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**EARTHSPEAK:**  
STORIES FOR A PLANET  
IN TRANSITION





## SPRING/SUMMER 2019

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# contents

## from the founding editor 2

## features 5

- 6 Possibility Beyond Ecopocalypse: The Phoenix of Earthly Renewal**  
Craig Chalquist
- 11 Oil and Water** Christopher McDonough
- 16 Ecobiography: Earth Stories as a Useful Clinical Tool** Linda Buzzell
- 22 Talking to Plants: A Deep Nature Guide** Tiana Cicco

## from the academy 30

- 32 Recovering the Wild Sacred** Ida Covi
- 44 Landscape and Story: Ecopsychological Reflections on a Day in the Burren** James Liter
- 57 Goddesses of Wholeness: An Exploration of Gaia, Demeter-Persephone, and Ariadne through the Lens of Personal Myth and Archetypal Activism**  
Olga R. Sohmer

## these mythic times 73

- 74 The Storming of the Grail Castle** Zhiwa Woodbury

## mythopoetics 85

- 87 The Silent Watcher Within** Ida Covi
- 88 Three Poems** Raïna Manuel-Paris

## art and image 95

- 96 Artist Profile** Shane Wheel
- 98 Interview with Andrew Winegarner** Mary Wood

## reviews 101

- 102 Nature Cards: Two New Approaches to Reconnection and Renewal**  
Mary Wood

---. "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle." From the *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Volume 8: *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, edited by H. E. Read et al, translated by R.F.C. Hull. 1952. Princeton University Press, 1973.

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# The Goddesses of Wholeness: An Exploration of Gaia, Demeter-Persephone, and Ariadne through the Lens of Personal Myth and Archetypal Activism

Olga R. Sohmer

We find ourselves at a critical threshold, a time when grave ecological destruction abounds, while many life forms are under increasing threat by human hands; hope can be a scarce resource, as grief swells and the meaning behind immanent devastation is unfathomable. Yet, when mundane meaning-making fails, mythology—with its vast archetypal view—can lend symbolic insight. That is, myth-tending through contemplation, active imagination (Jung, "Active Imagination" 1), dreamwork, attention to synchronicity, or cultivating an archetypal eye (Hillman 127) may offer guidance as we strive to find adequate responses to our current crises. The world's mythological traditions provide illuminating perspectives on our relationship with the Earth at this time.

In this essay, initially inspired by an exploration of personal myth (Jung, "Memories" 3; see also Chalquist)—that is, the depth psychological premise that we can find certain mythic stories and figures that resonate deeply with our life experiences and sense of self—I turned to the goddess figures of the Greek pantheon that intimate wholeness, containing the totality of life and death. Specifically, I was drawn into the myths of Gaia, Persephone-Demeter, and Ariadne in their particular yet interweaving forms. In what follows, I share the ways in which the mythic complexes of these goddesses emerged in my study and imaginal life as inextricable threads of one tapestry. Honoring each in turn, I hope to give voice to some of



their unique and intersecting lessons as I experienced them. In so doing, I offer an example of the ways we can discover the mythic dimension of our personal lives and the relevant wisdom this discovery may grant us at the ecological crossroads we face today.

### Gaia: Earth, mother, and the cycles of all

*I am enwombed. Gestating in the sacred waters of life, preparing for the sudden, death-birth passing through my mother. Breathfully in awe of the way life crosses from the liminal womb space, bursting forth into manifest world. The life force within me churning: all love. Sparkling, luminous, love incarnate—spirit crossing into form.*

*I realize: as natural as the birth process itself, we are tasked with separation from mother, necessarily individuating from her body and soul in order to become whole ourselves. But inevitably, the return to her beckons. As individuals, we return variously to our physical mothers—to her body or spirit, or to her impression as it resides within. We return, perhaps, to heal the wounds of separation, to forgive, acknowledge gratitude, or tend to her passing. Or, perhaps, we return to her when we cross into parenthood ourselves. Irrespective of our particular return to our human mother, we ultimately all return to our Great Mother Gaia in death.*

*Likewise, as a collective species we have differentiated—crawled out of Earth—separated ourselves, at times violently, from her, turning against her in deluded attempts to tame her wilds. Like the individual returning to mother, humanity must return to Earth to repair the connection that has been severed and rediscover, or create anew, our role as caretakers and tenders of her cycles. With the compassion of a whole mother, she forgives our offenses, ready, waiting, for our mature return.*

—Visionary encounter, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014

For us, on Earth, all is contained in Gaia. All of life springs forth from her and returns to her. She is the very ground and substance of our existence. According to a prominent Olympian Creation myth, Gaia arose from Chaos and gave birth to the mountains, the sea, and the sky. She then birthed Ouranos, “the mountain king” or sky god (Graves 31-33). The two marry—for it was not uncommon for the goddess of origin to engage with the masculine principle as he alternates between lover and son—forging the masculine-feminine partnership of Mother Earth and Father Sky (Guttman and Johnson 53). Together the two were abundantly generative, giving birth to plants, animals, the Titans (the pre-Olympian rulers), as well as many monstrous beings like



Enblem 2d: “Nutrix ejus terra est.” of Michael Maier, *Atalanta Fugiens*. 1617/1618. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

the Cyclopes. In this wave of ambivalent creativity, we discover that, as Downing emphasizes: “Gaia is not benign: she is generative” (154). So out of the fecundity of Gaia, life in many forms, ranging from the most benefic to utterly frightful, is released into the world. As the story unfolds, Ouranos becomes tyrannical and locks the Cyclopes in the underworld; that is, *within* Gaia herself. Suffering Ouranos’s cruelty, Gaia, as compassionate mother, provides her children with a sickle to put an end to his reign. Chronus accepts the task, successfully castrating and overthrowing his father, but is destined to suffer a similar fate by the hands of his own son, Zeus (Graves 37-39). And so on, this cycle of masculine power struggle repeats into modern day with Gaia as the active backdrop. Although our focus has shifted to the foreground drama, I believe that Gaia—as both primal Great Mother Goddess and the Earth herself—remains dynamically engaged in the play of life.

As such, the *living* myth of Gaia—for she has not departed but remains our source and home in her earthy flesh—gives much insight into the archetypal foundations of life. In the cycles of nature, the manifestations of her potential, we witness the diversity that Gaia is capable of. From the barren cold of winter, through the budding reemergence of life in spring, to the fruition of summer, and the decay of fall, Gaia is expressed in myriad forms. When we step back to behold the undulations of life's cycles as if from Gaia's perspective, we see that all phases are integral to her. Downing explains:

In the world of the goddesses, creation-and-destruction and feast-and-famine were seen as two phases of the one ever-recurring inescapable pattern, not as irreconcilable opposites. Perhaps it is the greatest gift of the goddess to teach us that good and evil, life and death, are inextricably intertwined. (12-13)

In Gaia's myth, we witness the unstoppable force of life expressed in an amoral tenor. Like in the vision she evoked in me, we are reminded that the evolutionary process that is Gaia's dance is necessarily comprised of both creative *and* destructive principles. Life bursts forth into manifestation, and, in due course, recedes. In her likeness, the children of Earth are capable of destruction as well as creation. Through reflexive consciousness and creative agency, however, we are able to take responsibility for our actions, free to enter into right relationship with Gaia and all beings as we choose. The challenge for us to evolve into a loving, mature relationship with Earth and our planetary community has, arguably, never been more urgent.

Similar to the Earth's seasons—all of which are contained within the capacity of Gaia—we can reflect on the goddesses that are her descendants as particularizations of her original wholeness. Lkening the seasons to the distinctive faces of the goddess provides a useful analogy. In springtime, the goddess is a maiden or nymph—virginal or sexually active respectively—youthful, vibrant, innocent, pure, and at one with nature. As summer ripens, the goddess is expressed as the abundant, fertile mother, either pregnant or with children. Then, the movement into fall symbolizes the phase in which the goddess experiences loss and grief (often separated from her child for the sake of his/her/their individuation) and gains wisdom to find a new order of wholeness. Finally, in the winter months, the goddess emerges as the crone,

witch, or wise woman. In these phases, we witness the diverse expressions of the goddess archetype as if peering through a prism from different vantage points. Each perspective allows us to experience the goddess more intimately, while recalling her wholeness reminds us of her inherent power.

Again, I want to emphasize that tracing the differentiations of the goddess to Gaia as their source does not eclipse their individual meanings but serves to anchor their unique expressions into the underlying totality from which they spring. In Downing's words: "As we return each goddess to the mother we rediscover her fullness. [The goddesses] do not thereby lose their particularity but they do lose their pathology. Their very dark aspects come to be visible as transformative" (155). In light of our current ecological crises, this perspective can, perhaps, help us honor the dark, transformative dimension of Gaia to move beyond denial and more clearly face the ways we enact destruction. At the same time, without diminishing the necessary functions of outrage to motivate action and grief to metabolize real loss, we may find trust in Gaia's relentlessly generative aspect and solace in the greater cycles of life. Furthermore, holding the phases of the goddess as diverging expressions of Gaia can grant deeper access to the mythic dimension, which is inherently multivalent, spiraling, and dynamic.

### **Persephone, Demeter, and Hades.**

In my personal exploration of myths and goddesses of Greece, the Persephone-Demeter dyad and their travails magnetized my attention. At once eerily familiar yet unapproachably dramatic, my engagement with their myth alternated between obstinate resistance and sudden realizations of commonality. Seeing myself as a predominantly upper-world inhabiting and self-determined girl and woman, I strained to identify with the innocent Core (i.e., Persephone in youth), Demeter's young maiden daughter and her nearly permanent abduction into the underworld (Graves 89-96). Likewise, I could not recall having relationships with Hades-like figures, nor see myself growing, as Core does, into Persephone, the "bringer of destruction," Goddess of the Underworld. Despite this surface level estrangement from the myth, a series of dreams coupled with archetypally resonant memories drew me back to the myth again and again. As I attended to the connections that emerged and continued to explore interpretations of the Demeter-Persephone myth, I began to discover that through slight retellings—especially taking the perspective of their myth as an articulation of the greater goddess archetype—I could readily discern the



myth's character in the themes and happenings of my life.

At the core, it was the depth of the bond between Demeter and Persephone that reminded me of certain aspects of my own mother-daughter experience. As the only child of a woman who moved and married numerous times in search of love and freedom, I grew up deeply connected to and, at times, enmeshed with my mother. When I was four years old, we left my father and extended family in Ufa, Russia, to move to Moscow when she fell in love. However, within a couple years, this relationship turned dark, necessitating another move to live with another man. This too did not last and around my seventh birthday we left Russia for the U.S. with my mother's new husband and employer—a man nearly forty years her senior. In retrospect, his Hades-like character is apparent as a once-powerful man, who had made and lost millions through controversial dealings in international investment banking. He adopted me but five years later this relationship also ended, and, after a difficult divorce, my mother remarried again. This time her partner was a more even-tempered man (albeit, curiously, still connected to the realm of Hades as an oil engineer), with whom we moved to another state. While the emotional waters stilled in this relationship, it was still not a fit, so by the time I was sixteen, I accompanied my mother through yet another divorce into her current marriage. At this point, she moved in with her husband in another state, while I completed school.

Before I reflect on this period of my life in light of the Persephone-Demeter myth, I will revisit the possibility of the phases of their story being expressions of the one goddess Gaia. We find the innocent maiden in young Core, who is stolen by Hades into the underworld while collecting poppies. Upon Hades' command, the Earth opens, swallowing Core into Tartarus (Graves 89). At this juncture, Gaia, as Earth, recedes into the passive, objectified backdrop that is the setting for mythic drama, rather than an actor herself. We then see the goddess in mourning, in Demeter's loss as she fiercely grieves Core's abduction and unleashes winter on the land. Then, the abundant goddess is expressed twofold: through Persephone during her yearly return from the underworld in the fecundity of spring and in Demeter as she presides over harvest. Finally, the goddess as crone unfolds both in Persephone when she takes her seat as the Underworld Queen, as well as in her underworld complement, Hecate, the elder goddess of witches. From this cyclical perspective, Demeter and Persephone emerge as aspects of one gestalt, expressing the totality of the goddess's life cycles. At the same time, as Downing explains, "Demeter and Persephone in their essential bond with each other represent the two aspects of



*The Return of Persephone* by Frederic Leighton, 1st Baron Leighton. Oil on canvas. 1891. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Gaia, the vegetative and the chthonic" (153): the generative upper-word and the transformative underworld. As such, we can interpret the mother and daughter dyad as a fractalization of Gaia, forging a totality in Demeter and Persephone as one. Yet,

at the same time, each figure can be held in her own light, containing a particular, but complete, emanation of the whole of Gaia. Downing elaborates:

Persephone is the goddess of the underworld but never just a goddess of the world of soul; she is always also the beautiful young goddess of spring as it manifests itself in tender leaf and half opened bud, in the rushing streams and the freshness of birdsong. To hold soul and earth together, the hidden and the appearing—that is Gaia's gift. (153)

In this sense, Persephone expresses both poles of Gaia's paradoxical potentiality. Addressing Demeter and Persephone together further accentuates Gaia's proclivity toward diversity.

When applied to my personal myth exploration, holding Persephone and Demeter as interpenetrating aspects of Gaia provided greater nuance and flexibility for interpreting how their myth has been expressed in my life. As daughter, I was initially inclined to see myself as Persephone, yet a more fluid understanding of their roles helped me discern her patterns in my mother's life as well as my own. In fact, reflecting on my upbringing, I now see my mother first as the abducted Persephone. Beginning with our birthplace, the Soviet Union, which has at times been likened to the underworld (Guttman and Johnson 96), my mother described a lifelong yearning to escape. After mourning her own mother's crossing to the underworld, when she and I were twenty-six and two-years-old respectively, my mom took a leap toward her own individuation and defiantly left her hometown. In her relational life as well, particularly with my adoptive father and her third husband, I can trace clear Hades-Persephone dynamics. Although she willingly entered into these marriages, they were also for her acts of survival and abductions from herself, marking loss of innocence. Along with the associations with Hades previously mentioned, my mother was significantly younger than both husbands and experienced power struggles as an immigrant married to, at times, possessive, controlling men.

However, as was characteristic for my mother and me in my youth, the boundaries between us were sometimes permeable and it seems that I took on the role of Persephone at a certain point as she matured into Demeter. A particularly resonant example was when my adoptive father, powerfully constellating the myth of Hades at the time, attempted to gain sole custody of me in their divorce. I recall my mother fighting in a fiercely Demeter fashion to keep me with her, while

I, akin to Core's refusal of food, did everything in my power to support her case. My mother won custody, but like Persephone's yearly return to Hades, I had court-mandated visitations with my adoptive father until I reached adulthood. Years later, this dynamic again came to the fore when my mother attended a Native American ritual with me and my partner at the time, during which she experienced a powerful revulsion to his "abduction" of me into the "underworld." Although I was not actually abducted in this case, later on, evoked by several dreams in which I have found myself feeling trapped back in this period of my life, I could see a potential mythic layer of her perception. As our relationship stands now, I see my mother embodying the role of Demeter as she alternates between struggling to accept my individuation and moving towards acceptance of our distance for much of the year.

Taking in the complexity of Gaia and softening the boundaries between mother and daughter, between Demeter and Persephone, invited me into a more creative exploration of the archetypal interplay within the mythic world. That is, a vision of Gaia as multidimensional and containing all of the potentials of the diverse Olympian goddesses fostered an archetypal perspective on the dynamic between my own mother and me as a fluid expression that weaves through the Demeter and Persephone gestalt. Coupled with the depth psychological premise that we are likely to live *all* characters in a myth at different times (just as we can explore all dream figures as aspects of ourselves), I can now see my mother and myself as Demeter and Persephone both. As Downing posits: "To see the Olympian goddesses in relation to Gaia is also to be reminded that we do not get to choose among them—we are, like it or not, involved with every one" (155).

### **Ariadne, Dionysus, and the recovery of wholeness.**

Having traced the myth of Demeter and Persephone through my youth, I come to Ariadne—Mistress of the Labyrinth—the goddess whose archetype first resonated as a personal myth and offered me entry into the mythic world. In short, out of love, Ariadne helps the Athenian hero Theseus fulfill his quest to kill the Minotaur at the center of the labyrinth by giving him a thread that guides his return, only to be deserted by him on an island shore before they wed. Possible endings for the myth diverge and she is either rescued by Dionysus to be his eternal consort, dies in childbirth, is killed by Artemis, or dies of grief (Downing 64; Graves 342). Despite the somber tragedy most tellings of the myth involve, my openness to Ariadne over Persephone was rooted in the intimation of wholeness that Ariadne,



in herself, suggested. While their myths have considerable similarities, when I approached both looking for clues of my personal myth, Ariadne called me in while Persephone repelled me. Still, their affinity as underworld goddesses inclined me to hold them together and offered insights about passages through the underworld and womanhood more broadly.

Most resonant for me was the way Ariadne's myth—with her thread that allows return from the labyrinth—suggested an ability to navigate descent and ascent from the underworld *at will*. Ariadne's myth also emphasized the potential for transformation through agency and love, whereas Persephone was transformed primarily by way of destiny. Finally, the contrast of Ariadne's seemingly bountiful marriage to Dionysus and Persephone's unwilling partnership with Hades, implored me to look deeper into the relational dynamic that Ariadne and Dionysus suggest. Based on these points of divergence, Ariadne became the most resonant portal for me into relationship with the goddess. Given the obvious parallels with Persephone that I later uncovered, I speculate that Demeter-Persephone as goddess refracted into mother and daughter was more aligned with my youth when my life was characterized by this dynamic, while Ariadne as an agentive maiden, lover, and mother spoke more clearly to my adulthood. Looking to her multivalent expressions furthered my exploration of how the goddess can manifest in human life.

In the facets of Ariadne we can find, like Gaia, the whole gestalt of Persephone-Demeter: in the ways she is variously portrayed as an underworld goddess (due to her association with the labyrinth and marriage to Dionysus), the Cretan goddess of fertility (Graves 79), the "Great Moon Goddess" of Crete (Kerenyi 124), and the androgynous, self-perpetuating original goddess (Downing 63). Graves explains: "Ariadne," which the Greeks understood as 'Ariagne' ('very holy'), will have been a title of the Moon-goddess honored in the dance, and in the bull ring: 'the high, fruitful Barley-mother', also called Aridela, 'the very manifest one'" (347). In the meanings of her names, we see Ariadne's complexity reflected: sharing the fruitful "mother of barley" with Demeter, "very holy" or "utterly pure" with the maiden goddess, and "the very manifest one" with Gaia herself. As my own name, Olga, also means "holy," I felt drawn into relationship with Ariadne on a fundamental level. Like Persephone, Ariadne embodies the realm of the soul as well as the virility of spring. And like Demeter, Ariadne is the fertile mother of grain as well as her own children. In her multidimensionality, Ariadne mirrors the totality of Core-Persephone-Demeter, spiraling between their distinctive potentials, which when taken together generate a



*Theseus and Ariadne* by Willoughby Vera. 1925. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

composite reflective of Gaia. As Downing attests, "In the beginning there is Ariadne, a goddess complete in herself, androgynous and self-perpetuating, creating out of her own being with no need of another" (63). Thus, intimating the archetypal core of the great goddess that is the origin of all, Ariadne conveys the mysterious process by which the goddess is differentiated from her source, while simultaneously expressing her diverse and particularized potentials.

Holding these various expressions of Ariadne, including her connection to the

primal goddess of origin, I remained intrigued about Ariadne's union with Dionysus, for this too emphasized her association with wholeness. After a visitation of Dionysus in a dream in which an ex-partner, disheveled and intoxicated, was pursuing me, I decided to look deeper into this aspect of Ariadne's myth. Now, Dionysus, the androgynous god of ecstasy, has always fascinated me, so it was not much of a leap to imagine what partnership with him might mean. At first pass, I saw his androgyny as an important indicator of masculine-feminine balance within. Downing draws this meaning further to posit: "The relationship with a man who has his own soul is inevitably that with one who is psychologically androgynous, as is Dionysus" (56). Thus, beyond a balance of masculine and feminine, the androgyny of Dionysus points to spiritual wholeness: an individual that embodies the totality of life as sourced and perpetuated within. In this light, it is no wonder that Dionysus remains the god with closest ties to the goddess and affinity to the wilds of nature. Curiously, Dionysus is at different times said to be the son of Rhea, Demeter, Persephone, and Semele—whose name means "moon" and is likened to Core—interchangeably, while Ariadne shares identity with each of these figures in certain contexts (Graves 347; Kerényi 89-125), reminiscent of the archetypal masculine passing through the forms of son and lover in relation to the primal goddess, as in the story of Gaia and Ouranos.

As consort of Dionysus, then, Ariadne is revealed as a goddess who similarly characterizes inner wholeness, freely embodying the masculine and feminine principles, and is, thus, complete in herself. Although further elaboration extends beyond the scope of discussion, I want to underscore here that I hold "masculine" and "feminine" with an open-ended, inquiring spirit. Rather than essentialized characteristics pertaining to men or women, I see these principles as a dynamic polarity within the human psyche that each individual can access regardless of sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual preference. Further, I believe that these principles are calling for our dynamic engagement and redefinition through our present-day lived experience beyond the associations often assumed with them (i.e., masculine as purely dynamic, intellectual, aggressive and feminine as purely receptive, emotional, nurturing) and encourage future inquiry to this end. Addressing how masculine-feminine integration, or intrinsic wholeness, might be expressed in the human dimension, Downing elaborates:

Dionysus is the lover of women who have their center in themselves, who are not defined by their relationships with literal men... For the



*Paphos Archaeological Park. House of Theseus: Mosaic of Theseus killing the minotaur - Ariadne (detail). Photo by Wolfgang Sauber, 2011. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.*

hidden Ariadne means woman in relation to her own powers, not as defined by relationship with others. She is woman unafraid of her own sensuality or of her own capacity for ecstasy. (61-62)

I would add from my own experience, aspirations, and reading of the myth, that this state of self-possession is possible in partnership as well. When a woman is whole, she can be with a partner that is also whole—not with a hero to rescue her or a child who needs to be mothered, but an equal—a partner who can hold his/her/their own. Conjunctio, the sacred marriage, then arises simultaneously within as without, as masculine-feminine integration in the psyches of the individuals as well as in the relationship between them.

Kerényi extends this potential from the human to the archetypal, positing that together Ariadne and Dionysus represent the very foundations of life:

Just as Dionysos is the archetypal reality of *zoë* [indestructible life], so Ariadne is the archetypal reality of the bestowal of soul, of what makes a living creature an individual... In the union of two archetypal



images, the divine pair Dionysos and Ariadne represent the eternal passage of *zoë* into and through the genesis of living creatures. This occurs over and over again and is always, uninterruptedly, present. Not only in the Greek religion, but also in the earlier Minoan religion and mythology, *zoë* takes the masculine form, while the genesis of souls takes the feminine form. (124-125)

Ariadne is, thus, a goddess rooted in the deepest potentialities of the feminine principle—the generative dimensions of underworld *and* upper-world, bestowing both soul and physical life. Yet, embodying inner androgyny like Dionysus, we are challenged to comprehend that, at the deepest level, Ariadne contains the masculine as much as the feminine. In this sense, she represents the fundamental interplay of creative impulse and manifestation simultaneously; that is, the deepest mystery of life itself. In this understanding of Ariadne—at once the furthest expansion and most essential distillation of the goddess—we return to Gaia, the origin and life force of all. Thus, myth becomes a bridge to connect our human lives to their archetypal source, granting access to the sacred, and fostering the possibility that we are living expressions of her.

### Closing contemplations

*"You need to unite masculine and feminine, and return to the dark Earth."*

-- *Dream message, March 22, 2014*

This exploration of the goddess figures that constellate wholeness renders intelligible a statement that came across as a very significant "answer" in a dream. For as we learn from the archetypal goddess of wholeness—who, arguably, embodies the original state and organic generative impulse of life—our individual and collective healing invites an integration of masculine and feminine as well as a return to the Earth. Looking to Ariadne and Dionysus, I now see masculine and feminine in fluctuation between fundamental union and individuation. Akin to the way that we can perceive Gaia as the taproot of Persephone, Ariadne, and Demeter without losing their individual meanings, masculine and feminine principles alternately integrate and differentiate in the dynamic perpetuation of life. At the level of the human collective, this archetypal message calls for a post-patriarchal balancing

of the masculine and feminine as they are expressed in our communities. At the individual level, it reminds us to honor and cultivate both principles, as well as the relationship between them, within our psyches. Engagement with the masculine and feminine as *living archetypes*, thus, may open a path toward enacting their mature expression, restoring balance within ourselves as well as in the human and greater ecological communities in which we are a part.

Likewise, the goddess implores our return to the Earth, mythic Gaia, not only to honor her as origin, home, and vital force, but to glimpse our own wholeness. Undeniably, the environmental crises we now face demand urgent, multidimensional responses. As my dream statement curiously qualified, our attention is being directed to the *dark*, chthonic, underworldly, transformative dimension of Earth. Similar to the goddess in the decay of fall—characterized by the life-death, individuation struggle that ensues before the hard-won wisdom of winter or the regeneration of spring—the human collective faces profound uncertainty and a call toward maturation. The intimate and often-perilous journey of the goddess suggests that regeneration will require movement beyond avoidance and denial, through likely grief and heartbreak, if we are to vitalize sustained, courageous action.

Coupled with critical effort in the physical world, my exploration of Gaia's myth has led me to believe that our activism must turn inward as well. For remembering Gaia—as variously expressed through mother Earth, our personal mothers, and the expressions of the goddess with whom we most resonate—may open pathways toward renewed relationship with her in both our psychospiritual and material landscapes. At the same time, this relational healing enables participation in the inner wholeness that Gaia intimates. Perhaps, as we heal the wounds of separation and fragmentation within, we may be liberated from the compulsion to recreate these conditions in the world around us. I hold this twofold path of archetypal activism—involving both inner and outer work—as promising, despite lack of guaranteed positive outcomes. May this account and vision of wholeness embolden our efforts toward a generative transition.

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Image on page 73: *Skógafoss* by Shane Wheel.  
Iceland. 2017.

# these mythic times

*Editor's note: This regular column is an attempt to openly explore what cultural myths may be emerging during this time of heightened crisis. There are many who believe that we are in one of those unique times between myths, when an old myth (e.g., the myth of progress) has died out or is no longer functional, but a new one has yet to take its place. Some ecopsychologists maintain that we lack a suitable myth to serve as a spiritual container for the climate crisis. Given that this crisis threatens life as we have come to know it, and that myths often arise in response to need, we are faced with the urgent task to at least attempt to identify the character and content of any new, emerging myth. This may in turn depend on how one views the dying myth, so it is equally important to speak to that. We welcome all those who hear the cries of the Earth to join us in this ongoing exploration. Please feel free to submit your own theories for future issues.*

