

I have been a stag *of seven tines, running*
I have been a flood *across a wide plain, flowing*
I have been a wind *over a deep lake, whispering*
I have been a tear *from the brilliant sun, glistening*
I have been a hawk *in my nest above the cliff, watching*
I have been a wonder *among the loveliest flowers, blooming*
I have been a god *with smoke to fill the head, blazing*
I have been a spear *that roars for blood, flying*
I have been a salmon *in a clear pool, swimming*
I have been a hill *where poets walk, singing*
I have been a boar *upon the hills ruthless and red, roving*
I have been a breaker *from the winter sea, thundering*
I have been a tide *of the ocean, delivering to death and*
returning...

Who, but I, knows the secrets of the unhewn dolmen?

I am the womb *of every holt,*
I am the blaze *on every hill,*
I am the queen *of every hive,*
I am the shield *for every head,*
I am the tomb *of every hope...*

Who, but I, gives birth to all that was, is and shall be?

from "The Song of Amergin" - translated by Robert Graves

Graves gives two of his own derivations of "The Song of Amergin":

I am a stag of seven tines, I am a wide flood on a plain, I am a wind on the deep waters, I am a shining tear of the sun, I am a hawk on a cliff, I am fair among the flowers, I am a god who sets the head afire with smoke, I am a battle-waging spear, I am a salmon in the pool, I am a hill of poetry, I am a ruthless boar, I am a threatening noise of the sea, I am a wave of the sea, Who but I knows the secrets of the unhewn dolmen? I am a stag *of seven tines*, I am a flood *across a plain*, I am a wind *on a deep lake*, I am a tear *the Sun lets fall*, I am a hawk *above the cliff*, I am a thorn *beneath the nail*, I am a wizard *who but I Sets the cool head aflame with smoke?* I am a spear *that roars for blood*, I am a salmon *in a pool*, I am a lure *from paradise*, I am a hill *where poets walk*, I am a boar *ruthless and red*,

I am a breaker *threatening doom*, I am a tide *that drags to death*, I am an infant *who but I Peeps from the unhewn dolman arch?* **As well as reconstructions from two other sources:**
from "The Romance of Taliesin" I have been a fierce bull and a yellow buck. I have been a boat on the sea. I fled vehemently... on the foam of water. I have been a drop in the air. I journeyed as an eagle. God made me of blossom. I have been a tree-stump in a shovel. I fled as a spear-head of woe to such as wish for woe. I have been a blue salmon. I have been a spotted snake upon a hill. I fled as a bristly boar seen in a ravine. I have been a wave breaking on the beach. On a boundless sea I was set adrift. **from "The Legend of Finn Mac Cool"** I am a stag of seven tines. Over the flooded world I am borne by the wind. I descend in tears like dew, I lie glittering, I fly aloft like a griffon to my nest on the cliff, I bloom among the loveliest flowers I am both the oak and the lightning that strikes it. I embolden the spearmen, I teach the councillors their wisdom, I inspire the poets, I rove the hills like a ravaging boar, I roar like the winter sea, I return again like the receding wave, Who but I can unfold the secrets of the unhewn dolman?

According to Graves, each of the thirteen lines of this "Song" represent one of the thirteen months of the lunar year, with its corresponding tree and letter (in specific, its consonant) from the Ogham, or tree-alphabet of the ancient Celts. When reconstructed thus:

VERSE OGHAM LETTER TREE I am a stag of seven tines, I am a wide flood on a plain, I am a wind on the deep waters, I am a shining tear of the sun, I am a hawk on a cliff, I am fair among the flowers, I am a god who sets the head afire with smoke, I am a battle-waging spear, I am a salmon in the pool, I am a hill of poetry, I am a ruthless boar, I am a threatening noise of the sea, I am a wave of the sea, Who but I knows the secrets of the unhewn dolmen? Beth = B Luis = L Nion = N Fearn = F Saille = S H'uath = H Duir = D Tinne = T Coll = C Muin = M Gort = G Ngetal = Ng Ruis = R *unknown* Birch Rowan Ash Alder Willow Hawthorn Oak Holly Hazel Vine Ivy Reed Elder Mistletoe the "Song" represents either the transmigration of the God through the elements representative of each succeeding month, or the Wheel of the Year itself.

But what of the Goddess (Whom, after all, his book "The White Goddess" was primarily about) and of the vowels? The Celts - whose culture was erected upon an holistic view of life, the universe and everything - could scarcely have neglected either. And indeed, they did not. Graves supplies a five-lined pendant to the "Song", which rounds out the picture:

VERSE OGHAM LETTER TREE I am the womb of every holt, I am the fire on every hill, I am the queen of every hive, I am the shield for every head, I am the tomb of every hope. Ailm = A Onn = O Ura = U Eadha = E Idho = I Silver Fir Furze Heather *or* Linden White Poplar Yew In writing this invocation, I chose the "I have been" variant for the Horned God's verse and the "I am" for the Goddess', in order to emphasize the His constant cycles of birth - life - death - rebirth upon the Wheel of the Year and Her enduring nature. I additionally incorporated an active ending to each line of the Horned God's verse to emphasize His more active nature. To balance the whole, I also added a final line to the Goddess' verse - giving them each a "Who am I...?" statement to encourage contemplation.

But why does all of this matter, anyway? Witchcraft, being a nature-oriented religion, focuses on the lunar and solar tides which ebb and flow not only within the world around us, but within us (*body, mind and spirit*) as well.

Learning to sense and to see the tides in the world without is one of the primary tasks of the novice Witch. And - aside from the beauty of its presentation - the ancient Celtic system in which the lunar months, the seasonal trees and the letters of the alphabet coincide provides the tools for that lesson. For each of the trees has a spectacularly notable characteristic during the month bearing its name, if one lives in the appropriate climate. And this is why *I* believe it important to modify the codex so that it matches with seasonal occurrences in one's own climate. When one can observe the Turning of the Wheel within the forested world around us, calendars become internal rather than abstract sheaves of paper hanging upon the wall. And, with time, awareness of the moon- and sun- tides rising and falling within the blood of each of us becomes "second nature" (quotes, because I believe it to be a first nature, of which we have lost awareness). By the way, if you're wondering what the "dolman" has to do with all of this: *dolman* refers to a trilithon - two menhir, or standing stones, capped with a lentil. This is a monumental style common to all of the Celts, and the Ogham were envisioned (in this arcane system) as inscribed about the arch - the flight of late winter / spring consonants up the left hand menhir, summer consonants across the lentil, autumn / early winter consonants down the right hand menhir and the vowels (of course) across the earth left to right at the trilithon's base.

For far more in depth information about the ancient Celtic alphabet, or Ogham, it's tree correspondances, associated mythology and the Lady & Lord in general, *please* read

"The White Goddess: A historical grammar of poetic myth"
by Robert Graves; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York; ISBN 0-374-28932-8.

Blessed Be.