

Transcript for the podcast Tide to the Moon

Episode 6: F-Moon

About a week ago I sat down to begin writing this episode. We'd just had mothers day and after reading a compelling piece from author Anne Lamott, I decided not to celebrate, and I let my kids off the hook.

And as I have been exploring celebration days in this podcast, the concept of Mothers day seemed an apt topic to explore, so I began writing which lead me back to a time many years ago.....

[Sparkly music]

And I wrote for a while and when I was maybe two thirds done I stopped for the day, satisfied that I now knew what I would be writing about in this episode.

But over the next day or two, I began thinking about how I was losing my mojo around this practice of secular sabbath Sunday - something was off kilter, and I felt a need to fess up to you dear listener but also to understand, to explore, and so I started to write about it, trying to figure out what was happening, 'cos I thought if its happening to me it might happen to other people, trying to understand why and what I might do to develop a practice....

[Sparkly music]

But the word practice is a big one, loaded with expectation and failure, and so I felt compelled to head off down a rabbit hole, to muse on what I've learned about habits and practices, including my long experience smoking cigarettes and the stony path of giving them up.

[Sparkly music]

Eventually I came back to the vexed question of vapid Sundays and I wrote my way to a list of three questions I wanted to explore:

1. What does it mean that something is sacred to us?
2. What do we gain from a practise of sacralising aspects of life?
3. If its positive, how do we nurture such practises?

All in a lazy 15 minute podcast episode.

[Sparkly music]

But sometime between lunch on Wednesday and breakfast on Friday I read something that said May was the Flower Moon. And a whole host of questions rushed into my mind
Where did that name come from?
What cultures have moon names?
What was the name for our time of year in the southern hemisphere, because it sure as heavens isn't flower season?

And finally I decide that this is what the episode will be about, moon names, and all those other writings will maybe serve, hopefully as inspiration, shortcuts for future episodes.

[Sparkly music]

And this is how it goes in the writing of almost every episode.

MUSIC

Intro

Welcome to Tide to the Moon, a podcast about exploring ways we can align our lives more closely with the rhythms of nature. My name is Kate Lawrence and I am your host.

MUSIC

Many cultures and eras have given names to aspects of the natural world that we now don't notice and we certainly don't name them, or what was common knowledge has now become specialist knowledge.

Some things apply to universal phenomena like the name of a spring tide and a neap tide, Some relate to a natural phenomena with local variations like the names of frosts -
In Australia we have hoar, black, killing and rime frosts, and some are very localised like the Santa Ana wind in southern California.

And when it comes to moons, there is quite a range of names and naming practices from specific cultures and eras. Most of these lunar names relate either to an aspect of nature like the spring flowers or the first frosts, or an aspect of the human activities due at that time of the year, like sowing or harvesting.

The names I could find all come from the northern hemisphere.

As far as I could discover Australian aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, while they have a deep and complex knowledge, understanding and relationship with the cosmos, they didn't name lunar cycles.

So here are some names from various cultures, taken from November, being the equivalent for our May:

From the ancient Celts, the first moon after Samhain was the Mourning, Oak or Dark moon

For Native American Indians the possibilities include Beaver, Dark, Frost, Tree and Snow moons

The Inuit peoples from the Arctic named this moon the Freezing Mist Moon although given how many words they have for snow, surely something has been lost in the translation there.

And the Chinese called this moon simply White Moon.

My first thought for a name for the moon in May for where I live was Frost Moon. We get decent frosts here and in May they begin to land more steadily.

But then looking around I was struck by another more compelling idea and in an instant I decide to call the moon in May in my part of the world - Fungi Moon,

This is the month when autumn rains allow a spectacular array of growths to push up through the earth, in fairy circles, in colonies on rotting logs, jutting out from the sides of trees like space ships, glowing iridescent with intricate gills and gullets, slimes and soots.

Fungi is one of the last frontiers of biological knowledge, species are still being discovered let alone understood.

While I have seen some beautiful fungi I am blown away by some of the images taken by amazing photographers, some expert, some amateur, and I highly recommend the website and the gallery page in particular of Fungimap Australia.

One moon down, 11 to go.

Or so I thought.

MUSIC

STORY

For probably the first fifty years of my life I had a bit, maybe a lot of prepper in me, you know a survivalist, a doomsdayer, plotting and planning and preparing for the end of the world.

I blame the depression and how it affected my parents who then influenced me.

For many years, I lived in Richmond, an inner city suburb of Melbourne with a slight gangster history

I lived a perfectly law abiding life, in fact I was a practising lawyer at the time, but that didn't stop me spending many hours almost mindlessly taking note of the all the lanes and alleyways and routes around Richmond, and imagining how I would escape, either on foot or by car, if I was to be chased by the police.

When I learned about climate change I upped my game in the vegetable growing department, installing water tanks and stockpiling food, always expecting the crisis, when there would be no power, no supply chain, no water.

Then when we moved out of the city to live smack bang in the middle of some of the most bushfire prone forests in the world, and I got a job with the Country Fire Authority as a community educator, I felt like I'd found a legitimate outlet for all of these preoccupations, - although my issues with authority and hierarchies mental I was not really suited to such a semi military organisation, even if it had been functional.

A year or two later I managed to get some funding to develop and deliver a pilot in three communities, a program called Weather the Storm - Women Prepare.

It was for groups of women in community to come together over a number of weeks and discuss and learn about the various threats they and their community might face, and how they could best prepare, both physically and psychologically.

Whittlesea Council were keen to host one of the pilots, but instead of choosing one of their many rural communities, as I expected, they asked me to deliver it in a brand new housing estate.

I said sure we can do it in an urban setting, why not, they'll have threats and disasters, we'll be able to plan our stockpiling together!

So in the group we brainstormed threats and looked at houses fires, escape routes out of the estate, but we ran out of ideas fairly quickly. So as the weeks wore on I went looking for others risks, googling the area trying to find things that might be dangerous.

I was pretty excited when I found that there a large mains gas pipe that ran along two sides of the estate and we spent a good hour or so contemplating what they would do if that ever leaked or exploded.

Then as I was pouring over a google earth map I saw an almighty roofed area just south of the estate. I almost rubbed my hands with glee, now I would really have something for them to consider.

Whatever this was, it would surely have some potential danger to nearby residents if there was an accident?

Eventually after triangulating the roads and doing some great sleuth work I discovered that it was

a mushroom factory.

All I'll say is that I had to work really hard to make that mushroom factory appear in the slightest way scary.

MUSIC

I spent a lot of time thinking about risk in those years, not just in that project but in communities facing very real threats from natural disasters, and I still live in one of the most bushfire prone forests in the world.

But vigilance is hard, especially when the risk is rare and unpredictable, when there are many false alarms and where the interruption to everyday life is considerable and it ends up being a waste of time.

I don't have an answer for any of this, although I have come to a peace with it for myself which, as yet has not been tested in the heat of an actual fire.

MUSIC

As I hope by now we all understand, I am an overthinker, not a particularly deep thinker, just a insistent thinker with a darting mind, and so at the end of a story about a mushroom factory, inspired by the idea of Fungi Moon, I find myself at the feet of another candidate for the May moon.

It is in the month of May when all of us in south eastern Australia who live in a high bushfire risk area, can say that the fire season is done, for better or worse. We can now have some months of reprieve from the risk.

So other names for the May moon, apart from Fungi Moon and Frost Moon, might be Fire Out Moon, or Fire Done Moon or Fire Down Moon.

Three possible names, all beginning with F. Maybe one for April and one for May and one for my first grandchild born on the full moon after Samhain?

MUSIC

Please feel free to jump on the Tide to the Moon Facebook group, I would be so thrilled and put your two bobs worth in as to what you would name the full moon where you are for May, or June, or any month. There's absolutely no reason we can't all have our own names for moons, change from year to year if we like or copy someone's else's moon.

And on the Story Ground website, if you go to Tide to the Moon you'll find the show notes for this episode which is where I've put some links to where I've sourced the information about moon names and also a couple of other websites about fungi.

MUSIC

Thanks for listening to 'Tide to the Moon'.

If you like this podcast please rate and review us on itunes or wherever you listen, and tell other people about it.

And if you have any ideas, suggestions, requests, comments or feedback, I would love to hear from you.

You can find the shownotes and contact details at storyground.com.au

Theme music by Danya from Audio Jungle.

This podcast is a production of Story Ground, and me, Kate Lawrence and is made on the traditional lands of the Gunum Willam Balluk, at the foot of Mt Macedon, 65 km north west of Melbourne, Australia.