



Love, Nature, Magic: Shamanic Journeys into the Heart of My Garden

Maria Rodale

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Maria Rodale's *Love, Nature, Magic* is an intriguing essay collection about shamanic communication with animals and plants in a garden.

An avid gardener, Rodale found herself wondering what some of the unwanted species found in her garden might be trying to tell her. She put her experience with shamanism to use in order to find out. What resulted is this book of lessons about nature, life, humanity, and love.

Most of the essays span a period of thirteen months, from 2021 to 2022. They include shamanic conversations with a variety of native and non-native species (in fact, many are considered invasive) that proffer valuable insights. Although the lessons vary in their specificity (for example, mugwort teaches Rodale that plants rule the world and killing one's enemies doesn't really destroy them; whereas vultures teach her that people are not their bodies and that cultivating love is everybody's foremost purpose in life), most all come down to the same overarching message: humans need to learn to love both nature and each other, instead of trying to control and eradicate that which is unfamiliar or unlike them.

Structured like a shamanic journey, the book brackets its essays with chapters on topics like opening and closing sacred spaces. The book doesn't presume any previous knowledge of shamanism or gardening; it introduces elements of both to set the stage for how the two connect throughout the volume. The prose is conversational and inviting, and self-deprecating humor abounds, balancing out the seriousness of the messages shared. All these elements come together into a loving and engaging book.

The thought-provoking essays collected in *Love, Nature, Magic* gather shamanic lessons from nature for the benefit of humanity.

CAROLINA CIUCCI (January / February 2023)

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