

In New York during the spring of 2020, I experienced a kind of vertigo, I found myself unable to focus or read or sleep, and I was quite literally stumbling through days and nights. In conversation with others, we discovered our symptoms were similar. We sought our bearings by obsessively seeking and sharing information. There was never enough information but so many questions. Friends got sick and some died.

I finally found some bearing staring at the moon. During the night, I stared as it rose through my front window. I watched its slow progression for hours. Later at night I tracked it through a skylight. Even during the day, I followed its form as silver slices, waxing and waning in the blue sky. The moon became a focus of my meditations: I brought it into my body, felt what it was like to be on it, counted breaths to it, imagined the inflation and deflation of my lungs synchronized to its waxing and waning. I joined every person throughout the millennia who contemplated the moon — its female power and energy, mystery, regularity, solidity, and holder of myth and knowledge. The moon guided me back to balance, to my body, and to the breath.

I discovered in Japanese Kaizen there is a technique called Moon Breath (Chandra Bhedana in Sanskrit), a form of Single Nostril Pranayama which is designed to promote calm and sleep: block your right nostril with your right thumb, inhale through the left nostril, then block your left nostril with your left thumb and exhale through the right nostril, repeat. The left side of the body is associated with the parasympathetic nervous system, so breathing this way, with the cooling moon, is calming. Reversing the sides is called Sun Breath (Surya Bhedana). The right nostril, associated with the sympathetic nerve system, promotes heat and activity in the body.

These experiences led me to make the drawing *Two Halves of the Moon*. Two halves, because this is how I experience the body, as a multiple of two: 2lungs, 2 nostrils, 2 eyes, 2 ears, 2 legs, 2 arms, 2 hands, 2 feet, etc. The scale of the drawing is also relevant. It is loosely in human scale, the two halves are relatively proportional to the size of inflated lungs, and the drawing is slightly less wide than a person standing in front of it with outstretched arms.

– Jill O'Bryan