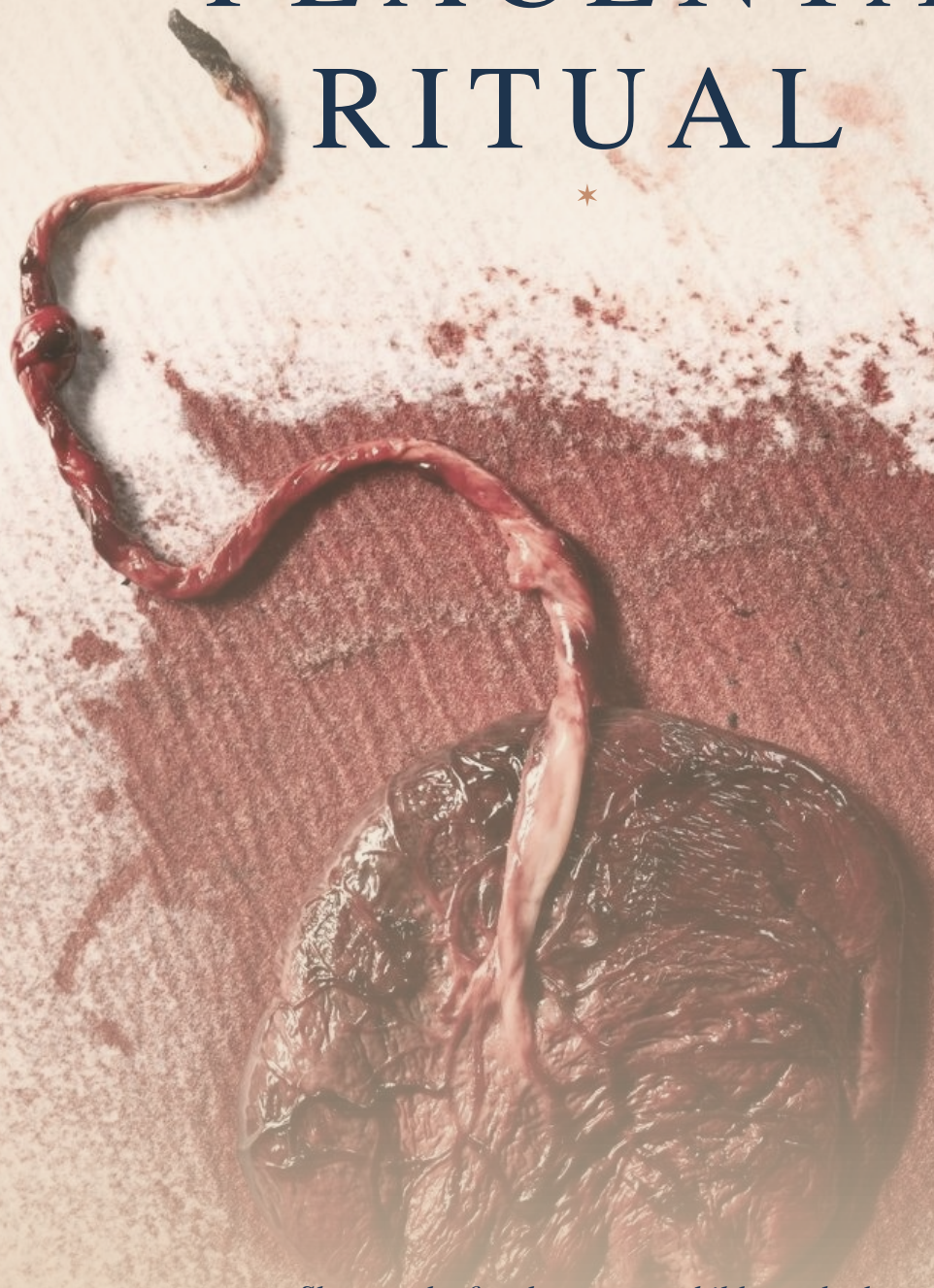


PLACENTA RITUAL



*She was the first home your child ever had,
and the only organ your body grew for love.*

A WAY OF HONOURING YOUR PLACENTA
AND THE MEANING SHE CARRIES

KARIN RUST
MOTHERHOOD IS THE DOORWAY

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THE WALK TO THE TREE

ONE

The placenta: *a living mystery*

The placenta is far more than an organ. She is the very first home your baby ever knew.

From the moment new life begins, she grows alongside it, nourishing, protecting and sustaining it with extraordinary intelligence. She forms the bridge between mother and child, carrying oxygen, nutrients and hormones, while quietly creating the perfect environment for life to unfold.

Your baby never has to ask to be fed. Never has to remember to breathe. Never has to make its heart beat. Everything is held, moment by moment, through the profound wisdom of your body and the remarkable work of the placenta.

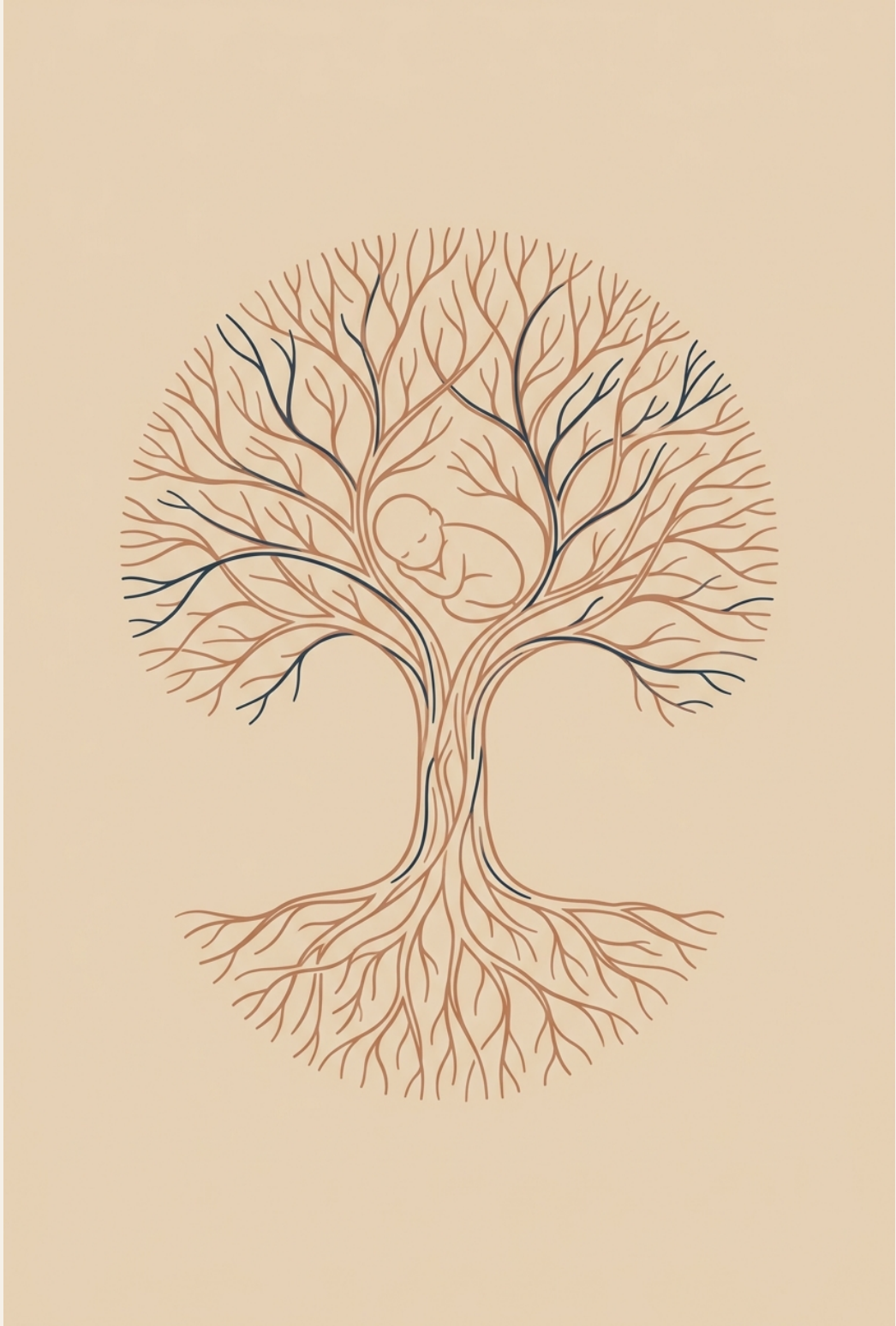


Across many cultures throughout history, the placenta has never been seen as something to discard. She has been honoured as a sacred companion of birth, a protector of new life and a symbol of the deep connection between mother, baby and the Earth. Some traditions buried her beneath a tree. Others regarded her as a guardian, a blessing or even the baby's spiritual companion.

Whether you relate to these traditions spiritually, symbolically or simply with curiosity, they invite us to pause and remember the significance of what the placenta has done.

She has carried your baby through the first chapter of life.

This ritual is an invitation to honour that journey with gratitude. To acknowledge the quiet work that so often goes unseen. And to return the placenta to the Earth with the same love and respect with which she supported the beginning of your baby's life.



THE TREE OF LIFE — THE CHILD AT ITS CENTRE

The placenta's *quiet intelligence*

The birth of your baby is not the end of birth. There is one more chapter that is often overlooked: the birth of the placenta.

Today, birth is often approached with urgency. We have become accustomed to speeding up processes that, for thousands of years, unfolded in their own time. One of these is the time between the birth of the baby and the birth of the placenta.

Yet the placenta's work does not stop the moment your baby enters the world.

While your baby is making the transition from life inside the womb to breathing independently, the placenta remains connected through the umbilical cord. During this time, she continues to support your baby, transferring the remaining placental blood through the cord and continuing to provide oxygen while your baby adapts to life outside the womb.

This final placental transfusion is a remarkable part of birth. Around one third of a baby's blood volume is still within the placenta immediately after birth and naturally transfers to the baby while the cord remains intact. Allowing this process to unfold can support your baby's transition into life outside the womb.



JUST AFTER THE BIRTH

Learning this before my son's birth changed everything for me. It took away so much fear.

I realised that birth is not something that has to be rushed. My body already knew what to do, and the placenta was still quietly doing the work she had done throughout my entire pregnancy: supporting my baby through each stage of the journey.

For me, this understanding created a profound sense of trust. It also changed the way I saw the birth of the placenta itself.

Rather than seeing her as something that needed to be delivered as quickly as possible, I began to see her as an organ with her own rhythm and remarkable intelligence. In my own birth, it took eight hours before my placenta was ready to be born. I never felt the need to hurry her. She had served my baby with perfect devotion for nine months, and I wanted to give her the time to complete her final act in her own way.



HOLDING WHAT HELD

THREE

The importance of *a conscious goodbye*

When the placenta has completed her work, a remarkable chapter comes to an end.

For months, she has nourished your baby, protected it and supported every moment of its growth. Quietly and faithfully, she has given everything she had to help bring new life into the world. Now her journey is complete.

What happens next is entirely your choice. Some families choose to encapsulate their placenta or use it as medicine during the postpartum period. Others create keepsakes or works of art. Many return it to the Earth by burying it beneath a tree or in a place that holds special meaning.

There is no right or wrong way. This ritual is simply an invitation to pause before letting go.

In our modern world, the placenta is often treated as medical waste, something to be disposed of once her work is done. Yet for many women, it feels different. After carrying and protecting their baby for so many months, saying goodbye with intention can become a deeply meaningful part of closing the birth journey.

A conscious ritual allows us to express gratitude for everything that often goes unseen. It reminds us that birth is not only about welcoming a baby into the world. It is also about honouring everything, and everyone, that made this beginning possible.

Whether your ritual is simple or elaborate, what matters most is the intention behind it.

Take a moment.

Say thank you.

Offer your gratitude in whatever way feels true to you.

Because every ending deserves to be honoured just as beautifully as every beginning.

Ancient wisdom *about the placenta*

Long before modern medicine, people around the world recognised the placenta as something worthy of respect. Although each culture had its own traditions, one belief was shared across many of them: the placenta was never seen as something insignificant. She was honoured as an important part of birth and treated with care once her work was complete.

01 The placenta as the baby's twin

In Uganda, the placenta has traditionally been regarded as the baby's twin, a lifelong companion that shared the baby's very first journey into life.

02 Returning her to the earth

Across many cultures, families buried the placenta after birth, often beneath a tree. In parts of Europe, it was once customary to plant a fruit tree above the burial place, symbolising new life, growth and the deep roots a child would one day develop.

03 A symbol of protection

In Cambodia, the placenta has long been associated with the baby's soul and wellbeing. Families carefully protected the burial place as a way of expressing love and care for the child's future.

04 A connection to the land

Among the Māori of New Zealand, the word *whenua* means both placenta and land. Returning the placenta to the Earth symbolises the child's lifelong connection to nature, ancestry and the place they call home.

These traditions may differ, but they all carry the same quiet message:

Life is sacred.

Birth is sacred.

And the placenta, which faithfully supported that journey, deserves to be remembered with gratitude rather than forgotten.

Perhaps we don't need to recreate the rituals of the past. Perhaps we simply need to remember what they were trying to teach us:

To slow down.

To honour what has served us.

*And to recognise that even the quietest parts of birth
deserve our love and respect.*



BIRTH AS PASSAGE

FIVE

The Ritual



You may honour your placenta in your own way. This ritual is a gentle guide that you can follow, adapt or completely transform into something that feels meaningful to you.

Some mothers feel called to return their placenta to the Earth shortly after birth. Others, like I did, sense that the right moment comes much later. I kept my placenta safely frozen for almost two years before I felt it was time to let her go.

There was no reason to rush. One day, I simply knew.

This is your birth. Your placenta. Your story. There is no ceremony more beautiful than one that comes from your own heart.

STEP BY STEP

01 Choose a place

Find a place where you would like to return your placenta to the Earth.

For us, it was beneath a magnificent walnut tree that had stood for a hundred years. Before we began, I placed my hand on its trunk and quietly asked whether it would receive this gift. Whether you do the same or simply pause in silence, allow yourself a moment to connect with the place.

Choose somewhere that feels peaceful and meaningful to you. Dig a hole deep enough that the placenta will remain safely protected beneath the earth.

02 Prepare the placenta

Place your placenta in a beautiful bowl or on a natural cloth made from linen, cotton or another material you love. If you feel called to, decorate her with flowers, leaves or other treasures gathered from nature.

Take a few quiet moments to simply be with her. Notice her. Thank her. Honour everything she has done for you and your baby.



THE HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD WALNUT



STEP BY STEP

03 Choose a few small talismans

My husband and I each chose a few small objects that carried a special meaning for us, little blessings we wished to place beside the placenta as symbols for our son's journey through life.

Many cultures have beautiful traditions like this. You might choose a coin to symbolise abundance, a stone for strength and protection, herbs for healing, a shell for creativity, or any small object that holds personal meaning for you.

For our son, we chose a little frog to represent joy and good fortune, a stone containing real gold for abundance, a small wooden heart with Mother Mary as a symbol of love and protection, and a shell to inspire creativity and beauty throughout his life.

There are no rules. Choose whatever feels meaningful to you. Every object becomes a quiet blessing, carrying your hopes and intentions for the journey ahead.



04 Return the placenta to the earth

If you wish, wrap your placenta in a natural cloth such as linen, cotton or silk before placing her gently into the earth. Take your time. There is no need to rush this moment.

If you have chosen small talismans or meaningful objects, place them beside the placenta one by one. As you do, you may like to speak their meaning aloud. For example:

“May this stone remind you of your inner strength.”

“May this shell inspire a life filled with creativity and wonder.”

“May this little heart always remind you that you are deeply loved.”

Speak whatever feels true to your heart. There are no perfect words. Only your love matters.

05 Offer a prayer or words of gratitude

Before covering the placenta with earth, take a quiet moment to express your gratitude. You may wish to say a prayer, speak a blessing or simply sit in silence.

Some moments are too sacred for many words. Others ask to be spoken from the deepest place within us. Trust whatever feels natural.

On the next page you will find the prayer that we spoke during our own ceremony. Feel free to use it, adapt it, or create your own. The most beautiful prayer will always be the one that comes from your heart.



THE PREPARED HOLLOW

PRAYER FOR THE PLACENTA



Grandmother.

Guardian.

Thank you.

*Thank you for nourishing and protecting (child's name)
throughout the time they grew within my body.*

*Thank you for your quiet devotion.
For every heartbeat you supported.
For every breath you prepared.
For every moment you carried life with such perfect care.*

*Today, we return you to Mother Earth
with deep gratitude and love.*

*May the wisdom you represent
remain alive within our family.*

*May (child's name) grow
with strong roots and an open heart.*

*May they always feel connected
to the Earth beneath their feet,
the beauty of nature around them
and the quiet wisdom within themselves.*

*May they walk their own path
with courage, kindness and curiosity.*

*May they remember that they belong:
to this Earth, to life and to love.*

*And may they always be guided
by the light of their own inner wisdom.*

Thank you.



BACK INTO THE EARTH

STEP BY STEP

06 Cover the placenta and take in the moment

Gently cover the placenta with earth. As the place returns to stillness, allow yourself to simply be present.

You may wish to decorate the spot with flowers, leaves or small stones collected during your walk.

Take a deep breath. Notice how this chapter feels as it comes to a close.

Perhaps this place will become somewhere you return to over the years. Or perhaps the ritual itself is enough, and you carry the memory quietly in your heart.

There is no right way.

Only gratitude.

Only love.

Only the quiet knowing that something beautiful has come full circle.





THE PLACE WHERE SHE NOW RESTS



WHAT REMAINS

I am Karin



I'm Karin Rust, a mother, mentor and guide devoted to helping women reconnect with themselves through the journey of motherhood.

Before becoming a mother, I spent many years searching for fulfilment in the outside world. But it was pregnancy, birth and motherhood that brought me home to myself. They reminded me of the profound wisdom that already lives within every woman.

When I became pregnant with my son at the age of forty, I chose to trust that wisdom completely. I experienced a wild pregnancy and gave birth to him at home, allowing birth to unfold in its own time and rhythm. It

became one of the most transformative experiences of my life and deepened my reverence for the extraordinary intelligence of the female body.

The placenta ritual you have just read was born from my own experience. It became a beautiful way to honour the remarkable organ that nourished and protected my son throughout his first journey in life.

Today, my work is dedicated to helping mothers remember who they are beneath conditioning, reconnect with their intuition and trust themselves again.

Because I believe that motherhood is not only the birth of a child. It is also the birth of a mother. And perhaps, a return to herself.

Thank you for allowing me to share this ritual with you.

With love,

Karin



TOGETHER, AT THE CLOSE OF THE CEREMONY



May this ritual become
a beautiful memory
that you and your child carry
in your hearts
for many years to come.

*With love,
Karin Rust*

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