



**October 26, 2024**

Greetings Fellow Reader!

Remember that I'm eager to hear your thoughts, so don't hesitate to hit reply or click the buttons below to write me back.

### ***Life Stuff***

Earlier this month I went to Mexico to attend a graduate school reunion. It's been 40 years since I left formal education to join "the real world" and there was something so beautiful about reconnecting with others who shared that especially fun, carefree part of my life. We've acquired lines around our eyes, mostly from smiling, it seems, as well as scars, mostly hidden. Some have become big deals, others have made their ripples in smaller ponds, but everyone's journey has been a story worth telling. When I was a grad student in my early twenties, I never imagined the twists and turns that would lead me back into those same friends' company decades later. But I wouldn't have it any other way.

***Not knowing what lies around the corner is part of the magic of life.***

In what ways has your life taken turns that you hadn't imagined? Click here and share your thoughts.

## *Fantasy Treat*

Thinking about life's twists and turns brought the Fates to mind. In my August newsletter, I mentioned them as the inspiration for my version of fairies in my upcoming debut novel, ALL THAT SHIMMERS. But who were they? In European culture, the three sister goddesses first appear in Greek Mythology. Together they are called the Fates or Moirai, derived from the Ancient Greek *Moirai* meaning share or fate and related to the word *moros*, meaning fate, destiny or doom.

**Clotho** spun the thread of a human's life, marking the life's beginning, **Lachesis** measured the thread, determining the experience of the life and its length, while **Atropos** cut the thread, determining the manner and moment of death.

In ALL THAT SHIMMERS, my fairy character Lachima is inspired by Lachesis.

*"The Three Fates"* by Paul Thumann



In addition to providing a socially acceptable opportunity to display a young girl's naked boobs, Thumann's 19th century painting above is a classic representation of the Fates—as girl, woman and crone corresponding with their role in a human lifetime. But their control isn't limited to humans. In most versions of the Greek myths, the Fates are beyond the power of the gods, whose destinies they also dictate. The Romans adopted the idea of the Greek Fates with their *Parcae*: *Nona*, *Decima* and *Morta*. Similar figures appear in other cultures as well, most closely as the Norns in Norse mythology. It seems humans across cultures are drawn to the idea (comfort?) that some aspects of life are simply out of our hands.

***If our destinies are foretold or determined by inaccessible goddesses, is there still a reason to try shaping our lives through our choices?***



*Saylie's* life dramatically changed when she first started going to the beach.

Photo by *Annie Moses*

## *Historical Yummy*

*“Mary the Jewess”* was a woman deeply into transformation. This renowned alchemist was also known as “Mary Prophetissa,” “Maria Hebraea,” and by many other names over the centuries.

Image from House of Applejay web site



First referenced by the Greco-Egyptian alchemist Zosimos of Panopolis around 300 A.D., she was one of the first recorded alchemists in the Western world and the first known Jewish woman to write and publish using her own name, though sadly, her work is now lost. Zosimos indicates she started an alchemical academy in Hellenistic Alexandria, Egypt around the first century A.D. and excelled at the process of transmutation. In the late tenth century, Ibn Al-Nadim’s Arabic book *Kitāb al-*

*Fihrist (Book Catalogue)* lists her among the 52 most important alchemists known at the time.



Cooks and scientists still use double boiler devices called “bain-maries” based on the one she developed. They were named after her in the 14th century.

Image by grongar on Wikimedia Commons

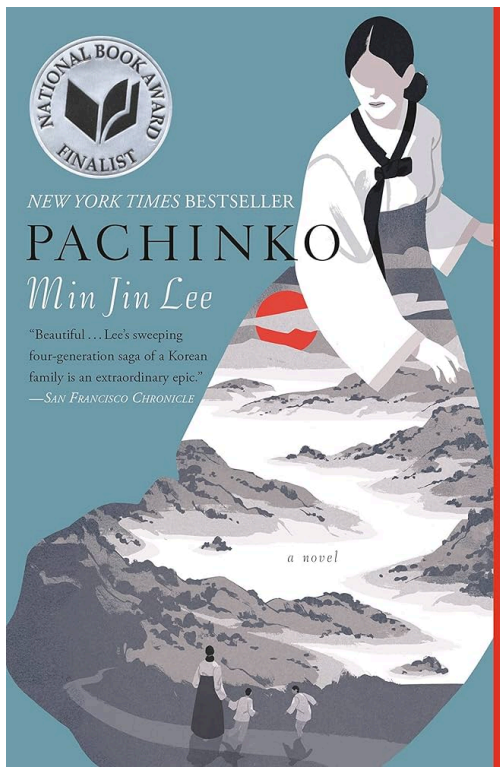
Mary is also thought to have been involved in the invention of other distillation devices, versions of which are still in use. We don’t know how her life started out, but I’m guessing that as a little girl in 1st century A.D. Egypt, she didn’t anticipate becoming a one of the founders of the entire branch of science we now call chemistry!

*What might our lives hold for us in the future  
that we can't even imagine today?*

**Fun Follow-up:** In last month’s newsletter, I introduced you to “the Bearded Lady” *Clémentine Delait*, so it was pretty cool that flying back from Mexico I discovered the critically acclaimed 2023 French movie inspired by Clémentine’s life called “*Rosalie.*” I’ll definitely be watching it.



*The Nightstand*



I've just finished Season 2 of **"Pachinko"** on Apple TV+, which is a beautiful adaptation of the exquisite 2017 novel by Min Jin Lee. It's a great example of a character whose life is transformed through several dramatic twists and turns, but remains anchored by love.

The story starts in Japanese occupied Korea, where little Sunja lives on the precarious edge of poverty with her loving

parents before her father tragically dies, forcing her mother to take in boarders to keep the family fed. As a young woman, Sunja falls in love with a powerful man at the marketplace where she works and becomes pregnant, only to discover her lover has a wife and children back in Japan. She's rescued from her plight by a Korean pastor on his way to Japan to reunite with his brother in Osaka's Koreatown, where Sunja raises her family in the house of her brother and sister-in-law while they all suffer intense discrimination by the Japanese and the ravages of WWII.



Sunja on Apple TV+ played beautifully by **Kim Min-ha** and **Youn Yuy-jung**.

Meanwhile, her first son's biological father, a wealthy Korean man who turns out to be a powerful figure in the Japanese underworld, tracks "his" Korean family, protecting them from deprivation and rescuing them during the war. The dramatic,

romantic family saga continues on for several generations in beautifully interweaving storylines.

I love this book for the incredible history lesson about the relationship between Koreans and Japanese in Japan in the 20th century, as well as the immersive writing and deeply compelling lead character. Sunja is a hard worker and canny survivor with deep emotions buried beneath a serene surface. I was engaged with every member of her extended family plus her first love/baby daddy and hated when the book ended. Having the excellent TV series arrive to take me back to Sunja's world was a welcome delight.

*When life's twists turn painful, how do we carry on with grace and dignity, remembering that better times can also lay ahead?*

[Click here to tell me what you're reading.](#)

## *Exclusive Freebie*

Looking for a line of poetry for the epigraph for ALL THAT SHIMMERS, I dug out “The Dead Nymph and other Poems,” written by my great-great-grandfather Charles Henry Lüders. It was published in 1891, the same year he tragically died in true 19th century poet style—of tuberculosis at the age of 33.

Reading the collection, I was stunned how much his poems resonated with my novel, both full of wood nymphs, naiads and woodland settings. He even wrote a poem called “Lines Made at the Rose-Tree” that seems like it was written in my fictional grand hotel!

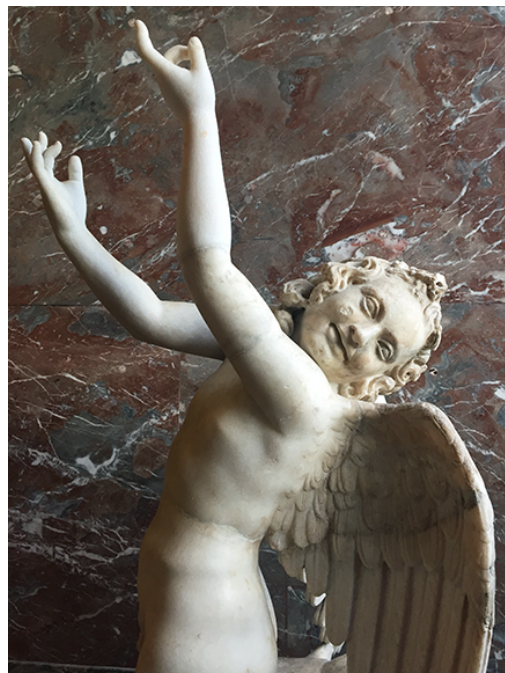
I did some internet sleuthing and found a old picture of the actual Rose-Tree Inn that looks to be roughly from his time period. It's no grand hotel, but the poem still evokes Twin Birch House for me.

I'm now planning to re-publish his book of poetry as a companion piece to the Twin Birch House series and I'm offering you his poem written at the Rose-Tree as this month's subscriber exclusive. Enjoy your stay at the Inn!

[Click here for your gift poem](#)

## *Pretty Pix*

From a visit to the *l'Orangerie Museum*, where Monet's *Water Lilies* are displayed and an angel at the Louvre. Paris, 2018.



## *Behind the Curtain*

*Historical Fantasy Fridays* on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) are in their building phase (nice way of saying not getting much traffic), other than one short video on YouTube about C.L. Polk's wonderful book "[The Midnight Bargain.](#)" For some reason, YouTube chose to show that one to a lot of people, while essentially hiding the others. Navigating the algorithms feels like playing Blind Man's Bluff. But I'm enjoying making the videos and posts, plus the people who *do* see them are liking them, so I'll be continuing.

Click here to tell me which social media platform(s) you're most active on.

Meanwhile, the publishing process for ALL THAT SHIMMERS is picking up steam! I got my copy edits back and formatted the print version of the book for proofing using Atticus. So fun to see the plain text of the Word manuscript transformed into the pages of a real book. I also got the first draft artwork for the cover design and am loving it. Look forward to sharing the final cover with you when the time is right.

On the writing side, I'm in the home stretch on first draft of my novel about Marie de Rohan. I'm targeting mid-December for delivering to my editor, which feels doable (she says with fingers and toes crossed).

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Talk with you again next month!

Warmest Wishes & Happy Reading,

**Kady**

P.S. Full disclosure - some links in my newsletter may be affiliate links, which means if you purchase something using the link, your price won't change, but I might get a small commission. Sweet, huh?

**Kady Ambrose**

Writing in Paris, France



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