

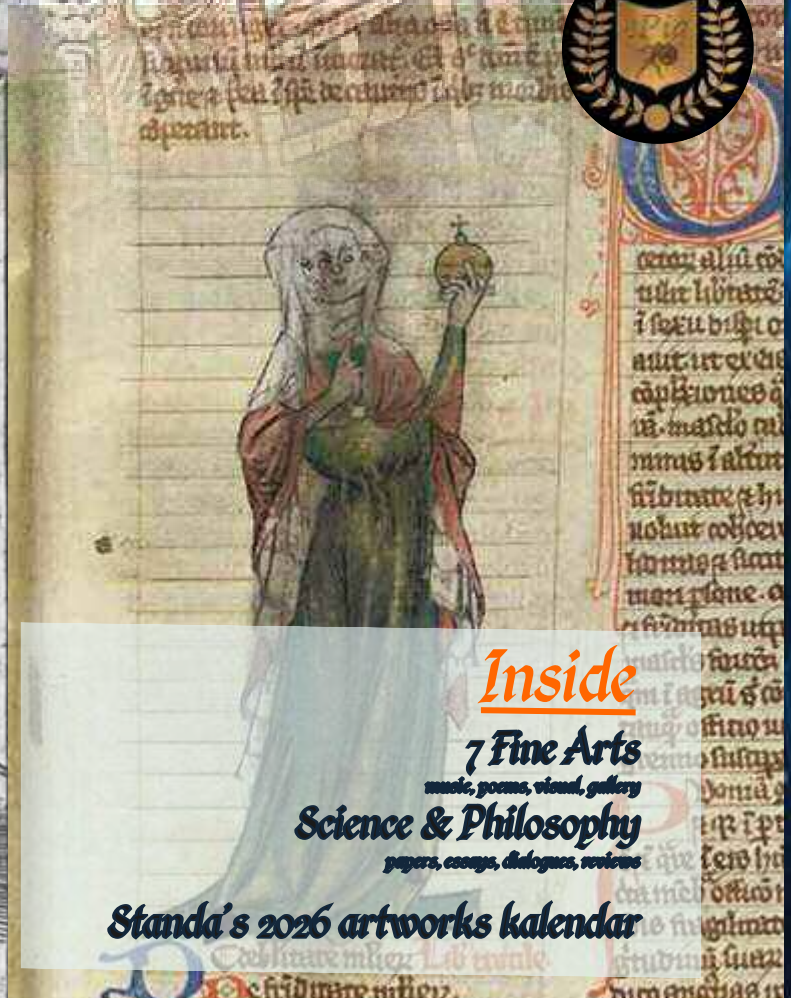
IQ Nexus Journal

<https://iqnexus.org/journal/>

Vol. XVIIi, No. 4; December 2025



***Featuring:**
Medieval Attitudes to
Women's Medical Conditions
Found in The Trotula*



Inside

7 Fine Arts

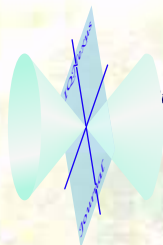
music, poems, visual, gallery

Science & Philosophy

papers, essays, dialogues, reviews

Standa's 2026 artworks kalendar

Online Journal publishing the works of the members of IIS & ePiq Societies, members of WIN



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Non-members' contributions are welcome and every new contribution has to be accompanied by an introduction from the contributor.

IQ Nexus Journal

was created to publish creative endeavours for members of the IIS and ePiqs, web based societies as well as guests of other societies and invited non members..



This issue features creative works of:

Listed alphabetically;

Alena Plíštilová

Anja Jaenicke

David Udbjorg

Edgar Allan Poe

Eric Trowbridge

Jaromír M Červenka

M a r i e .

Stanislav Riha

Xavier Jouve

COVER PAGE

'Medieval Attitudes to Womens Medical Conditions Found in The Trotula

The Trotula is a very well-known 12 th century text, originally written for male medical practitioners treating gynecological or obstetrical issues, which reveals a great deal about how people perceived sickness, health, and the circle of life during the medieval era. The modern perception of medieval medicine is generally that it was crude and barbaric, and there was very little or no knowledge of "real" medical science at all in the Middle Ages. But, to what extent is this actually true?

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<https://www.ancientoriginsunleashed.com/>



Special thanks to Jacqueline Slade for her great help with English editorial work and Owen Cosby For reviving and restoring Infinity International Society and establishing IQ Nexus joined forum of IIS and ePiq and later ISI-S Societies for which this Journal was created..

"Even though scientist are involved in this Journal, I and all involved in the IQ Nexus Journal have tried to keep the content (even though it is a Hi IQ Society periodical) on an ordinary human level as much as possible. In fact, is it not the case, that - to be a human being is the most intelligent way of life?"

Stanislav Riha

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Contents

p; 2 - 3 IQ Nexus Staff, Contributors & Contents

p; 4 7 Arts

p; 5 Creative pen

Lao-Tzu

p; 6 Stonewall Gallery of Art

Art shows, Photographs, collages and paintings by contributing artist

p; 20 Philosophy, Science & Essays

p; 21 10 Bizarre Relics from History

The Ancient Egyptian Origins of the Latin Alphabet

p; 32 THE FACTS IN THE CASE OF M. VALDEMAR

Edgar Allan Poe

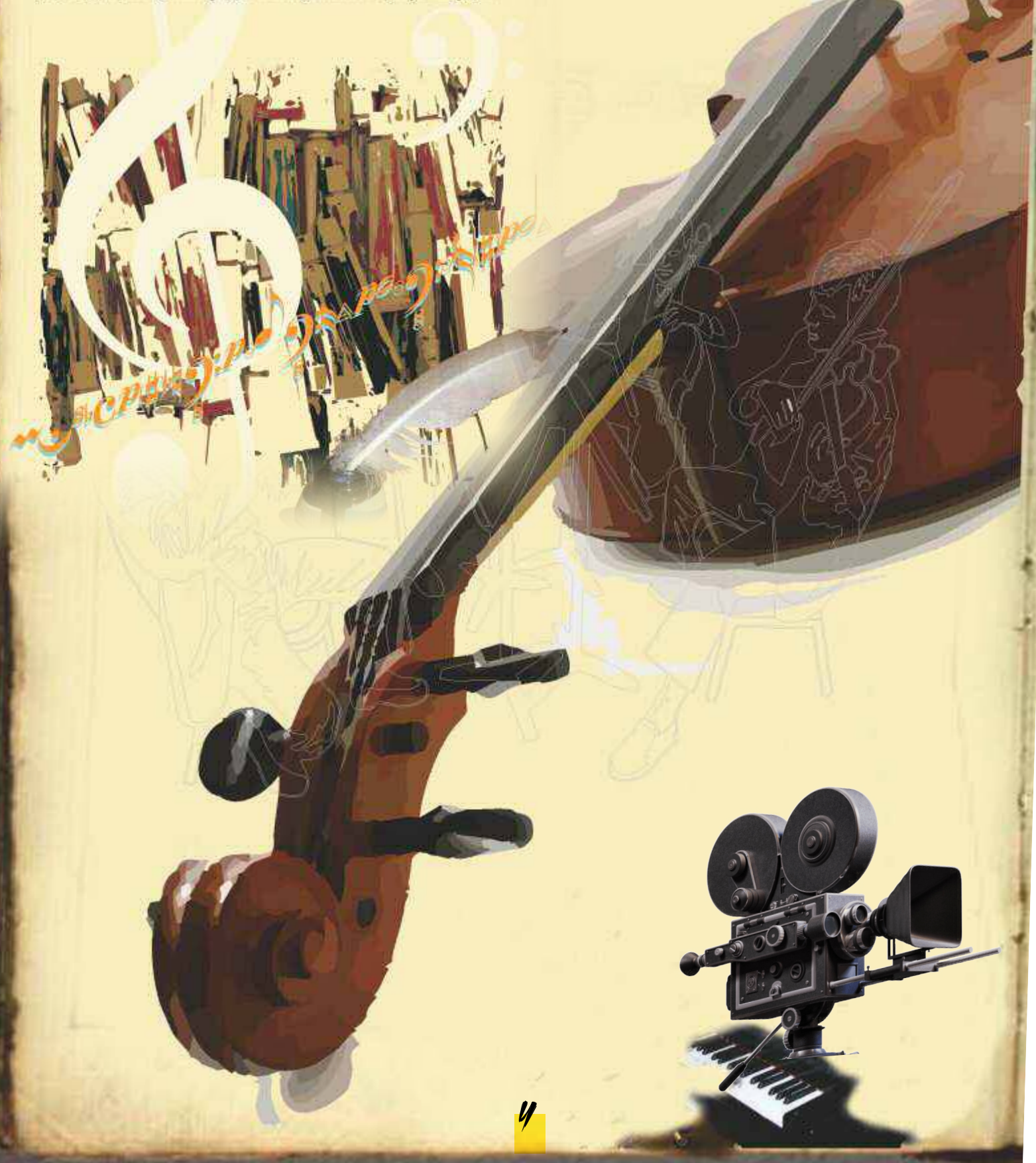
p; 37 Standa's calenda for 2026

IQ Nexus



7 Arts

Music Sculpture Painting Literature Architecture Performing Film



From a creative pen

Lao-Tzu 500bce

If you want to be a great leader,
you must learn to follow the Tao.
Stop trying to control.
Let go of fixed plans and concepts,
and the world will govern itself.

The more prohibitions you have,
the less virtuous people will be.

The more weapons you have,
the less secure people will be.

The more subsidies you have,
the less self-reliant people will be.

Therefore the Master says:

I let go of the law,
and people become honest.

I let go of economics,
and people become prosperous.

I let go of religion,
and people become serene.

I let go of all desire for the common good,
and the good becomes common as grass.

SGA

Stonewall Gallery of Art

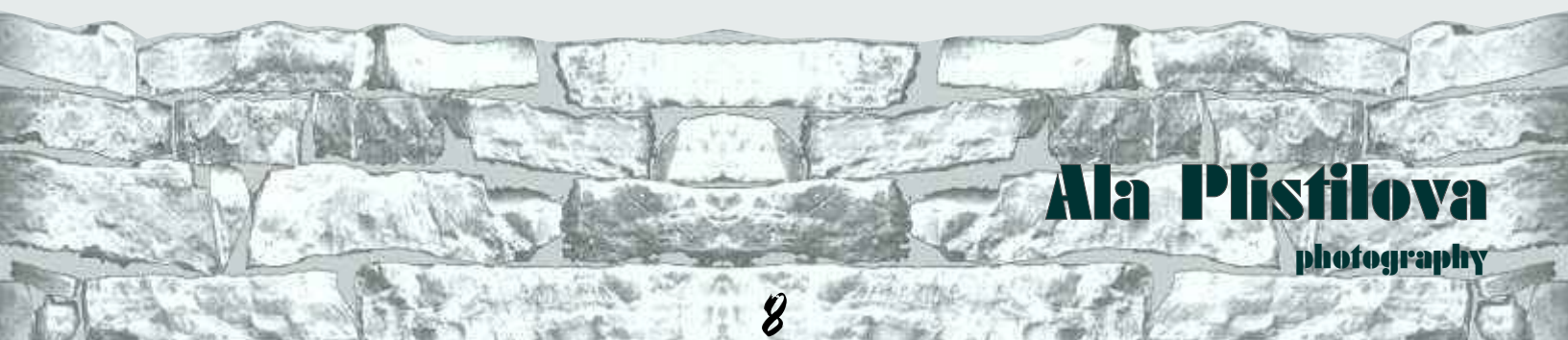
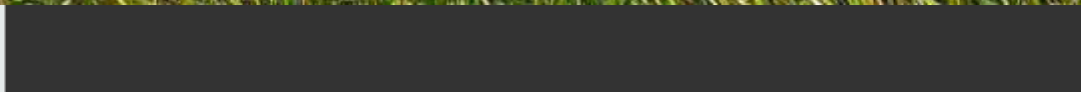
The Artists
alphabetically

Alena Plisfilova
Anja Jaenicke
David Udbjorg

J M Cervenka
Marie
Standa Riha
Xavier Jouve



Ala Plisilova
photography



Ala Plisilova
photography



Sitka

Anja Jaenicke
painting



Steampunk Repsody

Anja Jaenicke
painting



David Udhjorg
photography

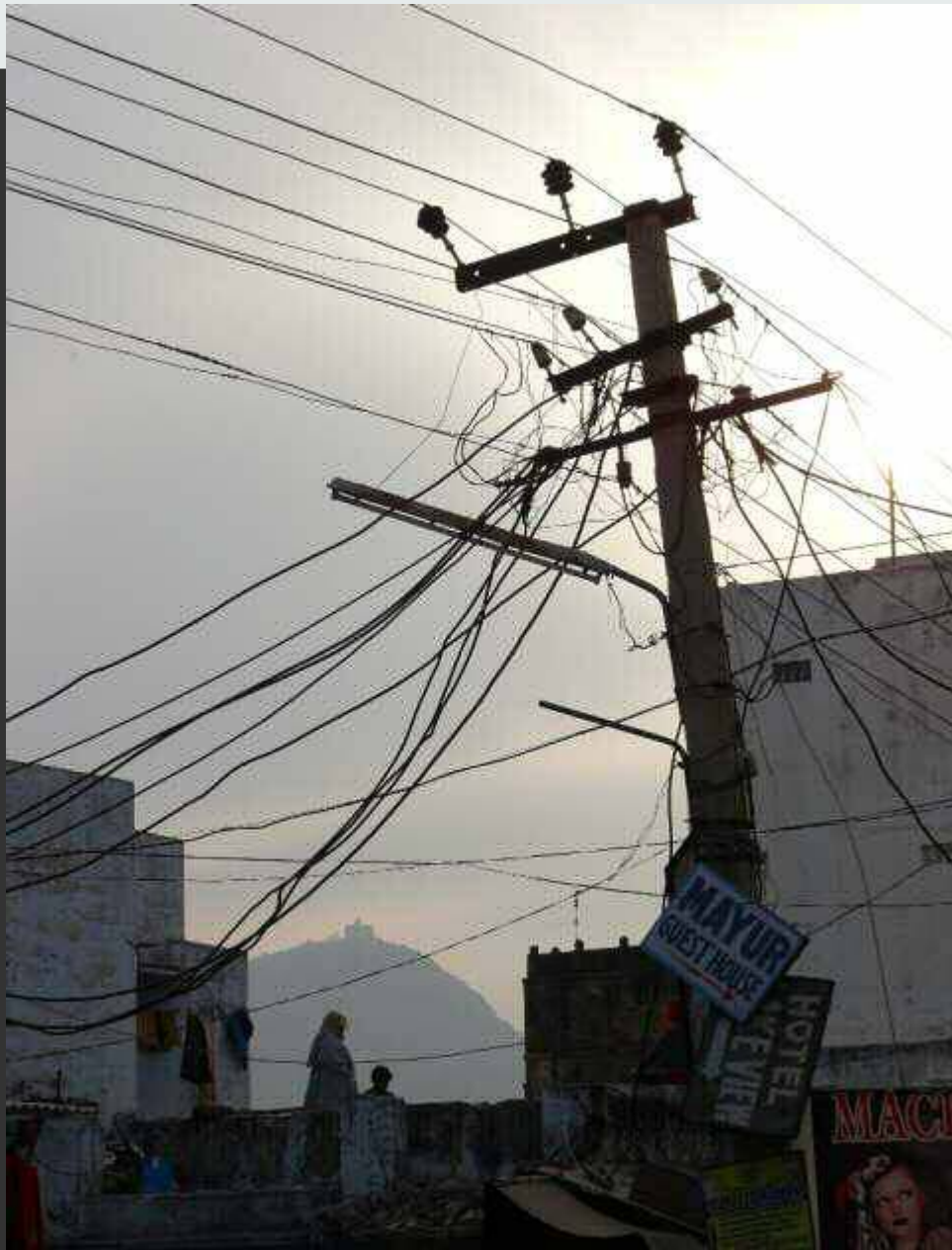


David Udhjorg
photography



Jan Gossaert

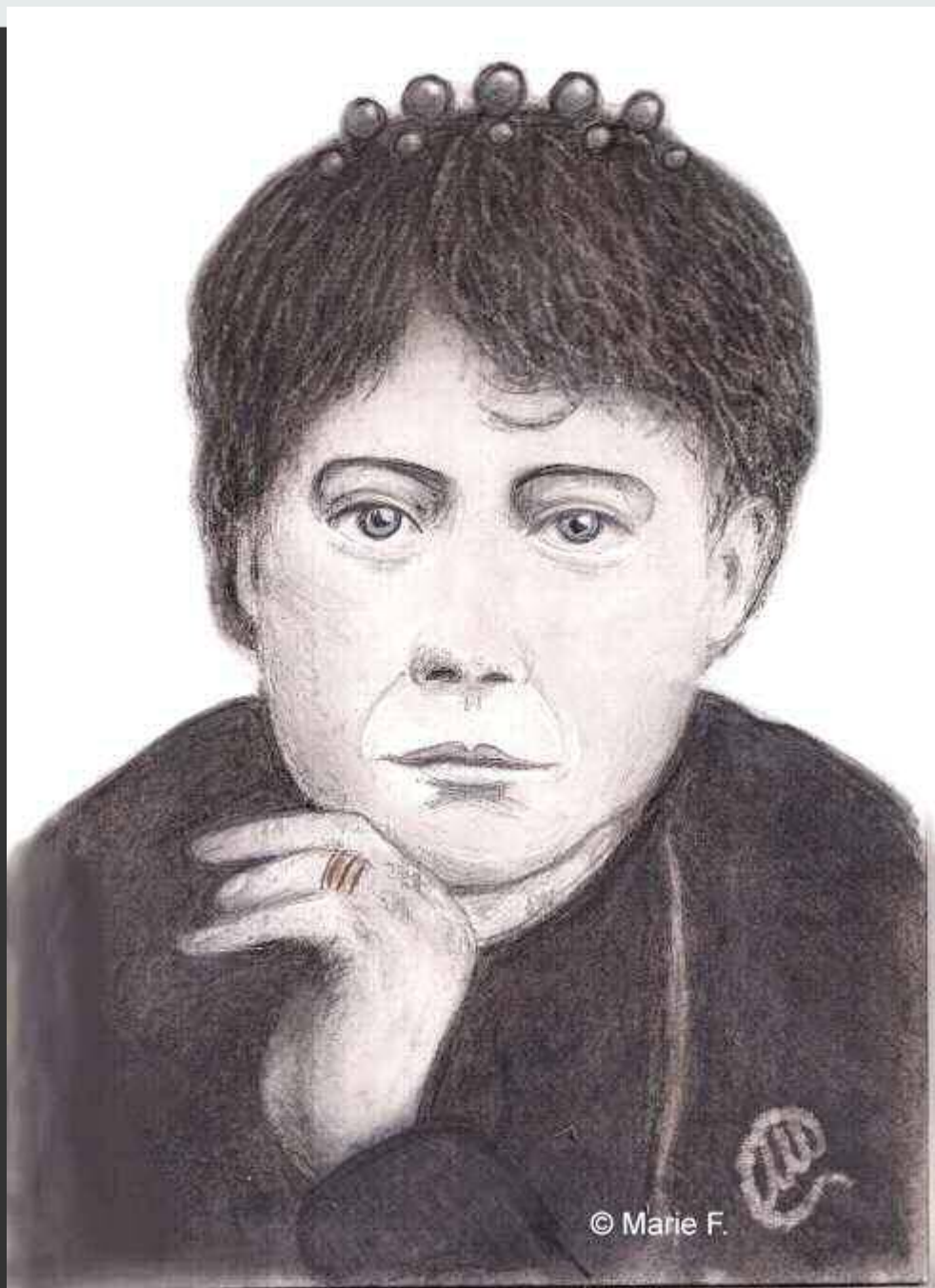
Art from the past



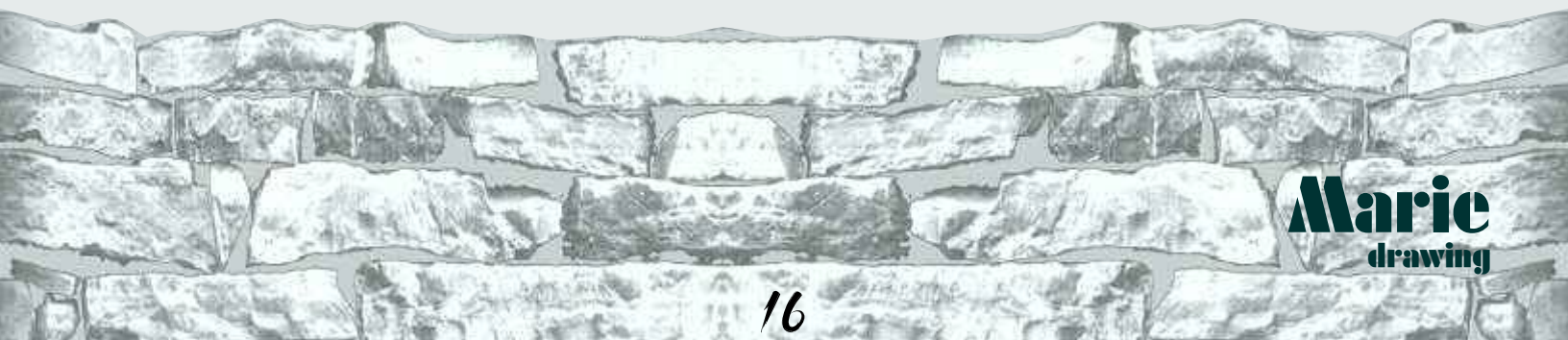
J M Cervenka
photography

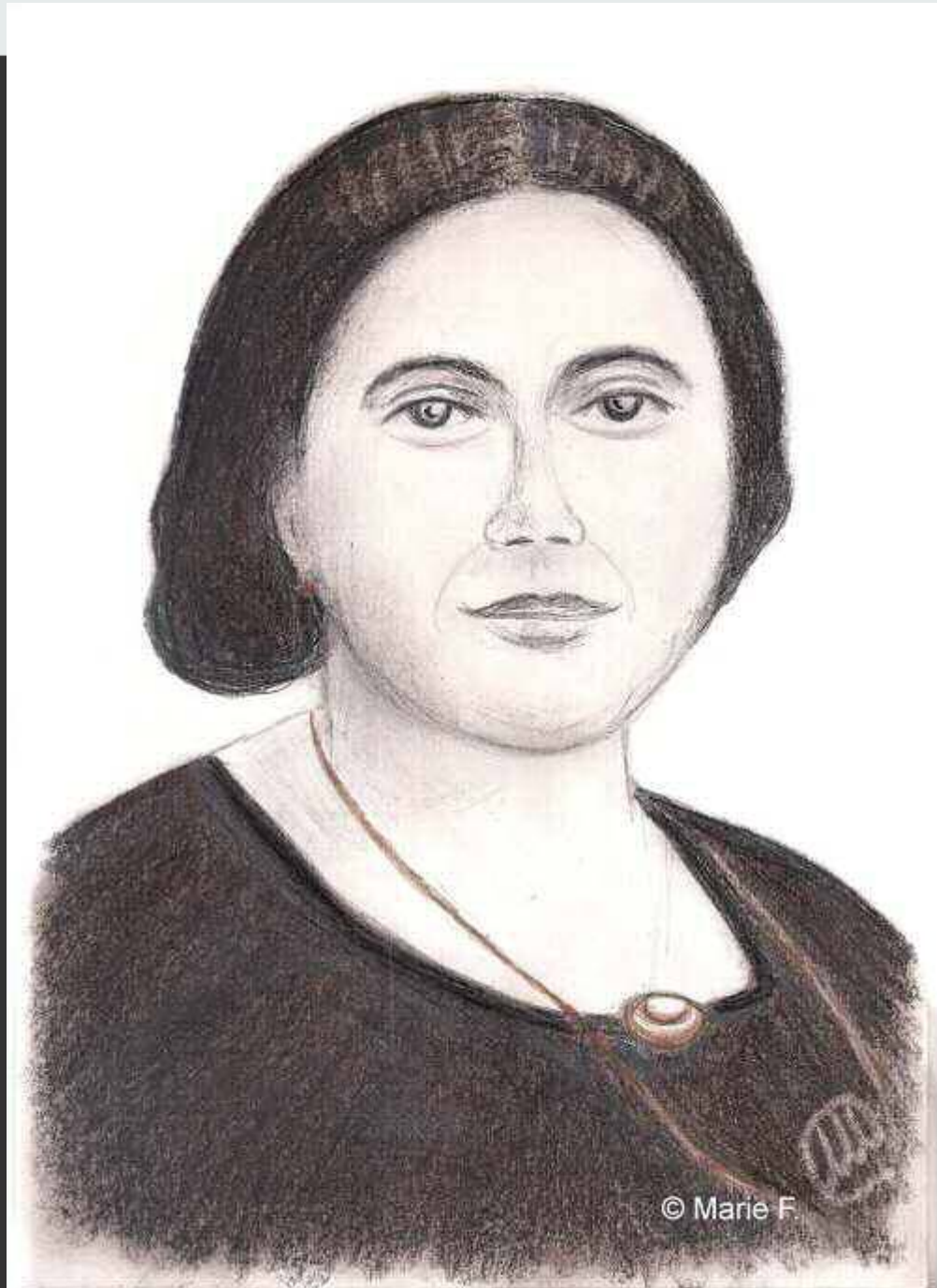


J M Cervenka
photography

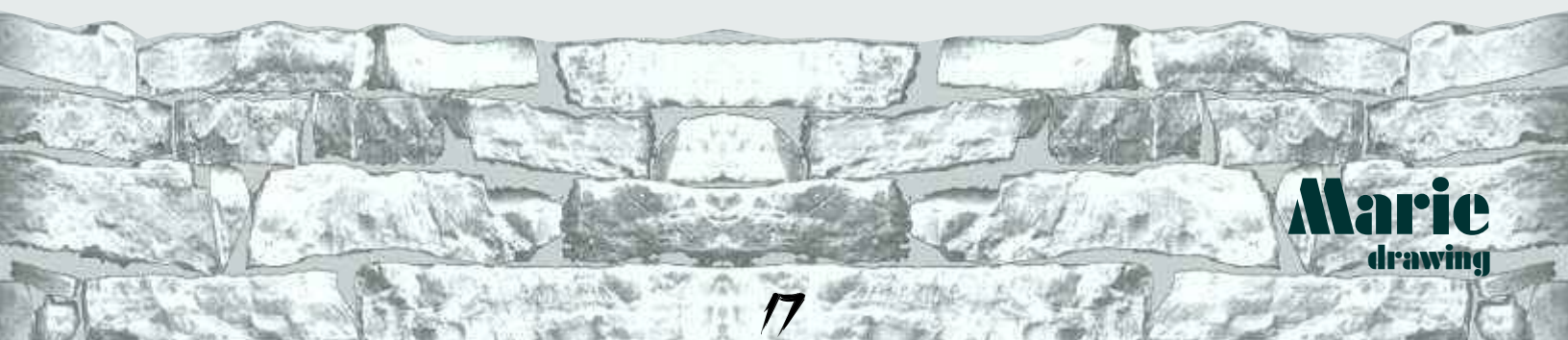


Helena Blavatsky





Helena Blavatsky





Standa Riha
mixed media



Standa Riha
mixed media

Essays, Philosophy, Science & Reviews

**Medieval Attitudes to Women's
Medical Conditions Found in The Trotula
by Ancient Origins Unleashed**

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO.

Less known stories by Edgar Allan Poe

Medieval Attitudes to Women's Medical Conditions Found in The Trotula



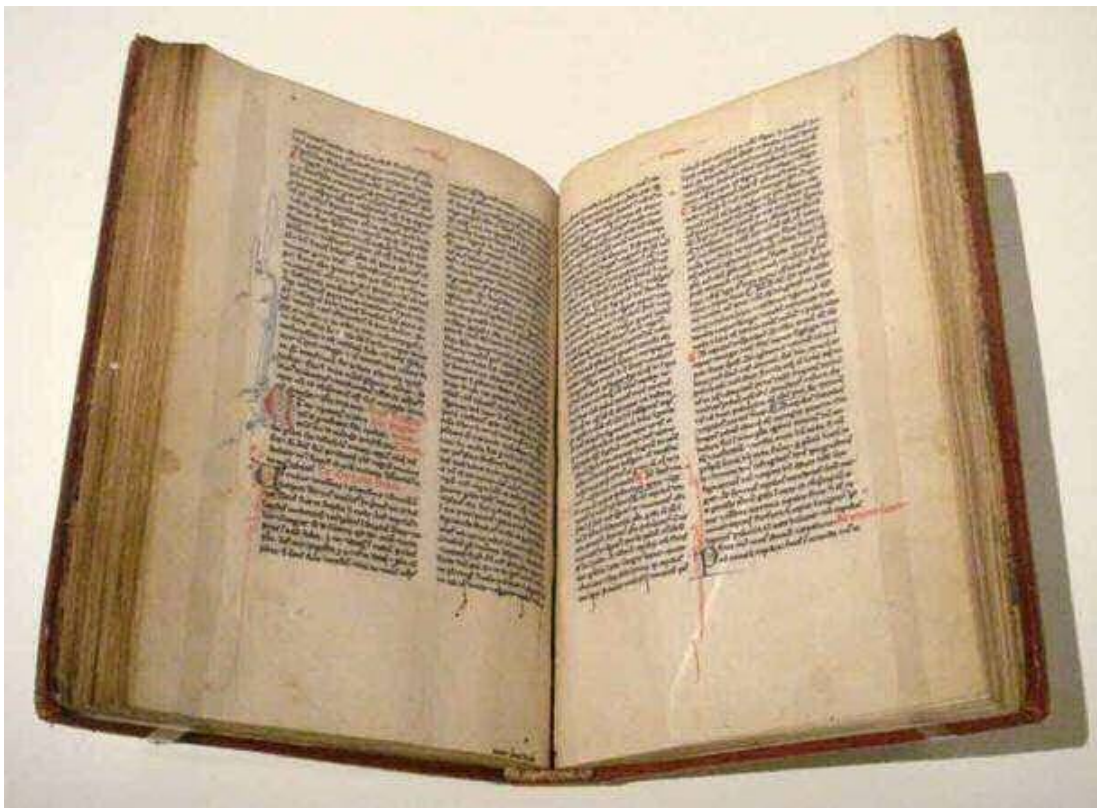
The *Trotula* is a very well-known 12th century text, originally written for male medical practitioners treating gynecological or obstetrical issues, which reveals a great deal about how people perceived sickness, health, and the circle of life during the medieval era. The modern perception of medieval medicine is generally that it was crude and

barbaric, and there was very little or no knowledge of “real” medical science at all in the Middle Ages. But, to what extent is this actually true?

If we take a closer look at medieval medicine, we can see that while some of the ideas about illness and treatment regimens may have been misguided, they were nonetheless based on very extensively researched pseudo-scientific theories dating back to the Classic Age. Some of these theories were so predominant in medical science as to define Western medicine for over one and a half millennia.

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Most interestingly though, is how medieval people thought about and practiced women’s medicine, meaning obstetrics and [gynecology](#). Up until the High Middle Ages, this field of medicine had been solely the province of midwives and other female practitioners, but around the 12th century things began to change and male doctors took over responsibility for treating so-called “women’s conditions.”



The Trotula on display at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. Source: [Public domain](#)

The *Trotula*: A Medieval Textbook on Women's Medicine

Perhaps the most famous medieval textbook on women's medicine is the *Trotula*, which was written in the 12th century in the southern Italian town of Salerno. It consists of three books and was most likely composed not by one person, but by a group of masters in medicine known as the School of Salerno. The first book however, entitled *On the Conditions of Women*, states in the preface that its author was impelled to write by "the influence of a certain woman stirring my heart," implying that it was composed by a single author.

Medical doctors in the Middle Ages were always male and received formal education in their field. Surgeons however were uneducated laypeople who often had no formal training whatsoever and were little better than butchers. A surgeon would usually only be called to see a patient as a last resort, as most of their patients did not survive surgery. Medical doctors would sometimes be priests or members of the clergy as well, men of religion were very well-educated in the Middle Ages, but clerics and priests could not practice as surgeons because they were forbidden by the Church to participate in any blood-shedding activity.

- [Medieval Sex and Scandal: Consistory Courts and Morality in Medieval England](#)
- [Pleasure, Procreation, and Punishment: Shocking Facts about Sex and Marriage in the Ancient World](#)

Spirituality was an important part of medical practice, so it was expedient to have a practitioner who was knowledgeable in both areas. [Medieval people](#) did not perceive a difference between illness of the mind or spirit and illness of the body. One was intimately connected to the other and if the mind suffered so would the body, and vice versa. A certain level of "magical thinking" was involved in the way medieval people perceived sickness and health, such as believing that certain ailments could be caused by demons or that illness could be cured by divine intervention procured by praying to

God or to a particular saint. For example, women having difficulty conceiving would pray to St. Anne or the [Virgin Mary](#), both patrons of [fertility](#).

There was however somewhat of a divide between the way the Church perceived sickness and health, and the way that “scientific” practitioners of medicine thought about them, and this divide is perhaps most evident in the field of women’s medicine. The perceptions of the general population were more heavily influenced by the ideas preached by the Church, but that is not to say the art of [medicine](#) was completely unaffected by Christian teachings either.



Image of woman giving birth from the 1500s. ([Public domain](#))

Medieval Women's Medicine: Impurity of Body, Impurity of Spirit

One of the issues of greatest consternation to the medieval Church was that of menstruation. While most people in the Middle Ages would have recognized to some degree that menstruation was a natural bodily function and necessary for childbearing, the general view of menstruation was that it had a polluting effect and therefore women during their menses should be shunned or avoided.

It was for this reason that women were often discouraged, or openly prohibited, from entering a church while menstruating. Many female saints were also said to not menstruate at all, as a sign of their spiritual purity, and much debate went on between theologians as to whether the Virgin Mary menstruated or not, seeing as she had been able to conceive and bear the Christ child.

Medical textbooks however, such as the *Trotula*, describe menstruation as being a very normal, necessary physical process. Women were inherently accepted as being the “weaker sex” and therefore more prone to fragility and sickness, particularly ailments of the organs involved in reproduction and childbearing. Women were also not given to undertake hard physical labor in the medieval period, as it was thought that they were too weak to tolerate it. While men were able to “purge” their bodies of ill humors through sweat, women must purge their bodies by menstruating.

The *Trotula* recognizes several causes for paucity or excess of menstruation that agree with modern medical diagnoses. If a woman is dangerously underweight, her menses may be deficient or cease altogether, and excessive bleeding during menstruation may be caused by vascular disorders of hemorrhaging. But the similarities with modern medical science ends here. The main causes of menstrual disorders, according to medieval thought, was an imbalance of humors.



Female healer with a urine flask from the Trotula. (Wellcome Collection / [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/))

Hippocrates and Humorism Underlying the Trotula

The underlying theory that influenced every aspect of medical practice during the Middle Ages was that of humorism. Hippocrates, the famous classical Greek physician who was born in the 5th century BC, invented the idea of the four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. These correspond to the four elements - earth being

represented by black bile, fire by yellow bile, and water by phlegm, while blood is a mixture of all four elements.

Hippocrates' theory was expanded on by a Roman physician, [Claudius Galen](#), whose theories on humorism would go on to define Western medicine for over 1,500 years. Born in Pergamum in 129 AD to a wealthy family, Galen studied philosophy in his 20s and then went on to become a scholar of [medicine](#), being appointed to the prestigious position of physician to the emperors [Commodus](#) and Septimius Severus. Galen created the theory of the four temperaments, which remained the predominant theory behind Western medicine until the 17th century. The four temperaments were sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic.

Hippocrates' four humors were thought to be related to heat and moisture, so a predominance of certain humors made one's temperament hot or cold and moist or dry, and not only defined their personality traits but also their physical robustness or fragility. Men, as the stronger sex, were thought to be hot and dry (choleric), while women were considered more cold and wet (phlegmatic).

Almost every diagnostic method, and many treatments, outlined in the *Trotula* are based upon the theories of [Hippocrates](#) and Galen. For example, excessive menses can be caused by "excessive heating of the blood caused by bile pouring out from the gall bladder" and so the treatment would be to draw blood from the hand or arm so as to provoke the corrupt humors upwards and away from the womb. Conversely, "suffocation" of the womb caused by "frigidity of the heart" or abundance of cold fumosity from buildup of semen can be treated by applying hot ointments to the vagina, such as iris, chamomile, and musk, or by applying heated cupping glasses to the pubic area.

In the 12th century, the field of women's medicine was still fairly new to male [physicians](#), as it had been the province of female practitioners such as midwives for hundreds of years. Many of the treatments recommended in the *Trotula* are not based on the "science" of humorism and are instead more superstitious in nature, having been handed down through generations of female practitioners. For example, to treat an excess of menses: "take two wide slabs of salted bacon, and let powder of

coriander together with its seed be sprinkled on top, and powder of wormwood. And let one slab of bacon be tied upon the navel and the other upon the loins.” The author confesses that some of these midwives’ remedies “whose power is obscure to us” are nonetheless helpful, such as drinking ivory shavings, wearing coral around the neck, or holding a magnet in the right hand to assist in difficult childbirth.



A medieval birthing scroll with Christian prayers on both sides, used to protect women during pregnancy and childbirth. (Wellcome Collection / [CC BY 4.0](#))

The *Trotula* and Infertility

Other than menstruation, the *Trotula* is largely concerned with is pregnancy and childbirth. The primary role of women in medieval European society was to bear and raise children, but it was also the most difficult and dangerous activity most women ever undertook. Mortality rates for both women and babies were extremely high during pregnancy and childbirth, and if the unfortunate choice had to be made between saving the life of the mother or the child, the mother’s life was seen as the priority so that she could go on to bear more children in the future.

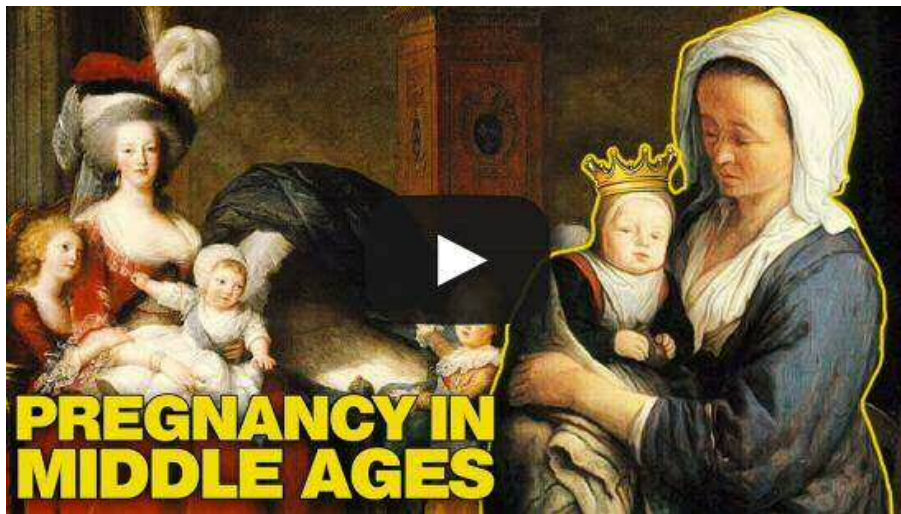
Of course, fertility is a delicate thing and not every woman was capable of conceiving a child and carrying it to term. The medieval Church taught that infertility was a punishment from God for sin, such as adultery or fornication, or the work of demons

or witchcraft, which drove the societal perception that if a couple could not conceive then the woman was to blame.

As such, treatments often included the use of talismans or remedies to repel evil or appeal to the supernatural, such as the use of birthing girdles. Birthing girdles were made from different materials, such as silk, iron, or parchment roll, and could be inscribed with prayers or religious symbols which would then be wrapped around the belly and groin of the pregnant woman.

Medical practitioners however, took a more rational approach to infertility and saw it as a medical condition to be treated. From a medical perspective, infertility could be a condition of either men or women, and was usually caused by a humors imbalance or by physical impediments, such as a woman being over or underweight, having a “slippery” womb unable to retain seed, or a man having excessively thin semen that slips out of the womb.

To determine the source of the problem when a couple could not conceive, one had to fill two pots with wheat bran and put the man’s urine in one and the woman’s urine in the other, then leave them sit for 9 or 10 days and at the end of this time, if one pot has worms in it and stinks then it will indicate which of the couple is infertile. However, if neither pot is found with worms, then there is no defect and the couple can be aided in conception with medicine.



Contraception and Conception in the *Trotula*

Most books on medieval medicine are hesitant to discuss methods of [contraception](#), as it contradicts the teachings of Christianity and God's command to "be fruitful and multiply." Some textbooks spoke of "methods to ensure conception" by *not* doing certain things, thereby implying possible methods of [contraception](#). The *Trotula* is more forthright in suggesting how conception might be avoided, acknowledging that childbearing might be dangerous, even deadly, for some women who have "narrow vaginas and constricted wombs."

In such cases, the medieval text recommended these women avoid having sex with men. However, in the case of those unable to abstain, the *Trotula* claimed that conception could be prevented by carrying "against her nude flesh the womb of a goat which has never had offspring," or tasting a gagates stone, a black mineraloid from the estuary of the river Gages in Anatolia, in modern-day Turkey. These were therefore methods of contraception in the medieval era.

- [Ending the Historical Atrocity of Virginity Tests?](#)
- [The Gory History of Barber Surgeons: Medieval Medicine Gone Mad](#)

Methods for promoting conception were outlined in far greater detail, including remedies to ensure conception of a male child (no such remedies are given for a female child) such as a woman drinking powdered testicles of a male hare before intercourse with her husband. Interestingly, medieval people thought that the sex of the child would be determined by *where* in the uterus the embryo became implanted.

If the fetus implanted on the right side, the child would be male and this would be visible by outward signs in the pregnant woman, such as high color and a bigger right breast. Likewise, if the fetus implanted on the left, the child would be a girl and the pregnant woman would be pale with the left breast bigger than the right. Hermaphrodites were thought to be born when the fetus implanted in the center of the womb, and thus were seen as a natural occurrence by medical practitioners, rather than an abomination.

While a 21st-century reader may find some of these concepts of medieval medicine humorous or ridiculous, it is worth noting that many of the theories upon which these ideas were based remained dominant in Western [medicine](#) until as recently as the 19th century, and were thought to be the pinnacle of medical science. Some of these medieval superstitions, particularly those regarding fertility and childbirth, are still around today, lingering in our cultural sub-conscious as old wives' tales. While it is certainly fascinating to discover how medieval people understood sickness and medical treatment, we can simultaneously be thankful that medical science has advanced to a much more sophisticated level in the modern era.

Top image: The diagnostic methods and treatments in the Trotula are based on the theories of Claudius Galen and Hippocrates, shown in this 12 th century mural from Anagni in Italy. Source: Nina-no / [CC BY-SA 2.5](#)

By Meagan Dickerson

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THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO.



THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitively settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved, precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity—to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian *millionaires*. In painting and gemmary, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack—but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him, that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him—"My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to- day! But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts." "Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them." "Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me—"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own." "Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement.

Luchesi—"

"I have no engagement;—come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon.

And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a *roquelaire* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode. "The pipe," said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked, at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!" My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi—"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough." "True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you

should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damp." Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us." "And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded. "These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family." "I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel." "And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit*." "Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said: "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grâve. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one. "You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood." "How?"

"You are not of the masons." "Yes, yes," I said, "yes, yes." "You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said.

"It is this," I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my *roquelaire*. "You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame. At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the

bones, we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use in itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depths of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi—"

"He is an *ignoramus*," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally.

From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment. "True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of my masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated—I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess: but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed—I aided—I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorer grew still. It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the

ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognising as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he!—a very good joke indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"*For the love of God, Montressor!*" "Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again—"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*



2026



JANUARY

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MARCH

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APRIL

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MAY

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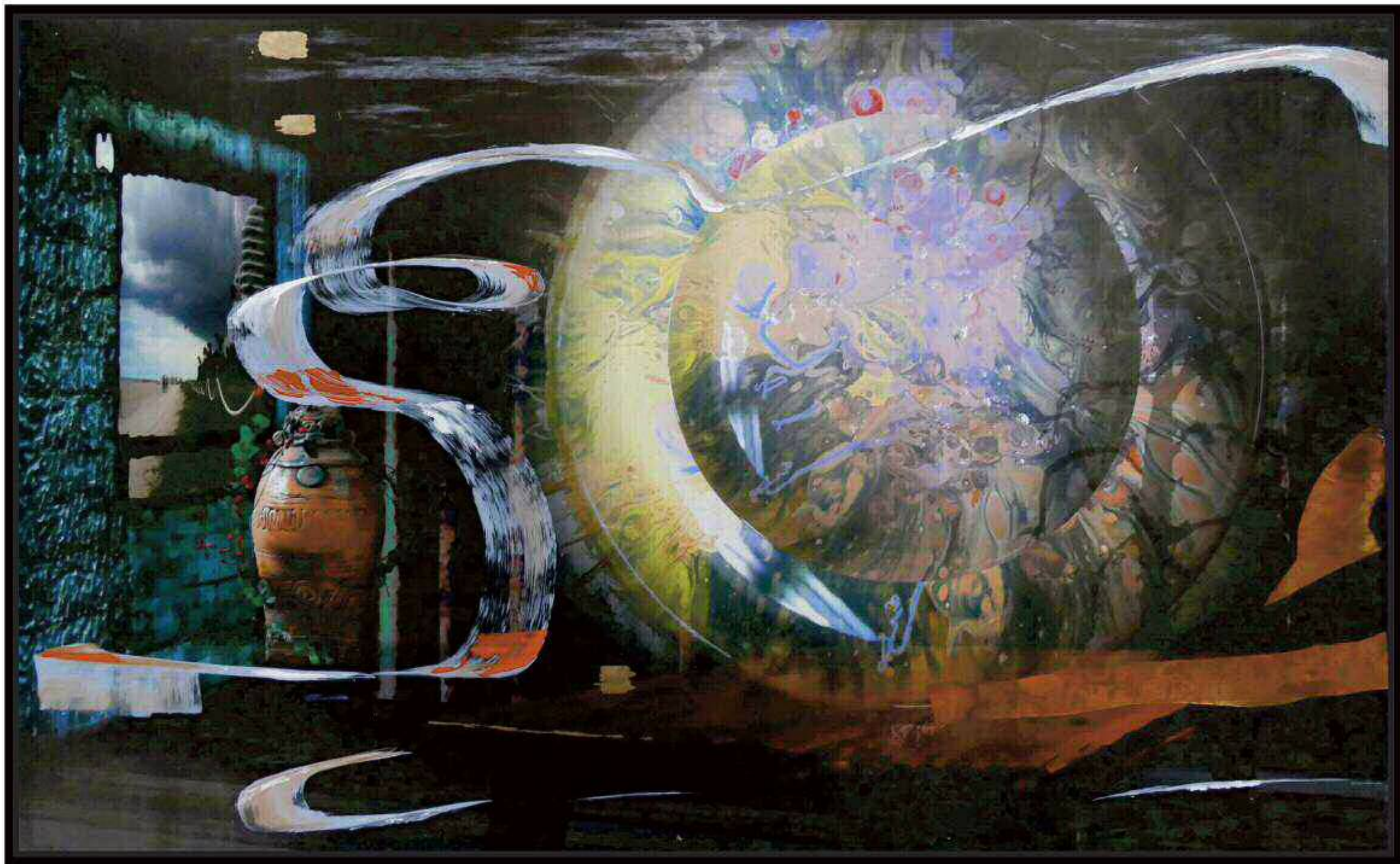
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JULY

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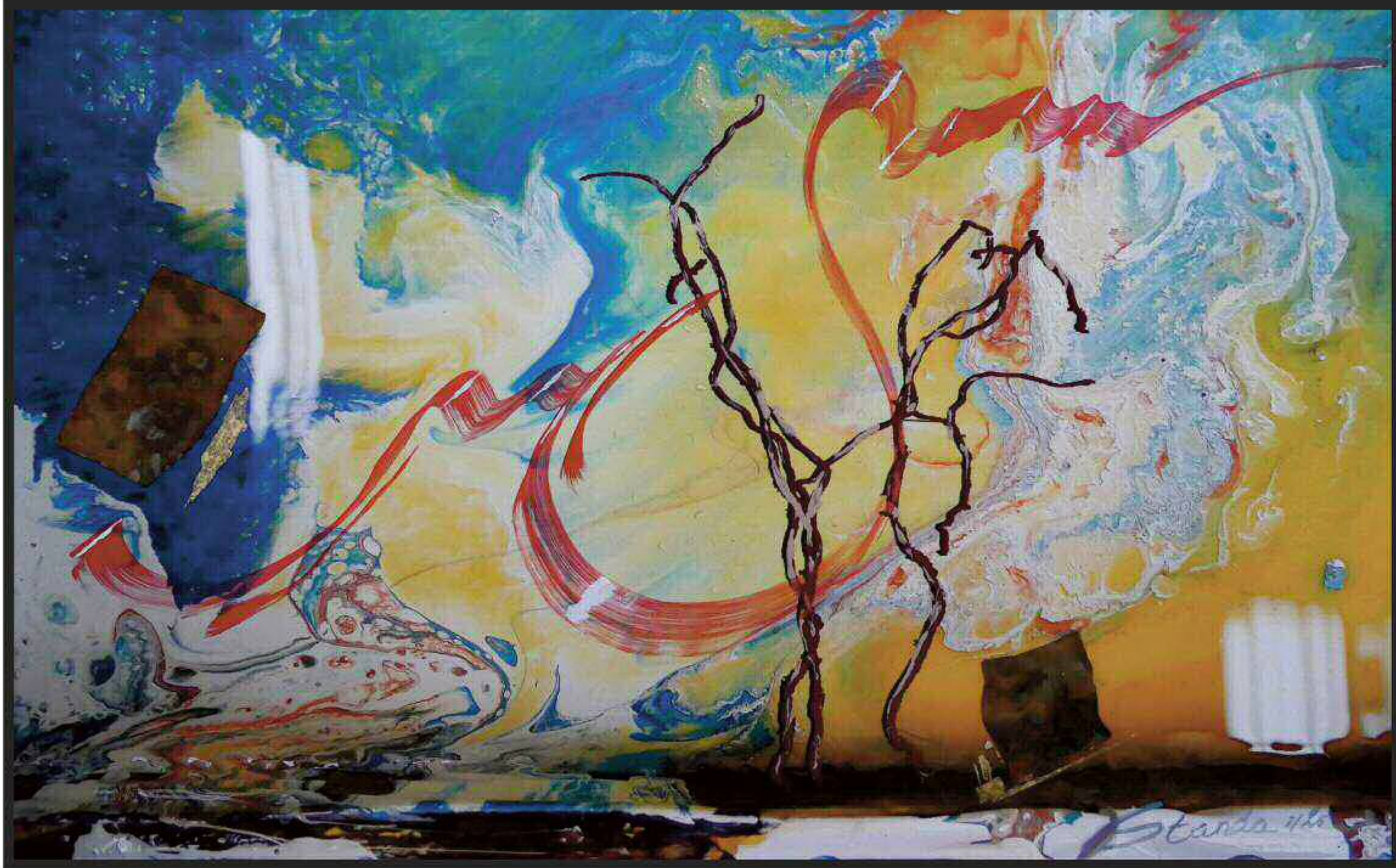
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SEPTEMBER

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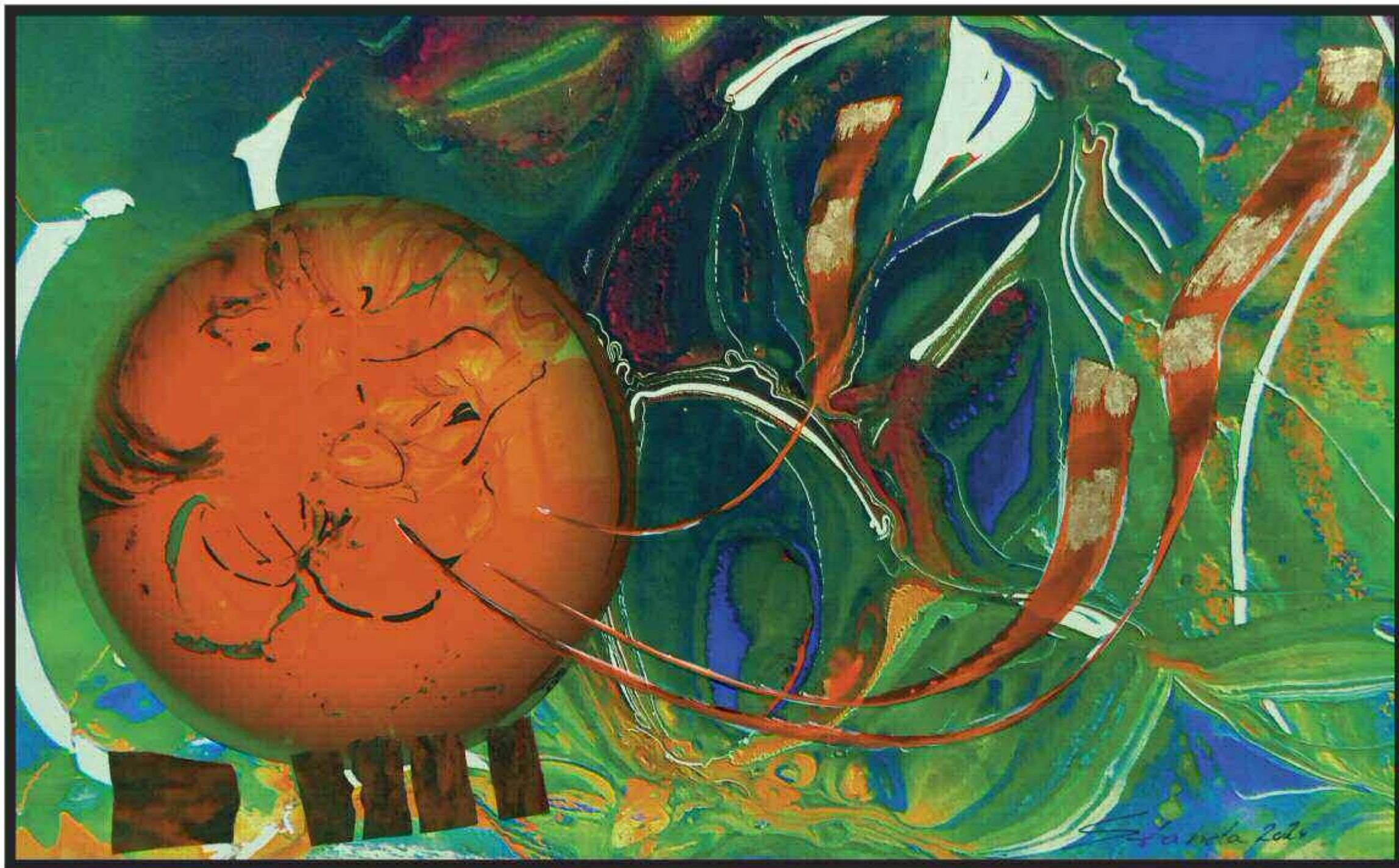
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NOVEMBER

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DECEMBER

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