

Mysterieries Camp

A Summer Camp for Grownups

July 24, 2005 – July 29, 2005

The Sea Ranch, CA

SOMEONE ONCE DESCRIBED our weekend retreats as “summer camps for grownups,” an irresistible idea. We will expand on this theme with five days on the Sea Ranch coast hiking, swimming, sunning, resting, visioning, circling, singing, creating sacred art, walking the labyrinth or just doing nothing with lovely women of similar spirit and heart.

Mysterieries Women of all years and their like-minded friends are enthusiastically invited! Call Sara at (707)578-7272 for more details regarding this restful yet invigorating retreat.

Sacred Beginnings Workshop

April, 2006

Big Island, Hawaii

JOIN SARA, the Mysterieries women and like-hearted artists, writers and soul travelers for Auntie Jessie's 70th birthday party at the Hale Kai Yoga Adventure Retreat, Kona, Big Island, Hawaii. In April of 2006 (either the week of the 15th or 22nd). Join all of Sara's wonderful Hawaiian teachers, kahunas, chanters and hula divas and see Pelé, the Fire Goddess, at her fiercest hour. Come early and see the sacred sites, do ritual, write and painting and as a special extra, see hula dancers from all over the world at the famous Merrie Monarch Festival in Hilo and do ceremony at the City of Refuge. This is a chance of a lifetime: a very untourist-y experience of the islands and an honoring of Jessie Hillinger, one of our special Mystery women and spiritual teacher. We can only take a limited number on this jam-packed adventure, so contact Sara at (707) 578-7272 as soon as possible to request a brochure or reserve a spot.

Even If You Grab a Piece of Time

Conjure something glowing

take this day

you were born with hands for spinning

talent for dreams are making them real

roll the hours like yarn

spin something that makes you feel full and big and open to talk

make this day your own square

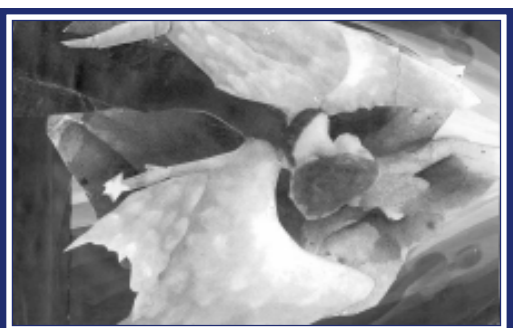
in your own life quilt

so shining

it brightens the whole of your years this far

make this day like one of God's seven.

—*Ruth Forman, from Renaissance*



WOMEN'S

The Messenger for Women's Mysterieries



MYSTERIERIES

May, 2005

The New Women's Mysterieries: An Urban Cycle

IN RESPONSE TO many women who cannot retreat from their lives for five weekends a year, I am creating another form of Women's Mysterieries. Beginning in September, 2005, I will begin the “Urban Shaman Journey,” a Women's Mysterieries journey no less juicy and intense but allowing more local participation and less retreat time away the first year. Five to seven women and I will meet once a month on a weeknight from 6:00 to 10:00. We will also gather for two day-long local intensives, plus two three-day retreats. The times and dates of these meetings will be decided on by the group as a whole.

The journey will take one year, during which we will practice bringing peace into our lives and the world. We will study together the major religious and spiritual disciplines and practices. We will explore our spiritual paths and create a container for spiritual growth with the group's support. We will create rituals of all kinds—those for healing, global peace, community intention and friend and family relationships. Sacred art will be used to manifest intentions, create healing protection and promote self-expression. We will learn the mystery and magic of the sacred Wheel of Life and how to turn the wheel together throughout the year. There will also be time to work with me individually at my office, studio or other place of our mutual choice.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

what the high priestess says at the temple gates

do not seek admission here
if your world holds together

and everything knows its place in your house

if the four walls have never fallen upon you

or the living room furniture floated out

of a sunday afternoon

on the breath of some god

do not pester me with inquiries

or shine a light behind these veils

if trees have never prophesied to you

or deer danced among the white clay men

in your back yard

do not disturb my meditations

if your sky has never ripped open

light cut you to pieces

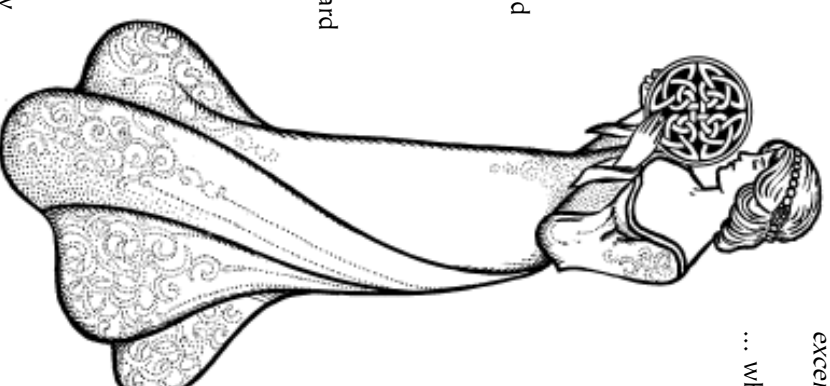
if your head's not been cracked

by the hooves

of the bull god

how can my mystery

enter!



excerpted from “Mystery”

... what mystery is it
that what tore us apart
remembers us back
among springs and old groves
on animal hooves and covered with
grape leaves
we are carried away to some mountain altar
where
fire in the dark
drum beat of heart
quicken leap of the god—
who never has been
but always is—

dances
behind closed
eyelids

Women's Mysterieries
Sara Spaulding-Phillips, M.A.
818 Cherry Street
Santa Rosa, Ca 95405



These wonderful Mystery poems are from a
stunning book of poetry, Crimes of the Dreamer,
by my friend **Naomi Ruth Lowinsky** and may
be purchased through Scarlet Tanager Books,
P.O. Box 20906, Oakland, CA, 94620.

When I Think About The Mysteries

AS WE COMPLETE our final weekends of the Mysteries journeys, the question on many of our minds and in our hearts is, “What has the Mysteries journey meant to me?” Below are some of the responses, and I welcome more.

When I reflect on the year for me, I see a kaleidoscope of colorful life. My 70th year has brought a deeper connection to my self, a deeper commitment to the women I shepherd, lead and circle with and a much fuller commitment to spirit, soul and my creative life. For instance, I listen more to my inner guide—not just listen, but take instruction daily. One of the most profound happenings this winter was a visitation from a room-sized angel in the middle of the night who came, comforted me and told me I was to have daily conversations with her (I assumed she was female). She does most of the talking, and I listen a lot. She informs my art work and will, my life’s path.

My life as an artist has exploded. Because of the Mysteries I do art all the time. Live art is my life. My paintings have taken on a theme this year: lots of light, lots of Buddhas and Kwan Yins. I want to paint more angels and their ethereal nature is hard to capture. I paint at Art Heaven twice a week and a Spirit House Studio of my own is beginning to get clearer.

My travel lately seemed to be guided by the Mysteries, what with an amazing summer trip to the Black Madonna in Barcelona and the site of Atlantis in Greece. Traveling to Oaxaca to experience the festival celebrating Dia de Los Muertos was life-changing. Death is so different in Mexico, it puts our innate fear into perspective. My dreams have been influenced by the Mysteries journey as well, whether it is the amazing “dreams” study we make, the honoring of our dreams in DreamSpeak or the powerful dream pillows we made in the Phoenix track.

In a world that is fraught with dissent and danger, upheaval and hatred, violence, war and irresponsibility, the Mysteries have grounded me and all of those around me. For example, our keening ritual of the Black Veil brought all of us in on group to an amazing and lasting sense of peace.

I see many of you taking what you’ve gleaned out into the world. Jane’s Soul Circles are a wonderful spin-off, part of the Mystery Web. Margaret, who has come into her own with writing practice and the newsletter, *Write On!* brings all of her many talents into play as she takes over the leadership of Sonoma County Writing Practice. I think of Laura Jorgensen’s collaborative theatrical work, “Golden Buddha Beach:” she is thinking of holding her first art show this year. The Mysteries seem to fan the fire of our creativity and in true shamanic fashion, the gifts gleaned from the year of retreat and soul work gets brought from the initiation journey back into the community and out into the world.

When in the last *Messenger* I wrote about passing the torch, the direction was not as clear as it is now. Several of you called about the possibility of learning more. I appreciate your interest, and as I spoke with more of the Mysteries community, I realized that part of the initiation process that the Women’s

Mysteries journey offers, as in any shamanic journey, is when the initiate goes “below,” spends time in the “Other World” and then brings back a treasure to share with the community, gleaned from their own personal journey. That is happening and will continue to happen, and for that I am grateful to the Mysteries journey.

When I think about my six years facilitating the Women’s Mysteries journey, I think about the forty women who have journeyed through and the seventeen women who are still circling. I think about the two public Winterfest Mysteries arts and gift shows we’ve sponsored. I think about the gorgeous sacred art we have created and all of the people, family and friends that we’ve held in circle for healing body, mind and spirit. I think of all the incredible times we’ve spent at Sea Ranch and the visioning we’ve done. I think about our appreciation and love for labyrinths and how many more have been born from the Mother Labyrinth at Sea Ranch.

I am so blessed.
I am so blessed.
I am so grateful for all that we have.

Blessed be,

Garden Workshops

with Jane Allard Allen

IN HOPES OF bringing my love of gardening, art, writing and ritual more actively into my work life, I have designed two new groups: one for adults, Soul Circle Garden Retreat; and the other for children, Art and Garden Circles for Girls and Boys. Both groups will begin in the fall and will gather once a month to follow the seasons through one year. Both will take place in the retreat of my lovely home and garden.

Please consider the Soul Circle Garden Retreat for yourself or your clients and the Art and Garden Circles for your children or for your clients who are children. Although these groups are not therapy, they will be therapeutic and an excellent adjunct to therapy. Please feel free to call me, Jane Allard Allen, with any questions, referrals and for flyers at 829-3141 or 763-3026.

What I Carry With Me Tonight

I CARRY THE WEIGHT, the precious weight, of those three babies I had, the soft midnight-hour weight of those helpless beings who were dependent on me. I learned to need that dependence and have sought it out, carrying the weaker, the less fortunate, in my mind, on my conscience, taking them for walks with me and on vacations, letting them sleep in my bed. Maybe it’s time to let them walk on their own.

What I carry with me tonight is the dark of the sky at night. It is my friend, my confidante and my tormentor. I try hard to understand the weight of black as it settles in with me on the couch to watch the rain. I feel it pull me down into a feeling of helplessness. I can’t carry this weight too far; it is too heavy. It gets impatient, thank goodness, and leaves in disgust looking for a more able body than mine, one that can really shoulder its dark weight over many miles.

What I carry with me tonight is the odd change of

friendship. It’s a currency I sometimes have trouble deciphering, wanting to give back too much for what I’ve received, not knowing how much is enough. I am perplexed, as if faced with a palm full of drachmas or rubles. I hold it all out in my hand, trusting that the other person will only take what is due. I’m not good with the negotiation of the price of friendship: not certain when to spend it or to save it for a rainy day. If only it would always add up, like ten dimes to the dollar.

What I carry with me tonight is the collective gene pool of all my ancestors: the horse thieves, the servants, the inventors and the shanty Irish, the bootleggers and chefs and railroad workers, the dirt farmers and mill owners. They all have hitched a ride on the chain of DNA I lug around as my inheritance. They all jostle for first class seats for the journey, each believing his or her own legacy to be most important. I usually close the cockpit door and speak to them only through the intercom. You never know when some hijacker might have gotten aboard, and I’m trying to have a more or less safe journey here. I never know if that cancer gene that killed my mother at seventy-two might be hiding out in economy class, eating pretzels and waiting for the right moment to show up and turn my ticket into a one-way flight. I try not to worry about it too much because I think worry will only give it more confidence, maybe open the door a crack, let it slip in, uninvited, to crash the party.

What I carry with me tonight is possibility, that funny two-sided coin that, when flipped, can give you heads or tails, win or lose, live or die.

—Cathy Evans

If It Weren’t for the Mysteries

IF IT WEREN’T for the Mysteries, I wouldn’t be sitting at this table writing when my feet hurt, my shoulders are equally yoked to one another wrapped around my ears with ferocious tenacity, my face is hot from the sun on it all day. No indeed, after two hours of walking and several trips to the beach hauling up heart rocks and driftwood I would be curled up on my couch watching a movie or reading *The Time Traveler’s Wife*. To write at this time of night is unlike me. Only because of the Mysteries.

If it weren’t for the Mysteries, I probably wouldn’t even be thinking of looking for heart rocks to sweeten my labyrinth, because if it weren’t for the Mysteries, easily a third of my garden would not be a labyrinth. If it weren’t for the Mysteries, I wouldn’t have a doppelganger (I mean what is a doppelganger?) hanging on my wall for all to see my naked core-boarded shape. No indeed, if it weren’t for the Mysteries

there’d be no torso with Victorian lace nor a tree in her womb nor a bed covered with a red-flowered bedspread in the tree nor a matching pillow on the bed in the tree in the torso’s womb sitting over my right shoulder as I read. Nor would I have altars in every single room of my house, except the bathroom where instead I have covered baskets for the toilet paper and wash cloths, and the circular clothes rack is covered with burgundy-flowered fabric because if it weren’t for the Mysteries, it probably would never have occurred to me to do so, just as it wouldn’t ever have occurred to me to collage my laundry room cupboards, relieving all of us of their sickly yellow selves. I mean, honestly, who collages their laundry room cupboards?

If it weren’t for the Mysteries, my shoulders complain, you wouldn’t be sitting here in this straight chair which announces itself across the back of your legs and won’t let you slip down even a fraction of an inch to rest your back. That’s true, I say,

but if it weren’t for the Mysteries, I wouldn’t be sitting here across from Sara or in a circle with these beautiful Mystery Sisters who have become a part of my life, with whom I have made stepping stones and mother and father masks, jumped the fire (in a little hibachi) or joked about murkins. If it weren’t for the Mysteries, I wouldn’t have even known most of these women, let alone what a murkin is.

If it weren’t for the Mysteries, I might not be thinking of daily activities as a direct line to the sacred. I would know that I love to garden and would still do so, but I wouldn’t be thinking of gardening as a sacred way to turn the wheel of the seasons and change other worlds as the garden seeds itself, flowers, composts and starts again when the sun returns.

If it weren’t for the Mysteries, I wouldn’t be hearing Sara break out into laughter which is so becoming to the wonderful witch who she is, which no one here knows what she is laughing about and for which I can’t wait for the end of this write to find out.

I know I’m missing something here. I’m talking all around the Mysteries forgetting to say that it’s the sun that shines goldenly (there she goes again, her laughter spilling all over the table causing others to laugh, put down their pens, wipe their brows with the refreshing coolness of her fun)...now where was I? Oh yes, the sun and the moon and the stars and the seasons and the cycles and life and death and the Book of Shadows and the conversations I had with my brother who died and my father who was pulled ruthlessly into the afterlife by pneumonia and teas with our dead ancestors and tea shamans asking to be initiates who couldn’t join the Mysteries because they were only inashits. Oh dear and blessed be, I am going downhill rapidly and must release my legs and back from the shackles of this chair and put down my pen to end this write.

—Jane Allard Allen



SOUL CARDS

Women of the Mysteries create Soul Cards to celebrate, symbolize or depict turning points in the year, personal transitions, spiritual teachers, archetypal figures, etc.

(Cards in this issue are all by Sara Spaulding-Phillips)

(FROM PAGE 1, “NEW WOMEN’S MYSTERIES...”)

For women who are interested in leading groups of a similar nature, this is a good opportunity to resolve your vision, plan with my guidance and learn needed group skills and structure. For everyone, the Mysteries is a wonderful gift to give one’s self: a gift of sacred time and soul work.

I will be interviewing through the summer. If you are interested in exploring this new offering or know of anyone for whom this seems like a good fit, please call me, Sara Spaulding-Phillips, at (707)578-7272, ext. 2.