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The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin

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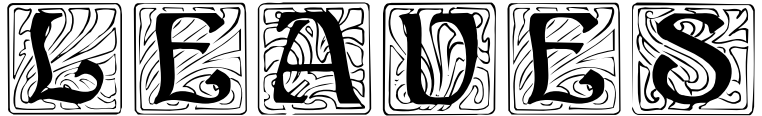


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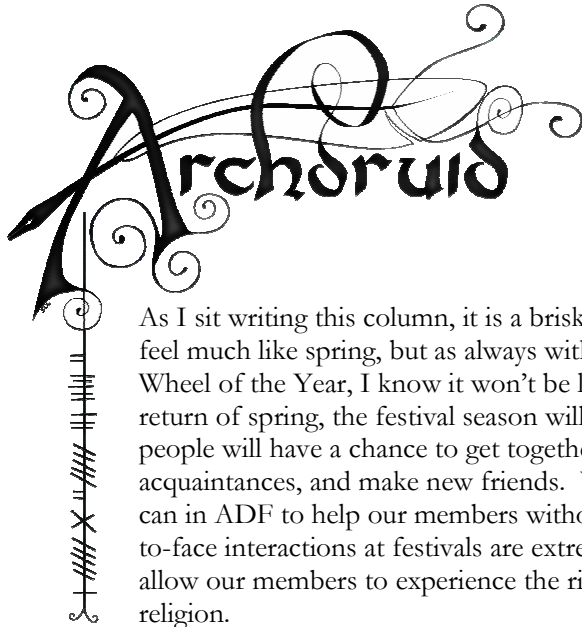
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As I sit writing this column, it is a brisk -9° F, so it doesn't feel much like spring, but as always with the turning of the Wheel of the Year, I know it won't be long now. With the return of spring, the festival season will be starting up, and people will have a chance to get together to renew old acquaintances, and make new friends. While we do all we can in ADF to help our members without groves, the face-to-face interactions at festivals are extremely valuable to allow our members to experience the richness of our religion.

Currently, we are expanding the ways we can aid our solitary members. Plans are underway to create a series of ADF "Podcasts," that will allow our members to hear songs, stories, and discussions about ADF. We also have a group of members working in the Second Life online world, holding rituals and giving people who take part in that realm a chance to learn about us. Finally, more videos of our rituals are being placed online. All of these steps are continuing the enhancements we have been putting in place for our solitary members with Internet access over the past few years.

As we near our 25th anniversary, which will be Samhain of this year, you will see other "improvements" in our outreach to our members. In our first twenty-five years, we have grown from a small group of friends who gathered to worship the Kindreds, to a religion that is recognized by many people around the world. There have even been academic papers written about our rapid rise as one of the fastest growing religions. I can't wait to see what the next twenty-five years bring!

Bright Blessings,
Rev. Skip Ellison

OAK LEAVES

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Arís Mundi

ADF Cosmology and Sacrifice
By Rev. Kirk Thomas



In religion, cosmology is, essentially, the study of the universe – how it is structured and how the various parts interact with each other to create a cohesive whole. In ADF, we have studied the ideas and beliefs of the ancient Indo-Europeans (IE's), and have found similarities which seem to occur across many of these cultures. These common ideas can be assembled into a coherent system that reflects the ideas of the ancients while providing us with the structure needed to create our Core Order of Ritual.

While we cannot claim that all IE cultures shared all these ideas, we have found that they do fit in

well in most IE Pagan cultural contexts.

Chaos and Cosmos

To the ancient, nomadic Proto-Indo-Europeans, the only part of their world that they could reasonably control was their own encampment, and perhaps the fields immediately around it where they kept their cattle. But out beyond those fields were unknown steppes or forested lands populated by wild animals, ghosts and hostile tribes. This outer, terrifying land they called chaos. Cosmos, on the other hand, means order, and the cosmos of these early tribes con-

sisted of those things they could rely on – such as their encampments, their warriors’ prowess, their cattle, the seasons and the great, annual dance of the stars across the sky as they circle the Pole Star.

And chaos is not all negative, for from outside the boundaries of Order came resources, and mysteries, and some of the inspiration and wisdom of the Gods.

In looking at the world around them, the ancients saw the tension between chaos and cosmos, and the opportunities and risks it offered. They created ritual to manage the relationship between the tribe and the ‘Other’ (those things outside the tribe), between the village and the wild-wood, and between chaos and cosmos.

The Creation of the Universe

We do not know of one, single IE myth used by the ancients to explain the creation of the Universe. As the IE’s migrated across Asia and Europe, many of them were influenced by neighboring cultures, and these influences may have changed the original mythic beliefs of the Indo-Europeans. However, some diverse IE cultures share a similar creation myth that many scholars believe may reflect the original myth from Proto-Indo-European times. In these ancient IE myths, first there were two beings, Man and his Twin (sometimes accompanied by a cow). Man sacrificed or slew Twin and used the parts of his body to create the universe as we know it. In some myths, Twin colonized the Underworld and became the first God of the Dead. Thus, the cosmos was established out of chaos, and the sacred was manifested there, the work of

the Gods. This first sacrifice shows that since the Worlds are all made of one being, then there must be a basic kinship between all beings, and communication must be possible between the Worlds.

The Three Worlds

In general terms, the ancients saw the universe divided up into the three Worlds that we use in ADF.



The Heavens (or Upper-world) is the place of order, where the Shining Ones dwell. The predictable dance of the stars around the Pole Star shows great order, and the bright, shining sky forever exists above the storms and clouds of the Midworld.

The Midworld is the world in which we live, the place of the Spirits of the Land and of life as we know it. And here also are the Otherworlds, the mythic/spiritual counterparts to our common world, existing unseen all around us. These are the homes of the greater land spirits, such as the Sidhe, the Tylwyth Teg, the Wights, and the Dryads, etc.

The Underworld is the shadowy land of the Dead and of the chthonic deities. Here, below the surface of the Midworld, the dead, or at least their bones, are buried, and this is where their spirits dwell. Death is a reminder that the wonderful order of life soon ends in the chaos of dissolution. But the Underworld is also a source of wonderful fertility, and especially of the inspiration that arises from the wisdom of the Dead. In some cultures, the Underworld is also seen as being islands across the western sea.

The Sacred Center of the Worlds

In ritual, we do as the Gods did, by re-creating the creation of Cosmos and of the universe. In so doing, we also re-create the time and place of that first creation.

The Sacred Center is that place, created in ritual, where all the Worlds meet, and where a “hole” can be forged allowing communication between these cosmic planes. In this place, we can be in all Worlds at once and in all times at once. Here, anything is possible.

In ADF worship, we do not move a circle of worshippers between the Worlds, but rather open a Gate at the center of the Worlds.

The Triple Hallows

In order to re-create the sacred center of the Worlds, we need first to connect to those Worlds. In ritual, we bless the symbols of the Well, Fire and Tree (our triple hallows) in our ritual spaces to create gateways to these spiritual places. While the symbols of Well, Fire and Tree are the ones most commonly used in ADF (and Fire is required), there are some accepted cultural variations such as Pit, Fire and Portal; three Fires; etc.

Fire – The Fire is the ancient focus of ritual. It is the transmuter and transformer, which can take something, like oil or butter, and change it into something else, something possibly more accessible to the Gods. The Fire corresponds with the Shining Ones and with order, and is our connection to the world of the Heavens. The Fire is common to all IE cultures.

Well – The Well is an ancient place of offering. The ancient Celts used to offer weapons, precious objects and even household goods to water. The Well connects with the earth power beneath us, and with the fresh, ordered waters of the earth. It corresponds with the Sacred Dead and with the chthonic deities, and is our connec-

tion to the Underworld. The Well can also be seen as a shaft, pit or chasm.

Tree – The Tree is the axis mundi or axis of the world. It is the cosmic pillar that holds up the sky and connects, through its roots, with the lands below our feet. Thus the Tree, while existing in the Midworld, connects all the Worlds above and below. It can be a tree, a mountain, an omphalos or even a pillar or boundary stone. But the Tree always stands at the center of ‘our’ world.

Liminal Gods and Psychopomps

In ADF ritual, once we have re-created the Center of the Worlds and consecrated the Hallows, we call upon a special, liminal God or Goddess to “join their magic with ours” so that we might open those gateways to the Three worlds that have taken form in our Hallows. We call these deities Gatekeepers.

Liminality is the condition of being neither one thing nor another. In the physical world, liminal objects can be boundaries of all kinds, such as walls, hedges, and sea shores or even a place like a crossroads, that is neither one road nor another, or both at once. Liminal times include dawn and dusk (neither day nor night) or even, for the Celts at least, the hinge days of Beltane and Samhain (neither summer nor winter). The veils between the Worlds are thinnest at liminal times and places.

Certain deities are particularly known for crossing the boundaries between the Worlds. Some carry folks into Faery, while others carry the dead to the Underworld or the Isles of the Blest. These latter deities are also called psychopomps.

**ghosti*

This word, **ghosti*, is a reconstructed Proto-Indo-European word that refers to “someone with whom one has reciprocal duties of hospitality.”

The English words 'guest' and 'host' both come from **ghosti*. Another way of putting this would be the saying, "I give that You may give," and this concept underlies our entire religion. We give offerings to the Kindreds to form relationships with them, just as we would give of ourselves to our friends and family, to maintain close ties. In ancient days, folks would build friendship by the ritual exchange of gifts, and these ties could bind families for generations. And so we give to the Kindreds in expectation that They will give to us in return.

Sacrifice

In our time, the word 'sacrifice' has a negative connotation to some people, due to its use by the dominant religion to refer to its founder's agonizing death by execution.

But the word comes from the Latin words *sacer* (sacred; to set apart) and *facere* (to make or to do). Thus its true meaning is "to make sacred, to set apart." And this is just what we do when we make our offerings to the Kindreds. And when we make these offerings, we are 'setting them apart' from the profane world, making them appropriate for the Kindreds.

There are a number of reasons for making sacrifice:

1. **Reciprocity** – I give so that You may give. This is one of the most common forms of sacrifice in ADF. We make offerings to the Kindreds in order to receive blessings or wisdom in return.
2. **Apotropaic Offerings** - Averting evil or bad luck. Here, the sacrificer makes an offering to say, in effect, "Take this and go", rather than to form a relationship with that Power. The removal of any ritual pollution would also come under this heading.
3. **The Shared Meal** – Here we feed the Gods, in reverse of normal parent (Gods) – child (man) relationships. Thus, we can make demands on

the Kindreds. The shared meal, where we take a food and eat some while giving the rest to the Kindreds, also enhances the unity of the People through celebration, and allows communion with the Kindreds.

4. **Maintaining the Cosmic Order** – When we give offerings that the unity of the people be enhanced, or the earth may be healed and strengthened, we are re-affirming the cosmic order.

5. **Chaos Mitigates Cosmos** – Too much order can cause brittleness. Think of a tree that cannot bend in the wind, and therefore breaks. In our rites, we have Praise Offerings, which cannot be totally controlled. Spontaneity in prayers, actions and praise can keep a ritual from becoming too lifeless.

Cultural Variations

There are many different ways that the various hearth cultures of ADF interpret the Three Worlds and the Triple Hallows. While this essay will only cover three of them, other information may be found on the pages or e-mail lists of the various Kins in ADF.

Celtic (Irish)

Uisnech was the cosmological center of Ireland. Here the Druid Mide built the first fire in Ireland that burned for seven years, and from which all hearth fires in the land were lit. There was also a pillar stone at Uisnech which had five sides, representing the five provinces of Ireland. The twelve chief rivers were also said to have come from Uisnech, either caused by a storm or flowing from the white-rimmed well there. Other Irish wells are said to be the sources of various rivers, and the one at the source of the river Boyne had hazel trees that dropped their nuts into the pool, where they were eaten by the salmon of knowledge.

Instead of the Three Worlds of Heaven, Mid-

world and Underworld, the Irish thought of the cosmos as the Three Realms of Sky, Land and Sea. The sea was equated with the Underworld because the Dead would journey to the distant islands of the West beyond the mists of the sea, where the sky and ocean touched. Most Irish Celtic Groves in ADF use the Well, Fire, and Tree for the Hallows.

Germanic/Norse

Instead of three Worlds, the Norse have nine. While Asgardhr and Vanaheim, Midgardhr, and Helheim may correspond well with Heaven, Midworld and Underworld, respectively, the other five worlds are more problematical.

Ljossalfheimr (Alfheimr), the land of the Light Alfs, might fit in well with the Heavens, while Svartalfheimr, land of the dwarves (whose names translate into things like "dead one" and "corpse"), and Niflheim, the world of ice, may be part of the Underworld (Helheim may even be within Niflheim).

Svartalfheimr may also be in the Midworld, as the caves and tunnels of the dwarves are directly below the earth. The other two worlds (Jotunheimer, land of Giants, and Muspellheim, realm of the Fire Giants) may also fit into the Midworld part of the ADF cosmos.

Yggdrasill, the great World Tree, is at the center of the Worlds and connects them all. Odin, from his seat, could see all the Worlds at once, suggesting that it may have been on Yggdrasill. At the World Tree's base are three Wells, Mimir's Well (connected with knowledge), Wyrd's Well (connected with the court of the Aesir) and Hvergelmir, where the serpent Nidhogg would chew at the root of Yggdrasill. Mimir's Well could be a connection to the Ancestors, as a source of knowledge and wisdom. And Fire, the great transmuter and transformer, takes sacrifices to the Spirits.

Hellenic

In Hellenic religion, a mountain (and possibly Mt. Olympos, home of the 12 main Gods), might best correspond with the Heavens. The world of men and of the land and tree spirits, such as centaurs and dryads, would be the Midworld, and Hades, the land of the Dead, fits in well with the Underworld.

The Triple Hallows of Well, Fire and Tree in Hellenic religion could be conceived of as Pit, Fire and Mountain. A Mountain (again, possibly Olympos itself) could be the connection with the Heavens (though an Omphalos might work as well) and a Pit or chasm could be the connection to the Underworld (also, libations to the dead were often poured into holes specially made in the roofs of tombs, for the dead were ever thirsty). The Fire, seen as the Goddess Hestia, is that central point here in the Midworld where everything comes together, and where transformation is possible.

Summary

Regardless of our various hearth cultures, the cosmology of ADF works to bring us together in ritual and as a religion. Our Core Order of Ritual is based on this cosmology and the ideas from which it springs. We all re-create the cosmos to establish the Sacred Center, allowing communication with the three Worlds or Realms. We make sacrifices to the Kindreds, ask for Their blessings in return, and wind down the rite, disestablishing the Sacred Center in the process. You can see the article on ritual elsewhere in this booklet for a more complete explanation of our Core Order.

ADF's cosmology was created for us – the people of today. We have not attempted to re-create ancient religions because we are not ancient peoples. Rather, we are modern people worshipping ancient Gods and Goddesses in modern times. Seen in this light, all of our hearth cultures can function well within ADF, bringing us all together as one Folk.

Dilemma of the First Oath

By David Crawford

Coming from a Wiccan background, I was a little nervous about doing my first oath for ADF. A part of me was concerned about how the deities and spirits I had worshiped and worked with in the past could take to me, as I was seeing it at the time, breaking the oath I had given to them already. This dilemma ended up causing me to put off my first oath for about 6 months into my DP studies while I worked through this conflict.



The Senior Druid of our grove, James, suggested that I include a part in the oath speaking to those I had followed before. He explained that this way they were not being forgotten or excluded, also it would show that they still would be a part of my practice just in a different way. This seemed like a very good idea from the start, but still I was left with the struggle of how to incorporate this into the oath. I read through a lot of different first oaths on the ADF members' sites and in some of the DP journals posted on the web. I was able to see how others had written their oaths and tailored them to the individual.

Still, even with this help, I was torn on how to write the oath so that I would show my desire to embrace the spiritual and intellectual teachings of *Ár nDraíocht Féin* while still respecting the wonderfully rich path that had lead me though most of my life.

Finally, during the meditation portion of my devotionals one afternoon there was a small thread that appeared to me... it was attached to the ring I was using as the symbol for my newfound druid-

idity. I picked up the thread and followed it through paths of memory in my mind. I saw all the places I had been with my studies. I saw all the people that had been a part of those studies. When it finally ended I was rather shocked. It ended with the previous owner of

the ring, my dearest and most beloved friend Lane. He had passed into ancestry only a few years earlier. He was the most intelligent well-read person I have ever met. He had given me a passion not only for reading in general but also for history and research. He held out his hand to me, which I took. He said, "Just remember what you said to me when you moved out." We had lived together for more than 12 years. He was very much a big brother to me, but my moving out had been rather hard on him. I had told him that though I was moving forward and on a different life path than him I was not leaving him or forgetting him in any. I had told him I loved him just as much as I did before.

From that point, it only took me a few days to get the oath completely ironed out to the form I wanted. So in October of 2006 I did my first oath with the Grove of the Red Earth as part of our Samhain ritual. I would like to share that

oath with you now:

I, David Crawford, reaffirm to all those present, Kindred and mortal alike, that I am a child of the Old Ways, of the Elder Gods. Though I have walked a Pagan path through out my life, I now set my foot upon a new path.

As the roots of the great oak grow and change paths seeking the deeper mysteries, I too grow, seeking the deeper mysteries.

As the oak grows in the mortal world fulfilling the needs both of Kindred and mortal, so do I seek to grow within the mortal realm.

As the oak reaches into the heavens seeking con-

nection with the Shining Ones, so I seek to further my connection with the Gods.

With my new found Druidry I shall live a virtuous life, seek piety in all ways, and always seek knowledge that will further my studies so that Truth is the light that guides me. For those whom I followed before, see this not as a turning from your ways, but as growth coming from what you taught me, to bring me closer to you and your kin.

These things I swear to the Gods, to the Spirits, to the Ancestors, and to all mortals gathered here today, be my witness, be my strength as I walk this path.

Oisín, at the Shore, Sees the Woman

By Jenne Micale

you stand on the white strand by your love, not noticing the spray soaking your cloak, the foam lapping your feet, the call of your companions, the cry of your hounds. you do not notice the gull wheeling white above you, the high proud heads of the cliffs.

for there is nothing but the hidden sun on her hair. her white feet, high-arched. her eyes first gray, then green, catching all the sea-colors in them, the gift of her father and mother, the wavewalkers of the boundary. her pale hand reaches out, its fingers rose-tipped.

your companions grab you back, grab your shoulder with their spear-roughened hands. they know who she is, and whisper her name, her line. you catch nothing of it. her name, to you, is the cry of the wheeling gull, the roar of the sea, the timbrel of your heart beating. her line is the smooth line of her hand reaching to you.

in the moment you take it, you know what is to be. you know: the three hundred years of joy, slowly edging to grief as the sun does toward its setting. the horse with its silver bridle, and the stumble that costs you it all. grave mounds gone green, and the old, old man, crumbling to dust on the loam.

but her hand is warm and she smiles, light dancing on wavelets. the calls and cries fade behind you.

you know what is to be, and you melt in its embrace.

Living in Oneness with Nature

By Donna Juzva



It's another glorious day on the beautiful isle of Maui. The morning trade winds blow against the palm trees so that all the fronds shift to the left. The breeze is just enough to make me feel comfortable in the 80 degree temperature which blesses Kihei year round. The leaves of the mango trees and fronds of the palms make a soft clapping sound as they gently slap each other.

From my vantage point on the lanai, I can see the ocean. I can hear the sounds of the waves breaking on the shore. The birds perched in a nearby plumeria tree, sing a sweet song, as I sit in the calm shade with this beautiful view. I feel so fortunate and so grateful.

A gecko scurries past then stops and makes its clicking noise. A bird chirps from an unseen

perch. A pair of dragonflies, hover over the pool then quickly dart away. Recognizing and appreciating the beauty and intricacies of nature is easy here on Maui. The culture here reinforces that reverence.

Visitors to Maui are encouraged to commune with nature through a plethora of outdoor activities. Interacting with nature raises environmental awareness. Snorkel tours educate passengers about local aquatic species and their environmental needs encouraging guests to help protect and preserve the pristine oceans and reefs. Hiking tours help visitors connect with the earth, fostering a sense of reverence for the island.

I walk down to the beach and step on the soft brown, sugar sand. Speckled with bits of brown,

tan, and black, the sand gently gives way shifting its peaks and valleys with each step I take. As I move toward the ocean, the sand becomes firmer as the salt water rolls back leaving it wet and heavy. The peaks and valleys take on the shapes of feet as I near the waters edge.

Looking at the Pacific Ocean, her frothy waves gently licking the soft sand, I am overcome with a sense of peace. The calmness and depth of the ocean comforts me. Although she is intricate, a complicated ecosystem, she appears simple and relaxed, comfortable and accepting of her own ebbs and flows, mighty and powerful yet serene.

Walking along the shoreline, I embed my footprints in the sand. In seconds they will be washed away as quickly and with as little effort as they were created. I am reminded of the temporary nature of our existence here on earth.

The cool ocean rolls up covering my feet and splashing my ankles, and I feel the Pacific's healing powers immediately. Although the tiny wave quickly recedes, her healing energy fills my body and then the next wave comes.

As I walk along the beach, the Pacific Ocean continues to baptize my feet with her healing waters. To the locals, the land and sea are sacred. Being here on Maui, it's easy to feel my connection with the Earth. In fact, it's nearly impossible not to. Reverence for nature is an inherent part of life here.

On Maui, we share the spirit of Aloha. Far more than a greeting or salutation, Aloha is a loving expression of welcome, hospitality and peace. The Aloha Spirit permeates though all aspects of life here. Our daily activities move and flow with the rhythms of nature.

The moon and tides are an important part of the lifestyle on the valley isle. We experience the highest tides when the moon is full and the surfers delight in the challenge offered by the giant rolling walls of the Pacific's majesty. At the half moons, the tides calm, offering more tranquil waters for snorkeling and scuba diving.

Sunrise and sunset play prominent roles in our daily lives. Visitors travel to the top of Haleakala Crater, each morning, hoping to catch a glimpse of nature's awesome beauty, as the sun rises over the clouds lighting up the sky with brilliant red and orange tones. Later in the day, when the sun descends, crowds gather at the shores of Lahaina to view the amazing colors painted across the sky as the bright orange orb disappears below the horizon.

Walking along the shores of Sugar Beach, I contemplate the awesome beauty of nature that is so lavishly displayed before me. Mother Earth has blessed this island with abundance. What a special place this is! How fortunate I am to be here! Thank you Great Spirit!

Down in Yon Forest

(ADF Druid version by Anne Keough)
(Music is a traditional English melody)

Down in yon forest where woods stand dark,
(The bells of eternity I heard them ring),
The cruel winds of winter blow through the trees,
And I love the Three Powers above anything.

In those woods, there's snow-covered rocks
(The bells of eternity I heard them ring),
That witness time's passage, endure everything,
And I love the Three Powers above anything.

By those rocks, there flows a stream,
(The bells of eternity I heard them ring),
That carries our sorrows, our hopes and our dreams
And I love the Three Powers above anything.

The wind and the water and Earth so still,
(The bells of eternity I heard them ring),
Await the Great Fire that heralds the spring,
And I love the Three Powers above anything.

Morning Devotion

By Fionn oMurchu

(Respectfully but blatantly stolen from Archdruid Skip Ellison and the DP, and modified by yours truly)

I approach the altar at approximately 5am (after I've fed the cat!) and ring the bell to focus and remind myself that I'm entering sacred space.

(Statement of Purpose/honoring the Great Mother)

A child of Danu is here to honor the Gods

A child of Danu is here to remember the Elder Spirits

A child of Danu is here to keep the ways of Druidry

(light incense as an offering)

Danu, I honor your body

Danu, I honor your bones

Danu, I sing to your spirit

Danu, I sing to your stones

(light candles and open gates)

Manannan mac Lir, Gatekeeper, Opener of the Ways Between, I ask that you join your magic with mine. And with our magics joined, let the Tobar (touch cauldron) open as a gate, and let the Tine (touch candles) open as a gate, and let the Bile (touch branch) form the conduit that spreads through all the Worlds. Osclaitear na geatai! (Let the Gates be opened!)

*The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree
Flame and flow and grow in me
I span between the Earth and Sky
Rooted deep and crowned high*

*The Primal Sea around me
The Shining Sky above me
The Holy Land beneath me*



*The order of the Worlds stands firm
Around me and within my soul*

(Two Powers meditation per the DP, also working with the Three Cauldrons as commented on by Caitlin and John Matthews and Erynn Rowan Laurie – see references)

(offering of Guinness to the Outsiders, take to back patio)
I call now upon the elder Gods, those who fought against my Gods. I give you this offer and ask you to trouble not my work. Outsiders, this is for you!

(back to the altar, offering of herbs – basil or rosemary – to the Earth Spirits)
This offering is for you, Spirits of Nature. Spirits of the Land, Spirits of the creatures, Folk of the Sidhe, today I

give you offerings and honor and my love. I ask at this time for your blessings on me and mine this day.

(offering of organic Bulgar wheat to the Ancestors)

This offering is for you, my Ancestors. Ancestors of my tribe and Ancestors of this place, today I give you offerings and honor and my love. I ask at this time for your blessings on me and mine this day.

(offering of Guinness to the Gods)

This offering is for you, Shining Ones. Gods and Goddesses that my people honored and called on, today I give you offerings and honor and my love. I ask at this time for your blessings on me and mine this day.

(offering of Guinness to the Morrigan and Lugh)

This offering is for you, O Mhor Rioghain, O Lugh Lamfada. Great Queen and Bright Shining One, today I give you offerings and honor and my love. I ask at this time for your blessings on me and mine this day.

(morning meditation, visualizing the Three Kindreds and waiting for their messages)

(Return Flow, unsweetened tea, the Gods may be able to drink Guinness at 5am but I certainly can't!)

As I have given love and sacrifices and praise to the Shining Ones, the Ancestors, and the Spirits of the Earth, I know that they will return that love and honor to me, magnified many times by their greatness. I look up to the gate above me and see the Shining Ones, the Ancestors, and the Earth Spirits looking down on me with love. They are pouring forth their radiance, pouring forth the energies that were given up to them, magnified many times by their greatness. I can see it descending upon me. I can see the energy fill this cup. I can see how the cup shimmers and glows with the energy. An Uisca Beatha Seo! (Behold the Waters of Life!)

Mhor Rioghain, Lugh, I thank you for your aid and blessings today.

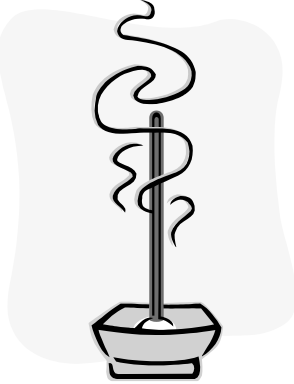
Gods and Goddesses of my people, I thank you for your aid and blessings today.

Ancestors of my tribe, Ancestors of this place, I thank you for your aid and blessings today.

Spirits of the Land, Spirits of the creatures, Folk of the Sidhe, I thank you for your aid and blessings today.

Manannan mac Lir, once again I ask you to join your magic with mine. With our magics joined, let the Tine (touch candles) be once again candles, let the Tobar (touch cauldron) be once again a bowl, and let the Bile (touch tree) be once again a branch. Duntar na geatai! (Let the Gates be closed!) Biodh se amblaidh! (So be it!)

(ring bell to close, put out candles, allow incense to burn, and collect offerings to place beneath the oak out front)



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Prayer Beads

By David Crawford

I am one of those people that have almost an uncontrollable need to fidget with something throughout the day. It started when I was in the sixth grade and continues even to today. This has really been an issue when it comes to my daily meditation and prayers. Years ago, a therapist told me that my subconscious was restless, which is what caused part of the issue. She taught me that if I used an object like a writing pen or pencil, I could learn to do a type of spinning technique that would create a rhythmic behavior that would help me to still my subconscious mind. It worked!

But this technique really is not fitting for use during meditation and prayer for me. So I decided that by creating a set of meditation beads I would have a tool that would help me walk through the steps of my works but it would also help me by giving me something to do with my hands while I worked. Each bead has its own meaning, as you will see in the prayer/meditation listing below. This allows my subconscious mind and even my conscious find a point of focus

I wanted to share this technique in case there were others it might help. The following is an image of my beads as well as the prayer/meditation I use for each bead on the set. There are large wooden beads that are used for the individual prayer/meditation points. The large clear



glass beads are used for my mantra “I am Druid, I am Light, I am Divine.” This helps me to create the link between each prayer. The smaller metal and wooden beads are used for silent reflection and connection at each step. Of course I have the beads set into groups of three that reflect the Three Hallows, the Three Realms, and the Three Kindreds.

- As the roots of the Great Oak I am rooted deep within the Earth. My roots growing ever deeper into the wisdom of times past, deep into the great well, deep into the great underworld seas of rebirth.
- As the body of the Great Oak grows in the mortal world fulfilling the needs both of kindred and mortal alike, I too grow within the mortal realm; bringing virtue, piety, and wisdom to all in the light of Truth.

- As the branches of the Great Oak reach into the heavens, to the fire of the heavens, seeking connection with the Shining Ones, I reach to further my connection with the Gods. As the Great Oak opens the path to the heavens in return, I open the path for ours to reach the home of the Gods.

- I honor the Land within which I live, upon you I stand firmly with my animal and plant brethren, a fulcrum in the mortal realm. I seek all your hallowed places which will lead me to further connection with you.

- I honor the Sea which gave birth to all things, within you I drift freely with my brethren of fin, in the cradle of all living things. I seek your depths which will lead me to further connection with you.

- I honor the Sky which my out stretched arms

reach for, within you I fly towards the heavens with my feathered brethren, the home of the gods. I seek your unlimited boards to further my connection with you.

- I honor you Kindred of Nature; creatures of flesh and spirit with which I share this, the middle world. Be my guide, my friend, my structure as I walk in light, the path of Truth.

- I honor you Kindred of the dead; great ancestors, those who came before, readying all the paths we walk upon today. Be my guide, my friend, my conscious as I walk in light, the path of Truth.

- I honor you Kindred of the gods; great shining spirits of the heavens, those who keep the order of the universe so that all possibilities are open to us. Be my guide, my friend, my inspiration as I walk in light, the path of Truth.

Ostara

By Leah Hamilton

Glad greet the morn; Goddess's day
Ostara in the East; Arises with the dawn
Wan winter to banish; With welcoming light
She nurtures all nature; New born the Spring
Sweet soft breezes; Swell with her breath
Ripening rain clouds; Renewing the earth
The gown of the Goddess; Glides o'er the hills
Drifting bright daffodils; Daisies and briars
Bright blooms bud; Into bowers of green
Havens for hares; Home for Her people

Ostara to us offers; Her bounteous blessings

Wes ðu Ostara hal!

The Cleansing

By Shell and Dorothy Alexander

Eclipse of the full moon, August 28, 2007

We started with our weekly meeting trying to get all the business out of the way followed by a brief Dedicant meeting. Dorothy and Shell had brought some WWLD? (What Would Loki Do?) pins they made because Cindy kept joking about our grove motto.....little did she know. After the meeting we ate some snacks and were waiting for time to start the ritual.

It had been decided we wouldn't have a fire but would use candles because of the severe drought and hazardous fire conditions we were experiencing. We also began to wonder when our friend Zach would arrive. He should have been here by now. It turned out that his OnStar navigation system is serviced by Loki. He had been to the site before but couldn't remember the address. He drove up and down the road and couldn't find us. Having a cell phone also by Loki electronics, he had to drive almost all the way home to get a signal. That's 40 miles round trip.

In the meantime, our Lead Druid Calvin got an emergency call from work. He had to drive all the way back to town (20 miles away) because of a false alarm. Someone had set off the fire alarms in the apartment building he works at. So he called to let us know what's happening and we said we would wait. He had passed Zach going north, but Zach did not see him. While Calvin was in town he got in touch with Zach and they both agreed he should follow Calvin out to the grove. At last they arrived.

We did our best to set our minds on ritual after such random chaos. It was very dark by now and the thunder and lightning were starting in the distance. Just as we started singing the processional song it started to rain. By the time we

reached the nemeton 50 yards away, we were all soaked. Our Lead Druid announced we were here to practice in the old ways. We were all holding back laughter because we knew what comes next. Our Gate Maiden Cindy replied "By the blood of Imir, I cleanse you for worship." She then aspersed each of us in the sheets of rain.

We all took our places around the circle. My niece Juli mentioned she was afraid of being struck by lightning. I said credulously, "If it's gonna hit anybody, it'd be Calvin - he's the one holding a hammer in the air!" Then Calvin started the hammer rite. We were whipped up into an almost ecstatic state. The rain was coming straight down in torrents and when Calvin spoke he was as a warrior before battle. The thunder clapped as if in emphasis. When at last Calvin was finishing the hammer rite he said, "May what is below be held and hallowed". As the hammer met the ground, an unprecedented thunderbolt broke through the heavens, lighting and shaking everything. Calvin had slammed the hammer down 3 inches into the ground! Talk about awe struck!

Calvin began to talk of our purpose that night and the opening of the gates. At which point he said "Should we continue? Does anyone want to leave?" And the group all announced in giddy voices "We're soaked already....hell, no, let's do it!" Dorothy, age 72, was laughing hard and said, "This is the most fun I've had in years!" Dylan, age 8, exclaimed, "Oh, this is cool!" By this time there was a small river about 2 inches deep running through the east side of the circle. Sara mentioned that she was ankle deep in water.

We started the personal workings. We had decided that we would present a staff to Flip and his grove, Midnight Sun. This was to be done at

the Midnight Flame festival in Bellaire, Michigan 2 weeks later. We each had made items to be hung on the staff. Calvin had burned runes into the staff and he explained their significance. Each person in turn came up and tied their creation on to the staff, and explained its meaning.

We had a guest at the ritual. His name is John and he's been a Christian his whole life. Even he was moved to make an offering to add to the staff. Zach said, "I've been carrying around this crystal in my pocket for weeks and I didn't know why. I guess I know now." This was also the first ritual our new friends Jerome and Heather attended. Welcome to the Grove! What an introduction.

We had a few more personal workings to do. One was a very soggy rendition of a spell to aid in energizing our resident spell/magic maker Jan. She is always willing to help when asked. She had set up a spell for healing for JD, a grove member who is about to undergo chemotherapy. She also ironically had made a spell for some badly needed rain?! After all that work, we never got to use it.

We realized that the storm had knocked out the power about mid way through our ritual when the yard light went out. This of course meant that when we got back up to the house there was no way to dry off but with a few towels. No one seemed to really mind by then. We were all so invigorated by the ritual, ringing out our clothes made for a good laugh.

As we performed the closing rite of the gathering, the rains gave way as if the Gods had been pleased by the devotion that the group had shown. We had started this night in chaos (getting lost, calls for help from work, lack of fire) and the fact that we had been drenched before we could get fully started.

Therefore, in the show of our devotion for our Gods, we had been blessed and cleansed, and placed in the good graces of the Powers in charge. There was a lunar eclipse of the moon and also a "twister" had come through the area that night, so is there any better to be blessed? This we ask, under these conditions, was there any better way to be blessed?

MANANNAN MAC LJR

By Linda Costello

Manannan, son of the God of the Sea,
Billowing white over gray shades of blue,
God of Between, and King of the Sidhe.

Guarding the gates; only you have the key.
Mists mark your passing as you travel through,
Manannan, son of the God of the Sea,

In your coracle to Tir na Nog you will be
Traversing the waves to find the way true,
God of Between, and King of the Sidhe.

Magical trickster, dancing with glee
As the children of faery frolic with you,
Manannan, Son of the God of the Sea,

With your cranebag of treasures, you journey so free.
Liminal crossroads are sacred to you,
God of Between, and King of the Sidhe.

Shapeshifter, wayfarer, with you I flee
Into the depths of your watery hue,
Manannan, Son of the God of the Sea,
God of Between, and King of the Sidhe.

Eostre Invocation

By Meredith McDonald

One of the best uses of divination for me is to connect to the stories we have lost. For example, the dilemma of Eostre. All we seem to know of her is that the Anglo Saxons named the spring month for her. Other months had known god names, so we assume that she was the goddess of the Spring.

When Awen's Breath made a decision to celebrate Eostre, I went on a divinatory journey to learn more about the goddess. The result was a song for an invocation. A rough mp3 is available by request at meredithmcdruidd@yahoo.com.

EOSTRE INVOCATION CHORUS

**ALL: Winds of the Spring come wailing in.
Wings of the Spring come flying through.
Goddess with the hair we welcome in.
Eostre, we call to you!**

Nestled in a valley, far beyond our view
Cradled by the green things, blossoming anew
A woman draws out kindling and stirs her
hearth's dull coals.
One breath brings life to fire, warming tender
souls.

ALL: CHORUS

She rises from her fire and pats the life within.
A drink is what is called for. She reaches for her
skin.
Just outside her shelter a spring spills out its
wealth
She fills the skin with water and drinks to new
life's health.

ALL: CHORUS

The valley all around her brightens with her

gaze.

Trees all full of dewdrops waken from their
haze.

From thickets and from meadows hares and
fauns appear.

Greeting their first mother, they let out a cheer.

ALL: CHORUS

She smiles and calls back gently, "We have work
to do.

My other children need me. You'll have to lead
me through."

These words call out an entourage all dressed
and tied with bows.

The changelings who attend her gather into
rows.

ALL: CHORUS

Shining from fresh bathing, wreathed in daffo-
dils,

A white mare pulls her carriage out along the
hills.

The people of the otherworld race to see her
pass.

She blesses them with radiance and charms the
spring at last.

ALL: CHORUS

Once she's filled her own land with promises
renewed.

She hugs the hare upon her lap and smiles at all
her crew.

"It's time we played with mortal ones, I hear
them calling now.

We'll meet them at the boundaries and liven the
still plows."

ALL: CHORUS

Eostre, we call to you!

Eostre, we call to you!

Eostre, we welcome you!

A Light for Lady Hestia

By Maggie Stewart

*Hestia, all the high-built homes of mortals,
Who walk the earth, and of the deathless
Gods,
Grant you an everlasting seat, fine portion
And right and greatest honor. In your ab-
sence
There are no mortal banquets. You are of-
fered
A honey-sweet libation first and last.¹*

Unlike other Olympians, there are no books dedicated to the study of Hestia. What little we know of her comes in dribs and drabs, in the dark corners of works dedicated to other deities. From the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite we learn that

*Shy Hestia too shuns busy Aphrodite...
The shining Goddess swore a powerful oath
On the head of Zeus, her aegis-holding father
To stay untouched – and this has had fulfillment.²*

In that same poem we are also told that Hestia is both the first and last-born daughter of Cronos: first born to his lover Rhea and last vomited-up from Cronos' belly. This line reflects the fact that Hestia was honored first at all Greek household sacrifices. We also know that every hearth fire was considered a shrine to Hestia and that these hearth fires were not allowed to go out in her honor.

But beyond these facts, gleaned from Greek culture and small bits of poetry, we know little about the Goddess Hestia. She wasn't the main character in any of the Greek myths. The ones in which she does appear present her only as a bit player. Mostly her worship seems to be related exactly to those things that we associate with her: the hearth fire and the home.

So how does a modern Neo-Pagan go about



honoring this noble Goddess?

I started my practices by focusing on the flame. Hestia is strongly associated with the hearth, which could be considered the heart of an ancient home. My home, unfortunately, has no hearth – but it does have a modern kitchen where all the cooking is accomplished. And so my first offering to Hestia was made in that kitchen, in the form of a small, glass enclosed red candle. I lit the candle and spoke some words of praise for this Lady before I started work on a large family dinner. All throughout the preparation of the meal I kept glancing at the candle, asking for Hestia's blessing on the food. When I had finished cooking, I thanked Hestia for her help and extinguished the candle.

From there I felt encouraged to make a more drastic offering. I laid in a supply of tall, red, glass enclosed candles and cleared a small area on one of my kitchen counters. I lit the candle,

read one of the Hymns to Hestia (part of which is included above), and then blessed the candle. I spoke to the candle about its role as an offering to Hestia, as an eternal flame in my kitchen. A sister of that candle is burning in my kitchen right now, the flame reflecting off of bottles of herbs and spices and the teakettle. Every time I go to cook or prepare something in my kitchen the flame is there, guiding my steps. I am only a beginner as far as cooks are concerned, but I feel that with Hestia watching over me, nothing I create in my kitchen will be too badly burned. In addition to using Hestia's candle as a guide for cooking, I also use the flame to light all other candles in the house – particularly when they are being used for ritual purposes. When I carry flame from my “hearth” to other parts of my home, I whisper a short prayer to Hestia, thanking her for the gift of the flame.

What are some other ways a person could honor Hestia? I have several suggestions that might work for you. A simple thing that everyone can do is to whisper a few words of thanks and

praise for the Lady whenever you set out to cook a large or involved meal. A bigger offering would be to honor her every time you attempt cooking. Since Hestia was always honored first by the Greeks, it might also be interesting to try starting daily devotional work with a short prayer to Her. If you regularly make physical offerings to the Gods, you could try pouring out some sort of “honey-sweet” libation for Her. Finally, you could take the slightly more drastic step that I've come to – keeping an eternal flame for Her in your kitchen. This flame could be used to light all the flames that you use. Should you ever need to move, you'd want to take the flame with you – and perhaps use it to bless the new house and hearth.

End Notes

¹ Ruden, Sarah and Sheila Murnaghan. *Homeric Hymns*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2005.

² Ibid

Evocation to Oghma As Guardian of the Rite

By Mark Cantwell

Sun-faced Oghma, child of Danu
We summon you, O Honey-Mouthed One,
To act as Guardian of our rite.

You entered battle, Champion of the Gods,
Armed with your ash club.
It was the singing sword of Tethra,
King of the Fomhoire,
That you took away as battle spoils.

Champion of the Gods,
Guardian,
Oghma accept our offering!

Umbrella Organizations, The Place They Serve, (and my thoughts thereon)

By Ayla Wolffe

Umbrella organizations have a very solid place in the world; they bring people together who would otherwise not ever meet. This is an exceptional role and one I personally think of as very positive. I would never object to this in a million years. They also have a lot of requirements for how people must behave. They do this to keep people acting in a civilized manner to one another. Because large groups of people tend to act out when they reach a certain mass, they have to. It's common sense. And this too, to a certain extent I can understand and even support. But it does interfere with personal freedom past a certain point. And this bothers me to a certain extent. Where does the role of the individual fit within the organization? How does one contribute in a positive manner and make their mark, finding the part of themselves that will become stronger and give the most benefit to the whole?

There are those individuals who enter such a situation thinking that the more they offer the more they will receive in return, and though this is often the case, it is easy to get lost in the shuffle as well, to simply see you as one drop in the midst not of a pond but of an ocean. And to a certain extent I have felt this way. I am not complaining that I feel I have all too often been treated unfairly because I would not say that, but simply that my sense of direction has at times not



always been the best. I have felt as though I didn't know how best to contribute and to a certain extent I saw some people as being the 'heavy hitters'; those that people knew already and who had on some level a personal fame. When I entered my organization, I was afraid of trying to compete with them. I don't consider myself to be inferior in any means, but how does one who is unknown rise to the surface when nobody knows your name? It's daunting. I suppose that the ability to press forward anyway is a sign of great personal worth within such an organization. It is part of how one is measured against the whole, and that if you do not do this, in a sense this is part of how you are judged, either as part of the mix or as someone sitting on the



visioned myself putting forth, not because I couldn't write them, but again because of a sense of intellectual intimidation. Not the fault of anyone within my organization except my own.

I stopped being productive or being an active part of the organization. Except that I wanted to become a steward for a cause that means a great deal to me, for disabled heathens, to bring them into a more active role in the heathen community. What I didn't realize is how hard it is to make them active simply in the organization I am involved with, that it is like a microcosm of all the Heathen Community and how limited a range I would be reaching. The whole of the organization had seemed so very large to me, as I had struggled through it, that I thought I would be taking on a very large job, and in fact my job is very small in comparison.

sidelines. I have always ridden just above the sidelines trying to break in and do better as time went by. Until a couple of years ago.

I guess that's when I felt that I needed to change the tack I was taking. At that time I had been contributing my poetry a bit here and a bit there. Which is very nice, I write good poetry and I know it. But is poetry enough? Does it showcase me in a way that tells the community I have more depth within me? I wanted to contribute articles or recipes or something, more. So I pulled out of the poetry gig except for an actual Skaldic Competition where I could stand by my work. And that seemed a rather worthy move. But, I fell into the trap of not contributing the articles I had en-

visioned myself putting forth, not because I couldn't write them, but again because of a sense of intellectual intimidation. Not the fault of anyone within my organization except my own.

I stopped being productive or being an active part of the organization. Except that I wanted to become a steward for a cause that means a great deal to me, for disabled heathens, to bring them into a more active role in the heathen community. What I didn't realize is how hard it is to make them active simply in the organization I am involved with, that it is like a microcosm of all the Heathen Community and how limited a range I would be reaching. The whole of the organization had seemed so very large to me, as I had struggled through it, that I thought I would be taking on a very large job, and in fact my job is very small in comparison. I think that in some ways this was something that some had in fact tried to drive home to me. I think there are a few reasons why my job has been so small to begin with. One is that I have not made a huge name for myself and so people do not recognize me to come to me with their cares and concerns as individuals in general much less as disabled individuals. Second, I think that because Heathenry stresses such a large amount of self-reliance, and because we feel a huge need to make it on our own, disabled folk do not want to rely on the attempts, whether well meant or otherwise of someone else. Third, they may not know what I could be able to offer in the way of aid. Therefore I have very little that I can do at this time. I think that

right now, instead of just spinning my wheels as it were, I need to find causes to champion. Not just strictly Heathen Causes, but causes for the disabled in general. If I make my worth known, and be consistent, eventually people will see my value and come to me, as one who has some knowledge of whatever the disability is that they are dealing with. But, it is a long and slow road to hoe.

Perseverance is one of the virtues however. I am hoping that I will be given the opportunity to continue in the vein I am currently going down and that just because my first year has been quiet I will not be shunted to the side. It is often easy for a large organization to simply keep moving on with what works and let those things which seem to have little purpose fall by the wayside. It is efficient and I can understand it, as the resources need to be allotted where they will. Even if my stewardship does fall between the cracks, I will continue to help disabled heathens whatever their allegiance. This I know. I have found that with the experiences I have gleaned, the personal friendships I have made and the opportunities to attend workshops at moots and increase my knowledge I have become more focused in my Heathen Experience. This is a very good thing and I will always value what I have found within the organizations I have associated with.

Both the organizations I have belonged to have given me great doors to self-knowledge. And I think that I am coming into a new peace. I know that I am accepting challenges now when before I was not able to do that. I think that the direction I have begun to take in my personal life has been affected by the past four years of learning to make friends of people I once saw as simply authors, names or names on message boards. People I thought were unapproachable. And I am grateful in finding a new stride within myself. Testing my strengths and weaknesses over time is one of my great tasks. It is something that I try hard not to let myself down on, because it is a constant challenge. Especially when you are in a

personal evolution to set the bar higher. I think that in many ways, being part of a large organization is set up to do this.

There are many examples of this to choose from, and this gives you a sense of where you might want to go. It is simply what choices you make, and what you take from it. Learning self-control and how to express yourself are great lessons within such organizations. Learning how to direct your intent in such a way that you can make a difference, are wonderful ideals. So is knowing when to walk away from controversy. As unfortunately, no matter how many rules are set forth there are always moments when it seems to rear its ugly head. Being able to put yourself above it, and keep clear of it I think is a great lesson to be taught. I have watched currents shift more than once, and I have seen the tides turn to peace when the day was won, due to the better nature of human beings asserting itself. We are social animals and we desire that order prevail. These are things I have noted. But, we do not always hold the same opinions or values, and it is hard to make it fit all nice and pretty in one space for long periods. This too is part of being social animals. I believe that in the end we are strong people with a tendency to hold together when the going gets rough. That the individual either has to sacrifice for the good of the tribe or get out of the way, and it is up to each individual to make that decision at the right moment. And most of the time the right decisions are made. I think that such organizations as exist do great service for the whole and we would not know what the face of our world would look like without them.

On the whole I am glad that they are made up of many smaller organizations though, so that there is a lot of individualism and a sense of family is preserved no matter what. This is my truth.

Two Powers Meditation - "Flower" version

By Gretchen Persbacher

As we gather in celebration let us prepare to open ourselves to the flow of magic.

Begin by closing your eyes and settling your body. Make yourself comfortable. Stretch and shift and place yourself at ease. Breathe deeply and slowly, allowing the cares and worries of the mundane world to flow out and away from you. As you continue to breathe, allow yourself to relax, body and mind.

Now, focus on your center—the core of yourself. Feel this place within you that marks the center of all that you are. Now, slowly, pull yourself into that center, concentrating all that you are, all that you have ever been or will ever be into a single focused grain: A seed.

You are a seed, full of potential and possibilities. You are tucked beneath the ground, surrounded by the warm soil, snuggled in the embrace of the Earth Mother. You can feel the cool waters that flow beneath the earth moving all around you, and you draw energy and nourishment from those waters. You are safe, and comfortable, and at peace.

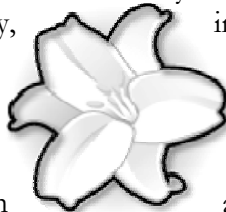
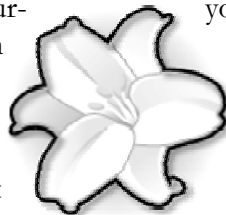
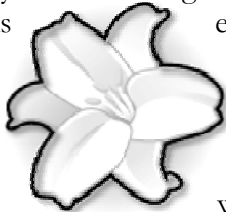
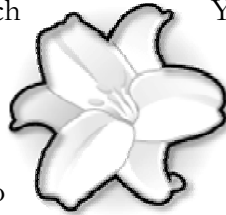
There is a tingling that begins slowly, building all around you, urging you to abandon your comfortable slumber and stretch for something more. At first, you try to ignore it, but the pull is irresistible. You stretch...there...you can feel the warmth above you...the source of the pull. But now, you are afraid to leave the comforts of the earth completely behind, so you stretch again. This time, you extend roots deep into the ground, connecting you to the nourishing waters that you continue to draw strength

from. Now, you are ready to reach out again. As you stretch this time, you break through the surface.

You can feel the warmth of the sunshine pouring down and you continue to grow towards the light. You unfurl your leaves, to gather more of the light to yourself, and as you do, you feel even more energy surge into your being. You reach down further with your roots, to draw in more of the waters, and also, to anchor you against the wind as you grow taller, stretching ever closer to the sky.

You open yourself to the wonder of the world. You realize your potential as you extend yourself leaf by leaf, and then, when you are ready, you unfurl your treasure. Opening the flower that you have carried within you since you were a seed, you reveal your true self, and turn your face to the sun.

Now, breathe deeply and slowly, allow yourself to become aware of your surroundings, not as a flower, but as a human. Feel the wind on your face and your arms. Feel your breath filling your lungs, see the light shining behind your closed eyelids. Know that like the seed of your imaginings, you too have untapped potentials, and treasures in abundance to share. As you open your eyes and return to the world you know, carry within you the memory of the seed and let it guide you as you shape the magic within yourself.



A Dragyn in the Garden

By Sharon Gorbacz

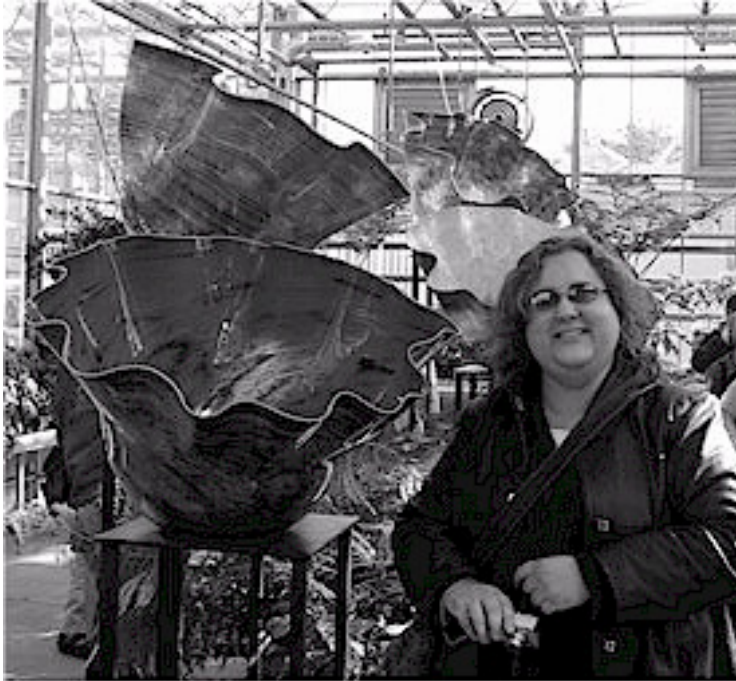
In October 2006, I had the opportunity to visit the New York Botanical Garden during the *Chihuly at the Garden* exhibition. “Pieces tucked in among the plants beg the question, ‘Were they made by man or by nature?’”

Pieces with such nature-inspired names as Heron, Reed, Cattail, and Grass (and indeed they do resemble these), join Chihuly’s other signature creations, with exotic names like Macchia, Persian, Ikebana, and Nii-jima Float, in installations all around the park.

Wandering for hours through the already stunning gardens in the Edwardian-era Conservatory, more than once my attention was drawn from the great variety of plants to a glinting object, cunningly tucked behind a bit of foliage, as if it were actually growing there. Another visitor to the exhibition commented, “Sneaky Chihuly”, and indeed, the impish Chihuly had transformed the garden into a wonderful fairyland, full of surprises. At right, a closeup of an “Ikebana” (the art of Japanese floral arrangement) that my friend hadn’t even seen until we shared our photos with each other.

Chihuly’s art is a weird interpretation of organic forms, heavily influenced by the natural world around him, and his memories of childhood in the Pacific Northwest. It reminded me of my

own childhood as well, particularly the wild landscapes in Dr. Seuss’ children’s books. After injuries sustained in the late 1970’s, he is no longer able to blow the glass himself, but employs a team of artisans to realize the ideas that he paints on canvas.



In the picture I am posing next to a “Macchia” (Italian for “spotted”) to show the sheer size of these blown glass objects. This one had a vibrant blue interior (and a value that made me *very* nervous to be standing so close to it with my “bull in a china shop” syndrome!) Grayscale certainly does not do this art justice.

I highly recommend going out of your way to view his art in person at one of the many exhibitions held around the nation and abroad. You can also take an e-trip to Chihuly’s sit to get a taste of the wonders this master artisan and his team are capable of.

I look forward to returning to explore the 40 acres of virgin forest on the Bronx River that the Garden boasts.

Sources: <http://www.nybg.org>
<http://www.chihuly.com>

Magical Healing: A Personal Journey

By Rev. Kirk Thomas

In our quest for perfect rituals for all the High Days, it sometimes feels like magic is the unnoticed step-child, left standing in the corner, unwanted and unloved. Unlike many other forms of Neopaganism, we in ADF place more emphasis on worship than on magical workings. Of course, we know that magic is an essential part of ritual, from re-creating the Sacred Center to opening and closing the Gates to hallowing the Waters of Life, but sometimes some of us get so focused that we lose sight of the fact that magic has other uses as well.

About a year ago a dear friend of mine, who I'll call **B**, called to tell me that he had cancer of the esophagus. The cancer had spread too far for an operation to be successful and it had spread to other parts of his body. **B**'s doctor had told him that this kind of cancer usually did not respond well to chemo-therapy and that he had about four months to live. **B** decided to try the chemo-therapy anyway, and if death was on his doorstep, he'd go down fighting.

As we spoke on the phone, it suddenly occurred to me that this would be a good opportunity to try some magic to aid him in his fight. **B** was not a Pagan then, but as an arborist he had always felt a connection to nature. So with some trepidation I offered to do a working for him. Somewhat to my surprise, he agreed.

In Rev. Ian Corrigan's book, *Sacred Fire, Holy Well* (86-7), the author mentions a technique that he calls the "Druid Fortress". This is a visualization technique that draws on the powers of earth and sky, much as we do when we perform the Two Powers meditation. In preparation for this exercise one goes into a trance. Once the trance is fairly deep, the work can begin. This exercise is all about bringing the powers of the heavens and the underworld into the three cauldrons of

loins, heart and mind (as in the Two Powers meditation), but then using those powers for overtly magical means. And it's all about visualization. Once the cauldrons are filled with the powers, the 'bubbles' or spheres of power in each of them can be enlarged until they merge, forming a large bubble completely surrounding the magician. After being held for a moment, these powers can flow into the hands, where they may be formed into a ball of energy, concentrating these powers. After breathing three times, letting each breath bring more energy into the ball, the magician can hold their hands out, palms towards a target. I used a pool I could see through the window near my home altar. While maintaining my Druid Fortress, I then breathed a fourth time and projected the ball of power out over the pool, where it hovered for a while. I waved my hands, releasing the ball of power, which then fell harmlessly into the pool.

Ian's book also mentions that these powers can be used for healing, by using the waters of the earth power to dissolve and clean out illness, and the sky power to burn it away (87).

My friend **B** was able to visit two weekends in a row, and the first weekend saw a waning moon, with the second weekend having a waxing moon. This was just too perfect! I determined to do two rites, the first to burn away the cancer and flush out the detritus, and the second to function as a rite of strengthening.

For these workings, the aid of the Kindreds would also be wanted. For the first rite, Brigit was invoked as a Goddess of Healing, Math was invoked as a God of Magic, Cernunnos was invoked as a God of the Underworld, and Morri-gan was given offerings to placate Her that She might turn Her face away from **B** and not take him.

In the workings section of a full ADF rite, using trance and the Druid Fortress techniques I had practiced, we got to work. I visualized the Powers of the Heavens, mediated by Brigit, and the Powers of the Underworld, mediated by Cernunos, flowing through me. Reverends Corrigan and Parker had warned me to be sure to only be a conduit for the powers, and not use my own energy, to prevent exhaustion. Once the powers were flowing smoothly, the earth power was staunched and the fire of the sky power was allowed to shoot out of my finger tips, aimed at the cancers which I could see in my mind's eye as white splotches in his body. I used the power to blast and burn them away, even catching little metastases running around his body. Starting at his neck, which was where the cancer was concentrated, the power then moved down his entire body, getting everything I could see. When this was completed, the sky power's fire was staunched, and the waters of the underworld were allowed to flow through me again, shooting out of my fingers to wash away the burned out cancer cells.

The next weekend we did another full rite, this time with sacrifices to Brigit and the Dagda, and also to three ancestors we called the *Matrae* (the Mothers), who consisted of my mother and two female relatives of **B**s. This time, both of the powers of heaven and underworld flowed through me, with Brigit aiding me with the powers of the sky, and Dagda aiding me with the powers of the earth, and with the *Matrae* helping me direct the powers where they needed to go. The visual at that moment was absolutely incredible. I could see all five of them, Gods and Ancestors alike, intently focusing on these powers that I was aiming into **B**'s body, to strengthen him for the ordeal ahead. It was then that I suddenly realized that we needed to touch, and so I laid my hands on him. It felt like electricity flowed through my hands and into **B**. I know now that the laying on of hands is essential to any healing.

To support this healing, **B** was sent a candle made in another ritual, blessed by Brigit, in which had been buried a Brigit's Cross. This was sent to him to burn daily, and when it burned down too low, he received another one from me in the mail.

A month or so later **B** called to say that the cancer had disappeared in much of his body, and had shrunk way down in his throat, so that now it would be possible to have the operation to remove his esophagus and the cancer. His doctor was ecstatic, and **B** has now had the operation and is back at work, in full remission.

So what is one to think of all this?

I have used this technique a few times now, and with remarkable success. Perhaps the Gods have sent healing through our magic and our faith. Perhaps we can heal with our own powers. And perhaps this is only an amazing example of the placebo effect, where patients heal themselves. Or perhaps it is a combination of all three. One thing we do know is that sometimes, through **ghosti* and reciprocity, powers greater than ourselves intervene on our behalf, showing us the beauty and magic of the cosmos, when ordered potential truly manifests in our lives with wonder and joy.

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Lady of the Land

By Linda Costello

Being married to the land in a sacred union is a theme that runs throughout ancient Celtic mythology. The goddess as Divine Mother and personification of the land is attested in Gaul and may even have preceded the arrival of the Celts in Ireland. The divine folk, the Tuatha Dé Danann, were said to have descended from the mother goddess Danu, sometimes referred to Anu, who was the goddess of prosperity, wealth, and fertility. Such a goddess would obviously represent the abundance and riches of the land.

Found in Irish tales throughout the centuries, such relationships implied that, with sacred offerings, these goddesses could make the crops to grow and the herds to multiply. It is clear that these often-dominant goddesses were worthy of respect and honor.

Different Types of Goddesses

The maternal aspect of the Celtic goddesses was significant; yet, according to Anne Ross in *Pagan Celtic Britain*, “Over and above this maternal aspect, many of the goddesses show marked regional or local characteristics, which give them some individuality other than that of mere mother figures. Some of these are known by name or by portrayal alone, while others are attested by several appearances in the iconography of a particular district.”¹

For example, some goddesses were associated with fresh water, in the form of rivers or wells. Boann is the goddess of the river Boyne, which, within its valley, sits Tara, the seat of the High Kings of Ireland.

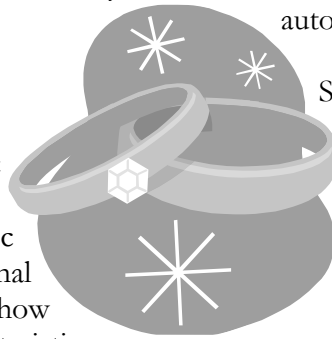
Hearth goddesses are known and worshipped to this day in Ireland and other countries. The Goddess, Brighid, is an example of both a heal-

ing goddess of the well, and a goddess of the hearthfire.

Sovereignty

The Celtic Goddesses are a powerful collection of rulers for fertility, wealth, sacredness, home, and sovereignty, all of which are inextricably entwined with the land in some way. Let’s examine the relationship of sovereignty in more detail.

The word, Sovereignty, comes from the Anglo-French word, Sovereynete, which means pre-eminence, authority, rule.² It is further defined as: **1 a** : supreme power esp. over a body politic **b** : freedom from external control : AUTONOMY **2** : one that is sovereign; *especially* : an autonomous state.³



Sovereignty goddesses, therefore, are those goddesses who are strong, autonomous, free from external control, and have pre-eminence and/or authority over a defined area.

Sacral Kingship

The basic unit of territory in Ireland during the Iron Age was the *Tuath* (tribe). Each tuath was ruled by a king (*ri*), who could usually trace lineage back to other kings and ancestral deities. The inauguration of the king included a sacred fertility rite wherein the king was wedded to Sovereignty (the Lady of the Land). This was known as *banais ríghí*.⁴

In addition to the kingships of the tuath, there was the High King (*Ard ri*) of the land, and his inauguration took place at Tara at a great feast around the time of Samhain, known as the *feis Temro*.⁵ The term “feis” basically means “sleeping with the goddess,” in this case, of

Tara, the goddess of whom, in the 3rd century was Meadhbh Leathdhearg. Again we see the idea of a king united with the land.

Before mating with Sovereignty, however, a high king would have to prove himself. He would have several challenges placed before him to test his fitness as king: a royal chariot would reject him if he was unworthy, a royal mantle may prove to be too big for him to wear, two stones which would open for he who was acceptable, and the well-known Lia Fal, or Stone of Destiny, that would cry out when the rightful king came near.⁶

Another ceremony that occurred prior to the appointment of the new king was the *tarbhfhess*, or bull-feast, in which a bull was killed, and a druid was wrapped in the hide after a sacred meal of flesh and broth, and incantations were chanted, so he could have visions of the identity of new king.

There were also a series of prohibitions demanded of the potential king by the Goddess of the land which were known as *geissi*. These were thought to be magically binding, and if a potential king broke them, he would not reign.

A true and rightful king must possess certain qualities to ensure the peace of the kingdom, security of the borders, and prosperity of the land. A king who was blemished would bring about similar conditions to the land, and crops would not grow, nor would cattle multiply.

Once all tests were passed and a king was found worthy, the *banais ríghí* would be held. There were two primary elements; the first is that a draught would be offered to the King by his new Bride, and second was the consummation of the marriage, wherein he would sleep with his Queen in the dream state.

Once the true and rightful King had slept with his Queen, she and the land would become transformed from a barren, desolate state to one of

life-giving beauty.

Common characteristics

The goddesses who have been known to be wed to the kings, either of the *tuatha* or the high king, have certain characteristics in common. For one, they are all known to have had many husbands. This would make sense, as each new king was wed to the goddess of the land when inaugurated.

The goddesses of sovereignty were all known to have lusty appetites, again they held an assurance of the fertility of the land. They were all shrewd, fierce and merciless, when needs be, which of course a sovereignty goddess would have to be, to ensure the value of her king.

In the legends, we learn of the power over men that Meadhbh Leathdhearg held such as that which took place in the Cattle Raid of Cooley. Her namesake, Meadhbh of Cruachain, was known as a great manipulator of men. *The Tain* tells of her appetites and the drama and intrigue that follow her.

In the county of Limerick in Munster, we have Aine, a Sovereignty goddess of the Eoghanacht sept, who married/slept with various rulers, and who still has a hill named after her, Knocainey (hill of Aine). It is said that she bargained with Eoghabhal to help him in battle in exchange for that hill.⁷

The Morrigan (and her triple aspects of Badb, Nemain, and Macha) was known as the goddess of war and death, and is also considered a Sovereignty goddess. She exhibits many of the characteristics of other Sovereignty goddesses with her lusty appetites, her ability to transform from hag to maiden, and to shapeshift and use magic.⁸

Other Irish sovereignty goddesses include Etainne, Grainne, Tailtiu, the three sisters, Eriu, Banba, and Fodla, and possibly Tlachtga. Conti-

mental sovereignty goddesses include Brigantia and Epona, The Welsh claim Riannon as a sovereignty goddess, as well as many other goddesses of place. There are many more, most of whom we will never know, as their names died as the tribes that worshipped them were conquered and absorbed by other cultures.

Practical Applications

We no longer live in *tuatha* or have kings in America. The ruler of our land is a ruler (supposedly) elected by the people, and it is hoped that he will have the just and true qualities as the ancient kings. Sadly, this is often not the case. So why should we renew and honor this relationship with the land and how can we do so?

Renewing our relationship with the land is significant, especially at this time. Without going into the myriad examples of how our distance from the land has harmed us, I will simply name a few that I see. There has been an attitude of dominion over the land, rather than living with the land. As a result, resources are being depleted daily. Species of plants and animals are becoming extinct when their life cycles are disrupted. We are contracting diseases which, I believe, have much to do with our disconnection from nature, such as eating processed foods with little nutritional value, and living sedentary lives. Our disconnection from the land is mirrored in disconnected relationships with each other, where the values of respect and hospitality are forgotten.

What we can do

We can, first of all, claim Sovereignty of the sphere of our own influence, and as such, reunite with the land. To this end, every day I make an offering and say this prayer:

*May I be united with you, Lady of the Land,
Keeper of abundant blessings and bitter truths alike
Grant me bounty, and the lessons you bear,
As my ways find favor in your eyes.⁹*

In my claim for Sovereignty, I make a personal vow to be a fit ruler of my "kingdom." This can take the form of caring for my body, mind, and spirit in healthy, mindful ways. I watch what I eat, and make sure I get regular exercise. I keep my mind active and strive to maintain good relationships with my own patron gods. To that end, I make a daily dedication to piety, to study, and to hospitality, as in the ways of old.

I am also mindful of my responsibilities to living respectfully toward the land. I do this by advocating and applying the principles and practices of sustainable living.

On a group level, as ordained clergy of FoDLA, I educate others in sustainable living practices, and help them to become more aware of their connection to all of life. In addition, I ceremonially renew this bond in ritual on each of the High Days. In order to uphold this sacred union with the land, we offer grain in a renewal of our pact with Her, so that any assembled folk can remember our shared responsibility of being environmentally aware and maintaining a good, healthy relationship with the land which we share.

¹ Ross, Anne; Pagan Celtic Britain, p. 271

² "sovereignty." *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Douglas Harper, Historian. 17 Oct. 2007.

³ "sovereignty." *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law*. Merriam-Webster, Inc. 17 Oct. 2007.

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⁴ Dillon, Miles and Chadwick, Nora, *The Celtic Realms*, p. 93

⁵ O hOgain, Daithi, *Myth, Legend & Romance, an Encyclopedia of the Irish Folk Tradition*, p. 401

⁶ MacCana, Proinsias, *Celtic Mythology*, p. 119

⁷ O hOgain, Daithi; *Myth, Legend & Romance, An Encyclopedia of the Irish Folk Tradition*, p. 21

⁸ Ross, Anne, *Pagan Celtic Britain*, p. 285

⁹ Covert, Todd; *The Mystery of the Union with the Land*, article found at <http://fodla.org/pb/articles/land.html>



Book Review

Goddess of the North by Lynda C. Welch
Reviewed by Sharon Gorbacz

I had originally purchased this book because of the title, and because the publisher had a good track record with me, considering that they'd published some "rather good" books authored by our own Ceiswr Serith. In hindsight, I should have read the first few chapters before making my purchase.

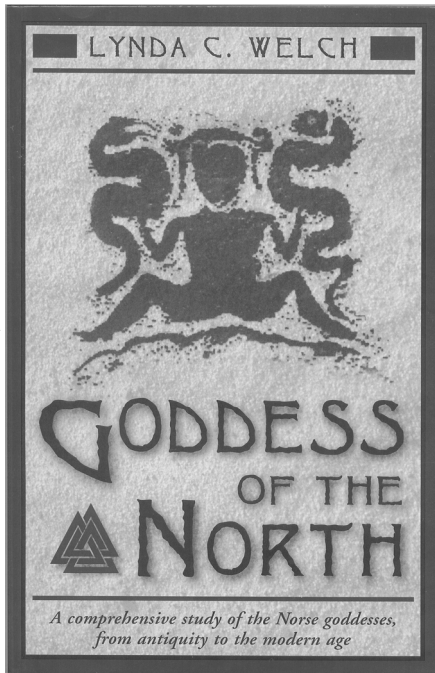
Lynda C. Welch states in the introduction that the purpose of this book is to present factual, intuitive, and spiritual evidence for the existence of a primordial Norse goddess." (pg. 3)

Indeed, Ms. Welch does disguise her work as a scholarly one, making references to what would be considered respectable sources of information on the subject, including Jakob Grimm's *Ten-tonic Mythology*, Snorri Sturlusson's *Prose Edda*, and Hilda R. E. Davidson's *Roles of the Northern Goddess*.

With footnotes included, she uses these works to support her ridiculous conclusion that all of the goddesses, both Aesir and Vanir, giantesses, and other feminine forces can be lumped into the Maiden, Mother, Crone mold of the Wiccan Goddess. Of course, she tries not to sound overly Wiccan by proclaiming this as the "primordial Norse goddess" and that these aspects are "Grandmother, Mother, Daughter" (Fjorgyn, Frigg, and Freya respectively).

This work is particularly contrary to the work that many of us who follow the Norse pantheon have been doing in trying to sieve out the functions and lore of the individual goddesses of the

Norse pantheon from what little literary evidence has survived from the pre-Christian period in Northern Europe.



Goddess of the North
Lynda C. Welch
Weiser Books, April 2001
ISBN: 1-57863-170-X

Her opinion of monotheistic religions from the very start is hostile. There is also a strong feminist, to the point of "male bashing" undercurrent to this work as well. "This monotheistic dogma teaches its practitioners to worship only the male divine, thus this discrimination will continue to perpetuate the suppression of women as the norm." (pg. 8)

She also perpetuates the myth that Asatru is a racist religion. "...we know that Nott has dark skin and hair, and that this is a result of her heritage. This is of great significance, as many people, both Asatru and others, believe the Nordic tradition emphasizes white supremacy" (pg. 90)

The bibliography sections for "Nordic Spiritual and Runic Studies", as well as "Nordic Mythological Studies" are definitely the highlight of this book – listed are some very good primary and secondary sources for the study of Norse mythology (avoid just about all of the Llewellyn titles, save Freya Aswynn's). But overall, this book is not worth the paper it's printed on.

On Fennel

By Nancy McAndrew

*"And as it mantling passes round,
With fennel is it wreathed and crowned,
Whose seed and foliage sun-imbrowned
Are in its waters steeped and drowned,
And give a bitter taste.
Above the lowly plants it towers,
The fennel, with its yellow flowers,
And in an earlier age than ours
Was gifted with the wondrous powers,
Lost vision to restore.
It gave new strength, and fearless mood;
And gladiators, fierce and rude,
Mingled it in their daily food;
And he who battled and subdued,
A wreath of fennel wore."*

*Excerpted from "The Goblet of Life" (ll. 11-25) by
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1842.*

Fennel, native to Southern Europe and parts of Asia, grows merrily and effortlessly anywhere it can find sun and mediocre soil. It has been naturalized around the world so successfully that the US and Australia consider it a foreign invasive plant. Nevertheless, it is a plant worthy of a spot in any Druid's herb garden.

All parts of this plant may be used; leaves, seeds, and bulb. It should be noted that not all types of fennel produce the engorged leaf base known as the bulb; Florence fennel is the most prone to bulbing, though other varieties can be encouraged to do it as well. One must prevent the flower stalks from forming for the plant to create the bulb. However, there are benefits to allowing the plant to go to seed. Besides the showy, branched, yellow blooms, many beneficial insects and butterfly larvae are attracted to the flower stalks. Planted next to roses, fennel will draw any aphids to itself letting your roses go on about their business and it has enough foliage that the aphids and other hungry insects will hardly im-



pede its growth at all. Fennel is an important food source for Swallowtail butterflies, the state butterfly of 7 states and state insect of 2 states.

It is embarrassingly easy to grow fennel. Seeds sown in early Spring will produce healthy, flowering plants the first year or established plants can be planted and will naturalize within a year or two. Fennel propagates through seeds and if allowed to go to seed it will be prolific! Unless you want a yard full of fennel, (it will shade out many other things as it can grow up to 3 feet tall), I recommend preventing the flower stalks from forming at all, or cut the flowers to enjoy indoors—cut fennel will stay lovely in a vase for over a week. In order to take advantage of the full range of fennel benefits, I allow several plants to go to seed every year, while snipping the flower stalks of others to enjoy the bulb (cooked or raw) and the continuous feathery greenery. Do be responsible when growing fennel and do not let it get away from the constraints of your garden.

Anethole, the substance that gives fennel its flavor and aroma, is a documented antispasmodic. Fennel has been used medicinally to relieve asthma, as a diuretic, laxative, expectorant, and as a cure for several intestinal and stomach woes. Tea made from the bruised seeds has been recommended to help stimulate the flow of milk, but there have been extremely rare cases of a severe, sometimes fatal reaction. It is common throughout India to chew fennel seeds after a meal to sweeten one's breath. While an essential oil of fennel could cause dermatitis in sensitive people, a steam of fennel can be very useful for asthma, croup, and bronchitis.

Fennel holds a prominent place in our mythological history. According to Hesiod, it was a hollow fennel stalk that Iapetus' son, Prometheus, used to conceal and carry the coal when bringing fire to mankind. In *Works and Days*, he writes, "He (Zeus) hid fire; but that noble son of Iapetus stole again for men from Zeus the counsellor in a hollow fennel-stalk..." and in *Theogony*, "But the son of Iapetus outwitted him and stole the far-seen gleam of unwearying fire in a hollow fennel-stalk." Sir James Frazer relates that during rituals in honor of Adonis, "gardens" for the god were planted in pots filled with soil in which were forced seeds of fennel, lettuce, wheat, and flowers. These gardens were allowed to wilt and die and were taken, along with the image of Adonis, to be thrown into the sea.

Pliny describes fennel as sacred to Bacchus and attributes an astounding 22 medicinal properties to the plant. One use that may be of modern interest was as a diet aid. Fennel was thought to assuage hunger pains (used in the Medieval era on days of fasting) and I have found it included in many modern diet/fasting teas. One of the more fascinating of Pliny's medicinal claims for fennel was that snakes were wont to rub against fennel to improve or restore their eyesight. One wonders exactly how he divined this. Belief in the ocularly strengthening properties of the plant endured through the middle ages. And one finds an echo of that belief in the Longfellow verse

quoted above. It is perhaps a stretch to find a connection between the Greek understanding of fennel as a tool for bringing illumination and the belief of it as an eyesight restorative; however, in the realm of UPG, one is allowed just such leeway.

Perhaps it was the conviction that fennel could improve vision that led to its being used in charms against witchcraft. In Anglo-Saxon lands it was most commonly paired with St. John's Wort, gathered at Midsummer, and hung in the eaves to dry and to protect the house's inhabitants. It would seem that this custom persisted into much later days; "on the eve of this saint (St. John's Day = Midsummer), as well as upon that of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, every man's door was shaded with green birch, long fennel, Saint John's wort, orpin, white lilies, and the like, ornamented with garlands of beautiful flowers" (Strutt, p. 284). In Creswick's Victorian telling of the tale of Robin Hood, Allan-a-Dale's hard-won bride, Fennel, is left to guard and heal the wounded greenwood men while the larger party accompanies Robin. Here we may see a remnant of the belief in fennel as a curative and power of protection to be found in the popular consciousness, for the name of Allen's love is not given in any of the ballads or poems of Robin Hood collected by Child.

Fennel is often included among the nine sacred herbs of the Anglo-Saxons; however there are myriad lists of sacred herbs and trees for most Indo-European cultures and rarely do the many lists agree. In his work *Night Battles*, Carlo Ginzburg describes numerous folk accounts from the 16th century of fighting off evil witches using fennel stalks (while the malevolent witches were armed with sorghum stalks). Ginzburg's research centers on the Friuli region—a fascinating area bordered by Venice to the West, the Adriatic Sea to the South, Austria on the North, and Slovenia on the East. Once occupied by Celtic people and highly influenced by Germanic traditions, one finds quite a mixture of Indo-

European customs and beliefs; and fennel figures prominently.

Hermetic magic finds fennel useful in purification practices. The 19th century translation of the *Clavicula Salomonis* offers specific instructions for making a “sprinkler,” used in aspersing or purifying with water. One must gather the fennel and other herbs during the hour of Mercury while the moon is waxing and tie their stems with a cord spun by a young maiden. After one makes certain inscriptions upon the handle one may use the “...Sprinkler whenever it is necessary, and know that wheresoever thou shalt sprinkle this Water, it will chase away all Phantoms and they shall be unable to hinder or annoy any.” (Mathers, p. 103)

Modern Pagans may develop all manner of possible uses of fennel in current practice. A stalk of fennel dipped in Holy water (gathered from 3 natural sources) can be used for a simple Purification. Additionally, adding the used aspersing stalk to the Fire as part of establishing the Triple Center may well add some oomph to a Greek or Norse ritual (not to imply that other Hearth Cultures can't appreciate fennel just as well). Perhaps an infusion or decoction of fennel (if the oil is found to be problematic) could be effective when used to anoint ritual participants or before divinatory work. In my experience fennel is excessively easy to work with and offers many rewards in return for a sunny spot in the yard.

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Correction:

The article “Dressed Up as Freya” was incorrectly attributed. It was written and performed by Arthur Shipkowski. Please accept our apologies for this error.

Sonoran Sunrise Grove, ADF
proudly presents our 5th annual festival

Desert
Magic
2008



Come to the Sky Islands!
May 8-11, 2008

Activities will include:

- Opening and Main Rituals
- Workshops on Magic, Seership, Trance, Spirituality and Mythology
- Presenters Include Cei Serith, Michael Dangler, Raven and Carrion Mann, Skip Ellison and many more!
- Bardic Circle

For More Information go to:

www.ssg-adf.org/desertmagic.htm

Or contact us at:

Sonoran Sunrise Grove, ADF
P.O. Box 17874
Tucson, AZ 85731
E-mail : sd@sonoransunrisegrove.org





News and Announcements

Dedicant Program Completions

Crystal Marie Groves of CedarLight Grove,
Completed November 7, 2007

Jim Harris,
Completed November 26, 2007

Anna Marie Connatser of CedarLight Grove,
Completed December 4, 2007

James "Seamus" Dillard of Three Cranes Grove,
Completed December 14, 2007

David Crawford of Grove of the Red Earth,
Completed December 27, 2007

New Protogroves

Snow Water Protogrove, ADF, Cambridge
Springs on October 3, 2007

Island Willow Protogrove, ADF, Pointe-Claire,
Quebec Canada on October 8, 2007

Muscadine Protogrove, ADF, Grantsboro, NC
on October 9, 2007

Whispering Oaks Protogrove, ADF in Sioux
Falls, South Dakota on October 15, 2007

Grove News

Ocean's Tide Protogrove

In November the folk of Ocean's Tide Protogrove in Rhode Island took a trip out to visit the University of Connecticut's pagan student group PODS (Pagan Organization for Diverse Spirituality).

Originally we were invited to speak about ADF,

but we seized the opportunity to do a full Samhain ritual for them and then had a great time hanging out afterwards, talking about our grove and ADF.

A few weeks later we were contacted by the organizer of the UConn group with the following message:

"I just wanted to let you know that like five different people want you guys to come back to PODS because they like you so much. One person even said they were strongly thinking about joining your grove.

It's rather strange, every time I see someone from the group they ask when you are coming back, haha. I just wanted to let you know how popular you guys now are (and honestly, NO other guest has had anywhere near this kind of response.. like normally I get no feedback at all)!"

All of us in the grove read this and agreed: It is a good omen! :)

Three Cranes Grove

Greetings! In the past few months, Three Cranes Grove, ADF, has been amazingly busy! Between electing a new Senior Druid, Seamus, and becoming more active in the community and deepening our relationships, it's another amazing ride!

We have begun to undertake monthly rituals, working from source material about the Druids and their affinity for the sixth night of the moon. These rites are primarily for Grove members, and finding the balance between our primary mission of public ritual and doing these rites for the Grove has been an interesting, deepening

experience for us.

We also adopted a trail that is nearly five miles long. We are scheduled to clean it at least once per quarter, though we may end up doing more than that because this trail is in such dire need of cleaning! It is one of the main bike trails in Columbus, and highly visible to everyone who calls Columbus home.

On Dec. 1, 2007, our Grove Priest, Rev. Michael J Dangler, participated in an interfaith World AIDS Day service in downtown Columbus. There, he addressed about 75 people of all faiths in ritual about the importance of faith and community when faced with something as impossible to comprehend as AIDS.

We have continued to collect canned goods at all

our rituals, and in keeping with our Yule traditions, also collected toys for donation to Franklin County Children's Services and other local toy drives. In early January, we presented about ADF to a Unitarian Universalist congregation in Reynoldsburg.

It has been a busy time in our Grove, but we are growing, strengthening, and praying with a good fire.

Bright blessings!

Beltane Dance

By Jennifer L. Gadd

Gather, faithful, join the dance
around the Maypole bright.
The evening chills, but now it's lit,
the bale-fire warms the night.

The dancers leap in firelight,
a flash of silk and skin.
The fecund world luxuriates
in life begun again.

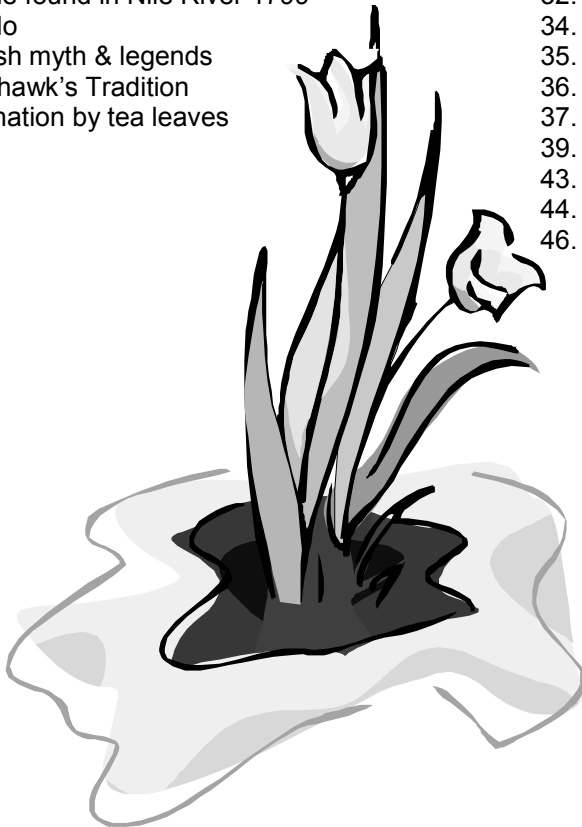
In and out, the dancers step,
closer every turn.
A fiery madness builds and grows:
passions flame and burn.

Spin the wheel a quarter-turn,
as ribbons twist and twine.
The Goddess meets her Lord tonight,
eadar dà theine Bhealltuinn.

Crossword Puzzle

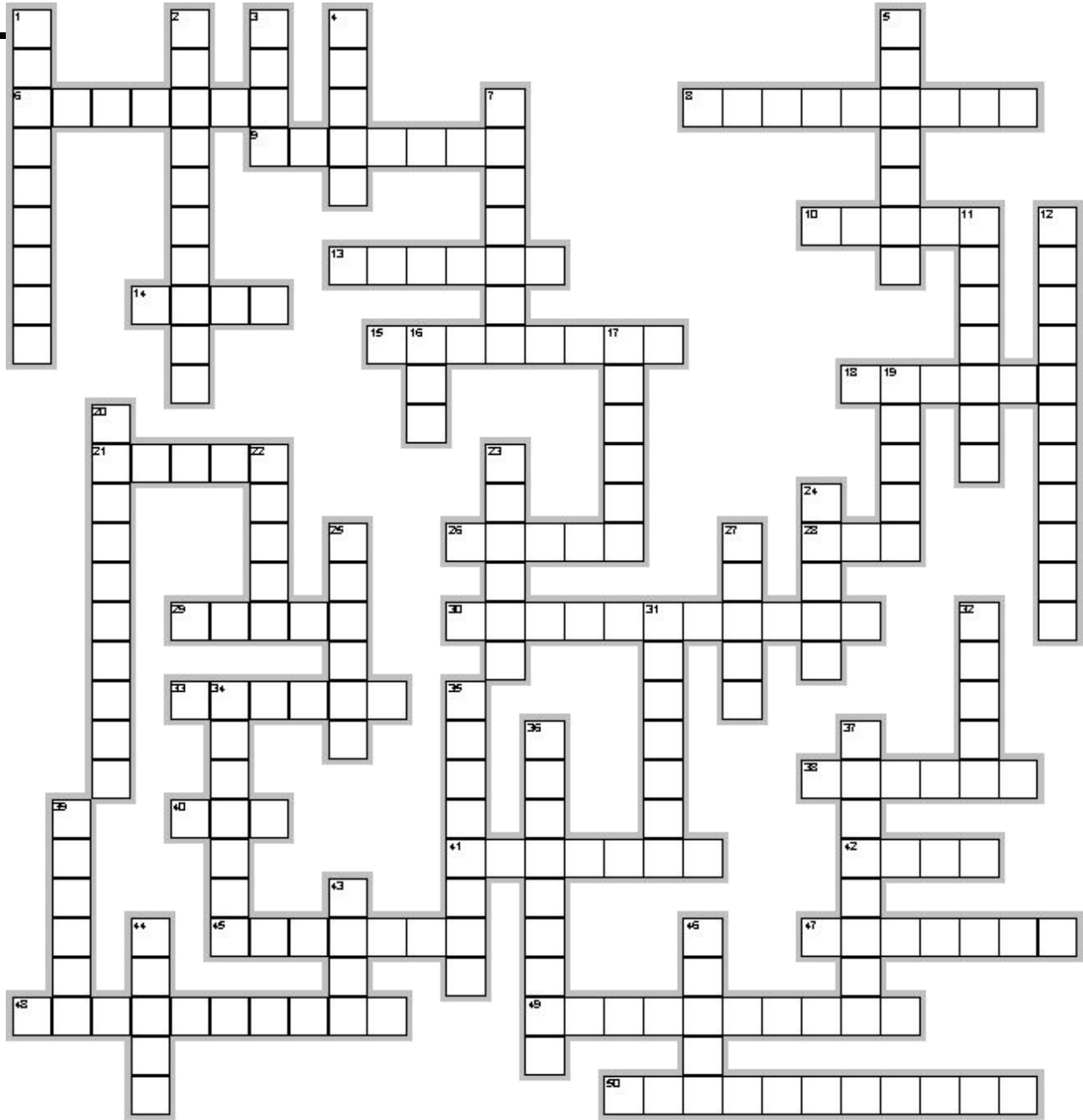
Across

6. Gaulish for Sacred space
8. The world within us...
9. Italian Astronomer 1564-1642 (first)
10. Norse Seeress
13. Brightest star in Earth's sky
14. Welsh Poets
15. Gaia Hypothesis originator (last)
18. Moral Excellence
21. September 24 to October 23
26. Leader of the Devas
28. Norn - Past
29. Killer of Achilles
30. Marcus Aurelius' book
33. 3 Laws of planetary motion (last)
38. Sacred river of India
40. Eihwaz
41. 'crystal' magic
42. O.E. Treow
45. Stone found in Nile River 1799
47. Raido
48. Welsh myth & legends
49. Starhawk's Tradition
50. Divination by tea leaves



Down

1. 12th Major Arcana
2. Canon Episcopi concerns....
3. Analytical Psychology (last)
4. Book of Irish Gospels
5. OBOD founder (last)
7. Society of inner light founder (last)
11. Latin for Skillfull
12. Circumambulation counter clock
16. Quercus
17. Older spelling of QBLH
19. A poem of Homer
20. Gk. Mysteries assoc. with Demeter
22. Fossilized tree resin
23. Foeniculum Vulgare
24. John Barleycorn poet (last)
25. Febuary 20 to March 20
27. Archangel of the Element Earth
31. Zoroastrian evil one
32. Strabo's - Interpreter of Nature
34. 4th Major Arcana
35. Lucky Charm
36. December 22 to January 20
37. Crataegus
39. Skt. for "Right Action"
43. Founder of Stoic Philosophy
44. A God or Goddess...
46. Irish poet 1865 -1939 (last)



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com

Submission Guidelines

Oak Leaves welcomes submissions of artwork, articles, poetry, letters to the editor, and anything else that might be of interest to our readers. Submissions, and especially artwork, relating to the turning of the wheel of the year and the celebration of the High Days are particularly encouraged. Submissions from non-members will be accepted, however, if space is constrained, preference will be given to submissions from ADF members. Certain pieces may receive preference, depending on available space.

Medium of Submission:

Electronic submissions are preferred, sent as email attachments to the Oak Leaves submissions address: oak-leaves@adf.org

Please send one submission per attachment specifying the format, author's name, your email, and membership status. Be sure the title of the piece and your name are at the top of the page, and you have checked it over for spelling and grammatical errors.

We will also accept electronic submissions on CD, sent to: **OL Editor, P.O. Box 17874, Tucson, AZ 85731-7874**

Please do not upload the article directly to the wiki as this has caused some confusion. Written submissions should be sent in one of the following formats: Rich Text Format (RTF), PDF or MS Word. Submitted materials will not be returned to the sender, unless specifically requested.

Art Submission Guidelines:

We now accept photos as well as drawings and computer generated pictures. Some of the color pictures will need to be modified to black and white but we will do that as necessary. We would like to have pictures submitted at 300 dpi, and in a useable format such as .jpg, .png, etc. Please send them to the Art Director at amairgin@pacbell.net. We are not currently accepting hard copies of your art.

Deadlines for submissions are:

Spring: January 1st, Summer: April 1st, Autumn: July 1st, Winter: October 1st

Contributors

Shell and Dorothy Alexander
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Mark Cantwell
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Linda Costello
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Lady of the Land, pg. 28

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Jennifer L. Gadd
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Sharon Gorbacz
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Leah Hamilton
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Chris Witishin
Crossword Puzzle, pg 39

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Shhhh...

Don't tell anyone but Oak Leaves #41 is going to be a special one!

We are going all out to celebrate ADF's 25th Anniversary!

But in order to do this we need your submissions!

How do YOU think ADF has changed in the last 25 years? How has ADF changed you? Now is the time! Let's see some ADF pride! We need articles, poetry, and pictures!

Be sure to send your submissions before April 1st! Otherwise you will miss the opportunity to get involved with our big project!



Ár nDraiocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

P.O. Box 17874, Tucson, AZ 85731-7874



Membership and Subscription Form

Beside your name, address, phone number, and e-mail 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.

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

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? _____
 If this is a membership renewal please state your ADF membership number: _____
 In which ADF Grove do you intend to participate in, if any? _____
 I am 18 years of Age or Older: { } Yes { } No (If no, see waiver below.)

ADF Membership Rates:

Regular Membership _____ years @ \$20/year = \$ _____
 Prisoner Membership _____ years @ \$10/year = \$ _____
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Members _____ years @ \$20/year = \$ _____
 Subscription to Oak Leaves - Non-Members _____ years @ \$25/year = \$ _____

Total Due \$ _____

Please mail this form with your check or money order (made payable to "ADF" in U.S. dollars only.) Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing. There are special rates for Prisoners. Please contact us if you are a prisoner or are assisting one. This form may also be found online at: <http://www.adf.org/joining/join.html>.

Under 18 Membership Waiver

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

To whom it may concern: (enter child's name here) _____ has my permission to become a member of ADF, and I am fully aware of the Neopagan nature of this organization.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

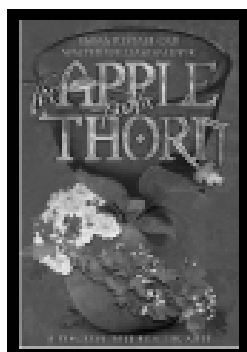
Notary Seal:

Out of the Ancient Mists Comes the Tale of

THE APPLE AND THE THORN

BY

Emma Restall Orr, and
Walter William Melnyk



A work of magical mythology, hanging in the balance between fact and fiction, this tale draws upon the legends and history of our ancestry, and the landscape itself, a story of worlds colliding in love and war. Major characters in the tale are the Chalice Well itself, the Red Spring, and a very special Cup of blue glass.

In the changing times of first century Britain, Vivian, Lady of the Lake, struggles to maintain peace within the lands of Avalon. Broken by the crucifixion of his great nephew, Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea makes his way back to her islands in search of understanding, bringing him more than he realizes.

In this inspiring and heart rending story of sovereignty, power and belief, as the Roman armies draw closer, these iconic figures are forced to confront each other and themselves, leading to choices neither could have imagined.

Emma Restall Orr (Bobcat) is Head of the Druid Network,

William Melnyk (Oakwyse) is a former Episcopal priest in the United States.



Expressing the depth of their own religious visions, the tale is a powerful exposition of British animistic Paganism and mystical Christianity – and what happens when they meet.

Thorn Publications
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