

THE GREAT MOTHER

The Great Mother is the feminine aspect of God, the full power and intelligence of Nature. She is the source of life. She gives nurturing sustenance and protection to everything in form on earth. Every culture makes some reference to Her. She is Spider Woman in the Native Indian tradition, Tara in India, or Sophia, Goddess of wisdom in Gnostic traditions. Many associations with the Great Mother are of the gentle, nurturing aspect of Her divinity but she is also powerful, dark, and mysterious.

The latin word for mother is mater. The Great Mother presents herself through all matter, all the material forms on this earth. In its desire to dominate and control nature, the patriarchy has banished the Great Mother from a place of dominant influence in our culture. She has been forced underground. We see her anguish now in our ravished ecosystems, vanishing species, and global pandemics. Our addictions and rampant consumerism are a misplaced hunger for a meaningful connection with her life-giving energy. When we ignore her, abusing our bodies and ignoring our connection to the natural world, we lose touch with this primal feminine energy. Consequently, our world is dying.

Encounters with Great Mother are never casual. They take us into the very essence of life. Having lost the cultural rituals that would connect us to the living earth, the heart of matter, we may encounter the Great Mother in times of darkness or pain. Still, it is in her realm that transformation occurs, seeds and gestated, and new life is born. When we are in the midst of these challenging times it is hard to see the 'bright' side of life, yet as we keep faith and honor wisdom gained through facing the difficulties, we become more whole.

The kit supports a personal encounter with the archetypal energy of the Great Mother. When I made the essences, I did not anticipate how complex it would be to write the definitions. My usual meditative intuitions were not sufficient to access information contained in the essences. To find the words, I had to journey into the depths of my body-soul.

Each essence has a general definition followed by a tone-poem, my personal encounter with the Great Mother through the creation of this kit. If you choose to work with the kit over a period of time, use the essences to support your own story. Follow the sequence and let the essences guide you to the Great Mother's hearth. Perhaps your exploration will be through art, movement, or sound rather than words. I trust the kit will invite you into an experience that is authentic, safe, and deeply loving.

At the Great Mother's Breast

*Rush the sacred moment and it ceases being holy.
Cage her wild purity and greenness starts to wither.
Measure out her ecstasy and sweet earth becomes concrete.
Stop her snaking rivers and children starve and die.*

200. I Descending

Georgian Bay, Magnolia, Crambe, Creator, Psychotherapy, Annual Poppy, White Climber,

Descending soothes the terror experienced when our world suddenly collapses around us. It eases the initial shock and disorientation and helps us begin to gently open to life's mystery.

I lose my way and wander out of my life. Everything in my organized heavens breaks and scatters. The ground heaves, uprooting the Great Tree. I gaze up at the massive tangle of roots. Intoxicated by the dank smell of the black earth, I close my eyes and breathe. Then my heart is pulled down like a great stone dropping in the sea. I lose my footing and plunge headlong into the blackness. Desperately clawing for anything to break my fall, I scream in terror but no sound comes out. I have dropped into the mouth of the Great Mother and I am certain she will eat me alive.

"Come to me. "

201. II Abandonment

Lady's Slipper, Antique Pink, Peacemaker, Crambe, Nasturtium, Immune System, Zinnia, Migraines, Unifier, Raven's Retreat.

Abandonment calms our panic and anxiety when we are gripped by fear and frantically running around in circles. It grounds us and helps us stay with our feelings when we are in the midst of a process we cannot comprehend or control.

Panic-stricken, I grope in the darkness. I am in a place of total desolation and emptiness. I cannot feel what is under my feet and I don't know where to go. This is a time out of time. Gradually in the half-light, I see around me the walls of a cave. I am trapped. Terrified, I can do nothing for my hands are broken and my legs fail beneath me. No one will find me here. Through the darkness, Great Mother's hand reaches out like a claw, squeezing my heart, ripping at my sinews. I am being crushed and devoured. I collapse and try to escape on the slow long waves of my breath.

"Stay..."

202. III Isolation

Purple Loosestrife, Othello, New Year 2000, Phlox, Calla Lily, Summer Solstice, , Pathfinder.

Isolation addresses the feelings of utter helplessness when we come face to face with demons from our past. As the illusions we have constructed are stripped away, leaving us completely bereft, the essence affirms the simple presence of our being.

Unable to move, I can only wait and watch. Scenes of past and future events haunt and torture me. I see everything I have not done and everything I must do. All my limitations are vividly displayed before me. I cannot bear the pain. Desperately alone, I rage at the cold stone chamber. I have nothing, and in this place nothing that I have done is valued. The cave absorbs my fierce wailing and when I am spent, the silence vibrates around me. The darkness still weighs thick and heavy, confirming my aloneness. Dazed, I reach out and stroke my toes. I lose track of which is which and whether there are even ten. A flicker of warmth stirs within me. This, my body, is one thing that is mine. The rest is illusion. Yet even as I claim this, I know it too will be taken away. For now I let it comfort me.

"You will take nothing from this place but your skin and bones."

203. IV Surviving/Strengthening

Pik Hawthorn, Warrior, Rio Samba, Ninebark, Honeysuckle, Healer,

When we are paralyzed by guilt and shame, *Surviving and Strengthening* softens our cruel self-judgments and helps us open to the flow of life's nourishment in the moment.

My sleep is shattered with endless scenes of deceit and torture. The frightful atrocities overwhelm me. Appalled and grief-stricken, I want to run away. I have become everything I hated and feared. My illusions of perfection are being wrenched from me. I am both the monster, cruel and terrible, and the victim. How can this be? Filled with shame, I weep. Will this ever end? My tears make a pool upon the cool stone floor.

"Stay in this holy place. Find the well. Drink and be nourished."

204. V Building the Ark

Ninebark, Raven Purple, Echinacea, Vibration – Nature's Music, Red Climber, Yellow Yarrow, Peacemaker, Storyteller.

Building the Ark offers hope when everything in our lives feels shattered. It helps us to open our hearts and see the possibilities for a new life-direction based upon loving compassion.

Once again my dreams are wild and chaotic. What do they mean? What pattern do they reveal? Slowly I start to see them as the shattered pieces of my life laid before me. This is what I have, for better or worse. Perhaps there is no pattern, just the pieces. I feel helpless and confused. None of my old skills serve me here. I can only wait and listen. The cave now begins to feel like a womb. I can feel the Great Mother's dark presence hovering behind me but now I am not afraid. Everything is already in ruins. There is nowhere to go. In the darkness, I feel her hands gently caress my swollen eyes. Then, she slowly reaches under my ribs to embrace me. With grateful tears, I fall back into her embrace. With her enormous body surrounding me, I open the floodgates of my broken heart. Instantly, I know that she will protect me. I see the pieces on the floor and they look different now. I can gather my broken dreams and spin them into something new. She will guide my trembling hands. Nothing must disturb this task.

“Only love organizes in these realms. Leave everything else upon the floor. What you have loved must now serve Love.”

205. VI Holding the Thread of Hope

Calla Lily, Sacred Clown, Apricot Nectar, Queen of the Night, Creativity, Departure, Perennial Mix, Arbutus.

Holding the Thread of Hope supports the complete reconstruction of our lives. After a time of deep despair, the essence holds us as life-energy begins to move again. It helps us to honor, contain, and nurture the preciousness of our own lives.

In the solitude, I rock gently back and forth, pick up each tiny fragment and hold it carefully in my palm. When it feels warm and alive, I twist it with another piece. I do not know what I am making but the simple act of twisting the threads brings me peace. As the strands grow, my hands strengthen and move more quickly. Now there is more light in the cave and I scan the stone floor for anything I might have missed. A shiver of awareness runs through me. This is not a repair — I am building a completely new life. As I spin, I sense that I could leave this place but I am not ready yet. My heart, once so fearful and broken, is still very fragile. Still, hope swells within me as I see the strands reveal their shape. This is a shawl. I feel a quickening and start to hum.

“I listen...”

206. VII Surrender and Sacrifice

White Climber, Millenium, Red Climber, Wisdomkeeper.

Surrender and Sacrifice assists with the conscious release of ego. When our illusions have been stripped away and we have survived the darkness of a life-altering journey, the essence supports our commitment to living in a fully ecstatic connection with Source.

As I weave, I hear the Great Mother ask, through the great ringing of silence, for me to abandon my willful arrogance and false passions. If I grant Her this request, I know that I will never be the same. The shawl that I am making is not to hide old shame and nakedness for it is woven of these very things. Within Her great body, I have let myself be eaten. I know now that the shawl that I have woven from the remains is me. In the pool I see a lotus floating on the water. I remember that I am very hungry. I cup the flower in my hands and hold it dripping to my chest. The lotus reaches into my chest, spreads beneath my breasts and licks me with its gentle fire. She has kissed me through the flower. Her lips and tongue are deep inside me. I feel her breath throughout my naked body.

“Your body is part of Me. You wear one of My many faces. Now, go and sing your song....”

207. VIII The Return

Bridging, Pathway, Digestive System, Katsura Rose, Cedar, Dispersion, Lavatera, Tulip, Millenium, Daylilies, Pink Hawthorn, Forget-me-not.

At the end of a transformative cycle, *The Return* affirms the experience of being at peace in the world. With the quiet wisdom that comes through deep inner work, we can honor the unity of all life and feel our rightful place in the whole.

Walking in the sunlight, I know that part of me will never fully return to this world. Everything in nature reminds me of Her: the cool stones, the flowers, the great silent trees all carry echoes of my encounter within Her great dark womb. Though I carry a great darkness within me, I am no longer sad or fearful. It comforts me to remember my time with Her. The spinning continues deep within me and I still feel her lips upon my heart. When I breathe, it is Her song I want to sing. My busy life no longer seduces me. With a gentle heaviness in my body, I walk more slowly. The lines upon my face are the cobwebs of my past, woven with tears and love, which I now wear with pride. This is my shawl, my life, and I will not let it hide me any more.

“ Now that you know me, you will find me everywhere.”