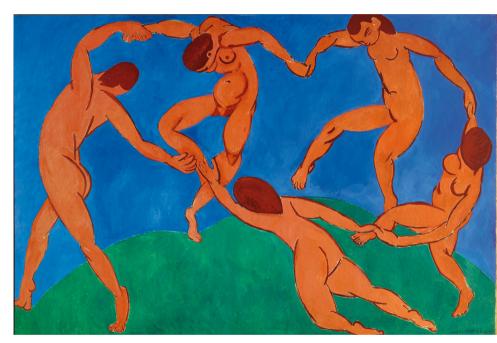
MAGIC CAROLS



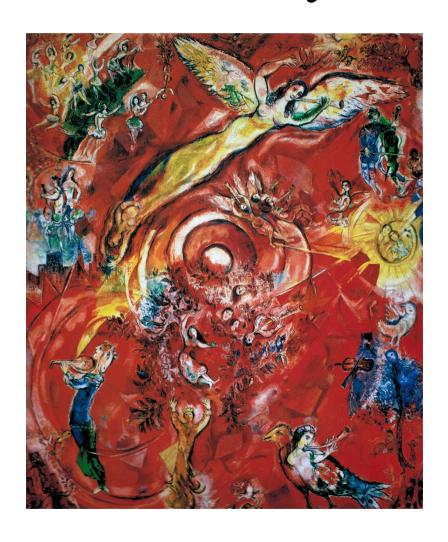
Seven Wonders of a Wonderful Woman

To my magic mother friend sister soul with all my love

On the 50th (plus 1) anniversary of our friendship

November 2014

1. THE FAIRY QUEEN



The Fairy Queen turned up in my life half a century ago, surrounded by elves and impish princesses.

I was a girl, clumsily traversing the uncertain territory between childhood and the challenges of adult life.

She was the essence of womanhood: radiant, mesmerizing, merry.

And she was wise, brave, willing to listen.

She opened my mind to the world, my heart to new emotions, my life to the future.

My Magic Carol.

2. THE WANDERER



Never forget: she was born near a gold mine, but her sparkle is that of streams and stars, not of cold metal.

She is a wanderer, and always has been.

She has wandered amid lakes and forests, quais and boulevards, tiny medieval villages.

She has slept on hard ground and swinging hammocks, under starry skies and on the ice of the Arctic.

She is a wanderer, and always will be.

She will continue to explore the universe, steering the stout wheels of a walker or flying on the frail wings of poetry.

3. THE MOTHER



She mothered her own, teaching them to embrace life without fear.

She mothered me, while I played mother to her children.

She mothered mothers in Brazil, teaching them to squat and scream, breathe and be naked, recognize the majesty of childbirth.

She wrote: I delivered babies by day, and sank into my own womb in dreams.

I am the Madonna... I am the child.

4. THE LOVER



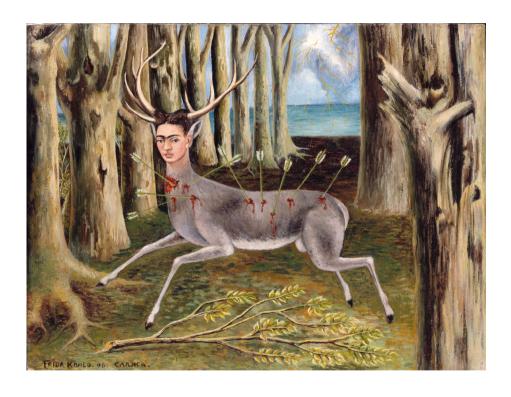
We both lived through an age of revolution and recklessness, and age difference made no difference.

We thought we could have it all, the fun without the fear, the belonging without the fetters, the curiosity without the hurt.

She loved and was loved, was playful and tender; but she gave more than she was given.

You can read it all in her soft smile, in the terse blue of her eyes, in the persistent pain in her jaw.

5. THE WOUNDED DOE



For those arrows I have no words, and none for the forest.

I have no words for the love trampled on, none for the gritted teeth or the surgeon's scalpel.

All I can speak of is a long afternoon, a long time ago.

The wounded doe trembling in my arms, her sobs trembling in my ears: I just want someone to hold me.

I held her tears, till they turned to laughter.

She held my heart, and will hold it for ever.

6. THE ARTIST



What drives her to Rembrandt, what drives her to Paula Rego?

Art discards silly questions, yet keeps triggering them.

What drove her to China, and to teach about peasant paintings?

What drove her to draw herself as an old lady, long before old age?

I study the drawing I cherish so much, hanging on the wall of my study, and can't help thinking of Anna Magnani.

Don't you dare retouch my wrinkles, she said to her make up artist: it took me a lifetime to earn them.

7. THE REBEL



There she is, linking arms with my mum and her daughters, on a student march.

We have marched so much, shared so much.

There she was linking arms with women at Greenham, crawling out of the tent at night to cut the fence we had circled.

We have shared so much, dared so much.

In Jerusalem we linked arms with Women in Black and women in scarves, and with bare-headed Palestinian girls searching for freedom.

We have dared so much, searched so much.

We shall never stop searching, never stop linking arms.