



The Controversial Cauldron

Lammas - The First Harvest 2010

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Best Wishes

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Wheatfield harvesting in the UK - by George Knowles

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Welcome Lammas (The Harvest Festival)

Written and compiled by George Knowles

Its time for the first harvest!! Welcome to the Lammas 2010 issue of the Controversial Cauldron. While this newsletter is published each Sabbat, its content covers not only Sabbat associated subjects, but also a multitude of broader related subjects on alternative Religions, Paganism, Mysticism, Magick and Witchcraft.

The Harvest Festival

Here in the UK the Harvest Festival is one of the oldest agrarian celebrations to have survived since pagan times when each stage of the harvest was celebrated. The harvest season begins with Lammas, the first of three autumnal harvests when people came together to give thanks for nature's bounty. Lammas was the main field crop harvest, usually consisting of wheat, barley, oats or rye. From this, grain to make bread and beer was produced, which provided the basic staple diet for most people. The name Lammas comes from an old Christianised Saxon term "*hlaf maesse*" meaning "loaf mass", which reflects the importance of bread in those early times.

Before the advent of modern farming techniques, mechanisation and global imports, most communities relied on local farm crops for their survival. It was necessary therefore, for the farmer to gather in the harvest as quickly as possible, for should the weather take a turn for the worse, the whole crop would be ruined and lost. In many rural areas local villagers and teams of travelling labourers were employed to help bring in the harvest. At the start of the harvest, a trusted and respected man from the village was elected "Lord of the Harvest". It was his duty to negotiate wages with the farmers, and while out in the field, assisted by the Harvest Lady (another man, acting as his second in command), was responsible for organising the fieldworkers and bringing in the crops.

Once all the crops had been gathered in, the farmer and his wife traditionally thanked all the workers with a celebration meal (the origin of the Harvest Supper celebrated today). This was normally held in a large barn specially decorated with boughs, flowers and produce from the harvest. Once all the fields had been cleared, the last cartload of produce, driven by the Lord and Lady and decorated with bunting and flags, was ceremoniously paraded through the villages. Along the way bells were rung in welcome and people cheered as it passed by. En route back to the barn some would throw water over the cart, an old custom rooted in imitative magic to ensure enough rain in the spring for the following year's crops.

Back at the barn, Corn Dollies made from the last cut sheaves of wheat were used as attractive table decorations at the celebration meal, after which they would be saved until the following spring. Many believed that with the cutting of the last sheaves of wheat, the "Spirit of the Corn" retreated into the soil, there to sleep throughout the winter. At the start of the new planting season, the Corn Dollies would be returned to the fields, burned and mixed with the new seed being ploughed into the ground. It was hoped that the "Spirit of the Corn" would then awaken and ensure the next harvest.

The celebration meal typically featured foods drawn from the recently gathered crops, and with the Lord of the Harvest sitting at the head of the table, a goose stuffed with apples would have been served with a variety of vegetables. A favourite pudding was Frumenty, a dish of wheat boiled in milk with raisins and currents, and flavoured with sugar and spices. Of course, there was also plenty of ale and beer to wash it all down.

When Christianity arrived many pagan traditions were incorporated and adopted for use in their churches. One such was the Lammas celebration. On the first Sunday of August homegrown produce and baskets of fruit were donated to local churches, and loaves of bread made from the first harvest were placed on the altar to be blessed and consecrated. After the service the food was distributed among the old folk and the homeless, or given to hospitals and other charitable organisations. However, after the Reformation of Churches in the 16th century, Church leaders banned the practice in their efforts to stamp out pagan beliefs and associations.

The practice was revived again in 1843, when the Rev. Robert. S. Hawker, Vicar of Morwenstow in Cornwall, decorated his church with produce of all kinds and held a special thanksgiving service for the harvest. His choice of songs, "*We plough the fields and scatter...*" "*Bringing in the sheaves*" and "*All things bright and beautiful*", sung during the service helped to spread and popularise the custom. Today in addition to the churches, many schools throughout England also celebrate the Harvest Festival.

Harvest festivals are celebrated all around world, but naturally due to location and climate changes, and produce grown, each country celebrates at different times of the year. Therefore:

In the UK, the *Lammas Harvest Festival* is celebrated on the 01st August.

In Canada, the *Thanksgiving Festival* is celebrated in October.
 In the USA, their *Thanksgiving Festival* is celebrated in November (although this is disputed because the original Thanksgiving celebrated by the Pilgrim Fathers occurred in September).
 In Southern India, they celebrate the *Pongal Festival* in January.
 In Northern India, the *Vaisakhi/Baisakhi Festival* is celebrated in April.
 In Ghana/Nigeria, the *Yam Festival* is celebrated in August.
 In Israel, the *Succoth Festival* is celebrated in September/October.
 And in the Far East, they celebrated the *Moon Festival* in September.



In today's modern world with every convenience at our disposal, we tend to forget about our roots and the way our ancestors relied on the harvest for their very survival. As Pagans and Wiccans we still celebrate and give thanks for nature's bounty provided at Lammas. However, Lammas is not just a time for feasting, singing, dancing and making merry; perhaps more importantly, it is a time when families and friends get back together and re-establish their relationships and loyalties. It is also a time to take stock of our lives, and reflect on what we have gained and what we wish to plant for the coming year.

Happy Lammas to one and all.

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<http://www.controversial.com>

The Dog Days of Summer

By: OwlOak

*Dog Days bright and clear,
 indicate a happy year.
 But when accompanied by rain,
 for better times our hopes are in vain.*

~ Old weather saying ~

When the hottest and most humid days of summer are spoken of, the term "Dog Days" is almost invariably used. But why? Does it refer to the furry canines panting in the shade, or something else?

Well, it's actually something else. The term "Dog Days" (Latin: dies caniculares) is attributed to the ancient Romans. It refers to the time of year that the Dog Star, Sirius (the brightest star in the constellation Canis Major – Large Dog), rises with the Sun. However, there is evidence from the writings of Aristotle, that the Greeks used the same term much earlier than the Romans.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the "Dog Days" usually fall between early July and early September. The actual dates vary greatly from region to region, depending on latitude and climate.

In ancient Rome they fell between July 23rd-24th through August 23rd-24th - which is no longer true due to the precession of the equinoxes. *The Old Farmer's Almanac* defines them, for the Northern Hemisphere, as the 40-day period beginning July 3rd and ending August 11th. While *The Book of Common Prayer* (1552), states the "Dog Daies" begin on July 6th and end on August 17th. In the Southern Hemisphere they are usually between January

and early March.

While Sirius does not actually affect the weather, its rising just happens to coincide with a time of extreme heat and humidity, which caused the Romans to think it did. According to Brady's *Clavis Calendarium* this was believed to be an evil time, "when the seas boiled, wine turned sour, dogs grew mad, and all creatures became languid, causing to man burning fevers, hysterics, and phrensies (frenzies)". So, to appease what they thought was the rage of Sirius, the ancient Romans would sacrifice a brown dog to Sirius. Thankfully, this custom is no longer practiced.

To the ancient Egyptians, this appearance of Sirius along with the Sun was a "watchdog" event which was looked forward to as it signaled the beginning of the seasonal flooding of the Nile and a renewal of the land.

In recent years new usages have arisen, most probably from common misuse or a misunderstanding of the origin of the phrase "Dog Days". In America, the slow time of the summer trading on the stock market is referred to as "Dog Days", while the phrase "dogging it" comes from the seeming laziness of dogs at this time of year. It is also used to define a time period or event that is very hot or stagnant, or marked by a dull lack of progress.

Sources:

The Old Farmer's Almanac, Yankee Publishing

Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org

Brady, J: *Clavis Calendaria, Or A Compendious Analysis Of The Calendar VI*, vol. II, page 89. Nichols, Son, and Bentley, 1815.

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Lammas Ritual 2010

By Crone

Cover your altar with a cloth of red, orange, gold and yellow. Have an abundance of flowers of the same color, and wear those colors yourself. Add in some fresh fruit and vegetables of the season. In addition to your usual altar items, include a smoldering cauldron and a small loaf of bread.

Ground and center with these words:

*I am blessed.
I am thankful for all that I have.
I give thanks. I give thanks. I give thanks.*

Cast your Circle with athame or wand:

*With a grateful heart I purify
This sacred space between earth and sky.*

Invoke Directions:

*Spirits of East
Let your breezes gently caress all that I do.
May my harvest be plentiful.*

*Spirits of the South
Bring your light and warmth to my endeavors
May my harvest be plentiful.*

*Spirits of the West
Your waters are my liquid life.
May my harvest be plentiful.*

*Spirits of the North
I celebrate the abundance of your good earth.
May my harvest be plentiful.*

Invoke Deities:

*Father Sun, come into my Circle.
I thank you for your strength,
For your energy,
For the food we now harvest.
I thank you, too, for your sacrifice
As the days begin to shorten.
I know you will rise again.*

*Mother Earth, come into my Circle.
I thank you for fertile soil,
For nurturing,
For the food we now harvest.
Walk with me now
As the days begin to shorten.*

*Give me strength in the dark
Till the Sun will rise again.*

Pronouncement:

*I am between the worlds,
Beyond the bounds of time,
Where day and night,
Birth and death,
Joy and sorrow,
Meet as one.*

Magickal Working:

Just as the seeds have challenges to their growth, so do we all have challenges to achieving our full potential. Consider what limitations may be holding you back. For each one of them, name it and break off a bit of bread, dropping it into the cauldron. As your bread/limitations burn, whisper this chant:

*So mote it be. So mote it be.
I am free of my limits.
So mote it be.*

When you are ready, eat of your loaf. As the bread nurtures your body, let it also nurture your spirit. Think of your harvests, past, present, and future, and know how powerful you are. Know that blessings will continue to flow with increased strength into your life. Chant with vigor and joy:

*My thanks for this harvest, the first of the year.
May its power be with me in all I hold dear.*

Dismissing the directions and the deities:

*North and south and east and west,
All by Mother Earth are blessed.
My thanks, directions, every one.
You are blessed by Father Sun.
My thanks that you did join with me.
Go now if you will, for you are free.*

*Mother Earth and Father Sun,
I thank you for your presence in my Circle.
I thank you for the blessings of the first harvest.
I thank you for blessings yet to come.
I thank you that I am blessed.
I am blessed.*

Sing or speak the chant:

*The Circle is open but unbroken.
May the peace of the goddess go ever in my heart.
Merry meet and merry part
And merry meet again.*

July 2010 © Darkhairedcrone

Crone is an active member of the UU (CUUP's) and has been a member of Email Witches since 2004

Legacy

Amulets vs. Talismans

By *Adriana Cahill*

An amulet, according to Pliny, is an object that protects a person from trouble. I tend to lean toward gifts of nature as amulets; like an animal claw or tooth, a feather, a rabbit's foot, a dried leaf, a shamrock, or a Holy Stone. These are not created or consecrated for a magickal purpose. They simply have intrinsic magickal abilities to protect or to bring luck.

Some of my earliest amulets were these four stones I picked off the beach at La Jolla. We had attended my "cousin" Steven Durham's wedding (the son of Aunt Chris and Uncle Earl Durham) the day before. Mom and good friend, Jerry, had come from Vegas while I was still living in Lancaster. We spent the night and left the day after. The sky was restless and the ocean was calling both mother and me. I walked to the shore and wrote a blessing for Steven and his new wife and let the tide take it. When I looked down, I saw some of the prettiest colored rocks just lying there. Green for luck, red for love, white for peace and yellow for joy. The color attributions that my mother had taught me.



This leaf is from the Cottonwood tree that grew by the lake on the golf course. Under this leaf I committed myself to a magickal life. Under the tree that bore it, I dedicated my first tools. I had many a full moon ritual under that tree and in that lake beside it.

This feather was a recent present deposited on my welcome mat. I often find feathers as there are so many birds that nest in our trees. But, this one was special because someone had to actually stand on the doormat to leave it because we have a deep overhang. Such a personal present has to be blessed.



An amulet can also be a manufactured thing and this is where amulets begin to overlap the thin line that separates amulets from talismans. A wedding ring becomes a protection amulet infused with love and memory; a coin left to one from one's grandfather can be a lucky amulet, a pair of socks can be lucky for a baseball player; or even the lucky catch of a rock star's guitar pick can become an amulet. Danny's Metallica guitar pick became a safety in travel amulet (along with a hematite stone) when he was traveling so often for his company. The Queensryche pick and one that my brother in law, John, caught at a Corrs concert are also lucky pieces. These things not having been made for a magickal purpose become amulets to those who see the intrinsic magick within them. This little bone handled knife is only two inches long and was intended to be a toothpick, but I put them in my home protection Witch Bottles.



Amulets differentiate themselves from talismans since they are used for general purposes: almost always for either protection (to ward off danger or evil) or to draw good fortune to the bearer. They are often not intended to that purpose by the maker or nature, but are judged so by the bearer of the amulet for whatever intrinsic magick one has the perception to sense or the sentimentality to value.

A green stone on its own is a good fortune amulet, but carve it with the word "Prosperity" or cut Futhark runes into a Hematite stone, like *Raido*, to insure safety in travel; *Uruz* to draw strength, and *Ehwaz* to attract or strengthen a friendship, and the



amulet becomes more than it is usually defined as, but not quite a talisman. A coin can be marked with an attraction symbol on it in hopes of becoming rich someday. These are still amulets, and not talismans unless they are constructed and *consecrated* for the purpose of a specific event - this horse, winning this race, on this day, at this time.

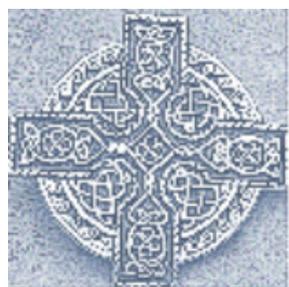
The Aventurine prosperity stone above was a commercial product done in a general manner and without much magickal insight. It was by chance that this word found this stone, because the word "prosperity" was also written on Picasso Jasper, Sodalite, Onyx, Bloodstone and Pink Quartz and a dozen other stones - along with the words love, success, magic, beauty and the like. To me, however much I like the stone, it is an amulet, until I work it as a talisman. If I take the stone, incense it, oil it, incant over it for the purpose of carrying it on Tuesday at 3:30 while going on a job interview...it's a talisman.

Often, a token becomes an amulet to the bearer because it ties them to a person or moment in time that is precious. The power of that memory becomes tied to the token. With time a precious token can magickally become the essence of that moment or that person. Again the bearer, not the creator, decides the magickal value of the item. This is how ordinary items, intended or unintended, become amulets. We expect that a piece of jewelry, a worn baseball mitt, a pocket watch or other item that held emotional value for one becomes a precious amulet after one is parted from the original owner.

One of my first amulets was given to me by my childhood sweetheart, Dave. I loved him as much as a 14 year old was able. He was of German descent and he had a German coin cut in half and drilled for each of us to wear. I kept it to remind me of him, our affection, and the young woman I once was who thought the sun rose and set in his blue eyes.



Mother used to wear a Philadelphia train token on her necklace of holy medals (of St. Anthony, St. Christopher and St. Patrick). Along with those, mother wore the talisman Susan & I had made for her in the mid seventies - the key chain charm that would will the Chalice ranch into being, and the home she would call Tres Santos inscribed on the back. It was carved with a chalice and set in the center with a Garnet - her birthstone. Long before we knew the magickal purpose of giving Garnets to secure that we will meet our loved ones in another lifetime, we bonded with Mother in giving this gift. These five charms, three from her Catholic roots and the other two representing magickal connections to her past and to her future are a perfect representation of Mother's philosophy as a blend of Christian and Pagan.



Talismans

The word talisman is derived from the Greek word *Teleo*, which means to consecrate. A talisman must be charged with a magickal purpose. The talisman, by strictest definition, is always prepared for a definite reason, time or event with exact symbolism, the nature of which is attractive. The more specific the better.



But here is where the lines blur between amulets and talisman. If natural is the first definition of an amulet and consecrated is the first definition for a talisman. What of simple unconsecrated religious icons purchased and never blessed - a Bridget's Cross, a star of David, the hand of Fatima, a Triple spiral, the eye of Horus, Thor's hammer, a St. Christopher medal, or a pentacle - which seems on the surface no different than a wedding ring or a train token, made amulets by virtue of their value for personal reasons. But these "amulets" are an exception. All are worn with an implied historical use of protection. For that reason, and that they are never used for another purpose - to gain money or love or a more specific goal to get pregnant with a son and not a daughter - they are considered talisman, not amulets.



Yet talisman can be shamanistic, a spirit bag or mojo bag with the appropriate elemental symbols, stones, feathers, shells, bones, herbs, tied together and enchanted to effect a particular goal. These too are talismans and no longer amulets, because a magickal person with skill and knowledge combined the right elements at the right time to effect a specific change.



The better definition of the word talisman is exemplified by the elaborate consecrated charms used for a particular purpose, most often based in Ceremonial Magick and Alchemy -like the ones on the right border: The top is the Invictus Alchemy, to master the magickal arts; the middle top, to attract love; the middle bottom, to attract money; and the bottom, to preserve one's safety in travel.

Another is this two sided talisman of Jupiter. Jupiter, father god and all powerful is invoked to bring strength, tranquility and personal wealth to the bearer of this charm.



The runic charms were popular and easily carved into stone or wood to charm a goal. Below are three talisman: The first with a single rune, Tyr, used to insure victory; the second a glyph composed of several runes to attract love; the final one a more elaborate runic talisman to attract love.



Our Wedding symbol was a talisman. The wolf and sword symbol was a construct of the wolf pin I wore which represented what I brought to the marriage as the person and Danny's sword represented his offering to me in marriage. These symbols will never mean anything else at any other time. Danny drew the picture and a rubber stamp was made and consecrated from that.

Two wedding talismans were blessed during the ceremony. Two charms - a flame representing the Sun/Masculine Divine blessing Danny and a chalice representing the Moon/ Feminine divine blessing me. Both charms played a role in the ceremony...the flame pendant during the candle ceremony rested under the Solar Deity candle. The chalice pendant sat at the bottom of my silver Full Moon chalice in which we shared during the wine ceremony. We wore the charms the entire first year we were married as a blessing on us and our marriage.



Our Handfasting cord was also woven as a magickal talisman. It's colors were our wedding colors: burgundy (love, passion), green (life, prosperity), ivory (light, devotion), plus gold (longevity) and silver (protection). Cords used in Wiccaning ceremonies have colors woven for specific talents, hopes or characteristics of a particular child. It is then hung over his/her bed for protection.

Dear Friends, Charles & Christine's wedding cross was a marriage talisman - a Celtic cross to represent her Celtic Christian path but with Chinese characters running down the Latin part of the cross representing Charles's Buddhist path. The symbols meant good fortune, love and blessings.



Article © Ardriana Cahill - June 2010

Ardriana Cahill lives in Western USA and is a Hereditary Witch, den of Clan McCormick and a Kell of Brigid since 1998. She has been a member of EW since 2004.



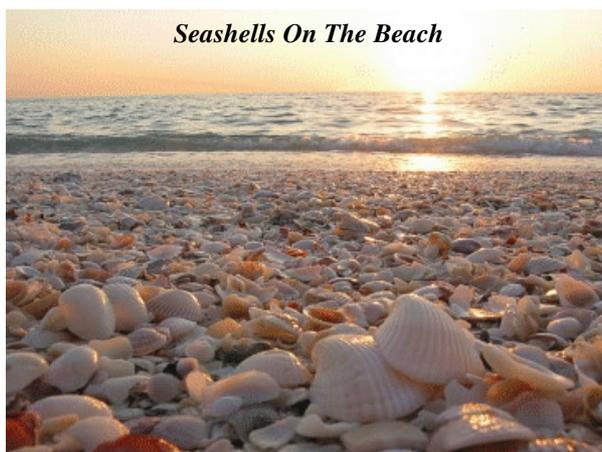
On the Rocks

She Spells Seashells...Down by the Seashore



by Pavi

Although I normally do a stone or crystal article for this newsletter, this summer the beach has once again captured my heart and I am moved to work with and pay homage to the magick of seashells. Just as the Ancients who raised up their giant Conch or Triton shells and used them as a horn to give warning or to beckon their brethren home, I too have once again been called forth to the ocean - the place that feels like home to me. And so here - for your pleasure, information, or amusement - is an account of my long-standing relationship with seashells and their magnificent abode.



Seashells On The Beach

I ask you, is there anything more beautiful than the sight of Aphrodite (Roman, Venus), born of the frothy sea foam, rising from some mystical Mediterranean shore and presenting her alluring and curvaceous physical image to the world from within a giant Scallop shell? And is there anything more delightful than watching sea nymphs bathe with a natural Sea Sponge or comb their long tresses with the protruding "teeth" of a Truncata Spider shell or Murex Venus Comb, while all the while millions of tiny wave-jostled seashells (nature's sea chimes) are making a soft tinkling sound that is music to your ears? I think not.



The Birth of Venus by S. Botticelli, c. 1486.

Since time began on our beautiful blue water-soaked orb, when the roiling tempests of primordial seas began to calm and recede and left their magick on our shores, the Element Water has been nothing but generous in offering up her mystical cache of gifts. Among those gifts are the various multi-faceted, shapely and colorful "gemstones" of the Sea ~ Seashells. These protein-based calcium carbonate exoskeletons, once belonging to a creature of the sea, have been left behind like abandoned homes, outgrown and discarded for another's pleasure and use. And their uses are many. Here we find that seashells have a wonderful magick all their own. Shells have been employed as magickal talismans and set into sacred jewelry since early time. They have been vessels that hold sacred waters or purifying herbs such as Sage, Sweetgrass and Sandalwood. They are listening devices, from within which we can hear the ancient sounds of Poseidon's bellowing calls and the soft vibratory hum of the cosmos. But perhaps one of their



Daughter Of The Deep - by J. Wall

greatest gifts is their obvious willingness to be the catalyst of the suddenly joyful face of the seeker who has found a secret treasure half-buried in the sand; or perhaps it is their ability and willingness to then aid us in recovering and unleashing our own true Spirit and our own magick. Whatever the case, seashells are a worthy friend.

Of course, there is always the connection to the attributes of the Element Water within every shell under the sun, but there is a certain instinct and knowing that comes into play when we accompany our Moon magick with Moonshells, Clamshells or Mother of Pearl (which can be found inside many shells). We also intuitively know that for prosperity, abundance or wealth, we will don some Cowrie shells, or work with Jade Turbos or Oyster shells; but for healing, we'll often grab an Abalone, Conus or Spindle. For protection, we've always flocked to use the dark, spiny matrix of the Black Murex or Lambis Scorpio, or the massive hard shielding body of the Whelk; while for love, it's the Heart Cockles, Red Scallop and Pink Sunrise Tellina we employ. And ancient knowledge and wisdom kicks in at just the sheer image of the Sand Dollar, Giant Clamshell and Triton.



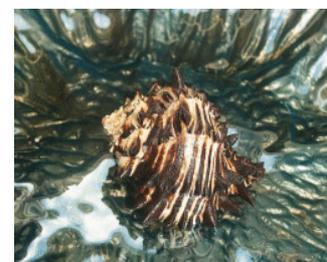
MoonShell & SharkEye - Clamshell - Striped Fox - Abalone



Pacific Lampis - Cameo Shell - White Murex

There are so many different shells in all sizes, shapes and varieties - way too many to list here - and each with their own magickal essence. How we use these versatile vessels from the sea, in ritual or within our magick, is often (as with anything else) a personal matter. What I offer below are a few of my own tool preferences within the world of sea magick, and some simple Spells you can do at the beach:

For Banishing ~ With the pointed end of a Black Murex shell, write in the wet sand (nearest the lapping waves at low tide), with all your spiritual intent intact, whatever it is you wish to banish from your life. Sit back in the sand and think on releasing that which has plagued you, and then watch as the encroaching ocean waves slowly take it away...dissolving it into the vast purifying waters of our Mother Earth...until all that remains is a smooth, clean slate of sand that sits before you. Know that as Her grasping tidal hands have helped cleanse you of your troubles, that you are now in possession of your own clean slate. You are now free to manifest goodness in the wake of what was once a burden. After a few moments of basking in the newly-refreshed You, cast the shell into the water and give thanks.



Black Murex

For Love ~ Gather paired shells along the beach; the more scallop and cockles and clamshells the better, but look for those who have their mates still somewhat attached or lying nearby. Then find or obtain one Sand Dollar. Arrange the paired shells in a circle around two red candles (or one gold and one silver), then place the Sand Dollar in front of them. Light the candles and call on Aphrodite (Venus) to assist you as you make firm your intent, thinking or saying aloud:



Scallop Shells

"To find you swiftly, my true love, in search of you, I send these doves."

Break open the Sand Dollar and release the 5 'doves' inside. Kiss them and cast them as far into the sea (or any body of water) that you can. In the following days, keep your eyes (and your heart) open, for he or she will most likely show up in an unexpected way!

For a simple everyday enhancement, wear a scallop-shaped pendant over your Heart Chakra. Oh, and as we all know, most shellfish are aphrodisiacs. So don't forget, you can always also treat yourself to a meal of oysters, conch, clams or sea scallops to move any love spell along!

For Health & Longevity ~ Just sit on the shore and feel the rhythm and continuity of the ocean and watch the movement of the waves. Spend some time thinking about them - of how long they have been rising up to cleanse and kiss the shore. Feel inside yourself (for you are made up of the same ancient waters) how rhythmic and strong your own body is, or is about to become. Your heartbeat sways with its own steady rhythm. Your mind is as intricate and unique as the tendrils of a Sea Fan. Your own salty blood courses through your veins like the circular tides. Breathe deeply of the blue-green healing energy that the ocean provides. Then once you feel your body, mind and spirit are in synch with the wholeness of the sea, cast these words (or similar) out into the depths:



Sand Dollar

*“Oh great Poseidon, King of the Sea,
Grant long life and good health to me.
Strengthen my mind, my body, my soul.
Make me wise and make me whole.”*

Bow to his greatness before you leave, and let your gratitude for life be the buoy that lifts you up.

For Good Fortune & Abundance ~ Collect Cowrie shells and make a talisman that you can wear; or simply carry a few shells in your pocket. For a slightly more intense additional boost: On a small square piece of paper write down exactly what you wish for - be specific! - and place a small amount of each of the following herbs atop what you've written: Basil, Rosemary and Spearmint. Then thrice, carefully fold and refold the paper, corner to corner, into a small triangle. Place this into the opening of a Cowrie shell (which is symbolic of the female anatomy and acts as a womb) during a waxing Gibbous Moon and leave it there for 7 days until the Moon is Full. Each night, (and best if done by the ocean, or at least imagine yourself there), sprinkle salt water over the Cowrie and envision your desire coming to you by the Full Moon while you chant the following:



Spotted Cowrie

*“Sweet Undine, current of the sea,
Swiftly bring thy wealth to me.
My wish within this Cowrie womb
will quickly birth and surely bloom.
Good fortune comes to set me free.
As I will it, so mote it be!”*

At the Full Moon and end of your spell, cast the Cowrie back into the ocean (if you can) or bury it in sandy soil. Expect your wish to manifest by the next Full Moon.

And for simply aid in Astral travel, meditation or trance work, begin by meditating on a Sundial Spiral shell...or the cross-section of a spiraling pearly Nautilus...or the fossilized spiral patterns of the Jurassic Period cephalopod Ammonites, named after the Egyptian god Amon because their shape resembled the god's ram horns...or even the mandala-like forefront of a Delphinula or White Murex. Use it as your 'stairway' to journey between worlds. And once there, continue to hold your shell with the calm knowledge that its protective nature will keep you safe while you journey.



Ammonite

Whatever you use your shells for, these beautiful gems of the sea are there to keep you pondering ~ 'What treasures will you seek and harvest this summer?'

Shell Blessings! Pari

Sources:

The Wind, the Ocean, the Waves, and the Shells, themselves.

Photos: by Pari

Photo of Seashells on the Beach - http://media.photobucket.com/image/seashells%20on%20the%20beach/mysticangel2003_2007/seashells-2.jpg

<http://www.josephinewall.co.uk/> (a most wonderful contemporary artist)

Dolphin Totem

by Pari

Life, it is said, began in the sea. And this summer, I just can't seem to get enough of either!

Aside from the heat wave we are having here in the northeast, summertime is one of my favorite seasons. My psyche craves to be near the ocean and her healing breezes - to be walking on the beach collecting colorful sea-tumbled stones or interesting seashells and to be listening to seagulls squawk over what's for dinner as each ocean wave crashes onto shore, chasing the vigilant sandpipers. Yes, wind and surf have become my mantra, and they have captured my heart; my mind and soul they always had. But what has also captured my heart's attention of late is the distant and persistent calling of Dolphin. And so I took a trip to Florida's Discovery Cove last year to be, at the very least, in the company of dolphins and to see what they might have to say.



Having already liked and studied Dolphin as a totem, I was already aware of many of their fine attributes. But, there is nothing like experience to drive them home. I also found out, once I swam and came face-to-face with them, that the ancient Greeks were right...dolphins are sacred messengers! Through them, I learned things about myself that I wasn't quite aware enough about, and their teachings opened up a whole new perspective for me. And so I offer up a bit of that old knowledge and new wisdom here. Meet Dolphin!



There is something mystical about dolphins. Perhaps it is the stories of how they interact with humans. Perhaps it is their intelligence, as the dolphin is considered the most intelligent of mammals next to Man. Or perhaps it is just the natural knowing smile that permanently graces their faces, or the series of rapid clicking sounds they make which, in turn, makes you think they are truly capable of laughter. Whatever it is, man has been intrigued with these lovely creatures for all time.

But first, what can we learn from a dolphin's physicality? Dolphins - of the order Cetacea, from the Greek word "ketos" meaning "whale", and from the family Delphinidae - are not fish; they are mammals. Being a mammal, they are warm-blooded and give birth to their young, nursing them underwater. Like Dolphin, we too are programmed with a natural desire to nurture others under any circumstances. Within the many species of dolphins (although I will concentrate on the Common and Bottlenose varieties here), exist Bottlenose, Common Dolphins, Pilot Whales and Killer Whales, to name a few. Diversity is not their nemesis, nor should it be ours. And lastly, dolphins - with an adult Bottlenose variety weighing in at anywhere between 300 to 450 pounds and being anywhere from 6 feet to 13 feet long - do not have too many predators in their wake to contend with...only Man. But regardless of that latter fact, dolphins are social creatures, mimicking our own desire to commune and share of ourselves with others, and they will often engage humans - of which they possess a natural curiosity.

On a metaphysical level ~ As water holds some of the deepest secret mysteries within its essence, dolphins are privy to that knowledge and wisdom and have evidently mastered the Ways of the Wise. They are the ocean's Adepts in the workings and powers of breath and sound - two things so very important to understanding and receiving those

mysteries. In fact, in Christian thought, it is said that life began when the angels first sang, (or the alternate version that life began when God spoke). In Babylonian cosmology, all the gods were created by the goddess Tiamut within the waters of life, but they did not *come* to life until she spoke and called them forth. With Dolphin Totem, you will be shown how to navigate the waters of life, uncover the mysteries of the deep, and learn how to most effectively call forth that which you most desire. Dolphin Totem is a *learn how to manifest* totem!



There is a rhythm to a Dolphin's breathing and to its swimming; a pattern. Of course, breathing patterns are important to anyone's well-being. Taking deep cleansing breaths on a regular basis will not only alleviate the stresses and tensions of the day, but will help keep your awareness level and clarity of mind at their optimal peak performance. Practice imitating Dolphin's deep spouting breath whenever you find yourself surfacing from anything tense or stressful. We can also learn from Dolphin's breathing how to reach altered states within our meditations and trance work, in order to help heal the mind and body. Dolphins have incredible sonar abilities and use it to maneuver through the depths, or to find and identify things. Using your own enhanced clairaudience when working with this totem, you will hear the tones and sounds of opportunity most clearly! Dolphins communicate through a series of rapid and reverberating clicking sounds. So truly listen to what is being said, and take nothing at only face value. Also, listen to anything that's been said more than once, and you most likely will find wisdom there. Swim deeper and listen with clarity to all that is calling you.

All dolphins are extraordinary swimmers and can out-manuever their prey with ease. They have no problem snaring multitudes of fish for nourishment, but their preference is squid. In that, Dolphin magick clears away tentacles of things that have you in their clutches. The Common Dolphin can swim fairly fast (up to 25 mph.), but they also are known for slow undulating treks through the water, along with many synchronized playful jaunts. But however they opt to maneuver their watery realm, they always do it with precision and grace. In this, Dolphin medicine teaches you how to do the same - maneuvering through your daily walk through life with just the right amount of speed and just the right amount of playfulness; but always with grace.

However, walking through life with grace doesn't mean that you won't be playfully mischievous, or that you cannot attack your enemies with vigor, or that you can't be forceful in going after what you want. On the contrary, it is the power through grace that allows all those other things to be more attainable. For instance, there's been a newly-discovered tactic of the dolphin recently, wherein a pod of dolphins will surround a school of fish in shallow waters and begin swimming around them quickly, encircling them there. Then shortly thereafter, the dolphins start flapping their tail fins to the side and inward - a veritable dance in a circle of synchronicity - in order to kick up the ocean sands. This makes the inside area of water murky and unbreathable for the school of trapped fish. In their frenzy to escape the muddied waters, the fish rush to the surface and start jumping clean out of the water....right into the waiting dolphins' mouths! It is a stroke of genius and an amazing thing to watch. It's actually not far unlike our raising a Cone of Power to manifest our need of the moment.

Yes, Dolphin can take you on a mystical journey through ancient seas. They nudge you and push you forward, delivering you to your most fanciful imaginings. They bring optimism in the face of any adversity - an optimism that is, under the surface, rich with intense power, strength, ability, creativity and undying passion. So play! Explore! Breathe! Dive deeply into the vast renewing waters of your life and then rise to the surface with a joyful smile, *knowing* that the world truly is your pearl-bearing oyster!

May your Summer go swimmingly and may Dolphin smile upon you!

Pari

Sources:

Animal-Speak, Ted Andrews

<http://www.seaworld.org/animal-info/index.htm>

Dolphin, himself



© Patricia J. Martin (a.k.a. Pari), July 2010.

Pari lives in the northeast, USA, and is a Shamanic Witch. She has been a member of EW since 2002.

Memorial - We Remember You

Herman Slater
(1935 - 1992)



By SilkyRose

On this date in the year 1992, Herman Slater - a Wiccan High Priest, well-known occult author, and the proprietor of "The Magickal Childe" bookstore and Witchcraft supply shop in New York City, lost his battle against AIDS. His death was a great loss to the magickal community. We remember you Herman!!

"The Magickal Childe", New York City's oldest and longest running occult bookshop, started life as "The Warlock Shop" in Brooklyn Heights, situated on Henry Street, just off Atlantic Ave, during the early 1970s. In 1979, Herman moved the shop to 35 West 19th Street in Greenwich Village, and with the move changed its name to "The Magickal Childe". The new shop soon became established. Inside was an ever-flowing waterfall, and as the smell of incense invaded your senses, the sight of shelves stocked with jars and books filled the mind with intrigue. This was where I first met Herman in about 1985. You can get a glimpse of the shop in the movie "Vampire's Kiss."



The Magickal Childe in Greenwich Village, New York

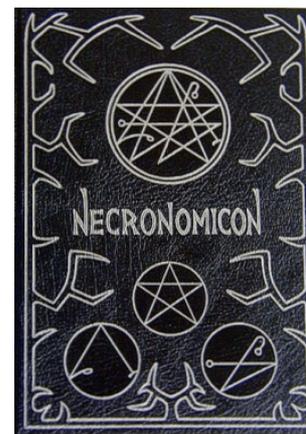
Herman Slater's Jewish parents hailed from New Paltz, a lower middle class suburb of New York, where he was born in 1935. From the beginning he was in search of his own path.

In the 1970s - 1980s he published a newspaper called *Earth Religion News*. I think my favorite book he had his pen on was *The Magickal Formulary I & II*. He also wrote: *The Hoodoo Bible*, *Introduction to Witchcraft*, *Pagan Rituals* and *A Book of Pagan Rituals I & II*. This included the idea of pre-initiation into a Coven and the concept of a Pagan Grove as an Outer Court extension of the Coven.

Herman also published his own version of H.P. Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*, which was perhaps the reason some people started to call him "Horrible Herman". This body of work was rumored to have come from the Catholic

Church, from a library text given to him by an old Catholic Archbishop named Simon. An alternate rumor was that a mysterious Russian Monk called Simon had delivered it to his shop. The truth of this will never be revealed, as this is one of the mysteries that he would never deny nor confirm. In any event, those who knew about this unsubstantiated information then dubbed the work "*Simonomicon*".

Herman's *Necronomicon* was published in 1977, with a publication of 666 copies. The next year another 3,333 copies were published, followed later by a third issue of an unknown number of copies. The first books were all leather bound with a price of \$75.00 each. Then an elaborate "manuscript" was created and touted to be the manuscript that Herman had received under mysterious circumstances, but no one knows the real story. Herman created a beautiful work as his version of the *Necronomicon* with the help of Schlangekraft and James Wasserman as part of the layout team, and Khem Set Rising who designed the book's raised seal. In 1980 the rights to the book were then sold to "Avon Publishing", who produced a paperback copy at a cost of \$5.00 each.



Herman also produced and sold replicas of his own version of the Gardnerian Wicca Sword created by Gerald Gardner; the original of which was given to him as a gift by Raymond Buckland. Herman had a good sense of humor and was a trickster, but he could get you just about any candle, herb, potion, book, card-deck, charm, bell or whistle you would ever want or need.

Herman was known as Lord Govannan in his Earth Star Temple, and was a smiling player of the "Witch Wars of the Seventies". The NY Welsh tradition came to be with the help of Herman and his partner Ed Buczynski, who founded the tradition in the 1960s. Eventually, Gardnerians, Welsh Trads, Alexandrians and Sicilian Trads all came to be seated around a table in the back of Herman's shop. Lady Rhea could often be found mixing oils there, as did many other prominent people from various traditions involved in the world of magick meet and work together there. People from different religious areas, from Voodooen' to Wicca, to Crowley's Magickal Order (the O.T.O.) also found a safe haven there.

Herman studied Business at NYU and Liberal Arts at Hunter Collage in 1969, until ill health caused him to stop working. He had TB (tuberculosis) of the bone. While he was recovering he began to explore the Occult and Psychic Sciences. During his stay in bed, and after a year or so in casts, they managed to cure him of TB, but it cost him a hip replacement. Medicine was not as progressed then and hip replacement was not what it is today. His interests in psychic phenomena began with levitation, which no doubt was due to the fact he was unable to get around in a body cast. He also gained an interest in divination and the tarot. He studied the occult sciences for many years after his recovery, and insisted that he had on a few occasions been able to levitate. You could never tell when he was serious or when he was joking, so one never knows, perhaps he did.

At the end of his life Herman owned 3 of his beloved breed of dogs, Salukis, but as his hip prevented him from walking the dogs, he always maintained someone to serve as a "dog-walker". He also had a cat and a boa constrictor. At the end, he spent some of his time at his home in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., and some of his time in NYC where he lived on 16th Street. For a while after his death, loyal fans, friends and employees tried to keep the shop open, but debts, taxes and bills left unpaid, all took their toll and sadly it was closed in 1999.

There were times when the shop did not keep regular hours; it was open when it was and closed when it was not. I remember many times in the 80s and 90s going there during normal hours only to find it was closed. Herman's "Magickal Childe" was an institution to East Coast Pagans of all paths. Curiosities stacked on dark wood shelves and in glass cases still causes one to recall to one's memory the combined smell and aroma of books, candles and large glass jars full of herbs.

I can still remember the first time I opened the door to that fragrant shop and came in out of blinding sunlight. The first person I focused on, when I could see again, was Herman behind his counter. He was counting bones or some other items for display. I looked around and there were colored books, oddities and flyers all over the place. He was both friendly that day and noncommittal, like he was curious and yet could care less. He was a man of many contradictions, and was, from that first meeting, my strange and totally interesting friend.

Sources:

George Knowles at: <http://www.controverscial.com>
 The Witch Book - The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft, Wicca, and Neo-paganism - By Raymond Buckland
 Plus many other personal sources.

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 SilkyRose has been a member of Email Witches since 2006

The Herb Garden

By Wes (Graybeard) Sanders

I'd said in the last Newsletter that I would be updating my progress on the Herb Garden, so, here ya go.

I pretty much had to go to Plan "X".

The Principal of the Elementary School liked what I had done, so far. However, he informed me that the School District had no money to buy any Herbs. Nor did the PTA. Finally, I was left in a little dilemma. I decided that the plants couldn't cost that much, and since I had done this much work on the Garden already, that I would simply buy them myself.

I went to the Lowe's Home Improvement Store nursery just to find out what everything would cost. And as I was looking things over, the Nursery Manager came by and asked if I needed any help. So, I told her what I was doing and that I needed some prices. She asked how many plants I needed and I told her that probably I needed about 20. She said that it would be no problem for Lowe's to donate 20 plants. I was pretty much flabbergasted. She told me to pick out what I wanted and she would okay the Donation. WOW, how cool was that!

I picked out five Chives, five Basil, five Sage, two Thyme, two Lavender, and one Mint. Also, I already had a nice Rosemary plant in another part of the garden, so I transplanted a sprig of it, and it is GROWING! That is very cool. Also, I have some Parsley going. I'd picked those out because I really didn't know what I was doing. But that's what I got.

I took them back to the garden and started planting them. At first they looked really sparse, but as time has gone by, they have really started to fill out. I haven't really done much to them. I have watered them almost daily, and weeded them about once a week. Weeds are not a good thing to have, as they rob the soil of its nutrients.

I did go back to Lowe's last week and found the Manager and told her that her plants are doing really well and of how much I appreciated her Donation. She has asked me to write a little letter to Lowe's Corporate Headquarters about it. I will have the Principal do that.

So Folks, that's where I stand at the moment on the Herb Garden. Next, I have to find out what to do about harvesting them.

Many Blessings to ya all.



Harvesting Herbs at Lammas

By Lyric Moonshadow

When I think of Lammas the first thing I think of is the poem by Robbie Burns, The Rigs O' Barley:

The Rigs O' Barley by Robert Burns

*It was upon a Lammas night
When the corn rigs were bonnie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light
I held awa' to Annie.*

*The time flew by wi' tentless heed
'Til 'tween the late and early,
Wi' small persuasion she agreed
To see me thro' the barley.*

cho: (optional)

*Corn Rigs and barley rigs
Corn rigs are bonny
I'll ne'er forget that Lammas night
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.*

*The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly.
I set her down wi' right good will
Amang the rigs o' barley.*

*I kept her heart, was a' my sin.
I loved her most sincerely.
I kissed her o'er and o'er again
Amang the rigs o' barley.*

cho:

*I locked her in my fond embrace.
Her heart was beatin' rarely.
My blessing on that happy place
Amang the rigs o' barley.*

*But by the moon and stars so bright
That shone that hour so clearly,
She aye shall bless that happy night
Amang the rigs of barley.*

cho:

*I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear
I hae been merry drinking.
I hae been joyful gath'rin' gear
I hae been happy thinking.
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw
Tho' three times doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a'
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.*

If you want more of the same, there is a very lovely rendition by the true Scotsman Paul Giovanni (!) accompanied by video clips from one of my favorite flicks, the original "Wicker man": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKu3mahE4-w>

The second thing that comes to mind when I think of Lammas is Ohio sweet corn! I actually experience pangs of homesickness when I think of Ohio corn - The best corn in the entire world. There is a man with a vegetable stand about 2 blocks from my home in Ohio who picks his corn every morning and I would stop and buy some on my way home from work, or while running errands on the weekend. When I got home I'd throw the corn in a big cooler full of cold water and close the lid. When it was time to start cooking and the grill was hot, I'd just pull out the ears with the silk and husks still in place and throw them on the grill. When the burgers were done so was the corn. As I said the best corn in the world!!! (Sigh) As much as I love living on this little island, and the mangos and avocados all year long are to die for right now I'd give my arm for some home grilled Ohio sweet corn!!

I snap myself out of a corn fantasy and back to the task at hand Lammas.

The third thing I think of when I think of Lammas is time to harvest and preserve the herbs I've been growing since early spring. Keep in mind that Lammas is the first of three harvests and many if not all your herbs still have a way to go, be they annuals or perennials. So here are some tips and suggestions to help you with the process.

When to harvest:

The best time to harvest is before your herbs have gone to flower – but if you missed this not to worry. Just remove the flowers whenever you see them popping up. This is a good practice throughout the growing season. Your herbs will be stronger and tastier if the energy goes back into the plant and not the flower. Remember to thank your plants and ask permission to cut them and don't



Basil



Bay Leaf



Chives



Coriander



Dill

take more than one third of the entire plant at each harvest. The best time to cut the plants is mid morning, when the dew has already evaporated but wilting from the mid-day and afternoon sun has yet to start. If you like to garden by the Moon, as I do, the best time to harvest just about anything is during the waning Moon and on August 1st we will be well into a waning Moon as our Full Moon is July 26th. Please remember not to harvest your perennials too late in the season They need time to recover before the first frost. Annuals on the other hand, you will want to do a final harvest before the first frost at which time you will harvest the entire plant.

If you are planning on using your herbs fresh, just run them through some cold water, shake off excess water, wrap in paper towels and store them in the fridge. If you plan on using the herbs in a day or two, just put them in the fridge as is and wash them off just before you plan on using them. They will last longer this way. Don't wrap them in plastic or use baggies, they will wilt and go bad quickly. They need the air to circulate around them to keep them as fresh as possible for as long as possible.

Drying herbs:

There are several ways to dry herbs depending on the type of herb. If you are drying herbs with large leaves such as basil, loveage, sage and parsley it is best to tie together bunches of them with cotton twine. It is very important that they dry in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight and where there is a good amount of air circulating, like a basement or barn. Actually, I like to hang mine in the kitchen because I can see them and grab some when I need them for cooking. If you have a space where you can string up something like a clothesline, you can just tie your bundles of herbs to the clothes line. They look nice and can be easily monitored. If you are drying culinary herbs outside or if your basement is very dusty, you may want to consider covering them with paper bags. Dusty herbs don't taste very good!! Depending on the herb and its water content and how much air you have circulating, your herbs

should dry in 2-4 weeks.

If you are drying herbs with seed heads such as dill, coriander, and fennel, it is best to put the herbs in a paper sack and tie the stems together at the top of the sack. You can shake them periodically to loosen the seeds. They should dry in about 3 weeks.

Another way to dry herbs is by using screens. I personally don't do this as it takes up a lot of room. But if space is not an issue and you have access to screens, they really do dry faster this way. Just remove the leaves from the stems, and lay them out on the screens. The screens should be propped up so air can easily circulate above and below the leaves, but be sure to keep them out of the way of breezes or you will lose your herbs. They should be dry in a just a few days.

Other options for preserving your herbs:

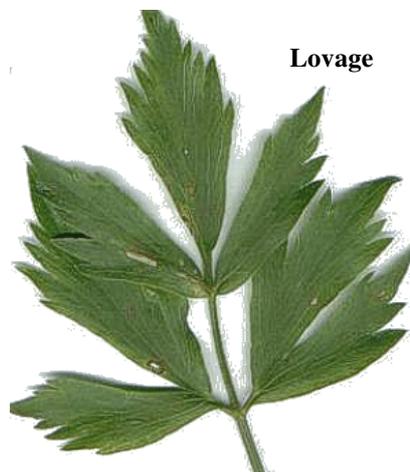
You may want to consider freezing your herbs, especially if space is an issue. It's really easy. Just take a bunch of clean leaves, like basil, mint, loveage, oregano – anything with a larger leaf. Put the leaves in a food processor with little bit of water and process. Pour into ice cube trays and freeze. Once frozen, you can store them in freezer bags. Be sure to label them, once processed they all look very similar and pineapple mint in your spaghetti sauce may not work too well! When you want to add a little “pop” to your favorite recipe, just throw in an ice cube – a standard size ice cube is about 1 tablespoon of pureed herb.

Other than culinary herbs you may want to consider preserving medicinal herbs as well. This recipe will work with any medicinal herb used topically. I love comfrey. It's big and beautiful and works wonders on burns, scrapes, cuts and generally all boo-boos. You can make a poultice and freeze them to use in the winter. Or you can make a salve. Harvest a bunch of comfrey leaves, shake them well to get off any bugs or other stray materials. I use equal parts of compressed leaves to olive oil. So, 2 cups of compressed comfrey leaves to 2 cups of olive oil (this makes a lot of

Fennel



Loveage



Mint



Oregano



Rosemary



Sage



salve, way more than you'll use in a life time, so if you don't want to give it away as gifts or sell it, start small). Put the olive oil and leaves in a pot and let it cook over medium heat (don't boil) for about an hour. Then, let it stand for 24 hours. Strain the comfrey leaves out of the mixture. At this point, for fun and to add a little interest you can throw in some lavender flowers and calendula flowers, and finally add a half cup of bees wax*. The bees wax is very important because it holds it all together and makes it easy to apply. Heat on low, stirring, just long enough for the wax to melt. Once the wax is melted pour into tins or glass jars. I keep mine in the fridge. *You can buy a bag of bees wax pellets at most craft stores.

longer this way. Store in glass jars, preferable dark glass with tight lids. Check them periodically for mold. If your herbs are not completely dry they will mold and you will have to throw them out, so err on the side to too dry! Be sure to label everything. Store your jars in a dark place to keep them fresh.

I know some people like to dry their herbs in the oven or even the micro wave (yikes) and I have tried this too, but I believe they last longer and keep their flavor longer if done the old fashioned way. After all your hard work throughout the spring and the summer, with a little bit of effort your garden can continue to please you throughout the winter as well.

Enjoy and Happy Lammas!

References:

- www.earthwitchery.com/lammas.html
- www.moongrow.com

Storing your herbs:

Once everything is completely dry, its time to store them away for future use. Store your leaves whole and crumble them up right before you use them. They will keep their flavor

Star-anise



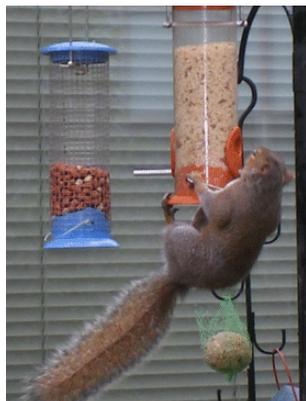
Thyme

July 2010 © Lyric MoonShadow
Lyric lives on the island of Sint. Maarten in the Netherlands Antilles, and is a Shamanic Eclectic Wiccan. She has been a member of EW since 2007

Nature's Glory
Where's the Harvest???



Bird Feeder



Pagan Kitchen

By OwlOak

Greetings Folks ~ Here we are another Lammas, a festival celebrating the first grain harvest of the year and also a time of hot, sultry days - something we here in New England have had more than our share of.

Traditional Pagan Foods for the Lammas Festival include homemade breads (wheat, oat and especially cornbread), fresh sweet corn, potatoes, berry pies, barley cakes, nuts, wild berries, apples, rice, roasted lamb, acorns, crab apples, summer squash, turnips, herbs, jellies, oats, all grains and all other First Harvest foods. Traditional drinks are elderberry wine, ale and herbal "sun" teas.

As usual, I have tried to keep to the spirit of Sabbat without reverting to the cliché foods. And since the "Dog Days" of August are not the time to be confined to a hot kitchen, I've included a number of recipes for the grill. I hope you enjoy them.

For breakfast we have:

Homemade Granola

By OwlOak

Ingredients:

5 cups rolled oats
 1 cup blanched slivered almonds
 1 cup chopped walnuts
 1 cup chopped pecans
 1/2 cup sesame seeds
 1 cup wheat germ
 1 cup shredded coconut, toasted
 1 cup unsalted sunflower seeds
 1/2 cup vegetable oil
 1/2 cup honey
 1/4 cup real maple syrup
 1 cup raisins
 1 cup dried cranberries
 1 cup dried cherries
 1 tsp. vanilla extract
 1/2 tsp. Salt



Directions:

Preheat the oven to 325°F/165°C

In a large bowl stir together the oats, almonds, walnuts, pecans, sesame seeds, wheat germ, coconut and sunflower seeds.

In a small pan over medium heat stir together the oil, honey, maple syrup, vanilla and salt. Stir until blended.

Pour over the oat mixture and stir to coat evenly, then spread the mixture out in an even layer on two cookie sheets.

Bake for 20 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the oats and nuts are toasted.

Remove from the oven and immediately stir in the raisins, cherries and cranberries. Let stand until cooled and stir again to break up any large clusters.

Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to two weeks, or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

Honey-Nut Oat Muffins

By: OwlOak



Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups buttermilk
 1 cup rolled oats
 1/2 cup your favorite nuts, finely chopped
 2 tbsp. honey
 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
 1 cup all-purpose flour, plus 2 tbsp. reserved
 1 tsp. baking powder
 1/2 tsp. baking soda
 1/4 tsp. salt

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F/175°C.

Grease a muffin pan with vegetable shortening, or line it with paper muffin liners.

Combine the buttermilk and oats in a small saucepan and heat just until warm, then set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the honey and vegetable oil with the oat mixture.

Sift the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt, and stir into wet mixture.

Add the reserved 2 tbsp. of flour to the chopped nuts and mix well, then stir them into the batter.

Pour the batter into prepared muffin cups, about 3/4-full.

Bake until lightly browned, about 30 minutes.

Remove from the oven and serve warm, or cool and place in a plastic bag for later use. They may be frozen for up to 3 months.

Spinach and Mushroom Omelet

By: OwlOak



Ingredients:

8 eggs
 1 pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
 1/2 red onion, chopped
 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
 1 pinch cayenne pepper
 6 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
 1 lb, (454 gm.) fresh mushrooms, sliced
 2 tsp. vegetable oil

1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
 Salt and black pepper, to taste
 Chopped parsley, for garnish

Directions:

In a large nonstick skillet, sauté the mushrooms in oil for 6-8 minutes or until tender. Remove from the pan and drain on paper towels to remove excess grease. Keep warm.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Then stir in the spinach, onion, Italian seasoning and 1/2 the crumbled bacon.

Pour into a heated skillet and cook until the bottom has set.

Top with the mushrooms, remaining bacon, and shredded cheddar cheese.

When the omelet is cooked through, flip 1/2 of it upon itself and remove from the pan.

Sprinkle with the chopped parsley, cut into portions and serve immediately.

For lunch we have:

Turkey Salad with a Twist

By: OwlOak



Ingredients:

3/4 cup plain, unflavored, yogurt*
 1 lemon, juiced
 Salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste
 3 cups cubed cooked domestic turkey, or chicken, breast
 4 celery ribs, thinly sliced and diced
 1/4 cup chopped green pepper
 1/4 cup chopped sweet red pepper
 1/2 medium red onion, finely minced
 1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans, toasted - optional
 Paprika, as needed

Fresh chopped parsley, as needed
 Lettuce leaves, as needed
 Cherry tomatoes, as needed

Directions:

In a small bowl, combine the yogurt, lemon juice, salt and pepper. In a large bowl, combine the turkey, celery, onion and peppers; stir in the yogurt mixture until combined.

Cover and refrigerate overnight, or for at least 4 hours, to allow the flavors to combine.

Just before serving, taste and adjust the seasonings and stir in the toasted nuts.

To serve: Spoon a desired amount of the turkey salad onto a lettuce leaf and garnish with some paprika. Arrange 2-4 fresh cherry tomatoes around it and sprinkle the whole thing with some paprika and fresh chopped parsley.

Note: If you wish to present it as a buffet item, you can place the turkey salad on a large platter on a bed of lettuce and surround the whole thing with cherry tomatoes, letting your guests help themselves.

*Yogurt works very well in the place of mayonnaise. I had a father-in-law, now passed, who didn't like mayonnaise. So, I would use yogurt to make up "special" potato and macaroni salads as well as coleslaw just for him...worked excellently. So much so, he always insisted that I make them for him for all the family picnics.

Laura's Portuguese Sweet Bread

By AuroraRose



(adapted from the cookbook of Mme D'Albuquerque Athayde)

Ingredients:

10 cups flour
2 1/2 cups sugar
9 eggs
1/2 tbsp. shortening, melted
1 cup warm milk
2 1/2 packets active dry yeast
pinch salt

Directions:

Dissolve yeast in 1/2 cup warm water and add 1/2 tsp.

sugar. Wait until it doubles in volume.

Beat eggs until fluffy.

Add yeast and some of the flour until it makes a batter (I use about 3-4 cups).

Cover with "a cloth and a blanket" (I use several dishtowels), keeping warm until it bubbles (close to an hour).

Add melted shortening, sugar, milk, and salt. "A little glass of Aguardente will be good also." (This is a local-to-the-Azores liquor made from grapes...I usually use about 3-4 ounces of Christian Brothers brandy.)

Add the rest of the flour. Mix well, kneading several times. Cover (as above) and wait 'til it doubles. (I alternate the liquids with the flour, and usually end up having to knead in the last cup or two of flour, and I let rise more than just once.)

Shape into 3 round loaves and place in cake pans, brushing with an egg wash.

Bake at 350° F/177°C until golden brown, about 30 minutes.

Vegetarian Sloppy Joe Pizza

By OwlOak

Ingredients:

1 medium eggplant, peeled and chopped*
1 medium onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp. ground cumin
2 tsp. paprika
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 cup ketchup
2 tbs. apple cider vinegar
1 tbsp. brown sugar
2 tbsp. cooking oil
1/2 cup water
2 cups shredded cheese, divided – Mozzarella, Cheddar, or Jack Cheese work well



1 recipe 2 pizza dough (see below)

Directions:

Brown the eggplant in a large skillet with the olive oil.

Add the onion, garlic, cumin, paprika and cayenne pepper.

Allow to cook for 1 minute; then stir in the ketchup, apple cider vinegar, brown sugar and water.

Simmer until thick, about 15 minutes.

Remove from the heat and divide between the pizza crusts. Sprinkle with the cheese and bake for 10-12 minutes, or until the crusts are browned and the cheese is melted.

*1 lb. (454 gms.) 80/20 ground beef can be used in place of the eggplant.

Basic Pizza Dough

By OwlOak

Ingredients:

1 pkg. rapid rise yeast
1 cup warm water
1 tsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
2 tbsp. olive or vegetable oil
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
Cornmeal, as needed

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 525°F/274°C

In a large bowl, combine the 2 cups of flour, yeast, and salt. Stir the warm water and olive oil into flour mixture,

and then stir in enough of the remaining flour to make a soft dough.

Remove from the bowl and knead on a lightly floured surface until smooth and elastic, about 4 to 6 minutes. Lightly coat the bowl with olive oil, or cooking spray, and return the dough to it. Set the mixing bowl of dough in a pan of warm water, cover, and let rise for 10-20 minutes.

Lightly oil 2 -12-inch (30 cm.) round pizza pans and sprinkle them with some cornmeal.

Remove the dough from the bowl, and shape into a smooth ball. Divide the ball in half and pat each half of the dough out on the prepared pans. If you would like a larger single pan pizza, then pat all the dough out on a cookie sheet in place of the 2 pizza pans.

Grilled Beef-Stuffed Summer Squash

By OwlOak



Ingredients:

4 medium summer squash or zucchini
 1 lb. (454 gm.) ground beef*
 1/2 cup chopped onion
 1 egg
 3/4 cup marinara sauce
 1/4 cup seasoned breadcrumbs
 1/4 tsp. salt
 1/4 tsp pepper
 1 cup your favorite shredded cheese, divided
 Additional marinara sauce (optional)

Directions:

Cut the squash in half lengthwise then cut a thin slice from the bottom of each with a sharp knife to allow it to sit flat.

Scoop out the seeds. Do the same to the pulp leaving a 1/4-inch lining of pulp in the shells. Chop the pulp and reserve.

In a large skillet, cook beef, chopped pulp and onion over medium heat until the meat is no longer pink. Remove from the heat and drain.

Stir in the egg, marinara sauce, bread crumbs, salt, pepper and 1/2 cup cheese.

Spoon filling into each shell and top with the remaining cheese.

Place on a greased, medium temperature grill. Grill, covered, until the squash are tender, the filling is heated through, and the cheese is melted.

Remove from the grill and serve with the additional marinara sauce, if desired.

*To make it vegetarian just substitute peeled and chopped eggplant and 2 tbsp. olive oil in place of the ground beef.



If that's not enough to keep you going then for dinner we have:

Shrimp Pasta Pomodoro

By: OwlOak



Ingredients:

1 lb. (454 gm.) peeled and deveined medium shrimp, or diced cooked chicken
 1 lb. (454 gm.) angel hair, or your favorite, pasta
 1/4 cup olive oil
 1/2 onion, chopped
 4 cloves garlic, finely minced
 1/4 cup white wine, optional
 2 cups plum tomatoes, such as Roma, peeled and diced
 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar

1-14 oz. (396 gm.) can chicken broth
 Crushed red pepper, optional and to taste
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 2 tbsp. chopped fresh basil
 Grated Parmesan cheese, to taste

Directions:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook to taste.

While the pasta is boiling, pour the olive oil to a large deep skillet over high-heat. Add the onions and garlic and sauté until lightly browned.

Add the wine to deglaze the pan then reduce the heat to medium and add the tomatoes, shrimp, vinegar and chicken broth. Stir in the red pepper, black pepper, salt and basil. Allow to simmer until the shrimp is cooked. Taste and adjust seasonings if needed.

Drain the pasta and add to the pan. Toss thoroughly with the sauce. Return the mixture to a simmer then turn off the heat and pour into a large serving bowl, or onto a large platter. Top with the Parmesan cheese and serve immediately.

For a vegetarian friendly version, replace the shrimp with 1 peeled, diced and sautéed eggplant, and the chicken broth with vegetable broth.

Garlic Cheese Bread

By: OwlOak



Ingredients:

1 stick butter, room temperature
 1/4 cup mayonnaise
 1/2 cup fresh grated Parmesan cheese
 2 tbsp. garlic powder
 1 loaf Italian bread
 1 tsp. paprika
 Chopped parsley

Directions:

Preheat the broiler.

In a medium bowl, mix the mayonnaise and garlic powder.

Slice the Italian bread in half lengthwise and generously spread each half with the butter, then with the mayonnaise mixture.

Sprinkle with the paprika, parsley, and graded Parmesan cheese.

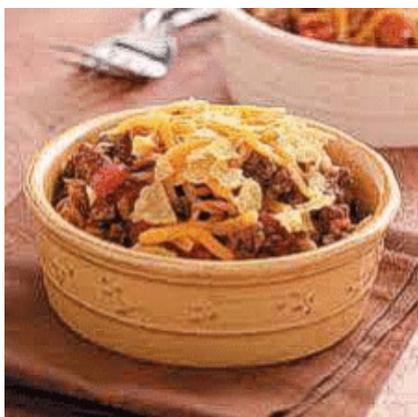
Place the halves, face up, on a medium baking sheet and broil for 2 to 5 minutes, checking frequently, until the cheese is golden brown.*

Remove from the broiler, cut into thick slices and serve immediately.

*Frequent checking is critical, as they can very quickly get away from you and burn. And, nobody wants to have that happen to them.

Vegetarian Taco Bowls

By: OwlOak



Ingredients:

2 cups cooked lentils, drained*
 2 tsp. chili powder, or to taste
 1 tsp. ground cumin, or to taste
 1 tsp. hot sauce, or to taste
 Salt and pepper, to taste
 1 1/2 cups biscuit/baking mix**
 3-4 tbsp. cold water
 1 medium tomato, diced
 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
 1/2 avocado, diced
 1 medium red onion, diced
 1 wedge lettuce, shredded
 1/4 cup sour cream

1/4 cup mayonnaise
 1 cup shredded Jack Cheese

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375°F/190°C.

Combine the lentils, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper. Taste and adjust seasonings to suit your taste buds, then set aside.

Add the water to the biscuit mix and stir to form a soft dough. Press the dough onto the bottom and up the sides of 4 oven-proof bowls which have been coated with cooking spray.

Divide the lentil mixture between them and top with the tomato and green pepper.

Combine the sour cream, mayonnaise, avocado, and onion then divide and spread evenly over the top of each bowl.

Sprinkle each bowl with some of the shredded cheese and bake 20-25 minutes, or until heated through. The cheese should be lightly browned and the bowls gently bubbling.

Remove from the oven and top with the shredded lettuce. Serve immediately.

*To turn this into a meat dish use 1 lb. (454gms.) browned ground beef in place of the lentils.

**If you prefer, cornbread mix can be used in place of the baking mix - just remember when adding liquid that the mix has to be firm enough to be molded into the bowls.

Roasted Corn Salsa

By OwlOak

Ingredients:

4 ears roasted corn on the cob, or thawed frozen kernel corn
 1 large red tomato, chopped
 1 small jalapeño pepper - seeded, deveined, and finely chopped (optional)
 1 garlic clove, minced
 2 tbsp. diced sweet red bell pepper
 1/2 tsp. celery seed
 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice
 1 tbsp. fresh chopped cilantro
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/8 tsp. black pepper
 1/8 tsp. ground cumin
 3 tbsp. mild olive oil
 Additional mild olive oil, as needed



Directions:

Remove the roasted corn from the cob and place in a medium bowl.

Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Adjust seasonings, cover and refrigerate - overnight is best to let the

flavors mingle.

To serve, remove from the refrigerator and allow to reach room temperature before using.

Roasted Corn ~ Oven method:

Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C

Remove the husks and brush the ears with mild olive oil.

Place ears of corn on a baking sheet and roast for 15-20 minutes, or until the kernels start to turn a light golden brown. If using frozen corn kernels, then just spread them on a lightly oiled baking sheet and continue as above.

Grill method:

Remove the silk from the ears and soak in cold water for 1/2 hour.

Remove the corn from the water and allow the excess water to drain out.

Place the ears of corn directly on a grill set on high heat.

Grill the corn for about 10-15 minutes, turning every couple of minutes, or until the kernels turn a bright yellow - some of the kernels may have turned black from the grilling process, but that's ok.

Note: If you prefer, this recipe can be made with un-roasted corn, but the flavor will not be the same.

Southwest Veggie Burritos

By: OwlOak

Ingredients:

2 small zucchini, yellow summer squash, or one of each, shredded
 2 medium carrots, shredded
 1 medium onion, finely chopped
 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
 2 cans black beans, drained and rinsed
 1 1/2 cups corn, canned or thawed frozen
 3/4 cup salsa
 2 tbsp. taco seasoning (homemade recipe follows)



2 tsp. ground cumin
 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, minced
 8 - 8 inch (20 cm.) flour tortillas, warmed

Directions:

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the squash, carrots, beans, corn, salsa, taco seasoning, cumin and onion in the oil until tender.

Remove from the heat and stir in the cheese and the cilantro.

Spoon about 2/3 cupful towards the bottom of each tortilla. Flip the bottom of the tortilla over the filling, then fold each side toward the middle and roll it up.

Homemade Taco Seasoning Mix

By: OwlOak

Ingredients:

4 tbsp. instant minced onion
 2 tbsp. chili powder
 2 tsp. paprika
 2 tsp. dried red peppers, crushed
 1 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
 4 tsp. salt
 1 tbsp. cornstarch
 1 tbsp. instant minced garlic

2 tsp. ground cumin

Directions:

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl and blend thoroughly with wire whisk. Spoon the mixture into a suitable container, tightly seal and label. Store in a cool, dry place. Use within 6 months.

This recipe makes 6 servings (about 2 tbsp. each) of Taco Seasoning mix - 2 tbsp. equals a 1.25-oz. (35 gm.) pkg. of purchased taco seasoning mix.

For dessert we have a cool and delicious treat:

Grilled Peach and Pound Cake Delight

By OwlOak

Ingredients:

4 ripe peaches, peeled, pitted and halved length-wise

1 pound cake, cut into 8 slices

1 stick butter, softened
Your favorite ice cream – vanilla, chocolate and peach would work well, as would peach sherbet

Chocolate sauce (see recipe below)

Whipped cream



Chopped nuts
Maraschino cherries

Directions:

Heat the grill to medium low and lightly brush with oil.

Place the peach halves cut-side down on the grill and grill for 2 minutes, then gently turn over and grill for 1-2 minutes more (they should be soft but not mushy). Remove from the grill and set aside.

Lightly butter both sides of the cake slices and place on the grill until lightly browned on both sides.

Place a cake slice on a plate and top with 1 peach half with the cut-side facing up. Put a scoop of ice cream in the hollow and drizzle with chocolate sauce. Top with whipped cream, chopped nuts and a cherry.

Chocolate Sauce

By OwlOak

Ingredients:

1 cup half-and-half

1/2 cup sugar

1/4 cup cocoa

3 tbsp. butter

1 tsp. vanilla extract

2-3 tbsp. peach schnapps - optional

Directions:

Combine half-and-half, sugar, cocoa, and butter in a heavy, small saucepan. Whisk over low heat until the sugar dissolves and the butter melts. Increase the heat to medium and whisk until the sauce just begins to simmer. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla and schnapps.

Allow to cool before serving.

And to wash this all down we have:

Summer Beer Cocktails

By: OwlOak

Ingredients:

1 large can frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed*

1 1/2 cups water

1 1/2 cups vodka



1 1/2 cups beer
Ice cubes, as needed

Directions:

Place the concentrate in a gallon pitcher and add the water and vodka. Pour in the beer, mix well and finish filling the pitcher with ice cubes.

Serve over ice.

* For a Tex-Mex flavor, use limeade concentrate in place of the lemonade and tequila in place of the vodka.

Well, there you have it folks, good food and drink to help you, your loved ones and friends celebrate the First Harvest. Now, I ask you, who could ask for more than that?

From my Circle to yours...Happy Lammas!

Huggs & B*B ~ OwlOak

This article contains recipes of my own, and/or other credited individuals. Mine are either original or adapted from those I've acquired over the years, along with family recipes that have been handed down to me by dearly departed family members. Any duplication of recipes created by others is accidental and unintentional.

Responsibility for the source and content of any published recipe is strictly the responsibility of the originator.

If any one wishes to comment or make suggestions on the Pagan Kitchen please feel free to write me <jrr147@yahoo.com>. Also, please mention "Pagan Kitchen" in the subject line so it doesn't go into my "Spam" file.

July 2010 © James Rancourt, aka OwlOak
OwlOak lives in New England, USA and is a Wiccan High Priest.
He has been an EW member since 2003.

The Magic of Angels

(Part 1)

By Graham D. Furnell

"The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be. Not in the spaces we know, but between them. They walk serene and primal, undimensioned and to us unseen."

H.P. Lovecraft - the Necronomicon.

Angels are undoubtedly one of the most familiar representations of spiritual beings in Western culture. There would be few of us who would not be familiar with the modern-day, stereotypical image of an angel – a shining being, replete in white robe, wings and possibly having a halo above the head; an agent of the divine who can provide aid in times of need. This is a beautiful and powerful image that has offered great comfort to many over the years; and which, more often than not, has probably stemmed from our exposure to adaptations of Judeo-Christian religious concepts. This may lead some to conclude that angels are a little “fluffy” and irrelevant to the practices of alternative religious paths. However, as is the case with many of the world’s religions, there are archetypal features that suggest common roots which are more ancient and fundamental than many of today’s followers of those religions may be aware of or wish to concede. Such is the case with angels, who, in various guises, have featured in religious and magical culture since the dawn of human civilization.

In this article, I would like to explore the cultural origins, characteristics, and modes of communion that have been associated with these majestic spiritual beings since those earliest of times. It is hoped that in doing so, I and those who read this article will become more aware of, and thus be better prepared to embrace should they wish, angelic energies in their own religious and magical practices.

Let us begin our exploration by considering the Judeo-Christian perspective on angels according to the Catholic Encyclopedia (www.newadvent.org/cathen). The encyclopedia states that the word angel comes from the Latin “angelus”, which took its meaning from the Hebrew term for “one going” or “one sent”, messenger. Interestingly, it says that the Hebrew interpretation is indifferent to whether the messenger is divine or human. The encyclopedia further states that angels are considered to be “spiritual beings intermediate between God and men”, and that they do indeed most often feature in the Bible as God’s messengers - for example, when the prophet Zacharias received his revelations from an angel, depicted as speaking “in him”. However, the roles of angels are not restricted to them being purely messengers. They may also act as personal guardians, as indicated in the words of St. Jerome, “The dignity of a soul is so great, that each has a guardian angel from its birth”; and as divine agents capable of unleashing both constructive and destructive forces upon the material world – all in the name of God. According to the Bible, even the wind rustling in the tree-tops was regarded as an angel, which

perhaps provides a hint of animist origins in earlier times. The final piece of church doctrine that we will take from the encyclopedia regards the hierarchy of angels. The following passages from Pope St. Gregory I (540-604 CE) provide a good explanation:

We know on the authority of Scripture that there are nine orders of angels, viz., Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Dominations, Throne, Cherubim and Seraphim. That there are Angels and Archangels nearly every page of the Bible tells us, and the books of the Prophets talk of Cherubim and Seraphim. St. Paul, too, writing to the Ephesians enumerates four orders when he says: ‘above all Principality, and Power, and Virtue, and Domination’; and again, writing to the Colossians he says ‘whether Thrones, or Dominations, or Principalities, or Powers’. If we now join these two lists together we have five Orders, and adding Angels and Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim, we find nine Orders of Angels.

We will revisit the Judeo-Christian perspective on angels later; but for now, let us journey back in time to the dawn of history to see what more we can discover about the nature of angels as we slowly work forward from those earliest of times to the more recent.

Archaeological discoveries have shown that winged human forms were venerated in what is widely considered to be the cradle of civilization, ancient Mesopotamia - where civilizations such as the Sumerian, Akkadian and Babylonian arose from origins that extended back in time to at least 3,000 BCE, on the fertile plains between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates in what is now Iraq. Ancient seals and reliefs depict the great Sumerian goddess of sexual love, fertility and warfare Inanna, (Babylonian/Biblical counterparts Ishtar/Lilith), with a set of wings, which were believed to convey divine protection. Upward pointing wings indicated her “worldly” aspect, while downward pointing wings indicated her “underworld” aspect. Preeminent depictions of the goddess as Ishtar are shown.



Imprint from the “Greenstone seal of Adda” ca. 2,300 BCE displayed in the British Museum: “Showing principal Mesopotamian deities including centrally, Ishtar - the goddess of fertility (indicated by the cluster of dates) and war (the weapons rising from her shoulders) who stands winged for victory.” (source: www.britishmuseum.org)



The “Queen of the Night” relief ca. 1,800 BCE displayed in the British Museum: “The figure could be an aspect of the goddess Ishtar, Mesopotamian goddess of sexual love and war, or Ishtar’s sister and rival, the goddess Ereshkigal who ruled over the Underworld, or the demoness Lilitu, known in the Bible as Lilith.” (source: www.britishmuseum.org)

The ancient Sumerians also worshipped a class of powerful deities whom they called the Anu-Naki, which literally meant “of or from the sky”. Studies of correlations between the literature and mythology of the ancient Sumerians, and accounts appearing in biblical texts have suggested that some of these ancient deities may have served as prototypes for the archangels that we are familiar with today. For example:

Enlil – “Lord of the wind”, was a ruling deity who corresponded to the illuminating archangel Uriel.

Ninlil – “Lady of the air”, was the consort of Enlil who corresponded to the messenger archangel Gabriel.

Enki – was a deity of crafts, water, intelligence and creation who corresponded to the healing archangel Raphael.

Ninurta – was a warrior deity who corresponded to the protective archangel Michael.

Seven demi-gods called the Abgal were also worshipped. They were considered to be priests of Enki who served as sages or advisors to the earliest kings of Sumer. The ancient Akkadians knew them as the Apkallu, and also worshipped them for their magical protective powers. Stone relief carvings of the Apkallu were strategically placed in palaces and courtyards to deter malevolent demons, and these carvings provide some of the most striking representations of the winged angelic archetype to have come from ancient Mesopotamia.

Top right is a copy of an ancient relief depicting one of the Apkallu. The original is housed in the British Museum, London, and once guarded an entrance to the throne room of King Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE) in his palace at Nimrud. (source: www.agelessartifacts.com)



Wings appeared in other divine imagery in ancient Mesopotamia; in particular, on statues of the mythological creature known as the Lamassu. This was a winged bull or lion having the head of a human – examples of which have been found at the city gates of ancient cities such as Nimrud. The wings of these creatures were those of the mighty eagle, the most powerful bird in the sky who oversaw all below. This, combined with the strength of the Bull’s/Lion’s body and the intelligence of the human head, made the Lamassu a formidable protective creature. Statues of the Lamassu were positioned at city gates to repel those having ill intent who may seek to gain entry. Thus, from the above, we can see that even from these early times winged beings had a strong association with divine realms, the powers of protection and angelic prototypes.



The Lamassu - a protective mythological creature from ancient Mesopotamia that had the body of a bull or lion, the head of a human, and the wings of an eagle.

We will now move on to consider an ancient culture which also venerated imagery of winged divinity – ancient Egypt. Similarly to Mesopotamia, the culture of ancient Egypt extended back many thousands of years. It was renowned for the sophistication of its religious beliefs and the beauty of the artistic representations of the deities worshiped, particularly the goddesses. For me personally, some of the most beautiful artistic representations of ancient Egyptian goddesses are those showing winged Isis and Ma’at. Generally, these two representations look

quite similar, with the only obvious distinctions in appearance being in the headdress worn by each. Ma'at, goddess of truth, order and justice wears the sacred ostrich feather of truth, and is often represented in her primary mythological role of overseeing the judgment of souls entering the underworld. Isis, the great goddess of nature, fertility and magic wears a headdress shaped like a throne. Her primary mythological role was the magical resurrection of her slain brother and husband, Osiris, and the bearing of his divine successor, Horus. For both goddesses, their magnificent wings symbolized the protection that they could bestow upon the worthy, and further demonstrated an association between the winged angelic archetype and divine realms in ancient religion.

Another interesting example of a winged spiritual entity in ancient Egypt was that of the "Ba" - the part of a deceased's soul which was associated with one's non-physical individuality, that is, the personality. The Ba was often depicted as a human-headed bird seen hovering above the body of a deceased person, serving as a spiritual link between the worlds of the mundane and divine. Finally, the Winged Sun Disc was a much revered symbol of power and divinity in the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Hebrew cultures. Also regarded as a symbol of the eternal soul in ancient Egypt, the Winged Sun Disc was placed above temple doors to remind those who entered of this eternal aspect of themselves.



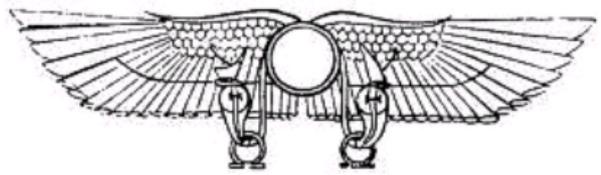
Papyrus print showing winged Isis.



Tomb painting showing winged Ma'at.



Depiction of a deceased person's Ba, seen hovering above the body.



The Winged Sun Disc - revered symbol of power, divinity, and the eternal soul.

In approximately 650 BCE, a new religion called Zoroastrianism took hold in ancient Persia - a region we now know as Iran. Though thought to have evolved from the older Mesopotamian polytheist beliefs, Zoroastrianism is credited with having arisen at this time from the teachings of the prophet Zarathustra (known to the Greeks as Zoroaster). Zoroastrianism is considered to be the world's first monotheistic religion, due to its worship of the supreme deity Ahura Mazda - venerated as the source of all good and light in the world. Aligned against Ahura Mazda were the forces of evil and darkness, personified by Angra Mainyu. In this manner, Zoroastrianism promoted the dualistic moral concept of good versus evil. Zoroastrianism also promised a final resurrection to heavenly realms for those who had lived a good life according to the moral principles promoted by that religion.

Zoroastrianism became the official religion of the Persian Empire, which, during the period 550-330 BCE, came to be the largest ancient empire in history, bringing more than half the known world under the rule of such famous kings as Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes. These rulers saw it as their religious duty to convert their subjects to Zoroastrianism, which consequently came to be a dominant religion in the ancient world. Because of this, and its features of monotheism, moral duality and the promise of a final resurrection, Zoroastrianism is thought to have had a significant influence on the development of other similar monotheistic religions that originated in the Middle East region; namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

In Zoroastrianism, we encounter angelic forms in a more familiar context, where they are referred to as Amesha

Spentas (“bounteous immortals”) and Yazatas (“adorable ones”). There are seven Amesha Spentas, corresponding to what we would recognize as archangels, with each representing a particular divine aspect of Ahura Mazda. For example, Spenta Mainyu is the holy spirit of Ahura Mazda, whose dominion is the world of humans. Like all archangels (and angels) in Zoroastrianism, Spenta Mainyu has an evil counterpart or daeva, which in this case is Angra Mainyu. The archangel Vohu Manah represents the “good moral life”, which is achieved in Zoroastrianism through the practice of the three pillars - “good words, good thoughts and good deeds”. Vohu Manah is also credited as being the archangel who appeared to Zarathustra while he stood on a river bank, commanding him to attend the heavenly court of Ahura Mazda so that the principles of Zoroastrianism could be disclosed to him. Yazatas is the collective name for spiritual beings that we would associate with as being angels, who made up a great army of light in support of Ahura Mazda. Amongst the most significant Yazatas was Mithra - recognized as a Sun god of the old polytheist religion, who, according to myth, captured and sacrificed a sacred bull of plenty (believed by some to represent himself) for the benefit of humanity; and by some accounts, was born of a virgin (some also credit Zarathustra himself with such a birth) at the winter solstice, and when he died, was buried in a cave only to be later resurrected. Also important amongst the Yazatas is a group called the Fravashis - guardian angels of both man and nature. One of the best known symbols of Zoroastrianism is the Faravahar, a depiction of a Fravashi in the form of a human superimposed onto a sacred winged disc. Amesha Spentas and Yazatas are honored by having months of the Persian calendar named after them, and by having specific days on which they are commemorated. Zoroastrians typically select a patron angel to be their protector throughout life, and make sure to honor that angel in their regular prayers.



The Faravahar, a famous symbol of Zoroastrianism which is a depiction of a Fravashi (Guardian Angel).



A modern artist's representation of Spenta Mainyu - the Amesha Spenta (Archangel) corresponding to the holy spirit of Ahura Mazda (source: www.persiandna.com)

So far, we have seen the angelic archetype evolve from various winged representations of the divine, its power and protection in the old polytheist religions of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt; to the emergence of more familiar forms in Zoroastrianism, the monotheist religion of ancient Persia. Here, the gods and goddesses of old gave way to hosts of “angels”, subservient to a single supreme deity, Ahura Mazda, and tasked with defending that deity’s cause of light and good against the daevas or “false gods” who represented darkness and evil. Thus, the polytheistic ways of old were overtaken by this new monotheist and moralistic religion – a forerunner of similar religions that would also emerge in the middle-east region. However, as we shall see, some characteristics of the old polytheistic ways would continue to be reflected in angels from time to time, in such characteristics as their capability for negative as well as positive acts. In the second part of this article, we will continue our study by considering these and other issues when examining the prevalence of the angelic archetype in Greco-Roman, Hebrew, Christian and Islamic religious culture.

Sources

<http://en.wikipedia.org/>

August Rune Reading:



Hagalaz - Ingwaz - Isa

Note: *The rune readings will be slightly upgraded. Prior to this reading, the majority of the casts have been a single draw. Henceforth, the casts will be a three rune draw (from left to right: present state, action to be taken, outcome).*

The portentous nature of Hagalaz (hail) still shakes our current traumatic state. This is to be expected, as the seeping of hail into the earth is a slower process than that of water. Some of us might have experienced trouble this past month with different goals and the like, and we still doubt some of our capabilities on whether we are able or should accomplish the objectives we set for ourselves. Note that these feelings are the bitterness of hail, a resentment that will soon melt away.

In order for us to spring from the harshness of “hail”, we are warmly greeted with Ingwaz – the seed of growth and fertility. We must take advantage of a nurtured ground and see our plans come into the fruition they so rightly deserve. As it stands in the line-up, the period of gestation is over, and growth soon follows. In this case, Ingwaz is a rune of projective action. The action to be taken is to listen and guide ourselves to where we want to go.

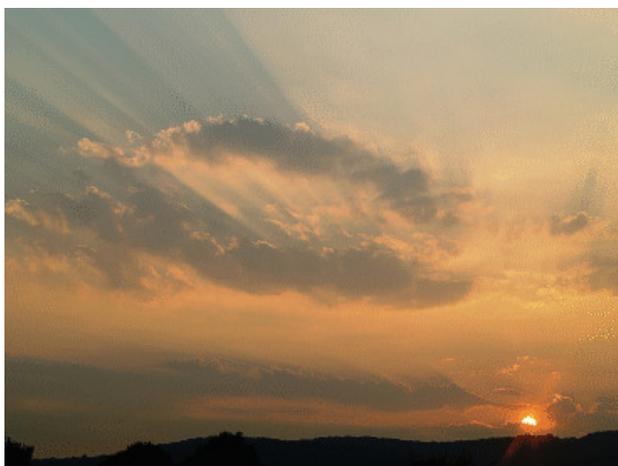
Isa is the rune of ice; and although this might seem contradictory to go from a “hail” rune to an “ice” rune, Isa is here to assure us that our future will be that of calm stillness. This will be a time where we can gaze at our accomplishments with pride and reflect on what we have endured (Hagalaz), how we have matured (Ingwaz), and how capable we are to do it all over again as the cycle continues (Isa).

Bless Bless!

Rune Reading by: Diancécht Óndulfr Pálsson - aka Rune Man

Rune Man has been a member of Email Witches since the 17th Aug 2009

Nature's Glory ~ Pics from our Members



Summer Sunset by Pari



Dancing Birches by Pari

Metaphysics

Dead In The Water

By Tamra L. Conbruck

*Death is one of two things...
Either it is annihilation, and the dead have no
consciousness of anything;
Or, as we are told, it is really a change;
A migration of the soul from one place to another.*

~ Socrates ~

Mandy. It was Mandy. She's the one who pushed my face into the maggot meat, the one who hung the dead cat attached to the fishnet outside the bedroom window. She was the one who did a lot of very bad things and always got away with it, even if I *did* have the guts to tell, which I didn't. Mandy was *not* a nice person. Even at the ripe old age of eight, I knew enough from past experience to never, ever, believe a promise or a smile if it was coming from *her* lips. But she was good at it. And I was a sucker who, even back then, always hoped for authenticity.

For reasons, that to this day are unfathomable, Mandy and her siblings were often in charge; compliments of my mother. They were neighbors on the same long stretch of road. They owned a house at one end, and we lived in the apartment complex at the other. We were in beautiful El Monte, California in the early seventies. My brothers, sister and I were the only white kids in the area. Our towheads were beacons of light for bad guys trolling through an otherwise dark ocean of brown and black.

Mandy and my sister Debbie were best friends, so why was Mandy in charge and not Debbie? At least with Debbie there was always a slim chance of fighting my way out or through whatever games she had floating around in her head. There was no way out or through it with Mandy. If you were stupid enough to get cornered, you were in it deep until she decided to let you go. And she had co-conspirators, like sheep herders, her little sister Rose and big brother Tony. All three towered over me like grown-ups, and Tony was a guy! Even if I did manage to get past Mandy and Rose, Tony was too fast for me.

It was never a fair fight, whether you got caught by one, or three, or half a dozen. It was always an ambush; separate, surround, and sick-em! Debbie never played fair either, but at least she could get bored and lose interest or get distracted by friends, weed, or just something she found more interesting, whereas the others were too focused. Get one of their attentions and you knew you were going to suffer no small amount of pain or humiliation. It was all about severe domination. They were the alpha dogs. I was a chew toy.

This day though, seemed to be a very good one. I'm not sure how I ended up in someone's swimming pool. I couldn't always remember how I got into some of these

situations, but why look gift horses in the mouth? The sun was hot and the water was cold and clean and blue. It was an apartment building pool, but our building didn't have one. So wherever I was, as always, I didn't have a clue. I slowly turned in a circle to take in this new water wonderland. Although barely registering in my brain, I could still see that the very few others who were in the water that day *seemed* to be having a good time...until my eyes fell on Debbie.

At first I didn't understand what I was seeing. They were at the other end of the pool. It was the shallow end. I knew this because they seemed to be standing up in the water and on my side of the pool I could not feel the bottom with my feet. There was movement and splashing between them. It kind of looked like they were dancing. They liked to dance to the radio together. They were friends, often even partners in crime. When Mandy was with Debbie, I knew any attempt on my part to distract my sister from the pain she would cause me would not work. Mandy kept her too focused, always coaching her on the finer arts of torturing little girls.

But something about the dance I was watching didn't quite make sense. I decided to become Spock and analyze the situation. But that wasn't always a good thing, because Spock was a Vulcan and didn't quite understand the nature of human beings. But I watched anyways. As Spock, it was *my* time to focus and I wasn't going to shirk this off.

I watched the two older girls as they splashed and wrestled on the opposite side of the pool. What looked like a game at first, quickly took on the appearance of something much more sinister. They weren't laughing or yelling or screaming, but both their faces were scrunched up in identical masks of extreme concentration.

Then my sister's head disappeared under the water and Mandy's arms plunged in from above, keeping her from coming back up for air. Debbie was flailing and splashing like crazy. Then Tony was in the pool pulling Debbie out and carrying her up the stairs and into some unknown resident's apartment. She seemed to be crying. I don't think I had ever seen my sister cry before, and it baffled me. The whole situation made absolutely no sense. Debbie and Mandy were almost the same person. They were the bad guys. They were on the same side. There was no reason for them to be fighting amongst themselves.

Once my older sister disappeared from view, I unwittingly felt myself drifting toward Mandy who was still standing in the shallow end of the pool. I hadn't become myself again, a little girl who knew exactly what *not* to do in this type of situation. I was still Spock, observing, analyzing, and collecting data. And then there I was, directly in front of Mandy. And, before I even knew what I was saying, out popped the ever present question, "Why?"

As an adult looking back on this particular experience I always catch myself silently screaming at the little me, trying to get my attention, *Wake up! Wake Up now! You*

are not Spock! Get out of the pool!" Of course it didn't work. It never works because it already happened. No matter how many times I relive it, that kid's going under.

So there I was, little Spock, locked in place before Mandy by the sheer power of her mischievous glare. Too close for comfort. But Spock didn't fear. He was not a creature who responded to human emotion. My present self cringes to at knowing what comes next, and I brace myself for the wild panic I am about to relive.

"Why did you just try to drown my sister?" There it was, said without the slightest twinge of emotion, aside from a barely audible curiosity; a willing chew toy presenting myself to the alpha dog. And I knew my mistake the moment I registered the twisted smile on Mandy's face.

"For the same reason", she proclaimed in a sticky-sweet voice, "I am going to drown *you*."

In less than a second and longer than a lifetime, I was plunged under the water. It happened so quickly and yet her hands came down upon my head in a surreal slow motion. I'm sure I knew it was coming. I should have snatched in one more quick breath before the water swallowed me up. But even in slow motion I didn't have time.

Spock was gone, completely forgotten along with his logic. And I was a small, weak, eight year old girl instantly engulfed in the rawest form of pure, unfiltered, terrifying panic, gripping and clutching and pulling at the strong unmovable arms holding me under.

Her fingers were stone hooks anchored to my hair and scalp and I didn't have the strength to peel them off. Complete chaos exploded inside my head. My lungs began to burn and my cheeks expanded with what little air I had left. I needed to breathe! I thrashed and pulled and gouged, trying to rip away from my own hair in order to reach the surface. *Hair for air*, I screamed in my head. *Hair for air!* as if I was trying to barter for just one more gulp.

Don't breathe! I begged myself. *If you breathe you will die! If I don't breathe I will die! Just shut up and don't breathe!* Not much of a choice here. I am nothing but arms and legs now, flailing and tearing at the hands of my killer in a mindless, all convulsive panic. *Oh God! Oh God! Oh God! I'm not going to make it!*

Involuntarily, I take the breath. It's the biggest breath my small lungs can hold; a simultaneous breath of both life and of death; inhaling the water so completely that my body seems to become liquid itself. And I die.

My terror transforms into childlike wonder. My eyes are open and I can clearly see that I am still under the water, but I no longer need to breathe. I'm not struggling for air because I no longer *need* it. Just think of the amazement of that! I register only slightly that someone is holding me under. It's so calm; unbelievably calm, and quiet. I register every muscle in my body dissociate from physical sensation. I watch in awe as my arms slowly and

peacefully float out in front of me, and yet they are no longer mine. My legs simply cease to exist.

Amazingly, I am clearly aware that, yes, I am dying. I'm dying and this is what it feels like. Yet it really doesn't feel like anything at all. I should be scared. How come I'm not? I can almost connect with the fear, but it's so far away. It is somewhere behind me and I debate with myself on whether or not I am supposed to retrieve it. The curiosity continues. I am baffled and incredibly impressed. This is what it feels like to die. This is me...I am dead.

Now my eyes are losing focus. I see a great ball of light rushing towards me, growing, expanding with the greatest speed to engulf me. It's so bright; bright and white with just a pinch of yellow. I try to focus on the yellow within the white. I am in the core of a fireless sun as I vaguely notice my thoughts fading. *Is it okay? If I go to sleep will I wake up again? What if I don't want to go?* Then there is nothing.

I am awakened by a strange high-pitched sound and begin to choke and cough up water. My throat hurts. I register the cold wet cement my body is lying on. I turn my head and open my eyes and for an instant I can't see. When my vision clears I find myself lying on my back by the side of the pool and, the brother, Tony is walking away from me. That is when I realize the high-pitched sound which woke me from my death was that of my own screaming.

It is a memory I never suppressed. I've remembered it since the day it happened. What I couldn't remember, that brief period of time I had left my body to be in the sun, my sister was able to stand witness.

As Debbie watched from the balcony above, my body floated motionless at the bottom of the pool. Tony sprinted down the stairs yelling at Mandy that she had gone too far. She was only supposed to scare us, not kill us. He jumped into the pool and fished my body out of the water and he and someone, whose identity my sister couldn't remember, proceeded to perform CPR. I was dead, she said. She could tell that my body was empty when Tony placed it on the cement. They worked on me for approximately two minutes before I responded.

The moment I began to cough up the water from my lungs Tony and the unknown man quickly walked away from me. I do remember that much, because it always confused me that I had found myself alone and crying at the side of the pool that day and nobody had come to my aid. I was dead. Why am I here? It would be many years later before Debbie and I confided in each other and compared notes.

What made such a deep and permanent imprint on my being, strong enough to effect how I interpret my life, is not the panic and struggle I suffered *during* my drowning, but of my continued coherent existence *after*. I often find myself wondering what more I would have discovered if I had been left for dead just a minute or two longer. What did I miss by being brought back so soon? What would I have seen or heard? Would the sensation of my physical

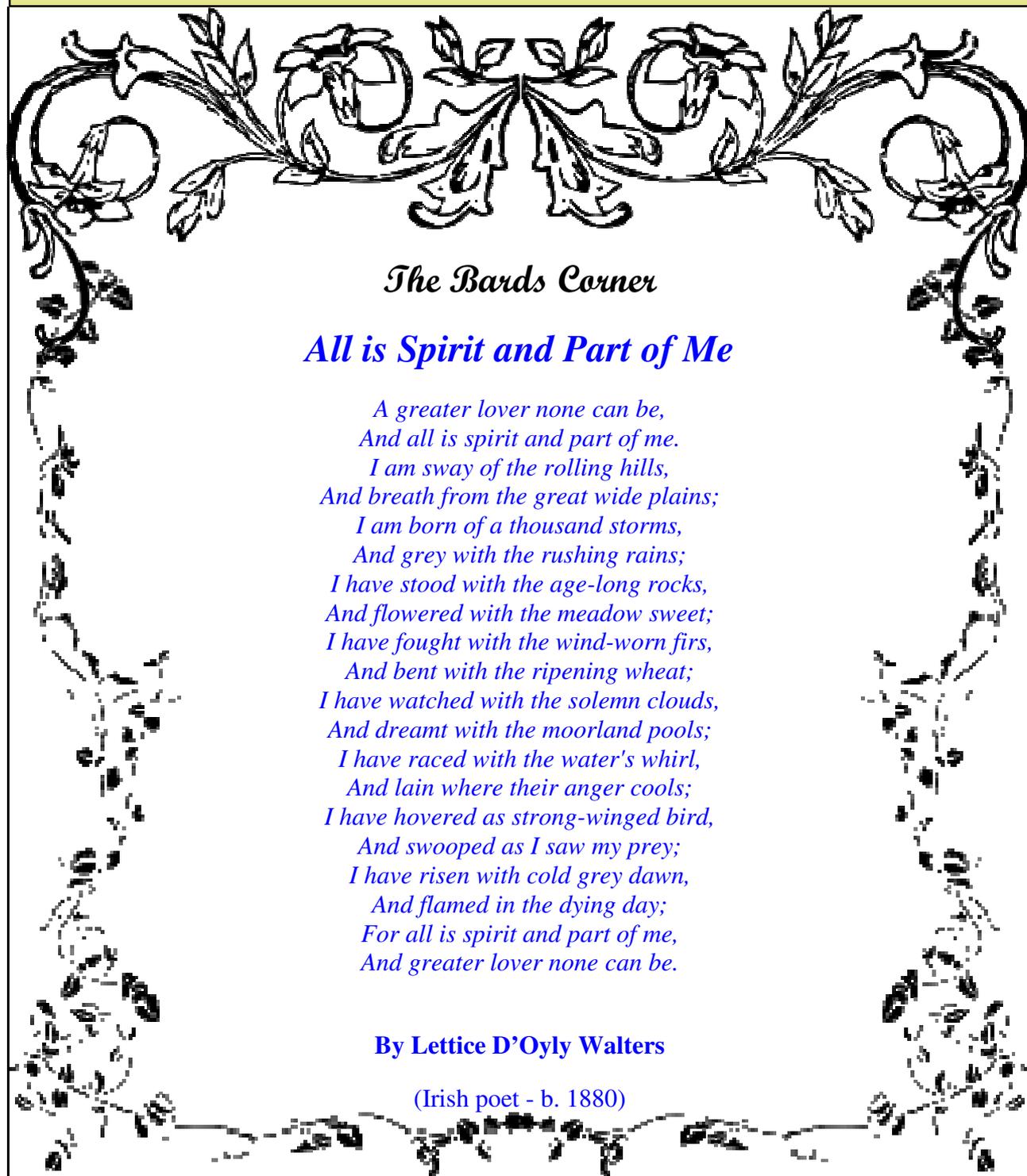
body have returned? Would someone have come to meet me and walk me home? Would I see Jesus, or Buddha? Would I have found myself trapped within a fireless sun, or walking through the Elysian Fields?

To this day I still search for the answers to what awaits us after our physical deaths. And there are accounts, so many in fact that whole books have been published on the subject of near death experiences, from those who had existed in death much longer than my mere two minutes.

Different people tell different tales but all share the one common beginning, the awareness after their breathing stops and that all encompassing incredibly bright light; - that light that had come to envelope me. The one truth I know for certain is that it is not death that brings so much panic and pain, that causes so much fear in the facing of it, but the struggle to stay alive. Life is where the pain lives. My two measly minutes on the other side were nothing short of a bright peaceful moment of wonder; a place to which some day I will return.

Revised July 2010 © by Tamra L. Consbruck

Tamra lives on the West Coast, USA and is an Eclectic/Metaphysical Witch. She has been an EW member since 2003.



The Bards Corner

All is Spirit and Part of Me

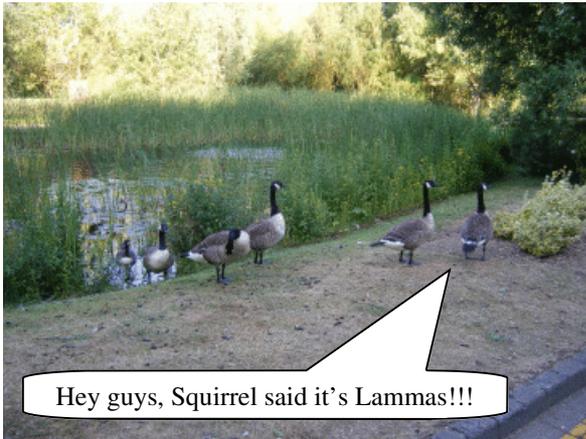
*A greater lover none can be,
And all is spirit and part of me.
I am sway of the rolling hills,
And breath from the great wide plains;
I am born of a thousand storms,
And grey with the rushing rains;
I have stood with the age-long rocks,
And flowered with the meadow sweet;
I have fought with the wind-worn firs,
And bent with the ripening wheat;
I have watched with the solemn clouds,
And dreamt with the moorland pools;
I have raced with the water's whirl,
And lain where their anger cools;
I have hovered as strong-winged bird,
And swooped as I saw my prey;
I have risen with cold grey dawn,
And flamed in the dying day;
For all is spirit and part of me,
And greater lover none can be.*

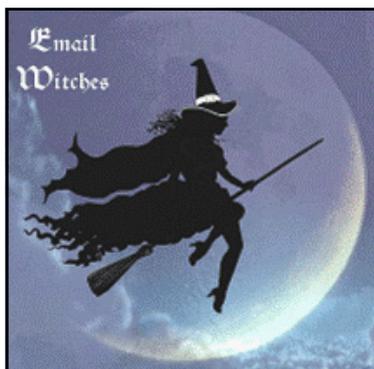
By Lettice D'Oyly Walters

(Irish poet - b. 1880)

Nature's Glory

Where's the harvest???





Email Witches is a pagan friendly email group attracting people from all walks of life, from all spectrums of society and from all around the world. Most are individuals seeking a personal practical religion that can be adapted to their own needs and criteria, and Wicca is a wonderfully diverse religion that meets these needs. Email Witches, a Yahoo! Group, is set up as a place where those of same interest can meet, discuss, share and gain more information about their chosen paths. All visitors to my website Controverscial.com are welcome, so feel free to join us and make new friends.

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Wheatfield harvesting in the UK - by George Knowles

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