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MOTHER EARTH SINGS TEA

-Yvonne Gallegos

This cosmic and poetic piece channels a lot of the power that Tea has to heal our relationship with Nature, ourself and others. These words are medicine themselves, and definitely worth reading a few times through. We found ourselves stopping, as Yvonne suggests, pushed back off the page by the power and beauty of her prose. There is a lot we can learn from her wisdom.

Before you begin reading this article, put this magazine down and close your eyes for a few minutes. Take a moment in silence to reflect on the article you read before this one. Or, if you've just sat down and are flipping through this magazine and are reading out of order (which I like to do), take a moment in silence, reflect on what you have just experienced and see how you feel. Finish your thoughts. Breathe...

It is said that planet Earth formed 4.54 billion years ago—the only planet with life in our solar system. Methuselah, a North American ancient Bristlecone Pine 4,847 years old, is the second oldest known non-colonial organism on Earth and is one of the most majes-

tic trees you'll ever behold. Her bark skin dances right before your eyes. With every twist, turn and bend, she tells a story long forgotten. The Queen of the Andes, the largest species of bromeliad native to Bolivia and Peru takes 80-150 years to flower—a gorgeous towering spike reaching twelve feet high encrusted with thousands of pretty little purple, green and white flowers. It's a triumph of the plant kingdom. A human fetus takes roughly nine calendar months to gestate, which is a miracle of evolution. A shimmering dragonfly lives for about four months, while a marigold seed will shoot through the soil within seven days.

All of these time frames are moments compartmentalized, docu-

mentation of a life in so many words. Whether it was a big bang or a tiny little seed that fell to fertile ground and eventually grew to be a wise old oak, there was a period of "time" in which all of these events took place, a time that was not calculated or measured by the organism or being itself. A time in which time doesn't exist. A duration in the creation of life that flows to its own rhythm. This is the natural rhythm of life where the trees, the plants, the animals, and all life are one with the sun—one together within Mother Nature's womb that is Earth. Every sun is a new sun and a rebirth of everything.

In order to further understand our world through science, this compartmentalization and docu-



mentation are necessary. As human beings, especially right now with devices that seem to be inextricable from ourselves, we are wrapped up so tightly within the threads of time, such as alarm clocks, deadlines, appointments, birthdays, calls, etc. Time perception differs around the globe dramatically. For example, American culture tends to process time in increments of five minutes, while Europeans process time in increments of fifteen minutes. From the moment we wake till the moment we close our eyes at night, we are constantly aware of what time it is and use time as a way to guide and shape our everyday schedules. We impose unrealistic expectations on ourselves of what can be accomplished in a day's

work. We feel that we are not living to our full potential, though we sometimes don't even know what that means. Not understanding our own rhythm and how to live in concordance with the rest of the world stifles our awareness of the Divine essence. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could rise with the sun and feel the change of the seasons within our bodies or even our sense of smell alone? Or, how about being so in tune with the behaviors of the animals in our environment that we can trust them as our guides? We put up so many roadblocks to inhibit our own free, natural state, which would allow us to live a natural rhythm.

When I think about what the feminine means to me, I think

about an exquisite unawareness of time: a gorgeous surrender into letting things flow and grow as they will, focusing on the now and really being present in the moment. There is no other moment than this one right now. It is where the rhythm of all the expansive creative energy lies and is harnessed. I think of the feminine as an accessible state of fertile energy that exists outside of time. I see it as the polar balance to the sun, and his force on Mother Earth. If we can but just attune ourselves to these subtleties, we will not only expand our consciousness, we will awaken our lost wisdom and soul's purpose within our DNA. What a beautiful life this is: And this life is the world, not just a part of it.

To some people, feminine energy, the state of 'being pure love' and being 'in the moment' is a place that is hidden or hard to find—constantly searching for that inner peace, when it has always been within them. I get that it is hard to wrap your head around the concept that you are the stars and the stars are you, that we are the trees and the plants and the flowers—but we are. As I cultivate my tea practice, I can say for myself that I *know* I am the trees, the plants, the flowers, the air, the water, the fire... I am this moment, which is the living reality. Tea has taught me this.

When we drink Tea, we are meeting Her spirit-to-spirit. We are taking into our bodies centuries of feminine energy, letting it connect us back to that time that exists outside of time. She is a coming-home for us. She is the river that flows through our bodies, knocking on our spiritual door saying: "Hey! Wake up; it's time to play!" She is one with the rhythms of the Earth, so wholly and completely. There is no time within her existence. She is a wise medicine woman with many lessons to teach. She is stillness, mindfulness, awareness, patience, kindness, happiness and so many things... But, most of all, She is love. That is the state of true enlightenment: *Being Love*.

Actualized in Tea

Every time I prepare my tea table for a ceremony, I slow down, breathe in deep breaths of love and put all time aside. I am in the moment from the time I dust off the tea table, to placing my mat down, gathering flowers, selecting my tea, selecting bowls, music, heating the water and finally sitting down with my sisters and brothers to share in the majestic power of all creation within a single bowl of tea. I am ever-present in these

moments, committing myself to this unique experience with a new and open heart. I aspire to live every moment like this. In kindness, gratitude, love, patience, grace, mindfulness and presence. There is no other medicine that connects me to the stars and moon like Tea. My loving-cup will always be filled.

Can we imagine ourselves being present, radiating this Divine feminine all the time? I'd like to think so. We have already started creating a conscious collective of love all around this beautiful planet in this Global Tea Hut. This has all been manifested through our mutual love of the Leaf.

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She is re-aligning our hearts and our spirits so that we may fully connect with our friends, families, plants and animals. It is so important that we listen to these lessons of connecting. We create more love by connecting and loving more. This is Her way.

After you finish reading this article, take another moment to pause and reflect and just be. If you think you can't because you have to bathe your children right now, I'm telling you, you still can (I have to do that, too). Don't think about what you've just read or how long you think you'll let them play in the bathtub. Surrender yourself to that moment with them. Notice how they are growing. Give them your full attention, and that will in turn give them the opportunity to talk

to you about something important or tell you a funny joke you might not have heard. Resist taking your phone with you to the bathroom and disconnecting. Keep your hands free so you can feel the temperature of the water, feel the bubbles, feel your child's wrinkled fingertips. Notice a new beauty mark on their back. Surrender to the Divine feminine that just 'is', and maybe even perhaps remember your inner child. Your full attention is fertile ground. If you are blessed to have beautiful animals, connect a little deeper. Voltaire, an animal lover, once said that the advantage of being an animal is that they never hear the clock tick. Take advantage of this open invitation to sit with them in their space at their level and be in their world. Try to smell what they smell, notice what they notice. Lastly, stand in your grace and connect to the amazing sun every morning, bask in its rays and find your rhythm. Talk to the wind and the fire. Tell them your worries, your tales of joy and happiness. Release to the waters and sing to the stars. Bow down to our Mother Earth and offer your gratitude. Give in to this moment. And, of course, best of all: offer tea to Her, to yourself and to the moment!



Yvonne lost in a bowl of tea.

