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WITCH

TAROTSCOPES

GRIMOIRE

PAGAN MENTAL HEALTH

FULL MOON IN ARIES

WITCH PICKS

UNDERSTANDING THE DARK GODDESS



Crows Feet Press

ISSUE 10/OCTOBER 2020



WITCH

Editors Letter

Welcome to the tenth issue of WITCH magazine.

Autumn is well and truly here, can you feel the changes? As we move in to October, we hope you enjoy the latest issue – you might have noticed they have got bigger in recent months – we have received some wonderful features and articles and we decided to increase our pages to make room for them!

As you all may know, new issues are released every full moon, and in October, we are blessed with two of them, the second taking place on 31st October.

As it's a full moon AND Samhain, we have decided to release a limited print run of 100 copies – more details are included in this issue and on our social media pages.

This does mean that for the Samhain edition, the online version will be £2.00 – however we will return to our usual price of FREE for November's issue!

Remember, if you have something you would like to share with us, contact us at www.witchzine.co.uk or email witchzine.submissions@gmail.com

-Bekki, Editor of WITCH magazine



WITCH
Magazine

Featuring...

Full Moon in Aries

Circle Casting – Part 3

Understanding the Dark Goddess

Black Moon Cove: November Tarotsopes

Witch Picks

Five Minute Fiction

...and more!

Magick Moon Art

Ritual Artist Bekki Milner

Lunar paintings channelled
under the full moon.
Created with sacred water
from Chalice Well

Find Magick Moon Art
on Facebook



DM to order or email bekkijomilner@gmail.com

Free UK
delivery on
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Commissions
Welcome



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★
WITCH
Magazine

The next issue of WITCH will be
our Samhain Special edition

Only 100 copies will be printed!

Preorder yours at
www.witchzine.co.uk
£5 + £2 p&p

Includes:
Pull out art prints
Freebie (TBA)
Free digital copy

We aim to deliver physical copies by 31st October where possible
Online edition £2* - available on 31st October

*digital copy for this issue will be £2 - we return to our usual price of FREE in November

WITCH Magazine

Residency Writers

Abbie Mearns

Abbie is an American witch living in the UK and following her own magical path influenced by her personal Germanic, Celtic, and Native American heritage. When she can, she enjoys bouncing around the the USA visiting family in various states and enjoying the vastly different magical flavours of each location. However she is usually found knitting or walking her dog in her home in Worcestershire.



A G Worthington

A G Worthington is an eclectic writer of the weird and the whimsical. She is a Liverpool based short story writer, novelist and witch. Find her online @agworthing on Instagram and on her blog agworthing.tumblr.com/.'

Cherry Doyle

Cherry Doyle lives in Staffordshire and spends most of her spare time on Cannock Chase. She has a BA in Creative Writing and is currently studying for an MFA in Poetry. She has a pamphlet, 'September', available from offaspres.co.uk



Portland Jones

Portland Jones is long time pagan, writer, optimist and thrower of fancy dress parties. She used to think there would be time to sleep when she was dead. Six kids, morris dancing, playing drums with a band, rituals, camping trips galore and working full time confirmed that sleep was a luxury she was denied. A stroke changed all that, but she still lives life to the full, with university, writing, and learning a new way of living, but now she does it with a lot more sleep.

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



Jessica O'Shea

Hi! I'm Jessica, I am a poet from Liverpool U.K. I have been a practising eclectic Wiccan for around two years now. I write about anything and everything, from poetry to feminist essays. I have an unruly obsession with words. Reading them, absorbing them and writing them is one of our sincerest forms of magic.



Fairy Bec

Fairy Bec AKA Rebecca Edwards is a healer, wellness guide and holistic health practitioner. Bec practices Reiki and brings Reiki energy into everything she does. Being Pagan and following the wheel of the year is very important to Bec as she travels her pathway through life. Bec often finds that people radiate towards her for help and advice, which she give with light and love . . . and a handful of crystals! Bec was given her first tarot set aged 14 and uses stones, cards and pendulums for her readings. Bec is always happy to swap a reading for a bottle of mead!



Facebook: Fairy Bec. Instagram: fairybecadventures. Website: www.rubek.co.uk

Sophie Fletcher

Most of my blog posts are drunken ramblings, my straight-talking opinions and theories on the world and my pagan life full of craziness. I never mean to offend anyone and my opinions are my own, and my own alone. Some are funny, some are sad, some will make your eyes roll. I am studying holistic medicine, and training to become a therapist, so I can work with others like myself to feel more 'Happy' and environmental. I offer one to one anonymous talking sessions, I am far from a professional, but I'm a listening private ear. Enjoy.



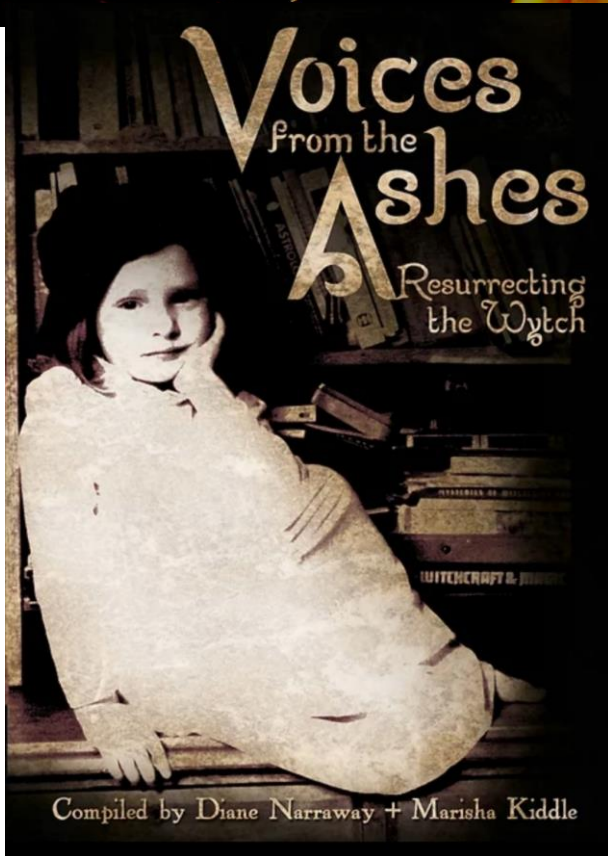
Whilst our residency is full for this season, look out for our next residency opening in January 2021.

Of course you can still submit your articles as usual – visit www.witchzine.co.uk for all the details!

Veneficia Publishing presents...

Voices from the Ashes : Resurrecting the Wytch

This book has been a true labour of love for all involved. It is an anthology of short stories that focuses on those tried as witches.



The intention being to dramatize the individual stories, bringing to life the individuals involved. In many cases precious little is known of the men and women behind the accusations and trials, and this anthology breathes fresh life into what has, for far too long been little more than a list of names.

All the stories blend known historical facts (where applicable) with fiction, to bring you a heartfelt look at the lives of just some of the many tried for their beliefs or unorthodox behaviours. This book spans centuries, various countries and cultures and includes men, women, and children. It is in many ways an acknowledgement of their sacrifice and has been a journey for all involved. Sadly, even today people are still persecuted in many countries, with accusations of witchcraft being commonplace.

The stories in this book are emotive, and we have no doubt that you will scowl, smile, laugh and shed the odd tear. However, one thing we are very sure of, is that you will always remember them.

Available from www.veneficiapublishing.com and Waterstones Online.

Includes full colour illustrations from contributing artists.

“This collection is a fine testimony to the continuing power of the witch figure to move hearts and inspire minds and pens. In their two-thousand year progress, spanning three continents, its stories embody the nobility and the tragedy, the horror and the pathos, the beauty and the poetry, the redemption offered by nature and evil inflicted by humans, that are all bound up in the image of the witch. No other human type has the ability to produce such a variety of reactions and associations, and all are represented here.”

*Professor Ronald Hutton
Author/Professor Bristol University*

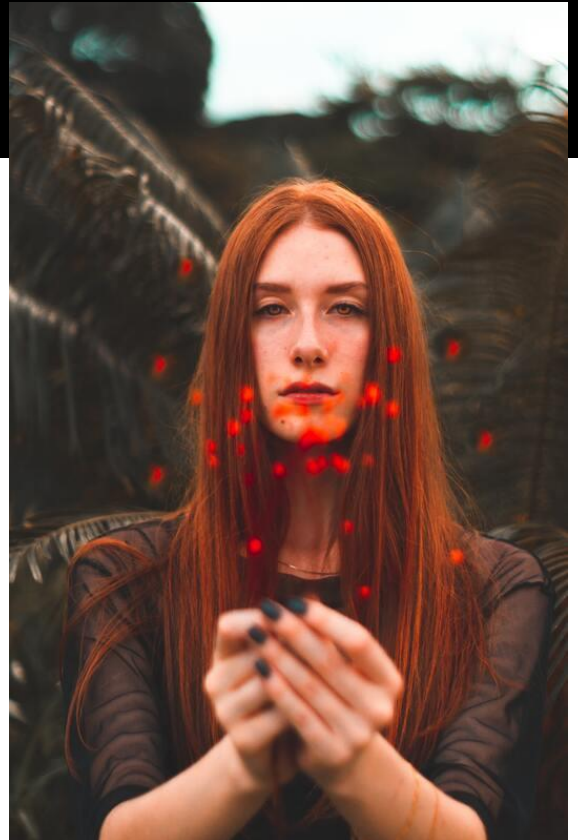
THE HARVEST MOON - FULL MOON IN ARIES

BY MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY FOR SISTERS OF THE MOON

DEAR ONES, THIS WEEK ON THURSDAY 1ST OCTOBER WE WELCOME IN THE FULL MOON IN ARIES. THIS BEING THE CLOSEST FULL MOON TO THE AUTUMN EQUINOX MAKES IT THE HARVEST MOON. WE WILL HAVE THE SUN IN LIBRA, THE SIGN OF RELATIONSHIPS AND BALANCE, AND THE MOON IN ARIES, THE SIGN OF THE SELF. AT FIRST IT MIGHT SEEM THAT THESE SIGNS CONTRADICT EACH OTHER BUT WHEN WE LOOK CLOSER THEY ACTUALLY HELP US TO NAVIGATE OUR AUTUMN THEME OF FINDING BALANCE. LIBRA IS A SIGN THAT IS ALWAYS WANTING TO MAKE PEACE AND HARMONY, THEIR FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS CAN SOMETIMES MEAN THEIR OWN NEEDS AND BOUNDARIES GET OVERLOOKED. ARIES IS A SELF-RELIANT, HEAD STRONG FIRE SIGN WITH CLEAR BOUNDARIES AND AN OFTEN DEVIL MAY CARE ATTITUDE. SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THESE TWO SIGNS IS A WONDERFUL BALANCE OF TAKING CARE OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY AND TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES.

Aries is the first sign of the zodiac, and when the moon is in Aries it asks us to take a step back and ask ourselves 'who am I?', 'What do I want?', 'What are my goals?'. If we feel we've been getting lost in other people's dramas and problems now is a wonderful time to come home to yourself in order to establish balance. This means you can also spend some time asking yourself if you feel your needs are being met, your voice is being heard and if you're being true to yourself. How could we add some of that powerful self-reliant Aries energy into our life at the moment? Moon in Aries is a wonderful time to concentrate on our relationship to self, to check-in with our self-love and self-care knowing that these have a huge impact on our relationships.

Aries can sometimes get a bad rep for being selfish, and though this may be an aspect of Aries' shadow side it's actually a part of their archetype that can be really helpful to work with. Instead of viewing them as selfish, view them instead of just having the level of self-love and self-respect that means they take good care of themselves whilst at the same time taking care of others. Aries helps us to make time for our own needs and wishes which means we end up with more to offer the world around us. How is your relationship with yourself? Do listen to your needs? Do you feel nourished?



THE WARRIOR WITHIN

Aries is ruled by the planet Mars, the planet of strength, passion and the archetype of the warrior. This Full Moon we have the opportunity to look to Aries for help building resilience in the face of adversity and tune into our inner warrior. This global crisis is forcing us all to dig deep, face our fears and do some real spiritual work - we can use this time to create deep transformation. Fire has both the power to create and destroy and we are in a situation where we can see these dualities playing out in both human nature and Mother Nature herself. As the old way of being begins to crumble around us, we have the chance to ask ourselves what new world we wish to create together, like the phoenix rising from the ashes.

Aries rules the head, sinuses and eyes so whilst the moon is in Aries it's really important to look after these areas of the body. We'll be more susceptible to picking up colds during moon in Aries days, especially if we're already run down so wrap up warm, rest and take



care of yourself. Aries can often suffer from being too much in their head and because they are a fire sign are often called hot headed. If you resonate with this and have been dealing with thoughts of overwhelm, it would be really helpful to dedicate some time for meditation to help soothe your mind and calm your thoughts. Journaling about what's overwhelming you could also be really helpful, especially in relation to the people pleasing and over committing that we just spoke about. Maybe it's time to scale back and admit we can't do everything? Full moons are a great time to take an honest look at what isn't working and let it go, we may have just started a new project or venture and for whatever reason it's just not in flow, sometimes we need to push through and sometimes we need to let go and accept that perhaps it's not the right time. How much are we clinging on to this particular thing out of fear of what others might think?

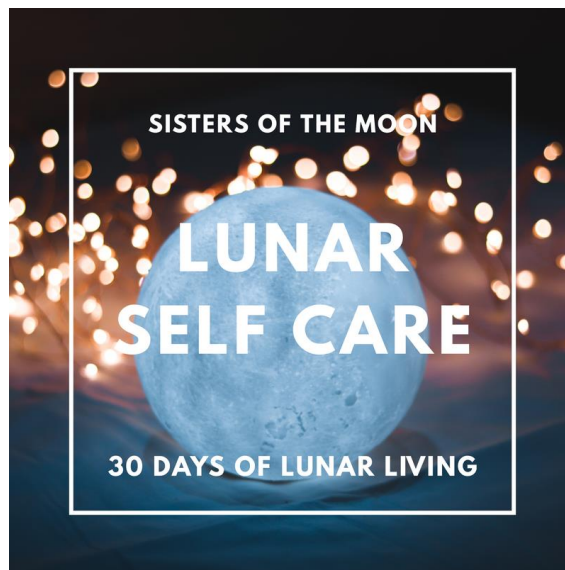
“In the end, only three things matter: how much you loved, how gently you lived, and how gracefully you let go of things not meant for you.”

ARIES GODDESSES

Now is a great time to call upon fire Goddesses and Goddesses of transformation such as Kali, Durga, Lilith, Brigid, Pele, Eos, Bast and the Morrigan. Set up an altar or a place on your altar for one or a few Goddesses, just seeing them there each day will help you to draw strength, guidance and power from them. You may even like to do a daily meditation with them or even a mantra practice. Durga's mantra is incredibly powerful for protection: *OM DUM DURGAYEI NAMAHA*



FREE ONLINE COURSE



We are delighted to be offering this free online course to help you deepen your connection to the Moon. The moon moves through a different zodiac sign every 2-3 days and each sign is associated with a different archetype, element, charge and part of the body. Over the 30 days we will be sharing daily self-care prompts for working with the moon on each day, this will also include which phase and zodiac sign the moon is in and the ruling planet of the day. This course will help you to create a much more intimate relationship with the moon as well as keep your self-care practices active during these difficult and uncertain times.

This course will start today - 1st October and is free to join. Once the course begins you will then receive a daily lunar prompt every day for 30 days.

Click here to sign up: <https://seekingblissonline.com/courses/1304/about>



Sisters of the Moon is an
online community, magazine,
and so much more!

You can find them at

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

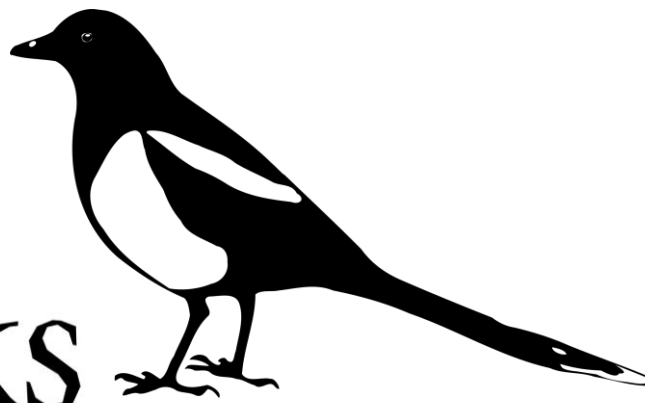
Join The Soul Shala Online Yoga
Studio!

Online weekly yoga classes





WITCH Picks



*Each month we bring you our
favourites from pagan and witch
small businesses!*



Fleece Lined Jedi Poncho by Wobble & Squeak

Our favourite for Autumn and Winter layering, this fleece lined poncho has a hidden pocket and a cosy hood!

£45

Available from

www.wobbleandsqueakclothing.co.uk

Season of the Witch home fragrance

by Moonseed Rituals

A scent made just for Autumn lovers, sweet orange, autumn spices and benzoin. Use it in your oil burner and around your home.

£10.00

Available from

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/MoonseedRituals>





Geranium and Orange Balm by The Happy Little Lab Co.

A soothing balm with uplifting orange and geranium – great for clarity and achy heads! Organic and natural ingredients too!

£7

Available from

@thehappylittlelabcompany on Instagram

Gobbolino's Garden Tea

by Tarn and Moon

A wonderful Autumn tea with Organic Ingredients ~ Black Fire Smoked Hill Cardamom, Lemon Bee Brush, Pink Berry Peppercorns, Pot Marigold Flowers, Rooibos, Turmeric Root + Real Cinnamon Bark

£6.50

Available from

www.tarnandmoon.co.uk



Got something you'd love to share?

Email witchzine.submissions@gmail.com

THAT'S TOO DARK! EEEK!

BY MICHAEL DAoust

"THAT'S TOO DARK/MATURE FOR CHILDREN," I GET TOLD SO OFTEN.

BUT I REMEMBER BEING A CHILD. AND I MAY BE JUST ONE PERSON, BUT WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I WITNESSED DEATH. I WONDERED AT NATURE. I EXPERIENCED CHRONIC DEPRESSION AT A VERY YOUNG AGE, TOO.

Now, as an adult, I'm forced to un-learn all the concepts that were taught to me within the religious structure I was raised with. I sit back and wonder, every now and then, and think of how much easier it would have been had my children's books and religious structure embraced the realities of mental illness, death, abuse in the world, and gender diversity.

I think I'm not the only one, too. When I look at fellow queer witches and pagans, we all have a heapload of teachings to unlearn. We all are striving to fix ourselves from the damages that have been inflicted upon us as children. And so I wonder – if we were to try, just give a hop and skip of an effort – to try and not do this to our next generation, what would that look like?

I come back to stories often. It's what I breathe, live, and write. I dream in stories, I even mourn for them. And so, my answer to fixing generational trauma and solving societal problems is through stories.

I wish I could write everything that young witches would need. I'm not that magnificent though, but I can write my own little sliver. I think we all can, in some way or shape or form. We can all tune in, write truths, and help to heal future generations.

Well, as great a notion and idea as that can be, how does one do it? It's all in the 'how', isn't it? So how do we, through stories, try and build up strong, capable, and open-hearted pagan children?

Now, I'm not a parent. I'm not even that close to my nieces and nephews, to my misery. My notions of what children need to learn about is all based upon my own experiences and observations from fellow pagan parents. So take the following guidelines with a few grains of salt.

But if you are willing to take my opinion for it, then this is my opinion, on three points that are very dear to me.

I think that, first and foremost (and very appropriate for this season) we need to help children face death and darkness. I remember, as a child, being paralyzed with fear of not only monsters in the dark, but of the cycle of death – which I thought ended up in a pit of hell. Had I been taught about death and rebirth and the very natural



cycles of death, I think it might have been different. So, really, I encourage parents to teach children to face the darkness and death. To know that death is not a big punishment or horrid thing, and that it's natural and just part of our lives.

Now, let's mention the monsters. I think that, as children and then later as teens and then even later as adults, we often feel powerless. Whether it be to our abusers, to the monsters under our bed (or in the window for my case), I think that we should teach children how to be proactive in their defence and standing up for themselves. We should teach them the basics of self-defence spiritually, not just to keep the bed-time monsters away but, by teaching children to deal positively and constructively with bed-time monsters, we teach them how to handle their fear and see the process of overcoming as a process, instead of a one-shot battle. We teach them that it's not the end of the world to have a boogeyman. For there will always be some sort of problem/boogeyman in life. It's all in the 'how' we deal with it, not just once but again and again and again. And by teaching this to children we prepare them for the slew of life challenges that life brings.

Another really important point that I see being brought up in queer circles but not hardly enough in neopagan circles is gender. Let's face it, pagans love to gender things in an over-simplified binary. We like to declare that even plants have their own genders, for crying out loud. But for a culture that loves to appropriate Native American white sage and drums and smudging practices, we forget that they had many, many, more than two genders. We like to polarize gender into a stark binary while forgetting about the (sometimes) sacred berdache. We ignore the rich history of transgender and homosexual persons throughout history and their acceptance and manifestation in so many different cultures. Where does this leave us? It leaves our children oppressed and suppressing their own inner nature.

Yeah, I'm going there. I'm saying that to not educate your children on gender diversity makes them hide their truths. Here's why: chances are that they may be gender non-conforming, and if they only see a brutish binary within which they are not represented, they will question their inner impulses. They will try and conform to what is not natural to them. They will suppress their trans-ness, their queer-ness, and hide it in order to do what they know is expected of them.

The thing is that kids are smart. They know what's expected of them, and they know it's better to conform. So please, please, show them that there's so much more than a binary. Even if you are cis and straight as a pin, do some research. Let your kids know that diversity is okay. Teach them about how there were ergi during the viking era. Teach them about Alexander the great's homosexuality. Teach them about the berdache so that if that resonates with them, they have some way of expressing what they're feeling. Encourage them to express gender divergence.

So, really, tell your children stories. Tell them about life and death, and the cycles of rebirth. Make death and contemplation thereof a part of life. Teach them to confront their fears and find solutions to overcome them. Finally, teach them about the diversity of gender so that they can express and understand themselves.





THE TROUBLING RISE OF PAGAN POPULARITY

BY SOPHIE FLETCHER – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

I LOVE THE INCREASING RISE OF WITCH NUMBERS, I LOVE THAT MORE PEOPLE ARE SAGEING THEIR HOMES AND USING OILS TO CLEANSE, BUT IS THE INCREASE IN DEMAND AND POPULARITY, MAKING OUR PRACTICES MORE UNETHICAL?

As a witch, who is also Pagan, I am growingly concerned about this. My personal beliefs are based on Mother Earth and protecting our planet, especially for our futures. I eat ethically, I recycle, and reuse, not wasteful and I live minimalist. I'm not perfect but I do try my best.

I prefer local businesses and always check where my products have come from, who's produced them and where they're from before buying anything, so when it comes to my craft, I am even more particular.

So I find it so troubling when I see crystals on wish for a pound, white sage sticks premade on what and so much plastic material, it almost makes me want to weep in despair.

What is cheap and easy for us, comes from very dark places?

The growing trend of witches (or "baby witches – if you want to call them that) is great for our community, our acceptance. Convenience is rad for our busy lifestyles – but at what cost?

Is it worth it? Is it okay?

Crystals should be pure, not man made, one spells enriched from the soils of the planet and our natural surroundings well protected in order for us to harness our true powers at full force.

So my message this month?

When you find a cute crystal, or see a man-made spell kit – take a moment, ask where it's come from, how it was sourced, where you could find a more ethical product and if you can't afford a more sustainable product – save for it. It will be worth it, and it'll make you feel more gratification when you get it.

Blessed Be.

Witchgasm.

ANNOUNCEMENT!!!

I WILL BE REVEALING NEW WITCHGASM MERCH ON OCTOBER 31ST!

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR IT.

FIVE POETRY BOOKS THAT WILL SET YOUR SOUL ON FIRE

BY JESS O SHEA – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

IF YOU'VE JUST FINISHED READING YOUR LATEST BOOK AND YOU'RE LOOKING TO EXPAND YOUR READING ENDEAVOURS, I'M HERE TO HELP YOU! WE'VE ALL SEEN THE BOOM IN MICRO-POETRY AND POETRY BLOGGING LATELY, BUT WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BEST CONTEMPORARY POETRY BOOKS OUT THERE? IN THIS LIST, I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU ALL TIME FAVOURITE POETRY BOOKS THAT HAVE INSPIRED, MOTIVATED AND ENLIGHTENED ME! IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER, HERE GOES...

1. **Hold Your Own – Kae Tempest**

“How many yous have you been? How many, Lined up inside, Each killing the last?”

This is one of the first poetry books in a long time to really inspire and move me. As soon as I finished it, I wanted to write so many equally beautiful pieces as there are in this book. Tempest's words and the way they tell their story of growing up are captivating, heart-breaking and so unapologetically real. The use of theme in Greek Mythology is particularly interesting, as Tempest writes about their teen years coming to terms with with sexuality, sensuality and gender. [Disclaimer: this book is published using Kae's previous name Kate, but they have now officially come out as non-binary, and now uses the name Kae].

2. **Teaching my Mother How to Give Birth – Warsan Shire**

“You have to understand, that no one puts their children in a boat, unless the water is safer than land.”

Shire is probably one of the most important contemporary poets at the moment. Born in Kenya to Somali parents, Shire's poetry pays tribute to her family's refugee experience throughout the entire book. Her words, so painful and raw, are utterly thought-provoking and moving. Though her poetry has themes of war, racism, and immigration, it is so beautiful that you just won't be able to put it down without thinking about it for a while afterwards. It sticks with you for a long time. I still think about these poems often, and read this book again and again.

3. **Mancunian Meander – Mike Garry**

*“Official bloody lifewreckers” shouts mad Mary
From outside the Red Admiral door
Swigging cider, sprawled on the floor”*

Mike Garry's short but sweet collection gives readers a glimpse into the nostalgic and the hidden gems of the Northern life. The words spelled out in the Mancunian accent, giving the reader a full immersive experience reading Garry's signature short and punchy lines. My particular favourite is *Man Running*, with the most fabulous account of well, a man running, and the locals he

encounters along the way. Just one of out of the amazing selection of Northern poets (and goodness, do we need more of them published!)

4. **Preparing My Daughter For Rain – Key Ballah**

*“Your body wasn’t made to be loved on occasion.
It was made to be loved every night with warm hands.”*

This collection is so unbelievably life affirming and moving. The collection is split into five sections, The Body, The Heart, The Land, The Soul & Notes. The notes are there for readers to add their own pieces of poetry, or what they may have learned from this collection. We are on a journey with Ballah as she writes about loving herself, thoroughly and unconditionally, as well as dedicating this for her future daughter, ensuring she too, will love herself and carry these gorgeous words with her through her life too. It’s an absolute must for those going through their own self-discovery/self-love journey! I come back to it time and time again when I begin to feel self-conscious and anxious.

5. **The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis – Lydia Davis**

*“Examples of Remember:
Remember that thou art but dust.*

I shall try to bear it in mind.”

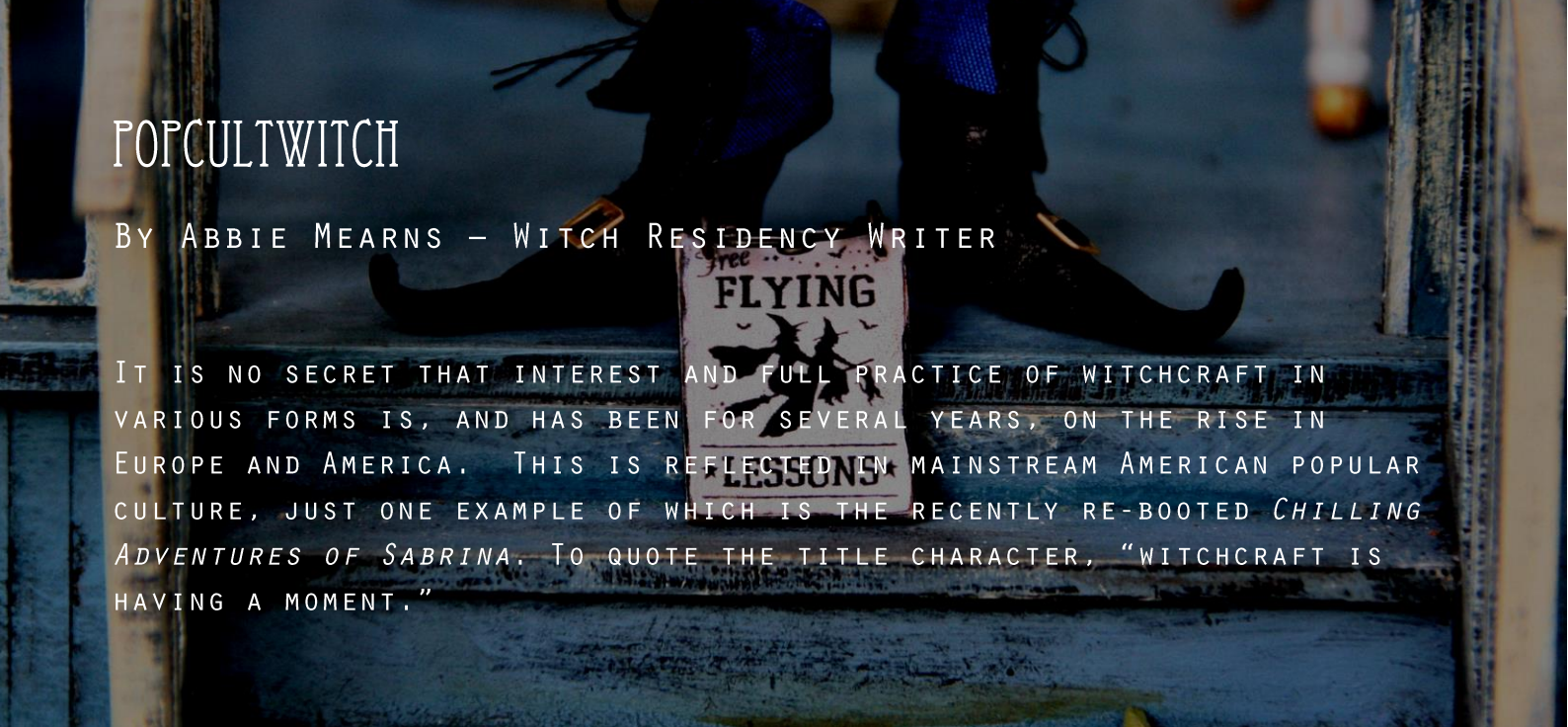
Okay so really this isn’t just a poetry book but it is the collection of Lydia Davis’ work which is just filled with absolutely sublime stories and poems. Some of her short stories will only contain one sentence, one line or a few words. Her work is unlike any I’ve ever read. It is surreal, unusual and turns the mundane into the insane. This collection contains mostly everything she’s written from the 1980’s, through the 1990’s to the 2000’s. Her characters, the way she words her stories with the most unexpected twists and turns, just blows my mind! This is one of the main books you definitely need in your collection, so you can see Lydia Davis taking her ideas for a walk.



And those are my absolutely favourite collections! I hope you gain some inspiration from this and continue to expand your book shelves and it helps open your mind. These books will show you that there is still so much beauty and magic in our words and our world.
Many Blessings all!

POPCULTWITCH

BY ABBIE MEARNS — WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER



IT IS NO SECRET THAT INTEREST AND FULL PRACTICE OF WITCHCRAFT IN VARIOUS FORMS IS, AND HAS BEEN FOR SEVERAL YEARS, ON THE RISE IN EUROPE AND AMERICA. THIS IS REFLECTED IN MAINSTREAM AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE, JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF WHICH IS THE RECENTLY RE-BOOTED *CHILLING ADVENTURES OF SABRINA*. TO QUOTE THE TITLE CHARACTER, "WITCHCRAFT IS HAVING A MOMENT."

It is interesting that this resurgence of witchcraft is occurring now as the much-maligned Millennial generation is approaching middle age and preparing to be passed the reins of control from the generations that preceded them. We are no longer in passive roles, forced to comply with rules set out by our elders. We are becoming the elders, or at least find ourselves among them, instead of continuing to be relegated to a lesser platform like children at a kid's table. Given the agency to make our own decisions about our beliefs and values, more and more of us in the Millennial demographic are acknowledging a positive connection to the earth and supernatural. As a Millennial, as a witch, and as a student of culture I find myself asking why. What is it about this unique moment in history that is emboldening more and more people to either take up witchcraft, or to come out of the proverbial broom closet and be open about their practice?

Yes, there have always been witches. And yes, there have always been outspoken witches to whom fellow practitioners can look either as role models or as high-profile embarrassments, depending on individual sensibilities. However, the first wave of modern witchcraft to appear in mainstream Western European and American society appears to have occurred in the early 1960's with the writings of the likes of Gerald Gardner, Sybil Leek, and the creation of the Witchcraft Research Association. In terms of popular culture, there has always been a demand for tales of witchcraft but between the Victorian era and the end of the 1950's witches served a primarily cautionary purpose in the popular imagination¹. Throughout these 60 years, when a witch appeared in fictional narrative it was almost always as an antagonist. If not the antagonist, the temptations of witchcraft as a concept was a protagonist's downfall. This trend began to shift in the early 1960's. Numerous examples of positive (if reductive) depictions of witches began to appear in mainstream popular culture.

¹ A notable exception to this is Glinda from *The Wizard of Oz*. However, this nearly ubiquitous staple in Western popular culture was not entirely a product of the mid-twentieth century. The 1939 film is based on a series of books that were first published in 1900, and on a subsequent Broadway musical adaptation that debuted in 1902. This supports the theory that the Victorians did not view witchcraft as inherently negative, as it was possible in the popular imagination of the era to be either a 'good witch' or a 'bad witch'.

Just some of these examples include the first appearance of *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* in 1962 as an Archie comic book series, popular television programmes *Bewitched* (1964), *The Addams Family* (1964), and animated Hannah Barbara segment *Winsome Witch* (1965). Other programmes such as *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965) and *Dark Shadows* (1966), while not featuring witchcraft specifically, nonetheless portray at least the concept of magic in a positive light. Sixty years after the Victorians were so interested in witchcraft, magic, and how these two concepts intersected with science and industry, practitioners again found themselves less demonised in the popular imagination. These programmes may or may not have caused adult consumers to become less intolerant of the idea of witchcraft. However, more importantly, the young adults and teenagers these programmes were actually targeting were witnessing serious social and political unrest on a daily basis in their real lives. Being exposed to alternative ideas about acceptable spiritual beliefs as well as societal beliefs created, or helped to create, an atmosphere where witchcraft could, if not flourish, at least be less persecuted. It could be argued that this trend was brought to a screeching halt with the popular film *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). This film can also be pointed to as one of main modern examples of confusing witchcraft with Satanism.

The generation of children who witnessed the social revolution that took place in the 1960's eventually grew up to become the writers and producers of popular culture that would be consumed by children of the 1980's and '90's. The film, television, and literature created by that generation would again shift the ideas of the popular fear of witchcraft, sometimes referred to as 'Satanic panic' – again incorrectly equating witchcraft with Satanism - that surrounded metal music in the 1970's and early '80's, to at least entertain the idea that witches are not necessarily a social malignancy.

One of the first examples in mainstream American media of this ideal shift is the 1987 film *The Witches of Eastwick*. Developed from a novel of the same name published in 1984, witchcraft is featured in this narrative as neither a benign or malignant force. It is simply a way of life for the main characters. While, yes, the main characters get themselves into a mess that involves their craft, they also continue to practice after the main conflict has been resolved. And this film was by no means a low budget film intended for a small niche audience. It boasts an A-list Hollywood cast and was one of the most successful films of the year, receiving two Academy Awards nominations and winning one BAFTA.

Other films early in the 1990's did indeed portray witches as antagonists (*The Witches*, 1990 and *Hocus Pocus*, 1993). However the witches in these examples, while technically the villains, also have endearing qualities that render them at least partially sympathetic characters. The rest of the decade is filled with examples of main-stream popular culture that worked to de-vilify witchcraft.

The concept of witchcraft is not used as a strictly cautionary tool in *Practical Magic* (novel 1995, film 1998), *The Craft* (1996), *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (1996), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (tv programme, 1997), *Charmed* (1998), or *Angel* (1999). Just as *Rosemary's Baby* contributed to the end of social acceptance of witches in the 1960's, *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) also cast the concept of 'witch' firmly back into the category of villain. It can be no coincidence that a generation brought up on the idea of witchcraft as an acceptable alternative way of life is now embracing it as such. Similar to the practitioners that found confidence and popular representation in the 1960's, American Millennials are also survivors of an embarrassing and failed military effort and dissatisfaction with government. Again harkening to the past, just as the first wave of modern witchcraft occurred in the 1960's, 60 years after Victorians had entertained the possibility that witches could be benevolent, the current second wave is occurring a further 60 years on, in 2020.

If the pattern of positive representations of witchcraft in popular culture occurring roughly every 30 years, and a new wave of 'out' practitioners occurring roughly every 60 years continues, I have renewed hope for the future. While I suspect some amount of backsliding will occur due to whatever the next *Rosemary's Baby/Blair Witch Project* will be, I also suspect that witchcraft will continue to thrive, as it always has, in the face of adversity. The combination of the re-popularisation of witchcraft in popular culture, incredible amount of social unrest the Centennial generation is currently enduring, and that generation's proven ability to be outspoken about their values and beliefs, makes me hopeful that in another 20 to 30 years witchcraft will again become a mainstream notion and foster even more acceptance and representation.

From the editor of WITCH Magazine

Bekki Jo Milner.
.lunamosity
www.wildwitch.co.uk



A collection of poems inspired by the moon, the sea, magick and nature.
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CIRCLE CASTING BASICS BY NITA SIMPSON

PART THREE...CALLING THE CIRCLE AND GROUNDING

IN MY PREVIOUS TWO ARTICLES WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE UNDERSTANDING AND REASONS BEHIND CASTING OUT CIRCLE AND FROM PART ONE AND PART TWO AND WE HAVE PREPARED WELL IN ADVANCE. OUR SACRED SPACE IS CLEANSED AND SMUDGED AND WE HAVE ALL TO HAND AND READY.

The evening before or early on the morning of the casting I make a herbal tisane of mint, rosemary, nettle and sage. Sometimes I add thyme and lemon balm. All my herbs I grow in the garden and after the ceremony I burn the Affirmations and Wishes of my fellow participants and spread them liberally in amongst my herbs. This way I add to the cycle of life.

I make a concoction of dried herbs, rock salt and fresh water in my chalice, in advance. Rain water is good but do be aware it can have pollutants in and can go slimy after a short time. I visit Chalice Well gardens in Glastonbury regularly so try to save some of the sacred water for each casting. I set my chalice in a window where it can be bathed in moonlight. I try to leave it in a window over a full moon. This is for drawing my virtual circle.

My fellow pagans usually arrive at a given time so we can start the casting together without interruptions.

I walk around the table, between it and my pagan sisters, saying.....*I cast this circle in perfect love and perfect trust.* I flick out droplets of the ready made herbal waters and repeat it until I have circled as many times as I feel is appropriate, sometimes only the once, sometimes more. I had not realised until it was pointed out that I circle more if we have a lot of people. Maybe this is my subconscious making sure it is well cast and accommodating. All the time I dip my fingers in the Chalice and splash the contents lightly as I go. I always assure my sisters that it will not harm their clothing.

I then invite each individual to step inside the circle asking...

How do you enter the circle?

Each individual will respond:

In perfect love and perfect trust or

In the light and love of the Goddess

I then move towards each quarter and light each candle in turn as stated below.

I call upon the Guardians of the Watchtowers.....

Guardians of the East, and Air I call upon you to watch over us all here today.

RING A BELL and LIGHT THE CANDLE

We ask that you keep watch over us within this circle.

Guardians of the South and Fire, I call upon you to watch over us all here today.

RING A BELL and LIGHT THE CANDLE

We ask that you keep watch over us within this circle.

Guardians of the West and Water, I call upon you to watch over us all here today.

RING A BELL and LIGHT THE CANDLE

We ask that you keep watch over us within this circle.

Guardians of the Earth and Grounding, I call upon you to watch over us all here today.

RING A BELL and LIGHT THE CANDLE

We ask that you keep watch over us within this circle.

As above, so below. As the universe, so the soul. As without, so within. This Circle is cast. Blessed be.

NOTE All the words for the calling of the Quarters and the final admission that the circle is cast, can be changed as the seasons progress to include something for each Sabbat or season.

I then hold a short breath meditation first in order to invoke our own energies and find our own power zone and focus our whole selves.

Often we envisage a journey and afterwards, spend a few moments discussing these if people feel they can. It is no problem if someone prefers to keep their visualisations private. Again, it is up to the individual. We follow different mediations, some pathway mediations, some a conscious meditation and others a mental chanting, but always begin and end with breathing exercises.

I will have made a tisane of herbs, honey and lemon for each participant to sip after we enter the circle, call the Quarters and have a meditation.

I usually have a shallow bowl full of tea lights and invite each person to light a candle and add it to the altar circle. I then invite each person to write their wishes and affirmations then to place their affirmation papers into a censer ready to be burned.

I have burned them at that time but it does smell and had set off my smoke alarms. It can be more provident to do this at a later time and outside.

Once I have only ashes, I allow the wind to take these ashes away in my garden or add them to my vegetable patch or my herb garden.

We then consider our own affirmations and I light a white sage bundle and take it around the outside of my circle and smudge away any negativity. I usually then add this to my censer.

We then can indulge in spell work and I always include a poem or a story to link with the season.

To close the circle I extinguish each candle in turn as the circle was cast.

Guardians of the East, South, west, North, I bid you peacefully depart but your blessings remain. My thanks and farewell.

Place hands on the table to ground any further energy.

The circle is cut but the blessings remain.

Just make sure that you don't spend so much time casting the Circle that you don't have any time left for the rest of your ceremony. It is important to eat drink and be merry after the circle is closed for both grounding and also for the social aspect of the casting.

Blessed Be

The Old Crone

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COMING SOON...

PART FOUR

RITUALS AFFIRMATIONS AND SPELLWORK

SILVER MOON: CONVERTING TO PAGAN RELIGIONS LATER IN LIFE

BY CHERRY DOYLE – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

SOMETIMES IT CAN FEEL LIKE WITCHCRAFT – OR PAGANISM AS A WHOLE – IS A YOUNGSTER’S GAME. FILMS, TV SHOWS, AND BOOKS ABOUT TEEN WITCHES HAVE ENTERED THE ANNALS OF POP CULTURE – FROM *THE CRAFT* WHERE THE YOUNG WOMEN CEMENT THEIR IDENTITY THROUGH THEIR COVEN, TO *SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH*, WHO BALANCES HER MAGICKAL HOME LIFE WITH THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF BEING A TEENAGE GIRL. ABBIE MEARNS WRITES ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE THAT THOSE OF US WHO GREW UP WITH THESE POSITIVE REPRESENTATIONS MAY WELL FEEL A SENSE OF VALIDATION OR ACCEPTANCE OF OUR PAGAN BELIEFS, OPENING THE DOOR FOR EXPLORING THESE RELIGIONS AT A YOUNGER AGE.



However, not everybody finds their path in their formative years – some of us come to paganism much later than our teens and twenties. This in itself presents unique challenges of breaking away from established belief systems, communities, and routines, so what draws people to paganism later in life, and what support is out there? I spoke to three women who converted to pagan religions, to find out more about their experiences.

“I’ve always been fascinated by anything to do with witchcraft and spiritual work,” says Gill, who didn’t begin to practice until her thirties. It’s a common thread – curiosity piqued at an early age, and the subsequent repression through a sense of propriety fostered by religion, family, or society. Ginette, who became a “fully-fledged witch” at 43, broke away from a religious background to practice Wicca. “I knew I was a witch at 13, but rejected it for a long time due to my Christian upbringing,” she explains.

Esther also started following a pagan path in her thirties. She says of her upbringing as a Jehovah’s Witness; “The image of going to hell if I misbehaved was instilled in me from a very early age – should I question or dabble in paganism, eternal damnation was on the cards for me.” As Abbie points out in her article, earlier depictions of witches in media connected them with devil worship and evil, which might have contributed to nervousness about adopting paganism, or ‘coming out of the broom closet’ amongst generations who’d been brought up with these legacies. Often, families of older witches, druids, and others can be reticent in accepting their loved ones’ desires to explore more unconventional faiths.

“The biggest challenge for me was telling my mother,” says Esther, “who told me at the time I was going to burn in hell.” However, Esther kept communication open with her mother through her journey, explaining the fundamentals of her nature-based path and discussing her mother’s questions. This has led to a deeper understanding – if not agreement – between the two: “She has even attended a handfasting [a pagan marriage-type ceremony] with me which I know she really enjoyed.”

For anyone interested in pagan religion, the women advise reading books to research your options. There are certainly plenty to choose from - a search for ‘pagan books’ on Amazon returns over 20,000 results. With books on Wicca and paganism available from high street suppliers such as The Works, and the internet becoming a wonderful tool of connection, it’s easier than ever to gain knowledge on the subject. But while books can give you



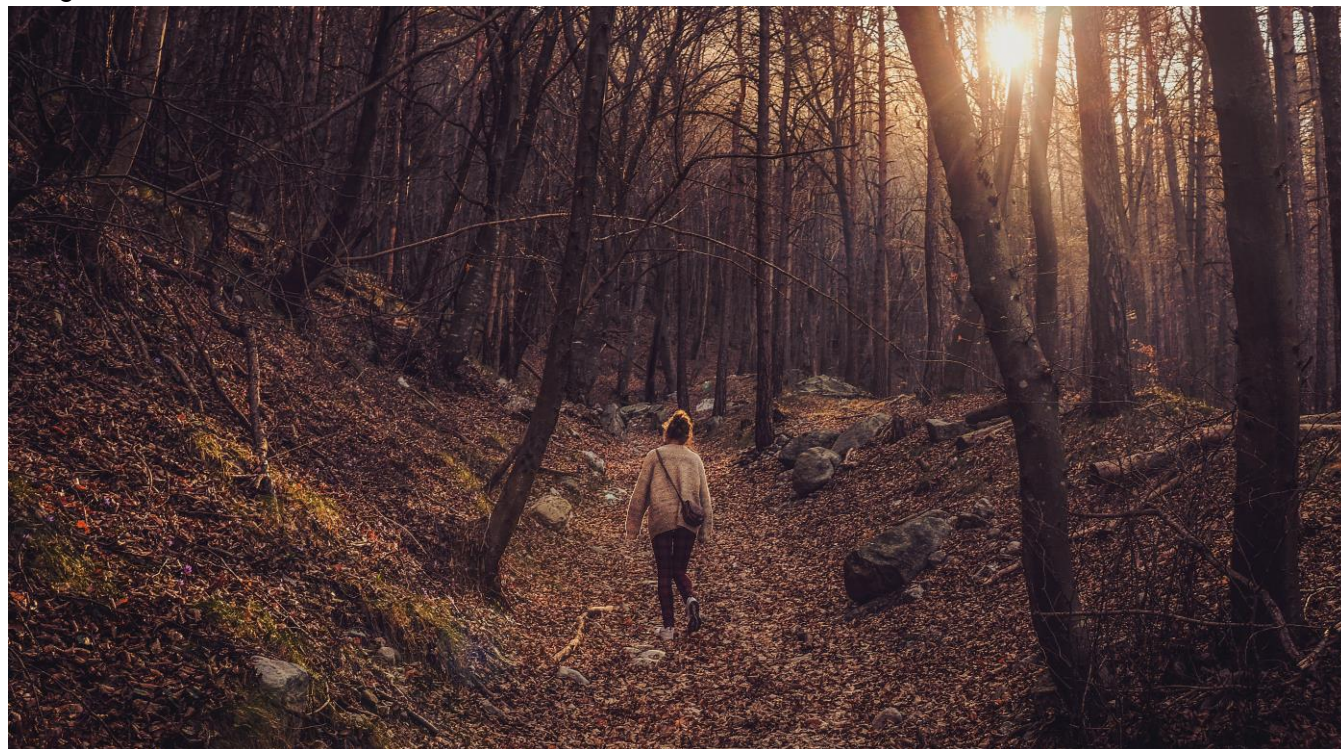
information, a community to turn to for advice is a wonderfully validating thing to be part of. Esther sought advice from elders in a local coven. “I wanted guidance and knowledge that I was on the right path at the time,” she explains, “so I met with a High Priestess in the pagan community.” After the High Priestess consulted with the coven, Esther was initiated. Although she’s no longer with them, she admits she learned a lot about Wiccan practice from them, and still counts the members as friends.

Social media is probably the most powerful tool for connecting with people and communities. The Facebook groups *UK Pagans*, *Heathens*, *Witches and Spiritual People* and *Pagans and Witches of the UK* bring together people from all walks of life and many different religious practices. You may also find groups and pages for local moots (meetings) and communities. The UK Pagan Council is free to join and provides a network of events, contacts, and resources.

The 2011 UK Census data shows that almost half of people following an ‘Other Religion’ – including Wicca, Druidism, Heathenism, and Occultism – were aged between 25 and 49 years, with a further 24% aged from 50 to 64. The women have some ideas about why pagan religions are so popular with people in middle age and older.

“It’s the most accepting way of life out there,” says Ginette. Gill agrees, having also been attracted by the peaceful nature of paganism. She points out; “pagan religion has never caused a war” – indeed, most branches of neo-pagan religion promote tolerance and harmony both within paganism and externally. “I would never force any religion on anyone,” says Gill, encapsulating this refreshing ‘live and let live’ ethos, which in some cases can be in stark contrast to the religious backgrounds of pagan converts.

Despite youthful curiosity towards different religions, Esther's commitment to finding her path was cemented after her father passed away. "I didn't want to think that once you died there's nothing, so I started exploring spirituality," she explains. As we emerge from the hedonistic years of our teens and twenties, when we feel indestructible at times, our own mortality and that of the people around us can begin to dawn on us. It's not hard to see that amongst these often existential feelings, we might be drawn to exploring our place in the natural world and all its cycles – the fundamentals of many neo-pagan religions.



I get a real sense of defiance from the women in talking about their faith. "I don't let people tell me what I should be doing," says Gill, who follows her own path. In fact, the flexibility of paganism is another of its appeals. People who have spent years living within society and religion's written and unwritten rules, find themselves with the freedom to determine their own way of honouring their beliefs. "Every other religion has rules and regulations," says Ginette, "the only one pagans have is *do no harm*". Esther agrees that the ability to hone her own way of practicing was a draw for her; "As a family we do our own thing. I have explored many different paths, so now I take bits from each and my path is ever-evolving. I see my path now as whatever lessons the gods want me to explore and learn from."

Considering the women's differing journeys to different pagan paths, I am struck by the commonality between their sense of control over their faith, their attitude, and outlook. From self-education to designing their own methods of worship, this is religion born from a drive to fulfil a calling, as opposed to being imposed by the circumstance of family or education. For a generation who have always been told that they need to follow rules, I can see why neo-pagan religions appeal to those who never fit the mould they were given. What advice do the women have for people considering converting to a pagan way of life? The answer is unanimous. "Go for it," Ginette summarises, "you won't regret it."

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UNDERSTANDING THE DARK GODDESS

BY FRANCES BILLINGHURST

WHO IS THE DARK GODDESS AND WHY IS SHE IMPORTANT IN OUR MODERN LIVES?

It is common these days for only one aspect of the Dark Goddess to be acknowledged – that of the Crone – but even then, she is often perceived as some kindly “grandmother” figure.

So when we call to her – “Come Crone, come Dark Goddess”, it is little wonder that when Baba Yaga appears with her gnashing teeth and disheveled hair, we run shrieking for the hills. If anything, the Dark Goddess teaches us that life is not “sugar and spice”. She is our reality check.

The Crone, Hag, Wise Woman. These terms are commonly associated with the Dark Goddess, the Keeper of the Cauldron of Knowledge and the Holder of the Keys to the Sacred Mysteries. However, she is also the one who forces us to not only acknowledge but to also embrace our demons. We pigeon hole her as Baba Yaga, Cerridwen, and the Cailleach. Hekate and the Morrighan still find themselves added to this group of Goddesses despite historical evidence stating otherwise.

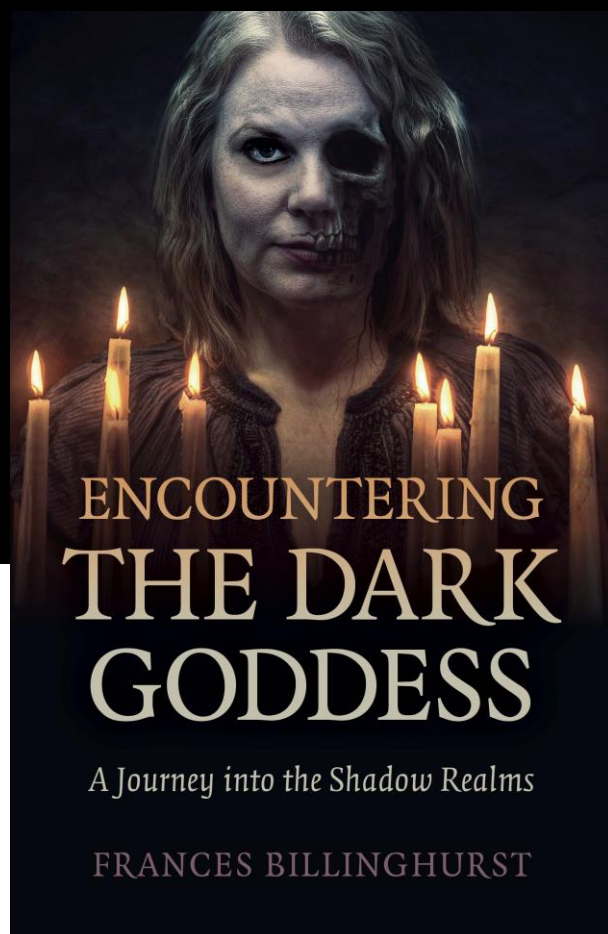
When we try to pigeon-hole her into the relatively modernised concept² of the Goddess being triple in nature, this is often when the problems first start to arise. Many of the Goddesses who are deemed as “dark” actually do not fit into the Crone/Wise Woman description.

The late Shekhinah Mountainwater identified with a “Dark Maiden”, the enchantress, the sorceress, and seductress. It is here that we find Persephone, Sekhmet, Morgan le Faye, Pele, and Lilith amongst other names. All of these Goddesses tend to dispel any perception that Maiden Goddesses are innocent and naïve.

The probably most terrifying aspect of the Dark Goddess, the one we do our best to ignore, is that of the “Dark Mother”, she who creates, destroys only to create again through her power of transformation. We are encouraged to consider mothers as natural nurturers, who offer comfort when the world seems to be against us. Goddesses such as Kali Ma, Macha, Oya and Scathach are all classified as “mothers” yet their love tends to resemble tough love as they often reveal to us things we wish not to accept.

Then there are those Goddesses who cannot fit into any of these categories, and those whose classification as “dark” may come as somewhat of a surprise. For example,

² This connection between the Goddess and the moon was first made by Jane Ellen Harrison in her *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (published in 1902) that was later mentioned by Robert Graves in his poetic work, *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* (first published in 1961)

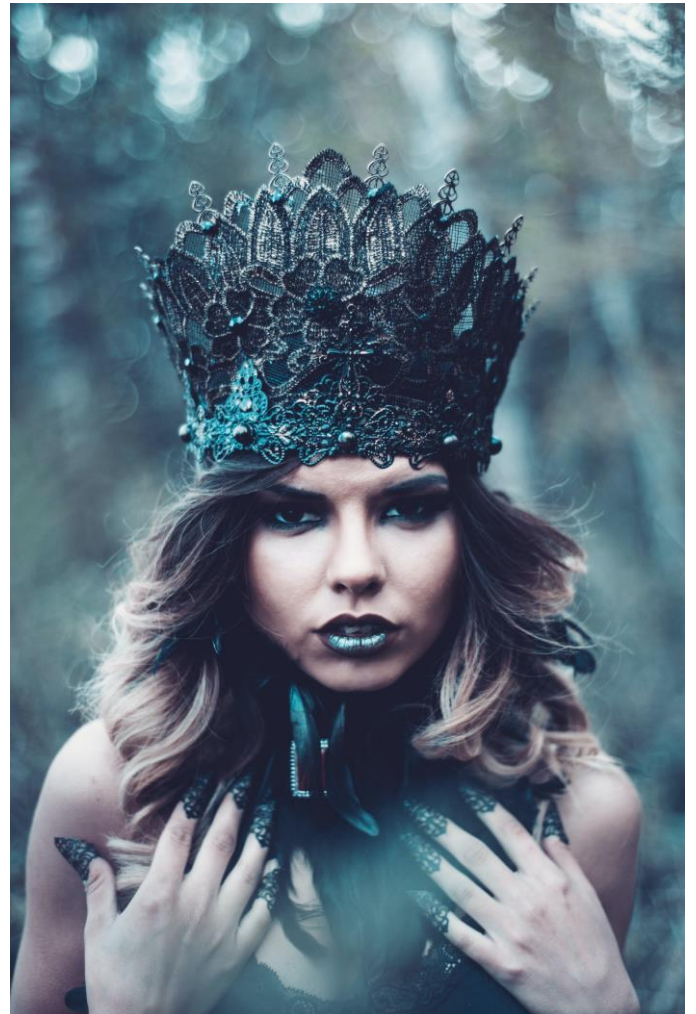


Demeter, the Greek Grain Mother, almost destroyed the world when she went into mourning for her beloved Kore could be termed as “dark”. Isis, the Great Egyptian Goddess (another “mother”), showed her darker side when she poisoned Ra in order to gain his magical powers.

The truth is that there is really no such thing as a specifically “dark” or even a “light” aspect of deity – Goddess or otherwise. What we refer to as “dark” or “light” are aspects to their nature that we are either comfortable with or not.

When talking about the Dark Goddess, Jungian psychology is never too far away. “Dark” represents the repressed or ignored “shadow” aspect of our consciousness and as Demeter George points out, it is often our conditioning that shapes our interpretation of the Dark Goddess and what she represents:

“Through cultural conditioning we have inherited negative and false images of the Dark Goddess, the dark aspect of the feminine. Distorted images of the Goddess include ‘bitch queen’, ‘outcast daughter’, ‘fallen woman’, ‘terrible mother’, ‘wicked witch’, ‘wicked queen or stepmother’, ‘domineering mother in law’, ‘bag lady’, ‘ugly hag’”³



Matomah Alesha offers an interpretation from a more historical perspective:

“She is a genetic, emotional, spiritual archetype that resides in all humanity. She is often pushed away or suppressed but she is never quite conquered or overcome. She is the black orb, the place where all of us collectively depend, emerge, and return to. This is symbolised as the cosmos, the dark earth, the unconscious body-mind, the world of the undead, the genetic mother Lucy, and Africa. She is all of these things and so much more.”⁴

Alesha goes on to state that the word “dark”, when relating to the Goddess, should be considered as a form of energy that has the power, given the right circumstance, to change its shape into illuminating light. These colours change and alter to reflect the ever-aspiring consciousness and its ever-expanding reality as they are extensions of the darkness that give birth to it and are likened to rainbows, pastels in the sky, iridescent stars twinkling in the waters.

The Dark Goddess is also the story of humanity that intimidates the streamline mind of commerce and ego-identity. Within that story, however, is hidden a great spiritual mystery, a hidden truth which must be grasped for the whole story to be completely understood.

³ George, Demeter, *Mysteries of the Dark Moon: The Healing Power of the Dark Goddess* (Harper Collins, 1992)

⁴ Alesha, Matomah, *The First Book of the Dark Goddess* (Matam Press;2004)

Working with the Dark Goddess calls for truth. She projects images of us that we often do not wish to acknowledge, let alone accept. She challenges us to break free of conformity, of our past, and to step beyond our comfort zone. She was with us at the beginning of time – even before time itself for she is its creator. It is she who greets us at the end of our days when we return to her.

Feminist writer, Vicki Noble, in an article for *Woman of Power* magazine, commented that:

“The Dark Goddess is no light weight. She promises trouble, an end to form as we have known it, the death of the ego ... she is impersonal yet she erupts from deep within the human psyche with unexpected passion and rage. She is transformation in the extreme, and her power is regenerative and healing. Like a trickster, she frees us from the trappings that bind us to our tiny personal worlds; like the knife she cuts away all that is unessential and not truthful.”



The Dark Goddess represents the unknown, change and even death. She challenges our reality, what we consider to be “normal”, and forces us to move beyond compliancy. It is no wonder the Dark Goddess is shunned, ignored or even perceived through rose tinted glasses by our modern culture. While she can be found in the shadowy underworld, she is also the creatrix of the cosmos and earth itself. She is enticingly wild and untamed, yet like a siren warned about in the tales of ancient mariners, she can lure us out into the ocean of uncertainty only to find ourselves beyond our comfortable depths.

Yet that is what she teaches us – to step beyond our comfort zone.

When we summon the courage to open ourselves up to the teachings of the Dark Goddess, we realise that in order for us to appreciate the light, we must come from a place of darkness. This darkness is not in the sense of “evil” or foreboding, but in the sense of emptiness, the void, yet which is a containment of all. The Dark Goddess is like the night’s sky and her Mysteries are the limitless volume of stars that shine despite the increasing amount of “light pollution” of our modern world.

In order to truly accept and embrace our own self as perfect, we need to come face to face with the Dark Goddess. We need to find the courage to lift the veil and see what actually lies within because through all her guises, she reflects all aspects within our own selves.

Since 2006 I have been running workshops on working with the Dark Goddess as a way to identity and work with the shadow self. These workshops have also formed the foundation of my forthcoming book, *Encountering the Dark Goddess: A Journey into the Shadow Realms*, due for release in April 2021 through Moon Books. I also will be offering a month long online sadhana (spiritual journey) in October 2020 (from 4 to 31 October, concluding at Samhain in the Northern Hemisphere). Details of the sadhana can be found on through the Temple of the Dark Moon (<http://templedarkmoon.com/training-available/encountering-the-dark-goddess/>).

Bio:

Frances Billinghamurst is a prolific writer with an interest in folklore, mythology, and ancient cultures. Her articles have appeared in various publications including Llewellyn's *Witch's Calendar*, *The Cauldron*, *Unto Herself: A Devotional Anthology to Independent Goddesses*, *Naming the Goddess*, *Witchcraft Today: 60 Years On* and *The Faerie Queens: A Collection of Essays Exploring the Myths, Magic and Mythology of the Faerie Queens*. She is the author of *Dancing the Sacred Wheel: A Journey through the Southern Sabbats* and *In Her Sacred Name: Writings on the Divine Feminine*, and the editor of *Call of the God: An Anthology Exploring the Divine Masculine within Modern Paganism*. Frances's long awaited *Encountering the Dark Goddess; A Journey into the Shadow Realms* will be released in April 2021 (through Moon Books), with *Contemporary Witchcraft: Foundations for a Magical Life* to be made available later that year. When she is not writing, Frances is attempting to replicate the Hanging Gardens of Babylon on her patch of Australian dirt, beading, and journeying between the worlds. More information about Frances can be found on her blog (<http://francesbillinghamurst.blogspot.com.au>), on Instagram, or crafting magick with the Temple of the Dark Moon (www.templedarkmoon.com).

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PAGAN MENTAL HEALTH

BY FAIRY BEC – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

THE SUBJECT OF MENTAL HEALTH IN PAGANISM HAS COME UP A FEW TIMES FOR ME RECENTLY. ALL CONVERSATIONS HAVE BEEN POSITIVE AND ABOUT HOW WE, AS PAGANS, GENERALLY HAVE A STRONG MENTAL ATTITUDE TO LIFE AND HAVE A STRONG RESILIENCE DURING CHANGES. I AM NOT SAYING THAT WE DON'T SUFFER AND THAT WE NEVER HAVE DARK THOUGHTS, JUST THAT WE HAVE AN EXCELLENT PHILOSOPHICAL 'TOOL KIT' TO ACCEPT AND DEAL WITH IT. IT HAS LEAD ME TO PONDER WHY.

My initial response is that it is because we are people centred. (Any excuse for a party!) We generally focus on stories, music and having fun rather than superficial elements such as material gain or what we or others look like. I have never been to a Pagan event where people are negatively judgemental of others. We all seem to be more about the feeling and the vibe and celebrating individualism.

"Merry Meet and Merry Part" is also an important element for me. It reminds us to be respectful and show people that we care enough to take time to leave on a happy vibe. We also, on the whole, love a good fire. The seasons when humans struggle with mental health most are the seasons that we are most likely to light our fires. Staring into a fire brings reflection and warmth. It is also often a sociable thing so it brings us away from technology and back to the human interaction/company that we need to feel supported. (Fake fires and candlelight can also bring a similar warmth.) As a cherry on the top of the cake, it also draws us closer to our ancestors as this is what they would have done every single day before electricity was invented.

In addition to the human and social side, we Pagans learn that we can ask for protection, energy from spirit, from the angels, from the gods, from the Earth and we don't do so with ego involved. We simply know it is there if we need it, we just have to ask.

Another interesting thought is that we are secure in our beliefs. We are happy to live alongside a huge diversity of beliefs and we don't feel the need to preach and try to convert others. The word Pagan is an umbrella term within which are both clearer pathways such as Wicca as well as an encouragement to find your own pathway with hedge-witchery, shamanism, herbology and more.

Also, there is nothing within our practices that threatens punishment when we make a mistake or lose control of our emotions. We go with a growth mindset of learning from our journeys, releasing and moving forwards.

We Pagans work with cycles so we are already open to releasing what does not serve us before bringing in the new and positive energies. Us female witches are used to the ebb and flow of monthly cycles and often will follow these naturally with the moon anyway.

On a final note – "So mote it be" is a phrase adapted from the Freemasons that is used in a lot of Pagan rituals nowadays. We accept that some things are just the way they are because that is what is meant to be. It helps us focus on that which we can control and to not worry about that which we cannot.

The elemental tool kit:-

EARTH

- To feel grounded is a very good way to maintain emotional stability or to start to build ourselves back up to a more positive state of mind. A simple way to feel grounded is to sit with your feet firmly on the floor. Then imagine that you have roots growing out of the bottoms of your feet and into the ground.
- Hugging a tree. Some people literally do this and feel their energy rejuvenated. I met a chap in the woods the other day who told me that he puts his hands to the Fairy Oak and knocks three times every day for good luck.
- Crystals also connect us with the Earth and can raise our energies positively. I swear by my crystal bible to look up appropriate crystals to help my family, friends and myself along with whatever is most important in our lives at the time.

AIR

- For me, there is nothing more rejuvenating than standing at the top of a hill (or Tor) closing your eyes and imagining the wind is literally sweeping away the cobwebs of any negative thought.
- We can also use our breath and meditate a while on drawing in positive thoughts and blowing away the negative. When you blow away, imagine it going up and being dispersed, make sure it does not get directed at anybody or anything in particular.
- Lastly, we often work with scent in the way of scented candles, aromatherapy and incense. There are many studies that show how key essential oils can boost emotional and physical wellbeing.

FIRE

- I went to a Pagan event at the start of this year and the question “Has anyone ever performed a banishment spell?” came up. There was a mutter, some tittering and then a raising of hands followed by exchanges of knowing looks. Sometimes we need to forcefully eject elements of our life that bring us down. This does not have to be a person, you might be trying to lose weight for example. I light a candle assigned to the element I am focussing on ridding myself of. I visualise it releasing and going away then I blow the candle out and make a flicking action with my fingers away from me. Sometimes you do have to do it a few times for it to take full effect. Banishment spells make us feel very empowered but you must be 100% sure you want to rid your life of the element you are focussing on.
- I also use fire to send things into the ether – especially around Samhain. As a family, we write wishes for ourselves and others and burn them on our ceremonial fire. I then put the ashes in the flower beds.
- I have heard of people burning items and photos that being them negative thoughts and feelings. Fire is an extremely cleansing tool but please make sure you are safe with it.

WATER

- Dissolving is the word that first comes to mind. My most powerful spell was one I painted on a piece of rice paper and let it into the sea at Whitby. I was at a real crossroads and desperately needed a sign to show me which pathway to take. I got that sign very quickly afterwards.
- Running water also offers a cathartic result. Stare at running water such as a river and imagine that it is taking and dispersing any worries away with it.
- I also use water by way of cleansing and detoxing. I try my best to drink at least two litres a day. I boil then cool the water, put it in my re-usable bottles and then in the fridge. The cool, calming effect helps make me feel re-energised.

SPIRIT

- Belief is a strong tool for generating hope. It does not matter what religious or spiritual belief you have or how superstitious you are. If you believe in something, you give it power.
- Us Pagans will readily discuss death in its many forms. This is unusual in the Western Cultures. Mortality is one of the things that humans can struggle with, especially if themselves or someone they love is poorly. We, as Pagans, know that something of everyone lives on in some format even when they have passed on.
- One of the things I love about being Pagan is the acceptance of all 'gods'. There are no closed doors, a god or goddess is a god or goddess and we are humans. They are there, as are the angels, like faithful friends waiting to support us when we ask them to.

So mote it be.



Wiccan Warriors



Merry meet!

I'm Penny, I'm a wiccan & doula.

What on earth is a Doula? I hear you ask....

Doula's have been around for thousands of years

Supporting women through pregnancy & birthing.

I can be your sole support or work alongside your partner.

I offer practical and emotional support to help you remain a true goddess throughout your pregnancy & birth journey.

If you want incense burning, healing music, reiki,
affirmations, crystals & empowerment to have your baby,
then you need ME!

Whether you have a homebirth, Freebirth, VBAC, Waterbirth or hospital birth, you need a doula. If it's your first baby or your 7th, I will work alongside your midwives to give you the best birth experience possible.

Women are goddesses, at their most powerful when birthing.

I can support you antenatally, attend your birth and postnatally. I'm also a Peer Breastfeeding Supporter.

I am based in Isham, Northamptonshire and can travel upto 90 minutes for births (up to 2 hours for postnatal care only)

I am registered with Doula UK & have a clear current DBS.

Check out my website for information: wiccanwarriors.co.uk

Email: Pennyawest@aol.co.uk Tel: 07956 498652

MY WITCH'S JOURNAL

BY PORTLAND JONES – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

I ENJOY KEEPING A JOURNAL. I USED TO THINK OF IT AS MY BOOK OF SHADOWS, WHERE I RECORDED DETAILS OF THAT WHICH I DISCUSSED WITH FELLOW WITCHES, OF MY LEARNING, OF THE RITUALS WE PERFORMED, OF THE MAGIC WE WORKED. OVER THE YEARS, THE CONTENTS HAVE CHANGED TO INCLUDE THINGS NOT SPECIFICALLY TO DO WITH THE CRAFT, BUT WHICH ARE IMPORTANT TO ME AS I MAKE MY WAY THROUGH LIFE.

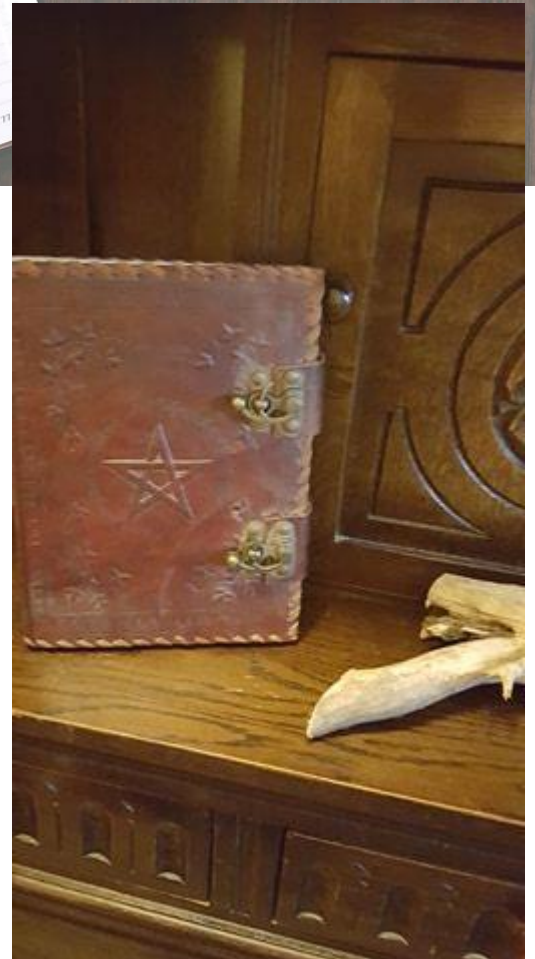
After all, my pagan beliefs shape the way I relate to life events, shape my thoughts. How I react to, and cope, with life events shapes my pagan beliefs. My journal becomes a book of plans, of joys, of fears, and of confessions, all merged in a way that expresses who I am, reflects the inner me.

I have to confess I am not good at keeping a journal. I will start with all good intentions, the entries regular and in depth, but I get caught up in the busyness of life. The entries become shorter and more infrequent until they peter out. Then I miss my wonderings and regret not doing it, so I start another.

As I refreshed my altar for the autumn equinox, I found myself reading my journal from 2016. This was one I had kept fairly well. I would like to share with you some snippets. Some of these struck a chord as I read through them, made me stop and think, still relevant. I started this journal on 31st December 2015, the calendar New Year's Eve.

'An over-whelming sense of loneliness. The world moves on but leaves part behind, like mud dropping off the turning wheel as it cuts a track forward. I take down the Yuletide greenery, holly so bright with berries now jaded, mistletoe with opaque, softly glowing berries promising new love, new hope, winding pointing ivy, wrapping everything into its grasp, dry prickly pine cones, leftovers from the re-birth cycle. I unplug the Christmas lights, take the ornaments off the tree, drying and brittle. I carry all this outlived festiveness outside, out of my home and leave it lonely in the garden.

How like those special people who lit up my life last year, who brought happiness and joy. Those who won't be making the journey with me in the coming year. The dropping mud that falls from the wheel and is left behind. For some, it is meant to be, death right and proper in the fullness of time. Some, it is my decision, an event, a principle, that decision to go our separate ways, still memories of what was. Some, it stops abruptly, cut short, other forces crashing in, forcing a change in direction, taking away my choices. This hurts the most.



I have people moving forward with me, loved ones, cherished ones, ones to be put up with, and those I have yet to know. But my new year eve is no celebration; it's a time to mourn, to be sad, to remember what was.

And so I burn the once festive greenery, to let it burn brightly, warm us, enchant us once again, just briefly, remind us of what was, before I gather myself, dust myself off, and roll onwards into a new year.'

As I read this entry, I was surprised at the sense of sadness there. I always think of myself as the eternal optimist, so I turned the pages a little apprehensive as to what I would find next.



Tuesday 5th January 2016

'First witchy night of the year. A planning meeting, always a planning meeting. Though how often those plans fail, with good humour and often laughter, a recognition of what we would like to achieve and also of our inherently fickle natures, easily distracted.'

We planned a trip to Glastonbury, agreed to take a look at numerology, the personal symbolism of the pentagram, science and belief, noetic science, which we did. We didn't make it to Pendle, nor to pagan pride in Nottingham. One thing we planned to do, which turned out very successfully, was a day out to locate, and record in photos, all the green man images on the buildings in Birmingham city centre.

My records of our session on numerology made me chuckle. The descriptions of how I was described according to the numbers read as follows. The Boss – practical, decision maker, takes control. The Idealist – seeker, tolerant, unselfish, loving, cheerful, flabby. I'll take all of that, including the 'flabby' description!

I recorded our Imbolc ritual, organising a baby shower for my daughter and deciding if I should be called Gran or Nan (we settled on Nan). I wrote my quarter call for the ritual at Stonehenge.

*'IN THE SOUTH, SPIRIT OF FIRE
SPARKING, PULSING, RAGING FIRE,
POWER TO WARM, TO HEAL, INSPIRE,
THE POWER TO DESTROY
TO RAZE THE GROUND CLEAN.
THE POWER TO CLEANSE
CREATE NEW BEGINNINGS,
BRING FORTH NEW LIFE.
COME JOIN US THIS SUMMER DAWN
HAIL AND WELCOME.'*

Importantly, we planned our Samhain ritual, my favourite time of year.

*'THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE
WE REMEMBER YOU.
WE LEARNED FROM YOU,
WE EVOLVED FROM YOU.
WE ARE ONE AND THE SAME.
WE LIVE, WE GROW, WE BLEED, WE DIE,
YOUR STORY, OUR STORY.'*

We look around this changing world. We don't know our future, will it be good or bad?
Your fears, our fears.

Will there be peace or war?

Will the crops ripen, or will our young fail in man-made devastation?
Your worries, our worries.

No matter what life throws at us, we live on, we make our way forward, sometimes quickly, sometimes, oh so slowly, shouldering burdens.
Your strength, our strength.
We watch the glorious sunset, autumn trees. We rejoice in the birth of a precious child, the soft, snuffly nose of a dog.
Your joys, our joys.

We see a loved one pass from those we are now to those who came before.
Your sadness, our sadness.

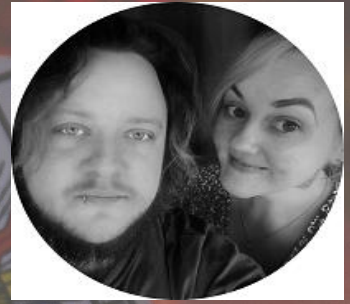
And life moves on, with its joys and sadness, hopes and fears, till we too become those who came before.'



My last entry in this journal was 23rd February 2017. This was just a few days before I had a stroke that created chaos, disrupted my life. I think I was meant to find this journal, at the autumn equinox, this wonderful time of balance, and thankfulness for what we have harvested. I have moved on from that life event, with many lessons learned, about endurance and acceptance. I have a new future to look forward to. It's about time I started recording it.

RAVEN & LUNA'S

OCTOBER TAROTSCOPES



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LIBRA *5 of Wands, The Emperor, Ace of Cups*

Be aware of butting heads with those closest to you. With emotions so high, arguments may ensue. It may hurt just that little bit more because it is someone who you love. There could also be inner conflict- a new masculine energy in your life and the intense feelings that they come with could have you wondering if they're really any good for you. Something you thought was solved may now be the subject of disagreement. Pause before reacting and try not to force people to be a certain way in regards to their emotional reactions.

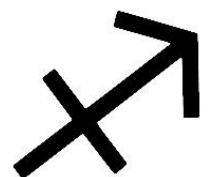


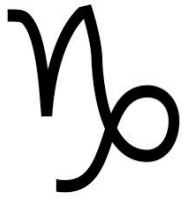
♍ SCORPIO *6 of Wands, 7 of Wands*

You'll get the recognition you deserve for a job well done. Expect to be popular and to have people looking up to you but remember that not everyone is going to be happy. There may be jealousy and a need to fight your corner in order to keep your crown.

SAGITTARIUS *Justice, 2 of Pentacles*

You may receive a fine but it's important that you don't ignore it. Make room for it in your budget, as it's better to deal with it now so that you don't end up with a bigger debt. There may be compensation if you're waiting for it but be careful not to spend it all at once.



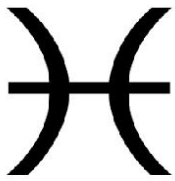
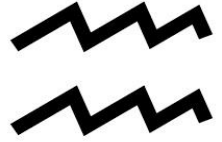


CAPRICORN *Knight of Cups, 4 of Swords*

We can see that you want to help and although it is coming from the right place, it might be coming across as too much or not how you intended. You can't help everyone, sometimes you have to put yourself first. Put aside your pride and ask for assistance.

AQUARIUS *The Hanged Man, 6 of Cups*

Someone you haven't seen for a while may re-enter your life or do something to make you see them in a different light. Something you thought was true isn't or your understanding of a situation was incorrect. Do you need to admit you were wrong? Healing and forgiveness is needed.

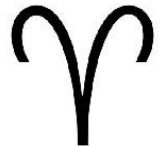


PISCES *Queen of Wands, The High Priestess*

You're going to be extra intuitive and sensitive to energy. You may have a profound spiritual or spooky experience. Be careful not to get too overwhelmed and keep yourself energetically protected at all times. Don't let anyone gaslight you, you know what you're talking about.

ARIES *Knight of Wands, The Magician*

It's time to take action and gain control of your life or a situation, especially if you're trying to deliberately manifest something. You may be learning something new and are hoping for good results- visualise the best outcome. If you're thinking of applying for somewhere for study or work, go for it.

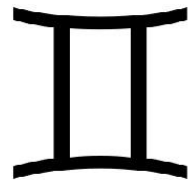


Taurus *8 of Pentacles, The Hermit*

You're going to be hard at work with no time for much else. You may also have an opportunity to work from home. You won't want to socialise but you might have to. You'll start seeing a positive result for the effort you've put into a project or yourself.

GEMINI *Ace of Wands, The Star*

Good fortune shines on any new studies, projects, jobs or if you've started on a spiritual journey. Something you've been hoping for is likely to materialise but you do need to grab opportunities as they arise and know that you deserve it. You'll be given the chance to show what you can do.

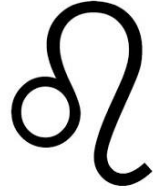


CANCER *7 of Wands, Strength*

You may be the victim of jealousy or feel like everything is getting on top of you. In this overwhelming month, channel your inner strength. If it's something you actually wanted embrace it, as ingratitude hinders progress. Prepare for a busy few weeks by knowing that you can do this!

LEO *The High Priestess, 9 of Swords*

You may not feel like your normal self. Be careful of psychic attacks, especially if you're doing any energy work. You will feel extra sensitive so ensure that you're energetically protecting yourself and that you aren't attempting things beyond your capabilities. Reach out if you're struggling. Your doubt could be due to an outside influence.



VIRGO *The Lovers, 3 of Swords*

Relationships with those closest to you will be a struggle, particularly romantic partnerships. There will be break ups, misunderstandings and quarrels. You could be feeling unappreciated. You may experience a broken promise, a lack of support or be expecting something that isn't going to be delivered. Be extra careful with your words ,they can't be taken back.

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Five Minute Fiction &
Poetry



LIKE A CURSE – PART 2

A G WORTHINGTON – WITCH RESIDENT WRITER

I listen to the footsteps they make as they retreat into the cottage and as soon as the front door clicks shut, I make my way to the rear of the cottage and to the back door which Isolde has left ajar.

‘I don’t believe I got your name,’ I hear the stranger, Alder, say to my mistress.

‘How terribly rude of me. It’s Rose.’

‘Rose...’ He repeats it in a drawn-out way as if he were feeling the weight of it on his tongue. ‘A pretty name.’

‘Thank you,’ Isolde says, and I can hear the smile in her voice, fake as the name she gave him. It’s quiet then, save the shuffling footsteps and creaking of someone sitting down in the wooden chair by the fireplace. I close my eyes and reach out across the bond my mistress and I share and when I open my eyes again I am seeing through her own. Her body stiffens ever so slightly as she feels my presence but other than that she gives nothing away to our company.

Alder looks totally at ease in the old oak rocking chair, his nervous energy from outside dissipated. We watch as he casts what I’m sure is supposed to look like a casual gaze around the room. My mistress is very careful and there are no tools or trinkets on display that would make outsiders suspect they were in the presence of a witch. At most, this home looks to belong to an eccentric aging widow who is living out the remainder of her days in peaceful isolation. In fact, there are very few things in this front room that give any kind of real insight into my mistress’ life.

‘You have a lovely home,’ Alder finally says, his gaze coming to rest on us.

‘It’s not perfect, but I like it well enough,’ Isolde says, and I can feel how carefully she is trying to keep her tone neutral, to keep from asking any demanding questions. Who are you? Why are you here? What do you want?

‘I must confess, I may have told a lie out there.’ He nods towards the front door. ‘I was hoping to come across you. Though I did not expect for you to be so very hard to track. This forest is not so large, though I have found myself wandering for days now.’

Isolde has many protections cast in the forest. It’s likely he was close to the wards many times only to be ‘turned around’ and found to be walking in circles.

‘You know me,’ Isolde pushes forward with. ‘You have me at a disadvantage then, as I do not know you.’

‘We have not met, this is true, and I only know you from...’ He trails off and gestures loosely with his hands, trying to find the right word. ‘Whispers,’ he settles on, and his meaning is all too clear.

‘And what did these whispers tell you?’

‘Oh, many things.’

Alder stands then, and it takes great strength for Isolde not to step back. But she stands her ground and instead of coming directly towards her, he turns to look at the dormant fireplace. His fingers trace along the mantle and dart over the miniature framed and displayed at the centre.

‘They told of an old woman in the woods.’

He turns back around, cradling the portrait, and studies it for a long moment.

‘Is this you?’ he asks lightly, the tip of his finger dancing around the figure painted on the right.

I know the image well. Isolde is painted there, younger and brighter, with a great flowing mane of dark hair and a smile in her eyes. In the portrait she is looking at another woman, one with a stricter dress and maintained appearance contrasting the wildness of Isolde. This woman has fair skin and pale, guarded eyes though her lips in the picture are quirked in a secret smile. This painting is perhaps the only thing in the room of any worth to my mistress. I can feel her recoil at someone else holding it.

‘Not your sister, surely?’ Alder asks.

‘Not my sister, no.’

Alder shrugs his shoulders and puts the portrait back, but lies it face down. Isolde flinches.

‘I was told of a woman in these woods who can heal the sick and wounded. I hear she performs miracles, in fact.’

‘No miracles here. Just natural remedies and an understanding of basic science.’

‘Science,’ he drawls. ‘Some say it is only witchcraft disguised.’

‘Perhaps the two are not mutually exclusive.’

‘Sorcery is outlawed in these parts.’

‘Yes,’ Isolde agrees. ‘Yet science is not.’

‘So you admit it?’

‘Admit what? That I help those who come to me seeking aid? That I allowed you into my home under that very same guise only for you to hurl accusations at me?’

‘That you are a witch.’

‘You say it like it’s a curse,’ Isolde tuts.

‘You do not deny it?’

‘No, I do not,’ she proclaims, head held high. I curse her foolishness.

‘Then by the laws of this land, I must strike you down.’

‘I will not fight you.’

‘Then you are craven, too.’

With an almighty rush, I am thrust out of my mistress’ body and back into my own out on the back porch. I hear a crash of commotion indoors and throw caution to the wind. I slip through into the cottage.

To be continued...

KINSHIP

BY LAURA BILLIGAHAM

Fee wasn't sure when she had first realised she was different. From a very young age she was aware of being able to 'do' things that other people couldn't, but she'd never put a name to her powers.

Adopted as a small child by a God-fearing couple and denied access to any of her kin (not that she knew if she had any blood relatives) she had learned very early on to hide anything out of the ordinary. The first (and only) time she had said anything at all to her adoptive parents about her unusual abilities had resulted in no supper for a week and extra chores. As they berated her for her 'unnatural powers' Fee had the feeling that if they could have beaten them out of her, they would.

To keep the peace, she promised never to use her abilities again. She kept her mouth shut and was careful never to do anything which may lead her parents to believe she was still using her gifts.

In private of course she delighted in using magick...just in small inconsequential ways; like levitating and floating around her room or calling for things to come to her when she felt too lazy to get up and get them. She wasn't really sure how exactly her power worked, with no one to talk to or learn from, she simply made things up as she went along. If she wanted to fly, she just thought about it and it happened. When she wanted an object to come to her she commanded it to...it was as simple as that.

Her parents had moved town when they adopted her – “for a new start” they told her when she asked why. When she was old enough to understand, Fee reckoned they had moved because everyone in the old neighbourhood had known they had adopted a child rather than produce one themselves. She was wrong on that count - they simply wanted to keep her from her past.

Keen to obliterate any trace of magick, or at least bury it so deep that it didn't resurface, they dragged Fee to church every Sunday, enrolled her in Sunday school and sent her to a church run school. Religion was thrust upon her at every occasion. She simply absorbed all the good parts: be kind, be good, love thy neighbour etc; ignored all the bad bits: sexism, homophobia, hypocrisy, and kept right on doing her magick.

As she grew older she realised that her parents were scared of her, not because they realised what she could do – she'd been far too careful to hide her abilities after that first occasion –

but because of what they knew about her past. She didn't know how she knew that; they never spoke to her about her life before she was adopted aged 4, but somehow she did. Sometimes she would catch them looking at her and then at each other, a wary look in their eyes.

Their unease grew the older she got, fuelled perhaps by the fact that as she passed puberty she developed into a strikingly attractive young woman. Dark, almost black, curly hair framed a heart shaped face, almond shaped hazel-green eyes fringed with long black eyelashes were set above a small straight nose and full rosy lips. Physically she was the complete opposite of her adoptive parents in every way; they were tall, she barely topped 5'4"; they were bulky and out of shape, she was lithe and strong; they were blonde, she was dark.

It was inevitable that comparisons were drawn by outsiders. When the three of them were seen together people would nod knowingly to each other and Fee's adoptive parents became paranoid about appearing in public with her. This suited her down to the ground as they stopped wanting her to accompany them everywhere; especially church; and left her more or less to her own devices.

One day just after her eighteenth birthday; which had barely been acknowledged let alone celebrated; Fee, on a whim decided to catch a bus to the nearest big city. To the best of her knowledge she had never visited there before, but as the bus drew closer to the centre, she began to experience a very strong sense of déjà vu.

The tiny hairs on the back of her neck began to prickle and she felt a tingle down her spine. Although she had planned to journey right into the main bus station in the city centre, she found herself pressing the bell to halt the bus as it passed through an outlying suburb. Almost in a trance Fee jumped from the bus and stopped to watch it pull away. She was standing outside a line of three shops – a newsagent, proudly proclaiming it sold National Lottery tickets; a hairdresser and the one she was directly in front of. This particular shop had paintwork the colour of the sky at the deepest darkest part of the night accented by a trim of metallic silver. The sign above the window read "Witch Way is Up" and the window display was a mish mash of dream catchers, crystals and other random esoterica.

Fee was charmed and pushed open the door eager to have a browse around the types of objects her adoptive parents would have a blue fit about; calling them 'the work of the devil'. A pleasant tinkling bell sound announced her arrival into the shop which appeared to be empty apart from herself. As she was cursorily examining a haphazard stack of books a voice emerged from the recess of the shop causing her to jump and knock over the pile.

"Bugger!" she exclaimed falling to her knees to gather up the scattered volumes.

"No need to fuss my dear, here, let me help you."

Fee turned her head and spied a woman, perhaps in her early 40s long dark hair loosely plaited, wearing a voluminous purple dress which reached to her ankles. She was smiling widely and her dark eyes crinkled at the corners, this was a woman who embraced laughter if the tracery of fine lines around her eyes were anything to go by. As she reached Fee however, her expression changed to one of shocked recognition.

“It can’t be! Come here, let me see you properly!”. The woman stretched out a hand and lightly cupped the side of Fee’s face causing a tingle, almost like a mild electric shock, to pass through her.

“Fee!” It wasn’t a question. “Oh my dear, I never thought I would see you again!” Rising to her feet a shocked Fee faced the stranger, who didn’t *feel* like a stranger in the slightest. They were exactly the same height and their eyes connected immediately; Fee felt a tremor of recognition herself...” Mum?” Although only just four when she’d been adopted she still vaguely remembered a pretty woman with dark eyes telling her stories and rocking her to sleep.

The older woman nodded, eyes glassy with tears. “I should have guessed you would find your way here eventually. They told me never to look for you, but I suppose they didn’t count on the bond we have and that you’d come looking for me!”

“But I wasn’t looking for you, at least I don’t think I was – I just needed to get away from my parents. Their house makes me so claustrophobic. I was heading for the city centre, but something made me get off here...OH!” The penny dropped. “It was YOU!”

“Well not just me” the other woman said. “When they took you from me I cast a bonding spell over both of us. It meant that if ever we were near each other we would find a way to meet. I’d lost hope of that happening if I’m honest – fourteen years is a long time, I worried the spell had lost its magick. Speaking of which...”

Fee smiled, “Yes I can do some!” she said allowing herself to levitate, just enough so that she was raised above her mum. “We have a lot to catch up on I think!” None of this felt at all strange to Fee, in fact, just the opposite, for the first time that she could remember she felt at ease with herself and her surroundings... she felt accepted for who and what she was. But she had questions.

Her mother headed for the shop door, locked it and turned the sign to ‘closed’, her face was wreathed in smiles. “Come, I need to show you something”.

Fee followed her through the door at the rear of the shop and up a steep flight of stairs to what was obviously the living accommodation. The space was small but spick and span, the walls were painted white and adorned with colourful mandalas and exquisite images of plants

and trees whilst crystals were strewn across the windowsill. She took a seat on the single sofa which was draped in a soft throw covered in colourful representations of the 'tree of life' – it was a beautiful room and one in which she felt right at home.

Her mother, and she knew beyond doubt this WAS her mother, disappeared into another room and returned seconds later carrying a wooden box. Sitting down next to Fee she told her a story which was both shocking and yet rang very true. She explained that her 'adoptive parents' had in fact snatched Fee when she was not quite four years old (the day before her birthday in fact) and threatened her mother with all sorts of retribution if she had tried to find them. They were devout Christians, vehemently opposed to anything they considered Pagan and they had been utterly convinced that she was a devil worshipper who was leading her daughter along a path of evil.

Fee was dumbstruck – what had given them the right to take her? She was chilled to the core...what could they have threatened her mother with to keep them apart all these years. She had to ask.

In response to the question, her mother handed her a single piece of paper. Fee recognised the handwriting – her adopted father's. The note read: "Miriam, we have taken your daughter Fee. It is an abomination to us that one so innocent is being raised to worship Satan. We have saved her from you and your master and will raise her as our own. If you try to get her back we will have no option but to take her life and return her soul to God to save her from your evilness".

Fee watched as the paper slowly drifted down from her cold hand to the floor. Her gut told her that he had meant every word of that chilling message – they would have killed her if her mother had tried to find her. To them that would have been mercy, not murder.

Miriam, hugged her daughter, she had hoped against hope that Fee would find her, that the magick which was part of her lineage and her birth right would have survived – and it clearly had...they could start her training now – training that would see Fee join the others around the world silently fighting to keep light in the world.



Grimoire



October 2020

HAG STONES

BY FAIRY BEC

Hag stones are stones with a natural hole in them. They also get called Witch stones, Adder stones, Odin stones, Hex stones, Fairy stones, Holy stones and Eye stones.

I love a hag stone. I have no preference for size, shape or colour. Any hag stone bring me joy.

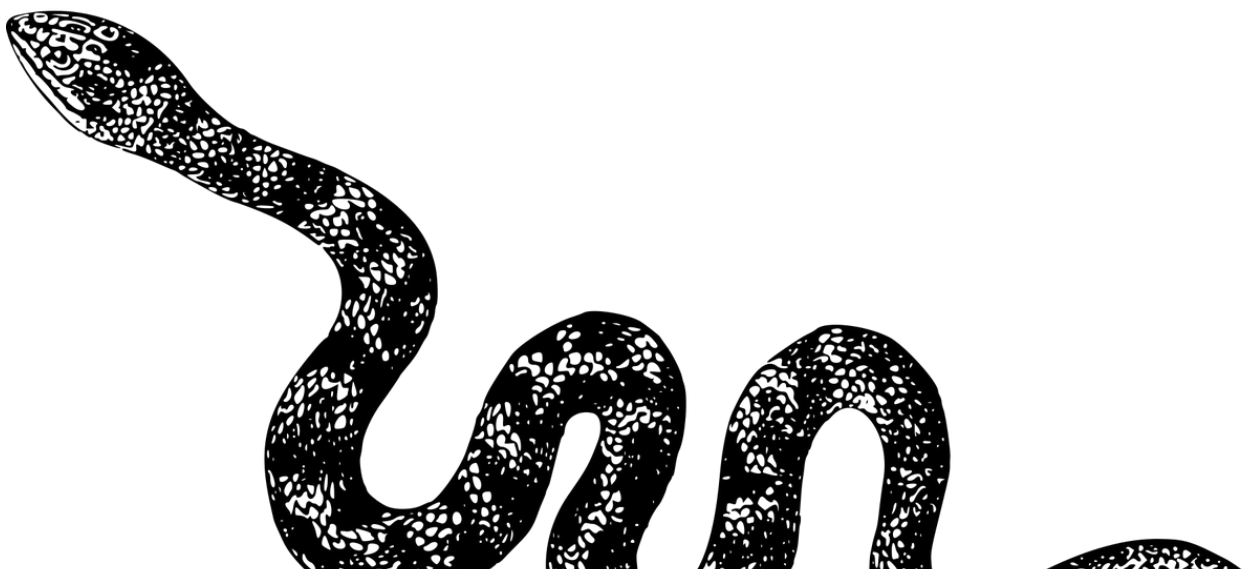
I collect mine from beaches after a storm and ideally near a full moon.

Hag stones have three main purposes for me:-

- 1) Protection – wear them, place them at your property boundaries, keep one in your pocket.
- 2) Increased spirit vision – look through one, use one in spell craft, opens up portals (especially at Samhain).
- 3) Fertility – represents the feminine, insert a stick in the hole, tie one to your bedpost.



Do you have a favourite spell or ritual you would like to share? Email them to witchzine.submissions@gmail.com and we will feature them in future issues!



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