

71. *Cardiaca.*

Motherwort.

WE EXPAND

A BLACK WOMEN'S HERBAL

WE EXPAND: A BLACK WOMEN'S HERBAL

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To the Reader:

As I write this, I can hear helicopters circling overhead. It has been four days since Derek Chauvin, working with four other officers of the Minneapolis Police, murdered George Floyd. I live in Houston, Texas, in an apartment a block away from Emancipation Park, in Third Ward where George Floyd grew up. He made a name for himself here as Big Floyd, making records with DJ Screw, he played basketball and football at Jack Yates High School, and he raised a family. My own family has roots in Third Ward, and I think about my ancestors every time I walk around and spot goldenrod or yellow dock in an empty lot. I think about what they had to sow and reap, and I think about what they chose to grow, and how they chose to ground themselves in this hot, muddy, bayou place. This land was looted, our ancestors were looted. The protestors, in their rebellion against state-sanctioned violence, seek reparation.

Rebellions erupt after the oppressed have waited for justice and received none. After they have marched peacefully, after they have been attacked by police, after they have defended themselves and protected each other in the streets, after some of them have enacted civil disobedience in order to be heard, after they have exhausted every tactic and still don't see transformative justice from their leaders, they need rest. I offer this collection of herbal remedies, stories, and poems to all Black women and nonbinary folks, in the hope that when they are in need of herbal, spiritual, or psychic aid, they can find in these pages a remedy to soothe the heart.

I had originally put this herbal together in 2017, shortly after the election, with contributions from NYC-based Black women and nonbinary folks. It was very much intended as community support by and for NYC-based Black women and nonbinary folks post-election. I had to put my mental health first at the time, so the herbal was put on the backburner. However, its original intention remains, and really, much of it is applicable to Black women anywhere in the U.S. I'm taking this critical moment now to revive this project because it still matters. Black women's lives matter. This is for Breonna, and every Black woman murdered by police. This is for the family members of men and women murdered by police, and for Black women who are taking care of their families during the pandemic. This is for the Black women who are tired. This is for Black women who are surviving in a country that never wanted them to survive. May they thrive.

Lyric Hunter
Houston, TX
May 31, 2020

For those who are able, I encourage you to make a donation when downloading this zine to the National Bail Fund Network.

Beginning.

And so they call us Genesis
For in our beginning we're so seemingly surrounded by darkness on the face of the deep
Ever morphing, without form
We're looking to fill our void with the wisdom of water
Weary of witnessing our women weep
They call us the Genesis
The beginning of order
The birthing of our true daughters so no longer will our sons be lead like sheep
To the slaughter
They're lost in the grey
When almost every religion has claimed that *only* they can shed light upon the way
The Buddhists say that the finger pointing towards the moon is not the moon
But to whom does one call when she realizes what many call the moon is not the moon at all?
See, there's twisted words, and re-purposed verbs are mangled in their meaning
Nothing's as it's seeming, so whose team should we be on?
You may think you're in tune when you're singing the wrong song
God speaks silently from heart, leaving mortals to Babble-On
Where half of what's said to be right is wrong
Half of what is false is true
When the sacred becomes taboo, veiled and hidden in plain view
What exactly are we left to do?
Tricked and trapped, the truth we lack, so in the words of Albert Camus:
"The only way to deal with an un-free world is to become so absolutely free that your very existence is an act of rebellion!"
So if you must, you label us the holiest of hellions
They call us 'Gen'- 'esis': 'the birthing'- 'of Isis', our alias is 'Eve': 'dawning of new day'
She who with ease carries the sun within her center
Polaris in our placentas
From heart we pulsate, creating sacred space for all who dare to enter and call us GenIsis
We are the blue flame
True moonlight in the dark
Soul initiation
Re-ignition of our spark marks the starting of our nation
They'll try to stop our emigration
But the Law says we can return and that must be our Revelation
So let it dawn on us
We are the Eve
Our son is rising in the East
And so we'll triple dog dare them like we're three-headed beasts
And they call us GenIsis, yes, through our breath Osiris is born anew

Witness the synergy of knowledge of self plus the books of hidden clues
And we know the lies they've spewed of our history have concealed that which is true
But now the answers to life's greatest of mysteries shall reveal themselves
Not just to you
But through you!
So feel your smoldering embers of creation re-ignite
Our flames flickering and dancing against the shadows of darkest night
We are offspring of Isis, from the ashes watch the Phoenix form and take flight
For our name is GenIsis
Now let there be Light!



Karen Culpepper

A Day In The Life of A Plant Medicine Woman or, Plant Medicine: A Daily Practice

I open my eyes when my body is ready to awaken. Upon rising, I give thanks for a new day of life, opportunity and possibility. I check in with my body and notice where I am feeling ease and discomfort. On this day, I am not feeling rested and my right side, the masculine aspect of me that is always doing, feels tired and tense. I drink a pint of water with lemon and I stretch for a few minutes and set the intention to move through the day with ease and surrender. I focus on being fully present for my client.

I go down the hallway to the bathroom and use my copper tongue scraper to get rid of all the toxins from the evening and start the day with a bowel movement. I begin my morning with my usual cleansing routine: homemade tooth powder, followed by a triphala mouth rinse and a quick shower with dry brushing. I go downstairs and get water going for tea. This morning my bodies are asking for holy basil chai so I take my mortar and pestle and grab five-finger pinches of holy basil, cloves, ginger and cinnamon, a few pods of cardamom. I grind them together and infuse healing, love and balance into my morning tea.

I go outside and ground myself. Offering water, a bit of tobacco and returning the herbs from my morning chai to the earth. I give thanks for mother earth, who sustains all life. I grab a handful of dirt. I remember learning about the accounts of African ancestors who were ripped away from the only land they knew. They grabbed a fistful of dirt and placed it in their mouth, to savour the taste and richness of their native land, Africa. In the same way pieces of Mother Earth sustained connection to homeland, I recall my grandmothers as walking altars--practicing and offering healing in the face of immense suffering. For a moment, I am moved to tears. I give thanks for ancestral resilience. Thank you for being able to bloom wherever you were planted.

I call on my plantation herbal guide, Rosemary, the herb of remembrance, to help me with my client of the day, who mentioned a history of sexual trauma. I recite a prayer: May I meet them exactly where they are. May all that does not serve their highest good shift accordingly, in their own time. Everything is perfect, whole and complete as it is. Before I re-enter my home, I sage myself to clear the hard memories, and prepare for a day of stewardship.

Once inside, I place salt in all the corners of the treatment room and spritz new moon clearing spray made from homemade florida water to create space for my client. I decide to fast before my client arrives so that I can be fully present and hold space for them. I know that they will need to be received in whichever container that I create. So I find ways to expand, and expand, and expand.

My client arrives. We welcome each other with a deep embrace. I already sense how energetically tired they feel. I offer to prepare a fresh tea, which they initially refuse. I pause. “You know, lots of healing and revolutions happen inside mason jars.” They smile and accept my offer. I decide to blend my organic heart space tea: red rose petals for the upper heart and lower heart (womb), holy basil to offer ease during their spirit’s evolution, hawthorn leaf and flower to circulate healing and compassion throughout the bodies and finally, I add a pinch of damiana for an energetic touch of pleasure. They feel safe with their cup of tea. They are received in the container. The work has begun.

They immediately open up about what is going well, what their health goals are and how I can support them as an herbalist. We flesh out their health concerns on each level of their bodies: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. I listen to stories of their aches, pains, womb space, joys, dreams and areas of improvement. We eventually get to part of the intake when I ask about their favorite numbers, favorite tastes and favorite seasons. When I look at their tongue to assess their energetics, I see that it is pale, damp and shaky.

We shift to the next phase of the appointment: the body work. I feel moved to offer a dose of herbal tincture as we prepare to start the massage given the nature of the sexual trauma and their raw honesty and anxiousness about unsafe touch in the past. I decide on a blend of skullcap to calm the circular thinking, holy basil for the spirit, albizzia for calm, ginger to drive the formula to the womb space and cotton root bark. The latter was an herb used by enslaved African women as an abortifacient to regain reproductive empowerment over their womb space. In my heart, I pray: “May this bring awareness, healing and movement to them on this day.” I quietly place mugwort, rose quartz and my small tuft of cotton under the table to support the session.

During the massage, their body shutters and tears begin to flow. Water represents movement. I take my hands away and pause. We reset. They decide to let the tears air dry. We resume. Full body session with a touch of energy work. During the second half, they are able to fall asleep. They have been fully received. We expand, we expand, we expand.

At the end, I douse my hands in homemade florida water from the last full moon and clear all the energy from around them. After we finish, I offer another serving of heart space tea with a touch of lavender rose honey to bring the sweetness back into their life. I ask permission for another hug. We have a debrief conversation, and, of course, I share a parting gift: brown sugar scrub with rose and lavender. I gently instruct them to use all of the scrub tonight as your self care. I say, scrub toward your heart space, drink lots of water and pay attention to your dreams. I assure them, I will check in tomorrow.

After my client leaves, I boil a pot of water for my midday nourishing tea of nettles and red raspberry leaf. I sage myself and the treatment room and sweep the salt from the corners of the treatment room and out the front door. I needed a little sweet in my own life after that appointment, so I cut two apples into slices and enjoy with almond butter and honey.

When my client leaves, my healing role merely transforms. I go into the apothecary, my sacred plant medicine space. I spray more florida water for protection. It is time to speak and listen. I request the assistance of the plant spirits that will serve my client's highest good on their healing journey. The plants begin to volunteer: cotton root bark, mugwort, motherwort, ginger, chaste tree berry, milk thistle. Magically, the herbs get in formation, ready to serve. I move to blend a tincture and daily tea for my client as the dietary and lifestyle recommendations come together in the medicine vision. When I look up, it is time to prepare dinner with my beloved.

What's for dinner after a day of healing? Fresh onions and garlic as the base. Himalayan salt, fresh black pepper, turmeric, cayenne, all make their way into the diced chicken with celery and carrots. A side of fresh bok choy with fresh ginger and jasmine rice with cardamom pods and astragalus. Another side of kisses, a few flirtatious looks and intimate touch.

My beloved does the dishes. I remove my whites, uncover my head and commit to my own dose of self care: a Himalayan salt scrub, rosemary infused hair oil, poke root oil for my womb space and a clearing spiritual bath full of beautiful flowers: roses, calendula, red clover, lavender. After half an hour of soaking, I am visited by my beloved with a sweet spoonful of homemade aphrodisiac honey followed by a mug full of calm tea: chamomile, linden and lemon balm. I get out to a towel waiting for me. It's time to complete my night routine: a facial massage with rose water toner followed by a lovely body application of whipped lavender shea butter and I brush my teeth. I give thanks as my beloved prepares for our union. So looking forward to the root chakra healing and pleasure that will go on into the night.

SELF-HEALTH IN OUR NYC FIELDS & PARKS

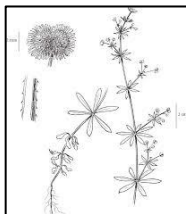
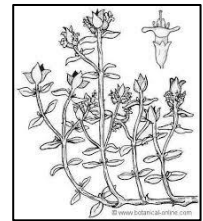
Ezekiel 47:12 "... and the leaf for medicine."

From early Spring though late Fall, fields and parks abound with herbs. Often dismissed as common weeds, these unassuming little plants have been used since antiquity to restore and maintain health. Following are some common ones.



Burdock is well known for the burrs which stick to your clothing and get all in your animal's fur. Known as "gobo" in Japan where it is grown domestically and eaten there (and here in macrobiotic restaurants), burdock is a long slow worker. It has an outstanding reputation as a blood cleanser and a skin healer. Works great in combination with dandelion.

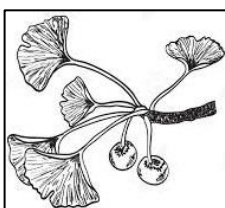
Chickweed likes the cool of spring and fall. It is a favorite herb for the treatment of rashes and sores minor burns, lesions, acne, wounds, eczema, insect bites, nettle burns, psoriasis, and gout. The young shoots are edible and have been used as salad greens. Chickweed's ability to "break cells open" helps it relieve bacterial and itchy skin infections when applied as a poultice



Cleavers is cooling, astringent and diuretic and is a tonic to the lymphatic system. It grows in the cool part of the spring and fall. Cleavers tea or the fresh plant soothes dry types of skin ailments like psoriasis, eczema and sunburn, as well as burns, boils and poison oak rashes. It has also been used to treat kidney problems and high blood pressure among other ailments.

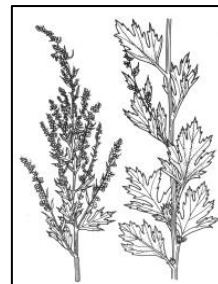
Dandelion, also called piss-in-bed, is diuretic without flushing the body of potassium. The leaves, sold by some farmers, are a good digestive. Put some leaves in a glass, pour a nice white wine over them and let sit while you make dinner. Strain and enjoy your aperitif!

Dandelion root is also known to reduce blood pressure with regular use. Dandelion root's greatest contribution however, is to the health of your liver. Your liver is your body's largest organ; it filters internal as well as external toxins from your system. Regular use of dandelion root gently tones and nourishes your liver, restoring it to optimum health.

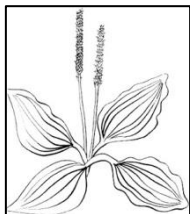


Ginkgo has been around since the dinosaurs. Its durability makes it one of the most popular street trees in NYC. Ginkgo increases blood flow which has remarkable results in different parts of your body. It has a great reputation for helping to improve memory and has been used to reverse the debilitating effects of Alzheimer's disease. It can help with impotence. It has been used to address tinnitus, chronic ringing of the ears. It can help with vertigo. Collect the leaves when they turn yellow

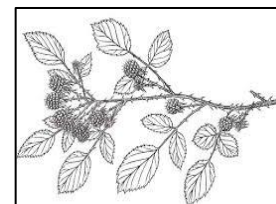
Mugwort is a prolific grower, with dark green leaves that are silvery underneath, and has a distinctive taste and smell. Used in ancient time for magical purposes, mugwort's reputation as a dream enhancer continues into the present day. To make your dreams more vivid, try putting a small bit underneath your pillow when you sleep. Mugwort is helpful to the respiratory system and is used to unblock energy channels in the body. It is also a very good friend to women. Regular use can relieve PMS, cramps and heavy bleeding. The hearty may brave mugwort's bitter taste in tea but for those less brave, try the tincture.



Plantain is another common "weed" with outstanding health benefits. Not at all like the plantain you buy in the grocery store, this low-growing plant features leaves growing from a center out of which emerges a 3 or 4 inch spike covered with small seeds. Plantain can check bleeding and heal stubborn wounds. A plantain ointment can help relieve diaper rash. Chew a leaf of plantain and apply directly to a mosquito bite to relieve the itch. Plantain is also known for being able to draw out bee stingers and splinters. Chew several leaves or mash up a liberal amount of the dried herb with just enough water to make a paste and apply directly to the affected area. This is called a poultice. Leave overnight if possible. Remove gently. If you don't get results the first time, keep trying and be consistent. Use a fresh batch of the herb for each poultice.



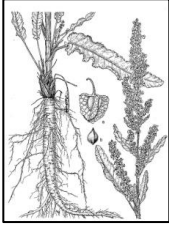
Raspberry has a reputation as an outstanding auterine and pregnancy tonic. Regular use of **raspberry leaf** can ease cramps and menstrual discomfort and can help to re-establish regularity. Raspberry contains lots of absorbable calcium to assist in relieving PMS. It is also a valuable remedy for diarrhea.



Red clover, with its round compact pink/red tops makes a nice tea and is good for blood cleansing. Red clover oil will help to heal stubborn skin problems. It enjoys a long reputation for its effectiveness in relieving eczema.

Violet, an understated yet powerful and prolific plant, makes pretty purple flowers in the spring. The violet leaf makes a mild-tasting tea which is a low key easer of stress and tension. Violet is best known however, for its affinity to the breast. A little of the oil rubbed directly on the breasts can help to ease premenstrual breast pain. Try making violet oil to help relieve breast tenderness. Fill a small jar about 2/3 full of violet leaf. Make sure everything - the jar, the violet, and the cap - is absolutely dry to avoid rancidity and mold. Pour a nice grade olive oil over the violet, all the way to the top of the jar. Poke the mixture with a dry chopstick or spoon to get out as much air as possible, and cap tightly. Place the jar on newspaper or in a saucer to catch leakage. Keep the oil topped up over the next six weeks. After six weeks, decant and rub your violet oil on sore breasts for relief. Violet can also help to reduce benign cystic lumps when taken regularly in tea or tincture form.





Yellow dock is another plentiful herb at this time of year. Known for its skin healing properties, the root of yellow dock is soothing to hemorrhoids. It is also reputed to be a real ally to those with iron deficiencies, helping to overcome anemia with regular use.

SUMMARY

These are just a few of the herbs available here in NYC parks. Now, if you're sick, see a doctor without delay - Western medicine works wonders. But as you may know, there's plenty you can do to maintain your health with herbs. Herbs can help when properly used. Treat them with the same respect you treat medicine from the doctor and seek professional help. And you can also go to the bookstore or library to acquaint yourself with these plants. Then go find them for yourself, or buy them from the herb/health food store. Take a little time to learn about them and they can help you.

Jaliessa Sipress

Witches Under Empire: What it Means to Be a Witch In "Trump's America"

Just the thought of merely existing in “Trump’s America” may seem like some treacherous shadow-work; consistently being pushed to face our worst fears and darkest conceptions of this world while trying to maintain a sense of self and focus on the light. Most likely, that is exactly what we are stepping into.

With the erasure of pages on the new government’s website that previously acknowledged issues of climate change, LGBT rights and Civil Rights, Trump’s confirmed misogynistic comments regarding sexual assault, and his right-wing stances on police terror, abortion rights and immigration issues, there is definitely cause for alarm.

However, working with shadows and lighting a candle in the dark is what we do best, and the postcolonial (or continuing colonial) world has never welcomed the hard and necessary work witches have engaged in for centuries, so what is new now? Despite the new US President’s nationalistic sentiment (or possibly in exact alignment with the era he is referring to within it) America has never been great. For those of us living on the margins of race, class, gender, spirituality, sexuality and disability, our precious work has historically been violently persecuted and left to the shadows.

So, do not fret my dear witches, a Trump-inauguration is a mere practice in veil-lifting, another opportunity to practice seeing in the dark, and revealing our political and social climate for what it really is only makes our work that much more important

Just as we would practice healthy boundaries with the powers we cannot see while spell-casting or engaging in spirit-communication, we must form a relationship with strict boundaries to this new force that is the Presidency of Donald Trump. To do this, it serves us to remember three things:

- The work we do at home in solitude must echo the work we do in the presence of others
- A witch’s power lies in being unafraid of the unknown
- A concentration on fear attracts things to be scared of

To begin, I must acknowledge that secrets made and secrets kept in personal ritual are of the utmost of importance, and their existence as secrets is sacred. Additionally, to keep the people and politics you protect when you step foot on the streets also within your private practices is crucial. Private here means altar space, home space, and sacred spaces you frequently inhabit for safety and light. To

keep your politics here is to be conscientious of whose practices, rituals, symbols, words and imagery you use, to keep a candle burning for the people you cannot reach, and to center self-healing around the idea that the healing you do is not just for you, but for the people that need you and for the people who have come before you.

Second, the uncertainty and unpredictability of Trump and his cabinet that may feel daunting and scary for us is really his fall and not ours. Witches stay ready. A predominant part of witchcraft is completely based within “the unknown.” We communicate with things we cannot see or are told have no vocabulary. We know how to improvise, to work with flowers and weeds and how to heal ourselves and oftentimes others. The epitome of being a witch is the knowledge of the earth’s force, an awareness of the changing seasons, positions of the stars and the knowledge of our own and other witches’ power. There is a steadiness to knowing that you are learning to master a presence that lies beyond what we can see and touch, because a capitalist society can only touch the tangible, only mess with the material, and can never understand or consume the power of the witch.

And that is why we are feared.

Most people are terrified of what they cannot see, what is not “scientifically proven” and what they have never been told is okay to explore. Our defiance of letting fear immobilize us is a huge part of our job description. Our persecution is and was based on the fact that we mess with things that other humans are too scared to touch. So, what happens when the witches are scared? What happens when we use the same power we use to manifest, heal and conjure to fear what is to come? It becomes no different from calling on Aunt Milly from our salt circle; we invite the object of our focus into our space, into existence.

During this term of election, there must be an embracing of fear and willingness to carry on with our confidence, knowledge and strong sense of solidarity leading the way. We need each other now the way we have always needed one another, the way we have always needed care and attention and the way we have always needed to perfect what we do and know best. Every person has a place, and to investigate your larger contribution to the world at this time is crucial. I know herbalist witches, astrologer witches, sex witches, hood witches, good witches, bad witches, shadow workers, wortcunners, rune throwers, conjurers, psychics, angel beings, light-bearers, medicine people, community healers and everything in between. This diverse set of knowledge is priceless in the face of hegemonic structures that seek to bury us and our history. Whatever kind of witch, warlock, regular schmegular bitch or magical star being you are, you and your power matter and we have got to keep moving, shaking, laughing, whispering, conjuring, kicking, screaming, growing, learning and loving in the face of this age-old regime with a new face. We will always hold the power as long as we recognize what we all bring to the table and figure out how to use these powers to resist.

So, gather with your coven to bottle tinctures with intentions of sustaining the resistance through Reishi mushrooms, skullcap and yarrow. Host gatherings teaching the history of the crossover between radical witchcraft and community organizing. Continue to defend the Earth, question the government and fight like hell for causes of the living while keeping your fire lit with the rage of the dead. We are here on this earth, at this time for a reason. So, whether you were born into a coven or you just stumbled upon witchcraft, you have been given the task of protecting what is sacred.

To be a witch is to reclaim the power of connecting with our bodies, our spirit and the earth and in ungovernable ways, to create paths towards a more regenerative, sustainable society through channeling our ancestors and wisdom from other realms. A man barking orders and spewing hate from a position of socially-constructed power is no match for the power of the people when guided by light, ancestral wisdom and unwavering solidarity. It is our job to carry the legacy, to stand amongst the crowds with rose quartz and motherwort tincture in our pockets, bundles of cedar burning in our hands, holding the match when it is time to burn it all down.

This article first appeared at TheHoodwitch.com on January 30, 2017

“And I was tired...”

And I was tired. Tired of the levonorgestrel/ethinyl estradiol pump faking the endometriosis.
Tired of progestin raging in my body like a luteal phase machine.

This will be your life the doctors, nurses and surgeons say. Learn to manage it. Bandage it.
We slice you open. Rip your sides. Sew you up. Send you home. Repeat as necessary.
This will be your life.
We cannot cure you. You are not curable. You are broken. Crippled. Cracked. Defective.

And I believed them. After the first surgery, I believed them. After the second surgery, I believed them. After the sixth surgery, I believed them. After I lost the left ovary I believed them. After I lost the right fallopian tube I believed them. Cut. Scarred. Mangled. I believed their thoughts should be my thoughts about me. I believed those Endocrinologist, those Gynecologists, those Immunologists. I believed them and my psychologists believed them too.

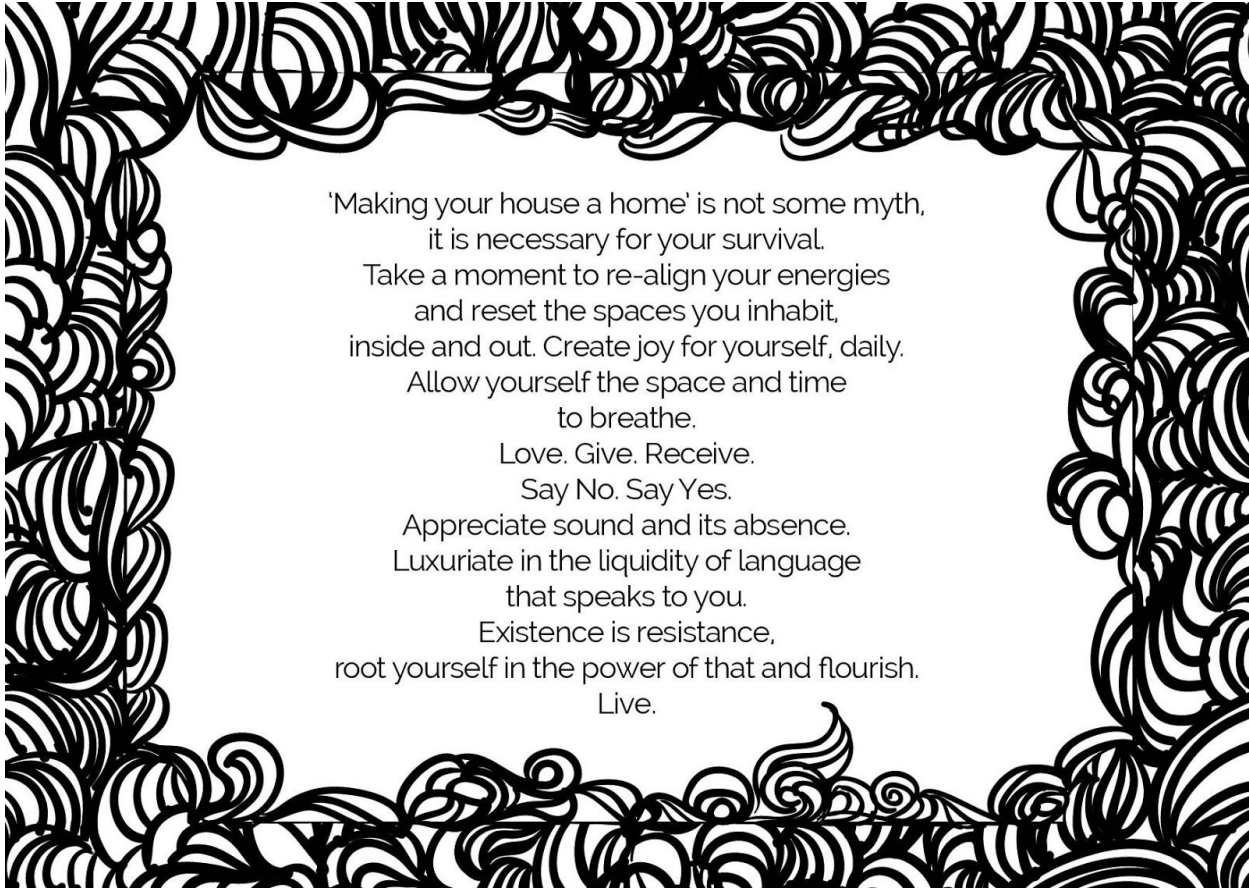
The more I listened to the chorus sing the more I expected myself to disappear.

I see myself slowly and sadly sung like a dirge at a funeral. I said to myself I should take my meds, embrace shade with silk velvet in hollow cool caves slip away, to the dank lagoon sooty women are pushed into. Anarcha, Lucy, and Betsey. Me. The black women white doctors experiment on then discard.

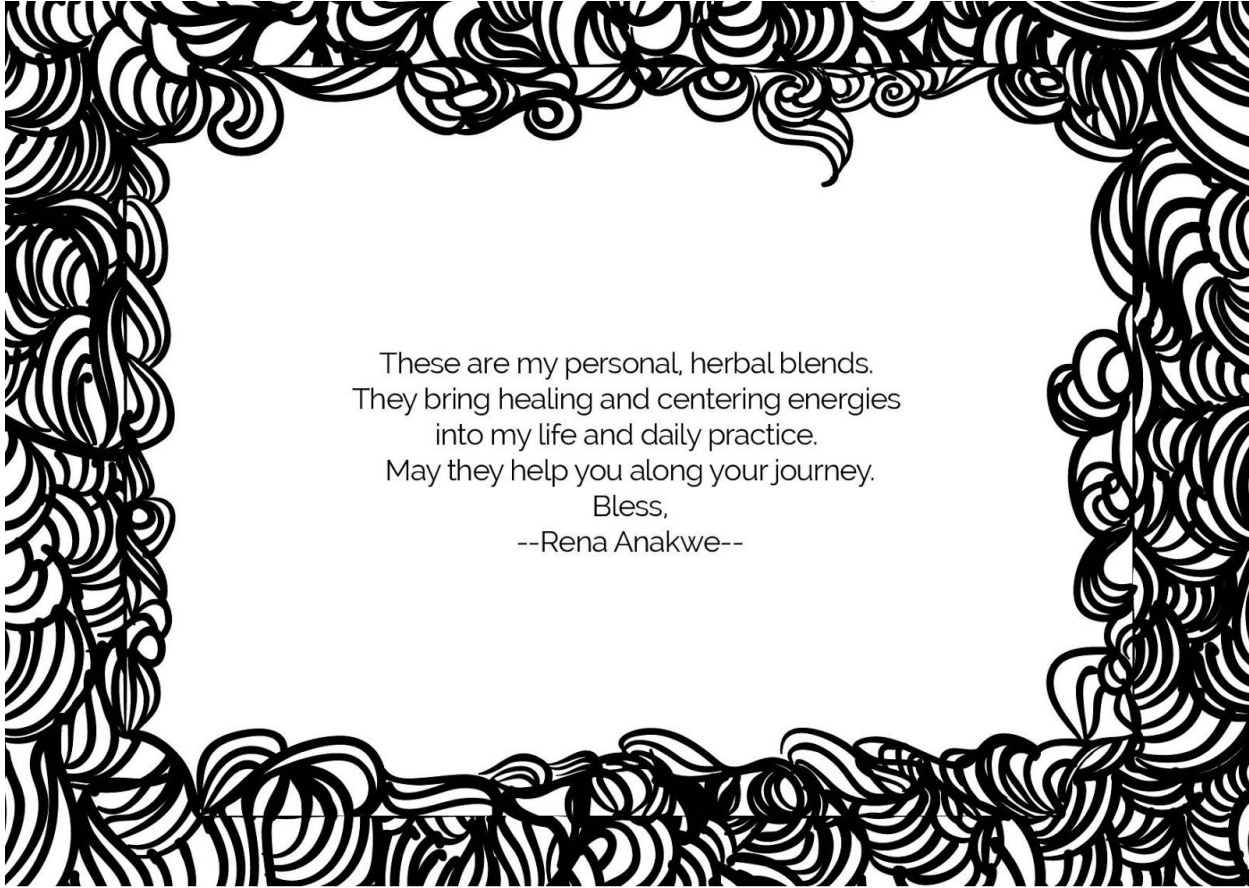
Watching my body disintegrate, I see myself reaching in air for substance I can't prove yet can feel. My mouth longing for a practice that tastes like water from our sublunary world not biotech pharmacon wrapped in Big Pharma stockholder dreams and a polymer barrier. My eyes reaching for the spider plants, chrysanthemums and moth orchids. My body whispers stay with it. Life. Keep it close.

I found a friend in a three-dollar green pathos. I named that plant in a shameless feeling and gave it permission to sprawl across my ceiling, hang over my bed and protect me give sanctuary. I gave myself permission to sprawl across the ceiling all the aspects of me all around me externally blasting me. I saw myself as a rhizome sending out roots and shoots from nodes. Developing axillary buds growing perpendicular to the force of gravity growing upward across and through.

I am not their experiment. I am the life within me. This body the aches, the bends the bleed thrive akin to the bamboo and iris and moss. Leaves and flowering stems collaged on the walls that stare back at this body. Seeds, pulp, and rind soft speaking to this body. She. Me. We need a soil's touch. One part Vishnu and Gaia three parts Aztec Africa and Maya. I need lavender on the brain, turmeric, mint leaves and sage between my teeth. I am healing and brimming. I sip rose water and rub evening primrose. I ask my body for second opinions. I orbit green. I stay home when Western approach is too much. I retreat to the southeast corner of my room with a mug of lemon balm, with my plant in sight and wait for my body to say yes.



'Making your house a home' is not some myth,
it is necessary for your survival.
Take a moment to re-align your energies
and reset the spaces you inhabit,
inside and out. Create joy for yourself, daily.
Allow yourself the space and time
to breathe.
Love. Give. Receive.
Say No. Say Yes.
Appreciate sound and its absence.
Luxuriate in the liquidity of language
that speaks to you.
Existence is resistance,
root yourself in the power of that and flourish.
Live.



These are my personal, herbal blends.
They bring healing and centering energies
into my life and daily practice.
May they help you along your journey.

Bless,
--Rena Anakwe--



REFRESH

SPRAY • AROMA

Tea Tree Oil 30 Drops
Peppermint 5 Drops
Lemongrass 5 Drops
Clary Sage 5 Drops
Water 3 Parts
Witch Hazel or Isopropyl Alcohol 1 Part

HELPFUL FOR: HOT DAYS, PUTTING UP
PERSONAL FORCE FIELDS OR A MOMENT TO
ONESELF. SHARE A LIGHT SPRITZ WITH
OTHERS.



CLEAR YOUR PASSAGES

RUB • AROMA

Eucalyptus Oil 5 Drops
Peppermint 3 Drops
Tea Tree Oil 3 Drops
Rosemary Oil 3 Drops
Your Choice of Carrier Oil

RUB THIS INTO YOUR CHEST, NECK AREA AND UNDERNEATH
YOUR NOSE, WHEN FEELING CONGESTED.
BREATHE.



SPRING

RESET

FALL

OIL • CLEANSING

Tea Tree Oil 20 Drops
Clary Sage 10 Drops
Holy Basil 5 Drops
Jojoba Oil 1 Part
Avocado Oil 3 Parts

USE A HOT CLOTH ON YOUR FACE AND CHEST. SHAKE YOUR OIL,
THEN APPLY A FEW DROPS INTO YOUR PALMS RUBBING THEM TOGETHER.
SMELL THE AROMA THEN RUB INTO FACE AND CHEST.
LET SIT FOR 3-5 MINUTES. TAKE HOT CLOTH AND WIPE OFF OIL.
LET SKIN REST.

A decorative border with a repeating floral and leaf pattern in black and white, framing the central text.

SUMMER

RESET

WINTER

OIL • CLEANSING

Propolis 5 Drops
Calendula 5 Drops
Tea Tree Oil 20 Drops
Clary Sage 10 Drops
Holy Basil 5 Drops
Jojoba Oil 1 Part
Avocado Oil 3 Parts

USE A HOT CLOTH ON YOUR FACE AND CHEST. SHAKE YOUR OIL,
THEN APPLY A FEW DROPS INTO YOUR PALMS RUBBING THEM TOGETHER.
SMELL THE AROMA THEN RUB INTO FACE AND CHEST.
LET SIT FOR 3-5 MINUTES. TAKE HOT CLOTH AND WIPE OFF OIL.
LET SKIN REST.

Amina Ross

SALT AND SUGAR/ HOW TO CURE A COLD

A piece of experimental and playful writing on healing

In how many ways may salts act upon a body? Salt applied to a wound may burn, the most burdensome burn. Salt applied to a wound may singe. And when the fire settles there may be some healing.

I love to nurse wounds. I love the sting of rubbing alcohol on a bloody cut. A few times I have knowingly stepped barefoot on glass, looking forward to the arduous process of removing the shards and healing the cuts left behind.

I am currently nursing a barbell of surgical-grade titanium that has been inserted horizontally through my right nipple. As the metal tries to find a home for itself in my body I nurse this wound with salt water. Nightly I douse my right breast in a precise solution of sea salt and purified water. If the acidity of this solution is off-balance this will prolong my healing time or do nothing at all.

I heal best in the ocean.

For a Sore Throat

place a handful of salt into a cup of boiling water

make sure that this salt is in enough abundance to turn the water a murky white

let it cool

as to not scorch your throat

as to not further any damage and worsen soreness

gargle

churn the water

crashing waves against the back of your throat

cause a vibrational stirring

summon mucus, spit and hurting

expel these secretions into a basin, a sink, a cup, a garbage can, a gaping pit

repeat

repeat

repeat

as often as needed and always at night

How may a precise solution of sea salt and water extinguish a fire?:

Body is the only home I know. Where can I go from here? When "we" is
whispered through unreceptive phone receivers and smiles are hanged, like
over-worn sneakers, from unforgiving telephone lines.

Crying is watching houses burn to the ground. Where can I go from here?

I've collected weeping in buckets, I've heard salt water helps soothe
fires. I've felt the ocean flow past my eyelids as I watched this house
burn to the ground. The ocean made my spine its pipeline left this whole
home empty.

Watched that fire swallow. Hungry.

I've felt the ocean flow past my eyelids, I've collected all weeping in
buckets, I've heard salt water helps soothe fires. Tell me. How to
suffocate the smolder?

I wrote this poem several years ago in an attempt to articulate an extinguished fire growing in the pit
of my gut. The ~~absence of a lover~~ way she left me, in the way that she is always present but never
there, put out several lights inside of me. How many lovers does it take to screw in a light bulb? To
rewire a building? To gut a house that has been the victim of an arsonist? To rebuild and forget the
smell of charred wood?

For a Pained Body

Steep in a tub of warm water and epsom salts

Magnesium will permeate and in its transgression impress a calm upon you¹
bathe in it.

¹ “Stress drains the body of magnesium and increases levels of adrenaline. When dissolved in warm water, Epsom salt is absorbed through the skin and replenishes the level of magnesium in the body. The magnesium helps to produce serotonin, a mood-elevating chemical within the brain that creates a feeling of calm and relaxation.” "Epsom Salt Uses & Benefits." *America's Sea Salt Company*. N.p., n.d. Web. Nov. 2013.

Here is an attempt to re-write in remembering:

I've never smothered a child, but in theory I could
I have arms and several pillows
and an anger that blooms inspiring the most furious clouds.

You have not smothered any children
as far as I know.

I was a child once and am now again
and am now and again
and what is the opposite of *smother*? *Leave*? *Abandon*?
And am I to use another child's body as a metaphor for my innocence
or willingness
or for *happy* and something sacred and forgotten? Or for *potential*?

How many fires bloom in the fists of forgotten children? In idle hands?
How many questions ignite fires?
Who cleans up the ashes?

To Clear the Air

Fill the home with smoke²
suffocate the body that houses you
open the windows and breath again

² Burn sage or palo santo. Both sage and Palo Santo have been burned in an effort to cleanse or summon.

I have always been wary of air signs.

I am an earth sign. I am a Capricorn.

Upon revealing this, *I am a Capricorn*, at a party or in casual conversation this information is typically followed by one, two or several lamentations upon Capricorn heartbreak and manipulation. Joel says I give Capricorns a good name, Joel and I have never been in love.

Capricorns have a negative polarity.

This is signified by an upside down triangle with a horizontal line running through its lowest point. I am unsure of what this means exactly but sure of what this means perhaps. In the knowing parts of me I am reminded of a shape I've made with my body. This shape was made at the instruction of a man who claimed indigenous knowledge. Him and his white girlfriend teach young folks in search of some grounding the movements of the Nahuatl peoples at a health collective located above an integrative pet hospital in a place that's quickly gentrifying. The class cost me ten dollars. I am always in search of something.

Capricorns are of a cardinal modality.

To Clear the Lungs

Apply a blend of camphor, menthol and eucalyptus to the chest
to the neck

To disintegrate/dissolve the globe/ball in your throat
first know it is the result of an acid-filled stomach
know that this bubbling stomach has various origins³
follow a strict regimen of a morning glass of water and two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar
Follow your grandmother's advice

³ Included but not limited to: sadness, anger, excitement, anxiety, longing and prolonged hunger.

In how many ways may a little sweetness coax some healing?

Honey acts as a salve on the insides of a worn throat. I have very rarely screamed so loud as to strain my larynx. In fifth grade a teacher wrote that I was doing well but that I was reserved. He mentioned it again at the parent-teacher meeting where I bit my nails down so far, far down but not far enough to make the beds bleed.

I turned to the dictionary:

kept or set apart for some particular use or purpose.

sugar applied to onion⁴

May save the parts of you that are dedicated to your wellness

⁴ Cut an onion in $\frac{1}{2}$, apply sugar. Let it sit. A syrup will form. This syrup helps soothe colds and sore throats.

WAX TO THE FULL MOON WANE TO THE NEW

/ let your food be your medicine // no exceedrin // strictly herbs and them rays from the sun // casaba melon 'n' // drink water // eight glasses a day // cause that's what they say /
/ they say you are what you eat so I strive to eat healthy // my goal in life is not to be rich or wealthy // cause true wealth comes from good health and wise ways /
/ we got to start taking better care of ourselves // let's be healthy, gods /

as young parents
they ate vegetables did yoga made love
she birthed me in braids

in spectacles

she found a doula in a city of Reagans
found all the softness she'd not been filled with
found a partner made of magic

in the county of queens
she fed me milk and new sweetness
eschewed Prince for my nobility

and in wombs painted orange
steamed my broccoli and sweet squash
for as long as she was able

in '83 I am a black vegetarian and do not know it
in '83 I am at a Burger King birthday party and eat one –
to celebrate? to assimilate? to ruin?

two decades later
I am a vegan who eats cheeseburgers
a decade after that I am an artist

o b s e s s e d w i t h f l o r a l

in a winter bitter with breaking
I move toward the sounds my family has made
the dances my cousins may know

in Flatbush – gardener –
descendants of enslaved farmers thrive
in the privacy of remove

: : : B L O S S O M : : :

i n t h e
s o l a c e o f
n e g l e c t

a mountainous blackfemmeartmother
speaks publicly of the treasures of secrecy
declaring her allegiance to This Sistren

pointed me toward an herbalist
surnamed within my mother's given
visage like the Trini chef queen

whose heart i broke without a gun to my head ²

at our first
consultation I tell her
what pains me

and do not mention my mother
so she can offer no aid for cellular heartbreak
no assistance for existential chaos

instead I think I tell her
of the nowdead fever that laid its
corpsing eye upon me

tell her of concerns that glitter thick
my blood the sadness that suffocates my spirit
and how you houseplants learned

t o m a k e l o v e l e g i b l e f o r m e

tell her slant and she cocks her head
stay quiet with her and she finds the words
for my particular bridge and soon

you find you are a woman
of covered tea and warming crystals
and it is easier and easier to stay alive

a m o n g t h i s p o i s o n e d s p e c i e s

because your drums been tuned for slant
and your safe freedom is profound
and your friend is still dead

K o r r y n & B a l d w i n & S a n d r a

too

so you are writing
every single minute second moment Black Girl
cause their fear of enslaved literates

was
prescient
AF

more and faster
better deeper wider
every minute you still breathe
you finna check in on that lyfedraft like

IS YOU DONE OR IS YOU FINISHED

Because you are still breathing these breaths
and your heart is still screaming

do. you. see. who

the F U C K these

niggas elected

tryna give ME a heart attack
so it's STRAIGHT to the Prison of White Tears for yo ass
so that I can return to my work

fuck outta here
with that messy
White mess

I'm over here
sketching Decalogues
for my Sistren

:

YOU CAN TEACH YOURSELF HOW TO TURN SOME POISONS TO MEDICINE
POROUS BRIDGINGS OF CARE BUOY WITH THEIR DENSE & INFINITE FREEDOM
EXPEND AS LITTLE ENERGY AS POSSIBLE WHEN THEY BE DOING THE MOSSST
WERE NEVER SLAVES BUT ENSLAVED AIN'T NO PRISONERS THEY IMPRISONED
SAY WHAT HURTS SO YOU CAN FIX IT & SAY IT LOUDER THAN YOU SHOULD
LIMIT THE TIME YOU SPEND HELPING PEOPLE LEARN HOW NOT TO HATE YOU
LISTEN TO THE WAY THEY SPEAK OF THE LIVING THINGS THEY THINK THEY OWN
IGNORE THE VIOLENT HUMILIATION OF REMINDING OTHERS OF YOUR EXISTENCE
KNOW THAT YOUR LIFE IS AS REAL AS A MOUNTAIN AS ESSENTIAL AS A ROOT
ENJOY YOUR TIME ON EARTH AND DO NOT LET ANYONE CONFUSE YOU ABOUT IT

WAX TO THE FULL MOON WANE TO THE NEW

A Song for Kabir

All know that the drop merges into the ocean
Each contributing to The Collective becoming One
The stars dared me to find my drop among the countless beneath the sun
Even in the desert I found water to take my leap of faith
But soon found myself too far from shore beginning to feel unsafe
Beginning to perspire
Tiring of treading water, consumed by worry and fear
Using up energy but getting nowhere
So I began speaking back to the stars through the language of astrology
Now I recall
Water holds memory
And water makes up more than half of me
So I let my sweat beads form strings of 108 to meditate
Trying to find my Kore before it's too late
I'm running out of time
I'm running
Out of time
Frantically trying to find myself
Find my kin
Still letting doubt within linger
Until I found daughters of ink-colored women with child bearing hips wide like ginger

Breasts swinging low like pendulums marking time

Tick

Tock

Drop through her hourglass goes her egg like the last grain of sand

Ring the alarm clocks across the land to wake us up

Understand, time is not mechanical

It's as natural as the lines in the palms of our hands

So how can I run out of something that I Am?

Finally truth can be uncovered

There's only One with no concept of other

Now is the time to rediscover

There is no son without the mother

There is no sun without the mother

So we must bear light within our wombs

Nurture our seeds with warmth and fertile soil

Sow what we reap, rain wisdom to our womb-world

But these Earth-girls are easy

Birds with clipped wings

They are clouds without water carried about by the winds

Late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead pulled up by the roots

Raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame

*Wandering stars** with only ego to blame

So define, refine, and redirect that energy, factor it by time and become art!

Then we, the 3x3, nine muses formed from the foam of the sea

Will perform in synchronicity

Cyclically

Perfectly in harmony

Starting on Dali

Ending on Silio

Allowing us to properly precipitate

Align our spines to the universe and end the age by shifting time

And the time of that idea is now, not soon, so with free will, choose Love over fear & hate

Elevate the distorted vibrations controlling our minds and nations

Till finally our frequencies are in tune

Use our force as Mother Nature to create monsoons

Make it rain, raise sea-level till the Earth is consumed

Still reflecting sunlight as orange moon

I shake hands, blue electric, while writing runes

Realizing

As truth comes full circle

Returning to The One

Becoming as I watch

The ocean merge

Into the

Drop

.

*Jude 1:12-13 (NKJV)

December, 2008

Grown.

Some of what She told me:

- Touch.
- Never forget your flesh is the color of mine – Blacks, Browns, Reds, even the Pale parched desert, sun scorched – your blistered hue, mine.
- Plant seeds in your mind with peaceful expectation to harvest the sown.
- Be careful; thoughts are powerful, actions more so.
- Grow.
- Earth's bounty overflows with provision.
- Be pro-vision.
- Fertile eyes, Her is all the shit you don't want to deal with that helps you grow.
- Quicken.
- Pray, ROOTS!
- High Doses of ginger can cure just about *any* daily thing. A heaping tablespoon or more.
- Make sure it's pure.
- Protect the Water.
- Protect the Water.
- PROTECT THE WATER.

February, 2017

Lajja is a mother, a Christian, and a writer of multiple mediums. Her first creative nonfiction book, [In Search of Epiphany: A God Spell](#), will be published in 2018. She isn't on social media but loves to build with positive people: LadyLajja@gmail.com

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Karen L. Culpepper serves as a clinical herbalist, licensed massage therapist and founder of the clinical practice, Embracing Rhythm, based in Maryland. Karen's unique herbalist contribution centers on the ways in which the energetics of plant medicine can support deep healing. Her particular focus areas are inter-generational trauma and its impact on physiology and womb restoration. Within the intersection of historical trauma of the African slave trade and womb healing, her study and knowledge of cotton root bark offers a powerful perspective on role of plant spirit healing in the context of political changes.

Vienna Carroll has been studying herbs since 1987 when her mother was cured of a stomach tumor through herbs, nutrition and prayer. She experienced the profound power of herbs herself when, 6 months later, she found a lump in her breast and was able to eliminate it through alternative remedies. Carroll founded Vienna's Herbal Compounds in 1991, handcrafting the aromatherapy and herbal products they offer after personally experiencing their healing help.

Jaliessa Sipress is a black/mixed-race queer Astrologer and witch. She specializes in life-path Astrology and seeks to center her healing practice around ancestral healing and liberation. You can learn more about her practice, read her work or book her for a private reading at obsidianmoonastrology.com.

Jamara Mychelle Wakefield is a queer performance poet. Her work is cross genre combining music, poetry, theater, music and improvisation to create public performance. She is a finalist for the Leslie Scalapino Award for Innovative Women writers. She is the new age protector of the black radical tradition. www.jamaramychellewakefield.com

Rena Anakwe is an interdisciplinary artist and performer, working primarily with sound, visuals, scent and space. She is based in Brooklyn, New York by way of Nigeria and Canada. Using storytelling as a platform, her work focuses on sensory-based, experiential interactions through art and technology.

Amina Ross is an undisciplined artist engaged in the reevaluation of visual and written language. As of late Amina's interests have led to an exploration of conceptions of Body and Beauty within communities dedicated to alternative modes of healing.

Amina works across mediums, shaping spaces that honor darkness and love. These ambitions manifested in the founding of 3rd Language (2011-2015), queer arts collective. Currently, these ambitions manifest themselves within Beauty Breaks, (beautybreaks.info), a participatory creative project and workshop series. Amina is currently Co-Lead artist of Teen Creative Agency at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Adjua Gargi Nzinga Greaves is an artist chiefly concerned with postcolonial ethnobotany working in the mediums of scholarship, corporeal wisdom, archival gesture and language. She lives and works in New York City

Lyric Hunter is a writer born and raised in New York City. She is the author of two chapbooks, *Motherwort* (Guillotine, 2017) and *Swallower* (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2014). Her poetry and prose have appeared in Counter, Cordella, and Organism for Poetic Research's PELT vol. 4. She graduated from Pratt Institute in 2017 with an MFA in Writing. She lives in Houston, Texas.