

MY TATTOO STORY

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BY AMANNI FERNANDEZ

THE BEGINNING

THE PHOTO TO THE RIGHT WAS TAKEN IN MY AUNT'S CAR JUST FIVE DAYS AFTER MY 7TH BIRTHDAY. IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY YOU CAN SEE THAT MY LEFT ARM HAS A TATTOO ON IT THAT GOES FROM THE TOP OF MY SHOULDER DOWN TO MY FOREARM.

HOWEVER, AT 7 YEARS OLD, DRAWING ON MYSELF WAS SIMPLY JUST ONE OF MY PAST-TIME HOBBIES. THE "TATTOOS" I DREW ON MYSELF NEVER HAD ANY SIGNIFICANCE. INSTEAD, I SEEN THEM AS BEING SOMETHING THAT WAS JUST "COOL TO HAVE".

WITH TIME I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THAT TATTOOS WERE SEEN AS BEING BOTH SOCIALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY TABOO. MORE IMPORTANTLY, MY MOTHER HELD STRONG VIEWS AGAINST TATTOOS BUT HER VIEWS NEVER STEERED ME AWAY FROM WANTING TO GET ONE.

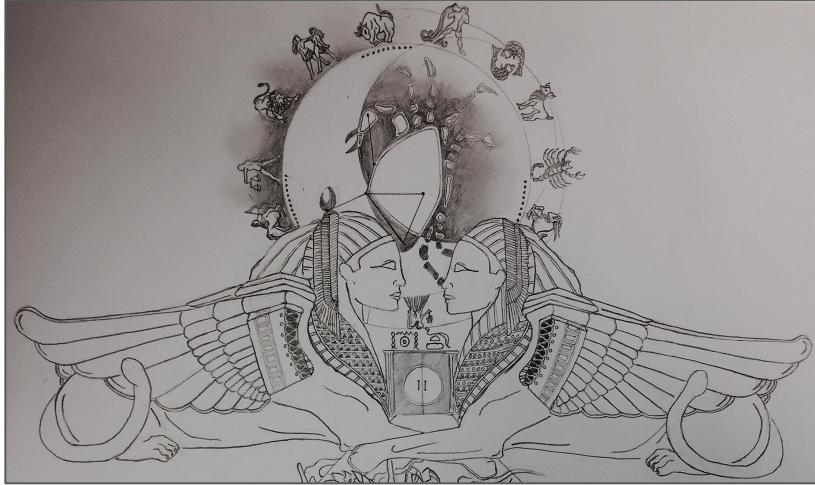
ULTIMATELY, I WAITED UNTIL I TURNED 22 TO GET MY FIRST TATTOO. WAITING GAVE ME THE CHANCE TO CONTEMPLATE DEEPLY UPON THE DETAILS OF TATTOO. THIS STORY HAS GIVEN ME THE CHANCE TO OPEN UP ABOUT THE MEANING OF MY TATTOO AND I'M EXCITED TO SHARE IT.

AMANNI, JULY 2002



THE UNIVERSE

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?



BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 AND 22 I LOST 7 OF MY LOVED ONES, SO I OFTEN DWELLED ON THE QUESTION OF LIFE AND IT'S MEANING. FOR ME, THE PRECIOUS LIVES OF MY LOVED ONES HAD A DEEPER MEANING AND THROUGH THEIR LOSS I WAS ABLE TO FIND SOME ANSWERS ALONG THE WAY.



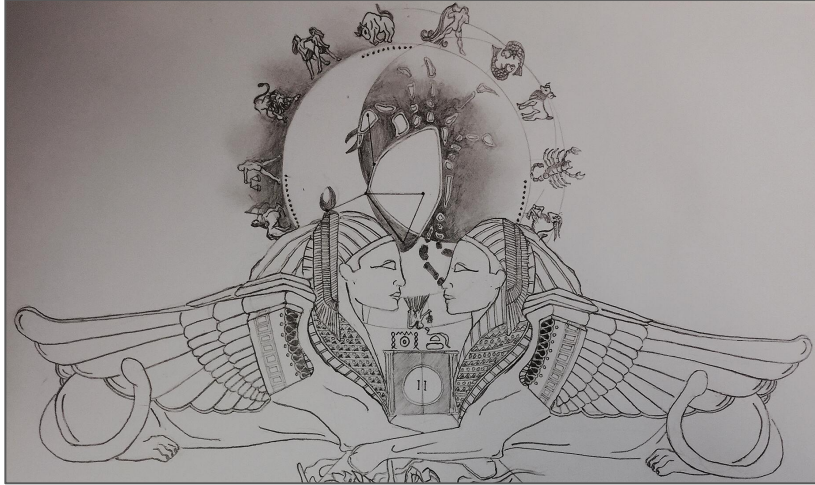
LIFE, FOR ME, HAS ALWAYS TAKEN ON MANY DIFFERENT MEANINGS AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF MY LIFE.

WHAT HAS ALWAYS REMAINED CONSTANT, THOUGH, IS MY BELIEF IN THE IDEA THAT OUR LIVES ARE CONNECTED TO THE UNIVERSE.

THE ASTROLOGICAL ZODIAC THAT IS DRAWN IN THE ORIGINAL IMAGE IS MEANT TO EXAGGERATE THAT THE CIRCLE ABOVE THE SPHINX IS THE UNIVERSE. WITHIN IT, RESTS PIECES OF THE CELESTIAL WHICH I CHOSE TO INCLUDE IN THE TATTOO AND CONNECT TO THE SPHINX.

YOUR MIND
YOUR BODY

"KEEP YOUR MIND AND YOUR BODY STRONG"



MY FASCINATION WITH ANCIENT EGYPTIAN HISTORY AND ART WILL HELP ME TELL THE NEXT PIECE OF MY STORY. WHICH IS THAT IN LIFE WE ARE CONNECTED TO THE UNIVERSE, *BUT* WE MUST PROTECT OUR MINDS AND OUR BODIES TO LEAD FRUITFUL LIVES.

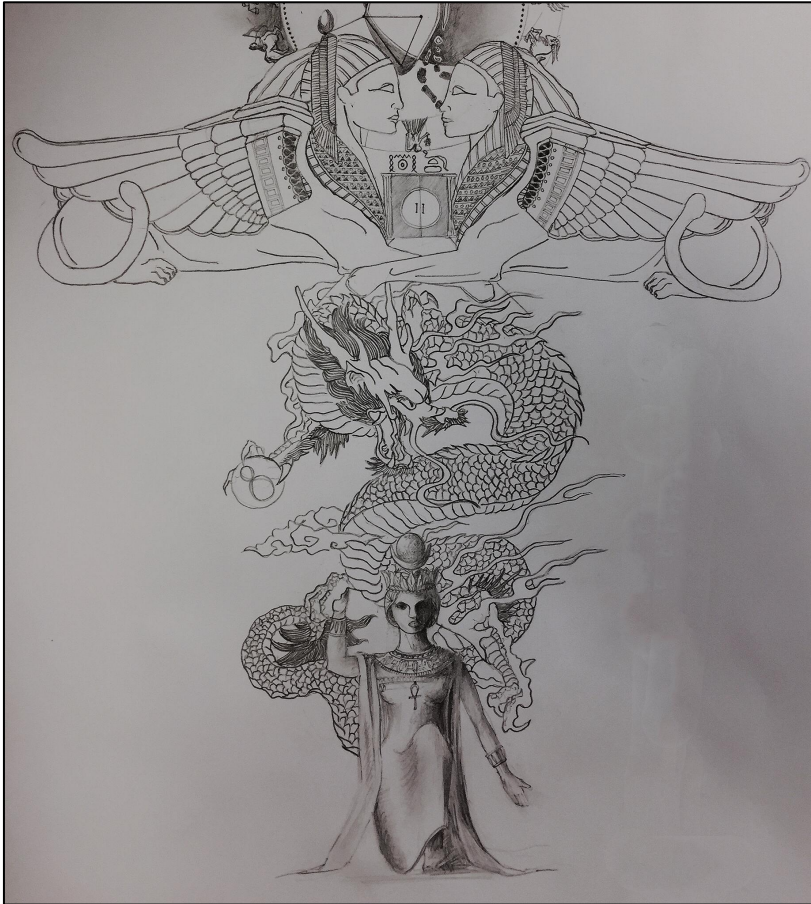


IN ANCIENT EGYPT, SPHINX WERE BUILT TO PROTECT TEMPLES AND THEY'VE ALWAYS SYMBOLICALLY REPRESENTED STRENGTH AND WISDOM. AS FOR MY TATTOO I WANTED THE TWO SPHINX TO REPRESENT THE MIND AND THE BODY AS BEING CONNECTED TO THE CELESTIAL ABOVE.

THE TINY DETAIL BELOW WITH THE DOOR REPRESENT AN ENTRY INTO THIS WORLD DOMINATED BY THE UNIVERSE. MOREOVER, ABOVE IS CALLIGRAPHY WHICH STATES MY LIFE'S MANTRA - *"TO LIVE LIFE FOREVER"*.

QIQIHAR, CHINA

"POWER, STRENGTH, WISDOM, AND COURAGE"

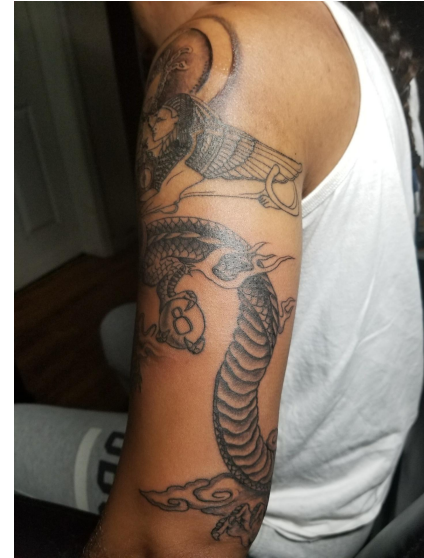
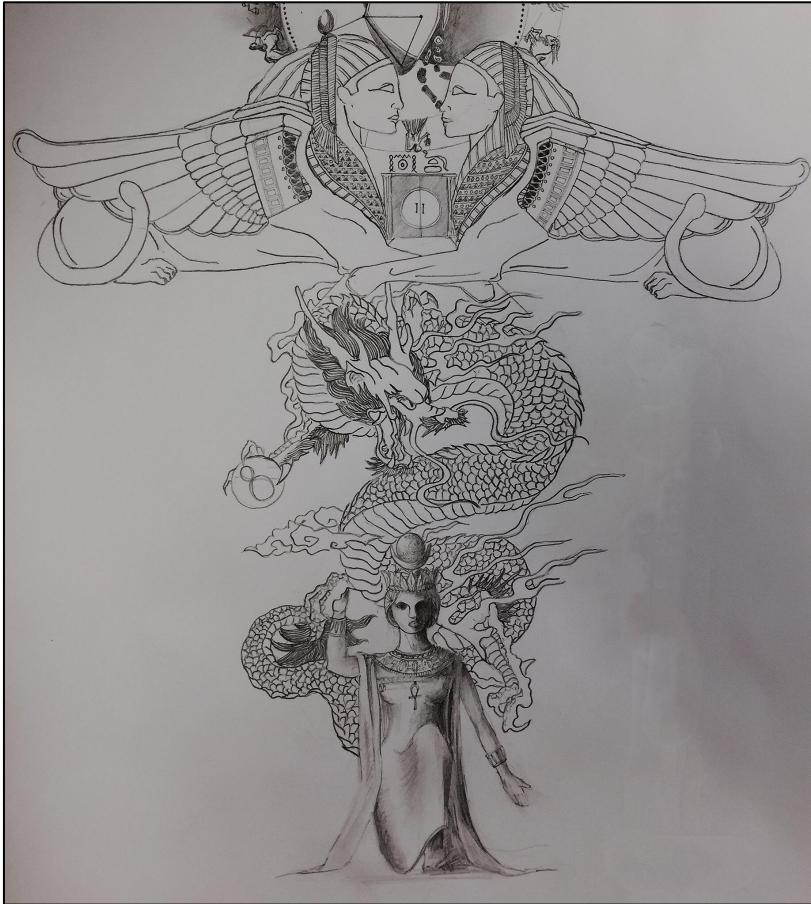


DURING THE SPRING OF 2013, I SPENT 3 MONTHS LIVING IN CHINA. THE PURPOSE OF MY TRIP WAS TO GO TO CHINA AND SPEND 1 MONTH AND A HALF AT A YOUTH ORPHANAGE IN QIQIHAR, CHINA TEACHING AND PLAYING WITH CHILDREN WHO WERE VICTIMS OF THE ONE CHILD POLICY.

I GREW UP MY ENTIRE LIFE BEING AN ONLY CHILD SO TO WITNESS AND ENGAGE WITH CHILDREN WHO HAD BECOME VICTIMS OF SUCH A VICIOUS POLICY TRULY RESONATED WITH ME FOREVER.

SIMILAR TO THE CHINESE DRAGON, THESE CHILDREN REPRESENTED POWER, STRENGTH, WISDOM, AND COURAGE. THE DRAGON, TO ME, WAS IN A WAY A TRIBUTE TO THEM AND WHAT THEY TAUGHT ME DURING MY TIME IN CHINA. IN ADDITION, IT ALSO SIGNIFIED, TO ME, THAT THERE IS BEAUTY IN THE BEAST CALLED LIFE. HOWEVER, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN SUCH BEAUTY YOU MUST WORK DILIGENTLY EVERYDAY TO GROW BOTH MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY SO I CONNECTED THE DRAGON TO THE SPHINX.

"POWER, STRENGTH, WISDOM, AND COURAGE"



JEZEBEL

JEZEBEL IS MY MOTHER, NOT A BIBLE FIGURE

MY TATTOO WOULD BE NOTHING IF DIDN'T INCLUDE A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF MY MOTHER - JEZEBEL.

JEZEBEL, IRONICALLY, IS THE NAME OF A QUEEN IN THE BIBLE WHO MANIPULATED MEN WITH HER BEAUTY. PLAYING ON THIS NOTION OF JEZEBEL, I WANTED TO SYMBOLICALLY REPRESENT MY MOTHER IN A RELIGIOUS WAY.

THE MEANING OF LIFE IS THE THEME OF MY TATTOO, AND THAT NARRATIVE WOULD BE INCOMPLETE WITHOUT HAVING INCLUDED MY CREATOR.

