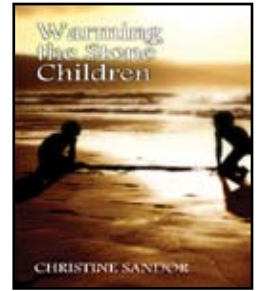


**Excerpts from book**  
***Warming the Stone Children***  
**by Christine Copans**



**I**  
***At the very depths***

Where were the children? I searched through the darkness. Where were they? I knew they were close, I could feel their presence. But I also felt their fear. I knew they had all found good hiding places. This was not going to be easy. I tried to let them know I was a safe grown-up. I was not going to hurt them. I had come to take care of them. It had not originally been my choice to come; in fact I had struggled with myself for sometime around the idea of taking this humanitarian step. But the process of getting to this dark world had taken on a life of it's own. Now here I stood. I could feel the terror all around me. Was this what the children felt? I continued to probe the area. Where were they hiding?

Then in the far corner, I saw a small child. A little girl with beautiful blonde curls, just laying there. I approached carefully. I did not want to frighten her, but she did not move. I bent down and knew at once, she was not breathing. I instinctively picked up the body. It was limp and lifeless.

“Oh My God, what have they done to you?” I wondered out loud. A distant voice, told me to give her CPR: bring her back. It was really going to be up to me. If she were to live, I would have to be the one to breathe life back into her tiny body. I wasn't sure I was really ready anymore. As I got closer to her tiny face I could feel myself beginning to fall into her. It was as if we were becoming one. I was having trouble breathing myself.

Something was in or around my throat. Instantly, I knew she had chosen to leave her body. I knew she had chosen to die. I struggled for what seemed like hours to get my own breath, but it was OUR breath I was trying to retrieve. My arm had gone numb. I was as dead as that beautiful little girl. With the encouragement of that tender, distant voice, my breath slowly began to return, but at a cost. I began to see all the child had endured.

Every bit of horror she had experienced was my experience. Every bit of sorrow, and pain was my pain. My sorrow. Her terror had been bigger than she was and it felt as if it was bigger than me. My head hurt from the flood of pictures pouring through. I felt as if my throat was closing again and I struggled harder to breathe. I could hear the voice of a woman calling me, us, back.

“Come on, honey.” The voice said. “Come back to us. We are here. We love you.”

Breathe. I did it. I was breathing. I looked at the tiny body in my arms. She was breathing. We were breathing together. I could hear the tiniest of voices whispering: “I don't want them to hurt me anymore.”

I studied her big brown eyes. They seemed so empty. She was breathing, she was speaking, but she was not completely back. I felt so inadequate. I didn't know what else to do for her, some aspect of who she was seemed to still be missing.

“We are not going to let them hurt you anymore.” It was that far off voice again. I kept forgetting she was there, somewhere. She was somewhere nearby yet hundreds of miles away. I let the voice reassure the little girl. I was not so sure I could do it. I still somehow felt the terror of her soul. I instinctively looked over my shoulder. I could feel so many little eyes on us. Watching to see if I too would hurt this little one. No, I would not, not intentionally, but I could admit I was fighting the urge to just turn and run myself. I did not know if I could handle the responsibility of caring for all these broken souls. It all seemed too much.

I turned back to the child. She looked at me with the terror I knew she had always felt. We did not need to speak. It was as if we were reading each other's minds and the conversation frightened me.

“Are you going to leave me?” She wanted to know.

“I don't know.” I told her honestly.

## Excerpt #2

The next day was a “free” day. It was one of the first we really had on the tour. We could go to Macchu Piccu and do what ever we wanted, go where ever, climb what ever; the only plan was that we would meet at five that evening for dinner at the hotel and restaurant at the mountainside ruins. We had been given special permission to enter the grounds at night. Bianca and Joe would lead us to the uppermost part of the ruins and there perform a “death ceremony.” I worried that I would not be able to make the climb and somewhere inside decided I was not going to be able to be a part of that ceremony.

The next day I caught the bus by myself to the ruins. Some had left before hand with plans of climbing to the area known as the Sun Gate and Sophie and few others had plans to head across the ruins to climb Hauna Picchu. I knew the climbing bit was out for me, but wanted to explore as much of the ruins as I was able. I wanted very much on this day to be alone. I could go as slow as I needed to go. I could stop when tired.

I entered the ruins through the regular passage, instead of over the top as we had done the previous day. As soon as I had done so, I was again deeply moved. I had been here so many times. I knew that. I sat for a moment under a thatched roof hut where a small row of benches stood overlooking the ruins. I took as deep a breath as possible, and silently prayed.

“Ok, God. You know what I can do. You know what is hard for me. Lead me. Show what is mine to be shown and to see here today. “ Even if I had not moved from that spot, just being there was a deeply moving experience.

I walked the ruins carefully and intentionally, feeling every stone beneath my feet. I sat for a moment or two, near sacred waters that ran from some point at the top of the mountain. Taking off my hiking boots and letting the cool water run over my hands and feet. I went into what once were temples and found cave entrances. I crawled through the caves and sat in a larger one for a long while, just meditating and feeling the energy of the stones. I felt Spirits around me, and knew this was a sacred space. At one point I found a smaller cave, tucked into side of the earth. It was perfect to step out of the warm sun and just sit. As I sat I had an amazing view of the mountains around and River below. I longed for that deeper communion with God.

“Mother, Father, Everything God.” I prayed. “ Show me what is mine to truly know. Give me Your message, a sign, anything that will tell me what it is YOU want me to know. Really know, at the deepest level of my existence. Something you want me take back with me and always know.”

I closed my eyes. The silhouette of the Mountain I had been staring at remained etched in the Velvety darkness of my meditation. I watched the silhouette for a few moments, and then it began to change, to take on a different shape. I watched as it rose and seemed to form letters, then words. And there before my closed eyes, in bright pink letters were two words: **I AM**. I stared at the words for the longest time. I felt a wave of Love pass through me. I understood. I also understood in that moment that it was time for me to move on: time, for me to begin truly healing from my past. I needed to start finally loving myself. I had no idea what that looked like. It scared me, as I was very uncertain I could do it. Yet the words and the knowing that God is and so am I was enough that I resolved in that moment to begin to learn to love myself.

## Poetry from the book

### Land of I AM

I was rocked upon the waters  
In the Womb of Pacchu Mama.  
Re-birthed in caves of Crystal.  
I heard the Memories within the stones  
I heard them whisper the inner knowing -  
I AM

I walked the path of a People  
Who held the Wisdom of the Cosmos.  
A stranger to the Native ways  
To the customs, and beliefs.  
But upon their ancient faces I saw the Truth  
I AM

I drank the nectar of the earth  
And washed in Sacred Waters -  
Becoming One with the Land.  
One with the people.  
I sat in a Garden of Eden  
And I remembered.  
I AM

I reached out and hands were there  
Ready to assist. Holding me.  
I reached and took a hand - Reciprocity.  
I stood upon the majestic Mountaintops  
And declared  
I AM.

And the Mother took pity  
And the Mother took my pain.  
She ate all that had no Love -  
In my memories, in my Life.  
And there in the Womb of the Mother  
I sprang forth to a new understanding.  
I touched the sky and declared.  
I AM.

## **Mama's Hands**

**Mama's hands are the first to rock you  
The first to stroke your brow.  
Mama's hands are the first to feed you  
And the first to show you how.  
But if Mama's hands are the enemy  
What happens to you now?  
Mama's hands should wipe the tears away  
Not be the cause of why tears come.  
Mama's hands should hold tight to yours  
Not burn them or make them numb.  
Mama's hands should always be gentle  
And give tender loving care.  
But if Mama's hands are filled with rage  
You just don't breathe, you don't dare.  
Mama's hands should nurse the wounds  
Not cause you to scream in pain.  
Mama's hands should sooth and calm you,  
But what if she's insane?  
Because if Mama's hands were on their way,  
It would not be to console.  
Mama's hands touched and rubbed  
And put things in every hole.  
So if I think of Mama's hands  
And what they're really meant for,  
I weep and wonder, where was the love?  
In the hands that locked the doors.  
No one must see, no one must know  
Mama's hands just made me sore.  
Mama's hands left their mark,  
But its not one you can see.  
Mama's hands are meant for Love,  
But what if Mama's crazy?**

## Encounter

*“You must go back, there is work to do  
So much is in store... a head of you  
Yes, it looks bad now, But oh the gift to know.  
Return now, that you might grow.”*

**“But it’s not fair, I didn’t count on this  
The terror and anguish.. How can there be a gift?  
Do You see what’s happening? Can You witness this sight?  
I find it hard to believe this is of the Light.”**

*“Not of the Light, My Beloved Child.  
But necessary that you may reconcile.  
That you may know your truth and stand again - whole  
Return now, that you may grow.”*

**“I don’t want to go back. I want to stay in the Peace.  
I have changed my mind. I want to be released  
From whatever agreement, whatever contract I made  
I didn’t know there would be such horror and pain.:**

*“Little one, I know.. This was not my plan.  
Buy I AM with you. Do you understand?  
And I will send Angles, Later in your life  
Who will hold you and sing to you and make up for this time.”*

**“All right, I’ll be brave. I will go back to that bed.  
They’re scared anyway. They think I am dead.  
And maybe one day, I’ll remember, though I won’t want to know.  
And you promise You then, Lord. .... I will grow.”**