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# Oak Leaves

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# Journaling the Druid Path

by ladytoad

(Judith Anderson Morris)



When I take on a Druidic student, the first task I ask of him is that he keep a journal— not because I am a professional writer or a former English teacher — but because I know what writing means to thinking and learning. The Druid way is traveled through thinking, and the best way to think clearly is to be forced to put your thoughts into words. Yes, one might argue that the Druids themselves used oral recitation and memorization rather than writing, but our world is much larger than that of our Druid forefathers and filled with far more information. I, for one, cannot recite my favorite books from memory, and I don't intend to try. I still call myself "Druid." I might not carve Oghams onto tree branches, but I do express my thoughts and learning. I journal.

To open a book, to run one's fingers across the words is, in itself, a sacred act. In the beginning there was logos, the Word, and from that sounding, all of creation came into Being. (If that idea tastes to you of Christianity, consider in how many other mythic traditions the accounting replicates itself). The Word is sacred. So to create your pathway, to bring your Druidic experiences to life again and again, writing can serve as your sacred tool — your logos. Your Druidic journal will become the dynamic manifestation of your Druidic Mind.

It doesn't matter if you are a "good" writer or not. This journal belongs only to YOU. It was not meant to be published or even shared - unless that is your desire. It simply will be the place where you unravel your thoughts and bring them to some tangible fruition.

Why keep a journal? Journaling serves a number of purposes:

1. We think, but we do not truly know what it is we know until we have structured and expressed our nebulous thoughts.
2. Once captured, our thoughts cannot be stolen by the winds of change or the demands of the every day. They cannot be dimmed by the mists of memory. They can be turned to again and again, reconsidered, and expounded upon. Journals add permanence to our thoughts.
3. Sometimes we despair at the pace of our travels, not realizing that growth occurs slowly, often unnoticed. When one can return to the thoughts of past weeks, one at last witnesses the processes of change and growth. We can look at where we have been and plan where we want to go next.
4. The journal is but one of the tools gathered along the sacred journey. It can be as important and as

*continued page 9*

## EXERCISE 1: FEELING

Lie down in the grass.

Close your eyes and try to feel the rhythms of the earth.

Without sight, you must rely on your other senses.

Empty your mind of mundane thoughts and concentrate only on feeling and hearing.

Put your ear to the ground.

Can you hear the movement of insects busy at their work?

If you listen very carefully, the pulsations of the living earth will become very apparent.

Allow them into your body.

Relax.


Let them become one with your heartbeat until your body no longer feels discrete and separate from the earth. Remain in this exercise for at least 15 minutes.

This exercise may feel difficult on your first attempts. We have become accustomed to walking on manmade substances, our feet soled and shielded from the earth. We have forgotten the connectedness that our ancestors knew well.

Even at your first attempt, however, you will feel something. Ancestral memory is strong within you if you allow yourself to remember. Oneness with the earth is part of our genetic evolutionary consciousness. It needs only to be aroused.

When you are ready to rejoin the everyday world, go to a journal. Write down what you felt and heard. Try to think of all the words you know that will bring your experience to life.

You may find yourself describing feelings as colors, scents, tastes. Your body knows how your senses connect. Allow your unconscious to describe for you. Let the words flow. Trust what is in you - not just what your logical, school-trained brain tells you.

The next time you do this exercise and journal a response, read back. See how different your new attempt was from your first. This exercise is not something you will do once. It must be repeated over and over until you really feel the connection again. You will benefit in a lower stress level, a deeper meditation level, a grander understanding of yourself and your place in the scheme of things. 



# Connecting With the Natural World

## A Series of Meditative and Physical Exercises for Journaling

by ladytoad

(Judith Anderson Morris)

## Ritual

# A Yule Ritual

by Anthony Thompson



Text and verses by Anthony Thompson except where otherwise noted. Note: D1 refers to the “first Druid,” and is generally the person leading the rite. The D roles are just suggestions; feel free to rearrange role assignments to make the ritual work best for your group.

### BACKGROUND

Historically, the “Twelve Nights” of Yule began sometime around our December 20th and ended at our New Year, encompassing the darkest night of the year, the Winter Solstice. It was for our ancestors a time for the Folk to gather in their halls and light fires against the harsh coldness outside. They would feast on the crops they had saved for this dark time of the year, and share what gifts they might have in order to keep their moods bright through the season. Religiously, Yule holds a similar place for Northern traditions as Samhain holds for Celtic traditions, namely that it is an in-between time — a time when the old year has ended but the new year has not begun. As Samhain is for the Celts, Yule is a time when the Dead walk freely among the living, and may be honored and consulted for wisdom. It is a time to make peace with the year that is past and make plans for the year to come. It is a time when we, the Folk, gather to acknowledge the cold darkness of Winter and ask the Kindreds for help through the hard times so that we may yet see the next year’s planting and reaping.

### PROCESSIONAL

A musical signal is given to signal the beginning of the ritual, and the folk process from the coldness of outside the home to the ritual area inside, singing “We Approach the Sacred Grove” as they do so (at least 3x):

*All:* We approach the sacred grove  
With hearts and minds and flesh and bone  
Join us now in ways of old  
We have come home<sup>1</sup>

*D1:* We are here to honor the gods.

*D2:* It is the dark time of the Yuletide and the deep night is upon us. The cold frost bites at our skin and the weather rides hard on our souls. Let us make haste to honor the Shining Ones, that we may turn toward the light of the coming year under their protection.

### EARTH MOTHER

D2 honors Nerthus, the Earth Mother with words and an offering:

*D2:* Nerthus, Earth Mother,  
 You stand solid beneath our feet,  
 Cold of rock, hardness of ice  
 Carry us on to night's next night  
 Support us well, Njord's twin  
 Vanir Mother strong sea sister  
 Bring faith to fruit Birch-bright one  
 Honor to you, your rhythms true  
 Hail Nerthus!

*All:* Hail Nerthus!

D2 makes the offering.

### GROUNDING AND UNITING IN THE GROVE MEDITATION

(Meditation of grove's choice.)

Bard leads the folk in the Unity Chant (1x):

*All:* We are one, in our grove, upon the earth,  
 within the sea, beneath the sky.  
 We are joined, to send our call, to the honored  
 dead, to the spirit folk, to the blessed gods.  
 We praise thee, in one voice, in our sacred  
 grove. We are one<sup>2</sup>.

### ESTABLISHING THE SACRED COSMOS

#### Sacred Fire

*FM:* Sacred Fire, holy woods  
 Warm light to fill the hall  
 Nine realms are known  
 With our words this night  
 Let the Folk hear the call  
 Light fires within, warmth to the True  
 Fire's flame burns to form the garth  
 Woods kindle well, with the fire of the hearth.  
 Let us call the Kindred forth!

The Fire Maiden (FM) lights the fire and makes an offering of incense.

*FM:* I kindle the sacred fire in wisdom, love, and  
 power.  
 Sacred fire, burn within us.

*All:* Sacred fire, burn with us.

FM censes the site and the folk.

#### SACRED WELL

*KW:* Holy Well waters deep

Three streams strong gathers the flow  
 One of Wyrð shining ones know  
 Another yet icy, serpent-safe  
 Last of wisdom, many eyes to see  
 What is, what was what will be  
 Watching sisters of ^rlog, three  
 Our Folk look on, watching well.  
 Let us call the Kindred forth...

The Keeper of the Well (KW) pours the waters and makes an offering of silver.

*KW:* In the depths flow the waters of wisdom.  
 Sacred waters flow within us.

*All:* Sacred waters, flow within us.

KW asperges the site and the folk.

#### SACRED TREE

The Tender of the Tree (TT) dresses & censes the world tree.

*TT:* Mighty Tree middle of all  
 Nine realms full its branches make  
 Much knows Har, High One hung;  
 Ygg's steed high, ever green stays.  
 Serpent below eagle above  
 Squirrel between Nith-hewer gnaws  
 Ash-wood tall wet with white dews  
 Strong-standing true our Folk seek shelter  
 Let us call the Kindred forth!

*TT:* From the depths to the heights spans the  
 world tree.  
 Sacred tree, grow within us.

*All:* Sacred tree, grow within us.

The formation of the vertical axis is completed with:

*DI:* The fire, the well, the sacred tree,

*All:* Flame and flow and grow in me!

*DI:* In land, sea and sky,

*All:* Below and on high!

*DI:* Thus is the sacred grove claimed and hallowed.

*All:* So Sind Sie! ("zo zind zee")

*D1:* By the cleansing of water and fire, let all ill  
turn away from me and mine.

*All:* So Sind Sie!<sup>3</sup>

### OPENING THE GATES BETWEEN THE WORLDS

D1 calls to Mödgud, guardian of the icy bridge to Hel's realm:

*D1:* Mödgud, warder  
Maiden mighty, ever keen  
Hella's watcher, wide bridge seen  
Dead men ride o'er your charge  
Guardian great, long your gaze,  
Gioll, golden, glowing bright  
Helmod rode hard, right your aid  
Low rings Gioll the Folk hear this night  
Mödgud, we pray, Let our blood-kin pass

D1 makes an offering to M<sup>^</sup>dgud.

*All:* We invoke you Mödgud, opener of every gate  
We invoke you Mödgud, opener of every gate  
You will reach us, you will teach us, and reveal  
our fate.  
You will reach us, you will teach us, and reveal  
our fate.<sup>4</sup> (3x)

### OFFERING TO THE OUTDWELLERS

D4 makes an offering to the Outdwellers outside of the ritual space, saying:

*D4:* You on the borders, etins, thurses,  
Rises, trolls, all of giant kin  
Take this offering this night, now  
And trouble not the work of my Folk.

### BARDIC INSPIRATION

The bard invokes Bragi, god of poetic inspiration:

*Bard:* Bragi! Odinson!  
Best of the wordsmiths and first of the skalds,  
You with the tongue of gold,  
Whose words are like the finest mead,  
We ask you best of bards,  
To inspire us and make our words mix well.  
Bragi, let your inspiration flow!

*All:* Bragi, let your inspiration flow!

The Bard makes an offering to Bragi.

### HONORING AND INVITING THE THREE KINDREDS

#### Ancestors

*D5:* Ancestors old Heroes renowned  
Blood of our veins, Strength in our souls,  
Grandmothers, Wise watching  
Disir women,  
Weal-bringing We offer you  
warders, welcome.  
Grandfathers, light-alf, dark-alf,  
Alfar, black-alf,  
Weal-bringing warders, We offer you welcome.  
Great heroes of eld, might-memory knows,  
Your valor shines still, We offer you welcome.  
O Ancestors of blood and heart, we call you  
forth!

*All:* Ancestors of blood and heart, we call you  
forth!

D5 makes an offering.

All sing *Mothers and Fathers of Old* (3x):

From far beyond this mortal plane, mothers  
and fathers of old  
We pray that you return again, mothers and  
fathers of old  
To share with us the mysteries and secrets long  
untold  
Of the ancient ways we seek to reclaim,  
mothers and fathers of old<sup>4</sup>

#### Nature Spirits

*D6:* Land spirits Keepers of place,  
Wise with weather, Your knowledge runs deep.  
Luck and prosperity, Your blessings fall,  
Honor to you, We bring this night.  
Landvaettir great Ancient as earth,  
Boulder-homed, Water-homed,  
Land wights old, Guardians true,  
Your strength strong still, We offer you wel-  
come.  
O Spirits of the natural world, we call you  
forth!

*All:* Spirits of the natural world, we call you forth!

D6 makes an offering.

All sing *Fur and Feather* (3x):

Stone and Bone and River bright,  
Those over Hill and Barrow Wight,  
Body of Bark and Limb and Leaf,  
Soul of the Korn and harvest Sheaf. <sup>5</sup>

### Gods and Goddesses

*D7:* Aesir, Vanir            Shining Ones all,  
On Itha Plain met    Many moons past,  
Of Ask and Embla,    Our ancestors first,  
Many things made,    Of the gods we all come.  
None of you gods,    is not mighty indeed,  
Of soul, sense, and    you have given us well,  
                                         being  
Taught us of runes,    Of faith and troth,  
Of right-mindfulness,    and honor true,  
O Shining Ones of magic and might, we call  
you forth!

*All:* Shining Ones of magic and might, we call you  
forth!

D7 makes an offering.

All sing *Hail All the Gods* (3x):

Hail all the gods,  
Hail all the goddesses.  
Hail all the holy ones,  
We dwell together.  
Lords of the sky,  
Ladies of the sacred earth,  
Spirits and the Ancestors,  
We dwell together.  
Hail all the Gods!  
Hail all the Goddesses!  
Hail all the Gods.and Goddesses. <sup>6</sup>(6x)

### MEDITATION OF MERGING THE ENERGIES AND RE-CENTERING

(Merging & recentering meditation done.)

### Ritual Purpose, and Honoring the Spirits of the Occasion

D2 states the ritual purpose & historical precedent.

D1 calls to Ullr (“ool”) and Skadhi (“skah-dee”), that the  
Folk might give them honor:

Ullr, great huntsman and master of the bow,

Sif’s son and Snowshoe-Aesir,  
We ask you O Glory of Winter to join with us  
on this dark night,  
For the frost is thick and the cold is chilling to  
the bone.

O mighty shield-god, fair of face and fight,  
As the darkness covers the fields and the folk,  
We pray that you share your strength us,  
That your skiff should shield us from harm,  
And that your shining light fill the hall the and  
Folk again.

(offering made)

Skadhi, great huntress and serpent-hanger,  
Njord’s husband and snowshoe-goddess,  
We ask you O Shining Bride of the Gods to  
join with us on this night of darkness,  
For the winds are wailing and the wolves are  
howling in the hills.

O mighty winter-goddess, woman of the wild,  
As the darkness covers the fields and the folk,  
We pray that you share your strength with us,  
That you guide us in our goings and doings,  
And that you bring the light of your wisdom to  
fill the hall and the Folk again.

(offering made)

D1 conducts a group intonement to honor the ancestors  
who have watched over and guided the Folk over the  
past year, beginning with:

Hear now the ringing of Gioll, the cold golden  
bridge to Hella’s realm.

See the pale battalions of the dead cross the  
bridge freely to our garth this night.

Feel them nearby, mighty wisdom of the  
ancients receiving our honor.

Hear the low ringing of Gioll.

See Mödgud stand watch over the golden  
bridge.

Feel our honored dead come to the hearth.

Hear the low, low, low ringing and sing with  
the ringing of the bridge in praise of the guid-  
ance our ancestors give, that we should always  
have it if we but ask and in thanks for their  
love and guidance let us sing.

(The Bard starts a low but steady hum, others follow; the  
humming/singing stops when those gathered feel it is  
appropriate)

## Praise Offerings to the Kindreds and Spirits

*DI:* Have the Folk brought praise?

*Bard:* They have.

*DI:* So Sind Sie!

The Bard conducts three rounds of praise offerings: Ancestors, Nature Spirits, and Gods.

## An Omen for the Blessings is Taken and Shared

While the omen is being taken the folk sing Come Druids All (as often as necessary):

*All:* Come druids all, ovates and seers  
And let your minds be still.  
Earth, sea, and sky will lend no fears,  
As the gods reveal their will.  
Let every heart sing praise to them,  
And all our works be skilled.  
Claiming their blessings to the very end,  
As the gods reveal their will. <sup>1</sup>

## Receiving the Blessings of the Gods and Spirits

D1 holds the waters aloft and hallows them with the blessings of the gods, as revealed in the omen. The Diviner leads the singing of the runes over the cup, then D1 says:

Wyrd's well waters, We waited to reveal,  
Three women Scores cut and laws  
weaving, laid,  
Women writing for the sons of men.  
Well have we witness to the glory of gods,  
Giving gift for gift, great ones all.  
Our waters received, wetness of galdr.  
Words were spoken and runes were read,  
Wyrd was revealed And weal we await.  
With these waters let our blessings flow...  
Seih den Lebenswassern da!

*All:* Behold, the Waters of Life!

The waters are passed and drunk, or asperged, as size of the group allows. As the waters are given to the Folk, they sing (3x):

Pour the waters, raise the cup,  
Drink your share of wisdom deep.  
Strength and love now fill us up,  
As the elder ways we keep <sup>2</sup>

## THANKING THE KINDREDS AND SPIRITS

*DI:* Kindreds have come heeded our calling  
Honor was given and honor received.  
Great are our dead, and great are our heroes,  
Great are our land and great are our gods.  
wights,  
With each call we to our Kindreds true,  
make  
They heed our calls and our troth stronger be.  
more,  
Rite ending, words our troth stronger still,  
waning,  
We carry it well with us all ways  
Honor to the Kindreds for ever more.  
Ullr, Skadhi, Wir danken Sie.

*All:* Wir danken Sie.

*DI:* Goette, Goettern, Wir danken Sie.

*All:* Wir danken Sie.

*DI:* Naturgeistern, Wir danken Sie.

*All:* Wir danken Sie.

*DI:* Vorfahr, Ahne, Wir danken Sie.

*All:* Wir danken Sie.

*DI:* Mödgud, Wir danken Sie.

*All:* Wir danken Sie.

*DI:* Nerthus, Wir danken Sie.

*All:* Wir danken Sie.

## Closing the Gates and Ending the Rite

*DI:* Mödgud, mighty warder ever keen  
maiden,  
Well do we know, what duty must do,  
We thank you indeed, for watching the ways,  
Guiding our kin home now to Hella's  
embrace.  
Gioll ringing loud though remembering  
remains,  
We trust your rightness great guardian  
woman  
That with need known again we may pass by  
your stay  
Your wisdom to guide well we, and our kin-  
dred of Hel.

Let the gates be closed!

*All:* Let the gates be closed!

*DI:* We have done as our ancestors did and as our children will do and the Gods have answered! Let us go out into the world secure in the knowledge that our sacrifices have pleased the gods and that we go forth under their protection. The ritual is at a close. So Sind Sie!

*All:* So Sind Sie!

### Authorship credits:

- 1 written by Sean Miller
- 2 written by Ian Corrigan
- 3 sequence by Paul Maurice
- 4 written by Sable
- 5 this verse written by Gwynne Green, original "Fur and Feather" by Sable
- 6 first verse, trad.; second verse, Richard MacKelley; bridge section, Gwynne Green



## Journaling the Druid Path

*(continued from page 2)*

powerful as the staff, the wand, the branch, the scrying bowl, or any treasures that present themselves to us. The journal, however, has the distinction of being interactive, for it is the manifestation of the Druidic Self.

Choose your journal carefully because it is, after all, a sacred tool. You must feel comfortable with using it or you won't. It's that simple. Over the years I have used folders, loose leaf binders, spiral notebooks, beautifully crafted journals bought particularly for

that purpose - ones with handcrafted paper and artistic covers — and large, bound artist's sketchbooks with leather-like covers. The choice is yours. Decorate it if you wish. Write with a pen you really love. Make the journaling process holy.

At first your journal may be little more than a record of your observations and responses to experiences. What was the weather today? Describe the sky, temperature, the conditions of light and shadow. What beings did you encounter along your way — a scolding blue jay, a curious baby squirrel? What natural occurrences did you witness? A storm? Changing leaves? The first buds of the willow? The shadows in a fish pond? How did these things make you feel? What small joys colored your life? What books were you reading? What thoughts did they engender?

Later, you may wish to add quotations, notations from your readings, descriptions of movies that stirred your imagination or your heart, art that sent your spirit soaring, your own poetry, meditations, magick, rituals.

There are exercises you can practice to foster a burgeoning awareness of your place in the natural world. Following these practices with journal entry is not a simple task. Journaling takes time and effort. It is ritual of the most difficult sort. Writing is hard work. As one wit put it, "Writing is easy; just slit your wrists and bleed onto the paper." Writing drains us and challenges us because it is so emotionally ridden. Yet writing also challenges, satisfies, creates, completes. The journal can foster one's most serious attempt at and keep one on the sometimes slippery Druidic pathway.

I first began my Druid journals back in the early days of ADF, written on notebook paper, bundled off to Isaac every few weeks or months and returned with a question mark here or a notation there and a little encouraging note at the end. I was working in the First Circle of the old study guide and had no grove with which to study. My journals were the link between myself and the budding organization. My permanent Druidic journal (which I serendipitously called "Toadflax" after a favorite herb) was begun in 1990 by a full moon. It was designed to contain my growth as a Druid. It is a large, bound sketchbook, illustrated with gorgeous Celtic reproductive work and filled with who I was at the time of each entry. As we are always a work in progress, so is our writing. With the journal, we grow and become.

Whether you are new to the Druid path, working your way through the Dedicant's Program, or an elder writing liturgy and teaching others, the journal can be a most treasured accompaniment to your journey.

Happy Journaling! 



## Ritual

# A Druid Naming Ceremony

by Phoenix

The back yard of the family welcoming in the new child. Ritual space is set up with a water-filled cauldron, a main altar, and a small hibatchi with fire in the center of the yard. A large oak in the yard serves as the "World Tree." Parents and child sit in a swing to the side of the ritual area. The main deities are chosen for their significance to the newborn and his/her family.

Three flanking altars form an outer circle for . . .

### **Nature Spirits**

(low table with a green bowl of earth, green candle, & a smaller green cup with whiskey),

### **Ancestors**

(low table with a navy bowl of local water, navy candle, & a smaller navy cup with whiskey),

### **Deities**

(low table with a light blue bowl of feathers, blue candle, & a smaller blue cup with whiskey.)

### **PRELIMINARY WORK**

Set up space: Nathair - Druid in Charge (DIC)

Pre-ritual briefing: DIC

It was traditionally the mother who named a new child, after its time of danger was passed. This family has already named their baby by filing a legal birth certificate with the state. Now though, they wish to name him before their community after his time of danger has passed. We come to welcome this new person, extend the hand of friendship and community, thank the Deities for his safe arrival, and ask their continued blessings.

[Mundane details of the rite are addressed and explained]

Individual meditation: [all meditate until the musical signal calls them back together]

### **BEGIN THE RITUAL**

Musical signal to gather: DIC - chimes rung. The group gathers and processes to form a circle around the ritual space.

Opening prayer to Earth Mother:

Earth Mother, you are our home, the ground beneath our feet. We honor you, and seek to live in balance with you. We ask your presence in our ritual today. Earth Mother, blessings and welcome. [A small bowl of cornmeal is taken from the main altar and sprinkled on the ground before the World Tree.]

All respond: Blessings & Welcome

Invite Bard (Brigit):

Brigit, you are known for your healing, as well as your craftwork, but today we call you in your aspect as Bard. Help our words to be inspired, our movements graceful, and our wits sharp to please you and all gathered as we perform this ritual. Brigit, Blessings and Welcome.

All respond: Blessings & Welcome.

## OPENING THE GROVE

Grove meditation: DIC.

[A guided meditation is led asking all to imagine themselves as trees with roots deep in the earth, and branches entwined with each other in the sky.]

Unity chant:

“We are a circle within a circle, with no beginning and never-ending”  
three times

Statement of purpose:

[The child's father steps into the circle holding him . . .]

It has long been the custom of a community or group to welcome its new members with a ceremony. Communities are as important today as they have always been, though they are now often groups of choice and not of location. You represent this child's community, you who will be his role models, his friends, and his confidants. We come together now to welcome him into our midst, and bless (name) as he begins his walk through life with us.

Outsiders offering:

[Takes a small cup of beer from main altar and pours it out away from the group.]

Outsiders, we leave this offering to you who are not concerned with what we are doing today. May you enjoy this drink and leave us in peace.

## ESTABLISH SACRED CENTER:

[The three elements of the sacred center are honored as usual, but after that, a blessing is also asked for the child. The father steps to the center of the circle holding the baby.]

We know little of how our ancestors worshipped in times passed. What we do know is that they had three things at their sacred sites: a hearth, a pit, and a deep shaft. The hearth was for the sacred fire, the pit for a sacred well, and the shaft for a pole, or bile - the World Tree.

## Fire

Sacred Fire, like you we come to dance for a short while, and like you we are hungry and must be fed. You cook our food, light our way, and keep us warm in winter time. O, sacred fire, we burn with you. [An offering of whiskey is poured into the fire.]

All respond: O, Sacred Fire, we burn with you.

O, Sacred Fire, lend your passion and will to this child. May he keep the fires of life kindled in his heart. [The child is presented to the fire — close but not over!]

## Well

Sacred Well, you are the womb from whence we spring. You are the waters of the mother, the collective unconscious that gives birth to creativity and life. You hold the water that nourishes us through out our lives. O, Sacred Well, we flow with you. [An offering of silver is dropped into the well.]

All respond: O, Sacred Well, we flow with you.

O, Sacred Well, lend your creativity, your ongoing capacity for change and renewal to this child. May he know a lightness of being. [The child is presented to the well.]

## Tree

Sacred World Tree, you are the axis of the universe. You hold the upper world high in your branches, and the lower world below in your roots. In you, meet both fire and water, light and dark. O Sacred Tree, we stand with you. [An offering of honey is poured before the tree.]

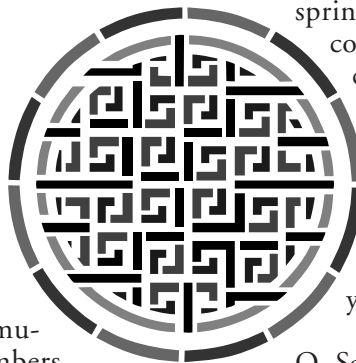
All respond: O, Sacred Tree, we stand with you.

O, Sacred Tree, lend your strength and endurance to this child, May he keep his roots firmly planted in Mother Earth, and his sights soaring with the stars. [The child is presented to the tree.]

Call in Gatekeeper (Danu):

Danu, you are the gateway, the mother that brings us into life. We call on you to watch over us and guard the gate between the worlds as we walk the elder ways. Danu, Blessings and Welcome.

All respond: Blessings & Welcome



## OPENING GATES:

[The three Druids calling the Kindreds come to the center with their staffs as the gatekeeper is called in. They form an upright triangle with the tops of their staffs touching over the well. As the gates are called open, they slide the sticks down until they form an open horizontal triangle. Walking backwards (carefully!) they retreat to their world's altar and leave the staff behind it on the ground.]

Let the gates be opened!

## MAIN OFFERINGS

Call in Nature Spirits:

We call to the spirits of this place: those of fur and feather and scale. We call to the spirits of green growing things, and the spirits of soil and stone, rock and pool. We honor you and thank you for letting us share this space with you. Blessings and Welcome.

[An offering of whiskey in a small cup on the Nature Spirits' altar is taken and poured on the fire.]

All respond: Blessings & Welcome

Call in Ancestors:

Now we invite our honored Ancestors. Ancestors of body, mind and spirit, those who gave us form, taught us, and helped shape our beliefs, welcome. To the honored family of this child who dwell beyond the ninth wave, we most especially bid welcome . . . (name the child's departed great grandparents, etc.). Blessings and Welcome.

[An offering of whiskey in a small cup on the Ancestors' altar is taken and poured on the fire.]

All respond: Blessings & Welcome

Call in Deities:

The children of the earth call out to the Tuatha de Danaan, the children of Danu. High Ones, we ask that you be with us in this rite. We also welcome the patrons of all those gathered today. Blessings and Welcome.

[An offering of whiskey in a small cup on the Deities' altar is taken and poured on the fire.]

All respond: Blessings & welcome

Invite in patron power (Dylan):

Dylan, Lord of the Sea, God of the waves, son of Ariahnrod, we call to you asking that you might join us in our rite today. Dylan, Blessings and

Welcome.

All respond: Blessings & Welcome

Praise offerings - Master of Ceremonies (MC):

Now is the time in the ritual where we offer gifts to the Gods. Those who have gifts for the child may also bring them forward. Who has something to offer? [Participants take turns coming forward, either giving things they have made to the child or the high ones, or singing a song, or reading a poem.]

## FINAL SACRIFICE:

[When all who have gifts to give are finished, the MC takes a cup of whiskey from the altar and pours it into the fire as a final sacrifice.]

Are there more gifts? No? Then let the Gods accept our sacrifices, and for those who could not be with us today in body, but are with us in spirit, we offer this final sacrifice.

[The whiskey is poured into the fire, or in front of the World Tree.]

## Seek an omen: DIC

[Ogham sticks are pulled from a small bag giving a reading from the Three Kindreds on how the energy will be returned.]

Meditation on omen: [DIC leads a short meditation on the divination given.]

## BLESSING & WORKING

### Waters of Life:

[Takes the two chalices from the main altar- one of wine and one of water - and holds them up towards the sky.]

High Ones, we ask that you bless these waters, sending us your energy that we might take it and use it to do our working here today. Behold the Waters of Life!

[Some wine and water is each poured into a silver cup belonging to the child, the rest is passed around the circle for each to drink from, or pour a small offering on the ground.]

## MAIN WORKING

Naming -DIC:

Who will speak for this child giving him the name he will be known by?

Mother:  
I will.

[She steps to the center of the circle holding the child and tells the story of why they chose the newborn's names — what each of them mean, if they came from relatives, etc. After she is finished she presents the child by his full name]

All respond: (Name) Blessings & Welcome!

Spell of blessing - DIC

Now we will pass a token of goodwill, a necklace to hold our wishes and blessings for (name.)

[All gathered pass a triskele pendant on a cord around the circle, sending a blessing or good wish for the child into the amulet.]

Affirmation of success: DIC

[The DIC takes the amulet and holds it aloft.]

May the wishes of those gathered here today stay with this child and help him in his life. May the Gods make it so. By their will, it is done.

[The DIC places the necklace around the child's neck.]

## UNWINDING & ENDING

[As the Kindreds and Deities are thanked, the Druid doing that role takes a small amount of the Waters of Life set aside in the child's cup and asks for the High Ones' blessings with it.]

Thank Patron and ask his blessing on child:

[Anoint the pendant around the child's neck with wine.]

Dylan, Lord of the Sea, King of the Waves, help us bless this child. May he know strength, and beauty, wisdom and compassion, the love of his friends, family, and high ones. Dylan, we thank you for your presence today. Join us at revels if you can, but go if you must. Blessings and Farewell."

All respond: Blessings and Farewell.

Thank Deities and ask their blessing:

[Anoint the top of the child's head with wine]

High Ones, Gods and Goddesses, we thank you for being with us today. We thank you for the safe deliverance of this child and ask that you continue to bless him through out his life. May it be a good one. Deities, Blessings and Farewell.

All respond: Blessings & Farewell.

Thank Ancestors and ask their blessing:

[Anoint the child's hands with wine.]

We thank the Ancestors for being with us today. May the path they have laid before us continue to inspire and guide us on our journeys. May the Ancestors watch over this child (name) and help him as he learns and grows. Ancestors, bless this child.

Honored Dead, we thank you for your presence and ask that you join our revels if you are not needed elsewhere, and if not, we bid you good-bye. Ancestors, Blessings and Farewell.

All respond: Blessings and Farewell.

Thank Nature Spirits and ask their blessing

[anoint the child's feet with wine.]

Nature spirits, join us now in blessing this child (name). May he be blessed as he walks in harmony with you and Mother Earth on the journey of his life. Bless this child.

Nature spirits, thank you for letting us share this space with you. May we not forget you and the lessons you bring as we all walk our daily lives. Blessings and Farewell.

All respond: Blessings & Farewell.

Close gates and thank Danu:

[The three people who invited the Kindreds come forward to cross their three staffs in a triangle over the well.]

Danu, we thank you for lending your presence here today as we blessed this child. Stay if you can, but go if you must. Blessings and Farewell.

All respond: Blessings and Farewell.

Let the gates be closed.

[The three Druids let their staffs slide upward until the points meet at the top. They return to the circle.]

## Reground and center:


[A reverse tree meditation has all gathered return from tree shape back to human shape.]

Thank Bard:

Lady Brigit, we thank you for being with us today, guiding our words that they might be sweet for the wee one. Join us at revels if you are able, but if you are not, go with our gratitude and love. Blessings and farewell.

All respond: Blessings and farewell.

Declare end: DIC

This rite is ended, may all join us inside for revels! 



## Ritual

# A Ritual for Yule

by Cynndara Morgan

For the last decade my family has celebrated Winter Solstice with many of our friends. The following ritual was designed to incorporate elements of our Grove and our household culture. The ritual borrows its structural elements from ADF while pulling many of its descriptive passages from extant sagas and our family tradition. It also pulls from my general knowledge of ritual customs and Indo-European and classical mythology. The ritual is oriented towards social rather than psychological effect.

### **PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS:**

The ritual site is arranged with a fire circle as the center. The well is sunk into the ground to the west and space is allotted for the tree in the east. Torches mark the cardinal points. Fuel wood is stacked to the south and the processional enters from a gate in the north-east of the circle. Sacrificial items and the torch for the joining of the fire and water are placed on the stones around the fire circle. Each participant carries a sprig of rosemary in the procession. All lights are extinguished until the lighting of the fire.

### **ADDITIONAL PROPS:**

Horn  
Ale  
Flour  
Whiskey  
Sacred oil  
Rosemary branch  
A jug of water  
Evergreen tree  
Basket of tree ornaments  
A bowl of nuts  
Ancestral recipe  
Brandy  
Bread or fruit  
Runes  
Blessing cup

### **Beginning signal:**

A horn is blown three times to signal the beginning of the ritual.

### **Introductory prayer (Note 1):**

#### *Druid 1:*

By earth, by sky, by sea,  
In the sight of spirits, ancestors, shining gods,  
and mortal men  
Let our words and deeds proclaim the ancient  
way.  
Let this rite begin!

**Processional:**

Participants proceed to the fire, circling around deosil.

*Druid 1 and Druid 3:*

As we approach the sacred grove  
With heart and mind, flesh and bone,  
Join us now in ways of old.  
We have come home.

**Statement of purpose and precedent:***Druid 2:*

The Sun has withered and grown weak  
His strength is waning and we who are  
Dependent on his light and warmth,  
Wait and watch in the Wolf's darkness  
On this, the longest night of the year.

Let our voices sound to the heavens.  
Let our wills be joined as one.  
Let our gifts strengthen the gods  
To drive the Wolf once more to the shadows  
To hasten the Sun's rebirth.

**Invocations to earth and sky (Note 2):***Druid 1:*

Hertha, O beloved Mother Earth  
From whose dark womb is born all green and  
growing things  
And to whom all life descends in death's darkness,  
We honor you as our forefathers did before us.  
Offering this precious drink, which was born of  
your bounty,  
We pray that you accept our gift and bless and  
uphold this rite.

Druid 1 pours ale onto the earth beside the fire.

*Druid 1:*

Tiwaz, O beloved Father Sky  
From whose bright heaven comes the wind, the  
rain,  
And the lightning which first gave spark to life  
itself,  
We honor you as our forefathers did before us.  
Offering this precious grain, which was born of  
your bounty,  
We pray that you accept our gift and bless and  
uphold this rite.

Druid 1 takes a handful of flour and blows it across the  
fire.

**Sacrifice to the outsiders (Note 3):***Druid 3:*

Ancient and dark ones; unseen, unsightly, and  
unloved  
We make this offering to you  
You twisted and misshapen  
You cold of heart and dim of mind  
Take this offering and trouble not our rites.

Druid 3 pours whiskey onto the earth, south-west of the  
circle (Note 4).

**Establishing the sacred centers:***Druid 1:*

In ancient times fire, man's greatest tool and  
nature's fiercest weapon, defined the meeting  
place of the sacred and the profane, the heart of  
the home and of religious ceremony. Therefore,  
when we come together to celebrate the rites of  
our ancestors, we light a fire with flint and steel,  
the twin gifts of earth and skill. We light this fire  
as the center of our circle, the symbol of the  
ancient ways, and as a means by which our sacri-  
fices may be conveyed to the realms of the gods.

The fire attendant lights the fire with flint and steel  
(Note 5).

*Druid 4:*

O sacred fire that consumes and transforms  
Ancient enemy and first-born friend of  
humankind.

Druid 4 pours oil into the fire.

*Druid 4:*

Accept this offering of fragrant bough  
Become for us the living door to the heavens  
The manifestation of the Shining Ones  
And the path of our return to the ancient ways.  
(Note 6)

Druid 4 raises rosemary branch.

*Druid 4:*

O sacred bough of fragrant memory (Note 7)  
May your sweet, rising smoke  
Reach the halls of the gods.

Druid 4 casts the rosemary into the fire.

*Druid 4:*

May we pray with a good fire. (Note 8)

All participants cast rosemary sprigs into the fire.

*All:*  
May we pray with a good fire!

Druid 5 pours water from the jug into the well.

*Druid 5:*  
O sacred waters that flow and swirl beneath all,  
Primeval womb of all that lives,  
Take into yourself the fire of the heavens.  
Become once again newly potent with unmani-  
fested possibilities. (Note 9)

Druid 5 pours oil into the well and lights the torch  
from the fire.

*Druid 5:*  
Accept this offering of sacred oil.  
Become for us the door into the darkness  
And the mirror of the unknown.

Druid 5 thrusts the torch into the well, extinguishing it  
and then asperges the participants with the wet branch.  
(Note 10)

Druid 2 steps away from the circle to the east and  
spreads arms to gather attention.

*Druid 2:*  
An ash stands, I know by the name Yggdrasil.  
(Note 12)

The tree attendant (Note 11) exits the circle to the east  
and retrieves the tree which has been positioned just out-  
side the gate to the east. The tree attendant returns to  
stand behind Druid 2 in the east.

*Druid 2:*  
That tall tree is watered by icicles daily.  
Thence comes the dew that drops in the dells.  
It stands ever green above Urd's well.

Three are the roots that run three ways  
Beneath that mighty bole uprearing:  
One harbors Hel, another the frost giants,  
Mortals find shelter beneath the third.

Ratatosk is the squirrel that runs  
From its roots to the Heavens and again downward.  
The words of the eagle above the branches,  
He bears to the gnawer below.

Four are the stags with necks gracefully arched  
That gnaw on the widespread, green-clad limbs.

There are more serpents beneath that tree  
Than any unwise ape could imagine.

Yggdrasil's Ash must yet endure,  
More than mere mortal may know.  
The bole of it crumbles with rot  
And below gnaws the Serpent, ever hungry.

The Ash Yggdrasil is the noblest of trees,  
The horse of Ygg, who rides upon it  
From Earth to Asgard and Hel after.  
Yet nine worlds I knew, nine Trees of Life,  
Before this World Tree grew from the ground.

Druid 2 steps aside, leaving the tree and tree attendant  
as the attention focus.

Druid 1 steps forward beside the tree, picking up the  
basket of tree ornaments.

*Druid 1:*  
From the fire of the heavens to the watery abyss  
of the underworld, all trees are one tree, the  
Shaman's stallion that joins heaven and earth. So  
also is this tree, Yggdrasil, by which we may travel  
between the realms of mortals and gods, and with  
us our hopes, our dreams, and our desires.

Druid 1 walks slowly around circle, handing each person  
an ornament.

*Druid 1:*  
In ancient times our ancestors would dedicate a  
tree in every grove and village to be what were later  
called fairy trees. On this tree they would hang  
ornaments, ribbons, little bits of metal, or other  
tokens as symbols and sacrifices that their wishes  
might come true. From that comes today's custom  
of raising the Christmas tree. So tonight, we take  
this opportunity to remind the gods of our wishes  
and dreams. Take an ornament and dedicate it to  
some special desire, to some message you have for  
the gods tonight and hang it on the tree.

Druid 1 demonstrates by hanging the first ornament on  
the tree, then moves aside.

*All:*  
By fire and by water,  
Between the earth and sky,  
We stand like the World Tree,  
Rooted deep, crowned high.

Come we now to the well,  
The eye and the mouth of earth.

Come we now to the well  
And silver we bring.  
Come we now to the well,  
The waters of rebirth.  
Come we now to the well.  
Together we sing.

We will kindle a fire,  
A door to the Shining Ones. (Note 13)  
We will kindle a fire  
And offerings pour.  
We will kindle a fire,  
A light beneath the moon and sun.  
We will kindle a fire.  
Our spirits will soar.

Gather we at the tree,  
The root and the crown of life.  
Gather we at the tree,  
The branching and tall.  
Gather we at the tree,  
The pillar of heaven bright.  
Gather we at the tree,  
The center of all!

#### **Sacrificial rites:**

##### *Druid 1 (Note 14):*

O you who dwell within this land, who are this land in spirit; you round rocks and standing stones, you trees tall and solemn or spreading and fair; creatures hoofed, horned, scaled, and winged, we greet you in the spirit of kinship and offer you hospitality. May there be friendship and sharing between us in the ancient way.

Druid 1 offers a bowl of nuts at the base of the tree. Then, he kindles torch to the east from the fire.

##### *Druid 1:*

O you who were our fathers' fathers and our mothers' mothers, you who gave our flesh and blood its form, though now you dwell in the spirits' realm, we greet you in the hospitality always owed to kinship. May you remember us in your world, as we remember you in ours. May there continue to be sharing between us in the ancient way.

Druid 1 offers a cup of special ancestral recipe (Note 15) at the western torch and kindles torch from fire.

##### *Druid 2:*

O you who are great beyond mortal knowing,  
Shining Ones of ancient and immortal kin, Aesir

and Vanir, gods of heaven and of earth, we greet you as in days of old. May there be friendship and hospitality between us. Gaze kindly on us, High One, Just-as-High, and Third! Accept the offerings we make this night, that there may be sharing between us in the ancient way.

Druid 2 offers brandy directly into the fire. As Druid 3 begins speech, south and north torches are kindled from the fire.

##### *Druid 3:*

Tonight we come together to witness the longest night of the year and the beginning of winter. Over the centuries this has become a joyous time, as families join together and exchange food and gifts. We must remember that this was not always such a happy season. In ancient times, the first day of winter marked the beginning of a long, cold, and often hungry wait until spring. During that wait it was not unusual for many members of the community to die. The oldest and the youngest, those too weak to survive without fresh fruits and vegetables, and victims of diseases that passed quickly in small houses around smoky fires would pass away. This night was a preparation for the harsh times ahead. No one knew when death would come nor in what dark year Ragnarok's demons would swallow the sun entirely along with the gods and the men whom they protected. So it is on this night we join together, as they did then, to remember that all things die. Cattle, kinsmen, and even the gods themselves will someday pass away. We can only hope and pray that this night will not be the beginning of that endless night, that the sun will rise tomorrow, heralding a spring still far to come.

##### *Druid 1:*

Tonight we remember the darkness and the doom which will overtake even the gods by recounting the tale of how Odin came to know his own fate. He traveled the road to Hel to raise the ancient Volva from her grave to foretell the fate of Balder, the beloved God of the Sun (Note 16).

Counsel took the Aesir under  
Yggdrasil's out stretched branches.  
Omens sought, shook runes for answer  
Why Balder was troubled by dreadful dreams.

Mighty slight was the Sun-God's slumber  
Less his comfort when lots were cast.  
Staves then showed him doomed to die  
Woe the weird of Frigg's son.

Up rose Odin, all-wise father  
Saddled Sleipnir, faring downward,  
Riding the road to Hel's dark doorway.  
Summoned She who knows all secrets.

Forced to rise, She spoke from the grave.

*Druid 2:*

Who among men wakes my sleeping?  
Covered with snow, I lay forgotten.  
Drenched with dew, long have I been dead.

*Druid 1:*

Answered the Aesir's all-high father.

*Druid 3:*

Name me Waywont. I will answer.  
Speak you from death's home as I from life's  
For whom is a place preparing yonder?

*Druid 2:*

Mead is made for fair-browed Balder.  
Bench and couch are covered in gold.  
Cease your questions. Ask no more!

*Druid 3:*

Cease not, seer. I will know all.  
Who shall be the bane of Balder  
And rob Odin's son of his age?

*Druid 2:*

High above the field there grew  
Slender and fair, the mistletoe bough.  
The sprig I see there shall become  
A sorrow-dart shot by Hoder's hand.  
Now cease your questions. Ask no more!

*Druid 3:*

Cease not, seer. I will know all.  
Who shall avenge him harshly on Hoder?  
What hand shall bring Balder's bane to the pyre?

*Druid 2:*

Balder's brother, before his time born.  
Not one day old, shall Odin's son battle.  
He laves not his hands, nor combs his hair  
Ere he brings Balder's foe to the fire.  
Now cease your questions. Ask no more!

*Druid 3:*

Cease not, seer. I will know all.

*Druid 2:*

No mere wanderer are you, Waywont.  
Odin I name you, Father of aeons.  
Know then the doom of the gods awaiting.

Eastward in Ironwood the Old One sits  
Fostering Fenrir's fearsome offspring.  
From them shall come a troll-shaped monster  
That shall devour the shining moon.

It feeds on the life of those who lie dying  
And blood-red colors the dwellings of heaven.  
The sun shall be dark the summers thereafter  
And all winds stinking.

For the Aesir crows a gold-combed cock  
That wakes the warriors in Host Father's hall.  
But another crows beneath the earth  
A soot-red cock in the halls of Hel!

Garm howls at the hollows of Hel.  
What is fast loosens, and Freke runs free  
To Ragnarok, the gods' death-struggle.

Brothers shall battle and slay one another.  
Kin-ties of sisters' sons be shattered.  
Ax-time, sword-time, shield shall be cloven  
Wind-time, wolf-time, ere the world wanes.

Loud blows Heimdal the horn held high.  
The giant is loosened, the Tree overturned.  
The serpent writhes, whipping the waves.

From over the water come Muspell's folk.  
Loki their helmsman, monsters fare forth  
Flaring fire flames fierce from the south.  
Mountains burst open, heavens are Sundered.  
Skewered the gods' bright sun on a sword.

The sun grows dim. Earth sinks beneath the  
waters.

The sparkling stars fall dark from the sky.  
Fire entwines the life supporter.  
Steam rises to the heavens.

Then comes Frigg's second life's sorrow  
As Odin fares forth to battle the Wolf.

The sword of Freyr flashes against the fire  
There shall Frigg's heroes fall.

Would you know more, or what?  
Ride home Odin, with what rest you may.  
So close shall none come to me again  
Until Loki from his fetters is free  
And the Wolf runs wild at Ragnarok!

*Druid 1:*

So rode Odin homeward, bearing with him such knowledge as made his journey no lighter. Like Odin, perhaps we know more than is comfortable. We know that life and pleasure are never secure and that our time to enjoy them is uncertain. Tonight a war is waged in the heavens between the gods of light and warmth and the demons of cold and darkness. We celebrate Yule knowing that it marks the beginning of a winter which could always be the final winter, the terrible Fimbulwinter that precedes Ragnarok and the final destruction of the very gods themselves. We keep a fire-vigil all this night, to join our hearts and wills together with those forces which are friendly to us and to mankind. To those forces whom we name gods, we offer the gifts of our shared affection and the strength of our will and desire. Here we have ale, fruits, and bread. Who will we name as our gods, friends, and protectors?

Individuals volunteer the name of a favorite god or goddess, taking ale for libation and bread and fruit for more solid offering. In each case a piece or sip is taken by the worshipper to signify the shared nature of the sacrifice and then the equivalent part is tossed in the fire (Note 17).

**OMEN TAKING:**

*Druid 1:*

The gifts of the people rise to the gods on the smoke of sacrifice. May our prayers go clearly and without hindrance to those we have praised (Note 18). A favor requires a favor, a song another song, and a gift given requires a gift in return. This is the law of ancient times, alike between man and man and mankind and the gods. We have offered our gifts to the gods and we ask them in return for knowledge of what tomorrow will bring. Will our vigil bear fruit and the darkness pass?

The seer draws and interprets a rune. If an unfavorable omen is drawn, the vigil will give ample opportunity to the participants to meditate on the gods' message and consider how to respond individually.

Druid 2 raises the mead bottle and blessing cup.

*Druid 2:*

Ancient and mighty ones we honor you. Having established the bond of hospitality with the gods, what the gods have given to us we distribute freely. Behold the waters of life!

*All:*

Behold the waters of life!

The cup is passed around the circle. Participants at the opposite end of the circle from the cup begin to chant.

*All:*

When we give we receive and are blessed  
What we share will be shared in return.  
Those we praise in joy will respond in our need.  
We are kin to the gods when we drink their mead  
(Note 19).

*Druid 1:*

Now the formal sacrifice is ended. Let the people stay or part as they will. This fire will be kept burning until sunrise to hold the night's power at bay. Good luck will follow those who keep vigil with strength and will to watch through out the night.

All light in the house is kindled from the fire, and no electric lighting is used until dawn (Note 20).

**Closing rites performed at either visible dawn or clear light:**

*Druid 1:*

The son of the dawn spurs on his charger,  
Caparisoned gaily in precious gems.  
Radiance flows from his steed's mane.  
He draws in the chariot Dvalin's toy.

Up rise the gods. Forth shines the sun  
Northward to Niflheim. The night draws away.  
Heimdall once more springs upon Bifrost,  
Mighty clarion-blower on the mountains of heaven.

Another earth rises green from the sea.  
Torrents tumble. The eagle soars  
From the mountains seeking fish.  
Harvests shall grow on unsown fields,  
Ills be recessed, and Balder shall come.  
With him Hoder shall build on Ropt's soil,  
As gentle gods of the chosen (Note 21).

Druid 1 offers a final libation to the fire.

**Druid 1:**

Now is the sun returned to glory.  
Now is the darkness banished once more.  
Now is our long vigil ended in victory.

Druid 1 offers the wishing tree into the fire (Note 22).

**Druid 1:**

Fire, carry our dreams to the heavens  
Then may you rest, your night's work done.  
Let the fire be flame.  
Let the well be water.  
Let all be as it was before.  
The rite is ended.

Druid 1 extinguish the fire with water from the well.

## NOTES

### (1) Introductory Prayer

Original. I noticed that Little Acorn was in the habit of using several sections of "purpose and precedence" in an explanatory mode, but no "opening prayer" in a ritual/poetic mode, so I wanted a clear beginning which would among other things establish me as the person leading the rite. This focus was important in that half the people present were not experienced with formal ritual and needed to know who to follow for cues.

### (2) Invocations to Earth and Sky

I quibble with the ADF Standard of invoking "Inspiration" at this point. While various powers of ritual wording and poetic vision are universal in IE motif, the first and foremost deity of all IE pantheons, the mate of Mother Earth and the single deity universally recognizable in IE linguistic forms is Deus Pater, the Patriarchal Sky Father. Denial of this fact serves no useful purpose. Imbedding such denial in constant ritual is as magically dangerous as any other form of constant, ritualized denial of a major aspect of reality.

The power of Inspiration is in general strongly linked to the IE veneration of the "fiery liquid" given by gods to man and linking the two by incorporation and sacrifice — i.e. alcoholic beverage, which is highly celebrated in the ritual formula of the Waters of Life.

### (3) Sacrifice to the Outsiders

The placement of this passage in the ritual emphasizes the general linkage of the Outsiders/Monsters/Enemies in IE lore with the older, first generation of gods which also includes Mother Earth and Father Sky (for instance, Gaia and Uranos and the Titans).

The second stanza of the standard ritual, "Likewise we acknowledge in ourselves," etc., was deleted due to the presence of family and friends to whom I felt the similarity to Roman Catholic "confession of sin" would be offensive.

### (4) Outsider's sacrifice poured to the SouthWest

On my property, a trio of pine trees marks the spot where sacrifices are regularly offered to the squirrels to keep them out of the garden. Furthermore, the design of the space made it impossible to make this offering in the North, which I consider most Ceremonially Appropriate.

This statement when submitted to the Liturgists' Guild sparked a week-long debate on the appropriate direction of the Outsiders. As a basic summary, it was observed that there is no universal direction of the Outsiders in Indo-European lore; while the South appears to be the direction of the Enemies in Vedic practice, the West is the direction of the Dead in Celtic mythology, and the East is the direction of Jotunheim, the home of the Giants, in the Norse material from which this ritual is derived. In addition, it was noted by Robert Barton that burial evidence suggests the orientation of warrior's graves so as to face the then-current physical Enemies.

Against this I argue the universal orientation of the ancient world to the the East or rising sun (preserved, in fact, in the word "orientation"), giving the resultant placement of the taboo Left hand to the North. The North is the abode of demons in Parsee mythology, the land of the Dead (at the back of the North Wind) in Greek and English, and Nifleheim, also the abode of the Dead, in Norse mythology. Furthermore, while grave orientation is not universal in practice, it shows a universal awareness of and response to a basic solar orientation; i.e., the head may be placed toward the sun or the \*face\* may be oriented toward the sun, but both indicate the same underlying intent; likewise, I would argue, with orientation of half-reclining corpses towards the south in far northern Norse graves, where the predominant direction of the sun is more southern than eastern. Thus, in the northern hemisphere, the North is clearly the direction of Darkness, and in keeping with Indo-European religious traditions, darkness is the direction of taboo. Finally, as determined Confederates located in Richmond, Virginia, it is the position of my household that the physical and mortal Enemy is definitively located in Washington D.C.

### (5) Lighting Fire With Flint and Steel

My husband has been lighting fire for ceremonies with flint and steel for 10 years. There is always, however, a certain amount of risk involved with this technique, as damp charcloth or anything less than perfect feeding with successive stages of tinder and kindling can lose the blaze.

On this occasion, Robert came as close, he says, as he has ever come to losing it without doing so. Several of us thought he had. In fact, several of us still probably aren't completely sure whether he actually re-lighted the fire with the Bic he had suddenly palmed from inside his sleeve. There are three possible contingency options for this disaster: 1) Have a Bic. It's also flint and steel, although not as impressive. 2) Make formal sacrifices of peculiam and start all over again from the very beginning of the ritual since this is close to the start. Double the sacrifice to the Outsiders. 3) Cut out all cheerful references, leave the lights off, and settle in for a long, cold, dark vigil of a ritual in solemn atonement for ritual error.

#### **(6) Sacrifice to Fire**

Beginning with Corrigan's (a) initial line, I reworked this to emphasize the primacy of Fire as the center of IE sacrificial ritual and its place as a symbol of continuous ancient tradition. I prefer to centralize both the independent divinity of the Fire and the Gods and the social content of ritual in linking the human community to them, rather than the individual psychological aspect of "let holy flame warm our spirits and our lives" and "Sacred fire, burn within us."

#### **(7) Rosemary Boughs**

Besides having a sweet scent and a modest psychoactive effect, rosemary is a traditional purificatory herb in classical culture, and is linked in herbal tradition with strengthening memory. Therefore, it represents both the individual and the cultural group-memory linking us to the rituals of ancient times.

#### **(8) May we pray with a good fire.**

This line is actually Vedic (O'Flaherty p. 100, RV 1.26.8); it was borrowed second-hand from Cei's Ostara ritual.

#### **(9) Sacrifice to Waters**

Beginning with Corrigan's (a) tag-line, I wanted to emphasize the Well as independent of the worshippers; not "the elder depths within us all," but the womb from which our souls spring. Again, in this ritual universe the sacred Well is not within, but without; we may come to grasp the Unknown, but we look for it in the outer, not the inner, Darkness.

#### **(10) MEETING OF FIRE AND WATER**

The making of khernips, the water which has absorbed holy flame, is a fundamental element of classical Greco-Roman sacrificial ritual (see Apollonius' Ta Hiera, the Neoclassical Rite of Sacrifice) and harks again to the meeting of Fire and Water in the sacred and vital fiery liquid which the Gods' gift, blood, and semen (O'Flaherty, p. 97). In Greco-Roman ritual the participants ceremonially wash in the blessed water in ordinary rites (Burkert),

however aspersion was used for purification in larger groups and was borrowed thence by early Christianity.

#### **(11) Staging the TREE**

This technique was adopted as a last-ditch solution to the otherwise intractable problem of how to fix the Tree firmly in place. Without a large Tree, it couldn't be done easily in the time available, and we did not want to risk cutting a large tree from the local commons. So we resorted to the conventions of Chinese stage setting. This worked remarkably well, giving a ritually-naive friend a useful job which required no advance preparation, and setting up the circumstances for a year of bad jokes. The motion involved in leaving the ritual area, coming back with the tree, and dividing attention from the main speaker allows wandering attention somewhere to rest which is nevertheless integral to the ritual.

#### **(12) An ash stands, I know, by name Yggdrasil**

This entire description does not occur in any one place in the Eddas (I used Tichenell's *Masks of Odin*, despite my misgivings regarding the translator, for the vast majority of all my texts because it was on the shelf. I hope to acquire a more scholarly translation). It was necessary to piece together sections from the Voluspa (Tichenell verse 19 is the first stanza, Auden & Taylor verse 6 is the last) and the Grimnismal (Tichenell 31-35, 44), then touch up the poetry and add continuity. However, my only original addition was the second and third lines of the last stanza, "the horse of Ygg, who rides upon it, from Earth to Asgard, and Helle after."

No formal meditation was included in this ritual because 1) I don't think formal meditation belongs in ritual, it belongs in private devotion and small working groups, 2) half the people present don't meditate and would find the exercise pointless, time-wasting, and possibly a joke at the Grove's expense, and 3) anyone who is inclined to meditate can and will slip into a good meditative state when the opportunity is provided by a long stretch of poetry like this or the core passages of the rite. As the average participant is a listener-observer for the majority of the ritual, the ritual experience in and of itself is appropriately a meditation. As proof of this contention, less than three weeks after, the Little Acorn SD honestly thought that we had done a Grove Attunement during the ritual. Finally 4) the fire-vigil provides a better opportunity for personal meditation for those who are specifically interested than anything which could be cobbled into the middle of the ritual.

#### **(13) We will kindle a Fire A door to the Shining Ones**

**Gather we at the Tree  
The root and the crown of life  
Gather we at the Tree**

**The branching and tall  
Gather we at the Tree  
The pillar of heaven bright  
Gather we at the Tree  
The Center of All.**

These lines were changed from the version previously published by Corrigan (c). I did this to eliminate references I mistakenly attributed to Wiccan influence ("Bless all and with harm to none"), make the rhyme scheme consistent with the good first verse, and emphasize the place of each element as a Center.

No formal Gate opening was used. I will write a paper on why I object to formal gate openings at some future time. In brief: the Gods don't need us to make a gate for them. Most IE myths agree that the Gods co-exist with us in this universe at their own discretion. If they aren't here, they can get here under their own power. To assume less is gross insult to Their abilities. IE tradition is to call the Gods, or Invoke them, as long, pleasantly, and intricately as possible ("or by whatsoever name it pleases You to be called") in order to get their attention. As far as I know, there is no place for an "Opening of the Gate" in any IE ritual until the adoption of demonological summonings from Middle-Eastern tradition.

Opening a Gate, however, does attract and provide passage for all sorts of other things that like to feed off of human energy. The sacrifice to the Outsiders does not eliminate this problem; it's only going to buy off the small and unsophisticated Problems. While I'm not claiming that opening a Gate will lead to a visit from Great Cthulu, I do believe that it will lead to attention from many entities which the majority of people at any rite do not have the ability to recognize or deal with. This added to both normal human psychological imbalances, and the tendency for marginalized persons such as are attracted to neopagan religion to have more than normal psychological imbalances, leads to an interaction effect which can only increase the statistical probability of life crises and emotional disturbances in attendees over the following cyclical period. Especially at the cyclical New Year, I feel that it is unethical to impose such a risk on nonmagicians who haven't the faintest understanding of the potential consequences. ADF needs to decide whether they are truly doing "open" ritual for non-initiates, or magical ritual for an initiatory group. The same rules simply don't apply to both audiences.

#### **(14) Sacrificial Rites**

Although these were written to provide continuity for the written ritual, in practice, I simply asked the person making the invocation to say a few brief words of their own preference. I do not believe there is a wrong way to make the Triple Sacrifice, and due to the length of the prepared portions of the script, it seemed well to keep these simple.

#### **(15) Special Ancestral Recipe**

Not everyone, of course, has a Special Ancestral Recipe. Ours is called "bourdeongus," and is a homemade Dutch liquor which has been translated by Dutch friends as meaning "Farm Boy." It is similar to other traditional recipes dating back to the seventeenth century and known throughout Scandinavia, consisting of three parts whiskey to two parts each of raisins and sugar, with cinnamon and other spices. The important thing is that this recipe has been a part of our family's holiday tradition for more than a century, making it especially appropriate to offer to those who have shared it with us in life as well as the Spirit Realm.

#### **(16) The Descent of Odin and the Prophecy of Volva**

My intention in this piece was to provide a genuine recitation from ancient texts as the core of the ritual, much as Christians base their rituals on readings from the Bible and ancient holiday celebrations would be based on a ritual re-telling of significant myths in words that had been themselves hallowed by repeated ritual use. I started by going through the Eddas in the expectation of find the story of Balder described completely in one place. However, this proved impossible. The only coherent stories in the Eddas, it appears, are Snorri Sturleson's prose contributions. The older lays are fragmentary and allusory; in many places they obviously refer to incidents which were such common knowledge as to not need repeating. By not repeating what would only bore their own audiences, the skalds have left us a mish-mash of poetic reference and allusion.

The story that appeared to emerge from reading Waywont, Odins Corpsgalder, Havamal, Grimnismal, and Voluspa, however, was that on the occasion of the first prophecy of Balder's impending doom, and perhaps while Frigga was wandering the world extracting oaths from various characters not to harm him, Odin took the high road to Hel to ask a dead seeress all of the particulars, probably in hopes of learning how to avert the fate. Once summoned, this seeress told him not only all about Balder's fate, but also about the entire episode of Ragnarok. Implied is that the Volva on the one hand was not a friend of the Gods, but not a complete enemy either; she mentions being the child of Giants. "Waywont" appears to give some of the context for this story; "Voluspa" appears to be the speech of the seeress; Odin's Korpsgaldr suggests additional references to Iduna or Nanna's role as the keeper of the apples of immortality, and the rebirth of the world and the gods afterwards.

Additional information is provided in Vaftrudnismal, translated by Tichenell as the "Lay of Illusion". None of it is exactly clear, so I made the best of it that I could. Although I originally intended simply to steal the lines and string them together, I found it necessary to do quite

a bit of tweaking in order to establish good rhythm, which is a necessary for memorization of the lines, and make it comprehensible. All thefts are from Tichenell, with V=Voluspa and W=Waywont:

*W 1-3*

Counsel took the Aesir under  
Yggdrasil's o'erspreading branches  
Omens sought, shook runes for answer  
Why Balder was troubled by dreadful dreams.

Mighty slight was the sun-god's slumber  
Less his comfort when lots were cast  
Staves then showed him doomed to die  
Woe the weird of Frigga's son.

*W 6, 8-15*

Up rose Odin, all-wise father  
Saddled Sleipnir, faring downward  
Riding the road to Hel's dark doorway  
Summoned She who knows all secrets.

Forced to rise, she spoke from the grave:  
Who among men wakes my sleeping?  
Drenched with dew — long have I been dead.

Answered the Aesir's all-high father  
Name me Waywont; I will answer  
Speak you from death's home as I from Life's  
For whom is a place preparing yonder?

Mead is made for fair-browed Balder  
Bench and couch are covered in gold  
Cease your questions, ask no more!

Cease not, seeress, I will know all.  
Who shall be the bane of Balder  
And rob Odin's son of his age?

*V 33-34*

High above the field there grew  
Slender and fair, the misteltoe bough  
The sprig I see there shall become  
A sorrow-dart shot by Hoder's hand.  
Now cease your questions; ask no more!

Cease not, seeress, I will know all.  
Who shall avenge him harshly on Hoder?  
What hand shall bring Balder's bane to the pyre?

*W 15, also V 35*

Balder's brother, before his time born  
Not one day old, shall Odin's son battle  
He laves not his hands, nor combs his hair  
Ere he brings Balder's foe to the fire.  
Now cease your questions; ask no more!

Cease not, seeress; I will know all.

*W 17*

No mere wanderer are \*you\* Waywont  
Odin I name you, father of aeons  
Know then the doom of the Gods awaiting:

*V 41-42, 44-48, 51, 53, 55, 56*

Eastward in Ironwood the Old One sits  
Fostering Fenrir's fearsome offspring  
From them shall come a troll-shaped monster  
That shall devour the shining moon.

It feeds on the life of those who lie dying  
And blood-red colors the dwellings of heaven  
The sun shall be dark the summers thereafter  
And all winds stinking.

For the Aesir crows a gold-combed cock  
That wakes the warriors in Hostfather's hall  
But another crows beneath the earth  
A soot-red cock in the halls of Hel!

Garm howls at the hollows of Hel  
What is fast loosens, and Freke runs free  
To Ragnarok, the Gods' death-struggle.

Brothers shall battle and slay one another  
Kin-ties of sisters' sons be shattered  
Ax-time, sword-time, shield shall be cloven  
Wind-time, wolf-time, ere the world wanes.

Loud blows Heimdal the horn held high  
The giant is loosened  
The Tree overturned  
The serpent writhes, whipping the waves.

From over the water come Muspell's folk  
Loki their helmsman, monsters fare forth  
Flaring fire flames fierce from the south  
Mountains burst open, heavens are Sundered  
Skewered the gods' bright sun on a sword.

The sun grows dim; earth sinks neath the waters  
The sparkling stars fall dark from the sky  
Fire entwines the Life-Supporter  
Steam rises to the heavens.

Then comes Frigga's second life's sorrow  
As Odin fares forth to battle the Wolf  
The sword of Frey flashes against the fire  
There shall Frigga's heroes fall.

*W 19*, except that the phrase "Would you know more, or what" is from the Auden/Taylor translation of the *Voluspa*

Would you know more, or what?  
Ride home, Odin, with what rest you may  
So close shall none come to me again  
Until Loki from his fetters is free  
And the Wolf runs wild at Ragnarok!

### (17) Naming of the Gods

Despite having pre-arranged this with both Grove and family members, it took a little while for the sacrificial action to warm up. It is utterly necessary for certain members of the group to be pre-selected to offer the first couple of sacrifices in order to demonstrate the ritual and encourage participation.

### (18) Also from *Cei Serith's Ostara ritual*

#### (19) Original.

I have tried to work out a tablature for transcription of music in alphanumeric form below. As the entire song is in major key, (+) marks indicate the note at the next higher octave rather than a sharp, with numbers indicating each beat in a measure of 4/4 time.

3 4 | 1-2 3 4|1-2 3 4 | 1-2-3-4| 1-2  
D D G G G D+ D+ B A —  
When we give, we re-ceive and are blessed

3 4 | 1-2 3 4| 1-2 3 4|1-2-3-4| 1-2  
D D G G G D+ D+ B A —  
What we share will be shared in re- turn

3 4 | 1-2 3-4| 1-2  
D D G G D+  
Those we praise in joy

3 4 | 1-2 3 4 | 1-2  
D+ D+ C+ B C+ A  
Will re-pond in our need

3 4 | 1-2 3 4 | 1-2 3 4 | 1-2 3-4 | 1-2-3-4  
B C+ D+ G G G A B A A G  
We are kin to the gods, when we drink their mead

#### (20)

This is a personal custom which I have practiced for about 15 years; however it is very difficult to convince guests that you mean business. The only way to perfectly maintain ritual purity among nonbelievers is to threaten them with death or dump the beer over their heads.

### (21) Closing Rites

#### *Odens*

The son of the Dawn spurs on his charger

#### *Korpsgaldr*

Caparisoned gaily in precious gems

#### *V 24*

Radiance flows from his steed's mane  
He draws in the chariot Dvalin's toy

#### *V 26*

Up rise the gods; forth shines the sun  
Northward to Niflheim the night draws away  
Heimdal once more springs upon Bifrast  
Mighty clarion-blower on the mountains of heaven

#### *Voluspa*

Another earth rises green from the sea

#### *V 61*

Torrents tumble; the eagle soars  
From the mountains, seeking fish.

#### *V64*

Harvests shall grow on unsown fields  
Ills be recessed, and Balder shall come  
With him Hoder shall build on Ropt's soil  
As gentle gods of the Chosen

#### (22)

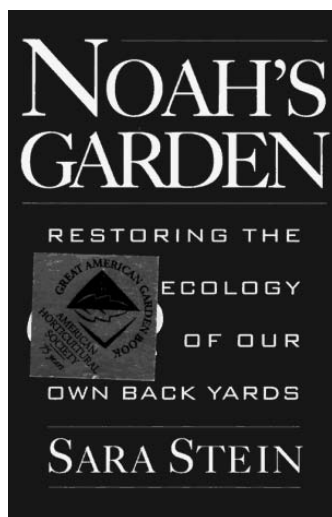
My husband pointed out to me that feeding an entire green tree into the fire at dawn was sure to create enough smoke to frighten the neighbors and bring out the Fire Department. Therefore, the Tree was fed to the Fire bit by bit over the course of my vigil, repeating the injunction to:

Fire, carry our dreams to the heavens  
Then may you rest, your night's work done

with each branch. This also gave me the opportunity to magically identify the ornaments with the branches

*continued on page 27*

# Book Reviews



## NOAH'S GARDEN

by SARA STEIN

Houghton Mifflin Company 1993

336 pages

reviewed by Barbara S. Knox, Ph.D. (White Owl)

Purple loosestrife blooms profusely in wet bottom lands. Multiflora roses festoon every fence post and aggressively push their canes into the tops of trees. Crab grass, pig weed and purslane flourish in garden beds. Russian olive, Japanese barberry, and honeysuckle thrive in

woods and fields. Such invasions of alien species tempt one to embark on rescue missions for the native plants they displace, to try to restore the landscape to some semblance of what the early settlers described so glowingly.

*Noah's Garden* is an excellent and highly readable account of such an attempt. Selected as a Great American Garden Book by the American Horticultural Society in 1993, it is becoming a classic, not only for its delightful and interesting contribution to environmental literature, but for the author's charming illustrations as well. Stein chronicles her conversion from a high-style, conventional gardener to a superb field ecologist engaged in restoring sterile suburbs to native landscapes that are more beautiful, interesting, and alive. Imagine fruit-filled hedgerows, native grass meadows and natural ponds, all teaming with wildlife, gracing back yards! Her story is laced with fascinating natural history and ecological wisdom. Both useful and visionary, it is a superb book.

## THE LEGENDARY PAST, CELTIC MYTHS

by MIRANDA JANE GREEN

British Museum Press, 1993

unknown pages

reviewed by Christopher F. Akins

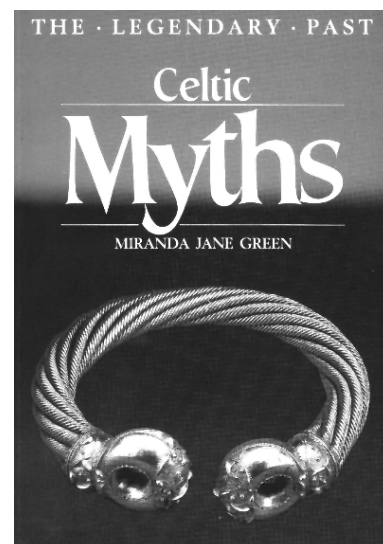
Miranda Green's *Celtic Myths* is an excellent introductory study of Celtic mythology for the period from 600BC to 400AD. *Celtic Myths* is a succinct (78 pages in length) and general introduction to Celtic mythology. Green acknowledges the difficulties in the study of Celtic mythology from the outset, citing the lack of written documents from ancient Celtic writers as well as the bias shown by contemporary Classical authors. As a result of the lack of objective contemporary sources, Green relies heavily on archeological evidence to support written chronicles, particularly in the case of her treatment of sacrifices.

The first chapters address the early myths of Ireland and the Ulster Cycle. Green cites ancient texts such as The Book of Invasions and the Tain Bo Cuailnge as her primary sources of Celtic mythology in Ireland. While she notes that these sources are to be approached with caution as Christian scholars compiled them during the medieval period, Green attempts to justify their use as the only resources available to the modern scholar, particularly for the study of Pagan Ireland. Furthermore, Green points out that there are very few "Christian" inclinations in the texts. While the reliance on such texts as factual representations of the actual practice of religion in Pagan Ireland are dangerous, these sources may still be valuable

for use in reconstructing the general Celtic pantheon and myths related to the pantheon. When possible, Green attempts to correlate written evidence with archeological and linguistic evidence.

Green provides a description of the Welsh mythology in the chapters following coverage of Irish myths. She again makes use of vernacular sources in her treatment of Welsh mythology, relying on the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, the Tale of Culhwch and Olwen and the Dream of Rhonabwy. From these sources she demonstrates common characteristics shared by Welsh and Irish Celtic deities. She also discusses common themes in Celtic mythology, such as the pairing of male and female deities. Green occasionally discusses the similarities of mainland Celtic myths to those of the Isles.

After the introduction to the primary Celtic myths of Ireland and Wales and a brief glance at the Celtic main-



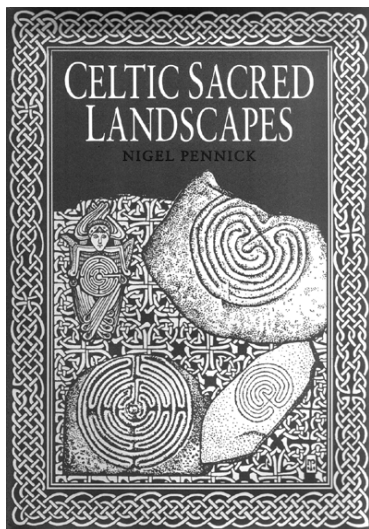
land, Green examines specific attributes of Celtic mythology. She spends a fair amount of time exploring the symbolism of water, sky, sun, and animals in ancient Celtic religion. The central theme is “numinosity (the presence of spirits) in all aspects of the natural world.” Her treatment of the spiritual aspects of groves, springs, and other aspects of nature is not confined to the Isles, but encompasses the entire Celtic world. Green does an admirable job of demonstrating the vastness of the Celtic world and the similarities in myths. In this area of study she relies heavily on archeological sources.

After her substantive examination of Celtic myths and pantheons, Green progresses to a brief examination of the ritual of the Celtic religion. Again, relying heavily on archeology, and more cautiously on contemporary Classical writings, Green studies the role of Druids in religious ritual. Her treatment of the Druid in Celtic society is almost exclusively related to their place in religious practice, although she does concede that they possessed a larger role. The study is primarily focused on ritual acts, specifically sacrifices and votive offerings. Green treats the issue of human sacrifice fairly, noting that there is little archeological evidence supporting the practice of ritual murder. In cases where archeology indicates the possibility of human sacrifice, Green notes that it is impossible to distinguish between death caused

by ritual actions and corpses which had ritual practices performed on them after death.

Green concludes *Celtic Myths* with a study of the Celtic concepts of death, rebirth and the Otherworld. She conducts a thorough examination of the nature of the Celtic Otherworld and the Celtic concepts of transmigration of the soul, death and rebirth. In her study she relates the common symbols associated with Otherworld creatures and deities.

The experienced scholar may find *Celtic Myths* limited in content. However, for those seeking an introduction to the myths and deities of the Celtic world *Celtic Myths* is more than satisfactory. Green’s study of the central themes and figures in ancient Celtic myths is exceptionally well suited to those seeking general reference or knowledge. The most apparent weakness of Green’s work lies in her reliance on the vernacular chronicles. Despite her confession that the use of such texts possesses certain dangers, Green relies heavily on them to discern the attributes of the Celtic Gods and Goddesses. In her defense, she does attempt to correlate written word with archeological evidence. In the end, the shortcomings of *Celtic Myths* are a result of the scarcity of reliable primary sources. I highly recommend *Celtic Myths* as an introductory read.



## CELTIC SACRED LANDSCAPES

by NIGEL PENNICK

Thames and Hudson Publishers. 1996. 224 pages

ISBN 0 500 01666 6

reviewed by *Seabhac Fionn*

Pennick’s book is a compendium of information on aspects of the landscape, both natural and man-made, that had special religious significance to the pagan, and later Christian, peoples of the Celtic countries. The various chapters cover trees, stones,

springs and wells, mountains, caves, islands, earthworks and cities, roads and routes of pilgrimages, and more.

I especially enjoyed the introductions of each chapter, in which he describes the important spiritual characteristic of each landscape feature and how it fit within the Celtic cosmos. Although I cannot comment on the scholarly accuracy of the cosmos discussion, I am happy to say that it does fit nicely with ADF’s interpretation. Each chapter also included numerous examples and their spiritual significance in history and folklore. I

was somewhat surprised by the inclusion of manmade features in this volume, but upon reading the book, I came to realize the importance of ancient roads, cities, and buildings to the religion of the ancients.

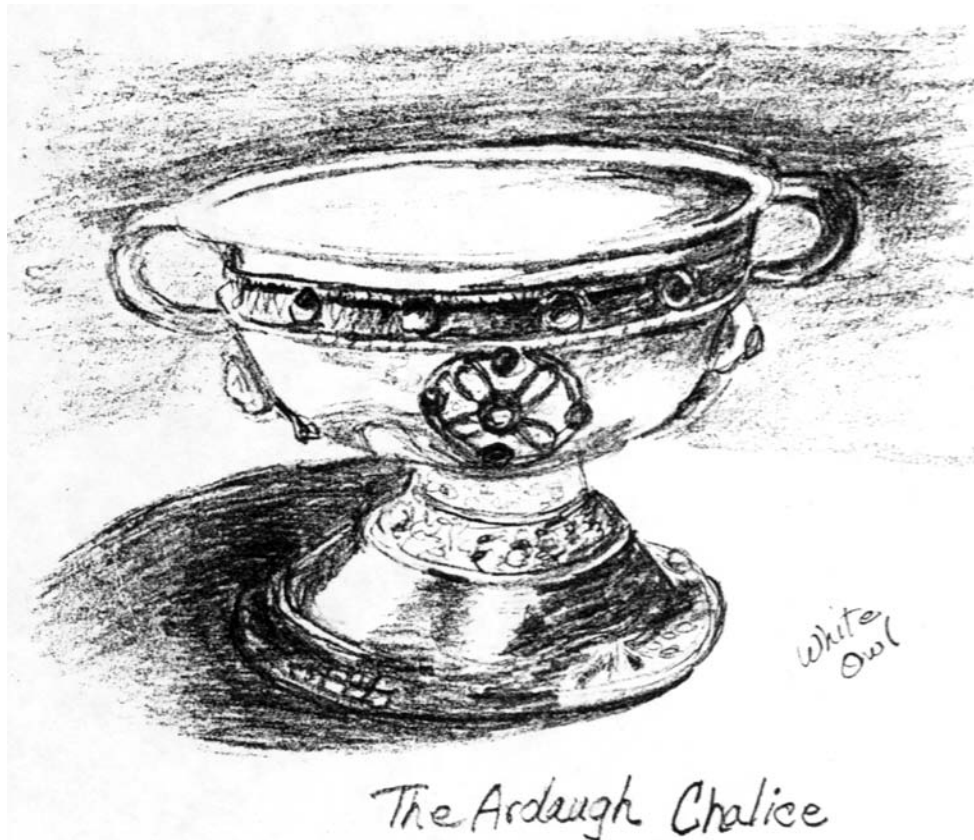
Since so many pagan sites were either destroyed or appropriated by Christianity, Mr. Pennick describes many sites within their Christian context. I felt he broached this topic and its relation to Celtic cosmology with just the right tone, seldom attacking Christianity for its usurping of pagan religious sites, but at times expressing a gratefulness for its having preserved some of them.

I wouldn’t say that Mr. Pennick came up with any real revelations in the book, but he certainly got me thinking about how to work on creating sacred spaces in non-Celtic lands, by contacting and experiencing the *anima loci*, the “place soul.”

The text of this scholarly work is beautifully interspersed with lavish Celtic artwork and depictions of sacred sites. This helps make it a beautiful addition to any bookshelf. I found the bibliography to be quite

useful, though the index was weak, and the Gazetteer of notable Celtic Sacred Places seemed rather incomplete, failing to mention a number of sites that I visited on a recent trip to England and Scotland.

I recommend the book, in spite of a few aforementioned flaws- it is a book that I will be using as a reference and as a source of ideas for rituals in many years to come.



## A Ritual for Yule

*continued from page 24*

they had been attached to as I set them aside, because I accidentally bought cheap styrofoam balls which could not be burned without nasty fumes. Paper or other natural ornaments would be a wiser investment.

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## Essay

# A Quest

by Erin Ogden Rorus

My husband and I celebrated our recent marriage by touring England, Scotland, and Wales. Our tour provided many instructive adventures. Some lessons were as mundane as “do not hike in new boots.” Other occurrences were more difficult to interpret.

The most puzzling was a quest we made in Glastonbury, a haven for Pagans and Christians alike. Many believe its magnificent Tor is the legendary Isle of Avalon. Pilgrims come to climb its sharp slopes and enjoy the fantastic views. Others come to experience the magical waters of the Chalice Well, which is situated at the foot of the Tor. Still others come to see the remains of Glastonbury Abbey, the legendary burial site of King Arthur and Guinevere. Glastonbury is a magical city and I could feel the tingle of wonder in the air.

On our second day in Glastonbury, we decided to walk a little. We set off with enthusiasm on a quest to find the reported 2000 year-old oak trees, which lie on a diagonal from the Tor’s summit. Pasture hedges and private property rights now prevent travelling in a straight line, so we wandered in the general direction.

Along the way we encountered a strange man at the bend of a country gravel road. He was living in an old bus, which I doubt ran. He wore short brown pants, a white shirt, and a green vest all made of wool. He had no shoes. He wore heavy brass torques with spiral designs around his arms and neck. His long hair was tied back with string and his beard was braided into plaits. His companion was a tall shaggy wolfhound with wary eyes. The man’s wild and masculine looks made me nervous. Although we were lost, we did not talk to him.

We continued to walk and became even more disoriented. We went around the Tor and ended up at the Chalice Well, which is on the opposite side from where the trees are supposed to be. We drank, feeling the magic water taking the ache out of our legs and putting strength into our will. We set out again toward the trees still not knowing exactly where they were.

Hours later we came upon the man again. He looked much the same sitting with his dog by a fire. Watching the firelight blaze across his torques, I knew that he could help us. I swallowed back my fear and I spoke.

“Do you know where the big oaks are?” I asked. He seemed startled. He did not understand the question at first. We were surrounded by big oaks, as is typical of the English countryside. I tried to explain we were looking for the old oaks. He smiled and gave us directions to the Druid Oaks, as he called them. I thanked him and he turned back to the fire. I could feel the dog’s eyes on me

*continued page 31*

I saw a picture of some newly-hatched sea turtles, spread-eagle and waving their tiny, green sea wings in a slow flight across the beach. Having left the relative safety of their nest, they were making their way — unerringly as turtles always seem to do — to the sea. Their distinctive tracks in the warm night sand looked like little snow angels — like the ones children make when they dash outside at the first snowfall, gleefully throwing themselves onto the ground, waving arms and legs.

As all children know, there is something absolutely magical and enlivening about the year's first snowfall. When the temperature begins to drop, I huddle indoors in sweaters and blankets, a pile of books beside me, wishing I could hibernate throughout the winter. But when I look out of my window some night to see big, fluffy snowflakes floating down through the streetlight and covering everything in white, I am enthralled. I find it nearly impossible to leave that compelling scene at my window as I try to immortalize the moment.

I was sixteen when the greatest snowstorm I remember slammed into Ohio. I remember sitting up half the night at my bedroom window gazing out to where several inches of snow were lying peacefully, fluffed onto everything in sight. There was an unearthly, mock-daylight from the street lamps which ricocheted off the dense clouds, down to the snow, and back again in a profound conversation between earth and sky which left me breathless. It was one of the most thrilling displays I'd ever beheld, and I wished it could go on forever, its innocence untouched.

Eventually, when the day dawned, I was afraid the snow would melt. The sun looked askance at the snow, but not wishing to spoil its loveliness, remained behind the clouds and let it be. It allowed the snow to continue falling for several days, and the wind, wanting to participate in this frigid frolic, joined in to whip the snow into drifts as high as the rooftops. The earth, like those of us in our houses, settled down to wait for the tempest of the elements play itself out. When the blizzard was all over, we began our lives again with a renewed respect for the beauty and majesty of nature.

At first, I found it strange to associate that great snowstorm with the little sea turtles. But then when I think of them tracking their way to unknown dangers beyond the sand, their bravery warms my heart. Surely some of them consider remaining nestled in that cozy, comfortable birthing bed, just as I want to bundle myself in my bed on cold mornings. Yet the turtles find they cannot ignore the sound of the vast oceans... calling, calling, relentlessly calling. I've seen films where the tiny turtles struggle across what must seem like miles of desert sand to reach the pounding surf of the sea, many

*continued on page 35*



## Storytelling

# Snow Turtles

by Jenni Hunt



## Essay

# A Lesson in Stone

by Christopher A.  
MacKay

While walking through a sacred forest, the master stopped and picked up a stone with his right hand. Holding it out, he spoke to his apprentice, "This stone can shape-shift. What knowledge of this and of the stone's power have you?"

"I do not understand, Master. What is the meaning of the stone you possess?" the apprentice replied.

The master gazed upon the apprentice momentarily and then carefully tied the stone onto a leather string produced from within his tunic. Thus bound, the master tied the leather string around his neck so that the stone hung loosely at the level of his breast. "Do you understand why I did that?" he asked.

Again the student was confounded, and rightly so, for he had no instruction regarding the use of stones. "Your action perplexes me, Master. Does the stone possess some special power that you might acquire by wearing it around your neck? Will you use it for magic, perhaps?"

The master smiled quietly and patiently began the lesson. "To you, this stone does not yet have meaning or power. To me, this small pebble contains the power to alter the world. That is how the stone alters itself, as if a shape-shifter." The master continued, "As for the power of the stone, it is power from a very common source. There are in existence three forms of power: that which exists within, that which exists without, and that which surrounds and touches all. Everything has one, and one has all three. Do you know that to which I refer when I speak of one thing having all three forms?"

"Although you speak to me in riddles Master, I know without a doubt that you refer to the energy of life itself."

"Excellent," replied the master. "You are correct. That which consists of energy or spirit lives within each thing. It lives without each thing and it surrounds all things in its ample, life-giving force.

"You may divine the nature and source of the stone's power through the triad of chaos and order: that which effects change, that which affects, and that which is affected. Thus, this triad allows for the three states of existence within the perceived temporal flow.

"To continue, that which causes effect uses the power within through reflection. That which affects is directed to do so and lives without. That which has been affected has most surely been touched by that which surrounds.

"When will is reflected through action, all things are affected by the change which occurs in that power which surrounds. For this reason, the magician must be

aware of his actions. Can you tell me from where the stone derives its power?"

The student was one of promise. He comprehended what was being taught and spoke confidently. "The stone cannot cause change of its own volition. Therefore its issuance is not from within. The stone can affect something else if directed to do so and can also be altered by the effects of directed action. However, in affecting it must have a source of direction, meaning reflection of another will.

"Therefore, if the stone has power it is only that which is conferred upon it. Its power is in reflecting the power that lies within the user. This means that to be directed is to reflect the will of the one who directs!" the apprentice exclaimed in sudden inspiration.

"You see truly," the master said. "While the stone holds within it that power which lies within stone and a part of that which surrounds and binds all things, it may only release that power when properly directed. If you can conceive this, then tell me what the power of the stone is for me, your instructor in ancient wisdom, when I wear it upon my neck."

"For you, the power of the stone is the power to instruct."

At this, the master removed the stone necklace from his own neck, and held it within the grasp of his left hand.

"With this in mind, a seer will use the stone for one purpose, the magician for another, and the teacher yet another. The stone itself does not change. Through the will of the user the stone changes form. The stone's power reflects the will of the heart, and so the stone is worn close to the heart.

"One last test, Apprentice," spoke the master and with that he hurled the stone necklace toward the stu-

dent, catching him unaware. The student reacted without hesitation and caught the stone in mid air.

When questioned regarding the meaning of the final test the master stated, "It is well that you caught the stone. The stone means instruction.

"There are three methods of receiving a stone: by avoiding the stone, by deflecting the stone, and by catching the stone. To avoid the stone is to avoid instruction by not hearing it or by absence, and is the way of the slow-minded. To deflect the stone is to hear the teachings but to reject them by ignoring them, which is an abhorrence for instruction, and is the way of the hard-headed. To catch the stone, however, is to accept wisdom through instruction and study, and to actually benefit from the teachings. This is the path of a Druid, and it requires a sharp mind and quick wit, as well as an acceptance of the pain a lesson may bring. You have done well.

"No more tests for you today. Go now and as you walk in this life and the next catch as many stones as you may."

And so the master departed from the student for a time.



## A Quest

*continued from page 28*

and I felt I should have given the man something other than the hot air of my mouth to say thank you. In those few seconds any gift I could think of felt foolish. We walked away.

We followed his directions and arrived beneath the biggest oak trees I have ever seen. Lightning had once struck the giant oak named Gog. It struggled for life as it stood beside its larger brother Magog. Only half of Magog's branches were green as he also fought to survive. Visitors left offerings such as strips of faded cloth, worn rope, bright beads, bits of silver, precious shells, and worn stones in their twisted boles. I left a tear shed for love and beauty. I wished the Druid Trees well.

We did not walk back past the man and his dog even though his advice had been the key to our quest. I regret not returning and thanking him again. At the time I was still afraid of him. We walked another way and ended up trudging through hoof-churned mud and cow dung.

This story may seem a sentimental cute honeymoon tale, but it was an informative lesson for me. I am young, but have already learned not to trust most people, especially strangers. I have learned not to pester people I do not know, and even some I do know, with questions. I have pulled away from being human. The hermit in Glastonbury made me realize the importance of knowing other human beings. I still may not trust everyone I see, but I will try to see a person who could be trusted, rather than a person who should be feared.

Pictures of Gog and Magog, as well as the Glastonbury Abbey and Tor can be seen at: <http://www.uidaho.edu/~ogde9431/homepage/glastonbury/>



## Storytelling

# A Tale of One

by Ash Maire

The child sighed deeply while dabbling her fingers in the singing waters. A shadow in the sunlit stream reflected into her face, and she looked up into the face of a woman.

“Why does one so young as you sigh as deeply as all that now, my lambkin?” the woman asked as she knelt beside her.

“I haven’t anyone to play with,” said the child simply. A tear fell into the stream, its sparkle blending into the larger body and passing away.

“That one tiny droplet from your eye — it was alone, was it not?” the woman asked.

“Yes, but now it is in the water,” replied the child.

“Very good — it is now a part of the water.” The woman smiled, “Do you think it is still alone?”

The little girl thought, pulling at a strand of hair in her concentration. “Is that a trick question?” she finally asked.

The woman laughed. “Yes and no.”

“Well, the tear is still alone cause it’s not the same as the other water.” The little girl went on in explanation, “I tasted my tears before, and they are salty. So it’s still different.” The little girl paused then added, “But it’s still a part of the stream ‘cause it’s in it.”

“That’s right, lambkin,” the woman said. “Now, what do you and your tear have in common?”

The child thought again. “I am me,” she said, “and there’s no one around here like me to play with, so I guess that’s what we have in common.”

“True,” said the woman, “but there is more.” The woman took the girl’s hand and dipped it into the stream. “You are also a part of this,” and then she placed the girl’s hand on the ground, “and a part of this.” Then she placed both her hands on the child’s head and gently motioned it so that the girl could see the land around her and the sky. “And you are also a part of all this. Now, with all of this to play with, how could you ever be alone?”

The girl thought for a moment, then said, “but there’s no people!”

The woman laughed again. “Across the land entire, there are other little girls and little boys, also alone but also not lonely, for they also are a part of all this, and so, a part of you.”

The child thought. "Then I shouldn't feel lonely, but just alone?"

The woman replied, "Alone, but not lonely. It is hard to be alone and not feel lonely, but you will learn more and grow stronger for it. By your own two hands, your own two feet, and your own two eyes, your one head can explore this world on your own terms. And there are always visitors and visiting to enjoy, yes?"

The child considered the woman's words. "Yes," she agreed.

The woman stood and made to move away. "Lady?" the child asked, "how do you know these things?"

The woman looked deep into the child's eyes, mirrors of her own, and said, "I, too, have played alone, once as a child much like you. I, too, had a woman visit me for a time. This is what she taught me, and now I teach it to you. It is the way of things to cycle around again in time. The same and yet different."

The child looked puzzled at the woman's words. "The same and different all at once? I don't understand."

"Look about you as you play and think about what is the same and how it is different," said the woman. She gestured about the area. "Here is one of the greatest and richest classrooms you will ever know. Remember the stories you were told by your Gran'mama."

The woman kissed the girl on the head. "In time, much will come to you." The woman chuckled softly, "In time." Then the woman disappeared into the greenery and the child went back to her play with the stream, watching the denizens within and making up stories based upon those she already knew.


The little girl wondered what stories the other boys and girls told themselves. In time, she figured she would learn when visiting time came.

## Snow Turtles

*continued from page 31*

being picked off by diving gulls along the way. It certainly seems like a hostile environment compared to the familiarity of their warm, safe nest. On the edge of my seat, I watch them anxiously, silently cheering them on and crossing my fingers hoping they will reach the water safely and remember how to swim. When that first wave does finally break over the lead turtle, I

laugh joyously as it finds its true element and flies away into the great unknown — its home and its future.

I yearn for another magical snowfall like the one of '78... and to make snow turtles in the front yard. You never know where all that ecstatic waving of arms and legs might get you. 

## Mead Tasting at next year's Annual Membership Meeting

Among pagan folk with its implications for ritual and revelry stretching back to antiquity. This past summer, standing around the campfire drinking mead, Paul Maurice suggested that we should have an official mead tasting at next year's Annual Membership Meeting. And a good idea that seemed to me. So, in preparation for such an event, I would like to suggest that all you mead brewers out there, and those of you who have ever considered brewing mead, should prepare a batch for the tasting. I would recommend that you start brewing this winter, so the mead has time to mature a bit in the bottle. My experience has been that after a couple of months in the bottle, the mead is right fine to drink.

For those who have not yet tried their hand at making mead here are a couple of recommended sources to get you started.

Papazian, Charles. *The New Complete Joy of Home Brewing*. Avon Books. 1991. Papazian's book is considered by many to be the "home brewing bible." He has a section on mead making which includes the recipe that Sylvan and I have used to make our traditional mead.

Spence, Pamela. *Mad About Mead*. Llewellyn Publications. 1997. This book includes a primer on mead making, recipes, and even rituals.

If you have questions about mead making feel free to email me, Seabhac Fionn <rdelach@erols.com>.

So come prepared to next year's Annual Meeting with a couple of bottles of mead to share at the Mead Tasting. It is sure to be a rewarding and well-attended event.



# Meagan and the Yule Solstice

by Kathryn Dyer ©1991

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Meagan. She lived in a house that had lots of woods behind it. She lived with her mommy and daddy, her big brother Corwin and her beautiful cat named Starweaver.

Meagan loved to watch Starweaver play with the snow in the winter. He would try to catch the flakes as they came down from the sky. Sometimes he would get mad when the flakes would melt and then his tail would start swishing from side to side. Meagan's parents told her not to mess with Starweaver when his tail was swishing like that.

"When Star swishes his tail back and forth it means that he is mad or frustrated," said her father, Michael, "And playing with him would be like someone teasing you when you're mad or don't feel good."

Meagan could understand that! "What does 'frustrated' mean Daddy?" she asked.

"Frustrated is how you feel when you are trying very hard to do something and it won't work right. Like when you were learning how to dress yourself and you couldn't get your head through the neck of a shirt," explained Michael.

Meagan knew just how that felt and she promised never to bother the cat when his tail swished.

But today Starweaver wasn't swishing his tail. He was following Meagan and Corwin into the woods and chasing shadows. Meagan and Corwin had gone down the path into the woods to gather green fir branches, mistletoe and holly. It was Christmas time and they were helping to decorate the house. Later they would go with their parents to pick out a live tree to decorate and then plant in the Circle behind the house. Meagan's family were Pagans, but they also celebrated Christmas when Santa Claus came.

Meagan's mother, Elizabeth, told her that many people celebrate a god's birthday at the middle of the winter or the Yule Solstice. Meagan knew that the Yule Solstice was the longest night of the year. Of course, many Christians celebrated the birthday of Jesus at Christmas. But before there were Christians, some people would celebrate the birthday of Mithras, one of the old gods, or some of the other Solar Gods. Solar means that the God is in charge of the Sun and Light. Meagan could see how the sun would be very important in the cold of Winter.

Meagan's family celebrated two holidays in the winter. They celebrated Christmas, which her mother said was Santa Claus's birthday and they celebrated the beginning of winter which they called the Yule Solstice. Meagan thought that Santa Claus must be a very nice person to give other people presents on his birthday so she and Corwin always left him a piece of cake and some eggnog to drink.

Meagan and Corwin picked lots of branches to decorate the house with. They tried to get fallen branches when they could, but when they had to take them from a live plant, they would ask the plant first and then thank it when they were done. Meagan had some crystals in her pocket to leave for the plants as a thank-you present. Corwin used the scissors when they had to cut something because he was older and Meagan's safety scissors might hurt the plant more. Corwin was always very careful not to cut more than they needed. They put all their branches into baskets that Elizabeth's mother, Nana, had made.

"Don't let Starweaver eat anything!" said Corwin, "Many plants can make cats and people sick."

Meagan held her basket up higher. She didn't want Star to get sick! Corwin told her that soon she would get to go on walks with their father into the woods to learn about which plants were safe to eat and which were not. "Yes," said Meagan, "And then maybe Cindy's mom will show me how to make medicines!"

Cindy was Meagan's best friend, and her mother was an herbalist. Cindy's mother, Anna, made medicine, incense, make-up and lots of other things with all kinds of plants and flowers. Sometimes Meagan would go with her mother when Elizabeth went to trade herbs with Anna. Then she and Cindy would have fun smelling all the herbs in Anna's workshop.

Soon Meagan's house was full of decorations. They made popcorn and cranberry strings to decorate the tree. Each year Meagan and Corwin would make a special ornament to put on the tree. This year Nana helped them make ornaments out of clay. Nana put the ornaments in her kiln, which is a kind of oven, so that they would get hard. Meagan loved

her Nana very much. She always brought Meagan a surprise when she came to visit. One time she had brought a little black kitten who grew up to be Starweaver!

Once Meagan asked Nana if she was a Pagan too. Nana said, "Oh, I'm half of one and a dozen of the other."

Meagan couldn't talk about it to her other grandparents. Her daddy's parents Gramma Lee and Granpa Scott were very Christian and always asked where the children were going to Sunday school. Meagan had been to Sunday school a few times with Cindy because her parents wanted her to know about all religions. But she didn't tell Gramma Lee and Granpa Scott about the time she went to the Jewish temple or talked to her parents' Buddhist friend. She knew that they wouldn't understand and she didn't want to make them feel bad.

It seemed like no time at all before it was the night before Yule Solstice. Meagan's family had found a dead tree in the woods to use for a Yule log. They decorated it with greenery after Michael carved little suns onto it. When it was ready they put it in the fireplace and put the piece of Yule log they had saved from last

year on top of it. This year Jeremy, the Coven's High Priest, had to work on the Solstice, so the Coven had decided to hold their ritual on the next Saturday. Meagan was excited because they would celebrate three days this year!

That night, Meagan's family had a big dinner and Nana came to stay the night. Elizabeth had talked to Cindy's mother Anna, and she let Cindy come to spend the night, too! Soon Elizabeth lit the Yule log and many candles around the room. Cindy and Meagan lay on the rug

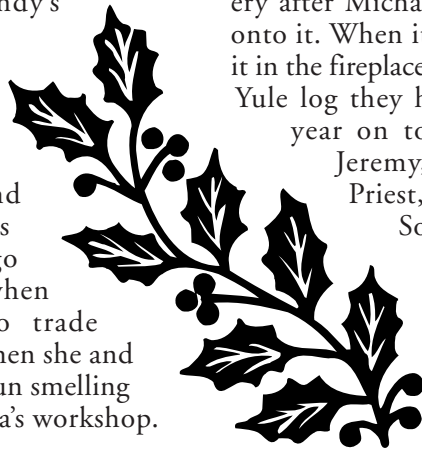
in front of the fire while Michael played his harp. They sang some songs that people in their Coven had written about the Yule. Cindy didn't know very many of the songs they

sang, but she tried to sing them anyway. This made Meagan giggle, and so Cindy started to tickle her. They had a great tickle fight until Nana said that they were too close to the fire even if it had a screen.

Cindy and Meagan got to stay up past their bedtime and even got to have a cookie before they went to bed. They promised each other to meet to play with their new toys after Santa came. Meagan could hardly wait for Santa to get there! On Christmas Eve she and Corwin left out some coconut cake and eggnog for Santa. They left him a note wishing him a happy birthday and thanking him in advance for anything he might leave for them if he thought that they had been good. Meagan had tried to be good all year, but it was very hard for her to go to sleep that night. She kept thinking that she heard reindeer on the roof.

The next morning Meagan got up and brushed her teeth. She could hardly wait to go downstairs, but she had to wait until her parents and Nana were ready. Because Corwin was old enough, he had gone down to the kitchen to heat water for tea and coffee. Meagan's mother and Nana would only drink herb tea, but Michael said he had to jumpstart his mornings which always made Elizabeth laugh and tease him.

Once they got downstairs, Corwin and Meagan rushed to see what Santa had left them while their parent's took pictures. After they were done, the whole family exchanged presents. Then it was time to visit Gramma Lee and Granpa Scott. It wasn't until the next day that Meagan had time to play with Cindy.



Since the Coven had chosen to meet on Saturday, they decided to have a party all day. People began arriving early in the morning. Some of them had brought gifts for Meagan and her family who also had gifts for them. Meagan had made Jeremy a plate with a pentagram and runes around it spelling out his name with the clay her Nana had brought to make the Christmas decorations.

"Thank you so much Meagan!" said Jeremy, "I will put this on my altar at home and every time I see it, I will think of you."

Meagan felt very happy that Jeremy liked her present. Everyone had a good time. They all played games and sang songs. Michael played his harp. Corwin had gotten a new recorder for Christmas and played it for everyone. Sometimes people would stop for a little bit and go for a walk in the woods. Not everyone had woods behind their house like Meagan's family did.

It was getting to be time for the Circle to gather. Everyone took

turns taking quick showers and baths to purify themselves. Meagan and Corwin helped decorate the Circle with greens and candles before it was their turn. They took their baths and put on their robes. The Coven was starting to gather in the Circle. There was a bonfire ready to light and two unlit candles waiting on the Altar. They would light the bonfire and the candles to help light the Horned Lord's way through the dark months of winter.

Robert blew a Horn and the ceremony started. When it came time for Cakes and Ale, they passed out some special cookies that Nana had made for them. "I may not come worship with you," Nana said, "But I respect what you do, and I would like to share a little part of it with you."

All too soon the ritual was over. Meagan wanted to help clean up the Circle but her mother saw her yawning and sent her to bed. "Don't worry, Meagan," said Elizabeth, "The grown-ups are

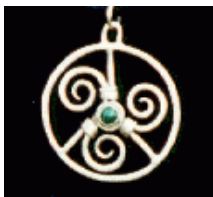
going to stay up until the bonfire goes out and we'll clean up then. Go brush your teeth and get ready for bed, and one of us will come tuck you in a minute, okay?"

"Okay, momma," yawned Meagan. "It's been so much fun this week, I just can't stay awake any longer."

When Michael came up to tuck Meagan in, she was already sound asleep and dreaming about the wonderful week she had had.



*Kathryn "Kat" Dyer is a house spouse who lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband of 11 years, two children (3 & 6) and five cats. There is a Meagan story for each of the eight High Holidays as well as some others covering aspects of Life and Death. They are deliberately made not to show any particular tradition so that more folks can read them and use them to open discussion with the children in their lives.*



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<http://www.adf.org/regalia>



## Winter Solstice

Early, darkness inches on her belly into the bottom lands  
along the creek. Crouching, slowly she begins to climb;  
When at length she crests the western ridge,  
she stretches tall and lights the stars.

She has silenced hunters' guns, granting deer reprieve.  
Headlights blare as processing pickups leave the valley  
to her silent darkness.

The dog begins its nightly fence patrol,  
returning to warm itself by the wood stove  
— then charging out again to warn away  
the wild intruders of the long night.

Emboldened by the dark, furtive mice sneak out to nibble  
baited traps, careful not to trigger execution. Frost  
patterns itself on window panes; it etches every twig  
and blade of grass. The fire burns low. A late moon  
rises above the brittle air: moonbeams fracture frost,  
scattering rainbow shards across the fields.

Sleepily, dawn comes tardy to relieve the weary night,  
snuffing stars, dimming moon, then stealing down  
the ridge, finally nestling in the hollows.  
The first sunbeams explode their brilliance  
through bare branches, transforming frost  
to diamond chips in dazzling, joyous celebration.  
The longest night is ended!

- *White Owl* (Barbara Knox, Copyright 1998)

## Daybreak by the Quinnipiac

Tall grasses stand in armor of ice.  
Weighted boughs in pale moonlight.  
Winter morning chill has hold.  
Crystalline dew all icy and cold.

Eastern sun comes flickering in.  
Frozen sheaths turn watery sheen.  
Glassy casings slip off and fall.  
Sun drenched morning. Icy withdrawal.

-*Craig Houghton*

## Solstice Blessing

This is the shortest day and longest night,  
we pray. Pray for the sun's return  
by making fire, precious sacrifice  
of warmth and wood, in hope our lesser flames  
can kindle that great Fire we need to live.

Upon cold white dark, bonfires burn.  
Dancers weave shadow shapes  
against leaping red orange yellow,  
blackly dance backward, forward,  
generations beyond generations.

Night's black casket swallows smoke  
that never touches stars,  
so distant, beyond touching,  
numerous beyond knowing,  
ancient in their youth.

Always the fires burn,  
warm the living,  
recall the dead,  
release the incense,  
and light our ways  
through words and forests.

So has it been  
in hearths and fields,  
oak groves and churches,  
in men and women.  
So has it been,  
and will it be.

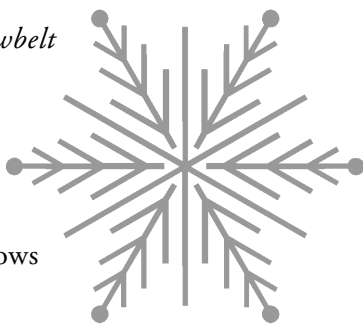
We bless your fire  
and ask your blessing,  
this year and all years,  
this life, and all lives.  
Like stars and bonfires,  
we share our wonders  
and so, welcome the sun.

- *Roy Jones*

### A Charleston Winter's Tale...

*with apologies to those in the snowbelt*

Sometime before dawn  
the winter warriors come,  
howling round the chimneys  
and rattling all the doors,  
heaving leaves against my windows  
lest I, snug within my bed,  
choose to ignore their power.



Trees cast old branches at the sky  
while pipers play discordant tunes  
on gutters, windchimes, windowpanes  
and pikemen pound upon my door.  
Clash of sword's sharp blade on shield  
or was that just a rubbish lid?

That sent me tumbling from my bed  
a witness to this fury bold,  
trembling in the morning chill —  
a mewling mortal, comfort past,  
and great of yawn and thick of head.  
And still the warriors howl and gnash —  
a legion, this advancing storm.

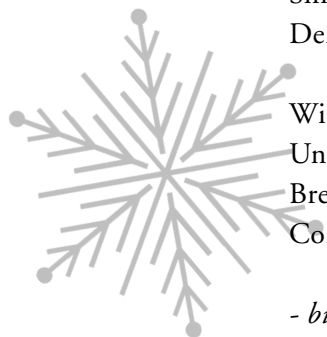
Foghorns in the harbor drone  
their songs of danger, danger near.  
And then the skies crack open wide  
and sheets of silver shining rain  
pierce and pommel, pelt and pound  
upon the water, earth, and sand  
like pressing hooves of stallions wild.

And then as quickly as begun,  
the horde has passed and calm descends,  
relinquishing only fallen leaves,  
the sundry detritus of trees,  
on a wash of early morning sand  
And grumpy, puffed-up birds  
whose springtime yearning matches my own.

- *toadie (Judith Anderson Morris)*

Winter  
Cold stark  
Relaxation time  
Time of renewal  
Branches clacking in cold cold wind  
Forsaken nests exposed  
Snow, ice, frost  
Intricate patterns of infinity

Winter  
Time for stories shared  
And food, and drink, and friends  
Resolute Otherworld comes battering  
Shingles, shutters and doors  
Demanding recognition



Winter  
Uncompromising of inattention  
Breathtakingly inspiring  
Contrast of light and shadow

- *birdlady*

### A Tribute to Marion Zimmer Bradley

Many stories, the same myths,  
but none made sense until i picked up your book  
and the Truth, buried under centuries of chivalry  
and dusty antiquarians, was laid bare for me  
like the magic of October sunlight.

Women who were vessels to be passed  
from tower to dungeon threw off their crowns  
and found their way Home through the  
overgrown forest paths, following  
the river and the stars and your Voice.  
Standing at the edge of the lake  
you waited for us all,  
fictitious and real women,  
and you taught us the words to part the mists.

You reminded us.

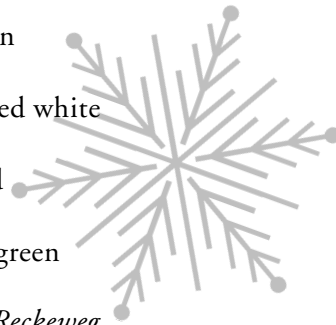
- *Yseult*

### Winter's Tree

I walked through the forest bare  
on winters paths I traveled  
Upon a hill I looked and gazed  
upon a land of shadow.  
And as I gazed upon that land  
by chance my eyes did see  
A tower of deep red and green  
the sacred Winter's Tree.

It stood there with its crown of green  
all jewel'd with berries red  
and through my eyes, its trunk shined white  
to reflect the winters day.  
The sacred tree stood tall and proud  
waiting for spring to come  
It stood there with its leaves bright green  
the sacred Winter's Tree.

- Andy Reckeweg



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# Kids Pages

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## WINTER TIME CRAFTS

from Jan Curran

### Bird Feeders

This time of year is tough for our feathered friends up north, and I'm sure that the ones in the South wouldn't mind a free meal either. An easy and fun craft project is to make bird feeders from pine cones. Here's what you will need:

- pine cones or stale donuts
- peanut butter
- bird seed
- ribbon, yarn or string

First, take a piece of string (or whatever you have) and tie it around the pine cone. Make sure it is long enough, as you will use the loop to hang the bird feeder from a branch. Next, put some birdseed into a bowl (about 1 cup or so). Then mix enough peanut butter in so that the birdseed clumps together like clay. Press this mixture into the spaces in the pine cone or onto the donut. Hang on a tree, and watch to see what kind of birds come to eat there. Have fun!

### Decorative Candles

These are really easy to make, and can be made for most holidays. You will need the following:

- candles (tapers or votives, we usually use votives)
- thin sheets of soft wax (can be found in crafts stores, often with pre-cut designs)
- Optional: small buttons, cookies cutters, or drinking straws (to make shapes for cutting the sheet wax...ask an adult for help here), poster paints.

Use the cookie cutters or scissors to make shapes to use as decorations. If you have buttons, you can use these to press designs in the wax too. Stick your soft wax designs onto the taper or votive candles. You can also use paints to make designs or pictures on the candles. See if you can make a candle for each High Day.

### Sand Designs

These can be very pretty and make good gifts for family and friends. Here's what you will need:

- Glass or plastic containers (clear ones, with wide mouths)
- 2-3 boxes of salt
- food coloring in different colors
- bowls to mix the salt in (one for each color you want to use a pencil or popsicle stick)
- Optional: melted parafin wax (ask an adult for help) or plastic wrap to cover the top of the container

Put 1-2 cups of salt in a bowl. Mix in enough food coloring to make the color you want. Be sure to add it a little bit at a time (about one teaspoonful). If you have a four pack of food coloring, here's some combinations to get other colors: For purple, use blue and red. For orange, use red and yellow. For brown use red and green, and if you add some blue to this, you can get a sort of black color.



Once you have your colors, you can start by putting one color in the bottom of the container you chose. Use the stick to make hills and valleys along the edges. Pour another color on top of this, making sure it filled the areas you pushed down.

Continue layering the colors until it is full. Cover it if desired. If you do not cover it, then you have to make sure it is someplace safe so it doesn't spill and spoil your creation.

### Sculpy Clay Activities

Since Sculpy clay bakes and becomes a plastic type substance, it's good for making your own set of runes or ogham sticks. Find a picture of the runes or of the ogham. For runes make a circular design, for ogham try a stick like design. Use one color as a base

and another as the design or use paint to add the design afterwards.

Follow the directions for baking on the package.

Some other ideas for Sculpy craft are making beads, pagan or other type pendants, small statues of your favorite gods or goddesses, wall or window hangings, or even something to offer at ritual. Be sure to follow the directions for baking, and if you need permission, make sure you check with an adult before using the oven. But above all have fun :)

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## CRAFT IDEAS FOR YULE

by Liafal

### Pine Cone Wreath:

Pine cones are excellent material for making art and crafts. They come in lots of shapes and sizes. When collecting, it's important to leave behind the cones that haven't opened. The seeds from these cones should be left so that the animals such as squirrels and chipmunks have something to eat. Find the cones that have the tips spread open. After you bring home the cones and allow them to dry, you need a wreath base to attach the cones to. A pizza box or other sturdy cardboard could be used to make a doughnut shape or any other shape you might like. You can attach the cones with a hot glue gun or tub and tile caulk that comes in tubes. You can add other natural materials such as dried flowers, leaves, moss, or stones if you like. Attach a wire loop to the back of the wreath and hang.

### Bread People and other bread shapes:

You need:

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup salt
- 3 cups flour
- mixing bowl

What to do:

Mix all the ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Knead the dough until it's smooth. The dough should feel smooth and rubbery when it's ready to form. To make a bread person make a small ball for the head and a larger ball for the body. Connect the two using a drop of water. Roll the dough to make arms and legs.

You can press a small amount of the dough through a garlic press to make the hair, or just form it around the head. Attach the arms, legs, and hair to the body using a little water. Add cloths using more dough and draw a face with a toothpick. You could also make ornaments for your Yule tree - try using cookie cutters! Ask a grown-up to bake your bread in an oven for 2-3 hours at 275 degrees. Let cool and decorate with tempera paints if you wish.

### Pomander Balls:

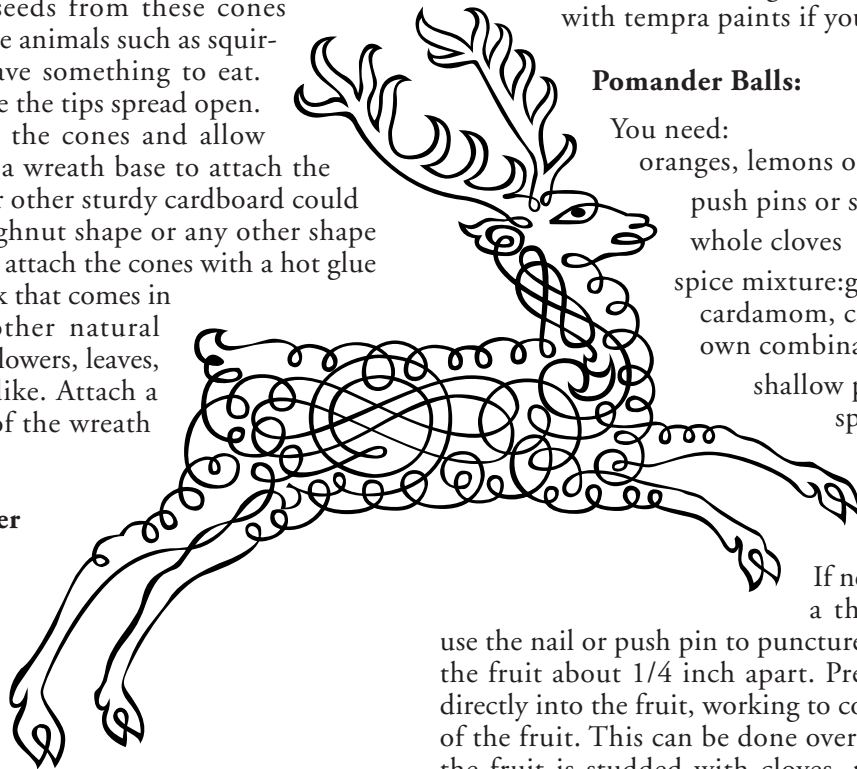
You need:

- oranges, lemons or apples
- push pins or small nails
- whole cloves
- spice mixture: ground, allspice, cardamom, cloves — mix your own combination

- shallow pan to hold the spice mixture
- yarn or ribbon for hanging

What to do:

If necessary (when using a thick-skinned fruit), use the nail or push pin to puncture holes in the skin of the fruit about 1/4 inch apart. Press the whole cloves directly into the fruit, working to cover most of the skin of the fruit. This can be done over several days. When the fruit is studded with cloves, roll the fruit in the spice mixture. Knot two pieces of yarn or ribbon together at the middle and place the pomander over the knot. Take up the four ends, tie them together in a firm knot and then tie a bow.



# Recipes

## WINTER WASSAIL

- 1 gallon sweet apple cider (not apple juice)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 8-12 1-inch pieces of stick cinnamon
- 1 Tablespoon whole cloves
- 1 Tablespoon whole allspice
- 2 teaspoons ginger
- 2 teaspoons nutmeg
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 2 oranges, cut into sections
- optional additions (choose one) - 2 cups red wine,  
12 oz dark ale, 1 cup apple schnapps or apple  
brandy, ½ cup whiskey or rum
- clove-studded orange and lemon slice  
for garnish

Combine all spices in a teaball or cheese-cloth. Heat sugar and 1 cup of cider to a boil. Add spices, lemon juice, and remaining cider. Add the orange sections, squeezing first to juice them.

Simmer, covered, for 30 minutes or more. Just before serving, remove spices and add the wine, ale, brandy, rum, or whiskey, if desired. (If you are keeping the Wassail hot after adding the alcohol, keep it covered - alcohol boils away at a lower temperature than water).

Serve in mugs, garnished with slices of clove-studded lemon or orange.

—*Sylvan*

## FESTIVE DRESSING

- 1 lb. chestnuts
- ½ cup butter or margarine
- 1 cup celery, finely chopped
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons rubbed sage
- 2 teaspoons thyme
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 8 cups dry cornbread cubes
- 1 cup sweetened dried cranberries
- up to 1 cup water or chicken broth

Heat oven to 400°F. Score chestnut shells with a sharp knife. Roast 15-20 minutes, then cool and peel. Chop coarsely.

Sauté onion and celery in butter till translucent. Add spices, chestnuts, and cranberries and remove from heat. Combine cornbread cubes and spice mixture in a large bowl, adding water or broth as necessary to moisten. Stuff a 10-lb turkey or bake in a covered casserole at 350° for 30 minutes.

*Variation:* add up to one pound of cooked, crumbled sausage.

—*Sylvan*



## SHORTBREAD

- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ sticks butter
- ¼ cups flour
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1 capful vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

Melt the butter and sugar over low heat, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved.

Cool slightly, then add flour, corn starch and vanilla. Stir until all ingredients are well combined. The mixture will be very stiff.

Drop onto a cookie sheet, to form individual cookies, or spread on a cookie sheet until about 1/4 inch thick, and score with a knife to make smaller pieces.

Bake for 45 - 50 minutes, or until the edges are lightly browned.

Cool on a rack, sprinkle with confectioners sugar, if desired.

—*Curucahn*

# A MENTORING PROGRAM FOR OUR DRUIDIC DEDICATION TRAINING

The Preceptor and Mother Grove of ADF are pleased to announce the beginning of a system of personal mentoring for our Dedicator Druid training program.

The Dedicator Program is the primary gateway to our larger study and training work. It is our task to make it as effective as possible. Over the last two years, our Dedicator materials have received considerable praise, as well as some criticism. We hope that feedback from members will allow us to continue to improve its content and execution. However, it is personal contact and the availability of one-on-one work with an experienced Druidic teacher that is the most important thing for us to offer at this time.

We would love to be able to offer personal mentoring to all of our members, equally and immediately. Unfortunately, our resources for are somewhat limited at this time, so we must utilize several different types of mentoring. For the members who are in or near our Groves, it is our Senior Druids who must take on the job of mentoring. Senior Druids themselves are assigned a mentor by the Council of Senior Druids, and they will include the Dedicator's work in their efforts. Regular discussions and working circles for the program led by the Senior Druid can only strengthen the development of a local Grove.

Other members, both solitary and in Groves, have regular access to e-mail and the internet. Those students probably have the greatest resources available to them. On-line students should join our ADF-Dedicator e-mail list. At any time there will be three or four experienced Druidic teachers subscribed to that list, along with other leaders and experienced

folks and newcomers. We will make sure that questions and problems are addressed quickly. We will also begin a series of monthly IRC chats devoted to the Dedicator's work. Subscribers will also have the advantage of conversation with their peers, feedback, and a wider perspective.

The third category of members is perhaps our most underserved. Members outside of Groves, and without internet access, can find



themselves isolated from the life of the organization. So it is to these members that we are giving the first option for one-to-one mentoring.

At this time we have approximately 33 spaces available for this mentoring. Those members who wish to participate in the program should send a one-page letter to the national address, telling us something about their interests and history. We will assign students to the available mentors, and the mentors will contact the students.

This personal approach will be based on one letter or one hour of phone contact per month. While individual mentors may have more time in some instances, we ask members to

remember that the mentors are volunteering their time. Mentors are obligated only for the assigned time.

In exchange for the effort of mentoring, we ask that mentored students be actively involved in the work. Mentors will expect to see regular progress in the program, although pace will vary from student to student, of course. Placement of students will be at the mentors' discretion, and inactive members may be moved aside to make room for others.

In any of these levels, we ask students to realize that mentors cannot be required to assume the role of spiritual leader. A mentor can offer advice, reflection, instruction in the details of the program itself, and direction in study and practice. The student's spiritual path, the direction and outcome of her work, must always remain her own.

Our short term goal is to make some level of personal advice and guidance available to as many members as possible. Meanwhile, we will work to provide more access to one-on-one mentoring for more members. In the long term, as our training and study program is completed, we hope to offer personal mentoring to the majority of those enrolled in the program.

In the meantime, we hope that you will take advantage of the resources we offer, and take up the work of Our Druidry with even greater focus and direction.

Nine Blessings

Ian Corrigan  
ADF Preceptor

# On the Solitary Path

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## Winter Thoughts... on the Synchronicity in Our Lives

by *ladytoad*

Winter forces us inward, hibernating, wrapped in our own drowsy dreams of spring. Even here in the South, it clutches at us in gusty bursts of wind. Grey clouds scuttle across a sky stretched wide by ocean and marsh. A cup of fragrant tea, a warm lap robe, a meaty, thought-provoking book provide tokens of comfort against the long dark nights. A roaring fire pushes away the shadows. Winter gives us space and time to reflect upon our past, to hibernate with our thoughts for the future, and to plant the seeds of self-renewal and awareness.

In winter, reading teases at my mind, and I devour a wide range of books. I buy books serendipitously and in clusters Ah, yes, this one might interest, and this one and this and... stash them until (at precisely the correct moment), the NEED to read one arises. They sit on my shelves for months, untouched. Then some unknown finger taps my shoulder, and I suddenly MUST read this particular book. And with that book, chosen by forces unknown to my conscious mind, I become caught up in an idea or a particular subject or a train of thought. Curiously, and just as surely, I find the same topic in a second text and then mentioned in a third and a fourth and then in conversation or on the Internet until my head is swirling with ideas that spiral around a central concept, connecting, webworking. This synthesizing process is among the highest levels of thinking; it stimulates and excites.

In college, when I was first introduced to the metaphysical theories of Carl Jung, I did not quite understand this synchronicity, this tendency for related events to occur together although they have separate and seemingly unrelated independent causes. I put it off as what we call "coincidence."

These many years later, however, I am CERTAIN beyond doubt that synchronicity rules one's life. Synchronicity, according to writer/philosopher M. Scott Peck, is a kind of over determinism. It's the surety that an event is never effected by only one cause, but is created by a number of seemingly disparate but inter-linking causes that bring it into Being, as if there were some sort of grand plan in force.

Unexpected money arrives at precisely the right moment from a totally unthought-of source and allows us to pur-

sue a venture that changes our life. We experience a casual meeting that somewhere down the road becomes, like a stone creating ripples in a pond, exceedingly meaningful to the rest of our lives. We grasp an idea and suddenly encounter it in everything we read until it becomes fully understood

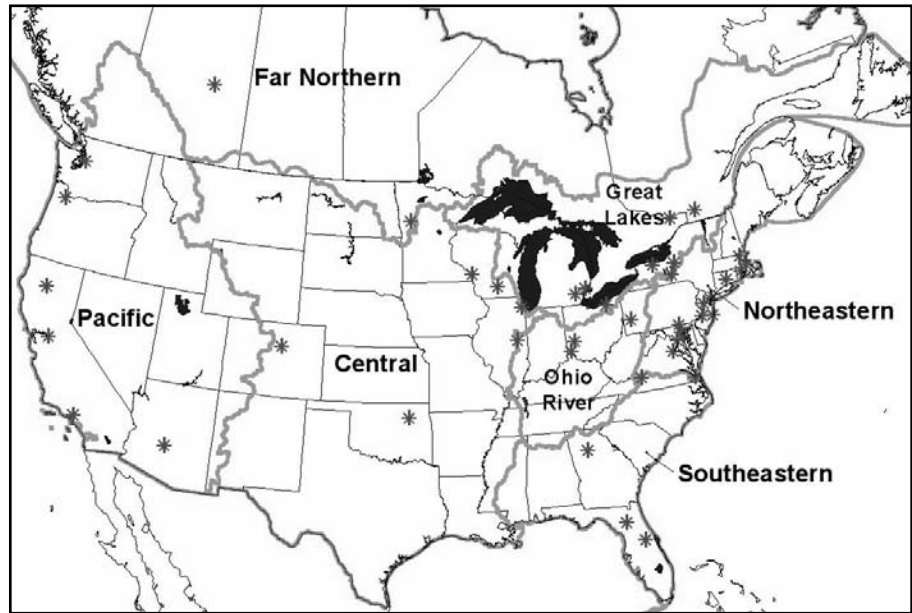
Somewhere along the line, I began to realize that Jung was right. Everything IS connected. Once I became aware of the weave of experiences in my life, I began living from an integrated point of reference. This awareness allowed me to discern a larger picture, and that larger picture opened anew view of life's purpose and meaning. It was as if I had once been standing too close to a painting by an Impressionist master, enjoying the beautiful dabs of color, totally unaware that they represented an entire garden.

So today, as I relish my winter confines with a fire, hot beverage, and a book; I keep myself open to this web that has become my life and my connection to the planet. I may be apart from the world at hand physically, but synchronicity is at work around me, promising Spring and rebirth.



*Below is the current listing of ADF Groves, Protogroves, SIGs, and ADF officers. Groves are listed alphabetically by region, and as of this writing there are a total of 43 groves (40 in the U.S., 3 abroad).*

*If you find errors, please contact the ADF Office at [ADF-Office@ADF.ORG](mailto:ADF-Office@ADF.ORG) or at P.O. Box 15259, Ann Arbor, MI, USA 48106-5259*



## Groves

### CENTRAL REGION

#### **Crescent Dragon Protogrove, ADF**

Grove Organizer: Hawke  
c/o ADF Main Office  
Urbana, IL  
Areas: IL  
E-Mail: [windstrm@apocalypse.org](mailto:windstrm@apocalypse.org)

#### **Golden Aspen Protogrove, ADF**

Grove Organizer: Loren Eason  
P.O. Box 260354  
Lakewood, CO 80226  
Areas: CO  
E-Mail: [nous\\_athanatos@yahoo.com](mailto:nous_athanatos@yahoo.com)

#### **River of Fire Protogrove, ADF**

Grove Organizer: Hekatatia  
P.O. Box 3443  
La Crosse, WI 54602-3443  
Areas: WI, MN  
E-Mail: [rivrfire@aol.com](mailto:rivrfire@aol.com)  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/river-of-fire>

#### **Sun Raven Protogrove, ADF**

Grove Organizer: Suil Bhran  
PO Box 8212  
Madison, WI 53708  
Areas: WI, MN  
E-Mail: [suibhne@centuryinter.net](mailto:suibhne@centuryinter.net)  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/sun-raven>

#### **White Rose Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Estelle Newton  
539 South Richmond  
Tulsa, OK 74112  
Areas: OK  
Phone: (918) 836-0907  
E-Mail: [candlemajik@juno.com](mailto:candlemajik@juno.com)

#### **Wild Onion Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Christopher Sherbak  
PO Box 87651  
Chicago, IL 60680  
Areas: IL, IN, MI, WI  
Phone: (773) 489-5766  
E-Mail: [sherbak@ibm.net](mailto:sherbak@ibm.net)  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/wild-onion>

### FAR NORTHERN REGION

#### **Flickering Shadows Protogrove, ADF**

Grove Organizer: Jennifer Kennedy  
PO Box 65  
Ardrossan, Alberta T8E 2A1,  
CANADA  
Areas: Alberta  
Phone: (403) 922-2499  
E-Mail: [falan@planet.eon.net](mailto:falan@planet.eon.net)

#### **Song of the Hounds Protogrove, ADF**

Grove Organizer: Cirulious  
P.O. Box 1444

Detroit Lakes, MN 56502-1444

Areas: MN, ND  
E-Mail: [rdragon@djам.com](mailto:rdragon@djам.com)  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/song-of-the-hounds>  
Publication: Acorns

### GREAT LAKES REGION

#### **Clairiér du Renard Argenté**

#### **Silver Fox Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Paradox  
2624 Jeanne d'Arc  
Montreal, Quebec H1W 3V9,  
CANADA  
Areas: Quebec  
Phone: (514) 259-8916  
E-Mail: [one@cedep.com](mailto:one@cedep.com)  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/silver-fox>

#### **Red Maple Protogrove, ADF**

Grove Organizer: Drahkan  
200 Earl Grey Drive  
Box 110  
Kanata, Ontario K2T 1B6, CANADA  
Areas: Ontario  
Phone: (613) 839-3962  
E-Mail: [drahkan@nitemaster.com](mailto:drahkan@nitemaster.com)  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/red-maple>

**Shining Lakes Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Fox  
PO Box 15585  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-5585  
Areas: MI  
Phone: (734) 487-4931  
E-Mail: robh@cyberspace.org  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/shining-lakes>  
Publication: Ripples, \$5/yr

**Stone Creed Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Liafal  
PO Box 18707  
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118  
Areas: OH  
E-Mail: seniordruid@stonecreed.org  
Mailing list:  
[stonecreedgrove@onelist.com](mailto:stonecreedgrove@onelist.com)  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/stone-creed>  
Publication: Stone Facts

**Willow Marsh Protogrove, ADF**

Grove Organizer: Asheerin  
PO Box 447  
St. Clair Shores, MI 48080-0447  
Areas: MI  
Phone: (313) 881-4578  
E-Mail: MEGABRIEL@aol.com  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/willow-marsh>

## NORTHEASTERN REGION

**Cedar Light Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Kedgwin McLaren  
PO Box 21723  
Baltimore, MD 21222  
Areas: MD  
Phone: (410) 319-8981  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/cedar-light>  
Publication: A Walk with the Old Ones

**Green Man Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Skraeling  
PO Box 3495  
Jersey City, NJ 07303  
Areas: NJ

Phone: (732) 249-6680  
E-Mail: eternalansw@earthlink.net  
Publication: MetroDruid Nuz

**Healing Stories Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: William Elston  
P.O. Box 4344  
Ithaca, NY 14852-4344  
Areas: NY  
Phone: (607) 256-3643  
E-Mail: Gealtinne1@aol.com  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/healing-stories>

**Hearth Fire Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Jan Curran  
PO Box 1138  
Billerica, MA 01821  
Areas: MA, NH  
Phone: (978) 439-5515  
E-Mail: ivydruid@mediaone.net  
Mailing list:  
[Hearth\\_Fire\\_Grove@onelist.com](mailto:Hearth_Fire_Grove@onelist.com)  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/hearth-fire>

**Little Acorn Grove, ADF**

Senior Druid: Sylvan  
11978 Cardamom Drive  
Woodbridge, VA 22192  
Areas: VA  
E-Mail: sylvan-adf@usa.net  
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/little-acorn>  
Publication: Little Acorn News

**Grove of the Midnight Sun, ADF**

Senior Druid: Emerald Dragon  
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# Guilds & Mother Grove

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# Mother Grove

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## The Mother Grove

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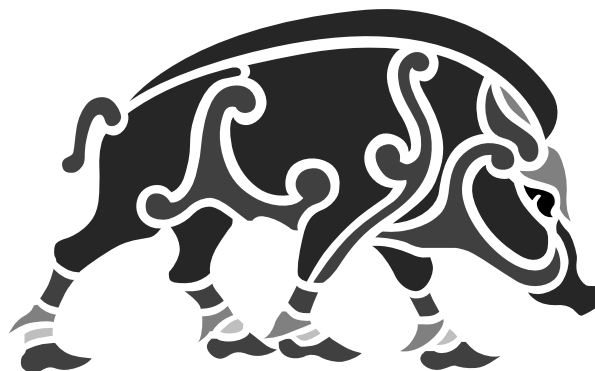
*This listing was last updated on: 9/8/99.*

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