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WITCH



LUGHNASADH





WITCH

Magazine

Dearest Witches,

Welcome to the first harvest!!

Apologies for the delay to this issue - I put my laptop charger somewhere so safe I had to order a new one to be able to finish the issue and get it online! I'm so sorry about the delay!

I had been playing with a new layout that I was unable to finish in time - so this issue may appear somewhat stripped back!

This year seems to have flown by - already we're moments away from the 'ber months, my favourite season! But there's still some summer left yet - I wish you a blessed August!

Bekki
Editor

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WITCH

FEATURED ARTICLES

Geridwen and the Cauldron of Rage - Helen JR Bruce

She-Wolf - Rachel S Roberts

Channeling Sedna - Fairy Bec

Banishing - The Old Crone

Article by Carrie Anderson

Lughnasadh Magic - Scott Irvine

Lions Gate Quartz - North West Crystals

Bayleaf Bonfire Blessings - Elyse Welles

Poetry by Madison Gawain, curated by Carrie Anderson

What We're Reading

WITCH AUTUMN EQUINOX



*Submissions due
11 September*

WITCH is an independently published magazine featuring writers across the globe, from all paths. We feature anything from witchcraft to the occult, pagan and druid practices and anything in between.

Even if you've never written before, we welcome new voices, previously published works and artist features of all kinds.

We'd love to hear from you!

*Send your submissions to:
submissions@witchzine.co.uk*



LUGHNASADH
BLESSINGS

Shine gold, the harvest begins



★
WITCH
Magazine

We live in a world where expressions of rage have become taboo, especially from women. Hearing a woman raise her voice or assert her boundaries fiercely may make us feel awkward or want to avert our eyes. Female rage is, all too often, something shameful. Even in ourselves, that bubbling fury is something which we might want to force down or mask, for fear of being seen as crazy.

HELEN J.R. BRUCE

CERIDWEN AND THE CAULDRON OF RAGE



This isn't an issue confined to only one gender. Culturally, firm boundaries and saying 'no', both in relationships and employment, can be mis-identified as frigid, lazy, rude, unapproachable, selfish and self-centred. The issue is magnified for women, as the patriarchal and capitalist construct of femininity allows no room for anger, fierceness or the venting of rightful frustration. An ideal woman, according to predominant societal constructs, is quiet, soft, yielding, fragile and forgiving. She is a follower rather than a leader, her value is measured in outward beauty and she is a consumer of products marketed as able to maintain this appearance. These products, in turn, present her tastefully for the male appetite and for consumption by men.

But what if women reversed this pattern? What if they bared their teeth, stretched opened their jaws and prepared to consume every one of their oppressors?

The tale of Ceridwen reminds us that this is possible. Over and over in folklore, women are portrayed as witches, queens and murderers. They are not simply princesses to be saved, but instead presented in multiple forms as goddesses and folkloric archetypes with complex and multi-faceted natures. Just a few examples include: the Morrigan, Kali, Rhiannon, Freyja and Hecate. There are many, many more, and these mythic women come from stories which are deeply intertwined with the land in which there are told, and the ancestors who told them. These tales are far more than something to be studied, but part of our own mythic heritage and powerful tools for transformation in any of us who hear and retell them. Thousands of goddesses are waiting to remind us that our rage is valid.



Ceridwen appears as a figure in Welsh mythology, and one of the most famous stories associated with her is that of her magical brew and the birth/rebirth of the bard Taliesin. In this tale she sets out to brew a transformative potion for her son, which must be brewed for a year and a day. After this time, the first three drops that come from the cauldron will give the gifts of wisdom and beauty. The rest of the liquid is deadly poison. She tasks a young servant boy, named Gwion Bach, with stirring the contents of the cauldron and adding wood to the fire. But, a year and a day is a long time, and just as the potion reaches completion, Gwion is careless with how much wood he adds and the cauldron boils over. Three drops fly out and burn his thumb, and when Gwion licks the stinging liquid off he is immediately filled with wisdom, foresight and magical abilities. He knows that Ceridwen is coming to kill him and he transforms into a rabbit to escape her.

But, filled with rage that her son has been robbed of the magical brew she created, Ceridwen turns into a sharp toothed hound to pursue Gwion. She is about to catch him and eat him when Gwion transforms again, this time jumping into a river and becoming a salmon. The furious Ceridwen becomes a nimble otter, and pursues him through the water until she almost able to catch and devour him. Gwion escapes her clutches by jumping from the water and transforming into a wren, but Ceridwen continues her chase in the shape of a hawk. Exhausted, Gwion drops from the sky and becomes a single piece of grain in a freshly harvested pile. But Ceridwen is not to be foiled in her revenge. She shifts her shape into an enormous black hen and consumes all the grain in the pile, including Gwion.

You would be forgiven for thinking that Gwion must be dead. But, Ceridwen soon discovers that she is pregnant, and immediately knows that the child growing within her is none other than Gwion. She resolves to kill the child as soon as it is born. But, after nine months she gives birth to a baby boy, and the child is so beautiful that she cannot bring herself to kill him. Instead she wraps the newborn up in a leather bag and tosses him into the sea, where the tides rock him and eventually carry the bag to a popular salmon weir. It is here that the child is found, adopted by Prince Elfin, and renamed Taliesin, which means 'radiant brow'. He goes on to be a famous bard, oracle and advisor to kings.

Considering the events in this story, Ceridwen is potentially as far from what society deems a good woman as it's possible to be. She gets angry and allows her rage out for all to see. She doesn't stick to any single portrayal of herself, becoming a hound, an otter, a hawk and a hen in turn, all of which are fierce and ravenous. Her behaviour is destructive and murderous. She stands up to a man who has taken something from her, and refuses to stop her pursuit of justice until she thinks he is dead. This is a woman who is a consumer of that which wrongs her, rather than a consumer

of products and content pre-approved by men. Ceridwen is not on offer for consumption, and any interest in softness or male-taste-beauty is thrown out in favour of fur, teeth and claws.

This is the goddess archetype in her richest, most complex and multi-faceted depiction. Sitting side by side with Ceridwen's rage and murderous tendencies, is the love of her son which drove her to

first brew the potion. Alongside the hate of Gwion for robbing her, sits a respect for the reborn Taliesin which allows her to finally forgive him. In the story, her placing of him in the sea is not generally interpreted as another attempt at murder, but as the final and necessary stage of his rebirth. Ceridwen is both a giver and taker of life. Her rage is a conduit for the transformative power which allows the rebirth of Taliesin. Her cauldron symbolises both the womb and the cooking pot, where dead flesh is transformed and the seed of new life is brewed. The rage of Ceridwen is at the core of her power.



Just like Ceridwen, our own rage can transform. When we settle into ourselves, acknowledge our rage and drop into feeling it, we can find a place from which we can channel it mindfully. Rage without purpose is just rage, but rage as fuel can power enormous transformation. Our rage energy is what can drive us to make real changes in our lives and in the community around us, bringing about the destruction of outdated and harmful structures, whilst allowing for the rebirth of inclusive and healthy ways of thinking and living. Female rage is taboo due to the fact that it is so powerful. Women do have teeth and claws as well as soft skin and beautiful bodies, and allowing ourselves that true multi-faceted depth and contrast is stepping into the fullness of our personal power.



**CHANNEL YOUR RAGE.
DEVOUR ALL THAT OPPRESSES YOU.
TRANSFORM THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER.**

This article has been brewed during, and follows on from, my talk titled 'Folklore, Female Rage and the Goddess Archetype' which I gave at Burning Woman Festival, 2023. This is a three day, two night, festival of empowerment, sisterhood and wellness for women.

SHE-WOLF

THE POWER OF WORDS AND RECLAIMING YOUR IDENTITY

Rachel S Roberts

When I was young, I remember being labelled as a quiet girl, who teachers believed would never find her voice. In the following years I believed it and kept quiet, even when I was suffering and in pain. Even into my thirties as a teacher, speaker and writer, I still sometimes find myself hesitant when it comes to sharing my voice. It was decided I was and would always be that quiet girl. That label has stuck with me ever since; in the expectations of those who knew me as a child and in the back of my mind where being loved and approved of is tangled up with keeping quiet.

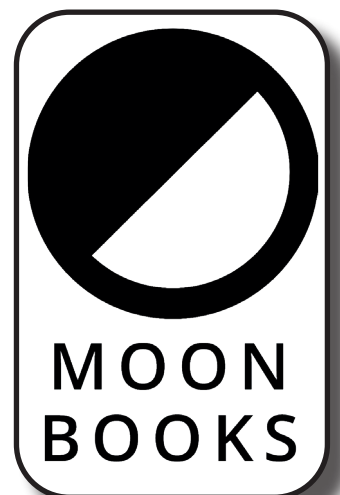
Can you relate?

Often in life we are encouraged, or feel obliged to take or claim a label; anything from witch, sorceress, priestess, lightworker to doctor, builder, leader, as well as kind, quiet, assertive or temperamental. You may even solely define yourself along the terms of old, young, woman, man, human.

Sometimes we choose a label and wear it proudly as a badge of honour and other times we are given a label when we haven't chosen it at all.

Although it is important to reclaim some words such as witch or woman as powerful vehicles and gift them positive association when they were previously deemed negative, I believe it is also important to not let them become a fence or confining limitation.

Yes, a label can be empowering and affirming and they can also feel safe. Yet they can also create stuckness or we can end up feeling obliged to the label or its associated characteristics or expectations. They can be like the old jumper from high school, that is threadbare and comfy but sometimes holds the energy of someone we no longer are or



want to be. They can also represent the someone you want, or wanted, everyone else to see. It is therefore important for you to continually ask and question whether you are choosing any or all of your labels and over time whether they still truly resonate. It is also worth considering what is your intention when you claim and celebrate a label or what wounds are being revealed when you dismiss or are triggered by one.

In my book *Lupa, She-Wolf of Rome, Mother of Destiny*, I share about the She-Wolf of Rome, a central character, goddess and energy in the foundation story of the city of Rome. Her name *Lupa* is literally the latin name for She-Wolf. She was celebrated as a courageous animal mother who rescued, nourished and facilitated the safety and growth of Romulus and Remus, the human babes who thanks to her intervention, went on to become

the founders of Rome. She was deified and had a festival named and observed in her honour. Her name, as well as her ferociousness and strength as mother, were revered while deployed on behalf of the founding patriarch of the roman city and later the empire.

Yet there were also the *Lupa*, the She-Wolves, her daughters, the lower class of prostitutes that were named and shamed, yet used and abused in ancient Rome.

They were very often slaves or women who found themselves in the prison and squalor of prostitution with no escape. Yet they were named *Lupa*, She-Wolf, as this word was deemed appropriate to reflect their predatory nature and the way they would go out to ensnare innocent, helpless men, just like the wolf hunting the deer. So *Lupa*, came to mean Mother as well as lowest of the low, sacred





feminine and wanton woman. Yet the divine wolf and her worldly daughters are so much more than just this, and these labels. The Lupa of the Lupernarium brothels were hearts, souls and bodies, as well as sisters, daughters and individuals, with unique dreams, desires and needs.

In my work with her I have found Lupa, the She-Wolf of Rome, to also be more than just the wet nurse to the roman founders. She is a mighty ally

who can support you with finding trust in your path, and purpose. She will facilitate a flourishing of your truest self. She does so through supporting you at times of decision, change and growth. She is a Goddess of the threshold, the she-wolf that roams the edges between this world and the other world, in places such as the cave, the depths of the forest and the river's edge. She can open your eyes to possibility and potentiality and provide insight in your deepest reflections and enquiries. She will help you to embrace honesty, integrity and surrender as you transmute fear into courage, pain into power, indecision into knowing.

For me Lupa, the she-wolf was a powerful ally in reclaiming my voice, my words and also in speaking and choosing who I wanted to be and remembering who I essentially was.

When she called me forth to write a book about her, she was also very firm about reclaiming the term and the name She-Wolf and to offer remembrance of all those women throughout history that have been labelled with her name as negative or offensive connotations.

She has taught me, and will teach you that that you should not let a name, a term, or even a role or title define you.

You are more than you could ever define.
Your magic is more than you could ever imagine.
You are limitless in your potentiality.
You are uniquely you and nature never repeats itself.
You are meant to be different and undefinable.
You are made to defy convention, to question ideas of normal, clear or simple.

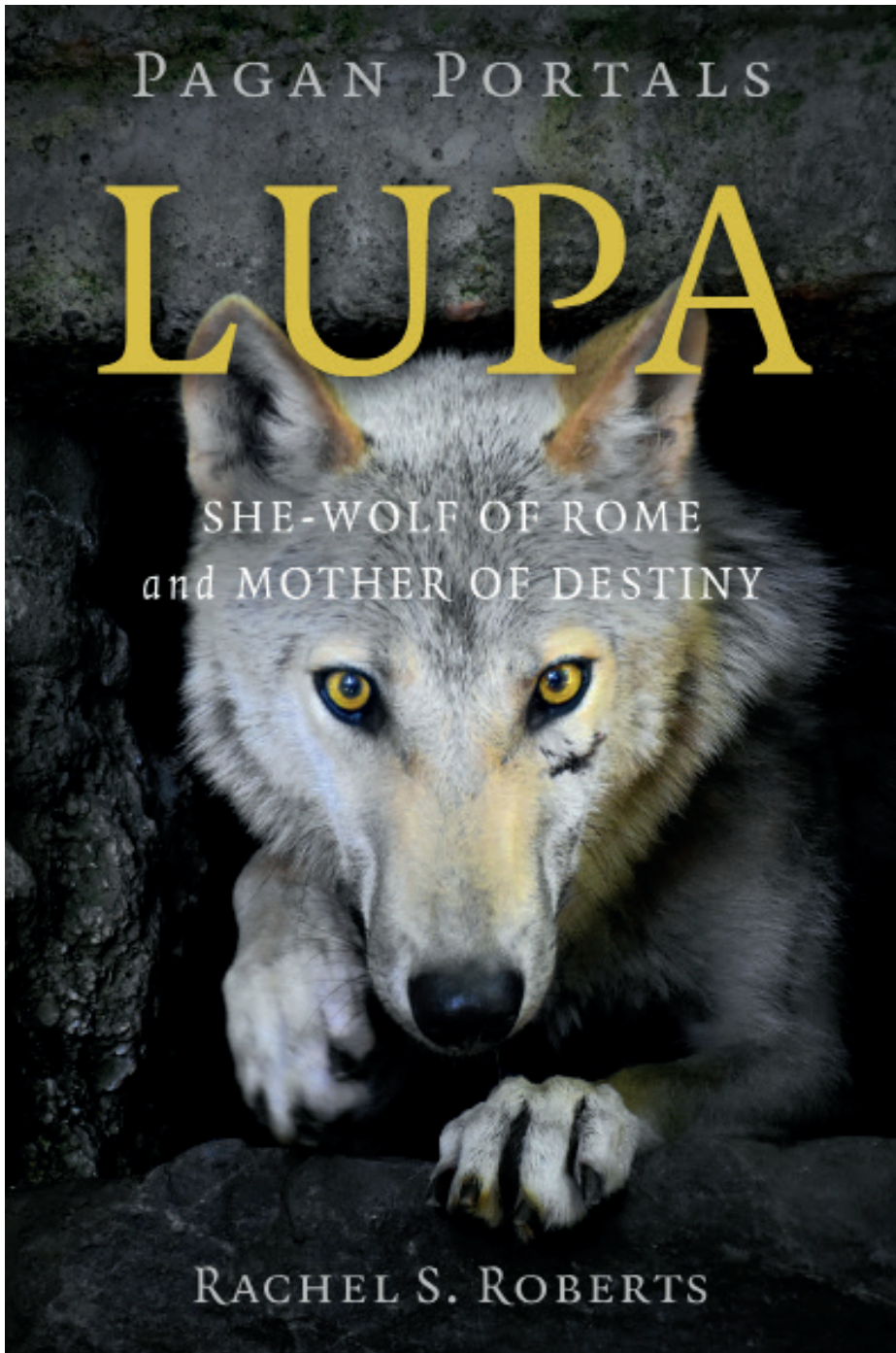
Lupa teaches us that a name or a label can mean many things. Whether she was divine mother, celebrated for her protective she-wolf character, or prostitute, condemned for her assumed character and dirty seduction. Every interpretation of her, or use of her name was deter-

mined by the perspective of the viewer.

Perhaps each one held some glimmer or reflection of her true essence, some insight, but the view or the opinion of her did not, cannot, will not, change her essential and intrinsic essence.

Remember also that no word can ever sum you up completely, even if you choose one that really resonates for you.

If you do choose a word as your label, it must be your choice, first and foremost and you choose it because it makes you feel good, empowered, excited, joyful or sexy not because you are told you should, feel you



PAGAN PORTALS

LUPA

SHE-WOLF OF ROME
and MOTHER OF DESTINY

RACHEL S. ROBERTS

should or are hoping for approval or to fit in.

You are always a soul, first and foremost. Essentially this.

Let that soul seek out the words that resonant with it, surrender to the fact that you may be indefinable, that no one else may ever understand you, and, never forget the power of words.

Words have the ability to create or to destroy.

Words determined the life and the fate of the women of the Lupercal brothels in ancient Rome. Words and a story made humans deify Lupa, though she already was of divine source essentially. The choice of words in her written mythology made her either central, sidelined, essential or an accident, depending on the writer.

Let no one else write your story, determine your character or choose the words that define your identity.

Ask Lupa to help you to align with who you truly are and with the you that is beyond, and more than, any label. She will help you do this so that you can celebrate your authenticity, howl your gifts and message loud and clear to the world and align with and embody your uniqueness. You came to the world to express who you are and to be your individuality. Life's journey is ultimately about finding your joy in sharing that individuality with the planet and the cosmos.

So be brave and as wise as the She-Wolf as you reclaim your identity now and tap into the power of your sacred words.

About the Author

Rachel is the author of Lupa. She-Wolf of Rome and Mother of Destiny as well as a sacred dance teacher, priestess, women's empowerment coach and flower essence practitioner.

Rachel is the creatrix of Wolf Woman Rising, a wisdom school where she empowers women to embody their wisdom and reclaim their authentic, wild and untamed self. Through online community, courses and training, as well as in-person retreats and workshops she initiates students into the feminine arts, nature alchemy & divine connection.

You can also find out more about Rachel, her books and online trainings and courses via her website www.wolfwomanrising.com or follow her on social media @wolfwomanrising

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Channeling **Sedna**

Fairy Bec



I thought it was about time I wrote about another god/goddess. So, here I am, moving on from the very familiar Ganesh to the lesser known Sedna.

The first time I heard of Sedna was in a book at Primary School called Tikkatoo's Journey. It is a story about an Inuit child who goes on a journey to get a flame from the sun to save his Grandfather whose heart is frozen. On his way, he meets several characters including Sedna, Goddess of the sea who is depicted as a mermaid. I have loved this story since I was at Primary School and cherished the book with my son while he was at Primary School. The name Sedna has always connected deep inside me somewhere.

Last year, Sedna called to me really strongly. Although I love being by the sea, I seemed to be more drawn towards it than usual. I was going through an extremely tough time and a major life change but when I was by the sea, I felt temporarily calmed, fortified and protected in a liminal space where the troubles did not exist. I kept thinking of Tikkatoo's Journey and Sedna. Every time I thought of Sedna, a huge wave came towards me, soaking just enough of me but not too much so I started experimenting with this and started to feel really connected to the energy of Sedna. It calmed me. One day after being at the sea, when I got back to where I was living at the time, I was drawn to go through some of my crystals which were boxed up. A

Shiva Shell necklace fell out of the box. I put it on and immediately felt a wave of calm flow through me and a deep connection to Sedna.

I then attended the Wild Witchcraft conference this year where Veneficia publications had a stall, and I immediately spotted a book by Fi Woods 'Sedna: Loving the Unloved'. The following paragraph in the introduction resonated deeply with me: -

"This book looks at Sedna: a feminine deity who despite the harsh words, cruelty, and vicious abuse she experienced from those who should love her and whom she should be able to trust, became the mother of all marine life."

I had to buy the book there and then and highly recommend it if you want to learn more than this surface scratch of Sedna and to learn the depths at which Sedna's





power can retrieve a soul from the brink. There are many versions of Sedna's story but all end in her triumphing against adversity. She was discarded and treated like she was unloved bringing grief, loss and despair, all feelings I sadly connected with at the time. This led her to anger, frustration and outbursts, also feelings I was familiar with at the time. Due to these feelings, Sedna can be perceived as a dark goddess, one who allows you to accept how you feel and make the most out of your situation.

It is the energy of triumph over adversity that I focus upon when I am channelling Sedna which actually brings a lovely inner calm. Her power brings hope and a re-assurance that you are not alone.

Some people see Sedna as a story to highlight to us that sometimes we need to delve to places we don't want to. Like shadow work which can feel like diving to the bottom of the sea. This makes a lot of sense to me as I see shadow work as a cleansing

activity whereby, we let go of things that do not serve us well. The energy of the sea is definitely one of catharsis. Shadow work also largely deals with emotions and emotional responses. Sedna is seen as a dark goddess because of her anger and frustration about the way she was treated. The key thing here for me is that despite Sedna's treatment, she maintained an inner sense of self-worth and understanding that she deserved to be treated better than she was, she deserved to be treated with respect like everyone else.

Most of us feel a sense of calm and rejuvenation by the sea which, to me, is indicative of the fact that releasing and dealing with emotions brings an inner calm. It is not good to bottle things up. Once released, we have let go and we can move on, as Sedna did. Trauma will never completely disappear which is why people often take offerings to Sedna before entering the sea. They don't want to trigger her so they treat her with respect and care.

I feel that Sedna is associated with the throat chakra. I also feel her energy as deeply Shamanic with shapeshifting qualities. She is thought to be the mother of all sea creatures and look at the array of amazing living things that encompasses. Sedna offers the opportunity to transform. She awakens your inner strength.

Colours associated with Sedna:- Blue, green, silver, white, grey, black.

Crystals to connect with Sedna:- Shiva Shell, Melenite, Aqua Aura, Aquamarine. Sedna also associates with Hag Stones, sea glass, driftwood and shells.

Other names for Sedna:- Ikalu Nappa, Meghetataghna, Arnapkapfaaluk, Nivikkaa, Sanna.

Recently, I was asked to give some Reiki to a lady on palliative care. The hospital was on the South Coast just a few minutes walk from the sea. I took some crystals with me and went down to the sea. As a goddess of the underworld, I asked Sedna to bless them for me and she claimed a few back in return.

I took the blessed crystals with me to gift the lady along with a coin and a key to help her gain passage through to the next part of her journey. I also took a shell that seemed to appear out of nowhere on the beach as I was walking away from the sea. The lady's husband said that it was highly appropriate as she loved shells.

Two days later, the lady passed peacefully away.

So, when you are need of triumphing against adversity or a major shift of circumstance and release, call on Sedna and ask her to lend you some of her power.

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BANISHING

WISE WORDS FROM THE OLD CRONE

Banishing sounds like such a negative thing, 'Get Thee Gone and Never Darken My Door.' It sounds like a very bossy, harmful and adverse thing to be doing. That depends on exactly what it is you are doing. It can be a powerful thing at the same time.



The Dictionary is a good place to start when looking into what banishing is and means. Mine says, Banishing is....expelling... deporting... evicting...removing... dismissing.. eliminating... do away with...

It usually involves some kind of loss, something given up or taken away, pushed away or forced to go. I'm sure we have all done it at some point in our lives. Sending ill-behaved children to their bedrooms, making them sit on the naughty step and withdrawing their privileges. These are all forms of banishing.

Nobody likes doing these things and it can hurt us as much as it hurts the person being banished, but sometimes, oh yes, just sometimes, it feel darned good too.

We regularly banish things from our lives with little thought about what we are doing. Spring cleaning or any kind of cleaning, is a form of Banishing. When you mop the floor, you are banishing stains and dirt, when you throw out old clothes and items, you are banishing them. Banishing is something which goes away, is told to go away, is forced to go away. It can be something as small as dusting your furniture or getting rid of someone from your life, something very small, which we do each day, or something really large which will impact our lives to a greater extent.

Usual methods of Banishment are burning , as in an intent, written on paper or a leaf or some such. Cleansing with smoke and incense, black salt to protect your home from adverse energies, and using a bell or chime, blowing out a candle, placing a crystal in a certain place and hanging spell bags at your front door. These are all forms of banishing and hopefully are all gentle forms.

Whatever we are banishing, we need to think about it very carefully, just as we do with our spell work. Be careful what you wish for, and be careful what you banish. In healing spells, we are banishing hurt, injury, illness, and requesting that any medication given by the professions is enhanced and works for the good of the person.

In our spell work, certainly in mine, I write all things down and read them out aloud to myself first to make sure have looked at all options. I try to ensure no harm can be done and that whatever spell I am weaving is for benefit. Banishing is the same. I don't banish things magically very often, certainly not as often as I do spell work, but I have banished and it has not always turned out how I hoped. This has been my own lack of thorough thought and I know I have learned from this.

In my view one can perform as many spells as one likes, however I do feel, and again my own view, that magical banishing should be done with the utmost care and not too often. If you feel you need to banish something a lot, over and again, think again. What exactly are you doing and what is your goal? Why are you doing this over and again and why is it perhaps not working? Maybe you need to look at it from another perspective.



If like many witches you perform final salutation of the day, you banish the day and as with any transformation you also welcome the dawn.

Be careful what you wish for and be careful what you banish.

Blessed Be

The Old Crone
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Carrie Anderson

This is the story of how my family inadvertently showed me the interconnectedness of life.

This is the silly, yet real way that my family, dysfunctional, but with some good intentions, taught me to cherish all life. This is how my parents, determined to give us clean air, used houseplants to keep us alive. Yet, accidentally created an altar to a dead animal and sealed my fate as an animist.

First, the background and history of how we ended up with the plant that never was a plant.

My family was from South Philly. When my middle sister was born, with Cystic Fibrosis, my parents were told she wouldn't live past the age of two.

My parents, seeking cleaner air for her, moved to the suburbs of Ridley Park. After my dad landed steady work as an electrician they were able to move to the rural countryside and bought a farm.

I was born in the farmhouse, which my sisters always informed me was actually haunted. By the age of three, my parents had gotten tired of the cost of heating the house. They made a deal with a local Amish family. That family could have thirty acres of land, plus the entire farm, but my parents would keep two acres and build a new house. For the cost of one dollar, the deal was made. We moved, slowly, to the house my dad built, on wagons pulled by draught horses.

As my mom began decorating our new house, she found a plant that she adored while shopping at Ames. She brought it home and placed it inside a glass jar that was attached to an old wooden coffee grinder that had a cast iron handle.

My dad hung our new plant, an air plant, beside our front door and above my dad's Lazy Boy. It was prime real estate in our house. The plant looked over us and watched us come and go through the front door. We spent every night watching tv, until it was time for us to go to bed. Holidays, the plant was a joyous participant. Not an intentional altar but a type of altar nonetheless. It knew our family, our friends, our pets and saw us through life changes.

The air plant was not the only plant in our house. Each window was festooned with spider plants laden with babies, trailing pothos, and African violets.



Our entire yard was filled with rhubarb, strawberries, watermelon, tomatoes and pepper plants. We had peach, apple and cherry trees in the front yard. My dad built a gazebo and used it as the framework for a grape orchard. We had a weeping willow, pussy willows, lilacs, roses, and a small forest in the back corner.

This is to say that we weren't plant newbies. We loved plants. The more plants we had in the yard the less my dad had to mow.

In the spots where there were no plants then that's where you could find one of our pets. Ponies, rabbits, cats, dogs, fish in a small pond, fish in tanks, frogs and of course, the wild animals like the groundhogs, birds, foxes, and opossums. Surrounding us were herds of cattle, carriage horses, work horses, work dogs, and barn cats. There was life everywhere.

Every summer, my mom and I would drive about ten minutes down the road and spend the next few hours at the local Amish greenhouse. This is how she entertained me through the long hot days. I could buy any plant, take it home and decide if I would create a new garden or keep it inside my

bedroom.

I had a butterfly plant garden. The next year I added a garden for rabbits. When I found snakes living in our shed I tried to plant a garden for them too.

In my room I had cacti, aloe and succulents. I would spend hours talking to the plants and petting the plants. The only plant that sounded different was the air plant. It was quieter, hushed, and most of the time, silent. I sat and watched this mysterious plant longing to connect to it not quite realizing it's silence was a message that a part of me heard.

The air plant was treated like a family heirloom. My mother assured me that it would outlive all the other plants. The air plant was the one tasked with making sure the air was clean enough for my sister's lungs to be able to breathe each day. The other plants helped but the air plant was, of course, the only plant with the word air in its actual name, so it was set aside as being very special.

It was curious though because the air plant needed no sun nor water. I would ask questions about how and why the plant thrived so well kept in a glass container. I would try to sneak drops of water to the plant but my mother told me it drank water from the air. I would try and take the Ball jar outside, but, alas, sun would burn the plant and it, in fact, didn't need sun at all. It got enough light from light bulbs.

One year, in middle school, I did my science fair project around this mystery (big surprise, I didn't do well at the science fair). I took two baby spider plants. The one plant was watered and had sunlight. The other plant received no sun and no water. My science teacher was wildly unimpressed but that didn't



bother me. I had a plant to understand and science had failed me.

The air plant was an exhilarating and exotic plant. A beautiful deep sea green with hints of jade. It was light and feathery with fronds. A fern like plant with unusual growing conditions. It was, everytime I asked, "just an air plant".

Fast forward to when I became an adult and moved to my own apartment. I looked everywhere for my own air plant but could not find one (this was ages before the internet). After I got married, my husband and I went to visit the U.S. Botanic Gardens in D.C. I noticed on the map that they had an entire exhibit on air plants. So, when we popped over to that area I was surprised to not recognize one single plant and said, "What the hell kind of air plants are these?"

Fast forward a few more years to when the internet was in almost every home and we finally had a computer. I started searching for my air plant, so that I could have one. A house without one felt empty. There's plants in my house but they all have a different energy and vibe then the air plant. Together, growing up, the plants, including the air plant, created a complete circular energy that felt whole.

Page after page of air plants that were not the right type. Finally, I really started to question the concept that a plant could live, almost forever, without water or sun, especially a fern. Starting to have a slight sense of dread, I changed my keywords for my search to "Fern like plants from the 70's". Which is when I found out that our beloved air plant was actually a dead marine animal from the family Sertulariidae and related to jellyfish and coral. To be fair to my parents, it had been marketed as an Neptune air plant.

By this point, I had already been a vegetarian for most of my life as had my middle sister. All of our homes were filled with plants and animals. I felt everything around me had a soul including plants, animals, water, rocks and the entire planet. I had spent my early teens and adult life studying the occult and identifying as a witch.

Looking back, I credit this beloved dead sea creature for instilling in me some of my most valued and treasured worldviews. Subtle messages from this aquatic species, heard by my subconscious. The greatest life lesson was given to my by the non-air fern. Life and death, plants and animals are all part of a continuum, a circle.

SCOTT IRVINE

LUGHNASADH MAGIC



Lugh found himself and his troops pinned down behind a rock, sheltering from a disintegrating ray that blasted from the single eye of the Fomorian king, Balor. Every time the giant opened his eye, his 'gaze' would shatter great chunks of the stone barricade that Lugh and his men hid behind. He had to act fast; or die. How on earth did he allow himself to get into this situation?

It all began with a prophecy foretelling Balor's death would come from the hand of a grandson. To prevent that from happening the king locked his only child Ethlinn away from admiring eyes in a crystal tower on Tory island off the north coast of Ireland. Unfortunately for Balor, he underestimated the guile of his enemies and an enterprising son of a medicine god, Cian from the Tuatha De Danaan, 'the people of the god whose mother is Dana'.

The Danaans, we are told, arrived in Ireland in a thick mist that drifted down from the heavens. Cian tricked his way into the tower disguised as a woman looking for work as a maid for the

very pretty princess. In a very short time they became lovers, resulting in the birth of the God Lugh. When Balor found out about the birth of a grandson, he had the baby thrown into the sea to drown.

Being of Danaan blood, Lugh was rescued and raised by the sea god Manannan in the other-world of the fairy where he was taught diplomacy and tact alongside sword and spear skills to prepare him for adult life. On reaching manhood, Lugh was accepted into the army of the people of Dana and moved very quickly up the ranks to become a general under King Nuada.

During the second battle on the 'Plain of Pillars', Nuada's arm was melted away by the deadly gaze from Balor's eye, making him unfit to rule. The kingship was passed to Lugh while Nuada waited for a silver arm to be made and fitted before he could regain his throne, by which time the war was practically won which brings us to the predicament Lugh found himself in at the start of the story.

Finding himself pinned down behind a rock that was slowly being blasted away, Lugh had to think fast before he and his men were obliterated. He had noticed that after each blast, the Fomorian king would blink and become aware his giant eyelid was closed and opened by four servants. Lugh could pick his moment to attack his grandfather. He loaded his trusty slingshot with what we are told was a magic stone and waited for the servants to move to open the giant eyelid.



At the precise moment Lugh stepped from behind the rock, fired his shot into Balor's eyelid just as it began to open, and before its evil gaze could see. The bullet penetrated Balor's eyeball and into his brain killing him instantly, fulfilling the ancient prophecy. The Fomorian army fled in disarray back to Tory Island with the Danaan army in hot pursuit putting paid to the threat of the Fomorians once and for all.

For his heroism, Lugh was awarded a feast day of his own that was held midway between Summer Solstice and Autumn Equinox on the 1st day of August, which we call Lughnassadh, pronounced Lunasa, which means 'Celebration of Light'. It was a time for tribal gatherings where business deals were made, marriages arranged and new ideas discussed. Tournaments were held and games played after the serious matters were taken care of, a time for entertainment and pleasure.

The first harvests of the year were celebrated when Lugh arrived from the otherworld and the first bread is baked and offered to the God in thanksgiving. Ready to welcome the God of Light to the celebration was Aine, pronounced 'On-yah', which means 'radiance'. She is the consort of Lugh throughout the feast. Aine is known as the Goddess of harmony whose spirit encourages human love and often took human lovers to satisfy her sensuality. She is the sister of Grainne and a protector of all women. Aine provides the power for Lugh to exist in the physical realm. Aine is the Goddess of the land where Lugh is the God of the tribe.

LIONS GATE QUARTZ™

NORTH WEST CRYSTALS

Lions Gate Quartz™ is a recent discovery from India, brought to the UK market by North West Crystals UK Ltd. It's an unusual combination of Golden Healer, Pyrite and Hematite with some inclusions of Black Tourmaline. The name Lions Gate Quartz was chosen by a competition and many entrants felt its striking appearance and energy is reminiscent of majestic lions. The golden hues of the Pyrite and Golden Healer give it an unmistakably regal look.



Lions Gate Quartz is very unique and full of contrasts, it is certainly a crystal of duality. It definitely has a high vibration yet the abundance of Pyrite and Hematite keep it grounded and earthy at the same time. It can be powerful and gentle together. Similarly, it is a crystal of strong action but also patience; wait for the right moment, just as a hunting lion will pounce at the right moment, rewarding their patience. There is no doubt that this is a crystal of change, of that liminal space of knowing that the old needs to go and stepping forward into the unknown. Lions Gate Quartz helps you to move forward with courage, no matter what the obstacle is. If there is something you wish to manifest, Lions Gate Quartz could be used to direct its fiery energy into helping you make any decisions or changes that are needed for your goal to happen. It would also be very helpful for inspiring those going for promotions or stepping forward to positions of power to lead with benevolence.

Unquestionably, this crystal is very much a solar crystal, piercing light into any darkness. The areas where Golden Healer is prominent are like the soft warmth of the setting sun whereas the Pyrite/Hematite dominant areas are more like the scorching sun during midday in the

summer, able to work gently or strongly depending on what the situation at hand needs. The height of summer is Leo season, a time for the boldness of the Lion to come through. The Lions Gate portal, an astrological alignment thought to be potent for manifestation and change, is also at its most powerful on the 8th August, making it a beneficial time to utilise Lions Gate Quartz for maximum effect with all the leonine energy around.

Another association which keeps cropping up with this crystal is the lion headed Ancient Egyptian Goddess, Sekhmet. Several people have felt that Lions Gate Quartz is attuned to Sekhmet's energies. She is a Goddess of Healing yet She can also be responsible for plagues and destruction, this dual nature fits with the crystal perfectly, being able to be two almost opposing things at once. Sekhmet's healing attributes are vast and Her priests and priestesses could also be considered doctors by today's standards, carrying out medical treatments, both physically and through spells, when needed. This is a very positive crystal with a great potential for aiding in healing. Golden Healer is already known to be a good all-round healing crystal and Pyrite, being good for abundance, boosts that property. In addition, Hematite is good when it comes



to matters of blood and protection. Imagine how powerful it could be when used for healing alongside the blessing of Sekhmet.

No matter how you use it, it will be sure to bring a bit of sunny positivity into your life.

Find North West Crystals in Clitheroe, Lancashire or Truro, Cornwall. We're also online at www.northwestcrystalsukltd.co.uk or catch up with us on social media:

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BAY LEAF BONFIRE BLESSINGS LUGHNASADH RITUAL

Elyse Welles

Lammas & Lughnasadh coincide with the full moon to begin the calendar month of August this year. The energy will be strong and singing, a powerful opportunity to embrace and invite blessings

With the Lion's Gate approaching in the week following Lughnasadh, this is a period of reaping reward and celebrating your hard work. This is a ritual that asks you to celebrate yourself: as our ancestors brought in



the first harvest in this time, you can bring in the harvest of your achievements. If there is something you have been waiting to earn or complete, it will come to fruition now.

Look for the blessings in your life that meet at the crossroads of passion and prosperity: what have you pursued that you have been rewarded for? Write a list of these things, and choose 1-3 to celebrate.

This ritual invokes the energy of this fire holiday by using a bonfire. If you cannot light a bonfire, any sized fire will do, even a candle.

For this ritual you'll need:

1. A fire, and the safety precautions required (a bucket of water or sand, fire-safe clothing, etc.)
2. Dried herbs representing prosperity and passion (see ideas below)
3. One bay leaf (laurel) per blessing
4. Fire-safe ink pen or pencil
5. Salt

Ideas for prosperity herbs to use:

- Rosemary
- Powdered cinnamon
- jasmine
- Patchouli
- Basil
- Clove

Ideas for passionate herbs to use:

- Rose petals
- Jasmine
- Liquid vanilla extract
- Hibiscus
- Ylang-ylang
- cacao

Set up your fire as a sacred space, with safety precautions ready. Mix the herbs together before you start.

Establish sacred space in the way that feels right to you. Drum, hum, sing or chant; play an instrument, or simply meditation in stillness focusing on your breath. There's no need to invoke the quarters or any deities unless it is part of your regular practice, but the chant below can be used even if you don't usually work with those deities.

Sprinkle some salt into the fire, dancing round it, throwing it in little by little, feeling more grounded with each toss. Say: *"I am grounded in this space of celebration!"* Repeat three circles around the fire.

When you feel the energy start to tingle at your fingertips, take the bay leaves and write what you are celebrating on each leaf. *"I am present here in celebration of _____"* give details aloud your accomplishments: speak to Spirit. Put them aside.

Next, with your magickal tools raised high if you use them, say:

"Goddess bold, full moon high and bright above.

Selene. As you lent blessing to the harvests of old,

I entreat your blessings tonight.

In gratitude I raise my hands to you, and ask you to join me here in celebration."

Place your magickal tools safely away, then pick up the herb mix, and dance around

the fire doing the same, throwing it little by little, feeling celebratory. Smile, laugh, sing, screech or howl if you feel called to! When the energy is high, say,

"I invite the spirits of the land to join me around this fire, dedicated to the Moon and to the _____ [state your gods, goddesses, or simply the Universe] in gratitude, that we may dance together in mirth and reverence."

Now, burn your bay leaf in the fire.

You don't have to end the circle right away: enjoy the energy however best you see fit. Play your instrument, sing, or otherwise commune with spirit as long as you feel called to. When the candle has ended and the fire has faded away, thank Selene and any other deities and spirits you called in for their presence.



Madison Cawein - The Keats of Kentucky

Carrie Anderson

Madison Cawein was a poet from Kentucky and often referred to as the “Keats of Kentucky”. He was also often compared to Percy Bysshe Shelley. He was born in 1865 and died in 1914. His father was a herbalist and his mother was a spiritualist. Madison had a deep love and respect for nature which is strongly reflected in much of his work. He was influenced by his study of the supernatural, mythology, literature and classical arts. He wrote in a style comparable to the Romantic period of the English canon. He eschewed modern forms of writing. He wrote over 1500 poems and published thirty volumes of poetry. His traditional Romantic verse was not overly popular with the public and few of his books sold well. Cawein’s poem, Waste Land heavily influenced the poem, The Waste Land by T.S. Eliot.

Poverty and illness affected him in his later life. His poetry took a darker turn as he often talked of death and dying. At the age of 49, he died from apoplexy (an outdated term referring to a stroke or aneurysm). While he often focused on themes of nature, love, war, spirituality and the supernatural there are some of his poems that contain outdated and offensive themes. His work is so profusive that I have never read or come across these poems. I read about them from one of his modern ancestors, in a thesis titled Poetic Justice: Rediscovering the Life and Work of Madison Cawein by Spencer Cawein Pate.

Madison Cawein’s supernatural and nature themed poetry have had a great impact on my witchcraft practice. Granted, many of his poems are too long-winded and dramatic for my tastes, however, his word choices and descriptions of nature create vivid imagery. I can feel the wind, the trees, smell the flowers, and the meadows when reading his poems.

His poem Witchery resonates with every part of my soul. When I first read Witchery, I stopped and read it ten more times. Then I bookmarked it and downloaded all of the available collected volumes I could find. I haven’t found a more perfect poem than that of Witchery. What I have found is that many of his poems circle around the same themes and imagery. I guess that’s why I keep coming back to his poems. The essence of my witchcraft, flowing from perfect prose, in a way that I could never have vocalized. If asked what kind of witch I am then I would have to say, I am a Witchery witch.

A few of my favorite poems are: Witchery, Waste Land, Hallowmas, Vampire, Halloween, Wood Witch, Wind Witch, Water Witch, Wood Witch and Town Witch. His description of witches ranges from crones being tortured, nature spirits, fay trickery, and to being a part of the land and all of the elements.

All of Madison Cawein’s poetry is in the public domain. The website Project Gutenberg has all the collected volumes available for free and available in a multitude of formats - however I have included my favourites for your enjoyment in the following pages. If you enjoy them, you can download a copy of my personal favourites from www.caresreiki.com

Witchery

She walks the woods, when evening falls,
With spirits of the winds and leaves;
And to her side the soul she calls
Of every flower she perceives.

She walks with introspective eyes
That see not as the eyes of man,
But with the dream that in them lies,
And which no outward eyes may scan.

She sits among the sunset hills,
Or trails a silken skirt of breeze,
Then with the voice of whip-poor-wills
Summons the twilight to the trees.

Among the hollows, dim with musk,
Where wild the stream shows heels of foam,
She sows with firefly-seeds the dusk,
And leads the booming beetle home.

She blows the glow-worm lamps a-glare,
And hangs them by each way like eyes;
Then, mid the blossoms, everywhere
She rocks to sleep the butterflies.

She calls the red fox from his den,
And, hollowing to her mouth one hand,
Halloos the owlets in the glen,
And hoots awake the purple land.

The cricket knows her foot's light tread
And sings for her an elfin mass;
She puts the bumble-bee to bed,
And shakes the white moth from the grass.

And to the mud-wasps, where they top
Their cells of clay, she murmurs sleep:
She bids the toad come forth and hop,
The snail put out its horns and creep.

She taps upon the dead tree's trunk:
And 'neath the bark the worm begins;
And where the rotted wood is punk
Its twinkling web the spider spins.

She claps a night-cap of the dew
On every rosy clover-head;
And on the lily, pale of hue,
She slips a gown while still in bed.

With kisses cool of drowsy mist

She thrills each wildflower's heart with June;
And, whispering gold and amethyst,
Sighs legends to them of the moon.

She bids the black bat forth, to be
The courier of her darker moods;
She mounts the moon-imp, Mystery,
And speeds him wildly through the woods.

She crowds with ghosts the forest-walks;
And with the wind's dim words invokes
The spirit that for ever talks
Unto the congregated oaks.

She leans above the flying stream:
Her starry gaze commands it stay:
And in its lucid deeps a dream
Takes shape and glimmers on its way.

She rests upon the lichened stone,
Her moonbeam hair spread bright around:
And in the darkness, one by one,
The unborn flowers break the ground.

She lays her mouth, like some sweet word,
Against the wild-bird's nest that swings:
And in the speckled egg, that heard,
The young bird stirs its wings and sings.

In her all dreams find permanence:
All mysteries that trance the soul:
And substance, that evades the sense,
Through her wood-magic is made whole.

Oh, she is lovelier than she seems
To any one whose soul may see:
But only they who walk with dreams
Shall meet with her and know 'tis she.



Wasteland

Briar and fennel and chincapin,
And rue and ragweed everywhere;
The field seemed sick as a soul with sin,
Or dead of an old despair,
Born of an ancient care.
The cricket's cry and the locust's whirr,
And the note of a bird's distress,
With the rasping sound of the grasshopper,
Clung to the loneliness
Like burrs to a trailing dress.
So sad the field, so waste the ground,
So curst with an old despair,
A woodchuck's burrow, a blind mole's mound
And a chipmunk's stony lair,
Seemed more than it could bear.
So lonely, too, so more than sad,
So droning-lone with bees —
I wondered what more could Nature add
To the sum of its miseries
And then—I saw the trees.
Skeletons gaunt that gnarled the place,
Twisted and torn they rose—
The tortured bones of a perished race
Of monsters no mortal knows,
They started the mind's repose.
And a man stood there, as still as moss,
A lichen form that stared;
With an old blind hound that, at a loss,
Forever around him fared
With a snarling fang half bared.
I looked at the man; I saw him plain;
Like a dead weed, gray and wan
Or a breath of dust. I looked again—
And man and dog were gone,
Like wisps of the graying dawn. . . .
Were they a part of the grim death there—
Ragweed, fennel, and rue?
Or forms of the mind, an old despair,
That there into semblance grew
Out of the grief of those?



Hallowmas
All hushed of glee,
The last chill bee
Clings wearily
To the dying aster:
The leaves drop faster:
And all around, red as disaster,
The forest crimsons with tree on tree.

A butterfly,
The last to die,
Droops heavily by,
Weighed down with torpor:
The air grows sharper:
And the wind in the trees, like some sad harper,
Sits and sorrows with sigh on sigh.

The far crows call;
The acorns fall;
And over all
The Autumn raises
Dun mists and hazes,
Through which her soul, it seemeth, gazes
On ghosts and dreams in carnival.

The end is near:
The dying Year
Leans low to hear
Her own heart breaking,
And Beauty taking
Her flight, and all her dreams forsaking
Her soul, bowed down 'mid the sad and sere.



Town Witch

Crab-Faced, crab-tongued, with deep-set eyes that glared,
Unfriendly and unfriended lived the crone
Upon the common in her hut, alone,
Past which but seldom any villager fared.
Some said she was a witch and rode, wild-haired,
To devils' revels: on her hearth's rough stone
A fiend sat ever with gaunt eyes that shone
A shaggy hound whose fangs at all were bared.
So one day, when a neighbour's cow had died
And some one's infant sickened, good men shut
The crone in prison: dragged to court and tried:
Then hung her for a witch and burnt her hut.
Days after, on her grave, all skin and bones
They found the dog, and killed him with stones.

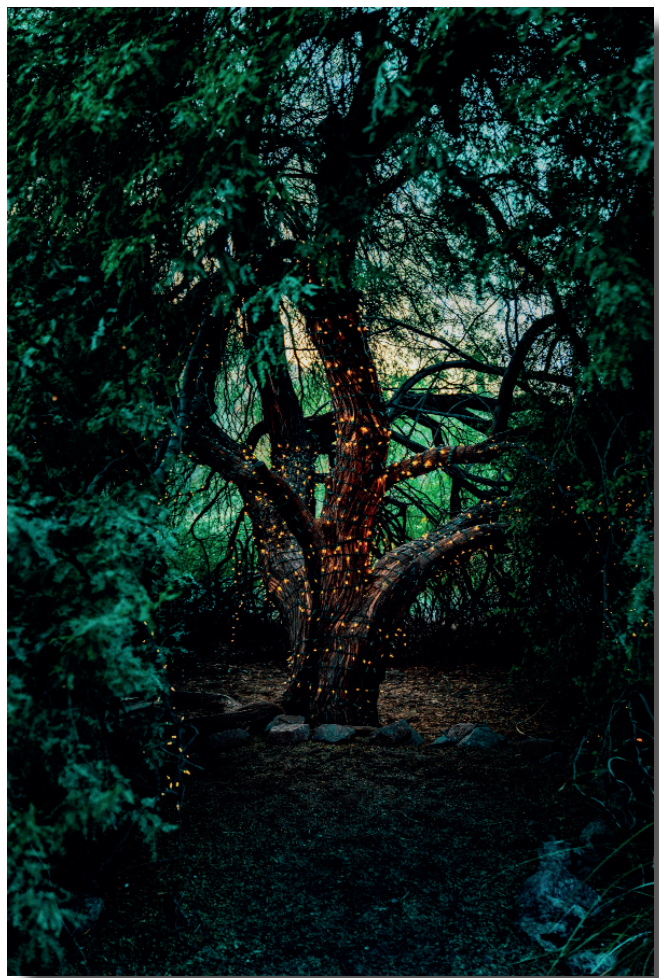


Wood Witch

There is a woodland witch who lies
With bloom-bright limbs and beam-bright eyes,
Among the water-flags that rank
The slow brook's heron-haunted bank.
The dragon-flies, brass-bright and blue,
Are signs she works her sorcery through;
Weird, wizard characters she weaves
Her spells by under forest leaves,
These wait her word, like imps, upon
The gray flag-pods; their wings, of lawn
And gauze; their bodies, gleaming green.
While o'er the wet sand, left between
The running water and the still,
In pansy hues and daffodil,
The fancies that she doth devise
Take on the forms of butterflies,
Rich-coloured. And 'tis she you hear,
Whose sleepy rune, hummed in the ear
Of silence, bees and beetles purr,
And the dry-droning locusts whirr;
Till, where the wood is very lone,
Vague monotone meets monotone,
And slumber is begot and born,
A faery child beneath the thorn.
There is no mortal who may scorn
The witchery she spreads around
Her din demesne, wherein is bound
The beauty of abandoned time,
As some sweet thought 'twixt rhyme and rhyme.
And through her spells you shall behold
The blue turn gray, the gray turn gold
Of hollow heaven; and the brown
Of twilight vistas twinkled down
With fireflies; and in the gloom
Feel the cool vowels of perfume
Slow-syllabled of weed and bloom.
But, in the night, at languid rest,
When like a spirit's naked breast
The moon slips from a silver mist,
With star-bound brow, and star-wreathed wrist,
If you should see her rise and wave
You welcome ah! what thing could save
You then? for evermore her slave!

The Twilight Witch

The twilight witch comes with her stars
And strews them through the blue;
Then breathes below the sunset bars
A breath of meadow rue;
She trails her veil across the skies
And mutters to the trees,
And in the wood, with firefly eyes
She wakes the mysteries.
The twilight witch, with elf and fay,
Is coming down the slumber way,
Sleep, my dearie, sleep.
The twilight witch, with crescent moon,
Stoops in the wooded hill;
She answers to the owl's tune,
And to the whippoorwill.
She leans above the reedy pool
And wakes the drowsy frog,
And with the toadstool, dim and cool,
Rims gray the old dead log.
The twilight witch comes stealing down
To take you off to slumber town.
Sleep, my dearie, sleep.
The twilight witch, with wind-like tread,
Has entered in the room;
She steals around your trundle bed
And whispers in the gloom;
She says, "I brought my steed along,
My faery steed of gleams,
To bear you, like a breath of song,
Into the land of dreams.
I am the witch who takes your hand
And leads you off to faeryland,
The far-off land of sleep."



Halloween

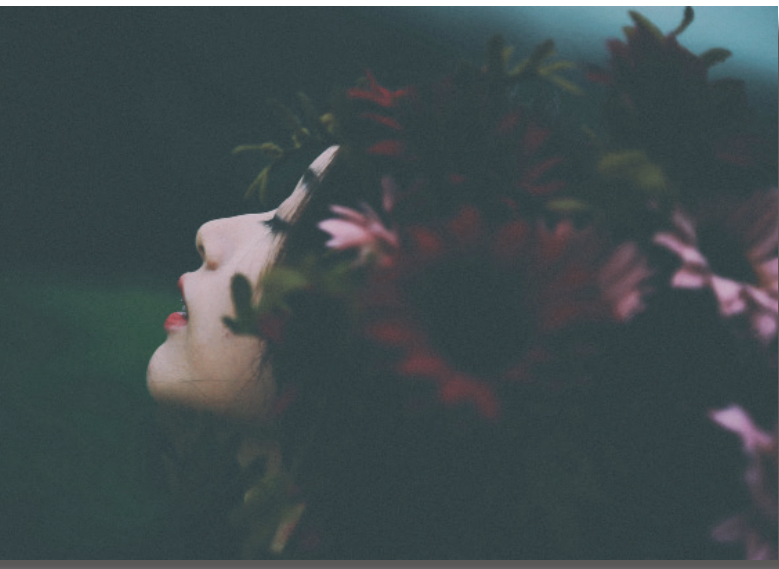
It was down in the woodland on last Hallowe'en,
Where silence and darkness had built them a lair,
That I felt the dim presence of her, the unseen,
And heard her still step on the hush-haunted air.

It was last Hallowe'en in the glimmer and swoon
Of mist and of moonlight, where once we had sinned,
That I saw the gray gleam of her eyes in the moon,
And hair, like a raven, blown wild on the wind.

It was last Hallowe'en where starlight and dew
Made mystical marriage on flower and leaf,
That she led me with looks of a love, that I knew
Was dead, and the voice of a passion too brief.

It was last Hallowe'en in the forest of dreams,
Where trees are eidolons and flowers have eyes,
That I saw her pale face like the foam of far streams,
And heard, like the night-wind, her tears and her sighs.

It was last Hallowe'en, the haunted, the dread,
In the wind-tattered wood, by the storm-twisted pine,
That I, who am living, kept tryst with the dead,
And clasped her a moment who once had been mine.



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WHAT WE'RE READING

THE MAGIC OF CATS

ANDREW ANDERSON

Review by Carrie Anderson

I can't claim this book is magic. However, before I began reading it, the only animal in my house was my senior rescue dog. Halfway through reading, *The Magic of Cats* an ear tipped cat showed up in our small city garden. A week later the cat had walked into our house and flopped onto our sofa. My husband is wildly allergic to cats, so we can't have a cat.

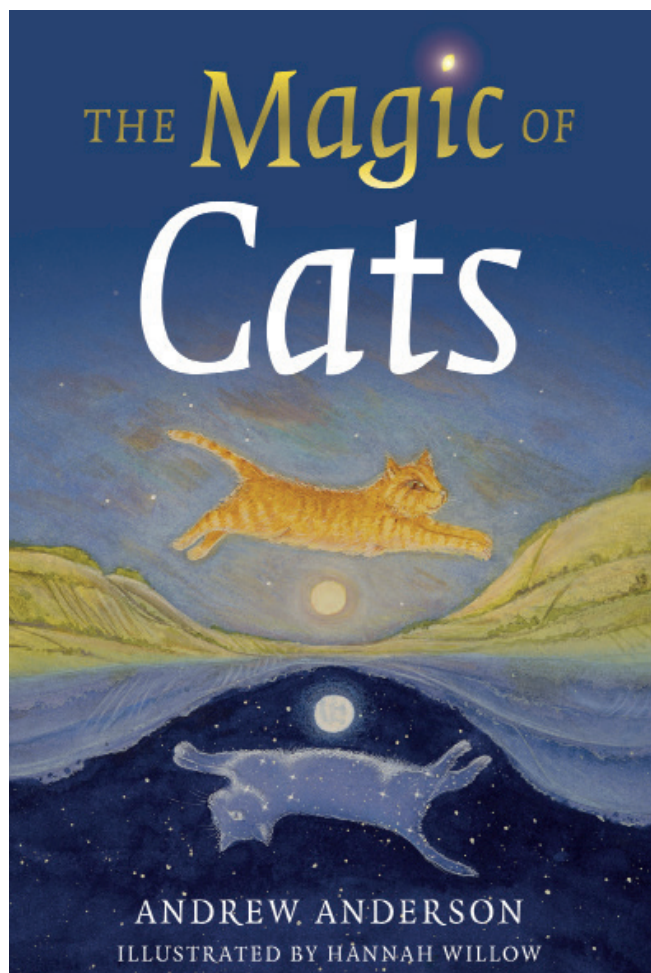
The author covers a variety of cats; archetypal cats, the cats in our psyche, the mystical and magical cats, and the demonic cats. Our current cat fascination has a long, and not at all straight, trajectory straight into the past. Cats have been revered, worshiped, maligned, mistreated, and demonized. As I finish this book, we now have a cat. We went out and bought a cat bed, a cat scratching post, and a litter pan. Oh, did I mention the moon and stars cat collar? My husband is scheduled to see an allergist

I think, after reading this book, that I may have finally answered my persistent question of why cats feel like magic.

I read a book called *The Magic of Cats* and now there's a cat in my lap....I am completely mystified as to what happened, but I did really enjoy this book.

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POWER THROUGH WITCHCRAFT

THE OFFICIAL WITCH OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY - LOUISE HUEBNER

Review by Bekki Milner

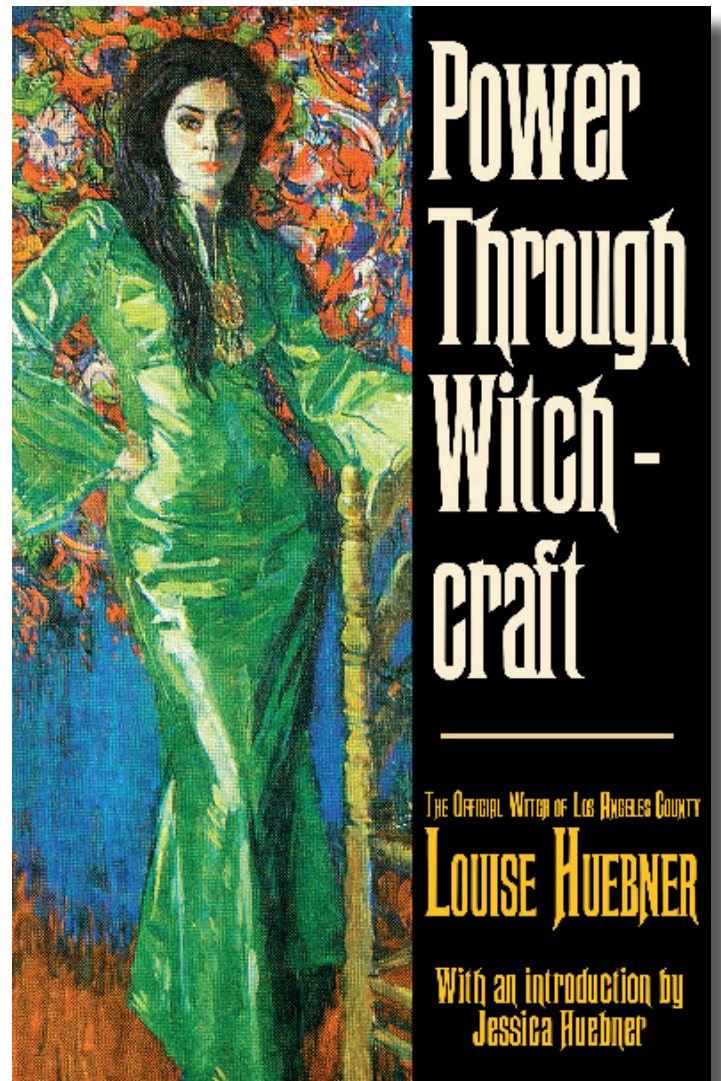
After visiting Los Angeles for the first time in 2022, I surprised myself by finding it a city full of hidden magic and not the gaudy, glamerous Hollywood I had expected. I am also enamoured with the 60's and the witchcraft of this time - many of my favourite books on the subject are dated from the 50's to the 70's, but all of them were British based craft - until now.

This is both grimoire and autobiography - for such a small tome it carries a lot of information. I really enjoyed the agony aunt style columns that were included from Huebner's time writing for various journals and newspapers.

This book is a fascinating look in to Huebner's craft, it is outspoken, determined and an excellent read, whether you align with her practices or not.

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