



# Youth

## WORDS OF MY ANCESTORS' WISDOM

*text and images by Carly Pruett*

I have been reading tarot for the past six years and I have really loved reading tarot and have felt very connected with the cards. But this Fall I took a one night rune workshop.

I had never used runes before that point, but as the class went on I felt a very deep, age-old connection with the runes, even stronger than the connection I have with tarot. I felt a profound need to pursue this. I have viking ancestry, so the runes are in my blood.

I have a very strong relationship with my ancestors and I honor and worship them at a local cemetery deep in the forest near my house.



Recently some trees were being cleared at the cemetery including several very old cedar trees.

I left my offerings and salvaged a branch and took it home. I dried it by the fire and cut it into 3/4-inch rounds then peeled them and sanded them and painted them in a snowy winter storm while the power was out, just as my ancestors would have done.

Because of the deep wisdom of the powerful tree from the cemetery, the runes speak words of my ancestors' wisdom.



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## Comparison

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Simplified to an out of place hair  
Like wry bread she smiles  
Eyebrows set to disconcert  
Teeth sing, jaws grind  
Majestic objective  
Carefree worry  
Defend my madame  
From adolescent hair pins,  
Light that rams in all the wrong places  
Brown eyes are not similar  
Brown hair is not related  
Brown skin,  
She has white.  
But when the clock strikes three  
Mice crawl out  
Tongues loll in  
Shoulders back now  
To hide the misery of wealth  
Comparison, if you will  
These two fine ladies on a stormy  
day  
Forget not, the turquoise necklace  
That covers skin of metal  
Lips of crimson, chin of corners  
Blue against brown  
White against white  
Who's to say which is to be  
More aesthetically pleasing  
When all I see is slave  
And owner  
Love and hate  
Compassion and remorse  
A whip shatters bones like glass

A scream claws at ears, digging in  
Like a wound that will remain  
Bleeding, open  
Termites gnaw for wood  
And this is what happens when brown lies still on the dirt  
She fades.  
Tilted face shows no misery,  
Cornered eyes search,  
In the distance, they wait  
For a photographer to take a shot  
So for one second they can pretend  
Nothing is real.  
But we all wake up sometime,  
With the flash, eyes open  
I did what I could.

*by Maya Litauer*



*Artwork by Monieka • Photo by RQ.*

# Youth

Your knees ripped out from under you,  
Shaking convulsing trembling crumbling,  
Your breath heaves barely tearing through,  
Your collapsed closed choking lungs.  
Sifting waters turning the rolling tides,  
Of seventy-five percent of you,  
Pouring down, crushing drowning in large sighs,  
A harsh cleansing of the undeserving slums.  
Beaten, broken and battered you lie,  
A dark chasm of your heart cracked,  
Now leaking the poison kept secret inside,  
Seeping into the rest of you from toes to gums.  
"How could I let it escape?!" you scream,  
Too late the greed has infected and begun to kill,  
You wonder, is this the American dream?  
As you lay quietly after the quake.

— by Hilary



Photo by Amy Breeds

# Youth

## Doctor Help Me Sleep...

by Natalie Mogg

He says Doctor help me sleep, because when I close my eyes, all I can see is the wallpaper. My breath won't look me in the eye and my tongue is bone-dry dead against my gritty teeth.

He is hoping for something closer to the horse tranquilizer end of things than she is likely to prescribe (judging by the soft weather-worn fabric look around her brown eyes and the smell of sand dollars clinging to her office).

The doctor steeples her fingers with the kind of fatalism someone else might use to build a house. She is the perpetual stranger. People are mere scenery, props for positioning around the stage of her mind. She draws in everything she sees, pastes it on the insides of her eyelids, makes it a part of herself.



Witchwear by Athena Knowles. Photo by RQ.

Most people, when they meet her, begin to believe in magic. She has harbored a tooth for the forbidden since her first day (it still attracts her tongue to it like an open sore). A shrine to warm sweet darkness, an altar that she cradles always in her mouth- It's the only thing keeping her here. In the morning, she turns the key in the door and says, "This is freedom."

Most people, when they meet her, begin to lose faith in words. She pulls out a pad of paper and writes: Just like swimming will help you to breathe, music will teach you silence.

Go wash yourself in the rushing Nile

(Forget that you are sick)

go cleanse yourself in the muddy Nile.

(or even better, rejoice in your decaying limbs)

You are not ill  
only dying  
so make your wanting  
an act of becoming  
Swim.

Satisfied with her hand-scrawled message, she leaves.

The patient takes the slip of paper, thin and yellow, crinkling to the sound of autumn, and steps outside.

The Nile is pouring down from the sky.

The paper dissolves.

He supines his eyes and lays down on the unclean sidewalk and fills his bone-cavities with the contagious rushing and catches hypothermia and sleeps.