

## **Somos Semillas, We Are Seeds Ep. 4: Sacred Winds, Returning to our Power of Shedding**

*[Music – Theme song, Sumergirse by La Clave de Sol]*

ERIKA: What does it mean to walk our journeys on Earth Mother with more depth? Why does it matter spiritually to weave our walk with rooted purpose? Are we capable of synchronizing our heart with the heart of Earth Mother and the heart of the cosmos?

We invite you to navigate together in *Somos Semillas, We Are Seeds*, a podcast about indigenous sovereignty and collective storytelling.

My name is Erika Murcia. I am a poet walking in my talk in Mesoamerica and wherever Earth Mother calls me.

NICKY: My name is Nicole Gervacio, an artist who moves dreams and creates with ancestors and future generations.

CAT: My name is Cat Petru. I am a dancer and pollinator remembering my roots to show up grounded in our movements for collective liberation.

ERIKA: Together we have been weaving stories that gather and recall our ancestral memories. We have invited voices of sacred feminine, and two-spirit leadership from various communities of the diaspora.

NICKY: In this five episode series, we'll deconstruct the ways we connect to each sacred element: water, fire, wind, earth, and ether.

CAT: We'll learn about the journeys of our guest storytellers, including astrologer, Karina Falcon, Dr. Uzo Nwankpa, and healer, steward and guardian, Ember Phoenix.

ERIKA: Welcome. This podcast is to uplift your soul's stories.

MUSIC FADE UP AND OUT

ERIKA: Hi everyone. It's so good to be here. Today we're going to be dialoguing about some principle about healing and about embodiment that has called me my entire life,

and that is something that comes from all indigenous people around the world. The way that we might talk about it or present it, it might be different, but the meaning, the powerful layers of meaning that this can bring is what we are trying to deepen into the dialogue. For those of you who know my voice by now, [ Erika laughs] this is Erika Murcia and I am joining from Nahuatl Land, also known as San Salvador, El Salvador. And today we have a guest! But before that, I want to let everybody say hi and introduce yourself and then we'll get into what we're talking.

NICKY: This is Nicole Gervacio tuning in from Ohlone Land, Huchiun, good to be with you all.

CAT: And this is, [ Cat laughs] this is Cat and I'm in Detroit, and I have yet to do my homework about whose land this is, but I'm in a loved one's home and I'm really excited to be here and very excited for you all to meet our guest. Would you like to introduce yourself?

UZO: Ndewo nu o, hello everybody, my name is Uzo Nwankpa and I currently live in unceded Ohlone Land, also known as San Francisco Bay Area. I'm in San Pablo specifically, and I'm happy to be here. Mm-hmm. Thank you.

ERIKA: So the element that we are going to dive into today is winds, and specifically this principle of shedding. How can we embody the power of shedding?

And to get more into that inquiry is in Mesoamerican traditions, shedding connects with the medicine of serpent, metaphorically and literally speaking. So we will be weaving both the, the literal and the metaphor of what serpent medicine can mirror us. And I hope that all of us can bring into the space the meanings in your own traditions.

Today we are going to be diving into how can we embody our essence from a place that is more authentic? And to do so, what do we need to shed to undo from the conditioning that we have been exposed to through generations? And to narrow down the questions, I'm going to ask another very broad question, and then we can go into like- excuse me, everybody, but there are so many inquiries that we have. So how the experience of colonization or the colonality of our minds has enacted domestication, not only in our minds, but also in our behaviors, in the ways we show up. So what comes for you in body, mind, spirit, everything is welcome here.

UZO: This is Uzo talking. There was something that happened to me in my body hearing that question. I found it really interesting, the difference between when I'm sick in my homeland in Nigeria, Igbo land in southeast Nigeria, and when I'm sick here in the United States, Turtle Island. You know, like even with my beloveds, right? Like there's a like, oh, I feel ill, and the first reaction is get away from me. But home, at home in my homeland where I grew up, when I'm sick, the first instinct is, let me come close to you and care for you. It's so strange to me. I mean, I understand that we all have to be cautious about illness, and I think this is relevant now because Covid has really highlighted that for me in that everybody is like, get away from me.

Except for certain peoples, they're like, come towards me. [ Uzo laughs]

And I just, I wonder about that. I feel like that is a perfect area of how I believe just in changing locations, what it feels like to experience what colonialism has done to what I think we naturally know how to be with, you know? And so to feel the feeling of "get away from me," I don't feel cared for. I need you the most when I'm ill. I need you to come towards me. And it feels very much like the opposite, you know? I feel like get away from me- and perhaps it's like, it's the evolution of what has happened on this land. Where maybe I did lean towards you, but then you got me sick and my whole family died, and so now get away from me.

So perhaps there's something to do with that. But I just feel like there's this yearning I feel when I'm ill in this country that I can't seem to receive because the instinct of, I think, the colonized behavior is get away from me. Yeah.

NICKY: That's super interesting because when you talked about the difference being here on Turtle Island and then also going to your homeland where you grew up. Because I was born and raised on Turtle Island in the United States, when I think about wind and air, I didn't realize that my body missed humid air where my people are from until I went to similar places.

So the first time going, you know, to Florida, or to Maui or to Sayulita in Mexico, experiencing humid air and realizing that my body missed that. And then also to reflect on my first experience going to my mother islands, my homelands with my family, that there was the comfort of the humid air, but there was also the physical representation

of colonialism there, which is pollution and sickness. Like literal- I was, I was sick the whole time because of the pollution and like my people were colonized for 400 years. And you know, the culture of capitalism being exported to my people. And so the literal air of my homelands was making me sick.

And to see the colonialism in the culture and in the people. And trying to find that comfort and finding it in the green places, up in the mountains or in the oceans away from tourism. So I'm just sitting with that. It's my first gut reaction. Also, still really sitting with your reflections, Uzo, about what has conditioned us to be afraid of each other in sickness as opposed to like the want and need to come closer together to care for each other. How colonialism can completely turn around the way we're perceiving and thinking what things are good for us, what things we want, and what is actually needed.

CAT: Mm. Wow. Before we started recording- this is Cat- we were talking about different practices of access. So for folks who have our eyesight, practicing describing what we're seeing and how in that practice, our perception can expand as well. And in disability justice culture there's a refrain that "access is love." And I also think there's a, a depth of understanding that the more accessible, like the more, the more accessible for anyone, the more accessible for everybody. And I say that because I'm thinking about shedding and I'm thinking about what Uzo said, and I'm thinking about how when I am unwell, and I say that not just physically unwell, but like if I'm feeling imbalanced or grief or deep fear or something like that, I think I have an internalized sense of "get away from myself." Like I can't even come close and hold myself in that, in a way. I think I'm - I think that's something to shed, right? How can I be with those parts of me? And then how does that expand my capacity to come close to anybody if it's desired, if it's consensual in any state they're in.

So I think to be broad or to synthesize or something, to shed ableism. The ableism of the empire, of capitalism, of white supremacy, all of the isms, the oppressive cultures. Ha! That would feel really good!

And the last thing I'll say, again, just like feeling what you're all sharing is with wind, it's, I was like, whoa, you started with illness, that's so interesting. It's just not where, where I was. But like in this time of pandemic, of coronavirus of global pandemic, it's

carried on our breath. It's transmitted, right, with these winds. Yeah. Uzo is like gesturing, like up and out from chest to throw out of the mouth on Zoom here and, oh my gosh, y'all, Mia Mingus, many of you've probably heard of her. She's a disability justice, transformative justice teacher, scholar, activist, and has a recent blog post- we can post it in the show notes- about how fundamentally ableist and deadly this nation's response to the pandemic has been. And so also we can keep each other safe and come close even if we are maybe physically distancing or if we're wearing a mask, right? There's ways we can actually protect and have intimacy at the same time.

ERIKA: There is so much coming at me and I'm a very visual person. Subtle. [ Erika starts laughing] You know, I can, I can read energy. Everybody's like affirming me, everybody I love this, thank you.

Um, I just went to how Uzo spoke onto community, and the relationship that you have onto land, which is so powerful.

You spoke about relationship to land that is not some, you know, the winds dance in every land. It's not just a thing, right, like that are isolated. And then nicky, you brought the waters, right? Like coming from the islands. And how winds also are like moving or having some level of impact on the waters. And I visualize how when you said, you know, you were talking about colonizers, like coming to the islands, right? That sense of the connection with the wind too, like how they were sailing I guess. But the thread that I was noticing energetically was this sense of how, the question is bringing more questions that has to do with how we relate with the land, but also to the community and how that will shift depending on where we are.

And then the other thing was, Cat, you brought this more inward perspective of like, okay it's not just things we need to shed in the greater systems that we are navigating, but things that we need to shed. And especially when you said, regarding to sickness, which it make me, you know, I was like, oh, I have felt that too! And I come from a community that do care. You know, that people come, everybody bring food and that, and food is medicine. So what you were saying about how we disassociate, right? We have been conditioned to not wanna be in our bodies because something aches and we don't know how to nurture it or come closer to that that is calling us, that is teaching us, that is trying to teach us something that it is asking of us to shed, to be shed. So I

was just like, you know, everybody was bringing all of these systems, like greater, and then the community, and then the inner, and it's like shedding is not just a one level, it's like the depth of how we can go into this breaking the habit or letting go of certain patterns of how are we in relationship with ourself and with the land. And with the winds and others. [Erika laughs]

## MUSIC BREAK

ERIKA: I have been doing a lot of shedding lately, and in my experience has to do a lot with belief, especially related to productivity. You know, like this idea that if I am actually dancing and dancing to the moon or dancing to the sun, there is a voice in my head telling me that I shouldn't be joyful of doing that because it's not productive enough.

It's not what is considered as a job. And for me, thoughts, the thinking is the primary way of how I notice the conditioning, the way I think about how I do and how I show up into the labor of love that I am trying to embody every day. So it has to do also with sickness in the sense that when I disconnect from my joyful sense or for that sense of rootedness, I get so much in my head and so much judgment happens that at the end of the day I'm suffering more because I can't let go of the ongoing cycle of internal hurt.

UZO: Mmm. This is Uzo. I found it really painful to hear that the air that you were breathing, nicky, was getting you sick. And for me it feels like a metaphor of how I notice, you know, being away from my homelands for so long and whenever I touch base there, I recognize the difference between what's happening in me and what's happening in the people, what's happening in our minds as well.

You know, if you sitting around shit all day, eventually you're not gonna smell the shit anymore. And someone else comes, has been gone for a while, comes out, what the fuck is all this shit? Right? Like, you know, oh, I don't know, can you cuss on here? Anyway, I'm sorry. [Uzo and nicky laugh] You know, like that, that would be my reaction, you know, like, how come nobody can smell this shit?

You know? So kinda made me think about that, right? Like that the air that you were breathing, the air that's supposed to be nurturing you, it's like the Wizard of Oz effect that you know, oh, I'm gonna go to my homeland to go get this thing that needs to feed

me. And, and then I show up there and it's been gone. It left with me like centuries ago, or it was with me the whole time. And that like, I'm having the experience of finding my Africanness in Africa, which is great. And that Africa has always lived in me and lives all around me and on this land and multiple lands. And that like, yes, place matters, but it's not necessary for me to find the location outside of me.

So, um, oof. So that's one thing. And then the other thing was Erika, your beautiful integration of all of what we contributed reminds me of this, you know, the work that I do as a public health nurse is that we look at the individual, but we also look at the environment and we look at the society in which the individual is impacted by. So the intervention happens on all levels, the community level, the individual level, and the systemic level. You cannot make change at the individual level only. Right? That's very individualistic. That's what's killing us. And so it has to happen at every level. In support of each other. And that's part of the issue we have right now where my shedding might be perceived by the community as me attacking it, as opposed to just me shedding, right? Like, "I'm losing my shit right now. Don't lock me up." And the society is like, "but you're dangerous, we're gonna lock you up!" And then the system is like, "we're gonna support the community and punish you for shedding." Right. And what would happen if the system and the community and the individual all recognize that losing your mind as shedding, right? Like what happens if we're all in collaboration with that? And like you were saying, the winds, there's no like, oh, there's winds only in this one land. Although rich people wanna claim it. But you know, like, like [ Uzo laughs] " these are our winds and it's clean." And it's true, there's something to be said about clean air and not so clean air, right? Based on what we do in your zip code. [ Uzo laughs]

Oh gosh, I know I just went off on a tangent here, but the winds, back to the winds. I just find it really interesting that the illness that has shut down the entire world for the last three years is a windpipe illness. You know, it's about addressing the winds of the environment as well, right? And it's so interesting that that is the way in which it is transmitted. Right? And so it's complicated. And the wind, Oya, this is the thing that charges us, right? This is the thing that carries the message. This is the thing that creates movement. This is the thing that sweeps the thing. This is the thing that cleans out the thing. This is the thing that will suffocate you if you get in the way, get out of the way so the thing can clear, the thing can clean.

So breath, and that's the thing that keeps us alive is we need to breathe. Like debris is going to move. Get out the way. Close your eyes, whatever you need to do, but let the wind do what the wind does, right?

That's how I feel about it.

There was a time when I went to, if you're living in the San Francisco Bay Area, you know this place called Treasure Island, which is kind of like, ha, the metaphor is like, it's actually a toxic island because of the military work that was being done there historically, and so on and so forth. I don't know very much about that, but I know that it's like unlivable, right? But I went there because it's also like a scenery place that you can go to. And that day the winds were so fast and heavy and almost violent, you know? And I went with my friend Shay - what up Shay- and we went there and it was so windy and we contemplated literally staying in the car. But then something said, get out of the car and feel the winds. And it literally went from us crouching over and trying to protect ourselves from this dangerous winds to opening up our arms and our chest and lifting up our heads towards the sky and feeling every bit of the wind.

And it was so, I felt charged up, y'all, it was like, ahhhhhh, it was so good! It was so good. It was so good to just open up ourselves to the, the winds with the framework that the wind is charging us right now. Like, not here to hurt me or not here to, you know, you don't have to take cover. And as soon as we got the charge that we need, it felt like the wind kind of dissipated, kind of went away.

It was like, can you muster the winds? You know, what happens if we surrender to it? What happens if we love up on it and receive it and be like, yes. [ Uzo laughs] You know? That was a, a life-changing moment for me.

MUSIC BREAK

CAT: Damn! [ Cat laughs] Do either of you wanna jump in? This thought isn't fully formed, but I was just gonna keep flowing. [ Cat pauses, no one jumps in]

Oh my gosh. Um, so I'm blown away- pun intended [ Cat laughs] - by what you just shared. And I'm so curious, right? 'cause we live in this time of, of omnicide as one of our teachers says. And so it's easy to resist, which is not like, I don't, you're not saying

surrender to the wind and therefore don't resist globalized militarism. Because I was like, okay, the winds like, what's omnipresent?

The waters we're swimming and it's, it's military, it's guns, it's racism. It's like all this painful, unnecessary death. And then it's like crunch down and crunch down and crunch down and crunch down is, is how my energy, how I think a lot of our energy starts to, to feel. And um, you know, a lot of folks are framing this as apocalyptic times.

I'm just so curious about in this shedding realm, like, huh, what's, what's the relationship between shedding and surrender? And acceptance and, um, like the, the medicine of destruction. The medicine of death.

And the last thing that was coming through while folks were sharing is just remembering- and of course, it, it will likely come again- the last several summers of the fires. And I remember I was in St. Louis, Missouri driving back west to California and there were fires and it just like how the air debris of the fires carries miles and miles, hundreds of miles on, on the winds and the air. Also thinking about pollination and migration and some of the things that are like naturally meant to be dispersed across land masses, across waterways.

ERIKA: This is Erika. And the only thing that comes to me, Cat, is this principle of non-duality that life and chaos are dancing with the wind. And how we need as humans, and that's the invitation, right? In these dialogues that we're bringing and these inquiries that may only open up new inquiries, more questions, is we are not bringing answers.

We're bringing experiences about our own journeys and sharing them to light something right in the winds of others. But also how we collectively are recognizing that we cannot, and Dr. Uzo said it clearly, we cannot do the work alone. We need to learn how to mirror each other so that we can celebrate one another, meet what each other is, and then recognize that this work is not something we do isolated.

Right? Like how not to bypass spiritually the work of shedding. And that's how, Uzo, you said something that it make me think about the crab, which right now we are in crab season, you know, like, uh, in the moon, like the Cancer. So how crabs walk all directions. They don't walk just forward. They go like in all the directions and it's so

beautiful how they return. They go, they come back, they go. And so visually that's what I was getting with what you were sharing, Cat, is you know, the undoing that is in many ways, subtle that we can't see that it's happening of the shedding is also happening at the same time that so many things that to our perception look chaos, like crisis, like the end of the world. [ Erika laughs]

And so how do we dance with that? Because this has been done by elders. We're not the first generations to do it. And winds is about ancestor. The calling, like that dance that you did, Uzo, [ Erika laughs] like with that like force like instead of running away or like hiding from the winds, you like show up with open-hearted.

And that's surrendering. That's what I saw. That's surrendering because you, it's not that you're just like, I'm gonna jump outta the cliff, right? You first let the, your own inner wind connect with that outer greater wind. And that was so powerful of how you, you know, just showed it to us through a dance. So thank you, all.

UZO: [ laughs] Yay.

NICKY: Yes. I appreciate that detail of sometimes that surrender, right? Of like letting go, being open and receiving and experiencing is important. And there's times too, when you do, like Erika is saying, when it's chaotic or messy, there are some times that you do need to hold on, protect. But I think that's what many of us are experiencing internally, right? Is like what things are we working through, letting go, and what things are we holding onto spiritually, mentally, emotionally? And I feel like one way I experience it is just the levels of healing and unpacking, I'm experiencing with my sisters of these patterns that we inherited from our elders, right? And from the hundreds of years of colonialism. And then in this last generation assimilation to Western culture on Turtle Island. And so much has been processed because like you're saying, Erika, we, we don't do this alone. Like it's, it's hard when you're by yourself and there's a lot we can do in our own minds and hearts and with our own guides, but the amount of work that I've done with my sisters in conversation and also just by living it, so much has been worked through and healed and released just in our generation.

And I do think that's true for a lot of Pilipinx's in the diaspora. I think we're in this interesting time of awakening in our generation. And I think it's partially because we

are the child of immigrants and so once they've like physically survived and made it in a place that they felt like would be a good choice for them. But now we're a few generations in after immigration where we are like, oh, we can look back and reflect. And then we're also like working through and processing and we're like thinking and we're talking with each other and we're reading and then we're letting go. I think a lot of people are going through this too. It's just the times.

But when I look at our arc of how we got here, it makes a lot of sense why there's this awakening around decolonization. You know, in my community as a Pilipinx in the diaspora, even that community, my community of being a Pilipinx in the diaspora is such, like you said, Erika, it's, it's not a binary. It's not just like, oh, Filipino's in the homelands, motherlands, and Filipinos and the diaspora. It's like we are so multidimensional, even in the islands alone. So everyone's experiences are different and everyone's way of processing and letting go and remembering is so different.

And I will say that's also why there's so much art coming out of it. It's because we're all children of immigrants who like moved past the like, be successful, make money, be a doctor, lawyer, nurse. And now there's a bunch of us that are like, oh, what do we want to do? And a lot of us wanna tell our own stories. A lot of us wanna dance. A lot of us wanna make art. A lot of us wanna sing, we wanna write our own songs.

And it's because we didn't have that ability to tell our stories. We had to survive. Right. And I think that's why there's this birth of art coming in our community. Poetry, yes. Poetry.

UZO: Mmm. Wow. As you were speaking- this is Uzo- as you were speaking, nicky, I had a vision of like, imagine the wisdom of the wind that sent these diasporan seeds [ Uzo giggles] to go remember how to dance and do poetry and like, imagine that wisdom that like, "don't worry, we got you. I mean, this generation, they're gonna work, but y'all generation..." like, you know, and imagine the generation after that, like and after that, right? And, and so like the winds are almost like in the context of this conversation. And for me, a diasporan child, like it's made for me, the winds blew me here and continues to blow me all around the world to like, feel and be with the land and be with the people and, and like I am meant to be blown around, right?

Like I am that seed that's meant to blow around. And it is a privilege and a joy and a, and it's uncomfortable 'cause I'm getting smacked around while I'm getting around too, [ Uzo laughs] you know? But that's, I thought about, whoa, such wisdom. We don't know 'cause we're in the chaos of the, I don't know, tornado or the debris, right? So we're like, "oh, this hurts, this sucks." But like the grandeur, like, it's so grand, so much bigger than us. And like from that wide lens, it's like, wow, thank you. You know? Yeah.

#### MUSIC BREAK

ERIKA: I just want to acknowledge that we are all beautiful semillitas, beautiful seeds of the diaspora. And that is so powerful and like I'm like, whoa, look at us! So I wanted to pause and offer that moment of celebration and now we're like seedling together in this virtual space [ Erika laughs] and I hope that we'll share space in person and have food and food from all of the, you know, lineages and celebrate those people's foods and their hands and their seedling. All of the work they did to harvest, to tend, to guardian, to steward the lands where they come from. So thank you all. I'm really grateful for realizing that. This is powerful.

CAT: Yes, it's so powerful and it's so healing because when we can nourish these conversations and these relationships, I think also it helps shed the toxicity and violence of other forms, of other stories that we, that like got in our -are stuck in our windpipes [ Cat laughs] about who we are, who we're supposed to be, how we are supposed to be, how we are supposed to act. Like I can just feel strengthened by relating with all of you and by having these realizations. Thank you!

ERIKA: That's how, when nicky, when you share about how transgenerationally you have done so much shedding, it was like the serpent being like, you know, blossoming and being like, "okay people, I'm not coiled, I'm right now like showing all my art, all my creativity." And that is so beautiful because that's healing. And you're, you know, even if we don't see it, again at the subtle level, that's exactly the work. We are ready, through choosing our heart's vision, we are healing our ancestors seven generations back and our descendants whether we have biological kids or not, because we are one.

UZO: Ooh, I appreciate this conversation about the transgenerational shedding. I've been feeling that a lot, like, you know, there's a very common term, t-shirt statement

that's floating around, you know, "you're your ancestors wildest dreams" and I feel it, you know. There's a lot of pressure I am experiencing from my family to like have biologic children. And there's something inside me that feels like, yeah, okay, I could probably do that and probably do an okay job, but what if the purpose of me being here is literally to be the fruit? I am the fruit. Like I am the thing that you all wanted to birth all this while, like, I, I don't need to create anything else but to be my full ass self. I am the flower. I am it. I am it. There's not much more that's supposed to, don't come fertilize me and like, not like I am it! [ Uzo laughs] I am the bulb of the onion that is the very last bulb after everything has been peeled that now perhaps maybe can then go into the soil and become a new onion. But like, I don't need, I've been feeling that feeling a lot, you know, that like perhaps I am the thing. Like all of these women wanted to be liberated and they're all getting to live liberated in my body today. All of my ancestors that really wanted to go play some games but couldn't 'cause they were peeling potatoes all day. I get to play for them today. You know, all the mamas, the little girls that like had to wake up at five in the morning from birth to death. I get to sleep in for them. That like, what if, what if I am the thing? Like nothing else is needed, Uzo, just go become the biggest fucking Uzo you can go become. And that is the thing.

And then, you know, there's something that happens where we pathologize our gifts. And I've been feeling that so much. And this seems really small, and I feel real sens- this is a vulnerable moment for me.

I have this condition with my feet. I've always had it, you know. Like my feet sheds. It sheds. I'm a dancer. And the traditional styles of dancing, we dance bare feet. So it's natural for my feet to have these reactions. So it's not really been a thing where I've cared too much to have pretty feet or pretty the bottom of my feet. But as I get older, now it's like, wait, is there something wrong with me? Why is my feet having so much peeling sensations where it itches and it itches so much where I just wanna scratch it? And no doctor has been able to properly diagnose me, right? There's this thing that like, oh, is it eczema or is it fungus or is it this and nothing, right, has ever worked. So then I traveled back to my ancestral lands in 2019, and I'm looking at my father's feet and his feet is the exact same way. And I look and turn and look at my brother's feet. And my brother's feet is the exact same way. Now in the medical industrial complex, we'll say, well, all of y'all suffer from the same disease.

But my dad said to me, he was like, this is who we are. We are snakes.

Snakes shed. You are shedding!

You don't need to fix you. I, [ Uzo laughs] I'm like, he said, your, our people are snakes. Like we have periods of shedding. And he said, pay attention to when you shed the most. And pay attention to the environments and what helps your shedding happen or what makes it difficult for you to shed.

That's what you need to pay attention to. Not fixing it. Like, can you imagine my whole life I thought there was something wrong with me? Only to realize, no! [ Uzo laughs]

You know, I haven't gotten to the point where I've just been like, oh, look at this beautiful shedding and making art out of it and pictures. And I would like to get to that point 'cause I'm still really embarrassed about it, you know, like there's ugly ass, just like not pretty. But my dad is like, no, you are a snake.

And we shed.

MUSIC BREAK

NICKY: I just wanna say thank you for sharing that, Uzo. I totally understand that the medical industrial complex telling you that there's just something wrong with you, but when you return to your people and you have the same traits, right? Similar thing, Uzo, my family has skin conditions. My sister and I literally have similar hands. Our hands shed, our skin sheds, we have eczema, or I don't know if it's psoriasis. And literally I love that your father's like pay attention to when you're shedding. 'Cause when you listen and find your cycles, you see what your body's reacting to and letting go of. And I literally, in my worst state of like- I'd say worst, it's not to say like good or bad, but it was extremely painful- my skin was inflamed all around and even all around my neck. And it's cleared up recently and I do feel like this specifically is around my neck, was when I was not speaking my truth or speaking for myself or not, not speaking up when I wanted to speak up. And it's, it's been clear for like a while now. And my sister and I have similar hands, and I know the struggle too, it's not always beautiful, like shedding isn't always beautiful. It could be messy, it could be uncomfortable.

But one thing that I hope that this may be some kind of supportive story. I remember shedding in the Philippines. So to return to the beginning of our conversation when I went back to the Philippines, my lips were never chapped.

My lips are always chapped 'cause it's very dry here. When people are like, it's humid today. I'm like, ha. [ Cat giggles] Ha, that's cute. Um, [ Nicky laughs] uh, but when I went to the Philippines, lips were never chapped. My skin, my eczema cleared up. I was moisturized all around, all the time. I was shedding. And then also another time when I was still a little bit unwell, like mentally, spiritually, maybe physically like emotionally. So I was like shedding a lot 'cause my body wants to let go of all this stuff that was unwell inside of me. Being on a beach, uh, visiting friends in Maui, friends who grew up in Maui and being able to swim in the water there 'cause I don't swim in the waters on the coast of California. I grew up in Central California, what is known as Central California. The water's too cold for me, it's too cold. But the first time being able to just swim and float in water and shed 'cause the salt water helps shed the skin.

What helps nurture me with the shedding is like the returning to land, like the physical, like, oh, I'm becoming part of this beach. Or here's parts of my earth, my body returning to the bigger earth, the bigger body, or like these things that I don't need anymore, these memories, like when I take salt baths in the bathtub and I really shed a lot of my skin, like, I really do feel like a snake too, Uzo. When I take salt baths, it's like my skin, the parts I'm letting go of myself, the things that no longer serve me, it feels like it's joining the collective memory in the water, in the earth, or as we're talking about the air.

I just feel like we're constantly returning back to the earth, right? And so, especially when I think about our skin and being a snake, it's like we are literally physically becoming sand on a beach or soil or even our hair, right? So I hope that that nurtures your, your feet. Sending love to your feet and your dad and your brother's feet.

ERIKA: Wow. Thank you both. Thank you, Uzo, for that moment of vulnerability. When you were sharing about the story of what your dad told you, it only brought my mom spirit. She had feet that shed a lot all the time. And also we couldn't find a why medically, which, you know the more I continue my own journey of shedding, I have also certain moments in the moon cycle that I shed a lot through my blood, the blood

that comes out of my womb. Because I notice, you know, I actually see my blood and I study it not from a place of like medical or diagnosis, but it's medicine, right? But the thing is, I shed right in the edges of where, you know, my hair is, and it's not always, but it is there. And it has to do with periods of that level of what's happening at the very depth of my own soul.

And, and my mom, not only her feet, also her hands. And then the more I learned about our ancestors, it's like they used to pick coffee. They used to walk long distances with no buses or cars and like the bodies needed to build up that protective response, right? To be able to do what they needed to do. And perhaps it was also a survival response.

But it is so interesting to notice that the realizing for me that, as my mom used to say when she came to visit me in Michigan when I was there and she was getting more tired so she wouldn't be able to come down to her feet and do the taking the skin out. [ Erika laughs] So she would be like, could you help me? And I would do it. And then she would say like, I feel that I'm blessing all of these soils I'm walking to because like, it's like compost. It's like bringing that, that extra vitamins. So hearing you both sharing, it's like, oh my God, we can talk about that here. Is that, that kind of space? This is powerful stuff. So I'm pretty sure there is a lot of other people around, right? Especially our listeners, I hope that you also start noticing what do you shed and how and when? Because that's medicine and serpent medicine is about the rootedness, the being so down to earth, away from our head and being so connected to earth. And that nourishment and that sense of cradle, right, that earth is for us, but also fertility. It is about the capacity of us not only being birthed, but ongoingly that spiritual depth that we experience in our journeys and how we also have the power to rebirth.

Imagine like the whole skin out. And then I'm like, I'm new again, a new flower! Uzo, when you said, I'm the flower, I'm the thing [ Uzo laughs], I'm like, you're the garden! You're the forest, you're the- [ nicky clapping] -you know what I'm like, yeah. So thank you both for sharing these tears shedding together these beautiful waters.

NICKY: I was just gonna say, what beautiful gifts that we receive from our ancestors that our bodies have these abilities and these superpowers and ways of communicating with us.

That's just what came up for me is like we inherited these abilities from them.

## MUSIC BREAK

CAT: We are coming to closing. Is there anything else that wants to be shared?

UZO: Hmm. I do have something that came up, this spiritual death. I so love that we're intertwined with our plantcestors, you know, we rely on them so much and, and it's so wonderful that we learn so much from them. And I, I just got done with a beautiful three month immersion into exploring death, grief, and dying.

And we did a community presentation of it in San Francisco called The Mixtape of the Dead and Gone. And, you know, I had seven years of locks that had been growing on my head. And after the piece was gone, it was a very clear message, you gotta offer your hair, you know? It, it's, it's gotta go, you gotta shed this, you know?

And I try to negotiate, "wait, I'm not ready, like, you know, can, can it just get to 10 years and then I can have like a 10 year thing." Like there was all this and there was just a very clear "it's time." And, and thankfully I was in a, a portal space to be able to know that that was a very clear message for me.

And so I received it and I, I shed the hair and it felt really good. And it's feeling really good right now. But then I discovered that in the Igbo language, which is the language of my ancestors, that in the Igbo language, when you describe trimming your plants or cutting a tree, it's called ikpu isi which means to cut its hair.

So we describe shedding, trimming the bush and even cutting the tree, cutting the leaves as cutting its hair. And so I just thought I'd offer that too as well, because it's so, you know our ancestors saw ourselves as the same, similar kindred and used- in our language we can rediscover how we were communing with each other, you know.

ERIKA: I pray that as we move forward, wind body, autumn with its wind, you know, and remember with those colors of the leaves and everything that falls, right, the medicine.

Thank you Uzo, for so much medicine brought and shared in this space, especially your laughter, your dance, your, I wanna dance with you! Okay? Okay. We, we need to like find the space and the, I mean, I already danced with your spirit today. Thank you.

And nicky and Cat, I don't know if you wanted to add anything else before we, we close this.

CAT: Just thank you. Thank you so much.

NICKY: I just appreciate at the beginning, Erika, you naming that things are, right, not binaristic, as colonialism will have us believe. And so honoring the expansive spectrum of ways that we can shed. So it could be like windstorm, gusts of wind, or it could be delicate and beautiful seedlings flying across bodies of water. So it could be beautiful, it could be poetic, it could be ugly, it could be messy. All the things. So just honoring and making space and having grace for the way in which you shed, and knowing that it's part of the process sometimes.

MUSIC BED

CAT: Folks listening, we hope you love up on yourselves. We're like giving air hugs to each other right now. It's a lot. Drink some water. No need to have it all make sense in this moment. Thank you all so, so, so much.

MUSIC BREAK TO MUSIC BED

ERIKA: What type of seed do we long to be in our journey on Earth Mother? Literally, and mythologically speaking. ¿Qué tipo de semilla anhelamos ser en nuestra caminata en la Madre Tierra, literal y mitológicamente?

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NICKY: This is a We Rise Production and we'd love to hear from you. Connect with us at [WeRiseProduction@pm.me](mailto:WeRiseProduction@pm.me) on the socials and at [WeRiseProduction.com](http://WeRiseProduction.com).

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Thank you all. Take care. We look forward to staying connected.

MUSIC FADE UP TIL END OF THEME SONG