

# SPRING HAS SPRUNG



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 # 5 8

## SPECIAL SYMBOLS

- Easter Lily conveys Resurrection
- Daffodil conveys unrequited love
- Sphinx conveys intellect, power and enigma
- Urn conveys death, mourning, fate and the female principle
- Rose conveys completion.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE :

SPRING HAS SPRUNG	2
DOGWOOD	2
DAFFODILS	2
SPHINX	3
MOURNING WOMAN	3
OTHER SIDE OF MOURNING FIGURE	3
SYMBOL OF THE MONTH	4

## APRIL FOOLS' DAY

I remember in elementary school there was one or two kids who took the inspiration of April Fool's Day to its fullest. It was their opportunity to make a fib or a great story seem true for just a moment. Some use to compete to see which one could create the greatest joke. What are your favorite April Fools' Day jokes that you remember?

April Fools' Day or sometimes referred to as All Fools' Day takes place on April 1st and is not a legal holiday but a day where general foolishness and practical jokes are tolerated by many.

Traditionally, in some countries like New Zealand, Australia, UK, Australia and South

April 24 is the day we celebrate Easter this year. What plans do you have for Easter other than going to church? I remember as a child, my southern grandmother (Billie Robinson Waterhouse) would buy us all Easter suits and we would proudly wear them to



April 1, 2001 in Denmark regarding Copenhagen's new metro

Africa, the jokes are tolerated until noon. After that if someone creates a joke, they are appropriately named an "April Fool". In other countries, such as France, Italy, South Korea,

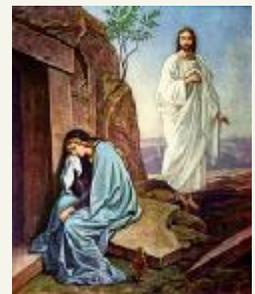
Japan, Russia, The Netherlands, Brazil, Canada and the U.S., the practical jokes last all day.

It is only speculation what is the origin of April Fools' Day but many believe that it appears first in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (1392). Probably, the reference comes in "The Nun's Priest Tale" when Chauntecleer is tricked by a fox.

In the European Middle Ages, the new year began March 25th and lasted a week with it ending on April 1. It is plausible that April Fools began because folks made fun of other folks who celebrated New Year's Day other than January 1.

## EASTER

the Easter services and then to a delicious lunch afterwards. Symbols related to Easter are: Easter Lily conveys Resurrection, Cross conveys Jesus' victory over death, Easter chicks convey new birth, and Lamb conveys Lamb of God.



## Spring has sprung

One of my favorite seasons of the year is spring because everything around us is so alive. The dormancy is over and the world is starting to grow again. There is a wonderful song that Judy Collins sings called "The Fallow Way" which talks about the moment right before spring when everything is quiet to allow all of us to get ready for the rebirth.

The season of spring conveys

regeneration, revival, youth, innocence, (especially female), rebirth, sweetness, mildness, courtship and time. It is also associated with early spring, Zodiac signs of Aries, Taurus, Gemini, the color green and occasionally the color white.

Let me know your favorite symbols of spring so I can share with others in the next newsletter or in my blog. There are so many as seen below!



Plafond Allegory of Spring by Jerzy Siemiginowski, 1680s

Art is a staple,  
like bread or  
wine or a warm  
coat in winter.  
Man's spirit  
grows hungry for  
art in the same  
way his stomach  
growls for food.  
I rvin Stone

One of my favorite legends related to Easter is the Dogwood.

The legend is supposedly that the dogwood tree was used for the wood of the cross that Jesus was crucified. After Jesus' death, God made the dogwood grow much smaller so it could never be used to make crosses from again.

Have you ever looked at the

## dogwood

blossom of a dogwood? If you have, you know it is shaped with a cross with rusted part on each part of the blossom, which alludes to the nails that held Jesus on the cross.

The middle looks like a crown of thorns that was put on Christ's and the guards mockingly called him "King of the Jews". There are so many wonderful legends!



Dogwood blossom from Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA

## daffodils

One of my favorite first signs of spring are the daffodils. We were in a restaurant the other night in Sandwich called the Bee Hive celebrating the feast day of the Welsh Patron Saint David and there was a vase at the door full of daffodils. It is the emblem of Wales.

The daffodils on the Cape are not quite up but the ones in Oakland Cemetery are in full bloom. It is just glorious to walk into the gates of Oakland and see the beautiful daffodil blooms celebrating the first few moments of spring. The daffodil conveys unrequited love (appropriate

for a cemetery), herald of spring, courage, dancing, short-lived beauty, death, mourning, spiritual rebirth (appropriate for Easter), and gracefulness.

In flower language, the great daffodil is a symbol of chivalry.



Daffodils in front of the Marsh Urn, Oakland Cemetery photo by Wynn Montgomery

## Great sphinx of mount auburn Cemetery



Great Sphinx of Mount Auburn

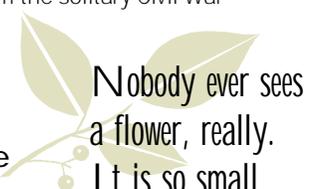
. If you have been to Mount Auburn

Cemetery, you have seen the Civil War Monument of the Sphinx. This particular Egyptian creature conveys intellect, power, enigma, spirit triumphant over manner, silence, mystery, pleasures of the body, union of binary functions (spirit/matter, intellect/physical power, harmony/peace, and creator/created), libido, Israel into Egypt, watch-dog over the ultimate meaning of life which remains beyond man's reach forever, sometimes associate with lust, and emblem of Egypt. In

ancient Egypt, it conveyed power and vigilance.

Normally, when you think about civil war monuments, you think about a single soldier on top of a monument. This one (Sphinx) and Oakland Cemetery's Lion of Atlanta are quite different and appear to be protectors of the Civil War dead.

Are there other civil war monuments that you can think of that are totally different from the solitary Civil War Soldier?



Nobody ever sees a flower, really.

It is so small.

We haven't time, and to see it takes time, like to have a friend takes time.

Georgia O'Keefe

## Re-visiting the mourning figure

Another wonderful bas relief at Mount Auburn is this gravestone monument to the right.

In last month's newsletter, I spotlighted the mourning figure and now we continue with that theme.

Symbols related to this marker includes the curtain which conveys concealment, protection, veil of the future dropping a curtain—the end, death.

A veil which covers the

woman's head conveys invisibility, concealment of certain aspects of truth or of the deity, fertility hidden underground, mystery, chastity, modesty, virginity, mourning (usually a black veil), atonement, and renunciation of the world.

An urn, which she holds, conveys death, mourning, fate, the feminine principle, health, purification, and caldron of plenty. A closed urn conveys mortality.



Mourning Figure from Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, MA

## Other side of mourning figure

The other side of this wonderful monument in Mount Auburn represent the soul of the person buried here ascending in to heaven.

The soul conveys reason, aspiration, and man's creative or immortal part. The representation of souls are seen many times in Victorian cemeteries from just a small figure quickly

ascending to a larger figure like this one to the right. Other ways that the soul is shown ascending to heaven includes: the finger of God pointing the soul to heaven; an angel pointing the soul to heaven; and even the huge obelisk pointing the soul to heaven. When you see a figure dressed in classical robes, it conveys mourning.



Detail from Mount Auburn Cemetery representing the soul ascending into heaven.

**Do you have ideas for  
future newsletters?**



**WATERHOUSE  
SYMBOLISM  
NEWSLETTER # 58**

Cahoon Museum of American Art  
4676 Falmouth Road, P.O. Box 1853  
Cotuit, MA 02655

Cell: 678 650-2241

Work: 508 428-7581

E-mail: [rwaterhouse@comcast.net](mailto:rwaterhouse@comcast.net)

Website: [www.tinyurl.com/waterhousesymbolism](http://www.tinyurl.com/waterhousesymbolism)

Blog: <http://waterhousesymbolism.blogspot.com/>

The mission of Waterhouse Symbolism is to research and document gravestone symbols nationally and internationally.



**NOTES FROM THE EDITOR**

Spring has sprung and the beauty of living in New England has quickly surrounded us. The early glimpses of spring like the crocuses peeping their heads out and the fields full of daffodils is just a small part of what is yet to come. I hope your spring is as magnificent as it has been on the Cape!

Take care,  
Richard Waterhouse

**S Y M B O L O F T H E M O N T H**

I want to bring back my symbol of the month but I want to add a little twist to it. Since I stop at historic cemeteries throughout New England, I want to show one that we found.

One of the great things about exploring historic cemeteries is that you never know what symbols you will find and where they are located.

This particular one to the right is located in Historic Bay View Cemetery (circa 1832) Waquoit Congregational Church. It marks the grave of two sisters who died very young. The rose conveys completion, perfection, the heart, God, the beloved, paradise, messianic hope, Christ, beauty, the

Virgin Mary, and integration of the personality.

Two dead blooms at the bottom convey life cut short or terminated before they reached their full growth. It is similar in Victorian cemeteries when you cut logs or wood or even a broken column. What are some other symbols in Victorian cemeteries that convey life cut short?

Notice that the branches of the rose bushes have three leaves which convey the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Also, notice that the rose bush is contained in a bowl which conveys containment here on earth but their souls will have eternal life.



Gravestone monument with a rose bush with dead blooms in Historic Bay Cemetery