

# *Ceremony for Completion of my Practice*

The Yurt. 55 La Perouse Street, Griffith, Canberra. 1 April 2023



## *Preparations*

In mid-February 2023, I received news about my health that meant I would be unable to continue my practice as a Jungian analyst and psychotherapist.

I offered a final session to each of my clients. After these poignant, significant hours I began planning a ceremony for completion of my practice. Gratitude flowed through me whenever I turned my mind to this task.

On 1 April, I cleaned the yurt and gathered flowers, fresh herbs and other plants from the garden. I placed flowers in the entrance shrine around the Mother Rock, then began the ceremony.

## *Invocations*

I waited upon the sweet quiet.

I listened for the harmony that inspires me.

I called in the voices that guide me.

I invoked my Indigenous European ancestors. I remembered recurrent regenerative themes in their visual art that point to songs they sang and stories they told through tens of millennia. I recalled their knowledge of potent, enduring laws for living well with the natural world and each other. I invoked the generative undercurrents of this heritage that never die; that bubble up and are sustained in every loving family, kind community and variety of caring work, including those I had the good fortune to land in.

I acknowledged my beloved first country, Aotearoa New Zealand, her First Peoples, my grandparents, my mother and father, my sister and brother, my whanau and friends. I invoked the sounds of dear voices, accented in New Zealand; of water and wind and weather; of birds singing in Papatuanuku's forests and coastal places. I remembered the farmlands, towns and cities of my childhood and young adult life, and Papatuanuku's hills and valleys, mountains and plains, rivers, lakes, fjords and seas. I remembered Ranginui, the Sky I was born under.

I acknowledged the beautiful country where I have made my home of more than 40 years, and Canberra, my city. I acknowledged the elders of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people with the song I wrote to Hazel Hall's words, which A Chorus of Women sings to open many of our meetings as well as some public gatherings:

*This land is the song of Indigenous peoples  
All those who lived here and all their descendents  
Song of the creatures and spirits of Dreaming  
Song of the children and culture they lost  
  
This land holds the lines of its earliest owners  
Custodians who respected the Earth  
Lines of their knowledge and wisdom of elders  
We ask to walk with you in concord and peace*

I invoked my teachers, remembering particular elders who gave me privileges and responsibilities for recognising, receiving, carrying and passing on significant healing traditions and cultural lineages. I recalled my happiness in university studies, professional training and research projects after discovering what I was supposed to be doing with my life. I gave thanks for all I learned for the work from my family, friends and the people who came to consult with me. I gave thanks to colleagues from whom I learned much, including those who have minded me with such thoughtful and loving kindness during my illness. I promised to continue loving and living by the gifts I have received.

I sang the chant with which I open my modest daily yoga practice ...

*Ong namo guru dev namo  
Sat nam*

I bow to the wisdom of all that is  
I bow to the wisdom within  
I bow to the sacred truth of each person who has visited this place

## *Ceremony*

I had prepared a list of the people who have visited the yurt to see me professionally. I welcomed each of these persons in turn in this way ...

I opened the door and greeted her/him/them by name. After placing the sprig of a plant and a flower on their chair I sat opposite, remembering this person in loving meditation. I prayed for their wellbeing. When this felt complete, I opened the door and said 'fare thee well' and their name. I closed the door quietly, as I have done at the end of countless sessions, watching as they walked up the path. Then I placed the plants in the large red vase or round the base of the fireplace.



In the mid-afternoon, Pippa came to get me. She led me outside.



'Come on,' she said.

Back in the yurt, the liveliest, most joyous music from The Wellsprings kept singing in my mind as I recalled the experiences of people I have listened to -- some for one or two sessions; some for many years ...

*Lament and laughter and lullaby*  
*Songs of Love*  
*Songs of Life*  
*Wellspring harmony*  
*Sweet mystery*  
*You are the midwife moving death to rebirth*

See [www.chorusofwomen.org](http://www.chorusofwomen.org)

A Chorus of Women will record my song The Wellsprings later in 2023.

Several times I went to the garden and replenished the cut plants on my desk.





The vase filled with sweet and bitter herbs, some sprigs of olive and wattle, and a tuft of lambs' ears, loved since childhood by one yurt visitor.

At dusk, when all was complete, I sat in my chair for a long while. In quiet gratitude, I cherished these dear people and my teachers, colleagues, family, friends and all the artistic spirits and women of the Chorus who continue sustaining me in so many ways. Then, for all that is dying and for the never-ending potential for regeneration, I spoke the promise of The Spirit of the Valley from Chapter 6 of the *Tao de Ching*. These beautiful, true, fertile words that I learned by heart a long time ago are the ancient source of The Wellsprings words and music ...

*The Spirit of the Valley never dies.  
It is the root of all Heaven and Earth,  
The mother of the 10,000 things.*

*Going far away, it returns.*

*Frail, frail it is,  
Hardly existing.  
But touch it.  
It will never run dry.*

Finally, I rang a crystal champagne glass with a yurt teaspoon to complete the ceremony.

