

Mysteries of the Mother

Julie Tara

It was Monday – not just any old Monday, but the one following Mother's Day. Those few hours when we focus, albeit briefly, on the one who nourished us within her womb, gave us birth into this world, and, hopefully, embraced us with love during our growing years. A time of honoring. A time of remembering.

Being a mother of three, I too basked in the light of my family's love. As we had done the past few years we went, at my request, on a day's hike in the mountains, following the full spring rush of the Thompson River until we found a perfect spot to fish, read, play, and picnic. How we re-awakened joyfully to the sun's warm rays once again after the long, cold winter!

A Wonderful Gift

This year, however, I had been given a wonderful gift that any mother of small children would probably leap at – three days away at the mountain hot springs – quiet, relaxing, rejuvenating, alone time; no interruptions, not even a single “but, Mom, just one thing!” Time yawned infinitely ahead of me as I grasped the possibilities – hiking alone, reading alone, immersing myself in nature photography alone. Thinking in solitude, having the freedom to dream for as long as necessary. No demands from anyone – wow!

So here it was Monday, and the train

rocked me in her lap as we snaked our way gently and gracefully through the proud and powerful Rocky Mountains. Through narrow canyons and high lush pastureland, alongside rolling rivers and velvet waterfalls, we weaved our way. Finally the train came to rest, just for a moment, like a dragonfly, at the hot springs.

It wasn't until the following day that I experienced what I had unknowingly come here to partake in. I didn't know

*I felt Her all around
me, encircling me like
a cocoon. Her
presence nourishing
me on so many levels.*

until then that I was on a pilgrimage to find Mother. And honor Her. Though I had that sense, that feeling – you know – of something different. Special somehow. That “this is meant to be” kind of a thing. I awoke Tuesday to a beautifully clear and sunny morning and jumped up out of bed quickly with thoughts of a long hike with my camera.

However, on greeting the fresh mountain air outside my cabin, I found it to be much cooler than I'd anticipated. That's when I decided it was time for the caves.

Steamy Caves

The Ute Indians had utilized these miraculous steamy sulphur caves for purification and healing. A naturally formed and powerful sweat lodge. I expect many rituals, songs, and prayers were performed in them in the long distant past, not to mention worship of the all giving, transforming Earth Mother. Having been in the caves briefly once before, I felt I knew the ropes a little. I secretly hoped, as I walked to them, that being early in the “season” they would be relatively uncrowded. Also, most people, I knew, opted for the large therapeutic pools where they could fully immerse themselves in the warm healing waters of these mineral springs. The pungent smells, deep heat, and closeness of the caves were enough to put a lot of people off.

As fate would have it I was the only one to enter the cave world that sunny morning. Quickly changing into swim gear in the clean, simple dressing room, I then began my pilgrimage – my descent into the Earth's underworld. The stairs were steep and rugged, reminding me momentarily of a recent dream – an ancient temple with stone steps leading me down, down into the dark belly of Earth. The sulphurous vapors began to reach my nostrils – a moment's hesitation, and then I gently pulled back the draped curtain at the base of the steps.

Another passageway appeared, warmer and thicker with visible streams of vapor creating a dreamy atmosphere. The deep, hollow sound of dripping water filled my ears. I walked further. Another curtain came into view and I felt as if I were gradually peeling away the veils of illusion as I moved gently from one world into another, from one domain of being into another. The tunnel began to encircle me as I walked, my body becoming as wet as the seamless walls around me.

Deeper and Deeper

Deeper I went, until I came to a central place from which several small, rounded caves spread out. As I stood and gazed around I realized I was standing in the center of a heart. And that I was looking at the inner chambers of that heart. Slowly, as in a dream, I explored each of these chambers (there were five

in all) to feel them out and intuit where to rest and give myself over to this sacred place. There was no doubt in me that I was clearly inside a body – not a body but *the* Body – the Body of the Earth. Of Mother Earth. Our Mother.

I found myself attracted to the smallest and hottest chamber of the five. As I entered through the portal I distinctly felt that I was moving into the deepest sanctuary of this, my Mother's Temple. It was a holy place and had the air of full blessing contained within it. A whisper of prayer breathed through me as I lay down softly on the gray slab of rock presented there, feeling a little like the sacrificial Aslan in the first of the Narnia stories.

Closing my eyes, I began to sink down into my body, feeling the wet heat sinking into my skin, breathing the moistness deeper and deeper into me. Dreams began to flood my mind and I fell quietly into Kairos time – Medicine time – timelessness. The soft colors, browns, grays, blacks, and chalky white, with the occasional russet blood streaks running down the wall surface were so soothing, so comforting. I felt then that I was in my Mother's womb, remembering my own mother's nest where I rocked gently in such safe warmth and love. Here, once again, I was held and nourished in the warm, wet darkness. Water was dripping, eternally dripping. All was still but for the rhythmic dripping. It carried me deeper into dreamtime, like a drumbeat.

Letting Go

Gradually I felt my bodymind beginning to shed tightness, pain, heaviness, sadness – letting go. I continued breathing deeply, shedding the old weight like a snake sheds its old, now useless, skin. I wondered, "Is this place in fact a tomb, a womb, or perhaps both?" I began to feel vulnerable, without skin, naked as a newborn babe. And as I sank into innocence I felt Her all around me, encircling me like a cocoon. Her presence nourishing me on so many levels. I breathe Her power into me. She is all Love, all Giving. And suddenly I know, I remember, that I am precious to Her – one of Her many beloved children.

As I laid in this openness, I looked up and around me at the walls of this inner world. I began looking in that magical

way you do when you're lying in the grass looking up at the clouds, and after a while you begin to see things – animals, faces, castles, or whatever. As I softened my gaze more and more I begin to see. It was as if my Mother began revealing Her mysteries to me, one by one. First, a perfect round globe appeared right above me. Then an owl over to my left. Then a wise old woman's face – head of an ancient turtle, a snake, a crescent moon, the screaming head of a birthing mother, an old Indian man with long hair – eyes, mouths, babies, eagles. Deep fissures pulled me into blackness, where all things begin and end. Now I understood how Michelangelo and Rodin could see what was calling forth from a piece of rock, long before they began the process of cutting away the superfluous to reveal the rock's true nature for all to witness. I was utterly immersed in this cauldron of transformation, this chalice where all things pulse in and out of being. I was transfixed.

Slowly sitting up, my body felt very hot, wet, and languid. My hair was plas-

tered down my neck and back – dripping, everything dripping. Directly in front of me was the arched doorway, about twenty feet away. I gazed through it, and there on the chamber wall beyond I saw a baby's form, surrounded by a circle of markings, symbols – almost like a zodiacal map. As I watched, the baby changed into a young girl and the circle around contained the branches of a tree she was sitting in. My mind cast back to the tree I used to sit in as a young girl – how I loved it, how it felt like home; its arms holding and supporting me.

Lulled in the tree's embrace I watched in amazement as the girl transformed into a heavier, fuller, pregnant young woman – her breasts ripe, her belly round like a globe. She sat on a swing, peaceful, filled with grace. And then, there was the mother, her arm and hand outstretched, touching the heads of her little cluster of children. I kept blinking – maybe I had been down here just a little too long? But the image held steady for a long, long time. I assumed this was where the transformational wheel of

EARTH MAGIC EARTH MEDICINE Seven Days in the Colorado Rockies

with

**Bill & Julie Tara, Steve Gagne,
Nancy Allawos & Special Guest Teachers**

Nourish Your Body - Delicious Macrobiotic Meals, Movement, Stretching, Stress Reduction, Hot Tub and Walks in the woods.

Refresh Your Mind - Stimulating Classes on The Energetics of Food, Health and the Emotions, Cooking and Natural Healing

Enliven Your Spirit - Innovative Workshop Sessions in Visualization, Shamanic Journeying, Nature Meditation and a Sweat Lodge.

JUNE 25TH - JULY 2ND

FOR INFORMATION WRITE OR CALL:
NOVA HEALING ARTS, 370 S. 43RD,
BOULDER, CO. 80303 - TEL: 303 - 499 - 7234

was moved, as this was when I am, in reality, in my life journey.

As I began to withdraw my gaze from the old, wise woman, a long staff was in her hand, and her head kept changing into an owl, then into a wolf, and back into an old woman again. The tree branches were serpents that flowed from her head out into the world, like electric currents. She scared me in truth – images of Medusa and Minoan priestesses flashed to mind. Yet I felt no sense of threat or need to fear. I just don't know her. She emanated such awesome power. Suddenly she was gone, and in her place – oh, it was the baby once more – the cycle began anew.

The impulse to make sound welled up in me from some primal core place within. Gently I began exploring this sacred womb with my voice. I found that certain tones seemed to resonate exactly with Her body and mine, so I chanted simple chants over and over again around those tones. One note reverberated strongly through my heart center and as I kept returning to it, it was as if a tunnel opened up through the sound,

linking my body to Hers like a cord, an umbilical cord. It was through this cord that I sang my blessings to Her, sang my prayers to Her, asked for forgiveness, thanked Her for my life. The cord widened and I heard Her voice – my Mother. She sang to me, sang Her sweet love to me, sang Her timeless wisdom to me. We sang together, She and I, healing the separations piece by piece. Giving and receiving – creating wholeness, creating holiness. The pulsing, to and fro movement gradually became one stream of song. There was only blessing then.

As simply as it had unfolded, my journey slowly began to come to its natural conclusion. My whole being felt ecstatic, alive, full and vibrant with love and joy. I rejoiced in the truth of Oneness with all my heart, yet I knew it was now time to leave. An element of oppressiveness had begun to creep in, as if I was being told "Go on now, it's time now." I knew with a deep certainty that my magical incubation period was over and that I was ready to be reborn into the world of Light. This time with my memory intact, with full consciousness as I shifted

from one world into another. As I gradually and gratefully walked back through the round tunnels, drawing back each veil as I came to it, I knew I was at this moment in a true state of grace. I began to feel and see glimpses of the sun's golden rays calling me forth into birth. And as I climbed up the stone stairway, I couldn't help but wonder if, at my time of death, it might not feel quite familiar after all – if I might not draw the final veil from one cherished world into an even greater, brighter Light – beckoning me on towards new birth. □

Julie Tara is the co-founder of Nova Healing Arts with her husband Bill. She has a healing practice in Boulder, Colorado that combines hands-on energy work with deep inner visualization process. She is a dancer, photographer, and the mother of three young children. Julie has been involved in the macrobiotic way of life for fifteen years, and is a graduate of the Kushi Institute of London, England.



French Meadows Summer Camp June 22 – July 1, 1995

Lecturer Update – We are pleased to announce that Kerry Loeb, one of our most popular shiatsu teachers, will be joining us again this year to conduct the shiatsu class during the first half of camp. In addition, Detmar Straub returns this summer to conduct the juggling class after lunch each day and to entertain at campfires. Other lecturers and guests include Herman and Cornelia Aihara, Lino Stanchich, Bob Carr, Patrick and Meredith McCarty, Bob and Kathy Ligon, Kaare Bursell, Lynda Paloma Mathé, and Carl and Julia Ferré.

Not Yet Full – As of this writing camp is not yet filled. However, we recommend that you contact us sooner rather than later if you are interested in attending this year's camp. And there are often last minute cancellations; so, give Carl a call at (916) 533-7702 by Friday, June 16 to see if by any chance there is any last minute space available.

Deposit – A \$100 non-refundable deposit reserves your place in this year's camp. We process registrations in order of receipt of payment. Only ten-day registrations will be processed before June 1, 1995—make checks payable to G.O.M.F.

Any questions – If you are enrolled and have any questions at all, please call Carl at (916) 533-7702, or fax (916) 533-7908, by noon on Monday, June 19. After this time, bring your questions to camp.