

# 100TH ISSUE



W A T E R H O U S E S Y M B O L I S M N E W S L E T T E R # 1 0 0

## WE MADE IT TO 100!

### SPECIAL SYMBOLS

- Rosemary conveys remembrance, madness and the nativity of Christ
- Bubble conveys hollowness, emptiness of material existence or personality and a dream.
- Acorn conveys life, strength, virility, latent greatness or strength and independence

We have made it to 100! Can you believe it? As many of you have heard, the idea for this newsletter began after a trip to Saint Peter's in the Vatican. To the right is the very first image ever presented in this newsletter.

This funerary monument by Antonio Canova is in the Vatican's Saint Peter's church and is for Pope Clement XIII, 1784-92. Notice, the dead lion - a symbol of courage and valor (similar to the confederate lion at Oakland). Notice the boy angel (Putto in Italian) is holding a downward torch and he is snuffing out this life on earth so the Pope will have eternal life. If you are familiar with the Joseph E. Brown monument in Oakland, you know that the two angels below Gabriel are snuffing out the person's life here on earth.



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## ROSEMARY

In Derbyshire, Great Britain, young women customarily placed a sprig a rosemary or a crooked sixpence under their pillow on Halloween in order to dream of their future husbands.

Rosemary conveys remem-

brance, madness and the nativity of Christ. In reference to flower language, it symbolizes your presence revives me, memory, fidelity between lovers, and remembrance of the dead.

Rosemary grows in hot and dry climates the best.



## WEEPING OVER A TOMB

This work is *Skeleton Weeping over a Tomb* from Andreas Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica* (Basel, 1543).

“The image of a skeleton weeping over death reinterprets a paradoxical vein iconographic motifs that were fashionable as early as Middle Ages: from Saint Jerome and Mary Magdalene to Saint Francis meditating upon death and the various allegories of melancholy. The very natural pose accentuates the skeleton’s humanity, render-

ing the spectacle of its sorrow all the more engaging” (from *Death and Resurrection in Art*, page 89).

Skeleton conveys death, vanity, usually has infernal implications and Death personified. If you see a skeleton at a feast at one of your many Halloween parties, it is a reminder of mortality.

Skull convey mortality, the worldly survival of the dead, death, the transitory nature of life on earth, the useless nature of earthly things, sin,

the Fall of Man. Many folks have it as their attribute: Adam, Hosea, Hamlet, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Romuald, Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Jerome. A skull in a portrait conveys a mark of piety; skull with a cross conveys mediation upon eternal life that comes after death; skull and crossbones convey pirates, poison, the brevity of life and danger to life; and skull and crossbones at the foot of the Cross refers to the legend that the Cross rested upon the bones of Adam.



## HOMO BULLA

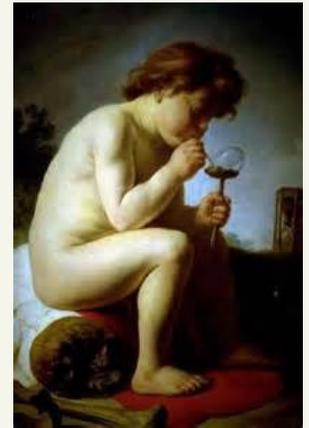
Witch and ghost make merry On this last of dear October’s days.

Unknown

Another excerpt from *Death and Resurrection* states that “the iconography of the *homo bulla* (man is a bubble), symbolized by one or several soap bubbles (less commonly, glass balls) floating in midair, forms part of the broader array of themes linked to the *vanitas*, which explore the fragility of the human condition and the ineluctability of death”. (p. 95)

One more simpler form of *Homo Bulla* is the boy blowing a bubble to the right. The young boy conveys innocence. The bubble conveys hollowness, emptiness of material existence or personality, a dream, fragile hope, brevity of life and lack of substance.

Hourglass conveys transiency of life, time, inversion, creation and destruction, perpetual inversion of the lower and upper worlds and death.



## COLOSSAL ACORN

Cathy and Steve Vogel sent this description and image from Spring Hill Cemetery in Charleston, West Virginia: “This is the grave of Adam Brown Dickinson Littlepage (1818-1862) marked by a colossal locally carved sandstone acorn. He was involved in the salt industry, barrel making, timbering, and own-

er of a general store. Landowner of 2000 acres, he enlisted in the Confederate Army at age 43. While in Virginia serving as a lieutenant, he was killed in action. He fathered seven children, all of whom made some mark upon the history of the Kanawha Valley. (WV)”

The acorn conveys life, strength, virility, latent greatness or strength, independence, a germinal idea and protection against the plague. The acorn is sacred to Thor and is an attribute of the Golden Age personified.



# BENSON MONUMENT

Richard Reisem sent me the following note and image: "The Jesse Parker Williams monument in your last newsletter is very similar to a monument in Mount Hope Cemetery, Rochester, NY. I have attached a photo below and a description of the Mount Hope monument. A classically robed gray granite female figure stands with outstretched arms in a niche with an arched top that frames her head. Arms outstretched is symbolic of a plea for mercy. The woman looks straight

ahead as she expresses her plea. Buried below, seeking the mercy that this dignified monument expresses, are John L. Benson (1871-1964) and Sofia Benson (1873-1926)".



# DIVINE PUNISHMENT

If you are familiar with Oakland Cemetery's Symbolism tour, you know Niobe because she cries right near the Bell Tower.

I have been reading a fascinating book called "Death and Resurrection in Art" and under the subject "Death and Resurrection", it highlights the urn by the Niobid Painter called "The slaughter of the Sons of Niobe by Apollo and Artemis", page 77. It is such

a wonderful story of tragedy with Niobe bragging about all her children and the Goddess Leto getting tired of the boasting. She had her powerful sons Apollo and Artemis kill them all.

Legend has it that if you go by Oakland's Niobe at the right time, you can see drops of tears coming out of her eyes. Have you seen those tears lately? Another good ghost story.



Shadows of a thousand years rise again unseen, Voices whisper in the trees, ~Tonight is Halloween"

Dexter Kozen

# ANONYMOUS

Mary Ethel Grady writes that "I am always so glad to read sayings by "Anonymous". When I was in Budapest I saw a statue of "Anonymous", a monk who tried to help the populace by sending uplifting sayings so they could withstand difficult times.

The statue is of a monk with his head partially covered by the hood of a monk's robe and he has a quill pen in his hand.

It is in a lovely park in the city center surrounded by flowers and trees".

A hood conveys repression, invisibility, death, detachment from the material world, spiritual blindness, regression and mysticism.

A quill or pen is an attribute of writers, scholars, Doctors of the church including St. Matthew and Saint Mark.



**What are your ideas  
for future newsletters?**



**WATERHOUSE  
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**The mission of Waterhouse Symbolism is to research and document symbols locally, regionally, nationally and internationally and to share that knowledge through this newsletter, blogs and other avenues.**



#### NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

Thanks to you all for helping make it to our 100th issue. What has been so special about this newsletter has been your input by asking great questions, responding to inquiries from others and suggesting themes for future newsletters. With your help, we will make it to our 200th issue. Keep those great comments coming!

Take care—Richard Waterhouse

## CIVIL WAR MONUMENT

While visiting Oak Bluffs in Martha's Vineyard, I stumbled upon this Civil War Monument.

It is made by J.W. Fiske, 26 & 28 Park Place, New York. It was the most prominent American manufacturer of decorative cast iron and cast zinc in the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition to their wide range of garden fountains, statues, urns, and cast-iron garden furniture, they provided many of the cast-zinc Civil War memorials of small towns throughout the northern states following the American Civil War. These were commonly painted to imitate bronze.

One plaque tells that "this monument

depicting a Union soldier was erected in 1891, by Charles Strahan, a former confederate who relocated to Martha's Vineyard after the Civil War. Due to lingering bitterness of conflict, over the conflict, local Union veterans first excluded him from their gatherings. In a gesture of conciliation, Strahan established this memorial in honor of their organization, the Grand Army of Republic. At this dedication he professed his loyalty to the restored Union and gave thanks to the abolition of slavery. His wish was that "more kindness would be shown toward his old comrades" was fulfilled in 1925 when a tablet honoring confederate soldiers was added to the pedestal.



**Civil War Monument, Oak Bluffs  
Martha's Vineyard**