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## NAMES MATTER

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Once or twice in a lifetime, if one is fortunate and is listening, one hears one's own name called. This is an experience akin to falling in love, standing on a mountain peak, or holding your child for the first time. This is an experience of soul. It was just such an encounter that seeded this exploration, which is a work of soul. As you engage with me in this medial experience, I hope you will also hear your name called.

The ancient Hebrew tradition is that in naming, one calls forth an essence. It is no mistake that we named our daughter *Alisa*, which means "Joy" in Hebrew. She named her son *Nathan David*: "Son of God, Beloved." She named her daughter *Ashley Simone*: "Dream, Meant to Be Heard." Names matter.

For years the phrase, "there is no place for me," has pounded the interior of my being. It's an odd phrase, because to all observing eyes, there are many places for me. Through the years, however, I have continued to feel that I just don't quite fit with life in the world as it is structured around me.

Toni Wolff developed a theory that she called "The Structural Forms of the Feminine Psyche." She proposed four forms for women—*mother*, *amazon*, *betaira* (lover) and *medial*. When I was introduced to Toni Wolff's theory of the structural forms of the feminine psyche and read her description of the medial woman, I heard my name spoken for the first time. As soon as I heard it, I understood immediately that I am a medial woman. I kept on listening, and, amazingly, the message has continued to reverberate in my soul through the years.

The feminine medial archetype is not understood or honored in our Western cultural order, and many medial women today unknowingly have made choices that have not served their medial nature. Some, like me, never knew their true nature until it was named. They

survived by accepting other archetypes as their primary patterns of being, archetypes more acceptable to our contemporary culture such as mother, caregiver, spouse, lover, activist, warrior. Other medial women have moved to the interstices of society so that they may live their true identity freely, though they may feel like dandelions growing in the cracks of a sidewalk. Some have literally been tortured and cast out with the names “Weird,” “Insane,” or “Evil.” There are countless unknown medial women who long to become who they truly are, but who have been bruised by cultural wariness of the irrational and mysterious. There are, however, many choices that medial women can consciously or unconsciously make between the extremes of abandoning their nature or living it at the edges of culture.

As our culture and the Earth experience distress, it is time to call the medial woman by her name out loud. To do so, one must look beneath the surface of the visible world and see through the eyes of the medial, which is what I hope to do here. This is the time to explore how a medial woman can live into the fullness of her essence. This is the time, in Rilke’s words, “to hear the wind blowing the uninterrupted message formed from silence.”<sup>1</sup>

And so, if *you* are a medial woman or wonder if you might be a medial, I invite you to come with me on this journey of naming and claiming. I also invite *you to come along with us if you love, live, or work with a medial woman and find yourself occasionally baffled by how she clicks*. I hope that you will gain an understanding of her, and maybe an appreciation too.

Most journeys have a path from beginning to end, which is somewhat direct. This book's journey is different, for it is a journey through “the web of mediality.” This web moves in and out in many directions from the central point of mediality, with long and short strands that intersect and support each other. As we follow these strands, we will discover that some are sticky and uncomfortable, but since it is the medial who is spinning the web, she can be playful and insightful, and her web is quite beautiful. Together we shall venture into this web of mediality.