



Between the Worlds

A Quarterly Journal of Myth, Magic, & Community

Winter 2009

Hope



BETWEEN THE WORLDS

A quarterly journal of Myth, Magic, and Community

Winter 2009: *Hope*
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Inside this issue . . .

Diana's Grove's Letters	3
<i>by Shaun Perkins</i>	
Things to Hope	5
<i>by Laurie Dietrich</i>	
We Hold On. We Hope.	7
<i>by River Roberts</i>	
Six Seeds:	9
Persephone's Story of Action and Consequences	
<i>by Cynthea Jones</i>	
Hope Grows in a Garden	11
<i>by River Roberts</i>	
In the Shadow of Hope	13
<i>by Cynthea Jones</i>	

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DIANA'S GROVE'S LETTERS



by *Shaun Perkins*

For a few years, I wrote articles for this magazine from the perspective of various dogs at Diana's Grove. Each dog was different, and I would try to get into each of their psyches in some way by describing their behavior in terms of the instinct behind it. I anthropomorphized them, of course. I mean—they wrote fairly logical sentences. Though the dogs and their stories were all different: happy and well-adjusted, abused and nervous, top dogs, followers, huge and small, somehow all of them were about hope. Rescue is about hope.

I just described us humans, too—in all our varied guises and personalities, assets and flaws, we are about hope.



“At the Grove, the number one thing I learned was that it was okay to be human. It was necessary to be human: flawed, beautiful, growing, grown, emerging, leaving, crying, screaming. A hot mess or a divine being.”

When we stop being about hope, we aren't here any more. People without hope leave the community of the human world—and they leave in a variety of ways. What keeps me coming to the Grove now, seven years after I first found it, is hope. The Grove doesn't “rescue” humans like it rescues dogs, but it provides the hope and support necessary for us to rescue ourselves. Hope. I live my life in those letters, and I know a lot of people who do, also.

Human.

Opening.

Poetry.

Eternity.

I live my life in the letters of hope because I always have. I was born into hope, into a large family of noisy dreamers and doers, rarely satisfied from one day to the next with the way the next day might become. Realists all. Daydreamers all. Some of us fatalists who loved to tell a story that began and ended with doom—yours, theirs, the neighbor's, the hound dog's. Amidst any hint of despair was hope, always surfacing somehow, always continuing on.

I live my life in the letters of hope as an adult because I found Diana's Grove in 2002, and I found the Human in hope. No one need be super-human. No one need be less than human. No one need be more than human. Let's say it like it is: We're humans. Let's talk about being human. Analyze. Dissect. Break it down using the images from Tarot cards and the dreams that shape our lives. At the Grove, the number one thing I learned was that it was okay to be human. It was necessary to be human: flawed, beautiful, growing, grown, emerging, leaving, crying, screaming. A hot mess or a divine being. All come back to this: We are human. I find hope in simply being human.

Opening. I thought I was a fairly “open” person, until I started coming to the Grove regularly and learned that “being open” and “opening” are two different conditions. To be open is to be open-minded, to be flexible, to be

aware of possibilities, to be non-judgmental—all qualities I believe I learned at a fairly young age, though they were perfected when I left home and met a variety of people and developed friends of all colors, sexualities, and countries of origin. But “opening” was for me a long process that continues and will probably continue my whole life, since I am a private person who loves solitude. I am a private person who also needs people. Satisfying that need has been a part of my life and the work that Diana’s Grove made possible.

Poetry. One of my 10th grade students made the comment on the first day of school, “Poetry is a way of life.” I had him put it in bold on a poster board. Really, this is my life. I have organized it—for better and sometimes for worse—like a poem. Economical with words. Fond of margins and silences. Perpetually hung up on metaphor. There is no better written form for hope than poetry. The only reason people write poetry is because hope is living somewhere inside them and refusing to be stomped,

ignored, written over, and relegated to obscurity. At the Grove, poetry lives in the way the land curves, the creek trickles, the conversations fade and appear, in the descriptions of what is and what will come. The poet in me was and is acknowledged here. And I acknowledge the poet in those who share the space with me.

Eternity. In their song “Virginia Woolf”, the Indigo Girls sing of the writer worrying that she has left no mark, even though they tell her, “Your words sent a message in a bottle to me, and it was my rebirth.” The message in the bottle motif exists in our common language because it is one of hope. That bottle floating on the waves, riding the current, scuffing against a bottom full of creek rocks or reef or jagged cliff edge . . . it retains our moments and carries them on. Long after the natural world has done its work in covering up the places we laid our patterns on, we will remain. My biggest hope is that more of you find Diana’s Grove and continue to strengthen the song it has been singing for twelve years now.

Diana’s Grove Events Calendar - 2010

*New this year: register for Mystery School, and come to one event of your choice for just \$50–100 sliding scale!
Visit www.dianasgrove.com for details.*

January

Before the First Winter: The Story and the Times
January 22 – 24: Opening Mystery School

February

The Seed: Before Birth
February 19 – 21: Professional Development: The Four Powers, the Four Arts, and the Mystery of Charisma
February 26 – 28: Spiritual Development: Full Moon Tarot – Reflection: A Mirror of the Moment

March

Release
March 11 – 14: Mystery School: Demeter Laughs (4-day)
March 19 – 21: Women’s Spring Equinox: Calling Her Home

April

Question Reality: The Crossroads
April 8 – 11: Drum, Trance & Ritual Energetics
April 23 – 25: Professional Development: Spiral of Leadership and Circle of Intention
April 23 – 25: Fire: A Land Weekend devoted to the Power of the Flame - Offered by Charles

May

Communion and Community
May 14 – 16: Professional Development: 12 Opposing Kings: A Mandala of Group Dynamics
May 22 – 29: May Intensive: Communion – Feeding and being Fed (7-day)

July

The Blossom’s Challenge – Giving Way to Fruit
July 10 – 17: Lunacy Women’s Week (7-day)
July 22 – 25: Mystery School

August

Ripening
August 12 – 15: Mystery School: Sacred Sexuality – Awakening through Desire (4-day)

September

Leaving Home – Choice and Consequence: The Fool’s Journey, the Hero’s Journey
September 3 – 6: The Priestess Intensive
A 4-day skill-building weekend
September 24 – 26: Fall Equinox: the Feast of Persephone
An open Mystery School weekend

October

Six Seeds, Just Six Seeds.
Pluto’s Story: “Every Spring, I Lose Her”
October 15 – 17: Rites of Passage
October 29 – 31: Return to the Root: A day of silence and reconnecting to the deep

November

After the fall... Closure
November 12 – 14: Closing Mystery School

THINGS TO HOPE



by Laurie Dietrich

Early in Neil Gaiman's magnificent *Sandman* series, The Dream Lord descends into Hell and is forced to play an ancient game there, against a powerful demon. The stakes, this being Hell, are high. The demon begins:

"I am a dire wolf, prey-stalking, lethal prowler."

The Sandman answers:

"I am a hunter, horse-mounted, wolf-stabbing."

And so it continues:

"I am a horsefly, horse-stinging, hunter-throwing."

"I am a spider, fly-consuming, eight-legged."

"I am a snake, spider-devouring, poison-toothed."

"I am an ox, snake-crushing, heavy-footed."

"I am an anthrax, butcher bacterium, warm-life destroying."

"I am a world, space-floating, life-nurturing."

"I am a nova, all-exploding, planet-cremating."

"I am the Universe – all things encompassing, all life embracing."

"I am anti-life, the Beast of Judgment. I am the dark at the end of everything. The end of universes, gods, worlds... of everything."

And then, Dream makes the final move, the one to which there is no answer:

"I am hope."

And he wins the game.

In my home, now, it is just turning cool. The summer has been long, and cruel. Here, we are coming back to life, even in this, the traditional season of death. While Winter bites deep into the shortening days of other climes, here skeletons dance in the streets, celebrating the feast-days of souls and saints, taking the finally-breathable air in

marigold-strewn graveyards at this time when the veil between the worlds is thin.

The long nights bring relief, and much-needed balance, but darkness imposes its own rigors, as ancient as our sun-loving lizard brains. There is always the fear (isn't there?) that *this* darkness – be it astronomical or emotional or situational or even imaginary – will be *the* darkness. The dark at the end of everything. The end.



"In the dark – love it or loathe it – hope is the light. The spark. The contrast. The gift given to only a few beings... the ability to dream of something else. Something, perhaps, better. To dream another reality, and so have a fighting chance at making that reality real."

In the dark – love it or loathe it – hope is the light. The spark. The contrast. The gift given to only a few beings... the ability to dream *of something else*. Something, perhaps, *better*. To dream another reality, and so have a fighting chance at making that reality real.

What will you do with this gift? This power? This demon-destroying, Hell-negating, world-creating power? You'll have your own answers, of course. Here in the narrowing throat of the year, darkness swelling and squeezing us toward the solstice, the tipping place, the season of rebirth... this is a good time to take out our hopes, polish them like marbles, sort them, name them, release a few, welcome a few more in. They are powerful beyond words – little universes of potential and energy and promise. But words begin the weaving of the spell that makes them real. You'll have your own words.

These are mine.

Things to Hope

Hope that today is not the happiest day of your life.

Hope for a good night's sleep.

Hope for friends who are strong in all the places you are weak.

Hope that spring will return.

Hope that there'll be something good for dinner.

Hope for peace, of course.

Hope that everything you love will live forever.

Hope for the strength to be graceful when that hope fails.

Hope that it's true, that everything changes.

Hope that people remember your kindness better than your clothes.

Hope for joy, and hope not to be prejudiced against sorrow.

Hope for power, and don't be afraid to admit it. How else can you change the world?

Hope that the good days are long and the bad ones short.

Hope for laugh lines.

For impossible beauty.

For forgiveness that isn't earned.

For wealth that isn't owned.

For love that doesn't have to be shared.

Hope to be stronger than you ever believed you could be.

And larger.

Hope for clean, clear eyes.

Judicious speech.

Touch that is gentle even when it has to be firm.

Hope for anything. Hope is free!

Hope bigger than dreams.

Hope beyond infinity.

Give up this idea that hope is what hurts us.

It is, in fact, what saves us.

Hope for the courage to never stop hoping.

Never stop loving.

Never stop growing.

Hope for the strength of the seed and the bud.

Hope that spring will return.

WE HOLD ON. WE HOPE.



by River Roberts

We are in the Great Room. A thunderstorm is raging just outside the window, but we are safe inside, illuminated by candlelight. I am standing as and for Persephone. I am holding a large bowl, accepting seeds as prayers for healing. Persephone will carry them with her when she journeys to the Underworld, and keep them safe until they can grow when spring returns. Some speak their prayers aloud; others are silent. A young couple approaches me. Together, they place their seeds in the bowl. They have just had a miscarriage. They ask that the child they never knew find rest, and that they might find healing and renew their hope in starting a family. My eyes mist with tears at the sincerity in their voices. The magic works. It took two years, but they did get to welcome their healthy baby girl.

When I stepped outside my apartment building this morning, I noticed that it was darker than it was yesterday at this time. The change is subtle—things are a little less bright, a little less vibrant.



“Every single ritual I have been to that invokes this story has been life-altering in some way, no matter how innocuous it seemed at the time.”

There’s a way that the leaves on the trees rustle in the light morning breeze that speak a little less of summer and a little more of fall. I am a city-dweller, but there is something about the changing of seasons that reminds me that I am a human animal, attuned to the shifting of light, warmth, and need. Faced with the mystery of that shift from season to season, is it any wonder that we humans created ritual?

Persephone’s story is the quintessential story of the cycle of the seasons. The spring maiden playing in the garden matures into an autumn woman, following the seductive lure of what lies below the surface. She then becomes a winter queen, only to return again as a maiden the following spring. It’s a story of love—for what is above and what is below. It’s a story of loss that leads to healing. It is all of these things—but truly, at the core, the story of Persephone is a story about hope.

Every Fall Equinox, Diana’s Grove hosts the “Feast of Persephone,” an annual open event at which we live and ritualize this story. Persephone’s journey to the Underworld is a consistent backdrop for magic and ritual that has the power to change lives. It has happened to me, and I have witnessed it happening to others.

We are in the Barn. The theme of the weekend is “Magical Activism.” The darkness is creeping in slowly as priestesses blow out the candles one by one. Matt’s deep voice cracks just slightly as he speaks very vulnerably about the times he has felt helpless and alone in the face of social and environmental crisis. As he talks, I drum and read the headlines in the background that the group had collected earlier. The atmosphere in the ritual space is heavy. It gets darker and darker, until I can barely see my hands in front of my face. There is no moon tonight, and the autumn mists are inching over the meadow. A third voice weaves in between ours—the voice of Demeter. Cynthea is speaking for her, and the anguish in her voice is palpable. My eyes have barely adjusted to the darkness when I see her drop to her knees in despair for her lost daughter. I am so moved by the sight that

I have to stop speaking. Matt fades out as well, and we are left with a long moment of silence, punctuated by quiet sobs from several points in the circle.

I hold that intimate silence as long as I can bear it, and just a few breaths longer. And then I start to hum softly. Matt begins to speak of what it means to hope, what it means to heal. I shift to words now, my voice slowly building in a crescendo, "Hold on, hold on, hold the vision, that's being born..." Matt urges the group to hold on, to trust that there is an end to the dark season. They are slow to respond at first, but soon, I see hands reaching, finding other hands. I hear voices join with mine. Then we are singing, sweetly, fervently, supporting each other.

Demeter stays on her knees, weeping. I do not expect her to rise with us. She has just lost her daughter, and we are facing a long winter. But still, we mortals hold on. We hope.

Next year we will have the opportunity to live this story through from season to season. I can't begin to describe the range of emotions that I feel when I think about the rituals that will rise from the work of the year. Every single ritual I have been to that invokes this story has been life-altering in some way, no matter how innocuous it seemed at the time. I am ready for a year of healing, for exploring the nature of power, what it means to face loss, and what

it means to find your heart's desire. I am ready to spend a year learning what it means to embrace hope.

We are gathered around a large fire in our newest ritual area, Persephone's Gate. "These seeds are singing," Persephone says, as she bends down to touch the large cauldron full of grass seed on the altar. These native seeds will go to heal land near the Grove that has been devastated by clear-cutting. "These seeds are singing," she repeats. "The song is what allows the green shoot to crack through the ice. Life has a song. Will you sing it?"

There isn't a single character in the Persephone story that doesn't speak to what it means to hope. Demeter hopes for her daughter's return while the mortal world suffers a long winter and she despairs of ever finding her. Pluto prays, when Persephone leaves in the spring, that she will find her way back to him. Persephone herself hopes that she will be able to break free of the roles of maiden and daughter in order to claim her place as queen and goddess. And we humans can only pray and hold on to the hope that the light will return, and the cold season will give way to warmth. When it comes right down to it, holding on to hope is a pretty powerful act of magic.



SIX SEEDS

PERSEPHONE'S STORY OF ACTION AND CONSEQUENCES



Hungry. Here in the darkness, I am a Goddess and I am hungry. I am Queen in this wealthy place. My mother is and represents the abundance of the Earth. The wheat – the rich, golden grain that waves in the wind and gives itself for the bread is Hers. She is the Wealthy One.

My husband is Pluto. He is and represents the abundance that is beneath the Earth – metals, gold and silver, the intriguing beauty of precious stones. Those stones, they now hold color because I brought the rainbow to this place. I put its vibrancy into the rocks that you treasure. Those gems, they are the flowers here below.

I hold the seeds. I hold the souls of the flowers in my hands and I release them one by one into life. I hold the souls of all the creatures of the Earth. I take away the nicks and gouges left by the stories that you have told and the stories that you have lived. The wisdom of your adventures goes to the depths within you. Your wisdom isn't lost; it goes to a secret place beneath the surface, like I did. If you can imagine your soul as a seed, know that I hold that

seed. Your wisdom deep within, your stories, wounds and adventures on the surface.

I hold the seed. I will take your wounds if you will sacrifice them to me. In my hands, you are restored. In my hands, your soul becomes smooth again. You are a seed, smooth and ready for a new telling.

In your world there are many truths, as many as there are people to tell them. In my world there are four truths and one law. The truths: Anything can be healed. I am the Queen here and I keep the patterns of regeneration.

This trip to the Underworld is always made alone. Once here, you can only give me what is yours, you may ask me to heal the pain of another, but I cannot.

The one law that governs me is the most difficult for humans to understand... What you give to me for healing, you must give up completely. I cannot heal a wound that you insist on keeping.

Here, in the Underworld, I am Queen. I am a Goddess. Do you have anything to give me?

When I am in Demeter's realm, my hair is the color of sunlight. Here, my hair is the dark wonder of the tree roots, wild and twisted. In both worlds, I am beautiful. Both worlds want me, both worlds need me.

Daughters grow up. We do. Being the daughter of a Goddess was my beginning but it was not my destiny. I yearned to be myself and to discover who I really was. It wasn't Pluto who took me away. It wasn't his desire that abducted me... it was *my* desire. It was my desire to be myself that snatched me from view and pulled me to the depths.

For my mother, I disappeared. For Pluto, color and warmth entered the underworld. And for me, I became a woman instead of a daughter. I will tell you that story as we move into summer and then on into autumn. I tell you that story again every summer as I ripen in the summer sun, as I swell into the lushness of autumn. This year, you will know how to hear me. You will know how to listen. You will hear my voice in the peach as it turns gold and succulent. You will hear my story as the apple turns red and juicy.

I am the daughter of Earth's abundance, Her grain and Her harvest. There was no other destiny for me but to become myself. There is a time in every life when your



“In my hands, you are restored. In my hands, your soul becomes smooth again. You are a seed, smooth and ready for a new telling.”

heart and soul and body sing “pick me, harvest me”. At that time in my life, I fell to the earth, my body yearned to become one with the mystery of all that was beneath the surface, with all that I did not know. There was no other destiny for me but to become myself.

Is there another destiny for you? Do you choose a path that will take you to a place foreign to your own becoming? No matter which road you take, you will *become*; but all roads do not lead to your becoming. All of your roads will end in death. That death will bring you to the Underworld and to me. Not all roads lead to life. I yearned to be one with the mystery and so, I was. I discovered my power. . will you?



“Pomegranate. A seed filled with seeds. Blood-red, jewel-red... the color of life. The color of integrity. The color of garnets and rubies, each seed filled with water and fire.”

That first winter, I did not eat. In my culture, to eat with another is to be forever bound. Food is a communion, you take in and become one with what you eat. Every meal is Communion with my Mother, it is communion with a whole community of gardeners and cooks, of elemental spirits and those who serve them. In my culture, the union and communion of a meal was also a promise. A contract.

I didn’t act quickly to seal my fate. I did not eat. My time with Pluto was an initiation into the mysteries... me into his and him into mine.

And then, the rain called. It called. It brought my memories of my Mother to me. It brought the sweetness of the Earth and life on the Earth to my senses. I could smell grass. Do you remember how grass smells? And wind? And dawn? And rain... Ohh, the smell of rain. I could smell apples and roses and the sweet, sweet scents of summer. It was as if the rain opened the Earth and I could smell light. I could feel color as it touched my skin. I was hungry.

I had not eaten. I was hungry for Earth again and I was hungry for the Underworld. I was hungry for Pluto and the work I did here. I was hungry for the meadow and the flowers that followed me everywhere. Most of all, I was hungry to be all that I am, not just one aspect of myself. I wanted to be all that I am. I was hungry before the first spring and I am hungry now.

If I went back into life with no bonds to the Underworld but my own desire to return, my fate would be in the hands of my Mother. If I stayed hidden in the underworld, I would be giving up my freedom. My destiny would belong to Pluto.

My life would be decided by others. It would be decided according to their desires rather than my own. That is the fate of everyone who makes no contracts, who isn’t willing to bite into their own life. That was not going to be my story. The contract that determined my life would be mine.

Pomegranate. A seed filled with seeds. Blood-red, jewel-red... the color of life. The color of integrity. The color of garnets and rubies, each seed filled with water and fire. I had a pomegranate. I would not choose either. I would choose both.

Six seeds. I ate six seeds. Six months I live beneath the surface, six months I live above. I am Daughter and I am Queen. I am Kore the maiden and Persephone the Goddess. I satisfied my hunger with six seeds.

Is your fate at the whim of the Gods and Goddesses? Is your life in the hands of Zeus who said “I didn’t think it would matter. After all, she was just a girl.” Or do you know what you hunger for and if you do... will you take a bite? What contracts will you make with life?

Spend a year with the magic, mystery, and healing that this story brings.

Join us for Mystery School 2010.

*Registration is open now at
www.dianasgrove.com
or call 573.689.2400.*

HOPE GROWS IN A GARDEN

by River Roberts



As a city-dweller who doesn't have any yard space to speak of (I make up for it with house-plants), I cherish the opportunity to come to the Grove and wander around 142 acres of protected land. I also relish being able to admire and relax in the community gardens. Even to the untrained eye, it's obvious that these tiny plant sanctuaries were created with both love and intention. The garden spaces at the Grove are true gems, and well worth your time during your next visit.

I asked Meghan Keeler, former Grove resident and top-notch gardener, to give us a virtual tour. Meghan is a devoted student of the wild—skilled in everything from herbalism to animal tracking. Becoming a gardener seemed like a natural evolution for her. "Gardening came into the mix via a desire to live more sustainably alongside a desire to be less dependent on our modern version of 'living,'" says Meghan. "Given the choice, I'd rather be planting my own food than be working someplace so I can buy food from a store that had it trucked in. So I decided to learn to garden. Turns out it's a life-long process!"

The Grove is home to three main gardens. We'll start with the largest one, which is situated midway between the Barn and the Meadow Cabin. Initially a food-producing garden, Grove staff member and land advocate Charles Williams planted it in 2006. A couple of years later, Meghan and Flame, another former resident and gardening expert, began to shift the focus of the garden from food to an inviting space for guests to visit and enjoy. "I was still into planting tomatoes such as heirlooms, grape and sungolds, as well as a wide variety of herbs," explains Meghan. "Meanwhile, Flame began adding stone pathways, a shed, various ornamental species and some fruit trees. We had a nice combination of function and form including foods like Jerusalem Artichokes, onions, garlic, peppers, tomatoes, basil (5 varieties!), sage, oregano, thyme, sativa, apples, beans, and melons. These grew alongside some lovely native and ornamental plants like marshmallow, echinacea, mugwort, roses, cedars, sunflowers, marigolds, chicory, cinquefoil, butterfly bush, coreopsis and many more. The new paths, shed and gazebo all added an element of structure and order to the regular explosions of nature."

The second garden is also at the bottom of the hill, next door to "Sun and Moon in Leo," one of the guest cabins. This one also began as a food garden, but was re-purposed as a decorative space. One of the highlights of this garden is the pentacle laid out in the center, the top point of which points to true north. Just outside the fence there's a hearty supply of mint and spearmint surrounding a bench where visitors can relax and enjoy the season.

"The garden up the hill, which I affectionately call the weed garden, is my favorite," Meghan admits. "This one was born during the Earth Activist Training course in 2006. We started with a lawn and three Mimosa trees, everything else came from the work of about a dozen people. This garden was intended to be a native plant refuge, and we moved many plants in from the surrounding landscape. In the last



Meghan's favorite garden just outside the Meeting Space was created during the Earth Activist Training course in 2006. It includes a myriad of native plants such as coral berry, yarrow, and wild ginger.

few years many wonderful natives have ‘volunteered’ of their own accord.” There are too many garden residents to name here, but you can find elderberry, coral berry, wild ginger, yarrow, chickweed and many more.

Meghan loves to talk about her “weed garden,” particularly about its medicinal plants. “Part of what drives my interest in the plant world is an appreciation for its ability to heal. I find it funny, in a sad way, that many of the common weeds people work so hard to kill are some of our most powerful North American plant healers. These would include plants like dandelion, the roots of which activate the liver to help detoxify the body. Plantain repairs tissues and has some nutritive value. Elderberry has toxic leaves but useful flowers and berries. Almost any plant I can think of has some healing quality. I often suspect that all plants have some gift to offer. There is an irony to the fact that the ones we modern people most often spray with poisons are the very ones that heal ailments caused by poisons.” To help create a space for these plant healers to flourish, Meghan helped to shift the theme of this garden to “Healing” by adding a few domestic healers to the wild ones already present, including valerian, lemon balm, basil, thyme and mint.

I love to talk to gardeners and other green thumb-types about their personal philosophy around tending plants. When I asked Meghan, she responded, “You know—my philosophy looks a bit unkempt from the outside. I let most anything that pops up have a shot at holding space in the garden. If it grows, I am likely to let it stay... at least for a while. I don’t do a great deal of weeding and I often apologize to the plants when I do. Nature has an ordered



“...I not only let volunteer plants hang around, I’ve also transplanted many a healing ‘weed’ into my garden—like dandelions and dock. I guess that runs parallel in a way to the Grove’s goal of providing sanctuary—be it to Mystery School participants, dogs or the flora and fauna of the wild—we tend to welcome whoever shows up.”

dandelions and dock. I guess that runs parallel in a way to the Grove’s goal of providing sanctuary—be it to Mystery School participants, dogs or the flora and fauna of the wild—we tend to welcome whoever shows up.”

I then asked Meghan to talk about the future of the Grove gardens. “There is not a designated gardener living at the Grove right now, so I have a hope that the gardens will be maintained in the old-fashioned Grove style: by the community. I hope that, as a community, those who have a love for gardens will give a little love during their visits to the Grove.” She went on to say that a good garden doesn’t need a person full-time. “Often all that’s needed are some dedicated hours at the right times: clearing (in the fall), planting (in the spring), harvesting (in the summer and fall) and, ok sure... some weeding in the middle! I really love coming back to the Grove and finding signs of other hands at work.

“Gardening is an act of hope—like life, plants are often kind of cute from the perspective of ‘the great perhaps’—and yet, the natural world is also, I believe, an affirmation and a promise: you’ll always get something for your effort (though the form might be unexpected.)”

Whether you come to the Grove and spend time weeding or simply enjoy one of the glorious heirloom tomatoes at dinner, I invite you to spend some time with the gardens. May they inspire a little hope.



The garden immediately at the bottom of the hill is a decorative garden with paths, benches, fragrant herbs, and flowers. It’s a great place to relax and take in the beauty of the season.

sense of chaos that I rather enjoy and I don’t need a sense of symmetry and balance to find a garden beautiful. In fact, I not only let volunteer plants hang around, I’ve also transplanted many a healing ‘weed’ into my garden—like

IN THE SHADOW OF HOPE



by Cynthia Jones

Eight new-born pups were taken from their mother and put into a plastic Wal-Mart bag. His father said “Jimmy, do something with them. Don’t come back until it’s done,” and sent him out the door. He didn’t want to leave the babies in the woods to die. He didn’t know what to do. In tears, he knocked on the door of a local woman known for taking in strays. Like Jimmy, she wanted to help; like Jimmy, she didn’t know how. She couldn’t feed the pups every three hours. Cow’s milk will kill them. How do you feed a newborn puppy anyway? It takes more than compassion to save lives. She called us.

“Yes”, I said. I have pups in my closet and pups on my porch; pups in the massage space and pups in the kennel house. Everyone has one more closet, don’t they? We met her halfway between her small town and ours. Shiny little pups, healthy and hungry, they came to us nestled in a box covered with a towel. They will never know the fate they barely escaped. They are now being cared for by a foster mom whose six beagle-esque pups are long past due for weaning.

Compassion is a large word, a word honored in every spiritual tradition. Compassion must be supported by compassionate options. It is easy to expect right action and think poorly of the person who does something else. Why not raise the pups and give them away, you ask? Why not take them to a shelter? But what will happen to the weanling when he is taken home and discarded a week later as so many “free to a good home” pups are? What do

you do when all the shelters are full? Only one in ten pups finds a home—one in ten. Well then, you say, Mom should have been spayed. I agree, and there aren’t any low-cost spay/neuter clinics or options in our area. There aren’t any vets. Poor areas hunger for solutions.

It is hard to imagine a place where compassion is a luxury and no one has the cash, time, or commitment to create an alternative. It is easy to blame the unfortunate for their unfortunate choices. “Not my problem, I spayed my dog.” “Not my problem, I don’t have a dog.” And yet, we are a society. We live in a world where we want our children to learn kindness, to value life. We want the mystery and miracle of birth to inspire wonder, compassion and care. The way a child learns to treat animals informs how they will treat their friends, children, families and you. It isn’t about dogs, it is about the kind of world we want to create. You are the maker of the consciousness of your times. It is hard to imagine a world with no caring solutions for new-born pups, but I live in such a world. I am the solution for 600 local dogs each year, and 400 local families—twice the population of the nearest town.

Stand tall for the values you believe in. When hope is distant and the sun is just right, that hope casts a long shadow. Tiny miracles of care, effort, love and action live in hope’s shadow. Reach, stretch, stand tall for that which you believe in; in the shadow of hope small miracles get a chance at life.