Liminality

*Jaden Graham*

**If there is one lesson to remind The Fool1, it’s this:**

**Take a pause before you leap**

**Take a breath**

**Collect that which you choose**

**To bring on your journey into the void**

**And the leave the rest**

**Don’t look back on the should’ves and could’ves of**

**This long, strange trip2 –**

**For gone are the days2**

**Of pointless fantasy**

**On what this path I’m walking would’ve looked like**

**If I was younger**

**Childless**

**Able to think faster**

**Move quicker**

**Retain this knowledge quicker and**

**Sooner**

**Yes, gone are those days of**

**Fast tracking my destiny**

**Of not embracing this**

**Liminal space**

**I occupy**

**Hold**

**And find myself in**

**The quietude3 of my soul’s calling**

**So…**

**Don’t look back**

**But rather**

**Reflect**

 **And reminisce**

**And remember**

**All of the moments**

**And choices**

**That led up**

**To where I find myself now**

**On this ever unfolding and unfurling**

**Spiral**

**Gather these teachings**

**“Good” and “bad”**

**Painful and pleasurable**

**Profound and seemingly dull**

**And wrap them up**

**In a red, silk scarf you’ll use as your sack**

**Tie it tightly**

**At the end of your wand**

**So as to not spill out**

**But not too tight**

**As to be unable to**

**Unravel,**

**Open,**

**And share**

**With your fellow dreamers,**

**Weavers of this new**

**Yet ancient**

**World**

**Now**

**Look across and forward**

**Set your gaze to the north**

**On the water bearer 4**

**Pouring milk and honey**

**Into the river**

**Which feeds Mother Ocean**

**From a copper vessel**

***Who is she?***

**Pear shaped and light caramel skin**

**Eyes and hair of rich, fertile earth**

 ***Who is she?***

**With a crown of sunflowers**

**Radiating beauty**

**Like the golden gown**

**That adorns her heavenly body**

***Who is she?***

**Draped in seashells5**

**Jade6**

**Kissed by dirt on her fingernails and face**

***Who is she?***

**Bell sleeved, bell bottomed**

**Child of wonder**

**Standing small but mighty**

**Beneath the waxing half moon**

**And towering Ocotillo blossoms7**

***Who is she?***

***Who is she?***

**This is she…**

**THIS. IS. SHE…**

**She is mother**

**She is lover**

**She is weaver**

**And the thread**

**She is magic**

**She is muse**

**She is with women**

**And here for herself**

**She is mestiza8**

**Soy la huesera9**

**She is the maiden10**

**And the crone10**

**She is the wellspring**

**And the desert**

**She is persistence**

**She is resilience**

**She is daughter**

**And the dreams of her ancestors**

**She is her grandmothers**

**Her grandmothers’ mothers**

**Her great-great grandmother**

**And all of her abuelas**

**She is future midwife**

**She is partera11**

**She is trailblazer**

**She…*knows* herself.**

**Now pause**

**And begin again**

**Look deeply at this**

**Familiar stranger**

**She is myth**

**And she is you –**

**If you want and will her to be…**

**The incomparable Octavia Butler12 once wrote:**

**“As wind,**

**as water,**

**as fire,**

**as life,**

**God**

**Is both creative and destructive,**

**Demanding and yielding,**

**Sculptor and clay.**

**God is infinite potential:**

**God is change…**

**All that you touch**

**You change.**

**All that you change**

**Changes you.**

**The only lasting truth**

**Is change.**

**God**

**Is change.”13**

***Nothing* is eternally**

**Fixed in the stars**

**Much less a tree**

**Rooted so deep**

**That nature so powerful**

**And so fierce**

**By divine circumstance**

**Couldn’t shake it up**

**You can build a fortress14**

**Only to have a wildfire14**

**Burn it to the ground14**

**But in the ashes and rubble14**

**Lies a raw and naked truth14**

**Another possibility14**

**Another path14**

**Another blank canvas to paint your unbound destiny14**

**Upon14**

**Life is impermanence14**

**And so it is…14**

**So…**

**Now…**

**Pause**

**Take another breath**

**See this woman across the way**

**Your potential**

**Your aspiration**

**For the person you wish to be**

**Focus**

**Your gaze**

**On the ground beneath her feet**

**This is your landing space**

**Your chosen destination**

**Stone and sand**

**Solid *and* steep**

**Firm and jagged**

**Now leap**

**So high and boldly**

**Or swim if the current suits your fancy**

**If you land with feet firmly planted**

**Bravo!**

**If you fall, you fall alone**

**But you always**

**Get**

**Back**

**Up**

**For even if the net underneath**

**Is merely an**

**Illusion**

**Who *are* you if you never**

**Jump?**

**(see notes on next page)**

**Notes**

1. In the tarot, the archetype of The Fool is the first card (card 0) in the major arcana. To me, The Fool represents both the beginning of a some part of the soul’s journey – both big and small -, the natural next step of the “end/completion” card, The World, and the cosmic void and liminal threshold we find ourselves in when ending one cycle and completing another.
2. These are two lines from a band that has ineffably shaped me from the inside out, The Grateful Dead (from “Truckin’” and “Brown Eyed Women”/”Crazy Fingers”, respectively). In the thirteen years I have been a Deadhead, I found an incomprehensible amount of medicine in their lyrics (thank you, Robert Hunter & John Barlow!) and their music has served as my soul’s compass, leading me to hard, beautiful and profound moments of truth, magical memories, and some of the most incredible individuals that I am blessed to call my soul family. I never saw The Grateful Dead live because I was only eight years old when Jerry Garcia died; though, I am beyond thankful to see various iterations of the other members forming something new, and carrying the torch and spirit of this “band beyond description.” The only other band that has come (very) close to doing this for me is The String Cheese Incident – both, of which, I encourage you to give a listen to if you haven’t yet! Feel free to reach out to me at @thankful\_earth on Instagram for show suggestions. I absolutely LOVE talking music!!
3. The first time I heard this word - “quietude” - was at my very first holistic doula training hosted by The Matrona’s founder, Whapio Dianne Bartlett. In what she calls the “holistic stages of birth,” the quietude is this place between reaching full dilation and before the onset of pushing. She compares it to when someone reaches the top of a mountain, and how, when we reach the top, we naturally want to pause and collect ourselves, instead of going straight down after achieving the challenge and momentous feat of climbing up.
4. Another tarot reference, “The Star” is the 17th card in the major arcana, and is deeply connected to the astrological profile of Aquarius, who’s constellation resembles that of an actual water bearer and an energy that, for me, represents personal and collective visioning embodied – we have two cups or vessels, and when one is full or overflowing, we pour it back into the river, both literally and metaphorically “giving back” to have a healthy balance of serving the self and serving others, be it your local or global community, non human relatives, or those in need.
5. When my grandma died a few years ago, I, being the only granddaughter in the family, was gifted all of her jewelry she left behind. One of the pieces was this gorgeous necklace made of seashells – namely, pukka shells.
6. Jade for Jaden – simple as that.
7. In our very trimester of the first year of Indie Birth Midwifery School, we had a Plant Medicine course taught by Colorado midwife Astrid Grove. The ultimate goal of the course was to compile a plant medicine profile to submit at the end of course – some would call this a monograph, though, it was much more freeform and eccentric than typical monographs -, and as an introduction to this project, we were offered a guided plant meditation to “meet” the plant ally we would be creating our report on. The plant that came to me in this meditation, that has been “visiting me” several times before in dreams and other guided trances, was Ocotillo (Fouquieria splendens), a shrub indigenous to the desert regions of Arizona and New Mexico (though, it can also be found in pockets throughout California, where the microclimate is akin to its homeland). Without getting into a whole long mini (or not so mini) post on this whole experience, my grandma, Jessie, who had died a handful of years before, and her mother, Maria, who I had never met and appeared to me as her younger, 20-something self, came to me in this vision and lead me to the Ocotillo. This profound was also the first time I was able to process and externally grieve my grandma Jessie’s death – necessary, hard, and so unbelievably healing. I have only met this plant once in the flesh behind a gas station after its blossoms fell but have a small piece of its wood on my ancestor altar and hope to meet her (or him) again someday.
8. My ancestors on my patrilineal side come from Mexico – both colonial transplants originating way back when from Spain and those from ancient Mexico (though the “who” and the “where” of this I probably will never find out) – thus making me “mestiza” – a (proud) Latina woman of mixed race. My matrilineal ancestors come from England and Germany, adding to the swirl of diversity within and without. Being mixed race was something I once saw as a burden and now see as beautiful and a gift.
9. *La huesera* (translated to “the bone woman” in English) is a Mexican folk figure canonized in Clarissa Pinkola-Estés’s book “Women Who Run With Wolves.” For more on *la huesera,* I have included some links in the show notes, as well as where to buy Pinkola-Estés’s book.
10. As women, we carry all of the archetypes within us – maiden, mother, and crone- throughout the entirety of our lives, however old we are and whether we actually become mothers to actual human children or not. I also have seen in a lot of posts on “embodied” motherhood that when we make the transition from maiden to mother that somehow our maidenhood is lost and completely dies off – or at the very least that we should deny this part of our identity. Personally, I think that to deny this part of ourselves is to deny the very essence of who we are – the part of us that helped shaped and molded us into the woman, and eventually, the mother we become. Of course changing to adapt to the needs of babies and children is critical to fully show up as a mother but to negate that which gave us so much joy and pleasure as a maiden is to not show up for ourselves, which I believe is equally as important, and ultimately, helps us become more present and balanced as mothers and as human beings.
11. *Partera* is the Spanish word for “midwife,” though, this word holds more depth for me than simply “a person who is trained to assist women in childbirth” (the Oxford dictionary definition of “midwife”). The *partera* is a servant of women and families throughout the entirety of their life cycle. While I don’t necessarily ascribe to calling myself or being a “healer,” some may consider a *partera* a healer, and a beacon of their community.
12. Octavia Butler was a science fiction author, whose work was rooted in Afro-futurism. Her works “Parable of the Sower” and “Parable of the Talents,” the two novels I have listened to on audio books, are absolutely incredible, and I have linked where to purchase her books in the show notes.
13. From Octavia Butler’s work “Parable of the Sower” as spoken through the lens (and journal) of protagonist Lauren Olamina and her doctrine in the making, “Earthseed: The Books of the Living.”
14. These ten lines, in reflection, were channeled by a really powerful inner knowing about the nature and fragility of life. I currently live in Northern California, where not only do we have a fifth season – wildfire season – but also where the biggest wildfire in California’s history, the 2020 August Complex Fire (reaching over a million acres in destruction), was a crow’s fly away from my home. And while my riverfront home is in many ways my sanctuary, this fact is both frightening and humbling. Obviously I would never wish for my home to be burned to the ground, nor do I think me writing about such a thing is me “manifesting” it to happen! Rather, having this transcribed from heart/soul to pen to page, is in, some way, my reminder of the impermanence of life, how that impermanence can actual carve out a new path we never thought possible, a declaration and promise to myself of my resilience, and to trust that I will be provided for and held (by others and by the universe) should such a monumental or tragic thing happen – and that I always am even when I am just going about my day, drinking coffee, and in my bliss.