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WITCH Magazine

Dearest Witches,

Welcome to issue 40!

We have had frost and one light flurry of snow here in the southwest of England, but the first green shoots are pushing up through the soil nevertheless.

For me, Imbolc is a time of huge potential. Winter isn't over yet, and the trees are still bare, but snowdrops and daffodils are appearing in the hedgerows and verges. Their brightness and resilience shows a defiance of the cold which I find inspiring.

I hope that you will find inspiration within these pages, whether through trying a new spell, cooking from a new recipe or from soaking in some gorgeous poetry and art.

We also have a new regular tarot column from the talented Auset Gypsy, which is sure to offer some useful insights in line with the energy of Imbolc.

Helen JR Bruce - Editor

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WITCH

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COVER ART - Monique Bouman

My work consists of many colours, textile materials, botanical plants and seaweeds. All combined into many layered artworks.

My work is analogue and digital, I am an intuitive and visual person who lives and works in the Netherlands. You are welcome to visit my Instagram and Facebook to view my art and get in touch with me.

Facebook/Kiek's Art-World Instagram/Kieksartworld

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



Kelly Ferranti

Coming from Irish heritage, Imbolc holds a special place in my spiritual calendar, and I would like to share my thoughts on what the sabbat means to me. You are welcome to follow my Facebook page Kelly Tarot or contact me via Instagram @kellymmarie.



Mark NeCamp, Jr

Mark NeCamp, Jr. is a tarot reader, healer, author, poet, teacher, spiritual alchemist, devoted family man, and modern day student and practitioner of the Art. He teaches classes using magic as a tool for personal growth. He is passionate for how we each can, through the alchemical process, turn our spiritual lead into gold as individuals and as a global community.



Pauline Flitton

Pauline Flitton, baby Witch from Surrey. Works with Crystals and is a Reiki and Crystal therapist. I hold space in my women's Circles for deeper meaningful connections, starting with Self-connection. I love to see people win, and get excited when clients have their breakthrough moments and is a true believer in the ripple effect. www.crystal-manifestations.co.uk



Scott Irvine

Scott Irvine is a Druid in a witches hat, a pagan who reveres Mother Earth and all life that resides on her. He sees the spiritual realm as real and as important as the material world.

www.facebook.com/Author-Scott-Irvine



Steffie de Vaan

Steffie de Vaan (she/her) is a Dutch intuitive witch. She loves cheap and easy witchcraft without cultural appropriation. Follow her on instagram as [muse_of_midnight](https://www.instagram.com/muse_of_midnight).



Oak Canessa-Pollard

Oak is a professional Storyteller who is passionate about all things Folklore. Living in Sussex, she loves nothing more than roaming the South Downs seeing signs of magic. Running her folkloric witch Instagram is her favourite pastime, plus a ritual or three.

Instagram: [folkloric.witch](https://www.instagram.com/folkloric.witch) www.facebook.com/solsticestorytellingcircle



Titania Fae

Titania Fae is an experienced Psychic Medium and Spiritual Mentor who offers a variety of divination, holistic and spiritual services. As part of a husband and wife collaboration you can find out more about Titania and Paul's business known as 'The Gypsy and The Witch' at www.thegypsyandthewitch.com or on their social media accounts such as Facebook, Insta, Tiktok and YouTube.



Mystic Dylan

Esoteric Consultant and Mystic Advisor, specializing in reading of the Tarot, palmistry, gris-gris, and incantations pertaining to love, happiness, success, and more.

IG @mysticdylanofficial



Redd

Raised in a magickal home, Redd is a third generation practitioner of the Craft. She is a dedicant of Andraste - the East-Anglian Goddess of Victory, and a founding member of the Covey of the Sword & Serpent - an eclectic female-focused working group which draws from its members' respective experiences in Folk Magick, Red Thread and Sabbatic Craft. reddwytchartes@zohomail.eu



Claire Spring

Blossom & Bloom-Joyful Living is a women's wellness page dedicated to reconnecting women to their joy and creativity and offers a range of Seasonal, Intentional and Bespoke Simmer Pots and Candles. www.facebook.com/people/Blossom-Bloom-Joyful-Living



Rachael Treymane

Kia ora, I am Rachael Treymane, a seasoned magical practitioner with 29 years of exploration and education. As the esteemed leader of the Coven of the Sacred Stars, I guide and nurture a community bound by the shared reverence for the magical arts that acknowledge our connection with "as above, so below". [Facebook.com/sacredstarscoven](https://www.facebook.com/sacredstarscoven)



Richard C Hick

Rich is a successful business consultant working throughout engineering and manufacturing, a father and a veteran endurance athlete. Spiritually, he is wholly diverse and acceptant of truth wherever it may come, an eternal student, eclectic witch, freemason, and hermetic, drawing from a rich web of traditions to form his daily practice. He lives with his wife in beautiful and ancient Derbyshire, with his dogs, cats and rabbits.



Sophie Jordan

My name is Sophie I am Sea Priestess, Womb Witch & Eclectic Priestess. Crystal Healing & Spiritual Teaching is my passion. I am an Holistic Therapist & Intuitive Oracle & Love working with various Goddess Pantheons. Especially Gaia, Maat & Domnu. You will find me knee deep in crystals or on a beach frolicking with the mermaids. <https://soulstarholistiche.wixsite.com/soulstarholisticheal>



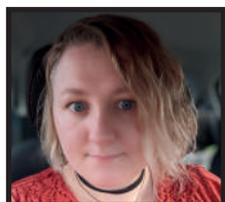
Wendy Witch

I'm a Tarot reader and Pagan Celebrant conducting Handfastings and Baby Naming Ceremonies. I live aboard a narrowboat and chug up and down the Grand Union Canal with my husband and a mad dog. I love reading, gardening (on the roof), making magic and eating cake. www.wendywitch.uk www.facebook.com/wendywaterwitch www.instagram.com/wendy__witch



Christina Corsetti

Christina Corsetti grew up in Salem, Massachusetts. She is a Paranormal Investigator who does her evidence review and collects EVPs, an Author, a Solitary Witch, and a Tarot/Oracle Reader. Christina will always continue to bring life to the paranormal world with her experiences and dedication. She devotes her time to helping others and has a keen knack for sharing her articles with the world on Social Media. <https://www.horseflychroniclesworldofpsychics.com/> <https://www.facebook.com/HauntedSalemChris/>



Sam at Bramble Fairy

I am an eclectic witch who loves collecting crystals, experimenting with herbs and practicing candle magick. I enjoy baking, gardening and researching myths, legends and folklore from across the earth. [instagram.com/bramblefairygram](https://www.instagram.com/bramblefairygram) [tiktok.com/@bramble.fairy](https://www.tiktok.com/@bramble.fairy)



Claire Valentine

I help people to transform into a more magical version of themselves through a mysterious sculpture or a mystical scenscape. I am a scientist and a Pagan and my art is about magical transformation of the mind. I know how powerful our minds can be and how we think influences how we experience our lives. [Facebook.com/ClaireValentineArt](https://www.facebook.com/ClaireValentineArt)



Julie Aspinall

I have been a witch as long as I can remember. I am eclectic with a stong traditional witchcraft background. I founded the coven of Gaia and The festival for pagans and witches. My aim is to help people starting on their paths.

www.covenofgaia.co.uk



Kylie Anna

Kylie is the Founder of the Confidence Coven and Witchy Woo, where she is a Witch, Spiritual Guide, Healer and Teacher. Kylie helps soulful ladies to sod that 'shoulds' and embrace spiritual freedom. She does this by helping them to connect with who they are at their core, without the conditioning, without the expectations, and without the fear of judgement. <https://msha.ke/confidencecoven/>



The Old Crone

After almost 60 years reading cards, starting when I was a child, and showing others how to interpret them, I still enjoy reading for anyone who wishes it. I follow the wheel of the year and the phases of the moon, grow my own herbs and wand woods as well as following pagan ways and assisting others to find their own special spiritual pathway.

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Carrie Anderson

Carrie is an Intuitive Consultant focusing on nature based practices. She created Green Wisdom Reiki, is a plant spirit consultant, diviner specializing in wax scrying, and an animal death doula. A deep respect for all of nature and earth guides all of her work. You can visit her at www.caresreiki.com for a list of offerings, readings, and to see her other writings.



Anne-Marie Kafka

My name is AnneMarie, I am a 60 yr old retired secondary school teacher. I have been a pagan almost all my adult life. Although I am neither a historian, nor a writer, sometimes I have to describe scenes which swirl around in my head.



JE Marriott

J.E. Marriott is a British author living in Canada with her husband, two demon cats and has a penchant for tea. She has been Pagan most of her life and attends a Druid ADF Grove. She writes paranormal mysteries, supernatural thrillers and magically enchanted tales for all. www.jemarriott.com/www.instagram.com/jemarriott.author/ www.facebook.com/JEMarriottAuthor



Auset Gypsy

James Jacob Pierrri studied Ayurvedic Medicine, Anatomy & Physiology and Herbalism, graduating from The Florida College of Natural Health & Holistic Sciences and also studied Aromatherapy at The AVEDA Institute NYC. James holds national certification as massage therapist, Yoga instructor and Usui Reiki practitioner He is the author of the internationally published AusetGypsy Tarot & Book Set. www.usetgypsy.com



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Celebrating Imbolc

Imbolc, which means “in the belly” in Old Irish, marks the midway point between the winter solstice and spring equinox. The sabbat has been observed since the 10th century and honours the Celtic maiden goddess Brigid, the goddess of fire, inspiration, and healing. Brigid was declared a Saint and honoured as an Irish patron following Ireland's conversion to Christianity. Even now, the Brigid cross is still frequently seen in Irish homes, honouring the resilience and strength of femininity.

Imbolc is a powerful time to allow our natural creativity to flow by opening our hearts and minds. It is the perfect opportunity to sow the seeds of promise and realise our own potential. The earth begins to awaken as we near the halfway point of winter in anticipation for the arrival of spring and the dawn of new beginnings, and just as nature is getting ready for the changes that spring brings, so too can we begin the same nurturing within ourselves with deep reflection and contemplation of what has been and considering the possibilities of what is to come. Now is the time to call back your power, embrace your divine goddess and nurture the potential that resides within us all.

During Imbolc, I always promise to take some time to spend outside enjoying nature again. Winter is hard, and relationships with family and finances can test our resilience and mental bandwidth, and that's ok. I have discovered no better way for me to heal and recover from the trials, excitement, and celebration of the season of Yule than crawling out of my hermitage, reconnecting with the earth like a bear from hibernation and sniffing the air in search of new inspiration and possibilities. I walk amongst the trees, feed the birds, thank the earth for all it provides and all it continues to offer.

My spiritual journey has never been a predominately aesthetic or staunchly traditional one, and although I embrace and learn from the wisdom of tradition, ritual and the knowledge of the witch and spiritual commu-

nity, my witchy journey has always remained discreet, earthly, and quite individual. I love to adapt spells, celebrations and rituals to my own budget, preferences and time constraints and always seek enjoyment and a feeling of peace from my practice. I truly believe that the most important rule of witchcraft is that there are no rules, and as long as my intentions bring no harm to myself or others and resonates with me, I embrace new ideas and practices.

My altar goes through several transformations throughout the year and changes of season. My Imbolc altar space will be donned with potted herbs, pinecones, my favourite plant, and candles I have made myself. To honour this beautiful sabbat I shall be throwing open the windows, blasting Fleetwood Mac through the speakers and dancing round with my broom cleansing my space.

A hearty stew of seasonal vegetables will be simmering in the cauldron (well, slow cooker, but we make do!) and I'll take delight in the opportunity to reconnect with nature after a season of overindulgence and eggnog, setting my intentions in preparation for the exciting prospects that spring will present. No matter how you choose to embrace your inner witch, how much money you have, or how much time you have available, remember that Imbolc is a time of development, power, and originality. Whether you choose to light a candle or a bonfire, plant trees or ideas, clean your home or your mind, have a blessed Imbolc and just know that you matter, and that the universe has your back.

Kelly Ferranti

Energy Magick: Energy is the Heart of Our Work

I like getting my hands dirty. Whether I am helping build something, doing gardening, or getting into the finer details of a project in the physical world- I like to get as visceral and tactile as possible. For me, this crosses over to magick. While I love grimoires, candles, sigils, and many of the physical trappings of magickal work, I always say them as means to an end- tools to focus the will and imagination, but just tools at the end of the day. Tools act on something, and they are created to shape or manipulate (or make those processes easier) something. What is that “something” in magick?

Energy.

The teachings of so many spiritual schools teach that the Universe is multilayered. These layers are all interconnected and what changes on one layer affects the others. We can label these levels of reality, all interdependent on each other, as follows:

- Physical- The concrete, visible world that is observable and subject to “standard” laws of conventional physics.
- Energetic- This is the mysterious world of ethereal energy that often mirrors the physical and binds it to the immaterial.
- Mental- The realm of consciousness, archetypes, and thought.
- Spiritual- The “Source” of all things; since everything comes from the same source- everything is connected.

Knowledge is power. Knowing that the world is so multifaceted and interconnected, we can further extrapolate that what affects one layer can affect the others. Magick directly affects the energetic level more so than any other, and understanding how energy works can only make magickal practice more effective. Magickal energy is all around us, and the ritualistic actions we do are ways to manipulate that. After taking a more post-modern take on the hundreds of years of occult teachings that have come before me, I realized I wanted to put away the intermediaries, and work on handling magickal energy directly. I did not come to this conclusion overnight. Before I did a deep delve into the occult, I did a lot of work with energy healing, chakra work, and Reiki. After helping a client deal with the energetic effects of a baneful working against them, I was able to make the logical connection between magickal cause and energetic effect.

I wrote Energy Magick to liberate people to a different paradigm. While my book does much to do magick without the usage of tools standard to much modern magick, I like to think it helps create more understanding and accessibility to the Art and looking at things through the lens of energetic experience can create a way to reinforce, strengthen and reawaken the spirit.

To give an example, I do a lot of work with invocation magick. It is one of the most misunderstood, but spiritually gratifying aspects of modern occultism and magick. I grew up Catholic and for me God was always somewhere far away and abstract. The only way I felt close to anything I would call Divine was by trying to love and help people to emulate a certain famous, bearded Jewish prophet. When I became Pagan, and I was in my first coven, we did a lot of fun stuff. We celebrated holidays, did spells together, and generally had a lot of fun (until things fell apart, but that is a different article). One of the things that still touches me through the mists of memory, to this very day, is how my high priestess could invoke the Goddess. She would do a full body possession. Her voice, posture, mannerisms, and even knowledge would change. Gone were the days of some deity in outer space somewhere- here was Divinity touched down to Earth. There was no need for faith, I had proof that the gods were real and that they could be interacted with on a real level. In the candlelight temple space of our coven, the Goddess was real and was there for us. In fact, to this day, some of my old coven mates and myself will swear that our high priestesses’ face changed depending on how you looked at her or how the candles flickered: changing between various aspects of the Divine feminine and even looking like different races and ages. It was a very moving

Invocation work can be tricky and there are several aspects to it. By looking at the energetic changes in invocation, I have found that it is easier to accomplish and teach to others. I look at invocation in four distinct levels: inspiration, visioning, oracling, channeling, and possession.

- Inspiration- This is where you invoke the deity just above you, or barely into your crown chakra, going no further than your third eye. This is useful if you need literal inspiration for a project- like invoking the goddess Brigid when you need help writing a poem or need guidance on love from Aphrodite. It is possible to do divination while under the spiritual guidance that comes from this stage of invocation. I would caution that the inspiration you receive will be influenced by who or what you invoke. While I would ask Thor for inspiration on when to plant crops and what the best time for something related to weather would be, I would ask Hermes for business advice on a reading concerning investments.
- Oracaling- Here the energy of the deity is coming down through the head to the throat chakra. At this point the crown, third eye, and throat chakra are all involved. To be an oracle of a deity is to be their mouthpiece. Being an oracle is all about letting the truths and wisdom of the deity come through. Since this is not a whole bodied possession, sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between what your truth is versus the truth of the deity. To counteract that, it is important to be as ego-less as possible.
- Channeling- You are about 50% still in control of your body, give or take. In oracling, the chakra energy stays at the throat chakra level; here it will rest at least at the 3rd chakra and from there flow into your energetic body. Channeling contrasts with being an oracle, in that the deity has more room to operate on. It is as if I am carrying the deity in my body more so that it is coming through me. Channeling is a fantastic way to contact deities when you need to not only communicate, but also handle physical objects. A deity may charge a talisman, give advice, or even do automatic writing.
- Possession- At this point, the deity has come all the way through, is in your body all the way, and has about 90%-95% control. I say 90% to 95% since 100% is rare. The energy of the deity is fully descended into the body. I have found that there is still a spark of control within someone even at the deepest levels. It is best to communicate with the deity what your boundaries are and what you will not do no matter the situation. Having clear and direct boundaries with them is important in any relationship, and even more so where the deity is having control over you.

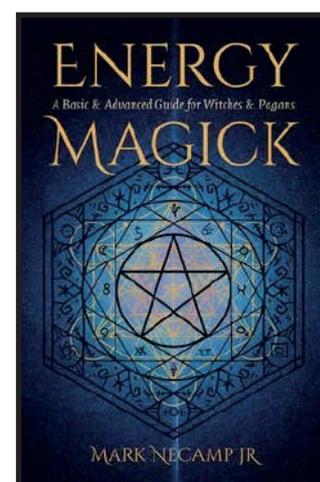
I go into more of the methods and exercises in my book, but the point I would like to emphasize is that something as potentially complex as invocation work can be brought into greater clarity through understanding the energetic changes the body goes through when doing magick. In each of the levels of invocation, feeling energy of the deity coming through you at various levels causes different effects, and understanding that these various levels of invocation correlate to how deep the energy penetrates the subject helps make these processes easier to understand and accomplish.

Energy and magick are everywhere, and the more you feel the more you can accomplish. May your magick be fruitful, and may the gods bless you. Always.

Mark NeCamp, Jr

His first book, *Energy Magick*, will be available soon from Moon Books. It can be pre-ordered on Amazon or Barnes & Noble. It will be released Beltane 2024.

<https://marknecampjr.com/>



Crystals for Alignment and Manifesting

Hello readers, fellow Brothers, Sisters and Souls of Witch Magazine.

I'm Pauline of Crystal Manifestations; I'm an advanced Crystal practitioner, Reiki therapist, I hold space within my Women's Moon Circles and I sell crystals. I'm a passionate advocate for self-connection, inner-wellness, holistic practices and being present and bring also my 28-year background in healthcare. I bring all my practices together to create Magick to help people connect, align and work with their Four bodies – Mental, Emotional, physical and Spiritual, this creates space to align, connect and manifest.

As the Wheel of the Year continues to turn, it brings us Imbolc, the first of the cross-quarter days, marking the midway point between Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox. Imbolc is the promise of longer warmer days, bringing renewal and growth to shed the old and embrace the new. Imbolc and Spring resonate with fire, passion, creation, fertility and growth, essential for manifesting. Hello and welcome Spring!

With more traditional ways to honour and celebrate Imbolc, I'd like to share a way of working with the growing seasonal energy Imbolc brings, with the amplifying energy of crystals and the true essence of YOU, to honour and celebrate YOU! This then brings abundant energies of alignment and manifestations. Now is your time to align and connect with your personal will and desires, plant your seeds and watch them manifest as The Wheel of the Year carries on forward, gaining momentum, moving towards the Spring Equinox – growing - manifesting.

BUT FIRST!

To Manifest our desires, we need to be in alignment; meaning our desires, thoughts and feelings match our actions and the energy we put out, as this is what we're communicating to the Universe and what we put out is what we get back. When we're aligned our energy vibration rises, flowing with ease, making manifesting easier. Trying to manifest from a place out of alignment can cause confusion, for which I recommend Spiritual Hygiene, do the inner-work to clear any blocks. Heal, open and activate your heart chakra to increase your ability to give and receive with ease and energise the connection between your Solar Plexus, Sacral and Root Chakras to harness the energy

of connection, willpower and drive.

SPIRITUAL HYGIENE

Meditate with the Elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water to clear and release old energy not serving you, creating space for renewed aligned energy to flow through. Then take a candlelit God or Goddess bath, I use my favourite bath oil (Molten Browns Gingerly Heaven), Himalayan bath salts, add my raw chunk of Rose Quartz (I'm a raw girl), dried Rose petals, light some candles and soak for a good twenty minutes while listening to relaxing music; this act is cleansing and the Rose Quartz works with your Heart Chakra, to heal, open and activate it, honouring YOU!

THEN!

Once you're clear with what it is you are intending to manifest, start manifesting opportunities, success, prosperity and future gains, working with a mix of Masculine and Feminine crystals and Imbolc energy.



Crystals with Masculine energy resonate with the vibration of action and manifestation, while Feminine energy resonates with the vibration of fertility and growth. Then as The Wheel of the Year continues on towards the Spring Equinox and the Sun energy increasing, you can use crystals that work to balance and harmonise Yin and Yang energy, keeping you aligned to your purpose. Too much Masculine energy can be overwhelming.

Whether you're manifesting for financial gains, personal development, business growth, whatever, these crystals are abundant with energy to help you on your way.

MY RECOMMENDATIONS

Masculine crystals to connect with the energy of Imbolc. When worked with, these crystals can activate and align the Solar Plexus, Sacral and Root Chakras, awakening our intuition, personal will and desires, making manifesting our aligned desires quicker and easier. Cleanse and recharge these Sun aligned crystals by day in an East Facing direction to absorb the Sun's Masculine energy, then harness and work with these abundant energies to grow your fertile seeds for manifesting. Meditating with these crystals and placing them on your corresponding Chakras will increase your connection to them. Happy Manifesting!

Sunstone - Meditate with the joyful energy of Sunstone to help you align with the Solar Plexus and Sacral Chakras. A strong crystal that carries the energy of personal will, illuminating your creative flow, bringing you growth.

Citrine - One of the strongest manifesting crystals, Citrine has a spark that ignites and amplifies luck and good fortune, Aligns and activates the 3 lower Chakras. keeping you grounded, focused and on track. A magnet for manifesting.

Orange Calcite - this ray of sunshine activates and aligns the Solar Plexus and Sacral Chakras, awakening your intuition, personal-will and desires, bringing fertile and solar energy combined, making it a powerful manifesting tool to grow your desired manifestation seeds. Use this to clear blockages and liberate the flowing energy of abundance.

Carnelian - Place on your Solar Plexus to activate and align your 3 lower Chakras and get ready to harness the potential energy of courage, personal power, passion, and strength. Carnelian can awaken your inner-child energy, unleashing your creativeness, finding your hidden gifts. Lets go get them!

Black Tourmaline - My body guard, she resonates with the Root Chakra and connects us to Mother Earth energy, she'll keep you grounded and cleanses your Auric field, blocking and transmuting energy not aligned with your goals. The Yang to Selenite's Yin.

Crystals with Feminine energy for fertility, growth and to bring balance in conjunction with the Masculine crystals. Cleanse and recharge with Selenite or the Divine Feminine energy of the Moon.

Labradorite - Carries the energy of transformation,

intuition, insight and creativity. Sit with this beauty, looking deep into her flashes, feel her energy radiating from within. Harness this energy and work with it to bring alignment and awakening, just as Imbolc is awakening. This beauty's is considered Masculine, however, its ruling Planet happens to be the Moon, so it brings in the energy of the Divine Feminine, just enough to complement the mix of energy. A truly Magical crystal (My fave!).



Rainbow Moonstone - Brings us Feminine energy, to tame the burning Masculine energy of the Sun resonating stones, if they were to become too overwhelming. RBM is the Feminine energy version of Labradorite, meditate with both to bringing transformational opportunities.

Moonstone - Brings balance, nourishing and fertile energy for growth, her planet is the Moon and it resonates with the Crown and Third Eye Chakras. Useful for balancing the Crystals with the Sun Energy.

Rose Quartz - Activates and aligns the Heart Chakra bringing in self-awareness and represents unconditional love, starting with YOU first. When we hold this self-love energy, it makes it easier to ask for and receive your desires. Manifesting becomes much easier when we're honouring ourselves.

Selenite - A purifying energy to keep us and our crystals auric fields cleansed and recharged, she brings the Moon's Feminine energy and offers balance to allow flow. The Yin to Black Tourmalines Yang.

These crystals are ones that I use a lot and I have had great wins, love honour and respect your crystals and they will love, honour and respect you. Have fun experimenting. let's take a moment to appreciate the beauty of this season and all that it has to offer. Blessed Imbolc!

Pauline Flitton

THE QUEEN OF SPRING

Having followed the Druidic path for the past ten years and with over thirty years gardening experience working with the Celtic Wheel of the Year to understand how nature operates and get the best out of her. I see Imbolc as representing the first stirrings of spring. The spirit of nature has arrived in the form of the Queen of Spring, the 'Flower Maiden', bringing with her the energies that will ensure life will flourish in time for the warmth and light of Sun God Bel, arriving onto the surface of Mother Earth. In the Celtic world, each new day begins at sunset with the dark of night symbolising the tribe sailing into the great light of daybreak freshly reborn akin to the journey a newborn baby makes through a mother's birth canal when entering our world.



Imbolc is a feast day when Celtic tribes gathered around great fires celebrating the rebirth of the Spring Queen. The warmth from Bel is just beginning to penetrate the icy hold winter has over nature, ejaculating a force impregnating Mother Earth with the fruits of nature in her belly. It is a force Druids recognise as the Goddess Brigit acting as a seed from our star fertilizing the womb of the mother so that humanity can feed and clothe themselves for another year. The root meaning of Brigit is 'Bright' representing the fire of the hearth that gave the Celts warmth and kept the darkness of night at bay. She was also the fire in the forge that produced metal tools and weapons and allowed artisans the ability to create wonderful pieces of art. Brigit gave the Celts the fire of inspiration to recite poetry and tell a good story around the hearth and campfires.

The Celts were Iron Age warriors who took on the might of the Roman army. Tribes migrated westwards across Europe, reaching Britain's shores around 3,000 years ago to find a vast forest landscape to move

into and settle. They utilized the many great stone temples for their own use in admiration for the people who ruled the land 1,000 years earlier. The Celtic world order was based on a hierarchy with priest kings we know as Druids at the top influencing the orders of chieftains, soldiers, artisans, engineers, metalworkers, farmers, spinners and weavers, butchers and bakers, merchants and the force that made the system work, at the bottom of the pile, the labourers.

As well as representing the element of fire, Brigit is also associated with water with her spirit seen to reside in rivers, wells and springs across Europe. In basic alchemy, fire is hot and dry and water cold and wet. When combined gives rise to a gas that is hot and wet that has 'magical' uses of its own.

A Neopagan thought from the early 20th Century recognises Brigit as a triple Goddess of the Maiden, Mother and Crone, or wise woman. According to this idea, Brigit arrives into our world at Imbolc as the Maiden who sees her surroundings through the eager eyes of a child with an inquisitive mind that wants to know everything. She is fearless and passionate in her new world of infinite possibilities. When she falls in love with the Divine Son Maponos who arrives here at the Spring Equinox, her whole understanding of existence changes.

The young lovers marry at Beltain when Brigit transforms into the Mother on their wedding night. She now perceives her world needing the care and attention a mother would give her children, guiding them towards maturity and responsibility. With the focus of Brigit now on her unborn child growing inside her, Maponos grows frustrated spending much of his time deep in the forest hunting through the summer months. The Divine Son meets and falls in love with the Nature Goddess Grainne who is the consort of the Stag Lord, the King of Nature known by the Druids as Cernunnos. This heavenly spirit descends into our world on a shaft of light from the first rays of the morning sun on the first day of Beltain. Before Maponos and Grainne can run off together, Cernunnos arranges for Maponos to die on the tusk of a wild boar on the eve of Lughnassadh leaving Brigit alone in the world to care for her unborn son. Fuelled with guilt, Cernunnos leaves the forest at the Autumn Equinox and into the villages with the final harvests to be Brigit's escort and protector of her unborn son.

At the Celtic New Year of Samhain, the start of the dark half of their year, Brigit ascends to the otherworld to prepare for the birth of the Divine Son at Midwinter when the night is the longest. Cernunnos returns to the depths of the forest to reunite with Lady Grainne to prepare the land for the coming spring.



In Brigit's absence, her nature spirit transforms into the Crone Cailleach who perceives a world that can learn from her experience and wisdom with an understanding of harmony and offering guidance to those that ask for it.

PAST LIVES

Brigit has been associated with the Roman 'Queen of Heaven' Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom and the patron of the arts. She was conceived without the need of a mother being born out of the head of Jupiter fully-grown and ready for war. Her name is believed to mean 'Thought'. Minerva stood proud guarding Rome with her lance. Both Brigit and Minerva were aspects of natural creativity based on the Greek Athena who a century earlier was born from the head of Zeus, fully grown to protect Athens at a time of war with Persia from the east with her lance. Athena was associated with intellect and invention and credited for teaching humanity the art of spinning and weaving at the end of the Neolithic Period in Europe when hunter-gatherers became workers for the Gods. With her came industry and the need for a strong labour force to clear forests, mine quarries and construct great stone temples. Athena had cows, bulls and rams sacrificed to her from heroes to succeed in their quests and ensure bravery on the battlefield.

Athena was associated with the Phoenician 'Lady of Heaven' Astarte, the wife and consort of the Rain God Baal and the Hebrew 'Queen of Heaven' Ashtoreth who was worshipped by Solomon in his temple in Jerusalem 3,000 years ago. Ashtoreth was conceived from the Babylonian 'Queen of Heaven' Ishtar, a passionate Goddess who connected Earth with Heaven from around 1,800 BCE. Ishtar was the planetary Goddess of Venus and Love and patron of harlots and promotor of terror to her enemies representing the violent horror at the heart of combat.

Ishtar was the less warlike and more beautiful earlier Sumerian 'Lady of Heaven' Inanna, the Goddess of Sensual Love and fertility. A symbol of Inanna was the serpent who convinced Eve to eat the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Paradise. This serpent Goddess was the reasoning behind the Hindu Goddess Shakti as the kundalini activating force that opens the chakras along the spine creating the bliss of orgasm. When the Sumerian empire faded in the shadow of Babylon, Inanna became personified as the women that prowled the old cities in search for sexual adventures before returning into the light of her own existence.

Scott Irvine

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Creating your Imbolc Altar

Imbolc marks the halfway point between the Winter and Spring Equinoxes. We're still squarely in winter, but we can already sense spring coming. The holiday is traditionally associated with the Celtic goddess Brigid, and witches from other denominations also celebrate Imbolc.

When to Create your Imbolc Altar

Imbolc begins at sundown on February 1st and ends at sundown on February 2nd, which gives you a full day to set up your altar. If that doesn't work, you can build your altar any time after February 2nd when the energies of Imbolc are already present and strong. The traditional holiday is often celebrated with oat cakes, so keep some at hand to eat and relax once you're done.

How to Create your Imbolc Altar

Pick a spot for your altar, and add things you love about Imbolc. Wool or a sheep's fleece. Imbolc is strongly associated with young lambs, possibly because it's at the start of lamb season. You can mark your altar space with a cloth crafted from ethically sourced sheep's wool, tufts of wool you found (perhaps during winter hikes), or a sheep's fleece.

A Brigid's Cross can honour Brigid, either as actual deity or simply as the symbolic embodiment of Imbolc. You can craft one easily with reeds, straw, or very young and thin twigs—the internet is filled with videos and pictures showing you how to make one. A handmade Brigid's cross can easily be the centrepiece of your Imbolc altar.

Imbolc is a fire holiday, so go wild with candles. Red, green, and white are strong colours for Imbolc, but use any that work for you. Give each candle a task: to burn away something you no longer want, to purify something you're struggling with, to attract good fortune, and so on. Be mindful of candle safety, and never leave candles burning unattended.

Imbolc doesn't quite denote the beginning of Spring, but it does shift the markation from the dead of winter to the first yearnings of Spring. Spring flowers like snowdrops or crocus are great for your Imbolc altar. Each flower can represent something you want to nurture, such as a healthy relationship, good opportunities at work, or your magical intuition. You can use seeds if you can't find any sprouted flowers yet, or if you're just rubbish at keeping plants alive (dead things do have their place in altars, but not for Imbolc).

Oatcakes make a great offering for Imbolc. Remember that an offering should be sincere and involve a measure of effort, but "effort" is different for everyone. You might enjoy mindfully baking homemade cakes, or maybe for you the effort lies in finding a half hour to meditate in front of your altar with a store bought cake.

Tarot, oracle, and deity cards are a great addition to your Imbolc altar. The Empress is a great personification of Imbolc and Brigid, while The Sun celebrates the nearing of Spring. The Wands suit matches the fiery aspect of Imbolc, with the ace, two, and three specifically symbolising the early beginnings of this holiday. Add whichever cards resonate with you this season.

Your personal altar favourites. What calls to YOU in an altar? Add candles, glitter, or dried berries. Anything that you associate with pre-Spring and that makes you happy. Try to keep your regular altar separate from your Imbolc altar though, so you can continue your usual practice and take time to celebrate the season specifically.

Steffie de Vaan



Ania Singh , illustrator from Krakow, has a diverse background in music, dance, art, and design. With a decade spent in India enriching her artistic perspective, she draws inspiration from folk stories, fairytales and all things magic. Specializing in detailed digital and traditional techniques, her work blends the mystical with the whimsical.

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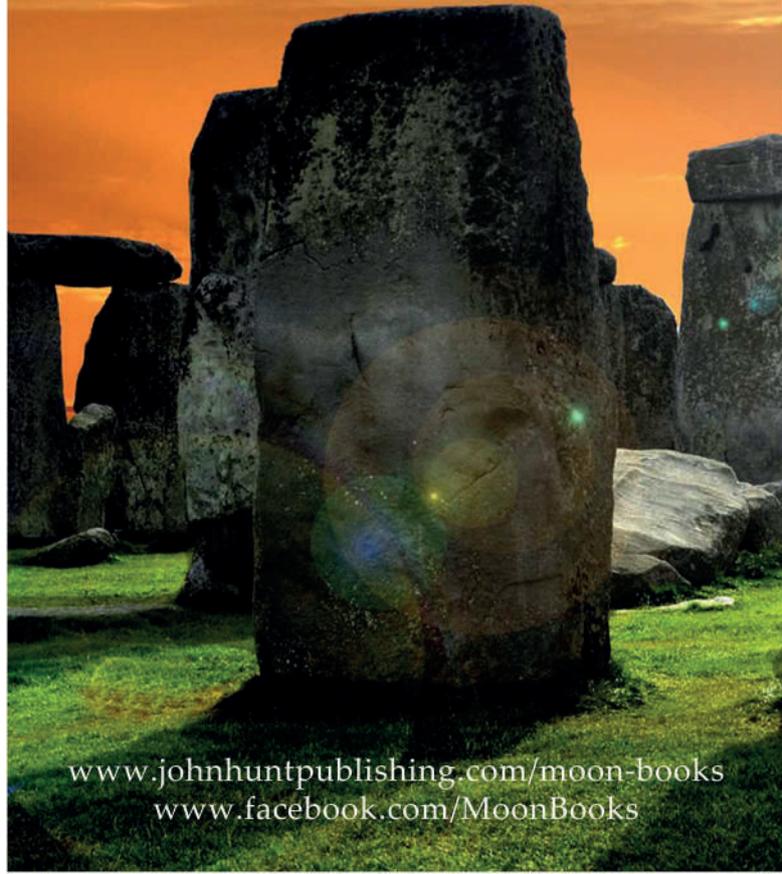
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A DOSE OF FOLKLORE

WITH OAK CANESSA-POLLARD



FOLK MEDICINE OF OUR LAND: WHOOPING COUGH

Folk medicine is recognised as a traditional form of medicine that indigenous people use to cure ailments, which we can feel far removed from here in Britain, but let us remember that we have always had our ways, and many believed in these cures so strongly that they were not seen as beliefs, but much the same as we see prescribed medicine today. I would like to share with you a piece of Folk Medicine for the treatment of Whooping Cough that was considered fact in certain parts of England, as an example of past curiosities and the power of belief in magic to heal. Please note this is not prescriptive, and medical advice should be sought from a doctor for all whooping coughs.

It was said, long ago, that the remedy for Whooping Cough was in fact any remedy that was suggested by a man riding a piebald horse. One should flag down the gentleman and ask his advice, then should do whatever he suggested. This became such a common form of cure for Whooping Cough, that some gentlemen who often rode such horses grew tired of dishing out advice to coughing folk, and tried to ride past them to no avail.

If this advice didn't work however, there was an alternative cure to ensure the cessation of the coughing. One must simply collect six sixpences, each one gifted by a different bachelor. The vital part of this process was that the bachelor should under no circumstance be thanked. Once these sixpences had been collected, they must be used to buy a silver ring, and on the wearing of this ring the sufferer would be cured of their coughing.

While the creation these spells or folk remedies remains a mystery, the widespread belief in these as remedies is fascinating to many of us, as they must have been successful enough to be perpetuated throughout the country. Perhaps it is the relaxing of the body at knowing there is a cure, the distraction of achieving a task, and on completion of the remedy the utter conviction that one will heal that led to the success of these cures. Perhaps they truly worked and our scepticism in today's society is all that stops us from benefitting from stopping strange men on their black and white horses...

Oak Canessa-Pollard

Love Magic and Lupercalia - the Dark History of Valentines

February, known by many as the month of love associated with the celebration of Valentines day. Gifts of roses and chocolates for your beloved enough to make singletons nauseous.

Many people believe this commercialized date was created in respect of Saint Valentine, a 2nd century saint however, like many other modern calendar dates when delved deeper into, also derives from Pagan history.

Lupercalia was a violent, bloody fertility festival believed to honor both the fertility God Faunus and a legendary she-wolf who rescued twin boys Rhomulus and Rhemus from the Tiber river in Roman mythology. Briefly the story tells that the boys were sent as babies to be drowned by the King's orders due to them having a potential claim to the throne. The heroine wolf cared for the boys and their story continues to the founding of Rome.

The festival itself involved 'The Luperci' - a corporation of priests conducting a sacrificial ritual followed by feasting and then a partially naked run around Palatine hill striking animal skin whips at women lined up around the area wishing to take part in events. It was said that being whipped would bring the women fertility, reduced childbirth pain and purify them from evil spirits.

Although some details of events may be debatable, there was then a mass feasting and enjoyment of the remainder of the festival with a lot-chosen partner hoping to conceive as part of the ceremony. Some evidence suggests that Lupercalia began around 6th century bc and was stopped by the 5th century ad when Pope Gelasius I eliminated the pagan celebration and replaced it with Valentines day on 14th February.

St Valentine was a 2nd century saint who apparently broke the rules by wedding couples in secret which lead to his imprisonment and further execution on Feb 14th around 270 AD.

Although many aspects of Lupercalia are not supported today, some pagans prefer to celebrate Lupercalia rather than Valentines day merging ancient energy into their urban practice.

Some suggestions for Lupercalia may include;

-A merry feast either with a partner or solitary - recipes can include kitchen witchery infused ingredients such as oysters as an aphrodisiac, honey for love or strawberries for fertility to name a few.

-Fertility spells or rituals can take place for any manifestation conceptions, whatever you wish to birth into reality.

-Glamour magick your day or evening through wearing your clothing or make up with symbolic colors; Red for lust and passion, pink for romance and self-love, blue to support communication, green for an open-hearted connection, yellow for confidence or orange for libido.

-Offerings could include love or fertility associated foods, drinks or objects such as wine, chocolates or flowers.

-Dressing your altar in red and white representing colors of the womb, love, purity and cleansing. You could also consider the use of these colors in honor of any animals that were sacrificed during historical rituals.

-Get 'witch-crafty' and create a talisman to attract positive relationships using an organza bag or glass potion bottle, corresponding herbs, oils, crystals and the most magickal part; direction of intention and manifesting energy.

A few correspondences could include;

-Crystals such as rose quartz, peridot and rhodonite.

-Herbs/flowers like lemon verbena, chamomile and rose petals.

-Oils of patchouli, jasmine or vanilla.

Depending on your reasoning a few deities to consider connecting with at this time include; Freyja, Cupid, Faunus, Isis and Osiris, Aphrodite, Jupiter and Juno.

Titania Fae

Spell for New Beginnings

a 17th Century Enchantment

INGREDIENTS

Chicken bones - remnants of the past
Fresh egg - symbolizing rebirth
Black candle - a conduit to the mystical
Bowl - the womb for the spell to be born



METHOD

Set the Space - Dim the lights or use candlelight - Place the black candle at the center, casting shadows like echoes from centuries past.

Prepare the Chicken Bones - Arrange the chicken bones in large bowl on a circular pattern, representing the cyclical nature of life. - As you do, chant softly 3X: "Bones of the past, weave my fate, A new beginning, open the gate."

Crack the Egg - Gently crack the egg over the bones, allowing its contents to merge with the remnants. - Feel the energies intertwine as the egg symbolizes the potential within the chaos.

Enchant the Candle - Light the black candle, acknowledging the shadows as allies. - Recite the following incantation: "Candle's flame, guide the way, Birth anew in night and day."

Casting the Spell - Slowly pass the chicken bone and egg concoction through the candle's flame, infusing it with transformative energies. - Visualize the old dissipating, making room for the birth of something new.

Closing the Ritual - Thank the spirits for their guidance and presence. - Blow out the candle, sealing the spell with the smoky residue of ancient enchantment.

NOTE: This spell draws inspiration from the mystical practices of 17th-century New England witches and traditional craft. Handle with reverence and respect for the energies invoked.

Mystic Dylan

ORACULAR CHIROGRAPHY

DRAWING DOWN THE MOON FOR SOLO PRACTITIONERS

The arte of communing with spirit intelligences is as old as humankind. We have ever sought guidance and wisdom from non-corporeal forces. Divinely inspired figures, or trance mediums, such as Seeresses and Oracles fill the pages of history, legend and folklore. Once upon a time, they would have been honoured and sought out by Kings. Later women suspected of having such gifts would be condemned as witches. Now, we have to go back to reclaim our self-belief and our arte.

There are multiple ancient techniques for accessing trance states to receive such guidance, including intoxication; the use of herbal entheogens; fasting; dance; and even intentional sleep deprivation. Many have fallen into decline or disuse in the modern West. But as an enduring muse to poets, dreamers and magick makers, the Moon has continued to both provoke our fascination with – and to awaken our perception of – that which is normally veiled to conscious awareness.

In modern British Wicca the human trance medium for delivering oracular inspiration is usually the High Priestess. The process (in a rite called Drawing Down the Moon¹) involves the High Priest of the Coven invoking the Moon Goddess into her, and – if so moved – the Priestess then speaks to members of the Coven as the Goddess. While they can be beautiful, such rituals – and ritual contexts – are not however needed for accessing this kind of spiritually inspired state. I too utilise the Moon for my oracular work. I do it solo however. And instead of pronouncing utterances, I write what I hear.

Both ancient Oracles and modern Priestesses typically deliver verbal pronouncements to those seeking wisdom. But not all of us are comfortable blabbing out what we hear clairaudiently via the so-called ‘third-ear’. And nor do we need to (especially if working solo). Personally I use a book and pen of arte for my own auditory spirit communications. This is not quite automatic writing²(a technique where the practitioner enters a kind of possession state and the pen is allowed to trace its own path upon the page) but simply transcribing what is heard internally from some source seemingly apart from ones conscious mind.

Below is a technique of my own construction. It works for me, and has delivered some quite striking intelligence over the years which has indeed come to

pass. I believe the key things for cultivating potential latent talent in a technique such as this are: i/ clearing the mind, ii/ focus of intent, iii/ trusting the process, and iv/ repeated practice.

With respect of these points, remember that not all spirits are helpful so it is wise to both ensure that your psychic channels are clear and to energetically shield against unwanted intrusions before beginning. Consciously and intensely attuning to the source you wish to connect with will also help here. As symbol of the Craft bar none, the Moon – including any specific divine names³ you might wish to invoke – is an ideal focal point. Trusting the process is often a difficult one, as what we subtly perceive can so easily be dismissed as ‘making it up’. Repeated practice over time, will however both hone your skill and build your confidence.



TIMING

Night of the Full Moon. Or, within the orb of the Full Moon (one day either side)

TOOLS

- Libation: herbal infusion of mugwort, clary sage, and/or blue lotus, or white wine
- Bathing items (e.g.: sea salt, essential oils of jasmine or lotus, moonstones etc.)
- Anointing oil (optional)
- Plain white tunic, plus thick shawl or robe if cold
- Moonstone and silver jewellery (optional)
- White candles and lighter
- Invocatory prayer, printed or written in large bold script (alternatively ad lib)
- Goblet or chalice
- Tools for cleansing (e.g.: salt water and herbal incensing bundle)
- Blade / athame (optional)
- Bell
- Jasmine, white sage, or frankincense incense sticks (ideally natural)
- Book and pen of arte (a plain sketchpad and fountain

METHOD

After sundown, prepare your space. Have a clean tidy desk and chair ready. Put your book and pen of art out. Place candles, incense and lighter accessible on the table. Have your blade and cleansing tools handy. Brew a pot of tea, or chill wine.

Take a cleansing salt bath. Add essential oils, crystals and herbes of your choosing. Jasmine, moonstone and mugwort are good options. Dry off meditatively. Anoint if liked, and dress in clean clothing (white preferably).

Cleanse your space. I usually asperge (sprinkle) with salt water and then circle around with a home-made herbal incense bundle. Pay particular attention to your tools if they are unconsecrated. If it is cold out, wrap up well. Don your ritual jewellery.

Light candles and turn out electric lights. Then take your prayer and a goblet of your chosen libation outside with you. Stand in full view of the Full Moon; knees soft, feet hip width apart (I like to do this barefoot if not too cold). If the Moon is not visible, or hid behind cloud, imagine it where it should be.

Soften your eyes. Open your heart and fall into slow, easy breathing. Gaze upon the moon, and enter into an adoring state. Make an invocatory prayer to call upon the power of the moon. This can be whispered quietly and imploringly, or delivered more loudly with passion. Allow your feelings to guide you. The one below is adapted from the Carmina Gadelica:

Hail to thee, thou bright moon
Jewel of guidance in the night
Hail to thee, thou bright moon
Jewel of guidance on the path
Hail to thee, thou bright moon
Jewel of guidance of my heart
May thy light be fair to me
Thou fair lamp of grace

Keep your spine long, chest raised, shoulders relaxed. Raise your arms to waist height and cup them open at the elbow in a receptive posture. Be a sacred chalice desiring to be filled.

Allow your breathing to deepen, fully filling your belly in long slow inhalations. As you gaze and breath, energetically draw down the moon's light. Feel the lunar astral rays filling your body and mind. Continue for several minutes, or until you feel entranced and your whole being is brimming over with shimmering vitality.

When you feel absolutely filled with lunar vibration, raise up your libation and drink most of it. Then sprinkle a little upon the ground in offering. Bow lightly, give thanks, and return indoors. If you wish to cast a simple circle, do so now. I would suggest visualising being encompassed in white light which will be easily achieved at this point. Sit at your work space. Ring bell, light incense as offering, and take up your pen and book of arte.

Listen inwardly. Attend intently to subtle impressions. As ideas, words and images arise, begin to write them. It may come in faint whispers from a voice that sounds like your own, tune in closely. You may think you're 'making it up', but whatever it is do not judge. Stay mentally passive and receptive. Simply listen and let your hand transcribe what you perceive.

I find that once the main themes of my channeling have been communicated, then the same words or phrases will start to repeat themselves in my mind. This is my cue that it is done and I've received what I needed to hear. At this point, give thanks, cease writing and close book. Ring bell three times. If you have cast circle, withdraw it now.

I like to ground by entering yoga squat or child's pose. Or you can simply bend down and release any excess energy into the earth. Alternatively make movement offering and dance it off in swaying and twirling. If not too cold, I also like to take another cup of libation and sit outside with feet bare on the earth. Return to a fully embodied state by attending to outer sensory awareness such as the smell of the night air and the sound of leaves rustling or traffic moving.

Put your channelled writing away for a time. Do not interrogate it straight away. Pop it under your pillow and read at a later date when you have time to fully digest the messages received. It may take days, months or even years to reveal its meaning to you. Simply be patient and continue to practice, you might be truly amazed at what you come to discover.

Redd Full Moon in Cancer, 27th December 2023

1 The main body of the Wiccan Rite can be found here: <https://sacred-texts.com/bos/bos123.htm>

2 Traditional definition of Automatic Writing: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/automatic-writing>

3 A list of Lunar Deities from around the world: <https://www.learnreligions.com/lunar-deities-2562404>

4 The entirety of this ancient Celtic-Christian prayer and blessing book can be found here: <https://www.electricscotland.com/books/pdf/carmina.htm>

5 Adapted from R J Horne's *The Witch's Art of Incantation* (p45 & p55): <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/141258634-the-witch-s-art-of-in>

Welcoming Imbolc with Intention

As the days brighten and the nights lighten Imbolc gifts to us the sense of hope and renewal, we feel ourselves awakened.

The soul stirs for the time to venture out of our dark hibernation has arrived. With this refreshing sense of self Imbolc allows us the chance to welcome in new possibilities and embody the essence of spring with our hopes and ideas that have been laying dormant throughout the winter months.



Intention setting with Simmer Pots is a wonderful way to celebrate the return of Imbolc and bring light cleansing energy into your home.

The ritual itself can be made more powerful by using energised water to accompany your simmering

such as storm or rain along with specifically blended ingredients for the season and or intention, making it a truly magikal way to connect to the elements, rejuvenate and ground yourself.

Wonderful ingredients to include in an Imbolc Seasonal Simmer Pot:

- Lavender - calm & peace)
- Rose Petals - healing & protection
- Lemon - cleanse & purify
- hamomile - prosperity & success

Ideas for Simmer Pots:

- Intentions-Clarity, Guidance, Tranquility and Protection.
- Celebrating Seasonal Changes and Solstices
- Offering of thanks for wisdom and direction from your spiritual guides.
- Setting specific intentions

Claire Spring

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Spring Cleaning

As the wheel of the year turns and we bid farewell to the cold embrace of winter, the time comes to welcome the first stirrings of spring with the Celtic festival of Imbolc. Imbolc, typically observed when the sun is at 15 degrees Aquarius, marks the halfway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. It's a time of awakening, a moment when the earth begins to shake off its winter slumber and burst forth with the promise of new life. In Aotearoa New Zealand we do tend to follow the practices of our descendants, but we are also careful to incorporate significant themes from our own country.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, Imbolc is a celebration of the increasing daylight and the gradual warming of the earth. As winter begins to loosen its grip, signs of renewal emerge in the form of early blossoms, the return of migratory birds, and the promise of longer, sunlit days. In Te Ao Māori culture, people are deeply connected to the land, may incorporate traditional practices into their observance of this seasonal shift, acknowledging the significance of the changing seasons in their natural surroundings. This time can be known as Pakawera or Hongonui.

However, this article is most certainly about following our descendant's traditions and what better way to honour this sacred time than by engaging in a magical spring cleaning ritual that not only cleanses our physical space but also prepares the ground for the energies of growth and renewal! Spring cleaning is a practice that transcends mere dusting and decluttering. It is a symbolic and spiritual act, deeply rooted in various cultural and spiritual traditions. At its core, spring cleaning represents a fresh start, a shedding of the old to make way for the new. In the context of Imbolc, this act of purification takes on a magical significance, aligning our physical and metaphysical realms in preparation for the energetic shift from winter's dormancy to spring's vitality.

In the realm of magic, the environment in which we conduct our rituals and spell work plays a crucial role. A clean and organized space becomes a blank canvas for magical intentions to manifest. Just as Imbolc symbolizes the stirring of life beneath the frozen earth, a clean space allows magical energies to flow freely, unencumbered by the weight of stagnation. Whether you're casting spells, performing divination, or simply communing with the energies around you, a clutter-free and purified space enhances your magical

workings and facilitates a deeper connection to the unseen forces at play.

One method I love to use is spring cleaning with water infused with peppermint teabags. Peppermint has long been associated with purification and clarity. Its crisp, invigorating scent is believed to dispel stagnant energy and invite freshness into the environment. To infuse the water, simply brew a pot of peppermint tea and drop it into a cleaning bucket. Dampen a cloth with the water and start to wipe down walls, counter tops, and whatever else needs a good clean. Another method is to wait until the water cools and transfer it to a spray bottle and spritz it throughout your living space. Whatever you choose to do, it can help to visualize the peppermint-infused water cleansing not just the physical surfaces but also purifying the energy that lingers in every dirty nook and cranny.

No magical spring cleaning ritual would be complete without the practice of smoke cleansing. We can use the energy of fire and fragrant herbs like cinnamon or rosemary to cleanse and purify our space. I usually light a bundle of dried cinnamon sticks or rosemary sprigs, allowing the smoke to fill each room – mind the smoke alarm my good people and leave a door or window open! As the smoke circles through the air, envision it banishing any stagnant energy and making room for fresh energies to flourish.

Blessed Imbolc, situated at the crossroads between winter and spring, signifies the end of winter's grip on the land and people. It is a time when the first signs of new life emerge, symbolized by the sprouting of snowdrops and the return of the sun's warmth. Spring cleaning during Imbolc becomes a symbolic act of shedding the remnants of winter, both physically and energetically. As we sweep away the dust and remnants of the cold season, we make room for the vibrant energies of spring to take hold.

Rachael Treymane

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Soul Trine



Soul Trine is a wellness and awakening brand. We help people with day-to-day concerns as well as soul-level discovery. If you want to know about the state of your current love and workplace life, we've got you. However, if you want to know about what life was like for you in a previous lifetime, what psychic-intuitive gifts you brought into this lifetime, even from your soul's Starseed experiences, we've got you as well.

**Our mission is to be there
for you for not just your first
awakening but the many you
will have
moving forward.**

Awakenings are not easy because they always include a level of releasing what you thought was real. People will go their whole lives holding onto belief systems that were first introduced to them because they are afraid of losing the community that they know, while, at the same time feeling lost because they don't feel like they fit in - "If I'm different, they won't accept me." This happens on so many levels of life. When it comes to learning yourself on a soul level, discovering your Divine power and gifts, as well as maintaining the balance between the mundane and magical world, we're your community.

Soul Trine is not going to tell you to run away from your world, live in the woods, and stop eating meat. That's not what we are here for. We want to hear

you say things like:

"This is how I used my gifts to level up in my community."

"My gifts helped me gain more influence and income at my job."

"I love myself more, therefore I am attracting better-quality people into my life."

"I understand my purpose for this lifetime."

"I found the spiritual path that is right for me."

"My psychic-intuitive gifts are much better than they were three months ago."

"Now that I understand spiritual protection, I made changes in my life and I am thriving."

At Soul Trine, what connects us all is magick and the desire to continue to expand while helping others do the same. The three of us are not exactly alike, spiritually. We have different spiritual upbringings and spiritual awakening journeys. We are all multi-generational psychics and have a strong desire to help people tap into their gifts, whether they are multi-generational or not.

What do we define as gifts?

- Your intuitive and psychic abilities
- Your ability to manifest, protect, and connect

Aether Candace



Justine
the Witch



Madame Creatrix



What is Soul Trine?

Aether Candace created Soul Trine in 2015, under a different and more complicated name. After a creative business coaching session with Madame Creatrix, Aether Candace received the name Soul Trine in the following morning's download. Justine The Witch, Madame Creatrix, and Aether Candace all met through Megan Killion, the founder of Coven Cloud. We all served on the Spiritual Advisory Board for Coven Cloud. After some time Aether Candace invited Justine the Witch and Madame Creatrix to be a part of Soul Trine.

We love the UK. We have UK clients and friends. Aether Candace lived in England for three years as a child, spending most of her time in Ipswich. Because of our love for the people of the UK, we created the Mirror Journey Experience that we will now sell on the website. One lucky winner from Witch Magazine will receive this package. To receive the full benefits of this package, you must know your birth date, time, and location.

Mirror Journey Experience Starseed Origins and Astro Gifts Reading - Work with Aether Candace to discover which Starseed groups your soul has been a part of and learn what psychic and intuitive gifts you brought into this lifetime. This session includes a PDF report and a one-hour session to go over findings and current lifetime alignment.

Past Life Reading - Work with Madame Creatrix to connect with your triumphs, tribulations, and purpose from a previous lifetime. This is a multi-sensory experience that will help you bridge a deep connection between your soul's journey and your current lifetime.

Divine Guidance Tarot Reading - Justine The Witch brings you an integrative tarot session that will help you process the Divine meaning behind your existence and the information you received from the Past Life Reading and the Starseed Origins and Astro Gifts Reading. This reading gives you an intimate look at what is showing up for you on a mind, body, and soul level.

Soul Trine are giving away a Mirror Journey Experience to one lucky reader! Find full details on how to enter on Witch Magazine and Soul Trine social media.

Facebook/soultrine

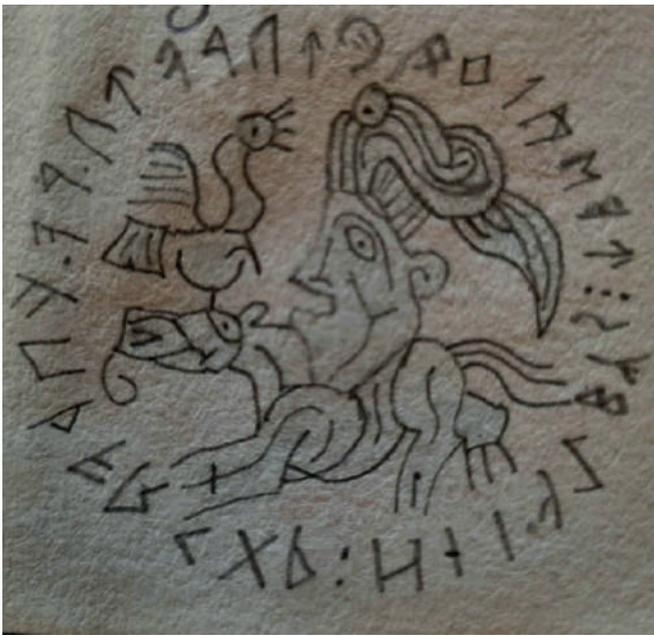
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RUNELORE

In the eclectic exploration of the pagan traditions and their origins, many will place their focus firmly on the time of Celtic or Druidic Britain and the cycle of life as it was then. Yet in the grimoire of many, sits the Runes, to some on the periphery and to others, as central to their life tree as its base and largest roots which nourish them across the passing of the years. For once, the Germanic peoples, who lived across most of what is now known as Europe and Scandinavia were very much universally pagan and Runelore, in various guise, was the backbone of the link between the human mind and that of the divine. Even in Britain, Danelaw spanned such great swathes of the realm at one time, that the runes became as indelibly inscribed here upon our forests and mountains as they were upon the wood, metal and stone upon which the Runemasters carved them.



If we are to understand the Runes, we must begin by speaking of the Hávamál, the Norse poem which translates to “The Words of the High One” referring to Odin, the All-Father and which provides us with their mythical origin. Within this, the most poignant section is entitled Runatál or, Odin’s Rune Song. This deals with what is perhaps the most frequently spoken part of all of the Norse sagas, that of Odin’s self-sacrifice on the world tree known as Yggdrasil, where he obtained the runes.

For many years I have recited the first two verses of Runatál as I visualise my intent, reach into the leather folds, draw and cast my runes upon my board.

I know I hung on the wind-swept tree,
Its roots to the wise unknown
Spear-pierced, for nine long nights,
To Odin pledged, self offered to self

They gave no bread, nor drinking horn
Down into the depths I gazed
Crying aloud I took up the runes
Then finally I fell

In future articles we shall speak more of the history of the runes, but for now, this mythology provides with a good start.

Futhark and Futhork

The name used to describe a runic alphabet is taken from the phonetic sound of its first six letters – in the former case – F, U, Th, A, R and K. As with any language and alphabet, these have evolved over human history but that which is generally accepted as the oldest and most original is called the Common Germanic Futhark. This consists of twenty-four symbols all of which have phonetic sounds as well as names. These runes were used from their first appearance, broadly dated back to around 2300 years ago, through to the time when their use fell out of commonality, around 800AD. At that time, Scandinavians had adopted a shortened version known now as the Viking Futhark, which had only sixteen symbols, where the Anglo-Saxon Futhork, which developed in Britain, expanded to consist of twenty-eight to thirty-three, depending on variant.

The Common Germanic Futhark was and still is known in Scandinavia as the Elder Futhark, again, cementing its original status. The shortened Viking Futhark, became later known as the Younger Futhark.

I personally use both the Common Germanic and the Anglo-Saxon Futhork but for this and for our future conversations on the subject we shall keep things relatively simple and stick to the Elder Futhark.

Uses of the Runes

The Futhark was used as much for secular means as it was spiritual and magical. Since runes were carved into many materials including stone and metal, archaeology has taught us that their use was widespread, educational at times and simply communicative at others, with examples including jewellery bearing inscriptions to the intended wearer, or identifying the maker. Common use on weaponry was almost certainly talismanic, with the runemaster reinforcing the blade or the shield or helm by magical means. Runes could be inscribed and worn as talismans, offering strength, vitality, fertility and many other gifts besides, to their wearer.

The use upon which we shall focus here, will be that of divination. The magical casting of the runes for the purpose of gaining divine insight.

Rune Crafting

The first eight verses of Runatál explain the skills in which a Runemaster must become proficient should they wish to in turn master the use of the runes themselves. It is very much true that there are many fetishes and tools which a witch can be gifted or can even purchase, with which they can then form their spiritual relationship, attune, empower and charge. However, if you wish to get the best from your work with the runes you will need to create them yourself.

The ninth verse of Runatál gives the line “gift ever looks for gift” and runic magic is very much based on this. A gift for a gift. Blood for blood. If you are not prepared to give anything, why do you expect to receive when you ask?

Runes are most easily cut from wood and when you cut the branch from which you will fashion your runes you should ensure that it comes from a fruit bearing tree. Right from this first step, your creating runes must be carried out with the utmost care and respect. You are taking from the tree, so you must give back also. Make sure that you have permission to be cutting the branch both from the landowner as well as from the tree itself, which you will establish through your own links to the land and blessings which you will bestow upon it, now and as you give thanks in the future. Select a branch which, whilst thick enough to allow you to then section into disks, is not going to cause significant damage. Use a saw and cut around the full circumference of the branch first, before you then

cut through so as not to damage the rest of the tree through tearing of flesh or bark.



It is very unwise to try to work with unseasoned wood and therefore you will now need to exercise considerable patience, storing your branch in a suitable dry but airy place, where it can season for at least six weeks.

When it comes to cutting your wood and then carving your runes, you should first consider when you will undertake the task. Perhaps you will begin during a full moon to empower your work? Perhaps on a Wednesday in honour of the All-father? Whilst the carving of runes will be a test of your skill, you will need good tools - certainly fine sandpaper so that you can smooth the carving surface and then a sharp knife with which to carefully carve the rune. Some like to burn the inscription into the wood too, with a heated knife and this can make the runic inscription more durable - if you do this, make sure that you use a knife with a handle which will not conduct heat, otherwise your gift will be that of considerable pain. Pencil your rune in first and then cut lightly to begin. If you do make a mistake, you will have to cast your disk aside and start again.

Once your runes have been cut, all that will remain, before you are ready to use them, will be that of staining the wood. What you do with regards to this is your

choice and your responsibility – suffice to say that mythology and history is in full agreement that what was most traditionally used was blood, not because of its pigment, but simply because it was blood.

A gift for a gift.

Your runes will need to be kept together and safe. This is best in a leather or cloth pouch which will not only house them well, but from which they can also be drawn without the natural sight of the caster being upon them.

Rune Casting

The casting of the runes can take place anywhere, accepting that there needs to be a flat surface upon which the runes can scatter without fear of their loss or damage. I prefer to use a casting board which adds further meaning to the interpretation depending on where the runes fall in relation to it, but this isn't a mandated requirement.

What is most important, first and foremost, is the intent under which you cast the runes. Just as is the case in most divinatory work, the caster should have meditated beforehand on the subject or question which is being contemplated and for which wisdom is being sought. The mind should be clear of distracting or unwelcome thoughts and the place and its sounds should be conducive to that mental focus. How you undertake this should be in accord with your usual and comfortable practice.

With that in mind, as the runes are touched and grasped, the caster should state with clear and bold tone, their intent before drawing and casting the runes. This is often followed by the tradition recital of verses from *Runatal* but again, this part of the process should be according to that which resonates best with you.

Ultimately, when you are ready, select a single rune – if that is appropriate to a more simplistic intent – or grasp a handful and cast them to your board or upon the ground in a single sweeping gesture.

Interpreting the Runes

There is no single text nor document which can ever profess to provide a complete journey in the use of the runes. Exploring this subject is, no less a personal gnostic journey as is the study of any other pagan tradition of any credence. It is another fork in the crooked path and one which, should you choose to take it, you will need to apply both time and your intuition in order to obtain the deep understanding which you will need in order to gain true mastery.

Reading a casting of the runes is no exception. In time, you will form a personal relationship with each and every one of the runes as they come to form their meaning to your spirit. Nevertheless, as is always the case, whilst the grimoire of every witch must be his or her own, there are many wise individuals who have trodden most paths before and their insights are always an excellent place to begin, provided that the discerning student accepts that they are precisely that – a platform from which to begin one's own journey. The Runes all have deep and detailed meanings as well as relationships between each other, represented by their position in relation, as they should fall. We shall explore this in depth, in the future.

If mastery of the runes is a journey upon which you should choose to embark, may I wish you all strength and warm blessings for the pathway ahead.

Richard C Hick





Speaking with Brigit

As the wheel turns Imbolc beckons. Imbolc marks the beginning of Spring. Imbolc marks the return of light & rebirth of spring. Goddess Brigid is the main goddess celebrated at this time in the Wiccan sabbat. So how do we bring the energy of Brigid into our life as this day approaches on February the 1st? Let's begin by setting up a small altar space to worship or pray at and give thanks for the changes about to come.

Imbolc marks the time for creation & new ideas, brew them in your cauldron & see what develops over the next few months!

To set up an Imbolc altar it does not have to be perfect it has to be 'yours'. Follow the colour scheme of greens & whites with dashes of red, like the delicate snowdrops that are re-born typically in this time of year. Pop a green cloth or scarf over a simple small table if you do not have a dedicated altar space & place some plain white candles on the top. Imbolc typically represents healing and fertility.

If you love crystals then place on your altar moonstone (which is the divine feminine stone representing fertility). She brings beautiful, gentle energy into your heart & home. Add to this a peridot crystal for good health, healing & balance. Now you're all set!

Rest on your knees in front of your altar or sit in a chair if you cannot kneel. Speak out loud with your eyes closed, hands in prayer position & ask goddess brigid to bring you healing energy as we move out of the darkness into the light. Call upon brigid to listen to your ideas you have for 2024 & ask her to help you nurture & bring those to fruition. Once you have spoken, make sure you thank her for listening.

Leave your altar until the next sabbat but ensure you spring clean it every so often especially the crystals as they become less potent in their healing ability. Regularly pop some fresh flowers on top as well - daffodils are a perfect choice. If you wish to make an offering to Goddess, then pop a little saucer of milk on your altar with a tea spoon of honey accompanied by a traditional 'corn doll' which you can make or purchase online.

Make time daily if you can, to speak to Brigid at your altar & be thankful for the returning sun & fertile lands blooming from hibernation in the darkness.

Sophie Jordan



A Solitary Imbolc Ceremony

I'm a solitary witch and although I enjoy group ceremonies, I usually work alone. I love this ritual. First, set up your altar in a way that makes you happy, and brings to mind the themes of Imbolc.

Prior to beginning your ritual, take a warm, cleansing bath or shower. Once you're done, dress in your ritual attire or something you feel comfortable with, and begin the rite.

You'll need:
Seven candles, in red and white (tealights are perfect for this)

If you wish to cast a circle, do so now.

Light the first candle. As you do so, say,
"Although it is now dark, I come seeking light.
In the chill of winter, I come seeking life."

Light the second candle, saying,
"I call upon fire, that melts the snow and warms the hearth. I call upon fire, that brings the light and makes new life. I call upon fire to purify me with your flames."

Light the third candle. Say,
"This light is a boundary, between positive and negative. That which is outside, shall stay without. That which is inside, shall stay within."

Light the fourth candle. Say again,
"I call upon fire, that melts the snow and warms the hearth. I call upon fire, that brings the light and makes new life. I call upon fire to purify me with your flames."



Light the fifth candle, saying:
"Like fire, light and love will always grow. Like fire,

wisdom and inspiration will always grow."

Light the sixth candle, and say again,
"I call upon fire, that melts the snow and warms the hearth. I call upon fire, that brings the light and makes new life. I call upon fire to purify me with your flames."



Finally, light the last candle. As you do so, visualise the seven flames coming together as one. As the light builds, see the energy growing in a purifying glow. Say,
"Fire of the hearth, blaze of the sun, cover me in your shining light. I am awash in your glow, and tonight I am made pure."

Take a few moments and meditate on the light of your candles. Think about this Sabbat, a time of healing and inspiration and purification. Do you have something damaged that needs to be healed? Are you feeling stagnant, for lack of inspiration? Is there some part of your life that feels toxic or tainted?

Visualise the light as a warm, enveloping energy that wraps itself around you, healing your ailments, igniting the spark of creativity, and purifying that which is damaged.

Let the candles burn out by themselves.

Wendy Witch

In the Belly of the Mother

Imbolc symbolizes the halfway point between the Winter Solstice (Yule) and the Spring Equinox (Ostara). Seeds of spring begin to stir in the belly of Mother Earth, therefore Imbolc means 'In the belly of the mother.' Imbolc celebrates the Pagan Celtic Goddess Brigid, who is the Goddess of inspiration, creativity, healing, and poetry. In ancient times they celebrated it as a time to re-affirm life and to start thinking about the upcoming harvest. Imbolc invites us all to celebrate the return of life and the promise of spring to come. It is a sacred festival of fire and lights. It gives a chance to ignite the spirit and kindle the soul with the warmth of the community and pays homage to the sacred forces of nature. They welcome the new life that lies ahead.

As the days begin to lengthen and the chill of winter starts to thaw, friends and loved ones gather around to light candles, and incense and begin to offer bread, honey, and milt to honor the Goddess Brigid. They will fill their homes with early spring flowers such as Crocus, snowdrops, and ivy. They will decorate their altars with colors of the season which are white, silver, green, and gold. For the natural world and its cycles of growth and renewal, they will spend time to connect with nature. They will take walks in the woods or pay a visit to their local parks to soak up the first signs of spring's warmth. They will pay attention to the first buds on the trees, the sounds of the birds, and the thaw of the snow. These signs give them hope and inspiration. As the evening falls at night, they will build a bonfire to symbolize the powers of the sun and banish the cold of winter and the darkness. Celebrated in dance and song around the flames, feeling the energy of the fire to awaken their spirit within. They are ready to embrace the new opportunities and adventures for the upcoming year ahead.

One of the most powerful ways to celebrate is through meditation and reflection. They will take their time in quietness focusing on their hopes, dreams, and what they want to cultivate in life. They will set intentions and may also create a piece of artwork that represents these intentions. When it comes to Imbolc food, the ingredients are key. They will create dishes that celebrate the arrival of spring such as roasted root vegetables, stews, and fragrant soups. They will use herbs and spices that wake up the senses such as rosemary, thyme, and garlic. They will pay attention to the colors of the food they are preparing to ensure it is pleasing to the eye. They may even bake a cake or bread to symbol-

ize the sun and add oats and honey which represent the arrival of spring.

Imbolc is when our ancestors celebrate our position in the annual cycle of life, death, and rebirth. It is a time of awakening where our sun bends around the planet and the sun climbs over the horizon into view. Sometimes Imbolc is debated to where it means 'in the belly' where it refers to the pregnancy as the promise of new life. For ancient people, the first of the year meant the first fresh foods in months. It is a time of the year associated with gestation and birth, also to honor the fertility Goddess Brigid in her maiden form.



Goddess Brigid is a Triune Goddess who was revered in Scotland, Wales, and across Western Europe. She appears as Maiden, Mother, and Crone mirroring the cycle of life, death, and rebirth experienced annually by the planet. She is credited as the Goddess of fire, forge, flame, change, and transformation. She mirrors a resurrection yet again, from death to rebirth, from Crone back to Maiden. To celebrate Goddess Brigid, ancestors would set up their altars with symbols that honor her like corn husk dolls, white flowers, a bowl of milk, fresh bread, and candles. They would light every lamp in their homes or burn candles in every room just after sunset in honor of the sun's rebirth.

The 'Brigid's Cross' is one of the archetypal symbols of Ireland and is considered a Christian symbol and seems to have its roots in the Pre-Christian Goddess Brigid. It is made from rushes and is woven into a four-pointed shape with a square at the center. The crosses may be hung above doorways to bless and protect the home or taken door to door by young children as a blessing. Crosses woven for Goddess Brigid during her transition from Mother to Crone may be stored and brought back out at Imbolc as a representation of her rebirth from Crone to Maiden.

Groundhog Day will be coming and we elect a woodchuck to determine the rest of winter by if he 'sees his shadow' we would have a few more weeks of winter weather. If he 'does not see his shadow' then spring comes early. The Imbolc season is a time for genuine introspection that seeks to clear away what no longer serves us and to make way for what we are manifesting. A time to prepare soil and plant seeds. The energies of the transition and changes coming into the first of the year represent another period of completion where we may lay down the old and empty ourselves for the new that is coming.

The beautiful, divine, brilliance of nature and the growing energy of the season is supporting you and is very powerful work. May you know your worthiness at the deepest level, today and every day, and feel your connection to the greater cycles of life that we all are a part of.

“Holy Spirit,
 Giving life to all life,
 Moving all creatures,
 Root of all things,
 Washing them clean,
 Wiping out their mistakes,
 Healing there wounds,
 You are our true life,
 Luminous, wonderful,
 Awakening, the heart,
 From its ancient sleep”

Christina Corsetti



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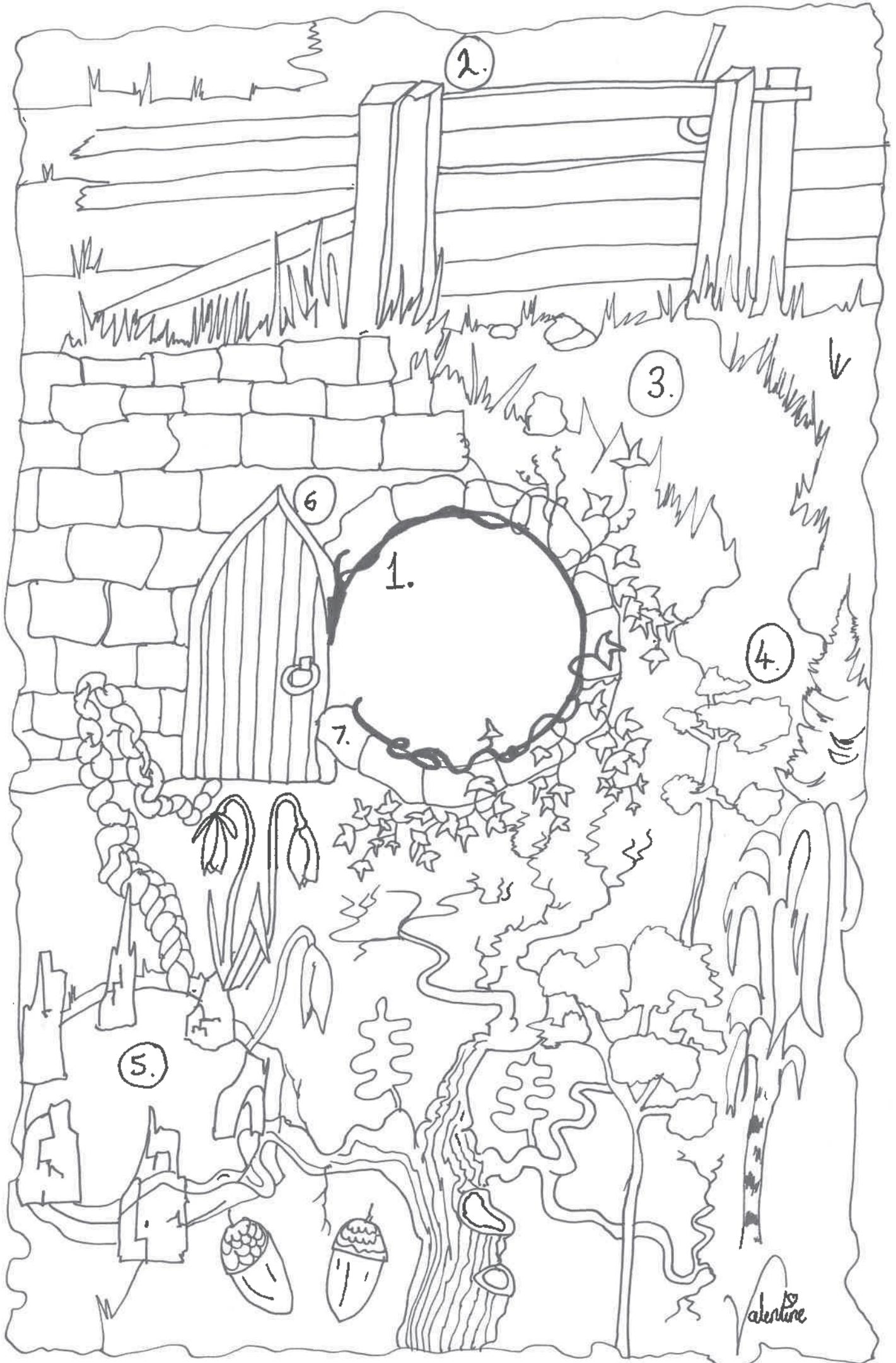
Ritual baths are an excellent way of treating yourself to some much needed self-care whilst cleansing yourself physically, spiritually and setting new intentions. I suffer every year with dry skin, which gets exacerbated during the winter months by the low humidity and the use of indoor heating. One thing I like to do is treat myself to a long soak that both soothes the skin as well as my soul.

For Imbolc, oats, being a crop that is often planted in the early spring, act as a representation of the agricultural cycle and the promise of new growth. Known for treating all kinds of itchy skin, adding a handful of ground up oatmeal to your bath can work wonders this season.

As the bath fills up I like to set my intentions. Imbolc is the season for planting seeds for personal growth. I shall light a candle as a representation of the returning sun and to help provide a relaxing atmosphere. Herbs, flowers and oils may be added to the bathtub based on your preference and the intention you are trying to set. This year, I am fortunate to have calendulas in bloom so I shall be incorporating them into my ritual to add in a dash of their sunny positivity! During the bath I like to visualise my goals coming to fruition whilst really enjoying the sensations around me.

Sam at Bramble Fairy





Creative Visualisation for Abundance

Meditation has significant mental and physical health benefits and that giving the hands something to do allows the brain to quieten by concentrating on a physical movement. Much like breath work can be used to provide a focal point, with a colouring, you are being given something that has a beginning and an end.

“Meditation is an active-ity and should be a verb rather than an adjective,” explains Claire. Meditation is a practice where an individual uses a technique – such as mindfulness, or focusing the mind on a particular object, thought, or activity – to train attention and awareness, and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state. Meditation is practiced in numerous religious traditions. “The guided colouring I bring to you today is that focus, and we are going to work on manifesting abundance”.

“If we were to look at spell work and rituals, there are similarities with guided meditations. There is incense used to connect the mind to the surroundings, gentle music to achieve the same and a specific order of activity to set intention”.

Claire says “this edition’s meditation is a creative visualisation meditation and the goal I have chosen for you all this time is abundance. Abundance is more than wealth. It’s a rich and full life. It means you have more than you need, and you are sharing it with others”

This meditation is designed to give you a practical focal point. As you colour each part, Claire guides you on visualisation techniques. The aim is to keep your hands busy and give you something to look at. By thinking about what that particular part of the drawing means, you will be benefitting from the distraction away from the day-to-day and be focussing on developing a positive state of mind. This meditation is designed to complete in a specific order and complete in full.

The best part, is that at the end of you will have a lovely piece of art that you have created and can put on your wall!

You may wish to read the words into a voice recorder (most mobile phones have a recording facility or you can use a Dictaphone if you want to switch

off your mobile) so you can play it back to yourself as you colour. Or ask a friend to read it or record it if you struggle with hearing your own voice.



Step 1

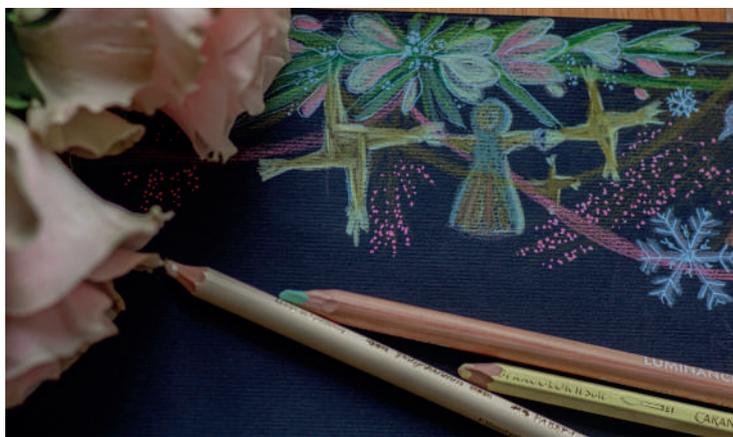
Find a quiet space where you will not be disturbed and silence all distractions. Make sure you are warm and have a comfortable place to sit. You will need a flat and hard surface to place your drawing on. This can be a tray on your lap on the sofa. You might want to tear the colouring out of the magazine (or print if using the online version). Collect whatever colouring materials you wish to use. I would recommend completing this one using only a selection of greens, a brown and a grey. Green symbolises the grass seen after the snow begins to melt and it is also strongly associated with abundance. Select some music of your choice. I recommend Dr. Jeffrey Thompson. Find him on YouTube. Light some incense and maybe a candle if it is safe to do so (never, ever leave a candle unattended especially if there are pets and children with you).

Step 2

Once settled, gather your pens and pencils and settle into a comfortable position. Take a deep breath in through your nose as deep as you can using your belly to pull the air in. Hold it for two seconds and then breathe it out through your mouth using your stomach muscles to really push as much air out as you can.

Repeat this two or three more times. It is just to relax you and relieve any anxiety you may be feeling. Do it as many times as you need.

This abundance meditation is numbered. Start at number 1. Take as long as you need to complete the colouring at each step. The journey is as important as the destination. We are moving in a Deasil (clockwise and creating) direction. Deasil is the prosperous direction.



1. **The Centre** – The space in the middle of the colouring is left blank and I want you to think of a symbol, picture or words that represent what you want to manifest. Think about what you desire to have more of, so that you may have so much that you can give it to others to help them in their life. This can be health, money, a familiar, a new skill or even a home. Get really specific and place it in the centre.

2. **The Gate** – Begin to colour in the gate. Imagine you are standing at this gate. It is the entrance to a field. As you stand at the gate you place your hand on the wood and run your hand along the worn surface and you locate the metal latch to the gate. Your fingers curl around the latch and you begin to feel excited. Adrenaline is pumping through your veins. When did you last feel really excited about something? Remember that feeling and re-live it now. Just grasp the feeling. As you colour, glance towards look the centre of the page at the symbol of your abundant desire. How will you feel when you have that which you wish to manifest? In your mind open the gate and walk through.

3. **The Path** – Begin to colour the path. Before you stretches a path made from grass and gravel and mud and time. It is the footsteps of others that have paved the way for you. If they got there, so can you. You close the gate behind you and hear it click. You will return, don't worry. You will return with that which you desire. The path is wet, a little slippery and there are soft and crunchy patches of snow under your feet. You are warm in your clothes and the cold air on your face is exhilarating. Hold out your hand to the side and open your fingers. Brigid touches your fingertips and you look to her face and she smiles at you. What took you so long to find the way? You are here and you are on your path to your abundance.

4. **The Wood** – Begin to colour the wood. As you come to the end of the path you feel the magnetic energy of the trees. A delicate smell of the evergreen needles fills your nose and you smile at the leafless skeletons of the deciduous Oaks that stand beside the Firs and tell them their time is coming again. You walk into the wood. The light intensity drops and you feel stillness. There is an energy, a vibration in the air and you know magic is with you. Reach out your hand and touch the rough, wet bark of the Silver Birch. A tree in a reverse silhouette against the Yew guardians. Walk easily, walk heavily and let your footprints be the only sound in the greenwood. Pick up the pace and stride purposefully towards your goal. It is only you, that will take you there.

5. **The Clearing** – Begin to colour the clearing. Notice the circle in the middle there is a ring of stones. As you colour each stone you feel how solid and permanent they are. They are your markers in time. The signposts to the future you desire. Take time to colour them well and make their borders neat. They are sentinels to your future magnificent life.

6. **The Portal** – Begin to colour the portal. Do you ever wonder what magic really is and how it works? Those who are brave enough to seek the magic will find it. It's like being a child again and learning how to use a door handle. Place your hand on the centre of the portal door. As you make contact with the portal door, it turns and opens. In front of you is nothing...just bright, white light. Take a step forwards into the light and feel yourself surrounded by the wisdom of eternity. It feels warm like a spring morning. Take another step and notice on the ground there are Snowdrops and a green rope. Pick up the rope and move forwards following it. You are nervous but completely confident that you are seeking what you desire. Then you get there.

7. **The Well** – Begin to colour the well. Touching the stones and cold wet moss that covers them. The sun high in the sky above you, warming your skin. You look over the wall of the well and there it is. Your abundance, your vision, your dream. That which you desire. Circle around the Well and see the dew on the Ivy that creeps over the ancient stone. From every angle you see your desire happening to you right before your eyes. How does it smell? What does it feel like when you have it so close. Then you climb onto the well and dangle your legs over the edge. Close your eyes and push yourself off the wall and into the well. Instead of icy water, you feel a warm bath and gentle caring hands pulling at your legs, beckoning you to submerge. You take a breath and sink under the water and you can breathe. Deep breaths in and out. As you descend the watery path you have become the person that has what you desired. Allow yourself time to really feel what it is like to have this.

8. **Returning** – As you move further and further down the well, you become aware that you are returning to the room in which you sit. Close your eyes for a while and remember your journey. Then open them and look at the centre of the page.

You may wish to frame your colouring and place it where you can see it so you can anchor back whenever you desire. “I would love you to share your creations to my Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ClaireValentineArt>.”

Put all your pencils away and enjoy your picture!

Claire Valentine



Imbolc, a Time to Cleanse

Cleansing for Imbolc is a wonderful way to prepare for the arrival of spring and to invite fresh, positive energies into your space. Here are a few suggestions for cleansing rituals that you can do.

Smudging: Use a bundle of dried herbs that you have grown yourself, such as garden sage or rosemary, to smudge your home. Light the herbs, waft them for the smoke to move around and make your way round the house starting in the top furthest point, remember to have the door open to allow all the negative energy out.

Salt Water Cleanse: Fill a bowl with water and add a few tablespoons of sea salt. Stir the water clockwise, visualizing negative energies being released. Then, starting from the front door, sprinkle the saltwater mixture around the perimeter of each room, moving in a clockwise direction.

Sound Cleansing: Use a singing bowl, bells, or a chime to create sound vibrations throughout your space. Start at the front door and move in a clockwise direction, allowing the sound to resonate and clear any stagnant energy.

Candle Cleansing: Light a white candle and hold it in your hands. Visualize the flame purifying and cleansing your space. Walk through each room, allowing the candle's light to touch every corner while focusing on your intention of cleansing.

Remember to set your intention and focus on the positive energy you want to invite into your home during the cleansing process. Enjoy the ritual and the fresh start that Imbolc brings!

Julie Aspinall

Candle Cord Cutting Spell

As we enter Imbolc, we are reminded of our beautiful pagan roots, and our ancestors' worshipping of Brigid passed down to us modern-day witches. Marking the midway point between Yule and Ostara, the energy it brings is one of healing and cleansing. Whilst we await the return of the light and the warmth, we are encouraged to look inwards at our own need of healing and shadow work. Imbolc marks the hope for returning light and calls us to prepare for when we are ready to come out of hibernation at Ostara.

It is the perfect time for you to look at what healing you would like to undergo – What physical, emotional and spiritual healing do you need right now? We spend so much time taking care of others' needs and giving away our precious energy, that we can often neglect our own. We are naturally inclined to answer the question 'how are you?' with an obligatory 'I'm good thank you,' without even checking in to see what is going on within our energy.

Lean into YOU. Take a moment now to take a couple of deep breaths, slow your body down, and notice what's going on. What can you feel physically? What can you feel emotionally? Try not to judge the feelings, just notice them. Intuitively allow yourself to feel into what healing may be needed in your body, your mind and your spiritual/causal body.

And then give yourself permission to feel this energy. To sit within it. That in itself will be healing. We tend to waste a lot of energy by subconsciously pushing down what's trying to come up because we are 'too busy' or too afraid to feel it fully. But imagine how much more free the energy flow would be within us, if we weren't subconsciously blocking our conscious mind from feeling this energy.

CANDLE CORD CUTTING SPELL

What you'll need:

- 2 x Votive Candles
- Tool for Carving Sigils into Candles (optional)
- Lighter / Matches
- String
- Fireproof dish
- Crystals you feel drawn to (optional)

This spell is perfect for releasing any energy, cycle or person that you no longer want in your life. This may be someone who is affecting you negatively, or simply the emotions and energy you are holding onto

around a person or a situation. This is designed for you to release them with love, and allow yourself to move forward, ready for coming out of hibernation at Ostara.

Start by deciding what the candles represent. One will represent you. The other will represent the energy, cycle or person you are trying to release. If you are going to use sigils, carve something that represents you on one candle, and something that represents what you're releasing on the other. You can create this intuitively or use a symbol you are already familiar with.

Once done, you can tie the rope around the two candles. This rope represents the tie you currently have to it, which you are releasing today. Place your chosen crystals around the dish, symbolising your intent of release for this spell.

Place both of the candles on a fireproof dish (you may need to melt a little wax at the bottom of both candles to secure it to the dish). When you are ready, you can light both candles. Be aware that the string can be very flammable and may make the candles burn down quicker, so be cautious and watch the candles at all times.

When you're ready, light both of the candles and say (Three Times):

"I lovingly release this energy.
Never to return to me.
So mote it be."

Watch how the candles burn and intuitively interpret the meaning. For example, if the candle that represents the other energy starts leaning in towards your candle, this may mean the energy is trying to cling on. If it burns very slowly, this may mean the energy will take a little longer to release, etc.

Allow the candles to burn down fully and repeat the above spell wording. Your spell is now complete!

Making space for yourself to complete any of these spells will allow you to fully embrace Imbolc energy, making way for the new WITHIN YOURSELF. Making way for when you are ready to venture out into the world again fully, when the light and the warmth returns.

Kylie Anna (Carter)

St Brigid's Cross Bread

Bake for abundance in the coming season! Baking bread signifies the transformation of the stored grains from the previous harvest into a new form of sustenance. It is also a lovely therapeutic ritual. Enjoy the squishy textures of the dough as you knead it, the smells of the rosemary and the act of weaving the doughy strands together can be quite the mindful experience.

St. Brigid is said to have woven this cross shape from reeds whilst explaining Christianity to a dying pagan. As a symbol of protection it marries well with the use of rosemary which can be used to ward off evil and poppy seeds which have calming properties and are another symbol of abundance. Don't be put off by the shape, this bread is incredibly easy to make, even if you've never woven bread before. It tears apart lovely and is also vegan!

Ingredients:

500g Strong White Bread Flour
7g Instant Fast Action Dried Yeast
1 tsp Salt
1 tsp Sugar
15g Olive Oil
340ml Warm Water
A sprinkling of Poppy Seeds and
Rosemary
Oat Milk to wash



Start by mixing together your salt, sugar, flour and yeast.

Put your oil and warm water into a jug and slowly pour into the dry mixture as you mix it altogether. I used a stand mixer but it can be done by hand, it will just take longer.

Once it's all mixed, knead your dough onto a floured surface and make it into a ball shape.

Pop the ball into a bowl and cover, leaving it in a warm spot for at least an hour. I ended up leaving mine for 7 hours and it was lovely and fluffy once risen.

Shape it back into a ball on a floured surface. At this point I sprinkled over dried rosemary and poppy seeds and divided my dough into 12 smaller balls. Then I rolled and stretched each of the balls into strands.

Then I began forming the cross using a pretty straightforward guide I found online. It was for weaving a cross out of straw but it worked out just the same. I proceeded to weave until I had used all 12 strands.

I used a piece of one of the bottom strands to tie around the bottom of each arm. Then I preheated the oven to gas mark 6.

I brushed over the top of the bread with almond milk and popped it onto a lined baking tray. Once the oven was ready the bread was baked for 35 minutes.

Enjoy and reflect on what you are grateful for and visualise the joy and abundance coming forth with the new season.

Sam at Bramble Fairy

Wise Words

from the Old Crone



I do have to admit, that although this is a chilly, dark time of year, prone to high winds, snow and rain, and at the moment as I write this, severe flooding, I always look forward to the month of January.

To me it is a quiet month and a time of reflection, time to put the house back to rights after the excesses of the season. Time to make plans for the garden. Time to write in my new diary. Time to eat plainer foods and try a mild detox. From October onwards in our household, it is a time of busyness, chaos, many birthdays and celebrations. From Samhain to Yule and beyond into the start of January it is non-stop, so I am well ready for some respite and rest.

The month of January was named after the roman god Janus who was the two faced god. He could look back at what had gone before and forward to what was to come at the same time. This made him wise beyond measure. We seem to carry this tradition on so often. We look back over the year just passed and look forward to the year to come. Many of us make New Years resolutions, in the hopes of making our lives better. In our household we call them Revolutions as that is what we hope for. A New Year offers a new start, a clean slate and hopes and wishes for the coming times. So often, we do not achieve the goals we set out at this time, but never despair. When you think about it, every new dawn, each new day, each new month, each new moon, and each new sabbat also offers a new start.

Like Janus, the roman God of winter and January, with winter behind us and spring ahead of us, we stride forwards along our own pathways in hopefulness and expectation, looking for new prospects, new promises and with optimism.

February is named after the latin word Februarius meaning to purify. So this is also a time for fresh beginnings, for purification and for reaffirming. Imbolc usually occurs on/around February 1st and, in America, on Feb 2nd is Ground Hog Day.

Imbolc falls as a cross quarter sabbat between the Winter Solstice of Yule and the Spring Equinox of Ostara. It is the first fire festival of the calendar year when Holy Wells used to be visited and decorated. If you want to see a beautifully decorated well, please google Chalice Well in Glastonbury. Always an absolute pleasure and delight.



The original word Imbolc/Imbolg, means 'in the belly'. The earth is pregnant and expectant. It is the promise of renewal, of hidden potential, of earth awakening and life-force stirring. It is time to let go of the past and to look to the future, clearing out the old, making both outer and inner space for new beginnings. So we often indulge in spring cleaning the home and by setting new resolutions, we aim to be clearing the mind and heart to allow inspiration to enter for the new cycle.

Imbolc is also a celebration of the transformation of the old, yet wise Woman of Winter, into the young and fertile Maiden of Spring in this time between January and February.

Imbolc is a great time for Candle Magic. Now, I use candles in ALL my formal and informal rituals and I have chosen to write about Imbolc as a time to anoint candles, which you can then use all year if the candle is a tall one. Take it with you into the shower room or bathroom or when you want some time to yourself, light it when you want to reaffirm your hopes and dreams for the year. You can anoint candles at any time of year, but this year I am suggesting we do it early.

For this, the simplest of anointments, you will need:

A candle, or several if you wish. It can be any colour or size. I like to use tall narrow candles which will burn for many hours.

Aromatic oil of your choice
I shall be using, home-made rosemary oil.
(For Recipe see the end.)

Kitchen roll to catch any drips and to wipe your hands afterwards.

Something with which to light your candle.

With your candles upright, possibly in a candle holder, and taking the utmost care, pour a small amount of oil into the palm of one hand. With the fingers of your other hand, dip then into the oil and gently rub the oil into the surface of the candle. Not too much so it drips but just a little to cover the entire surface. When you are done, if you wish, and you are using a good quality Olive Oil, gently massage the remains of the oil, if any, into your hands. (also see end)



When you are ready, plant your feet flat on the ground and feel the energy of the earth flow up into you. Light your candle and allow the flame to rise. Let it flame for a few moments. This is a great time to practice some deep breathing. Gently circle your hands thought the rising smoke, not too close, and draw the energy of

fire and air towards and around you. Think about new beginnings and the continuation of things already started. Think about bringing light and warmth into your homes and families, and especially into yourselves. If you are feeling brave, repeat this mantra three times. As the Winter wanes, and under the earth all is stirring, As our days become longer, warmer and lighter, May we feel more warmth, harmony and peace May the Divine Light of this candle shine within us all. When you are ready, snuff out the candle and watch the smoke rise. This is my favorite part as I love the smell of a newly snuffed candle.

Make sure you store your candle with care. I leave mine in candle holders and burn whenever I wish sabbat or non-sabbat. Just as the mood takes me. I shall be burning mine at Imbolc.

RECIPE FOR ROSEMARY OIL

This can be used for almost any aromatic herbal oil, and combinations of herbs too, such as sage, lavender, bay, lemon balm. I use individual herbs which I then use in cooking. I also always use good quality olive oil.

Take a small screw top bottle or a small flip top bottle which has a good seal. Cut several sprigs of fresh rosemary, smaller than the height of the bottle. Almost any herb can be used but rosemary has such a wonderful scent, and I use my rosemary oil a lot in cooking. Poke the sprigs into the bottle so that they fit well down. Add the olive oil until all the rosemary is covered. Seal the bottle and leave in a non-sunny place for at least a week. I put mine on a window ledge which catches only the early morning sun about also the moon. After at least a week, the oil is ready to use.

I use the oil as a hand massage for myself as it feels so lovely and smells so good.

My hair is rather long and very fine, I get a lot of split ends so before I wash it I sometimes use a very small amount of the oil wiped gently into the ends and leave it for about an hour.

You can use fresh rosemary sprigs, boiled in water for a few minutes and allowed to cool. Strain off the water and use as a hair rinse. It leaves the hair nice and shiny and also has a most delicious smell.

Blessings,

The Old Crone

An Imbolc Blessing

Stand with me this day my love
We'll face unto the East
We'll bless with milk this sacred space
And thus the earth shall feast

The hunter watches, quiet and still
His hair a frozen wreath
Listens to the gentle drum
Her steady heart beneath

Stand with me this day my love
We'll turn unto the South
We'll bless with milk with care and grace
And chants and word of mouth

Crisp crystals crunch beneath his foot
The horned one shall advance
Grey skies growl in latent wrath
The maiden's heart shall dance

Stand with me this day my love
We'll stare into the West
We'll bless with milk on earthen face
From heart and mothers breast

The clouds give way, a shaft of light
Lances into the dell
She rises renewed from frigid earth
Blessed of Brigid's spell

Stand with me this day my love
We'll come now to the North
We bless with milk this sacred space
And new life shall burst forth

Richard Hick

Earth in my Kitchen

Apple in my fridge
salt in a Labrador shaker
on the top shelf
it's claimed place
in the cupboard
cold, icy glass of
water in my hand
earth held and
consumed.

Steam rises from
the sink
bubbly layers spill
over the sides
the plates soaking
in their tub
Bamboo cloth
removes the dirt
and stains
Tomato soup
clings to them
and a fresh
white t-shirt.

Rain hits the window
a small river
distorting the image
outside
Succulent watches
from the sill
safe in her
panda shaped home
replacing the orchid
a delusion of grandeur
that didn't end well.

There's a little bit
of Earth living with me
every day.

Rochelle Hanslow

Awakening

She stirs gently,
I hear her whispers.
I sense her deep in my womb.
A quickening, of spring.
A promise, she brings.
Are you ready to bloom?

In liminal space,
an in-between place,
of slumbers, of dreams,
and of song.
The snow covered Earth
Incubates a new birth
In nights that are still
cold and long.

The snowdrops, they huddle
Preparing to peep.
Holding space for each other
As they wake from their sleep.
Pushing together
up through the cold soil.
As the seeds of our dreams,
begin to uncoil.

Wake up my children,
take heed of the urge.
Sense the spark in your belly,
it's time to emerge.
Fresh new beginnings,
brightest new starts.
Wake up my children,
feel my love in your hearts.

Jan Muse



The Wild Women are Coming

Awaken from your slumber;
Unfurl, uncurl to greet the ever warming light.

The Wild Women are coming
guided by Imbolc's melodic tune,
Bringing offerings of green and gold,
the beautiful, their riches will unfold,
To set a path of wonder
for the courageous and the bold.

Claire Spring



Rochelle Hanslow is a Scottish born and based, neurodivergent poet, writer, author and crea-trix. Her work explores femininity and things our bodies hold through memory and satire. She has been widely anthologised & is currently working towards her first pamphlet publication under the editorial guidance of poet Laurie Bolger.

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Jan Muse is a Nature based therapist, workshop facilitator and Holy Fire ®Reiki Master/teacher, Awenydd and Druwitch. Her mission is to bring the wisdom of Plant Allies, and energy magic to others. She has over 25+ years of professional practice.

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winter



'Hello! My name is Magda and I'm a graphic designer/illustrator/landscape architect Witch from Poland. In my art and craft I am inspired by nature, Wheel of The Year and the Seasons.

www.buymeacoffee.com/wildestjournal/extras
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www.behance.net/thewildestjournal

the wildest journal

There's a relationship between plants and humans and it goes further than what one might see at first glance. We work together as a part of the whole and are dependent upon each other.

I open my heart, mind and soul to plants, or green allies as they are often referred to in certain circles. I ask questions, aloud or silently and wait for the response. The sound of a plant talking with you may be silent. Listen closer, use your five senses. Meditate, sit with the plant. Take time to watch and learn from the plant. Sounds, movement, sensations, images, thoughts, dreams or animal counterparts are all ways plants can send messages to us.

Listening takes more than just your sense of hearing. Listening is a holistic excursion into being a part of the web of life on Gaia.

The following is an excerpt from my small book, *Wild Green Memories*, a collection of my memories intertwined with plant spirit messages.

Spring Beauties

Spring Beauties are small vibrant spots of pink and white. Ephemeral and fleeting signs of springtime beauty. They are a favorite of mine when we take our early spring jaunt in the local wildflower sanctuaries.

The white beauties often pop up in plentitude at the beginning of the hiking trail. Then comes the slight pink that has a blush of color bleeding from the center of the petals. As we get closer to the creek, the purple beauties take over the view.

Shortly after a leisurely walk through the wildflower sanctuary I had a visit, at night, from Spring Beauty.

She is a loud boisterous extrovert. The kind that has so much energy that it can drain you of your own. She's like an overcharged super caffeinated soda pop that fizzes and overflows when you open it.

Spring Beauty is a happy ray of chaotic sunshine. She isn't winter and she isn't summer, but she's also not the heart of spring. She wavers between two seasons and bounces back and forth as though she has petals in both. Her visit will be short, she explains. She is very busy. She has to get going. She can't stop for long because her time here to see the world and be seen is drawing to a close. She's ephemeral, a fading beauty.

She wants me to know that I should live in joy. I shouldn't waste away in worry and sorrow. She spends more time waiting, in the ground, for her time to shine, then she does blooming. Waiting is draining. Live in the moments of now.

Carrie Anderson

Hannah and the Parsnips

Aeldith shivered, and pulled the threadbare blanket closer around her shoulders. She looked at her four youngsters, who were still asleep on the straw mattress alongside her, curled up together like a litter of cuddly puppies. She smiled, as she heard a teeny snore come from Peregrine, the youngest. Aeldith breathed a sigh of relief, as she looked around the tiny room, and saw the effigy of Brigid in a basket next to their mattress. How the children had loved crafting Brigid from rushes and oats in preparation for this fine day.



The oldest child, a strong red headed lad called Finnegan was the first to wake, he slid silently off the mattress, and padded across the stone floor to the door which was slightly ajar. His mother was standing just outside the door, her red hair flowing down her back, her arms outstretched to the glorious sunrise peeking out over the Galtee Mountains. It was the first day of Spring, and the morning sun held a little heat which warmed their faces. Suddenly the cold Irish wind swept through the valley, reminding them both that although Imbolc had arrived, and the seasons to a warmer clime had begun, the sun was not close enough to stand outside for long.

Finnegan quickly drew some water from the well, and set about boiling this for his mother. The other children stirred slowly, and sat up on the mattress rubbing their eyes, and chattering happily to one another.

“Imbolc!” cried Hannah, who was just four years old, she began jumping up and down on the mattress, and soon the other youngsters were joining her. Aeldith allowed herself a large smile as she lit the hearth. She, and all of her children had made it through the tough winter without running out of food or fuel. But tears stung the backs of her eyes like acid had leaked from her brain as she thought about Finn, her lovely husband, who was destined to never light the fires of Imbolc again. She wiped her face with her dress, and quickly plastered a smile back on for the sake of her youngsters. Finnegan spotted it though, and gave his mother’s hand a short squeeze.

The fires for Imbolc were already evident across the land, with little plumes of smoke appearing in the near and far distance. It would be time to light their bonfire, after Aeldith had served up piping hot oats and milk for her hungry brood. They ate slowly and mindfully, savouring every drop, and feeling the warmth in their little tummies. Hannah, always the cutie, sat by the basket with the effigy of Brigid, and was trying to spoon oats in the Brigid’s mouth, before Baire noticed what she was doing, and quickly grabbed the bowl away, chuckling.

It was up to Finnegan to light the bonfire, and he stood tall and proud, knowing that he was now the man of the house, and no longer a boy. Soon he would have children of his own, and would be solely in charge of all the celebrations. Once the fire was roaring away Aeldith gathered the rest of the children, and told them about the meaning and significance of Imbolc, just as her mother had done for her all those years ago. The children listened in silence, their eyes gleaming and glinting in the fire light, as they thought about all of the little lambs dancing around in the sunlight very soon. It was a welcoming thought after the cold, dark winter, with very little food. Aeldith and Finnegan discussed the seeds that would be sown for food that year, and the youngsters licked their lips in anticipation, although there were a couple of snorts of disgust when parsnips were mentioned, with Hannah secretly vowing to feed her parsnips to the goat down the valley, who would eat their clothing, given half a chance.

Aeldith knew that the children missed their father, and celebrations such as Imbolc made the older ones hark back to a time when there was one extra person in the house, the large, loud, funny, strong Finn, who never failed to make them all laugh so much they couldn't breathe! But Finn was gone, and it was time for her to stop day dreaming and get moving. The children were busy ripping strips of cloth to take to the healing well. Elric asked Finnegan why they were ripping old clothes, and Finnegan explained patiently that they would be tying them to the tree by the healing well, and hoping that none of the family would get sick.

Elric asked, 'like pappy?'

"Yes" Finnegan replied, "like pappy".

The family set off down the hill clutching a piece of cloth each. Aeldith had to hurry Hannah on, as she tried to tie her cloth to every tree that she passed, then decided to sit down firmly on the cold heather in a strop. The other children laughed, and she couldn't keep her strop face on for long. Soon she was up skipping after the others, waving her cloth around like a flag in the wind.

A large cauldron of fresh soup was bubbling away on the hearth on their return, filling the small house with warm, homely scents which perfectly matched the bread that was baking. Today they would feast like royalty, and then lay around on the mattress groaning at their full bellies, grateful for the warmth of the hearth, and the lamps that Aeldith had lit inside and outside the house. Of course it was Hannah that tried to be mother to the cow, and the sheep in the house, secretly trying to feed them some of her bread and soup. The chickens wouldn't take no for an answer, and clucked their way around everyone hoping for a little crumb of the bread, which of course, they got! Days were still short, and darkness began to fall. The bonfire which had been fed fuel all day was slowly burning out. The embers in the hearth were still glowing bright as the children snuggled up to one another, at first giggling, then falling silent as sleep took them to their dreams. Finnegan and Aeldith sat still, staring at the embers, and both asked Brigid to be good to their little home, to keep them safe, to bring forth lambs, and a good harvest this coming year. Eventually Finnegan, tired from all of the wood chopping, and being a man, lay his head on the mattress and let out a sigh. Aeldith kissed the effigy of Brigid, and felt overwhelmed with love for everyone, and everything under that roof.

Anne-Marie Kafka



Monique Bouman

Kieksartworld@outlook.com

 Kiek's Art-World

 Kieksartworld

For many years, each child of Brew has been named after various items within Nature and Birch is no exception. Named after the Birch tree, which is one of the first trees to grow on bare soil and it has come to symbolize fertility, healing and rebirth. The tree itself was used for almost everything from canoes to producing sugar and represents that which is needed for everyday living. It is also known for its protective healing abilities and is used to drive out evil spirits and as protection from the fairy folk.

Birch is eleven years old with very short brown hair and brown eyes. She is slightly smaller than the average height of her friends and has a medium build.

Unfortunately, Birch is a selfish and sad girl. She never used to be, but then her life changed drastically four years ago and although her mum and Birch got through the hard times together, life at home changed yet again and Birch just didn't feel like she fitted in anymore.

Our tale begins at the end of January, just before the Imbolc celebration otherwise known as Seeding Day. This is a time when seeds are planted and nurtured to flourish throughout the coming year and a time of the returning light when new paths should be attempted in life.

An extract from: **Birch the Selfish Witch**

Birch looked at the calendar and noticed it was only one week until Imbolc and the due date of 'it'. She sighed deeply. At eleven years old, she thought she was too old to have a baby brother or sister. What-ever it was, it would smell, make lots of noise and everyone would love it and pamper it. Even worse they would all make silly cooing noises over it. She shuddered at the thought. She also knew, without a doubt, that she would be invisible in one week's time, as soon as 'it' arrived.

Birch leaned her head against the cold glass of her bedroom window, her breath making steam clouds on the pane. She looked out over the back garden towards the old forest and the Goddess Mound in the distance. On the mound she could see the villager's ritual space, the thirteen stones set in a ring each of them pointing upwards into the twilight sky like grey fingers reaching for the stars.

With a deep breath, and a sad face, she turned from the window looking back into her bedroom; her eyes scanned the posters of pop stars and horses that covered every inch of her bedroom walls. Sometimes she wished she could have her own horse and ride away on it or be someone famous and travel the world with millions of fans adoring her. The worst part was that when her Dad was alive, he and Mum were so happy to have Birch; they called her their little miracle. They were never able to have more children, although Mum had got pregnant twice more, she had lost them very early in the pregnancies. Then suddenly Birch's Dad had died in a car accident and it was just Birch and her Mum against the world.

They had done everything together; they'd shopped, cooked, gone on holidays and played together. They even saw each other every day as her mum worked at the village school where Birch attended. Whenever both of them had a problem they would always sit at the kitchen table eating chocolate and devising a plan of attack to solve the problem together. They were inseparable.

That was until her mum had met Rock, she had met him while out at the village shops. Before long Rock and her mum were Handfasted and then suddenly Birch wasn't so special anymore and stopped being spoiled by her Mum. Rock had once told her Mum that she spoiled Birch too much and Birch knew he was right, but she had rather liked it. Apart from this, Rock and Birch had become good friends and she was happy that her Mum was happy. Until now.

Until they announced that another miracle had happened and the Gods had blessed them with another child. Now, months later, the child was due to arrive in one week's time and was known, at least to Birch, as 'it'. Birch could hear Rock arriving home from work for the evening. He was a butcher by trade and worked in the village butcher's shop. She knew she should be helping her mum with dinner as her mum had gotten so big with 'it' that she looked like an alien and it was easy for Birch to think of the baby as an alien. An alien that was making her mum huge, uncomfortable and would take over their lives. -To be continued in the Ostara edition.

What We're Reading

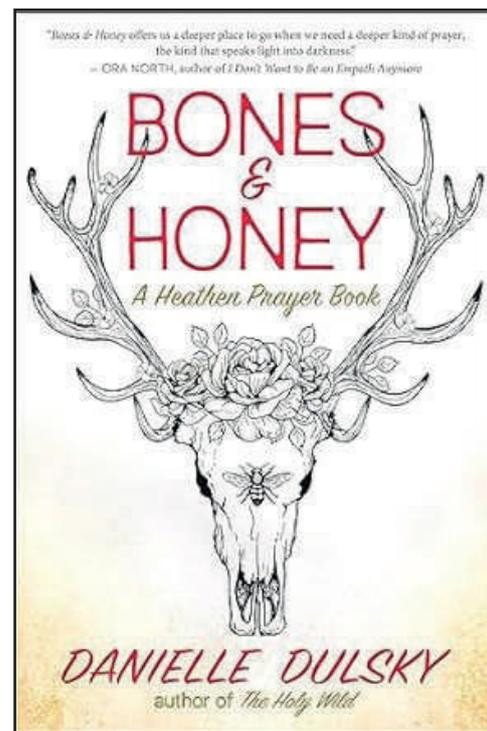
Bones and Honey by Danielle Dulsky

This book, as an offering, feels both unique and vital. It is split into thirteen sections, with titles such as 'The book of the Heathen Queen: Prayers for Empowerment, Sovereignty, and Truth Telling'. In each section, Danielle Dulsky offers the reader heartfelt prayers for the full spectrum of life experiences, including a Graveside Birth Song, A Healing Song for Leaving a Lover and a spell for the Grandmothers' Lost Arts.

Alongside these, there are also prayers for pilgrimage, the healing of the land and words to bless loved pets. The diversity of topics covered is a beautiful reminder of the sacredness of every day, and a raucous call to bring reverence into both our mundane and challenging moments.

'Bones and Honey' is a wonderful ally which empowers the reader to use heathen prayer as part of their practice and I will be dipping in again and again - Helen JR Bruce.

Published by New World Library. www.danielledulsky.com.



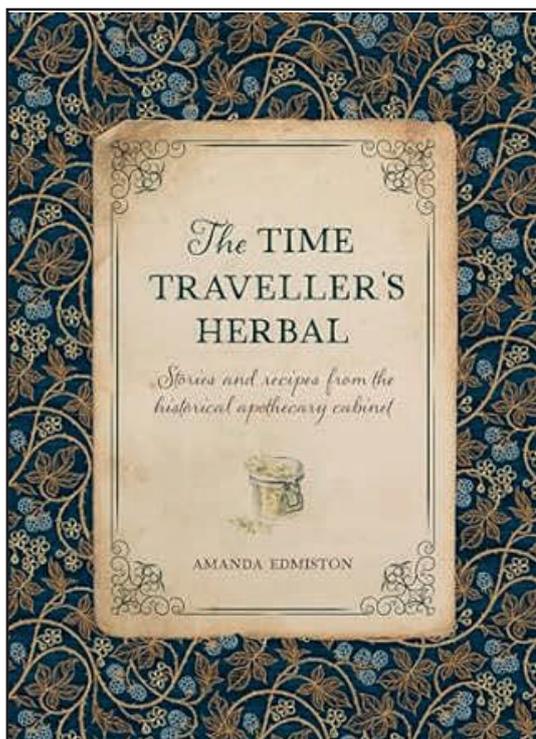
The Time Traveller's Herbal by Amanda Edmiston

Not only does this book feel gorgeous in my hands, it also inspires me to expand my foraging ability and try the many recipes for herbal tonics, cordials and balms. Plantlore blends with folklore and we are taken on a journey into a world of story. Amanda Edmiston encourages the reader to develop their own relationships with herbs, as she guides them through a world 'where we blend narratives and tisanes, old, collected, informed and new'.

Some of my favourite suggestions in the book are the meadowsweet herbal bath, the mulled herbal beer and the lotion to enable one to see the fairies. I love how myth and lore is presented as intertwined with the very real plants that can be found in fields and hedgerows, and the act of collecting ingredients also becomes an exercise in re-mythologising our relationship with the land.

As well as wise words, with much advice coming from first hand experience, 'The Time Traveller's Herbal' is also lavishly illustrated; an invaluable companion for hedgewitches, herb lovers and foragers - Helen JR Bruce.

Published by David and Charles. [@amanda.edmiston](https://twitter.com/amanda.edmiston).



TAROT MUSINGS WITH AUSET GYPSY



Imbolc, celebrated around February 1st or 2nd, marks the halfway point between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox. It's a significant day in the Wiccan Wheel of the Year, symbolizing the gradual return of warmth and the awakening of nature. As witches embrace the energies of Imbolc, they often turn to tarot cards to gain insights into the spiritual currents of the season. Three cards that hold particular relevance during this time are the Star, Temperance, and High Priestess tarot cards. So gather a few candles and light one each for the three cards drawn ahead...

The Star card, with its serene celestial maidens of Hecate pouring forth the heavenly fluids onto both land and water, reflects the optimism and hope associated with Imbolc. In the context of this holiday, it signifies the promise of new beginnings and the emergence of light after the darkness of winter. The Star card encourages witches to tap into their inner resilience and trust that better days are ahead. Just as the Star brings a sense of renewal, Imbolc heralds the renewal of the earth as the first signs of spring become apparent.

Temperance, a card depicting the Mermaid Parthenope, Patroness of Naples gracefully blending two contrasting elements, embodies the theme of balance and harmony. In the context of Imbolc, this card encourages witches to find equilibrium in their lives, aligning with the natural rhythms of the changing season. As the earth stirs from its winter slumber, witches are reminded to harmonize their energies, embracing both the outgoing energies of winter hibernation and the incoming energies of spring awakening. Just as the Mermaid in Temperance finds a perfect blend, witches seek a harmonious integration of their own energies with the energies of the season.

The High Priestess, a card shrouded in mystery and intuition, is deeply connected to the mystical aspects of Imbolc. Representing the unseen, the High Priestess Aradia seen here encourages witches to delve into the depths of their inner selves and explore the hidden realms of intuition and spirituality. Imbolc is a time when the veil between worlds is thin, making it easier for witches to connect with their inner wisdom and receive guidance from the spiritual realm. The High Priestess prompts witches to trust their instincts and explore the mysteries that unfold during this potent time in the Wheel of the Year.



Together, the Star, Temperance, and High Priestess tarot cards weave a narrative of hope, balance, and intuition that aligns seamlessly with the energies of Imbolc. As witches engage with these cards during their rituals and divination practices, they draw upon the symbolism and energy inherent in each card to enhance their connection with the season. Imbolc, with its emphasis on new beginnings and the stirring of life, becomes a magical tapestry where the wisdom of tarot intertwines with the ancient celebrations of the Wiccan Wheel of the Year.

In conclusion, the Star, Temperance, and High Priestess tarot cards offer witches profound insights and guidance during the celebration of Imbolc. Whether seeking hope, balance, or mystical understanding, these cards become valuable tools in the hands of practitioners navigating the energies of the season. As Imbolc unfolds, witches embrace the symbolism and wisdom of these tarot cards, enhancing their spiritual connection with the natural cycles of life, death, and rebirth.

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WITCH

Magazine



Annie Jones

This symbolises the beginning of the end of winter. The snow on the ground shows we're still in the grip of the cold, but the early spring crocuses are poking through. The rising sun gives up hope that there are longer, warmer days to come. Oil on canvas.