

# *THE ANTLERED FEMALE REINDEER*

**A Retelling Of The Norse Creation Story**



Ingrid Kincaid, *The Rune Woman*

I am a daughter of the North and reindeer are part of my spiritual heritage. I will tell you a story of creation, a story from the North. It is not the story that most of us know, the story that was written by men, for men and about men, as if they carry in their bodies the ability to create new life. It is the story of creation told by women, in our own voices, from our own perspective. That makes it the story of the mother, she who gives birth. And in the North, it is the story of the antlered, female reindeer.



Photo credit goes to Warren Sammut on Unsplash.com

In the very beginning, in the very, very beginning, in a time long past, there was the great, yawning void, the Gap, Ginnungagap, the great darkness. And there existed in that great darkness the realms of fire and ice. Muspelheim and Niflheim. These realms drifted slowly, back and forth through time and finally they collided and as is true when fire meets ice, a great chaos was formed and out of this chaos, there emerged a cow. Audhumla. Now we have been led to believe that this cow was bovine. But you must remember that this is a very old story from the beginning of time, a story from the far North, from the land of ice and in times long past they did not know the bovine in the far North. They knew the reindeer cow, the antlered, female reindeer. She is the mother in this story. And yes, female reindeer grow antlers, just as the males and theirs don't fall off until spring. It is written also in this story told by a man that at the same time as the cow appeared, there appeared a giant named Ymir. Now according to the story, as it was written by a man, we don't know who the giant is or where he came from. That's no surprise. But we women know because the story says that this giant Ymir was sustained by suckling milk from the swollen udder of Audhumla, the reindeer cow. Udders swell with milk when the females give birth. We women know this. So Ymir was the calf born to the sacred, antlered, reindeer mother. And the men's version of the great creation story continues. The cow licked ice. She licked and licked and out from the ice there emerged another being, a male and somehow he is called a god. Reindeer lick ice. It is one of the things they do to get to the lichen, which is a food source. And they also lick their newborn calves, removing the birth sac and in all likelihood, having just given birth in the ice, the birth sac would have frozen, so she licked the ice. This being was not a god. He was merely another newborn calf of the sacred, antlered, female reindeer.



Amanitas, a favorite food of reindeer

Now the story written by a man, for men and about men, goes on and on and on, about all the male gods, and all their sons, with little reference to any of the females who were giving birth to all these males.

And the cow disappears from this story that was written by a man. She is of no consequence. She isn't honored or revered. She is just a swollen udder feeding the gods. You never hear of her again.

So I ask, what happened to the cow, the sacred, antlered, female reindeer that is the mother in the Norse story of creation?

It's time to tell her story.

She carries wisdom in her body, the wisdom of creating new life and this wisdom is carried in the bodies of all women, whether they give birth or not.

The reindeer grandmothers lead the females to the places where there is food, where it's safe to give birth. And sometimes they must swim across great rivers, at great risk, but they must lead the mothers to safety.

We do well at this time in human history to go back to the creation story of our ancestors from Northern Europe and think about what it would be like to follow the antlered, female reindeer. She can lead us to places where there's food. She can lead us to places where it's safe. She can remind us what it means to be female, to own the power to give birth to new life and to feed that new life from our bodies. That's the place where creation comes from, the ancient, sacred mother. And when we remember that, we reconnect with the power of our own creative selves.

We have lost our way.

We're lost because we've been lied to, told that life comes from the male, from the armpits of Ymir or the head of Zeus, or the rib of Adam, and always this over-shadowing, dominant male god.

We can't and don't find ourselves in the stories written by men.

We need to tell our own stories. We need to go inside ourselves and connect with our own creative ability. Listen to our bloodlines, our own song lines. Lean into the breath of our mothers, our grandmothers, great-grandmothers, all the way back to the reindeer who gave birth. She can teach us how to walk the migration lines, where to find food, where it is safe. We need this knowledge. The past can serve us when we gather it up and bring it home and remember who we are.

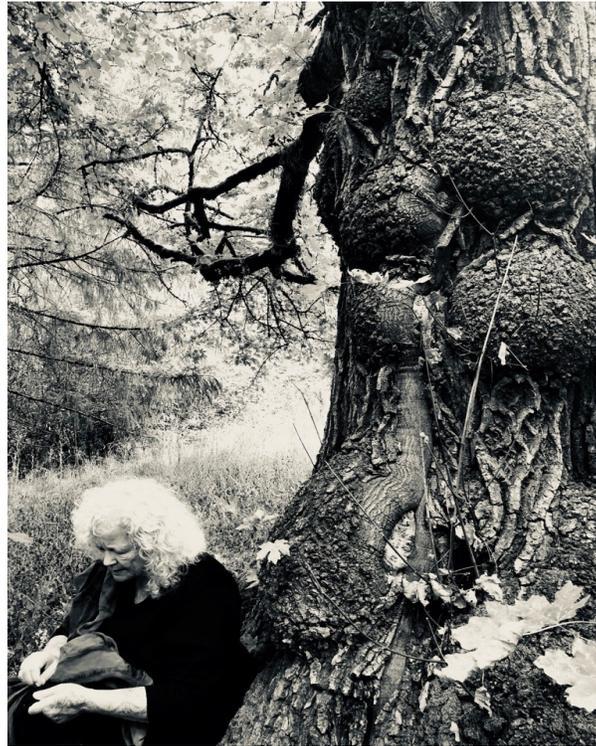
Sisters! It's time we remember our own stories and retell history using our own voices. We must filter out the taint of patriarchy.

We must return the Antlered Female Reindeer to her rightful place in the Norse creation story. It's crucial that we remember the rich spiritual heritage of tribal, indigenous, Northern Europe, a heritage that existed long before the Christians and the Romans. It's a heritage that honored the antlered, female reindeer.

It is vital that we recognize that the history we have available to us today is tainted and distorted by patriarchy. The mother has been removed; she who gives birth and feeds from her own body has been replaced with the lie of the gods.

I am a daughter of the North. The reindeer are part of my heritage. It is my sacred obligation to return the antlered mother to the history that was written about my ancestors.

What are you being called to do?



Ingrid Kincaid is an internationally known author/educator. She is an elder in the spiritual community. Wise, irreverent, out spoken and often controversial, she invites people to remove the distorted lens of patriarchy so they can see all the places in history where women have been dishonored, discounted, lied about and removed.

Visit her website [www.ingridkincaid.com](http://www.ingridkincaid.com) for free recordings and information about her books, classes and online courses.



**I have a mounted Canadian caribou in my home.  
I rescued this glorious being from an estate sale.**

Cover Photo credit to Marcus Lofvenberg on unsplash.com  
© 2018