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# WITCH Magazine

Welcome to the November edition of WITCH magazine.

This month we see articles from our Residency Writers, plus the low down on the Gemini Full Moon from Michelle Rose Boxley.



You will find the concluding installment of Like a Curse in our Five Minute Fiction, and the latest Tarotscopes from Raven and Luna to take you through to the Winter Solstice.

Thank you to all our contributors to our November issue! We love seeing what you have to share each month!

As always, if you have something you would like to share with us, visit us at [www.witchzine.co.uk](http://www.witchzine.co.uk) or email [witchzine.submissions@gmail.com](mailto:witchzine.submissions@gmail.com)

-Bekki, Editor of WITCH magazine

Additional black and white photography by Klaire Dawn Ader

## FEATURING

FULL MOON IN GEMINI  
TAROTSCOPES  
FIVE MINUTE FICTION  
SPIRIT GUIDES AND  
THE CHAKRAS  
GRIMOIRE  
THE RITE OF SPRING BY  
DAVEY DODDS

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# WITCH

## 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.



### 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 [offaspress.co.uk](http://offaspress.co.uk)

### 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/](http://agworthing.tumblr.com/).



### 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](http://www.rubek.co.uk)

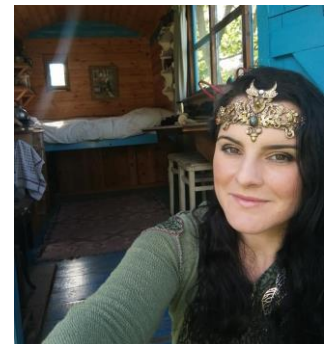
## SOPHIE FLETCHER

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.



## HELEN J R BRUCE

Helen JR Bruce is an author and illustrator based in Somerset. She draws inspiration from a deep calling to bring the myths of the land back into everyday experience. Alongside writing for a number of magazines, including Indie Shaman, Touchstone and Gramarye, she is currently working on the second book in her folkloric fantasy trilogy. Blending myth and reality, she collides she apparent world and the realm of story in order to breath fresh life into folktales and provide ancient perspectives on our lives.



[www.facebook.com/heatofthehunt](http://www.facebook.com/heatofthehunt) Facebook Group: Dark Fae, Black Dogs & Wild Hunters

# DIY YULE DECORATIONS

BEKKI JO MILNER – WITCH EDITOR

*Gather some apples and oranges and make some decorations to hang in your tree or around your home!*

## YOU WILL NEED:      METHOD

Apples and oranges  
A knife  
Oven tray (And oven!)  
Needle and thread

Optional:  
Cranberries, cinnamon  
sticks

1. **Pre-heat your oven** on the lowest setting. In order to dry and not cook the slices, your oven needs to be as low as possible, for the longest time possible.

*I used Gas Mark 1 and left them for 6.5 hours.*

2. **Slice your apples and oranges** horizontally (that is, across the middle if you think of the “upright” fruit”).

This will ensure you have the traditional looking orange slice and reveal the magical 5 pointed star at the centre of the apple.

Lay out the slices of fruit on kitchen towel and press gently to remove some of the moisture. Do this two or three times – it will help to reduce the time it takes for them to dry!



3. **Lay your slices of fruit** out on an oven tray as pictured.

Depending on how much fruit you have used, you will need to rotate the trays in the oven periodically to ensure even drying.

Pop the trays in the oven for 6 hours or more making sure to:

- Rotate the trays, if using a few
- Turn over the slices every couple of hours to ensure even drying
- Open the oven door every 1.5 hrs to release moisture.







#### 4. Bring out the needle and thread.

You can connect slices together in the ways shown below – top to bottom, in stacks, or just on their own.

I also used dried cranberries as spacers, and you could stitch or glue cinnamon sticks or star anise for extra scented decorations.

You might also like to attach ribbon, twine or pine twigs too.

#### 5. Hang in your tree or around your home!

To store, it is recommended to place in to tubs and place in the freezer to ensure they last long. However, this is something you could do every year.







# THE MOON BEFORE YULE

## FULL MOON LUNAR ECLIPSE IN GEMINI

BY MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY FOR SISTERS OF THE MOON

Dearest moonbeams, we are approaching our next full moon and this one is a powerful Lunar Eclipse in the sign of Gemini. The Full Moon Lunar Eclipse will take place on Monday 30th November at 9.29am(gmt). Lunar eclipses are when the Earth moves between the sun and the moon blocking the sunlight. Full Moons always offer us the chance to do shadow work and eclipses just amplify that energy even further.

We all have shadow sides of ourselves, parts of us that are wounded, parts of ourselves that we are ashamed of, states of mind that you could consider to be 'negative' - these might be things like anger, jealousy and attachment. When we're talking about spirituality and 'doing the work' we're referring to shining light on these dark places within ourselves and learning how to either heal, embrace or overcome them. Shadow work means leaning into those difficult and painful emotions and looking at what lessons they can teach us. There's a beautiful section in the book *Belonging* by Toko-pa Turner where she talks about 'negative emotions' and the Shadow self:

*"Negative emotions' don't cease to exist because we ignore them. They just find other ways to express themselves. Sometimes we lash out inappropriately, have confusing crying fits, or feel protractedly numb. Most commonly we slip into depression and anxiety. And if we leave it for too long, we become prone to accidents, crisis, and even physical disease."*

*"Negative doesn't mean bad, it simply means opposed to the way things are. So if we remix those definitions, negative emotions are a disagreement with how things are and, if we are receptive to them, they can change the way we are navigating our lives." - Toko-pa Turner*

What tends to happen when we experience a 'negative' feeling is that because we have labelled them bad, we immediately feel ashamed and then try to bury/repress them. Shadow work teaches us to invite them in, sit them down with a cup of tea and listen to what they have to tell us. It won't always be comfortable or easy but each time we do this we will have learned a little bit more about ourselves and how we can heal and move forward. That is the invitation for this full moon as we begin to close out this difficult year.



The November full moon is also known as the Moon Before Yule, the Mourning Moon and the Darkest Depths Moon. For this full moon we will have the sun in the fire sign of Sagittarius and the moon in the air sign Gemini - both are masculine signs and both are to do with the mind. Both Sagittarius and Gemini are inquisitive, curious and mentally expansive. Gemini also rules communication so it's interesting here to work with combining the philosopher archetype of Sagittarius with the ability to communicate our ideas out into the world.



A key theme for Gemini is truth and honest communication and sometimes that communication can be to do with how we view ourselves, the conversations we're having with ourselves and whether or not we're being honest. When the full moon is out, there's nowhere to hide, this can be a powerful time for looking inwards and asking these questions.

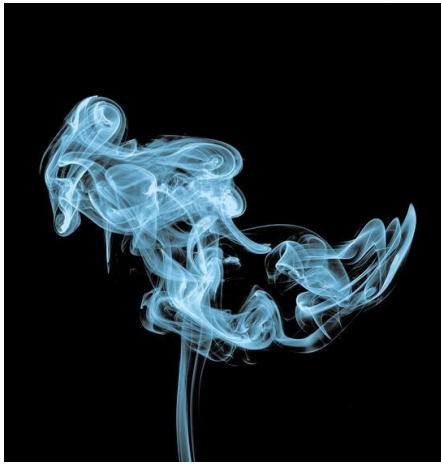
On Gemini moon days it's easy to get caught up in our thoughts, Gemini has a mercurial energy to it which can leave us feeling ungrounded and mentally overwhelmed, add this to the busyness of the lead up to Christmas and hello frazzled mind. It's a really good idea on Gemini moon days to bring ourselves back into our body and do things that will calm and focus the mind. Think of the idea of using the arrow and focus of Sagittarius to focus the somewhat flighty tendencies of Gemini.



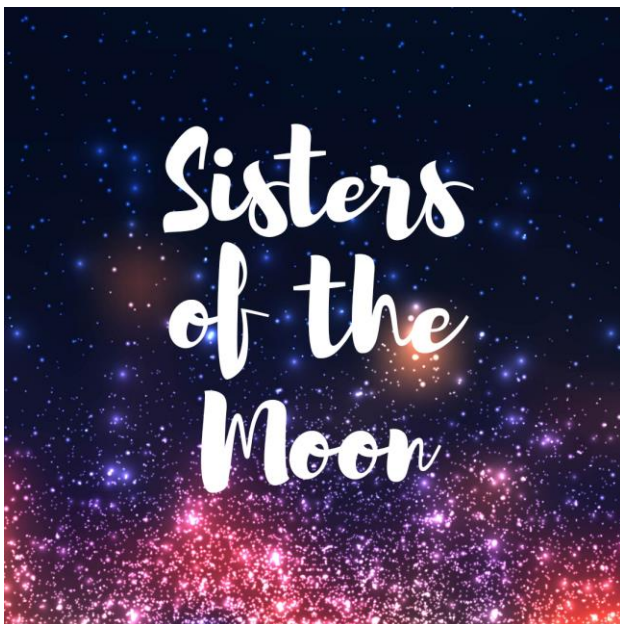
Using practices such as Yoga Nidra, guided meditations and gentle yoga can be really helpful for slowing the mind down. Also, when it comes to tackling Christmas tasks, try to focus on one thing at a time, write lists or use a bullet journal to give yourself the satisfaction of ticking things off. Try not to flit from one unfinished task to the other, just like leaving loads of tabs open and programmes running on your computer slows it down, it's the same for our mind too.

The combination of Sagittarius and Gemini can also lead us to get over excited about new ideas and ventures, so check-in with yourself honestly about whether or not you're taking on too much? Can

some things wait? Are you honouring the season of winter and the need to rest? Sometimes it can be so hard with all the pressures of social media to not want to jump into new things straight away, one of our favourite quotes is "Do less, be more" - can we let go and soften a little bit and pick up the pace again in Spring? Or is our gut telling us that now really is the right time? Only you can know :)



Gemini is an AIR sign so why not use sacred smoke cleansing practices to cleanse your home, your oracle cards and crystals and to do a ritual of letting go - this ideal as this full moon falls at the end of the month. Use incense, resins or herb bundles to clear negative, old or unwanted energy from the last month. Afterwards light a white candle which represents the way you'd like to feel moving forward or the things you want to welcome in for the month of December.



We really hope you have enjoyed this article and wish you a blessed full moon..

Join us online where we dive deeper each month in to the magic of the Moon.

Don't forget, you can join our Patreon membership site to join in with our New Moon and Full Moon sister circles.

Visit

[WWW.PATREON.COM/SISTERSOFTHEMOON](http://WWW.PATREON.COM/SISTERSOFTHEMOON)

for more information!



# UPCOMING COURSES FROM MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY

We have some exciting online courses to share with you to connect to the season of winter and to celebrate and honour Yule:

## THE GIFTS OF YULE - \$20

<https://seekingblissonline.com/courses/1299/about>

We are delighted to share this course with you! One of our biggest passions is helping people to connect to the cycles of the seasons and the Moon. In this course we are going to be exploring how to honour the Winter Solstice in our own hearts and homes. We will also be exploring how to embrace the season of Winter - the season for dreaming, storytelling and cultivating magic below the surface. Our founder Michelle Rose Boxley has combined her background in Celtic spirituality, meditation, art and yoga to bring you this course jam packed with magic, ritual, self care and ceremony.



## YOU WILL LEARN:

- The history and meaning of Yule and it's traditions
- Goddesses of Yule and the Winter season
- The Magic of Storytelling
- How to honour Winter's archetype of the Crone
- Seasonal self care for Winter
- How to create a Yule Altar
- How to create Yule Crystal Grids
- Hearth Magick - Yule recipes to keep you warm this winter
- Yule Crafts - making wreaths, yule gifts and decorating the home for the winter season!

## YOU WILL RECEIVE:

- an MP3 Audio Winter Solstice Meditation - taking a journey with Goddess An Cailleach
- a Journaling Sheet
- Advent calendar of Yoga
- a ceremony for honouring the light

This course is a self study course and starts on Dec 1st. From Dec 1st onwards you'll have access to all the lessons and you can study at your own pace.



# Goddess Advent Calendar

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*Free online Course*

*December 2020  
mysteryschoolofthegoddess.com*

## GODDESS ADVENT CALENDAR – FREE

<https://seekingblissonline.com/courses/1350/about>

Join us for a slightly different take on the Advent Calendar! In this free course you will receive a daily prompt introducing you to a different Goddess each day. We will journey together from December 1st until December 25th exploring Goddesses of Winter, Yule, Magic and Light. If you have been wanting to deepen your connection to Goddess this is a wonderful place to start. Sign up for free via the link and the course starts on December 1st!





# FEAR AS AN ALLY

HELEN JR BRUCE – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

ILLUSTRATOR AND AUTHOR OF THE 'HEAT OF THE HUNT' TRILOGY

[FACEBOOK/HEATOFTHEHUNT](https://www.facebook.com/heatofthehunt)

Given these strange times which we all must navigate, it is understandable that many of us have felt a strong sense of fear recently. Whether we are afraid of illness, or of poverty, or simply scared by the greed and malevolence that can seem to be rife in the world, fear is a natural response to things being out of balance. For our ancient ancestors, fear warned against predators, turbulent waters and other unfriendly tribes. It manifested then, and still does now, as tight muscles, sweaty palms and the electric surge of adrenalin through our bodies. These responses prepared us to either fight or run, and were an ally in our survival. We still occasionally hear stories in the news of people who have achieved superhuman feats, such as moving immense weights, under the influence of adrenalin. But times have changed, and the bodily response which might help us fight off a sabre toothed tiger is not so useful when dealing with overdue bills.

Our shaking hands, tight chests and fizzing veins do very little to ward off the scary things we might hear on the television. The threats to our lives have become larger, but vaguer, and are immune to the iron and bronze weapons of the past. Whereas a rival tribe could be pacified, and a deep river bridged, the structures of society that generate homelessness and hunger are not so easily defeated. Our adrenalin still rises up in response, but it most often remains unused, and it lingers as a heavy, stale weight in our

bodies. Our fears seem to have no remedy, and they calcify in our muscles and set our minds on edge. We become prone to anxiety, and sadness, and the world begins to lose its colours as our vision is crowded with problems we can't fix.

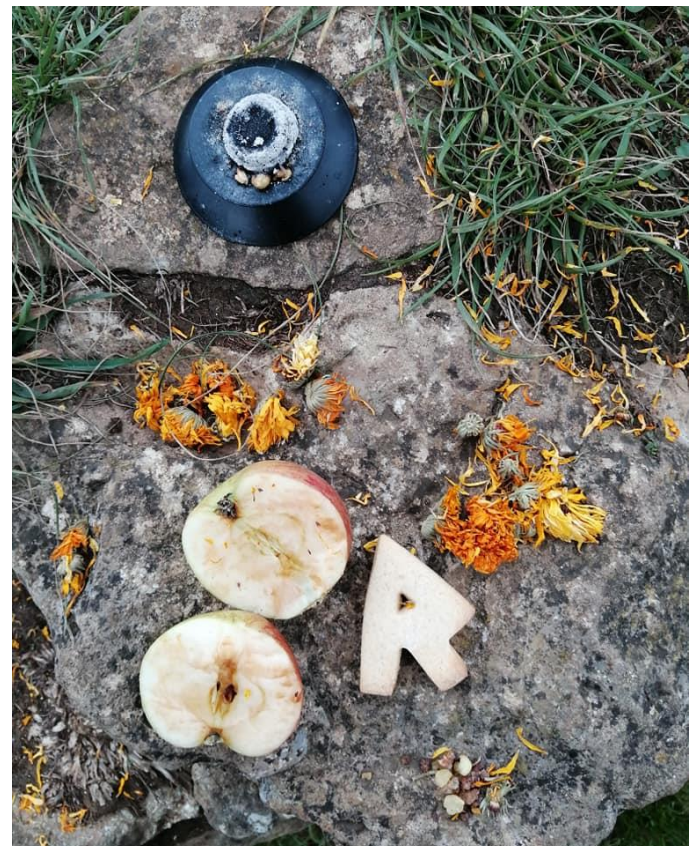
But there is something we can do. We might not be able to remake the mould of the world as we know it (though we might, and we must keep on trying) but we can choose to shift our perspectives. We can choose to invite our fears in from the cold, and beckon them close to the warm flames of our fire. We can speak to them softly, and sing to them, and listen closely to what they have to say in reply. Our ancestors did not see fear in itself as frightening. Yes, frightening things happened, but fear was the early warning and the sense that triggered survival responses. It was also a gateway to rebirth, a spiritual initiation and a portal through which we could access powerful transformation. As an illustration of this, I will share with you an experience I had recently, within a long-barrow, close to Samhain.

I travelled there alone, which is unusual as I'm a sociable creature, but I felt a strong pull to make the hours' drive to the little known location by myself. It was a grey autumn day, with a biting wind that rose up every so often and plucked the brown and gold leaves from the trees. The ground was wet as I climbed the grassy slope upwards towards the

exposed hilltop, much to the disapproval of the resident sheep. It was a sad day for me. My life was, and is, challenging and I was afraid of the future. But I had brought with me offerings for the ancestors, and I had chosen them with great love and care. There were cinnamon and ginger biscuits cut in the shape of the rune 'Raido', symbolising the journey, and also frankincense, myrrh, an apple from the Avalon orchard and dried marigold flowers. I walked around the outside of the barrow and asked for permission to enter. Then I made the slow, shuffling walk through the inner tunnel to the deepest in of the seven chambers. The stone ceiling is so low that anyone entering must do so bowed, which felt an appropriate reverence to the ancestors, and the tunnel is also narrow and dark. I have sat and meditated in this barrow before, but never completely alone. On this instance I felt a little frightened. There was no one anywhere nearby to help me if I got into any trouble. But I pushed this fear aside and carried on shuffling.

Sitting in my chosen chamber, I could see directly back down the tunnel to the light at the end. I sprinkled out a circle of dried flowers, lit the incense, and cut my apple neatly in half. One half I placed in front of me and the other I placed further away, as if laying a place for someone else opposite. Then I sat, gazing, in open eyed meditation. The incense smoke swirled softly around me and tall trees swayed out in the distant, lit, world. I don't know how much time passed, but I think it was hours. The entrance of the barrow began to glow with a silvergrey light, and I knew that I was seeing the veil. Our ancestors understood that these barrows were entrances to the Otherworld and they were sacred sites to seek an audience with the dead. For a time, I had stepped over the threshold, and I was without a doubt afraid. To my left, I caught movement, and a brown, peat stained skull peeled away

from the wall. The whole skeleton eased itself out from the adjoining chamber, peering around the edge at what I was up to. In this moment, the real terror set in. My muscles tensed and I considered running out from the barrow into the safety of outside. But the narrow tunnel made quick movement impossible, and I would have to pass the skeleton closely if I tried it. *This is a test,* whispered all of my memories. I settled myself back down as comfortably as possible. *The ancestors are here, just like they always have been.* So I sat with my terror. I held it close until the edges turned soft, and then I began to sing. My voice cracked at first, but I repeated the words that came to me over and over. I sang love to the ancestors. I sang love to the bones. I sang love through my fear until the adrenalin steamed off me in a bright haze of belonging. The bones settled back down, and shortly afterwards it felt right to depart. I left my remaining offerings at the entrance, and I looked up in wonder to see that the sun had come out.





The fright I had felt in the barrow felt more distant in the daylight, but an element of it did remain with me. However, this sliver of fear had been transformed, and it sat in my mind as a bright diamond of knowledge. Of course there will be fear; it is the price of the crossing. Fear is the tightness of the birth canal; the dark hours before dawn. It is the cocoon we must break, and the skin we must allow to soften and shed. Fear alerts us to the fact that things are out of balance, whether out in the world or within ourselves. It draws us to the places and the parts of us that must be cradled and held, just like our bodies at the end and beginning of our lives. Fear calls us to action, and it prepares us physically for the tasks that lie

ahead. Left out in the dark, our fears will howl in pain, but when we invite them in they will lead us to our most tender wounds and our deepest of secrets. Healing ourselves is the beginning of healing the world. Fear is the sign that transformation is beginning. Changing the structure of our minds is the first step to building new support networks in our community. We can use our bright adrenalin to fuel small, physical acts of change; choosing a few items for a food bank, clearing out our wardrobes for charity. Our fear can be turned into songs, and poetry and dance. We can take it by the hand, and we can whisper: *thanks for the warning, and I've changed my behaviour.*

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# THE DOLMEN



**“Wytches are the Evolution of  
a Sacred Breed persecuted  
in pure ignorance by the  
un-evolved”  
Taloch**



# SPIRIT GUIDES AND CHAKRA

FAIRY BEC – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

I used to think that spirit guides were a whole load of rubbish. I used to see spirit simply like The Force in Star Wars - an energy without a form. So many people I knew declared they had human spirit guides and often they would be a Native American. I used to question “Why do we humans value our existence so highly and feel that we need to put spirit into human form?”

My epiphany started to come when I did my Reiki One attunements. My Reiki Masters taught me how to pathwork in meditation. They took our group on beautiful journeys and it was on that first journey, sitting by a mighty oak tree in my mind, that my Barn Owl came to me. From then on and for many months and right the way through my Reiki Two course, this Barn Owl (Who developed into a Barn Owl/Elven Warrior Shapeshifter) kept returning and it was like I was picking up a book and reading the next chapter. During my Reiki two I discussed this all with one of my Reiki Masters and she confirmed that this was my main spirit guide, my healing guide.

Still, I was cynical (I need tons of proof, signs, facts, etc. before I believe anything!).

I am part of a regular Psychic Fayre at my local community centre in Alton, Hampshire and on this particular day, there was a well-respected medium, Gemma Stacey (Wolf Spirit), on the table next to me. Within ten minutes of me sitting down, she started giggling and looked at me. “Your Owl is playing with my Wolf. Cheeky fella isn’t he?” Well, what more proof did I need? This lady also has a Native American Spirit Guide.

I was now well into my journey.

I feel my guide close most of the time but in meditation he draws nearer. I started to notice that when I was opening up my throat chakra, he would come flying in (literally). I then started to explore trying to call him in at different chakra points but it did not work. Then I started opening up and inviting other guides to join at different chakra points and very quickly I started to get a sensation of someone putting their forehead to mine when I focussed on my head chakra. A furry head. The image of a lion started to come and eventually I realised that it was actually Sekhmet the Egyptian Lion headed goddess.

In order to focus on each chakra, I have done a lot of deep work on all the chakras within the same session. I have always meditated from the base up, after which I go on my journey. Then I close the chakras down from the crown to the base and visualise wrapping myself in a white egg or a golden bubble to seal the work and ground myself. Afterwards, I sometimes draw pictures of what I have seen or of what instinctively comes. Sometimes I write notes on my experience. Other times, I simply grab some chocolate, a coffee and relax!

I have also been in workshops where people focus on single chakras at a time and my guide connected to that chakra has come through. For example, I have been doing chanting sessions with an amazing lady called Jennifer Jenkins ([www.jenniferjenkins.co.uk](http://www.jenniferjenkins.co.uk)). She also does Chanting for the Chakra workshops which are an amazing way to really connect deeply with each chakra. Each time,

I felt my known key guides with me and have experienced new sensations with the areas I have not yet fully discovered.

Each chakra feels different and each chakra brings me more energy at different times in my life – or week!

I have not developed a full ‘map’ of my guides yet but here is what I have discovered about myself:-

- Root/Red = A Badger.
- Base/Orange = Ganesh.
- Solar Plexus/Yellow = A Green Tree Frog.
- Heart/Green = Yet to be discovered.
- Throat/Blue = My main guide who is a shapeshifter. He alternates between an Elven Warrior (who dances with my fairy spirit) and a Barn Owl.
- Head/Indigo = Sekhmet who rubs her forehead on mine regularly.
- Crown/Violet = Yet to be discovered.



In addition, I often see geese flying (but I think this is the Egyptian link) and I work a lot with Archangel Michael. I also identify with Baba Yaga. Maybe these

are my gaps? The signs have not pointed explicitly enough to me yet. My journey of discovery is in progress and I am in no rush to complete it as I indulge mindfully in each epiphany as they organically come to me.

Revisiting the question “Why do we humans value our existence so highly and feel that we need to put spirit into human form?” We don’t there is magic in animals, colours, deities and mythical creatures as well as humans. Spirit guides are deeply personal and individual.

As for the Native American link, I have two questions to leave you with: -

- 1) Were they the first humans on Earth? Therefore, are they a common spirit guide because they are the ultimate ancestor?
- 2) Are they the race most connected with spirit which is why they often become guides?





# NOVEMBER

PORTLAND JONES – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

At Samhain, we celebrated death as part of life. Going into the dark is a fitting end, a part of the cycle, not to be feared.

Yet now we are in November and, yes, it is dark. It is also cold and wet, drear and dismal. It is the time of the Crone, the dark time, the cold time. A time to recuperate from the exuberance of summer and the work of harvest. A time to plan and prepare.

We have much to look forward to - the excitement of crisp white snow, the relief of Yule when the sun stops in its tracks then carries on its way to bring back the light in the lengthening days. But first, we have to find our way through November.

I was gifted a bag of cooking apples by a friend, collected from the apple trees in his garden. I converted some of these into apple crumble. This was a treat – my old oven had provided faithful service for many years but finally decided it was due a rest, leaking gas, and condemned. Cooking with a slow cooker and a microwave was an interesting experience. Fortunately, I also had a toaster....

The arrival of a brand spanking new oven did much to lighten my November and I set to cooking in earnest. I made apple and date chutney, the tartness of the apple and the heat of onions combining with the sweetness of the dates and spices to add a tasty texture to sandwiches. Apple and chilli jelly works as a dip for all sorts of food, and adds a nice kick to cold meats. It is also very pretty, light shining through its silvery gel glittered with red flakes.

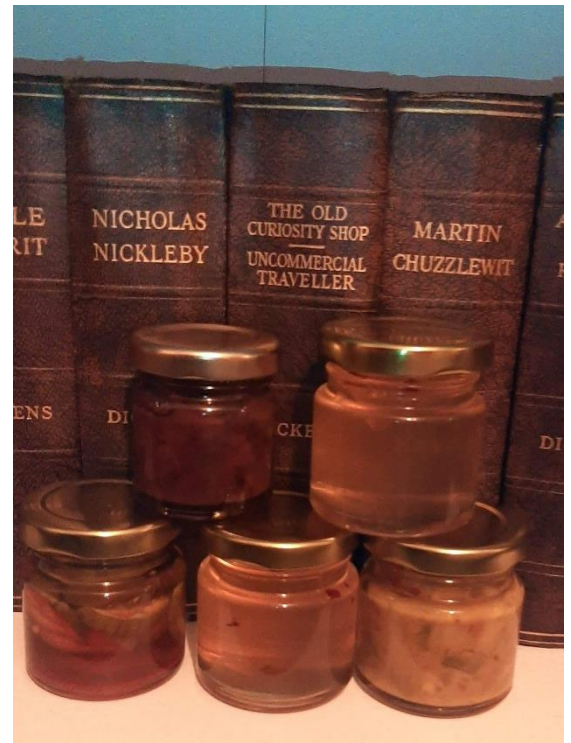
So once I had used all the apples I moved on to mustard pickle, then pickled cucumber slices with dill. I may have added a touch too much cayenne pepper. Time will tell!

Cooking in this way makes me feel productive and in touch with the bounty of nature. It brings back memories of childhood, making strawberry and raspberry jams, chutneys and pickles. Mom was a skilful gardener who grew an impressive array of fruit and vegetables on her allotment. One of my jobs was to pick the sprouts, which apparently always taste better when there is frost. I still feel the cold tingles in my fingers when I think of them.

Life was a bit harsh back then, and as for many people, wages did not quite reach to the end of the week. Mom ran up a debt on 'tick' at the local store, to the extent that most of Dad's wages went straight to pay the debt, thus starting the cycle over again. One week she determined to resolve this once and for all. She bought nothing from the local shop. (Supermarkets and their discount prices were not a thing back then.) If we didn't have it in the house, we went without.

Yet her resourcefulness did us proud as we ate like kings on the produce of her allotment. (I wrote about Mom's allotment in my story in primary school, you know the one 'What I did during my holidays'. Other kids wrote about their trips to the seaside. I told of my days playing in Mom's allotment although I spelled it 'elockment'; the teacher sent home to enquire from my mother what this meant.)

Aside from the happy memories of childhood, the skills I learned at my mother's side helped me see the unbroken line from us to our ancestors. Mother taught me what she had learned from her mother, who had learned from hers before. These skills have been passed down for generations. The first known cookbook dates from the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. It contains a recipe for jam. Joan of Arc ate quince jam before going into battle as if filled her with courage. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Nostradamus wrote about jam, including a love potion that would strike a woman with 'a burning of her heart to perform the love-act.' Sailors and pirates stockpiled jam on board their ships as it became clear that Vitamin C prevented scurvy.<sup>1</sup>



And in the background there were those who made the jams, who laboured over whatever form of hot stove they had in their day, who learned from those who had gone before. Just as I am passing on the skills I have learned to the next generation. And so the cycle continues.



ceiling.

Looking forward to Yule, November is the time to start work on hand made gifts for friends and family. There are plans to create mini hampers from the sixty assorted mini jars of preserves that are maturing in the cupboard. I was given a glass ink pen for my birthday. I have spent many happy hours playing with it, so the outcome of my doodling will be framed and found a new home. Decorations are in hand. I am currently knitting teeny tiny jumpers Swiss darned with Yule spelled out across them, to hang on my besom which will be suspended from the

Investing time into the things that I do to celebrate the seasons makes it more real to me. It is time that I have enjoyed but also chosen to dedicate to my beliefs and customs. I haven't always had this time, rushing around in a never-ending haze of work and busyness. No longer able to work, I treasure my freedom to do with my time as I wish. As they say, every cloud has a silver lining.

1 <https://life.spectator.co.uk/article/jam-beautifully-preserved-history/>



# THE RITE OF SPRING

THE FORTHCOMING ALBUM

BY DAVEY DODDS

At the beginning of March 2020, Davey Dodds released his second, come-back solo album, 'Toadstool Soup'. The reviews were full of praise and enthusiasm – with a full-on schedule of gigs and festivals, Davey was looking forward to decent sales. He was on tour with Pendragon in Europe when things started to unravel. Travel restrictions meant that the tour was brought to an early close and Davey was fortunate to get back to England on the last flight from Poland, before the borders were closed.

Lockdown was imposed and subsequent government edicts resulted in gigs and festivals being cancelled. Instead of a useful income and plenty of opportunities to promote 'Toadstool Soup', Davey was faced with an empty diary and severe wallet damage! Rather than get frustrated and sink into a pit of depression, he has concentrated on what he could achieve.

Davey had been nurturing a fiendishly pretentious project for a concept album. 'The Rite of Spring' was conceived as a Beltane celebration, structured like a Druid ritual. The plan had been to start assembling the musical threads this autumn and to record the album through the winter. The corona chaos wiped out the busy gig diary so Davey decided to pull the threads of the project together, complete the writing and start recording the meisterwerk!

A veritable constellation of other musicians have brought their skills and creativity to the project. Daniel

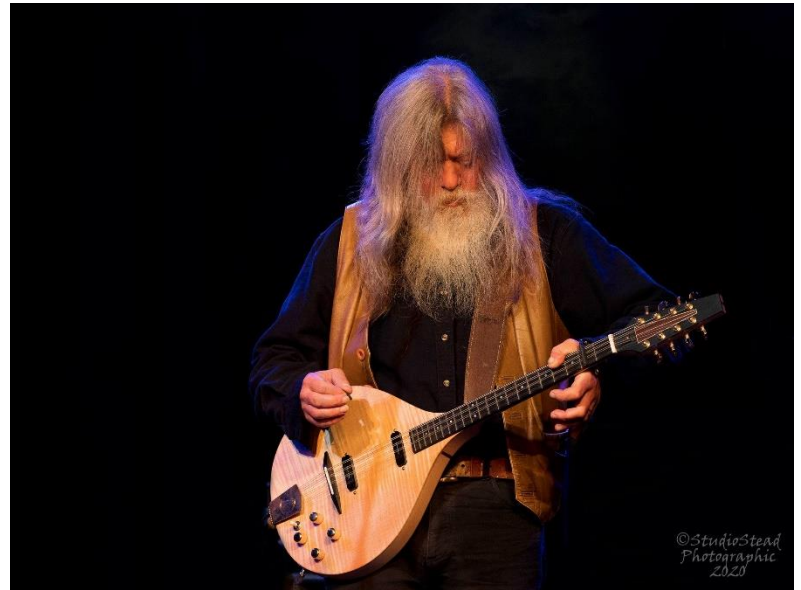
Billing's melodic, percussive bass playing meshes perfectly with Davey's Celtic rhythms. Gillie Hotston, of Mary Jane, brings her fiery fluid electric fiddle to the party (she played with Davey in The Porbeagles) and Tree Stuart, of The Emerald Dawn adds keyboard textures and soundscapes to the piece. Colette DeGiovanni adds gorgeous harmonies and duetting vocals and Soheila Clifford, who starred in a couple of Clive Nolan's musicals, provides seamless backing vocals. Pagan, tribal power comes from the bodhrans and frame drums of Colin Loveless.



This is an ambitious project. Davey's previous two solo albums have featured relatively sparse arrangements and acoustic, folky sounds. This is a full on, densely layered, progressive work. Davey holds the complete piece together with his new, custom made instrument – a solid maple electric octave mandolin. It fits the same sound range as an electric guitar but produces altogether different textures and resonances.

All the tracks are now recorded. The baton is passed to Rick Conolly at Beehive Sounds to twiddle the knobs and produce a coherent whole.

A few full shows are planned around Beltane (the 1<sup>st</sup> of May) 2021. Everyone has fingers crossed that the corona chaos will have subsided sufficiently to allow them to go ahead. Meanwhile, we can give you a taste of what's in store. Here are some simplified extracts from the piece, played live at The 1865 in Southampton. It was Davey's first gig since the onset of the covid restrictions. We will keep you posted!



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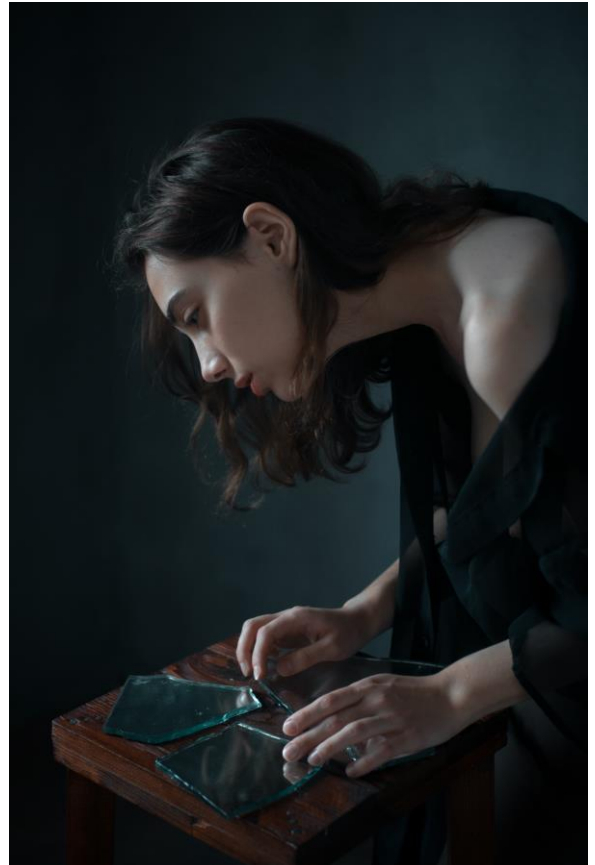


# MIRROR SCRYING

RICK SILFIES POTTER

The mirror is a powerful tool that is often neglected in magical workings and spellcraft. Most Witches are familiar with using a black mirror for scrying purposes, but a traditional silvered mirror is also quite useful.

The first mirrors used by people were most likely pools of dark, still water, or water collected in a primitive vessel of some sort. The earliest manufactured mirrors were pieces of polished stone such as Obsidian, a naturally occurring volcanic glass. Examples of Obsidian mirrors have been dated to around 6000 BC. Mirrors of polished copper and bronze soon followed, and were considered a luxury. The invention of the silvered glass mirror is credited to German chemist Justus Von Liebig in 1835. His process involved the deposition of a thin layer of metallic silver onto glass through the chemical reduction of silver nitrate. This silvering process was adapted for mass manufacturing and led to the greater availability of affordable mirrors. Nowadays, mirrors are often produced by the vacuum deposition of aluminum or silver directly onto the glass substrate.



Mirrors are said to be a reflection of the Soul, and are often used in traditional Witchcraft as tools for Scrying. It is believed by some that “mirrors do not lie”, since a mirror reflects things as they truly are and brings us ‘face to face’, so to speak, with reality. While this is true to a certain degree, this is not all. As Witches, we influence and change our reality through Magic. A mirror can be used to reflect your deepest desire, call forth an ancestor or animal totem, or can be used as a springboard to ricochet energy into the Universe to manifest your goals. For my own spellwork, I like to use a round mirror that is at least 6 inches in diameter. That is just my preference, the mirror can be larger if you like. A mirror that is extremely large or small will be impractical, as it must be placed in a stand or laid flat on an altar/table. You can find flat mirrors in various sizes at arts-and-crafts stores, and they are inexpensive.

If you have a framed mirror that you like, that is also appropriate. Before you use it, however, it must first be cleansed and dedicated for magical use. To make a formal cleansing and dedication of your mirror, use a Pennyroyal or Hyssop infusion.

To Prepare The Infusion: Use 1-2 teaspoons of the dried herb per cup. Add boiling water to fill the

cup, stir, and cover. Leave for at least 10 minutes, strain the herbs, and place them in a container. Stir the strained liquid again and leave it to cool. You can make some in advance and keep it bottled in the fridge for about a week. Place the strained herbs outside near a tree as an offering to the Earth. Before using your mirror, place your infusion in a small bowl. Dip your index finger of the hand you write with into the liquid, in the center on the surface of the mirror. Draw an Earth-Banishing Pentagram for protection and cleansing, and then an Earth-Invoking Pentagram on top of it to empower your mirror. Be careful not to ingest anything from your finger. Then, polish the mirror with a clean, white natural fabric cloth you keep for this purpose, asking for blessings on your work from any specific deities you work with. Polish the mirror with deosil (clockwise) movements to open it, and widdershins (counter-clockwise) movements to close it down. Cover the mirror with a black cloth when not in use.



When doing spellcraft with a mirror, use only natural light such as candlelight, Moonlight, or soft Sunlight during the “in between” times: early morning, late afternoon, Sunset, Midnight, Dawn, Dusk, New Moon, or Full Moon. Place candles where they cannot be seen in the mirror, to the sides and behind it, but still reflect light and shadow onto its surface. Turn the mirror slightly so that you do not see your own reflection. When doing mirror magic during a waxing or Full Moon, I like to use White candles. During a waning or Dark Moon, I use black candles. Light incense near the mirror. Some folks recommend Frankincense & Myrrh or Jasmine for mirror magic, but I like to burn Dragon’s Blood or Rose Musk.



## TO REFLECT YOUR HEART'S DESIRE IN A MIRROR

During your ritual, place the mirror in a stand so that it is upright. What is your heart's desire? What do you seek to manifest? A fulfilling relationship? A new job or career? Place items around the mirror that correspond to what you want. They could be pictures from a magazine, a drawing of yourself enjoying this goal, or any corresponding herbs and crystals. Sprinkle the herbs all around the mirror, and place the crystals in front of it. (If you're unsure of which ones to use, consult the *Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs* and *Crystal, Gem and Metal Magic*, both by Scott Cunningham). The next step is to take some long, deep breaths and bring yourself into a meditative state. Then gaze into the mirror. Look yourself deep in the eyes and say three times:

To the Powers That Be I Now Inquire,  
By Earth and Air and Water and Fire,  
Show Not My Face, But My Heart's Desire.

Still gazing into the mirror, back away so that your reflection is no longer seen. Quickly begin to visualize your goal as though it has already manifested, put yourself into the picture, see yourself experiencing your heart's desire. Project this image onto the mirror, and keep it there for at least 3 minutes. Do not allow your mind or your attention to become distracted from this image during that time. After three minutes have passed, end your ritual as usual.



## USING A MIRROR TO CALL FORTH AN ANIMAL GUIDE

Animal guides can make their presence known at anytime during your day-to-day life, to give guidance and direction, and they can be called upon whenever you need them.

However, when I call them forth in meditation or pathworking, it is **always** within the boundary of a magic circle. I lay the mirror flat on my altar, in a specific area where I want it to manifest. I place figures of the animal around the edge of the mirror, along with a lit candle and some incense. Place items that relate to your animal guide near the mirror. This could be feathers, photos or anything else that has a connection between you and the animal. With an incantation and some visualization, my totems materialize on the mirror, first as a misty figure which then becomes more solid. Or, it will ascend up through the mirror and hover over the altar. Your experience may be different, or it

may take some time before you see a visible manifestation. The important thing is to stay focused on the shape of your animal guide and where you want it to appear. It may remain in a misty form for

some time. Some people call their animal to stand next to them, or take a place near the altar. You can re-work the spell below to fit your needs.

## ANIMAL GUIDE INCANTATION

By the powers of land, sky and sea

I Call Forth The Spirit of...(state animal here...crow, raven, owl, etc)

To Be Present Here With Me

RICK SILFIES POTTER IS AN AUTHOR, TEACHER AND FOUNDER OF THE BLACKTHORN DRUID ORDER, A TRAINING PROGRAM THAT BLENDS CELTIC PAGANISM, DRUIDRY AND WITCHCRAFT. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.BLACKTHORNDRUIDORDER.COM](http://WWW.BLACKTHORNDRUIDORDER.COM)

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# APATHETIC

MIKE D/SONOFAWITCH PODCAST

[HTTE://LINKTR.EE/SONOFAWITCHPODCAST](https://linktr.ee/sonofawitchpodcast)

Who doesn't love a good movie, or a binge worthy show, right? But when we as witches watch these forms of media, are we watching mindlessly, or are we truly seeing what's in front of us?

Sadly, and it's not just recently either, many of the movies, shows, etc., we grew up with or currently consume do not paint us in a kind way at ALL.

I used to watch these types of things, and say to myself "Yeahhhh, but I can discern fact from fiction, so it's fine."

(Morgan Freeman voice over) "Mike would soon learn that indeed, it was not fine."

See, shockingly you can still to this very day find reports of hostility and demonizing of witchcraft and witches themselves by association. The "green face" persona of witches is still everywhere, and movies portray us as child stealing, satan worshipping, hex and curse casting demons more or less. Some are very extreme with their portrayals, some more campy and fun.



There may be, in my own personal opinion...2, possibly 3 out of this photo that DIDN'T make witches look bad.

Who makes us look good?

See, the problem becomes that while we try to personify perfect love and perfect trust, not everyone does. While we can discern fact from fiction, not everyone can.

So the question becomes, is this type of thing affecting us? In short...YES.

You can google and find this, but in recent years, one even last month (outside the U.S.), people are still being sentenced to death for being suspected or branded as witches.

Yes, read that again...in today's times, even recently...much like what is often referred to as the "burning times", people are still being accused and murdered, sentenced to die before firing squads, etc. for being...A WITCH!

There was an article about a man in Florida last year, who approached a car with two women, opened fire with a 9mm...Because he "knew they were witches, and was worried they were going to curse/hex him." Yes, that's actually the statement made to the police when they arrived. We won't even dive into the question of what would make him think this...seems like someone had a guilty conscience and may have done something to make him worry they would retaliate. Things that make you go hmmmmmmmm.

Shop owners of metaphysical/spiritual/witch stores are constantly being vandalized; doors spat and urinated on, etc.

There are numerous lawsuits, recent ones even that made headlines because people were wrongfully fired/terminated from their jobs for being witches and/or practicing magick because their fragile coworkers worried they worshipped satan sacrificed others, etc.,... Lawsuits for millions of dollars. Good for them, I hope they win!

The point I am making, and the question I ask myself and the rest of you is this..."Have we become apathetic to our historical and sadly even current plight as witches?"

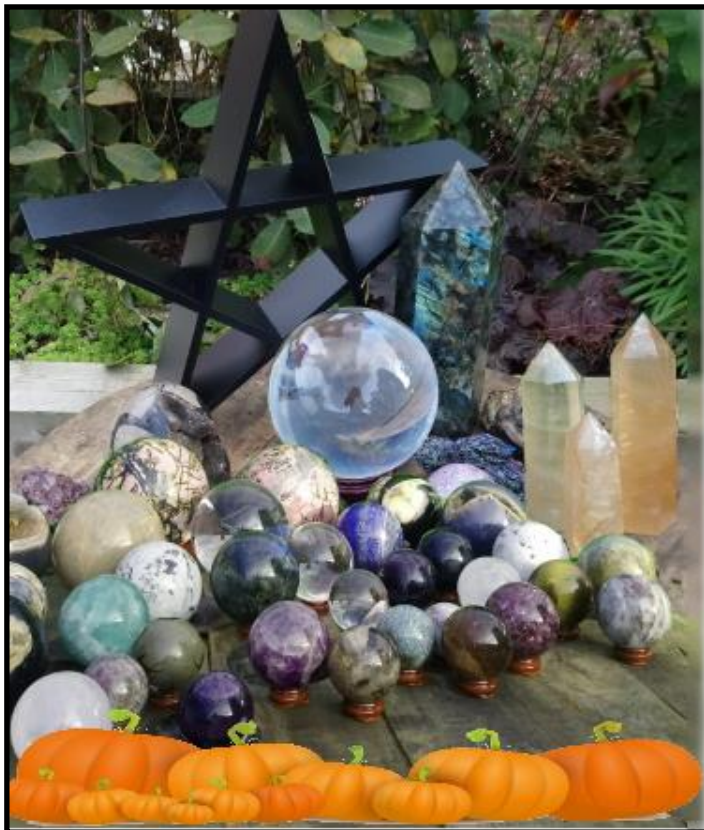
If the answer is yes, then maybe it is upon us to change this. To actively speak out against the studios, books, etc that portray us this way, perpetuating fear and hatred towards us. Some of you reading this may be thinking what I once did as well, "Ahh, Mike...people aren't that gullible and easily convinced."

Well, to that I say two things:

- 1) Read the accounts I spoke about above again, even research yourself and see even more than mentioned here...and ask "What gave them these misguided views and ideas about witchcraft, witches, magick and more?"
- 2) Take a look back at the recent years just in the United States alone. Is it really so hard to believe that some, not all, but many can be easily convinced to believe whatever they are told, whatever they see on t.v., without actually researching to determine if it is fact or fiction???"

I think we all know the answer to that.





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# POETRY PROMPTS

## FOR RELEASING YOUR INNER WITCHY WRITER

CHERRY DOYLE - WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Whether you've never written a line in your life, or whether you're a dab hand at verse, these simple writing exercises will help you conjure up a poem from nothing but a blank page and your own imagination!

### EXERCISE ONE: COLOUR IMAGERY AND FREE-WRITING

This exercise helps you access your subconscious to create imagery for your poems.

Start by listing out some colours which you'd like to work with. You could choose your favourite spiritual colours, or ones which represent an avenue you'd like to explore. Then write the first *concrete* word which comes to mind when you think of that colour. That means something you can see, touch, or hear - not a feeling or concept, e.g. 'love', or 'beauty'. Don't think too hard about it! See below for some examples.

Red	Lipstick
Orange	Fire
Yellow	Daffodils
Green	Glass bottle
Blue	Sapphires
Purple	Blackberries
Black	Ink
White	Snow

Now choose a colour to start with – the image you're drawn to the most. I'll start with 'Green – Glass Bottle'. This will be the start of your free-write.

Free-writing is a practice which helps writers get something – anything – on the page. It can be hard to embrace at first because it requires you not to intervene with your own stream of consciousness, and not to edit as you go along. The idea is that you start writing, and put down whatever comes into your head – it doesn't matter if it doesn't make sense, sounds silly to you, or if it isn't what you

thought you were going to write. Don't stop to think - just keep writing, until you come to a natural end, or if you prefer, after a timer, e.g. 5 minutes.

You will need to prepare yourself to write, type, or dictate quickly, as soon as the thoughts pop into your mind, so make yourself comfortable, get your first colour image on the page, and go...!

*The green glass bottle like moss, a heathland in the sunrise, pine trees, bottle brushes, moonlight-tipped, moon, crater, saucer, dripping milk, cats' eyes in the night sky, stars, dots, the cold, frost coming in the morning, the stars are out, Orion, bowman, hunter, the deer terrified with wide eyes, chestnuts, deer in the forest, in the pines, mushrooms, squishy and brown, feather-brown, owls, night creeping like a silent predator, hushed, suffocating...*

Here, you can see I've quickly jumped from green imagery into night-time imagery. That's OK - just go where the words want to take you. The starting image is only a jumping-off point. If you feel like you're just repeating yourself, chuck in another one of your colour images.

*...a silent predator, hushed, suffocating, snow gently falling, white, clean, pure, laundry on the washing line, soft cotton scent, summer days and breezes in the vased flowers, petals, soft pink, clusters of flowers like pastel jewels, sun lazing through the window, gentle yellow, daffodil sun, daffodil morning, sunrise, yawning new day...*

In this second segment, the snow led to the laundry image which has taken me in a totally different direction, and I've ended up on another of my colours – 'Yellow – Daffodils'. I think this is enough material to start a poem, as I've got two different contrasting ideas.

Now, go back through your free-write and identify the images you like the best. These will form the basis of your poem.

*The green glass bottle like moss, a heathland in the sunrise, pine trees, bottle brushes, moonlight-tipped, moon, crater, saucer, dripping milk, cats' eyes in the night sky, stars, dots, the cold, frost coming in the morning, the stars are out, Orion, bowman, hunter, the deer terrified with wide eyes, chestnuts, deer in the forest, in the pines, mushrooms, squishy and brown, feather-brown, owls, night creeping like a silent predator, hushed, suffocating, snow gently falling, white, clean, pure, laundry on the washing line, soft cotton scent, summer days and breezes in the vased flowers, petals, soft pink, clusters of flowers like pastel jewels, sun lazing through the window, gentle yellow, daffodil sun, daffodil morning, sunrise, yawning new day...*

Bring together the images into lines. Re-arrange, change, and edit them however you see fit.

*Above silver-tipped pines, cats' eyes blink out of the sky,*



*night slinks away as the sun yawns over the horizon.*

*The daffodil morning blooms through laundry, lazy in the breeze,  
through flowers on the windowsill, clustered like pastel jewels...*

## EXERCISE TWO: MIND-MAPPING AND POEMS AS INCANTATIONS

This exercise will help you focus your writing into something you can use as part of spell-casting, meditation, or other practices of manifestation. Similar to the above exercise, it will use your subconscious to map out images and connections between words.

First, write your key word in the middle of a piece of paper. This is the word which embodies your intentions.



Now add words around the edge which you associate with your key word. They can be *concrete* (physical things) or *abstract* (feelings, concepts) words. Don't think too hard – write down what comes to mind first.

N.B. If you are using assistive technology, you can list words instead.



Take each of these words in turn and expand the map, using words you associate with them. Keep going down your 'branches' until you're getting quite far away from your original word. Don't worry what the words are or whether they are clichéd or make sense - they might just be 'gateway' words for another idea. This won't be the finished product and nobody needs to see it.



Pick out images from the map which you feel the most connection to. Use your own words to join them together into an incantation (it doesn't have to rhyme!).

*To be calm as silver sunlight on a summer lake,*

*Free as snow-white doves, soaring in the breeze,*

*To picnic on warm sands by the hush of waves,*

*To walk among leaves drifting down from the trees.*

I hope you enjoy working through the exercises above, and if you feel brave enough to share your work once complete, send it in to Witch Magazine at [submissions@witchzine.co.uk](mailto:submissions@witchzine.co.uk) to be considered for publication!





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# THE GREAT CONJUNCTION

## AND THE DAWNING OF THE AGE OF AQUARIUS

STEPH ULPH

The Winter Solstice is always a magical time, but this year is set to be particularly special.

On December 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 (13:30 UT) Saturn and Jupiter will appear, from the earth, to meet each other in the sky, forming what is known as the 'Great (being our Solar Systems two giants) Conjunction'. This meeting is highly significant for several reasons.

One being of course that it happens on the Solstice and another being the proximity of these giants coming within 0.01 degrees – the closest since 1623 – so no-one alive has experienced this powerful and most positive energetic alignment.

Another significance is in sequence of events – this conjunction is the final in a chain of astrological events that have been paving the way for a new era. Most notably within this sequence was the Saturn/Pluto conjunction in January 2020. The meeting of these two often feared planets has throughout history and is certainly the case this year, brought in times of extreme upheaval. Saturn, ruling order, control and hierarchy and Pluto being the planet of change, means that when these two somewhat merciless planets meet, their energy totally obliterates anything of this nature that has been bubbling on the surface or being patched over to continue with the status quo. Unfortunately, this creates mass upheaval and it takes time for new and better ways to be found and integrated. Though fortunately, the overall rewards achieved through such growth are what is needed for positive progression and the new can be built after releasing that which is no longer working. And this is what we have all been experiencing this year, on a person, collective and societal level.



Thankfully, the upcoming conjunction begins the closing of the old and outdated, and Jupiter, being the planet of expansion and abundance, along with Saturn being a planet that rewards, promises to deliver new and very welcome energies. The more we have done any work that may have been called for on a personal level the more we can expect to see this in our personal lives, as well as collectively.



And by far the most significant aspect of this planetary shift is the widely held belief (through astronomical calculation) that this coupling on this sacred day, will herald in the dawn of the new era, as the 'Precession of the Equinox' (the cycle of the Earth's axis tilt) takes us into Aquarius. This almost 26000-year cycle greatly affects the overarching energies of the entire Earth plane, and with these shifts appearing in retrograde from the Earth, the cycle is worked through in reverse, meaning we move from the influence of Pisces into Aquarius.

It is important to note that no Zodiac Sign is 'better' than another – these are growth cycles and we collectively learn all we can in each sign before keeping that which works and discarding what no longer does at each Great Change. Many are calling this change to come 'The Golden Era' and whilst I do not disagree with this, and with view to remain grounded, it is also worth realising that the move into Pisces was also a huge advancement for humanity. Pisces, being a sign of empathy and compassion saw humanity shift from barbarisms to consideration and fairness being called for.

As we move into Aquarius, a humanitarian, Air sign, we can expect to see care for our fellow human beings becoming more common, breaking free from oppressions and living in truth. Of course, some will always resist change but this is set to be the overarching theme for the next 2000 years.

And Finally, what is wonderful is that this conjunction is observable in our night sky - already you can see both planets as they move closer night by night – both appearing as solid lights in the sky (Jupiter brighter than any star and Saturn as bright as any star). By the Solstice they will be close enough to view at the same time through a telescope – though no telescope is needed to view this extraordinary planetary event.





# 5 FEMALE AUTHORS TO IGNITE YOUR PASSION FOR READING

JESSICA O' SHEA – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Wow, what a year it's been for everybody, my friends. I hope you are all doing well so far, but if you are now beginning to feel bored, stuck in a rut, or if you have felt this way for a while, worry not my lovely friends, in this list I will give you some of my all-time favourite female authors that will get you through these trying times! Let's go!

## 1. TANA FRENCH

*I had learned early to assume something dark and lethal hidden at the heart of anything I loved. When I couldn't find it, I responded, bewildered and wary, in the only way I knew how: by planting it there myself.* – In *The Woods*.

This woman really got me back into reading in my early twenties! I went so many years without picking up a book, but Ms French really triggered my love for reading again. Her prose is mystical, strange, touching and intriguing.

**I recommend: Dublin Murder Squad series.** There are six books in this series, *In The Woods*, *The Likeness*, *Faithful Place*, *Broken Harbour*, *The Secret Place* and *The Trespasser*. These also work as stand-alone novels, but you get a real payoff for reading them all, spotting the references and little easter eggs throughout. My absolute favourite is the 4<sup>th</sup> in her series *Broken Harbour*. A family moves into their new home to begin their new life by the seaside. But soon enough, the husband begins to lose himself and his wife follows suit. Murder ensues and the secrets begin to pour out...

## 2. DENISE MINA

*Numbness is worse than pain: it's like a violent wasting disease when all connection with the outside world evaporates, nothing matters, nothing counts, nothing touches or entertains or surprises; even physical sensations feel distant and unreal. It's death without the paperwork.* – *Garnethill*.

A Scottish author, who endearingly writes in the accent, Mina's books are so unapologetic and addictive. Her characters are complex, mysterious and often anti-heroic. Her stories explore a lot of intimate and traumatic experiences and how these experiences can shape a person, or unleash them.



**I recommend: Garnethill series.** There are only 3 books in the series, Garnethill, Exile and Resolution. Believe me, you will fly through them! My favourite is the first book in the series, aptly named Garnethill. When Maureen, a hard-talking, hard-drinking Glaswegian girl, finally decides she is going to end her affair with a married man, she wakes up to find him in her living room with his throat cut. As the police draw in, she sets out to prove her innocence.

### 3. LIZ NUGENT

*People who go through life smiling miss out on the dignity of sorrow – Skin Deep*

If you're looking for severely complex narrators, unreliable at best and to delve into a rabbit hole of deceit, lies, truths coming to light, forgotten crimes, then Ms Nugent is your gal. Similar to Tana French, a lot of Nugent's stories take place in Ireland her hometown. Every time I pick up a Liz Nugent novel, I am up until all hours near to tears, sometimes fuming and often frustratingly yet satisfied after her whirlwind stories. But that's also the thing, her stories are often so set in the mundane parts of people's lives, that they can sometimes leak into your own.

**I recommend: Our Little Cruelties.** Oh, this book! This novel is narrated from 3 different perspectives throughout, from 3 brothers similar to age, but all of them are just awful, dreadful humans! But oh, so captivating. Will, Brian and Luke grow up competing for their mother's unequal love. As men, the competition continues - for status, money, fame, women ... They each betray each other, over and over, until one of them is dead. But which brother killed him?

### 4. LISA JEWELL

*My breath caught at the power of this statement. I immediately knew it to be the truest thing I'd ever heard. The weakness of men lay at the root of every bad thing that had ever happened. – The Family Upstairs*

Lisa Jewell has such immense talent with defying expectations. For instance, I thought 'The Family Upstairs' was going to be possibly a weird family living in an attic, a straight forward sort of crime fiction. But oh, no. This story is told from different stamps in time, from the 80's to the 90's to now. Jewell has this insane talent of keeping her readers on their toes, to go through each and every page with a sort of 'this is not what you think it is' set up, and it gets me every time!

**I recommend: The Family Upstairs.** Of course, as I've mentioned, I'm a little bit obsessed with this book. I finished reading it months ago and it still plays on my mind constantly! Twenty-five years ago, police were called to 16 Cheyne Walk with reports of a baby crying. When they arrived, they found a healthy ten-month-old happily cooing in her crib in the bedroom. Downstairs in the kitchen lay three dead bodies, all dressed in black, next to a hastily scrawled note. And the four other children reported to live at Cheyne Walk were gone.

## 5. GILLIAN FLYNN

*Sometimes I think illness sits inside every woman, waiting for the right moment to bloom. I have known so many sick women all my life. Women with chronic pain, with ever-gestating diseases. Women with conditions. Men, sure, they have bone snaps, they have backaches, they have a surgery or two, yank out a tonsil, insert a shiny plastic hip. Women get consumed.* – Sharp Objects.

Where to even begin with this absolute powerhouse of a writer. Gillian Flynn is quite firmly in the mainstream spotlight after the success of *Gone Girl*, the book and the film has been seen and read by just about everybody. But her other novels are so insane, so possessive, intense, strange, tragic and beautiful. Can you tell I'm a fan? Flynn's writing is just everything I wish I could write, where does she get these words from? How does she enthrall me every single time? I think I may be in some sort of psychological entanglement with Ms Flynn.

**I recommend: Dark Places.** This novel taught me that the scariest people out there aren't always the murderers and serial killers. The characters our protagonist encounters make you wince and sticks with you each stepping stone of the chapters. Libby Day was just seven years old when her older brother massacred her family while she hid in a cupboard. Her evidence helped put him away. Ever since then she has been drifting, surviving for over 20 years on the proceeds of the 'Libby Day fund'. But now the money is running out and Libby is desperate. When she is offered \$500 to do a guest appearance, she feels she has to accept. But this is no ordinary gathering. The Kill Club is a group of true-crime obsessives who share information on notorious murders, and they think her brother Ben is innocent.



And there you have it! I hope you go out and purchase or borrow some of these brilliant authors' novels, and if you don't particularly fancy my recommendations, there's plenty of other novels by these authors that will no doubt amaze and stick with you.

Many blessings all x



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RAVEN & LUNA'S

# TAROTSCOPES

## SAGITTARIUS

*The High Priestess, Page of Cups, King of Pentacles*

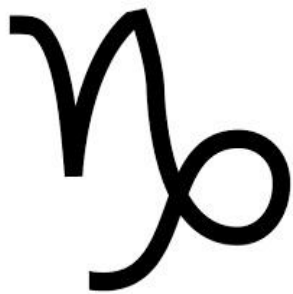
Before making any big purchases be careful, there could be hidden charges or it not be what you thought. You may also need that money later on so be mindful. It is a time where many people overspend and want things straight away but you know deep down that it isn't the right thing to do. Rather than go with your emotions, go with your intuition. Be aware of doing too much this month, in regards to celebrations especially. You may want to say yes to all the invitations but it isn't a sensible thing to do at this time.



## CAPRICORN

*2 of Pentacles, Knight of Wands*

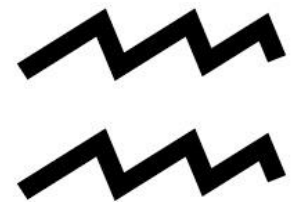
Spend your time and money wisely, making sure you balance work and play so that you can get the best of both worlds. If you're trying to impress someone, make sure you're still staying genuine. You can't wear a mask forever so accept that you're enough just as you are.



## AQUARIUS

*2 of Cups, 5 of Pentacles*

A friendship may be coming to an end. You could be feeling the pinch this month but you can find fun in celebrating without spending any money. Rely on friends to make new plans where you're unable to take part in your usual traditions.







## PISCES

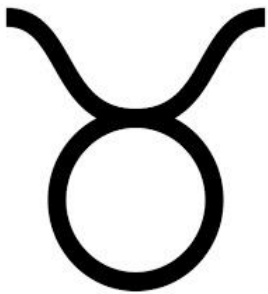
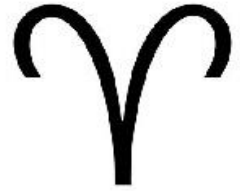
*Judgement, Page of Pentacles*

Why do you care so much about what they think of you? Don't allow others to coerce you into doing things you don't want to do or being the person that just isn't you. You may be around someone this month that makes you feel bad about who you are, it's time to put in boundaries.

## ARIES

*8 of Swords, The Emperor*

Do you struggle with your impulses? On the surface you may seem go-getting but in reality your impulsiveness may be holding you back. Balance your masculine and feminine, remembering to take others into consideration before reacting. A controlling person needs to be cut out of your life.



## TAURUS

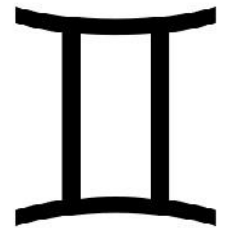
*2 of Swords, The Moon*

You may be feeling clouded or confused at the moment. You could be having trouble sleeping and having frequent headaches. Trust in your inner voice. Do what is right for you at this time and express yourself openly. Work with Moon energy and take notice of your dreams.

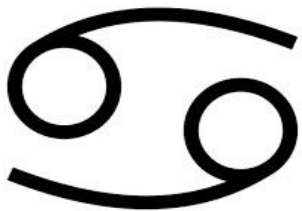
## GEMINI

*Justice, 5 of Swords*

If there's something you need to own up to, now might be the right time as it's going to come out any way. You've got to let something go, even if you were right. Things will work out for the best but something has to be accepted for things to change.



## CANCER



*2 of Cups, The Hierophant*

Use Spirituality to feel closer to those around you. If you're struggling in your relationship, counselling will help. You may meet someone in a group setting which could grow into something more. Someone will ask you advice about their love life. Lead by example.

## LEO

*Ace of Wands, 3 of Swords*

Things may not be working out how you thought and you need to swallow your pride so that you can move on. You may have already invested a lot but don't waste any more time. Try something different, especially if you're struggling with heartbreak right now.



## VIRGO



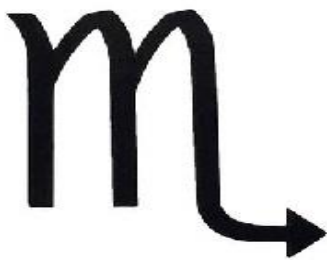
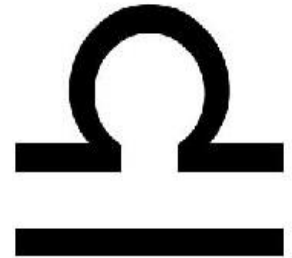
*4 of Wands, 3 of Wands*

Have gratitude for what you have and for what you've learnt this year. Concentrate on the good things rather than on any regrets. You've done so well, treat yourself. You may be put in charge of planning a party or wedding. Try to relax and enjoy this time.

## LIBRA

*5 of Wands, Wheel of Fortune*

The same issues keep coming up, so now it's time for you to deal with them. Break the cycle so that you aren't experiencing the same patterns over and over. It may be that you need to be the bigger person and/ or take accountability for making those changes.



## SCORPIO

*2 of Wands, 8 of Wands*

You need to make a decision quickly. Do it with care but something may come up where you'll miss out if you don't move swiftly. If you're being called to be spontaneous, go for it! Now is not the time to hold back or procrastinate.

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A lit candle in the center, with two unlit candles on either side, all on a reflective surface.

FIVE MINUTE FICTION

# LIKE A CURSE

## PART THREE

BY A.G. WORTHINGTON – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

My mistress once lived in a castle, or so she tells me. Our cottage is far from what I imagine a castle to be. I idly wonder if she ever misses the grandeur as I slip through the back door into the cramped wash room. The entrance to the main part of the cottage ahead gives me an unobstructed view of the witch hunter and my mistress. He has her pinned against the wall, a wickedly sharp knife pressed into the base of her throat. She doesn't struggle against him, only levels him with a cool stare which seems to only enrage him more. He's like a rabid dog, frothing at the mouth, all trace of that charming gentleman replaced with pure unadulterated hatred for what he does not understand. My mistress would never harm anything, man or beast, but in their minds she is only a creature of evil most foul. The knife pierces Isolde's skin, a drop of deep red trickling down the silver of the blade. The scent of it hits me violently and my vision bleeds.

The next thing I am aware of is the taste of copper in my mouth. My teeth are working independently, grinding through something soft and tissuey. Isolde's nails are digging into my fur and it feels like she's trying to pull me off... what? I can barely feel her. Sweetness slides down my throat as I swallow another mouthful and my tongue laps at the sweet some more. I feel intoxicated. I feel transcendent. I feel fed. It clicks in my brain then, the hunter, my mistress' blood on his blade, the first tear of skin and scrape of bone as my fangs sank into his fragile human flesh. The scream of surprise, fear, pain that is now no more than a faint, dying gurgle.

'Demeter,' Isolde says and this time I hear her and stop, my senses returning to me. I blink down at the carcass.

There's a ragged hole in Alder Thorne's side, his intestine spilling out in fat lumps of grotesque flesh that still look all too appetizing. Blood pours from the side of his mouth in a steady stream, which explains the gurgling. His black eyes are open and wide but growing more vacant with each



passing minute as he stares up at the wooden beams of the cottage ceiling. Demeter pushes me aside and kneels beside the dying man and presses her palms against his wound, but her hands are too small and blood gushes out over them and onto the already sticky floor.

‘Go,’ she says to me.

I hesitate, still torn between pushing her aside and continuing my meal and staying to help somehow.

‘You’ve done enough Deme,’ she says, easily reading my mind. ‘Get out of here now, you’ve put us in grave danger.’

That stings, and the shame it brings forth is enough to have me making a swift exit out of the cottage and into the woods. I run through the trees until I find a small stream which I dunk my whole face into to wash away the blood. I drink deeply, trying to rid that taste from my tongue, but it does little good. I can still feel the tang every time I lick my teeth.

As night falls I make my way back to the cottage. Once again I slip through the ajar back door and through into the front room. Isolde stands at the mantle, cradling the miniature painting.

‘I’m sorry,’ I hear her murmur at the picture before setting it back on the mantle.

Where Alder’s body was is now a bucket of murky water and a pile of soiled rags. The wood boards are stained dark but only by the water, all traces of blood already removed. As I get closer I see a line of red up Isolde’s arm, as if she had been cut by Alder’s blade. I let out a sound then, of question and apology all mixed. She turns to face me grim-faced.

*He hurt you.*

Isolde glances down at her arm, shakes her head and pulls her sleeve down to cover the mark.

‘It isn’t mine,’ she says, brushing me off.

*Why don’t you clean it away?*

‘Not without further price,’ she mutters under her breath.

The next morning I find myself stalking the woods once more. It isn't long before I happen upon another deer, this time a young buck innocently trotting through the trees ahead. Ignoring Isolde's admonition from the previous day I crouch low for a hunt. The buck looks up straight away. It shouldn't have been able to sense me yet but it looks straight at me, and there is something startling familiar about its eyes. Not brown like the doe's but impossibly black.

We stare at one another for one long moment before he turns tail and sprints away. I could give chase now, feel the wind glide through my fur and feel the rush of adrenaline only the hunt can give me, but I won't. I find myself still strangely full.

*The End.*



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# GRIMOIRE

NOVEMBER 2020

## RAIN WATER – MAGICKAL USES

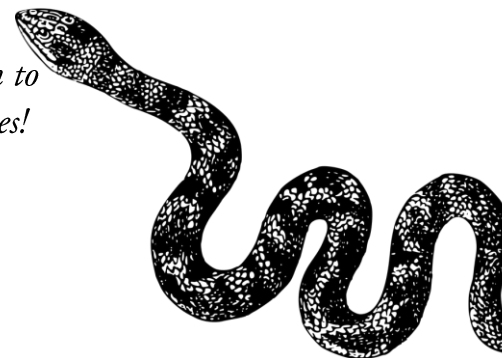
By Bekki Jo Milner

It's November – a season often filled with rainy days – so place some containers outside during showers and collect rain water to use in your practice.

Rain water has several uses – some swear by washing their hair with it for example. There are a myriad of magickal uses for it too, so why not try some of these?

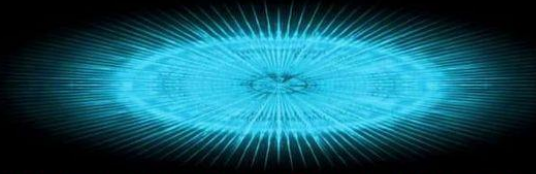
1. Use as offerings to deities or ancestors
2. Leave in a dish or sprinkle at the threshold as blessing or protection
3. Mix with essential oils and spray yourself or your room to cleanse
4. Draw sigils upon surfaces using the water and your finger
5. Anoint yourself or your magickal tools and crystals
6. Add it to jar spells – particularly for growth or abundance.
7. Add to ritual baths
8. Pour in to a dark bowl and use for scrying

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

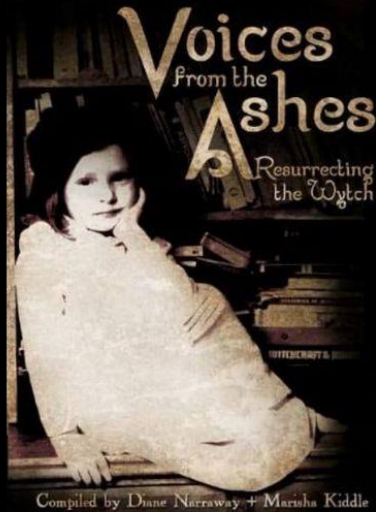




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anthology breathes fresh life into what has, for far too long been little more than a list of names.

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.

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