

Welcome to *Between the Worlds*  
Myth, Magic and Community  
January 2006

## Psyche and Eros: Reunion with the Divine *by Cynthia Jones*

The Diana's Grove Mystery School community offers you this monthly magazine. Mystery School tells a myth for a year. It invites those in Mystery School to live that story as if it were their own. *Between the Worlds* brings the story into our times; the theme for each issue comes from the story. From last year's Camelot and Avalon to this year's Greek myth, this magazine is centered on the dynamic relationship between story and personal work.

This year offers you an initiate's journey. Breath, soul, initiation - the message that this story tells over and over is that *your dream needs you*. To that, I want to add, *your community needs you*. *Your excellence needs you*. Your dream and your community need your *excellence*. This year is an initiation into that excellence.

I believe that each of us brings an array of originality into the groups and communities that we enter. Your being - body and soul, mind and spirit - is filled with talent, original perspective and insight, vision, skill, enthusiasm, resistance, and a multitude of other treasures. In the story that awaits you, you will be asked to walk the initiate's path, accept the initiate's challenge and apply Psyche's tale to your own life. At the end of the year, you can honor your work by creating an initiation for yourself, an initiation into a union/reunion with your....

Soul-self, higher-self; there is a part of you that is one with the timeless world. That aspect of you can step into Psyche's world, a place where the gods and goddesses walk the land and Zeus sends thunderbolts to earth to herald the coming of his regenerative rains. Demeter rises as the golden grain and her daughter, Persephone, disappears each autumn. In that world, Demeter's loss shortens the days. Her grief brings the chill down from the north. The moods of the deities replace the weather channel. Together, we will enter Psyche's time and live in a place where magic can be captured by those who dare to allow their open hands to be filled with promise and mystery. Just take a breath....

If you are in Mystery School, this year's monthly packets will offer you work that you can do alone or with a group - here or at home. They will ask you to breathe. They will ask you to meet the elements in *their* place of power. They will ask you see what blind faith *and* doubt can bring into your life.

Mystery School begins on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Registration ends January 31<sup>st</sup>. To learn more about Mystery School, click on *The 2006 Mystery School Registration Packet* link on our web site at <http://www.dianasgrove.com>. That packet will tell you all about Mystery School, our email discussion lists, the monthly Mystery School intensives, our open gatherings, and more.

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**Cynthia Jones** will be weaving the Psyche story into philosophy, philosophy into discussion, discussion into challenge and challenge back into the story throughout this 2006 Mystery year. Cynthia founded Diana's Grove with Patricia Storm in 1994.

## Initiation: Setting in Motion *by Canyon*

Gathered in solemn silence in the open-to-the-woods chapel, the other 10-, 11- and 12-year-old girls and I registered the head counselor's serious tone. "Blindfolds on," she said, and other counselors covered our eyes. My little cotton bandana smelled sweetly of detergent and fabric softener, laced with a chemical tang: the permanent marking pen that labeled all my belongings. In my memory, I can also smell the scent of my own excitement. Not fear, no; more the flavor of anticipation edged with mystery.

"Let's go." The lead counselor's whisper commanded, almost inaudible under cicada drone, creaking crickets and frogs. Night's symphony from the woodland ridge penetrated the camp's chapel, high on a ridge above the small lake. Strung together, hand-to-hand and bandana-blind, we young campers stumbled off the chapel's plank floor and onto the rocky trail that led on up the ridge. Safely guided by our trusted counselors, we climbed to the secret, sacred grove called Ragger Point.

I have little experience of formal initiation in my life. My induction into the Ragger Society at the YMCA's Camp Gravois – once near Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks – was my first. The ceremony impressed me: that blindfolded walk to the secret location; the solemn challenge, "Will you make the commitment of the Blue Rag?" whispered in my ear; the candle-lit camp emblem laid out in tree trunks and boulders and revealed when I was allowed to remove my blindfold. The honor-system of the society allowed me to decide each year whether I had kept the oath made the year before and could move on to the next color of Rag – from blue to silver, silver to brown...all the way to white. The three-corner scarf that was each year's Rag was knotted around my neck by a counselor I loved and revered, in a special knot that was never to be undone; a symbol of my commitment and my connection to others who made that same pledge. All these traditions – the ceremony, self-accountability, and symbolism – turned a simple but powerful camp program into a ritual of initiation...initiation of a new pattern in my soul.

My induction into the Ragger Society at the age of 12 was my first formal invitation to become a better person – a spiritually "larger" person. Each year's commitment to a new Rag was a dedication to a path; a commitment to live new values that pulled me beyond my own small needs and comforts, into a larger vision. Each year I walked the path of the dedicant, strove to embody those new values, strove to live that larger vision. Each year I fell short, and still strove. Nobody monitored my success; I was on my own, accountable only to myself and the divine as I understood it. Each new Rag was a symbol of my personal spiritual growth, and of a belief in continuing that growth.

My nearest-to-hand dictionary, Dictionary.com, says that initiation is *a formal entry into an organization* and is *the act of starting something for the first time, introducing something new*. My Ragger initiation represented these definitions well. It was formal and marked my entry into a society of others who had gone before me...for decades, as the Ragger Society began

in 1914. Some of those other initiates still stood by me; counselors wearing their Rags of many colors. The oath I took and the Blue Rag tied around my neck that first year did start something, did introduce something new: a process of year-by-year dedication to growth and the marking of my progress in the presence of my peers.

Dictionary.com also says that an initiation is *an act that sets in motion some course of events*. Certainly, this youthful induction set in motion continued annual attendance at Camp Gravois. But it also set in motion another course of events: a longer-term, apparently permanent pattern of seeking to become more than I am. My Blue Rag introduced me to the idea of continually becoming and becoming...expanding my self, with continual accountability to a divinity that has high expectations for me.

Many years later, from the sophistication of university life and that almost-adult superiority so common among those newly out of the teen years, I returned to Camp Gravois, traveling with my grandfather to pick up my youngest sister from her latest summer session. Remembering the power of those rituals on the ridge, I hiked up to the chapel and beyond, to Ragger Point. As I emerged from the trees into the little grove that had once so impressed me, I found the space small and simplistic, childish really. Why had I been so awed by this little outdoor altar comprised of rocks and felled saplings? It was so unimposing; nothing like the grand image in my memory. Disappointed, I returned to the chapel and gazed out over the lovely lake and little cabins, lying like beads strung in a rustic necklace, just a short distance from the lakeshore.

I wish now that, in that moment, I had achieved the last of my online dictionary's definitions of initiation: *wisdom as evidenced by the possession of knowledge*. But I did not. In fact, I wonder now whether Dictionary.com's little cyber-font of words and their meanings has it quite right. Initiation's wisdom seems to be less about the possession of knowledge and more about being possessed...by something beyond all knowledge; by mystery. Initiation, as wisdom, implies to me that my yearning for the divine has been touched – oh, briefly! – by the divine's yearning for me.

I was not visited by wisdom – either as knowledge or mystery – on that steamy July day in the chapel. Twenty years old and filled with cynicism, I dismissed my pre-teen self as a fool; a gullible dupe, dewy-eyed with optimism and hope; a child too in need of something grander than her real life to see the paltry, shabby truth of a childish camp game. I trudged back to the parking lot and grandfather's car, and rode home in sullen silence.

In this moment, I yearn to step back into the past and speak to that cynical young woman. I want to tell her that she will, in the decades ahead, walk many more paths of dedication to new values, to becoming a larger self. I want her to know that she will come to believe in this dedication as the only way to connect with the divine that she has publicly forsaken but for which she still privately yearns. Almost desperately, I want her to know that she survives not only the painful early years but also the cynicism and the death wish that is addiction. I want to tell her that, still – at nearly 52 – she will be...*I am* making a yearly pledge to grow. I want to step out onto the campground path behind that younger self and whisper in her astonished ear: "Let's go. Blindfold on."

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Find out more about **Canyon** at the end of her regular column for this magazine, *Mystery's Light* on page 26.

# Ritual Artistry

*by River*

Hello and welcome to “Ritual Artistry!” This monthly column is devoted to the realm of leadership that we call “Ritual Arts” here at Diana’s Grove. My primary focus will be on ritual facilitation. Whether you are leading ritual in your local community, learning how to hone your presentation skills, or are just interested in the mechanics of how an ecstatic, earth-based ritual tradition works – I hope there will be something within that piques your interest and sparks some ideas. This column will also complement the Ritual Arts e-mail discussion list, which is an optional part of the Mystery School program.

First off, let me start by defining what I mean by “ecstatic, earth-based ritual tradition.” There is a common misconception that being in a state of ecstasy means being separate from my body. Quite the contrary! For me, an ecstatic state is when I am completely present in my body. My senses are heightened. My awareness expands. My connection to life is enhanced. The actual goal of ecstatic ritual is to create an environment that engages the participants on several different levels – physical, emotional, and spiritual.

My favorite definition of ritual (and one I’m sure you’ll see me quote several times throughout the year) is from Cynthia Jones, one of the co-founders of Diana’s Grove: “Ritual is a multi-sensorial prayer that allows us to lay new patterns in our souls.” It’s the multi-sensorial part that makes a ritual ecstatic. Our rituals are often a mixture of song, movement, rhythm, and sacred play that serves to invoke a sense of mystery and connection to something larger than our selves. And to connect to something larger than me – be that community, divinity, or my expanded Self – I first must be completely connected to me. That’s the point of ecstatic ritual.

In addition to being ecstatic, the Grove practices an earth-based ritual tradition. By earth-based, I mean life-based. Although there are many different flavors and shades of earth-based traditions, the one thing that they have in common is that they honor the elements that make up all life. In a Grove ritual, our elemental invocations acknowledge that Air, Fire, Water, and Earth are already present. In other words, I’m already breathing so Air doesn’t need to be summoned, but I strive to strengthen my relationship to Air in my invocation. Our ritual practice invites participants to open to the sacred, rather than calling upon it to manifest. I like to think of ritual as a way to deepen my connection with my community – and I consider the elements as part of my community, as much as the person standing next to me in the circle.

The elements themselves are constantly changing, adapting and shifting form as they come into contact with one another. Those changes create a vital environment that is full of life energy. One of my favorite aspects of Grove-style ritual is that it is constantly changing, adapting and shifting form as it comes into contact with new people and ideas. Every year we change the ritual format to accommodate the story of the year, as well as the community interactions that will build and create the Mystery School community for that year.

We believe that changing the ritual format each year prevents us from becoming too rigid in our structure. Ecstatic ritual in an earth-based tradition is a living, breathing thing that thrives on variety. A garden has more opportunity to flourish with several different species of plants

rather than a single, homogenous crop. Ritual responds in much the same way. Ritual that repeats itself over and over runs the risk of becoming stale and lifeless. There is a danger of ritual becoming dogmatic when the facilitators give no room for creativity or variation.

Which brings me to the next reason why we change our ritual format: our strong community value for inclusion. When we change the ritual format each year, everyone coming to the Grove is placed on equal footing, whether this is your first or fiftieth visit. In priestessing terms, we call this creating a “field of relatedness,” which, in a nutshell, means that we strive to get everyone on the same page with the least amount of frustration or “culture shock.” There are a number of ways we do this, including teaching the chant before dinner so you know it thoroughly and can sing it comfortably at the evening ritual, and sharing the intention of the ritual, as well as what else to expect. In other words, we attempt to give everyone plenty of context so that you can participate fully.

Although it may not look much different from the style that you’re used to, our goal this year will be to experience the elements in a much more visceral way than we have in years past. Instead of Air metaphorically representing thought, communication, or vision, we’re going to quite literally invoke it as Breath. Breathing, taking air into your lungs, feeding every cell in your body...can you feel the difference? We’ll honor Fire as Light. I live in the upper Midwest, so at this time of year, I yearn for the heat of the sun on my skin, and the light that calls the sap forth from the roots to give birth to the springtime. That’s the kind of Fire we’ll dance with this year. Psyche’s name means “Soul,” and so that’s how we’ll call Water this year. The depths of the oceans, the rocking waves of the sea, the gentle rain falling and bringing life to a dusty plain...the Soul of life itself. Water. And we will build a relationship with the Earth as Being: Being in the world and participating in life through personal practice, daily work, and conscious action. Being can also include our relationship to the Earth through food, sustenance, and the wealth the soil brings. Being. Existing. And in the Center, paradox – the place where all of these Elements meet and dissolve in a cycle of life and death.

When we invoke the elements, we’ll also be working with those aspects of Mystery the Greeks called Apollo, Demeter, Metis, Zeus, and Artemis. We’ll ask to warm ourselves at Hestia’s hearth-fire, or cool our feet in Poseidon’s rolling waves. We’ll dance in the spring with Persephone and stand at the crossroads with Hecate when the nights grow cold once again. We will enter the ancient stories with our whole bodies, and feel the visceral sensation of the wind in our hair or our hands reaching into the soil – and we will call it magic.

Another one of my favorite quotes from Cynthia is that “magic is strong enough to uphold itself regardless of the form that we mortals impose upon it.” By shifting our ritual form from year to year, we allow ourselves to rekindle the vitality of our earth-based tradition.

Whether we see each other in person across the circle at the Grove, or you play with these concepts in your home community, I am curious about your experiences! May this be a year full of magic and energy for you, and may you deepen your relationship with life itself.

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**River** is a Grove staff member who would like nothing more than to talk about ecstatic Ritual Arts for hours on end. She lives in Chicago, IL with her cat, roommate, and half a dining room full of drums. For information on her teaching and travel schedule visit [www.rivermagic.org](http://www.rivermagic.org).

# Astrology for the Journey: Initiation

*by Teri Parsley Starnes*

The world around us, all of it – even unseen parts of it, wants to move us into our unique destinies by engaging our imaginations. Can you feel that? Have you ever thought a spider web encrusted with the jewels of a dew-filled morning was put there just for you? Have you ever had the experience of hearing a song that exactly captured the melody living in your heart? Have you ever taken a chance, begun a journey, said yes to an opportunity that you knew would change you forever? I know I have. I've had the experience that the world around me wants me to see myself in the bigger picture, asks me to re-vision myself as an essential character in the story of my life, challenges me to wake up to my own destiny. This calling by the world is a calling to initiation.

Astrology is just one tool that the world uses, like that spider web or that song, to engage imagination. Astrology is part of the magical world and the ordinary world that seem to take interest in me, want to mirror back to me my potential and my place in this complex and fascinating pattern of life. Astrology is a tool of the expanded self. Astrology is a tool of soul. I invite you to explore with me the use of astrology as a tool in your journey, as we expand our selves into deep soul.

In this monthly column I will write about astrology as a tool for the soul. I will share my use of astrology as personal practice. For me, personal practice is a commitment to expanding my self. I believe the world wants to collaborate with this practice. The stars are my allies. They are the story and the storytellers of my journey to soul. They are companions and guides. They are whispers of agreements I may have made before I was born. They are threads of the cloth I am weaving with my life. They are part of the world that wants me to expand.

This year, I'd like to invite the stars – the planets and constellations of the zodiac – to be initiators on my journey to soul. I pause after that sentence. Do I really know what I am requesting? Is this the type of foolishness that gets spoken at the beginning of an adventure? Did Psyche know what she was agreeing to when she took up the challenge from her initiator, Aphrodite, goddess and mother of her beloved? The initiations I've already experienced from the starry allies have sometimes been quite challenging!

Part of the power of initiation to transform us is the initiate's willingness to do the work, to take the call to expand the self seriously. I have a friend who says about the kind of magic and ritual he does, "This is not a metaphor." When I invite the stars to be my initiators on my journey to soul, I also know that this is not a metaphor for me either. In fact, what I am doing is inviting the world to care about the expansion of my self, and I am inviting myself to care about the world. To care is to open and to open is to change. Can I care about my self and the world, both, enough to become that initiate? Do you wonder that yourself?

I am inspired by Psyche because she cared enough to visit her beloved's mother, Aphrodite, even though it did not look like Aphrodite had Psyche's best interests in mind. Psyche must have been afraid when she accepted Aphrodite as her initiator. I am looking forward to

reading in the Mystery School story this year what Aphrodite has to say to Psyche and to me. And so, as an initiate, I go back to that invitation to ask that the planets and stars be included in those who will initiate me this year. If you are joining us in Mystery School, I invite you to become an initiate of the stars as well. And if you are not joining us as a Mystery this year, I still invite you to read our magazine each month and consider this: who is your initiator and what is the role of your expanded self? Do the stars call you to it?

Aphrodite's story is wound up with the story of Venus, the planet. What kind of initiator does Venus make? Venus invites and makes room for everything that gives us pleasure. Venus shows us how we do the dance of love. To be initiated by the planet Venus is to find out how important pleasure and love are. Without the energy to love, the self lacks the will to expand. In our birth charts, the sign that Venus is in will show us why we dare to take the journey at all. What pulls us from the heart? That energy is the beloved. For example, I have my Venus in Pisces; I am pulled from the heart by mysticism, one Pisces quality. As an initiator, this Pisces Venus has led me to ecstasy and to illusion. I grow from both these experiences. Do you recognize the energy of the sign your Venus is in as an initiator? Where has it led you?

Venus works brilliantly at getting us started on our journeys. But the planet Venus can also point out deeper areas that keep us from our soul – the places we keep the self small, enshrouded in feelings of needing to be accepted by others, and poor self-esteem. The process of initiation – moving from the small self to the expanded self, is a process of growing out of the patterns that do not serve my soul into ones that do. One of the signs that Venus rules is Libra. Those Libra scales are a good reminder to keep my desire to be loved in balance with self-love. Again, I return to the need to care deeply about my self as well as the world in order to become the initiate.

The world is full of wonder. One of the things I appreciate about Diana's Grove Mystery School is the rare opportunity to be in community with other seekers who also recognize that wonder. Story, myth, the stars, and the inspiration of others in this community all become my initiators. I do not know where my journey will lead me. Even with the aid of the stars, that future is not entirely revealed, but I do know I will not be alone. And that just may be the most important ingredient to finding my soul. Venus invites. Do you hear that invitation?

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If you want to learn about the initiators in your own chart, you can order a copy of your chart along with an interpretation from Diana's Grove. Visit: [http://www.dianasgrove.com/store/astrology\\_charts.html](http://www.dianasgrove.com/store/astrology_charts.html) for more information. To explore Venus as an initiator in your chart, Mysteries enrolled in Diana's Grove Mystery School will be able to visit the Interact site and read more about your Venus in the astrology folder, *Astrology for the Journey*.

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**Teri Parsley Starnes** is a consulting astrologer living in Minneapolis. She is thrilled to be starting her 7th year as a Mystery. She is available for readings about your soul's journey and loves to answer your astrology questions. Contact Teri at [tpstar@mninter.net](mailto:tpstar@mninter.net). To find out more about her practice go to her website at [www.starsdanceastrology.com](http://www.starsdanceastrology.com).

# Will you Dance? Death and the Initiate

*by sisalfish*

“Persephone returns to the living. She gathers up the gifts of peace and paradox, so the living may remember, if only briefly, the richly textured beauty of the dark....”

- from *Persephone Remembers* by Irene A. Faivre

“If death is the known, life must be the mystery.”

- Cynthia Jones

Greetings to new Mysteries and returning Mysteries. And to those welcome readers who are not participating in this year’s Diana’s Grove Mystery School, but have found our monthly magazine – I greet the mystery within you as well.

The subject of this monthly article will be death and transformation. Death is a hard subject, sometimes, to come at folks with, though I think those who appreciate the earth and her cycles, and mystery, find it less worrisome than most. I’m seeking a way to enter into this subject, and seeking to offer ways (and reasons) you might enter into it too, with the heart of an initiate.

Are you drawn to those words – *mystery, initiate*? In ancient times, many who were drawn to enter the mystery were not allowed to enter the mystery schools. Often, those schools rejected initiates they found unworthy. But you and I don’t have to campaign or pass any kind of test to be accepted as an initiate into the mystery of death. It is the single most universal experience. By virtue of being born, you are an initiate to its mystery – though I believe its gifts are better accessed by those who choose to *claim* themselves as initiates.

And nothing, no one, stands between you and that dedication, and the rewards it brings. This ultimate mystery is a study and a path open to all, which makes it even more ironic, I think, that so few choose to take advantage of its accessibility.

And it is perfectly balanced, perfectly symmetrical. All who are born will die.

About a year ago, when I first stuck my toe in these waters, I was amazed at how willing Death was to take me as an initiate. I had been a Mystery in Diana’s Grove Mystery School for almost six years before it came to me that the ultimate mystery I was drawn to explore – and the one I’d been sidling up to for six years – was death. At that point, all I said was: “What do you have to show me?” The answer I got was a hand held out, inviting me to dance. Since then, I imagine I’ve been shown some of the things learned by other initiates who opened themselves to this knowledge.

Having asked to be shown the mystery, and having death respond so openly to that request, I began studying Thanatology, and am currently earning certification as a Thanatologist – one who works with loss, death and grief. It’s my hope to ease times of death and bereavement for those in my communities and, if they choose, to support them if they seek to grow through their experience.

But beyond credentials, what I bring to the study of death – its uses, its gifts - is this: I love life. I am a passionate priestess of what sprouts and grows, on the earth and in people as well. I once heard Cynthia Jones, one of the founders of Diana's Grove, say she had no interest in leaving the wheel of rebirth – that it was this earth she wished to return to, time and again. I'd suggest those of us with a passion for life can make our experience on this earth even richer by opening ourselves to the mysteries of death, and by bringing our joy to the subject.

So the title of this monthly column in *Between the Worlds* magazine will be "Will you Dance?" I believe that death's wisdom, the transformation she brings the living, hinges on *choice*, in choosing to open ourselves to her energy and dance with her, rather than turn a blind eye to her. Each month, this article will explore one paradox or aspect of death, as a doorway to the mystery.

Why would you want to become an initiate to this experience? Here's what some of the Mysteries in Diana's Grove Mystery School have to say:

The thing is, death comes whether we welcome it or not. We can live as if there is no death, but it isn't a very real existence. And if we live within the knowledge and friendship of shadow and death, I believe we have a richer quality of life.

- Artemis

Death touched me in a very personal way about twelve years ago. My heart was blown open, never to be closed off again. My connections with friends and family strengthened. I became willing to risk loss, even the loss of physical security, because I knew I could live through this experience. I knew that I would grow and transform.

- Synnove

For me, being present at a birth or death is an opportunity to experience profound intimacy. There remains a strong stigma for someone living with and/or dying with AIDS. When I can ease that transition, when I can help make space for the exquisite intimacy that is possible, when I can lend support for the loved ones of the dying, that exchange, that service is sacred work, and an even more sacred gift I receive.

- Elizabeth Wilson

Death and shadow tend to be things we forget about. The importance of them both to me is that without these overlooked pieces of reality, I would not be able to appreciate light and life. Death and shadow make the world whole. Death and shadow ask me to be wholly and vitally present.

- Teri Parsley Starnes

I'm beginning to see the splitting of Life and Death as another story of the Fall. As Death says, "Your fear of me split the world in two." Once she was simply and blissfully a part of the Whole, but we identified that part as fearful, split it away and made it something \*other\*. So doing this work feels like bridging a vast, painful chasm. It is reconciliation and reunion. Synthesis. Equanimity. Integration. Peace. Those are the gifts of this work.

- Laurie Dietrich

So our Mystery year begins, and our year with Psyche begins, and we begin at the end. We begin with Psyche's death, and see the story, for the rest of the year, through that opening lens. Because we begin with her death, her story becomes more than one of love lost and regained, or of challenge and success. It becomes, instead, a story of living a life worth living, of a doorway to passion that opens because the end is known and acknowledged.

We step into the story, and begin with Psyche's death, and, at the least, doing so lets us see the story in terms of its ending. At best, it lets each of us enter into the mystery as well. So here we stand, at the threshold. The story is beginning, and the doors to passion, and to depth - to paradox and complexity - to freedom, and to mystery – those doors are opening. Initiate, will you step through?

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**sisalfish** is a writer and editor living in San Antonio. This is her sixth year as a Mystery in the Diana's Grove Mystery School, where she is currently a member of the 2006 Rites Team. She works as an editor and writing coach for poets, fiction writers, novelists and writers working with spiritual subjects, and is currently working toward certification in Thanatology, the study of death, grief and bereavement. You can contact her at [sisalfish@satx.rr.com](mailto:sisalfish@satx.rr.com).

## Stewarding the Land: The Winged Ones

*by Patricia Storm*

Winter brings stark hillsides and deeper views to the land of Diana's Grove. In November the turkey vultures left for warmer climates; in December the eagles returned. I find it curious that turkey vultures and eagles seem to share this space but not at the same time. It's as if that big open sky is only big enough for one or the other of the great soaring birds.

We sat recently in the comfort of the main house overlooking the hillside and saw two eagles, elegantly soaring close to the treetops at the bottom of our hill near Sinking Creek. I feel incredibly blessed to be able to see eagles from my dining room window. Loggers Lake is nearby and is reported to host a couple of eagles each year. Stewarding this land helps maintain the forests that support these and many other beautiful birds.

When Cynthia and I first moved here we didn't see many birds. We put out a bird feeder and gradually they came. Now our dozen bird feeders host goldfinch, nuthatches, black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice, flycatchers, warblers, wrens, and others. Our woodpecker population includes downy, hairy, red-bellied and the magnificent pileated woodpeckers. At one time or another, all of these have been at our suet feeders. Early on, we would only hear the pileated woodpeckers, rat-a-tat-ing some distance away, but rarely saw them. When our neighbor did some logging on his property, their territory diminished. They began coming closer.

Although pileated woodpeckers are at some risk because of the logging of this area, we see them fairly often. If you walk this land and look for dead trees, you can find their nests in large oval holes. These magnificent birds are the largest woodpeckers remaining here. The larger ivory-billed woodpecker was believed to be extinct but has been reported in Arkansas. For more details check out the NPR link here:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5067655>

Perhaps these birds will thrive and move back into Missouri in the future.

Sinking Creek is home to other interesting birds. We have a blue heron that moves up and down the creek, and can often be seen at the low-water bridge you cross when driving to the Grove. He loves to fish there for the small fish and crawfish that live in that area. Occasionally crawfish shells will be left on the bridge. I also often see a kingfisher on the telephone line that crosses Sinking Creek. That line must be a good spot for watching for meals. Sinking Creek is crystal clear most of the time, so fish are easy to spot even though they are not very large. They do make nice meals for a kingfisher, I suppose.

We often see red-tailed hawks and crows soaring overhead. I haven't seen many owls, but the dogs found one once. They raised such a ruckus I went to explore and found a large, wounded barred owl. What intelligent eyes those birds have. We safely rescued it and took it to a special bird "hospital" near St. Louis. They promised to bring it back and release it in this area when it healed. We like to think they did.

One of our small dogs came in one day gently carrying a baby bobwhite in her mouth. We found two more just outside the house. I built them a pen to keep them safe from the dogs and put out a light to keep them warm at night. We raised them until they were big enough to release. We turned them loose near the old root cellar that was part of the original homestead, and watched them disappear into the tall grass immediately.

I can't forget to mention the turkeys – wild and free, and sometimes loud. They don't come as close as they used to. Wisely they avoid the dogs. But we still see them in flocks, roaming the hills around Diana's Grove.

If you are interested in birding, this is a great place to spend some time. You can sit on the deck and let the birds come to you, or hike the land and see or hear them all around you. In the winter when the land is barren of leaves, you can find nests of all sizes in the woods. The hummingbird nest we found was tiny. In the summer, we often work around the nests that the flycatchers build on the porches, outside lights and in the barn. Any time of year you can see birds. Some winter here, some summer here, and some pass through. Maybe you can join them sometime - wintering, summering or passing through.

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**Patricia Storm**, one of the founders of Diana's Grove, is instrumental in the developing Stewardship Path Program. For more information see the Diana's Grove web site or contact her at [patricia@dianasgrove.com](mailto:patricia@dianasgrove.com).

## The Stewardship Path

*by Sarah Rittenhouse*

"Together we steward this land, resources, and community in responsible, pleasing and progressive ways. We seek long and short term care for human and natural resources."

- Mission Statement, Environmental Stewardship Initiative

Many interesting ideas and thoughts come up from weekends or weeks at Diana's Grove, but none have exploded with such force as a short discussion during a tarot draw during this last year's Lunacy week. Patricia gathered the group of women together, and we all drew a card. I believe the purpose of the morning's draw was to divine the future of the community at

Diana's Grove. Magic was definitely in the air as ideas jumped around the room, and passionate voices joined together.

After many side conversations among members about the idea of developing a more sustainable community, a meeting was finally agreed upon to coalesce all the ideas into a manageable whole. During the month of November, a small group of Diana's Grove participants met for a weekend of brainstorming and planning to discuss the ideas of land and community stewardship, and what they mean for us. The group came to the meeting with many varied ideas, backgrounds and specialties...but all came with a motivation and vigor to enact change. After 48 hours of lists and excited conversation, the environmental stewardship initiative was born.

As Diana's Grove expands and grows, a need has slowly surfaced for an ethical stewardship plan for the land and staff that make up our community. As this community develops and more members are needed, so does our need for more space and housing. There is also the need to ethically power those living/working spaces, recycle wastes that go along with hosting more community, and to grow or obtain food for the staff. As we consider these needs, the needs of the land must be in balance with the needs of the community living on it, or it ceases to be sustainable.

This new initiatives purpose is to "...engage more intentionally in environmentally beneficial practices at Diana's Grove and raise environmental awareness through conservation, 'green' building construction, the use of bio-diesel for fuel, and other such actions."

The idea of stewardship and how it relates to our community is a varied one. Some of us wonder how we can fit in with this initiative, and how we can support this need within the community with the skills that we have to contribute. And the Grove needs Mystery School participants to blend the Diana's Grove spiritual principals with environmental awareness and practice, by participating in the Stewardship Path (SP). This path gives us a chance to fill the needs of building a more sustainable community and stewarding the land, while still learning and participating as Mysteries.

There are four main areas that the stewardship path will focus on: the natural world, the cultivated world, land management and natural building. The natural world portion will focus on being aware of nature, natural history and wild crafting. The cultivated world will provide experience with organic farming, gardening and permaculture. Land management will involve using a wide variety of tools and techniques to maintain the living landscape at Diana's Grove. Natural building will involve using a variety of building materials (i.e., cob, cord wood, straw bale, pole, etc.) in the construction of a variety of structures to fill the growing space needs in our community.

### **The Idea**

Many of the people who attend Diana's Grove for the Mystery School weekends also have interests concerning the conservation and stewardship of the earth and the land that we are such a large part of. There is a need here in our spiritual community for a path or a focus during the weekends, for people with such a desire to give back. Our aim is to provide a space to learn, participate and contribute to the greater community that is our land here at the Grove.

As with other portions of Mystery School, there is a hierarchy of commitment. There are staff members who have volunteered to lead an intensive internship where students would come to reside at the Grove to work and learn about the stewardship of the land. There will be Mystery School participants who make a time commitment to attend a certain number of weekends and contribute their time and energy to learning about and tending the land. And, there could be those people who could not attend the weekends, but who could contribute their time through other means. All who have an interest are welcome in any capacity to contribute their positive energy, time, expertise, muscle, sweat, tears or supplies to this effort.

### **The Outcome**

This idea is still in the birthing stages of development, but one outcome is clear. Diana's Grove must become a more sustainable community, both through its resources (land and the people living from it) and spiritually. The stewardship path aims at bolstering both of these needs by combining the spiritual with the maintenance and stewardship of the land in a path for priestess\* development. Those participating in this unique path with the Grove will help give back to community through donating their energy and expertise, while learning and growing through work and mindful purpose. Both the land and the people on it will grow, and develop and sustain the natural goodness that we strive to protect and steward.

### **The Implementation**

So how do we begin on this journey together? Does this path call to you?

Some of the details concerning the separation or interaction of the stewardship path and other Diana's Grove leadership development paths are unclear at this point. The staff of the Grove is working hard to hammer out the last minute details, and will keep everyone up to date on the final outcome.

To participate in the stewardship path will be a commitment, much like IPP. If this path calls to you, you will need to contact a staff member to figure out what the current needs of the project are, what your time allows, and any additional constraints. The stewardship path staff will work with the community to develop a plan to involve everyone interested in the effort so that all contributions and talents are provided space to grow and develop.

*\* At Diana's Grove, priestess is a word that is not gender-specific. For more information, see "What Does Priestess Mean at the Grove" in the booklet *Myth, Magic and Community*, available through a link on the home page of our web site, [www.dianasgrove.com](http://www.dianasgrove.com).*

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**Sarah Rittenhouse** is a Mystery who lives in Champaign, Illinois. She was part of the original brainstorming/goal-setting weekend for the new Stewardship Path that was held in November 2005.

# The Shadow of Transformation: Psyche's Shadow, and Yours

by *sisalfish*

Psyche teaches us that the soul is developed through challenge and human love. She represents the possibility that humans may become divine.  
– Michael Babcock

Greetings, and welcome to *The Shadow of Transformation*. I am sisalfish, a sixth-year Mystery in Diana's Grove Mystery School. This will be my third year to write for this magazine on the gifts and the challenges of the shadow. As in previous years, this year's *Shadow* articles will reflect on the new and full moon work suggested by the Diana's Grove *Moon Shadows*, a Mystery School book that has already been mailed to all registered Mysteries. For those of you who are Mysteries this year, the Grove's *Oracle* discussion list offers additional opportunities to reflect on the shadow path through moon work, astrology and tarot.

But you needn't be a Mystery in this year's Mystery School to access the shadows. Your dreams, the moon and your own intuition provide everything you need to enter into this deep and rewarding work. So whether you're a Grove Mystery this year, or you walk another path, I hope you'll continue to follow these and other articles in this monthly magazine as the year unfolds.

This year, Diana's Grove Mystery School will work with the story of Psyche – a mortal princess who falls in love with a god. So, in addition to exploring the month's new and full moon energies, each *Shadow* article will focus on an aspect of Psyche's journey toward transformation – and, alongside hers, our journeys toward our own transformations.

How can shadow work (or shadow play) enrich your journey toward transformation this year? In many ways, I believe. I would even dare to say *joyously*.

I specify *joy* because I avoided shadow work for years, based on what others told me about it, or seemed to struggle with in doing it. At retreats or camps, I'd watch when facilitators would state, their voices laden with dark warning: "We'll be doing shadow work." Then, it seemed to me, participants gasped a bit, and quailed, and grew a little ashen.

My own experience of Grove shadow work is not that it is dark, but, rather, complex – as anything that brings richness and greater options is complex. It doesn't always involve struggle, or facing what I find hard to face. Rather, it involves reaching deeper, into the part of myself I can grow into, if I'm willing to do the work. Sometimes that does involve working with parts of myself that are difficult to look at – kept in the shadow, and for good reason. Sometimes it involves faith that I am, perhaps, better, stronger than I have wanted to believe. That's shadow work because, once I acknowledge my strength and positive qualities, I then have to live up to them....

Shadow work lets me take what I know and am familiar and comfortable with, and then expand. I believe it is about growth. Otherness. *Transformation*. It opens the door to the

challenges that stand before me, once I've determined what I want, how I want to grow. The Shadow is like Aphrodite to my Psyche. It says, "Meet this challenge. And in doing so, earn the love, the divinity you long for." It provides a wider envelope, and the possibility of more freedom, more options. Options, freedom, complexity and transformation – I find a great deal of joy in these things. If you do, too, then I think you'll probably love the shadows.

I'm excited about the shadow work we'll do this year, because it seems to me Psyche was born to deal with, and grow through, shadow. She is light, and breath, and soul – at least on the surface. A princess, Psyche lived in a state of grace, and was so beautiful and healing that her very presence was a blessing to her people. She brought them much joy, good fortune, even miracles.

And by virtue of her light, Psyche's gifts invoked their Shadows. So revered, so honored was Psyche that no suitor – indeed, no friend – claimed her. It was as though her beauty and her gifts formed an impenetrable glass wall around her, so all could admire her, but none could touch her. Would you trade your life for hers – to be so beautiful, such a walking blessing, that all around you benefited, but you yourself were desperately, achingly lonely? Psyche was given no choice in the matter. She was born to such a fate.

And yet, as hard as Psyche found it to confront her shadow – her loneliness, her mortality – that shadow delivered her to her destiny. Aphrodite, noticing Psyche (as who would not?) spoke to Apollo. At Aphrodite's urging, Apollo's oracle declared Psyche's suitor would be a monster who would devour her. And so he did, in a way. Psyche was left alone on a mountainside to await her fate, and so lonely was she that she went to that fate gladly. Psyche's groom did indeed come for her, and was no monster, but the god Eros. And then – well, the rest of the story, and its shadows, will unfold, as the year unfolds.

But for now, consider your own story. Consider the light you bear and bring, those things that make you a blessing to yourself and those you meet: your intelligence, your kindness, your loyalty, your passion. Then, I invite you to consider the shadows such a light engenders. The two go hand in hand, light and shadow, inseparable. And I'd suggest that it isn't your light that is intriguing. Your light, those things that make you a blessing to yourself and others – those characteristics are known. They are in place. They are a given.

But before you stands a shadow, and past that shadow waits the light you *don't* know yet – the promise of what you can become. You may have some inkling of its shape, seen through the smoky vapors of shadow; or the shadow may be so dark and dense that you have no idea what promises, what transformation await you. But either way, you must pass the shadow to reach those gifts. It isn't that the shadow blocks your way. The shadows *are* the way, the path that leads to Psyche's transformation – and your own.

Will you step into your own story, and open yourself to the shadows, to transformation? Will you take that first step, with the new moons, the full moons, Psyche's story and your own dreams as your companions on this journey?

Then let's begin....

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Find out more about **sisalfish** at the end of her other regular column for this magazine, *Will You Dance? Death and the Initiate*, on page 8.

# Interview with a Mystery: Cynthia Jones and Patricia Storm

*by River*

Welcome to the 2006 edition of “Interview with a Mystery!” This column is designed to introduce you to just a few of the myriad of amazing members of our far-flung community. While my goal this year is to get to know some of the folks that either aren’t able to or rarely come to an on-site event, this month I’m sticking a little closer to home by interviewing the two founders of Diana’s Grove: Cynthia Jones and Patricia Storm.

*How did you decide to start Diana’s Grove? Has it manifested in the way you originally intended?*

**Cynthia:** After renting places to hold the Reclaiming Intensive and have workshops, I wanted to have a place where we could have greater control, assure the quality of the food, and create a much more gracious landscape. At that time, there really was no dedicated land to hold earth-based events. There were lots of wonderful organizations such as Boy Scout Camps or State Parks, but no primary-focus land dedicated to earth-based principles.

I realized that I could no longer continue to teach earth-based spirituality in a concrete parking lot or a city environment. I wanted to go from evening classes to more intense, in-depth experiences that were more multi-sensorial. I wanted to offer not just information, but land to walk, a fire in an actual fire-pit – some communion with nature while teaching earth-based spirituality. That was my original vision.

I never thought we would be doing our own work with regularity, such as Mystery School and the events we have here. I thought we would primarily be a facility for other organizations to offer their work. When we began Mystery School, we invited 22 people with the hopes that 13 would respond – and that was our plan. Obviously that changed!

**Patricia:** Cynthia and I had a metaphysical center in Springfield, IL, about ten blocks from the capitol building, from 1987 to 1994. Diana’s Grove came out of a workshop we did with Starhawk in 1993. During the workshop, Starhawk led a trance in which I became deeply involved. Cynthia was busy writing about a community crisis we needed to deal with when we returned from the workshop. On the way home, we each shared the vision that had come from that work. We did a nine-month search and looked at hundreds of properties until we found the one that matched all of our criteria – beautiful land, trees, open spaces for camping and rituals, a creek, and a building to live in, work in, and grow from.

I don’t believe either of us could have imagined the way Diana’s Grove has grown. I certainly could not have imagined the variety of people who would come into our lives and be such a vital part of what happens here. I did dream of a full campground and quaint cabins to house our participants. Those things have manifested, and so much more.

Cynthia and I shared the original vision of creating a space for spiritual and physical retreat. Now we are in a growth phase that involves two different visions simultaneously. Cynthia’s dream of a dog rescue has been made manifest in the last couple years. My vision of doing

more sustainable and renewable building and energy work is beginning to manifest in a program we will introduce this year and be developing as the year progresses.

*What excites you about the upcoming Mystery School year and the story of Psyche and Eros?*

**Cynthia:** The return to Greek Mythology! I'm also excited about looking at the elements as Breath, Light, Soul / Inter-relationship and Being Alive. This is really an initiatory story with what I believe to be five truly essential challenges to anyone on a path of spiritual development. I think the challenges that Aphrodite offers to Psyche are truly, in essence, the challenges that we all face if we're going to grow into being our Expanded Self, our Soul-full Self. And to work those challenges in a community of intentional and dedicated people is an exciting opportunity for a year.

**Patricia:** What excites me most is revisiting a story that I know, and learning how it and I have grown. It always amazes me to see what new people bring to a Mystery School year and to see how returning Mysteries have grown and changed as well. I'm also excited about that new program I mentioned earlier. We're thinking of calling it the Stewardship Path. It came from a group of people who met with me in November to discuss how we can sustain the Grove and to address the energy issues that we currently face and expect to face in the future. Along those lines, I'm looking forward to building a tree house with Charles Williams at our Tree House Weekend in April, and to hosting in September Starhawk and the Earth Activist Training program, which includes permaculture.

*The Grove Community has inspired literally hundreds of people through Mystery School Intensives, Open Gatherings, and beyond in several home communities. How has it inspired you?*

**Cynthia:** It simply is my inspiration. Inspiration...inhalation...what fills me and what I release. It's my reason for being.

**Patricia:** Perhaps I could best describe it as inspiration from behind! It is a continuing challenge to keep up with (and occasionally be one step ahead of) those hundreds of people. I often feel like one of the dogs (Magic, who passed on just this year) who always ran ahead of the truck – and always had to keep checking back to see which way the truck was going so he could stay ahead. I'm constantly trying to run ahead of the work here – and constantly looking back to see which way we're all going together.

A tangible way Mystery School has inspired me is in developing my skills as a drummer, through work with Layne Redmond, then developing my skills as a drum teacher by working with many groups of new drummers. Those classes give me opportunities to practice the Diana's Grove Cornerstones of Community and my priestessing skills.

*Can you tell us about an early life experience that has shaped who you are today?*

**Patricia:** I have a couple of pictures of me at about five years old – one on a tractor, one in a truck, and one wearing what looks like a cape. On any given day at the Grove you are likely to see me on a tractor, in a truck, or wearing what looks like a cape. Could it have been a prophecy?

I had very supportive and loving parents who sometimes struggled financially but always managed to give me the important things in life. They believed in me even when they didn't agree with me. I consider myself very lucky to have had them and other supportive people in my life.

**Cynthia:** The early life experience that has done the most to shape who I am today is always that I felt “on the edge,” being very shy and finding new groups to be incredibly painful. I remember being highly aware, from my vantage point on the outside, of “insider” dynamics. That experience has made me extremely conscious of issues of inclusion and exclusion, such as what it's like to be new in an existing community. I see the necessity to develop a practice of inclusion by creating structures that reach out.

*What do you imagine the Grove community will look like in the next decade?*

**Cynthia:** Because the Grove community is going through a major shift right now with the addition of the Stewardship Path, I see it taking an organic turn, of people coming here who are more involved in the land, and equally involved in the philosophy. So I see the next ten years as years where we begin to deepen our relationship with both the land and our values.

**Patricia:** I think I can imagine it, and I'm sure I'm wrong! I see more people living here and sharing the physical and magical work. I see others teaching and drawing new people in to fill workshops and events. I see sustainable energy becoming more prevalent and renewable resources increasing. I see gardens, paths, solar panels and wireless networking. I see me retiring and sitting on the porch doing nothing but reading a good book, drinking coffee and petting a dog (or six). You did ask for an imaginal view, didn't you? Well, maybe I'll still drive the tractor a bit.

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Find out more about **River**, the author of this piece, at the end of her other regular column for this magazine, *Ritual Artistry* on page 4.

## Journey in Words

*by Shaun Moffitt*

One of Joseph Campbell's most popular phrases is “Follow your bliss.” I think this phrase is very appropriate for the 2006 Mystery School year because Psyche was certainly following her bliss. And what if we were to follow Psyche into this year of possible bliss? One way we can do this is through writing.

Writing is a journey. Writing is a way of following one's bliss – even for people who don't consider themselves writers or, perhaps, don't even like to write. We all know the effect that others' words can have on us, and so it's no surprise to me that my own words can affect me, too. The journey in words can be a journey inwards.

*Journey in Words* is the online creative writing class that I will be facilitating for Diana's Grove this year. I hope that you will join us in this adventure if you feel called to it. The class is available to all Mystery School registrants. We will be using the archetypal pattern of the hero's journey to create our own writing experiences this year. You may decide to write

poetry, short stories, essays, a novel, a play, or journal entries. The type of writing you do is up to you.

We will have various writing exercises, and you will be given the chance to have feedback on your writing – and that feedback will be structured according to what you feel will serve you best. When you sign up for the class, you will get additional information about feedback. You will also have the opportunity to have your work appear in *Between the Worlds*, this magazine of Diana's Grove. In the magazine, I will write this monthly column devoted to the work we are doing in the class, and your writing might appear there.

The hero's journey is the archetypal pattern for the process of personal growth, the process from innocence to experience that continually repeats itself. The main three stages are departure or separation, initiation, and return. Most stories follow this pattern, and most human lives do, also. Using this pattern as we write can bring both form and illumination to our words. It does not matter whether what you write is for an audience – the pattern calls forth a rhythm and the rhythm speaks to your soul.

Soul. Psyche. Psyche goes on a hero's journey. As she journeys, so will we, as we make our way through her story, our stories – and perhaps the story of a character you are imagining right now. Do you have the seed of a character? Of an idea? Of a plot? Is that seed ready to be planted and brought to fruition? If so, think about joining us in this journey. Think about walking the path with Psyche into the stars, below the earth, upon the road, into the heart of love and life and mystery.

One of the journeys I continue to take is the journey in words that began when I was a child. I remember going to the county library in the summer with my mom, who was friends with the librarian. There were four of us kids, and we were allowed to check out 10 books apiece. I can still see those piles of books on the back seat of the station wagon and then again on the coffee table at the end of the two weeks when we had to take them back.

From a love of reading came a love of writing. I began writing poetry not long after I learned to write. When I went away to college, I changed my major eight or ten times until I finally decided that what really interested me was writing, poetry in particular. And so I came away with a bachelor's degree in English, and not being able to immediately do anything with that, I jumped into graduate school and continued my journey into creative writing. After a change in graduate schools, I wound up with a master's degree in liberal studies.

Eventually, I went back to school to get teaching certification, and for the past twenty years, I have been a teacher of composition, literature, speech and creative writing. I have taught high school and college students. Last year, I facilitated the online poetry class for Diana's Grove Mystery School. I have co-authored two books, and my poetry has been published in various literary journals.

I will probably be referring to the work of Joseph Campbell a lot this year. I remember, in one of the Power of Myth videos, his discussion of the wheel of fortune as a symbol for the natural pattern of life. We ride that wheel into fortune and misfortune, beginnings and endings, over and over. However, if we happen to be the hub, the immovable center of the wheel, we are in the same place all the time, and we will never find our bliss.

Journeys are inescapably full of ups and downs, if we take them for what they are. If we try to rig the path we take too closely or narrowly, we will find ourselves like the hub of the wheel,

locked in stasis, perhaps outwardly strong and constant, but also not open to change and transformation.

I began my journey in words because I had something to say, something to express. I loved words, the sound of them in my head and the feel of them on my lips. As a child and teenager I wrote for myself, and I never allowed anyone to see those poems and stories. In fact, I had a metal box that I kept them locked in. In college I was forced to workshop what I was writing. Sometimes the creative workshops I was in were very helpful, sometimes painful, always insightful. As an adult I desired to share what I was writing, and my work has since been published in literary journals and in two books.

It has occurred to me that as a child I was journeying inward with my writing. As an adult I was taking the journey with others. For the last few years, I have been combining the two and the work has led naturally into my teaching and storytelling. Writing, teaching, storytelling: in this triad is where my bliss lies. If you are searching for yours, perhaps *Journey in Words* will help you find it.

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**Shaun Moffitt** is a fifth year Mystery who lives in Locust Grove, Oklahoma, amidst rye grass, cats, dried-up ponds, family, and teenage boy. She can be reached at [okieload@sstelco.com](mailto:okieload@sstelco.com).

## Hound of the Hill: Marlee

*Diana's Grove is devoted to dogs as well as people. Each month, a Grove dog weighs in on the monthly theme in his or her own special way. This month, Marlee, a half rat terrier, half golden retriever (yes it's true) puppy talks about her early days spent in the Grove great room.*

I am small, but when I take a step and I take a step and I take a step, I grow larger and larger and larger. I am small. Puppy. I am beginning. All that is new. Unlatch the gate and I fly out and skid across the slick floor in anticipation. With my brother puppy, we take steps that are leaps that are dances that are flight.

I promise to keep coming out when the gate is unlocked. I promise to someday jump over the gate if no one comes to open it. One day when I have grown larger and stronger. It will only take one step at a time, one step after another. And a little help along the way.

When you pick me up, I am warmer, too warm sometimes. Put me back down so I can breathe. Let me nibble on your pant leg. Just a little. Gnaw on your knuckles. It won't hurt. I'm just a puppy. I have a lot to learn, so you can help me out.

I promise to keep circling the furniture just like this each time I come out. Just like this. I promise to run to you as soon as you open the door. But I can't promise that I won't run straight past you and out that door before you can close it.

Once in the watery circling place, I nudged another next to me. I kept nudging and nudging and didn't get a response. We're getting ready, I said to the one next to me. Get ready.

Something is coming. Are you ready? I'm ready. My paws tingled and I tried to open my eyes and couldn't. I was tingly all over.

I promise to keep moving and think about it, though I might move past my head. I might speed past my thoughts and past yours, too. But I promise I will try and catch up and get my legs and head together, at least sometimes. If it occurs to me.

There are big ones that come in here all loud and shaking and sniffing the air by our pen. They are huge so I know where the possibility is. They smell like dirt and each other and other things that make sense but I can't name. One day I will be like them but not them, one of them, but not one of them. I will have seen a few things. Marked a few spots on the hill and down it, too.

I promise to grow, to eat what you give me, to let it fill me. I am starting out each time I eat. I am building a new muscle. I am pushing that food through me to be me. I have a list of things I want and growing is one. I promise to grow for me and for you.

What is there to know? I sleep on the soft round bed by the blue and orange flames. The nights are dark and mostly silent. The big ones like to be heard sometimes and wake me up. In the morning, the gate opens and I take a drink and run out. My hind legs are stronger and turn me around sometimes, even when I am going forward. It's hard to slow down once you get started.

I promise to see what is around each chair leg, around each corner. I might smell the air first before turning the corner. But I might not, too. Sometimes I will just round that bend with faith. With curiosity. With trust. I promise to keep growing.

## Logos: Words and Meaning

*by Arden Goewert*

Imagine, if you will, a lump of earth, moistened by water, warmed by fire. It remains a warm, moist piece of clay until a deity breaths life into it. Breath separates animate and inanimate, alive and not alive. *Psyche*, in Greek, originally meant breath.

Creation stories from many cultures tell of a god breathing life and soul into the first people. Here are some examples: "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (the Bible). "Old Man made some more mud images of people, blew his breath upon them, and they became people, men and women" (Blackfoot Native American). "Odin and his colleagues breathed life into two tree trunks, turning them into Ask and Embla, the first man and woman" (Norse). The Pacific peoples have known that God often speaks from the whirlwind. Theirs is a faith shaped by "aloha," a word drawn from two roots, meaning "in the presence of wind, breath or spirit." In Hawaii, to speak of God means, necessarily, to be open to the often disturbing and life-giving wind of the spirit. Prometheus fashioned people out of clay and Athena breathed life into them (Greek).

This definition is from the Oxford English Dictionary: "Psyche – breath, to breathe, to blow, (later) to cool; hence, life (identified with or indicated by the breath); the animating principle in

man and other living beings, the source of all vital activities, rational or irrational, the soul or spirit, in distinction from its material vehicle, the soma or body; sometimes considered as capable of persisting in a disembodied state after separation from the body at death; the animating principle of the universe as a whole, the soul of the world.”

About five percent of English words have a Greek origin. Most of these words entered the language after the fifteenth century. Ancient Greek texts, rediscovered between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, were mined by scholars for words to define their ideas and inventions. The use of Greek-derived words also reinforced a sense of elitism among this educated group. These Greek (and Latin) borrowings were deliberately adopted, as most scientific writing was done in these ‘dead’ languages.

Psychology, psychiatry, psychic; Psyche’s name continues to live in words like these. Psychology was first used in Germany in the seventeenth century, when it was defined as the study of the soul. Psychology took on its modern English meaning of study of the mind in the eighteenth century.

Breath, to life, to soul, to mind, the meaning of the word ‘psyche’ has evolved over time. Yet all these meanings can connect in the present. I breathe, I live, my breath gives life to my mind and my soul.

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**Arden Goewert** is a psychiatric nurse and college professor with an avid interest in history and the origins of things. She lives in St Louis with her family and pets. She is in her eighth year of Mystery School.

## Appalachian Trail Tales: Facing Death

*by Lorely Lather*

This column, “Appalachian Trail Tales,” will be my personal story of hiking on the Appalachian Trail (the “AT”) in 1993. The Year 2006 will mark 13 years since I set out to backpack the entire distance from Georgia to Maine – 2000 miles in six months. I contribute this tale to *Between the Worlds* because I see in my hike the archetypal journey of Psyche. I see myself following the pattern of initiation, quest, and return during the years involved in my AT transformation. I hope to demonstrate how you, as a reader, can let the myth of Psyche float down and overlay your life, as I will do in my stories.

In my storytelling, I hope to reflect Carl Jung’s perspective of archetypes. I am not formally trained in Jungian analysis; I simply wish to tell my personal life stories, seeing archetypal meanings in everyday events. It is in Jungian archetypal understandings that European fairy tales, Greek myths, and much more storytelling overlap. Archetypes are immortal and cross time and cultural lines readily. Archetypes wander onto the Diana’s Grove Mystery list; they wander into your life in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Changing your archetypal understandings may be referred to as laying new patterns on your soul.

I feel the AT segment of my life was a deliberate effort to lay new patterns on my tender, death-touched soul. Like a caterpillar, I consciously chose to enter the pupa, hoping I would somehow emerge as a butterfly. I feel that comparing my story to Psyche’s may help you readers see or seek similar transformative times in your lives. So, let me begin:

## **Facing Death**

It was Death that pushed me to the wilderness of the Appalachian Trail.

Incidentally, the Appalachian Trail is the foundation of many East Coast Americans' concept of wilderness. The AT is not well known in Missouri, where I started my journey. All that I knew, when I first spoke my dream aloud, was from one 1987 article in National Geographic magazine.

Facing death...I do not contemplate my own death often, but I know I wish to die at home, in my own bed. And I hope that it will be peaceful so I can savor every precious moment of this beautiful life on earth. My partner had such a peaceful death in 1992. I was there; I drew close to his death and witnessed it intimately. Time stopped in the last couple months of his life. Nothing happened, except where we were. There were no other people on earth, except those who came to visit us.

When it was over, I was completely depleted, yet amazingly energized. He had been ill for 10 long years, so we had formed strong loyalties and deep promises.

I told him he was a heavy burden for me. He promised me that if I would stay until the end, he would ask no more of me. He promised he would not haunt me or demand allegiance beyond his life.

He told me he was afraid to die. I promised I would stay until the end, as intimately as I could. I promised I would care for him and respect his final wishes. We both kept our word and his life ended in peace.

So, in the month following his death, I realized I was fully free, with no regrets but with no place to go. I was energized, but depleted. I spent hours sitting in various spots in our house quietly looking around, accepting this reality. He was gone and I was free. What could I do with my freedom? I'd seen death; I desperately wanted to fully live before death became intimate to me again.

People had admired me through his death; I'd been his faithful partner. We had an Irish Wake at our home, as he had wanted. I directed the entire memorial service and gave his eulogy, as he had wanted. I had handled the dramatic death of a young, well-liked, handsome man. The Dark Mother archetype had overlaid me and still clung to me, a month later.

Yet, despite their admiration, people offered much unsought advice. "Get back to normal, return to work; what are you waiting for?" some said. "Normalness is an 8-5 job and buying things for yourself and your house. Normalness is desired, as quickly as possible."

But I could not move toward normalness. I felt persistently wordless. Death had overwhelmed me and I sought a spiritual foundation to make sense of it. My thoughts swung between revisiting the long silent pause after my partner took his last breath, and remembering the sense of whole-body awakening when I realized I had survived his death. There was often utter silence inside my Soul during the month after the death of my partner. Like Psyche, I stood fixed at the top of the mountain, facing Death, awaiting Eros.

Jung might say that my Soul awaited wilderness, while my Conscious Self was clueless. Or, Jung might say my bold Shadow wanted to hike far more than my insecure Ego. Neither my Soul nor my Shadow could seem to put it in spoken words, but hiking was persistently in my daydreams during the month after my partner's death. I found the National Geographic magazine in the basement and carried it upstairs.

We had subscribed to this magazine for years; we loved the earth and her people as shown in this magazine. My partner and I had been concerned about the environment. We had been cavers, as our hobby. When he was healthy, we had discovered, explored and cleaned trash from many caves. But his years of illness had severed that bond for me. I now felt I wanted to make hiking my connection with life. I read the story again and slept on the idea.

Yet, I might never have acted on the idea without my friend Sandra's strong urging. When I managed to offer the thought that I hike the AT as an intermission in my life, she literally jumped up and down. Like some kind of cheerleader, she chanted: "You've got to do this. This fits you. You must go!" Have you, Reader, ever expressed great enthusiasm directly to another's Soul – urging her to leap into her dream? Have you been the Initiator? Has a dear friend ever cheered excitedly for your dreams and been your Initiator?

My friend Sandra urged me to leap into my dream, in November of 1992, after my weakened Ego let slip the idea that I hike the AT. I had spoken my daydream aloud, so I could no longer linger facing the surety of Death. I turned to face Eros and seek paradise by hiking the Appalachian Trail.

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At a pinnacle of her life, **Lorely Lather** stood at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, having hiked 1000 miles in 100 days--all the way from northern Georgia. In the years since 1993, Lorely found Diana's Grove. This will be her fifth year as a Mystery.

## Going Deeper

*by Synnove*

I wonder if you can imagine yourself standing at the edge of a mountain lake at the top of a steep trail; feeling rock and earth below your feet, a cool breeze caressing your cheeks; surrounded by silence that is punctuated by an occasional rock fall; seeing brilliant blue sky, steep mountains of jagged rock, softened by an occasional patch of brilliant white or, sometimes in the shaded areas, a shimmering blue. Can you imagine seeing your image reflected in the lake, surrounded by this beauty? Can you imagine yourself feeling hot and sweaty from the climb up, feeling tempted to dive in?

Can you imagine diving into yourself? Have you ever wanted to? Wanted to dive in and learn more about you? Do you want to discover what motivates you, what challenges you, what stops you from reaching out to claim your heart's desire?

I want to dive in and explore. I want to feel the cool water against my skin, washing away the burden of my journey. I want to reach out hands unfettered, and claim my heart's desire.

This column is a mirror of our journeys into the depths of self knowledge and transformation. I'm an initiate of life, committed to continual growth. I can't resist the temptation of an exploratory question, one that seeks to worm its way into my psyche, demanding that I learn and grow. I can't imagine ever reaching the pinnacle of knowledge, the point at which where there is nothing left to explore and learn. Can you?

All of this is why I love Mystery School. You see, in Mystery School, we don't simply read a story each month; we step into it and experience it. We step into the story and, in the process, step more fully into ourselves. We step onto a path of initiation, of becoming the person of our dreams. In Mystery School, each month's journey of exploration builds on the previous month's work. Personal transformation occurs in a year and a day.

"Going Deeper" is an invitation for you to join me and other Mysteries in diving deeper into the story of Psyche and Eros, in diving deeper into your own story of transformation. Or, as Cynthia would say, an invitation to step into "the story of the soul, your soul" and, in doing so, "step into a year of discovery, creation, challenge and initiation." We will explore the story using all the materials available to us in Mystery School, and experience the ways in which a question can branch off to touch different aspects of our lives in a deep way.

Everything you need for this journey of transformation will be in the column or on the Diana's Grove public website. In addition, you may want to have access to all of the resources of Mystery School to facilitate your journey:

- The monthly story asks me to imagine myself in tales of ancient Heroes and, in the imagining, to learn more about myself. Each month, I step into a story that is true to the legend, yet allows motivation and intention to shift, so that each character has value. This style of story telling encourages me to explore my own motivation, both conscious and unconscious. It encourages me to grow.
- The workbook, a companion to the story, helps me make the shift into my left brain, so that I can be more conscious in my exploration of the monthly theme, with concepts and questions spelled out clearly.
- The *Moon Shadows* book personalizes the story following the rhythm of the year and the monthly rise and fall of the moon.
- E-mail discussion lists and classes connect me to the Mystery School community so that I may reinforce my learning by sharing with others and learning from them.

"Going Deeper" will invite you to dream, to imagine your life as you would like it to be. And it will provide tools for personal exploration to help you along that path. You choose the destination and the path.

What path do you want to take this year? Is there an area of your life where you would like to grow past your current boundaries? A place where you feel stuck? Or perhaps you have an idea of the life you would like to live; a life in which you experience greater confidence, a more fulfilling job, more intimate relationships, better health, a greater sense of well being, or all of these. Does this idea draw you in? Can you imagine stepping into that life, pulling it around your shoulders like a cloak?

Transformation occurs as we stretch beyond our limits and grow into the life we have always dreamed. The story of Psyche and Eros ends in the way all stories of transformation do:

Psyche dies and is transformed into a goddess. What will die in your story of transformation? What will become your doorway into reincarnation?

What is your dream for yourself?

Will you dive in with me? Will you embrace the unknown?

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**Synnové** is passionate about empowering others. She has over twenty years of Management Consulting and Executive Management experience with an emphasis on building effective teams. She also mentors middle-school aged girls for Passages Northwest "Girls Rock!" — a program dedicated to inspiring courage in women and girls.

## Mystery's Light

by Canyon

We light the light...each of us lights the light.

All through this year, we are Psyche; you are Psyche. She is that part of you and me that seeks to see, seeks to know, seeks to be. She is that part that seeks to become a larger self than you are now. Psyche is the part of us that seeks union with the divine, with ecstasy, with capital-L Life. This year, that Psyche part of us will be invited to breathe more deeply, live more fully, build a new home for each of our hearts and souls. This year, you will – I will – be given a chance to light the light: the light that reveals all we need to know.

And, Psyche, when we lift high the light that reveals all...we cannot help but reveal ourselves.

Many who read this magazine are in Mystery School; even more are not. This year, in *Between the Worlds*, we will, all together, explore the story of Psyche and Eros as we tell it at Diana's Grove. Chapter by chapter, the story will unfold for Mystery School, inviting us to shake off reality as we know it and step into a myth. Month by month, the writers in this magazine will breathe life into that story from more than a dozen different directions.

From this column - from "Mystery's Light" - will come echoes of dozens of voices. Psyches all, those enrolled in Mystery School will speak to each other through the online discussion list called Mystery. They will light the light that reveals their beloved, and that light will reveal them, too: their dreams, their goals, their passions, their stories. Each month, I will gather pieces of those insights and those voices and, through this column, the 2006 Mysteries will speak to a wider world, will find common ground in a wider community, through shared dreams and shared goals, through passions and stories that entwine. The words of dozens of Diana's Grove Mysteries – anonymous beyond the confines of the Mystery List – will invite deeper and wider reflection on similar dreams, goals, passions, and stories.

"Mystery's Light" will be a band of light, a thick cord of braided threads that glimmer and glow, shine and spark, flare and flicker. These lights will represent the essence of Mystery School: the voices of the 2006 Mysteries as they find personal meaning in universal myth. Having shaken off reality to step into a myth, these seekers will don reality once again, as a cloak rewoven. Psyche's story will invite them to retell their own stories. And they will tell

them to each other with their emails to the Mystery list. Here, in “Mystery’s Light,” I will re-tell them again – for them and for those of you who read this magazine from beyond our edges.

Beyond our edges...yes. This magazine is a borderland that connects Diana’s Grove Mystery School with the mysteries of the wider world. Our reasons for reading this magazine vary. Regardless of whether you read from within Mystery School or from beyond its edges, we hope you are fascinated, that you find our writing provocative and interesting. We hope that those of you who are not currently in Mystery School might be *Mysteries-in-the-making* and that you will join us next year or beyond, if not this year (registration is open until January 31<sup>st</sup>, you know!).

Despite our sundry reasons for clicking on the link to this magazine each month, I believe we might also have commonalities. Maybe what we share is simply an interest in Greek mythology or, specifically, in the story of Psyche and Eros. Maybe what we share is that we are all seekers of some kind. Maybe each of us is seeking a community, or a spiritual home, or a safe place to stretch the edges of who we are. Maybe we share a desire for transformation, a yearning for union with the divine, however we define it.

Diversity and commonality; both are 100% true. But why-ever you are reading this magazine, we welcome you. We welcome you to this magazine and, beginning next month, this column will welcome you into the heart of who we are. “Mystery’s Light” will welcome you into Mystery, that online community where we, the members of Diana’s Grove Mystery School, tell our stories of who we are and who we are becoming.

We welcome you and we invite you...raise your light high, high enough to see.

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**Canyon** is a staff member at Diana’s Grove and has been reading and writing for the Mystery List since 1999. She is currently writing a book on how adults can face unresolved developmental challenges from childhood and work them through to a different conclusion. She offers programs and publications that support you in your striving to become who you truly are, who you were intended to be.

## Psyche and Eros: The Story

*retold by Cynthia Jones*

Psyche was the third daughter of a King and Queen. She was beautiful. The people in her village made altars to honor her. They left flowers and trinkets on those altars. Everyone admired Psyche, but she had no friends, and worse than that...she had no suitors. When her less awesome sisters were all married, the royal family became worried about Psyche’s future. They decided to consult the Oracle at Delphi about Psyche’s fate.

The Oracle told the family to prepare Psyche for her wedding. On the morning of the Spring Equinox, she should climb the sacred mountain. At its peak, her groom would meet her. “Psyche” the Oracle said, “will be the bride of Death. Fate is fate, and fate cannot be denied.”

As Psyche began to climb that mountain, Aphrodite - the Goddess of Love and Beauty - asked her son, Eros - the God of Passion - to go to that mountain. “You will find a young girl there,” Aphrodite said. “Shoot her with one of your arrows.” Mortals and Gods fear and pray

for Eros' arrows. The one pierced will fall in love with the one they see. Deeply in love, love beyond reason, that is what comes from Eros' arrows. Psyche's groom might be death, but she would go willingly into his arms.

Eros reached into his quiver to take an arrow...some say they are poison arrows and I am one of those who agree. Reaching in, he pricked his own finger. Eros fell in love with Psyche. Deeply in love, love beyond reason, he picked her up and took her to paradise.

Now, in those times, a mortal could not look upon the face of a God. In order to be together, Eros told Psyche she could not look at him. Paradise. She could have everything she wanted, but she must never look at him. Is that too much to ask? In the day, her every desire was fulfilled. At night, in her windowless bedchamber, they made love. It was wonderful, but Psyche was lonely. She invited her sisters to come and visit.

Her sisters brought doubt. Perhaps they were jealous - after all, Psyche lived in paradise and was married to the God of love. After their visit, Psyche took the oil lamp from her bed chamber. She held the lamp high and looked at the face of her sleeping lover. A drop of hot oil fell from the lamp and landed on Eros' shoulder. He woke up. Paradise disappeared. Psyche was alone. She could go back and resume her life as a princess or she could go on and become a Goddess, the equal partner of Eros. Our summer weekends will reveal her choice. What will you choose?

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Find out more about **Cynthia Jones** at the end of one of her regular columns for this magazine, the cover article on page 1.

## The Eclectic Bibliophile

*by Sherrid*

I've been a reader for over thirty-five years. I believe that the written word holds power, and from that power magic is created. How can something that comes from our souls, our imaginations, not have power? Every book I read has the capacity to teach me something or manipulate my emotions or both – that is the power. But the trick with power is to be open to its touch and the changes it will bring. Change even for a moment...well, that is the magic. My vision of heaven is a place full of books and teachers and all the time beyond the universe to learn about the mysteries, and friends to talk them over with late at night over dessert...something chocolaty. My goal for this column is to provide a little bit of that heaven each month, by giving friendly input on some of the books I read and weaving them into the theme of the month. Because I believe in dissemination of power and knowledge, I hope to share a little of that power and magic I get from my reading with you each month and, perhaps, inspire a read or two for you, as well.

The theme for January is initiation and death. I've been a Diana's Grove Mystery for seven years and a nurse for ten. From that experience, I know that there is nothing that affects our lives more than death, and nothing we try to ignore more than its effects on our lives. So, the book I decided to review this month is *The Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold. Ms. Sebold's creativity in the story line, and its ability to inspire the need to contemplate ideas of life, death and the "Inbetween," were masterfully woven.

The story is that of how the murder of a young woman – a child, really – affects her family, community, killer and herself. Her name is Susan, Susie. She is everyone's child, parent, friend...or that person you never spoke to in school, or at work, but suddenly noticed was missing from your life and you know things will never be the same. How that unimaginable loss intertwines in our lives and becomes part of our structure; becomes a part of our bones.

My life has been one often touched by death both personally and professionally. I have lost family and friends, and by being a hospice and geriatric nurse. I have learned a lot about life from the dying, and when I retrace my life I have to acknowledge that Death has been my initiator, my mentor. Because of this I consider myself a child of Death.

However, I view Death from the standpoint of the living. Knowing how it affects my life...tracing its patterns through my choices and who I am and will be, well, that is my decision in my awareness that I am Death's child. But *The Lovely Bones* is about life through the soulful vision of the dead. The murdered child Susie tells this story of her life, death and afterlife from the place she calls the Inbetween. She spends years watching her family, community, and killer; piecing together her influence on their lives. "Who could have known how my death would change the world in so many small ways?" Her story is told with nostalgic humor and true horror, but always with compassion. Compassion for those left behind and for her.

One of the most heart-rending themes in this story is that the dead regret what they missed. How can the soul go on if it has regrets? I find I cling to my regrets like weighted life preservers. Can I really let go of anything if I hold onto my regrets? Can you?

Her Inbetween mentor tells Susie, "When you stop asking why you were killed instead of someone else, stop investigating the vacuum left by your loss, stop wondering what everyone left on Earth is feeling...you can be free. Simply put, you have to give up on Earth." Simply put, to soar free, Susie had to let go of her life preserver. But if you never experienced letting go how do you do it? Susie died as a young girl who had not experienced true letting go. To be free, her soul had to experience this release, and the only way available to her was through watching and being with her family, friends, community, and even her killer.

Susie finds that the Inbetween isn't static...it is as full of life and growth as life itself, and as her soul grows she begins to understand that her freedom also frees the living. "When the dead are done with the living...the living can go on to other things." "When the dead are done with the living..." When ARE the dead done with the living? Do they leave because we, those left behind, have integrated their loss into our bones? Or do they leave because they have integrated our loss into their soul? Does it matter? Do we notice when they finally leave us and, when they leave, is it forever?

This is a powerful story. Heart-warming, full of smiles and tears. A story of compassion, forgiveness and redemption. I do not believe anyone reading this book cannot be affected. Cannot read it and ask about what they believe, or to imagine their Heaven, or to think about the legacies they received from those who left them behind, and the legacy they will leave behind.

How has Death been an initiator in your life? This is not a simple question. In life and death there are no simple questions. If followed, questions have a way of twisting and turning,

winding down, burrowing through your skin into your bones; and the answers have a way of changing. Frustrating? Perhaps, but what a ride!

This is her story – Susie’s – and their story – the story of the dead and their coming to grips with what they left behind. It is about the growth of the soul, not through its death, but through the understanding of its influence on others and others’ influence on the soul. And it’s our story; the story of those left behind; how we incorporate the dead’s life, death and after-life into our existence.

“These were the lovely bones that had grown around my absence: the connections – sometimes tenuous, sometimes made at great cost, but often magnificent – that happened after I was gone.... The events that my death wrought were merely the bones of a body that would become whole at some unpredictable time in the future. The price of what I came to see as this miraculous body had been my life.” When I think about those who have gone I can trace their bones in who I have become. This quote is their epitaph, and I can only hope that it will be mine as well; that my death will become some lovely bones, of which the future is built.

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**Sherrid** is an eccentric Mystery who has been part of the Grove, "since the beginning of time" - okay, seven+ years - and was on the 2005 Rites team. She lives in the small Missouri hamlet of Ellsinore and is a nurse, enthusiastic tarotist, multimedia crafter and rabid reader. Her eccentric humor and perspective are liberally sprinkled throughout all her encounters, writings and projects. She can be reached at [Sherrid@Dianasgrove.com](mailto:Sherrid@Dianasgrove.com).

## Dreaming with Morpheus: Dreamwork as the Initiate’s Path

*by Shauna Aura*

Dreams...where we can slip off our conscious selves, and become more than we are. Slipping into the dreamtime can allow us to become our greater selves, more than what we are. It can allow us to give life to our souls, our immortal, expanded selves, those selves that call to us to become more than what we were.

Your dreams need you, and you need your dreams.

Welcome to “Dreaming with Morpheus,” an exploration of dreamwork in the context of the story of Psyche and Eros. Psyche means breath and soul. I invite you to breathe life into your dreams that they may help you on your journey.

Dreamwork goes beyond just remembering our dreams, though that is certainly the beginning. In articles through the year, this column will lay a foundation for dreamwork, and then continue to explore and deepen the practice. All year, I’ll focus on practical ways you can use dreamwork in your personal growth and spiritual practice.

Those enrolled in Mystery School will have access to the email list where we can discuss our dreams, and deepen our knowledge of dream techniques presented in this column. Those attending Mystery School Intensives will have the opportunity to meet for dream circles.

“Dreams make available to us a mine of psychological and spiritual treasures. They provide guidance vital to the journey, and they point to areas of ourselves where we need to work.”

- Wayne Teasdale, *The Mystic Heart*

### **Dreaming: One path of the initiate**

Dreams are an invaluable tool for transformative personal growth. I can experience entire worlds in my dreams that I have no access to in the conscious world. In my dreams, I might interact with deities, archetypes, facets of Mystery. I might pass through a dark night of the soul that transforms me. An abundance of wisdom is available to us through our dreams that we might have no other way of gaining.

Taking on a personal practice of dreamwork is an initiate's path. It is a discipline. To begin, I must know, “Why would I do this?” I must make the choice to do it. And I must follow it through with a consistent practice.

#### **A basic dreamwork practice:**

1. Formalize your intention
2. Prepare to dream
3. Dream
4. Remember your dream
5. Interpret your dream

### **Formalizing your intention**

Much like in any magical work, possibly the single most critical piece is intention. What do you want? Do you want to get better at remembering your dreams? Do you want to use dreams to get to know yourself better, to transform yourself? Do you want insight into a major life decision? Do you want to deepen a connection with a specific deity or archetype? Once you have an intention, you can make dreamwork a workable personal practice.

### **Preparing to dream**

This might be as simple as stating aloud, “I will remember my dreams tonight.” It should involve a physical commitment such as keeping a pen and journal or tape recorder by your bedside. It might involve working with an archetype, such as Morpheus, Greek god of dreams. All these are practices that will help you formalize your intent, and should help you remember your dreams.

### **Dreaming**

This is the easy part. Many people say they do not remember their dreams. Enough research assures me that everyone dreams, but not everyone remembers them. The exception to this is that certain sleep disorders prevent dream sleep.

### **Remembering your dream**

I find that writing the dreams down is absolutely the most challenging part of the discipline. The most important moments of dreaming are the first few of waking, when I really want to tuck back under the covers. When I am ready, I write down my dream. If I am having trouble remembering, I will lie in the position I slept in, as sometimes this will help the dream come back to me.

It might take a while to really remember your dreams. For me, the key is to write them down as soon as possible. Sometimes my notes are a brief snippet on waking; sometimes two pages. It might keep until I'm on the bus to work. What I have found is that the closer to waking that I write down my dream, the more details I remember.

I write this article feeling chagrined; in the past six months, I have written down less than six dreams. Part of my commitment to writing this column is a recommitment to my dreams. This week I've followed through on my discipline by writing down three so far. I am finding that my dream recall – my ability to remember details – is already improving.

### **Interpreting your dream**

Dreamwork is a difficult but rewarding discipline. For the full reward, I not only need to write down my dreams, but I have to then unravel the mess of symbolism. In my personal dream practice, I am constantly exploring these dream symbols that may or may not make sense...perhaps for years.

Writing down the dreams, and truly seeking to understand them, is my way of honoring the dreams that I asked for. I honor my own personal growth. I feel I owe it to my soul, and to Mystery, to write those dreams down, to do my very best to listen to what they have to say, and to act on that knowledge.

Like any initiate's path, dreamwork can take a long time to get good at. I look at the first dreams I wrote down, and how it took perhaps two years to get any kind of depth and detail to my dream recall, to get enough detail to really start interpreting my dreams. Next month's article will focus on how to interpret your dreams.

“Dreams give us the answers if we attend to them, because they come from a source that is deeper and wiser than the everyday waking mind. To attend means more than to listen.... To work fully with our dream source, we are required to stretch our understanding, to go beyond familiar maps.”

- Robert Moss, *Conscious Dreaming*

### **Transformation requires discipline**

I find keeping to my discipline of dreamwork is most difficult when I'm seeing things in my dreams that I do not wish to face. These aren't always nightmares; my dreams might be giving me the information I asked for, and yet I'm too stubborn to listen to the advice. Dedicating to dreamwork often asks me to look in the mirror in ways that can be difficult. But, I feel that if I asked for the dreams, I should be prepared to listen to what they tell me. Asking the hard questions will give me the hard answers, and ask me to face hard truths.

I find myself constantly asking myself, do I have what it takes to keep writing these dreams down, to keep working with them and facing the hard truths that emerge? Can I step beyond a place of comfort, into a place of learning? Can I look at my dreams as interactions that matter? Can I breathe life into a practice of dreamwork?

Can you breathe into your dreams?

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**Shauna Aura** is an artist and designer who has been working with dreams since she was 12. Dreamwork is an integral part of her personal, spiritual, and creative practice. She believes that the dreamworld informs the waking world, and that dreams deepen our insight into ourselves, our lives, and our spirituality. She can be contacted at [shaunaaura@gmail.com](mailto:shaunaaura@gmail.com).

# Moving Images: Everything I Needed to Know I Learned from Filmmaking

by Dan Wilson

*This year's "Moving Images" will explore the how films are made and the life lessons learned from the production process as we follow Dan through a semi-fictionalized year producing a re-telling of Cupid and Psyche in Milan's fashion industry.*

I am a storyteller. I tell stories with pictures and, more specifically, I am a filmmaker. I'm not a big fan of the Hollywood machine for the simple fact that, as a general rule, they pump out films based on market research instead of good storytelling. The stories on screen are often distilled down to stereotypes (rather than archetypes) and are no more challenging to the viewing audience than Dr. Seuss is to a Ph.D. candidate in English Lit. Typically, films produced outside the Hollywood studio system and foreign films are the ones that pay more attention to story and character, and develop those elements with more craftsmanship.

I prefer my stories with some meat. I like to leave a movie thinking about characters' dilemmas and choices. I like to see stories that aren't wrapped up with a completely happy ending. I like to see characters that aren't totally good or totally bad. I like to see stories that are a better representation of that gray area that I perceive life to be. I like to feel some connection to the story and the characters and, in my own work, I strive to give my audiences that same connection. Of course, trying to find that magic formula for connecting with the audience is the trick.

For those of you who've studied writing, you may have heard that there are a limited number of stories at the core of everything, and only the details the storyteller includes differ. Depending upon whom you choose to listen to, there are seven stories, twenty stories, 'thirty-two dramatic situations'...you get the idea. But what I realized in reading these books was that the common thread running through all the core stories is that they touch upon archetypal interactions and situations faced by the characters.

I also realized that the best examples of archetypal stories are those that survive the ages. Greek plays and epic poems, Shakespearean comedies and tragedies, fairytales, myths and legends have all survived the ages, and are being retold today with new characters and modern situations. For me, this was the magic formula. To create a lasting story, the only thing I need do is pick a story from myth and legend – a tried-and-true archetypal situation in which tried-and-true archetypes find themselves – and I can't miss.

During the late nineties, I read a lot of mythology, fables and fairy tales. I dug out my books of Greek plays from my college archives, and re-read volumes of Shakespearean plays. I watched classic films to see how they utilized archetypes, and spent a lot of time searching for a story that would speak to me.

After a few months of research, I found myself drawn to the story of Cupid and Psyche, and decided to set it in the world of Milan's high fashion industry. I began writing the script by looking at the archetypal situations and characters in the myth, trying to understand what

they represented, and then stepping back and figuring out the contemporary analogues for those same archetypes. This process became the basis for my story.

When the theme for 2006 Mystery School was announced, I was thrilled. Not only am I quite familiar with the nuances of the story, and very intrigued with seeing how Cynthia will choose to retell it, but I had an instant inspiration for this year's "Moving Images" column.

I firmly believe that everything I need to know about life can be gleaned from the film production process. My intention for this year is to create a semi-fictionalized monthly diary of making the film. While my Cupid and Psyche script is still in progress (I'm between my first and second drafts), I'm going to use this year's columns to describe the decisions that must be made to put the film project together, and the lessons that can be learned from making those decisions. It will be written as if I were actually turning the script into a film but, as I'm not in a position to make the film just yet, I'll be fictionalizing my experiences, based on past film projects.

I'll be tying those lessons to the monthly Mystery School themes, while at the same time giving insights into the mysteries of how movies are made. Combining two of my greatest passions, filmmaking and storytelling, will indeed be a treat for me, and I hope for you as well.

## Lonely Hearts: Why do we do it? Why do we rescue dogs?

*by Cynthia Jones, co-founder and co-owner of Diana's Grove*

To you who are new to our community or our magazine, let me begin the year by introducing this monthly column to you. "Lonely Hearts" – this page is for the dogs. It is devoted to the dog rescue work that we do. We are one of many grassroots animal rescue groups. Grassroots – we have no funding, no city contracts, no building or facility. We care for forty to fifty dogs in our home. Diana's Grove is a retreat center offering a personal growth program that focuses on professionalism and understanding group dynamics, or pack dynamics – that is what the dogs would call it. Members of our community expressed concern when they learned that the cost of caring for each rescued dog is about \$60 a month.

I agree with their concern. Caring for abandoned and unwanted dogs consumes our time, energy and financial resources. You might wonder why we do it. Here is why:

I believe that each one of us is called to do what stands before us to be done. You might be called to stand up for your political beliefs or devote your resources to your church or your spiritual work. You might be a volunteer and provide necessary community services. Some of you, like me, care for abandoned dogs, cats and other animals...just not at home or not so many at home. Like you, I do what I can. Our land and our staff enable us to do what stands before us to do; we take in abandoned dogs.

We live in a rural area with limited resources. There are very few services for people and none for unwanted dogs and cats. There are no local vets, animal care facilities or doctors.

When we get a call or see a dog wandering on the roadside, we decide what to do. Should we say yes or should we acknowledge our limitations and be realistic? Here in Bunker, I can't kid myself. The next solution isn't coming down the road behind me. If we don't do it, no one will. The dog that we don't take may well die a slow, lonely death in the woods. If at all possible, we take the dog. We provide medical care, food, shelter and lots of love. In order to continue our work, we must find homes for the dogs in our care. Yes, we are a no-kill shelter, but the dogs that we can't take don't live in a no-kill world. Every dog that we place means another dog can live.

We don't look for the dogs that we save. In most cases, they weren't looking for us either. They simply stand before us, creatures of circumstances whose fate is placed in our hands. Why do we do it? A frightened puppy cowers in my arms and believes that he will be safe. The last person who held him placed him on the side of the road on a December day and drove off. And yet, I am forgiven for that sin. I am seen as a solution by a creature whose birth was the result of neglect and whose life has been an extension of that neglect. I am compelled to live up to the hope that lives in an abandoned dog's eyes. That is why I do it. That is why we do it.

We do it because it is before us to do. In exchange for our time and care, we get to share our lives with creatures that are committed to personal healing. The dogs that we rescue recover. They forgive. They love and they trust even when their personal experience tells them it is foolish to do either.

How does it happen? Alienation. Alienation is the root and heart of abandonment and neglect. Alienation. We are alienated when we think the fear and misery of an abandoned animal is someone else's responsibility. It is easy to blame the owner; to blame the ones who can't find or afford a better answer. It is easy to be alienated from a world where there is no acceptable solution, but there will only be an acceptable solution when we are all willing to create one. I am not separate from the person who put that dog on the road. I am not separate from the family who didn't spay or neuter. Blame is easy but it doesn't lead to a solution. "Not my problem. Not my fault." Should we simply decide whose fault it is and be done with it? Blame is alienation's pup. Alienation – tell me, how do we fix *that* dog?

Here is what we can do. We can share the burden of kindness. You don't have to give your life, just give an hour and join the solution. That is the only way we will solve the problem...no matter what problem we are addressing. The number of abandoned and euthanized pets has decreased in the last ten years.

Here is my request: rather than lose yourself in the abyss of hopelessness, look into the eyes of the need that stands before you. Respond. Give your time. Give a little bit of your heart. Be it dog rescue work, volunteer work, social action or speaking for a political cause, connect with the world around you. Be an advocate for that which you love. Do what is yours to do.

If you want to help us rescue dogs but you don't have a place or time, then work with us. Join our work. You can refer potential dog owners to us. You can give us an hour of your month. Give one hour's wage once each month and change the world for a lost or abandoned dog. Help us help the dogs.