

## Finding Kin, Making Kin



I found you in a cave.

Among slimy, black rocks, damp, spongy moss, and a trickling stream, connecting and birthing as it flowed from the cave's depths to my feet.

I had been searching for you for sometime, traveling through the landscapes our ancestors inhabited. These places are not what they used to be. Once boundless, bountiful and self-sustaining, we lived in harmony. These environments are now in flux, unbalanced and teetering between existence and obsolescence. And with their uncertainty comes ours. I need your help to survive among this damage. I had heard whispers of your story, your struggle to connect. I sought you out to learn, to be inspired, to rejoin, and to recreate in this time of precarity.

As I looked for you, I relived your story. I started at the origin point, where the initial sacrifice was made – where our kin jumped from the cliff into the waters below.

Then I swam in sapphire seas, among the seaweed and fish, hoping to speak to the Sea Gods who reanimated this sacrifice, breathing life and a vision of continuance into being. I could not reach them. I only heard their aqueous echoes as my limbs and fins tread through this aquatic world.

Then I surfaced. I walked along the same shores where this original sacrifice, this again-alive being, now a Seal God, danced and celebrated the feeling of sand beneath its body. Here it had become comfortable in its form and with the ground that sustained and supported it.

After that, I ran to the hills, tracing the path the Seal God had taken to find the Dog God, with whom it created you. The Sea Gods said to “enmesh until you forget where she begins, and you end.” As I ran inland, I whispered, I sang, I yelled, I barked, I howled. All into the void. The Dog God gave no response. Was it still alive? So I lay still in the grass and let that other ancient relative, the wind, speak. It told me to come here. To the cave, the womb, the darkness, the place where we rest, reimagine, and create anew. I came home, and you spoke to me.

Like many before us, and hopefully those after us too, you told your story on the cave’s walls. Out of the darkness you projected yourself mid-air, and you came to me as a series of moving images and sounds. I sat quietly and listened to you, BXYB.

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“Long asleep on sinking beds. I did my best to forget. ‘til that cold distance of plastic awakened the memory of home. And I cry ‘touch me! touch me!’ as I learn the rituals of the vivarium and the laboratory.”

You struggled.

Those rituals did not fit you - beautiful, uncategorisable, perfect.

Plastic wires, a syringe, a speculum,

Cold. Homogenizing.

You used these strange tools to poke and pry yourself open.

Alone, you looked within for the possibility of

an egg

a child

a community

a way home

Then you began to return by working with others.

You kill a deer. Another sacrifice.

I cried as I watched its insides unearthed.

Lungs, stomach, intestines.

Pelvis split and sawed by a knife with a vicious

gnaw.

Then you hold her womb, and with it “The next generation of deer”

You use the baby deer,

Scalpels, test tubes in hot water baths, pipettes and

mix it together

with the life-gift from a bat.

A hybrid for a hybrid

Do these scientific rituals work?

These tried and tested methods

Microscopes show rustling life

On the brink of bloom

You eagerly assemble your tools and try  
again.

“As I let my long plastic fingers release inside of me... I can hear mother singing...”

Perhaps you are close.

“She and I will have all of what you lost”

You leave your laboratory-home and make for the terrain where our ancestors roamed. Perhaps  
this is the missing piece, what you need to succeed.

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You walk alone and tired and heavy

Through valleys and among mountains

You collapse into the grass, soil, roots.

The air brushes over you, a misty salve.

A goddess finds you

Stretches out her hand and

carries you to a stream.

She embraces you, transferring her strength

Binding you with it

You hold each other

Where do you begin and she ends?

The water washes over the both of you, splashing, cleansing,

Ripples, waves and currents become booming cymbals and synthetic beats.

They pulse like contractions, and from the river's watery womb a new generation is summoned.

Several versions of you-but-not-you surface, and our kinship circle grows.

Finally, together these different assemblages of care and possibility united.

Stop.

You're back in your home-laboratory.

On your bed. You take another pill.

Another one-size-fits all solution.

Things go black.

Was it a dream?

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I sat there for some time.

Until the moss beneath my feet grew to cast and cradle my extremities

Wrapping around my legs, fins, paws, talons.

The stream from the cave's depths became whispering song.

And slowly it all became alive, or rather I realised that it always had been.

Family beneath my feet, above my head

As small as my pupil

As large as a boulder

As ephemeral as breath

Listening, loving, waiting to be found