

## **Gertrude of Helfta on Maternal-Fetal Microchimerism**

by [Mia Schilling Grogan](#) in the [August 2024](#) issue  
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Gertrude saw quite clearly how it was:  
There were sisters, yes, who had known the same  
womb, but it didn't end there. Somehow cells  
were circulating: those sisters also  
shared some whit of their mother and perhaps  
an older sibling—sister or brother—  
deep in their livers, kidneys, hearts, and bones,  
the microchimeristic presence of  
these distant others enlarging every  
hour's choir. And far away, in some  
cold castle, the sisters sat at table  
in other bodies, imperceptible  
emissaries from Helfta cloistered in  
their mother's blood, a brother's marrow.  
What would be so marvelous in this truth  
yet to be discovered? *It tells no more  
than what we all live daily: sweet honey  
overflows the cells that form the comb.  
Every body's integral to Body.*