

A brown rabbit is the central focus, shown in profile facing left. It is surrounded by dark green foliage, which is softly blurred in the background. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture of the rabbit's fur.

WITCH

Ostara



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WITCH



Welcome to the
Ostara issue of
Witch!

Additional art and photos
by:

Klaire Dawn Ader

Spring is well and truly
blossoming outside, as the days
get warmer and we reach towards
Summer. There's still a lot of
growing to do, just like the tree's
blossoming and the flowers
preparing to bloom.

We hope this issue finds you safe
and well!

Be blessed,

Bekki

Editor

Contact us
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WITCH

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SPRING BY CARRIE ANDERSON

PAGAN POETRY

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WITCH

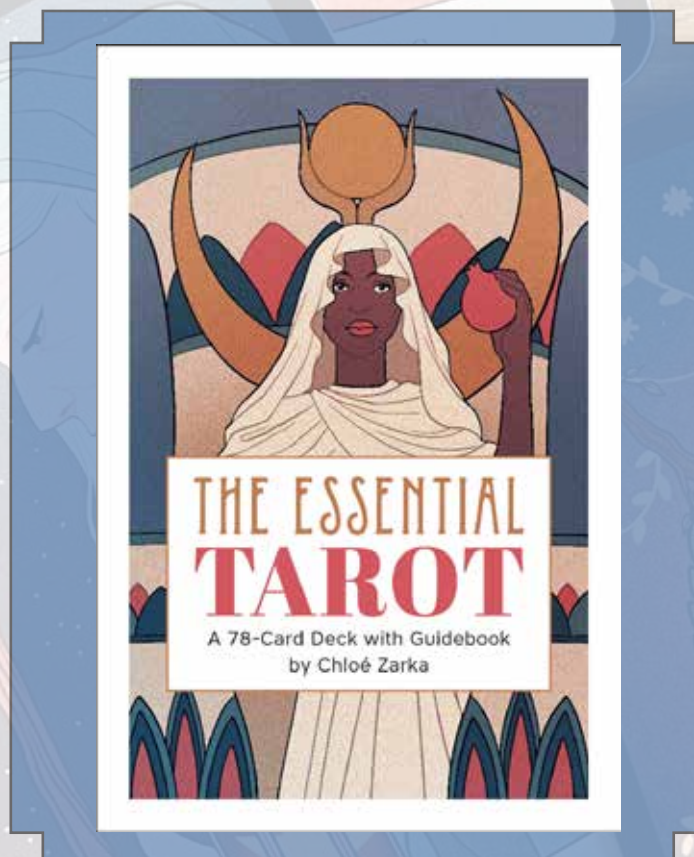
Competition

Win The Essential Tarot deck!

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What is the name of the story told by the Major Arcana?



Winners will be selected at random on 1st April 2022 and notified by email. Prizes will be sent directly by the publisher.

Meet our Residency Writers

We are pleased to welcome our new Residency Writers for 2022!
We can't wait to see what they have to share with us!

Carrie Anderson

Carrie is a Intuitive Consultant, Reiki Master Teacher, Certified Holistic Health Practitioner, Wellness Master Consultant, Metatphysician and Yoga Instructor. Her primary focus is on Divination, especially wax scrying and bone readings, hedge-riding and Distant Reiki.

Her connection and love of Nature guides her practice. She's a featured author at Reiki Rays, and a co-author with Mellisa Dormoy for the title, "Easy Mindfulness for Today's Teens".

www.caresreiki.com

Instagram: @caresreiki



Samantha Teves

Samantha is a lifelong lover of the written word, she loves to write about the ethereal, the dreamy, the storied and the magical things.

Samantha is a Mother, an herbalist, an aromatherapist and an astrologer. She is the owner and creator of the botanical & astrological apothecary: Twelfth House Apothecary, which combines her herbalism, astrology, and cosmetic backgrounds to create botanical scents, skincare, and tea.

A lover of faerie lore, plant folklore, astro-herbalism, and mixing up tea time potions, she can often be found surrounded by oils, herbs and a cherished notebook filled with potions and poems.

Samantha is so excited to share her words and passions, and find connection through this special space!

Links:

Twelfthhouseapothecary.com

Instagram: @twelfthhouseapothecary



Raquel Dionísio Abrantes

Raquel is a Portuguese poet, word witch, and writer. She has a Bachelor's Degree and a Master's Degree in Cinema from Universidade da Beira Interior. Raquel gave a Master Class in Writing of Scripts about Narrative Structure. Her writing has been published by literary journals and magazines. She is the author of *As Above, So Below*. More about her work can be found on Instagram, @woodland.poem.



Faith Barnes

Faith was born and raised in the UK, in the South East of England. She has over 22 years of experience as a practising witch and is very passionate about sharing her knowledge and ideas about the craft. Faith is knowledgeable in most areas of witchcraft but leans more towards sea witchery, spell creation, protection and all things nature-loving. Even after all this time, Faith is still constantly learning about the craft, it surprises her each day.

Faith enjoys writing magazine articles, blog posts and poems. She also is halfway into writing a book about sea witchery and its practices with a goal to getting published. Please see Faith Barnes's social platforms below:

Instagram: @witchinsmall

Blog: <https://witchinsmall.wordpress.com>

Email: witchinsmall_author@protonmail.com



Sarah Lloyd

Sarah is currently writing a book about the Mother energy / Divine Feminine; and regularly writes pieces around my different approach to how work intuitively when it comes to promoting your business.

Sarah is a spiritual PR coach – as well as reiki master, crystal healer and intuitive – she works with tarot and oracle cards and connects with angels, star people and mother Gaia.

Instagram @sarahlloyd_ispr

Website is www.indigosoulpr.com



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Exchanges of Energy

BY FAIRY BEC

I love what I do. I am extremely passionate about all things esoteric. Overall, my work is an absolute pleasure to be a part of. When I am busy working hard it still does not feel like a chore. So, should I offer my services free? The short answer is no.

There are many people in the spiritual world who believe that charging for our services is wrong, that our gift was given to us for free so we should give it out for free.

I used to offer card readings for free to anyone who wanted them. I did not see the value in myself enough to understand that my talents are rare and that by giving away all that energy I was not leaving enough for myself.

My first ever Reiki Master taught me that there has to be an exchange of energy. If you give something for free and receive nothing in return, that can actually upset the Karmic balance of the receiver. Think about it. It makes total sense. Look at the 'Takers' in the world, they are never happy, never satisfied and often 'market' themselves as 'The Victim' which is a state they get stuck in and is very hard to break.

I love a good exchange but how can we make sure that it is fair, that we are not being greedy and that the exchange is made without causing any animosity or upsetting the karmic balance?



Money is just energy

You may ask "How do I charge?" As a business paying insurances, tax and National Insurance, you want to do your research and have a look at what is everyone else charging in your area or what the average charge is for your services at the event you are attending. If you are not set up as a business, you can ask for a donation to a charity you support and build a client base before officially setting up a business if this is your goal.

If you are not fully confident, you can do offers but make sure you show why. E.g. "Fledgling Reader – Just £15 a read" or "First 5 people get a reading for £20".

If you undercharge then people will also under value what you do.

The main thing is that you set your fees before you start. You can always offer discounts.

Money vs Time

I love doing a swap of skills for skills. A facial for some reiki etc. It always feels great and we often then write reviews for each other so the support is very wholehearted.

Value Exchange:- If your treatment is £25 then it is logical to swap an equal amount e.g. you do a reading for someone and they swap for £25 worth of the retail value of their product.

Time Exchange:- An hour's treatment for an hour's service right? This is where it gets more tricky. I might charge £30 for an hour's work but a friend might charge £80. This then can become largely out of kilter and animosity can grow.

Friends and Family

I will offer healings and readings for free to friends and family out of love but equally, they don't expect it for free. The gratitude is always there, and I usually find that they gift me with things I am not expecting e.g. pay for me when we go out for a meal and that they are always there to listen when I need a chat and advice.

If I have a friend that I always call up and rant at and it is all a bit one sided or they are helping me through a tricky period in my life then I will always try to re-dress that balance by offering a reading or healing, sending flowers or noticing when they need to talk too and holding space for them.

Often the balance is felt between you naturally and it is more of a subconscious thing. If things are out of kilter it is usually felt by at least one party. The key in this situation is to communicate your feelings and set your boundaries.

See the bigger picture

Still don't think you should be charging/asking for exchanges? Consider this:-

I don't expect my cleaner friend to clean my house for me for free or my accountant friend to do my accounts for free for me but an hour long therapy could be exchanged for an hour's cleaning/accounting.

My friend is gifted with growing plants but she does not do my gardening for me. Another friend is gifted with cooking skills but he does not make my meals for me.

I have been reading various types of cards for over thirty years. That is a huge amount of development time to get where I am now. I regularly pay for additional training, spend time researching and networking and pay for treatments from others by way of 'market research' as well as pleasure.

Tipping and discounts

This can be really awkward.

Your friend gives you a good rate – do you then tip to full price? Your friend charges less than you so do you tip to make it the same price?

This goes back to boundaries again. If you charge £20 an hour and your friend charges £60 then maybe consider that 20 mins of their time is worth 60 minutes of yours.

I always give discounts where I can and I find that people are extremely grateful for them. They will often refer others to use my services or offer discounts back for their own products.

Volunteering and pay it forward

Where is the exchange?

My friend Louise from Soul River talks of a cup and saucer in relation to self care. You pour the cup from your teapot and what is in the cup is for yourself. Whatever spills over into the saucer is for others. If you feel that your saucer is always full, then volunteering or gifting is a lovely exchange of energy as you can trust the universe that it will help you keep that cup and saucer full.

If you recognize that you don't have enough overspill then that is when you need to re-focus on filling the cup for yourself rather than emptying it for someone else's benefit.



Karma

If you want Karmic balance in your life then you can simply take each day at a time. Think about the Reiki Principles:-

Just for today . . .

- ❖ I will not worry
- ❖ I will not be angry
- ❖ I will do my work honestly
- ❖ I will be grateful for my many blessings
- ❖ I will be kind to all living things

By following these, you are inviting more positive energy into your life. The law of attraction really does work.

So remember, just because your gift and talent is spiritual does not mean that it is any less valuable than anyone else's gift and talent.

Fairy Bec AKA Rebecca Edwards is a spiritual reader, writer, healer, teacher, wellness guide and holistic health practitioner.

Being Pagan and following the wheel of the year is very important to Bec as she travels her life pathway. Bec often finds that people radiate towards her for help and advice which she regularly gives with love, light and often a handful of crystals too!

Bec first picked up a pack of tarot cards aged 14. Her mother bought them for her along with a guide book. Bec also often uses stones and pendulum in her readings. A believer in exchanges of energy, Bec has been known to swap a reading for a bottle of mead!



Please visit me at www.rubek.co.uk to view a list of events and services.

Words from the Witches Journal

I have a large wooden cupboard in the alcove off my living room where I keep my 'witchy' stuff ~ my tarot cards, the wand I made for myself from a fallen twig, a crystal ball on a stand that throws topsy-turvy images. Incense cones battle with essential oils for the sweetest scent. I took out a thick leather bound journal and started to read.

PORTLAND JONES
WITCH WRITER

www.portlandjones.com

<https://www.facebook.com/Portlandjonesauthor>

Ostara is upon us, a season of new growth, of renewal, of new beginnings. Yet new beginnings follow a death of some sort. Crops are growing now because last year's crop ripened, fulfilled their purpose and died. Often our lives are moving on because something has changed: a new job, a new home, a new baby, a new way of thinking, a death.

In my journals, I don't just record 'witchy' stuff like rituals or how we celebrated festivals, or spell work – important as these are. I also write down how my life is going and my thoughts and feelings.

My paganism applies to all parts of my life. It shapes my life, and my attitudes and responses to what is happening in the world around me. My husband of forty years died in late 2019. This has had a huge impact on my life and that of my children. It was a start of a new world, a transition from one life to the next.

What follows is a collection of my thoughts on his passing, and also my sister's, and how we responded.

7th October 2020

It was Brian's birthday today. The first without him. My son posted on Facebook – miss him was all it said. So sad. My grandson asked why his mommy missed grandad like he did. I'm no longer sad for myself missing Brian, but I find it difficult still seeing the impact the loss is having in other people's lives. Someone came round with a bunch of flowers, holding them out to me, saying 'don't want to make you cry.' Facebook is full of people remembering him.

17th October 2020

We watched my grandson on video (during lockdown) opening birthday presents. His mom said 'this is the present from Nanny.'

'Nanny and who else, Mommy?' Of course Grandad is missing. Mommy recovered quickly, saying 'and Teddy', (the dog). I am in bits. How can a child so young still have these thoughts at the forefront of his mind a year later?

Me to my daughter:

I don't cry for Dad anymore. I've moved on. Sounds terrible I suppose but I had a long time to prepare. Longer than I should have done. Too many practice runs. But I'm not coping well with what it's doing to others. I can't take their pain away. Only time will do that. I can only sit back and watch. Not my style.

Daughter to me:

Yeah it's hard to watch, but grief is just one of those things that does take time, plus for some, being in grief keeps the connection going. And let's face it we didn't just lose Dad – the whole fucking world ended not long after. We're allowed to struggle. We are living through a pandemic. Life is very different. It'd be weird if we were all doing ok.

4th November 2020

The anniversary of Brian's passing. It could have been a sad occasion yet it was joyful. We sat in the garden as per covid guidelines. Freezing cold, so we set up two small tents. I was in a jumper, a cardigan and my biggest jacket. My sons just don't feel the cold. The girls set up a TV on the window ledge facing out, a DVD player, and speakers. We spent hours watching videos of family outings, holidays and parties. The memories have changed from sad and despondent to laughter and joy. This day will itself become a fond memory. As darkness fell, we lit a fire, watched cedar in herb form burn in the night for remembrance, and we added roses for love. As pagan as it gets, this celebration of his time with us and he remains with us as time moves on.

13th April 2021

My grandson asked why did grandad die? I didn't cry this time. I realise that I am moving through the grieving cycle. I am accepting of what happened and adjusting to the new life. My grandson is also moving on. He might not understand exactly what death means, but he knows that Grandad has gone. Now he

is questioning 'why death?' That's a mighty big question for a 4 year old, one that needs to be answered honestly, but in such a way as to not instil fear. He knows that Grandad wasn't well, and he knows that some things are good for your health and others not. He asked his mom to stop smoking – she has. I

anticipate more questions.

16th August 2021

My sister is dying, slowly and painfully. In her extreme, it was like looking at Mom in her last days. There is little left of my sister.

I was once told by a friend that when I came to look death in the face, I would change my beliefs to adopt Christian views of an afterlife. I haven't. For my sister, I wished her only a blissful release from the pain, for this existence to relinquish its hold, for her energy to scatter to the winds, producing new life.

7th October 2021

Brian's birthday. Second year without him. I caught a train back from Wales where I had been on holiday. My daughters met me at the station. We met with the rest of the family at Bacchus bar for a meal. We shared our memories of Brian. The most memories were from family holidays: camping, golden beaches and wet Welsh weather. Then we went to the Trocadero for a drink. Brian wasn't a great drinker, but he would enjoy an occasional glass of whisky, or a bottle of Bud with a meal. So that was our toast to the man who meant so much to us all – a Bud with a whisky chaser.

31st October 2021

Samhain. Small ritual in garden. On the altar to honour the ancestors we added a brooch for my father and my mother's gold earrings. For Brian we chose the brass ashtray he'd made way back in his twenties. He was so proud of that ashtray. And lastly we added a necklace that my sister had given me – a piece of amber. She told me she had been worried when she bought it, would I like it or hate it. I loved it.

And there they all were, gone but not forgotten, kept alive in our memories.

Portland Jones

www.portlandjones.com

<https://www.facebook.com/Portlandjonesau>



What we're reading...

Psychic Spellcraft

Shawn Robbins and Leanna Greenaway

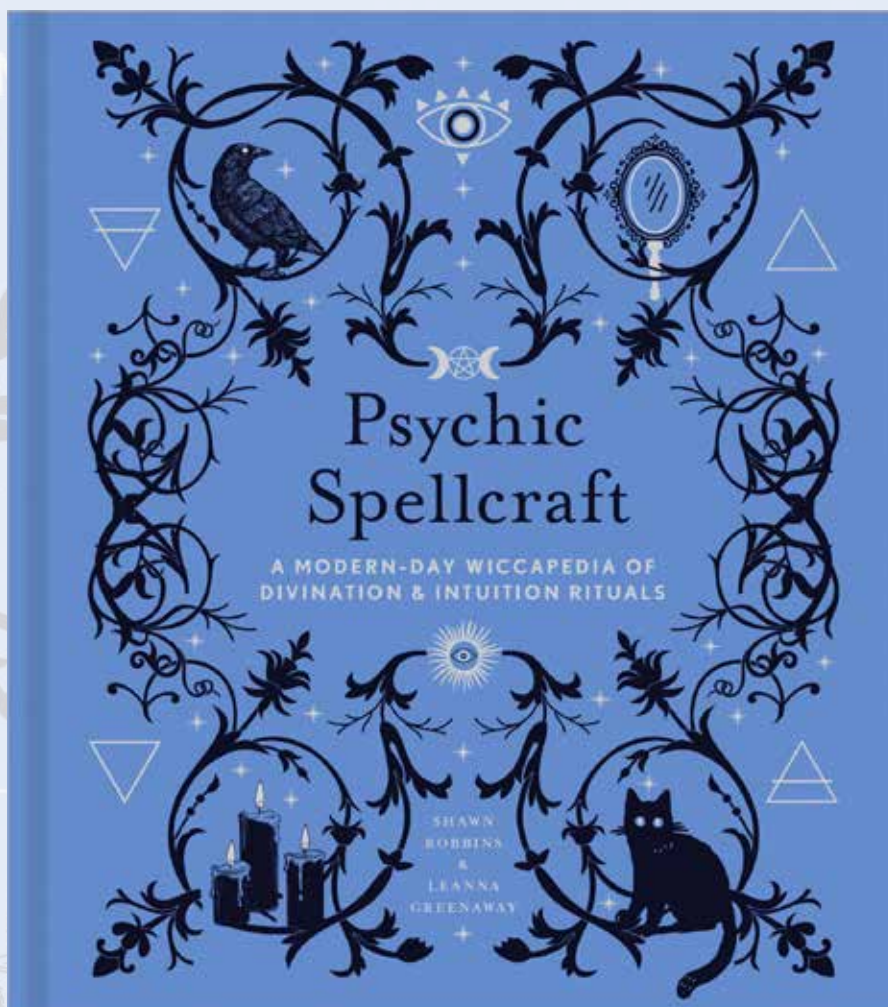
A Modern-Day Wiccapedia of Divination & Intuition Rituals

Ever wanted to expand your Psychic Spellcraft? Are you a whizz at reading tarot, but want to learn about scrying or reading pendulums? Or has your journey just begun, and you don't know anything about divination? This book is packed full of every divination method you can think of, with practical exercises and explanations, useful tips and much more!

I was surprised by the size of this book - it's beautifully made to be small, yet packs a massive 300 pages between it's cloth-bound covers.

The information - and there's a lot of it - is well presented and laid out, and you can dip in and out of any of the divination practices inside - from tea leaves to tarot, palmetry, plants and pendulums, and everything in between.

ISBN 9781454943884, RRP £14.99, published by Sterling Ethos, in Hardback



LEANNA
GREENAWAY

The Essential Tarot

Chloe Zarka

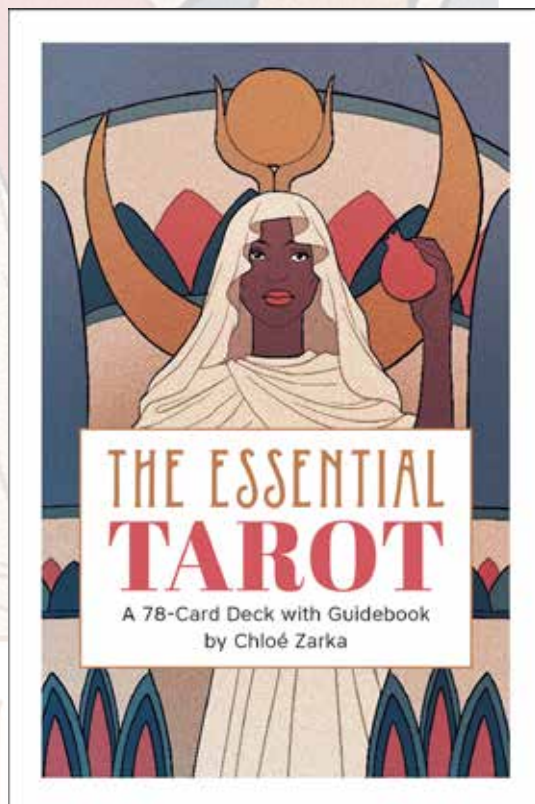
The Essential Tarot is a beautiful deck with thoughtful design based on the Rider Waite imagery. As a tarot reader, I rely heavily on the Rider-Waite imagery in my readings, and I found this deck was useful in advancing my ability to read cards that might not utilise the familiar images and expand on my intuition.

Chloe Zarka has used historical costumes in her interpretation of the major arcana and the court cards - the images are familiar but refreshingly different. The pip cards are a mixture, some present with familiar imagery, whilst others don't, which encourages the reader to interpret them intuitively. The cards have a wonderfully diverse diversity of race, gender and body types that is refreshing to see.

The blend of traditional tarot imagery, historical costuming and modern art creates a deck that is inclusive, accepting and comforting. I've enjoyed using it in readings, and find it to be easy to connect with and a pleasure to use, although the cards a little on the larger side for my hands (this happens regularly for though, so is not unusual).

If you want to see a full flip through this entire Tarot deck check out this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8SRaT8ZFr0>

ISBN 9781454943938, RRP £25.00, published by Sterling





The figure of the Hunter has been steadily pushed to the edge of society. He has settled deeper and deeper into his liminality, becoming a motif for the dangerous and desirable, but also for the forbidden. In traditional Dartmoor folklore, a farmer asks the Dark Huntsman for a share of his game, and is gifted the body of his own dead child. A tale from Savoy relates how a man asks the Rachaseran for a piece of what he is hunting, and a slab of meat is thrown down the chimney which swells up to fill the entire house and force out the family. In our day to day lives, many of us may find it easier to distance ourselves from the killing and butchering of our food. The Hunter is a little too wild, a little too dangerous, a little too close to animals and the earth for clean, modern sensibility. But, perhaps we have forgotten that the Hunter is one aspect of the divine masculine, and was never meant to be understood or embodied in isolation.

In her book *The Holy Wild* Danielle Dulsky calls us to 'consider both the Triple God and Triple Goddess archetypes as living metaphors for the holistic expression of our authentic wildness' (Dulsky, 2018). But what are the aspects of the Triple God, and how do they align with those of the Triple Goddess, which we may be somewhat familiar with already?



For Dulsky the masculine archetypes are 'Hunter, Father and Sage', corresponding with the feminine 'Maiden, Mother and Crone'. The Maiden is defined by her purity and potential for growth, as well as her inaction in not having yet carried a child, whereas the Hunter is virile and outwardly active in his wooing and displays of prowess. The Mother, of course, holds new life internally within her womb, and the Father gifts his seed, externally from his body, to allow this alchemy of creation. Perhaps we envisage the Crone as a wise woman, equipped with an internal, bone-deep knowledge of self, and the steadfastness to weather all the storms life brings. In balance and opposition her, the Sage is dispenser of knowledge and teacher to the many who

come to him for guidance, in an external sharing of learning. If we may consider the feminine archetypes in their triple aspect as a threefold cycle of inward growth, then the masculine archetypes in their triple aspect are a representation of external growth. The Maiden reminds us that sometimes the most potent decision is the choice not to act, whereas the Hunter teaches us the power of strong, decisive action.

Within this context, we can perceive the Hunter in a state of virile innocence, poised at the beginning of the cycle and equipped with the raw energy to manifest the productivity and

knowledge that follows. Defined by expression through action, he understands the spiral dance of life into death and life again, and has the freedom to walk the liminal space in-between. The Hunter is a figure of vital movement, racing on hungrily towards knowledge, creation and resilience. Perhaps now, we can understand clearly why he is less than welcome in Capitalist society and why stories have been shifted towards portraying him negatively. His hunger is not for material trinkets; rather, it is a soul need for spiritual and flesh-body growth, which he stalks with the honed focus of a predator.

Of course, none of these archetypal figures manifest in isolation. Not only do they hold space within their own trinity, but they exist, necessarily, alongside each other in complementary opposition. Dulsky reminds us that 'The Maiden, Mother and Crone live inside all human beings, just as the Hunter, Father and Sage live inside our ever-changing and always-cyclical psyches' (Dulsky, 2018). These figures offer tropes through which we can understand our own stories, and like any array of tools they give the best results when used as a complete set. Choosing the best archetype to guide us in any given moment allows us to gain perspective on our own life experiences and longings, and in this capacity we must work towards honouring each of them. We should remember that they all exist 'inside our ever-changing and always-cyclical psyches' which means periods of aligning



with the Sage must likely precede a return to working with the Maiden, and vice-versa.

Armed with this understanding, we must ask ourselves exactly why the Hunter has become 'dark' and 'wildness' become frightening? In his book 'Phantom Armies of the Night' Claude Leconteux suggests that legendary narratives have been reinterpreted by Christianity and retold in new tales where ancient deities are demonised 'and the word hunter... designated the sinner' (Leconteux, 2011). The cursed huntsman Squire Cabell from Dartmoor folklore and Dando from Cornish folklore are pertinent examples, given that their place at the head of an eternal hunt is punishment for their transgressions. These are typically sexual misdemeanours (including implied homosexuality), an overwhelming desire to hunt (whether for sport or food) and disobedience in honouring Christian holy days, and are mirrored in multiple variations on this tale.

The Hunter, in his most fearsome aspect at the head of the Wild Hunt, has clearly been perceived as enough of a threat to devote huge time and energy into a sustained campaign to rewrite his character in folklore. Where he cannot be portrayed as a cursed human or as synonymous with the Devil, he is often demoted to King of the Fairies. Both reworkings strip him of youthful innocence, inserting him into a narrative where he is the villain: either as the nemesis of Christ in Christian mythology or as an Otherworldly being without access to human empathy. In the tale of St Collen, the fairy court has been diminished to the point that their Hunter King, Gwyn ap Nudd, can be banished from Glastonbury Tor with a sprinkling of holy water.

Stepping back from these stories, and removing the lens of Christian doctrine, we may



slowly begin to dust off the figure of the Hunter from beneath the warnings and misinformation. What if so called sexual misdemeanours were fertile virility? What if hunger for nourishment and movement were understood as a requirement of growth? And what if the only holy days were those of the seasons and our own initiations within cycles of learning?

Now is the time for the return of the Hunter. By this, I do not suggest that he has ever been missing. Rather, I mean that now is the time for him to take up his throne within each of us once again. Now is the time to balance action with inaction, and awake that soul hunger for all that nourishes us as a complete human being. Take the knife of your intellect; slice beneath the dusty trappings of doctrine and discover the hot flesh beneath. Delve deeper, beneath skin after skin of disempowerment, obedience and shame, and reach for the beating heart of truth.

There is healing after wounding. There is freedom after oppression. There is life after death. Embodying the Hunter, we may move confidently through the liminal and transformative spaces in-between each of these states, stalking our own emotions and assumptions, seeking that which we need to cut free.

References

- Dulsky, D. (2018) *The Holy Wild*. California: New World Library.
Leconteux, C. (2011) *Phantom Armies of the Night*. Vermont: Inner Traditions



Wise Words from the Old Crone Toxicity

I don't usually write about negative things as I always try to find positivity in all I do and give out. Most of us will prefer good Karma to bad Karma and look to the harmony and accord rather than the adverse and destructive. I have always

been a glass half full kind of person. My husband gets upset with me as he moans that I always see good in any situation or person. He of course, as you can guess, is a glass half empty person. That is his way and he can't change the way he is and nor can I. It will be the same for you too. You are what you are and so long as we all recognise our attributes, be they negative or positive, we can be whole.

There are times, of course, when looking at the negative is helpful. We sometimes need to look at the negative in some detail to understand why we feel the ways we do, and also why others react in the way they do. I don't just mean Shadow work, I mean negativity in its entirety. We all have a dark side, I know I do and try as I might things do sometimes slip out of my mouth that I wish hadn't. Sometimes we need to embrace the undesirable and take responsibility for our not so agreeable attributes. We can all behave badly from time to time especially when we are under stress or unwell or even suffering with mental health. The difference is that a person who is TOXIC is always TOXIC.

This lunar cycle I wanted to write about TOXICITY as there does seem to be a lot of it around at the moment. We all know about



foods and plants that are toxic and poisonous and even those which are merely slightly Toxic to ourselves and cause sensitivity but occasionally can cause allergic reactions. These foods and plants we avoid as they can make us very ill and on occasion they can be fatal. I have a severe allergy to nuts. Only the edible ones I hasten to add! and I need to carry EpiPens with me at all times. Obviously I avoid anything with nuts in them.

We avoid plants which are toxic and I for one won't grow Rue as it affects my skin badly. I am very careful with herbs as I use herbs every day in magic and in my usual routines, for cooking, healing and herbal tisanes but am very careful which herbs I use and also which ones I grow. Certain herbs (and plants) bear an uncanny resemblance to their very poisonous counterparts, for instance Hemlock and Cow Parsley look very similar, as do Chamomile and Stinking May Weed. Incorrect usage can prove fatal. Even gardening for me is tricky as I need to wear gloves a lot of the time. I suffer from hay fever and if I am gardening for more than an hour I need to go indoors and wash my hands with great care and leave the garden alone for a while. No I am not a sensitive flower, just have sensitive skin!!

We know what plants and foods affect us adverselyso my big question is.....

Do we also acknowledge that people too, ourselves included at times, can be Toxic and poisonous? If so how do we avoid the hurt?

As those who follow a Pagan or Witchy path we know full well that what we give out comes back threefold. I know most of my associates in the Pagan world try so hard to be positive and give out good vibes but it is not always possible. That does not excuse bad behaviour and being negative but are we aware that we are being negative? I guess most of us are from time to time and we all strive to be more positive don't we? But do others?

I am thrown back to my childhood here and my school days. I had some lovely friends and am still in touch with my very best friend from school even after... yes really..... 58 years. Like us, most people all through my school days were easy to get along with but there was always one or two who were toxic and rather like a bad apple in a crate, their toxicity bled out to others. We can all remember those.

Personal Toxicity can happen in all walks of life in social and work situations with some people deriving pleasure from other peoples misfortunes though gossip, rumours, false narratives and misinterpretations of the truth. Their behaviour is often irrational and unreasonable. We find this more and more with social media. It appears that one person makes a less than pleasant comment and suddenly more and more people jump on the band wagon. Recently in my village a locally well-known person was cited on a local social media page as having died. His family were inundated with messages. It caused great upset and anxiety as he had not passed away at all. The rumour stemmed from an earwigged and misheard conversation in the village shop. Someone had then taken to social media to spread the gossip, probably to make themselves feel better, a person in the KNOW, ear to the ground and all that, possibly thought they were doing a great favour spreading the news but in fact causing great harm.

The sad feature here is that social media can reach out to such a wide audience in seconds. Whilst in many circumstances, especially over the past two years, it is great

and does a fabulous job of this outreaching, it can also become speedily TOXIC. We all need to think very carefully about what we put out, in words, deeds, emails and on social media.

A toxic person can disrupt your life in very deep and lasting ways. They are not always easy to spot either and it can take a long time to understand that a toxic person is self-serving, manipulative, and often a guilt tripper. They drown us with their poison, piling their negativity into our lives. It could be blatant like gossip and nasty comments or very subtle such as a heavy sigh, a raised eyebrow or leaving you out of conversations and events.

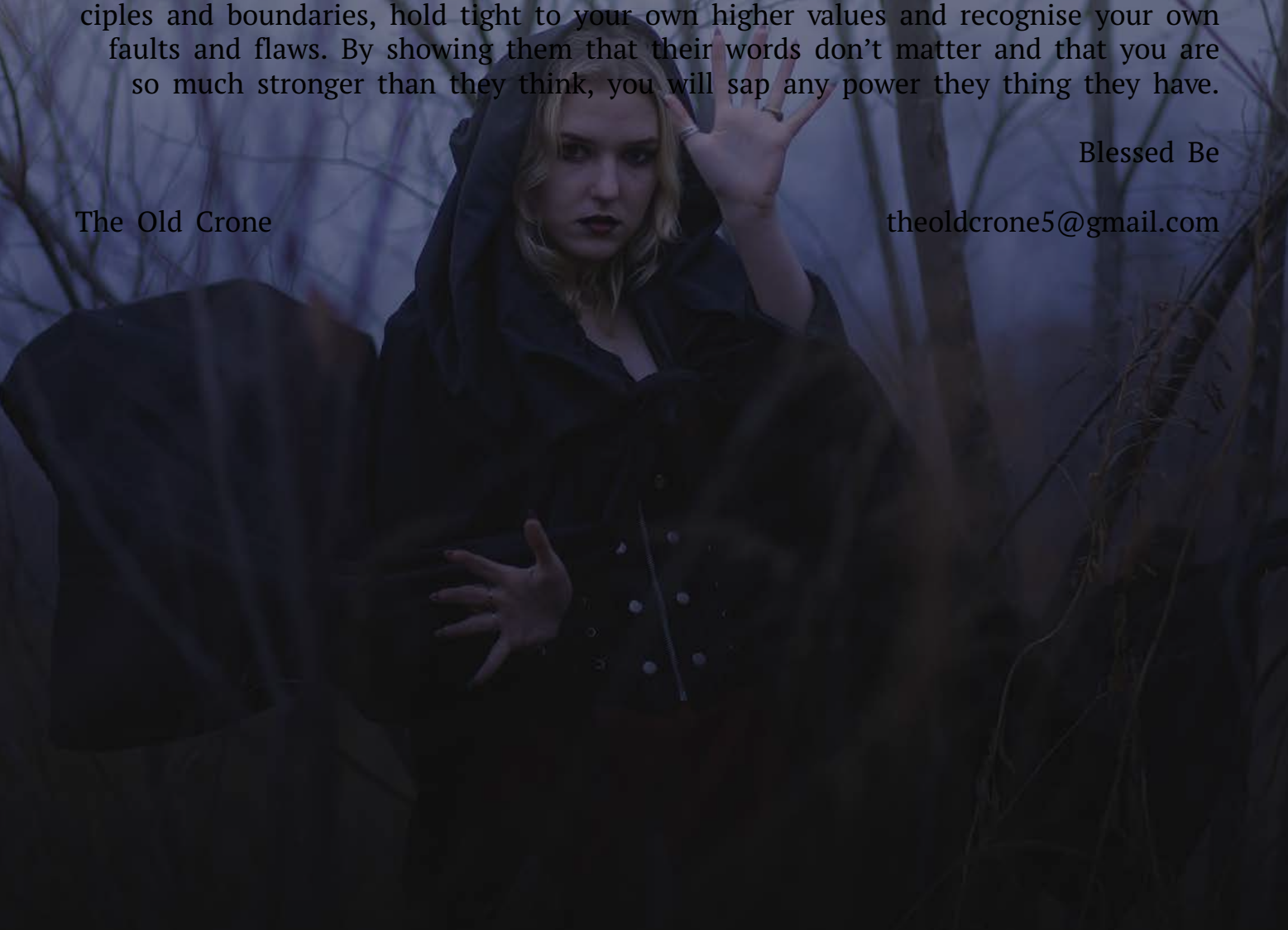
Many times it is because they are unable to deal with their own stresses and disappointments in their own lives and are unable to own their own emotions or accept that responsibility for themselves. This is no excuse for anyone who exudes Toxic behaviours but by recognising what they are, you are better able to avoid being hurt. You will not ever change the way they are, you will never gain control over them and why would you want to?

You will never win with a toxic person all you can do is walk away, don't answer back, don't get emotional and use the age old 'HOW TO DEAL WITH BULLIES' premise, imagine them stark naked and with a bad haircut. Stick to your own principles and boundaries, hold tight to your own higher values and recognise your own faults and flaws. By showing them that their words don't matter and that you are so much stronger than they think, you will sap any power they think they have.

Blessed Be

The Old Crone

theoldcrone5@gmail.com



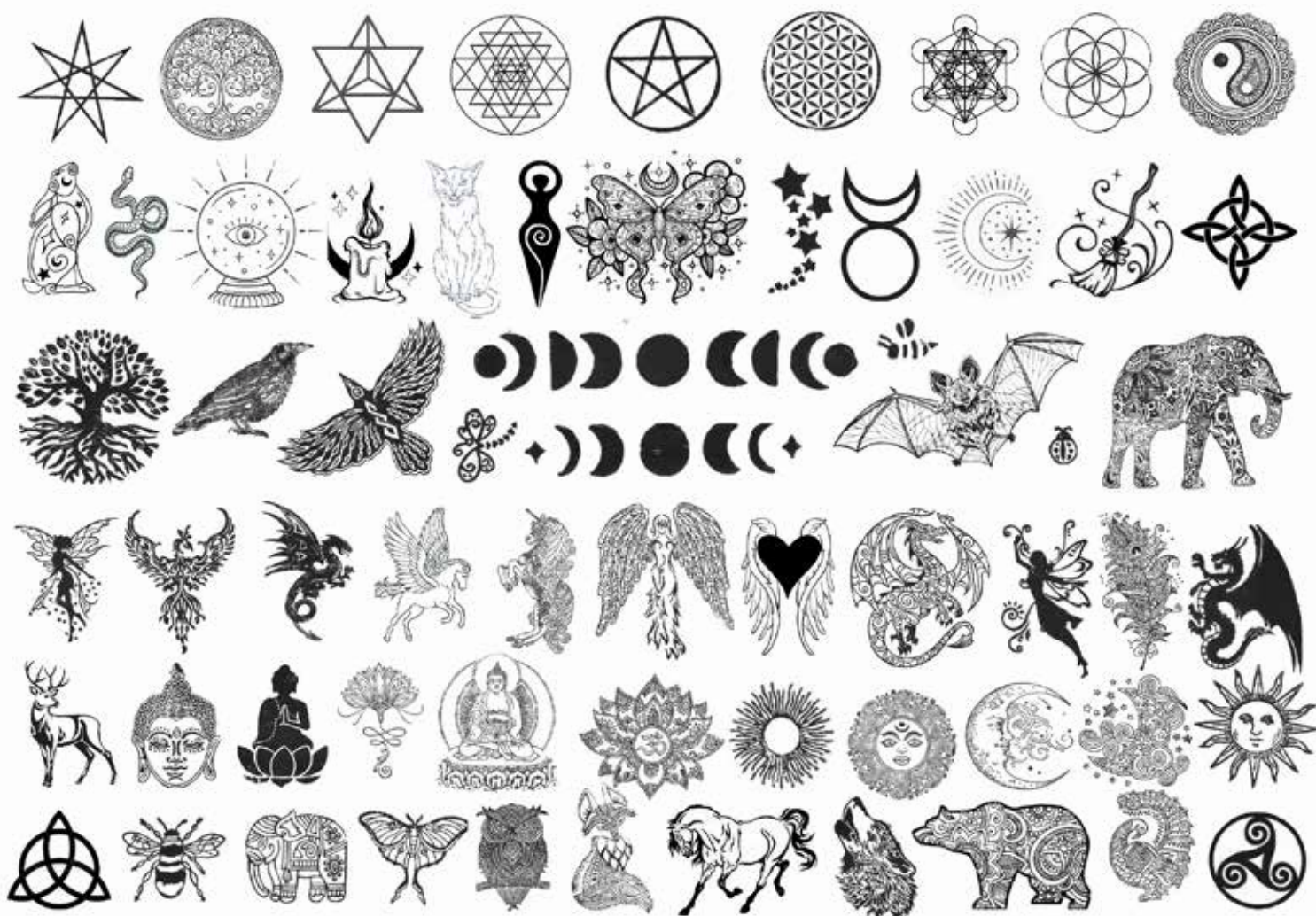


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Zoe Oakley: Oakenspirit art
FEATURED ARTIST



That Inner Calling
by Zoë Oakley

An artist that focuses her avid passion for creation into acrylic painting, oil painting, charcoal and pencil sketches; Zoë Oakley uses an extensive range of media with the aim of communicating her ideas and journey of self-discovery through visual means.

Pictured above: Pan's Introspection

This one holds a presence of his own. I wanted to capture the deep, masculine fostering of the forest in a calming and beautiful way. He is ever present as we walk in the woodland, wanting us to walk deeper.

Inspired by the nature that surrounds her home in Shropshire, Zoë draws the visions of many of her artworks from the woodlands and a deeper connection she feels to the land – where her imagination is allowed to roam free.

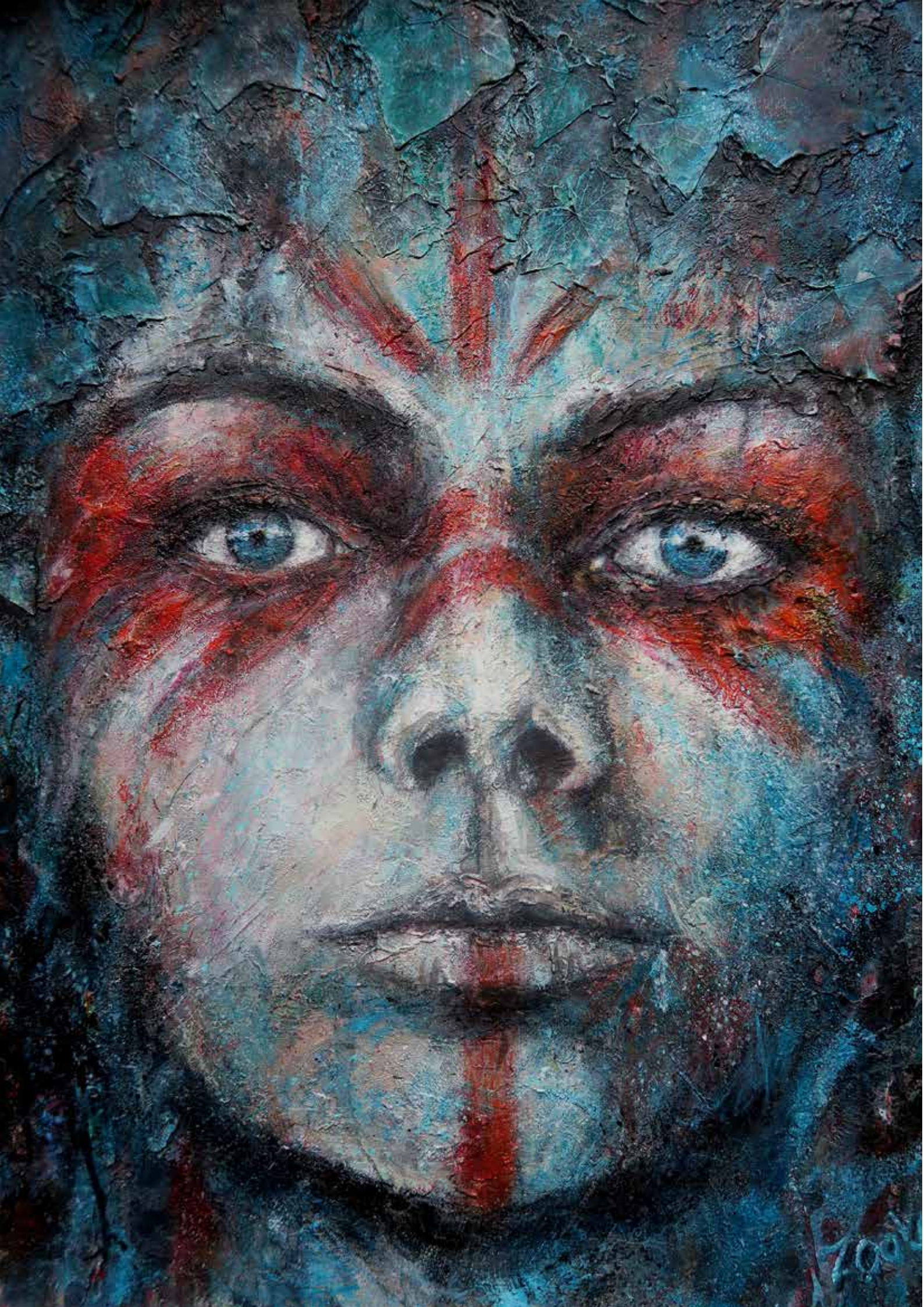
From the immediate land, Zoë also uses foliage and feathers in her pieces as prints and textures, using nature as a physical means to her art as well as an inspirational one.

Over the years, Zoë discovered a similar pursuit into the ancient roots and mysteries of folklore, venerable cultures and spirituality. Through her awakened curiosity into these lores and legends, Zoë began to create works that reflected these tales of old as they became her muse and the creative influence behind many of her artworks to come.

Zoë believes in honouring our origins and understanding where we belong in the greater pathways of life, staying true to where our roots lie in the natural world, and how our history shapes our individual identities today.

Pictured below: The Beckoning, with handmade forest frame.







Her ongoing journey in art has lead Zoë down many pathways and will take her down many more, as the road she travels bares no end and leads her anywhere she could wish to be.

You can discover a larger body of work on Zoe's website at oakenspiritart.com. She is always happy to take on commissions.

Facebook: Oakenspirit - Zoe Oakley

Twitter: ZoakenArt



Pictured right: Quanecia (Dream Child)

“Each individual carries within them a small but powerful generator of love whose energy is waiting to be released. When we learn to give and receive this universal energy, we will have affirmed that love conquers all, we are then able to transcend everything and anything, because love is the quintessence of life” — unknown

Pictured above: Pan at Night (segment from)

Four Fun Spells to Kickstart your Ostara Celebrations!

Faith Barnes

Instagram: @witchinsmall

Email: witchinsmall_author@protonmail.com

Ostara is a time when new life should be celebrated! You've all heard of the saying 'out with the old and in with the new'. This is how I see Ostara.

A time for renewal, a clear-out and reset! To kickstart your Ostara merriment, here are four easy spells you can try:

Ostara Chant

Greet the sunrise with this wonderful chant, full of optimism and joy!

*" Spring forward,
Search the path,
Call the fertility goddess to our hearth,
Bouncing up the energy rise,
Seeds sown for a future grown,*

*Spring for joy,
Buds breakthrough,
Finding the light so shall I too,
Blossoms bloom as shall we,
Bring forth fertile power to me!"*

Flower Crown of Hope

Turn your crown into a flower wreath to put on your door to bless your home with Ostara energy. Bring in the good vibes and luck!

Herbs not only have magickal associations, but flowers also do too! Daffodils are associated with March when Ostara occurs. So are a must to include! Daffodils bring love, luck and abundance into your life.

- Flowers! Choose from: daffodils, fig leaves, sunflowers and wheat for fertility. For hope: Daisies and violets. For luck: Carnations, dandelion and poppies.
- Green is the colour of hope. Use this with blues and yellows for that Ostara feel.
- Floral cloth wire (or wooden branches)
- Green floral tape (or string)
- Scissors

How to Make: Bend the floral wire to form a circle and tape to secure it. Trim the flower stems down to 3 inches, and bunch together 4-5 flowers to form a flower cluster by taping the bases. Once you have 10-15 clusters, nestle each one right below the other. Place them against the outside of the wire and tape them into position. As you tape on each one, say this chant:

*" I call on love and I call on hope, to bless this crown
with powers as I bind this rope.*

Bind once, come to me. Bind twice so shall it be. And bind thrice for the magick to be set free"

If you do not have access to real flowers, you can use artificial flowers by adding essential oils onto them. Ribbon, antlers, sticks, crystals, artificial butterflies or mushrooms, and glitter can be added too for that personal touch! Have fun with it, attract that positivity and joyous energy!



Honor Spring Fertility

It's that time of year when nature gets a bit frisky! But it is not just about getting down and dirty. It's also about powerful fertile energy, giver of life. Honour this sacred sabbath by embracing this energy, and becoming reborn!

The long-debated goddess Eostre, is the focus of this ritual. Eostre is the goddess of the dawn and spring. Her name means East, from where the sun rises.



a

- White Clothing
- Flower crown
- A Bottle
- A Bouquet of Flowers
- Dew Collecting Tool - V-shaped stick and cloth attached.

At dawn on Ostara as the growing light of spring starts to glow, rise and dress in white wearing a flower crown. Go to a grassy area. Roll, dance, and bathe in the dew in celebration. It is said this dew restores youth, use it to bless your rebirth! Wash off the old you, all that no longer serves and refresh yourself for who you will become. Gather the morning dew from grass and flowers into a bottle using the dew collection tool. Place the magickal dew drops onto your third eye and wrists. With your arms outstretched, call to Eostre and say:

*'I call yee Eostre,
First of the warm winds,
Joyously awakening the earth,
Sprouting new life, with all your might,
Bless this dew with your dawning light,
Refresh my energy,
Rebirth my life,
With this gift I offer thee, so shall your magick absorb unto me,
Celebrate, celebrate and dance to set it free!'*

Lay down on the grass the bouquet of flowers as an offering to this delightful Goddess. Once home, place the dew bottle onto your altar and use it whenever you need to feel reborn again! Who will the new you be?

Flower Petal Divine

You've all heard of 'he loves me, he loves me not' using daisy petals. Following this tradition, Ostara is perfect to get answers on love, life and the future! Flower petals make a perfect tool for divination, use this spell to discover your answers. You will need:

- Three Different Coloured Petals - Crocuses and daffodils are perfect to use, as first spring flowers. And they come in yellow, white, purple and blue!
- A Bowl
- Rose Water for divination
- Salt for clarity
- Fountain Pen and Paper

Time to Divine: Fill a bowl with rose water and add a sprinkle of salt. Write your question onto a piece of paper with a fountain pen. Gently blow on the water, imbuing it with your personal energy. And say:

'Spring mother, giver of life, reveal the answer to my strife, energy I give and answer I shall receive, with this blessing, so shall it be'.

Fold the paper three times and place the paper within the water. The ink will fade into the water filling it with your question to focus on. Take the three chosen petals and name each answer. One for Yes, one for No and one for Retry. Eg yellow daffodil petal for yes. Holding all three petals high above the water, gently release them. Watch the bowl and think deeply of your question. Whichever one floats the longest is your answer.

And there you have it! Go forth and celebrate Ostara in style with these fun spells! Which one will you try first?

Wishing you a joyous spring!
Faithy xx

Within The Egg

Samantha Teves



The egg. A symbol of life, of hope; an image that conjures thoughts of everything from pastel-clad rabbits to ancient fertility goddesses. We see the egg everywhere in the beginnings of Spring. It's image dances in synch alongside the flowers, the verdant grass, the scent of dew on a morning breeze. The egg, dyed and jovial, hidden in briars for rosy-cheeked little ones to find, or maybe placed upon an altar, calling to Eostre, celebrating her radiance and the dawning of new life. But what does the egg mean? Why is it a springtime beacon?

There are many interpretations of the Egg. Is it the cradle of life, yoke and white, Sun and Moon, a perfect balance. Perhaps we see the symbolism of the Sun, golden and round; Birth, fertility, the promise of "all", the image of potential. A beautifully dramatic image really, the unassuming shell of the egg that suddenly splits apart, revealing life itself.

If we flip back to the ancient Romans, the Egg was a symbol of reproduction. If we move even further back, into the pre-Christian times, Pagans colored eggs to thank the Sun for its warmth. Egyptians (who placed decorated ostrich eggs in graves), Greeks, Persians, the Germanic people, and other civilizations held the egg as a beacon of power. With many varied beliefs, over many cultures, the universe was often thought to have hatched from a great Mother egg, making eggs extremely valued in ceremonies and common upon sacred altars. The ancient Druids were said to bury eggs in the fields, to entice the Goddess from her wintry slumber. These eggs were tinted red to symbolize life force and fertility, willing that energy into the land. The egg, one of the original symbols of the Mother Goddess!

Later, during the Catholic traditions of Lent, eggs were not allowed to be consumed, so they would be hardboiled to save for Easter, a tradition which still thrives today. It was also said that these hardboiled eggs were given as gifts to the children to enjoy before or after the fasting.

While the Easter connection is often what is most commercially known of the egg, its rich history and symbolism belongs to so many beautiful Springtime celebrations, Deities, and religions.

If we look at writings from the philosophers of old, the egg is often mentioned in awed reverence. It was marked as an amalgam of the elements: White for water, yolk for fire, the outer shell for earth and the space between the shell, air. Over time, the egg was used in divination. Broken upon a doorstep for luck, decorated lavishly, gifted, jeweled, and tossed. The shape of an egg, the way it rolls, the way it floats, the shapes seen in an egg white, lovingly dropped into water, all forms of egg divination performed throughout many cultures. Fun Facts: Ovomancy, Ooman-
cy, or Ooscopy, are all words for egg-specific divination!

The egg is woven into folklore from all over the world. The beauty of this little symbol is that it can mean hope in so many different shades, whether we see regeneration, resurrection, fertility, or the cosmic energy of birth, reflected in those delicate shells. There is a magic about the interconnectedness of the egg. Our families all decorate them differently, we view the symbolism through our own lenses, depending on our heritage and beliefs, but that same egg is present in so very many of our springtime celebrations. The egg, a feature of ancient mythology that is still so present to our everyday lives. When we hold it in our hands, we can remember its power. We can see calloused palms digging into the freshly tilled soil to lay a crimson egg in hopes of bounty, the incense billowing over an ancient altar, adorned with eggs wrapped in springtime greenery and onion skins, we can see the cracked shells, strewn beneath the feet of tiny chicks, life itself. A memory of ancient ancestors before, A potent symbol that radiates the very essence of Spring. Growth.



Sources:

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Castile, Eliza. "Why Do We Have Easter Egg Hunts?" Bustle, 27 Mar. 2016, Accessed 8 Mar. 2022.

SPRING

Carrie Anderson

I like to welcome Spring with a walk in nature. I plan this hike for the Spring Equinox. I treat it as a ritual. It's how I greet the Spring, look for new life and to feel the energy that is rising from the sleep of Winter. It's my way to mark the transition of the Seasons, by looking for all the signs of new life that are emerging. I bring my family, so they can feel, and learn Spring from the first moments she arrives here. The first few years of our Spring walk allowed us to see buds forming. We saw spectacular mating rituals of some of the wildlife. The flora dazzled with bright green leaves slowly forming and uncurling. Early Spring wildflowers popped up with their ephemeral; like Perspophone, delicate, tender and offering a fleeting beauty. We also did a little bit of creek walking to see if the melted snow had unearthed any treasures. We were visitors peeking at a brilliant show, but not invited to partake.

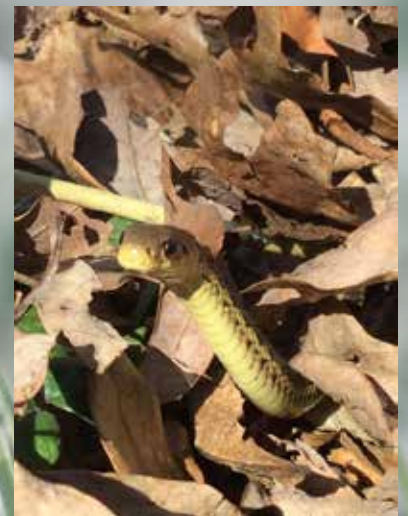


One year, on a whim, I decided to see if I could coax out a snake. Garters are born live during the Fall. They weather the Winter, hibernating in a den. Spring calls to them and they come out early during this season.

I walked in the woods and called to the snakes. Spoken words are not my first choice when communicating with Nature. I sent out thoughts and tried to match my energy to the Spring morning. Then I began to share healing energy. A gentle way to become part of my surroundings.

As I waited, patiently, by a stream, I saw a flash of yellow-green, zig-zagging towards a nearby tree. It was a ribbon snake and an adult. I clearly needed practice in how I called for a baby garter.

The next year, I tried a different location and was successful in meeting a baby garter snake. The third year, the snake stayed even longer, allowing a full conversation instead of just a quick hello and goodbye. I looked into his eyes and tried to see if he would succeed and grow up to feast on rodents, or, if he would become food for an owl before the week was even over. I wished him well and he turned to leave. I promised to come back next year, which will be soon, just a couple of weeks from now.





Pagan Poetry

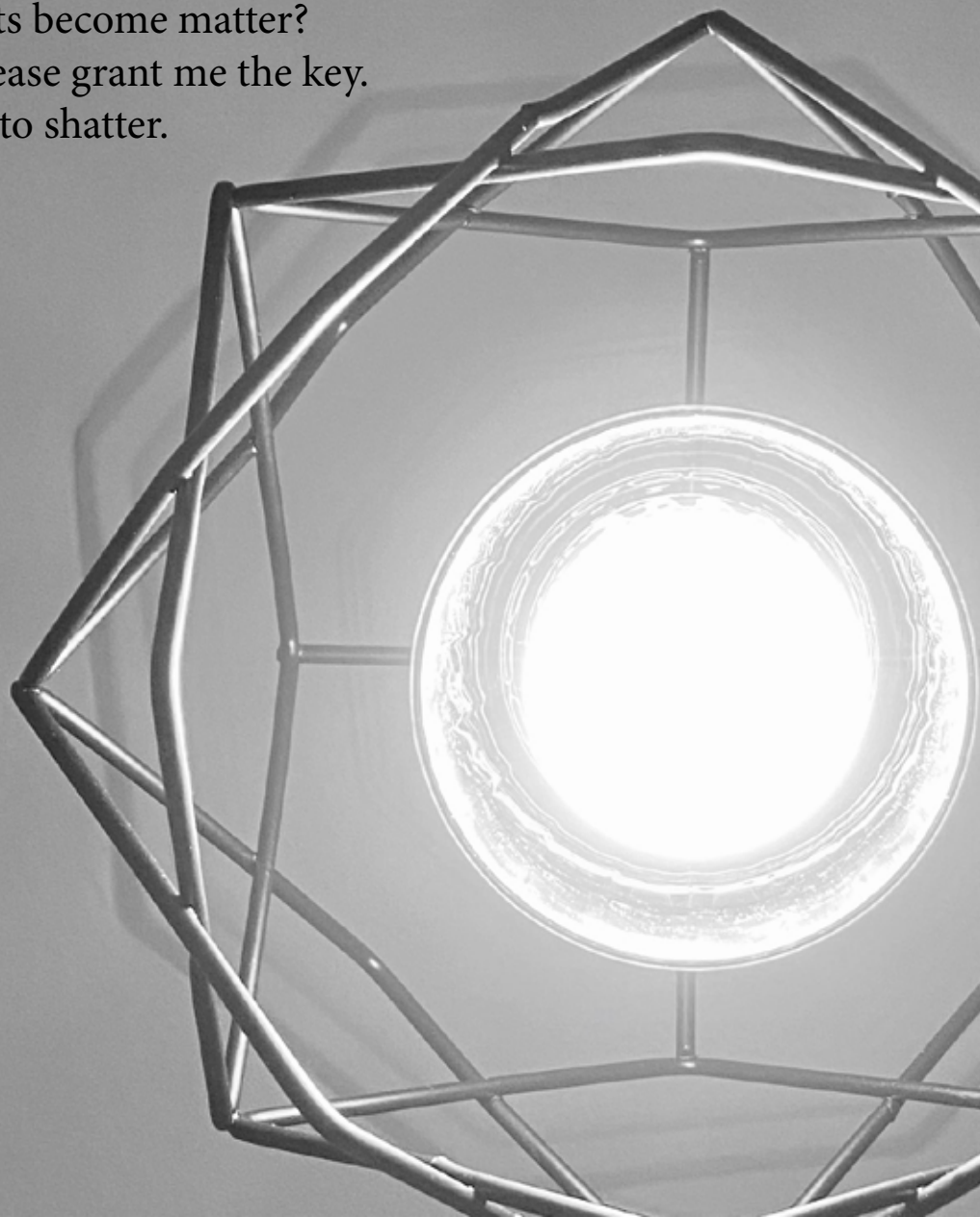
Photo by Klaire Dawn Ader

Poimandres

Is it you, oh mind, who sees it all?
Are you the breath behind the matter?
Was it you, oh mind, who birthed the fire?
Was it as enchanting as I remember?
Through the shadows, oh mind, the eye became,
And gave birth to the eyes who make fractals.
Share your glorious secrets,
Oh creator, oh mind.
From where did you pull forth the ether?
Is it you, oh mind, who whispers it still?
In the land where thoughts become matter?
If you are Poimandres, please grant me the key.
My illusions are pleading to shatter.

Kelly Buchan, 2022

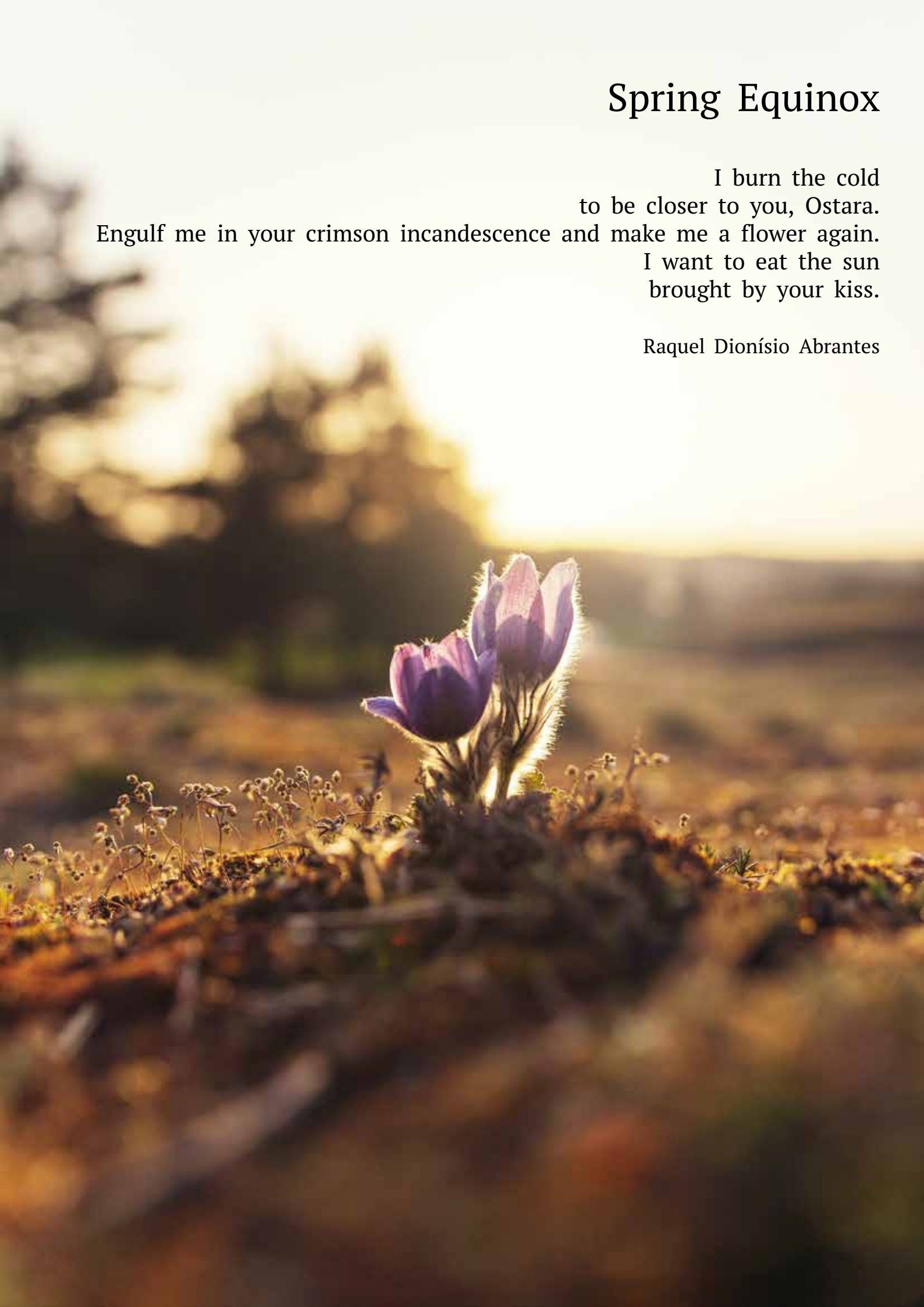
Kelly Buchan
2022



Spring Equinox

I burn the cold
to be closer to you, Ostara.
Engulf me in your crimson incandescence and make me a flower again.
I want to eat the sun
brought by your kiss.

Raquel Dionísio Abrantes



Scales to Horns

A Poem of Spring

What once was bathed in ice, now drips and steams.
Puddles of petrichor, a potion of the melting snow and early spring rains, filling the air
There is a tensing in the muscles, the fibers heating and thawing. A readiness for initiation,
a thirst for commotion.

A melody of hope, sung from damp branches, tiny chirps of life returning. Jaws unclenched
after months of chattering; tongues sharp with ideas to be manifested.

When Winter bows to the Spring, yielding the crown, turning the wheel,
The dream-soaked fishes take their bow and swim below, as the Rams raise their spiraled
horns to the sky in willful anticipation.

A season born of fire and wind. Red, like hearts beating. Red, like primrose buds. Red, like
the kiss of a new love.

Green, like the first blades of grass. Green, like emeralds atop altars. Green, like the start
of something new.

There is an awakening, in the belly of the Earth.
A tossing and turning, leaves unfurling like spines stretching.
Eyes opening, vines thickening, the shadows that hung so heavy, now awash in a pastel
peach glow.

The promise of hope stands on this cusp,
an outstretched hand yielding new journeys.
The release of once-was's and used-to-be's. The magnificence of possibility in every dew-
laced petal.
Chin to the growing Sun, my brave, adventurous soul.
The Rams we shall become.

Samantha Teves



Spring Worship

An early golden dawn
Peace, but for the waking birds
The slow chime of the bluebell
The prostrate fern unfurls
Reaching for the heavens

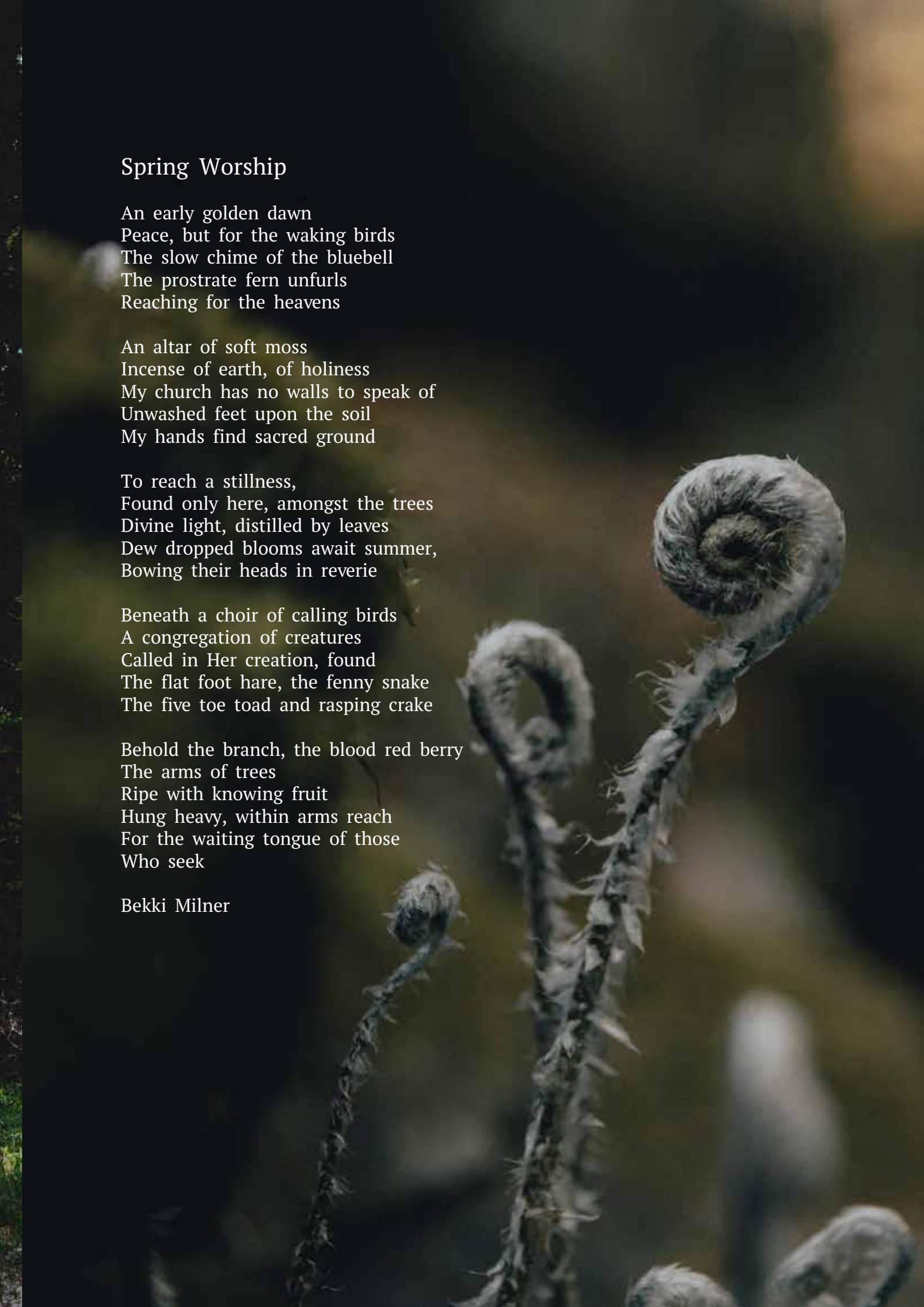
An altar of soft moss
Incense of earth, of holiness
My church has no walls to speak of
Unwashed feet upon the soil
My hands find sacred ground

To reach a stillness,
Found only here, amongst the trees
Divine light, distilled by leaves
Dew dropped blooms await summer,
Bowing their heads in reverie

Beneath a choir of calling birds
A congregation of creatures
Called in Her creation, found
The flat foot hare, the fenny snake
The five toe toad and rasping crake

Behold the branch, the blood red berry
The arms of trees
Ripe with knowing fruit
Hung heavy, within arms reach
For the waiting tongue of those
Who seek

Bekki Milner





WOODLAND NYMPH

Wreath



Hi Everyone,
I'm Jessica, I love designing and creating wall hangings, decor and candles inspired by nature. I like to decorate with foraged natural materials from the forest and the sea shores. When designing I find myself utilising recycled materials. I am an avid charity shopper and like to collect things on my travels, this makes my art completely unique and sustainable. This is something I am very passionate about and find rewarding.



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