

## **I Will Kiss You, Mother Earth**

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I am a mother.

But there are times, I admit, when I feel like howling at the moon. Like running through the forest. Like playing the seductress, the lover. Like obtaining and holding in my hand a sort of spirit-power over myself and all I behold, like some kind of zany queen without a country. A kind of Mother Goddess – Gaia, if you will. And, oh, I will.

Like Gaia, I find my role as creator empowering, in and of itself. It is a role I have played exactly twice, and with it comes a certain understanding of the universe, a connection to the very cosmos through these little beings I've brought into existence. Being a mother inherently causes lots of terrific paradoxes to occur, the very like sending one's brain reeling a bit – a strange marvel, motherhood, hauling along with it foibles and joys, simplicity and greatness, complete acquiescence and total power. On top of all this, there is a very real feeling of extraordinary unity with nature and all living things, leaving one quite overwhelmed – in a good way, of course. (Merci, mere Gaia!)

So, why then do I struggle with this longing for a freedom I do not have, a way of life that will enable me to fly away from the strains of parenting? How can a woman, finding a reflection of Gaia in her eyes when she gazes in the mirror, overcome such dissatisfaction? How can you get over the restlessness, knowing that the very core of you is immersed in this great love of your children? Ah, this love of children – a love that hurts, a love that captures, unrelentless and somehow confining. Does this surrender of independence lead to a surrender of the self?

Or does it lead to something else?

Perhaps when you surrender something so profound, a rather unpredictable pattern emerges. Perhaps, in fact, you find a certain quality of freedom on a completely different level, a freedom that releases you from yourself. Maybe the real freedom is in the letting go of your vanity, your tendency toward feeding the ego. The absolute, throw-your-hands-in-the-air type of release might, in fact, cause you to let go of all the self-consciousness, the petty squabbles, the self-absorption, the extraneous self-examination.

I find myself concentrating instead on these lovely, smooth faces. These small people who laugh easily and fall into hugs often. Whose emotions and instincts are so much on the surface, right at their fingertips, that they pull out of me a gift of sublime connectedness, the likes of which I've not experienced before – (oh, maybe when I was a child.) A gift of an energy that pulls out the creator in me, that pulls me toward a deeper relationship to the earth and, in a sense, all of its inhabitants.

So then, this is freedom. This is weightlessness.

And after all, it's a trade, the barter system, between us – mother and children. I give them a sense of themselves, to a certain extent. I help them along, I hope, to gain a perspective as they try to finagle their lives in this crazy, confusing, often frightening world. And they help me to lose myself, to let go of it all, something that they'll have to struggle with when they become adults and forget what freedom means.

And in the midst of all this madness, this tug of war with the meaning of freedom, Gaia, Mother of all things, gently lays her cool hand on my forehead and grants me a connection – with the night, the sky, the forests, the strong and steady rhythm of the ocean – all that I know of as good and powerful forces, all blossoming in, and inhabiting, my heart.