

# Mother Tongue: Wailing With The Whales

[BY AMANDA FIORINO](#)

*Inspired by and in collaboration with Earthsongwave Dawn  
Chorus – Join the Global Song April 1st, 2019*

Long, drawn out, and aching with belonging, a primal speech echoes through the halls of my heart and emblazons a world of water with love and mourning.

Every chord pulls tears from my eyes, bringing me to my knees. Brought closer to the Earth where I bow remorsefully into a fetal position, sobbing my love, my memories, my longing into the sand. Screaming for forgiveness from the ancient ones who swim in these old, old seas.

Awash in confusion and overwhelm at where to begin. The fragmented pieces of my life are yoked together through the agony of grief and remembrance that resounds through every pulsing strand carried from current to current.

These are whales that I hear, and their calls and cries are an oral tradition strung together by generation upon generation of their own mother tongue. A mother tongue that I know through the cells of my body, but have no conceptual recollection of how I came to know them. It is a native speech made up of codas (distinct and intentional clicks, pops, and drawn out vocalizations) that permeate the layers of forgetfulness, and reach deep into the core of who I am.

***With my knees in the sand of my soul,  
having surrendered so fully to these***

***water beings, with their lifelong families and extended clans, the only task left is to wail.***

To wail with the whales. To wail for their lives, their homes, their food sources, their shared love for one another. To wail because of their patience with humanity even amidst our history of hunting them down, and now destroying the only home they have.

To wail at the possible loss of their stunning existence in this world, and the possible future of my own calf never knowing who they are save for what is written in books of their once-upon-a-time existence.

Wailing is like a song from which notes of grief, anger, and pain roll out from the body like waves crashing down upon the shore of one's existence. Breaking through habituated living, to hear wailing from ourselves or another is to hear the truth of this vulnerable, dynamic existence. An existence comprised of endless and tangled expressions of life reaching out through thresholds of birth and death for each other. Wailing sends out invisible notes, electrifying the stretches of space between and within all living beings, illuminating the web that binds us all together.

Wailing is a part of our mother tongue, a primal speech that we inherit the day we are born. For we hear wailing as our mother's hips crack open, and the amniotic sea we called home floods the land of our collective becoming. We hear our own wailing as our first breath finds us, filling our lungs with the mysterious song of our life. Wailing signals that something sacred is happening. That we are standing upon, swimming within, or flying through hallowed ground.

Mother tongue is usually defined as "the language spoken by one's ancestors." Ancestor generally implies human

descendants, and very rarely encompasses the vast ecological web we are in relationship with and kin to. A web that encompasses both this corporeal land, as well as the deep imaginal, dreaming mind of the Earth.

For this reason, I would like to stretch the definitions of mother tongue and ancestor to include those more-than-human beings, places, and spaces that we belong to, and that those who came before us belonged. A Gaian lineage, or perhaps spiral-age, whose "language" is far more complex than letters strung together forming words that form sentences.

Language is a form of embodied communication that arises out of life's desire to commune and relate. Embodied communication can present as guttural moans, high pitched and melodious whistles, clicks and pops, growling, rattling, snorting, hissing, or grunting. It can also take the shape of arched backs, hair standing on end, cheeks rubbing together, fin tips pointing downward, bared teeth, chest-pounding, or tail-flicking.

Language is also a portal for rich and textured oral traditions that preserve and pass on knowledge and wisdom necessary for the next generations. And one particular method of transmission is song.

The language of whales, particularly Humpback Whales, is reminiscent of the music dreamed up by humans. Especially so when our stringed instruments are played. I've always wondered, did my own Celtic ancestors, with their fiddles, first hear the whales in the seas that they lived with and depended upon long before they ever dreamed up such an instrument? Did the vocalizations of these sea creatures stir such a deep longing within them that it was all they could do to draw closer to the source of such profound and aching songs?

***Out of the exquisite nature of the Earth's relational web, what wisdom and knowledge might these water ancestors have been transmitting that my human ancestors were privy to? I believe such transmissions of knowledge live on in our cells. They carry a vibrational memory that speaks to us with an embodied linguistic dialect. A dialect of the mythic soul-spirit.***

Spiraling forth from the Anima Mundi (soul of the Earth) are the mother tongues of other species. These are the voices of our more-than-human ancestors. Ancestors whose songs will disappear from the larger chorus of creation if we humans do not remember our rich spiraling. If we humans do not, once again, remember how to listen to and sing with the voices of the Others who have been so intimately a part of our ecological emergence. Others who have evolved long before us, and alongside us. Creatures who carry the memory and medicine of belonging in the songs they offer up to the world. Songs sung in a feral speech of primal proportions.

If you were to step beyond the walls of industrialized culture and the colonized world, you would find yourself making a pilgrimage back to the soul of the Earth. The clamor and cacophony of man and machine would grow faint as the ground beneath your feet would be overtaken by the vegetal grasp of feral lands.

Winds would jostle your hair about, and you'd feel yourself swept up in a dance with the trees who sway back-and-forth, back-and-forth. Quaking leaves, wingbeats, snapping branches, claws scraping against bark, small grunts coming from bushes,

and the faintest clicks and pops from insects busying about would lead you down a sandy path to the edge of an ocean whose salty waters are the birthing ground of your primordial existence.

It is here that you would encounter them.

Those enormous, finned ancestors whose songs can be heard thousands of miles away. Those long and drawn out chords that ache with belonging. A primal speech that echoes through the halls of your heart.

Tears would spill from your eyes, and their gravitational force would pull you down to your knees. Bowing close to the Earth, sand would begin to cling to the saliva, snot, and tears that pour from your mouth, nose, and eyes.

You would begin to wail.

And if you're lucky, out of your wailing, you might re-member who you are before it's too late.

You might begin to sing your song, and the uprising swell of the Earth would enfold you into the vast chorus of everything.

***Join Amanda for this very special event that is in service to the Earth and the waking up of humanity:***



EARTHSONGWAVE DAWN CHORUS  
MONDAY - APRIL 1, 2019  
JOIN THE GLOBAL SONG

WWW.EARTHSONGWAVE.COM

■ ■ ■

Photo by [Amy Humphries](#) on [Unsplash](#)

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [52 Ways to Live a Kick-Ass Life: BS-Free Wisdom to Ignite Your Inner Badass and Live the Life You Deserve](#) .

***Sip a little more:***

***Feral Lunacy: A Call For Awakening***

***Divergent Mother: A Force Calling Out For  
Restoration & Healing***

*Sensuous Presence: Giving Yourself Over To The Earth*

# SHE

[The She Book](#)

• • •

**#MOTHERTONGUE**

HOWL WITH US  
ON [FACEBOOK](#), [INSTAGRAM](#), [TWITTER](#) & [PINTEREST](#).

HELP SPREAD THE MAGIC: