

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white, lace-trimmed, off-the-shoulder dress, stands in a golden field. She is holding a single large yellow flower in her right hand and looking back over her shoulder at the camera. The background is a vast, open field under a bright, slightly cloudy sky.

WITCH

Beltane



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WITCH



Welcome to the
Beltane issue of
Witch!

Additional art and photos
by:

Klaire Dawn Ader

This issue we roll towards summer
and the celebration of Beltane!

We hope you enjoy this magical
issue!

Be blessed,

Bekki

Editor

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WITCH

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Speakers

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Kate West

Pete Jennings

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Cat Treadwell

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Anna Franklin

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Entertainment

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Green Fortune

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Explore Mindfulness This Beltane

4 Easy Spells

By Faith Barnes @witchinsmall

Beltane also called "May Day" festival is full of new life, as the earth bursts into action once again. A time to awaken from the sleepy winter, into a more productive you! Beltane energy is about new beginnings, a new path, and a new you! We each have within us the male and female energies of this festival. The leafy green man encourages growth and reaching your highest potential. And the May Queen is brimming with youth and vitality. Both coming together to create something spectacular, be it a project, buying a house or starting a new exciting relationship!

Nature calls us to enjoy our bodies this time of year, dance, exercise, move, or jump! To connect and joyously celebrate your wild and free spirit! Use these spells to reach a happier, rebalanced you!



Abundance Spell

Earth is buzzing with abundance this Beltane. Harness this energy to attract abundance into your life too! It can be for joy, strength, luck, love, anything which fulfils your life. Live your life to the max! You will need:

- Green Ink Pen and Paper
- Honey, Cinnamon, and Sugar
- Small Flat Plastic Container
- The New Moon - which lands just before Beltane this year!

Write down in green ink what you wish to attract in abundance. Mix up the offering of honey, sugar and cinnamon into a watery paste. To carry and bless this spell. Anoint the piece of paper, then fold four times. Bury this paper next to a blooming flower. I like to bury mine in a daisy circle or near flourishing flowers to attract this growing energy. And where bees like to go! Place the remaining sugar water into a small shallow plastic container by the flowers. For an offering to the bees. As you do this say:

*☐ Luck and prosperity buzz to me,
Carry this power and set it free,
Offerings gifted and blessings from the bee,
Attracting abundant energy everywhere I see,
Bring your magick, and bring your glee,
Bestow this mightiness from the bee! ☐*



Creation Blessing

A blessing before you embark on any new endeavour, get your creativity on!

- White Crayon
- A white piece of paper
- Orange paint (watered down)
- Paintbrush

The white piece of paper represents the start of your chosen task, a blank slate. Using the crayon write the endeavour you are embarking on. Brainstorm your plan, why you are doing it and what you'll achieve at the end. As the invisible ink is revealed by painting over the paper with the orange paint, so too will your creativity flow. As you paint, say:

*'In the flow,
Let my mind grow,
Searching, seeking and finding that glow,
Inner creativity guide me so,
Bless this endeavour as I show,
How I wish it to go! ☐*

The magick is cast, get on it fast, and work as long as the creativity lasts! What will you start today?

Productivity Spell

Use this fresh energy to progress with any project which has been untouched for weeks. Now is the time! Be a finisher, not a procrastinator! With Beltane's vibrant energy and this glittery sensory jar with a magickal twist!

- Spell Jar with lid (mason jar)
- Onyx Crystals
- Blue and Silver Glitter
- Yellow Candle (Clarity)
- Clear Liquid Glue
- Essential Oil Mix: Almond carrier oil, 5 drops lemon balm, 3 drops rosemary, 1 drop spearmint. Optional add 1 drop of either pine, wild orange or lime into the mix for that extra kick!
- Herbs: Rosemary (Clarity and balanced emotions), Bay leaves (Prosperity) and Mint (Stimulating).

Assemble your glitter spell jar by adding the glitter, clear glue, essential oil mix, herbs and a dash of water! As you add, think of your motivation to finish the project, why you are doing it and all the elements you need to do to complete it. Hold the onyx crystals and use the yellow candle to seal the top of the productivity jar shut. State out loud with confidence what project you will finish and say:

*As I seal,
So be it done,
This spell is cast,
Let start the fun,
This project has begun!*

Place the jar on the windowsill in the light where you work, with the crystals surrounding it. If you get distracted or need motivation, shake that glitter! To help you refocus and energetically wake up into action by saying:

*Energy rise and energy fill,
This day will be productive still,
A single shake is all it needs,
Lasting motivation is freed,
With the sparkle of this jar,
Bouncing energy is never far!*



New You Spell

We all need a transformation and reinvention from time to time. As humans, we change constantly and what better time to refresh than Beltane! Where nature is bouncing with new life and magick! Perform this sunrise spell on the morning of Beltane, at a local beach or river with the water coming in.

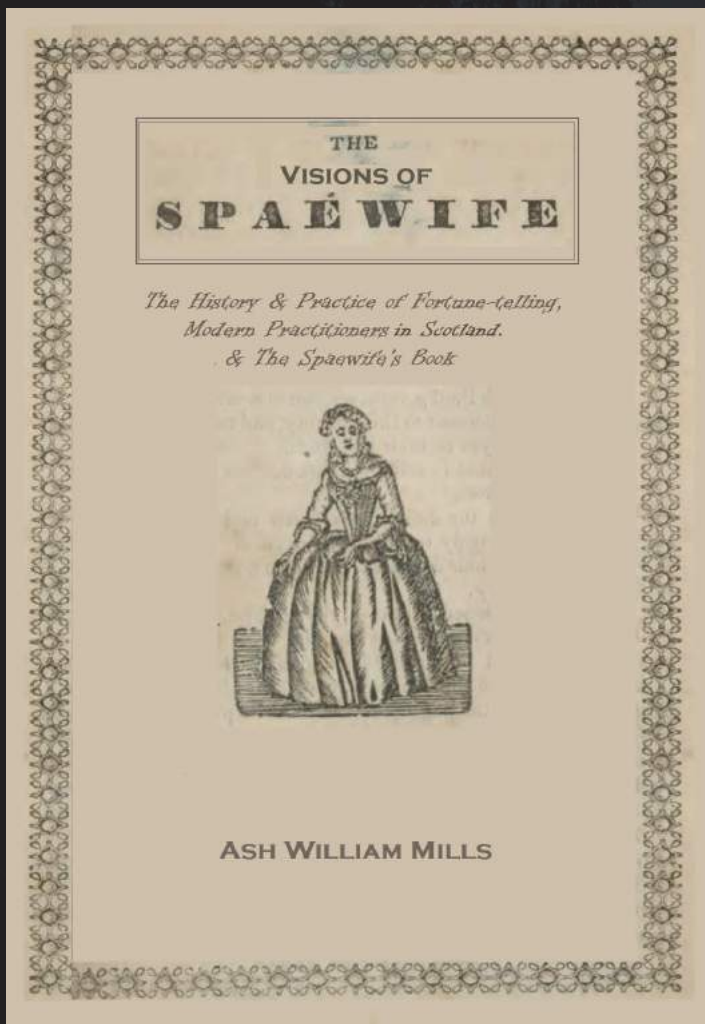
- Driftwood Stick
- White and Blue thread

Draw a line in the sand with a piece of driftwood, at the edge of the shore. To represent your past and moving forward onto who you want to become. Under the line, write the new traits you wish to have or develop. As the tide comes in, it attracts this energy towards you. Bringing forth the new you! Recharging and refreshing.

Take a moment to sit surrounded by your words in the sand. Plate the white and blue thread together, then tie a knot in the bracelet, one for each new trait you wish to attract. And say:

*Release the old, and embrace the new,
Bring forth the person I wish to pursue,
Only good traits shall enter through,
Wave in once, I welcome acceptance,
Wave in twice, it shall be precise,
Wave in thrice, I am renewed with these rites!
Once finished, put the bracelet on to remind you
of who you have become. And dance barefoot in
the sand to seal the spell and celebrate the new
you!*

So what are you waiting for!? Embrace the power of this Beltane sabbath and create the fresh start you've always wanted!



THE VISIONS OF THE SPÆWIFE

AN INTERVIEW WITH

ASH WILLIAM MILLS

KELLY BUCHAN
WITCH WRITER



Ash thank you so much for talking with Witch Magazine today! Being a Scottish Spæwife myself, it was a pleasure to read so deeply into the history of Scottish fortune telling, and the chapbooks shine light on the subject from such an interesting angle too.

Where does your love for this particular subject come from?

A: Well, I've always been interested in fortune-telling at a young age when great-aunt taught me how to tealeaf read which she herself along with my grandmother do read the leaves whenever had their friends around for a cuppa. The second sight also runs on my mother side of the family, so the ability to delve into the world of foresight and reading omens to peer beyond the limits of the present. So, as well being a professional fortune-teller myself, I guess that's where my interest in the subject grew to where I am at now.

What inspired you to compile these chapbooks for a broader audience?

A: Well originally it was going to be a reprint of the chapbook *The Spæwife*; or *The Universal fortune Teller* which I had displayed in my first book *The Black Book of Isobel Gowdie* and other *Scottish Spells & Charms* but the more I researched in the context in which the chapbook was published, the more I felt that the Spæwife deserved more justice in telling its story how popular it was of its time. Then, in my research I found another chapbook titled *The Ture Fortune Teller*; or *Universal Book of Fate* which circulated in Scotland during the 19th century which I felt deserved a republication also.

During your research into the subject, what has been the most surprising thing you've found within the chapbooks? I particularly enjoyed the anecdote of the fortune teller in Edinburgh who would divine using an African bird.

A: If I am to pick two things from each chapbook I found most surprising I guess it would be the divining of a person's facial characters or moles found in the Spæwife as I feel this

kind of fortune-telling is kind of a dying art and in the world where tarot is the go-to medium, its something you don't really see practiced today. The second would be the start of the Book of fate where there is depiction of a tree with numbers which when picked at random would tell your fortune on the next page. I really like the simplicity of it because traditional fortune-telling was just that, simple yet effective!

I'm delighted to agree with you on the point of modern day spaewives increasingly becoming more accepted within society. Do you see any correlations between the way in which spaewives were viewed in the 19th and 20th centuries and today?

A: Although times have very much changed today since the 19th and 20th centuries, the needs and desires of the people are pretty much the same. So people come to Spae-folk today like they did then, wanting foresight of things that only those with the Spae can tell them. Such as "will they find a partner soon and who they will be", or will have financial stability and what fortunes are in store for them.

With the modern revival of paganism and witchcraft becoming more and more mainstream, what place do you think these books from history hold within modern magickal communities?

A: Ash, being a practitioner yourself, how have your practises changed since compiling these chapbooks?

Do you feel more connected to your Scottish ancestors?

A: I guess since compiling these chapbooks and the simplistic methods of its diving practices, it really has re-directed me back to what I saw of fortune-telling in my youth. Like when I use to see my grandmother use a needle and thread to divine the sex of an unborn child or divining with threads which has attached itself on your clothing. Looking back at what my grandmother and great-aunt would do to divine would look very dull to people who practice divination today. I think today divinationary practices can be overly

complicated or diverse, it can be quite distracting to the actual practice of fortune-telling. I feel much more comfortable reading the tealeaf my cup than deciding what tarot deck im going to use. So, I guess more connected to my Scottish ancestors utilising the methods that is taught to us through these chapbooks and what I have been taught from my own family members from Aberdeen.

It can be difficult for those who live in rural Scottish communities to find like minded individuals to share their crafts with. What advice would you give to sole practitioners in Scotland who are looking to connect with other practitioners?

A: We live in a world where social media is very much apart of everyday lives, we share our interests, political and moral standing as well as our religious and spiritual practices and views. It through my sharing of the stuff I know about Scottish folk magic, fortune-telling and folklore that I have met so many amazing people which I class as good friends. When I was young it was through magical folks gathering at pubs known as Moots in which you got to know like-minded people but now I feel it is online where the magical community is the most strongest in meeting others. So, if you are on facebook, Instagram or Twitter, I suggest people search out for groups or creators which can prove a good space for information and networking.

And finally Ash, in which direction do you intend to take your research now? Are there any fields you would love to explore within the occult realm?

A: Well, I have always had a keen interest in gardening and plants since at a young age from which I inherited from my father. Scottish plant lore and folk medicine, and the magical practices that relate to the Green Arts have been a fascination for me for some time now. So maybe a book on this subject will be in the working in future.

Find Ash online at:
www.
Instagram

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<http://mysteryschoolofthegoddess.net/2021/08/15/the-lunar-temple-monthly-moon-membership-with-michelle-boxley/>



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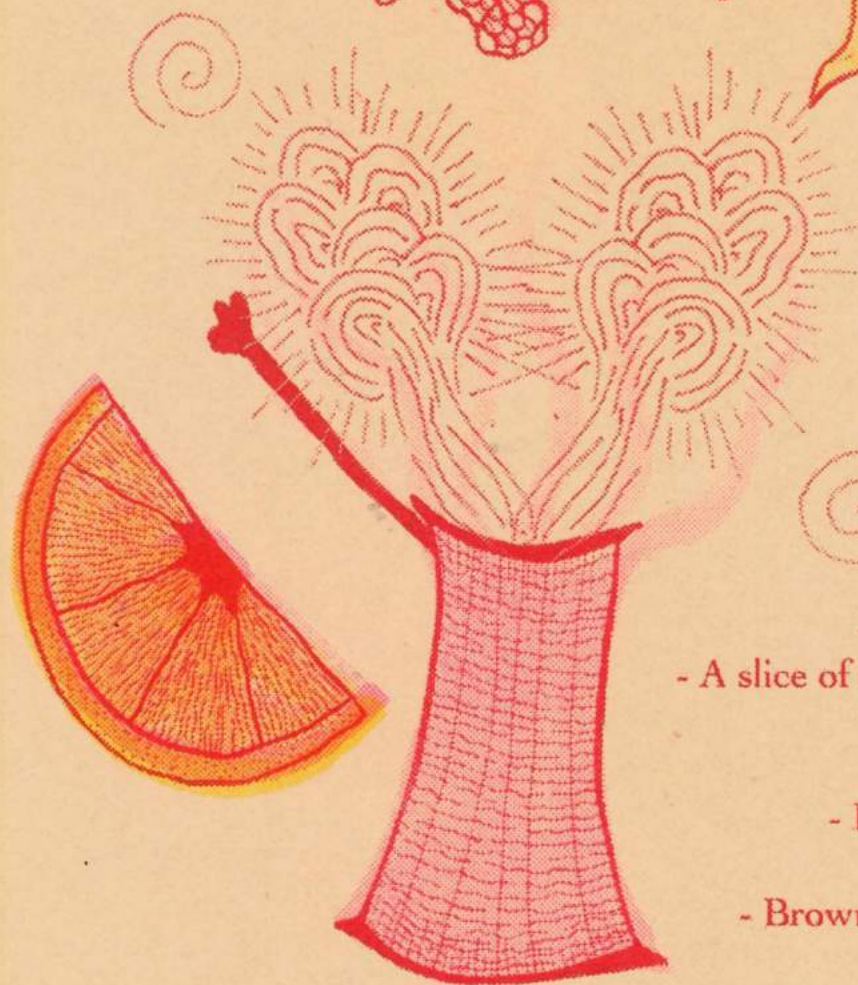
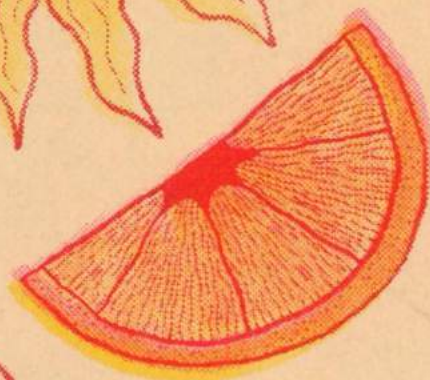
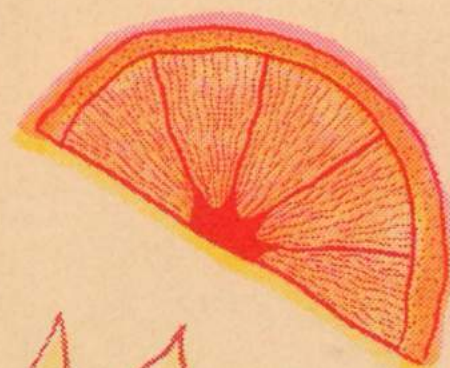




An extract from
ENCHANTRESS RIOT
by Ayshe-Mira Yashin @illustrationwitch
AN ILLUSTRATED ZINE OF
SPELLS FOR QUEER WOMEN


SUN TEA FOR INNER PEACE AND HARMONY

This sun tea can be used to create peace and harmony within oneself, through the combination of several enchanted herbs, and the act of "drinking sunlight". It is best to make this tea during daytime, especially when the sun is out.



INGREDIENTS

- A jar
- A small pot
- Water, for cleansing and renewal
- A slice of orange, for happiness and warmth
- Chamomile, for relaxation
- Rose petals, for love and healing
- Lavender, for peace and relaxation
- Cinnamon stick, for spirituality
- Brown sugar, for warmth and sweetness

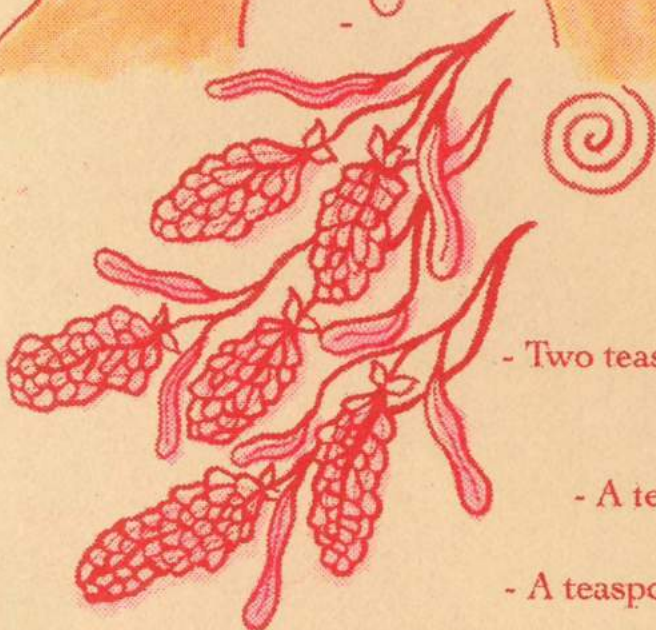


GUIDELINES FOR THE SPELL

- Fill your jar up with tap water/ drinkable water.
- Place the jar outside, or on a windowsill - anywhere where it can be reached by direct sunlight. If you wish, you can use this moment to express gratitude to the sun for providing the earth with warmth and with life. Leave the jar of water out in the sunlight for a few hours (at least two).
- Meanwhile, place the orange slice, chamomile, rose petals, cinnamon stick, and brown sugar into the small pot. Focus on each individual ingredient by feeling the texture in your hands, and thinking about the magical powers of each herb.
- When the sun-water is ready, pour it into the pot over the herbs, and set it to a low heat. As the sun tea brews, stir it clockwise in order to "set the spell into motion".
- Brew the tea for up to five minutes, until it has become hot, but not boiled. When it is ready, strain out the herbs, and pour the tea into a mug. (If you wish, you can save the herbs and add them to a bath - or simply compost them or bury them in the earth.)
- As you drink, visualise sunlight and warmth entering your body through the tea, manifesting peace and harmony within your body and mind.

VEGAN ROSE COOKIES TO ATTRACT QUEER LOVE

This spell, another example of kitchen witchery, uses a range of flowers and herbs, baked into delicious cookies, to attract queer love. Please note that this is not a "love spell" in the traditional sense; it cannot be targeted to a specific person or used to make a particular individual fall in love with you, but can instead be used to open oneself up to love, or to draw in experiences or encounters with people that could lead to love.



INGREDIENTS

- One and a half cups of flour
- Half a cup of almond flour
- A teaspoon of baking soda
- A pinch of salt
- A pinch of cinnamon, for spirituality
- A pinch of cardamom, for love and lust
- A teaspoon of dried lavender, for love
- Two teaspoons of rose petals, for love and healing
- Half a cup of vegan butter
- Three-quarters of a cup of brown sugar
- A teaspoon of rosewater, for love and healing
- Two tablespoons of almond milk
- A teaspoon of orange zest, for love and happiness

GUIDELINES FOR THE SPELL



- Before you begin baking, gather your ingredients. You may wish to light a pink candle for the duration of the baking and/or whilst you eat, as it corresponds to love.

- Preheat the oven to 180 degrees C, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

- In a bowl, sift together the plain flour, almond flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and cardamom. Add in the dried lavender and rose petals, and mix well, adding intent as you combine the mixture.

- In a separate bowl, beat together the brown sugar and vegan butter. When they have combined and softened, mix in the orange zest, rosewater, and almond milk. As you add each ingredient, think about the magical powers of each herb, and speak it out loud if you wish.

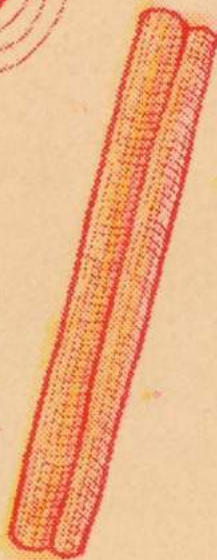
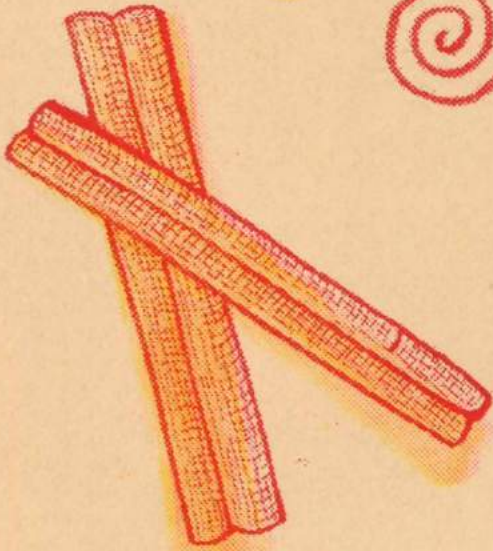
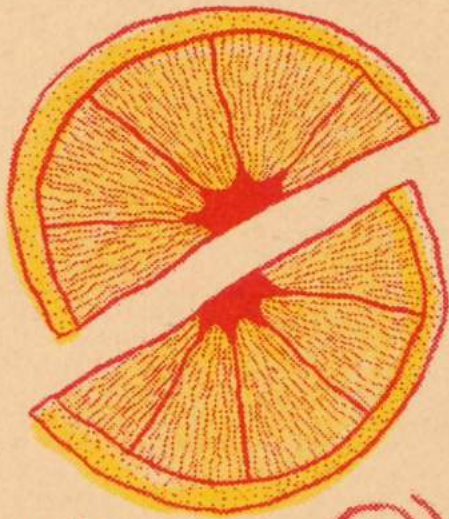
- Pour the wet ingredients into the dry, and mix them together well using a wooden spoon. The mixture should come together into a dough, wet enough to scoop. If it is not wet enough, you can add in an extra splash of almond milk.

- Use a spoon or ice cream scoop to scoop out balls of the mixture, and lay them out on the baking sheet. You should get around 20 cookies.

- If you wish, you can decorate the cookies by sprinkling more of the lavender and rose petals on them, or coating them in brown sugar.

- Bake the cookies in the preheated oven until they are golden, or for about ten minutes.

- Allow them to cool for a few minutes before eating. As you eat them, visualise what you would like to manifest, and visualise the magical powers of the herbs entering your body and bringing the spell into action.



Words from the Witches Journal

I have a large wooden cupboard in the alcove off my living room where I keep my 'witchy' stuff. The collection of dried herbs, mostly kept in dark glass bottles, lives on the bottom shelf behind the glass doors. Rose petals, bay leaves, chamomile, wormwood, hyssop, eucalyptus, peppermint and willow bark ~ labels on jars reveal their contents although some labels are now faded or missing. It looks like it's time to refresh the stock.

Ostara is upon us, a season of new growth, of renewal, I picked up a notebook – not a tactile leather bound journal, nor even a glossy coated lined pad. This was a rather tatty spiral bound book with shiny metal protecting the corners. Leafing through the pages, I discovered notes hastily made at work in the back, and scribbled lines at the front dating back to 2007. I realised that I had not treated this book with the deference I make to others. There was scribble and doodling and scarcely intelligible writing, yet it held a wealth of information.

There were lots of loose pages shoved inside the covers which tumbled out as I turned the pages. We had been looking at trees. Photos of oak trees and pictures of alder brightened the pages.

Why were we looking at them?

At the time, rituals were taking place in some woodland not far from my home. Most locals called it the Bluebell Woods, far more apt than its proper name. In the north of the circle lived a huge oak tree towering above us, its round trunk furrowed and scaly. The leaves are deeply lobed and grow in bunches. Its fruit are the acorns that most of us know from childhood, tubby little nuts sitting in tiny cups.

Our notes record this poem.

The Oak

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

*Live thy life,
Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
Living gold.*

*Summer -rich
Then; and then
Autumn-changed
Soberer-hued
Cold again.*

*All his leaves
Fall at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough
Naked strength.*

PORTLAND JONES
WITCH WRITER

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We looked at how to make ink from the oak apple gall. The gall is caused by a tiny wasp that lays its eggs in the leaf bud. Oak gall ink has been used for many years, possibly way back in the fourth century. Laws were enacted in Britain to specify the content of the ink used for legal documents.

At one time acorns were collected and processed into flour, and Google tells me that this is still the case. Acorns are high in tannins and considered poisonous and so cannot be eaten straight from the tree. The tannins have to be leached away before the acorns can be made into flour.

My notes remind me that mistletoe can be found growing on oak trees, that oak trees are prone to lightning strikes as they are often the tallest thing around. Legend had it that mistletoe was a sign a god had stopped by with the lightning strike.

The Oak King rules over the summer months. Many years we enacted the battle scenes between the Oak and the Holly Kings.

As we walked to the open area where we would create our circle, we brushed against Alder trees, plentiful in this woodland. They are a native tree, not as tall as others. The leaves are round and a little ragged at the edges, a bit leathery. The flowers are catkins. The green dye from the catkins was thought to colour the clothes of fairies. They develop cones to hold their seeds.

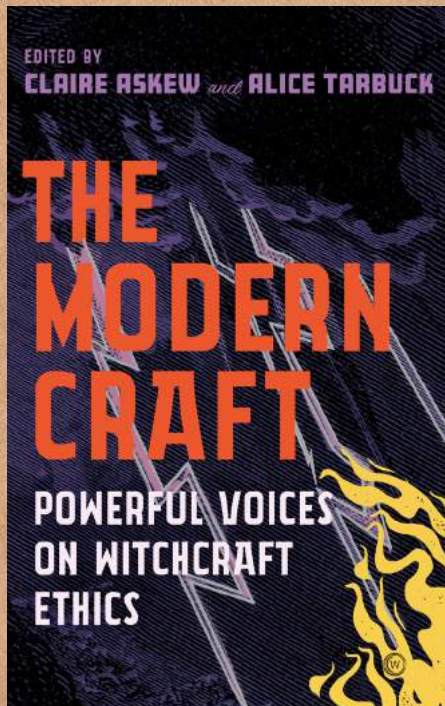
The wood is resistant to water and they enjoy damp ground. When the wood is cut, the pale wood changes colour giving the impression that it is bleeding which is probably why some people fear the alder. We loved it. We chose the alder as the symbol of our coven, making embroidered emblems which we stitched to our cloaks. So much to learn.

Portland Jones

www.portlandjones.com

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What we're reading...



The Modern Craft

Edited by Claire Askew & Alice Tarbuck

A collection of essays from a diverse selection of marginalised voices, *The Modern Craft* brings forth vital viewpoints on the ethics of contemporary witchcraft and magical practices.

A well rounded representation of minorities have shared their viewpoints, creating a refreshing and often eye opening account of what it means to be a witch today.

Whilst we are lucky to live in a time that is more forgiving towards witchcraft, this book highlights to issues and difficulties that can even come from within craft communities themselves, including cultural appropriation, gatekeeping, the world of social media and more.

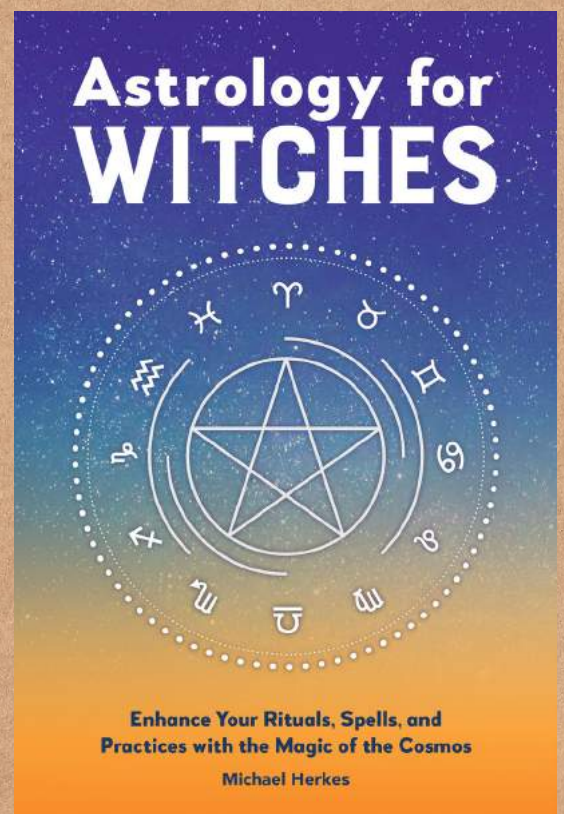
Astrology for Witches

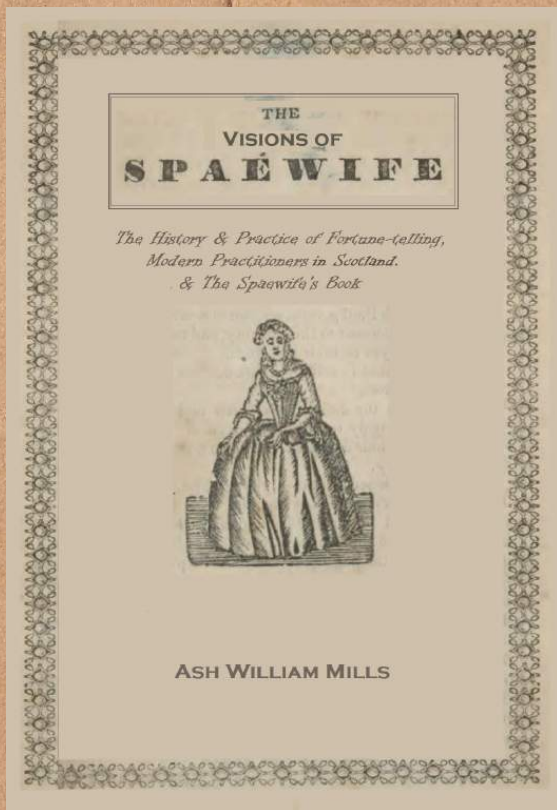
Michael Herkes

I have always struggled with astrology, with so many resources available out there, I could never quite grasp the basics to assist my craft- until now!

Michael Herkes' latest book, *Astrology for Witches*, provides an easy to understand introduction to astrology that you can work in to your craft.

In addition to that, there are meditations, spells, recipes and rituals to put the knowledge in to practice. You'll find a chapter focussing on the sun, the moon and each planet, in addition to considerations for your spell casting practice, this is a must read for anyone who has been mystified by the mechanics of the cosmos.





The Visions of the Spawwife

Ash William Mills

Just as in Ash William Mills' first book, *The Black Book of Isobel Gowdie and other Scottish Spells & Charms* [2021] the work has really been put in to his latest release, *The Visions of the Spawwife*. Ash does his research, and it shows.

This book is an indepth look at Spawwifery and traditions of fortune telling in Scotland, and in addition to the chapbooks referenced in the text, there are practical divinatory methods from both the author and historical sources, and interviews with modern professional fortune tellers in Scotland.

The delight for me is always the translated historical texts, a fascinating look at what was written down in the world of the craft in a historical context - a must have for anyone interested in the history of witchcraft in Scotland or the United Kingdom.

An introduction to Spiritual Ecology

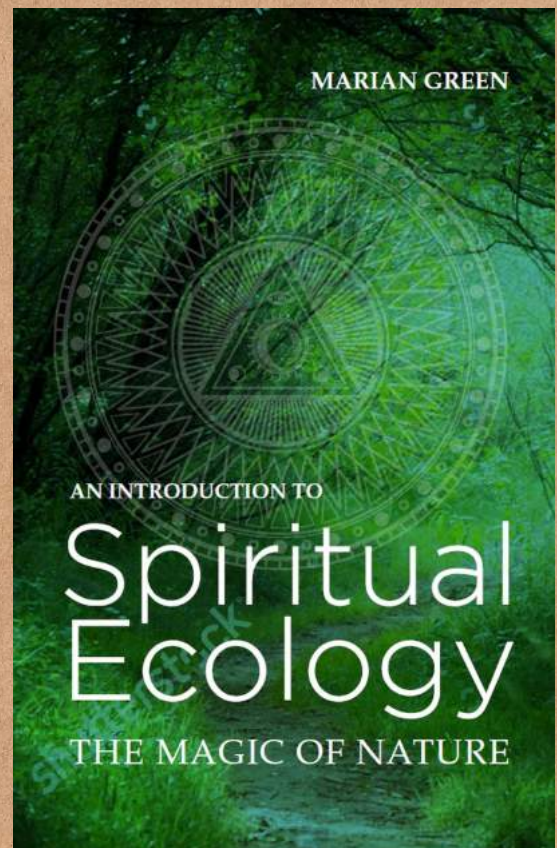
The Magic of Nature

Marian Green

Whilst this book makes clear that within the concept of Spiritual Ecology, everyone's path may be different, I have found that it explained how I feel about the modern world and its loss of connection to Nature and magic with a surprising accuracy.

Our world is not what it was, and we live in a time where our connection to the earth and the elements is increasingly forgotten, changed, and hidden beneath modern, consumerist and technological advances and ideals.

This book manages to summarise all that's going away with our connection to natural and magical ways and reminds us how important it was to our ancestors. It also suggests ways to reconnect with the seasons and the elements in an informative and practical way.



*See, as the prettiest graves will do in time,
Our poet wants the freshness of its prime;
Spite of the sexton's browsing horse, the sods
Have struggled through its binding osier-rods;
Headstone and half-sunk footstone lean awry,
Wanting the brick-work promised by-and-by;
How the minute grey lichens, plate o'er plate,
Have softened down the crisp-cut name and date!*

Fame
Robert Browning

CEMETERIES

AND THE LICHENS THAT LOVE THEM

Carrie Anderson - Witch Residency Writer



Two of my favorite pastimes are looking for lichens and visiting older cemeteries. Combining the two allows time for casual strolls through graveyards, looking at the lichen and photographing them. My husband likes researching the stories of those buried at the different cemeteries that we visit. My son works part-time, during the summer, doing groundskeeping at an old Victorian-era cemetery, so I have ample time to find lichen.



After years of excitedly pointing out different lichens to my husband, “Look, another lichen!”, one day, he stopped and asked, “So, what is a lichen?” I could only explain the reasons that I thought they were beautiful and worthy of my time and attention. I had never really taken the time to research lichens and find out why they populated the cemeteries.

They certainly create a more dramatic visage when strolling through, looking at graves that are several hundred years old. Lichens add a touch of color, vibrancy, and life that compel the eye to look closer at the intricacies and details.

I added reading about and researching lichens, in my amateur naturalist kind of way, to my list of hobbies. Now, when visiting graves and photographing lichens, I can talk, for hours, about lichens. I’m not a scientist, but I am a fervent advocate of appreciating and conserving lichens.

Lichens developed over 250 million years ago. They are one of the first living things that crossed over from the aquatic environment and adapted to living on land. Approximately 14,000 species of lichen exist and many are found in barren areas. They grow in colonies and can live for decades, while many can live for centuries.

Whenever I point out a lichen, I like to explain how it is its very own ecosystem. Then, I pretend that I’m looking at a miniature city. Housed in that lichen are bacteria, viruses, and primitive one-celled organisms. Lichens are like snowflakes, no two are alike.



Lichens remind me of being a little girl and seeing ads for Sea-Monkeys. I believed those ads. I thought I would be housing a family of super-cute critters that had their little family life playing out in my bedroom. Lichens are like my adult version of Sea-Monkeys but without all of the disappointment. I know there’s a tiny little microscopic, thriving, and diverse community housed in each lichen and that makes seeing them always fascinating and exciting.



Lichens are composed of a fungus and an alga (although some new research indicates that yeast might also be an important part of the symbiotic relationship.). The fungi are almost always of the sac variety. While the alga is either alga-green or blue-green or both.

A lichen must attach itself to a substrate and that attachment is part of the fungi's role. The fungi provide structure and prevent the organism from drying out. The fungi need the alga to provide food to sustain their existence through photosynthesis. While it is primarily regarded as a symbiotic relationship, there are some signs that it might have a slight parasitic quality too.

Lichens have a wide variety of colors. They can be yellow, orange, red, green, black, brown, silver, or gray. Periods of wet weather, when it's slightly warm outside (like early Spring in the US) are when lichens are at their most colorful. During periods of drought, they tend to shrivel and lose the intensity of their color.

While lichens can colonize a substrate rather quickly, their growth is measured in millimeters or less per year. Depending on the species of lichen, it can take decades or hundreds of years for the colony to become firmly established.

While I delight in looking for and photographing lichen, I still am very hesitant to trust my ability to successfully identify a species. There is so much variety. Lichen is classified, not in the normal taxonomic way that you might be used to. Instead, they are grouped by basic shape and structure, not by species. Crustose is the first classification. Much like its name implies, these are the lichens that appear to form a crust. Foliose lichens are, like the root word here, those that appear to have foliage, or, are leaf-like. Fruticose lichen has finger-like or thread projections.

One aspect of identifying a lichen is looking at the substrate it has attached to. Lichens have very specific, and widely different needs. Since we are looking at cemeteries, I'll just discuss the substrates that you might find lichen on, which are different stones. The calcium content on the gravestones is important for the lichens. Some species will want a higher calcium content and they will thrive on limestones, mortar, or marble. Stones that are more silica-based, in a cemetery, will be granite, slate, and possibly sandstone. Highly polished headstones and newer headstones are unlikely to house lichens. So knowing the type of stone that you are looking at, in the cemetery, will help you identify the species of lichen if that is your goal.

I love lichens because they exist. I don't need more of a reason. However, when explaining to other people, it might be handy to explain why we should conserve them. Here are some reasons that lichens are important to our environment, to ourselves, and to other living beings.

Lichens are extremely sensitive to sulfur dioxide and their presence is an indication of good air quality.



Lichens are food for many wildlife, including reindeer (fun fact: Reindeer moss isn't moss. It's a lichen), some species of hummingbirds, caterpillars, orb-weavers, flying squirrels, and invertebrates. Birds will use lichen for nesting. Some invertebrates have evolved to appear like certain species of lichen to camouflage themselves.

Humans have a long history of using lichens. Lichens have been used in cooking and baking in various cultures. Fabric has been made from fiber spun from lichen. Natural dyes can also be made. Numerous medicines are attributed to lichens.

Sure, you can find lichen on trees, soil, and sand dunes. You don't need to look for them in a cemetery. But, if you're like me, chances are extremely high that you were going to be in a cemetery anyway. A day spent in a beautiful old cemetery is a day well spent. Cemeteries are very special places and lichen love growing in them.

Why? Cemeteries are often spared the progression of human development. Think of a cemetery as a time capsule. It sustains life that may no longer be able to thrive elsewhere. Cemeteries can stave off urban sprawl, grazing livestock, off-road vehicles, invasive plants, and other activities that degrade the natural landscape.

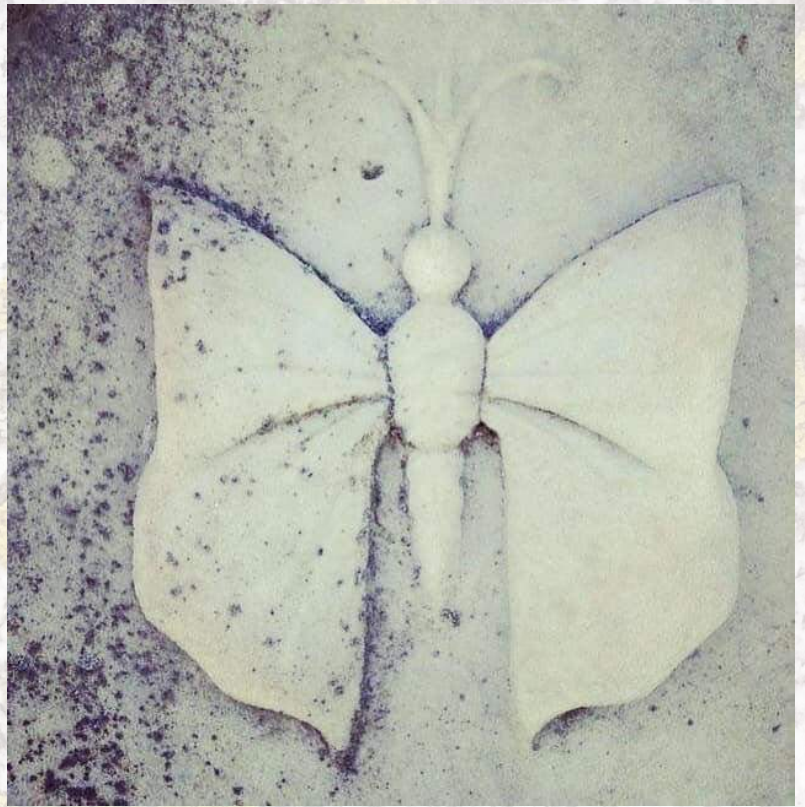
Cemeteries are, often, the oldest man-made structures in the local landscape. Due to lichens' slow-growing process, one can find lichens that are almost as old as the headstones. A technique called lichenometry, similar to dendrology with trees, can use lichen to help age artifacts. One could measure the growth of the lichen based on the date on the tombstone.

Cemeteries can support rare species of lichen. In Lowland Britain, for instance, churchyards are the only habitat where certain lichen species can live (<https://www.britishlichensociety.org.uk/conservation/churchyard/churchyard-lichen-conservation>).

Cemeteries can be areas of great biodiversity. One such example involves a medieval tomb. A churchyard and the British Lichen Conservation society worked together to create a sustainable plan for the restoration of a tomb and conservation of the lichens. During the process, it was discovered that the top, of the 300-year-old tomb, alone, had over 30 species of lichens (https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/case_study/conservation-of-lichens-on-a-historic-chest-tomb).

There is concern that lichen on tombstones causes the stone to decay. It's not quite a simple cause-and-effect scenario. It does depend on the type of stone and the species of lichen. Some are barely attached to the stone, while in others, the lichen may be a few millimeters below the surface. Removing the lichen, especially without first consulting with organizations that understand lichen biology, can cause more damage to the stone and the environment (especially in cases when harsh methods or chemicals are used).

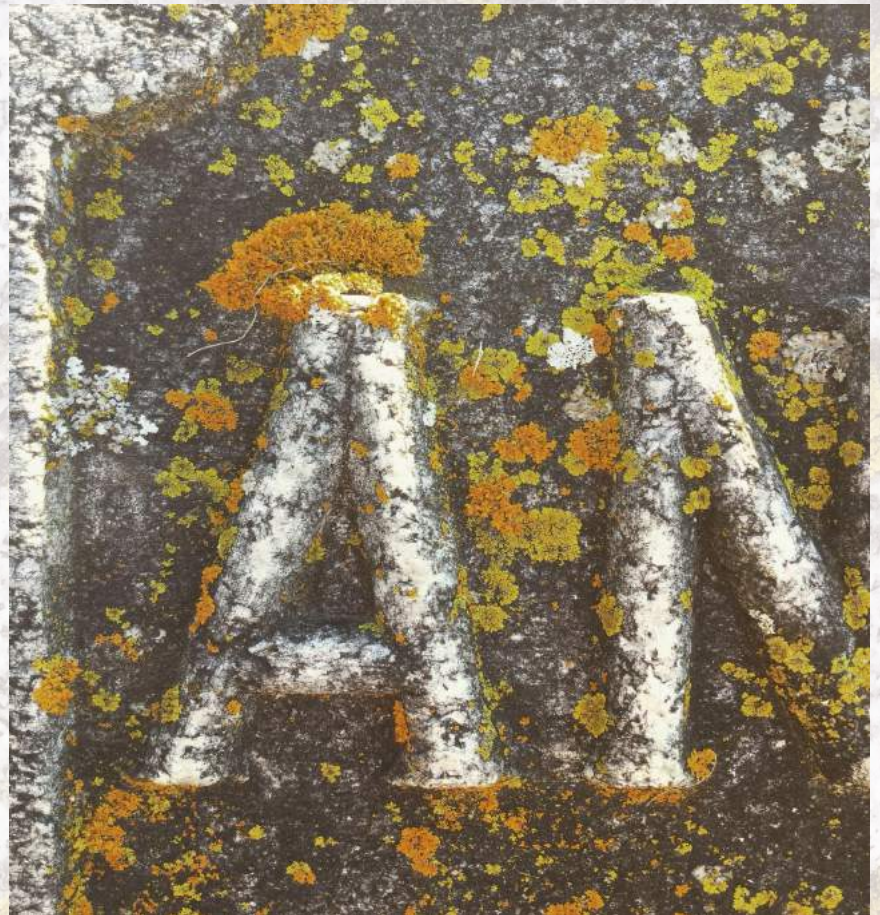
Lichens can create beautiful mosaic-like displays on tombstones. I find them enchanting and I spend more time at a cemetery where lichen grows. For my family, we are willing to volunteer, partake in fundraisers,



and work at the local cemetery where the lichens aren't regularly removed. Lichens are life coming forth in a place that memorializes the dead. I find their presence to be a poetic reminder of the cycle of life and nature's resilience.

Cemeteries are places, untouched for, possibly centuries. They are places that house staggering biodiversity that might not be found on the other side of the cemetery gates. Lichens that are growing in the cemetery might be rare, unusual species. They might not be able to exist in the neighboring fields, yards, or developed areas.

Part of what entices us to spend time in cemeteries is the peace, solitude, mystery, and beauty of the surroundings. The lichens on the headstones, tombstones, and statuary add an ethereal quality that can allow us to be in that liminal space between life and death. Here are our dead and here is the life that congregates above them.



Resources

I highly recommend the British Lichen Society's website and the affiliated Churchyard Lichen Conservation. I don't live in Britain, but this site has so much information that I find myself using it more than other lichen sites.



The Consortium of North American Lichen Herbaria is an impressive, yet daunting compendium of images, species checklists, and more. The USDA has a fairly basic, yet easy-to-follow section on lichens.

Lichens of North America by Irwin M. Brodo, is an absolute blessing of a book, even if holding it makes me feel like my arms might collapse under its immense weight. Not including the index or glossary, this book has 750 pages of information and photos. It's certainly not a portable guidebook. However, depending on where you live, there are many guidebooks available.

<https://www.britishlichensociety.org.uk/>
<https://www.lichenportal.org/cnalh/>
<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/beauty/lichens/index.shtml>



Wise Words from the Old Crone

Green Magic, Natural Lore and Beloved Trees

Finally we have had a few days of really hot sunshine, lots of happy work in the garden (interspersed with a book, a gin and a fire pit, not necessarily in that order, I'm not all work!) and I have loved the magic of watching seeds pop new leaves up above the compost in the greenhouse. Peas, runner beans, sun-

flowers, and other flowering plants all getting ready for potting on and then planting out. Garlic and rhubarb in my veggie patch almost ready to pull. The glorious days of Spring and summer stretching out in front of me, Beltane just around the corner and this year once more, thanks to no restrictions, off to Butser to see the Wicker Man burn. Such an exciting and ultra magical time of the year.

I love to be as green as I can and grow as much as I can in my veggie patch, fruit patch and herb garden. Almost time to sow my pumpkins (or Pump Kings as my children used to call them) too. My raspberry bushes and other fruit bushes and trees are already blossoming and I am hoping for another bumper crop from all. Sounds like I have a huge garden but that is not the case. Just well used. We hear all the time about being GREEN whether it is by eating more plant based foods, recycling, using less energy, buying an electric car(?), using public transport, cycling to work, walking more or not making unnecessary journeys. Much of this is not so easy in our frenetic life styles but with a little research and small changes in our lives we can all be a lot more GREEN.

We can try to use less fuel in our homes. We can turn off lights and radiators in unused rooms turn the thermostat down a notch and perhaps chuck on a jumper if we are cold as this also helps with the bills, use energy efficient appliances and even eco bulbs in our lights. We can grow



more of our own foods even if it is only a small amount such as herbs, and can buy locally sourced foods, support local shops and farmers and even cook more food from scratch. All of this is much more healthy too. Don't get me wrong, I do try but I also like a take away Thai curry with the best and yes I buy things which need to travel from all over the world such as coffee and chocolate to name but two but at least I do think first and I try. Nowadays it is easy to overuse things, our homes are well lit and warm thanks to electricity and fossil fuels and sometimes wood burner stoves, although these last two are targeted these days too for emitting none green smoke! Please make sure all wood you burn is very well dried out, at least a year to make sure.

We are lucky that we can cook at the flick of a switch and take a hot shower whenever we wish. Our streets and roads are lit in the main and even on rural roads house lights still shine some illumination on the darkest of lanes or our car headlights show us the way. It is hard to believe that not so long ago houses and streets were unlit apart from gas lamps and before that candles, their shadows casting eerie shapes which scared our ancestors. It's no wonder our human imaginations ran riot and superstition was rife. Life used to be much more GREEN. So what else can we do nowadays?

We can appreciate what is around us and do our utmost to preserve what is good in our surroundings, our plants for food and just plain joy, our woodlands for walks and enjoyment and preservation of the trees which surround us and our hedgerows in late summer for foraging. I love trees and woodlands and would be hard pressed to live in an area where I was not surrounded by trees.

We all noticed that the skies were cleaner due to less air travel and also lower local pollution during Lockdown due to less traffic. Less noise from our roads and as I live on a main A road, I even noticed there were less blue lights and sirens too. We all walked more, took our daily exercise and waved to our neighbours when we clapped for the NHS. We all liked the cleaner air and to help us with this are our trusted friends the trees. I have been known in my younger days to help form a human barrier around some beautiful old oaks which were destined to be cut down purely for more houses to be built. Yes me, a baby in a sling and a tot in a push chair along with others who felt the same We made the front page of local news and were even on local TV. We lost, of course, despite all our efforts. Money spoke louder than us.

Up to about 200 years ago it is understood that a squirrel could travel the length and breadth of England and never touch the ground such was the density of forest and woodlands. Most people lived in clearings within these forests or above the tree line in shelters. People believed that trees whispered to each other. We now understand it is the wind in the leaves. Or is it? How have these superstitions survived today?

Touch wood! How often do we see this occurring? People searching for real wood to touch. A relic of former times when people believed spirits lived in trees and they honoured them and their wood for their protection. Early man saw the tree roots rise from the ground in a single trunk representing the unity of man, the branches reached high into the sky joining earth to heaven.

Symbolism of trees was all around from the humble Hawthorn which was often laid in the rafters of new dwellings to guard against evil spirits, to forked hazel, used to dowse for precious water and even today it is used for dowsing for water and to search for buried treasure. (Tried treasure hunting. No success as yet!)

The Holly tree, often displayed in the home at Christmas, is sacred to the Fairies. Holly was planted around homes, barns and byres and even fields as protection. The fallen leaves

a great deterrent to marauding animals as the spikes stay sharp even after a year on the ground. I am lucky enough to have a mature holly tree at my gate.

Oak was thought the King of trees, very alive and magical due to the cries and groans when felled. Many travellers carried acorns as amulets. The mighty Oak tree can live up to a thousand years and has been on the earth longer than man has.

Rowan or Mountain Ash, sacred to the Druids and the Vikings, was thought to be the most magical of trees especially for wand making, as was willow. I use willow and elder for my wand making as I am waiting for my home grown Rowan tree to grow a little more before I ask it if I can cut any down for my wands.

Willow has long been used in medicine and people used to use stripped willow for cleaning their teeth and to ward off toothache as it contains a natural type of aspirin. It has long been associated with mysticism, makes great brooms and is associated with rebirth and fertility too as it sprouts from twigs easily. I have four willows in my garden all grown from twigs literally pushed into the ground.

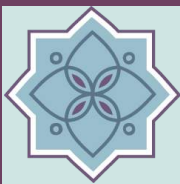
Yew was considered most revered and used for making long bows and is another tree sacred to the Druids. Yew trees and bushes were planted in graveyards, churchyards and around chapels for protection and its needle like leaves used to line new dug graves. Yew needles are very toxic and poisonous to cattle and other creatures so this may have had something to do with it. Nobody wanted their graves to be dug up for food.

I was astounded, many years ago, when I moved into a new home to discover I had several trios of mature trees in patches around my home of Willow, Holly and Rowan, a very magical trio. They were always my 'go to' places when I felt the need for comfort peace and succour. One trio was close to the house and another, my favourite, the farthest away where we kept a garden fire pit. It was here I felt most at home and most comfort although it was years before I connected the place I loved to the trees around it.

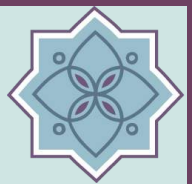
We can all be much more green by growing more trees and plants. Plants take in carbon dioxide and give out oxygen. You don't need a huge garden. You just need a will to grow something. A window box is ideal for herbs, mine are grown in two old butlers sinks and have thrived for many years. You can even grow herbs in small pots on a windowsill. Runner beans can be grown in a large pot on a patio or in a rear yard. They just need compost, water and sunshine. It is so much easier than you think and the results are amazing. Even a pot of Petunias or Bizzy Lizzy on a pathway will bring joy and cheer.

I hope you will look at our native trees with reverence and perhaps plant a new one in your own garden. Now that will be MAGIC.

From The Old Crone
Circle of the Crystal Moon
theoldcrone5@gmail.com

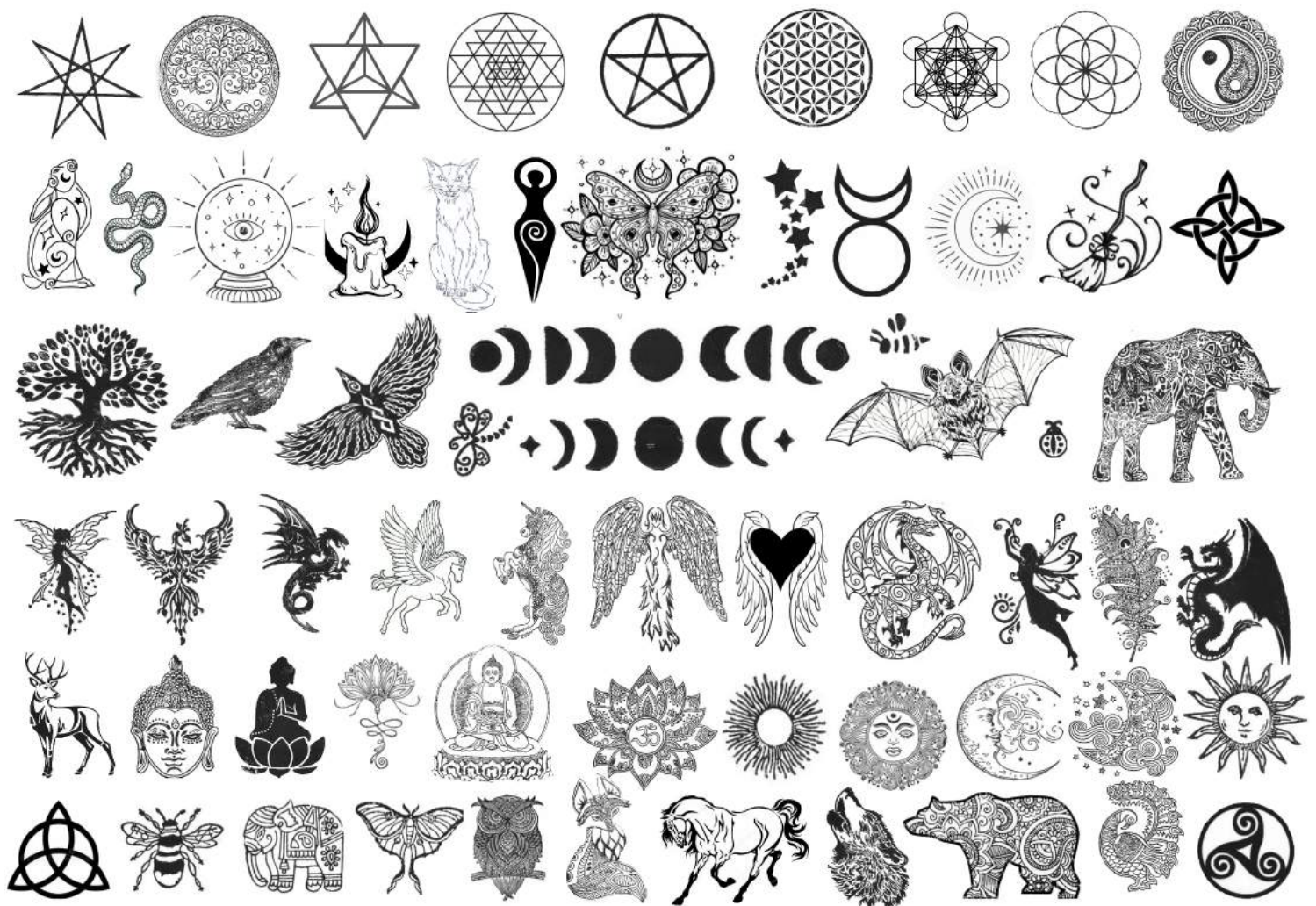


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What does Mother mean to you?

Sarah Lloyd- Witch Residency Writer

mother:

[mu-ther] noun

A goddess on earth, a female figure of authority, the holder of the hearth, weaver of deep connections and one who tends to the inner wisdom and knowing a soothsayer who illuminates, protects and nurtures others.

It feels only fitting to be presencing words myself and my sisters are currently weaving into existence, in our collaborative book "Wake Up Mother", in this, the Beltane issue.

Beltane - where all of life is bursting with fertility, potential becomes conception, and the maiden goddess reaches her fullest. A time of crowns of flowers, of growth, fertility and abundance.

It was no coincidence that after following the intuitive call to Sherwood Forest in March, followed by a stop off in Wellow at the ancient Maypole, that I would be writing these words.

I have been receiving these calls for a few years now, the loud nudging of intuition telling me I need to visit certain spots, with little or no guidance after. Then once I get there the signs are clear, like a magical treasure hunt.

I call myself a dot connector, a weaver of stories, I help others to cast their nets further through the power of the media. It is making a refreshing change for me to talk into the magic that comes to me, alongside my day job as an intuitive PR consultant.

The downloads, I received during that visit to the Great Oak and to the fairies in the woods, showed me that the work that our circle of storytellers is creating now on earth, is never more needed.

One ancient story that was evident during my visit was that of Robin Hood, his Merry Men and his Lady Marion. If like me, you were brought up on fairy tales like Robin Hood, Peter Pan, King Arthur and to an extent, the story of Jesus, it may not have occurred to you (it didn't me), that each male lead character has their band of men surrounding them. Whilst the female character, is often on her own or a minority. The female is written as the love interest, the mother, or the whore; these stories showed a strong masculine character and the nurturing, supporting female character. I ask you where Marion's support or Mary's for that matter was, we know they would have been present in real life, just lost in our stories of old.



Or perhaps it is an honouring of the Cosmic Womb, the priestess, the creatrix - through singling out that character, making them front and centre within the story?

The book, Wake Up Mother, that I have been inspired to create with these magical women, has us casting a new spell on these stories we have grown up with. Words are spells after all. This spell we are casting is one of the power of

female community. One of love for our fellow woman. Unpacking our different perspectives of what the Mother energy means to each of us. The Rites of Passage from maiden to mother to crone, long forgotten in modern society. A celebration of all of this.

And yet, I want to also presence that this is not a bashing of the masculine. Those masculine characters, were the other anchor of the stories. The strength in union when equal is never more powerful. Each bringing their own magic to the story to bring the balance.

This a celebration of balance.

The festival of Beltane reminds us of this requirement for balance in all areas of life. To celebrate the strength and softness that is within all of us.

The celebration of the silent cheerleaders supporting those characters in those stories, not mentioned by name, but would have been there, nonetheless.

And so it is.

Ways I will be celebrating Beltane with my kids...

As a Mother, I have always wanted to integrate my own spiritual practices and encourage my own girls to be part of them as they grow up, sharing with them the ancient festivals, celebrations and rites of passage that were quietly celebrated when I grew up.

And I am excited to share that we will be honouring the Beltane festival at home through creating our own offerings:

Crystal water – my girls love crystals so we will select some of the many crystals we have at home to make crystal moon water. My faves are rose quartz to honour love and connection and amethyst. We will put them in a jar and leave to work its magic in the light of the moon. This can then either be drunk (minus crystals) or added to a lovely bath to soak in the magical energy.



Fairy Crowns – I love creating offerings for the fairies and Beltane feels particularly connected to the Fae. We will be creating flower crowns with dried flowers and silver birch branches to create a natural crown offering. This practice is great to do together and builds on the creativity energy associated with Beltane.

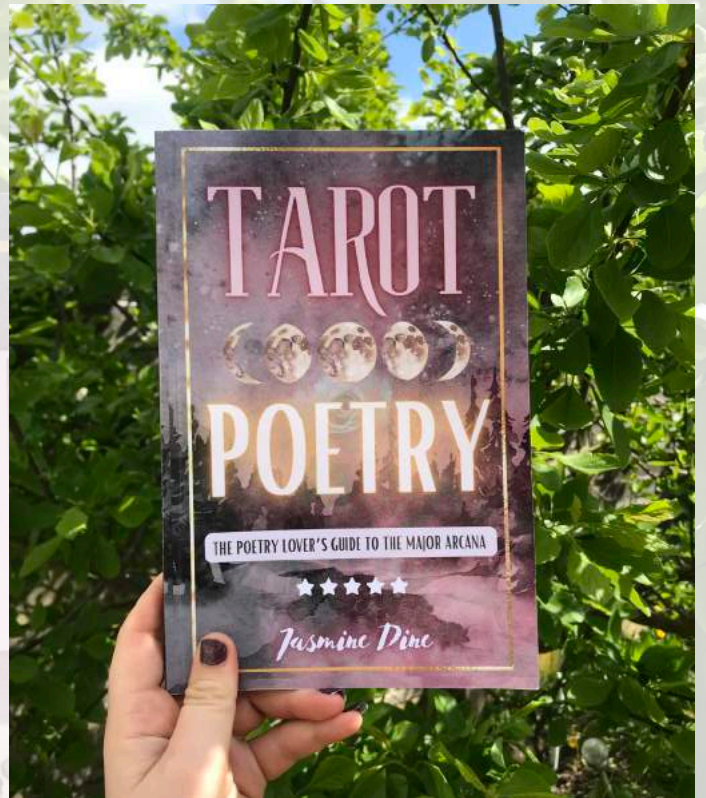
Natural mandalas – another beautiful way to celebrate with children is to create a flower and leaf mandala in the dew of the morning. Gathering whatever we find – pine cones, flowers, crystals, leaves - we will create a gorgeous mandala as an offering.



*To find out more about my collaborative book *Wake Up Mother*; you can find me on Instagram @sarahlloyd_ISPR or my heartcentered PR offerings on www.indigosoulpr.com*

Tarot Poetry

Meet the Author:
Jasmine Dine



Hello!

I'm Jasmine Dine, a poet, a person, (probably) and the author of two poetry collections.

My first published release: 'Eleven after Eleven' (2020) is poetry for all adult children of abusive or unloving mothers who survive by rebelliously re-parenting themselves with love, and a little help from the universe.

My recent release is a bit different though. It's called 'Tarot Poetry' and it's the poetry lover's guide to tarot, specifically the Major Arcana. Reconnecting with my damaged sense of self and repairing the relationship with my inner knowing, my intuition, has been paramount to my healing. As I'm sure many of you know, tarot is a wonderful tool to use to strengthen your intuition, and to investigate your situations, it's a sounding board, a confidence boost, or a kick up the bum where necessary. It basically just hits you with what you already know, but maybe haven't accepted yet (good or bad!) 'Tarot Poetry' will help you to quickly process the meaning of your card with correct advice without having to read through lengthy blog posts or miss out by just using key words alone whilst you are developing your own language with your deck(s).

It's arty throughout with 111 full colour pages, and each poem gives direct advice based on the traditional meanings of the trump cards in the Rider Waite, or related decks. I wanted this collection to be in full colour, because it spoke to my inner child and I wondered why more books for adults weren't in colour, when so many zines and magazines utilize colour so beautifully. I absolutely love reading abstract poetry that is only inspired by a subject, there are plenty of poetry books which are simply inspired by tarot already. I wanted this book to be an accurate, and genuinely impactful guide for all baby witches or those new to tarot to use while developing their



intuitive practice to learn the tarot, so it needed to be useful as an actual guide-book, whilst being primarily a poetry collection with art witch vibes. I would say it's most useful for this purpose in simple 1-3 card pulls, but enjoyable and easily memorized for anyone at any level of their tarot... (*desperately avoids saying journey*)....experience!



After reading the poem for the card you pulled, I'd invite you to take notes of your intuitive feelings about it in the tarot log book provided in the collection, and then you can flip to the 'association' page for that card, to say the rhyming affirmation there to yourself and if you wish, set the given intention for your day. These positive daily intentions relating to the card and what's going on for you that day, will amplify the good in your experiences and help you focus on how you want to interact with the world. You could also wear clothes in the given related colours, make important plans for dates that align with the relevant lunar phase, eat/drink/wear/buy/touch etc the related botany, herbs and crystals, and engage with the associated elements. It's intuitive, it's experimental, but it's really powerful. Have fun with it!

A short excerpt from 'Death' a poem based on the traditional meaning of the 13th card in the Major Arcana:

*☐ Purge the patterns that are preventing your prosperity
 Burn the bridges that bind you
 things might be hard temporarily
 but you have to make way for the future to find you
 Have fun and visualise the possibilities
 forget what you feel confined to
 Things may improve extraordinarily
 with focus on what you've put your mind to. ☐*

Tarot Poetry can also be used if you don't have a deck, for rhapsodomancy which is an ancient form of divination in which you ascertain information through a poem or passage, simply by flipping through the collection and intuitively stopping/reading when you feel pulled to. I have included 22 of the 78 designs from my upcoming tarot deck within the book, which can help you visually intuit alongside the given meanings of the poems.

My story

5 years ago I was at rock bottom. As you may have ascertained from my description of my first book, I had been living in chaos for far too long, and had found myself in a frighteningly dark place; struggling badly. For a long while I did nothing, let things spiral, but I scared myself into getting help when I was seriously suicidal. I started trying to do everything I could to feel better; I changed my environment, I took up painting and writing as a hobby, meditated (a lot) and generally tried to improve my sense of self in every possible way. I was still feeling numb though...until around my birthday when I was gifted a trip to a local renowned psychic for a full-reading. Angela (the psychic) sat and shared with me what she was receiving (all uncannily accurate) and helpful! But then the most exciting thing happened: she delicately told me she could sense I had psychic strengths in the same way she did (something I kind of knew but perhaps hadn't accepted) and that I could develop them to be stronger and more efficient if I chose to- she even gave me heaps of advice about how to do that. That experience changed my life, it was like I received my letter to Hogwarts, and my perspective quickly started shifting. For the first time in a long time I wasn't feeling alone and powerless anymore, I was feeling capable and worthy and witchy, like I had stepped into myself after a period of absence (perhaps a lifetime hitherto of absence). I've spent the last 5 years leaning into that heavily, nurturing my spiritual practices and empowering my intuition, often through tarot. Things are so much better now. That's how this book came to be. If it sounds like something you'd enjoy you can get it on Amazon for only £13.33. I hope you find joy in its pages.

I also have a podcast coming out this month called 'Intu-it' which will go into depth about all things curious about consciousness and the power of our minds, as I believe it's my purpose to bring attention to the incredible opportunities available to us when we fully understand our intuition and in turn the connections between us all. (Available wherever you listen to podcasts and at @intuit-pod)

You can keep up with me on Instagram on @jasminedine and you can reach me on jasminedine@gmail.com for any collaborations or questions!

Authenticity

Fairy Bec

With the rise of “The Instagram Witch” and Tarot workshops on Tick Tock how do we know what is authentic in the spiritual world right now? Who can we trust?

Witchcraft and its many elements seem to be gaining popularity at present. Although there is still a lot of ignorance, there is a growing understanding and acceptance of the true ethics of witchcraft and other Pagan practices.

Witchcraft has infiltrated our entertainment in many positive ways in recent times from Bewitched’s Tabatha to Practical Magic’s Sally Owens to Harry Potter. We now have many more positive representations of witches in our lives which has helped bridge gaps between ignorance and knowledge.



Heritage

There was a time, not that long ago, when people would only trust those with proven spiritual heritage. For example, being a descendant of Gypsy Rosealee got you kudos. Even today, just the surname Petulengro brings trust in mediumship abilities.

Nowadays, it seems that anyone can pick up a pack of cards and charge you for a reading. Historically, we knew who to trust because it was those with proven spiritual heritage and years of experience. Authenticity was proven with undisputed origin.

When I think about heritage and experience, I do see that it is relevant. I was brought up with this type of practice as normalised. I have been reading since 1992 and I do find readings flow with ease and feel natural. My Grandmother claimed to be a descendant of Gypsy Rosealee. I rarely need to ‘get in my space’ because I live in my space. I do also believe that there is nothing particularly special about me as everyone has the ability to read, to heal and to perform magic – they just need to be attuned to it.

I am aware of others who have started their journeys very recently, struggle a little to get in the zone and need to concentrate more. This can give off a certain type of odd energy to potential clients. People might also pick up more on the calm energies of an experienced reader and be more drawn to them than someone feeling nervous. This is simply down to confidence which can be build most easily with experience, guidance and support.

Trust

How do we know when we are being authentic? How do we know when others are being authentic?

There is a level of copycat from people who are not fully embracing their genuine selves. People desperately trying to fit themselves into a desired box and being that is not authentic to their true self. These are the people I would advise avoiding as, intentionally or not, they may be ‘Energy Vampires’ and leave you feeling exhausted and drained.

How do we spot these 'Energy Vampires'? Firstly, I would suggest looking at how you feel about them. Are their energies calm and confident or are they a bit zingy? Additionally, be open minded. Perhaps they just need a little support, a few kind words and some space held for them to develop in their own time. They don't yet fully trust themselves. When we feel someone is being authentic, we trust them. How can this happen if they don't trust themselves?

Either way, be wary and set clear boundaries with them. They need to find themselves for themselves rather than using you to find what they think is their true selves.

Imposter Syndrome:- This phrase keeps coming up recently. I have met a few people who are embracing their spirituality later on in life but feeling the pressure of a 'lack of experience'. If this is you, ask yourself "Why?". What is it about your ability or your relationship with yourself that makes you doubt? If it feels right deep within, why do you doubt yourself? Some shadow work would help you to heal this from within before you venture out with it.

My main advice in this situation, other than shadow work, is to refer to yourself as a fledgling and offer a discounted price while you build your confidence through experience. You can also do emailed readings and styles other than face to face. These allow you time to sit within yourself to read without disruption, without trying to second guess the facial expressions of the client by way of seeking feedback and without the pressure of 'getting it wrong' in front of an audience.

Finally, learn how you can trust yourself and you will find that everything slides in nicely.

Genuine

How can we be genuine? How can we tell if others are being genuine?

For me, this is all about intent. Why am I doing readings and healings? I am doing it because it resonates deeply within me as my purpose in life. My primary reason is to make people feel better about themselves and to give them the healing and guidance they need in order to move forwards with their life. I love empowering others and helping them build their confidence. I do not see competition in other practitioners, just variety and variety is the spice of life. If someone else is offering the same service as myself and a potential client uses them instead of me, then they are the two who are supposed to be working together.

I find those who are doing it purely for money are the ones to avoid. Yes there needs to be an exchange of energy, yes people are running a business but ultimately, if you are doing what you are supposed to be doing, the business/money will flow to what you need it to be. Greed is not an origin for the authentic but a fair expectation of energy exchange is acceptable.

Be You

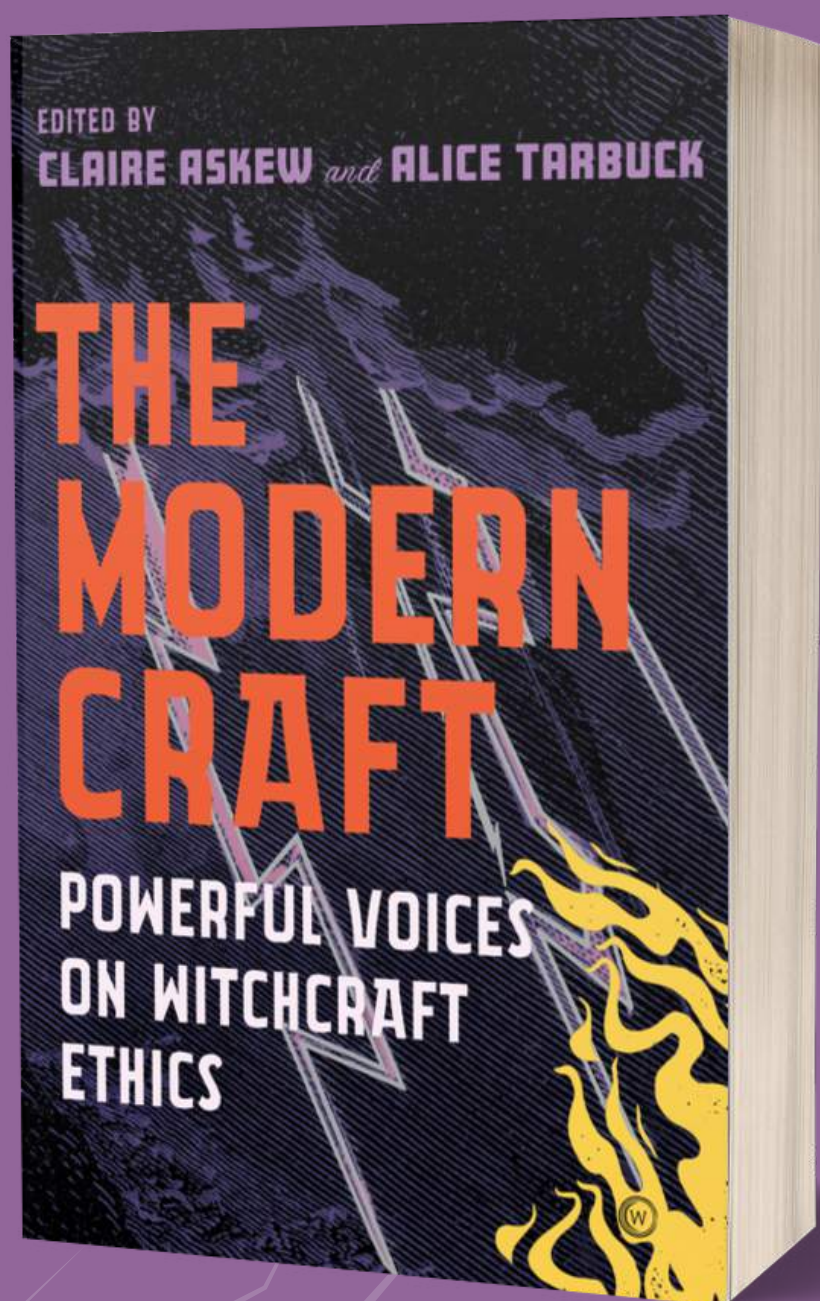
I live my life being unapologetically myself. I can claim heritage, ancestry and experience but I don't use it as a main tool for advertising my services. Word of mouth is my most powerful tool. In simple terms, I am just me. I am authentically myself. How other people respond to that says far more about them than me.

YOU are an amazing individual. You are enough, just as you are.

Sending rainbows of love and light to everyone. May The Force be with you,
Fairy Bec x x x



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An interview with



Word Witch Kristin Lisenby

Raquel Abrantes - Witch Residency Writer

Raquel Abrantes: You are a storyteller, word witch, and writer passionate about folklore, mythology, and witchcraft. What does the word “witch” mean to you?

Kristin Lisenby: The eternal question! My definition is forever evolving, but I think a witch is someone who believes in magick. They work with energy, respond to intuitive nudges, and lean into shadow. They see divinity in themselves but also in nature and the cosmos. Witches question things. They live cyclically and usually have gone through various stages of transformation to get where they are today.

RA: What sort of rituals do you like to do when it comes to writing?

KL: When I was in college, I had a professor who would have us do writing warmups, and he referred to one method as ‘stream of consciousness’ writing. Later, as I continued my craft, I discovered that people also refer to this method as automatic or channelled writing. So, one of my favorite rituals involves sitting in the greenhouse with my journal and just listening and recording whatever comes through at that moment. I usually will incorporate some form of breathwork or sometimes I burn herbs that I’ve grown and harvested. But automatic writing can be done anywhere with nothing more than pen and paper, and I think that simplicity speaks to me.

RA: One of your current projects is entitled Little Witch Books. What is its purpose? What stories can we expect?

KL: Yes! Little Witch Books was created by myself and my talented art witch partner, Caitlyn Barone. We wanted to create a children’s book series that would appeal to both kids and adults, because fairytales and folklore are such wonderful doorways for understanding the self on a deeper level. Through them, we can work with archetypes and emotions - specifically nostalgia which has been such a welcome reminder that the things we love are connected to our purpose, and our inner child is a wonderful guide.

The first book, Little Witch Hosts Samhain Supper will be out later this year and will touch on the sabbat, seasonal rituals, and ancestor



vation.

RA: Do you visit your inner child often?

KL: All the time! More so recently as Little Witch Books comes to life, which is something I am so grateful for. I've been working on rebuilding a relationship with my inner child through writing, of course, but also meditation, dreams, storytelling, and I even invite her to participate in some of my magickal workings.

RA: Books are always close to you as an avid bookworm. Are you reading something magical at the moment?

KL: Always! I just started reading *Bohemian Magick* by Veronica Varlow, also *Pandora's Jar: Women in Greek Myths* by Natalie Haynes. I've also been working with the folktale, *The Lindworm*, so I've been reading all sorts of retellings of this story.

RA: I think it is safe to say that you are a green witch, too, and your greenhouse is an enchanted place. Do you have any advice for those who want to work with plants?

KL: Thank you! I do love spending time in the greenhouse, it carries such calm energy, and it's a dream to have a place to divine with plants, especially during the winter months. But I think the best advice I can offer is not to be afraid when plants die. I always say you can't be a green witch if you're scared of killing plants because plants dying is a part of the cycle. That's not to say it's not sad, but it's how we learn a plant's needs and which species grow best in our environments. I also think plants make wonderful guides, so if we speak with them, ask them questions, listen, they will tell us exactly what they need.

And full transparency here - even I struggle with keeping houseplants alive. In my experience, most are happier outdoors or in a greenhouse, where they get fresh air, lots of light, and exposure to pollinators.

RA: Is there a spell you would like to share related to plants?

KL: Talk with them! I'm serious when I say this, plants are alive, and they will communicate with us if we're open to it. I'm also a big fan of offering crystals to my plants. Some-

times I bury them within the soil as an offering to the roots, or if I think they just need an energetic boost, I'll add some green calcite around the base. I've also been known to place plants within a crystal grid if they really need some love. So much of my craft these days is very intuitive and simple because as much as I appreciate the effort that goes into elaborate rituals, I think simple ones with clear intentions can be just as effective.

RA: You practice mirror gazing. Is it your favourite way of divination? How do you prepare yourself?

KL: I would definitely say mirror gazing is somewhere in my top five. I've always wanted to 'see' magick, but that's never been one of my gifts in the waking world (dreams are a whole different story), so when I added mirror gazing into my craft it was quite jarring how quickly I began to see things in the mirror. Not only auras, but people and visions that I'm still working to understand. It's a fabulous way to expand your magickal abilities, especially if you're interested in trance-work or clairvoyance.



RA: Which goddess do you work with the most and why?

KL: The Celtic goddess Brigid definitely holds a special place in my heart. She is the goddess of poetry and writing. She tends to our creative fires and is a fierce guardian. I love lighting a candle for Brigid when I know I will be home all day and can let it burn for several hours. I always think of her eternal flame at Kildare and while it's not the same as lighting a candle as I sit down to write, it is a symbol of devotion. When that candle is lit, it's an invitation into my home where she can choose to hang out and relax or be part of my creative process. I am also partial to the Egyptian goddess Seshat. She is a goddess of wisdom and the librarian in charge of the Akashic Records. Also, all the crone goddesses – Hekate, Cerridwen, The Cailleach, I love them all.

RA: Complete the phrase: "Writing is a portal to..."

KL: the soul." I could also say it's a portal for remembering, and for some of us word witches, our purpose.

Kristin Lisenby is a Writer and Word Witch living in the Azores Islands. As a practicing ritualist, Kristin creates modern rituals, articles, and musings for the wild women and earth-spirited. She co-hosts Magick & Alchemy, a Tamed Wild podcast about mythology and witchcraft, and is the co-creator and author of Little Witch Books, a series of fairytales for humans of all ages.

Kristin has a BA in Modern Language and Literature from Cal Poly and has also studied at the University of Valladolid. She is passionate about storytelling, nearly-forgotten folklore, and all things Magical Realism. When she's not writing, you can find Kristin digging in her lunar garden, caring for her beloved goats, and working alongside her partner to reenvision their century-old farmhouse.

Follow Kristin's story on Instagram, @eastandalchemy, or join her storytelling coven on Patreon, www.patreon.com/kristinlisenby. Learn more at KristinLisenby.com.

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Pagan Poetry

Photo by Klaire Dawn Ader

In Reverence to the Fae

Samantha Teves

Knelt in thickets, from overgrown wealds they peer
With soles of primrose, starweed sashes and buttercup linens, it's a sight to endear
They wait for the rosy cheeks to spin, to flatten, to pluck petals with singsong rhymes
Watching the Earth play host to the children, voices carrying like a pewter chime

They buzz with glee as night falls and the meadows clear, ready to restore
Creeping from their mossy bunkers, fireflies illuminating the forthcoming chore
A hundred tiny feet spread out to lift trampled grass blades and summer's bride petals
With boundless love of their Earthen home, they tidy the leaves, and unfurl the nettles

The nights air warm with magic, honey and smoke floating on the breeze
A tiny celebration unfolding beneath the canopy of trees
The darkness sets them all free, whimsical, and devoted
Night after night, they set the flowers right, making sure they've been properly doated

When you step into a particularly lovely coppice, take a moment to send word
Praise the Fae for the towering toadflax, the artemisia, and the enchantment that's occurred
A tip of the cap, an offering of cream, a whispered sentiment to the johnny jump-ups
Gratitude for our earth-keepers, tiny but mighty enigmas using canterbury bells for teacups

With many names across time, odes penned in ink and artfully upon canvas
Watchful yet hidden from sight, forever present under bonnets of dianthus
Yes, cheers to the Fae, the devas, nature spirits and to our home that they protect
May we each do our part in kindness, love and out of the utmost respect



Puff of Smoke

A heart lays on a butchers block,
And it's coughing out splinters of lead.
It whimpers alone, like a dying old man,
Who's begging for a blow to the head.

A sickness is seeping, quiet and calm.
No music notes hang in the air.
The butcher advances, baring his teeth
To rip apart all that was shared.

It didn't take a magic wand,
Or a whispered spell bespoke.
All at once with a single, strangled cry,
You were gone in a puff of smoke.

Kelly Buchan 2022 ©



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Wreath



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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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