HALLOWEEN SYMBOLS

Issue 148 **October 1, 2018**

WATERHOUSE SYMBOLISM NEWSLETTER

SPIDER

Caleb has a Redon catalogue sitting on the den coffee table and I came across this wonderful spider.

A spider conveys patience, subtlety, industriousness, ambition, cunning, presumption, temptation, envy, aggressiveness, malice, a miser, the Devil, the supreme deity, the Creator, avarice, craftiness, despair and hope, heaven, and continuous sacrifice.

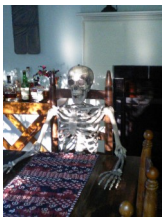
Odillon Redon (1840-1916) is part of the Symbolism movement. He was born in Bordeaux, France and always had a gift for art. In the 1870s, he moved to Paris where he began working exclusively in charcoal and lithography. He remained unknown until his appearance in a 1884 cult novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans titled À rebours (Against Nature). The story featured a decadent aristocrat who collected Redon's drawings.

In 1903 Redon was awarded the Legion of Honor.[His popularity increased when a catalogue of etchings and lithographs was published by André Mellerio in 1913; that same year, he was given the largest single representation at the groundbreaking U.S. International Exhibition of Modern Art (aka Armory Show), in New York City, Chicago and Boston.

Redon died on July 6, 1916. In 1923 Mellerio published Odilon Redon: Peintre Dessinateur et Graveur.



OUR FRIEND SCUTTER



Every year, Scutter comes out around Halloween and finds a spot in the house to celebrate Halloween. This is a portrait of him when he lived at the Windfall House, Sandwich, Massachusetts. The portrait was taken October 2015. Notice the wonderful afternoon sunlight that gives him an eerie glow. Light conveys the spirit, virtue, intellect, creative force, optimism, the past, discovery, divine revelation, and divine love.

A skeleton conveys death, vanity, and death personified. A skull conveys mortality, the worldly survival of the dead, dead, the transitory nature of life on earth, and the Fall of Man.

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Special points of interest:

- Spider conveys patience, subtlety, industriousness, ambition, cunning, and presumption.
- Sun conveys potential good, the will, the hero, the eye of God, and creative light.
- Palms convey victory, military victory, and martyrdom to attain heaven.

SUN AND MOON



This great image on a gravestone comes from the detail of the Susannah Jayne gravestone, 1776, Marblehead, Massachusetts, slate.

Notice the skeleton, whose headdress is palm leaves. Palms convey victory, military victory, and martyrdom to attain heaven. A scythe conveys time, death, autumn, harvest, and the death of the old year. It is related to the moon because of the crescent shape of the blade.

The moon conveys resurrection, abode of the dead, inconstancy, and serene loveliness.

The sun conveys potential good, the will, the hero, the eye of God, creative light, the spiritual, the source of light, blessing, youth, the active power of nature, the promise of salvation, the guiding light, the creator, the mind, splendor, magnificence, and authority.

SKULL OF KING RICHARD III

History is a love song chronicling the triumph of life over death.

Unknown

It is fascinating when a huge discovery happens and finding King Richard III under a parking lot is a huge one. Even though we think we know everything about our history, new discoveries are always popping up.

British scientists are convinced "beyond reasonable doubt" that a skeleton found during an archaeological dig in Leicester, central England, August 2012, is that of the former king, who was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485."



Richard III (2 October 1452 – 22 August 1485) was King of England for two years, from 1483 until his death in 1485. He was the last king of the House of York and the last of the Plantagenet dynasty.

ART OF SULTAN ROGERS



Sultan Rogers (1905-2003) carved coffins, snakes, vampires, and “haints” (a Southern colloquialism for goblins or ghostlike figures). Rogers created coffins as hiding places for small valuables, because he had the idea that no one would steal from a coffin, even a fake one.

Rogers was a Mississippi folk artist who spent most of his life in Syracuse, New York working at a chemical plant. He moved back to Oxford, Mississippi in 1995 and lived there until his death in 2003.

The term haint was first used in the 1830s and supposedly Southerners suggest that a blue porch ceiling originated out of the fear of haints.

STORY OF CORRINE LAWTON

In Savannah's Bonaventure Cemetery, there is the beautiful legend about Corrine Lawton. The young woman fell in love with a man who was not favored by her family and they planned to send her away. It is said that right before she was to be sent away, she walked into the waters of the Wilmington River, that flows by Bonaventure, and drowned.

There are several symbols on her grave. One is the wreath of flowers which conveys eternity, celebration, mourning, victory, valor, and resurrection.

Another one is the three steps she is sitting on which conveys the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

We also see the Latin Cross which conveys the conjunction of opposites, the connection between heaven and earth, the tree of life, crucifixion, and suffering.



THE GHOST OF JOHN B. GORDON



Georgia State Capitol Grounds
Sculpture of John B. Gordon

Supposedly, if you are in Oakland early in the morning, with the fog thicker than pea soup as my father used to say, you can hear John B. Gordon, on his horse, riding the grounds of Oakland looking for his next battle.

General Gordon starts rapidly, gets to the end of the east wall, peers over it, looking for those Yankees and then slowly strides back to his grave.

Allen Myers, former Sexton of Oakland Cemetery, tells a funny story about being at Oakland one of those early mornings when the fog was thick as pea soup. He heard the clomp clomp of General Gordon's horse. He thought this was it—he finally was going to meet the General. The clomp clomp got closer and closer.

Then he realized that it was one of Atlanta's mounted horse policemen.

When we find ourselves fading into shadows and unrealities, it seems hardly worth while to be sad, but rather to laugh as gaily as we may, and ask little reason wherefore.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

ROSEMARY

I have been in the process of indexing all my symbols in the newsletters and came across this information about Rosemary.

In Derbyshire, Great Britain, young women customarily placed a sprig a rosemary or a crooked sixpence under their pillow on Halloween in order to dream of their future husbands.

Rosemary conveys remembrance, madness and the nativity of Christ. In reference to flower language, it symbolizes your presence revives me, memory, fidelity between lovers, and remembrance of the dead.

Rosemary is so pretty in Oakland right now with its purple blooms.



The mission of Waterhouse Symbolism is to research and document symbols locally, regionally, nationally and internationally and to share that knowledge

WATERHOUSE SYMBOLISM NEWSLETTER #148

Rivers Hunting Lodge
2535 Forrest Way NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30305

Cell: (774) 251-8620
Work: (404) 467-9447
Email: rwsymbolism@gmail.com



Wynn Montgomery sent me this from Denver's Fairmont Cemetery. Do you know what it is?



Hello all,

I always love this time of year. Halloween has a rich array of symbols and I have tried to share a few of these with you.

If you have others you want to share with everyone, please send them my way.

Take care,

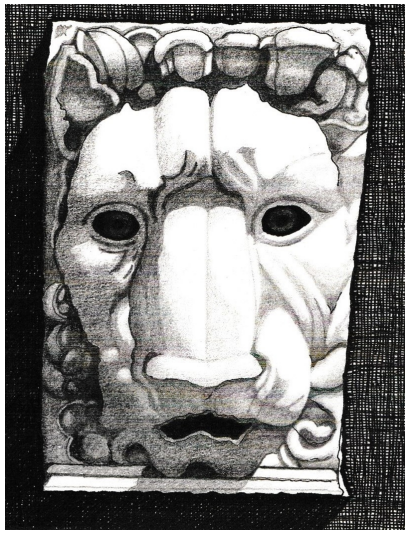
Richard Waterhouse

Ideas for future newsletters?

INSPIRATION FROM MY NEWSLETTERS

I am always humbled when someone gets inspiration from one of my newsletters. Howard Bonington, an artist on Cape Cod, whom I knew when I was Director of the Cahoon Museum of American Art from 2010 to 2016, sent me this copy of a drawing he did of a lion's head. For those that keep up with my newsletters, it is in newsletter #133.





The lion is the symbol of the king, the sun, the masculine principle, the spirit, continual struggle, victory, an index of latent passions, the danger of being devoured by the unconscious, gold, blood, earth, fertility, the underworld, time, nobility, royal dignity, Christ as king, valor, strength, and compassion.