

Zine Verschenken

#15 | october 2023 | rituals



Editorial

The days (and hopes) of a hot kinky Venus in Leo retrograde summer are long over, and we will rest, recover and recuperate into autumn now.

October reminds us to take our time, let go and welcome in the darkness. That darkness starts with Scorpio, and reaches its darkest during Samhain, where the veil separating the physical world and the spirits is at its thinnest and welcomes winter.

So lets proclaim October as the month of ritual. Falling leaves, colder days and longer nights. October observes multiple national days, weekly observances, and monthly occasions. And would October even be October without Halloween?

In a world of chaos, rituals serve as our steadfast anchors that ground us through the unpredictable rhythms of life. Rituals remind us to pause, reflect, and connect. Whether it is simply a practice of taking a morning shower to begin the day, a walk through the park or candle-lit reading under the moon, anything can be a ritual.

Washing day

It was a beautiful May day, plenty of sun and a light breeze. Perfect for doing the laundry, said Oma, as she heaved a cauldron of water onto the Rayburn. We waited for it to boil. I watched as she put in a cup of Lux soapflakes, a measuring cap of Milton, a handful of salt crystals and a spoon of soda. When it was frothy, in went an armful of bandages, strips of muslin and lint: everything Oma had used to bind up her legs in the fortnight she'd been here. For an hour she prodded them with a long wooden spoon as they rose to the surface. The kitchen filled up with the smell of steam and antiseptic, as soap bubbles spilled over the rim of the cauldron to spit and sizzle on the hotplate. After a while, she pulled out the steaming bandages with a giant pair of wooden tongs, ready for the cold vinegar rinse, and tipped in the next batch.

When everything was wrung out and squeaky clean, we dragged the washing basket by its handles to the washing line, under the cooking apple tree. There, I teetered on my stool, handing Oma the pegs, one by one, as she hung out the bandages in orderly rows to dry: the long ones, the short ones, the everyday ones, the ones she kept for best... humming to herself as she pegged, as the heels and toes of her support hose danced along in the wind.

By the time we'd finished there were scores of bandages blowing in the breeze, a candid carousel of fluttering streamers. The cottage garden had turned into a field hospital full of little flags furling and unfurling, surrendering to the spring sunlight.

Yet, even as a child, I realised that it wasn't a joyful washing line like Mama's was, with its bunting of bibs and booties, it's tiny hankies and little hats. No, Mama told me Oma's washing line had seen years of hardship and cleansing routines salted by her own tears.

That evening, we all sat at the table to roll up the bandages - left over right, twist then tuck - fastening them securely with safety pins. There! Oma's First Aid bag was restocked at last, and the laundry merry-go-round began all over again... But we danced around it anyway - that whirling washing line with its pure white streamers, their blemishes bleached by the sunlight, their wrinkles smoothed by the wind. As springtime melted into another summer, there was the soothing hope of much more sunshine to come.

Oma's Kitchen

Oma's kitchen smelled of sauerkraut, sausage and cigarette smoke. There were tins of this and that on the shelves: coffee beans, dried beans, lentils and pearl barley; jars of herbs to season soups and casseroles; little packets of aromatic tea: fennel, nettle and camomile: things to settle your stomach or give you sweet dreams. It was her little kingdom, where she wrote letters, peeled potatoes, soaked peas and stirred her milk puddings. After school she'd open the twin doors of the greengage dresser to reveal 3 little dessert glasses bearing banana custard or creme caramel or chocolate blancmange: one for me, one for cousin Angelika and one for her brother Rüdiger, when they came.

Sometimes I would help prepare lunch: squelch a stale brötchen in milk, ready to fill the Kohlrouladen, sprinkle the mince with roasted cumin seeds, fold up the steamed cabbage leaves to make parcels and put my finger on the thread so she could tie the final knot. Other times we would sing a song, count out the money in her purse or draw up a shopping list as the soup pot bubbled on the stove and saucepan lids jumped merrily up and down. Most of the time I would watch her flit between chores, then sit down to fill in her weekly lotto form, twist a silver goblet from a cigarette paper or put another patch on Opa's work trousers. In the afternoon, coffee would be brewed, cream whipped and Apfelkuchen laid out for visitors. A break in the day.

After supper, I went to bed, but I could still hear her as she swept the floor, emptied the ashtray and changed the bandages on her legs. "So!" she'd say to herself with a little sigh. "Jetzt gehen wir schlafen... Fritz, kommst du?" A chair creaked, Opa's slippers scuffed along the floor... The net curtains ruffled slightly as she opened the window to let in the night air, then the kitchen was quiet at last.

Collective Rituals

Spell: whenever I am scared of getting physically hurt I say:
Make my body hard as stone
So it cannot even break a bone!
then I breathe 3 times, with every breath my body becoming more resistant!

Espresso make my morning beautiful

ONE OF MY FAVORITE RITUALS WAS WHEN AT WORK WE USE TO LIGHT A CANDLE AND SAYED A FEW WORDS TO SAY GOODBYE TO OUR PATIENTS. THAT WAS A VERY SPECIAL MOMENT. WHEN THEY PASSED AWAY.

Music wand and sushi take-out session

put on left shoe first
Wing time

Burning candles and talking to my tarot cards

Waking up with my cats, feed them, make a big coffee, then go back to bed for an hour and cuddle them ☺
Makes me feel content, stress-free & grounded.



oat milk cappuccino every morning

Roll a cig AND
SMOKE BY THE WINDOW
LOOKING AT THE STARS

EYES = ONCE DONE, YOU FEEL REBORN!
WASH FASH
TONE CREAM x2
EYE SHADOW 1 = FEEL AMAZING!

When I feel that my energy is locked I light some incense and walk in silence around my house, visualizing the bad energy releasing the house.

Having a long shower, putting some oil after. Wearing my robe and lay on the sofa, listening to music.

follow your soul
feel your surroundings
enjoy yourself

Writing intentions and storing them somewhere safe.

taking a bath

cleaning and cleansing the house, smoking weed before going to bed, meditation

Read or write before going to bed

Rituals

As the room filled with smoke, I glanced around at the carefree creatures, chatting and spilling out truths. Puff by puff, cloud by cloud the confessions rose to the wooden rafters. The secrets of feelings swirled around from the nurtured. Each encouraged from the last, never to let a breath of air into the conversation or the room itself.

I drew a shallow breath and glanced uneasily around. I knew I must share, but what could I give them? I'm not a lamb being sent to the slaughter, but they do not know that. I took a few uneasy steps onto the tightrope, careful to laugh just enough at the others revealing themselves, and turning over my secret, one so mildly interesting that it raised no further questions.

The want to be seen and yet disappear at the same time was stronger than ever. I knew that if I could not share my deepest truths, then I must choose the other option to blend with my peers.

I rolled. Cigarette after cigarette. Each inhalation pushed my secret further down. I nonchalantly smiled at my fellow smokers. The sense of kinship warmed me slightly as I pictured the smoke as our souls, swirling and blending together in the thick air. Except we all knew that they were sharing and I was not.

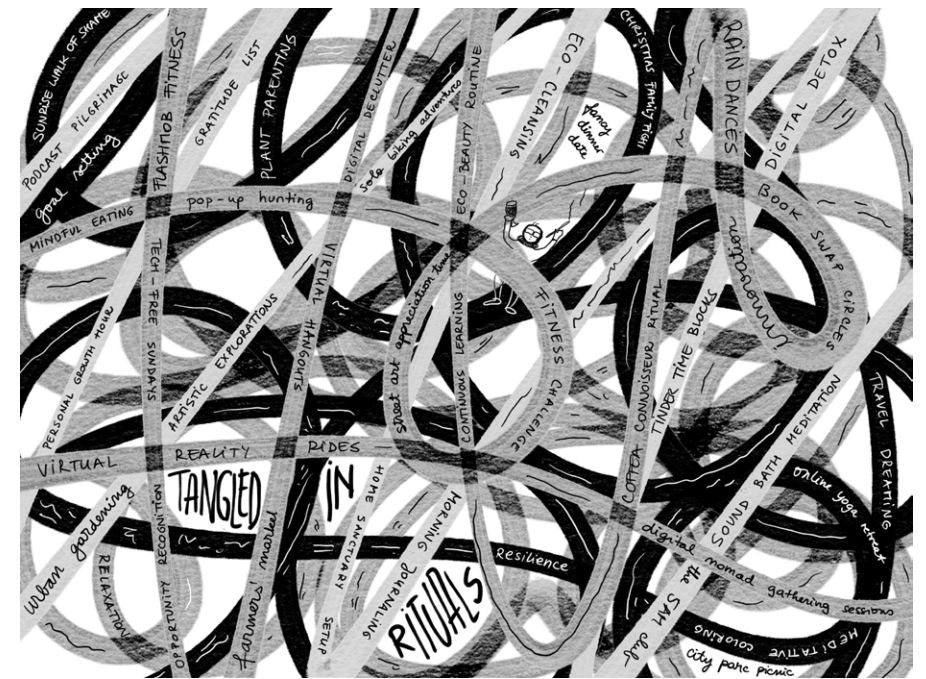
I offered a thin shaving of the person I am. Not a generous slice of the one who sat amongst the honest. I can't even say that I was honest with myself.

On previous evenings on my walk home, I could almost convince myself that I had bonded. On those evenings when I reached home, I always knew that I had not.

The years passed by and these smoking confession sessions went on longer than I cared to admit. One particular evening, I was half listening to a long, winding story from a long, wirey character. He was a peculiar man and I never thought that he was particularly wise or even truthful in his storytelling. He told his tales without a slight of doubt and didn't care for anyone else to share. This made me feel at ease, so I leaned in to listen and let my mind wander about my own truths without worry. He was explaining the concept of a ritual vs. a habit. I moved close to watch the fire leap and crackle and heard nothing more.

Ritual, habit. Ritual, habit. Why have I kept this habit, continuing to return to this smokey room? The desire to blend in and tell stories to impress those in this room has shamed me into a habit and turned me into one of these sheep. All baa's and bleats without any visible backbones. Spines buried in wool, they continued to smoke. The air was almost gone, and I started to feel drowsy. I staggered out into the crisp, night air. Dark.

I woke to the sun peeking through the leaves in the trees. I must have fallen asleep right there on the forest floor. I tried to recall the evening. Those two words. I spoke the first one out loud, "Habit". It left a bad taste in my mouth. Strong and bitter like a nettle to the touch. I spoke the second, "Ritual". It made me rise to my feet as if it had laid a path for me. I did the only thing that felt right at that moment. I let it lead me. And I followed.



Oma's coffee-grinder

“Karen, kommst du?”

Looking down from the top landing, I spied Oma, ready and waiting on the bottom step of the rickety stairs. Morning hair pinned up, leather pantoffles on her crooked feet and still wrapped in her flowery housecoat; her lacy petticoat was just visible at the hem and her wrinkly-brown stockings unravelled to below her knobbly knees to keep the bandages on. From there, she had a bird's eye view of goings on in the kitchen while still keeping watch on my bedroom door.

Holding the coffee grinder in her lap, she knew not to begin until I was perched beside her. That was when I'd open the tin hatch, pour in the glossy beans and listen to them trickle through the hole until they disappeared. Then, with the grinder set snugly between her knees, she turned the handle. The little mill protested mildly at first, but there was a practised rhythm to her grinding. Often, we would sing the windmill song, “Es klappert der Mühle” just to help it along and, sure enough, as the grating sound became smoother, the wooden drawer filled up with a pyramid of soft grounds and the kitchen took on the exotic aroma of Costa Rica.

Abendbrot

Pork dripping, the war-time spread, came wrapped in greaseproof paper, or in a tin for Christmas. It was plain and simple, or flecked with fried onions and crispy bits of crackling. On rare occasions, it might even be flavoured with pieces of sour apple.

“The poor man's or the rich man's recipe,” said Mama, “depending on the quality of the butcher.”

“A bit like the fatty juices of the Sunday roast I used to mop up with the heel of a bread loaf as a boy,” remarked Papa.

Either way, I quickly learned that you spread it on black bread, sprinkled it with a little salt and were grateful.

Griebenschmalz had a smell and a taste that reminded me of every Abendbrot I ever ate with Oma and Opa when I was little. Maybe there would be a ripe tomato to go with it, polished to a shine on Oma's apron or, better still, a pickled gherkin “to help it go down,” Opa used to say. Even when Mama served it at home, I would close my eyes and pretend I was in Opa and Oma's Stube, eating off my own little breadboard, with Opa adding the odd tidbit from his, and Oma cutting more bread in that way she had of hugging the loaf close to her chest and slicing it towards her.

“Spread it a bit thicker, Therese,” Opa would say. “We can't have her going to bed on an empty stomach!”

“I don't think there's much chance of that!” said Oma impishly, pinching my chubby arms and poking me in the ribs until I giggled. “If I were the gingerbread witch and you were Gretel, I would would say you were plump enough to roast in the oven!”

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Do you want to contribute to the zine?
Have any questions?
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energy is locked
some incense
in silence and
noise, visuali
bad energy to
the house.

Having a
putting some
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lay on the
listening to

follow your soul
feel your surv
enjoy yourself

taking a b

, the house,
going to bed,