



WITCH

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BELTANE

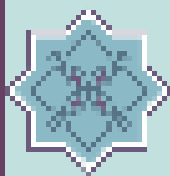
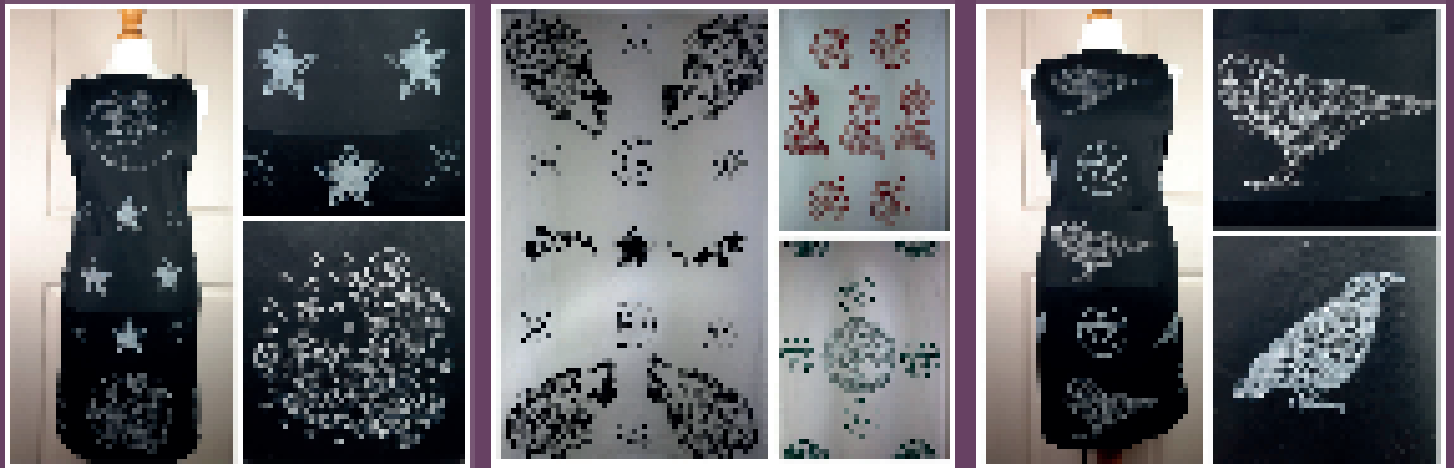
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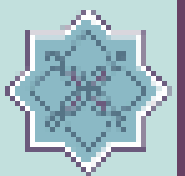
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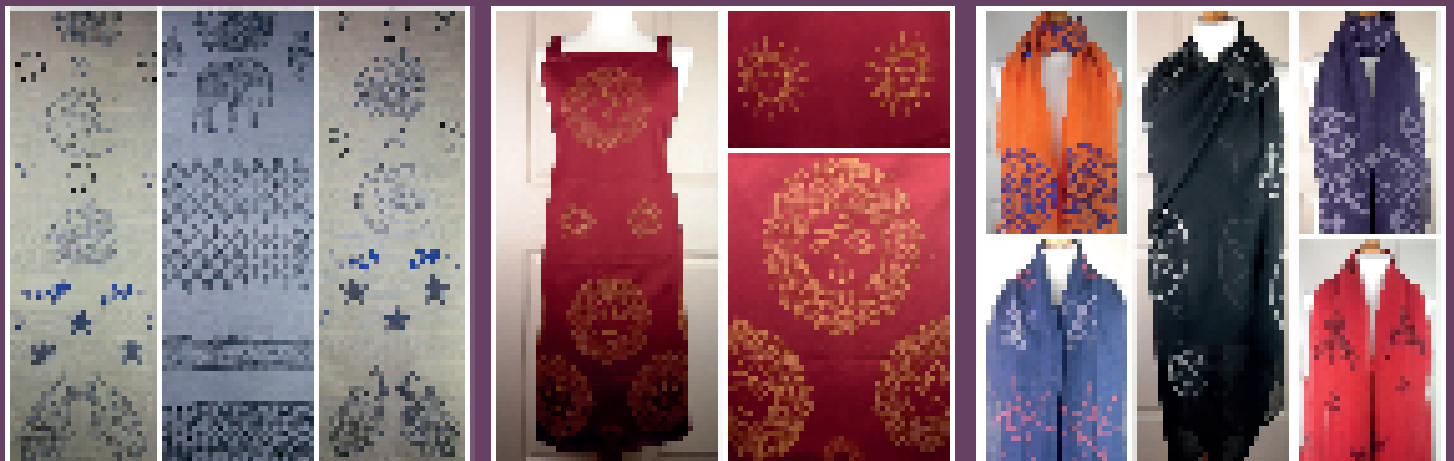
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WITCH

WELCOME TO ISSUE 17 OF WITCH!

We're celebrating Beltane and our third print edition! We hope you enjoy what our wonderful writers and artists have to share with you. Thank you for your continued readership and support, and may all of you have a Blessed Beltane - may you dance the fire and may it burn bright!



As always, if you have something you would like to share with us, we'd love to hear from you!

Bekki
Editor of WITCH magazine

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FEATURED
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WRITERS

Words from the
Witches Journal

Michelle Boxley for
Sisters of the Moon

Fairy Bec

Jessica O Shea

A.G. Worthington

Black Moon Cove
Tarotscopes

Grimoire

Helen JR Bruce

Poetry and Fiction

Cover image and
additional photography
@magiaziemi

WITCH

RESIDENCY WRITERS

NYA HOUSE

Nya is an artist and a writer living in Knoxville, TN with her wife, teenage son and two boxer girls.

Her writing passion comes from the bliss of getting lost in creating worlds and characters in her head. Her art and writing leans towards expression of powerful and strong women as she is always traveling on the journey of bringing that version of herself out. Her background comes from ten years of teaching yoga and mediation with trauma informed practices and reiki.

She is an empath that always forgets to shield herself, An eclectic witch that lives by the turn of the wheel and a creator that just can't stop the waterfall of ideas from spilling all over her studio.

Last year she launched an oracle deck that features all her previous paintings on kickstarter and it was funded in three hours.

This year she launched a Lenormand deck and her Tarot deck launches on 13th March. You can follow her work on instagram: @the_ritual_muse or on her website, www.theritualmuse.com

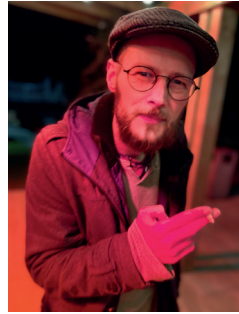
KELLY BUCHAN

Kelly Buchan is an eclectic witch and professional tarot reader from the North East of Scotland.

With passions for philosophy, ancient divination systems and both low and high magick, her writing seeks to uncover the structures upon which spiritual concepts are built, while introducing witchcraft to those yet to be initiated into their divinity



K.D. PHILLIPS



K. D. Phillips is more of a modern conjurer of spirits, describing himself as a modern Cunning Folk type.

He has read and practiced multiple summoning books, The Lesser Key of Solomon, The Sacred Book of Abramelin the Mage, and such.

He has recently begun a journey to decipher what works and what doesn't. And actively invites you all along on this journey.

His fiction is relatively unconnected to his magical practices, and is working his way to being traditionally published. He was shortlisted by New Writing North for BBC's Radio 3 show The Verb (Verb New Voices), and mentored by Leeds Playhouse for two years.

He has a new YouTube channel following his search for the paranormal, the strange, and the magical... Haunting Lands... https://youtube.com/channel/UC65-KK177_ruYgFGOeFw9xQ

STEPHANIE ULPH



Stephanie Ulph is a Reiki and Sound Healing Practitioner who feels blessed to live near and work within the magical town of Glastonbury, Somerset. She follows her own path, but enjoys making sense of and finding interconnection between all paths, spiritual practice, myth and

religion, though her path is most closely aligned with Shamanism and Paganism in her knowledge and practice. She loves nature, travelling, music and dancing, and assisting people along their spiritual journeys.

ANYA LUKOVER

Hi, I'm Anya and have a passion for helping people to bring balance to their mental and physical wellbeing so that they can enjoy the experiences that life presents as they awaken to their true self.



I have trained in various energy therapies that I now blend together to create unique and tailored 1:1 & group sessions for people who are ready to shift out of the programs that they feel stuck in and connect to their power.

I enjoy talking and learning about energy & frequencies, alchemising shadows, wellbeing rituals, essential oils, connecting with plant majick and any other gifts & wisdom that Mother Earth has to offer us. I teach online Qigong classes and hold bi-monthly moon circles.

I absolutely love writing and excited to be joining Witch Magazine.

Find me on IG @ awaken_with_anya - I'd love to hear what my transmissions awaken within you

F.R. MAHER



F.R. Maher graduated with a first in Creative Writing a couple of years back. Prior to that, she published her first novel, a fae fantasy called *The Last Changeling*, plus a horror series. Whilst still at Uni, a trip to a library in Leeds saw her uncover some startling new evidence in a 100 year old case which led to her non-fiction book *'The Secret*

of the Cottingley Fairies.'

A regular contributor to *The Fortean Times*, she also co-presents *The Fairy Podcast* with Dan Baines and now has six books to her name. As 'Tink' she organises festivals in non-Covid times, including *The Legendary Llangollen Faery Festival*. With over 250 stallholders plus bands, walkabout acts and set-piece shows plus 12,000 visitors, it's easily the largest fairy gathering in the UK. She lives in Wales with three opinionated cats.

MIKE SPROUSE

Mike is a dad, a veteran, a voice actor, and podcast host.

He has been practicing almost 30 years as an eclectic solitary witch, and currently a 1st degree Cabot Witch with plans to eventually become a High Priest in the tradition.



Since last august he has created and hosted the podcast "Son Of A Witch", delving into topics concerning the witchcraft and pagan community...with a healthy smattering of pop culture, comic references, and guest interviews. Mike currently resides in New England with his fiance and their 2 fur babies.

*Read more about our
writers and
our residencies*

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THE BLESSING OF CONNECTION

YASMIN TUBRITT

As pagans, we are blessed be
Because we see the mystery.

The web of life,

The link, the chain

That connects us to the wind and rain.

The sun and sky and earth below,

The walking things and plants that grow.

The birds that hover in the clouds

Whose feathers we find on the ground.

The scent of snow upon the breeze.

The teas we brew to give us ease.

The setting sun, the rising moon,

And scent of lilies in full bloom.

The taste of mead upon our lips.

The pleasure of our lover's kiss.

All around us in this place,

Is sent to bring us joy and grace.

And when we embrace this energy,

The magic and the mystery,

As above,

Then so below,

Our connection with this earth will grow.

The Hare Moon

The Full Moon in Scorpio

Dear ones,

This full moon in Scorpio on 27th April is also Lunar Beltane, and I find this really interesting because Scorpio is associated with Samhain and Samhain's opposite is Beltane.

Both of these times of year are associated with magic and the otherworld but they have very different energies. Beltane is about Spring, fertility, joy and celebration and Samhain is about death, journeying to the underworld and Autumn.



This full moon is set to be potent and full of magic as it takes place close to the Beltane portal where the veil between worlds thins. We will have the sun

in the sign of Taurus - the sun moves into Taurus on April 19th. Taurus as an earth sign invites us to be present, grounded and sensual, Scorpio as a water sign invites us to dive down into the shadows of our psyche and 'do the work'. Scorpions have an almost disdain for the mundane, the shallow and the ordinary and like to spend a lot of their time in quiet, deep contemplation on the how's and why's of the world and are also unafraid to confront topics such as death and dying.

Scorpio has two ruling planets, Mars and Pluto. Mars brings the energies of sexuality, action and primal passions and Pluto has this connection to the underworld and therefore the cycles of death and rebirth and the parts of ourself that are unseen, hidden and secret. Scorpio is very much about making the unconscious, conscious.

We have Scorpio, a water sign associated with the underworld and Taurus an earth sign associated with the earthly and material world. These signs appear to contradict each other but they actually invite us to establish balance between these two aspects of ourselves. We can check-in with where we dwell most often. Are we always off exploring the dark mysteries of the world, brooding, deep in thought but perhaps a little aloof? Or are we distracted by the trappings of the material world and do we shy away from thinking about the darker concepts of life?

Balance between the Scorpio and Taurean energy would be this idea of being in the world but not of this world, the ability to stay connected to the truth of life - the cycles of life, death and rebirth whilst being grounded and present with our self and the people around us.

There would be this peaceful, contented energy of enjoying the things of this life whilst having the ability to let them go when the time is right.

One of the best ways to harmonize these two energies is to look to nature! Being in constant communication with nature teaches us how to both enjoy the sensuality of flowers in full bloom whilst also not shy away from death and decay.

Michelle Rose Boxley
for Sisters of the Moon

*Tuning into the cyclical
nature of life teaches us
to see the beauty in each
moment.*

GODDESSES: Lilith, Hekate, Kali, Morgan Le Faye,
Ceridwen, Mary Magdalene

THEMES: Transformation, passion, death, karma,
emotions, intuition, magic, regener-
ation, rebirth,
sovereignty, the witch, the dark goddess, the liminal.



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Magical Book Recommendations

A.G. Worthington - Witch Writer

My taste in books has always veered towards the magical so it's no surprise that one of my favourite genres is fantasy, ranging from the highly conceptual to magical realism. It's a really diverse genre. The books I'm recommending all have one thing in common: magic. Now magic can be defined in many different ways, so I only thought it was right for that to be reflected in my book choices.

Book of Shadows (The Wicca/Sweep series)

by Cate Tiernan

The first in a series of fantasy books about a teenage girl who discovers she is from a long line of witches. The series follows her through her journey coming into her powers and has a really nice representation of 'non-blood witches' and the Wiccan community interwoven in a world where magic is more tangible. If you like young adult fiction, stellar witch representation and a dynamic and interesting on-going narrative then I recommend picking up *Book of Shadows*.



The House in the Cerulean Sea

by T. J. Klune

A heartwarming and beautiful tale about a group of magical children, their enigmatic carer and the case-worker who is assigned to determine whether or not the 'orphanage' they live in is up to code. A little bit Orwellian, a little bit Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, this novel is brimming with magic, and not just the literal kind. If you love the found family trope, gorgeous subtle world-building and a really succinct queer romance, then I think you will enjoy *The House in the Cerulean Sea*.

The Daylight Gate

by Jeanette Winterson

Based on the 1612 Lancashire witch trials, otherwise known as the Pendle witch trials, this is a tale that delves into the effect of James I's reign and war on the two greatest evils of the time to a protestant king, witchcraft and catholicism. This book blends historical fiction with fantasy, although who is to say what really happened during the trials and how many of those accused really were witches. I really recommend *The Daylight Gate* for those with any interest in history and the witch trials, looking for a gripping gothic tale.

Useless Magic

by Florence Welch

This is a bit different and I admittedly have not read much poetry, never mind poetry as intrinsically magical as the like included here. A collection of lyrics and poetry woven in-between original art and doodles, this book elicits many feelings, from hope to anger, melancholy, power, enlightenment and for anyone who is already a fan of the author's music (which I believe as fellow witches, is many of us) then this is definitely worth picking up. Music is poetry, and poetry is pure magic.

Angela Carter's Book of Fairytales

by Angela Carter

Fairytales are many of our first experiences of magic. There's few things more magical, in fact, than being told a fairytale and, if you're anything like me, believing it to be fact. And maybe some of these stories are, or at least, started that way. So we grew up on fairytales and know the stories of Brother's Grimm and maybe even Hans Christian Anderson but those tales often are very Euro-centric. Here we have a collection of fairy and folk tales from around the world, spanning from the Arctic to Asia, each story has been carefully selected and proudly displaced in this wonderful collection.

Three anticipated releases for 2021

Witches Steeped in Gold by Ciannon Smart

A Jamaican-inspired fantasy novel about two enemy witches who must form an alliance to take down a common enemy.
Release date: 20th April OUT NOW

The Bone Way

by Holly J. Underhill

A sapphic Orpheus and Eurydice inspired fantasy novella where a woman must travel to the shadow realm to save her wife.
Release date: 26th June

A Dark and Starless Forest

by Sarah Hollowell

A contemporary fantasy novel about a girl whose siblings go missing which leads her to confront the dark thing that lives in the forest and the growing darkness within herself.
Release date: 14th September.

What if we never traded our claws for that space by the fire?

What if our teeth weren't the price of a place in the tribe?

What if our tongues still remembered the fierce tune of a howl?

RECLAIMING THE WILD SELF

HELEN JR. BRUCE
WITCH WRITER



There is so much to distract us...

So many of these things are valid distractions; family, friends and the way we earn money to provide food and shelter. But it is of vital importance to sometimes set all these things aside. We must take precious time, be it a stolen ten minutes, to retreat back to the dark cauldron within. We must sink into ourselves, unashamedly and without reserve, and sit in that shadowy cave that appears when we close our beautiful eyes. Often, all we need do here is listen. Just as we hear the truths of our friends without judgement, we owe ourselves space for an uncensored voice.

Have I not heard you, in the quietest hours of the night, open your window and call out? Have I not felt you, fingers dividing the course of the stream, longing for something you cannot quite name? Have I not seen you, with my eyes shut, blazing with black and gold and all the colours of the forest?

We speak often now about feeling overwhelmed. We have a to-do list that never ends and a set of standards, deemed normal, which we may feel we can never live up to. This is how we begin to grow small. We make ourselves quiet, so as to not draw attention to what we have labelled as our failures. Our eyes turn downwards to the list, rising only occasionally to check the clock, and we feel the weight of accumulating missed deadlines. The cave within becomes a place of fearful shadows. We block it out, filling the space with bright screens and the blinding lives of fictional others. But the cave is still waiting. That cauldron of rebirth sits within us, singing softly, and waiting for us to once again hear its call.

And you've heard it. At sunset, when the whole sky shimmers between purple, blue and gold. In the forest, when the first green shoots pierce the soft skin of the earth. In autumn, when the wind rises up, cold and care-free, racing itself from rafters, to fields, to the endless playful sea.

When you are ready to return, that still space within will welcome you back. Your authentic voice resides here, curled in a wolf-body beside the embers of a fire that only you can tend. At some point, many of us learned to tone down our emotions. But here they are all welcome;

from frenzied joy to deep, rumbling grief. In this sacred space, we may shrug off our human skins and prowl as predator and prey, devourer and divine, guardian and ghoul. Our claws can cut through bonds that no longer serve us. Our bared teeth mark a boundary, between others and self.

The Wild Self has never been something to fear. Perhaps it is a little too feral, a little too loud for modern day society. There's a chance that it may not wash before dinner. But it is an unrivalled tool in real, soul level, survival. It retains a direct line to the rhythms of nature and it understands, instinctively, that feelings must be let flow; not dammed and left to fester. There are few things more healing and enriching than allowing the Wild Self out, barefoot, in the forest. Than allowing it to sing, loud and raucous, by a fire. Than allowing it to weep, full bodily, curled up on the earth.





EXERCISE

The following is a short meditation to help you feed your connection with your Wild Self. It can be done indoors or outdoors, although I do recommend an outdoor space where you feel safe and grounded if possible. Once you have chosen the right spot, sit down and place a small candle in front of you. This will be lit at the end. Close your eyes softly and take a few moments to focus on your breathing, allowing your body to relax, and put aside any day to day thoughts or worries. Set the intention that all you do is for the highest good. This is sacred space. This is sacred time.

Visualise yourself sitting in a comfortable, dark cave. Take time to get to know the shape, sounds and smells of where you see yourself. The place is familiar

and you feel utterly at ease. You may feel the desire to imagine yourself sitting there in just your bare skin, or you may see yourself portrayed in a way that feels more authentic to you than how you appear in normal life. You may not change visually at all, and any of these paths are perfect. Allow yourself a few moments to see yourself here and perhaps share some positive words with yourself.

Looking ahead, you notice that there are the remains of a fire in the middle of the cave. Light from the red embers gently illuminates a sleeping shape next to the fire. As you watch the shape, you realise that its body is softly rising and falling as it breathes. You recognise your Wild Self, be it in wolf form or another shape meaningful to you, and you feel a rush of love for this magnificent creature. It wakes up, and looks at you with bright, understanding eyes. It knows there have been challenges. There is no need for forgiveness, but if you need it, then it is offered.

You remember that you have brought a gift with you. Reaching down beside you, you pick up an offering of fresh food. It is the delicacy most suited to the animal you see before you. Smiling, you lay the offering down by the fire and sit back, watching as the animal steps forward to eat what you have given it. The food is nourishing, and after it has eaten your Wild Self looks sleek and healthy. Now is a time when you may speak to your Wild Self and interact with it as seems appropriate. Do not leave the cave on this first meeting, but follow your intuition other than that. Once you have shared whatever you need to, bid the animal goodbye and, if you can, promise to visit again. The creature curls up again by the fire, and you notice that the embers are glowing with renewed vigour.

When you are ready, allow your visualisation to gently dissolve and slowly open your eyes. Now is the time to light your candle and speak aloud, or in your mind, thanks to the energies which have worked with you and any positive affirmation which feels appropriate after your journey. Allow the candle to burn out where you are, if possible, or on your altar or another special location later. This meditation can be repeated weekly, or as feels right to you, in order to continue nourishing and building a bond with your Wild Self.


Photos by Helen J.R. Bruce

Artwork by Haz John Taylor (facebook.com/bazjohnart)



HAZ JOHN





When we think of mythologies, the ones which most commonly come to mind are the Greek, Roman, Norse and Biblical myths among a few others.

Though, almost all cultures do have their folk tales ~ their tales of old: embellished over centuries ~ that keep alive in the hearts and minds of the peoples, the magick and mystery of the land, which may just come from very real parts history.

Sometimes it is that such tales and fables hold enough weight historically, culturally and esoterically that they become myths and legends in their own right and what it also most interesting is the links between many cultures' folktales, myths and legends.

TROJAN BRITAIN AND DEFEAT OF THE GIANTS

We begin our brief journey through history at around 15th century BC. It was around this time the lands, then called Albion were set foot upon by Trojan exile Brutus, who is said to have founded the name Britain. Legend has it, just as it does with the myths of Tuatha de Danann when they arrived in ancient Ireland a few centuries prior, that the lands were inhabited at the time of arrival only by giants.

Whilst this sounds a far cry from reality, it is interesting to note that there have been various archaeological findings which do back this up in both the size and dating of found skeletons. One very notable example is that of St Michael's Mount in Cornwall, where an 8-foot skeleton was unearthed. It is here that is believed to be the location where Jack the Giant Killer (more commonly known from more recent children's books as Jack and the Beanstalk) famously defeated the great giant Cormoran. Certain stories pertain that Jack was then offered a place on the round table, but this does not chromatically add up and seems to have been a poetic embellishment added centuries later.

I don't wish to spend too much time on giants but is worth mentioning that there are countless stories of giants throughout many age-old texts from Pagan, Hebrew, Islamic and Christian cultures - most notable Gogmagog, whom in our story was the

LEGENDARY

BRITAIN

STEPHANIE ULPH
WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

final giant to be killed by Corenius, the founder and first king of Cornwall.

There are tales of Gogmagog's return and fray with William the Conqueror 2500 years later, though I believe this to have been a way of intertwining the invaders lineage in literature with the present peoples, as the Romans did with Greek mythos, thus gaining their acceptance over time. It is also important to say here that the links with British history and the descendants of Troy is in fact greatly backed up through literature and archaeological findings.

TRIBAL BRITAIN, BOUDICA AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The following 1500 years or so seemed to be a relatively peaceful time, with the people of the lands being made up of various tribes, predominantly of Trojan and also Celtic (from circa 600BC) decent. Whilst I say peaceful, no doubt battles were had and parcels of land changed ownership, but overall, this was not a time of invading and conquering.

It was a time of clans, hillforts, groves, bard songs and Druidry. There are texts that claim the Celts as barbarians and of committing human sacrifices, though these writings come from the invading Romans who saw themselves as somewhat more civilised and had reason to discredit the Celtic peoples. The Romans invaded Britain 43AD, and brought with them a new type of warfare and societal structure that would prove very difficult to resist.

One legendary figure whom led a fierce rebellion was Boudica, wife of Prasutagus, King of the Iceni tribe. Upon his death King Prasutagus left half of his wealth to Emperor Nero as a deal to leave well his wife, daughters and tribespeople.

Unfortunately, Nero did not stay true to his word and following Prasutagus's death sought all of his wealth and with it the torture of his family and people. These events led to Boudica's uprising. Her army fought tremendously well but were eventually defeated by the Romans who remained in England another 350 years.

THE TALES OF ĀVALON

The myths and legends surrounding the ancient isle of Avalon are both grand and intricate, and some of the most intriguing in the world.

It is here that the stories of the bible and the legends of King Arthur lead us. It is here that the Holy Grail is said to be buried, and it is here that the first known church was built - according to legend by Joseph of Arimathea and Mary Magdeline.

Though not forming part of mainstream history, there is good evidence of its existence and its subsequent destruction by fire in 1184. And with this pre-dating Christian conversion by

circa 500 years, contrary to popular understanding, suggests that Pagans and Christians (pre-Vatican takeover of Christianity) actually lived side by side for centuries. Avalon is both the Celtic otherworld and the 'new Jerusalem', as referred to in William Blakes poem of Jesus's pilgrimage to Glastonbury, which is one of Britain's unofficial national anthems.

With the derivation of the name 'Isle of Avalon', meaning isle of apples, the context of the now surrounding land would have been underwater in mythological times. With the majesty of the tor, the white calcium rich water springs below, the red iron rich water opposite at the Chalice Well - both of which flow endlessly - as well as the 'holy thorn tree' established on Weary-all hill, which prior to its arson attack (thankfully there many trees grown from its cuttings) had been dated to times of antiquity and a tree indigenous to the middle eastern area - to name just some of the most prominent sacred sites - it is incredibly easy to see how Glastonbury, the heart chakra of the Earth, is so central to these great legends.

Whilst some of these tales may sound rather fanciful, it is curious to comment that the Queen has a piece cut from what has become the main replacement (cut and grown from the original) 'holy thorn tree' every December!

KING ARTHUR, JESUS AND THE HOLY GRAIL

Neither of these great legends need any introduction, but perhaps less known is the connection between them and how they individually and together make up a huge, magical and most valiant part of our land's history and mythos.

The most obvious connection of course - King Arthur and Jesus were both questing in search of the holy grail (symbolically the heart chakra and representing emotional fulfilment). They each had 12 trusted companions in the form of disciples and knights (also symbolizing the astrological signs and representing the natural attributes and challenges of each sign within their characteristics).

Jesus died on the cross, whilst the cross is the symbol on Arthur's and his knight's uniform and weaponry, and both are said to rise again when the world needs them most. Jesus makes pilgrimage to Glastonbury, whilst Arthur is taken there, following his final battle. The great sword Excalibur contains interesting links also.

Legend has it Excalibur was forged by the Nordic elf Weyland the smith, under request of Merlin. Coincidentally, Weyland's Smithy is in Oxford, which is where Geoffrey of Monmouth, the greatest attributor to the Arthurian legends, claims to have gotten his information from (in a very ancient book given by the deacon of Oxford), but no such book has been discovered. As far as the sword, the symbol of truth, the name Excalibur actually means 'sword' in ancient Aramaic, the language most likely spoken by Jesus and the language of



ancient Jerusalem. There lies 'The Foundation Stone', above the well of souls, believed to be the centre point axis of earth's creation (unfortunately inaccessible to the public). There are enough further similarities to fill a book but that is enough for here and we will look at how this may have come to be a little further on.

THE DARK AGES

The Dark Ages refers to the British time period after the defeat of the Roman Empire in England and before The Norman conquest (roughly 500AD to 1000AD). This time period has less documented history and more conflicting literature than the time periods either side.

Popularly it is thought that this was a dark and bludgeoning time of history, though this is not the meaning of the term

the Dark Ages. It is also popularly believed that the Saxons and the Vikings, who were prominent peoples of Britain in this time, were ruthless barbarians. Historical studies show that this is, for the most part, unlikely to be correct. What actually seems to fit more accurately is the intermarriage between British and Saxon royalty, and eventually Viking royalty, leading to mass migration and intermingling of cultures from there.

Recent DNA studies conducted by Oxford University also suggest cultures living side by side and overtime intermingling, contrary to the commonly accepted idea of the Saxons ruthlessly wiping out the Britons. As well as this, the tracing of the founding of the Saxon dynasty brings us to a rather interesting character, Cerdic of Wessex. Here we once again reach a point where history and mythology seem to cross or intertwine, with some scholars suggesting that he was purely a figure of legend, and most accepting that he was very real and a Briton native, with the Anglo-Saxon chronicle giving lineage tracing him back to Woden or Odin. In addition to this, it is worth noting that the Saxons were a Pagan people up until and way beyond the formal conversion to Christianity brought on by the Gregorian Missionary in England, as ordered by Gregory Bishop of Rome beginning in 595AD (some 600 years after the aforementioned church being built).

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

Seemingly shrouded in mystery, The Templar Knights were essentially an elite medieval Christian military organisation founded in 1119 following the taking of the land of Jerusalem and the subsequent need to protect pilgrim's making their way to the holy lands.

By the 12th century the Templars had gained great prestige, thus expanding their roles to higher and more secretive tasks. It is suggested they were the keepers of the occult, keepers of religious artifacts, and of secret texts and information. And their tales too cross with our legendary King Arthur, through the well-known stories of them being keepers of the holy grail and the association of the shared symbology of the cross. They both have a very intrinsic connection to France, with it being the place of the Templars creation and subsequent destruction, and the place where many aspects of The Arthurian legends seem to stem, explaining the many French sounding names such as Guinevere and Lancelot.

The Templars, despite their acclaim, fell out of favour with the powers which backed their establishment, and on Friday 13th October, 1307 the Templars in Paris were raided, arrested and burnt at the stake. A few years on, the Order of the Knights Templar was officially dissolved. Could it be that the Templars brought back stories which held great spiritual and occult meaning, and information from their time in Jerusalem, which through the passing of these stories they became en-

twined with our own heroic legendary figure?

This hypothesis is presented as most likely by 30-year researcher Ralph Ellis, who suggests the stories were passed from the Templars in northern France, to Geoffrey of Monmouth's friend Walter of Oxford. He further suggests the Templars came across texts that revealed Christ as a great warrior king and contained much esoteric information which the Templars hid or destroyed to avoid execution for 'heresy' (the irony of the church!) and so passed the information on in story - to which it seems they still met such fate!

KING ARTHUR

Who then was King Arthur? Was he real, or real as far as in the hearts and minds of the peoples who adore what he represents?

This question is, and unless any further definitive evidence is found, always will be, a speculative one. It is my belief that there likely was once a great warrior king - I believe the dates in the Monmouth's, Bede's and Gildas literature are not correct and that the great warrior king was likely to have lived a century or so earlier.

The famous battle of Badon has no definitive time or location and the literature within which it is mentioned portrays King Arthur as Romano-British soldier. Each of these sources are known to be somewhat unreliable, with areas not quite adding up, and were also written in Latin during the times of the Gregorian missionaries or the Norman (largely Gallo-Roman descendant) conquest, which leads me to query whether their purpose was to appease these powers and/or to weave them into British culture. This seems to happen with imperialist conquests as a way for the people to over time accept them as part of their history and lineage (various kings from this time onward even had themselves painted as and claimed descent from King Arthur).

So, my theory is that Arthur was a great warrior, most likely battling against The Roman empire (which would be another similarity between Arthur and Jesus) and that much history was erased and re-written to suit the conquerors narrative. With this reasoning, and for Monmouth particularly, it is not then clear whether he was appeasing the Normans as many researchers believe, or drawing on others accounts and adding some hidden information as given by the Templars - to which he could not publicly acknowledge in its entire truth in such times.

As well as this, it is certain to say that King Arthur, his knights, Merlin and all (some of whom seem to have genuine place in history and some of whom seem written in as part of romance novels) have become such great archetypal figures that themselves and their gallant tales are very much real in the realms of the collective subconscious, to which almost all

great literature and creative works that delve into this area of imagination make reference to it being very real on an alternative plane of existence.

IMPERIAL BRITAIN TO THE MODERN AGE

In 1066 came the invasion led by William the Conqueror, and with it our final piece of folklore meets history, where it is said that Edith Hnesce (gentle swan) walked through the battlefield at Hastings to identify Saxon King Harold Godwinson, her husband by handfast marriage, by marks or love bites only known to her.

Subsequently, William the Conqueror was crowned British King on December 25th that year. Unlike the previous invaders and settlers, it was/is highly disputed that there was any legitimate claim to the throne, and revolt against the invaders went on for 6 years, with a further major uprising known as Revolt of the Earls several years after. The full secure of the throne in turn saw all British peoples in elite positions being removed from power, and inheritance laws created, meaning that widows and daughters with great wealth had to marry Normans.

The end result of all this was the re-imperialization of England and the surrounding lands. It was at this point that I believe our history was destroyed and re-written (thus forming 'the Dark Ages'), with the Saxons, one of the strongest forces against the Normans, being painted in such a way that was in fact a true portrayal of the Normans. Following this time, several fires of importance took place, notably the previously mentioned church in Glastonbury and the great fire of London in 1212, in which Southwark and the London Bridge (both places of major English resistance, which ended in them being torched at that time also).

And it seems to be from here onwards our history and culture was largely lost and/or altered. Skip forward and we see peasant revolts, colonization of the lands that now form the United Kingdom, the establishing of parliament, and the formation of the 'British' empire. And the rest I guess is history!

CONCLUSION

England has a wonderful tapestry of mythos and legend, some known, some mis-understood, and some much less known. I feel it's a real shame that most citizens have no idea of these wonderful tales which would be so appropriate to learn of in history or religious studies classes in school, or passed down in tales and fables as they once would have been.

This is simply an outline of my understanding of events and how I see them fit together. Of course, there is always more to be discovered, but unless anything of major contradiction is presented, I feel the overall gist of my story is most likely very accurate.

DAMAGING WOO WOO

K.D. Phillips
Witch Residency Writer



Disclaimer: this article is important. If you are offended by the words that follow, I'd like to remind you that your offence is acknowledgement that you are guilty of what follows... and so I refuse to accept responsibility for any ill feelings you have regarding the subject matter below.

Warning: at the end of this article there is an actual curse, bestowed upon those who do not heed the caution given regarding the forthcoming article. The curse cannot hurt you by simply reading it... unless you read it and actively go against it. (It is irrelevant if you can read the language it is written in)

So I've heavily implied my lean towards most modern practices losing their way. This despite many claiming to be on their own individual paths.

Unfortunately, the individual path speaks of discovering esoteric knowledge for yourself, but via the same original texts that every practitioner has studied before you.

It's why we urge secrecy... not to be mysterious, but, in essence, to avoid any kind of 'spoiler alerts' for initiates and Acolytes. It is not about self discovery woo woo, it's about learning for yourself. It's knowledge earned. It's the importance of study.

YouTube videos don't count, and are often beyond woo, into the realms of disinformation... mostly because these kinds of videos are making stuff up to make the person posting sound special, or researching online from other woo-extraordinaires. This results in a lineage of bovine excrement.

How many videos I've seen of some moody, alternative, attempted Satanist claim that to summon a demon all you need is black candles, a pentagram, and to shout the demon's name... you've seen these videos too.

How much woo have you seen?

Endless articles and videos that don't demonstrate the OP's results, and with no source link for the material.

These mild abominations are only slightly damaging... they put people on a wrong path, and make any mockery of what we do easier for mainstream religions and such.

From the Victorian seances that many claim their powers originate by being passed down... excuse me while I laugh through the vomit.

Anyone heard of the Fox sisters?

They confessed to parlour tricks and explained how they were achieved. Table tipping is still in operation within the most woo groups.

It makes us all look like delusional frauds.

These new ghost hunting gadgets are basically the same thing... "This device just spiked, it must be a ghost!"

Sorry, I laugh-vomited again.

There's no evidence to suggest that any beep, spike, or glitch has anything to do with a spirit manipulating the device. Never has been, never will.

Some of these newer devices such as Ghost Boxes claim that spirits can manipulate them more easily. Think about the logic of such a statement... so the inventor knows how spirits manipulate things???

Might be a better idea to demonstrate how this knowledge of how ghosts work has come to be known... that would be

proof of such things.

This too makes a mockery of those who truly look for ghosts.

You can tell the woo woo groups and teams because they copy the same format as the TV shows... shows built for entertainment rather than a sincere search for the unknown. Have a good think about how ghost investigations were done before the movie Ghostbusters. It was done by documenting any activity. Now we see a myriad of gadgets "specifically" designed for hunting ghosts. Same point as above... designed to find what we know nothing about.
Bovine excrement.

So much woo woo it sounds like a train coming.

Where the woo becomes damaging here is the gazillion people posting "images of ghosts" where they zoom in so the photos have four pixels and claim there's a face, or a monk, or a mist.

Orb-mad people who haven't dared to look into what orbs really are—Depending on where the external light source is to your lens and flash, orbs can be caught on demand if you know how.

It's particulate matter, often the moisture in the air, most times just dust and moisture combined.

But look at this face in it...

Ah that pixelated pareidolia... excuse me while I wipe my face clean from this vomit-laughter again.

I'm using this term because these things are laughable, but also make me sick.

So what?

So this makes us all look bad, who cares?

It's not like we have to prove anything to anyone, and besides, that secrecy mentioned above is also so those of us who are 'in the know' can quickly distinguish between those who are not. We can smell the woo a mile off.

It doesn't hurt anyone, does it?

Well, it can cause damage. Unchecked woo-warriors are like any bovine-excrement artist... same as any liar, they become bolder and bolder in their lies. Often they begin to believe their own woo.

We've all seen those TV 'Mediums' get angry at their audience when their tricks fall flat.

Is it the audience's fault? Are they not bystanders to the Medium and the spirits?

Credulity is apparently a prerequisite for "powers and abili-

ties" to work.

So they are saying without your belief in their powers... that their powers don't work.

Is that how this works... who is the psychic here, you or me? Is it me that gives the psychic their 'abilities'? FFS!

Since the Victorian era onwards, people have visited such woo woo practitioners to verify their belief in the afterlife, or to contact lost loved ones.

And that's a noble, but stupid thing to do.

It's fine if someone goes to a Medium to contact a loved one, but then the woo goes dark.

There's the moral ambiguity stepping in the way of paranormal investigators and psychics contacting the spirits of the newly deceased for entertainment. We know this is wrong, but it still happens.

The living loved ones of these newly deceased are having their emotions trampled on.

It's mostly understood by those who are woo adjacent that this is bad practice... but the common social media investigators tend to go unchecked.

But it gets worse than this too.

I recently saw a Facebook group post something horrific and sickening.

The group are guilty of everything mentioned above, but this next bit is disgusting.

An Admin of the group posted a police plea regarding a missing child. The police had posted on social media to reach as many people as possible.

This group took it upon themselves to 'psychically' find the boy. (Despite any show you have seen on TV, police in the UK, and USA do not use psychics. Maybe in some random encounter, but never as you see on certain shows)

And this comment thread kicked off immediately.

The first comment was the most painfully clichéd statement...

"He's near a large body of water."

The next...

"Near a wooded area."

Clichéd, vague, but not damaging... right?

Well it turned beyond wrong.

Someone said the boy was in a moving car... and, "I see a man, 50's."

Another...

"He's been kidnapped, poor boy."

"He's in a house he doesn't know. He can't phone home. Lovely boy, he just wants his mum. A happy boy, but not too bright."

The comments then began to imply the boy had been raped, and that he was dead.

Imagine now that you are the parents of that boy, and you see these comments. You are already out of your mind because your child is missing... and there's a group of people confirming your worst nightmares. Probably giving you more than you would dare think about.

Many of the commenters from this paranormal group have children of their own.

I was quick to point out how sickening this was, and that they want to think about if this was their own child.

The post was removed shortly after my lengthy message.

The boy turned up safe and sound according to the police post. I checked. Apparently he was just playing with friends and wandered off out of earshot. He was never lost, just



couldn't hear his mother shouting for him. He wasn't even picked up by police, he made his own way home once the street lights came on.

So much for those psychic abilities... not one of them was even close. Thank the gods.

What was done with good intentions could have harmed the parents. Without realising, this group were back-slapping and congratulating each other on their alleged abilities... at the

expense of a child's life.

Do what thou wilt, but harm none. That also goes for unintentional harm. We must know what we are doing fully. Hence our lessons in focus and intention.

Those individual paths taken by the many, the woo woo twisting road leads to folly.

If you are reading this, and your knowledge is not from the original Grimoires, or taught to you by someone who has read them... Stop!

Go find these books. They are readily available to all.

What seems innocent now, can lead to destruction without your knowledge of it.

That innocent spell, that little ritual... doesn't hurt anybody, does it?

Does it?

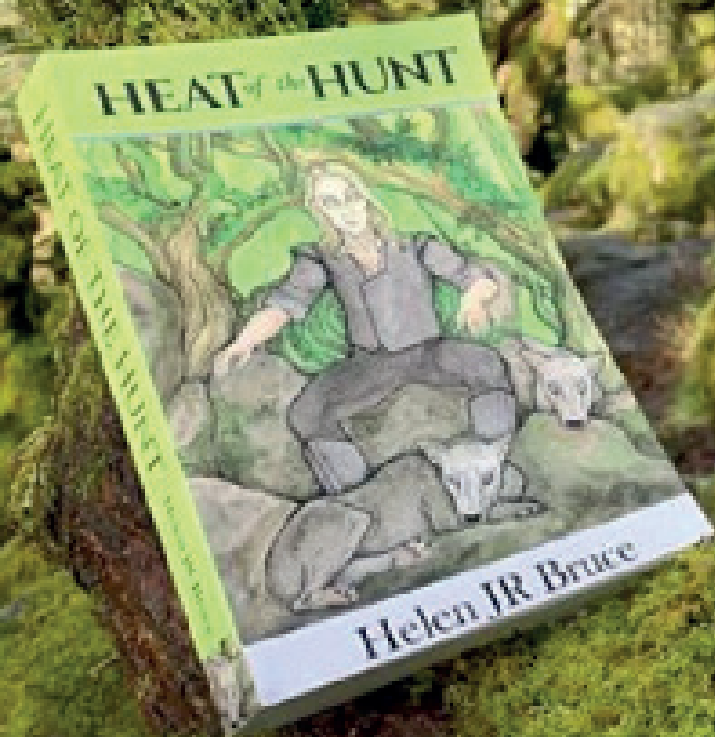
If you ask where the information you are being taught comes from, and are met with derision, or dismissed... step away. Because that person offers nothing but fountains of damaging material. To you and to others. Sooner or later, the viper of deceit will bite. It often bites the innocent, not the person delivering the woo.

For those that are hard of hearing, and will continue to use woo woo in ways that bring harm to innocent people and encourages malpractice... (Warning, this next part is an actual curse, not woo woo) here is my Malediction to you...

If one does not wish to incur the eternal curse of wandering the post-life wasteland, excluded from whatever happiness comes through this life or the next... heed my words of warning. Cease your vile ways, or vileness will be all that you are. The peril of losing your blessedness hangs over you. Such a being who dares defy this decree will hereafter never find rest nor quiet.

*Homo homini lupus est.
Omnes autem inimicos tuos et eos qui
oderunt te et persequuntur.*

Special dishonour belongs to the evil and loathsome people who practice such knowing they have no ability, or authority to do so. May devils continue to punish you until death becomes release.



*Choose
humanity.
Choose the fae.
Or dare to
choose both...*

The Wild Hunt has been summoned, the fae are abroad and in the wilderness of Dartmoor an ancient power stirs.

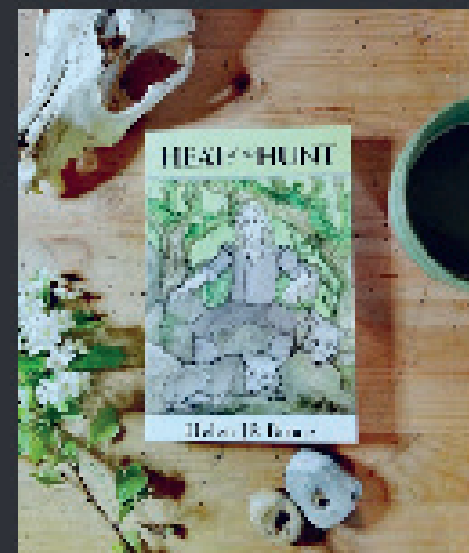
Gemma would have been happy to ignore all of these things. But now her best friend has been kidnapped, there's a

hellhound in the local pub and all of the myths are real.

Can she join forces with all that frightens her to get him back?

Available now in paperback from

www.facebook.com/heatofthehunt and as an ebook on Amazon.





Crazy Horses

EQUINOPHOBICS BEWARE,
IN THE UK, HORSES ARE
EVERYWHERE

As a dream interpreter, I might see them as the representative of the dreamer's sexual drive; the size, shape and movement of the horse telling you anything you need to know; your attitude or feelings towards the horse being of equal importance. Some dream theory places the running horse in a dream, as a sign of travel ahead or a sudden bout of Wanderlust. In Tarot, we see horses in all shades; their symbology ranging from a jaunt on your 'spiritual pony' in The Sun; witnessing Death on a pale horse; a friend on your journey that stops to graze in The Pentacles - to some wild, out of control fire horse in the Wands. Almost every town in the United Kingdom will have a carving, statue, mosaic or depiction of a horse; dedicated perhaps to the soldier that rode them into victory, or to show the passionate, dramatic rush of the entire ocean. They were integral to the survival of our ancestors, there is evidence of Anglo-Saxon horse worship and having also spent many of my early years working with horses, I can vouch for them as magical, intelligent beings that seem like they've been here for a long, long time.

Writing this from my home in Edinburgh, Scotland; Beltane celebrations here are surprisingly horse-less. Famously, The Beltane Fire Festival is alive and well (even continuing through the magic of technology during these plague times) and in normal years, the drums from Calton Hill can be heard all over the city on the 30th of April. However Beltane, and Beltane's changeable cousin, May Day is rife with horses all over England, Ireland and Wales - I wanted to explore some of the weird and wonderful horse-flavoured shenanigans that take place on May Day and other big calendar days, to give you a glimpse into what you can achieve with a remote location, a dependence on horses and a lot of ale.

"OSS OSS, Wee OSS!": PADSTOW, CORNWALL
Possibly, the most famous of these 'Wicker Man' style celebrations; the 'Obby Oss Festival' in Padstow successfully embraces the Beltane spirit, while simultaneously encapsulating the unsettling wildness of ancient tradition in Britain. Despite the general consensus amongst the locals that this festival is at least 4000 years old, the first actual record of it appears in 1803, with

Tarot Reader and Dream Interpreter at
Amber-Lee Alchemy Tarot
www.amberleealchemy.co.uk

almost every aspect of it still playing out today. That's not to say by any means that it is not significantly older than this record and as you'll read ahead, there are hints and tips of all of these festivities having firm roots in an ancient and unrecorded past. The main event consists of two performers, usually male, each donning a huge hoop around the neck, secured at the shoulders. Over this hoop is stretched a black oilskin and in the centre of the hoop, towering about the head of the performer; the ghastly, grinning, red and yellow mask, with snapping jaws. The horse head is a wooden carved head on a stick at the front of the structure, with a long black mane. These unwieldy creatures lead two separate processions through the town, accompanied by a 'Teaser' (someone with a painted club) and the whole town singing behind them (known as The Mayers). The first journey begins at May Day midnight outside the 'Golden Lion' pub, singing the 'Night Song', while some members of the party cut Sycamore, Primrose and Ash- the 'May Greens' decorate the May Pole. The second Oss appears in the morning on May Day, with both Osses sloping and dancing through the town. The procession ends at the May Pole to the tune of the 'Day Song' where the two Osses meet and the death of one Oss is acted out until the Oss is resurrected next May Eve. There was a time when the black skin of the Oss was covered in tar and they would chase the young women of the town, if they were smudged by the Oss, they would be married by that Christmas! Curiously, that tradition is no longer observed...Instead, part of the game is to make the Osses as 'Merry' as possible, with one Oss from 1953 quoted as saying "In less than half an hour, I'm ringing a pint of beer out of my shirt."

THE MINEHEAD HOBBY HORSE: MINEHEAD, SOMERSET

Many believe that the Minehead Hobby Horse, or 'Original Sailors Hobby Horse' was created to scare away the Viking Invaders - and frankly, even the best of us would have had a fright at the 8 foot long, 3 foot wide, brightly painted monstrosity from Minehead. In 1983 however, a local news reporter wrote "The origin professes to be in commemoration of the wreck of a vessel at Minehead in remote times, or the advent of a sort of phantom ship which entered the harbour without Captain or crew." Which is somehow even more intriguing. The first written record of this horse tradition appears in 1830, with a second horse not added until 1962. Now the festival involves 3 rival horses; 'The Original Sailors Horse', 'The Traditional Sailors Horse' and 'The Town Horse'. They appear at Beltane (May Day Eve a.k.a. 'Show Night' or 'Mazey Eve') and again on the 2nd and 3rd of May in a ceremony called 'Booty' at a part of town called 'Cher' (seriously, you couldn't make this amazing stuff up). The Booty involves one 'victim' being booted 10 times while being held by the arms and legs beneath one of the horses. When they are released, they must avoid the whip-

ping tail of the beast and dance with the horse. On May Day sunrise, dancers and the horses make their way out of town collecting donations as they go, to salute a crossroads - thought to be how far they once chased the Vikings out of town.

"THE ANCIENT ORDER OF HOODENERS": KENT

The Hoodener tradition itself is steeped in mystery, with many folkloric historians believing that these stem from travelling performers; possibly tracing back to Saxon times and similar to the Mummers Plays but a little more chaotic; dancing and causing havoc in the towns and villages so that one would pay them to leave. The Kentish Horses, particularly the 'Hooden Horse' from Margate has left a trail of incredible stories behind it. In 1939, a 21 year old woman from Broadstairs was reported to have 'died of fright' at the sight of the 'Hooden Horse' from Margate - not dressed as an actual horse, as such but quoted as: "one of whom was habited as a bear in a dress of the most hideous description." The outfit was to be given up, with prosecution threatened if it was seen again! On the flip side of this, the Lower Hardres horse in 1859 frightened a previously chair-bound German woman so much that she leapt from her chair to hide. She remained 'cured' for the rest of her life - her husband was so impressed that he purchased the horse from the performers and took it back to Germany as a memory of the miracle cure. In modern times, many East Kentish villages hold a Hoodening around Yule time - a small festival led by one or many carved wooden horse heads on tall sticks with clacking jaws, that tour the local pubs and private homes putting on small plays, often on the theme of resurrection.



“MARI LWYD”: WALES

We can't talk about Yule, without mentioning everyone's favourite horse skull on a stick. The Mari Lywd (pron. Marry Loo-eed) or Grey Mare, is the name of this beloved Midwinter character from Welsh folk tradition. A horse skull, mounted on a big stick, covered in a white sheet that hides the human operator and part of the skull so it appears hooded. The Mari skull will often have black, glass or painted eyes and a clacking jaw and this creature would arrive with a little band of men to sing with The Mari Lywd. The group would arrive at someone's door and sing outside it about how the occupant should definitely let The Mari in, in order to get a blessing. The inhabitant would then sing back refusing - and this epic rap battle of history would back and forth until the Mari gave up and begged for kindness. The Mari Lywd and its party would then be let in, fed and watered. In some parts of Wales, some of the congregation would be dressed as Punch and some as Judy, the 'Judy's would have brooms and would be tasked with sweeping up the mess made by the Mari Lywd. To finish, the Mari would chase people and everyone would (somewhat drunkenly) bless the house for the year!

“LAAIR VANE”/“LAIR BHAN”: ISLE OF MAN/IRELAND

Another Christmas Tradition, although with some records of the horse appearing at other celebrations, is the Laair Vane (pron. L-air vayne) of the White Mare from the Isle of Man. Thought to have first made an appearance as the comic relief in Mummers' Plays. Once a carved wooden horse head painted white, now a much more 'pole-friendly' paper mache, this tall beast has a white cloth at its base to cover the performer beneath and snaps its jaws ferociously. Again, designed with ruckus in mind, it would disrupt festive gatherings and clacks at party goers - sometimes targeting only those that don't manage to ignore the thing. In 1800, the records tell of also appearing on New Year's Eve to chase young women until it caught one. Once caught, the woman would then have to wear the horse disguise while



the rest of the party played music and danced a complex dance involving sticks around her. Eventually, the fiddle player would be blindfolded, and their fake beheading would take place...before resting the fiddlers head in the lap of the horse-woman and asking her questions about the year ahead. I'll stick to Tarot for my divination, thanks! Ireland has the Lair Bhan, pronounced exactly the same and with an identical appearance and lore as the Manx tradition. in 2020, a mysterious Laair Vane appeared during the Manx Christmas Celebrations without warning, to sniff at the people playing dead during one of the Saints Plays still performed there in (a 200 year old resurrection play called 'The White Boys') and dance along with the festivities before disappearing as discreetly as it came. The identity of this Mystery Horse remains unknown!

YORKSHIRE/ DERBYSHIRE/ NOTTINGHAMSHIRE - “POOR OLD HORSE”

Mining communities pay homage to their equine co-workers in lots of unique ways, so I wanted to mention 'Poor Old Horse' here. It is similar in appearance to the Mari Lywd, but instead of just creating mayhem - around Harvest time, the party around it sings a sad, ten verse song about a mistreated horse, that suffers injury and dies, while a designated blacksmith attempts to shoe the horse and it bucks into the crowd. The old horse is a motif that appears around Yule for many cultures, and like the Calteach, is said to represent the death of the old or passing year. Have a listen if you can, to Richard Dawson singing 'Poor Old Horse' - it will certainly put you in mind of an older time, if nothing else.

One repeating motif that I haven't touched upon yet, but that certainly feels ancient, is the act of these horses going to the pond to drink. Many of these 'mast' horses (the long neck, wooden variant with a clacking jaw and cloth covering the operator), would partake in, or detour to include a journey to the village pond or well. The merry makers would follow, sometimes singing or dancing. The horse would dip its wooden nose into the water, then bring the head back up to splash water over the crowd. Being splashed was a way to guarantee luck for the year ahead.


The true origin of the 'Hobby Horse' remains unknown for now, but the theories are interesting. A 'Hobby Horse' appears in written records as early as 1460 and is associated with dancing and Ritual Transvestism. They appear again in Tudor and Stuart Morris Dancing as signs of fertility and energy and in mummers plays and theatre as comedy prop horses. It can't be a coincidence that there are historical references to horse worship in Anglo Saxon and Roman times, as well as frequent pictorial reference to animal disguise as intimidation or in ritual. It also seems unlikely for there to be no connection between our ancestors and the White Mare

from Hungarian and Scandinavian folklore. How many of these traditions have changed over time? For example, many that hear the name of 'The Derby Tup' will only associate it with a chaotic Derbyshire ram; perhaps from folk song or just from living nearby. Many children of the 1950s might still remember putting their pal in a bag and tying the ends around their heads to look like ears. There is, however, evidence to suggest that the Tup was once in fact, another of the travelling Mummers play style horses. I have also noticed striking similarities in shape and style between the Celtic instrument called The Carnyx -an upright, booming horn in the shape of boars, horses and dragons used in battle, and the 'Mast' style hobby horse that could imply that these creatures or their likeness are of even greater age.

Like the fires of Beltane today, we could be witnessing the mock sacrifice of a village member to appease the Horse Deities or the Gods of Winter; we could be re-enacting an ancient, brutal and dangerous fertility rite, involving the ritual capturing and marking of our women; we could even now be wearing comfortable shoes to dance and drink, unknowingly in celebration of kicking the Vikings out of town and saving our loved ones from some terrible fate. We may just never know! I like to think of these mad, horse-based antics as a fun and suitably Pagan way to celebrate the death of the year just gone and the life in the year ahead - the perfect accompaniment to your May Day, Harvest and Yuletide celebrations.

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WITCHCRAFT, TAROT, AND THE ROUTE TO CEREMONIAL MAGICK

KELLY BUCHAN - WITCH RESIDENCY WRITER

Sitting poised at my altar, the tiny hairs on my neck begin pulling at my skin. Electricity oozes from the palms of my hands as the magick seeps from within. At this moment, with expectant eyes looming from my phone seeking confirmation and guidance, I am channelling the above for the below. I'm suspended between the micro and macrocosms while the angels dance within my third eye... and there's not a place in this universe I'd rather be.

I was gifted my very first experience with tarot when I was 11. My mum (an exceptionally gifted reader in her own right) took me to see a well-renowned psychic medium on the island of Tenerife. She was an eccentric lady for sure, her brittle arms were dripping with quartz crystals and amethysts and her colourful home was heavily perfumed with indian incense. She pulled us into her world with incredible ease, and she seemed herself to be mostly existing in the astral realm, only occasionally gracing us with her physical presence to relay messages from our ancestral spirits.

I'll admit to not remembering much about my mum's reading, I was so enchanted by the flickering of the candles and the way the light danced across the silk tapestries adorning the walls. Reality seemed to ripple across us as she pulled the cards one by one. My mum's awe was thick and palpable. And before long, this unearthly woman turned her attention to yours truly. Unbeknownst to me at the time, she was using the Thoth deck, which perhaps explains why this first encounter with the aether left such a lasting impression on my young psyche.

I watched her facial expressions closely as she turned the cards over, small knots of understanding would loosen on her face as the puzzle pieces seemed to click together for her. Whispered sighs and ineffable mutters escaped her ancient lips before she finally committed to saying:

"You'll be doing this when you're older my dear, you'll be living abroad, married to someone from a different culture who works with his hands". She gave me a wry smile as she locked her eyes into my whole being, I hung onto her every word. "You've got an exciting road ahead of you my girl. You'll write books on the occult and heal people with a touch of your hands. Take heed, do what you can to avoid drugs and alcohol...you wont do well with being chained to the lower realms of existence. And please, dont ever forget that you have magick sewn through you."

*

The tarot embodies symbolical presentations of universal ideas, behind which lie all of the implicits of the human mind, and it is in this sense that they contain the secret doctrine, which is the realisation by the few truths embedded in the consciousness of all

- A.E Waite
co-creator of the Rider-Waite Deck

The true origins of Tarot are to this day shrouded in mystery, with a plethora of tales offering insight into where this magickal tool first emerged. Some say the tarot was used in ancient sumerian magick, others believe the major arcana to be a construct of the greatest minds of the ancient world who, just before the destruction of the library of Alexandria, met in the city of Fez to establish a symbolic language which could be used to pass down sacred knowledge lost in the impending tragedy.

Another myth credits the egyption god Thoth, who was the scribe to the other gods, as having

gifted 22 images containing sacred knowledge to humanity. These images were said to have been hung on giant stone pillars through which new initiates would be led, all the while having the great wisdom of the symbolic images explained to them on entrance into the mystery school. Legend has it, these pillars were situated between the legs of the Great Sphynx, with the initiates traveling through secret underground tunnels leading to the great pyramid itself in the Giza Plateau. However exciting and immersive these stories are, the only facts that are currently proven is that the modern Tarot system was first documented as being used within an occult system in 1781. Academically, it is widely accepted that the cards first emerged as gaming and gambling systems.

Not every Tarot reader is a witch, but I have never personally encountered a competent witch who doesn't at least have some working knowledge of the Rider-Waite or Marseilles systems of tarot. I've met many oracle readers who channel spirit so well that ive been left utterly gobsmacked by their messages and I can see the allure of using one of the many beautiful oracle decks now available to buy.

In my opinion though, tarot really does work in an altogether more succinct holistic system when used as a magickal divination tool correctly. An experienced witch can harness the energy of both the major and minor arcana (arcana being the latin word for secrets) in her spellwork by creating charged talismans with the cards, invoking the planetary, zodiacal or elemental energies associated with each one. The suits of the minor arcana correspond with the four elements which also match to the four bodies which encompass us all, the spirit, the mind, the physical body and the astral body.

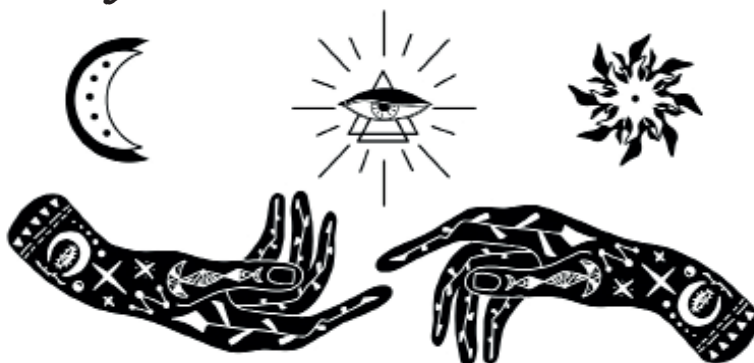
As Donald Michael Kraig explains in *Modern Magick*, using the tarot daily is essential in order to maintain practises of white magick. White Magick (western mysticism, or "yoga" in eastern spiritual traditions) is categorized by causing changes to occur within our realities in conformity with will, pulling us closer to our divine selves, and preparing us for obtaining the knowledge and conversation with our Holy Guardian Angel. Without forming a strong bond with the Tarot, it can be very easy for our moral compasses to shift, casting black magick (causing changes to occur in conformity of will which could indirectly cause harm to yourself or others) or grey magick (unconsciously causing actions to happen through both white and black magick). One of the ways we are advised to bond with our decks and develop confidence in our intuition is by using the tarot contemplation ritual below.

In ceremonial magick, we are working to achieve two things. Spiritual sustence and the strengthening of the aura. This ensures that at the point of death, our energy is preserved and not sucked into another life cycle, allowing the escape of the ouroborous. That is to say, we can enter the physical reality as and when we chose. Once our understanding of the tarot, and indeed ourselves is strong enough, it is at this point we can begin invoking the angels in specific sequences, opening the portal which will allow us to take the plunge and cross the abyss...

The Tarot Contemplation Ritual

For this ritual, we will be using only the major arcana, so separate them out from the deck and lay the minor arcana to one side.

- 1. It is recommended for beginners to set aside major arcana cards numbered 6, 7, 10, 13, 15 and 18. These can be reintroduced once a deeper understanding of the more positive cards has been achieved.*
- 2. Shuffle the sixteen cards until you feel compelled to stop and draw a card. Examine and connect with the card for no more than 3 minutes before taking three grounding breaths.*
- 3. Record any messages, feelings or intuitive guidance you received from the ritual in your magickal diary or grimoire. This can be referred back to, and cross referenced with your dream diaries.*



Words from the Witches Journal

I have a large wooden cupboard in the alcove off my living room where I keep my 'witchy' stuff - chalice, athame, wand, crystal ball, and things I have gathered over the years.

It also houses my journals, records of things I've done, things I've learned.

There are scribblings of my personal feelings, and my coven history, things we have done together.

In lockdown, with plenty of time on my hands, I thought I would take a look in this cupboard, remind myself of my journey.

The memories it brought back!

Then I thought I might share them with you.

**Portland Jones
Witch Writer**

Beltane heralds in May at long last, traditionally a time for handfastings. It has been said that in the Middle Ages people took their yearly bath in May, so a union at this time would be sweeter, though this probably falls into the realm of myth. This edition, I thought I would share with you some details of the handfastings that I have officiated at.



When planning a ritual to celebrate a handfasting, I am very aware that we will most likely be joined by people who are not familiar with our pagan practices, and might even feel a little apprehensive. So first I bid people welcome, with a brief explanation of what we are here for. The quotes that follow are taken from outlines of different celebrations.

'Welcome to everyone who is here today to celebrate this union and to bear witness as this couple make their personal commitment to each other. They have chosen to have a handfasting, an old custom from the days when a person's word was their honour, when to speak out in truth was a bond that held fast.'

I then explain simply, so that it did not interrupt the flow of the ritual, what we are doing as we go along. *'First we need to create a space, a sacred space, appropriate for these words of honour to be spoken. A space where the past and the future will meet with the present, where what we say and do will last forever.'*

I feel that everything we do needs to be explained in terms of what it can bring to the specific occasion, so give thought to what each quarter can bring to a relationship.

'Air represents the east, where the sun rises to start a new day. Air is the whispered voices of those we love.'

'Fire represents the south, which brings us warmth and is the passion in our lives.'

'Water represents the west which brings us rain to refresh us on our way. Water brings life to everything we do.'

'Earth represents the north, the earth on which we build a solid foundation for our lives and ventures.'

There are three candles on the altar. The couple each light a candle and I ask them to exchange their vows to each other. The cord is then wrapped around their wrists, joining them together.

'With this cord I bind you to the vows that you have made here today before witnesses. The cord is not tied. You remain here willingly.'

Their vows said and their wrists bound, their first task is to light a taper from their own candle and extinguish that candle. They then jointly light the third candle, to symbolise their union, their coming together as one.

The next task is to jump the broomstick. We invite anyone who wishes to jump the broomstick, explaining that people would jump over the broomstick to show the corn how high they wanted it to grow.

Next is cake and ale followed by general merriment for a while. At one a maypole was erected and dancers wove patterns in the ribbons. At another we performed a mummers' play, specially written for the people there, many of whom joined in.

Finally, we unfasten the cords.

'We free you from your bindings. The physical cord no longer holds you together but the cord around your hearts will stay with you.'

And wish the couple well.

'Everyone here today has witnessed your joining. Know that we send you joy for the happiness you will bring each other. We send you strength to deal with the sadness that affects all of us at times in our daily lives, and to come out of it stronger than before. We send you our blessings for a wonderful and fruitful future.'

We then bid the elements farewell, open the circle, leaving the happy couple to celebrate in their chosen way.

One couple decided they wanted a handcrafted occasion as far as possible. The weather was fine, so food was taken on a blanket on the grass, picnic baskets overflowing with good things to eat. The altar was carved from a single tree trunk. A tree was decorated and hung with 'favours', small gifts for guests to harvest from the tree themselves. Family and friends provided cakes. Even the hired portable toilet for use outdoors boasted a sign written in runes.

It was a lovely and very fitting celebration, and most importantly full of joy.





DREAM JOURNALING

HOW TO TRACK AND UNDERSTAND YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS EMOTIONS

CHERRY DOYLE - WITCH WRITER

Also note that just because we mention 'nights', 'days', and 'mornings', this doesn't preclude you from dream journaling if you have an atypical sleep schedule, e.g. if you work nights. Everyone goes through REM sleep as part of their sleep cycle, although people with certain sleep disorders may have less REM sleep time than others.

Conditions such as sleep paralysis and night terrors can occur when usual sleep routines or cycles are disturbed for some reason. They can sometimes be associated with hallucinations, however these are not 'dreams' as we understand them. Both sleep paralysis and night terrors can be caused by underlying issues, and may be extremely distressing. You should see your GP if your sleep or wellbeing is adversely affected by these conditions.

PART 1: PREPARING TO START A DREAM JOURNAL

DREAM JOURNALING? WHAT'S THAT?

Dreams are the brain's way of making sense of what's happening in our waking lives.

Sometimes they're drawn from things that happen to us during the day; other times they're influenced by our subconscious - underlying thought processes we aren't aware of. They occur during the Rapid Eye Movement (REM) period of sleep, and studies suggest that most people dream between 3-6 times a night.

Here at Witch Magazine, we've looked at the benefits of interpreting your dreams in the past - check out Stephanie Ulph's article 'The Magick of Dreams' in issue 15, or Amethyst Gardens' 'Dream Interpretation - A How-To Guide' back in issue 6. Throughout history, prominent thinkers have linked dreams to greater meanings, and still today, many people look to interpretations of their dreams as a way to address imbalance in their lives.

Regardless of whether you believe that your dreams will reveal hidden secrets about yourself, keeping a dream journal is a great way of tracking what happens in your mind overnight. The idea is that you record what you dream about in order to interpret it, learn from it, or refer back to it. In fact, as Amethyst Gardens points out, dreams can sometimes have a disruptive impact on your day, and getting them down on paper when you first wake up can help you leave the dream behind and move on.

When done habitually or long-term, you might see patterns emerging, and tying these to your waking life will reveal whether there is a connection between your dreams and emotions. New research has linked higher dream recall with an increase in creativity, so training yourself to remember your dreams can have additional benefits, too.

OK, SO WHAT WILL I NEED?

- Notebook and pen

It's best to have a dedicated blank notepad and pen, to keep next to where you sleep. It's vital to have these within easy reach for when you wake up.

- Optional: voice recorder

If you're not convinced that you'll be able to get your dream down on paper when you first wake from slumber, you might wish to use a dictaphone, or voice recording app on your phone. However, again, it must be easy to grab or open as soon as you wake up - and if you're sleeping next to someone, you might want to run it past them first!

- Interpretation guide

You'll want to do a bit of research into popular books and/or websites. Aim for something that draws on mixed influences - not just Freudian or Jungian, for example. Check out reviews before you buy - do people trust the interpretations given by the resource? If you purchase a physical book, it may also be helpful to keep it nearby to where you sleep.

- Patience

Unfortunately, if you're a little out of practice in recalling your dreams, it probably won't happen overnight. Stick with

it, and soon you'll be in the habit of recording them on most occasions. Below, we'll look at some tips for getting you started.

I'VE GOT ALL OF THOSE - WHEN CAN I START?

Choose a night to start recording. It should be a night when you think you're going to have a good night's sleep, and when you'll have some time in the morning to record your dream, for example, a weekend. You might wish to relax more than usual before bed (a nice cup of cocoa or some soothing music) and head off for an early night.

In your journal, write or record the day, date, and some notes about the evening before you go to bed. How did you feel during the day? Was there anything particular on your mind? Did anything unusual or surprising happen? Did you have a lot of cheese for supper? (OK, maybe not that last one).

If you're particularly arty, you might want to section off some pages to dedicate to the dream itself, and to the interpretation. Be aware though, that the level of detail you can recall may differ dream to dream.

If you like, you can vocalise or visualise your intentions before bed, whether through a spell or simple ritual, or just telling yourself before you drift off that you **WILL** remember your dreams.

Accept the possibility that you may not remember any dreams the first night. However, recording emotional and 'environmental' factors will still help with tracking patterns later, as the effects are often cumulative.

Instead, you might have a particularly vivid and memorable dream one night, and decide to begin at that point, in which case, you can record your emotional and environmental notes retrospectively.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I'VE HAD A DREAM AND I WAKE UP?

Grab your notebook or voice recorder and immediately record everything you can remember about the dream. We really mean **IMMEDIATELY!** Don't wait a few minutes, or your memories will start to fade. If you desperately need to attend to something, try and run over the dream in your head as you do so, until you can get back to your notebook or voice recorder.

Try to write in a stream of consciousness, and don't edit too much as you go. It doesn't matter if your grammar and spelling are all over the place, or whether your sentences start and end as they should. The key thing is to get as much as you can out of your memory and into your journal.

It's important to try to recall as many details as you can, as



you'd be surprised what these seemingly insignificant elements might represent. For example, what was the weather like? Who were you with? How did you feel in your dream? Write down everything you saw, ate, heard, and did. Pay attention if someone in your dream drew attention to something in the environment; it's likely your brain is guiding you to a focal point.

Some things appear in many peoples' dreams quite frequently. They're generally considered highly metaphorical, and you should take as many notes as you can about them. For example, if you dreamt about water, what colour was it? Was it clear or murky? What was the surface like? How did you feel about it? Was there anything in it? Were you in it?

Once you've done this a few times and read through your interpretation guide, you'll get the feel for the kind of things you need to pay attention to. When you're starting out, it's handy to check the interpretation guide quite soon after recording your dream, as it might prompt you to recall additional useful details.

You might also want to record any additional 'environmental' events which occurred overnight. For example, did you get a good night's sleep? Did the dog or cat or kids wake you up in the small hours with unreasonable demands? Were you unusually hot or cold? Did your dream have a significant impact on your emotions when you woke up?

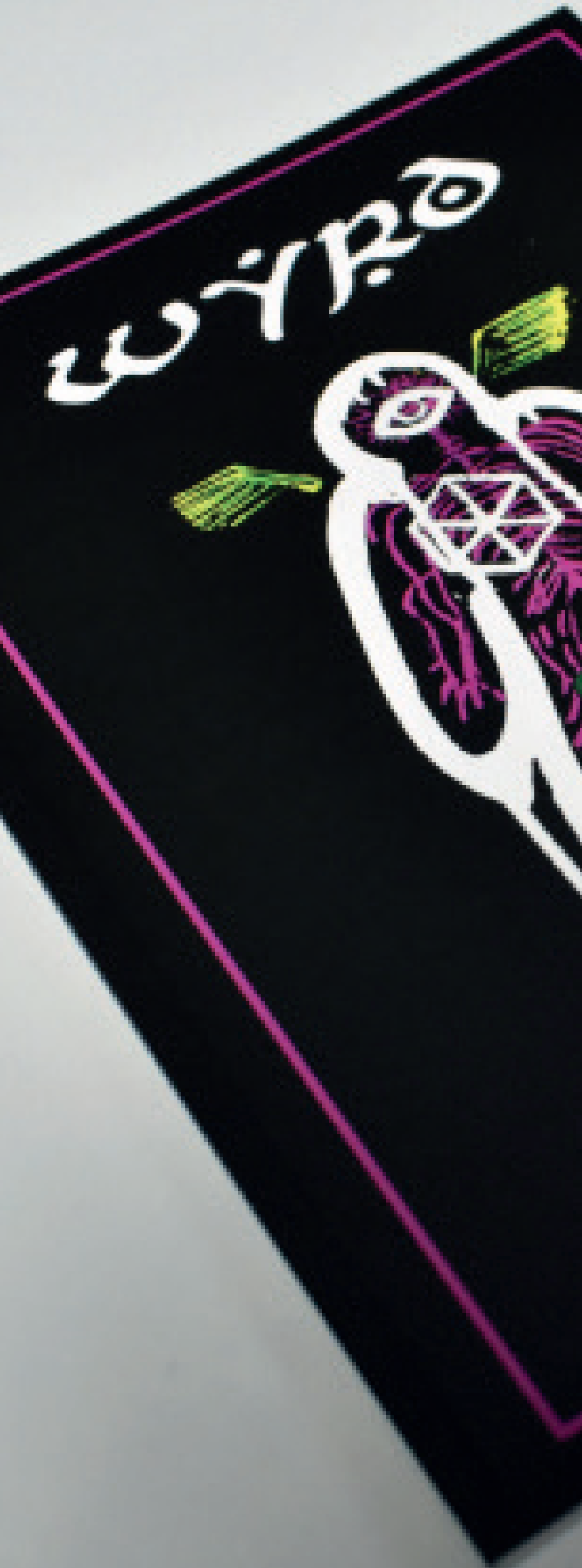
Don't beat yourself up if you forget a dream or can't remember all of the details.

Not all of us are able to dedicate our time to recording our dreams every morning. The more often you do it, the more adept you will become, and you'll build up quite a surreal catalogue of dreams to read back through!

I'M READY TO START!

Fantastic! Remember to keep your journal close at hand, and keep trying if it doesn't happen right away.

Next time we'll look at finding your way round interpretation, and identifying patterns in order to factor them into everyday mindfulness and spellwork. Sweet dreams!



What We're Reading...

Bekki Milner
Witch Editor

WYRD

www.wyrdzine.co.uk

WYRD sold out of it's first print run pretty fast- but the good news is this independant zine has had a second run of their debut issue - and it's worth picking up!

Wyrd is a collaboration of art and magick, with articles from experienced pratitioners and esoteric art packed in to a tidy zine format.

If your occult practice is of a shamanic or Northern Tradition, you will find plenty to explore within it's pages, and plenty of practical methods to try too.

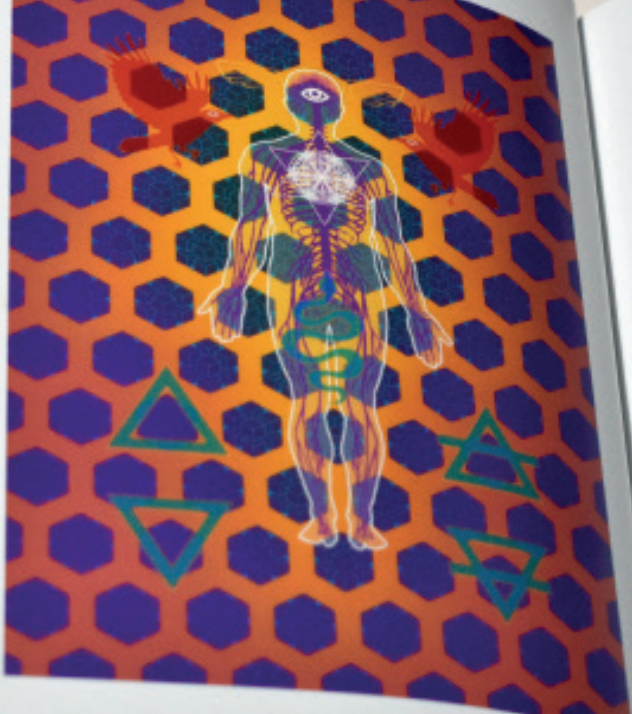
The artwork is equally as magickal, with prints available from the Wyrd Store should any take your fancy for altar spaces or otherwise.

Highlights for me include *Yggdrasil* by Will Wright (pictured opposite), exploring the mysticism and connection of the great Tree of Life to the human nervous system.

Banshings in the Northern Perspective by Magnus Stokoe is a thorough exploration of protective circle casting that feels much more intuitive than alternative practices offered, despite their similarities.

Contemporary art project, *Mr Punch*, brings us the strange and folkloric artistic vision of Will Wright and Claire Wyldeheart, and I hope to see more featuring this delightfully dark character on his own instagram account, [@therealmrpunch](https://www.instagram.com/therealmrpunch)

Overall, Wyrd is a title which befits any bookshelf, and I recommend buying a copy before their second print runs out.



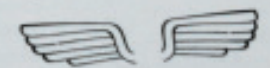
This design of the world tree incorporates Hittite hieroglyphs, the snake, my soul sigil, Hugin and Murrin, the eye of consciousness and the elemental forces. What I reveal is Woden, the archetypal illuminated being, traveler of hyperspace and the multi-dimensional realities.

Through my experience of altered states of consciousness I've become aware of the importance of the central nervous system to our experience of reality. How it operates as a construct for the interaction of our consciousness with this dimension.



The spinal cord represents the trunk of the tree, whilst the nerves are the roots and the brain become the branches and leaves. Practices such as Qigong and Yoga help to demonstrate the flow of consciousness across this neural network. Techniques of ecstasy and gnosis achieve their effect through stimulation. Entheogens turn up the volume/sensitivity to facilitate altered states.

The wings resemble those used in Hittite hieroglyphs and art and attach to the head. They replace the winged sun or bird, that represents the upper realms, such as Valhalla. From my research wings appear to represent illumination, that the bearer has travelled to and from the higher realms. It is my opinion that the animals and other winged creatures represent non-physical intelligences from this realm.



The Ritual Muse

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SEARCH FOR WITCHGASM

CONNACH

FIRST ALBUM
COMING SOON!

The Uk Goth band CONNACH, introduced in our earlier magazine, is currently working hard towards the release of their first album.



Visit their website to get their new T-shirt.

Connach.com

Be the first to see new track "Legion of Angels" with a video on Saturday, 20th March, ON STREAM! (Crows Feet Ostara Market)

Follow us on:



My Spiritual Journey...

Jenny Frances

From a young age I felt I was different. I saw things, heard things, and felt things that others did not seem to. I had extremely vivid dreams and there was no one I could talk to or explain myself too.

Life took over - I went to art school, got married 3 years later, and had two beautiful girls. People would say I had a way with children that calmed down. I felt their feelings, and I connected with them on so many levels. Based on this I became a qualified teacher. Over the years in my hometown, I was always pulled towards a local shop which sold crystals, scents, herbs, cards and so much more. I would take my children and they would rummage through the crystals eagerly. I felt peaceful (probably the incense!), as if I had arrived home.



Time went on. Life had its ups and downs and I still wanted to explore the spiritual world - but my world was fast and pressured, and now I realise I just wasn't ready. However, in 2019 someone mentioned Glastonbury to me. They were shocked that I had never been. I only ever assumed Glastonbury with the festival, not the town itself. A week later I visited the town and I have never looked back. I was totally overwhelmed and by the end of my visit I felt a mixture of emotions - pure excitement came over me and I felt as if everything made sense.

A friend of mine saw me two weeks later and noticed that I needed to be grounded immediately, as I felt I was literally floating in an almost manic state. Glastonbury had shot me up into the sky with excitement and interest and I never came back down to earth. She practiced her reiki on me, aligned my chakras, and brought me back to earth by grounding me fully. The experience was not easy at first. I felt my body twist and turn, my breathing had fastened, and the "floating" feeling I had experienced after Glastonbury was stronger than ever. My friend forced a sense of calmness into my manic body, and I eventually came to a standstill. Something clicked, and I fell into deep relaxation. It was a time I will never forget.

I now meditate daily to connect with the Divine and Mother Earth, which is so special and beautiful. I have found similar people who have become good friends and attend Moon circles (pre Covid) which is pure magic.

After many years, I finally picked up my paintbrush and began to pour out my thoughts and feelings into my paintings. I created them purely for myself, until one day someone expressed an interest in one of my paintings and I have not looked back!

My work is inspired by Mother Earth and her natural beauty, the Divine Feminine, and my own personal journey of discovery into Paganism and belief.

I feel complete, content, and fulfilled. From feeling chaotic, overly sensitive, and feeling like a lost soul, everything makes sense and I finally have gained a sense of internal calm.

Instead of fighting my natural ways, I now embrace these empathetic qualities by caring for elderly people in my community, many of whom are ready to leave this world, by listening, singing, massage and practising reiki. I am now at peace.

Blessings,
Jenny Frances

'The Divine Feminine' (opposite)

'The Divine Feminine' is the healing force that connects us to Mother nature herself, others, and all energy sources. An interwoven essence that I am so drawn too. I found creating this each very empowering.

'Surrender to the Divine'

Creating this piece was a powerful experience. I felt myself surrendering to the world of spirituality, and I was enveloped by an overwhelming sense of calm. I am currently working on similar pieces as this collection is my most personal work.

 Jenny Frances

'The Nurturer'

Gaia, otherwise known as Mother Nature, is the life and very soul of the earth. The Goddess who inhabits the planet, offering life and nourishment to all her children. The Goddess of raw, maternal power. I thoroughly enjoyed creating 'The Nurturer'.



Enchanting Woes

Meet Shannon Piekieniak the artist and creator behind these woeful creatures

 @enchantingwoes



Who said dolls were for kids?

As beautiful as they may seem my creations do not take kindly to being chucked around the room and tossed into toy boxes. Unlike the common Barbie, these dolls hold magick, wonder and worries.

Hello, my name is Shannon, I am from the UK and I am the creator of enchanting woes. I make these little beings from scratch and I wanted to share a piece of my journey with all of you.



For as long as I could remember I have collected all sorts of dolls, especially China dolls. I was fascinated by how they looked, their beady eyes watching you as you walked around the room and how hauntingly beautiful they were. I used to be obsessed with their outfits and how much detail went in to making them.

I have always had an artistic flare, ever since I could remember. I would sit at the table with my dad, watching him draw for hours and try to copy him. He would tell me stories about the creatures in his drawings and that's when I knew I felt different from others. I started learning about mythology, legends and folklore from an early age and one tale that spiked my interest was worry dolls. As someone like myself who suffers with mental health and worries 24/7, the thought of placing a worry doll under my pillow at night to help get rid of them brought a lot of comfort to me. This then brought me down the route of witchcraft where I started learning about herbal remedies to help calm my nerves. It was last year during the pandemic where I had the idea to combine worry dolls and herbs together!

During this pandemic I have realised that everyone's mental health has been taking its toll, and unfortunately it is incredibly hard to get yourself out of, what seems like, a never ending loop. I have created these dolls in the hope that they might bring comfort to someone who feels anxious or worries a lot. These are not worry dolls. In fact, these dolls are woeful dolls and they all have similar sad features and are filled with herbs that could calm anyone's nerves, herbs such as lavender, camomile and lemon. They each have individual names and their own back stories too! Do not feel put off by their saddened eyes, they are actually happy creatures who only want to be a beacon of light when you need someone to hold.

Disclaimer: It is always advised to seek professional help when times get hard and although these little woes may hold some calming properties, and as much as they want too, they are too small to hold your biggest worries.



Aiyda

*Delora
Ophelia*



Lilly

In Conversation with...

Anya Lukover

Witch Residency Writer

Frankincense

When in doubt, give Franky a shout!

And when the chaos of life becomes too much - when the mind goes into absolute overdrive and the limiting beliefs feel like they're exploding and coming at you from all directions, it's time to call in on the support of my friend 'Franky.'

Learning how to deal with overwhelm has been one of the biggest learnings on my recovery journey from chronic fatigue syndrome. Realising that I was pretty much living my life in overwhelm was one of the most liberating moments I had along the way.

And even when it creeps up on me now, even when I have all the tools and all the allies I have for support, in that moment of chaos I can be caught off guard with who to call on for help...

When in doubt, give Franky a shout!

With His strong and safe energy, Frankincense helps me to find my courage to move through any challenge that my shadows are presenting me with - when I have lost bal-

ance and fallen in to an unconscious hole of believing in the stories I'm telling myself about not being able to cope, or that i'm not doing enough, or that i'm really shit at life, that i'm a massive failure or that i've got nothing of interest to offer the world. These are the usual themed thoughts that go off like an unexpected firework display in my mind when I have disconnected from myself and my truth. And when the physical chaos manifests from this disconnect and I am spinning in circles, not knowing what direction to move in to next, I know it's time to plonk myself down for a few moments to call in the help of Frankincense, re-connect, and pull myself up out of the temporary hole I've found myself in.

Because those states of chaos and overwhelm really are temporary. We don't have to stay stuck inside them. We can, and absolutely **MUST** pull ourselves out of them. And yes, we have our allies for support, but it is solely our responsibility to stand up and be in charge of staying conscious. And by conscious, I don't just mean awake. I mean awake and in total awareness of of what the mind is saying to you.

And that is what our friend Franky will help you with - to locate the strength to pull you out of the depths of that unconscious hole so you can get back on track with consciously riding the waves of life where you are re-connected to your truth.

The truth that you are actually **NAILING** life just by being here and breathing in and out. The truth that failure simply does not exist and that it is just another man made illusion that creates ridiculous pressure in your life. And when you take this pressure off and allow yourself to take a moment to connect in with your heart and live life as your true self then the chaos and overwhelm falls away and life stops being such a struggle and stress.

If you are someone who finds it a challenge to sit yourself down to do any sort of inner reflection work, or finding some peace or meditate then Frankincense is your 'man'! Once invited in He will move through your energy, cleanse your sacred space within and around you, slow down those fast paced cogs and will pull your energy from your head down into your heart. He will hold the space for you to remember who you truly are, and that nothing else really matters.



Because everything in your life that you are currently making matter so much that it makes your head spin, actually doesn't. It doesn't matter. You are making things matter so much more than you need to!

When you allow yourself to fall into the gentle arms of King Franky and begin to experience the wholeness and truth in your heart, everything that you are making matter simply falls away. And when you can continue on your path from this place then you don't ever require your mind to be working anything out for you, or for it to have to make any of the many micro decisions you have to make each day, because you will be on the path of following your intuitive flow. Your heart will be guiding you. Each and every step will simply be lit up by the truth in your heart, creating a journey where you are confident that every step you take is the absolute right one for you. Even if at times it feels bat shit scary, you will KNOW it is right.



Living by the truth in your heart will free you from the prison of your mind.

Ritual to connect with King Franky and your heart

Create a space for yourself where you have some peace and quiet and won't be disturbed

Light a candle

If you have Frankincense oil then put a couple of drops in your palms, rub them together and cleanse your aura from head to toe (as if you are having a shower but using your hands to move through your energy field) as you recite the below intentions (or your own intentional words)

Cup your hands over your nose and spend a minute or so breathing in the powerful and grounding aroma. Imagine

Franky entering your body through your nostrils with each breath

Next, place a drop of Frankincense on to the acupuncture point H7 on both wrists (google it or contact me for help)

Find yourself a comfortable position, either laying or sitting and place your hands over your heart and breathe in and out of your heart only focusing on that space for the whole time you have set for yourself.

10 minutes is a good minimum

Notice any thoughts that arise but do not follow them. Simply keep breathing into your heart space and allow your body to relax into whatever experience you experience within your body.

*I call in the spirit of Frankincense
For some help to know where to start
To guide me through the forgotten depths
And find the truth deep within my heart*

*I welcome the presence of Frankincense
Your strength is a warm embrace
I'm so grateful for the courage you bring
For the shadows that I need to face*

*I dance alongside my friend Frankincense
And ask for your help to unwind
All the fears that i've got myself tangled in
And to free the constraints of my mind*

*I bow to the support of King Frankincense
My energy now feels cleared and soothed
May you keep me on this woken path
So I can live being lead by my truth*

Enjoy the ride and always stay true to yourself
Much love, Anya xxx

BRINGING THE MAGIC OF FAIRIES INTO YOUR LIFE AT BELTANE



Beltane for me is a festival of fire and fertility. It is also a festival of energy and awakening. We Pagans often write wishes for the coming months on pieces of paper and burn them at Beltane - often along with a Wicker Man (Have a look at Beltane at Butser Ancient Farm in Hampshire). If the fire rages well, the weather for the summer will be good. We Pagans howl into the fire in order to howl away the bad weather. The howling also raises the fire's energy and makes it blaze stronger.

When I picture Beltane in my mind, I see dancing, joy and Fairies. For me, Beltane is the time when us Fairies start to fully awaken. It is a magical time of colourful ribbons, germinated seeds and rays of sunshine.

We Fairies enjoy a long slumber over the winter months but as soon as we start to see buds on the trees and shoots turn to flowers, we wake up in preparation for our biggest party at Litha (Summer Solstice). We are at our most powerful between Beltane and Samhain.

How to feel like a Fairy

- Wear some flowing clothing.
- If you have long hair, let it down and don't brush it.
- Put some biodegradable glitter on your face and body.
- Imagine little bumps starting at your shoulder blades, growing out into cute little wings that flap quickly buzzing like a bee.
- Take your shoes off and walk barefoot on the ground.
- Spin around and around and let yourself feel dizzy.
- Fairies are light hearted, cheeky and often child-like in their approach to life finding wonder in all things natural.

Fairy Offerings

Every sabbat I make bread. Each loaf is different and relevant to the wheel of the year. Beltane is about balance so if I put a sweet ingredient in, I will also put a savoury ingredient in. I usually create a plait for my Beltane bread. This to me is a nod toward a Celtic love knot and fertility. If I have some edible glitter or gold - on it goes too! My Beltane bread is always a nod towards the Fairies.

I usually eat my sabbat bread warm with some cheese (usually Boursin) and mead while taking part in a circle casting with my coven. Whatever is left over from my portion that night will be broken up into small pieces and placed in my fairy garden outside as an offering to the nature spirits. When my family have had enough of the bread a couple of days later, the left overs go out for the birds.

The presence of Fairies

Fairies will show themselves to humans in many ways but only when they choose to.

You may see sparkles of light like little twinkles of glitter in the air, you may see twigs, leaves and other organic matter placed on the ground as if in human form or you may see a tiny flying thing that suddenly disappears when you look a little closer. Fairies are also around when you see Dandelion seeds floating through the air.

Fairies are not like angels. Fairies will come and go as they please and can never be summoned by humans. Fairies serve Mother Earth and not humans. Fairies merely bring fun, light heartedness, positivity and energy for humans.

If you want to connect better with the Fairies, be more eco-friendly and show your respect for the natural world around you.

Merry Meet this Beltane, Fairy Bec x x x



Raven & Luna's Tarotscopes Forecasts For Your Sun Sign

TAURUS

6 of Cups, 5 of Wands, 6 of Pentacles

Past issues surrounding money or an argument may come up again in the family, especially regarding siblings or someone younger than you. They likely depended on you (or still do) but you need to stand your ground, make clear boundaries and let them work this out for themselves. Something may get thrown in your face about what you owe or an event that happened, bringing something up that you thought was finished with. You may be conflicted about whether to help someone but there has to be a line and you need to draw it.



GEMINI

Strength, 9 of Swords

Use your inner courage and strength to get through difficult moments. You've been through a lot already but something could come up again. You're a survivor and you can get through this. You may struggle with your mental health or with a condition, such as PMDD, but there's likely to be something you can do to help. Look at your habits or lifestyle and see if you can make changes.



LEO

4 of Wands, The Magician

A very positive time, manifesting lots of happiness and celebration. This could be something you've wanted for a long time such as a wedding, engagement or party. You may be asked to organise an event, be asked to be a maid of honour or best man. You'll be in your element, bringing people together and feeling a lot more positive.



CANCER

7 of Swords, Page of Pentacles

A child or someone younger (or less mature) than you may do something deceptive or let you down. This is likely someone you give a lot of time, energy or money to, making it more difficult if you find something out that they've been hiding. Ensure you're not doing too much for others as it could make you resentful or cause someone to become too dependant.



VIRGO

5 of Cups, King of Wands

Dig deep into your inner wisdom to get through a loss or overcome grief. You may struggle to believe in your power or abilities, build a connection with your Higher Self. Share your advice in loving ways, even if it's not appreciated. Don't let those not ready to hear what you have to say knock your confidence or have you feeling sorry for yourself.



LIBRA

King of Pentacles, 7 of Cups



There's potential for lots of options or opportunities such as job, business or university offers. You may not know where to put yourself! You could get overwhelmed with the attention you're getting or worry about choosing the wrong option. Follow

what feels right, trust that it's the direction you're supposed to take. Enjoy the feeling of abundance, seeing your hard work or investments you've made paying off.

SCORPIO

2 of Cups, King of Cups

You may meet or connect with someone who really gets you on a deep, emotional level. Take a risk, tell someone how you feel and it's likely to be well received.

Don't let your emotions run away from you. Find stability and safety in someone who appreciates you for who you are.



SAGITTARIUS

3 of Wands, King of Pentacles



You may be faced with an unexpected bill or realise you've overspent. Make sure you're balancing the books. You could receive an injection of money such as a bonus, payout or through a new job but it doesn't mean you have to immediately

spend it all. Invest wisely. It's okay to be generous but you don't need to buy love or affection. When something good happens, pause and enjoy the moment.

CAPRICORN

The Hierophant, Page of Wands

You may be seeking something new such as a job, area of study or spiritually. Be careful of the advice you're taking or giving out. Be humble and open minded.

Join a course or group you've been looking into. Even if someone is more knowledgeable, it doesn't mean they're better or above you. If you're feeling out of your depth, seek help from someone you trust.



AQUARIUS

6 of Swords, The Hanged Man

There's a need to pause and reflect on how far you've come, to meditate on what the next right step is to bring more balance into your life. Make a plan before you move forward, pause before reacting. Travel, a change in career or moving house plans may be delayed.



PISCES

Ace of Swords, 4 of Wands

Something you're really excited for or passionate about should go really well.

You may be exhibiting your art, a skill or talent. You could meet someone, perhaps at a function, that may develop into a more

serious relationship or reignite the passion in a long term connection. Celebrate in the things that drive you, not allowing others to dampen the belief you have in yourself.



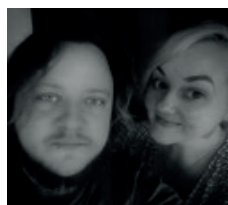
ARIES

3 of Cups, The Tower

There may be friendship fall outs, coalition breakups or business propositions that don't work out how you planned. Someone could be trying to cause friction in a group. A friend could receive bad news that you're not aware of. Try to be understanding and not take things personally if they're distant. Let them know you're there for them.



*Raven and Luna are High Priest and Priestess for
Black Moon Coven.*



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Grimoire

Beltane Magick



Collect the Dew on May Day Morning

You need to be up early for this one! Just as the sun rises on Beltane morning, take a white rag or handkerchief and bowl outdoors. You want somewhere leafy or grass covered to collect as much dew as possible.

Wipe leaves or run your rag through grass until it's soaked in dew. Squeeze in to your bowl and then repeat until you have collected as much as you want. Morning dew does not keep, so use it whilst fresh - for a cleansing wash, or in your Beltane Magick.



Beltane Bonfire

Beltane is a fire festival. Now we can meet people (sensibly) outdoors, gather your nearest and dearest for an evening of fire and good food. Traditionally, people would jump over the Beltane fire for cleansing and fertility, but please don't go jumping over your fire - it sounds like a recipe for disaster! Instead, write down wishes on paper and toss them in to the flames.

Bring in the May

Decorate your altar with a branch of blossoms taken respectfully taken from the Hawthorn Tree. It's sweet white blossoms promote fertility, happiness, togetherness and protection, and has a strong connection to the Fae.



Blessed Beltane

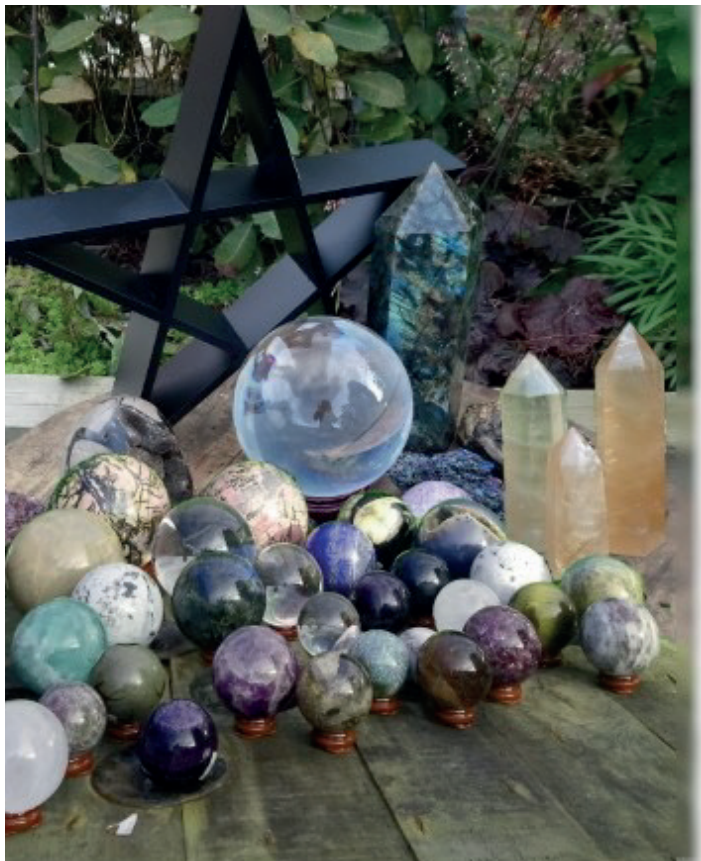
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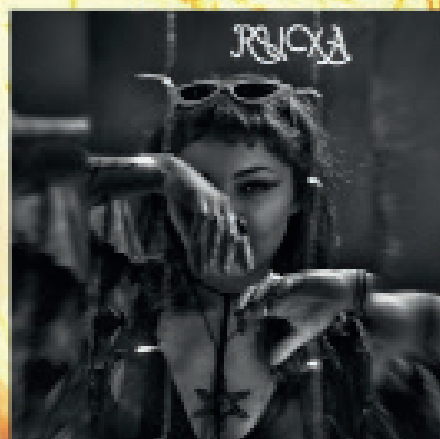
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RUKKA

You Said Fire

THE NEW SINGLE

OUT NOW





Pagan Poetry
&
Fiction

photo by Klaire Dawn Ader



LUCIA

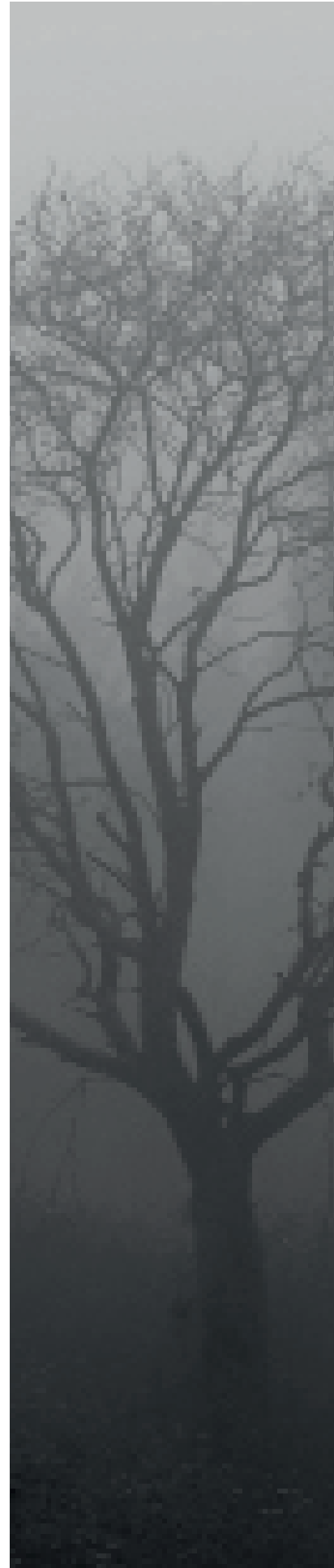
Nya House - Witch Residency Writer

It was 4am. She knew because the wind changed slightly and she could smell the morning on the breeze. Through her eyelids she could see orbs of light dancing be-fore her face, beckoning her to come play. There was very little sound around her and unlike every other morning, she remained perfectly still to listen before making any sort of movement. She never woke aware of her surroundings or how long she may have been asleep. Could have been days, weeks or even months since she last moved. The wind picked up a little stronger and she could tell by the gentle sound of of falling petals above and below that it was mid Spring now and she was definitely inside of deep woods. She let out a low groan. Though it was her favorite time of year, it was well into Autumn the last she could remember. She must have really fell hard this time.

There was not much else awake around her. She could hear the movement of water not too far away. It was definitely a large river she decided, no more than a mile from where she laid still. She reached further with her senses and could barely make out the buzz of civilization. It always amazed her that she could hear it even while most slept. She brought her awareness to her body and what shape it was lying in. Fetal position, of course. Keeping all of her vital organs protected and warm. She slowly unclasped her hands and turned her palms outward to get a better feel for her sur-roundings.

There were many things at this hour or at any hour in fact, that couldn't be detected with even her eyes or ears. A soft buzzing sensation gently swept across her palms and moved up her forearms. She waited and allowed it to move around her body, telling her what was waiting for her to wake. She couldn't find anything aggres-sive or unsettling, so she reached even further with her awareness just to be sure. She still found nothing threatening. A sigh of relief left her lips and then she thanked the Goddess aloud for allowing her over rested limbs to wake without a fight.

Uncurling herself slowly, she moved into a seated position and dangled her legs off the tree branch she'd been lying on. She filled her lungs and held on to that air until she thought she'd burst. Orbs were still dancing all around her, bumping into others softly like bubbles. She smiled and nodded a 'good morning' to them all just before slowly standing upon the branch and taking a look around. It was still black as mid-night and the shapes of the trees were easy to see as their pulsing energy was ac-cepted by her sentient eyes. This was her magic hour. The time of day when she car-ried her human strengths, but none of the weaknesses and her other realm abilities and senses were still keen. People were still sleeping, animals were still sleeping but the veil was thin and the spirits on the other side were wide awake and ready to play. Mornings like these were rare. Mornings that made her feel she was the only one left to walk this earth. Then again, she never walked at this hour.



Turning to face the trunk of the tree she began to climb. Redwoods were her absolute favorite. The wisdom they carried was worthy of worship in her mind, if only they could share it with the world. She climbed higher and higher, clamping her fingers and her bare feet on the branches as if she already knew where each one was. With barely a crackle beneath her touch she climbed with great speed and agility.

A shutter swept over her naked flesh and caused an itch in between her shoulder blades.

"I know." She whispered and thrust her body up five feet to the next large branch.

Her skin began to heat up and a small drip of sweat tickled the back of her neck.

"Almost there." She said out loud. She could see the break in the branches and the stars just beyond. Her back was burning now. Her shoulders aching as she climbed faster and faster, the back of her arms slowly losing sensation as sweat rises to the surface.

"Five seconds!" She shouted, her stomach began to churn with the heat of the pain that throbbed inside her flesh. She reached to her right then stepped with her left then jumped up three more branches without any hesitation or worry she might miss.

Her skin felt like it was ripping, breaking open and gasping for air.

She slammed her feet onto the highest stable branch and thrust herself into the air.

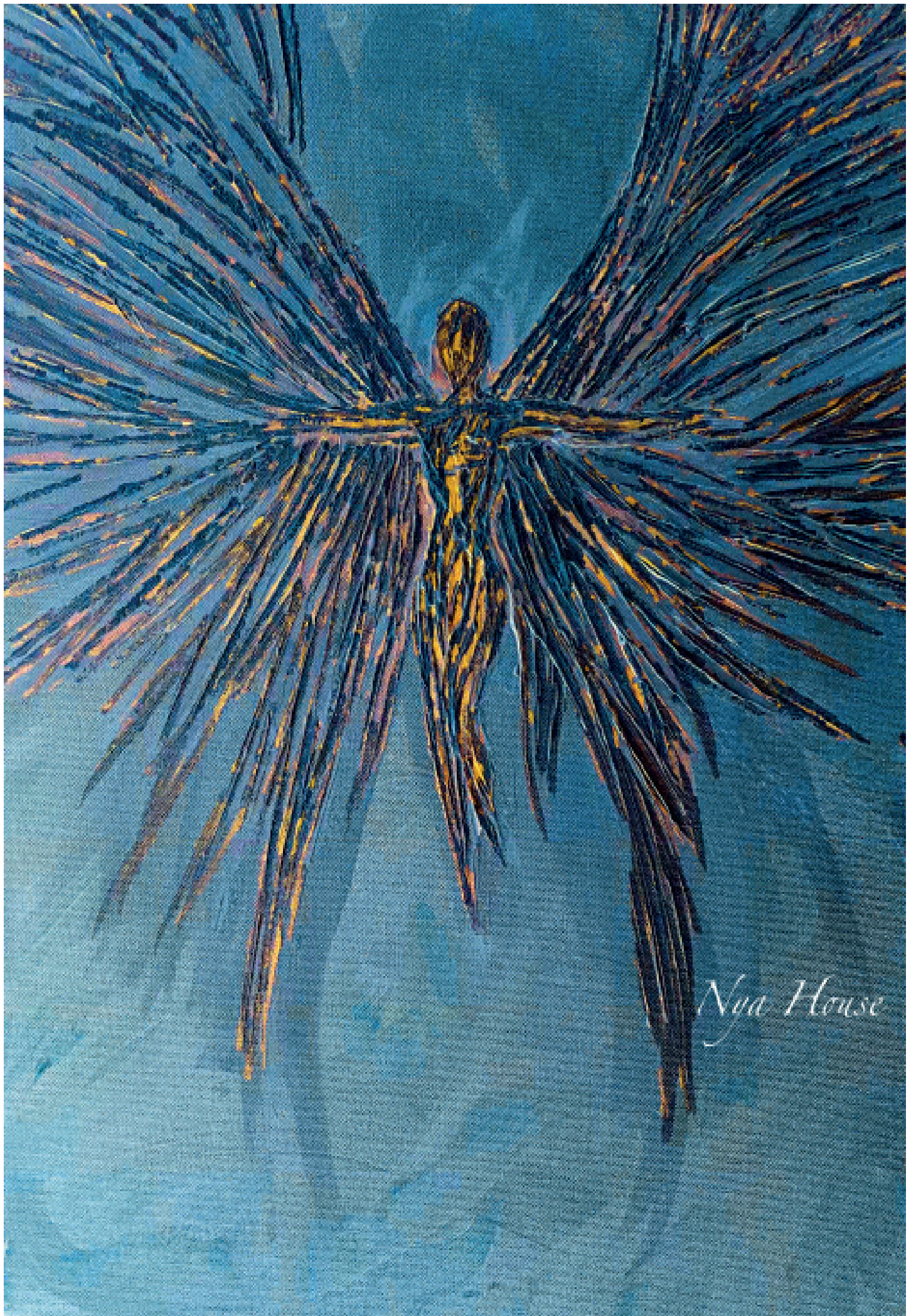
"AWAKE!" She screamed from deep in her throat, through tears and gasping as she threw her arms out wide and then forced them downward to grab hold of the wind. She flew a hundred feet in less than a second. Then another hundred and another with each downward thrust of her arms. When she could see the ocean dance beneath the moon in the distance she settled down and caught her breath. Her tears turned to laughter as she looked side to side and took in her new form. Her true form. The pain was gone and her body felt more alive than ever. Her skin was no longer a soft olive, it was dark grey and slightly luminescent. Her eyesight was impeccable, her hearing unlike anything else and her arms were now black wings twice the size of her height.

"Well, good morning gorgeous!" She said with a nod toward the moon. Her wings shuttered and stretched with irritation for being kept inside so long. She waited for their rhythm to sync with her heartbeat before slowly turning in a circle to choose which direction to explore first. An unfamiliar scent moved on the breeze. Suddenly sensing she wasn't alone, she whipped around, looking over her shoulder at the sight of a woman floating before her.

"Aris?" She whispered as the woman's familiar face was quickly fading into nothing. Lucia moved toward her, reaching out to grab hold of her arm, but flames shot up between them and swallowed the mirage into its flickering tongues of anger.

A sudden realization slammed into Lucia's chest, "The Beltane Burnings." She gasped as the air left her lungs. A chill whipped around her shoulders and began to move up her neck as the wind caught her hair and moved it behind her back. Lucia closed her eyes, aware there was still a presence near her.

She could hear the faint sound of breathing and suddenly lips caressed her right ear and whispered, "Save us."



Nya House

NOT ANOTHER MOON POEM

JESSICA O'SHEA

WITCH WRITER



I dreamt of spring; a park soaking in sunlight
I was singing a song that doesn't exist
I twirled in a pastel blue dress
it ran past my knees and spread out
and out and out until it became waves of ocean!
The trees were green clouds,
puffs of garden smoke,
the grass was wind swept and joked with me
my lover was sitting on a picnic blanket
watching me as I moved like a ghost, catching notes in my thought bubble.
Birds fluttered around my hair like some daft cartoon.

Finally, I coughed awake on a May afternoon
tangled and groggy, sticky face from drool
ears ringing with the non-existent song
my mouth makes up words but they don't go!
A syllable too soon, a misgiven verse,
I've been trying to hum it all day
I searched in the grids, I searched the children's shoes,
I searched David Bowie's eardrums,
The song was billowing away from me,
I tried to find notes in passer-by's,
In toddler's laughter, in lovelorn couples
exchanging tender whispers.
As the sun sinks away so does this melody,
an idea cracked open above me,
if I go back to sleep, the song will reappear.
So, I ran back to my bed, curtains drawn
and doodles undrawn and I shut my eyes tightly.

O, come song! Slowly or quickly, tuning my ears
trying to get signal on my radio head.
I tossed and turned and huffed and groaned
I looked out the window
I saw the night.
She was out in full roundedness
glistening bowl of milk
the quietness of Her, beckoning and shooshing
when I blinked, I could hear it
softly, the distant humming of my dream song
it was true all along, just as I thought
echoes of us rise into the sky, figments of dreams
sit on the lovely moon
and she sings our songs back to us.



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