

OAK LEAVES

The Quarterly Journal of Ár nDraíocht Féin Spring 2020 ~ Issue No. 88



TO CONJURE A HOUSE-GUARD

Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones
All you beings who come to my fire,
Who know my voice and face, hear me, now, I pray.

I call for spirits of strength, of watchful warding, of careful caring
Strong as stone, watchful as stars and sun
Those who love me, and this place,
And who love peace and good order
Whether you are my beloved ancestors
Or the wights of the very stone and soil of this place,
Or the daemons of my own Shining Gods

By the Gods of the Hearth and of the Doorway
By the Offerings I give, and the blessings I receive,
I call by the Light of Hearth-fire: keep safe my Home.
I call by the Water that flows and cleanses: keep whole my home
I give you this offering and ask you to come to my aid

Stand at the doors, spirits, this I ask
Hold fast this stead, turn aside ill
Whether person or chance or the errant thread of fate
From the Four Winds, or from Heaven or Earth
Or by any element
When I bide or when I go
That me, and mine, who bide herein
Be guarded.
By Wisdom, Love, and Power,
So be it!

REV. IAN CORRIGAN

This incantation can be used as you may please, but if you wish to employ it as a full calling of local spirit-guardians, then arrange an offering of incense in the center of a conjuring-table such as the one shown, using sigils of protection and strength. The offering can be of hot or strong scents - Dragons Blood, or Cinnamon or even Rose, for its Thorns. Light the offering when the text calls for it to be given, and open your Threshold Sight to the presence of those spirits who answer your call. Recite the final portion of the text as the charge to the spirits, and bide a while as the offering burns away.





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OAK LEAVES

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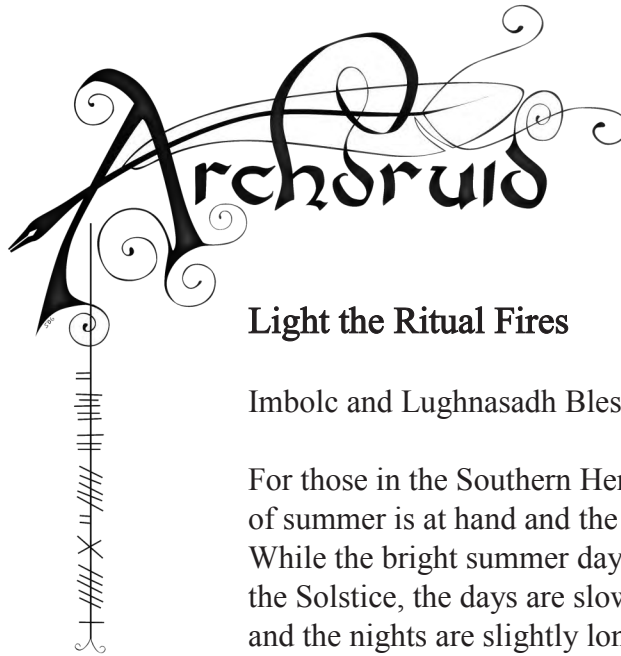
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Rev. G. R. Grove

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Light the Ritual Fires

Imbolc and Lughnasadh Blessings to one and all!

For those in the Southern Hemisphere, the height of summer is at hand and the harvests loom near. While the bright summer days have lingered from the Solstice, the days are slowly growing shorter and the nights are slightly longer. There is much of the year left, but the harvests remind us that the cycles of the seasons march ever-onwards.

Lughnasadh was a festival, in the Celtic world, that honored the Goddess Tailtiu, foster mother of Lugh, who died of exhaustion after clearing the plains of Ireland for agriculture. At the height of the growing season and right before harvest and the Fire Festival turn to Samhain, we find a festival dedicated to an Ancestor, Tailtiu. We honor the Ancestors at this Fire.



For those in the Northern Hemisphere, the first glimmers of the returning spring are in evidence at Imbolc. Imbolc, in the Gaelic world, is the first stirring of life after the long cold of the Solstice. Right after the Winter Solstice, the first day is longer by seconds, but the trend continues with the barely perceptible earlier dawns and somewhat later sunsets. We may not see it with our eyes, but somehow, we feel it in our very beings.

Imbolc was the time when the ewes began to lactate in anticipation of the new births, early in the year. From the darkest of days, life, insistent, approaches. Streams and other bodies of water, once frozen solid, show days of water and movement amidst the frozen and the cold. It is a time when the spirits of nature and the natural world itself begin to stir and life quickens in anticipation. We honor the spirits of nature at our fire.

With the beginning of the calendar year, it is a good time to review our virtues and remind ourselves of their place in our lives and what they mean, not only in general, but specifically to us. Wisdom, piety, vision, courage, integrity, perseverance, hospitality, moderation, and fertility. Hopefully, they are more than just words and provide meditation points for our members as they pursue their practice with the Earth Mother, the Spirits of Inspiration, the Ancestors, the Spirits of Nature, and the Shining Ones.

Perhaps a weekly mediation on one virtue at a time, or – if one is so moved – a daily meditation on the meaning of the virtue and how it fits into our lives and workings is a good way to spend the lengthening days or the long, sunny days that grow shorter with each dusk and dawn. For those who have done the Dedicant Program, it is a good review. The virtues aren't a one-time pass through, but a well that we can draw inspiration and insight from, time and time again. In some ways, it is a well of inspiration. For those that haven't done the Dedicant Program, it is a good way to familiarize oneself with the virtues. Using the virtues in devotional practice is not only a good way to learn them, but a better way to make them a part of one's life.



For those looking for an introduction to ADF practice, may I recommend our Hearthkeeper's Program? Both members and non-members alike can establish a hearth and undertake the meaningful path to worship and understanding as detailed in the accompanying manual. I recommend it to our solitary members and Grove members alike. I have created my own Hearth and included it in my practice.

Blessings of the seasons to one and all and may the fires of Imbolc and Lughnasadh burn bright in your lives.

Blessings,
Rev. Jean (Drum) Pagano
Archdruid, ADF

Spring Issue of Oak Leaves

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

Although wintery weather is still with many of us here in the north, we stand nevertheless on the threshold of Spring. Rev. Jean “Drum” Pagano’s column, as usual, considers the position of those of us in both the northern and southern hemispheres, where Imbolc faces Lughnasadh, the two halves of our world in balance, as we begin a new decade.

In response to a lot of last year’s internal turbulence in our organization (referred to by Rev. Sean Harburgh in his last Vice Archdruid

our poetry section for this issue begins with a submission by another prison member, William “Eonan” Graham.

Nathan Large provides us with both poetry and a story this time, and several other poets (Jenne Micale, Rev. Jean “Drum” Pagano, Rev. Amber Ferree, Red Son, and Jeffrey Keefer) also share the fruits of their bardic inspiration. Diane Cacciato shares a guided meditation, and Rev. Ian Corrigan shares his thoughts. John Hijatt tells us of his reaction to a new and interesting Norse



column), I asked James Myers to explain why our leaders do not always react to crisis situations as rapidly as some of us would like. His discussion of parliamentary procedure makes the problems of a board of directors much clearer, and I thank him for his explanation.

Turning to matters seasonal, Rev. D. Rowen Grove tells us of her experiences visiting the holy wells at Kildare, Ireland, associated with Brighid, and also provides two recipes for fresh cheeses – most appropriate for Imbolc! In another exposition of Irish history and customs, Olivia Wylie tells us of the meaning of holly in that tradition. Ted P. Gilliland meanwhile tells us of the steps his prison group went through to develop their Druid worship group, Corvus Harborstead, and

divination deck. At the academic end, I have contributed a selection from one of my Clergy Training courses concerning ritual use of intoxicating beverages in two very different cultures, and also reviewed one of my favorite Greek sources, Sarah Iles Johnston’s *Ancient Greek Divination*. The issue finishes up with the usual puzzle and news sections, and something different – a recipe for “*Sun Eggs*”!

As usual, I thank all contributors, and encourage future submissions – send them to oak-leaves@adf.org! Remember, we wouldn’t have this magazine without you!

Blessings,
Rev. G. R. Grove

Parliamentary Procedure and How It Affects You

By James "RavenSea" Myers

What is parliamentary procedure? All organizations have protocols, rules, guidelines, and standard operating procedures (SOP). To some, the responses of an organization may seem delayed or not quick enough. Depending on the scenario, this can become frustrating to those who are awaiting a reply from their leadership. Let me be the first to assure you that the timeliness of an organization's answer is not due to apathy nor laziness. It's simply because of the procedures and protocols they are bound to follow.

I have been intimately involved with many secular and religious non-profit organizations for decades, as well as covering state and local government as a photojournalist for 20 years. They have one thing in common. They all follow the organizational procedures laid out in "Robert's Rules of Order." This is known as the "gold standard" for parliamentary procedure. Everything must be done in a very specific and proper order. This ensures that nothing is overlooked and that all voices and points of view are heard.

The simplest thing like having a "quorum" is essential to doing anything. This is the bare minimum number of people required to make even the smallest decision. Sometimes getting in touch with enough people to gather for a vote can be quite a challenge. Even in an emergency there are special procedures in place, but there must still be a set number of people in attendance (or on speakerphone or video chat). Bottom line is that without a quorum, nothing can be done... period!

After the time it takes to rally everyone needed, then there are steps that must be taken in each meeting to facilitate action. There are a lot of moving parts in every meeting. First someone

makes a motion. A motion is the requested action they want to take. Then that motion must be "seconded" by another member or it "dies for lack of a second". Next up is the discussion or debate of the topic. This is the most arduous part of the process and can go on ad nauseum. Once all debate has been completed, finally a vote is taken. If it passes, only then can the action be taken, whatever it may be.

When a governing body needs to make a formal statement on an issue, the same rules apply. While many of the members may have very strong opinions on a topic, it is not only improper for them to speak out publicly for the organization, it is against the rules. Even the head of the organization cannot step out and make a statement that appears to come from the whole without having the input and agreement of the group. This is very important. If one person speaks for the group, it carries the weight of the entire organization. That is a lot of responsibility and must be done properly. It must be done with a great deal of thought and consideration as to what to say. Words matter, and crafting the appropriate response is critical. Often there are several drafts submitted for consideration before one is agreed upon.

Being in any governing body, be it a board, committee, city council, or even Congress itself, is not for the timid. It takes a great deal of your time and energy. It can be, and quite often is, exhausting. It taxes you mentally, and the stress levels take a toll on your body. No one enters any of these positions if they do not care about the greater good of the organization and the people they are sworn to help. So, you can be certain that when an issue arises, they are doing their best to quickly act. A little patience and understanding of how things work can make all the difference when awaiting an answer from your

organization. Perhaps even taking a moment to say thank you and show your appreciation to the members of that board would go a long way. Remember, this is a thankless and demanding job.

James has been on the governing boards for several veterans' groups (Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion). He also spent 20 years covering local, state, and national government as a photojournalist. A portion of that time was with the Capitol Press Corps in Sacramento. He is currently working as a photojournalist.



Words From the Vice Archdruid

By Rev. Sean Harbaugh

Happy spring to everyone,

The weather is once again changing as the wheel of the year continues to move forward. The trees are budding, and the thaw is beginning to expose the earth below the snow. The days are noticeably longer and warmer. It's a time for new beginnings. As I wrap up my tenth and final year on the Mother Grove, it certainly is time for a new beginning for the organization. I'm proud of my decade of service to ADF as a member of its Board, and I hope history will look kindly on the accomplishments that have been made in that time.

As ADF looks to the future, it is time for fresh perspectives and ideas to take center stage if we

are to survive as a church. We have been hit hard with some difficult issues, and if we are to overcome them, we need to change and evolve into a modern Neopagan church. We talk about "Why not excellence", but we are far away from that. Until we can look within ourselves and be the change, we will always be missing our mark. That means we must acknowledge our shortcomings from the past, understand that we need to let go of that which no longer serves us, and move forward into the future with hope, trust, and love. It is only through hope, trust, and love can we truly find excellence.

Nine-fold blessings,
Rev. Sean W Harbaugh

A Wandering Druid in Kildare

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

I have had a connection to Brighid for some decades, regarding Her as one of my “Patrons” long before I encountered ADF, and it had been a longtime desire of mine to visit Kildare, where She has over the centuries been honored both as Goddess and Saint. Tracking the worship of Brighid in Ireland is complicated; some consider that the Goddess and member of the Tuatha de Danann, and the sixth-century Saint, are in some way the same Individual; some think that an early, human Christian holy woman may have deliberately adopted the name in order to bring the honor in which the first was held over to the new religion. However that may have been, I think it is well established that Brighid has dominion over both Well and Flame in Kildare. Although there are almost a hundred holy wells in Ireland which are dedicated to St. Brigid (there are twelve in Co. Limerick alone), two of the best known are in



the town of Kildare. The Kildare area was very probably a significant ceremonial site since pre-Christian times; certainly it is one of the earliest documented Irish Christian sites. Both of the Wells there are downhill from the town center, across the motorway, and are not far from each other.

At this point, I have visited Kildare three times, with varying results. My first visit was ten years ago in the autumn, but due to travel constraints, it was little more than a stop-by. My companion and I found the better known, more Christianized Well, which is locally known as the Garden Well, without too much effort, and spent a little time there, wandering around the gardens, and sampling a few blackberries from the wild vines by the small car-park.

Besides the strongly flowing Well itself, this site includes the well-known bronze statue of Brighid upholding a Flame, five small standing stones which are now known as prayer stones, and a few young Irish Oak trees, which had then been recently planted. I had no way on that occasion of obtaining a Flame from Herself, but She did help me by taking a silver ring which had once been significant to me, but which I wanted to be rid of; as I reached into the little stream which flows away from the Well in order to dip up some water, the ring slipped from my hand, and settled among the pebbles. I left it there, partly as an offering, and in gratitude.

My second visit to Kildare, which was in the spring a few years later, was more extensive, but had its own problems. My companion and I stayed at a B&B a little way outside of the town, but we discovered that Kildare itself was in a bit of an uproar, for the Dalai Lama was expected to visit there in two days' time. I had hoped to visit the Brigandine Sisters at *Solas Bhríde*, for it was



that group which had re-kindled Her Holy Flame, as of Imbolc of 1993, and who have kept it ever since. But according to the very helpful gentleman in the Kildare tourist office (who kindly called them for me), and also to my own efforts to speak to a member of that group who happened to be in the town square, due to their preparations for the anticipated visitor, they could not spare even a few minutes for a random pilgrim, and would not receive me at their site. I never got to see their Flame; indeed, as of this date, I have not done so.

The town square of Kildare features a tall bronze statue of Brigid and a representation of the Flame at the top of a pillar. At the edge of the town square is the Protestant cathedral dedicated to Herself, in the grounds of which we were able to visit a sixth-century round tower and the excavations of a very early Fire Temple which had almost certainly pre-dated the Christian observances on that site. The women who were preparing the cathedral for their anticipated visitor were very friendly and helpful, pointing out not only the Fire Temple, but a little-known Sheila-na-gig, (on the edge of a bishop's tomb!) and some

places on the site in which we could make inconspicuous offerings. By local tradition, small enclosed fires are brought into the Fire Temple ex-





cavations at Imbolc, in honor of Brighid, and there were both Christian and Pagan offerings left there.

From there, we went again downhill and across the motorway to the Garden Well, which we had visited on our previous trip. I prayed there, leaving a small offering at the foot of the statue, and asked Brighid to send me some way in which I could access Her own Flame, that I might take it away with me to share with others. Presently I saw that someone had left an offering candle burning there, protected by a tightly closed lid that had just a small narrow opening for air, and despite the strong gusty winds that day, with the aid of a sliver of dried grass, I contrived to extract the fire from that, and so lit my own candle; I consider this to be Brighid's own Flame, given to me direct from Her.

Then we went looking for Her "other" Well, locally known as the Wayside Well, which is some-

times considered a more Pagan site, and apparently more popular with the folk who live in the area. The only directions we had were that it was "near the Japanese Gardens", so we went around a corner from the first Well, and down a street where we encountered some friendly ponies leaning over the fence. After communing with them for a while, we eventually found the car park for the Japanese Gardens, and from thence, discovered the Wayside Well. Here the flow is less pronounced; the water swells up gently in a round stone basin, embraced by an arc of stone with an Irish inscription reading, "*A Naoimh Bhríd, Muire nan Gael, guí orainn,*" (Holy Brighid, Mary of the Gael, pray for us.) The trees overhanging the Well have quite a few cloutie-rags left on them, for the most part simple cloth strips, some of which appeared old and weathered, and the atmosphere there is very peaceful and contemplative, perhaps more so than that of the better-known location.



Our third visit to Kildare was in April of this past year, toward the end of an extensive trip. We arrived mid-day on a Sunday, approaching the town via small country roads, found parking, and once more visited the Fire Temple and round tower (although we decided not to climb the steep stair to the entrance). There were families with young children wandering through the old gravestones near the Fire Temple site, but they seemed for the most part respectful of the place. We again proceeded down the hill, first to the Garden Well, and then to the Wayside Well. There were other folk conducting their own devotional rites at the first Well site, though the second was mostly unoccupied. Both were peaceful, although the Japanese Gardens near the Wayside Well were full of visitors that day.

In retrospect, visiting Brighid's holy places at Kildare is a mixture; ancient Pagan beliefs, overlaid with later Christian devotions, and folklore which sometimes combines the two. I have found this mixture at other places in Ireland, where old Pagan Deities have become local saints, and newer Christian saints have evolved into something like local demigods. We have no way of knowing

just what rituals may have been held in ancient times at the little Fire Temple or at any of the Holy Wells, although there are archaeological traces at some locations, and sometimes hints in the older Patterns or healing rites held there. There may even have been ceremonial groves of oak trees near Kildare long ago, for the name of Kildare is derived from the Irish Cill-Dara – the church of the oak. And what could be a more appropriate place for a druid to wander?

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Ó Duinn, Seán; *The Rites of Brigid; Goddess and Saint*, Columba Press, Dublin, 2004

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

Fresh Cheeses for Imbolc

By Rev. D. Rowen Grove

Dairy foods were an important part of the diet in northern Europe from as early as Neolithic times. Archaeological evidence of milk-fat residues on pottery shards has been found across Europe, and there have been dozens of finds of butter preserved in bogs in Ireland and other places. The Greek historian and geographer Strabo commented that although the Celtiberians had access to olive oil, they preferred butter with their bread, and that all of the folk of Britain were well supplied with milk, and many made cheeses. The whey resulting from cheese-making was considered in early and medieval Ireland to be good for many ailments.

Either of these recipes will make a small fresh cheese – a very Imbolc sort of dish, especially if you can get goat's or sheep's milk.

Fresh Yogurt Cheese

This is particularly fast and simple to make, but beware of false economy. Use the very best plain yogurt you can find, preferably not “fat-free.”

2 quarts good quality plain yogurt
Salt to taste
Herbs as desired

Place the yogurt in a large saucepan, and heat slowly until simmering, stirring frequently to prevent sticking. Remove from the heat, and let it stand until the yogurt has separated, and the whey is clear and yellowish. Strain through a cloth-lined colander, reserving the whey. Gather up the corners of the cloth, and squeeze gently. Open the cloth and work in salt and herbs, then squeeze the cloth to firm up the cheese. (The preferred degree of firmness / dryness is up to you.) Turn the cheese out of the cloth into a bowl or crock to serve. Refrigerate any that remains after supper or ritual. (Note that the simmering does kill off the cultures, but it is still a good cheese.)

Fresh Cheese with Buttermilk

This is a bit more complicated than the previous recipe, but not much. It's probably a little closer to what our early European ancestors might have made at any farmhouse or steading, and is almost identical to an early Irish method.

2 quarts whole milk 2 c. buttermilk
Salt to taste Herbs as desired

Place the milk in a large saucepan, and heat slowly until simmering, stirring it frequently to prevent sticking. Remove from the heat, and add the buttermilk. Cover it and let it sit at least half an hour. If the whey is still whitish, heat it gently again, adding a little more buttermilk or a little lemon juice if desired, until the whey is clear and yellowish.

Strain the curds through a cloth-lined colander, reserving the whey. Gather up the corners of the cloth, and squeeze gently. Turn the curds out of the cloth into a bowl or board, and work in salt and herbs, then squeeze to firm up the cheese. The preferred degree of firmness / dryness is up to you; kneading the cheese for a while will alter the texture (the process is called “cheddaring.”) Place the cheese in a bowl or crock to serve, and refrigerate any that remains after supper or ritual.

The leftover whey from either cheese is good for baking, or surprisingly tasty just to drink.

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Mahon, Brid, *Land of Milk and Honey: Traditional Irish Food and Drink*, Poolbeg Press, Dublin, 1991

Wood, Jacqui, *Prehistoric Cooking*, The History Press, Gloucestershire, 2011

Nature of the Holly

By Olivia Wylie

*Trí duirn ata dech for bith:
dorn degsáir,
dorn degmná,
dorn deggobann*

Three hands that are best in the world:
the hand of a good carpenter,
the hand of a skilled woman,
the hand of a good smith

-From The Book Of Ballymote

Botanical name: *Illex aquifolium*
Family: Aquifoliaceae
Ogham: Tinne
Scots Gaelic: cuileann
Irish Gaelic: cuileann
Welsh: celyn
French: houx

Message: Kindle your fire. Pick up the tools of your trade and begin the work.

The land is white. The sky is grey. Warmth is the distant dream of a fool.

And then your eyes catch red fire. The berries shine like hot coals fallen in the snow. The color of the leaves makes eyes that have seen gloom too long come alive again.

Wandering in the dead of winter, you have found the holly tree.

However bitter the cold grows, Holly is the fire that still burns bright. In the darkest times, it recalls us to life. It's no wonder that it was held in high esteem throughout the lands of northern Europe. Even today we remember this in our Yuletide songs; don't we still sing:

Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly (1)

And even more tellingly,
Of all the trees that are in the wood, the Holly bears the Crown (2)

In the ogham the fid of Holly is Tinne, and it

shares a root word with Tine, the modern Irish word for Fire. Other names for this fid include *tinne iarn*, an ingot or bar of iron and *trian ni-airm*, one third of a tool (3). Like so many things in the ancient landscape the tree earned these names through deeds, and Holly earned hers in the forge.

To the ancient Irish blacksmith at his work, the Holly was the best of all woods. In the *Silva Gadelica* it is written:

*cuilenn loisc a úr . cuilenn loisc a críon í
gach crann ar bith becht cuilenn as dech díob!*

*Holly, burn it green; holly, burn it dry;
Of all trees the most esteemed is holly! (4)*

These lines refer to traits inherent in the holly's morphology and the qualities it imparts. A tough shrub or small tree of 30 feet in the wild, Holly was an excellent source of fine-grained hardwood that created excellent charcoal without the need for lengthy seasoning. Though it contains saponins, it neither produces noxious smoke nor bursts due to high moisture content when dropped fresh into the fire (5). This made it invaluable to a smith, especially one who might need fresh wood in a hurry should a battle come up and many new weapons be needed. Holly charcoal was specifically valued for the long, sustained heat required to create and repair iron and steel tools. The wood of the female Holly was preferred, for her bright red berries were seen as a source of vitality. It was seen as so valuable that in one law tract, it was required that every landowner keep Holly charcoal by for the repair of weapons (6). Holly wood came to the smith's hand as they created weapons and tools as well: its tough, springy wood was perfect for the axles of chariots, the spokes of wheels and the shafts of axes and spears. Hence it earned the name *trian ni-airm*, for it made one third of a tool, the center or the shaft. Sitting at the right hand of the smith, Holly became linked to the art of the forge and the fire of creation.

In the smith's forge, matter is transformed with hard work and skill from one state to another. Ore becomes metal. Pig iron becomes steel.

Some people call this magic, but magic in the English language implies an easy wave of hands and things coming with no effort. Better to use the Irish way of speaking of these changes: as an art. An art is not quick nor easy. An art takes great time and great effort to master. The artist crafts themselves as much as they craft their work, fighting to gain skills, making mistakes and learning, working every day to become something better than they were.

The work is daunting. But the fruits of the labor are worth the effort.

In today's world we've separated the body of an art or a craft from the soul. We separate the work of the world into work for artists, who we see as flighty creatures with flamboyant dreams, and work for hard-headed

people who do the dirty work. But in older times there was an art to all things. There was an art to making tools. There was an art to making weapons, an art to war, an art to building a wall.

That did not mean it was not hot, heavy, dirty, and difficult work. It was. But here's the key: to the people doing it the work was seen as a form of art. The people who saw the world in this way created tools for daily life that were both functional and beautiful, both strong and pleasing. And the 'artist' was no more or less valuable than the 'warrior' when trouble came calling.

When true sorrow came over the land of Ireland in the days of the legends, it was

craftsmen, not warriors, who were the midwives of victory.

The Book of Invasions tells us that the darkest

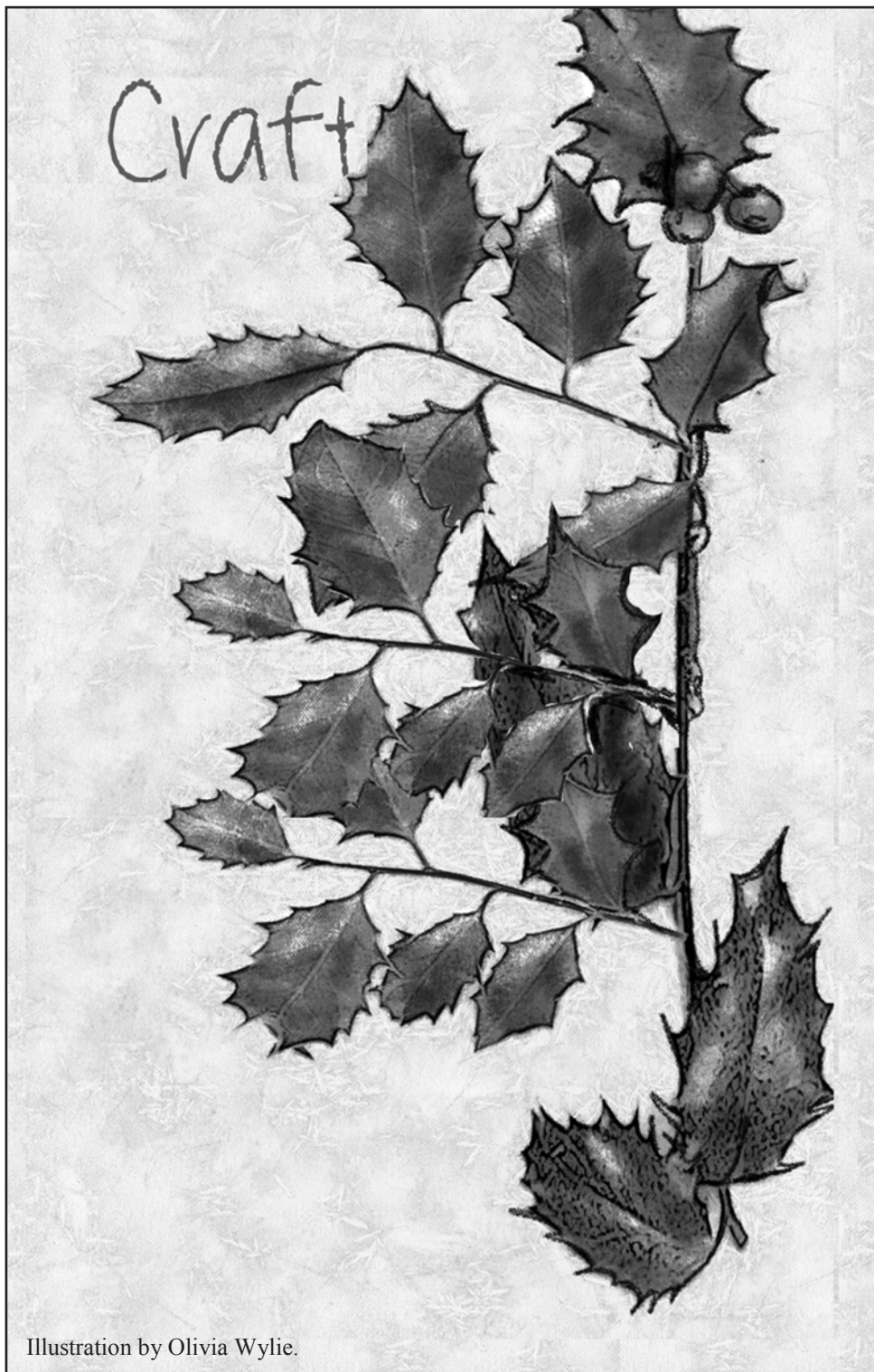


Illustration by Olivia Wylie.

days to come upon Ireland were not during the first great battle between the blessed Children of Danú and their terrible foes the Formorii for the soul of the land. It was in the time between the first battle and the second, when a false king sat on the throne at Tara. The renowned leader Nuada had lost his throne in the first battle of Mag Tuired by losing his hand, for the law held that only a man whole in body could sit on the throne of High King and embody the health of the land. Bres who took his throne might have been whole in body, but he was hollow of spirit, and the land grew sorry and sour under his reign. He was cast from his throne by the curse of a bard and good riddance to him, but Nuada was yet denied the throne by his wound, though his folk needed his guidance.

In his forge, the smith Goibniu, greatest in his trade, decided to make all well. He fetched a man of equal rank in his own art, the great healer Dian Cécht. Together they worked seven days and seven nights, and at the end of it, Nuada bore a shining silver hand that worked as well as the one he was born with. Whole again, the High King regained his rightful place. In time, his people were strong enough to face the Formorii again.

On that great day, Nuada named Lugh the All Crafted as his battle leader. As his men gathered, Lugh asked each of them what power they wielded. When Goibniu was asked what his strength in battle would be, this was his answer:

“For every spear that separates from its shaft or sword that breaks in battle, I will provide a new weapon in its place. No spearpoint which my hand forges will make a missing cast. No skin which it pierces will taste life afterward.” (8)

In the smith’s words there is a lesson: the world needs great warriors and leaders, but just as dearly it needs craftsmen who work their art with passion and skill. Do not count your art as less valuable than another’s because it is of a different kind. Without Goibniu at his forge, the De Danann warrior in the fray is dead. Give equal glory to the fighter and the healer, to those who craft and those who rule. Without the artist’s skill and the craftsman’s dedication, the King would not sit upon his throne.

The tools of your art could be anything. A pen. A

fiddle. A keyboard. A shovel. A knife. Holly doesn’t care what the shape of the tool is. She only urges that you pick it up and get to work crafting yourself and your arts.

The world needs your skill, Holly insists, poking at you with prickly leaves.

“So go on”, she whispers. “Kindle the fire. Pick up the tools. Get to work.”

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Note: This essay is a part of the book ‘*Roots: Insights From The Tree Alphabet Of Old Ireland*’ by Olivia Wylie. If you find this work valuable, the book is available on Amazon.com

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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

Corvus Harborstead, ADF-PWG:

A Journey to The Present

By Ted P. Gilliland

I was introduced to ADF Druidry at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center (Connell, WA) in 2011, and spent five years as a member of Frog Stone Circle, ADF-PWG under the tutelage of Thomas Brown III and Rev. Kirk Thomas. In 2016 I requested a transfer across the state to Stafford Creek Corrections Center (Aberdeen, WA) to be closer to my family. Unfortunately, there was no ADF, or any other Druid group, present at this institution.

At that time, ADF Prison Worship Groups (which fall under the purview of the Clergy Council and are not considered a Grove or Proto-grove) were only established at Coyote Ridge in Eastern Washington, and Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Northwest Oregon. I felt that as a Dedicant Druid who was near to completing my Generalist Study Program, that there was an opportunity for community service by establishing a Druidic presence and sharing with others the enjoyment and peace I found as part of the ADF community. I wanted to establish here the best of what I learned from my mentors.



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Because I do not ascribe to an Asatru path, I attended the Wiccan meetings where I met several men who expressed an interest in Druidry. Speaking with confidence and authority about ADF's history, beliefs, and practices, I evoked the interest of those fellow Neopagans and took steps to found the third ADF Prison Worship Group.

I knew that the Seattle-metropolitan area was home to Cascadia Grove, ADF, as Karen LaFe, one of their members, came with Rev. Thomas to celebrate the five-year anniversary feast with the Frog Stone Circle. In late 2016 I wrote a letter to Cascadia Grove expressing our need and the fulfilling opportunity available as a Volunteer Druid Mentor. Some time later I received an email response from Debbie Olhoeft, Senior Druid of Cascadia Grove, saying they were discussing our request for a sponsor and should they speak with the facility chaplain? She also asked questions which I believe to be frequently asked by potential prison group sponsors: "What does sponsorship entail? Do we need to physically visit, and if so, how often? Besides those, how can we best support you guys in what you're doing?"

Debbie and I corresponded back and forth, I answering questions and outlining prison life, while directing her to the facility chaplain and Rev. Thomas (respectively) for policy answers and experiences as a sponsor.

During that time, Cascadia Grove was kind enough to send material from the ADF website and to donate books to get us started. Titles such as *Sacred Fire, Holy Well* (Corrigan), *A Book Of Pagan Prayer* (Serith), *Bonewits' Essential Guide To Druidism* (Bonewits), and *In Search Of The Indo-Europeans* (Mallory) were great additional resources to my personal

books we were using.

As we waited for sponsorship of our own, what started as three people meeting weekly off to the side of the Wiccan group steadily grew. During the time we met with the Wiccans, I asked to lead an ADF Beltaine ritual so others could experience it. I enlisted the help of those I had been meeting with to act as ritualists. The differences of a ritual with songs, offerings, and opening the gates, as well as the structure, appealed to several more men.

Eventually our size became a distraction, and we Druids were no longer able to meet. And since the religious library was segregated by living units, we had no space available to meet for study.

In time, Debbie and her grove-mate, Shane Coinendubh, made the decision to go through sponsor training, though they were unsure how often they would come out. For those who don't know, sponsorship requires fingerprinting and a background check; then, in Washington State, there is online training and in-person orientation. Due to changes of dates, time, and places to hold the orientation (it is not done at the facility) it took almost six months for them to complete the training. Afterward, Debbie wrote that she would not be coming in after all [volunteering in prison is not for everyone], but Shane would be coming in as often as he was able.

Even before Shane first walked through the gates, we pondered what to name our not yet established PWG. When arriving at Stafford Creek, one cannot help but notice the number of crows. At times, hundreds take flight at once. To me, the crow is a symbol of inquisitive awareness, opportunity, and community, and a bird of good omen. We looked at several “corvid” possibilities, but since we are off of Gray’s Harbor, our unofficial group chose “Corvus Harborstead, ADF-PWG” as our name.

We met with Shane for the first time when he



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came out to lead the (2017) Samhain ritual. He told us that he would come in for the High Days, but at that time would be unable to come in more often. That first year we were still unable to meet in between Shane's visits, so our growth was slow. In this, our second year, Shane has made the commitment to come out every month to meet and discuss business, and work on other group needs when we are not going outside for rituals. Also, in early 2019, after not meeting regularly for close to one and a half years, the new chapel library opened without restrictions as to which living units could use it on which day. Thus, our core group was able to start meeting weekly for teaching sessions. Currently we have five ADF members who meet, but are open for others to join us in our DP discussions.

Our group has, of course, experienced some growing pains. There is a natural ebb and flow within prison of people coming and people leaving, whether by transfer or freedom. On occasion there is drama and politics that seep in and must be dealt with. But in the end, as my OBOD friend Garridan Nelson stated, we are about service leadership to our community, and our community encompasses everyone within these fences. It is our responsibility as leaders to perform our rituals and welcome the community regardless of race, crime, sexual identity, or religious belief as long as they are respectful of

our ways. That statement made a positive impact on our group at a critical time.

In September 2019, Corvus Harborstead was part of the Combined Annual Pagan Event, an annual feast for the Wiccan, Asatru, and Druid community. Even though it was “combined”, each group was seated in their own section and had their own agenda. Our Druid group had members who told cultural stories, performed skits, presented speeches and poetry, and we all shared in a round of ADF Jeopardy. Rev. Thomas joined us as our honored guest to mark the end of our second year.

This Samhain, which we will celebrate with a Hellenic Genesia/Nekysia ritual, begins a new year which will see, as in the past, a division of rituals between Norse, Celtic, and Hellenic hearth cultures. Corvus Harborstead is now on a track of steady growth, and with the Kindreds blessings, this year will be one of prosperity and peace.

Speaking on behalf of our group, we can't thank our sponsor Shane Coinendubh enough for his dedication of time and service. It means a great deal to us to be able to practice our worship of the Kindreds and to further our understanding of the Indo-Europeans. We would also like to express our thanks to Debbie Olhoeft for helping make our group possible and who continues to correspond, providing additional support and sage advice.

Nationwide there is a need for pagan volunteer sponsors in prisons. Don't believe the hype you see on television which tends to show the worst of the worst. Prisoners are very welcoming, and extremely appreciative and protective of their sponsors. Shane Coinendubh and Rev. Thomas lead by example helping to transform the lives of the men they sponsor. If you are interested in this fulfilling opportunity, please contact ADF's Prisoner Relations Committee.

Ted P. Gilliland has been a member of ADF since 2011. He is a Dedicant Druid, founding member of Corvus Harborstead, ADF-PWG, an artisan and bard, and is waiting for approval of the final exit standard submitted for completion of his GSP.

Rede of the Dagda

By William "Eonan" Graham

Hear now the Dagda, known by many names;
Red Man of Knowledge, Ample Father and
The Good God are but a few.
I am the God of Abundance, magic, and storms.
I am the lord of life and death, for with my club I
can bring both.
I am the sower of seed, the worker of fields, the
lightning and the thunder. The mark on the
tree struck by such is my sign.
I am King, host, grieving father, and sage; for I
hold the wholeness of heathen knowledge.
With my harp, birth, joyfulness, sorrow, and
death can all be strummed.
My cauldron is bottomless; feast with me and
you shall know fullness.
You who seek me between covers of books, seek
in vain, for I am in the ripening grain beneath
the sun;
I am in the songs of my kin and in their laughter
during feasts;
I am in the sweat of the smith at his forge, the
farmer at his plow, the warrior as he defends
others, and the grieving father.
Whenever you have need of me, I will come. By
moonlight and by firelight, at dawn and at
high sun, I will be with you.
Together we shall dance the round of freedom,
sing the songs of joy, and feast with passion.
My generosity is boundless, there will always be
room for you at my hearth. But there is a
price!
Your weakness, your stinginess, your doubt and
despair must be given;
And as a gift calls for a gift, I will give you
strength and fortitude, courage and the will to
act.
For behold, when you act to defend your home,
the defenseless, and those you love, I am with
you.
My club is in your hand, my strength is in your
arm, and my veracity is in your heart.

Wind Chaser

By Nathan Large

“Hermes, my beloved son,” *Pateras* Zeus decreed,
“Attend me on Olympus, for the human world has need:
“Aeolus’ gates are fallen, and the twelve winds have escaped.
“I bid you find them where they hide, stop each and give them chase.
“Unceasing gales wreck homes and sails, and storms assault the land.
“Pursue these rebel *Ánemoi* and get them back in hand!”
Now, *ton Ellinón theón*, yes, I’m certainly the fastest
But not the strongest (I work out) and no match for the elements.
The ancient winds are primal things and stronger when they’re running...
Eftychós, amongst the Gods, I’m also the most cunning.

I led my quest with Zephyrus, the warm wind of the East;
Of all the winds the gentlest, I hoped he’d fight the least.
I found him in a flowered field, with fauns and nymphs cavorting
And asked him kindly to return, but he’d not leave his sporting.
“I may be fair and *filikós*, but never think me tame.
“I’ll not be taken lightly... I know, let’s play a game!
“No, not a sport, that’s in your court; I’d be too quickly bested.
“Instead, a game of stratagems, in which our wits are tested.”
I agreed and gave him lead and beat him swiftly (yes, I cheated).
But, to his word the East stood good and gracefully retreated.

Notus, fiery Southern wind, was next most easily tracked.
I found him scorching orchards ‘til the soil dried and cracked.
At first approaching cautiously, not wanting to be seen,
I saw he’d burn the farmers, if I didn’t intervene.
“By Zeus’ name,” I threatened him, “Leave off these cruel crimes.
“Surrender now and come with me, to serve your sentenced time.”
Instead, the hot-head roared and charged, by *exousías* unturned.
I had to dodge and hop away to keep my heels unburned.
But, by his ire, the breath of fire was soon enough exhaled;
I waited ‘til his heat was spent, then hauled him off to jail.

The third I found was Boreas, the Northern chilly brute;
Another none too friendly but not prone to hot pursuit.
He instead ignored my words, rebuffing my advances.
He much preferred to drive his herds and join them in their dances.
For hours, I watched him tend to them, observing loving care,
When on a hunch, I joined the bunch, disguising as a mare.
Employing a distraction I had learned from Northern tales,
I led the love-struck stallion along a merry trail.
O fygás turned *kynigós*, he pursued me several days
Until I led him back, unwary, through the prison gates!

With these three of four winds caught and safely put to rest,
I next sought out cool Eurus, the weird wind of the West.

Stealthy and mysterious, he proved quite hard to find,
 I tracked his ways for several days, through clues he'd left behind.
 A ship spun 'round in circles or a blizzard blown of leaves
 Are just the sort of *ainigmoi* the West wind loves to weave.
 But, after days without success, my worn mind felt defective,
 Until I realized who I was: a rogue, not a detective!
 I overturned a whole town's roofs, a prank of similar structure,
 Then captured 'mazed Eurus when he stopped to stare in wonder.

Rounding up the other winds became a simpler matter;
 Once the cardinal four were caught, the rest were lost and scattered.
 Kaikias came quietly once his hailstones were depleted.
 Skiron, too, the eldest, was by climate change defeated.



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I bested Lips by racing ships (my secret is: row from the hips).
 Phoenicias, predictable, was all too easily tracked and tripped.
 When I'd gathered all that lot, I merely asked politely
 And Thrascias, Euronotus, and Libotonus came quietly.
 The last breeze lost, or so he thought, I heaved a heavy cough
 And hurled wee Meses from my lungs... he nearly pulled it off!

I'd done my duty, caught them all, but surely made no friends.
 A grave concern, for when one flies, it helps to know the winds.
 So, to their prison I returned and made apologia, Begging pardon for my tricks in service of *várdia*.
 They stood unmoved, *agélastos*, until I offered trade:
 Would they forgive my dire offense, if I arranged 'escape'?
 I'd slip each from Aeolus' hold when they required a break,
 And they'd return when time was up, just for appearances' sake.
 A bargain struck, we parted ways, if not with perfect trust,
 But I believe I'll win again, if I'm ever double-crossed.

Greek Translation Guide:

Pateras - Father
Ánemoi - Winds
ton Ellinón theón - of the Greek gods
eftychós - fortunately
filikós - friendly
exousías - power, authority
O fygás - the beast
kynigós - hunter
ainigmoi - enigmas
várdia - duty
agélastos - sullen

The Dream of Aonghus

By Jenne Micale

Aonghus pined for that dream: the woman with her harp, her soaring voice that spun songs from the spindle of the Otherworld.

He thirsted for sleep just to see her, desiring nothing else – not his birds nor his sword, not even clever jokes

but waking she left no footsteps and the roads press on in all directions. Eventually, physicians intervened,

parents and brothers, a sympathetic queen – love aided by love, in the search for love. Don't despair over your dreams,

fair mortal. Even the gods yearn, deathless though they dwell. Our dreams make us who we are.

You never know where you will find Caer,

that bright yew berry, that soaring swan: on a far lake, in your bed. It all starts with that vision playing in your head

and the help of the ones who love you – love aided by love in the search for love, a lake of love ringed white by the swans.



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The Dream of Caer

By Jenne Micale

You want to be found on your lonely lake, and so you close your eyes and rise from yourself to walk in another's dream. You don't forget

your harp, of course. The song makes you who you are.

You always come back to the Dragon's Mouth, turning your long white neck toward that sky, that shore,

a swan among swans, a changer of shape waiting to be changed by the power of dreams. No one ever asked for your perspective –

not that flock with their golden necklaces. They were always just a part of you, part of your magic, a reflection captured

in fragments of a mirror – hence the chains. Yours is the most difficult position: the red berry hidden on the yew bough

waiting to be found, knowing your own grace and poison, knowing most would not see you but only a white bird, a flock of girls.

You wonder how long you will float on this lake, watching the ripples that capture the sky, whether it's magic or just your madness

whether you are the animal bride or just a lonely woman who lives in your head, who sings only to air and breathes in a poem.



Brigid of the Outcasts

By Jenne Micale

Write me a poetry of the undeserving:
of those huddled at shadowed fires far from the
garth
who eye the palisades suspiciously
and earn their names battling our noblest of sons.

Sing too of their ragged women, unbeautiful
and veiled from our honest gaze, or naked sows
sucking generations of war! Or weaponed
and solitary, faces painted with lampblack.

“We speak no such guttural tongues here,” you
say,
from the timbered safety of your hut, full-bellied
and fire-warmed, rightful inheritor of soil and
blood.

Behind this wall, there is culture. Breach it

and feast only on the raw, scrabbling in dirt,
fit only for chains. You see not your own
smallness

under those darkening boughs, the tumble of
history toward its inevitable end.

Meanwhile, the bright Lady leaves your tidy
hearth
for that wilder one woven of elder twigs
and desperation. Nameless she accepts the gifts
offered by a trembling hand, whispered, worried,
hushed.

She gives to them her Father’s sword, the kind
milk
poured from the red-eared cow, the pillar of a
hand
on a weakening back, the shaft of sunlight
through gem-green leaves. She asks nothing in
return.

“This is a greater temple,” she says, “than those
with their forests of roof beams and pillared
stones.”

She asks nothing of deserving, lighting the
flame—
a fragile spark of heaven in the shadowed yard.

Prayer to Athena
By Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano

Bright Goddess,
Pallas Athena,
Goddess of Wisdom
And the Arts
Help me to journey forth
Secure in the knowledge
That I am safe,
That I am discerning,
That I move to make the world
A better place,
With your blessing.



The Light of Love
By Rev. Jean "Drum" Pagano

The light of love
Shines like the Sun
Warm,
Radiant,
Constant;
While there may be cloudy days,
And dark days,
We need to remember that the
Light of love is always shining
Regardless of weather.

When the Sun shines,
We bask in its warmth;
When the Sun cannot be seen,
We remember its warmth
And pray for its return.
The light of love
Shines like the Sun.

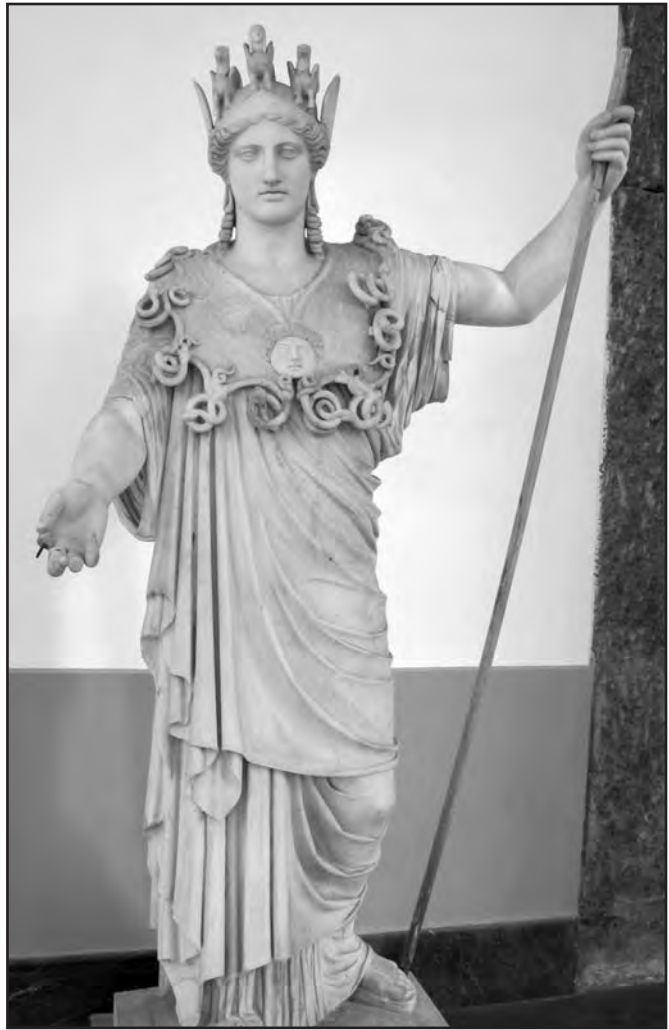


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Prayer to Herne
By Rev. Amber Ferrebee

He who hunts the dark woods,
He who defends his tribe,
He who knows that sacrifice is necessary,
We thank you for watching over and caring for
us.

From the weather, You have protected us!
From strife, You have protected us!
From hunger, You have protected us!
From fear, You have protected us!
You have granted your strength, cunning, and
prowess so that we might survive this harsh
time.

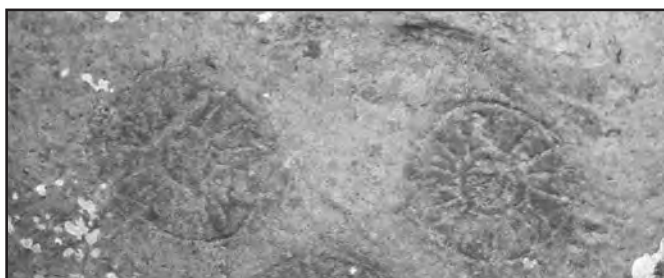
Your strength defended
Your cunning befuddled
Your prowess defeated
And so your Children have won the day.

Warming Time

By Red Son

My sun.
Please.
Thaw my heart.
Confront me and cleave my cold exterior so I
may rejoice at the sight of our world under your
loving toil.

My sun.
Please.
Clear the darkness
out of my sight and mind so I may regain the
vision that has lain dormant through the cold
time.



The Ride of Skinfaxi

By Red Son

Skinfaxi,
once again strong, bears the disc proudly while
Hrimfaxi rests between shortened
shifts.
Voices from the waters shout out to the ocean's
twin,
now awakened and warm with life,
in gratitude as Skinfaxi rides into the horizon.
Yggdrasil, defiant and strong, hails the return of
the warming time.
The winds carry her voice across the Middle
Lands and all the living hear her call.
The Wanderer's Hall fills with celebrations while
the living toil and exert their industry.
The winds carry their celebratory songs and
marching anthems back to Skinfaxi as he rides
again.
Hail, Skinfaxi,
Bringer of Light and Sustainer of Life.

Ode to a Porcupine

By Jeffrey Keefer

We walk alone, across field and furrow
By choice, live and watch, woe misunderstood.

Hidden by watchers who choose not to see,
Unheeded visits beyond neighborhood.

Love, nature, warmth, elemental value,
With cold eyes open, touching the edgewood.

Dying, I cause memories to falter,
Kin abandoned, karmic life as coal ash.

Dead, unbeknownst, provides meadows of life,
More alive than faces who travel past.

Life again peers out once wheels happen by,
New forebears spread, without limiting cache.

In death, never equal, weight of action,
Wit forgotten, breathe alone, redaction.

This poem was written as a Duplex, which is a poetry format developed by the poet and educator Jericho Brown. As such, it is a combination of a ghazal and a sonnet, with a touch of the blues.

My poem was inspired by a dead porcupine who I saw on the side of the road, and it was in this face of death that I saw the first porcupine I have ever experienced in the wild. That it was dead and that the driver likely was not aware of what happened, I wanted to honor the life cycles that were involved on both sides of the road. I was intentional about the interplay between the lines as expected in the Duplex form, yet wanted to experiment with the meanings between the lines, rather than repeating the same words as common in this highly structured format.

Guided Meditation

By Diane Cacciato

Druids, place your feet solidly on the Earth.
Close your eyes so that you may see inwardly.
Breathe in the scent of the Earth Mother.
Hold her magick in your lungs, feel it fill your
body,
and then release the breath to the sky.
Breathe in the scent of the Earth Mother.
Hold her magick in your lungs, feel it fill your
body,
and then release the breath to the sky.
Breathe in the scent of the Earth Mother.
Hold her magick in your lungs, feel it fill your
body,
and then release the breath to the sky.
Before you see a meadow; lush, green, and
beautiful in the summer sun.
Across the meadow a figure approaches.
She, too, is lush and green, luminous and
beautiful in the summer sun.
She takes your hand and leads you across the
meadow and into the forest.
Together, you walk along a path, and from
between the trees, the Nature Spirits gaze at
you.
She leads you to a pond.
In the center of the pond is an island with an
ancient Garry Oak.
Hand in hand, you float across the pond and step
foot upon the soil.
You look around and realize you are now alone
with the ancient One.
You run your hands along the rough bark, feeling
every bump and edge.
You turn your back and lean against the tree.
The ancient Garry Oak absorbs you and you
become one.
Your blood mixes with the sap.
Every cell of your body melds with that of this
ancient tree.
Your legs stretch down into the Earth as roots,
past the soil, through the bedrock and into the
Deep Waters upon which this earth floats.

Your arms stretch up as branches, into the sky,
touching the sun, the moon and the stars.
You have become the tree,
and as the tree, you have become the grove,
and as the grove you have become the forest,
and as the forest you have become all forests
that spread across the Earth Mother.
You have a question for the Earth Mother that
you have hesitated in asking, even if you do
not know what the question is today.
Ask the forests to help you. Ask the grove to give
you the words.
You are the Ancient One, the Garry Oak. Send
your question down through your roots,
down past your ancestors,
past your nature siblings,
into the water upon which this world floats.
Send your question through the water.
Listen to the sound of the waters. The Earth
Mother will send her answer to you through
the waters.
Feel the energy moving through the roots and up
into your body, filling you from the bottom of
your feet to the top of your head. The Earth
Mother will send her answer to you through
her energy...

(Pause to listen for the answer)



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You may not understand her words now, but trust that her answer will be with you and will reveal itself when you are ready.

It is time for you to return.

Acknowledge and thank the world forests. Bow your head in gratitude and step away from the forests.

Acknowledge and thank this forest. Bow your head in gratitude and step away from this forest.

Acknowledge and thank the grove. Bow your head in gratitude and step away from the grove.

Acknowledge and thank the tree. Bow your head in gratitude and separate yourself from the tree.

You look around and realize you are back on the island, no longer alone with the ancient One. The green woman is standing with you. Together you run your hands along the rough bark, in thanks, then you float back across the pond. You walk along the path through the forest. You exit the forest and step out into the meadow. The green woman bows her head to you, turns, and then walks back into

the forest, leaving you all on your own. Breathe in the scent of the Earth Mother. Hold her magick in your lungs, feel it fill your body, and then release the breath to the sky. Breathe in the scent of the Earth Mother. Hold her magick in your lungs, feel it fill your body, and then release the breath to the sky. Breathe in the scent of the Earth Mother. Hold her magick in your lungs, feel it fill your body, and then release the breath to the sky.

Open your eyes.

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.

The Ritual Use of Intoxicating Beverages in British Celtic and Vedic Cultures

By Rev. G. R. Grove

This short article is taken from my submission for one of the Third Circle Clergy Training Program courses, "Indo-European Studies 2", which requires the student to compare several aspects of two Indo-European cultures, one from the area west of Asia Minor and north of the Black Sea, and the other from Asia Minor or points east. For this question – the ritual use of intoxicating beverages – I chose to address the British and Vedic cultures.

British Celtic culture

Mead, wine, beer, and other intoxicating drinks were common in the Celtic world. I have mentioned in passing before the role of intoxicating drink in the installation of a king, a custom important in both the Celtic and the Germanic warrior cultures. But in British Celtic culture, and especially in Welsh poetry from the sixth through at least the fourteenth century, the most important drink, together with its associated images, was mead. And for mead, as Marged Haycock notes, the *locus classicus* is the *Gododdin* (41), a long collection of elegies for the war-band of Mynyddog, King of Gododdin in what is now Scotland, attributed to the sixth century poet Aneirin. Mead (and to a lesser extent wine and other intoxicating drinks) symbolized the hospitality and support given by a leader to his warriors, and the "payment for mead" they gave in return was their willingness to fight to the death for him. Athenæus (fl. C. 200 CE), quoting Posidonius, said that the Celts at their feasts used a common cup, which the servant carried around from the right to the left; the same image of cup-sharing can be seen in *Hirlas Owain*, a poem by the twelfth century CE poet-prince Owain Cefeiliog, in which he directs his cup-bearer to take the "long blue" drinking horn to one and then another of his warriors after a raid, then notes, in respect to some who are missing: "...armed as comrades, their weapons keen... Like the long-ago warriors... they paid for their mead" (Athenæus 9-10,

Aneirin xlii, Jackson 36-37, Evans 106-107, Haycock 41, Conran 149-151).

Vedic culture

In Vedic tradition, *soma* is both a deity and a pressed liquid which is alleged to have psychotropic and/or hallucinogenic properties (Puhvel 65). Many of the important Vedic rites, known generally as the Soma Ritual, involved offering this liquid to the gods. In this ritual the priests would perform some version of the Praise of Fire (*Agnistoma*) and offer *soma* in the Drink of Strength ceremony (*Vajapeya*). The *soma* liquid was pressed from a plant which was crushed between stones, and the resulting liquid was filtered through woven cloth, then poured into the fire burning on the altar. In a simple version of the *Agnistoma*, three pressings were made: one in the morning, one at midday, and one in the evening. Drury says that "the priests offered libations to the gods, cup by cup"; this would imply that the human participants in the ceremony also drank, as Drury emphasizes in further comments on the ceremony, stressing that *soma* was drunk "for its exhilarating, mind-expanding, ecstasy-producing qualities" (Drury 31-32, 37, Mahony 130). Identification of the plant used in the ritual has occasioned much scholarly debate. Puhvel (66) follows the school which considers it to be the hallucinogenic (and poisonous) *Amanita muscaria* ("Fly-Agaric"). Drury, on the other hand, sug-



gests it should be one of the asclepiads (39), while Mallory identifies it with some type of *ephedra*, and describes the presence of this plant in many Central Asian Bronze Age Indo-Iranian grave sites (Mallory and Mair, 138, 262). Wikipedia (“Soma (drink)”) offers a variety of other candidates.

Comparison:

The examples of ritual use of intoxicating beverages in the Celtic and Vedic cultures which I could find are very different. In the Celtic cultures, and especially the British Insular Celtic culture, mead, wine, and other intoxicating liquids served to create ties of loyalty between the king or warlord and his warriors. The ritual drink at the king’s inauguration confirms his status; his sharing of drink (especially mead) with his warriors confirms and strengthens the bargain between them. In the Vedic *soma* rituals, however, the bargain is not that between king and people, but between sacrificer (and assisting priests) and the god or gods to whom he sacrifices, and his reward is not bloodshed but ecstasy. One ritual binds the drinker to an earthly lord, the other to a god.

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Is it Possible to ‘Steal’ From a Religion?

By Rev. Ian Corrigan

This question appears often in Pagan discourse, and it is discussed from both sides. Often Pagans accuse Christianity and Christian pop-culture of “stealing” ancient customs surrounding the seasonal holidays, while the concern over cultural appropriation has Pagans questioning tropes such as “smudging”. Opinions vary widely around all of these issues.

In general, I oppose rules that try to impose cultural separation, and a sense that certain tropes or ideas can be “owned” by certain classes of people. In this I come mainly through the filter of arts. I think “religions” are like “musical styles”. Some may remain closely identified with an originating culture, some may bust loose. This inability to prevent musical cultural elements from travel-by-imitation started no later than radio, but was probably supported by performing arts before then. “The Blues” is simply no longer limited in ethnic reach, if it ever was.

We can see the downside of the popularization of an ethnic style as well, in the rise of Rock-n-Roll as a series of white imitators of the “race music” of the previous decades. Hot tunes that were already circulating in bars and garage-bands made money for Pat Boone while “race” artists went wanting.

That’s the danger – that the greater cultural might of a commercial or colonial imitator might actually overwhelm the original, contributing to an ongoing loss of cultural memory. That became a real factor at a moment in the 70s when fake-Indians were really pushing their packaged fakery on seekers, and even native kids were learning from them. It remains a concern in the discussion of “shamanism”.

That considered, individuals assembling a personal polytheism and animism stand at very little risk of harming the ways by our experiments. The



Photographer unknown.

student in Dubuque will never find a Tungusi teacher, but may benefit from work with trance-journey, as long as there’s no confusion over what one is actually doing. I think our movement should discourage the easy use of nouns like “shaman”, for several reasons, not least the devaluation of the original.

As usual I hold that those who profit most hold the most accountability. Thus, some music-show halfwit dancing in a chief’s bonnet wears his own punishment as a fool’s cap, while a company that manufactures and sells the hats ought to get some attention.

From another perspective: In general, I view the imitation of the ritual mechanisms of other traditions as less appropriative than the lifting of content. So, it’s one thing to imitate Tantric or Yogic ritual gestures in a western mythic context, but another to attempt (or pretend) to work with specific tantric spirits without having the proper empowerments. Tantric tradition isn’t ethnically limited, but it does travel in specific lineages, as well as by back-channels. The same can be said for the African traditions in the New World.

Pretend is a key word. Is someone pretending to do traditional work when they are not? Do they claim titles of adeptship or priesthood which they have not earned? Even more to the point, are they **selling** their work based on such claims?!

So, I see trends, tropes and models flowing through world spiritual practice based on ethnic heritage, geographical region, publication and commercialization (the Hoodoo Drugstores come to mind), and always producing new syntheses, which may last a week or until this very day. Inside that ferment are those who **do** appropriate the ways of colonized peoples for financial or personal gain. Modern Pagan teachers and leadership should be encouraged, at least, to educate themselves about world traditions and popular fakes, and be prepared to stand as clarifiers and out-straighteners for each wave of students. Let us always know what it is we are doing, and why we do it, and be able (as a Druid I say) to speak with honor of those from whom a thing may once have come.

Now, by these standards, I can try to evaluate whether the use of a Gatekeeper God in our OoR is appropriate.

- First, I'll mention that the Voudoun traditions are not racially exclusive in themselves. They are themselves an outcome of colonization, and have been exported by their originating culture both by live teachers and in literature.
- ATR models were examined in early ADF discourse mainly as examples of real polytheists / animists, next door to us now, in the same spirit as Celts might seek to look at well-preserved Hellenic forms. Certainly 30 years ago we knew less about real IE outlines than we do now.
- Certainly, we pretend no false claims, nor present ourselves as representing, or even employing, ATR tropes. In no way have we appropriated content. We do not attempt to "use" Legba or any variant. It is fair to say that we have plainly addressed cultural variants of the root that begins in Hermes as Lord of Roads, Magic, Crossroads and as Priest of the Gods. Yes, we said to one another "look, this is also like Voodoo", but our research has been about finding the IE models. That's still what we're discussing.
- Nor have we lifted forms. We do not make offerings the way Voudou folks do, or generally imitate the rites surrounding their Gatekeeper. We

are making no effort to address Legba or Elegua, or pretend he has a place in our rites. The most we have done is to decide that there is a point where a God of Gates, Beginnings or Crossroads should be addressed. Such Gods are addressed in Indo-European rites as well, though we can discuss the place in the order. We have sort-of devised / located a god position to keep the center of the rite, depending on how we measure the center.

- So, I do not believe that we owe any debt to Legba for our work, nor that we have improperly used an African trope in our Rituals. I tell you that there was no moment (in discussions where I was present) when someone said "OK, we'll do it like voodoo", but rather the form was evolved based on multiple sources.
- I think we still lack an example of an IE rite meant to claim incidental ground for a one-off ritual (Even the PGM assumes the student can do it already). So, we do all the set-up, blessing the Hallows, etc., and then begin the Rite of Offerings. One simple thing that might clarify these conceptions is to make a dividing-line not at the moment when we "open the gates", but at the moment when we are finished with purifications and the place is fit to begin. We would then be beginning the offerings with the Fire-priest(ess) / Road-God / Way Opener, as per various IE traditions.

Even here at Tredara, where we actually have permanent, consecrated Hallows, I'm very hesitant to truncate the front end of our OoR. One could simply walk in reverently, make a preparatory prayer, and begin by making the (revised) Gatekeeper or Druid God offering, perhaps following a Fire-Priestess (Hestia-style) offering...

See some of my other articles for other ideas on how to refocus the whole module. But our folk are so very used to How It's Done...

Rev. Ian Corrigan is a senior priest and Archdruid Emeritus of ADF. He blogs at <https://intothemound.blogspot.com/>.

Story: Anansi and the Priest

By Nathan Large

One fine day, Anansi was climbing across the treetops, above a road, in one of his favorite forests. The sun was shining brightly, fruit was ripening, and Anansi had no cares.

He was happy... until an awful noise interrupted his pleasant journey. Anansi heard a voice moaning and groaning from the ground below.

“Oh, I am worthless,” the voice moaned. “I have failed you. I am sorry, my Lord.”

Irritated by the sound – and a little curious – Anansi descended from the trees to the road. There, he saw a lean man in dark robes, sitting at the roadside. The man was holding his head in his hands, rocking back and forth as he cried.

“Why are you groaning so loudly?” asked Anansi. “What troubles you, that you must trouble me on this fine day?”

The man looked up. If he was surprised to be addressed by a small, fat, hairy creature with eight legs, he gave little sign.

Instead, he wiped his eyes and answered: “I have traveled from far away, to tell the people here about my wondrous God. I am only a poor priest. I need more people to give offerings to my God so that He will bless me... and them.”

“That seems like a noble goal,” said Anansi, “but I suppose things aren’t going well?”

“Not well at all,” said the priest. “Everyone I tell about my God listens very politely, but then they say they see no reason to give him offerings. I think no one believes me; some people even say so.”

Anansi scratched his head knowingly. “Of

course, they don’t believe you. If you just tell someone something, directly, they think you’re lying and trying to get something out of them.” He winked four eyes at the priest. “You have to put your truth in a story... like coating a bitter pill in honey, so that it is easier to swallow.”

“A story?” asked the priest. “What is that?”

Anansi was offended and surprised. “Why, a story is a... a story! It’s a way of telling something that happened, by explaining it very slowly, step by step. You say what people did and said, and then what happened afterward. I should know; I own all the stories. You really never heard of *stories*?”

The priest shook his head. “I think I know what you mean, but where I’m from, you just state the facts, and that’s all.”

“Well, it seems I’m being too stingy, if word of my wonderful stories isn’t spreading that far,” mused Anansi. “I need to advertise better. How about this: try using one of my stories. No charge. I rarely charge much for them, anyway. You’ll see what I mean: people will believe you better, your God will get offerings, and you will get your blessings. Then, you can tell everyone how Anansi’s story helped you to prosper. Your testimonial will be payment enough.”

“That does sound good,” admitted the priest. “All right, I’ll try it. There’s a village down this road. I’ll go there and tell them a story about my God.”

“Good luck!” said Anansi. “I’m sure you’ll do fine.”

Anansi and the priest parted ways. The priest walked quickly toward the village. Anansi climbed back up into the trees, resuming his gradual, casual pace.

Anansi walked for half the day, relaxing and eating fruit as he went, without a care. He was happy... until he heard a familiar moaning and groaning from below. He descended from the trees, and sure enough, there was the priest again, walking back along the road and wailing and pounding his head.

“Why won’t they believe me?” he cried. “Why am I such a terrible priest?”

Anansi hurried over to the man, calling out, “I suppose your visit didn’t go well this time, either. Didn’t you tell them a story, like I told you? You must not have done it right, if they didn’t believe you.”

“I did just as you told me,” the priest answered, wiping his eyes. “I told them that once, there was a man who offered up everything he owned to God. Then, he was blessed and everything he did turned out well, so that he ended up more prosperous than before.”

Anansi stared for a moment, then said, “No wonder they didn’t believe you! That story is terrible. I can’t believe that’s one of mine... must be a cheap imitation. It’s much too simple, for one thing. Too straight-forward. And the ending? No one has ever seen anything like that happen. It’s not plausible.”

“But it’s true!” protested the priest. “That’s exactly what I believe... exactly what *would* happen!”

“That’s beside the point,” explained Anansi. “Even if what you claim really would occur, no one’s seen anything like it. You can’t just throw out a straight line and expect to snare anyone. You have to work around to your point... come at it from a corner... spiral inward, so that your audience doesn’t see where you’re going... until they’re already caught.”

“You make stories sound very devious,” said the priest, “like they’re *not* true.”

“All my stories are true,” objected Anansi, “but

some are more believable than others. For example, try using some different characters. Not people, like you or them. Maybe animals? Animals usually work better. And don’t directly describe things like ‘offerings’ and ‘blessings’. Make them into symbols, to represent what you mean without saying it outright. Then, people will understand your point before they know what it is they’re understanding.”

“Oh! You mean getting past their doubts!”

“Exactly! All right, it sounds like you have the idea now. Don’t let me keep you; I’ve given you enough of my valuable time already.”

“Thank you again,” said the priest, as they parted ways once more. The priest hurried back to the little village, and Anansi climbed back into the treetops.

By then, it was getting late. The sun was disappearing below the tree line. Anansi felt exhausted from all his hard, charitable work. He wove a hammock and settled in for a pleasant night’s sleep.

He was woken the next morning by the all-too-familiar sound of moans and groans. Once again, the noise was moving, passing along the road below.

Anansi climbed out of bed, grumbling, and dropped below the leaves. Sure enough, the wandering priest was walking slowly back from the village, crying and beating himself for his failures.

Anansi didn’t care as much about the interruption. He could forgive the man for waking him... just barely... but he remembered his sage advice from the day before. Anansi was upset that his stories were proving so ineffective in the mouth of an incompetent user.

Anansi descended to the road and shouted at the priest’s back: “Hey! What’s wrong now? Didn’t

you tell them a story like I said? Why aren't you successful and happy?"

The priest turned around, drying his eyes. "Oh, I did. It was a good story, too, I thought, but they still didn't understand. They still wouldn't make any offerings. They even laughed at me!"

Anansi asked, "What story did you tell them, that didn't work?"

"I told them about a lion who killed an enormous water buffalo. He couldn't eat it all himself, so he gave most of the meat to vultures. Then, when a hunter came to kill the lion, the vultures cried out to warn him, saving his life."

Anansi ran a leg over his face, momentarily too annoyed to speak. "Look, that's a better story than last time, I'll grant you. You have characters, and you made symbols out of things... but it still doesn't make sense. Lions... male ones, at least... don't kill buffalo. Certainly, not by themselves. And they don't 'give meat away'. They might wander off if they get full and bored, but they're not generous. Vultures know that. They certainly wouldn't do a lion any favors, not when there's an armed hunter nearby, to leave them two carcasses instead of one."

"But..." began the priest.

"No, sorry," interrupted Anansi, "it's still a bad story. Where are you finding these duds? I should clean out my inventory. Look, because your characters acted in completely unbelievable ways, your audience didn't believe your conclusion, much less understand the point you were trying to make."

The priest finally managed to interject: "But, I thought you said all stories were true."

"They are," Anansi protested, "but some stories are more true, and some are more believable, and some are just better than others. You have to use a *good* story, not just a true one."

The priest frowned. "I'm already concerned that the story I told was false. Like you said, it could never happen. But the things I'm describing *are* true, and they could happen, and they do. Your 'good' story sounds like it's more false than what it's describing."

"No, it's a *bad* story, if it sounds false," corrected Anansi. "A good story always sounds true... more true than the truth itself! You just have to go a little further. Sometimes, you have to talk about things that don't even exist – characters who never were and events that nobody could know about – so that your listeners can't doubt you. Then, when you tell them what happened, they don't have any reason to think you're wrong."

"That sounds even more false!" objected the priest.

"No, no, it's even more true," said Anansi, "because it gives them the right idea, without a lot of false parts. Trust me. Try another story, one with some really fanciful characters and symbolism. See if it doesn't get through to them."

The priest looked skeptical but nodded politely. "All right. I don't have any other ideas. I'll try it your way, one more time."

"It's your choice," Anansi replied, feeling fatigued all over again from the hard work and the argument. "Just don't complain to me if you choose another bad story. You've had a lot of my best advice for no charge."

They parted ways once again, this time annoyed with one another. Anansi went back to bed, to sleep in until lunch-time. The priest returned to the little village nearby.

When Anansi woke again, the sun was high in the sky. He was hot and hungry and drowsy. Rather than travel further onward, he decided to go back to the nearby village for a snack. Surely, the people there would be thrilled to see him and host him for a meal.

Anansi followed the road back to the village. He did not see or hear the black-robed, wandering priest. Well, then, the man must have been successful. Anansi wasn't surprised. Anyone who used one of his stories – one of his *good* stories, told the right way – they couldn't help but succeed.

Anansi reached the village and walked up to the nearest resident he saw. It was a woman; she almost didn't see him, with her eyes fixed on the skies above.

“Good day, mistress!” called out Anansi. “I am the great Anansi, come to grace your village with my presence. I ask only a decent meal and a comfortable place to rest, before I go again on my way.”

The woman looked down at his voice, but she looked worried. “O, Great Anansi, we are honored by your presence and can certainly make a place for you to rest, but I am afraid we have no food to offer you.”

“What?” shouted Anansi. “There are fruiting trees all around your village! Surely you have decent farmers and hunters? It is the perfect season for harvest! You should have vast stores of food. Do not insult me by claiming you have nothing to offer a guest... particularly a guest of my quality!”

The woman looked downcast at these complaints, but answered, “It is true, great one. We had much food stored, but we offered it all up to the great Spirit who lives above the trees. Everything we had is gone... but if you will be patient, a mighty blessing will come to us, and we will be more prosperous than ever before.”

Anansi was about to shout again, but then realized how familiar her words sounded. The priest! Somehow, he was able to persuade the villagers not only to make offerings, but to offer *everything*.

Dreading her answer, Anansi asked the woman, “Why have you done such a thing?”

“A priest came to us three times,” she answered. “At first, he told us a foolish story about a man who gave up everything he owned and was rewarded. We laughed and ignored him. Then he came back and told us a stupid story about a lion and some vultures. We laughed again.

“But the third time, he told us a story about the King of the Jungle, a great and noble lion who struggled to teach his kind greater wisdom. He told us how the King made a treaty with the great Spirit of the Sky, who lives high and hidden above the treetops. In return for a portion of the kills of his lionesses, the Spirit would watch over the King and his family, through the birds who are His servants, guarding the lions against danger and helping them find even more prey.”

The woman finished: “The priest explained how he had learned this wisdom from the King, who lives in a land far away, and came to share it with us. If we made offerings to the Spirit of the Sky, He would share His blessings with us, too. The more we offered, the greater the blessings. So, of course, our leaders decided they would offer everything and gain the best blessings.”

Anansi had little to say. He had been right... and he had been wrong. His story – one of his best and most believable – had worked just as he promised, but the way in which it was used left Anansi hungry.

With an empty belly and a heavy head, Anansi thanked the woman and left the village. He walked back down the road on his previous course, hoping to catch up with a certain priest and offer him some new advice.

Nathan Large is a writer and storyteller, primarily working in speculative fiction with mythological themes, but his study within ADF has taken a Bardic turn, producing several "new myths", fables and a growing number of praise poems and songs. (See the rest of his bio under "The Poets" below.) Anansi is an African character, not Indo-European, but we thought the story would be enjoyed regardless.

Book Review: Ancient Greek Divination by Sarah Iles Johnston

Reviewed by Rev. G. R. Grove

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell; 1st edition (August 18, 2008)

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Sarah Iles Johnston is the College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor of Religion and Professor of Classics and Comparative Studies at The Ohio State University. She has authored and coauthored a number of books on ancient Mediterranean religions and edited or co-edited several more. *Ancient Greek Divination* is a scholarly yet accessible discussion of divinatory practices in ancient Greece from its earliest history down to post-Hellenic times, concentrating mainly on the earlier periods. A list of the chapters and their subsections is as follows:

Chapter 1 – Why Divination?

The Ancient Discussions

The History of the History of Divination

Divination and Magic

What This Book Will Do

Chapter 2 – The Divine Experience Part One:

Delphi and Dodona

Location

Delphi

Apollo's bride

Experience and mechanics

Science to the rescue?

The chain of transmission

Riddles and lots

Bringing things down to earth

Dodona

Men and women; birds and trees

Springs and cauldrons

Lead tablets

Fitting it all together?

Chapter 3 – The Divine Experience Part Two: Claros, Didyma and Others

Claros

Didyma

Incubation Oracles

Trophonius

Necromancy?

Flames, Mirrors and Dice

A Famous Scam ... Perhaps

Chapter 4 – Freelance Divination: The *Mantis*

Becoming a *Mantis*

What *Manteis* Did

Manteis in battle

Old problems and new solutions

Healing and related activities

How They Did What They Did

Reading the Entrails

Birds and other omens

Observation of the heavens

Dreams

Chresmologues, belly-talkers and oracles

Chapter 5 – The *Mantis* and the Magician

Magic?

Texts and Their Backgrounds

Changes

Divination in Magical Texts

Seeing it for Yourself

Fire and Water

Sending Dreams, Receiving Dreams

Divinatory Statues

Mills and Spheres, Skulls and Corpses

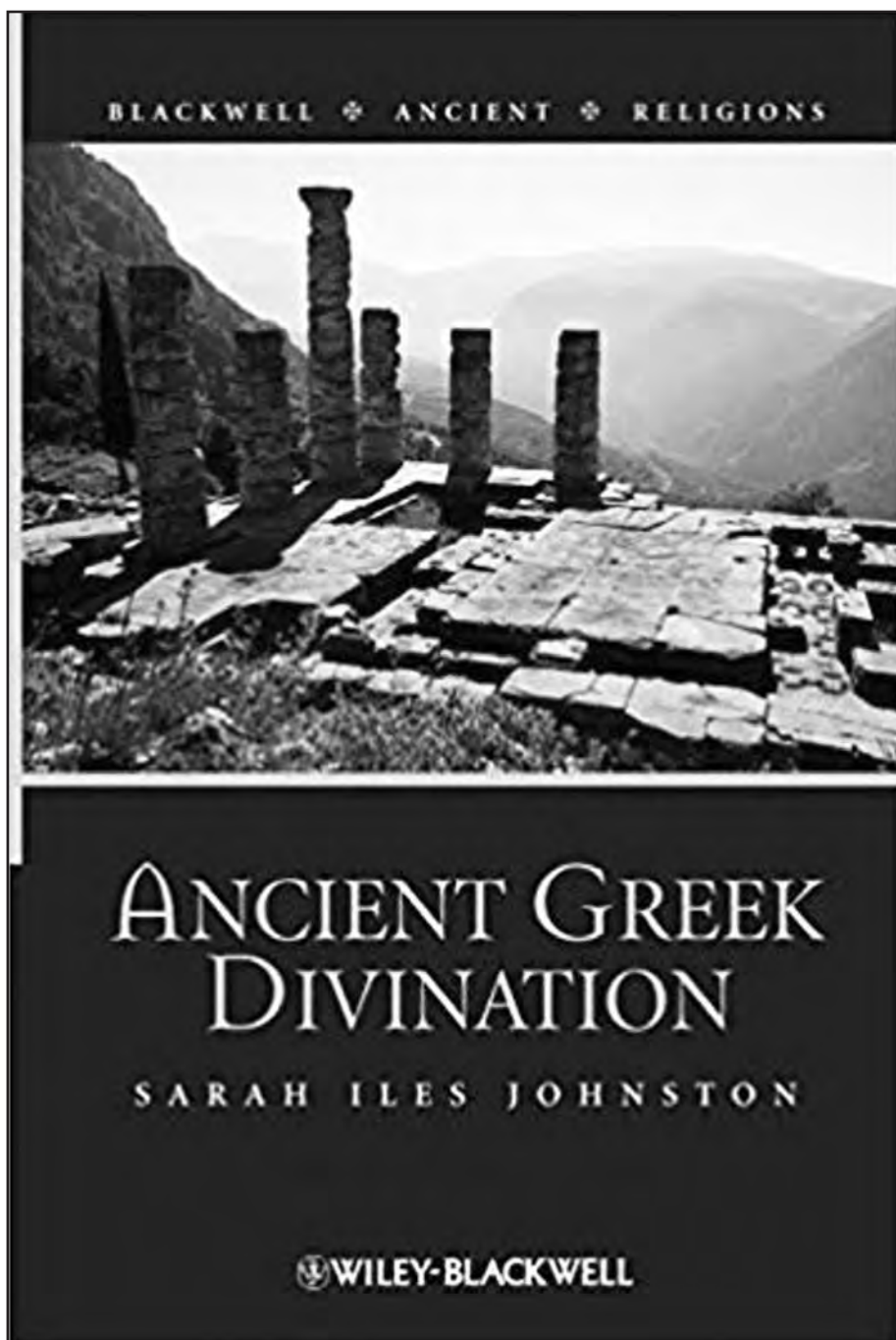
Magic and Divination

I found the discussion of the oracles at Delphi and Dodona in Chapter 2 the most interesting as they loom so large in the literature of Classical Greece. These were two of the oldest and most famous of the oracles, and were dedicated respectively to Apollo and Zeus. Johnston's detailed exploration of the mechanics of the oracles themselves is fascinating: who could seek an oracle, when, and how. At Delphi, for example, the Pythia gave oracles only on the seventh

day of each month (except for the three winter months when Apollo was believed to be away). Some Pythias spoke in verse and others in prose to the attendant priests. Since clearly one day a month could not handle all enquirers, there were also lot divinations providing a “yes” or “no” answer by means of beans or pebbles. The oracle at Dodona, on the other hand, solely involved written questions inscribed on folded lead tablets (over 1,400 of which have been found there). Like the lot divinations at Delphi, the questions at Dodona were phrased so that they could be answered “yes” or “no”.

In Chapter 3 Johnston discusses a few of the less famous oracular sites. At Claros, another oracle of Apollo, the prophet descended into a cave and drank from a sacred spring, then answered the questions of the enquirers without ever being told what they were. At Didyma, also an oracle of Apollo, the *mantis* first fasted for three days and purified herself by baths in the innermost part of the temple. As at Delphi, she prophesied through being taken possession of by the god. The incubation oracles operated in a much different fashion than Delphi or Dodona; instead, questioners slept overnight in the precincts of gods or heroes in expectation of receiving prophetic dreams. Many of the gods involved, such as Asclepius, Podalirius, Calchas, and Amphiaraus, had once been mortals, which may have provided a more intimate experience. Most of these oracles specialized in cures.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the process of freelance



divination, either by the wandering who worked for hire or by magicians who mostly worked for themselves. The two categories seem to have had considerable overlap.

I recommend this book to anyone interested in divination or indeed in Ancient Greek society in general, as divination was such an important part of that society.

Rev. G. R. Grove is a Senior Priest of ADF and Editor-in-Chief of Oak Leaves.

Yggdrasil: Norse Divination Cards

Reviewed by John Hijatt

Yggdrasil: Norse Divination Cards

By Haukur Halldórsson with G. Hauksdóttir

Published by Llewellyn.

The *Yggdrasil: Norse Divination Cards* was published in summer 2019 and has 81 black and white illustrated cards depicting gods, goddesses, Jotuns, Dwarfs, Elves, and other beings and realms. This oracle deck is special because, unlike other oracle decks, it includes more than the commonly known gods and goddesses of the Aesir, Vanir, and Jotunar. The inspiration for the artwork and details are from the stories, mythology, and spiritual practices of Northern European Traditions (Vanatru, Heidhrinn Craft, Heathenry, Rokkr, Asatru, Forn Sidh, Norse Paganism, etc).

Creators Haukur Halldórsson (artist) and G. Hauksdóttir (writer) open doors to the realms of beings that have a lot to explore and show us. When I first saw the announcement in a Llewellyn catalog at my local metaphysical shop, I was immediately drawn to the artwork and excited about the potential of this deck. The tiny image showed only the box cover and four of the cards to entice my interest and anticipation for the summer release.

This was a deck that I looked forward to seeing the artwork, the divination/oracle aspect of it, and the stories that would be included. When I received the deck, I eagerly opened the box and flipped through the cards. What a delight to see so much more of the artwork and to have the accompanying book to begin a journey with these diverse beings. With that, here are my impressions:

DECK DETAILS

The cards come in a sturdy box with magnetic closures and an insert that holds the cards in place. The cards are a sturdy cardstock with semi-

gloss finish and a size of 3 ½ x 5 1/8". This is a good size to showcase the art, but does make shuffling the deck a bit of a challenge. Some will find it useful to utilize an over-hand shuffle or riffle shuffle the cards in smaller groups.

ARTWORK

The artwork is very detailed and interesting. Artwork in an oracle deck is pretty important because it is what draws a person to it and sparks that connection to the spirit (wyrd) of the experience. Here the artist goes in a direction not usual for oracles, black and white line work instead of the colorful/fanciful images of other decks. Here it works very well. It is detailed and evokes a sense of classic artwork that is found in very old books which used block prints for images. I really enjoy it on each card.

Halldórsson's artwork on the characters appears to take different styles or genres. It is subtle, and when I asked about it, they mentioned that it was just the way he draws. I like the fact that it evokes, in my untrained appreciation, the artwork of the classic era, modern Klimt or Picasso, avant garde, and some tribal elements. It's really a great way for each of the beings to show just a little bit of personality.

On just a couple of the cards, the art is slightly overcrowded and probably represents better in a much larger format. When reduced to the card size, it is easy for more detailed images to become more condensed and harder to see. But this is only on a couple of them and does not render the image useless in the deck.

There are also some designs that seem a bit out of place or oddly chosen. When I showed the deck to some of my female friends, they thought that depictions of some of the goddesses diminished their power and strength. I understand their arguments and present it as a topic of thought for

Picture provided by the author.



The text is written by G. Hauksdóttir who includes the stories of the beings along with divination possibilities. Many of these characters do not have easily found sources from which to learn more. Some might even challenge how we look at the “accepted” explanations of them. The most obvious of these is for Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld. In this deck, they are interpreted as present, future, and past, instead of the widely accepted and taught past, present, future (*resp.*).

When I asked G. about this, she related that these are the stories they grew up with in Iceland. When looking at the

others to consider as they work with the goddesses on this project.

BOOK/TEXT

The book that accompanies the deck is a good size and printed in easy-to-read type. It is laid out with an appropriately sized image of the card and the text of the story. The characters (they are not all gods and goddesses) are categorized into nine groups of nine beings. Each group is connected to one of the Nine Realms of the Northern Tradition cosmology.

The interesting thing about this form of groups is that you may be surprised by the group that Halldórsson assigns to a certain character. Rather than get upset or declare his experiences/choices as “wrong”, it creates an opportunity to look into this aspect of expression and see how it will add to your own connection to that being.



Picture provided by the author.

Norns example, for instance, the understanding of them relies more on the nuances of language, interpretations, and how sometimes things are simplified. I found this freeing, and it opened opportunities to start with these stories and learn more about a being from a different starting point, and to look into those with whom I am familiar with a different approach.

Just a couple of technical items about the text of the book. 1) A more complete table of contents would be appreciated. Currently it lists only the nine groups. Because there are so many cards with unfamiliar characters, it will be very useful to have an alphabetical listing of each card with the page number. This way, when a card is drawn it can be easily located in the book.

2) The stories are really great, and it would be useful to have references to where they come from (if they have such references, such as Ed-das, mythology, collections, folklore, etc.). Also, that if something goes in a direction so drastically different (as with the Norns), just a short explanation to help readers understand that process would be good.

USING THE DECK

This is a large deck and has a lot of possibilities. Included is a spread for the Nine Realms (Worlds) and how each position relates to the other in a reading as well as when related cards show up in the reading. It's a big spread with a lot of possibilities and attention. Slightly complicated, but I think with regular use it will be easier to use. I do not think this deck will lend itself easily to the more common layouts and spreads that are included in many tarot and oracle offerings. In addition to the spread included for topics needing a lot of feedback, I think this deck will be really good companion to use with other oracle, tarot, or rune readings as clarifying or helping advice.

As with any tradition, I believe it is important to become familiar with the culture, mythology, beings, and traditions (historical and modern) that

are part of that expression. This deck is based on Northern European Traditions (Icelandic, Nordic, Germanic) that have a rich mythology to explore and include when connecting with the cosmology of that *wyrd* (spirit).

This is a really nice work and a very good addition to accompany a divination and spiritual practice. You can pick up or order from your local bookstore if possible or from your preferred online retailer. Follow *divination_yggdrasil* on Facebook and Instagram.

John Hijatt has been an ADF member since 2006. He co-founded the Coast Oak Grove and is currently the Seers Guild Chief. His spiritual practice is that of the Northern Germanic Traditions including Vanatru and Heidhrinn Craft. He is the host of Gifts of the Wyrd Podcast, promotes inclusive heathenry, is a rune practitioner, and is working on writing projects about the runes.



“Sun Eggs”: Good for Any High Day

By Aleen Bachman

Deviled Eggs are somewhat labor intensive but will serve 2 or 3 as easily as 20 or 30 so they are great for potlucks and gatherings.

Hard boiled eggs --- as many as you need to have 1 egg per person being served plus 1 extra egg for every 6. The extra eggs are used to replace eggs which cracked in the cooking, don't peel smoothly, tear while being stuffed, or have the yolk so off-center that it leaves a hole in the white part.

Mayonnaise

Dijon Mustard

Dill pickle juice (optional)

Salt (optional)

Ground Horseradish (optional)

Pepper

Onion powder

Chervil or Parsley --- fresh or dried

Dill Weed --- fresh or dried

Paprika or Cayenne pepper (or Wasabi powder for the adventurous) for topping

Peel the eggs and slice them in half length-wise. Carefully remove the yolks and place in a bowl, setting the whites aside

If any of the whites are torn or majorly damaged (like from sticking shells) chop them up finely and put them in the bowl with the yolks.

Once all the yolks are in the bowl, mash them well to break them up into fine crumbles. I put mine through a ricer at this point. Some people

like to use a mixer at this point but I feel that makes the mixture too soft

This is the point where “to taste” comes into play.

Stir in mayonnaise, Dijon, and dill pickle juice (go lightly on this last ingredient) into the yolks until the yolk consistency is about the same as soft-serve ice cream. Fold in the horseradish, pepper, onion powder, chervil and dill weed sparingly. The more you stir and mix, the creamier and softer the texture of the yolks get, so if you want your finished product to have more substance, stir lightly.

Taste the mixture. The mustard and pickle juice (if you used it) will add salt to the flavor. The Dijon and horseradish will give a spicy bite. Adjust the spices to your taste.

Some people will spoon the yolk mixture into a pastry bag and fill the whites by squeezing the mixture into the centers. I use an iced-tea spoon and one by one put the yolk mixture into the whites. This is what makes the recipe labor intensive. There should be more than enough to fill the centers of the whites.

Once all the whites are filled, lightly sprinkle the stuffed eggs with Paprika or Cayenne. Wasabi is a good choice for those who like a strong bite but go lightly as it can be harsh.

If you make deviled eggs ahead of time, put a paper towel on the plate since the eggs will sweat and the paper towels will soak up the extra liquid. Finally, keep them refrigerated!



Aleen Bachman joined ADF in 2014. She is a founding member of Chokecherry Grove in Denver, Colorado.

Word Search Puzzle: Characters and Places In the First Branch of the Mabinogion

By Rev. G. R. Grove

R	H	I	A	N	N	O	N	G	G	Y	P
D	Y	F	E	D	A	G	S	W	O	G	W
W	F	A	E	P	R	Y	D	E	R	I	Y
A	A	D	O	G	S	N	C	N	S	O	L
L	I	E	L	C	H	A	O	T	E	R	L
L	D	U	G	W	A	W	L	I	D	A	R
T	D	R	W	M	F	S	T	S	D	R	L
A	H	Y	R	N	G	T	M	C	T	B	I
R	E	N	I	W	A	A	R	O	W	E	A
A	N	N	W	F	N	G	Y	E	F	R	N
W	T	E	Y	R	N	O	N	D	O	T	T
N	F	F	G	L	Y	N	C	U	C	H	P

PWYLL
 GORSEDD
 ARBERTH
 ANNWFN
 ARAWN
 HAFGAN
 RHIANNON
 HYFAIDD HEN

GWAWL
 TEYRNON
 TWF
 LIANT
 GWRI
 WALLT
 EURYN

PRYDERI
 GLYN CUCH
 DYFED
 GWENT IS COED
 DOGS
 COLT
 STAG

The Poets

Rev. Amber Ferree is an Ordained ADF Priest, Thelemite, and all-around Nerd Girl. She has a thirst for knowledge and loves letting her brain make interesting connections between the stuff she learns. She is an author and an artist and lives with her two feline children, Ash and Eadha.

William Graham (Eonan Feliciano) joined ADF in 2018. He is currently incarcerated at the Green Rock Correctional Center in Chatham, Virginia.

Jeffrey Keefe has practiced Druidry for a decade, and is now into his second year with ADF. Embracing a solitary path while living in the Big Apple, he believes his Druidic service is partially fulfilled through actively editing Wikipedia and serving as the Board President of Cherry Hill Seminary. He writes poetry as a bardic expression of awen.

Nathan Large is a writer and storyteller, primarily working in speculative fiction with mythological themes, but his study within ADF has taken a Bardic turn, producing several "new myths", fables and a growing number of praise poems and songs. His original science fiction series with Laine Megan Lundquist, *Empyrean Dreams*, will soon release its fourth self-published book, and

he is developing a strategy card game based on sacred trees and the Ogham, *Growing the Grove*. Nathan serves as deputy coordinator of the Games and Play SIG and Secretary of Whispering Lakes Grove in Erie, PA.

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

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

News and Announcements

Program & Path Completions

Rev. G R (Gwernin) Grove

Elevation to Senior Priest

12 October, 2019

Ian Cook (Phoenix Wyrdlampe)

Dedicant Path

10 October, 2019

Ròcas Cearcall

Dedicant Path

16 December, 2019

Andy McCoy

Dedicant Path

18 December, 2019

~Congratulations to all~

Upcoming Events

Ghostii-con 2020

19-22 March, 2020

<https://ghosti-con.org/>

Wellspring Gathering

21-25 May, 2020

Tredara, Madison, OH, USA

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

Word Search Puzzle : Bards and Bardic Gods - Answers from Issue #87

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

Taliesin
Aneirin
Amairgen
Dallan
Senchan
Thiodolf
Ulf
Egil

Homer
Orpheus
An Dagda
Aengus Og
Keridwen
Gwydion
Odin
Bragi

Apollon
Muses
Pan

(Apologies—the name “Dallan” was inadvertently omitted from last month’s puzzle)



ADF Directory



The Mother Grove

Archdruid	Rev. Jean 'Drum' Pagano	adf-archdruid@adf.org
Vice-Archdruid	Rev. Sean Harbaugh	adf-vice-archdruid@adf.org
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Secretary	Victoria Selnes	adf-secretary@adf.org
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Chief of the Council of Senior Druids	Rev. Michael Dangler	adf-cosd-chief@adf.org
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Non-Officer Director	(vacant)	
Non-Officer Director	James Fielder	thebigpigeon@yahoo.com
Non-Officer Director	Julie Desrosiers	poledrasdaughter@gmail.com

Additional Leadership Positions

Administrator	Jane Wayson	adf-administrator@adf.org
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Isaac Bonewits	[deceased]
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Ian Corrigan	tredara@ncweb.com
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. John 'Fox' Adelman	john.adelman@trw.com
Archdruid Emeritus	Rev. Robert 'Skip' Ellison	skip@dragonskeep.us
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Committees

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

For information on **Regional Druids** please see the full listing at:

<http://www.adf.org/members/org/cord/>

For more information on **Groves, Guilds, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and Kins**, please see the full listing at:

<http://www.adf.org/groups/groups-list.html>

Ár nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship

Oak Leaves Subscriptions:

ADF and Oak Leaves Membership Rates:

Regular Membership: \$30/year
Prisoner Membership: \$10/year

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Subscription to Oak Leaves: Non-Members: \$25/year

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P.O. Box 84
Wickliffe, OH 44092-0084;

adf-office@adf.org

If you would like to subscribe to Oak Leaves without joining ADF, please contact the Business Office at the address above.

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

Salutation to the Dawn

A Dawn Devotional

<Hold arms outstretched in front, with palms up>

I reach for the Sun

In the dawn:

Start of a new day

Doorway to the morning

The first blessing of the day.

I call to the Holy Ones,

With this prayer.

I find my place in the Dawn.

~Rev. Jean Pagano~

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Graphic work by Holly Paulsen

The Wellspring 2020 Gathering



May 21 - 25, at Tredara Shrine, In NE Ohio
Since 1991, the original and perennial festival of Neopagan Druidry
This year's special guest:

Diana Paxson

Seidhkona, Godhi, Author & Teacher

Wellspring Bardic Chair • Warrior's Guild Games
Brewer's Competition • Artisan's Guild Competition & Salon
Pot-luck Feast • ADF Annual Meeting

Special Musical Guests:

The Mickeys

Rollicking Irish Fun!

COST: \$75-ADF MEMBERS, \$85-NON-MEMBERS,
PRE-REG, \$85/\$95 AT DOOR, \$20 PER DAY. CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE.

<https://stonecreed.org/wellspring> • seniordruid@stonecreed.org