

OAK LEAVES

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin Autumn 2017 ~ Issue No. 78



Julianne Watson 2017



Photo: Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano

Blessings to the Nature Spirits!

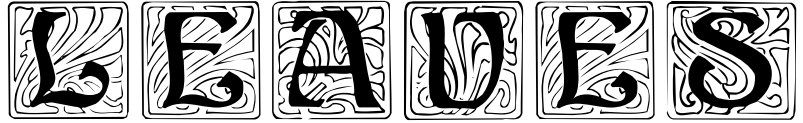


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OAK LEAVES

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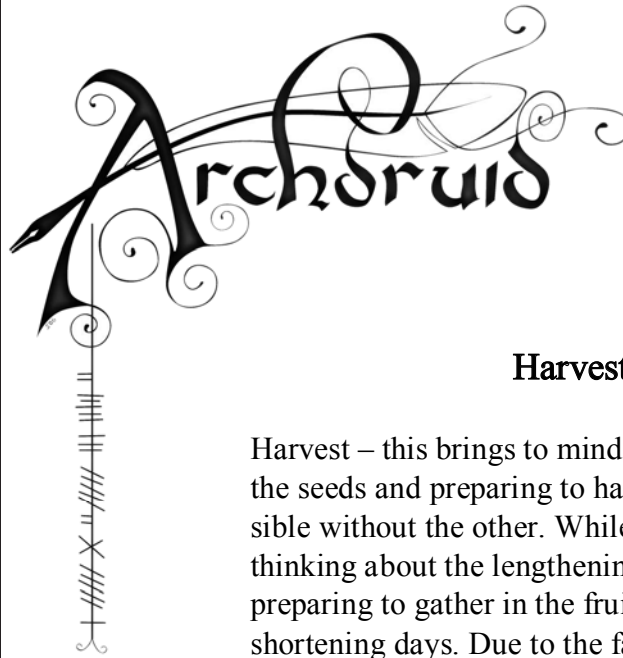
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World Tree by Diane Watson

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Harvest

Harvest – this brings to mind two things: planting
the seeds and preparing to harvest. One is impos-
sible without the other. While one hemisphere is
thinking about the lengthening days, the other is
preparing to gather in the fruit of its efforts in the
shortening days. Due to the fact that we have
members in both hemispheres of the globe, I find
it more holistic – if I may – to speak about the
two halves as one, of the two events as one since
they happen at the same time. It is relativity in
motion.

What seeds have you planted this past season?
What seeds are you about to plant in your lives? I
like to think that Hospitality extends even into the
seeds that we plant in the Earth Mother and the
bounty we receive from Her in return. Please –
don't just plant seeds but plant them with love
and an offering of water and food. While the act
of planting typically assumes and expects a
return, nothing is for certain. I heard a story this
morning of a farmer who planted an entire crop
only to have it ruined by an unexpected flood. Do
more than just the act; include the devotion in





your work.

When you plant a seed, whether it is one or an entire field, do so with care and compassion. Will it grow regardless? It will most likely. Will the relationship between you, the work, and the Earth Mother grow? It will not without effort and investment. When you water your seeds, give a quick prayer to the Earth Mother, such as:

Earth Mother
May this water
From my hands
To your body
Bless and nourish us all.

This enhances the watering of the garden into an act of devotion and hospitality. We give so that the Earth may flourish and grow. As opposed to just watering and looking over the fence, watch the water soak into the soil and provide for the Earth Mother, the crops, and the entire effort of sustaining life. We give so that we may receive. By being present in the moment for the process of watering, it becomes much more than just water flowing from some vessel onto the ground. It becomes an act of giving and nurturing.

When one goes to harvest the fruits of the bounty

of the Earth Mother, please – thank the plant from which you are drawing sustenance or harvest. By thanking the plant, you acknowledge that the thing which you are taking is given as the result of effort and the sacrifice of life, as we say in RDNA. For some plants, just the fruit of the plant is used and life continues. For other plants, the plant itself is the food stuff and this sacrifice is really remarkable. We give offerings so that we may receive offerings in return.

When the harvest is done, and the field or garden has returned once again to a barren state, continue to give offerings and blessings in harvest. Life does not stop when the object of our pursuit is gone. The entire Cyclical Nature of Reality continues through rest and renewal in life and bounty until harvest and gathering are in hand once again. The Nature Spirits teach us about the cycles of nature and about the cycles of our lives. Let us remember them too in our daily watering and gathering.

Harvest – it is a holy time.

*Rev. Jean “Drum” Pagano
Archdruid, ADF*

Autumn Issue of Oak Leaves

By Oak Leaves Editor-in-Chief Rev. G. R. Grove

Even as I write this in the midst of summer, we look forward to harvest, when the bounty that Mother Earth has given us over the long hot days will be gathered to support us through the winter darkness. In the southern half of our planet, of course, the opposite situation obtains, and our members in Australia and Brazil will see this issue at their Imbolc. So the great dance of life continues in circular Sacred Time.

Looking backwards for a moment, I would like to mention Wellspring. Ian Corrigan and Stone Creed Grove continue to do wonderful things at Tredara, as he discusses in his article in this issue. As usual, three Guilds held competitions – the Artisans, the Brewers, and the Warriors. Diane Watson’s full report on the Artisans’ competition is on the following page. In what I hope will become a tradition, I had meant to choose a piece from that competition for this issue’s cover, but the piece I liked best (shown below in a black and white photo which unfortunately fails to display much of its beauty) was not a good shape for that purpose, so Diane kindly provided me with a related piece of more appropriate dimensions. I missed the other two guild completions, but I’m informed that the Brewers competition was won by John Hilliard, and the Warriors Games by Chris Henderson and Rhiannon Ellison. Congratulations, all!

Finally, I come to the Wellspring Bardic Chair. This year we had a large field of eight competitors, and I’m told the judges (Rev. D. Rowen Grove, the previous year’s winner; Rev. Jean “Drum” Pagano; and Rev. Kirk Thomas) had considerable difficulty in deciding which of the many wonderful performances should yield the crown of victory to the performer. In the end, however, it was awarded to Wayne Keyser. The other competitors included (in alphabetic order) Mike Biershank (Three Cranes Grove), Ty Davis (Solitary), Rhiannon Ellison (Muin Mound

Grove), Taliesin Govannon (Stone Creed Grove), Dave “Thexalon” Kleinschmidt (Stone Creed Grove), Bonnie Landry (Charter Oak Grove), and Maria Stoy (Sassafras Grove). Two of Wayne’s competition pieces are in this issue, in addition to a longer article he had submitted previously on “Lying Gods”.

In this issue I also continue with my policy of encouraging new voices by actively soliciting submissions from new and old members of ADF whose work has not been previously published in *Oak Leaves*. This time we have a piece from Diane Cacciato, a new Solitary member who divides her time between British Columbia and Sicily, and a ritual module and song from ADF’s newest priest, Rev. Ellie Lazzaro, who lives in Germany. Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue, and I encourage all ADF members to consider submitting to future issues. For more details, see our submission guidelines on page 44. I want *Oak Leaves* to be a magazine for all of us, wherever we live, and wherever we practice!

Blessings,
Rev. G. R. “Gwernin” Grove



Photo: Diane Watson

Wellspring Artisan Competition

By Diane Watson

The Artisan Competition has been a long-held tradition of Wellspring. Over the years it has grown in number and quality of works. My first Wellspring Artisan Competition many years ago consisted of three entries. I was disheartened with the lack of participation. The artisans were an important component of Isaac's vision for ADF. Over the years I've witnessed the competition evolve not only in the works submitted, but the pride felt by the Artisan Guild members in providing a small gallery-like atmosphere to showcase the ADF Artisan talents and works.

The artisan competition encourages both accomplished artists as well as those just beginning to explore their artistic selves to share their work with the ADF community. For many artists, Wellspring is the only place they exhibit their work. I wish to thank all ADF artists who have made the competition a success by submitting their work.

This year the entries were of the highest quality ever submitted to the competition. The entries in the category of fiber arts were numerous showing a wide range of skill and talent. Elisabeth Willmott won the fiber arts category with a cap which she designed to wear in the winter landscape to inspire trance and vision. In jewelry, Deana submitted handmade glass Roman bead necklaces based on ancient Roman style jewelry. In 2-D



Photo: Diane Watson



Photo: Diane Watson

fine art, Melissa Hill won with a watercolor entitled *Imbolc Rising*, a piece from her series of images she has created for every high day. An Anglo-Saxon ring pouch and Viking wood handled bag created by Maria Stoy using historical re-creation and hand sewing techniques received 2nd place in the textile arts category. Jenn Hatter won best of show by popular vote for her crocheted hooded rainbow cloak. Other winners included Amanda Kroff 2nd place in fiber arts, Wesley Jolly 2nd place sacred objects, Deana 1st place metal arts, Jason White 2nd place jewelry, Wesley Jolly 1st place other crafts and Sydney Gooch 1st place children's category for her drawing of *Druid Hollows*.

I welcome all those dabbling in the visual arts to join the Artisan Guild of ADF. While creating during this next turn of the wheel keep the Wellspring Artisan Competition and Show in the back of your mind.

Diane Watson has been a member of Sassafras Grove and ADF since 2008. She is Pursewarden for her grove. She is a member of the Artisan Guild and holds the position of Pursewarden. Diane has been the chairperson for the Wellspring Artisan Competition and show for the past few years.

The **Ghostis* of Harvest

By Rev. Kirk Thomas

In our lives, we have gotten used to getting our food at the grocery store in town. We have also grown used to finding exactly the foods we want, regardless of the season. Thanks to modern transportation systems, we can eat fruit and vegetables in the dead of winter, watermelons in April, and strawberries year round. And all this plenty comes at a cost to our environment, since fossil fuels must be burned to power the planes, trains, and trucks which distribute the food all around the world. The morality of all this is questionable, but that is another article. What is certain is that the ancients didn't have such luxury when it came to the foods that they could eat.

Until modern times, food was available when it was locally harvested. While some foods, like grains and wine, could be stored and transported long distances, at least by late antiquity, most perishable foods could not. In Northern Europe, food had to be stored for the cattle or other livestock to survive the winter, when grass was not readily available. Any excess animals that could not be provided for had to be killed in late autumn so that some of the meat and hides could be preserved. The rest of the meat would be consumed in great feasts at that time, which is a tradition we in the present have continued with our Samhain, Yule, and New Year's celebrations.

But when May returned in the spring, supplies were often getting very low, since much of the stored food could have already been eaten. And it would be a long time before the summer harvests would begin once again. Nowadays this is not an issue at all, but in ancient times it was a very big deal indeed. Drought or other crop failures could lead quickly to starvation.

And since the Gods "Give Good Things", offering to the Gods and Spirits was the normal thing to do. There was a recognition that the Gods

came first, and that there was a higher order to be maintained if people were to keep their bellies filled. And that is why both society and individuals maintained the institution of reciprocity through sacrifice. *Do ut des*: I give that you may give.

A successful harvest was a good thing, and essential for life. People gave to the Gods and Spirits that They might give back good things to everyone. And everyone agreed that maintaining these relationships with the Gods was important.

One of the main ways of maintaining these sacred relationships was through the First Fruits sacrifice, also referred to as *firstlings*. The very first bit of food or produce, however it was obtained, would be given to the Gods. These firstlings could also include the first woven bits of cloth, the first born farm animals, indeed the first of





anything grown or created. When a harvest was taken in from the fields, some of it would be given back to the Gods, through burning, laying down in sacred places, or even in springs or rivers. The idea was one of gratitude for the good harvest, in hopes that the Gods would guarantee that the next harvest would be good as well.

The idea of gratitude at harvest time has continued down the ages. In the United States and Canada, there are Thanksgiving celebrations. In Britain and other parts of Europe there are Harvest Suppers and celebrations. These feasts blend the two ideas of the firstling offerings and the culling of the herds, both autumnal activities. And they can lead to great parties!

There was another type of firstling offering in the ancient world, and that was one of the uses of the libation offering. In ancient Greece, libations were probably the most common form of sacrifice and were performed in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons, but one of those reasons was as a firstling offering.

Whenever a new *krater* (or storage jar) of wine was opened at a feast or other occasion, the very first pour would be given to the Gods. In Greece there were even rules as to which Gods would be invoked before drinking. In a group, the libation

from the first *krater* of wine would be offered to Zeus and the Olympians. The libation from the second *krater* would be given to the Heroes, and the third and last *krater's* libation would go to Zeus Teleios, the Finisher. Each person could then offer further libations to whichever God or Spirit they liked. They gave, so that they might (continue to) receive.

Today, people who grow food in their gardens can certainly offer the first bits of food they harvest to the Gods and Spirits, and even the first cut flowers and herbs. Farmers who grow livestock or raise hens have plenty they can offer. Nowadays, however, with our stored and prepared foods, it might be a bit of a stretch to offer the first bit from every package or can of food or drink when opened, but that would be in keeping with ancient tradition. We're already giving thanks for food through prayer at our tables, but actually sharing part of our meals and harvest with the Gods and Spirits would certainly be something that our ancient forebears would recognize. And it would certainly uphold our **ghostis* practices.

Rev. Kirk Thomas is an Archdruid Emeritus of ADF. He expands on this theme in his book "Sacred Gifts: Reciprocity and the Gods".

Life as a Solitary on the West Coast

By Diane Cacciato.

I've always been a bit out of step when it comes to spiritual matters. I grew up in a house that was a little atheist enclave in a middle-class suburban sea of Protestantism. In my 20s, I was the recipient of a mishmash of influences: Shirley Maclaine's book *Out on a Limb*, Capra's book *The Tao of Physics*, Zukav's book *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* formed and informed my beliefs in a spiritual life and an afterlife and in reincarnation. Living in Japan at that time, I practiced Shintoism and was profoundly influenced by Buddhism and the Twelve Step programs with their underlying Christian tones. I was even baptized in Tokyo Union Church.

But when I came back to Canada, all my friends had fallen into the race for the biggest house, the shiniest BMW, the job with the best law firm or biggest bank or richest insurance company. They were in the sprint for Mammon. I didn't fit.

Eventually, I found my way to the very middle-of-the-road United Church of Canada. It was probably the best fit that I could find at the time, but even there, some aspects of my beliefs, I just wouldn't talk about because I was pretty certain of the reaction I would get – raised eyebrows, disbelief, or, worst of all, silence. Eventually, I left the United Church. That was 1998.

Two years ago, I found a little multi-faith church based on social justice activism – right up my alley. I joined there and was, for the most part, happy. However, a year ago, I started thinking about the feminine in the divine. We are surrounded by ideas of the old white-haired, white-bearded, white man in the sky. No matter what we do, the word god is always masculine just by the nature of its partner word – goddess. I knew it was time to take the next steps in my spiritual journey. I went to see my mentor. She is a local medium who is teaching me Reiki and has forgotten more than I will ever know about paganism.

"Karen," I said. "I think I want to learn about Wicca."

"Oh no," she said. "Wicca isn't for you. You were meant to be a druid."

"Druid?" I asked. "Is that still a thing?"

She did as she always does. She handed me a binder full of articles she had collected over the years. I went home and started reading and that led me to the Internet – OBOD and ADF websites to be exact.

It has been almost two months now that I have been on this path – I know, I have barely dipped my toe into the well. I have printed out the DP and Through the Wheel of the Year. I have



Photo: Diane Cacciato



written my essays on the High Holy Days, the nine virtues, done one book report, taken my first oath, put together my altar and written about it, started my journal, and planned out my solitary ritual for Beltane. Yes, I am a keener. I am also an extrovert.

When I say extrovert, I mean it. My husband is an introvert and is quite happy to hole away with a book and not see anyone for days at a time. Me? I would lose my mind, so doing this whole ‘druid thing’ as a solitary is a challenge for me. How do I do this without going stark raving mad? Well, once a week I visit with my friend and mentor, Karen. I tell her what I am learning, and, in spite of not being a druid herself, she shares with me her wisdom and gently guides me or holds me back when I get ahead of myself. I have connected with Chris W, our fearless leader in Western Canada. I have also connected with the one other druid on Vancouver Island. They have both been patient with my emails and Facebook messages when I am stumped. I have already amassed a

small library that I am slowly working my way through. And YouTube. I think I have watched every YouTube video by ADF, OBOD, and John the Verbose, all of which have been exceedingly helpful.

Ultimately, as helpful as all of these people and things are, I crave face to face human interaction. Perhaps one day, I will make it out to Ottawa or down to Washington or Oregon to a ritual so I can meet up with other druids. And, dare I hope, perhaps we can have a Grove on Vancouver Island someday, too. In the meantime, if any of you out there happen to be heading to the west coast of Canada, get it touch. I would love to meet you.

Diane Cacciato is new to ADF, but is excited to be here. She is an author, poet, essayist and retired teacher-librarian. She divides her time living between two islands worlds apart - Vancouver Island and Sicily.

Samhain Ritual Module: River of Memory

By Rev. Ellie Lazzaro (Ishtar vom Sternenkreis)

This is a module whose first version I have written during my research for Mythology 2. After using it the first time in ritual, it was revised to find the form it has now.

Theoretical background

In his book “Death, War and Sacrifice”, Bruce Lincoln delineates a few common reflexes in Indo-European Myths for the Otherworld. Among others, Death herself is often seen as a “beautiful and hideous, fatally attractive” Goddess, often known as the “Coverer” (Lincoln 87). To enter the realm of the dead, the souls often had to cross a body of water. There are hints that the water washed away their memories, which then were carried to a spring, to be drunk by special individuals who by this received great wisdom (Lincoln 57). In Norse mythology, the river *Gjöl* separates the world of the living from the dead on their way to Hel. It springs from *Hrevgelmir* and flows through the Ginnungagap (Lincoln 54). Lincoln suggests its connection with Mimir’s spring, which bestows supernatural knowledge on whoever drinks from it, situated at the roots of the World Tree (Lincoln 55). Additionally, there is a third spring, Urd’s spring. According to the Prose Edda each morning the World Tree is sprinkled with sand from Mimir’s spring by the Norns. Some researchers believe all of the three wells are actually denominations of one and the same mythical well (Kvilhaug “Sacred Drink”, Simek 211). Around my area in Germany, there are folk tales about the Goddess Hulda accompanying the souls of the dead to a place called the “bathing room” located on the west side of her mountain, the Meißner, and from the “Holle Teich”, the Hulda pond, the children are said to be born. While I wouldn’t equal Hulda to “Death herself” she obviously has features of a guider of souls.

Preparation beforehand

For this ritual, it is important that we communicate beforehand to the participants to bring some sort of drink with them representing a connection with loved ancestors. Depending on the venue

(kids, drivers, people with alcohol problems) it is important to give a few guidelines. Because Adrana Grove PG has kids and drivers participating, the guidelines were “no alcoholic drinks, no milk (depending on the other drinks there could be mixing problems), no energy drinks”.

In the ritual, a person will represent the Goddess Hulda. If the person is able, an invocation (Godform assumption) can be done, but the ritual can work as well without this technique with someone simply portraying the Goddess. To facilitate the transition I often use a crown, masque, or veil, which is first used as the symbol for the Goddess, then put on as long as the person represents the Goddess, and put back on the table when this part is finished. The module lives more from the acting out of the parts than from the text, so the person should be chosen by how well she can represent the Goddess. The rite includes as well a fitting magical working that has been included in this module; of course, the module can be as well used without the magical working.

Please start with the steps as you usually do them:



Photo: Rev. Elen Lassair

Initiating the Rite, Purification, Honoring the Earth Mother, Statement of Purpose, Recreating the Cosmos, Opening the Gates, Inviting the Kindreds (Gods, Nature Spirits, and Ancestors).

Special time with closest ancestors

This is something we do regularly which only works in smaller groups; it doesn't have to be included as part of the module.

I call upon the Ancestors last, asking the folk that if they have praise offerings to certain Gods to do them beforehand. Everyone has put up a small altar behind them for their personal ancestors. After inviting all of the Ancestors, everyone has some quiet personal time to commune with their closest ones and give offerings. When each person is finished, they turn around facing the middle of the circle. If it goes on too long, the leader of the rite can use a musical signal.

Inviting the Deity of the Occasion

The quiet communion with the personal ancestors is followed by inviting Hulda as the Deity of the Occasion. The Goddess Hulda is invited by the person later representing the Goddess. I use the hymn "Hold, Hold, Hold".

Assumption of the Godform



Photo: Rev. Elen Lassair

Someone starts to beat a single drum, while the person to represent Hulda begins putting on the veil and the bone crown and takes the distaff into her hands. "Hulda" takes as much time as she needs to perform the transformation. She then turns around to the participants, saying:

I am the Companion of Souls, leader of the Wild Hunt.

She walks one full circle, taking her time to seek eye contact with everyone. Then she takes a cauldron in her hands and says:

Your ancestors live in you. In your blood, your spirit. The remembered are within your heart. Let the essence of your memory of your Ancestors become the River of Memory.

She then puts the cauldron at her feet.

Key offering

Leading Druid speaks: **Today we have remembered our Ancestors. Let us now bring our prepared offering drinks, filled with our treasured memories of our ancestors, as an offering to the Goddess Hulda. Let the River of Memory be formed. Hulda, accept our sacrifice!**

Everyone takes up the drink they have brought and starts to sing to the melody of "The River is Flowing":

Der Fluss fließt zur Quelle, zum Born der
Erinnerung
Der Fluss fließt zu Quelle, von ihr trinken wir.
Am Fuße des Weltenbaums, wo der Quell' der
Weisheit fließt
Am Fuße des Weltenbaums, zur Quelle wir
geh'n.

The River flows to the Well, the Spring of
Memory
The River flows to the well, where we will
drink.
Under the World Tree flows the Well of
Wisdom,
Under the World Tree, to the Well we go.

The leading Druid guides a circle spiraling inwards to Hulda and the cauldron with everyone pouring their drink with reverence to Hulda into the cauldron. All circle back out again.

When all have poured in their drinks, Hulda takes up the cauldron and walks with it to the Tree. (In our rite we have a tree at the periphery of the Nemeton symbolizing our World Tree and we positioned a chair for her there. If you don't have something like this, choose a suitable place beforehand.)

Omen

Omen is drawn either by Hulda or a Seer, in our case by Hulda, who then proclaims which blessing is bestowed upon the people.

Hulda: **Your offerings have been accepted. The blessing of [result of the Omen] will be given to you.**

Calling for the Blessing

Leading Druid: **Hulda, we have given you offerings and they have been accepted. We ask you now, to let us drink unharmed from the Well of Wisdom.**

Hallowing the Blessing

Hulda nods and performs the hallowing of the waters of life in whatever way she feels able and comfortable (in our group we often chant 3 AWENS). She uses the Cauldron filled with the drinks as the Waters of Life. Before giving the Blessing out to the people, she sprinkles the Tree with some of the drink and says:

Sacred Tree, may your roots be nurtured by the Well of Memories.

Magical working with ribbons preparation*

In our case we included as well a magical working with ribbons which were sprinkled beforehand with the Waters of Life, and Hulda says:

Ancestors, Your memories live forth!

Receiving and affirming the Blessing

Hulda calls the people saying: **Come and drink**

from the Well of Wisdom. The memory of our Ancestors and the blessing of [result of the Omen] are within.

When a participant is standing in front of her to receive the drink, she asks: **For whom is the cup poured?** And the person ideally answers by retelling a few names from the mother or father line (e.g. For Ellie, daughter of Yolanda, daughter of Lydia). This is best explained beforehand, and when a few people are well-instructed, start the process.

After everyone has drunk the leading priest says:

The blessing of [result of the Omen] is within us, may it show itself in our lives!

A drum then beats again as the Godform is freed; the Veil and the Crown are put on the chair and left there, as the Goddess is still here!

Magical Working

The person who has been Hulda brings the ribbons with her for the magical working. A song



Photo: Rev. Elen Lassair

for the Ancestors is sung together and the ribbons, which have already been prepared in three strands (white, red, and black, enough for each person) are braided during the chanting. The aid of the Ancestors is then called into the braided bands. They are used to contact the Ancestors more easily at home or to have something portable if needed. For us this was the beginning of a new tradition of renewing the braided band yearly.

Afterwards the rite is closed as usual with Thanking the Beings, Closing the Gates, Thanking the Earth Mother, and closing the rite.

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Rev. Ellie Lazzaro (also known as Ishtar vom Sternenkreis or Ella Adair) has been in ADF since 2010. She serves ADF as the Regional Druid for Europe and was recently ordained as the first ADF Priest in Europe. She loves bringing mythical stories and plays into her rituals.

Hold, Hold, Hold - Hymn to the Goddess Hulda of the Meißner

By Rev. Ellie Lazzaro (Ishtar vom Sternenkreis)

Hold, Hold, Hold
Schimmelreiterin sei uns hold
Wolken Weberin, Spinnerin
Führ uns durch unser Leben.

Rider of the white horse
be graceful to us.
Weaver of Clouds, Spinner
lead us through our lives.

Im Hohlstein zum Gleichtag
Gesundheit du bringst
wenn schweigend Geschöpft von dem Borne.

In the *Hohlstein* when day and night equal,
you bring us health,
when in silence your gift is taken from the well.

Zur Sonn'wend in weiß,
da kämmst du dein Haar,
gar golden zur Morgengabe.

At midsummer in white,
you comb your hair that shines golden
through at the *Morgengabe* (Morning Gift).

Du segnest die Flure
gekleidet in Stroh,
Machst fleißige Burschen und Mädchen froh.

You bless the farmlands
dressed in straw.
Make diligent boys and girls glad.

Im Winter führst an du die Wilde Jagd
bringst Seelen zur Badestube herab.
Führst unter Erd' sie zu deinem Bade
neugeboren durch deine Gnade.

In winter you lead the Wild Hunt,
bring souls to the *Badestube* (Bathing room).
You lead them under the earth to your bath
and so they are reborn.

Hold, Hold, Hold
Schimmelreiterin sei uns hold
Wolken Weberin, Spinnerin,
mach stark unser'n Lebensfaden.
Hold, Hold, Hold

Hold, Hold, Hold
Rider of the white horse
be graceful towards us.
Weaver of Clouds, Spinner
strengthen our thread of life.

Of Lying Gods and True Religion

By Wayne Keysor

It is a basic starting point in the Christian theological tradition that a true experience of God is, in all senses, true because, although the Christian god is beyond all qualities, he, or more accurately, it, embodies the highest human virtues magnified infinitely. Thus, a genuine experience of the Christian god is Truth with a capital “T,” a metaphysical truth. Yet in the European Pagan traditions of the ancient period, this is resolutely not the case. There are many examples of divine beings, simultaneously powerful, numinous, and ultimately lying. What should we make of this potentially startling fact in light of our modern faith in these same mysterious powers?

This is not an issue to pass over lightly for it bears on the central question of the sources of religious authority within contemporary Paganism. Lying gods might pose serious problems in a religious tradition like contemporary Paganism that prioritizes the individual experience of the divine over the authority of religious tradition. For when a contemporary Pagan publicly makes claims concerning a divine will or divine characteristics and these claims have an impact on activities of the larger Pagan community, the distinction between the truth of a religious experience and the truth within a religious experience can be a yawning abyss.

So let us begin by examining just a few, selected examples of lying gods from the ancient sources to see what might be learned. Given the scope of this article, only a few, out of many possible examples, can be cited, but they will be enough to draw out some of the major theological issues involved with lying gods. We will begin with the Greek sources, which contain the texts least altered by Christian transmission in the European Pagan tradition, if such a unitary religious tradition might even be supposed. The three major literary sources coming out the archaic period of

Greece, the *Theogony*, the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey*, all contain multiple references to, or descriptions of, lying gods.

Perhaps the most paradigmatic statement on lying gods in the ancient sources occurs in the opening lines of the *Theogony*. The *Theogony* is Hesiod’s great epic poem on the nature of the gods, and at the very beginning, before we learn anything else about the gods, we learn of their propensity to lie. The Muses tell Hesiod, the poet, who was himself a shepherd, “Shepherds of the wilderness, wretched things of shame, mere bellies, we know how to speak many false things as though they were true; but we know, when we will, to utter true things (26-28).” The Muses are the goddesses who, among other things, inspire the epic poetry from which the ancient Greeks derived their religious knowledge and more specifically, their knowledge of the gods. Given this fact, it becomes all the more remarkable that the Muses themselves speak first of lying to humans and only second of inspiring truth, and only when they will it. Furthermore, they do not clearly point the way to how the two might be disentangled by their human worshippers. Quite the opposite, their imperious, even derisive, tone suggests that humanity is of such low status in the eyes of the gods that we are not owed anything by them, especially not the truth.

This paradigmatic statement in the *Theogony* is underscored by a number of examples of lying or deceptive gods in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the beginning of Book 2 of the *Iliad*, Zeus sends a lying dream, rendered as an “evil dream,” in the Lattimore translation, to the Greek king Agamemnon, in which he falsely promises him that he will sack the city of Troy the very next day (*Iliad* 2.5-35). He does this to provoke Agamemnon into renewing the attack in order to humiliate the Greeks, and by doing so, honor Achilles, who has withdrawn from the fighting in anger at an insult from Agamemnon. Zeus engages in this

deception in order to keep a promise to Thetis, the sea goddess, who is the mother of Achilles, to the detriment of Agamemnon, who subsequently suffers defeat because he follows the urgings of the dream.

Deception by the gods is once again evident in Book 4 of the *Iliad*, when after the Greeks and Trojans try to end the war by single combat, the gods intervene to drive on the slaughter by sending Athena down to the battlefield disguised as a Trojan warrior. She deceptively convinces another Trojan warrior, Pandaros, to break the truce by firing an arrow at Menelaos, playing on Pandaros' desire for glory (*Iliad* 4.68-103). The gods do this because Zeus listens to the counsel of Hera, who hates the Trojans, but in a larger sense because Troy is fated to fall to the Greeks, and the gods, in regards to Troy, are agents of fate; therefore, they are carrying out the dictates of fate by extending the fighting so that the city can fall. Both of these examples exhibit gods either lying to humans for their own purposes to the detriment of the humans, or because they are agents of fate, working out a destiny that is destructive for at least some of the humans involved.

The *Odyssey* reiterates this theme of lying gods in a different context. Athena, who is the special patron of Odysseus throughout the epic, lies or engages in deceptive actions in order to aid his quest to return home. In fact, the epic opens with Athena disguising herself as Mentos, a Greek chieftain and friend of Odysseus, in order to encourage Odysseus' son Telemachos to prepare for his return. She tells him of Odysseus' plight within the context of a carefully crafted lie intended to disguise how she obtained the information. She then goes on to manipulate him into taking certain actions to prepare for his father's return (*Odyssey* 1.105-213).

A second, particularly illuminating, example of lying gods from the *Odyssey* occurs when Odysseus washes up on the shore of his long sought home, the island of Ithaca, confused and uncertain. Athena appears to him there in the form of an aristocratic young herdsman, and tells him that



he has arrived home. Odysseus, in response, concocts his own lie about who he is and how he came to Ithaca. Only then does Athena reveal who she truly is, praising Odysseus' ability to deceive (*Odyssey* 13.219-310). This is particularly interesting because it was not strictly necessary for Athena to lie. Arguably, she was testing Odysseus to see if he retained his cunning. For only after he lies does she reveal herself as a goddess, smiling at him, stroking his arm, and congratulating him on his ability to match the gods in deception (*Odyssey* 13.287-295). Seemingly, it is Odysseus' ability to display cunning, including outright lying when it suits his purposes, that Athena finds an admirable quality; a quality which she seems to suggest is shared by the gods. One could argue that it is precisely this quality that makes Odysseus worthy of Athena's patronage in the first place. In these two examples, a god first lies to manipulate events for the benefit of her worshipper, and then later to test his seminal virtue.

In the Irish literary sources, there is a tradition of lying gods as well. The god Manannán mac Lir, in particular, is known for frequent deceptions. In

one prominent story, he appears to the high king of Ireland, Cormac, disguised as a youth bearing a glittering fairy branch with nine red apples, which have the power to put humans to sleep and to make them forget all their woes. He sells the branch to Cormac in return for his wife, daughter, and son. Manannán then takes his family to the Otherworld, which eventually sets up a quest for Cormac to recover them. After many tests, Manannán returns Cormac's family to him, but only after revealing his identity and explaining that he had tricked Cormac in order to get him to enter the Otherworld. He teaches Cormac important wisdom, and then gives him three magical objects as gifts (Gregory, 86-89).

In this example, Manannán employs deception to teach a human a positive lesson and then rewards him for his learning. And this is far from the only occasion that Manannán lies to humans. Gregory documents a whole series of tricks played by Manannán on humans throughout Ireland in Book 4 of her *Gods and Fighting Men*. These tricks can result in momentary disaster for the humans involved, including ending up on a gallows or being killed, but Manannán eventually corrects the situation, often through magic (79-82). Manannán, as opposed to Zeus or Athena in the previous examples, seems to be mainly a benevolent liar, who either benefits humans through his deceptions or at least leaves them no worse than they were before.

In the Norse literary sources there are also many examples of lying gods. Loki is perhaps the archetypal lying god, and his stories in this regard are so well known as to not be worth recounting here. But it is important to note that other lying gods appear in the Norse tradition as well. Both Odin, the chief god, and his wife Frigga are known to deploy deception in their relations with humans. In the *Grimnismol*, Odin and Frigga make a bet regarding the hospitality of King Geirroth. To settle the bet, Odin visits the king in disguise, claiming to be a human traveler named Grimnir, in order to test the king's hospitality. However, Frigga had sent her maid-servant Fulla

ahead with a false message indicating that an evil magician was coming to enchant Geirroth, who could be recognized by the sign of dogs being afraid of him (*The Poetic Edda*, 86).

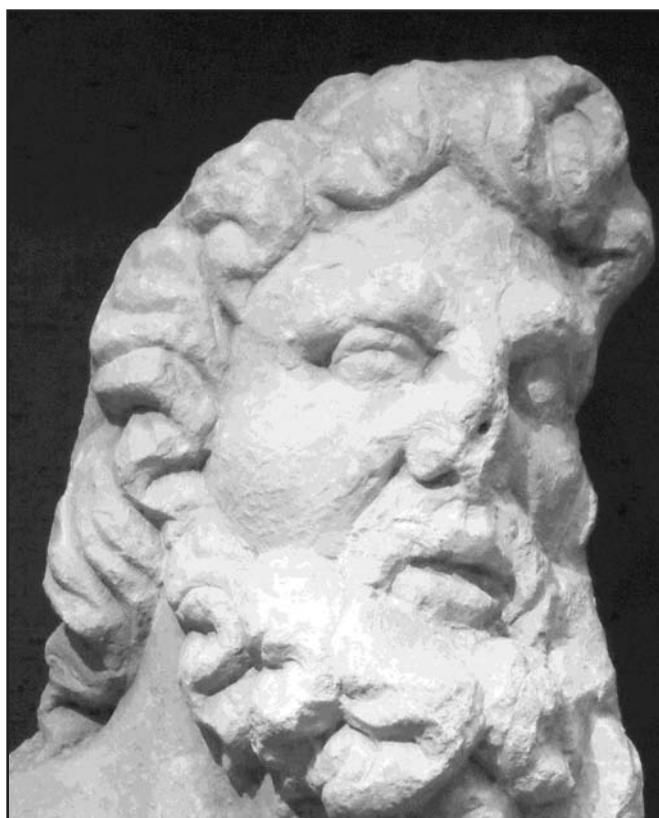
Thus, when Odin arrives, and the dogs are frightened of him, he is seized and tortured by Geirroth to make him speak. Odin verbally plays with Geirroth as he is tortured, slowly revealing his identity through poetic verse, until Geirroth, to his horror, realizes what he has done and attempts to free Odin. But as he rises, he stumbles on his own sword and is run through (*The Poetic Edda*, 87-102). Once again, we have an example of gods lying to a human, and as is the case in the *Iliad*, to the detriment of the human being lied to. Tragically, Geirroth seems manipulated by divine forces beyond his control and acts out of fear, which results in his own destruction.

These few preceding examples all point to the ancient theological claim that one can experience the presence of the divine or receive divine inspiration, which is true in the sense that it is a genuine experience of the divine, but not true in the



sense that the content of that experience is deceptive. This possibility is problematic on multiple levels. For one, it makes us consider how we, as contemporary Pagans, decide claims of religious truth. Paganism, at least in the United States, has grown up partially out of a countercultural movement that has been deeply suspicious of authority of all types. One of the major draws of contemporary Paganism is that it privileges personal experience over received religious wisdom or dogma. This can be a strength until people within the same community make rival claims, which they support with evidence derived from personal experiences of the divine. Without accepted norms about how to adjudicate such claims, difficult conflicts can arise.

However, we do not necessarily have to accept this theological claim of ancient Paganism at face value. After all, these stories are not generally accorded the status of scripture in contemporary Paganism. They are considered neither the direct word of the gods as the Koran is in Islam nor even divinely inspired, as is The Bible in Christianity. Without this kind of theological authority providing a straitjacket, one is free to argue that the ancient claim simply reflects how people



experienced their gods then, as opposed to our modern experience, which is much different. It is a common theological assumption in contemporary Paganism that individuals experience the divine through their own mental lens, which is necessarily different than another's lens because of variations in backgrounds and innate characteristics. This fact results in different types of experiences of the divine among individuals because every mind that is performing an act of interpretation is different than every other mind.

Such an approach goes back to at least Plutarch; the 1st century CE Greek philosopher and moralist, who was also the chief priest at Delphi. He argued in his *The Obsolescence of Oracles* that seers are like musical instruments that are played by the gods (9.31 and 15.65). The individual nature of the instrument matters. All instruments, though they make music, do not sound the same, and the same kind of instruments will sound different if they are well-strung and well-taken-care of (50.1).

Another possibility to consider is that the gods may have changed since ancient times: that they once lied to humans, but no longer do. This is a live option given that both contemporary and ancient Paganism did not see its gods as existing outside the world or time, as in the case of the Christian god, who in classical theism is conceived as eternal and unchanging, a being completely beyond time. To the contrary, Pagan gods are born and in some cases die. They can be permanently altered in physical ways by events, as for example in the case of mutilation. They can hold one social position in the cosmos at one point in time and then rise or fall in social status, depending on circumstances, at another. Given that both the physical and social status of the gods seem changeable and affected by time and circumstance, it is not a stretch to argue that the character of the gods could also change. This would allow the possibility that the gods have evolved, just as humans have, and consequently their relationships with humans have changed as well. The process theology of Alfred North

Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne, adapted to a polytheistic as opposed to monotheistic world view, might provide a theoretical framework to support such a view.

As tempting as these latter two possibilities might seem, I think it would be a mistake to too easily abandon the theological wisdom contained in the stories of lying gods. It seems to me an important recognition by the ancients that an experience of the divine is often ambiguous, even outright mysterious, and that these forces move in ways that are sometimes beyond human understanding, custom, or morality. It also encapsulates an understanding of the divine that recognizes the gods as not merely adjuncts to humans, existing solely for our benefit, but rather as having their own agendas, perceptions, and attitudes that can not only run in parallel with human interests, but also against them. All this creates a more perplexing, mysterious, and unsettling picture of the divine that mirrors the complex world that we see around us. Such a view does not allow us to lapse into easy, but false, certainties about our religious practices and experiences.

The ambiguity and complexity of our relationship with the spiritual world can be seen in no better place in the ancient sources than in Virgil's *Aeneid*, when the hero Aeneas journeys to the underworld to speak with his dead father and see the progenitors of the Roman people. At the end of his journey, he is shown two ways to depart the underworld. *Sunt geminae Somni portae, quarum altera fertur cornea, qua veris facilis datur exitus umbris, altera candenti perfecta nitens elephanto, sed falsa ad caelum mittunt insomnia Manes (Aeneid 6.893-896). There are two gates of Sleep; of which one is said to be horn, whereby a ready exit is given by true shades; the other, shining, made from gleaming ivory, but through it the spirits of the underworld send false dreams to the upper world* (translation mine). Aeneas leaves through the gate of ivory, the gate of lying dreams, and we are left to ponder the significance of this fact to the unfolding of the story, just as we are left to ponder the significance of lying



gods in our own religious practice. So next time you take an omen or go on a journey, you just might ask yourself, how true is this and what does such a question even mean to me?

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Three Short Ritual Modules

By Rev. Ian Corrigan

The ADF ritual style is designed to allow different elements of poetry and prose to be ‘installed’ in the various steps of our Order of Ritual. One advantage of this is that rites can be designed to be longer or more brief depending on circumstances.

Here are a set of charms for three sections of the ‘ordinary’ (i.e. the parts one does all the time) of our rites – the Three Hallows, the Sacred Center and/or Gates, and the Three Kindreds.

1: The Three Hallows:

This module is brief, perhaps suitable for solitary use, or for occasions where one wants a proper consecration without an oration. In this ‘Sacred Center’ refers to the Tree, Pillar, Stone, Omphalos etc., as a cross-cultural general reference. Feel free to substitute anything that doesn’t wreck the scansion.

• *Offer Silver or Salt to the Water and give oil or incense to the flame, saying:*

Holy well flow from the deep
Bless the water, silver keep
Sacred Fire, O sacred light
Feed the flame and make it bright
Sacred Center, stand between
Mortal Realms and the Unseen
The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree
Flow and Flame and Grow in me
In Land, Sea and Sky, Below and on High,
Let the Water be blessed and the Fire be hal-
lowed.

2: Opening the Gate of the Center:

This is presented as the conjuration of the Gate or Center – any offering to a Gatekeeper god should precede it:

• *Spread your hands, contemplate the three worlds and the Shrine, saying:*

Let the sea not rise, and all ill turn away.
Let the sky not fall and all ill turn away.
Let the land hold firm and all ill turn away.
To sunrise and sunset,

to the Pole-star and to the Four Winds
I proclaim this place claimed for Holy Work.
By Fire and Water, Earth and Sky,
At Sacred Center here stand I.
So let the Gates be open!

3: Three Kindreds Song:

I finally wrote simple verses to accompany the “Gods and Dead and Mighty Sidhe” verse many of us have sung for so long. Notably I also removed the glaringly Gaelic reference and made it cross-cultural.

• *Prepare 3 simple offerings, perhaps of incense, drink or food.*

Gods & Spirits; Kindreds Three
Powers of Earth & Sky & Sea
By Fire & Well, by Sacred Tree
Offering we make to ye

First we call our ancient kin
Great Ancestors, come ye in
Hearth and heart we call you here
Mighty Dead whom we hold dear

Spirits of this ancient land
You we honor, heart and hand
Fur or feather, scale or skin
By our welcome, come ye in.

Come ye in, O Shining Ones
Hearth and Forest, Moon and Sun
Gods below and gods above
In your wisdom, strength and love

Gods & Spirits; Kindreds Three
Powers of Earth & Sky & Sea
By Fire & Well, by Sacred Tree
Welcome we do give to ye.

Rev. Ian Corrigan is a Senior Priest of ADF, Archdruid Emeritus, and ADF Bard Laureate Emeritus

The Most Difficult Race Ever Run

By Wayne Keysor

In the season of the sun, when the flowers sing,
far-seeing Finn and his free-living band
to the meeting of the Munstermen made haste.
For there, heavenly horses were to hold court;
heaving haunches of horseflesh glistening
were to race resplendent against the rising of the
sun.

When fish-wise Finn, full of craft,
with his cunning company came finally to Mun-
ster,
warm was the welcome of that wealthy king.
The finest foods were freely offered;
savory soups accompanied by the sweetest meats,
all expertly enhanced by aromatic spices
fetched from far away Italy and further China.
And songs were sung, sweet music to ease weary
hearts,
languorous lullabies and light-hearted satires,
and regal rings of royal silver were granted;
gifts given by the gracious king's own hand.
It was a hosting most holy, hospitality rightly
given.

And when the races were run, and the runners
scored,
haloed in hero-light was a high king of coursers.
This god-like galloper to the king's grandfather
belonged,
so that righteous ruler with his royal ancestor
sought to bargain for the rights to this radiant
runner;
but as gracious and as great-hearted as the good
king was,
the other was thrice the thane in thoroughness of
generosity.
So gladly he gifted him the gallant steed.

This king, keen of vision, considered carefully
how such a precious prize might properly be dis-
posed.
Being a wise war chief, well-versed in the arts of

hospitality,
he awarded his wandering guest the winning
mount.
The lord's largess Finn repaid with lavish gifts of
his own:
splendid furs from distant Friesland, finest strands
of Baltic amber,
and a cunningly wrought cup, carved from gleam-
ing ivory.

When this gift-giving was done and goodwill ob-
tained,
up to that masterful mount the mighty Finn
stepped.
However, being born of a line of kings, the beast
snorted proudly,
and rudely rebuffed him, rearing back in disdain.
That is until fish-wise Finn, finest of Ireland's
poets,
whispered soft words that worked a subtle charm,
casting a gentle calm over the recalcitrant lord.
Then Finn coolly climbed upon his kingly back,
and galloped gladly from the great fortress of
Munster,
taking two of his men, talented fighters both,
the eagle-eyed Cailte, and Oisín of the deer.

All day they dashed, desiring only to outrace the
wind
and outdo the others in excellence of horseman-
ship.
And when darkness finally dimmed the daylight



sky,
Finn found himself bested, fairly outridden in the
contest.
But in their reckless rush, the riders had cast
themselves adrift,
and were now foundered upon far shores, friend-
less and alone.
So swiftly they searched among the last scarlet
rays of day
for a friendly fire that would be favorable to
guests.

Cailte caught sight of a dwelling, concealed in a
hollow.
None knew this hostel, nestled as it was in such a
lonely place,
but difficult need drove them on with its dagger-
sharp design.
So upon its ancient and unknown door they
knocked.
Warped and weathered, the door whined loudly
on its hinges,
pulled open by a forbidding figure, a full-bodied
churl.
He welcomed them wordlessly, as if well-known
was their coming.
Immediately they were ushered into the eerie hos-
tel,
and its dark door was dragged shut behind them.

Grand and gloomy, greater inside than out that
hall seemed,
but its definite dimensions were difficult to affirm
for shifting shadows shielded much from human
eyes.
Their host heaped elder wood branches on a huge



fire
until a cloud of clotted, black smoke crept over
the chamber
making them gag and gasp, and grasp at their
throats.
In this harsh and gathering haze, they saw a three-
headed hag
and a man with a missing head, who moved none-
theless
and had a single, staring eye in his sturdy chest.
Such strange sights instilled within them a silent
dread,
but the holy bonds of hospitality held them in
their place.

Then a disturbing dirge was delivered by their
hosts;
a music of pure malevolence, madness laced with
spite,
which offended awfully the ears of the tormented
guests.
Even worse, nine horrid heads, wholly lacking in
human bodies,
like some rotted, raucous, ghastly fruit, rolled into
the chamber
and with a barbarous and baleful chorus, blasted
the companions.
And across the ancient hall, there appeared more
ghastly sights;:
terribly bloated trunks, totally separated from
their heads,
dancing a deranged reel in a deathly chorus line.

Offense upon offense, the outrages piled,
but the courageous companions kept their tem-
pers
until their haughty, fined-boned horses were
hauled in
and with swift, savage blows, slaughtered in front
of them.
Quickly the butchers quartered the queer meat,
and speared it on spits of rowan wood that
spanned the fire.
A dark rage descended on Cailte, and he desired
only blood,
but Finn restrained his wrath, reminding him that

far better
their mounts be massacred than be murdered
themselves.

Then the churl chose a chunk of horse meat,
tearing it free with terrifying force; his talon-like
fingers
gripping the gruesome meal, a great mass of flesh
that was still red and raw, and reeking of blood.
He offered to Finn, without ceremony, this foul
food.

Finn, however, decorously declined, declaring a
geis.

At this, their hideous hosts into a hot rage fell,
and set about to slaughter their suffering guests.

But wits and weapons their weary guests had
kept,
and so a desperate duel began in that dusky hall,
not only with swift swords and spears of stabbing
iron,
but with hafts and handles, and hands bare and
bloody.
Finn and his men fought with a ferocity born of
terror;
tables were toppled and tossed like children's
toys,
and chairs were chopped into cheap kindling.

In the course of the combat, some careless foot
kicked over the fire.
And so the flames failed, until finally they gut-
tered and died,
and a darkness, deep and utter, descended over
the hall.
Still the struggle continued; sweat mixing freely
with blood,
they battered at each other blindly, their brutal
blows
only hairsbreadths away from inflicting awful
damage,
hacking heads from shoulders or hands from
arms.

With rage and red fear its goad, this rampage con-
tinued
until the sun stirred, stretching its golden brow

over the horizon.

By then, the dangerous duel had turned desperate
for the guests.

Beleaguered and bloodied, they were backed into
a corner;
their chests heavy and heaving, their heads spin-
ning,
arms like leaden weights, leached of strength.
Now so perilously pressed by their still powerful
foes,
they only wielded their weapons by will alone.
But as the first, bright beams of morning imbued
the hall,
the combatants were cast into an all-consuming
sleep.

When Finn and his fellows awoke, fresh from
rest,
of their dark and deadly hosts, they discovered no
sign.
Their horses were whole and the hostel had disap-
peared.
Finn's men were in wonderment at what had hap-
pened.
Seeking the salmon's wisdom, Finn sucked on his
thumb,
and voices and visions he received, verifying the
cause.
The fair sister of those furious Sidhe, the Fenian
had killed,
and so stern vengeance they had sought on the
stalwart band.

Rejoicing, the three returned to the royal fortress,
and told their strange tale to the towering lords,
who sat spellbound among the sighing stones
of that hoary hall, home of their father's father's
fathers.
And all were amazed, announcing their own relief
at finding so fortunate a sanctuary, full of gener-
osity,
with a glad gathering of those who guarded zeal-
ously
the long-established laws of liberal hospitality.
And so Oisín earned an answer most dear
to that curious question, recalled years later,
what was the most difficult race ever run.

Poet's Invocation to Brigid

By Wayne Keysor

Beloved of bards, Brigid, your wisdom,
O prophetic power that into the poet roars.
Like a hot, howling wind that hurls and whirls,
it fans into flame the fierce sparks of rhyme;
a blazing brand of blessed verse.
It is a tumbling torrent and a towering flood
that like a mellifluous madness upon the maker
falls;
a raging river that soon overflows reason's soft
banks.

O what airs you inspire with this outpouring of
imbas,
soaring are the strains of your sweet, salmon
song,
conjuring up darkling dreams and daring feats
and moonlit marvels whose ageless music shim-
mers
in the high-beamed halls of the heroes of old,
resounding with famous feasts and fabled deeds
and great heaps of gold that gleam and glitter
in the red, flickering flames of far-gone ages.

Such wondrous words that onto waiting ears fall,
echoing the proud epics of ages long past
when bold and bloody kings blackened in hot war
blades of biting iron or beaten bronze
and holy, thrice-blessed harpers hallowed dulcet
notes
with fine-boned fingers that fell like plunging
hawks
upon silvered strings until they spun the night
into gauzy, glistening webs of golden enchant-
ment.

And out of these long-ago lays and legends old,
crawl terrible creatures, cruel and wise.
Older than the eldest, they owned the sunless
hours.
In the vast, dreaming dark, they dwelled alone,
haunting the lonely hollows, hidden from the
eyes of men.
And strong-armed hurlers and clever hunters har-
ried them into the dark;
heroes who long ago laid down their lashing
spears
and their insatiable urge for everlasting glory

among broken bones in barrows cold;
now richly remembered only in the rhymes of
singers.
So bright goddess the giver, of the gifts of poets
furnish your favor now; fire in the head,
rhymers' reward, rendering ordinary verse into
gold.
Let my three cunning cauldrons craft wondrous
tales
and my words carry wisdom from the Well of Se-
gais,
so that our deepest dreams, dwelling in the pri-
mordial dark,
might rise resplendent once more and reclaim for
us,
holy and haunting, the hymns of our ancestors.

Dark Autumn

By Rev. G. R. Grove

I walk in darkness
beneath the sun;
an invisible cloak
heavy, unseen,
folds me in,
hides my heart.
I may not say
what I believe.

Autumn comes on;
the forest blood-red
briefly flames
before winter's night.
Nuts to the ground
and the stream fall,
lost in the earth,
lost in the frost.

Silence now
is my only shield;
as a wolf on the edge
of the forest I walk,
nameless, tongue-less,
yet in my heart
the Old Gods live
and may yet speak.

Moon Phases

By Jason Taaffe

Red Moon

Bó Rua
The Red Cow
The full moon
Blood
Ruby
Our precious stone
In the night sky
Life sustaining cycle
Full, of kinship and abundance
The hinge between passion and temper
The complete duration
The maximum rounded outline
Bó Rua
This is your night
To shine

Brown Moon

Bó Donn
The Brown Cow
The last quarter
Coffee
Chocolate
We are overawed and bovine
That you continue to endure
Like an autumnal equinox of the moon
Per sé
Moving into new
Bó Donn
As you wane
Good morning to you



Photo: Wikipedia Commons

Dark Moon

Bó Orainn
The Dark Cow
The new moon
Soot
Coal
The null void of emptiness
As the sky wears a gloomy suit
A reflection of the Dark Ages
Lightproof, dark murkiness
Old familiar
Sullen
Repetition from a timeless age
Bó Orainn
As you rise and set with Grainne and Bile
We will miss you tonight

White Moon

Bó Finn
The White Cow
The first quarter
Milk
Fresh snow
Building and taking shape
Mmm...that tasty cheese
As you proceed to your potential
To remain fresh and unimpaired
Like the vernal equinox of the moon
Per sé
Moving into view
Bó Finn
As you wax
Good evening to you

I Was Birthed By The Sea

By Diane Cacciato

This poem was written as a reflection about the two seas from which I come – the Celtic Sea of my ancestors, and the Salish Sea of the land on which I was born. The second stanza refers to the mythology/cosmology of the Coast Salish peoples. This is not an attempt on my part at cultural appropriation, but an acknowledgement of the cultural milieu into which I was born. It is almost impossible to live on the west coast of Canada and not at least be aware of Coast Salish or Haida culture.

I was birthed by the cold Celtic Sea.
Salt waters flowed from the Earth Mother's
womb,
And deposited me beneath craggy cliffs.
Carried on the white foamy back of Eiocha,
The icy waves pounded my skin,
Washing away the blood and the vernix.
Cradled by Cernunnos, Horned God.
Protected by Epona.
I was birthed by the cold Celtic Sea.

I was birthed by the cold Salish Sea.
Salt waters flowed from a giant clam,
And Raven dropped me on the rocky shore.
Carried to the sky by Tzinquaw,
Bitter wind bit my body.
Drying me of the birthing waters.
Dropped with the *sxwoxwiyám*:
The people of Quw'utsun.
I was birthed by the cold Salish Sea.

The creation myth of the Coast Salish peoples describes Raven, the trickster, bringing people to the world by opening a giant clam that releases people onto the land. The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia has a YouTube video describing the tale. https://youtu.be/aaRcj_BfbNA

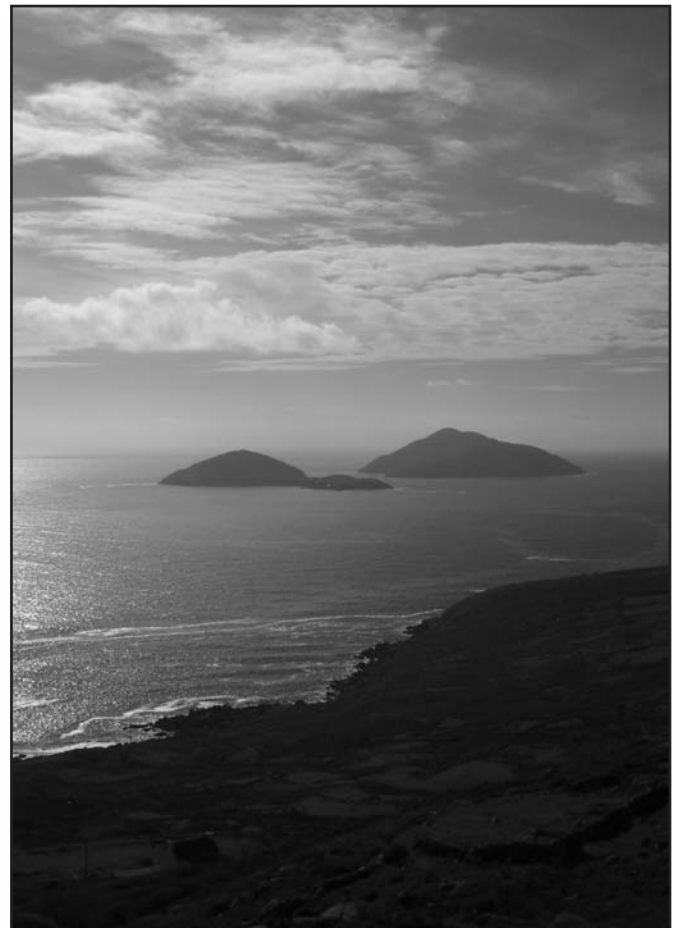
Tzinquaw (pronounced as it looks) is the Thunderbird, a supernatural being of power and strength.

sxwoxwiyám is pronounced (roughly) shwoxweeyahm. These are the original people of the northern edge of south Vancouver Island.

Quw'utsun is pronounced Cowichan. This is the name of the valley in which the *sxwoxwiyám* people live and where I am currently living.



Photo: Rev. Rowen D. Grove



Two Prayers to Mother Earth for the High Days

By Birgit Reinartz

Lughnasadh:

Braun der Boden, Mutter Erde,
krümelig in der Sommerhitze.
Blau der Himmel, Mutter Erde,
wolkenlos und unendlich.
Grün die Wiesen, Mutter Erde,
wogendes Gras in vollem Saft.
Ich bei dir, Mutter Erde,
geborgen in deiner Hand,
wenn ich über das Land schreite,
wenn ich zwischen den Welten wandle,
als Teil deines allumspannenden Netzes.
Amen!

Lughnasadh:

Brown the ground, Mother Earth,
Crumbly in summer's heat.
Blue the sky, Mother Earth,
Cloudless and never ending.
Green the meadows, Mother Earth,
Billowing grass full of sap.
Me in you, Mother Earth,
Safely in your hand,
Walking across the land,
Walking between the worlds,
Being part of your all-encompassing net.
Amen!



Herbst-Tagundnachtgleiche:

Ein Korb mit Äpfeln steht zu meinen Füßen,
rund und duftend, und dein Bild steigt vor mir
auf.
Wie sonst selten wird uns in dieser Zeit der Ernte
bewusst,
wie du uns täglich hältst und ernährst,
wie du alles Leben auf diesem Planeten hältst
und ernährst.
Mutter Erde, ich bitte dich:
Halte mich auch in diesem Ritual
und lass mich sicher in dir ruhen,
so wie du es immer tust.
Amen!

Fall-Equinox:

A basket full of apples is at my feet,
Round and fragrant, your image rises in my
mind.
We are more aware during this harvest time,
That you are supporting us and nourishing us,
Just like you are supporting and nourishing all
life on this planet.
Mother Earth, I pray:
Keep me supported in this ritual,
Let me rest safely in you,
As you always do.
Amen!

Eildon

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

I went to walk above the town, among the triple
Hills
Where bright the curves of stone stand high
above the river's rills –
To walk among the Hills upon the last eve of the
year
To see, I thought, what I might see, and hear what
I might hear.

The autumn wind it sighed along, and whispered
in the trees
And set the bright brown leaves a-swirl, by pas-
ture, road and lea –
Below the Hills it sighed again, and rustled in the
grass
And tossed along the sheaves of grain, where
Summer's green had passed.

It plaited locks in horses' manes, it called the cold
rain down
And louder sighed, and faster sped, by field, and
garth, and town;
It billowed over sand and stone, out on the cold
grey sea –
And aye the voices in the wind came calling after
me.

They called my name as they sped by, and aye
returned again –
A call of voices harsh and cold, that whispered
through the rain,
And other voices wild and fair, that seemed nor
far nor near –
A coaxing and a blandishment – I dared not stay
to hear!

And I had wandered far from home, and night
fast coming on
And closing in around me, and the last of twilight
gone –
A fool I'd been to dare this night, and over Hills
to roam
For chill dark miles, that now stretched out be-
tween my steps and home.

Upon the track that I had come, I swift turned
back again
To put my back unto the wind, and to the bitter
rain –
I turned my face where far below the lights of
town shone fair
And still the wind it called, and plucked cold fin-
gers in my hair.

One grim, cold voice spoke at my back, and bade
me flee away
Or else be taken where I stood, a howling pack's
right prey.
I answered not, nor did I run – may all the Gods
forfend –
A wanton-witted fool is he, who would out-race
the wind!

A proud, stern voice spoke by my side, and dared
me come and ride
All up the wild and rolling world, and all the seas
bestride –
And still I did not give reply, but steadily walked
on
Till eastward of the Hills there bloomed the first
faint flush of dawn –

A fair, wild voice spoke in my heart – ah Gods, I
hear it still!
And called me come with them and dwell beneath
the triple Hills –
I paused to turn toward that voice, that sweetly
spoke my name
When up the fair and wheeling sky, there rose the
sun's bright flame.

The voices all were silent, and the night's chill
rain was past –
The dawn wind laid one shiver on the pale and
frosted grass.
The three Hills shone in splendor where they rose
above the town –
A fool it was went up them, but a wiser man
came down.

Seasons

By Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano

How Gemini-like the seasons carry forth:
One coming into being,
The other,
Hiding on the other side of the globe,
Walks softly towards shadow
And shortening days

How patient the Earth Mother attends:
One season like another, because
To Her,
They are all one,
Spinning and swirling
Flowing like rivers
And whispering like breezes

How subtle the wind as it extends:
It moves from Spring to Autumn
And all points in-between,
Not caring for a moment
For place or duration;
It moves in all directions,
Like Time.



A Morning Prayer

By Victoria S (Leona Oigheag)

Hail to the Ancestors
of Blood and Bone,
of Heart and Spirit.
You who raised us, taught us, made us,
Remind us of your good lessons.

Hail to the Nature Spirits
of plant and animal,
of the elements of Nature,
You who share this world with us,
Remind us of our connection.

Hail to the Shining Ones
of sea and sky,
of this land and others,
You who share your blessings with us,
Remind us of our relationships.

Hail to the Ancestors,
Hail to the Nature Spirits,
Hail to the Shining Ones,
Hail to the Kindreds.
May your blessings be with us always.





I Hold Within Me, the Three

By Nicholas McKenney

I hold within me, the sky;
Pure, clean, and free,
My mind.

I hold within me, the tree;
Strong, true, and wise,
My spine.

I hold within me, the sea;
Flowing, changing, and nourishing,
My soul.

I hold within me, the spirit;
Eternal spark of creation,
The flash of beginnings.

I hold within me, the truth;
Solid and real as a tree,
Bridging time and space.

I hold within me, the chaos;
Depthless waters of potential,
The fuel of life.

My Harvest

By Red Son

A seed, a seed, a hope, a promise,
I planted you in a book
Uninvested.
But rain soaked pages,
And sun burnt edges,
Left nothing that could be harvested.

A seed, a seed, into my breast planted;
Below the surface,
My Earth, my soil, to root;
These tears and this sweat,
“Drink this rain,” I wept,
“Accept my gifts and come out of hiding.”

A seed, a seed, were you ever a seed?
No more than a name of itself is a deed.
You harvested me
And gifted me:
A winter’s home, where I am planted and waiting

A seed, a seed, a hope, a promise,
My thanks to you: giver of my harvest.



**Ian`s Little Room –
Landwights` Shrine at Tredara**

By Rev. Ian Corrigan

At Tredara, our 17-acre stead in NE Ohio, we have been working to build a sacred complex of shrines and worship areas for our polytheist and animist ways. Last year we arranged the construction of a Mound-Shrine for the Ancestors. To balance that we are building/gardening a glade for the many Spirits of the Land. By completing this shrine, we will honor the gods at our primary Nemeton fire, and have special places for the other two Kindreds.

To create the anchoring monument, I sought out a local chainsaw carver, Bob Anderson of Rock Creek, Ohio. My original notion was a green-man tricephalus, but that was vetoed as 'too boring'. We decided on a tricephalus of green man, owl and bear, those being important guardian spirits around here. Bob did a fine job on the piece.

A few years ago we were fortunate to be able to enlarge our property, allowing us the space for this build. The fact is that we have since had occasion to kill many plants, disturb habitat and otherwise generate for ourselves a need for frequent special offerings. The glade chosen for the shrine was an abject wreck when we arrived, filled with tires, holes and unmanaged brush. While we have been somewhat severe in our pruning and prepping, I hope that our offering of beautification and the reverence that comes with it will be well received.

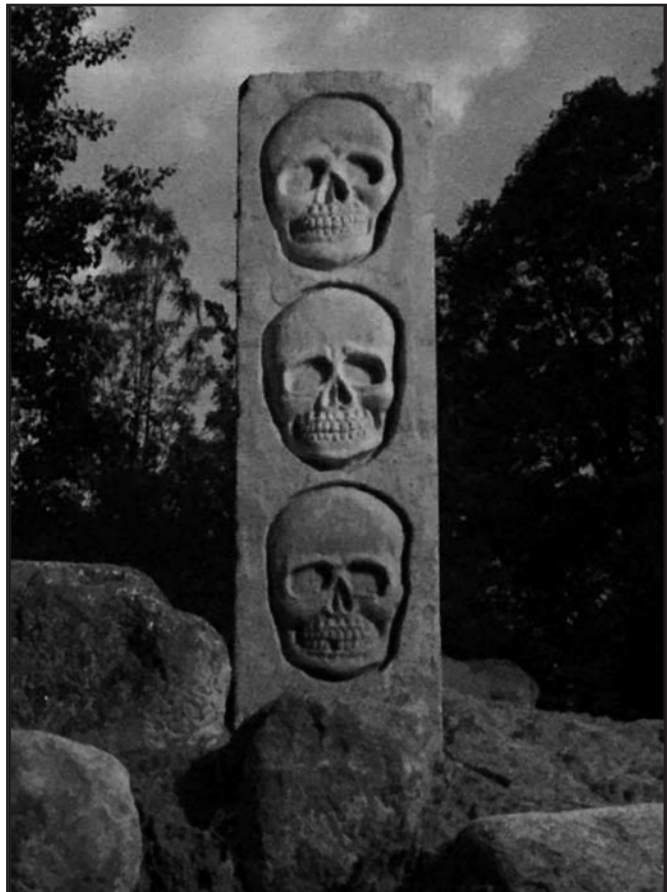
At Beltaine of this year (2017) we consecrated the Glade in a semi-public rite. Here is the invocation we made to the Landwights:

- *Preparing the Offerings, the Landwights are invoked:*
- **In the power of the Gods of the Land and Sky**



and Sea we call to the Noble Clans.

- **Come from the Soil and Stone we call, and from the Green crown of the Land, from holds beneath hills, from green halls and the pools and wells.**
- **Come with the Wind and Cloud we call, and from the deep Sea, all you who troop and fly and sing, you whisperers and cloud-kin, you who dwell in Isles of Wonder.**
- **Come in the Moon and Sun we call, and in the**





shimmering light of Stars, in the warm and the cool, and the rays of the heavens that bless the worlds.

- Come to the fire, Noble Kins of the Worlds.
We call with the voice of the Cauldron of Wonder, with the voice of the Hearth of Welcoming. All spirits of this place and in this place, you of Other Kins, hear and heed our voices.
- To the Owl and to the Bear, and the Serpent of the Deep; to the Spirit of the Green and of every living and lasting thing.
- Be present without malice, be present in beauty, come in peace and know, in this place that we make sacred to you, our welcome.
- To you, O Noble Ones, we make these offerings:

Fruits, seeds and nuts, sweetened with honey, by which we give back of the Wealth of the Earth.

Sweet smoke, by which we remember the Beauty of the Earth.

Mead, that together we enjoy the Delight of the Earth.

And by these gifts we offer you welcome.

By Four Winds and Nine Waves,

By the World Tree's root and branch,

By the Four Treasures and the Crown,

By Fire's Light and Well's Might,

Come to our call, and accept our sacrifice!

Rev. Ian Corrigan is a Senior Priest of ADF, Archdruid Emeritus, and ADF Bard Laureate Emeritus.

From Roots to Branches – The Outdwellers

By ADF Vice Archdruid Rev. Carrion Mann

The Outdwellers are described or classified as “...those older Gods or tribes that fought against our Gods, such as those recounted in the Book of Invasions; those tribes that stand at the edge of chaos, the unformed potential that may bring trouble and would interrupt our rite...” (Ellison 91). Outdweller beings exist in the majority, if not in all, of the ancient Indo-European cultures. Within the Norse lore examples include Loki and his horde: Fenrir, Jormungand and Hel, as well as etins and trolls. In an Irish Celtic context the Fir Bolg or Fomorians are those who stood against the Gods. The Olympian Gods fight against the Titans, and in the Vedic lore examples of such beings include the Raksases, the Asuras, and the Dāsas.

In an ADF ritual context the Outdwellers represent any and all forces, powers, or beings that are not aligned with the intention of our ritual, and of course, all those that stand against the Gods and man. “[T]he recreation of the cosmos requires that the ‘chaos’ of mundane space be symbolically kept at a distance for the duration” (Bonewits 61). Outdweller is the term designated to mean a force of chaos that seeks to destroy order and bring trouble to our world, our work and our lives.

ADF Druid ritual has no need to seal out beings of the Otherworld by rigidly defining an outer boundary, but instead welcomes all those aligned with our ritual purpose to join us, while attempting to contain outside of our sacred space all forces whose intention is to disrupt our work. Once sacred space has been created or identified, the creation of chaotic energy is initiated through sacrifice by the ritual officiants and not by the Outdwellers, without focus and control, which is by nature their very function. The Outdwellers should not be “offered to” but instead acknowledged for their role in the cosmos. For chaos feeds the order of the cosmos and without it the

order of the cosmos would become brittle, stagnant, and break, but the chaos must be mitigated by order to maintain balance. This is why within the lore we see that the Gods fight the forces of chaos, and why chaos is brought into our ritual space in a controlled way through sacrifice, and not by an open invitation to the Outdwellers. Addressing or acknowledging the Outdwellers in a ritual for their function is very different than seeking to establish a personal relationship with them. In keeping them outside our ritual area we hope to lessen their impact on our work, which aids us to manage and mitigate chaos with order in a balanced way.

In 2006 addressing the Outdwellers became an optional part of the Core Order of Ritual; however, many ADF members continue to include it in their ritual work. As time passes, who and what the Outdwellers actually are or what the term actually describes has become lost to some, and seems to be, more often than not, misunderstood and misused in our work. To seek a personal relationship with this group of beings or to enter into the worship bargain with them means to align yourself and your work intentionally with the uncontrolled powers of chaos, inviting these powers into your life, your work, and our world. “Remember when you are worshipping a spirit, an ancestor, or a deity, you are showing them (and perhaps any observers who may be present) that you have respect for them” (Bonewits 50). When you “feed” these beings or offer to them, you establish a personal relationship with them and they grow stronger.

Identifying Outdwellers is not always as easy as it might seem, because there are occasions when who and what is considered an Outdweller is subject to change by the will of the being(s) in question or with the purpose specified during any given ritual. Careful consideration should be taken if calling upon a being previously identified as an Outdweller supports your ritual goals.



Intention is truly everything in ritual. An example of this type of situation can be found in Irish tradition at Lughnasadh in rituals that honor and offer to Crom Duibh. During the majority of the year Crom is considered an Outdweller; however, at Lughnasadh he may be called upon to stay his hand, for he is known to be the carrier of mankind's burdens of the harvest.

Because addressing the Outdwellers in ritual hinges on the intention of the work, acknowledging them immediately following the statement of purpose in ADF ritual allows all beings to know the intention of the work, and gives these beings the opportunity to choose to be one with us or to stand against us or outside of our cosmic order. When acknowledging the Outdwellers, don't offer to them; give them a bribe or *apotropaic sacrifice*, which is given to placate beings that might do harm or cause trouble. This bribe should be placed outside of the ritual area to draw away those forces that may stand against us in ritual.

Remember that within each of us dwell forces that bring chaos into our lives, those influences that pollute our hearts and minds. Know that these powers also dwell within the worlds,

realms, and among the Kindred, and at times threaten our world, our work, and our lives. Let us acknowledge these influences and beings that stand against the Gods and Man. Let us remember the strife that they bring. Let us recognize their power and influence: their purpose. And with a token, seek to end our relationships with them. May we be free of the chaos that threatens to overwhelm us!

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Rev. Kelley "Carrion Mann" Kingston joined ADF in 2001. She became an ADF Priest in 2008, and a Senior Priest in 2014. She is currently the Vice Archdruid and Preceptor of ADF, and is Leader of the Order of the Dead.

1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed

By Eric H. Cline

Reviewed by Rev. Kirk S. Thomas

Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014.

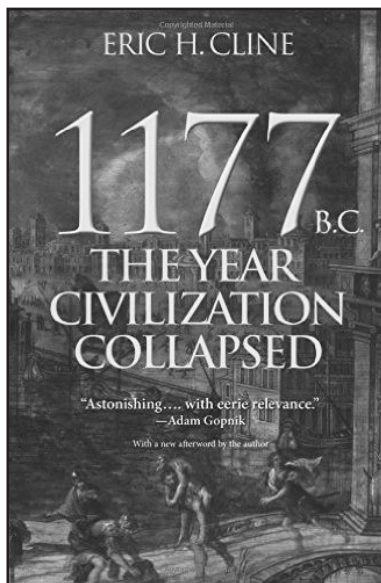
When we hear the words, the Dark Ages, we usually think of that dim time between the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of Medieval Europe. But there was another Dark Ages before that, the one that occurred after the collapse of the great Bronze Age civilizations of the Mediterranean and before the rise of Archaic Greece and the spread of the Phoenicians from east to west.

The Bronze Age of the eastern Mediterranean was the time of the Minoans on the island of Crete, of the Mycenaean High Kingship on mainland Greece, of the great Hittite Empire in central Turkey, of prosperous city-states on the coast of northern Syria, such as Ugarit, where the Phoenicians would one day live, and of the great 18th-20th Dynasties of Egypt. There are vast amounts of archeological evidence that all these civilizations (and others in the area, like the Assyrians and Babylonians) had vibrant trade contacts and that trade was extremely important and widespread. Minoan artisans painted frescos in a palace in the Nile delta, artifacts from all of these civilizations have been found in all the others (with the exception of Mycenaean artifacts in the Hittite heartland – there is evidence that the Hittites enacted a trade embargo against Greece in retaliation for Greek meddling in western Turkey, where Troy was located).

Then, in 1190 BCE and then again in 1177 BCE the Egyptians found themselves facing a formidable foe in the Sea Peoples, a people of unknown origin who almost defeated Pharaoh's forces. The

battle barely won by Ramses III in 1177 BCE stopped the tide of conquest there, but Egypt was never the same again. And by this time most of the other civilizations had already collapsed.

Where this might matter to ADF Hellenic Pagans and others is in the relationship between the mainland of Greece and Troy in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). The stratum of the ruins of ancient Troy most likely associated with the Trojan War in Homer's *Illiad* and *Odyssey* has long been assumed to be Troy VIIa. The older stratum below that, Troy VIh, was destroyed in an earthquake around 1300 BCE, and had been partially rebuilt before the sacking of the city attributed to the Greeks in the *Illiad*, around 1190 – 1180 BCE (based on recent pottery analysis).



And this is where the problems begin. Between 1225 BCE and 1190 BCE we see the destruction of palaces and cities all over Greece, including Mycenae (twice!), Pylos, Tiryns (also twice), Thebes, Orchomenos, the Menelaion (near Sparta), and many, many more. How could the Greeks have been besieging Troy at a time that their own homes were being destroyed, unless it was taking place while the army was away? Perhaps the Trojan War, as depicted by Homer, was rather a collection of old myths

and themes from an earlier time when the Greeks were meddling enough in western Turkey to bring on a boycott by the Hittites? We may never know.

But what could have caused this incredible end of civilization in the region? Archeologists have offered many explanations, but no single one seems to explain them all. These explanations range from drought, famine, earthquakes, invasions, internal rebellion, and the collapse of centralized international trade and the rise of the individual merchant. This book's hypothesis is that *all* of these things happened more or less at the same time, a 'perfect storm of calamities'. Different causes took place in different places, but put to-

gether they were enough to bring down the whole edifice. It was a globalized world that suddenly lost its globalization. That it happened so quickly in what had been a prosperous and connected world must give us pause. Could something similar happen to our civilizations today?

Rev. Kirk S. Thomas is an Archdruid Emeritus of ADF.

The Christians as the Romans Saw Them

By Robert Louis Wilken

Reviewed by Rev. Kirk S. Thomas

New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984. 2nd Edition, 2003. Print.

Many people today, immersed in our Judeo-Christian based society, have this idea of the ancient Romans that their Gods and Goddesses were not much more than decoration, with no real meaning to the average Roman. It is hard for modern people today to believe that anyone could actually believe in them. Christian writers such as Augustine presented Roman religion as cynical and manipulative, and these ideas have colored the understanding that modern people have.

Since ancient religion was based on reciprocity between the Gods and the people, traditional Roman religion emphasized the *utilitas* (usefulness) of religious belief for the well-being of the Roman State, since this usefulness is an understanding of the intimate relationship between religion and the social order. However, not only were the Romans religious, they also considered themselves religious.

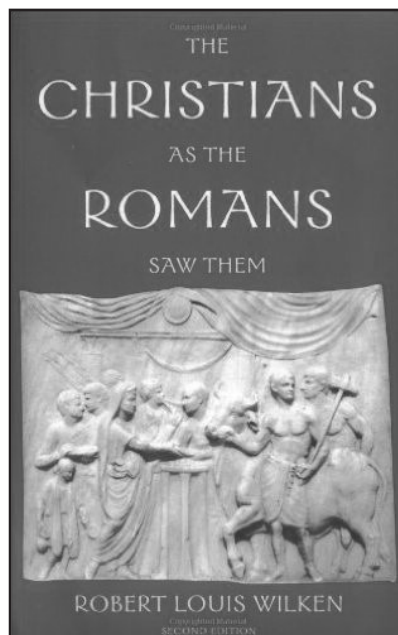
And there was nothing about ancient Roman religion that guaranteed the success of Christianity. In its earliest days, the average person might join Christianity out of curiosity, and then not finding what they were looking for, quickly fall

away again. It was the clever use of the institutions of associations (Gk. *hetaeria*) that gave people a sense of belonging. And these are what the early Church grew out of. Of course, the Imperial embrace of Christianity certainly helped as well.

Most other books on this subject have been written by Christians from a Christian point of view. The author of this book deliberately set out *not* to do that, but rather to write from the ancient Pagan point of view, and what we find here is really quite eye opening. Of course, most of the ancient writings of Christianity's critics have not survived in themselves, thanks to massive book burnings carried out in the Late Roman Empire. But in refuting (or attempting to refute) these critics, the Christian authors found it necessary to quote long passages from these banned critical works. And this ensured their survival.

This book covers the writing of Pliny, Galen, and Lucian, but concentrates on the three major critics of Christianity: Celsus (in his *True Doctrine* of 180 CE), the Neo-Platonic philosopher Porphyry (*Against the Christians*, 2nd c. CE), and, of course, the Emperor Julian (4th c. CE), known by the Christians as 'the Apostate', because he had been raised a Christian but abandoned the religion for the Old Gods thanks to mystical experiences in his teens. And how many of us can relate to that nowadays?

One thing that these ancient critics did for Christianity was to force them to re-think and even think through their ideas. And without Pagan criticism of the religion, Christianity would not be what it is today. The ideas that the critics challenged the Christians on included faith and reason, the relation of God to the World, the Creation out of nothing, the status of Jesus and his relationship to God, the historical reliability of



the scriptures, Christianity and Civic Religion, revelation of God in history, and very importantly, the relationship of Christianity to Judaism, Christianity's Achilles heel, in Julian's eyes.

It is interesting to note that while many of the issues were addressed by Christian writers, the answers weren't all that successful, and often relied on faith to see them through, rather than logic. But logic could be scathing. As St. Cyril of Alexandria said of Julian's arguments against

Christianity, "His critics were left speechless."

This is a good and insightful book for anyone who wants to understand the transition from Paganism to Christianity from a theological standpoint. And there is much here for a modern Pagan to understand about the arguments of Christian apologists.

Rev. Kirk S. Thomas is an Archdruid Emeritus of ADF.

Three Harvests

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

There was an old woman in Ireland, and she had but little family left to her, naught but the one grandson, but they had a fine fertile field, bordered by grey stone walls. And one day in the spring, the old woman and her grandson went out to plow the field. In the spring light, they could see something bobbing and leaping in the air in front of them. They stopped, and looked, and there was a púca,

"What do you want?" asked the old woman.

"I want the half of your harvest, when it is ripe," said the púca.

"That seems hard," said the old woman. "Why should you have the half, when it's we who do all the work?"

The púca laughed. "Because if you do not agree, I'll call up a fire, and burn all of your crops."

"Well," said the old woman, "if it must be, then it must be. Half you shall have – you'll take the part of the harvest that grows above the earth, and we'll take the part that grows below."

"Agreed," said the púca. And he was gone.

So the old woman turned to her grandson, and she

said, "We'll plant potatoes." So they planted the potatoes, and some turnips and onions as well, and the plants grew, and the sun shone and the rains came, and there was a fine crop. And in the fall, the old woman and her grandson dug them all up, and just as they'd got the last ones, up popped the púca.

"I've come for my share," he said.

"And there it is," said the old woman, and she pointed to all the tops that lay withered and scattered about the field.

The púca was not pleased. "This is no good," he said. "We must make a new bargain."

"Well," said the old woman, "that must be for the next year, for you agreed to this one."

The púca grumbled a bit, but he had agreed, so he said, "I'll see you in the spring." So the púca went away, and the old woman and her grandson lived well through the winter. And in the spring, the old woman and her grandson went out to plow their field, and up popped the púca.

"Ah, there you are," said the old woman. "It's time for us to agree on our bargain."

"Well," said the púca, "this time I'll take all that lies below the earth, and you'll have all that grows

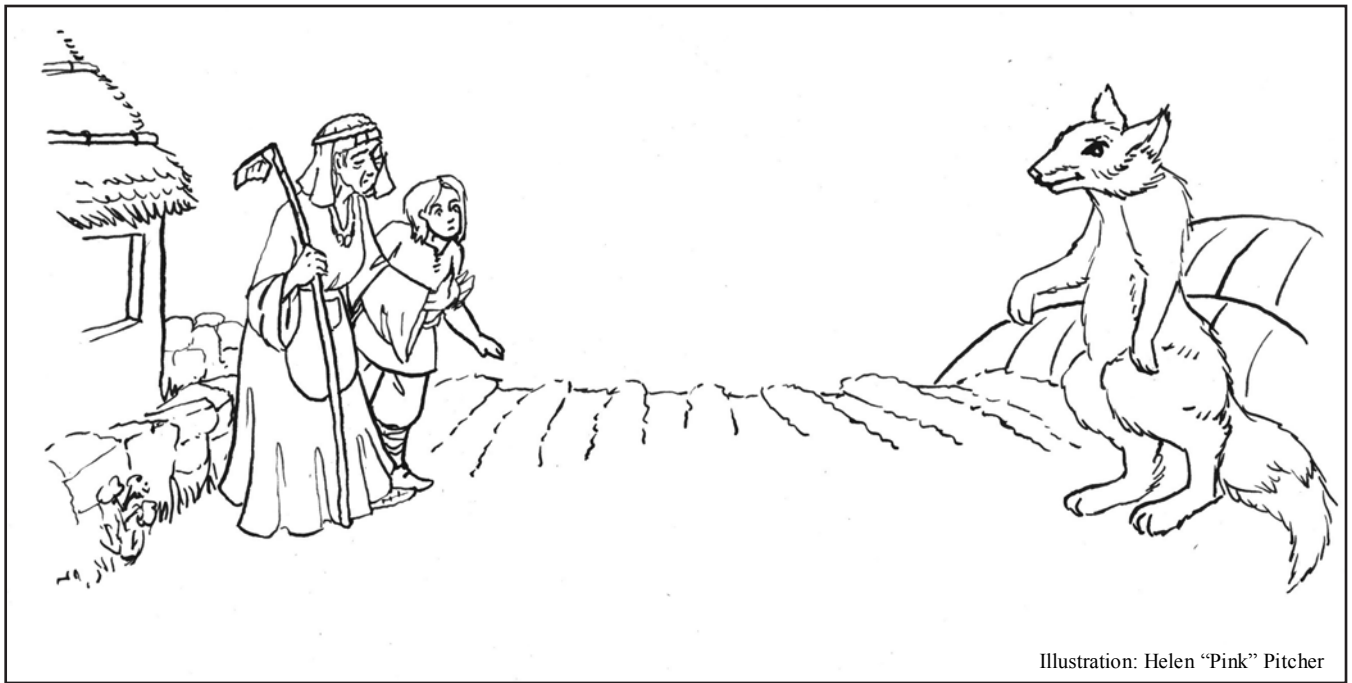


Illustration: Helen "Pink" Pitcher

above.”

“That seems hard,” said the old woman. “Why should you have the half, when it’s we who do all the work?”

The púca laughed. “Because if you do not agree, I’ll call down a flood, and wash away your house.”

“Well, then,” said the old woman. “If it must be, then it must be.” The púca grinned broadly, and he was gone.

And the old woman turned to her grandson, and she said, “This year, we’ll plant wheat.” So they planted the wheat, and some oats and barley as well, and the plants grew, and the sun shone and the rains came, and there was a fine crop. And in the fall, the old woman and her grandson cut down the grain, and just as they’d bound up the last sheaf, up popped the púca.

“I’ve come for my share,” he said.

“And there it is,” said the old woman, and she pointed to the stubble. “We’ve taken all that grew above the earth, and the rest is yours.”

The púca dug a little, but all he found was the stubble and roots of the grain, and he was not

pleased. “This is not fair,” he cried.

“Well,” said the old woman, “it is what you agreed to, so if you are wanting to make a new bargain, we’ll see you in the spring.” So the púca grumbled, but he went away, and the old woman and her grandson lived well through the winter. And in the spring, the old woman and her grandson went out to plow their field, and up popped the púca.

“Ah, there you are,” said the old woman. “It’s time for us to agree on our bargain.”

“Well,” said the púca, “this time I’ll wait for you to get in the harvest, and then *I’ll* choose which half I shall take.”

“Oh, that seems very hard,” said the old woman. “Why should you have first choice, when it’s we who do all the work?”

The púca grinned, showing all his teeth. “Because if you do not agree, I’ll call up a fire, and I’ll call down a flood, and burn all your crops and wash away your house.

“Well,” said the old woman, “if it must be so, then it must be.” The púca laughed, and he was

gone.

The old woman's grandson was worried. "What shall we do, grandmother?" he asked. "He'll take the best, and leave us with nothing."

She smiled. "That's what he thinks he'll do. This year, we'll plant both wheat and potatoes, and when we do the plowing, we'll pick out every stone we come to, and lay it by." So they planted the potatoes, and some turnips and carrots as well, and they planted the wheat, and some oats and barley too, and as they plowed, they plucked out every stone they found, and set them by in a heap. And the plants grew, and the sun shone and the rains came, and there were fine crops.

"Now," said the old woman, "we must hurry and get the harvest ready. So the old woman and her grandson worked the next day, and long into the night, and they lifted the potatoes and turnips and onions, and they cut down the grain and tied it in sheaves, and all the roots and all the grain they tied up in strong sacks, and they got more sacks and filled them with the stones of the field. And they put the sacks with the roots and the grain in one pile, and the sacks with the stones in another, and the pile of sacks full of stones was just a little larger, and a good bit heavier, than the pile of sacks holding their crops. And just as they had finished, up popped the púca. "I've come for my share," he said.

"Ah, there you are," said the old woman. "Well, we've just now divided it out."

The púca looked at the piles, which were almost the same size, but one was just a little bit larger. And he hefted some of the sacks from each pile, but those on the one side were just a bit heavier. "Ha," he said. "So you thought to cheat me with one side larger than the other? I will take *this* pile." And he pointed to the sacks full of stones.

"Are you sure of that?" asked the old woman. "You wouldn't rather have some of the others?"

"I would not," said the púca.

"You won't change your mind?" she asked.

"No," cried the púca. "I will have these sacks and no others!"

"Well then," said the old woman, "that is how it must be."

The púca grinned from ear to ear, and he ripped open one of his sacks, but it was full of stones from the fields. He ripped open another, and another, but all of them held only stones. The púca glared at the old woman.

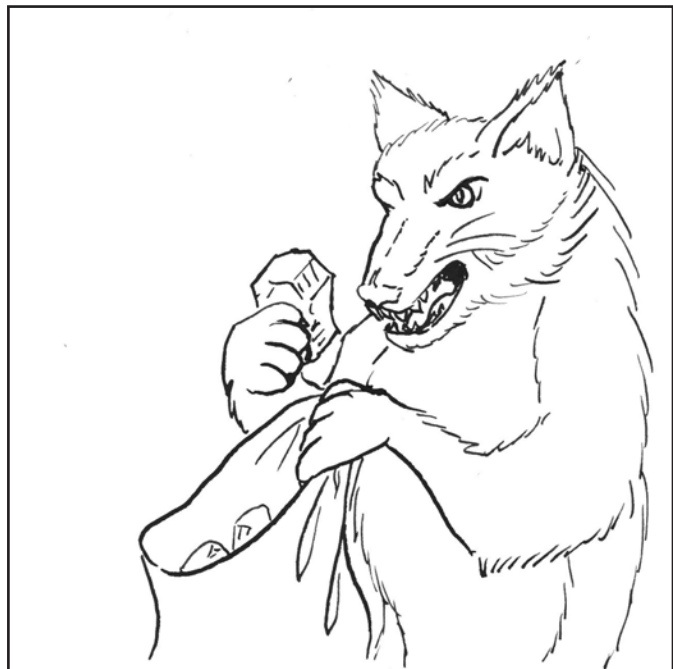


Illustration: Helen "Pink" Pitcher

"You got what you chose," she said. "Be content with it."

Well, the púca he hissed like a cat, and he snarled like a dog, but there was no getting around it: he'd got what had been agreed on, every time. The púca whirled and was gone, and he never returned again. And the old woman and her grandson lived well.

Rev. D. Rowen Grove joined ADF in the spring of 2010, and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She is an Initiate of ADF, Chief of the Seers' Guild and Preceptor of the Scholars' Guild, and was ordained an ADF Priest in 2016. Rowen is also a co-founder of Chokecherry Grove.

The Poets

Diane Cacciato: *I Was Birthed By The Sea.*

Diane is new to ADF, but is excited to be here. She is an author, poet, essayist and retired teacher-librarian. She divides her time living between two islands worlds apart - Vancouver Island and Sicily.

Rev. D. Rowen Grove: *Eildon.* Rowen joined ADF in the spring of 2010, and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She is an Initiate of ADF, Chief of the Seers' Guild and Preceptor of the Scholars' Guild, and was ordained an ADF Priest in 2016. Rowen is also a co-founder of Chokecherry Grove.

Rev. G. R. "Gwernin" Grove: *Dark Autumn.* G. R. joined ADF in 2009. She is an ADF Initiate, Chief of the Scholars Guild, and one of the Bardic Guild's four Master Bards. She was ordained in 2016, and is Senior Druid of Chokecherry Grove, ADF, in Denver, Colorado. She has published four collections of poetry and four historical novels (with a little magic) set in 1st and 6th century Britain and Ireland.

Wayne Keyzor: *The Most Difficult Race Ever Run; Poet's Invocation to Bridget.* Wayne Keyzor joined ADF in 2008, and has completed the Generalist Study Program and holds the rank of ADF journeyman bard. He is currently a student in the Initiates Program. He also holds a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies with a concentration in Philosophy and Religion, and is currently studying classical Latin and its literature at the Univer-

sity of Maryland College Park. He is the current Wellspring Bard.

Rev. Ellie Lazzaro (Ishtar vom Sternenkreis). *Hold, Hold, Hold - Hymn to the Goddess Hulda of the Meißner.* Rev. Ellie Lazzaro (also known as Ishtar vom Sternenkreis or Ella Adair) has been in ADF since 2010. She serves ADF as the Regional Druid for Europe and was recently ordained as the first ADF Priest in Europe. She loves bringing mythical stories and plays into her rituals

Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano: *Seasons.* Drum has been a member of ADF since 1984 (he was ADF's eighth member). He is an ADF Senior Priest, an Initiate, and our current Archdruid. He enjoys working with his various altars, spending time in Nature, and studying and teaching the Ogham.

Birgit Reinartz: *Two Prayers to Mother Earth for the High Days.* Birgit joined ADF in 2013. She is a Solitary member and lives in Germany.

Red Son: *My Harvest.* Red Son is a teacher of Religious Studies and World Languages and an active Pagan for over 10 years

Jason L. Taaffe: *Moon Phases.* Jason is a member of the Fallen Oaks Prison Worship Group, located in Carson City, Nevada. He joined ADF in 2015 and contributed several poems to *Oak Leaves* last year.



Summer Garden

R S Y F A N I K R H M R L R C M D I L L
O O K O N P A C Z Y P Y N E T O O T S W
K C S R M M P U T E Y M Y M Y Q N N S M
H J P E V D P L C A R R O T C I Y E L I
J C R G A C H G E R A N I U M B Y I H H
Q F A A S P L U X L N V X V T U S J H H
A V E N Z P E O N Y S Z K L S A Z T B W
K P B O N C S Q A O A I I T B T W H S P
O U C S K L G A E P P L Z R Q L B Y T X
N U V D W E G J R V G W A B R W Y M R I
I M W Z M A S T R A W B E R R Y O E H C
Z P N S A K O D Q U U R A S P B E R R Y
T B N W H T D B Q H T V L U Y K A H A F
P Y A V A E W R R R O K A N M G T D D F
Q O N A P Z T X U J S D O F O J F Y U H
Y B T X P Z U O F P L D O L I N F Q E G
J Q P A N S Y Q M N V K N O Q V Z V P W
L L O R T L P G O A A S B W G X Z H Y R
W U J A S O Y V F X T R O E C H E R R Y
E X G U X T X O D L Q O Y R C Z G J K S

APPLE
BASIL
CARROT
CHERRY
DILL
GERANIUM
LEAK
MINT
OREGANO
PANSY

PEA
PEONY
POTATO
RASPBERRY
RHUBARB
ROSE
STRAWBERRY
SUNFLOWER
THYME
TOMATO

Wordsearch Puzzle by Chris:)

For **ADF volunteer opportunities** check out the
Volunteer page

[https://www.adf.org/members/org/
volunteers.html](https://www.adf.org/members/org/volunteers.html)

News and Announcements

Program & Path Completions

Thomas Brown

Completed: Bardic Guild Study Program
Date Completed: April 2017

Rev. Elizabeth (Ellie) Schibli-Lazzaro

ADF's First European Priest
Completed: 1st Circle Clergy Program March 29, 2017
Date of Ordination: June 10, 2017

Protogrove & Grove Approvals

White River Grove, ADF

Indianapolis, IN
Date of Charter: April 20, 2017

Silent Heron Protogrove, ADF

Litchfield, NH
Date founded: April 29, 2017

~Congratulations to all~

Upcoming Events

Pan Pagan Festival (Pan-Pagan Festival)

August 2-6, 2017
Monterey, IN

Summerland Festival (ADF Festival)

August 17-20, 2017
Yellow Springs, OH

Midnight Flame Festival (ADF Festival)

September 7-10, 2017
Bellaire MI

Rocky Mountain Retreat (ADF Festival)

October 13-15, 2017
Denver, CO.

Harvest Nights Gathering (ADF Festival)

October 20-22, 2017
Otis, MA.

www.adf.org/events

For more festival info



Mark your calendar now for Chokecherry Grove's Rocky Mountain Retreat in October. For the latest information see our web page at chokecherryadf.org, or follow us on Facebook.

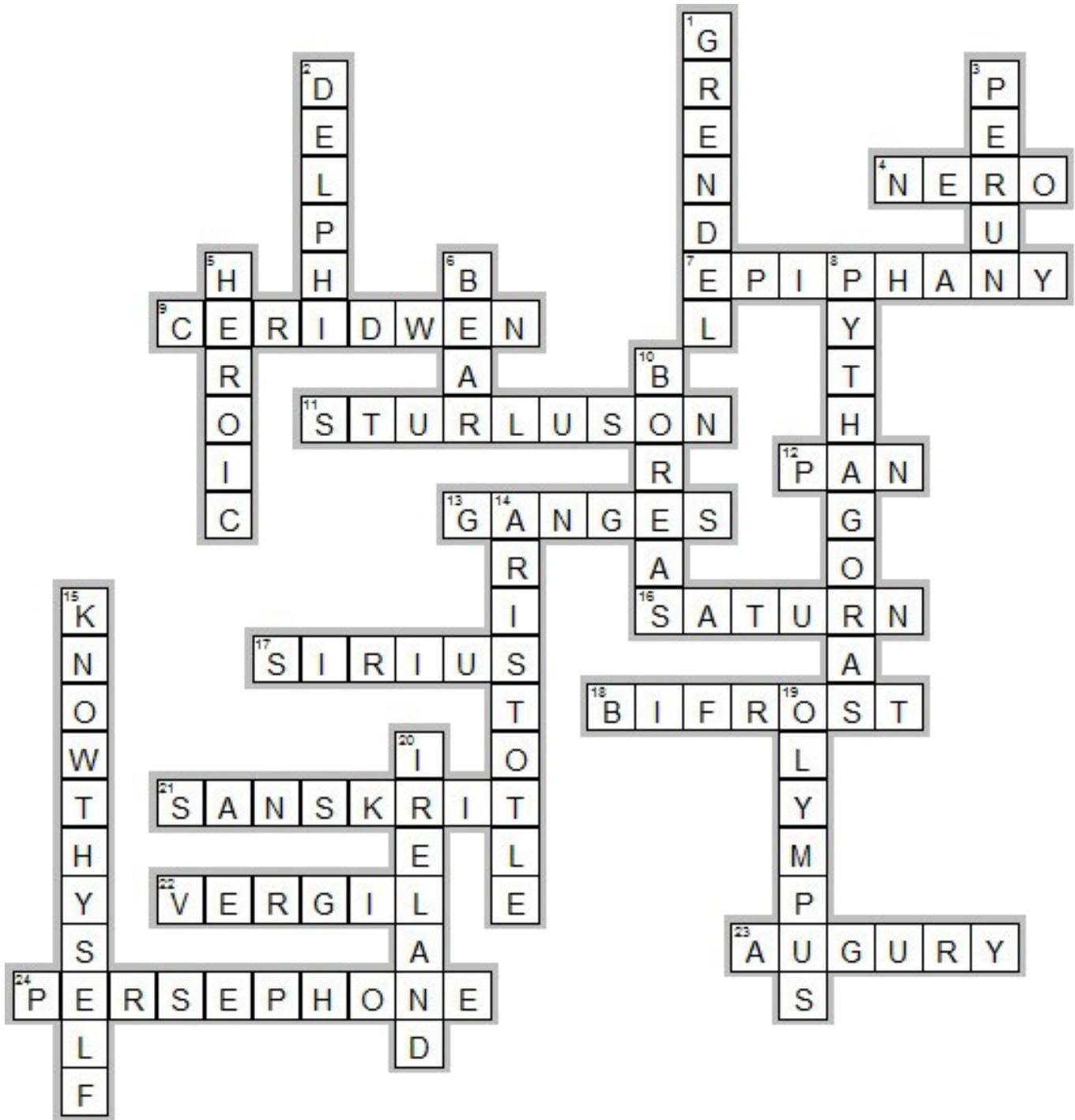
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POEMS, MUSIC, AND STORIES.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT ISSUE
IS SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2017.

FOR MORE DETAILS,
SEE PAGE 44.

Mixed Bag:
Key to Issue #77's Puzzle
By Chris:)



EcologyDocument.com



ADF Directory



The Mother Grove

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Non-Officer Director	Julie Desrosiers	poledrasdaughter@gmail.com

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Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison	skip@dragonskeep.us
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Webmaster	Arthur Shipkowski	adf-webmaster@adf.org

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Clergy Council	Chair: Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano	adf-archdruid@adf.org
Council of Lore	Chair Rev. Kelly 'Carrion Mann' Kingston	adf-preceptor@adf.org
Grove Coordinating Committee	Chair: Rev. Caryn Laney-MacLuan	adf-gcc-chair@adf.org
Grove Organizing Committee	Chair: Rev. Nancy McAndrew	adf-goc-chair@adf.org
Prisoner Relations Committee	Chair: Rev. Kirk Thomas	adf-prison-ministry@adf.org

For information on **Regional Druids** please see the full listing at:
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For more information on **Groves, Guilds, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and Kins**, please see the full listing at:
<http://www.adf.org/groups/groups-list.html>

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Submission Guidelines for Oak Leaves:

Oak Leaves welcomes submissions of articles, poetry, artwork, and anything else that might be of interest to our Druid readers. Submissions 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, but preference will be given to submissions from ADF members. Since excellent scholarship is one of ADF's goals, please document sources of ideas and materials that you used for your writings. Please follow the standards for references in the MLA Handbook or Style Manual. We will not accept submissions with footnotes, as they require considerable editing to convert to endnotes. We reserve the right to reject submissions which do not meet our standards. When planning lengthy submissions, please inquire first at oak-leaves@adf.org.

Electronic submissions are preferred, sent as email attachments to the Oak Leaves submissions address: oak-leaves@adf.org. Written submissions should be sent in one of the following formats: MS Word (.doc/.docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), or Text Format (.txt). Please include a brief ADF-related bio for all articles and essays. For more information on submissions, please see our web page at <https://www.adf.org/publications/periodicals/oak-leaves/submissions.html> or contact us at oak-leaves@adf.org.

Deadlines for submissions (two months before publication date):

Spring Issue : December 1st;
Summer Issue : March 1st;
Autumn Issue : June 1st;
Winter Issue : September 1st



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2017



SASSAFRAS GROVE

Long Live the Tradition