

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Grief, Mixed media, paper, marker, natural fibers, and dried flowers, 2021

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Abstract

Artist statement for the cover art of IJPS Volume 10, Issue 2: *Grief*, Paper and mixed media.

Keywords: Michael Meade; Nature; Grief; Building Partnerships; Listening

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In a recent *Living Myth* podcast, Michael Meade (2023) puts forth the sentiment that facing and adequately responding to the climate crisis will take more than an ecologically focused movement – it will require us to completely transform our understanding of what it means to be a child of the Earth. He suggests this can be done through “personal experience of the Earth and of Nature’s radical openings that can happen by direct exposure to the energies of the other world, also called Nature.” That trees, birds, rocks, plants, insects, wind, and rain have their own language, knowledge, and consciousness is garnering greater appreciation in the Western world, a world that has long considered our planet something inanimate to be dominated. We need to build a new partnership with the Earth. Building partnerships in another world and way of knowing requires more than just going there. Developing the right relationship requires curiosity, wholeheartedness, ease, and letting go, so much so that it changes your very soul. I call this deep listening. In my artwork, I am bringing something through from

another world: it is an exercise in listening to understand the language and knowledge of Nature. Something elemental comes forward to be known and is shown to me as a puzzle on paper. This work, entitled *Grief*, was created the year following the unexpected death of my Mom. It represents my ongoing conversation with her after she died, and what Nature has taught me about grief and healing. The crow – known to hold death ceremonies or funerals for its kin – is protecting and making space for the heart, symbolizing the vulnerability and preciousness of our lives that become apparent when we lose those beloved to us. The river represents the tears that cleanse and refresh not only the joy and gratitude for loving and having been loved, but also the heartache of loss. Night and day, constellations and clouds, the Earth, and that which grows from it, represent change – the one thing we can rely on. Nature has taught me to respect, honor, and lovingly experience my time of grief and that of others, expressed in these life symbols – a message I am grateful and humbled to receive.

A collection of my artwork can be found on Instagram: @darkheart_skb

Reference

Meade, M. (2023, June 10). Premium episode 116 excerpt – The subtle ground of imagination. In *Living Myth* [Audio podcast]. <https://www.mosaicvoices.org/podcast>

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