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One of the very best things about editing a newsletter is that you get so many letters. Most of these letters are "personal" letters as well as including comments and other materials for The Crone Papers.

One of the very worst things about editing a newsletter is that you don't usually have time to answer every single one of these letters with the personal reply it deserves. I do answer quite a lot of these letters but I never have the time to answer all of them. I hope that those of you who haven't received personal answers to your notes will accept The Crone Papers as a "personal" letter. [as a helpful hint, the chances of my answering letters personally is increased if you enclose a SASE -- not only because of saving on my enormous postage bill, but it saves time and fuss and all I have to do is answer the letter.]

Whether or not I get around to a personal answer, please know that I greatly appreciate your thoughts, good wishes, suggestions and comments. Obviously, The Crone Papers could not exist without your constant input.

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WOMEN, WIVES, AGE

Going back to my comments previously about wives not being expected to have any sensible and real thoughts, or the knowledge to growth the, I suppose this reflects my age, too. I inherited some money and my husband said he would investigate for me and find a safe, stable sort of investment for it. Having chosen something, I sent in the required amount--and received papers made out to BOTH of us. His name was not on the check; it was just assumed that I would make it joint. There was a purpose in mind for not doing so, but they never asked. I requested a change. Nothing happened. I then wrote to the woman whose name was on the interest check--anyone signing company checks has a certain authority. The change was made--pronto! I held a power of attorney for my sister at one time. I read it carefully and decided exactly what it expressed, but gave in to urging to consult an attorney to be sure--who confirmed my own feelings. I carefully examined papers for a land purchase and spotted a railroad right-of-way across the front of it, so refused to sign until it was removed. At about age 45, I went to college for some credit courses, freshman level. The male teacher, much younger, was absolutely astounded that I could write about passionate (non-sexual) emotions. Women don't live in a vacuum! It was not autobiographical, either. Some of the problem may be a "ladylike" exterior for dress, manners, speech, without--I hope--being unduly so. To be otherwise is to deny my sex, age and station in life, which is wife, mother, grandmother. It may just be that I have been caught in the swirl of changes, neither one nor the other, as the new age enters.

Timothea

My dear husband is a Christian and if I die before he does, I will be put away as a Christian. But I do not care what he does with this old wore out body of mine, because I will be too happy in the next world to bother about anything else.

Now having a good relationship if one is an Old one and one is a Christian is not a hard thing to do -- if each one knows what the other thinks and are before they get married. You have to be truthful with each other in the beginning then work real hard to make the other person happy, go to his church like I do and make them all like you -- then my husband helps me with my work on spells and other things I wish to do. If you love each other you can work things out and both will be happy with their own religion.

Alice

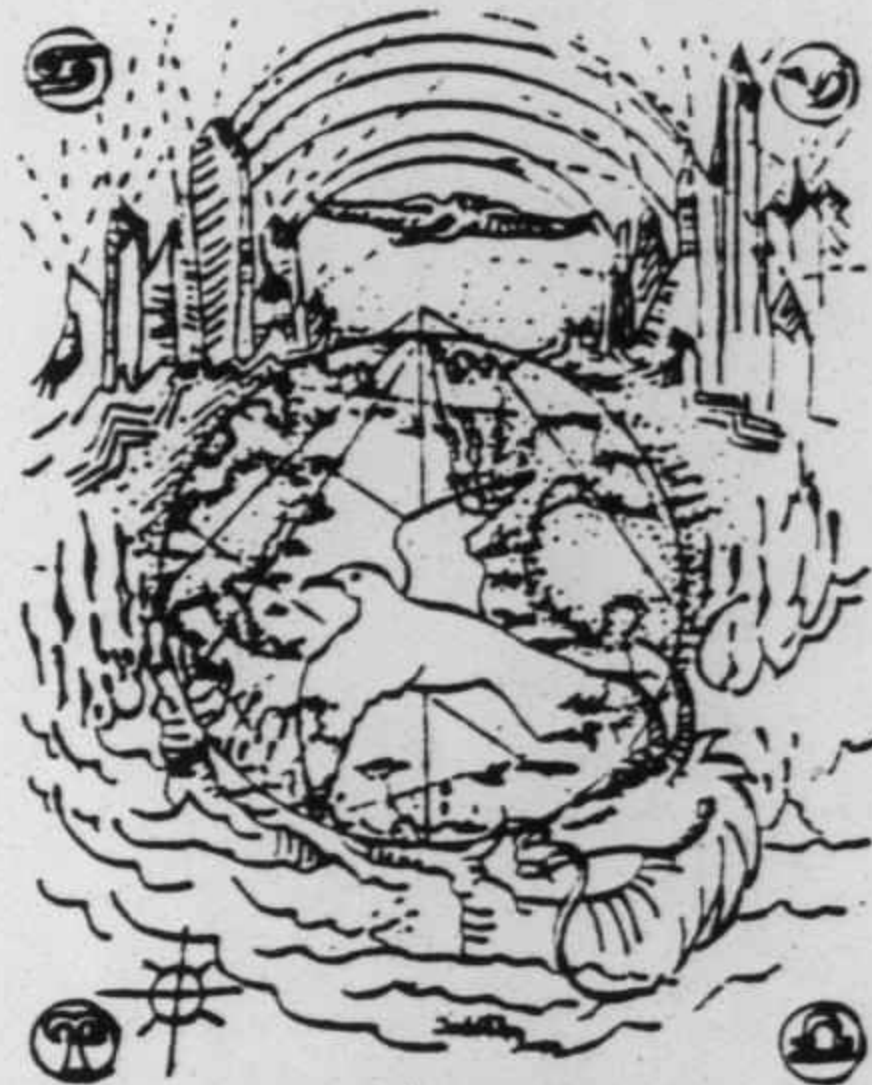
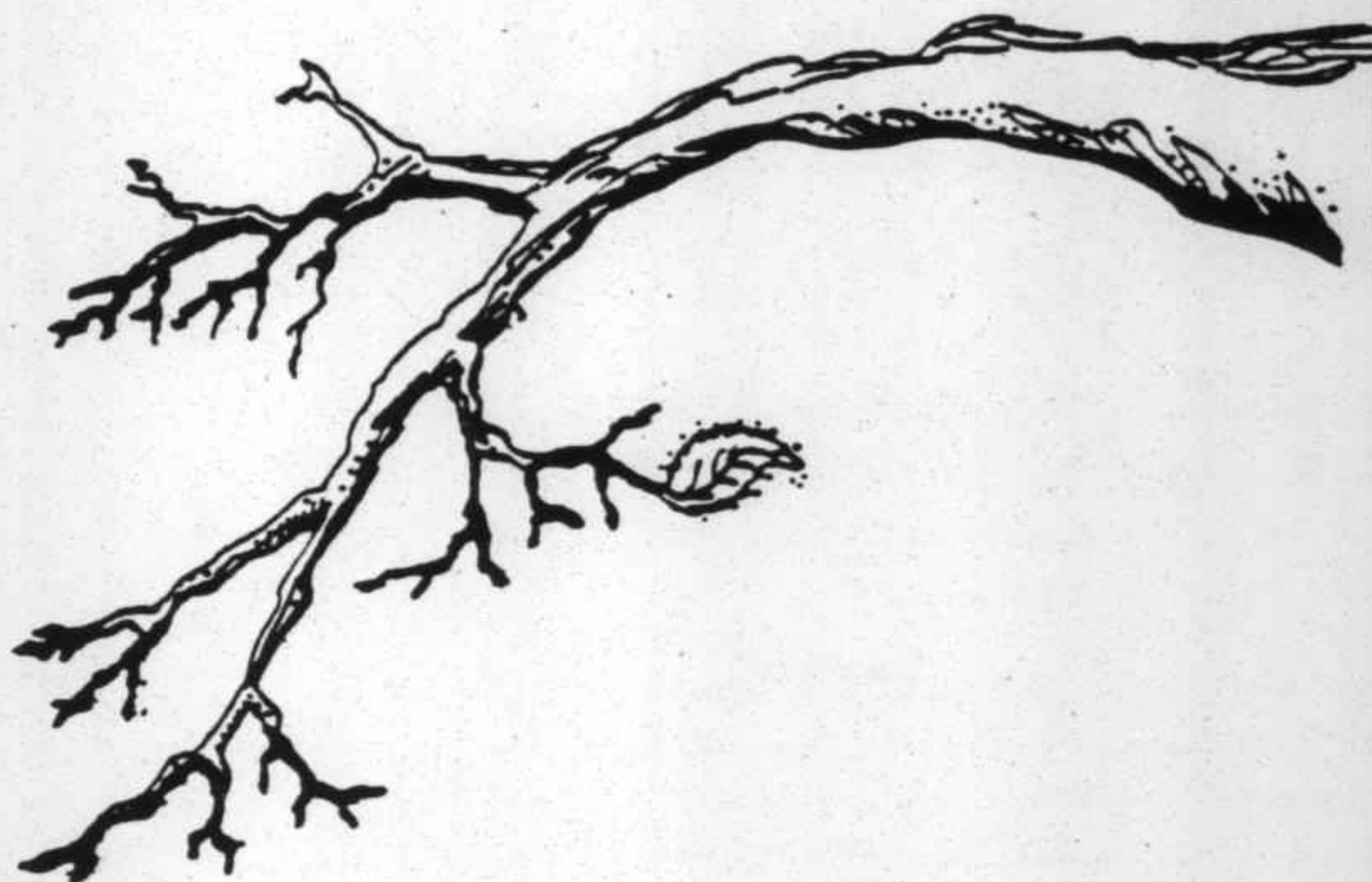
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CRONOLOGICALLY SPEAKING

My path to Cronehood...Now that I am 57, (and enjoying it) I can look back and think about the things that have led me here...Bible Study since 1977 has done a lot...it has made me ask questions...study a little more archaeology...ask more questions, what went on before that? This led of course to the old religions...and now to the Neopagans...

Yes, I am married...I sang in the church choir for many, many years ...Upon reaching 40, decided to fulfill my lifelong ambition...I started, (not returned to..) College...got my degree and R.N....all at night. I am now working part time, and helping my children through college...at this writing, we again have 3 in college at the same time...my youngest is going to college this September, and the house will be empty except for my husband and myself...during this past year, I have been learning about Wicca, Neopagans, and as much as I can study...This is why I have been so seeking, searching and yearning for something else...and now I think I have found what I have been searching for...the love of the Goddess...the old religion...where woman was in command...



Strangely enough, I come from a family where my aunts told me that the way the wife runs the house, that is the way the family will go ...and she always allows the husband to believe that he is the boss...it keeps him quiet...It is SHE that bears the children..the life giving force...It is SHE that raises them with loving hands, and gives nourishment to their minds...cares for their bodies in sickness and in health, and when the end is in sight, she also does the caring for whoever needs it...This is what I have learned, not in so many words, but through osmosis...In my own family too...I am the strong one, the dominant personality...the one that opens her mouth faster and comes out with opinions quicker than my mate ...Of course, it would stand to reason that he too, is no dummy ...Professional Engineer...married to this, my second husband for almost 28 years...He still going on in the religion that was our when we met and married, understanding such of what I now believe, and letting me go my own way...Even though married for such a long time we have always realized that we each need our own space, for our work, and for our own interests...Even our hobbies are different...It makes for wonderful talks and discussions when we have time together.

CRONE IMAGERY - STRONG AND POSITIVE

Here is the Crone...The crone is not old, she is mature. She is not unkempt, she is tidy. She is no longer in the chubbiness of childhood, or the boniness of being a teen-ager, no longer the svelte sophistication of the young wife. She has the buxum beauty of what the old Teutonic Tribes would call "saftig", beyond the readily blushing bride stage...

The Crone is wise with the wisdom of the ages, and yet with a book on her lap to teach the young ones...children and grandchildren alike...older so that she would

have raised her children by now, and is in this comfortable, serene time where she can start to relax... note the few extra pounds that have been added since the daily stress of husband and children and housework have been subtracted. Things come easier now...the flowing gown is more comfortable than the girdle or pantyhose of the business world that she may have been in for many years...

The look of contentment is written on her face now that she has time for the things she believes important. Time to give to herself and and others...love to impart to family and friends...energy to do all the things that she now wants to do. The power of the Crone is great. She is beyond the juvenile scene of letting her hair go in an unkempt manner. She has come to the realization that straggly hair gets in the way of cooking and eating, and has done hers up in a neat bun. It is clean and becomes her. She looks serene.

Her hands also show her age. They are no longer the soft smooth fingers of a younger woman...but show each line and wrinkle...the care that they have given...toilworn from washing clothes...burned from the cooking pots and pans, and all the ovens that were hers...old from the many chores that befell her...yet in these hands one can also see the care that was given by them...the loving that was imparted to a child, the caresses given to a husband or lover...the nursing of a fevered brow, (and other various parts of anatomy and physiology...)

The strong legs, which have walked and climbed tens of thousands of miles in their day, resting now on a little footstool...feet tired and bruised.

She is the embodiment of the Goddess...the Goddess that lies dormant in everywoman...coming from its hiatal period to the full blossoming of true womanhood...

Now is her time..



Diana0

CRONE RITUAL
THIS IS AN OUTLINE OF THE RITUAL DONE AT THE
PAGAN SPIRIT GATHERING

NOTES: Two of the participants accepted appointment as "song leaders". After the ritual was worked out and outlined, they undertook to select appropriate songs. They then sang and those participants who knew the songs joined in. There wasn't time to teach the songs for this ritual, and it really seemed to work extremely well this way (with a choir so to speak).

Most participants were costumed as aspects of the God/desses in any of their phases. Costuming was selected by participants according to their intuitions and not in any limited by the youth or age of each individual. Among these aspects were the God as Smith, as Warrior, as Hunter and possibly more. Goddesses appeared as Bag Lady, Black Crone, Warrior Mother, Warrior Maiden, Atropos (as a Samuri), Elder Shaman(woman), Isis, Sea Mother, etc. Black hooded capes were worn by the individuals aspecting the Goddess as Crone and by those who would be calling the quarters.

The altar was set up with cup, candles and a cauldron and a moon bowl full of water. (A moon bowl, to me, is a silver (colored) shallow bowl. I used a very large stainless steel mixing bowl.) Cookies (Beket cookies and Ginger "men") were provided for the "cakes" and ice water for the "Ale" -- it was HOT!!

When everyone was ready, the song leaders began a song and participants entered the circle. The hooded figures led the group and gathered, hooded closely around the center, heads bowed. The other costumed figures enter with the uncostumed last.

As the song ended, the hooded figures in the center spiraled out and "hobbled" around being "wicked old Witches" for about one turn around the Circle. Then they slowly removed their capes and revealed their aspects. The capes were placed around the edge of the Circle to outline it.

The quarters were called according to a method described by Tziporah Cline wherein the East was called by someone aspecting a child, the South by a youth (or maiden), the West by a mature adult (in our case by the Mother as Warrior) and the North by crone or elder (here by the Elder Shaman(esse)).

The Song Leaders began another song and as everyone quieted, the Shaman of the North led everyone into the Center and sat, beginning as a story teller does as the song leaders let the song die away. The story teller led into the guided meditation, "The Faces of the Crone". This meditation was led by another individual (Fox, the "Green Button Lady") although it could, of course, have been led by the story teller.

"Consider the face of the Crone. Relax. Center. Find the peaceful place within.

"The face of the Crone is the face of the maiden--for in the mirror of her grandmother's eye she sees what she will become.

"The face of the Crone is the face of the Samuri--for she knows when the thread must be cut.

"The face of the Crone is the face of the good witch--magickal and loving.

"The face of the Crone is the face of the huntress--for she knows the place of death-in-life.

"The face of the Crone is the face of the Shaman, the Craftsman--for wisdom and skill know no gender.

MORE →

"The face of the Crone is the one next to you now—turn and know her. The face of the Crone is my face...the face of the Crone is your own."

[pause. Allow people to consider the lessons they have learned. Do not rush this, not let it go on so long restlessness sets in. Begin re-centering..]

"Relax. Relax. Draw a deep, cleansing breath, release it slowly. Become aware first of yourself. Breathe deeply. Become aware of us around you, our circle. Rest gently in the breast of our mother the earth. Take another deep breath, let it go. Look around you now with new-opened eyes, from the peaceful place within. Center. Be here now."

When the meditation was over, the ritual progressed into its second portion, a Death Crone Ritual done for a young man in the final stages of AIDS. He was represented in Circle by a coven-mate who did a great deal of the design for this portion of the ritual.

After a few moments silence, the God as Smith began, very, very softly and with a deep voice, the chant of "Crone...Crone...Crone" As this chant grew in volume and intensity, the Smith and the Dying God stood in the center of the group. The Smith tied the hands of the young God with ties of red cord and each spoke on ties, transitions, freedom. The Goddess as Atropos came forward and cut the bonds (with a samuri sword) and the representation of Hecate, in black and veiled came forward and said:

"We have seen the Crone of the Shadows. She who guards the great mysteries and grants, sometimes, a glimpse of them.

"There is another Crone -- She of the black veiled face, who cuts the thread of all life. To her we all must one day turn. The Dark Crone has two faces, one of retribution, vengeance, the face of the furies, the valkeries, of nemesis.

"Another face has the Crone of Transition; a face of mercy and kindness. Of death come in it's good time, of death given as a resolution of suffering, of death withheld a time to allow a worthy completion of life.

"We ask this face be turned to our friend; that he may complete his studies and receive his advancement in the Craft and that, if indeed you seek him soon for your last, glorious time of changing, that he find you in peace and joy."

Hecate then threw back the veil from her face and kissed the young God. She stepped back and other aspects and participants stepped forward, much as fairy Godmothers visit the cradle of new birth, to give gifts to he who may be nearing death. These gifts included the vision of Summerland, of incarnation again, whole and well, of courage and serenity, energy and love. Some gifts were tangible, stones, crystals, etc.

When the gift giving was complete, the cookies and ice water were passed among those present and the Song Leaders sang 5 minutes or so to give a quiet personal meditation time before conversation began. At the end of the songs, all were led in grounding and explanation, discussion, etc. could begin. After a time of this, when some were ready to leave, the individuals who had called the quarters closed the Circle.



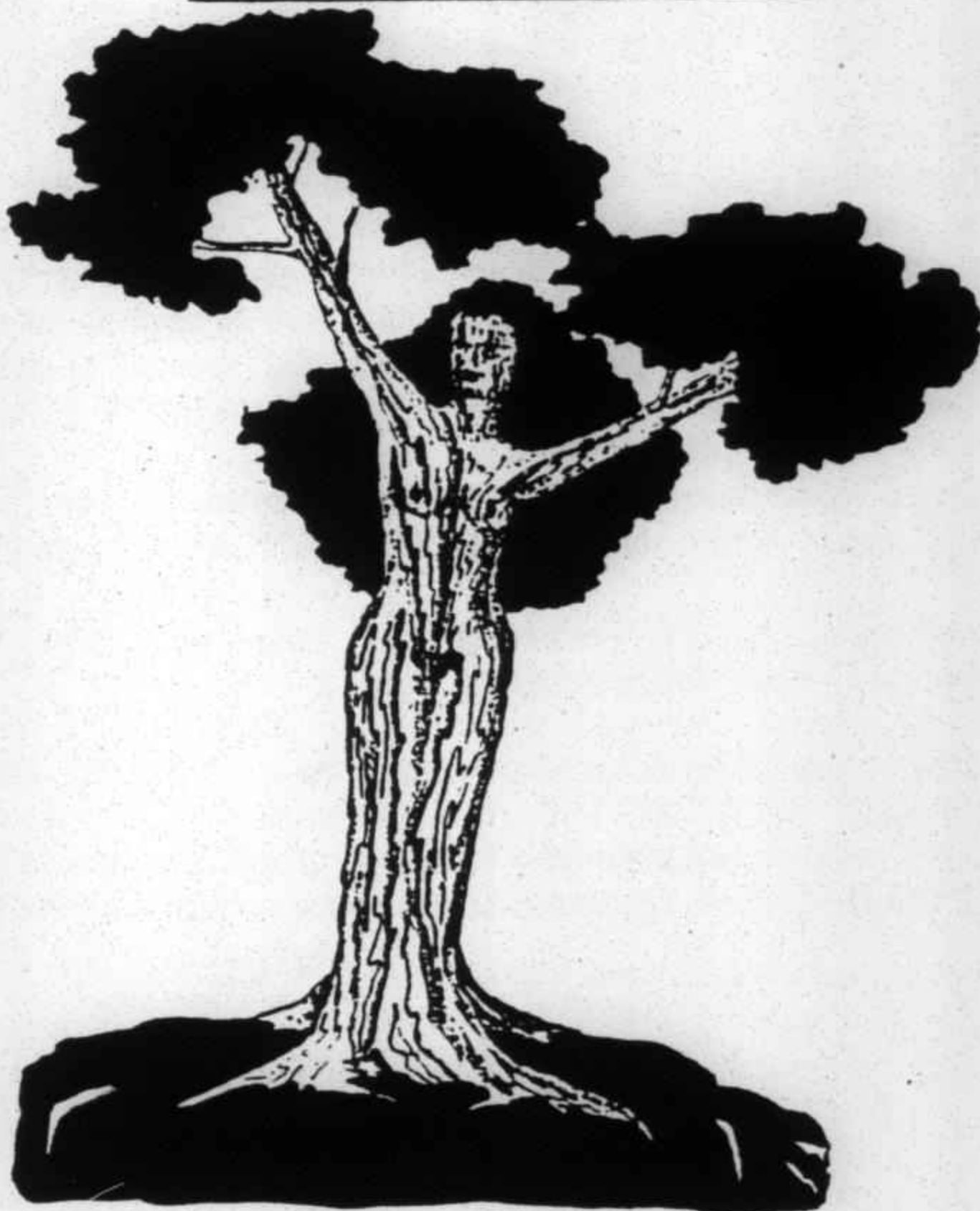
COMMENTS

Just a few comments on Crone Papers. Wow! You're outdoing yourself with each issue. I'm so delighted with the input from folks like Shayna -- the Croneing Ritual is just beautiful. It brought tears to my eyes. Also Invocation to Hekate by Don Lewis.

Shatay

Agreed whole-heartedly with Shayna's words about being more inspired and prepared to face Cronehood. Also feel very strongly that we all should acknowledge, support, protect, and speak well of each other, as Shekhinah Mountainwater suggests. It's far too easy to close eyes and mind to what is going on around us. Positive reinforcement on multiple levels can only help us all in the long run. A "Thank you" to Don Lewis for the Invocation to Hekate -- lovely, beautiful, stirring.

Laira



I sometimes feel that the whole thing (Wicca, etc.) has sort of been play-acting for a lot of people, but I feel that this is going to change and that change is just beginning. I think the acceptance of the Crone, indeed welcoming her, is part of this process. I feel that if we are on the verge of a new era as far as Pagan thinking goes and that all the bickering and back biting that one hears mentioned more than observes will become less of a problem. Lets face it, there are some real problems out there (AIDS, the threat of environmental catastrophe or nuclear war, economic chaos, etc.) and what "tradition" you are or what color candles you use are not among them. I sense more people are getting serious about what they are doing as pagans. I think something is very definitely "in the wind" as far as major CHANGE goes. The energy current seems very intense, yet unstable. There is a lot in the "unseen" world going on, I can intuit a lot but interpretation is very hard sometimes.

Paula

←
I'm not sure how this piece came about. I just started thinking about Crone Papers and how Mother Nature is the most venerable Crone of all. I love doing pictures of trees -- all sorts, from scraggly to impressive, so I guess this piece just sort of popped into my mind.

OBJECTIONS TO MUCH OF WHAT WE HAVE SAID ABOUT THE CRONE

Lady Artanis sends the following letter:

I just today received my first issue of TCP, which I read with mixed emotions. I'm not really sure exactly what you are trying to express. I also must state the article "Crone Ritual at P86" was very upsetting! Pointed hats, "Glenda", the good witch of the North, images of Joan Collins and the Gabor, Come On!!

The Crone aspect is indeed a rich and fulfilling transaction that each female will experience in due time but aren't you, "Iriel" making a mockery of this sacred experience?

In the Wiccan religion we do pay respect to the Crone aspect, as we do Maiden and Mother. But to be portrayed as such figures is appalling!

I am a 3rd degree Wiccan High Priestess with a Coven and Network. I teach the Old Religion and old laws to my chosen family. If I were to entertain your thoughts of the Crone I would be breaking my Wiccan Oath and one of the laws; "And the greatest virtue of a High Priestess be that she recognizes that youth is necessary to the representation of the Goddess. And that thereby will she return to that pride of place in another life with greater power and beauty..."

Yes when the time comes I will lovingly surrender to a younger priestess, but do we not hold the Key that unlocks the door of youth.

I am led to believe that your thought and ideas are a little mixed. Is not the Crone the third aspect of the triple Goddess? And your article "The Croning Ritual" now we have a time in life "56" when POOF, we are now into Cronehood!!

In modern day society there is so much emphasis on youth, are you not leaning a little too much on the counter point?

Any Wiccan with the proper training would be very upset upon reading such article. Yes, self-esteem is a daily process we all must travel through but our teaching prepares us for the transitions of age to become an elder with grace, warmth and knowledge that we are reaching attainment. Is that not why we are Wiccan and follow the laws of the Old Religion.

My opinion is one of many but in this time when we, I, am trying with the help and guidance of the old ones and the Goddess and the God to project an image of the Maiden, Mother and Crone in a warm, respectful aspect, "natural", and gracefully and not feeding some mixed up feminists' minds on growing old becomes very defensive. I do not want to be thought of as Glenda [Maiden], Joan Collins [Mother] and the Fairy Godmother [Crone].

We Wiccans take our religion very serious. It is not something we take off the shelf on Sun. It is our life, from birth to death and beyond -- Age is of no matter...

If you seek to help the Crone aspect do it with grace and not mockery. For at any age are we not children of the Goddess..

EDITOR'S COMMENT: It was this teaching and attitude which was one of the early points which brought me to The Crone Papers. I note that many "Wiccans with proper training" have not been upset by our approach to the Crone. Also, Glenda, Joan Collins and the Fairy Godmother are all aspects

(or popular ideas in society) of the Crone! It is not my - or, I believe, our -- goal to conflict with traditional Wicca on this matter, but to enlarge everyone's perception of the Crone and of Crone Time in their own lives.

I do believe that in many cases an older High Priestess will want to step out of the day to day work with a coven and hand over many of her responsibilities to a younger, more energetic individual with fewer projects awaiting her attention. I don't believe that it is essentially any harder for a 75 year-old woman to aspect the Maiden Goddess than it would be for a 20 year-old woman to do the same for the Crone. Actually, the older woman has the advantage of having been a Maiden in this lifetime!

I end this Comment with the hope that Lady A will accept this as a disagreement in opinion and interpretation, not a put-down of her tradition and beliefs. The wide range of practice and belief contained within American Wicca is one of its greatest jewels, most precious qualities and all of us are, I hope, dedicated to the loving maintenance of our separate, harmonious paths.

SERIOUS AND SOLEMN

The question seems to have surfaced in Lady A's letter which I would like to address by quoting briefly from a letter from Amber K, Wiccan Elder, past First Officer of the Covenant of the Goddess, and my friend and teacher. This letter appeared in the Lughnassad 1984 issue of the COG Newsletter. While it was addressed to a specific situation, I believe that its application is as wide as the Craft itself.

"It seems to me that you have confused seriousness with solemnity ... by 'serious' I mean 'earnest in thought and purpose,' and by 'solemn' I mean 'dignified, sober, grave or mirthless.' I am quite serious about my spiritual path; I care about Wicca deeply, and work very hard not only for my individual development but for the good of the Craft. Much of the time I am also solemn about it. Yet when I do laugh, or joke, or write humor or encourage others to do it -- I am still very serious about my spiritual commitment. There is no inherent conflict.

"Laughter expresses appreciation of the ironies, contradictions and surprises in life. As I appreciate life and celebrate it, so I must celebrate the ironies with humor. To ignore this facet of life would be to spurn one aspect of the Goddess's reality. She really is Eris, as well as Diana, Cerridwen etc. Who am I to shun any part of the miraculous Whole -- solemn or silly?

"Indeed we should take ourselves seriously, as part of the Whole. But as little self-important egos, let us not take ourselves too seriously. The Inquisition took themselves seriously, as did Hitler and Stalin -- but the world has never suffered under the heel of a Marcel Marceau.

"As you can see, I am very serious about humor. Her world is full of paradox, and isn't it delightful? Blessings on your commitment and service to Paganism, and may She grant you the gift of laughter you deserve as well."

Amber K

Amber K was my very first teacher in the Craft and I dare to call her also my friend. I could do no other than to edit The Crone Papers keeping in mind her delicious sense of humor as well as her rigorous demands upon her students and her whole-hearted, whole-life commitment to the Craft of Wicca.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

As I find myself with a number of things to say in this issue, I thought for once I'd group it all together instead of sprinkling comments here and there in TCP. Of course, there are still some editorial words appearing after submissions from members which I wanted to add to. After all, it's "my" paper!!

First of all, I feel impelled to declare THE CRONE PAPERS a great success. There are about 45 paid and/or participating members -- and I do mean participating!! I haven't really started typing in this issue as I write this, but I do know that even without counting the "commercials" which will be in their own section, TCP will run more than the 16 pages it has been up to now. This, of course, will cost an extra \$.17 in postage but otherwise, I'd have to permanently leave out a lot of really good stuff. As it is, not everything I already have on hand will make this particular issue. I do date stamp everything which comes in the mail and, in general, will publish more or less in order of receipt. Obviously, I will sometimes save something to go with another article I'm expecting to have.

Let me apologize to all who wish I would cease to shrink the type when printing TCP. I shrink a good deal less than many amateur publications and the result is generally as large or larger than newspaper type. Without the compression allowed by this reduction we'd just have a whole lot less in TCP - not only does full-size type take up more sheets of paper, then they cost more postage.

Beket wrote a wonderful article on making Paganism appropriately available to all -- that includes those who can't make the climb to the meeting place, and who aren't about to boogie all night to raise power. I have sent the article on to the Stardust Salamander where I hope it will see publication in the Samhain issue. I felt that A) it deserved the wider audience, and B) perhaps we of TCP could become sensitive to the issue upon its mention without the need of the article. What I do want is suggestions about what needs to be done to open our rituals and gatherings to all. I know Alice is more or less wheelchair bound; several of us have, to greater or lesser degree, the problems of aging which make sitting on the ground, dancing around for 30 minutes, standing endlessly, etc. a problem; undoubtedly a number of us have hearing or visual problems which sometimes cause us some problem at ritual, etc. What can we do to ease this. Many of us older members have expressed the idea that we are participating in TCP partly because the Craft is getting older. The great bulge of the population is at the 35 - 40 age, they will be Elders soon and we felt that we owed them some help, preparation, and, hopefully, solutions. One of the things which is truly needed is more sensitivity to ALL, not just whoever "US" is at the moment. (Note that young children are also sometimes at risk in ritual which includes ecstatic dancing.)

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Remember that next issue is the networking issue in which will appear the names and addresses of the members who wish to be open to correspondence from other members (and any and all readers, of whatever sort, of TCP) and also, will feature the publications with which we exchange subscriptions.

This issue will step into some slightly more controversial areas. To quote a letter from Timothea: "My generation was taught to speak nicely and not upset people. Well, they have often upset me, so a recent resolve is simply to speak out and "tell it like it is" from my viewpoint and if they get upset--well, maybe it will do them good." And Beket: "...I have stepped on a lot of toes and none too lightly. At times it seems necessary to go beyond nasty Crone and be a crusty curmudgeon, codger, or whatever. Frankly, I'd rather be popular, but I suppose it is more important to deal with the issues honestly."

One controversial issue which TCP has been involved in from the first, and which I deliberately haven't addressed until we had begun to forge some bonds, is the question of Male input. To begin with, let me assure you with all truthfulness, I by no means expected to include males, male views, male participation, etc. in TCP!! I thought of Cronas as US -- old (and not so old) ladies! However, it was unlikely that I would begin a project such as this without at least mentioning it to Serphant..and Paul has been so generous in giving (and seeking) support and advice in various situations that I mentioned it to HIM -- and Ben has been a serious and devoted friend and correspondent for quite a while -- and when all of them immediately sent material -- which I must say, they very diffidently and politely offered with permission to exclude it should I not wish to allow male participation. More important than any of these, that nasty character, Serphant, reminded me that I strongly disapprove of groups, belief systems, etc., which have decided that the way to redress the balance distorted by paternalistic history is to "do like we was done to" -- Well, I really, as an editor, a Priestess, a "mate" and a person with moral standards, had absolutely no choice. I mean, they write good stuff, they find a need to explore their own reactions to, power from and role as elders, they do belong! So with no further apologies, males will continue to be included in TCP so long as they address one of our subjects and don't piss me off.

In a similar vein, one of our members (she wouldn't object to my naming her, but I feel more comfortable yelling at an anonymous figure) said in answer to the question: Are you interested in correspondence with other members of TCP? "Yes, especially if any older women have indicated they are lesbians and would like to write. I have little in common with women who need to rely on men for their identities." I don't know about the other hetro-, bi- or non-sexual readers, but I profoundly resent anyone assuming that my ability to interact with half the race, put on the earth with us wimmin by the GODDESS, is thereby automatically unable to form my own identity. And the implication that ALL lesbians form their own identities and NEVER take identity from their sexual partner!!! I feel quite sure that the author of this comment would resent my expressing a picture of her as a "bull dyke" in a leather jacket, tatoo saying "kill the MF'ers" and a chain in her pocket for the expected bar fight! I, personally, do not believe that all gay males are gentle, sophisticated, work as florists, I happen to know a gay redneck! I don't believe that the mere loving of woman for woman will transform a clinging personality into a positive identity, nor that living with a male will turn a woman into a lace trimmed marshmallow.



SOLITARY CRONE DEDICATION

This ritual is designed for anyone wishing to approach their Cronehood with positivity, intent on growing, and realizing their potential for wisdom.

The Altar will be set up in the Center of the Circle. We "begin" at the Center, we "end" at the Center, we spiral onward. On the Altar will be a Rock Crystal, Incense (crone herbs?) and burner, Candles - your usual Altar candle(s) and three more: white for the Maiden, red for the Mother, black for the Crone, and water, preferable in a shell. Also on the Altar will be bread and wine, your athame, and any personal symbols of wisdom, inner light, beauty, strength, and integrity that are special to you. Set a candle at each quarter.

Enter the Circle from the North (the direction of the Crone) and proceed to the center. Using the Sacred lighter (or match) light the usual altar candle(s). Light the incense. Breathe deeply of the incense, meditate on the Crone, become calm and centered. Think of the Crone as positive, old and wise, compassionate, intelligent, strong, beautiful, warm, a person to be respected and loved. Let go of your fears and negativities. See the Crone as You, You as the Crone.

Cast the Circle in your usual manner, or, using the incense, or athame, begin in the East, and build the Circle, clockwise, with spirit of Air, wisdom. Return the symbol for East to the altar. Then use fire (candle) or wand and build with spirit of fire, creativity, full Circle. Then sprinkle water from the shell around the Circle, and build with love and harmony. Then use the crystal and build with strength and earth energies. When the Circle has been cast: light the Maiden candle from the Goddess altar candle. Proceed to the South. Light the candle there. Say,

"As the maiden, I learn to live and love with passionate intensity. I create my world with joy and imagination. This fire shall always burn within."

Return to the altar, light the maiden candle in its holder, still lit, and take up the Mother candle. Light it from the Altar candle, and walk to the West. Light the candle there and say:

"As the Mother I nurture and heal, plant the seeds of growth and sustenance, I learn love and patience. These qualities shall always flow within."

Return to the altar, setting the Mother candle into its holder. Take up the Candle of the Crone and light it from the Goddess candle. Walk to the North, light the candle there and say:

"As the Crone, I possess creativity, beauty, joy, imagination, nurturance and healing powers, the ability to grow and to share of my bounty with love and warmth. As there is darkness, there is light; where there is coldness, there is heat; where there is negativity, there is positivity. As the Crone, I possess the Wisdom to seek and walk the balance, to weave the web of dreaming where it leads. These things shall always dwell within."

Return to the altar, set the Crone candle in its holder. Take up the Goddess candle and walk to the East. Light that candle, saying,

"I am an embodiment of the multiplicity of the Goddess, Spirit

manifest in physical form. As the moon reflects the sun, I am a perfect reflection of her life force. Within me, at all times, is combined the aspects of Maiden, Mother and Crone. As any facet of the triad, I am never alone--my sisters are always with me.

Return to the Altar and replace the Goddess candle. Stand and feel the peacefulness of acceptance. Feel the power and beauty of the Triad. Tune into the symbols you have placed on your altar. Contemplate on their meaning, shine your light into your future -- it is what you create. Create a positive, joyful existence.

When you feel the time is right, offer some of your bread and wine to the Gods. Share it with them. Be at peace. Thank the Gods for their attendance, ground and open the Circle.

Laira



RELATIONSHIPS

I have just lost a friend (same sex) of 58 years. For all that time, she was there for me, accepting, loving, helping when possible but not often as our life paths were very unlike. We lived many miles apart, but saw each other, however briefly, when we could. It is a great loss. My thoughts at present are wondering how to go about--not replacing--but somehow trying to fill that void in my life? It is probably impossible, because my departed friend knew my home town, my teachers, my family. We helped her, and she helped us marry, since all the families concerned were opposed--it worked out fine for us all. Sometimes, especially about love, the young are wiser than the old. I have acquaintances and group co-members; but no one to whom I feel really close who is living nearby. There are a few correspondents to whom I am close, but we meet seldom if ever. Yes, I would like to have closer friends! How far is it safe to expose my inner self, my soul, to new people? How long should I know them before disclosing more of my private thoughts, feelings, etc.? Perhaps age is no criteria; at least one who seems understanding is half my yearly age. I can understand her age; I have been there, too! She cannot always understand my desires and fears.

The crone age is one of certain wisdom, and most of us have learned caution in the trust placed in new acquaintances. Suggestions are welcome. Do others think it is possible, I wonder, to find such a thing? How? Have they?

Timothea

ON AGING AND THE CRAFT

Because of all these factors - good and bad - I've been backing away from active participation in Pagan/Craft rituals. The Craft is an entire lifestyle and mind set. I'm not giving that up. I couldn't if I tried.

I still teach the Craft and Craft related subjects. On occasion I go to public festivals and sabbats. I'll help out if a H.P. is needed for an initiation, and I still talk to classes on occasion. But I don't have a coven anymore and I don't want one. I'll be 50 years old next summer -- I've done it. If women can be Croned at Fifty, I think the same or similar should be available for men. I just want the respect as an Elder not the "glory" and hassel of H.P. I don't mind giving help, advice and training, but I think "the law" for the High Priestess applies equally for all to "...always step aside for youth..." for this is how the Craft grows.

Don Wildgrube



*The Old Goddess
Speaks Kindly
to
Her Old Cat*

*Opica
1987*



PAEAN TO THE DEATH CRONE

Hail Hekate of the cross roads
Hail Atropos, who holds the thread
of life,
The shears of change.

Hail Dark One who knows our
destination.
She who needs no worship
Who answers for each of us
One prayer only.

Who sees in the darkness
Who hears the silence.

The unchangeable
ever changing.
Who, when the Circle comes at last
to completion,
Sheds for us each
One ray of The Light.

This is your dark night
This candle the reflection of your
darkness.
This libation the token of your
name.

Hail Death who will one day heal us.

Grey Cat

KNOWING, ACCEPTING, THE CRONE

At Spiral, last year, I met you and some other wonderful ladies (and gents) with the result that we had a sort of impromptu meeting/discussion/workshop on the Crone. At that time I was drawn or attracted (as we always are when it is time for us to know/experience something) to this. But, although there was contribution on my part to you, this publication and (I hope) to furthering of the understanding and the being--the manifestation, the actual becoming of the return of the Hag to us, our culture--I did not, in truth, know and understand this Aspect. In that sense, Spiral was my initiation and this following year my comprehension of Her/me. I am not as many of you, post-menstrual. Indeed, I am in the throes of menopause, hot flashes and all. And I have come to learn that at least part of my definition of crone is the fact that I don't agree on most things with most people most of the time --and quite happy about it. (A happy crank is a happy crone?) But Crone. Possibly I have been since age two when my father was killed. I am now almost 44, but not until this part year have I come to understand the grief that has been with me all my life that I can remember. For I was then, as now, a fully operational empath. My mother was devastated (for years). A double burden for a little girl. We were a breffrit, forsaken, grief-stricken, sorrowing couple of Queens of Swords--the Widow. For that is what She is, that side of the Lady. That is the darkness the Crone goes into, passes out of, and that others sense and fear--and rightly. Pain, sorrow, loss, the terrible knowledge of Death of that which is Beloved, after being integrated, survived (first of all) and used (always our lessons must be used) is the hall-mark, the scar, the badge, the grey hair...it leaves its mark on us. Sometimes indefinable, invisible. Salty? Believe it! Understanding? Absolutely. Sympathetic? Maybe. Hard-hearted? It may appear that way to some. Fair-minded, balance-oriented, willing to help--but on Her terms (which I have learned the hard way, being somewhat hard-headed), O sweet, milky maid of youth?! With all that I desire dragons (or unicorns or the heart of Faerie) with a profound desire, I am no longer what one could call Romantic. The happy ending is not always what one would foresee or hope. It is more often something else entirely. And I have learned something else. Something about the forgiveness of that "widow", that pain. Where it is held onto, kept tight and actually made into tradition, there is unbelievable sorrow and trouble. The earth absorbs it, so to speak. Look at Ireland and the Middle East. There the land itself echoes the vengeance in the people's hearts in a terrible vicious spiralling effect. In those lands are the widows losses the most powerful. Both sides have ennobled the pain of breffritnes--and it proliferates geometrically from ancient to the modern. I suggest that it is up to us to be more than examples. To be in our hearts able to pardon, to forgive and to heal. Any suggestions on how to ritualize this or "bring it down"? Please.



WANING MOON CIRCLE

For a long time I have felt that it is necessary to work with all phases of the Moon and aspects of the Goddess. Last week I planned a circle that would focus on the Crone. I placed a large cluster of smokey quartz on the altar. I wrote an invocation calling on Her wisdom. As She took over I felt the urge or need to turn. (I was standing in the North of the circle facing south.) I turned slowly and began to bend over slowly. I bent more and more until I was almost half bent over at the waist. Then She began to speak. She spoke in an 'old person's' voice without the smoothness of a younger voice. She told us that Her's is the ultimate sorrow. She knows all and has seen

the first waves that lapped the shore, the first lava flows that created land. When a person is born, She is there. But her sorrow is that at the moment of birth She sees their death. She knows all of life. I saw her as she sits in a cave seated near a fire with a book. She is alone for none can share the knowledge that she has. She had turned Her back in the circle because no one may look into Her eyes. They are filled with the sorrow. While She said this I did not feel sad or sorrowful. This is Her duty and it is accepted.

I'm not sure how well I have put this down, it is probably best told orally. I just thought that I would share it with you. PS I have enclosed a brief version of the invocation, it is modified from one by the Farrars.

E: From the most ancient times our people have gathered at the time of the Full Moon to workshop. We have followed the Charge of the Mother.

H: But the wise, the wise ones gathered also at the time of the greatest DARKNESS in prayer to She who waits and judges us at the end of time and life.

O: As those wise ancients gathered, so do we join together this night.

H: We call to thee, Hecate, dark sterile mother; thou to whom all manifested life must return, when its time has come. Dark Mother of stillness and rest, before whom mortals tremble because they understand thee not.

O: We call to thee, who are Hecate of the waning Moon, Dark Lady of Wisdom, whom mortals fear because thy wisdom towers above their own. We the hidden children of the Goddess, know that there is naught to fear in thine embrace, which none can escape.

H: We call thee, Crone, grace us with your presence, we who desire justice and wisdom.....



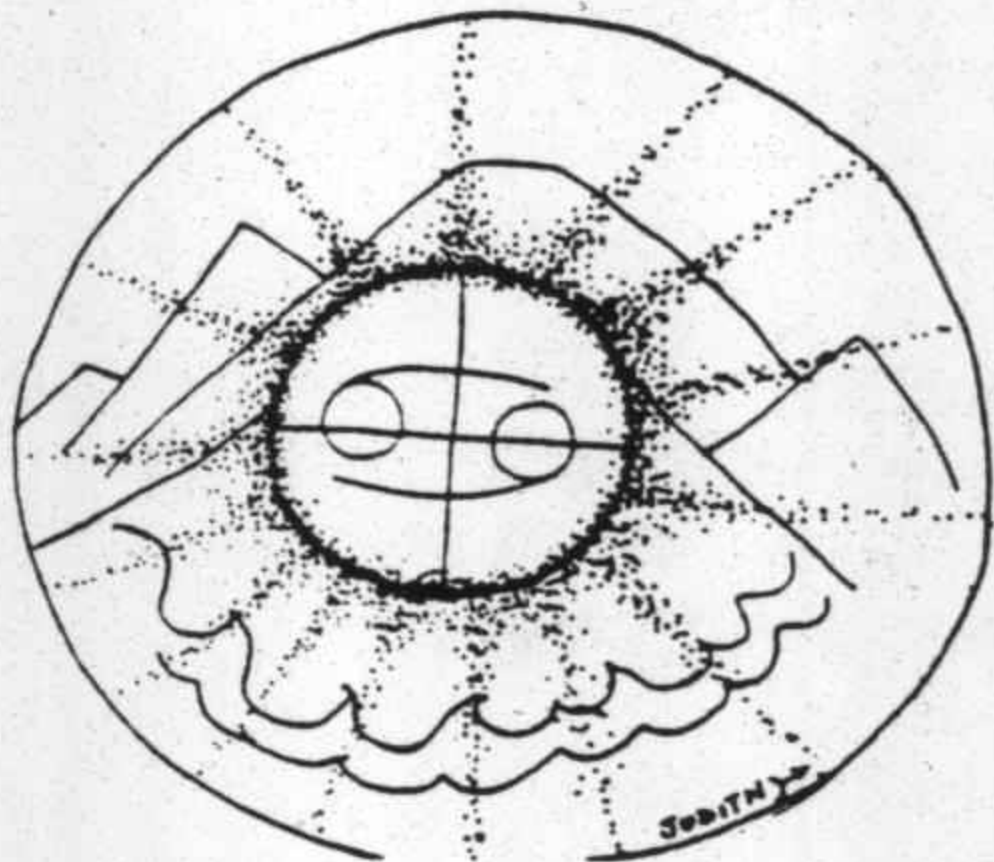
Reading TCP has helped me to come to a realization. It's not a very earth-shattering revelation and on the face of it is certainly very obvious but at 36 years of age it has moved me a step or two towards Cronehood.

It suddenly dawned on me that I am an adult. (Yes, that should have been obvious to me for some time.) I am as adult as I am ever going to get. My mother was my age when I looked up to her as the source of wisdom, the most beautiful woman I knew. When I told her that, she laughed because she never thought of herself as pretty or wise.

As an adult I don't have to do or be what others want me to do or be. I really am responsible for who I am and what I do. I don't expect to turn 56 and suddenly I'm a Crone, Wise and powerful. Instead it will happen bit by bit like the setting of the Sun that gradually reveals the depth of night - deep black space lit by the sparkling gems of wisdom.

Right now it seems to be that Crones are the source of wisdom, truly beautiful, powerful women. But I suspect that when I achieve Cronehood I'll find that insecurities, fears, and worries are still with me. Of course, I might be wrong.

Kyril Oakwind



HAG'S SONG

Old woman, you give me courage
to live my life in freedom
though the vision of you
is sometimes frightening
the laughter dancing in your eyes
dares me live boldly

No man would look at you with desire
and no babe longs to suck at your breast
yet within you somehow lie the mysteries
of life and love and lust

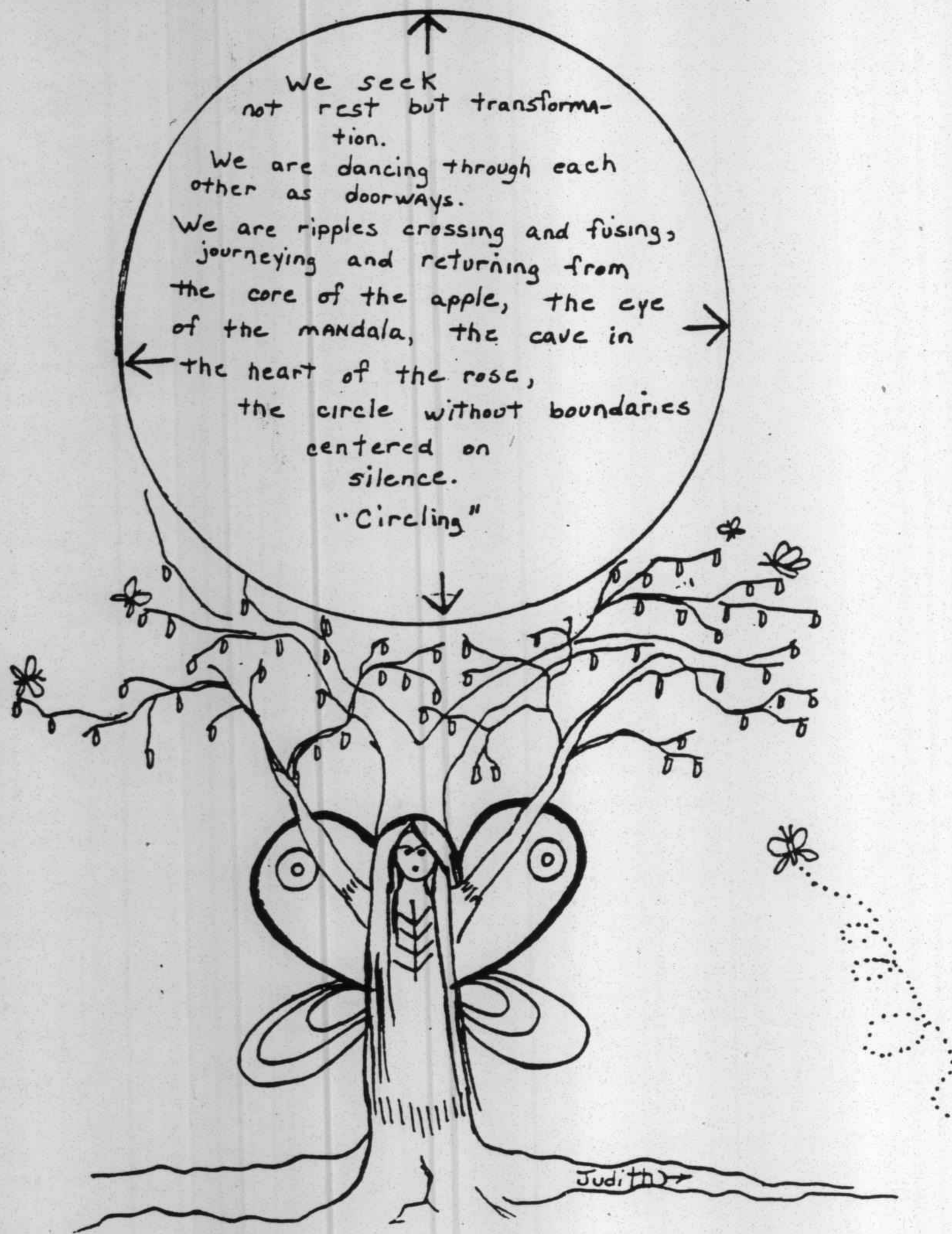
Bitter one, when life tastes of you
my soul feels its bits
yet in my struggle
it is from your firmness
that I gain the strength to grow

You are the silence in the day I walk
wisdom comes when I am calm enough to
listen
in those moments
when I am your echo
I understand

You are the mother of my faith, Bright One
and at my death your cauldron
will hold my body
as I am held in your arms

Sarah Perkins 8/86





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THE CRONE PAPERS

There is another way to begin solving the money problem [to support the Pagan movement and Pagan professional Priest/-esses] and it is the one that I favor. That is to have a big push to support pagan owned businesses. This is not a big deal, it is just common sense. What what message do we get in the pagan press, the idea that we as business people are not quite honest or forthright. Like the little notices that if anyone has problems with any of the advertisers, just let them know. Why is the editorship of the pagan publications not openly calling for more support of pagan owned businesses? Why advertise only "magickal" wares in them. Why not other pagan businesses as well. It would be nice to know who has a print shop, a gas station, etc. I would go out of my way to do business with those people and I think others would too. If we are going to talk money and paganism, why has this support for our business people been so slow in coming?

Paula

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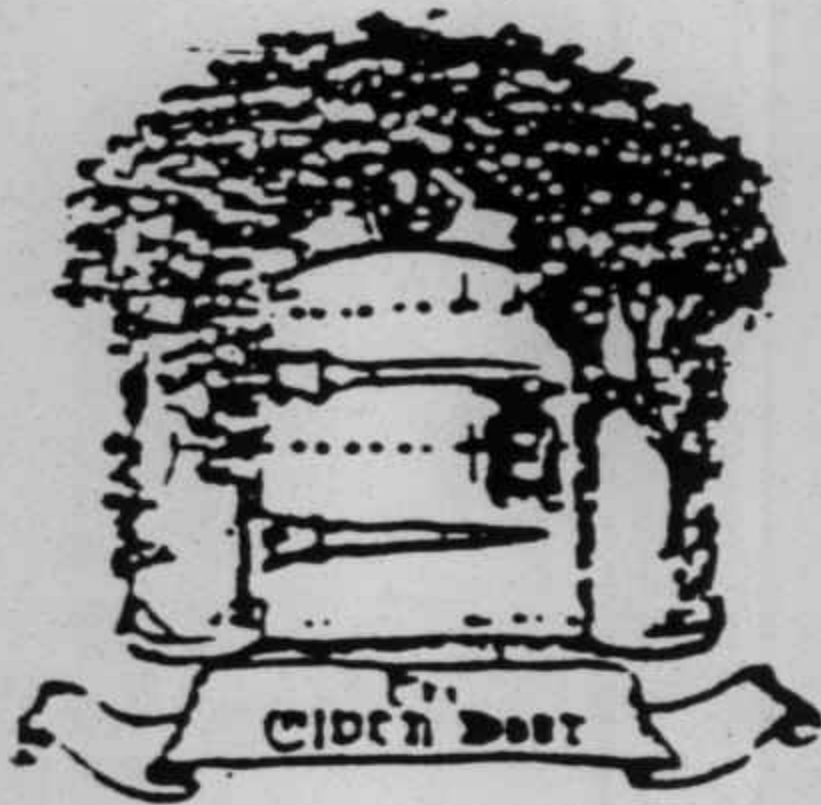
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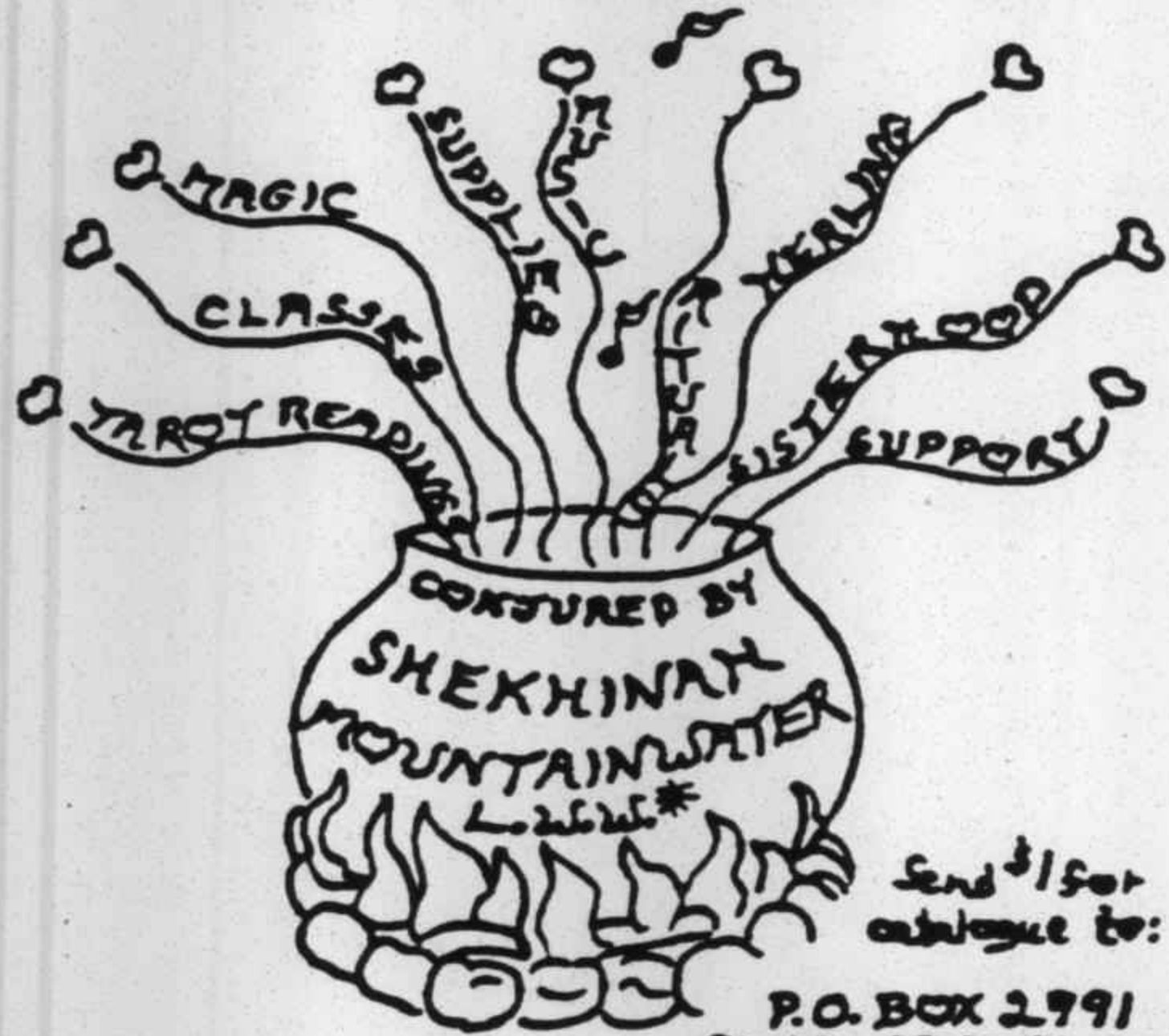
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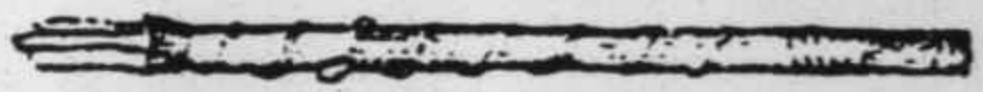
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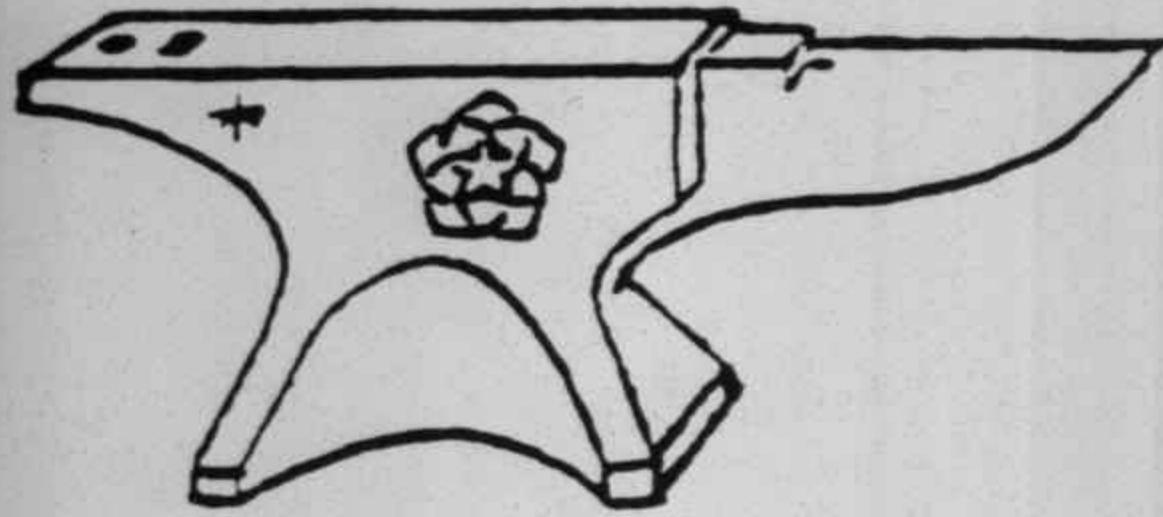
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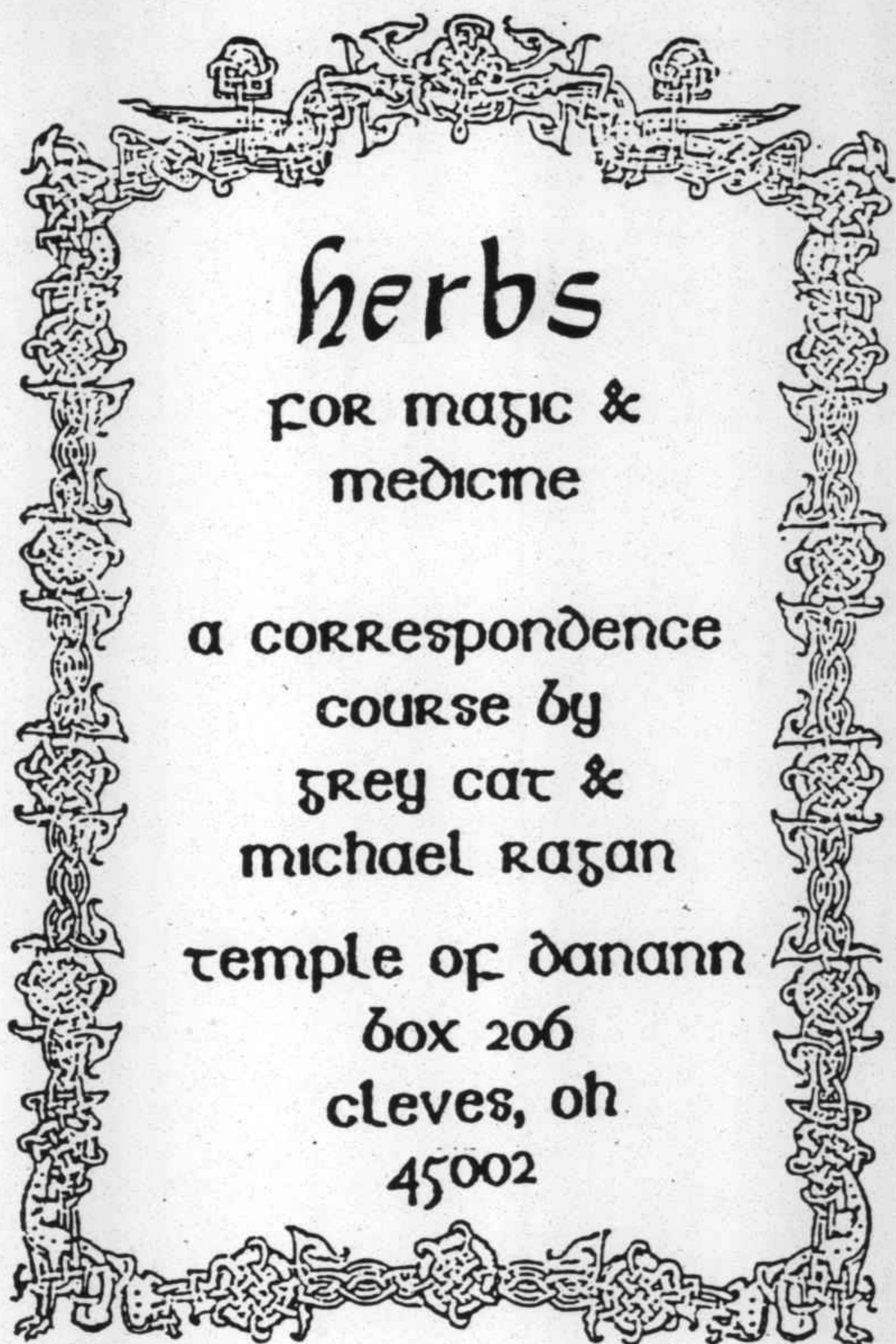
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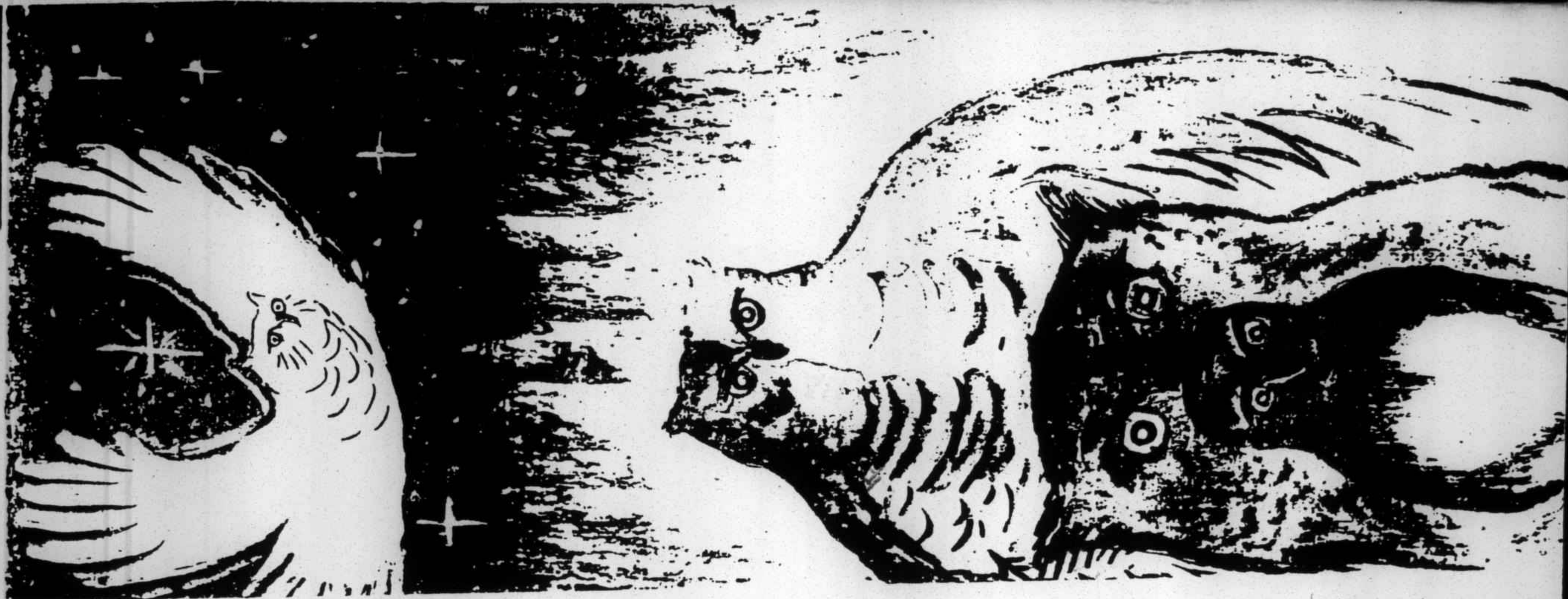
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