



Medicine Stories Podcast

Episode 54 with Sharon Blackie

Lineage, Calling, and the Mythic Imagination

August 26, 2019

[0:00:00]

(Excerpt from today's show by Sharon Blackie)

It is myth and story and archetype and dreams that help us remember who we are, literally, what it was that we came here to be that helps us unfold that sense of calling.

(Intro Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[0:00:17]

Amber: Hello friends! And welcome to the Medicine Stories podcast, where we are remembering what it is to be human upon the earth.

I am Amber Magnolia Hill and this is Episode 54. Today I'm sharing my interview with Sharon Blackie, a wonderful mythologist, writer, speaker, human being, who is an important teacher in my life and whose work is so related to the things that we talk about on this podcast. It was an honor to talk to her and I'm psyched to share it with you.

I also wanted to share the book series that I've been reading this summer that has blown my mind and came to me through Sharon and her podcast [This Mythic Life](#). Her second interview was with the author, Manda Scott, and I am so glad I bought the first book because, I mean, I'm just gonna hold these in my heart in a very special way for the rest of my life. So it's [The Boudica Series](#). The Boudica was a real historical figure. She was a woman living in Britannia in the first century who was a warrior and a leader of her people and fought a number of successful revolts against the invading Roman colonizers. And the book is just an imagining of what her life was like, what her people's lives were like, the four books. There are four of them. And it's just, you know, if you yearn for the old ways (as you probably do if you listen to this podcast), it's such a beautiful immersion into what it might've looked like. She bases as much on fact and the historical record and archaeological finds as she can, and at the end of each book, she talks about what was fact in the book. And I love that. I love reading her process.

And then she has such an amazing way of filling in the details that make for compelling fiction, which she shared about on Sharon's podcast. So she lived alone for the six years that she wrote the books with dogs, I believe. And she developed this technique of dreaming, as she calls it,

“dreaming while awake.” And when she was in the dreaming is when the book would come to her and she would write from that state. And you can tell it’s really special writing, and it’s **good** writing, too. This isn’t one of those historical fiction things that someone’s just trying to sell a bunch of books, and they’re a crappy writer. She’s a really, really good writer, and the plotting is so good. It never seems contrived, and it never gets boring. And the way that she interweaves characters and events from the past, I’m just... I’m in awe. I’m in awe of her writing; both the actual execution of it and the content is so, so, beautiful.

So even if you do have ancestry in Britain, I think it would for sure interest you. But even if you don’t I think that anyone who yearns to understand how tribal peoples before colonization gathered information, passed down wisdom, nurtured their dreaming, nurtured their dreamers, and nurtured their warriors, as well, and just lived daily life - the materials they were using to make things I feel like so many people listening to this will really vibe with these books.

For the first time ever I’m considering starting at the beginning as soon as I finish the fourth one that I’m on right now. And I’m finding myself slowing down even though I can’t wait to turn the page because I don’t want it to be over. There’s a number of books in my life that I look back on, and I wish I could read it again for the first time (*Amber laughs*). That’s definitely how I’m going to feel about these.

So thank you so much for introducing me to these books, Sharon. And thank you so much for writing them, Manda. They are just beyond, beyond.

[0:04:53]

Amber: So speaking of Sharon and I mention a number of books in this interview, and, of course, they’re all linked in the show notes. I try to link every linkable thing in show notes when I do these episodes. And the Patreon offering for this episode is a giveaway for one spot in the online course [Sisters of Rock and Root](#) that Sharon does. This is for everyone, not just for patrons. You can enter at patreon.com/medicinstories. It will close on September 17th, so do it before then.

Sisters of Rock and Root is a unique self-study online course, an experience for women who want to delve deeply into wild stories, myths and archetypes. And so to connect in a grounded, rooted way with the cycles and seasons of the years, and the themes associated with them as they arise in your own life.

If you have more questions, the link will be there in Patreon, and you can just learn all about that course; there’s much, much more on the page there.

And finally, I just want to share a few sentences from a few different iTunes reviews here, and I think you’ll see what I’m getting at pretty quickly:

Amber is a wonderful interviewer and host. Even just her voice transmits calm and wisdom.

--

I greatly enjoy the information Amber and her guests are putting into the world. I learn something new with every episode. I do have a really hard time with her voice, though, as to my ear it sounds forced and fake.”

--

I love this podcast. I feel like we all go so deep together with Amber and her illuminating guests. Her voice is so soothing.

--

The topic and guests on this podcast are phenomenal. Thank you. But I'm having a hard time with her speech/cadence. It does feel forced? Flowery?

--

I just found you and so far your content and voice is a soothing balm. You have such a beautiful voice. Please create a guided meditation.

(Amber laughs)

Amber: So I just... it's just so interesting to me, different peoples experiences of the same thing, and the things that people feel motivated to put online (*Amber laughs*) and like, fully acknowledging that both of these reviews who don't like my voice also had very positive things to say about the show. That's nice, for sure. Thank you.

But, you know, (*Amber laughs*) my voice is neither forced or faked. It very well may be "flowery." I believe that I've never been told that before. To me, "flowery" is a compliment (*Amber laughs*). I love flowers! And, you know, I live in California. I was born and raised in California. I've definitely heard people from other parts of the country, especially the East Coast, comment on the, like, lilting rhythms of Californians, so perhaps that's what folks are feeling here. And I think that especially in the intros sometimes I'm in a more dreamlike state. Sometimes I'm in my own dreaming doing this, you know, depending on how much sleep I've gotten or where I'm at in my cycle, or who knows what else. So I can see that being something that can come through at some points sounding different than at other points. And it's hard not to feel something about negative reviews like this. This is, like, not at all the worst thing somebody said about me online. I've gone through many ups and downs in being someone with an online presence, and lots of tears. These certainly didn't make me cry, but they do make me think of wonderful quote from Georgia O'Keefe that I thought I would share because I'm sure it can benefit many people out there:

I have already settled it for myself: so flattery and criticism go down the same drain, and I am quite free. - Georgia O'Keefe

[0:09:15]

Amber: I love that. I'm certainly not there at all. I really like this idea of both flattery and criticism being irrelevant; being ignored by the person creating something and putting it into the world. Everyone talks about "Ignore the haters! Don't worry about the negative comments and stuff like that!" But very few people, I think only the wisest people, talk about "Ignore the praise as well. Just do your work. Just do your work and put it out there."

So I'm not there. I don't know if I'll **ever** get there, but I think there's a lot of wisdom in it, and I'm very grateful to Georgia for even planting that idea in my mind with that amazing quote. For the people who don't like my voice, like, I ain't mad at ya! I'm not trying to call anyone out here. I was just reading those today and thought, "What an interesting contrast between these people who have such different experiences of the same thing." My voice is what it is. It's not going to change, I hope. Something probably bad would happen if it changed so I'm gonna keep on keeping on.

And as a final, **final** note: Sharon mentions Pat McCabe or a Woman Stands Shining in this episode, and she's actually the first person on This Mythic Life podcast, episode 1 interview. And that woman is Lyla June's mother. Lyla June was my guest on Episode 38 of this podcast, so I thought that was a neat connection there.

Alright, let's get into this wonderful interview with Sharon Blackie.

[0:10:56]

Amber: Hello Sharon! Welcome to Medicine Stories.

Sharon: Hi Amber! And thank you so much for inviting me. I'm delighted to be a guest on your lovely podcast.

Amber: Oh I'm thrilled to have you. Your work has really touched me so deeply. There's clearly such a need for myth, for remembrance of the mythic imagination and for the kind of earth-connection and re-enchantment that you are teaching, and I am excited to talk about all of that today.

And I thought we could begin by having you tell us a story since you're a storyteller. This is the first story, I believe, in your book *If Women Rose Rooted*. And thank you so much for being willing to share it with us today.

Sharon: Indeed! Yeah, it is the first story. It's kind of the anchor story, I guess, for the book. For just a tiny bit of background: it's a very old story. It's believed to be of Welsh origin, originally, but it appears in Chrétien de Troyes' version of *Perceval, or the History of the Grail*, which is the first of the French romances about the Grail. And it tells quite a different story of how the land became a wasteland from the standard version which happened a little bit later in French legend and romance. And I'm just gonna read it, if that's okay, the way that I told it in the book which is topped and tailed a little bit by a character of mine, who is part woman and part heron.

So here goes, and the story is called "The Loss of the Voices of the Wells:"

Do you know the Tamar? The great river that once cut Cornwall off from the rest of the world until they built a big bridge and let the others in. Do you know its story? The story of the water nymph, Tamara, who was turned by her father into a stream and grew up into a mighty river? I was looking for the source of the great Tamar one day up among the willow trees by Wooley Barrows, when out of the corner of my eye, I caught sight of a great heron, standing in the boggy waters from which the water is known to rise. At least, I thought she was a grey heron, but when I turned to look at it in the place where I thought the heron had stood was a tall skinny old woman all dressed in grey and with straggly white hair. I imagined at first that she hadn't seen me, but then suddenly she turned her head and began to speak to me.

'I don't imagine you remember,' she said, quite apropos if nothing, 'that once the court of the Fisher King could be found along the banks of the Tamar.'

I was taken aback, but found my tongue and answered politely that I had never heard such a story. She laughed a curious sound; more shriek than laugh if truth be told.

"It's no story, girl," she said. 'In the Kingdom of Logres,' -- for that was what this land was called in those days-- 'were all the riches of the world, and they all came from the Fisher King: gold and silver, splendid furs, nourishing foodstuffs, and beautifully woven cloth, the people did not lack for comfort and beauty. But more than this, from the court of the Fisher King, came falcons and merlins, goss hawks and sparrow hawks, wolf and bear, badger and fox, all the beautiful wild things of the land. In those days when the King's court could still be found, there was such an abundance of riches throughout this land that everyone was awestruck by it.

I don't know quite how it happened, for I didn't see her move, but all at once she was standing very close to me. Her face just a couple of feet away from my own. Her eyes were black, black and shining as pools of tar and I felt oddly vertiginous as if I were being drawn in.

'It's not like that now, is it?'

Caught off balance, I simply shook my head.

'You want to know what happened?'

I nodded, of course; I've always loved a good story.

'Well, then, I'll tell you what happened. You won't like it.'

She shrieked that strange not-quite-laugh again, head tilted up to the sky and closed her eyes. She lifted her bony arms to the sky as if to call on it as a witness and then she sighed, lowered her arms and began.

'In the old days, as I was saying, the Kingdom of Logres was rich and beautiful and the land offered nourishment for all. For it was properly tended and cared for. It's a contract you see, people and the land. You care for it, and it cares for you. The source of the Kingdom's life, the life-giving blood which surged in its veins was the sacred water of the wells which flowed up out of the deep, potent waters of the Otherworld. And the wells were tended by maidens, and these maidens were the voices of the well. And this is how they served: if a traveler in need should pass by a well in those times, a well maiden would appear, and if he asked reasonably, offer him the food he liked best, and to drink well water from her golden grail. This gift was given to all, freely given in the spirit of service to the land.

But then, there came a king in the land who did not cherish the old customs or understand his contract with the land and the duties of hospitality which traveled both ways. That king's name was Amagons.'

The old woman paused and shuddered as she said his name, and I swear to you, that a tremor passed through the ground beneath our feet, as if the land shuddered, too, to hear it spoken out loud.

'As King, it was his duty to guard the land and those who lived on it. It was his duty to tend it and see that all was in good heart, for this is the sacred contract which maintains the balance of the world. It was his duty to keep the Well Maidens safe, for they were the Voices of the Wells. And without the wells, the land would lose its heart. But Amagons wasn't much a man of duty and the day came when he broke faith.

On that day a well maiden seeing him pass by, offered him food and water, as was the custom. But after eating the food and drinking the water, Amagons tore off her white dress, threw her across the stone wall which surrounded the well and raped her while his men looked on.

Tears leaked from the old woman's eyes.

'Can you imagine? Can you imagine it, girl? A maiden from the scared wells? Can you imagine how the earth itself must have cried out in horror? How the earth, itself, must have cried out in horror? How the waters of the wells would have stopped midflow and recoiled from this evil which was visited on the land? But it did not stop there. After this violation, Amagons stole this maiden's golden vessel and kept it for himself. Though it did not stay with him, for the well maiden's grail might not pass into hands such as his. He carried the maiden off and made her serve him.

Then, seeing what the king had done, and taking their lead from him, all around the country his men began to rape the other Well Maidens. So the Well Maidens no longer came out of the holy wells and withdrew from the land altogether.

And so it was that the people of Logres lost the Voices of the Wells and the services of the wells. This was how the land was laid waste. The leaves on the trees shriveled and died, plants withered, fields and meadows turned brown, and the earth lay barren and scorched. The waters of the land diminished, and the rivers ran dry, and no one could find the enchanted court of the Fisher King who had once made the land bright with his treasures.'

She looked at me long and hard.

'Do you think it was long ago, girl, if it even happened at all? Do you think because the green has grown green again and the great Tamar flows strong and true that we do not live in the wasteland still? Have you seen the great scars that men have made on the face of the earth? Have you seen the starving masses in the scorched lands and the hungry hearts amidst the richness of the cities? DO you think there are no men like Amagons?'

And I could not answer her, for I knew that what she said was true.

'The green crept slowly back,' she whispered, 'but in its heart, the land was still a wasteland, for the Voices of the Wells were lost, and the maidens and their grails were gone, and along with them passed the riches of the court of the great Fisher King.'

With that, the old woman grew silent, and stepped away from me, staring back in the boggy morass from which the great Tamar sprang. I stood with her for a while and then I

turned, and began to walk down the hill. After a little while, I stopped to look back at her, but all I saw was a large grey heron, standing on one leg, perfectly still.

[0:19:34]

Amber: I love your writing, Sharon.

Sharon: Thank you! (*Sharon laughs*)

Amber: And why... yeah, it's... yeah.

Why is that story the anchor for the book? What is the core message in the book?

Sharon: Well, the story tells, in my way of looking at it, there are many ways you can interpret a story, of course, there's never just one. But I see it as two-fold: that at the time when the land was disrespected, when the contract between the people and the land was broken, the king and the land, at the same time, women were disrespected. And so the rape of the land parallels the rape of women, and women lost their voices.

In our mythology, here in Ireland, at least, and, we believe, in many of the other Celtic countries, women were the voices of the earth. So women, female Goddesses, if you like, or the Goddesses of the land, represented the Earth, represented the Anima Mundi, the soul of the world. And this is a story about those stories being lost, being silenced. So, at the same time, as we lose women's voices, we lose our real connection and sense of the sacred in the earth.

Amber: Yeah, this idea, this truth that this oppression of women and destruction of the land are really deeply interwoven, and I think that story hits so deeply, and we all know that to be true, even if we've never consciously thought it before. On an intuitive level that connection runs so deep.

It seems to me, too, that it's easier to rape the land, destroy the earth, subjugate the life-givers of our species when we have lost our stories; when we have fallen out of myth.

Do you see this "mythlessness" of our culture here as being interrelated with the suppression of the land and with women?

Sharon: I do, indeed. I think if you look at the cultural mythology, and as a mythologist and a psychologist, that's something that I've studied very deeply. That the stories that our culture's telling itself: the stories of excess, the stories of growth, of neverending progress, the stories of more, more, more, their stories of the individual heroic, these are not what the old stories told us. This is a new thing.

And so, what I find very inspiring -- and one of the reasons that I teach these old stories -- is precisely to inspire others to this understanding that our ancient stories, the stories of our ancestors in these lands, just like the stories of many other indigenous peoples around the world tell a very different story. They tell a story of connection. They tell a story of the earth as sacred. They tell a story of a deep, of the Otherworld being deeply interwoven with this one. And they tell a story where women speak for the earth,

And again, I was working recently with Pat McCabe, a Woman Stands Shining, a Diné and Lakota tradition-bearer in the UK recently. And we found that our stories, our native stories were saying EXACTLY the same thing. This whole message about balance and harmony with the earth is intrinsic to them. And this whole message that women speak for the Earth with the voices of the earth, or, in this case, with the Voices of the Wells. And so one of the reasons why I think it's so important to work with these old stories is it gives us this sense of continuity. It gives us a sense of lineage. This is something that we don't just makeup, but we actually go back and reclaim.

[0:23:37]

Amber: That loss of lineage is so tied into the loss of the original myths, right? When we don't have the stories of our people, we're so cut off from who they were and what wisdom they can give us.

Sharon: Indeed. And I think part of the problem -- and I can only, you know, my knowledge and my expertise in these stories is very much in the European tradition, specializing in the Celtic tradition -- but when I was growing up, these stories were presented to me as simple fairy tales. They were presented as a kind of entertainment for kids. They were curiosities. They were a little bit childish, maybe, but they were never ever presented to me as a tradition. They were never presented as, like, a mythology or the remnants of any kind of spiritual practice or way of really seeing the world. They were just, **just** stories. -- and you know, it horrifies me to say those words. (*Sharon laughs*) Like, anything is just a story like that makes it meaningless.--

But they were never presented in the way they might be presented, the stories might be presented in other indigenous traditions around the world.

So we're really not taught to see them. And that's why most of my work is going back and saying, look, just look at them from a different perspective. Look at them as really shedding light on how we view the world, a different way of living than the story our culture is telling ourselves about progress and more and the heroic, that they're telling a very, very different message. And this is the message we badly need today, don't we?

Amber: Oh, we sure do.

It reminds me of my time as a religious studies major, when I was taught about ancestor-worship and animism as these sort of backward, throwback ideas. And you're right...

Sharon: -- Yeah, "primitive" --

Amber: ... Just a fairy tale. We've progressed beyond that now, as we destroy our earth.

Sharon: Yep. That is the theory. But it's interesting how sophisticated a lot of these stories are. And I'm not just now talking about the Celtic tradition, but if you go back to other Western traditions, I mean, if you go back to Greek mythology, which, you know, everybody thinks they know about Greek mythology, umm, because it is so very popular and we know the names of the Gods and Goddesses and we see them in our literature and so on, but when you actually go back to the philosophy behind them, it is surprisingly complex and surprisingly sophisticated, and surprisingly beautiful. And again, people don't go back looking at these subject areas normally for inspiration for living. They just study them as some historical curiosity.

So I think part of the thing that I'm passionate about is just trying to say to people, "Maybe our ancestors actually knew something that we've lost. That it might be something really great to regain and look at again."

Not to regress and try to go back to some conceived of long, lost golden age, because I really don't think it was like that. I think we've learned a lot in 2000 years or more, and I think our knowledge can be applied to what our ancestors know if we take the best of it. But we really, really need to go back and start again from that beginning and say, "Where did we go wrong? What is it that we can go back and pick up and learn and bring to the contemporary world?"

Amber: Absolutely. I love that idea of the study of myth and fairy tale as what can we learn? What can we learn about living and right relationship with the earth?

And as so many people are endeavoring to do that again, I think a lot of us, as an herbalist and as someone who's really in the realms of people seeking earth-reconnection is story is really easy to overlook.

Sharon: Yeah, it is. And part of the reason that we have been taught to look at the world in a culture that favors the scientific perspective -- and, by the way, I think that has a place. I had a scientific training, and it stuns me in good stead in its place -- but we're taught to value looking at the world in that way much more than we're taught to value stories, which are still just seen as entertainment. But, you know, if you go back all the way to Plato and the ancient Greeks and beyond, and you pick up a thread that runs right through the depth psychology (which I have studied and practiced to this day), and the work of Jung and the work of James Hillman, that idea that story is fundamental to the nature of the universe carries on. You know, it may not be mainstream, but it's an unbroken thread all the way through.

In this perspective, we think in the 20th, 21st -- gosh, I'm behind myself -- in the 21st century, we imagine that we make stories up. But in this perspective, we don't make the stories up at all, and it would be ridiculous and arrogant to imagine we did. The stories have an independent existence, and if we're very lucky, they happen to us.

And in this perspective, stories are literally coming from the Anima Mundi, the soul of the world. The stories, in the sense, are the voices of the earth. And that is the way that the Anima Mundi (or in the Celtic tradition, the Otherworld) tries to interact with us, just as it tries to interact with us in our dreams. You know, when we're open to images.

Jung said that images, and particularly, the images in stories, are the basic fundamental structure of psyche of the soul. And that's why I think stories are the perfect teaching tool, and at all for understanding and for different ways of perceiving the world, and if we can open ourselves up to them in a very genuine way and respect them and court them sometimes, I think they have an enormous amount to teach us about how to be in this world.

[0:29:29]

Amber: Yes, I love that idea that I learned from you about the stories having independent existence outside of us, outside of our human minds. And you quote -- is it Sean Keene?

Sharon: Kane.

Amber: Kane. Kane. Kane.

Yes, and his book and his idea that he brought forth is that myth is the power of place speaking.

Sharon: Exactly, and that is a very similar concept.

So Sean Kane was a Professor -- **is** a Professor of English at Trent University, just outside of Toronto. And he wrote a book called *The Wisdom of the Mythtellers* which is very much about the storying and telling of place. And yes, this idea that myth literally springs from the land is central to that book. In most of the ancient traditions of Europe and the near and middle east that is exactly the same kind of thing.

So if we look for an example in Ancient Sufi traditions, the mystic branch of what we call now Islam, we find exactly the same idea of those. There's a French philosopher called Henry Corbin who studied this and brought this to the attention of the modern world, and he called it the *Mundis Imaginalis* which literally means "the imaginal world." So the ancient Sufis had this idea of a world which existed and had independent existence somewhere between the world of our intellect, you know, what we think we think, and the world of our senses, the physical world which we're taught to believe is the only real one.

There lies this third world, which is called "The Imaginal World" and that is the place where the stories live. That is the place where the archetypal energies and images that are in stories live. That is the **place** -- to use Jungian terminology -- where synchronicities arise; where dreams come from. And this is really conceived of in this old tradition as an absolutely real additional world. And again, the beings in this world might be the characters we call Gods and Goddesses in some of our traditions. And again, they're trying constantly to interact with us. And this imaginal world is kind of a bridge between the world of the intellect and the world of the senses.

So that is why I think images and story help us connect; helps us literally get out of our heads, out of our intellects, back into the land, back into the earth.

[0:31:55]

Amber: It makes me think of when I had my friend Asia Suler on the podcast, we talked about the Otherworld, and I really loved this framing of it as -- because when we talk about that, we talk about the imaginal realm. It's easy to think of it as a literal, physical place that's separate from us, but really conceiving it as the here and now within us; it's this invisible entity interwoven into the visible fabric of our lives and of our physical world.

Sharon: Yeah, kind of. I mean, the Irish tradition is rich, which I've studied extensively as well as living and having my heritage here, the Irish tradition is very rich in stories of the Otherworld. And it's very clear if you study those stories properly that the Otherworld is not a place. You can reach it from various places. You can reach it under hills. You can reach it at the bottom of lakes. You can reach it by on a riverbank. You can reach it by crossing through a barrier of mist. You can reach it at any liminal, any places that we think of as liminal, are threshold zones.

But the Otherworld in the Irish tradition is very clearly a kind of overlay; it's interwoven with this one. It's inextricable. It's not internal to us at all. It is kind of like a different layer of reality that is overlaid onto this world of our senses, and you cannot have one without the other.

You know the Otherworld is everywhere. And it's conceived of in the Irish tradition, it's kind of like piercing a veil. If you're lucky, you'll catch a glimpse of it; you'll catch a glimpse of that reality. And that is why we have these traditions at certain times of the year, as well as in certain places. The veil becomes a little bit thinner and you get a glimpse of what the Otherworld really is and it's **easier** for the Otherworld then to impinge on what we think of as reality.

[0:33:56]

Amber: I love this idea that you brought to me through your writings of Rollo May: "The person without a myth, is a person without a home."

And I think we can extrapolate that into the larger culture and say that a culture without a myth is a culture without a home. We just have so many fragmented myths in the West now, and so many (like you talked about) unhelpful myths that are worshipping this idea of endless extraction and growth.

Sharon: Exactly. And if you look back at the old stories, they're teaching stories, and they're teaching us a different way of being in the world.

So one of my favorite folk tales in the Irish tradition is this story of a cow called "The Glas Ghaibhleann," and she was the cow of plenty. And you see similar stories in other traditions, too, in Europe. And the story goes that the Glas Ghaibhleann had milk for everybody. You know, she was an Otherworldly cow, and she could feed the entire country of Ireland, and in times of war, she would go around and feed the armies and make sure that everybody was nourished. And she would always allow anyone to take milk from her if they came with a pail, a bucket, she would allow them to take a bucket full of milk from her; anybody who came.

And the story goes that one day someone came with a sieve and milked her through the sieve into bucket after bucket after bucket, and because, of course, the sieve was never full, the Glas Ghaibhleann kind of didn't know when to stop, but as soon as she realized that this was happening, she flew off and was never seen again in the land of Ireland.

And that story is very much a teaching story about not taking too much; about knowing when it's enough; about living in balance and harmony with the land. And these are the old stories of our tradition, of our ancestral lineage. And, you know, they tell us a different way of being.

I often talk about the post-heroic journey in contrast to the phrase everybody knows, which is Joseph Campbell's Heroic Journey, which is very individualistic and killing dragons and swashbuckling, and, you know, all of that malarky. And just to say, okay, a post-heroic journey, if

we really thought about that, it really hasn't served us well because it's killing the planet as well as us.

What does it need to look like?

That post-heroic journey needs to be about balance and harmony and not taking too much.

Amber: Just imagine: if, from birth, children were raised up with simple, simple, small folk tales like that and vetting those values into them, instead of what we get today: TV and iPads (*Amber laughs*) and all the wrong messages.

Sharon: Exactly. Yeah, to me it's a really sad thing that people have lost that tradition of telling stories to kids.

And, you know, it's funny. I live in a very rural and remote part of Ireland, which is the Gaeltacht and one of the Irish speaking areas of Ireland, and to an extent, those traditions are still there. So quite often, if we have people to dinner or guests or whatever, we will ask them to exchange a story, or to offer a poem or a song or something from their tradition, and we'll do exactly the same, so that those old stories, those old poems, those old songs are not forgotten.

They're not just curiosities; they're actively part of a living tradition in a house and your interactions with people.

And if I were to encourage people to do any one thing, it would be to talk about those stories; set up a story circle, ask your friends when they're around for dinner which are their favorite stories, and it's really interesting. It sounds like a little bit of a soppy thing to do, but people can get quite animated and quite excited by some of these things. And again, it brings -- it just makes them more real. It makes them more real, and it makes us believe that they might have greater relevance.

Amber: I love that idea. That's beautiful. I'm gonna do that! (*Amber laughs*)

[0:38:00]

Amber: I'm thinking about this idea of mythos, the land speaking, and your story of connecting with Pat McCabe from different traditions but finding such similarities. And I'm thinking that -- you know, overall, sort of generalizing -- a lot of the myths of indigenous people, people who are living close to the earth, our ancestors, are going to be telling very similar stories, right?

Because it's not super complicated to be in right relationship with the earth and to be tending to it in a regenerative, giving way. But because landscapes are so different, the stories and the myths are going to be filtered through the literal, physical attributes of the landscapes from which they come, which is what makes them so meaningful to the people living in those landscapes.

Sharon: Indeed. And if you look at -- if we just take the characters in stories -- for example, the characters that we think of as archetypal, archetypes are a very, very old idea, but Carl Jung was

one of the ones who expressed it (I think) most clearly, perhaps, and most recently, and he looked at archetypes as potentials.

So an archetype was kind of like a pattern. It was like a very basic, fundamental pattern of being, but it was expressed. An archetype would be expressed differently in different cultures.

So, for example, if we think of the wise, old woman archetype, that is a basic pattern. When we say those words, we all know that there is such a thing (*Sharon laughs*). They're in all the old stories, and even today we still see them in our culture. But the clothes that that archetype wears are different from culture to culture. So in some of the Native American traditions, it might be Grandmother Spider (or Spider Woman, depending on how they call her). You know, the old woman who weaves the world into being?

In the Irish tradition, the wise old woman is the Cailleach, which literally means "old woman," and she is the creator and shaper of the land. In the Irish tradition, she is very much associated with high rocky places, with wild weather, a lot of rain, a lot of wind, the kind that we have here. She's very... she's kind of like a geotectonic force, like a geological force. She almost personifies the land through its very, very long ages, and she makes sense here. The Cailleach makes sense here precisely because she is so very much associated with our particular weather and our particular kind of rock.

But in another place, there will be another old woman archetype, whether it's Grandmother Spider, or in the Scandinavian countries, the Norns, the kind of equivalent of the Three Fates were old women. Everybody has their own representative of these archetypes.

And to me, the real trick, the real connecting trick is to find the archetypes in your place; the ones that spring from the land that your feet are actually planted. And I believe that our old ancestral stories, particularly in your part of the world whose families might have migrated there in the past, the ancestral stories can kind of train us; train us into how to find the archetypes of the places where we find ourselves planted now. They give us clues. It's almost like a way of looking at the world that makes it easier for us to find the archetypes in our places.

Amber: Yeah, and for descendants of colonizers in America like myself and I think most of my listeners, probably, it's kind of, we kind of have this opportunity where we can look to our ancestral myths to learn. And we can also look to the myths of the ancestors of the land where we find ourselves, where families have landed. And, you know, we can just have an opportunity to learn and to deepen in both of those ways.

[0:42:11]

Amber: I would love to learn more about Cailleach? Cailleach? Say it again. (*Amber laughs after the mispronunciations*).

Sharon: Cailleach (*kal-ee-ach*)

Amber: Cailleach. Yes, I've only ever read it. I always wondered how it was pronounced correctly.

(*Sharon laughs*)

I know you have a close relationship with this archetype, with this woman, and I'd love to hear about how you met her, and how she has informed your life and maybe your work.

Sharon: Yeah, well she is really intrinsic to the Scottish and Irish Gaelic traditions. I mean, there are stories about her **everywhere**. It's interesting. She's an interesting character in that she doesn't appear very much in the form that we know her in the old texts, in the old -- Ireland has a **huge** body of very ancient literary texts, but she doesn't very much appear in those literary constructions. But she's **HUGE** in folklore.

Even to this day, there are stories about the Cailleach in every part of Ireland and many parts of Scotland. And so she's kind of gone down through the ages where other gods and goddesses have been lost by the wayside, she never has. And so the theory is that she is a very old goddess. She was probably pre-Celtic, and, in fact, in many, many parts of Europe there are traditions of kind of "giantesses" of old women who were associated with the creating, the shaping of the land. So that is, to me, where she comes from. She's very much... she's kind of the old woman of the world archetype. She keeps it. She makes it.

In the Scottish tradition, particularly, she is a keeper of the balance. Again, we come back to this concept of balance has been critical in the Celtic tradition. So she -- there are many folk stories about her stopping a hunter from taking a female deer in the season where they're likely to be pregnant, or stopping hunters from taking too many deer and insisting that they just take their share. And so she's a very, very fierce character.

There are lovely stories about her, again, in the Scottish tradition: dancing across the mountaintops with a staff, and where she strikes her staff on the ground, ice and frost forms. So she has this association with the winter season. Sometimes she's portrayed riding on the back of a wolf. Sometimes she's portrayed with a herd of wild pigs running behind her and just this fierceness with hair everywhere, and sometimes she has tusks, and her face is blue. The idea of a very fierce old woman who will not tolerate the rape of the land, who knows when to say, "No. Enough. Not in my name," I think is a very, very powerful one for me, as it seems to be for many, many women in this part of the world now.

I really began to understand her stories when I moved to an island called the Isle of Lewis in the upper Hebrides of Scotland, which is kind of as West as you can get before you run into Saint Kilda and then all the way to your part of the world. And she was very imminent in that landscape, again, stories about her, places named after her, and I lived in a place that was very remote. There were very few people and certainly no one that I had anything in common with. And so she kind of became a friend, if you like, you know? I would talk with her as I walked the landscape, the old story that said she had created and done.

Yeah, so in that way, I became very connected. Through her stories, I became very connected to the land.

[0:45:46]

Amber: It's interesting because I was thinking before we got on the call about what I really like about your work and your writing and your presentation of myth and story is that it's fierce. It's not precious. It's not dumbed down. It really is all-encompassing.

Hearing you speak about her, I feel like maybe she's sort of a guiding archetype of your work. I can feel that energy in the way you filter all the myths that you share, not just hers.

Sharon: Yes, I think so. You know, I think one of the things that I love about my mythology is that in the stories there are consequences. So the rape of the Well Maiden story, there are consequences of that act. The world became so... a wasteland. You know? You don't just get away with it. And it's not that I'm talking about punishment or retribution.

In Irish law, for example, the ancient law, what we call the "Brehon Law" was very, was almost always a restorative justice process, you know? So you didn't always get punished for crimes; you didn't always get locked up or your hands chopped off or whatever if you stole a neighbor's cow, you had to produce a cow. You had to restore the balance in the world if you had committed a crime. And that sense of justice of restoring the balance is critical. But there are consequences; you don't just get away with stuff.

And I really think that that is important in a world today where it's very easy to slip in our horror and our grief into what I always think of (if you forgive me for putting it this way) but kind of an excess of "love and light." You know? And it doesn't really recognize that there is a balancing darkness to every light. There are other emotions which sometimes are appropriate in their place. And it's kind of an all-encompassing mythology which says "no fierceness."

Sometimes we have to stand. Sometimes we have to say, "No. I'm not having this. Not in my name." And I love all those very fierce women of all ages in Celtic mythology who do that, who represent that kind of wild, fierce, instinctual sense of what is right, and are going to do whatever they can to uphold that sense of rightness and truth.

So yeah, the Cailleach, to me, is one of those characters. And as I grow into approaching elderhood, I'm 58 now, she becomes a real guiding spirit for what it might be to be a good elder. But that is the subject of my next book which I'm just writing now (*Sharon laughs*) so I'm not going to go too much into detail on that.

Amber: Oh wonderful! Yeah, I like to say "love and darkness" (*Amber laughs*). "Love and Darkness" (*both laugh*) as well.

Sharon: There's a richness in darkness.

Amber: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah, I don't know. That's just a place where I like to be dwelling; where I like to sit and be open to what comes through, like the dreamtime and things like that. And this makes me think of your concept of the mythic imagination. I did your online course, *The Mythic Imagination*, a couple of years ago, and just really loved it. Loved getting sort of a larger perspective on all the ways that story informs our lives and cultures.

[0:49:21]

Amber: And yeah, can you just speak a little bit about engaging with the "mythic imagination" and what it is to have an active mythic imagination and how this can inform our daily lives?

Sharon: Yeah, I think that is the key phrase. It is about informing our daily lives rather than seeing it as something separate that we dabble in from time to time. And, again, coming from that old

Western tradition from Plato onwards and delving into that psychology, as I have done academically and professionally, that really feeds into my practice. It's not just an academic and a kind of "history of ideas" kind of thing. For me, it is very much about a way of being in the world.

In an upcoming course that I'm about to launch, which is a deeper version of that one you did, I called it "Courting the World's Soul," and to me, that is what the mythic imagination is. If we find ways of approaching the world mythically, of underlying, or understanding the mythic patterns that are running beneath the surface of our lives, of understanding the archetypes that call to us, and try to figure out why then we are engaging with that world; with that anima mundi, with that Mundus imaginalis, imaginal world (whatever you want to talk about it), which is bringing us more deeply into another world, another level of reality which is an add-on to world. -- and, by the way, I should make it clear that is in **no way** to suggest that the physical world isn't good. It is. But there are other levels of reality that we can trace.

And I think for me, it all goes back to that very ancient concept (again, Plato and beyond). The belief in that time was that every soul chooses to come into this world in a particular place and in a particular time in order to express a particular sense of calling. And calling is not about job. It's not vocational profession. To put it very, very simplistically for sake of speed, it is about giving. It is about offering to the world a gift that you uniquely have.

So each of us in this beautiful old way of looking at the world would be a unique expression of the cosmos. We have a particular gift that nobody else has. We have a way of being that nobody else has, and we get to come here and do that.

But in our culture, we are not taught that this is what we're doing. We're taught that we're like some kind of random blot on a peculiar landscape that there is either no meaning, or the meaning is dogma in a religious sense. And I love this idea that every one of us came here to be something; to do something, whatever it might be, to express something that matters to this world. And I believe, as Plato and the ancient Greeks did, as Carl Jung did, as all of the people in my depth psychology tradition believe, that it is myth and story and archetype and dreams that helps us remember who we are, literally, what it was that we came here to be, that helps us unfold that sense of calling.

And so I really believe that it is absolutely critical for each of us to remember that sense of meaning, to reclaim that sense of meaning, that there is a point to this, there's a purpose to this, that we have something unique to express. And these are the ways in which we can tap back into that sense of who we are. So that kind of, to me, is what the mythic imagination is about, and why it is so absolutely critical to find -- techniques is the wrong word -- but find practices, find possibilities for informing us about all of that.

Amber: Yes! Yes, that is so much of what this podcast is about.

[0:53:25]

Amber: And that reminds me of this word "noticia," the attentive noticing of the soul? I believe it was James Hillman who wrote about this and brought it to my attention. It's that idea that notice what your soul notices. Notice what you're drawn to and pull towards. For me, and I think for so many others, just a deeply human thing, that those things tend to come to us through myth, symbol, and archetype. And they are showing us our unique path on this earth.

Sharon: Exactly. And Hillman, one of the things that Hillman said when he spoke about, well, he wrote about this concept of “calling” was that there were clues. We come into this world having forgotten that. And that’s part of the fun, (*Sharon laughs*) Or not always the fun. That we... there are clues that are offered to us. And one of the clues that he said might come in the things that you really loved in childhood, you know, particularly the stories that you really loved.

And this has been really important in my own life because from a very, very tiny child I always loved fairy stories; always, always, always, when things went great. And I **loved** with a passion the wise, old woman characters: the Baba Yaga in the woods; the wise old woman in the woods; the solitary character who knows, who understood the mysteries. It was deeply connected to her place, who smelled a little bit mossy and a little bit rooty, and who didn’t put herself out there, but people would find her when they needed her. I **loved** that character!

And it’s become kind of clear to me, as I’ve grown older and struggled through various journeys of my own, that that’s really kind of, you know, envisage my own calling into the future; that this is an archetype that I really feel that it’s important for me to embody, in the particular way that I might do it, and I had it when I was a child. And I think that that’s a very simple example of this. But there are clues all the way through our lives and often they come in these archetypal beings in what Jung called “the big dream;” the dream that you have that you know that there was a message in that dream. It wasn’t just some random outpouring.

And to learn to look for those things. To learn to look for the synchronicities, to understand what is a real synchronicity and what is, frankly, just a coincidence; to look at the symbolic messages, whether it be tarot or astrology, these archetypal languages. I don’t mean for divination purposes. I mean for understanding what an archetype is and how they offer themselves in the world. This is a practice, and we are not taught it in our culture. And so that is really what I’m trying to do in teaching the mythic imagination.

It’s just teaching people to look at the world in slightly different ways; to be looking for the clues, to know what the clues are, where they might come, what’s real, what’s kind of like imagined, and it’s such rewarding and lovely work.

[0:56:25]

Amber: It really is, and you’ve piqued my curiosity: in your own life how do you tell coincidence from synchronicity?

Sharon: For me, it comes back to being grounded. And by grounded, I mean, literally, in your place.

So for example. Let me think of a simple example. A simple example: I remember being on a retreat here in Ireland with someone who loved hares and saw hares as her particular animal. Hares meant something to her. She loved what a hare represented. And the first morning that we were there, she came in running, very excited, she had seen a hare right outside where she was staying, and it was a message for her.

And I didn’t have the heart to tell her that hares were **everywhere** in that place. There were hares everywhere; there was nothing unique; there was nothing different about that hare being there in that place in that morning, even though she saw some meaning in it.

And if we don't know our places, if we don't know the creatures on it, then it's very easy to see symbolism and meaning where, actually, this is just the backdrop where symbolism and meaning happens. Do you see what I'm trying to say?

So, somebody could come here in my place and say, "Oh my goodness! I saw a crow today." And it would just be like, oh come on. (*Sharon laughs*) You see a crow, like, a hundred times a day. If you knew that, if you know where crows were, if you knew what crows did, and then you saw something different, then you would be telling synchronicity from background noise.

To me, a lot of it is very much about understanding, literally, the ground of our being. Whether it be the place where our feet are planted, or what is happening in the world around us, it's about observation. It's about acutely observing the world around you; observing the people around you so you know when something is different. You just know.

Amber: Yes. And that doesn't mean it's not special when you see an animal that you love, but maybe is not such a deeply meaningful synchronicity.

Sharon: Exactly. I think the animals that connect us to our places are really very important. And that's in no way to denigrate that connection. To see that as the something that was unusual means that you don't really understand. You're not really attuned to the place and the spirit of a place.

And so that's what I think is very important: to really, really understand the world around us, to really be watching all of the times so we can pick up on these clues when they come to us, then we are grounded rather than just always in our heads. Otherwise, the imagination is always in our heads. Do you see? We're never actually grounding it in the world where we live.

Amber: Yes, that's a really helpful distinction. As someone who's interested in all this stuff, clearly, I look back on some things in the past that I thought were, like, amazing synchronicities, you know? And I'm like, I think I was just too in my head with that. Not really grounded in my body.

And yeah.

Sharon: Yeah.

Amber: So that's helpful.

[0:59:38]

Amber: It reminds me. Okay, I want to transition now into speaking about your most recent book, *The Enchanted Life*. And you wrote about the mythic imagination and everything we've talked about in *If Women Rose Rooted*, and then you heard from people who are like, "Great. How do I actually do this? I've got the concept down, but how do I bring this into my real life?"

So you wrote *The Enchanted Life* which is really, yeah, how to enchant our daily lives. And you write about this idea, one way to do that is through "body-fulness" as opposed to "mindfulness."

Sharon: (*Sharon laughs*) Yeah, I have a strange relationship with mindfulness.

(Amber laughs)

Umm, I think it's very wonderful. But what it does, I think it -- obviously, there are many ways of teaching mindfulness. There are very wonderful ways, and there are some that are not quite grasping the meaning of where it came from which is very much the Buddhist tradition. And I think it can lock us on much -- I think if it's not done well, it can lock us inside our heads. You know? The idea is that mindfulness is supposed to get you out of these trains of thought where literally our thought just runs away with us, and we're unconscious most of the time, but if it overly trains you to be too conscious of your -- the inside of your head, of your kind of bodily functions, of your breathing or whatever, then it is, in a sense, preventing you (if it's done badly) from opening up to the rest of the world around you, if I can make that distinction.

So I think that, really, to me, what is needed is a kind of deeper noticing of the world than this constantly coming back to my breath or constantly standing back from my thoughts and letting them kind of happen without me. I think it's much more a sense of engagement with the other animate beings in the world around us, and the way I look at it (and certainly in my ancestral tradition), that means everything.

Everything is animate. Everything is waiting there to be in relationship with us. And I worry that mindfulness, because it brings us back to our own body, our own breathing, to our own thoughts, prevents us from entering into relationship with the land which badly, badly wants to be in relationship with us.

So that's kind of my gripe, I suppose, with some of the ways in which mindfulness is taught.

Amber: Yeah. I love it, and I love the idea of body-fulness. Just that one word helps to shift something for me, and I love the idea of enchantment, too. Can you tell us the etymology of this word?

Sharon: Yeah, it comes from the Latin "incantare," literally, "to sing into."

And so it's really, to me, that is a very active process. You're singing yourself into the world in a sense and it's coming back at you.

In the old Celtic traditions, incantations (and, again, you know, part of the same word) were absolutely critical. They really believed that if you said certain things or sung certain things at the right time and the right place in the right way, that you'd literally change the fabric of the universe. So this sense of really being involved in the world, of singing yourself into it, is really what enchantment is about.

It's one of those words -- a little bit like myth -- that is used in so many different ways, and some people use it in a very airy, fairy, not in a very grounded way. But to me it's really not. It's a very embodied way of approaching the world. It's really very much about being in it with your senses and with more than your senses, rather than this kind of slightly magical, airy, fairy, kind of way that some people use it.

Amber: Yeah, I love that word SO MUCH, and the root of it there.

[1:03:39]

Amber: So, another of my favorite practices that you give in this book as a way to re-enchant your life and just come back into daily, again, really simple deeply human relationship with the land around us, is the idea of telling stories to the land.

Can you tell us about you how you stumbled upon that?

Sharon: Yeah! I thought about it really, when I was in Lewis. As I said, there were very few people there, and I had no one to talk to. My husband was off doing kind of different things at the time, and I felt out of relationship with people, so I only had a relationship with the land. And I talked to it. I would walk the land in the mornings with the dogs, and I would talk to a mountain that I saw as the Cailleach personified. I would talk to the sea. I would talk to a seal. I would talk to the crows. And that was what really made me have the deepest, deepest relationship with any place that I've had in my life.

And I think that sense of letting the land hear your voice is such an important one because we speak to people we're in relationship with. That's how we do it. Speech is an important part of it, isn't it? We tell each other stories about the way we are, about what happened to us, about the way we think the world is. And so if we're really going to see the land and the creatures in it as beings that we can have relationships with, then I think that exchange of voices is a big part of it.

So I love to sit, and -- if I'm in a new place, and I'm trying to get some sense of it -- I will either sing, or say a poem, or tell a story and, you know, I'm way past the point of feeling silly doing that now (*Sharon laughs*). And it just makes me feel as if it's a genuine relationship rather than something on which I'm plunked as a kind of a background drop to in my very human life.

Amber: Right, and if we're going to be cultivating this kind of relationship with the earth, and espousing the belief that the earth is real and sentient, or alive and sentient, and the plants and the animals, too, but then we're not speaking out loud to it (*Amber laughs*), to all these things...

Sharon: Exactly! Exactly. And in the book, I mention a wonderful example by a sadly, now dead Australian anthropologist called Debra Bird Rose when she was talking about the -- she did a lot of work with the Aboriginal peoples in Australia. And she said they had this concept of Country -- and this is almost Country with a capital "C." It's very specific to them, which kind of, in a nutshell, represents the spirit of a place -- and she was talking about this lovely idea of if you went into Country (which would be a region, say, a tribal homeland), if you went into Country, and you didn't acknowledge it, then Country would think that you were sneaking around. And I thought that was perfect!

Yes! Absolutely, you have to say, "Hello. Here I am," just as you would introduce yourself to a person you just met. "Here I am. Here's who I am. I'll tell you a little bit about something of myself," and it's just a respectful way of engaging with a place, and I thought that was absolutely brilliant. I loved that.

Amber: Absolutely, yeah. 'Cause the land knows you're there. This came up in my second interview with Asia Suler, that when the birds start chattering, they're talking about you. They don't do that when a human hasn't walked into a forest. This was something she learned in a bird-watching class she took. And then we know when there's mycelial mats underneath the grounds, that that

mycelium is weighing you with each step that you take. It's aware that you're there, you know. And that this is the neural network of the earth.

Sharon: For sure. Yeah, for sure. Every ancestral, every indigenous tradition knows this to be the case, and yeah, it's kind of funny that we are just rediscovering it, really.

But I think the real thing is about relationship. It is an understanding that the land really wants to be in relationship with whoever is on it. Wherever you come from, however long you are there for, that it really wants to be in relationship with you. And this sense of engagement in any place where your feet are planted, whether it's for five minutes or for all of your life, that there are, to me, there is a duty to engage. There is a responsibility to engage with it because I do often think, you know when I called this course and some of the work that I'm doing now "courting the world's soul," it's not just a courtship where we try and introduce ourselves and try to reconnect.

I believe firmly that by turning our attention to things we are keeping those things alive. The land is thirsty for relationship. The earth is thirsty for relationship. And the idea that by being very vividly in a place and of a place and engaging with the beings on that place, I do believe that in these really, really challenging times we are doing... that is enough to keep our places alive. If we only ever do -- you know, we only ever do think about our role in the world or calling, perhaps, these grandiose acts, we must "save" things. We must do big deeds. And I believe that the most important thing that any of us can do, all of us, any one of us could do is by keeping our places by talking to it, by praising it, by telling it how much we love it and how much we appreciate the air and the food and the water and the companionship of all the creatures on it.

And that is kind of like, you can just imagine this great light in the world's soul, in the imaginal world, shining and shining because we're feeding it. And that is an image that I hold whenever times get so tough that I begin to feel that it's all pointless. I keep remembering. I hold this image in my mind that by talking to a crow, I'm making that light shine a little bit brighter, and I won't let it die.

[1:09:43]

Amber: So helpful and hopeful and beautiful and encouraging. Thank you, Sharon.

Tell the people about your books, your upcoming workshops, your online courses, everything that you have on offer.

Sharon: Well, the best way to find out is to go to my website, which is www.sharonblackie.net, and you'll find pretty much everything you need to know there. I do have a major course which I'm doing for the first time in a more interactive way with live webinars and live teaching online for people who can't come and do in-person workshops, which is called "Courting the World's Soul," and that is starting in October. SO that is kind of core teaching for the way ahead. And I have a new book coming out called Fox, Fire, Wolf's Skin which is a set of fairy tale reimaginings of shapeshifting women. And you'll recognize some of the characters in there from Hans Christian Andersen's Snow Queen to Baba Yaga, but it's a little bit of reimagining them for the times. So they have a little bit of an ecological edge. Of course, they have a slightly feminist edge, and it's all very much about bringing, about reawakening that sense of wildness both inside us and outside us.

Amber: I'm so excited for that one. I loved your version of the selkie, the selkie myth in *If Women Rose Rooted*, and yeah, just really excited to see what you do with those old stories and archetypes. And the online course, as well, sounds amazing.

And then you'll be California in September, too, for any of my fellow Californians who are listening.

Sharon: Yeah, I'll be at the Esalen Institute, doing a weekend workshop there, and I'll be at beautiful Point Reyes, giving a day-long workshop and an evening talk. So yeah, I'm really looking forward to being back there again.

Amber: Yes! Okay, Sharon, thank you so **very** much. It was truly an honor to talk to you today.

Sharon: Oh it was a pleasure, really. That was a lovely discussion. I really enjoyed it.

(Exit Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[1:11:41]

Amber: Thank you for taking these Medicine Stories in. I hope they inspire you to keep walking the mythic path of your own unfolding self. I love sharing information and will always put any relevant links in the show notes. You can find past episodes, my blog, handmade herbal medicines, and a lot more at MythicMedicine.love. We've got reishi, lion's mane, elderberry, mugwort, yarrow, redwood, body oils, an amazing sleep medicine, heart medicine, earth essences, so much more. More than I can list there. MythicMedicine.love.

While you're there, check out my quiz "[Which Healing Herb is your Spirit Medicine?](#)" It's a fun and lighthearted, but the results are really in-depth and designed to bring you into closer alignment with the medicine you are in need of and the medicine that you already carry that you can bring to others.

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The music that opens and closes the show is Mariee Sioux. It's from her beautiful song "Wild Eyes." Thank you, Mariee.

And thanks to you all. I look forward to next time!