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The Hierophant

HENRY CRAWFORD ADAMS

I grew up in what is now known as Atlanta, Georgia, the traditional homelands of the Mvskoke (Muscogee) and Tsalaguwetiyi (Cherokee) peoples ... the “City in the Forest.” Ever since I was a child, I have found joy and sanctuary in the beings of woodlands, streams, swamps, and skies. Birds, specifically, have always been symbols of power to me ... their beauty, enormous importance to global ecosystem functionality, and interwoven connection to human communities have made them a fixture of my life as an ecologist and an artist. Researching avian conservation allows me to better understand the intricate and nuanced relationships between ecosystem, wildlife, and human health, and how I can become a better advocate for environmental justice and equity. Bringing avian ecologies into my artwork as they relate to my experiences and the experiences of my communities, helps me process my emotions, share myself with others, and better navigate the world. My three pieces in this publication were inspired by, of course, avian ecologies and the Major Arcana of Tarot. Since its creation in the 15th century, Tarot has been used for a variety of intents, including gameplay and divination, and I’ve found it to be a wonderful tool for both interpersonal connection and introspection. While I am working on illustrations for all twenty-one major arcana, I felt particularly drawn to the three you will see herein and thought they combine into what I hope to be an empowering reading for my beloved Queer community.

THE HIEROPHANT

This card represents traditions and sticking to one’s path. Understandably, “tradition,” in the conventional sense, can be an agitating if not outright harmful thing to Queer folk, often used to control and repress our light. So, I’ll take a moment to contextualize. I interpret tradition as a living body of healthful and loving knowledge, activities, and ceremonies given to us from our Queer elders, our families of both blood and choice, and ourselves that helps us continuously establish and navigate our paths in life. These aspects of tradition are much like the landmarks, stars, and electromagnetic fields birds use to way-find along their annual routes. When I think of this Queer and ecological interpretation of tradition, I think of sandhill cranes, their migratory flocks numbering in the thousands, their trumpeting cries echoing off clouds. While they may have to alter their thousand-mile routes to adapt to ever-changing landscapes, they trust in self and community, and always manage to find their way home. This piece, forever enshrined in the skin of my left arm, reminds me to carve and trust in my own path and to use the ever-growing shared love and memory of my community to face the unknown. I hope it may serve as a similar reminder to you.

Henry Crawford Adams (They/He) is a wildlife ecologist, educator, and illustrator and currently serves as the wildlife management coordinator at the Lincoln Park Zoo’s Urban Wildlife Institute.



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On the cover of this issue

"Strength," a Tarot illustration representing a radiation of power coupled with inner understanding and love. | [HENRY CRAWFORD ADAMS](#)