

Field Notes from the Acres  
By Laurie McDonnell, Resident Gardner 2019

Mid-May: *The bats start chittering not long after I open the barn door. It doesn't matter that it is the middle of the day; they have a lot to discuss. I imagine them like an improvisational dance troupe of Polish grandmothers hanging upside down, nestled between aged wood, wearing colorful babushkas and discussing all things meaningful. They are my neighbors.*

June 2: *Still life with seed potato. A spring of peace making, yes. Making peace with the fact that the east coast of Maine seems like the west coast of Ireland; that the soil may not be ready even if i want it to be - relationships take time; that a bevy of ticks swing casually from blades of grass....perhaps they are my teachers on how to open one's arms to love with abandon....Peace Making....this morning, barely perceptible in the fog, I saw three deer walking and grazing their way slowly across the field. They came baring gentleness... "as it is," they insinuated. Would a deer ever wonder in what ways it was worthy?*

Mid-June: *People keep telling me how it is for me here rather than asking me. "You must love it here!" "Aren't you afraid to be here alone?" "What an experience!" "Look at this...." In my polite silence, my desire for 3-dimensionality fades. Who is the I that needs to be seen?*

July 10<sup>th</sup>: *Under a gray sky, the fields look more yellow than green. They are so textured in color and form, betrayed by a quick glance. Could it be that July is doing its work on them? A soft breeze comes in the window and gentle birdsong floats across the air. Just a little, my hard edges soften. I still struggle when i feel lily fronds in the water. Meanwhile, there are flowers near my desk, lake water in my hair, and wide open space for dreaming. Maybe this is how one lets the soft animal of her body love what it loves....?*

August 15<sup>th</sup>: *Turns out the tiny Monarch farm outside my toolshed wasn't so tiny after all. I counted 42 chrysalis this morning. So, lest hope not ring eternal in your day - check this out. What a bunch of clever opportunists stashing themselves in every nook and cranny of the barn. We bumble about in awe at the spectacle of it...including a small relocation project for the final few caterpillars who were down to nothing up stubs. Luckily, there is other milkweed in the field that can sustain their transformational journey. Something of a Midsummer's Dream over here when you add the patty pan squash explosion and the singing sunflower chorus.*

September 20<sup>th</sup>: *This spring, i was introduced to a piece of land and asked to grow food with it. And so, we set about making relationship. We met the cold, grey spring with patience; we wondered what might grow and invited the bees, the birds and the caterpillars. When the fever broke, we crested into the Mediterranean summer with an abandon neither of us expected. But, why not, by then we had broken each other open and met those most jagged of bits. We went on to charm our foraging friends to other locations; and, finally, we laid it down in a fruit bearing both graceful and succulent. Today, as i stood on that small piece of land with wistful reverence in my heart and the sun on my face, the word church came to mind. I aim for my heart to beat with this boundless sacred in all my relations.*