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WITCH

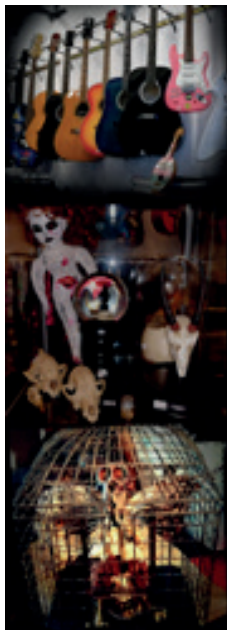
Magazine

Ostara



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Issue 16



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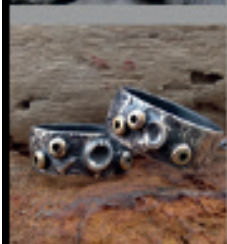
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WITCH Magazine

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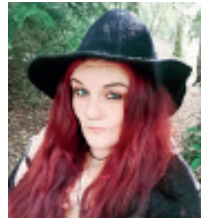
We are welcoming Spring this issue as we celebrate

*O*stara!

Find your regular favourites from our Witch Writers and residents, your monthly Tarotscopes, Grimoire and more!

Our new look website launches today, so pay us a visit at www.witchzine.co.uk for writer profiles, pre orders and so much more!

As always, if you have something you would like to share with us, we'd love to hear from you!



Bekki

Editor of WITCH magazine

Contact us

editor@witchzine.co.uk

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FEATURING
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Michelle Boxley

Fairy Bec

Jessica O Shea

Black Moon Cove
Tarotscopes

Poetry and Fiction

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[@magiazieni](https://www.instagram.com/magiazieni)

WITCH

RESIDENCY WRITERS

NYA HOUSE

Nya is an artist and a writer living in Knoxville, TN with her wife, teenage son and two boxer girls.

Her writing passion comes from the bliss of getting lost in creating worlds and characters in her head. Her art and writing leans towards expression of powerful and strong women as she is always traveling on the journey of bringing that version of herself out. Her background comes from ten years of teaching yoga and mediation with trauma informed practices and reiki.

She is an empath that always forgets to shield herself, An eclectic witch that lives by the turn of the wheel and a creator that just can't stop the waterfall of ideas from spilling all over her studio.

Last year she launched an oracle deck that features all her previous paintings on kickstarter and it was funded in three hours.

This year she launched a Lenormand deck and her Tarot deck launches on 13th March. You can follow her work on instagram: @the_ritual_muse or on her website, www.theritualmuse.com

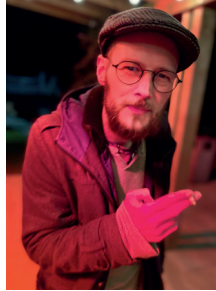
STEPHANIE ULPH



Stephanie Ulph is a Reiki and Sound Healing Practitioner who feels blessed to live near and work within the magical town of Glastonbury, Somerset. She follows her own path, but enjoys making sense of and finding interconnection

between all paths, spiritual practice, myth and religion, though her path is most closely aligned with Shamanism and Paganism in her knowledge and practice. She loves nature, travelling, music and dancing, and assisting people along their spiritual journeys.

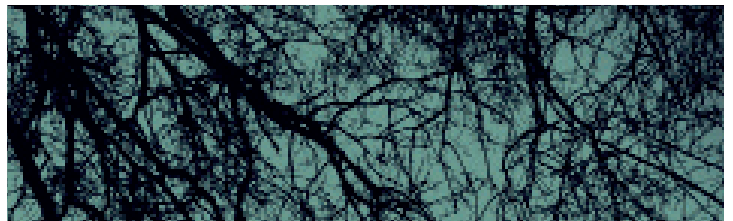
K.D. PHILLIPS



K. D. Phillips is more of a modern conjurer of spirits, describing himself as a modern Cunning Folk type. He has read and practiced multiple summoning books, The Lesser Key of Solomon, The Sacred Book of Abramelin the Mage, and such. He has recently begun a journey to decipher what works and what doesn't. And actively invites you all along on this journey.

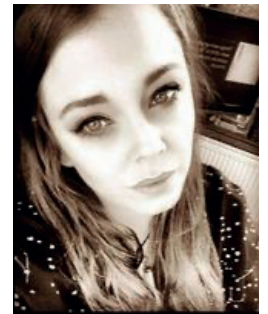
His fiction is relatively unconnected to his magical practices, and is working his way to being traditionally published. He was shortlisted by New Writing North for BBC's Radio 3 show The Verb (Verb New Voices), and mentored by Leeds Playhouse for two years.

He has a new YouTube channel following his search for the paranormal, the strange, and the magical.... Haunting Lands... https://youtube.com/channel/UC65-KK177_ruYgF-GOeFw9xQ



KELLY BUCHAN

Kelly Buchan is an eclectic witch and professional tarot reader from the North East of Scotland. With passions for philosophy, ancient divination systems and both low and high magick, her writing seeks to uncover the structures upon which spiritual concepts are built, while introducing witchcraft to those yet to be initiated into their divinity



ANYA LUKOVER

Hi, I'm Anya and have a passion for helping people to bring balance to their mental and physical wellbeing so that they can enjoy the experiences that life presents as they awaken to their true self.

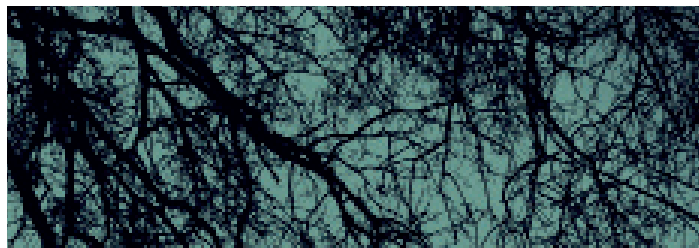


I have trained in various energy therapies that I now blend together to create unique and tailored 1:1 & group sessions for people who are ready to shift out of the programs that they feel stuck in and connect to their power.

I enjoy talking and learning about energy & frequencies, alchemising shadows, wellbeing rituals, essential oils, connecting with plant majick and any other gifts & wisdom that Mother Earth has to offer us. I teach online Qigong classes and hold bi-monthly moon circles.

I absolutely love writing and excited to be joining Witch Magazine.

Find me on IG @ awaken_with_anya - I'd love to hear what my transmissions awaken within you



F.R. MAHER



F.R. Maher graduated with a first in Creative Writing a couple of years back. Prior to that, she published her first novel, a fae fantasy called *The Last Changeling*, plus a horror series. Whilst still at Uni, a trip to a library in Leeds saw her uncover some startling new evidence in a 100 year old case which led to her non-fiction book *'The Secret of the Cottingley Fairies.'*

A regular contributor to *The Fortean Times*, she also co-presents *The Fairy Podcast* with Dan Baines and now has six books to her name. As *'Tink'* she organises festivals in non-Covid times, including *The Legendary Llangollen Faery Festival*. With over 250 stallholders plus bands, walkabout acts and set-piece shows plus 12,000 visitors, it's easily the largest fairy gathering in the UK. She lives in Wales with three opinionated cats.

MIKE SPROUSE

Mike is a dad, a veteran, a voice actor, and podcast host.

He has been practicing almost 30 years as an eclectic solitary witch, and currently a 1st degree Cabot Witch with plans to eventually become a High Priest in the tradition.

Since last august he has created and hosted the podcast *"Son Of A Witch"*, delving into topics concerning the witchcraft and pagan community...with a healthy smattering of pop culture, comic references, and guest interviews. Mike currently resides in New England with his fiance and their 2 fur babies.



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The Sap Moon

The Full Moon in Libra

Dear ones,

We are welcoming in our next full moon on Sunday 28th March at 6:22am(gmt). The March full moon goes by a few different names, I was particularly drawn to the name The Sap Moon which relates to the rising sap in the trees at this time of year. I love this idea of our own life force and creative energy rising within us as Spring is now well and truly underway. This full moon is also called the Worm Moon, the Paschal Moon and the Sugar Moon. It's the first full moon after the Spring Equinox which takes place on March 20th and is in the Air sign of Libra - how wonderful as the season of Spring is associated with the element of air and both Libra and Equinox signify balance!

Both Spring and the element of Air welcome in renewal, inspiration, creativity and a feeling of hope which feels so needed after a long and heavy winter. The sun will have also moved into the sign of Aries (this happens on the same day as the Equinox) so we have another sense of renewal and rebirth as we begin a new zodiac cycle. We are entering the season of the Maiden archetype! The Maiden is the part of us that is sovereign - beholden to no one. The Maiden is creative, curious, playful, courageous, sensual and follows her whimsy and her wonder! It's time to shake off the heaviness of winter and bid farewell to the Crone. It's time to unfurl and emerge from the sleep of winter like the plants in the garden.

Michelle Rose Boxley
for Sisters of the Moon

For this full moon we will have the sun in the fire sign of Aries and the moon in the air sign of Libra. Aries is all about our



relationship to self and Libra is all about balancing this by looking at our relationships with others. This full moon invites us to balance our own needs with the needs of others, and learn to give and receive in equal measure. Libras are always seeking for balance and harmony and are the peacekeepers of the Zodiac. This can sometimes be at personal cost as they often put their own needs and wishes at the bottom of the list and can get into the habit of denying themselves pleasure. With the arrival of Spring and Aries season we can fully step into our Maiden energy and create boundaries around time for our self, going after what we want and voicing our own needs and desires!

This full moon teaches us how to balance the fierce, independent and self assured energy of Aries with Libra's wish for peace and harmony with others. It's an opportunity for us to see how much of our energy is spent people pleasing - you may need some more Aries devil may care attitude, or if you spend too much energy caught up in yourself - add in some of Libra's air qualities of connection, harmony and communication.

Libra teaches us that we are all interconnected in a web of humanity, everything we do affects others and the actions of others also have an effect on us, this is being illuminated not just by the glow of the full moon but also by our current global situation. Libra's ruling planet is Venus, the planet of love, beauty, abundance and pleasure. There is a lot of shame wrapped up in us experiencing pleasure and enjoyment. Do you always feel like you have to justify yourself when you do something that is just for the sheer joy of it? We can look back to our New Moon in Pisces reflections on our creativity and ask how much we block our creative flow because of this guilt and shame. When we long to create do we then strangle that creativity with the need to be productive? That constant need to be productive is a patriarchal quality and needs to be balanced out.

"When you make pleasure your driving force, the doing is a joy and the outcome is irrelevant. When you make pressure your driving force, the doing is a stress and the outcome is always changing. It is irrelevant what you are doing, what is relevant is the undercurrent of emotion that is driving it. You can change your entire life, but if you don't update the system nothing will really change."

- Rise Sister Rise

SPRING GODDESSES

At times such as these when we are dealing with a lot of fear, anxiety and uncertainty, it's a beautiful practice to connect with the divine via the Goddess. Goddesses associated with Spring help us to connect with our inner maiden, with the abundance of mother nature

and with our creativity. Here are a few suggestions:

Blodewedd, Eos, Saraswati, Eostre (Ostara),
Flora, Persephone, Polik Mana, Freya.



LIBRA SELF CARE

Libra rules the lower back, hips, kidneys and bladder so be gentle on these parts of the body as the moon journeys through Libra. Drink plenty of water and lay off the caffeine. Using springtime herbs such as nettle and Dandelion can help to gently cleanse the kidneys but its important you drink plenty of water at the same time. A yoga practice to help release the lower back and hips will not only aid in any muscular tension in these areas but will also help to release old emotions that have been stored here - perfect for the full moon when emotions are heightened and brought to the surface. You could also work with crystals to support and balance the Sacral chakra such as Carnelian and red jasper as well as working with crystals to support the heart chakra such as rose quartz, emerald and green aventurine.

Tune into Libra's balancing and harmonizing energies with essential oils of Geranium - for balance, Bergamot - for harmony and Rose - for love. These are beautiful together and make a gorgeous bath recipe or body oil. Rose is often the symbol for both Venus and the Divine Feminine so why not treat yourself to a bunch of roses to decorate the home.





JOIN SISTERS OF THE MOON

We really hope you have enjoyed this article and wish you a blessed full moon and blessed Ostara.

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ANIMALISTIC BY NATURE

In the past two issues of this magazine I said some things about paganism as we know it being a re-invention. We know little about paganism and its practice, we know even less about the Druids, and nothing of original Witchcraft.

Most of what we use within paganism (in England) comes from Greeko-Roman paganism, Norse, and... well, you know the other stuff. Much like all magical practices come from the renaissance Grimoires. There's a few texts that claim to be older, but only a few date back to the ancient Egyptian era, and even the age of those are debatable.

This was not an attempt to criticise anyone, but more to cut to the chase... to get to the root of it all.

Here I want to talk about the first ever religion. Many believe that Sun Worshipping is the first religion... but certainly that was not the case. The Egyptians had many gods before the concept of one god was accepted. A plethora of gods came before Aten, an aspect of Ra, the sun god that was introduced by Akhenaten.

So what came before all of these gods?

Animalism.

The worship of animals. And there's lots of different animals, which probably led to the numerous gods we see within early paganism... and why many of these gods have animal characteristics.

(Not to be confused with Animism... the belief that plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena have spirits, and that the material universe is animate via supernatural power. This would lead towards later paganism and the worship of multiple gods, but we had to learn this on a smaller scale before it was put into action)

It's hard to define Animalism as a religion, but we can certainly see the elements of spirituality forming.

Obviously, hunting animals was the main source of

K.D Phillips
Witch Residency Writer

food for early humans. Along with foraging. Humans probably copied other animal's eating habits.

Ever wonder how early humans tested what was poisonous? One theory is that we tested on ourselves. Either a single human ate and if they died, we didn't eat it... or we tasted small amounts to see if it made us sick.

This, to me, seems to be a retrospective analysis. Basing this on our current scientifically minded processes.

Early humans were stepping out of animal behaviour and into civilization... Before that, we were animals.

We will have been intelligent enough to observe what other animals were doing, and simply copied what they did. Learning to hunt from wolves and such, and learning what plants to eat by watching herbivores.

(This is speculation, but it's not a bad concept... especially considering that testing on ourselves would easily result in many deaths. With this being small groups/tribes, it is unrealistic to test internally)

This copying of animals would easily lead to the veneration of animals. Recognising each animal's attributes and merits.

In essence, by taking the best each animal can offer, we became an amalgamation of their qualities... we became an intellectual chimaera of sorts.

Hunters were known to wear animal skins to embody hunting prowess.

Could this be where the concept of animal transformation comes from... by mimicry?

What's more interesting about Animalism is that it still exists today. Within the more isolated tribes, Animalism is still in practice... not just remnants, as we see in aboriginal and Native American peoples.

No other ancient religion/spiritual practice has

survived this long.

This means that we don't have to piece together this practice via many distant cultural texts. Texts that are often incomplete, or partially incorrect. For instance, Druids. We know virtually nothing of the Druids. And what we do know comes from a handful of Roman documents. And of course these Romans saw Druids as the enemy, so the contents of the texts are unreliable.

Makes me laugh when people identify as Druid... we know nothing of them.

The common cultural understanding is that Stonehenge was a Druid site, but it predates the Druids by a long margin. Stonehenge is closer to those ancient people who practiced Animalism.

In later years, we start to see Animal Sacrifice.

And we often overlook the fact that these animals weren't just killed to appease a god/gods... the flesh was shared among the community. It was a feast. It was a way to ensure everyone had enough food during tough times.

(Trigger Warning: Veganism was not a choice back then, they had to eat anything to survive. Nowadays we live in a Goldilocks period where exploitation means we can choose what we eat. Have a good think about that... how excess and exploitation means we can choose to condemn the very thing that affords us the privilege in the first place)

We currently anthropomorphize animals... and this stems more from Animalism than it does the domestication of animals. Because it is to look at the attributes and characteristics of our pets more than it is to use them as tools and aids.

While I'm on this, recently I had a conversation about binding demons and spirits being a form of slavery. I disagree with the sentiment. To bind is to enforce that the spirit does what is needed, but the spirit is then free to go about its business. Similar to the Familiar... to bind a spirit in animal form in order to do one's bidding. Spirits don't generally want to help. I can see how the practice

is frowned upon... but I then went on to point out that animals should be free, so keeping a pet is the definition of slavery, or kidnapping.

(I say these things as a (mostly) vegetarian who doesn't own a pet... not to condemn, but to point out hypocrisy)

Before I incur the wrath of many, let me get back to true form:

Animal form. There's many spells that claim to be able to turn humans into animal form. In the Abramelin book there's a spell to turn humans into animals, animals into humans, and animals into stone. Many neolithic stone structures have stories attached to them about people, giants, witches and such being turned to stone.

But spells are internal and metaphorical, aren't they?

Yeah, whatever. See my article in last January's issue.

Many folktales speak of witches being able to turn into giant black cats... have a think about the big black cats that allegedly roam the British countryside. Black panthers being released into the wild is one theory, but black panthers are very rare in nature. The idea of a population is kind of ridiculous. Black panthers are a rare variant of leopards. But we hear more reports of big black cats than we do spotted leopards, our cougars.

We hear of half-human half-animal creatures from the earliest texts through to modern day. Think of werewolves, and Egyptian gods, and such. Can it be possible to transform into an animal... for real?

I'll certainly be attempting the ninth chapter of the Abramelin book to find out.

But it's not scientifically possible, right?

Depends, is the answer.

Think about how our bodies are made of atoms, and atoms are mostly nothing held together by vibration. If the vibration changed, it stands to reason that so would our physical form. A spell, a chant, a shamanic drum beat, these are vibrations. I see no coincidence that Native American peoples speak of Animal Shouts. A kind of word shout-ed that will transform an individual into Animal shape.

However, it is impossible to transform into something with less mass. Where would all the excess matter go if you transformed into a chicken, for instance?

But a humanoid chicken, a half-human half-chicken... a Werechicken...

Okay, that's a silly example, but the theory stands.

But our bodies are physiologically different from other animals, right?

Yes.

But it's common knowledge that humans share 98% DNA with chimpanzees. What's often overlooked is the simple fact that ALL living things share DNA... even plants. You share 60% with a banana. 60% with that previously mentioned chicken. 82% with dogs. 67% with mice. In short, humans share 99.9% DNA with all living things.

Obviously, we also lack certain parts that they have... all creatures and plants have 100% DNA structure to be whole. We lack their missing percentage... which is why we don't have feathers, gills, leafy bits, nocturnal vision. Stuff like that. But we do have similarities from the DNA we do share with the particular living thing in question.

So turning into a wolf... impossible. But turning into a kind of humanoid wolf... not so impossible, just not very likely.

In essence, within our DNA structure and sequence, humans have a limited blueprint of all

living things.

Change the vibration, change the structure. Maybe.

I'm heavily speculating, and doing so with fringe ideas that have no real basis in any practice. I'm juggling with some facts and adding to them... but it's not exactly gigantic leaps of faith.

But there's obviously a more grounded reason for Animalism, and I'd be foolish not to approach this subject without being truly scientific. Especially after the Werechicken section of this article.

Hyper-active Agency Detection.

This is the psychological process of noticing danger when there isn't any... just the potential for danger.

It's why we flinch at a coiled wire, is it a snake? That bit of fluff on the carpet, is it a spider? Early humans needed this more than we do. It's better to see a bear when it's actually just a boulder than it is to not see an actual bear. By becoming too complacent, we become dead.

Your pet dog will flinch at a suddenly moving coil of wire... but your dog has never seen a snake before.

This lends more credence to Hyper-active Agency Detection being genetically hardwired in all living things than it is a learned behaviour.

Many people haven't seen snakes in England, and our spiders are not poisonous, so why this reaction? It's speculated that we can learn from writings, radio, TV, and the internet. But that doesn't explain why animals also do this. If it is genetically ingrained... What else creeps beneath the surface of our minds? This is not evidence of our perception being malleable. It's evidence that our perception plays an integral role in our survival.

Now think of how that boulder was a bear a moment ago until you looked closer. Did a bear just

turn into a rock? Was it a rock that turned into a bear and returned to rock form?

(Maybe we have that children's tale wrong. Maybe the boy who cried wolf really thought he saw something)

This will have given rise from Animalism to Animism... where everything has a spirit, and personality.

It's a great argument for god/gods being an invention based on psychological factors.

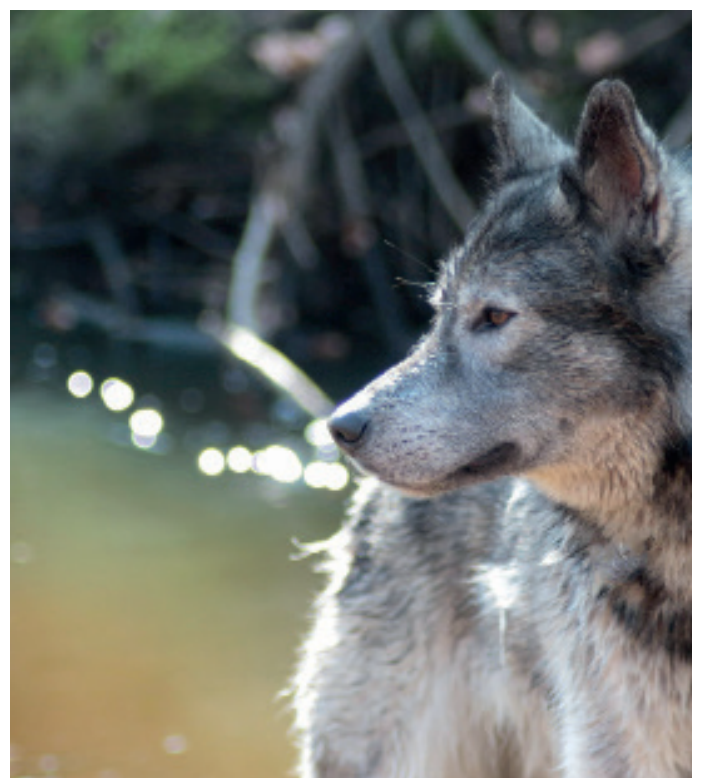
And of course... "Wait, watch out! There's a giant wolf!

Oh, sorry. It's just Steve."

Then poor Steve gets the Witch Trial treatment for being a werewolf.

The conclusion is inconclusive. Is it psychological, or can things change form?

I'll let you know when I attempt chapter nine of The Abramelin.



Faeries

*Building Relationships with
"The Good Folk"*



Stephanie Ulph
Witch Residency Writer

There are many reasons we may wish to connect with and build relationships with the faery realm. Whether we hope to connect with nature on a deeper level, to expand our knowledge of life and existence, to increase harmony between the human and faery realms or to have Faeries assist us in our magick, it is necessary to gain trust and begin to build genuine mutual friendships before attempting to delve into or gain anything from working with the Fae (when I say to gain, I do not mean unnecessary materialistic items - this does not tend to bode well with the Faery folk).

Without delving into the history/folklore/cultural stories linked with the Fae, which would in itself require a dedicated article, it is important to know at least a few things.

Most importantly that there is much discord between the faery and human realms. This is largely, even almost entirely due to the ever-encroaching ways which humans tend to live. Think of what our greed driven society has done to overtake, ostracize and diminish native peoples - the same has been done to the Fae, and they continue to witness our destruction of everything wild, natural and pure.

It is extremely important that we approach the Fae with this in mind. We cannot expect an immediate mutual understanding from the offset, and we must go some way to allow trust to be put in ourselves as individuals, just as it is important also to see the Faery folk as individuals, rather than as purely elemental beings or as stereotyped 'categories' of Fae (discussing in detail the different types of fae and their common attributes would again require its own article, but initially the best way to think of it is like people we can be defined to a point by our nationality/race/culture, but our truest definitions are within our individuality).

Another important point to mention is that it is generally known that the Fae can be somewhat tricky to work with - however it is not that this is always the case but rather a multitude of things including that 'the Fae' is a very broad term and

that respect and custom is essential, as is patience, honesty, integrity and also discernment. With these attributes you shouldn't stumble - particularly hard at least.

So, with all that in mind - here are some ideas and practices for connecting with the Fae:

Be mindful of your own treatment of and effect on the environment

and where possible make adjustments to your routine to help nature thrive. Whether this be picking up litter when out for walks, not buying from companies that disregard the environment, planting trees, helping to save natural habitats etc - the more we live in accordance with natural principles the greater ability we have to connect to nature and all that it encompasses.

Make your garden attractive to the Fae

by planting wildflowers and beautifully scented flowers. You can also create some kind of faery shrine or home - rocks, naturally sparkly pebbles, shells, some form of wind shelter for candles is a good start - include a little space to leave offerings.

Leave offerings and gestures. Faeries are particularly fond of honey, bread, milk, chocolate and mead. Anything sweet and tasty is good though. You can also leave small crystals, pretty pebbles, feathers, ribbons, small flower bunches, dried petals, incense (being mindful of where these items are sourced from). Offerings can be left in your Faery space, out in nature, or on your altar.

Spend some time learning a little about the Fae

Read up on folklore and even fairy-tales. Learn about the different types of Faery folk and their customs. In doing so be mindful that some information can be contradictory and not everything you may read is totally correct at least for all Faery folk. Simply use your intuition to help you with this. Anything you would like to question, once you have established some rapport you can

ask directly. In his ground-breaking book *The Old Straight Track*, Alfred Watkins refers to folklore legends (in general) as 'lingering fragments of fact disguised by an overlay of generations of imaginings'. For me this is a perfectly succinct description and well worth acknowledging when delving through folklore (ancient facts) and fairy-tales (ancient fables and/or modern fables inspired by ancient facts).

Visit the Fae in their natural residence - This is most certainly the best way to connect with any fae or nature spirit. This can be done any time of day, any day of the year, however the best times are the 'in-between' times. Dusk or dawn is best as a time of day. And the Sabbats are great times for much Faery activity. This certainly doesn't mean that you can only connect on the Sabbats but that you will notice much greater activity on these days (especially Beltane, Samhain and Litha).

In the same respect you will notice a difference at dusk or dawn compared to the rest of the day therefore where possible try to visit at these times.



When it comes to deciding where to go, quite simply if you have anywhere nearby to you that feels very magical or that you are intuitively drawn to, this is most likely a great place to start. Otherwise, Faeries love any natural space! Woodlands rich in moss, lichen, ferns and mushrooms are a particularly great place to look for Faery folk. As are natural water sources - waterfalls, lakes, rivers, streams and the seaside. And of-course known magical places - stone circles, barrows, wells and places rich in legend and folklore.

Upon finding a place you feel is right to tune into the faery realm, visit there with the intention in mind of making connection, allow yourself to become relaxed and meditative, and as you walk through or to your desired place take your time to pay attention to nature. Notice different trees, fauna, hear the wind, notice the smell of the earth. Allow yourself to touch the trees you pass, look closely at bark, different mosses and lichen, tuning yourself into the magick of nature.

When you get to or find somewhere you would like to sit, allow yourself to deepen into meditation, sending your thoughts out to the faery realm. You can introduce yourself, giving your name and a bit about you and also why you are there and what your overall intentions are.

Be authentic! You can also ask questions if you feel inclined, especially as to whether your presence is welcomed there. Notice any feelings you get! If you feel comfortable stay a little longer. If you get an un-comfortable feeling, do not be offended or feel put off as a whole, simply look for somewhere else.

Most of the time you are likely to feel your presence is ok and you may also experience other signs of communication such as feeling the presence of other beings, noticing things darting around from the corners of your eyes, leaves moving when no wind is blowing, crackling sounds, animals or birds may also seem interested in you and watch from a short distance and eventually you will hear and

sometimes see Faery folk. Be mindful of the cautiousness Faery folk have of us humans and don't feel dis-heartened or try to rush things if it takes a while to get much response. It will come.

Connect with Faeries on the astral plane

Whilst as mentioned the overall best way to connect is by venturing out into nature, practically this is not always possible for various reasons. Besides sometimes it's nice to easily make connection from within your own home, plus it can be done more regularly.

Faeries reside on the astral plane known as the 'otherworld', or sort of in between the physical world and the otherworld, and here we can visit them using astral projection/trance work. This is not as difficult as you may think if you haven't done it before, and with a little practice becomes quite second nature (there does seem to be some mis-leading teachings, that astral projection means actually leaving your body, which can lead people to think they cannot do it. This is simply not the case. I may do an article in the future on astral projection but for now just be assured that you will be able to journey to the otherworld).

To do this find a quiet space where you will be undisturbed. You can smudge and/or light incense or a candle if you wish. Using a drum, rattle, singing bowl or listening to some relaxation/meditation music are also excellent aids especially whilst getting used to journeying.

Either sit up or lie down straight, take a few deep breaths and set your intention of journeying to meet Faeries and then allow your mind to travel outwards. At this point you can guide your mind's eye to a magical place that you know, down a Faery door/portal in a tree, through a well, over a rainbow, down a stream - a few ideas of where you can begin your journey and let your mind know that you are entering the Otherworld.

Personally, I feel it best to keep it simple initially - take in the environment, notice any similarities

and differences from where you live, feel free to explore a little and if you do encounter any Faery folk, introduce yourself, say why you are there, and pick up on any impressions you get, whether heard or felt. To return, go back the way came and upon returning allow yourself to integrate your experience. You can leave an offering on your altar if you have one.

The more you journey to meet the Fae the more proficient you will naturally become. If you have never done any meditation or anything similar and find this difficult you can spend some time doing guided meditations (there are many to choose from free on YouTube) which will help greatly in building your skills to this type of work.

And finally, a few things to be mindful of when working with the Fae.

*Be sensible of anything you say you will do
and always keep your word!*

Never step inside of a Faery ring!

*Do not join in dancing with the Faeries on
the astral plane where time can easily be
lost!*

*Do not partake in eating and drinking on the
astral plane!*

*Faeries generally are not keen on the overuse
of pleases and thanks.*

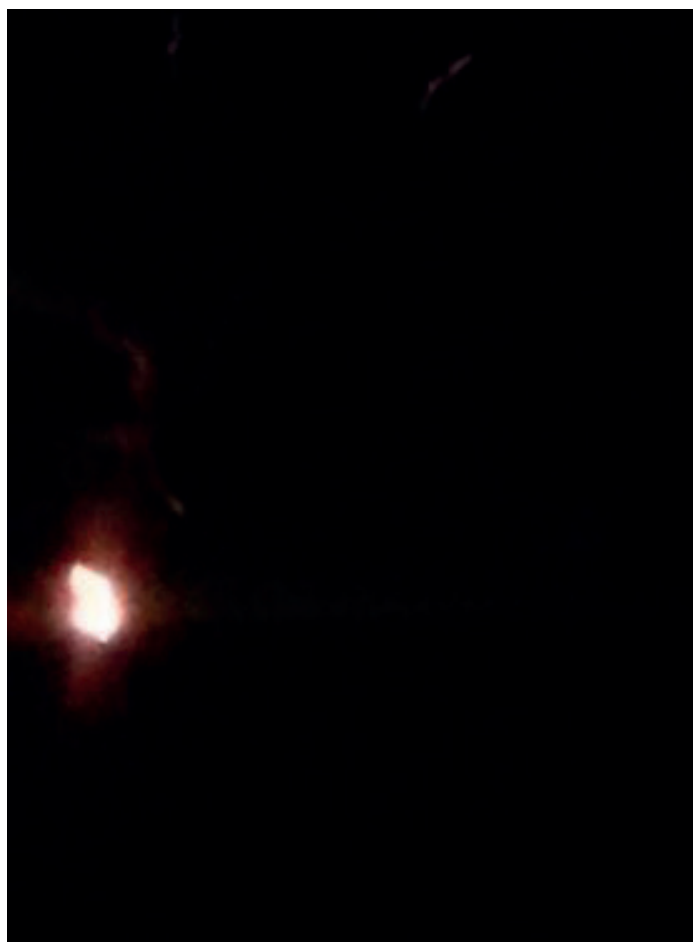
This doesn't mean you must not say them at all but overusing can come across either fake or sound like you are grovelling, which either way does not fit with the honour that the Fae regard immensely - the latter they tend to see as dis-honouring of yourself rather than honouring of them as we may see it.

And most importantly

Do not expect anything from the Fae
Build genuine relationships openly and honestly and from there will you begin to see and experience the many personal, spiritual and magical benefits of knowing and working with Faeries.

With spring finally here and Beltane not too far away, now is a great time to begin getting to know the Fae. Maybe by the time Beltane arrives you will want to invite them to join in your celebrations.

*Sambain at Boscastle
An orb? Or a lady holding a lantern?*



LIVING LIMINALLY

Helen J.R. Bruce
Witch Writer

In a climate of fear, it can be so easy to become tense and grip tightly. It is a natural response, to cling to what we're used to, or what we perceive as 'normal'. But our bodies are not designed to be tight all the time. Muscles which do not flex become tense and painful. Ideas which are gripped as a shield can grow sharp like a weapon. This is the point at which we freeze, gripping our raft until the blood blossoms from our palms, and we realise we have marooned ourselves on an island of terror. We worry that if we let go we will drown, and we've been warned that the darkness below is the home of all horrors.

But what if we could swim? And the current was kind? And the soft wind blew us to a safe new horizon? In this article I will share with you some thoughts around the idea of 'living liminally' which, for me, represents a soft way of taking responsibility for our own journey. I encourage you to consider the concept of 'holding on loosely' and, as a structure and grounding motif which you may wish to continue to explore and work with, I have arranged my thoughts under three different runes.

Ingwaz 'trust'

To be in a liminal place is to be in-between absolutes. Dawn and dusk, as well as the yearly equinoxes, are liminal times, and therefore long associated with magic and power. When we choose to remain liminal ourselves, it allows us obtain the balance of having a foot in both worlds. By that, I propose we can engage positively and meaningfully with the apparent material world, but can also access and gain knowledge from the realms of spirit. This allows us to remain grounded, yet open to our intuition, which means we can imbue physical action with magical intent.

In order to remain in a liminal space we must resist the common urge to overly categorise ourselves and other people. It is a deep rooted response to fear the 'other' and of course the many tropes of horror play on this. But, by trusting ourselves to be enough, without the armour of a pre constructed identity, we can allow ourselves the space to step back and assess others objectively. Are they the threat that they may at first seem? Or are their ideas and perspective different, but still valid? Once we release absolutes, we can move away from perceiving a challenge to our beliefs as a threat to ourselves. We can understand that self does not dwell in rigid ideas, but is constantly evolving and assimilating fresh knowledge.

Laguz 'flow'

The ability to flow is key to our energetic and physical wellbeing. You have probably heard

the saying 'going against the flow' and know that 'a bough that bends in the wind does not break.' But how does this link to living liminally? For me, remaining liminal allows for a process of constant renewal and regeneration. By keeping our bonds with our own definition of 'self' light we can flow between various versions of ourselves as best suit any given situation, as well change overarching convictions that no longer serve us. This ability to 'shapeshift' is a natural gift which enables empathy on a deep level with others, plus allows us to flow through various environments without unnecessary resistance. I do not feel that presenting one version of yourself in the office and another version of yourself in the forest is in any way untruthful. In fact, what could be more true to yourself than allowing your many facets to thrive and have purpose?

Furthermore, a liminal view of self is not damaged by others who do not belong to a corresponding group or category. Instead, someone who has mastered living liminally can delve into their many facets of self, all of which are healthy and nourished, and pick out a shared experience or idea that builds bonds instead of barriers. A liminal person can be comfortable in a wide range of situations, and has no need to assert themselves or their beliefs over others.



Gebo 'giving and receiving'

To live liminally is in no way to be weak or indecisive. It does not mean that you have not thought about your perspectives, or that you do not feel strongly about concepts that matter. What it does mean, is that these concepts are allowed to go on growing and evolving, rather than being shut up in glass cases to be unquestioningly revered. If new information comes to light, which affects how you see something, it is digested and considered as nutrition, not poison. The process of flowing, which we have previously considered, avoids stagnation and naturally seeks a balance through movement.

We have all seen a river flowing from higher ground to lower, or a reservoir swelling with rainfall and dropping as it feeds all our homes. Likewise, we can hold onto wealth, status, poverty or isolation loosely and always be open to a shift. By acknowledging the natural flow, we can avoid severe feelings of disappointment or loss. We can move away from taking things personally, and instead take ownership of the new state we find ourselves in. Avoiding the snares of self importance and self pity, we can channel all of our energy into moving forward positively. This rune reminds us to remain open to good happening to us, and also that we can do good for others. Every exchange of ideas or energy feeds into the movement of flow and brings us further away from the rigidity of extremes.

If any of these ideas speak to you, then now is the time to begin practising with them. Many of our ancestors had liminality thrust upon them; from the wise woman to the blacksmith who was made to live on the edge of the village because such skills were seen as 'magic'. In this modern day, we are blessed with considerably more ease in inhabiting our spiritual and mundane lives simultaneously, and that sweet point between them is a landscape of power.

TRUSTING ONESELF: THE TROUBLE WITH SOCIAL



As Ostara encroaches upon our collective horizons and the ever turning wheel lurches us onwards through the year, I've found myself pondering the effects of social media aestheticism on the modern day lives of witches. In particular those who are new to the craft. As I type this now, I can see swathes of young beautiful witches scoffing into their morning coffees at the mere mention of a social media panic, and I can understand why. We now live in a time of technological advancement never seen before in this era of civilisation, so why shouldn't we occultists also be reaping the benefits of the silicon age?

Having so many talented magicians from all over the world is a wonderful thing, and we are truly blessed to live in an age with the internet where we have instant access to more information about witchcraft than any mage from centuries past could have even dreamt of. However when it comes to the development of one's own personal craft I strongly believe that Facebook and Instagram are not the appropriate tools with which to feed ourselves, particularly witches whose craft is still in the early stages of awakening.

I was lucky enough in life to have been made aware of my inherited abilities from a young age, so believing in the power of my divinity came as second nature by the time I learned how to use it. Not all witches come to the craft through ancestral lines though, and I can only imagine how impenetrable it might seem to be met by thumpingly beautiful instagram reels on seasonal living and endless variations of the same spells which have been tweaked time and again to fit the content creator's own artistic style.

Kelly Buchan
Witch Residency Writer

Let us imagine for a moment, a solitary witch who lived in the 15th century. What would she have done without facebook and instagram or even books with which to find guidance? Would she have doubted her abilities?

Of course not.

She would have attuned her connections to the higher realms of existence through meditation, allowing her to feel the vibrational qualities of the plants and herbs, to see the energetic fields in which we live and to hear the guiding messages from her ancestral spirits and guides. She would have revelled in the beauty and holisticness of nature, and believed in her own will so powerfully, that not a single thought of self doubt could ever cross her mind.

There is truly nothing which separates us from the enigmatic high priestesses and all powerful magicians who paved the paths we all now walk on, except perhaps the belief that we too deserve to live such dynamic and influential lives.

I've spent many an hour this year talking to those not acquainted with any aspects of esoterica in order to better understand what it must look like from an outsider's perspective. The words "daunting", "ominous" and "bonkers" were the most commonly used adjectives to describe the structure within which all of us feel so comfortable and at peace with the universe. This inaccessibility is often seen as the first barrier to initiation. Those who can see past the cascading waterfalls of increasingly formidable and foreign texts and study materials that come hand in hand with the occult will see the shining light that lies beyond all doubt. And this dear reader, is the most powerful and comforting connection of them all.

This comfort, the knowing which comes from the nurturing of one's own psychic abilities, is a gift. It comes to us after rigorous study and strong discipline within the craft, not by regurgitating

memes from social media and taking other people's words as gospel. We must be confident within our abilities, quieting the noise of any outside distractions and finding the guiding voice which lies beyond the stillness. It waits for us all, but only some of us are lucky enough to be met with it.

By committing to a daily practise of low magick and experiencing the visceral connections to the higher realms of consciousness, we are nourishing the divine aspects of our souls. It awakens wisdom which has been hidden from view, and allows us to step into our power so effortlessly, it feels as though it's been there with us for eternity.

In my humble opinion, the true essence of witchcraft lies within the hours spent alone cradled within the sanctuary of the mind's eye.

It can be felt within the tears of release which flow during an energetic purge beneath the majesty of the full moon.

It can be heard in the whispers which creep up one's spine during a tarot reading and it can be seen within the eyes of witches everywhere, who have stared into the abyss, only to find themselves staring right back.



SPRING CLEANING

YOUR MIND



Jessica O'Shea
Witch Writer

Hello readers! So, it is almost Spring (again!) and after a tumultuous 2020 I think it is time to practice mindfulness as the rebirth of our Earth comes around again. I will be taking you through a relaxing and grounding meditation and some new crafts and hobbies for you to pursue & prepare you for the New Bloom.

CRYSTALS FOR SPRING:

♥ SERPENTINE

This crystal has detoxifying qualities and helps clear the chakras. This crystal works for personal transformation and making essential life changes.

♥ FLOWER AGATE

Also known as Cherry Blossom Agate and Sakura Agate - this crystal is a perfect representation of the first signs of Spring in its flower like pattern, fusing with pink, white and earthy colours.

♥ CHRYSOPRASE

This crystal has natural growth and nature qualities, with its turquoise shade. It is also great for getting you started with your motivation to begin new changes in your life.

♥ SODALITE

with its deep indigo body and white veins, this crystal has space and mind clearing qualities, giving you the clarity and space you need to get inspired, gain higher perspective and embark on a new journey.

WELCOMING THE NEW BLOOM

You can see the nights are getting longer, the sun getting closer and more orange, basking all in the Golden Hour before it sets for the night. This is a great time to begin your meditation as the night draws in.

Before you begin your meditation, it's time to get your journal.

- ♥ Write down what your desires are for the New Bloom, what do you want to achieve as the earth begins to awaken?
- ♥ What do you think is holding you back from achieving your rebirth goals?
- ♥ What projects do you wish to complete for rebirth?
- ♥ What new habits and hobbies do you wish to begin?

ACTIONS FOR THE NEW BLOOM

As the blue sky becomes more visible to us all, it's time to begin some cleansing and decluttering, in your mind and in your physical space.

- ♥ Clean out dead leaves and plants from your garden, plant new seeds!
- ♥ Go for walks in your local park/woodlands for clarity and breathe in the fresh air. Collect rocks and flowers on your way that you want to keep on your altar/in your journal.
- ♥ Clear your personal space, literally it is time to begin your spring cleaning! Decluttering your space will declutter your mind.
- ♥ It is always time to be mindful of our environment - recycle what you can!
- ♥ If you are able to, try to donate your old clothes and accessories to your local homeless shelter/charity.
- ♥ Time to get creative - create new decorations to welcome the New Bloom, daisy chains, new plants, paintings, sketches, charm bracelets/necklaces.
- ♥ Brew new teas! Chamomile tea has anxiety relieving qualities, this will help when practicing mindfulness.



THE NEW BLOOM MEDITATION

You do not need to have completed all of these tasks; they are just mere suggestions of what can help you reach your mindfulness goal. Even if you have only done one of these things today - you deserve to wind down.

This will be most effective at the Golden Hour - but as we are still in overcast cloudy weather at the moment, you can practice this short meditation any time of the day - whether you are a morning person or a night owl!

Let's begin.

- ♥ Lie down or sit comfortably in your favourite space. Close your eyes and focus on how your breathing moves through your body gently.
- ♥ Inhale the day, exhale everything that has happened. Let it flow out of you in order to welcome a new breath.

- ♥ Breathe in peace, visualise inhaling all the thoughts and events of the day. Fill up completely. Then, let it go.
- ♥ Think about the fresh air and fresh floral scents Spring shall bring. Visualise new and exciting things that may happen as the Earth blooms again - so will you.
- ♥ Remember your growth over the past months, acknowledge that changes will come.
- ♥ Each season brings a brand new you. The plants and nature wither away in winter, they come back stronger in Spring.
- ♥ You are a budding flower, pushing through to the light to begin your rebirth. You are about to sprout. You have been protected by Earth for all these months.
- ♥ You drink the rain water, filling up with Mother Earth's persistence and peace. Feel the cooling droplets on your skin.
- ♥ What is it you want to improve? What are the little and big changes you wish to make? Visualize yourself as the flower, poking through the Earth as you bloom.
- ♥ See yourself achieving these goals - no matter how big or small. The other flowers are your family and friends, cheering you on as you blossom.
- ♥ Keep believing in yourself, you have been and will be amazing, focus on all your achievements and what else you will achieve in the New Bloom. You will make it happen.
- ♥ Just like the rest of Mother Nature's miracles, you come back stronger than before.

Well done! You have just practiced amazing mindfulness! Now make a great big stretch, exhale and open your eyes.

I hope this little guide will help you kickstart your own New Bloom. Spring is the most forgiving and peaceful season, it is definitely the time of year to practice being gentle with yourself, celebrating the little victories and creating a safe and welcoming environment for yourself.

Happy blessings! Have a great season. ♥



Elizabeth Franklin, A Witch's Tale

Available at Amazon

Free on Kindle select



The witch of a Franklin
shall live once more

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE OLD CRONE

TASSOMANCY AND DIVINATION



How often when someone is feeling down or upset the first words of comfort are so often, 'come on in and I'll make us a nice cup of tea.'

Its been said to me and I have said it often enough. A cuppa is a comfort. When we have visitors we usually offer a drink of some description and what that might be depends on the time of day. This offer is the welcome, it is an indication of comfort, wellbeing and security. More to the point, it always helps.

Around the world the art of tea brewing is a form of high culture, yet it is such a simple act of comfort. Tea can be made from almost any edible source, rose petals, hips and haws, fruits and herbs. Before I cast a circle I always make a tisane of herbs to offer all participants. I grow my own herbs and dry them so I have an infinite supply and regularly drink my favourite, nettle tea with honey.

I came into the world of divination through the art of tassomancy at quite an early age, even though I was not able to make head nor hound of what I saw in the bottom of a teacup. I have never practiced this very ancient and noble art nor have I ever been able to find anyone who does. I came into Divination through cartomancy. 'Oh,' I hear you ask, 'What has this to do with tea?' Well hold on, it does.

I come from a very large wider family as my grandmother was one of fifteen and was in constant touch with all her siblings. She was especially close to one brother, my Uncle Dick and his wife Aunty Lena. (Selina) We had regular family gatherings and as they had a large kitchen table we would visit them often. There was only room for the adults at the table so we children sat on the cross bar underneath. Each family member brought something to the feast and there were always two large tea pots on the table. It was unceasingly such fun and after tea, as the tea brewed was always loose tea, Aunty Lena read tea leaves. There was no dissention even though we were all Catholic (oh yes indeed!) We unerringly embraced the fact that this old world activity was totally acceptable and part of our family rituals. It was a magical experience in every sense of the word.

There would be an expectant hush in any conversation as soon as Aunty Lena began her tassomancy. She would ask the querant to swirl the dregs widershins then deosil, then place the saucer on top and flip the cup over handing it to her upside down. We would all watch in silent awe. We children stood behind Aunty Lena who would slowly turn the cup over and show it to us. She always picked me out to try to read the dregs. It unceasingly sent a shiver of recognition down my spine however try as I might, I was never able to see the anchor, star, shadow, cloud, dog etc. She encouraged me to try over and again but it never worked for me. One such afternoon she said, 'You know you may be better with cards.' Now I loved card games and still do so perhaps the two were related. She sorted a brand new pack into Ace, 7, 8, 9, 10 Jack, Queen, King and gradually taught me the meanings of each suit and then each card. Almost sixty years on (yes I am afraid so!) I still have these original cards. I began to tell 'fortunes' to my friends and could not believe it when they informed me how accurate the readings were. All though my teens I read cards and then as a student, my boyfriend, now my husband, found a pack of Tarot cards which he purchased for me and I never looked back.

I was not initially able to get on the Tarot cards until someone suggested I put the original, ordinary card pack away and sleep with the Tarot under my pillow. Gradually the cards began to speak to me like the original part deck.

I now have a very wide collection of cartomancy ephemera as well as other divination devices used regularly and often in tandem. All due to Aunty Lena and her Tassomancy and to her I am eternally grateful.

If this speaks of nothing else, it is to find and follow your own pathway.

Blessed Be

The Old Crone



Words from the Witches Journal

Spring Equinox

I have a large wooden cupboard in the alcove off my living room where I keep my 'witchy' stuff - chalice, athame, wand, crystal ball, and things I have gathered over the years.

It also houses my journals, records of things I've done, things I've learned.

There are scribblings of my personal feelings, and my coven history, things we have done together.

In lockdown, with plenty of time on my hands, I thought I would take a look in this cupboard, remind myself of my journey.

The memories it brought back!

Then I thought I might share them with you.

Portland Jones
Witch Writer

The Spring Equinox, Ostara, is a time of renewal. Flowers are making themselves known, springing from their buds to wave colourful faces in the breeze. From my window, I can see the yellows of forsythia and mahonia. Ritual at this time is always joyful. We keep records of our rituals, and often write them up in advance to give us guidance.

Friday 21st March 2008

'Ostara - a time of wind and change, of fresh beginnings. A time of chaos and optimism. A time when we know something good is coming; we can sense it in the air. Let's rejoice, join in the madness, let the earth know that we are eagerly awaiting the changes that mean spring is here.'

We met at 6am in the woods, robed, with a garland of fresh green leaves and flowers in our hair, carrying a staff or a stout stick, and streaming ribbons behind us. We walked around the woods to peaceful places, knocked three times on the ground, to waken Mother Earth, saying 'Mother Earth, awaken and clothe yourself in your mantle of fresh green'.

We made our way to the circle, weaving patterns with our ribbons, placing a ribbon at each of the quarters, and one at the centre. We had planted seeds at Imbolc, and we had brought moon water, blessed by the light of the full moon, to water our plantings, to encourage their strong growth, just as we hoped we would flourish and blossom, our hopes and dreams coming closer.

We took time to wonder at the dawn, as the sun rose from the earth to the heavens, raising energy as we stamped our sticks with the heart beat of the earth.

Then came the Ostara eggs, eggs blown so they were hollow, then filled with herbs. Each egg would be tailored to an individual, with herbs to support their current needs. We cracked the eggs over their heads, showering them with the contents. And then we all went back to Moonstoane's to decorate the Ostara tree and have a good breakfast.

Ostara 2013

This year we focused on Ostara as a time of balance.

'Stand in your quarter. Align yourself east to west, right hand facing west. East is the direction of light, of the morning sun. See the brightness. Let it flow through you and pass out to the west, towards darkness.

Turn to align yourself south to north, right hand facing north. South is the direction of fire. Feel the warmth. Let it flow through you and pass out to the north, towards the cool of the earth.

Turn to align yourself west to east, right hand facing east. West is the direction of the setting sun, of darkness. Feel the comfort of the night, the darkness that allows the moon to shine. Let it flow through you and pass out to the east.

Turn to align yourself north to south, right hand facing south. North is the direction of earth, of cool and growing things. Feel the strength of growth and new beginnings. Let it flow through you and pass out to the south.

Raise your hand to the sky, align yourself from above to below. Feel the gentle nothingness above and the solid ground beneath you.

You are the centre of all things. You are spirit. Take what you need to keep in balance, to be grounded and at ease.'

We developed a series of words and movements to help us visualise the elements:

- Air blowing - hands to front, palms facing out - feel the wind on your palms
- Fire blazing - hands to side, palms facing out - feel the heat from the fire
- Water flowing - hands to side, palms facing up - catch the rain in your palms
- Earth growing - hands to side, palms facing down - feel the cold rising
- Spirit blending - hands out to side - gathering motion towards the chest

Ostara 2007

We liked to keep a record of each ritual after the event, a debrief so to speak, so we could learn from our experience, what worked well, what didn't, anything unusual that we noticed.

The record sheet from 2007 makes interesting reading.

'There was a strong smell of slurry in the woods which disappeared when the circle had been cast. The smell came back again once the circle had been closed.'

Another comment reminded me of a funny tale to tell you - 'scared off strangers'. This ritual had taken place at night. The woods where we held rituals was open access and on occasion we were aware that we were not alone. Usually it would be dog walkers taking their pets for a last walk before bedtime. Sometimes it was more sinister.

We had a very nasty incident where a group of teenaged lads surrounded us, demanding to know what we were doing. We spoke pleasantly to them but the ring leader became aggressive. They picked up stones and threw them at us. I was hit in the chest. Eventually they became bored, probably as we didn't retaliate, and left us alone.

That wasn't the funny tale, just to give you some background.

In 2007, there were people in the woods, and they did not appear to be just walking past with their dogs. Apprehensive, I raised my arms to the sky and spoke loudly and authoritatively in sonorous Latin. (I had learned Latin at school, and could remember enough to make it sound authentic, but had no idea what I was chanting.) On this occasion, we just happened to have with us instruments that made the sounds of rain and of thunder. As I completed my chanting, other members created a storm of epic proportions.

Tree branches rustled, feet pounded and the people who had been watching us hastily left us alone. The tale does not end there. Last year my son's girlfriend told us the story of some friends of hers who had had a strange encounter in the woods when they were youngsters. And yes, it was us they ran away from. Small world.





MEDIUMSHIP



I will start this piece by saying that this topic can be controversial and that the following is simply my opinion on the subject.

I have been pondering this subject for years now. Many people have asked me “Are you a medium?” and my answer used to be “No”. But maybe I am? Or maybe I wasn’t but I am growing that skill?

What is a medium?

To me, a medium is someone who is so connected to messages from spirit that they don’t need a ‘medium’ (e.g. cards) to read from. They, themselves, are the medium through which spirit is channelled.

What I think makes a true medium

Firstly, if you have to ask the human you are reading for specific questions to gain subject matter, you are not likely to be listening to spirit. These sorts of questions might be when the ‘medium’ asks “What do you do for a living?” or “Do you have a grandparent who has passed over?”.

I believe that if you truly trust in spirit and have formed that link, spirit will give you the messages that the receiver needs to hear at that time.

Secondly, the mediums I have met that I would classify as true mediums have either said things as if they are reading my mind or said things at the start of a reading that nobody would know.

My two best examples of this are:-

1) Nearly twenty years ago now I was doing a ‘Thriller’ dance performance in a large pub in York for a Halloween event. There were two mediums there and us

Fairy Bec
Witch Writer

dancers were chatting away to them prior to the show. One of them had fascinating eyes. I was looking at her wondering if she was wearing contact lenses. She said to me "What is this about eyes?". I was blown away and here is where my belief in mediumship started.

2) The first time I met my friend, Gemma Stacey, I had just completed my Reiki 1 course and had discovered that I had a main spirit guide. My main guide is a shapeshifting Elven man who can transform into a Barn Owl at will. Now, this sounds really far out and I was already sceptical at the time about spirit guides. I assumed it was my imagination over anything else so I had not declared this to more than a couple of people. However, as I was setting up my table, Gemma started giggling. She turned to me and said "Your Owl is really cheeky; he is playing around with my Wolf." Needless to say, I then paid her for a reading that revealed deep down things that I had never expressed to anyone for fear of being ridiculed.

Finally, to be a medium, I believe that you need to be skilled in reading other people's energies. Auras can be a great place to start. The colour, the texture, the shape - all these elements can indicate the energies around the person at the time and therefore the support that they require. Most people who come to a medium or reader do so because they need guidance and support. It is a kind of therapy. I believe that spirits and angels draw closer to those in need so by reading a living person's energies, you can see which spirits are close to them at the time.

This energy reading skill usually comes with time and life experiences. This is why I believe the best mediums are older people and not usually under the age of thirty.

Charlatans

I go back to the subject of questioning here. If a 'medium' has to ask tons of specific questions, my question is - what information are they actually receiving from spirit?

I had this once with a 'Crystal Ball Reader' in Whitby. She asked me "What do you do for a living?" At the time I was a performer and when I replied with this, she said "I see you on T.V.". To me, this was pretty obvious and she had no details for me about this T.V. appearance. She also told me that I travel a lot. No s**t Sherlock! Someone with a southern accent has rocked up in a northern town! She did not tell me anything that was not linked to things she couldn't gain from my physical presence or through direct questioning. She was the worst Charlatan I have ever met and I am pretty sure she knew it.

Some people also believe what they want to believe. You may present a 'medium' with a photo of someone who has passed and they know they have passed. They may say things like "I am getting Mum/Grandma" when presented with a picture of a woman. You then say "No, it was my Aunt" and they style it out "Oh yes, I was seeing the connection of an older woman in your life". They might also go on to say "I see organ failure". Well, how else do you die?

I have seen this a lot and many people do feel a lot of comfort from basically being asked enough questions until they have convinced themselves that the medium has connected with this specific person. This is because this is what they desperately want. The 'medium' then tells them that their loved one is peaceful and looking down on them - what they want to hear.

This is where I take a slightly different stance on the 'charlatan' label - essentially, the 'medium' is giving the customer what the customer has asked for and the customer walks away satisfied. Is this really a bad thing?

Not all people who call themselves 'A Medium' but whom have no apparent skill in the area are charlatans. Some truly believe that they are channelling messages despite obvious interviewing of the client.

Should you ask for your money back when faced with a Charlatan or a poor Medium? No. That person has still given up their time for you and an exchange of energy is always necessary. What you should do, in my opinion, is your research. The most secure reading will come from a word-of-mouth recommendation.

When attending your appointment online or in person, I recommend that you wear neutral clothes, take any wedding rings off and don't answer direct questions with straight answers.

Who can be a medium?

I strongly believe that every living being has the ability to tap into these skills.

There are some people who are brought up in families with generations of known mediums. There are others of us who are brought up with open minds and parents who openly do things such as reading tarot and dowsing. Ultimately, connection with spirit needs to feel natural to you for you to start to hone your mediumship skills.

Trust is the key factor. You need to trust in your connections with spirit.

For those just starting out, my major advice would be to declare if you are a fledgling and charge accordingly. That way, you can build your reputation up without being tarnished with the 'Charlatan' label.



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A BRIEF GUIDE TO SPELLWORKING

Lecture to the old Cardiff Coven c.1986 Peter Nash

Wicca is primarily a religion. It is the worship of the Old Gods and the attunement with nature through the eight festivals of the Wheel of the year. But what of the practical side of the Craft, the working of Sacred Magic? To put things in perspective, magic is very much a secondary function of the Craft. Any Coven worth its salt should put the worship of the Gods and spiritual development of the Coven members first, otherwise we have no wicca. Nevertheless there are working evenings of the Coven or Esbats to give them their correct Craft name. These usually occur on or before the full moon of each month although special working meetings may be convened at any time in an emergency.

There are many different types of Magical working ranging from long and highly ritualised Golden Dawn style invocations of God forms to simple candle magic workings, all are valid and may work equally well as the complex ritual.

The point to keep in mind is that magic is a natural phenomenon not a supernatural phenomenon and as such it conforms to natural laws and therefore logically it has its natural limitations. Magic is not a miraculous panacea for every difficulty that life throws at you, despite what some books on the subject tell us. How on earth are we supposed to learn the lessons and gain experience of life if we "run to mummy" and reach for the spell book every time we have a problem to negotiate? This is a mistake that many operators make.

The spell is best likely to succeed when you have a realistic chance of achieving it by your own efforts to begin with. Let us remember that magic is an ally - it is not our servant. Anyone attempting to use magic as their slave is working to the Left Hand Path and will end up in deep trouble. For example, if you are caught red handed throwing a brick through a jeweller's window, you are going to prison, it is as simple as that. True, you could do a working for the judge to be lenient with you, but that would be all you could do. No amount of rituals could keep you out of court. These days do-it-yourself books of spells are easily available and although there are a few good ones, many contain much nonsense - the commonest mistake that they print is that belief is all you need to perform a successful spell. Belief is in reality nothing more than a positive state of mind that's all it is.

Belief is certainly vital, after all there would be little point in attempting the spell if you had no faith in it. Half hearted attitudes will lead to half heart-

ed results. But it is a special kind of belief that matters, and much more important is personal effort on the part of the operator. I can believe that I can jump off a building and fly. It doesn't believe matter how strongly I believe it, as soon as I jump off the building I am sure to hit the pavement! Magic is a natural phenomenon not a supernatural one and therefore it must conform to natural laws. Consider this equation:

POSITIVE THOUGHTS + POSITIVE ACTIONS + POSITIVE VISUALISATIONS = POSITIVE RESULTS

For a spell to succeed I look to what I call the magic triangle ; ie the idea, the visualisation and the will to bring it about; if any of these three aspects are missing the triangle will collapse and the spell will fail. What is the difference between the idea and the visualisation? The idea is simply the notion of what you want to achieve, the visualisation is the actual mental image of the end result.

The problem with performing spells from a book is that they are somebody else's spells and although effective for the author they may not work so well for you. It is far better to compose your own spell or ritual especially considering what we have said earlier about making a personal effort. Just as a magical tool will have more power if it is hand crafted by the Magician, so a self composed spell is sure to be more effective for the same magical reasons.

You must also be very precise in the working of your spells. You must be clear beyond doubt as to what you are trying to accomplish. A London Wiccan I know petitioned for £500. He stepped out into the street and found a £500 monopoly note. Yet he got what he asked for! The lesson here is, for example you want a new car, visualise yourself in it and driving it. Work for the car direct, not for the money with which to purchase it. After all How would you feel if you petitioned for say £10,000 and then somebody close was involved in an accident and you received the money from an insurance company?



This brings us to another important point - visualisation. This, like belief and personal effort is essential to the successful magical working. Mental discipline is therefore very important. When I first joined the Craft, part of my early training in the First Degree involved a gruelling programme of some 60 exercises involving visualisation and concentration, and working with the four elements. Although tough, and not everyone can hack it, I have never regretted working through it and to this day I always pass them onto anyone that I teach the Craft to. The exercises provide an excellent primer to serious ritual work and I believe that no Wiccan however experienced could fail to benefit from the course. Mental discipline then, is of paramount importance. A daily practice will improve results and provide the all important discipline needed in magical work... furthermore visualisation can be practiced virtually anywhere - if for example you are listening to the Archers - close your eyes and see if you can see the scenes... close your eyes whilst watching television and see if you can do the same... if you are sat on a bus close your eyes and take a mental trip to a favourite place... the possibilities are endless.

The use of the appropriate words is also important - as is their delivery. If you go to call a dog and you simply mumble his name he is not going to come - he may not even hear you. The use of sound in magic is known as sonics - let every, letter, every syllable, every sentence count - let every word - be clear and let it **VIBRATE** as you send it into the astral realms - as above so below - invoke the forces you are seeking to work with with utter respect.

If you are going to invoke a god or goddess - learn as much as you can about them - research their personalities, functions and legends. Step into the circle and assume their god/dess form - unite with them! The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn well knew the value of this practice, indeed it formed part of their training in the Outer Order grades.

The would-be spell worker should define their goals within a special framework of ethics. Traditionally Wicca teaches that whatever magical forces you transmit through your rituals will return threefold. Most serious Covens will not attempt psychic attack for this reason. The consequences for even attempting this kind of working can be dire indeed.

Similarly money and love spells are a dubious area. Rituals to win the pools or lottery are quite wrong in my view. The Wiccan Crede is "Eight words the Wiccan rede fulfil - an' it harm none do what you will". If you perform a spell to win the lottery you are basically working to give yourself an unfair advantage over everyone else who has bought a ticket. You are not physically harming them, but you are certainly harming them in another way. Such a working is therefore against Wiccan law.



Love spells are another grey area. I personally prefer to leave them alone although I acknowledge that they can be justified in some circumstances. Casting spells to win the love of the attractive girl in the office are a blatant attempt to interfere with the free will of another especially if the target is in a relationship that you are trying to break up. Such a spell is pure Left Hand Path and would in any case almost certainly fail. To give another scenario if for example

you knew of two painfully shy people who were attracted to each other but neither was willing to make the first move - you could be justified in working to bring them together; although of course in this instance you could fall foul of the old argument on interfering with free will.....much can sometimes depend on the discretion and judgement of the operator.

So can money and love spells be justified at all? In some cases I would say yes. In my own instance I just work for more overtime; but if say a brother and sister were starving or the bailiffs were at their door, then I can't see that a working to improve their financial situation by fair effort would be out of order. Clearly a degree of discretion is called for when assessing rituals for financial gain. I feel that as long as one sticks to the maxim "need not greed" you will not go far wrong. As for love spells, I have

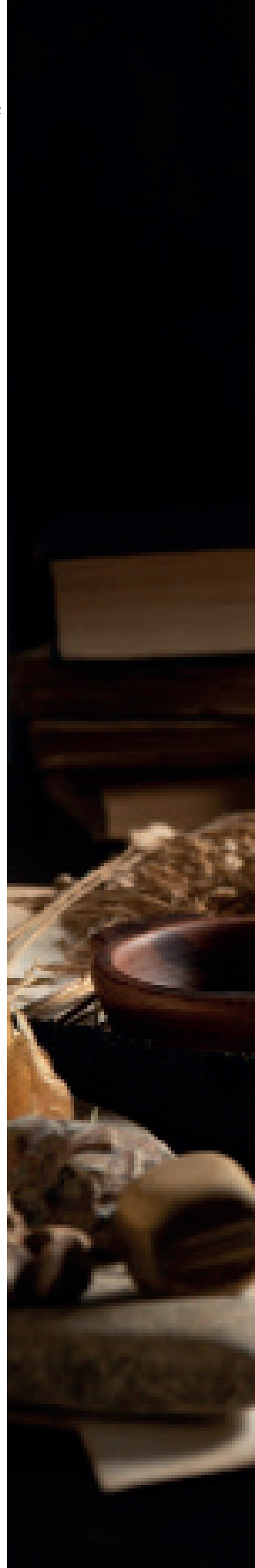
no problems with a single person performing a spell to attract a new partner without naming a specific individual. Similarly if a Coven knew of two people who were attracted to one another but both were painfully shy, I think that few people would say the group were wrong to work a spell to bring them together.

On the subject of Covens, working spells with a group and as a solitary both have their pros and cons. Working with a group it is easier to raise the power and more of it, but the goal worked for is more or less at the discretion of the High Priestess. Furthermore only one member of the group needs to be a little tired or depressed or lose concentration for the whole working to be short circuited. Once again we can see the need for first class concentration and visualisation skills.

Working alone, it is harder to raise the power, but the lone worker is "the boss" as it were, and is in complete control of the ritual. He/she can work for whatever he/she wants; one is not bound by the rules and wishes of a particular Coven and he/she can work whenever is convenient for them, not specifically designated Coven nights. In twenty-six years as a Wiccan initiate, I have only been a Coven member for about five of those years. Personally I have a marked tendency to prefer working alone.

Just how do we know when a ritual has succeeded? This is a difficult question to answer. There is a sort of feeling, a gut feeling or flash of intuition which may tell you that petition has been answered, or some set of circumstances may bring it about that which are so remote or unlikely to have happened without unseen aid. This is the true religious miracle. Similarly when we perform a ritual that works only partially or not at all we often receive signs why it is inappropriate for the wish to be granted at that time. But before writing a ritual off as a failure, always remember that some spells may require several repetitions before any results are observed. In magic, persistence pays. Here again a magical diary can be invaluable if only to carry out a sort of Magical post-mortem as it were - where we may be able to pinpoint any errors or where we may have gone wrong - years later a properly kept and updated magical diary can provide an invaluable tool for our own research.

Magic can be found in virtually every religion there is. Christians pray to God or to Jesus for favours, Roman Catholics go one step further by petitioning saints for aid. Nichires Shoshu Buddhists chant a special formula to bring about changes on a material plane...etc, etc. The Roman Catholic Mass seeks to unite the worshipper with God through the sacrament of communion. Is not union with God the true Great Work, the ultimate magic ritual? The working of magic is a true sacred and special gift/privilege of the Gods. Clearly care must be taken not to abuse it and to use the art ethically, discreetly and with respect. Abusing the power is very dangerous indeed its a bit like taking heroin you will have your fun at first but in the end the master will become the mastered! And Just as the Gods have given us the gift of spell working, they can just as easily revoke it and take it away. They also have a knack of teaching those who abuse the Craft a sharp and unpleasant lesson if need be!



In Conversation with...

I have Lady Mugwort to thank for the biggest realisation I've had on my journey of recovery from chronic fatigue.

As I welcome in Lady Mugwort (or Lady Artemis as She also like to be called), a sweet and grounding song moves from my root and up through my vocal chords. It is not a song i've sang or heard before yet is sounds and feels so familiar. The safety I feel when Lady Mugwort comes in to my space really is like having that old friend who you trust completely and helps you to feel grounded and present with.

Even though i've only been consciously connecting with LM for about 2yrs now, I do feel like I've known Her my whole life. We've been friends in many lifetimes before, which is why She feels so familiar. As i've re-connected to Her in this life She has helped me to overcome the biggest challenge that I've faced and to begin waking up from the dream I've been living in.

Lady Mugwort opened me up to some early memories of thoughts & feelings I used to have as a little human and the biggest flashback was that I perceived I was living in a dream. Nothing seemed real. Everything was a constant dream. I'd question to myself if things were really happening, if I was really awake or if I was in a dream. Were the feelings I was having really mine? I'd lay awake at night too scared to go to sleep because of what might happen if I left the waking dream to go into a sleeping dream.

As Lady M assisted in opening up these memories, here then came the realisations of the answers about the chronic fatigue and chronic brain fog that I'd been challenged by for so many years...

... it's time to wake up from the dream
Enjoy waking up, dreamers!
Much love, Anya & Lady M xxx

Mugwort

*Wakey wakey rise and shine
It's time to journey to the sublime
You are source itself, you can create
So wake up from this unconscious state
Enslaved by your mind you have to see
And when you do, you will break free
Open your eye the fog will shift
And the heaviness will begin to lift
The stories you did once believe
Will dissolve in to a new perceive
Life itself will be the theme
The illusions will be a distant dream
Your soul will shine, the spell will
break
And your true self will remain awake*

Anya Lukover
Witch Residency Writer



CRYSTALS, WITCHY & WELLNESS ITEMS

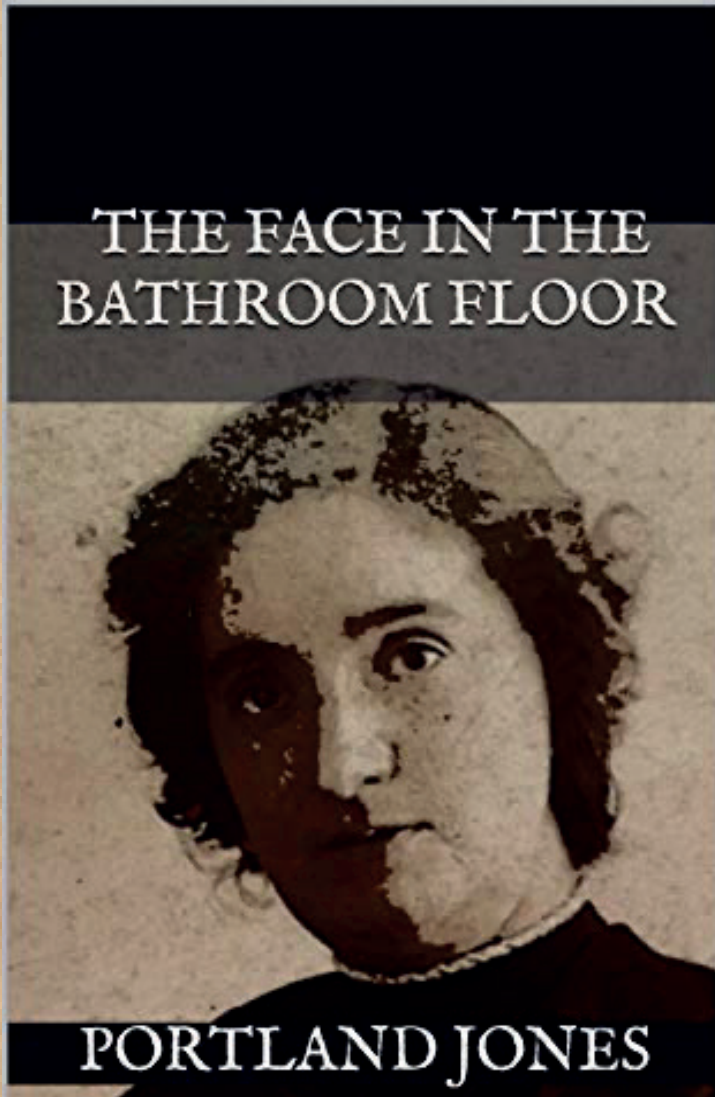
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The Face in the Bathroom Floor



In a tale that crosses generations, Erica, an unknowing witch, meets the spirits of those who have gone before ~ on her bathroom floor. Their lives are revealed as Erica walks by their side through love, hate, war and revenge. Between the school run, a demanding mum and a rocky relationship with husband David, will she unravel the secrets from the past in time to save her future?

Portland Jones, long time pagan and regular contributor to Witch Magazine, released the kindle edition of her debut novel - the Face in the Bathroom Floor - for Ostara 2021, a great time for new beginnings.

The book was inspired by faces that appeared to her on her own bathroom floor - hence the title! Set in Birmingham, The Face in the Bathroom Floor follows the interconnected lives of witches over five generations. Yet Erica, the latest in the line, doesn't know her history. She needs to learn.



The cover on the book is a photo of Portland's grandmother. She died before Portland was born, but Portland grew up with tales of her 'laying out the dead' and seeing ghosts of the recently deceased walking through walls.

Out now on Kindle, only £1.99, or free with Kindle Unlimited.

Also available in paperback.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Face-Bathroom-Floor-Portland-Jones-ebook/dp/Bo8X3QGQ6F/>



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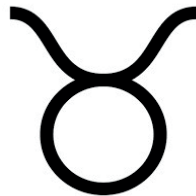
Aries *Ace of Swords, 10 of Cups, 2 of Swords*

Listen to your intuition regarding a new venture, especially a family matter. You may want to start a family and this could be the perfect time. If you don't want children be careful! A decision needs to be made and you know deep down what you want or have to do, you just might not want to admit it. Do what makes you happy and content, that drives your passions. Try to take your emotions out of the equation in a difficult situation. It isn't personal, don't always think that it is.



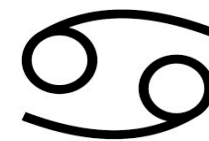
Taurus *7 of Swords, The Hermit*

Someone is talking behind your back or something is happening without your knowledge. It may leave you feeling lonely, sick of people's BS and you'll want to retreat. Keep that secret to yourself! Someone may find out what you've said or done so prepare for the fall out. Don't get involved, reflect before reacting. Stop doing things for others if you feel unappreciated.



Cancer *9 of Swords, 2 of Wands*

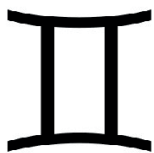
You may feel overwhelmed and your mental health may suffer. Take a step back from your problems and look at it objectively.



Share the load! A hard decision may keep you up at night. You're at the end of a tough cycle, it feels bittersweet. Something will be finalised - you're glad but difficult feelings come with it.

Gemini *8 of Pentacles, Ace of Cups*

There's something on the horizon, perhaps a new love or your existing partnership will feel rejuvenated. It's something you've worked hard for or you need to put more work into your close relationships. Find a job you really enjoy. If you've lost yourself, go back to the beginning and remember why you wanted to do it. A career opportunity may come up, know that you deserve it. Apply for that job even if you don't think you'll get it.



Leo *9 of Wands, 5 of Swords*

Don't follow the crowd! Things may not be as bad as you think, get more information. You may be going through a lot changes, embrace them don't fight against them. It will work out for the best. Do you need to take accountability for something? Don't lower yourself to someone else's petty level



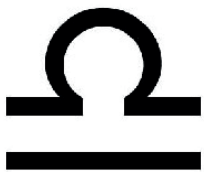
Virgo *7 of Cups, Knight of Pentacles*

You've lots of decisions to make or things to do and may not know where to put yourself. Be careful not to reach burn out and stay grounded. You may be feeling super enthusiastic and invigorated, especially when helping others, but make sure you also fill your own cup. Money will be coming in from lots of different places.



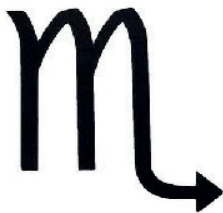
Libra *6 of Wands, Knight of Wands*

Great results for tests or exams, it's a good month to take a vehicle test. People will look to you as a mentor or top of the class. Check credentials before doing anything. Do your own research. Be careful of idolising someone too much. You may be accepted onto a course, receive a job offer or a promotion. You'll gain recognition for something you've done.



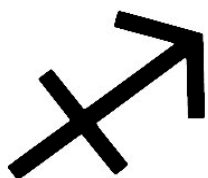
Scorpio *7 of Wands, The Sun*

People will be interested in you or your skills but be mindful that some people may become jealous. There's nothing wrong with being proud but avoid arrogance. Get out into nature if you can. Anything you put your energy into should produce good results. You don't need to justify your actions or explain yourself. Don't be so defensive. Things will improve after a tough cycle.



Sagittarius *The Hierophant, The Moon*

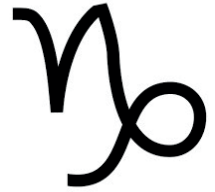
Seek support for your mental health needs through therapy or a support group. Anything you've been avoiding or denying needs to be addressed, seek advice if need



be. You may be having trouble sleeping and need to seek medical help. Do shadow work. Don't deny your spiritual gifts, learn more about it so that you know how to use it safely.

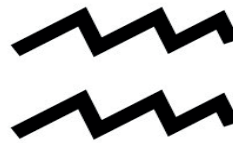
Capricorn *8 of Swords, 4 of Pentacles*

You're restricting yourself far too much, let go a little. What's holding you back from doing what you really want? Whilst worrying about what might be, you're not doing what needs to be done. Be more present. You have the means and abilities to do what you want. Do a Chakra healing. Be careful of what you're investing in, read all the small print.



Aquarius *5 of Pentacles, Temperance*

Try not to overspend, double check your statements. Stay accountable. What areas in your life are abundant? Concentrate your energy on being grateful, it will create financial abundance. You may be feeling feeling worn out, be assured this is turning around for you. Volunteer your time, your generosity causes stagnant energy to shift.



Pisces *The Magician, Queen of Cups*

You may be very sensitive to energy, be sure to protect yourself. Use your emotions or this excess energy and channel it into manifesting your desires or in your spell work. It can be really hard to be so hyper aware but it can also be really helpful if utilised correctly in creative endeavours.





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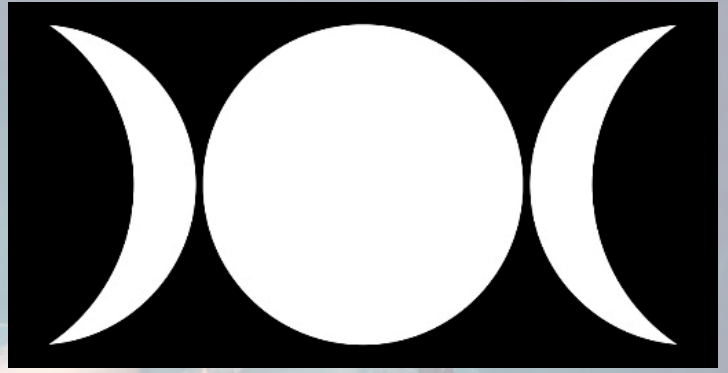
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*“Women are like teabags. We don’t
our true strength till we are in hot
water” ~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

Menstrual Magic

*It isn’t for everyone but menstrual spells are
incredibly powerful, especially for empow-
erment spells. Women were kept in bleeding
huts for days because their periods were seen
as sinful. Women were shamed. It’s time
to take back our menstruation and use it to
yield our power.*

*On the next full moon, take a small amount
of period blood (did you know a lot of witch-
es sync with the moon? If you don’t ~ don’t
worry just save a small drop when you can)
Write what you want to achieve by the next
full moon, dip the paper in your collected
blood. Then under the light of the moon
~ BURN IT. WILL IT into intention.
Tell the universe what you want, and what
you’re going to get.*

In modern Pagan traditions, the triple goddess in the form of Maiden Mother and Crone is honoured. She is seen as the feminine counterpart, the female who provides polarity to the male essence. In some traditions, such as in some wiccans, the triple goddess is the only deity worshiped.

Here’s my problem with it....

Robert Graves (yes a man) wrote about the goddess in his book “white goddess”. If you don’t know Robert Graves, he is a forefront and leader for followers of wiccan, although a man ahead of his time, his views in todays society are now out dated.

The notion that women have three forms, childless and beautiful, then a fulfilled mother and then an ugly old woman, is such a ridiculous notion to me and is so harmful. We don’t suddenly transform our images like computer sims, we don’t need those labels. We are wise at each stage, although in different way, we are strong and beautiful at all stages. Some of us will never be mothers, some of us are infertile, some of us weren’t born women and sadly some of us will never get to grow old. The notion is outdated, restrictive and enforces that women are just child bearers, we are not in stages of our lives. Worshipping our goddesses and our women shouldn’t be based on our wombs, it should be based on our strength, our creativity and our beauty (inside and out)

So what do you think?

Do you worship the triple goddess?

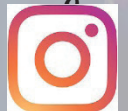
Please get in touch and let me know your views.



*“Have no fear of perfections,
youll never reach it” ~
Marie Curie, first woman to
win a Nobel prize.*

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Recently the worlds attention has been on women's safety - Its been a big talking point.

So what better subject to discuss than women in witchcraft, female empowerment and what brings sisterhood together. Lets not forget that our ancestors were burned as witches, not just because they practiced the dark arts, most didn't, but because of the color of their skin, their sexual preferences, if they were too awoken, if they were too smart and too independent, if they were too beautiful or too ugly, or quite simply because they pissed the wrong man off, or rejected one.

Sounds like I could be talking about 2021 - right? Sadly not much has changed. We got the vote, but we never gained our safety. We have been fighting injustice because our wombs for centuries.

Witchcraft had terrified the small minded and strong women will continue to. So women... light your fires and stand together as sisters and brothers.

I've included some spells in this article, some wise words from strong women and why now need to stand together and help build his memento from social media posts, to strength and change.

So I love listening to music to empower me so I thought I'd compile my top 10 females in music.

Here are mine;

1. Kate Bush
2. Bjork
3. Whitney Houston
4. Taylor Swift
5. Lady Gaga
6. Stevie Nicks
7. Celine Dion
8. Britney Spears
9. Fiona Apple
10. Adele

What are yours? Have a think and get in touch with yours?!

A message for men;
We love you, but things have to change.
You are scared that fellow men will laugh at you, that by caring, you'll be soft. We as women are scared for our lives. Were your sister, your mother, your aunts and friends....begging you to stop raping us, to stop scaring us.
We know its not all men, but that doesn't make it less scary, it doesn't take away the danger. So what can you do?
Talk about it, tell that friend that his rape jokes aren't funny, or that he shouldn't be talking about a woman's body. Teach your sons, your brothers and even your fathers to be respectful. Take action; walk that girl home, take no as a no and communicate your feelings rather than blocking or cheating and calling her crazy.
Mostly? **JUST LISTEN.**
We really just want you to hear us, really hear us. We cannot go on like this.

"Don't let the bastards grind you down"
~ Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

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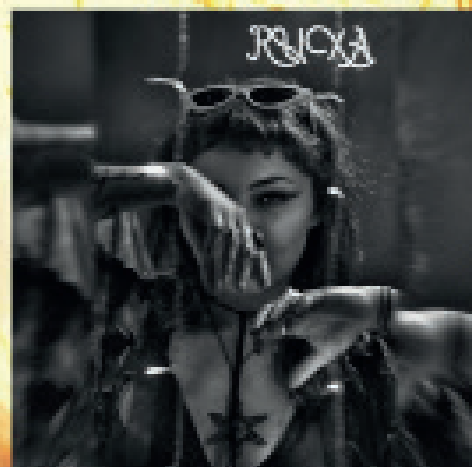

Magazine

RUKKA

You Said Fire

THE NEW SINGLE

30.03.21





Pagan Poetry
&
Fiction

photo by Klaire Dawn Ader



BEYOND THE VEIL

Nya House - Witch Residency Writer

It's the seventh hour of this day. The sun is just beginning to stir in its bed and open its eyes...not yet though. Maybe one more snooze, I imagine. Two candles flicker on the square trunk just in front of where I sit on my couch. Isabella, the sweetest puppy, lays curled in a ball as close to me as she can get. Every once in a while she stirs and lets out a soft sigh. Deuter plays on the speaker behind me on the left and beckons me to be quiet, to find stillness. I still have half a cup of coffee left and it's lost it's steam so I set it down on the table. I consider closing my eyes and sinking into meditation, but there's a flicker of light at my back door that catches my eye. I watch for a breath or two and decide it must have been my imagination. I close my eyes and lean my head back against the couch pillows, considering getting up to refill my cup. Suddenly there's a flicker of light above my eyes. I open them to investigate, but there's nothing there. I look around the room and listen to the movement of the air then I watch the flickering of the candles. The fire dances and laughs. I smile and say, "Good morning to you." The flames go out-both of them, gone. Just as if someone had leaned over and blown them out. Isabella sits up from her morning nap and stares directly at the candles. Chills rush over my skin and then I take in a long, deep, slow breath to calm my startled fears so I can just listen.

"Hello?" I said.

There came no response. Nothing else moved. The music had gone quiet in between songs and then began again playing my favorite meditation song.

"Okay." I said aloud, sitting a little taller and wiggling into the couch to get more com-fortable. I closed my eyes and began alternate nostril breathing to calm my slightly agi-tated nerves. I had no idea why those candles went out. There was no explanation, which usually meant there was a perfect explanation. I just needed a minute to accept it. Someone was in my living room with me, someone from another place and another time and they had something to say.

Behind my eyelids, the colors began to swirl. Bubbles moved and grew and I allowed my awareness to ebb and flow with them. My body grew heavy and then still until I was no longer concerned with where it was or how it was feeling. The sound of my breath took over my senses and I followed that rhythm. The colors began to go dark and still. Soon tiny lights began to glow in the distance. One after another, they emerged from the blackness that had fallen and rested all around me. My sight grew more keen and the smell of the night air made it's way to my face. There



was a soft breeze moving the leaves on the trees to my right. To the left, a soft glow grew and called for my attention. The moon. She hung proud in the sky and dusted the tips of grass that made up the meadow to my left. I took a step and felt my bare foot press gently onto the warm rocks beneath me. I stood on a gravel road with a small building directly behind me. I didn't know what was in that building, just that it was always there and I never felt the need to turn and look at it or explore its purpose. It made me feel safe as I took in the environment before me and allowed my eyes to adjust further to the darkness of this night. I took another step hearing the crunch of tiny stones and then another step and then another.

I have been here many times before and I knew that just ahead there would be a path on my right leading into the dense woods. I expected to take it, but found myself walking right past it this night. I had no idea what was further down this road and suddenly I was aching with curiosity. Excitement swept over me and I began to run. My bare feet pounded against the gravel road and it made me feel like a kid again. I laughed out loud and shouted for my legs to carry me faster and faster. All ahead of me was dark and open space. I noticed a wooden fence on my left. I kept my eyes on it while I ran and then saw the moonlight kiss a ripple just beyond the fence in the meadow...water! I ran harder, tucked to the left and leapt over the wooden fence clearing it with ease because I believed that I would. My feet hit the soft grass and pushed me right back into a run. I ran alongside the lake and noticed a pier up ahead. It went almost halfway across the lake, stopping near the center. I turned left again and darted down the pier, my feet pounded against the wooden planks. The water was barely moving in the soft breeze and it seemed as if the moon had sent a beam of her light right into the center, right at the end of the pier. I moved closer and closer to the end until finally pushing off the very last plank and thrusting my body into the air and out into the water. I crashed deep into the lake, swooshing and splashing noises filled my ears. Cool water pressed gently against every inch of body and I realized I wasn't wearing any clothes. I smiled to myself and then kicked my feet to rise up to the surface. I gasped for air and burst into laughter. Throwing my arms up a couple of times and then arched my back so I could float on the surface. My laughter subsided and I closed my eyes fanning the water to keep afloat.

"That was Brave." Came a voice. I sat up as best as you can in water and whipped my head toward the pier.

"Hello?" I called.

"Hi!" Came back.

My eyes squinted to make out the form sitting on the very edge of the pier. It was a small person, a girl with curly hair that moved gently below her shoulders. As I tried to make out more of her features, the moonlight brightened upon her face as if it heard my wonder.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Well.....I'm you!" she giggled.

"You're ME?" I asked as I began to swim toward the pier.

"I'm you." She said standing up so she could step aside. I placed my hands on the last plank of the pier and pulled myself up with a twist to sit on the edge.

"Then who am I?" I asked with deverness.

"You're Me." She said and began to giggle.

"And where are we?" I asked, playing along as I moved to my feet.

"We are right. Here." She said like a smart ass...maybe she was ME. I tilted my head to the side. I still couldn't see her very well. She had soft pale skin in the moonlight and big eyes, but I couldn't make the color out. Her smile spread wide across her face and it was very sincere. She wore a dress that stopped just below her knees with a ruffle at the bottom and short puffy sleeves.

“Alright ME, what shall we do now?” I asked opening my arms out wide.

“I just wanted to watch you play, so I called you.” She began to walk back down the pier towards the bank.

“Play what?” I asked as I started to follow her.

“Just play.” She said over her shoulder. “You ran and jumped into the water without even knowing what was in it or how deep it was or wasn’t. That’s playing, it was brave though-you haven’t done that in a very long time. You really should visit me more of-ten, you know.”

I stopped walking, “Do you want to jump in with me?” I asked.

She turned to face me and I saw her smile spread across her face again. She walked toward me and reached out for my hand. I took it.

“I just did.” She said and turned to guide me off the pier.

“Where are we going?” I asked as a shiver swept over me. Suddenly, my skin went dry and I could feel clothes resting against my skin now.

“You’re starting to use your grown up brain now, so we’re going back to the road so you can find your way home.”

I was confused, but also felt like this little girl was making perfect sense. I believed her. It was like a wave of understanding came over me just as I set my foot back into the grass. We stepped in between the wooden posts of the fence and began walking down the gravel road. She held my hand tight while we walked in silence. I looked all about, taking in every tree top on the left and noticed mountain peaks far, far off to the right just beyond the meadow. I looked down at her little hand in mine and something made me want to pick her up and wrap my arms around her. I suddenly wanted to protect her, I wanted to keep her safe and tell her that everything was going to be okay. She stopped suddenly and looked up at me. I smiled and then she pointed down the road. I turned to see the building that I usually sense behind me here.

“Do you live there?” I asked her.

She shook her head side to side.

“Where do you live?” I asked becoming concerned about leaving her out here in this wilderness.

“It’s alright.” She began. “I’m safe. Safer than I have ever been.” She leaned in and hugged me, squeezing her arms tight around my waist. I don’t know why, but I leaned down and kissed the top of her forehead. She stepped back and smiled at me.

I tried one more time, “Sweetheart, where do you live?”

She sighed and took a step closer to me. She reached her little hand up and placed it over my heart.

“I live here.” And with that she disappeared.

Isabella let out a sigh and I came back to the couch, back to my body. I could hear Deuter still playing just over my left shoulder. I felt the warmth of my grey hoodie against my arms. I took in a long breath and began to blink my eyes open with my ex-hale. The candles on the trunk were lit, flames dancing and laughing with the air. Something flickered at the back door and grabbed my attention, but nothing was there. I stood up and walked over to the door, opened the handle and stepped outside. The sun had risen and the sounds of morning filled the air. Isabella came and stood beside me and then reached out to stretch her front legs. She began to walk into the yard when I heard a laughter just behind me. We both turned around to look back into the house, but of course, nobody was there. I smiled and placed my hand over my heart.

“It’s okay Isabella, it’s just ME.”



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BREAKING HER CURSE

Kelly Buchan

Witch Residency Writer

I guess it's hard not to be hopeful
As we're floating in my bed.
Your shadow cloaks me gently
And my magick stains us red.

She consumed you long ago
But you're loving me instead
I hope that soon she'll fade from view
As we slow dance 'round your head.

I guess it's hard not be hopeful
As we roll around this bed.
We fuck inside out and back again
Like dogs that haven't been fed.

What horrors were spouted that've hurt you so?
Or is it the words you've left unsaid?
You're looking straight through me and into her soul,
As we sacrifice this bed.

I guess it's hard not be be hopeful
Can you sense a common thread?
Do you think I'll be enough to break her curse?
She drips over every word said.

Am I the one you've always dreamed of?
Are mine the only legs you'll spread?
Or is she out there on your periphery?
Holding her curse that chains you dead.

So I guess it's hard not to be hopeful
That your heart hasn't fully been bled.
I guess it's hard not to be grateful
That you're loving me instead.

NIGHT-TIME PRAYER

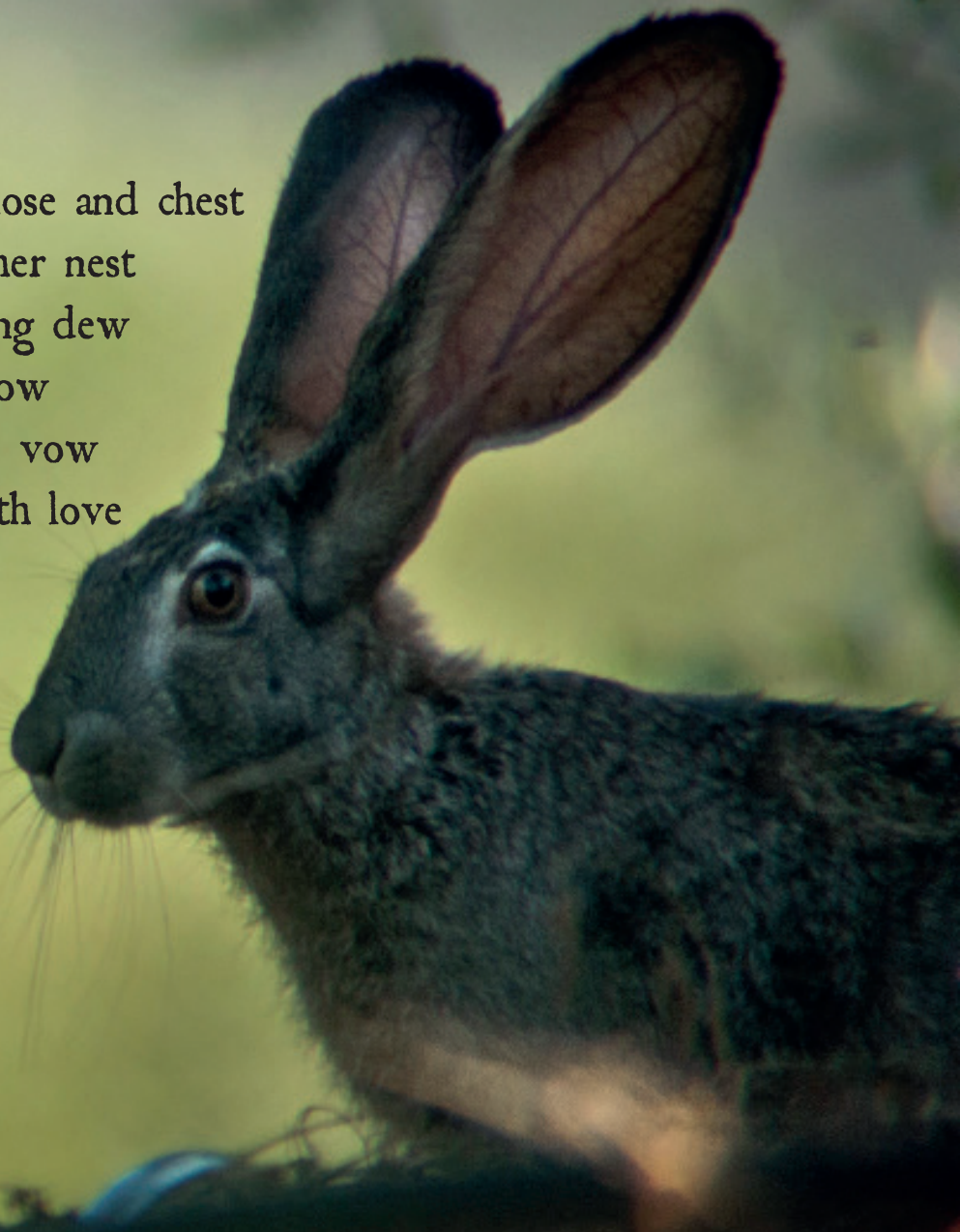
Yasmine Tubritt

Lord and Lady cast thy light
And keep us safe unto this night.
Into your arms we pass our cares
As we release our woes and fears.
Send your blessings far and near
And help to keep our loved ones dear.
Onto this house and all within,
May joy and peace the next day bring.
Lord and Lady, by rule of three,
We do no harm,
So mote it be.

OSTARA BLESSINGS

Bekki Jo Milner - Witch Writer

The waxing of the wheel
An Imbolc promise, now fulfilled
A song, sweet beneath the soil
Reaches for the skies,
Carried on swift Spring winds
Listen, it speaks of hope
And Love, and so above
Then too below
The Hare will rise
To greet the moon with nose and chest
The snake uncoils within her nest
Step barefoot upon morning dew
Let the sun upon your brow
Renew within your sacred vow
Honour what you hold with love
As below, and so above



THE SNAIL AND THE WATERFALL

F.R. Maher - Witch Residency Writer

Can the Apothecary's daughter succeed in her quest to find a lost Elven King and restore Magic to the world?

*The King is young, the King is black,
He carries his Castle upon his back.
Lives between the land and water,
Waiting for the Wise Man's daughter.*

- Traditional Savarene Skipping Rhyme

In the reign of Queen Greganver a blight came upon the land and the people lamented. For true Magick had left the realm and none knew why and all grieved its passing.

-from The Gray Book of Arnos

When the Older World was emptied of Magic, the high and sacred places of the Elves became the haunts of wolves and the empty, desolate wind. All who knew Elven-kind missed them, but none more so than Alia, the Apothecary's daughter.

As beautiful as a dark fairy, she haunted the sunlit glades, hearing her lost lover's voice in the rippling streams or the plangent note of the cuckoo. Though a mortal, she was betrothed to Perathor, King of the Elven Court who had disappeared back in the deep winter when the tempests raged.

Heart-sick, Alia knew he would not willingly desert her. If she could find him and bring him back, perhaps magic would return to the land?

All the bright spring-time she travelled the secret paths Perathor had shown her. Through woodland and meadow, she wandered searching whilst blustery winds tousled her cloak and curls, dappling them with petals of apple and cherry. Long nights she sought for clues in the books of her father's ancient library, but to no avail.

On Midsummer's Eve, he found her consulting a map of the Westerly lands. A kindly man, Father brought her fresh candles, tea and seed cake.

"I won't say it's late, you know it is."

Alia gave a rueful smile.

"Truth often hides in Plain Sight. Look there and leave no stone unturned," he patted her arm and left. Alia picked at her cake, deciding next day she must venture further afield.

That night she dreamt of being in a damp cave strewn with curious whorl-shaped pebbles. She overturned one and a scuttling thing skittered away. A mist arose and wraithlike, Perathor appeared before her. "Find Vehennos," he whispered.

Alia jolted awake and flew to the library. The bestiary revealed Vehennos was a dragon who dwelt betwixt land and water. She pondered; what can be between land and water? Neither beach nor bank as they are still land. She moved the cake plate that stood upon the still-open map and noticed a place name, 'Vehennos Falls.'

It took Alia two days to ride to the foot of the mighty waterfall and almost another day to climb the treacherous rocks beside it. Her ears rang from the thundering water, her fingers were bloodied and her hair, tunic and breeches were soaked through. Rainbows played across her misted vision, yet still she climbed, seeking Vehennos.

Gradually the sun outpaced her and the torrents glowed red as sunset approached. Beyond exhaustion, she would not survive nightfall in this perilous place. As Death breathed upon her, she reached a welcome ledge. She would rest and await the inevitable.

Huddled, she glimpsed exactly where the vertical rock face had crumbled back from the leaping falls leaving a gap betwixt earth and water. With renewed resolve she rose and shimmied behind the pounding cascade. Inching along the slippery rocks, she spotted a cave. The setting sun knifed through the shifting curtain of water and cast a huge shadow on the cavern walls: the shadow of a dragon. From the cave mouth, Alia called respectfully, "Vehennos the Terrible, I request your help."

"What will you give?"

His piping voice was so tiny against the rushing water, Alia's startled gaze swept from his gigantic shadow to him directly. Haughty Vehennos was no bigger than a dragonfly. Entering the cave, she quelled her rising laugh and bowed.

"I offer four times the bounty I have in my hand."

Vehennos wondered how much gold this mortal could carry. He sniffed, "Your hands are small. Make it ten times."

Head still bowed, Alia frowned, "Then you promise to help?"

"Upon the ancient bloodline of Vehennos Draco, I promise and am bound by that."

"I seek King Perathor."

"First, give me my prize," Vehennos snapped.

"First, grant me your promise," Alia countered.

"He's here," Vehennos exhaled fine, blue fire, one exquisite claw indicating the empty cavern. "Choose wisely, you have but one chance."

Alia cast wildly about her, Perathor could be anywhere; trapped in the walls, the dripping ferns or any of the scattered rocks and pebbles of which there were thousands ... but none showing the coiled shape of her dream. A gleaming black snail crept lazily over the drenched moss and a fragment of childhood rhyme came to her:

The King is young, the King is black,
He carries his Castle upon his back.

What if it were a prophecy?

Alia reached out and touched the snail's shell. Thunder shook the cave. The waterfall abruptly ceased and in the ringing silence a shining column of silver light coalesced into the noble form of Perathor. Alia flew to his embrace.

Thwarted, Vehennos buzzed like an angry wasp, "Where's my reward?"

From the safety of Perathor's arms, Alia revealed her empty hand, "Ten times nothing is ..."

Vehennos shrieked and grew huge with anger. He roared, filling the chamber with fire, but Perathor was ready this time and cast a spell binding Vehennos in ice.

In the luminous twilight, Perathor guided Alia down the still-damp rocks, recounting how the dragon had lured him to its lair with promises of finest sword-steel before entrapping him. All dragons fear Elven Magic lest it is used against them.

Perathor gathered his scattered Court and slowly, True Magic returned to the Land. That fall-time was the most beautiful anyone remembered and Alia and Perathor were wed in the burnished light of the copper beech forest, arrayed and crowned with gold.

Never again did the Elves trade with perfidious dragons. To remind them, to this day certain snails still bear the whorl shaped sigil of King Perathor.



Grimoire

Welcoming Spring

*O*stara, the Spring Equinox - equal day and night, and a time of bringing in the Spring. Here's some simple rituals you might like to try to welcome in the Maiden Goddess!

Cleansing

Throw open the windows! Declutter! Not just things, energies!

Now is a perfect time for cleaning down your altar, cleansing your home and bringing in new energies!

Burn incense, play music, sing and dance to cleanse and raise fresh energy in your home. Move from room to room and don't forget about the corners! A perfect time to get your besom out and sweep sleepy Winter energy out the door!

Decorate

We bring in the green for winter, but we can bring nature in for Spring too! Try planting herbs on your windowsill, or seasonal flowers and shrubs in the garden and encourage new growth. If you can't plant, fresh flowers are good too and will brighten up any space with their energy.

Paint eggshells for your altar, use bright colours and sigils to invite in growth and abundance. Write your wishes on paper and place it at the bottom of a plant pot - watch them grow as the seedlings grow too! Or you could use half a washed out eggshell and plant some seeds - try watercress!

Connect

Get outside, wherever you are, and find some nature. Be it one tree or a forest, spend some time in nature this equinox. Sit and look for the signs of Spring - the buds on the trees, blossoms, bluebells, birds - welcome the Goddess by celebrating nature's bounty!

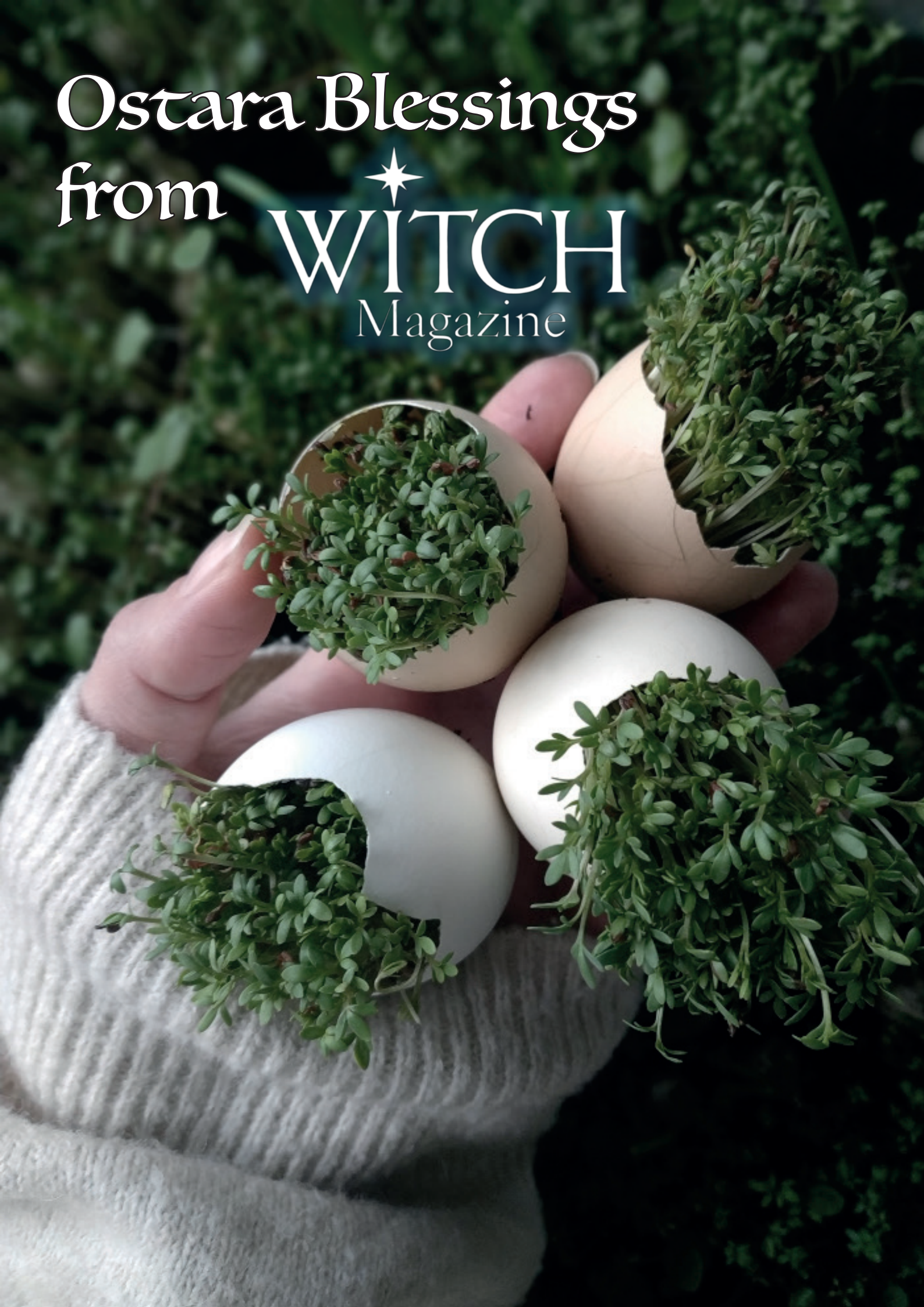
"A weekly contact with nature has an important part to play. It feeds a certain aspect of your nature, a higher aspect of the second plane... you will find you get a lot out of nature - especially trees.

Dione Fortune

Have a favourite spell you'd like to share? Contact us at submissions@witchzine.co.uk!

Ostara Blessings
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*MAGICK PORTALS
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