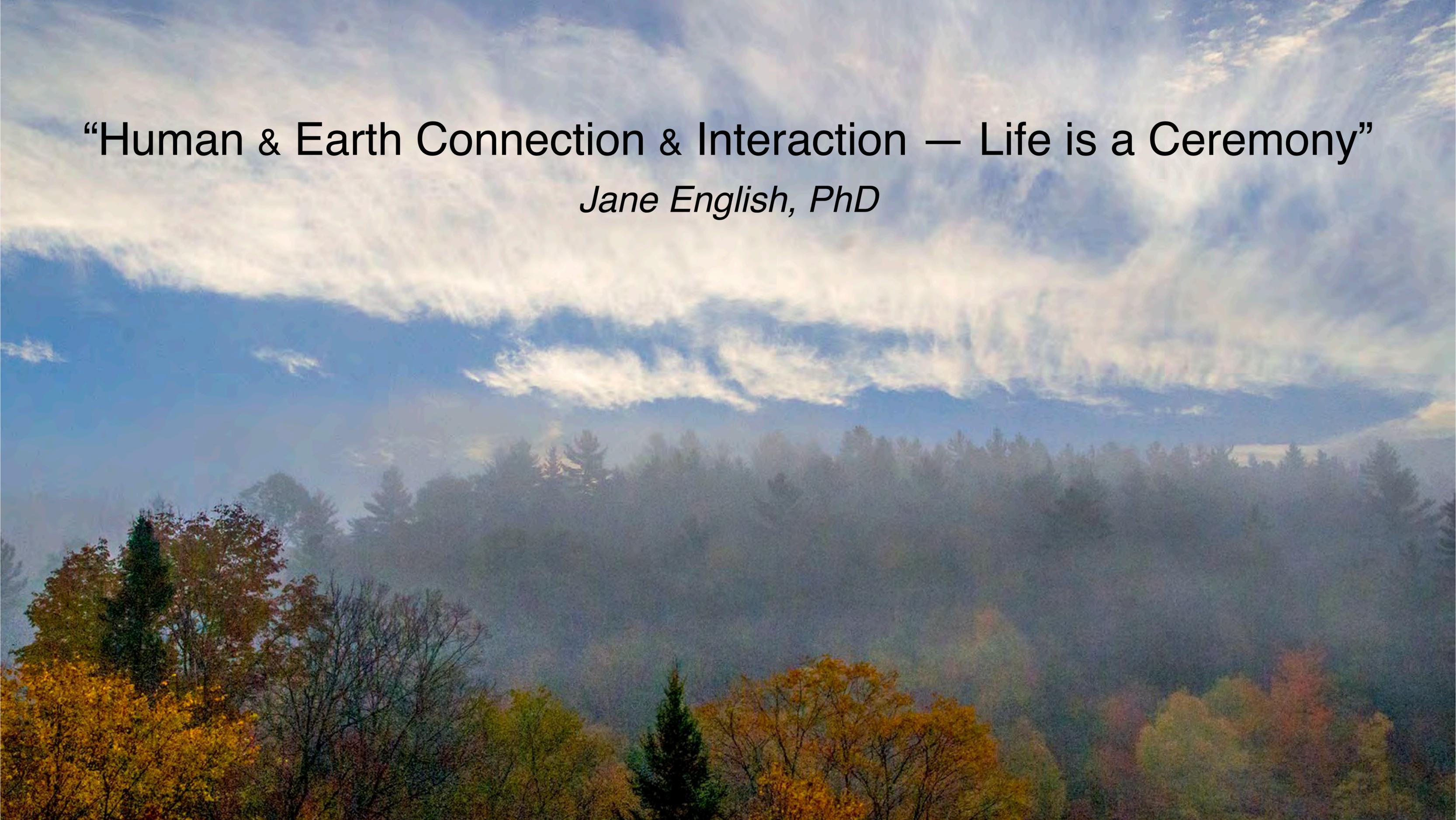


“Human & Earth Connection & Interaction — Life is a Ceremony”

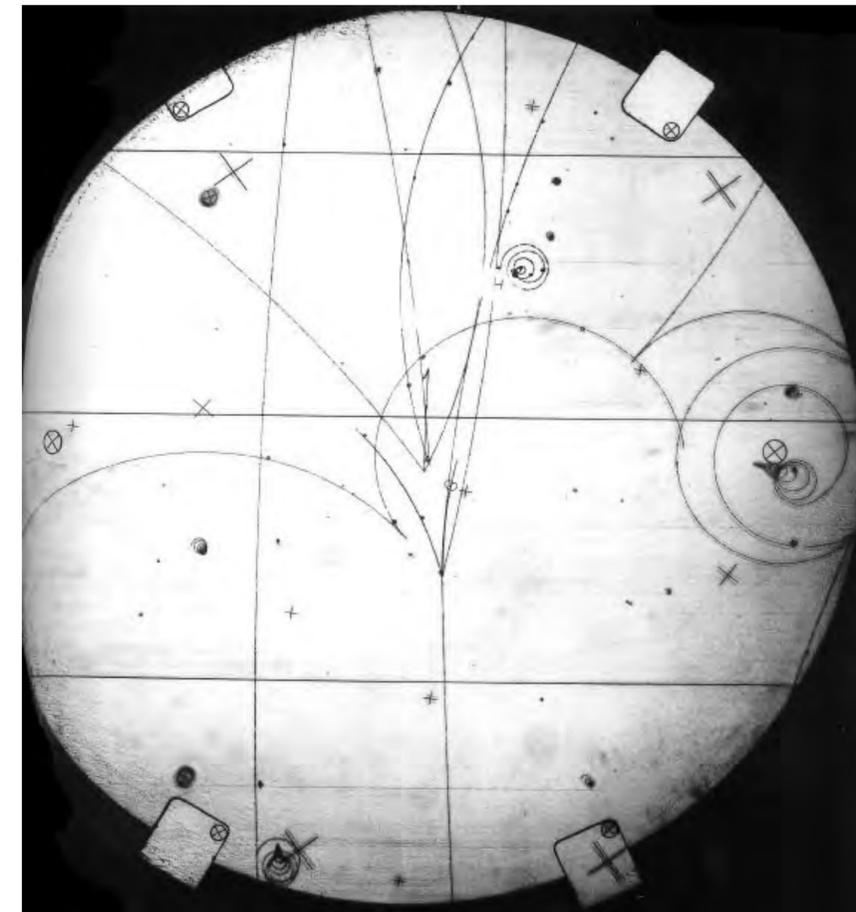
Jane English, PhD



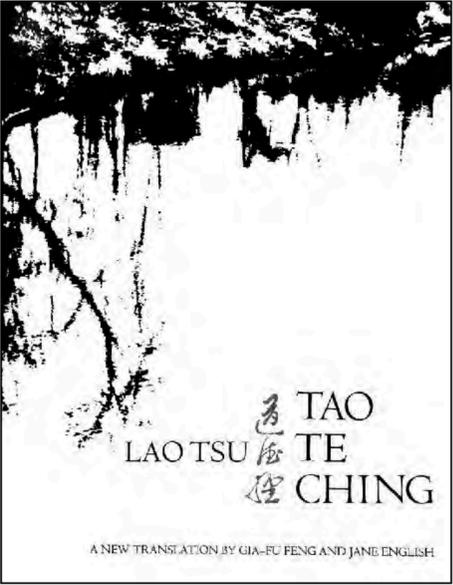
Humans and Earth are both separate and not separate,

Honoring indigenous cultures that value personal experience over second-hand book-knowledge, I need to tell you some of what I have learned from 80 years of living.

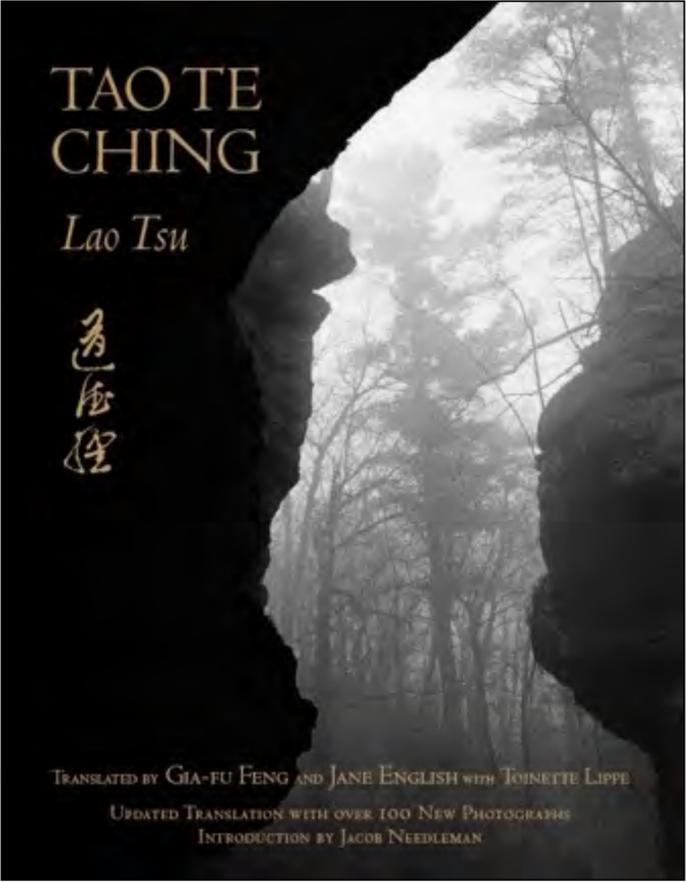
- born non-labor cesarean in Boston in 1942
- PhD in experimental sub-atomic particle physics at the University of Wisconsin in 1970
- grew up near a small New England town with plenty of fields and woods in which to roam



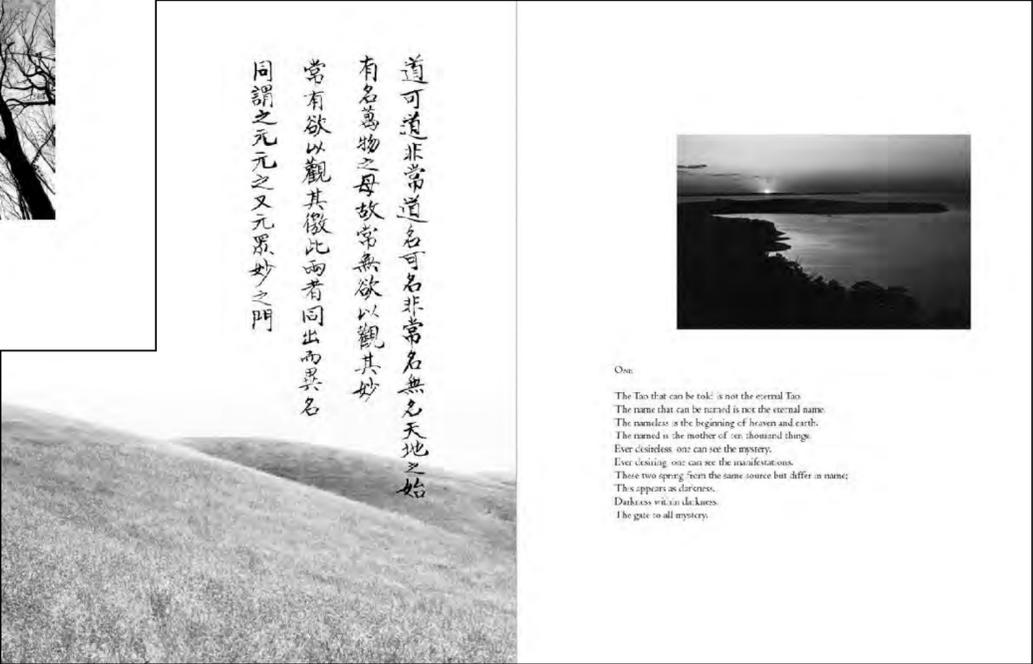
- married in 1970 to Gia-fu Feng, a Chinese man 23 years older than me,
- with whom I created a best-selling version of the Chinese classic *Tao Te Ching* — his translation and calligraphy, with my page design and monochrome images of nature



1972 cover

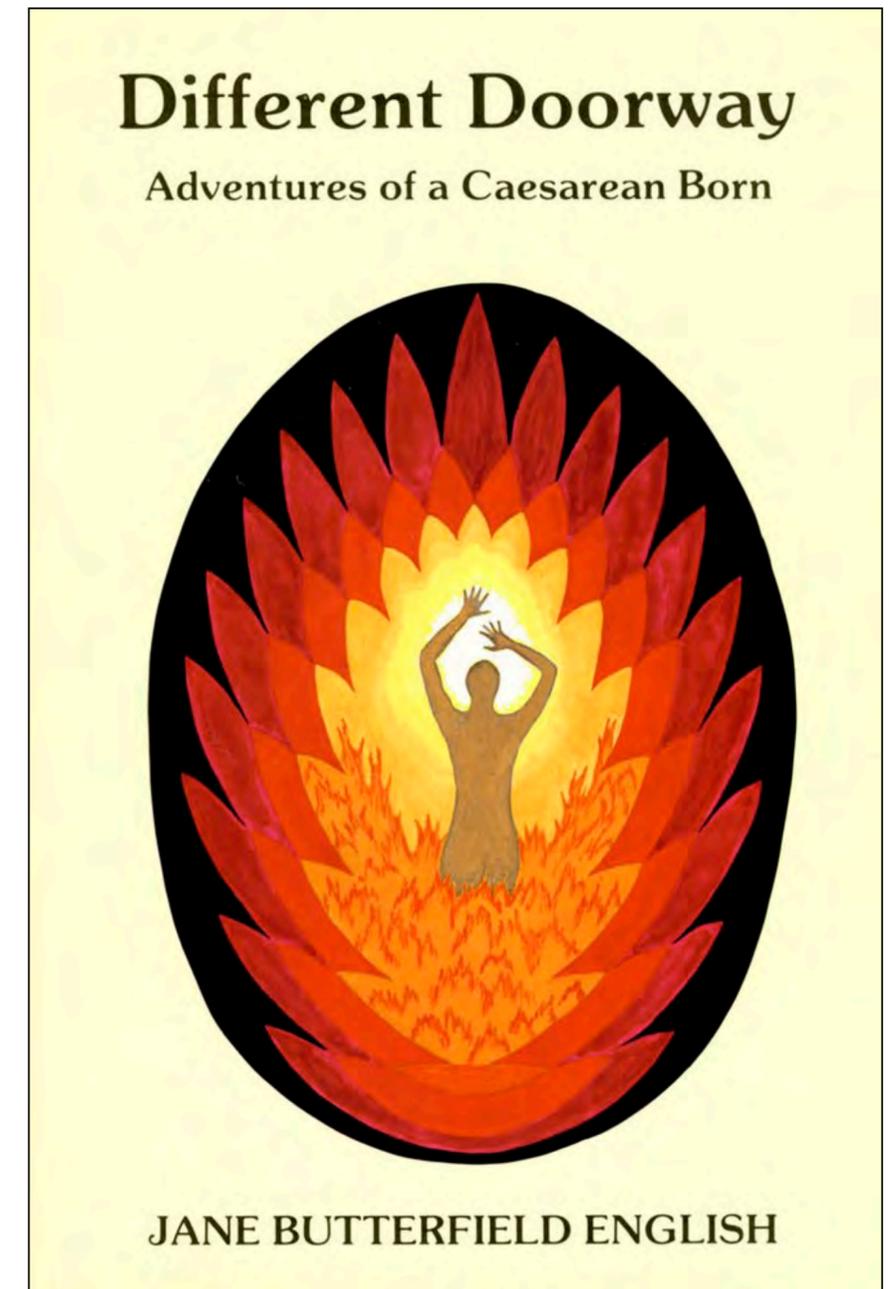


2011 cover



- inspired at first by recurring dreams, I have since 1973 been doing an in-depth exploration of the implications of having been born non-labor cesarean
- published in 1985 a book
Different Doorway: Adventures of a Cesarean Born
- presented at birth psychology conferences in the US and Europe 1985-2013
- much what I and others have written about cesarean birth is at the Cesarean Voices website:

<cesareanvoices.com>

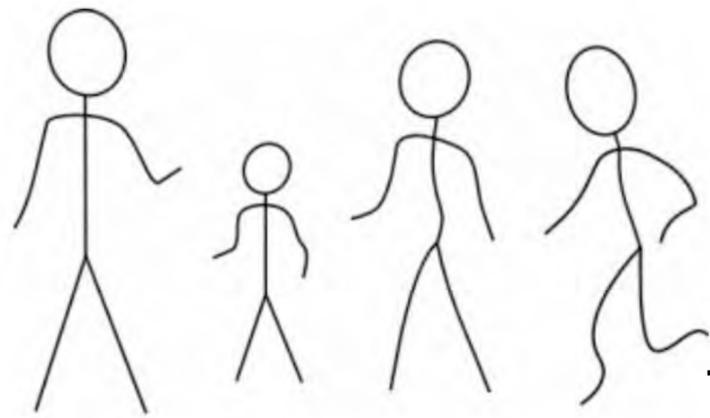


Since about 1978 I have had indigenous Native-American, Eskimo and Basque friends who have taught me much and have invited me to their ceremonies

for more see <eheart.com>

*With that as background, I want to speak about what came to mind
when I first saw this title I was given for my 2022 presentation:*

“Human & Earth Connection & Interaction: Life is a Ceremony”



As I considered that title I realized it assumes
separation between humans and earth —
because for two things to connect and interact
there has to be pre-existing separation between them.



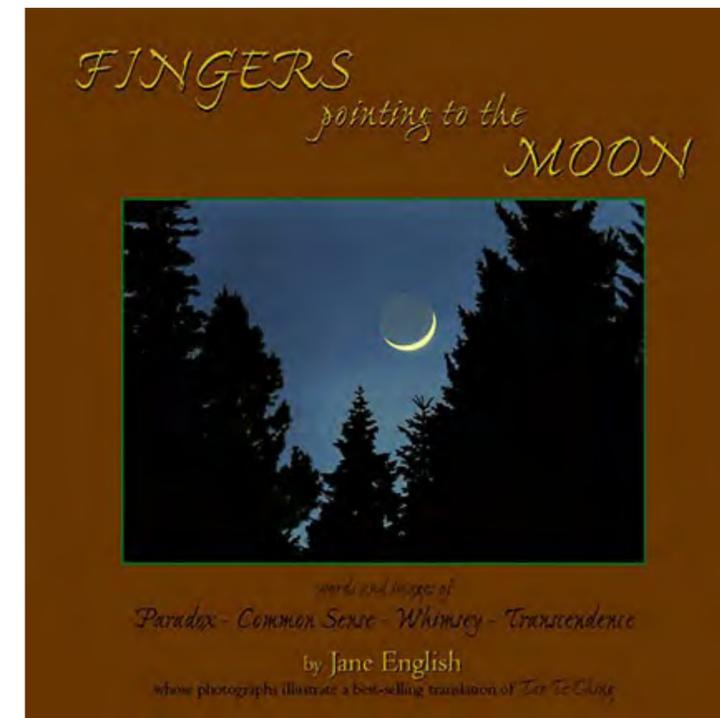
In many indigenous cultures — Native American, Eskimo, Basque, Taoist —
there is more of a balance of separation and non-separation.

This interplay of separation and non-separation also emerges in the most modern world of science —
in quantum physics and in other disciplines.

It was in my physics studies that I got a first glimpse at the possibility that our usual world of separate “things” is simply a construction, a way we have been trained to think and to see.

About 15 years after I first studied quantum physics, its wave-particle paradox resolved for me in a transcendent experience, in which there was no separation. “I” did not exist, neither did “things” outside of “me.” There was just consciousness.

I have written more about this in my 1999 book *Fingers Pointing to the Moon*.



The ancient Chinese book, *Tao Te Ching*, has been my constant companion for well over 50 years.
In its first chapter is this:

*The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.
The named is the mother of ten thousand things.
Ever desireless, one can see the mystery.
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations.
These two spring from the same source but differ in name;*

This speaks of the essential interplay of —
named/nameless
desiring/desireless
manifestation/mystery

All these are equally real, just different

道可道非常道名可名非常名無名天地之始
有名萬物之母故常無欲以觀其妙
常有欲以觀其徼此兩者同出而異名
同謂之元元之又元眾妙之門

道
德
經

So it seems to me that real question we need to address is not the Human/Earth interaction

but the interaction in our lives of

the seen and unseen

the visible and invisible

the physical and the spiritual

Birth sits at this interface of the physical and the spiritual.

When we focus entirely on birth's physical aspects we are missing a lot that is essential.

As I mentioned earlier, I have for about 50 years also made an in-depth exploration of having been born non-labor cesarean.

During this exploration I found my self wondering:

What is a person?

How and when is this sense of being a person formed?

In order to provide the necessary subject in a sentence our language limits us to speaking of a "person" being conceived, of a "person" being born, with "person" somehow existing before either of these events.

Early on in my exploration of cesarean birth I thought of a metaphor:

*Imagine describing a building from the inside,
and then asserting that that is all there is to know about the building.*

*That description of a building is obviously incomplete
as it ignores the outside of the building.*



Just so, describing being human only in terms of what happens between birth and death is also incomplete.

It ignores the vastness of what is before birth and after death
and also in the intermediate states of consciousness of dreamtime and ceremony.

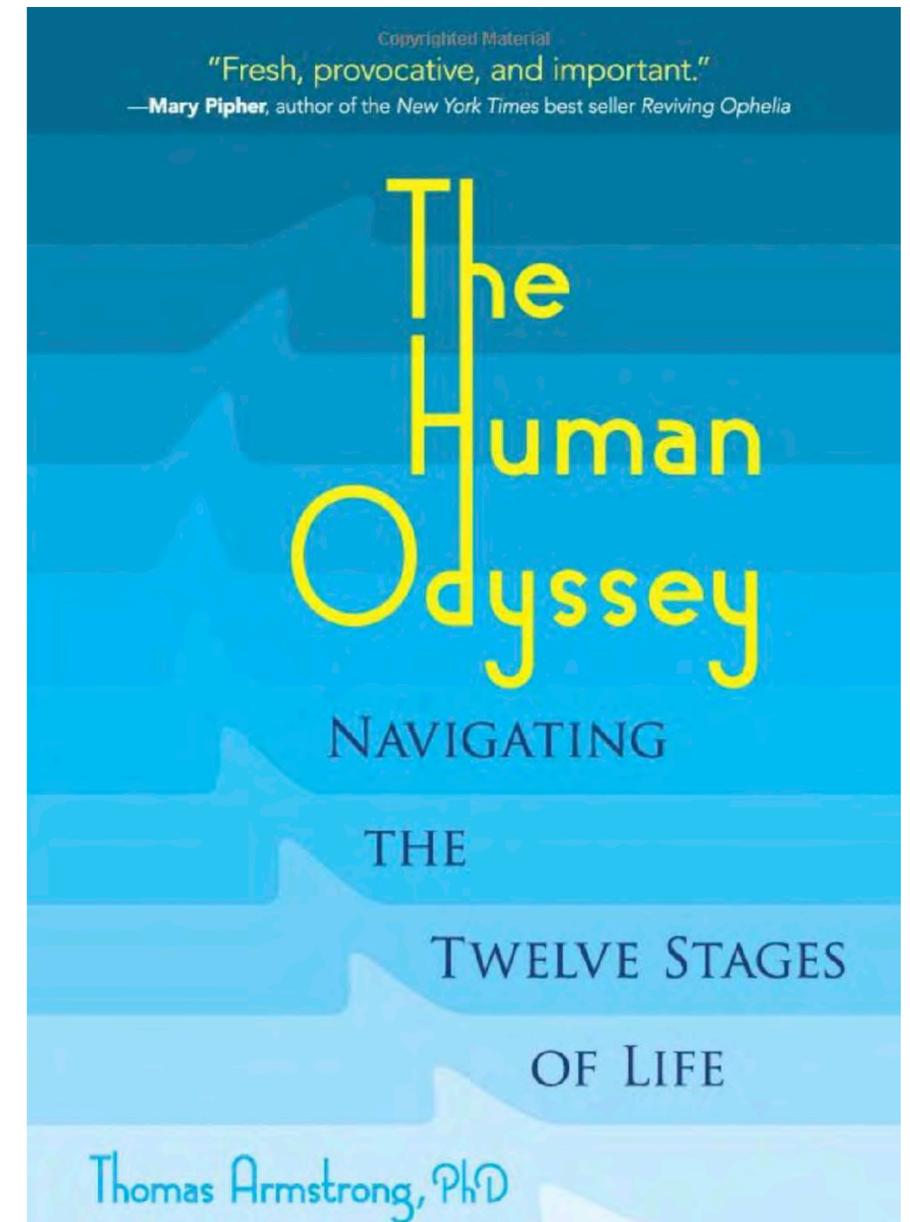
I first met psychologist Thomas Armstrong, PhD at a birth psychology conference, back in the 1990's. We discussed my cesarean birth work.

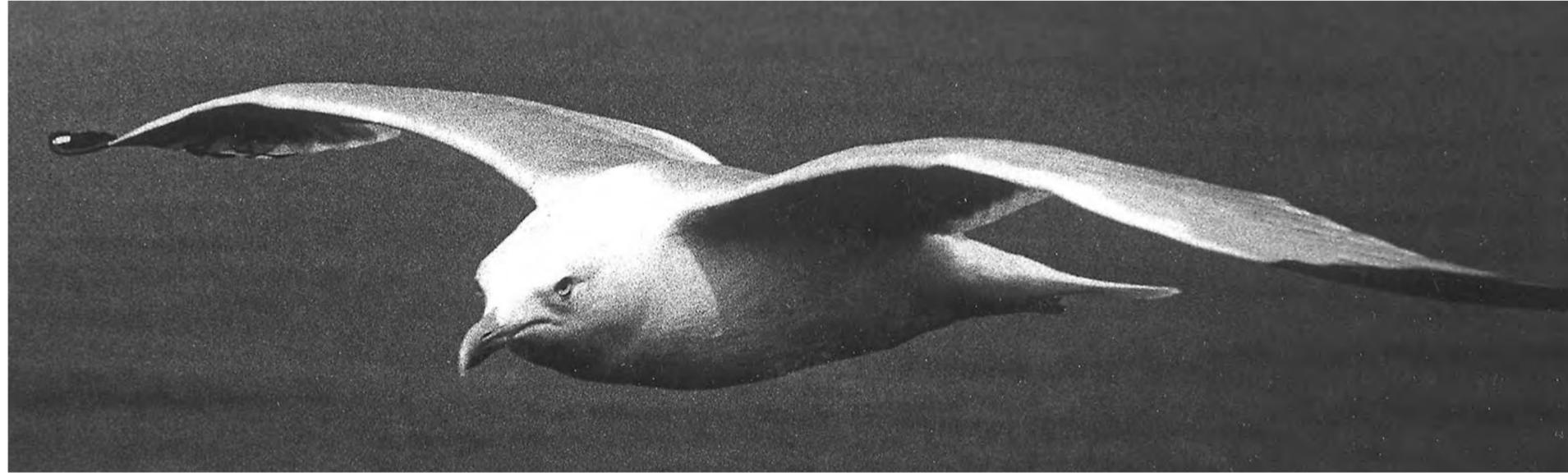
He spoke of the hormones of labor being like the drink from the River Lethe in Greek mythology - the drink that causes one to forget what has gone before.

He said that people like me who did not experience any labor in our births actually remember who we were before we were born, and even before conception.

In his most recent book he calls us “rememberers.”
(see pages xxii - xviii in *The Human Odyssey*)

His work has helped me to understand while I am also a very practical person, I often experience the unseen, the invisible, and the spiritual.





We each have two wings—the physical, rational wing, and the spiritual, intuitive wing. When we “fly” with one of our wings, being stronger than the other, we fly in circles, repeating the same mistakes over and over.

But when we fly with our two wings in balance, we can live the beauty of Life as a Ceremony, a big ceremony we from time to time celebrate with our own smaller ceremonies as reminders.

Ceremony exists at the interface of the visible and the invisible.

It connects our ordinary world with the vastness of spirit.

**The IceWisdom Teachings of indigenous Greenland, are communicated with ceremonies.
The ceremonies are the teachings.**

Life is itself a ceremony, one worth celebrating with a ceremony.

We have small ceremonies we perform within the Great Ceremony of Life.

These small ceremonies are times to practice being present, honoring life as sacred.

*We often have it backwards, thinking the ceremonies we perform consciously
are more important than the rest of life.*

In reality, our “ceremonies” are like practicing scales.

The rest of Life is the concert.

Smiling or having a cup of coffee or tea is a ceremony.

Cleaning house can be a ceremony.

There are as many ceremonies as there are breaths taken.



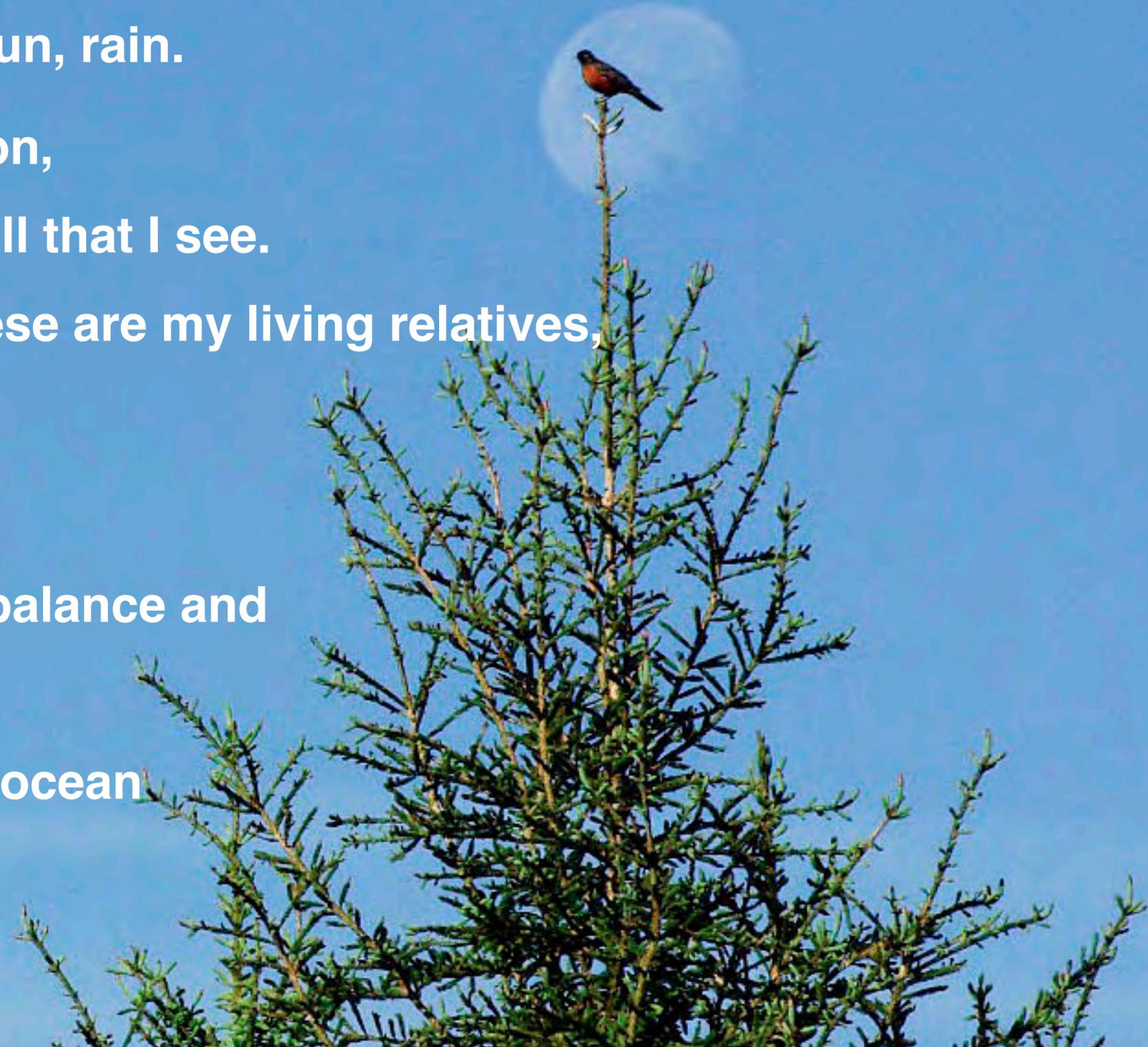
**As my indigenous friends have taught me,
each morning, first thing, I step outside to greet and thank my relatives—
trees, sky, clouds, grass, birds, squirrels, sun, rain.**

**I realize it is so easy to assume separation,
to fall into using my eyes to push away all that I see.**

**It is so satisfying to be reminded that these are my living relatives,
that I am embedded in a living world
in a community that is whole.**

**Each of us can in this way bring a drop of balance and
beauty to our world that so needs it.**

Many such drops can create a river and an ocean



What do I wish for you to receive from what I have shared today?

We need to honor ancient wisdom as well as modern science and technology,

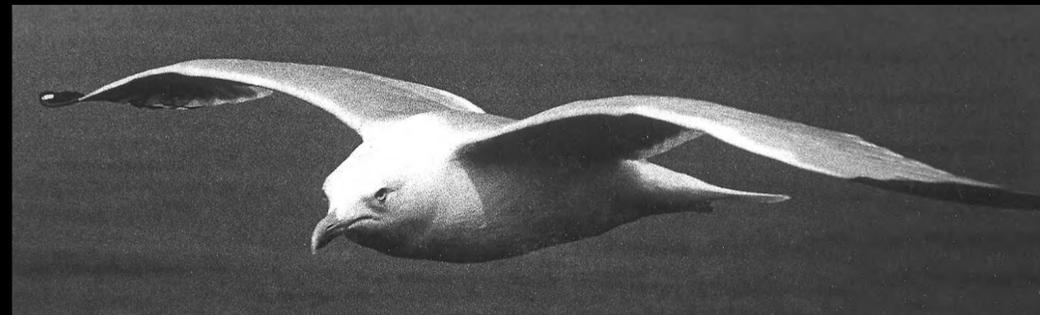
the intangible and the measurable

integrating them in both our minds *and* our hearts

Rather than “interacting with” Earth as separate entities

We are embedded in a community of living relatives of many kinds

all of whom have both body and spirit

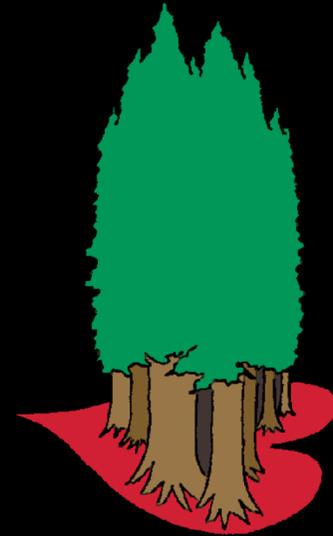


May we “fly” with both our wings in balance

*You are welcome to visit my
websites —*



cesareanvoices.com



eheart.com



theceremonycards.com

I welcome connection and further discussion with you

Please contact me by email: jane@eheart.com

**except for free clip art and a three photos (bubble chamber, winter house, Jane & Gia-fu),
all the text, photographs and artwork in this presentation are by Jane English ©2023**

