

My Tree Family

Some of my first memories in this lifetime are of the trees, including the sound of golden leaves of Aspen trees shaking in the wind in the Colorado fall at age three or four and the strangely swaying oak trees of a new home in Virginia when I was six years old. Beautiful trees inhabit the college I chose to attend. At age 20, when I first visited Washington state, I felt at home with the Western Red Cedar trees and the Douglas Fir trees. As I began the study of shamanic herbalism 12 years ago, I began to have greater awareness around my connection with the trees. With the trees, I feel at home. Particularly since I began to study with the plants and trees, my journey has been guided and held through the wisdom I've received from the plants and trees. In my study of shamanic herbalism, I choose a tree or plant to be my plant or tree guide. Even in choosing a tree or plant guide, I have also connected and worked with many other trees and plants simultaneously. My first tree/plant guide was Chickweed, however at that time I also deeply connected with the wild roses, Western Red Cedar, and many other plants and trees. The wisdom I receive from the trees and plants comes in many ways, including through breathing and asking with them, harvesting and making preparations, and it is also woven into my dreams. For instance, at one time, Cedar, and many small pieces of cedar, came to me in a dream, indicating to me "we are the cedar weavers. You are to learn to make cedar baskets". I did, and it was beautiful. Since 2014, I've had tree guides, while also working with many other shamanic guides and helpers. The trees who have shown up as my tree guides are my best friends and are family to me. Through asking "Who Am I", I've received countless times from the plants and trees that I'm a healer. The plants and trees themselves healers, are my teachers, friends, and family, my kin. They gave me the name "Song From the Trees". Here I share about my tree guides, some of the members of my tree family, with you. In creating this "book" about my tree family, I asked each of my tree guides what they would like for me to share about them, and I create this "book" in honor of and with great gratitude to them.

Hawthorn



Hawthorn was my first tree guide. She lives in a garden of native plants, that is planted near the school in Ballard WA where my daughter went to elementary school. Other plants growing in the garden with her are Wild Roses, Thimbleberry, Yarrow, St. Joan's Wort, Oregon Grape, and Queen Anne's Lace. Hawthorn is in the Rose family, and is of the genus *Crataegus*. In the Wise Woman tradition, Hawthorn is known as a Triple Goddess plant, nourishing and supporting the heart, womb, and nervous system. I'm unsure of the species of the particular Hawthorn who was my first tree guide, however the shape of her leaves is wedge-shaped, and they are serrated, whereas many Hawthorn leaves are lobed. Also, this Hawthorn has very long thorns, and her berries are deep red, and larger than many I've seen. In the fall, as pictured above, her beautiful leaves turn from deep green to yellow. As I first began to breathe and ask with Hawthorn, she introduced me to and connected me with the plants, birds and animals in her community. She inspired me and the clients I worked with who she supported, in creating art, ritual, and ceremony. At one time, when I was asking her what I was to create for a ritual that I would be doing for my shamanic herbal apprenticeship, a small branch had recently fallen from her with many thorns on it. She told me to make a crown of thorns, which I cherish to this day. She healed my heart, loved and nourished me, and connected me with deep peace.

During the time that I worked with Hawthorn as my tree guide, I harvested the blossoms in the spring, and made infused honey, vinegar, and tincture with the blossoms. In the fall, I harvested the haws and made tincture and dried many haws for making nourishing herbal infusion.

Here is some writing that I wrote while working with Hawthorn as my tree guide:

"In the Wise Woman tradition that I practice, each year I choose a plant or tree ally to work with. In my experience, my plant or tree ally not only supports me directly, however may also call to other trees and/or plants to reach out to me, or may tell me of trees and/or plants to seek out to support my nourishment, growth and healing.

There is a spot where I go to breathe with my tree ally, Hawthorn, where Oregon Grape (the common name for several species of the genus *Mahonia*), is surrounding. This morning, I felt called to breathe with her and my tree ally. As I breathed with her and asked permission, Oregon Grape gave me a gift. She offered me a berry of those remaining on her stems. In eating this berry, I was infused with sheer calm and ease and a feeling of deep connection with my intuition, body, and all of my senses. I am called by this experience that I had this morning to tell a story. I have many stories like the following that I feel illustrate the plants loving us and supporting us, and this one is a favorite to share.

Early this year one day, I was led by my tree guide to breathe with Oregon Grape. I was seeking guidance regarding the appearance of some fear, anxiety, stress, and a lack of self-worth I had been feeling. I breathed seven breaths with Oregon Grape, asked her how I could experience relief, and felt and saw her in my mind's eye twining around my arms and legs, wrapping me up, enveloping me. She told me she was there to support, heal, and love me. I would know more of how she would support me.

The next week, I began to feel an intense sensation of pain just above my navel which I had never experienced before. I woke in the middle of the night to pain, asking my guides and my

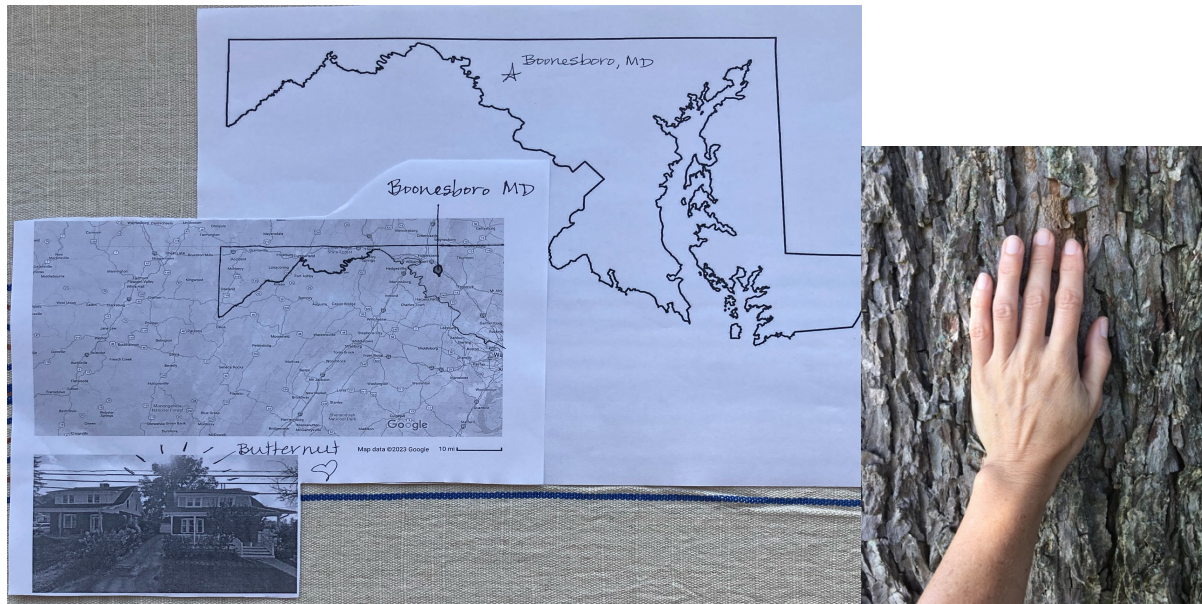
dreams how I could support myself and relieve the pain. I dreamt of broccoli and heard I should eat broccoli, and I again felt the presence of Oregon Grape. She led me to take Oregon Grape root tincture. I felt puzzled by this guidance, and I followed it. Within half a day, my pain had eased, and within a few days, the sensation was all but gone.

In feeling relief, I also felt so much gratitude and curiosity. I did some research to find that the appearance of pain I was experiencing is often related to an ulcer. An underlying emotional cause of ulcers can be fear, anxiety, stress, and a sense of not feeling good enough. Physically, ulcers can be caused by bacteria. Broccoli contains a chemical that kills the type of bacteria that often cause ulcers. Oregon Grape is claimed to have antibacterial properties. Energetically, in my experience, I would say that Oregon Grape brings a calm uplifting to the spirit.

Rather than making a specific recommendation here of a particular remedy for a particular experience, I feel called to share with others that the plants support us by connecting us to an intuition we have within our own bodies that knows how we can increase our wholeness and health. This is so beautiful as each of us is unique and our experiences are as well and this type of wisdom is so personalized and individualized. The plants can help us to discern of all of the options available to us for healing, what may most support us, and give us confidence in what we choose."

“Butternut”, Northern Pecan





I met “Butternut” in the summer of 2016. My daughter and I had recently moved from Seattle, WA to western Maryland, and we were looking for a house/home. Since I began working with the plants and trees, I have been supported by the wild roses, and the roses told me to look for roses when I was looking for this new home. At one home, I found abundant garden roses out in front of the home and in full bloom. As I walked around to the back of the home, I met a big, beautiful tree. I felt very curious about this tree, and was unsure of the type of tree. I noticed nuts forming on her limbs. I asked what type of nuts, however didn’t receive a response. Following that, and purchasing the home, I began to look up different kinds of trees to try to discover what type of tree this is. I wondered if she is a butternut tree, and asked her. She told me “no”, however that I could call her “Butternut”. I did. I learned after a little more time that she is a pecan tree. She became my tree guide and I worked with her as my tree guide for the next two years. She is very tall and very noticeable, and loved by many, human beings including clients, birds, squirrels, cicadas, flowers, plantain, and other plants at her feet, and so many other beings. One time as I stood and breathed with her, I came face-to-face with a squirrel who became astonished in realizing that I was not a part of the tree! Something that I learned from Butternut is that the trees have many, many jobs in our world, some that we human beings would never guess. Below is some writing from my time learning from and working with Butternut.

“9/14/17 Butternut and the Council of Pecans

My plant guide this year is a beautiful pecan tree. I call her Butternut, and experience that she likes that name, allowing me to call her Butternut. This year, she is heavily fruiting, filled with pecans that have begun to blanket the grass of my yard. As I was breathing with her last week, I experienced the most heavenly scent, and became aware that this is the scent of her pecans. How incredible. I’m still marveling over the intoxicating, divine scent.

Synchronously, I began to read "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer just after I had this experience with Butternut last week. As I came upon the second chapter of the book, my eyes nearly popped out of my head as I read "The Council of Pecans". Robin shares how "nut trees don't make a crop every year, but rather produce at unpredictable intervals. Some years a feast, most years a famine, a boom and bust cycle known as mast fruiting." The nuts aren't meant to be eaten right away, encased in a hard shell and then a green husk, food for winter. Also fascinating to me is that the trees act as a collective, all fruiting at the same time, within a grove, across groves, across states, across the country. They communicate with one another about fruiting (and much much more), likely above ground (through pheromones) and below ground (through fungal networks). There is so much mystery and wisdom in the processes of these trees and of nature overall. Robin shares of the wisdom of the pecans as "The pecan trees and their kin show a capacity for concerted action, for unity of purpose that transcends the individual trees. They ensure somehow that all stand together and thus survive. How they do so is still elusive." The health of the whole is integral to the health of the individual being. For me this resonates with the teachings of the hologram, that each part contains the entire universe and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. We are each within the universe and the universe is within each of us."

"10/23/2017 Plantain, Plantago Major

I experience this to be an interesting, intense time on our planet, so much going on. I've noticed my longing to be of greater and immediate benefit to others. I just had the beautiful opportunity to be at two amazing conferences, receiving so much wisdom and knowledge that may flow from me to others. How can I be more expansive than I am, immediately? At the same time, I've had opportunity of a less pleasant nature for healing and growth. I've felt sad. I noticed at first how I had some judgment of myself and that my own experience and sadness felt trivial compared to what's going on in our world, even as I know how important it is to care for myself so that I may be of benefit to others. I've been sharing of the sadness I feel. Perhaps this vulnerability and authenticity may be a way to expansion. There is possibility for such beauty and intimacy in allowing all of myself and others, including all emotions, to be included in the space of relating. A dance teacher in her newsletter recently shared a quote from Carl Jung that is deeply meaningful to me: "Emotion is the chief source of becoming conscious. There can be no transforming of darkness into light or apathy into movement without emotion."

Perhaps as a wake up call to move very slowly, reflect and be grateful for all that is and all that I accomplish and do, I was in a car crash last week. I'm grateful to have sustained only minor soreness, slowness, bruising, and opportunity to reflect, heal and grow. As I came home following the car crash, I went to visit Butternut, my tree guide. She had dropped/lost an enormous branch, and she said to me "It's ok.", supporting me around what had happened for her and for me that day. I am endlessly astounded by the friendship we share, and by how available and present she is with me. For several days in a row, I laid on the earth under her branches and above her roots for healing.

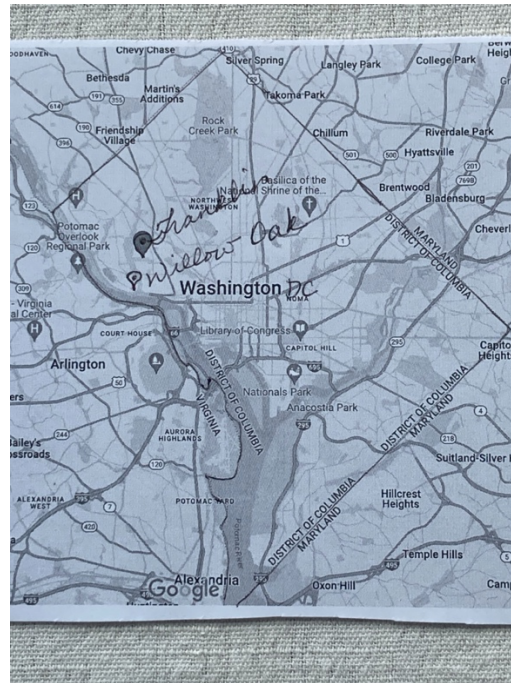
After the car crash, I experienced additional clarity around what it is that I value and how important it is for me to act from the place of knowing what it is that I value. I felt also a restoration of child-like innocence, coupled with the greater wisdom of adulthood. My child self has been wanting to show up more to inform and guide me.

I dreamt last night, remembering several experiences of my childhood from around the age of 6, when I moved with my family from Colorado to Virginia. As a child, I experienced it as a painful and traumatic time. As I was dreaming last night of these experiences, I smelled a plant. This plant was telling me that I had been deeply connected with her as a child. "Who is that plant?", I asked. Like magic, she revealed herself to be plantain, *Plantago major* (aka "the bee stinging plant"). She shared with me in my dream that not only is she known to be nourishing and healing for bruised tissue and drawing out foreign substances from the body like bee stings and venom from a snake bite, however she is also nourishing for drawing up and out childhood trauma from the body. This seems to coincide with that Plantain is known in many places as "whiteman's footprint", known to grow in soil that has been heavily compacted by foot or other traffic. This plant grows prolifically and powerfully nourishes herself with water and nutrients, drawing them up from the most compacted soil. Perhaps from where she grows, she is supporting much further-reaching impacts in addition to the physical of "whiteman's footprint".

I love how the plants work with me in my waking time and also in my dream time. One way that I encourage my dreams is by burning some mugwort smudge just before going to bed. As I do this, I set an intention for my dreams to deliver messages to me from my unconscious of any wisdom needed by me.

This morning I went in search of Plantain in my garden. I found her. I breathed with her, asking if I could harvest a couple of her leaves for making a spit poultice to apply for healing bruised tissue and in support of healing these childhood memories that have surfaced for me. She gave me a "yes".

Willow Oak



My daughter and I moved to MacArthur Blvd. in Washington DC in August of 2018. We were welcomed by the Willow Oak, who agreed to be my tree guide at that time. During the first year and a half of living there, the Willow Oak and I gave many small workshops together. The connections that workshop participants had with the Willow Oak were beautiful and woven together. The Willow Oak encouraged me to write and share, and I wrote a lot during the time that she was my tree guide. We were also together during the beginning of Covid times, and I was deeply nourished through our companionship.

The apartment my daughter and I lived in felt a little like a tree house because we could see right into the branches of the Willow Oak from the apartment windows. I often witnessed the many birds who loved to sit in the branches of the Willow Oak, including a pair of red-tailed hawks.

Below are several writings from my time living with the Willow Oak.



"9/15/18 Ask

I am full of questions and mind chatter this afternoon. Some of the questions I perceive as bigger picture questions. How do I/we restore and experience our connection to Mother Earth, and care for her as young, humble human beings, as she is our teacher and source of all life and nourishment? How do I/we solve climate change? Some are more personal, individual questions. I have a lot of thoughts about the mystery of my practice with the plants and trees, and how it fits in with other mystical traditions. Am I to share more expansively about this connection I experience and this practice? How? In a life so full and wonderful, what is it in me that so deeply longs for more meaningful connections with other human beings? How am I to transition more easily between time with other human beings and time with the plants and trees or alone? With all of these questions swirling, I notice how grateful I am for my practice with the plants and trees, that I may breathe with them and place questions, and receive wisdom and guidance. I feel how I am not alone, how I am so supported and loved. How I am so in awe of the expansiveness of the plants and trees, the wisdom they share, and the change I have experienced through connection with them. Breathing with the plants and trees and asking/placing questions is core to my practice. I go outside with the Willow Oak tree that is my new tree ally. I breathe 21 breaths with her, offering my breath to her, and receiving the breath that she gives. The question I place today, with all of these questions in my head and being is "What have you for me?". My mind quiets. My breath stills. I feel calm and serene. As I ask, I receive from the Willow Oak that I am a living question. I am a living mystery, she tells me, just as the source of all life. I am a prayer. Through my prayer, I am blessed, and I communicate and connect with something much larger than myself. Through asking, prayer and intention, I may create right relationship with others, with all beings, including the plants and animals that provide me with nourishment and the food that I eat. Our prayer blesses and infuses water with positive intention, and this is powerful as there is so much water in the food we eat, in our bodies, and in our world. I hear the Willow Oak, encourage me to write, to share with others of this experience. I share photos of her here, pictured on a sunny day a couple of weeks ago."



"11/1/20 The Path of Possibility With the Ancestors"

Samhain greetings and blessings everyone, a bit early! I experience the energy of the ancestors very potently this year, and am eager to share. I was breathing with the Willow Oak this morning, just outside the door to the building of my apartment home, asking "What is possible?". I received from her that there is deep connection between the ancestors and possibility, and that it is possible to see possibility with our whole being, like we have eyes all over our body, or like we are an eye, seeing possibility in all its vastness. This connects with what I received from the Willow Oak a couple of weeks ago when breathing and asking. I experienced connection with the ancestors, including my human, animal, tree, and plant ancestors, and received the message that the ancestors are here to help us with the "thirteenth step". We may ask them for help with the "thirteenth step" and they will help us to come up with creative solution. In the tradition of herbalism that I practice, the Wise Woman tradition, the "thirteenth step" is described as relating to the natural law of the spiral, the cycle of life as it moves through time. This cycle is movement around and beyond a circle. In walking this spiral, we come to the unique thirteenth step, the unknown, the challenge, "the problem", the opportunity for change and transformation. The spiral is the path of each of our individual lives, the patterns of nature, the rotation of the Earth, and the passage between worlds. I experience how our ancestors are available to us in helping us to perceive possibility and creative solution for individual, planetary, and universal transformation."



"3/7/20 The Breath of the Planet"

The Willow Oak, my tree guide, is getting her leaves. She is a beautiful, compassionate teacher for me. It is my experience and belief that all of life, all beings and elements are ready to be in conversation and community with us human beings when we are ready. I feel that we are deeply called at this time to restore our connection to the natural world through asking and listening to her wisdom. I believe that the solutions that we are seeking in our world today will come from us deeply listening to nature and returning to community in harmony with nature.

I've been breathing with the Willow Oak recently to ask how I may be in service to the whole. My usual practice is to breathe 21 breaths, exchanging breath with her, and then place the question that I want to ask, and then listen and receive. I experience something different the last few days. I experienced tuning into my lungs, tuning into my breath and feeling the intimacy of my breath in exchange with the breath of the Willow Oak. We intimately know one another through our breath. There is intimate connection between my lungs and my breath and the Willow Oak and her lungs and her breath. I experience this with her and learn about her. As the time comes naturally, I ask her "How may I be in service to the whole"? Yesterday I received from her that we are to connect with one another and all of life through deeply heart-felt compassion and connection and that this connection is ever-present when we are open to it, and does not require any physical touch. I encourage you to do this practice with a tree to whom you feel called.

One perspective is that the trees are the lungs of our planet. I feel it is remarkable the experiences we are having right now in our world related to fire and coronavirus, and other experiences as well related to our breath and breathing and the planet's breath and breathing. When we connect with the trees, I feel that we naturally come in service to the whole, we naturally come into community. We naturally embrace the way of the spiral and the hologram – when we encounter challenge and pain on the spiral path of life, and nourish every cell, every seed, every aspect, every emotion as part of our wholeness and what writes the whole, we come to acceptance and response, and compassionate solution comes to the forefront. I pray that at this crucial time in our world that I and all of us human beings will listen and be in service to the whole."



"9/5/20 Listen Listen

I've been taking many walks during this time of pandemic. Several weeks ago, I noticed how my body wanted to walk very slowly, and that my body had been resisting the pace my mind chose and asking for this slower pace on many previous walks. Finally, I listened fully. I was walking on a path near my home that is quiet and wild for the city, and allowed myself to walk at the pace that my body wanted. I experienced luxury in the pace I took, my whole body soaking up the experience. My feet felt as part of the soil and the grass. I heard and noticed the plants more vividly than usual, and the birds and insects too.

Even as my mind has wondered on subsequent walks about the amount of "exercise" I'm getting and if it's enough with the slow pace I've been taking, I've continued my walks moving at a much slower pace than I often did in the past. Today, I breathed with the Goldenrod and was reminded by her of how loved I am by the Earth, and then I felt the beautiful presence of the Earth with us. I heard the Earth saying "slow down" in a most gentle, loving, and yet enjoining way. I experienced it as a whole-body invitation, so welcoming, yet not optional. She showed me how the mixture of all of my energies as a representation of all human beings is called, deeply called. I feel how each one of us a unique expression of divine creativity must slow down and experience ourselves as the nature that we are once again. We are called to recognize ourselves as an incomparably unique, yet not higher, lower, or more important part of a very vast community, spiral and web of life. In my awareness came that the virus is intelligent life bringing us this opportunity to slow down. The virus is not benevolent or malevolent towards us, however a force to bring natural balance. What offerings can we make, what work can we do to bring this balance in other ways?

Sometimes as I walk on this particular path that is very quiet and wild, I sing and pray, giving gratitude to the trees, plants, the Earth, and all beings. As I left the quiet of the path this evening for the sidewalk, I was delighted by the cool air. I felt goose bumps form on my skin. I walked by a stone wall, and felt the warmth of the sun that had been absorbed by the stones. I stopped and placed my hands on the wall and breathed with the warm stone. As she offered and bestowed upon me presence and peace through her warmth to my nervous system, I felt how much more I can slow down and listen, listen to the wisdom of the Earth."

"3/28/21 The Beauty of Disturbance and Gratitude to the Willow Oak

Amidst all happening in our world, the beauty and the challenge, often I focus on what I feel concern and confusion about, including my own small challenges and troubles. Although I have my own impressions and intuitions regarding what is happening in our world, I also feel how limited my perspective is and how limited my ability is to fully comprehend all that is going on in our world. What feels deeply meaningful to me is exploring how to live in right relationship with all of life, listening to the wisdom of the intelligence of life. I feel the natural complexity and simplicity of our world is beautiful and mysterious, and yet I often feel troubled by how complicated the world is. I ask the trees and plants about larger things going on in our world. My experience is that they share of beautiful natural patterns/laws underlying all of life, and that they also share of the energy of things, teaching me as we go. I hear them sharing their wisdom and how much they want to collaborate with human beings and all of life to create beauty. I also feel them sharing how useful it is for me to be able grow in the way that I work with my own small challenges, so that I may be of greater contribution in our world.

My daughter and I recently moved from one apartment and neighborhood to another. This was not a move that I had anticipated, but that arose out of necessity and care of myself and my daughter. Something related to a neighbor's behavior began happening in the apartment where we were living that we could not stand to live with. I had a lot of story around it for awhile. The story helped me to process and to connect and relate as I was having the experience. Through the disturbing experience and through my story, I felt the presence of the Willow Oak who was my tree guide for two and a half years. The Willow Oak supported me. She helped me to reflect on how disturbed I felt and to connect with her and her roots to ground and feel my roots still intact, and to relax my nervous system. She helped me to see and feel what was true, connect more deeply with my intuition through the experience, and to accept responsibility for the choices I made. Seeing through my story to the truth that I did not want to and could not healthfully continue in the experience where I was living brought me to accepting responsibility for my choices, and healing and beauty came as my story about the experience fell away. The flow of my emotions and story, coupled with the compassionate wisdom of the Willow Oak, ushered me to a healthier place for me and my daughter. Some of the wisdom shared by the Willow Oak is how our stories nourish and heal us, and how we naturally let them go and they fall away upon healing.

Something else interesting, that felt related, also happened to me during this time. There were a couple of things at my job that didn't feel right to me, and I spoke up about them, against the grain. I noticed how I felt like a disturbance, even as I was speaking from my heart, speaking up for what I feel is in care of everyone. I don't like to feel like a disturbance. I asked the Willow Oak about this, breathing with her. I had a beautiful experience with her. As I breathed with her, first I saw the image of me in an enclosed pod at work, and almost instantly as I saw this, the pod wasn't a pod at all, however a seed. As a seed in the vision I received, I burst first into roots and then into branches, my roots moving through the soil in a way that is nourishing and necessary, deepening. My branches reaching, connecting. I felt how this is the energy of myself

and of others. Although I may not perceive it often, I am and we are each one of us much more expansive energetically than we notice, and we are deeply affecting one another and all of the life around us. The Willow Oak seemed to share how this is happening in the way of the hologram, expansively throughout our world

I talked with my shamanic herbal teacher about these occurrences. She tuned into disturbance, and encouraged me to tune in further as well, expressing how it seems that I was being disturbed for a purpose and that I was being called to be disturbing for a purpose. As I conversed more with the Willow Oak about this, she shared with me how the energy of being disturbed is useful and meaningful if we are moving from a place of being deeply rooted, connected, and from the heart. These experiences of disturbance are happening in our world on all scales, in the way of the hologram, and at this time of renewal on our planet. For renewal, the forces of disturbance are essential. Anything that is not serving life must fall away.

Another gift that I received from the Willow Oak is that she led me to a new tree guide close to my new home. She created a bridge for me from her wisdom and support to the wisdom and support of this new tree guide. She continues to support me in various ways, and I have visited her in person relatively recently too. My new tree guide is a silver maple tree. He shared with me that his name is Franklin. One meaning of the name Franklin is “land holder”, and one aspect that I experience through Franklin is his knowing and far-reaching connection with the surrounding land, trees, plants, animals, people, and all the beings. I’ve received wonderful gifts from him, to be shared in coming writing.”

“Franklin”, Silver Maple



In February of 2021, my daughter and I moved to a different apartment in Washington DC, that is right by the park/forest in Glover Park. One gift of this apartment is that it has a porch in the back, right on the alley that borders the park/forest and looking right out into the forest. There are many trees there, and I loved meeting them. During the process of moving, I met a very large tree just a block from the new apartment home. When I first breathed and connected with this tree, he shared with me that he identifies as a male tree, and that his name is Franklin. He is overflowing with wisdom, life and joy to share. Over the weeks, the Willow Oak who was my tree guide, created a bridge for me to work with Franklin as my new tree guide. I also learned that Franklin is a Silver Maple. I breathed and asked in person with him, however something new and remarkable happened, where Franklin's presence, wisdom and guidance often came unexpectedly, amidst other regular daily activities.

Through breathing with Franklin, I received peace and connection, resting in community with him and the web of life. Sometimes I received deep insight and transformation, and also found the work he called me to do in response to what he shared was challenging for me. I received great compassion and wisdom from Franklin. Franklin taught me a lot about shapeshifting energies, including fear. He revealed that many energies and truths of the moment are present and the denser energies can shapeshift into another form through bringing in insight and love. I

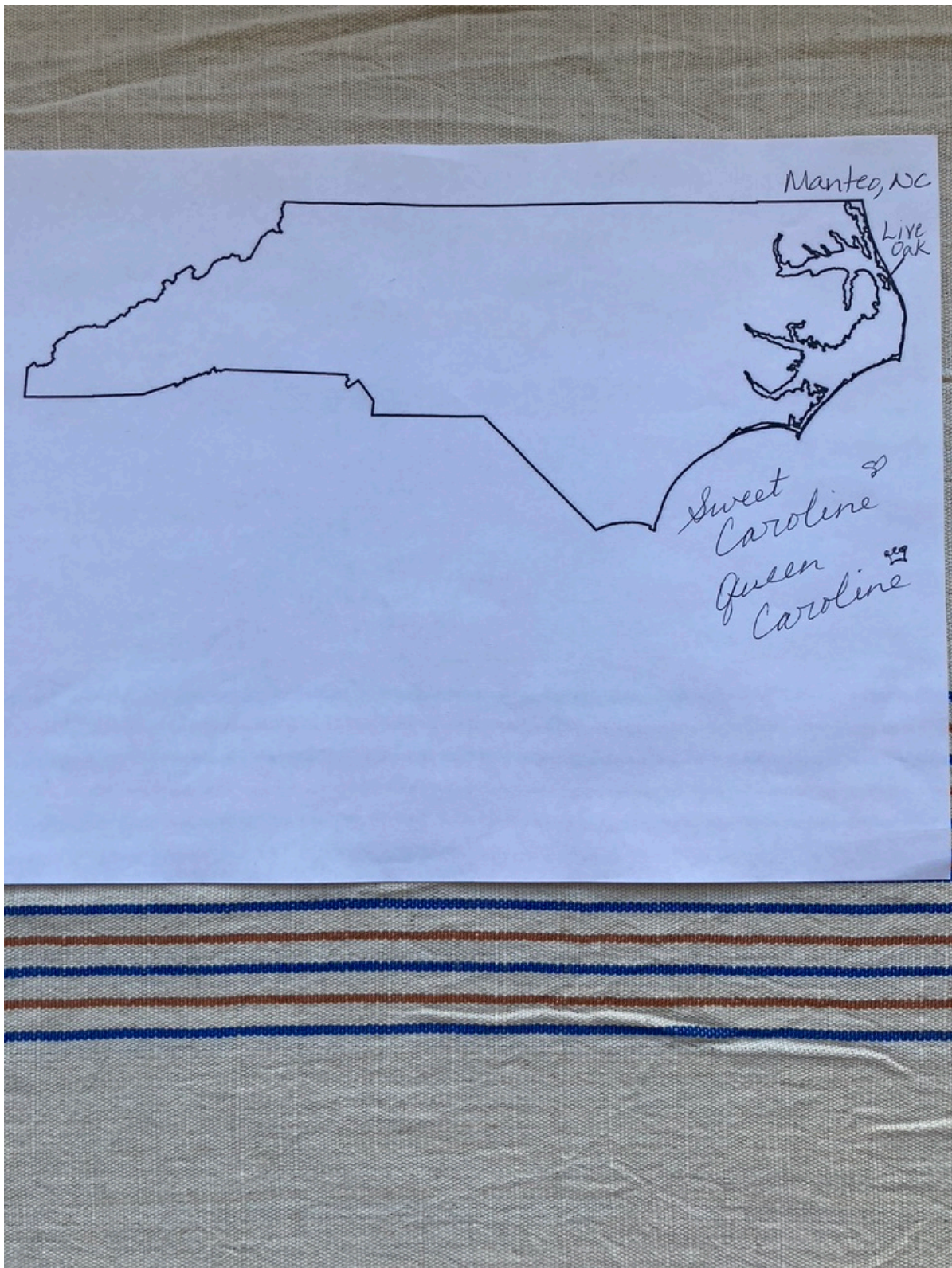
also began to experience greater ease in the shamanic practice of dismemberment to release and let go of old energies that no longer served, and allow space for more nourishment.

Something I experienced almost immediately with Franklin was his sense of humor, and it was a beautiful gift to witness how clients and friends who connected with Franklin also experienced his sense of humor and his unique way of sharing wisdom and guidance. Franklin's warm way of connecting with human beings and all other beings revealed itself in myriad ways. When I stood and breathed with him, feeling a part of his community, animals including squirrels, foxes, and birds would come very near to me. Franklin shared with me how even the poison ivy is part of his community.

Franklin and a beautiful Gingko Biloba tree who is also connected with Franklin supported me through my mom's death and transition, including helping me to grieve and teaching me a way that trees grieve, which I would describe as grieving in every moment, woven with joy and all other aspects of life, just as life and death exist simultaneously and are intertwined.



“Sweet Caroline”, “Queen Caroline”, Live Oak





In July 2023, following guidance I received, I moved to North Carolina to live near the wild roses, the live oak trees, and the ocean. When I first came to the home where I live now, I noticed two live oak trees in the back yard. I put my hand on one to connect and ask "What have you for me?". I felt gladly and enthusiastically welcomed by the tree to move to this area in general and to this home specifically. After I moved to this home, I connected further with the live oak tree. I experience the live oak tree as a she. She and Franklin worked together and she became my tree guide. She sang part of Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" song to me, telling me that her name is Sweet Caroline. When I thanked her for being here, she made clear that this is her yard/garden and that she welcomed and welcomes me here. Shortly after she told me her name is Sweet Caroline, I was having some work done in my home. One of the people doing the work was working on a ladder and all of a sudden began singing out loud "Sweet Caroline....."!

When I felt curious about Sweet Caroline's age, she responded to me that she is about like me in age, and yet I am unsure if she means in the number of years or in terms of a ratio of expected life. As she shared this with me, I felt infused with the sense of longevity of the beautiful live oak trees, a woven tapestry and canopy in this area. I received from Sweet Caroline that the trees here hold the sun and bring it down into the Earth. I experience her sovereignty, her freedom to choose for herself, and often experience her as Queen Caroline. I experience that she is teaching and sharing with me how to come more and more deeply in harmony within myself and with the web of life. I also witness her seamlessly supporting my clients and friends who meet her. I am so grateful that she continues to be my tree guide at this time.