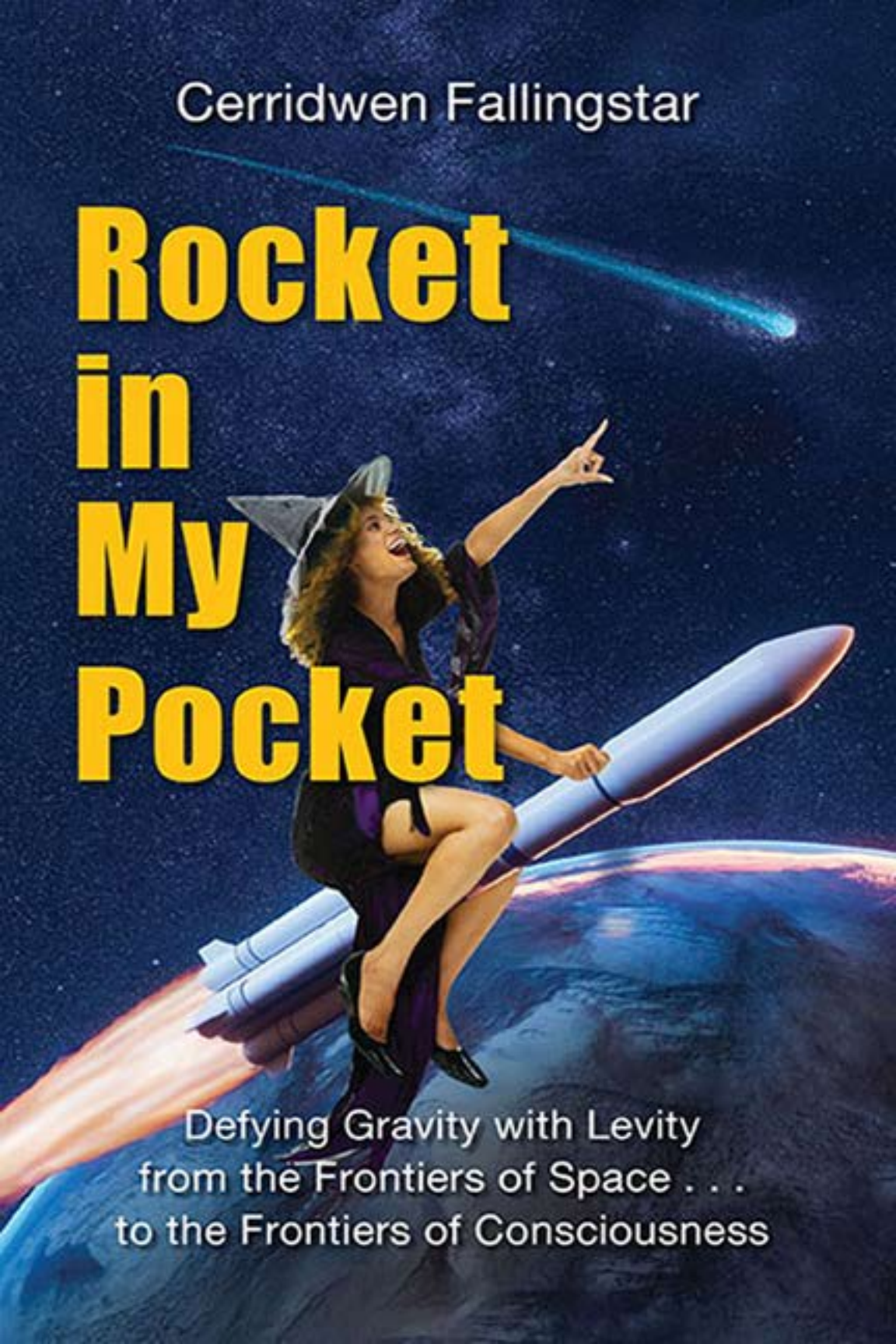


Cerridwen Fallingstar

Rocket in My Pocket



Defying Gravity with Levity
from the Frontiers of Space . . .
to the Frontiers of Consciousness

Praise for Broth from the Cauldron

“Shamanic Witch Fallingstar (*The Heart of the Fire*) explores her life of spiritual seeking and magical experiences in this intriguing collection of reflections. Readers into witchcraft will find much to enjoy in this touching and humorous memoir.”

—Publishers Weekly

“Pagans, spiritualists and other open-minded thinkers will relish this memoir.”

—Kirkus Reviews

Throughout her life, Cerridwen Fallingstar has gathered plenty of wisdom and is ready to share her anecdotes and personal beliefs with those feeling a bit lost in life. Telling the story of her life and her personal transformation to a spiritual being, *Broth from the Cauldron* details what it means to leave a world of denial behind and embrace a new kind of awareness. For anyone interested in personal growth, this new non-fiction book will show you the way to finding a better version of yourself.

—Life Goals Magazine

A Wiccan reflects on her lifetime of magic in her thoughtful memoir *Broth from the Cauldron*, a text full of guidance for living a more spiritual life.

Fallingstar’s writing is conversational and welcoming, encouraging introspection. Her entertaining stories illustrate deeper truths about how others should be treated, regarding the wisdom of animals, and about the power of intuition.

Fallingstar suggests ways for others to live their own spiritual lives, in tune with the earth, nature, and all its creatures

—Foreword Clarion Reviews

Broth from the Cauldron [She Writes Press, May 12th 2020] offers a collection of good-for-the-soul stories told from one of today's most inspirational spiritual leaders.

As deeply personal as it is powerful, *Broth from the Cauldron* is a memoir assembled of memories and moments shared by Shamanic teacher and Wiccan Priestess Cerridwen Fallingstar. Intended as a “journey through mystery and magic”, Fallingstar guides her reader through carefully curated moments of her own life as she uses her own trajectory through teachable moments of compassion and wisdom to inspire the same in others — and it works.

While Fallingstar grounds each story within her unique brand of spiritualism, her own journey is as unique as it is relatable, which is something magical in itself: it elevates the book from a collection of essays into something that feels so genuinely heartfelt and inviting that the experience of reading feels like having a warm conversation with a close friend.

—The Nerd Daily

Astounding miracles and magic intricately thread between and through the sorrows of tragedy and loss, weaving a magnificent tapestry of a life fully lived. Compelling and impactful, the story is a powerful testament of how listening and following your inner voice can open up your world and inspire you to live it!... this motivational book succeeds in creating a healing balm for a battered spirit. Skillfully and expertly written, it is an exceptional piece of work.

—Reader's Favoirts

How does a Republican girl, raised in an agnostic scientific household, become a Pagan Priestess? *Broth from the Cauldron: A Wisdom Journey Through Everyday Magic* (May 12, She Writes Press) by Cerridwen Fallingstar shares profound insight in this charming and wholly unique memoir of meditations on topics such as perception, fear, anger, trauma, healing, magic and gratitude.

—Women Writers, Women's Books

“With her trademark humor and intellect, Fallingstar shares soulful reflections and wisdom gathered through a lifetime of experience ... like a *Wiccan Soup for the Soul*.”

—C.E. Tobisman, author of *Proof* and *Doubt* winner of the 2018 Harper Lee Prize for Legal Fiction

“Magic dreams and Wiccan rituals cross into the real world in Cerridwen Fallingstar’s latest book *Broth from the Cauldron*. Her stories spin a spell that leads us on a dance into the mystery of life’s wonders and synchronicities.”

—Lisa Alpine, author *Dance Life: Movin’ & Groovin’ Around the Globe* and *Wild Life: Travel Tales of a Worldly Woman*.

“Many of us will find our thoughts and instincts confirmed within these pages, from a writer who beautifully articulates the journey.”

—Ellen Evert Hopman, author of *Being a Pagan: Druids, Wiccans and Witches Today*

“*Broth from the Cauldron* is a delightful, mesmerizing, and potent healing brew. While you can certainly sip these short chapters slowly, you’ll probably find yourself drinking in chapter after chapter because the writing is so profoundly nourishing ... you’ll find a rich blend of the experiences and stories that helped craft Cerridwen from a powerful young girl into one of the most inspirational and wise warrior goddess priestesses you’ll ever encounter.”

—Heather Ash Amara, author of *Warrior Goddess Training* and *The Warrior Heart Practice*.

“These deeply personal stories from the life of a true modern shaman and Pagan Priestess will tear your heart out and lay it on a griddle—in a good way. These are tales of wonder, of power, of magick ... and of love. Each of them brought tears to my eyes, and I guarantee they will touch you in the same way.”

—Oberon Zell, author of *The Wizard and the Witch*, Founder of The Church of All Worlds, *Green Egg Magazine*, and the Grey School of Wizardry

Praise for Cerridwen Fallingstar's first book: The Heart of the Fire

"Ms. Fallingstar's writing style is so captivating that you find yourself totally engrossed by the first chapter. I simply could not put this book down. I felt not so much as if I were reading a book, but that I was experiencing Fiona's life with her, as she did. A MUST READ! Highly recommended."

—The Index

"The author brings us an exciting novel filled with edge of the seat adventure which is hard to put down."

—Omega New Age Directory

"*The Heart of the Fire* is an unforgettable book, compelling the reader, arousing passionate emotions on every level. Read it and you will laugh, love, cry and remember."

—Green Egg Magazine

"Fallingstar is a consummate story-teller who brings her characters to life in all their fullness and complexity. She lets the characters define themselves through their relationships, especially those involving Fiona and her lovers — Annie, her young gypsy friend; Sean, the son of the village laird; and Alain, the magical wandering minstrel. I cannot remember the last time that a book moved me so deeply."

—Fireheart Magazine

"*The Heart of the Fire* is a gripping and disturbing look at a vanished world and way of life. The story of Fiona and Annie, their families, Alain the minstrel, the dour priest, the half-pagan nobility and the other people of the village is a story that deserves to be heard."

—Rave Reviews

"In the business of writing, few authors can successfully write about their own experiences and have them accepted by the reading

public. Very little has been published by authors who were actually writing about experiences they had in another life-time. Taylor Caldwell claimed to have lived her own novels, but nobody really believed her. Fallingstar, on the other hand, augments her past life experience with meticulous research into the period and a stunning use of detail. There are no anachronisms in *The Heart of the Fire*. A vividly written and compelling book that is next to impossible to put down.”

—New Directions for Women

“The characters in this book are rich and full. They cover a wide spectrum and are all completely believable. And the writing is brilliant. The love scenes are the most erotic I have ever read, and the pace and timing of the story are flawless. Highly recommended.”

—Sage Woman Magazine

Praise for *White as Bone, Red as Blood:* The Fox Sorceress

“Cerridwen Fallingstar’s second historical novel, *White as Bone, Red as Blood: The Fox Sorceress*’ is by far one of the best reads to come along in a while, historic fiction or otherwise ... the book has what any reader wants in a story: love, deceit, betrayal, murder, passion and even erotica. The ending will leave readers thirsty for the sequel, *White as Bone, Red as Blood: The Storm God*.’

—Francisco Book Review

“... an intricate tale of treachery and love that is so realistic, it feels as if the reader is actually a living witness to the tale. It is historical fiction at its very best ...”

—The Historical Novel Review

“Seiko Fujiwara, a potential sorceress, may just hold the key to the salvation of her country. But fulfilling the prophecy is never an easy thing ... an interesting and excellent read.”

—Midwest Book Review

“With superbly crafted characters and riveting action, *White as Bone*’ is sure to have readers reading and re-reading passage after passage ... An engaging, highly recommended offering from a promising new literary talent.”

—Apex Review

“This is such a beautiful book. I started and finished it in one day. I couldn’t put it down. I highly recommend this book ... but with the warning to be prepared to be swept away by the excellent narrative all the way to the last page.”

—Goddess Oracle

“Cerridwen Fallingstar is a writer to keep an eye on. I find myself eagerly awaiting the sequel, *White as Bone, Red as Blood: The Storm God.*’ Very highly recommended.

—Silver Chalice e-zine

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Rocket in My Pocket

Defying Gravity with Levity,
from the Frontiers of Space ...
to the Frontiers of Consciousness

Cauldron Publications
www.theheartofthefire.com

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Dedication

For my mother, Jane Lesh,
Who taught me to love literature.

For my father, Michael Lesh,
Who taught me to love nature.

And for my grandparents,
Arbie and Edward Farmer
Who taught me to reach for the stars.

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Introduction



People like to say, “It’s not rocket science.” But in my childhood, it was all rocket science. My father worked, first for McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft, then for Aerospace, designing rockets for space travel and warfare. “To boldly go where no man has gone before,” as the famous TV show intoned. My father was a magician of the sky, exploring the unknown. For all I knew, the folks on Star Trek were probably his co-workers.

It was my father who talked John and Bobby Kennedy down from the ledge during the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was my father who designed the first big “spy in the sky” satellite that could take enormous, detailed pictures of Soviet military installations. He moved us from Southern California to upstate New York for that covert, top-secret operation in which Aerospace and Eastman Kodak cooperated to make my father’s blueprint a reality, though the cover story was that Kodak simply “made him a better offer.” The Cold War was the core reality of my childhood, immediately followed by the sexual revolution in my teens and twenties, when the rockets became metaphorical fireworks. This led to a lot of fireworks at my house, as my father’s blood pressure shot up like it was Cape Canaveral every time a young swain of mine appeared.

There was never a better time to be young than the 1970s before AIDS, when the new paganism took root and feminism and gay rights were ascendant. There were orgies and demonstrations, there were sweet dreams and flying machines and infinite hope for the future. But my family didn’t see it like that.

When I moved abruptly to the left politically, protesting against the Vietnam war, followed by working for feminism, gay rights, and saving the environment, my Republican parents lamented that their little apple had fallen far from the tree. Or, as my southern grandmother Mimi said; “If you find an orange under an apple tree, it’s not a miracle. Something’s not right.”

In 1975, when I was twenty-two and working as a journalist for a feminist newspaper, my editor came in and said, “There’s a witch on trial for fortune-telling.” My hand shot up. “I’ll take that story!” And so, my life of growing up in a scientific household where all religion was held in contempt, took a dramatic swerve.

My life as a political pagan priestess and teacher looked outlandish to my father, like a refutation of his conservative, scientific views. But, at heart, we wanted all the same things. A healthy planet, a safe world for our children. We wanted truth and justice to be the American Way, though we disagreed on whether they actually were or not. He yearned to explore physical, outer space. I spent my life exploring metaphysical, inner space, slipping through the gateways at the intersection of the betwixt and between.

My father helped save the world once. I’ve spent my life attempting to do the same.

This apple may have rock-and-rolled on down the hill. But it came from this tree. So, get ready for takeoff. The rocket is on the launching pad.

10—9—8—7—6—5—4—3—2—1—Blastoff!

Rocket Man



My father wanted to be an astronaut. But he settled for work behind the scenes as an engineer designing the rockets for the space program in the '60s. He had only a B.A. — in history of all things — from Occidental, but he had somehow wangled a job with Douglas Aircraft, where his innate brilliance at design landed him a job at Aerospace designing top-secret satellites and rockets for the government during the height of the Cold War space race. Most of Dad's co-workers had PhDs, often more than one. When they asked where he got his doctorate, he would smile thinly and say, "The school of hard knocks." At company picnics, when the other men stripped down to their T-shirts in the hot sun, my father kept his long-sleeved shirt on rather than reveal the tattoo he had gotten while in the army — a hand and arm holding a sword with "To the Victor" inscribed beneath, something he felt marked him out as a lower-class roughneck among his more educated peers.

When my father was applying for the job at Aerospace, men in dark suits with dangerous eyes came to inspect our house, to interview my father and my mother as well, probing for any hazardous secrets they might possess. A man in my father's position had to have top-secret security clearance, had to be clear of a penchant for drugs or boys or prostitutes or anything which could be used to blackmail or extract information. I remember the pages-long form he filled out with my mother's help. At the end of the questionnaire was a final inquiry: *What else do you think we should know about you?* To which my father responded, "I am pure as the driven snow." My mother argued with

him about that answer. Suppose the vetters had no sense of humor? But my father insisted; the response stayed, and my father was hired, he always believed, on the strength of that final question.

Like most men in suits fighting the Cold War, my father fancied himself a James Bondish sort, minus the martinis and loose women, of course. He had a briefcase with a combination lock. He was flummoxed when I took one look at the lock, dialed the numbers to 007, and popped the case open. Transparent to a nine-year-old! He changed the combination, and I never figured out the new one.

Though I had never seen a James Bond movie (way too risqué and violent for children!), Bond's dapper image saturated the media and Dad's workplace reeked of secrets. My father wore a big identifying badge with his picture and had to punch in secret numbers to get the Aerospace building doors to open. The security guards seemed friendly enough—to my father!—but any fool could see they were wearing guns. Once inside, I remember ordinary offices, and drafting tables where people just got to draw all day—rockets and space-ships!—but coolest of all was the area of my father's specialty: the computer room.

Computers at that time were huge, floor-to-ceiling affairs, making *pockata pockata queep* noises and spewing out reams of paper with seemingly random sets of numbers—possibly code—emblazoned on them. Computers were new technology, and my father was an early programmer, privy to the mysteries of the bulky, wayward beasts.

As my father showed our family around, beaming with boyish glee, I realized that when he went to work he just got to play all day, unlike my mother and all the other mothers I knew, who spent their days changing diapers, mopping floors, and throwing Lipton soup mix onto pot roast and canned fruit into Jell-O molds shaped like garish rainbow palaces.

Was it too late to change into a boy?

I realized how seriously my father took his work after I gave him the mumps. The mumps had been agonizing for me for two days. My brother and sister barely registered fevers. But then my father got sick, and mumps in grown-ups can be a serious malady indeed.

One night, my mother burst out of their bedroom, where my father had been sequestered, unseen for the past three days.

“Your father thinks he’s a computer!” my mother cried. “I have to go to the drugstore to get him medicine! Stay here and take care of the kids and DON’T GO IN THE BEDROOM!”

“What’s wrong with Dad?” my sister whimpered after Mother raced out the door. “Nothing,” I said, thinking quickly. “Just a touch of ... computeritis. And mumps.”

I read a couple of picture books to my siblings. “O.K., you guys just lie down on the couch,” I said, tucking blankets around them. “I’m going to take Dad some water.”

My sister objected, “But Mom said ...”

“She meant you and *Mark* couldn’t go in. She left me in charge. Close your eyes now.”

Annie pinched her eyes shut.

I got the glass of water and walked into the bedroom. My father was thrashing a bit on the bed. His eyes were glassy and his neck was swollen as wide as his head. In between bouts of panting, he was making familiar noises.

“*Pockata Pockata queep! Pockata Pockata queep!*” followed by the whirring noise of the printout.

My father was turning into a computer!

I walked out, still carrying the full water glass, and poured the water down the sink. Far from being terrorized, I was excited. No one else had a father who was a computer.

Meanwhile, my mother had been pulled over by a cop while speeding on her way to the pharmacy.

“I have to get to the pharmacy before it closes,” she sobbed hysterically. “My husband thinks he’s turning into a computer and I have three little children home alone!”

Cowed by her sincere hysteria the cop said, “O.K., O.K., ma’am, just go, get home to your kids ...”

My mother tore in the door, wild-eyed, and rushed to the bedroom. I don’t know what magic bullet the pharmacist gave her, but by the next day, much to my disappointment, my father was no longer a computer.

Computers were not my father’s sole source of data. He and his friends constantly observed all flying creatures for hints on how to make their flying machines more aerodynamic and efficient. They watched

films of all sorts of birds and insects in flight, slowing them down so they could observe every aspect of take-off and landing.

Bumblebees were a thorn—or maybe a stinger—in my father’s side. He and his colleagues studied them intensively. They were simply too fat, too round, too unwieldy to get off the ground. Their wings were too small, and they didn’t beat enough times per second. Bumblebees were the most aerodynamically unsound creatures ever. A fat kid with a kite had a better chance of getting airborne. Dad and his fellow engineers ran every possible program and diagram, and they proved it conclusively: bumblebees cannot fly.

Except, of course, they do.

One sunny day, I saw my father sitting motionless in our garden. A bumblebee bobbed around him like a drunken dirigible. With the melancholic air of a doctor informing a patient he has a terminal illness, my father whispered bitterly, “You can’t really *do* that, you know.”

You’d think he would have been more cheerful.

The bumblebee didn’t have a PhD either.

Nuclear Family



“All right, kids! That’s the signal,” Mrs. Adams chirped over the alarm sounding in our classrooms. “Under your desks!” The rest of my first-grade class quickly scuttled under their flimsy plywood-desk chairs.

I stood up. “Mrs. Adams? Um, actually, getting under our desks won’t help in case of a nuclear attack. See, if the bomb lands anywhere close, we’ll be vaporized instantly. If it’s farther away, but close enough to break windows or collapse the ceiling, then we will all die of radiation poisoning anyway. You can’t hide from radiation under a desk.”

A wail emerged from red-haired Jenny, followed by snuffling from a few other kids. The alarm stopped. “O.K., you can come out from under your desks now and get back to your work,” Mrs. Adams said with cheerful determination. “Now Cheri . . .” she took me by the arm and led me outside the classroom.

“Now Cheri,” she said again sweetly, “why would you say those mean things in our class?”

“It’s not mean, Mrs. Adams, it’s just the facts. My dad works for Aerospace, and I heard him and his friends talking. You can’t hide from radiation. The drills won’t work. Even the bomb shelters won’t work.”

“Cheri, I understand your father works for Aerospace—such a fine young man. But we don’t want to frighten the other children, do we?”

“So the drills are just pretend?”

“Well, I wouldn’t say that . . .”

“If it’s just pretend, let’s pretend that Superman is going to save us. Then we won’t have to waste time squeezing under our desks.”

“We are not going to talk about this anymore. When the alarm sounds, get under your desk and please do not mention the word radiation in front of the other children again, understand?”

I nodded. I liked Mrs. Adams and wanted to please her. She let me sit in the corner and read by myself when the other kids were puzzling over *Dick and Jane*. I had taught myself to read at the age of four, and could not believe we were forced to go over and over the alarmingly boring Dick and Jane, the most tedious tots who ever cursed literature. I had tried to liven things up by emphasizing the emotions in the paltry script—“Funny, funny Spot!” I would laugh, miming hysterical laughter. This had led to another outside-the-classroom conversation.

“Now Cheri, just read in a normal tone of voice. We are not auditioning for a play.”

“I’m just trying to make it more interesting. It’s so boring. They do the same thing every day. Can’t we read *Robin Hood* instead? The other kids are never going to learn to read if they think it’s all as boring as *Dick and Jane*.”

Hence my delightful isolation at a corner table where I could read my own library books to my heart’s content.

Mrs. Adams survived the first grade with me, as she had survived forty years of challenging children. But then she switched to teaching sixth grade just as I entered that year, and I was in her class again. It was a fiasco; Mrs. Adams was a perfect first-grade teacher, but in no way equipped to handle the surly, rebellious tweens her little angels had become in the ensuing five years between first and sixth. I, of course, never acted out and did my best to be a perfect student, but in my own way I continued to be a constant trial for her. When my mother was hospitalized for a week, Mrs. Adams called me over to her desk after the bell rang.

“Is your mother having a good rest?” she asked with syrupy concern.

“Oh, she’s not resting. She’s in the hospital for a hysterectomy,” I informed her.

“Well, we don’t say *that*, it’s not polite.”

I was flummoxed. My mother had presented the situation to me in an utterly matter-of-fact manner. When she explained that a hysterectomy involved removing her uterus, I felt two things. One was sadness that my first home on this earth was going to perish. The other was concern. One of the girls in my scout troop said her father had divorced her mother because her mother didn't have sex with him anymore. "Won't Daddy miss having sex?" I asked timidly.

"Oh, heavens! We'll still be able to have sex after I heal. I would miss it too! Don't worry about that!"

While I did not understand much about the mechanics of sex, I knew it was important to my parents, the mysterious glue that kept our household so much happier than that of most of my friends. When my father would look up at the warm summer sky, grin, and stroke his hand along my mother's spine, saying, "It's a mighty sexy day today, pussycat," I knew that it was my mother's beauty, not the hot yellow sun that made it a sexy day, and I felt proud.

"Why don't we talk about hysterectomies?" I asked Mrs. Adams.

"We just *don't*."

But the conversation that finally broke Mrs. Adam's spirit involved mathematics.

While normally a good student, I was hopeless at math. The multiplication tables had been grueling, as it involved memorizing boring numbers. "I shouldn't have to do this," I grumbled in a fit of psychic foresight. "We're going to have computers to do this for us when I grow up."

My father laughed. "You know how big the computers are at my office," he said, referring to the huge floor-to-ceiling gizmos he operated at Aerospace. "Are you planning to live in a mansion?"

"They'll be smaller by then. We'll be able to carry them around with us."

"Ha!" my father snorted. "I'd like to see that."

But horrid as multiplication had been, division was far worse. Especially long division. Mrs. Adams showed saintly patience, but my father had been attempting to teach me "new math" at home and it was a case of too many cooks having totally wrecked the pot. The more my father yelled and screamed that with my I.Q. I could easily do this and I was just refusing to learn in order to drive him crazy, the more

traumatized I became, until the very sight of numbers caused me to break into a cold sweat.

Mrs. Adams was as mystified as my father about why anything having to do with numbers should cause me to collapse into a state of mental polio. One afternoon after school, as she attempted to explain my failures on a math test, I burst out, "I'm going to be a writer anyway. Lots of writers hate division. Swineburne *hated* division!"

Mrs. Adams regarded me skeptically. "Now Cheri, what makes you think Swineburne hated division?"

Drawing myself up tall, I quoted the passage I had memorized, taking comfort in the fact that a famous poet felt the same way about division that I did.

*"Time turns the old days to derision;
Our loves into corpses, or wives.
And marriage and death and division
Make barren our lives."*

"Division is making my life *barren*, Mrs. Adams."

She shook her head hopelessly. "Go home, Cheri."

Cerridwen Fallingstar



Cerridwen Fallingstar is a pioneering Priestess in the feminist spirituality movement she helped ignite in the 1970's. She is a renowned lecturer and teacher of magic and shamanic spiritual development classes. Cerridwen has appeared on programs including AMLA Morning Show, the Oprah Channel, and National Geographic, in addition to many films and literary anthologies. She is the author of three historical novels based on her past lives: *The Heart of the Fire*, set in 16th century Scotland, and *White as Bone, Red as Blood: The Fox Sorceress*, and *White as Bone, Red as Blood: The Storm God*, set in 12th century Japan. Her first memoir, *Broth from the Cauldron: A Wisdom Journey through Everyday Magic*, was published in 2020. She lives in Marin County, California.

Books by Cerridwen Fallingstar

The Heart of the Fire

Fiona McNair is a peasant girl in 16th Century Scotland. Her grandmother, the leader of the village coven, is teaching her herbcraft, healing and magic, as she follows the visions that lead her in a path of shamanic powers known as Witchcraft. Fiona grows to be beautiful and falls in love - with her wild Gypsy friend Annie; with Sean, the youthful, wealthy and potentially dangerous son of the village Lord; and with a minstrel who still dares sing the old songs of magic and power. Then, the Witch-hunter comes.

The Heart of the Fire is a suspenseful blend of magic, romance, danger and eroticism. Even more, it is an authentic past-life chronicle, a unique and revealing window into the lives of historical Witches from their own viewpoint: who they were, what they believed, what all of us lost as the magical web of life was torn asunder.

\$15.95, Kindle \$8.99

White as Bone, Red as Blood: The Fox Sorceress

Book One of the *White as Bone, Red as Blood* saga. In twelfth century Japan, Seiko Fujiwara, a young woman believed to be a sorceress, is caught in a deadly conflict between the Heike and the Genji, two clans battling for control of the throne. The peaceful Heian period is giving way to the rise of the Samurai; Japan teeters on the edge of a time of darkness. Seiko's mother, priestess of Inari, the deity of abundance and sorcery, predicts that if Lord Kiyomori's daughter Tokushi's closest friend, becomes Empress and gives birth to the next Emperor, their world will be saved.

If he lives ...

It is Seiko's responsibility to make sure the prophecy comes true. Journey with Seiko as she navigates through a world of assassins, palace intrigue, warfare and enchantments, struggling to honor her giri, her sacred destiny, while longing for the fulfillment of love.

\$19.95, Kindle \$9.99

White as Bone, Red as Blood: The Storm God

Book Two of the *White as Bone, Red as Blood* series brings the saga to its shattering conclusion. In twelfth century Japan, Seiko Fujiwara, a young woman believed to be a sorceress, is caught in a deadly conflict between the Heike and the Genji, two clans battling for control of the throne. The peaceful Heian period is giving way to the rise of the Samurai; Japan trembles on the edge of a time of darkness. Seiko's mother, priestess of Inari, the deity of abundance and sorcery, predicts that if Lord Kiyomori's daughter Tokushi, Seiko's closest friend, becomes Empress and gives birth to the next Emperor, their world will be saved.

If he lives ...

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