

Accepting and cherishing being alone:

I learned to braid my hair back, so it would not catch on every twig, and how to tie my skirts at the knee to keep the burrs off. I learned to recognize the different blooming vines and gaudy roses, to spot the shining dragonflies and coiling snakes. I climbed the peaks where the cypresses speared black into the sky, then clambered down to the orchards and vineyards where purple grapes grew thick as coral. I walked the hills, the buzzing meadows of thyme and lilac, and set my footprints across the yellow beaches. I searched out every cove and grotto, found the gentle bays, the harbor safe for ships. I heard the wolves howl, and the frogs cry from their mud. I stroked the glossy brown scorpions who braved me with their tails. Their poison was barely a pinch. I was drunk, as the wine and nectar in my father's halls had never made me. No wonder I have been so slow, I thought. All this while, I have been a weaver without wool, a ship without the sea. Yet now look where I sail.

For a thousand years I had tried to fill the space between myself and my family. Filling the rooms of my house was easy by comparison. I burned cedar in the fireplace, and its dark smoke kept me company.