



DIANA'S
GROVE

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Between The Worlds Patterns of Possibility

Diana's Grove Mystery School

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The Empress

From the endless exchange that happens between two ones, three is born. Two points - perpetual negotiation - I can't give up my point of view and you won't give up yours. A whole new solution, perspective, answer, question must be born; three rises out of the two. Not this or that but...look, from a line form is born. From the line that connects the two, she give birth to dimension. From flat to form...what which is neither one contains both. That's creativity. That's three.

Who deserves to wear the body of so much creativity? What form would such a principle take? Who embodies birth? Great Mother - pregnant, labor, new life, nurturance, the past is resolved in the future's hope. How does she walk among us? She is the endless cycles and the constant promise. She is the resurrection known as Spring. She is autumn's empty arms that reach out to hold the dying grasses. She takes her lost child in her arms. She draws the tired leaves to her breast. She rocks the seeds, the children of her children. And then, when the time is right, she lets us go. She sends us into life. She knows we will return to her, to her, to her. Mother, great mother, mother nature, rhythm...birth and birth and birth. Each of us has our own cycle. The trees, the grasses, the insects, we who walk on four legs and we who walk on two - we all have a rhythm, a time, a rise and a fall. From her, we come, to her, we return. She is life. We are the living.

I dream of the garden. Which plants will rise with green shoots, offering new life? Which plants will not rise but will support life with the gift of compost? Offering the remains, they will provide nutrients as fuel for new roots and be an integral part of the whole.

by SingLoudSindClear on the BOS e-mail line.



Definitions of the Empress

The dictionary is a book on Tarot. The hard part is figuring out which word to look up.

Nature: *natura*: born. Birth. That which is the source or essence of life. Creative force, the sum and order of causes and effect in time and space. The powers that produce existing phenomenon, whether in the total or in detail, the agencies which carry on the processes of creation or of being.

In a metaphysical sense, the source or essence of the life of the universe; what appears and acts as forces, energies, laws. That is which is produced by natural forces; the existing system of things in time and space; the world of matter or matter and mind.

Nurture: nourishing, that which nourishes. To feed, nourish, rear, foster, cherish. To educate, to bring up or train.

Cycle means circle or ring.

Thirteen... thirteen stars in the Empress' crown. Thirteen is the number of a cycle complete. A year, marked from Winter Solstice to Winter Solstice has 13 moons. If we were to measure a Lunar year, first full moon after the Solstice was December 26, 2002. The 13th moon falls on December 8th. Its cycle ends on January 7th. This last moon, does it ask us to take time for closure? Does it ask us to draw the passing year into our arms and bid it fare the well?

If we were to count the year by new moons, the first new moon after the Solstice fell on January 2nd. The 13th new moon is December 23rd, the day after this year's Solstice. If we used the Solstice as the turning point, this year, the 13th cycle is the end of one cycle and at the same time, the beginning of the next. Think of the lore we would live if we counted time by looking to the night rather than to the day.

The Theme For This Month Is "The Empress"

by Constance Sea

The Empress – she who is and represents the Goddess, Demeter, the Mother of all Life. She holds the forces of nature, the enduring cycles of beginnings and endings, and the continuing round of birth, maturation, death, and the new life that comes from death. The earth is her body, the seasons are her biorhythms, and all beings are her children. The Empress is the bounty of the earth and the irrepressible power of Life Will Out!

In the world of the Empress, I find peace and joy. I am comforted; I feel at home. I am amazed by the 100 million miracles happening every day around me. The miracle of the monarch butterfly that travels 2,000 miles to winter in Mexico, the miracle of the tree that grows in a tiny crack in a rock or in a concrete wall – the tree that sees only opportunity and doesn't take "no" for an answer. The miracle of the turtle that crosses the highway and makes it, the miracle of the turtle that doesn't make it and becomes food for the crows.

In the Empress' world, all are fed and all are food. Nothing is wasted, every thing has a purpose. Everyone has a place in the pattern of the whole and all the parts are connected. The seed is fed and watered. The plant has everything it needs to blossom and bear fruit. The fruit is put to good use in service to Life. Individual lives end but Life doesn't stop, Life doesn't give up, Life always begins again. The Empress presides over the continual striving of Life that yields growth and transformation. I see cycles and lessons in nature that tell me that life, itself, is the meaning of Life. In the Empress I see what I call divine.

I believe in the paradigm of support and interconnectedness in the external world of nature, but I haven't experienced the human world in the same way. I got to this place honestly – the Empress was not the ruler in my childhood home. My growth and unfolding was not nurtured and celebrated, it was neglected and sometimes suppressed. I didn't know that I had a gift to give Life just by being my unique

self. I learned how to have relationships by nurturing others but not myself. I didn't recognize that support was available for me. I learned to be "self-sufficient" by not having needs and hiding them as much as possible. I was ashamed to have needs. I learned to be safe by being isolated and not connected to human community.

I have changed some of these childhood patterns and learnings about the world through healthy adult relationships, but I have the gift of the awareness that the essence of my story is still basically the same. I say that this awareness is a gift because without awareness, I can't act to change my consciousness. And this change, I want. I am making choices that act to create a new essence. The biggest choice I'm making to support this new reality in my life is being in community at Diana's Grove. When I came to the Grove, I felt it was a place where "true" love – defined as the will to extend one's self for one's own or another's spiritual growth – was practiced. I caught a glimmer that here was a place where the Empress reigned.

Knowing in my cells that the Empress offers me the same grace – the same divine love freely bestowed – that she offers other creatures poses a life challenge for me. I long to be "as the lilies of the field," and know I am as great as they are. Interacting with my community at Diana's Grove is helping me gain this knowledge. I am feeling it grow within me. I know in my mind that support is available. Bit by bit, I'm recognizing what support looks like and I'm "trying out" asking for it. I'm feeling myself relax and have more faith in others. I also feel more faith in myself. The power of the Empress, the transformative power of Life, seems to be moving me beyond my past. It is the promise of a beginning.

I share my challenge with you – Allow yourself to dance with the music of Life. Open yourself to the trust Life has earned from you. Embrace the freedom of being who you truly are. I wish you the bounty, the grace, of the Empress in your life.

This Poem has been included at the request of Constance Sea as an addition to her theme page.

Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
 You do not have to walk on your knees
 for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
 You only have to let the soft animal of your body
 love what it loves.
 Tell me about despair, you, and I will tell you mine.
 Meanwhile the world goes on.
 Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
 are moving across the landscapes,
 over the prairies and the deep trees,
 the mountains and the rivers.
 Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
 are heading home again.
 Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
 the world offers itself to your imagination,
 calls to you like wild geese, harsh and exciting-
 over and over announcing your place
 in the family of things.
 by Mary Oliver

Excerpts from The Nature Class

One of the best winter respite activities I enjoy is perusing the seed catalogs that come in early January and planning the garden to come for the growing season.

This year some of the seeds I got needed to be started indoors before being transplanted outside. With a foot of snow on the ground and 8-10" coming tonight, it will still be sometime before we see bare ground again. However, some of my seeds need to be started 8 - 12 weeks before transplanting. Generally, in Maine the earliest I can safely count on being able to plant a garden is Memorial day weekend. However, with some cole crops, and the benefits of walls 'o water and floating row covers, it is possible to get the colder loving plants in the ground as early as April. March is our traditional mud season and the ground is too much like soup to work it.

So, this afternoon, just after 3 pm EST with the moon just having moved into Pisces, I started some seeds for this year's garden: Brussels Sprouts, Kale, Leeks, and Thai Peppers. Herb seeds I won't start until later since they only need 6-8 weeks growing time before transplanting.

by Melissa

Nature Class Excerpts Continued

Under the light layer of snow, there must be great places for moles and mice to tunnel around these roots and stems. I was also very impressed with the various seeds the plants offered. What intricate tiny structures, and ingenious ways of protecting the seeds yet leaving them available to dispersal by bird, breeze, hitchhiking, or gravity. And the colors in this spot are muted yet rich this time of year -- honey and pewter.so many things to read about, to watch for! I was very moved by the description of the ways that plants use and conserve water and energy in the cold, and in seasonal transitions. Reflecting on water as one of the Elements, as a metaphor/symbol for emotions, I thought about the ways that I adjust my needs and my expression in times of emotional scarcity.

by Christine Larson

Memorable Quotes

The month of February belongs to Sherrid

Drum and Trance Intensive:

"This is the only place I have ever been where we celebrate mistakes"

by Sherrid

February Mystery School Check Out:

"I am feeling Mythologically Deja Vooeey"

by Sherrid

Haukus from the Writing Class

Abundant Goddess
 She knows the anguish
 of loss
 Her arms are empty

In constant Cycles
 The vast millennia turn
 Forever Changing
 by Arden

Lush August plenty
 belly-round hill of grain, ripe
 babies, eat well, sleep warm
 by Sisal

Caring for my muse
 springing forth inspiration
 nurturing my soul
 by Dan

Life as a Sacred Path; Musings from the Book of Shadows

by Jane Holt

***What awakens you from your winter slumber?
How do you know that you have been slumbering?
How do you know that you are waking up?***

I ask myself, how do I know when I have stumbled across something within myself that deserves a longer look? How do I know when I have touched a nerve that is ready to heal or found a wound longing to be transformed by the gift of light into a sacred wound? I know when these moments happen. The deeper, more important question is how do I allow myself to listen to that knowing? How do I let myself hear the lump in my throat, the tightness in my belly? How do I support myself when the questions and emotions pour out like water from an artesian well? How do I stay with those questions and emotions when I fear that the suddenly free and gushing water will overwhelm me?

How do I sit among the feelings? How do I listen to their story? How do I listen long enough to hear what I am afraid I don't want to hear? I'm not sure of the answer to any of those questions. I only know that sometimes something will touch me in a different way and that touch will stop me. It will touch my heart rather than my brain. Those touches, they say please, *stop and listen*. Please, don't let me slip away. Often, as I read through the Book of Shadows, a line, a question will stop me that way. My throat will close, my stomach tense, and I'll forget to breathe. Why now? Why this response to this particular question? Those questions...the ones that touch me differently...they look so innocent.

*What awakens me from my winter slumber?
When did I wake up? How long was I asleep?*

What did I miss?

That is the question that tightens my throat and stops my breathing. The questions that grow out of the original question have lost their innocence. How much did I miss? How long did I sleep, how much of my life did I slumber through? How much of my life did I miss by not looking out of the car's window? How long was the landscape painted in the winter colors of gray and white and sometimes black? What bump in the road woke me up? Or perhaps it

was a glimpse of a tiny spring flower passionately surviving in spite of its surroundings. Perhaps that caught my attention and began the stirrings in my soul.

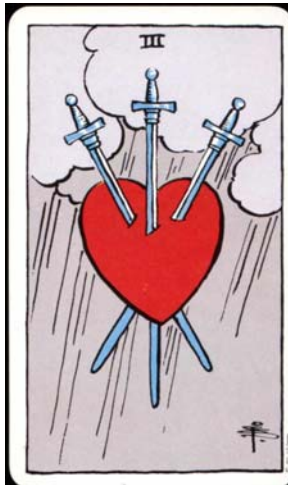
There is so much I don't know that sometimes I cling desperately to what I think I do know. Of those things I think I know I believe this: If I let this question about awakening from winter's slumber slip away I will lose an important piece of myself. I know that if I listen to it, to all of its questions and all of its answers, I will feel many things. I feel grief. I grieve for those lost and unconscious years. I grieve for what I missed and can't recover. I feel the sadness and sense of loss of that person that I was. The one who needed to slumber because being awake was unbearable. I didn't know then that it was possible to grow and expand beyond who I was into who I wanted to be. I didn't even know that it was possible to be more than who I was. I yearned for it, but I didn't know it was possible until I saw others growing, stretching, and reaching beyond themselves, becoming who they truly were, who they wanted to be.

I feel many things as I sit with this question. Beyond grief and loss I feel the sense of adventure that comes with waking up alive and conscious each day. I feel the enthusiasm for life and life's cycles that comes with a sense of rebirth. I feel the joy of learning to give myself freely and the deeper love of learning to be nurtured and cared for. Most importantly, I feel a passion for life that runs through my whole body. I feel the passion of a soul waking fully into the experience of life.

What awakens me from my winter slumber? Life and the passions of life. Life and *your* energy for life and growth and expansion. *Your* passion for life awakens mine.

What awakens you from your winter slumber?

Three of Swords



The three of swords, that's me. I am the image you see when you draw a three of swords from any tarot deck. I am that image; and I am all the emotions, feelings, thoughts, and intuitive knowledge that comes with the image.

The image that you may be the most familiar with is that of three swords piercing a heart. I am an attention grabbing image, most certainly. I am typically an unpopular card or at least that is my sincere belief.



I am sometimes referred to as sorrow. I am almost always shown in shades of grays and blues. I have a tendency to invoke anxiety, worry, fear, doubt, and stress. I am really not all bad though.. I honestly do perform a functioning role, in service to the whole.

I can be found in those moments of internal and external conflict. I am present when hopes and dreams come from different directions, or perspectives. I am invoked when they clash into each other... each dream resists the other, hope is challenged by a different hope.

I am those moments in which you feel torn. Surely, you know about those moments of feeling torn. Have you ever found yourself in a moment of having to choose... and feeling pulled in two different directions at the same time? That would be me, that would be a three of swords moment. Hello, hi there, that's me. Actually, that's you embodying the experience that I represent. After all, I only exist to reflect the experience of your journey... back to you. I AM...in service to the journey into consciousness.

I am, despite my efforts and dedication, an often frowned-upon card. I am sympathetic; I am truly am. I understand that it is often painful to live through and move beyond the moments that I represent. Whether your conflicting ideas and thoughts are internal or external, physical or mental, there is continuously some sort of triangular dynamic tension present in life. I maybe manifested when you find yourself holding on to opposing philosophies or ideals, when you feel torn and conflicted. I maybe present when you feel called in different directions. I am the three of Swords. I am of you.

Excerpts from the Diana's Grove on line Book of Shadows

"The days grow slowly longer with sun's light. I feel my sap, while still resting, is beginning to think about the coming season and what had been put to bed last Autumn in order to grow strong for spring's sprouting."

Blessed Be
Bett

"I do feel very off balance. In looking at the full moon, I kept reminding myself that She has her phases, they are of a rhythm, She is both predictable and unpredictable, and so am I and my world . . ."

Blessings,
wobbly Sisalfish

The Creative Power of Beauty

by Teri Parsley Starnes

"The Empress represents the trusting, balanced heart..."
[Angeles Arrien] in the [Tarot Handbook]

"No problem has a solution that is not in some way beautiful." Caroline Casey in "Making the Gods Work for You" Let the Beauty we love be what we do.

There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground." Rumi I am looking at the Empress card. The Empress is regal, abundant; she is beauty surrounded by beauty. She is Venus, the brightest jewel in the sky, known as the Morning Star and the Evening Star. Venus balances between these two positions evenly, spending exactly the same amount of time as each. Beauty and Balance are her province. Venus rules two signs in the zodiac - Taurus and Libra. In the earth sign Taurus, we see her abundant aspect and her desire to create sustainable systems of beauty. In the air sign, Libra (the Scales), we see her balancing aspect. The Empress asks me to find the way to use sustainable, balanced beauty as a creative force. In our birth charts, Venus shows us what we find beautiful and what we need to do to create balance in that creative realm.

Imagine that you have an audience with The Empress. You come to seek your heart's desire ? a token of Beauty. The gift she gives - your natal Venus. The price she asks - make it balanced. Perhaps, the following is what she gives. To Aries Venus - the gift of beauty in leadership, self-assertion. The balance to seek: learn to depend on someone else. To Taurus Venus - the gift of the beauty of the good green earth and all her bounty. The balance to seek: let it go. To Gemini Venus - the gift of conversation, learning and movement. The balance to seek: become still in order to appreciate it. To Cancer Venus - the gift of the beauty of the home and family. The balance to seek: learn that you can not guarantee perfect safety. To Leo Venus - the gift of creativity and attention for it. The balance to seek: seeing the same in everyone else. To Virgo Venus - the gift of the beauty in nature's order. The balance to seek: accepting chaos and unpredictability. To Libra Venus - the gift of the beauty in someone else's eyes and drawing that beauty out. The balance to seek: self-responsibility. To Scorpio Venus - the gift of the beauty of the dark. The balance to seek: daring to be seen in the light. To Sagittarius Venus - the gift of the beauty of the Truth. The balance to seek: learning that there is no one truth. To Capricorn Venus - the gift of the beauty of boundaries and

authority. The balance to seek: learning that you are fallible. To Aquarius Venus - the beauty of creating systems and communities. The balance to seek: opening to emotions. To Pisces Venus - the beauty of dreams. The balance to seek: being aware of illusions.

Venus in our charts will attract the qualities of its sign into our lives. Someone with Aries Venus will attract self-reliant, assertive people into their life. This is the expansive quality of Venus and The Empress. As I become larger through my power of attraction, I expand into the world of forms, relationships and meaning. Beauty as my guide I expand into greater potential. As Rumi instructs, when we let the beauty we love, be what we do, we expand into beautiful solutions. As there are hundreds of way to kneel and kiss the ground, the house position of Venus can tell us more of the ways we may become Beauty's apprentice. Consider these twelve: 1st house - identifying yourself with beauty, 2nd - becoming the expert in what is beautiful and drawing it to you, 3rd - expressing beauty through words, 4th - creating beauty in the home, 5th ? enjoying romantic beauty, 6th - finding beauty in the everyday, the beautiful routine 7th - committing to beauty in partnership, 8th - claiming beauty in power, 9th ? finding beauty in the quest, 10th ? recognizing the beauty of achievement, 11th - conceiving beauty in coalescing ideas, and community, 12th ? devoting oneself to the beauty in surrender.

As we look into the qualities of Venus in our charts, we get a story about the place of Beauty and Balance in our lives. As an example, in my chart I have Venus in Pisces in the 3rd house. Putting the sign and house together, I can say: I expand when I express the beauty of dreams. I bring sustainable balance into my life by laying my illusions at the Empress' throne. With this balance, I look toward finding the reality in the dream and giving them both expression.

The Empress reminds me that Beauty and Balance is my birthright. With Venus' help I can choose to claim it.

Who are the Mysteries: An Interview With Charles Williams II

by Solice Novia

The theme for this month is the Empress. Naturally, there has been much talk about the Empress and that Empress energy here at the Grove this month. In talking about what the Empress means and represents, our dear friend Charles came to mind.

Charles Williams II is a part of the Diana's Grove community and many other lucky communities around the world. Charles truly lives and dances in the hand of the Goddess, more so than any other human being I have ever meet. We all agreed that Charles just naturally fit in with this months theme...so we decided to track him down.

I found Charles at home in one of his favorite places, Farm and Wilderness Camp in Vermont. He was kind enough to agree to be interviewed. For those of you who have never meet Charles, allow me to tell you a little bit about this amazing young man. Charles truly lives as one with the natural world around him. He spends most of his time living and being outside. (Even in the Vermont winters.) Charles divides his time between many communities and causes. You may encounter him teaching a group of children about native plants at a summer camp, or you might chance to meet him teaching nonviolent resistance training workshops at a political protest with Starhawk. You are just as likely to run into him hitch hiking across the country, or helping Patricia build new lighting systems for the kitchen here at the Grove. Wherever you chance to meet him, no doubt you will be amazed at his ability to be fully present, open, honest, and giving.

In Starhawk's new book *Webs of Power*, she acknowledges and thanks Charles, referring to him as the Greatest scout in the world. He truly changes everything he touches...and everything he touches...changes.

Q: *How did you first discover Diana's Grove, Charles?*

A: I meet Kitty (Kathleen Engelmann, Cynthia's daughter) at Witch Camp in Vermont. She told me about a place in Missouri that was really pretty, and I love pretty places. I was hitchhiking across the country at the time, so I hitched into Bunker and called for directions. I visited the land, met

the dogs, and helped out by cleaning the showers. I helped Patricia fix a broken generator. Kitty was right, the Grove was really pretty.

Q: *Charles, How do you experience the Divine?*

A: Daily. In so many ways...in the whoosh of the pine trees. (You know, when you lay at the base of a pine tree and just listen to the wind blow through the pine needles.) In the magic moments of time, the moments of clarity. I experience the Divine in the rawness of the world. I can see the divine in the really usual things, if I am going slowly enough. If I am not in a hurry, then there is the divine...it's right there if I slow down and see it. Also, in people - in their actions. I see the divine in people for sure. I feel the divine in those moments of just being alive outside, the divine is there.

Q: *What is your personal spiritual, religious, or psychological path or practice?*

A: I would have to say that I am a practicing person. My path...well...I am Charles. My "ritual" if you choose to call it that, is to make daily connection with the natural world. To be outside, to hear the voice of the wind, some people would call it being pagan. I don't, I am not exactly sure what pagan really means.

I practice giving up the need to know, letting go of the need to structure, and just trusting that it will all work out. I stay open to the possibilities, leaving space to see how life unfolds. I am a person living in this world, and being present to life.

Q: *What are you driven by or passionate about?*

A: I would say what most people are probably driven by or passionate about; curiosity, fear, mystery. I am passionate about being outside and getting other people outside. I am passionate about enjoying myself.

(What drives me....?) Well, there is what I call the red telephone of life. That refers to those inner callings that I get. Those times when I just know, this is what I should do...here is something important calling me and then working with the energy of what that is. For example, when I felt

(Continued on Next Page)

called to go to Palestine...that was a red telephone call. A lot of these things happen, where the call is just clear and it might not be convenient or fit in with the schedule, but I know that this is what I need to do...so I do it.

In between "calls" I apply the skills, gifts, and talents that I have, to the best end at the time. I give my skills to help others and the environment that I am in at the time. I get excited about giving in service to life and community.

Q: *How do you go about connecting with new people Charles ?*

A: As best as I can. Often I connect in service to other people. Sometimes through professional work i.e., as a teacher, leader, or guide. I connect with people through happenstance, like if I am hitch hiking and someone picks me up, I connect with the driver. Also, I connect with people I meet who share the same goals...for example if we are working together on the same project. It could be as simple as painting a protest banner together or we could be philosophically aligned. (Like tasks under the same goal socially or spiritually.)

I connect with new people through verbal intellect, discussions/arguments, ect...

Sometimes I just have a spiritual, intuitive knowing, and I feel connected to a person, that is pretty rare though.

Q: *Charles, what gifts do you bring to community?*

A: Ask the people in community, Solice. They would be able to answer that. I guess I would have to say I bring an ability to see possibilities, to see the world differently. I bring tools of caring, of how to genuinely care about people. I also bring an understanding of how community works and what healthy community needs to function. I am able to bring relief to community by stepping into whatever roll needs to be filled.(I can fill in the gaps.) I bring a willingness to serve. I also bring my intensity, an ability to drive, to push or pull other people...to get things moving.

Q: *What is it like, to truly live in the hand of the Goddess Charles?*

A: It is wonderful and difficult. I live moment by

moment, with a need to be out in the wild. Outside, everything else is reduced, the world becomes clearer...not as confusing or difficult. There is a clarity that comes with waking up outside in the cold and just watching the sky. It doesn't really matter what we do, not really. The winters will still be cold, with or without humans. Life becomes simple when we realize how much larger it is than any of us.

Last October I spent the month outside, and the world spoke so clearly to me. Being outside reduces the mental chaos. If I wake up and it is raining outside, there is nothing I need to do about that. I just get to know that it is raining, therefor the trees will grow. I don't need to try to change or control that, it just is.

If I am open, it is simple...and I am able to hear life speaking to me. If I am not open, if I am all caught up in the rat race, the game, then I can't hear the calls of life as clearly.

It is difficult, because the way I live is very counter-cultural. As a social being, that is difficult. It is difficult to interact with the "game", and stay totally connected. I am always walking in two worlds, and they both have their place. I need social contact, but I don't want the smoke screen of our culture to get in the way of the stillness and clarity. I accept that I am a part of that, our culture, fully. I am that. I am fully being a part of humanity, without accepting that there is only one way to be. I do not accept that there is only one way to live in the word.

I am grateful that Charles doesn't accept that there is only one way to be. I am grateful for the experience of knowing Charles. The way he lives in harmony with his natural environment is awesome and beautiful. His relentless commitment to a better way of life is inspirational for me, and I believe many other people who's lives have been touched by Charles. Charles truly embodies that Empress energy. Charles Williams is a part of our community, he is also and always...wild and free.

I look forward to the opportunity to "discover" another mystery with you all next month. Until then...dream boldly and live fully. Blessed Be....

March 2003 My Favorite Places

By Jane Holt

Not all my favorite places at the Grove are scenic. I am enthralled by the magic of the compost pile. The life that teems in mud puddles on the road astonishes me. I have to admit that I have spent time watching Dung Beetles, amazed by the importance of their work. No, really it's true, not all the Empress' creative energy goes into scenic turnouts. Some of her finest work, I believe, happens in less than ideal conditions.



Her abundance is also found in small, unassuming places where entire universes teem with pantheons of goddesses and gods while archetypes and superheros play out the recurring patterns of life unfolding.

I'd like to give you a full tour, but we can't all fit in. Trust me, we've tried. If you will just glance in the doorway as we walk by you'll get a view of this birthing place where so much comes to fruition even without sunshine and adequate ripening time. Yes, it is chaotic. Yes, sometimes it is hard to tell who is human and who is mythic in here. You'll probably notice how quickly the horizon stops; just 10 feet from the door and another 14 the other way. The inspirational view, you ask? One end is comprised of book cases filled with notebooks and other office necessities. At the other end a giant white board covers the wall and speaks of tasks yet to do and information to pass on. Two computers hold coveted spots of importance with a printer between. Dog beds litter the floor, as do the dogs. The linoleum shows scars from past puppies. There is only room for a couple of extra chairs. Sometimes we magically squeeze in 7 or 8. Obviously, it is a place of high magic and impressive daily juggling.

The Empress' world is boundless. This room proves it. Here is a great majestic wilderness disguised as a small office. Here is the wildness of the Empress' abundant growth and creative energy. Here is where Cynthia and Patricia work. This is the place that vision becomes reality and reality is transposed into myth. Mythic heros become human once more and mere humans step courageously into the world of myth.

This place looks small, chaotic and a bit careworn. It thrives on the Magician's magic and the Priestess' exchange. It is a shrine to the Empress and to Demeter, if ever there was one. This less than scenic corner of the Grove holds within itself an endless striving for health and wholeness, growth, abundance, creativity, expansion and life itself. I love to visit it. Life teems here as if it were a rainforest. I'm pleased to share it with you, warts, puppy chewed spots and all.

Skippy Speaks: And wows us with *Canine Truths of Life* and the Passion of Skipphooly.



All rolling together in the Empress' lap.

Ahhhhh, The Empress; abundant, soft and cushiony. Can you feel the luxury of her lap? How good would it feel to curl up in that lap and let her take care of you? And thanks to Skipphooly's encouraging efforts, here you are, right in that lap of luxury and abundance. Bless her little enthusiastic heart! We dogs think lying in the lap of luxury is a fine occupation; full time when possible. And, because we are a generous species, we often give up the lap for the cushion. Actually, not a bad trade. There's a saying among us dogs, which is one of the top five *Truths of Life*; *Where there's a soft cushion, there's a dog...* Or there ought to be.

Dogs know how to make the ultimate use of large, soft pillows. Allow me to initiate you into the secrets and mysteries of the good life as practiced by canine yogis the world over. To begin, you must breathe the sacred word, deep and slow; "*pillooooowsss*." Then dance yourself through the Empress' sacred circles, round and round, until...just the perfect moment arrives. You will feel that moment when the Call weakens the resistance in your legs and you are ready to sink deeper into your quest. The sacred quest of becoming one with the soft abundance of the Empress' world.

Can you feel yourself sinking down into a large, fluffy pillow, covered with soft, sensuous velvet? Can you feel that pillow as it surrenders to your body, shaping itself to fit the very contours of who you are? Can you feel it as it cushions and supports you, oh, so gently. This is the Empress' pillow, filled with the softest down and always billowy and fluffed. This is living; a life-long quest for the perfect pillow. Every cushion deserves a try. Every dog deserves to quest. You didn't think dogs came out of the woods for a few bones and a little extra warmth did you? We dogs, we have higher callings than mere survival. We are deeply connected to archetypal missions and mystical truths.

For example, please take a moment to notice how many birds and other things with feathers there are on the Crowley-Harris Empress card. Lots of birds, all sorts of birds. Those birds are there as symbols of themselves. It is my contention that

they have no other meaning. They have no need for another meaning. They represent themselves and all their soft, cushy feathers. Lots and lots of soft, cushy feathers. Ask any dog, we wouldn't lie to you about something as important as this; the mystical experience of down pillows. Trust me.

We dogs would like to spend all of our time with the Empress. She really is our kind of Archetype: nurturing, loving, soft and cuddly. She gives great body rubs and the food closet is always open. Except, of course, when it isn't. She is, after all, the archetypal Great Mother. Mothering can get tough sometimes. Sometimes things go haywire. Once you birth something it tends to lead its own life. Once life starts even the Empress doesn't know what's going to happen. Continually giving birth and keeping track of your offspring can be exhausting. Sometimes the Empress needs a rest. That's when Skipphooly curls up in the hollow of her back and helps to keep her warm through the lean, cold months. That's where the give and take of love comes in. Yes, we dogs love the Empress' abundance and we indulge ourselves in the richness of her luxury. We also help restore and sustain her. In order to frolic in her fullness we know we have to be part of her regeneration. We give what we have to give; our very lives. *There may be free pillows, but there aren't any free lunches.* Wow, a second canine *Truth of Life*.

By the way, before we move on, why is that one Empress wearing a nightgown? I mean, she's got a great pillow, but there is no way she's going to nap with that large, pokey thing on her head. Just a simple question from a simple dog. I've asked Skipphooly, but she just shrugs her shoulders and says, "Archetypes, who's to know." My personal opinion is that Skipphooly herself gets down right soft when she spends too much time with the Empress. All she really cares about is getting her share of the pillow.

The pillow quest is Skipphooly's passion. What is yours?