

Issue 33



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WITCH



YULE



*Mari Lwyd
Jennifer MacNeill Photography*



WITCH

Magazine

Dearest Witches,

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We have reached the Winter Solstice, when the sun stands still for three days before the hours of sunlight get longer and we return towards Midsummer. This pause is a great time to reflect on what we want to keep and no longer need - and I hope that you find something useful in these pages that you can try.

I also hope this issue finds you all well and in good health, and that you have a beautiful holiday season however you choose to celebrate it.

Be blessed,

Bekki
Editor

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WITCH

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★
WITCH
IMBOLC

*Submissions due
16 January*

WITCH is an independently published magazine featuring writers across the globe, from all paths. We feature anything from witchcraft to the occult, pagan and druid practices and anything in between.

Even if you've never written before, we welcome new voices, previously published works and artist features of all kinds.

We'd love to hear from you!

*Send your submissions to:
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Yule
Blessings



WITCH
Magazine

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"This story is gripping and compelling and soon makes us familiar with ritual and witchcraft as normal and essential to awaken and maintain a healthy soulful lifestyle..."

Maureen Walton O'Brien
Visual Artist, Canada

O'LAN RUADH & SARAH BERTI

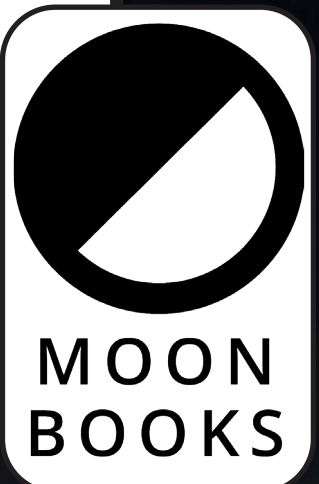
A Good Old Fashioned Yule

Melusine Draco

The Yule or Mid-Winter Festive is one of those celebrations that have survived almost complete ... down through the ages from pagan times. Queen Victoria gave it an unintentional shot in the arm with the decorated tree that was introduced by Prince Albert - the idea having originated in Germany, where Albert was born. In 1848 the Illustrated London News published a drawing of the royal family celebrating around a tree bedecked with ornaments and with it came a market for tree ornaments in bright colours and reflective materials that would shimmer and glitter in the candlelight. The first advertisements for tree ornaments appeared in 1853 and Victorians would often combine their sparkly bought decorations with candles and homemade edible treats, tied to the branches with ribbon.

But, according to English Heritage, Victoria and Albert weren't the first royals to put up what we know today as a Christmas tree. George III married Queen Charlotte who, like Albert, was raised in Germany, and she is credited with bringing decorated evergreen trees to England when she introduced their first Christmas tree at Queen's Lodge, Windsor, in 1800. Nevertheless, decorating our homes with greenery was already a Yuletide tradition ingrained in our national consciousness and it is hard to imagine Yule without wreaths, holly and mistletoe. But when and why did such traditions emerge?

It's a suprisingly difficult question to answer, as Yule traditions are generally deep-rooted and undocumented. They have also been adapted and changed over time and are riddled with regional differences and personal interpretations of these much loved traditions that are strongly centred on the use of evergreens. By the late Middle Ages almost all surviving church records include entries for the purchase of holly and ivy in the winter; for Mid-Winter evergreens symbolised eternal life and the promise of the return of life in the spring. We know that private homes would also have been dressed with greenery at this time of year and the 16th-century London historian, John Stow, found an account from 1444, which explained that in London:

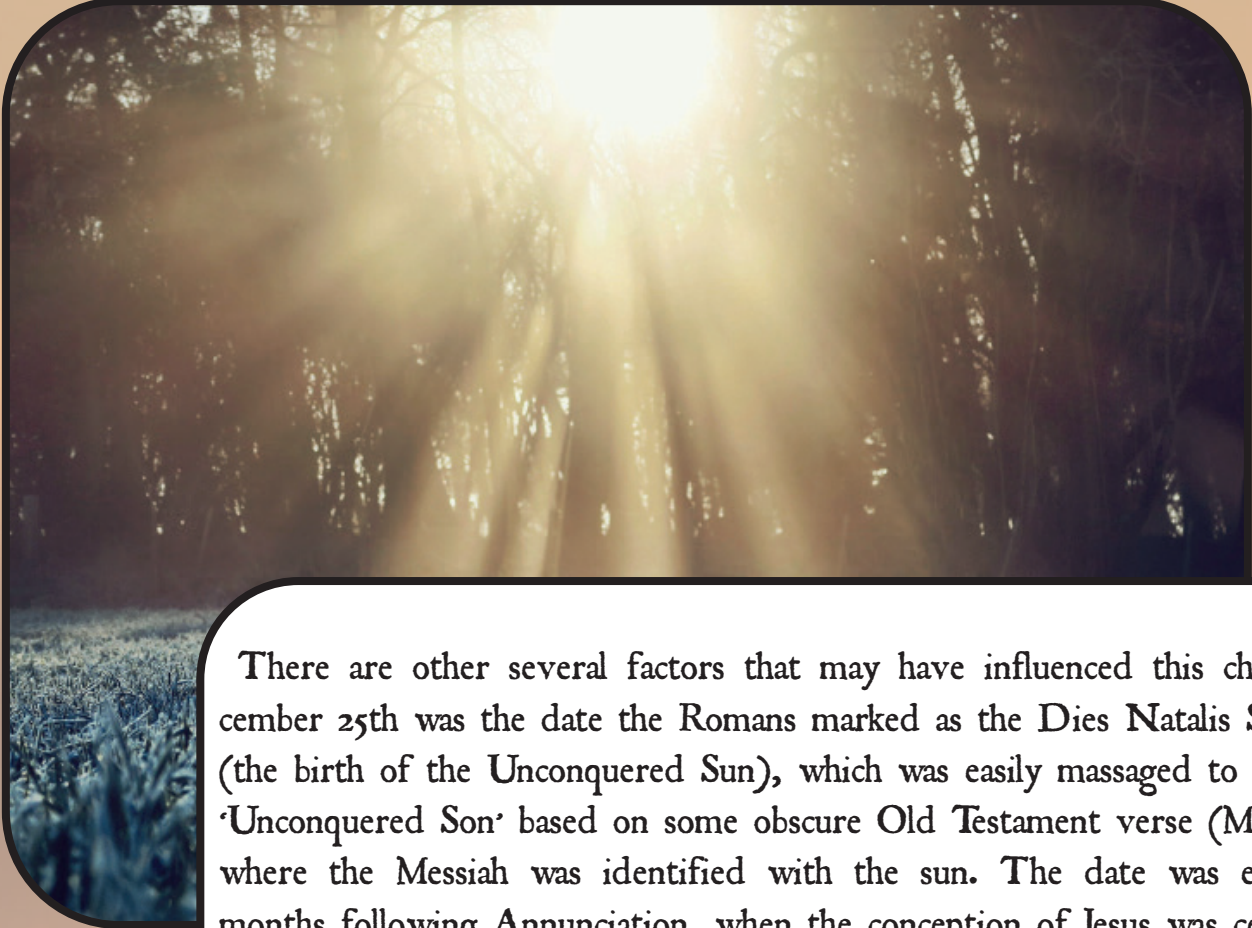


every man's house and also his parish church was decked with holme, ivie, bayes, and whatever the season of the year afforded to be green.

While 17th-century poet Robert Herrick is well-known for his several verses relating to the Candlemas custom of removing the Yuletide greenery. According to the old calendar, the festive greenery not taken down by Twelfth Night should be left up until Candlemas Day (2nd February) and then removed. In fact, Candlemas was formerly the date when Christians kept their decorations up as noted in this poem by Herrick (1591-1674), *Ceremony upon Candlemas Eve*.

*Down with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and mistletoe;
Down with the holly, ivy, all,
Wherewith ye dress'd the Christmas Hall*

Towards the end of the year, however, the internet is full of pagan postings bemoaning the fact that they hate Christmas ... how all the pagan meaning has been profaned and announcing that they will be holed up in solitary misery until all the commercially decadent festivities are over ... all of which sadly demonstrates a complete lack of awareness concerning our pagan ancestry and its customs. Let's understand one thing before we go further: the Church did not invent the Mid-Winter Festival.. it was there with all its rich pageantry of feasting and celebration long before Pope Julius I officially decreed, in the 4th century AD, that the birth of Jesus would henceforth be celebrated on the 25th December!



There are other several factors that may have influenced this choice. December 25th was the date the Romans marked as the *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti* (the birth of the Unconquered Sun), which was easily massaged to become the 'Unconquered Son' based on some obscure Old Testament verse (Malachi 4:2:) where the Messiah was identified with the sun. The date was exactly nine months following Annunciation, when the conception of Jesus was celebrated in the Christian calendar. Biblical scholars, however, reckon it most likely Jesus was born late August or September, because 'when John leapt in Elizabeth's womb at the presence of Jesus in Mary' it was during the Festival of Lights (Chanukah) in December and that is more likely closer to his conception than birth!

More importantly, it was also the birth date of Mithras, whose following rivalled that of early Christianity; although Mithraic iconography always portrays Mithras and the sun god as separate beings, in Mithraic inscriptions this god of the Roman Legions was often identified with the sun by being called 'Sol Invictus' - the Unconquered Sun. Finally, the Romans also celebrated a series of pagan solstice festivals near the end of the year, so the calendar dates were realigned to appropriate these sacred days for the Christian holy days, but without any historical evidence to justify this hijacking of pagan customs.

As we can see, we only have to scratch the thin veneer of 'Christmas' to find a highly important pagan holiday with the majority of its ancient traditions preserved intact. Strangely, the ubiquitous pagan 'Wheel of the Year' now assigns the Winter Solstice to the place of a minor sabbat, and yet as we can quickly discover, it was probably the most sacred festival of the year for our pagan ancestors. Nevertheless, these associations reveal that the Mid-Winter Festival was a time of magic and mystery for the ancient Britons, the Germanic

tribes, the migratory Celts and Anglo-Saxons, as well as a time for feasting and celebration.

It doesn't matter where we live in the New or Old World, it would be a pity to ignore these facts and not celebrate the season with mirth and merriment as our forebears did - and not let Christian hype and gross commercialism ruin the true magic of the Mid-Winter Festival. Perhaps it's time to embrace the pagan sacredness of the season and reclaim that which was taken from us by the most insidious of means - absorption!

After all...what is there for anyone who calls themselves 'pagan' to hate about ancient pagan traditions ... or avoid in re-introducing them back into our family's seasonal customs?

For the entire pagan community this should be one of the most sacred times of the year, and, hopefully, Have a Cool Yule will have served its purpose in demonstrating that history proves the festival to be a wholly pagan event, worthy of being acknowledged as one of the great festivals of the pagan calendar along with Harvest, Beltaine and Samhain. With all the different strands of pagan custom brought to the hearth-fire of the Mid-Winter Festival we all have something to celebrate in time-honoured fashion whether our ancestors are Briton, Celt, Norse or Anglo-Saxon.

'Appeasement' in a political context is a diplomatic policy of making political or material concessions to an enemy power in order to avoid conflict.' And that just about sums up the reactions should many of us dare to



suggest that we might like to opt-out of the family Christmas and spend a pagan Yule in peaceful solitude. Unfortunately, parents often have a blinkered view of their offspring, their partners and the grandchildren, and see Christmas as a time for the family to get together in a spirit of love and light. Despite the fact that siblings may have divorced from their original partners and teenage grandchildren really don't want to be bothered with new toddler cousins.

In many areas of commerce and business, the Mid-Winter break has now been extended to include the whole week from Christmas Eve up to the New Year Bank Holiday, which puts increasing pressure on people to spend more time where they don't want to be. So, the ideal solution is to tell the family well in advance that you'll be spending 'the Day' in your own home, and arrange other days, such as Mother's Night, Boxing Day or New Year's Day, to visit with family. The news might be as welcome as a Jesuit's sermon at a Beltaine Bash, but in the long term it will take all the stress out of deciding who's going where for Yuletide. Stay at home and start to build your own traditions around what should be a precious and magical time for everyone regardless of faith, belief or denomination.

Of course, not all families are anti-pagan and it may be that you want to try to combine the two approaches to the holiday season. After all, the ancient Britons thought the fire festivals of the Celts were a good idea, and the introduction of the Norse Yule found favour with the Anglo-Saxons. By amalgamating such customs and cultures our pagan forebears found themselves in the same position as modern Christians who often share symbolism with another faith. Compromise - rather than appeasement - is the way to make the Yuletide celebrations go with a swing and still manages to keep those important family members happy.

For ideas of how to Have A Cool Yule: How to Survive (and Enjoy) the Mid-Winter Festival by Melusine Draco is published by Moon Books: ISBN 978 1 78535 711 4 : 84 pages : Price UK£6.99/ US\$10.95

PAGAN PORTALS
**HAVE A
COOL YULE**

How-To Survive (and Enjoy)
the Mid-Winter Festival



MELUSINE DRACO





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Renew and Heal This Yule

Bring in the Light

Faith Barnes

This time of year darkness can feel challenging to our mental health, as the dark nights draw in, and the cold starts to begin. We can feel like we are stuck inside away from nature, avoiding the bad weather.

But don't despair, you're just a witch who needs some self care! Honour your mind and spirit this Yule by bringing back your light! Embrace Yules magick with these three healing spells!

GLITZY STAG RENEWAL SPELL

Dive into this spell this Yule to get your pzazz back!

You will need:

- * Stag statue, necklace charm or photo
- * 8 gold candles
- * Pine oil (healing)
- * Dried pine needles ground or cut
- * Ground dried holly leaves
- * Carving tool
- * Gold glitter glue

Gather a stag statue to focus your energy on and to embody your spell. This can be in the form of a Yule tree decoration or a necklace charm. Add to your yule tree for the extra renewal energy it brings. Stags represent strength, renewal, hope and new life.

Charge your candles by anointing them with the pine oil, pine needles, and Holly leaves. Carve into each an elder rune symbol : Berkana for healing, regeneration and fertility. Or Laguz for renewal and hope.

Create a circle of candles and place your chosen stag object within. Now light the candles. Visualise the candle's light rising and forming a golden dome above the stag. Focus that energy spiralling inwards, moving down like a hurricane, taking the d... Filtering into the stag. And chant:

*"Stag within, release and begin,
Bring me your power,
Through this candle ring.*

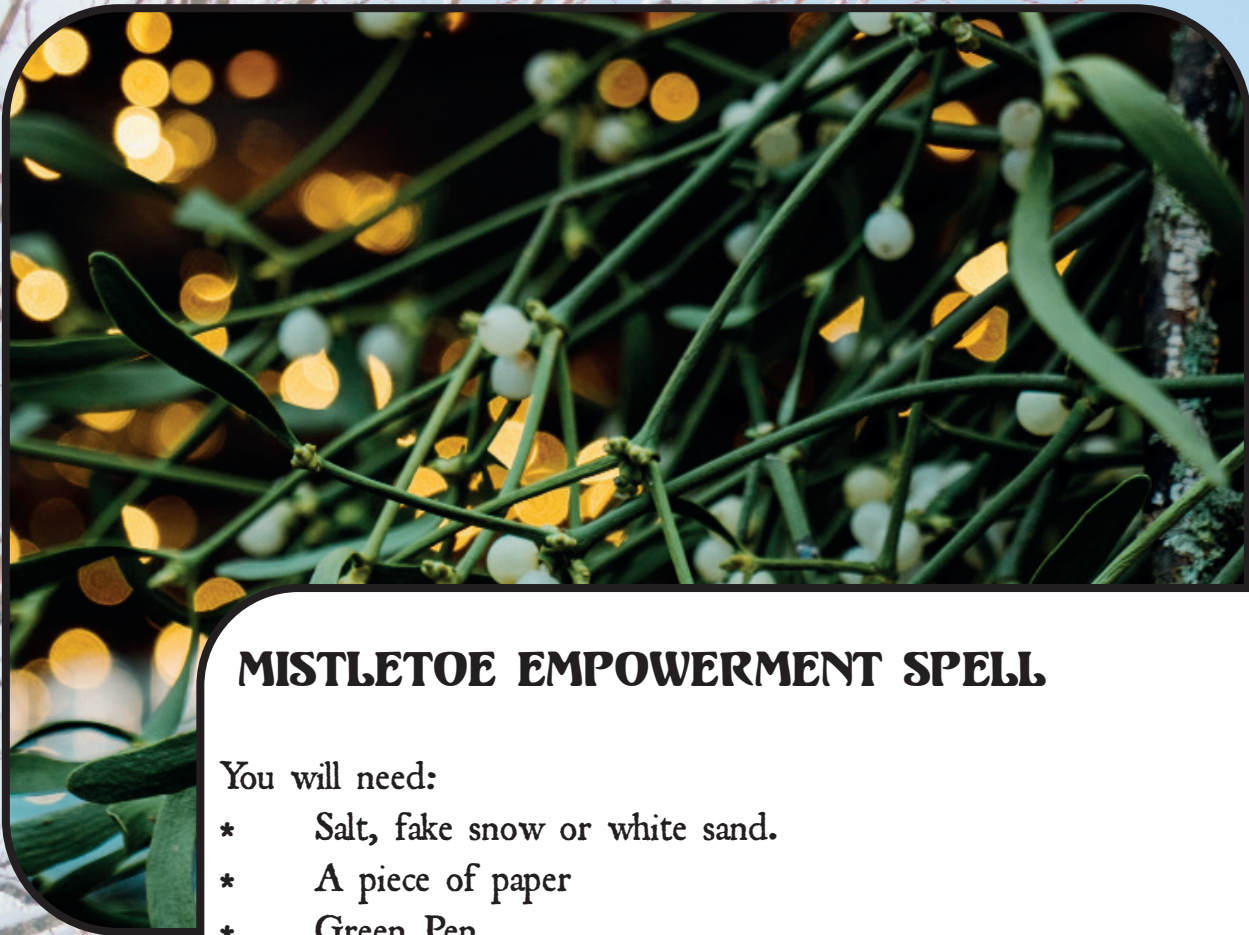
*Glittery light, show me your might,
Renew and heal on this Yule night.*

*Third eye that seeks, be still to see,
And attract this energy onto thee.*

*Yule blessings it brings, the stags power sings,
Magick comes, spreading this witches wings"*

To finish the spell, use the anointing oil on each wrist and forehead to attract the energy you seek. Then as a blessing, end the spell by putting the gold glitter glue on your stag, adding in some glitz and pzazz!





MISTLETOE EMPOWERMENT SPELL

You will need:

- * Salt, fake snow or white sand.
- * A piece of paper
- * Green Pen
- * Green Spell Bag
- * Mistletoe (healing, hope and vitality)

Draw an eight pointed star in salt, fake snow or white sand. The eight pointed star helps us see beyond the material world and to dive into the spiritual. In native america it symbolises hope surrounded in a circle. And it also represents completion in other cultures. In this spell it represents a completion of self through empowerment.

Cut up eight pieces of paper, one for each point of the star. These can be Yule designed too! Write on each something which empowers you, or traits you'd like to attract. eg confidence or a type of music which puts you in a powerful mindset. Don't fold these pieces of paper, keep them open so you can see your power words.

Next lay each piece of paper, at each point of the star, saying out loud 'Bring me....' saying the power words you have written. By doing this you are already casting magick bringing in the light, as your star shape has now been transformed into a brighter star!


Using the mistletoe as a wand, hover it above the stars power words and go around clockwise 8 times saying:

*"I bless this star,
Before you were far,
Now you are near and almost here,
Empowerment I seek as life was bleak,
Already you shine, and bring what is mine"*

Then place the mistletoe in the centre of your star, and say:

*" This spell is one, this time was fun.
Magick released as this spell is done"*

Place the pieces of paper in a green bag, and carry it with you when you need an extra boost of empowerment.



Dream

12 BELLS OF YULE

12 days of healing and renewal! Often healing starts with the mind, this simple but effective spell is to build that strength up again and to empower you to heal.

You will need:

- * A small bell
- * Pine incense (healing)
- * A Green outfit
- * A strong intent and imagination!

Find a private and quiet location, I personally prefer to be outside in nature but it can be anywhere you choose. Light the pine incense (or use pine spray oil as an alternative).

On the dawn of each day, ring out a single bell in silence. With each day this sound heals you. Feel its white light of sound wash over you, cleansing and renewing your body and mind. Calling to your spirit to reappear and to reconnect with who you are.

Once the ring ends , hum a tune that feels natural and pops in your head, embrace the flow of the hum.

Then sing in the tune of the hum:

*"Days are bright, days are long,
Hear me now as I hum this song,
Spirit I call,
Align with them all,
Mind and body as one, feel this pull,
As my wish, so be it this Yule.*

*Take back my mind,
To who I am,
Take back my body,
To feel it shine,
Take back my sound,
To here it this time,
For here I stand and stand I shall!*

*Bring me my spirit,
Bring me what's rebound,
Bring me my joy,
Bring my magick all around,
For here I sing , listen to my sound,
As I call, so shall these be found!"*

Breath and relax after, absorbing your words in the silence. As you repeat this each day, feel your strength and power coming back to you again.

Take the time for yourself this Yule and renew ready for the new year!
Which spell will you choose?

Have a magically fueled Yule, Faithy xx



HUMAN SACRIFICE

HELEN J.R. BRUCE



I see you, draped across the altar,
bathed in the light of nine white candles.
On their waxy pillars you have carved your
hopes and failures, cut the shapes of your flaws
for divine inspection.

You pray for dissection by sickle and antler.
You wish for your blood to be burnt off like incense.
You lay in the cold and wait to be answered.

I beg you, do not mistake other humans for gods.



The dark half of the year is a time for conserving energy. Hibernating animals drop their metabolisms and slow down their heartbeats. Deciduous trees draw their sap back down to their roots, shielding it below ground from the worst of the weather. They also release their leaves so that the wind can blow past them more easily. Shedding this weight can mean the difference between life and death for a tree, with a mature oak having up to 200,000 leaves, weighing in at approximately 2,200 pounds. That's the weight of just over sixteen average humans. Letting leaves go in winter, despite the fact they were useful and essential in summer, is the tree acting to support its own health and survival.

Humans, weighing the same as around 32,338 leaves, have evolved to work within a similar pattern. It may be easy to forget this, with the brightness of screens and electric lights keeping the winter darkness well outside our windows, but now is the time to start to remember. Or continue remembering. Or dust off last years remembering, and delve a little deeper.

It is important to become aware of how our precious energy is spent. We may immediately assert that energy is not spent, and rather it's given or shared, but the word 'spent' is useful in terms of marking an exchange. As signified by the rune gebo, which looks like an 'X' or a kiss

at the bottom of a card, energy flows most healthily in a pattern of giving and taking. Giving too much leads to us feeling tired, used and drained. Whereas taking too much encourages bitterness, helplessness and control. Creating balance in our giving and taking is perhaps the most essential energetic work in any spiritual practice, and the dark winter evenings are suited to sitting with this task.

What follows is an exercise which can be used to help identify areas in our lives which require more energetic balance. This kind of deep work is hugely individual and the key is stillness and gentleness while realisations settle in. Insights may be sudden, or ferment in the body over a period of time,



emerging at last from the leaf litter alongside the new shoots of spring. Ground yourself like the oak tree, imagining that you spread deep roots into the earth and tall branches into the sky while you work with this exercise.

Tending our Leaves

Begin by creating nine leaf shapes. They can be real dried leaves, printed images, drawn pictures, the imprint of wet leaves crushed against paper or even natural clay shapes. The important part is that they are large and durable enough to write a short sentence on. Choose or create your leaves with intent, allowing the most beautiful colours and shapes to come to you.

Take your leaves and write words or sentences on them that describe things in your life which require a lot of your energy. These may be worries, relationships, responsibilities, jobs, regrets, fascinations, desires or day to day tasks.

Now split your leaves into three groups of three. Allow this to be instinctual, trusting your movement on a chemical level, allowing your impulses here to be similar to those that control the rise and fall of sap in the trees. Do this without reading the next step if possible.



Your three groups of leaves represent elements in your life requiring shedding, holding and nurturing. Allow yourself to identify which group is which. With this knowledge, think carefully and slowly if any leaves in the groups require rearranging. Accept any unexpected placing as a potential message from yourself, and allow space for this information even if it doesn't feel useful right now.

Start by reading aloud the three uses of energy in the group which you have identified with shedding. Become aware of how you feel in your body. Be honest with yourself about how much energy you spend and how much you receive back. Imagine your energy use on these shrinking and notice other outlets this saved energy might be drawn towards.

Then speak aloud the three uses of energy in the group which you have chosen for holding. These are seeds which require a years cycle before they're ready to germinate. Picture them held in the womb of the earth, nestled in roots that glow with potential. Become mindful of the fact that these things require a steady background energy as they prepare for the future.

Finally, read out the three uses of energy in the group which you have picked as nurturing. These are your core elements to focus on over winter. Notice if they spark joy, or a feeling of purpose. Consider how you can feed them most meaningfully, remaining aware that the

energy invested should also feel returned.

After working with this exercise, take some time to rest. This process is most often not about big, sudden changes and sitting with your thoughts and feelings over months may yield the best results. If you decide that some energetically imbalanced elements of your life require shedding completely, then it may feel cleansing to return the representative leaves to nature in a non-polluting manner. The other leaves, symbolising holding and nurturing, may find places on your altar or around your home (or in your car, used as a bookmark, placed under your pillow or held in a herb pouch!) Embrace them as companions to return to multiple times over winter.

I've worded this softly, but I know this work is hard. Cutting energetic cords which drain us is often accompanied by pain and frustration, but these are the very emotions which are so essential to release. When they sit in our bodies they make us tired and heavy, absorbing negative energy from the world around us, beginning eventually to affect our physical cells. Individuals and actions which don't meet us in balance can lessen our personal power over time, even if they seem on the surface desirable. Sacrifice as a one sided action is ungrounded. Remember to serve mead for yourself when you place it as a gift on your altar, because the divine is within humans and oak trees just the same.



*Kramppus
Jennifer MacNeill Photography*

ALONE IN THE WINTER SOLSTICE



MARIANA AMARAL
INSTAGRAM: @UNDRESSINGTHESOUL
YOUTUBE.COM/@UNDRESSINGTHESOUL

Winter has never been a happy time for me.

With all the holidays coming and the getting together of families, I was always left in an empty space where all I was reminded of was how much of a family I do not have.

Family is not an easy subject, and at this time of the year, for those of us that have it hard in that matter, it can be extra tough.

But this year I feel something changing...

The magic in the air feels different, and even my sadness is being felt differently.

As I go into the darkest time of the year, I am seeing that not only I've been feeling the sadness and loneliness, but I have also found love and support within my practice. For as long as I've been doing it, my practice has always felt like a best friend, a company that is with me and within me wherever I go, and sometimes just sitting in front of my altar feels like sitting at the table with the whole family. But this time, with the family I always wished for.

I sit down with mother earth, she reminds me of her love, of her kindness towards herself as she is born, dies and transforms.

I sit down with my herbs, my cards, my incense, and my crystals, and they all truly feel like a family, and they are. I sit down with the elements. Through them I see myself in new refreshing ways, and through them I find myself in nature.

I see and feel the fire and its power and warmth. I feel transmutation seeds forming, wanting to bloom inside me.

I find fiery courage to take me through another day.

I see the earth and how it holds me so safely and tightly. I feel protected.

I feel the air, the wind, the change, the letting go, the magic all around me. I close my eyes to feel the wind and I feel hugged and seen.

I see the water, the sea, the waves, the immensity of the ocean and of myself. I feel whole, and I accept and love my wholeness.

Everything that is so good to me is on this one table, on my altar. And what is on my altar is also a reflection of me.

Even when I feel most alone, as on holidays like this or just random moments in life, I try to remember to sit here, I've learned to trust the process and I begin feeling whole again.

One thing I keep getting reminded of is, I am my own family, and the more I give love to myself and to the things I love to do, the more people I attract that give me that same safe feeling of family, that I never had before.

So for this year, if this applies to you in any way, take this invitation:
Sit in front of your altar, in front of a plant, or in front of the mirror.
Be with yourself.



Talk to the plants, to your animals, to your guides, to your cards. Tell your crystals how you feel, let yourself see them as siblings or cousins, ones that respect you and love you as much as you love them.

Create magical circles around you, send loving every to your heart and to your inner child. Dance!

Create magic, paint and all art forms can be your best allies, take their hand and create what your soul wants to express!

Feel protected by your own energy.

Let the feeling of being alone pass through you as you remember how many energies of love you have inside and outside yourself. Let them in, and feel your heart burst with warmth and love and expansion!

Feel it all, become your full self!

You are loved! So much loved! You are never alone!

Breathe, smile, cry.

Let yourself safely feel.

Hug yourself a lot.

Thank yourself after.

I promise you,

This winter solstice, and really any time of the year, you are not alone!

Feel the family within you,

Feel the community of witchy and magical beings out there, that even far, are on the same path with you. Trust that your soul family is finding your way to you right in this moment, and you'll meet them soon!

I send you love from my heart and soul to yours,

happy Holidays and Celebrations!

Sisters of the Moon Lunar Temple

<https://seekingblissonline.com/courses/1465/about>

Sister, are you feeling the call to be part of a global lunar sisterhood? Would you like to deepen your connection to the moon, the seasons, Goddess and your own internal rhythms? The Lunar Temple is an online monthly membership giving you the opportunity to receive lunar and seasonal guidance and be part of a global community of like minded women.

As part of the membership we gather live once a month via zoom to honour the New Moon. These are beautiful online circles where we gather in the Lunar Temple to set powerful intentions for the month ahead and to connect in sacred sisterhood. Michelle combines her knowledge and passion for all things divine feminine to bring you these beautifully crafted circles.

Our theme for 2022 is 'The Inspired Feminine' - we are going to be exploring badass women throughout history and weaving their magic into our own lives. There will be some really juicy journaling prompts each month as well as creative invitations as we explore pirate queens, warrior women, artists, writers, revolutionaries, poets, truth seekers and much more. Dive deeper into astrology and lunar self care and learn how each of the zodiac signs can take you on a journey of self discovery & empowerment.

Awaken the wild woman within, gather round the collective fire of our ancestors and howl at the moon!



Yule Wordsearch

Download at www.witchzine.co.uk

R X A N A Q Z N X Y U P S Q Y
W X O J C C M A R I L W Y D L
A I X J L G F L A S I V H F G
C U N G Y J E B B I S N J H E
A P T T L H J K Y U L E L O G
N N Q Q E O U J K R A M P U S
D X N A S R J W R K V J Q P G
L O Y W Q N S Y A H B X Z M L
E H T I Q E K O S S Q A L O X
S S R L O D N F L K S B C T O
N R E D F G Y D L S U A Z H A
F P E H Y O S T N V T Z I A S
C B A U W D O N L D V I H L N
P P E N E O O E K A C Q C S O
G N D T H K H U C E C Q Q E W

wintersolstice

homedgod

marilwyd

tree

yulelog

krampus

wassail

wildhunt

candles

snow

HOW THE MOON BECAME FEMALE

SCOTT IRVINE

As a druid, in a witch's hat, I revere the Moon as much as anyone, celebrating the new and full phases every two weeks or so. I had always seen 'Luna' as a goddess until I done research for my book 'Ishtar and Ereshkigal – The Daughters of Sin', Sin being the Babylonian Moon god, a male ruler. For a long while, I was confused, wondering if I was honouring a male or female Moon. I needed to do further research to clear things up and put my mind to rest.

Our Moon, according to Sumerian clay tablets was born Nanna, the eldest son of the sky god Lord Enlil and the grain goddess Lady Ninlil. It was common pre-Greek for the Moon to be ruled by a god with Lord Chandra 'the Shining' in India and Lord Khonsu 'the Traveller' in Egypt. Enlil was symbolised as a Bull and Ninlil a Cow.

The clay tablets reveal how Enlil, the heir to the Anunnaki throne forced himself on the grain goddess, impregnating her with his heir destined to be the Moon god Nanna. As punishment, the sky god was forced to marry Ninlil and ordered to reside among the dead in the underworld realm of Huber. However, Ninlil refused to leave his side and chose to join him in the subterranean kingdom. Unfortunately, this created a problem for the council of gods with Enlil's heir destined to be a shining example of the god of heaven, Anu's gift for humanity as a moonly calendar. As it stood, the future king of the gods would be born unseen in the underworld forcing the council to order the goddess to return to the surface before the Moon god was born. The strong willed Ninlil still refused to leave her husband's side so the council had no option but to release them both but with a caveat that their first born grandchild to rule over the kingdom of the dead in Enlil's place when they come of age.

Instead of being happy with his freedom, Enlil was full of rage to find his half-brother the Serpent King, Lord Enki was now the heir to their father, Anu's throne.

On becoming Lord of the Earth, Enki taught the Stone Age hunter-gatherers how to perfect their stone tools and weapons, construct strong shelters, make cooking pots and fishing nets. For the elite he showed them how to read the night sky. Enlil did everything in his power to thwart Enki's plan going so far as to bring a great flood to destroy humanity. His plan would have succeeded if it was not for Enki to warn his favourite priest and told him how to build an ark to save the 'essence' of every living creature on the planet.

Humanity under the guidance of the wisdom of the serpent became civilized, establishing city states between the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris to become the world's first nation Sumer around 3,500 BC.





When the Akkadian king Sargon the Great gained control of the fertile crescent of Mesopotamia 1,000 years later, he moved the administration centre from Ur to Babylon. With the Akkadians came a new language that saw the Moon god Nanna called Sin and his children Irkella, the queen of the underworld become Ereshkigal, Inanna the queen of heaven, the goddess of love and war became Ishtar and the Sun god Utu became Shamash.

By now, the gods and goddesses were making so much noise the 'Mother of Life' Tiamat and her husband Apsu who created them, grew tired of their racket and plotted to destroy them. However, Tiamat did not wish to see her offspring suffer and warned Enki of the plan. The Lord of the Earth cast a powerful spell enchanting his grandfather Apsu into a deep sleep, stole his powers over water

and cast him in an underground pit below an island off the furthest western reaches of the known world.

Sin was not pleased with his uncle's actions and demanded Tiamat seek revenge. Soon Tiamat was on her way to Earth to annihilate the gods. Enki tasked his son and heir Marduk to stop and slay her. As tradition decreed they settled the matter in single combat. The prince was victorious, cut the old goddess into pieces and scattered them throughout the universe. For siding with Tiamat, Sin was stripped of his powers and because his children already had important powers of their own, the forces of the Moon reverted to Sin's mother Ninlil, the Lady of the Sky. It also would not have gone unnoticed that a woman's menstrual cycle echoed that of the Moon of twenty-eight days.

When the Babylonian empire began to crumble 3,000 years ago, suffering from climate change, dishonest ruler ship and internal turmoil, the gods moved their operations into fertile Europe. Enlil wrangled control from Enki to rule Greece as the sky god Zeus, Ninlil became Artemis, Ishtar became Aphrodite, Ereshkigal's husband, the storm god Nergal became Hades and Enki became Poseidon.

When the Hebrew's went in search for an identity of their own, they transformed the ancient gods and goddesses into angels (messengers). Enlil/Zeus became Yahweh, Enki/Poseidon became Lucifer, Shamash/Apollo became the archangel Michael, Nabu/Hermes became Raphael, Nergal/Hades became Uriel and Ninlil/Artemis became Gabriel.

'I BELIEVE IN FAIRIES' REVISITING FAIRY SPELLS BY CLAIRE NAHMAD

CHERRY DOYLE

Claire Nahmad believed in fairies - she says so in the opening sentence of *Fairy Spells*. Descended from herbalists and wise women, and author of over a dozen books on magic, spells, and angels, in these pages she is unabashed about her engagement with entities that many still believe to be fictional.

And readers should take a leaf from her book when picking up a copy of *Fairy Spells*. The book acts as a beginner's guide to curating the required conditions to reach out to fairy folk. Over several petite chapters, readers will learn about introspective actions they can take to open the doors to the fairy realm, along with appropriate days, dates, times, and locations at which the fairies will be receptive to communication.

Nahmad combines elements from different cultures, religions, and spiritual systems from around the world to inform her advice. Indeed, there are references to 'God' from the start. It might seem jarring on first read, this alignment of the fantastical and the theological, but this is not a book for the faint-hearted when it comes to spiritual and 'new age' ideas; rather it's an immersive patchwork which demonstrates how an intertwining of global beliefs can inform a new appreciation of the world around us.

Re-issued by Souvenir Press in 2022 (the year after Nahmad's death), this pint-sized book captures something of the spirit of its original era. Between the release of a new, complete collection of Ciceley Mary Barker's *Flower Fairies*, and the movie *Fairy Tale: A True Story*, not to mention the plethora of childhood paraphernalia bearing wings, it's fair to say fairies were having a moment in 1997.

70,000 copies sold already



*Fairy
Spells*

Claire Nahmad

Seeing & Communicating with the Fairies

But the themes and concerns raised in *Fairy Spells* ring true today, perhaps even more so than at its original release. Nahmad identifies human disconnection from our spiritual imagination as a leading cause for our loss of 'fairy sight', and suggests that abuses of the natural world have led to fairy mistrust of humans and encourage trickery.

Nahmad coaches the reader to become more attuned to these little-used, intuitive senses, through meditative observation, poetry, and imaginative exercises. She provides step-by-step spells for engaging with and invoking the power of fairies, which call on the natural world and its elemental powers.

At the turn of the millennium, I found and read my parents' copy of *Fairy Spells*. Having not had much exposure to the ideas, deities, and religions mentioned within, I was immediately fascinated. I started to practice some of the spells in the book, and began building a spiritual connection to holy dates, particularly Midsummer/Litha. Did I believe absolutely that I would, through these little ceremonies, see fairies? Talk to fairies? Receive anything from them? I'm afraid to say that I did not. But the ritual of undertaking the spells developed into an act of worship and natural connection that still resonates with me today.

And this personal interpretation is at the heart of this book's enduring appeal, 25 years after its original publication. While outwardly, *Fairy Spells* appears to be written for those already 'away with the fairies', in fact it will delight even the most sceptical. This is an undeniable object of beauty; carefully chosen Victorian illustrations complement the poetry of the spells themselves. Small in stature, it sits comfortably in the hands - its slimness makes an enchanting 'coffee table' read.

The world may have moved on from its late-nineties obsession with fairies, but those looking for a closer relationship with the earth - or themselves - could do worse than giving *Fairy Spells* an afternoon of their time. Regardless of your beliefs on the subject matter, this is a book which says 'open your eyes and pay attention to the natural world!' in a way that the world desperately needs us to. We could all benefit from a little more of that.

WIN A COPY OF FAIRY SPELLS!

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

WHAT TREE IS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH FAIRIES?

- A) HAWTHORN
- B) OAK
- C) BIRCH



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DEATH AND THE WITCH

CERYN ROWNTREE

As we find ourselves here, in the depths of winter, our thoughts can't help but turn to the darkness and all it represents, including death.

For some, that's terrifying. We live in a world that has become so focussed on the light and on the linear process of life, that to even dance our way into the darkness of death is to teeter on the edge of the greatest unknown there is.

Yet we witches know differently, just as our ancestors knew differently. And there is no better time than Yule for us to remember that. After all, at this time of year our ancestors would watch as the world around them descended into darkness; as so much of the natural world appeared to die off, always with the risk that those deaths would be forever.

Which is why there was such great celebration on the morning of Yule. Because with the sunrise after the longest night came reassurance; the certainty that the light had returned and with it, a promise that one day the bountiful harvest would do the same.



As those who honour the cyclical nature of our planet and its seasons, of course we know that to be true too. We celebrate the long nights of winter just as fervently as we do the bright days of summer and everything in between, and recognise that there is just as deep a power and a beauty in the darkness as in the light.

We witches recognise the powerful balance that exists within the natural world and honour the deep and transformative magic that can be found in our endings as well as in our beginnings, knowing that it is only in releasing the old that we can ever truly make way for the new.

Yet for all of their wisdom and comfort, those knowings don't protect us from the sting of death.

Just before Samhain, I found myself saying goodbye to my best friend, my soul sister and my familiar, when my dog Kali suddenly and unexpectedly took her transition from this Earth.

As someone who has consciously worked with the spirit world for almost two decades, and practiced as a witch for almost as long, death is something I have always had an interesting relationship with, and never more so than on this occasion.

After all, for ten of the most turbulent years of my own life and spiritual journey, Kali has been my

closest confidante and greatest protector; she is the one who has been there to cuddle me through tears, jumped joyously with me through successes, and kept me going on the days I felt all too close to giving up.

To lose her - especially without the opportunity to say goodbye - was shattering in every sense of the word, and left me feeling entirely untethered from a world that she and I had spent so much time connecting with together.

And though I know that her transition into the realms of spirit was both necessary and temporary - Kali was an older lady whose body was tired and ready for a rest, but even before I knew she had transitioned into Spirit, she paid me a visit to tell me what she would like to be named when she returns to the physical world - the experience of her passing is painful.

Does this mean I am a terrible witch? That I've



somehow lost faith in my beliefs, or am trying desperately to usurp the natural order of our world so that I can gain more time with someone I loved?

No. It means I am human, as we witches are, and that I am honouring the whole experience of death and darkness.

There are some out there who will tell you that this is somehow wrong; that to work with and embrace the darkness is to surrender ourselves to endings with no thought or feeling for the loss that they involve. But though I respect the views and beliefs of those people, they're something I can't agree with.

I believe that, as witches, our feelings are a potent fuel for all that we are and all that we experience within this life. More than that, I believe that it is in our humanity that we find so much of our



wisdom.

To allow ourselves to grieve the endings that come our way is to sit in the deepest darkness of our energies, it is to stand fearlessly in the presence of that which we cannot fully know and understand, and it is to hold within our hearts the deep pain that is part of life on this Earth.

But it is also to honour and even celebrate one of the deepest and most beautiful experiences of this life. After all, isn't such a painful goodbye evidence of a love that deserves to be celebrated?

To be a witch is to face up to and honour both the pain of death and the joy of life as well as the potent transition points that lie between; a sentiment that is never more true than on the solstices of the year when the Earth itself seems to hover on the point between life and death.

My invitation to you this Yule is to do just that, and to allow yourself to feel it all.

Unlike the ancestors of old who may have celebrated only the return of the Sun and the promise of new life; don't be afraid to honour the grief and the endings that are embodied by this longest of nights too.

And know as you do that your very existence is proof of the power in both.



CERYN ROWNTREE IS A WRITER, MEDIUM AND THERAPIST BASED IN NORTHUMBERLAND, UK. YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT CERYN AND HER WORK VIA HER WEBSITE AT WWW.CERYNROWNTREE.COM, OR THROUGH HER BOOK *THE DIVINE FEMINIST*, PUBLISHED BY THE UNBOUND PRESS, AND PODCAST OF THE SAME NAME.

YULE HOT CHOCOLATE SPELL

WITCH GRIMOIRE

A simple spell and a tasty treat all in one!

Make your favourite hot chocolate - it doesn't matter if you make it on the stove or from a jar of your favourite instant (mine is the one from Aldi in the purple tub - so far the best supermarket hot chocolate I found!).

Sprinkle in a little cinnamon and nutmeg powder for protection, healing and good fortune. Throw in a cinnamon stick and/or a star anise for a magickal extra kick, and some marshmallows, just because they taste good ;)



STEFFIE DE VAAN

WINTER MAGIC

The world goes to sleep in Winter. Trees withdraw the last of their nutrients, to store in their roots and release again come Spring. Bats, hedgehogs, snakes and groundhogs hibernate safely in their nest — and on that note, don't rake any leaves in winter! Wasp and bee queens find a quiet place to survive the cold, already carrying their new brood with them. It's a resting and waiting time, until the world is ready to welcome them again.

This article presents two rituals that follow the same natural pattern: hold, put into stasis, wait for warmer days.

WINTER FOOTSTEPS

Go on a bracing Winter walk while setting your intentions for the coming time. Make sure to keep safety in mind — don't go where you wouldn't feel safe, or take a companion with you. Covens can walk together, each member creating their own chant to contribute to a shared incantation with multiple voices.

WHAT IT DOES: Sets your intentions

WHEN TO CAST: That depends on your intentions. Generally new moons are great to set intentions. If you want to not call your ex though, that's a waning moon. If you want to make more money, Tuesdays and Wednesdays are good. This ritual is flexible.

WHAT YOU NEED: Snow, good boots and

a warm coat. Optional intention tokens or offerings.

HOW IT WORKS: Dress for a walk in the snow. Fresh snow is best, but you also want it nice and thick, so you might have to compromise. If you want to leave offerings or tokens as you go, like seeds to represent prosperity, prepare and charge those with intent before you leave.

Decide where your walk begins and where it ends. You might want to do a full circle, starting and beginning at home. Maybe you want to walk from your house to an old oak tree. Or maybe you want to start at the oak tree, so the walk to it doesn't count, and walk from it to your home.

As you walk, create a chant setting your intentions. Remember to phrase the chant as achieved intent ("I do more magic" rather than "I will do more magic"), but other than that don't overthink it. Don't prepare the chant at home either. You can change the chant as you go, so long as the intention remains the same. You want to be fully in the now, and have your own walking rhythm guide you. Make sure it's not just words you're chanting, but that you believe and feel it with your entire being.

When you start the walk, feel the energy that you summoned with your chant flow down into your footprints. You're not just leaving them on the snow — you're leaving them on the universe.

If you want to bring offerings or tokens, keep the chant and walk going as you drop them. Don't use anything that is harmful to nature, which includes glitter (unless biodegradable) and salt. Seeds and pieces of bark are perfect. If you have to sit down for your offering, consider doing it right at the start or end of your walk. The ritual ends when you reach your destination, but your footsteps remain.

GUARDING THE LIGHT

This ritual works best with a group of people. This can be your coven, other witch friends, or any chosen family who wants to help out and takes your craft seriously. You can do this with an online group, so long as everyone has a channel of instant communication open.

If you're really good at staying awake, you can do this ritual on your own.

WHAT IT DOES: Guards against the dying of the light

WHEN TO CAST: The night of the Winter Solstice. If your group isn't in the same time zone, the earliest sunset and latest sunrise count. If you celebrate any denominational holidays, you can celebrate and perform this ritual together.

WHAT YOU NEED: The light and its warmth, so candles—lots of candles.

HOW IT WORKS: At sunset before the Winter Solstice, everyone goes round the circle to light their candle. When you light yours, set individual intentions on how you will guard the light — not just the candle, but the light of humanity: how you will continue to fight for social and

racial justice, equality, and human rights for all people.

After that, you must stay awake and keep your candle going until dawn. If everyone is physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially (i.e. not at risk of losing their job by showing up tired the next day) capable of staying awake the entire night, you should aim for that. Keep each other going. Otherwise, when someone needs to sleep, they should ask someone else to guard their light. Say a quick spell like "I give you my light," and "I will guard your light" and physically pass the candle. With an online group, the guardian then lights a second candle while the sleeper snuffs theirs. Return the light in the same manner when the sleeper wakes up.

Ideally, you want to do all this without caffeine, but again — each to their needs and capabilities. Come sunrise, let the candles burn out naturally, or snuff them for candle safety. You've safely guarded the light through the longest night of the year. Now get some sleep if you can.

Steffie de Vaaan is a Dutch witch who loves cheap and easy witchcraft without cultural appropriation. Follow her on instagram as muse of midnight.



CARRIE ANDERSON

CROCHET AND WITCHCRAFT

Domestic arts often get overlooked as important works of art. The line between craft and art is fascinating and fraught with reductive attitudes. I prefer outsider art to classical. I would much rather have something handcrafted than factory produced. Give me hours, to peruse racks of old linens, at thrift stores, looking for old embroidery work and I need not ever see, in person, that which has been deemed “fine art”.

There are similarities between the treatment of domestic arts and the historical attitudes toward witchcraft. That which is the traditional domain of a woman gets hidden, mocked, or viewed as less than, by the establishment.

In reclaiming the word witch, I have found an outlet for combining my handiwork with my craft. There is so much that lies beneath each stitch. When crochet and witchcraft are out of their defined context, reshaped and combined, they become one of the core foundations of my Witchcraft practice.

Crochet and Witchcraft both offer connections to the past, a chance to work with ancestors, family and community. Both arts allow us to create and define our space. Neither of my crafts look like someone else's. I tell a story that is woven in stitches and spells. My craft is one of colorways and textures belied with thoughts and images captured into symbolic intentions turned into knots.

Crochet to remember:

Crochet is a window into the past and it houses some of my fondest memories. Sitting on the floor, by my sisters' knees, I would watch as they crocheted. Our hall was lined with ribbons won from state fairs for their craft-work. They would give me important tasks, like making pom-poms, or weaving in ends. As an adult, I now understand those were the most boring and tedious of the tasks, but it kept me busy and I was part of the process.



As a little girl, I just had to show one, or both, of my sisters a naked Barbie and they would grab some yarn and turn out a new dress for

her by day's end. If Barbie should show up the very next day, once again naked, then they made her a new gown of yarn.

I wasn't taught to crochet so much as it was a part of me. I spent hours sitting beside my sisters, my head on their knees, or laying across both of their laps, while they watched television or listened to records and crocheting. As I watched, they used hooks and yarn to create. It was magic, I could fall asleep beside them and wake up to find a blanket freshly finished. From endless strings they would gift me things that they had made. Magic and love.

One day, long after they had moved out, I took up a hook and began to sort through the memories of yarn moving through their hands.

There is magic in changing a ball of yarn into a sweater, a blanket, or into a hat. Crochet pattern books are grimoires of coded language only understood by those with the knowledge to translate them. I create a way to link the past and the present. To relive memories and create new ones. I crochet spells and I manifest through the movement of my hands.



I prefer to not use patterns. I use vintage yarns and old photos of crocheted projects from the 70's as my inspiration. I never buy new yarn. I scour non-profit thrift stores and art reuse centers. It's amazing how much yarn from the 60-80's has sat, in someone's craft room, unused with original labels and price tags still attached.

Crochet to honor:

My best friend died a few years ago. She had wanted to donate her body to science, however, she was cremated. I knew exactly how she had wanted her body to be used for science. She wanted to be displayed in a similar fashion to the Body Worlds Exhibit. I spent the better part of the year looking through anatomy books, studying anatomy flashcards, sketching, and buying yarn. Then I began to freeform crochet body parts. I created an almost queen sized blanket that I call, "The Human Body Blanket for Linda". While making it I could often hear my best friend speaking to me. She would say, "Oh, it's so weird! I love it! I can't wait to use it!". Once I finished it, I showed it to her spirit and heard her saying, "Sweetie, it's so gross and fantastic. I love everything about it!". I have it



preserved in a large bag as a memorial to her.

Four years ago, when our dog passed away, my husband kept visiting a wildflower field where they had often walked. I spent months photographing all of the flowers, then created a large collage to see the colors that were most present during the different seasons. I found yarn in those colors. Then, with a 4.00 mm hook, I spent ten months crocheting granny squares into a king size blanket. I gave it to my husband as a gift so he can always sleep under the memories of our dog and those wildflower walks.

Crochet to protect:

I crochet circle after circle. Prior to vacation I made tank tops, a skirt, and a cover-up, each one circular in fashion. They were bits of home that I could bring with us and they encircled myself and my family with protective intentions and spellwork.

The art of crochet is both practical and magical.

This year, our Christmas tree is entirely decorated in ornaments and garland that I crocheted. I made them reminiscent of the vintage ornaments that I remember from my childhood. I want to be able to offer them to my son, when he is grown, as a memory of this Christmas. In each ornament, I wove in memories of Christmas past, present, and future.

Crochet is one of many domestic arts that I perform daily. It's a meditation and respite. It's a way to create items that can be used, worn, and cherished. Through the knots that I make, with a hook bought at a thrift store, with yarn donated from someone's attic, I cast a web that connects me to others. Crochet and Witchcraft dovetail through time, to prove that hidden and unseen work that takes place inside the home, are powerful ways that we can connect, even when solitary.



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SPOONIE MAGICK

@THE.URBANWITCH

Spoonie magick is based on the spoonie theory, an analogy which is often used to explain energy management in regards to a chronic illness or disability. As a spoonie, doing basic tasks can be exhausting, let alone putting together a whole extravagant ritual.

We should all be able to practice our craft, worship or become more in tune with our sacredness. We shouldn't feel like we aren't doing enough, as long as we are in touch with our own spirituality that is the most important thing.

Being a spoonie witch is all about modifying your craft and finding ways to practice your craft which works for you. It's about knowing your limitations and working with your body not against it. Below are a few tips which have helped me personally with practicing my craft.

TURN THE MUNDANE INTO MAGICK

I have found that easiest way to conserve spoons but still connect to your craft is to combine mundane tasks that you do each day with magick.

MAKE YOUR MORNING TEA MAGIC. Most of us have tea or coffee in the morning, the simple act of focusing your intentions while stirring your hot drink can turn it from mundane to magick. Stir your drink clockwise to attract something and anticlockwise to banish. Focus on your chosen intention while stirring. You can even choose specific herbal teas to match your intentions.

MAKE YOUR SHOWER MAGIC. Many spoonies will understand how draining the simple act of having a shower can be. While it is exhausting, it is a cost that often needs to be accounted for.

Make your shower into a simple ritual by adding herbs or non water soluble crystals into an organza bag and tying it to your shower head. If this is still too many spoons for you, you can still perform a visualisation ritual. As you shower, visualise it cleansing your aura and your energy and allowing the negativity to leave your body as the water washes over you.

Use premade spell kits or make your own when you have more spoons and keep them for when you are low on them.



NOT ALL RITUALS NEED TO BE GRAND

Many practices can be done while laying down such as meditation or visualisation. I personally try to practice grounding techniques in times of pain flare ups. Something as simple as holding your favourite crystal and visualising its energy washing over you is more than enough.

Adapt your altar so that it is easy to transport, using a mini altar means you can bring it to bed with you if needed. Create a magick kit by your bed. Keeping a few candles and crystals with a notebook and pen close by is a convenient way to do easy spells when you are low on spoons.

Choose function over form. It's easier said than done especially when there are so many beautiful altars on social media but your practice doesn't need to be ascetically pleasing. Cutting the frills can make your practice more practical and efficient.

Are books too heavy or inconvenient to hold? Use a kindle to keep all of your books, you can even find a vast selection of books on your phone. Instead of keeping an elaborate book of shadows, try using your phone's memo pad to keep all your notes. If typing uses up too many spoons for you, try using speech to text.

PRACTICE PASSIVE MAGIC

The following takes very little energy and can just be set up and left to work their magic.

Charge your crystals using selenite, or under the full moon. Light a candle or incense for your intentions and allow it to burn out (but don't leave it unattended).

Practice aromatherapy, essential oils can be diffused to match your intentions.

Carry items with you such as your new tarot

deck to infuse them with your energy.

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM ENERGY VAMPIRES



As spoonies we already struggle with trying to conserve our energy. Avoid people who feed off other people's energy and drain you. If it is impossible to avoid these types of people, take some low effort precautions such as anointing yourself with a protection oil or keeping protective tumblestones near-by such as black tourmaline.

FIND YOUR EMPOWERMENT

Many people turn to witchcraft for personal development. Witchcraft has become a movement of self empowerment magick can be transformative.

As spoonies we are already in tune with our bodies. We spend so much time tending to its needs, learning to recognise potential flairs and pre-empting what our bodies might need. While all of this may be exhausting, it also means we

are adept at tapping into our bodies. This can be a powerful tool when tapping into our own power.

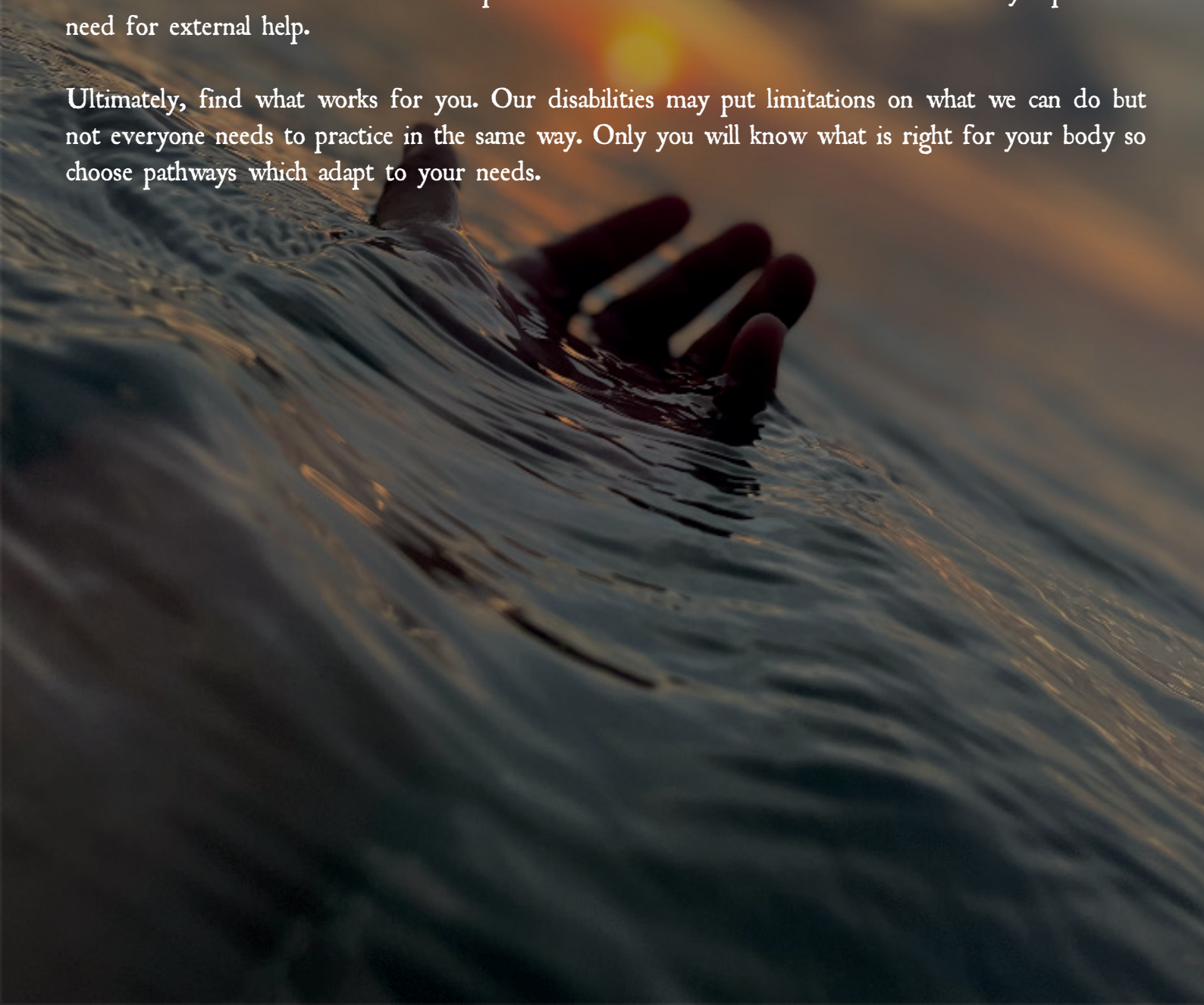
Practice shadow work to build a better relationship with your mind and body.

Shadow work is a practice in which a person delves deep into their shadow self and shines a light onto their shadow. Many issues can be so deeply intertwined into our being. Do you grieve for your old life? Are you holding onto bitterness? Rebuild your relationship with your body.

Shadow work should not be taken lightly, while it can be extremely useful and enlightening, it is messy and painful. It can bring up a lot of feelings and emotions which can be exhausting for those who are low on spoons.

It is vital to remember that while witchcraft can be extremely powerful and support us through our struggles, it is in no way a replacement for professional help. We can find a sense of catharsis or empowerment from rituals but it does not necessarily replace our need for external help.

Ultimately, find what works for you. Our disabilities may put limitations on what we can do but not everyone needs to practice in the same way. Only you will know what is right for your body so choose pathways which adapt to your needs.





WHAT WE'RE READING

THE POSSESSION OF BARBE HALLAY: DIABOLICAL ARTS AND DAILY LIFE IN EARLY CANADA

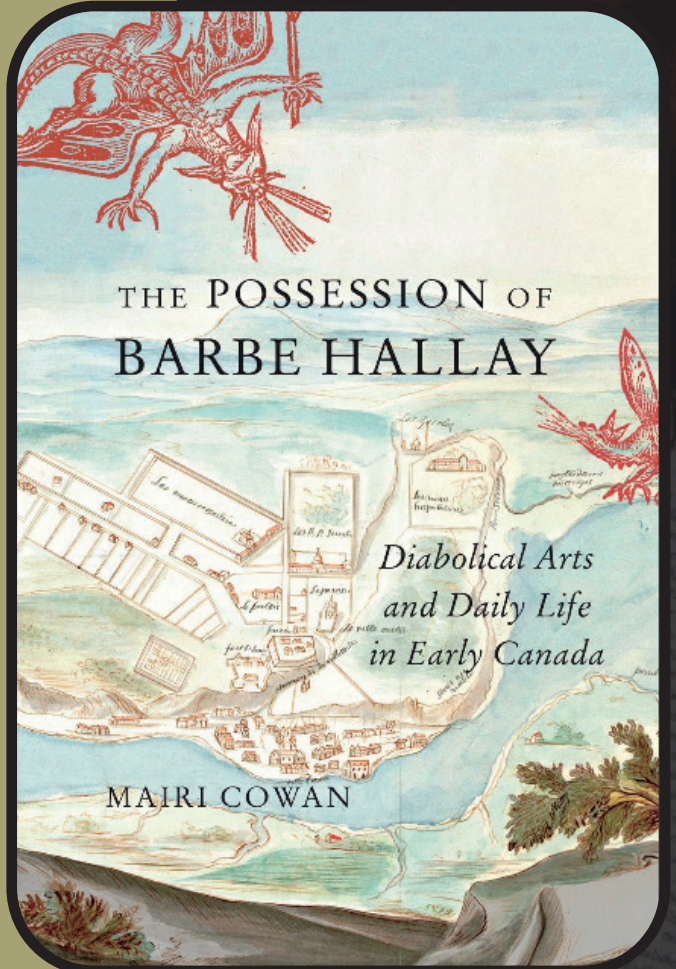
REVIEW BY CARRIE ANDERSON

Reading, *The Possession of Barbe Hallay: Diabolical Arts and Daily Life in Early Canada* by Mairi Cowan, I was introduced to the study of microhistory. Microhistory, is the facet of history that I have always searched for and wanted to immerse myself in. I have never understood why so much of what I learned in school was about big events like war and industrialization. As I went about my day-to-day life, I wanted to understand how countless women before me had spent their days.

Here, the focus is that of daily life and how a community is affected by larger outside forces like; religion, immigration, wealth and status. While the book focuses on one individual person, Barbe Hallay, it does so in such a wide context that the reader is drawn into and can understand life in Quebec in the 17th Century.

Before reading this book, my knowledge of New France in the 17th Century would not have won me any trivia contests. What I admired about this book was how the author, Maira Cowan, took painstaking care to make sure the reader truly had a grasp of the historical context at each step of Barbe Hallay's story.

This is a book that goes to great lengths to demonstrate how one might become possessed (not obsessed) by demonic forces and why one might be deemed to be the witch that cast a hex. Mairi Cowan does a service to those of us interested in this niche study of history, by shedding light on the intricacies of the outer world, the inner world, and how both impact the individual. This isn't a reductive analysis that leads to "the witch did it". Instead, the reader is asked to pause, analyse, and place themselves into the community of New France in the 17th Century and how we might have interpreted Barbe Hallay's behaviour.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mairi Cowan is associate professor in the Department of Historical Studies, University of Toronto Mississauga.

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