

*Magical
Writing*
with Ariel Gore

**LIT KIT
COLLECTIVE**



literarykitchen.com

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Now as to magic. It is surely absurd to hold me “weak” or otherwise because I choose to persist in a study which I decided deliberately four or five years ago to make, next to my poetry, the most important pursuit of my life . . . If I had not made magic my constant study I could not have written a single word of my Blake book, nor would The Countess Kathleen have ever come to exist. The mystical life is the center of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write.

—W.B. Yeats



Welcome to Magical Writing

We gathered in the Literary Kitchen to experiment. *What might happen if we married the occult with the creative?* I shared instructions for the exercises I use in my own writing to tap into magic, to allow for chaos in my plots, and to channel spirits who want to help.

We endeavored to trust the ghosts who showed up, to trust our own subconscious, and to let our rational minds take a back seat. There was no “wrong” way. We practiced good boundaries, and gave ourselves permission to say “no” to unwanted stories that showed up.

We began by drawing our muses for this work, and building altars to our writing. We checked in with one another. We felt inspired.

—Ariel Gore

Altar by Carolee Gilligan Wheeler



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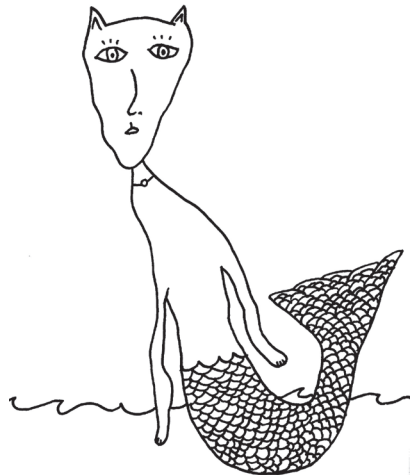
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They have Never Been So Unconcerned

Alley Hector

Eight of pentacles, Nine of cups, Two of cups, The Moon

They toiled daily in the mines of their own heart, survived cave in after cave in. It was a brittle, fragile place, and harsh but also felt just like tough love at times. A love so tough it might kill you, it's true, but a hard love nonetheless. The sculptures they carved from this roughness emerged from the stone behind them. Some escaped, some remained, jewels for eyes, living, breathing and dying in the wall of sediment hardened by the millennia.

They hated this place. This place of learning was a disappointment to them and they broke knuckle after knuckle on the bloodied ceiling. But one tired day they lay against their prison home and tried to curl into the softness, the crevices that exist even the hardest of substances and fell asleep to a fevered dreaming. In the morning, though you cannot tell morning from the inside of a mine, they rose with a hand continuously holding onto the walls, sliding over every stalagmite as they were compelled down a path they had never noticed before.

Love of this place they had lived forever, their home, their jail, increased with every step even as they knew it was leading someplace . . . else. The walls began to pulse with new color new warmth and

they thought they might have even seen some movement, a rhythmic breathing—the inanimate around them slowly taking in and blowing back out air, or at least presence.

By the time they finally saw that dust strewn trickle of light they knew that it was their way out and their time to go. For as long as they had lived in this prison they were a little sad to go. So they thanked the goddess for the tattoos, the scars that would forever accompany them on their journey forward as a memory of this blessed, terrifying place that had molded so many stone stories that could be remembered, as long as they were written on the body.

Now they fly on a platform. Some might call it a carpet, but it is more like a raft, a duvet, a cloud. Their vehicle changes shape as they come close to the ground, spreads out as they rise higher into the sky, the thinner air making them tipsy and light headed. It is this way that they can think best, though it might also be why they have the worst memory of any of their loved ones. Smells, feelings remain but details drift away on the subtle wind that surrounds them always.

“Where am I going?” they wonder. They are so curious even though they remain unconcerned. They have never been so unconcerned. Because their usual wheels are not rooted to the ground, they don’t have to follow any of the trodden paths. It is total freedom. But even hovering above they acknowledge the wisdom of those who built these footpaths. Animals, ancestors, conquerors all followed at some point, leading to joy and death alike. So they follow many of these roads. Only at a crossroads do they veer off completely into the sky leaving behind any site of the lines on the earth, covered as they are by levels of cumulus, nimbus, and their own enveloping traveling chamber, spaceship, flying car. Even this is malleable, amorphous.

But it flies over a very real, corporeal earth. When they descend they recognize nothing and are delighted by these new rocks that jut

out so brazenly, openly, reflecting thousands of years of hot beating sun. Now their feet must carry them the rest of the journey. Sure, you could just call it a hike, but they have cloud sneakers, feet blessed with the lightness of blithe, untroubled steps into the desert.

Towers, spindles of rock and sand that snake through them have led them here, to some kind of resting place, if not end. And there sparkles before them a bright blue corner flowing gently into subtle green. Round the corner and it opens up into . . . a body of water. And she really is a body, a person, whole and alone spreading herself before them. And whatever adornment they had worn, for safety, for self-expression, for conformity and nonconformity alike, had to be stripped before plunging in.

The coolness was a shock, but a welcome one, from the hot dry air. That air that they must return to so quickly, at least in part, or die. But for a few small minutes they could be submerged in her depths, cold and clean and dangerous. They swim like this for hours, days, lifetimes, exploring her boundaries, her vast beaches, that dark hidden part that sways into the walls of a cave (so familiar) and reflects her own dampness falling back into her. They do this forever, until the end of time.

But then time did end and it was time to travel on, at least for now. Their trusty raft cloud had stayed politely out of sight this whole time. An animal of ultimate love and patience, like an arm of your own heart. They remounted their trusty steed, tears of their lover streaming down their face, but also so excited to feel the wind on their skin once again, the joy of unknowing. And once these shiny water stars reached their lips they kissed and blew them back home to their lake woman, a piece of their own salty body mixed within. “I will be home soon my love,” they said, and they sincerely hoped it would be true. ★

About the Magical Writers

Alley Hector is a writer, journalist, poet, spoken word artist mashup who writes about adventure, technology, culture, and creating radical history in Portland, Oregon. You can find tales of her adventures and links to more of her work at her website, www.outandabout.space

Amanda L. Andrei is a playwright whose work centers around young women navigating strange worlds—whether hostile or charming, catastrophic or whimsical—and how those women come into their own power. She likes rabbits, the color red, and fresh pots of rice.

Amanda Gilby is a grateful writer recapturing magic at midlife.

Ariel Gore teaches Magical Writing and other workshops in the Literary Kitchen. Check out the class schedule or subscribe for Saturday Morning Writing Prompts at literarykitchen.com.

Carolee Gilligan Wheeler writes, draws, makes zines, and takes walks in San Francisco. She is a founding member of the Elsewhere Philatelic Society, a volunteer librarian at the Prelinger Library, a bookmaker, and a bookseller.

Debi Knight Kennedy lives, works, makes magic, and lots of other fun stuff in the wilds of rural Alaska.

Finn Jogen is queer, trans, and Buddhist. He does spreadsheet magic by day and tells stories by night.

Jenna Fox is a queer adoptee witch trying to be a good ancestor while raising biological descendants. She is a teacher, tarot reader, and writer who's been published in *Mutha Magazine*, *Hip Mama*, *Off-beat Mama*, *Priestess & Hierophant*, *Unchaste Anthology*, and *Salty*.

Jenny Forrester is the author of *Narrow River, Wide Sky: A Memoir* and she hopes readers of the Rural West will find it in the libraries nearby. Find her writing, podcasts, and news at jennyforrester.com and on Instagram at [jenny_forrester](https://www.instagram.com/jenny_forrester) and at unchastereaders.com.

JJ Johnson is a writer, yoga therapist, and single mama trying to live an authentic life in increasingly automated Seattle. She encourages everyone to seek out everyday magic.

Laraine Herring's work most recently appeared in *Vice-Versa*, *K'in*, and *Quiet Storm*. She's the author of three novels and four nonfiction books, including the award-winning *Writing Begins with the Breath: Embodying Your Authentic Voice*. She lives in Arizona with six cats. Find out more at laraineherring.com.

Leah Ida Harris is a writer and mother living in the Washington, DC area. She fully believes in the magic of words and their ability to conjure worlds we need.

Nicole Phoenix is a restless midwesterner, taking road trips every chance she gets. As a recovering poet, she is currently writing fiction, memoir and a hybrid of the two. Nicole draws from her life experiences of trauma, teen parenting, and bipolar. In her free time, she can be found near the ocean.

Lori Dewender is a writer, weaver, and programmer based in Colorado. Ms. Dewender is at work on *Blade: Growing Up on Edge*, a reverie cast into Ms. Dewender's early experience as a figure skater and the effects of her family's hidden history.

Rebecca Fish Ewan, founder of Plankton Press, is a poet/cartoonist/writer/zinemaker. Her hybrid work appears in *Punctuate*, *Brevity*, *Hip Mama*, *Under the Gum Tree*, *Crab Fat*, and *After the Art*. She grew up in Berkeley and now lives with her family in Arizona. She makes *Tiny Joys* zine, and has two books of creative nonfiction, *A Land Between* and her new memoir, *By the Forces of Gravity*.

Steph Patzlaff lives in Oakland, California, where she is frequently trapped under-cat or at the beck and call of two small dogs. She wrote her first novel at age ten, which chronicled her imaginary adventures as the manager of British pop group Duran Duran.

Having left her pesky job, **Sue Moshofsky** hopes to write more, now that time is less marginal, but she will not rely on Siri. Her writing has most recently appeared on *The Manifest-Station*, *Grown and Flown*, and *Brain, Child*. Read more at susanvaughanmoshofsky.com.

Susie Bright is a hungry student of The Literary Kitchen. Her latest book is *Santa Cruz Noir*.