

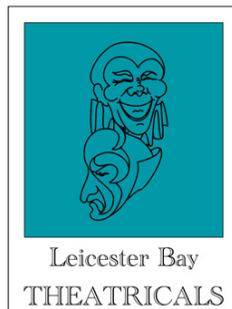
PERUSAL SCRIPT

MOTHER WOVE THE MORNING

a play in two acts

by

Carol Lynn Pearson



Newport, Maine

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MOTHER WOVE THE MORNING

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Mother Wove the Morning was first performed by the author, Carol Lynn Pearson, as a one-woman play in 1989 in Walnut Creek, California. She eventually performed the play internationally over 300 times. A filmed version of her performance won an award from Booklist as one of the best twenty-five videos of the year. Ordering information for the DVD and the playbook can be found on the publisher's website www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com as well as Carol Lynn's website, www.clpearson.com. This version was adapted by the author for performance by groups of women. It can be performed by any number up to sixteen.

From the Reviews of *Mother Wove the Morning* (The original one-woman play)

"What an extraordinary piece of work!" -- **Olympia Dukakis**, Academy Award winning actor, author of *Ask Me Again Tomorrow*.

"An amazing experience, a passionate performance of theater at its best. It makes us cry, laugh, and remember what we did not even know we knew. I wish everyone could see it and be inspired by it." -- **Riane Eisler**, author of *The Chalice and the Blade*

"Intellectual awareness of the repression of feminine divinity becomes experiential in this profound and poignantly human drama. I strongly recommend this wonderful and powerful play." -- **Jean Shinoda Bolen**, author of *Goddesses in Every Woman*

"Take a train, take a plane, ride a bus or a bike, but go to *Mother Wove the Morning*...a magnificent, emotionally charged performance. Bravo!" -- **Evening Press**, Dublin, Ireland

"A powerhouse! And with such terrific humor." -- **Joan Baez**

"...an experience I will always cherish. Carl Jung said that the most important psychological task humankind faces in our century is the reintegration of the feminine divine into our religious experience. *Mother Wove the Morning* is an important way-pointing of our task." **Thomas Patrick Lavin**, Ph.D., Senior Training Analyst, C.J. Jung Institute of Chicago

Reviews from Producers of *Mother Wove the Morning* (The multiple actor version)

Equity Showcase Production in New York City, May 2005

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to produce 'Mother.' It has been an amazing experience. The cast has been so excited to be part of this project, and truly reverent of the work they know we are doing. They didn't want the run to end. Audiences have responded with all the enthusiasm we had hoped for. May 'Mother' have a long and happy life!" -- **Sarah Jebian, Producer**

Glendale High School, Glendale, California:

"We opened the play last night. It was stone quiet, not a peep, except where there should be a peep or laughter or a gasp. The teens did not squirm or whisper to their neighbors. And my young women were amazing! They were focused, intent in the work and eager to perform. None of them will look at being a woman in the same

way as they did eight weeks ago. Thanks so much for giving us this remarkable experience!” -- **Mack Duggar, Director**

Rainbow Repertory Company, Canton, Ohio:

“I cannot tell you how lucky I feel having come across your play and being given the chance to work with it. It is one of the most important theatre pieces I will do in my life....Our performances reached 278 people. The first weekend we saw only 60. Our local paper did not print anything, but because of word of mouth, our second weekend saw over 200. I have a growing list of those who have contacted me and want to know when it will be performed again...I look forward to the other bookings I am planning.” -- **Deb Lemire, Director**

“Your play was the highlight of our Women’s History Month! It introduced a cross-cultural, historical exploration of the role of women and the social understanding of the divine.” -- **Kathryn M. Feltey, Ph.D Director of Women’s Studies University of Akron**

Method Acting Workshops, Mill Valley, California:

“Thank you so much for allowing me to use this awesome play....We got a standing ovation. The performance was combined with an acting workshop. I coached audience volunteers to speak their own truth and explore the resurrection of the feminine divine bringing insight from their own lives to perform scenes from the play themselves!” -- **Shelley Mitchell**, acting teacher to Bay area professionals, trained with Lee Strasberg at the Actors Studio

YWCA of Lewiston/Clarkston, Idaho:

“Thanks so much for letting us do your play. We were moved and honored by your boldness and your generous gift. This is a very important work. Huge! We had a grand audience who wept and laughed with us. Your work is that of a true pioneer.” -- **Jeanmarie Simpson, Director**

Emergence Theatre, Fringe Festival of Canada:

“The play was a great success, with over 300 people seeing it and lots of deep feelings and feedback. The company is very excited and honored to spread your work and the inspiration of women’s spirituality to the public.” -- **Beth Cruise, Director**

St. Peter Catholic Church, Social Justice Task Force, Pacifica, California:

“Thank you for your beautiful play! As we rehearsed, I became more and more aware of how you balanced out the horror and the humor. Your research was so thorough, your artistry in interpreting and presenting the history so evident. My life has been enriched and enlightened by having been a part of it. It’s been over six weeks since we put on *Mother Wove the Morning*, and we are still hearing about it...The Director of the Pacifica Resource Center is delighted with the over \$3800 that we earned for them.” -- **Mary Brown, Director**

“I LOVE YOUR PLAY!!!!!! It has taught me so much. Some of my friends saw the play today and they wanted to say thank you for writing this piece. I think they too are really inspired. Every time I read the play or listen to my fellow actors I just feel like crying. I feel like the characters are all my sisters and we share a bond and trust and we share our happiness and fears and all. So thank you, thank you.” – **Angela**

Why We Need the Mother

The Mother Goddess is virtually universal as the dominant figure in the most ancient stories . . . the female force was recognized as awesome, powerful, transcendent....We have seen how men appropriated and then transformed...the power of the Mother Goddess. --

Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*

The God of Judaism is undoubtedly a father-symbol...nor can there be any doubt as to the need answered by this image...however, there is an equally great, or possibly even greater need for yet another symbol: that of the divine woman who appears in many different forms throughout the world yet remains basically the same everywhere. -- **Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess***

The more than usually miserable state of the world demands that the supreme Godhead be redefined, that the repressed desire of the Western races for some practical form of goddess worship be satisfied. -- **Robert Graves, *The White Goddess***

Introduction by the Author

Mother Wove the Morning is the product of a lifetime of hunger and searching and discovery. I grew up in Provo, Utah, descendent of numerous Mormon pioneers. Life was good and secure and the mountains were clean and the neighbors were kind and opportunities were abundant. God was in his heaven and all was right with the world.

"His heaven."

I remember saying at nine years of age, as I walked with a friend on a country road one evening, "Well, there's one good thing about being a woman—at least you don't have to marry one!"

Where did I get that idea? I was getting top grades in school and was always "teacher's pet." My mother was a successful and respected school teacher. I felt that I was a favorite with my father, who had three sons and two daughters. Nobody ever told me I couldn't do something because I was a girl. I was constantly told that God loved me. But for nine years I had lived in a world in which the subliminal negative messages about being female were everywhere.

Without being told, I was being clearly told that maleness was a superior commodity. In society there was no question. It was a man's world. And at church. God's world was a man's world too. The heavenly beings we sang praise to were all male. Every prayer we uttered was to a male and through a male. God's prophets, ancient and modern, were male. His crowning creation, Adam, was male.

Even the stories in Sunday School were almost always about boys or men. People in the Bible prayed for sons, never for daughters. Every act of religious importance needed the authority that only males had. It was as clear as the vertical line on the blackboard: "God—man—woman." Eve and I were a beloved support, but we were auxiliary. God's house was designed and furnished and owned by males and it was a Motherless house. There were no feminine touches anywhere.

However, there was one tiny window in the dark patriarchal space that my eye could not resist. Joseph Smith, the founder of my church, had taught that we have not only a Heavenly Father, but a Heavenly Mother as well. I stared at that tiny window, transfixed. What wonders might be beyond it?

Holding my breath, I climbed out the window. And the view was stunning. So many witnesses—history, archeology, anthropology, philology, mythology (not to mention common sense)—told me the same story. The human family has not always viewed God as male. The earliest accounts speak of God as Mother. What happened? I could not read fast enough. Delight and rage filled me together—delight to learn that male supremacy was a male invention—and rage that no one had ever told me this before, rage that I had been allowed to grow up female in a Motherless house.

By 1982 my research filled a large cardboard box, but it was put away. Other projects seemed more pressing and were certainly safer, and by this time the demands of four children were enormous. But one afternoon, as I was taking a nap, I had a dream. I have never had a "vision" or heard a "voice," but I do have dreams that come I believe from my own spiritual resources. In this dream I had been told that my mother, who in actual reality died when I was fifteen, was really alive and being kept at the home of my step-mother. I rushed to the house and my three brothers told me that our mother was in a certain closet. I entered and saw at the top of a shelf a large cardboard box. I climbed up and peeked into it. There was the head of my mother, with her eyes closed. I studied her, wondering if she were dead or alive. Suddenly her eyes opened and she said, "Well, it's about time you got here!"

My message to myself could not have been more clear. It was about time I took "off the shelf" and "out of the closet" the Mother project. The Mother was not dead, but very much alive and only waiting for the children to find her. Immediately I got out my box of research and began.

But it was years before I found the right vehicle. One day in early 1989, as I was walking in the hills hear

my home, the Mother project fell into place in a totally unexpected way: it would be a play, a one-woman play. In it I would embody the women I had met in my search, women who could help to solve the mystery of the loss of the Mother and invite her home. I hadn't been on the stage for twenty-five years, but I thought, "I've got to do it!"

I selected the women, wrote, rewrote, rented our community theater, chose props, costume, blocked, memorized, advertised—and did it.

My very first performance came two days after the major Northern California earthquake in October of 1989. As I hung onto the door frame while the house was rolling, I prayed, "Dear Father and Mother, please don't let me die before I can do my play even one time!"

I have performed my play well over three hundred times, and now my prayer is, "Dear Mother and Father, I am so grateful I get to do this thrilling thing. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

There are no words to express the level of my gratitude for the privilege of participating in one of the most important shifts that is occurring on the planet today. The reclaiming of the feminine has profound implications for all aspects of society, touching intimately the way we relate to ourselves, to each other, to the earth and to God.

I extend my thanks to each person who has come to a performance of *Mother Wove the Morning*, for helping to create those sacred moments in which the theater has served as a place of spiritual ritual, where together we have moved toward healing, toward wholeness and holiness. To the young woman who told me she was a victim of incest and that her life from this moment on would be transformed. To the elderly gentleman who embraced me in tears and said, "There are no words to tell you what this evening meant to me." To the young man who handed me a poem after his fourth time at the play: "If you listen you can hear sixteen women singing through her, and sixty billion humming along." To the elderly woman who said, "I didn't think I'd live long enough to see what I've seen tonight." To the Catholic priest who said, "I realize for the first time the harm we have done to women and to the Mother." To the young Jewish girl who said, "Your play made me feel so warm inside, so proud to be a woman." To the thousands of women and men—Catholic, Mormon, Presbyterian, Mennonite, Christian of all types, Jewish, Sikh, Muslim, and atheist—who have greeted this work with such enthusiastic appreciation.

The Mother is returning, in our hearts and in our minds, and eventually in our worship. After every performance someone has said to me, "Let me tell you what my church is doing to bring back the Mother." Or "This is what my group is doing." Every religion is dealing with the issue, some enthusiastically, some reluctantly, some determined not to acknowledge the need. The potency of this issue, and the profound change in our thinking that it requires, is such that a backlash of fear and punishment is very much present. But more powerful is the wave of progress and change that is so evident and so desperately needed.

I anticipate in my hopes and my dreams a time in years to come—who knows how many?—possibly fewer than we thought—in which women and men move solidly toward partnership together, acknowledging in our own way the partnership of our Father and Mother God. In that day we will speak of and sing of and pray to a Creator in whose image we all are made equally. We will look at one another with a new reverence, and "women's work" will be given a respect that is more than lip service. So many of the ills of our society will be alleviated, for half of humanity will no longer be elevated over the other half because they are thought to be closer to God and his image and his authority.

To you who hold this book today, I offer my hand, grateful to be with you on this splendid journey.

-- **Carol Lynn Wright Pearson**

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Act One

Carol Lynn--Today

Bruen the Paleolithic--20,000 b.c.

Rachel from the Bible-- 600 b.c.

Abigail the Midianite Virgin--1300 b.c.

Amenepshut the Egyptian Priestess--1200 b.c.

Lydia and the Rape of the Levite=s Concubine--1000 b.c.

Alexandre the Greek--475 b.c.

Julia the Gnostic--200 a.d.

Paula the Christian at Ephesus--431 a.d.

Genevieve the Witch--1432

Act Two

Running Cloud the Native American--1600

Phoebe the ShakerB1825

Emma Smith the Mormon First Lady--1842

Elizabeth Cady Stanton the American Feminist--1870

Hilda the Nazi Woman--1942

Rebecca the Jewish Woman--1942

Carol Lynn the Therapist--Today

SUGGESTED STAGE SETTING

Carpet, at least nine feet by twelve feet

Trunk or large wooden chest

Coat rack with several pegs or hooks

Wooden stool about two feet tall

Small stool which may be added to the taller stool to create Rebecca's table and Mrs. Stanton's podium

SUGGESTED LIST OF PROPS

Bruen the Paleolithic

Small fur-like rug

Ocharina (simple musical instrument with whistle-like mouthpiece and finger holes, usually ceramic, similar to recorder)

Rachel from the Bible

Colorful striped cloth, big enough to cover her lap and legs

Small brown bag, cloth or leather, with draw-strings

Several clay or metal Agods and goddesses@

Tambourine

Amenepshut the Egyptian Priestess

Egyptian headpieceBbeads in bang-style hairdo

(or) Decorative neckpiece

Coin belt

Small brass gong with striker

Lydia and the Rape of the Levite's Concubine

Dark, hairy-looking shawl

Alexandre the Greek

Fan

Lyre

Masks

Julia the Gnostic

Parchment letter, rolled up

White tunic

Rope tie belt

Paula the Christian at Ephesus

Scarf

Wooden bowl or wooden tray

Bread dough (see recipe below)

Genevieve the Witch

Six yards or more of black chain (can be purchased at hardware store)

Running Cloud the Native American

Beaded headpiece or neckpiece

Drums

Phoebe the Shaker

Long cotton apron

Emma Smith the Mormon First Lady

Elegant embroidered shawl

Elizabeth Cady Stanton the American Feminist

Ruffled neckpiece or small shawl with brooch

Bible

Wire-rimmed antique spectacles

Cane

Hilda the Nazi Woman

1930's apron

Brown shirt with swastika on sleeve

Needle and thread

Rebecca the Jewish Woman

Long, narrow, soft scarf

Colorful cloth to cover table

Two candlesticks

Two white candles

Small matchbox with matches

Carol Lynn the Therapist

File folder

Pen

Reading glasses

ACT ONE

SETTING: *An antique trunk, a wooden coat rack, a step-stool, a short stool and a carpet define an otherwise bare stage. CAROL LYNN enters, speaks to the audience.*

CAROL LYNN: Well, it seems the Pope dies and goes to heaven, and St. Peter greets him saying, “Before you come in we have this little test you have to pass. You have to spell the word ‘God.’” Of course, he does and he goes in. Then Billy Graham dies and goes to heaven, and St. Peter greets him saying, “Before you come in, we have this little test you have to pass. You have to spell the word ‘God.’” He does, and he goes in. Then Barbara Harris—that’s the first female Episcopal bishop—dies and goes to heaven, and St. Peter greets her saying, “Before you come in we have this little test you have to pass.” And she says, “Oh, no! Not another test! That’s all I’ve done down there—pass this test and that test. And you know the tests are always harder for the women than they are for the men!” And St. Peter says, “Don’t be silly, my dear. Spell ‘Melchizedek.’”

She does, of course, and she goes right in!

(Beat)

A little girl once wrote a letter. “Dear God, are boys really better than girls? I know you are one, but try to be fair.”

I am female. I love being female. And what I really believe about God is this: In the beginning, at the dawning of the first day, the Eternal One appeared as Two. Mother wove the morning, and Father made the evening—joyfully, together. Lovers, friends, partners, parents. Through them all things were born.

What happened? Why did I grow up feeling that my world was a Motherless House? As I look around this world, read the newspapers, watch the news—it becomes clear that what a Catholic theologian said is true: “If God is male—the male is God.” I read of one hundred million women missing from the statistics worldwide because of female infanticide, selective abortion, little girls being given not the same food or medical treatment as their brothers. I read of rape, battered women, bride burning in India because of insufficient dowry. It goes on and on. “If God is male--the male is God.”

What happened? I began to think about all the women in history. Did they know anything I didn’t know? Oh, I wanted to find them, to see through their eyes. So I went out searching. I walked backward in time. I walked through their villages and courtyards and homes and dungeons, crying out, “Where is my Mother? Nobody can tell me you can have a Father without a Mother. Did she abandon us on the doorstep without even a note?” And as quiet as ghosts, some of my sisters appeared, and they began to speak to me.

WOMEN enter. They wear simple, stark theatrical costumes, perhaps leotards.

REBECCA:The Shekhinah has been banished, you know!....

HILDA:Femininity would destroy the revolution!....

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON:Should women ride? What are God’s intentions concerning woman and the bicycle?....

EMMA SMITH:Then God our Father must have numerous wives—more even than Joseph!....

PHOEBE:Well, child, do you see the human world and the animal world all walking around looking like they were formed out of three masculine beings?....

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RUNNING CLOUD:She thought the rocks and the clouds and the snow and the juniper trees, and the clear rivers, and they appeared....

GENEVIEVE:They clapped me in irons then. It will not do, you know, for a woman to speak up to a man of the church!....

PAULA:For I do not even have a soul to save! Augustine has made that quite clear....”

JULIA:Will you look at my woman’s hand and see the hand of God, or will you recoil?....

ALEXANDRE:Apollo is right! Only fathers are related to their children!....

LYDIA:Oh, they lay her on the ground and one by one they performed their wickedness upon her....

AMENEPSHUT:The great god Ptah was before Isis and is more powerful!....

ABIGAIL:They said our god was false and our god was evil and our god was a woman!....

RACHEL:But these I steal back again—to help me remember....

CAROL LYNN: You will have to stretch your mind back many thousands of years. You can. Anything is possible here. This is the theatre. Seats—stage—light, to help us all see a little more clearly. This evening see, in your own way, the Goddess—God the Mother—the Feminine Divine.

CAROL LYNN opens trunk.

BRUEN takes from trunk small fur-like rug and places it on floor. CAROL LYNN takes out ocarina and places it around BRUEN’S neck. BRUEN raises ocarina to her lips and sounds a few notes .

OTHER WOMEN may participate in pantomime in the background.

BRUEN: I do not understand. You lost Mother?

Is not possible! Listen, her voice--wind. You have wind? Feel. Earth--her womb, giving, giving. Seasons, her cycle. Look, moon-- her silver egg, fruit of her night sky. Stars, her eyes. Rain, her good milk. You have heavens? You have Mother.

You have woman, who by magic bleeds, by magic swells, opens to bear child? You have Mother.

You tell your children story, yes? In beginning she was there, Goddess of All Things, and she rose naked from chaos. But nothing was for her feet to rest upon, so she divided sea from sky. She danced lonely upon waves. Wind as she danced began work of creation. From herself she formed heavens, earth, all in them.

You tell story to your children, yes?

Ah--you do not?

You *have* lost Mother! I worry now for you. Mother--is *all!*

Mmmm--you said word--

WOMEN: Fa-ther!

BRUEN: --What is this?

WOMAN takes from BRUEN’S neck the ocarina. BRUEN stands and picks up the rug. They place the props on or beside coat rack. CAROL LYNN goes to trunk and takes out leather pouch, opens it and takes out two small clay “gods and goddesses,” holds them up to audience and speaks. As she does, RACHEL takes from trunk a colorful, striped cloth and a tambourine. She places tambourine at foot of trunk and stands beside the trunk.

CAROL LYNN: Do you remember Rachel in the Bible? That’s Mrs. Jacob of Abraham, Isaac, and? We find her early one morning in her tent near to the hill country of Gilead.

CAROL LYNN hands the clay figures and the bag to RACHEL. RACHEL holds figures out for audience to view.

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RACHEL: Who told you I have them? Is this what you seek, the teraphim? You seek them too, like my father Laban seeks them? Listen. He shouts now in the tent of the maidservants.

LABAN: Where are the teraphim? Where are my gods and goddesses?

RACHEL: Oh, listen to him shout! And if he finds them with me, I will pay with my life! But he will not find them. See? I place myself on the camel cushion, my skirts like so, and under my skirts I hide the teraphim. Oh, you are saying, that is too easy, her father will find them.

Oh, no! No. You wait and see. You think I am a robber? I steal because they are mine and my right to hold them has been stolen from me, as right after right has been stolen from me. But these--these I steal back again--to help me remember.

In the days of Sarah, grandmother to my husband Jacob and wife to Abraham, the ways of the mothers still prevailed. Sarah was a priestess, a prophetess of power, and she knew the old ways, the ancient order in which the mothers were honored and all the people blessed. But the new ways came, the customs that honored the fathers and exacted obedience to them.

We have stories of wandering nomads that came on horses with their thrusting weapons of bronze in their hands to kill and take slaves. Theirs was a god of war and mountain, a male without a female, and with them the peace of the mothers vanished from the earth--woman became property--cities had walls.

Oh, I remember Sarah, and I bless her name! But the names of the mothers are being erased--as a wind erases words written by a finger on the desert floor--and my seed, I fear, will not know the name of my mother, or the name of the Goddess of Mesopotamia, for whom I was named Rachel. I leave the land of the Goddess to go to the land of the patriarchs. But I carry with me, hidden here beneath my skirts, her memory and her hope.

Do you hear him? Now he is in the tent of my sister Leah.

LABAN: Where are my teraphim?

RACHEL: Shhhhh!

My father, you know, has traveled a seven days' journey to find us, for we left without his knowledge when he had gone to shear his sheep. And this morning I listened from my tent as he said to my husband Jacob--

LABAN: Why have you stolen my gods?

RACHEL: And Jacob said, and he spoke truly--

JACOB: I have not stolen your gods. Come in and search. And if you find them with any one of us, that person shall not live!

RACHEL: So. You may think it strange. For the sacred images I would risk my life? There is more to life, you know, than breath. A life that has given up its meaning is not a life. A life that has given up its power is not a life. These little goddesses and gods I hide beneath my skirt--are my meaning and my power, and without them what good would my life be to me?

But my life will be spared, and I will tell you why. In a moment my father will come to my tent to search and I will say to him, "Father, forgive me that I cannot rise before you, for the period of women is upon me." And my father will not come near to me, for if he were to touch me he would be unclean and accursed!

(Laughs)

The ancient ways of the mothers--the curse of the woman--will save my life!

RACHEL picks up the tambourine and shakes it joyfully, then hits it once with the palm of her hand.

OTHER WOMEN hang the cloth on coat rack and place tambourine and bag holding teraphim at

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base.

CAROL LYNN: You see, women, about every century or two—it comes in handy!

This next woman is too timid to speak for herself. Well, she's only ten years old. You read about her in the Bible. She's one of the Midianite virgins taken as booty by the warrior priests of Israel.

ABIGAIL tells her story in primitive sign language.

WOMAN: *(Interprets for her)* Tell them--I still remember the blood of my mother on my robe.

The men of Israel killed my father and all the men of the city and the five kings and all the little brothers. They looked at the bodies of the women and the girls, and those that had known man were put to the sword, and those that had not were given to the men of Israel.

I do not know why they hated us so. They said our god was false and evil and our god was a woman, and theirs was the only true god and he hated the female god and said that men must rule over women.

My mother held me close until they tore her from my arms and ran the sword through her belly. Whenever I close my eyes I see her blood on my robe.

OTHER WOMEN hold ABIGAIL, rock her. CAROL LYNN joins them, kissing ABIGAIL on the forehead. WOMEN take from trunk neckpiece, belt, place them on AMENEPSHUT, and hand her a metal gong.

CAROL LYNN: An oasis appears. Egypt!

AMENEPSHUT: There he goes again! Did you hear him? The high priest shook his finger in my face and argued that we must have more priests than priestesses serving here in the temple at Memphis because--

HIGH PRIEST: Men are nearer the form of the divine than are women!

AMENEPSHUT: What? Nearer the form of Isis, oldest of the old, the Goddess from whom all being arose?

HIGH PRIEST: Ah!-- That was a misconception. The great god Ptah was before Isis and is more powerful.

AMENEPSHUT: They are always doing that to us, bringing in one god or another and claiming he was here first! Now, why? Why this wanting a male in the heavens? What difference can it make? Well. Absurd! Who gave birth to Ptah?

HIGH PRIEST: No one. Ptah gave birth to all the gods and the goddesses.

AMENEPSHUT: Oh? And how did he, a male, accomplish this marvel? Well, I blush to tell you. Ptah--

HIGH PRIEST: Performed a certain act upon himself, and there issued all—all of creation!

ALL WOMEN laugh hysterically. AMENEPSHUT hits the gong a few times. WOMEN take from her the neckpiece and belt and place them at foot of coat rack. WOMAN takes from the trunk a dark shawl and wraps it around LYDIA. LYDIA sits on a small stool.

CAROL LYNN: You read about this woman in the Bible, but you never thought about her, not really.

Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night with her voice going 'round and 'round in my head.

LYDIA: Shhhh! I do not want them to hear. When they hear me talking to myself as I sit here in the kitchen by the fire, my brother's wife shouts at me--

BROTHER'S WIFE: Old woman, be quiet!

LYDIA: Shhhhh! It is when I am thirteen and I am my mother's jewel.

My mother and I have secrets. We go sometimes to the high place under the spreading trees where the Asherah is planted, the carved wooden pole of the Goddess, the remembrance of her that Created All Things, and my mother tells me the stories of the ancient ones who knew her. My father knows not of this, for he listens to the priests of those who hate the Goddess and call her an abomination. And so my mother

and I have secrets.

One day my father brought home with him a man who wore the scarlet robes and the grand headdress of the Levite priest, one of the chosen, ruling priesthood of the great god Yahweh. And my father said—

FATHER: This priest shall be my guest—him and his asses and his concubine.

LYDIA: And so my father and the man made merry. The concubine had long black hair and soft, sad eyes, and skin like the skim part of the milk, and she was but one year older than I. She told my mother and me her heart as we prepared the food and the drink.

ADAH: My name is Adah. I am of Bethlehem of Judah. My father sold me as concubine to the Levite priest, but I hated him and I ran away back to my father's house. But the Levite came again to bring me, and I wept, but my father was glad, for I was no longer a virgin and of no value to him. So I was put on the ass the Levite had brought, and here I am, and where can I run to now?

LYDIA: When it was dark there came a loud beating at the door, and I heard some men cry out—

MEN: Bring to us now the man that came into your house, that we may know him.

LYDIA: And I heard my father say—

FATHER: No! No, Brethren, do not so wickedly!

MEN: Bring him!

LYDIA: Then the door to my room flew open and my father laid hold upon me with one hand and upon Adah with the other, and he brought us to the door of the house and he said—

FATHER: Look! Here is my daughter, a maiden, and the concubine of the man you seek. Do to them as you wish, but to this man, this man of God, do not so vile a thing.

LYDIA: Then my mother fell upon us both.

MOTHER: Old man, leave the girl alone! This is my jewel, my only daughter!

LYDIA: My mother ran with me out the back of the house, and her hand on my arm shook like a leaf of the Asherah, but it was strong, strong, and we ran. We ran to the high place near our house and we hid in the little grove of sacred trees and we knelt before the Goddess and pled for her mercy! Soon we heard—

ADAH: *(Screams)* Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh!

LYDIA: —And we looked to see as Adah was carried by the men from our house to the foot of the high place where we were.

Ah, can I tell it?

They humbled her! Oh, they lay her on the ground and one by one they performed their wickedness upon her. They laughed and tried to outdo each other with their vileness. My mother held me close so I could hardly breathe and whispered—

MOTHER: Keep your eyes on the Asherah and do not look at their sins!

ADAH: *(Screams)* Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh!

LYDIA: When the dawning came and the men had finished with her, they stood back and said—

MEN: Go, then.

LYDIA: And they watched and we watched as Adah crawled to the door of our house. And when she reached the threshold, she could go no further, and she lay unmoving, and her black hair covered the step.

The men left to go to their houses, and we were about to go to Adah, when—her lord the Levite came from our house and saw that his concubine had fallen down at the step.

THE LEVITE: Up! Let us be going!

LYDIA: But she did not answer.

THE LEVITE: Let us be going!

LYDIA: But still she did not answer. He bent down to see, then rose and said--

THE LEVITE: Well, she is dead. Bring the ass.

OTHER WOMEN stand behind and beside LYDIA, touching her gently.

LYDIA: I leave the kitchen now only to go to my bed. I do not even go to the high place. In my youth I thought she was in the green of the trees we planted to her name, this Goddess you seek, giving us some memory of a day when woman was favored and promising that we will again be remembered. When I was thirteen I decided she was in the heavens hiding from her Lord the Levite and speaking low and trying not to offend. But now I am old, and I know that if ever there was a Goddess in the heavens, she was long ago cast down, down to be trodden and abused, and to be told--

WOMEN: Old woman, be quiet!

LYDIA: So she sits with me by the fire here, see?--and we rock together and we gossip and whisper. And no one notices us much, for we are women--and we are old women--and maybe we are--mad women!

BRUEN picks up the ocarina and blows a long and plaintive note. The WOMEN take shawl from LYDIA and pass it from each to each, touching it to their cheek as they pass it, finally hanging it on the coat rack.

CAROL LYNN offers a hand to LYDIA, helps her up, embraces her, wipes a tear from her cheek.

WOMEN take from the trunk a Greek lyre and three masks. They also take costume pieces and place them on ALEXANDRE, and hand her a fan. ALEXANDRE sits on the trunk and plays a few notes on the lyre.

ALEXANDRE: I attended the theatre this afternoon. The entire city of Athens is invited--required-- men, women, slaves, to attend the theatre.

OTHER WOMEN hold masks in front of their faces.

I would have enjoyed being down there on the stage holding a mask! But of course--

ACTORS: *(Deep voice)* Only men may act!

ALEXANDRE: And so--I am a listener. The play was "The Eumenides" by Aeschylus. Orestes is on trial for having killed his mother, Clytemnestra, after she avenges the death of her daughter, Iphigenia. The god Apollo takes it upon himself to argue, in Orestes behalf, that he could not possibly have killed his mother, for--.

APOLLO: The mother is no parent of that which is called her child. She is only nurse to the new planted seed that grows, whose true parent is the male.

ALEXANDRE: I looked around me. All, men, women, stared unblinking at this remarkable assertion. They had just been told that the sun above them, moving in its ordained course toward the mountains, was really the moon. And they sat there unblinking! But I cannot fault them, for they have been carefully taught, and not everyone sees beyond the stage, as I do, or hears more than is said.

APOLLO: I will prove to you now that there can be a father without a mother. There she stands, the living witness, daughter of Olympian Zeus.

ALEXANDRE: Enter Athena, whom our religion tells us sprang forth full blown from the forehead of her father Zeus.

ATHENA: Apollo is right. Only fathers are related to their children.

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ALEXANDRE: Can you tell this is a man speaking behind the mask of a woman? I thought so.

ATHENA: I am always for the male with all my heart, and strongly on my father's side.

ALEXANDRE: And then the chorus, the Furies— Oh, that's who I would have played, that's who I am—
exclaim in horror—

FURIES: Gods of the younger generation, you have ridden down the laws of the elder time, torn them out of
my hands!

ALEXANDRE: The laws of the elder time. Athena was not always Zeus' daughter, did you know that? She and
the other goddesses were sovereign in the heavens as woman was sovereign on earth. And then came the
thunderbolt god Zeus, who overturned the order of the heaven as man overturned the order of the earth, and
which happened first I do not know— do you?

There never has been and there never will be a man who was not born of woman! And are they so envious
that they take to themselves even this most obvious reality of nature? Woman, they would have us believe,
was really born of man, as Athena was born of the forehead of Zeus. Or, as a traveler told me, it is
somewhere taught—that woman was born of a man's rib!

(Laughs)

And the sun is really the moon!

Well, do you wonder whether Orestes was pronounced guilty? The jury of twelve Athenian citizens was
evenly divided, and so Athena, the goddess herself, cast the deciding vote.

May I see by the uplifted hand those who think the goddess voted for the reality of motherhood? Hands?

Shielding her eyes from the light, she surveys the audience.

And those who think she voted against herself? Hands?

Surveys audience again.

Ah! You are right! Athena sided with the men, didn't she? Orestes is acquitted on the ground that he could
not have shed kindred blood, for indeed—

WOMEN: He had no mother!

ALEXANDRE: And we left the theatre to go to our homes, fully aware of who has been born of whom, of
what happens to a woman who dares to rebel as Clytemnestra rebelled, and of the place in this world of
goddess—and—woman.

Well, if Athena declares for male supremacy, can I do any less?

*ALEXANDRE takes mask from a WOMAN, leaps onto the trunk and holds her fan in the air as if a
flag.*

ALEXANDRE: Athena and I raise the white flag and say—

ALEXANDRE AND ACTORS: I surrender!

ALEXANDRE: But we lie. No, no. We perform! I was wrong, you see, that women cannot act. We can, and
every day. And if we are good at it, if we learn our lines well and speak them sweetly, we regain something
of what we have lost.

ALEXANDRE holds up the mask.

ALEXANDRE AND ACTORS: I am always for the male with all my heart!

Mask down, ALEXANDRE winks broadly and jumps from the trunk.

ALEXANDRE: Ahhhh-ha!

ALL laugh. ALEXANDRE strikes a few notes on the lyre as AMENEPHUT picks up her gong,

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strikes it a few times and laughs. ALEXANDRE places lyre and fan at base of coat rack.

WOMEN take from trunk a scroll and rope belt. They tie belt around JULIA and hand her the scroll.

JULIA: This letter from Tertullian!

TERTULLIAN: Dear Julia. My visit to you was not without pleasure, but oh, dear cousin, I weep that you have fallen into the hands of the heretics. Here it has been only two hundred years since the death of our Lord Jesus, and already so many have fallen away...

JULIA: He thinks I have fallen. I feel I have flown, so like a bird!

TERTULLIAN: That you count yourself now with the Gnostics breaks my heart, dear Julia. I could hardly bear to sit in the congregation and have a woman, even my cousin whom I love, act as a priest in celebrating the eucharist—oh, Julia, do not be so immodest. You know it is not permitted for a woman to teach, undertake healings, even to baptize! And oh, the prayers you offer!

JULIA: How I wish Jesus were here to teach us still. He was so revolutionary. He saw everyone—certainly women—with new eyes. He talked with women openly, told them first of his mission, came to them first upon his rising. There was a woman who had been unclean for years, and he actually allowed her to touch him. There was Mary, who sat at his feet to learn, just like a man, when the Torah clearly says women are not to learn.

WOMEN: *(With masks)* Only men may act!

JULIA: Jesus was so surprisingly generous to women that one cannot help thinking had he lived on he would have given them more and more, not less and less.

Now, that prayer that I spoke. “From Thee, Father, and through Thee, Mother, the two immortal names, Parents of the divine being...”

LYDIA: *(Mournfully)* In my youth I thought she was in the green of the trees we planted to her name, this Goddess you seek...!

JULIA: Do you know the “Gospel to the Hebrews”? Well, the orthodox churches have thrown it out. But it tells of Jesus speaking not only of his Father, but of his Mother, the Holy Spirit.

To know oneself at the deepest level is simultaneously to know God. I know myself, and I am female, and so I know the femaleness of God, as a man knows God’s maleness. And the femaleness of God is wonderful. It is gentle, and it is powerful. Oh, I can imagine God as Mother. I see—a hand setting out in the sun a little plant that is a thousand olive trees. I see fingers weaving a cloth that is a universe of flowers, rainbows, oceans, grass, the horns and hooves of cattle. I see a wonderful shoulder rocking a baby that is the millions of us.

Is this troubling to you? Blasphemous?

If you can see no femaleness in God, you will see nothing of God in the female. But if you can, you will see God in everyone!

(Indicates her face)

In this face.

(Lifts hand of WOMAN)

In this hand.

(Indicates hands of women throughout audience)

Or in these hands!

WOMEN assume a kneeling position. JULIA gently touches the crown of each of their heads as if in

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blessing. WOMEN take off JULIA'S costume pieces and hang them on the coat rack, placing the scroll on the floor at its base.

CAROL LYNN opens trunk and takes from it a scarf and a wooden bowl that holds bread dough. She hands the scarf to PAULA, who puts it over her head and comes close to the audience.

PAULA: You have not heard? Oh, you should have been here this morning! When the bishop said the words, oh, I will never forget—

BISHOP: It has been decreed, you may worship Mary as the Mother of God!

PAULA: Oh, we were transported with joy! We kissed the hands of the clergy! In all the city of Ephesus there was singing and dancing! My husband danced like a child! Men need their Mother too, you know. But women, oh, we need her most especially.

She takes the wooden bowl from CAROL LYNN, sits on the trunk and begins to knead the bread.

During her scene she shapes the bread dough into small rolls.

I do not like to say the word—

PAULA AND WOMEN: —“Woman!”

PAULA: There, I said it, and it tastes bad on my tongue. Pttt-pttt! I know, as St. Clement said, and I hear it often enough—

ST. CLEMENT: You should be overwhelmed with shame at the very thought that you are a woman!

PAULA: Pttt-pttt! And I am ashamed. Oh, dear God, I am! And I know I am irredeemable, for I do not even have a soul to save—Augustine has made that quite clear! And I know that I am once again—

PAULA AND WOMEN: —Eve!

PAULA: —The source of all—

PAULA AND WOMEN: —Ev-il!

PAULA: —Except for whom we would still be living in the Garden of Eden. I know that, as Paul said, I was created for the man, not the man for me. I know that I am weak and frivolous and the devil's gateway, and that my very presence tempts men with vile thoughts beyond enduring, and I am sorry!

But I make good bread! And I have produced six sons! Truthfully, I quite enjoy being a woman, until they tell me how ashamed I ought to be.

I wonder now if Mary had a soul? If we may worship her, that must mean, not only she was, but she is! What a grand thought, that one of us made it! I will have to ask the bishop! Oh, but Mary was unusual. I could not aspire to be as she. We are under a threefold curse, women are. We are accursed if we are barren, for we exist only to give children. We are accursed if we conceive, for this is the nature of original sin. And we are accursed by the pains of childbirth. But Mary escaped all three. Imagine! She is virgin and fruitful. She conceives in holiness. She gives birth without pain. We have never known such a woman! And to think that from today she is in the heavens for us that we may worship her....

God is--well, God is God and I would say nothing against him. But God can be harsh. God is stern with the men, but he seems to be especially stern with the women.

I have thought of poor Hypatia! Oh, Hypatia!

The church, you see, is the only source of truth, and so it has to control all other sources. It has closed down the ancient Greek academies and burned the great library there. The great school of philosophy in Alexandria was pillaged. The head of this school was Hypatia, and that was her mistake. A woman is not to head, that is not her calling. But, according to talk, Hypatia was exceptionally learned and eloquent, very

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charming and beautiful, all of which attracted a large number of students to her lectures. She was mathematician, logician, astronomer, philosopher, all this and a woman too!

Well, the bishop of Alexandria—and I am not speaking against the bishop—

PAULA AND WOMEN: —For he is the bishop!

PAULA: —Became very upset that Hypatia was commanding such respect, for—

PAULA AND WOMEN: What authority has she?

PAULA: So, after a particularly inflammatory sermon against this woman, he urged his congregation not to allow such an unfeminine, un-Christian monster to live.

As PAULA tells the story, the other WOMEN act it out in pantomime.

They poured out of his church. They found Hypatia in her school, tore off her clothes, scraped the flesh from her bones with oyster shells, then burned what was left.

Now, I know her behavior was unwomanly. But....

Constantine ordered all the goddess temples destroyed. Oh, we have such a wonderful temple to Diana and we refused to destroy it, for we have had Diana for centuries! Large crowds gathered and we besieged the bishops. Oh, we were angry! We cried—

PAULA AND WOMEN: Give us our Diana of the Ephesians!

PAULA: So they told us that we could have Diana, but that her real name was Mary and we were to call her that! They re-dedicated the shrine to the virgin Mary. They baptized the temple! So now we say the word—

PAULA AND WOMEN: Mary!—

PAULA: But we think—

PAULA AND WOMEN: Diana!

PAULA: —in our hearts.

And today they have told us we may call her Mother, the Mother of God, the Mother of us all. You should have seen the dancing! We may pray to her. We may reach for her consoling, maternal arms. Oh, it is hard to be a woman and not have a woman to reach to.

(Beat)

Mary must have had a soul. I will have to ask the bishop!

WOMEN take costume pieces and bowl from PAULA and place them on or by coat rack.

CAROL LYNN: So a reporter finally gets to interview Mary in heaven, and he says, “Oh, Mary, I have been so looking forward to talking to you. You had such an amazing life down there on earth. Tell me, how did it feel to be—the Mother of God?” Mary casts her eyes down and she says, “Well—I was hoping for a girl!”

WOMEN open trunk, take from it a length of black chain and wrap it around GENEVIEVE, fastening an end of it to the trunk. During her scene she moves from front to side, as far as the chain will permit.

GENEVIEVE: It is said that if you look into my eyes, an enchantment will bring you evil. You may suddenly develop leprosy. Your cow may die. You may find yourself unable to copulate with your wife or your husband. If you are not wearing your bag of salt, consecrated on Palm Sunday, I would advise you not to look into my eyes.

Old Peter foolishly forgot this precaution as he was arresting Helen on behalf of the **INQUISITION**, and the next day she caused him to fall down a flight of stairs, which he proved by torturing her until she confirmed it. And until she confessed that yes, she was in love with the devil. And so were nineteen of her

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fellow townswomen, each of whom was stretched until she produced names of others, who produced names of others. It was remarkable how many women in one village had lain with Satan! Having thus righteously confessed, Helen was rescued from the chamber—and burned.

No. I will bypass the chamber, thank you. I choose to go directly to the stake. Which I will do before the sun sets.

And so you think that I have lied too? No.

A woman who is old, which I confess to being—lame, which I am most especially in the months of winter—poor, which indeed is true—a woman spotted on the skin with witchmarks, oh, I have those—and with eyes of an unusually pale blue, which you see I have—but do not look into my eyes!—unless you are wearing your bag of salt consecrated on Palm Sunday—such a woman, it is thought, must be a witch. Few of them are. But I am. And so I was called before the men of the cloth.

INQUISITION: It is said you question the authority of the church.

GENEVIEVE: The church may go to hell for all of me! It is a church of men, and it gives me no place and no voice.

INQUISITION: It is said you practice the ancient religion of pagans.

GENEVIEVE: It is true. I am high priestess to the moon Goddess.

INQUISITION: It is said you heal.

GENEVIEVE: Aye! I heal!

INQUISITION: Do you not know the blessing witch is even worse for the land than the destroying witch?

GENEVIEVE: Fool's words from fool's mouths!

They clapped me in irons then. It will not do, you know, for a woman to speak up to a man of the church.

JULIA: If you can see no femaleness in God, you will see nothing of God in the female. But if you can, you will see God in everyone!

(Picks up GENEVIEVE'S hand.)

In this hand!

GENEVIEVE: I am guilty. Maybe somewhere there is a woman who is a lover of the devil, but I have never met her. The witches that I know—we heal!

For centuries no one minded us. We were the wise women, priestesses of healing shrines, peasant healers, and they came to us, the mighty, the royal, for our knowledge and our herbs. And we kept alive—

BRUEN picks up the ocarina and plays the same notes we heard in the paleolithic.

—some near-forgotten secret of the gracious Goddess, who gives the gift of joy to the heart, who is the beauty of the green earth and the white moon amongst the stars and the mystery of the waters, the soul of Nature.

She has whispered the secrets of healing to the mothers back and back and back. I give ergot for labor pain, though the church has banned it, saying a woman must suffer, but I give it anyway. I give belladonna to stop a miscarriage. Digitalis for the heart. And when I have nothing to give, I listen, I sense, and I do what I feel. And this is what frightens them the most-- that I should listen, not to the doctrines of the church, but to the voice within.

BRUEN puts down the ocarina.

Still they allowed us for centuries. Then—

INQUISITION: You cannot heal, for you have not studied!

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GENEVIEVE: But to study I would have to go to the university, and to go to the university I would have to become a man, and to make a woman into a man is something for which I have no secrets. So when a doctor heals it is of God, and when a wise woman heals it is of the devil. When they use their magical cures, holy-water, crucifixes, it is a blessing. And when we use our charms, though our charms may work better than theirs, it is a curse. Their miracles are of saints, ours of demons. Their visions from heaven, ours from hell.

INQUISITION: Exodus, chapter twenty-two, verse eighteen—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live!"

SOUND: CLANG OF METAL; SOLDIERS' BOOTS APPROACHING.

GENEVIEVE is seized by the WOMEN AS SOLDIERS, who unchain her and position her for burning.

GENEVIEVE: Let me not scream as the flames move higher and higher. Nature, our Mother who sent me forth, wilt thou take me again, and let the wind be westerly after the flames have done, that I might become one with my little forest—and finally know—peace!

GENEVIEVE closes her eyes and falls backward as the OTHER WOMEN catch her, carry her prone to the other side of the stage and set her down standing. Their hands ritually touch her head, her shoulders and back, her chest, her hips, her legs, her feet.

JULIA: From Thee, Father, and through Thee, Mother, the two immortal names, Parents of the divine being....

The WOMEN take the length of chain and lift it high above their heads, move to the coat rack and let it clang to the floor.

END ACT ONE

12 more pages in ACT TWO

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CAROL LYNN PEARSON has been a professional writer, speaker and performer for many years. Many of her poems have been widely reprinted in such places as the Ann Landers column and *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, as well as college literary textbooks. The poems appear now in a compilation, *Beginnings and Beyond*.

Her autobiography, *Goodbye, I Love You*, tells the story of her marriage to a homosexual man, their divorce, ongoing friendship, and her caring for him as he died of AIDS. This story made her a guest on such programs as “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” and “Good Morning, America.” She has been featured in “People Magazine.” A recent book that continues her work for gay people and their families is *No More Goodbyes: Circling the Wagons around Our Gay Loved Ones*.

In addition to *Mother Wove the Morning*, Ms. Pearson has written numerous plays and educational motion pictures, including the well-known *Cipher in the Snow*. Two children’s musicals, *Don’t Count Your Chickens Until They Cry Wolf* and *I Believe in Make Believe*, were commissioned by Robert Redford’s Sundance Theater. *My Turn on Earth* is among her best-loved plays, as is *The Order Is Love*, a musical based on the pioneer experiment of communal living in Southern Utah called the United Order in Southern Utah. *Facing East*, the story of a Mormon couple dealing with the suicide of their gay son, premiered in Utah in 2006 and had a subsequent limited run Off Broadway.

She is the author of numerous inspirational books such as *The Lesson*, *What Love Is*, and *I’ll Always Be Your Daughter*. Her Christmas books include *A Stranger for Christmas*, *The Modern Magi*, *The Christmas Moment* and *A Christmas Thief*.

The recent *Embracing Coincidence*, telling forty-four of her personal stories of synchronicity, was a finalist in the Inspiration/Spiritual category of the 2002 Independent Publishers Book Awards.

Ms. Pearson has an M.A. in theater, is the mother of four grown children, and lives in Walnut Creek, California. You can visit her at www.clpearson.com.

Pronunciation Guide

ocarina o-ca-**ree**-na

teraphim ter-e-**feem**

Amenepshut ah-men-**ep**-shoot

Ptah **tah**

Gibeah **gib**-e-a

Asherah **ash**-e-ra

Jaweh **ya**-weh

Eumenides u-**men**-e-dees

Aeschylus **es**-cu-lus

Orestes o-**res**-tes

Clytemnestra cly-tem-**nes**-tra

Iphigenia if-e-ja-**nee**-a

Athena a-**thee**-na

Tertullian ter-**tul**-ee-an

Gnostic **nah**-stic

Ephesus **e**-fe-sus

Augustine ah-**gus**-tin

Hypatia *hi-**pah**-tyah*

belladonna bel-e-**don**-a

digitalis di-ji-**ta**-lis

Nauvoo nah-**voo**

Chaim **kai**-im (first vowel in throat)

Kabbalah ka-**bah**-la

Shabbat shah-**baht**

Shekhinah sheh-**key**-nah (second vowel in throat)

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu...B=tzivanu...Ner Shel Shabbat...

ba-**ruhk** oh-**tah** a-doh-**nye** e-loh-**hey**-nu...b-tzi-**vay**-nu...ner shel shah-**baht**

Auschwitz **oush**-vitz

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