



KRISTY M. VANACORE, PSY.D

# *Rewilding*

A Woman's Quest to Remember Her Roots,  
Rekindle Her Instincts, and Reclaim  
Her Sovereignty

# *Rewilding*

**A Woman's Quest to Remember Her Roots,  
Rekindle Her Instincts, and Reclaim  
Her Sovereignty**

**KRISTY M. VANACORE, PSY.D**



**SACRED STORIES**  
PUBLISHING

Copyright © 2022

All rights reserved.

This book or part thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise without prior written permission of the publisher, except as provided by United States of America copyright law.

The information provided in this book is designed to provide helpful information on the subjects discussed. This book is not meant to be used, nor should it be used, to diagnose or treat any medical condition. The author and publisher are not responsible for any specific health needs that may require medical supervision and are not liable for any damages or negative consequences from any treatment, action, application, or preparation to any person reading or following the information in this book.

References are provided for information purposes only and do not constitute endorsement of any individuals, websites, or other sources. In the event you use any of the information in this book for yourself, the author and the publisher assume no responsibility for your actions.

Books may be purchased through booksellers or by contacting Sacred Stories Publishing.

Editor: Gina Mazza

Rewilding: A Woman's Quest to Remember Her Roots, Rekindle Her Instincts,  
and Reclaim Her Sovereignty  
Kristy M. Vanacore, Psy.D.

Tradepaper ISBN: 978-1-945026-88-1

Electronic ISBN: 978-1-945026-90-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021949782

Published by Sacred Stories Publishing, Fort Lauderdale, FL USA

# Contents

## DECLARATION

### PART 1: REMEMBERING MY ROOTS

Domestication .....	3
Hiding in the Shadows .....	55
A Portal Appears .....	69
The Dismantling .....	75
Invitation .....	93
The Body Tells the Story .....	101
Ancient Medicine .....	119

### PART 2: REKINDLING MY INSTINCTS

Labor Pains.....	143
First Steps .....	155
Ahimsa.....	171
Inner Compass.....	179
The Fruitful Darkness .....	195
Baptism .....	205

**PART 3: RECLAIMING MY SOVEREIGNTY**

Home Again ..... 225

A Feral Foal ..... 233

Dance of Liberation..... 243

A Brave New World..... 253

Deliverance..... 261

  

A NOTE FROM ALLEGRA TOPANGA ..... 271

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS..... 281

ABOUT THE AUTHOR..... 285

# *Declaration*

*I was angst, fear, jealousy, rage, depression, neurosis, confusion.  
I was remnants of a protective ego lurking in the shadows of Earth's elements  
that kept me shamed when I wanted to shine  
caged when I wanted to fly  
immobile when I wanted to dance  
silenced when I wanted to sing  
sheltered when I wanted to share love.*

*It was the cold harsh armor of steel that imprisoned my heart.  
It was the toxic juice that fed my overprotective brain.  
It was the punitive teacher who told me to color within the lines.  
It was the overprotective parent who told me not to play outside in the rain.  
It was the dominating boy who told me I was unworthy and told me not to  
tell anyone when he touched me.*

*It was the trusted friend who held me and cut me with the same knife.  
They have all been my greatest teachers, and it's now time to put  
the lessons to the test.*

*It's time to become who I am truly am—who I was before  
the world told me who to be.*

*—Kristy Vanacore*

# Part One

## Remembering My Roots

The Heroine horse stands upon her pedestal after placing *Best in Show*. Smiling for the cameras with her shiny trophy on display, she examines her life. It is full of all that she set out to achieve, yet it has come with a price. She feels empty and devoid of purpose and passion; her inner landscape barren, her soul bereft and estranged from itself.

She hears a calling and knows she must go; yet fear is all consuming and she hides in her stall, clinging to the only life that she has known.

And then one day, she wakes up and discovers the gate has been left open...and the choice is all her own...

# Domestication

I awake on a cold metal makeshift bed, my eyes immediately blinded by the worn fluorescent lights blaring overhead. Vague memories of the night before flood my consciousness. I'm eight years old and cannot comprehend why I am in a jail cell, surrounded by rusty bars and musty block walls.

“Kristy, I’m Sergeant Brandon.”

The shadow of a man in uniform towers over me. I’m scared and confused. He hands me a Dixie cup of water. The name on his badge reminds me of the dog on my favorite TV show, Punky Brewster. I focus my mind on the image of the fiery-spirited girl Punky and her doting Golden Retriever, Brandon, who were abandoned by their mother at the grocery store and taken in by a sweet old man named Henry. *Had my parent abandoned me last night? Where is Daddy?*

As I sip the water, a woman sits down next to me.

“Hi Kristy, I’m Mary.” She smiles sympathetically, brushing back my long strawberry-blonde locks. “Everything’s gonna be okay, honey. We’ll get you out of here real soon.”

After a while, I hear the sound of Daddy’s voice down the hallway as he emerges from the room where he was being questioned by a police officer. His face looks bloody and bruised. My mind flashes back to the prior evening; some sort of fight is all I recall. I’m suddenly frozen in fear.

“Come on, your father’s here to get you.” Mary takes my hand and tugs on me to stand up. “Uh oh,” she murmurs, seeing that my pants are soaked.

I had urinated on myself. The tears come. I’m embarrassed and want to run and keep running—but I can’t. In the car, Daddy doesn’t say a word. He just stares out the window of his old blue Oldsmobile that smells smoky from the time the engine caught fire and burned a hole through the floor panels. When that happened, he made me smile by saying we could be like the Flintstone’s cartoon—just put our feet through the floor and run. But today I can’t find humor or *any* feeling. I’m numb.

The day prior started out like every typical Saturday. Daddy picked me up at four o’clock for his court-ordered weekend visitation. We drove to his apartment which he shared with his mother, my Grammie. I cooked in the kitchen with Grammie. Daddy stayed in his bedroom, watching TV and chain smoking.

“C’mon, we gotta go!” Daddy yelled to me just as I was setting the table for dinner.

“Johnny, what are you talking about? We’re eating now,” Grammie said. “What’s so important? Don’t tell me it’s that girl again.”

“Let’s go! I said NOW!” I could see veins bulging in Daddy’s head. Grammie had tears in her eyes. I felt nauseous, as I had many times before,

being put in the middle between wanting to stay with Grammie and watch her favorite “Golden Girls” TV show and wanting to please my Daddy.

I put two-and-two together as to why Daddy rushed me out of the house. He had gotten a call from his girlfriend who was in some sort of trouble. I didn’t understand it then, but she was in some crack den doing drugs, and one of the men there tried to hurt her. She was on the verge of overdosing. As we drove to her rescue, Daddy mumbled and banged the steering wheel. I just stared out the window, humming songs in my head. Something didn’t feel right about the situation my parent was leading me into.

We arrive at the old, dank-smelling apartment building. The hallway is dingy and reeks of oil paint as I try to keep up with Daddy, whose brisk, purposeful walk leads us to a thickly-painted brown door with “Apartment 2H” on it. Smoke is wafting through the gaps in the door. It smells awful, almost medicinal. I am shaking, as I know something bad is about to happen. Being a man of few words, I’d gotten good at reading my father’s facial expressions and body language. In these moments, anger is seeping out of his pores as he raps on the door repeatedly.

“Open the fucking door!” he screams.

Finally, a tall, muscular, bald black man cracks open the door until the safety chain catches. “Who the fuck are you?”

“Let her out of there!” Daddy demands.

“Get the fuck outa here.” The man slams the door.

My heart is racing furiously. I want to run and hide but don’t want to leave Daddy there.

“OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR, I SAID!” Daddy slams on the door.

“Daddy please let’s just go,” I plead timidly, but he doesn’t acknowledge my request.

The intimidating man cracks open the door again and Daddy pushes his entire body into it, breaking the chain and swinging it wide open. The man raises his gigantic fist and repeatedly pummels Daddy in the head, blood spewing from every punch. I could faintly hear a woman moaning somewhere inside the apartment. Daddy struggles and slumps to his knees. I watch, absolutely horrified, as the hallway starts to spin. I scream so hard I can't hear my voice—only the sound of Daddy's body thumping onto the tiled hallway floor.

The next morning, after leaving the police station, Daddy takes me straight back to Grammie's apartment. She is there to greet me with a hug. I could see she had been crying. Daddy storms off to his bedroom and slams the door. Grammie helps me remove my soiled clothes and draws me a warm bubble bath. She sings softly to me while washing my hair. Once clean and clothed in warm flannel jammies, she holds me. I can't cry or even speak. None of it feels real.

Later, I hear Grammie reprimanding Daddy through the closed bedroom door.

"Johnny, come out and look at your daughter. She peed herself and you didn't even help her. That piece of shit woman has ruined you!"

I'm comforted that Grammie is my defender and at the same time, afraid that she might further upset Daddy.

That evening, when my visitation hours with Daddy were done, I took it upon myself to call Mommy to ask her to come get me since Daddy was nursing a concussion from the fight.

"Why are *you* calling?" she asks. "Where is he? Where's Grammie?"

"He has a bad headache. Just please come get me, Mommy."

I beg Grammie not to tell Mommy what happened because I knew she would never let me go with Daddy again. Instead, I make up a story about

going to the park on Saturday and how much fun we had. This secret is one of many from my childhood that I lock away in a neatly organized cage in my heart, and one of the countless times when I abandoned myself in order to keep the peace. This self-betrayal accumulated over the years, little by little, unbeknownst to me, and oblivious to the damage it would eventually cause me.

### *Magical Gypsy Child*

I was born with an untamed heart, an adorable little girl with eyes as blue as the sky and always full of wonder. I remember (not just the stories my family told me but somehow the feeling of) the mystical little gypsy of a child, always marching to the beat of her own drum. I saw magic everywhere. My eyes beamed with curiosity. My unbound flaxen locks thrashed in the wind as I ran free.

Yet this gypsy heart carried a burdened soul, a heaviness of responsibility that plagued her spirit. A baby who was entrusted with the responsibility of salvaging a fragile marriage between two people who were not destined to be. Right out of the gate, the circumstances of her life began to erode the beautiful landscape of her soul's innocence. With each blow, a fence was erected around her fierce heart. She felt as though she was born at the wrong time or place, a foreigner in a strange land. She always felt much older than her age and even loved talking with adults and hearing the wisdom of her elders. She had a mind and heart thirsty for knowledge and understanding of the ways of the world.

As she grew, people entrusted her with their stories, which she collected and preserved like precious relics from ancient, yet familiar, times past. She absorbed all of it; and whenever anxiety or apprehension consumed her as she attempted to navigate this strange land and adapt to its customs, she

## *Rewilding*

---

used each fiber of her collected stories to weave a cloak that she hoped would keep her safe in the midst of chaos.

**END OF EXCERPT**