

We Are The Granddaughters Of The Witches You Could Not Burn

[BY LISA MARGUERITE MORA](#)

I live on the North American continent. But my ancestors hail from Britain and Scotland. And Mexico. My mother was British and felt a deep connection with the earth and the ocean. Something she has passed down to me. She needed to stay close to the elements for her well-being and eventually, she chose to go back to her roots, to her British island culture, where the weather is changeable as was her moods.

I grew up along the edges of the Pacific in Southern California, where I breathed salt air, and the sticky fog matted my hair. If I'm ever too far from the ocean, I begin to feel restless and claustrophobic. My pores suck at this dry desert air unsated and a part of me shuts down. I become camel-like, conserving water, pacing myself until I can be once again in my own element where I feel free and revitalized. Fog and moisture and myriad tiny green things are like medicine.

Once, in a walking meditation in the small rain, I yearned for so much more of it, and in a spontaneous moment asked if I was really something else, not quite human, some strain of earth spirit from the kingdom of Fae. Why did I feel so different? And so alive in this mixture of earth and water?

Afterall, I was born in that slip of time right after the Summer Solstice which is supposed to be a time of enchantment. Children born between June 21st and 23rd could be changelings. Switched by the faeries. Neither here nor there. Living not quite in both worlds.

I turned the corner of the avenue and rather matter of factly, smack dab in the middle of the wet clean pavement, a rather large mushroom lay on its side on the otherwise empty sidewalk. I looked around for some dedicated gardener perhaps working in their yard even in this weather. The street was devoid of human activity. So, how the mushroom got there, is anyone's guess. I stopped before it, dumbfounded. An image arose of elves or gnomes scurrying off, after yanking and tugging it from some hidden place for me to happen upon.

Was that a yes?

Often I think of how the natural world seeks to commune with us, to answer our questions, to reflect back to us our deepest selves.

When the Dakota Access Pipeline protest (NoDAPL) movement was growing in 2016, I watched video after video, week after week made by citizens local to the events – white, black, brown, and indigenous alike were united in a common concern for the fate of the Missouri River, the largest cleanest source of water in the country. It bordered reservation land of the Standing Rock Sioux.

I could not tear my eyes away from the young people and the elders of the various tribes who responded to the call. They came from all over the world, from as far away as New Zealand on the other side of the globe. Tribes that had been notoriously hostile to each other, mended their animosities.

My interest in what was unfolding was insatiable. One woman expressed it, her fist to her chest, that some heard “the drum.” Her voice broke and then rose. “We hear the drum!” Heartbeat of Mother Earth. Those whose DNA remembered who we once were when we all lived close to the earth, when all

beings were revered as equals and necessary for the survival and thriving of a peaceful planet.

And our planet was calling now, in this moment, as had been prophesized for centuries, to those who could remember. I sobbed, playing the video several times in a row seeking to understand.

This is what had been reverberating my bones. The planet's heartbeat. But who could I speak to about this who would care as much as I did? My friends listened with concern, but I knew from their words, the events in North Dakota did not have for them the same urgent pull.

I remember when I was eleven on a company picnic in Topanga Canyon with my best friend. At one point, I wandered away from the picnic area and ended up next to a clear joyful little babbling brook. Many of the other children were playing in and around the happy water. The environment was one of intense activity.

I had never been near a body of water that was not salt. It cantered merrily over the myriad colored pebbles on the bottom of the creek bed and the brush lining its shore was young and green.

I could hear laughter and felt an unbridled undercurrent of joy. But it did not emanate from the other kids alone. Something else was laughing, winking, playing, and it wove in and out of the scene like extra splashes of mirthful energy. It filled me with something I'd never experienced before with that intensity.

I knew it was magic. I said it in my mind.

Something I had always caught whiffs of in the stories my mother told me, as well as in the books I read, and came across fleetingly on my own but never able to tack it down to truly examine what was going on. Here, it surrounded and

uplifted and entered my bloodstream on the very air I breathed.

Earth medicine, earth magic, another kind of intelligence alive and well, sharing itself with we human children. I didn't want to leave. I was eleven, prepuberty before hormones would take hold and push me to care about my place with other people, find my niche in society, and with the opposite sex as the culture would bear down on any individualistic tendencies I had. A culture that did not believe in what could not be seen with the naked eye.

I took one last look at what I thought was the place where enchantment lived and vowed that somehow, someday I would return.

It took me twenty-some years to find my way back, but I recognized that elusive energy once more when I made a new friend, who happened to be a medicine woman. At the time, she often led night walks in the canyon. When she asked if I would like, my immediate answer was, yes.

By that point, I had re-found the canyon when I was eighteen, years before, and was taking day hikes on my own, where I was pulled to just walk and observe and be. I knew I was looking for something, but I didn't know what. It became my medicine, my place of center.

While there, I felt accepted and loved, and receptive. My friend and I had many adventures and I also began to night hike on my own. I met animals that normally did not show themselves and I realize now many of those times I was in an altered state, aligned with the energy of the earth – which scientists classify as the Schumann Resonance a frequency of 432 hertz. Some call it the frequency of unconditional love.

During the NoDAPL movement, one of the elders interviewed commented on how so many young people were coming to the camp hungry for the teachings. She said we all needed to go back to our own cultures and find our roots and learn about our own traditions. Her response left me feeling hopeless. My parents' generation did not talk about the past, which included the Great Depression and two World Wars.

These events were invariably the reason both sides of my family emigrated away from their own roots to the states. And I was born an American. My father refused to teach me Spanish, my mother could not "remember" many things about her family's past, and I was too young to even know what questions to ask before both my parents died.

I knew I was drawn to the earth religion of Native Americans and felt markedly out of place in the colonized American culture at large. It was only the other day when "called" once again to reread a book I first found twenty years ago, that I came upon a sentence in a memoir by Phyllis Curott, a professional woman, highly educated, an attorney, and also High Priestess of an order of the Wiccan religion. She wrote, "I was discovering an elegant spiritual practice, much of which was rooted in the lives of women, of European shamanism, which could heal and open the human heart."

Bingo.

I knew that Native Americans practiced shamanism. Myself, I have burned sage and cedar to clear unwanted energy, sat in circle, attended sweat lodges, conducted prayer rituals, and journeyed to receive knowledge of my power animal. Alongside this, I cast spells.

In my mind, I separated it from the earthy Native American practices. In my mind, I was doing something else as I sat in circle when the moon was right, focused, raised energy, and affirmed an outcome for myself and others, with unnerving

results.

All my life I've had prophetic dreams; communed with animals; heard their voices; recognized "signs" that would end up protecting me or alerting me of what was to come; felt when a friend or even a stranger needed something specific that I could give them to ease their way; sensed earthquake energy; knew when someone was lying to me.

With the discovery of the term 'European Shamanism,' I felt the alacrity of relief. All these years of my life I had experienced and been drawn to do only what my ancestors had always done. It is in my blood. My DNA. I looked up from the page and took a breath. "I am a witch," I whispered.

Other magical women I'd met throughout my life remarked on my latent abilities. They could see it "around" me, could see it in the lines on my palm, could sense it in a quiet moment, announcing to me unbidden that I was "a magical person."

I did not know what they were talking about. I'm not really, I thought with my thinky mind. I can barely conjure a paycheck.

But in truth, I've been learning all these decades to straddle two worlds. I am one of many, who can see, who cares so much it hurts, who cannot align with this patriarchal culture that is dying, which thrashes its dangerous tail as it is challenged by the awakening that is occurring across the planet.

There are more of us awakening, or long awoke, than one would think.

I now renew my commitment to "know," to learn, to listen, to

hear as we stand on the brink and seek to backtrack to save our very lives. We are in a time that has been prophesized by many ancient cultures as the return of the Goddess, the energy that nourishes, gives life, but also protects for the greater good and is resplendent in all forms from the Mother Mary to Kali to Demeter to Aphrodite to the White Buffalo Woman to Quan Yin.

This energy resides in every woman and man in the world. And we each need to find it within our hearts if we are to fulfill our destiny as whole human beings, and protect the future for the children of all life waiting to come in.

The enchantment I yearned for as a child, that I thought existed only outside of myself, I can see now has lived in me all along. And each time I align with it, I come home.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom](#) .

Sip a little more:

***Embracing Forgiveness & Rekindling
Hope On Christmas***

***Poverty Gave Me A Spark Of Knowing Deep
Within Me***

***Rebel Rebel, Give Yourself Permission To
Be Your Messy Self***

I believe that life is measured in
our ability to feel; the deeper and
the more raw the feelings, the
more authentically we're living.

Zoe Quiney

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