

BELONGING

REMEMBERING OURSELVES HOME

Ancestral Longing

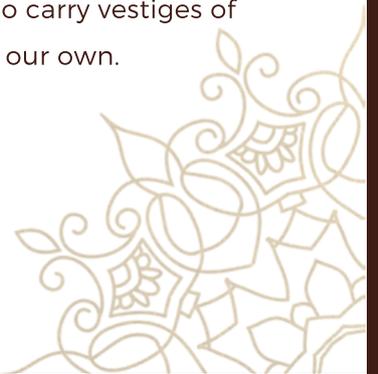
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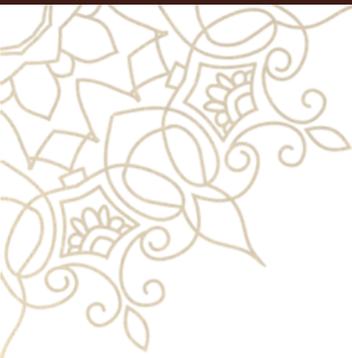
It's a fundamental mistake to believe that unbelonging begins with the self, because although we are stewards of this perpetual missing, it did not begin with us. Our first experience of unbelonging is like a pattern in our substrate which, like rocks in the soil, causes everything to grow awkwardly around it. Tracing our longing back to its origins, reconciling it to its history, is an important step to healing belonging forward.

This missing has been passed on, gaining in momentum through the generations, starting with an actual exile of your people's people. Perhaps when your village was made to flee from the humble patch of land to which they were promised, separated from the faces that looked like their own, distanced from the secret ways in which they were attuned to and praised beauty. Maybe they were once a people made proud by their numbers and shared identity, a compendium of songs and myths and an unrequited debt - the cherished kind - which kept them bound to the holy, which showed them how to walk on the earth knowing their magnificence.

Perhaps your people were broken apart by the betrayal of your own brothers and sisters, your elegant compendium suddenly and irreparably scattered into anonymity, forced away from the wealth of togetherness, given a nameless, placeless status: slave, immigrant, refugee. Of course there is a triumph in surviving, and new stories to be made of how a new home is hard-won, how a family can be made of strangers. But like any great grief that never goes away, we must learn instead to live with it, often for many generations.

The convergence of ancestral momentum into a single body can be both confounding and liberating. On one hand, if we trace our history, we may find a sense of purpose in reuniting with what our ancestors loved and we're longing for. On the other hand, we may also carry vestiges of their trauma and embittered hopes in our blood stream and mistake it as only our own.





'BELONGING: REMEMBERING OURSELVES HOME'

Toko-pa Turner

An inherited alienation may live in us like an invisible condition, haunting us with feelings of unbelonging, causing us to absent ourselves from life in various ways, but never showing its true face. Sometimes we glimpse the origin of these patterns in our parents or grandparents who never evolved out of their identification with the Outcast archetype, assuming their own rejection before they even ventured to participate in community. We may also recognise our own tendency to distance ourselves, dwell in alienation, believe that we are unwanted wherever we go. But consider that these strategies have deeper origins than your life alone.

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We are the expression and extension of a long line of survivors. Our lives are but a continuation of all those who came before. And though many perished, your people didn't. They saw and lived and endured and their resilience is your true inheritance. In this way, their wounds are our own, in that it is always up to us to turn the salt of bitterness into the salt of wisdom. It is liberating to consider that when we heal an ancestral pattern, we are healing backwards through time, liberating all those souls who were left unresolved, unforgiven and misunderstood.

In the beginning of the world, there was longing. Only in this state of missing, of absence, can life be drawn into itself. Like the womb which is an empty vessel waiting for the seed of life, longing is the force that pulls potential towards it. Rather than a thing to be tolerated or gotten rid of, longing should be venerated as the elemental gravity that attracts towards us the life and world we want for ourselves.

May all those who are being re-remembered in your personal journey of belonging feel the great relief of love come alive in your reunion with longing. May their dignity be preserved in our care of one another, and may all our relations be fortified in our not forgetting,