

May 5, 2012  
Lunar Beltane Ancestral Journey  
Barbara Bickel

At 6:15am this morning I set out to journey in my back yard in Carbondale Illinois. Since an inland hurricane blew through our small town 3 years ago, we have lived without the large cypress tree that cooled our mossy backyard. A new landscape has emerged as new light was available. Diverse foliage, some planted perennials and a variety of trees (cottonwood, maple, sumac, tulip, cypress, red bud, oak, elm, mulberry) have sprouted and grown prolifically each year. This space has become a diverse eco-system and home to many creatures and insects, in stark contrast to our neighbours' monoculture lawns regulated by man and machine mowing,

Over the past 2 years my partner, Michael, has lovingly dwelled with this small plot of forest, keeping the invasive English ivy, poison ivy and other aggressive weeds species at bay, and has forged a managed pathway in the shape of a lemniscate. Walking this path of infinity in the early hours of the morning, wit(h)nessed by Michael became the ground of my ancestral journey.

As I walked, winding my way repetitively in/out/around/through the young forest, I touched the plants and trees along my way. Drawn to them as they are drawn to the sun. I felt shaped and guided by them and a sense of ancient pre-verbal intimacy became clear to me as I moved among them. As I pulled myself through the forest by holding onto the slim tree trunks I was returned to my primate ancestry, to an understanding of the trees and their influence in my evolution to becoming human.

Stopping to sit in the forest on a wooden drum made of a tree trunk, I entered the chorus of birds. The resident red-bellied woodpecker offered the finale to my journey with his echoing pecks on our housetop's rusted dysfunctional TV antenna; poignantly restoring the human-made tool of communication within the Natural realm.

