the first pea and when to harvest the seed for next year.

This vital knowledge base of plant and human connection is what we seek to cultivate, disperse and nurture.

We strive to live in reciprocity with all of our living breathing beings and to not only take but to sincerely give back.
What if we were to ask ourselves everyday "What can we gift?"

Our gift, to all who are willing to open their hearts to the necessity of listening, to those beings that have faced and are facing extinction and relocation and to learn from their fearless resilience.

"Outside my work, the thing I care about most is gardening, especially vegetable gardening."

George Orwell

In 2019 we launched the SEED: Climate Change Resilience exhibition at the Albuquerque Museum accompanied by numerous theme-based events in collaboration with many bioregional partners and a special edition of the SeedBroadcast Journal. This year 2022 we continue to work in partnership with the Haak'u Museum (<https://www.acomaskycity.org/page/home>) in Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico to add new seed stories to this exhibit and directly involve their local communities. We are moving one careful step at a time. This exhibition is scheduled to open late spring, 2022. However, as we are all well aware, during these unprecedented times we need to be fluid, so this date could well change.

SeedBroadcast launched this year by gathering with 15 Nomad MFA (<https://www.nomadmfa.org/>) students at HawkMoth Farm in Anton Chico, New Mexico. We collaboratively investigated the rigor of the relational pluriverse of arts and agri-culture and regenerative practices through the creative process of gathering and sharing the stories of seeds, seed cleaning and processing. The insert in this edition was created by the students, from the seed concepts that emerged during our time together. A huge thank you to Roberta Trentin, Katie Grove, Aiysha Ghani, Mauricio Vargas, Arneitha Douglass, Julie Chen, Kathryn Cooke, Monica Kapoor, Teal Gardner, Sarah C. Rutherford, Rebecca Zablocki, Rebecca Schultz, Justin Moore, Morgan Kulas, Natalie Stopka and Mary Mattingly.

SeedBroadcast will be on the National Mall in Washington DC at the Smithsonian's Earth Optimism X Folk Life Festival (<https://festival.si.edu/2022/earth-optimism>). We will be sharing the stories of seeds and their deep connection to resilience and reciprocity in the face of pandemics, rampant injustice, and climate crisis. Please do come and visit us as we would love to hear your seed story and to share from our digital seed story library. June 22nd to July 4th.

While 2022 will be a year of action we will continue to take time to slow down and to reflect on how to best take meaningful action for change. We are redoing the website to make it more accessible and interactive as it is seriously out of date. A new version will be up and running soon and much easier to navigate. We are continuing our conversations and networking with farmers, seed savers, backyard gardeners and activists, and teaching and mentoring as much as possible.

And we are always in the process of tending our own fields and gardens, learning as much as we possibly can from the seeds and soil and trying new ways to keep the seeds alive and vibrant.

This issue is dedicated with deep bow of gratitude to all the indigenous peoples of the world who in the face of forceful opposition courageously continue to hear the song of their traditional seeds and nurture their breathing presence for the future generations.

How will you know the difficulties of being human if you're always flying off to blue perfection? Where will you plant your grief-seeds? We need ground to scrape and hoe, not the sky of unspecified desire.

Rumi

PLEASE HELP US GROW! Support SeedBroadcast with a tax-deductible donation!

With the increasing demands for SEED Action now, we need your help to ensure that we continue to expand our collaborations and activations. Your support will keep the SeedBroadcast agri-Cultural Journal free and accessible, nurture seed stories and keep them alive and percolating and allow our partnerships with Native Seeds/SEARCH, Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance and community activist organizations to deepen the focus on food and seed sovereignty and climate change resilience. These are times of rapid climate and environmental crisis that are causing devastation to our mother earth so we need to continue to sustain and deepen our efforts. Your donation will help us to build the capacity to dig deep, sprout tall, and shout out for more action to plant the seeds of our ancestors across the land.

TO MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO SEEDBROADCAST GO TO:

Onlinedonation:
www.seedbroadcast.org/SeedBroadcast/SeedBroadcast_Donate.html

www.littleglobe.org/portfolio/seedbroadcast/

Or contact our fiscal sponsor Littleglobe for other payment options:

Phone: 505.980.6218
Email: info@littleglobe.org

- Your donation will support the on going activation of Seed: Climate Change Resilience and community engagement.

- Your donation will help us to keep activating local food and seed resiliency through community partnerships.
- Your donation will help keep the agri-Culture Journal free. Available online https://www.seedbroadcast.org/SeedBroadcast/SeedBroadcast_agriCulture_Journal.html and at various locations around the nation.

SeedBroadcast has been and continues to be funded by in-kind donations of time, labor, and money from collective SeedBroadcasters.

SeedBroadcast has received generous grants from the Kindle Project Fund of the Common Counsel Foundation, McCune Charitable Foundation, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, the Puffin Foundation and anonymous donors that support our continued projects. All of these funds are essential for the successful operation of SeedBroadcast.

SeedBroadcast thanks you for your support and BELIEF in the power of Seeds, Stories, and acknowledging the vital aspects of culture that is held within traditional forms of agri-Culture!

CONTENTS

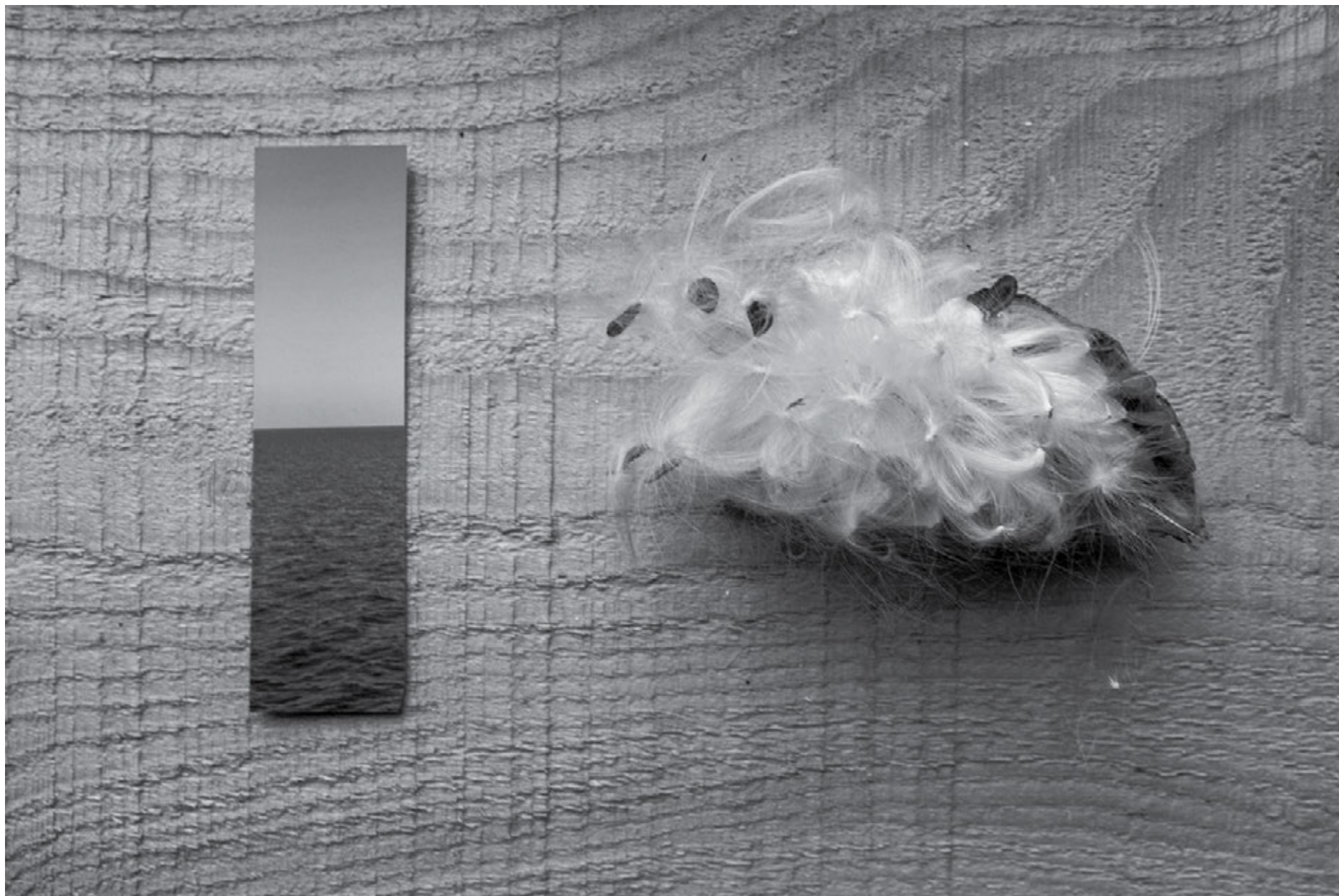
Milkweed, digital capture Margaret LeJeune	5
Sunflower Soup Liz Mueller	6
Milkweed (Asclepias syriaca) Meredith Taylor	8
In Praise of the common Milkweed Iren Schio	10
Sprout Anita Vasquez, Gracious Raven	14
Urlar Guy Veale	16
Nomad MFA	INSERT PAGES 1-18
Eulogy for the American Chestnut Tree Roberta Trentin	INSERT 2
A Blue of Dreams Katie Grove	INSERT 3
La Ceiba de Caguana Aiysha Ghani	INSERT 4
The Plunder of the Sananab Mauricio Vargas	INSERT 5
Family Beans Arneitha Douglass	INSERT 6
I've Been Being Julie Chen	INSERT 7
Orange Cardamom Pancakes Kathryn Cooke	INSERT 8
Wind as Protagonist Monica Kapoor	INSERT 9
The Bread of Roses Teal Gardner	INSERT 10
We Were Seeds Sarah C. Rutherford	INSERT 11
The Snap Pea Rebecca Zablocki	INSERT 12
Moringa Rebecca Schultz	INSERT 13
Dear Henry, Cormac & Owen Justin Moore	INSERT 14
The Wild Blueberry Seed Morgan Kulas	INSERT 15
Seven Generations to Home Natalie Stopka	INSERT 16
Chiseled in Seeds - Furrow Project Lorna Tychostup	21
White Ash Leaf Sculpture Susan Hoenig	28
Go! International Seth Hamilton	32
Mycelial Madness	35
First Light: Brigid and the Bear Sara Wright	37



PHOTO CREDIT: SEEDBROADCAST

The wheat fields around Wallington were reminders that even seeds for annuals or practices like farming could out last a regime, a dictator, a pack of lies, and a war against science. Lies mutate more freely than seeds and there are new crops of those as well.

Rebecca Solnit "Orwell's Roses"



MILKWEED, DIGITAL CAPTURE, 2018

MARGARET LEJEUNE IS AN IMAGE-MAKER, CURATOR, AND EDUCATOR FROM ROCHESTER, NEW YORK (USA). WORKING PREDOMINANTLY WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC-BASED MEDIUMS, LEJEUNE EXPLORES OUR PRECARIOUS RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATURAL WORLD. HER WORK HAS BEEN WIDELY EXHIBITED AT INSTITUTIONS AROUND THE WORLD INCLUDING THE GRIFFIN MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY (USA), THE CENTER FOR FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY (USA), ARC GALLERY (USA), CIRCE GALLERY CAPE TOWN (SOUTH AFRICA), SCIENCE CABIN (SOUTH KOREA), AND UMBRELLA ARTS (USA). LEJEUNE HAS BEEN INVITED TO CREATE WORK AT SEVERAL RESIDENCY PROGRAMS WHICH FOSTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES INCLUDING THE GLOBAL NOMADIC ART PROJECT - THE EPHEMERAL RIVER (DARTINGTON, UK), UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME RESEARCH CENTER(USA), AND UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MADISON TROUT LAKE RESEARCH STATION(USA). SHE HAS BEEN AWARDED A PUFFIN FELLOWSHIP, THE SALLY A. WILLIAMS ARTIST GRANT, AND A BRADLEY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH EXCELLENCE 'NEW DIRECTIONS' GRANT FOR HER INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECT GROWING LIGHT. HER WORK WAS RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND CLIMATE: CONVERSATIONS AND EMERGENT PRAXIS FROM ART.EARTH PRESS. LEJEUNE CURRENTLY SERVES AS VISITING ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AT ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK.

SUNFLOWER SOUP

LIZ MUELLER

I can relate to Truman Capote's elderly, eccentric, distant cousin who woke up every year on a day in late November, and exclaimed, "Oh, my, it's fruitcake weather!" Her announcement that officially inaugurated the coming Christmas season, "exhilarates her imagination and fuels the blaze of her heart". (A Christmas Memory by Truman Capote)

For my part and the blaze of my heart, the ritual is in anticipation of the coming of the spring season. My exclamation usually comes in late March, when I awake on a crisp, cool morning and say, "Oh, my, it's Sunflower Soup weather!"

My recipe doesn't produce a warm aroma or yield loaves to share with loved ones, but it does provide brilliant colors through the summer and fall, as well as food for feathered friends and butterflies.



SUNFLOWER SOUP

1. Collect sunflower seed heads from your garden in the fall. Store in a cool, dry place. Leave some for the birds to dine on through the winter. In spring, snip what's left, as well as any other seeds you find. I usually season with zinnia, marigold, morning glory, hollyhock, amaranth, poppy, cosmos, etc.
2. In a large, shallow bucket or on a tarp, stomp on the heads to release the seeds and mulch everything up. Children like this activity almost as much as I do!
3. In a wheelbarrow, mix the seed with potting soil. Add water to make a thick "soup".
4. Spread the mixture in garden beds and pots. Cover with a layer of soil. Keep moist until germination and then water as needed.
5. Your Sunflower Soup will grow into a colorful surprise for you and your garden wildlife to feast on. Enjoy!

LIZ IS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR AND TAUGHT CHILDREN (AND ADULTS) OF ALL AGES FOR OVER FORTY YEARS. SHE LIVES IN ELDORADO, NEW MEXICO WITH HER HUSBAND, CLYDE, AND THEIR DOG, MAX.



PHOTO CREDIT: LIZ MUELLER

MILKWEED (ASCLEPIAS SYRIACA)

MEREDITH TAYLOR

Throughout rural areas of the world, the milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) plant is ubiquitous along roads, rights-of-ways, and fields. Common milkweed plants are not only a beautiful native species, but they're essential habitat for a number of insects such as Monarchs and other butterflies, bees, beetles and flies. The Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*), in Greek literally means "sleepy transformation" indicates the Monarch's ability to hibernate and metamorphose to an adult monarch butterfly which possesses two pairs of brilliant orange-red wings with black veins and white spots. The four stages of their 28-32 day life cycle are: egg, larvae, pupae and adult. Each adult butterfly only lives about 4-5 weeks. Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed leaves as its only host plant, so milkweed is critical for its survival. Without milkweed plants, the Monarchs cannot complete their life cycle causing the populations to decline. Unfortunately, weed spraying is causing the eradication of milkweed both in agricultural areas as well as other landscapes impacting the Monarchs. The globe flower matures into a pod which then opens and broadcasts its bounty of seeds that float through the air with silken tufts to grow where they land. Planting milkweed is one of the best ways that we can improve Monarch habitat in addition to not spraying roadside plants.

Monarchs have a unique migration through the United States from Mexico to Canada annually. They winter in Mexico and California before they fly north 1200-2800 miles to lay their eggs. The eggs hatch as larvae on the milkweed plants and then consumes the leaves before it pupates into the butterfly. The Monarch population in California was down to about 2000 butterflies in 2020 but recovered last year when more than 200,000 butterflies were counted in 2021 during their winter at Pacific Grove.

In the right climate conditions, they overwinter from November to mid-March. There are dozens of species of milkweeds native to North America, so it is best to plant the milkweed species naturally found in your area. Planting local milkweed species is always best. It's easy to collect your own seeds to plant in any landscape. The common milkweed is a rhizomatous plant that is a valuable pollinator species as well. The milkweed plant is edible when the green leaves are boiled. Milkweed has been used for millennia for medicinal purposes as well. Many indigenous tribes allegedly applied milkweed sap topically for wart removal and chewed the roots to treat dysentery. Milkweed was also used in salves and infusions to treat swelling, rashes, coughs, fevers and asthma.



MEREDITH HAS LONG HAD AN INTEREST IN THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF NATURE TO LEARN HOW LIFE WORKS.

AS A CHILD, SHE EXPLORED THE FORESTS AND FIELDS IN SEARCH OF UNUSUAL PLANTS. EVENTUALLY, AS SHE TRAVELED AROUND THE WORLD, SHE LEARNED HOW PEOPLE USE PLANTS AS FOOD AND AS MEDICINE. SHE STUDIED ETHNOBOTANY WITH NATIVE PEOPLE WHILE SERVING IN THE PEACE CORPS IN THE AMAZON, ON AN ENDANGERED SPECIES RESEARCH PROJECT IN AUSTRALIA AND WORKING ON THE WIND RIVER INDIAN RESERVATION. THE MORE SHE LEARNED, THE MORE SHE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT WHICH PLANTS TO USE FOR CERTAIN CONDITIONS.

NOW SHE HARVESTS A WIDE DIVERSITY OF PLANTS. TWO OF HER FAVORITES ARE ARNICA, FROM WHICH SHE MAKES ANTI-INFLAMMATORY SALVE AND ROSE HIPS WHICH SHE NIBBLES ON AS SHE HIKES THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS. MEREDITH IS A CERTIFIED WYOMING NATURALIST WHO ENJOYS TEACHING ETHNOBOTANY FIELD CLASSES FOR SCHOOLS AS WELL AS NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WEST.

IN PRAISE OF THE COMMON MILKWEED

IREN SCHIO



BLOOMING COMMON MILKWEED



TOP: CLOSED MILK WEED POD
 BOTTOM: HALF A COMMON MILKWEED POD

Having an Acequia run through the land I live on has been delightful, even without water rights to it. So many beautiful plants grow along the side of the ditch. Milkweed is one of them.

Native to North America, Milkweed (*Asclepias*) contains over 100 species. The thick, milky sap gives the plant its common name.

I hardly think it should be called a weed, since it is such a beneficial plant to animals, insects, and humans alike.

When it blooms it has pink fragrant flowers, Monarch butterflies drink the nectar and lay their eggs on the plant. It also attracts Bees, Hummingbirds and other Butterflies.

Milkweed produces different delicious edible products. It was a regular food item for Indigenous people. Be sure to identify the common Milkweed from the bitter, but similar looking Dogbane. The latter grows taller and lacks the fuzz on the stems that grows on common Milkweed.

The plants shoots can be sautéed, as can the flower buds once they bloom. The immature pods can be eaten whole or in stir fries. Once the pod has matured the silk is pulled out from it and boiled to a melted cheese consistency and tastes especially good server on rice.

Milkweed floss, or silk has an insulating effect that surpasses Goose down and the tough stalk fibers can be worked to make string and rope.

Thank you, Countryside magazine and Santa Fe Botanical Garden for your information on Milkweed.



TIGER-TAIL BUTTERFLY FEEDING ON MILKWEED

IREN SCHIO LIVES AND WORKS IN ABIQUIU, WHERE SHE LOVES TO HIKE, GARDEN AND PURSUE HER ART.

PHOTOS TAKEN BY IREN SCHIO, ON THE LAND ACROSS FROM POSHUOWINGE ANCESTRAL PUEBLO AND AT THE NORTHERN YOUTH PROJECT GARDEN IN ABIQUIU.



PHOTO CREDIT: SEEDBROADCAST

“A seed’s whole purpose in life is to sacrifice itself to grow one more time. They need to return home to hear their languages again, to see their people again.”

Jessika Greendeer, Dream of Wild Health. Member of the Ho-Chunk nation

SPROUT

ANITA VASQUEZ, GRACIOUS RAVEN

Fall encrusted, Spring awakened
last years' seed.
Yearning to burst,
root first,
rain quenched mega thirst.
Tender sprout emergence;
primary leaf arousal instinctively instilled.
Bluebird and meadowlark calls
echo through secondary leaf vein
precisely so –
This sequence, duplicated
throughout each reverberating sprout
impresses itself with organic clout.



Blanket Flower Pod under Snow Crystals



BLANKET FLOWER SEED POD



Soaking Dragon Tooth seeds to loosen seed coat.
This works well with or without scarification.

ANITA VASQUEZ HAS BEEN SAVING WILDFLOWER SEEDS SINCE 1986. HER EDUCATION IN BIOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES LED TO HER RAISING, SAVING AND SHARING SEEDS IN IOWA AND MONTANA; MANY FROM URBAN WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES WHICH ONLY EXIST WITH SEED CYCLES. THIS POEM REPRESENTS MY WILD DRAGON TOOTH FLOWER SEED CYCLE. THE 4.5 FOOT TALL 10-YEAR-OLD PLANT STARTED FROM A SEED SPRIG OF A PREVIOUS PLANT. THE RESULTS ATTRACT MYRIADS OF POLLINATORS.

ÙRLAR

GUY VEALE

Ùrlar is the Scottish Gaelic word for 'ground' or 'musical theme' and was chosen as the title for an experimental open-air performing arts event – commissioned by the National Trust for Scotland – which took place along the Ardes Hidden History Trail archeological site at the base of Ben Lomond, in the heart of Scotland's first National Park, on Sunday 26th September 2021. This article will give a brief insight into some of the environmental concerns driving the commission and how they became the creative inspiration for costume designs, character attributes and movement vocabularies for the event.



"Recreation and conservation are not two separate things. They depend on the balance between access and inaccessibility." The "world's wonder [...] has to be planned otherwise the wilderness will not remain wild." (Tom Weir)

The National Trust for Scotland cares for many of Scotland's iconic natural landscapes, looking after 10 Munros, 245 miles of upland footpath, 8 national nature reserves, and 76,000 hectares of countryside. One of their most popular and accessible sites is Ben Lomond, approximately 45 minutes north of Glasgow, visited by c. 50,000 walkers a year (70,000 in 2020 in the wake of the first wave of Covid-19). The Ben Lomond estate comprises almost 6,000 acres of stunning upland scenery. Native oak woodlands give way to montane scrub and a sweeping SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) peatland, before reaching the summit area of Ben Lomond itself, with views across the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park and far beyond. Ben Lomond comes from the Gaelic *Beinn Laomainn*, which means 'Beacon Mountain'.

On the lower slopes of the Ben, we find an oak woodland which gives way to open pasture intermixed with the remnants of the lost hamlet of Ardess. This area contains the ruins of houses, farm buildings and field walls – reminders of a community who lived by the banks of Loch Lomond several hundred years ago. Miles of stone and turf dykes marked property boundaries and prevented animals from grazing on the crops. 'Rig and furrow' was the common form of cultivation from the 16th to the 19th century in Scotland. The rigs consisted of long built-up lines of earth, cattle dung and organic materials, which provided a fertile strip for growing crops such as oats and barley. The furrows were dips that helped drainage. In order to ensure a fair division of arable land, each year tenants drew lots to decide which rigs they would cultivate.

About 250 years ago, rig and furrow cultivation began to be replaced with large-scale sheep grazing. Later, the area became popular with rich gentry for game shooting. With no role for small-scale farming, many families were forced to move to the cities or emigrate from Scotland. By the early 1800s most of the houses on the trail were abandoned. The people who once lived here spoke Gaelic, and Ardess is Gaelic for the high (ard) waterfall (eas), referring to the prominent waterfall on the slopes above. Many other local names have since been lost or forgotten.

The oak woodland was planted in the late 18th century. The timber and bark served several purposes, from use in industrial leather-making to building material and fuel. The traces of buildings and agriculture suggest that several families may have been displaced when the woods were planted. Native tree species such as holly, hazel and rowan are making a comeback because the National Trust erected fences to protect them from grazing sheep and wild deer – no small undertaking across the breadth of this challenging and sometimes hostile landscape.

Iron was once smelted at a furnace or 'bloomery mound' on the hill above the settlement; this hill became the central performance location for our *Ùrlar* event. Bog iron (an orangey, silty substance) was collected from wet ground, while nearby woodlands, now

gone, provided the vast amounts of charcoal needed for fuel. Once smelted (separated by intense heat), the iron was either shaped here or taken to a blacksmith to make tools and weapons. The ground here is much greener as turf has grown over piles of 'slag', the waste product from the smelting process.

It was within this context of ongoing recovery from intensive local human land use and sustained access to wild places – through carefully managed natural woodland regeneration and path repair projects – that the National Trust for Scotland commissioned *Ùrlar* to engage with new audiences, make new connections between natural and cultural heritage, provide visitors with a novel and thought-provoking experience and "help to reveal the voice of the landscape".

Ùrlar was intended as an outward and inward journey; a kaleidoscopic vision of place; a sounding of resonant notes echoing through time. With people and place entangled at Ardess for centuries, *Ùrlar* celebrated the rhythm of that relationship: the ebb and flow of seasons and cultures, the past and future of farming and recreation, and the cycle of habitats and inhabitants – lost and restored. In the Great Highland Bagpipe tradition of piobaireachd (or 'pibroch'), the *ùrlar* is the 'main theme' or 'ground' upon which the tune builds layers of variation; similarly, the landscape and history of Ardess was the *ùrlar* generating creative responses across multiple artforms.

Ùrlar featured evocative live music and song from multiple traditions, dance and choreography from a wide range of styles, and spoken / theatrical narrative fragments. Small audience groups of up to 15 people were guided and led at a gentle pace throughout a 90-minute experience, seeing and hearing the landscape in new and unexpected ways, guided by professional storytellers along a curated trail, their imaginations fired by a cast of magical characters in costumes all inspired by the natural and cultural history of the immediate locality. Key stations along the route were brought to life in harmony with the natural environment, by subtle sonic additions to nature's own soundscape and a uniquely recurring 'sonic beacon' joined by multiple instruments and voices, carried on the wind to activate the entire site and help embed our *ùrlar* in collective memory.

A short video trailer documenting *Ùrlar* can be found here: *Ùrlar* video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9R3fqwKcpM&ab_channel=GuyVeale

A related music mix invoking sonic references for *Ùrlar* can be found here: *Ùrlar* radio mix <http://movement.radio/show/Urlar-20092021>

To make all this possible, each of the creative practitioners involved – whether designer, performer, artist or musician – was given a thorough overview of the natural and cultural

history of the site, as well as a detailed creative brief to help shape and refine their artistic responses.

There were many important elements informing the creative development of *Ùrlar*, including:

- devising memorable and unusual scenes, to last long in the memory
- seeking to work with the landscape and not compete with it, in terms of scale
- collapsing distance and empty space with 'harmonic' visual and sonic design
- encouraging practitioners to take ownership of the brief and create freely
- being open to local influences and site-specific discoveries wherever possible
- combining literal character representations of local flora / fauna with symbolic archetypes
- building a multifaceted mythology with references drawing from several traditions

As seen in the video, a series of characters greeted the audience at various points along a linear, one-way trail. Each character was a 'genius loci' or spirit of place, with a collection of attributes relevant to their position and having specific functions to both guide and entertain the audience. For example, as we researched natural staging positions on a particular part of the trail, we were repeatedly met by several ovipositing golden-ringed dragonflies (*Cordulegaster boltonii*), on multiple occasions. They often landed on our hands. This spot became the performance location for a humanoid dragonfly called 'Etherbell' (a traditional Scottish name for the insect) complete with accurate colour scheme – i.e. gold and black rings – and stylised movement vocabulary.

The majority of the trail took place under the cover of woodland, but at the edge of this treeline, the path emerged onto open hillside with a westerly aspect, facing out onto Loch Lomond and backed by the lower flanks of Ben Lomond. The audience immediately had to cross a small stream to this exposed area which we designated as our Celtic 'Otherworld', where normal rules do not apply. Etherbell was the first character seen after the audience emerged into the Otherworld; she had a complimentary character stationed further along the trail: 'Demoiselle', named after the male beautiful demoiselle damselfly (*Calopteryx virgo*) – another known and frequently sighted local inhabitant. Demoiselle was one of the last characters seen before the audience crossed over the same stream higher up, emerging back out of the Otherworld.

Along similar lines, a pair of white-tailed sea eagles were spotted nearby at Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve in early March 2021: this was believed to be the first time sea eagles settled at Loch Lomond in over 100 years, since persecution and habitat changes led to their extinction in Britain in the early 20th century, with the last known bird reported in Shetland in 1918. Their wider reintroduction to Scotland, first in the 1970s and again in the 90s and early 2000s, has been a conservation success, with their population now estimated to be over 150 breeding pairs. It became important for us to represent this magnificent bird in *Ùrlar*, and so two characters were created in direct homage: 'Erne Sùil na Grèine' (Gaelic: 'eagle of the sunlit eye') and 'Albacilla' (from the bird's Latin binomial taxonomy), whose soaring poetry and plaintive song reverberated far over the trees, toward and across the loch, in eerily subdued weather conditions.

Erne – the male of this pair – was created by Alex Rigg (director of leading outdoor performance group Oceanallover), who chose J.A. Baker's novel *The Peregrine* as a guiding inspiration for costume, movement and speech, shaping the character into a man whose obsessive and patient observations of his chosen species have begun to transform him – a transformation always doomed to failure. We were astounded when, during the dress rehearsal on the day before the event, a peregrine – not an eagle – flew low and slow over our heads within seconds of the eagles' performance. The previous month, with our production management team sat outside for a meeting at Ardess Lodge (the base for the entire site), our conversation was interrupted by a projectile flying just over our heads and ripping the air open with a sound like a zip in a tunnel. We ducked thinking someone had fired a stray bullet – but there were no guns anywhere. This was a peregrine 'stoop' (reaching 200 miles per hour at its fastest) aimed at prey in a field metres away; until then, Senior Ranger Alasdair Eckersall had never witnessed or heard this in 30 years on site.

During the event, the audience were led to the highest point of the site by Albacilla: the iron smelting 'bloomery mound' with a panoramic view next to a sole hawthorn tree, where they were met and addressed by 'Dé' – a member of the sith (fairy) and "voice of the landscape" – with the following words, adapted from Alasdair Eckersall's book *What the Names Tell Ye*:

Moveslowly, gently. Be the grass, be the rock and stone, be the shadow beneath the tree. Let Them not see. Leave no trace: be the grass, be the rocks, be the wind, a hint of shadow flitting through the landscape.

During dress rehearsals, the local cattle became interested in Dé's words and song; their curiosity was so great that we were required to draw up a 'cow management plan' for health & safety reasons. These cows can be seen walking along the trail with the camera crew in the video above.

After an 'activation' of the entire site with synchronised music and movement, cued by a bagpiper placed high above on a rocky outcrop, Dé's main role was to function as a 'psychopomp', leading souls safely back from the Otherworld, preparing audiences to meet the character 'Danu' who required a symbolic 'tribute' or 'exchange' before permitting the crossing of the waters. Danu is a composite goddess figure combining elements of Danu, Demeter, Grian and Brigid (the Smith); emerging from beside a lone grey willow tree, she provides access to stepping stones over a stream. The video clip shows she holds a book which people are invited to sign with charcoal.

Like all characters, Danu's costume design and performance actions were refined in detail over time, but the guiding inspirations for character functions and core attributes were based, from the earliest stages, specifically on their immediate environment's topography, flora and fauna. Each performer chosen to inhabit each role would "locate" themselves in response to a brief emerging from the inspiration and resulting character attributes. A high degree of autonomy given to experienced, self-directing performers allowed each of them to hone in on parts of the brief or symbolic associations related to it which spoke the most meaningfully to them. The character of Danu – created by Laini Christmas (pictured) – is an interesting case in point.

From the outset, the defining feature of Danu's small part of a vast performance site was the grey willow (*Salix cinerea*) tree straddling the 'Otherworld' stream – a stream we know to be coming from high on Ben Lomond and ending in the loch, with flowing water joining the River Leven and reaching the Firth of Clyde estuary, where it enters the Irish Sea and ultimately the North Atlantic Ocean, before evaporating to rain back down on the same land at some point in future. High up on the Ben, a difference of a few metres on the other side of the watershed would take falling rain down to the Forth Valley, before making its way to the Firth of Forth and North Sea on the eastern side of Scotland. We speculated on paths already mapped and courses already charted, imagining the water's cyclical journey from the unique position of this tree in time and space.

We gathered imagery of the grey willow's catkins for a design reference 'mood board', along with other mythological and natural imagery including representations of the main nesting bird inhabiting



this area of the site – the wheatear (*Turdus leucurus*). Costume designer Zephyr Liddell worked in close consultation to consider how we could best clothe Danu to be part of – and integral to – this particular landscape. The dress references young male catkins, with their mass of fine silver silken hairs hiding the developing stamens; the headdress opens out to reveal long white filaments culminating in yellow anthers. These filaments needed to be of exactly the right tensile strength and diameter, so they could be shaped accordingly to hang firmly – subject to gravity, as well as potentially strong winds and rain – in the desired radiating pattern.

Danu can be seen wielding a staff in the image and the video. During a site visit to prepare a film crew for documentation, only one week before the event, my dog Pippin disappeared as we reached Danu's grey willow tree. No amount of whistling fetched him back. After what seemed like a very long minute, he emerged from a clump of vegetation directly beside the stream and willow tree – right under our feet – with an entire, pristine sheep's skull clamped by one horn in his mouth. This skull must have been stripped by natural processes and laid bare in place for decades before Pippin uncovered it: it may have belonged to a sheep herded by one of Ardess' 19th century farmers. Later that day, the decision was made to incorporate this skull into the staff Zephyr had already made for Danu. We know theatrical performers can be highly superstitious, and interesting stories emerged about this skull – including disembodied voices being heard in its presence, and the heavens opening the moment it was brought off site at the end of the event.

In a similar case of serendipity and coincidence, also only one week before the event, Laini / Danu saw the Levon Biss' photograph: Two-Spined Singhara Nut (*Trapa natans* var. *bispinosa*) on display at the Carpology collection of the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh; she sent Zephyr and I an email shortly afterward, saying her immediate thought upon seeing these seed pods was "make up!" and forwarded the images in case it "sparked with our thoughts". Zephyr's reply was: "I'm actually very scared of these seed pods! We had one in our house, washed up on the west coast all the way from the Americas, but I kept it locked away as I thought it was evil". The seed pods' shape and pattern did indeed become the source reference for Danu's make-up.

These scattered examples hopefully help to show what a gift and solemn responsibility it was for us to work in such a cherished and iconic location, and – in the middle of a pandemic with all of its complexities and uncertainties – find our feet to make art that we love, safely, once again.

We wanted to tap into a small part of the natural and cultural heritage of the site with respect for all of its inhabitants, past and present, highlighting work that preserves wild places so critical to our wellbeing. In doing so, we sought to create lingering memories and spark unique responses – and point to a future where habitat, memory and creativity are all secure and entwined.

GUY VEALE IS AN ARTIST, PRODUCER AND SOUND DESIGNER BASED IN GLASGOW
DANU: LAINI CHRISMAS
COSTUME: ZEPHYR LIDDELL: [HTTPS://WWW.ZEPHYRLIDDELL.COM/](https://www.zephyrliddell.com/)
PHOTO CREDIT: HASSAN NEZAMIAN: [HTTPS://WWW.HASSANNEZAMIAN.COM/](https://www.hassannezamian.com/)
COMMISSIONED BY THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND: [HTTPS://WWW.NTS.ORG.UK/](https://www.nts.org.uk/)



In January of 2022, a group of 15 students from the Nomad Interdisciplinary MFA Low Residency program at the University of Hartford traveled to New Mexico to spend two weeks working with artists and practitioners. The program visited Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Taos, Socorro, Carrizozo and Anton Chico. This was the program's second visit to New Mexico.

The Nomad MFA is a graduate art program that is dedicated to regenerative culture. The curriculum brings together interdisciplinary approaches including field-based learning, social engagement, ecological art, and systems thinking. This residency was conducted under the guidance of the Nomad program director Carol Padberg, interim director Mary Mattingly, program manager Carla Corcoran, on-site manager Sophy Tuttle, thesis advisor Christy Gast, and guest practitioners in New Mexico including Agnes Chavez, Clarence Cruz, Mike Lagg, Andrea Polli, Porter Swentzell, Francisco Uvina, Paula Wilson, and SeedBroadcast (Jennette Hart-Mann & Chrissie Orr).

SeedBroadcast shared stories about farming in Anton Chico and about their work amplifying seed sharing networks around the state. They asked us each to locate and share a seed story from our individual ancestry: a seed that has been important to us, to our families, and to our cultural heritage, and evince a story about that particular seed. We are grateful for this opportunity. It opened up so many points of connection with the lands around us.

We would like to acknowledge that the work of this residency was done on the ancestral lands of Pueblo and Jicarilla Apache Nations. The many relationships we built with places, seeds, traditions, ancestors, plants and animals left us grateful to all of the people we were able to work with and learn from. We are inspired by their generosity, knowledge, and wisdom.

Mary Mattingly, Nomad MFA

EULOGY FOR THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT TREE

ROBERTA TRENTIN

1904 New York City
the American chestnut was gone.

Frustrations persisted
aply. And now, new hope.

Hypovirulent
healing success.

Discussions techniques discussions
control ideas.

The return is doubtful. The hope remains.

We have to imagine it a tree that nearly vanished
And They lorded over the forest.

A starburst of pearly white catkins
streaking like a comet's tail against the dark
flowers roll like surf for miles.

Chestnut made things cradle coffin.
tannins bread stuffed wild
turkey bear fattened on the mast fire. roast.

No longer. no longer.
... gone down like a slaughtered army,

For now.

But there may come a day.

Castanea dentate
towering giant. Preblight
postblight.
We hypothesize.

ROBERTA TRENTIN'S SOUND PIECES, VIDEO WORK, AND PHOTOGRAPHY EXPLORE OVERLOOKED STORIES OF PLANTS AND MYCELIUM IN THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN WORLD. A BACKGROUND IN SCIENCE AND A LOVE OF THE EARTH RESULTS IN AN INTERWEAVING OF MACRO/MICRO OBSERVATIONS AND DEEPLY PERSONAL STORIES IN HER WORK. HER CURRENT COLLECTION OF EULOGIES TO THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT IS A PIVOT POINT BETWEEN ANCESTRAL MEMORIES OF THE TREE, ITS DISAPPEARANCE, AND A FUTURE OF ITS UNDOUBTED RETURN. SHE SPLITS HER TIME BETWEEN THE FORESTS OF THE HUDSON VALLEY AND NEW YORK CITY AND IS CURRENTLY AN MFA CANDIDATE WITH THE NOMAD INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM.

A BLUE OF DREAMS

KATIE GROVE

● ● breath
 ● swelling
 ● corn seed cascading
 ● swirling blue of sky mixed with red earth
 ● fingers running through whispering
 ● seeds
 ● sounds of ocean tides
 ● back and forth
 ● in and out
 ● sound of
 ● power
 ● and unceasing gentleness
 ● the pause between winnowings
 ● is the expanse between
 ● this precious water desert
 ● and the unstoppable vastness
 ● of water in the sea
 ● between white of corn silk dancing in the breeze
 ● and white capped waves as they roll to shore
 ● between
 ● a diligent grid of acequias
 ● and the impossible drink of deep water
 ● in
 ● blues
 ● shared color of our shared origin
 ● blue of unbridled dreams
 ● blue of a careful prayer
 ● rhythm
 ● of a thousand ancestor bodies
 ● echoing in our hands
 ● the waves
 ● an unceasing breath
 ● rising and falling
 ● the sifting corn
 ● a whisper lasting as long
 ● as the dance of fingers brushing through
 ● those hard earned seeds
 ● winnowing to the wind
 ● a cadence of gratitude
 ● a tempo of longing
 ● ● ● a blue
 ● ● ● of dreams

IN HER METICULOUS WOVEN SCULPTURES AND INSTALLATIONS, NEW YORK ARTIST KATIE GROVE USES PLANT MATERIALS SHE HARVESTS FROM THE LAND TO EXAMINE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH NATURE. GROVE IS ALSO AN EDUCATOR IN THE FIELD OF NATURAL BASKETRY AND USES THE WORKSHOP SPACE TO GUIDE STUDENTS IN CONSIDERING THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH PLANTS AND THE LAND AS WELL AS LEARNING BASKETRY TECHNIQUES. SHE IS CURRENTLY AN MFA CANDIDATE IN THE NOMAD INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM AT UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD. WWW.KATIEGROVESTUDIOS.COM

LA CEIBA DE CAGUANA

AIYESHA GHANI

LA CEIBA DE CAGUANA

“
*”Mis raíces corren desde la Cordillera, tras continentes y
 oceanos...”*

GUA'KIA ATA BIBI TOCA EL FIRMAMENTO...

CU'KE' APITO TUREYGUA

DESDE LOS SUELOS DE MIS PADRES
 Y TANTAS GENERACIONES ANTERIOR.

UNA SEMILLA...MADRE DE LAS SEMILLAS...
 QUE NOS LLEVAMOS HACIA LA VIDA ETERNA.

NOS DA DE COMER.

NOS DA PARA TEJER.

NOS HACE RECORDAR

NOS NUTRE Y CUIDA AL ALMA..

NOS CONNETA LAS EPOCHAS DE TIEMPO A CU'KE

NOS LIGA AL PUEBLO Y LA FAMILIA

NOS LIGA AL FUTURO, ATA YABISI NANICHI

Yax Che
 Yabisi Sarobey

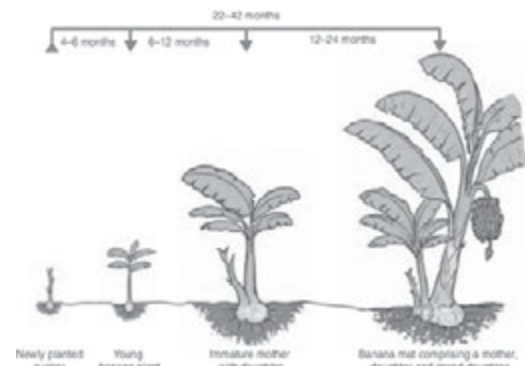
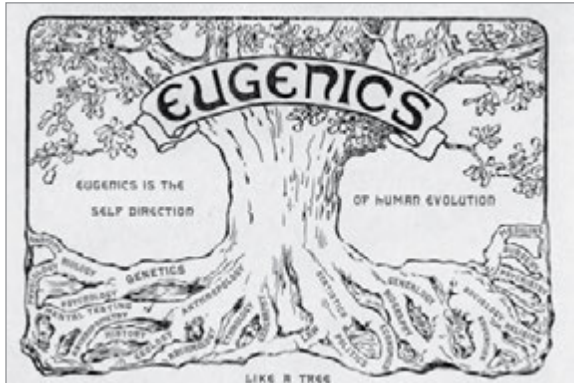
Bombax ceiba/ Red silk cotton tree

foro y palabras: Aiysha M Ghani

AIYESHA IS BASED IN MIAMI, FL. SHE IS CURRENTLY PURSUING A MASTER'S OF SCIENCE IN GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA. HER INTERDISCIPLINARY WORKS INVESTIGATING DEEP SPATIAL ECOLOGIES HAVE BEEN EXHIBITED INTERNATIONALLY.

THE PLUNDER OF THE SANANAB

MAURICIO VARGAS



My parents call my siblings and I spoiled. Products of the consumer culture in which we were brought up — corporate America. It's not that we don't appreciate our parent's heritage, but it was never something that was represented much outside of our house, unless on an advertisement or tv drama, exaggerated and caricatured. In the home there was a bit more evidence through traditional iconography and native music which could be found in many Sananab households. But otherwise our family history was rarely discussed, let alone celebrated. Life moved so quickly for our kind — the Musa¹, or Sananab more colloquially — there seemed to be no time for such conversation. Only time to adapt to our current home. And with a complicated lineage that goes back 10,000 years, it was a story that was often grazed over and lost in the fragments of inherited memories shared amongst relatives. More often, we opted to simply submit to our present circumstance and try to be grateful for the 15 months we have on planet Htrae. Not that we had any choice in the matter anyways.

My generation, the Cavendish, or the triploid Musa Acuminata, have grown to accept our roles in the cycle of things. Soil under our feet. A warm climate. We also get to continue practicing our trade and do what we do best: mining and sharing nutrients with the local community. Our ability to mine for fiber, vB9, potassium, magnesium, and vC has earned our species a certain popularity in the Sapien's global market over the years, and it shows in the polished yellow coats my generation now sports. It came at a cost though, when we had to give up our genetic and cultural richness to the western Sapien's nutritional demands. This is all evident in the bloodied hands of the pop-up Republics and their guiding scripture, Capitalism. Something I learned about one day when rummaging deep in the rhizomatic memories of my grandmother, and the day my parents' indifference began to make sense.

My family's story started when my ancestors were forced from their homes and brought to the west by the entrepreneurial Sapiens more than 300 years ago. Speaking a different language, and little-to-no access to translators, my ancestors unwittingly gave up their reproductive rights in exchange for what was believed to be an opportunity for them and future generations. They didn't understand the Sapien's motivations. Couldn't see why they had particular interest in the

mutants of our species. The nearly sterile outcasts that had little chance of survival outside of our village. But the Sapiens knew better. With their nimble animal neurons, they knew how to exploit a misfortune such as sterility and benefit from it for their own purposes. They had observed how the mutations in our community, which caused some Sananab to have smaller sex organs, had also allowed them to mine for fibers and nutrients more efficiently. Eventually some of our ancestors became completely sterile, but since we are a parthenocarpic² organism, this was all the more ideal for the Sapien's global nutrition shipping schema. By the beginning of what the Sapiens call the 'Age of Exploration', whole communities of Sananab had been shipped to parts of SouthEast Asia, Arabia, Africa, and Australia, and by the 1830s made its way to the present day Caribbean Island of Martinique, from where they spread across the Americas.

For About 100 years, grandma Gros Michel³'s generation was the dominant Sananab being cloned and put to work across plantations in Central and Southern parts of the Americas. Her generation was so successful that entire nations were being colonized by rich Sapiens to capitalize on the growing potassium industry. Around 1904, wealthy oligarchs usurped land and power in Honduras by funding wars, securing concessions to build railroads, developing banana plantation infrastructure, and obtaining tax-free imports. This was the first of the infamous Sananab Republics, but not the last.

Around 1950, a disease called the Fusarium Wilt started spreading across America's Musa communities. Corporations like United Fruit, who monopolized the market, irresponsibly spread the disease by continuing to demand labor from the infected Sananab. While the monocultural attributes that had initially given us value in the eyes of our Sapien landlords, and had promised growth and prosperity for our kind, was now the reason they were more vulnerable than ever. This is because without the genetic variations offered by sexual reproduction, our species adapts slower to new pathogens being encountered. In response, my generation, the Cavendish, was bred by the Sapiens. Or cloned, rather. Today, 50 years after the near extinction of grandma Gros Michel, my own generation is now in danger from an infection that threatens to wipe us all out. Making up around 90% of commercial miners, The Cavendish generation waits and hopes their fungal foes will be kept at bay. In the meantime, we do

our best to embrace the absurdity of our 'domestic' lives. Privileged, yet precarious. Abundant, yet vulnerable.

After learning my family's story I occasionally found myself wondering what life would have been like had we stayed on the other side of the world where my 'wild' ancestors still reside today. Even though they too live under the watchful eye of the Sapiens, albeit via local state protection or otherwise, but at least they got to keep their organs.

Footnotes

1. Musa is the name of the genus to which wild and cultivated bananas belong. In the binomial nomenclature system created by Carl Linneaus, the genus name forms the first part of the binomial species name for each species within the genus (e.g. Musa acuminata). <https://www.promusa.org/Musa>

2. Parthenocarpy refers to the development of fruit without fertilization. The process produces a sterile fruit that lacks seeds. This means that the pollination results in a production of berries that are completely seedless (Colova-Tsolova et al., 2003). Parthenocarpic seedless berries are mostly small.

3. Gros Michel, often translated and known as "Big Mike", is an export cultivar of banana and the main variety grown commercially until the 1950s.

MAURICIO VARGAS IS AN ARTIST AND EDITOR BASED OUT OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA. HIS WORK FOCUSES AROUND THE USE OF CRITICAL FABULATION AS A MEANS OF CHALLENGING EPISTEMOLOGICAL TRADITIONS AND ELEVATING UNDERREPRESENTED NARRATIVES.

FAMILY BEANS

ARNETHIA DOUGLASS

I can remember the smells of smoked turkey and onions boiling on the stove, with the bean packet laying on the counter. Our pantry was always filled with beans; navy, kidney, pinto, and the family favorite, large lima beans. With seasoned water boiling excitedly, my mom would call down to me "Nee,' can you pour the beans into the boiling water?" The process was to let them boil for 20 minutes and then cut the fire off so they could soak. Once that was done the empty hulls would rise to the top. I would take a spoon and skim the top of the water to remove the floating hulls. Later the beans would be replaced on the stove until they finished cooking. The next step was the homemade biscuits, oh my! Out came the ceramic bowl with the flour, salt, sugar, baking powder, mixed together. Then the dough would be rolled out with the rolling pin and a drinking glass would make perfectly cut biscuits, placed in lines of 6 to be baked. Within the 15 minutes allotted for baking, the aroma of golden brown steaming hot biscuits filled the air. The rice would be finished magically, and we would sit down to eat. How I remember those days and can still taste her simple meals made with love.

Question: "How many of you can remember Mother's bean?"

ARNETHIA HAS ALWAYS STOOD OUT FROM THE CROWD, OFTEN THOUGHT OF AS QUIRKY AND A BIT WEIRD. SHE TRULY DANCED TO A DIFFERENT DRUMMER: OLATUNJI TO BE EXACT. HER BELIEF IN HERSELF PROPELLED HER FORWARD INTO A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF HER SPIRITUALITY AND PURPOSE. A JOURNEY THAT LED HER TO EXPLORE ANCESTRAL CONNECTIONS IN SYMBOLS AND PATTERNS, WHICH IS EVIDENT IN MOST OF HER ARTWORK TODAY. FOLLOWING HER ROOTS IN ANGOLA AND SIERRA LEONE SHE WOULD DELVE DEEPER INTO THE YORUBA CULTURE AND ITS CONNECTION THROUGHOUT THE DIASPORA. SHE CONTINUES TO EXPLORE AND PAY HOMAGE TO THE MANY ORISHA OF THE YORUBA PANTHEON, FINDING CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN HER WORK FROM BASKET WEAVING, PRINTING, SCULPTURE AND PAINTING. HER FORMAL TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD ART SCHOOL AND STUDIO AFFILIATIONS HAVE ALSO BROADENED HER ARTISTIC SCOPE AND UNDERSTANDING.

I'VE BEEN BEING

JULIE CHEN



What am I? Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I? How did I get here? Who put me here? Where am I going? Where else is there to be? Who decides? Can I decide? Or am I swept away on a breeze of circumstances?

JULIE CHEN IS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTIST LOOKING AT INTERSECTIONS OF MORTALITY, MEMORY, AND PLACE. SHE PROCESSES DEEPLY PERSONAL MEMORIES AND HISTORICAL EVENTS WITH CINEMATOGRAPHIC, ARCHITECTURAL, AND NATURALIST AESTHETICS. WITH THESE NARRATIVES AT THE CORE, SHE BUILDS HER PROJECTS IN BOTH PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA. THESE TAKE SHAPE IN ANY COMBINATION OF IMAGE, SCULPTURE, OR ASSEMBLAGE; FROM LARGE ATRIUM-SIZED SPECTACLES TO SMALL OBJECTS OF WONDER.

ORANGE CARDAMOM PANCAKES

KATHRYN COOKE

Seed and Food Sovereignty is the establishment of connections between individuals, community, the seed and the land. What happens when these relationships are broken? And how can these relationships be healed? For many of us, we have lost connection with handling of seeds and the earth. We have forgotten how to care for soil and nurture plant growth for food. Relationships of community are also severed, particularly during these times of Covid. Rituals of connection through food sharing have dwindled and we have found ourselves often alone and alienated. Some people, like myself have personal stories of a lifetime of separation from food. We are a culture which has for generations supported an objectified, mythological image of women which adheres to the value of a woman being based on her beauty and that thinness is a virtue. This was the story which generations of women in my family experienced and which continued into my own life. Sometimes other forms of trauma can be experienced around food which breaks the relationship between the individual and food. In my case, such a story occurred where I was physically beaten by my father for the disappearance of an orange. Food was thus linked for me with punishment and with becoming worthless. What a conflicting paradigm.

How then can relationships be healed? SeedBroadcast offered a unique experience to my Nomad MFA artists from the University of Hartford Connecticut. We were taught how to handle seeds of corn, squash, beans, and chilies. Some of the seeds would be used for planting in the spring; some were used to make a meal that was shared by our community of seed handler artists who visited the farm. This act of immediate connection to the food triggered the unearthing of deeply embedded feelings. As these feelings surfaced, pain and sadness was experienced but there was new growth happening. And when these entangled feelings reached the surface, they were encouraged to generate ways of healing on a personal level which could spread and perhaps heal at a community level. The following day after handling and collecting seeds, a communal meal was prepared. I offered to serve my fellow artists the simple meal that Jen Hart-Mon and Chrissy Orr had prepared from the seeds we had cleaned the previous day at SeedBroadcast. The act of serving the simple meal of squash soup heated with the chillies, freshly cooked and buttered squash, and fresh bread to my Nomad artist community was an act of honouring the food and honouring my fellow artists. It was grounding and allowed me to dig deeper into ways of healing.

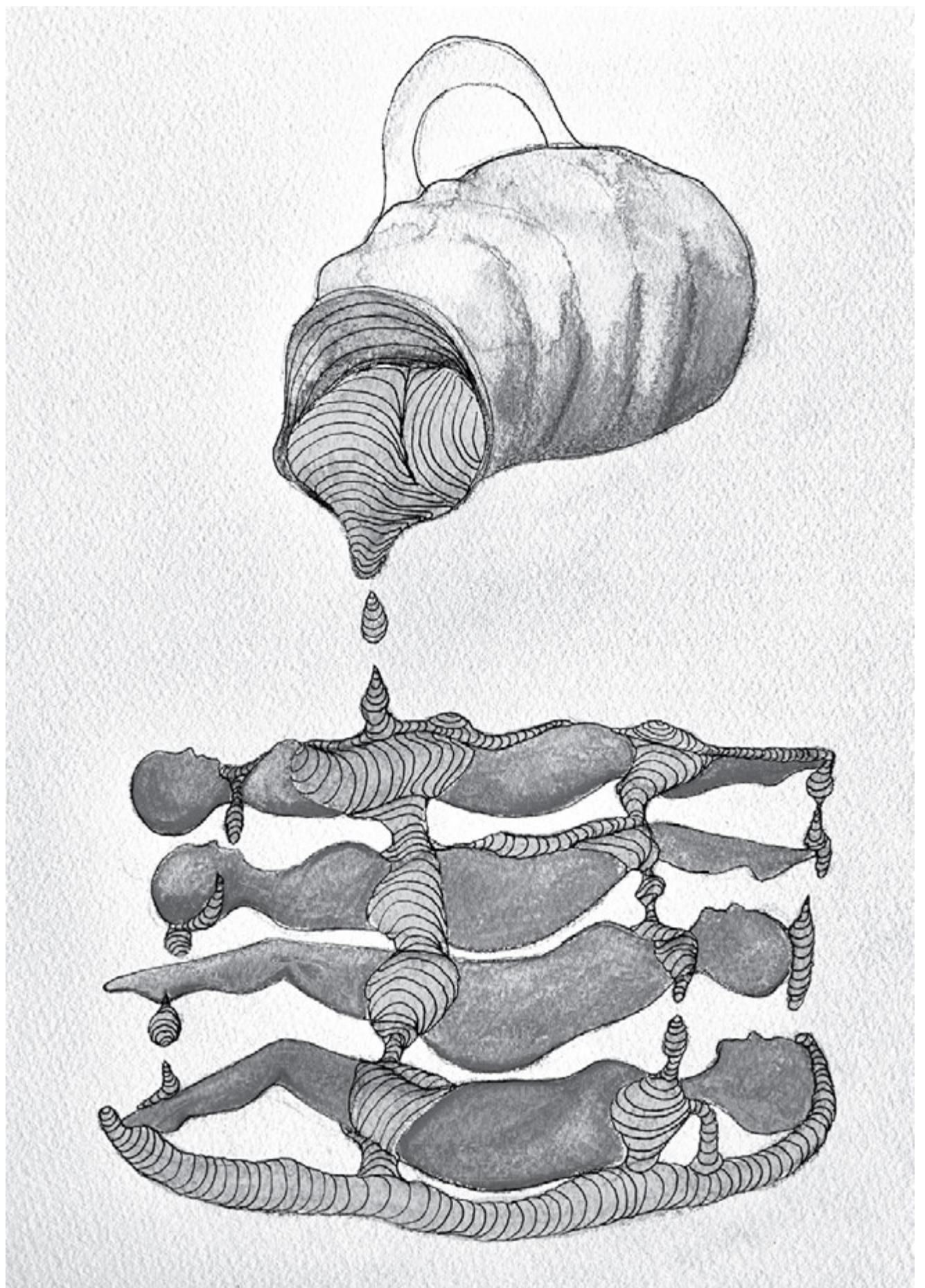
I remembered my mother's pancakes. Every time she made pancakes a particular story was told which illuminated both my mother and the food. I remembered that I had been making an adapted version of my mother's pancakes back home to one of Orange Cardamom Pancakes. Unknowingly, I brought my mother, through the pancakes and my father, through the orange together. Perhaps by making the pancakes I can connect my mother and father and forgive the trauma. Perhaps through the pancakes, I can move towards re-establishing food sovereignty on a personal level. Perhaps by sharing this recipe and story, I can grow new relationships. Perhaps by creating a tablecloth printed

with the motif of a stack of orange female pancake forms, I can visually remember the generations of women who lived through

the cultural disconnection from healthy relationships with food. And finally, through a yearly ritual of a community sunrise pancake

Orange Cardamon Pancakes

- 3 cups of flour
- 3 eggs
- 2 tbs baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 3 tbs melted coconut oil
- 1 tsp cardamon
- Orange juice to make consistency of preference.

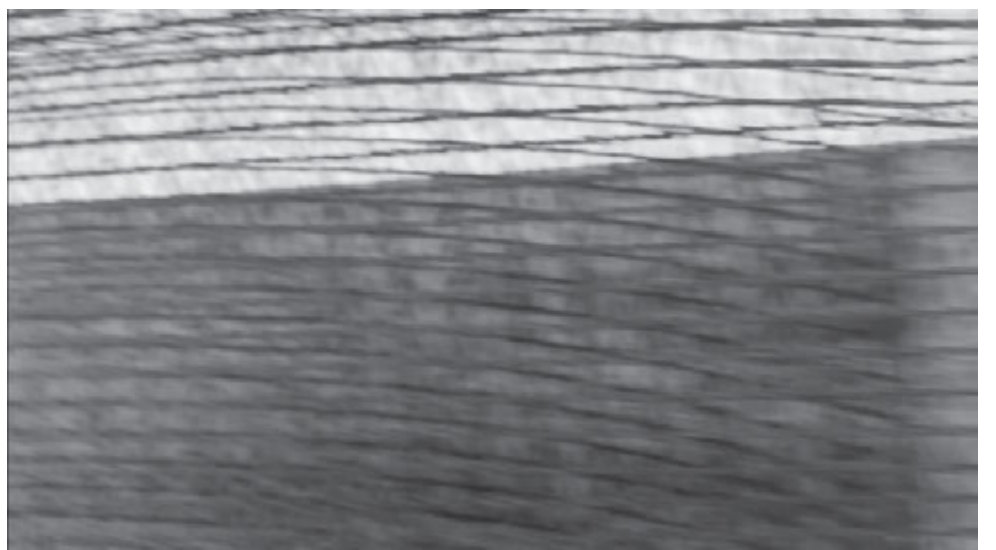
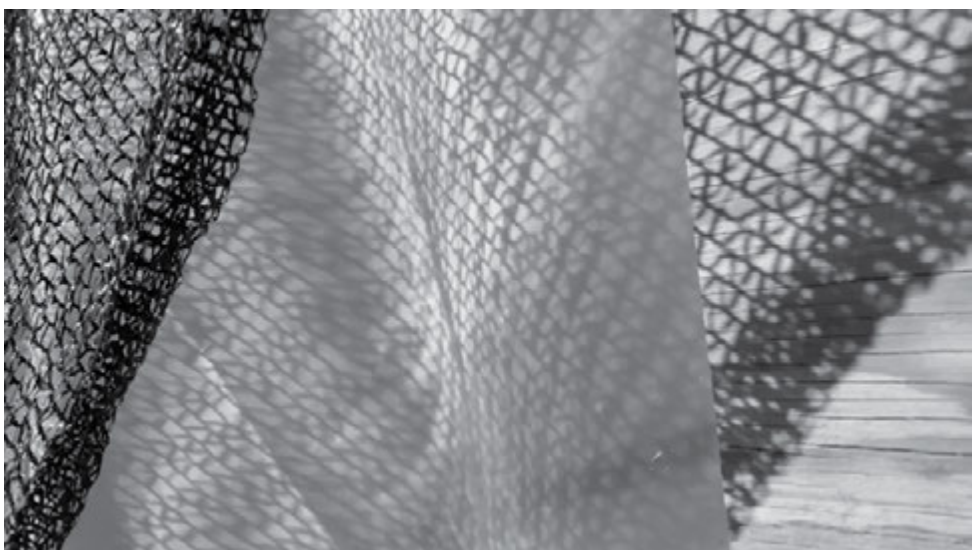
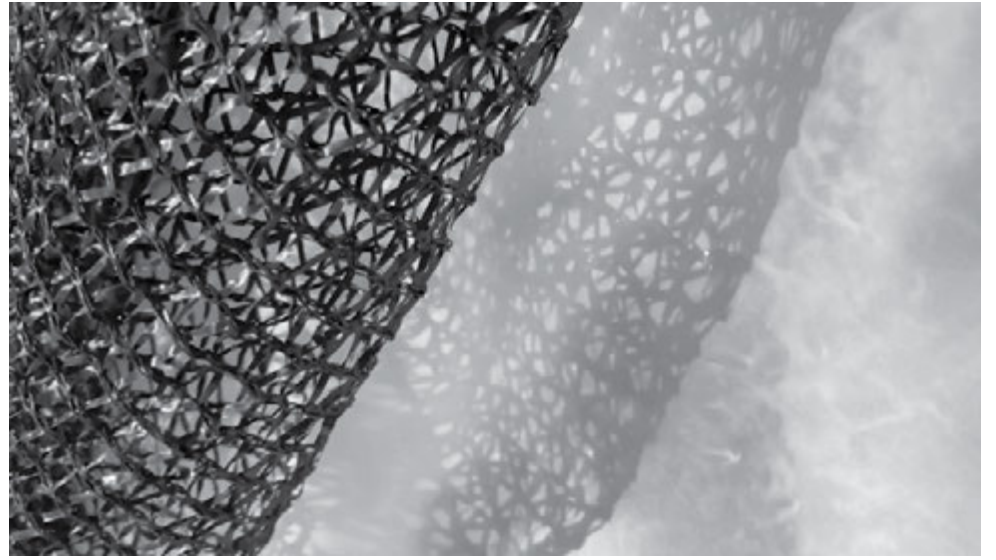


KATHRYN COOKE IS A MULTIFACETED ARTIST WHO WORKS CONCURRENTLY AS A PEDIATRICIAN IN CANMORE, ALBERTA, CANADA, A THERAPEUTIC ARTS FACILITATOR, AND AN ARTIST. KATHRYN ATTENDED THE ALBERTA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN FROM 2010-2014. SHE GRADUATED WITH HER BFA IN 2014, AS THE GOVERNOR GENERAL AWARD WINNER. KATHRYN IS CURRENTLY COMPLETING HER MASTERS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS, FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, AND WILL BE TRANSITIONING TO A FULL TIME ART PRACTICE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THIS WILL INCLUDE THE CO-CREATION OF SLOUGH STUDIOS, A LAND-BASED ARTS RESEARCH FACILITY DEDICATED TO THE MORE THAN HUMAN, HUMAN AND LAND RELATIONS IN A DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIC FRAMEWORK. KATHRYNCOOKE-BLUEYESTUDIO.COM

WIND AS PROTAGONIST

MONICA KAPOOR

Wind as protagonist. My seed story around wild spinach took me down a weedy path of the values we attribute to the cultivated. Of the forces and structures that shape cultural knowledge and availability. What is native. What is domesticated. What is invasive. What is desired. Wind felt the most untampered, encompassing aspect of our time spent in Anton Chico. What are the winds of ancestry? Winds of dissemination? What takes the forefront, what is left behind?



[Video stills from Wind.]

MONICA IS A BROOKLYN BASED PRODUCER AND ARTIST. SHE RECENTLY LEARNED AN INDIAN WINTER GREEN, WHICH SHE ENJOYS DURING VISITS TO FAMILY IN DELHI, BATHUA, IS SOMETHING SHE PASSES ALONGSIDE THE LITERAL STREETS OF NEW YORK, BETTER KNOWN TO SOME AS LAMBSQUARTERS. IT IS ESPECIALLY TASTY WHEN SPICED WITH GARAM MASALA AND STUFFED IN PARATHAS, FLATBREADS. SPINACH WORKS TOO, BUT IT IS NOT QUITE THE SAME.

THE BREAD OF ROSES

TEAL GARDNER



In winter, when Boise, ID goes under the cloudcover of inversion season and the whitebrowngreyblack vie for palette dominance- red becomes precious. The rosehip is my redwinter pulse. In January each year I begin to pull the mushy and tangy-sweet rosehips from the tall skeletons of wild rosebushes. Navigating their thorny extensions, I fill bags with the furry seeded fruits. It is a lively, seasonal task; it binds me to the gulch near my house where the roses grow. Looking up the particulars of these rose bushes yields the complex truth; these *Rosa rubiginosa* are Eurasian plants seen as noxious weeds in some places. They grow in riparian zones and sometimes crowd out native plants. I can see their worth, however, in the hiding places they make for the birds and rabbits, and in the achene-filled hypanthium they bear.

Red in winter draws me outside, to the cold after dusk when I stay on just a little longer to pluck a few more hips toward my yearly plan- to preserve a strong sauce from them, which I take as medicine, and distribute to friends as gifts: proof of toil and proof of care, and especially, proof of the pleasure in a fully felt process. I take joy in making this dark ochre stew, a tedium whereby the pulp is separated from the many yellow seeds, and then put up in a hot water canning process and saved for later.

I love it, this whole labor, and the sense of connection to the outside it builds. When I approach the spreading thorncastle of these wily plants, I feel a hearty rootedness. Through a connection to these living products of human migration and domestic escape-plus-translation to the wild spaces where they now proliferate -- I feel my own wobbly domesticity amid a desire for wildness. When I work in this way, with my bleeding fingers out in the cold, under the towering rose canes arching through the sky, I laugh to my hunkered and stabbed self, and feel an ecstatic connectedness, beguiled and calmed by the task. There is beauty in the process, and a special nourishment there.

*Our lives shall not be sweated
from birth until life closes;*

*Hearts starve as well as bodies;
give us bread, but give us roses.*

James Oppenheim, "Bread and Roses," *The American Magazine*, December, 1911.

Swathed in the steam of simmering rosehip sauce in my kitchen, I came across James Oppenheim's above quoted poem, which has been put to music many times over; anthemic and relevant for over a hundred years of class and labor struggles in the USA. The bell ringing truth of the poem, (that we should aim to satisfy more than mere physical need through a call for bread, but also demand fulfillment of our human requirement for soulful conditions beyond the body) is answered – for me – in another harmonic, through the foraging of wild foods.

What I am describing here is the bread of roses, the spiritual sustenance associated with the wild harvesting of food, and the relationship that is built between a forager and her forage. While rosehips do supply the body with the physical means for health, (rosehips are a significant source of Vitamin C) the experience I've had of connecting with this wild food has provided me with much more than nutritional satisfaction. Processing the rosehips has taught me the value of engaging in a full cycle with food. The yearly round of the plant itself includes having a wild place to live; the loveliness of hundreds of blossoms; the ardent company of bees and other pollinators; times of ample water and dry times; snow & wind & birds. And for me,

it involves uncovered time outside, being in touch with a plant and the system of supports that make up its ecological home. To process this wildness and to share what I have made in collaboration with a pulsing living system – this is the bread I draw from roses; my red in winter.

Notes on native and non-native rose species of the Inland Pacific Northwest https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_PLANTMATERIALS/publications/wapmctn11818.pdf

ROSEHIP SAUCE

Great on yogurt, oatmeal, pancakes
The images above are most of the steps below, only done over a campfire.

- 4 cups fresh rosehips
- 6 cups water

Prepare rosehips:

- Collect at least 4 cups of rosehips
- Clean them- remove stems
- Wash them, and strain
- Put hips in a pot and cover with 6 c water
- Bring to a boil - boil until quite soft
- Remove from the heat and strain-reserving water

Separate seeds from pulp:

- In batches, smash rosehips through strainer with back of spoon
- Add water from the bowl a little at a time
- Push pulp through strainer until seeds are fairly clean
- Boil the rosehip sauce once more, and place in clean glass jars

Refrigerate, and eat as you please.

TEAL GARDNER (SHE/HER) IS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST AND NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATOR CURRENTLY WORKING ON THE UNCEDED ANCESTRAL LANDS OF THE SHOSHONE AND BANNOCK PEOPLE CURRENTLY KNOWN AS BOISE, ID. HER WORK PLAYS WITHIN THE INTERSECTIONS OF HUMAN AND MORE THAN HUMAN WORLDS, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON ISSUES LOCAL TO IDAHO AND THE INTERMOUNTAIN WEST: WATER USE AND DROUGHT, DEVELOPMENT OF WILD LANDS, AND SALMON.

WE WERE SEEDS

SARAH C. RUTHERFORD



SARAH IS A MURALIST, FINE ARTIST AND EDUCATOR BASED OUT OF ROCHESTER, NY. THIS SEED STORY IS INSPIRED BY HER FIRST YOUTH CENTERED MURAL PROJECT IN COLLABORATION WITH THE SEEDFOLK CITY FARM YOUTH PROGRAM (ROCHESTER, NY 2015). SINCE THEN SHE DEVELOPED A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT MURAL ARTS PROGRAM THROUGH THE CITY OF ROCHESTER WHICH IS NOW IN ITS EIGHTH YEAR.

THE SNAP PEA

REBECCA ZABLOCKI

The sun-baked ground, flooded with bright warmth.

Barefoot; I make my way through the short green grass,
Stepping up, onto the wooden balance beam that cradles the garden,
Dad's garden.
Careful not to tread on the cool shaded soil.
I don't want to set a bad example for Kodi,
"No garden" I say and he acknowledges our shared boundary by sitting comfortably in the neighboring grass.
His pointy ears stretch upward toward the sky and his tan fur glows red from the sun.

Green life creates a canopy, blocking the light and holding the moisture in the dark earth so it can permeate into the roots.

With care, I tip-toe toward the fence and the lattice,
The foundation for the vine.
Undulating, weaving in and out, climbing toward the sun
Leaves filter the light, glowing neon green

This vine began as a seed
Sprinkled along the fence,
Round, wrinkled, almost-spheres.

The small seed became an expanse, life erupted from within and then from the earth, a slow, gentle climb,
Tiny curly-cues sweep through space as the vines taper.
Emerging and morphing from white petalled flowers, living green ornaments dangle,
Little green cloaks.
As my hand touches the slender pods, some are flat with only a hint of what other life is caressed inside.
Some are draped, rippling over a succession of buxom lumps
The green snap peas.

Energy flows up through the soil, the roots, the vine, the leaves, and the pea pods

Grasp,
Pluck
Snap
Give and take
The vine snaps back into place,
Fluid motion
swooping
Tossing
The pod flies through the air in a gentle arc
landing in his mouth- Kodi.
Catch
snap, crunch, chomp
"One for you"
pluck, snap, crunch
"And one for me"

I taste the color green.
What does the color green taste like?
An echo, the earth, sweetness floods from my tongue to the back of my throat

Feeling joy, what does joy feel like?
A flutter in my chest and my gutt, a deep breath.

Thankful for the garden, built and cared for by my father.

Thankful for the snap pea, cultivated,

Descended from peas that have been on the earth for thousands of years, traveling, spreading, expanding across the globe.

Thankful for the snap pea seeds in the yard, and the peas that did not complete the cycle to become seed.

The seed that inspired the planting of many more.

Thankful for healing
From the sky
From the sun
From the earth
From the joy
From the snap peas.

MORINGA

REBECCA SCHULTZ



KOPTO

Moringa leaf sauce with peanut butter

Ingredients:

- 500g of fresh moringa* leaves or 100g of dried leaves, rehydrated
- 100g of peanut butter
- 2 onions, minced
- 1 hot pepper (scotch bonnet)
- 1 bouillon cube
- 6 tomatoes

Four servings

15 minutes total

10 minutes cooking time

Description:

- Boil the moringa leaves for 10 minutes until tender, drain.
- Mix the peanut butter with the onions, the crushed bouillon cube, and the chopped pepper. Add a little bit of water to aid with mixing and getting a creamy consistency.
- Mix the moringa leaves and the peanut sauce, then add the tomatoes (either diced or in strips).
- Can be eaten by itself or with rice or dried cassava powder (garri).

*Dried moringa leaves can be found at stores selling Indian products (sometimes marketed as drumstick leaves).

The first time I traveled to West Africa I lost more than ten pounds. The unrelenting heat and dust stole my appetite, and as a recently lapsed vegetarian, the stews rich with meat were very difficult to get down. I was also unable to eat due to the anxiety and confusion of the unfolding of a seemingly impossible relationship that became my marriage.

The second time I traveled to West Africa—only four months later—I still had difficulty eating, with the exception of *kopto*, a dish made of boiled moringa leaves, peanut butter, onions, pepper, and tomatoes. I ate copious quantities of it. I learned that moringa is a superfood, rich in vitamins and protein with a plethora of medicinal properties. When my husband and stepchildren immigrated to the US, I asked them to bring moringa leaves with them.

Moringa Oleifera is native to India, where it's called the Drumstick Tree, but grows equally well in the tropical and arid climates of Africa. In Djerma, my family's native language, it's called *windi boundou*, or pillar of the house. It has been cultivated in Niger for centuries. My mother in law drinks moringa tea every day, which has kept her healthy despite a difficult life raising nine children largely on her own after her husband died young.

In recent years, Moringa has been "discovered"—in other words, white people learned about its benefits and started touting it as the new miracle plant, like it had never existed before. West African countries are working to increase production of moringa products in order to benefit local communities, but when I see the powder in Whole Foods I wonder if the profits from its sale are really benefiting the people who have cultivated and consumed it for so long.

In West Africa, moringa is being promoted as a solution to both malnutrition and deforestation, as it grows quickly—up to ten feet in one year—and can tolerate poor soil and drought conditions. Back in southeastern Pennsylvania, we planted moringa seeds in our temperate, clay soil. They struggled. The next year we planted them in pots but they died when the temperature dropped. This last year, they finally flourished, growing into small trees that we were able to harvest and dry for tea. When winter came, we brought them inside. Now they sit in the sun next to my desk, sending out new shoots.

REBECCA SCHULTZ IS A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY ARTIST AND EDUCATOR LIVING IN ELKINS PARK, PA. HER WORK, WHICH INCLUDES PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, INSTALLATION, AND PUBLIC ART, CELEBRATES THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN AND MAKES VISIBLE THE COMPLEX NATURAL SYSTEMS THAT SURROUND US.

DEAR HENRY, CORMAC, AND OWEN

JUSTIN MOORE

I brought straightneck squash seeds to New Mexico as a prerequisite to working with SeedBroadcast. I chose squash because it is one of the few crops we have successfully grown. Of the thirteen seeds we planted in last Autumn, one sprouted and has survived being transplanted. One seed I planted during the Summer sprouted, as if inspired to do so by the Autumn sprout. As you may remember, the early months of the pandemic renewed a long dormant interest in gardening. Your mom bought houseplants and I built the raised planter box. As the beans, beets, and carrots I planted yielded a pathetic harvest, my initial pride and optimism gave way to disappointment. Subsequent attempts to grow food produced frustration. Now the planter box holds the two squash sprouts, but even their days appear numbered.

As I considered my relationship with food sovereignty, I could not help but think about your great-grandmother. My grandmother spent her early life on small family farms near Raton, New Mexico. As a young widow with seven children, my grandmother bid farewell to farming and resettled in Southern California. There, she went to work at a factory, met your great-granddad, and had three more children (Grandma being the last). However, Great-grandma maintained her green thumb and would occasionally produce small sandwich baggies with mysterious seeds of unknown (to me) origin. Aside from pruning her roses and watering her plants, I don't recall her ever actually planting any of the mystery seeds.

Even Henry is too young to remember this, but in the final years of her life, before cancer reduced her to convalescing in bed, Great-grandma planted one final seed. Despite warnings to the contrary, Great-Grandma was able to make a store-bought avocado's pit sprout. The pit was eventually transferred to a five-gallon pot in my grandparents' backyard. Great-grandma did not live to see her avocado stone make it beyond a seedling.

Years later, I again found myself in the backyard as Great-granddad marveled at the small avocado tree and shared its story with me. I have tried a dozen times since to do what my grandmother did, to no avail.

Within the decade following Great-grandma's passing, Grandma had assumed the role of full-time caretaker for Great-granddad, as his increasingly odd behavior would eventually be diagnosed as Lewy body dementia. On our visits to Whittier, I made it a point to check on the avocado tree. In what turned out to be my final visit before my grandfather was moved to a memory care facility, I walked out to inspect the tree. "They told her, 'It probably won't grow, and you won't get any fruit if it does'," my grandfather told me, with an impressed grin years before.

My grandmother, either through innate disposition, an early life of hard luck, or more likely, a combination of the two, was incredibly strong-willed. Just like the woman who planted it, the little avocado tree seemed to have inherited some of Great-grandma's stubbornness. When I last saw the little tree, it had the beginnings of two narrow avocados hanging from its branches.

Great-granddad spent the last seven months of his life in a nursing home before hospice. Grandma settled his affairs and sold his house. Cousins I haven't seen in decades



materialized as my grandparents' possessions were distributed. Feeling I always owed my grandparents a debt for the years we lived with them, I felt entitled to nothing. Nothing, save the avocado tree. Nothing, save the avocado tree that beat the odds and elicited a smile from my grandfather as he recounted the story of Sylvia's store-bought avocado on a clear afternoon. I asked after the tree when Grandma finalized the sale of the house. "It's still there. It went to the new owner," she informed me. Grandma must have sensed my disappointment as she shifted the conversation to the purchase of her own home in Mariposa.

Your great-grandfather passed away in 2020 and I still wonder about the fate of the avocado tree. Is it still there? Did it make it into the soil of the backyard? A friend's house? The landfill? I confess to occasionally fantasizing about liberating the tree from the house my grandparents no longer live in. Daydreams of covert operations aside, I usually just imagine myself walking up to the new owner's door,

sharing the story, and asking for the tree, with a large amount of discomfort for both parties.

My own attempts at growing an avocado tree from a pit have yet to succeed. Combine this with my lack of success with most seeds and I am not sure what hurts more: my inability to take some step toward food sovereignty or the fact that I can't ask my grandmother for her insight. I missed my opportunity to glean some of her wisdom.

I left New Mexico with a desire to learn the skills our ancestors practiced. As a parent, I feel an obligation to engage more fully in seed-saving and food sovereignty, and to share this experience with you, my children. It is still very early in the process, but I eagerly await another sowing season.

With love,
Dad

JUSTIN MOORE (NOMAD MFA, COHORT 6) WORKS WITH ITEMS PULLED FROM THE WASTE STREAM AND THE STANISLAUS AND TUOLUMNE RIVER WATERSHEDS TO CREATE SCULPTURES, VIDEOS, AND INSTALLATIONS. HE RECEIVED HIS BA FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS IN 2021. JUSTIN LIVES WITH HIS WIFE AND THEIR THREE CHILDREN ON THE ANCESTRAL LANDS OF THE NORTHERN VALLEY YOKUTS (PRESENT-DAY MODESTO, CA).

THE WILD BLUEBERRY SEED

MORGAN KULAS



Morgan Kulas

MORGAN KULAS IS A MULTIFORM ARTIST AND EDUCATOR WHOSE WORK EXPLORES DEEP AND SPIRITUAL ECOLOGICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS, RELATIONSHIP, AND TRAUMA. INFORMED BY A LIFETIME OF TRAINING IN CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY DANCE AS WELL AS CONSIDERABLE PRACTICE AND RESEARCH IN MOVEMENT MEDITATIONS ACROSS CULTURES; MORGAN'S WORK IS DESIGNED TO OFFER EXPERIENCES OF EMBODIMENT IN ORDER TO RESTORE BONDS AND FOSTER HEALING. LEARN MORE AT MORGANKULAS.ART.

SEVEN GENERATIONS TO HOME

NATALIE STOPKA



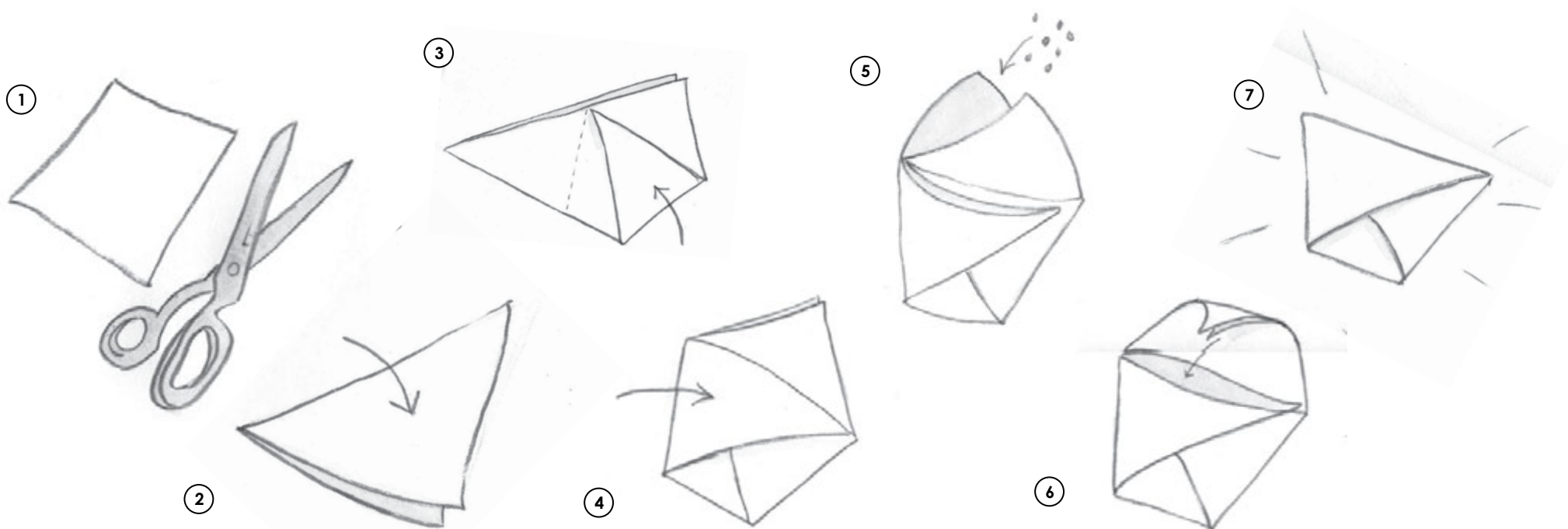
In the halcyon days of summer, the true salad days of tender herbs and lissome greens, I cosset each plant in my garden. I weed around them and chatter to them. I make sure to pluck every emerging flower head from its stalk. I do this to enjoy the cut flower, to encourage regrowth, to keep the greens sweet and pliant. When autumn days dwindle, the garden grows serene and withered, catching low golden light as the sun slips further down the sky. I surrender my charges in the garden. I ought to eke every moment of joy from the dwindling light, instead of retreating indoors. I ought to honor every stage of growth, instead of scrolling through the sites of seed vendors. My gratitude should include the bolted radishes, the overripe tomatoes and rattling beans. They contain more potential than the seed catalogs sitting in my mailbox.



Plucking the flower from a plant sterilizes it. A bounteous garden should provide not just my larder for the year, but for many years and many other beings. Allowing just a few plants of each type to bloom invites pollinators (the handmaidens of plant procreation) into the garden for nectar and pollen. Many common plants are self-pollinating, meaning just a single specimen can flower and set seed. These seeds embody not just the raw material for next spring's planting, but the genetic material for the next generation. They carry adaptations to this specific place: its soil, wind, rainfall, microbial allies or antagonists, and innumerable other particulars. Plants respond to these stimuli not by altering their genetic code, but by modifying gene expression through epigenetic adaptation. Characteristics called forth by epigenetic changes can be passed from plant parent to offspring. The seed from a glossy new packet may not be especially suited to this locality, but its child will be more so. And the seed of that child will be better adapted, and on down the line from seed to flower to seed.



If I can muster gratitude for the plants' full life cycle by allowing them to bloom, then saving and replanting their seeds, they will repay my efforts by embracing this place. The unexpressed potentialities of dormant genetic code will be sifted through the experience of soil, water, and sunlight to find articulation. After seven generations, the plants will be at home here. Novelty is not the seed with a charming name ordered from a bright catalog, which will bolt or be tasteless, grow woody or fail to grow whatsoever. Novelty is the seed who has gradually acclimated to this place over generations of adaptation. It doesn't exist in quite the same way anywhere but here.



Folded Paper Seed Packets

1. Cut spare paper into squares
2. Fold in half
3. Fold
4. Fold
5. Fill with seeds
6. Tuck flap into pocket
7. Save for sowing!

Self-Pollinating Plants for Seed Saving

- Bean
- Eggplant
- Escarole
- Ground Cherry
- Lettuce
- Peanut
- Pea
- Pepper
- Quinoa
- Tomato
- Sunflower

NATALIE STOPKA IS AN ARTIST AND EDUCATOR WHO WORKS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MATERIALS AND FORCES OF THE NATURAL WORLD. HER DRAWINGS AND PRINTS INCORPORATE PLANT DYES AND NATURAL PIGMENTS, WHICH PROVIDE A SEASONALLY EVOLVING VOCABULARY OF TEXTURE AND COLOR. HER FREELANCE STUDIO AND DYE GARDEN ARE LOCATED IN YONKERS, NEW YORK.

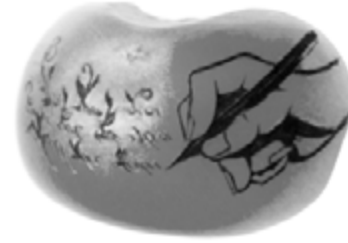
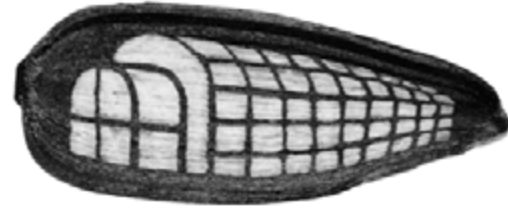
CHISELED IN SEEDS - FURROW PROJECT

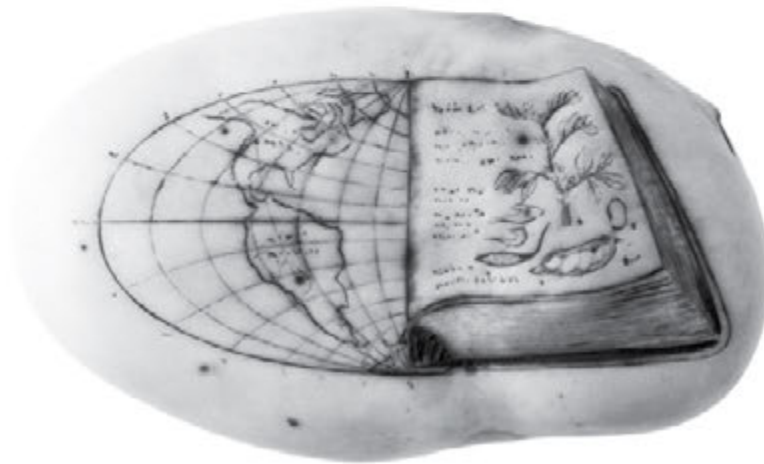
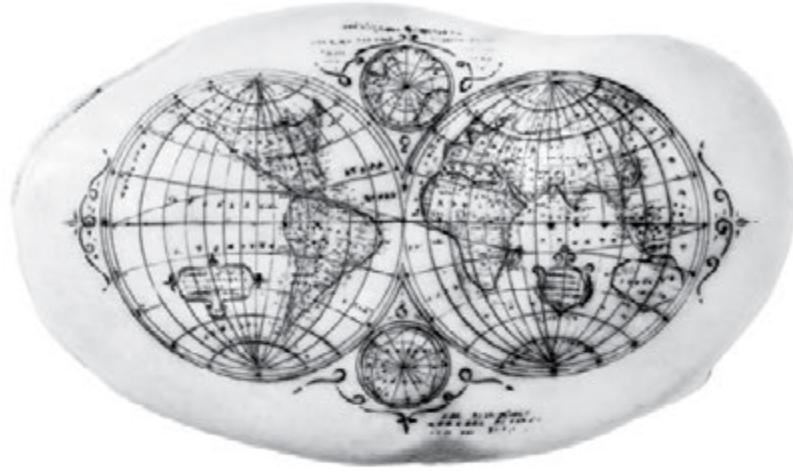
LORNA TYCHOSTUP

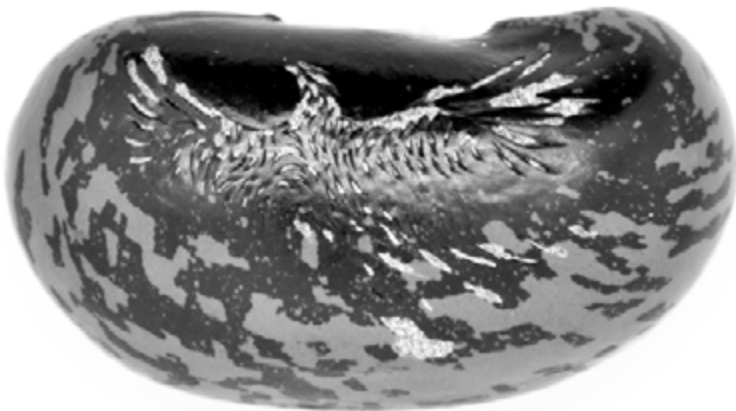
Deeply understanding that each heirloom seed, like every person, has its own very personal story, artist Sergey Jivetin seeks to connect the two. Partnered with Hudson Valley Seed Company and other national horticulture organizations, Jivetin takes his Furrow seed engraving project to communities worldwide engaging audiences in a dialogue on the meaning of seeds and seed-saving advocacy.

Bringing along his growing collection of seeds from over 50 species and an array of high-tech, microscopic engraving tools complete with large screen that allows audience observation of the carving process, he asks participants to select a seed that resonates and then proceeds to carve that person's very unique story onto its shell. Sometimes people bring their own seeds, one they already have a connection to – a seed from the oldest tree in a fourth-generation apple farmer's orchard or a Morning Glory seed reflecting an avid gardener's fascination with its unique properties.









The results are always intricately magnificent, and leave both the engraver and person forever changed. "Some people come prepared and volunteer their stories," says Jivetin. "With others I have to delve deeper, ask questions about their family history, personal history. Eventually, together, we get to the essence of their story, a spark, what I then interpret into a motif."

Some motifs are repeated among different people in different venues. The phoenix rising has been requested by a retired California forest firefighter who saw it a signal that life always rises from the ashes. Her psyche, connected to fire, ash, rebirth, and renewal after destruction, grasped that despite the damage wildfires cause, good things – the quick breakdown of organic material and renewal of soil nutrients – can come from them.

A recovering alcoholic in Philadelphia, twelve years sober, viewed possessing the seed with its phoenix as a reminder of the constant regeneration of hope, potential, rebirth... transforming their life, a reminder of second chances, and giving them what was needed to meet each new day. A glass-blower connected the phoenix to working with fire. Thinking it too literal, Jivetin did some digging with the person who then disclosed a recent breakup and going through an intense reevaluation of their identity. They went so far as to take off their shirt to reveal a giant image of the mythical creature tattooed on their back

The original phoenix motif however, was done for a close friend – an artist and curator, to be given as a gift to console the family of a loved one who had passed away. Based on a sketch from the deceased sketchbook, the engraving was done on a scarlet runner bean. "Its shape and naturally occurring patterns of "flames" perfectly commemorated the soul ascending from the flames," says Jivetin, "and the final engraving mimicked the drawing almost exactly." It was after seeing the meaningful impression left on the family and friends of his first phoenix when Jivetin fully realized the powerful, energetic, and emotional consolation and connection that could be provided by his personalized motifs during life's more painful seasons.

Seeing how the art of the deceased lived on through the cycle of the seed fueled my project," says Jivetin. "And the phoenix has an especially strong collective resonance with many. Death, rebirth... this is the life cycle of a plant: seed germination, plant growth, flowering, fruit production, seed release, death, and repeat it all over, again and again."

Most of the motifs are more individual and evolve into being after protracted dialogue between Jivetin and the person. "The final composition ends up as an original symbol that uniquely represents that person's particular story," says Jivetin. "This approach requires more creative thought and interpretation, since I am picking out and assembling relevant bits and pieces of information and placing it all into an aesthetically and conceptually bound total. Sometimes the information is general,



like representing a farm or certain elements of farm life. In other cases, the information the person shares can be very, very personal from their life and the motif becomes an incredibly individual portrait of that person. But it is also much more fun for me, as I get to utilize more of my creative thinking and interpretive play"

But even in these very specialized, individual motifs, Jivetin tries to connect a specific seed both to the nature of the motif and to the person who has shared their story. This is an important and gratifying aspect of his Furrow project. "I feel incredibly fulfilled and honored to get this glimpse into the person's deep psyche. ... their sense of purpose, sense of lineage, of heritage. I feel as if I am participating in their story, helping them uncover some hidden parts about themselves."

In doing so, Jivetin admits he also uncovers some of his own veiled parts, as well as connecting to important universal truths and a sense of belonging to a community or to place. "In symbolically reconnecting them to their heritage, I feel myself becoming a tiny part of their story, and at the same time, remembering my own. I also discover how much we all have in common. How we are all mirrors for each other, reflecting each other. Our individual stories have a lot of shared values, dreams and goals. Realizing that universality leads me to experience a greater sense of belonging to a larger community."

Jivetin admits his sensitivity to the issue of belonging is likely due to being a transplant into the United States. Uprooted and disconnected from his own Uzbek heritage, Jivetin eventually landed in New York's mid-Hudson Valley, where he currently resides. The area has acted as a salve, allowed him to connect to a variety of people from a variety of backgrounds and walks of life, and helped him to once again feel understood and grounded.

So what seed does Jivetin feel he connects most deeply to?

"I would have to choose a cotton seed, an ever-present crop in Uzbekistan where it is glorified as 'white gold,'" says Jivetin. "I grew up surrounded by it and it has a very complicated history. In the 20th century, cotton became a staple cash crop and a major industrial commodity with a very dark, exploitative side. Like many locals, my parents were forced into a cotton-picking Gulag summer youth camps. Environmental degradation accompanied its cultivation resulting in the drying of the Aral Sea – a major regional catastrophe. "

And what motif would he engrave into his cotton seed?

"To represent my complexity of associations, instead of a single motif, I would probably expand it into a mini-series. But then again, I would try to speak through a more generalized collection of images referring to the history of cotton, rather than the subjective story of my own relationship to it."

After bringing others to reveal deep aspects of their own personal psyche, why avoid taking himself to the same places?

"Perhaps I think of myself as an observer, or a historian. This approach affords me some distance or perspective. But that probably doesn't answer your question fully and I am still puzzled by that."

Traveling the country with the *Furrow* project, Sergey Jivetin connects with growers, breeders, and seed-savers and memorializes their contributions into actual seed pods through the art of hand-engraving.

Growing up in Uzbekistan, the site of one of the greatest ecological disasters of the 20th century especially heightened Jivetin's sensitivity toward the preciousness of natural resources and their management. Since coming to the United States in 1994, his practice has expanded from wearable pieces of jewelry to include experimental flatware, scientific and medical apparatus, sculptural objects, and site-specific installations.

He is the recipient of numerous accolades including fellowships from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, Peter S. Reed Foundation, and New York Foundation for the Arts. Jivetin's work is in the permanent collections of many public and private entities, such as the Smithsonian Institution, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Dallas Museum of Art.



LORNA TYCHOSTUP BEGAN HER WRITING CAREER COVERING THE NAFTA-INSPIRED ZAPATISTA REVOLUTION IN MEXICO. AS SENIOR EDITOR OF THE MID-HUDSON VALLEY-BASED CHRONOGRAM MAGAZINE (2000-12), SHE TRAVELED TO IRAQ WEEKS BEFORE THE WAR BROKE OUT IN FEB. 2003. RETURNING TIME AFTER TIME AS A JOURNALIST, SHE EARNED A MS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN 2009 AND HAS SINCE WORKED FOR VARIOUS USAID-FUNDED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, EUROPE, AND CENTRAL ASIA, REPORTING ON DECENTRALIZATION, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, LAND MARKETS, SERVICE DELIVERY, FINANCE, FISCAL REFORM, LAW, HEALTH, AND MORE. GROUNDED BY COVID RESTRICTIONS, SHE IS WORKING REMOTELY WHILE HAPPILY RENOVATING HER 1890 HOME AND AWAITING THE NEXT FOREIGN ASSIGNMENT.

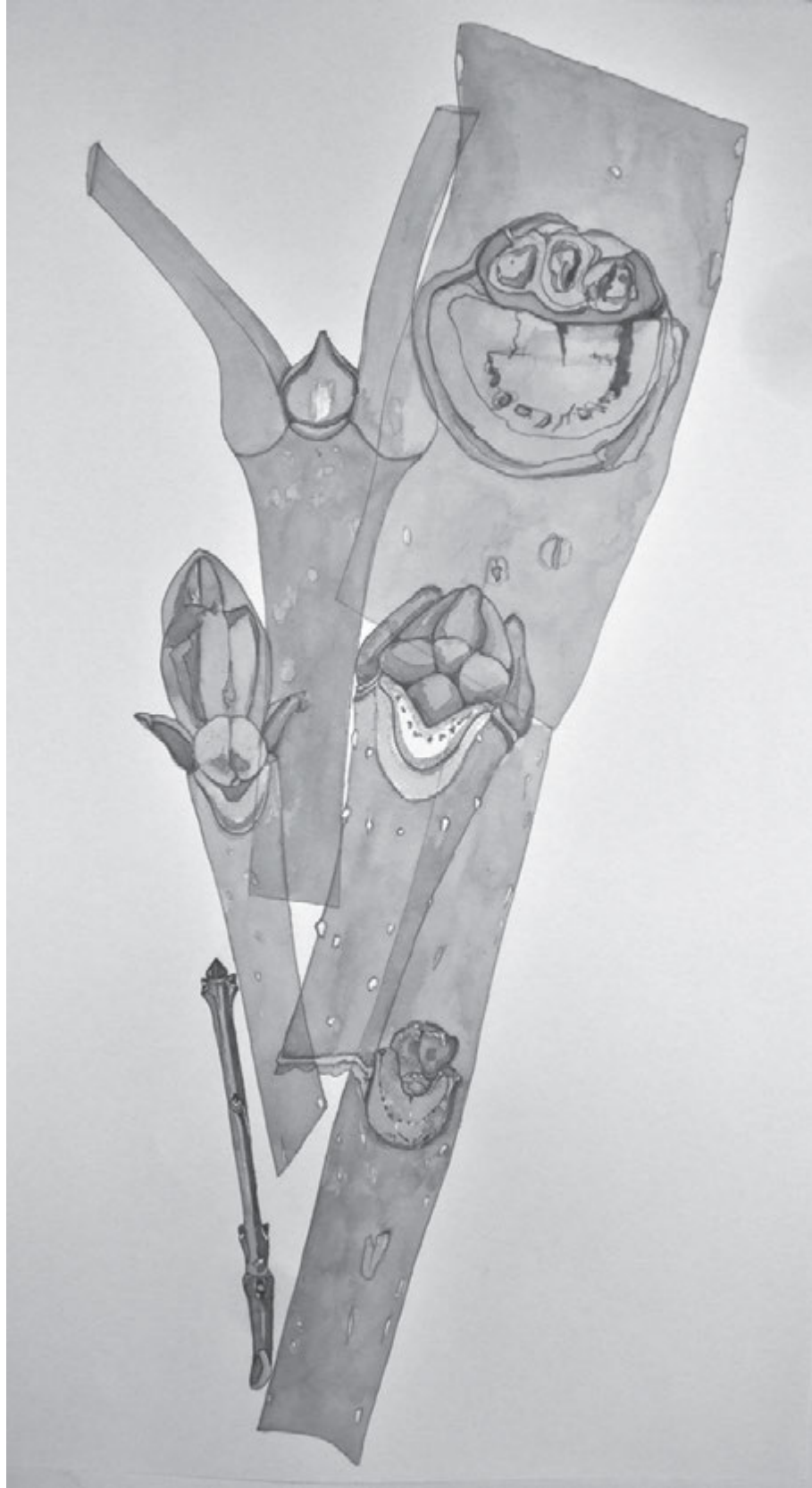
WHITE ASH LEAF SCULPTURE

SUSAN HOENIG

Montgomery Township Parks & Open Space and Ecological Artist Susan Hoenig Collaborate to Draw Attention to the Value and Beauty of Native Trees.



LEFT: WHITE ASH LEAF SCULPTURE
RIGHT: WHITE ASH PAINTING BY SUSAN HOENIG



"BUDS, TWIGS AND LEAF SCARS: WHITE ASH",
BLACK WALNUT INK PAINTING, 2021

White Ash, *Fraxinus americana*, native to Eastern and Central North America, is the largest of the native ashes, growing 60'-80' tall. Ecologically, ash trees provide habitat and food for various animals, such as the Red-bellied Woodpecker, Wild Turkey, Wood Duck, White-tailed Deer, Fox Squirrel, the White-footed mouse and 43 native insect species. White Ash trees are dioecious, male and female flowers are on separate trees, and only the female flowers develop fruits. The winged seedpods, samaras, are a good source of forage, the branches, bark and tree cavities make the tree invaluable. This connectivity is crucial for seed dispersal and growth of the tree. The leaves are pinnately compound with 7-9 leaflets that are ovate to oblong in shape. The edges are smooth or finely toothed. White Ash leaves are some of the most nutritious and important foods for aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Unfortunately, the White Ash trees are being decimated by the Emerald Ash Borer. The Borers attack the trees by laying eggs on the bark. The larvae feed on the inner bark and create galleries that cut off the ash tree's circulatory system. This can kill the tree within just a few years. We must value each and every species in our forest, for the loss of the White Ash is devastating for our ecosystem.

*Special thanks to Montgomery Township Open Space
and Pathways Committee.*



SUSAN IS WORKING ON A COMMISSION, "WHITE ASH LEAF SCULPTURE" AT HOBLER PARK, MONTGOMERYTOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY. IN 2020, SUSAN WAS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT MOUNTAIN LAKES NATURE PRESERVE IN PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY WHERE SHE COLLABORATED WITH FRIENDS OF PRINCETON OPEN SPACE TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE VALUE AND BEAUTY OF NATIVE TREES.

ONE OF SUSAN'S LEAF SCULPTURES, THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT IS SITUATED ALONGSIDE NEWLY PLANTED AMERICAN CHESTNUT SAPLINGS. TO VIEW THE DOCUMENTARY OF THIS PROJECT [HTTP://WWW.SUSANHOENIG.COM/](http://www.susanhoenig.com/) AND TO READ THE ARTICLE ABOUT THE "AMERICAN CHESTNUT LEAF SCULPTURE" GO TO THE SPRING 2021 ISSUE 2 VOL.35, CHESTNUT THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT FOUNDATION. IN 2020-2021, SUSAN AND MARY WALTHAM HAD AN EXHIBITION AT THE PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY, "WETLAND TO WOODLAND". IN THE SPRING OF 2022, SUSAN WILL GIVE A PRESENTATION OF HER BIRD CONSERVATION PAINTINGS AT THE WASHINGTON CROSSING AUDUBON.

LEFT ABOVE: "UPON ME", BLACK WALNUT INK PAINTING, 2021

RIGHT ABOVE: "UNFURLING ASH", BLACK WALNUT INK PAINTING, 2021

BELOW: "BECOMING WHITE ASH", BLACK WALNUT INK PAINTING, 2021



PHOTO CREDIT: SEEDBROADCAST

Look about you. Take hold of the things that are here. Let them talk to you.

You learn to talk to them.

George Washington Carver



GO! INTERNATIONAL

SETH HAMILTON

In south central Illinois on the other side of the Mississippi River from our better-known sister city, St. Louis, MO, lies the small city of East St. Louis. In spite of only having 27,000 residents now, our city's reputation is well known throughout the entire midwest. Local newspapers write about how "you are 19 times more likely to be murdered in East St. Louis". People have also attributed up to 65% of St. Louis' murder rate to our community, as St. Louis currently sits as the murder capital of the U.S., and was ranked 19th in the world in 2020. Our population has dwindled to roughly a quarter of its height in the late 60's when our city was voted "best city to raise a family" in the whole of the U.S. two years in a row. There are also innumerable chronicles documenting corruption in the city, and our school district's goal is to get one third of its 5,000+ students just to meet the national average for reading and math in a state whose prison budgets are based on third grade reading scores. Now there is an invisible border around our city whose population is 99% black. Putting our city's name

ABOVE: A STALK OF THE SELF-FERTILIZING CORN WE IMPORTED FROM MEXICO AND PROPAGATED IN EAST ST. LOUIS

BELOW: KIDS HARVESTING FRESH GREENS TO TAKE TO GIVE TO PEOPLE IN NORTH ST. LOUIS

RIGHT: EAST ST. LOUIS YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS SELLING THEIR PRODUCE TO THEIR NEIGHBORS IN THE COMMUNITY



on an application means you are less likely to get hired and less likely to get a loan for a home or a business. Our population shrinks each year as the local paradigm for success is "to get out".

In spite of everything stacked against our kids, we see their capacity to succeed everyday in our programs. While we offer programs focused on developing marketable skills such as coding, piloting, a language school with 7 languages being taught (Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian, Mandarin, Arabic, and Vietnamese), financial literacy in tandem with the Federal Reserve, and others still, the center piece that demonstrates their capacity to shatter all expectations is the entrepreneurship program.

This program began under the guidance of local East St. Louis businessman, James Pirtle, who ran an ice cream store in the city for nearly 50 years until he passed away last month. He gave the kids chips to sell in order to raise money for a trip to Senegal, where they would help organize the country's first MMA event in an effort to build the sport as an industry that would create businesses and jobs, which would go on to happen as there are now promoters, gyms, and gear distributors. The kids raised about \$2,000 of the funds for the trip, and we decided to keep selling to raise money for their travel opportunities. Two years later after a few other trips through Africa and Latin America, some of our youth entrepreneurs were on a beach in Costa Rica where they imagined creating a jewelry line with the shells they found. They came home and did their research. They created a line of earrings, bracelets, and necklaces with precious and semi-precious stones they bought



using capital they raised from their snack business. They would debut the line at an event showcasing black entrepreneurs called "The Real Black Friday", waking up at 3:30 am the day after Thanksgiving to go sell their products. The next Spring in 2019 they would reinvest their jewelry earnings into a community garden. They built 12 new beds, totaling 25, and added a vertical gardening space. In their first year, they produced 2,000 lbs of food! They created a community farmers market to address healthy food disparities since their neighborhood is a food desert with no access to organic, locally grown produce. They also took their fruits and veggies to other markets in St. Louis, expanding their business.

Even last year as the pandemic started underway as the growing season began, they gave seeds they saved from the previous year out to neighbors, helping start seven other community gardens for people to provide food for themselves during harsh economic circumstances of the shut down. They continued getting food to their community and in the markets in St. Louis when they could, and they even planted forty trees to create their own small urban forest, choosing trees that attract over 50 local species of birds and fruit trees to provide new products for

their markets. As of this year their food is at a local store, four markets, and they even have more left over to give to the local food pantries. They are even producing their own salsa brand with product names being based on East St. Louis neighborhoods like "Roosevelt Reaper", "Gomper Ghost Pepper", and even a "Miles Davis Mild" for our city's famous son and jazz pioneer. In the process, they are learning how to collect market research, create retail spreadsheets, basic business accounting, branding, and sales.

This however, is still just the tip of the iceberg. As they traveled, they made contact with African and Latin American artisans and began importing their jewelry, learning they not only could support themselves and their own community, but also other people around the world. They import goods from Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Senegal, Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda to sell here in the U.S.

Their work would attract some major entities as well. Soon after the first event at The Real Black Friday, we were contacted by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. They wanted to give us their financial literacy curriculum. They not only gave us free training for the curriculum, but they would extend it to our other community partners including two after school programs and the entire school district, in which we will now have over five thousand students in our community learning financial literacy from a curriculum created by the nation's central bank. We have also had two students serve on the Federal Reserve's Student Board of Directors, where they get to meet with influential figures like the President of the Fed, and they will also have an opportunity to work there after graduating college where they can gain a position to potentially influence policy and champion their community.

The Federal Reserve also connected us to a local credit union, Scott Credit Union, that started a mobile banking program to help kids save money and put what they have learned in financial literacy into practice. We learned in this process and through mutual research with our partners that our community and others like ours suffer not only as food deserts, but also as finance deserts, as many banks and credit unions do not invest in creating establishments and services there. So our residents are stuck relying on predatory financial services like check cashing, payday loans, and pawn loans that drive them further into debt and ruin their credit. It also means less opportunities for home loans, business loans, and loans for college. As a result of the lack of home ownership, we have less tax revenue to pay for education, police, road repairs, and many other infrastructure elements that could improve our city and quality of life. We have a plan in place to build up financial services for our city and then to present it as a model of low-overhead investment to other banks and credit unions to address poverty in inner cities across the country while building a valuable customer base that has historically been denied and then ignored. Even during the height of the pandemic, our kids continued putting money into their savings accounts, as eight of the kids started their own small businesses to make money and help provide for their families in that dire time. Yet they still made enough to stock more money away and accrue more interest.



As an organization, we seek to empower the marginalized. It is not enough to address disparities in education such as reading and math scores. While those are important, we see ways to teach those through our other classes that build marketable skills that make our kids truly competitive within their local economy and where they can become an influence on the entire St. Louis area and beyond. This is what it means to truly empower them and to give them the tools needed to determine their community's future and direction on their own terms. It is fascinating how through urban agriculture we can not only address food disparities, but also financial disparities to bring healing to our community and opportunities to others around the world. Success is only determined by zip code when resources are inaccessible. Little by little our kids are changing the way people see them and their community, and the paradigm is changing from "get out" to "stay and build up".

To learn more about our work at Go! International or find out how you can get involved, please visit us at www.go-int.org.

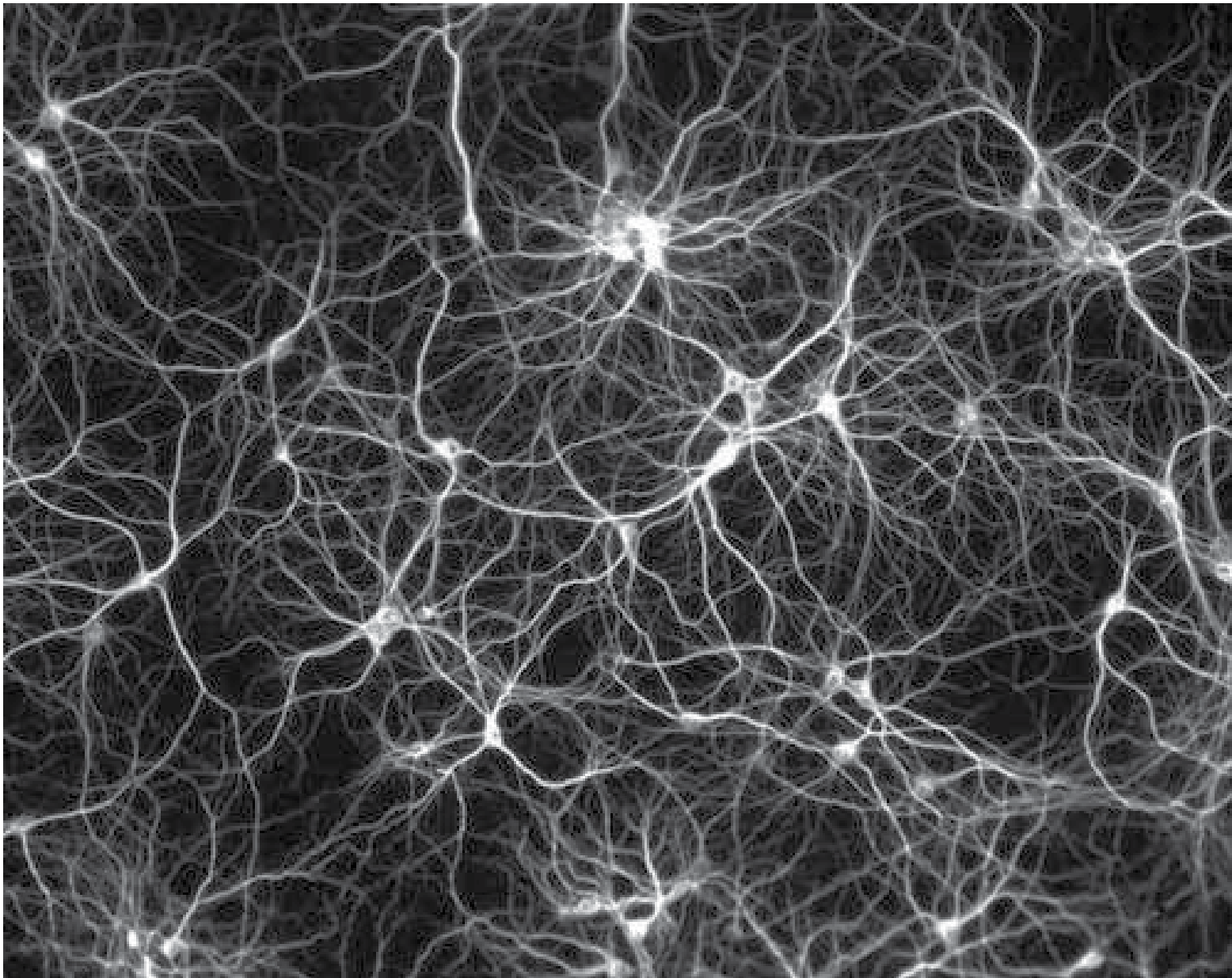
SETH IS THE CEO OF GO! INTERNATIONAL IN EAST ST. LOUIS. HE HAS BEEN WORKING TO CREATE SELF-SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS BY TEACHING MARKETABLE SKILLS IN IMPOVERISHED COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S., LATIN AMERICA, AND AFRICA FOR 14 YEARS. THESE INCLUDE A LANGUAGE SCHOOL, BUSINESS SCHOOLS, SPORTS ACADEMIES, FINANCIAL LITERACY, AVIATION, CODING, URBAN AGRICULTURE WITH A SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS. PROJECTS ARE LOCALLY LED AND MAINTAINED.

MYCELIAL MADNESS

SARA WRIGHT

The last winter I spent in New Mexico I walked to the river every morning in the pre-dawn hour. No matter how much the wind would howl later on, at this time of the day nothing stirred besides the birds. Because I traveled the same path every morning circling round one wetland listening to river songs I would find myself slipping into a light trance as my feet hit the hard unforgiving ground. Every bush, cottonwood, russian olive, juniper was familiar, each was a friend. Although this wetland had been trimmed and paths mowed (parching open ground), the majority of trees, plants and grasses had been left intact and the river was nearby. During these light trance states I sensed that the ground beneath my feet was pulsing with some kind of light; that the earth was trying to communicate with me.

At that time I didn't know that I was walking over of miles of mycelium, because I didn't know whether these networks extended throughout the desert although I assumed they did. But I felt or sensed *something*. I knew from trying to garden in NM that the surface of most of the ground seemed quite barren except for the piles of decaying cottonwood bark that I used as mulch, so where was the rest of the mycelium?



Later I learned that across arid soils, a thin crust *often* forms within the top few centimeters of the soil surface *as long as that surface is not disturbed*. If the land is run over by too many cattle, four wheelers or other machines, mined or otherwise disfigured even by tilling a garden that precious skin will disappear. It takes hundreds or thousands of years to replace this layer of living matter.

Surprisingly, this mantle is not exclusively formed from excess minerals, as I first believed, but is created by microscopic and macroscopic organisms that live together – fungi and algae. Whenever it rains, cyanobacteria, formerly called blue-green algae, bacteria, fungi, and other microbes that have been dormant awaken. Freed from drought, these microscopic creatures start making food and creating miniature tunnels as they move through the soil, reproducing as long as the soil is moist. The mucilage around algae filaments keep in the moisture the algae/fungi to thrive. As the soil dries out after rain, the threads of mycelium tightly bind all the soil grains, gluing soil particles together against wind and erosion. The value of this thin, living skin of the desert must not be underestimated. Mycelial fungal threads called hyphae communicate, grow every which way, exchange water and nutrients and store carbon underground. What fascinates me now is that I sensed the presence of these living networks beneath my feet although most were microscopic. Mycelial communication occurs by electrical impulses/electrolytes which emit sparks of light and something in me apparently could feel this pulse emanating through my feet.

Fungal networks are the foundation of all life on earth. Four billion years ago alga met fungus as it crept out of the sea. Algae could photosynthesize but it needed fungi to break down nutrients like minerals from rock. The two developed a mutualistic partnership that still exists today. Between the two they create the soil that supports all terrestrial life.

In temperate forests like mine here in Maine, billions of mutualistic/symbiotic mycorrhizal mycelial networks are quite visible, often tucked under leaves or threading their way through the forest floor. Pull off a dead piece of bark and you will find these threads, some are patterned like trees or sunbursts – all are beautiful.

Often during the spring summer or fall I try to imagine the billions of mycelium that are running under my feet as I walk into my field through the pines, or step across the brook into the cool hemlock forest that is carpeted with a plethora of emerald mosses, princess pine, pyrola and other spring ephemerals. I experience awe as I remind myself that all these underground threads are exchanging information, carbon, water and other nutrients with one another. What we learn is that although competition exists in every forest, cooperation between species is the norm. Trees even favor their own kin (Dr. Suzanne Simard). Most important and worth repeating is that during this time of climate change, stabilized mycelium stores masses of carbon - about 70 percent underground.

I notice that the cold white blanket that separates me from this pulsing earth in the winter is not something I appreciate for long; winter used to be a time I loved to snowshoe, look for tracks, and watch wild animals. I still treasure the season, but not the snow, although I value the latter as a form of protection for plants and tree roots, as well as a source of some water (it takes 12 inches of snow to equal one inch of water). I have no desire to fly over the snow like a skier or on some screaming machine; instead I want to sink myself into earth's bodily wholeness.

Last summer was wet and the best mushroom year I ever remember. I spent the entire summer season in the forest looking for/identifying/and studying the ecological niches that abounded with mushrooms, the fruiting bodies of some mycelium. There are billions, trillions of mycelium that make up these underground networks but only about twenty thousand kinds of mushrooms in all.

I noted with excitement that in my favorite forest I sometimes experienced that pulsing light under my feet while searching for mushrooms or ground covers, walking slowly and getting on my knees frequently to inspect a plant or mushroom more closely. Reflecting upon this phenomenon *it seemed to me that I had shifted my awareness from thinking mind to experiencing body*. After all it was my body that experienced this pulsating sensation.

Today, I think of this vast mycelial network as a primal earth mother, a sentient being that lives under my feet and stretches across the entire surface of the earth, an ancient and infinitely wise earth mantle that might be trying to get my/our attention. It is intriguing to see pictures of mycelium and the neural pathways of the brain because visually they seem to share similarities. Perhaps these mycelial networks are the mind of the earth reminding us that we need to re-learn from nature that interconnection and cooperation will help us save our species.

SARA IS A WRITER, ETHOLOGIST AND NATURALIST WHO IS MAKING HER HOME BETWEEN ABIQUIU, NEW MEXICO AND MAINE. SHE HAS INDIGENOUS ROOTS, NATURE IS HER MUSE AND INSPIRATION. SHE WRITES FOR MANY PUBLICATIONS MOST OF WHICH FOCUS ON NATURE AND ECO-FEMINISM-THE BELIEF THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE EARTH IS ALSO HAPPENING TO WOMEN.

FIRST LIGHT: BRIGID AND THE BEAR

SARA WRIGHT FEBRUARY 2, 2021

Winter light pauses so briefly. Now Chickadees are chirping and wild doves are pairing up. Birds are starting to sing love songs to the earth as she turns towards the light. By early February light is streaming into the house with more warmth and for longer hours. It is no longer dark at 5 PM.

Each morning I stand at the window to glimpse a golden orb rising through the cracks of bare tree branches. Some days the sky is infused with deep rose, bittersweet orange or scarlet. When the sun star appears I watch what the light will do – will it reflect on the still open water of the brook, or turn night frozen branches into star-like crystals? Some days the sun has to climb out of the hooded clouds to rise into blue. Amazingly, this star at the center of our solar system literally transforms parts of its body into light every second, an astonishing thought that speaks more to sun as process than to an actual entity... First Light is upon us.

After a warm sunny afternoon young maple branches outside my window turn a rosy red providing a dramatic contrast to the snow. Sap is rising, if only temporarily. Mid winter also brings us raindrops that shine like the finest crystals when freezing, and blankets of snow that keep the Earth in stillness and deep slumber until the next storm erupts...

Many cultures throughout the world still celebrate this mid-winter turning including myself. Brigid 'calls' me as does the Great Bear.

The Celtic Brigid's Festival occurs around February 2nd. Brigid is a goddess of poetry and creative inspiration. As a goddess of the forge she is associated with both Fire and Light and the return of the sun/son.

Another aspect of Brigid is that of water. Her sacred springs were/are associated with healing. These clear mountain springs have a spiritual and bodily capacity to purify whatever/whoever they touch. They bubble up from the depths of the molten earth.

One legend has it that a crystal drop from Brigid's mantle touched the earth and became a deep clear lake. I love this image. I think of Brigid's blue lake as a kind of mysterious bowl that holds different ways of experiencing time. If I throw in a hook I might catch time in the round as I experience it as seasonal cycles. Ah, I have caught a January feeling through a chickadee. A childhood loss – memory of an inexplicable death might pull me under without notice after I throw in the next hook. Or I might reel in a dream of a future event that might release me from a haunting. In Brigid's Lake time does not flow like a river even when I experience it that way – Time is simply there as unexplored potential waiting to be lived.

Brigid is a Lover of Women, Mistress of the Dreamtime, and a Daughter of Prophecy. She reigns over the fires of our imagination. In Celtic and Nordic mythology she wears a crown made of evergreens that is lit with candles.

I prepare for this turning by bringing indoors a second wreath of fragrant balsam greens that I made when I wove the first wreath for the house at winter solstice. In its place I lay the fresh fragrant wreath on the same chest and surround the circle with tiny white lights – *Brigid is crowned and the Circle of Life is renewed*. The light is returning. A little Zuni bear sits in the center of my wreath to honor the Goddess/God as the Great Bear. The old wreath is surrendered to the fire.

Brigid reminds me that the goddess is always with us manifesting as Love and the Power of Woman to create changes that can help us to *retrace* our steps to embrace an egalitarian matriarchal perspective, way of being in the world that focuses on equality and the good of whole community. After picking up this thread it becomes possible to move into a future that allows us to bridge differences so that we may live in harmony with humans so different from ourselves – we must create unity and begin to repair the bridge to the rest of nature, the latter is a lesson we must learn if humans are to survive.

Equally important to me is that Brigid has a bear aspect because I also associate the bear with the Sacred Body of the Earth, and with Earth's ability to *heal* herself as well as her people. This healing aspect of the bear is another reason the bear holds the place of honor in the center of the wreath. Even as we continue to destroy her, nature will live on. It is humans that are in dire need of help.

Both Brigid and Bear are associated with brightness and the return of the sun. *Both speak to the powers of healing, the coming of spring, and most important rebirth. Fire and Water are the elements invoked.*

The goddess Brigid may have been the Great Bear Mother that was venerated in the earliest recorded bear cults. All reference the bear who entered the underworld, died, was reborn in the spring. The power of bears and bear shamanism is documented in all the circumpolar cultures – Siberian, Alaskan, Scandinavian, Nordic, Celtic, Germanic cultures as well as the Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Up until recently, Europeans celebrated Bear's Day on February 2nd. Country folk walked from town to town with a live chained brown bear (the Shrovetide Bear) who they forced to walk on hot coals. It was believed that the bear who walked through the fire would help the crops to grow. When I think about this story I imagine the bear as the body of the earth that is forced to endure intolerable fire to appease human stupidity...

No one seems to know how Bear's Day became the secular Groundhog Day in the United States. On February 2nd the bear/ hedgehog/groundhog emerges from his den. If he sees his shadow he returns to sleep for another six weeks. Regardless of his behavior the appearance of the bear is a harbinger of the coming season. Because male bears do emerge from their dens during the winter months it makes sense that this bear is *male* (hedgehogs and groundhogs do not usually surface during winter months). I find it interesting that both male and female aspects of the bear have become mythologized by humans.

In the far north the Inuit hunt polar bears for food/clothing etc. Some Indigenous peoples of the United States do the same; others hold the bear as too sacred to hunt. For Indigenous peoples bears are relatives, embodying healing and protection. Because of the power and strength of this relationship male bears are treated with great reverence and often called Grandfather. If there is a spring hunt in the United States (females are never hunted – they are too sacred), only one male is taken for food and fat and each part of the animal is used. The bear's skull is returned to the forest and is placed on the branch of an evergreen. The *People* (all Native peoples call themselves the People) believe that if respected, the Spirit of the Bear will return to allow himself to be sacrificed the following year. Contrast this approach to the bear hunt with that of modern-day cultures.

The Navajo have a ceremony that marks mid-winter called the Mountainway, also celebrated in early February. The Bear Ceremony is the most powerful of all of the healing chants and curiously in this tradition the "Woman Who Becomes a Bear" leads the ceremony. This shape-shifting bear walks through the darkness, works with fire, and converses with the Yei, the sky gods. This Bear Ceremony is the most powerful healing ceremony of all – not just for healing individuals but to help restore harmony and balance between the people and nature.

From a naturalist perspective, we learn that female wild bears give birth in mid to late January emerging from their dens in early spring when the warming sun melts frozen ground. Bear mothers are alert and attentive to the birth of and caring for their cubs. Black bear cubs remain with the mother for 18 months; brown bears and polar bears stay with mother for two and half years. During a mild winter, males may awaken and leave their dens for brief periods. A bear that leaves its den during the late fall and winter will often walk in its own tracks to return to it.

Mid – winter approaches under a waxing moon this year. Northern Indigenous peoples call this moon the "Little Bear Moon" in honor of all the female bears most of whom give birth this month. As I celebrate this turning my heart opens to the wee cubs nestled under their mother's thick fur even as I thank each bear who ushers in the year's rebirth in such an embodied way.

PHOTO CREDIT: SEEDBROADCAST



“My hope is that folks who previously had their head in the sand about these issues of food insecurity and injustice have a felt the tiniest pinch themselves, and will be committed to partnering with all of us to make that necessary change.”

Leah Penniman



“Sometimes, as the fairy tales and myths tell us, you only need the smallest of things to help you change the course of destiny: an ant, a reed, an ear of tufted barley, a hand full of coloured beans.” Dark Mountain

