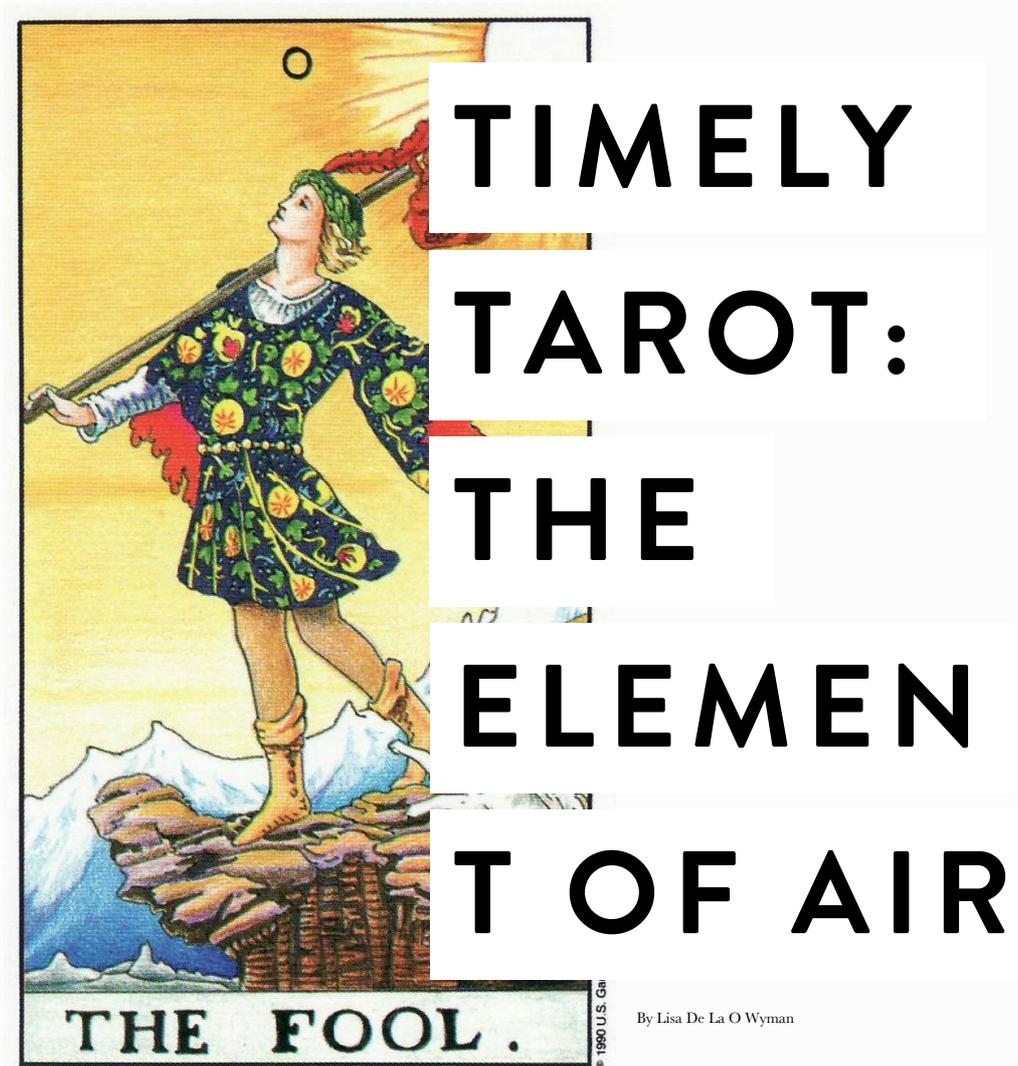


January 28, 2022

## Timely Tarot: The Element of Air By Lisa De La O Wyman



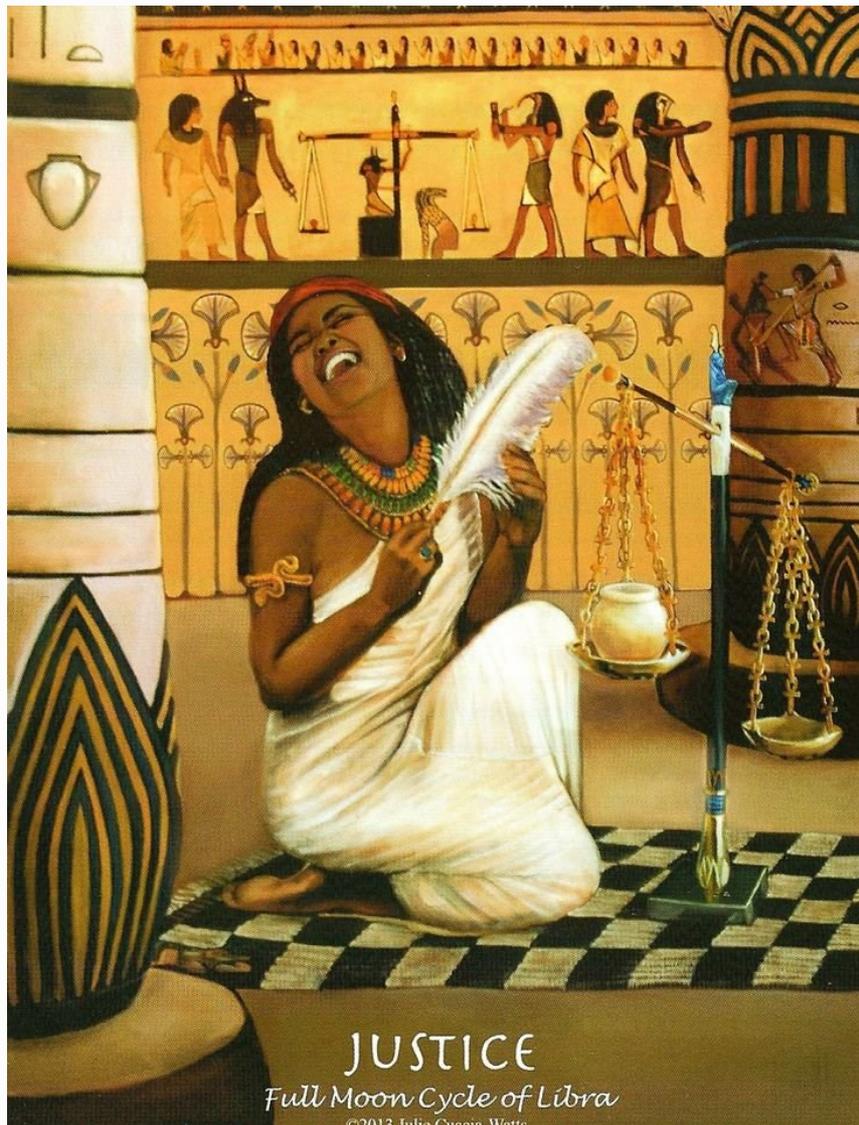
Happy New Year! We made it through the strange days of 2021 and are tentatively emerging with caution and hope like the dawn. We are forever changed by what has come before, but one of our key strengths as human beings is our curiosity about what's next and what *could be*. Our innate desire to ask questions, explore, and create something new galvanizes us forward even after the most devastating events. We want to know! In Tarot, this is the gift of the Air element – the power of the mind to collect information and experiences, break them down, and flesh them out to make decisions about who we are and what we want. Air encapsulates that electric speed of thought, billions of neurons sending signals in a chaotic symphony. The Swords suit of the deck is a walk through this uniquely human effort to process information and express ourselves. They can be challenging cards in that they capture the merry madness of our brains - often over-stimulated, buzzing with anxiety, and producing thoughts and images we struggle to reconcile. Yet it's also the cradle of innovation, problem-solving, and exquisite discernment.

As one of the four elements, air is a building block of our life on earth. While we need it to physically survive moment to moment, we can also observe it as an energy that has something to teach us. It is unique and infuses life with its singular expression. Associated with the direction of East, it represents a new beginning, freshness, and change. In Western magical systems, Air shares an active, yang proclivity with the element of Fire. Air possesses an ease of mobility, as we see in the movement and motion of clouds, winds, and extreme weather conditions like tornadoes and hurricanes. Air builds momentum and quickly moves through territories of great expanse. It also moves objects in its path and can dramatically alter a landscape in a short amount of time. While this can be quite daunting, air can also be that gentle breeze that tickles

your face and tempts the reeds to dance upon the surface of a still pond. Air is dynamic and a shapeshifter of incredible variety.

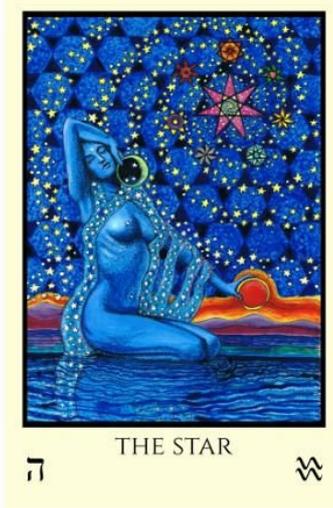
Air is associated with the intellect and the power of reason. It symbolizes the agility of the mind, both the quickness of our thoughts and their changeability. It also represents communication and speaking your truth. Astrologically, Air is associated with the zodiacal signs of Libra (Cardinal), Aquarius (Fixed), and Gemini (Mutable). All three signs possess a strongly mental inclination, the mind being a significant player in how they process emotions and resolve conflict. The key phrases for each sign are "I think" (Gemini), "I balance" (Libra), and "I know" (Aquarius), all of which prioritize the ability of the mind to process information, discern, and form an opinion to make decisions. The desire for knowledge is a hallmark of the Air signs, which provides access to worlds of information but also comes with dualities, conflict, and ultimately the need for resolution.

In Tarot, Air shows up in the Major Arcana cards of Justice/Adjustment (Libra), The Star (Aquarius), and Gemini (The Lovers), as well as the associated suit of Swords. The element itself is represented with The Fool and considered its purest expression. One way of seeing the journey of Air through the Tarot is learning or establishing rules and ethics in Justice, navigating that path by The Star, and then having to make your choice among many options in The Lovers.



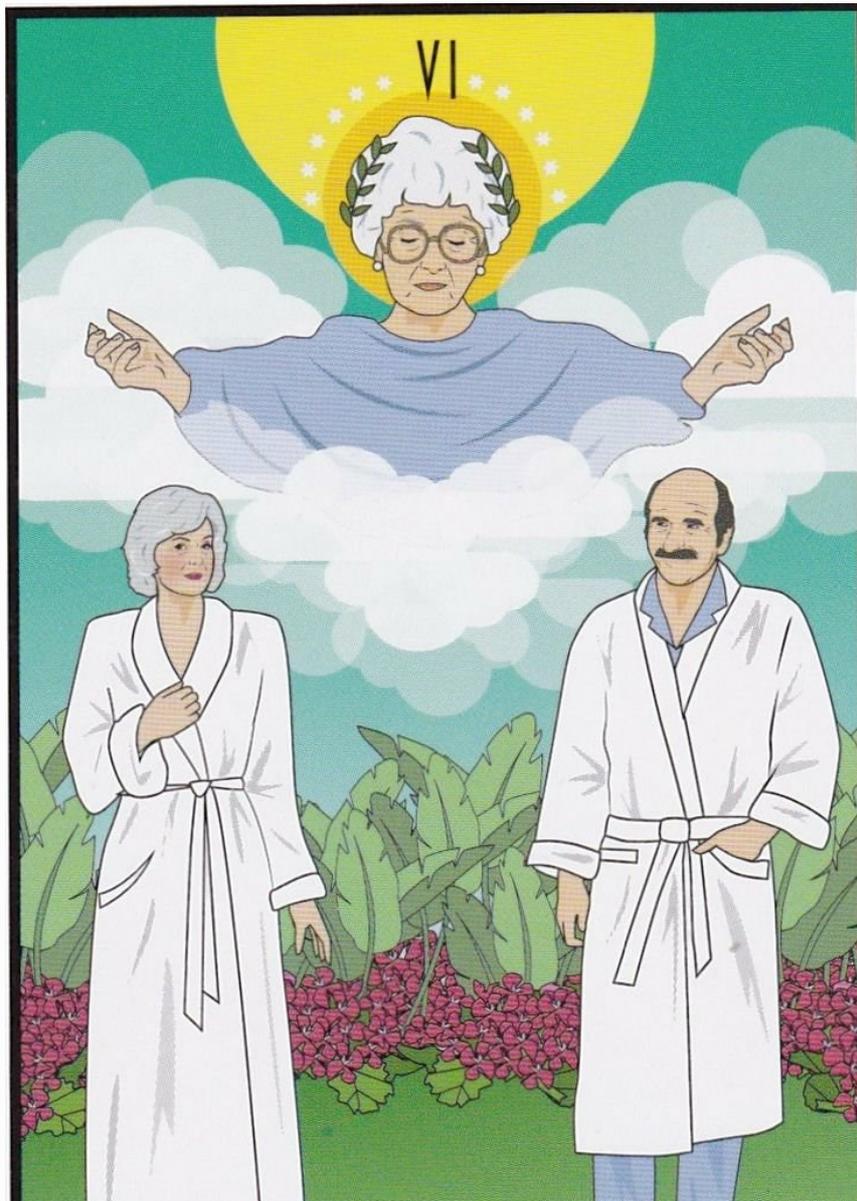
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In the cards of Libra (Justice/Adjustment and 2, 3 & 4 of Swords), cardinal energy initiates a process of delineating information. Libran energy is concerned with equality, balance, and ethical decision-making. Symbolized by the scales, it's seeking symmetry in all things, a harmony found through constant focus on refined adjustment. The scales are a means of identifying where true balance resides. In going deeper, Justice invites us to employ discernment, recognize our accountability, and take responsibility for the reality that our intentions and actions have created. Justice is intimately connected to the concept of karma, which simply means *momentum*. Karma is the law of cause and effect - what results from your actions. In Justice, the sword is a tool of discrimination. It can cleave something in half, separating one part from another. It breaks things into smaller pieces for deeper examination. The sword *dissects*. Rather than taking something at face value and labeling it based on an initial emotional reaction, it encourages a closer look, varied perspectives, and mental space for discernment. On this leg of the journey, we find ourselves at the crossroads, where adherence to a path will demand commitment and yield consequences. To arrive at an aligned, balanced decision, we must try to reach that still point in the mind where clarity can be attained. As with the practice of meditation, we are seeking the calm at the center of the mental storm, that place of temporary peace in a sea of chaos. Can you quiet your mind long enough to calmly discern? What might help you with this?



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The cards of Aquarius (The Star and the 5, 6 & 7 of Swords) bring in the fixed energy of a passionate pursuit for knowledge and progress. Aquarian energy is all about freedom – the freedom to think in new ways, be original, buck convention, and imagine a world in which the collective is united through cooperation and cosmically-influenced innovation. The blessing of The Star card brings in much-needed hope, faith, and inspiration. It's our North Star, lighting the path back to wholeness and optimism through clear vision and forward-thinking ideals. Here we are a stranger in a strange land, living by our wits and problem-solving along the way. The journey can be treacherous so we rely on the power of our mind to see us through. Like wily Odysseus of *The Odyssey*, we have a way with words that can get us out of scrapes and a furious curiosity for new adventures that expand our horizons. However, like him, we may also find that sometimes thoughts conflict with actions and we get into all sorts of trouble. Our efforts may trip us up, take us far off the road, and give us yet another riddle to sort out. Our mind is a remarkable navigational tool but it's not infallible – when mental problem-solving detaches us too much from our emotional needs and connections, we stumble. By uniting the head and the heart, we can create a future built with brilliance and love.





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In the cards of Gemini (The Lovers and 8, 9 & 10 of Swords) mutable energy refines our relationship to information and awakens knowledge of dualities. We must learn to differentiate before we can integrate. How is *this* not like *that*? How is *that* similar to *this*? How do I want to combine them in a way that makes sense for me? This is what we do when working with this energy. The cards of Gemini teach us a great deal about relationship to the *other* – person, place, or thing. We need to understand how they are separate and can be connected. Gemini is related to the concept of twins, and throughout world mythology, many examples speak to us of the inherent conflict of dualities – Cain and Abel, Castor and Pollux, Osiris and Isis, etc. In these stories, one twin always dies. Through their duality, they symbolize choice – to reach a decision and commit to it, one option must be sacrificed. Settling on an outcome can cause tremendous mental anxiety. We feel “analysis paralysis” and it seems like all of the options sound good, make sense, or offer us something we want. How can we possibly choose just one? We may even avoid choosing at all in a misguided effort to stave off the “wrong” one, but that tends to simply cause more stress. Our thoughts can keep us up at night, marinating us in fear and exhausting us with second-guessing and painful self-judgment. But in the end, we have to kill off the twin and make peace with it if we truly want to move forward. You may regret your choice later, realize it was made with good intention but yielded unexpected results, or find it turned out as happily anticipated. Either way, you must accept the consequence of your action. We are integrating information into choices, finding and fleshing out their relationships and how they might play out in our lives. It can feel like high-stakes gambling at times, so be honest and kind with yourself and others.





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The Fool is the card of elemental Air. They are the free spirit, the child, the beginner. It's all new and exciting. Enthusiasm, curiosity, and novelty fuel the journey. There will be adventure but also risk. It's the path from ignorance and folly to knowledge and its price. The wayfinding of the Fool is a maturation process – the collection of information and experience will eventually be distilled into informed wisdom. Choices will be made and consequences suffered or celebrated. We see this play out through the Swords cards – the perilous voyage of free will. We get to make choices! Our intellect airily flits from one option to another, occasionally settling out of necessity or desire. The Biblical story of Eden exemplifies this quest for and the price of knowledge. Was Lucifer a “light-bringer” or damning demon? Was the tree of knowledge a forbidden poison or gateway to liberation? Did Eve awaken humanity to consciousness or condemn us to death? It depends on how you view knowledge. I think most of us prefer having a choice. Saying no to the quest is on some level a rejection of life.

Connecting with the air element can bring freshness, vitality, and expansion. When we intake a breath, we are saying YES again. *More, please. What's next? I can do this! It's going to be okay.* If we keep breathing we can keep going and the adventure continues. A beautiful way to embody air energy is through conversation, song, and writing – the air carries our words and sounds, connecting us in profound ways that can both harm and heal. Words are powerful and cast spells, birthing an intention into the world that may manifest in ways you can't predict. Be mindful and aware. This is true for your thoughts as well. Do you cast unkind spells on yourself all day with cruel inner monologues? How would your daily life change if you altered your words? Try addressing yourself as you would a beloved friend. Be forgiving when a mistake is made, give a compliment when spirits are low, or share a humorous observation to pass the time joyfully. Working with your Heart Chakra and connecting with people through loving words and gestures can counterbalance some of the frenetic energy of “monkey mind” and move you out of your head and into your heart for greater balance and tranquility. Commit to making your mental space a healthier, more supportive place to spend time. After all, you'll spend your whole life there. Put out a welcome mat and mean it.



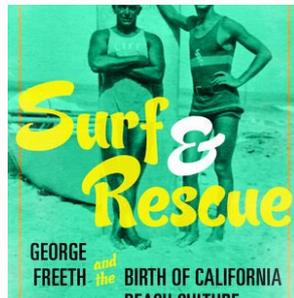
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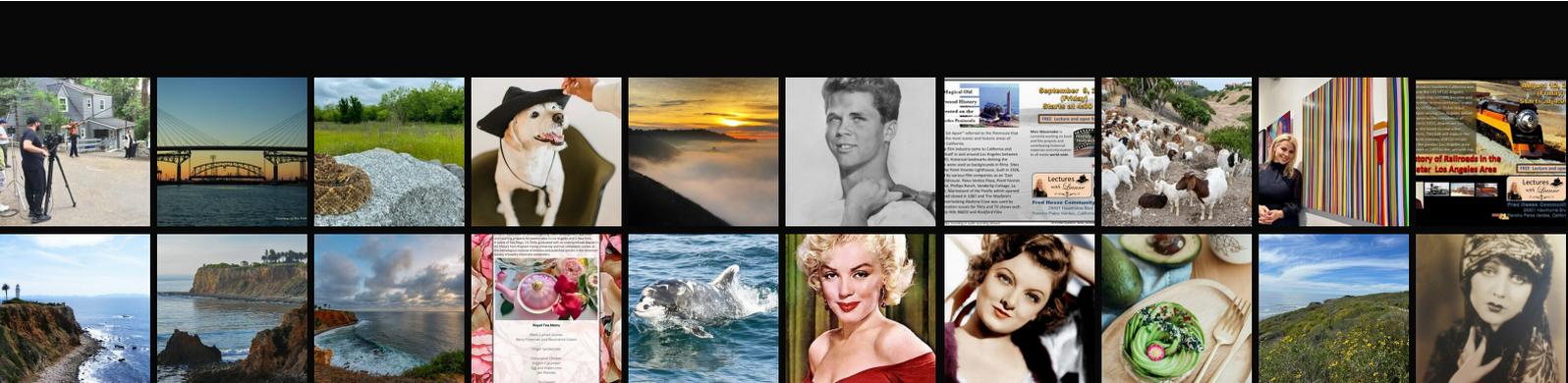


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