

West Midlands W M F C F Magazine

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Issue 3/March 2020

West Midlands Witch

ACrowsFeet Publication

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Full Moon in

Is it time for Paganism to Clean Up it's act?

Ostara Grimoire

Five Minute Fiction

Tarot Talk

Welcome to the third issue of West Midlands Witch.

We hope you enjoy this new issue, with some wonderful content from the Pagan community as we celebrate the waking of the Maiden and the Spring Equinox on 19th March.

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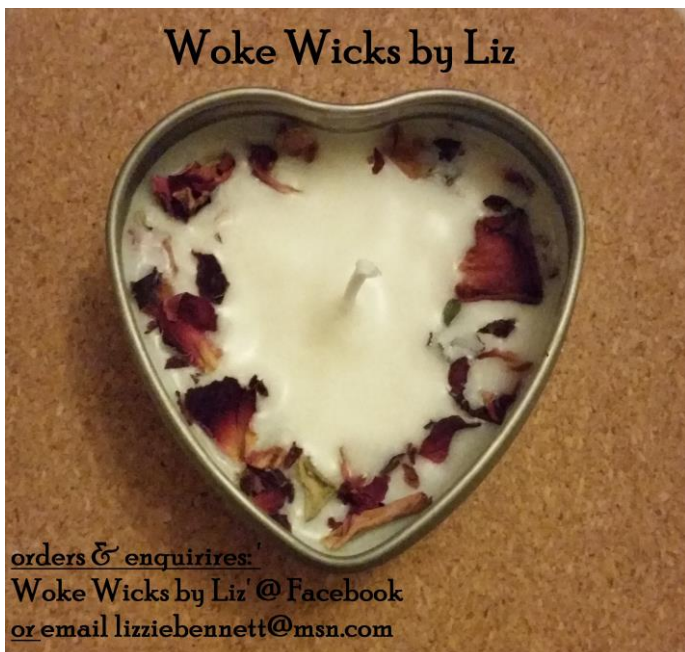
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Working with Animal Spirit Guides BY VERVENNA

Across the world and throughout the ages, Animism has been a part of many spiritual practises. From the Ancient Egyptians, to the Celts and the traditional Japanese folk religion Shinto, animals have featured heavily.

The definition of what a Spirit Guide, (or Power Animal) is, is one which has been hard to define. The Celts for example saw animals as omens, and recognised certain qualities in different animals (such as the loyalty of the dog) that they revered. Animals also played a part in Celtic myth, helping or hindering our heroes along their way. Whilst it is clear that the Ancient Celts honoured animals, did they work with the spirit of the animals in its more literal sense, or just use animals symbolically? It could be argued that even by using animals in a symbolic sense, you are still invoking the 'essence' or the qualities of that animal, and so could be considered to be using it as an animal guiding you to your intended purpose.

I don't want to get into it now as there is enough debate, but for the purposes of this article I will be defining 'working with animal spirit guides' as using them symbolically as well as by directly working with the animal spirit on the spiritual plain.

I just want to make a quick comment on the term 'Spirit Animals'. This is a term which refers to a very sacred practice in some Native American belief systems. However, there is a rising focus on the appropriation of this practice (you can find quizzes online designed to help big brands find their 'brand spirit animal', or online quizzes designed to encourage you to buy specific make up products because they're your 'make up spirit animal'). As such, I won't be using the term 'Spirit Animal', or focusing on Native American practices in this piece as I don't feel it is my place.

There are two types of Spirit Guide; those who pop up, do their job and then disappear again, and those that stay with you for a prolonged period of time.

An example of an animal spirit guide that just pops up and does its job I would consider to be the following; a couple of years ago I was working a terrible job which I absolutely hated (in quite a senior position) and was contemplating quitting. After a few days of working-hell which would drive me to the brink of handing in my notice, I would have a couple of good days with my boss and think 'maybe I will stick this out'.

It was around this time that I started being visited by a fox guide; whenever I started thinking that work wasn't too bad and maybe things had finally changed for the better, the fox would appear. I never saw it at any other time throughout the two years I was living in that place, only at these moments.

The fox is said to appear at times of unpredictable, large changes. It advocates acting swiftly, and being decisive. Most notably, it indicates that you may need to be aware of



those people or circumstances that are tricking you, or deceiving you into following a path which might not be right for you.

At first I was sceptical, but after this pattern kept recurring I knew that this was a message and the symbolism of that message. I finally plucked up the courage to quit my job, without having anything else lined up.

A couple of weeks later I found a dead fox in my garden.

I'm not going to lie, that shook me up. It's bad enough finding a dead animal anyway, but to find one that I had built such an affinity with over several weeks really stuck with me. As upsetting as it was, there was no denying that this was a very final, and literal confirmation that the animal guide had served its purpose and moved on.

I also have a spirit guide which I work with on a more long-term basis, and that is the magpie. The magpie is a spirit guide with many purposes. It is a bird of communication, with its identifiable screech. It teaches you to speak when you need to speak up, and not to be afraid to advocate for yourself or your beliefs. As a lover of shiny things, the magpie reminds us not to be blinded by pretty things, and to stop chasing false beliefs or that which is unsuitable. It can help you to re-evaluate your priorities and see through illusions.

As such the magpie makes a great spiritual guide; as it focuses on moving past the materialistic, it encourages you to look within and see what you need to do to grow. The message of the magpie is to realise and become the person you want to be, and to not be afraid to show that person.



The magpie is a very intelligent and resourceful creature that adapts to its surroundings. It takes stock of its situation and then manoeuvres to make the best out of it. So too does it encourage patience, of considering your options before making a move. However, the magpie isn't afraid to take a risk, but it is always a calculated risk.

Most recently I called on my magpie spirit guide to help me 'break through an illusion'. I was experiencing issues with a certain person in my life and their behaviour. This behaviour was starting to irritate me, and as such I was becoming more intolerant of it. However, at this point I couldn't tell whether their behaviour was as bad as I perceived it to be, or whether I was being unnecessarily sensitive because of how much their behaviour was grating on me.

I performed a small ritual using some feathers (not all magpie feathers) and asked my magpie spirit guide to help me break through the illusion and see the truth of the situation, which involved me binding the feathers together and then sleeping with them in my bed. That night I had a dream in which the magpie told me that whilst some of their behaviour was out of line, it was mostly me being too willing to find fault with them because their behaviour annoyed me. That helped me take a step back and re-evaluate the situation and my attitude.

As with many things in witchcraft there is always that question of whether what you are experiencing is really spiritual, or whether it is simply an instance you are reading too much into. For example, maybe I just happened to see a fox around and there wasn't anything spiritual to it? A couple of summer later I had baby hedgehogs in my garden - as incredibly adorable as they were, I knew there was nothing

magickal to it. When the fox visited me, however, it felt different; my intuition told me there was something more to it. I wish I could tell you some secret formula for discerning whether that cat you saw at the bottom of the garden was in fact some sort of spirit guide, but unfortunately I can't. You just need to trust your instinct and pay attention to the world around you, and the world within you.

Another question that is often asked is can I work with spirit animals that aren't 'local' to me? You can, sure. I spent a long while working with a salamander spirit guide despite never having seen one before in my life which was rewarding. However, I have found that choosing an animal which I am likely to see regularly and can observe in its natural habitat has helped me attune to it in a much deeper way.

There are many ways to get started with animal guides. Like most areas, research is always a good first step. There are plenty of websites and books which go in depth into the meanings of different animals.

Think about the qualities you want to exude or the areas of your life in which you want to improve and pick an animal which compliments these. Open your eyes to the animals around you, whether it is an ant on the road, or the birds flying overhead; sometimes your spirit guide can be an animal you never even considered!

Spend time meditating on your animal, and finding out all you can about them, their behaviours, their lifestyle, etc. Sometimes animal spirit guides can come to us in our dreams so make sure you pay attention to any animals you come across as they may have a message for you.

The main key to success is to work with your animal regularly. I have a stone which I drew a magpie on as a part of a workshop I attended which I keep on my altar and always acknowledge when I'm doing my devotionals. It's a small gesture, but it helps me feel more in tune with my spirit guide. You don't need to be performing



grand rituals on a weekly basis; even small actions such as saying a little prayer, meditating or leaving appropriate offerings such as food or water out for them can help build a strong relationship with your animal spirit guides. I have found it to be a really rewarding practice, and hope that you do too.

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Full Moon in Virgo

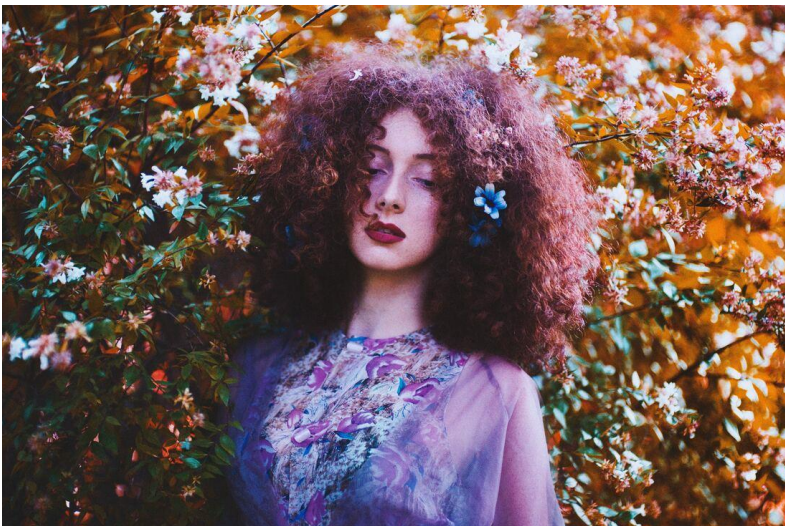
BY MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY

FOR SISTERS OF THE MOON

Hello dear ones!

We hope you have been doing ok during Mercury Retrograde in Pisces, we know it's been a rough ride for most. So, you'll be pleased to know that Mercury goes direct on Tuesday (phew) but do remember that a few days after Mercury goes direct we have a bit of a retrograde hangover so be prepared for there to be some lingering weird energy. We have a full moon on Monday 9th March in the beautiful grounded earth sign of Virgo and we can welcome in the Maiden energy of both Virgo and the beginning of spring (Spring Equinox is coming up on March 20th). It's also International Women's day on Sunday 8th of March so a wonderful time to celebrate the divine feminine! Virgo is actually ruled by Mercury, the planet of elevated thought, communication and travel and Virgo's symbol is the Maiden or Virgin and is often depicted as a maiden goddess carrying a sheaf of wheat (representing the harvest season but also the gathering of wisdom) - so again, we can turn our attention to thinking about the wisdom we have gathered over the wisdom and how to integrate that into the fresh energy of Spring. We can also use this gathering of wisdom in relation to our experiences during Mercury Retrograde, it's likely that over the last few weeks we have had difficult emotions and baggage churned up and old karmic patterns resurfacing. We could just breathe a sigh of relief that it's all over in a few days or we could spend some time sitting with the pain

and discomfort of what's been illuminated.



This is really what full moons are about, we use the light of each full moon to shine awareness on our inner darkness. We ask, what is hurting that needs to be healed? What do I need to let go of in order to move forward? What wisdom lies in my suffering? The Virgo energy invites us to see our pain as a teacher. As Buddha said 'Suffering has many good qualities'

- it shows us what we have left to master.

So for this upcoming full moon, we will have the sun in the water sign of Pisces (read our previous blog about Pisces if you missed it) and then the moon in Virgo. Pisces as we spoke about before is a deeply spiritual sign and enjoys spending time swimming in the depths of the unconscious - their shadow side can be favouring the spirit world over being grounded in reality and connecting to others, they are sometimes described as being aloof or unable to cope with the realities of day to day life. Virgo is also a spiritual sign but their Earth element gives them the ability to embody their spirituality here on earth

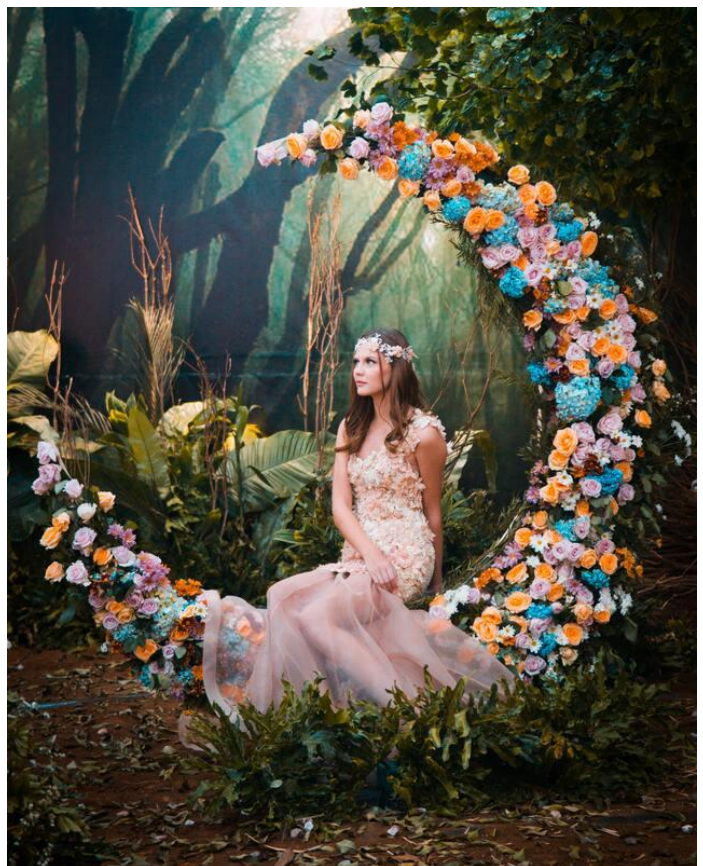
whilst being present. This Virgo full moon can help us to balance these parts of ourselves - the ability to journey to our soul world but also the ability to embody what we've learned from our time in the soul world with our feet firmly on the ground. Virgo full moon asks us how can we balance the Spiritual with the practical? How are we showing up for our spiritual life? How can we integrate our connection with the divine into every day? In your journal, write a list of ways that you can create spiritual habits, simple ways that you can connect to the Divine every day. Do you have an altar space? If not, is this something you could set up?

If you've felt a little bit dreamy or away with the fairies this Pisces season then use this full moon to arrive back in your body. Get a massage, have a bath, move, dance or so Yoga. Go outside and connect to nature, disconnect from technology for a little while and feel your feet on the earth.

Virgo rules the gut and because of this they have very good instincts and are deeply guided by their intuition, this is also a big part of the Pisces energy. We looked at this during the New Moon in Pisces but we can continue to ask, how often do we allow ourselves to be guided by our intuition and gut feelings? Or do we allow our rational mind to take over? An interesting journaling practice is to ask yourself about two situations from your past, one where you followed your intuition and one where you ignored it. Where did these situations lead you? How did it feel in both instances? How did it feel to ignore your gut and how did it feel to follow your deep inner knowing? Intuition is a powerful aspect of the divine feminine - awakening, trusting and being guided by your intuition is a powerful way to awaken your Maiden sovereign energy. The archetype of the Virgin and the Maiden is very much to do with the idea of being sovereign - being self assured, self reliant and deeply connected to our wisdom and intuition. Do you trust yourself? Do you trust where you're being guided to go? Or are you resisting?

Working with the Maiden energy

We will be calling in the energy of the Maiden further with the upcoming New Moon in Aries and Spring Equinox but for now start turning your mind to this Maiden energy. Think about the energy of Spring, all the energy of mother earth at the moment is being channeled into growth and nourishing seeds and new buds. It's a time for being curious about everything, of being open to wonder and new possibilities. Maiden energy is playful, creative, expressive and initiating. This full moon, pull out your journal and read about all the things you journalled about and moodboarded about over the winter months. The Maiden energy is all about bringing these goals and intentions out in to the world.

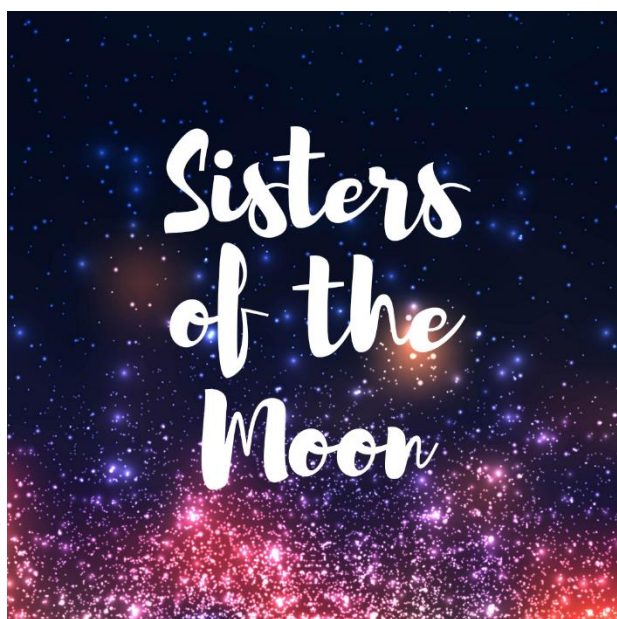


It's about being seen. What can you put in place to begin manifesting your goals for the year? This could be another powerful time to moodboard - use the intuitive energy of both Pisces and Virgo to get a clear vision of where you're headed and how you're going to get there. Again, balance the ability of Pisces to dream and wonder with the organised and practical energy of Virgo...Virgos and Maidens know how to get shit done :) Make lists, create new pages and spreads in your bullet journal, create a plan of action! When Mercury goes direct, things can start moving forward again, what would you like that to look like?

We really hope you've enjoyed this blog post. We will be back soon for more lunar self care.

This article was an excerpt from the Sisters of the Moon Blog - read the full thing here:

<https://sistersofthemoononline.weebly.com/blog/full-moon-in-virgo-awakening-the-maiden>



Sisters of the Moon is an online community, magazine, and so much more!

You can find them at <https://www.facebook.com/sistersofthemooncommunity/>

The first issue of the Sisters of The Moon is available to buy for the cost of a cup of coffee on Etsy - visit their Facebook page for more info and a link to purchase the Winter edition!

The first issue of Sisters of the Moon digital Zine, 54 pages of winter yumyness from recipes, to self care rituals, to astrology forecasts as well as interviews with incredible women from all over the country. This issue is inspired by Yule and the perfect way to help you connect to the winter solstice and seasonal self care.



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Ostara Art BY THE WITCHCRAFTER ARTIST





Claire is a West Midlands based artist. She lives in Stone and is inspired by witchcraft, paganism and the natural world. Her favourite fine art subjects are trees and waterscapes as well as animals often chosen to be familiars for witches. She especially loves owls and cats and they feature heavily in her work. She has also created a series of magical characters and she likes to locate them in bars and restaurants in Stone. Look out for them if you are in Stone!

She has picked out a selection of her work featuring the Hare. Typically the March animal (Mad as a March hare), is seen scampering across fields. Easily distinguished from the rabbit, they have long ears and long legs.

You can find her work on her website <https://www.witchcrafterart.co.uk> and you can follow her on Facebook WitchCrafterArt or on Twitter @CrafterWitch and also Instagram the_witchcrafter_artist. You can buy her work by direct messaging her or you can go to Etsy and find her buy typing The Witch Crafter in the shop search box.

You will also be able to meet her and buy her work at the Crows Feet Pagan Craft Fair Spring on 28th March in Stourbridge.

She would love you to get in touch.

IS IT TIME FOR PAGANISM TO CLEAN UP ITS ACT?

BY DANIEL BRAN GRIFFITH, THE CHATTERING MAGPIE

On a trip to the Derbyshire Peak District in the autumn of 2012, specifically Stanton Moor and the Nine Ladies Stone Circle, I was quite shocked at the number of offerings left, that were in truth nothing more than items of rubbish. The majority of the items were



The Chattering Magpie Photography

tied to the nearby 'fairy' or 'offering' tree.

Amongst this rubbish was a plastic bottle that was formally used to contain mineral water, plastic based ribbons, plastic toys, plastic jewellery, plastic buttons, plastic charms and even an empty packet of Paracetamol. The key word as I am sure you may have noticed; is plastic. I removed two coat pockets full of this junk, which was as much as I could carry at the time. There was just so much of it that I could not practically carry away more and eventually, I deposited this rubbish in a bin while passing through nearby Bakewell. I make no apology for this action.

I have seen littering of a more deliberate sort when visiting the better known sites, those that attract the larger crowds. Although the Nine Ladies attracts many campers at the Summer Solstice, obviously the numbers are not comparable to those of Stonehenge or Avebury. At the latter two sites and after a Summer Solstice, I have found myself physically disgusted by the rubbish left behind by so called fellow Pagans and New Agers celebrating the festival. Interestingly, at the Winter Solstice, when perhaps the gathering attracts the more hardcore Pagan and fewer numbers, there is little or no litter.

This suggests that Pagans are not solely responsible for this littering but whether that is true or no, we share a collective responsibility by our presence. Furthermore and again whether we like it or not, we are by the public, by landowners and local government, tarred with the same brush. Pagans whilst claiming to revere nature are unfortunately labelled as nothing more than litter louts by some today.

I personally do not object to biodegradable post ritual offerings such as wine or a little cake. Although more awareness by the casual visitor that human foodstuffs such as chocolate, may be harmful to wildlife would be of benefit. My real objection is to the remains of spent candles, plastic ribbon, toys and crystals (yes crystals) being left at sacred sites and other ancient monuments.



The Chattering Magpie Photography

I am not advocating an all out ban; neither Paganism nor our sacred places are museum pieces, although some historians may argue otherwise. The sites are used and have been used as places of power, reverence and magic for centuries, long before the repeal of the Witchcraft Act. This we can deduce from local folklore and legend associated with the many ancient monuments or sacred sites. Like a Christian Church, our sites are old (and older) and very often, they have remained in some form of use. They are living places of worship, reverence and magic.

I emphasise that my objection is not to the leaving of food and drink, nor do I object to the leaving of biodegradable items such as cotton ribbon and pieces of cloth. My objection is the leaving of artificial items, generally plastic junk and the burning of candles directly upon the stones of an ancient circle or other such site. Obviously there are some things that I would not remove and this includes the items made from natural materials that will eventually degrade. However, we have to be more aware of how much is left behind or our sacred sites will end up looking like a rubbish tip.

I am therefore left making the suggestion, which I am fully aware is not an original one: that local Pagan groups should with the knowledge and approval of the landowner, 'adopt' individual sacred sites, cleaning and maintaining them for the enjoyment of all.

Naturally this would require some diplomacy, as some using the sites for recreational purposes may raise objections to the removal of some items and some working groups may leave physical and spiritual 'markers', which are indeed best left alone.

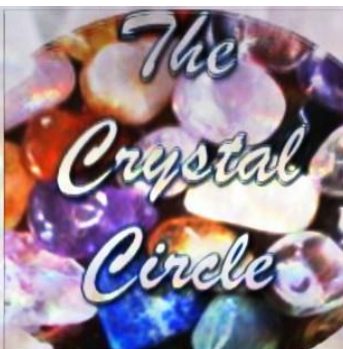
In the case of a physical marker, the item is usually of a Traditional nature and is left denoting Craft usage of a particular spot. Such items for example, would include a

carefully and deliberately placed animal skull or an old iron horseshoe placed semi-hidden in a wall or tree, these items mark 'territory' and should be left undisturbed. This is how we do things in Derbyshire.

Further diplomacy with regard this issue will be necessary in those parts of the country such as Cornwall, where independent non Pagan Federation groups have already begun this proposed 'adoption' of sites. It is unfortunate that in some quarters of the Pagan Community, the Pagan Federation is not highly regarded and attempts to assist may be perceived as an attempt to take over. In these situations it may, for the sake of public relations, be better for the Pagan Federation to take a more reserved, background and supporting role.

Text & Photography © Daniel Bran Griffith the Chattering Magpie

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Tarot Talk

BY ESME KNIGHT

Each month we will discuss the cards, suits and interpretations of the tarot to aid you in your tarot readings.

THE PRIESTESS

The Priestess is one of the most empowering cards of the major arcana. She is bold and courageous fuelled by instinct and confident in her experience. When this card is revealed in your spread, she brings a message. You are enough. You are valid. You have strength and wisdom, and all the gifts you need to release your potential and be the best you.

And so too, as the Spring is heralded upon us we must surge forward with new projects and adventures leaving behind the physical healing and safety of Winter's restful dormancy and put those plans in motion. The Priestess counsels us to now mentally prepare. Clear your creative spaces, spiritual spaces and emotional baggage as well as Spring cleaning your home.

Gone are the short days and long nights of studious preparation. Now is the time to apply ourselves. To develop and trust our intuition. Dissect what you know to discover the deeper truth growing just below the surface for it is ready to emerge with all the possibility and hope that lies in the fresh start of the new season.

SUIT OF SWORDS

The suit of swords is aligned with the element of Air, and in turn Spring and the East. All of these are associated with thought, communication and the mind. Cards that appear in this suit related to our mental state and how we process the information we receive, and in a logical, objective and unemotional way. Often connected to the written word (some decks even represent this suit with a pen or quill) and the power of speech, the Swords take us on a journey through our mind, the language we use and how we express ourselves.

The harshest lessons are taught by the Swords, their truth cuts us to the very core and their unyielding steely presence leaves us cold. We cannot hide our failures, weaknesses, yearnings or secrets from our own mind but don't succumb to the temptation to be over critical. Ask: would you be kind toward someone else in the same situation, before you are too hard on yourself



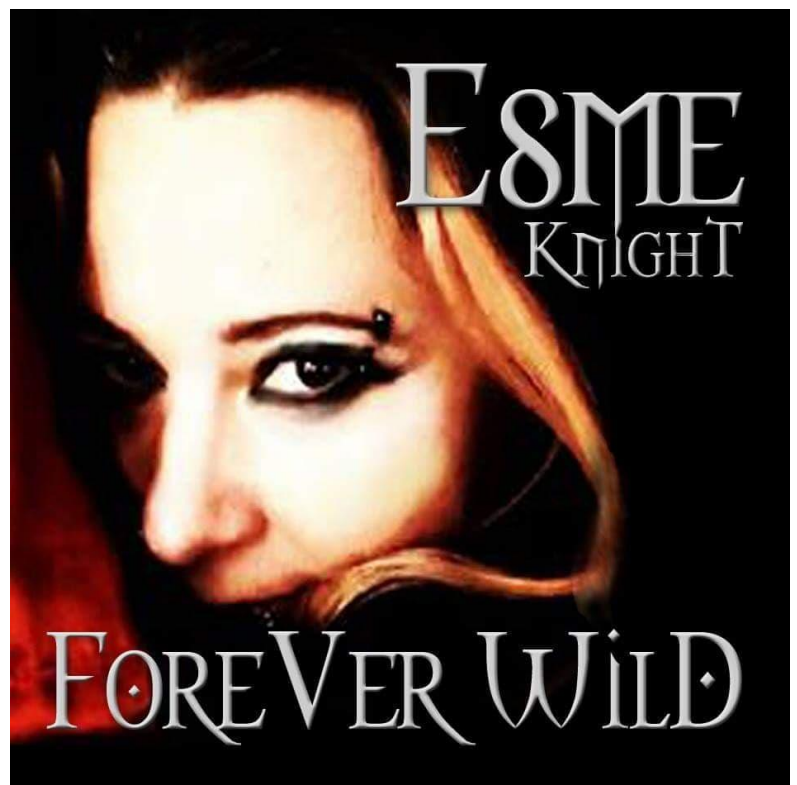
Not all about the Swords is negative. It may seem that it does nothing but highlight our



short comings but in fact, this suit shows us how and where we can improve. By listening to the Swords when they gently point out our vices we can avoid the calamity that so many dread when they are drawn. After all the Tarot is a means to have a conversation with our true self, so heed what is divined.

Don't waste it. Don't ignore it. Embrace it.

Esme Knight is a Yorkshire born musician, witch, fire performer, artist, writer and community leader living in Nottingham. Primarily a musician, Esme's original material is a mix of dark and sassy rock songs blended with modern gothic folk ballads. Following years of bands, collaborations and cover gigs she decided to focus on her original material and her debut solo album "Forever Wild" was released June 2018 to wide acclaim, containing tales of joy, sorrow, reflection, death and the wildness in all of us. Moving to Nottingham in 2008 from London where she was Retail Manger of the famous and gruesome London Dungeon, she began her work with the Pagan community and founded Pagan Pride UK, championing accurate representation for modern Pagans and hosting the UK's largest Pagan event attended by over 3500 people every year. Her community work earned her an International Women's Day award marking the centenary in 2011, and recently Pagan Pride UK's annual festival in Nottingham won the Pagan Federation's 'Best Large Outdoor Event 2018'. Esme Knight is a Dragon Shaman and a member of Clan Dolmen, regularly performing and speaking at their events, including their fire rituals, working with fire, drums and body movement to conjure the dragon within.



Karen Kay's Fairy Ball - A Night of Transformational Magick

BY BEKKI MILNER

This past weekend, Glastonbury was awash with wings as folk flew in for the Fairy Fayre and Butterfly Fairy Ball, hosted by Karen Kay's Faery Events.

During the day, there was opportunity for some retail therapy with the Fairy Fayre full of fae delights, fantasy art and a whole other host of goodies (I obtained a beautiful felted pair of hare ears that I am wearing as I write - much coveted from wonderful creators, Spirit of Wire and Felt).

The evening's festivities brought butterflies, moths and even a caterpillar together for the exciting line up of Crow Dancers and Prima Nocta.

Taloch of the Crow Dancers opened the night alongside Karen Kay, with the Butterfly Transformation Ritual. A ritual bringing blessing to all who were present, a blessing of love, of transformation, and of universal togetherness.

The magick of the ritual rose in to the night on tribal drum beats and the powerful cries of unification. You are moved to move, to connect, creating an organic symbiosis between the musicians and the crowd, all reaching out to the ancient spirit as one.

This is not just a performance, not just another gig. This is raw and real ritual, reaching out

and touching the hearts of those who are open and ready to receive the message. How lucky the folk in the town hall were to hear it.



Crow Dancers have recently embarked on their next album, and with a number of UK and Netherlands dates lined up (with more to be announced), don't miss a chance to experience what can only be described as pure magick for yourself.

A short change over gives us time to visit the bar and admire more costumes before Prima Nocta take to the stage. This six part pipe and drum band are a long time favourite of mine, and it is always a pleasure to see them here on our island.

High energy, metal beats and a lot of leather grace the stage, and I am sure I was not the only one present that night to have sore feet from endless dancing. There was flag waving, crowd surfing for a bottle of rum, and the band had everyone on their knees (literally, at one point!).

With impeccable musicianship and non-stop energy, Prima Nocta stir up something ancient in us, something we had forgotten, something primal and unstoppable. What more could you want from a band that has at least two sets of bagpipes being played at any given time?

At the end of the night, this tired butterfly left (limping!) for home, but with a full heart from a night full dancing, joy, and making magic with the Fae.



Thank you to everyone who made it such a wonderful event! You can find more on Karen Kay's Faery Events at <https://www.faeryevents.com/>

Crow Dancers <https://www.facebook.com/crowdancers>

<https://crowdancers.bandcamp.com/releases>

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Five Minute Fictions

And Pagan Poetry

Grab a cup of tea and pull
up a chair.



An Earth's Fairytale BY LAURA ALDOMA

In the beginning Gaia was an unconscious and sleepy cloud created in the immensity of She Who Ever Dreams. She held her legs against her breasts and the expanding vibration of her heartbeat awoke her from her deep sleep. The Sun, one of thousands of stars, shone bright in all shades of gold and a mist of star dust surrounded her like a blanket. She moved her fingers, her arms, her legs. She stretched her back and observed her body becoming denser and denser. She felt her belly expanding with each breath and her blood running, pulsating in her veins. Waters flowed from between her legs and flooded her shaking body creating seas and oceans. She breathed deeply and tidal waves collapsed against her ribs, spilling on her sides just to be raised again.

In ecstasy Gaia gave birth to the first plants and trees. The yew came first, then the fair birch, the mighty oak and the blooming hawthorn. Heather sprout from her lashes and covered the moorlands born from her eyelids. The first fishes and sea creatures came after. Whales and dolphins, salmon and crabs. And the seahorse to lit the path into coral caves. Deer and horses, cats and dogs, wolves and bears, and many other big and small animals followed.

Sweet milk came out of her breasts creating snaking rivers. Her hair became a blanket of moss on the rocks. Her teeth stalactites inside the caves. She sang a lullaby that travelled with the night's breeze across the sea and the forest to comfort all the young souls growing on her. Her heartbeat, the beat of life; birth, death, rebirth... her spiral dance honoured on rock, bark and hide alike.

Last she gave birth to men and women and they were blessed with the gift of speech, for them to be bards among all living beings, chant her stories and cast her spells.



Tiny Tales

BY RAVEN INKSPELL

Wilding

She stands before the window, the darkness calling her away, the woods singing an ancient song and calling her wild soul home – it's a plea she cannot ignore.

Feet bare, she steps out onto the dew-kissed grass, the cool moisture washing away her domestic life, reconnecting her with the earth from which she was born. The midwinter moon lights a path into the woods, the sky is alive with the sound of the Cailleach and the Lord of Misrule, charging the wild hunt across the treetops, calling home all the children of nature.



Her eyes begin to adjust to the cloaked darkness now that's she's in the woods, her other sense heighten, she knows that it's more than her eyes she'll need as she journeys into the trees. The haunting hoots of owls and the raspy bark of fox's echo amidst the tree trunks and branches that form this sacred woodland empire.

Her nose attunes to the different scents of flora and fauna in the woods, slowly but surely able to distinguish their different origins as the wilding of her soul gains pace. Her sixth sense prickles as she feels a thousand night-dwelling eyes watching her from the inky darkness, another moonchild called home. They have the seen the wilding of souls since the dawning of time, guardians of the secret magic that lies at the heart of this journey.

As she walks, she can feel the twisting of flora swirl up and around her limbs, the trees and plants painting a pattern on her pale skin. As the woods take over her body, she feels energised, vital – the electricity of the forest pulsing through her veins, her very blood alive and on fire. In the places where the moonbeams break through the trees, she can see her skin being tattooed with ivy, holly and berries, with mice and badgers, foxes and owls. bluebells and foxgloves. At her heart, a raven, rainbow black. But these tattoos are not static like conventional tattoo artistry drawn by human hands, her whole body is moving and alive with woodland life and as she breathes the tattooed woodland breathes with her, living art painted by the hands of magic.

The Journey Begins

Juniper berry incense fills my nostrils and my head swirls. As my outward eyes close, the inner eyes open and my body is filled with light, awakened. The sanctuary of my Grove surrounds me, it's still dark but I sense dawn stirring amidst the trees as I listen to the sweet, gentle song of the birds dancing on the air.

My senses prickle and through the clearing I see my faithful Grove companions trotting towards me, Sionnach and Hare. I bend to greet them, their earthy scents filling my lungs, their energy radiating wild, that soul-song impossible to ignore.

With my Crane-skin bag slung across my body I move silently across the clearing, my companions beside me. We head into the forest, my bare feet sinking into the moist, warmth of the woodland floor. All of nature stirs as the dawn sunlight melts through the gaps in the emerald, evergreen canopy. The citrusy grapefruit perfume of the foliage is intoxicating and fills my head with visions of ancient ritual, ancestors at one with nature, worshipping the divine Goddess that is Mother Earth.

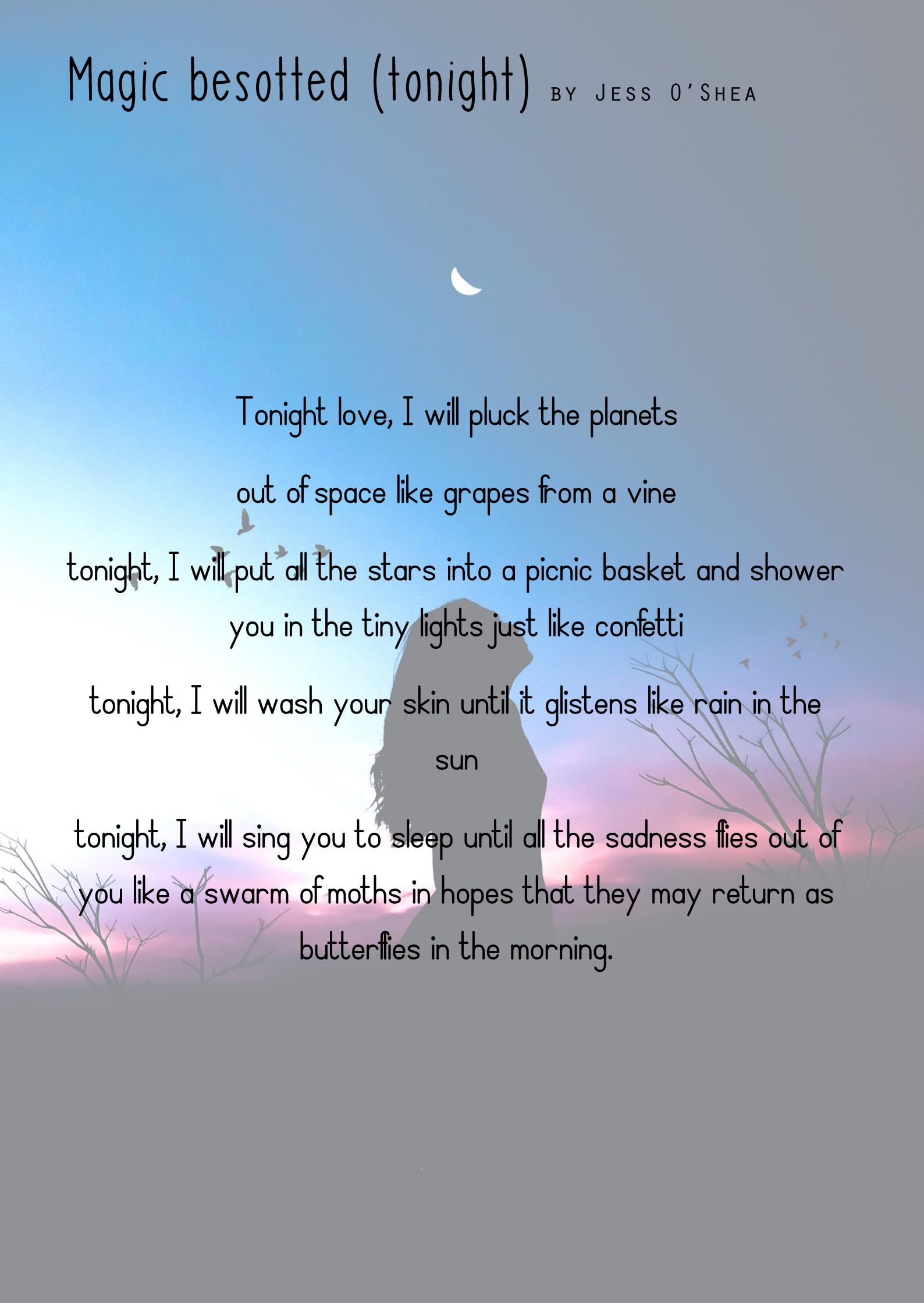
I stop a distance from a giant Douglas Fir, Sionnach and Hare scamper off deep into the forest while I greet the majestic spirit that stands before me. Although the tree is time-worn I can still feel his strength, his aura full of arcane wisdom, his roots deep. I bow before him my stature tiny beneath his sky-sweeping presence. My skin tingles and I know he granted me permission to rest within his energy, to move inside his private space. I seat myself at his base my spine in communion with his thick, corky bark, my feet covered in needle-like leaves. Golden threads of warmth seep through my body, a web woven between he and I. We breathe together slowly, and time stands still. My mind clears and I sense him ask of my purpose. Without words I tell him of my journey to seek out knowledge of the ancient tree lore, and to request his guidance and blessing on my quest. Instantly my mind flashes with kaleidoscope visions of all that he has seen over the countless years of his life, I respond with awe and compassion, a desire to protect and nurture the old ways, so that magic may once again assume it's rightful place within the role of planet custodian.

Open to his inspiration and energy I await his response. True to Fir form he responds with strength and I feel a rich vitality and health course through my veins. A more subtle message emerges of inner wisdom and the ability to see far beyond the realms of the physical eye. I stay awhile, absorbing the spiritual nourishment he's given me, closing my eyes to fall asleep bathed within his green fire.



I'm awoken by the bristle of Sionnachs whiskers on my face. Smiling, I thank the fir for all he has blessed me with before rising to my feet. I place my hands on the fissured bark of his skin once again, the resin lightly staining my fingertips. I collect some needle leaves from the floor, placing them in my Crane-skin bag before returning to my Grove. As my inner eyes close my outward eyes open and I know it's time to close the ceremony in my own, time-honoured way. I reach for my book of magic, and I start to write...

Magic besotted (tonight) BY JESS O'SHEA



Tonight love, I will pluck the planets
out of space like grapes from a vine
tonight, I will put all the stars into a picnic basket and shower
you in the tiny lights just like confetti
tonight, I will wash your skin until it glistens like rain in the
sun
tonight, I will sing you to sleep until all the sadness flies out of
you like a swarm of moths in hopes that they may return as
butterflies in the morning.

Events Listings

Submit your event at thecrowsfeet@outlook.com

Events:

- Elsecar Mind Body Spirit & Wellbeing Festival** – Elsecar Heritage Centre – Sunday 21st March
- The Crows Feet Pagan Craft Fayre** – Talbot Hotel, Stourbridge – Saturday 28th March
- Psychic, Holistic and Spiritual Fayre** – The Collingwood Centre, Great Barr – Saturday 4th April
- Rugby Mind Body Spirit & Wellbeing Festival** – Benn Hall, Rugby – Saturday 9th May
- Witchfest Midlands** – Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent – Saturday 23rd May
- Pagan Tribal Gathering** – Nuneaton, Warwickshire – Thursday 4th-Sunday 7th June
- Lammas Camp** – New House Organic Farm, Derbyshire – Friday 30th July-Sunday 2nd August
- Artemis Gathering** – Kibblestone Scout Camp, Stone – Friday 28th-Monday 31st August
- The Nine Worlds** – Tutbury Castle, Burton – Saturday 12th September
- Manchester Mind Body Spirit Wellbeing & Yoga Festival** – Bowlers – Saturday 26th September
- Wolves Pagan Conference** – Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton – Saturday 3rd October
- Damh the Bard** – The Rose Theatre, Rugeley – Saturday 17th October
- Witches Market** – The Chase Health Club, Penkridge – Sunday 25th October
- Samhain Witches Market** – Victoria Hall, Kidsgrove – Saturday 31st October
- Yuletide Witches Market** – Checkley Community Centre, Checkley – Sunday 6th December

Moots:

- The Crows Feet Wytches Meet** – The Talbot Hotel – Third Sunday of the month 4pm
- Central Lincoln CoA Gathering** – The Dog & Bone, Lincoln – First Tuesday of the Month
- The Wulfrun Gathering** – The Stile Inn, Wolverhampton – Second Monday of the Month
- Derbyshire Pagans** – The Old House, Chesterfield – Second Monday of the Month
- Stoke Central Moot** – The White Star, Stoke-on-Trent – Second Wednesday of the Month
- Rugby CoA Gathering** – Seven Stars, Rugby – Second Wednesday of the Month
- Leicester Pagan Moot** – The Ale Wagon, Leicester – Third Tuesday of the Month
- Kidsgrove Moot** – The Blue Bell, Kidsgrove – Last Tuesday of the Month
- The Woden Thing Moot** – Pretty Bricks, Walsall – Last Tuesday of the Month
- Halesowen Pagan Moot** – The Widders Pub, Halesowen – Last Wednesday of the Month
- Cannock Chase Pagan Moot** – The Park Gate Inn, Cannock Wood – Fourth Monday of the Month

Grimoire

March 2020

Ostara is near, a time of Spring, rebirth, and the return of the sleeping Maiden, reborn from her time as the Crone of Winter.

Waking the Maiden – A simple ritual

It is said the Sun King woke the Maiden with a kiss, bringing spring to all the land.

To honour this time of year, this is a simple ritual you may wish to do for her return. You can do this any time between Imbolc and Ostara (the Spring Equinox) on the 19th March.



You will need:

Two white candles

Herbs and oils of your choice to represent the Sun King and the Maiden.

An early morning

Take time to dress your candles – one to represent the Sun King, and the other to represent the Maiden. You can use oils and/or herbs to anoint them, surround them, or, carving a small hole to stuff them in to. You may also like to use visual representations for the God and Goddess for this ritual, flowers or twigs and leaves found in nature. You can also inscribe sigils or symbols in to the candle.

You can use your altar, sacred space, indoors or outdoors, but you need to be somewhere you can see the sun rise or the rays of the sun as it rises, and somewhere you can place your candles safely.

Take some time to sit quietly and think about the return of Spring and what this means for you. You may want to think about what it will bring in to your life, things you want to try or achieve as the warmer months come in. As the sun rises, light the candle for the Sun King. Notice the heat, the light it brings. Feel yourself warm like the sun warms us.

Think of the Maiden sleeping. Perhaps something sleeps within you, waiting to be awoken in the Spring. As the sun rises higher, lighting up the sky, use your Sun King candle to light your Maiden candle. Let it burn for a while and think upon what has chance to grow along with all that Nature will bring in the coming months. As the Maiden wakes and brings us through Spring, you can return to these candles and light them for meditations or journaling of your own personal journey through Spring.

Egg shell protection powder

Save your egg shells! Did you know they make an excellent protection powder? They are pretty potent on their own, but try out this combination:

Eggshells – ground up in a pestle and mortar

Salt

Dried basil

Grind it all up well and store it in a jar. You can sprinkle it across doorways, use it to cast your circles, or include it in protection spells and witch jars.



Do you have a favourite spell or ritual you would like to share? Email them to thecrowsfeet@outlook.com and we will feature them in future issues!