



## The Alchemical Imagination: Creativity as Catalyst for Radical Transformation

**Eliza Swann**

Weiser Books (May 4, 2026)

Softcover \$21.95 (256pp)

978-1-57863-901-4

Artist, mystic, and teacher Eliza Swann's *The Alchemical Imagination* is about the history, processes, and magic of ancient and modern alchemy, affirming the value of its esoteric spirituality for creatives.

The result of years of research and distillation, and an embodiment of alchemy's secrets, this lively book includes stories of personal vulnerability and growth alongside brief biographies of noted alchemists and artists from antiquity to the present. In linking ancient practices with contemporary approaches to creativity, it reveals the degree to which alchemists and artists alike can become devotees of a higher, spiritual art and state of being, using rituals, practices, and exercises to foster attention to detail, patience, and humility.

The book's presentation of alchemy is singular, with Swann asserting "Alchemical work offers pathways forward in the face of our current ecological crisis ... [It] weaves together the mystical, the scientific, and the philosophical to foster a more holistic, loving, and interdependent understanding of our world." The alchemistic quest for the Philosopher's Stone, inspired by a desire to turn base metals to gold, is also addressed, serving here as a metaphor for purifying, refining, and perfecting the human soul. The book asks probing questions and provides potent explorations and exercises to encourage contemporary alchemists and artists to bring forth their authentic inner truths, in turn providing material for their transformative creations. Queer and femme perspectives are highlighted too, as with the stories of seventeenth-century gender-nonconforming Queen Christina of Sweden and of Texas-born visionary painter Forrest Bess, both of whom transcended the boundaries of their eras.

A humane and engaging artist's guide, *The Alchemical Imagination* suggests that creativity rooted in an esoteric spirituality can purify, refine, and elevate both art and the human spirit.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May / June 2026)

*Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.*