

# SageWoman

*Celebrating the Goddess in Every Woman*



## Sacred Lands

A Night on Glastonbury Tor · Danu: The River is Flowing  
Earth Angel · Fairyland in a Factory Town  
Ancient Mothers of Loch Lomond

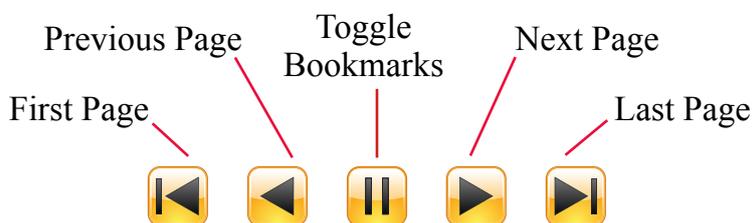


*Magazines that feed your soul and liven your spirits.*



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## where the river springs from the mountains

I have always loved the wild places. Growing up in central Oregon, I rode the bus back-and-forth between home and school, a clear view of Mount Jefferson and Mount Hood before me. Each morning I sang to them while waiting for the bus, and each night I waved good-bye to them as I went back home.

I learned the stars of our wide open sky: my mama taught me to recognize all the constellations she knew. In summer, we camped at the high mountain lakes my fly-fishing daddy loved: I treasured the silence of the woods, the sound of the rivers, and the songs he sang just before the Coleman lantern gave its last blue flash in our tent.

ARTICLE BY NADYA KING

ARTWORK "GYHLEPTIS"

BY HRANA JANTO

After graduation, I left for college in the Willamette Valley, where stayed for the next twenty years. I raised kids, learned massage therapy and herbalism, gardened, and generally lived a town life with occasional forays into the woods with my botanist hubby.

Then came the divorce, the kids growing up, and living again on my own. All this time in the valley I had longed for my mountain home, but something always got in the way of returning there. So when the opportunity came to take a live-and-work position at Breitenbush Hot Springs, I eagerly took the plunge.

This wasn't my first encounter with Breitenbush: decades earlier, my Dad's older brother Bill King and his wife had worked there one summer. We stopped by the springs for a quick visit and a tour on our way to visit a different uncle down in Monmouth. My diary entry for that day shows that we stayed for about an hour — just enough time to hook me. I loved the little stream between the lodge and the sauna, and I looked longingly at the kids playing in the swimming pool, thinking, "I could learn to swim there!"

Throughout the rest of high school, I petitioned my folks to stop over at the hot spring whenever we passed by it on a trip through the Cascades, but my longings remained unfulfilled. I loved being in nature when we went camping, but I wasn't as enthusiastic about the chores those trips entailed: the brisk cold mountain nights in an unheated tent, the perpetual set up and take down, hauling water from a pump and boiling it over an open fire. But my parents didn't share my enthusiasm for paying extra to stay at some "resort" up the road from Detroit, miles away from the fly-fishing campgrounds. My dad would grumble, "Uncle Bill doesn't work there any more, and I don't even think that place is still open," and that was that.

I never forgot that summer afternoon and as an adult, returned to Breitenbush on my own. The years had been kind, and it was as wonderful as I had remembered. At the hot springs, I had the joy of being in the mountains, only a few miles from the glaciers on Mount Jefferson, but baths in the hot water lovingly heated by our warm Mama Earth. I loved how the dark clear skies made it possible to see the stars throughout the year. I'd bask in a hot pool and sing to the open sky, feeling my Uncle Bill's quiet presence as I watched the wheel of the Big and Little Dippers roll by.

Back at my home in the valley, I began making flower essences, and studied Tai Chi and Reiki. I sometimes dreamt of being a plant, and would feel called to gather flowers to make the essence of the flower I had been in my dream, and soon I built up my own flower essence pharmacy.

I began spending more and more time at Breitenbush. I attended a Reiki gathering, and began teaching the staff Reiki as well. I was asked to offer a Tai Chi class as a Well Being program over the winter holidays, and soon I began offering weekly classes.

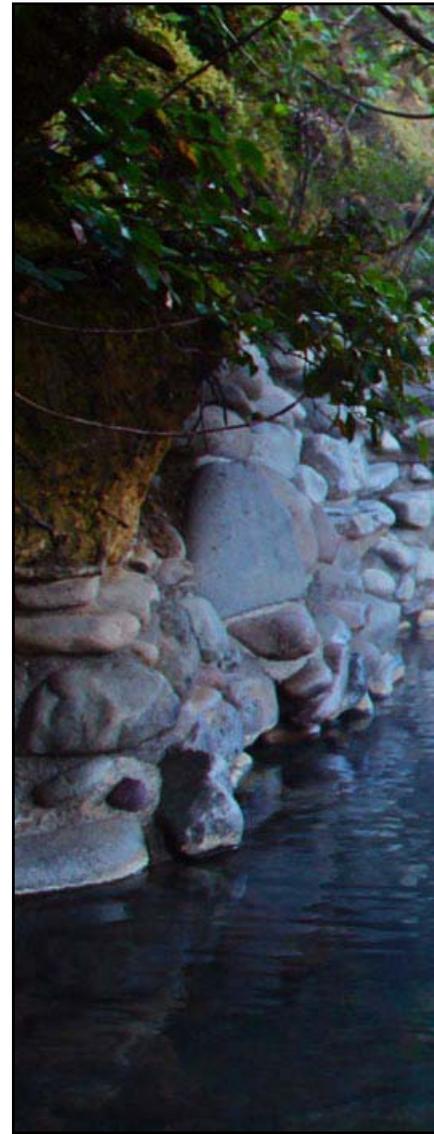
Finally, I was offered a full-time position: I could actually move to Breitenbush full-time. I moved in, and quickly fell fully in love with the rushing river: singing quiet then singing loudly, constant, yet constantly changing. On my daily commute across the footbridge, I would take a moment to release my pain, cares, and sorrows (both of my clients and myself) while I looked downstream. Then I'd turn and look upstream to the ridge, to the sunrise, and feel myself fill with joy.

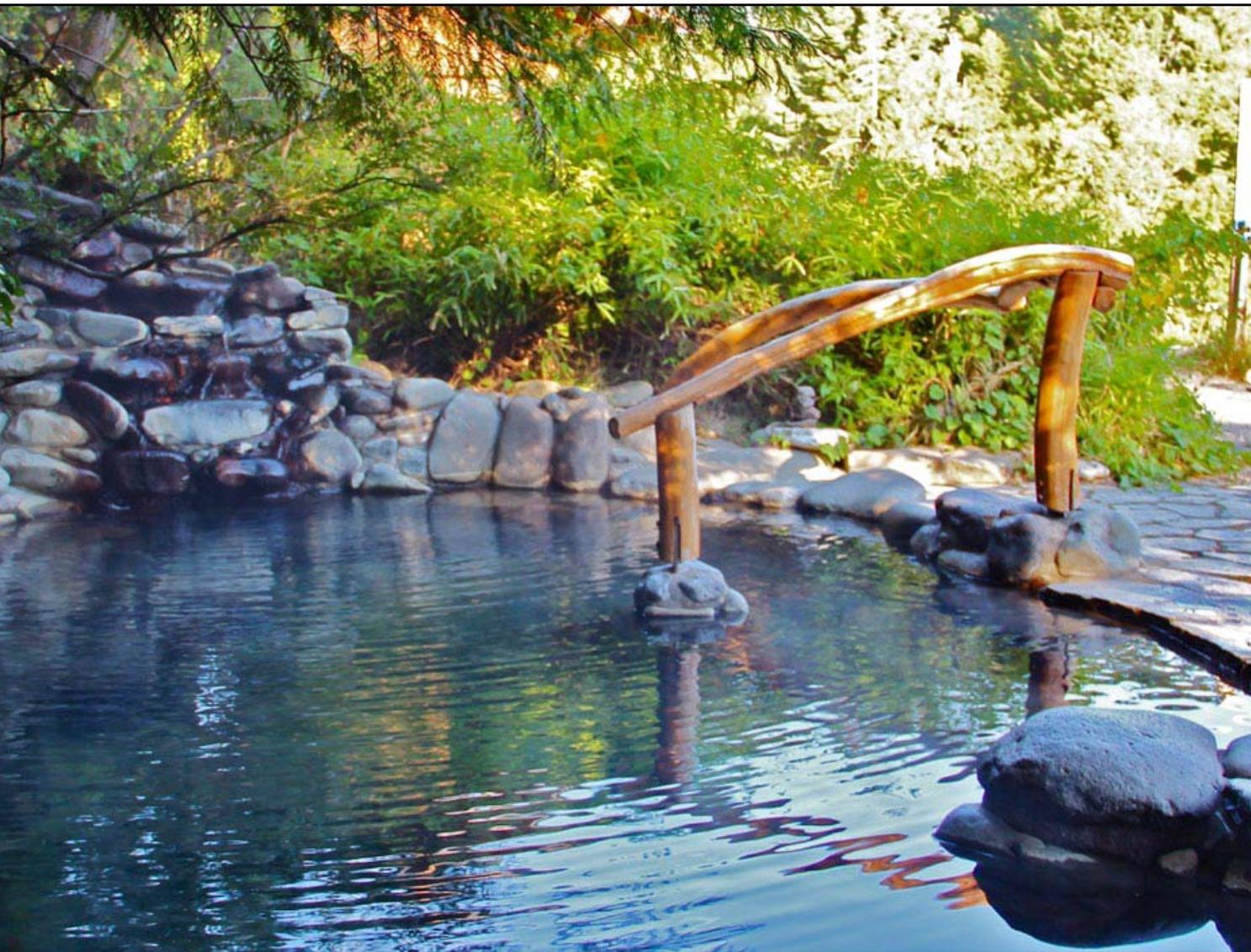
I loved the return of my natural clock, and, to my surprise, I could generally feel the time even without a watch or a cellphone. Do I have time for a sauna before breakfast? Yes, just! Is it about time for the lunch bell? Yes!

The wildlife of the mountains seemed to welcome me home: once a deer stood close by as I held a class on the lawn by the kitchen, and I often saw them grazing outside the windows of Vista, the Healing Arts house. Several times, I saw a bobcat trotting by, often watched osprey flying above the river, and heard the occasional owls and the little birds that abound in the woods.

I danced skyclad under the moon and stars that first summer; walked the land even at night without artificial light, and, more mundanely, got myself a pair of really sturdy winter boots. I breathed in the mountain air, ate the wonderful meals, and learned to appreciate the luxury of living in a warm house with a sturdy roof.

My mom and dad both visited me that summer: we all recalled driving across the old bridge, parking on the lawn in front of the lodge decades earlier. My mom was seventy-nine at the time of that visit and using crutches from childhood polio, but she still stayed in a cabin, walked to the lodge and climbed the steps to





*Middle Meadow Pool at Breitenbush.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF BREITENBUSH HOT SPRINGS

take a meal. She and her brother Allen had visited back in the 1930s, and she remembered the big fireplace in the North Wing of the Lodge.

The next summer my dad passed on, but stayed close by for a time. One night while sitting in the far meadow pool, I found myself looking up and was surprised to see my father's profile in the clouds. (A vision shared by my sweetie who was also in the same pool at the time.) Months later, I ordered a folk harp and began learning to play it. My dad and I often sang together and sometimes I feel that he's humming along as I play.

Several years passed with a dizzying circle of dances and workshops, a constant flow of staff and guests coming and going. We smudged the land (and each other) stacked rocks, made prayer flags, laughed, cried, sang, worked, and played.

Eventually, I felt Spirit ask me to make room for someone else at the sacred springs. I was one of the first visiting "fill-in" therapists at Breitenbush, and in the twenty years since the river sent me on, I've repeatedly returned to fill that role again.

Even though I no longer live there, I still feel called by the River and the Mountain. Every time I return, the ravens welcome me home, sweeping above me as I walk down the road toward those amazing, wonderful springs. ☺



*NADYA KING is an artist and healer, mentor, dancer, singer, harpist, wild woman and sage living in McMinnville, OR. She's often in the garden, painting, hanging out with her grandkids or sipping herb tea. Visit her website at <http://ladyharper.com>.*