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The Summer of Love - The Season of Sisterhood - The Belief in our Community.

Dear Sisters -

I am writing this from the Walhalla office, August has just passed, and we are in our last few days in Michigan. I want to thank all of you for this year's most incredible Festival - for bringing your best selves to this beloved community - your big hearts, your incredible fire and creativity, your playful and thoughtful selves, your passion for creating this city of womyn together. This has truly been the Summer of Love in action. To the sisters who were not able to be with us on the Land this year, who lit a candle, sang a verse of Amazon, imagined the Land under the hope of the new moon - your spirits were strong and always part of our greater good.

I leave August grateful for every moment: the hard sweaty work, the open smiles on the path, the touch of so many sisters, the woods that hold us so steady, each and every conversation that made me think/feel/consider/shudder/shift and most of all - the absolute rejuvenation I feel in our beautiful family of womyn. Together, each of us walked through the doors of doubt into the open air belief, in us, of our most beautiful community.

We are a complex community and this ongoing dialectic (that is, our investigation of the truth through discussion) around sex, gender and intersecting identities is not simplistic. We know in our hearts that there is no one right answer, and we are working together to shift the focus towards asking more genuine/complex questions and speaking with gentler, contemplative voices as we bring our true compassionate hearts and minds to this process. The path of communication we nurtured together on the Land, around fires, on paths and in circles at workshops, will continue. We can and will build on this process in our home communities, in our personal circles, and when our community gathers again face to face next August.

The intention of Michigan as a space for womyn born female and the question of trans inclusion has been a painful issue within the Festival. It is important that we continue these discussions and truly build alliances across our complicated and multi-faceted identities and beliefs, based on truthful, compassionate conversation and radical listening. In Michigan, as well as in our home communities, the difficulties we have experienced having these discussions in a clear and open-hearted format has pulled a great deal of focus. It is critical that we remember -- as a radical, loving and diverse community -- that a just world for all humans is our common ground and our greatest good. This is a fundamental tenet I hold dear as founder and producer of the Festival, and as a radical feminist womyn. I pledge to continue to foster and support discussions about gender identities and to renew the Festival's commitment to focused community work around issues of sexism, racism, classism, ageism, ableism; issues that, in their own ugly ways, overlap, injure and separate us. This excavation must be an ongoing process in our intentional community; good work is never complete - we are always in process.

I also want to thank you for your support of the Festival during this complex and challenging year. May each of you who offered what she could, have your gifts returned to you threefold. Every single womyn who offered financial support, who shared her energy, who held us in the light, who showed up at Festival or encouraged others to do so, who took a moment to set her intention on the Land in August from points around our mother planet - I thank you for believing in and supporting this community, this Festival.

With your support we have met the expenses of this year's Festival - a goal that seemed impossible in early June! In order to meet our operating costs and seed money towards the 2014 Festival, we will need to continue to reach out to our community and generate some mid-season sales to keep the home fires burning and get us moving towards the 39th Festival. You've made some awesome suggestions online and we're following up on them! Please watch for a follow-up email in a few weeks about automatic monthly bank withdrawals for those of you who would like to tithe, who want to purchase Tickets in Remembrance or to purchase Honorary Tickets to the 40th Anniversary. We will also send out information for those of you who want to start to pay for your 2014 ticket by monthly deduction, and there will be a last chance to buy calendars and cards.

Soon we will make those smoking hot prom photos available for you to purchase, as well as some gorgeous Festival Moment images in sizes that will do your home walls proud and keep Michigan in your sight all year.

The community we create together can be so deeply magical, so profoundly transformative, and so gently healing. It is in this fertile ground that we plant the seeds of our beautiful, continual, revolution. For these precious weeks, we nurture a culture where we live within the rare, all-encompassing feeling of unity that allows us to solidify our commitment to righteous action and simultaneously dissolve the constraints of isolation, vanity and distrust. We create a revolution where we liberate our playful, fierce, foxy and feral selves - and move forward with trust in the union of our sisterhood. This is what we grow when we are together with clear intention. This is what we can create, nurture and pass on in every aspect of our lives.

Keep that precious light alive all year sisters - until we meet again under August skies...

Much love,

Lisa

"I'm going to camp out on the land
I'm going to try an' get my soul free"
Joni Mitchell, 1970

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