

Restorying Surgical Menopause¹ by Sarah Miller

Menopause needs a reframe. Surgical menopause needs one too. We need to give this Rite of Passage, this journey of unbecoming and of becoming anew, much more respect and honour.

Menopause however it is lived in you, is your rite of passage. Whether it has been or is surgical, chemical or “natural” it is a powerful Rite of Passage. And it is natural, in that it is happening to you, regardless of how it happens.

She, I’m giving Menopause this pronoun (though, please choose your own) She is the birth canal. She is the deep dark forest we must enter. She is the Old Woman cackling one moment and issuing instructions the next. She is the oceanic depths we must plumb. She is Descent, is Darkness, is Death and yes, she is the Birth Canal. For through her you birth yourself anew. You birth the powerful, wiser, older women you are becoming.

Powerful wise old women, not a familiar turn of phrase out there in the world, but in here, in this space, I trust you know it well. Call me hag, witch, provocateur, crone, maga. I will take them all- for going the distance of this menopausal journey brings you to your knees, and then some. Call me what you like. I take those names back, I reclaim them, with all the power and mystery that they represent. It matters what they call me, but it matters more what I call myself. So in this time of descent and ascent, I claim back what is mine, and discard what is not.

As a menopausal woman I no longer accommodate the smallminded vision of woman. I wear my crowns, I treasure my lines, my scars, my knowing nothing, and knowing everything. I was and you are stripped bare, naked, unbecoming and becoming again.

So however your menopause looks, feels, is lived, it is yours for the claiming. I want each of you to say yes to Menopause- surgical or otherwise and yes to your journey. It is a journey of severance, of transition and challenges, and return. This is the domain of all our Rites of Passage.² They follow these tracks of severance, initiation (through our transition and challenges) and return. Rites of passage occur whether we are paying attention or not. So pay attention. Listen to the whispers, the words, the roars of your body. She is speaking to you and She is wise.

If you are unfamiliar with this terrain, listen to some old stories, older still.³ Listen to the stories of women, from times when women and Her ways were acknowledged. I know it’s a long time ago. A long, long time ago. These story guides, these mythic guides are there for you, so you need not, “feel lost or mad, or dismissed”, on this menopausal journey.⁴ Though if you do, take heart- for all the heroines do at one point or another feel this way.

¹ This article was the basis for a presentation at Seven Sisters Festival March 2020:

Surgical Rites of Passage – presented with Nymh Fox. Nymh focused on caesarean birth as rite of passage.

² Jane Hardwicke Collings articulates that all rites of passage, particularly menstruation, pregnancy, birth, mothering and menopause holds the opportunity for deep self-awareness and healing.
www.schoolofshamanicwomancraft.com

³ It can be really useful to find stories from your heritage, but I am also a believer that stories come to you, so follow the stories that feel alive in you. Some of the most important for me have been the stories of Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth., The stories of Persephone and Demeter especially the version by Charlene Spretnak in her *Lost Goddesses of Early Greece.*, *Skeleton Woman* as told by Clarissa Pinkola Estes in *Women who run with the Wolves*, and tales of the Mabinogion..

⁴ From Pope, A & Hugo-Wurlitzer, *Five Ways to have the Best Menopause Ever*, Blog post 1 October 2019, www.redschool.net

One of my most important allies for my menopausal journey has been and is, Inanna, The Sumerian Queen of Heaven and Earth.⁵ Inanna's journey was and is a map for me. Perhaps she can be a guide for you too.

And now is also the time for writing new stories, for listening to that which wants to be born at this particular moment in time. What stories is your bodymind speaking to you? What is asking to be lived, embodied, spoken? Lean in and listen. Your journey will be unique. Your way is the way for you, and yet you can be supported by the ways of other women, by those who have gone before, and before and before.

There are guides and maps for this journey, although it can feel otherwise,⁶ in a culture which still seeks dominion over the feminine, the earth, your body. Many of these stories have been silenced and forgotten. One powerful guide has been living in you a long time too. Perhaps you have not listened carefully to the wisdom of your menstrual cycle as out there, there is little regard for it. Hopefully you have listened, but either way, your own cycle is a map for you, a way to navigate all the cycles.⁷ Use this knowing, dig deep into the soil of your cycle, analyse and reflect. For your first menstrual cycle is its own Rite of Passage, your menarche, and your cycling years hold much wisdom for you. There are lessons in how you were met- or not in this Initiation into your Womanhood. Your initiations into mothering life and creativity, your initiations into being with the life/death/life cycle that is your menstrual cycle are keys to unlock woundings and healings, stagnation and flow. Dig deep, see what resources lie within you.

And here you are at the door of Menopause. You are standing alone. You are prepared or not, but you are here. Though you may want to flee, you are here. And here is the first door, the door of severance. It's the way in.

Severance

Severance is a separation, a tearing away from. It is psychic, and it is bodied. It is the first part of any initiation. You must separate from that which is familiar. You must step into the unknown, planned or not, you will go. You know this call to up and leave, everything and everyone. You feel it, don't you? Menopause is drawing you away from everything but the essentials, and then some.

Severance is an uncoupling. In our surgical menopause journeys it is an uncoupling of the womb, the cervix, the fallopian tubes and the ovaries from our body.⁸ The hormonal dance of your menstruating years is over- in one quick movement of the knife, the separation is forever and complete. Chemically induced menopause can take a little longer, or not. However She arrives, that moment of no return always arrives. So we breathe. We Breathe and breathe some more.

Such radical uncoupling within your bodily self-heralds radical changes in your psyche. The woman who stood at the gates of surgery is not the same one who wakes. For however your menopause

⁵ Wolkstein, D and Kramer, S., Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth, Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer, Harper & Row, 1983.

⁶ I am particularly indebted to the work of Jane Hardwicke Collings, Jane Bennett, Alexandra Pope & Sjane Wurlitzer Hugo, Lara Owen, Martin Shaw and Sharon Blackie.

⁷ The work of the School of Shamanic Womancraft has been invaluable. The teaching of the Women's Mysteries and our Rites of passage are embedded throughout the Four Seasons Journey and the SSW Workshops. Through many years of studying and practice I am now a SSW Teacher. Red School also offers essential teachings on the Menstrual Cycle, and our Rites of Passage.

⁸ The particulars may differ, but it does entail the loss of ovaries and womb. I also lost lymph nodes and extra tissue.

arrives, you may look back, but you can never return to that state. That way of being, infused with oestrogen and progesterone, with the monthly shedding of your blood, and the cyclical highs of ovulation. That woman is gone. That way of being is over. And yet, and yet there is something of the cycles that will live in you forever. You do take this knowing with you.

Before my surgery I heard tales of this. The speed of transition, the full and immediate loss of oestrogen means that you have less time to be in transition. Less time to prepare and negotiate “the usual” ratcheting down of your hormones. Brutal, decisive, quick. This is how it was described to me. And yes that may be so, it is brutal, decisive, quick and those of us who journey this way may also be given notice and gifted time. Time to heal this surgery, this cancer, this condition, whatever it is that led you to this point- of surgical/chemical menopause. And time is your ally.

Time to be with the severance, the transition/initiation and the return. Time to notice all the signs, to hear the whispers and the roar, time to pay attention to what is essential. Everything else is stripped away. You are stripped bare. Naked, unbecoming and becoming again.

Given notice, preparations can be made. The surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy often occurs at an appointed hour- though not always. You may well know that the menstrual bleed you have before this hour is your last one ever. What will you do with it? How will you be with it? I free bled for my last, something so rarely done. I walked and swam and snorkled with giants, feeling the tidal surges of the water. I let the surging currents swim me. I let the bull kelp show me how to be so rooted, and yet so supple and flexible. I let my blood flow free. I descended into the watery depth and was held there by the ordinary miraculous mystery of the sea.

With this knowing of my impending surgery I prepared for my departure. Like Inanna before me, I asked my *sukkal*, my support and wise counsel, to come with me. No, not all the way, that is not possible, but my sisters, did as Ninshubar did, drum and sing over me, they held vigil for me, before and during my descent. Ninshubar is Inanna’s wisest sister and counsel. She drums for Inanna as she descends into the underworld. When we begin our menopause journey, it is good to call on our own Ninshubar, the internal wise counsel, and also our friends and families who are there to support our deep descent.

I had several womb ceremonies to say goodbye to my womb, to make sacred, this sacrifice of womb to earth, of menstrual cycling to menopause. I had time to acknowledge both the physical and spiritual dimensions of my womb and my upcoming womb loss. The personal and collective grief for our wombs was shared in sacred ceremony. I felt my sisters near, holding rose petals in my hand as I went under the anaesthesia. My husband too, a constant support- attending to me even as I descended alone into the underworld.

For this is always a journey we take alone.

To support yourself, you can cultivate your inner Ninshubar. Think of her as, “an aspect of your consciousness which remains awake and alert while you submerge into the Dark.”⁹ Inanna prepared herself by asking Ninshubar to be present and to drum for her as she descended. Inanna knew that she was journeying, on the road from which she may not return. and still she went. She was willing to remove all signs of her status, her identity. She was willing even as she “entered the throne room, naked and bowed low.”¹⁰ And on that cold surgical table, you too, are naked and bowed low. You have given up and will give up much that identifies you as woman, as mother, as nurturer, as

⁹ Chameli Ardagh in Inanna Sadhana, a 21 Day immersion, <https://awakeningwomen.com/onlineashram/>

¹⁰ Wolkstein op cit, p.60

creatrix, as artist. This severance is a surrender, a surrendering of who you knew yourself to be. And thus having a part of yourself as witness is powerful. This is your internal midwife, holding you through all phases of this great Life/Death/Life cycle.

Transition/Challenges/Initiations

Through your surgery, or your chemically induced menopause, you now find yourself in the transition phase, the in-between place. It is as unfamiliar as you are now to yourself. And of course in this strange place you meet with challenges. Yes, and I hear her laughter ringing out. Why would you question this? Every initiation is full of challenges. If you were not questioned and tested, how would you know that you can call on your deep inner resources? How would you know that they were even alive in you? How would you know you are supported by forces seen and unseen? Yes, your allies are there for you whether you recognise them or not.

Who will meet you in the dark forest, or the sea? What parts of yourself, or of the Great mother, will be met in this time of Darkness. That I cannot say, for it is your journey, and yours alone. But know that there are story threads that you can hold onto, that in the seemingly uncharted realms of your menopause journey, there are sign posts and guides. Human and more than human. And Menopause opens you to them in ways untravelled before.

Menopause is the heroines journey. And so you do travel through forest, through mist, through sea. Make no mistake, you do descend into the underworld. You are tested, often over and over, for it is the way of women to descend into our power. And if you have been charting your cycle, you will know this. You will know what a powerhouse your blood time is. You will know how much there is to be gained by listening to yourself through all phases of the cycle. You may well be aware of your triggers, and of self-care practices you can call on.

Your menstrual cycle is a guide- one of the most powerful allies you will have. If you are still bleeding, track it, did deep into the soil of your cycle, if not scent out the knowing that it was showing you. Perhaps you need to sharpen your claws and dig some more into your cyclical history. You can do this, whether you are still living it or not. For your menstrual cycle, from your first blood onwards will help you navigate the terrain of Menopause. Your cycle is you ally.

But maybe you didn't know this. Maybe you missed the signs she was giving you. Maybe you were more obedient to a culture that derides your menstrual cycle, than to your own body. I get that. For a long, long time, it was like that for me. And so maybe you like many of us were not paying attention. But now you are. Menopause calls you to attention, and Surgical Menopause has a fierce call all of her own.

Part of you must die, so part of you can grow. You must make this journey. You know that now. Surgical menopause is a very powerful initiator into the depths of your unbecoming and your eventual rebirth. It may be quick, but it is no shortcut. There are no shortcuts through the forest.

During her descent, a descent She chose, Inanna asks, "what is this?" again and again, at each underworld gate, she questions what is being asked of her. And each time, she is met with the dismissive response, "Quiet Inanna, the ways of the underworld are perfect."¹¹ And she is quiet, and she does go on, for she knows that the descent to meet her Dark Sister is essential. The Dark Sister Lives in you too, is part of you, often exiled, and misunderstood. Inanna knows that she must make this journey, whatever the cost. Through Her story, and my own cycling ways, I knew this too.

¹¹ Ibid, pp 57-59.

Holding on to her threads, to the knowing that Menopause was a powerful initiator, gave me strength, it gave me something to hold onto as I navigated my way through. I had context. I had knowing that whatever happens I was held in a great story, a great and necessary story that was ultimately healing. I knew through my years of navigating the terrain of my cycle, of my rites of passage, through studying and then teaching the wisdoms of the cycles, that this Rite of Passage was a necessary and powerful initiation into my next phase of life.

So I descended through surgeries, through infections, through recoveries and more surgeries. Through the loss of my womb, my cervix, my ovaries, extra tissue and lymph nodes. And through the healing of my body, new initiations were emerging. Off the many drugs I was on in the first six weeks, I began to wrestle with the reality of the changed conditions within - physically and psychically. It was a difficult time, and yet I had voices to lean into.

In the Dark it can be very soothing to listen to stories. You can hold the thread of stories, when all else seems to be unravelling. This golden thread of Inanna's ancient and transformational story was essential to my journey. There are others too, Persephone and Demeter, Tales of the Scar Clan, Psyche, the Story of Mis, Mad Mis, the Mabinogion. Find the threads, weave them back into your life. You can listen to the stories being written on your body.

And of course, your transition is not simply the surgery, ah no, that would be far too quick a process, for something so significant as Menopause. You and me, we are in what Sharon Blackie calls, "a long brewing in the dark cauldron of transformation."¹² She is speaking of winter, and menopause is one almighty winter. There is so much that shows up in your life, so much to be reckoned with. Old griefs, traumas and rage. Like characters in an old tale, they come out of the trees, the shadows, they come to be met. And with the changed hormones, with the exultation of Follicle Stimulating Hormone and Luteinizing Hormone you are more adept at seeing.¹³ Visitors, visions they come now, through these open portals. Another gift of menopause. She is skilling you in new ways, gifting you new techniques for your becomingness.

The healing and recovery time post-surgery, or whatever medical treatment you had, is just the beginning. There is the being with all the ways in which your body and your psyche now respond to and slowly become the changed conditions of you.

The portal of illness, that time in between when you are not here, nor there, nowhere really, is another profound opening. After one of my earlier surgeries I reflected that: Illness is a gateway into another way of being. Time shifts and morphs. This is the realm of magic and wonder. This is the realm of the Shaman. And here I roamed in and out of time, of sleep, of dreams, of earth.¹⁴ And it was like this again and again, at differing times through my surgeries and my recoveries.

This type of knowing is dismissed in our left brain, logical, limited culture. Do not listen to the voices that reside only in your head. Be open to all that is arising in your body/mind, in your innate knowing. Listen to your inner wise counsel. Be open to the wisdom of menopause.

¹² Sharon Blackie, *The Enchanted Life, Unlocking the Magic of Everyday* September publishing 2018 p108.

¹³ Maloney, S., *Female Hormones, Part 1*.

¹⁴ I had several investigative surgeries, the first of which led to a six week undiagnosed infection and a large haematoma. To read more of this see this link. <https://www.embodimentsdance.com.au/2017/02/02/on-illness-part-1/>

And this is a special time - for it opens you to other ways of knowing and being, ways that are perhaps more real than the norms of "out there". Ways that help us navigate the initiations of our menopause. For Menopause is its own profound healing process. She is doing you.

Down on your knees, hands in the earth you rummage through the stories of your life, findings the treasures, the stones, the broken shards, those parts of yourself you may have banished. Now you open the cellar door, enter the forest, shine a light in the dark, to let yourself see who you have hidden there, who is exiled. We all have exiled parts, how could we not in a world that largely condemns us, our feminine nature, our menstrual cycle, our sexuality, our bodies. And so we do need to be with whomever is with us in the dark. And here Stories can guide us too.

Inanna could not arise- until the *kurgarra* and *galatur* attended to the pain of Ereshkigal, the Dark Goddess, her sister/ herself. And in attending, they heard her cries, and in hearing, they echoed her cries.

Ah! Ah! My Heart she sighs,

Ah! Ah! My Heart they sigh

Ah! Ah! My Liver she sighs,

Ah! Ah! My Liver they sigh,¹⁵

This is the time to listen to the exiled parts of yourself. To have compassion for all that you are and are not. You will be called to meet the exiled parts. You may meet these exiled parts through symptoms or as I call them initiators, hot flushes, night sweats, chills, insomnia, vaginal dryness, eye dryness, osteopenia, or osteoporosis, stress incontinence, urinary retention, loss of libido, grief, rage, depression. Each of these initiators are calling for your attention. Asking you to take notice of who you are, and who you are not. What traumas have you not fully attended too? How can you be with discomfort? What are you prepared to give up? What arouses you now? What are your passions? What have you put up with, that is not of your liking? What of your liking have you not sought?

Pay attention to what your body is showing you. What might She be asking of you? Listen to the voices in the forest, and the caves. Spend time gathering the shards of yourself and maybe you can put parts back together again. But it is likely that there will be much to let go of. Menopause like our menstrual cycles, like the earth seasons, the moon phases, and the Old Stories show us that letting go, grief and loss are necessary and beautiful parts of the cycle.

And in this letting go, you can rest some more in the dark. The dark is the "all nourishing abyss." And through surgery/radiation you will have much time to rest in the dark. There is nothing to do, nothing one can do, really but rest, and trust in the body's capacity to heal. For our bodies are designed to heal themselves. Even after the surgery the medics know there is nothing more they can do. You must go home and rest, to let your body do its own miraculous healing.

Yes, this is a blessing of the "forced rest" associated with surgical menopause, and in my case with cancer. People get this, they get cancer is a huge moment in your life, they might not frame it as a rite of passage, but they do support you to do what you need for your healing, and they understand you will "go away" for a while, usually hospital, and then once at home, they get you are still

¹⁵Wolkstein, Op cit, p66

“elsewhere” while you heal. They don’t demand or expect much from you, except to heal. Friends and family generally understand that you will be changed and will return somehow different.

And menopause is a going away and a return.

We hope that each menopausal woman is given the opportunity to go away, for she will travel, she will descend, but too many do it while still working full time, mothering, caring for aged parents, feeling pulled in the outer realms, rather than giving themselves over to the inner realms, to the Mystery. Menopause is a Mystery Teacher. She is Mystery, so you must find some time and way to bow to the Mystery. Or maybe just maybe you will be forced.

Menopause is a deeply powerful inner journey. No matter what is happening on the outside, the animating and decaying forces are deep at play within you. And this journey, surgical or otherwise still takes years. Who ever read a story that was over in a day, or a week, or a month, or even a year? Usually it is seven years, or perhaps three, either way it’s a significant amount of time. You need to gift yourself time to be with this process. Menopause like all births, takes as long as it takes. There is no rushing it. No rushing the severance, the descent, or return. There is nothing to do but to be with your whole self, so use this time, not to do anything but simply to be with yourself, your whole self. Be with yourself as you navigate the severance, the descent, the return. Listen to the wisdom of Menopause as She works herself through you.

My lowest point yet came at a time when I thought I was walking a path to recovery. And isn’t that the way. I was three months post radical hysterectomy, and I had begun my Ex-med exercise program¹⁶. I had begun teaching again. I was peeking out into the world, and then, just then I learnt that I had to be cut open again. Yes, they would take a scalpel into my soft belly. They would open my scar and extend the incision out and up. They would perform remedial surgery on my left ureter and reimplant it into my bladder- for the surgeon had fucked up, and my kidney was dying.

Bereft, utterly bereft. I had nothing to give at this point. Absolutely nothing. I could not be anything for anyone. And I felt that deeply, that cutting away, of everything, but especially of my ability to mother. I had nothing to give.

And yet there was the tiniest glimmer of recognition, a knowing that Inanna had walked this path. And this was a golden thread, a single strand which I clung to. She had to give up everything of herself. Every aspect of her identity was surrendered: the *shugurra*, the crown of the steppe, the lapis beads from her neck, the double strand across her breast, the royal robe, the breastplate, the golden ring over her wrist, and the lapis measuring rod and line. All the things that signified who she was, as Queen of Heaven and Earth, were relinquished. And I lent into her as I howled with grief. What was there to do but fall into my grief?

And so I went again, naked and bowed low. In the story Inanna is killed by her Dark Sister and she is “a piece of rotting meat. And was hung from a hook on the wall.”¹⁷ I was breathing still. I was alive.

And the transition through this surgery was far easier. After all I had already navigated radical hysterectomy. I had begun finding my way, and with a stronger body and stronger mind I came through this surgery much more quickly.

¹⁶ Exmed is a best practice exercise program for people with Cancer. <https://www.exmedcancer.org.au/> This program was so important to my recovery from Cancer and my radical hysterectomy. I still exercise three times a week, doing strength based and cardio exercises, supported by my original exercise physiologist, Stephen Harvey.

¹⁷ Wolkstein, Op cit, p. 60

The Return

There comes a time when you realise that something in you has shifted. You have begun to look at yourself with new eyes. Animal eyes perhaps? Clear sighted vision is returning, in ways that are new to you. Perhaps now the Maga in you, that wise Older Woman has found her voice. Perhaps you are now listening to her. What is she asking of you? Why are you here, what is your purpose? She is not mean or cruel, no, but she is responsible. And She knows that to fully return you too will have to be fully responsible, not to others, not like you were as mother, but to your souls calling, to your own life. Now is the time. There really is no other time.

Am I returned? When is the return?

After Inanna is returned to life, and is to return to the upperworld, she is reminded that

“No one ascends from the underworld unmarked.
If Inanna wishes to return from the underworld,
She must provide someone in her place.”¹⁸

It is not simply a story of happily ever after. The cycles remain as important as ever, despite your blood now circulating internally. The wisdom of the cycles is still a wisdom to live by. Ascent and descent continue. Life and Death are given their dues.

Returned you are transformed. How does that look in you? With sharpened claws, with feathers, a tail? Is the animal body more alive in you? We are all animal. Human yes, but animal too. Part of Her Wholeness. And part of this Return is becoming more of Her, of recognising the ways we truly are woven into the web of life. And the ways we are thus responsible for protecting, supporting, enabling this web of life. We need the menopausal women to show up, to speak up, dance up, drum up, love up their embodied knowing.

As Alexandra Pope says, “You lose yourself to become a channel for the soul of the world”¹⁹. This is a deeply profound and important process, not just for you but for the world. And she is calling us now. Calling us to step into the power of the wise older woman. We need to find our voice, our stories for Her, for life and for death.

So there will be losses Perhaps like Inanna, you tell the *Gulla* to take your husband in your place, for he is no longer worthy to be your partner. Perhaps it's a part of yourself you have recognised as unhealthy. Perhaps you have tended this part, so that they no longer play out in re-wounding you. Perhaps it's more physiological. Maybe now the fluid in your body flows more freely within you, perhaps those once stagnant waters have found a new creek to flow into. Perhaps you have undammed those waters and you flow like a gushing torrent for Life. Perhaps you sit quietly with the cape of yourself firmly clasped at your shoulder.

Perhaps you only have a glimpse of who you are becoming, and like it or not, there will be more unbecoming. Arising and descending, waxing and waning, growing and dying. But you will have become more of yourself, and further cycles will be there to support you becoming more of yourself.

¹⁸ Ibid, p.68

¹⁹ Pope,A., Red school, Should Menopause be Such a Drama, 2017 www.redschool.net

You will carry the scars of your journey; you will be marked. Let your scars remind you of your capacity to heal. For scars are the body's sign of healing, of the inherent regenerative capacity of your body and you. Be proud of your scars. I wear my crown, I treasure my lines, my scars.

And me, let's just say I am still in the process of returning. The ascent takes time. It's been two years three months post my surgical menopause. Sometimes I think I am still in the initiatory period- still wandering the dark forests, but I see the path, crooked, of course. And I see my Maga Self calling me, in her quiet way. It's not even three years, so really, how could I have returned? And only the other day, I realised so much about myself, so much about knowing and not knowing, about belonging and not belonging. In that moment I felt as if I was still trying to belong to a world that will never accept me, even though there is another, storied sentient world embracing me. So I turn, as Mary Oliver would say, "to the waterfalls and the Trees"²⁰. I turn and embrace her back.

So before I depart, here are some words from women who have returned... Let us bow to those who have gone before, to their wisdom and the Teachings of Menopause.²¹ ...

Freedom, Courage, Intimacy, Reflection, Power and Authenticity.

The Maga woman "Gives no Fucks"

She is feeling the "roar of no"

"The time for being small is over."

And through it all remember, as Bene Brown says. "You were born worthy of love and belonging"²². If nothing else Menopause- surgical or otherwise is an initiation into your deep belonging to this earth, this community of beings, human and more than human. Reclaim your menopause, surgical or otherwise. For she is claiming you.

You are Maga, powerful wise older woman. You have an inner authority, and wisdom born of your years of living, and your journey through Menopause. You are welcome here. Woman, Wise and Wonderful.

²⁰ Mary Oliver, Blue Pastures,

²¹ These words were shared at one of my MoonSong Workshops by the Magas present.

²² Brene Brown., Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead