

OAK LEAVES

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin Autumn 2018 ~ Issue No. 82



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OAK LEAVES

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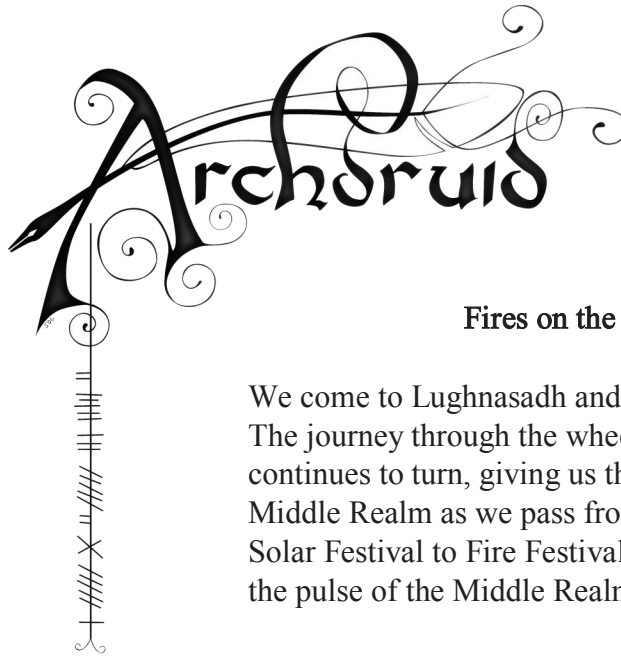
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Summer's End by Rev. G. R. Grove

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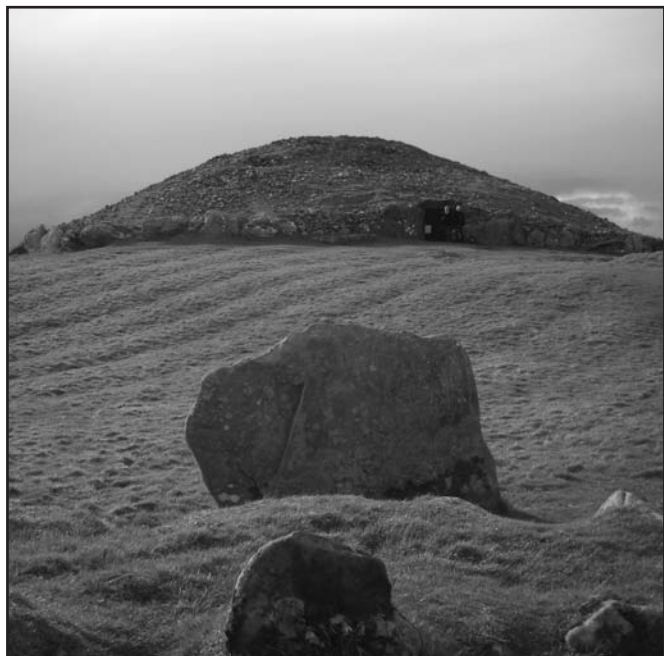


Fires on the Hill

We come to Lughnasadh and Imbolc once again!
The journey through the wheel of fire festivals
continues to turn, giving us the rhythm of the
Middle Realm as we pass from Fire Festival to
Solar Festival to Fire Festival and more. This is
the pulse of the Middle Realm.

We are fortunate because of the spread of our
membership that we get to celebrate two festivals
at the same time: Lughnasadh in the north and
Imbolc in the south. How blessed are we to be
able to see both sides of the celebration under one
global umbrella.

While the summer is in full force here, the irony
always remains that the days are getting shorter.
While those in the southern hemisphere are
experiencing the benefits of longer days, through
this darkness the promise of light remains. This
subtle yet opposite dance reminds us of the flow
of things in our world. We find that we can



appreciate these opposites if we can envision them both happening at the same time. It is part of the dynamic of this world that opposites can occur at the same time.

We hear tales of fires being lit on high hills that other could see from a distance, stretching across the land. The beauty of a global celebration of both High Days is the fires in the north that emanate from Lughnasadh carry forward across the equator and terminate or participate in the fires in the south. This is not just a local phenomenon: we can envision a string of fires lit all across the world. In time, may it be so!

ADF is many things to many people. To me, it is a way of life, a way of practice that is based upon hospitality and devotion and expresses itself at High Days like these, and then every day in the devotional activities we undertake as individuals, as Protogroves, Groves, and Prison Worship Groups, and as an organization. I light the fires of devotion for the Earth Mother and for the Kindreds: Ancestors, Nature Spirits, and Shining Ones.

Let us light the fires of our virtues, be it figuratively or be it literally: Wisdom, Piety, Vision, Courage, Integrity, Perseverance, Hospitality, Moderation, and Fertility. Let me offer a prayer for each of the next nine issues, beginning with Wisdom:

Wisdom Prayer

Earth Mother,
Spirits of Inspiration,
Ancestors,
Nature Spirits,
Shining Ones;
Give me good judgment,
Grant me the ability to perceive people and
situations correctly,
When faced with a decision,
Let me deliberate about and decide on the correct
response.
So be it!



If one were to establish a devotional practice based upon the virtues, this prayer – or something like it – could be used on the first day, the tenth day, the nineteenth day, and onwards. In this way, we can remind ourselves of our virtues in spirit and in practice. By lighting the fires of good practice, we will light fires on the hill that will be seen across our home and across the world. Let us remind ourselves each day of what is of value in our lives, and by devoting ourselves to our virtues we will reinforce them in our lives.

Let us light the fires to commemorate the sacrifice of Tailtiu and to celebrate the relighting of the fires of the forge of Imbolc. Let these flames of commemoration light the fires of our practice for all to see.

“Day by day, what you do is who you become.” –
Heraclitus

Blessings,

Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano
Archdruid, ADF

Autumn Issue of Oak Leaves

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

In Welsh the word for “July” is *Gorffennaf*—“Summer’s End”. Lughnasadh is the time of first harvest, as shown by the field of ripe wheat on the left of the picture below and in color on our cover. But grain is not the only thing which comes in its time to be cut down. The mound of earth in the center of the picture is the remains of a Neolithic tomb. Several of the poems in this issue reflect this joint sense of endings, as here in the north we move away from Summer’s brightness and descend towards Winter’s dark.

experiences in founding a new Protogrove on Vancouver Island, Canada, and Olivia Wylie offers us a basketful of Irish lore. Rev. Ian Corrigan muses on the subject of Gods and spirits, magic and prayer, and gives us his conclusions. Nathan Large has provided us with a new feature – a serialized story in four parts. I think the first installment should leave everyone eager to know what happens next! After a gap last month, we have two book reviews this time, and Chris Wityshyn provides us with her usual



In this issue, in addition to Rev. Jean “Drum” Pagano’s Archdruid column, we have a self-introduction from our new Vice Archdruid, Rev. Sean Harbaugh, and a report on some of the happenings at the last Wellspring by past Wellspring Bardic Chair winner Wayne Keysor. We also have a new and excellent “Wandering Druid” article from Dean Hallett, our Australian correspondent, on his experiences on the Winter Solstice in Greece. Rev. D. Rowen Grove investigated the vexed question of whether the early Druids in Europe were equivalent to the shamans of the sub-arctic cultures, and shares her findings with us. Diane Cacciato tells us of her

challenging crossword.

As usual, I would like to thank all the contributors, without whom we would not have this magazine. I also encourage new submissions, especially of poetry and music (the latter missing for too long because I haven’t been able to persuade any of our talented musicians to contribute). For longer submissions, contact me first at oak-leaves@adf.org, but don’t be shy – we publish about 90% of what we get!

With that, may you all have a fruitful harvest at Lughnasadh and a pleasant autumn!

Words From the Vice Archdruid

By Rev. Sean Harbaugh

Greetings, everyone.

The long cold winter is finally behind us, and we now have the warm summer days ahead. The birds are out, the sun is shining, and festival season is upon us. It's that time of year where we are finally able to reconnect with those we only see a few times a year. I was especially grateful to be able to fly to eastern Ohio to Tredara for Wellspring and reconnect with the folk out east. I think about our relationship to the Nature Spirits and the Earth Mother especially during this time of year, because we can truly go outside and experience them in their beautiful radiance.

Aside from a paragraph describing my appreciation for the warm summer months, I also want to give my gratitude and appreciation to the members of ADF. I am truly humbled to have been elected as your new Vice Arch-Druid. It is an honor that I do not take lightly. It is with this deep responsibility that I enter into the position, and it is with a true sincerity that I will do my best to serve the folk of ADF the best I can to the best of my ability.

A little about me: I have been an ADF member since November 2003. I co-founded the Sierra Madrone Grove in 2004 in Sacramento, CA, and our Grove continues to be a leader of public open ritual in the area. I am married to another long term member, Lindsay, and we were wed by Rev. Kirk Thomas in 2007 at the very first Eight Winds Festival in Oregon. We have a blended family with four children—one of whom moved out and is now married. At that very same Eight Winds, I was ordained an ADF Priest. I have held many roles within ADF through the years, including: Social Media Manager, Public Relations Manager, Gael Kin Chief, Grove Organizing Committee Member, Deputy Chief of the Council of Senior Druids, Non-Officer Director on the Clergy Council, Preceptor for the Order of Manannan, SIG Coordinator for the

Sacred Feast, Chair of the Risk Assessment Committee, Northwest Regional Druid, Senior Druid of Sierra Madrone Grove, and Non-Officer Director of the Mother Grove. I have also co-written two books: the ADF Leadership Handbook and the ADF Festival Organizer's Handbook. As promised with my election as Vice Arch-Druid, I have relinquished all other roles (except one), so I can focus my full attention on the important role I now have in our organization.

I want to talk about my skills that I bring to the table that can assist me in my role as Vice Arch-Druid. I have years of training in leadership, behavior analysis, communication, investigations, anti-harassment, mentoring, conflict resolution, and management. I plan to use these skills as situations arise within ADF to help ADF better mitigate conflict and bring a more open dialog between leadership and the membership. I also want to concentrate on what is becoming an evolving organization. On one hand we want ADF to maintain the same spirit as it's had throughout the years, but ADF is also a dynamic organization that needs to move forward or become stagnant. How do we achieve that? We make sure that we get our membership involved. We make sure we put a call out to the membership when there are open positions. We bring in the best skilled for the jobs we need done. And we make sure that we are actively listening to the membership.

With that being said, I once again want to state how honored I am to be your Vice Arch-Druid. I am very available for the membership, and I welcome folks to email me or chat me up on Facebook.

Blessings of the Kindreds,

Rev. Sean W Harbaugh

Wellspring Festival Review

By Wayne Keysor

An ADF festival is always a combination of a pilgrimage, fair, reunion, camping trip, arts festival, and political convention, and Wellspring 2018 was no exception. The festival took place on the sprawling grounds of Tredara Retreat Center in Madison, Ohio, USA, a Pagan retreat center owned and operated by long time ADF pillars Rev. Susan Parker-Wyndham and Rev. Ian Corrigan. The center features a permanent nemeton, as well as an Ancestors mound, a holy well dedicated to Brigid, and several other shrines. The weather was fine for the Great Lakes region of the United States in late May, neither completely inundated by cold, late spring rains nor baking in the premature heat of the coming summer, although the ubiquitous presence of mosquitos presented its own inimitable challenges. All and all, it was a fine setting for a gathering of old friends and new.

This year, there was a full slate of workshops, which included a double session spread over two days covering the principles and techniques of Indo-European folk magic presented by Chris Godwin, traveling all the way from Texas. Chris laid out the principles and correspondences under which traditional Indo-European folk magic operates and then demonstrated some simple folk magic practices and rituals. He drew much of his material from medieval and early modern folk texts, where this kind of magic is preserved, which led to some fascinating discussions. Rev. Melissa Hill, traveling from Michigan, presented another double session on the presence and meaning of the mythological figure of the swan maiden across multiple cultures, which your correspondent was not fortunate enough to be able to attend; her second session featured a group ritual designed to evoke these elusive beings, which I was very sorry to miss. Other workshops included: a session on rune valdr and runic magic presented by the head of the magician's guild, Rodney Cox, and a session by Rev.

Ian Corrigan on practical spirit-sorcery, as well as a session presented by Rev. Ayliah Cannon on Pagan Consent Culture, a topic very much on many people's minds these days, so we thank her for her effort.

Another highpoint of the festival was the annual Wellspring Bardic Chair competition, in which ADF bards compete against each other in the presentation of poetry, song, and storytelling. The competition was spirited, but gracious, with six contestants showing admirable courage and consummate craft in presenting their creations to the folk: Mike Bierschank (Three Cranes), Jan Avende (Three Cranes), Shannon Kovach (Stone Creed), Taliesin Govannon (Stone Creed), Gary "Garrick" Cook (6th Night), and Ed Hartle (Solitary). The judging panel was Thexalon, Rev. Ian Corrigan, and ADF Archdruid Jean Pagano. This year's winner was Mike Bierschenk from Three Cranes Grove in Ohio, who put together what the judges noted was a complete set, covering both Celtic and Norse material. I found his song honoring Manannan Mac Lir particularly moving. Once the winner was announced, many of the talented people at the festival took their time on the stage to share their bardic skills with all, raising spirits and moving souls, using everything from unaccompanied vocals to poetry, flute, accordion, and guitar. It is always amazing to see what talented and courageous people we have in ADF.

A religious highlight of the festival was the ordination of ADF's newest priest, Chelly Couvrette from Ontario, Canada. An ordination is always a momentous occasion where the folk get to celebrate the culmination of years of work by the aspirant and to witness their oath of service to the folk. Rev. Couvrette's ordination was no exception. I always personally find the passing of the new priest's stole around the folk for their blessing to be a very moving embodiment of the relationship between the people and the priest. The priest carries the weight of the hopes,

dreams, and needs of the people into her work in the world. Rev. Couvrette was graceful and poised throughout her ordination ritual, demonstrating command of the ADF ritual form. She will be a fine addition to the ADF Clergy, and we look forward to seeing her positive impact on the religious life of the folk in the coming years. Another fine rite was the dedication of a herm at a crossroads at Tredera, ably led by Dave Kleinschmidt (Thexalon) from Stone Creed Grove, who ensured the statue was installed with due reverence and proper ritual. A herm is either a plain, rectangular rock or square, stone pillar with a head and phallus on it, which is sacred to Hermes. They were traditionally placed at crossroads, where they served an apotropaic function, protecting travelers from harm. As one goes by, one should place a stone on the pile of stones next to the herm for good luck, so if you happen to find yourself at Tredera, throw a stone on the pile for safe travels.

The annual ADF meeting also occurred at Wellspring this year. ADF Archdruid Jean Pagano and ADF Vice Archdruid Sean Harbaugh highlighted some of ADF's achievements over the previous year and handed out annual awards. ADF ordained its first European priest this year, which is an exciting step for the organization. Ian Corrigan briefly addressed his Hearth Keeper proposal, which we look forward to hearing more about. It was also announced that a digital subscription to ADF's journal, *Oak Leaves*, was on the verge of coming to fruition. The perennial topic of updating the ADF website was discussed, and we were given a status report on the effort. The public facing website (as opposed to the members' only part of the website) is nearing testing and deployment. Many thanks to all those who are working so hard on it! There was also a discussion of membership numbers, which were down a bit this year, though we continue to grow overall. It was suggested that this drop was potentially related to the controversy surrounding ADF founder Isaac Bonewits. I was also told by the Archdruid that the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis being done by the Mother Grove was nearing the completion of its initial iteration, and we look

forward to more information arising from this process.

The following awards were presented: Award of Appreciation to Rev. Kirk Thomas for hard work on prison ministry; Award of Appreciation to Rev. Caryn MacLuan for tireless pursuit of excellence in leadership; Award of Good Fire to Ceisiwr Serith for all the really good liturgy he provides the organization and his amazing ability to put word to paper; Award of Excellence in Nature Awareness to Shining Lakes Grove, ADF for all their river and bug work over the years; Award of Appreciation to Bonnie Landry for continued excellence through service; Award of Appreciation to Rovena Windsor for regular dedicated chat hosting; Founders Award to Silver Birch Grove, ADF for exceptional public service in getting the message out and starting PPD's and "Druids Down Under" in Australia; Award of Appreciation to Rev. G. R. Grove for excellence in production of Oak Leaves; Award of Appreciation to Rev. Amber Doty for clergy video production and dedication; Volunteer of the year award to Art Shipkowski for tireless pursuit of excellence and problem solving.

During the festival, I met ADFers from New York, Massachusetts, Texas, Michigan, Ohio, Canada, Indiana, California, and probably other places I don't even know about. I am not surprised. Wellspring is a wonderful festival, and is worth the trip if you can make it. So perhaps next year, I will see you there, and we can swap stories and experiences, or perhaps compete against each other in bardic chair competition. Until then, I'll see you around. May you pray with a good fire.

Wayne Keysor joined ADF in 2008, 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 University of Maryland College Park. He was the 2017 Wellspring Bard.

A Wandering Druid in Greece: Winter Solstice on the Acropolis

By Dean Hallett

It was the Winter Solstice of December 2017. It was a beautiful sunny day to go to the Acropolis. In my native Australia they were experiencing the glaring peak of Summer, while I was in Europe hoping for snow. But it had been a warm winter in Greece. It had snowed on the Acropolis the previous year, and elsewhere in the region of Attica in the previous few days, but the white metropolis of Athens has a comfortable warm microclimate, sheltered as it is by a ring of marble hills. A skyline of white buildings, among them ancient ruins await, a city with swathes of green parks and groves cradled among the hills like a giant bird's nest. A sight I knew well from climbing various wooded hills to meditate and watch the sunsets. It seemed more like spring than the middle of winter. The garden was full of flowers, but the first jonquils had already started to bloom. Robins sang and doves cooed. The only signs that it was winter at all were the wisteria and mulberry having lost some but by no means all of their leaves, and the horrified looks of rugged-up Athenians as I walked around in a t-shirt in winter.

I set out in the cool sunshine and began the walk down hill and along the roads leading to the heart of Athens. I had already been living in Athens for a few weeks, and it was my second time in this ancient city, so I knew the way well. I made my way past parks and gardens, the flocks of ringneck parrots flying over, the orange trees covered in fruit, the fountains of the Truman memorial. Then the massive and ancient Panathenaic Stadium, used for ancient games and the first modern Olympic Games. Just next to it, some beautiful old olive trees stand near a fenced, forested hillside that is an ancient grove. A small spring can be found there, with the typical arched niche of many Greek springs which have been reused for centuries. Sadly this one had been sealed up, but I stopped to pay my respects to whatever local nymphs live at the spring and any

dryads or other nature spirits which may dwell in those woods. Through a busy intersection I made my way past the National Gardens, and detoured to see the immense neo-classical Zappeion *megaron* (hall). Ancient and modern often sit side by side in Greece, and across from the opulent Zappeion is the Athens golf club, itself next to the colossal pillars of the ancient Temple of Olympian Zeus.

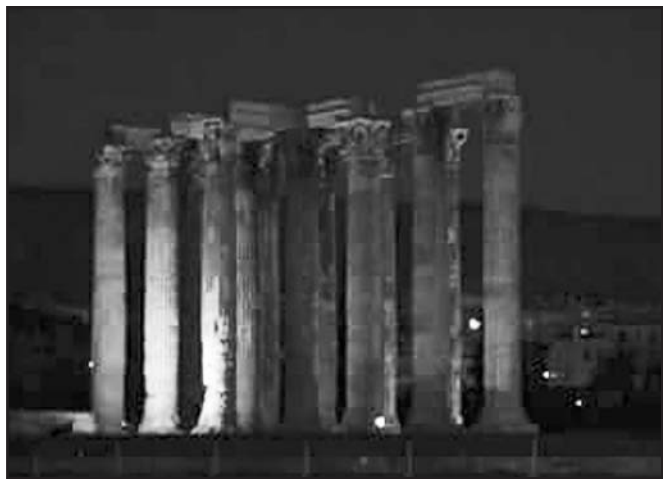


Photo: Dean Hallett

Although only a fraction of the temple now remains standing, the immense columns reach up to the sky, seemingly linking the heavens and the earth. I paused at various places along the fence line for a quick photo. I suddenly found myself feeling the need to express some thanks for safe travels and offer a short spontaneous prayer. I continued on, the Lord Byron monument across the road to my right. Following the path past the outside of the Temple of Olympian Zeus, you pass by the Roman emperor Hadrian's Arch. Looking through Hadrian's Arch I could see my destination: the Acropolis. I crossed at the lights, and walked through the old part of the city, the Plaka. The Plaka district is full of winding streets, tourist souvenir shops, and restaurants, under the base of the Acropolis. I went up the widened pedestrian street, Dionysiou Areopagitou, and paused to look in a shop. There were the standard postcards, fridge magnets, and t-shirts. Despite some of the kitsch items, one great thing for Pagans is that many Hellenic ritual tools are readily available and affordable, like alabaster

stone statues of the gods, pottery, oil lamps, and tripods (bronze three legged cauldrons for incense). I found a beautiful necklace of a replica tetradrachm coin with Athena on one side and her symbols, the owl and the olive, on the other side, and loved it so much I just had to get it.

Now, there are two main entrances to the Acropolis, both off the same street, but one is more to the northwest – it is the one where the tourist buses pull in, so you have to contend with more steps, a steeper slope, and more tourists. The discerning Pagan wants to enter through the southeast gate, and take the less crowded, gentler slope, if a little longer path, that if you continue heading straight (west) takes you through the sacred precinct of Dionysus. It is also just opposite the brand new Acropolis Museum. I stopped by the foundations of the Temple of Dionysus. There, an unassuming pile of a few stone slabs is what's left of the Altar of Dionysus. I said a small prayer and poured a libation into a worn depression which once contained a fire for consuming offerings: a pensive spot to pause for reflection with great sadness that these sacred sites had been looted, partially demolished, and eventually banned by zealous mobs and Christian Roman imperial decrees centuries ago. I continued on to the Theatre of Dionysus, home of the first plays of comedy, tragedy, and drama, which began as a form of ritual, and later became the foundations of theatre, and ultimately movies and TV as entertainment. It is quite sobering a thought to

feel that on the stage below you is where all these things first began, and you have the chance to sit in the very same stone seats that others must have sat in, watching the plays of Aristophanes and Euripides performed over two thousand years ago.

I resumed my journey, past the arches of the Stoa of Eumenes, the partially restored Sanctuary of Asklepios, past a Byzantine cistern, a covered area with a selection of ancient statue bases, and the foundations of a bronze foundry, to a nice spot to rest opposite the enormous Odeon of Herodes Atticus, an ancient amphitheatre cut into the hillside. It's a good spot to rest before climbing some steep rock cut stairs. And after these and going around the corner, I found myself in front of the steps and columns that form the Propylaea, the epic sacred gateway to the upper



Photo: Dean Hallett

Acropolis where Athena's temple, the Parthenon, stands. Before you ascend the Propylaea stairs, it is worth having a look to the northwest and gazing upon the Temple of Hephaestus, the most intact example of an ancient Hellenic temple in



Photo: Dean Hallett



Photo: Dean Hallett



Photo: Dean Hallett

Greece. I scaled this last final set of steps, passing the Temple of Athena-Nike (Victory) perched on a rocky cliff top, as if the building were watching the movement of Helios in his solar chariot across the sky. Then I entered the gigantic columned entranceway Propylaea to the *temenos* (sacred precinct).

There before me stood two ancient temples, the Parthenon of Athena and the Erechtheion of Poseidon. In the founding myth of Athens, Athena and Poseidon disputed who should be the patron deity over the city of Athens. Poseidon gave the gift of the horse to the people; Athena created the olive tree as a gift. The people chose Athena, and Poseidon in frustration struck the ground with his trident, and there a saltwater spring appeared. Pragmatically, the Athenians built a great temple for Athena, but still built Poseidon a temple just opposite Athena's. The original temples were made of wood, but were burnt down by the Persians in 480 BCE. After the Persians had been driven out of Greece, new stone temples were erected from the finest Pentelic marble.

The Parthenon was dedicated to Athena Parthe-

nos. The famous cult statue of ivory, wood, and gold stood inside. Parthenos means "virgin" or as one local Athenian told me, more literally, "the pure." I walked around taking photos, admiring the care and effort taken to slowly restore each stone fragment piece by piece. Where that was not possible, skilled stone masons had to make new pieces to fit exactly into place. Marble from the same Mount Pentelikon is used, just as it was originally, but the original pieces are a more weathered beige colour, while the new pieces are brilliant white. It was decided not to not make it all one uniform colour to leave it clear to the visitor what was original and what was restoration. Earthquakes, fires, and erosion have all worn at the structure, but it was humans that did the most damage. Christian desecration seems to have done a lot of the original damage, before it was modified into a church named for 'Our Lady of Athens' – the Virgin Mary. Later modifications were made before the Orthodox church became a Catholic one after the fourth crusade, then an Orthodox church again, and later a mosque under the Ottoman Turks, and then their gun powder store which was blown up by Venetian cannons, and finally European powers helped themselves to sections of it, including the

Elgin Marbles which reside in the British Museum.

I stood before the Parthenon in awe as it was bathed in the sunset light. Part of the charm of being there in winter is that you can be there at sunset; at the Summer Solstice the site is closed before sunset and open after sunrise. The downside is that being the Winter Solstice, it was windy and steadily getting cold and darker. I paused here and there to look out at the city below. And there at the eastern end of the Parthenon, the side of the temple where the statue had once stood facing the dawn (Athena was said to have been born from the forehead of Zeus at dawn, fully formed, in glittering armour and ready to fight), I managed to get some photos of the setting sun streaming through the columns of the Parthenon towards me on the Winter Solstice. In the sacred serenity of that moment, I extended my arms out in a ritual gesture and said a few prayers to Athena. Her presence is strong in Athens, stronger still on the Acropolis, and in that moment, beautiful, illuminating, and sublime. I clasped my new Athena coin pendant, and as normality started to seep into my senses again, I thanked Her for Her aid in making this pilgrimage and the wider trip possible. I'd had a few



Photo: Dean Hallett

fortunate minutes with that end of the temple to myself, probably only because it was close to closing time on a winter evening – in summer this would have been impossible. I spent awhile there in quiet contemplation, taking it all in, and as the guards came to give us a warning that it was closing time and to start making our way out, I headed over to the Erechtheion to pay my respects and take some photos, walking around it toward the Propylaea. There on the west side of the Erechtheion was a small courtyard with the only tree on the top of the Acropolis: the very olive tree, according to legend, that Athena had gifted to humanity. I bade the heights of the Acropolis farewell and made my way through the Propylaea in the last rays of the sunset. I turned for a moment with a glance and a smile back, before making my exit down the steps of the steeper slope.

At night the Acropolis is lit up, one of the most prominent sights in the city. I went for a roast lamb dinner and some ouzo at a nice traditional restaurant in the Plaka. I even wrote a postcard to my Grove back home, while looking up at the Acropolis. Reflecting on the day's midwinter pilgrimage.

Dean Hallett has been practicing Ásatrú for 14 years and has been attending Silver Birch Grove for 5 years. He is currently writing an archaeology PhD thesis on chariots in the ancient Near East. When he's not in a university library, he can most likely be found haunting the forests and waterways of the Dandenongs, southeast of Melbourne, Australia..



Photo: Dean Hallett

Were the Early Druids “Shamanic”?

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

The concept of shamanism seems to have become quite popular in the Neopagan community of late, and I have encountered assertions that the early Druids, the Paleo-Druids, were the “shamans” of their culture. But to what – if any – extent, might this be said to be true? It seems to me that in order to examine this question, and to compare the two, we need first to investigate what the beliefs and practices of a Paleo-Druid might have been, and secondly, who or what, (perhaps particularly at that period) would properly be considered a shaman. The first term was not easy to pin down, but I could at least find a definition. Bonewits defined Paleopaganism as “a general term for the original polytheistic, nature-centered faiths of tribal Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, Oceania, and Australia”, including some forms of Asian shamanism, as well as the religions practiced by the Germanic and Celtic tribes, including the Paleo-Druids (Bonewits 4). Note that “some forms” of Asian shamanism are included here. Traditional shamanism seems to be genuinely Paleopagan, although the term and some of its elements have been conscripted by later practitioners.

We haven’t a great deal of evidence – solid or otherwise – concerning the actual beliefs and practices of the Paleo-Druids, but at least some of the Roman commentators have left us a few observations. The clearest extant information as to general Celtic beliefs concerning the afterlife comes from the works of several classical writers: Lucan, Caesar, and Diodorus Siculus; “they hold that the Druids taught a doctrine of reincarnation, wherein the spirit of the dead person passed into a new body after a time” (Aldhouse-Green 171). Concerning the Druids specifically, she adds, “Caesar stresses their involvement in politics and leadership and mentions their role in expounding doctrine about life after death; Lucan echoes the involvement of

the Druids in teaching about reincarnation; Pliny the Elder comments in detail on their activities as sacred healers; and there are multifarious references in the ancient literature to the central Druidic function – that of divination or prediction of the future via communication with the spirits” (*ibid* 82). So we have a class of teachers, sacred healers, diviners, and those who commune with spirits, but also persons who may be involved in the politics of tribal leadership.

For the second term, shaman or shamanic, things became a little more complicated. The Oxford Online Dictionary defines a shaman as “a person



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regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of good and evil spirits, especially among some peoples of northern Asia and North America. Typically such people enter a trance state during ritual, and practice divination and healing”, and notes that the term is derived from the Tungusic Evenki word *šaman*, which entered the English language in the late seventeenth century (web). Oxford Online’s definition of “shamanic” is (reasonably enough), “relating to the beliefs and practices associated with a shaman” (web). In the original context of the term, a shaman was a spiritual practitioner, making use of a specific set of tools and practices, working within an intact indigenous culture; the same could be said of the early Druids. Members of both groups would, for the most part, have been raised within their own cultures. There were certainly women among the Druids who faced the Romans on Ynys Môn (Anglesey) in 60 CE; likewise, gender seems to be largely irrelevant to most traditional shamans.

Hutton points out that unfortunately there is currently no generally academically accepted definition of either “shaman” or “shamanism” (*Shamans* 135). He describes traditional shamanism as “partly a craft and partly a spiritual vocation” (*ibid*, 85), though indeed the same might well be said of quite a few other magico-religious practices. Other authors have expressed their own definitions or descriptions. Adler considers shamans to be individuals who “enter altered states and embark on a journey to learn something or do something”, adding that in their traditional society, the shaman relates to and interacts with the spirits of plants and animals, as well as disincorporate spirits of several kinds, often to gain knowledge or bring about healing, and frequently uses forms of trance-journeying. According to Chas Clifton, she says, “traditional Shamans cure people through their trances, accompany the souls of the dead to the Otherworld, and communicate with the Gods” (Adler 424). Aldhouse-Green quotes the Finnish scholar and researcher Juha Pentikäinen on the Siberian shaman: “he is a healer and a priest, a fortune-teller and a psychopomp leading the souls of the deceased to



Wikipedia: Public domain image.

the abode of the dead, an epic-singer and a politician” (Aldhouse-Green, 82). She compares these attributes to the observations of classical authors on Gallo-British Druidism (mentioned above), and considers the most striking correlation between the early Druids and the circumpolar shamans to be their “curation of tradition” in passing down their esoteric knowledge by oral transmission, rather than by anything written. However, the oral transmission of esoteric knowledge alone does not make a culture’s traditions either Druidic or shamanic.

Pentikäinen’s description of Siberian shamans is indeed quite similar to the summation of Paleo-Druids discussed above: a class of teachers, sacred healers, diviners, and those who commune with spirits, but also persons involved in the politics of tribal leadership. But one of the most prominent and widespread practices of shamans in a number of cultures is that of “soul-flight”, or trance journeying, often with the use of a drum. Is there any indication whatsoever that the early

Druids had such practices? Aldhouse-Green comments, “clearly, this form of activity is going to be virtually impossible to track archaeologically and, even if relevant to ancient Druids, is not the kind of information that they would have communicated to the foreign powers that recorded their presence” (*op cit*, 83). She attempts to make a connection between Bronze Age petroglyphs depicting winged men, a reference to “Druidic bird men” in a medieval Irish text, and theoretical trance-journeying as practiced by Paleo-Druids, but this may be a bit of a stretch. The technique of *Imbas Forosnai* (possibly practiced by Druids in earlier times) mentioned in Cormac's *Glossary* and discussed by Chadwick does appear to involve some sort of trance work; should this be considered equivalent to trance journeying? Without more information, it is not really possible to determine for certain. Mircea Eliade, who considered “shamanism” to be a worldwide phenomenon, comments, “In preparing his trance, the shaman drums, summons his spirit helpers, speaks a ‘secret language’ or the ‘animal language,’ imitating the cries of beasts and especially the songs of birds.” I have not encountered any references to the use of drums in the practices or ceremonies of the Paleo-Druids, and such use would certainly be noticeable to an observer. Hutton points out that Chadwick also considered that the “bards and druids from Celtic-speaking lands” and the Siberian shamans had “a common ancient Eurasian tradition of inspired poets, seers and healers who communed with spirit worlds” (*op cit*, 134), in addition equating the Druidic feather cloaks mentioned in some Irish sources with the feather-adorned ritual gear of some shamans. There are, however, many other (clearly unconnected) cultures which have used feathers for ornamentation or ritual, without being either Druidic or shamanic.

The definitions and descriptions used by these and other authors vary widely: that the early Druids were a noble, philosophic priestly class (who could not possibly have been involved in human sacrifice, whatever the Romans said); that

they were purely holy men; that they were quite “primitive” and should be equated with traditional shamans; and so forth. Hutton remarks that there is a tendency “for archaeologists to be harsher on Druids than specialists in literary sources”, but adds that attitudes differ markedly within those disciplines as well as between them (Hutton *Blood* 23). Likewise, opinions as to what constitutes “shamanic” practices vary so widely that if all are allowed, almost any magico-religious practitioner could be considered as a “shaman”, or at least “shamanic”, and in the absence of solid academic definitions, and a great deal more evidence, the comparison between the practices of Paleo-Druids and those of traditional shamans remains uncertain, and largely a matter of opinion.

So all in all, do I personally consider the Paleo-Druids to have been “shamans”? I am of the opinion that they were not; while there are some similarities in what we know of the practices of both groups, there are also differences. To some degree, both fulfilled the same purpose or role within their respective societies, the same “function” (in Dumézilian terms) of tribal priests and diviners. But as the culture of the Gallo-British Celts and that of the Siberian Tungus were not equivalent, neither were their spiritual practitioners. Returning to the original question of the title, *could* some of the practices of the early Druids be thought (in broad terms) to have been “shamanic”? Some of their practices – as far as we have evidence concerning them – were similar, and could perhaps be so described, but having examined the case, it is not a term I would choose to use for them. Why do I say that? Opinion is a subtle thing, but for some part, it is because of the difference in cultures, and a dislike of casually equating “X” in one culture to “Y” in another. Just as there is no such thing as an exact translation between one language and another, so too, should similar things in diverse cultures not be necessarily considered as being entirely the same thing.

As to whether modern Neo-Druids could legitimately be considered as shamans, or any of their practices truly shamanic – well, that is a



quite a different topic, and a discussion for another day.

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Rev. D. Rowen Grove joined ADF in the spring of 2010 and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She became an ADF Initiate in 2015 and was ordained an ADF Priest in 2016. She is currently Senior Druid of Chokecherry Grove, ADF, in Denver, Colorado, and ADF Preceptor.

Social Media and Druidry on Vancouver Island

By Diane Cacciato

Facebook – the group that so many people love to hate. I know many people complain about Facebook and the time some spend on social media. I for one, however, am very grateful to social media and Facebook. I use a variety of social media, and particularly Facebook, to meet and stay in touch with people. It was instrumental for me as I worked on my DP whenever I had questions or was confused about something, which was, believe me, frequent. I did the “Druid Happy Dance” when I found out about the various ADF groups on FB. Yes, FB *is* the group that many people love to hate, but it has been instrumental in bringing together Druids on Vancouver Island.

When I joined ADF just 15 months ago, I thought I was one of only two Druids on Vancouver Island. At that time, there were, in fact, only two ADF Druids – the other one a good hour away on the Trans Canada Highway. I was, and really felt

like, a solitary. Now, there is nothing wrong with being a solitary, and for many people that is their preferred state. I, however, am not one of those people. I stand firmly in the center of the extroverts’ world and I would rather poke myself in the eyeballs with knitting needles than have to work on things without any face-to-face interaction. Enter stage left...Mark Zuckerberg. Well, clearly not really Mark Zuckerberg, but Facebook.

Almost exactly one year from the date of writing this little piece, I decided to see if any other Druids might come out of the woodwork if I made a Facebook group. Vancouver Island Druids started out with just two members in June of 2017. Slowly, our numbers began to grow. I was astounded at how many people came out of the woodwork who were either Druids or were curious about Druidry.



Photo: Diane Cacciato

Photo: Diane Cacciato



We began to organize rituals. Our first one was at Yule. There were only three of us there, and it was raining so hard we couldn't get a fire going. Instead, we huddled around a candle at a barbecue pit beside the beautiful Lake Cowichan. The next was Imbolc, and we had six participants who gathered at the Englishman River Falls Provincial Park on a crisp, beautiful sunny day. Our most successful public ritual, however, was this past Baeltinne at which we gathered on a beach near Victoria. We had seven people attend, but because it was a hot sunny day, the beach was crowded and we had a small crowd of observers including one little boy who came up to us in the middle of the ritual and said,

“Are you guys selling stuff?”

“No, we aren't.”

“Well, that's good 'cause my dad didn't give me any money.”

Out of the mouths of babes.

Last autumn, we began discussing turning our little odds and sods group into an actual ADF protogrove. We played with names and discussed pantheons and after Christmas I began the paperwork to start a protogrove here on Vancouver Island. On April 1st, I got the email saying that the Garry Oak Protogrove had been approved. Why Garry Oak? The Garry Oak is an indigenous species that is found in Canada, almost exclusively on Vancouver Island. (It is also widespread in Oregon, where it is called the Oregon White Oak.) The Garry Oak groves provide an ecosystem that supports a number of at-risk species and therefore Garry Oak groves are protected. This seemed like the perfect name for a bunch of Druids.

Today, we have 38 members of the Vancouver Island Druids Facebook group. We have members who are Druids with ADF, OBOD, RDNA, AODA, and who are solitaries. We have other members who are Wicca, Hedge Witches,

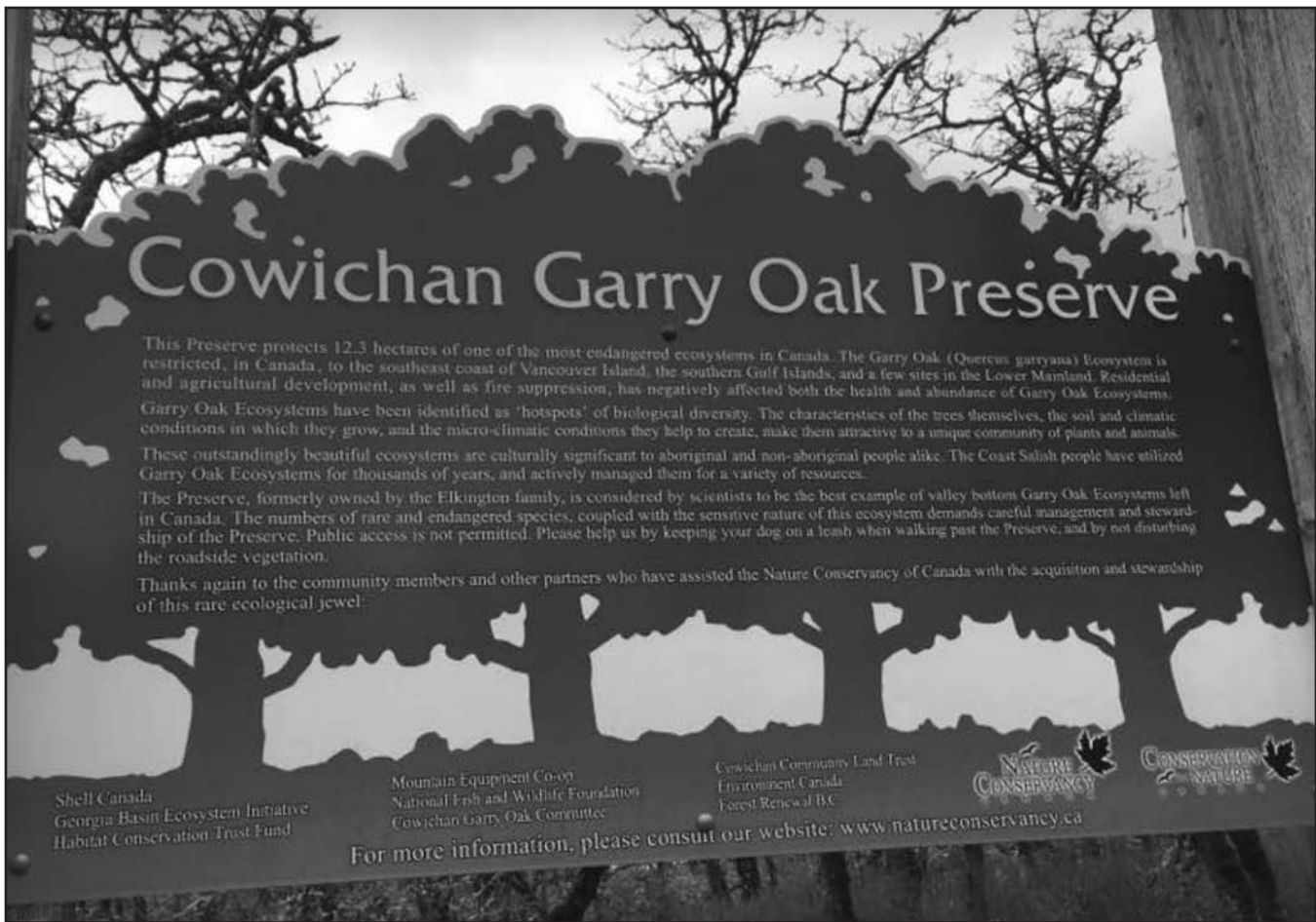


Photo: Diane Cacciato

Heathens, and Celtic reconstructionists. We have members who identify as fey and as nothing. We are truly an eclectic group.

And what is in the future for the Vancouver Island Druids and the Garry Oak Protogrove? We will, of course, continue to hold public rituals. Even though we have members from a diverse background, our rituals always follow the ADF Core Order of Ritual. In spite of my lack of experience, as the protogrove and the ritual organizer, I am the one who puts the rituals together. We don't have a priest, so I am taking the 'pre-courses' for the Clergy Training. With some hard work on my part, we may have our own priest next year. We will have a table at the Vancouver Island Pagan Pride Festival, and I am hopeful we will have more members join while we are there.

What a change Facebook brought for Druids here on the west coast of Canada. With all the issues

and complaints about this social media platform, I, for one, will always be grateful as it helped me connect with so many wonderful Pagans right here at home.

Diane Cacciato joined ADF in 2017 and is the Grove Organizer for Garry Oak Protogrove. She 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.



Photo: Diane Cacciato

Tailtiu

By Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano

There were just trees and fields
Streams and hills
That rolled like fields of grasses
Through eons of time.

Touched by invasions,
The land remained "as-is"
Until the next invasion came,
And the old ways looked to change.

Only dew fell in recent years
Rains and water were scarcely found;
Harvests continued
Through your bounty.

On this green island
Long-standing ways maintained,
Hunt, gather, prepare;
That which grew abounded.

And then they came,
Tall dark ships
Out of the north,
Like change on the wind.

War ensued and you were torn,
Between the old way

And the new that was to come;
Lose a husband, gain a son.

Your time as Sovereign,
Of the land, was coming to a close
And it was time to make a change
All the way to the core.

The rains returned and the fields,
Green as emerald, a canopy of leaves,
Called out to you and said
"This time is passing".

You ploughed and ploughed
Until the entirety of the land was tilled;
Time for straight rows,
No time left for chance.

Accept this sacrifice of life,
Yours, Tailtiu, for the land;
This land will change, forever now,
By your hand.

There were just trees and fields
Streams and hills
That rolled like fields of grasses
Through eons of time.



Hail Ye Kindred!

By Thomas Brown

Hail Ye Kindred! A Druid prays
Moonlit nights and Sunlit days,
To the grove the Fire warms,
With Waters deep, and Tree is firm.

As we come into this shrine,
The Kindred bless and are divine.
Our Mother teaches ways to love,
The Lord of Wisdom opens the grove.

Sacrifice and offerings poured,
Kindred all receive our hoard.
O Hear our prayers, by light and shadow
By day and by night and in the meadow.

Hail Ye Kindred! A Druid prays
Moonlit nights and Sunlit days,
From the grove the Fire warms,
Waters deep, and Tree stands firm.



Prayer to Sigyn

By Birgit Reinartz

Sigyn, Quiet One
Sigyn, Blameless One
Sigyn, Brave One
Sigyn, Loyal One

You are grieving,
because it was your children, too,
that the gods killed to punish Loki.
And perhaps you ask yourself like so many other
parents:
Why did it have to be my child? Why did this
happen to me?

And still you find the power in you
to soften Loki's pain
as much as you can.
You cannot lift the punishment,
maybe you even don't want to,
but you show mercy in your staying,
mercy in your doing.
You go with him, through thick and thin.

Sigyn,
be with me in my darkest hours,
when my strength seems gone,
when hope is lost,
when desperation threatens to overwhelm me.
Hold your bowl over my head,
when I need it most.

But also teach me the gift of empathy and mercy
so I can give comfort to others and pass on your
blessings.

Tea with Brigid

By Jenne Micale

You serve me tea. The storm roars white outside
the thatch, the shutters latched. The hearthfire
roars

and you pour it fragrant into the cup —

and push a scone with raisins on a plate.
Devotion is marked, you say. I pour you
coffee most mornings in truth, and the tea

in the Otherworld and you are grateful
enough to pour it in turn. This is what
binds Gods and us: friendship, kin, love and trust.



In Memoriam

By Victoria Laughlin-Casares

My memories are like marshmallows
In a cup of lovingly made hot chocolate.
Floating in a sea of delight
Are thoughts of laughter shared,
Smiles made, and love given.
We used to dance
To whatever came on
In joy and revelry.
Sometimes I would ask you
To play the organ
And you happily obliged.
Now that you're gone
I'll treasure each marshmallow
In my saddened heart.



Prayer to Delling

By Birgit Reinartz

This moment between day and night,
when it's starting to become bright
still the sun has not risen above the skyline,
when the only sound you can hear is the song of
the birds.

This moment, when the world seems to hold her
breath
when the sky reddens slowly
and the meadows at the river are bathed in
morning mist.

This moment when I can breathe deeply,
before the daily chaos closes in on me.

This moment is you, Delling!

Shining God of morning light,
father of Day,
I greet you and invite you:
Share this moment with me!

Summerland

By Diane Cacciato

This poem is entitled Summerland. It is about sitting with my mother in the moments before she passed through the veil.

Tonight the veil is thin...
"I forgive you for everything."
I watch you struggle,
Eyes already focused on the Summerland.
"Please forgive me."
Each breath a battle,
"May my love carry you through the veil..."
No pill or drug can fix this.
"...In peace, and light, and love."
Your breathing slows,
"It's okay to let go."
A breath then a pause.
"Dad is standing by your side -
He's beckoning you over."
One more breath,
"Arawn, please take her."
Then Arawn takes your hand
And, after 96 years,
Years of struggle and pain,
Laughter and joy,
You finally let go,
And Arawn leads you into Summerland.



What Is Remembered Lives

By Rev. G. R. Grove

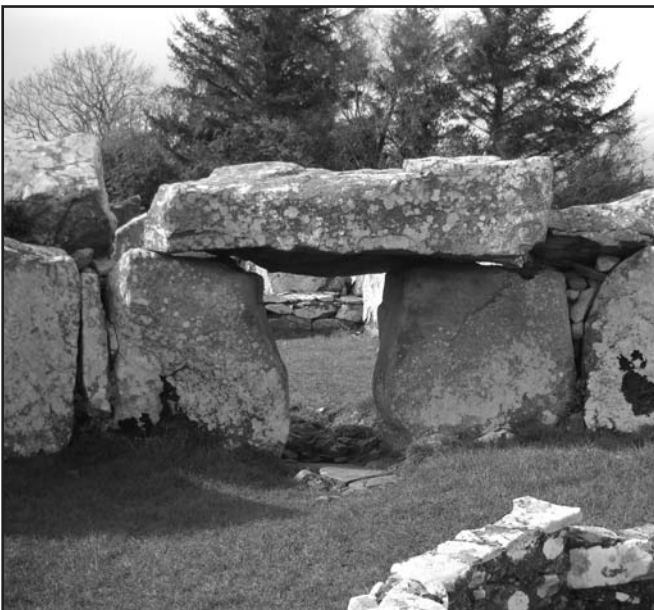
That day, turning a corner,
we saw the very place
at the old familiar Renfair
where we'd last heard him sing,
and we paused, remembering.

A mellow voice he had,
and played upon his lute
with rapid, skillful fingers.
A proper minstrel, dark-avised,
singing in many tongues.

We joined him once or twice
in songs that we both knew.
That day smiles in my memory.
A good man, Owain Phyfe,
beloved, too early gone.

Awhile we stood in silence,
still hearing his pure voice,
then poured an offering,
sighing, and walked on
into the warm afternoon.

True is the old saying:
what is remembered lives.
Who will remember us,
when we've passed?
Who will remember you?





Ancestor Self

By Jason Taaffe

The family that brought
me into the world
was the very same to ask

Me to leave it, you see
we're what happens to a
dreamcatcher when it gets

Full, reincarnation means
forever and all time
it's always the same

The wind picks up
carries the flames to
the ground, licks the grass

In turn reduces our
phantasm to real flesh
the joys of yet, another

Life, you can't live
outside your own time
though we all try anyway

Memories reduced to
déjà vu, one cycle
of life completed

Yet there are many

many lives to be
lived, each with its

Own challenges and mistakes
but do we make the
same choices every time

Is each new cycle
a rerun of the last
is the repetitiveness

Never ending, a pendulum
always having the same
result over and over again

Or do our stars change
as our faces, from one
ancestor to the next

Does each new experience
change us for the better
in the compendium of

Infinity, I'd like
to think so, that
it's not all for naught.

The Roots of Honor are in the Fields: Blackberry and its Lessons in Old Irish Lore

By Olivia Wylie



*Trí fostadh:
foisdinecht,
gairde,
athchumairecht.*

Three glories of
speech: steadiness,
wisdom, brevity.

Botanical name: *Rubus fruticosus*
Family: *Rosaceae*
Ogham: Muin
Scots Gaelic: *Dris*
Irish Gaelic: *Sméar dubh*
Welsh: *Mwyar duon*
French: *La mûre*

Message: Words have great power. You must use them wisely, but you must not fail to speak.

If you have been brambling or blackberrying in your life, you will soon understand the insight of linking this fid with the power of speech and the power of words. Brambles are not kind to the brash. In the *Aidedh Ferghusa meic Léide*, the king of the *sidhe* gives advice on species of trees, saying this about the bramble:

*Bending wood the spiteful briar is,
burn he that is so keen and green;
He cuts, he flays the foot
the man that would rush forward he will hold
back. (Aodh Ó Dálaigh)*

But for those who are clever and careful, the blackberry yields its fruits. Here we are given a perfect metaphor for the using of words.

Some have translated *muin* as “grape vine”, but archeological evidence calls that translation into question. According to Rowan Laurie, “grapevines are not native to Ireland and barely grow in its climate. They were a much later import and even in the warmest historical periods were difficult to cultivate.”

Although wine was imported from the Mediterranean as a high status drink as early as 600 BCE (Hopman), the plant from which it came was not part of the lore of old Ireland. The blackberry, on the other hand, appears again and again in poetry and song as the symbol of love, beauty and plenty. In the tales of Finn, a good summer is described as being “of the beautiful blackberries,” and in one of the most famous Irish love poems of all, the blackberry is used to denote beauty:

*'s í bláth deas na sú craobh í,
's í planda b'fhearr méin mhaith
le hamharc do shúl;
's í mo chuisle, 's í mo rún í,
's í bláth na n-úll gcumhra í,
is samhradh ins an fhuacht í
idir Nollaig is Cáisc.*

She's the blackberry-flower,
the fine raspberry-flower,
she's the plant of best breeding
your eyes could behold;
she's my darling and dear,
my fresh apple-tree flower,
she is summer in the cold
between Christmas and Easter (Mac Coitir).

In the Brehon laws, the blackberry is marked as one of the ‘sweet fruits’ and a Bush of the Wood. Clearing a stand of them earned the penalty fee of a heifer cow (Ginnell). The price was so high because these plants were so valuable as a food source. Rich in folates, potassium, vitamin E, and

sugars, they were a welcome supplement to the diet of ancient peoples. Blackberry seeds have been found in the remains of a Neolithic man's stomach, blackberry shoots provided some of the first greens of spring, and ripe blackberries were an integral part of the Lughnasadh fairs, and the dishes served by lords to their client farmers and craftsmen at these times (Hopman). On the holy days, the usual system of clients paying their lords what they called "food rent" was reversed, and lords held great *fled* or "hospitality feasts" for their parishioners. The generosity of a lord was integral to his legitimacy: a lord who served bad fare could lose his holdings.

Why?

Because people talked. Unlike ancient England, which mainly focused on lineage as the deciding factor for one's place in the world, ancient Ireland was a contractual country. A free man signed a contract to be, say, a herdsman or a warrior with a specific lord, and his contract stipulated what he was owed in return for his service. If he liked the work and the terms, he renewed his contract on a yearly basis at the festival of Samhain (Ginnell). If he did not, he found a new lord.

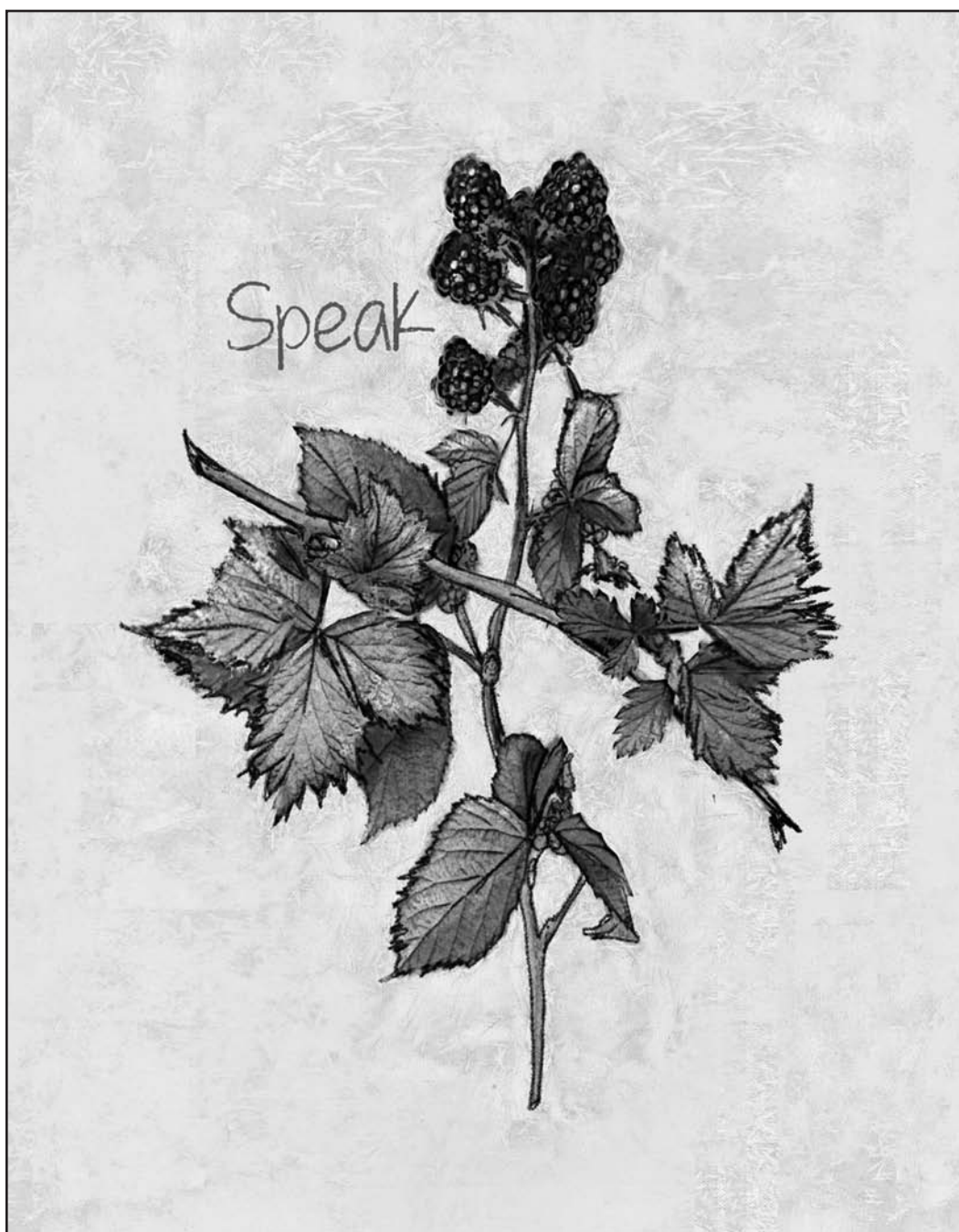


Illustration by Olivia Wylie

This created a system that placed great importance in the way an individual was spoken of and prized truthful speech. Again and again in period texts, liars are shamed and abused. In the Brehon law defamation of character incurred the same debt to the wounded party as a physical injury requiring two days of bed rest (Williams), and we have numerous historical examples of the price actually being demanded of someone who spoke falsely by a *brehon*, (judge) (Williams).

In this world, words truly had power. In this

system, lords who were known to be stingy had fewer workers to tend their fields and beasts, fewer men to serve them under arms, and tended to suffer over time. A good master had good men. Thus, it paid to earn a reputation as a good lord and a good man. The man who did not remember this paid dearly for it.

One of the most famous stories in Ireland tells us just how high that price could be. It is the story of Caibre Mac Edaine the bard and Bres mac Eladain, who was high king.

In a world where words had power and the way others spoke of you decided your future, those who used words had enormous power. The Irish *filid* (poets) went through intensive training to become walking libraries, able to advise on the past and record present events in ways that would make them easily remembered for the future. This recording included the great deeds of nobles, and the evil ones. *Filid* were some of the first political satirists, and satire had a very practical purpose: to compose a satire against someone was to challenge their authority and call their honor into question. It was a potent weapon in an oral society.

The word *filid* comes from the root word for “sight”, and Irish high bards were prized for their insight into situations and their clear articulation of history and present events. By the time the *Uraichech Becc* law tract was written, the *filid* were of a higher social status than the druids and were classed with the lords, while the druids were classed as craftsmen (Williams).

With this in mind, we can more easily understand the great crime Bres Mac Eladain did and why he paid for it.

Bres had proved himself an unpopular and thoughtless king when he took the throne after wounded Nuada was forced to abdicate. The boy was beautiful, but he had disdain for all under his rule. Forcing champions to carry firewood and lords to dig ditches, he humiliated them all from

his high throne.

Now there came a cold night, and in it Caibre came knocking on the door of the king at Tara. “Lord, I come to tell tales for my food and for my keep,” he said when brought before Bres. The young king’s lip curled. “Well then, be about it,” he said.

And so Caibre sang and spoke the evening away for Bres and his folk. But when he had done his work he was taken, not to a good pallet in the castle, but to an outer shed.

It was narrow, dark, and dim. There was neither fire, nor bath, nor bed. Three small oat cakes were brought to him for dinner. Neither butter nor milk was offered. Caibre slept cold and hungry that night.

In the morning, he stood before the court and spoke. “Lord, I have a poem on your hospitality.”

“Well, be about it.” said Bres.

And Caibre spoke.

“Without food upon the platter,
Without a cow’s milk whereon calf thrives,
Without a house in the deep darkness,
Be that the luck of Bres Mac Eladain.”

The bard swept away in a flap of cloak. “Bres’s wealth will fail,” he said as he passed the threshold.

And as the bard said, it was so. By nightfall, Bres had broken out in hives, and by Samhain he had lost the contracts of his men. Soon he lost the throne.

The words we speak have great power for good and ill. We must remember to use our words in ways that help the folk and the world around us. Speak to raise another’s spirits. Speak to right a wrong. Speak to heal what’s harmed. Be thoughtful when you raise your voice, always. But never be afraid.

**Three sorrows that are
better than joy:**

**the heaviness
of a herd
feeding on
mast,**

**the heaviness
of a ripe field,**

**the heaviness
of a wood
under its
burden
of fruit**

Illustration by Olivia Wylie



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Olivia Wylie is a green witch and professional landscaper who specializes in the restoration of neglected gardens. In days of rain or snow she creates works revolving around the connections between human and green lives. She lives in Denver with a very patient husband and a rather impatient cat. You can view her work at www.leafingoutgardening.com

Gods & Spirits, Magic and Prayer

By Rev. Ian Corrigan

“Prayer is a form of magic.” “Magic is applied prayer.” One hears these saws often enough in current discourse about Pagan religion and practical magic. Neither assertion has ever rung the bell for me. I feel as if there is a significant difference between what is done when we pray, and what is done when we work a spell for a practical goal.

Refusing to resort to dictionaries, I assert: “Prayer is a verbal or internal address to a/the Deity. Often it includes a request for specific aid, though it may be or include some other conversation. While traditional prayer was often scripted, traditional and uniform, prayer is also often performed *ex tempore*.” Beyond that description, prayer has the connotation of a request to a “higher power”, and the inevitable implication that the request might be refused. “All prayers are answered” we hear from monotheist apologists, “but sometimes the answer is no.”

Magic arts, on a different hand, intend to cause effects and not merely to ask for them to be caused. Magic is a body of technique that uses spiritual skills to work the individual will of the magician. This is accomplished, in tradition, by a combination of work with the living spirits, and with impersonal spiritual forces. Allies are gathered, patterns woven, and pressure-points targeted in the clever ways that are also used in engineering or even artistic composition. One expects that once one has built skill that doing the work correctly will produce the desired result, without being dependent directly on the will of any higher power. “Magic always works – if you do it right” is the basic aphorism here.

To do a little context, magical manuals are full of prayers and instructions to pray, and how to pray. The preparation for high-end ritual magic com-



monly involves periods of fasting and prayer.

Philosophers have found reason to object to traditional magic because it implies an effort to coerce the gods. This is a reasonable objection – that mortal-level efforts cannot have the juice to coerce a large transpersonal power, any more than we can move a hurricane with fans. Yet traditional magical rites, and the spoken “prayers” they preserve, are full of both invitations and direct commands to Deities and to a variety of other spirits. Here we find the point I intend to make in this piece.

Traditional Magic does not depend on asking the Gods to accomplish our goals.

I think this is the core reason I find magic and prayer to be separate.

If magic is not based on petitioning and requesting, what is its basis? As I said, it is a combination of relationships between the magician and the spirits, and the magician’s ability to employ impersonal spiritual forces. What can be missed by modern students, especially those who are inclined to apply generalized “religious” principles to Paganism, is that the Gods are not the only focus of Pagan religion and sometimes not even the primary focus. I have a point to make about practical work with the Gods, but first let me think about the big Kindreds of non-Deity spirits that play a part in magical work.

Magic of the Dead.

Traditional sorcery is heavily, perhaps predominantly, powered by the Dead. The “hordes of spirits” often summoned to carry out the conjuror’s will are composed of the Restless Dead – those spirits inadequately settled by rites or fate, whose hunger, lust, and anger can be exploited by magic. In our modern lives we are lucky to be far freer from violence than our pre-Christian ancestors could have imagined. Likewise the culture of magical hexing and spellcraft for personal gain at another’s expense is greatly reduced. Many of us work to calm and cool the Restless Dead, not to exploit them.

Ancestor worship is a different matter, concerned with family, affection and reverence. One no more commands one’s Ancestors than one’s grandparents. Rather we maintain our relationship with the Beloved Dead and they become primary protections and instructors. Spirits from our family lineages may become familiar allies or important contacts, but often they remain background counselors and support.

Folk-magic customs may seek aid from a specific spirit. Customs surrounding graveyard dirt and such tokens may call on a specific spirit in a specific grave. In some places such graves have become shrines of a sort, regularly visited by those seeking aid. Magic has always had its “saints”, and even post-Christian magic seems likely to continue the tradition.

That kind of individualizing and personifying can happen with the non-human spirits of nature as well.

Magic of the Land-Spirits.

A variety of magical traditions draw on spirits present as plants and animals. To gather herbs for practical magic is to make a pact with the spirit of the herbs. Plants of special power and lore may be more individualized allies – the mandrake is an example of this kind of plant familiar.



More mobile spirits abide in wind and weather, and can be called to aid the magician, along with the shining beings of sun and moonlight. These spirits, along with the spirits of the green world and even the sea, often appear in the forms of animals. My own intuition is that such animal-formed Landwights were frequently the “familiar spirits” of medieval folk-witches.

Lore is full of tales in which spirits appear as “chimaeras”. In Greek story the Chimaera was a Titan-spirit composed of lion, goat and serpent. Thus the ancients depicted mighty spirits in this composite way. The Satyrs and Centaurs of the Greeks, the Griffins of the east, even the Water-Horse or *Nuckelavee* of Celtic lore use animal forms to display the power of the Nature-Spirits.

Lacking a literate remnant of Northern Pre-Christian magic, we can find many examples of chimaera spirits in the grimoire tradition. The spirits called “demons” in the medieval theological atmosphere of the grimoires can easily be understood as Landwights or “elementals”,



appearing in animal-mixture forms proper to their natures. The medieval Christian cosmology relegated all such beings to demonic status, even the gentle “demons” that teach poetry and herbcraft.

Daemons of the Gods.

It seems reasonable that even the most able mortal should not be able to “command” great transpersonal spiritual forces. Ancient skeptics and modern ones have wondered why the planetary powers of wind or water should respond to our calls. I think a reasonable answer lies in the ancient understanding of the Daemons.

In Hellenic Paganism the relations between mortals and the Gods are managed through the uncountable number of spirit servants attendant on every deity. These spirits were called “daemons” (or “daimons”, same pronunciation...), a word derived from roots meaning “able to act”. The daemons attended the sacrifices as regents of the deities, receiving the offerings and “carrying” them to the Gods, then bearing in turn the Gods’ blessings back to mortal rituals. In doing this they acted (as their name implies) as the active powers of the God, and would have

appeared and acted as the deity, often bearing the symbols and tools of the god. So if a traveler were visited by an apparition of a fine naked young fellow with wings on his hat, he would likely assume it to be both a daemon of Hermes, and a visitation from the God, unconcerned about the distinction of person that might be involved.

It is such daemons of the Gods that magicians seek to employ in practical magic (more here: <http://intothemound.blogspot.com/2014/04/demons-daemons.html>). The magic of the Greco-Egyptian Papyri often explicitly invokes Gods, asks them to send a daemon (or some daemons) and then commands those agents of the God by the borrowed power of the God. In this way one is not, in fact, claiming to command the mighty power that rules the (whatever) of the cosmos, but only their agent, specially selected for and by your magic to be in tune with you and your desire.

So, I feel as if I might define “prayer” as an attempt to invoke and speak directly to the cosmic principle or higher being of a Deity, and to entreat it through supplication (i.e. by asking for something). Magic, in turn, is an effort to bring an active agent of the divine near to the mortal world, and arrange to have them aid your goals. In practice this can be the daemon of a God, or a Land Spirit, or one or more of the Mighty Dead. Note that in basic magical theory it is spirits who are closer to the mortal world, to the world of forms, who have power to act in our realm – far more so than the Great Abstractions that might lie at the top of an imagined Platonic ladder.

Prayer can be used as a technique of magic. Often it is a preparatory technique intended to attune the magician to those Great Abstractions and thus make us more suited to speak with the related spirits. As a practical spiritual technique for getting results, I can see it being useful perhaps with Deities with whom one has developed a long sacrificial relationship. However, I can’t see prayer as the equivalent of practical magic, or imagine that it could have magic’s (still imperfect) reliability or effectiveness.

An Additional Thought from Ian:
A Prayer to the Mothers

In the world of formal neopagan “Church” in which I do my work, people are often moved by the news of the day, and the distant suffering of strangers is brought to us in our hands through our media. Whether or not one supports the involvement of religious work in chosen “causes”, it is the plain goal of Wisdom to help people process our reactions to life's troubling events and choose the best path toward better outcomes. In the Clergy Council of Our Druidry we discussed the creation of prayers and works proper to circumstances as they arise in the socio-political currents.

After a few drafts this arose for me. Writing it brought me up against several bumps in my road to “topical prayer”.

I believe (*not a phrase I start sentences with often*) that my progressive values are simple and rational, and conform well to my polytheism, and even to many (not all!) of the tropes of ancient society. So I ought to be able to write a prayer that asks for the kind of good I want, without beginning to cite specific circumstances that I want changed.

(This produced the insight that a prayer tells the Gods what kind of world you want, while a spell or charm aims to make specific changes...)

I want to write things that seek what is unarguably The Good, regardless of the times, or the circumstances of this quarter's politics, or the specifics of issues. I believe that by doing so I will advance progressive ideas, since those inhere in nature. Likewise I want the work to remain useful even after whatever current political circumstance may have inspired it has passed away.

I feel the asking-for part of this verges a bit close to the recitation-of-modern-political-norms thing, but I still rather like it. May it be a blessing to the work.

**A Prayer to the Mothers
For the Sake of Children**

Let this be a prayer to the Mothers.
To those powers of spirit who bear forth the living
Who nurture the young
Who ladle out sustenance
In the Land, and all kindreds
Among the Gods, you Shining Mothers
And surely among the Beloved Dead
You peace-weavers, home-warders
To you I call.
And Three-fold I call:
To Mother Abundance – that all may be kept whole
To Mother Liberty – that all may walk their paths in freedom
To Mother Wisdom –that together we may build in peace
Mighty Mothers, protect our children.
The children of my hearth, and of my clan,
Of my town and of my valley, of my mountains or plains.
Let the wanderer's children be protected as our own.
Let us value humanity before nationality
Let the freedom of persons be honored
Let us value liberty before conformity
Let the compassionate heart be honored
Let us value kindness before severity
So, Mothers of us All, keep you the hearths of our people.
Let The Fire be lit for all who come with a guest's heart

Rev. Ian Corrigan is a senior priest and Archdruid Emeritus of ADF.



The Guest of Honor

By Nathan Large

Introduction

“The Guest of Honor” was inspired by the idea of depicting ritual as a journey, a path walked by a visitor among the Worlds. In particular, this travel would be a Fool’s Journey from ignorance to wisdom. I used the Core Order of Ritual as the map. This concept transformed into an allegory for ritual as a structured event – a party – in which the participant is one guest among many invited. The resulting story is presented in serial form across four issues for reasons of space, but the section breaks neatly segment major sections of a Core Order Ritual, perhaps not surprisingly. I hope you can follow this journey across the year and enjoy the story not only for its core, but also its outward form.

The Guest of Honor: Part I: Water and Fire

Wet wind slapped Kelly in the face as she ran. She cursed the weather, but the rain was helping as much as hindering her. The young woman might be soaked and shivering, but so were her pursuers. The wet ground slowed them when their tires skidded on the slick pavement. And the flying droplets interfered with everyone’s vision.

If not for those mutual disadvantages, Kelly might already be caught. That the riders continued chasing her at all showed how badly they wanted her... and the prize she carried. Kelly kept the wadded paper sack tucked deep into the pocket of her black, hooded jacket, as dry as she could manage. She had begun running to protect that treasure.

Catching her was becoming less about the prize and more about punishment, as the chase became an exhausting, freezing, frustrating hunt. Her promised pain grew with every city block.

They were almost past the downtown streets.

Along with Nature’s mixed help, Kelly had relied on side alleys and urban obstacles to obscure her and slow down the bicycles. Suburban lawns would offer less cover.

If luck were on her side, she might have found an ideal hiding spot and lost them entirely. Instead, everywhere she could hide was soaking wet: either rained on or flooded out or both. She couldn’t go indoors, either. On a Sunday evening, everything was closed.

Kelly was fleeing toward her home, but home was a long way away. She originally planned to catch a bus back, but waiting at a bus stop was no longer an option. Once the horde marked her as a target, she ran and had to keep running.

Kelly felt alone in the world: just her and her tormentors. Everyone else was indoors or inside a car. *Nobody* walked at that time on that day in that weather. *Nobody ran*. *Nobody* should be biking, either, but these were idiots. Otherwise, they’d call the hunt a loss and go home.

The situation was long past reason. They were out for blood. Kelly started to think seriously about dropping the bag, just to see if it would buy her some time. But no, that was surrender. Giving up would make all her effort foolish, in hindsight.

And it wasn’t like she could ask someone for help. Even if anyone was around, what would they do? Call the police? By the time officers showed up, Kelly would be a bloody smear washing away on the pavement. Even if the police did save her, they’d probably take the bag away. No good options.

Her thoughts made the man’s appearance even more startling. A tall, broad elder in a bright blue rain slicker stepped out of a garage, crossing her path. His thick white-blond beard jutted from beneath his lowered hood. Seeing Kelly racing toward him, he raised his hands.

“Whoa! Going to hurt someone like that. Probably yourself.”

Staggering to a halt, Kelly looked past him, into the dark, dry garage. It was a big space, mostly filled by a tarp-wrapped boat.

She leaned over to catch her breath. “There’s... guys... chasing. Can I...?”

Fortunately, he understood her breathless gaps. “Sure.” He jerked a thumb toward a shadowed corner. “Not much room to hide in, though.”

Kelly managed to string together more complete thoughts: “Gets the rain off. Catch my breath. Won’t keep you long.”

The man stepped under the garage door and removed his hood. He had a weathered look, long bleached hair and tanned skin. Bright eyes and wrinkles warred to define his age. When he smiled at her, his teeth were large and white.

“What kind of trouble is this, exactly?” he asked with a wave outside.

Kelly inhaled deeply to cover her fears. Then, she tried: “Some kids are chasing me, trying to beat me up and steal my stuff.”

His brushy eyebrows shot up. “Oh? I should call the police.”

“No!” Kelly gasped, then shook her head. “I mean, I thought of that. But they’d be too slow. These guys are serious. If I hold still anywhere, they’ll find me. They’re probably close now, looking. I’ll be half-dead before the cops even start driving.”

“Need somewhere to hide until this strife blows over?”

“That’s... thanks, but you won’t stop them. I don’t want to get you hurt, too. I’m almost recovered. Thanks for the dry spot.”

“You know what? I have some friends next door. They could let you wait there. They’re having a party... you’d have plenty of company. *I’d* think twice about trying anything with that crowd around.”

Kelly gave the offer some thought. Being indoors would be preferable. Much safer. And more comfortable. She might even outwait the gang. The problem was, she didn’t know this man or any of his “friends”. She could be walking right into a kidnapping... or worse, a bunch of missionaries.

“Uh... I don’t...” Kelly stopped speaking as she heard shouts, loud even through the rain. She imagined she heard the rattle of chains and the squeak of rubber. They were close. “... sure!” she finished. “Let’s go!”

With a chuckle, the man flipped up his hood and stepped out into the rain. “This way. Not too far.” He trudged along the sidewalk without looking back.

Kelly followed, quickly and with nervous glances up and down the street. When a stray biker crossed a nearby intersection, she looked away fast, hoping they’d either missed her or mistaken her for someone else.

The Captain – as Kelly named him in her mind – led her two doors away, to the porch of an old Victorian townhouse squeezed between two modern duplex apartments. He hopped up the stairs while Kelly took the slippery bare wood more carefully.

The Captain rapped hard on the heavy carved door, rattling its stained-glass transom. “Hello, the house!” he called, so loudly Kelly flinched, imagining her pursuers hearing it from miles away. “A guest needs a port!”

After a few seconds, the door unlatched and opened, answered by another well-built blonde man, but one much younger and shaven, dressed in a thick white sweater and beige corduroys. “Man, what’s this?” he asked, looking at his familiar neighbor.

“Some riders are chasing this girl through the storm,” the bearded elder said. “She needs a place to hide out, dry off, and call for help.”

“Riders? A gang, you mean?” The young man

flexed muscles evident even beneath heavy wool. “You want me to chase them off?”

“That shouldn’t be necessary,” the Captain answered, pre-empting Kelly’s own protest. “In fact, I gather the lady prefers to avoid a confrontation.”

Kelly nodded. “Yeah, if I can just get out of sight, they’ll probably go away. And if I make a court case out of it, they’ll just kick my ass harder next time.”

The young man looked skeptical but shrugged. “Your business, I suppose. But happy to help you, either way. Come on in. You joining us, Man?”

The elder shook his head. “I left my garage open, and I had work to do before that. You carry on without me. I’ll keep an eye out for those riders, though.”

“Thanks,” Kelly said with feeling. “And you, too,” she added to the young man.

“Lewis,” he supplied, putting out a hand as he stepped back to let her enter. “Welcome to the party. I mean, you don’t *have* to join us, but you might as well since you’re here. The guests haven’t shown up yet, so it’s no trouble to set another place.”

Kelly shook hands and entered, leaving “Man” to hurry back to his own home. She paused in surprise as Lewis closed the door behind them.

The entry of the house was an experience in itself. Unlike anything she’d seen before, the entire hall was paneled in wood, in squares carved with scenes of trees, flowers, vines and small animals. A bounding rabbit stared at Kelly from the wall. The smell of wood soap wove through stronger scents of flowery perfume, baking bread, and wood smoke. Kelly could hear a fire crackling in a hearth nearby. Burning wood? In the city? These people were rich, crazy, or both.

The flowery smell was coming from actual flowers. Potted plants surrounded the entryway

on stands, a mix of broad green leaves, spiky fronds, and in one case, a vine studded with soft white blooms.

As a crowning archaism, a tall wooden stand held an enameled metal washbasin, which was actually half-full of clean water, a wet washcloth and bar of soap at its side.

“Towel?” Lewis offered, reaching for a stack beneath the washstand.

“Uh, sure,” Kelly accepted, flipping down her hood and scrubbing at her hair with the fluffy cloth.

“I’ll let the hosts know you’re here,” Lewis said, stomping away before Kelly could object. “Mom! Dad! Unexpected guest!” he called around a corner, his voice echoing through a larger side room.

“Be right there!” came another male voice, rattling down the stairwell from the upper floor.

“So much shouting!” came a deep but female voice from across the hall, in the direction of the fire sounds.

Kelly, left momentarily alone, soon found herself at the center of a converging trio. Lewis stepped back into the hall, joined by a broad-shouldered, broad-bellied, bright-faced balding man trotting down the stairs and an equally wide but graceful matron sweeping in from the opposite side, her curly auburn hair bouncing in every direction. Both were dressed in what Kelly assumed were their party clothes: dark blue slacks and a robin’s-egg dress shirt for him, with a silk tie patterned in gold; for her, a long, heavy mud-brown skirt under a frilled green peasant blouse.

“Who’s this?” the man boomed. He stared intently at Kelly, as if trying to knock her down with his gaze.

“Shush,” said the woman, shooing him back. “She’s a guest. A wet and tired-looking one. Introductions can wait. Let’s get her to... the bathroom... then the fire. That order, I think.” She smiled warmly, showing deep dimples.

Lewis looked at them both with amusement.

“Man said she was avoiding some enemies. I didn’t think it would hurt to have her join us.”

“Of course not,” the woman said, reaching for Kelly. She paused. “Can I help you with your jacket, dear?”

“I got it,” Kelly said, unzipping the wet covering. Then, realizing she sounded rude, she added, “Thanks, though. I’ll take that bathroom. You got a hair dryer? Clothes dryer?”

“Nope!” boasted the round man. “Just the fire. That’ll work, though. I’ll get some hot water on. Tea. Maybe something stronger.”

“Not for her,” the woman chided.

“For me, then. This party sounds like it’s going to be more interesting than usual.”

As they dispersed to their tasks, Lewis led Kelly upstairs to a bathroom as quaint as the rest of the house. In the stairwell, she passed framed pictures that were actually painted portraits rather than photographs. The toilet had its tank mounted high on the wall, far above the bowl. The sink had a pump rather than taps.

“Did I go back a hundred years?” she joked as Lewis showed her how to pull up water.

“No, they’re just old-fashioned,” he deferred. “Mom and Dad have been doing things their way for years and aren’t about to change. Some of their friends are even older. They appreciate a slower pace, too.”

“Are they your parents?” Kelly asked as they swapped places, Lewis exiting into the landing hall.

“Yes and no,” he answered. “They’re everyone’s parents, you could say. Not directly, though. Everyone just thinks of them as Mom and Dad. You’ll see.”

“Yeah, they seem motherly-fatherly. Okay, see you downstairs,” Kelly said before closing the door.

She exhaled for a moment to collect her thoughts. This was weird. Not bad, maybe, but weird. Nice people. Strange people. Seemed like they had

money. She thought about the paintings and then stopped herself. It wasn’t worth risking her refuge to start appraising its contents.

Kelly pulled the bag out of her pocket and checked it carefully. A little damp, but still intact. The contents were dry. Good. She wadded it up and stuck it into the pocket of her jeans. Her pants were at least half-dry, on top.

Kelly pulled off the soaked jacket and wrung it out over the cast-iron clawfoot tub. She decided her t-shirt underneath was still dry enough for decency. She peeled off her shoes and socks. Her feet were red and a little raw. A dryer would be nice, but the fire would work well enough.

She just hoped she wouldn’t have to leave again fast. The rain was still coming down, though with less intensity. Kelly looked out the window to check... and froze.

A group of three bicycle riders went past on the street, slowly, weaving back and forth to check nearby yards. One of them had a flashlight, which he was shining onto porches, into dog-houses and sheds.

They weren’t giving up. They were getting closer. Whatever else she decided, Kelly wasn’t going outside anytime soon.

To be continued...

*Nathan Large is a writer and storyteller, working primarily in speculative fiction with frequent mythological themes. After twenty years of storytelling across varieties of role-playing – and two years of live public practice – his fascination with the power of folk tales and myths, ancient and modern, continues to grow. He recently released the first two novels in his *Empyrean Dreams sci-fi series with Laine Megan Lundquist; two more should follow this year. Nathan also creates as acting Secretary of the Games and Play SIG and Secretary of Whispering Lakes Grove, Erie, PA.**

Book Review: Song of the Vikings: Snorri and the Making of Norse Myths

Reviewed by Rev. D. Rowen Grove

Song of the Vikings: Snorri and the Making of Norse Myths

By Nancy Marie Brown

Palgrave Macmillan

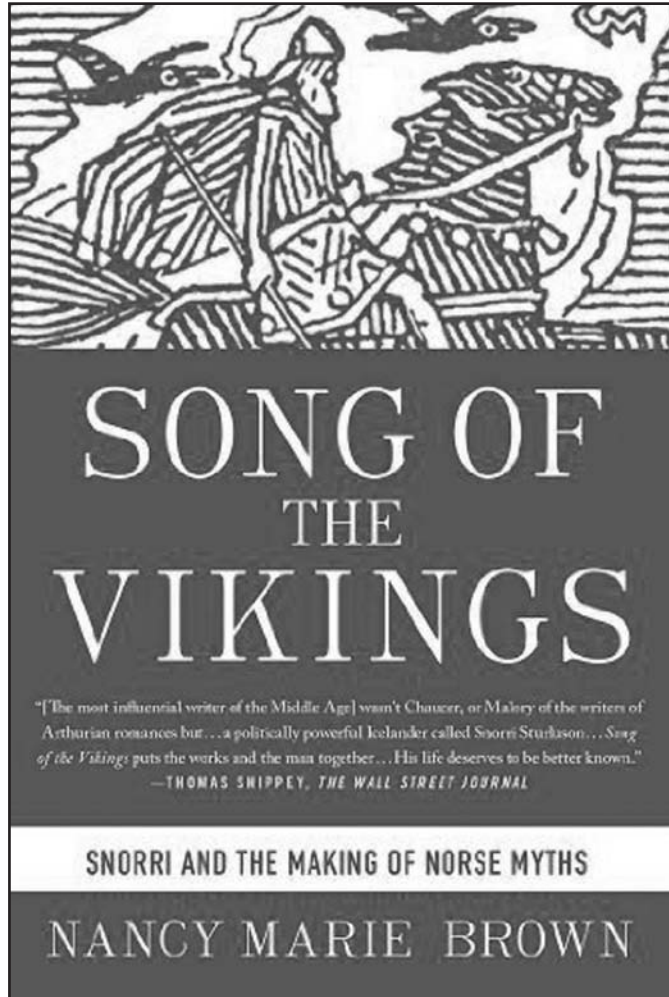
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In *Song of the Vikings*, Nancy Marie Brown brings to vivid life an era of poetic Viking skalds, of blood feuds, intrigue, and vengeance raids, of fierce queens, clever bargainers, and mythic wanderers, when there were magic-workers, berserkers, elf-kin, trolls, and giants living alongside ordinary human folk, all in the stark, beautiful landscape of the North. I had previously been aware of Snorri Sturluson as someone who was connected with Norse and Icelandic mythology, but hadn't realized the extent to which he is our main – and sometimes only – source for many of the tales. Much of what we now know concerning the adventures and misadventures of the Norse Gods, the Well of Wisdom, Yggdrasil the World Tree, the Midgard Serpent, and Ragnarök, the Twilight of the Gods, is derived from Snorri's works.

Snorri Sturluson was a thirteenth century Icelandic chieftain, considered by many scholars to have been first among the Icelandic medieval authors. An historian, landowner, and the Law Speaker of Iceland's high court, as well as an advocate for the preservation of the Norse lore and mythology of his time, Sturluson was the author of major contributions to the Norse lore: the *Edda* and the *Heimskringla*. He was in addition a talented skald, a lawyer, an intriguer, a diplomat ... and not exactly a heroic figure. Fond of his food and drink, plump, a little timid, and a collector of old lore, he resembled more closely one of Tolkien's hobbits than the archetypal Viking warrior of the sagas. He has been called a brilliant scoundrel, "the Homer of the North", and the most important writer the world ever forgot. Tolkien considered him to have been more central to English literature than Shakespeare (with whom he was annoyed because of his depiction of the elves). In *Song of the Vikings*, the author discusses Snorri's numerous flaws (including his

self-serving nature) but neither excuses them, nor depicts him as villainous, and her treatment of the Icelandic culture is similarly balanced. Although Snorri is always at the center of the tale, the book is also a description of the unique culture and people of medieval Iceland, struggling with the challenges of religious changes, shifting political



alliances), and perhaps above all, the difficulties of living in their stark, rugged, gorgeous island homeland. She discusses the early days of Iceland's founding by adventurous folk escaping the rule of a disliked king, the complications of the introduction of Christianity, and Iceland's later domination by Norway, deftly leading the reader through the dense, multi-generational family feuds and counter-feuds, politics, wars, raids, and revenge battles so characteristic of the era. Brown also points out that in the Norse mythological tales of the creation of the world, born out of fire and ice, between volcanoes and



glaciers, it is specifically Iceland, and not the earlier homes of the Norsemen, which is being referenced, for it is Iceland which has those geologic features, as Norway, Sweden, and Denmark do not.

In the last chapter, Brown stresses the degree to which Snorri's work influenced a diverse group of writers and societies including (but hardly limited to) eighteenth century antiquarians and the German Nationalist movement; Thomas Carlyle and Richard Wagner; William Morris, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Neil Gaiman. In Tolkien's work alone, the archetypal wizard Gandalf, whose name is from the Old Norse, signifying "wand-elf", (from *gandr* "wand, staff" and *álf* "elf") is loosely patterned after Odin, although the name belongs to a dwarf in the *Völuspá*. The names of all the dwarves in Tolkien's books are all pulled from folk mentioned in Snorri's work – only one example of the Icelander's deep influence on the modern fantasy movement.

The first English-language book published on Snorri in 30 years, *Song of the Vikings* will surely be intriguing to students of the lore as well as casual historians, giving us a vivid, evocative glimpse of the fierce, bleak, and beautiful world of the sagas.

I had the pleasure of reading this accessible and interesting book shortly before a trip to Iceland, and it added to my experiences there. I stood by the site of Snorri's camp at the Þingvellir, by where the Law Speaker's rock rises above the valley, and thought of the generations of folk who had come there to resolve quarrels and difficulties. Earlier in the trip, I had visited the site of Snorri's home at Reykolt in western Iceland, which now features an historic exhibition, a conference center, and an excellent academic book store. Although the stone-lined bathing pool, which actually predates him and is sometimes colloquially known as "Snorri's hot tub", is the only surviving medieval feature, in his time there was an underground passage leading from the farmstead out to the natural hot spring. One cannot but help picture the clever, wily Snorri reclining in his hot bath, sipping mead, scheming and conversing with his friends.

Rev. D. Rowen Grove joined ADF in the spring of 2010 and completed her Dedicant Path work two years later. She became an ADF Initiate in 2015 and was ordained an ADF Priest in 2016. She is currently Senior Druid of Chokecherry Grove, ADF, in Denver, Colorado, and ADF Preceptor.

Celtic Myth in the 21st Century: The Gods and their Stories in a Global Perspective

Reviewed by Rev. G. R. Grove

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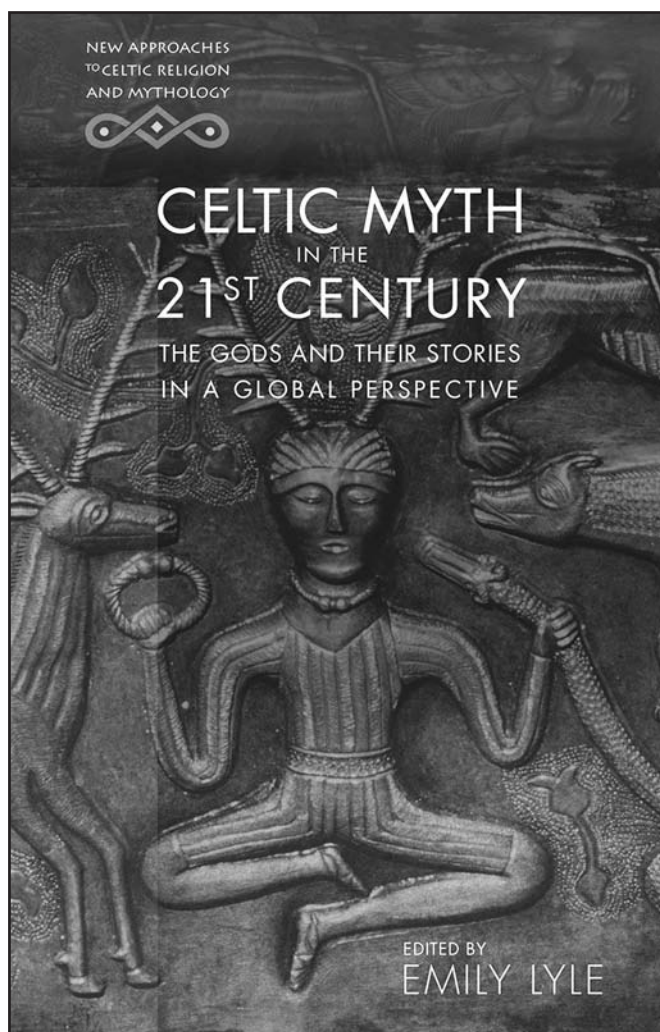
This book consists of a collection of scholarly articles, all but one of them deriving from a series of colloquia held between 2013 and 2015 by the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh on the topic “Thinking about Celtic Mythology in the 21st Century”. To quote from the Series Editor Jonathan M. Wooding’s introduction, “[t]his collection, as a whole, models a series of approaches that offer new and imaginative uses of mythology as a method of criticism”.

I ordered this book after information about it was posted in the ADF Facebook discussion group by Sharon Paice MacLeod, one of the authors. The topics listed seemed to me to make it a suitable subject for a review in *Oak Leaves*, and I was right. The writing styles and approaches to their material of the twelve authors vary considerably, but I found most of the pieces interesting, enjoyable, and even exciting. The notes at the end of each article were also useful, sending me off on a quest for new publications to aid in my own research and writing, while at the same time I was pleased to see references to old friends.

This is not, however, a book for the beginner in Celtic mythological studies. A few of the articles are highly technical, most appear to be directed to the professional scholar rather than the casual reader, and almost all assume some familiarity with the material. In terms of our ADF study programs, this book might be a useful additional reference for, let us say, one of our Indo-European Studies or Indo-European Mythology courses. Despite the reference to “a global perspective” in the title, most of the discussion centers on Irish and to a lesser extent Welsh and Breton material, with a couple of leaps to India

and Greece for brief comparisons.

Despite these caveats, I enjoyed reading this book and am glad I acquired it. As I find can no “look inside” feature for it on Amazon, I have included the table of contents below, together with the first sentence of each article to give the perspective reader a taste of each author’s style.



Contents and initial sentences:

Introduction: Celtic Mythology in the 21st Century - Jonathan Wooding, Series Editor

Section 1: Myth and the Medieval

1. *God and Gods in the Seventh Century: Tírechán on St Patrick and King Lóegaire’s Daughters* – Elizabeth A. Gray. “Stories about the gods of pagan Ireland lie barely below the surface of Tírechán’s account of

the meeting between Patrick and two daughters of King Lóegaire on the slopes of Cruachan...”

2. *Time, Identity and the Otherworld: A Note on The Wooing of Étaín* – John Carey. “In a lucid and insightful study of the Old Irish tale *Tochmarc Étaíne* (‘The Wooing of Étaín), Thomas Charles-Edwards distinguishes between elements in the story that are ‘relatively unambiguous’ and those that ‘hover on the margins’.”
3. *The Celtic Dragon Myth Revisited* – Joseph F. Nagy. “In 1911, the year before his death, George Henderson, Lecturer of Celtic at the University of Glasgow, published *The Celtic Dragon Myth*, which included a lengthy introduction by him concerning traditional stories about dragons and dragon-slayers from around the world; a translation of the medieval Irish text *Táin Bó Froích* ‘Cattle-Raid of Froech’, a saga that features not just one but two arguably dragon-like creatures...”
4. *Tory Island and Mount Errigal: Landscape Surrogates in Donegal for the Gods Balor and Lug* – Brian Lacey. “The early medieval text *The Second Battle of Mag Tuired* has been characterized as ‘the most important Irish mythological tale’.”

Section 2: Comparative Mythology

5. *Ireland as Mesocosm* – Grigory Bondarenko. “In attempting to understand the major principles of early Irish cosmology one has to define how the island of Ireland was perceived in the early world-view (*imago mundi*).”
6. *Hunting the Deer in Celtic and Indo-European Mythological Contexts* – Maxim Fomin. “This chapter explores various mythological concepts concerning the domestication of space and the taming of wild nature, the hunt of the deer as the epitome of the process, including its subject (‘the hunter’) and the object (‘the prey’), the interrelationship between the two and their independence on each other for their subsequent survival and success.”

7. *Gods, Poets and Entheogens: Ingesting Wisdom in Early Irish Literary Sources* – Sharon Paice MacLeod. “This chapter will explore early Irish literary sources that feature stories pertaining to early Irish deities and supernatural figures, and contain symbolism associated with the ingestion of foods or other substances believed to provide access to the wisdom of the otherworld.”
8. *The Armorican Voyage to the Afterlife and Celtic Myths* – Fañch Bihan-Gallic. “In August 1923, Félix Tual, mayor of Molenez, was on his deathbed.”

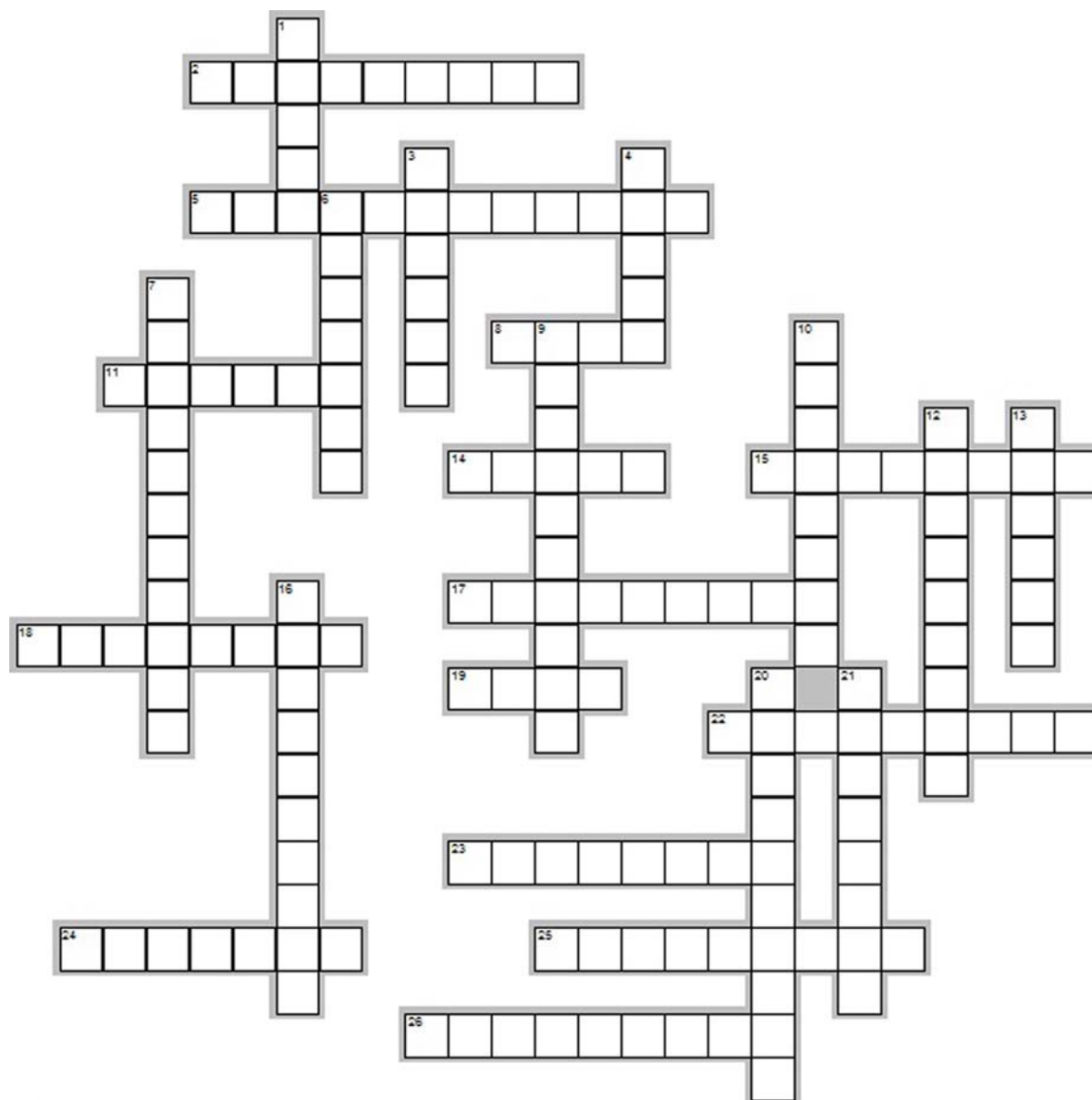
Section 3: The New Cosmological Approach

9. *Towards Adopting a Double Perspective on Celtic Mythology and its Prehistoric Roots* – Emily Lyle. “The premise of this chapter is that the gods we know in stories were first imagined in prehistory and that we can only understand some aspects of Celtic mythology by reflecting on it in this context.”
10. *Sisters’ Sons in the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi* – Anna June Pagé. “The central relationships in *Math uab Mathonwy*, the Fourth Branch of the *Mabinogi*, are those between uncles and nephews.”
11. *Fashioner Gods in Ireland and India: The Dagda and Tvastr* – John Shaw. “In the list of gods from the pre-Christian Celtic world, there is little doubt concerning the importance of the Dagda, who makes his first appearance in the mythological stories of medieval Ireland.”
12. *Psycho-Cosmology: Mental Mapping in Táin Bó Cuailgne* – James Carney. “The last fifty years have not been kind to systematizing cultural models. The post-*soixante-huit* emphasis on the archaic, the ludic and the fragmentary has come, more or less explicitly, at the expense of approaches that nominate structure, organization and totality as guiding heuristics.”

Rev. G. R. Grove joined ADF in December 2009. She completed her DP work in 2012, and became a Master Bard in 2013 and an ADF Initiate in 2015. She was ordained in 2016, and is currently EIC of Oak Leaves.

Deity Names That Became Words

By Chris:)



Across

2. (R) Goddess of rejoicing and humor
5. (R) She is the Goddess of peace
8. (R) Goddess of popularity and rumor
11. (R) God of wells and springs
14. (R) Goddess of love
15. (R) This goddess rules over justness
17. (R) She is the Goddess of agreements
18. (R) Pray to her if you want to win
19. (R) Goddess of the rainbow
22. (R) Goddess of Roman security
23. (R) She is the Goddess of liberty
24. (R) She is the Goddess of prosperity
25. (R) Goddess of good luck & success
26. (R) The Goddess of forgiveness and mercy

Down

1. (R) She rules over the plant realm
3. (R) A Goddess of dawn
4. (R) She rules over the animal realm
6. (R) This Goddess rules over revenge
7. (R) Goddess of forethought
9. (R) She is the Goddess of abundance and prosperity
10. (R) A Goddess of pleasure
12. (R) She rules over strife and disharmony
13. (R) She is the Goddess of duty
16. (R) She rules over discipline
20. (R) Goddess of necessity
21. (R) The Goddess of youth

The Poets

Thomas Brown: *Hail Ye Kindred!* Thomas is a prisoner member of Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF) and Frog Stone Circle. He is also a goal oriented and pragmatic ADF Master Bard, the newly Chaired Bard of the Darkstone Nemeton, and self-proclaimed Hearth Keeper. He enjoys participating in the spiritual and magical work of Our Druidry, Druidism, and Draiocht.

Diane Cacciato: *Summerland.* Diane joined ADF in 2017 and is the Grove Organizer for Garry Oak Protogrove. She 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. G. R. "Gwernin" Grove: *What Is Remembered Lives.* 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 Past 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.

Victoria Laughlin-Casares: *In Memoriam.* Victoria became a Dedicant in 2013 and is currently working on the Initiates Path. She is an active member of many SIGs, especially the Solitaries and Safe Haven SIGs, and the Norse

Kin. This is her first Oak Leaves submission.

Jenne Micale: *Tea with Brigid.* Jenne is a writer, singer, priestess and musician whose endeavors include the ethereal/wyrd folk project Kwannon and, in former times, the wyrd folk band Belladonna Bouquet. A former initiate of the Henge of Keltria, she won the 2009 DANAC Golden Oak Award for best Druidical essay, and has published articles and poetry in a variety of publications. She is currently Bard of the ADF Protogrove of the Three Gorges. Listen to her music at www.kwannon.net.

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

Birgit Reinartz: *Prayer to Sigyn, Prayer to Delling.* Birgit joined ADF in 2013. She is a Solitary member and lives in Germany

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



News and Announcements

Program & Path Completions

Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano
 First Circle - Arts
 Date completed: April 2018

Rev. Amber Ferrebee
 Initiates Program
 Date completed May 2018

Rev. Melissa Ashton
 Clergy Circle 2
 June 2018

~Congratulations to all~

Upcoming Events

Beyond The Gates (Panpagan)
 August 30-Sept 2, 2018
 Trout Lake, WA

Summerland Festival (ADF)
 August 16-19, 2018
 Yellow Springs, OH

Midnight Flame (ADF)
 September 6-9, 2018
 Bellaire, MI

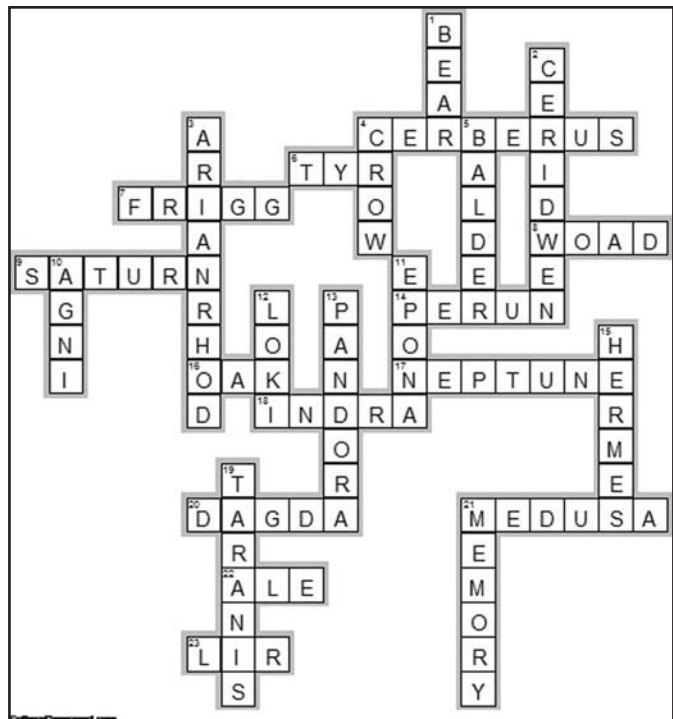
Rocky Mountain Retreat (ADF)
 September 21-23, 2018
 Colorado Springs, CO

Harvest Nights (ADF)
 November 9-11, 2018
 Otis, MA

For more festival information see
www.adf.org/events

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Easy Myth (from Summer Issue) Answer Key





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Ár nDraiocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

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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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CHOKECHERRY GROVE, ADF'S
THIRD ANNUAL
ROCKY MOUNTAIN RETREAT
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FEATURED SPEAKERS:
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