

OAK LEAVES

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Oak Leaves

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Ethics of a Celtic Warrior

by Robert Barton

Ethics are the principles of proper behavior, and some system of ethics or morality is taught in every culture, society and religion. Those of us who are modern Celtic Reconstructionists often try to base a large portion of our personal ethics on the ethical code of our ancestors. We can examine general ethical principles and practices by study of a variety of sources, from general folktales and the mythos system to the oldest recorded laws of these people.

What we see emerging from these laws and tales is a system very concerned with the balance and maintenance of societal and spiritual contracts, coupled with responsibility for one's own actions and decisions. When the balance has been upset in a social contract in this system, the laws are used not to punish, but to return the situation to a state of balance, unlike the legal systems of the Middle East, which were often structured towards retribution and punishment.

There is, however, at least one source in which a set of basic rules for proper ethical conduct is set forth in a clear and concise treatise designed for that purpose alone. Attributed, like so many other lessons, to the great third century Irish king, Cormac mac Art, as his instructions to his son, they are simple and easy to understand. Clear enough for a child yet comprehensive enough for a king, this one text may be the single best Celtic source for the learning of practical Pagan Celtic ethical behavior. Any person interested in following a Pagan Warrior spiritual path should spend time in regular study of this story.

Partially given here below, this tale is so clear that it has no need of theoretical explanation or long-winded moral interpretation. It only needs simple examination, for it contains a clarity that is heard even seventeen centuries removed from the speaking.

"O Cormac, grandson of Conn. What habits were with you in your youth?" asked Cairbre.

"Not hard," said Cormac.

"I was a listener in a wood... a gazer at stars... unseeing among secrets... silent in the wilds... conversational among many... mild in the mead-hall... fierce in battle... gentle to allies... healer to the ill... weak toward the feeble... strong toward the powerful. I was not close lest I become burdensome... arrogant though I was wise... a promiser though I was with wealth... boastful though I was with skill... venturesome though I was with swiftness. I would not speak ill of the absent... deride the aged in my youth... reproach, I would praise... ask, but I would give.

“Through these habits will the young become old and kingly warriors.”

“O Cormac grandson of Conn, what is good for me?” asked Cairbre.

“Not hard,” said Cormac.

“Do not deride the aged when you have youth... the poor when you have wealth... the lame when you are swift... the blind though you have sight... the ill when you have strength... the dull when you are clever... the foolish though you are with wisdom.

“Be no too wise... too foolish... too conceited... too diffident... too haughty... too humble... too talkative... too silent... too harsh... too feeble.

“If you are too wise, they expect much... too foolish, you will be deceived... too conceited, you will be vexing... too humble, you will be without honour... too talkative, you will not be heard... too silent, you will not be regarded... too harsh, you will be broken... too feeble, you will be crushed.”

“O Cormac, what is the worst thing that you have seen?” said Cairbre.

“Not hard,” said Cormac.

“The faces of foes in the rout of battle”

“O Cormac, what is the sweetest thing that you have heard?” asked Cairbre.

“Not hard,” said Cormac.

“The shout of triumph after victory, praise after wages, the invitation to the pillow of a lady.”

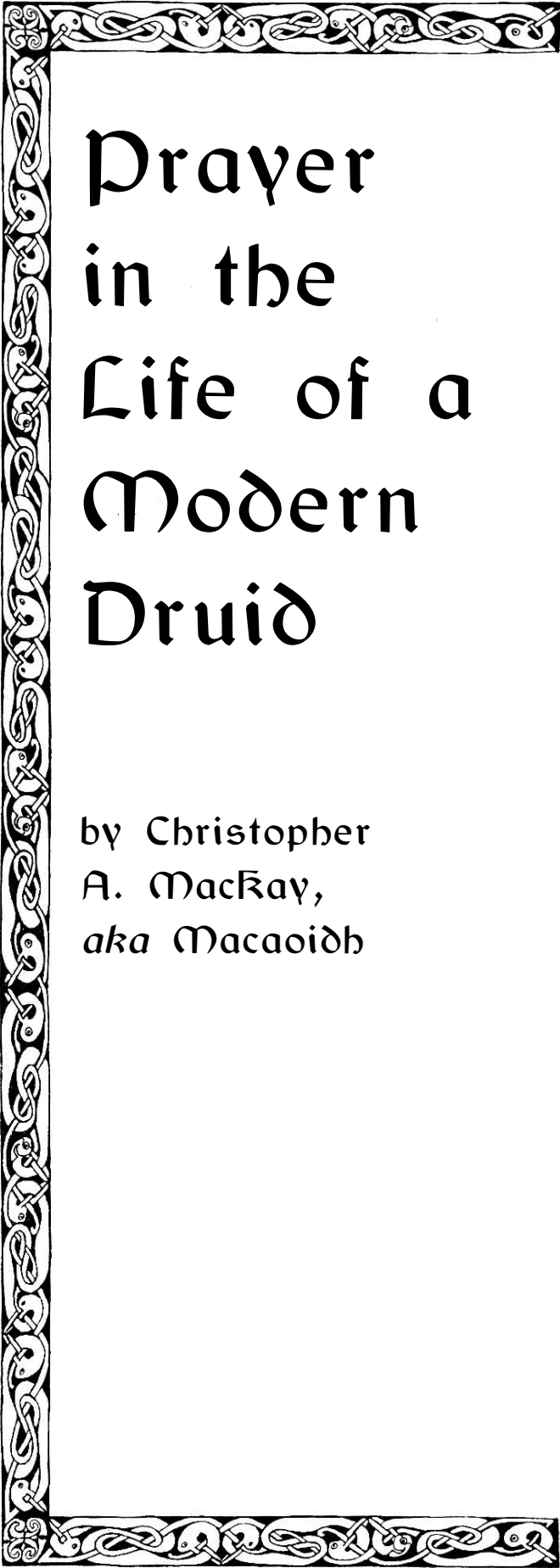
There is quite a bit more to this story, some of which was obviously added in later to reflect the new religion. But the above section appears to be consistent and without additions. This story has been used to train warriors in Ireland for centuries. For the sake of brevity, I have removed repetitive phrases, but the original conversation is given in a very formal form. I invite you to look at the various translations and examinations of this story that are available.

Sources

Selections From Ancient Irish Poetry, translated by Kuno Meyer, pg. 105-6, Constable & Company, London. 1911

The Story of the Irish Race, Seumas MacManus, pg. 50-1, Devin-Adair Company, Old Greenwich





Prayer in the Life of a Modern Druid

by Christopher
A. MacKay,
aka Macaoidh

As Druids and scholars, it is easy for us to become absorbed in discussions regarding technical details of our rituals, about paleontology, about linguistics. Sometimes, we overlook the more basic aspects of our path, including the most basic method of communication with our Gods. It is this aspect which this article will discuss.

What is prayer? The answer to that is manifold. Prayer can mean supplication, communication, entreaty, invocation, or many other things. In general, prayer is a method of contacting a deity by way of vocalizing our devotion, our needs and concerns, our thanks and our praises to a deity or pantheon of deities. Our prayers need not fit the stereotypic model of lowering ourselves in abject humility before an omnipotent being of Supreme Authority.

Ostensibly, through prayer, we convey our thoughts and our emotions, by the power of our spirit in combination with the strength of our will, to the Gods. It is upon the spirit of this definition that this article is written.

As Druids, we may enjoy many benefits in our daily lives, on a multitude of levels, which many persons do not.

Through our religion, we are able to have a personal relationship with our Gods, and to have that relationship, not as supplicants, but as equals who exist in different but overlapping realms. Through our religion and our training, we are able to develop ourselves and our awareness of these other realms. We are able to see the complexity of the worlds around us to an ever-increasing extent, and are able to realize what it means to take personal responsibility for our actions within each of these worlds. Through our heightened awareness, we are able to achieve empowerment mentally, spiritually, emotionally, magically, and even physically. Along with this empowerment comes a deep sense of responsibility and connectedness with all things. This leads to a deeper understanding of ourselves and the All, on each of these levels.

As Druids, we have the ability to communicate, not through an intermediary, but directly with the Gods who comprise our pantheon, as well as with the spirits of the land and of our Ancestors. For many, the limitations of their faith preclude any such contact, sometimes even denying the existence of these beings. To us, our loved ones are never lost, but are transformed, reborn, and are still available to us when we wish to communicate with them. Through all these means, we develop an increased appreciation for life itself, in its many forms.

Through our fellowship with our fellow Druids, and other Druidic organizations, we are able to meet with others who share our thirst for knowledge, our sense of Celtic values, and a belief in our ways and our Gods. We can associate with those who share our heightened senses, and our love for life. We can feel a sense of community which grows beyond physical barriers, and can both extend to others, and find within them an understanding of one another which surpasses that which most groups find.

How many of these benefits owe heavily to our prayers, to our communications with spirits of other realms? You will note that the majority of the benefits we receive from our religion, as listed above, hinge upon the development of a personal relationship with the Mighty Ones, and other spirits. Prayer is our most easily accessible tool in acquiring this personal relationship, and can be used by anyone, regardless of their current level of knowledge and ability in other areas. As such, it may also be one of the most powerful avenues of spirituality we have in our repertoire.

Yet prayer is often the most neglected part of our daily lives, and is often subject to many problems even for those who do engage in it on a regular basis. We need to put forth an earnest effort to ensure that we regularly pray, and that those prayers we utter have true meaning and power. Our spirit and our will propel them to the other realms. How can we develop the regularity and meaningfulness of our prayers?

Under stressful conditions, our prayers are likely to be especially earnest and meaningful. But what about our everyday prayers? Do they give evidence of the warm, close relationship we feel we have with our Gods, or which we desire to have with them?

Usually, unless we pause and think before we pray, we can find that the

tendency is for our prayers to become mechanical, stereotyped, routine. Or they may become repetitious, and we may be sounding off words which, to us, no longer have meaning. How many Christians can recite the "Lord's Prayer" very fast, yet have no understanding of it, or who cannot do it slowly or in parts? How many have never stopped to break that prayer down into its component meanings? Such prayers which take place merely by rote or habit may lack feeling, and be devoid of spirit and will. They will have no power.

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At times we may be inclined to hurry through our prayers. However, it could be said that if you are too busy to pray, you are too busy. We should not need to memorize certain words for our personal prayers, and just repeat them each time we pray; neither should it be necessary to read a prayer. However, knowing a formal prayer, and having a repertoire of proper prayers can help us to become familiar with the proper methods and content of praying, and can help us, in formal ritual, to have prayers that are widely known and acceptable to those participating, and which follow the formal tradition of our Order. An examination of *Carmina Gaoidelica* might help one with this endeavor. No doubt all these pitfalls arise, at

least in part, from the fact that sometimes we cannot physically see our Gods.

We will be able to guard against the aforementioned pitfalls to the extent that we appreciate the importance of our daily prayers and have a good relationship with our deities. For one thing, such appreciation will help us to guard against hurrying through our prayers as if we needed to get to more important things. Knowing our Gods, at the least to the extent of reading about their attributes and coming to an appreciation for their personalities, is one method in which we can become more personally involved with them. Meditation, and learning techniques for traveling between worlds is a far more advanced phase which many strive for, but many also do not reach. Prayer is an important step to overcoming the barriers one may face to more advanced forms of communication between worlds.

Nothing can be more important to our spirituality than talking to our Gods. True, there may be occasions when time is limited. For example, we often find ourselves pressed for time when preparing to go out into the world for our day's activities, whether that be work, school, or so forth. What better way could we arm ourselves against the negativity of the outside world and the pressure we face on a daily basis, than to approach our Gods briefly in quiet ceremony, and to set our hearts, minds and spirits in a mode of serenity and preparedness? By doing this, we also may awaken our senses in a calm, controlled manner, which enables us to better cope with issues that arise during our day, and helps us to solve problems that may occur to us.

Once in a while, matters may be so pressing that our time is limited, and we nonetheless find ourselves rushing, or perhaps even neglecting our prayer. Except for occasions,

—Continued on page 21



The Soul of Manannan

by Open

Author's note: My Senior Druid, Antonyus had asked me to write a newsletter article on one of our grove patrons for the new members of our grove. Since I had written a ritual call for Manannan, I was assigned to write the article on him.

I did have an interest in exploring Manannan but a empty rehashing of Manannan's deeds of legend did not motivate me. It is one thing to know all the facts. It is another for the facts to connect to your heart in a way that ministers to your soul.

If I have a call to Paganism/Druidism, it is to tend the connection between head knowledge and heart experience. To tend it from a philosophical perspective: not the accuracy of research, nor the mysticism of magick, but the reasoning of the heart.

With this perspective, I set to the task. Being allergic to dusty books I turned to the internet. My whole claim of any scholarship rests on two web pages:

<http://www.pantheon.org/mythica/areas/celtic/>

<http://www.ancientsouls.com/manannan.htm>

The second website appears to be a quote of: S. McSkimming/L.MacDonald *Gods of the Celts* (1992).

From these two pages I departed following the leading of my heart. I do not know whether my heart departed of its own, or followed a lead of an unseen hand. I do hope and pray these words might be close enough to warm Manannan's heart. If not, may he enlighten me to the error of my ways. May these words be meaningful for the reader in either case.

One of the major functions of any religious culture is to deal with death. What happens to people after they die? The ancient Celts allowed death to remain mysterious. Of course they had ideas, but there was always a certain amount of the unknown in their ideas. They invented a place for the dead to live. But the location of this place was somewhere in the mysterious Western Sea.

The Celts may not have known what was beyond the great waves and mist of the Western Sea. They could see some islands off the shore of Ireland, but even those would fade in and out of the mist, and reaching them could be treacherous. What lay beyond them was unknown.

It is understandable that the unknown Western Sea was aligned with the unknowns of death. Just like the islands off the coast, views of the afterlife were misty and partial. It was deemed a one way trip, one only the greatest of heroes could ever return from. Myths and legends arose of this place and the heroic journey there.

It was only natural that a God arose to oversee this concept. Manannan was his primary name.

So central were the mysteries of the sea and death to the Celts that Manannan was a member of the core group of Gods known as the Tuatha De Danaan.

Manannan was placed into a very interesting position in Celtic cosmology. He was said to be the child of Lir– Lir, the God of time and space. But Lir was also a distant God. The vastness of time and space could be a little intimidating. So Manannan’s father was important, but well beyond the reach of common man.

Manannan was the foster father of Lugh. The legends of Lugh tell of human foibles, subjects the people could easily relate to. Lugh was popular and close to the people.

Positioned between Lir and Lugh, Manannan occupied strategic middle ground between the great incomprehensibles of time and space and the familiarities of everyday life.

And being in this position, Manannan bore the answers to some of the great questions of life. How does everyday life fit into the grand plan of time and space? Manannan knew.

He didn’t know in the sense of $1 + 1 = 2$, he knew in the sense of a seasoned captain that knew his ship and the waters he traversed. The Celts didn’t look to him to expound a formula, they looked to him to know the vast experiences they would pass through in their journey to the other side. Manannan was specifically crafted to guide the Celts on their journey through death.

The legends of Manannan give us some specifics to associate him with. For secure transportation to the otherworld, Manannan had a boat which could steer itself and travel without wind or wave. There was an emotional comfort to this. How could one fear the journey if the boat itself knew its own way? With Manannan and his boat, there need not be any fear of getting lost or stranded between this life and the next.

But before one leaves this life, one’s deepest wish might be to see truth win out in the end. To cut through any defenses and expose what may have been long hidden. To that end Manannan was given a sword. Not just any sword, but a sword called “The Answerer.”

The Answerer could not miss its mark and no armor could resist it.

Still, there were times when truth did not seem to win out. Invasions came and new ways overturned the old. So, Manannan was given a cloak of ever-changing color or invisibility. With it he could veil the fall of the old ones, protecting the old ways from questions of “Why?”

Thus Manannan was the keeper of mysteries– but not a cold keeper that would keep you up at night pondering. Rather, he was a warm keeper you could trust your fears to, like a parent’s reassurances to a child that “everything’s OK.”

To give him this warmth, Manannan popped in and out of legends. Often under different names, he disarmed

those he met through tricks and illusions. He used practical jokes to keep people from taking life too seriously. But he was very careful to make sure his jokes never caused harm to those he interacted with. His message was “You may not understand life and death, but that is no reason to fear life or death.”

Instead of seeking an exegesis of every detail of life after death, the Celts had a warm, welcoming guide. Their soul could rest well knowing Manannan would captain them through whatever mysteries lay beyond.

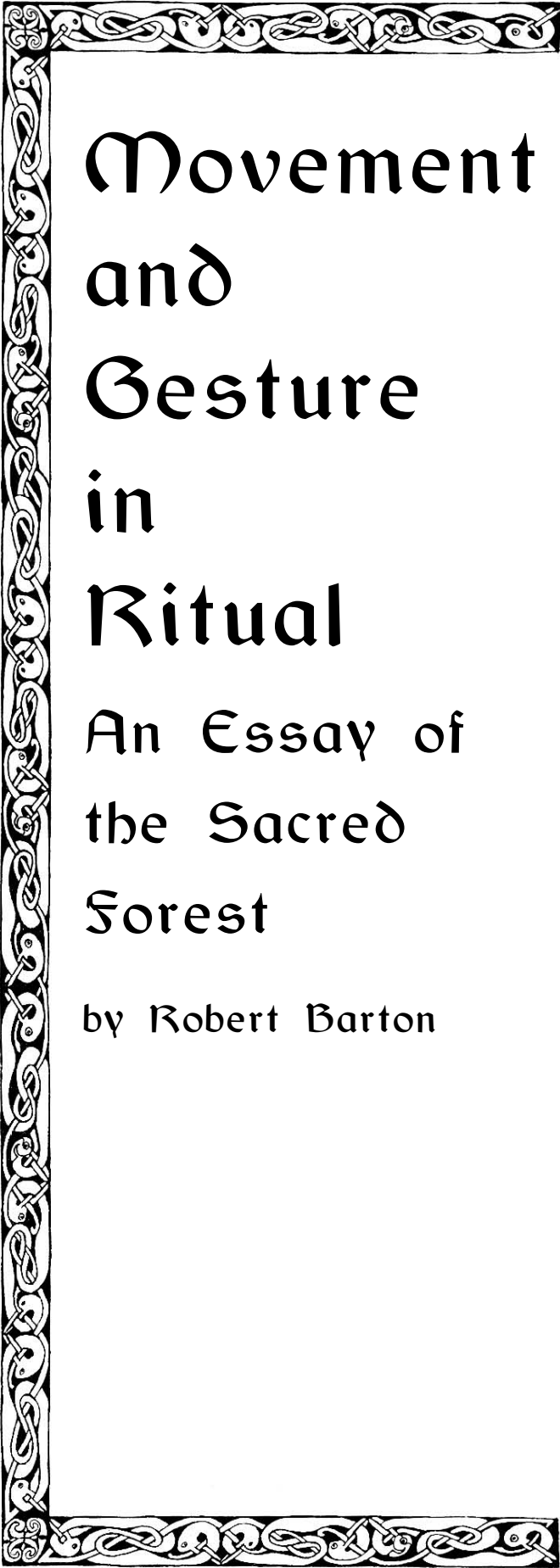
And that same deity could mean the same to us. With a relationship with Manannan we could find peace for our souls. We could rest in his ability to sail us to the other side. We could trust him with the mystery of it all.

Not only can Manannan comfort our ponderings of our final journey, but he can also enrich our day-to-day lives.

Each time we open the gates, whether alone or together, we take a spiritual journey into a misty, mysterious area. Who better to accompany this journey than Manannan. We may not know how to enter or move about in the spiritual realms but Manannan’s vessel can propel and navigate itself. We can trust such details to our welcomed Guide.

Yet we know that with Manannan, it won’t be the same old boring trip. Manannan always has a fresh twist in the trail to give us a new, safe experience and perspective. This is the soul of Manannan.





Movement and Gesture in Ritual

An Essay of the Sacred Forest

by Robert Barton

Formalized movement and gesture during the performance of ceremony is found exemplified in virtually every venue of ritual, from the traditional ethnic ceremonies of tribal spiritual leaders, to the complex exercises of the modern magician. It is the intention of this essay to provide the student with a basic introduction to, and a reference point for, explorations and development of this oft-used but seldom discussed skill.

When conducting a ritual or ceremony, we use several symbology systems –laid one upon the other– with the intent of reinforcing a specific message or set of messages on multiple levels of awareness and understanding. Human communication makes use not only of verbally expressed information, but also of feelings relayed through facial expression, body position and body movement. The willful use of gesture, movement, positioning and expression, along with the generally more studied symbology systems of temple furniture, ritual tools and spoken language will often convey instinctual perception and understanding of the concepts being communicated.

Many examples for the use of ritual gesture may be found in the teachings of magical schools and organizations of the past few generations. Magical systems use sigils and symbols drawn in the air with a magical tool and in a very formal manner in order to perform specific tasks. There is the very commonly used posture with a single finger placed to the lips, in the position for silence. Many ritual systems start their exercises with a physical gesture of opening a veil or sweeping away a fog. Priests of many faiths bless with a physically drawn symbol of their faith.

It is unfortunate that many modern systems for the teaching of liturgical composition and performance do not directly address the more physical methods of expression and communication. This is, however, a valuable area to explore, in that a small amount of study is all that is required in order to apply a set of skills that can exponentially increase the practical effectiveness of spiritual and ceremonial activities.

During the invitation to Deity or invocation of forces, the person performing the operation can use simple gesture and expression to enhance the effect of the act upon everyone present. The eyes can be elevated to gaze through a point above the heads of the attendees as though looking through a doorway into another world, with the eyes not being focused on any obvious point in this realm. While the invitation is being spoken, the hands start at the sides, then are slowly raised palm-up to a position of 'awaiting' with the palms up, open and elevated to the level of the eyes or top of the head with the arms slightly bent. After the words are spoken, a short pause, and then the hands are lowered slowly to the sides as the eyes are lowered to look at the others

present. A final statement to the effect of “He is among us, may he be welcomed” may be made to complete the effect of awaiting, and then of arrival.

While a space is being declared sacred and blessed to the work at hand, the perimeter may be walked by someone asperging or censuring the area as they go. Alternately, the speaker may point toward the edge of the area in a large, slow, sweeping gesture, completing the entire circuit, and the words, simultaneously. An area, or the people in an area, may also be blessed while the hands are held up palm out at (or above) eye level. An item or cup may be blessed by being slowly elevated in one hand and then the other palm being held over the item, as though pouring out the blessings upon it.

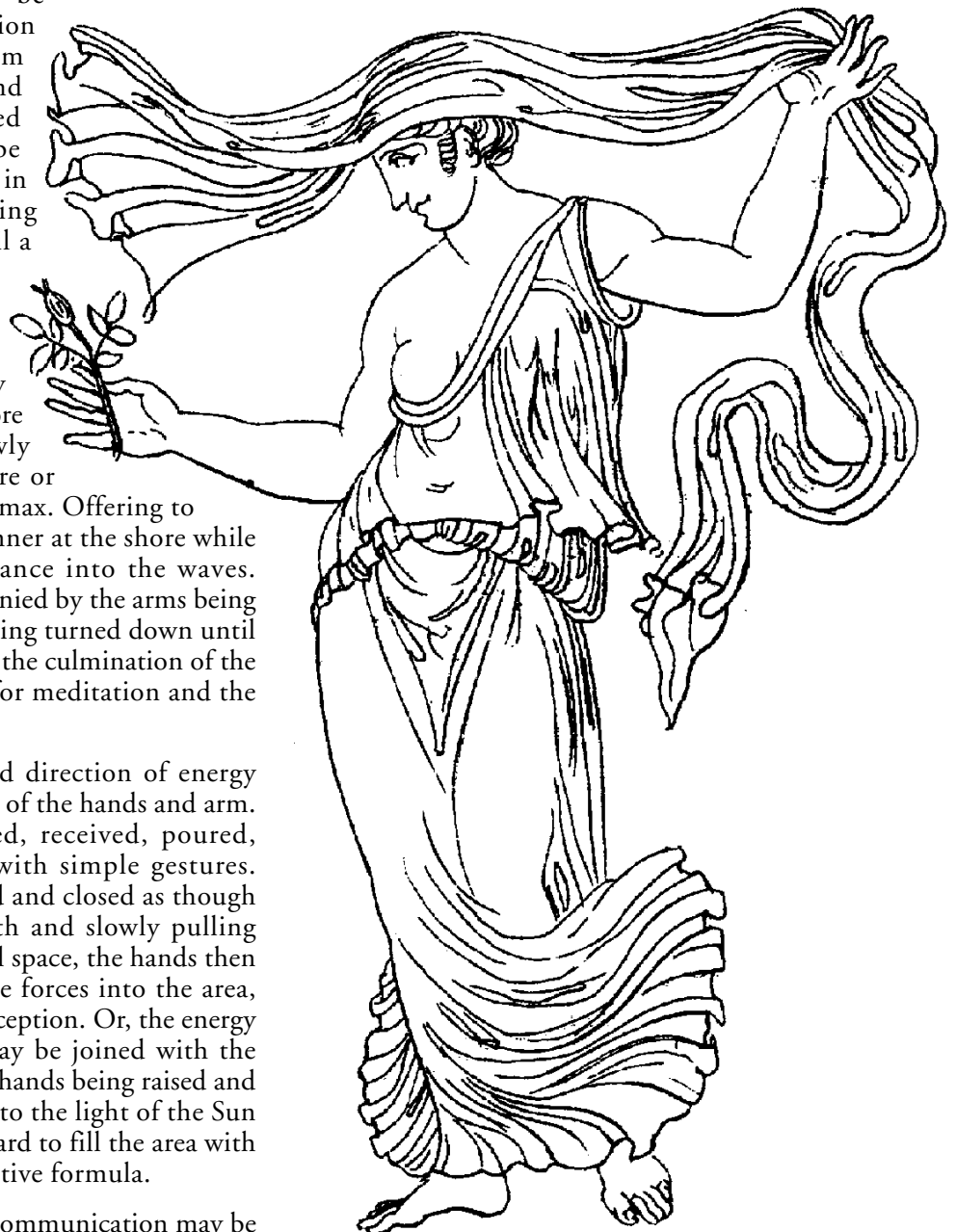
The opening of gates may be accompanied by a simple motion of the arms being extended from the chest outward to the sides and the palms slowly being turned outward. Or, the hand may be raised and directed at some point in space, and then slowly moving outward in a spiral pattern until a final sweeping large circular motion is made as the words are completed.

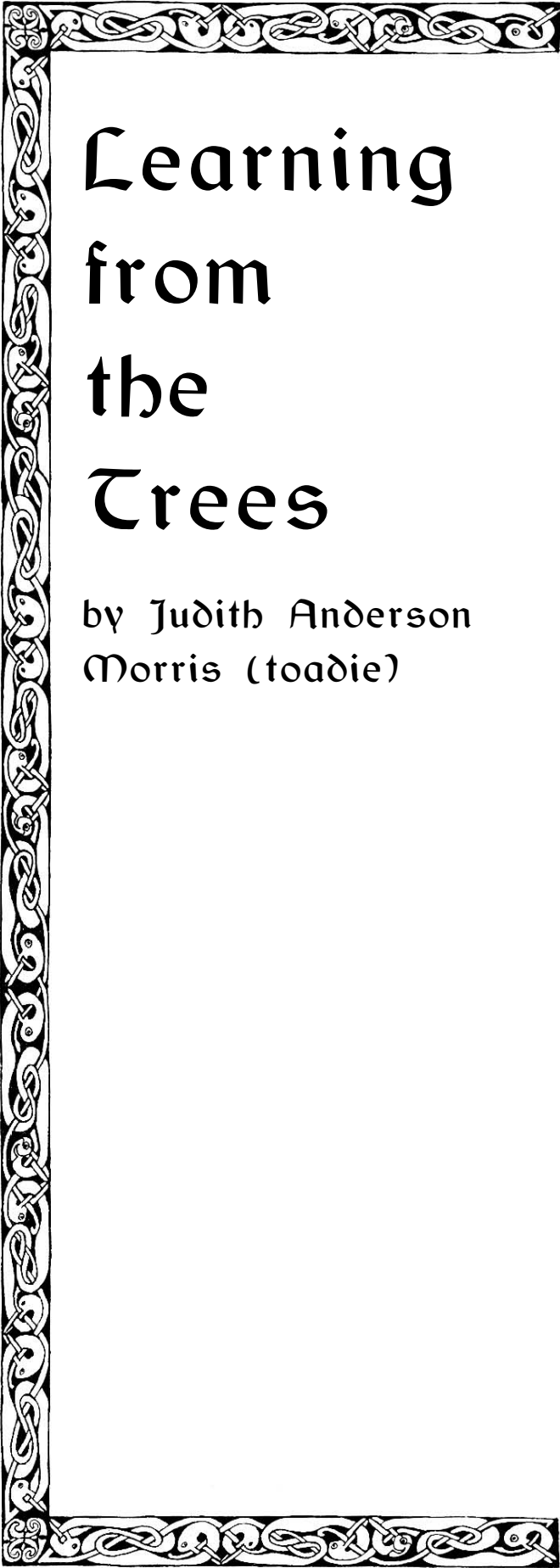
Sacrifices may be presented by carrying them in both hands before the offerer as the item is slowly raised and then given to sea, fire or well as the statement reaches climax. Offering to the sea may be given in this manner at the shore while the sacrificer walks some distance into the waves. Grounding acts may be accompanied by the arms being slowly lowered and the palms being turned down until they rest flat upon the ground at the culmination of the statement, a short pause taken for meditation and the ritual ends.

The perception of the flow and direction of energy may be enhanced by movements of the hands and arm. Energy may be raised, lowered, received, poured, projected, held and directed with simple gestures. Hands may be thrust downward and closed as though grasping the forces of the Earth and slowly pulling them up into the body and ritual space, the hands then opened as though pouring those forces into the area, people or items awaiting their reception. Or, the energy thus grasped and pulled up, may be joined with the awaiting forces of the sky by the hands being raised and opened palms up to be exposed to the light of the Sun and then the hands spread outward to fill the area with the combined forces of this creative formula.

Gesture and the effect it has on communication may be studied by the observation of professional actors during

stage performance. Ritualists should practice the coordination of movement and gesture with spoken parts and sections of ceremony. One should not wait until a ritual begins to think about gesture, but should rather practice these things well ahead of time so that the movements will appear spontaneous and natural during performance. A small amount of thought and practice in advance can turn a competent ritualist into a good or even excellent one. While this essay contains only a few examples from a field of endless possibilities, I hope that it has made the reader more aware of the subject and how it may enhance spiritual and ceremonial practice.





Learning from the Trees

by Judith Anderson
Morris (toadie)

What's a Druid without trees? For that matter, what's a world without trees? Yet most of us take trees for granted. When I was teaching honors and Advanced Placement English to gifted high school students, I gave the same assignment at the beginning of each school year. Go out tonight, I would instruct them, and hug a tree; then write about your experience.

My students were, of course, incredulous. This woman is nuts. Hug a tree? What's that have to do with learning English? But being the obedient little honors students that they were, everyone always completed her assignment.

The next day each student would read his journal entries aloud. Some were incredibly funny (usually written by self-conscious, he-man, athletic types who reported having crept about in the wee hours of the morning so as not to actually be SEEN doing this dirty deed). But ALWAYS, without exception, the students were amazed at what they felt. While they were aware that trees are alive, their awareness rested at some abstract intellectual level. Once they touched the living thing in its essence, they understood the meaning of the word "alive" in all its nuances.

For most of us, awareness is a touch (or a hug, if you will) away. I know of no other interaction that so immediately and intensely renders us aware of the life around us. So go hug a tree and write about your experience. Once you have completed the exercise, repeat it with another kind of tree. Was there a difference? In Charleston, we have a thousand-year-old live oak which natives call "Angel Oak." The breadth and sheer power of this tree (protected in a city park) is incomparable. Each time I have visited and sat at its base, my back against its broad trunk, my feet on the humped stool of an exposed root, I am given what I call my "affirmations" (little signs that reaffirm for me the magic of the universe and my part in it). Sometimes it comes in the form of a visiting hawk; sometimes a horde of butterflies; sometimes I find unique feathers at its base. It provides acorns, moss, and ferns for my spellwork and, of course, a deep sense of peace. I always leave three shiny copper pennies in its hollows in return.

The crepe myrtles that adorn the city streets, on the other hand, are quieter trees. They stand like shy and beautiful women as I stroke their smooth, shiny, twisted trunks. Willows are sad trees whose song is a wistful whish-h-h in the breeze. Birches emote a sense of freshness and possibility. The tree has long been symbolic of life, but I also like to draw the analogy of the tree to the human brain.

Everything in the universe exists in macrocosmic and microcosmic forms. The solar system is mirrored by the atom, a factory by a colony of ants. So, too, are the branching dendrites of our brains which spread from each neuron like the branches of a tree. Dendrites pass information quickly from one neuron to the next, processing at an amazing rate. The better care one takes of a tree, the more branches it produces. The more one uses her brain, the more dendrites are produced. The more dendrites one possesses, the better one's potential for intellectual accomplishment.

When Albert Einstein died and left his brain to be analyzed, the only real difference between it and the brains of other humans was in the amazing amount of dendrites Einstein possessed. Science has told us what the trees have always known, that proper use strengthens and enhances.



There was an omission from issue 13.

We somehow misplaced the endnotes for Rob Barton and Gwynne Green's *Critical Analysis and Response to "Initiation and the Druidic Secret Language" by Cathbad*. We are sorry for the mistake, and have included the references here.

Eugene O'Curry *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, Vol. 1 (Dublin: W.B. Kelly, 1873) Lectures IX & X.

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Ritual

A Spring Blot to Nerthus

by Jordsvin

The following is an outline of the blot to Nerthus and the Landwights that I led at the 1997 Trothmoot in Indiana, USA. It is based on the Nerthus blot written by Lisa Wilson, Gydhia of Hammerstead Kindred, and ultimately on the blotar published by Steve McNallen, with a bit of Kveldulf Gundarson's ideas thrown in, especially the breadman.

Introduction— Nerthus is one of the Vanir. She is the Mother Earth Goddess mentioned by Tacitus in his book *Germania*, written in 98 CE. Her name corresponds etymologically with the much later Njordhr, and my own interpretation, which seems fairly common in contemporary Heathenism, is that she is his sister and wife, as mentioned in Lokasenna. As this is a Vanir-blot and thus a frith-stead, all edged weapons must be deposited outside the Ve before the blot begins. We processed to the blot site, carrying the materials for the blot and Nerthus' image in an improvised God-cart, as was done long ago. The harrow was already set up, and I asked for Nerthus' permission to put her on the harrow and waited to do it until it felt right to do so (read Tacitus for further details as to why).

Hallowing with recels (incense)— I used vervain, an excellent purification herb which unfortunately smells like a “pot” (=marijuana) party. Rosemary, hawthorn and/or frankincense would have worked fine too. As I walked around the Ve area, I chanted Diana Paxson's chant: “Hallowed herbs all ill dispel, as fuel on the fire, as smoke on the wind” Elhaz hallowing at the four directions, beginning in the West, the direction the harrow is facing (this is a Vanir-blot, as I mentioned): “Elhaz, helga Ve thetta ok hindra alla illska.” (“Elk-Rune, hallow this sacred space and hinder all evil things.”)

I then invoked Nerthus. Since she is Mother Earth, she didn't have to journey to us from somewhere else. Rather, I invited her to extend her consciousness up to us from within the Earth. Winifred Hodge did an Earth-blessing based on the Anglo-Saxon Aecer-bot and sang a song. Diana Paxson chanted her Nerthus chant: “Strength of stone, depth of Earth, Mother Nerthus gives us birth. Fur and feathers, scale and skin, all her creatures are our kin.”

I used a breadman for this blot. I made him from a variety of different flours, and put food in his stomach before baking him. Please note that you want to try for a very solid breadman, not a flaky, crumbly one. I did the ausa vatni water-sprinkling/naming ceremony on the breadman as a part of the blot, giving him the name “Heathen-frith” in hopes the Gods will help us get along better! Each person present had the opportunity to charge him with some of his or her own energy as I

carried him around the Ve. I then went around and collected offerings to accompany Heathen-frith into his previously-prepared grave when he is sacrificed. Nine pennies of the Nine Worlds is a good offering (there is no inflation in Asgard). A small crystal or amulet, a lock of hair, etc. is also nice. I had some bread on the harrow for folks who didn't have anything else at hand. I then ritually strangled Heathen-frith, placed him in the grave and pinned him down with bamboo skewers (sacrificial victims were often cut in some way as well as strangled, whether or not the sacrifice was to Odin), and added the grave goods, which represented things being let go of, sacrifice, or planting a seed for future growth. Many had already spoken of the motive and symbolism of their offerings as they made them earlier.

Next came the hallowing of a horn of mead to Nerthus, and the sprinkling of the harrow, Nerthus' shrouded image on the harrow (traditionally few were permitted to see it), the sacrificed Heathen-frith in his still-open grave, and the blot participants, myself included, with the charged mead. We then toasted Nerthus while passing the horn. As she is one of the Vanir, we asked for peace and good seasons, including better weather than we've been having this year! I then offered to the local landwights of the working apple orchard where the blot was held. I gave them cornmeal and tobacco, which is what they used to get from the First Nations living in the area, and put these offerings in with Heathen-frith and the other gifts to Nerthus. I then covered the grave, and poured the mead left in the hlaut-bolli (bowl used for sprinkling) on one of the apple trees, asking for good harvests and prosperity for the family which has owned the grove for generations. Someone had left a lovely little wreath of red and white clover blossoms on a stump by the harrow, and one of the participants put it on the grave and placed two crossed sticks in the middle, forming a Sun-Wheel. We all greatly enjoyed this lovely and reverent spontaneous gesture. We then bade Nerthus farewell, and in doing so at each of the four directions released the sacred Vespaces as well. Most of the assembled Heathens then departed, but a few who wished to draw closer to Nerthus stayed to assist me in the unwrapping, traditional washing of the image, and its re-wrapping. This experience was very moving to me, and I believe to all others present. We omitted the anciently-practiced drowning of slaves. Not only is that now

highly illegal, it was unnecessary as well, since all the participants had charged Heathen-frith before his sacrifice, and we had thus already given Nerthus a bit of ourselves. We loaded the God-cart and reverently departed the blot site.

Please feel free to use this outline-description as a guide to your OWN blot to Nerthus and the landwights, the guardian spirits who care for her. I deliberately didn't write it out verbatim as a script to keep folks from reading it off note cards. (OK, I admit it, I started off doing blots that way too!) Nerthus' blessings be with all of us, and may we prove worthy of them by caring for her. Hail Nerthus!



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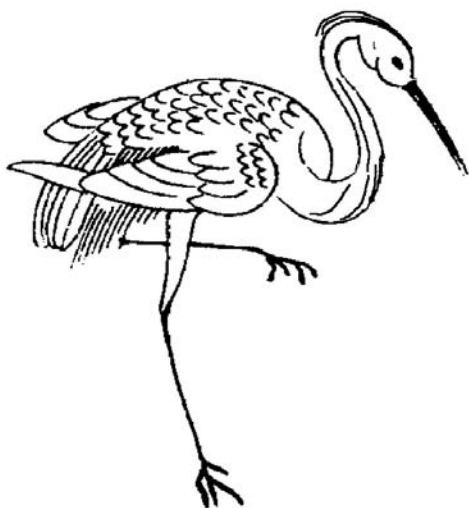
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Storytelling

The Gifting

by Skuniamh an
Inish ni hUigain



Once, not so many moons ago, I, Skuniamh an Inish ni hUigain, the Wanderer, in my many journeys came upon a venerable apple tree close to a babbling stream in the countryside of my Tuatha's lands.

At twilight I lay to rest there upon my sheepskin and soon drifted into sleep.

'Twas not long after, as I rustled to gather my cloak about me, that I awoke from the screeching caw of a heron. As I roused, I looked about to find myself and the land enshrouded in a strange, luminous mist.

I took up my journey-sack and lorg, then stepped along the path leading to the stream, for that was where the heron, my spirit-totem, was always to be found.

Standing still as stone upon a rock in the stream, the Heron eyed me intensely as I seated myself on a tree stump along the bank. I greeted the Heron, "I honor your presence, Great Corr. What may I learn from you?"

It was thus the Heron spoke:

In your presence shall alight

The Messenger sent to you

Heed the Voice of Shadows

Black as jet, black as night

With that, the heron spread its great wings and ascended into the night sky with only the sound of the moonlit breeze to mark its flight. I looked about to see the mist had cleared, leaving me alone by the stream on a cloudless night.



A moon and a day passed, and I found myself on Samhain's even with the Tuatha of the Ring at the longhouse of the armor-maker Janssone Wulframson, and his wife, Briana the Brehon. The fire was enormous, and the stories finely spun. But alone, I stole away to the edge o' the wood, to give reverence as Samhain tradition called for. I knelt and gave prayer amidst a small grove. Upon giving my offering to the land, I heard a hushed scratching emanating from somewhere above me.

I looked skyward to see the silhouette of a great bird perched atop a small bare tree along the woodline. I greeted the Raven, "I honor your presence, Great Bran. What is your missive from the Dark Woman?"

For this was the Messenger of Morrigan. It was thus the Raven spoke:

Crowned is she

Like the Eyes of Belenos

A seeker of the Ring

Friend and pupil, kin to be

The fox shall honor your wing

With that, the Raven cawed and sprang from its perch, vanishing into the darkness. I rose to join my Kindred at the hearth. But as I stepped from the grove I heard, in the field beyond the path, laughter and the yipping of mirthful animals.

Peering out onto the moonlit field I beheld a flaming red-haired woman in flowing garments, at play with three red foxes. The maiden and the foxes leapt, circled, and danced in the silver-tipped grass until the woods beyond the field shadowed them, and the vision was gone.

I knew this was the one spoken of by Morrigan's Raven for it was my friend, Derga the Artist, who was not present with us that Samhain's even.

I rejoined my Kindred, gathered hearthside. I gifted each the Blessing of Salt as Samhain tradition called for. I announced Derga as my new pupil. It was thus my Tribe-mate, Yulfa of the Orkneys, spoke, "'Tis a good and proper task you have undertaken this even." And I knew her words were truth.



The moons passed and the Wheel of Life turned. I gave many hours to teaching Derga the ways of the Tuatha of the Ring. I spoke of the Ancients; I spoke of the Warriors; I spoke of the Ways of a fili; we talked of many things.

When the time came for Derga to declare her chosen name, I spoke of my vision of the three foxes, and Derga knew that this was her spirit-totem. So she chose her name, Sionnach, to honor the fox; for that is its meaning.

As the days became warmer, the great Festival of Imbolg approached. I grew anxious, for I knew the Tuatha of the Ring would accept new Kindred at the Feast of the Goddess Brighid.

The roundhouse of Clan hUigain was astir as we prepared for Imbolg. But as we partook of our Fasting Meal soft, lulling music emanated from the woods beyond our fields. A strange drowsiness befell us, and we were overtaken with an enchanted sleep. We dreamt of the Sidhe, and never-ending feasts.

A sun passed before I was roused from my otherworldly slumber by the Calling Horn of the warrior Isgunn Eymuni; my Kindred from the icy fjords. Grieved was the Tuatha by our absence. But the sleep-enchantment of Clan hUigain was dispelled, and all was well again.



The sun grew stronger, waters flowed, and the earth was bursting forth with the youth and beauty of Spring. Beltaine was at hand, and the Tuatha of the Ring prepared for the great festival.

I sang an Armoring to protect against enchantments; for this was an occasion not to be missed. All was as clear water on a windless day, and I knew the Twin Fires of Belenos would illuminate Sionnach an Derga's Making of Kindred.

The festival commenced. The Tuatha ate; the Tuatha sang; the Tuatha danced, and the time came for the Making of Kindred. The Elders gathered in private council, and it was thus Briana the Brehon spoke, "Shall it come to pass that Derga will be accepted?" The Council of Elders agreed it should be so.

I sounded my Calling Horn, and the Elders gathered the people around the Twin Fires of Belenos. It was thus Briana the Brehon spoke, "Tuatha of the Ring; There is one in our midst who seeks to be made Kindred. Inish, who is this person?"

I called my fosterling forth: "Sionnach an Derga, stand before this Tribe."

Sionnach an Derga stood amongst the Tuatha of the Ring in the light of the Twin Fires of Belenos, and many fine words were spoken. I gifted my new Kindred with an idol of Morrigan, Sionnach an Derga's matron. Her torc, of bronze with equine finials, was bestowed by the mighty Northman, Valbjorn Flettir, to honor her dancing in the Parade of Epona's Winged Children.

At last, the Tuatha Horn was brought before the people. The incantation was spoken; the Horn began to be passed. Then Sionnach an Derga, overcome with inspiration, presented the Tuatha Horn to each Kindred of the Ring herself.

This had never before been done, and there was great stirring amongst the Elders. For they felt love in the people's hearts; saw joy in the shine of their eyes; and heard laughter upon their lips.

It was thus Briana the Brehon spoke, "'Tis a good and proper deed that Derga has done this even." And I knew her words were truth.

So it continues, in the sacred traditions of hospitality and the eternal spirit of friendship, that a drink from the Tuatha Horn is gifted one by one to the people of the Ring by their newly accepted Kindred.

And thus it came to pass that Sionnach an Derga honored me, her mentor, with the greatest gift anyone could have given a fili or their Tuatha; the creation of a new tradition.

And that is my tale.





Storytelling

The Rainmaker's Apprentice

by Gwynndewin

but when the next day
came, the sky was
dry and clear

Once a Rainmaker and her new apprentice were traveling through the forest. When they stopped at a stream to fill their canteens, the apprentice asked the Rainmaker if she could call the rain.

“Well,” said the Rainmaker, as she looked about them at the stream and the forest and felt the gentle wind, “Call and we shall see.”

Now the apprentice was glad for the chance to prove herself, and when they camped that night, she danced her best dance and sang her best song, and went to sleep dreaming of rain.

But when the next day came, the sky was dry and clear.

The apprentice was much surprised by this and remained quiet all day until they again stopped at a stream to drink. Finally the apprentice said that she would like to try again.

“Well,” said the Rainmaker, as she looked at the stream and the forest and felt the gentle wind, “Call and we shall see.”

Now the apprentice was very determined, and when they camped that night, she danced her best dance until she was very tired, and sang her best song until her voice was gone, and again fell asleep dreaming of rain.

But when the next day came, the sky was dry and clear.

Then the apprentice was very disappointed and began to think she could not call the rain. She was quiet all day as they traveled through the forest until they came at last to the beginning of a strangling desert.

Then the Rainmaker turned and said to the apprentice, “Now you will call the rain.”

This shocked the apprentice and she cried, “But how can I call the rain in the desert, here where it never rains, when I could not even call a mist in the forest where water is no stranger!”

But the Rainmaker only said, “Call and we shall see.”

That night they camped deep in the desert and the apprentice, who was certain she could not call the rain, did her shortest dance and her simplest song and when she slept that night she only dreamed of sand and withered seeds.

But when the next day came, the sky was cloudy and a gentle rain was falling.

“But how?” said the apprentice to the Rainmaker. “When I did my best dance it did not rain. When I did my best song it did not rain. But here, in the desert, where I do my least, we’re soaked from falling water?”

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I am a Jew, of the utmost reformed category. I grew up in a Jewish household. I went to synagogue on the High Holy Days. I went to Hebrew school until I made my Bar Mitzvah at 13, when I became a “man.”

The Lord and Lady never ask my approval. I serve them as Priestess, I do what they ask. I would not have chosen my co-worker Yitzhak, Izzy, as my mate for the Bealteinne fires. But the choice was made above and beyond me. To my credit— I surrendered.

What is a Jew? I asked myself that often. Yes, I'd read the textbooks. I knew the dates, the places, the prayers. But what did it mean to me? Where was my place? A fire was smoldering, but wouldn't catch. It was the struggle of a fire going out. So when she introduced the idea of the Bealteinne fires, I was all ears. Where did this fire burn? Show me, Charlie.

The first Bealteinne we worked together we were very enthusiastic in teaching each other about our very different Traditions. We would walk on our lunch hour, and that first spring I got a very general education about Passover and Izzy got a very watered down description of Bealteinne— minus the fires altogether. A season later we were walking on very different ground during lunch. I knew enough to say “Shabbat Shalom” on Fridays, and when to bring unleavened bread to share at lunch, and Iz had learned enough to comment on the moon phases and at least wish me happy solstices and equinoxes.

And then she appeared, looking like an orphan with a backpack and a rumpled windbreaker on some early spring morning. “I like you,” she said, with gigantic green eyes and red elfin hair. No words needed. Just those wonderful green eyes and lashes that summoned forth the shadows of some forbidden forest. Something sleeping awakened in me. Jung would've said it was my anima, my inner female. “I like you,” I returned with my broad shoulders, my long legs, and the stubble that darkened my chin. She was so alive, so passionate in her beliefs, her Pagan path— so reverent in her respect for all of life, from her clients to the bugs and butterflies of our never ending walks. Show me Charlie—

I tried not to complicate my workplace. I tried not to admit a physical attraction to a man who called my tattoo a “pen-tangle” and thought the four elements were “animal, vegetable, mineral and synthetic.” Iz did everything he could to deny that he was being haunted by some past life version of himself, Priest at Avalon maybe, or Bard at the King's court— noticing the tides of his blood ebbing and flowing with no Yiddish expressions to capture or

—Continued on next page

Storytelling

Bealteinne Edition

by Betz King

& David Manchel

I would not have chosen
as mate for the beltane fires
my Jewish coworker
yidzhak

explain it. What a rationalist. What a thinker. We walked day after day for over a year with me, celebrating every season. "Who can figure?" I said to myself, in my best Yiddish impersonation. I know now, after that night of the Bealteinne Fires, that we had been puppets all along, Lord and Lady pulling our strings for over a year before They, and we, joined together in the fields.

She thought I was brilliant. Quite an aphrodisiac for an insecure solitary soul. I always hampered my every move with a crass and scolding "You can do better Izzy, you can do better." My father perhaps, talking. Or maybe my whole culture, chanting in unison: "Do better, do better, do better— we are the Chosen People and we must do better!" Ah yes, the guilt at not having done good enough, my Alma Mater. A graduate from the University of Not Having Done Enough.

Macrocosmically, we were the chosen of the Lord and Lady. Microcosmically, our attraction to each other was harder to explain. Walk after walk, talk after talk, I felt a magnetic attraction to a process larger than our incompatibilities. I was newly sworn as Priestess, but unable to share that reality in my professional work as psychologist. Iz was the least likely to understand me. But it was his very unfamiliarity with my Tradition that allowed him to see me as Priestess. This, in turn, allowed me to see myself as Priestess. And as Priestess, I saw in him both Priest and man— maybe more man than Priest, to be honest: the pull of his deep brown eyes, the suggestion of muscles under his dress shirts, the knot of his tie against his Adam's apple, and his swarthy 5:00 shadow at nine a.m. Around his masculinity, my femininity resonated like a tuning fork.

Every six weeks or so I explained the current Sabbath to him, and if there was also a Jewish holiday he would teach me. We combined them into

lunchtime walk celebrations. We called our blended tradition "Hebragan," and Iz pronounced it with such a perfect Irish accent that I laughed with delight every time. But he was sad— empty somehow. Iz went through the motions, but without any inner spark. When I tried to talk with him about it he was evasive, and would always turn the talk elsewhere. I let him be.

My car seemed to drive itself to the Temple of my youth. I used to talk to God here. It was dark, and I was reluctant to enter and visit the ghosts inside. I walked instead around the back, to the fields behind. I was lost, yes. Spiritually, soulfully lost— walking in the field behind the Temple of my youth. Without goals, without faith.

It was the field behind Temple Emmanuel where my spiritual crisis culminated. I was thinking of Charlie of course, of her crazy faith, her beliefs as alien to me as my own Judaism. Only difference was she chose hers— something I don't do. I don't choose. I default. Into being a Jew and back out again. Empty and aware of empty.

I do not recall a time when I felt so alone as I did that evening. It was as if a night of endless proportion, of infinity, was descending upon the fields. And the silence was so overwhelming, so daunting. Was I losing my mind?

Recently I'd joined a Druidic grove, to compliment my Kabalistic studies. We were seeking a place to celebrate Bealteinne and initiate new members. I made a few calls, and secured us permission to use the big field and small forest behind the Temple Emmanuel, and our celebration was consequently held there, on Jewish ground. "All Gods are one God, and all Goddesses one Goddess," it didn't matter to us. We were grateful for the little piece of wilderness within the metropolitan city.

After initiations of the new members, and the traditional Bealteinne rituals of the Maypole, and jumping the fires, there was much merry making in the warm spring night. Mead flowed as nectar from the Gods as people broke into smaller groups and lit smaller fires to talk and sing and dance around. I sat for awhile with some pipers, lending my feeble skills on my wooden recorder, then wandered, blessedly barefoot, to the guitars and dulcimers, strumming and singing their Gaelic tunes. The drumming circle eventually captivated me and pulled me to the edge of the woods, by the abandoned Maypole. Congas, bongos and medicine drums pounded into the night, the rhythm so hypnotic, the night air so crisp and filled with the smell of mud and smoke and new grass. It seemed to me the most joyful celebration of life possible— a newly sworn Bard, a Priestess in grateful celebration of Bel, the bright one, Lord of the Fires. The music took me like one of Pan's nymphs. I found myself jumping the various fires, past pipers and drummers, to the edge of the woods where our Maypole still stood, like a giant phallus, guarding the deep dark forest behind.

Weary, and burdened by the weight of my own thoughts, I walked blindly into the great field behind the temple. With each step I heard my heartbeat, throbbing. But then the internal became external as I recognized the sounds to be rhythmic, ebbing and flowing, fading in and out, distant but then closer. Drumming? Yes, it was the sound of drumming. How peculiar. My curiosity piqued, I walked faster into the field.

Aglow in the field, the brilliant orbs of small fires burned. Smoke curled upward. Sweet sounds trickled through the night air. A dulcimer? A mandolin? Was some sort of gypsy caravan performing behind my Temple?

I strolled closer, trying to look nonchalant among the people

dressed in all manners of ways. My instinct was to hide, and observe, but out of nowhere a girl in a peasant dress grabbed my hand and pulled me towards a small fire crying "Come jump with me!" and she began to run, pulling me. I jumped over the small fire with her and she kissed my cheek and was gone. What strange sect was this? Who were these people?! I found a hiding spot behind a large Oak tree, where I could watch this surrealistic scene. I was both captivated and apprehensive. Suddenly, I recognized the sound of feet, quick stepping over last year's leaves, and a voice, humming, singing, chirping and giggling. I peered around the trunk and through the smoke and night I barely made out the image, silhouetted before the burning fires.

Was it— ? Could it be— ? It couldn't be—

Charlie. Swirling round and round a great pole hung with streamers. Eyes closed, a blissful smile on her face. Her tattoo, the one I'd only heard of, the one that would forever prohibit her burial in Jewish ground, was glistening and glorious. Her torso was wet with sweat. I inched closer to convince myself that I was not dreaming. Yes, it was Charlie, dancing round and round in time to the music. Some kind of pagan hoe-down? She told me she worshipped outside. She didn't mention it was behind my Temple.

"Shekhinah," I whispered without thought, the divine feminine in my tradition, why remember that now, after so many years of forgetting? She was almost too beautiful to look at, and my heart swelled at her brightness. "Why, she is Shekhinah, and she is fire— she is all that I am not, all that I am missing— " I began unbuttoning my shirt, smiling.

"A Maypole dance— too perfect!" I exclaimed. I hummed and giggled, eyes mostly closed as I focused on the mud between my toes and the cool

breeze on my skin, dancing towards the Maypole. I grabbed a ribbon and began to twirl around the pole, ducking, turning in and out, very pagan, very ancient and very child like. Stumbling for a moment, I opened my eyes to catch my balance and realized someone was watching me. It took two seconds for my rational mind to blow a fuse and shut down, because it took two seconds to recognize the watcher as Izzy. His eyes were sparkling. The firelight illuminated him from behind, and he said simply "Shekhinah."



Somewhere along my approach to her, as the tongue of flame licked us both, from our toes to the roots of our hair, language became non-functional, and thus void. The fire, the pounding of the conga, the

dappling of the guitar notes, my own heartbeat, these became our language, hers and mine.

Show me the Light Charlie.

As she turned fully to me, her eyes melted.

Is this happening? Am I dreaming? Show me— show me!

Then she brought her gaze full up my body, so slowly, then up the slope of my neck, around my ears, over my chin and to my fully parted lips. I saw her eyes glaze over then, as if she was venturing to some far off place.

She held her ribbon out to me.

He approached me then, and took up the ribbon. If ever I doubted the existence of magic, or of the Lord and Lady, the doubt was extinguished in the dance that followed. Round and round the maypole, over and under the ribbons, braided together as we twirled somehow in perfect grace—



After the fire— I started so many sentences in my mind that way, so many emails and letters to Izzy, all unsent— after the fire. The seasons have turned. Yitzhak took a new job months ago, and it's been longer since we last talked. I spend my days at a much lonelier workplace now.

After the fire, I came back to myself, as if I had been in a drug induced black out, with only fragments of images to fill in the missing hours. In the shower that night, my muscles were sore, my body covered with mud and scratches, I had flashbacks, singular images and scenes— Izzy over me, me looking down upon him, the smell of smoke— Washing my face, I felt the sting of the soap where his stubble had rubbed me raw. I remember mud painted war stripes

—Continued on next page

on his cheeks and chest, that bare chest revealed after so many months of wondering—shoulders so broad, hair so thick and curly—I moaned and rested my cheek against the cool shower tile. “Oh Iz, what have we done?”

Clean then in my bathrobe, still stinging and sore, I sat before my altar. I lit a stick of Nag Champa and recited the Charge of the Goddess to sooth myself, much as I used to recite “Now I lay me down to sleep—”

“I who am the beauty of the green earth and the white moon among the stars and the mysteries of the waters, I call upon your soul to arise and come unto Me—.” I murmured the words, thought of my Grandmamma with her rosary—all Goddesses are one Goddess—“For behold I have been with you from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire.”

I lay my damp and throbbing head against the silk covered table and breathed deeply. What am I feeling? What am I feeling? I scanned my energy field and was immediately struck by an awareness of my own polarities, anima and amimus, combined into a third thing, pulsating and vibrant in my bloodstream. I shifted to my inner vision and saw that my aura was golden and radiant and huge, and that each chakra was wide open, a rainbow of frequencies harmoniously dancing. “And I thought I was complete before!” I exclaimed to the empty room.

Faithful reader, whomever you may be and whatever drew you to this particular essay, I say: “Believe in the Bealteinne Fires!” Again I repeat: “Believe in the Bealteinne Fires!”

I could not then, nor can I now explain rationally the change that overtook me the night of the Bealteinne Fires. As Charlie told you, I was a thinker, a logician of sorts, rigid and well defended, forever stepping carefully and never on cracks.

I’d often wondered what attracted Charlie and I to each other. On paper, we were mismatched. But when you come within close contact to someone who is on fire, burning, you tend to follow, because slowly you remember that you are on fire as well. You smell the smoke and sometimes you see the glowing embers, and sometimes you hear the crackle. You learn that fire follows fire, and there isn’t a damn thing you can do about it. Charlie, the Elf, with the Green Eyes and red hair, was on fire, and I was too.

On the night of Bealteinne, we finally allowed our flames to touch. We saw the grandeur of our fires together, the Flame of Passion. We allowed its presence, and savored its glow. And in the divine moment of our flames blending, I realized Charlie was my teacher.

In the synagogue, the Torah is housed in the Ark. And hanging over the Ark, the Eternal Flame burns through the days and nights, always flickering, casting a pool of light. What does the eternal flame represent? In perhaps a personal interpretation, it is thus: God’s love is always present, and can never be extinguished. Throughout the ages, great Kingdoms of Evil have attempted to exterminate the Love, but repeatedly they have failed. But the other interpretation, gleaned from a night of reckless, wild, and wonderful union with flesh, soil, grass, and an enchanted field full of joyful Pagans, is that the fire burns within us. And we are free to burn alone, or with others. But the trick, dear reader, is to Burn. Remember: Burn!

We are alive.

(Authors’ note: any resemblance to persons either living or dead is the product of many lunchtime walks).

The Rainmaker’s Apprentice

Continued from page 16...

The Rainmaker, who was busy gathering fallen rain for the rest of their journey simply said, “While we were in the forest, neither the land nor ourselves lacked for water or needed any rain, but here in this unhappy desert, both the land and ourselves were dry.”

“As an afternoon bonfire can shine less brightly than a new-moon candle, so too does magick often follow need, and help bring harmony to the world.”

And the apprentice smiled and bent to help the Rainmaker catch the morning rain.



Prayer in the Life of a Modern Druid

Continued from page 5...

however, we should take time for our prayers and let other things wait. If our prayers tend to be hurried, we do not fully appreciate the importance of prayer.

For our prayers to be truly meaningful, we must make an effort to dismiss all outside considerations and to concentrate on the fact that we are coming into the presence of the Gods, and that, under such circumstances, we should be mindful and respectful in our manner. We need to approach them with deep respect, appreciating that though we may share many attributes, they exist in a different way from us, and their impact on our lives can take on subtleties or power which we may not be able to anticipate.

To keep our prayers meaningful and to avoid making them repetitious, we do well to vary their content.

To help us to get more into the mood of prayer and make our prayers more meaningful, it is good to change our physical position. Although a change of position does not actually make any communication with our Gods more sacred, it can sometimes make it easier. By altering our natural position, we alter the mental state in which we approach our deities. Through brief ritual and meditation, we prepare ourselves for prayer by using these methods to leave behind the concerns of the mundane world temporarily, and approach with better concentration and sincerity the denizens of the Otherworld (or Underworld, for that matter). Some have found it good to kneel because they find that position conducive to their having a proper mental attitude. I often adopt the typical Celtic seated position (similar to a half-lotus), or sometimes the Japanese "seiza" position. Having a *brief* ritual accompany the taking of this position may help, as well.

Perhaps simply lighting some incense or some other physical gesture may signal our subconscious that we're now going to stop dwelling on outside concerns, and devote our mental capacities to spiritual matters.

For our prayers to be truly meaningful, we must be consistent with our prayers. We must live in harmony with our prayers and work at what we pray for, just as we live in accordance with our word, once it is given, in honor. In this way, we incorporate the content of our prayers into our daily lives, combining the physical with the mental and spiritual aspect, and thus prayer takes on some aspect of a magical working, from a certain perspective.

At a ritual, when one is leading a group in prayer, it may be inappropriate to direct the audience to "bow their heads" or to take any arbitrary physical position while praying. Many groups recognize this, and do not take such positions of subservience in any regard. Why? Everyone should, of course, assume a respectful posture, but no specific posture makes the prayer more sacred or more effective, *per se*. At a public meeting, there may be those in attendance who do not share our beliefs, and who are attending respectfully, with a view to gaining familiarity and comfort with our group. Thus, though friendly, they may feel uncomfortable with giving an outward sign of participation in reverence for our Gods, alongside the regular members of our Order.

One of the most disconcerting feelings one can have is that, after much heartfelt prayer, there seems to be no response. Keep in mind, though, that you must also be willing to accept whatever answer the Gods supply, even a response of seeming silence. They may see things you do not see, or have an understanding of the situation, or even of you, that you do not. So if you ask for something and don't

receive an obvious response immediately, this does not mean the Gods have forsaken you, or that they are refusing to help you. It could simply mean you have asked for something that was not in your best interests, or which may be contrary to the best interests of others. Conversely, they may be answering you in a subtle manner, which will require your attentiveness and awareness to recognize.

When prayer becomes a regular part of your life, it can bring you into a close and happy relationship with our Gods, something to be treasured. If you have not yet developed the habit of prayer, now is a good time to start. Why not pray to the Mighty Ones about your desire to establish a good relationship with them? They will be more than willing to help you.

Prayer, for a Druid, must become, then, a priority. Priority is defined as "coming before in order of importance; a preferential position allotted to anything which gives it first claim to the necessary resources." To give priority to prayer means to recognize its importance. It means to make time for it by taking time from other things of less importance. Giving prayer a high priority, then, means being constantly conscious of our spiritual needs, the needs of our Gods, and our connection with all things physical and spiritual. It means being aware of our Gods, the Ancestors and the Nature Spirits at all times, so that we do not profess Druidry, but that we *are* Druids. We live as Druids, as opposed to speaking like a Druid.

May our Gods hear us, and we hear them in return.



Warriors Guild Championship

Held at Trillium in Northern Virginia, 1 April, 2000.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE RESULTS FOR

ARCHERY

| PLACING | | SCORE |
|---------|---------------|-------|
| 1 | Dering Eirias | 6 |
| 2 | Joseph Park | 5 |
| 3 | Seabhac Fionn | 4 |
| 3 | Rodney Cox | 4 |
| 5 | Matt Ducar | 3 |
| 5 | Bardd Dafydd | 3 |

22 total participants

FOOT RACE

| PLACING | |
|---------|---------------|
| 1 | Toad McGuire |
| 2 | Chelsea Matej |
| 3 | Seabhac Fionn |
| 4 | Joe Park |
| 5 | Bob |

10 participants

CIRCLE CHALLENGE

FINAL STANDING FOR CIRCLE CHALLENGE

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Seabhac Fionn |
| 2 | Matt Rutledge (<i>aka Flame</i>) |
| 3 | Sid |
| 4 | Lee Eaves |
| 5 | Guy Eaves |

16 participants

Winners of each match indicated by *

FIFTH PLACE DETERMINATION MATCH:

- * Guy Eaves
- Paula Maurice

SEMI-FINALS:

- Lee Eaves
- * Matt Rutledge (*aka Flame*)
- Sid
- * Seabhac Fionn

THIRD PLACE:

- * Sid
- Lee Eaves

FINALS:

- Matt Rutledge (*aka Flame*)
- * Seabhac Fionn

VORPA

| PLACING | | INCHES FROM STICK |
|---------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Night of Shadows | 4" |
| 2 | Dering Eirias | 6" |
| 3 | Rodney Cox | 16.5" |
| 4 | Willow Fae | 17" |
| 5 | Seabhac Fionn | 21.5" |

10 participants

SHOT PUT

| PLACING | | |
|---------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Chris | (48.5 footsteps, measured by RobH) |
| 2 | Seabhac Fionn | |
| 3 | Gil | |
| 4 | Duke | |
| 5 | Toad McGuire | |

13 participants

FINAL POINT TOTALS

| | |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| 15 | Seabhac Fionn |
| 9 | Dering Eirias * |
| 6 | Toad McGuire ** |
| 6 | Rodney Cox |
| 6 | Joe Park * |
| 5 | Night of Shadows * |
| 5 | Chris * |
| 4 | Chelsea Matej |
| 4 | Sid * |
| 4 | Matt Rutledge (<i>aka Flame</i>)* |
| 2 | Duke Sexton |

TOP 5 OVERALL FROM THE WARRIORS GUILD

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Seabhac Fionn |
| 2 | Toad McGuire ** |
| 3 | Rodney Cox |
| 4 | Chelsea Matej |
| 5 | Duke Sexton |

* not members of the Warriors' Guild, so not eligible for the overall prizes

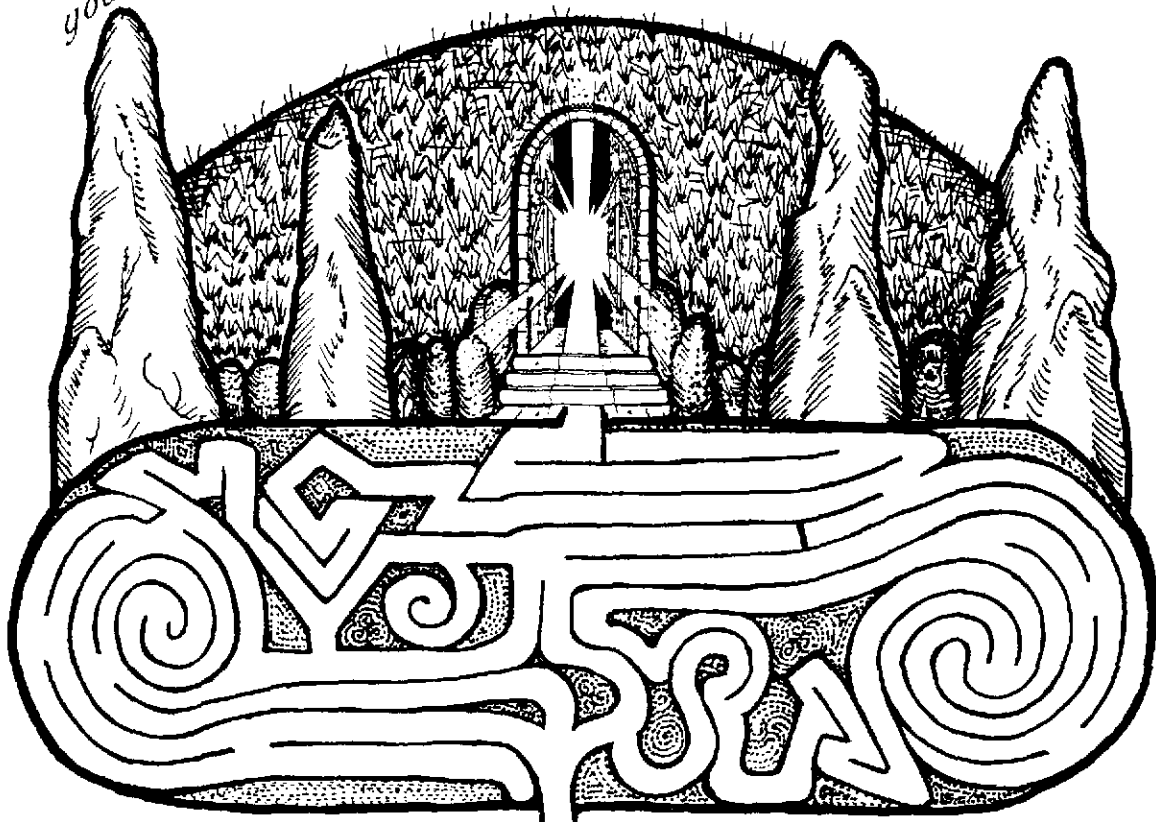
** awarded 2nd place over Rodney for having won one of the events (foot race)

The Road To The Fairy Hill

The Feast of Beltaine is a day sacred to the Fairy Folk. In Erin the Noble People (the fairies) are said to live in the ancient mounds built by the folk before the Celts. These mounds were called the Sidhe (pronounced 'shee'), and the magical tribes that lived in them were called the Daoine Sidhe (theena shee), the People of the Mound.

On Beltaine the Tribes of the Sidhe are said to open their doors. Sometimes they ride out among mortal people, and sometimes mortals find their way into the Otherworld inside the Mound. In the stories they find feasts and treasure and many wonderful things.

Here's a maze to get from the mortal world into the magical gate of the Sidhe. Start at the bottom, and keep your pencil on the paper. If you get turned around, well that's just the way it is with Faeries



Poetry

Good Morning

I open my eyes and you are there
A form so close to mine
Your breathing gives me sweet release
Your warmth a place to hide



I wish these moments weren't so scarce
Awaking by your side
I want to keep you here with me
To Cherish for all time



Now as your body starts to stir
And all the covers rustle
I only wish this didn't end
With those tragic words: "Good morning"

—adam majewski



Eostre (March 20, 1999)

The March hare, coat still white
Hops along the ridge tonight.
She brings her promise,
Her warm breath upon us
Eggs,
The colors of rainbows.

—Damiana Blume

Wind Moon (April 1999)

Beaming orb, why such a name as this
as you float the quietude of Beltane?
This eve when fires should be roaring,
only a candle flickers in Goddess name.



And there beneath soil in this strange calm
seeds take root, sprout forth in your gaze.
Paths paved with ribbons, rainbow balm,



bright colored members of strong stock.
Ribbons like flowers along the garden walk,
Yellow jonquils, violet hyacinths breathe
heady with the perfume of spring, and talk



on the morrow of Maypole dancers.

—Damiana Blume

Let The Dance Begin

(A Salute to the Spring and Summer of Creativity)

Breathe, she laughed, eyes glinting and lips
twitching.

Good advice for any mortal, unless of course it is
issued by one who is not.

So I resisted, glamourized as I was by the twin
flames of ecstasy and fear.

The command, when it came again, was more
insistent,

And, though my mind still cried nay, body and
spirit obeyed.

My chest rose and fell as the Breath of the God/dess
roared through nerve and cell.



I gasped, gulped, choked on the fire-storm as eyes
dripped tears of blood.

I can't, I can't, Oh please, no I can't, I screamed,
struggling against every breath.

I exploded through a wall of ancient mist and burnt-
shadow,

Once familiar images beating out a tapestry of
change, twisting, bending, shapeshifting,

Casting me adrift as my old, comfortable worldview
ruptured and splintered.

It dissolved into a spider-work of outworn
memories.



My resistance was fierce and sword-sharp as I fought
to reclaim a sliver of control.

But it was not to be!

I slipped over the edge of the well-known into a
cauldron of swirling darkness.

I fell! Spiraling downward,

Knowing in both blood and bone that my old life
was finished,

A sacrifice to Arawn, the Lord of the Underworld.



In the end,

I yielded to the inevitable,

Allowing the will of the Gods to thunder
through me.

And as I did so,

I found myself stepping beyond both fire and fear
To emerge reborn into a world of sun-bright
creative manifestation.



I shuddered with joy and reverence,

Offering my praise-songs to the Shining One
Who had seen me through this scalding ride.

Many thanks, my Lady Bridget, Great Inspirer,

For shattering my foolish resistance

With the lightening of your fire-breath.



Lugh, Lord of Summer and Sun, waited in the
wings with smile of gold,

Eager to begin the next phase of creation

That was circling around to seize hold of us both.

Bridget smiled and nodded

As she reached out to pass me on to my next Partner
and Patron.

I shivered in wonder, stepping forward to join the
SummerLord in The Dance.

—Christy Coyle Prokopiak

On the Solitary Path

By Judith Anderson Morris (*toadie*)

While tools are not absolutely necessary to being a Druid—(I have always proclaimed loudly and insistently that worship and magick can be created anywhere and with nothing as long as one knows what she’s doing), they are certainly pleasant to have and a pleasure to acquire.

My own “Druidic” treasures have been collected over a number of years and include the following sorts of items (which are practical or decorative or both):

1. **a nemeton:** a spot of sacred ground for worship. In the past I have used: an oak-filled, stone walled space that, luckily, was my own backyard; an enclosed herb garden with a sawn tree trunk for an altar; a screened porch; an apartment balcony; a spot of deserted beach; an old, closed bridge that spanned a harbor; a sunroom; a stream running through a city park; a clearing in a wood. I think you get the point. You can establish your nemeton ANYWHERE. Simply bring your devotion, and you create holiness.

2. **a costume for worship:** This is not a necessity. In fact, I feel more than slightly awkward running about in fantastical Druidic garb. I’m more the Druid-in-blue-jeans type and save my tunics and robes for big deals like performing weddings; but to some folks, putting on a uniform of sorts helps them to adjust their mental framework, to “see” themselves as a sacred being. You might choose a white tunic or robe signaling fairness in judgement and truth, a cloak made of linen, cotton, or wool (natural materials) —or speckled bullskin if you can get it <grin>.

A tartan would be appropriate— in your clan colors— or red, white, and green (the colors of energy, truth, and fertility). Don’t settle for a bedsheet; save for the real thing. It took me years to get a fully lined, hooded, flowing cloak of soft green wool; but it was worth the wait.



3. **an altar:** a flat stone on which one can stand is nice for oath-takings; a natural standing stone with a flat top is wonderful; I have two stones that we dragged with us from Pennsylvania to South Carolina and through four moves since then— one I found deep in a wood and spent three days gradually rolling it out. It was worth it! A sawn tree trunk is great also.

My current altar is a concrete garden statue of the kneeling baby Pan, holding a cushion above his head; it was a very expensive gift from an old lover

who saw me drooling over it in a garden nursery and bought it for me a month later. Since Pan “called me” to the woods, it is highly symbolic. Use whatever feels ‘right’ to you— I have even used a small corner bookshelf that served no other purpose or spread a cloth over the coffee table when needed.

4. **the sacred well:** a cauldron: gourmet kitchen supply stores often sell cast-iron ‘chili pots’ which are perfect miniature cauldrons; just don’t leave it outside because it will rust. A nicely shaped bowl will do as well. For years, I used an earthenware bowl enameled midnight blue inside. It was also good for scrying.

5. **the bile:** My bile is a bundle of birch twigs tied with raffia. I stand them upright on the altar. A carved stick, a bonsai, a tiny statue of a tree, even a good stick of wood can all serve as the bile.

6. **the fire:** I have used a lantern, a burning bowl, a simple candle, a votive. We become good at collecting candles and firemakers. It’s addictive. What is a Pagan without candles? I have holders of metal with stars cut into the side that splash star shadows on the wall when lit; I have indigo blue glasses scattered with golden stars and suns; I have colored glass and scented pillars. A Druid never has to worry about the electricity going out.

7. **a wand:** the 'slat' is a straight white stick of birch, yew, hazel, rowan, or ash approximately an inch in diameter, about 2 feet long, with a rounded bottom and a blunt top— phallic rather than “pretty.”

8. **a triskelle or tryfot:** the three-legged sunwheel.

9. **a 'craebh bec':** the branch of an oak used to sprinkle blessings; to this you should also attach small bells. I recently officiated at a Pagan wedding and made mine silver for the occasion, wound with tiny white flowers and hung with tiny golden bells. I found the bells in the sewing section of Walmart among the specialty buttons. The branch was quite beautiful and made a lovely little sound that was a blessing in itself.

10. **a hearth:** a fireplace is a wonderful luxury, a place to burn sacred wood and herbs and a fire on which to meditate.

11. **mead:** nothing beats the real thing, brewed in Ireland; I carried home several bottles from my last trip (along with a smuggled bottle of 'poteen,' the Irish potato whiskey, purchased from a wandering gypsy with a pony-drawn cart followed by goats); mead is for heaven; for earth, serve beer, ale ('coirm'), or apple cider ('nenadmin') in a fanciful flagon or pitcher.

13. **goblets or cups:** I have a wooden cup carved by a friend; I also have a wine glass with a golden star for a stem .

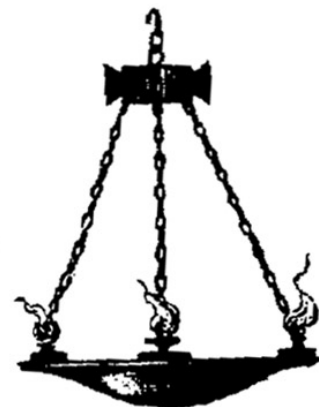
14. **a knife:** I bought my first one in a tiny cellar shop in Edinburgh, Scotland, from a man who made it by hand; the handle was made from the horn of a roe deer.

The rest is fun stuff:

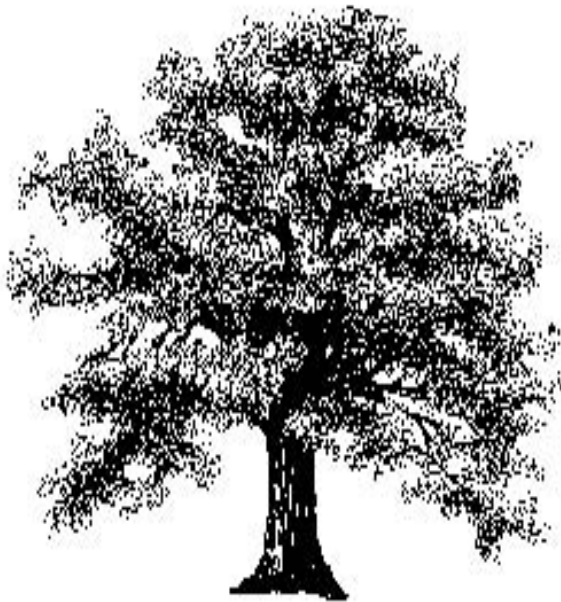
stones: I own hundreds of them, some gathered from wonderful places like Glastonbury Tor and an old stone fort in Wales; others I have purchased in gem shows or in stores when the vibrations are exactly right; some are gifts from friends and family; I often use them as charms which I give to those in need or as protection for loved ones.

totems: my totem animal is the toad (duh:), and I have a number of toad and frog statues and pictures given to me by family or students or friends or found on my travels; each one has a story behind it, and their presence keeps fond memories alive.

miscellaneous: plants, baskets, figurines, flasks; sun, star, and moon images; feathers and shells; herbs and dried berries; old keys; wind chimes; dragon-shaped bells; wallhangings and paintings; sculptures; acorns and mosses; dried flowers and branches— If you collect these things over time and with love, they bring with them the power of nature and the memories of what you have experienced within them. They bless your living space and are constant reminders of what you ARE... Druid.



Falling Acorns



CedarLight Grove, Druid Hall, Baltimore

Brightest of Bhrigid's blessings to all during this the time of Imbolg, and most amiable greetings. Yule and Imbolg each brought much magic and enchantment, and many new and old friends to Druid Hall. CedarLight opened our fourth year at Druid Hall with a real flurry of activity, from fresh paint on the foundation and front entrances to a season filled with gatherings, celebrations and ritual.

CLG began a very full season by hosting a well received community drumming circle. We catered the open house at Druid Hall on the first weekend of December. In return, we asked that those coming to drum bring a donation of clean, lightly used or new clothing, blankets or toys destined for a traditional Lakota community in Kyle, South Dakota.

Druid Hall filled early, and overflowing into the waning winter sun on the front porch. From early in the afternoon, when

hands first met heads, myriad rhythms rolled and rumbled on through the afternoon. New hands picked up the twisting and turning as others slipped out for rare breaks of munching on chili and hot cider, an enchanting draught of our most sacred Lady Caffeeena, of course, and all manner of other festive fare.

Eventually, and quite reluctantly, the energizing fellowship of the drum acceded to the pleadings of numbed and bruised hands. We stowed the plethora of percussive toys escaping off across the floor, and bid farewell. Though drums and drumming and drummers drifted into December's gathering winter, Druid Hall remained filled with the love and with the gifts. These latter we soon loaded into boxes, five boxes full, and with the generous support of the Earth Chalice Community, mailed them off to the care of one of the traditional elders in Pine Ridge's Lakota community.

Our High Rite for Yule brought us together again in our outdoor sanctuary. Though colder and perhaps less inviting than some times, the sanctuary soon warmed in the rising flicker of our fire, and the gathering glow of our family. So we held against December's dark as we invited the three generations of Earth to join our rite, to join in our lullaby sung for the Sleeping Lady; and to join us in creating gifts for wild Cernunnous.

Retiring to the warmth and well stocked larder of Druid Hall, we set about the deliberations of our annual elections, and then to the most festive feast of Yule's revels. Therefore, let it be known through all the lands, that CLG now offers all honors, trust and welcome to our new Witan: Lady Katherina, Senior Druid; Linda, PurseWarden; Lil, Scribe; Will, Vice-SD & Liturgist; Mark, FireWarden; Phoebos, Archivist; Dick, GardenWarden; Gwen Garden Assistant.

A few hours after our High Rite, came our Long Night Vigil. This time of prayer and meditation marked the initiation and anointing of CLG's newly chosen Witan. Those keeping the vigil spent the long night engaged in prayer for the new Witan, in reading from the traditional lore, and in the sharing of personal practices and visions. And so, in early January, our new, often boisterous, sometimes contentious, always dynamic Witan, first met, amidst bodings of a rising vitality throughout our community.

Imbolg came amidst the deep snow and ice filling Baltimore's unplowed streets. With the outdoor sanctuary at Druid Hall lying muddy and wet and not quite frozen, bound beneath the crust of wintry white, we moved our celebration of Imbolg's High Rite indoors. There our cauldron awaited enchantment, as we gathered snug against the darkening chill. There we sought the aid of Imbolg's Lady, Bhrigid, healer and midwife, and of the Dagda Eochaidh Ollathair. There, they came to us, bringing enchantment, and imparting the lore of our cauldron. They brought us

guidance in the ways of our cauldron, ways to keep it strong, and ways to use it wisely.

Thus was born our cauldron of Birth, which is already becoming a well used and well loved part of our ritual lore. For now, the Dagda's cauldron of Plenty remains to the west of our indoor sanctuary, inviting and reminding each us that plenty for all begins with a little from each. Across the sanctuary, Bhrigid's cauldron of Birth sits to the east. Thus, this time of Imbolg, the time of Birth, witnesses the birth of an expanding ritual lore at CLG.

The Cauldron of Birth, and the Birthing Rite through which we use it, marks but the first step in bringing our common sense of the sacred deeper into our personal lives, and awakening it more fully into the common life of our community. To our long standing commitment and tradition of celebrating the Seasonal High Rites, and the weekly Rites of Caffeeena, we are adding Personal Rites, Occasional Rites, and Common Rites.

So watch for changes to our current schedule of Lore Meetings and Rites of Caffeeena as find room for weekly Common Rites of Worship. Please visit CedarLight at Druid Hall in Baltimore when you can. May you ever live safe in Bhrigid's embrace, with the Blessings of Imbolg to all.

*Will, Liturgist,
CedarLight Grove, ADF*



River of Fire Protogrove, La Crosse, WI

Summer Solstice to Imbolc

Our Protogrove was founded last spring and had its first introduction to the Kindred and the local community at the Summer Solstice. We have grown to three members, with several other interested Pagans attending rituals and meetings.

Through the months we have tried various formats to offer study and events to our community. Currently we have settled into a monthly pattern of a ritual and a social meeting. Classes on Druidism (modern and paleo) beginning in March have generated a lot of interest among the wider community.

In addition to our first rite, we held rituals for Lughnasadh, Autumn Equinox, Samhain, Imbolc, and in honor of Hekate during the dark moons of July and September. At all we were joined by members of the Pagan community and our offerings were well received by the Kindred, who gave bountiful blessings in return.

As of February our website is back online at a new home and with a new look. Also that month, members participated in interviews for an article on local Pagansim in our area newspaper. We allowed the reporter to observe our Imbolc ritual for the article.

Coming up, we've accepted the offer to cosponsor an Earth Day festival on April 22nd. This event is for the Pagan community, primarily sponsored by a Wiccan coven. It will focus on cleaning the land, and includes a ritual

reflective of the different Pagan traditions in our area. Also, we are trying to gather together as many interested people from WI and MN as we can to travel to Michigan for SLG's Lughnasadh festival this August.

Bright Blessings,

Hekataia

Grove Organizer



Regional Report

Pacific Regional Report

I finished my road trip in January, touring Groves and ADF members in the Pacific Region. It was a great success. I was able to meet with different groves, and get a feel for their issues and concerns which I was able to pass along to the Mother Grove.

I would like to thank Twin Dragons Protogrove in Phoenix and Raven's Cry Protogrove in Los Angeles for their hospitality during my trip.

New seedling groves in Tucson, Arizona, and Aloha, Oregon are in the process of organizing and hopefully will be sending in protogrove application forms soon. The new start-up in Oregon will be holding public ADF rites in Champoeg State Park.

Peace and Love,

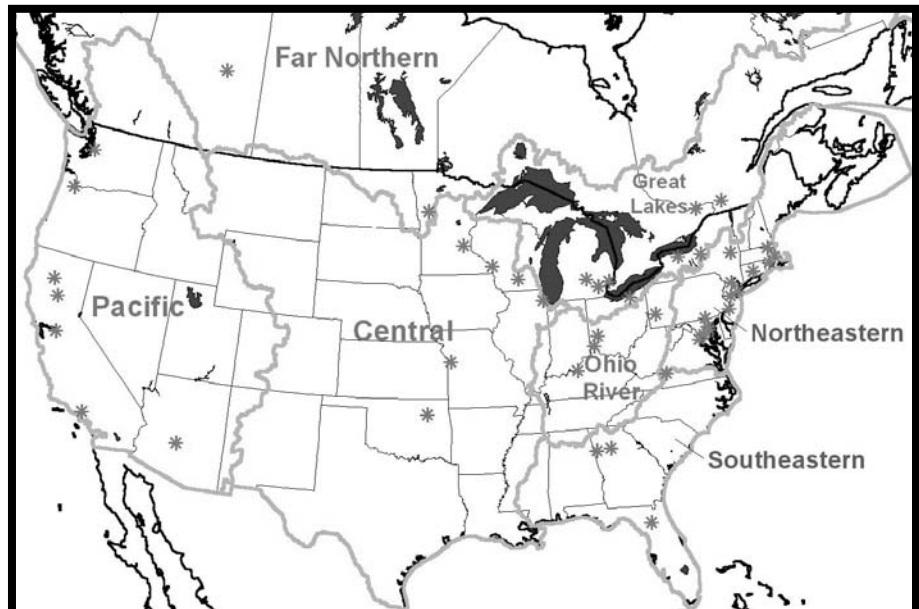
Dragon

*Pacific Region Representative
northwest_dragon@yahoo.com*



Below is the current listing of ADF Groves, Protogroves, SIGs, and ADF officers.

Groves are listed alphabetically by state/province, and as of this writing there are a total of 45 groves (42 in the U.S., 3 abroad).



ADF's new system of Regional Representation includes seven regions related by common watersheds rather than artificial political boundaries. Each star on the map represents an ADF Grove or Protogrove.

Groves

CENTRAL REGION

Merlyn's Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Merlyn
P.O. Box 818
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
Areas: MO, KS
E-Mail: merlyn@merlynsgrrove.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/merlyns-grove>

River of Fire Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Hekataia Ruadhbran
P.O. Box 3443
La Crosse, WI 54602-3443
Areas: WI, MN
E-Mail: riveroffire@mac.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/river-of-fire>

River of Night Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Ostara Voss
P.O. Box 7271
Minneapolis, MN 55407-0271
Areas: MN
E-Mail: vossing@pro-ns.net

Sun Raven Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Suil Bhran
PO Box 8212
Madison, WI 53708
Areas: WI, MN
E-Mail: suibhne@centurytel.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

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
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/wild-onion>

FAR NORTHERN REGION

Flickering Shadows Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Jennifer Kennedy
21511 Wye Road
Ardrossan, Alberta T8E 2J2 CANADA
Areas: Alberta
Phone: (780) 922-2499
E-Mail: 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@djham.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/song-of-the-hounds>

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
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
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/red-maple>

Shining Lakes Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Robert Henderson
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>

Stone Creed Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Shawn T. Miller
PO Box 18707
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
Areas: OH
E-Mail: seniordruid@stonecreed.org
Mailing list:
stonecreedgrove@onelist.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/stone-creed>

Third Coast Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Steve Marquie
5946 North Hagadorn Rd.
East Lansing, MI 48823
Areas: MI
Phone: (517) 332-7985
E-Mail: wb9tow@egr.msu.edu
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/third-coast>

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

Black Dirt Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Isaac Bonewits
P.O. Box 372
Warwick, NY 10990-0372
Areas: NY
E-Mail: blackdirt@neopagan.net

Cedar Light Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Zaina Katherina
PO Box 21723
Baltimore, MD 21222
Areas: MD
Phone: (410) 319-8981
E-Mail: ladykatherina@hotmail.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/cedar-light>

Green Man Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Skraeling
PO Box 3495
Jersey City, NJ 07303
Areas: NJ, NY
Phone: (732) 249-6680
E-Mail: eternalansw@earthlink.net

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
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>

Grove of the Midnight Sun, ADF

Senior Druid: Emerald Dragyn
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Bridgewater, NJ 08807
Areas: NJ, PA, NY
Phone: (908) 658-9322
E-Mail: dragyn@earthlink.net
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Mugwort Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Nathair bheag
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Phone: (703)-204-9822
E-Mail: jrunya1@alummi.umbc.edu
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/mugwort>

Muin Mound Grove, ADF

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7188 Minoa Bridgeport Road
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Raven Hawk Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Caryn MacLuan
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Red Oak Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Bardd Dafydd
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E-Mail: dafydd@bardd.com
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Rocky Meadows Grove, ADF

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Phone: (717) 235-3760
E-Mail: delyn@nfdc.net
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/rocky-meadows>

Garrán na bPréacháin Naomh: Grove of the Sacred Crows, ADF

Senior Druid: Gwynne Green
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East Bridgewater, MA 02333
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Phone: (508) 378-2870
E-Mail: ardbard@aol.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/sacred-crows>

Three Songs Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Wolf
P.O. Box 168
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E-Mail: threesongs@threesongs.org
Mailing list: threesongs@onelist.com
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Tear of the Cloud Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Illious
P.O. Box 109
Guilderland, NY 12084
Areas: NY
E-Mail: illious@nycap.rr.com

White Birch Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Beithe
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Middletown, CT 06457
Areas: CT
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E-Mail: beithe@earthlink.net

World Tree Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Paul Maurice
PO Box 10036
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E-Mail: pmaurice@adf.org

OHIO RIVER REGION

Sassafras Grove, ADF

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The 6th Night Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Amergin Aryson
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Dayton, OH 45410
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Triskele River Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Antonyus Kaleal
526 Symmes Road
Fairfield, OH 45014
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Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/triskele-river>

Whispering Oaks Grove, ADF

Senior Druid: Dame Jord Soster
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Phone: (502) 922-1711
E-Mail: whispoaksgrove@hotmail.com
Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/whispering-oaks>

PACIFIC REGION

Almond Tree Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Bardd Dafydd
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Areas: CA
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E-Mail: dafydd@bardd.com

Cascade Dragonsong Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Epona
25025 SE Klahanie Blvd. Apt. L302

Issaquah, WA 98029

Areas: WA

Phone: (425) 427-2620

E-Mail: cascadedragon@mailcity.com

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Druid Heart Spirited Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Rhiannon Hawk
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Loch Shea Meara Protogrove, ADF

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Raven's Cry Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Ravenbard
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Twin Dragons Protogrove, ADF

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Groves & Guilds & SIGs



SOUTHEASTERN REGION

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Web: <http://www.adf.org/groves/burning-skies>

DogWood Protogrove, ADF

Grove Organizer: Gwyndewin
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Moneta, VA 24123
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Peachtree Grove, ADF

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Grove Organizer: Atemlos
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Bardic Guild

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Preceptor: Gwynne Green
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Web: <http://www.adf.org/members/guilds/bards>

Healers Guild

Chief: Jan Curran
Preceptor: Jay Tibbles
Mailing list: adf-healers@adf.org
Web: <http://www.adf.org/members/guilds/healers>

Liturgists Guild

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Preceptor: Cynndara Morgan
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Web: <http://www.adf.org/members/guilds/liturgists>

Magicians Guild

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Naturalists Guild

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Preceptor: Maraë Price
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Scholars Guild

Chief:
Preceptor:
Mailing list: adf-scholars@adf.org

Seers Guild

Chief: Bardd Dafydd
Preceptor: Paradox

Mailing list: adf-seers@adf.org
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Warriors Guild

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Preceptor: Robert Barton
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Mailing list: adf-outreach@adf.org
Prisoner Relations Committee
Chair: Camille Grant

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Brewing SIG

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Children's Education SIG

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Mailing list: adf-parents@adf.org

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Solitaires SIG

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TechnoDruids SIG

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The Mother Grove

The Mother Grove

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Vice-Archdruid

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Non-Officer Director

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Northeastern Region Director

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Ohio River Region Director

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Southeastern Region Representative

Londubh
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Central Region Representative

Barbara Wright
E-Mail: ceorua@aol.com

Far North Region Representative

Jody Kennedy
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Other Leadership Positions

Archdruid Emeritus

Isaac Bonewits
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IRC Coordinator

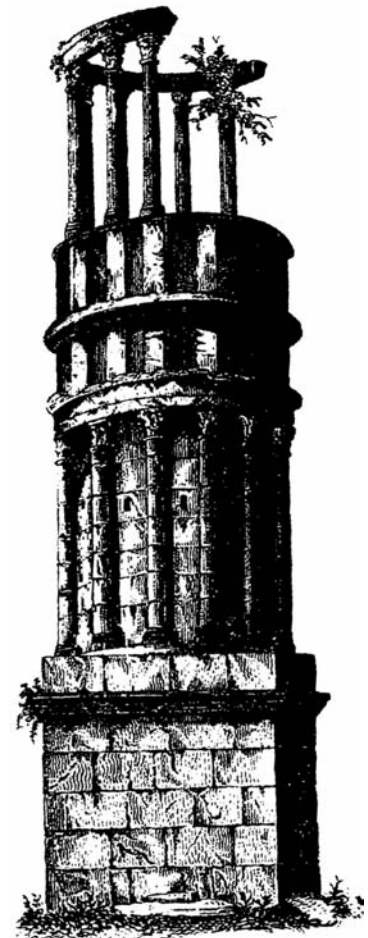
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Webmaster

Shawn T. Miller
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ADF World Wide Web Page: <http://www.adf.org/>

ADF Central Office: E-mail: ADF-Office@ADF.ORG

Shining Lakes Grove, A.D.F.

Lughnasadh 2000

A festival gathering in celebration of our community and honoring Lugh, our tribal Father
August 3-6, 2000 Emrich Center Excellent facilities rain or shine!

For the wedding of Janet and Fox

Located one-half hour north of Ann Arbor, Emrich Center provides an excellent site for our Festival. The site adjoins over 7,000 acres of State forest land, with a lake and hiking opportunities.

Bonfire circle.

Both dorm-style bunk rooms (bring your own bedding) and camping accommodations are available.

Hot showers for both dorms and camping.
Handicapped accessible facility.

Volunteers are needed for security, set-up, and clean up.

Discounts are available— call or e-mail for details.

Shining Lakes Grove, A. D. F. (734) 487-4931

Email to wittke@home.net

Or visit www.msen.com/~robh/slg

\$10.00 off if registered before 1 June 2000



ADF Regalia

We have a number of excellent items, including ADF hats, t-shirts, publications, and audio cassettes, as well as jewelry, and statuary. Of special interest is our newly expanded Jewelry section and Sacred Source Statues, reproductions of authentic religious artifacts.

✦ Hats ✦ Shirts ✦
✦ Publications ✦ Jewelry ✦
✦ Statuary ✦ Audio Cassettes ✦

Visit us on the ADF web page:
<http://www.adf.org/regalia>



Red Maple Grove invites you to attend:
The 1st Annual Northern Lights Festival
Sept 1st-4th, Ontario, Canada

Workshops, on-site camping, nature trails all
await you in the beautiful and serene Northern
forests. Come and celebrate the coming of
autumn in these hallowed settings.

Contact Michael Demers at sd@redmaple.yi.org for
reservations and more information.

RITUALS

LUGH GAMES

POHJUCK



CAMPING



The Ohio River Region of
Ar 'nDraiocht Fein, A Druid Fellowship, Inc.
Is Proud To Present

SUMMERLAND BATHERS 2000

August 18th, 19th, 20th
CAMP CLIFTON
YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO



IN CELEBRATION OF LUGHNASSADH
AND PAGAN COMMUNITY



Your Hosts:
Triskele Rivers Grove, ADF
Cincinnati, Ohio
The 6th Night Grove, ADF
Dayton, Ohio

FOR MORE INFO
937-228-7866

E-MAIL: Summerland@Coolmail.net
(This Festival is not associated with Summerlands, Inc.)



CABINS

WORKSHOPS

ADUHOZ

POOL

LIVE MUSIC



Greetings!

The members of the Ohio River Region of Ár nDraíocht Féin, A Druid Fellowship, Inc., are proud to extend to you an invitation to join us in festival the weekend of August 18th, 19th, 20th, for the 2nd Annual SummerLand Gathering.

This year the festival will be held at a new site, Camp Clifton, located 4 miles east of Yellow Springs, Ohio. Camp Clifton is a 4-H camp, offering 25 acres of secluded woodlands, a large playing field, an Olympic size swimming pool, (lifeguard on duty, bathing suits required,) a large covered pavilion, a dining hall, and 22 private cabins!

10% of all net proceeds from this event will be donated to ADF!

Directions to Camp Clifton

From your location, take Interstate I-70 to Ohio Exit #54, State Rt. 72 (Springfield/Cedarville exit.) Take St. Rt. 72 south, exactly 6.5 miles, to the village of Clifton. Turn right on Clifton Road. Camp Clifton is located 1 mile, on your right.

Festival Fees:

Adults: \$40.00 Pre-registration, \$50.00 at the gate.

Children 12 to 18: \$5.00 Pre-registration, \$10.00 at the gate.

Children under 12: FREE!

(All children under 18 must be accompanied by a paying parent or legal guardian.)

Festival Fees include camping. (Bring your own gear.) Pre-registration cut off date is July 15th!

Private Cabins: There are 22 rustic cabins available at Camp Clifton. They have electric lighting, but no electrical outlets. Sleeping accommodations are bunk beds. (Bring your own linens and pillows.) There are no toilets or showers in the cabins. (Cabin renters must use the shower houses with the campers.)

The cabin rental fee is \$80.00. (Minimum occupancy 2, Maximum occupancy 8.) The cabin rental fee is above and beyond the per person festival fee. *Cabin rentals will be on a first come, first served basis!* 2 cabins will be set aside for individuals wishing to sleep in a cabin without renting a whole cabin. The fee is \$10 per bed, above and beyond festival fees, and individuals will be assigned to a cabin at the discretion of the festival organizers.

Rituals: Friday evening members of The 6th Night Grove will perform a Rite of Saining, and officially open the festival. Saturday morning members of Triskele Rivers Grove and The 6th Night Grove will jointly perform the Lughnassadh Rite. On Sunday afternoon members of Triskele Rivers Grove will perform the Closing Ritual.

Workshops: Workshop presenters and topics this year will be:

Skip Ellison, Vice Archdruid of ADF, *The Role of the Magician in ADF*

Bard Dafydd, Chief of the Council of Senior Druids of ADF, *Trancework 101*

Lugh Games: Members of the Warriors Guild of Triskele Rivers Grove will be hosting the Lugh Games, tests of strength, agility, and skill, throughout the weekend. There will be games for adults and children. Grove Champions and a Regional Champion will be crowned, and trophies awarded. There is a \$5.00 fee to participate in the Lugh Games. Please sign up at the Registration Table when first entering the festival to register to compete in the Lugh Games.

Potluck Feast and Pancake Breakfast: Saturday evening we will gather in the dining hall for a Potluck Feast. (Please bring some food to share.) Sunday morning we'll have a Pancake Breakfast. (Included in Festival Fee.)

Live Music: Saturday evening we will gather in the Pavilion to be entertained by *Rogues Cross*, a Neopagan, Celtic oriented four piece band from Cincinnati, performing their original music. Bring your dancing shoes!



Pre-registration Form

2000 SummerLand Gathering

(Must be postmarked by August 5th, 2000)

Adults @ \$40.00 each = \$ _____ # Children 12 to 18 @ \$5.00 each = \$ _____

Optional. () Yes. We want to rent a cabin! (Add \$80.00 to your total.)

Place an X () I want to reserve a bed in a cabin. (Add \$10.00 for each bed.)

in the space () I want to reserve a Merchant's Table. (Add \$15.00 to your total.) Total Due = \$ _____

Your Name(s): _____

Your Address (Please include zip code): _____

Your Phone Number (Please include area code): _____

*(Make your check payable to: The 6th Night Grove, ADF, and mail to
The 6th Night Grove, P.O. Box 1521 Dayton, OH, 45401.)*

Ár nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship, Inc.

P.O. Box 15259, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-5259

Membership and Subscription Form

One form per person, please.

Legal Name: _____ P S C
Religious Name: _____ P S C
Address: _____ P S C
City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Post Code: _____
Country: _____ Phone: _____ Birth Date: ____/____/____ (mm/dd/yy)
Email Address: _____ P S C

In which ADF Grove do you intend to participate, if any? _____

Beside your name, address, phone, and email address, please indicate whether the information is: Publishable (P), meaning it can be printed in ADF publications and we can give it out freely to people who wish to contact you; Sharable (S), meaning we can give it out to ADF members who request it; or Confidential (C), meaning that only the Mother Grove and ADF office staff will have access to it.

The information on this form represents a:

New Membership Renewal Revival of Expired Membership
 Information Update (if name/address changed, indicate previous: _____)

If this is a new membership, where did you hear about us? _____

ADF Membership Rates

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Regular Membership (includes Oak Leaves) | _____ years @ \$30/year = \$ _____ |
| Family Membership* (no duplicate mailings) | _____ years @ \$15/year = \$ _____ |
| Prisoner Membership (includes Oak Leaves) | _____ years @ \$20/year = \$ _____ |
| Associate Membership** (does not include Oak Leaves) | _____ years @ \$15/year = \$ _____ |
| Subscription to Oak Leaves | _____ years @ \$20/year = \$ _____ |

* Family memberships are for blood relations and spouses living with Regular or Associate Members, and do not include duplicate mailings.

** Associate Memberships may be purchased by members of ADF groves and protogroves ONLY. To purchase an Associate Membership, this form must be submitted to ADF by your local grove or protogrove.

Your Membership will officially begin on the postmark date of this form.

Membership Donation = \$ _____

Earmarked Donation for:

 Publishing Activities = \$ _____

 Land Fund = \$ _____

 Other: _____ = \$ _____

Unrestricted donation to ADF General Fund = \$ _____

Minus amount paid earlier on ___/___/___ = \$ _____

Total Enclosed: = \$ _____

Checks or money orders should be made payable to "ADF" in US Dollars only. Sorry, no credit cards.

I am 18 years of age or older: Yes No (Check one)

Waiver

If you are under the age of 18, you must have a parent or guardian sign here to indicate her/his permission for you to be a member of ADF, and that signature must be notarized.

To whom it may concern: _____ has my permission to become a

(Enter child's name here)

member of ADF, and I am fully aware of the Neopagan nature of this organization.



Parent or Guardian's Signature

Parent or Guardian's printed name

Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for membership processing.

Contributors' Page

WRITERS:

ROB BARTON, *Movement and Gesture in Ritual*
and *Ethics of a Celtic Warrior*:

Rob is a member of Grove of the Sacred Crows in East Bridgewater, MA; a current member of the Mother Grove of ADF; and coordinator for the prisoner ministries of ADF; he is also the Preceptor for the Warriors Guild and an advisor for the Bardic Guild.

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DAMIANA BLUME, *Wind Moon* and *Eostre*:

Damiana joined ADF in November of 1999 with affiliation with Muin Mound in Syracuse, New York. She draws upon the bounty of nature and her love of life for her inspiration. Her poetry can be found in print journals throughout the United States.

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GWYNDEWIN, *The Rainmaker's Apprentice*:

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"Before man there was god and before god the Celts."

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JORDSVIN, *A Spring Blot to Nerthus* :

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JUDITH ANDERSON MORRIS (LADYTOAD),
Learning from the Trees and *On the Solitary Path*:

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscape, but in having new eyes." –Marcel Proust

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"I stand in that place between earth and sky
where flame-sparks kindle."

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SKUNIAMH AN INISH NI HUIGAIN, *The Gifting*:
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"Don't dream it, be it."

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