



WITCH



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# WITCH Magazine

Dearest Witches,

The days are at their longest and wild dog rose and delicate clumps of elderflower are appearing in the hedgerows. Many of us are out at fairs and festivals, celebrating the bounty of the earth and enjoying community.

It is also Pride month, and we are celebrating diversity within the Witch community. This Midsummer edition of the magazine includes many pieces from LGBTQ+ contributors, and these are marked with our rainbow newt image.

In these pages we follow the journey of a Green Man, learn about the healing power of saffron and meet the last pagan god of Rome. Plus we have the recipe for a delicious watermelon and mint salad to enjoy!

Helen JR Bruce - Editor

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Kalat Cards  
by Dennis Kalat



# WITCH

Drawing Down the Sun - Raven Digitalis  
Rethinking Offerings - Madalena  
Watermelon Mint Salad - Julie Aspinall  
Somatic Solstice - Nell Shepherdson  
The Goddess and the Green Man - Benjamin Selby  
The Greenman's Corner - Ewan Cameron  
Herbal Magic - Oak Canessa-Pollard  
Lilith Incenses Spotlight  
Divine in Any Form - Vera Nadine  
The Winter King - Scott Irvine  
In the Light of the Sun's Garden - Fauna Raine  
Runelore - Richard C Hick  
The God Antinous - Martin Campbell  
Kalat Cards Spotlight  
Apollo a God of Light and the Sun - Ellen Evert Hopman  
Anthropomorphism - Andrew Kleister  
Meeting MJH Leathercraft  
Saffron Magick and Healing - Cacey Blackburn  
Learning from the Moss-Folk - Lucy Spirit  
Social Justice Education Remystified - Jason Beauregard  
Wise Words from the Old Crone  
Pagan Poetry  
Birch the Selfish Witch - JE Marriott  
Rebel Folklore Review - Fiona Dowson  
Forests of Silver Forests of Gold Review - Cherry Doyle  
Tarot Musings - Auset Gypsy



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# MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



## Raven Digitalis

Originally trained in Georgian Witchcraft, Raven has been an earth-based practitioner since 1999, a Priest since 2003, a Freemason since 2012, and an empath all of his life. He holds a degree in cultural anthropology from the University of Montana, co-operated a nonprofit Pagan Temple for 16 years, and is also a professional Tarot reader, editor, card-carrying magician, and animal rights advocate. [www.ravendigitalis.com](http://www.ravendigitalis.com) [www.facebook.com/ravendigitalis](https://www.facebook.com/ravendigitalis) [www.instagram.com/ravendigitalis](https://www.instagram.com/ravendigitalis)



## Madalena

Writer, artist, and witch residing predominantly in forest glens.  
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## Julie Aspinall

I have been a witch as long as I can remember. I am eclectic with a strong traditional witchcraft background. I founded the coven of Gaia and The festival for pagans and witches. My aim is to help people starting on their paths.  
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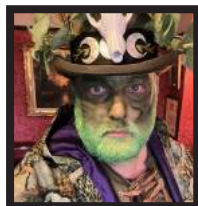
## Nell Shepherdson

Nell is a Yoga Teacher, Reiki Practitioner, Tarot Reader and founder of Wilding Wellness in Shepperton, Surrey. She is an enthusiastic artist, writer and a fervent storyteller with a passion for sharing the magic of the wild.  
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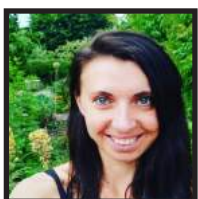
## Benjamin Selby

Benjamin is a Green Man of Glastonbury, sharing poetry on the Green Man Facebook page.  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/110624469351633/>



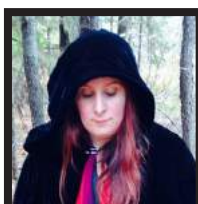
## Ewan Cameron

Ewan is one of the Greenmen of Glastonbury and has followed the Greenman since 2020. He is a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel, Director in the NHS, Morris Dancer with Wild Moon Morris and Pagan. Ewan has just started his Greenman journey and seeks to help preserve our pagan traditions in and around Somerset.  
Wild Moon Morris Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/wildmoonmorris/>  
Wild Moon Morris Instagram Page: <https://www.instagram.com/wildmoonmorris/>



## Oak Canessa-Pollard

Oak is a professional Storyteller who is passionate about all things Folklore. Living in Sussex, she loves nothing more than roaming the South Downs seeing signs of magic. Running her folkloric witch Instagram is her favourite pastime, plus a ritual or three.  
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## Vera Nadine

Vera Nadine is a writer, mama, energy healer and spirit channel living in the wilds of Nova Scotia, where she soaks up nature's magic, runs workshops and has morning chats with the moody ravens who share her mossy woodland plot.  
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## Scott Irvine

Scott Irvine is a Druid in a witches hat, a pagan who reveres Mother Earth and all life that resides on her. He sees the spiritual realm as real and as important as the material world.

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## Fauna Raine

Fauna Raine is a professional reader & healer specializing in Tarot, Palmistry & Crystal Healing and offers private sittings, workshops and mentoring. Fauna also attends many Pagan and Holistic festivals and events throughout the year. You can find more of her work on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/Faunaraine](http://www.facebook.com/Faunaraine) or contact her through email [Faunaraine@gmail.com](mailto:Faunaraine@gmail.com)



## Richard C Hick

Rich is a successful business consultant working throughout engineering and manufacturing, a father and a veteran endurance athlete. Spiritually, he is wholly diverse and acceptant of truth wherever it may come, an eternal student, eclectic witch, freemason, and hermetic, drawing from a rich web of traditions to form his daily practice. He lives with his wife in beautiful and ancient Derbyshire, with his dogs, cats and rabbits.



## Martin Campbell

Martin lives with his husband Soman and four black cats in the heart of Glastonbury, England. He writes historical novels about LGBT people who helped shape humanity but who's private lives were never taught about in schools. Julius Caesar was bisexual, Hadrian was gay, did you know?

[www.amazon.co.uk/stores/Martin-Campbell/author](http://www.amazon.co.uk/stores/Martin-Campbell/author) [www.amazon.co.uk/Love-God-Martin-Campbell](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Love-God-Martin-Campbell)  
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## Ellen Evert Hopman

Ellen Evert Hopman is an Herbalist, author and Druid who lives in an oak forest in western Massachusetts. Her volumes are far-ranging, including Celtic herbals, a trilogy of Druid novels, and children's literature. Her most recent offerings are; "The Sacred Herbs of Yule and Christmas – Remedies, Recipes, Magic & Brews f Her books can be found on line in the usual places. She is the Archdruid Emerita and founder of Tribe of the Oak (Tuatha na Dara), a Celtic Reconstructionist Druid Order [www.tribeoftheoak.org](http://www.tribeoftheoak.org)



## Andrew Kleister

Andrew is the owner and manager of Kleister's Sounds of Yesteryear and has a passion for restoring vintage audio equipment. He is also fascinated by the paranormal and has had numerous encounters with folk who have passed on.

[www.facebook.com/kleisterssoundsofyesteryear](http://www.facebook.com/kleisterssoundsofyesteryear)



## Cacey Blackburn

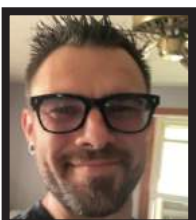
Cacey runs a Herbal Apothecary and Counselling practise from the Sunshine Coast in Australia. Her training began in 2000 when she studied European folk herbalism and completed a year-long apprenticeship in Alexandrian witchcraft. Cacey shares twenty years of international training in plant spirit medicine and various counselling approaches through her clinic and workshops, and is passionate about animal rescue.

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## Lucy Spirit

Lucy Spirit is a writer, researcher and art historian. Escape to [www.spiritedlucy.co.uk](http://www.spiritedlucy.co.uk) where she will horrify and delight you in equal measure with tales of the strange, the curious and the fascinating. You can also follow her on Instagram [@spirited\\_lucy](https://www.instagram.com/spirited_lucy)



## Jason Beauregard

I am a father, educator, yogi, shamanic practitioner, mystic , occultist, and musician residing in the United States. When I am not in the studio or teaching public school, I enjoy spending time outdoors with my wife and kids, listening to music, skateboarding, hiking, meditation, studying classical tantra, and reading everything I can get my paws on. I hold a BS in Secondary Education, a MA in Gothic Literature and Writing, and am a proud RYT 200.



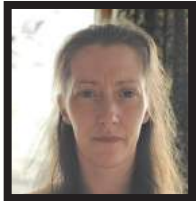
## The Old Crone

After almost 60 years reading cards, starting when I was a child, and showing others how to interpret them, I still enjoy reading for anyone who wishes it. I follow the wheel of the year and the phases of the moon, grow my own herbs and wand woods as well as following pagan ways and assisting others to find their own special spiritual pathway. [theoldcrone5@gmail.com](mailto:theoldcrone5@gmail.com)



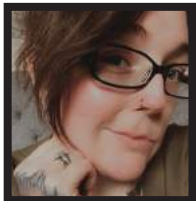
## Jeff Turner

I am from a small village on the North East coast of England called Whitburn and I have recently retired which now affords plenty of time to indulge myself. Spending time outdoors and stepping off the concrete is a fundamental part of my wellbeing, Pagan beliefs and my connection to Gaia. I am an amateur naturalist and committed conservationist and am rarely seen without my binoculars constantly on the lookout for birds and wildlife.



## Tamsin Flowers

Tamsin is a singer, songwriter and witchcraft poet living in the Scottish Highlands. For her folk band Amarynthia she writes original folk-style music with witchcraft themes and lyrics, and explores the history of witchcraft. [www.witchcraftmusic.co.uk](http://www.witchcraftmusic.co.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/amarynthiamusic](https://www.facebook.com/amarynthiamusic)



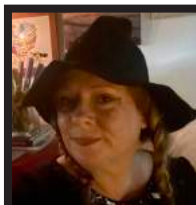
## Rochelle Hanslow

Rochelle Hanslow is a scottish, neurodivergent, chronically ill writer and poet. She is The Grief Witch and creator of Mourning Magic, where grief meets creativity & soul-craft. Rochelle is working on poetry pamphlet publications and her new project, The Grief Grimoire Podcast. You can follow her on Instagram @Mourning\_Magic



## Hannah Semple

Hannah is a long time Pagan and poet based in South Wales where nature has always been her inspiration and teacher. When she's not walking the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal she busy writing, gardening, volunteering and being a mum.  
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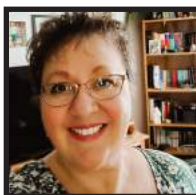
## Melanie Webb

Melanie Webb is a writer and lover of all things nature-based and magical. She lives in the Wiltshire countryside with her wife, her black Lab, Winnie and her rabbit, Arthur.



## Dead Culture

Dead Culture, a one man fictional Goth-Wave band driven by manic drums & cello's. Lyrics by (Man)Drake.  
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## JE Marriott

J.E. Marriott is a British author living in Canada with her husband, two demon cats and has a penchant for tea. She has been Pagan most of her life and attends a Druid ADF Grove. She writes paranormal mysteries, supernatural thrillers and magically enchanted tales for all.  
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## Auset Gypsy

James Jacob Pierri studied Ayurvedic Medicine, Anatomy & Physiology and Herbalism, graduating from The Florida College of Natural Health & Holistic Sciences and also studied Aromatherapy at The AVEDA Institute NYC. James holds national certification as massage therapist, Yoga instructor and Usui Reiki practitioner He is the author of the internationally published AusetGypsy Tarot & Book Set. [www.asetgypsy.com](http://www.asetgypsy.com)

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# Drawing Down the Sun



## Hail the Glory of the Sun!

Most Witches are familiar with the ritual procedure of Drawing Down the Moon. Originating in the Gardnerian Book of Shadows, and poetically crafted by the illustrious Doreen Valiente, Drawing Down the Moon is recited during traditional Wiccan Full Moon Esbats. Within the ritual, the Coven's High Priest gives the High Priestess the Fivefold Kiss, ritually kissing points on her body, followed by a call to the Great Goddess in her many forms, requesting that she descend into the body of her Priestess and servant. Upon invocation, the Priestess recites the Drawing Down, often followed by the Charge of the Goddess and sometimes channeled messages for participants.

But what about the mighty sun? Being a Goddess-oriented tradition, Wicca and many other forms of Neopaganism the most reverence to the moon and her tides. Gardner and Valiente never offered a masculine or solar alternative.

In their legendary book *A Witches' Bible* – which I personally feel is an indispensable piece of Craft history – Janet and Stewart Farrar offer a masculine alternative called Drawing Down the Sun, wherein the Priestess invites the Great God into the Priest. Having a similar structure to Drawing Down the Moon, albeit shorter in duration, many Covens have found this procedure to be effective for summoning the Great God while the sun rides high in the sky – an ideal addendum to Sabbat rituals!

Many practitioners of this rite modify the Farrars' Drawing Down the Sun by incorporating

their own poetry, God-based chants, and masculine affirmations. Many male-positive groups will take the liberty of crafting their own masculine and solar-based rituals, poetry, and sacred songs focused on the loving qualities of God(s). Because of Witchcraft's malleable and personable nature, modifications such as these are not only permissible but greatly encouraged in modern Craft circles.

Rituals, of course, don't always have to take place with other people. We can practice Drawing Down the Sun on our own terms, in our own ways, in private and solitary settings. Contemplate what the sun means to you and why he should be honored in his many forms. From there, create your own daytime rituals focused on solar veneration.

*We all have energies of the masculine and feminine polarities within us, regardless of sex, sexuality, or gender identity.*

Additionally, we are discovering that social evolution in the West is catching up with many Indigenous and Asian views of gender as malleable, diverse, and not necessarily restricted to biological sex. We all have energies of the masculine and feminine polarities within us, regardless of sex, sexuality, or gender identity.

While the moon rules the month's cycle, the sun rules both the daily cycle and yearly cycle, such as with the Sabbats and tropical zodiac timing. Consider creating an everyday morning routine to honor and harness solar energy for yourself. Begin by a basking under sunlight at the same time every day; simply face

the sun outdoors with arms outstretched, inhaling solar essence and emanating gratitude for light and life itself. During these meditations, listen to your intuition for inspiration about creating your own unique daily solar routine. Expand your morning practice based on your Witchy insights and personal pantheon.

Experiment with utilizing daily solar energy to charge and enchant spells, charms, and magickal tools. Those drawn to Western esoterica may observe zodiac shifts and astrological alignments. Those drawn to Vedic or Yogic paths may practice a brief Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) routine as part of their morning observation – perhaps even with the addition of traditional Sanskrit mantras to Surya Dev: Hinduism's masculine ruler of the Sun.



Like any aspect of Witchcraft, trusting personal intuition is essential. As a giver of life and an emblem of the Great God – the co-creator of reality alongside the balancing force of the Great Goddess – the mighty sun deserves to light the path of the Witch just as much as the soft and mystic moon.

***Like any aspect of Witchcraft, trusting personal intuition is essential.***

Finally, keep in mind the axiom, “as above, so below,” which naturally encompasses the saying, “as within, so without.” The sun is always accessible energetically, even in the dead of a winter's night! (That just means that it will take a bit more work to harness

its strength.) Although not necessary, some apps for the phone and tablet allow users to track exactly where planets and zodiacal configurations are in relation to the user. Whether or not we know the exact whereabouts of the sun, moon, planets, or constellations, we can draw upon their energy from above/without, to mirror and strengthen our connection to them from below/within. Because we ourselves are direct reflections and products of the Universe, all of its energy is at our disposal at any given time. By observing the world around us and utilizing its energy for the greater good, we deepen our own spiritual advancement while helping enrich the lives of others around us during this sacred and fleeting moment of time on earth.

## Raven Digitalis

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# RETHINKING OFFERINGS

## *Through Alder and Temperance*

This text forms part of an offering to the spirit of Alder, guardian of other worlds. It follows from a conversation with the Alder tree around building a creative practice of service to Spirit- that is, a practice of “offering”.

What emerged was a reading of offerings anchored in “Temperance”, card 14 of the Tarot’s Major Arcana. Like Alder, the angel of Temperance is between worlds. They stand with one foot on earth and the other in water. The materiality of earth and collective spiritual wisdom of water flow and entangle effortlessly through them.



Temperance is the loss of singularity, binary, and separability. It calls for healing by searching for the parts of ourselves severed and dispersed through the whole. This is a dialogue between seen and unseen, material and immaterial. Temperance alchemizes our bodies and worlds as formed of disparate seen and unseen elements. Through their liminal alchemy, all seeming binaries are shattered into their many parts and rebalanced towards wholeness.

Offerings, too, can straddle worlds in infinite ways. They alchemize spirit contact and creative output. They require us to create earthly matter with, through, and for the deep, unseeable pool of the spirit realm, where we are not separable. Their form exists, malleable and fluid, between worlds.

A creative practice of “offering” which embodies the spirit of Temperance centers liminality as a mode for healing. It aims to re-compose us toward wholeness by enacting creativity as the alchemy of our fluid selves. As we disintegrate beyond separability,

we illuminate an interconnected reality beyond the spatial-temporal confines perceptible to the naked eye. This practice of “offering” thus collapses the pillars of visibility and materiality which regularly structure our creative output, replacing the idea of the separable art object/artist with the multidimensional, alchemical, and ever-changing one.

Between worlds, we see through many eyes. Invisible, conscious spirits everywhere emerge as parts of us dispersed through space-time. We broaden our perception of the “visible” through the displacement of our centralized gaze.

Temperance creates with both eyes closed. Earth and water move through their being, so they are not limited by the visible separability of the two. Creativity is moved beyond the self-conscious limitations of beauty and taste- it is felt as the natural alchemical flow of life.

As we open our eyes to the conscious worlds we reside in, symbols emerge in countless languages from countless beings, which we translate and assemble into devotional creative output. We become capable of visualizing the web of life that is always offering invisible inspiration.

As our creative output comes to fruition, we understand that it will enter into this communicative web and expand beyond its visible, separable form- these invisible reverberations through the network of spirit hold its true beauty. Like our multiplied self, the object broadens and shifts in all directions, becoming one with all. Like our liminal body, it activates a bridge between disparate parts of the whole.



Beyond our centralized gaze, the visible gives way to the felt sense, and our relationship to materiality shifts. Separable forms moving in linear trajectories through time-space dissipate, and matter emerges as entangled in Spirit's web. We realize that all matter forms a whole that has been engaged in transformation since the beginning of time. Our creative materials, like all things, are animated with past lives. Our offering will only be another.



The skull of the crow holds the spirit of that crow, the land and sky it once inhabited, the spirit of all crows, and all matter that came to form its bones. A petal can hold the histories that formed it, as can any musical note. A jar of dirt holds thousands of years of death and decay. Our very body carries the dust and seeds of more than we can imagine.

Temperance alchemizes from stillness. Creative output is not forced. It emerges naturally, in flow with the cycles of transformation all matter is entangled in. We see ourselves as part of these cycles, and creativity emerges as a way to enmesh ourselves more deeply in their networks.

Through this shift in our material orientation, we become aware of the immaterial ramifications of our creative materials- the histories and potential futures they carry. When we enter liminality, our material existence begins to reverberate through immaterial connections to the whole. Creativity is activated into spiritual service, moving beyond the static object in space-time. It becomes an actionable everyday practice of bridging worlds.

The creative output that emerges from this method is not bound by taste, beauty, material value, fame, or any other limiting factors caused by our sense of our 'self' as strictly separable from other beings. It is not bound by the individualistic structures of capi-

talism that bind our creative worth to metrics of value skewed by systems that glorify some at the expense of all others.

Offerings emerge as collaborative- they are created through the relaying of Spirit whisperings, which flow through our being. As Temperance teaches us the power drawn from shedding our illusion of singularity of the self, singular authorship loses all meaning. This structure instead activates all choices to inhabit and activate the liminal as creative acts of "offering". It activates re-integration into the whole, the deep re-framing of the self held in Temperance, as a vehicle of service. It aligns our actions with a wider purpose of devotion. It asks us to decenter ourselves, imagine we have wings so we can suspend ourselves in-between. It asks us to consider where we really end and the other begins. It emerges as any practice which we alchemize through an understanding of ourselves as enmeshed in a great web that is always creating.

Madalena Botto



# Watermelon Mint Salad

This Watermelon Mint Salad is light, hydrating, and perfect for the summer season. It incorporates the sweetness of watermelon, the crispness of cucumber, and the refreshing flavour of mint. It's a delightful dish to enjoy during the longest day of the year!

## Ingredients:

- 1 small watermelon, diced
- 1 cucumber, peeled and diced
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, chopped
- 1 tablespoon honey (optional)
- A pinch of salt



## Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, combine the diced watermelon and cucumber.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the lime juice, chopped mint leaves, honey (if desired), and a pinch of salt.
3. Pour the dressing over the watermelon and cucumber mixture. Gently toss to combine.
4. Refrigerate the salad for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavours to meld together.
5. Serve chilled and enjoy this refreshing salad to celebrate the summer solstice!

Julie Aspinall

# Somatic Solstice

Summer is here! The air feels different as we embrace the longer days and warmer nights. Even those who are not sensitive can feel the changes as the seasons shift gear in preparation for the longest day. But what does this do to us on the inside, physically? This beautiful, witchy community knows energy moves within us intertwined with our bodily processes but how many of us take the time to work that energy through and release blockages? It's hard around busy schedules to find the time for this kind of energy focused self-care that can help us live more vibrantly but there is a little 'buzzword' that has crept onto the wellness scene recently that might just be the answer we have all been looking for.

You many have come across the word 'somatic' being thrown around in yoga classes or crop up on social media. It's the current darling of the wellness industry and seems to mean different things to different people. But what exactly does the word mean? If you are any kind of medical professional, it's a word you will be very familiar with, if you look it up in the Cambridge Dictionary it will very simply tell you that the word somatic 'relates to the body as opposed to the mind'. If you have a pain in your wrist because you have a broken bone there, that is somatic pain because it is pain caused by something in the body and is felt physically. We are not talking about all the emotional burdens that may also come with a pain in the wrist here, simply the physical pain.

Somatic movement deals entirely with the physical body, it is organic mindful movement, movement that is free and wild.

Somatic movement in wellness means tuning into movement for movements' sake not reaching a goal based on how it's supposed to look or how it effects our mind. It's a wonderful tool for moving energy around

the body, releasing, balancing and cleansing ourselves. And its accessible for everyone regardless of circumstance, ability or experience – and, while the sun is shining, there is no better time to bring this beautiful practice into our lives. Don't worry if it sounds scary, I've got a few tips to get you started.

## Find Stillness First

What we are doing when we are practicing somatic movement is focusing on the body and moving it in a way that feels natural. There are no rules as to how you need to move, just move in a way that feels right. You can do this with other people if you feel comfortable, but the point is to feel internal sensations rather than be worried about how we look so for some it would be better to choose a time and place where you know nobody is watching.



Make a start by finding some stillness, you can be sitting or standing. Take a few deep breaths, calm the mind, and then move your attention to your body. Start at the top of your head, take your attention to your crown, and just hover it there for a moment. Try not to feel anything about it, try not to judge, just notice. Then move your attention down to your forehead, again just hover there. Move down to your eyes then your nose and continue all the way down through your body to the soles of your feet.

Remember it's not about making judgements, you are just noticing and then moving on. You don't have to linger on each part for very long, this isn't about cultivating yogi-style meditation, and if you find that your mind has wandered off or you become lost in thoughts just acknowledge it. Once acknowledged move onto the next part of the body and carry on.

### Feel The Energy & Move

Once you have scanned through the body try to tune into your personal energy. You can do this in whatever way you wish. Some people can just feel it, but you can visualise light or liquid moving through you if that helps. Maybe you might like to connect into the energy of the summer sun and draw it down into you. It may take a little practice to be able to tune in and be able to feel this without having thoughts about anything else. Don't worry if it doesn't come automatically, like I said before, just acknowledge that your mind has wandered off and bring it back to the present moment. Even those who are experienced at this will have times when thoughts creep in and they lose focus, it's just one of those things.

Now it's time to move! Feel the energy flowing inside and push it around the body instinctively. If you are sitting maybe you could start by rolling the pelvis or the neck and upper body. If you are standing, perhaps you could raise and lower your arms adding more and more parts of the body in as the momentum increases. Just move – that's all there is to it. Move within your limits; if there is a part of you that can't or doesn't want to move, then don't move it, move everything else. Turn it into a dance and let your movement be a celebration of your body.

### Slow Down & Be Thankful

Gather momentum, see where the flow takes you. Do whatever feels right and then when it feels like enough start to slow down. Come out the same way you went in by slowly finding stillness and then making that scan of your body, this time just noticing how it feels different. Know that you have moved your vital



lifeforce around your physical body, energetic blockages have been released and your vibration has risen. Give thanks to your body for all it does, give thanks to the spirits around you and give thanks to the sun because as it wanes away after the solstice you will be better prepared to connect with its energy and use it to enhance your own.

## Nell Shepherdson



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## *'The Goddess and the Green man...*

A match made in heaven? Not a chance....

But one made in the earth... *Yep that's the place.*

How she loves him, values his wildness and wit...

She knows he spends the year working away, tending to creation,  
Planting and pruning, tending and nurturing the greenwood.

How she loves him, she delights in the few times he lets down his  
hair, when he keeps his horn full to celebrate her spring time...

When the sparkle in his eye burns brightest.

How she loves him, when his jokes are crude and misunderstood  
from the generations that come after...

When she rolls her eyes at the same story retold.

Those looking in may whisper *how does she cope with  
her wild man...*

She appears so much calmer and in control while he staggers around  
and raising all hail to all he sees.

But they are in love... And love conquers all.

Love makes it all ok. This union between two apparent opposites  
works and long may we celebrate it in the only way we know.

It may be right it may be wrong but for the Goddess and the Green  
Man it works.

And I'll certainly raise a horn to that.

Benjamin Selby, Green Man of Glastonbury





# The Green Man's Corner

As the Beltane festivities start to fade and we turn our heads to the Summer Solstice I regularly take this time to ponder on who the Green Man is and his place in folklore. In Glastonbury we celebrate Beltane with dawn ceremonies led by the druids of Glastonbury, fire jumping, Morris dancing and of course our Beltane parade led by the Wild Horde. Centre stage to the parade are the Green Men of Glastonbury carrying the May Pole to a field on the slopes of the Glastonbury Tor, Isle of Avalon or Anwyn, home of Gwyn ap Nudd (pronounced Gwynn ap Neath), King of the Fae. Ceremony and merriment abound with mead consumed in generous quantities by many of the Green Men. Organisation, timings and order are a concept; wildness, thanksgiving and the fertility of earth mother are embraced; often literally by some who attend. It has been an especially powerful few weeks with the lunar eclipse, Beltane and the northern lights presenting themselves as red and green over the Tor of Glastonbury. Personally, I'm still recovering and moved back to my Green Man ways knowing that there is real promise for this year's bounty.

What is the Green Man? After having followed the Green Man for the last two years the most common question I am asked is 'What is the Green Man?'. Where does one begin when you have less than five-minutes and an eager member of the public expecting you to have a succinct answer. In truth I am still finding out. As Paul Broadhurst said to me as he signed his book 'The Green Man and the Dragon' for me; 'Ewan, may the green man lead you a merry dance!'. There are many books on the subject of the green man and his place in our folklore. In one of the more hypnotic publications I found that Carolynne Larrington weaves that story between myth, magic and folk lore in a way that provides real substance in her book 'The Land of the Green Man'.

'For many people, the Green Man is an image strongly connected with one particular part of the world – England. Although it is also known as a symbol of the Celtic era and appears in other parts of the world, the Green Man, arguably more than and other

image, is taken to represent "merrie England" and the boisterous medieval and early modern period. It is also seen as a largely rural image, representing perhaps the darker pastoral history of the country where extremely old ways and traditions are still observed.

It has become clear to me that it's not that important to define or place the Green Man in a box; plus I have yet to find anything in nature that could be contained in such a way. I have also been described as a Green Witch, Hedge Wizard and on occasion Druid. Fundamentally my following the Green Man centres on being one with nature and embracing the seasons. Much of my practice is spontaneous, driven by those seasons and what I see in nature. My alter reflects these daily bounties as if the Green Man himself points these wonders of nature out to me as if to say 'here I am, notice me and celebrate'. As with weaving spells I entwine these natural offerings with the sabbats and what I feel at that time. Emotion and feeling are extremely important aspects to those that follow the Green Man such as the Green Men of Glastonbury celebrating Beltane with the selection, ringing, felling, carving and parade of the May Pole that always includes burning of fire, incense, giving thanks and copious amounts of mead. Many follow this 'merrie' tradition and equally many are solitary preferring the one-to-one embrace of nature and the energies of the Green Man.

Everyday Green Man. Celebrating the sabbats provides a certain structure to all our witchcraft but for me it's also very important to incorporate the Green Man in my everyday life. This has been a conscious effort given that I am a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel and now a Director in the NHS. Two occupations that I have not associated with paganism let alone following the Green Man. For me it's the simple things and as a keen gardener keeping it simple is often the most spiritually rewarding, economical and bountiful. I always try and have a short morning walk in my local wood and follow the same path. No iPod or other such music devices.

I need to hear the trees move and the wilderness breath. In that space I reach out to my ancestors and wood spirits, give praise and thanks and I am instantly rewarded with calm and joy. Even when it is hammering down with rain, hearing the leaves being tapped like small drums and the smell of ozone reminding me of the fertile soil on which we all depend. To follow the Green Man is to find joy from this simple of starts of the day. I also ensure that at least once a day I am in my garden pottering, tending, saving, nurturing and sometimes just placing my hands in the cool soil of my vegetable patches knowing that last year's compost develops and gives back from the crop I take out. This year I have potatoes, beetroot, tomatoes, chard and salads on the go and of course the standard herbs one could expect to be used for eating and spell craft.

As with many gardeners I have two Robins who regularly follow me around the garden and sometimes come so close they take grubs from my hand. Watching them also tend to the areas I have exposed for them to rummage through is a constant reminder of the circle of life and it is reassuring to know that in some cultures Robins are associated with our ancestors coming to check in on us. At the start of my pagan journey the bumble bee very quickly made themselves known to me as my spirit animal and I always pay heed to what they try and tell me. It has been quite exhilarating to learn and act on the guidance offered as without exception it has been the right thing to do. When following the Green Man just taking that time to pause and reflect on what is being presented to you from nature becomes the norm. It also has presented itself in alarming ways, bumble bees repeatedly head butting me, hares and barn owls slowing my car down as I am going to an appointment; in all 3 occasions the outcomes of those meetings was negative. Is this nature and by extension the green man trying to intervene? I'd like to think so and I am in the process of trusting and acting on such signs. However this is difficult for me as I have to unlearn 35 years of Army and NHS behaviours.

Preparing for the Summer Solstice. Litha or the midsummer/ summer Solstice will soon be upon us on 20 June. After all the rain of April and coldness of May it hardly seems fair that mid-summer is but 4 weeks away as I write this article. I find the summer Solstice to be a time of thanks giving and joy and yet for Green Men it also reflects the midpoint where we shed our oak's green leaves and embrace holly greens and autumnal browns. It always feels too soon. I am still trying to develop my understanding and approach

to the Green Man and as such this will be the first year where I will go on a personal retreat.

At the end of my garden there is a field in which an ancient apple orchard stands. On the far field boundary stands a massive oak tree that spans three of my arms lengths. A wise and ancient English oak. My personal retreat is simply to visit and be with my ancient oak for 24 hours and take a breath. No media, no phone, no internet, no books, just myself and listening, feeling, touching, embracing my ancient tree. I will take some provisions and Green Man tea that I have been concocting. Reflection, contemplation and observation. I look forward to watching the tawny and barn owls that I know live in the area and seek to welcome the dark of the night as the hedgerow leans in to me with all the night noises that brings. I know what to physically expect but I wonder at what to expect when laying in the arms of the Green Man. Mead and other types of beverage are routinely shared between Green Men when we assemble and go on retreats. For me I wish to be clear headed with only my tea and fresh spring water that I will collect from the White Spring of Glastonbury next to the Chalice Well. I don't know why but I want to make this experience uninterrupted, clear, almost pure.

On the 20th June I will have completed my retreat with hopefully a new understanding of the Green Man. Just before dawn I will dress in my Green Man regalia and walk up to the top of the Tor to welcome the sun. Last year we were free from cloud and consequently as the sun peaked over the horizon it was easily seen and greeted with cheers, revelry and gasps followed by multiple different ceremonies that typifies Glastonbury. After the sun rise I will descend to the Chalice Well gardens and give praise with meditation and thought. It will be a happy occasion and yet tinged with a bit of sadness as this Green Men will also recognise 'that winter is coming'. This year I will meet with the other Green Men of Glastonbury at the Becketts Inn and revel, mead will flow to celebrate and be merrie with all that is this sceptred isle. 'All hail the Green Man!'

Ewan Cameron





# HERBAL MAGIC

As a Green Witch, I incorporate herbs and their qualities into many aspects of my daily life. I am lucky enough to have a garden where I can grow these beautiful plants, feed and water them, embed the Earth with crystals should I choose, where I can pick by sunshine or moonlight, but mainly I use them in everyday aspects of my actions.

You don't need a garden for herb magic, you just need access to the herbs. These can be fresh from the supermarket, grown in pots, dried, or from flourishing plants in community gardens.

Nourishing, caring for, and nurturing herbs like a small (stationary and silent) child only enhances the potency and effect of their magic, especially when used by you, as you build this connection to the Earth through your stewardship.

Below I list the relationships each herb has with magical aspects. These can be used in Spell-work, as teas, infusions or dried and used as incense for rituals pertaining to that particular theme.



## Lemon Balm

This herb is one I use multiple times per day at this time of year, in my salad at work, rubbed into my socks for freshness and stewed as tea enjoyed in the sun. There is something uplifting, light and yellow about the scent, so unsurprisingly this is linked strongly to happiness, purification and protection from illness. I find lemon balm is best used fresh, and not burned, and can be ritualistically used to attract joy and happiness to your life or a specific situation. It has the transient quality of summer breeze that seems strange to pin into drying, so use throughout the spring and summer as it grows prolifically!

## Fennel

Beautiful and cloudlike, fennel can be eaten raw in salads, tea and the flowers used as a delicious snack for any liquorice fans. Properties of this illustrious plant promote health, courage and cleansing. Used either

fresh or dried, fennel is an ideal herb to include in any rituals to cleanse bad energy or negative relationships, tie cutting or habit changing. For example, in reducing my coffee addiction, I once exchanged my 4th and 5th cup of coffee with fennel tea, and despite being at work I felt as though I was performing a ritual of strength, courage and cleansing my body all at the same time.



## Feverfew

Used in folklore medicine to sooth fevers, Feverfew is still today being investigated for its abilities to calm migraines if a leaf is eaten every day. This is an undertaking I am doing, paying the price of the less-than-delicious taste of these pretty little leaves. Used magically, feverfew is associated with fidelity, love, protection of the home and family and healing. In ritual usage, feverfew leaves or flowers can be potent in spells of healing for long term family situations and relationships.



## Respect

As witches we must respect the Earth and her gifts, so as you use these incredible offerings from the land, be sure to be mindful what you take and how you take it. Pick as needed and with intention, thank the herb plant for its' participation in your ritual.

Go well fellow witches, enjoy, respect the plants and take heed not to pick herbs where animals may urinate, or near busy roads. Be safe, be green, be magical and be herbal.

## Oak Canessa-Pollard

# Lilith Incenses

Since people first gathered together to honour the Gods and spirits of nature and the land they used gums, resins and fragrant herbs to bring them closer to the divine beings and to give aromatic wings to their hopes, dreams and prayers.

I have always been interested in aromas, perfumes and scents for as long as I can remember, it began with making little potions with rose petals and water as a child. My great love of incense developed further in the 1990's after attending a workshop, I was given free rein to experiment and play with ingredients I had never heard of before and just make my own blends.



I create authentic blends for use in rituals and ceremonies, sacred to the deities and the seasons, frequently dreaming and channelling the recipes, envisioning the ingredients, the smoke and sensing the aroma. I have my own core blends but am very happy to dream up a bespoke incense for your specific needs.



The incenses I create are birthed through dreams and channelling. The beings are ever present, talking to me throughout the blending process; which gums, resins, herbs, flowers and oils to use, stopping me mid-blend and deciding the best time to resume for most potency.

All the ingredients I use are natural, I spend a great deal of time in nature foraging, either locally or further afield ~ in ancient woodlands or stone circles ~ for flowers, herbs, tree barks and fruits, they are a mixture from Mother Nature's pantry, she yields her bounty for blending into a fragrant, sacred offering. I do get very creative with which unusual ingredients to use, adding sand, earth or bird feathers, these add to the potency and magick.



Each incense is hand crafted in my home. All my blends are lovingly treated, allowed to sit for a while, imbued with song, and crystals. When the dry ingredients are ready the oils can be added, I used organic oils where possible and my first choice is always from a company which distils most of their oils at their own farm in England.

Each jar of incense contains a crystal from my collection which now needs to be passed on.

Every individual component has its own vibration, creating its own aromatic note in the heady symphony to the gods. These hymns or prayers have wafted up to the heavens since time immemorial, offering our thanks, prayers and gratitudes.

The incenses can be burned traditionally on charcoal for ritual and ceremonial use or they can be burned as an offering indoors, smokelessly, by using an oil burner, simply add sand or salt to the bowl and sprinkle about a teaspoonful of the desired incense onto it, light the candle underneath and the aroma will permeate your space for about a week, then it can be burned on charcoal if you so desire. Always be sure to set your intentions when using these incenses magickally or ritualistically as they will not do the work for you.

I recently facilitated the blending of the community Beltaine Celebration Incense with a group of women taking part I am available for workshops, talks, retreats etc my contact details are below.

Lilith Incenses are available from:

Directly from me every Tuesday on Glastonbury Market  
Market Place/Magdalene Street, Glastonbury, Ba6 9E, United Kingdom, Glastonbury BA6 9EW

<https://lilithincenses.weebly.com/>  
<https://www.dandeliondreamz.co.uk/>  
<https://whiterabbitglastonbury.com/>

[lilithincenses.glastonbury@gmail.com](mailto:lilithincenses.glastonbury@gmail.com)

Phone

07526000282



# DIVINE IN ANY FORM



Whether you believe that sacred deities came down to us as messengers from the cosmic creator, or you believe that deities are archetypal concepts, constructed, believed in and elevated by humankind, regardless there are divine beings that we look toward and call upon for inspiration, guidance, protection and assistance in our daily lives.

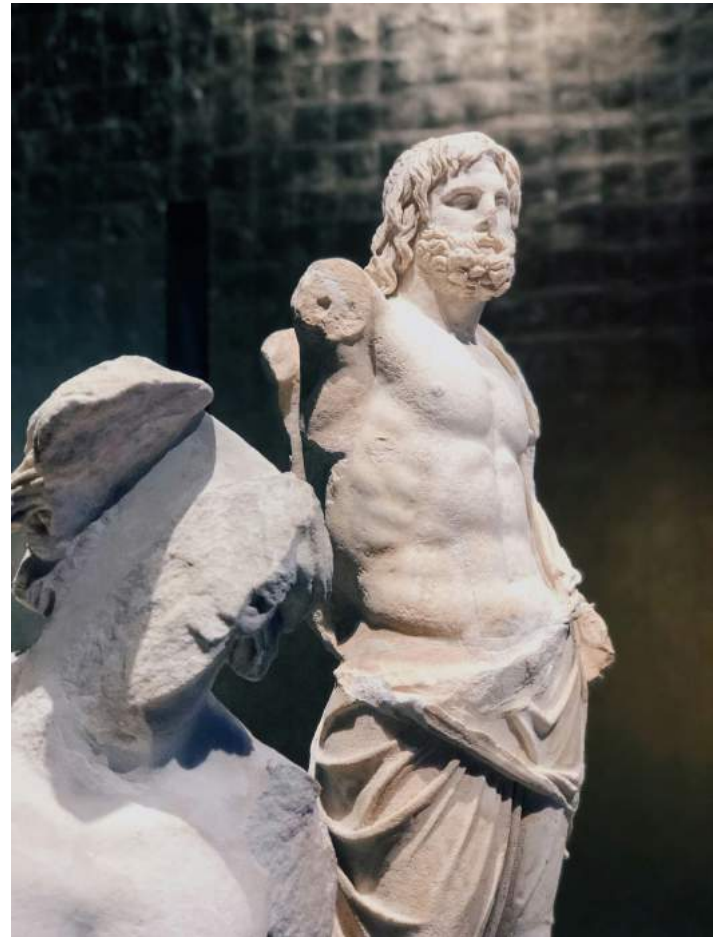
Necessarily we are all familiar with the goddess, as divine feminine, sacred mother, goddess of the harvest, and the God, as divine masculine, all father, the horned consort, lord of the wilds and the woods. These and numerous other hetero representations of the divine are most featured in traditional myths and folklore, and commonly used in modern rituals. However, there is more to divinity and like most things – hot and cold, light and dark, etc. – masculine and feminine exist on a scale. There are the polarities and then there are the gradations in between, the places where one slowly fades into the other and vice versa.

Any keen observer of nature can validate this gradient phenomena, in all aspects of existence. Our ancestors, great hunters, healers and farmers of the land were keenly aware of the fact that most things do not exist at the farthest end of the polarity. Therefore, for their own understanding of, benefitting from and celebration of the natural world, their pantheons of deities always included those of androgynous, hermaphroditic and shapeshifting nature, as well as varying sexual orientations.

The benefits and beauties of existing in the middle ground, whether in sense of self, in presentation or in physicality, have always been appreciated by mystics and artists, priests and priestesses within many of our most revered ancient cultures. The varied attributes of gender and sexuality have been represented in deity form and celebrated in rituals and festivals by the Hindus, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Sumerians and several other local, regional and continental belief systems throughout recorded history, and undoubtedly before.

In seeking to know ourselves better, to live as we feel born to live and to embrace the freedom to revel in our own uniqueness we often come to look towards nature religions, spiritual faiths and their pantheons of deities,

to give us strength, guidance and inspiration on the heroic journey of self-discovery. When we are met with deities that do not reflect at least some of our experience, and our hopefulness for our own future, it can be disheartening.



Selective editing of ancient texts has certainly taken place throughout history and surviving details are open to differences of interpretation. Nevertheless, below I seek to provide a helpful introductory list, divided by pantheon/culture, of ally deities and deities that offer us expanded views of divine presentation in the form of gender-fluidity, gay, lesbian, bi and pansexuality, transgender and other non-binary/mid-polarity natures, amongst both the deities and their worshippers.

The sacred divine being limitless, every deity is open to personal interpretation and how you see/interact with them is between yourself and the cosmos. As with all choices made for ritual or spiritual development purposes, please do your own research and, most importantly, pay attention to how working with a specific

element, entity or pantheon makes you feel and adjust accordingly.

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*May the sacred shine brightly through you, across the spectrum and across any and all external boundaries. You are divine.*

(Note: I have sought to write the following descriptions with an eye towards verifiable history whenever possible and also to be sensitive to differing uses of descriptive vocabulary. If any offence is found, it is unintentional.)

## Sumerian/Mesopotamian

Inanna/Ishtar: Goddess of sexual love and of warfare, also a sky deity associated with Venus and with thunder and the rains. She is generally worshipped in a female form, though she is also known to have a masculine, warrior-like, aspect and said to have the ability to “turn a man into a woman and a woman into a man.” This transformative ability of Inanna, by virtue of her own bravery and selflessness (and also by the power of her father, the god Enki) features strongly in the story of her descent into the underworld. Inanna’s temples were served by non-gender conforming priests, known as the Gala, who took on feminine names and sang in a specifically female dialect. Statues confirming the mixed gender attributes of these priests have been found throughout Sumeria.

## Egyptian

Hapi: The god of the Nile responsible for the annual flooding which made the fields fertile. Depicted as a rotund man with ample hanging breasts and a false ceremonial beard, sometimes crowned with a wreath of flowers. In this guise he can be said to become both god and goddess, giver of life and sustenance to the plants, animals and people.

Aten/Atum: Often depicted as a king, they are the androgynous creator deity who sprang forth from the primordial chaos on their own volition. They are

responsible for the birth of the land and parent to all other deities – creating their offspring through use of their male and female aspects. Their name means “completeness,” symbolising both the beginning and the end of creation.

Isis: An ally goddess who urged the mother of Iphigeneia to keep the child even though she was a girl, and to hide Iphigeneia’s true gender from her father in order to protect her life. Iphigeneia is raised male until she becomes old enough to marry. Iphigeneia becomes engaged to a woman that does not know Iphigeneia to be a female. After prayers from Iphigeneia and her mother, Isis takes pity upon Iphigeneia’s circumstances and aids the union by turning Iphigeneia into a man before the wedding day.



## Hindu

Ila (Sudyumna): Ila is a Lunar deity, who is caused by Shiva and Parvati to alternate between male and female every month, eventually marrying Budh (a non-gendered deity) and conceiving a child during one of the months when such a thing was made possible. After the birth of the child, Ila was then allowed to remain in masculine form, becoming known as Sudyumna.

Ardhanarishvara: This deity is an androgynous form of Shiva and his consort Parvati/Shakti, “the deity who is half woman,” with the left side being feminine and the right side masculine. Ardhanarishvara represents the ultimate union of loved and beloved, or male self and female self. This deity symbolizes the synthesis of these qualities into a complementary divine energy, illustrating how everything in creation holds both aspects within.

Agni: The Vedic god of fire, digestion and of the initial spark of life. He is married to both Svaha, goddess of sacrifice, and Soma, the god of the Moon (and of ecstasy.) He is noted as having multiple same-sex encounters with other male deities, accepting their seed as a

ritual act, symbolic of accepting votive gifts from the earth to the heavens. He is often depicted with red skin and either two or three heads.

## Greek/Roman

**Iphis:** A mythological figure, born a female and given a gender-neutral name, Iphis was raised as a male so that her father would not find out that he was without a male heir. Iphis falls in love with Ianthe, a girl with whom she was raised. They are betrothed and as the wedding day approaches Iphis' mother prays to Isis for help, lest their secret be found out. Isis, in her mercy, turns Iphis into a man and he goes on to form a happy marriage with Ianthe. (In the Greek version, it is the goddess Juno who performs this transformation.)

**Dionysus/Bacchus:** The god of fertility, wine, dancing and sexual pleasure, among other things. He is often described as androgynous-looking and is known for his bisexuality. He was once lover of the satyr Ampelos and, after many other exploits, eventually became the husband of the goddess Ariadne. Dionysian/Bacchanalian rites, held privately in his honour, were distinctly ecstatic in nature, often pictured as feasts with dancing and orgies. However there were also seasonal public celebrations held to honour his aspect of lord of death and rebirth.



**Apollo:** Oft fictionalized, he is the strong and physically beautiful sun god who is sometimes referred to as the “patron of same sex love.” Apollo was multi-talented, serving as the god of light, poetry, prophecy, medicine and archery. He could perhaps be considered pansexual for his varied taste in lovers, including kings, queens and princes, priests and seers, hunters, maidens, nymphs and each of the nine muses. His most famous love was Hyacinthus, a prince of southern Greece who, when accidentally slain, Apollo mourned so much that he turned him into the fragrant flower of the same name.

**Artemis/Diana:** Classical Goddess of the Hunt and Goddess of Chastity who refuses the love of men and is listed by Homer as one of three goddesses immune to the power of Aphrodite, being interpreted as her having no romantic or sexual desires. Diana has, in more modern times, been worshipped by some in the gay and lesbian pagan community as a potentially lesbian goddess, theorised due to her large retinue of female hunting companions and the ancient usage of the word “virgin” which simply meant unmarried and belonging to herself, autonomous.

**Athena:** Goddess of Wisdom and chaste goddess who, owing to the same Homeric information above, is believed to have been asexual and aromantic. She never stated or has been told to have had romantic love or attraction for another, whether male or female.

**Hermaphroditus:** The child of the god Hermes and the goddess Aphrodite, he is one of the Erotes, classical winged gods who deal primarily with love and desire. Often pictured as an intersex youth with both feminine and masculine features, including female breasts and male genitalia, Hermaphroditus began life as a male but after catching the eye of a nymph named Salmakis she prayed to the gods to never be parted from him and the gods transformed them by them both being united in one body forever.

## Chinese

**Lan Caihe:** One of the Eight Immortals of the Taoist pantheon, Lan Caihe is a gender-fluid shapeshifter often depicted as a youth (male or female) carrying a basket of flowers, or as a wandering musician who is portrayed in Chinese theatre as appearing feminine but with a masculine voice. Noted as both a celestial deity, capable of ascending into the stars, and an earth deity, stomping the ground as they play their music and aiding gardeners with the beauty of their gardens, this deity is therefore skilled at living in two worlds or forms at once.

## Norse

**Loki:** A well-known shapeshifter and god of mischief, Loki presents as bisexual or gender-fluid throughout several of the Norse myths, often taking the form of a woman to achieve specific ends and even giving birth more than once in the form a female animal. His nature is that of stepping outside societal expectations of what “should” be done and being comfortable in non-traditional forms. In recent years his worship has



been adopted amongst some in the bisexual community.



**Odin:** Though known as the all-father and the supreme male deity of the Norse pantheon, Odin was also said to have at least one feminine attribute which set him apart from other male deities and for which he was accused of being “unmanly.” He was known to be a master of *seid* – a form of magic practiced solely by women in Norse culture. *Seid* was a shamanic magic involving the use of ecstasy as a means of transcending borders, enabling one to cross into the past, the future and even the realms of the dead.

## Hawaiian

**Hi'iaka:** Healer of the land and goddess of hula dancing, sorcery and sacred song. Her greatest loves were her sacred forest grove and her lover, the female dancer Hōpoe, later turned into stone by the goddess Pele. Hi'iaka was gifted with super strength and psychic vision/communication.

## Japanese

**Inari Okami:** A Kami (deity or elemental) of the Shinto tradition, depicted as male, female or intersex, with the gender being left up to each worshipper and their own ideas of faith. Inari Okami is associated with foxes and

with prosperity in the form of food and fertile fields of rice, grain and tea.

## African

**Mwari:** A kind and loving creator deity honoured in the Shona religion, especially in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Though this name is now used to refer to the Christian biblical god, in Shona it means “the force of creation.” Mwari is the controller of the rains, of agricultural bounty and the outcomes of human events. Mwari was traditionally seen as having no specific gender, being at times genderless, and at times choosing to split into male and female forms.

## Aztec/Mayan

**Huehuecoyotl:** Aztec patron of uninhibited sexuality. He is a bisexual shapeshifter and trickster god whose name means “the old coyote.” He can appear as male, female or even the coyote itself and his attributes are all about music, dance and sexual indulgence, yet he may also be appealed to for changing ill fortune into good.

**Chin (Chen):** A Mayan deity, most often depicted as male. The patron deity of gay and homosexual relationships, said to have introduced humans to homoeroticism. Chin championed gay marriages and trial marriages amongst the Mayan nobility. (The only known reference to this deity is in the 16th-century chronicle of Bartolomé de las Casas, a Catholic Bishop, writing in post-conquest Guatemala.)

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# The Winter King

We celebrate Summer Solstice for its longest day of the year of around 18 hours of daylight and the joys that comes with hot sunny weather. It is a happy time for sun lovers when the fruits of nature are beginning to mature in the wild, parks and gardens, drawing in bees and insects to collect pollen and fertilise shrubs and plants ensuring rebirth next spring and the continuation of life on the planet. In our garden, our sacred space at this time of year the roses, lupins and love-in-the-mist are beginning to flower, the hollyhocks, gladioli and purple heart hosta are budding and the aquilegia's and forget-me-nots are coming to an end. The veg plot is thriving, apart from the parsnips, which are a little slow this year. We are listening to the birds and watching the bees, butterflies and tiny baby grasshoppers making the most of the garden.

The Summer Solstice heralds in the conquering Holly King to rule over nature in the Celtic world for the next six months. He is the harbinger of darkness after defeating the light of the Oak King at his most powerful when the sun is at its extreme and the Winter King at his weakest during the shortest night. For some, like myself, it is the thin edge of the wedge towards darkness and the race towards the death of nature. The dark and cold are coming, starting from now.

Imagine the cycle of winter and summer as the ever-changing flow of the eastern philosophy Yin and Yang, the dark and light forces constantly transforming from one state into another, the waxing and waning energy driving the constant motion of the universe where one is always part of the other. Every event in our lives is a result of the interaction between these two forces, a dance transforming into something

new and fresh, provoking our inner spirit and outer experience.

The Summer Solstice is a single point in time when our star bathes our world for its longest day, a climax of light before the inevitable descent towards winter. Now is the time the evergreen Holly King rules over nature while the conquered Oak contemplates shedding his leaves and resting until the rebirth of the sun and his return at the Winter Solstice. The Holly understands what it takes to survive the cold and dark of winter; he is the dark prince, the winter warrior who will guide and protect you through the shrinking day and growing night.

For most, summer is a time for enjoying holidays, music festivals, camping and despite the days growing shorter, temperatures continue to rise due to the Earth's elliptical orbit still travelling closer to the sun. My summer really begins with a journey to Stonehenge for a private ceremony with the Cotswold Order of Druids to be entertained by the battle between the Holly and Oak Kings, music, morris dancers, stories, cake and mead and catching up with fellow Druids. I first became interested in Druids at the Stonehenge free festivals of the 70's and 80's until they were banned in 1984. I continued to visit for a few years afterwards when the site was surrounded by police to try to gain access, sneaking through the nearby woods in the dark of night but was always captured and turned away. One time I was arrested and spent the rest of the night in Devizes police station and served with a ten-mile ban around the great stones (but I still went).

Recent archaeology evidence around the whole Stonehenge landscape suggests our Neolithic ancestors

put more energy into the Winter Solstice festivals than the Summer celebrations, rejoicing the rebirth of the sun and the return of the strengthening light. It has been discovered that people travelled from all parts of Britain as far away as Scotland for the longest night with their best cattle to sacrifice for a great feast in celebrating the continuation of a successful fertile spring. Despite the Celts never writing anything down, it is understood that at the heart of their philosophy are the 'Circles of Existence', the three worlds of our reality.

At the core, the source of our reality and world of the fairy is Annwn, pronounced Annoon, the magic Celtic Otherworld that exists alongside ours (Arbred). Annwn means the 'Deep Place or Land', a realm from which all earthly life flows from and returns to after the death of the physical body. It is also known as the Underworld or Realm of the Dead. It is populated by beings whose lives parallel ours but in a more fluid and connected way where suffering, sickness and death are rare and connected to our world by magic portals through which beings from both realms can pass at certain times of the year. Our world, Arbred heavily depends on the health and well-being of Annwn whose energy radiates outwards through Arbred into an outer realm, the roof or boundary of our physical existence called Gwynvyd or 'Shining Realm'. It is the dwelling place of higher powers we call Gods and Goddesses, angels and demons, the messengers who can manifest and influence our world, subject to rituals and prayers, sacrifices and offerings made by us mortals. Gwynvyd is a state of pure bliss, love, the enlightenment we

understand as Heaven or the upperworld. It is seen as the harmony of the workings of the universe through which the creative impulse permeates to the inner realms.

Outside of and surrounding the 'Circles of Existence' is the realm of divine powers or intelligence where there is no beginning or end called Ceugant. It is the highest expression of God energy known as the source or the oneness of unity, the totality of being. The unity is pure universal love that stirs up the polarities of Yin and Yang into action, influencing our moods and emotions, our happiness and sorrows that change constantly through the change of time. Many understand unity as the cosmic spirit, the will of the universe some call God. It is an active initiating force (+) that interacts with the human mind, a receptive processing energy (-). The balancing force born from the interaction of + and - is the physical human body. When the Mother Goddess became separated from the mind following civilization, the opposing forces began battling with one another for control of the body. The constant conflict to overcome each other created an imbalance in the mind and dis-ease in the body. When our inner energies work harmoniously through meditation and focused endeavours, the higher forces of universal intelligence work with us.

Scott Irvine

## BREATHWORK workshop in New Mexico USA

Expressions of interest  
for early December  
2024

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- Shared accommodation
- Approx 8 days
- Relaxation + personal development
- Affordable prices (TBA depends on numbers)

With Cacey Blackburn Dip.  
Couns. - Breathwork specialist  
of 23 years.



# In the Light of the Sun's Garden

In today's world it is more important than ever that we take good care of ourselves, our mental wellbeing and be more mindful of the overall environment that we find ourselves in. Society tells us that we need to be this or that in order to fit in, that we NEED to fit in to be accepted and that we NEED that acceptance. More and more of us are aware now that actually, fitting in or being accepted is extremely stifling and uncomfortable. We laden ourselves down with outside obligations in order to seek that external validation. Somehow we began to believe that our worth and our own power is somehow in the hands of those around us, and never was ours in the first place...

From early childhood we learn from those around us. As we grow, we continue to adapt ourselves. We adopt behaviours and personality traits, likes and dislikes of those around us. Filling ourselves with bits and pieces of everyone else. But no one talks about what happens when we become aware of that. When we have that moment of shell shock and realisation and we begin to question 'wait, who am I really?'

We fall into the depths of ourselves, desperately trying to cling on to the familiar, not knowing which way is up or who turned out the lights, or if there is even still a light switch? We seek out support and guidance from those same familiar faces who squash us into those pigeon holes, leaving us void and empty when we don't find the support or answers we're looking for. Surely we must be broken. FALSE! The answer, the one true answer, has been there all along. YOU are your own validation. You are your own source of support. You are all the acceptance you need. Once we realise that, we find ourselves surrounded by others just like us, who are authentically living in the light of their own sun, which ironically helps and inspires us to bask in our own.

But how do we take back that power and control? How do we politely ask for the permission of those we gave our power to, to be kind enough to return it? Honestly, we don't. Because it was never theirs in the first place. Some may call it selfish, but honestly, you're entitled to be arrogant when it comes to protecting yourself.

Last year was a Tarot Judgement year collectively. A great many of people found themselves suddenly struck with reckoning. A collective reality check and reflection of ourselves and our lives, recognising what makes us uncomfortable or unhappy. What stemmed from that was then anger and frustration. That moment of 'wait, who am I really?' You may have found yourself actively seeking that change in job, location, relationship. You may have become much less tolerant with the relationships you hold and aware of the balance or lack there of.

But this year is a Tarot World year collectively. The

year we begin to romanticise our lives again and fill it with the things we really wish to see and do. Enabling us to find that inner spark and bask in the light of our own sun again. One rule of thumb I am a strong advocate for, is if it doesn't fit, it doesn't sit. There are no compromises. The people in your life that have a problem with that, don't usually have your best interests in mind. We forget that the majority of people are only ever capable of seeing things from their own perspective, and that's not our responsibility. We are however solely responsible for ourselves and our actions.

But remember, you do not need anyone's permission to live your life the way you want to! You do not need to hold on to any relationship – family, friendship or romantic connection if it doesn't feel good to you. If it causes you more pain than fulfilment, then it's time to reevaluate that connection. Let's face it, what is the worst that could happen? You live a happy and abundant life filled with genuine people, beautiful places and all of the things you wish to see around you. It certainly won't be as uncomfortable as you have been, being squashed and squeezed.

Manifestation begins with a single thought. Everything around you in this very moment began with a thought. From the spot where you sit right now, the outfit you're wearing today and even what you will have for dinner later. If you can manifest these simple every day things, then why can't you expand that horizon? Everything begins with thought. It's time to reintroduce yourself to who you are NOW and start getting creative with what you want your life to look like. No permission needed! There is no room for doubt! Once you tell the universe that you're ready to start making these changes, it will respond in the most beautiful way for you! It's time to hold your own power, validate and accept yourself! After all, you always have been and always will be, the one solid constant in your own life.

The Sun card in Tarot talks about living your life fully, with fun, laughter and joy. Being carefree, safe and secure within ourselves. It's time to give your own inner child what it is they have always been looking for! Life isn't meant to be black or white, it's time to honour the penumbra in between! You are the light of your own sun, decorate and thrive in your own garden!

Here is a simple 3 card spread to help you to find the light of your own Sun:

- 1) How do I see myself?
- 2) What do I wish to see more of?
- 3) What wants to awaken within me?

Fauna Raine

# RUNELORE IV

Just as all saga must reach their conclusion, all journey's too must come to their end. This, the fourth and final article in the Runelore series, in fact, represents the end of one journey and the beginning of another.

For you, if you have chosen to explore the path of the Runemaster, you will complete your initial investigation of the Common Germanic Futhark and it is with a hopeful heart that I will then let my guiding hand fall free and leave you to forge your own destiny. If the fates are favourable you will have already begun to grow a deep relationship with your set of runes and my analysis of the remaining eight, which have yet to be examined, will merely affirm your thoughts or perhaps simply add to the foundation of the knowledge which you have already obtained.

Having spent much of the last two articles in the series, discussing the divinatory powers of the runes, in this one, we shall also speak a little more of their talismanic use. However, for now, let us pick up from where we left off in Beltane and embrace the Summer Solstice, the dawning of the longest light and a final excursion into the runic poems!



## Teiwaz

This rune has its meaning derived from the warrior deity named Tyr. Sometimes spelled Tiwaz, the rune

is pronounced “Tea-Waz” and it stands as one of the most commonly seen runic symbols mainly due to its talismanic use upon weaponry.

Tyr was one of the sons of Odin, although by which consort is a matter shrouded in mystery. In the Norwegian runic poems, he is the God who placed his hand into the deadly maw of the great wolf Fenrir, as a false pledge, whilst the creature was being bound. Realising his plight Fenrir then bit the hand off, Tyr having sacrificed a part of his body for the love and protection of his fellows.

As such, despite the falsehood of the pledge itself, Tyr and indeed the rune Teiwaz, upturned, represents justice, self-sacrifice and victory. The warlike nature of the associated deity does not necessarily pertain to physical violence either, rather it represents the spiritual warrior and the pathway to overcoming all of the adversities of life.

Downturned and in opposite meaning, the rune can point toward injustice, needless sacrifice and martyrdom. Depending on the context, this could be simply a warning to the downtrodden and a person doing far more giving than receiving. It can, of course, forewarn of far more serious situations to be avoided.

## Berkana

The immediate meaning of this rune is Birch, referring of course to the sacred tree associated with the fertility rites of the spring. Idunn is known as an eternally youthful and beautiful maiden and appears in a wonderful section of the Prose Edda called the Skaldskaparmal, featuring the most certainly more well known deity named Loki. In very brief summary, Loki is convinced to be party to the trickery and abduction of Idunn, but as the Gods begin to lose their youthfulness in her absence and Loki's involvement is discovered, the trickster is forced to retrieve her. Her abductor and captor, the giant Thiassi, is lured to his death.

Berkana is sometimes spelled Berkano and is pronounced as it would be in English and in the case of both variants. With such associations, the appearance of the Berkana rune, upturned, most definitely points toward sanctuary, fertility, growth and maturing

wisdom, as well as healing and rebirth. In association with any rune, this will always apply a positivity. Downturned this rune unfortunately takes on a meaning more akin to the earlier part of the Skaldskaparmal story and leans toward deceit, insecurity and possibly even a warning of powers conspiring against the subject.

## Ehwaz

Not to be confused with the similarly spelled Eihwaz, nor the similar appearance of Mannaz, this rune is pronounced as it would be in English, “Eh-was” and carries the literal meaning of Horse.

Indeed in the positive context, in a divination, the appearance of the rune suggests all of the wondrous qualities of the noble steed of mankind. Loyalty, friendship and working together as an effective team. In certain associations and depending on context, it certainly suggests something or someone worthy of trust. There is a negative downturned meaning of course, which is similar to that of Berkana and suggests distrust, betrayal and disharmonious relations.

## Mannaz

Mannaz, as the name suggests, stands for Man, but more in the context of Mankind, or all of humanity, as opposed to being specifically masculine.

It was thought to carry talismanic powers of defense and protection, but in deeper meaning the Runemaster might take care to remember that all humanity are flawed and doomed to fail their fellows at some time or other.

As a result, the meaning of the rune is another example of one which is extremely binary depending on whether upturned or downturned. Upturned, it refers to the finest qualities of humanity, such as our intelligence and the fact that we are divine beings capable of ascending to higher states of consciousness and transcending our frailties. Downturned, the rune carries the meanings of the flaws of the human condition such as physical frailty, self-delusion, egocentrism and arrogance.

## Laguz

Laguz is pronounced “Log-Uhz” and carries the literal meaning of the word Lake. However, whilst all of the various runic poems associate Laguz with a body of water, this ranges from waterfall in the Norwegian,

through to oceans in the Anglo-Saxon. Therefore it is best simply to view this rune as representative of the element of water.

No human life can exist without water. It sustains us and yet there are no mysteries so deep and obscured than those contained within our oceans. This is true both in the physical world context as much as it is when envisaging our subconscious minds as a vast and unfathomable dark sea full of mysteries, shadows and wonders. In the divinatory sense, Laguz represents life but also dreams, overcoming challenges and the growth of consciousness or conscious state.

It also has an opposite meaning which is that of the withering of dehydrating flesh and poisoning, metaphorically or otherwise.

## Inguz

Where the Mannaz rune deals with humanity as a whole, the appearance of the Inguz rune refers to man and quite specifically to male fertility. As such it is thought to have carried the literal meaning of the word Seed. The name of the rune is pronounced as the spelling suggests, “Ing-Uz”.

Ing is actually a mythological hero of the Danes and is otherwise known as the deity Frey. In divination, the general meaning of an upturned Inguz rune is based around latent energy or potential life. It can very simply represent rest, or perhaps a need for it. It can also hold deeper meaning around internal growth, solitude and soul searching.

Should the rune appear downturned, it broadly represents impotence although rarely in the physical sense. Rather, this warns of pointless expenditure of energy or perhaps the naïve pursuit of fruitless ends.

## Othila

Othila is sometimes known as Othala and is pronounced much as it's spelling would suggest. The rune carries the surface level meaning of inheritance and represents the passing down of things of value. That could include material possessions and money, but could equally refer to less tangible things such as knowledge. It can also refer to one's land of origin, or bear reference to an ancestral estate.

Appearing in a casting, the rune is usually very positive and often for a collective group, perhaps

family, rather than the individual. It can also represent productive connections and otherwise just simply represent home.

Naturally there is a negative meaning for a downturned Othila which is really far more concerning than in the case of most. This warns of homelessness, poverty and in the more extreme case, even that of being driven from one's home, which could be as benign as being shunned by a community, through to even the destruction of home or being physically prevented from returning to it.

## Dagaz

Dagaz is again a rune which has a relatively straightforward meaning, referring to Day. It is pronounced much as the spelling would suggest as "Day-Gaz".

Naturally, as being representative of the daytime, in the upturned appearance, the rune is referring very much to the light of day and the illumination, awareness or even awakenings that this can bring. If the appearance of Dagaz is alongside other runes which suggest relationships or connections, for example, this would indicate that things are what they seem, or that the connection is set to illuminate things which are perhaps currently obscured.

In the downturned appearance, Dagaz represents the exact opposite and the darkness which comes with the night. This could be very benign in just representing sleep. On the other hand, depending on association with other runes, or simply the context, it could represent obfuscation, blindness or just a lack of clarity of vision.

## Runic Talismans

As we have touched upon in earlier articles in this series, a rune can be cast upon various objects for talismanic purposes. With a deeper understanding of the runes and their meaning in the divinatory sense, we can begin to consider how the permanent fixture of those runes might imbue certain properties upon practical or ornamental items.

Often, where objects were of sufficient size, a Runemaster might carve or inscribe several runes on a surface, since, as we have previously explored, different combinations of runes offer an almost infinite possibility of different connotations and indeed implications.

In the singular sense the most common appli-

cations of runes tended to include Teiwaz, which was most often inscribed on weapons – spearheads and sword hilts for example.

A farmer seeking good harvests might have asked a Runemaster to cast a Jera rune upon his plough. A couple wishing to conceive might once have seen a husband wearing an Inguz rune to promote his fertility.

The Raido rune is sometimes worn as a charm, simply depicting that the wearer is on a journey, whether this be physical or spiritual. However, clearly this rune carries far more talismanic power when coupled with others, for example a Raido and Algiz combination might bestow protection for the traveller on the road.

The photograph below shows a section of my staff, which carries a combination of three runes repeated around its circumference, namely Kaunaz, Raido and Algiz. The presence of Kaunaz makes the talismanic intent somewhat more clear. It bestows protection on what is a spiritual journey toward enlightenment.



Another example of a rune commonly combined in this matter is Gebo which of course refers to a gift. Combine together Gebo and Uruz, for example, and we bestow upon the receiver a gift of strength.

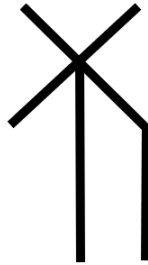
Naturally, this would tend to be inscribed upon something which was then gifted to another, such as jewellery.

## The Bindrune

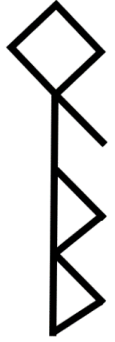
Sometimes, when seeking to cast combinations of runes for talismanic purposes and where there might simply have been insufficient space, a Runemaster would devise what became known as a Bindrune. In fact sometimes Bindrunes were inscribed as a form of encoding, where perhaps the Runemaster wished for only select individuals to know the meaning, which would otherwise be obscured from others.

A Bindrune involved creating a symbol which incorporated all of the selected runes.

This example here, uses the Gebo and Uruz combination again, this time binding the runes together to create a symbol which is fairly easy to recognise for anyone familiar with the Futhark.



Other slightly more complex example could be the binding of the Inguz, Laguz and Berkana runes, all of which carry meanings related to fertility, birth and life and therefore an extremely powerful talisman for a man to wear. There could be many ways in which to design such a Bindrune, but my version is given here.



## The End and the Beginning

And thus, finally, this journey does come to an end.

Thank you for reading the Runelore article series here in the wonderful Witchzine publication. I hope that you have found this introduction both interesting and useful and, should you choose this to mark the beginning of your own individual journey as a Runemaster, then, as always, I wish you both the cunning of Loki as well as the strength and vitality of Thor to be with you.

Hail!

Richard C Hick

**James Jacob Pierri**  
**Tarot Reader & Author**

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# The God Antinous

Did you know there were LGBTQ+ deities across the ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman Pagan religions? There were a range of them – some still worshipped today.

One in particular was a real-life Greek youth who died in Egypt and became the last Pagan God of Rome. His name is Antinous. He was the lover and consort of the Roman Emperor Hadrian. In the year 130 CE he tragically drowned on an official imperial voyage down the Nile in Egypt. For ancient Egyptians, dying in the Nile immediately associated one with the Egyptian deity Osiris. So Antinous became 'AntinOsiris', a new Egyptian deity. He was immediately adopted as a new Greek deity too.

Hadrian was utterly distraught at the death and set in train an extraordinary set of honours for his lost lover...



At the point on the Nile where Antinous' body was found, Hadrian created a new Roman city called Antinoopolis (now ruined and mostly buried in sand). As Hadrian and his vast entourage sailed back up the Nile an extraordinarily new star appeared in the sky. It was a supernova in a cluster of stars that was observed (as we know from ancient records) simultaneously by Chinese astronomers. Hadrian declared it as a sign that Antinous had risen to become the new God An-

tinous – the last Pagan God of ancient Rome. Hadrian named the star Antinous and it was still called that until 1922 when it was merged into the Aquilia Constellation.

Hadrian commissioned statues and busts of Antinous to be made. More images survive of him than any ancient human being – more than Julius Caesar, more than Cleopatra.

Hadrian commissioned temples of Antinous to be built across the Roman Empire and ordained priests to officiate in them. At its height the Antinoan faith was as large as the newly emerging Christian faith. In the year 391 CE the Christian Roman Emperor Theodosius issued his "Theodosian decrees", which established a ban of Paganism. The temples of Antinous were destroyed and the faith seemed lost forever. But archaeologists started to find all those statues and busts in the 18th century and a mania for all things Antinous began. Even popes collected the statues!

In 2000 a young man in Los Angeles, USA, read about Antinous and had a profound realisation that he should revive the faith. It now has thousands of worshipers and several priests across the planet. I am the first known UK priest of Antinous.

I am a guardian at The Temple of Avalon in Glastonbury created to hold a safe space for male, female and gender fluid deities in divine harmony. Antinous has been welcomed in the Temple's pantheon of deities. So, for the first time in over 1,900 years Antinous can be worshiped in an established Pagan temple. I will give a blessing from Antinous at the start of Glastonbury Pride on Sunday 28th July 2024.

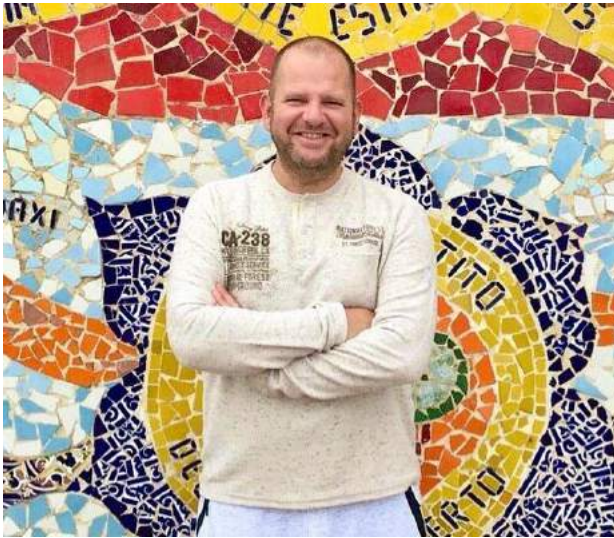
I am Martin Campbell and in 2014 I published the novel 'The Love God' about the life of Antinous. It is available via Amazon. Blessed be to you all.

Martin Campbell



# KALAT WORLD

*Proud couple dreams big with their Kalat World*



Since august 2023 they present themselves as team Kalat World. This little company is run by Roel Verhees and his husband Dennis Kalat, who created the Kalat Cards.

Dennis Kalat has known about his psychic abilities since he was a kid. In 2000 he met Roel and they married in the Netherlands in 2001. His fascination for beautiful drawings made him buy a Lenormand deck from Ciro Marchetti. The first cards he drew were when asking how the upcoming holiday would be, they were spot on. He started working with cards, followed courses, and noticed that he missed some cards and meanings in the Lenormand system.

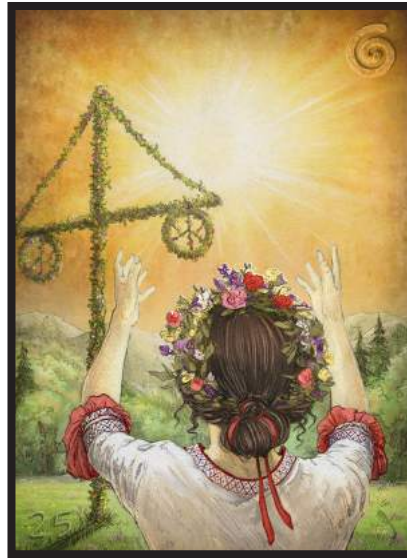
Dennis started producing his own cards. The living room in Haldenstein (CH) turned into a small art gallery, cards everywhere. Dennis creativity really has no boundaries, inspired by his love for Scandinavia, he went in the right direction. He felt guided putting it all together, in this certain order, ... The shower he calls his download room (Dennis's Zodiac sign is Pisces,

and in Finnish Pisces is Kalat, which explains his last name).

Eventually the first card of the deck is number 51, the moon, Yule, the return of the light and the first season card of winter! Everything just fitted it, and Dennis could not explain how this happened.

He had really made something interesting and Roel said 'you have to bring it out to the world'. They started looking for an illustrator to design these cards Dennis had been drawn to. Then the real work started, Dennis worked closely with Inge Laan to make the most beautiful deck possible, 52 cards, representing the 52 weeks of the four seasons. Roel looked for high standard printing companies so this deck could be printed for everybody out there.





It took over 1.5 to 2 years but on August 1, 2023 the decks arrived in Haldenstein. The living room turned into a warehouse with 3000 decks. Proudly Dennis presented his deck to the world and soon recognition came from the Esotoracle, World Divination Association and the Tarot Association. This oracle deck of Dennis has its own unique system, the cards are clear, they do not fool around. They do not pull any punches! The cards scream!

You can make combinations of two cards to get a yes-/no answer of fast-/slow answer. Or no answer at all but so, the cards explain why you get this 'no answer' answer. In spreads of three cards, you can even use houses because the Kalat system uses an infinite Sphere of houses. Explanations are on Facebook group: Kalat World or on the website. The deck also contains three bonus cards which can be used channelling tool in a big Table of Seasons spreads to get connected to your deceased loved ones (adult, child, animal). The deck comes in a beautiful magnetic flip box that was also designed by Inge Laan, the back of all cards features a map of Kalat World. And you also get a 136p. guidebook.

Behind the cards is a slightly dark fairytale, all cards find their place in the story that takes place in Kalat World, the two main persons (Askings) are nonbinary. This was some-

thing important to Dennis. In his tales he also uses the term: 'hän', to let everybody identify themselves with the characters and cards of the deck. These stories can be followed in the Facebook group every Fairytale Friday. Kalat World has just started...





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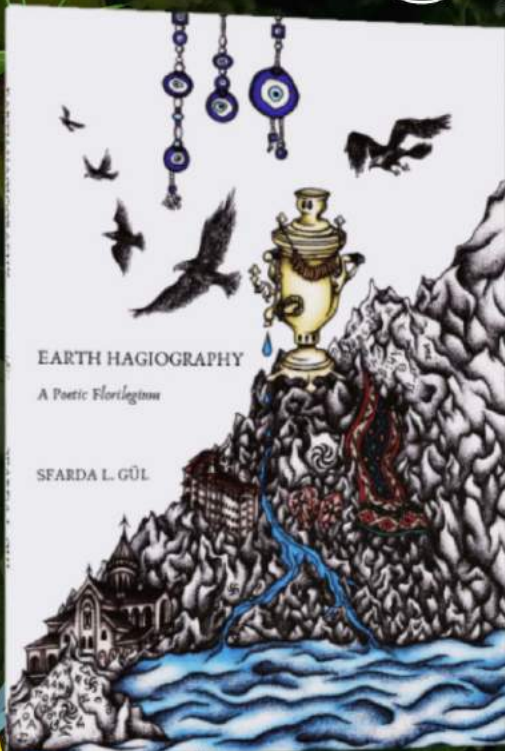
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# APOLLO

## A GOD OF LIGHT AND THE SUN

Apollo and his twin sister Artemis, were born on the isle of Delos to Zeus and Leto. Apollo was the Greek God of music, prophecy, beauty, healing and the Sun, who was usually depicted as a beardless youth, naked or clothed, often holding a bow and a lyre. He had a Laurel crown on his head and sometimes carried a golden sword. The bow symbolized distance, death, shock, and awe, while the lyre symbolized the joys of communion with Olympus through music, poetry, and dance.

The palm tree was one of his symbols, because his mother Leto was said to have held onto one as she gave birth to him. Laurel was associated with him because the nymph Daphne changed into a Laurel when he pursued her. Another of his symbols was the tripod, associated with the oracle at Delphi and the Pythia (Priestess) who would stand over a tripod and inhale the fumes to make prophecies. Apollo is sometimes shown riding in a chariot drawn by swans. He was one of the most widely worshipped and influential Greco-Roman deities who, like the Sun, illuminated people's minds to make them aware of their transgressions and then cleansed them of those. As the Patron of secular and religious law he transmitted to mortals knowledge of the future and the will of his father Zeus.



As a God of herds and crops he protected against the attacks of wild animals and disease. Phoebus means “bright” or “pure,” and as Phoebus Apollo he was connected to the Sun.

Patron of music and poetry, he was the leader of the Muses and lead them in dance. Said to be the inventor of string music, he played for both mortals and Gods. His music was so harmonious and beautiful that it could even stop pain.

Pythagoreans, who saw an intimate connection between mathematics and music, worshipped Apollo. Their belief in “music of spheres,” held that music had the same laws of harmony as space, the cosmos, and physics, and that it purified and healed the soul. As the Patron of education for young boys, Apollo guided them as they grew to manhood. Male students cut their hair in his honor and worshipped him.

Apollo killed the dragon Python that guarded the area known as Pytho, with special arrows given to him by God of blacksmiths, Hephaestus. Then he took on the guise of a dolphin (delphis), forced a Cretan ship's crew to serve him, and established the cult of Apollo Delphinus. The area was then renamed Delphi and became the most important oracle in Greece.

A local woman aged fifty or older, known as the Pythia, was enlisted as the medium at Delphi. She would stand near a fissure in the Earth and inhale the fumes which put her into a trance state. Then she would pronounce the oracles and priests would interpret them.

The Pythian games were inaugurated to honor Apollo. Wrestling, racing, and other competitive games were played and prizes such as laurel wreaths, tripods, and more were bestowed upon the winners. In Sparta they would adorn the statue of Apollo with clothes and a meal was served where masters and slaves ate together as equals, with dancing and singing.

At the octennial (taking place every eight years) Delphic Stepterion festival, a boy reenacted the slaying of the Python and then was temporarily banished. Another festival in his honor was the Pyanopsia,

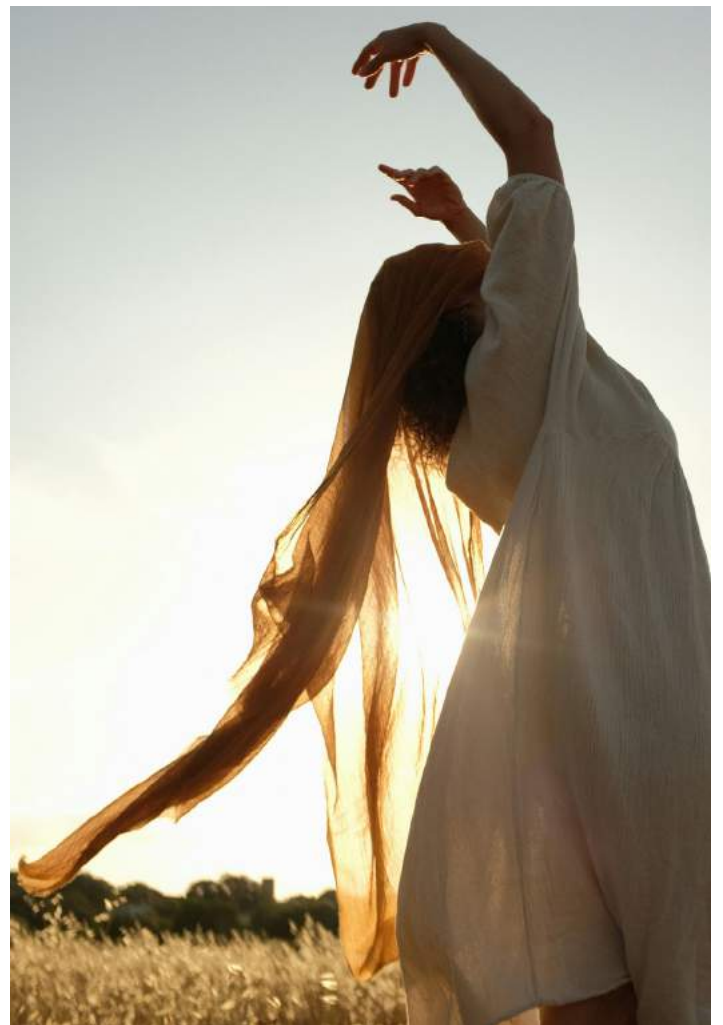
or Pyanepsia, which took place in Athens on the seventh day of Pyanopsion (October). There were offerings of edible pulses (edible seeds of plants in the legume family) and a branch of Laurel or Olive wood was bound with wool and hung with fruits, pastries, and small containers of honey, wine and oil. The decorated branches were carried to the Temple of Apollo and hung on the gate. Similar branches were affixed to the doors of houses, as a way of showing gratitude to the deity and his gifts to humanity.

Apollo's decision to side with the Trojans in the Trojan war affected the outcome of the battle. But bright Apollo had a much darker side. He was once challenged to a music competition by the satyr, Marsyas. The Muses declared Apollo the winner but Apollo was upset at the audacity of the satyr and so flayed him and nailed his skin. In another music competition with the God Pan, Apollo was again pronounced the winner but King Midas still maintained that Pan was the better musician. As punishment Apollo changed Midas' ears into those of a donkey\*.

Offerings to Apollo can include incense, honey, olive oil, milk, wine, barley meal, fruit (especially grapes, figs, apples, or olives), flowers, bay leaves and other solar herbs, and cakes decorated to look like the Sun.

Laurel or Olive branches would be very appropriate if you can get them, and a tripod with fire or incense on the altar would be a nice touch. Apollo is a God of shepherds and their music so a skein of wool and some simple shepherd's pipes would be pleasing to him.

As he is a Patron God of music and of poets, offer him songs, poems and dances, especially circle dances under the midday Sun\*\*. Lyres, archery bows, swans and ravens are associated with him and his sacred plants are Laurel, Larkspur, Cypress\*\*\*.



Every fall Apollo departed for his winter quarters in the land of the Hyperboreans (a distant fabulous land in the North), returning in the spring. During his absence the Pythia did not deliver oracles, and Dionysus ruled over Delphi” - From the UNC classics site article on Delphi ([http://iam.classics.unc.edu/loci/del/16\\_hist.html](http://iam.classics.unc.edu/loci/del/16_hist.html) )

“In the case of Stonehenge, I suggest that the presiding deity was a prehistoric equivalent of the Greek and Roman god of healing, Apollo. Although his main sanctuary was at Delphi in Greece, it is widely believed that he left Greece in the winter months to reside in the land of the Hyperboreans – usually taken to be Britain.” - Timothy Darvill in “Stonehenge: The Biography of a Landscape” (Tempus Publishing, UK, 2006)

\* James Hardy, “Apollo: The Greek God of Music and the Sun”, History Cooperative, April 20, 2022, <https://historycooperative.org/apollo-greek-god/>. Accessed January 6, 2023

\*\* Quora, What are some good offerings to make to Apollo? <https://www.quora.com/What-are-some-good-offerings-to-make-to-Apollo?share=1>

\*\*\* Theoi.com, Apollon, <https://www.theoi.com/Olympios/Apollon.html> accessed 2/4/2023

Ellen Evert Hopman



# Anthropomorphism

Being a restorer of Vintage and Historic Audio equipment I am lucky to be constantly surrounded by truly wonderful items, artefacts, pieces of history that have found themselves requiring restoration and repair. These items can vary between cherished family heirlooms or items purchased by individuals looking to turn a profit, or simply those adding to their collection. Just over the last week prior to writing here, I have been lucky enough to be working on a Columbia Gramophone from around 1918, an Edison Phonograph from 1903 and a Dansette Record Player from around 59. I adore my job.

Now, I'm that annoying person. The person that has abilities that they label as unwanted gifts. But, as a youngster it was difficult, which I am more than sure the readership of this publication will understand. I don't have a label for myself but, I do have abilities. I receive messages from those passed, I see the occasional spectre alongside and within my normal day to day life. I get impromptu messages from folk I do not know when in the company of random strangers, it all can be (without sounding ungrateful) quite jarring and difficult to live with. There are two more elements to my intuition that I am more grateful for, the ability to feel when an inanimate object has attachment and the ability, albeit unplanned, of seeing scenes from the past over laid onto the modern world into my sight. At times it's even better when the two work together.

I can admit to really buying into Anthropomorphism, no one can tell me that my beautiful old motor car doesn't have a soul or at the very least a character! Inanimate objects don't have life, they don't breathe and as far as I'm aware don't move of their own fruition but what is this energy that some items hold. Now, I don't mean spiritually charged items, cliché items like haunted dolls, crystals or wands; I mean everyday items of the past. Everyday items such as equipment that those would have had in their home to make music, items that I am constantly surrounded in day in, day out with my work.

Due to the simplicity of the machine I was able to provide an informal quote for the restoration of a very rare Columbia gramophone from 1907 for full restoration without seeing it, trusting the assessment of the customer due to previously carrying out work for him. The chap that owned the lovely machine

was in the market to sell it shortly after I had worked my magic in getting it up and running again, as well as making it look presentable. The gentleman's booking wasn't due for another 4 months but I visited his property to purchase a 1940s radiogram for parts and spares to aid the restoration of other sorrowful items in my workshop. As soon as I entered his property I felt such a draw to a room on the left. Ignoring the untimely arrival of my let's say 'abilities' I carried on as planned in regard to purchasing the radiogram and after the gentleman and I got it loaded into my car he asked if I would stay for a cup of tea. I accepted his kind offer in the hope (because I'm sneaky) that I may just get to have a look in that room on the left!

Following some small talk in the kitchen about life outside of work and relationships he soon invited me to sit. Well, Result; I followed into the room off to the left where he showed me a small collection of vintage audio equipment including a Jukebox, some record players and radios but, the best of all; the most wonderful Columbia Gramophone. "that's the Columbia" I said with a frown, insisting that he mustn't have the exterior restored much at all, it was absolutely oozing character, A light rust overwhelmed the horn just enough to cover it but not enough to diminish the rich green colour of the metals coating. The veneer was all worn to the front edge where decades worth of hands had lent upon it to steady it whilst winding, in my eyes it was perfect. Inspecting the machine was interesting, feeling immediately that there was 'some kind of energy' surrounding it. It was a little confusing, it made me feel uneasy but also deeply attracted to it even further than the level felt on its appearance alone. I immediately insisted he sold it to me as it was and after some negotiation, it was mine!

The following week I had time to take a look over the gramophone, the repairs required to get it to play a record successfully again were extensive but nothing out of the ordinary, and more extensive in man hours than parts requirements. For an original machine of this kind and age, we were doing ok. It took around a fortnight to source the necessary parts to repair the gramophone and once work had been carried out re-assembly took place, and she was ready to test. It was getting late, so I had decided to move on to testing in the morning. I gathered my things and prepared for home locking up my workshop,

making my way to my car. With the keys in the ignition I'd made a huge mistake, I found myself excited, almost desperate to try the gramophone. Naturally, I re-entered the building, going through the motions of getting back into my workshop. I selected one of my favourite records, Ben Selvin 'Am i Blue'. Gently placed it onto the platter, fitted a needle and begun winding the motor. This is a process, a routine that I regularly carry out, at work, in my spare time even, at least lets say 5 times a week; but this felt profoundly different.



Now the moment had arrived to hear this machine sing again for the first in goodness knows how long. As soon as the needle struck the record it was simply thrilling, a goose bumps moment. Obviously, I am proud of my work but the feeling of sheer happiness was just beautiful. Within just a few seconds after the absolute pleasure of the hearing its tone be so well-rounded and rich I was over come with moving pictures in my mind, a scene, a wonderful scene from the past, a portly lady dancing with a wonderfully dressed gentleman in a room where furniture had been moved to the walls, to make way for dancing. They were presented in period fashions, that I cannot really pin point, when thinking of textures and cut I'd want to say late 20s maybe the early 30s but the decor, suggested later still. They covered the floor elegantly, but playfully. The routine was clearly not of a serious nature and the smiles on the faces of the pair were lovely. I was quickly brought back to reality when the record was near finishing. There dancing had concluded and the lady looked toward me and nodded with a smile. As wonderful as this was to say it was jarring would be an understatement. I had never had one of my moments of seeing scenes from the past, be acknowledged by someone I could see. That split-second of reality

coming back to me I noted the gramophone had been playing upon a small dining table in the room with them. The records run out groove was at this point in its repetition cycle and that was it, back to reality. I immediately wound the gramophone and played the record again, even neglecting to change the needle but to my disappointment I wasn't taken back.

It was time to be heading home, as I re-gathered my things i glanced at the clock and then realised id been back in the workshop for the best part of an hour, now just to confirm a 78rpm record of this type runs for the less than three minutes and the motor inside the gramophone on a full wind I'd expect to run for maybe 5 or 6 minutes. The motor of the gramophone still had enough wind remaining to still continue in the run out groove. This was the point in which i realised I'd experienced something well past a fit of imagination, not being able to forget the look from the lady when she nodded to me as though I was in room. I experienced something that night.

Now you read of instances of haunted artefacts, vintage items with attachments too. Is this what I have here? The drive home was interesting and unusually i arrived home realizing that I hadn't even put the wireless on or played any music the entire drive home, which for me is more than unusual. I was tired, so tired and can only describe my feeling as 'spaced out'.

Returning to work the following morning I felt perfectly normal, and it was a 'straight to it' kind of day finding a customer waiting for me at the door on arrival. We made some small talk after my apologizing that I was slightly late wile unlocking the door. Upon opening the door I was hit with the strongest, most potent musky perfume smell imaginable. A strong but feminine fragrance, I can assure you that none of my cleaning or restorative potions I use for my work smell this way, at all. Not even close. The customer commented 'Blimey have you been cleaning in here, I'm going to be high by the time I leave.' I laughed it off kind of, and got down to business with the chap regarding his valve radio that I'd recently finished restoring for him. After a demo of the radio and taking payment I found myself alone and of course I was straight to the Columbia. Just how I left it, the tone arm set upon the cabinet, horn turned and record sitting on the platter. Nervously I re-wound the machine and again neglected to change the needle before starting the song. I felt on edge, maybe even a little nervous expecting to be taken back there again but the song played through without any unusual experience. I was obviously unsure, maybe scared even but also now terribly disappointed. More than happy with the wonderful tone the machine



produced. Work was certainly complete on the unit as id long since decided that I wouldn't be carrying out any cosmetic restoration on it.

The gramophone was neatly placed in the retail area, priced and sat pride of place on the shelving on what i call the civilian side of the workshop. The gramophone has such a pull, an energy that it is hard to describe. A couple of days passed and I played the Columbia for another Tennant of the multiple occupancy building where my workshop resides. They were impressed, complimented my work and went on with their day leaving me to my work. The next job that I had already started was motor repair on a George Carrette Phonograph and I had started to dismantle a 1950s Portable record player to have it ready for electrical repair over the following day.

To eliminate this write up turning into a diary of my days in the workshop. Over the course of a three to four week period I had discovered that when I play the gramophone the following day, lets say 9 times out of 10, I will be greeted with that very same strong fragrance and an overwhelming feeling of positivity or maybe happiness, even contentment in my environment, it's simply so strange.

Now another strange situation I find myself in with this gramophone is that of the total failure I have found in selling the machine. Due to some cosmetic downfalls, although I like them, it is offered by myself to rectify these if the prospected purchaser would want them be, included in the price of course. But yes, Over the time of having this gramophone I have bought and sold six inferior gramophones, both in rarity and quality. It is complimented by folk all the time but it just won't sell. To be perfectly fair, I really don't mind if

it stays, it's one of the Rarest Columbia machines and I haven't seen another since purchasing it; I love it. The gramophone sits in my workshop to this day, priced, displayed beautifully and ready to roll but alas, its stayed with me.

To this day when I play the gramophone the room is absolutely electric with an almost unnerving level of contentment and positivity and the fragrance returns the following day most times after it is played.

Now my gifts I before mentioned, don't go as far to analyse what i experienced that night, I received no message, no information and absolutely no connection to the gramophone or the characters i saw that night. No connection has been made with any of my mildly unwelcome spiritual visits I have in my head most days. There's so many unanswered questions that I have. Is the gramophone haunted? Now I struggle to see how, you normally expect stereotypically that a haunting or attachment to an item would hold negative connotations, is the gramophone charged, does this inanimate object hold memory somehow, is this a strong case for Anthropomorphism. I can't help but think with the visiting fragrance following any attention the gramophone gets that there is an attachment, a haunting, is it a vessel? Inhabited by that lady that gave me the thankful nod in the scene played out for me.

All I know is, this gramophone is so different, is so positively energetic and to be really to the point, did the gramophone, or the potential spiritual attachment to it, choose me?

Andrew Kleister



Monique Bouman

Kieksartworld@outlook.com



Kiek's Art-World



Kieksartworld

# Meeting MJH Leathercraft

I'm Matt I am the sole leather worker at MJH Leathercraft.

I started leathercraft in 2023 after getting very bored and wanting to try something new.

I have ADHD so need lots to fill my time as I don't do well sitting watching TV!

I made initially a wallet which was terrible but I have always thought your mistakes are your best teachers so I persevered, this hyperfocus has lasted and is not letting up.

My work is very unique and forward thinking compared to most brands in the leather world, which is slowly starting to gain recognition and dedicated followers, who are very passionate about what I do.

I have never followed any patterns I like to sit with a piece of leather and let the texture colour and feel dictate the end product, I call this freestyle leather work as I design on the fly. I have always had a passion for nature and art so it was natural for me to incorporate these into my work.





I try to be as eco-friendly as possible; I strongly believe that the earth is our god so needs to be respected, with this in mind I will only use the highest quality leather a thread you can buy, from verified sources, the glue I use is next generation which has no solvents and is eco-friendly. No plastic is used and my waste is around 2 percent of what I buy, so very low.

Each bag is hand stitched and hand cut, I use a laser cutter for the Mandalas and etching but the rest is all me.

My latest creations are at [www.mjhleather.co.uk](http://www.mjhleather.co.uk).

*I try to be as eco-friendly as possible; I strongly believe that the earth is our god so needs to be respected.*



# Saffron Magick and Healing

Saffron (*Crocus sativus*) holds the powers of healing, clairvoyance and purification. Its astrological and elemental categories are the sun and the fire element. Look here for tips on how to grow saffron (<https://www.bhg.com/how-to-grow-saffron-7557717>).

This very beautiful plant was utilised and revered in Ancient Egypt and all throughout the Middle East where it grows happily in the heat, and is still grown as a commercial crop now.

Saffron has been shown to be beneficial in the following ways; positive mood, anti-inflammatory & pain relief, age related glaucoma/macular degeneration and eye health in general, aphrodisiac, improved sleep, antioxidant properties and anti-anxiety effects (most well researched areas). When combined with Fennel seed it is especially good for eyesight with the added benefit of improved digestion. Contraindications include those on anti-depressant medication, some sleep medications, blood thinning anti-coagulant medication not including low dose aspirin, pregnancy and breast feeding (due to lack of studies). *Crocus sativus* is a great anti-depressant for people with cancer where their treatment prevents them from taking pharmaceutical anti-depressants. Saffron has very good tolerance in most cases and depression can be a serious side effect for significantly unwell people (check with your health care provider before beginning treatment).

## Saffron Healing Ritual

You may want to invoke Isis as she is one of the many accomplished healers and because of her Egyptian connection to Saffron. She teaches us to transform matter from one form into another, which is basically what healing is.

Start by having a small bowl of Saffron water on your altar and wash your hands with Saffron water and Rosemary before beginning your ritual. Saffron Water Recipe: Boil 1 tablespoon of Saffron in 500 ml of spring water, let sit for 3 minutes then strain into a clean vessel.

Set this on the southern (fire element) corner of your altar or the north (earth element). Any healing water or potion can be strengthened by placing it out in the sun's rays and overnight in a suitable moon phase - virgo or aries moon is helpful, a waning or waxing phase will depend upon the type of healing you are trying to achieve.

Your own herbal healing garden is always the best place to get herbs, but Saffron is a specialist herb

and therefore take all care to get the best quality, ethically produced Saffron you can afford. When you have prepared your circle, read aloud your chosen healing spell. An example for a healing spell - 'Isis and great Saffron plant spirit, heal me as you healed Horus of all his wounds. Great magicians I invoke thee to deliver me from all fatal sicknesses, wounds and evil things, and from diseases of every kind, for the highest good of all involved.' This may be personalised, but pay very close attention to the language you use. Negative thinking or dwelling on the illness is counterproductive. Instead focus on seeing all involved happy, healed and whole, free of the current problem.

Saffron can also be worn as an amulet to develop clairvoyant powers. It refines your energy significantly and makes you more sensitive. It is helpful to combine with Sandalwood for protection while opening the second sight. Saffron and Sandalwood also assist you with working in different time periods for divination.

And remember, one to rot, one to grow, one for the pigeon and one for the crow. Never take more than you need, and offerings must always be given.

Closing thoughts...

*'The Holy Female is a natural force, she is beautiful but not sweet and she is not dedicated to what men and women want' -  
Martin Prechtel (Prechtel, p. 132).*

Remember when you work with magick and especially plant magick- being so closely connected to the force of nature itself- this is the power you are choosing to work with.

Healing Ritual paraphrased from Scott Cunningham's 'Magical Herbalism' book and combined with knowledge from my own practise.

## Cacey Blackburn

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Monique Bouman - 'Inguz'

I am an intuitive and visual artist who lives and works in the Netherlands. My heart lies in spiritual places , everything botanic and the Victorians. I start each new work with a fresh look, like flowers opening and showing us the fresh new earth in all their colours and vitality. [www.facebook.com/p/Kieks-Art-World](http://www.facebook.com/p/Kieks-Art-World)

# The Ancient Lore of Reciprocity: Learning from the Moss-Folk

As living creatures, we are all an integral part of earth's biological cycle of reciprocity; the perpetual give and take between species, a cycle that has existed for millennia. We are surrounded by this every day, and perhaps as witches we are more aware of this than many folk. Celebrating the wheel of the year, the changing seasons and the sabbats are at the heart of our craft. But how do we apply this symbiotic relationship, imbued as it is with powerful, ancient energy to our lives, spells and ritual work?

To my mind, the best way to learn is to explore, and where better to start than my 'happy place' – the woods. Meandering the well-trodden paths, musing over what it is exactly about the woods that delights me so much, my eyes are inexplicably drawn to the vivid green, velvety moss cloaking the roots of a majestic oak tree. The moss's presence is quiet and unobtrusive, yet it begs to be touched – and indeed explored.

A tiny, taupe-coloured butterfly, fearless of the impending drizzle takes me back to my childhood, and tales of little people known as the 'moss-folk' or 'moss-people.' These woodland dwelling fae are often described as very small and having pairs of delicate wings, often being mistaken for butterflies.

It seems that I was lucky to spot this tiny being at all. Emanating from ancient Germanic folklore, tradition dictates that moss-people stand just three feet tall, and clothe themselves in moss in order to camouflage themselves amongst the very trees in which they live.

Male moss folk are rarely seen, and in his book 'Teutonic Mythology' (p. 164) eminent storyteller Jacob Grimm himself recommended that they be avoided due to their 'nasty tempers.' Female moss-folk, also known as 'moss-maidens' and 'moss-wives', are to be positively welcomed however, with their golden hair, emerald-green mossy clothing trimmed with red, and miniature hats jauntily upon their heads.

One lucky group of mortals is said to be able to spot moss-folk with ease. Woodcutters tending and managing the spectacular fir forests of Central Europe had regular interactions with moss-maidens, or 'wood-wives'. These tiny women would approach those tending the forest to beg for food. This was not solely a plea for charity, but part of a ritual offering/receiving cycle. The moss-maidens would always give in return,

in the form of baked goods, or assistance with laundering clothes and kitchen chores, much like the brownies that are more widely known today.

In fact, ancient superstition states that when baking, wood-wives will always be present; they are said to appreciate making use of the fire for their own food preparation. The moss-maidens have few rules for us human folk, but those they do have are strict. Whenever baking, mortals must make an extra loaf especially for them, and never bake on a Friday. By leaving the bread as an offering for the tiny folk, you will receive a gift in return; it is imperative that you accept this gift, as great offence will be taken if one rejects it. And take heed! Moss-folk have a particular hatred of caraway seeds, and will be extremely displeased if caraway bread is offered.



Within rural communities at harvest time, wood-wives are keen to assist farm labourers and vice versa. Grimm (ibid.) describes: "Men are often on good terms with them: at haymaking or harvest they rake a little heap together, and leave it lying, for "that's the wood-maidens' due."

Interestingly, the moss-folk's predominantly female presence is said to have been influenced by Grimm's original written records, taken directly from oral traditions. These have been criticised as leaning towards the author's Protestant values in Tom Shippey's 'Jacob Grimm's Mythology of the Monstrous' (pp. 13-14)

"Goddesses... would have strong connections with household virtues. A strong element of nature worship, especially of trees and groves, was also a desideratum."

These ‘household virtues’ can also be seen in the traditions dictated by the moss-maidens themselves. They are said to be staunch supporters of traditional ways of life, dictated by a variety of commands not limited to forbidding the peeling of bark from a tree and a strict ban on discussing one’s dreams before breakfast. Grimm (p. 165) records:

“A wood-maiden told a woman; ‘Never a fruitful tree pull up. Tell no dream ‘til you’ve tasted a cup.’”

In conjunction with the properties of moss itself, these woodland folk also benefit from any water that humans can provide,

“In pouring out of a dish, when drops hang off the edge, don’t brush them off – they belong to the moss-maiden.”

In her book ‘A Field Guide to the Little People,’ (pp. 178-9) Nancy Arrowsmith states that if these simple rules are followed, moss-maidens may become dedicated helpers, who bring great luck if properly fed. She describes them as ‘industrious workers and good housewives with secret knowledge:’

“They know the healing properties of all the plants in the forest and show their favourites how they should be used.”

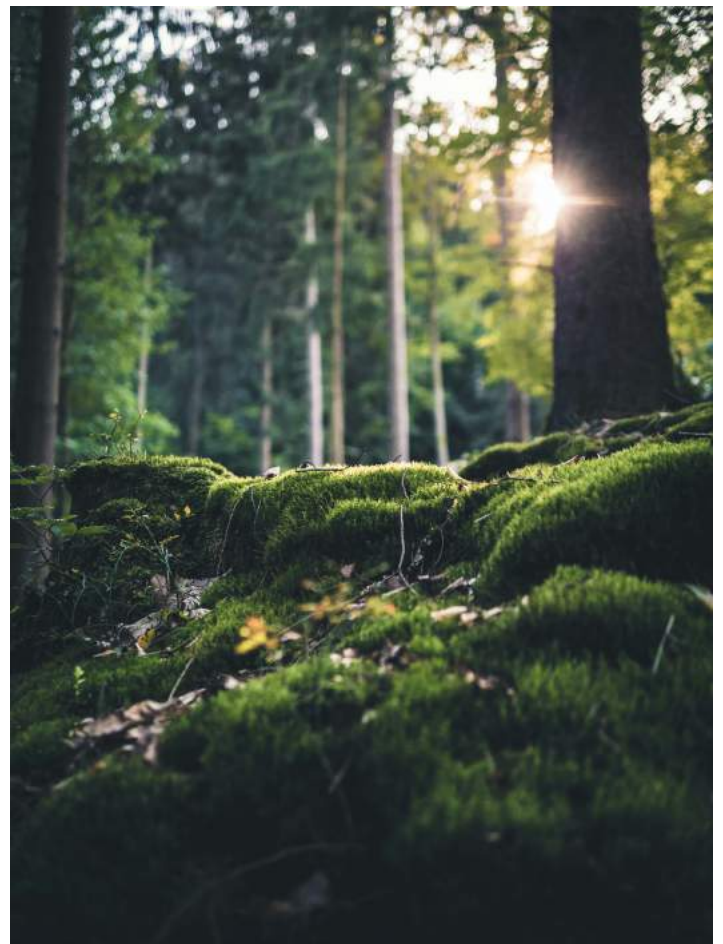
Upon further investigation, it seems that there is a fascinating cross-cultural, historical importance of the use of moss in everyday life that also explains the heavy emphasis on moss-folk being predominantly female. Although the moss-folk described above are of Germanic folkloric tradition, it would appear that across both European and Native American culture, moss was traditionally associated with the daily activities of women.

In her book ‘Gathering Moss’ Native American botanist and author Robin Wall Kimmerer states (p.113):

“The most important uses of mosses, roles that reflect their best gifts, were everyday tools in the hands of women.”

Within the majority of society today it is no longer considered appropriate to believe that tasks or tools are gender specific. However, within a historical context, it is important to record that women used moss frequently, benefitting from its natural properties. Clothes were lined with moss to provide extra insulation; it was also dried and used as wicks for lamps. Its soft, water absorbing properties meant that it could be used for scrubbing and its astringent and mildly antiseptic qualities made it perfect for use as sanitary pads and nappies, curing nappy rash in the process. In fact, Kimmerer goes so far as to say (p.112):

“A pouch filled with mosses was probably as vital to those mothers as is the ubiquitous nappy bag today...A woman’s life was also intertwined with mosses



during her menstrual period. Dry mosses were widely used as sanitary napkins.”

Interestingly, if we turn back to one of the moss-maidens rules – the command that no dream must be discussed before breakfast - we find a link to the properties of a specific type of moss that was used by many cultures as bed-rolls and pillows. ‘Hypnum’ moss, as its name suggests, has the ability to weave a trance-like effect upon the mind of the sleeper, conjuring vivid dreams of the sort that moss-maidens would not discuss on an empty stomach!

This leads us to muse upon the ways in which we can utilise the properties of specific plants to enhance both our rituals, spells and indeed, our lives. As Kimmerer so astutely says (p. 107): ‘Plant knowledge also comes from the plants themselves. To the attentive observer, plants reveal their gifts.’

Let us then show gratitude for the abundance of nature that surrounds those who know where to look; for it is at the very heart and soul of our craft. May we only ever take the little that we need and offer our gratitude for the bounty that is returned: for this is the ancient lore of reciprocity.

## Lucy Spirit

# Social Justice Education Remystified: Turning Learning Upside Down

Teaching has always been my calling. I have taught English and Language Arts in high schools and middle schools for nearly twenty years now, and among other things such as teaching yoga at an incredible studio and working with individuals on personal growth or with esoteric studies or practice, it has always seemed to be in my wheelhouse to teach.

After the pandemic, I struggled tremendously with accessing my passion for the profession because it was so different and unpredictably traumatic, and I found myself and my students grappling most with new systems in technology and logistics that I had to ground into my authenticity. Hard. Centering and grounding are the first lessons anyone on this path benefits from because they surface the gift of listening with all our senses. The basics are the best, kids. Listen!

I have since completely outed myself as a yogi, folklorist, and witch to my colleagues, students, and their families. When they ask, I answer with certainty and dignity. For several reasons this keeps me honest with my peers and removes, not establishes, a barrier... a samskara... a loop in the Wyrd that disrupts the pattern from finding stability and progress. As a result, I use my holiday and personal time openly and people have a chance to speak with someone like me about things that make them curious. That doesn't mean everyone gives me a pass of social approval, but forewarned is empowered. I understand that this is not everyone's privilege; however, I advocate for everyone to step into their power and authenticity, and that only becomes more possible with the insistence of those able and willing to push that envelope.

Consequently, my students benefit from a host of unique teaching techniques I've developed that reach their fingers and minds deep where Yew roots seek water and wisdom... and the beauty of it all is that each and every technique I create or implement is data-driven and established in research-based fields: STEAM, psychology, biology, and neuroscience. Somatic exercises, meditation techniques, and projects that help them coregulate with nature and art such as using Cretan labyrinths for creative writing all guide students through challenging literary experiences, writing compositions, and discussions and presentations in an environment that they can comfortably and creatively navigate, connect, and release enough to be in a state of liminality that affords me and my students the capacity to facilitate co-creation and transformation.

This year I found myself personally working more and more with Elder FUTHARK runes, so when I started finding myself drawn to deepening my runic practice through comparative studies in traditional Tarot, my stitches in the learning web resonated some in the realm of oracle cards, and those drew me into their vibrational field.

For years I had teased my colleagues about using Tarot as a text, but had simply dismissed this notion as too liberal or controversial for public school. I purchased a few small oracle decks, and I realized so quickly the benefits that these could have for my students in a world where they make meaning through memes, clips, emojis, and Tik-Toks. Oracle cards needed no excuse to be used as a learning tool fluid enough to serve any area of study.



One particular book in my research that spoke to me was Zenju Earthlyn Manuel's *Opening to Darkness*. Her discussion about developing an oracle deck for BIPOC to identify with particularly resonated with me as a human and teacher, especially considering I am always looking for resources that my diversity of students, many of whom seek to make personal connections to art and seek thinkers who look like they, and this galvanizes their ability to identify and access a relationship with the material that opens and personalizes the learning for them. Manuel's description of the black angels in her *Black Angels Cards* and the rewarding experience her students and customers had resulting from having tools that were recognizable and immediately relatable made me wonder what students would develop for themselves.

I knew I would have to create a deck with them.

After speaking with my wife about it at length, she supported the notion, and so I developed a unit that would culminate in the development, design, and fabrication of a deck in which each student contributed a card to inspire, motivate, or educate audiences on an issue germane to social justice.



We began a literary and research unit on social justice that included LGBTQIA+, gender issues, class issues, environmental issues, ableism, and issues of race and ethnicity. We read Oscar Wilde fairy tales, speeches by Lady Gaga demanding the end of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Daniel Quinn’s Ishmael, Jane Goodal’s speeches, songs by Diamanda Galas and SZA, articles about the Capitol Crawl, short stories by Alice Walker and David Levithan, and many, many more.

Students used our literary adventures to select and research complex issues of social justice and support for diversity that ranged from the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire to abortion access to redlining and the Stonewall Riots. Students learned about artists, genocides, witch hunts, pandemics, revolutions, and so much more. Their world opened up before them, spread like cards across a table.

I ordered several decks of oracle and learning cards for my students to see and handle that represented a plethora of uses ranging from intention setting to meditation to inspiration and education. On a scheduled day, students entered my classroom to discover ten decks spread on separate tables for exploration. I wanted them to find inspiration in the creative and transformative outlet oracle cards manifested as for so many artists.

Watching cards in The Hip-Hop Queens Oracle, The Bob Ross Oracle, and The Sacred Geometry Activations Oracle passing through so many different hands was unreal solely in the questions and discussions that students generated simply given the chance.



I also used The Moth Presents a Game of Storytelling, LGBTQ+ History Cards, The Britney Spears Oracle, and many more to generate writing and research prompts or connection questions to demonstrate the uses of cards for a variety of non- “witchy” things. I gave a few lectures on the Death card in the Rider Waite deck, and they were speechless at the complexity of the allegory (yes, they learned that, too!)

Students walked away with a zillion ideas

about their vision for the card they would create. They were asked to utilize a minimum of four symbols to communicate their message about the social justice topic of their choice. We workshopped back and forth determining what best fit the message they wanted to inspire. When it came time, they composed their illustrations by hand or we worked using AI to create the images. This leveled the playing field for all my students, and we had fun bringing new technology and ancient ideas together.



So we began the process, and each student composed their images, a title, and a detailed written interpretation of their choices citing their research and explaining their perspective and their own magical desire for change or reflection. Even if some students failed to complete their card, the deck was still a whole deck!

Working with my students reminded me of the power we all hold to transform our inner and outer worlds, to make meaning in ways that can inspire or motivate others to want to live more authentically in a world that they belong to and are a part of. This was also true for me. Always endeavour to play your hand to its fullest. You never know what’s in the cards... unless you create them! Have a blessed solstice, and when you reflect on your work as the heat dizzies us all to the point of silent witness, be sure to see the potential that may be right under your nose in the things that daily inspire you!

Jason Beauregard

# Wise Words

## from the Old Crone



This is such a wonderful time of year despite the rain. My garden is a haven of magical greenery and blooms. I have willows, holly and elder with roses, sunflowers and geraniums among others. My vegetable and fruit beds as well as all my herbs, are all awaiting the blessing of the full moon and Summer Solstice.

I shall be celebrating along with my Circle of the Crystal Moon. Apart from our circle casting and meditation, we shall be looking at the folk lore of the season. I hope the weather will play nicely and we can celebrate outside. Perhaps we will sit beneath the Elder tree as it is said that doing so at Midsummer (or at Samhain), you will see the fae, the fairies and the Riders of the Sith.

I have always loved folk lore and folk tales. They may be based on imagination myths and legends but often there is a peck of truth in there as well. My Elder tree was full of foamy white blooms, happy to dance in the light breezes of early summer. Now it is beginning to turn those blooms into the dark red berries we will pick in mid to late summer.

The elder tree (*Sambucus Nigra*) was, and is still sometimes, called the Old Witch Tree or the Crone Tree and has long been regarded as the most magically powerful of plants. Elders are unusual as they are hermaphrodite, meaning both the male and female reproductive parts are contained within the same flower.

It is a crone wood and often used to make wands. I certainly do make wands from this wood as well as from Willow, Rowan and Holly. It is called the Crone Tree or Witch Tree as it was thought that old witches were able to turn themselves into an elder tree. I love this thought and perhaps that is what I wish when my time comes. It was believed that a crone witch lives within each Elder Tree which is why they are thought of as being so magical. The wood was used to make long straws because the centre of each small branch is spongy and so once cut, can be poked out to make it hollow. These were used to blow air, like

bellows, into a fire to make it brighter and also used to make rudimentary flutes and whistles. They make great pea shooters too.



Like Rowan and Holly, Elder is a tree of protection. It presides over birth and death, in other words, a tree of transformation. It is often planted in graveyards to assist the newly departed spirit to pass over. It is known as Ruis in Ogham. Ruis means red and refers to the deep red berries which appear in midsummer onwards. The berries are poisonous to eat raw as they contain cyanide, however, once heated and cooked, they are no longer toxic and can be made into a marvellous medicinal syrup for colds, sore throats and chesty coughs. In the 17th Century an entire book was written about the healing properties of elderberries. Many studies have shown that the berries have anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties. More recent research has shown that they're also an anti-inflammatory. They are rich in antioxidants and vitamins C and A, and contain a high level of immune-boosting compounds.

The berries make amazing wines and pies too, especially when mixed with blackberries. The elder-flower blooms make a very refreshing cordial, and they provide nectar for a variety of insects. Birds and mammals like the dormouse and voles eat both the berries and the flowers.

The flowers are pretty and useful but it is the berries I love. To pick them is really simple. Cut off the entire spray and then with a fork, gently run the tines along each sprig and the berries will just fall away easily.

The wood smoke is very toxic. It was thought that if you burned it and inhaled the smoke, you would see the devil. This idea goes back to biblical times as Judas Iscariot hung himself from an Elder Tree. It is possibly from this story that the elder is thought to repel malignant spirits, so it is often cultivated near homes. The druids however regarded the Elder Tree as a gift from Mother Earth, who it was thought lived within the tree. Just as above, people believed a benevolent crone witch lived within.

If you are to cut the blooms or berries or even some of the wood, do so with respect. Speak to the tree. Say "Old woman gift me some of your wood. I will gift you mine when I grow into a tree." The goddess of the tree will remain silent as an affirmation for you to continue. I always tell and ask any tree before I cut or prune it. Some years ago, I had tree surgeons come in to cut all our hedges and trees away

from our fences and generally tidy them up as they had all outgrown the size for our garden. My husband rang me to tell me they had arrived early. I asked him to pass on a message not to cut my willows until I got back and spoke to the trees. He just laughed but passed the message on. The tree surgeon understood and agreed. My husband was puzzled. The tree surgeon said 'Oh yes, I always ask a tree before I cut it. I explain to the tree that it is for the good of the tree. It will grow better and live longer.' We have used him ever since.

Blessed Be

For more information or If you would like to join the Circle of the Crystal Moon please email me at [theoldcrone5@gmail.com](mailto:theoldcrone5@gmail.com)

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# Identity Crisis, a play on stereotype

Witch, Wizard or Warlock, who am I to know  
Everyday I feel different, with every cauldron Glow  
Incantations to jupe a man I find the Witch within  
But to gather the requests of my grimoire, this is where a Wizard may win.

I'm a Wizard of strength and walk to find, the loot for my curse  
Now if I was a Witch today would I find room in my purse?  
A warty toad, oak mossed bark and a leaf I have to stow  
These vestments prove the best to smuggle these and go

Just one more thing my good book needs, strikes a bit of a blow  
The inner most wood of a red wood tree!? Only a man would know  
To strike an axe, do the deed and deccerate this tree  
Sounds like the job of a brute, a red blooded Warlock to me

Stoking the fire, teasing the flame, seductive blows ensure  
The cauldrens load excites and rings, begging her for more  
A peice of this, a nip of that, and stir, and pour  
The book states that 'she' must be skilled at broiling and to have done it before!

A loud crack rang, flame turn blue, billowy smoke of pink hue  
A man somewhere was cursed tonight, And it was so over due  
A tidy room, a tidy mind, now the time had come  
For the alter to be tidied and the cauldron had to succumb

With one easy grapple the warlock hugged the toasty iron crock  
He lifted her up and placed her where it was known for her to dock  
Assumptions are rude, a dangerous game and no one ever knows  
Just what one can do when you avoid genders typical throws

Witch, Wizard or Warlock what is it to be?  
Who cares, who sniffs, who curses, the choice that is me  
Lucky to reside in this other world, this covern, this circle here  
The only place, the only world where no gives a slug, if you're queer.

Witch, Wizard or Warlock, can't I be all three?  
Greedy maybe whoever knows, what's feeling like me?  
See the wizards gay, the warlocks trans and the witch is a drag queen from Skegness  
Just know one thing you need to know, be yourself and revell in your own prowess.

Kyler George Welling



## Old Farmer John Blueitt's Raspberry Ripple

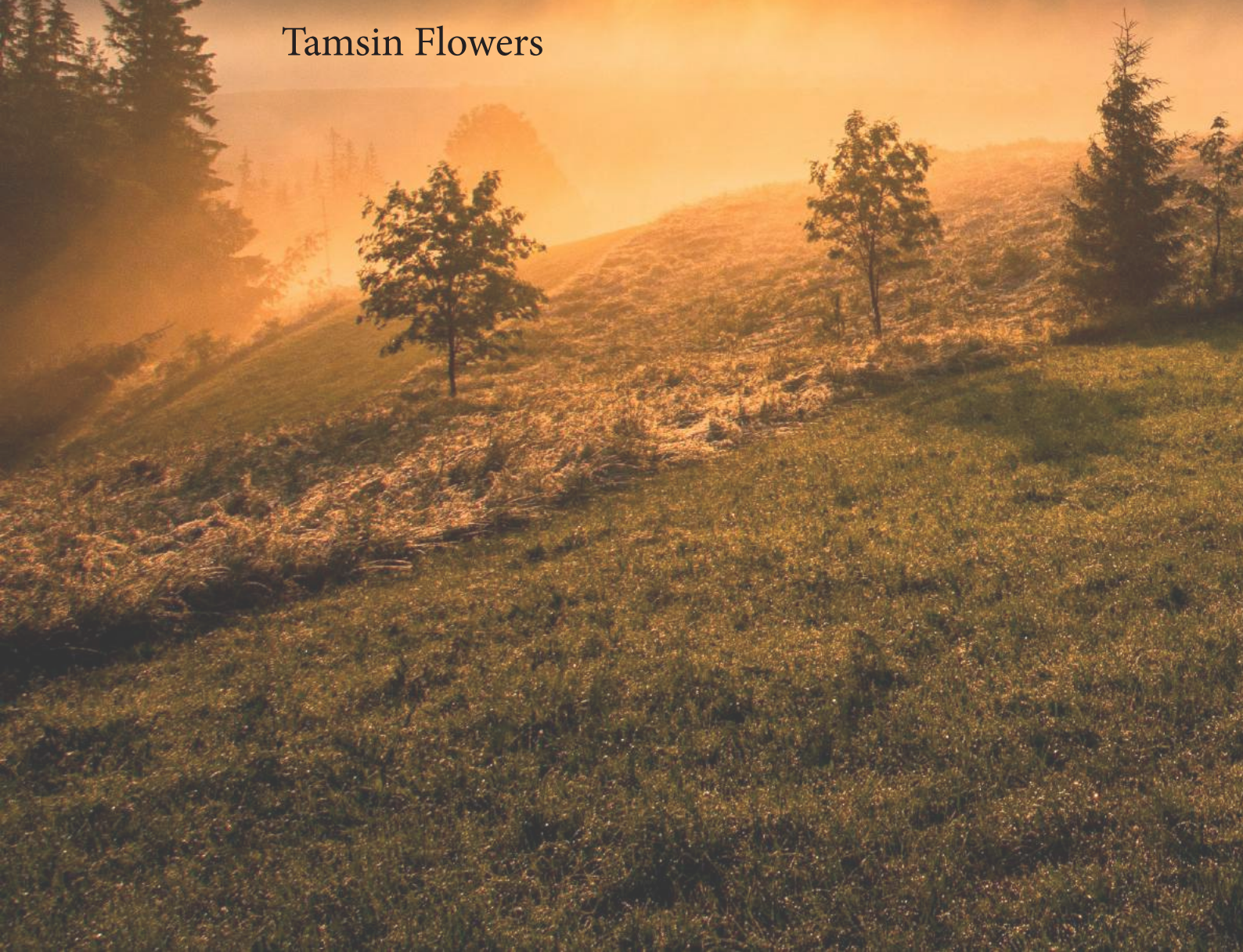
The smell of the pink flowered Hawthorn,  
is such a sweet and heady tippie,  
The hedgerows are awash,  
with old farmer John's Raspberry Ripple.  
Toward the light ever stretching, growing upward and tall.  
Cow parsley, Thistle and poppy now join the field margins flowery ball.  
The breeze gently caresses the meadow,  
causing the grasses to flow and sway,  
Sweet and lush and tender, its ready for making hay.  
John Blueitt the farmer consults with his bees, as he checks upon his hives.  
Whilst farm hands sit running stone over steel, sharpening up the scythes.  
The forecast tomorrow is going to be good, the Queen bees have all agreed.  
So we're on for the morrow, calls out the old boy to the two heavy horse in the field.  
Two hours in and the cock still to crow, we've no time to waste sixteen acres to mow.  
It's all hands on deck, all must pitch in,  
Even Molly the collie, and a terrier called Finn.  
Too soon the suns at its height as the church bells ring,  
A well earned break listening to skylarks sing.  
The women approach carrying baskets and jugs,  
The smell of fresh baked bread and cider for our mugs.  
There's banter and laughter and the odd cheeky kiss,  
Oh the sweet fresh cut grass that smells pure bliss.  
Too soon comes the call of "right let's be back to it,"  
"It won't cut itself" shouts the old boy John Blueitt.  
Horses nose bags are empty, and they're fully rested,  
Re-hitched and eager now time to be tested.  
We toil through day and into the evening,  
now stripped to the waist muscles aching and heaving.  
Then as swifts and swallows go up for their vespers,  
Back toward the farm go this tired band of farm workers.  
We stand at the stone trough with its cast iron pump,  
Spring water ice cold makes us shiver and jump.  
It feels good to be washed and rid of the days dirt,  
Fresh set of britches and a clean linen shirt.  
Now it's off to the kitchen for a big hearty dinner,  
Thanks given an amen and forgive all the sinners.  
John Blueitt lights his pipe and calls for his fiddle,  
What song shall we have as he has stands from the table.  
For the wheel it has turned to Junes 21st day,  
So let's sing one and all on this Summers Solstice day.

Jeff Turner

## Solstice Whispers

'Only One' said the rabbit in the early summer dawn,  
as he hopped and bopped and quivered eating daisies in the corn.  
'Only One' sang the water as it bubbled down the stream,  
to the mighty roaring river on its way out to the sea.  
'Only One' gushed the mayfly as she danced upon the dew,  
with her gilded shimmer striking green against the brightest blue.  
'Only One' cried the blackbird as she sang into the sun,  
on the summer solstice morning when the day had just begun.  
'Only One' wept the fieldmouse as she cried into the leaves,  
with her tears in silent falling in the rustling of the breeze.  
'Only One' laughed the spider as she spun her silken strand,  
as the warmth of sun's embrace began to stretch across the land.  
'Only One' called the raindrops as they gently tapped the floor,  
but then vanishing without a trace their shadow seen no more.  
'Only One' spoke the yew tree with his skyward reaching boughs,  
as he caught the early morning winds beneath the cotton clouds.  
'Only One' cheered the otter as he dived into the pool,  
where the flames of mid June's fiery day were tempered by the cool.  
'Only One' sighed the mighty stag stood high upon the ground,  
while surveying all that he commands beneath his thorny crown.  
'Only One' the Goddess whispered in a voice of summer hue,  
'Only One' that heeds my calling, and that one dear Witch is you.

## Tamsin Flowers



## This is happiness for me

dogs running, their wildness changed  
yet, they are still at home  
just like me.

They used to be babies  
now they match these trees  
never staying still,  
growing, giving;  
my light and air

climbing turns to playing  
turns to beating  
there is only this moment -  
making indents to last a lifetime -  
in the trees  
and in my soul.

Rochelle Hanslow

## Rising Sun

The sun in golden glory climbs  
Above the mountain peak,  
Rising high in sapphire sky  
In a flourishing saffron streak.  
Bold, she blazes blue horizons,  
Trailing fires of umber,  
Radiating light and heat  
Rousing all from dreamlike slumber.

Hannah Semple

## The Garden at Twilight

Silver fox in moonlight shines,  
A mirror to the evening stars,  
A warrior behind the lines,  
Heart beating fast within the bars.

The flowers of the garden frame,  
His noble head as long he looks,  
As if he knows each one by name,  
Collecting them in leafy nooks.

With joy, he leaps amongst the green,  
As grasses bend to mark his way,  
Until at last he'll softly lean,  
And make his bed amongst the hay.

Melanie Webb

## Decisions.

As the sun reaches  
The corner of her eyes  
Illuminating her soul  
Fading her contours  
Reaching deep inside  
The whisper of a voice  
She looks like a ghost  
She looks like she was  
Never really here  
A step in the wrong direction  
The shadow a sharp line  
Her thoughts wandering  
The Runes on the table  
Not telling anything  
The Tarot jaded  
Telling lies  
She sets fire  
To her beliefs  
Tears down the veil  
Between here and then  
A thin line between worlds  
She is shimmering in the light  
Undecided where she belongs  
She freezes in the warmth  
Counting the specks in the universe  
Dancing with spirits  
Her head dizzy  
She fades from this world  
To one of different, purer beliefs  
Never grounded, always doubting  
Will she have made a decision  
When the sun has moved away  
The flames dwindled  
Time to move on  
Time to be, one.  
As the sun reaches  
The tip of her toes.

Dead Culture

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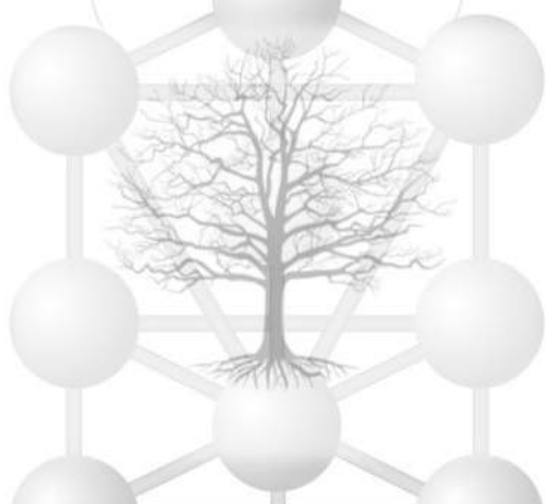


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# Celtic Druidry

## RITUALS, TECHNIQUES, & MAGICAL PRACTICES

Ellen Evert Hopman

Foreword by  
Dr. Kenneth Proefrock





# Birch the Selfish Witch - continued

"You seem to be unhappy lately. What's bothering you, love?" Fleur asked.

"Nothing," Birch replied without looking up.

"Come on, I know something is the matter. Talking about whatever it is will help. You know what they say: 'a problem shared is a problem halved'", Fleur smiled encouragingly.

"I don't care what 'they' say. There's nothing wrong." Birch glared at her mum.

"Birch, don't get angry with me, love. I just want to help." Fleur reached out her hand to touch Birch's knee.

"Help me?" Birch fumed and jumped up, she stood looking down at her mum, "How can you help me when you don't even know I'm alive!" She shouted.

"Of course, I know you're alive. Don't be silly, love. Whatever is the matter?"

Birch watched her Mum struggle to the edge of the sofa and try to stand up, the bulk of the baby making her movements difficult.

"No, you don't. You don't care about me anymore now that...that... it's coming." Birch gestured towards Fleur's pregnant tummy, "All you care about is the stupid baby!" Birch burst into tears and ran from the room. She rushed up the stairs to her bedroom and slammed the door behind her. Sobbing, she threw herself on her bed and cried into her pillow.

She could hear her mum calling her from downstairs but refused to answer her and put her pillow over her head to block out the sound of her mum's voice.

Suddenly a high-pitched screech pierced through Birch's sobs and she heard a very loud noise like the chimney falling off the roof. She sat upright on her bed listening, tears still wet on her face. There was no sound, nothing further to help her work out what she'd heard, perhaps it had been an owl she thought. She listened hard again for a few moments and walked quietly to her door and listened there. What if someone had broken in? She started to feel nervous as she listened harder.

Nothing. Not a squeak of a floorboard.

Quietly, Birch opened her door and peeked out. Everything appeared normal and as it should be. Slowly she walked along the corridor towards the stairs starting to think she had been hearing things. At the top of the stairs, she froze, unable to believe her eyes.

At the bottom of the stairs was a jumbled pile of clothing, at least it looked like one at first glance. Instantly, Birch realized that it wasn't a pile of clothing but her mum's bathrobe tangled up and her mum was laid in a very strange position. More horrifying was the fact that her mum was not moving.

Birch rushed down the stairs, almost falling herself in her rush to get to her mum.

"Mum?" She managed to climb over her mum's inert body to see her face. She looked like she was asleep. "Mum? MUM?" Birch tried to gently shake her arm hoping to wake her up but nothing worked. She was paralysed with fear that her mum was dead and couldn't move to get help.

"Hello?" a familiar voice came.

"Her...here." Birch's voice croaked out feebly.

"By the Gods! What happened?" Rock dropped the box he was carrying and rushed over to the foot of the stairs, he took one look at Fleur and grabbed his phone from his pocket and dialled for an ambulance.

The next two hours were a blur of faces and white walls for Birch as her mother was taken into hospital and then into emergency surgery. Rock had said that she was bleeding inside from the fall and that both her life and that of the baby's were in danger. He had explained all this while they sat waiting in the family room. He held Birch close to him now, both of them were stunned and shocked that everything had changed so quickly and taken such a dangerous turn.

All Birch could think of was that if she hadn't fallen out with her mum and ran upstairs, her mum would not have followed her and fallen down the stairs. The thought of 'what if I've killed mum and the baby?' kept going around in her head like a stuck song, making her feel more and more panicked.

"It's all my fault." She whispered to herself, still wrapped in Rock's arms. "My fault."

"Did you say something?" He asked, pulling her away to see her face. -cont in the *Lughnasadh* magazine.

# What We're Reading

## Rebel Folklore by Icy Sedgwick

Rebel Folklore is one of those gorgeous coffee table books that it's fun to dip into. Icy Sedgwick takes us on a whirlwind tour around the globe so we meet witches, nature spirits, shape shifters, tricksters, fairies and women who are part human but part snake.

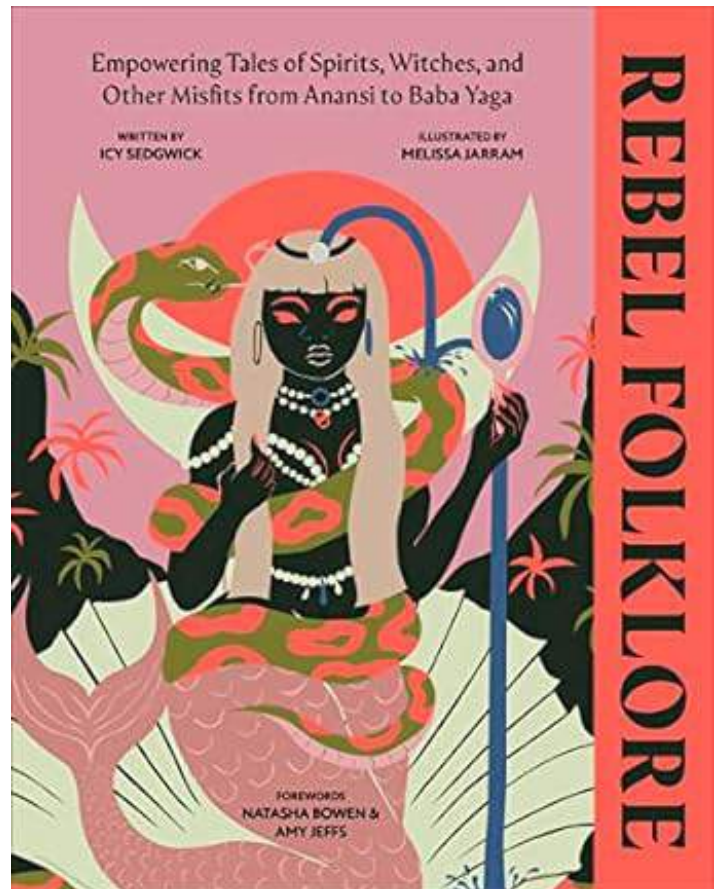
We begin our journey in England with the familiar Green Wood figure of Robin Hood. The next two characters from British Folklore are less friendly, Jenny Greenteeth, and the Scottish Cailleach. Jenny Greenteeth is the frightening aspect of rivers, the potential to drown. The Cailleach is the bringer of the freezing Scottish winter who only reluctantly yields to Spring. Icy Sedgwick writes with tact and humour about the dark side of the female Folklore characters. There are plenty of them.

The image of the cauldron appears time and again in our journey through world cultures. Meng Po, the Chinese goddess of forgetfulness has a cauldron in which bubbles a tea that takes away the memories of those who have just passed into spirit. For those who manage to avoid the tea past lives remain part of their memory.

From Iceland comes the tale of Gryla, whose cauldron is a vessel for cooking the naughty children at Yule. This seems barbaric to us but Icy Sedgwick argues that Gryla represents the harshness of the Icelandic winter and the fear of starvation. Essentially she is the aspect of Santa which we have glossed over, the need to punish those who have misbehaved.

The cauldron is usually taken as a womb symbol, an image of rebirth. The Goddess as Earth Mother is how we like to think of her. The Mexican perspective gives a dark twist to this image. Tlazolteotl nourishes the Earth by recycling waste and excrement. Soil, the gives of life and crops, is essentially made by rotting dead plants and manure. It's a concept we find a little difficult if we like to concentrate on the Maid and the Mother but the Crone and Hag aspects of the Goddess bring new life from the force of death.

Baba Yaga, the Russian witch, is also partial to a dish of cooked human meat. Those who thwart her may end up in her cauldron but those who work for her will find a reward. She lives in the dark forest, at home in the forces of Nature. Her Romanian equivalent Muma Padurii, Mother of the Forest, is another Crone figure but her role is to protect the woods and



woodland creatures. In some versions she protects children who have wandered into the forest or may, in times of hardship, have been abandoned there.

Her male equivalent comes from the Caribbean. Papa Bois, the Father of the Woods punishes those who do harm to the forest but helps those who have good intentions. He brings us back to Robin Hood, the Green Man figure who is at home in Nature's Realm.

The story aspect of Rebel Folklore is brought to life by Melissa Kitty Jarram's phenomenal illustrations. An artist who is unafraid of the dark aspect of femininity she portrays Taraka wearing a necklace of human skulls, Tlazolteotl with her arms and legs outstretch, her genitals covered by a flower she is joyful in the power of female sexuality. Every chapter has its own artwork. Every single one is good enough to frame.

In her biography Melissa Jarman claims that 'breaking the male gaze' is important to her. This makes Jarman the perfect partner to Icy Sedgwick, who, as a writer of Goth horror, has brought the darker aspects of the Folklore tradition to light.

Reviewed by Fiona Dowson

# Forests of Silver Forests of Gold

## by C.E Collins



Think you've read enough re-imagined fairy tales? Think again. C.E. Collins puts a vivid spin on these stories we love to return to in her debut short story collection, *Forests of Silver, Forests of Gold* (Between These Shores Books).

A pint-sized volume containing nine short stories, *Forests of Silver, Forests of Gold* is the perfect length to get lost between its alluring covers at pool-side, patio, or picnic this summer. But don't be deceived by its stature – this book packs a punch.

As the book's subtitle - *Tales of Crones, Maids, and Mothers* - implies, these are female-centric stories, but they're not saccharine or clichéd – they're imbued with a relatable femininity that challenges the traditional role of women in fairy tales. These are not the nostalgic fairy tales of our youth where princesses get married to princes and witches get boiled in their own pots. Here are women who grieve, who bleed, who scheme, who defy, who read signs. Women who are sexually suggestive, women who take revenge. Women who are, for want of a better word, unconventional – at least by fairy tale standards.

The rich character descriptions present you with not-so-fairy godmothers who are 'all gap teeth and cleavage', smelling of 'cheap perfume and foul smoke' with 'over-rouged lips'. But this is not Disney-esque character coding, rather Collins embraces each female character as they come; she crafts them with what society would deem 'imperfections', and then asks so what – is that what truly matters?

Running through these stories like a golden

thread (not dissimilar to that which is used by a character in the book), is a wildness, a wind-in-your-hair muddy-boots adventure, a deep appreciation of the cycles of the earth, and, most present of all, a keen sense of 'otherness', of not belonging. Rather than lean into the old familiar tropes of isolation and eccentricity, Collins turns that 'otherness' into a thing of strength, of beauty, of defiance – two fingers up to a world that never wanted you anyway. Not too far under the surface, these are stories of embracing uniqueness.

In tackling these most familiar of storylines, some of these tales subvert, some nod to, some dabble in, some are second cousins once removed. You'll delight in guessing which childhood favourite Collins is flirting with in turn, and then cheer when she toys with all that we love about fairy tales – nostalgia, optimism, a neatly wrapped-up ending – turning the moral on its head by the end.

The book is underpinned by detailed world-building and a strong manipulation of voice. Collins's chameleon-esque ability to write narration that falls anywhere in time from yesterday to the Middle Ages, and characters from 5 years old to 80, provides variety that pulls you into the world of each individual tale. Painterly descriptions of people and landscapes are complemented by Rebecca Freeman's delectable black and white illustrations that slip in amongst the text so symbiotically you'd never believe they were once separate entities. Get lost in forests covered in 'lace white mist', dance in meadows 'blessed with hyssop flowers and oxlip', breathe in air 'soft and sweet as cowslips'.

With its gently humorous tone, beautiful illustrations, imaginative twists, and trope-busting characterisation, Collins proves that fairy tales CAN continue to inspire us as we outgrow their original insipid yarns. Make a place on your bookshelf today for *Forests of Silver, Forests of Gold*.

Price: £10. Available from:

Between These Shores Books (online: [betweenthese-shoresbooks.com/shoreline-series](http://betweenthese-shoresbooks.com/shoreline-series))

Press Books & Coffee (Hednesford, Staffordshire)

Illustrations by Rebecca Freeman.

## Reviewed by Cherry Doyle

# TAROT MUSINGS WITH AUSET GYPSY



The Sun and Moon tarot cards hold deep symbolism that resonates profoundly with the Roman gods Apollo and Diana, especially in the context of the Wiccan holiday of Midsummer or AKA Litha. This convergence of tarot imagery, ancient mythology, and contemporary Wiccan practice creates a rich tapestry of inspiration for modern witches.



The Sun tarot card, symbolizing clarity, enlightenment, and vitality, mirrors the attributes of Apollo, the Roman god of the sun. Apollo, known for his radiant energy and artistic prowess, governs over music, prophecy, and healing. In tarot, the Sun card often features a brilliant sun shining down on a joyful child riding a white horse, epitomizing the peak of personal power and happiness. This imagery aligns perfectly with the essence of Midsummer, or Litha, a Wiccan festival celebrating the summer solstice. During Midsummer, the sun reaches its zenith, and the days are longest, embodying the life-giving force that Apollo represents. Modern witches draw upon this energy to perform rituals aimed at harnessing the sun's power for

growth, healing, and enlightenment.

Conversely, the Moon tarot card encapsulates the mysterious and intuitive aspects of the night, closely aligning with Diana, Apollo's twin sister and the Roman goddess of the moon and the hunt. The Moon card, often depicted with a moon hanging over a scene of wild animals and a path leading into the unknown, symbolizes intuition, dreams, and the subconscious. Diana, a protector of women and the wilderness, embodies these nocturnal qualities. She represents the untamed, instinctual side of nature and the feminine psyche. During Midsummer, witches also honor the moon's subtle influence, recognizing that even in the height of the sun's power, the moon's presence is a reminder of the balance between light and dark, conscious and subconscious.



Midsummer, celebrated around June 21st, is a time when modern witches engage in rituals that honor both solar and lunar energies. They perform sun-based rituals during the day, absorbing the sun's potent

energy through activities like sunbathing, creating sun water, and lighting bonfires. These acts are seen as a way to connect deeply with Apollo's attributes of creativity, health, and foresight. The bonfires, in particular, serve as a beacon of Apollo's light, driving away darkness and welcoming abundance.



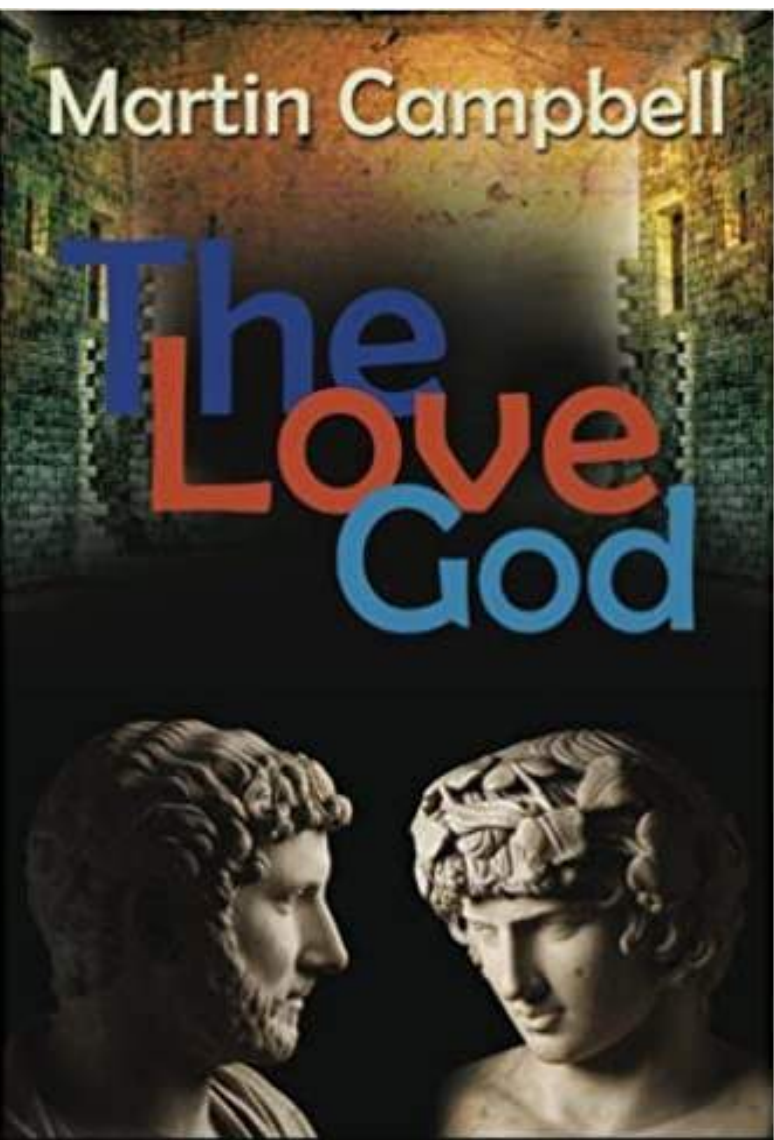
As night falls, the celebration transitions to honor Diana and the Moon. Witches might partake in moonlit meditations, dance under the moon, and perform divi-

nations using tarot or other means to tap into their inner wisdom and dreams. This dual celebration reflects a balanced appreciation of both deities, acknowledging the sun's overt power and the moon's quiet influence.

For modern witches, this interplay of the Sun and Moon tarot cards with Apollo and Diana during Midsummer is more than symbolic; it's an invitation to live harmoniously with nature's cycles. The holiday inspires a holistic approach to spirituality, encouraging witches to embrace both their active, outward energies and their introspective, intuitive sides.

The connection between these ancient symbols and deities offers a rich source of inspiration for rituals, meditations, and celebrations. By honoring Apollo and Diana through the tarot's Sun and Moon, modern witches find a profound connection to the natural world and the eternal dance of light and shadow that defines the human experience. This blend of mythology, tarot, and Wiccan practice creates a vibrant and dynamic way to celebrate Midsummer, infusing it with layers of meaning that resonate deeply within the modern pagan soul.

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# WITCH

Magazine



25