

Earth Stories

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SYNCHRONICITY

Expansive blue watercolors the Texas sky over the meadow where we gather on this perfect fall day. This small group of people that gathers once a month at a deer ranch just west of Houston now sits in a circle listening to stories from a couple who have just returned from a trip to Peru. We hear about tales of the ruins at Macchu Pichu and the visits with the local people who share with them a story of the north and south peoples joining together to share wisdom with each other. They speak of the Condor (of South America) and the Eagle (of North America) and flying together in the sky, illustrating the connection between the peoples of both continents. Specifically, these Peruvians envision the growing relationship with our small community in the United States.

Enchanted, we close the story with a song about the Eagle and the Condor flying together. Soon after, I hear a stirring and see someone pointing to the space in the sky above the meadow next to us. We look up, astonished at the sight: a vulture (a Texas regular and relative of the Andean Condor) and a bald Eagle (a not-so-common visitor to this part of Texas) skydancing in graceful loops and spirals around each other.

Goosebumps crawl up my legs. Time seems to momentarily suspend itself as we drink in this synchronistic vision, an affirmation of our connection with the people of South America.

Synchronicity. *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright (© 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company)* defines it as, "Coincidence of events that seem to be meaningfully related..." Certainly this describes our experience on the ranch that day.

Synchronicity stages its entrance in many ways; but, no matter what the situation or the source, it calls us, if for a brief moment, to experience something greater than ourselves. The Condor and the Eagle's visit that day validated for us an awareness of our connection with others as well as forwarding our perceptions of ourselves.

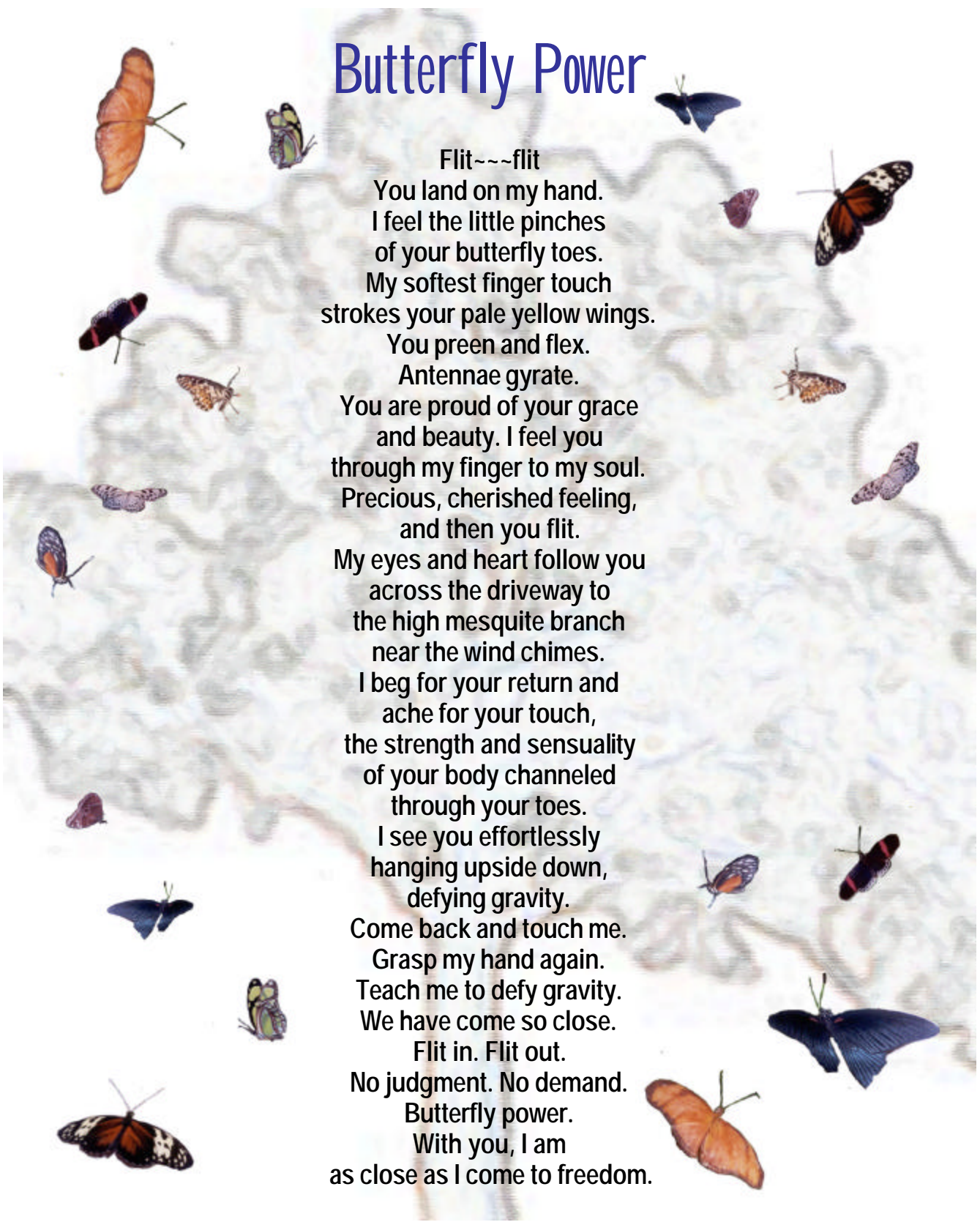
Do you have a synchronistic experience with nature that you'd like to share? Please see guidelines for submission at our website (www.pachamamapress.com) or send a request for guidelines to Pachamama Press, P.O. Box 58840, Webster Texas 77598.



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Butterfly Power



Flit~~~flit
You land on my hand.
I feel the little pinches
of your butterfly toes.
My softest finger touch
strokes your pale yellow wings.
You preen and flex.
Antennae gyrate.
You are proud of your grace
and beauty. I feel you
through my finger to my soul.
Precious, cherished feeling,
and then you flit.
My eyes and heart follow you
across the driveway to
the high mesquite branch
near the wind chimes.
I beg for your return and
ache for your touch,
the strength and sensuality
of your body channeled
through your toes.
I see you effortlessly
hanging upside down,
defying gravity.
Come back and touch me.
Grasp my hand again.
Teach me to defy gravity.
We have come so close.
Flit in. Flit out.
No judgment. No demand.
Butterfly power.
With you, I am
as close as I come to freedom.



© 2002 by Lynette M. Bowen

Lynette took this photograph at the Cockrell Butterfly Center in Houston, Texas. At the end of her visit there, she met this butterfly perched on the exit door, reminding her to take with her the wisdom that all living things reflect back to us glimpses of who we really are.

Forest Scene

White billowing clouds nestle in the sky
While a creek runs through tourmaline terrain
Making delightful music,
Serenading tall silent trees.
Moody and shadowed,
Quiet and serene
Shutting out the chaos
Of the outside world.
It is peaceful, it is calm
Here where it is cool and green.

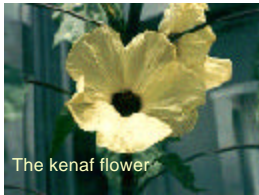
Atira Gnick, Friendswood, Texas

Contributor's Bios

Atira Gnick, a native Texan, is still proud to call the Lonestar State her home. After attending high school and college, she raised two wonderful sons before working as part owner and operator of a small retail store. Now retired, she resides with her husband in the Houston area and enjoys gourmet cooking, writing, art and yoga. Besides writing poetry and short stories, she paints, mostly watercolor pictures of nature.

Jim Wilson After growing up in the Big Bend Mountains in far west Texas, Jim graduated from veterinary school at Texas A&M. About the same time he started his practice he began writing poetry. Thirty years later his is still practicing veterinary medicine and writing about the "relationship of man/woman, nature, and the Universal intelligence that shows us how to operate our world." To access his website, go to www.jamesraywilson.com.





The kenaf flower

EARTH NEWS YOU CAN USE

Kenaf: The Tree-Free Alternative

Synchronicity struck again while visiting my friend's quartz crystal shop in Kemah, Texas. She *had* to show me a greeting card that "looked like me." Of course it did...a wonderfully illustrated card with a woman, owls and the moon. When I got home and looked at the back of the card (Tree-Free Greetings: www.tree-free.com), I noticed it was made out of Kenaf, a "unique plant discovered in Africa."

Kenaf? My curiosity led me to search on the electronic "e-paper" trail, and the following is a brief summary of my wanderings which I thought you might find useful.

What is Kenaf?

An annual, non-wood fiber plant related to okra and cotton, Kenaf has been cultivated in Egypt since around 4000 B.C. For thousands of years people in Africa and parts of Asia used it for making clothing, rugs, rope and other products, as well as using it as a food source. In the 1940's the USDA began researching Kenaf because of restrictions on jute imports during WW II, and in 1960 the USDA determined that Kenaf was one of the most promising non-wood fiber alternatives for pulp and paper making for some of these reasons:

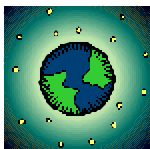
- Grows rapidly: reaches 12-18 ft in 150 days
- Yields three to five times tons of fiber per acre than the southern white pine
- Takes less chemicals, energy and time to pulp
- Pulped with less toxic chemicals (hydrogen peroxide vs. chlorine)
- Uses 15-25% less energy to pulp than southern white pine
- Grows best in southern US, where existing paper mills are located
- Treated wastewater after processing can be used for irrigation
- Existing mills can be easily converted to produce Kenaf and Kenaf-blend paper.
- Works well either alone or blended with recycled paper or virgin pulp.
- Kenaf paper is stronger, whiter, longer lasting, more resistant to yellowing, and has better ink adherence than tree paper.

Besides replacing trees, Kenaf may also someday augment or replace fossil fuel use (ethanol has been derived it).

To learn more about Kenaf, contact the Kenaf Society at www.kenafsociety.org.

Here's a short list of some Kenaf uses :

- Paper (Paper products available at www.visionpaper.com, www.crane.com)
- Horse bedding (Kenaf Fiber Inc, Alvin, Texas)
- Absorptive material for oil and sewage spills (<http://www.oilsuck.com/>, <http://www.petroxxintrn.thomasregister.com/olc/ptroxxintrn/home.htm>)
- Cat Litter (<http://www.kenaf.com>)
- Potting soil (replaces non-renewable peat: *Kmix* found at <http://www.kinneybonded.com/pages/catTN55.htm>)
- Insulation (see *Agricultural Resource Service* article about Kenaf's use in cars at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/jul02/kenaf0702.htm>)
- Construction materials (see example at <http://www.kenaf-industries.com/>)



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