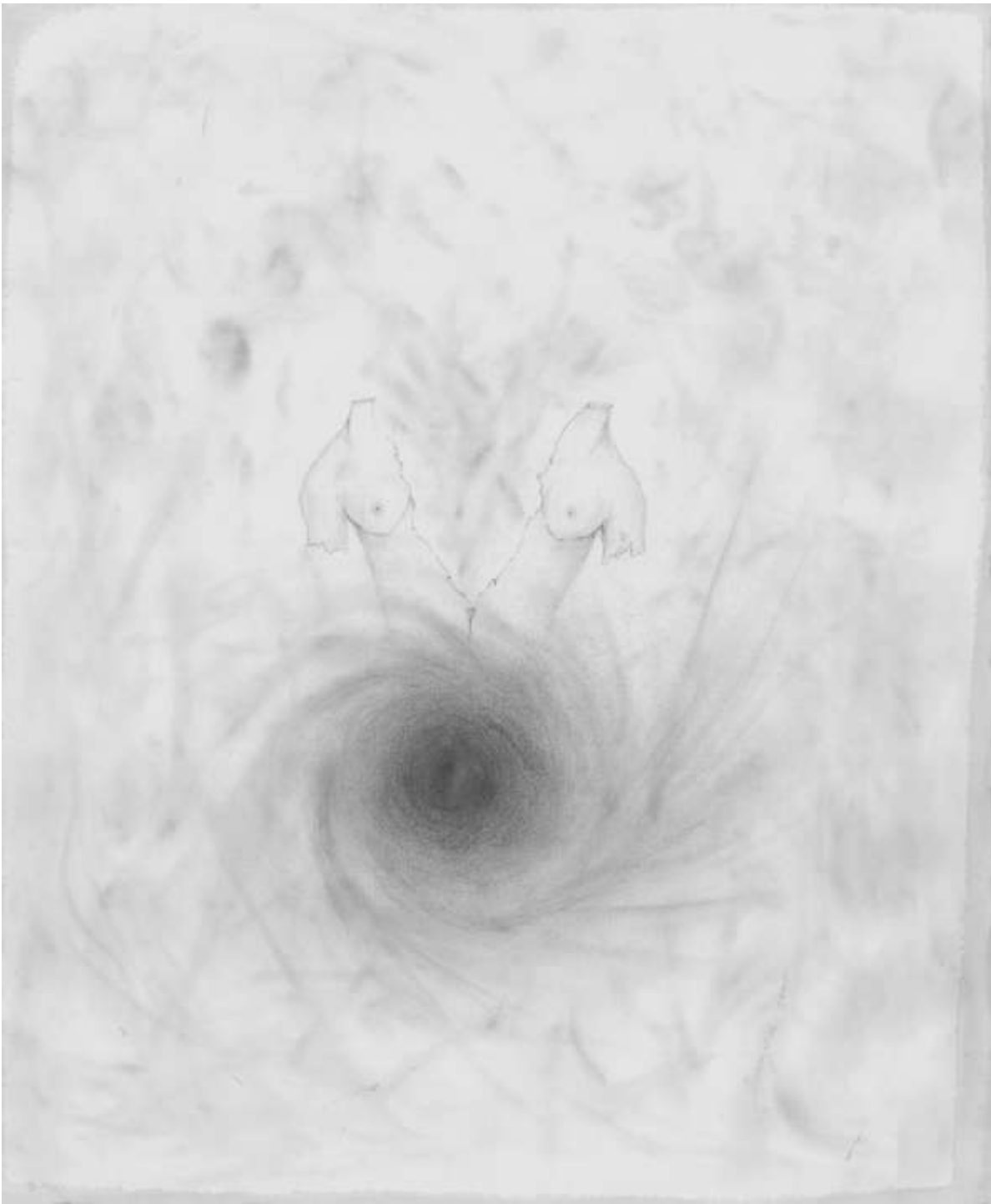


Juanita Van Ham's Healing Journey



Drawing #1 – a self portrait

Trauma; ripped open- heart broken, lungs can't breathe

No arms – can't do anything

No head – can't think straight

No legs – can't run away, it's all encompassing

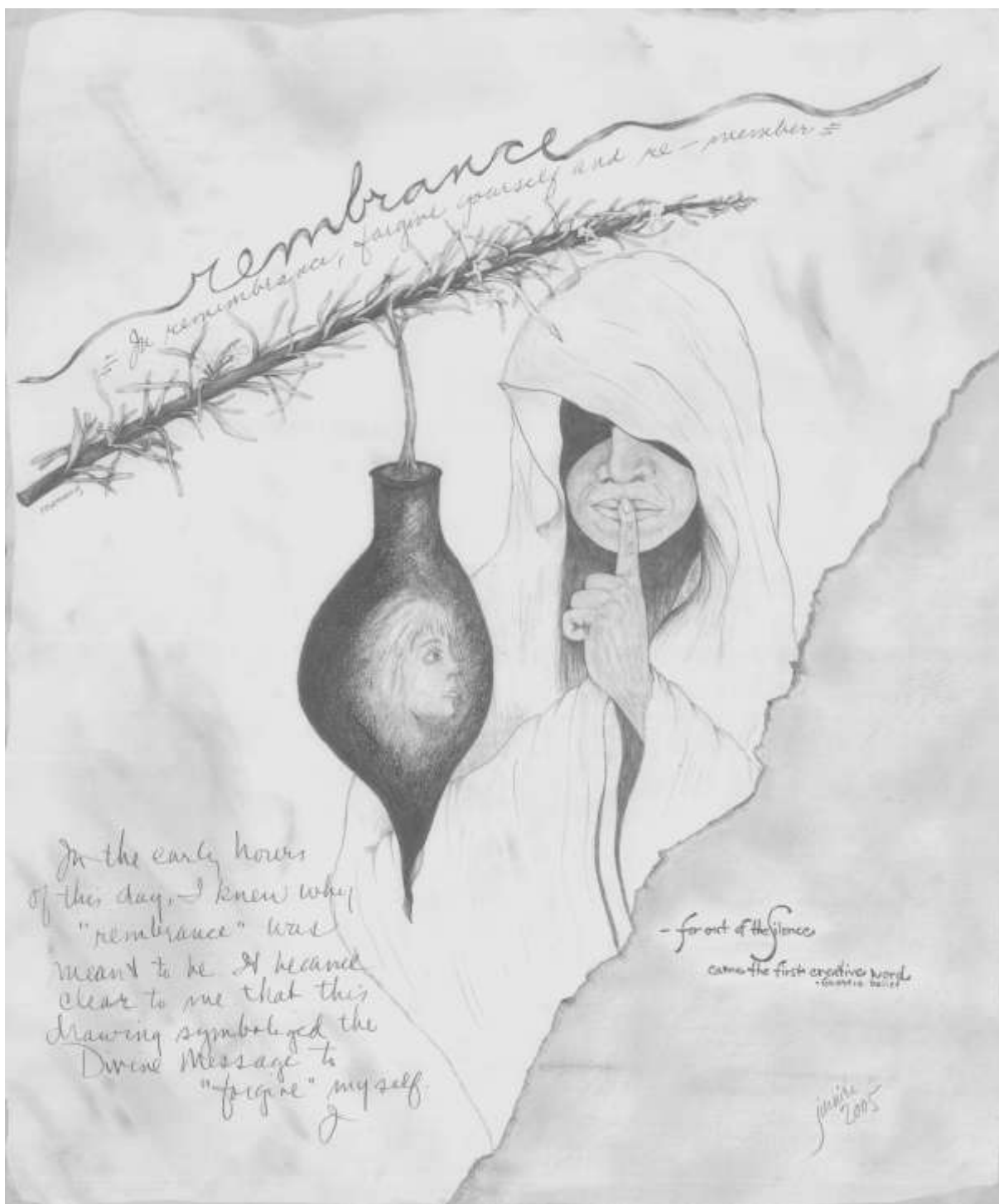
Swirling black mass all consuming

Lost

All feels at once, surreal yet, so real I could die

Can't sort it out

Imprisoned/trapped



Drawing #2 – rosemary and re-member

The first image that came was the girl in the vessel – trapped, imprisoned, life-less. I knew next that the herb, rosemary, had to be there – had a craving for it right after my initial TFT treatment. I didn't know why. I just let it come.

The jagged torn edge connects to the ripped open torso in the first drawing. The girl in the vessel looks trapped in an ornament, the façade one puts forth perhaps. Silence is present as the Great Mother, a nurturer, a stable, grounded presence. It begins to feel safe, Holy Mystery.

The presence of rosemary connects to nature being present in the process. The girl in the vessel is connected to it by a root. I feel we are all rooted in nature. I have forgotten that far too often.

One of the things rosemary symbolizes, I found out later, is memory/to remember.

Note: I spent a long time carefully scrolling in a flowing font, what I thought was the word, "remembrance." Upon completion, I was devastated that I had been so involved in the process of writing this word that I didn't even see that I was writing a word that didn't exist – "rembrance." How stupid of me!



Drawing #3 – ginseng and protection

The first image in this drawing was Silence touching the vessel, the importance of the presence of ginseng was clear next. I later learned it was a symbol of protection.

Secrets. I needed protection as they emerge. Personal secrets I kept from my self and/or others that I stuffed, denied. Secrets others kept from themselves and/or from me. All of these secrets effect choices and behaviors, many times stemming from pain, fear, brokenness.

Still in the vessel, protecting the façade while, at the same time protecting the vulnerable, broken self, I am touched by a deeper knowing that comes out of the Silence, the Presence of God, Holy Mystery. It becomes safe enough to feel, to let the energy flow. It is really difficult because there is so much there. Yet, I am not alone.



Drawing #4 – juniper and healing

The first image in this drawing was the girl coming out of the vessel. Juniper came next, symbolizing, I learned later, health.

Touching, seeing, feeling Divine Presence within the Silence, it becomes safe to crack open the vessel and reach out, step out into a story that is bigger, more interconnected, than the isolated pain of my brokenness. Breaking out of the vessel, the façade loses its power, thus its importance fades.

The child becoming --- still rooted in nature via the connection to the juniper branch, it feels safe to break free, seeking health, wholeness.



Drawing #5 – hawthorn and transition

The first image here was actually hawthorn, followed by the curled up claws and the wave.

This was a frightening image for me. Yet, I knew it was in me, a part of me that lived, most times, undetected. I hated this part of the truth that was emerging. It was now time to see its face, to name it – a process that, for me, diffuses its power. Unknown and unnamed it functions with impunity.

Silence, the Great Mother, Divine Wisdom, God, Truth – all connected, all one, and present in the abyss. She, no longer a child, faced the creature as it fearlessly emerged from the box, the imprisoned and denied place of fear, betrayal, and resentment.

She stood, even as the creature reaches an extended tentacle-like claw out to possess her again. Released for this very box of fear, betrayal, resentment, she stands, eyes wide, hand out stretched, with an expression of wonder? Of compassion? Of understanding? Perhaps speaking her truth?

Through research, I also learned that a Hawthorn branch(s) made up the crown of thorns worn by Jesus.

Afterthoughts

I know that I am the woman ripped apart. I am the imprisoned girl-child, frightened and life-less, that is touched by the Holy Mystery and breaks free from being trapped in personal pain and victimization into a bigger story seeking wholeness, and interconnection.

I am the young woman who seeks compassionate understanding of others as well as my own being. Within me dwell fierce creatures along with the Holy Mystery.

It is a process, best pictured, for me, as a spiral where I can slip into any one of these places. There is a potential to be stuck there, even to seek out relationships and situations that enable me to stay there either consciously or in denial. It is also a spiral where Wisdom comes and growth happens.