RE-ENCHANTMENT & GRATITUDE DAY

THE DECOMPOSERS & DETRITIVORES

The Sacred Art of Unmaking



The world is forever making a meal of yesterday.

A Blessing for Decomposers



Beloved Decomposers, we honor you.

With this small offering of words and attention,
may you receive our gratitude.

You who feast on the fallen,
who turn endings into nourishment,
who make a thousand beginnings
from what the world has relinquished.

We honor your patient, marvelous work
of breaking down, breaking open,
returning and renewing.

You remind us that nothing lives alone,
that every body is borrowed,
that what we call decay is also a great becoming.

May your hidden labors be seen.
May your strange beauty be celebrated.
May your appetites be nourished,
and the living communities you sustain flourish.

May we learn to relinquish what is finished,
to make fertile offerings of our endings,
to participate with gratitude in the grand metabolism.



May we remember your sacredness,
and our place in the never-ending shapeshifting of Life.

Beloved Decomposers, thank you.



Banana slugs mating

Life and Death are lovers
that can never be pulled apart…

(From "Mud Almighty" in Watershed)



“Composers make; decomposers unmake. And unless decomposers unmake, there isn’t anything that the composers can make with.”

~Merlin Sheldrake, Entangled Life

MEET THE DECOMPOSERS









MEET THE DETRITIVORES











THE GRAND METABOLISM OF LIFE

Consider the wondrous labor of all the beings
who make a living by unmaking the dead.

Fungi and bacteria, earthworms and millipedes, snails, slugs and beetles: an extraordinary community of decomposers and detritivores, feasting on the fallen and transforming the remains of yesterday into the nourishment of tomorrow.

Fungi and bacteria release enzymes that break down organic matter, while detritivores consume and fragment decaying material. Together, these indispensable kin help return elemental nutrients to the living world, building and replenishing the soils from which new life emerges.

Without them, the dead would accumulate, nutrients would remain locked away, and the great cycles of Life would falter.

From a certain perspective, we all live inside the stomach of fungi.

Every forest is a vast metabolic collaboration.
Every fallen leaf, decaying log, and relinquished body
becomes an invitation to the future.

The astonishment isn't that things die, but that Life has evolved so many extraordinary ways to receive and eat what dies.

Perhaps these marvelous practitioners of dissolution have wisdom to teach us about the endings in our world, about what we cling to, what we release, and what we're willing to transform.

What would it mean to participate more consciously in the grand metabolism of Life?

INKCAP ROTSCAPE

Put on your ink cap. The goo is here.






Inkcap mushrooms, including Hare's Foot Inkcap (*Coprinopsis lagopus*) and Shaggy Inkcap (*Coprinus comatus*), appear with the first rains.

They're evanescent, sometimes lasting only a day before their caps begin autodigesting, dissolving into black ink through a process called *deliquescence*.

A marvelous self-unmaking.

And not only mushrooms are losing their shape.
It has me wondering about the rampant cultural autodigestion we're living through. *A radiant Rotscape.*
Old institutions, legitimacies, and worldviews dissolving under the weight of their own contradictions.

The most ecological thing may be the composting of Empire.

But the goo isn't merely an ending. Within the dissolving mushroom, spores are already being scattered toward other beginnings.

What might we write with the ink of our unraveling?

Twenty four seven
breakfast buffet of decay—
your waste is our wealth



Precious Peridioles of Possibility

Behold the Woolly Bird's Nest Fungi!



These little saprotrophic marvels feed on decaying wood, transforming yesterday's forest into tomorrow's possibilities.

When their tiny cups open, they reveal miniature "eggs" called peridioles, each containing countless spores.

A well-placed raindrop launches these little spore vessels out into the world.

In some species, a sticky cord called a funiculus (say it, it's fun!) unfurls in flight, helping them wrap around twigs. Pretty ingenious apparatus for dispersing possibility.

And perhaps some inspiration for these Times of Trouble.



What's your mechanism of sacred sporulation?

What impossible eggs
are you incubating in the nest of you?

Time to get funky and go fungal.

A Bird's Nest Fungi Blessing

May the rain wash off the dust of us
and splash our extraordinary eggs
into the ecosystem of justice.

May we deploy our magnificent metabolic moves
for this Great Unraveling.

May we uncoil our Funicular Freakiness
to fight the putrid Power.

May we invoke our Inner Fungi
and Patron Saints of Rot
to eat away at the rotten pillars of Empire.

May our sacred spores of radical imagination
sprout from the scared and scattered scat.

May we propel our Precious Peridioles of Possibility
and get to play.

Puff puff hooray!



The Sacred Compost Pile

What needs decomposing from our previous season to nourish the next?

What if we allied ourselves with the energies of autumn, welcoming the breaking down that makes regeneration possible?

The soil of our next season can be amended with a letting go.
This applies to individuals and collectives alike.

A Practice: Life Debris
For a week, keep a small notebook or jar of paper scraps labeled *Life Debris.* When you notice an old habit, story, attachment, or inherited spell that's ready to be composted, write it down.

Perhaps it's an old identity, the reflex to be right, or an attitude you've outgrown. Don't analyze or fix it. Simply add it to the pile.

At week's end, take your collection outside. Tear the notes, and place them in a symbolic compost pile, or compost them if the materials are suitable. Ask:

What am I ready to relinquish?
What new life might this decomposition nourish?

Whisper: ***May something wiser eat this.***



What are you putting on your Sacred Compost Pile?

Make Room for Rot

Visit a fallen log or patch of leaf litter.

Who is already making a living there?

Leave some fallen leaves in the yard to become habitat.

Allow a decaying log to remain where it's safe.

Welcome the fungi, beetles, worms, and other small recyclers into your garden or neighborhood. You might even get to know some of them.

If possible, begin or tend a compost pile.

What might change if we stopped treating every sign of decay as something to clean away?

Dear Detritivore:
your voracious appetite
completes the circle



POEM

Invoke Your Inner Fungi



Recite the rotten motto
to earn the bright bloom

This era of decay,
this quiet and sometimes raucous
breaking down and going under

without which,
no glorious spring
no unblemished blossom

certainly no sunworthy fruit
or feast will come

Recite the rotten motto
to earn the bright bloom

The dirty truth is
the soil of your next self
must be amended with death

No, you didn't ask for this
Grand Intimacy—

the rules were here
when you arrived

POEM

So throw the year's dead
and dying on the heap
spelling compost in your blood
and invoke all your fungi

whispering the vows:

I will not turn up my nose
at worms

will not condescend to bacteria

will not avert my eyes
from the bloody beak
in the remains

or the dazzling black beetles of me
in their delicious decomposition

I owe them all this poem,
my life

—from *Within the Cave Something Pulses*



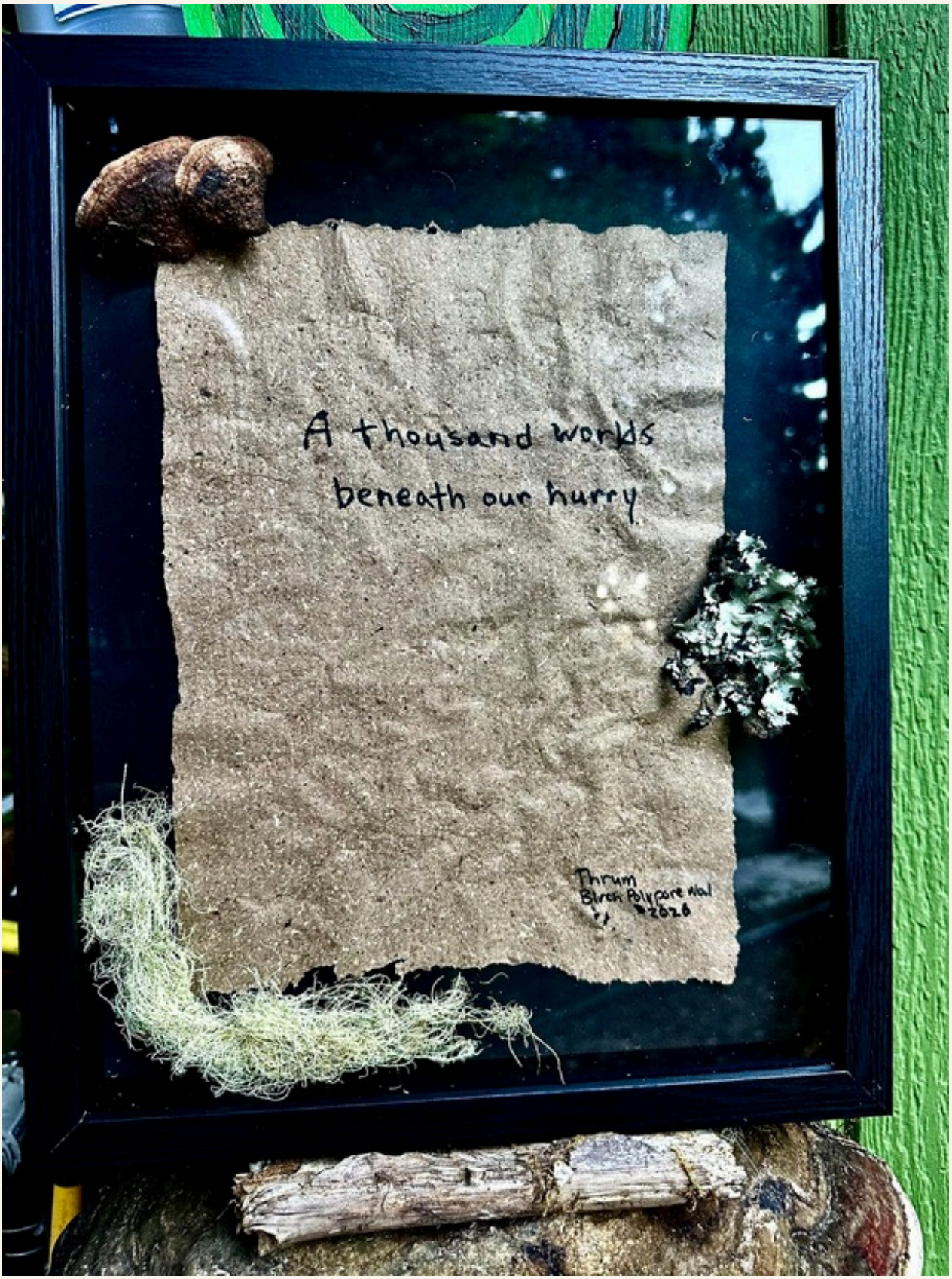
From *Becoming Beautiful Barbarians*



May we remember:

what is breaking down

is becoming the ground for something new.



Mushroom paper made with birch polypore,
accompanied by bracket mushroom and two types of lichen

FURTHER SPORULATION

Deeper into the Grand Metabolism:

- ***Entangled Life*** **Merlin Sheldrake**
- ***Dr. Fun Guy's Passport to Kingdom Fungi*****, by Dr. Gordon Walker**
- ***Teaming with Microbes*****, Jeff Lowenfels and Wayne Lewis**
- **Fantastic Fungi Film**
- **8 Essential Decomposers - YouTube**
- ***Fearless, Sleepless, Deathless: What Fungi Taught Me about Nourishment, Poison, Ecology, Hidden Histories, Zombies, and Black Survival*****, Maria Pinto**
- ***Meetings With Remarkable Mushrooms*****, Alison Pouliot**

Further Sporulation

If you feel called to slow down to notice things a little longer, these Wild Nature Heart spaces & creations flow from the same forest floors and living waters, where we continue practicing relationship with the living world and our next aligned turn.

A few places to continue:

—**Lichen & Liberation**: A gathering in symbiosis and solidarity. Coming in December in two forms: an in-person, on-the-land gathering in Humboldt County and a 2-hour online gathering. Interested? Email *programs@wildnatureheart.com* for details and updates.

—**Becoming Beautiful Barbarians**: **Composting the Spell of Empire** is a 3-month seasonal journey dedicated to liberatory imagination, composting inherited patterns, and experiments in otherwise living. Begins January 31.

—**Earth Intimacies:** A 6-week course devoted to reinhabiting the animate web of life. We deepen connection by tending sacred relationships with the more-than-human world—Water, Living Cycles, Lichen, Fungi, soundscapes, emergence, and more. Begins February.

—New earth poetry collections available now: *Becoming Beautiful Barbarians*, *Riverever*, and *Watershed*.



A Year of Enchantment

Wild Nature Heart • Re-Enchantment Day



wildnatureheart.com