



**“Where would you like to begin today”?**

## **Crone, St Anne and Kuia**

**by**

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*'Ours is the late, last wisdom of the afternoon.  
We know that love, like light,  
Grows dearer towards the dark'*

Winter Grace pg 87

In Christianity, Jesus Christ was the great Spiritual Director and the tradition was carried on later by the Desert Fathers and Mothers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Centuries in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. However, having a soul friend is likely to have been an aspect of personhood and community life since the birth of the human spirit.

That its origins aren't well documented is more attributable to the fledging expansion of spiritual direction from the monastery to the market place in the last 50 years, than it is to it inherently not being so.

It is a common experience among poets, politicians, sportspeople, teenagers, Catholics, Jews, priests and paupers to have a muse, role model, hero, idol, favourite saint, prophet, mentor or benefactor as inspiration. Spiritual Director's are not immune to the need for a model to aspire to too.

To have a person or quality to aspire to acts like a magnet in the soul, drawing us to prayerfully strengthen and deepen the skills, sensibilities and experiences we gather on the journey to becoming a spiritual guide. Rumi the poet saw in Shami, his soul friend, 'a reflection of the Divine' and a muse's mysterious quality can reflect an aspect of the Divine for Spiritual Directors too.

We consciously or unconsciously chose a person, quality or an archetype as a source of inspiration for numerous reasons. Frequently because 'they touch us at the level where we most need to be touched: the very depths of our hearts' Helminski (pg xii). At other times it may be that a muse chooses us, perhaps because there is a deeper call to the soul and we don't always know how to answer that.

Soul comes from the Latin word *anima*, which is feminine and the psychologist Jung said that 'we desire above all things (sic) the rediscovery of the feminine, a heartfelt inner tenderness and the faculty of intuition'. Mullen (pg. 3).

Perhaps that is why I have chosen to present the feminine archetype of 'wise woman' as personified by crone, St Anne and kuia as one of a myriad of potential muse's an aspiring spiritual director may have along their journey.

Together we will share their stories and experiences.



## Crone

*I am Macha; it is you who call me crone.*

*I have lived to see my flesh give birth  
And have been there to celebrate  
Girls become women, women become mothers  
And mothers become crones.*

*I have mourned both husband and sons  
The cycle of the waning moon and the fallow ground,  
I have seen emptiness of seed and soul  
And at each passing I have surplus fruits to share.*

*I am stiller now than I have ever been  
I am now part of the seasons too.  
My heart is like a cauldron in the hearth  
Come and share all that is sacred with me.*

*And from the cauldron my blessing for you is  
That we reclaim the vow of Poverty  
And consider a virtue of Emptiness*

*'Macha, what is emptiness for a spiritual director'?*

'And that is the difficulty as it is not something that I can tell you about, nor can you read, see or touch it.... but you can play with it'.

*'What do you mean?'*

'Emptiness is a quality of experience and I can't give you an experience, I can't even describe it very well. At one time I could have sung it for you, but I lost my voice some moons ago, perhaps.....'.

*'Perhaps.....'*

'.....if I tell you how I came to know it.....

When I was young, in this town here my family lived just over the field from Neve, the midwife at the time. Neve was in her 30's when she caught me and it was some 20 year's later when I first assisted her at a birth. Neve and I worked beside each other for many years until she was too old to stay out so long at night and she had passed on all that she knew.....

All that I know about emptiness I learnt from being with Neve, from being with women as they gave birth, from keeping the moon and solstice rituals to the Triple Goddess and from my times alone.....

From being with Neve I experienced tremendous warmth, depth, fortitude, patience and silence as she went about her work of catching all who were born to women in the town. With Neve you learnt by osmosis, watching all that she did, all that she said, observing how she managed difficult births, simple births, the different prayers and invocations she said depending on the time of the season or the moon.

From being with women giving birth I learnt how to create a place where mothers could trust, feel safe, and be with the natural forces moving through them. I also saw what happened when they held their breath against the pain and I experienced that neither way ensured that the baby would live to take its first breath.

From keeping the moon and solstice rituals I experienced great devotion, gratitude, fire and love for first of all Inanna, then Demeter and now Hecate. I learnt much about time, the seasons, the comings and goings and that everything does indeed have its place and is sacred – be it seed, fruit or in decay.

Ahh and from my times alone.....

..... I remember so well the times I would go to the pool at the bottom of the waterfall and swim there, lying on my back with the sun speckling through the leaves to warm my body and soul. Indeed it was my soul that was warmed ..... I would invoke She and ask that I be emptied of all my dross, of my pains and joys, of my words and deeds, of my desires, my intentions, my passions..... so that I could receive Her and Her alone.

And over time that has happened.....

Oh, of course I still do everything that I always did, although my time as a midwife is almost over. But I do it all now with a deep sense that it is not I, but She who does it all through me'.

*'You said that I could play with it?'*

'Oh yes you can.

That is because it is not so much what you do but how you do it..... not so much who you are but that you are.....

So play heartily!'

## St Anne



*I am Anne; it is you who call me Saint,  
Patron of grandmothers and midwives.*

*I was betrothed to Joachim and  
Together we gave birth to Mary.  
At three we took her to the temple and it was  
'As if she were a dove that dwelt there'.*

*When Mary came of age she was betrothed to Joseph  
And, through faith, I became a grandmother to her son.  
We lived together sharing the household tasks  
And partaking in the Hebrew rituals and prayers.*

*Oh my joy of reading to Jesus on my lap,  
While his parents were out at work and chores,  
Or of showing him off to my friends  
As he played with his cousin John.*

*And from the cup of joy my wish for you is  
That we reclaim the vow of Chastity  
And consider a virtue of Faithfulness.*

*'Anne, what is faithfulness for a spiritual director'?*

'Oh it is so hard won and so easily lost. And there are no rules to guide us (and you know how we are with rules) other than; to be faithful'.

*'What do you mean?'*

'A rule that is not a rule, a commandment that is not a commandment, a prayer that is not a prayer, riddles - it all becomes a riddle. But..... come sit at my knee and I'll see if I can explain.

We were a happy family, Joachim, Mary, her siblings and I. But it was so much harder to be a good mother than to be a good grandmother. Mainly because much of it came down to me and I didn't always know the answer to a sickness or a quarrel and I had so little time in the day or night to give the attention that each one of the children, Joachim and God deserved and I needed that time.

Then before you know it – they are gone, at least as a son or daughter because soon they are mothers and fathers themselves. And it was being a grandmother that redeemed me. But not just the having of grandchildren, for me, it was being with Mary. As a mother you so hope you instill what is right in your children, and frequently you never know if you've succeeded or not until they are parents.

It was in Mary that my faithfulness was rewarded; however pride doesn't permit me to say all about that. I lived with Mary and Joseph until Jesus was thirteen and it was during this time that I came to not just know faithfulness but to experience and understand it.

That is because faithfulness is linked to love and oh how I loved, really loved now that I had the time and the freedom to give to it. You see I watched Jesus grow from a babe who suckled at Mary's breast and who would sit for hours on my lap to a boy who hunted swallow's nests shortly after he learnt to run, who helped his father in the fields and shop and who went up to the temple for his bar mitzvah, who .....

.....faithfulness is so painful, do you really want me to go on....?'

*'Yes, I do'.*

'Faithfulness is an ache so sweet it tears at your heart and soul at times. I watched Mary as a mother, get as tired as I used to as the demands on her day were many and tiring. But it was love for her that taught me that I couldn't always relieve her exhaustion, that at times it was that very pain that drew her closer to her own knowing, her own truth - as it had to me.

As a grandmother I watched Jesus struggle to be accepted in the games of the bigger boys, to be pleasing to his father with his strength, to not hurt me when he no longer wanted to sit on my lap, to run and hide when his mother wanted him to do something around the home. But it was love for him that taught me that I couldn't do his growing up, I couldn't make the wrongs right, I couldn't make him..... he would have to fall and fall again and learn from these.

But don't let them tell you it is easy!

From my view I saw that faithfulness was first of all to the person that Yahweh called you to be and that is a commandment that is not a commandment. Rather it is an invitation hidden in the deepest recesses of our soul that we sometimes don't discover until quite late.

I saw that faithfulness was to God, but not as we always know Him and this is a rule that is not a rule. I died not long after we took Jesus up to the temple the first time, and I saw enough to know that Jesus was following very deeply a God that we didn't yet know.....

Lastly I experienced a faithfulness beyond faith. In my last days I grew very weak and Mary looked after me with much concern and worry. Jesus, now the young man however, had a calmness about him and for hours he held my head in his lap as he whispered prayers, told me tales of what he could see from the window and recited many of the stories that I had read to him when he was young.....

and then he would stop and silence would descend  
and we would have moments of great peace together

that were Beyond.....

and we were one

So, this is my prayer; that you remain faithful.

And it is not a prayer; because faithfulness is your very being'.



## **Kuia**

*I am Pomaria; it is you who call me kuia.*

*My Whakapapa is in front of me,  
My mokopuna are behind me  
As I karanga to the dawn and the tipuna.*

*I grew up in the whare of my kui and koro  
My wananga was hui at the marae,  
Where I learnt about tapu, mauri, tangi and kawē mate  
And puha, eel, mutton bird and tea.*

*I understand the mana of Io-Matua-Kore and God  
I live with deep love for Ranginui, Papatuanuku and church  
Within me the wairua is strong.*

*And from the kete my karakia for you now is  
That we reclaim the vow of Obedience  
And consider a virtue of Tika.*

*‘Pomarie, what is tika for a spiritual director’?*

‘Well, at a school they might say that tika means; what’s right, valid and authentic and they would be correct. It is the basis of tikanga, but that is only half of it as tikanga comes from the dawn of time and permeates all aspects of our lives. It’s what makes us unique as a people.

*‘What do you mean by ‘only half of it?’*

‘What I learnt a long time ago from the old people was that our values and concepts like tika are infused with spirit from the Gods and that gives them another deeper meaning. In this way over the years I have come to have many understandings and experiences of tika, just as Kui said I would.

My Kui..... she died before my Mani was born and I was sorry about that..... called home she was, to be with her Kui and her Kui before her. I still talk to her though and she some times to me, that’s her picture over there.....

She first taught me about tika when I would help her with the washing. We weren’t allowed to wash the tea towels with the other clothes because it wasn’t tika. We would wash them on different days and I would hang them out on the line and watch them being blown dry by the wind. She told me it was because eating food was noa, particularly after a powhiri which was tapu. That you couldn’t go and wash something that was associated with noa in with underwear that clothed what was tapu. Kui taught me many things like that that I still do today, like now we have left our shoes at the door as outside is noa and in here is tapu.

Another time she taught me about tika was when we went to Karitane marae for Aunty Edith’s tangi. As you know, here at our marae we begin powhiri by the karanga and then the manuhiri come in and we hongi and then we sit down and the men korero. Well at Karitane, after the karanga we went in, sat down, the men had their korero and then the hongi. I asked Kui why it was different and she explained that what was tika for one hapu was not necessarily tika for another and that both were right.

This was hard for me to understand as a 13 year old but now I know that there is no one right way. I see that being true much of the time, particularly with my moko.....

Kahu and Hemi they changed their names and they come back and stay here even though they live in the city now. They know these walls and po of the whare tell the stories of our tipuna even when we sleep. But our Beth, she

only lives over the bay and she doesn't want to stay over here, she prefers her own bed.....

I now say kati pai, kati pai although I didn't always..... now I know both of them carry their tipuna with them and it is not for me to say how the wairua works.....

Then when Kui was sick and I was caring for her she told me once about a dream she had..... where her Kui was calling for her to come home, and her Kui's Kui and all the tipuna were there lined up going back and back .....like we do in the hongu line.....

.....back to Rangi and Papa who came from Te Ao Marama and Te Po, the light and the darkness who separated from Te Kore, the 'unlimited potential for being' inseparable from Io ..... and then Kui could see who she came from..... she could see who she was.....

And she whispered to me, "Pomaria, know and live your tikanga and your tipuna and your wairua will be like the light and the dark within you .....and you will know who you are..... and you will know Io".

So this is what I do now at the marae. I am the kaikaranga, calling our people home to this place so we can share what we know of our tikanga, what we know of our tipuna so we can know who we are. And this is tika'.

*'Macha, who I call crone  
You have nurtured me for a long time,  
When I struggled with my God  
You showed me a gentler way.*

*Anne, who I call Saint  
Not because they said you were chaste,  
But because of your hidden mystery  
And I know you lived beyond what lies.*

*And kuia, you who share this place, your place  
Your manaaki in the face of such misunderstanding,  
Is a lesson in trust and faith to me.  
Thank you, thank you, kia ora.*

## A translation of Maori words or concepts as described in Tikanga Whakaaro

Arranged alphabetically:

<b>hapu</b>	In this context, a clan
<b>hongu</b>	The act of pressing noses as a sign of life and immortality symbolizing the gods breathing into humans the breath of life
<b>hui</b>	Gathering, meeting
<b>Io-Matua-Kore</b>	The supreme Being, God
<b>kaikaranga</b>	A woman who calls the karanga
<b>karanga</b>	Woman's call of welcome onto the marae or other occasions
<b>karakia</b>	Prayer
<b>kati pai</b>	It's okay
<b>kawe mate</b>	A gesture of love and respect by a family for a relative who has died in the form of a memorial service
<b>kete</b>	Carry basket
<b>korero</b>	Talk
<b>koro</b>	Affectionate term for grandfather
<b>kui</b>	Affectionate term for grandmother
<b>kuia</b>	An older woman after she has completed her years of child-bearing and has passed the menopause. She may then have been 'chosen' to undertake priestly duties at rituals such as kaikaranga
<b>mana</b>	Is the enduring, indestructible power of the gods, of the ancestors, the land and of the individual
<b>manaaki</b>	Non-judgmental abiding warmth and acceptance
<b>manuhiri</b>	Visitors at the powhiri
<b>marae</b>	Community facilities and a symbol of tribal identity and solidarity
<b>mauri</b>	Power possessed by Io which makes it possible for everything to move and live in accordance with the conditions and limits of its existence
<b>moko</b>	In this context an affectionate term for grandchildren
<b>mokopuna</b>	Grandchildren
<b>noa</b>	That which is free from tapu
<b>Papatuanuku</b>	Mother Earth

<b>po</b>	In this context, a pole to hold up a roof
<b>powhiri</b>	Welcoming ceremony for people coming to the marae
<b>puha</b>	A green vegetable
<b>Ranginui</b>	Sky Father
<b>tangi</b>	Funeral ceremony
<b>tapu</b>	Power and influence of the gods to make something sacred and set apart
<b>Te Ao Marama</b>	The essence of lightness or the day
<b>Te Po</b>	The essence of darkness or the night
<b>tipuna</b>	Sacred ancestors
<b>wairua</b>	Spirit that belongs to all things
<b>wananga</b>	School where teaching in tikanga takes place
<b>whakapapa</b>	The genealogical descent of all living things from the gods at the present time.
<b>whare</b>	Home and also meeting house

## **Artwork:**

**Finding Mentors**, Helen Redman

**Crone**, Ellen Lorenzi-Prince, 2003

**The Virgin and Child with St. Anne and John the Baptist**,  
c 1499, Leonardo da Vinci

**Ko Mauri**, Peter Caley, 1998

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There were also numerous internet sites looked at and I want to mention  
three:

[birthingthecronehome.com](http://birthingthecronehome.com)

[newadvent.org](http://newadvent.org)

[maori.org.nz](http://maori.org.nz)

2004 was the centenary for midwives in New Zealand and to celebrate they  
had a rose named: **Wise Woman.**

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