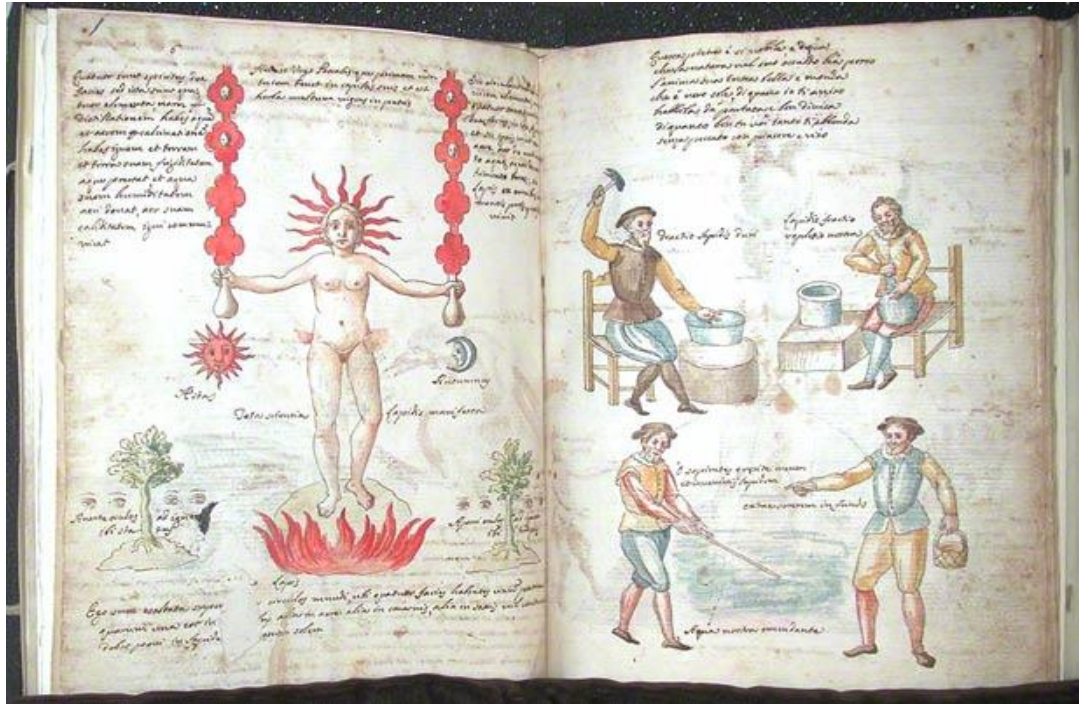


# ***Book of Shadows***

rev Oct 2021

***“The poet’s labor is to struggle with the meaninglessness and silence of the world until he can force it to mean; until he can make the silence answer and the Non-being be.”***  
Archibald MacLeish



***A later-life project of collecting clues to Your Life-with-Meaning. This is the record of your work as a Casual Alchemist .These are your lab notes: A private record of how you have made/lost Meaning; How, when and why you have Revised your Story; How you have encountered the Intuitive, the Spiritual and the Practical in your life. Your Dance with the Body, the Mind and the Moment. Your history of Going In, Down, Out and Away. How you have managed the tension between life expected and life experienced.***

***“Bidden or not bidden, the gods arrive.” ... in accident, disease, disguise, chance, coincidence; alone, in pairs, triples, mobs; as strangers, friends, feathers, leaves, sticks, stones and bones. A Book of Shadows is your personal, private record of your experiences with the gods.***

***This is a free-form document with pictures, lists, words, quotes, dreams, found objects, records of your experiences with Enchantment, encounters with the Holy***

*This is work for Spiritual Explorers: seekers, elders, outliers, caretakers, the wounded and the healing. Exploring Self, Community, Nature and Unconscious Intelligence with chance, coincidence, accident by making objects as compasses, tools of personal exploration. A different, selected, edited version may be made and shared with others. This is called a Grimoire.*

***HOW?*** conscious, active experimenting with materials, tools  
*Honor the casual.*

This is not a Project, nor Art, nor a Test, nor a Challenge. Approach all this sideways: alert to coincidence, hunch, accident, mood, Move on if nothing seems to be arising. It has its own ways and means. Three Moods to start from: Quiet, Active or Public Where are you right now? Just pause, wait for something to arrive. You are the spider who has just woven this beautiful web It's a shy, indistinct flicker or shadow of interest

***Choose where to Start. They all connect***

Be Alone/Quiet	Trust Curiosity
Consult current symptoms	Seek Experiences of Awe/Wonder
Take Small Risks	Play
Pause/Wait	Make Things
Make Time for The Holy	Trust the Body
Distrust Talk/Words	Be with Children
Give Things to Others	Repair Something
Recall a Dream/A Memory	Find/Share Thin Places
Make a Presence	Be with others; Find Clan
Be with Nature	Put Something in an Empty Container
Allow/Tolerate The Unresolved/The Unseen/Ambiguous	
Read: Kandinsky's <u><i>The Spiritual in Art</i></u> ,	Read Rumi
Make Notes on your experiences.	Make Notes about Your Body
Look in Drawers	Look on Your Cell Phone

Who, What, Where brings on moments of brightness?

Consult the Body and your current symptoms. What and where are the aches, or the feelings of well-being?

Just a stretch beyond the usual, the comfort zone

## ***Collect Pieces of your PROFILE:***

### ***What you've Earned, Learned, Inherited, Rediscovered;***

Life-long defaults, tendencies, interests, routines, themes;

*"Oh, YOU Again!" Welcome friend!*

**BODY:** *health?, habits, Hair, Clothes, weight, height?*

**BIRTH/FAMILY Highlights** Birth Experiences, Deaths, Successes and Tragedies

**NEEDS** *when has life had meaning? Are there life-long fears or worries?*

**Experiences with OBJECTS:** PRODUCTIONS/COLLECTIONS? Saving?

**Experiences with the Eternal, the Olde, the Paleo:** rocks, insects, water with Religion? Spirituality? The Occult? *How you Alter Consciousness*

**Experiences with The Feral, Nature, Instinct, Shadow**

**YOUR GIFTS?** Passions, talents, obsessions, reputation?

**Your Preferred, Practiced Voices:** *teacher, preacher, cheerleader, critic, victim?*

*What's TIDAL, in play, right now?*

The weather fronts of the moment.

*Start from where you are at*

***List care/ordering/attention self soothing: collecting, eating, buying, hiding***

Passing Encounters, Accidents, Coincidences, Pictures, People, Places, Symptoms, Attractions, Hunches, Experiences, Events, Animals, Scents, New Voices What Songs are stuck in your mind? What words, verbs, nouns seem to repeat?

***Collect clues about your emerging selves, and the changing matrix around you.***

Trust that Meaning is always available in the Regular; The Profound is in the Simple. Trust Process; That you are not alert to it all, That One-step leads to another. Seek Contact with Ambiguity, Chance through Casual/Indirect Ways to Allow Discovery; that there are layers of meaning which get Revealed after risk

## ***WHY DO THIS?***

*We are being lived by powers we pretend to understand* W. H. Auden

*Let's try to understand more. Narcissistic? No, it's taking ownership for who you are and what you've become.*

# Explore, Revisit Your Etheric Cords

*We live in many worlds at once: that helical twist of The Imagined, The Perceived, The Remembered, The Glimpsed*

Some get forgotten more easily. There's a cost: "The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of contemporary violence. To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects, to want to help everyone in everything, is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activity neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace. It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful." Thomas Merton

They need to be remembered; Given attention, reviewed, refreshed by Looking In, Out, Down, Back and Ahead. These are not tasks, but invitations, idyls to "kindle magic in an unmysterious world ." Joseph Stella

Etheric Cords are connected to our Four Needs (see below). They are expressions and connections to Archetypes. They are Feral, Random, Erratic, Carnal, Disorderly; Yet, they are about Science (order), Art (beauty), Magic (intuition, transformation), Religion (groupness) and Shadow, Darkness. They are your interwoven connections to places, people, substances, practices, thoughts. They are always being formed: They are Ancestral, Casual, Accidental. They can form from a passing encounter out a car window! They can be cut and dissolved.

"Walking in Three Worlds" Photo by David Horton.

**Old/New Clan** *Is a new clan appearing? Who's there from the old one?*

**Experiences with Organizations** Why do you join,? When do you leave ?

**LIFE STAGE:** What's this one about? What are you losing? Gaining?**Media**

**BITS** messages/emails/your programs and apps, your life with electronics

**QUOTES/POEMS** What words, images, stories move you?