



Earth Stories

One Family...

My brother-in-law's scuffed, leather, work boots lie, neatly aligned, on the exposed seaweed, just above the protected tidal pool. While they wait, he explores swirling seaweed beds, rough hands gently plucking out treasures...pale starfish, purple urchin, cobalt mussels. Cassie, 6, and Tiffany, 12, each take turns holding them before sending them on their way.

On the other side of the whale-spine, sandstone ridge, frothing Atlantic waves spray rock-riding watchers, including 11-year old Shelby and 10-year old Rachael. The two old seafaring souls edge close to the rock bow tip, hoping for stone-hewn sea mist to baptize their faces.

"Lynette," Tom calls, "At least come down and put your feet in the Atlantic."

I gingerly make my way down, peel away socks and shoes, and step in, laughing as I dodge waves that lick the bottoms of my rolled up jeans.

A summer vacation in Maine... between the ocean and my parents' rustic cabin on Long Lake, just outside of Augusta, my sister and her family, me and my girls, and my parents retreat and reconnect. I'm



acutely aware of the timing of this visit: my mother battles a life-threatening illness and all of us (including my brother and his family in Seattle) live thousands of miles apart.

I believe it's no coincidence, that my mother coordinates our visit in nature. We swim, fish, talk, sleep, eat, and laugh together, comforted by its peaceful presence. Our memories intertwine: Rachael's bass caught on a bare hook, Kit-Kat (the cabin kitten) getting locked in a kitchen cabinet, and my mother's front-porch bird watching. We are inseparable from the Earth's presence as she facilitates our human connection.

Earth Stories is a gathering place for our stories through writing, art, and photography, a collective diary about our relationship with nature. Through storytelling, we reconnect with ourselves, others, and the Earth. We remember we are *one family*.

Before I left Maine, my niece Rachael gave me a piece of glittering pyrite, fool's gold. Sitting on my dresser, it often reminds me of our precious connection. In the same way, the stories we share here become more in their telling...a transformational connection we take with us on the journey of life.

Lynette M. Bowen
Publisher/Editor

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Welcome to the first edition of *Earth Stories*, created as a storytelling circle for people of all ages and walks to share their experiences with nature through stories, poetry, artwork, and photography.

Through creative storytelling, *Earth Stories* seeks to encourage our connection with others and promote a deeper understanding of our interrelatedness with our home planet, the Earth.

There are certain moments in my life that I can look back upon and know were truly life-changing. One such moment occurred in February of 1996 when my family celebrated my son's birthday on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

We began the day gulping down breakfast, finding hidden sneakers in our hotel room, and soothing wounded egos as one child or the other took a dig at his or her sibling. Tempers quieted though, the moment we arrived pier side of the boat that would take us out to watch for Humpback whales, which make their yearly migration to the waters of the Hawaiian Islands.

We boarded and ambled toward the front of the boat. My wife and I were careful to make sure the children (Adam 10 and Alexis 7) didn't get too close to the rails, but were even more careful to make sure they had a good place to watch our friendly leviathans.

As we made our way out of port, I couldn't help noticing how beautiful the day was: sky speckled with clouds, a westerly breeze making everyone's hair flutter, and the bluest and clearest water I could imagine. It seemed that everyone was more human, more beautiful, and well, just *more* than we had been when we were tromping about on land those few minutes earlier.

Poseidon's Horses



Chuck Wemple, Bolivar TX

The tour guide explained our trip and dutifully reminded us about the rules of safety to follow in order to fully enjoy our excursion that day and keep the whales safe as well. We were going to try and find some humpbacks, but we couldn't get too close or we would be in violation of federal laws protecting the gentle giants.

About that time Adam alerted us to a couple of humpback whales flinging themselves into the air in unison a couple of hundred yards off the port bow. He and I were the only ones to see the full jump. We looked at each other knowingly and communicated the fact that we *knew* we were special for having witnessed the event from beginning to end. The day had been a complete success. I would have been content to turn and head for shore.

The boat doodled along for another half hour. The engines shut down and the guide continued his scripted monologue instructing us on the lifecycle, mating rituals, and mysterious songs for which humpbacks were famous. It was during his lecture that my life changed.

I couldn't resist the feeling that I had just been reunited with friends that would stay with me for the rest of my life.

As we sat there, a huge whale and her young calf surfaced off the starboard bow about twenty feet away. We were all speechless and I, for one, found it difficult to breathe. They were enormous and gorgeous. I fell in love and was a moment away from weeping – they were too beautiful.

Taking turns "spyhopping," they raised one eye out of the water to give us a thorough looking over. It seemed they were just as interested in us as we were in them. I could almost imagine the mother whispering to her child, "Now don't get too close, we don't want to scare them."

After a few minutes the mother dipped down and swam under our boat. She rolled over underwater and looked up at me, then turned to go back to her young one. He also swam under the boat to return to Mom.

Overwhelmed, the only thing I wanted to do at that moment was jump into the water with them.





Photographer Therese Walker took this picture of Terri Chandler and her wolf Nashoba (Choctaw word for wolf) communicating with each other in September 2002 while on a photo shoot in the northwestern US. Terri, who loves the freedom and devotion both Nashoba and Amanni (other alpha male, "brother" in Choctaw) demonstrate daily relates, "They are family oriented, mate for life, take care of their own, and can teach us [humans] many things about loyalty, freedom, and devotion." For more information on Therese's photography, contact her at theresewlk@aol.com.

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As I stood there, I looked down at my new friends and thought how lucky I was to have those moments with them and to share them with my family. As I told the whales that I loved them: each rolled onto their sides, flipped their flippers at us, and left.

I couldn't resist the feeling that I had just been reunited with friends that would stay with me for the rest of my life. In a *moment*, I met and loved them. I have never felt that way before about anyone or anything and haven't felt that way since.

Now, whenever I need to recall a beautiful moment or want to feel peaceful, I remember that day and talk to my friends, and, I could almost swear that they hear me and answer back.

I hear chickadees

I hear chickadees singing a song
I hear it all day long
I hear water trickling down the stream
The song is singing in my dream
I feel the strong wind pushing me
The wind is making me feel free

Cassie Townsend, Age 6, Jefferson ME



Introducing...



Pachamama Press

We're on the Web:
www.pachamamapress.com

Born on June 13, 2002, *Pachamama Press* sprung from a personal awakening I'd had a month earlier. At a one-day seminar in Austin, Texas held by John Perkins; author, businessman, and ecologist (www.dreamchange.org); I was introduced to the expression, *Pachamama*, the word the Ecuadorian Shuar tribe uses for Mother Earth (Incan in origin) and reminded of my power to create my own dream. During this workshop, through some experiential meditation, I began to remember in a new way my connection with the Earth and call to support her.

Several weeks later, after attending a monthly poetry workshop where I'd had some poetry critiqued (to my disappointment), I began to question who I was and how much I had founded my personal worth on performance and being "the best." Through engaging in this inner dialogue, I recognized again the need to let go of what I "thought I should be" and simply enjoy who I was in the moment.

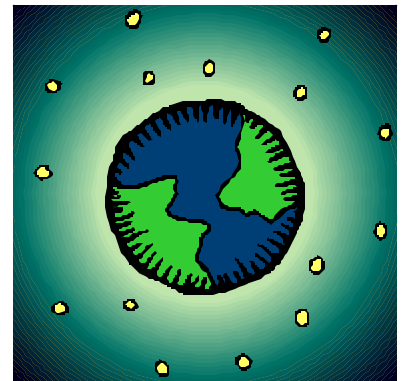
That night I put out the intention to let go of an unrealistic standard I'd set for myself, and I realized my calling was not to be "poet" or "artist" or maintain any one, set role...it was simply to *be*.

Interestingly enough, the next day, the idea of *Pachamama Press* came to me in a flash as I was sitting at my desk at work. I wanted to start a magazine (had I thought about anything like this before?); a forum for sharing our stories of connection with *Pachamama*, the Earth; a magazine that would reach a large audience, from children to adults. This magazine would celebrate storytelling creatively not only through stories, but through poetry, artwork, and photography as well.

The newsletter version of *Earth Stories* is *Pachamama Press*' first project, as the mission of *Pachamama Press* is to support the dream of the Earth through publishing projects.

In the great web of life, *Earth Stories* is a dreamweaver and facilitator, connecting our individual dreams and experiences with others' and reminding us that we are One family.

Welcome to the *Pachamama Press* family...we're looking forward to what each of you has to share...your hearts, your hopes, and your dreams that will change your own personal lives as well as the world.



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recycled paper

Lynette M. Bowen

**Supporting the Dream
of the Earth**

Earth Stories

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