

# **Sweet Darkness**

## **September 21-25, 2021**

### **RoFo Ranch, Colorado**

## **Preparation Information**



Greetings,

We're delighted you'll be joining us for *Sweet Darkness: The Initiatory Gifts of the Shadow, the Loyal Soldier, and the Sacred Wound*. Please read below for logistical and personal preparation information. We very much look forward to our five days together at RoFo Ranch in Southwest Colorado.

Wildly,

*Sage & Bill*

Animas Valley Institute  
PO Box 1020 Durango, CO 81302  
T: 970 259 0585 | [soulcraft@animas.org](mailto:soulcraft@animas.org) | [www.animas.org](http://www.animas.org)

## **COVID-19 PROTOCOLS**

---

We are gathering for this experiential immersion in the midst of a global pandemic. While this season of unrest may amplify the opportunity for healing, wholing, and soul initiation, it also presents a risk to the health of all of us in attendance together. Therefore, we urge you to follow social distancing guidelines, mask wearing, and sincere diligence in avoiding exposure to COVID-19 prior to your arrival and during our time together.

Our permit to operate on RoFo Ranch, Colorado requires compliance with all applicable Federal, State, and Local requirements. In addition, we are required to adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, as well as all state and local requirements surrounding this pandemic. Failure to do so can result in revocation of our land-use permit. Above and beyond that, the health and safety of everyone in attendance is our top priority, and we are committed to providing a safe and cooperative setting for this program.

In order to comply with regulations and in an effort to maximize safety, we ask you to commit to keeping yourself safe in the weeks leading up to the program, and throughout its duration. It would be unfortunate to have someone fall ill during the program. To that end, we previously asked you for compliance with the following guidelines prior to finalizing your registration, and **we are trusting strict adherence to these protocols to provide the safest possible experience for everyone:**

1. We encourage you to drive a personal vehicle to the program - do not travel on airlines to the program or in the two weeks prior to the program, unless you have been fully vaccinated. If you are unvaccinated, we require a 7-day post-flight quarantine plus COVID-19 testing before and after air travel.
2. We encourage you to continue practicing COVID-19 safety protocols including social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing, not touching your face, using hand sanitizer, etc. in the two weeks leading up to the program. This is especially important if you have not been vaccinated.
3. Please let us know immediately if you have any underlying health conditions that put you in greater danger should you contract COVID-19, and do not plan on attending the program at this time.
4. Excuse yourself from the program (even very last minute) if you have come into contact with someone with COVID-19 in the two weeks leading up to the program, and/or you are experiencing possible symptoms of COVID-19 including fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, cough, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion, loss of sense of taste and smell, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
5. Commit to keeping 3-6 feet of space between yourself and other participants and guides throughout the program. Avoid hugs, handshakes, and touching – especially if you have not been vaccinated.
6. Commit to wearing a mask if circumstances require participants and guides to be closer than 3-6 feet from one another (such as if a sudden rainstorm hits and we all need to huddle under the tarp).
7. Commit to practicing safe hygiene during the program by frequently washing hands, using hand sanitizer and not sharing food, utensils and other objects.
8. Diligently cover sneezes, coughs, robust laughter, etc., especially if you have not been vaccinated.
9. Agree to leave the program if you become ill.

**On your drive to the program, please attempt to stay out of public places as much as possible. For example, aim to pee outside rather than using a public restroom (be very quick and hygienic if you do need to use a public space). Travel with food and groceries in your car so you do not need**

to go inside a restaurant. If we are each diligent, we can avoid the challenges of having anyone in our group contract the virus while we are gathered together.

**We are relying on you to keep your agreement to follow the COVID-19 guidelines in the two weeks prior to the program. Not keeping this agreement could put yourself and our entire community at risk. Please take this agreement seriously and follow through. It is an incredibly important part of preparation for this program. Thank you!**

## **LOGISTICS**

---

### **Program Begins:**

**Tuesday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at 1:00 pm**

We will start the first group meeting promptly at 1:00 pm. Please arrive between 11:00 am and 12:30 pm so you have time to settle in and begin promptly at 1:00. Please have your belly pleasantly filled before we begin.

The first meal team will provide dinner on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Please review the “meals” section below.

### **Program Ends:**

**Saturday September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 after lunch, which will be around noon.** We will stay together as a group through lunch. Lunch is our final gathering for this program.

**Please make your best effort to be on time and plan to stay for the full duration of the program. Thank you!** Should unexpected circumstances arise prior to your arrival, please contact the Animas office at (970) 259-0585. While attending the intensive, should unexpected circumstances arise, please communicate with your guides.

If you have any questions prior to the start of the program, you are welcome to email [soulcraft@animas.org](mailto:soulcraft@animas.org) or call the Animas office at (970) 259-0585.

## **TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATIONS**

---

**We strongly recommend you do not purchase your airline tickets until you hear from the Animas office confirming the program will happen, as Animas is not responsible for any costs associated with travel. We must wait until there are enough participants registered to confirm. The latest date we will confirm is 30 days prior to the program start date.**

We will be gathering at RoFo Ranch, 15200 Road J, Cortez, Colorado. The ranch sits at an altitude of 5500 feet in magical McElmo Canyon, beneath the northern slopes of Sleeping Ute Mountain. This is a camping program – you are responsible for all your own camping gear. RoFo Ranch has a beautiful bathhouse available to all participants – please bring your own towels and supplies.

**DRIVING DIRECTIONS:** (Please note that Google maps will work with this address, but cell phone reception in the canyon is spotty at best)

**From Durango & Cortez to 15200 Road “J”, Cortez, CO, 81321:**

\*Note: Travel time is approximately 1.25 hours from Durango

1. From Durango Take **Hwy 160 West** (towards Mancos, Mesa Verde and Cortez)
2. From Cortez, head south (out of town) on **Hwy 491**.
3. Make a right turn on Road G (towards the airport) heading west.
4. Continue on Road G almost 8 miles and look for the downhill, right turn onto Road J (you should see a “Dangerous Intersection” sign and some mailboxes just prior to Rd J).

5. Once across the bridge, make a left onto the Sage Canyon portion of Road J.
6. Continue following the dirt road to the gate at the end. **The current gate code is: 2020**  
**\*\*THERE IS NO CELL SERVICE AT THE GATE. PLEASE HAVE THE CODE WRITTEN DOWN\*\***
7. Once you come into Sage Canyon, make your first left to follow signs to the **RoFo Ranch**. You will cross a bridge. Keep following the road that will take you to the south side of the canyon. Eventually the road will open into a large field. Take a left where the road splits. Parking will be near the white wall tent.

The road into the property is a dirt, single-lane county road, but is passable by passenger cars. Help us preserve the quiet nature of canyon life for ourselves and our neighbors. Please drive slowly and watch out for critters.

### **BY AIR:**

You can fly to Cortez or Durango on regular commercial airlines. The drive from the Durango airport (La Plata County Airport) to RoFo Ranch is about 1.5 hours. Some folks choose to fly into Durango if they are arriving a day or two early, as Durango offers many options for camping, lodging, hiking, and relaxation.

There is also a small, reasonably priced airline called Boutique Air that flies between Cortez and a few major cities, which may be a good option to check out. The drive to RoFo Ranch from the Cortez Airport is about 15 minutes.

Another option is to fly into Albuquerque, NM or Grand Junction, CO (which may be less expensive) and rent a car for the 3.5-4 hour drive to Cortez. Please note that Albuquerque and Grand Junction are the closest metropolitan areas (Denver is about an 8 hour drive from Cortez, and Salt Lake City is about 6 hours drive time).

### **MEALS**

---

Dinners are group meals and will be designed, purchased, and prepared by the participants for this program in four meal teams. Everyone is responsible for their own breakfasts, lunches, snacks, and beverages. If your breakfasts will need to be cooked, please bring your own stove. The group kitchen will provide only hot water at breakfast time. It typically works best if one person volunteers to coordinate the overall organization of dinner teams and menus. **If you are excited about this opportunity or are particularly gifted at this, please let the Animas office know by email at [soulcraft@animas.org](mailto:soulcraft@animas.org).** We are happy to provide example menus of meals that have worked in the past as well as other documents that make the process fluid and fairly simple. **Make sure to ask people about their dietary restrictions; it is a safe bet to plan meals that are primarily vegetarian, dairy and gluten-free.**

### **PAPERWORK, ETC.**

---

1. **Health Questionnaire:** **Your registration is NOT complete until you fill out your health questionnaire;** here is the link: <http://www.animas.org/forms/questionnaire/>
2. **Once you have made your travel plans, please communicate them to us by e-mail if possible ([soulcraft@animas.org](mailto:soulcraft@animas.org))** so we know how and when to expect you. If you are flying in, please let us know the airline, flight number, date, time, and cities of departure and arrival. If you are driving, please let us know where and when you are beginning your journey, and the date and time you expect to arrive.
3. **Liability Release Waiver:** You will be asked to sign a liability release waiver for Covid-19 at the start of the program.

4. **A participant contact list** that includes phone numbers, email addresses and the city and state where participants live will be sent out when the program is confirmed. If the program is already confirmed, it will be included in this email. Please utilize this list to connect with one another after the program.

## **PAYMENT**

Thank you for your deposit. **The final payment for your balance is due 30 days prior to the start date of the program** unless other plans have been made. Please use one of the following methods to pay your balance:

1. Utilize the “[Make a Payment](#)” link under “Participants” on our homepage
2. Via PayPal, sending payment to [animasoperations@gmail.com](mailto:animasoperations@gmail.com)

As a non-profit with a small staff, we appreciate your promptness in paying your balance.

## **PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS BY ANIMAS VALLEY INSTITUTE or YOU**

Please reference <http://www.animas.org/policy/policies-procedures/> for our complete **Cancellation Policy**. To enroll in an Animas program is to invite your soul on something like a date; it is to say "yes" to a potentially life-changing journey, a journey of initiation or of deepening into a soul-infused life. It's not unusual for fear, resistance, or an apparent scheduling conflict to surface as the time of your program nears. We believe that whatever arises is a part of your journey and is ripe with opportunity and meaning. Our cancellation policy is designed to support you in keeping your date and to support our staff and guides as they prepare for your program.

A few notes of particular importance:

1. Once a program has confirmed, deposits cannot be credited or transferred
2. Cancellations 30 days or less prior to program start incur a forfeiture of deposit
3. Cancellation 7 days or less before the start date incurs a forfeiture of all payments

**PLEASE NOTE:** Due to the unique circumstances and risks of Covid-19, our policies have softened. If you withdraw from the program prior to the start due to possible exposure or symptoms of Covid-19, we will hold your payment as a credit for a future Animas offering. Once the program begins, no credits will be offered if you develop symptoms and are required to leave the program, as we have guaranteed payment to the guides for your participation.

*We will adhere to all Federal and State Health advisories regarding Covid-19, which could cause us to cancel the program up to the last minute. Also, if we have multiple cancellations that reduce our cohort substantially, we will need to cancel the program.*

## **PREPARING FOR THE INTENSIVE**

Want some ideas? You probably don't *really* need to prepare because your soul already knows what you've got yourself into *this* time and, most likely, your unravelling is already underway in the dark corners of your psyche where the real prep work happens anyway. We send our delighted condolences! But, in case you think some conscious preparation will help:

Read Bill Plotkin's *Wild Mind: A Field Guide to the Human Psyche*, with special attention to Part II (on the subpersonalities) and chapter 9 on the Shadow, in particular. You might also read chapter 12 of *Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche*, especially the sections on Shadow Work and Projections, but the Romance section would be a good idea as well. Reading *Nature and the Human Soul* and *The Journey of Soul Initiation* wouldn't be bad ideas, either.

Also, accompanying this PREP letter is a two-page document entitled "Where to Find Shadow." Might be good to take a look.

### **Want some journaling ideas?**

1. Who are your three favorite and long-term heroes from books or film? List the characteristics of each of them. Draw pictures of yourself with each of them. What are the qualities of your heroes that are also your own potentials?
2. Who are, for you, the three most nefarious villains or tyrants from books or films? Then, same as above.
3. Think of mother and father figures, wise guides, tricky characters, and the like, in books and films. How are any of these also like you in some way? Who are the people you have met along the way who fit into the various character/archetype roles? How have they helped or hindered you?
4. The animal species you love, especially if it is one most people don't like, can be a clue to elements of both your positive ("golden") and negative ("sinister") Shadow (e.g., liking crows because they are naughty when most people consider them rude and pesky). Which animal scares you the most? Which do you find most repulsive? Most admirable? What things in nature most appeal to you or most repel you? Any intuitions as to how your answers above reveal you to yourself? (Don't try to figure it out, though!)
5. Dreams and compensatory action: admirable and disturbing deeds we perform and dream figures who seem nothing like us might reveal our golden and sinister Shadows. Dialogue in deep imagery with the figures you meet.
6. Dayworld relationships: Our relationships with people often reveal missing facets of ourselves — or a union of opposites that expands our identity. What are the qualities typical of the people in your life?

**Keep a regular dream journal:** If you're having trouble remembering your dreams, have a long conversation with yourself as soon as you get into bed about the precise reasons why you're interested in recalling your dreams. Review and explore as many of *your* genuine reasons as you can, "store" each reason in a different body part so you can remember them all, and keep up this review until you fall asleep. Have your pen and journal ready at your bedside. Before you turn off the light, write the next morning's date and the words *Dream Report* at the top of a fresh page of your journal. As soon as you wake up, don't move an inch until after you have replayed your dream in your imagination. Perhaps give it a title before you move. Then reach for your journal. Transcribe your dream in the present tense as if you are recording actions and experiences that are occurring *as you write them*. Include all emotions that occur *in* the dream and also the general psychological and social atmosphere of the dream as you experienced it while you were dreaming. It's best not to ask anyone, including yourself, what your dream "means." Better is to spend as much of the day as you can "living within" the dream, submitting yourself to its images and feelings, so that the dream can do its emotional and imaginative works on you rather than you doing your analytical work on the dream.

### **More reading?**

Robert Bly, *A Little Book on the Human Shadow*. James Hollis, *Swamplands of the Soul: New Life in Dismal Places*. Robert A. Johnson, *Owning Your Own Shadow: Understanding the Dark Side of the Psyche*. David Richo, *Shadow Dance: Liberating the Power and Creativity of Your Dark Side*. Connie



Zweig and Jeremiah Abrams (eds.), *Meeting the Shadow: The Hidden Power of the Dark Side of Human Nature*, Sean Kane, *Wisdom of the Mythtellers*, anthologies of myth or fairy tales.

## **Shadow Council**

We would like to invite you to a Shadow Council at Sweet Darkness! Please prepare thyselfes accordingly.

A Shadow Council is one in which you show up as an element of your Shadow, at least a suspected element thereof. So, first, an important reminder: Shadow is NOT what you don't like about yourself and it is NOT what you know about yourself and feel — or suspect others would feel — is socially unsavory, disgraceful, strange, controversial, or depraved about you (whether or not you like it about yourself). Nope. Not Shadow. Rather, Shadow is what you DON'T KNOW about yourself and would, under normal circumstances, adamantly (and sincerely) deny is true about you. Well, then, this makes a Shadow Council a challenging if not impossible thing, does it not? I mean, how are you going to show up as an element of your Shadow if you don't know what's in your Shadow? Hmmmm? Well, that's why I wrote "*suspected* element" above. All you can go on are shadowy clues.

Where do you look for such clues? Here are some classic and popular places, which I commend to you — but first you must keep the following very much in mind: a Shadow character is only a Shadow character if you can honestly say to yourself something like, "If there's one thing I am NOT, it's this!" (the only exception being those of you, if any, who have fully assimilated the spiritual truth that, as Rumi puts it, "Everyone's scandalous flaw is mine."). OK, so here are some places to look for Shadow shapes, and let me add here, we'd like you to look specifically for elements of your "negative" or sinister Shadow (characters that you feel are "beneath" you, that you are better than, as opposed to your "positive" or golden Shadow elements):

- a dream figure (especially from a nightmare) — again, this would be a figure you'd swear you're not ANYTHING like
- someone in your life with whom you have a VERY strong negative emotional reaction to
- an other-than-human creature and/or aspect of nature to which you have a strong negative emotional reaction
- a villain from literature, film, myth that you have always felt is entirely despicable
- strongly negative feelings about people from "different" genders, cultures, races, religions, nations, political parties
- characters from your own deep imagery journeys that you find deeply disturbing
- your most detested archetypes or icons
- complete this sentence: "The one thing I am absolutely NOT is ...!!!!"

Our Shadow Council will occur in the dark (at night), possibly around a fire. During it, you'll give voice and embodiment to the possible Shadow element you have chosen to explore. The Council is an embodiment of these shades, with movement and enactment; you won't be talking about your Shadow aspect; rather you'll be exploring it somatically, psychologically, and socially while being it and being witnessed by the rest of us.

So! Please bring some item(s) of clothing or accessories that you can don to represent/ portray/ act out your possible Shadow element.

After the Council, there is a ceremony to go off into the night to further engage with your Shadow element in the dark fertile terrain of the land and the night sky. Please be sure to bring warm clothing!

And, to repeat: Shadow is not what you know about yourself but don't like or that you know about yourself and feel is socially unacceptable to you or others. It's what you DON'T KNOW about yourself AND would sincerely deny if accused. The Shadow Council is not an opportunity to embody some socially dubious aspect of what you already know is true about you. Rather, it's an opportunity to somatically and emotionally and socially explore and experience something that is likely to be in your Shadow, and, yes, you'll probably feel it's socially unacceptable (and it might very well be to some or all of us).

Also, it probably goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway: We expect and need your Shadow enactments to not be in any way physically dangerous to you or any other beings (including the humans in our group).

### **Where to Find Shadow**

Some places to look for your own shadow elements (how to begin to become conscious of your Shadow elements):

- dreams (including/especially nightmares)
- experiences during ceremonies (like the Alcove of Death)
- accusations and confrontations by others (in which you assume, for exploratory purposes, that they are *correct*)
- people with whom you have a strong emotional reaction (+ or -) (projections and/or transferences) ("provocative people")
- other-than-human creatures and aspects of nature with which you have a strong emotional reaction (+ or -)
- deep imagery journeys (characters who you find disturbing in either the + or - senses, or both)
- emotions, attitudes, etc. during meditation practice
- your own episodes of acting-out or over-reactions (these are your **Shadow Selves**)
- favorite heroes and villains from literature, film, theater, myth, etc.
- favorite and most detested archetypes or icons
- feelings (+ or -) about people from "different" cultures, races, religions, nations, political parties, etc.
- your beliefs (stereotypes) about the other gender
- your beliefs (stereotypes) about your own gender
- your own characteristics that disturb you (you're looking for the *shadow* of/in those characteristics) (e.g., disturbed by your own shyness? what is the opposite of your shyness?)
- your deepest creativity (true artistry) e.g., (what's missing? how is it skewed?)
- some of your inner voices: during times of decision making or inner conflict, that other voice engaging you
- in an inner debate may be the Shadow voicing its desires, a voice we might need to heed if we are to make
- wise decisions
- your own disturbing bodily states
- some of your illnesses (e.g., what's not being expressed?)
- the jokes you tell and the ones you laugh at the hardest!!
- your own children (or parents)!! (who might be embodying your unowned shadow, or who might simply be calling you on your shadow, "Horrors! How could they *possibly* believe that about me!!")
- encounters during vision fasts
- romance!! (when you fall out of love as well as when you fall in)
- qualities of your best friends



- what your true friends tell you about you when you're acting out (if three friends tell you the same thing independently, listen!)
- strong longings, including envy
- things you feel ashamed about
- when you believe you've spotted someone *else's* Shadow and it really annoys you
- Freudian slips
- impulses that occur during ecstasy (including orgasm)
- If your favorite magazine published an article about you, what are the three words (describing you) that would most trigger you?
- With whom would you not want to be caught strolling hand in hand in a place where there are people you look up to?
- the qualities of "the difficult" people in your life (present or past)
- situations and topics about which you are tempted not to tell the full truth
- complete this sentence: "The one thing that is absolutely (not) true about me is ...!"

**Some Questions you might ask about an element of the Shadow after you begin to become aware of it** (as umbral shadow enters penumbral):

- **Pre-integration awareness of Shadow elements:** Before you became conscious of your Shadow element *as* Shadow, what did you *think* it was when you enacted or embodied it? What qualities or traits did you think you were embodying at those times? Were you aware of it as part of you *at all*? (Or did you go completely unconscious when you were embodying it?) What did you call it? What did your Loyal Soldiers say about it? Your Wounded Children? Your Escapists/Addicts/Puers?
- **How projected?:** Before you began to integrate it, did you project it onto others (human or otherwise)? (Correct answer: Yes, or probably.) Who or what? Did you project both your sinister and golden Shadow elements both negatively (i.e., you didn't like the people you projected on) and positively (you did)? For example, with sinister Shadow, did you secretly admire or long for or be turned on by others with qualities you felt were abhorrent?
- How did you begin to become conscious of it? (See list on first page.)
- What is the **resource** you've discovered in the Shadow element? How have you begun to understand that quality in a new way? How might that resource be essential to your soul work, your larger conversation with the world? How has the conscious embodying of that resource changed your acting out of the pre-conscious quality, or your projection of it?
- Social/cultural context: What was or is it about your early family or cultural environment (or your constitution) that led to your repression of that Shadow element? How does this Shadow element (if it is now embodied consciously) lead to a wholing of the family, community, humanity, self, etc.?

## **WHAT TO BRING**

---

- **REQUIRED:** emergency whistle (the very loud, usually orange kind found in army-navy surplus or camping stores)
- **REQUIRED:** watch or other timepiece that is NOT your cell phone (so you will know when it's time to return to group after solo tasks on the land)
- **REQUIRED:** camp chair – bring your Therma-lounger, Crazy Creek, or other easily transportable low chair - we will be sitting on the ground during much of the program so be sure it is comfortable for you
- Benadryl for anyone with life-compromising allergies (this is in addition to your Epi Pen)
- sleeping bag
- Tent with rainfly and ground cloth (no hammocks, please)
- sleeping pad - or whatever set up will allow you to sleep comfortably on the ground
- emergency blanket (the very lightweight foil kind)

- any first aid supplies you wish to bring – band aids, antibiotic cream, moleskin, etc.
- camping-style solar shower – optional
- clothing for cold/cool/warm/hot ~ hiking/sitting/sleeping (bring layers!)
- light hiking shoes
- rain gear (jacket with hood plus rain pants, or a rain poncho)
- umbrella (optional, for sun or rain)
- day pack to carry all you will need for wanders
- flashlight or headlamp (with extra batteries/bulbs)
- lap blanket (optional — for extra warmth while sitting in circle on possibly cool days)
- insect repellent – fragrance-free and non-toxic, please
- sunglasses
- sunhat
- sunscreen - fragrance-free, please (for lips, too)
- personal toiletries
- towel
- water bottle
- personal eating utensils including a durable bowl and spoon
- durable coffee/tea mug or insulated water bottle/thermos
- your own breakfasts, lunches, snacks
- personal hand sanitizer/wipes/soap (COVID-19 protocol)
- cloth or N-95 face masks (COVID-19 protocol)
- personal journal and writing utensils
- special or sacred items that assist you in soul work (see below)
- drums, rattles, and other small percussion instruments (see below)
- dreams
- curiosity & imagination

**\*\* Please leave all consciousness altering substances at home – thank you!**

**Please Also Bring:** Two objects for the altar we will create together: one that symbolizes Wholeness (for you) and one to represent Shadow (for you).

**Rhythm instruments:** Together we will create rhythm to help us ease out of our ordinary modes of being and perceiving, and into the timeless, symbolic presence of the underworld. It will help if you bring with you some rhythm instruments. Most relevant are the percussion instruments: drums, shakers (rattles, gourds, maracas, tambourines, tin cans with pebbles or seeds inside, etc.). Bells, conches, whistles, flutes, recorders, etc., are also welcome if played in a rhythmic manner.

**Sacred Items:** Like most people, you probably live with (not necessarily "possess") certain small items that are of special significance to you -- that help you access soul, archetype, mystery, myth, courage, intuition, imagination, love, or truth. These items might be stones, seeds, jewels, figurines, bones, teeth, claws, photographs, feathers, powders, crystals, carvings, etc. You are encouraged to bring with you any small items that might help you access important personal or transpersonal qualities and that might aid you during moments of fear or confusion or opportunity. Some people bring pouches or satchels in which to carry these items. Please note! – It is illegal in the U.S. to possess certain animal parts (feathers of birds of prey or migratory birds, for example). If you are traveling by air, be aware that these items could be confiscated if your personal items are searched. Rocks and sharp items should be placed in your checked luggage for security purposes.

We're very much looking forward (and somewhat terrified) to dive into Sweet Darkness with you!

Wild blessings,

*Bill & Sage*

*(Cocoon Weaver & Spider Gateor)*



## ABOUT OUR GUIDES:

**Sage Magdalene** has a gift for hearing and reflecting the deep stories of many beings. She invites people to thresholds and opens gates between worlds. She has been an educator, artist, dancer, and gate keeper in many ecosystems. Her greatest joy is to hear and converse with the wild others: moon, spider, frog, human, river and stars. She brings a light touch and embodied wisdom to the serious work of transformation.



**Bill Plotkin, Ph.D.**, is a depth psychologist, wilderness guide, and agent of cultural evolution. As founder of western Colorado's Animas Valley Institute in 1981, he has guided thousands of women and men through nature-based initiatory passages, including a contemporary, Western adaptation of the pan-cultural vision fast. Previously, he has been a research psychologist (studying non-ordinary states of consciousness), professor of psychology, psychotherapist, rock musician, and whitewater river guide.

In 1979, on a solo winter ascent of an Adirondack peak, Bill experienced a call to adventure, leading him to abandon academia in search of his true calling. Bill is the author of [\*Soulcraft: Crossing into the Mysteries of Nature and Psyche\*](#) (an experiential guidebook), [\*Nature and the Human Soul: Cultivating Wholeness and Community in a Fragmented World\*](#) (a nature-based stage model of human development through the entire lifespan), [\*Wild Mind: A Field Guide to the Human Psyche\*](#) (an ecocentric map of the psyche — for healing, growing whole, and cultural transformation), and [\*The Journey of Soul Initiation: A Field Guide for Visionaries, Evolutionaries, and Revolutionaries\*](#) (an experiential guidebook for the descent to soul). He has a doctorate in psychology from the University of Colorado at Boulder.