

OCTOBER EDITION

BUZZING

WITH...

***How storms make trees
take deeper roots***

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As Latine and Hispanic Heritage Month fades out and LGBTQ History Month makes its way, we collectively celebrate the lives and efforts of those who came before us and got us to this moment. With respect to those who have lived through life's challenges long before us, I personally take this moment to honor and celebrate my queer, trans, and Mexican ancestors.

In my culture, the tradition of Día de los Muertos is a day to remember our dead. Their legacies continue to be passed onto future generations in this way, and their stories serve as lessons for the living. It is no coincidence to me that it happens during this time of year when we are watching life fade into death as seasons shift. As difficult as it is to grieve – be it our loved ones or even previous versions of ourselves – we somehow naturally, even joyfully, embrace the cycles of life, death, and

change in the world around us. So, we savor the last blooms of summer roses. We embody the spirit of the harvest for self-reflection as the calendar year's end draws ever closer. We admire the leaves changing color and falling from the trees (or whatever version of that applies here in South Carolina) before winter's chill sets in.

Our ancestors adapted to and were shaped by harsh environments. An environment is everything that influences a living being and the relationship between how that being is affected and how it chooses to respond. Our ancestors' trauma responses, in many cases, kept them alive and, in some cases, led them to safety. They seared the experience into their memories and passed on what they learned by writing our DNA so that we could be able to withstand almost anything.

Our ancestors continue to guide us. For many of us, we move forward because of them. We care for ourselves, our loved ones, or our communities based on their wisdom – whether we are aware of it or not (epigenetics, anyone?) Nonetheless, generational resilience is a medicinal byproduct of generational trauma; it heals the very thing that ails us.

Safe spaces are far and few in between. Seldom are those of us living “in the margins” allowed to grieve, to process, to be. As a child, I would run away to a nearby magnolia tree as a space for refuge from the ongoing, overlapping traumas I was experiencing. This magnificent magnolia tree's overhanging branches offered me a dome of invisibility and seeming invincibility. Although the tree from my childhood neighborhood that inspired these words is also an ancestor now with only its wide roots remaining in the soil after the rest was cut down, the memory of this tree still lives in me. The years I spend patiently earning my rings of growth will hopefully be the ones during which I remember the lessons from many storms weathered and droughts endured.

From Under the Magnolia is a space shaped by words.

As you read, I encourage you to breathe, meditate, feel, heal, imagine,
and manifest a world filled with protection and hope.

Read the whole poem, or a few lines.

Root into yourself and allow for growth.

From Under the Magnolia

*From under the magnolia's dark green leaves,
I saw Her. For the first time I recognized a face
Of someone who wasn't familiar; I was
Comforted by a stranger. She showed me
A vision that would one day become mine.
I was 5; She was ageless.
We danced and told secrets and
I walked along her roots
Until the street lights came on.
Then I'd be gone, only to return to her
Branches' embrace, coming to know her divine face
Day after day. Like it was my own. She told me that I
Was a warrior; She told me that I*

*Would never be alone; that my own roots would always
Guide me home; that my mind contained
Knowledge that I didn't yet know; that through me
Healing love and creation could flow, in and out.
I didn't know what it meant, but I knew She meant well.
I didn't see her for many years. Until:
After 17 rotations of the sun, after thinking
All I was was said and done, She returned to me
In a dream. I was
Down and out, seeping self-doubt.
I looked upon Her face but saw my own:
She said to me*

"Come in through the leaves. Sit at my roots.

*Look at me: look at my blooming flowers that will soon
wither;*

*Look at my deep, entangling roots, that have held on for
many storms;*

Look at my leaves, evergreen, but always growing.

I am proof things remain but there is no way that

You will stay the same. You will yield to change.

To feel joy amid all the strange

*Is a feeling you cannot feign,
A feeling foreign to your brain
There is no way it will sustain. But, find peace
Knowing that your soul's moonlight won't cease
As the same light was never extinguished in
All those who came before you:
Your magic is ancient. Your roots are deeper than
Any pain you may be feeling now. You carry within you
A potent medicine, passed down to you in your life's
blood,
From mothers, midwives, magicians, mighty warriors
Who bore you, who birthed the essence of who you are,
And are becoming yet.
Like you, I, too, was once a sapling, just beginning to
feel
Our great mother's earth, not yet knowing what it could
offer.
She ensured my growth was not stunted; that I was not
lost in the forest.
For every snap of a branch, there have been ten more
that grew;
For every season I went without, my blooms doubled the
next.*

*It is not in your mind's eye now, but it will be:
The day when you come to know Her as you know me,
The day you fuse your old and current selves, to meet
Who you will become:
The past, present, and future selves as one
Fluid transition to your newfound position
Giving recognition to all parts: those without and within
To strive, to seek, to dream
May you never lose steam
To achieve, to fight for what you believe
To pursue all things with hope, all things
With love, in service to below and above.
Illuminating dark spaces, to seek familiar faces
In unlikely places and cherish the embraces
That you may never feel again.”*

*And She is gone. The coolness of the air, not Her branches,
Wraps around my shoulders
Much of what surrounds me serves only as a placeholder
For the connection that yields direction.
The signs and prayers could all just be deception*

*But is believing in something not better than despair?
It's a game of Lotería, but it keeps matters fair
But magic and all is coming, with no shortage in sight
And I can change the course of fate if I will it.
Still, for now, the Fool's fortune is greater than my own
What power can I possibly conjure when I'm all alone?
I am left with only my intuition and sheer volition
That's wearing thin, but I'll search for more within
Even if nothing is revealed, even to examine my scope of field
It may yet yield all which is past and now healed.
I remember the pact we made when I was five,
But, oh, how much harder it is now to keep hope alive.
I'll continue to dream
even when I've lost all steam,
even when the light narrows to a single beam.
I'll continue to hope
even when the Universe says nope,
even when I'm seeing only a limited scope.
I'll continue to pray
even if I don't know if I'll see another day,*

even when the response is after much delay.

I'll continue to dance

even if I'm not granted a deserved chance,

even if my moment's magic fails to entrance.

I'll continue to create

even if I share my art too late,

even if my efforts are met with hate.

Magnolia's gaze reminds me of my earth's view

This vantage point above it all

But keeping close to those I'll care for

Nurturing with compassion and intuition,

Healing by soft light,

Providing others with gentle protection,

Remembering my ancestors' loving lesson

Of rooting, and growing, from deeper within.