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# Yule



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# WITCH Magazine

Welcome to the Yule Special edition of WITCH magazine.

When you receive this issue, we will be at the time of the shortest day, and the longest night.



From there forward, the nights will grow shorter and the light will return, until the waking of the maiden at Imbolc. Another cycle will begin, but until then it is time to embrace the dark nights and winter weather.

Find tips on making the most of winter, spells and winter rituals a plenty within this issue. We hope you enjoy the small Winter Ritual and the free spell candle that came with this issue!

Thank you to all of our readers for your support – this 13<sup>th</sup> issue marks a whole year since Witch began, and we look forward to celebrating our birthday issue next 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 [submissions@witchzine.co.uk](mailto:submissions@witchzine.co.uk)

-Bekki, Editor of WITCH magazine

## FEATURING

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CANCER

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FEMININE

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GRIMOIRE

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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.

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/).



FAIRY BEC

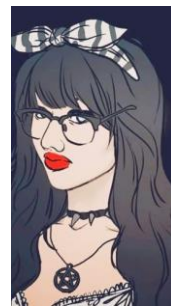
Fairy Bec AKA Rebecca Edwards is a healer, wellness guide and holistic health practitioner. Bec practices Reiki and brings Reiki energy into everything she does. Being Pagan and following the wheel of the year is very important to Bec as she travels her pathway through life. Bec often finds that people 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](https://www.instagram.com/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.



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](http://offaspres.co.uk)

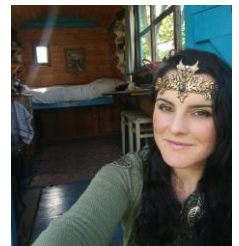
PORTLAND JONES

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>



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



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.



# WITCH

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# THE MOON AFTER YULE - FULL MOON IN CANCER

BY MICHELLE ROSE BOXLEY FOR SISTERS OF THE MOON

FOR OUR FINAL FULL MOON OF 2020 WE WELCOME IN THE FULL MOON IN CANCER ON DECEMBER 30TH. WITH THIS FULL MOON TAKING PLACE SO CLOSE TO THE END OF THE CALENDAR YEAR WE HAVE A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO REALLY RELEASE AND LET GO OF ALL THAT NO LONGER SERVES US AND ALL THAT WE DON'T WISH TO CARRY IN TO 2021. DECEMBER'S FULL MOON IS ALSO CALLED THE MOON AFTER YULE, THE COLD MOON, THE LONG NIGHT MOON AND THE OAK MOON.

Cancer is a feminine water sign ruled by the moon herself so expect to feel ALL the feels in the lead up to this Full Moon especially as this moon lands in that weird crimbo limbo time. Self care, rest and nourishment couldn't be more important at this time.

**Cancer themes:** *home, nurture, care, nourish, motherhood, receiving, emotions, healing, belonging, intuition, the divine feminine, the lunar, the mysteries.*

For this Full Moon, we have the Sun in Capricorn and the moon in the opposite sign of Cancer. Capricorn invites us to look at our soul purpose and the balance between our spiritual life and daily life - we'll explore this more with the New Moon in Capricorn. The full moon in cancer can help us to see how much emotional baggage is standing in the way of us achieving our spiritual

goals. Spend some time really sitting with your emotions and whatever is coming up for you during the lead up to this final full moon of the year and journal about your feelings. What patterns can you find within your emotions? What narratives can you see are on repeat? How much of this is your stuff or stuff that has been passed down to you? Can you cut the cords? This Full Moon falls so close to the end of the calendar year, really ask yourself what you don't want to carry with you into the new year.



We can also ask ourselves if our attachment to safety and security is preventing us from moving forward and stepping into the unknown. Cancer is a very home orientated sign and the shadow side of this can be that this sign gets stuck out of fear.

A key theme associated with cancer is CARE - it's really important to achieve balance between the care that we give to others and then making sure we care for ourselves. How good are we at receiving care and support from others? Winter is a time to let ourselves receive - receive rest, nourishment and restoration. It's a time to hug our energy in and create boundaries that protect this important time for our self to process the events of the year and also to allow our self time and space to dream the new year ahead.

It's really important to re-establish our boundaries at the beginning of a new year. Reflect on your emotional



boundaries at the moment, are they functioning? Do you need to assert new boundaries? Who and what is depleting your energy? Remember, if we want to achieve our soul purpose we need our energy to be directed in the most beneficial way.

It's important to remember, in the midst of everyone posting about "new year, new you" detox plans and exercise goals that we are in the depths of winter and will be for some time. In the old celtic calendar, the first signs of Spring are celebrated with Imbolc on Feb 1st but even then there's an awareness that this is a subtle shift and there's still plenty of Winter time to go. We still have to get through the frosts, fogs and potential snow of January, February and March. So, an invitation is to think carefully before packing away all of your Yule decorations. Home is an important theme for cancer (crab shell), moon in cancer days invite us to look at how nurtured we feel. Think about the home comforts that are going to keep you warm and nurtured over the coming winter months. Continue to adorn your living spaces with fairy lights, candles, and soft and luxurious throws and blankets.



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

In two weeks' time, on Sunday 15th November we will have the New Moon in Scorpio. Join us online where we will be delving deeper into the themes associated with Scorpio.

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

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# HUNTING THE WILD FEMININE

HELEN JR BRUCE – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

When we picture the Huntsman and his wild entourage we are most likely imagining a strong masculine archetype. Whether we see Wodan and his ravens, Gwyn with his antlers or Arawn in pursuit of a prize white stag, we are imagining a hunt where the male is the Master. Of course there is great power in this, and that driving masculine energy is needed to tear through the land at Samhain, gather lost souls, and leave the earth cleansed before rest and rebirth. But it is also important to remember that, even in spiritual motifs and mythic archetypes, there is always a balance of the masculine and feminine.

Wodan, or later Odin, was married to Frigga and others, although these goddesses can arguably be seen as various aspects of the feminine symbolically split. Nevertheless, they were mistresses of sorcery, fertility, lust, motherhood and the arts. Odin may have been all knowing and the allfather, but still his knowledge was balanced by the all important gift of creativity, which was overseen by the feminine. Arawn, the Welsh Master of the Wild Hunt who precedes Gwyn ap Nudd, is said to be married to the most beautiful woman in the world in the Mabinogion. But Gwyn ap Nudd himself brings us a tale worthy of more detailed discussion.

The story goes that Gwyn fell in love with the maiden Creiddylad, who is in some tales his sister, and abducted her from her betrothed. The man who was to wed Creiddylad, named Gwythyr ap Greidawl, raised an army against Gwyn in retaliation, but it was Gwyn who was victorious. After their bloody battle, King Arthur is said to have called the two men together to finally settle their dispute, and decreed that they must do battle each May Day until Judgement Day. Only then, will it be decided who will win the hand of Creiddylad.

Of course, there are some problematic elements within this story, not least the fact that the the would be lovers are related. This often comes up in folklore, and is likely used to underline the deep connection and the importance of the relationship between two figures. They are bound by more than love or lust; it is an eternal bond of both blood and the energy of interconnected fates. Considering the tale from this perspective, the battle over the maiden motif can be seen as a variant of the yearly battle between the Holly King and the Oak King. Taking this interpretation, Gwyn would equate with the Winter King, with his dark hair and role as King of Annwn, and the fiery haired Gwythyr would be the Summer, or Oak, King. Creiddylad can therefore be seen as a personification of the goddess, the fertile land itself, and the driving force behind the cycle of seasons which summons the Hunt.

Alongside the female companions to the Huntmaster, there are also of course deities that are huntresses in their own right. One of the most famous, perhaps, is the Greek goddess Artemis, who presides over childbirth, chastity, wild animals and of course the hunt. Greatly favoured by the rural populace, she was recognised as the goddess Diana by the Romans, and considered to be a potent and powerful deity. In one myth, the young hunter Actaeon comes across her bathing naked with her nymphs in the forest, and is transformed into a stag as punishment. Fleeing through the trees, the unfortunate hunter is tracked down by his own hounds and torn apart.



Hekate is widely known as the goddess of witchcraft, but she also presides over crossroads, entrance ways, night and necromancy. As an ancient Greek goddess, she is most often depicted with two burning torches and a key, although she can also be seen in triple form and accompanied by hunting hounds. Some scholars have suggested that Hekate originated as the 'dark' aspect of Artemis, and provides the natural balance of the soul midwife to the goddess of childbirth. This suggestion is contested by others, but it still offers us an interesting stance from which to consider the links between these deities. The Chaldean Oracles also attributes to Hekate the role of holding the cosmic world soul.

I must also mention Elen of the Ways, who is fascinating in herself as an antlered goddess. Originally linked to the migrating reindeer herds that lived in ancient Britain, she is now more often associated with the native roe deer. As a sovereignty goddess, she embodies the land (just as we considered Creiddylad may) and also governs both the physical and spiritual trackways that we take through life and beyond. Like Hekate, and the various leaders of the Wild Hunt, she is mistress of thresholds and the sacred journey. Her femininity is part of her power, and it is the female reindeer who retain their antlers throughout the cold winter months and use them to dig for hidden food beneath the frost.

Within each of these deities we see the fierce courage of the female. We are called to remember that women have been trailblazers throughout all of time. As keepers of the ways, they created the paths between realms that the Wild Hunt will follow. Keeping the soul of the world in their wombs, they hold space for the process of death and rebirth. It is no coincidence that the Welsh Otherworld of Annwn is described or depicted as the cauldron; the archetypal feminine symbol of creation and regeneration. In recent communion with the Master of the Wild Hunt, I was urged to remember that, within our wild core lies our power. Within us are the same bones as of all of creation, and each form we take is a re-arrangement of energy and minerals that has been many wonders before us. Now is not the time to be placid and demure. Women and men are called by the wild beat of the drum, by the cycle of the seasons and the roar of the stag in the heart of the forest.

*Bless the land!* Cries Creiddylad. *Suffer no disrespect!* Advises Artemis. *Ascribe honour in death!* Demands Hekate. *Lead on with pride!* Whispers Elen.

There is no strength in division, and there never has been. Women, we are still in part the huntress who runs with hounds by her side. We are the gatekeepers of mysteries and we know where the path lies, even under the snow. Men, you are made more magnificent by the women beside you. Wear your antlers with pride, and know that when they are shed you are still held and protected. The Wild Huntress has always been present, blessing us with drive and resilience through all the dark winters of our lives. She remains close now, calling us all to rise up, and to honour the old paths with the fall of our feet.

*Illustration by Haz John art*

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# THE DOLMEN



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

# THE TRIPLE GODDESS

FAIRY BEC – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

I am writing this article from my own feelings and opinions. The only research I have done has been to discuss the triple goddess with others. I plan to look more into books etc. but thought that my best starting point was with people and my own thoughts.

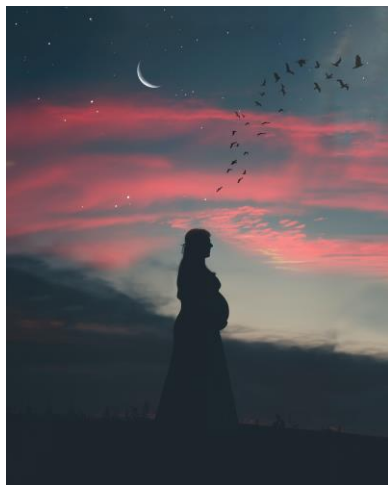
I hope you find my opinions and approach to the triple goddess thought provoking.

The Triple Goddess is linked mainly to Neo Paganism and Wiccan beliefs. It is the concept of Maid, Mother and Crone who can be seen to come together as one in unity.

This is how I view each of the figures:-

## THE MAID

My image of the Maid is one of a free spirit. The Maid is innocent, all loving and open. The Maid needs protecting as she leaves herself open but this openness gives her bravery to try new things. The Maid is also seen as the virgin, the pre-marriage girl/the single girl. The Maid has her life ahead of her and she could choose to make it anything she wants but she lives very much in the moment. You could even view The Maid as a character in her teens to mid twenties. I see The Maid as represented by the crescent moon to the left of the triple goddess symbol.



## THE MOTHER

When I think of the Mother I see The Empress from the tarot in my mind. The mother is the protector and the one that creates growth both physically and emotionally. The Mother is wise but has little time to reflect for herself. Her role is more of servitude, she is the rock that holds everyone together as she makes sacrifices for the sake of her family. The Mother lives for the future, always planning and preparing for every eventuality. You could view The Mother character as being late twenties to late fifties. I see The Mother as represented by the full moon in the centre of the triple goddess symbol.

## THE CRONE

The Crone is mainly still and calm when I see her in my mind's eye. She sits, watches and finds the comings and goings of others fascinating. The Crone accepts every being as themselves and shows love and light to all. The Crone sees the reason in everything and accepts that things are simply what they are. The Crone accepts fate and karma. She knows that no matter what you do, the result is what is meant to be. The Crone knows the importance of going with a pure and open heart.

I think of Baba Yaga as the ultimate Crone. I feel a strong affinity to her and her wise, kindly face

I see The Crone as represented by the crescent moon to the right of the triple goddess symbol.



## ALL THREE

All three together represent The Goddess to me. (Although I do get similar images to that of Station from Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey when I think of them all blending together to make one uber spiritual being!). They can come together to cover every area of any situation or you can call upon the individual aspects of the triple goddess to guide you through specific situations.

It is often felt that we embody the triple goddess within ourselves. Many people think that they have to just be one of these roles at one time and that life progresses you through Maid then Mother then Crone. Many people also think that these roles are age related and that you cannot be The Maid in your late sixties or The Crone in your twenties. Although I have attributed ages to the characters above, I feel that these ages are not a reflection of what is on the outside but of how you feel on the inside.



## A SPELL TO CALL IN THE ASSISTANCE OF THE TRIPLE GODDESS

This spell is for when you are in a difficult situation with others and you need to find your way out or help others to find a way out of a difficult situation.

## YOU NEED

1. Three candles – any colour. I tend to use white tea lights.
2. A safe space to light your candles. I like to use my Celtic triple spiral candle holder in my kitchen.
3. Something to light your candles with. I love using my unicorn lighter.

## OPENING THE SPACE

1. Light the first candle and say “I call upon The Maid to give me the bravery to approach this situation openly.”
2. Light the second candle and say “I call upon The Mother to give me strength and protection in this situation.”
3. Light the third candle and say “I call upon The Crone to show me the wisdom to behave in the right way for the benefit of all involved.”

## THE BIT IN THE MIDDLE

This is when you ask for whatever it is that you need. It may be for a sign, to speed a situation along that might be stagnant, protection for someone you love. The possibilities are endless.

You can also change the wording to suit individual spells.

With Yule and New Year approaching, you can simply ask for a fabulous 2021 for yourself and those you care about. There is no time limit. Sometimes I pop my candles on and bake or paint then close the spell. Sometimes I open the spell and come back a couple of hours later to close it. If you leave the room, please make sure that your candles can burn safely unattended and that you frequently check in on them.

You can do this spell as many times as you like. I recommend that if it is a situation that you wish to grow e.g. going for a new job and wanting to expand your finances, do it in the three days around the full moon. If it is about coming out of or shifting a new situation forwards then I recommend you do it after the full moon and approaching the new moon.

## CLOSING THE SPACE

1. Say “Thank you Crone for your wisdom, you may now leave.” and blow the third candle out.
2. Say “Thank you Mother for your strength and protection, you may now leave.” and blow the second candle out.
3. Say “Thank you Maid for your bravery and open mind, you may now leave.” and blow out the first candle.

Merry Yule everyone, I wish you a blessed 2021.

# CONJURER'S LODGE

TALOCH JAMESON

SINGER-SONGWRITER OF THE DOLMEN

[WWW.THEDOLMEN.COM](http://WWW.THEDOLMEN.COM)

“The English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all account of witches and apparitions, as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it...”

-John Wesley's Journal – 1768

On the Dorset Island of Portland in the year 1816, Wesleyan minister Francis Derry delivered a fiery sermon to a gathering of parishioners. Condemning those members of the congregation who still held belief in (or perhaps even practiced) the ancient craft of the Witch, Derry's sermon was to some not only an ultimatum, but a challenge.

By the time the sermon was concluded, a line had been drawn in the little church that would mark a decade's division. Precedence for what was to be Derry's heavy-handed treatment began in the firmly rooted convictions of John Wesley, the founder of what eventually became Methodism. A hundred years before Derry's Portland sermon, the 1716 haunting of his family home by the “Epworth poltergeist” had galvanized Wesley's belief in the invisible world. Wesley's writings and journals abound with references to the powers of various dark or divine forces. But by the 19th century the majority of Wesleyan followers, along with their parent, the Anglican Church, were increasingly influenced by scientific rationalism, wishing instead to have such ‘superstitious nonsense’ as belief in Witchcraft purged from their ranks.

Still, in the little Portland congregation were several who would not be moved by Derry's sermon. With blazing indignation, the Reverend struck their names from the records of Christian brotherhood. In those days, this was as good as consignment to the furthest circles of Hell. (Writing of the incident more than eighty years later, Portland Methodist Robert Pierce, whilst convinced that ‘a stern policy to deal with this mischievous superstition’ was necessary, nevertheless regretted Derry's zealous methods). It is said there were between fifty and perhaps as many as sixty people total that left the small Portland church on that day.

Led by two prominent lay preachers named Charles Whittle and Robert Hinde, their next move was extraordinary for its time but perhaps not for its place. Proceeding to establish their own church, they defiantly and openly named their new chapel “Conjurers Lodge”. The stone building that housed this remarkable congregation still exists. Retaining the same name today, it is no longer a church dedicated to a belief in Witchcraft, but a builder's yard.

Portland is an epic place with a rich heritage of legend and lore. The surrounding sea itself is scattered with ghostly ship wrecks, and tales a-plenty have been told for ages of Black Dogs, Mermaids, and Sea Monsters of fantastic proportion. Among its many unique sites is the famously named “Pirates Graveyard”. Located at the top of the Island near Church Hope, many grave stones carry the symbol of the Skull & Bones. Whilst piratical mayhem is certainly part of Portland history, obviously the graveyard is mistakenly named, as in truth these carved symbols were adopted by the Freemasons, another group with a not unexpected vigorous presence on an Island where stonemasonry abounds.



In fact, the first major building encountered when driving on to the island is a Masonic meetinghouse. No less than six lodges exist on Portland, a remarkably high number for an area measuring no more than four and one-half miles. (“Modern” Freemasonry has dominated the Island - at least formally - since 1864, with the establishment of the first consecrated Lodge). But it is credible to assume that earlier stonemasons’ societies would have existed on the quarry isle of Portland, of all places, having been so on the mainland for centuries before (the earliest known “mason’s marks” are said to be on Norwich Cathedral and date from around 1119).

Portland Witchcraft is fairly much in keeping with similar then-known veins of the practice that were condemned by everyday folk. Witchcraft practitioners were not seen as working for the common good; basically it was a title given to people considered evil, or consorted with the Devil.

“Witcha” or “Witche” referred to particular individuals who were said to be working with evil spirits in acts that were detrimental to others. In contrast, there were many “cunning men and women” who performed spells for healing, harmony and communal good. I personally think that the bulk of Witch history available to us today is extremely limited. It reflects a confusion of a variety of activities of the past, so that now we have an altogether thick soup under the single heading of Witchcraft. But no matter the intent of the practitioner of the Art, time and again in history such individuals have been feared and singled out for persecution by the community and its institutions.

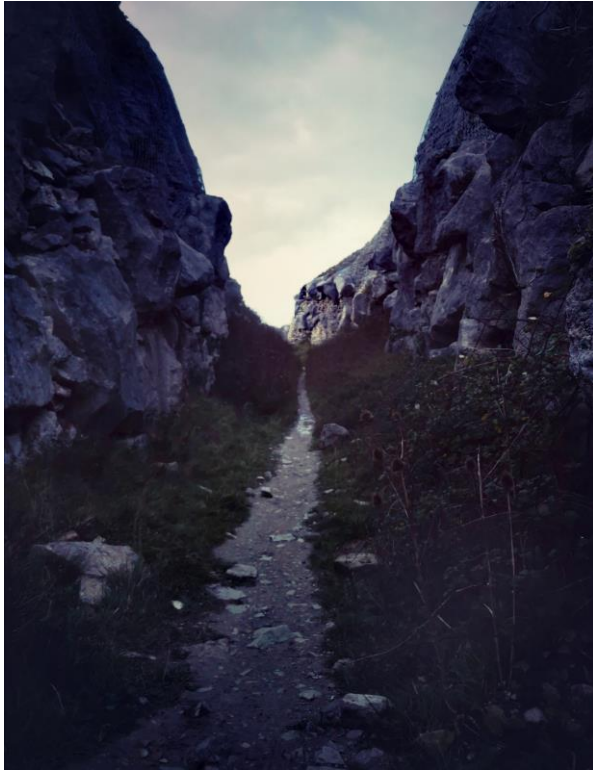
The point of the foregoing is to establish that those who were accused and shunned by the Portland church back in the early 1800’s were not all necessarily practicing Witches but were most assuredly connected in some way. This theory is borne out by the fact that after walking out, leaving the pastor to himself with the remnants of the congregation, they boldly and publicly declared their new meeting house to be a “Conjurers Lodge”.

Historically, Portland people were a hard working but wilfully closed community. Cut off from the mainland, though only by a short distance, ensured the sort of family and community soul as is found in many small villages or settlements of the time. (On Portland, a person not born of the Island was known then and even now as “Kimberlin” [stranger], whilst elders of Portland have long maintained their sea-faring ancestors differ from those of the mainland, even that of close- by Weymouth.) In short, these close knit inhabitants knew each other, were closely kin to each other, and from the many historical connections based on thousands of years of occupation the Island had its customs and practices which, to be fair, were not against the new religion of Christianity but continued to run alongside it.

Keeping in mind that the religion of Wicca is a fairly modern invention and that the practice of traditional Witchcraft has no past evidence of ties with any particular religion other than the wrongful association between it and the Christian Devil; individuals who were accused of being part of the Craft were actually few and far between. As we know many an innocent soul died as a result of false accusation.



But what about those who were the real Witches - those who did work with spirits, practiced the Arts and had genuine ability? To be called a Witch an individual had to be seen as one, which meant there were associated deeds that earned them the title.



Those who became the founders of the Witches' Coven Conjurers Lodge were quite an unusual case, and in fact, became a massive embarrassment to the Church and to Rev'd Derry, whose 'circuit' on the island ended not long after. It wasn't that they wanted to fight with the Church; instead they refused to lay aside the heritage of a lifetime and follow the rest of the country under the reign of other such religious zealots: that is, to turn against those amongst them whom they knew in fact to be real Witches and who were most likely respected individuals within their community.

Whilst the prevailing attitude of the church at that time was not necessarily outright persecution but instead condemnation of the Islanders' convictions as being based on 'superstitious nonsense', the folk of Conjurers Lodge knew better – after all, were they not dealing with Kimberlin who knew nothing of the Island people, of the traditions and customs that arose during the long centuries of isolation? The Island holds many secrets and many traditions, and for those who are skilled in the arts there are also places by which many a Witch, since the rise of the mighty Dolmen stones and circles, have gathered, and now gather, to commune and interact with those brethren of the close realms.

The art of magick would be practiced, and based on the nature and intent of it, the community would no doubt benefit by these workings. The belief in the abilities of such individuals was enough to make a church congregation fly apart in support which gives one a clue that those local Witches at the time were not all considered to be bad.

This reversal in many churches of the time from outright persecution, torture and even death to those accused of Witchcraft, to the view that only unenlightened bumpkins believe in such things, takes quite an ironic twist in the history of Portland's Conjurers Lodge. They of the little chapel would keep their Witches, thank you, and their curious blending of Christianity along with it. It is no stretch to envision that within the walls of a chapel with such a name, at least some of those sixty souls not only held to a belief in the Craft, but practiced it. And a lot of their neighbours knew it, and knew that some of it was for the benefit of the community as a whole.

A few years ago, to honour the early Witches of the Island and in preparation of the Year 2013, Conjurers Lodge was re-established and dedicated. Through those who have heeded the call, the revived Lodge pays tribute to the early Portland Witches of Dorset, and has been itself an experience steeped in magical wonder, as we seek to renew the original Witch heritage of the Island of Portland.



Taloch Jameson  
Castlefest Ritual  
Sanne Druif Jans

# CELEBRATING YULE

BY PORTLAND JONES – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

The winter solstice, or Yule, is a great time of year, when we think of roaring log fires bringing warmth to the home in the coldness of winter. There will be banks of crisp white snow, sparkling in the sunlight. We gather (usually, though probably not this year) in family huddles, celebrating our survival, feasting on the bounty of the closing year.

Actually, I don't have a roaring log fire in my home. It's kept warm by no fuss central heating. If it should do the unthinkable and break down, I can just plug in my electric back-up heater. It's not all that likely to snow till January, and even if it does, it won't stick just yet.

So I won't be dusting off my sleigh to glide over the snow. More likely, I will be frustratedly slipping and sliding on slush stained grey by city contamination. I'm not going to starve if I run out of supplies. I could put on a feast at any time of the year, courtesy of frozen food and all year round supply chains.

So while I fully appreciate – and participate – in the imagery of Yule, I have marked the occasion in other ways. One good thing about the winter solstice is that the sun rises considerably later than at the opposing summer solstice.

A brisk solstice morning saw me in strange company at the Rollright Stones. On the boundary between Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, at the edge of the Cotswold Hills, the oldest of these stones dates from circa 3,800 to 3,500 BCE. We gathered in the circle of stones known as the King's Men. Legend has it that an Iron Age King one day set out with his army to conquer England. He fell foul of a witch, his hapless soldiers being turned to stone. His knights became the nearby clump of stones known as the Whispering Knights. The witch turned into an elder tree that is still in the hedgerow. According to the legend, if the elder is cut down, the Stones will come back to life.

I was there with some fellow witches, and Beorma, morris dancers hailing from Birmingham. In the dim light, our merry band walked the curve of the circle, led by the beat of a drum, preparing to greet the rising sun. I said a few words to the people gathered to watch us, and to pay their own respects to this special time of year. I spoke of our ancestors and their fears for their future, of the contrast between their lives and our own. We shared 'cake and ale' with those ringing the circle. And as the dark lifted, the morris danced up the sun.

Closer to home, solstice has found me with family and friends at the Lickey Hills, Birmingham, another area steeped in history. The first records of people here date back to the stone age, when a Neolithic hunter lost a flint arrow head on Rednal Hill. The Romans constructed a road over the hills to transport salt and other goods between their camps.

Early morning before the sun rose was eerie in its cloud of mist. We stepped quietly over the fallen leaves and branches, listening to drops of water lose their grip on damp trees and fall to the floor with a patter almost of rain. Waking birds announced the time with their chorus; the undergrowth rustled as unknown small life raced away from our intrusion.





The ground underneath our feet was soft and springy, and slippy enough for the need to concentrate on not ending up prostrate on the floor. We found a clearing amongst the trees where we chose to stop, to create our space for ritual. On our meander we had each chosen something that had significance for us from the richness that had gathered on the ground, placing it on a large moss-mottled stone that served as our altar. Amid the glory of towering trees, we made our thanks for the return of the sun, and were rewarded as the mist cleared away to reveal the rising sun in its fullness.

Leaving the isolation and otherworldliness of our morning gathering, we headed back to the car park, past eager dogs dragging their yawning owners, and bright as a button walkers taking their morning constitutional. Back in our day to day reality, we jumped in the car and headed to a local pub. As we waited for our breakfasts, we hugged mugs of hot tea and coffee to restore life to our chilled fingers.

The duality of our pagan lives captured in a single moment.



# CICADA SEED JEWELLERY

## MEET THE MAKER

Meet Jenni Joule, the maker and imaginator behind all that you see @cicadaseedjewellery!

Living through this pandemic makes me think of Eyam, where I grew up. This tiny, otherwise-insignificant village in the Peak District is famous for the original pandemic lockdown (the bubonic plague) and life during those pretty awful times probably had too many parallels to life today. It is however the place that my mind, filled with Brian Froud's storybooks, would run wild, and deep in the woods my mind would be dreaming up goblins and fairies and I would go grotting around in the wonderful miniature world of bugs and grubs. I was so interested! Take cicadas, for instance. Their amazing life cycle begins as underground nymphs before they climb trees, molt, and burst into synchronous song, sometimes decades later! I've always thought of the little creatures as seeds waiting for that day to grow into their full potential. Their patience in their dark lives and then their transformation at a magical event gives me hope during difficult and uncertain times.

Small critters have always fascinated me, whether canoeing down Malaysia's chocolate jungle rivers in 35C heat or walking through a moss-covered forest on a cold, dreich December day. This is absolutely my inspiration for my 'Undergrowth Collection'. I have created silver leaves and stone charms which remind me of glistening berries or shining beetle backs, and silver beetle and moth necklaces all of which hold a raw jewel resembling a little treasure from the undergrowth.

Having lived in faraway places and magical countries like Indonesia, I never saw myself living in a small, green, steep-roofed cottage on the edge of a wet and windy Scottish loch. Nevertheless, my second collection takes its inspiration from here: the 'Barnacle Collection'! Surprisingly (by which I mean, despite the weather!) my love of the ocean has deepened so much here. Seeing porpoises from the shore and seals up close from the little boat we often row out on the less windy days – it's my daily meditation to think of life under the ocean.





UNDERGROWTH COLLECTION



BARNACLE COLLECTION



MENDED COLLECTION

Each morning with the fire made, I sit at my desk in the cottage and look over the misshapen and old tools that I have collected since my training in India. Scattered around, they each tell their own story through their dents and scars – my favourites are the pushes and rockers that I use to fix each stone into their new homes. My 'Mended Collection' is a series of pieces containing scars bound with brass stitches, which represent the beautiful journey we take when we wound, heal and learn to love ourselves again. I adore these pieces and they have become my most popular range. Jen says: "Learn to love your scars because this is where your strengths come from!"

Wherever you are, in the UK or beyond, I wish you all a happy solstice and fun New Year celebrations! I hope you are happily planning what you will do once this virus has vanished... and if you ever visit the wild west coast of Scotland (and you should!) keep your eyes peeled for me – I'll be the one in black leathers flying around on my aptly named motorbike, "Smokey"!

In the meantime, you can message me or find my shop via Instagram and Facebook @cicadaseedjewellery!

Much love,

Jen



# TWO SPELLS

## THAT HELPED ME COMBAT 2020

ALEX WORTHINGTON – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Yule falls at a special time of the year for me. The days are short and the nights are long, there's a chill in the air and a sense of the end of a chapter. I love the feeling it brings. This year has been one of the hardest any of us have had to live through in our lifetime but it's also been a year where I have reconnected with my inner witch. As we reflect on all that has happened and look forward to a (hopefully) brighter year ahead I thought I would share two spells that have helped me immensely this year.

Before I get into the magic I want to preface this by saying these spells are completely my own creations and my magic relies on using what I have directly to hand so if you want to re-create these with substitutes you have available or want to add anything then that is completely up to you!



## SLEEP POUCH

This one is a staple and has been ever since I really seriously started practicing my craft. I have had trouble sleeping on and off for years, as has my partner so I find this little pouch really beneficial to aiding peaceful sleeps for us both.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- An organza bag (though any small bag or sewn pouch will do- I once created one of these by stitching up a handkerchief)
- Rose quartz for self-love and to dispel negativity
- Amethyst to ward off nightmares
- Moonstone to reduce emotional stress making it easier for your mind/body to sleep
- Optional: dried herbs or flowers such as chamomile, lavender, thyme etc... that promote good sleep, calm, self-love etc...

This is one of the simpler spells I do and really just involves placing the items into a vessel and speaking my intentions whilst I secure the bag/pouch/etc so to lock in the ingredients of the spell. I then leave it on my altar to charge (depending on how soon you wish to use it, this can be for a couple of hours or overnight) and then slip it inside a pillowcase for it to work its magic!



# ANTI-ANXIETY LUCK CHARM

This one is a more involved spell I created with more elements and steps than the sleep pouch. I suffer quite badly with anxiety and this year has only worsened it. I am also a firm believer in luck and see it as its own type of magic. Believing in luck is just another way of practising Positive Thinking. Magic only works if you believe it will.

I have quite a stressful job so this spell was primarily created to ease my stress and anxiety in the workplace but of course you can use and adapt it for anything.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- An organza bag
- A candle (any shape, size or colour but for extra omph you can use a coloured candle that is tied to your intent)
- A small bowl
- Moon water (I used blue moon water I collected under this years Samhain full moon)
- Salt to purify
- Thyme to cleanse
- Rose quartz to dispel negativity
- Adventurine for luck
- Citrine to release negative traits and promote productivity
- Tigers eye for persistence and self-confidence



First step is to light your candle. I then poured a small amount of moon water into a bowl and added a pinch of salt for extra purification. I briefly bathed the crystals in the water before taking them out and patting them dry. Be careful with exposing your crystals to water as some will not react well to being submerged for longer periods of time and may be damaged.

Again, the charm itself isn't overly complicated to make. I just put the crystals and herbs into a small organza bag and secured it. At this point I would start to burn the thyme. I personally worship the triple goddess so I spoke to her as I let the smoke from the thyme seep through the charm bag but you can speak to any god/goddess or deity you want. I asked Her to bless this charm and then spoke my intentions to Her. Finally I left the charm on my altar to charge overnight so it was ready for me to pick up in the morning and take to work.

# A VERY MERRY DUALTHEISTIC HOLIDAY

MIKE D FOR SON OF A WITCH POD

We are now in “The most wonderful time of the year”, as the song says. Indeed it is considered by many to be just that, wonderful, merry, and bright. But what happens when your household is dualtheistic? Well, you make it work, that’s what.

I will tell you how our family does just that. I have often received very perplexed looks when I tell my witch and pagan friends that my partner is Christian, while I am a practicing witch.

“But how does that even work Mike?” is the typical query I am usually asked. The simple answer that I give is this...it isn’t very hard at all.

See, for me, I was raised in a Christian family, southern Baptist to be precise. If you are not familiar with that particular denomination of Christianity, just know that at times there is talk of hell fire and brimstone, eternal damnation, and lots of very strong verbiage denoting “this is how you should live, else you are a sinner and going to hell”.

In other words, speaking out as being a witch would not have ever been received warmly. Many of the listeners of my podcast know that I have been a practicing witch for almost 30 years. If you knew my age, which we won’t get into, that would tell you that I have been practicing the craft since I was a teenager.

So how then, being surrounded by a very devout Christian family did I make this work you might ask. Well, that answer too is quite simple...I told no one. No one except my grandmother, who taught me much of what I know. So I grew up celebrating Christmas as a religious holiday primarily celebrating the birth of Jesus.

However, the traditions common in my household now are not very different from those I celebrate now. Let me explain.

We always decorated a Christmas tree, of which we would place gifts under and anxiously await, sometimes even sneaking a peek prior, to open. If you are pagan or a witch, this may sound a lot like a Yule tree. Well, that’s because it is.

Many believe, myself being one of the many, that the tradition of a Christmas tree was inspired and appropriated from the tradition of a Yule tree. We would also have wonderful feasts around the holidays, again, much like during Yule. We were told that we needed to be good little children throughout the year, otherwise Santa would not bring us gifts, and instead we would receive a lump of coal.

Well, in many pagan traditions, Odin would have done the same thing during what is known as “The Wild Hunt”...leading many to agree that Santa was modelled after Odin in this way. Odin rode his eight legged steed Sleipnir, Santa had eight tiny reindeer.

In other traditions, Santa still exists, but alongside a terrifying creature known as Krampus. Santa would reward good children, while Krampus would bring coal to the naughty ones, and depending on who you ask, possibly even stuffing them in his own sack and taking them away.

We had mistletoe hanging in doorways, and the lore was that if you found yourself under it with another, you should share a kiss. Well, in pagan traditions, mistletoe was around as well. Primarily because it was seen as the only plant that would bloom during the cold, dark winter months...thereby representing life anew at the passing of the winter solstice.

Many Christmas ornaments are shiny baubles, more often than not shiny colourful glass balls hung on the Christmas tree for decoration. This was borrowed from the tradition of Witches Ball.

Witches balls were sometimes clear, and other times colourful glass balls with a hole in the top. The lore behind them is that you could hang these in windows of the home, and malevolent and mischievous spirits

would be so entranced by them that they would be stuck gazing at their beauty until the sun rose the next morning, vanquishing them. Others say that when the spirits would touch the balls, they would be trapped inside. In modern traditions of the witches ball, herbs, cascarilla, crystal etc are added to the balls and sealed with wax as to facilitate the protective properties, or to bless the home.



The list could go on, but this article is about how Christian and pagan households coexist. Suffice to say, that the traditions of both are very similar and at times virtually the same, so it is not very hard. In many cases, I have quietly celebrated my Yule traditions alongside my Christian family and friends without them even knowing it.

When I grew older, and particularly when I moved away from the south, I grew tired of keeping my beliefs and my witchiness quiet. So I stopped doing so. If there are any of my family that do not know at this time I am a practicing witch, they just aren't paying attention. What I found is that despite my reservations, the majority of my Christian family and friends were very accepting of my path and choices. I even have Christian ministers in my family who support me in all that I do, and even at times express great interest in "what it's all about". That is why for me, this works so well...because my partner and I respect and support one another's beliefs, practices, and traditions.

See, as a witch I do work with different deities. I believe in and honour many gods/goddess'. I asked myself many years ago, what kind of person would I be if I believe in these deities, but stated that god did not exist? For me, I do believe it is entirely plausible

that god does...just that they are not the ONLY one. That is a rabbit hole I could go down for a very long time, but I will save that for a future article.

That is what truly makes this time of the year magickal for me. It reminds me often that people, whether in a relationship or not do not have to be the exact same, or follow the same traditions. This also applies in daily life as well.

My son has often heard me say that "If everyone only associated with those that shared the exact same beliefs and practices as yourself, the world would be a very boring place". I wholeheartedly believe this whether discussing religious, political, or romantic choices and paths. All that is truly required is that you are open and accepting of one another, and compromise.

Sure, I call our tree a Yule tree while my partner says it is a Christmas tree. I call all of our shiny spherical ornaments witch balls, while they say ornaments. I say potato you say potato right? At the end of the day though, we are celebrating using many of the same traditions, just calling them different things.

So I leave you with this. Whether you celebrate Yule, Hanukkah, Christmas, or any other tradition, make the celebration fun and joyous regardless of personal beliefs.

Love one another and celebrate the birth of the new year.

Just don't argue over whether it's a Christmas tree or yule tree. Even though it is a Yule tree, lol.

Mike is a dad, husband, voice actor, practicing witch and podcast host living in Vermont. He was taught the ways of the craft by his grandmother at a very young age, and has furthered his knowledge of all things occult and esoteric since.

He is an accomplished pendulum/dowsing reader, writer working on a manuscript, business owner, and currently teaches online courses found on his shows website [www.sonofawitchpod.com](http://www.sonofawitchpod.com), and everything associated with his show and brand can be found at [www.linktr.ee/sonofawitchpodcast](http://www.linktr.ee/sonofawitchpodcast)

He currently hosts the weekly podcast "Son Of A Witch", available everywhere podcasts are heard

# MULLED WINE

## A RECIPE FOR YULE

### BY PATRICK OWEN

[HTTP://WWW.NERDYBOOZE.COM](http://www.nerdybooze.com)

I have a long history with mulled wine/gluhwein/vin chaud or whatever else warm wine with spices in happens to be called in different cultures/parts of the zeitgeist (my favourite being Glogg, because it's really nice to say). I've used it to accidentally get an astrophysics department at a top university wasted and to choosing a weekend away with mulled wine being a major deciding factor in where to go.

The tradition at UCL Astrophysics was (and probably still is) that the first year PhD students organise the christmas party. I was rather responsibly put in charge of gluhwein by a German PhD student who was heading back to Munich before the party (she was amazing, and made us a batch of Lebkuchen before she went). I duly entirely ignored her recipe (or rather the quantities). Several boxes of supermarket Merlot (while I know you can now get great wine in boxes, this wasn't it), a whole bottle each of the finest brandy and amareto that Lidl did sell, a couple of kilos of sugar a handful of cloves, a handful of cinnamon bark and two packs of "value" oranges in a tea urn later, we had a vague analogue of mulled wine. It did the trick!

A couple of years ago we wanted a weekend break in December. There's loads of great places to go for Christmas markets. We chose Brugge/Bruges, as it was rumoured to have the best mulled wine. The turned out not to be the case, but we did have a lovely weekend (mostly avoiding the really rather mediocre Christmas market but enjoying the beautiful medieval town, fine beer and flemish primitive art). Which brings me to a key problem with mulled wine in general.

It's not very good.

I'm not sure if it's that people (me included) always use bad wine for it. I'm not sure if it's because it's actually a concept that just isn't as good in reality, but I'm not sure I've ever had a good mulled wine.



That brings me to now. I thought I'd try actually putting some thought into mulling some wine, and use wine that I'd actually drink rather than any old dross/tombola wine. I think for all it mostly being a northern European thing, it needs to be quite a big Mediterranean wine, so I've gone for a perennial favourite Cote Du Rhone from Guigal.

I've learned over the years that when making stuff with booze, keeping the sugar and alcohol separate as long as possible is key, so I started by making a mulled syrup. Melting sugar with slices of orange and a pile of spices but don't boil, we're after a syrup, not a caramel (maybe I should try going for a caramel next time?!?)

Then I poured over the wine, turned off the heat and left it to steep for 20 minutes (again no with the boiling, we're aiming for steep, not stew) and then finished it with a good slug of brandy.



I'm sure this is supposed to be a nice glass and a cinnamon stick with some tea lights in the background, ah well.

The results? Less than the sum of its parts.

It was noticeably better, though I'm not sure it was worth the effort vs the everything in a pan. It's tasty and made both lovely girlfriend and I very happy. Maybe that's the key to mulled wine. It's not a great gourmet thing, but it does bring much joy.

Recipe (note amounts are very approximate!):-150g golden caster sugar

-One orange

-4 cloves

-2 star anise

-1 supermarket sized cinnamon stick

-3 slices (a couple of mm thick) of fresh ginger

-4 allspice berries

-5 black peppercorns

-1 piece of mace that I happened to find while looking for the allspice

-bottle of (good? maybe not!) red wine

-A slightly less generous glug of brandy than I used (you could also use rum, amaretto or anything else vaguely festive)



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**INTERVIEW WITH ESME KNIGHT**



# THE MAKING OF DIRTY RIVER

**Esme Knight brings us the low down on the first in her series of music videos to accompany her album, *Forever Wild*. We caught up with Esme for exclusive behind the scenes access to the making of *Dirty River*.**



Tell us about *Dirty River*. Where did the song come from?

I've had a couple of people have said; it sounds like you're talking about a person, as if it's a jilted lover, with that line "once I was beautiful". Like I

was treated well and then he came, you know, with his money and his wheels, meaning he gave me money and he gave me a car - only, it's not that, it's actually the river, and man literally invented the wheel. They brought carts and market traders and vehicles and, you know, money, and technology, and now look at it.

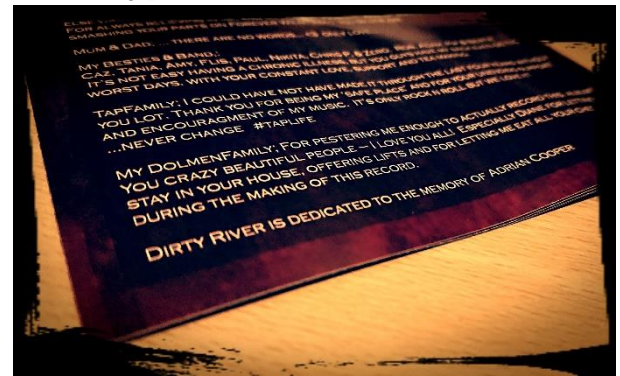
I wrote the song 14 years ago, after my friend Adrian died. He drowned in the Thames, which is just fucking awful.

They were developing the Docklands, they'd put up some new apartments and made this private frontage for the Thames. Adrian was walking along the Thames, and he was drunk. He'd missed the last train and he was trying to get to our friends house, and couldn't get past. He should have walked all the way around the houses but because he knew where he was He tried to cut through instead, and attempted to climb over a fence. He slipped and fell into the into the river.

So I was asking myself, why there isn't more safety, and me and my friends were all grieving and everyone was angry and confused. I think that's when I stopped looking at the river as a Goddess.

I was living in London and got kind of caught up in the corporate stuff. I was questioning, why isn't there more safety measures and why, how, is it that people can, you know, just climb on these things.

One night I woke up in the middle of the night and it dawned on me; hang on a minute, I'm totally angry at the wrong person here.



The person who was in the wrong was Adrian, he couldn't swim, he was very drunk, and climbing over a wall over a very fast river. It's like one of one of the most famous rivers in the world. In one of the most famous cities in the world. It's about half a mile wide. It's really fast. It's dirty. Why would you? I felt guilty that I had blamed the river and that was kind of where I remembered the sacred in it. That it's not her fault. She's been here since before everything else was here.

She's been here forever and she was so strong and vibrant and full of life, that's why man settled on her banks in the first place, and obviously that brought trade, and that brought more people and the city built up around Her.

Then of course there's those big walls, the big promenade down either side of the Thames. Those were built, and so she was hemmed in. If you squeeze a river it gets faster because there's still the same amount of flow. Then the boats and the trade and the pollution, and all that kind of stuff and I realised, we've done her wrong. We've done her wrong. I think

that's the first lyric that came out for the song. We've done you wrong.



Then I felt I needed to apologise, so my song is kind of like an apology, for blaming her. And an apology for what we've done to her, and acknowledging that Adrian was a bit of a twit to try and climb over a fence. So that's kind of where it came from.

Adrian passed in November 2006 and the song was written in a couple of months after that, so around this time of year. That's 14 years, which just seems a lifetime ago. We had had our own Memorial because we're all actors and creators, we held like a cabaret show and everybody got up and did their own bit. I played it at the memorial and everyone was crying and weeping, and I was crying and and it was all very cathartic.

It quickly became a real favourite in my set, and as soon as that happened, I knew it was going to go on the album, it just had to go on *Forever Wild*. Josh Elliott (producer) also said; yeah that's got to be the first track. That's the one, that's like, got to open the record. And it does, with that open chord, and then just the vocal. It kind of sets the tone for the whole album.

### Did you always have a concept for *Dirty River*?

I'd always had this idea to do it underwater because it's written in the first person from the river's point of view. My original ideas were more like what we shot on the second day, laying in a pool of water. I thought I could lay down in it and just sort of move as if I was floating on the water. Like a John Waterhouse's *Ophelia*. This was before I knew about the tank. Quite a few of my friends were into mermaid acting, and I came across Tankspace through them doing photo shoots.

### Tell us about the process, how do you film underwater?

The tank is inside a studio, and they have a big black gazebo attached onto the side of it to take out all of the reflection. Then they light the tank from the top and the side. They've painted it on the inside a rich blue, not like swimming pool blue. It's a rich blue to create depth, and it just looks like you're staring off into nowhere.



What's unique about Tank Space is that you can get great underwater shots, without having to have any of the underwater rig, you can just use all your regular cameras and stand outside to film. The same tank we filmed in was used at Brixham Pirate Festival for the Mermaid Cove there.

I had four hours at Tankspace and we needed to do the two different looks you see in the video in that time. First up, we had the pure and clean goddess; how she was back in the day, which serves as her memories for the reverie and reminiscing in the slower parts of the of the song.



We did that first because the makeup was going to change – starting of pretty fresh and getting darker for the second look. I had these massive eyelashes on, which didn't even last half an hour! The chlorine was like, dissolving the glue off my eyes. Also, when your hair is underwater every single hair floats individually, and so my hair wrapped itself around the headdress I was wearing, and the whole thing got tangled up. So,

they had to go!



Being in full clothing in the tank takes a while to get used to, so at first I wasn't lip synching. I was just floating about trying to look as serene as possible. It was like, 40 degrees in there though, warmer than a bath -, more like a hot tub!

For the first bit they said I could keep my eyes closed and be sort of, sleepy and dreamy to get used to it. I mean I'm an all right swimmer, I wouldn't drown. But having chronic fatigue and all the other stuff that goes along with a chronic illness, it's tiring. You're not moving through the air, you're moving through water, you know, so that takes up more muscle power to hold any kind of pose.

After filming the first costume, I went and had a break and got changed, and then went back in the tank to finish off the shots we needed for the second look; Dark Flow. For this part, as you can see in the video, I had to lip sync underwater. So I definitely had to have my eyes open. In some of the pictures you can see that my eyes are starting to swell up from the chlorine.

The other exciting thing was TankSpace said that I was the first person they've had lip synching underwater in their tank. So, yes that was a first and really cool.

It was also amazing to work with Jay Hillier, the director. He said that the majority of music videos he film are standard performance videos, so he was excited to be filming at TankSpace and do something with a narrative that was a bit more creative.

By the end of it. I was kind of getting the hang of how to breathe. You have to almost make yourself hyperventilate a little bit so that you're oxygenating your blood, but you don't have as much air in your lungs. That way you don't float, but you don't feel out of breath. There's a trick to it, so once I'd got the hang

of that we were on a roll! There is a bar across the middle of the tank that you can use to brace yourself and stay in position, so a lot of the shots I've got my arm in the air because I'm pushing down to keep myself underwater. So for each take I'd push myself down, wait for my frock to float down out of my face, holding my breath, and then wait for the music.

We had a speaker behind the tank with the bass turned right up, so I could hear it. Obviously, I know the track so well that it didn't have to be crystal clear, just enough so I knew my place. The only thing that I couldn't do was see where I was supposed to be looking. So, the assistant director got a torch and put it up to the glass, so I knew where to look. Then the camera came in and they took the torch away, and that was basically how we shot everything, 30 seconds at a time. You can probably hold your breath for maybe two minutes underwater, but even 10 seconds feels like an hour.

### Did the song bring you back to the Goddess of the river?

After I wrote the song, I started looking again at who was the goddess in the Thames? In the past she was Tamesis (or Thamesis), and was related to Isis (Egyptian figures dating from Roman times were found under London Bridge). I also found out that Thames or Tamesis means Dark Flow. So in naming the song Dirty River, I actually unknowingly named the song after Her.



A theme that turns up in the song is how we did her wrong. She was once revered; Emperors *did* walk her hallowed halls. Now all she is, is just a murderer to us. A taker of life. I see it as that now, She feels that if you think I'm a murderer and that I kill all these people



because they jump in or they get too close to the shore, or you've got mobsters out there doing deals and murder down by the docks and under the bridges, this kind of seedy underbelly archetype. If you think She's a murderer, then She'll become a murderer. If that's what you think I am, then that's what I'll be, and you've only got yourself to blame.

Also the idea that, no one suspects Her. No one realises that it's the river actually doing it, the concept of, you know, a Goddess wronged is a wrathful goddess. If we don't respect nature, the Earth and climate change, if we don't respect our environment then we kind of open ourselves up to whatever wrath they choose to bestow upon us. So the fact that so many people, the homeless, lost children, the murdered, die in the Thames, maybe that's her purpose.

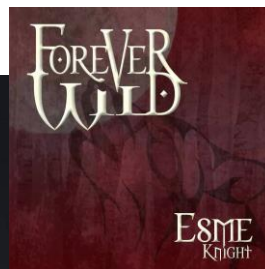
I think that turns up in the theme of the song; "I pray on the lonely I pray on the week, I pray on the drunks that fall in from the street." That part is the homage to Adrian, "I pray on the clumsy that climb to their fate, and drag them down to Traitors Gate", which is a reference to one of the attractions at the London Dungeons where we worked. Visitors went through Traitors gate as part of a boat ride, as if they were being condemned on the way to the Tower. That's what would happen,, they would sail convicts from Newgate prison on the south side, across the river,

through Traitors' Gate and be led up to the gallows. So there's another connection to death and the river and the Dark Flow.

### So what's next...?

Well lockdown has been hard on musicians particularly, we have no way of performing live at the moment. I guess that's what sparked the idea for this project, I wanted to do something, perform something in the only way we can right now, via the internet. That's why I came up with the idea of the Forever Wild Tales; a series of narrative music videos telling the stories of the songs on the album. Dirty River is the first, and we're planning on shooting five or six throughout next year, which will no doubt keep me busy. I can't say which ones just yet – that would spoil the surprise, but I can say that yes, the title track Forever Wild will be among them. So I encourage everyone to subscribe to my YouTube channel, everything will be happening there from live streams, behind the scenes stuff and of course the final music videos themselves.

Aside from that, I suppose I'll just be staying safe like everyone else. Being auto-immune means I have to take extra precautions, but I've got a good support bubble around me, and the beauty of the internet means no one is more than a video chat away.



SEE THE VIDEO FOR  
DIRTY RIVER AT...

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esmekmusic](http://www.youtube.com/user/esmekmusic)

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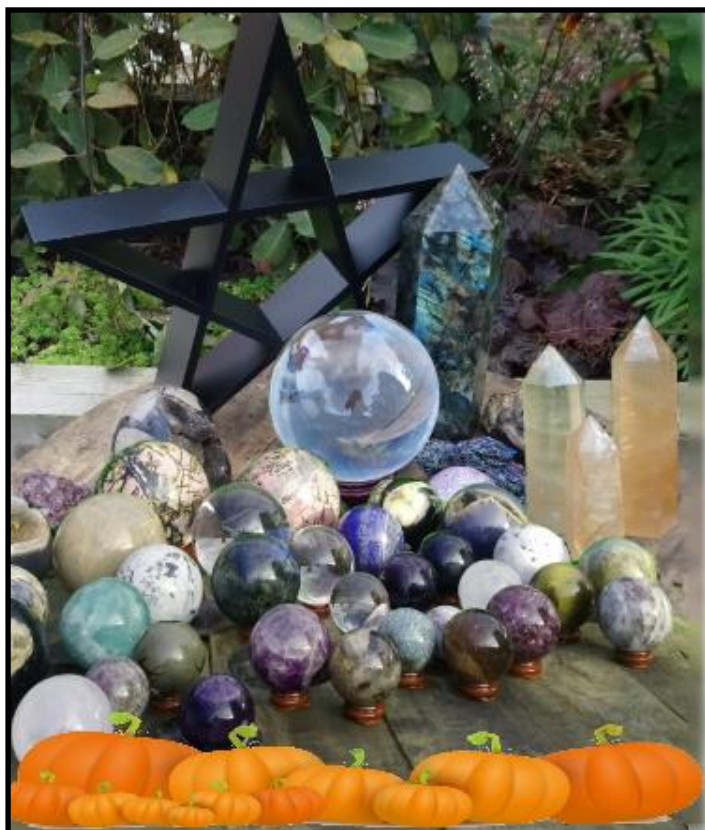
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What is Paganism?

A polytheistic or pantheistic nature-worshipping... sounds far etched and a complicated thing – right?

For me as a pagan, it's simple, it's not my religion, it's my belief. I believe Mother Nature gave USA beautiful Earth and we must cherish it and everything one or thing on it.

But all of us indifferent, which is something I love about my pagan family, no two of us are the same. There is no set of rules, no guide. It's embracing and respecting every aspect of life.

Some belief in the old Gods' and goddess, some believe Nordic or Celtic practices, some are Wiccan, some even a mixture of them all.

Paganism is so complex, I don't think there is any way to explain it with words (although I'm trying). It's like our fingertips, our brothers' abs sisters are unique and perfectly formed in their style.

One thing we all agree on... we don't fuck goats (well most of us do anyway), no, as all agree nature and life is sacred, divinity takes many forms and diversity is brilliant.

We don't tend to believe in the devil or Satan, or even evil, they're a Christian concept although some Pagans are also Christian. We're not evil hexers that sacrifice anymore (mostly - although there's a few I'd like to).

Did you know:

Pagan translates to "one who dwells the earth" something we all do right?



Some Pagans follow the Pagan holiday Wheel; Samhain (31st October – Halloween), Yule (Winter/Christmas 19th-22nd), Imbolc (feast of Saint Brigid 1st Feb), Ostara (Easter March 19th -22nd), Beltane (Mayday May 1st), summer solstice (Midsummer June 19th-22nd), Lughnassa (Harvest Festival Aug 1st) Mabon (Autumn), Equinox (Sept Autumn).

I love the outdoors, our churches are the forests, the pews are our trees and our magic and meditation is our prayers.

We are (mostly) peaceful and (mostly) normal (although normal isn't much fun is it?), most of us aren't interested in spells.

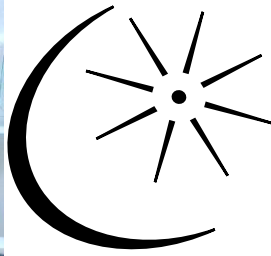
We are not a cult, Occult you may hear, it means der ret or mystery, so of cause that sounds dodgy it's not of cause, I promise. We also don't have massive orgies, well we do, but not because we have to or our faith tells us to, in fact we don't really care who anyone has sex with (law abiding of cause), or what your gender is. We live by, be safe and have fun.

Some of us do practise nude though, dancing in the light of the moon feels amazing (everyone should try it – I highly recommend it) but it doesn't have to be, and rarely is, sexual.

So next time you meet a Pagan (not that you'll know unless they say) so smile, ask questions and get to know their faith, you'll be highly surprised.

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My Yule update...

I thought I'd give you a little update on me, and what's going on at Witchgasm HQ.

So I've been emotional this month, losing my friend has hit me hard, and my mental health has been battered. It's happens to the best of us doesn't it.

But.. I put on my big girl boots, and I'm backing to smashing life (or trying to) and I'm focusing on doing more courses whilst I've got the time to maximize my skill and build up my CV (thanks to Covid for something)

My dream is to open a wellness Centre, a place for spiritual, physical and mental growth, a push towards goodness and calm. No judgement, just learning together. Times like now, we need it the most. That is my focus right now.

Join me next month to hear more.



## THE ONLY FORCE

*Fire comes yet all is frozen*

*Frosting over but is golden*

*Twists of steam which turn to snow*

*Icy tundra golden glow*

*Upon rocks fall molten lava*

*Meet the ice now nature's wrestler*

*When opposites adjoin on path*

*Nothing known can halt its wrath*

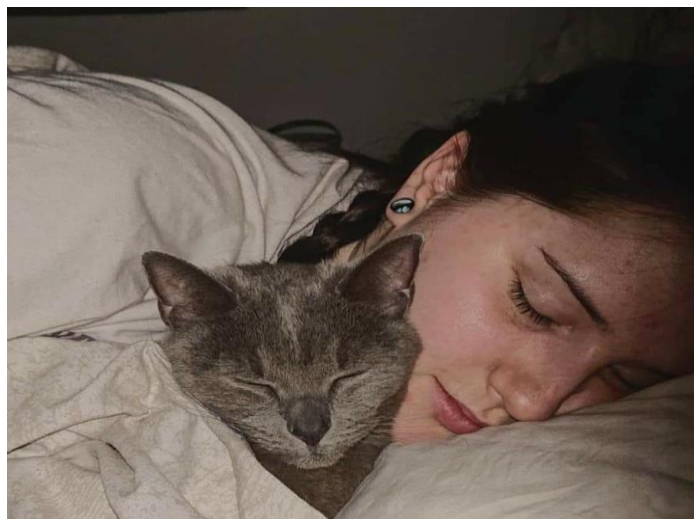
*And so it flows the fiery snow*

*Nothing fore stops it goes*

*Except for the sea the only force*

*To stop both powers in their path*

© 2020 *The Warrior Poet*



I lost my beautiful friend Lauren recently.

At 25, she was taken far too soon.

May she rest in beautiful sleep.

Please send good vibes and prayers to her family and all of us miss her dearly.

I love and miss you so much girl ♥



# MAKING THE MOST OUT OF WINTER LANDSCAPES

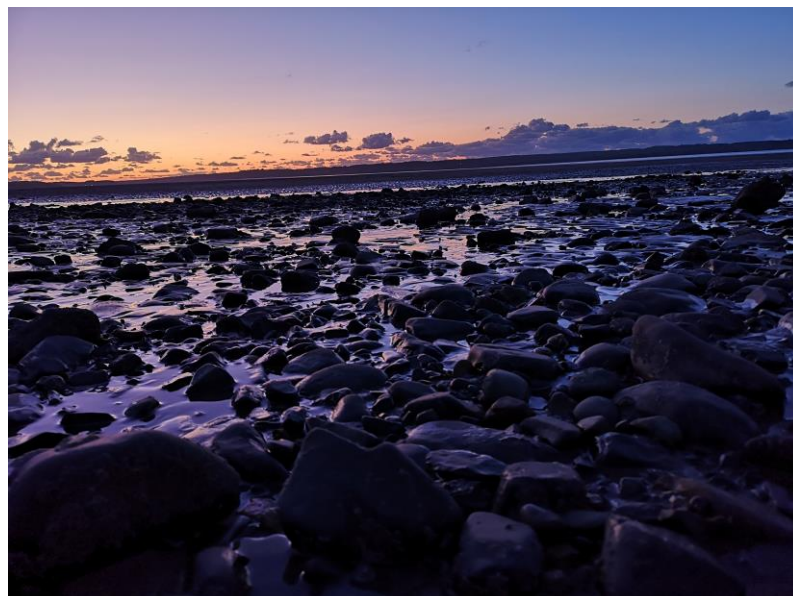
CHERRY DOYLE – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

You might think that once all the flowers have disappeared and the autumn leaves have fallen, that our natural landscapes don't offer anything to be excited by. On top of that, this time of year is so busy with shopping, planning, and visitors – even with current restrictions – that it can be hard to find time to visit the places we love.

A day out in nature at any time of year can be beneficial for mental health, fitness, and maintaining a spiritual connection to our natural surroundings, so we share some inspiration for how to get the most out of winter landscapes.

## THE COAST

What's the seaside without sun cream, sandals, and sand in your pants? The coast has more to offer in winter than you may think. Although only the bravest amongst us might brave the chilly waters, a stroll down the beach or a bracing cliff-top walk will help burn off any seasonal indulgences. Stop in at a local coffee shop for a winter warmer on the front, or head to the beach at evening low tide to see the colours of the night sky, local town lights, and silhouettes of off-shore boats gliding along the horizon. With far fewer people around, it's also the perfect time for a spot of beach-combing (observing local enforcement of Coastal Protection laws).



## HEATHS AND MOORLAND

The uplands are more likely to see some of the white stuff over winter, so if you're after some really festive scenes,

seek out your nearest moor. Wrap up warm

and plan a route to a local town or village

and back again, stopping off for takeout from

a local eatery. Four-legged companions will

enjoy tiring themselves out with a big space

to run around in, while you take in stunning

views of the wide, open sky and the

structural shapes of sparse winter heather. If

the wind gets up, you'll hear a primal howl,

and if you stay out after dark, you'll have an

unparalleled view of the stars.



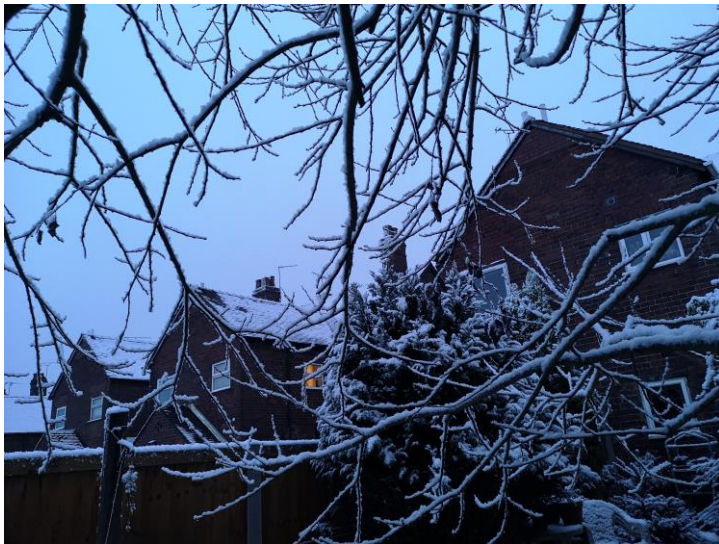
## FORESTS

If you're after some foraged Yule decorations, a forest or woodland is your best bet - holly, twigs, and pine cones are all still plentiful. Make sure you're aware of any restrictions from the landowner, and always forage responsibly, ensuring you don't disturb any habitats which wildlife might be using to hibernate. Although the leaves have fallen and the tree branches are bare, there's plenty to see in the forest at winter – from non-migratory birds such as robins, wrens, and blackbirds, to many species of fungi, lichen, and moss. Wait for a dry day, grab a field guide, and see what's living quietly in your local woodland. Pick somewhere with a visitor centre for activities and play areas for the kids, or take a bike and a picnic for a longer-distance journey.



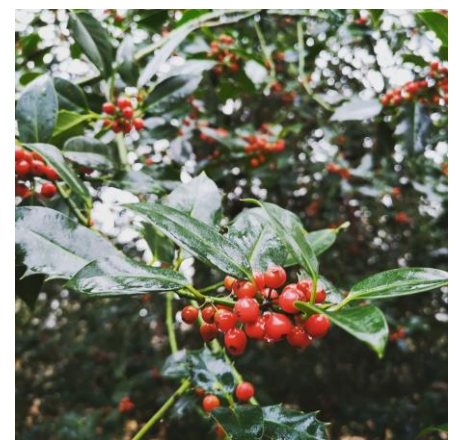
## URBAN GREEN SPACES

Canals, parks, graveyards, and even university campuses are wonderful snippets of nature which can be found in our most urban areas. A sunrise walk on a frosty morning will give you a sparkling new perspective on your locale, especially if you're not usually up at that hour. With the streets a little quieter, take time to really see the detail around you. Do shadows from play parks or street furniture make patterns in the low sun? What flowers and plants are still holding on through the cold? Look for urban birds and wildlife – foxes, deer, and water birds can be seen making the most of the dark mornings, before the hustle and bustle starts up.



## GARDENS OR ALLOTMENTS

Some of us love being up to our elbows in compost, while others barely glance at the garden in winter. Although there might not be many gardening jobs left to do until spring, spending time in our gardens is a quick and easy way to get back in touch with nature during the colder months. Leaving some feed out for the birds will help them survive the long winter, and means they'll keep coming back to your garden (make sure you keep feeding them if you start). A trail cam is a great way of seeing if you have any nocturnal visitors too! Even taking some time to look over your allotment with a flask of tea will be a calm break in the busiest of festive schedules.



However you're celebrating this festive season, don't forget that nature is still there for you, and there's so much to see and experience even in winter. Dust off your wellies and get out and about in your local beauty spot to look after your mental and physical health.





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# APROPOS ARTS

## MEET THE MAKER



Hey everyone! I'm Cat, I live in Yorkshire, and I'm a mixed media artist specialising in watercolour pet portraits, modern calligraphy, lino prints, and Viking wire wrap jewellery.

I come from an open-minded, artistic family and I was really lucky to have support from my Mum whenever I decided to take up a new art or craft. I've always struggled to focus on just one thing at a time, like a hummingbird with too many flowers to visit, so having her behind me has been a blessing. My hummingbird mind has always influenced how I work, so my little studio space is a bit of a goblin's cave of brushes, inks, cups of tea and shiny rocks. My favourite stones for helping me focus while I'm working are Amazonite,

Hematite, Amethyst and Clear Quartz.





I started doing pet portraits for charity when I saw that my local shelter was looking for people to contribute to a Badly Drawn Pets fundraiser. I hadn't done watercolour painting in the best part of 20 years and I was really surprised at how much I enjoyed it and how fulfilling I found it.

My first portrait was for a lady who had lost her cat and after losing my furry familiar, Luna, I wanted to do my absolute best to honour her friend. Her feedback was lovely, and it was comforting to me to know that she had something to hold on to, and was what spurred me on to make art professionally.

I always try to make ethical choices in my art and wherever possible I choose cruelty free and recycled options. For my jewellery one of my favourite materials to use is sea glass for being recycled, the soft ocean tones, and the history it holds. I'm drawn to bodies of water and feel a strong affinity to the sea.

My greatest inspiration comes from the natural world, dark night skies, and the moon, and these are a

particular feature of my lino print designs.

I have commission slots available for pet portraits, personalised calligraphy, and Viking wire jewellery and can be contacted on Facebook, Instagram or by email. My Etsy shop is coming in the New Year, and I will be offering prints, originals and queer-friendly cards as well as my commissioned items. I love working with my customers to discover what their ideal piece will be, and I like nothing more than seeing my finished pieces

happily in their new homes!

Happy crafting!

Cat

Facebook: @apropos.arts

Instagram: @apropos.arts

email: [apropos.artist@gmail.com](mailto:apropos.artist@gmail.com)



# RAVEN & LUNA'S

# TAROTSCOPES

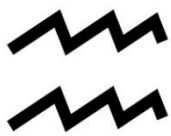
## CAPRICORN *Queen of Cups, Wheel of Fortune, 5 of Cups*

It looks like you're going to be feeling the winter blues. You may be overwhelmed by the festive chaos or feeling disappointed about your birthday, as things may not turn out the way you'd hoped in terms of being able to celebrate. It could also be that you've suffered from a loss of some kind which will play on your mood this month. If it's an anniversary or time that reminds you of a passed loved one, honour their memory rather than going inward. Express your emotions with those around you, don't bottle them up.



## AQUARIUS *8 of Cups, 8 of Wands*

You could just get the news you've been waiting for but you may be having second thoughts. It's being suggested that you leave your emotions out of the situation and instead think logically about what is to happen next. Accept a reward for a job well done, you deserve it.



## PISCES *Judgement, Justice*

Be careful about your actions leading up to this month as you could find yourself with a speeding fine, bill or court summons. There's also a chance you'll be called in for jury service. If you've been waiting for a court date or a solution that is best for everyone, you should get it.



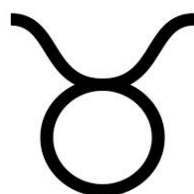
## ARIES *9 of Wands, The Devil*



Use this time to rid yourself of unhealthy attachments and to heal. It's been a hard few months, give yourself what you need and let go of that which no longer serves you. You're assuming the worst of someone or something but things may not be what they seem

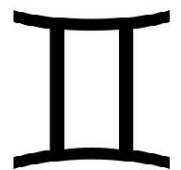
## TAURUS *King of Swords, Strength*

Standing your ground is not something you usually find difficult, unless it's concerning your loved ones of course. Sometimes even those we care the most about need to be given boundaries and to hear some home truths. Your emotional health is going to be tested, have support and coping mechanisms in place.



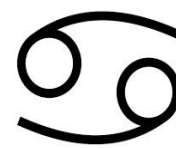
## GEMINI *King of Pentacles, Knight of Cups*

A charming and rich person may be coming into your life but be careful that they are who they say they are. You'll be feeling good this month so pay that forward to those who are feeling down. You could receive a bonus, payout or financial gift. Don't waste it, use it for good.



## CANCER *Temperance, Knight of Pentacles*

During this festive period you may have indulged in just about every way possible. Now moderation concerning your habits, money and energy needs to be exercised as you go into the New Year. Avoid any large purchases at this time. Set yourself some goals next month to get you back on track in regards to healthier habits.



## LEO *Wheel of Fortune, Page of Swords*

You are likely to be met with a recurring problem and it's going to leave you frustrated. What can you learn from this situation? Is there any responsibility that you need to take? Restrictions are going to be difficult for you, know that it is only temporary and try not to overreact.

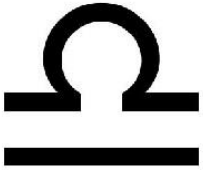


## VIRGO *The Hanged Man, 2 of Pentacles*

Money is going to be tighter this month so ensure you're keeping an eye on your finances before making any purchases. It's a good time to ensure that you're receiving as much as you're giving in regards to your energy. That thing you're waiting for is coming, it's just going to take a bit more time.



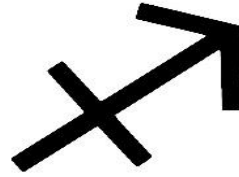
**LIBRA** *9 of Swords, The High Priestess*



You're likely to be feeling low and your mental health may be impacted if you don't get the help and support that is needed. If you suffer from seasonal depression and/or PMDD, working with the energies of the Moon or a spiritual adviser may help. Don't ignore the problem, face it.

out. If you're pregnant ensure that you're getting enough rest and listen to your body.

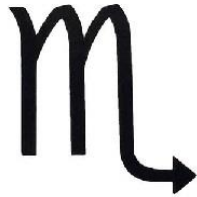
**SAGITTARIUS** *Page of Wands, 7 of Pentacles*



You miss that sense of spontaneity and freedom, but this period won't last forever. Plans may be put on hold or things will take longer than you hope. Stick with something even when things aren't quite going your way. Take your time and don't do anything rash as there's something to learn from this.

**SCORPIO** *4 of Swords, The Empress*

It's going to be a slow month and that's just what you need. This isn't a time for doing, it's a period of stillness. You've done all you can in regards to a situation, now you need to let it play



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# DAYDREAMS OF WINTER

JESS O'SHEA – WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

## I. THE FIRST DROP

You watch me;  
settling on the rooftops  
scurry on bare branched trees,  
and under children's scuffed knees.

I fall down the back of  
your woolly jumper  
your nose and cheeks  
turning a bulbous red.  
As the days pass by  
I'm freezing up  
and I simmer down  
at times I erupt, but still  
you go about  
without a look  
or a touch,  
swift & ignoble  
you're storming past  
forced by the winds behind you  
I'm just laying here  
waiting to be  
picked up  
by your soft  
knitted gloves,  
but on the rare chance  
you do gather me up  
underwhelmed, as usual  
you tend to only  
throw me away.

## II. BITTER, SHE RETURNS.

The autumn bird returns  
her sunset feathers scatter,  
blowing rings around the dog  
walkers  
and the benches  
she glides  
creating gusts or a gentle breeze  
wiping away the last of the sun  
beams  
the autumn bird sits on the rooves of  
homes  
on lampposts and early night clouds  
formed like cobwebs, looming  
watching us leaning against  
her flight and rainfall –  
the nights  
draw into the day prematurely,  
intrusively,  
unworried hushes from unawake  
mothers  
they tend to little ones who search  
for her,  
*she will revisit once more.*

## III. A TIME FOR CHANGE.

Frost begins to form in the garden,  
and the flower beds open,  
like welcoming arms  
I wished to lay in them, until they  
begin to wither;  
feel each petal and stem  
begin to crunch and develop  
its rigor mortis  
I can lay here in the rain, make  
believe the blossoming,  
still and thick  
as the humidity, I become.  
I'll stay for the autumn  
in my makeshift tomb,  
for the colder nights, they draw in  
ever so ferociously and unforgiving  
the snowflakes shall gather  
surround me, hum to the tune of  
gales,  
a hurried choir,  
unafraid of decay, because even as  
they  
disappear  
eventually,  
I will plant the seeds again.

# CONNACH

A NEW GOTH BAND STEEPED IN  
THE MAGICAL ATMOSPHERE OF WYCHDOM.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS OF THE PANDEMIC, CONNACH FORMED WITH A NEW ENERGY  
STEPPING OUTSIDE NORMALITY.

BY FUSING THEIR OWN MUSICAL STYLE, INSPIRED BY VINTAGE FILM NOIR INTO THE  
SOUND OF CLASSIC UK GOTH, THE BAND IS BREATHING NEW LIFE  
INTO A FORGOTTEN ART OF MUSIC.

CONNACH ARE PRODUCING THEIR FIRST ALBUM FULL OF ORIGINAL SONGS  
NEW SINGLE "PROPHECY" OUT NOW



BEYOND

CONNACH ARE  
CONNACH JAMESON, SINGER  
SONGWRITER, GUITARIST  
LENA M PAAK, BASSIST AND VOCALS.

WITH THEIR MUSIC,  
CONNACH TAKES US ON A  
MAGICAL JOURNEY  
THROUGH MYSTERIOUS  
REALMS TO ESCAPE OUR  
EVERYDAY LIVES AND SE

VISIT

FACEBOOK.COM/CONNACHOFFICIAL



# GRIMOIRE

## YULE 2020

### WINTER SOLSTICE BLESSINGS

By Bekki Jo Milner

This is a simple ritual for the Winter Solstice. Your free gift this month was a white candle, especially for you to use in this ritual. The candle has been charged and blessed beneath the new moon eclipse on the 14<sup>th</sup> December.

This ritual is best performed after the sun has set on 21<sup>st</sup> December (Winter Solstice), or during the nights of 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> December, when the nights are longest.

You may begin with cleansing your space and yourself, casting a circle or calling in the elements or ancestors as befits your path. Keep your lighter or matches nearby as you will need to access them easily. You may also want a journal nearby to write down your thoughts afterwards.

Begin by lighting your candle, then extinguish all other light sources in the space. Take some deep breaths and settle in to your sacred space. You may wish to spend some time shaking off the day and moving in to your ritual headspace – perhaps lighting some incense or playing instrumental music.

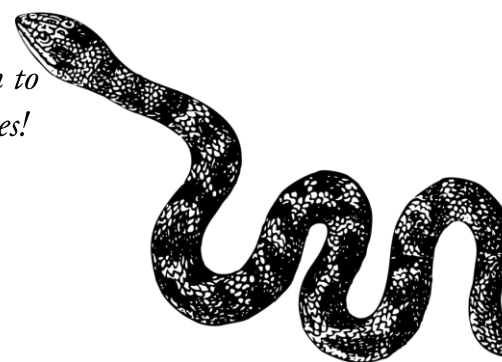
Once you are settled, blow out the candle and rest in the darkness. Think about the year that has passed – the good and the bad. What would you like to keep, and what would you like to let go? What lessons have you learnt through the year?

When you are ready, take three deep breaths, and relight your candle. As the light fills the darkness, visualise anything you wanted to release vanishing with the shadows or being swallowed by the light. Think about the return of the sun, and how the days will grow longer in the months to come. Now spend some time connecting to your own inner light and what that means to you. Think about what you want to shine in to the world.

Spend some time journaling by the light of your candle, writing down any thoughts that came to you, whether in the darkness or upon the return of the light.



*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!*



BLESSED YULE

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WITCH

Magazine





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NEW ISSUE EVERY  
FULL MOON

## FULL MOON DATES

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19 NOVEMBER 2021

19 DECEMBER 2021

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