

# part 2: remembering

**this lesson contains:**

my ancestry // how to have this conversation

what is ancestral memory

how ancestral memory effects our boundaries

boundaries // possession // colonization

moving toward receptive boundary practice

chiron: your wound, your healer

# my ancestry// how to have this conversation

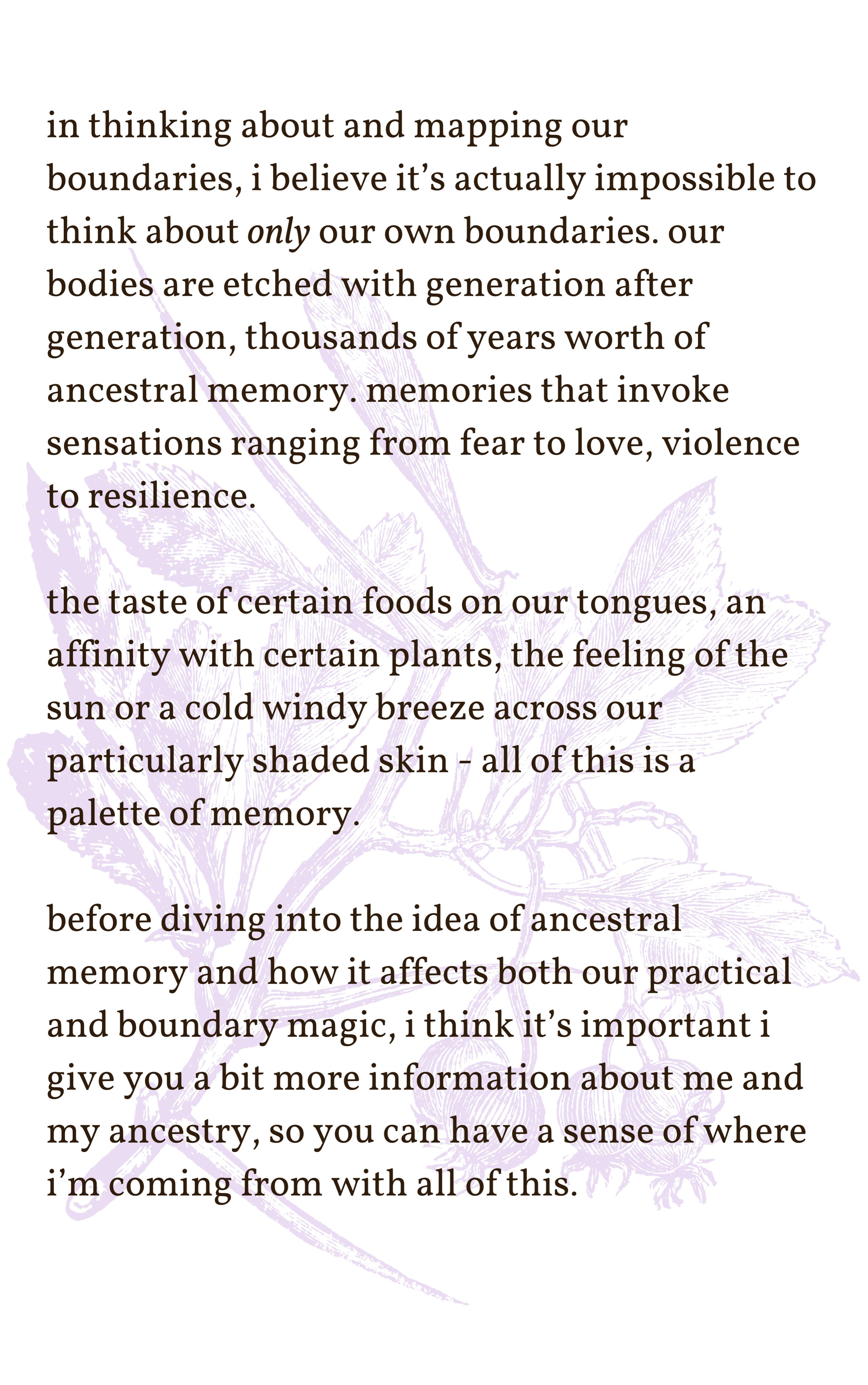
i wonder femmes, how is lesson one landing for you? in your heart, your body, your dreams?

what sensations do you notice in your body as you connect to the areas in your life where you are craving stronger or different boundaries?

what have you seen as you've shone gentle light onto your shadows? do you feel ready to celebrate or offer gratitude for what you found? if not, what is stopping you?

as you listen and connect to your body, through these practices, what do you hear?

i encourage you to post on the facebook group with any realizations, stories or questions.



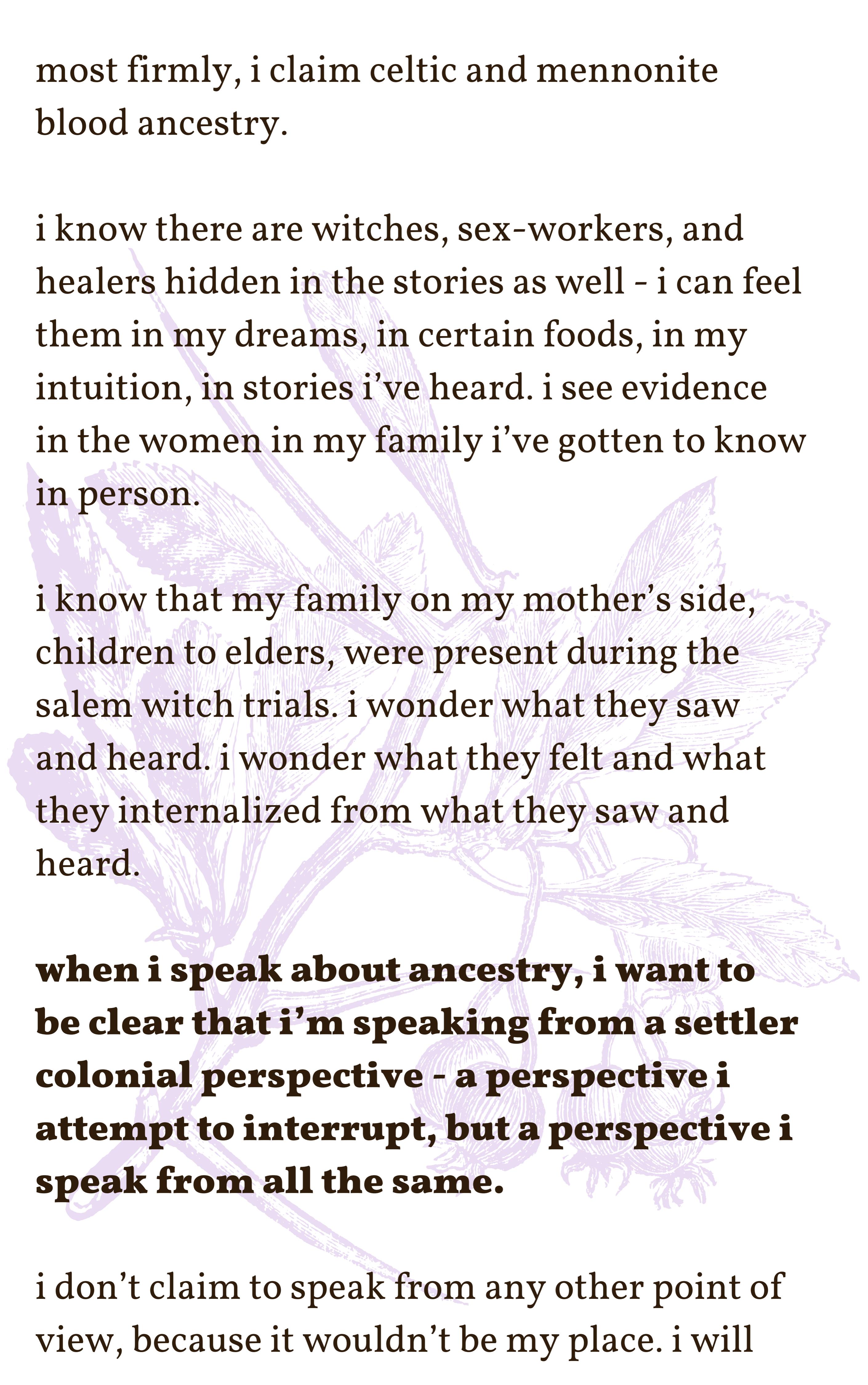
in thinking about and mapping our boundaries, i believe it's actually impossible to think about *only* our own boundaries. our bodies are etched with generation after generation, thousands of years worth of ancestral memory. memories that invoke sensations ranging from fear to love, violence to resilience.

the taste of certain foods on our tongues, an affinity with certain plants, the feeling of the sun or a cold windy breeze across our particularly shaded skin - all of this is a palette of memory.

before diving into the idea of ancestral memory and how it affects both our practical and boundary magic, i think it's important i give you a bit more information about me and my ancestry, so you can have a sense of where i'm coming from with all of this.

my blood family (which is only one part of my ancestry) consists of fifth- and fourth-generation settlers. on my father's side we are mostly from north scotland and ireland. on my mother's side we are mostly from england and descended from transitory german mennonites who fled the ukraine during the bolshevik uprising.

i have heard stories passed from from my great-grandmother to my grandmother to my mother to me, of there being intermarriage and the birth of children with 'canadian' indigenous ancestry. i don't know the terms under which these births or marriages happened, the specific power dynamics that shaped these histories. i don't know details; i've just heard whisperings. i don't claim indigeneity to the place my family has settled because of these stories - but i also don't want to erase these stories, which in many ways have been purposely faded into obscurity: *an intentional colonial erasure.*



most firmly, i claim celtic and mennonite blood ancestry.

i know there are witches, sex-workers, and healers hidden in the stories as well - i can feel them in my dreams, in certain foods, in my intuition, in stories i've heard. i see evidence in the women in my family i've gotten to know in person.

i know that my family on my mother's side, children to elders, were present during the salem witch trials. i wonder what they saw and heard. i wonder what they felt and what they internalized from what they saw and heard.

**when i speak about ancestry, i want to be clear that i'm speaking from a settler colonial perspective - a perspective i attempt to interrupt, but a perspective i speak from all the same.**

i don't claim to speak from any other point of view, because it wouldn't be my place. i will

however, as the lesson unfolds, refer to and share with you ideas i have heard from indigenous and non-white people.

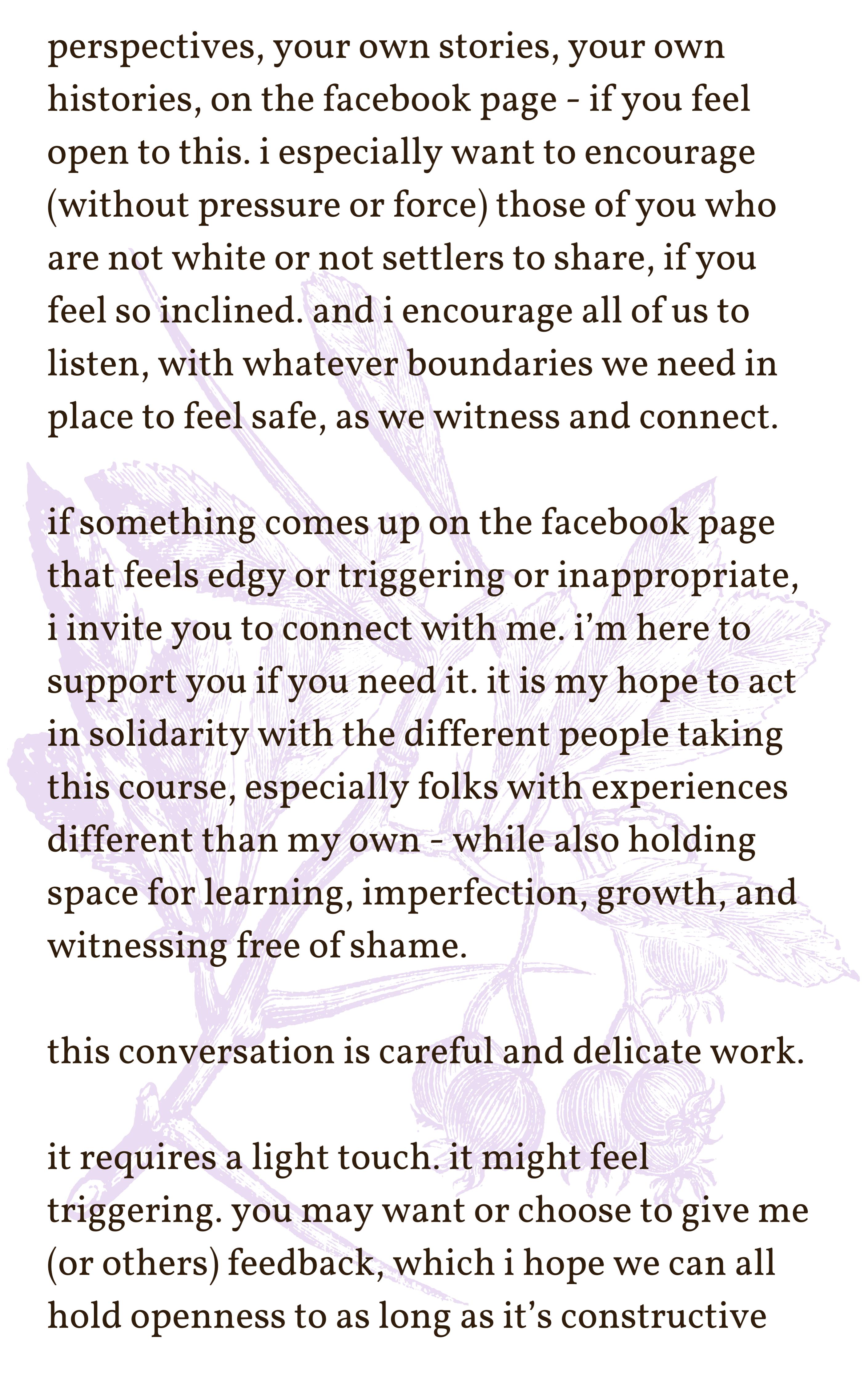
i'm in no way claiming these ideas as my own. rather, it feels fundamentally important to me to call in voices and perspectives other than mine. this is about appreciation and education, not appropriation.

i don't want the only ideas and voices in this workshop to be settler and/or white voices.

i'm open to paying or trading with non-white and non-settler folks for written content for the course, mostly especially for this section.

**if you feel open to sharing in that way, just send me an email and we can chat about collaboration.** i want to hold this space for your wisdom and i want to offer you fair compensation for your work. this is the first round of the course in this format - there is endless room for growth.

i highly encourage you all to share your own



perspectives, your own stories, your own histories, on the facebook page - if you feel open to this. i especially want to encourage (without pressure or force) those of you who are not white or not settlers to share, if you feel so inclined. and i encourage all of us to listen, with whatever boundaries we need in place to feel safe, as we witness and connect.

if something comes up on the facebook page that feels edgy or triggering or inappropriate, i invite you to connect with me. i'm here to support you if you need it. it is my hope to act in solidarity with the different people taking this course, especially folks with experiences different than my own - while also holding space for learning, imperfection, growth, and witnessing free of shame.

this conversation is careful and delicate work.

it requires a light touch. it might feel triggering. you may want or choose to give me (or others) feedback, which i hope we can all hold openness to as long as it's constructive

and generative of a better way of sharing these ideas. i'm also open to trimming back the content if something really should not be here, or perhaps it should appear in a different way.

i so deeply appreciate the labour this kind of feedback requires. i thank you in advance, those of you who choose to offer it - and also if you choose to listen to it with grace, patience, and humility.

i'm willing to hear you, and i hope you are willing to hear me and each other in well-bounded ways. i hope we can step into this work with a felt sense of good intentions, as well as a felt sense of the massive gaps in the knowledge of our histories and the pain that follows from those gaps.

we are all learning. **we are all steeped in a culture that weaves an illusion of separateness between us.** this is not to say that i believe we are all the same, but rather

that our differences bring great richness to our connections. i believe that we are deeply capable of accountability, solidarity, and support. i believe that this work can bridge the gap of separateness and isolation.

**i don't approach my ancestry from a place of shame, and i don't think anyone should - but i also don't turn away from the implications of that history on my position of power and privilege, as well as the wounds it has left me with.**

i hope we can all keep these ideas in mind as we move forward into the tender, powerful content of this part of the course.

# what is ancestral memory?

*“if you go far back enough, we all come from beautiful origins.”*

*- Mel Bazil, speaking at the field gathering, on unceded Sinixt territory*

**ancestral memory is the idea that the stories of our ancestors literally live in our bodies.**

western scientists are only recently coming around to the idea that **our bodies reflect and mirror the experiences of our ancestors**. many cultures less steeped in colonial values and ways of thinking have held this wisdom for generations.

in lab tests, it's been shown that if you expose an animal to an unpleasant or painful stimulus, that animal's babies and grandbabies will remember the pain from the

previous generation and avoid the perceived cause of the pain - *even if they have not experienced the pain or stimulus in their own bodies.*

examples of this phenomenon abound. there is a great deal of western scientific research and worldwide multicultural storytelling around ideas of ancestral memory. i'd love to see you all share some examples that resonate with you on the facebook page.

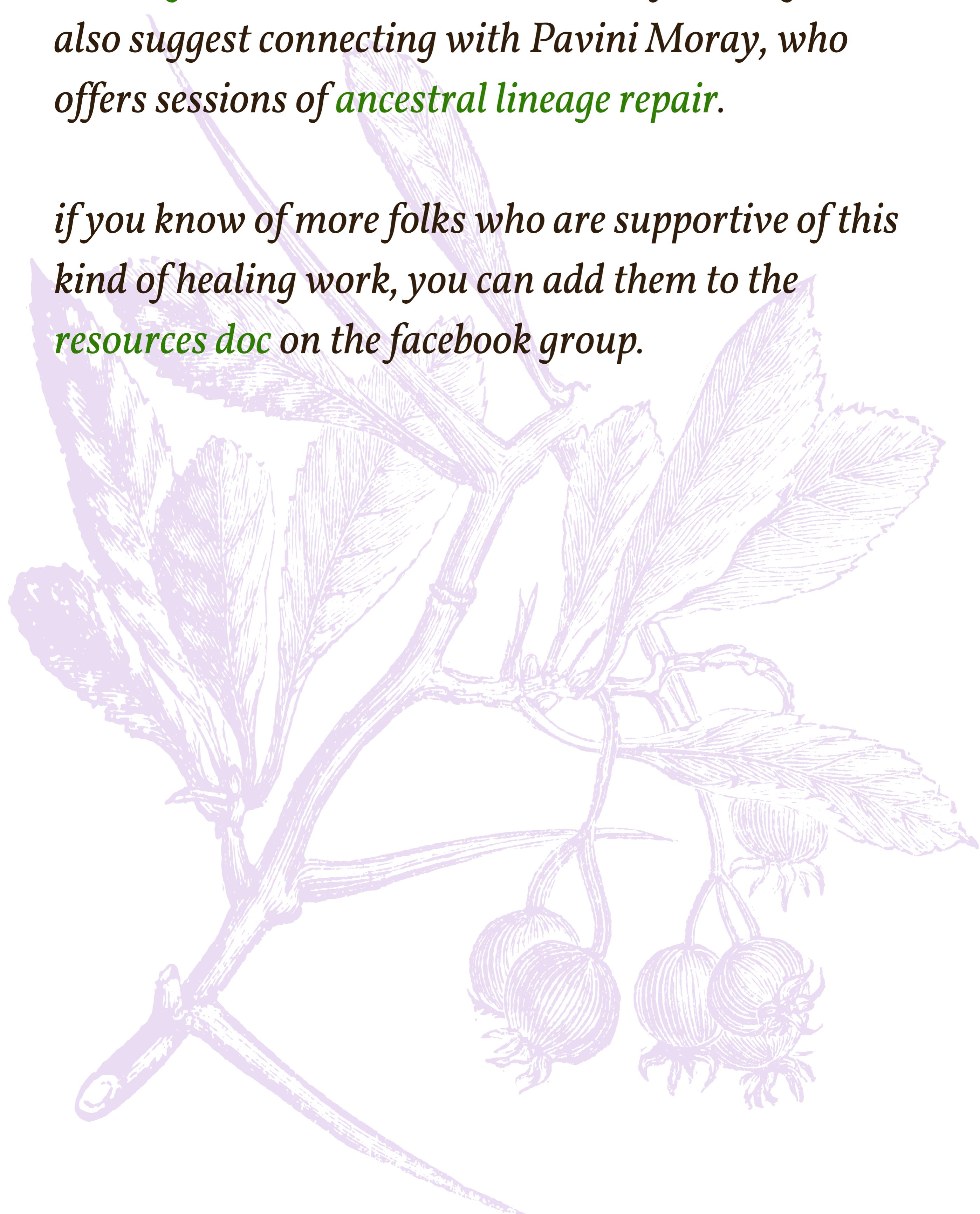
the essence of ancestral memory is this:

**we remember. we carry generations of memory. our bodies remember in ways that span through time, far more vastly than our minds can imagine. our dreams and our magic remembers.**

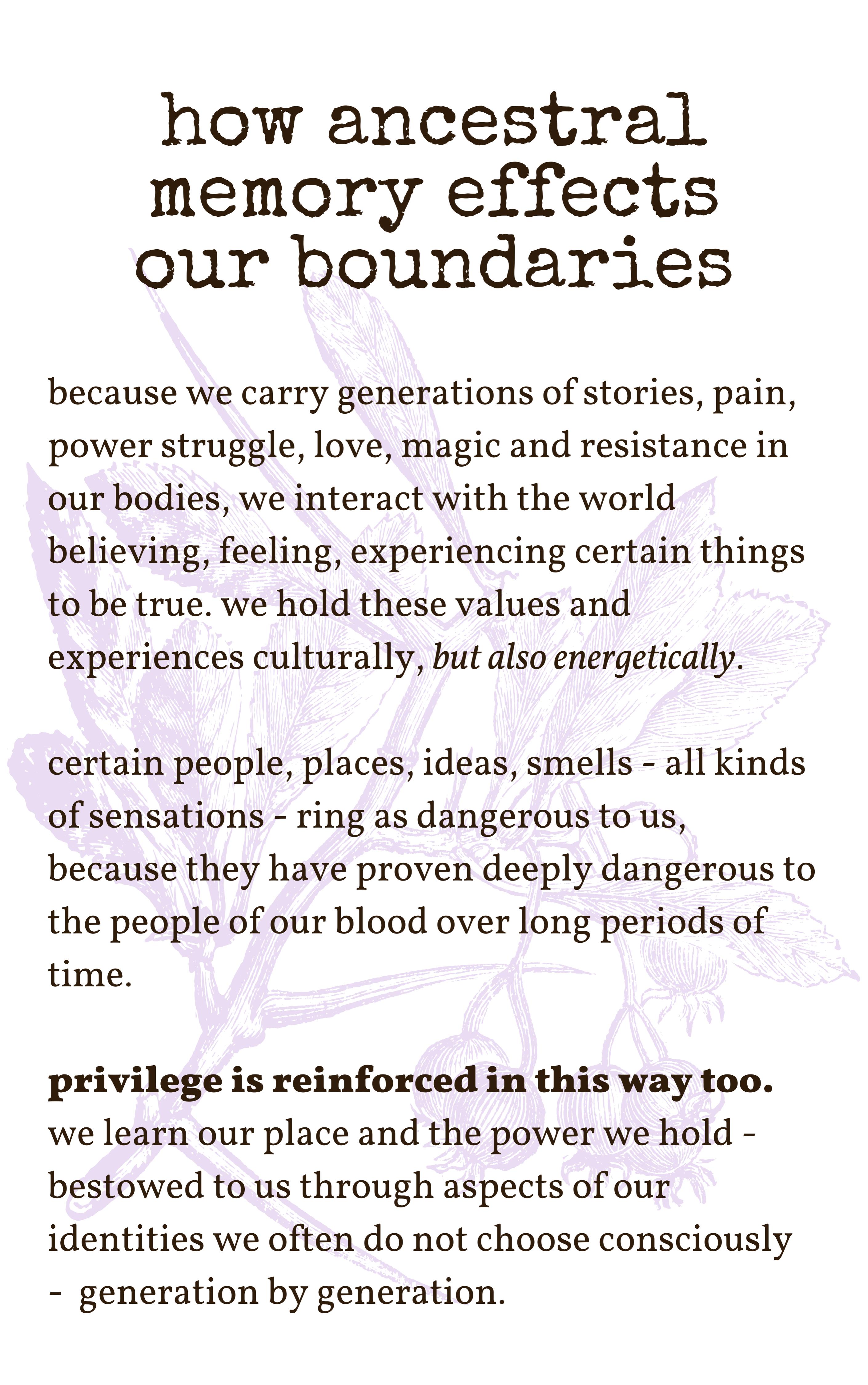
memory is a powerful and valid form of knowledge, even if it is not 'precise'. feeling, dreaming, wondering - these are all forms of memory and valid forms of knowledge.

*if you want support to uncover your ancestral connections, i'd suggestion Rain Crowe's courses: **the burning times never ended** and **the wylder edge**. i'd also suggest connecting with Pavini Moray, who offers sessions of ancestral lineage repair.*

*if you know of more folks who are supportive of this kind of healing work, you can add them to the resources doc on the facebook group.*



# how ancestral memory effects our boundaries



because we carry generations of stories, pain, power struggle, love, magic and resistance in our bodies, we interact with the world believing, feeling, experiencing certain things to be true. we hold these values and experiences culturally, *but also energetically.*

certain people, places, ideas, smells - all kinds of sensations - ring as dangerous to us, because they have proven deeply dangerous to the people of our blood over long periods of time.

**privilege is reinforced in this way too.**  
we learn our place and the power we hold - bestowed to us through aspects of our identities we often do not choose consciously - generation by generation.

*i want to note that ancestry is not limited to blood, we can also have ancestors of struggle, ancestors of shared resistance - feel free to call on these folks as you dive into this content as well.*

**often our boundaries weave in and through the places we feel *the most* scarcity.**

a deep sense of lack often convinces us to accept things we would be better off saying 'no' to. scarcity tends to convince us that we actually have no choice *but* to do something we would rather say 'no' to.

and yes, there are moments when we are forced to say 'yes' to things by the pressure of capitalism and other systems of power, where we have to make the best choice from a range or poor choices.

**boundary and protection magic are about finding *the places where we can say 'no'.***

sometimes there are opportunities to say 'no', even while we say 'yes' to something we don't want. there are gradations of 'no'; there are gradations of 'yes'. we can set terms.

**protection magic is about opening our eyes and hearts, then bolstering our bravery to ask for *something other than what we have been conditioned, sometimes over generations, to accept.***

*and so i ask you, when you look at the stories of your family: where do you see the weakest boundaries? the deepest scarcity? the most painful wounds from a lack of protection?*

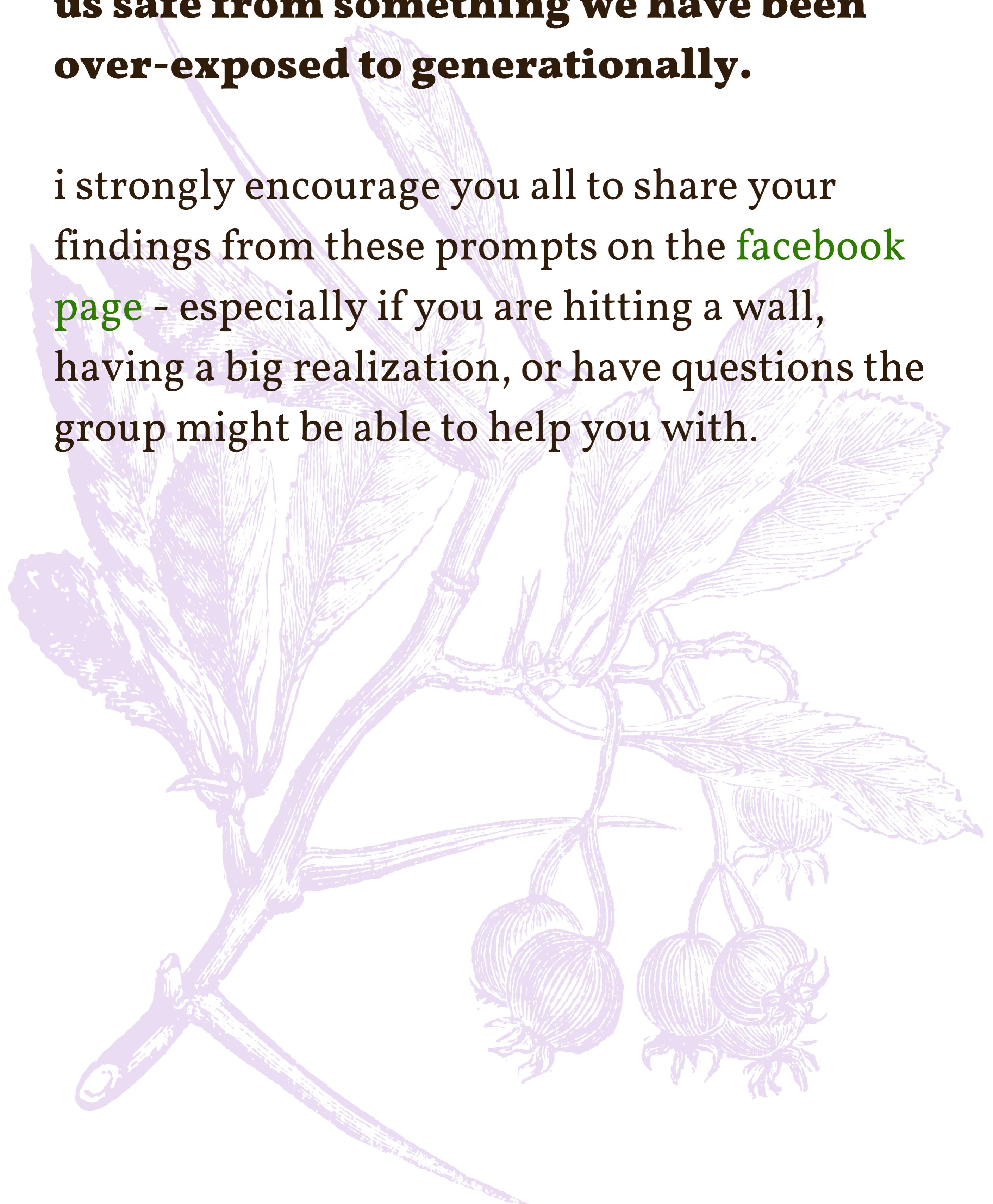
(this question can also be asked in reverse to reflect on the areas of our greatest privilege..)

*do you see rhythms or reflections of these family/ancestral patterns in your own boundaries?*

*or perhaps you see the mirror opposite?*

**many of us will explicitly strengthen (and sometimes even over-fortify, often in painful ways) boundaries which keep us safe from something we have been over-exposed to generationally.**

i strongly encourage you all to share your findings from these prompts on the facebook page - especially if you are hitting a wall, having a big realization, or have questions the group might be able to help you with.



# gather

throughout this course i'll offer prompts for something you can gather, something you can weave into your magic.

this week i suggest you **gather stories**. if you can gather or create physical evidence - you can use this on your altars, which we'll be creating next week.

*speak to your family, in person if you can. research the stories. read books about myth and witch craft from the places you are from - these books often hold a more radical, feminist, indigenous lens than history books written by colonial historians.*

*if there is no evidence in a pen/paper/data kind of way, sit with mugwort and dream. dreams, creative practice, ceremony, trance, visualizations, and astral travel are also valid ways to speak to your family. ask for the stories to come. trust that they'll arrive when you are able to hear them.*

**make sure to ground yourself as you go through these practices and take your time digesting what you discover.**

# **boundaries// possession// colonization**

i wrote this section (and the next) because i want to introduce you to ways of thinking about boundaries via differing cultural lenses.

**in a settler colonial context, one of the main ways we are taught to understand boundaries is through borders.**

borders are harsh, controlling, violent and involve long histories of theft, displacement and power-over. while we may not *mean* to have these values come through in our boundary practices, sometimes they do because these are the values of the culture we are steeped in. even if we are not overtly harmful to others, our ways of approaching conflict can still embody these values in an energetic sense.

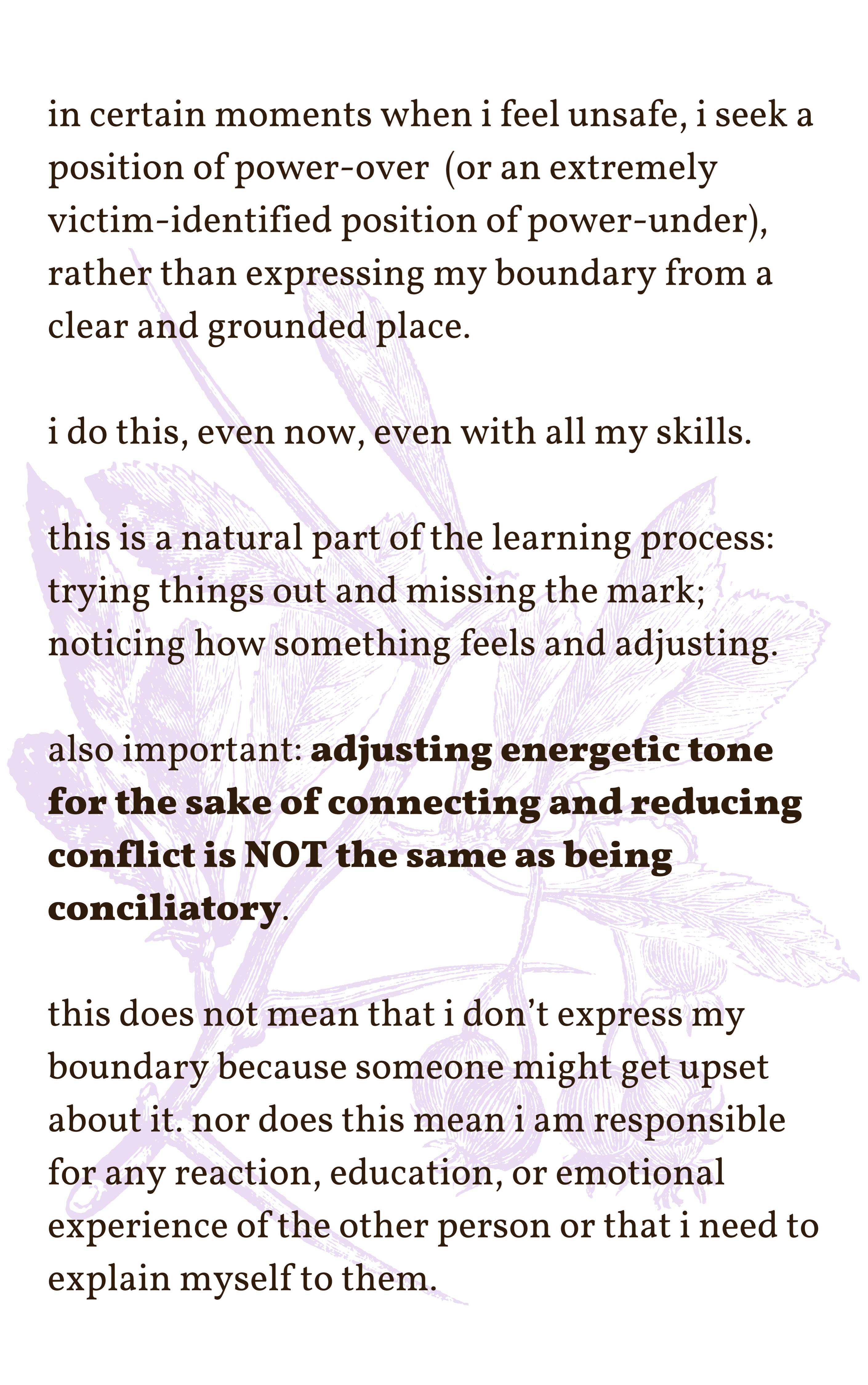
what i mean by this is: i have noticed in myself and others that when people set boundaries - especially folks who have not felt able to do so before - *we can sometimes over-compensate in the fierceness, possessiveness, inflexibility, and volatility we bring to our boundaries.*

**sometimes this fierceness can actually lead to more conflict rather than less, which is often the opposite goal of the boundary.**

this is not a judgment: it's a gentle witnessing of a totally natural response to trauma and generations of de-skilling.

look,  
i'm a triple fire sign.  
i love fierce bitches...  
and...

*...sometimes the way i communicate my boundaries is unnecessarily harsh.*



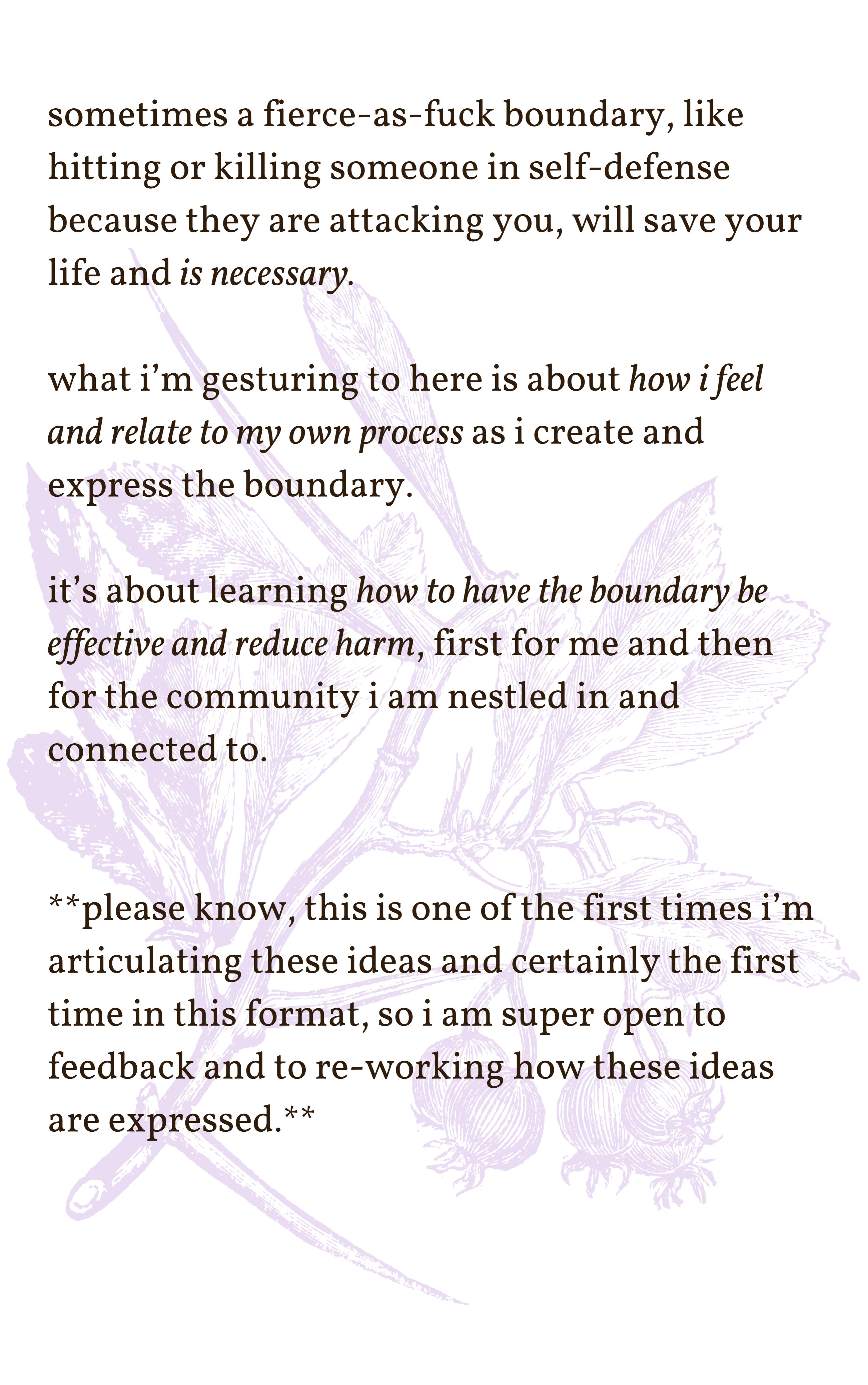
in certain moments when i feel unsafe, i seek a position of power-over (or an extremely victim-identified position of power-under), rather than expressing my boundary from a clear and grounded place.

i do this, even now, even with all my skills.

this is a natural part of the learning process: trying things out and missing the mark; noticing how something feels and adjusting.

also important: **adjusting energetic tone for the sake of connecting and reducing conflict is NOT the same as being conciliatory.**

this does not mean that i don't express my boundary because someone might get upset about it. nor does this mean i am responsible for any reaction, education, or emotional experience of the other person or that i need to explain myself to them.

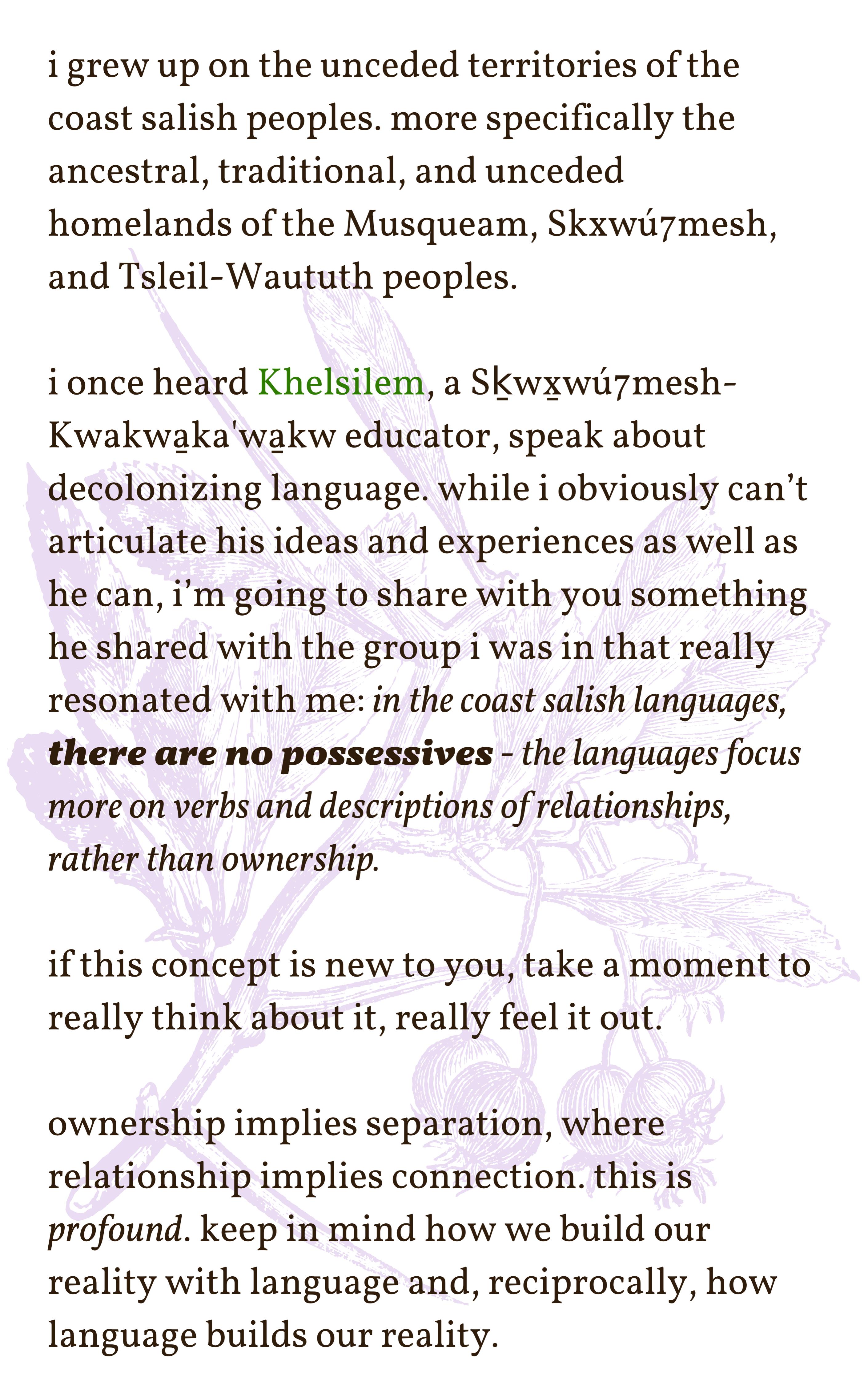


sometimes a fierce-as-fuck boundary, like hitting or killing someone in self-defense because they are attacking you, will save your life and *is necessary*.

what i'm gesturing to here is about *how i feel and relate to my own process* as i create and express the boundary.

it's about learning *how to have the boundary be effective and reduce harm*, first for me and then for the community i am nestled in and connected to.

\*\*please know, this is one of the first times i'm articulating these ideas and certainly the first time in this format, so i am super open to feedback and to re-working how these ideas are expressed.\*\*

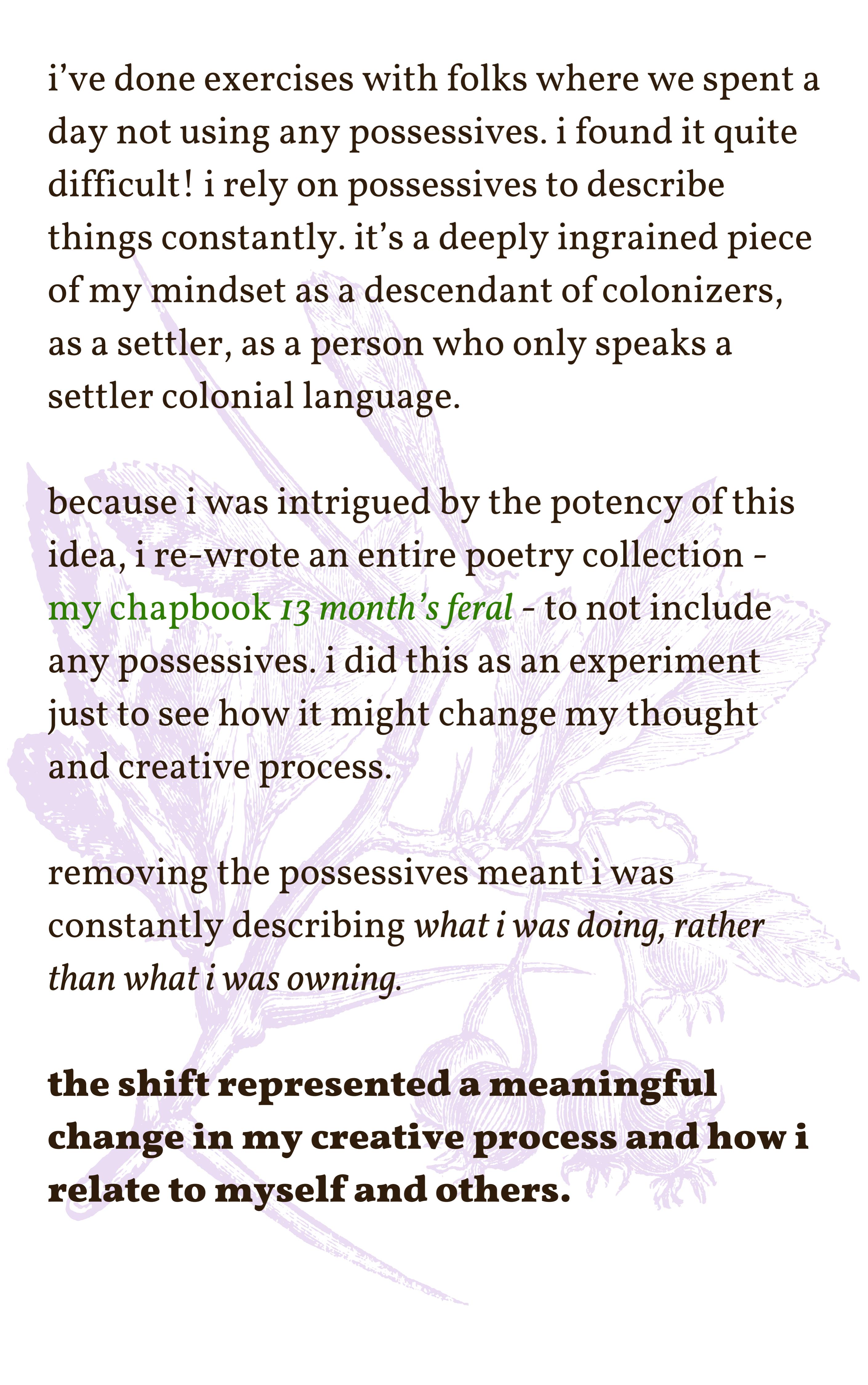


i grew up on the unceded territories of the coast salish peoples. more specifically the ancestral, traditional, and unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Skxwú7mesh, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

i once heard **Khelsilem**, a Skwxwú7mesh-Kwakw̱aka'wakw educator, speak about decolonizing language. while i obviously can't articulate his ideas and experiences as well as he can, i'm going to share with you something he shared with the group i was in that really resonated with me: *in the coast salish languages, there are no possessives - the languages focus more on verbs and descriptions of relationships, rather than ownership.*

if this concept is new to you, take a moment to really think about it, really feel it out.

ownership implies separation, where relationship implies connection. this is *profound*. keep in mind how we build our reality with language and, reciprocally, how language builds our reality.



i've done exercises with folks where we spent a day not using any possessives. i found it quite difficult! i rely on possessives to describe things constantly. it's a deeply ingrained piece of my mindset as a descendant of colonizers, as a settler, as a person who only speaks a settler colonial language.

because i was intrigued by the potency of this idea, i re-wrote an entire poetry collection - my chapbook *13 month's feral* - to not include any possessives. i did this as an experiment just to see how it might change my thought and creative process.

removing the possessives meant i was constantly describing *what i was doing, rather than what i was owning*.

**the shift represented a meaningful change in my creative process and how i relate to myself and others.**

and so i offer these questions for you to reflect on:

*what would it look like if we shaped our boundaries within a web of relationships, rather than through ownership?*

*how does the concept of possession affect our ideas around boundaries, protection, and sovereignty?*

*what would it look like to create boundaries that gestured to relationships and accountability?*

*what would it look like to include the land, the water, the elements, the living creatures, and our ancestors in our boundary and protection magic practice?*

perhaps some of you have examples of what this concept looks like as it unfolds in your own lives, families, or cultures. if you do and you feel open to sharing, i would love to hear from you **on the facebook group**.

# moving toward a receptive boundary practice

in this section i'm sharing a quote with you from Tada Hozumi's upcoming e-book. they are of japanese ancestry, and their work is very much influenced by that cultural lens.

*“Boundaries are an ever hot topic today.*

*I think of my work as a very close cousin to modern boundary work that originates from Asian relational practices such as Tai Chi or Aikido.*

*While I understand it is important for us to know what we want and don't want, I don't emphasize developing ways for us to say 'no' to someone or something.*

*My practice supports a way of gently accepting something that is approaching us and directing it where we want it to go, with discernment and minimal effort.*

*I found that thinking of relationships in terms of setting boundaries can fall into the habit of **reinforcing patterns that are reactive.***

*These kinds of boundaries can be unhealthy in their own right and cause unnecessary suffering.*

*Reactive boundaries are like setting up electric fences. Someone has to pay the price of keeping them charged up. They may work for a time but they are not sustainable.*

*If anything, the energy field work we will be doing is about maintaining ‘friendly’ boundaries that feel good to you AND good to the other person, as much as possible.*

*You might think of unfriendly boundaries like an egg. Hard on the outside and soft on the inside. This can be really scary because once the boundary is penetrated we are incredibly weak and vulnerable.*

*Instead, we want to be soft on the outside and hard on the inside.”*

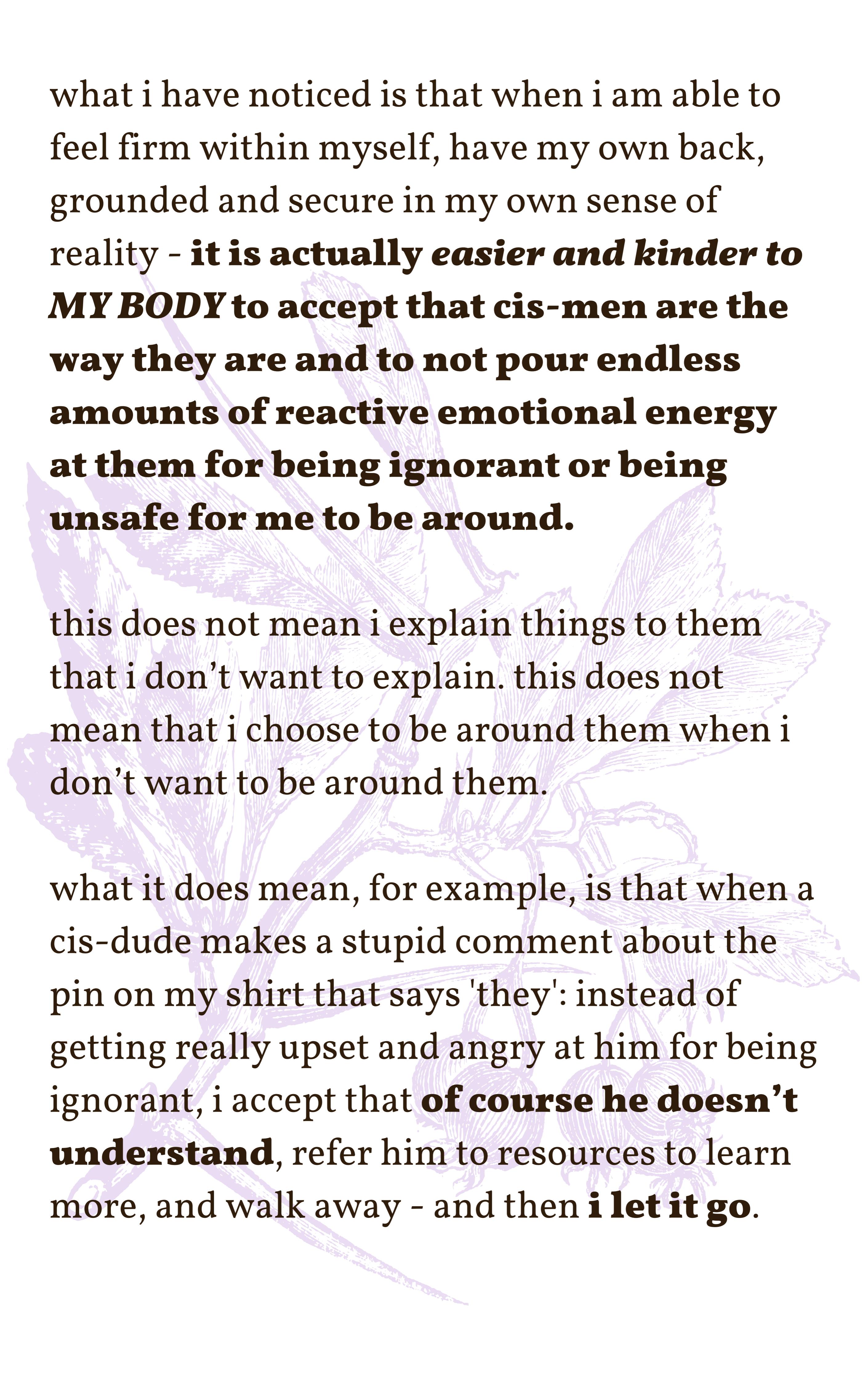
this idea resonates deeply for me in terms of my own self-care, AND i notice myself feeling defensive just reading this.

part of my mind says...

“what do you mean i should be friendly to cis-dudes?! they are awful in so many ways, why would i be friendly to them?? they don’t deserve that and can’t reciprocate 99% of the time!!”

and of course, *there are ways that this is completely true*. i’ve been raped and sexually assaulted and harassed and experienced a lifelong feeling of unsafeness around cis-men. i am not *imagining* this violence. in many ways, cis-men do not *deserve* my kindness.

*however...*



what i have noticed is that when i am able to feel firm within myself, have my own back, grounded and secure in my own sense of reality - **it is actually easier and kinder to MY BODY to accept that cis-men are the way they are and to not pour endless amounts of reactive emotional energy at them for being ignorant or being unsafe for me to be around.**

this does not mean i explain things to them that i don't want to explain. this does not mean that i choose to be around them when i don't want to be around them.

what it does mean, for example, is that when a cis-dude makes a stupid comment about the pin on my shirt that says 'they': instead of getting really upset and angry at him for being ignorant, i accept that **of course he doesn't understand**, refer him to resources to learn more, and walk away - and then **i let it go.**

i don't do this letting-go to let *him* off the hook. i do it to let *myself* off the hook from processing shit that ends up taking energy i could give to writing, walking my dog, making magic, or doing my makeup and looking fierce-as-fuck.

**this process actually leads me to de-center the experience of the cis-dude and re-center my creative, spiritual, and emotional vitality.**

now of course, like everything, there are always exceptions to this idea. there are moments when we *need* to process our reaction to something. i'm not suggesting we cultivate an air of non-reactivity, where we move through the world pretending nothing effects us.

**my capacity for non-reactivity needs to come from a place of genuine peace and calm within myself.**

if i have recently been traumatized, for example, i need digest that trauma somehow. expressing anger can be a necessary and healthy activity, as long as it is in balance with other ways of expressing and relating to our emotions.

**a basic rule is: the anger should serve us, not deplete us.**

i'm a triple fire sign, so being permanently non-reactive would be torturous to me. that is, i have a boundary to protect my magic and to give my energy to myself and the people i love whom love me back the way i deserve.

and so i ask you..

*are there areas of your life where you give your energy away through reactivity?*

*what are you hoping will change as a result of your reactivity? is it working?*

*what is held in place by you reacting this way?*

*how does this experience land in your body?*

*how might it feel in your body to be exposed to this same kind of trigger and not ignore it, but also not react in a way that is exhausting and painful?*

*what would it look like if there was a part of you that **enjoys** reacting in this way? how could you honour that part of yourself without getting sucked into the cycle?*

*please feel encouraged to post on the facebook group with your thoughts about this exercise.*

# chiron: your wound your healer

astrologically, where the comet chiron was in the sky when we were born, indicates the area of our lives *where we hold the deepest wound and our richest capacity to heal.*

you can find out where chiron was when you were born by using [this chart](#).

because chiron gestures to the area of our deepest wounds, it also can indicate where we may most need and benefit from a well-balanced and energetically-fortified boundary, set of boundaries, or well-weaved protection magic.

if this idea interests you, i suggest doing deeper research via a search engine or working with an astrologer to get an in-depth

look into the complicated art and science of astrology, your natal chart, and how it may impact your life.

for the sake of brevity and reference, i've listed what each placement of chiron roughly refers to...

**aries:** will, ambition, self-confidence, self-discovery, personal power

**taurus:** possessions, wealth, material things, bodies, sex, sensual experiences

**gemini:** communication, education, relationships, voice, self-expression

**cancer:** home, ancestry, family, sense of belonging, nourishment, nostalgia

**leo:** pleasure, leadership, ego, loyalty, jealousy, creativity

**virgo:** work, health, service, duty, details, modesty, analysis, anxiety

**libra:** harmony, balance, peace-keeping, self-definition in relation to others

**scorpio:** secrets, taboo desires, hidden emotions, self-transformation

**sagittarius:** travel, philosophy, how you think, spirituality, beliefs

**capricorn:** power, materialism, hierarchy, prominence, self-discipline

**aquarius:** friends, being misunderstood, new ideas, eccentricity, revolution, technology

**pisces:** faith, esapism, ecstasy, psychic gifts, difficulty connecting to material reality

again, astrology is a *complex art and science*. what is written here is meant to be a doorway to deeper learning, not a static all-encompassing answer.

if this idea resonates with you, or if perhaps you disagree with the information here, i would highly suggest further learning and/or connecting with someone who can dive more deeply into your chiron, or even better, into your whole chart.

and i wonder...

*does your chosen area of focus align with where chiron sits in your birth chart?*

*what does this information reveal?*

*do you see a connection between your shadow desires and what chiron reveals about your wounds?*

please feel encouraged to share your discoveries, ideas and questions with the group on facebook.