

Babblings by Charlotte Babb

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"One side of my psyche argues for relatedness, rootedness, and stability. Another side wants to go on heroic crusades, have great adventures in exotic places, travel to the other side of the world, and live like a gypsy. Yet another personality wants to build an empire and consolidate my power systems. Sometimes these conflicts seem irreconcilable, and we feel torn apart in the conflicts of desires, duties, and obligations."

--Robert A Johnson

Inner Work: Using Dreams and Creative Imagination for Personal Growth and Integration, p. 37

In my grad school classes, we are doing deep inner work, interacting with various myths and finding where our life stories interact with the ancient stories. I have found myself stuck with Inanna in the underground world with her angry and vengeful sister Ereskigal. One thing I have learned from this myth, and from other similar stories from many unrelated cultures is that the dark underworld ruler is also the guardian of the riches of the earth--gold, copper, fertile soil, the water of life. Meeting the Shadow and working through our conflicts is important for our individual growth as we work towards identifying and manifesting our futures.

Active imagination, a form of writing, is very therapeutic for allowing the writer to deal with his or her own conflicts in a very personal way. Some issues can be illuminated and resolved with only a few days work. But others open up a life-long story of the other lives that each of us could have taken, often a paradoxically different path, one that would negate what we have achieved in our physical life. Writing these stories, even if one does not do the work to make them publishable, allows us to live out these parts of ourselves, allows us to give voice to the parts of ourselves that we often put out back, away from our public life. Writing our deep stuff gives us a safe path to experience those challenges and opportunities that we probably should not try to live out in the real world.

But how much more authentic our work if we have plumbed our depths and looked, not only at our skeletons, but at the most noble parts of our shadow sides--our inner warriors and princesses, our inner mages and priest(esse)s, our inner executives and crafts workers. This work is not about destroying the ego. In fact, an intact and healthy ego is necessary to allow one to consider the desires that would take one away from the job, the family, the lifestyle, without acting on them.

How lucky we are to be writers, to be able to develop the skill to tell these stories and live them out through our work with our readers, and to give our readers a glimpse inside themselves by looking deeply into our own mirrors. What we do is important work.