I am a tree, rooted in the bedrock of divine love. I am no longer trying to be a stone wall or surround myself with one. Walls are strong but they divide, are inflexible, less connected to the earth and the divine. A tree is rooted, grounded, yet flexible. A tree can bend in the wind or under snow, shifting back and healing any damage once the pressure has passed. A tree cannot live without the ground that roots it in standing tall, cannot live without others around it exchanging gifts. Trees give gifts of fruit, shade, cleansed air, homes for many species, and are given gifts by bees pollinating flowers, animals carrying seeds to new places, sun giving light to turn to food, rain nourishing roots, joyous birds singing in their branches. Trees carry messages to each other on the winds and through the earth. When one doesn’t have enough nutrients, others share through underground root systems. They support one another. They can grow and change. They are all unique. They can heal from wounds. They live in balance, yet flowing with the cycles of seasons. Their branches make music in the wind. They do not try to be something they are not. Changes are not immediately seen. They are in cycles of growth as they are meant to be. When a branch breaks or is cut off, more growth springs up in new places. They aren’t proving anything to the world, just living into their true selves, rooted and grounded in divine love, water from deep within the divine earth running through all veins, infusing each and every cell.

Cai (they/them or ey/em) is a lifelong Quaker with passions for Witness, personal discernment, and diverse methods of spiritual deepening. With a gender that transcends binaries, Cai is practiced at deeply questioning societal expectations and norms and in shifting towards roots of individual and group integrity. Spiritual deepening, Witness, and integrity are expanded in Cai’s music and photography practices. Eir photography series Transcendence connects themes of spirituality, mythology, and gender diversity as related to global and timeless patterns. See more at caiquirk.com.