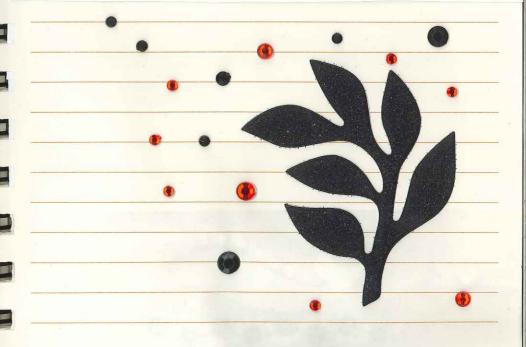


Thank you, Tymon Dogg, for unknowingly allowing me to use the lyrics from your collaborative track with the Clash, "Lose This Skin." I don't think you would mind. You were a gypsy, and a roaming violinist for hire. I think you would be proud of this story. I don't think Joe Strummer would mind. He's too dead to care. And he was all about campfire songs and sharing lyrics. I mean, that's how he met you! I doubt Epic Records will care. Unless I get a book deal out of this or something. I'll email them and let them know if that happens.

Oh yah.I changed the masculine pronouns to feminine ones. I'm not a boy. But I used to be. A few times. Now I'm a Raspberry River Witch. xoxo

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, there was a young girl named Rita Lynn.

Rita Lynn loved books, her bed, the tree in her backyard, and being alone. She was hairy, all over, and while she was a great climber, she was always unsure of how to get back down to the ground.

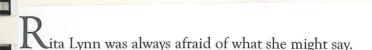


Rita Lynn wasn't like the other children in her village.

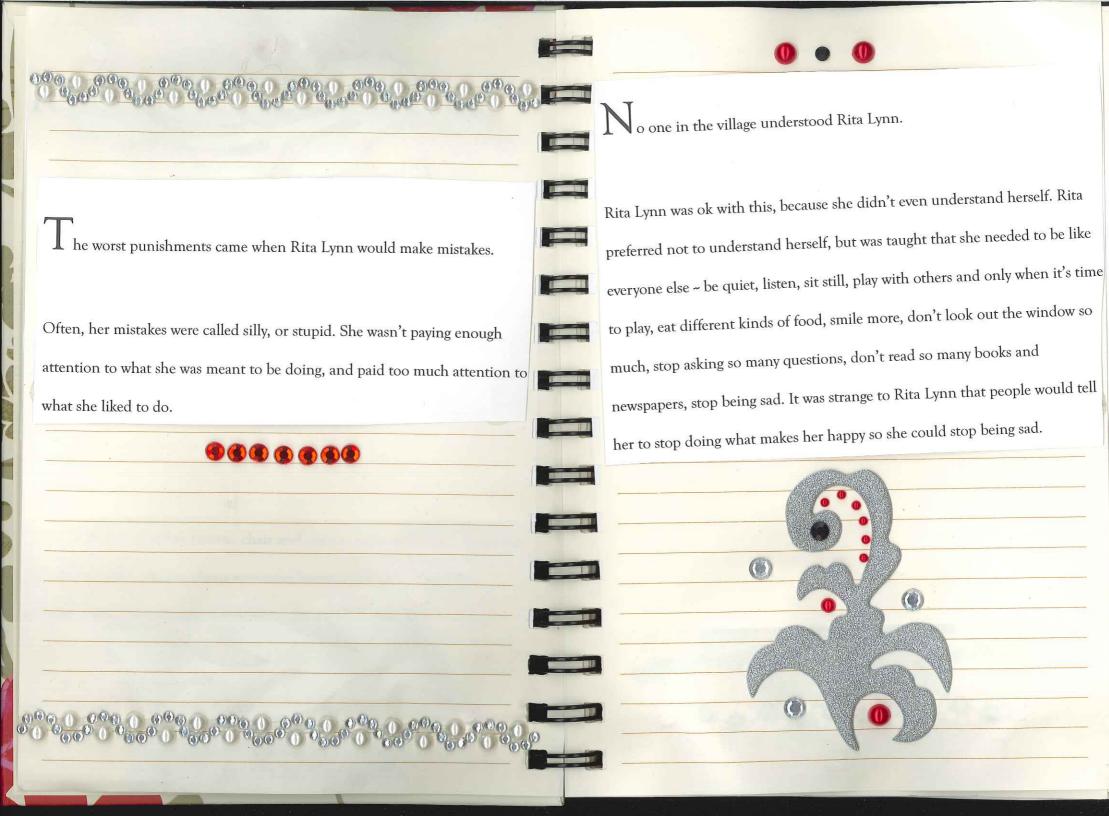
They all thought she was weird.

Rita Lynn was very sensitive, and could smell the traces of a man's sweat when he left the room, or see imprints in the carpet where her mother paced in the morning. Rita Lynn ate the same thing for lunch everyday, and by herself. She had certain toys she loved to play with and could play for hours, and hours, all by herself. She liked to be near loud instruments so she could lie on the floor to feel the vibrations. Rita Lynn didn't like looking people in the eye ~ it felt scary, and overwhelming. Rita Lynn always shied away from touch, even from her parents. She was too sensitive, and it felt like being burned by a smoldering wick. She also liked to sit in her favorite chair and stare at walls, and could nap at the drop of a needle ~ she was always very tired because she had a hard time sleeping. Otherwise, though, Rita Lynn could never, ever sit still.





She couldn't stop herself from saying what was not being said, or what shouldn't be said. She said strange things that only adults were supposed to say, and was punished for being too curious or talking out of turn.

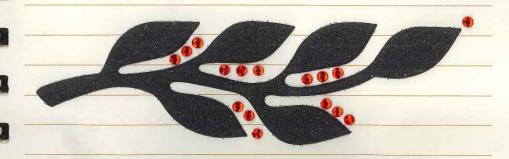


Rita Lynn just could not be like other children, no matter how hard she tried.

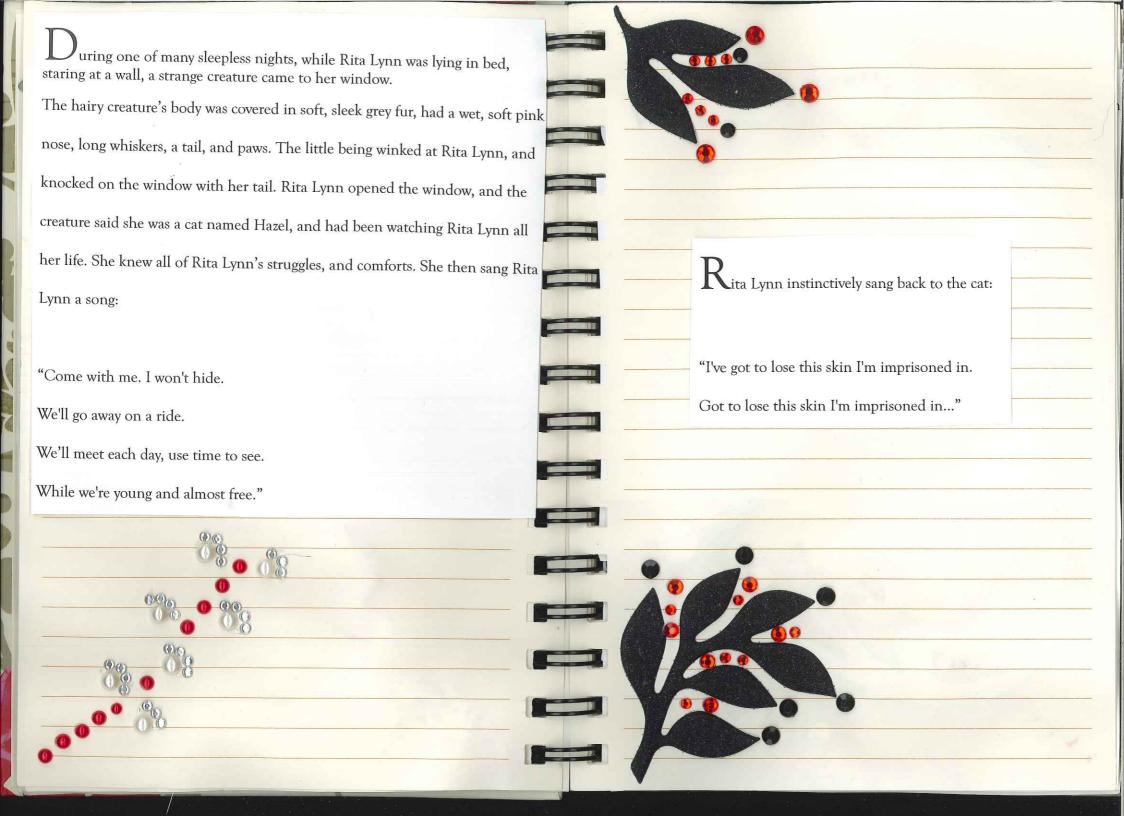
It hurt her body, and made her itchy when she tried to be like the other children. This made her parents sad. Rita Lynn's parents thought she was possessed by an evil spirit, and instead of loving her, were afraid of her. They thought they had done something bad to deserve a child who was so unlike other children. They sent her to wizards and warlocks who gave her potions, and capsules, and tinctures, and read from ancient books of strange magic to rid her of the evil inside her. They never worked, and sometimes made things worse. Some people said they should send Rita Lynn to the Raspberry River witches, but they never did. Everyone was afraid of the witches and their dark powers. They had been exiled long before Rita Lynn was born, and lived in mossy caves by Raspberry River, on the other side of the Dark Forest With No Path. It was rumored they killed young boys and ate them. Rita Lynn wanted to meet the witches, since she, too, often wanted to kill and eat boys who made fun of her.

Everything became worse the day that Rita Lynn discovered she was dying.

There was pain, fear, anger, sadness, insatiable hunger, a tender wound, and dark blood. For many weeks before her body would again try to kill itself, she would be sad, and not want to get out of bed. Rita Lynn thought the evil inside her was punishing her for not being like all the other children. She thought she deserved her self-curse. She thought she deserved feeling alone in her slow suicide.



ho else could deserve such a horrible fate than I? Ifter a few years of her slow suicide curse, Rita Lynn started to feel pain, fear, anger, sadness, insatiable hunger, and wounded all the time. Who else could be so unlovable, so useless, that their own body wants them to She was afraid of strangers, and even people she knew. Though the blood only die? And why so slowly?" came every once in a while, and only when these feelings felt the strongest, she stayed in her room, in her bed that now felt too small, and never sat in her tree. Her parents sent her to the wizards and warlocks again and again, and nothing changed. Rita Lynn felt unloved, and broken.





azel winked at Rita Lynn, and told her to follow her to the Dark Forest With No Path.

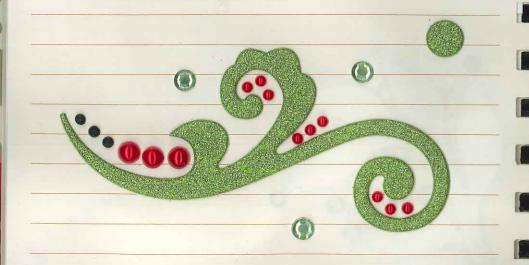
Rita Lynn was afraid because she had always been told not to go to the Dark

Forest With No Path. There were many creatures in there who wanted to eat

little girls, and on the other side of the forest were the mossy caves of the

dreaded Raspberry River witches. However, Rita Lynn trusted Hazel more than
anyone before, and followed her bouncing tail into the depths of the Dark Forest

With No Path.



When they entered the forest, Hazel sang:

"Do not turn or hate to see,

All the things you think we've got.

Do not turn or hate to see,

What happened to the wife of Lot."



And Rita Lynn sang back:

"I've got to lose this skin I'm imprisoned in.

Got to lose this skin I'm imprisoned in..."



azel and Rita Lynn walked through the Dark Forest With No Path, when suddenly, Rita Lynn felt the familiar pain, fear, anger, and a tender wound seeping blood.

Hazel listened to Rita Lynn's spirit screaming in agony, and gave her a red wool cape to help keep her warm. Then Hazel sang:

"We're alone or so they say.

We're not on our own in that way.

When we're alone it's real tough going.

We can take a part in someone else's play."

And Rita Lynn sang back:

"I've got to lose this skin I'm imprisoned in.

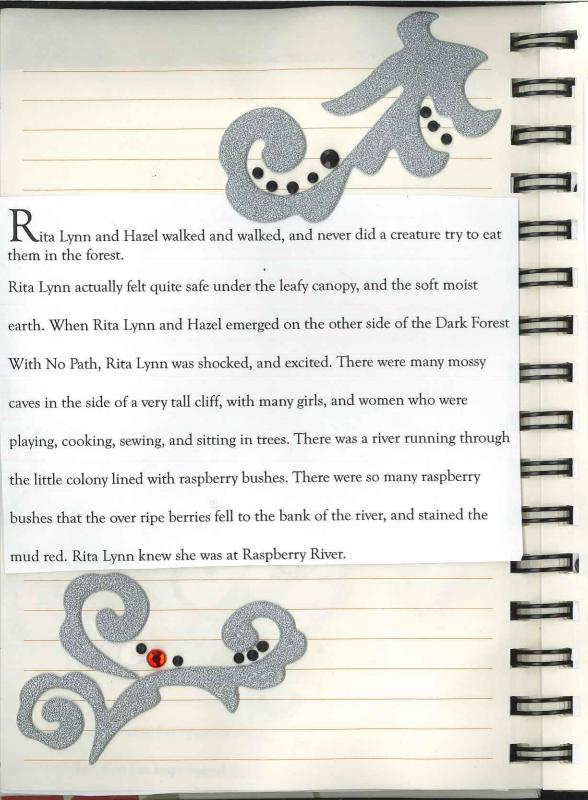
Got to lose this skin I'm imprisoned in..."

While Rita Lynn sang back to Hazel, Hazel rubbed her warm, furry body on Rita Lynn's legs, and a low vibration came from Hazel's belly and throat.

Rita Lynn was also afraid that they were lost. She had never been in the Dark Forest before, and didn't know where she was going. Because of the hood, and Hazel's vibrations, Rita Lynn's body felt soothed, warm, and safe. Hazel whispered to Rita Lynn:

"Do not worry about escaping yourself. We're almost there, to where you





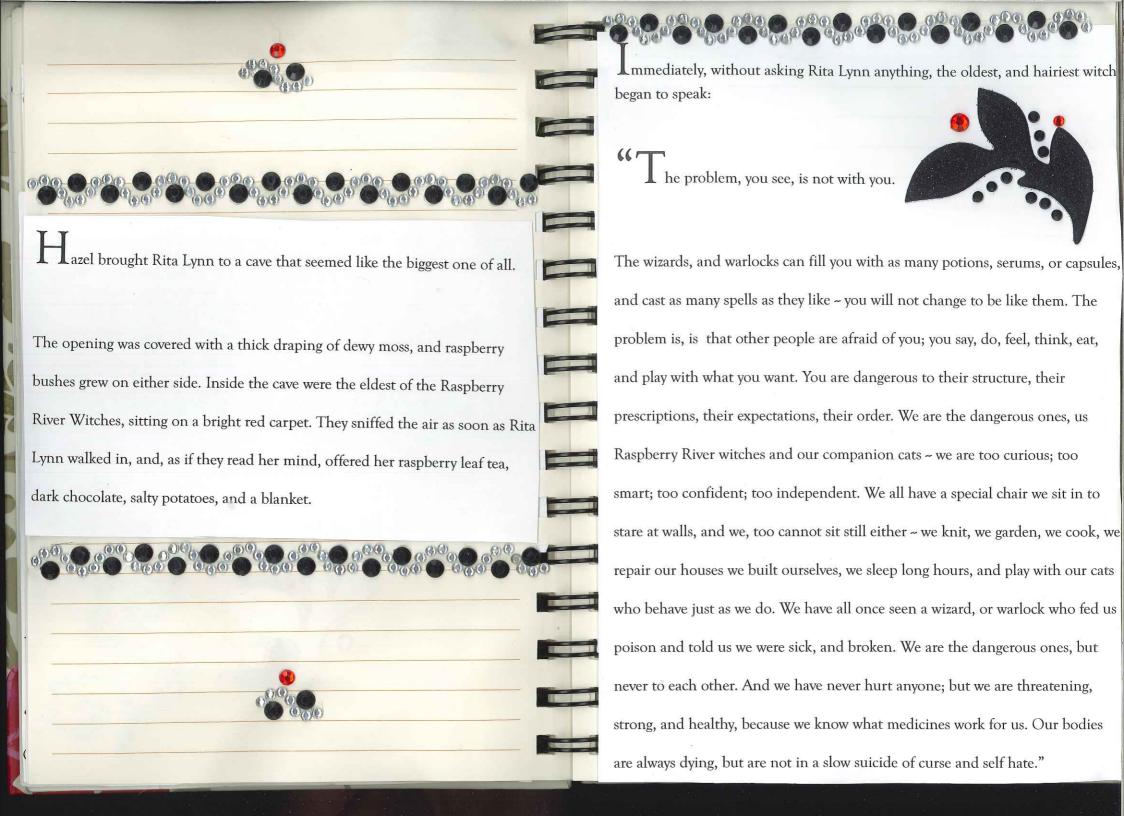
There were also many cats, just like Hazel, but of many different colours.

Each girl and woman had at least one cat following her, draped on her shoulders, or playing with a ball of wool.

"Are these the mossy caves of the Raspberry River witches?" Rita Lynn exclaimed.

"Yes," said Hazel, "and they are expecting you."





hen, an old mother cat carried two new born kittens to Rita Lynn's lap; one black, one white. She then spoke to Rita Lynn, and said:

"My daughters will be your protectors, your friends, your kin, your ideal dual self. They play as you play. They show love as you show love. You will feed their bellies, and they will feed your soul, and your insatiable hunger will leave you. We cats are family with the Raspberry River witches - we are hairy, curious, playful, do unexpected things, and unravel tightly wound balls of wool, just like you do to your village's social order. We, too, only like being touched when we initiate the touch, and we feel it through our whole bodies. We, along with the witches, smell, feel, and see what is missed by those who only smell, feel, and see what they are told to. We also sometimes climb a tree a little too high, and are fearful of, and paralyzed by the space between our paws and the earth. You are always welcome here. You may leave, you may come back, and you may stay. Know that you are always here, no matter where you are."

Rita Lynn cuddled her two new companions on the soft red blanket, and gave them names:

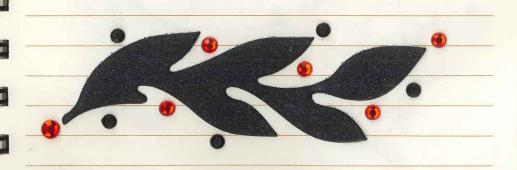
the white cat Sophie, and the black cat Fraulein. Sophie and Fraulein curled up in Rita Lynn's lap, and drifted off while Rita Lynn softly sang to them:

"Come with me, I thought she said.

But that's not me anymore, she's dead.

What's it like to be so free.

So free it looks like lost to me."



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Rita Lynn stayed the rest of her life at Raspberry River and became a Raspberry River Witch.

She never felt lonely, but knew she was safe to be alone. She knew it was safe to play with other girls, cats, and women, just like her, and barely needed any medicine at all. She learned about medicine, and how to take care of other girls and women as individuals. But she still sometimes felt like eating the little boys who hurt her feelings so many moons ago.



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Not The End.

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