

Published in Lilipoh Magazine

MEMORIES OF A COUNTRY GRANDMOTHER **EASTER AND COW HORNS**

Rudolf Steiner knew a thing or two and a lot of it was pretty exotic.- like filling up cow horns with fresh manure in the fall and burying them in moist ground through the winter. He saw things the rest of us can't see, the profound transformation through this process in the womb of Mother Earth as she embraces the animal, plant, and mineral world and works her magic through interaction with the cosmos. We dig up the horns around Easter and take the rich, fragrant substance the transformed manure has become and make a solution to spray over the land. It helps to increase the moisture content and vitality of the earth. It is a practice at the heart of bio-dynamic farming.

We do this work on our White Feather ranch in the Sierra foothills in California, home to pines, oaks and meadows and a small herd of bio dynamic beef cows. One crisp October day, warmed with mellow beams from the southern sun, found my seventeen-year-old-grandson and another boy, both with slightly curled lips, taking pungent fresh manure, scooped up that morning from the corral where the cattle feed, and spooning it into horns. Three-year-old Jonas looked on with wide-eyed astonishment. "Grandma, that's cow poop! He then exclaimed again, incredulous at the whole affair, "COW POOP!"

"Yep, Jonas, it is cow poop," I affirmed. Then I explained to him how the horns would be buried in the ground and then the good magic things would happen. Intrigued, he proudly brought the filled horns to me to put in the hole we had dug, doing his part in the "big boy" work. We teased the older boys about what they might relate to classmates when asked what they had done over the weekend.

At home, Jonas explained to his mother the day's events his eyes shining with importance. And bursting with the amazement of it all. "Mom! They took these BIG horns and they put COW POOP in them." And then he proudly exclaimed, "I helped put them in the ground and cover them up. And then (and with this he strutted triumphantly around the room opening and shutting his outstretched hands for emphasis). And then the MAGIC HAPPENS, the MAGIC HAPPENS!"

Yes, that is what we shared. The magic of the cosmos working, the powers of the heavens, stars and planets, combining through the tapering concentration of the cow's horn with the fecund crystalline powers of renewal in the winter earth. The creating of substance to nurture beautiful, healthy life-filled vegetables and flowers. Human deeds, human alchemy enhancing nature's alchemy.

Last spring our, cow horns were dug up by Kim. Kim who was in the advanced stages of cancer. But she wanted to do this, and she didn't want help. So as she worked,

shoveling with capable moves, I spoke to her of the cosmic feminine, of the horns of Goddess Isis, the horns of the woman's uterus where new life begins, horns of wisdom reaching for the cosmos for the renewal of the planet. She smiled with satisfaction and completed the task alone, ten horns emerging from deep in the dark soil through her labors... Then we clowned as she held a horn to her head. We laughed and hugged. She died five weeks later.

This fall as we prepared the horns I brought some of last spring's transformed preparation (called 500) for Jonas and the boys to smell; rich, sweet, full of musky vitality and life. Later, we would stir a handful in a bucket of water with Jonas helping, and walk together across the pastures, flinging the mixture with big paint brushes, enjoying the magic droplets sparkling in the sun as they fell to earth.

Rudolf Steiner in his profound wisdom, gave us the gift of this healing work that unites heaven and earth. Kim, now in heaven, who lifted the riches from the earth at Easter tide, the child, Jonas, who was burying the next treasure of horns in fall.....all of us joining the cycles of the most basic, literal, renewal to the planet, old to new, age to youth, earth to heaven, star to crystal, sorrow to laughter, despair to hope,--death to resurrection - the blessing of spirit in life!

Nancy Jewel Poer, October 2003