



## Coda

### From the Managing Editor

Let's get one thing out of the way upfront: I'm not officially old enough to be the editor of this magazine. At almost-forty-nine, I just barely fit into the category of "baby crone." Heck, I'm not even menopausal yet. So what am I doing on the masthead, or even involved with this project at all?

I don't know exactly why the Crone drafted me for this experiment. It's been an uphill battle; I've just completed this, the premiere edition, and I've never worked so hard in my life. But that's typical of the call of Crone: She doesn't take "no" for an answer, so you might as well just plug away at whatever job she hands you, no matter what. I'll admit, there were times I wanted to throw up my hands and walk away from the intensity of this project, but She never let me get away with it. That's as it should be, since grit, determination, and a ruthless dedication to truth-telling is what embodying the Crone means to me.

Of course, Crone has many faces besides the one I've just laid out, and Ann Kreilkamp and I hope we have offered a taste of some of them in this issue. She and I have endured hours of intense negotiation over the content of the magazine, and what you hold in your hands is truly a collaborative effort, the product of dozens of women's soul-searching, wrenching, empowering attempts to open the door to a venerable, compassionate, but challenging reality: the power, beauty, and above all, the *gravitas* of old women.

I'm laying claim to my inner Crone right here-and-now; she may only be a baby, but she's already built up quite a head of steam. She dates back, at least, to the death of both my mother and father within eighteen months of one another when I was twenty-seven years old.

Being the eldest of four siblings, the death of my parents propelled me into the realm of funerals, burials, and estate planning. (Or the lack thereof.) It brought my own mortality rather forcibly to my attention (they both died in their early fifties of "natural" causes), and left me with a keen appreciation for the fragility of our internal paradigms. The world can change, I realized, at a moment's notice — and there's not a darn thing I can do about it.

Becoming first-in-line for our family's next appointment with Death hasn't made me morbid, but it has impressed upon me the importance of prioritizing: I've been rather intensely focused on finding my purpose ever since. When opportunities are presented to me, I try to reach for them, even if I don't know *exactly* what I'm doing.

My parents never got the chance to see me married, to meet their grandchildren, or to grapple with the journey of eldering. With our family history, I have no idea whether I'll live to see another generation either, but I'm not waiting to explore what it means to be Crone: with your permission, dear reader, I'd like to share that journey with you.