

# Sacred Fire, Holy Well

A Druid's Grimoire



Ian Corrigan



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A Druid's Grimoire  
Of Lore, Worship & Magic

Ian Corrigan

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Dedicated to the folk  
Of Ár nDraíocht Féin  
& Especially Liafal,  
My priestess, lover and friend

# Introduction: Druidry, Paganism & Magic

## Druidry in the 21st Century

It is remarkable that in the age of scientific and lifestyle miracles, the old ways of religion and magic persevere. Alongside electronics and genetics, trance and ritual and prayer continue to flow through human life. I believe that fact speaks to the central reality of religion and the spiritual to real people, on the ground in a real world. It is also remarkable that, despite the near-stranglehold of traditional western religions at the middle of the last century, new religious movements are finding fertile ground in the people of the industrial west.

This book grows from the soil of Pagan Druidism, which is part of the NeoPagan movement. Throughout the English-speaking world, and in many other places, people are looking to the pre-Christian ways of Europe, and to other tribal and magical religions, for inspiration. From that inspiration we are growing new religious systems, meant to serve us today as the Old Ways served our ancestors. To accomplish that, we often take equal parts scholarship and imagination, and mix them in the cauldron of experimental group ritual. This book is the result of over 15 years of that experiment, carried out by American NeoPagans in the late 20th century.

These rituals and ideas have been nurtured in the Druid order called Ár nDraíocht Féin. Founded in 1983 by noted occult scholar, Isaac Bonewits, ADF is a network of over two-dozen Groves, Guilds, and many solitary students all over North America and, increasingly, the world. Our work is an effort to apply real scholarship into the ways of ancient Celtic and Indo-European Paganism to the creation of a workable NeoPagan religion. ADF is associated, but not identical with, the ‘reconstructionist’ approach to Paganism. We hope to make modern systems that resemble the real ways of the ancients.

This work is divided into three purposes. The first is a very simple summary of Celtic (specifically Irish) lore. We cannot give a complete introduction to that vast subject here. These notes can only serve as some context for the student’s additional reading, and in support of the rites that follow.

Ritual work is the heart of the book. Our Druidry has always been centered on ritual, and on the skills of trance and performance that support it. The core outline of these rites was developed by Isaac Bonewits, and tested by the author

and many others over many years. These rites have been tested in the work of Stone Creed Grove, ADF, the author's home Grove. In that circle we have kept the High days for 15 unbroken years, and performed many other kinds of group and personal ritual, all based in the unique ritual format of Pagan Druidry. We have achieved some powerful results, and supported a Pagan community that averages 40—70 guests in attendance at rites.

The second purpose of the book is to provide basic instruction in Druidic ritual, on tools and forms, and on the four Celtic holy days. ADF does keep the solar holy days as well, but this work is focused on the Celtic path, and so we deal only with the Celtic high days.

The third purpose of the book takes us into stranger turf. The ADF Order of Ritual was originally devised to serve large groups. It has been an ongoing effort to adapt it for small-group and individual magical work. The author, along with Liafal, his partner, has created several works of group theurgy, and an approach to private magical work, including Druidic methods of spellbinding. We intend to provide all the basic skills of trance and ritual that are required for a productive personal spiritual practice.

Our Druidry means to build powerful relationships between mortals and the God/desses and Spirits. I hope that this book can provide resources toward that end. May this book further the worship of the Powers and the understanding of Druidic magic and spirituality.

Bíodh sé amhlaidh

Ian Corrigan



## Introduction

Throughout the Neo-Pagan revival, the romantic image of the Druid has fermented a froth of activity. Many Wiccan groups use Celtic names for their Lady and Lord, and Celtic lore in their sabbats, mixed with elements of renaissance ceremonial magic. Quasi-Masonic British Druids continue to practice, some moving toward a more Pagan approach. In the last ten years, a new interest in the Druids has produced unique rites and organizations, such as *Ár nDraíocht Féin* and *The Henge of Keltria*. The Priest/ess—Wise One—Healer—Lawyer—Wizard figure that is the Druid is inspiring a wave in our NeoPagan pond. However, the level of scholarship and historical accuracy of

our movement has seldom reached the level of our enthusiasm.

We learn about Celtic lore through the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans, through the discoveries of archeology, through the lore preserved by medieval monks, and through the folklore of modern Celtic-heritage nations. This little book focuses mainly on the Irish-Gaelic versions of Celtic myth, as expressed in the Book of Invasions, the Tain Bo Cualgne, and the many collection of later-period 'fairy' lore. These sources preserve some of the oldest and the clearest of Celtic religious and magical patterns, though even they are from the pens of Christian writers. They must be carefully analyzed and not accepted as 'scripture'.

However, this is not primarily a work of scholarship. My intention is to present a simple version of a Gaelic mythology that can enrich the work of people today. I cannot suggest that this is the religion of the ancient Celts. Rather it assembles the remnants of those forms into a new synthesis that I hope our ancestors might recognize, understand and even approve of.

In the last hundred years British and Irish seers have seen the Fairy Ships leaving the western shore of the Isles, bearing the hosting of the Sidhe. Perhaps they have sailed to Avalon, to Tir Na nOg, to await the magical call to return. Perhaps they were just sailing west, like so many in that time, to a land where wolves still ran in deep woods and men still lived by the hunt. If so, then the Powers wait here in America as they waited in the Old Lands, in tree and stream and stone, in beast and bird. I hope this work can be fuel for the fire that welcomes them into our lives.



### Introduction *(to the original 1993 edition)*

In ancient days there was one great culture, from India to Ireland: the Wise were their healers, counselors and priest/esses. Men and women devoted their lives to learning and working the accumulated lore of their peoples. They spent years in study, ritual and meditation. They spoke to and with God/desses and Spirits: they made magic and taught wisdom. They were the memory and justice of the folk.

These Wise Ones were known by many names in the many tongues of the ancient world. Brahman among the Aryans, Flamen and Flamenca among the Romans, Gothi among the Germans and among the Celts they are called Druidh

(singular Drui. Gaelic Draoi, Druidheachd = Druidry.)

In our time there are those who are called by these images, these cultural memories. They wish to light the Sacred Fire in the place of the Spirits; they seek the hidden Holy Spring in the forest's heart. They feel called to worship the Old God/desses and to restore their honor in modern life. Some of us who seek these ways call ourselves Druids in honor of the mighty Wise Ones of old. We seek to walk the Elder Way, though we have not yet the skills of the ancients.

The work of Druidry is the work of remaking the connections between our common lives and the wonder and magic of the Inner Worlds. It is the opening of the Gates of the Soul where before they were closed. It is the use of every Power of the Self—intellect, feeling, intuition, instinct and flesh—to seek the good of all folk—health, wealth and wisdom—and then the secrets of initiation—wisdom, love and power.

We are beginning to reclaim the Pagan heritage from the rubble of history. We may never know the forms that the ancient Druidry took. We strive to make a spiritual system—a religion and magic—that the Elder Wise might approve and understand. Equally, we seek to make Pagan religion that will serve the needs of today's folk, and the land in which we live.

This book is a simple initial effort to make public the directions taken by modern Druidry as I have seen and practiced it. I must acknowledge the work of Isaac Bonewits in creating the early liturgical outline for *Ár nDraíocht Féin*. Of equal importance is the work of the folk of Stonecreed Grove A.D.F. and the other groves of Our Druidry.

This book is a skeletal outline of Druidic symbolism and Magic, not a primer in the practice of Pagan Magic. There are many good books from which to learn the basics of relaxation, concentration and visualization, and the rationale of ritual. Success in the rituals given herein will depend on those skills and on personal study from other sources. Even when Druidry is approached as simple personal religion, the traditional disciplines of the mind are needed for good results.

To all of you who seek the Ancient Ways—the Magic, the Wisdom—with diligence and pride—

Siochaint agus Beannachtai

Peace and Blessings,

Ian Corrigan, Spring Equinox 1993





## Concerning Magic

When we enter the realm of magic, we move from rites of worship and sacrifice, intended to provide general and ongoing blessings, to rites meant to accomplish specific goals. These kinds of rites are often referred to as ‘magical’. Before we proceed to more technical matters it is useful to examine just what we mean by magic.

To the Greeks and Romans who coined the term, ‘magic’ was a reference to the foreign practices of the Persian fire-priests, called the ‘Magi’. These Indo-European spiritual specialists offered specific rites that promised their clients’ health, wealth, the blessing of the Gods and the aid of the Spirits.

These Magi operated outside the systems of local Hellenic religion. They came to be considered suspect and impious under Hellenic law. This was the start of the long discussion concerning the distinction between ‘magic’ and ‘religion,’ in the difference of style between two closely related Paganisms.

In your author’s opinion, religion and magic are the closest of kin. The skills that make effective sacrifice possible are those we use in the magician’s art. The deities and spirits that we honor in our private and communal rites are our allies in the work of spellbinding. If there is any important distinction at all between religion and magic, it may lie in religion’s service to community. Magic tends to be a private matter, either between the magician and the Gods, directly, or between the magician and his client among his folk.

Pagan theology grants mortals the ability to be active agents in the spiritual world, as in the material. The same human spirit that grants us the power to shape wood and stone makes us able to work our own will in the spiritual worlds. We have the ability to perceive the spiritual realms, and the power to make ourselves felt in them. We have the power to shape the stuff of the Otherworld by our will and imagination even as do the Gods, if to a lesser degree.

If I were to offer a simple definition of ‘magic’ in a Pagan Celtic context, I might say that ‘magic is the use of spiritual skills to achieve specific goals, according to individual will.’

Indo-European Paganisms varied in their attitudes toward the use of spiritual skill for personal goals. The Greeks and their Roman inheritors came

to distrust it as impious. On the eastern end of the Indo-European spectrum, Vedic and Persian cultures seem to have freely applied the work of priests to individual goals, and later Hinduism has preserved a wealth of occult methods inside their orthodoxy. Among the Norse there was some suspicion of magical practice, but a strong tradition of the same existed.

If ancient Pagan cultures varied in their attitudes toward the use of spiritual power for personal goals, we can easily place the Celtic peoples among those who favored and supported it. Classical writers describe the Celts as deeply committed to religion and magic. The Druids are frequently compared with both the Iranian Magi and with the Vedic Brahmins—both being cultures accepting of magic. Our limited evidence all points to the Celts and their wise people as accepting of the use of spiritual power for personal gain and good.

The Celtic Druids are one of the sources of the figure of the ‘King’s Wizard.’ Druids were priests and sacrificers, diviners and seers for great kings and for local chieftains. While many of these Wise Ones were attached to households and the courts of rulers, the tales also tell us of Druids living alone in the wild, emerging from the greenwood to influence common lives. Some of these Druids could also have served as ‘consulting magicians,’ working for clients on a case-by-case basis, working rites of healing, fertility and prosperity.

It is that sort of work that we will discuss here. These rites are meant for individuals or small groups to use and work for specific goals. We will offer you scripts and images that can be applied inside of whatever ritual system you prefer. The rites have mainly been written within the outline of NeoPagan Druid ritual created by Isaac Bonewits and developed within ADF and the Henge of Keltria, but they can easily be adapted to a more Wiccan ritual format.

It is the process of absorbing, testing and personalizing this work that makes it magic. Religion works quite well with simple repetition of traditional forms. Magic, in the end, is an individual art. You must make its elements your own, and express them in ways that express your own power. Until then, these basic rites and works can serve as an apprenticeship.



## A Word about Folklore

When we attempt to reconstruct the religion and magic of the Druids and

ancient Celts, one of the most productive sources is the body of folk-custom and lore that was preserved among the Celtic nations into the early modern era. Researchers and folklorists have left us with a reasonably clear picture of many of the magical practices and possibly Pagan survivals among the peoples of Ireland, Scotland and the other Celtic nations. Looking at practical magic in the Celtic countryside as it has been recorded and preserved over the past 200 years does give us a glimpse of what the ancient customs might have been—but it is only a glimpse.

The Celtic customs have been worn away by time, like ancient buildings in the sun and rain, leaving only vague outlines in the early modern folklore. If we were to shape our work like theirs, we might conclude that Celtic ways involved little ritual, little formal speech or custom. To draw such a conclusion would be to miss a major point of traditional customs.

Recent Celtic customs have their forms because of an unfortunate process of forgetting, sped along by deliberate suppression of the traditional material and those that preserved it. In Pagan Celtic times, the Druids and their students and imitators carefully held and preserved the oral lore of their ways, from the great tales of the Gods to the farmer's spells to cure cattle or make the trees fruitful. As in many Pagan cultures, such a farmer's rites might actually be worked by the farmer, but they might also be performed for him, or at least supervised and supported, by one of the trained Wise Ones who would make certain that all was done properly. When the incoming Roman conquerors and their Christian inheritors made the priesthood and (surely some) practices of Celtic Paganism illegal, these sources of traditional memory were cut off. The folk were left to preserve what portions of lore, custom and ceremony they could remember, even as the new religion preached against such memory. By the time that 'folklorists' began to record countryside customs in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, they found only degenerate scraps, kept in the hands of those called 'charmners' or 'cunning folk' or even 'white witches.'

By combining some of these scraps with what we know of more ancient Celtic lore and with models derived from less damaged Pagan systems, we mean to create something that Pagan Celts would recognize if they were to see it. One of the most obvious things about the practices of traditional peoples is the level of detail and complexity of their spiritual practices. Traditional peoples are seldom concerned about how much time or detail their work will require, nor do they need to conceal their efforts from authorities. The magical rites of

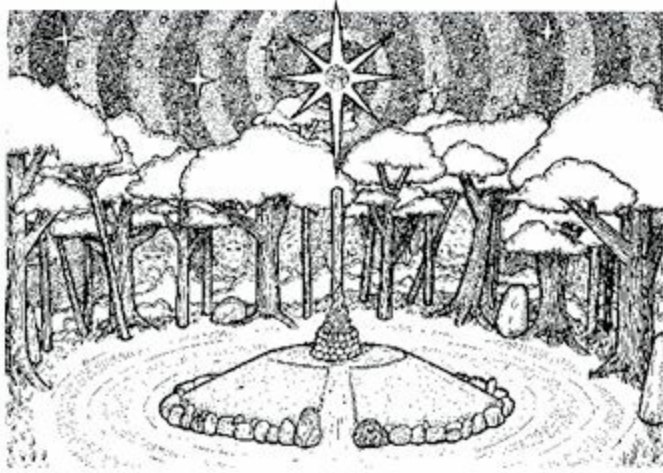
traditional peoples often require days of preparation and hours of performance. While we may simplify our work in this grimoire compared to the complex ways of ancient times, we will also be sure that all is well expressed in poetry and symbol. By building solid and detailed ritual systems, we can only draw closer to what the ways of the Old Ones must have been like.



### A Word about Irish

Scattered throughout this work are terms in the Irish language. Your author is, himself, a duffer at Gaeilge, however I pride myself that my skill continues to increase. The Irish in this book is, on average, more likely to contain errors than is the occult theory or ritual structure. I recommend the use of a good Irish-English dictionary to clarify any confusion.

## Part One



## The Book of Lore

## **Core Ideas of Celtic Lore**

Let us begin by examining some of the basic worldview ideas that we will employ in our magic. We must admit at the outset that little can be clearly known about Celtic models of the spiritual world, about their religious views or about their magical and sorcerous practices. The patterns presented here are my best guess, drawn from the scraps of historic Celtic lore and assembled in light of better-known Indo-European patterns of magical practice. These ideas and patterns have been tested over the last decade or so. However, each student should read the lore carefully and evaluate these ideas in light of your own understanding.

## **Three Celtic Dualities**

It is common for modern Celtic Pagans to talk about various threefold symbols in Celtia. There are, indeed, many. However, we can identify key twofold symbols that lie at the base of much of our magical work. Throughout northern Europe we find traces in the tales of a basic duality in existence, between what the Norse poets called the Fire and the Ice—the powers of expansion and transformation, of contraction and solidification. In the warmer climes of the Celts, these are the primal Fire and Water.

We know little about how Celtic cosmology viewed magical ‘energy’ or power. From scraps of lore and linguistics, modern Celtic Pagans have proposed a second duality—bri and bua.

Consistently throughout Celtic story and lore we find a duality between the common world and the Otherworld—the beautiful spiritual counterpart of our beautiful material world.

## **An Fuinneamh Deach—The Dual Power**

The Underworld Waters and Fire of the Heavens, the Shadow and the Light, the Chaos of Potential and the World Order, are the Fire and Ice of Celtic creation; Danu of the Waters and Bel of the Fire, they are primal divine powers that underlie all existence, and empower both Gods and non-gods.

- **Underworld:** The Power Under the Earth is called the Chaos of Potential.

The Underworld power is associated with the great goddess called Danu, or

Anu, the Mother of the World. This water is the rich nutrient soup into which all individual existence dissolves and from which it arises. From it arise bounty and new life, the wisdom of memory and the root of personal strength.

- **Heavens:** The Power of the Overworld is the Pattern of the World Order. The Heavenly Realms are associated with the great God called Bel or Beli or Bile, the First Father. From the Revolving Castle of Sky comes the Light, the Catalyzing Quickener that calls individual forms and beings out of the Chaos of Potential. When it shines in the soul, it brings the pearls of idea from the Sea of Mind.

### **Two Kinds of Magical Power—Bri and Bua**

Magical or Otherworld power is perceived in Gaelic lore in two kinds. These concepts do not appear directly in ancient Celtic story, but have been extracted mainly from Gaelic vocabulary. They are speculative, but useful. Bri (a word from Irish language roots meaning ‘rising’) is power intrinsic to a person, place or thing, while Bua (from roots meaning ‘wealth’) is power that is gathered or stored.

- **Bri** is the innate meaning, ability, power and/or talent in any person, place or thing. Bri is intrinsic, inherent in its existence, from its creation or birth. It can never be added to or subtracted from, only utilized or allowed to atrophy. Bri can be used or ignored, developed or allowed to lay fallow, but its ‘amount’ remains constant. Because Bri rises from the innate potential of anything, we might associate it with the Underworld Power, though not exclusively.
- **Bua** is the power, meaning, ability or form placed upon or within any person place or thing by the will and work of a being. Bua is the trove of power that accumulates when people use any place or thing and it becomes thick with story. Bua is gained or lost based on your deeds and those of others. One can have as much Bua as one is able to gain by one’s skill and strength. Because Bua is made by will and deed, it might be associated with the Sky Power, though not exclusively.

These concepts should not be considered ‘kinds’ of energy in the way we might see the Two Powers. Rather they are modes of operation of energy. Bri is energy in stasis, locked into a specific form and function. Bua is energy in

motion, assuming the form into which it is called.

It is useful to consider an analysis in which we relate the Two Powers to Bri and Bua. Underworld and heaven powers interact to make all things. They flow in the world as the treasure of Bua, and they arise in individual manifestation as innate Bri. So it might repay meditation to contemplate the flow and shine of the Two Powers as the Bri and Bua in all things.

### **Two Mingled Realities—Common World and Otherworld**

Celtic story plainly shows us a variety of wondrous, hidden places. Out in the trackless sea are islands of marvels. Deep under the mounds and hills are glittering halls of feasting. Even in the woods and fields where humans dwell, the mist may rise and carry us into the realm called **An Saol Eile**—The Otherworld. While the tales present us no single form of these other locales, we will approach them all as local variations in a single continuum—the Otherworld.

An Saol Eile is the spirit counterpart of the material world, within the great web of nature. It is everywhere, and no place in particular. It reflects the material world, and the material world grows from its matrix. So we begin with another basic duality of Celtic symbolism: common world and Otherworld exist in balance.

The tales tell us that the beings of the Otherworld have the power to shape and influence the common world in ways that seem mysterious to human understanding. In a more metaphysical sense we might say that the Otherworld is the causal matrix of the common world. What happens in An Saol Eile is reflected in the world. One of the secrets of the magicians is that the opposite also happens—actions done in the common world have their reflection and effect in the Otherworld. So when we construct visualized locales or create constellations of powerful symbols, these things have a reality not only in our individual minds, but in the Otherworld as well.

Celtic lore presents no coherent map or model of the Otherworlds. Even as we attempt to supply such a model, we advise you to avoid treating it as authoritative or doctrinal. Each student is likely to find his experience of An Saol Eile to be somewhat unique. It may conform to our maps and models, or it may not. Just as the material world has landscapes of vastly different sorts—arctic tundra and rainforest, deserts and tilled fields of grain—so the Otherworld contains a nearly infinite variety of locales.

The Otherworld may usefully be divided according to a motif found in



Pagan cultures throughout the Indo-European world. The Three Worlds of the Otherworld are called the Underworld, the Middle World and the Heavens. This triple cosmology is present from India to Ireland and is also present in the Shamanic cultures of central and western Asia.

Celtic NeoPagan thought has been influenced as well by the three or four-tiered model created by Iolo Morgannwg in the 18th century from fragments of Welsh lore:

**Ceugant**—‘Highest’—realm of ‘God’

**Gwynvydd**—‘Shining’—realm of the Gods and Spirits

**Abred**—‘The World’—common world and earth spirits

**Annwn**—‘Underworld’—chaotic pit beneath

This model is clearly influenced by Christian myth. In Welsh lore, Annwn is plainly used to refer to the general Otherworld, but Iolo relegates it to a mythic reflection of Hell. At the top he inserts a sketchy locale, the home of the monotheistic ‘God’ that his 18th century audience required, but which has no place in traditional Celtic lore.

Since our work here is firmly based in polytheism we do not require any single, ruling will or being at the ‘top’ of our system. We can easily bring the model into alignment with widely held Pagan systems:

**Gwynvydd**—Shining Realm of Lights

**Abred**—Common world

**Annwn**—Deep place of the Ancestors

In making this arrangement, we acknowledge the Underworld, moving it from the status of a sewer to a place of potential and fertility. In removing the artificial Ceugant, we place Gwynvydd in harmonious balance with the Underworld.

We speak of the Middle World, our common home, both materially and spiritually. It is in the Middle World that the dual nature—material and magical—of existence is most apparent. We experience material nature every day, but our experiences of the Otherworld are few. When they happen they are remarkable, becoming the roots of tales or producing inspirations for songs or the building of shrines. The Mid-world is the doorway for mortals into the

Otherworlds. Just as we must leave our home to travel through the material world, so we must pass through the Mid-world to reach stranger places.

Celtic lore further divides the Middle World into a triad of Land, Sea and Sky. This is a direct description of the material world, of course. It is also a major system of spiritual geography in Indo-European religion and magic. From Vedic to Hellenic to Irish lore we find the Three Realms of Land, Sea and Sky ruled by triads of deities.

In our Celtic cosmos map we can envision Land, Sea and Sky as a triplicity, all located in the Middle World. We will envision the triad of Underworld, Mid-World and Heavens as the shaft or spindle of our cosmos, with the Three Realms of Land, Sea and Sky as the wheel on the center of the spindle, together spinning the thread of existence.

In Irish lore, more direct mention is made of the Realms than of the Worlds. The Sea is connected with the Dead and the Outer Chaos, taking on some of the attributes of the Underworld. The Sky is the home of the birds, who so often serve as the messengers of the divine, and the place of the Great Lights and the Starry Wheel. We can draw a simple set of triadic correspondences for our map:

Heavens—Sky—Deities  
Mid-World—Land—Gentry  
Underworld—Sea—Dead

These three triads are all made present in ritual by a fourth triad of ritual tools, in which the Fire connects with the Heavens, the Well with the Underworld and the Tree with the Mid-World.

We must remember that such a simple chart is only the beginning of an analysis of these symbols. If we were to apply a classic principle of reflection to them, we might generate a model such as:

Heavens:  
Sky of Heavens;  
Land of Heavens;  
Sea of Heavens  
Gods of Heavens;  
Sidhe of Heavens;

Dead of Heavens  
Heavens of Heavens;  
Midworld of Heavens;  
Underworld of Heavens

And so forth for each of the other Worlds and Realms and Kindreds. Some of the symbolic items created by this method will be easy to understand, others will be more obscure. This 27 or 81-fold system does offer a sense of the depth and variety to be found in the Otherworlds.

In this work we will begin by approaching the most local portions of the Middle world. By both creating and discovering our personal Inner landscape, we call the Mist and open a way from our personal Inner landscape into the transpersonal Middle World itself.

Within the Mid-World are found many paths, and many doors. We can pass out from our starting place into the whole cosmos. Deep gates lead down into the Underworld. We can be lifted, or climb into the Heavens. We can find our way into the Halls of the Dead or the homes of the Land Spirits. We can sail over the Otherworld Sea to islands of magic and wonder. Even the places of the Gods need not be closed to us.

Even as we learn to journey, we learn also to open our eyes in the Middle World, to perceive the spirits that naturally stand near us, the patterns that arise around us, or are created by our ritual work. We open our Inner eyes to the presence of the Gods and Spirits when we call them to our Fires.

## Three Triads of the Celtic Worlds

### I: Three Realms

*Within and behind all apparent reality is the Otherworld, the Realms of Magic.*

- **Underworld:** The Power under the Earth is called the Chaos of Potential. The Underworld Realms are the place of the Ancestors, of the Daoine Sidhe, of the Underworld Gods and Goddesses. From their halls and lands issue bounty and new life, the wisdom of memory and the root of personal strength. The Underworld is associated with water, both the Sea and the Waters under the Earth. This water is the rich nutrient soup into which all individual existence dissolves and from which it arises. So it is sometimes called, or symbolized by, the Cauldron of Rebirth.
- **Midrealm:** The Midrealms are the Setting of the Great Tale. In the Middle Lands dwell all the Mortal Kins, and a variety of Spirits as well. The common world where human and nonhuman kindreds live, the Land, Sea and Sky, are reflected in the Middle Worlds, hung between Underworlds and Heavens. Some of the God/desses dwell there, near to their mortal children, and sometimes mighty Ancestors make a home in the Middle Lands to aid their descendants. The Midrealm is associated with the surface of the Land, the Home of the Hosts, and with the many spirit tribes that share it with us. It is the spirit-matrix that underlies the common world in which we dwell, its twin and its mirror. Within it grows every individual manifestation of life, and so it is called the Cauldron of Bounty.
- **Heavens:** The Power of the Overworld is the Pattern of the World Order. The Heavenly Realms are the places of the Brightest Gods and Goddesses, the Shining Ones, and those mortal Heroes who have been welcomed into their palaces. From the Revolving Castle of the Sun, Moon and Stars comes the Pattern of Existence, the wisdom of perspective and the objective eye, and clarity of thought and will. The Heavens are associated with the Sky and with the Sacred Fire that brings the Heavens' Light into the Grove. This Light is the Catalyzing Quickener that calls individual forms and beings out of the Chaos of Potential. When it shines in the soul, it brings the pearls of

idea from the Sea of Mind, and so it is called the Cauldron of Wisdom.

## II: Three Worlds

*The Middle Realm is divided in a pattern related to the Three Realms, another reflection of the Holy Triskel.*

- **Land:** The common earth on which we dwell, our mortal home and support. It is the tilled field and the unseen mountaintop, swamp and desert, town and woodland. The Land is the convergence of Sea and Sky, the Holy Island. It is connected to the Otherworlds through caverns and deep places, wells, pools and the tops of high places. The Land is the home of those animal kins that are closest to our human life, our allies and our predators.
- **Sea:** Surrounding our island home on every side is the boundless expanse of the oceans. The Sea is the mystery, the portion of the human world most alien to humankind. Within its misty vastness may be found islands of wonder and fear, the isles of the Otherworlds is the home of the Cattle of Tethra, the uncounted fishes and their stranger cousins and kin. Some of those are friends to human folk, and some are not.
- **Sky:** Arching above our common Land and Sea is the blue dome of the Sky, the realm of cloud and storm and calm breezes. It is the airy realm that is both all around us and far beyond our reach. In its floating world of clouds we see the playgrounds of the Gods, the seats from which they watch the world. From the Sky's high distances descend the birds, so often the messengers of the Gods.

## III: Three Kindreds

*Within this cosmos of three and three dwell the Gods and the Non-Gods—the three Kindreds.*

- **The Shining Ones:** In the First Days the Mother of All bore children, the People of the Mother, who are our Gods and Goddesses. They are the First Family, the Eldest and Wisest, their youth continually renewed by their

magical feasts. The Kings and Queens, the Magicians and the Poets, the Powers of Love and Delight, the Warriors, and the Cow Women, the Smiths and all the Powers of the Wild, in every culture the Gods and Goddesses guide their mortal children. Each Pagan culture has a family of Deities whose Wisdom, Love and Power sustain the worlds and humankind. Whether these cultural forms portray separate, individual entities or whether they are names and titles of one great family of Gods and Goddesses, they are the object of our highest worship, and our greatest allies.

- **The Ancestors:** Many tales tell us that humankind is descended from, and intermarried with, the Gods and Goddesses. The Fire of the Heavens and the Dark Waters of the Underworld flow in our human spirits, and death cannot extinguish us. So we remember and honor the Ancestors, the Mighty Dead. The Old Lore makes it clear that human spirits sometimes reincarnate in the mortal world, often in their own family bloodline. But it is equally clear that many of the Dead are ‘reborn’ in the Otherworld, in the Land of the Dead. There they live the lives their fate has woven for them, just as we do here. Pagan tradition teaches that the Ancestors hear the voice of the living, that they value our worship and offerings. It teaches that the Mighty Dead still have power in the Mortal World, to guide and protect, or to chastise. So we make our gifts to them, and listen closely for their voices.
- **The Spirits:** Humankind and our Ancestors share the worlds with a myriad of other beings, other forms of life both physical and spiritual. The Otherkins share with us and the God/desses in the weaving of the Web of Fate. They are as various as the species of our world, filled with magic and skill and cunning. Some of them are the Beast-Spirit Peoples. Many of these are close allies of Human folk, the hound and bull and pig and more. Others are of the deep wild, the wolf and deer and boar. The Spirits of Birds go freely between Earth and Sky. Other spirits are the Wonder Peoples, the magic races of the many cultures—fauns and dryads and Alfar and Daoine Sidhe. They roam in Midrealm countries sometimes very close to ours, sometimes very distant. We honor them and sometimes seek their aid in magic.

These Nine Things make up the core Druidic understanding of the Order of

the Cosmos. They are wide, deep symbols that will repay study and meditation. The following descriptions are presented as a starting place on the journey to comprehend the Druidic Cosmos.

Three Triads  
of a  
Celtic Cosmos

*1: Three Realms*

**Anwnn:** The underworld: The cauldron of rebirth

**Abred:** The Midworld: The cauldron of bounty

**Gwynvydd:** The heavens: The cauldron of wisdom

*2: Three Worlds*

**An Muir**—The Sea: The wild waste: The road to the blessed isles

**An Talamh**—The Land: The green earth: Dwelling of many kins

**An Speir**—The Sky: The unchanging order: The place of the shining ones

*3: Three Kindreds*

**The Dead:** The blessed ancestors, who sustain the clans.

**The Sidhe:** The other kins, who sustain the web of the worlds.

**The Deities:** Eldest, wisest and mightiest, who sustain all.



## The Four Airts

The Four Airts are the four cardinal directions, north, south, east and west. They are associated in Irish poetic lore with a number of symbols, especially the Four Provinces of ancient Ireland, and the fifth, the sacred center.

Let us approach the Circle of Eire from the West, as the Tuatha De came to Eire, and turn our right shoulder to the center, in respect:

- West—Wisdom—**Modern Irish:** Iarthar **Old Irish:** Iar **Province:** Connacht  
**Symbol:** Wand **Color:** Grey **Twilight:** Sunset **Season:** Fall • The old Irish province of Connacht symbolized to the Celtic poets the work of the Wise—of the poets and priests, the law-keepers and magicians—those called the Druids. The West speaks to us of the virtues of wisdom, of vision and of piety.
- North—Battle—**Modern Irish:** Tuaisceart **Old Irish:** Tuath **Province:** Ulster  
**Symbol:** Sword **Color:** Black **Twilight:** Midnight **Season:** Winter • The province of Ulster symbolized the work of the warrior—strength of arm and honor in the heart, loyalty and cleverness, skill and courage. It speaks to us of the virtues of honor, courage and strength.
- East—Bounty—**Modern Irish:** Oirthear **Old Irish:** Ear **Province:** Leinster  
**Symbol:** Plow **Color:** Red **Twilight:** Dawn **Season:** Spring • The old Irish province of Ulster symbolized the work of the Keepers of the Land, the Cattle Lords, those who produce wealth and growth from the land. It speaks to us of diligence, hospitality and the delight in food, drink and love.
- South—Labor/Music—**Modern Irish:** Deisceart **Old Irish:** Deas **Province:** Munster  
**Symbol:** Harp **Color:** White **Twilight:** Noontide **Season:** Summer • The province of Munster symbolizes all those who work in trenches and factories, and who wander the land singing for their supper. The three great divisions of Celtic society—farmers, warriors and priests—left a large group of ‘everyone else’—slaves and bond-folk and all the common labor that stands on the edge of, and even outside of, the culture. While the poets and enchanters of Gaelic culture were reckoned among the wise, players of instruments, wandering musicians and popular singers were given to the southern quarter, as marginal persons.

The Quartering of the World has many layers of meaning in Celtic lore, but it has often been confused with the more modern system of

assigning the 4 classical ‘elements’ to the directions. Irish and Celtic lore offers no examples of the elements assigned to the Airts. The four symbols of air, fire, water and earth are present in Celtic lore, but they are not associated with a fourfold cross. Rather they are expressed as what some call the Tribhis Mhor—the Great Triskelion of Land, Sea and Sky, with the Sacred Fire in the Center.

The Airts are useful in Celtic magic in many ways. When we quarter the world we bring ourselves to stand in the Sacred Center in which all magic can occur. In augury we look to the Airts for omens proper to the meanings of the directions. We may turn to, or conjure from the Airts proper to the intention of a work. While the Airts may be seen in some ways as secondary to the many threefold Celtic symbols, they play a key part in the Celtic cosmos.

The Airts divide the Middle Realm into its wheel of time and cycle and growth and death. It is the wheel of human living, the vocations of the farmer and the warrior, the poet and the laborer. In modern times we must all stand in the center of the cross of human skills, with Battle and Song, Bounty and Wisdom balanced in our own lives.

## The Anatomy of the Soul

The remnants of Irish Pagan lore do not present us with any systematic model of the human soul. As with so much of the Old Wisdom, we are given shreds and bits, a large chunk here, a snippet there, from which to attempt to create a working model that has some bit of relation to the symbols and ideas of the Pagan Gaels. We will not attempt a systematic map of the human spiritual self in this work on practical Druidry, but it is worthwhile to examine two bits of Irish lore that seem to have direct bearing on the topic. These ideas are drawn from later material preserved by the Irish poetic schools, where we may guess that a certain amount of Pagan philosophy and practice was preserved. They are the *Duile*, and the Three Cauldrons.

### The Duile

The principle that the greater world (in Irish, *bith*—‘what is’)—both material and spiritual—is reflected in the personal body and spirit of the individual is an Indo-European universal. “As above, so below; and as below, so above” the old aphorism says, and we can find plenty of evidence for the principle in Irish lore. The Irish poems describe a correspondence between the parts of the natural world and the parts of the human body and mind. These parts are called the *duile*, which means ‘elements’ or ‘components.’ There are several traditional lists of these symbols. We will adopt a nine-fold model similar to those current in NeoPagan Celtic circles.

- Crown of the Head—Starry Heavens
- Brains—Clouds
- Face—Sun
- Mind—Moon
- Breath—Wind
- Blood—Sea
- Hair—Plants
- Flesh—Soil
- Bone—Stone

These can be divided into various triads. We might find:

Heavens/Sky: Heavens, Sun & Moon;  
Midrealm/Land: Plants, Soil & Stone;  
Underworld/Sea: Clouds, Wind & Sea

Or we might divide them by head and heart and loins, something like:

Head, Brains & Face  
Breath, Mind & Blood  
Flesh, Hair & Bone

For the more practical purposes of our magic we can draw an important conclusion from these symbols. As Pagans, we know that the divine power inheres in the things of the natural world. What exists in the cosmos, in *biith*, is reflected in ourselves. If the divine power exists in the greater world, it must also exist in us. The flow of creative power in nature is mirrored in us, and our creative power is reflected in the events of the greater world. This reflection and mutual flow of causation is the base on which our ability to do magic rests. The divine will that is inherent in each of us is the authority on which our right to do magic is founded.

### **The Three Cauldrons**

There is, in Irish lore, a hint of a system of ‘centers of power’ within the human spiritual form. The medieval Irish poem called “*The Cauldron*



*of Poesy*” describes the spiritual process by which the Imbas—the Power of Inspiration (and therefore of magic)—enters the mind and spirit. The poem describes three cauldrons—one in the head, one in the heart and one in the belly. It is said that these cauldrons are either turned downward, half upright or fully upright. Each of us is able to receive the flow

of Imbas, the Mead of Poetry, according to how our Three Cauldrons are positioned.

- In the belly—**Coire Goiriath**—The Cauldron of Warming: sustenance, incubation; basic physical life and the urges and inspirations that accompany it. The Cauldron of Warming is said to be upright in everyone who has their basic health.
- In the heart—**Coire Ernmas**—The Cauldron of Movement: vocation,

gaining in skill; higher functions of mind and art, reason and intuition, and knowledge of one's own bri. The Cauldron of Movement is said to be born half-upright in some people, and downward in others.

- In the head—**Coire Sois**—The Cauldron of Knowledge: inspiration, creative power; the vessel of Poetic Inspiration—Imbas—that brings seership and spiritual wisdom; said to be born turned downward in all people.

The process of spiritual, magical and poetic growth is then seen as the work of turning each of the Cauldrons fully upright, enabling them—and you—to hold a full measure of the flow of power. The very effects of the work of living, accomplish this by the cultivation of virtues, with deeds proper to those virtues, and by the study and practice of spiritual and creative arts.

These two sets of symbols—the Duile and the Three Cauldrons—contain many clues to Gaelic symbolism and world-view. They can repay deep study, and a great deal of good material has been written about them by other teachers.

## Four Modes of Magic

These modes are based on a functional analysis of how magical systems operate, and how skills are plied.

- **Spirit-art**—The most well documented forms of ancient magic are done with the aid of spirit beings. While this can and does include the Deities, it more often refers to non-deity spirits: the shades of the Dead, the people of the Mounds, animal spirits and spirits of the natural landscape. Spirit-art might be said to combine the power of Vision with the Power of Speech.
- **Energy Work**—Some magical systems, such as yoga or Taoist work, have clearly developed systems of using impersonal spiritual energies for practical goals. While Celtic lore has no such thing, there are implicit concepts that can be expanded into practical methods. Energy work might be said to combine the power of Vision with the power of Shaping.
- **Symbolic Magic**—The power of signs, letters, and images is a key part of many kinds of magic, even from illiterate cultures. Celtic lore provides several systems of magical signs and letters to draw upon. There are also several modern methods that adapt very well to Celtic models. Symbolic magic combines the power of Speech with the power of Shaping.
- **Natural Magic**—Pagan magic has always sought the hidden powers of herbs, stones, times and seasons, stars and all natural things. All such things can bring their own Bri to the work. There is a wide range of real Celtic lore on these matters, not all of it clear. Natural magic is, in many ways, an application of all the other three modes.

## Concerning the Gods

### Introduction: The Nature of the Powers.

In any discussion of the basic nature of the God/desses and Spirits we must begin by saying that they are essentially nonphysical beings. They do not inhabit bodies of mortal flesh (at least not permanently) but rather have forms composed of the Spirit Fire and the Earth Current. In these forms they are immortal, though they renew youth and strength with the proper spells. Yet every form can be subject to change, and the tales tell of the death of Deities. In this we might assume that the form and name of the Power pass away, while the inherent will-spark remains, returning in new forms.

These core powers—Sky Fire and Earth Shadow—are the Primal Powers that inform the Worlds of Spirits. These powers are strongly active in relation to all common matter, and it is the ability to shape the forces that gives the Gods their ability. The greater God/desses are shaped of the brightest Flame, the deepest Shade, and so they can influence those beings in whom the forces are less strong.

So bright and lovely is the being of a God that their form is reflected in the soul of every sentient being, influencing personality and behavior. In that way the Gods have their reflection as archetypes in the collective and personal psyche, though they are not limited to these reflections.

Though the forms and lives of the God/desses are not made as our bodies are made, they are like us, their mortal children, in many ways. The Tuatha De is a clan rather like a human clan of ancient Celtia, with birth, sex, tribe and kin. They have their wars, with enemies and among themselves. They love feasting, strong drink and clever entertainment. They restore their youth with the Feast of Age, sacred pork, apples and ale.

We mortals are, in some way, the great grandchildren of the Tribes of the Gods, and they love us as their kin. We serve the Powers, and they bless us in turn, as children serve their elders and are blessed. The Shining Ones bid us to be proud, wise and loving, keeping the web of obligation that binds woman to hearth and hearth to clan and clan to tribe, and all to the Gods and the Gods to them.

The Gods and Spirits are also like, yet unlike, mortals in their ability to wield magic. The Powers have natural abilities, as mortals have talents, but the tales



make it clear that they also use the songs and charms of magical art, as mortals do. So they may shift shape almost at will, may hear the voices that the wind hears, may give bane or blessing by their word. They may lay fertility or barrenness on land, beast or human, may open up the Otherworlds to mortals or appear in any number of ways to give prophecy, advice or warning. It isn't only the greatest Gods who have these skills, but all the tribes of the Noble Spirits know magic, and may even teach it to mortals if they can be enticed to speak.

The Powers are bright, deep and marvelous beings that dwell in realms suited to their nature. They move in the Otherworlds, subtler, lovelier, more powerful places than our mortal realms. The God/desses have their homes in the secret places of the Otherworlds, their personal halls and estates.

The greatest God/desses, the High Ones, are usually well disposed toward mortals. We offer the rites sincerely and they come joyfully to our fires. We give sacrifice, and often get their aid and blessing in return. We keep the Sacred Year, and forge personal and community alliances between ourselves and the Gods, the Dead and the Sidhe. In our rites we carry blessing from the Inner Realms to our mortal country.

## **The Lore of the Book of Invasions**

The most important of the Gaelic myth cycles concerns the successive waves of beings who came into Eire. Beginning with the most primitive and unformed times, it tells of the growing wisdom of the Gods, and hints at how they brought forth the world in their war with the Demons. The preserved texts have certainly been heavily edited, by scribes in Christian monasteries in the early Middle Ages, and should not be taken as a complete image of Celtic Pagan belief. The Book of Invasions does, however, seem to provide the most complete glimpse into the core of Celtic myth.

The tales give us only hints of what a Celtic creation story might have held. The Book of Invasions speaks of successive waves of beings carving out plains, lakes, rivers and mountains from the chaos of the primal forest, in tales that make the isle of Eire a symbol for the entire world. The Sea itself represents the Primal Chaos from which the manifest lands emerge. Into these lands come the God/desses. The Tuatha De Danann, in the Book of Invasions, arrive on Beltaine morning in their ships of cloud. They make war on the Demons, and in the battles between the Gods and the Other Gods there are hints of the Primal Sacrifice. One great Power slays another, and from that other's form is made all of the manifest world.

We begin at the most speculative end of our journey. We will presume to suggest a model for a Celtic creation myth. This tale draws on material from Germanic and other Indo-European sources to help fill in the blanks in Celtic lore. From there we will move to somewhat firmer footing, as we outline the five invasions of the Isle.

### **A Summary of the Five Invasions**

The Irish collection of tales called the Book of Invasions describes the arrival of the Shining Ones in successive waves of settlement. In it the Isle of Erin symbolizes the world, where the War between the Gods and Demons carved out existence from primal emptiness.

## **Part 1: The First Waves**

The account begins when the Goddess Cessair arrived in Eire with forty-nine women and three men. They called the Isle Banba (Isle of Women), but an overwhelming flood from the chaos-sea destroyed them. Only Fintan (Shining Fire) survived, in a cave on the Isle's highest peak.

Next comes Partholon, who was called the Chief of Every Craft. He

brought with him twenty-four women and twenty-four men, and with them plows and oxen, craftsmen, poets and magicians. They made the first sowing and reaping, baking and brewing, the first inns and the first feasting in the world. In Partholon's time four new plains were established, seven lakes sprang forth and the directions first quartered the Isle. Partholon's folk called the Isle Fotla.

The envious Fomorians assailed the folk of Partholon. For many years the two tribes fought with sword and spear and magic, the Fomor striking from their rocky islands in the chaos-sea. At last the Fomor chanted an evil plague upon the folk, slaying all, save only Tuan the Old.

Once again the God/desses came into the world, led by the Holy One, Nemed. They drove out the Fomor and established themselves in the Goddess' green land. There they lived for many generations, always harried by the Fomor. Every Samhain the Demons would assail the Isle, and the Gods would spend their lives to drive them back. Such warfare was dire for Nemed's folk, who could not match the sorceries of the Fomor.

After many years the Nemedians were so weakened that they gathered their folk together to flee. Only thirty escaped the Fomorians' wrath into the Otherworlds, led by the three sons of Nemed—Starn, Iarbonel the Druid, and Fergus Lethderg.

Of these three, two became the fathers of great peoples. Starn sired the Fir Bolg, while Iarbonel fathered the great Tuatha De Danann.

## **Part 2: The Fir Bolg and the Tuatha De**

The Fir Bolg (Men of the Lightning) were the first to return to the Isle, led by their king Eochaid (Stallion). They had the longest and most prosperous reign in the world up until then. They called the Isle Eriu, and they held the Isle strongly against the Demons.

One evening at sunset a vision came upon King Eochaid. The sky turned red and the sea turned dark and a flock of birds rose from the sea to attack the Fir Bolg, though one bird was sore wounded. He saw slaying, and mounds of severed heads.

The King's Druid, Ce Cesar, told him that the dream foretold the coming of the sea-warriors of the folk of Nemed, and the end of the Tuatha De's reign.

So it was that the children of Iarbonel the Wise returned to the Goddess' Isle. They had dwelt in the Cities of Wonder, learning poetry and mighty

magic's. They called themselves the Tribe of the Goddess Danu—the Tuatha De Danann. They were strong, loving and wise, greatly valuing talent and skill. It is said that those of them who had an art or skill were lords, and those that did not, were not. For three days the host of their cloud ships blotted out the sun.

On Beltaine morning the ships of the Tuatha De landed on Eriu's highest mountain and lit their Sacred Fire, and they made offering to the Goddess of the land. They took counsel among themselves and sent an emissary forth to see who dwelt on the Isle. They asked that one half of the Isle be given to the Tuatha De. The Fir Bolg refused, and it was plain that only war would settle the issue.

This was the first Battle of Mag Tuireadh, the Plain of Lamentations. The warring was terrible, as every day the champions from both sides fought, and the streams flowed red with blood. It was their greater skill in magic that gave the Tuatha De the victory, and they took one half of the Isle. Yet they paid a terrible price, for their War-King, Nuada, had his hand struck from him by a Fir Bolg champion. Diancecht, the Gods' physician made a perfect hand of silver and fitted it where Nuada's hand had been by magic art.

### **Part 3: The Tuatha De and the Fomorians**

Thus the Tuatha De were established in the world. But there was a law among them that the King must have no blemish or infirmity. Though Nuada was a strong and just King; the Druids and lawgivers declared that the tradition must be upheld and a new King chosen.

Now the Tuatha De had made a pact of peace with their ancient enemy, the Fomorians. Elathan, a King of the Fomor, had lain with Eriu of the Gods and from that union came Eochaid Bres, the Beautiful. Likewise Ethniu the granddaughter of Balor, a King of the Fomor, had been betrothed to Cian, son of Diancecht the physician. So it was decided to offer the Kingship to Eochaid Bres, to complete the pact.

Bres was a beautiful being, wonderful to look at as he took the throne. However it soon became clear that he wished no good upon the Tuatha De. He began to force them into labor, day and night, for his own welfare and that of the Fomorians. For, now that Bres was king, the Fomor war-bands roved the Isle freely, oppressing all.

Bres set the wise and mighty Dagda to building fortresses, with little to eat

and a hideous demon to mock him through the night. Ogma was set to cut wood, and grew so weak that he could not complete his tasks. Brigid was given in marriage to Bres and she bore him a son.

So stingy was Bres that no feast graced his hall, no meat was laid before guests and no ale flowed. No mirth or music was heard in his court, for Bres gave no largesse to bards.

At last Cairpre, the Harper of the Gods, went to the Hall of Kings to play for the court. In return for his music he was given a tiny, windowless room and a pile of straw for a bed, a crust of bread and stale water to drink. So Cairpre composed a satire on Bres, deriding and mocking him mercilessly. So potent was this bardry that Bres' face broke out in hives and blotches and he took to his chamber in shame.

So again the old law was invoked, this time by the Tuatha De. Bres was driven from the Hall of Kings, and the High Seat stood empty.

The kings of the Fomors were not willing to forego the tribute of the people of the Isle, and they resolved to destroy the Tuatha De at last. Balor of the Evil Eye, Indech the Son of Domnu and Elathan the father of Bres led the Demons' army, to win the Isle of the World forever.

These were the deities of the Tuatha De Danann as the Fomorian army marched:

Nuada was their War King, who led them into the world. The Dagda was their Druid and Sacrificer, himself a mighty warrior. Ogma was their Champion, eloquent in speech and great in deeds. Morrigan was the Battle-witch, who turned the enemies' loins to water. Brigid was the Druidess of the Tuatha De, Lady of Fire and Water. Boann was the deities' Queen, Keeper of Cattle and Wisdom. Manannan the Wizard was with them, and Mider the Secret, and Diancecht the Healer; Goibniu the Smith, Credne the Bronze-wright; Luchtine the Carpenter and many other powers stood ready to meet the Demons in battle.

#### **Part 4: The Birth of Lugh**

Now Cian, son of Diancecht, had been betrothed to Ethniu, daughter of Balor, and sorcerer-king of the Fomorians. But a prophecy told that Balor would be slain by his grandson, so he had locked Ethniu away in his glass tower, on a rocky isle of the sea.

Manannan gave Cian a cloak of invisibility, and a ring that would open any

lock, and Cian went alone to the black Fomor isles. Evading every mighty warrior he came to Ethniu's bower. There he won her love, and dwelled with her in secret for a year and a day. Ethniu bore a son, whom they named Lugh (light).

When Lugh was a few months old they determined to escape, and return to the Isle. One of Ethniu's handmaidens betrayed her, and Balor set his hunt after him. The three were on the shore when the hunt came upon them. Cian cast his spears and whirled his sling and foes toppled, but just as he was pushing their little boat into the sea, Balor's spear pierced the heart of Ethniu, and she was slain. Cian barely escaped with Lugh into the empty sea.

When they arrived again on the shore of the Isle, Lugh was given in fosterage to Manannan the Wise, who took the young one to the Isle of Apples to learn the hero's work.

The Tuatha De met in counsel to discuss their strategy against the Demons. The Dagda, the Lord of Perfect Knowledge, asked each of the Gods what they would do in the fight. When the whole company had given their pledges the Dagda smiled and said that he would double their power, for he would do all their deeds again himself. The Shining Ones cheered, saying truly, he is In Dagda! (The Excellent God)

As this council progressed there came a knock on the gates of the hall. It was golden Lugh, son of Cian, upon a white horse with weapons bristling. The gatekeeper halted him, asking what skill Lugh had, for none could enter the hall unskilled.

*"I am a smith," said Lugh,*

*"We do not need one," said the gatekeeper, "we have a very fine smith".*

*"I am a champion," said Lugh.*

*"We do not need one," said the gate-man, "Ogma is our champion."*

*"I am a Harper," said Lugh.*

*"We have harpers many, and do not need one."*

And so it went, as Lugh named his skills in turn. At last he asked if they had any who had each and every of these skills. The gatekeeper went to the council and told them of he who claimed to be Samildanach—master of every art.

The Gods brought the Wonder Child (for he had not yet grown his first mustache) into the hall and tested him. When Lugh had proven all that he claimed, he was seated at the war-council, and given the Champion's Seat.

## **Part 5: The Second Battle of Maige Tuireadh**

When Samhain came again, the Fomorian sent a war band to collect tribute from the Tuatha De. The Gods thought to delay the battle, but Lugh fell upon the Giants' warriors and slew all save Bres, their leader. Lugh sent Bres back to the Fomorian kings, that they might hear of their enemy. When Balor heard that a son of Ethniu had risen against him, he grew both angry and afraid.

It was true war then, and the Tuatha De war-bands took their great battle-chariots out to harry the Fomorian reavers. Deeming Lugh too valuable to risk, they left him safely at the hall.

For four days and four nights the two armies fought unceasingly, and the slaying and hero-deeds were many and mighty. First one side would gain the advantage, then the other, as the Druids stood upon the pillar stones and chanted their dire war-spells. The Morrigan flew above the battle, shrieking her curses and pecking at the eyes and vitals of the foe. Dagda and Ogma laid about them with their clubs, slaying dozens, but the Fomor were mighty. Many of the Tuatha De Danann warriors were slain, including Nuada of the Silver hand.

The Fomorian king Balor came late to the field. Balor was the eldest of the Fomorian Gods, and he was borne onto the Plain of Wailing, upon a litter, by nine shield men. Balor had one dreadful magical eye, long ago poisoned by magic. It was held closed by a heavy bronze door that required all the strength of his shield men to open. When he opened the eye, none could live where its gaze fell. Balor came to the front of the battle line, and prepared to blast the warriors of the Gods.

Lugh had been left behind at Tara. Now he looked out from the high rampart there and saw the danger to his folk. He mounted upon Manannan's white horse, Splendid Mane, and rode into the air toward the battle. The Fomors saw a light arising in the west and Elathan spoke, saying, "How is it that the sun rises today in the west?" His druids said to him that it was not the sun, but the son of Cian and Ethniu, Lugh the Long Hand, come to aid the Tuatha De!

As Lugh reached the Fomorian army he turned and rode once tuathal about them, slaying as he went. Then he rode hard, straight for Balor, and the Giant king called for his eye to be opened. Lugh took out a sling and magical sling-ball made of the brains of slain Fomors. He let fly, and the shot struck Balor's eye just as it was opening. The force of the blow drove the eye out the back of Balor's head, and its terrible power was turned on the Fomorian horde.

At this the warriors of the Gods charged again, and the Fomorians broke and ran. Lugh struck off the head of Balor and set it upon a pillar-stone.

In their defeat the Fomorians were made to give up all the secrets of the Isle, upon which they had dwelt for so long. The secrets of grain and herb, the times for planting and reaping, and much wisdom was won for the good of all beings. The Fomorians were banished from the face of the world, to live beneath the Earth or on the sea.

So the Tuatha De Danann was established on the Island of the World. Under their rule all prospered, even those of their former foes who accepted the new powers.

## **Part 6: The Sons of Mil**

It is not clear how the Tribes of Mortals emerged into the world. The Book of Invasions describes them as coming from Scythia, through Spain, but that later idea tells us little about the Gaelic traditions of the creation or birth of humankind.

It is said that the warrior prince Mil, was renowned for his conquests. He led a great people, in lands apart from the Isle, but in time it came his fate to die. His two sons—Emer Donn the eldest, and Eremon the youngest, succeeded him but he had many other sons, including Amairgin White-knee the Poet.

The People of Mil heard of the wealth of Erin, and they sent an uncle of Mil, named Ith, to seek it. After treating with the Tuatha De, he fell out with them and they fought, wounding Ith badly, so that he died on the voyage back to his lands. The Sons of Mil cried out against the Tuatha De, and they set out in force for the Isle. They sailed with threescore and five ships and forty chieftains with all their folk.

As their ships approached the Isle, the Druids of the Tuatha De caused a mist to arise and obscure the shore. The Milesians could not know where they were, and they sailed three times around the Isle, searching. At last they arrived on the western shore of the Isle, on the morning of Beltaine.

When the Folk of Mil had landed, they made their way toward the center of the Isle. They were met by three goddesses in turn—the Ladies of the Land. The first of those was called Banba, and the second Fotla. Each of those asked in turn that the Isle always be known by their name, and to this the Milesians



agreed. The third was the Goddess of the Tuatha De named Eriu. She asked in turn for the naming of the Isle, and Amairgin agreed, saying that it would always be known as Eire, in her honor. In this way the mortal folk made their peace with the Sovereignty before ever they crossed spears with the warriors of the Tuatha De.

The Milesians came to Tara, the sacred center of the Isle. There they met the three kings of the Tuatha De; Mac Cecht, Mac Greinne and Mac Coll. Seeing the strength of the Milesian force, the Tuatha De asked that they withdraw for nine days, and that at the end it would be peace, or the division of Erin, or war. Donn said that if it were his to choose it would be war, but Amairgin recognized the rightness of it, and decreed that the People of Mil would depart again to the sea, beyond the ninth wave. That they did.

Then it was the magic of the Tuatha De that came against the ships of the Milesians. The druids conjured a great wind that blew the ships away from land, and they could not come near. This was a thing the Milesians had never seen before, and they only discovered its nature by the fact that the wind did not blow above the tops of their sails. Yet they used all their sea craft to work their way toward shore.

The poet Amairgin saw the way that things were, and he composed a verse to make peace between the Milesians and the land. He sang

I invoke the land of Erin,  
Thrice coursed be thy fertile sea,  
Fertile be thy fruit-strewn mountains,  
Fruit-strewn be thy showery wood,  
Showery be thy rivers of waterfalls,  
Of rivers be thy deep pools,  
Deep-pooled be thy high holy wells,  
A well of tribes for the assembly,  
The assembly of the kings of Tara,  
Tara be the hill of thy tribes,  
The tribes of the Sons of Mil,  
Mil of the ships, of the barks,  
Let their lofty ship be Erin  
Lofty Erin, darkly sung,  
An incantation of great cunning,

The great cunning of the wives of Bres,  
The wives of Bres of Buaighe;  
The Mighty Women of Ireland.  
Eremon has conquered her,  
Ir and Eber have invoked her  
I invoke the land of Erin.

With this song he called upon the pact between the Milesians and the Goddess of Sovereignty, and the wind began instantly to still. Emer Donn had pressed ahead, coming to the rocks before the shore, standing at the prow of his high ship, a sudden gust of wind sent him fallen, and his life was dashed out on the stone. Thus he became the first mortal to perish in the Isle.

The magic of Amairgin brought the Milesian force to shore, and in time they had the victory over the Tuatha De. They divided the land among them, into two halves. Eber Finn took the southern half, and Eremon the northern, and they established all their clans and chiefs.

The Tuatha De drew back from mortal sight. The greatest of them remained as Gods in the land, for the Milesians worshipped Erin, and learned to worship the Most Noble of her kin. The lesser folk of the Tuatha De drew away into the Otherworld, or into the secret places in the world. For it is said that the Milesians chose for their part all that is visible above the ground, and the Tuatha De chose all that was beneath the surface of the world.

So the Order of the Worlds was set. Mortal beings live on the face of the world, yet we can find vision to look within it as well. The Sidhe-folk live beneath appearances, though they can find their way through to our world as well. Over all are the Shining Gods, and outside all are the remnants of the Fomor enemy, though some of those are now true servants of the World Order.

## **The Gods of Pagan Eire**

### **Introduction: The Problem of an Irish Pantheon**

Any attempt to assemble a single, comprehensive order of the Celtic God/desses and Spirits faces many difficulties. A modern Pagan often wants to sort the Celtic powers into the clear categories of late Greco-Roman myth—a God of War, a Goddess of Love, etc. Celtic deities consistently evade such classification. While some types of classification can be made, the Irish tales never passed into the hands of philosophers who reduced them to poetic abstractions. This was in some ways the fate of the Greek and Roman deities, especially in late classical times, but Christianity overran the Celtic lands before any similar sophistication occurred there. The Celtic powers remain particularly lively and multifaceted.

### **The Three Functions**

Scholars have discovered an important relationship between the languages and cultures of a wide range of ancient peoples. This is referred to as Indo-European, because its range stretches from the Aryan peoples of India through the Persians, Greeks and Romans, to the Germans and the Celts, on Europe's western shore. Indo-European elements in Celtic lore include special veneration of sacred fire and water, a four or eightfold division of space with an added sacred center, and reverence for Deities, Ancestors and Spirits of the Land. In most Indo-European cultures, including that of the Celts, human function was divided into three sacred categories. These are: the Providers—landholders, farmers, cattlemen and some artisans; the Warriors, who protected the land and sought gain; and the Wise Rulers—poets, master artisans, judges, law keepers and priestesses. By looking at Celtic myth through these divisions we may shed some light on how the Gaels themselves understood their deities.

In the tale of the arrival of the Sons of Mil is preserved the names or titles of the so-called Three Gods of the Tuatha De. These are given as Mac Cecht—Son of the Plow, Mac Greinne—Son of the Sun, and Mac Cuill—Son of the Hazel. Mac Cecht is obviously the King of the Providers. This function is concerned with fertility, crops and beasts, feasting, revelry and sexual love. The hazel is the tree of wisdom, poetry and inspiration, so Mac Cuill can be called King of the Wise, concerned with those functions as well as law and rulership.

Mac Greinne is thus left to be assigned as King of the Warriors, who loved display, glory, courage and gold.

In the same tale, the War band of the Milesians meets the three Goddesses of the land on its march to the sacred center. Banba is associated with the Warriors, Fotla with the Wise and Eriu with the Providers.

In this double triad of powers we can find a model—Three Kings and Three Queens. We will apply that in a more detailed examination of the Tuatha De Danann deities.

## The Tuatha De Danann

I offer here a tentative categorized list of the major God/desses of the Tuatha De. We will give the names and primary attributes of each, and a key symbol. We will then move to more speculative areas, suggesting what kinds of magics are proper for each deity and giving a short visualization to attune to their power.

While we will create categories for the God/desses, the individual listings are more authentic than the overall outlines, which are my own device.

### The First Triad

**Danu** is the Cosmic Mother, source-womb of all life and the Mother of the Deities. She existed from eternity and exists as the background principle of all realities. Danu never appears in the tales, and receives no public offerings or prayers, but the Wise may seek her in secret. Druids strive to know her mind, for she is the heart of all experience, and gives to her chosen the bliss of her love.

Danu is known by no single symbol, for each must find their own way to her. The whole of the world is symbolic of the Mother of All.

**Key Image:** Vast and empty sea, with the stars reflecting from the sky. From out of the stars and sea mist emerges the perfect shape of a woman. Full-breasted and round-bellied, she is cloaked in a mantle of stars with a hem of green. She is hooded, and the shadows hide her face.



**Bel** is the Cosmic Father, the first fire that wakes the womb. He is also the first Son, having appeared mysteriously, himself, from that womb. He is the

Fire of the Year—at Beltaine the Fire of Life, at Samhain the Fire of Death. He is the spark of individual and separate mind that draws individual life from the all-womb of Danu.

Bel's symbols are the World Pillar and the Sacred Fire. Upon the stone are set the heads of the slain, and into the fire their bodies are cast.

**Key Image:** In a cavern deep in the earth stands a great Fire-altar, flaming high. Before this fire sits a mighty male form. Completely naked, huge and strong with mighty erect phallus, red hair and beard, crowned with fire, with smiling mouth and flashing eyes.

**Lugh** is the Cosmic Child, the Hero King who turns back ill. He is the Samildanach—Master of All Arts. In him the Gods and Demons are united and the World Order preserved. Lugh is the Defender of the Gods, the ideal of warriors. He is called Lugh Lamfhadha—the Long Hand—because he never misses with sling or spear.

His symbol is the Spear of Victory. It is sure in casting and slaying, so mighty that its head must be kept in the juice of poppies lest it rise and slay alone.

**Key Image:** A grey hill, high in the first light of dawn. Riding on the first spearing ray of sunlight, a young warrior comes in full panoply. He stands in a chariot, pulled by two white steeds, its golden fittings blazing. He is tall, blond and perfectly formed, naked save for a scarlet cloak clipped with a silver brooch. He wears a torc and arm-rings of gold. His hair is blown back by the wind of his ride as he holds high his nine-pointed spear, its points flashing in the dawning light.



Danu and Bel are the holy grandparents, loving yet distant from the living, sought only by mystics. Only Lugh is part of the present order of worship. He is the grandson of Balor, a version of Bel. The slaying of the Old God by the Young Son is a pattern that repeats throughout the Indo-European complex, often connected with the rivalry of two Gods for a single Goddess.

Descended from Danu and Bel are all the Shining Ones of the Tuatha De. They are the skillful spirits, the voices of inspiration whether in art, in magic or in the common skills of living.

## The Three Kings

**In Dagda** is the eldest of the Tuatha De, though his youth is maintained by the spells of the Gods. He is the wisest and mightiest of the Gods, save perhaps for Lugh, for his is the power of every Power. He is called Dagda—the Excellent God; Ruad Rofessa—Lord of Perfect Knowledge; Eochaid Ollathair—Stallion, the Great Father. He is also called Aed—fire—and the Sacred Fire is his chief attribute. He is described as always hungry, able to consume vast quantities of food. He is a red God, and has the power to slay or give life—all attributes of fire. The Dagda is also a phallic God, his amorous exploits matching his appetite. He is the father of many of the Tuatha De Danann deities, but his main function is as the Lord of Knowledge, the Druid of the Gods.

The Dagda's symbols are the Cauldron, the Harp and the Club. The Cauldron is called the 'Never-Dry', one of the Four Treasures of the Gods that gives each their favorite food. The Harp is called Four Cornered Music, upon which the Dagda plays the turning of the seasons. The Dagda's Club slays with one end and gives life with the other.

**Key Image:** A landscape of green hills with a great plain before them. Over the hills comes a male form, tall and broad. He wears a patch tunic of nine colors and a kilt of burnished leather. His mighty arms and legs bear bands of gold, and his shoulders a cloak of scarlet fastened with a great brooch. Upon his thick neck is a great torc with bullhead finials. His uncut hair and beard are red, and his features broad, with smiling eyes and lips. In his right hand he drags his war club, cutting the turf as he goes. On his back is his harp and under his left arm he bears his cauldron, steaming and bubbling all the while.



**Nuada** is the War-King of the Tuatha De. He is the brother of the Dagda, and is called Airgetlam—the Silver Hand, and Iriel Faith—the Seer, and Tuathal Techtmar—the Guide of the Tribe. Nuada's arm was stricken from him in battle and replaced with a silver one. Thus he is the Healer of Wounds as well as the Warrior. He presides over those river-fords where conflicts are fought, and over the healing waters that run in them.

Nuada's weapon is the Sword of Light. With it he led the God/desses into

the chaos to carve the world. None survive the bite of the Sword of Nuada. His symbol is the Silver Hand, the sign of honor and rightness, for he stood graciously aside, in keeping with the law.

Nuada rules kingship, victory and mastery. He may be offered to for these boons, though his potential for strife must be tempered. He can guard and ward for the Druid, and give comfort after battle. He should be invoked in connection with fresh water.

**Key image:** Dawn at the ford of a fast-flowing river. Onto the far bank steps a noble warrior in a tunic of nine colors, wearing white breeches. His scarlet cloak is thrown back to reveal his right arm. That arm is silver from the elbow to the fingertip, and the Silver Hand grips the Sword of Light, flaming with spirit-fire. A great oval shield of bronze covers his left side. He wears a helmet with two bulls' horns, and upon his neck is a golden torc. His clean-shaven chin is visible below his faceplate, as are his sweeping yellow mustaches.



**Ogma** is the son of the Dagda and, with Nuada, is the third king of the Tuatha De Danann. He is called Griannach—Sun-faced—and is the Champion and Defender of the Land. His mighty club holds back ill from field and flock. He is called Cermait—Honey-tongue—and his greatest strength is his speech, for Ogma is the greatest of orators. As persuasion is stronger than force, so Ogma the Champion is Lord of Eloquence.

Ogma's symbols are the sun-face and the Ogham alphabet, which he invented. Ogma gave the twenty letters of the Ogham to Manannan Mac Lir, to be the root of every poem and spell.

Ogma is the protector of all, both by strength and by skillful speech. Offer to him for eloquence, clarity and persuasiveness, for strategy and victory. He gives leaders the words to inspire the folk and turn them to right ways.

**Key image:** In the midst of a field of ripe grain stands a ring of twenty trees. Into the ring comes a tall, handsome young man, clad in a short leather tunic and richly decorated boots. He has long blond hair, flashing blue eyes, and wears a golden torc. In his right hand he carries a great bronze club, like a flail. He leads a group of men and women. As he speaks it is as if golden chains link his tongue to the ears of his listeners, and his face shines like the sun.



These three Gods can be tentatively identified as the Sons of the Sun, the Hazel and the Plow, but they are obviously more multivalent than any single classification. Dagda is clearly identified as the Druid of the Tuatha De (thus, the Son of the Hazel), but his Club, Harp and Cauldron are themselves symbolic of the warriors, wise and providers. Nuada is plainly the warriors (Son of the Sun), but Ogma (left with the Son of the Plow) has warrior aspects as Champion, and as Orator might be of the Wise. We will see throughout this study that the Celtic powers do not fit neatly even into their own most common patterns.

### **The Three Queens**

**Boann** is the White Cow Woman, Mother of Bounty, Lady of the Well of Wisdom. She is the mother of several of the Gods, often by Dagda. In the first times she freed the Waters of Wisdom, so that the heroes and the wise could aid the folk. She is the Bearer of Wealth, the mother of Cattle and Clans.

Boann's symbols are the White Cow and the Well of Wisdom. The White Cow is the source of blessing, from her udders milk to the flesh that sustains to the hide loved by craftsmen. The Well is Nechtan's Well, surrounded by nine hazel trees. The hazel nuts drop into the waters, to be eaten by the Salmon of Wisdom. This is the fount of Druidic wisdom, given by the Cow-Mother.

Boann is the Mighty Mother of the Tuatha De. We offer to her for fertility, prosperity and increase, for the aid that a mother gives her child. She also grants access to wisdom, especially that of the heart and the land.

**Key image:** High on a wooded hillside an ancient stone stands on a hill. A hole pierces its center and beneath that hole a clear strong stream flows from a crack in the ground. From out of the wood comes a woman, clothed in a blue gown open to the waist to show her full breasts. She bears a great basket full of bread and fruits, and she leads a white cow. Her green eyes are kind, her braided scarlet hair is bound with a golden circlet and she wears a golden torc. She smiles as she offers bread, and the cow drinks from the stream.

**Brigid** is the Mistress of Knowledge, the Triple Goddess of Poetry, Smithcraft and Healing. She is the daughter of the Lord of Perfect Wisdom and the White Cow Woman. She is called the Lady of Fire and Water, the Lady of



the Harp, the Lady of the Milk of Sustenance. She is a nurturer, and her legends tell of her winning land for the folk by casting her starry cloak across the earth. She is also called the Foster Mother, protector of women in childbirth. She rules the milk in the udder and the breast. Brigid is the Fire of Inspiration in the Heart of the Bard, the Fire of Shaping in the heart of the Smith and the Fire of Health in the Freeman's belly.

Brigid's symbols are the Sacred Fire and Water, and especially her Starry Cloak. It is a great woolen cloak of black or deepest blue, studded with gems like stars of the night sky. It is a mantle of protection and comfort to her children, a shelter from trouble and pain.

Brigid is the gentle teacher of the Tuatha De, the shining source of wit and inspiration. We offer to her for poetic and artistic gifts as well as for the strength to comfort and heal. She is the Initiator of the Wise and Patroness of Druids.

**Key image:** In the center of a clearing in the woods is a pool, and beside it is a Druid's fire-altar, flaming brightly with Sacred Fire. Out of the Trees steps a maiden's form, young and graceful, though strong and sure. She wears a short white tunic and golden shoes, her starry cloak and a golden brooch. In her right hand she bears a smith's hammer, and a harp rests in the crook of her left arm. About her shapely neck is a torc of gold. Her golden hair is bound behind her head, her eyes wise and her features calm.



**Morrigan** is the Great Queen of Phantoms, the Tuatha De's Goddess of War, Kingship and Magic. The Morrigan has three persons, called Macha, Nemain and Badb. In these names she rules battle. She is called Badb Catha, the Battle Raven, Chooser of the Slain and Prophet of Doom. She is sometimes a hideous crone and sometimes an irresistible beauty. She is sexually powerful, the Lady of Sovereignty, lover of heroes and kings. She is the Prophetess and Sorceress of the Tuatha De.

The main symbol of the Morrigan is the Battle Crow or Raven. In that form she haunts the sites of battles and conveys her omens to the wise.

The Morrigan is the Goddess of Conflict, Magic and Sovereignty. She is worshipped for prophecy, to teach the secrets of shape shifting and magic, or for the warrior's wisdom.

**Key image:** A wide plain, the scene of many battles. In its grass are ancient skulls, arms and armor and the glint of gold. A bonfire burns before a great pile of severed heads. Three ravens fly around the mound of bones as a woman steps from behind it. Tall and strong, gaunt yet sensual, she has streaks of grey in her red hair. Her eye is bright and her lips full and red. She wears a red kilt and a black cloak, with gold armlets and a torc of silver. A bronze dagger hangs at her girdle, with a skull upon its pommel. She raises her arms to the sky before the fire.



The simple analysis of these Three Queens would be Boann for the Providers, Brigid to the Wise and Morrigan to the Warriors. As with the Gods, they cannot be neatly pigeonholed. Boann of the Kine partakes of both wisdom and sovereignty, while Brigid the Inspirer has connection with fertility and nurturance. The Morrigan the Warrior also has connotations that can be associated with Druidry.

Each of these Goddesses can also be seen as triple. Brigid is called the Three Brigids, who rule Healing, Inspiration and Shaping. Morrigan is Macha—Sovereignty, Badb—Battle and Nemain—Magic. Boann's triplicity is more speculative, but could be defined as Boann the Wise, Aine the Mother, and Eriu the Queen. Again, the point is that these powers are very well rounded and multivalent, and cannot be limited to simple categories, even those we have presented here.

We have described the Kings and Queens of the Tuatha De Danann, as we see them in the Book of Invasions and other lore. Let us go on to list more of the Clan of the Gods.

## Various Deities

**Aengus Og** is the Mac Oc, the Young Son, child of Boann and the Dagda. He was born when the Dagda caused nine months to pass between one sunrise and the next. He is the Lord of Love, the Harper and the Enchanter, the Principle of Pleasure. Aengus is the embodiment of sweet youth, delighting the worlds with his golden harp. He is the Inheritor, who will sit on his father's throne, and the Suitor who becomes a swan to win the Swan Maiden.

The Swan and the Harp are the symbols of the grace and gentility of

Aengus. The Swan symbolizes the Fairy Lover that leads the wise into bliss and wonder. Both the Harp and the Swan can be messengers and guides to the Otherworld.

Aengus is the Sweet Favorite, the Light of Love and Beauty. We offer to him to aid lovers, to lighten the heart and to bring joy. Aengus offers all the wonder and enchantment of the Sidhe.

**Key image:** On a plain of beautiful flowers lies a still lake. Upon the lake swim three white swans, and beside it a harp of gold stands on a stone. A young man appears, a youth in his first full strength, with strong, slender limbs and red hair. He wears a kilt of tooled leather and a cloak of nine colors. He wears nothing else save ornaments of gold upon his arms and wrists and a torc of gold. Around his beautiful face and head fly tiny silver birds, singing sweetly. He sits and begins to play the harp, as the swans swim toward shore.

**Manannan** is the Mac Lir, the Son of the Sea. He dwells amidst the empty Sea, on the Isle of Apples, Emain Ablach, where the Apples of Immortality bloom. It is Manannan who hosts the Feast of Age, by which the God/desses renew their youth and vigor. He rears the infant Lugh in his Otherworld forest. Manannan is the Judge of the Gods, called to settle their disputes. He is the Traveler, patron of traders and sailors who rides his mighty sea-chariot, Ocean Sweeper. Manannan is the wizard and Druid-Judge. We offer to him to open gates to and from the Otherworld, and as ruler of roads and boundaries. He is an initiator, who imparts secrets of the Sidhe, and is invoked for wisdom and good judgment.

His symbols are his great sea-chariot with its silver-white horse, Splendid-Mane, and the Silver Branch. With the Chariot the God traverses the great void of the Sea to the Land of the Young. The Silver Branch is the fruit of the Otherworld Tree. Its crystal fruits chime the call that brings mortals into the Land of Promise. The Apples of the Otherworld are the sacred Fruit of Life that the Gods eat to restore their youth.

**Key image:** On the shore of the sea, with the waves pounding. From the grey distance comes the Chariot of Manannan. It is of apple wood, with rowan wheels and silver tires. Its fittings are of bronze and gold and it bristles with weapons—two great spears, many javelins and a great oval shield of bronze, worked all over in spirals. The war-car is pulled by white horses, barded with

silver and pearls. In the chariot stands a man, tall and slim, with eyes like an eagle's. He wears a tunic of nine colors, with grey breeches. Upon his shoulders rests a cloak of grey-blue-green, fastened with a seashell brooch of silver and mother-of-pearl. His hair and beard are long and white, but his face is youthful and unlined, shadowed by a hood. As the chariot races over the waters, the sea beneath the wheels becomes a grassy, flowered plain.



**Aine** is the Lady of the Land of Youth, the Earth Woman whose power is the rulership and bounty of the Land itself. She is called the Mother of Clans, whose children are unnumbered. She is also called the Cailleach—the Old Woman—the spirit of the very hills and stones, the womb that brings forth the food from the land. Aine of the Land took husbands in turn over the ages, for she would restore her youth as each man aged. Thus her grandchildren were whole tribes.

The symbol of Aine is the Sacred Hill. This is the womb of the Land-Mother, the Body of the Earth Woman.

Aine is offered to for fertility and prosperity, and for authority and rulership, for she is the Lady of Sovereignty. She is also an initiator, Queen of the Land under the Mound.

**Key image:** A wide plain under blue skies, with a great mound in its midst. A line of pillars leads to a door cut in the hill, and before the door is a great curbstone, carved with spiral glyphs. From out of the mound comes a woman, tall and thick-limbed, great-breasted and full-hipped. She is robed and mantled in green, with golden ornaments, a distaff hanging at her girdle. She is black-haired with streaks of grey, and her face bears the lines of laughter and rage. She bears a staff as she walks forward and seats herself on the stone.



**Flidais** is the Lady of Beasts, the Goddess of the Forest and Meadow. She is sometimes called the Wife of Manannan, but more often is described as the lover of the hero Fergus. It is said that the warrior-king Fergus, whose name means 'best of men,' requires nine women to satisfy his sexual appetite, or Flidais alone. So Flidais, the Stag Woman, is inexhaustible in her sexual

prowess.

The symbol of Flidais is the Stag and Doe in rut, and we offer to her for comprehension of the life of the wildwood, for fertility and for the joy of sexual love.

**Key image:** In a meadow, looking into a deep forest. In the field a herd of deer graze quietly. Out from between the trees comes a woman riding on a great stag. She is naked save for a short leather kilt, her body slender, strong and beautiful, and her hair black and loose upon her shoulders. Her arms and shoulders are tattooed in spiral patterns and adorned with gold and silver. Upon her neck she wears a silver torc. She guides the stag without reins and, as she approaches, she raises a willow wand in salute.



**Diancecht** and **Airmid**, his daughter, are the physicians of the Tuatha De, the source of the skill of medicine and the knowledge of the secret power of growing things. Diancecht is the Dagda's son, sometimes said to be Lugh's grandfather. It is said that he never left a scar and could heal any wound or ill, so long as the brain and spine were whole

When Nuada lost his arm, Diancecht made him a silver arm but could not replace his own arm of flesh. Diancecht's son Miach succeeded where his father had failed, giving Nuada his own arm, whole again. Enraged with jealousy, the Healer-God struck off the head of his son. His daughter, Airmid, took the head and buried it beneath a hill. From that soil grew every healing herb, and the head of Miach taught his sister their virtues. When Diancecht saw Airmid setting all the herbs in order upon a cloak, he shook the cloak and scattered them all. Thus was the healing knowledge confused. Ever since, the Healer and his daughter have striven to aid the wise in regaining that sacred knowledge.

The symbol of Diancecht and Airmid is the sprig of growing herbs and the Cloak of Airmid upon which the herbs were spread. Every Druid seeks to discover the secrets of herbs and plants, for the good of all folk.

We offer to the Healer Gods for aid against illness, especially for knowledge of the uses of and right relation with herbs and plants.

**Key image:** Deep in the woodland a spring leaps from the rocks, and verdant life grows all around. It is night, with a waxing moon overhead. Into the moonlit clearing comes a hooded, white-cloaked figure, naked and bearing a

bronze-bladed sickle, the figure indistinct beneath the cloak. The Druid bends and cuts a spring of herbs.

The Healers may also be seen seated before a cauldron bubbling over a fire, slowly adding herbs to the brew.



**Midhir** and **Edain** are mighty powers under the Sidhe-Mound. Theirs is a story of initiation and magic.

When Aengus invited his foster-father Midhir to guest with him, Midhir demanded three gifts—a worthy chariot, a noble cloak and the love of the most perfect maiden of the Sidhe, Edain Echraide. Through heroic deeds and a fine bride price Aengus won Edain from her father, and she goes to Midhir’s bed. But Midhir had a jealous wife, called Fuamnach. With a rowan wand she transformed Edain into a pool of water in the garden, and then fled from Midhir’s house. In time the pool dried into a single worm, and in time the worm became a purple butterfly. In the presence of this butterfly no trouble could last, and she stayed with Midhir and whispered secrets in his ear. Again Fuamnach interfered, stirring up a great wind that blew Edain far and wide through the world for seven years. At last she found rest with Aengus Og, until Aengus went to visit Midhir’s hall in turn. Fuamnach conjured the wind again and blew Edain away. The butterfly lodged at last in the thatch of a noble hall, and dropped into a pitcher of wine. A mortal queen drank her down and, nine months later; bore her as a living babe.

In time this babe grew to womanhood, and was named Edain. The King of the Isle fell in love with her and they were wed. Midhir has spent the years searching for her, and finds her at last. He asks her to return, but she said that she would go only if her husband bids her. So Midhir engages the King in games of fidchell. Twice he loses and pays great forfeits, but the third time he wins, and demands a night of Edain’s embraces. Though the king set all his warriors to keep Midhir out, he appeared in the hall and carried away his prize.

The King set out to recover Edain in turn, and Midhir agreed to return her if the king could pick her out of a crowd. Fifty women came forth, identically dressed, but the king chose her unerringly. So Edain lived out that life as the wife of the king.

In this strange story, both Midhir and Edain play the part of the Fairy

Lover. Edain is the spirit of joy and wisdom to both Midhir and Aengus. When she is born into the mortal world she marries a good king, but the Otherworld comes to claim her. The Fairy Lover is an important Celtic motif, and we offer to Edain to bring this weird relationship into being. The Fairy Lover is the ally and companion of the Druid, who teaches secrets and imparts divine bliss.

**Key image:** A gorgeous hall, fit for a royal house. On a dais is a golden bench and seated on the right side of the bench is a kingly man. Upon his shoulder rests a perfect purple butterfly, which fills the air with gentle song. It seems that the figure of a lovely, queenly maiden appears dimly behind the King's shoulder and whispers in his ear. She is golden haired and flashing-eyed, slender and beautiful, with a gown of gauzy cloth. She dims from sight as the butterfly fills the air with song.

### **The Gods of Craft**

**Goibniu** is the iron-wright of the God/desses, the Divine Smith who forges the swords and spears of the Shining Ones, and inspires mortal smiths. Goibniu joins his own magical ale with the Apples of Manannan to make the Feast of Age, and he keeps a magic cow that never ceases to give milk.

The symbol of Goibniu is the Smith's Hammer, which shapes woe and weal by beating raw material into swords or plows. As it is for the iron, so it is for the Druid's soul.

Goibniu is offered to for perfection in craftwork, and for the strength and perseverance to meet goals. Yet Goibniu is also a mystical God, and teaches the Wisdom of Shaping, gives initiations, and provides bounty for the Holy Feast.

**Key image:** Deep in an oak wood, in a clearing by a spring, the Smith has set his forge. The man at the bellows is huge, brawny and red-haired, clothed in black tunic and breeches, and an apron of thick leather, his arms bare. His blue eyes gleam in the firelight as he heats a bar of iron to red-hot. He stands, takes the iron from the fire, and goes with his mallet to the anvil. As he begins to strike, he sings.



**Credne** and **Luchtine**, together with Goibniu, are the Three Craftsmen of the Tuatha De. Credne is the worker in bronze and lesser metals, and Luchtine is the carpenter and woodwright. Together the Craftsmen support all life by

fashioning the living earth into the dwellings, tools and ornaments of the Living. No plow breaks soil, no grain is reaped, no thread woven into clothe without the Artisans' skills.

Credne and Luchtine are symbolized by the tools of their crafts and are offered to for skill and diligence.

**Key image:** See the Craftsmen in their garb of honor, with cloaks of three colors and brown tunics, with ornaments of gold. Credne is seen with his crucible and tongs, Luchtine with his mallet and plumb.



**Donn** is the Dark One, the Harvester of the Dead. He is not of the Tuatha De, but the Son of Mil who died on the rocks of the Isle's coast. He is, however, firmly a part of the Shining Ones. He is the first of the Dead, who sits in his house, Teach Duinn, and receives the dead as they journey to their country. Donn is the Bull-Father, the First Ancestor and the Lord of the Gates of Death.

The symbol of Donn is the Brown Bull, the strength and virility of life in the



face of mortality

**Key image:** In a cavern deep in rock, a cleft overhead admits the moonlight and the sound of the crashing sea. On the cavern floor is a huge, square hearth with a roaring fire. The beam of moonlight falls on a male figure, seated cross-legged upon a cubic stone. He is bare-chested, with striped breeches and bare feet. Upon his neck is a great golden torc. His hair and beard are black and wild, streaked with grey. Heaped around the base of his throne are gems and gold and silver, and every precious stone. Beasts surround him—a white horse, a brown bull, and a serpent with ram's horns. His eyes burn with reflected firelight.





These are the chief Deities of the Irish family of God/desses known as the Tribe of the Goddess Danu. While we may think of them as a single, neat system, it is certain that their tales are composites of many Celtic traditions, welded together by the culture and land of Eire, even after the coming of Christianity.

The evidence suggests that there were dozens of local versions of these Powers, worshipped by specific tribes, clans and villages. The Celtic tendency to conceal the personal names of their God/desses behind more general titles makes deciphering the order of the pantheon a problem. To conclude our treatise on the Irish deities, let us look at a model that might have been found in a specific village. A Celtic Pantheon

### **The River Mother or Land Mother**

It seems likely that the central Goddess of Celtic worship was connected with a key feature of the land that supported the tribe's life. This usually seems to have been the area's key river, as in the case of Danu herself, and Boann of the Boyne. Alternately this Goddess might be connected with a feature of the land, such as the Paps of Anu, hills sacred to Aine in the south of Ireland. This Land Mother would also be the power of Sovereignty, to whom the tribal king owed his sacred authority.

### **The Totemic Father**

Each tribe or clan would trace their history to a sacred ancestor, sometimes a God per se, but just as often a mortal hero. From this figure the tribe derived its name, and often its central symbol. This was most often an animal that would be identified with the tribe's nature. We see in the Dagda the horse, in Lugh the raven, in Donn the bull. Classical writers said that the Celts traced their ancestry to 'Dis Pater,' the Underworld Father. On the continent this figure is shown as the Stag-Horned God of Wealth, called Cernunnos. The Stag God does not appear in Irish lore, but Donn the Bull, the First Ancestor, may fill this role.

### **The Tribe of Gods**

From these parental figures would spring the many deities representing the functions and aspects of human and natural life. These would include Powers of Inspiration and War, of Eros, of Poetry and Artifice.

In addition to the God/desses, the Celts would have honored the Ancestors, both of their own tribe, and the great heroes of the past. They would also have worshipped those spirits of natural features that came to be called the Sidhe, or the Gentry.

The worship pattern of any particular household would have varied, based on the place of that family in the tribe's functions. Warriors, poets, craftsfolk, herdsman, farmers, and sacrificers would each have had their specific deities and cults, each with their place in the overall religion of the tribe.

This pattern offers to modern Pagans a fine model of unity in diversity. The deities and Powers are one great family, in which individual mortals can find a set of symbols that can be tailored to a life's specific needs. Thus a Pagan, polytheistic religion offers us each our unique, personal spiritual life connected fully with the equally unique religions of others in our religions, and all joined in the great seasonal observances.

### **The Afterlife, the Heroes and the Dead**

What is known about the afterlife beliefs of Celtic peoples is sketchy and often contradictory. The classical authors are unanimous in declaring that the Celts held an unshakable belief in a happy life after death. It made them fearless in battle and was so strong that debts were often said to be deferred until the next life. While this belief in personal survival is well attested, there is much less agreement on the details of the fate of the dead.

Many of the classical authors say that the Druids taught the transmigration of souls. In that doctrine of reincarnation, spirits may be reborn into any of nature's forms—human, animal or even inanimate things.

That doctrine is supported by evidence from the tales. We find humans becoming pools of water, their own descendants or sacred animals. Fintan, last survivor of the first folk, lived successive lives as a man, a stag and an eagle. The two great Bulls of Erin, the Brown and the White, began their existence as a pair of swineherds, and underwent rebirth until they reached their exalted state as sacred bulls. In Welsh tales the wizard Gwydion undergoes a series of animal lives, and the Irish tale of Edain depicts transformations or rebirths in human, insect and inanimate forms.

If we assume that these tales reflect a doctrine of the fate of souls, then we might conclude that human spirits can be reborn, and can include nonhuman as well as human forms. A nonhuman rebirth was clearly not always a punishment. Rebirth as an animal could involve increase in honor or spiritual authority. Mortal humanity was only one of the many kinds of beings who kept the World Order whole.

Of course these tales may also be interpreted in a mythological, initiatory or shamanic way. They may represent the magical journey of a particular individual rather than remnants of Pagan afterlife belief. So while the tales strongly suggest a belief in reincarnation and transmigration among the Celts, they fall short of proving it.

When we look at the archeological remains of Celtic burials one thing becomes clear. The Celts, at some periods at least, expected their afterlife to be very similar to the tribal life they left behind. Chieftains, both male and female, were buried, either whole or after cremation, with chariots, jewelry, weapons, drinking equipment and food. They clearly expected to retain both their status and their obligations.

The tales also support this model. When various heroes are transported to the Otherworld they find a land of perpetual feasting, horseracing and revelry not unlike the Viking's Valhalla. These tales give little evidence of an expected reincarnation of any sort. However, it is unclear whether the beings met in these journeys are actually mortal spirits, or 'Sidhe-folk' of some stranger kind.

The destruction of Celtic Paganism by the rise of Christianity is nowhere more evidenced than in afterlife beliefs. Still, as moderns working to revive the Old Ways, we need to formulate some sort of more or less coherent attitude toward death, the afterlife and the place that the Ancestors hold in our worship. A speculative reconstruction of a Celtic afterlife doctrine might be expressed thus:

For almost everyone, the afterlife will be an improved version of this one. The dead are guided by proper ritual, and by the King of the Dead, to Tir Na Marbh; Land of the Dead, where they dwell happily. This land is a lovely and joyous place, where the songs of the Goddess' birds ease pain and sorrow, where feasting and entertainment are the order of the day. The magical Boar and Stag are hunted, and the Mead of Poetry flows freely. Many tales tell that the souls of the newly dead linger, as shades, in the living world until Samhain eve. Then Donn, the King of the Dead, winds his horn and calls all souls to his

House, Teach Duinn, and then west across the Sea to Tir Na Marbh.

While we find no doctrine of universal reincarnation among the Celts, it is clear that Spirits are often born into flesh for various reasons. For some the Way of Return is their fate. Those chosen by the Powers for some destiny, or who choose rebirth themselves, or are placed under a geas by a magician, may return to the mortal world to work out their path. We may know a series of rebirths until our specific destinies are fulfilled.

There is no evidence, at this time that the Celts believed in a process of regular reincarnation leading to movement up any sort of spiritual ladder or stairway. Spirits came into flesh to aid their folk, to do the Gods work, etc.

All Indo-European peoples seem to have practiced, in various ways, a Cult of the Dead. This seems to have included veneration of the generations immediately passed, as well as more broadly important cultural figures. The Grandmothers and Grandfathers must be respected and given proper offerings if the clan's prosperity is to thrive. A Version of the Greco-Roman Cult of Heroes was probably present in some form, remembered in Celtic countries in their active Christian Cult of Saints.

All over the Aryan world, it was known that by great deeds of martial, magical or other sorts, an individual could become more like one of the Powers. This is the mark of the Hero (a word we will use both for men and for women). He or she must display in their nature and action one of the archetypes by which the tribe lives. The blacksmith, the bard, the warrior, the ruler, in fact all traditional professions, have magical power. When a mortal fills the traditional image of a skill especially well, and when her deeds do very well for her folk, she may become a hero.

In a very real way, such a person makes a sacrifice of themselves for their folk. Often the Hero must give up many of the potentials of common life, take on terrible risk and pain, and even die young. Most of us hope to be left in peace by the Powers, to offer to them and to be blessed in turn, without being singled out for a great 'destiny.' So we can only be humble and grateful to those who give themselves to let the Light and Shadow show through their lives. When such folk die, they may become Noble Spirits, guests at the feasting table of the Shining Ones. They gain insight and wisdom, and the ability to aid their living tribesfolk, in some of the same ways as the God/desses themselves. In effect, these great mortals become Powers themselves, able to bless in return for the gifts of the sacrifices.

The Pagan tradition of veneration of the spirits of mighty mortals past was lively throughout the Middle Ages. Mortals like Mongfind became—as spirits— aspects of a greater Spirit, such as Morrigan or Lugh.

Those who choose to pursue the Path of the Wise will come into close contact with the Great God/desses. The archetype of the magician is especially powerful for many modern Pagans. Fortunately, that role contains elements of balance and wholeness that can prevent the need for drastic personal sacrifice.

The hero-task of the Druid is to act for, and with, her people, while bringing through from the Otherworld, the wisdom and skills of the Powers. By serving the God/desses, by speaking with the Spirits, by healing and seeing, the Druid can earn his own place among the Heroes.

Of course not every human has the particular nature that becomes a Hero or Magician. In traditional Paganism the ‘laity’ is often somewhat removed from the greatest Powers, busy with their individual worship as warriors or craftspeople or whatever. For these, the Cult of Heroes serves as a reminder of human potential, and as mighty ancestors who can transmit the Deities’ fire just as they did in life.

Gaelic lore gives us some specific examples of human spirits invoked and venerated by the Celts.



## The Family of Mil

The Book of Invasions tells of the first mortals to arrive on the Isle as the folk led by Mil (the Warrior) and his sons—Donn the King, Amairgin the Druid, Eremon, Eber, and four others. Shown in the tales as the Fifth Invasion, who defeat the Tuatha De and drive them into the Otherworld, they are the ancestors of common humanity, the first heroes of the Gael.

**Donn** was the first mortal to die in the Isle. He became, himself, the Lord of the House of the Dead, adopted among the Shining Ones. **Amairgin the Wise** was the Magician, Judge and Prophet—the Druid. His were the spells that overcame the Chaos to allow the folk to come into the Isle. **Eremon** became king after Donn, but Eber insisted that the Isle be divided, and so the first dividing of Erin into north and south occurred. In this way the land was given to the cattle lords; and the north was called the Chief’s Half, and the south the Servant’s Half.

## The Ulster Heroes

Eire's greatest epic is the Cattle Raid of Cooley, the tale of a ritual war between the kingdoms of Ulster and Connaught. These tales, too long to tell here, focus on the warriors of the 'knightly' band of Ulster—the Red Branch.

**Conchobar** the king, **Cathbad** the Druid, **Fergus** the Stallion, Queen **Medb** the Intoxicating, all have the status of demi-god/desses. In fact, while they are remembered as mortals, they may be reflections of Deities whose names have been forgotten.

**CuChullain** of Muirthemne is by far the most famous of the Ulster Heroes, and the whole tale-cycle—a kind of Gaelic Iliad—centers around him. The Hero's birth-name was Setanta, but in one of his childhood feats he slew the watch-hound of the smith named Cullain. His sentence was to serve as the smith's watchdog for one year, so he came to be called CuChullain—the Hound of Cullain. The Cu (as he is called) heard Cathbad the Druid pronounce that any boy who took weapons upon a certain day would have a short life, but everlasting fame. CuChullain asked his father for weapons that day, and thus his path was fated.

CuChullain was said to be the son of Lugh of the Long Arm, and the Dark Goddess—Scathach—she trained him in war-deeds. In the end it was the Red Goddess, Morrigan, who takes him to his death. In between, the boy hero defeats the army of Connacht in months of single combats, earning the fame promised by the wise Cathbad.

Medb, Queen of Connacht, is the greatest of the women of the Ulster cycle. She ruled by her own right, with her husband Ailill, and it was she who sought to steal the Brown Bull of Ulster to add to her own herds. She was the Intoxicating One, of whom it is said that she never had one man without another waiting in his shadow. Medb displays the power of the Goddess of Sovereignty, as well as of the Morrigan.



## Fionn and the Fianna

On the misty edge of history, we find the Hero Fionn MacCumhail—Bright, Son of the Sky—and his band of warriors called the Fianna. In the Fenian tales, as they are called, the Heroes knew, fought and loved the Gods and Spirits,

doing many great deeds.

Fionn was the last of his clan, and he was hidden away in the forest with three women—warriors and witches—as his nurses. His childhood name was Deimne, and the warrior-women made him expert in every woodcraft and war-skill. Because his hair was golden bright he came to be called Fionn—the Fair One. When he was well grown, the boy set out from his forest upbringing to find his path.

He came, in time, to the banks of the River Boyne, where an ancient seer named Finneceas was grilling a lovely salmon. The seer explained that prophecy foretold that the Hidden Wisdom of the Salmon would be granted to one named Finn, and he had spent a year fishing the Boyne. Now at last the Salmon was grilling in the pan, and the poet asked the boy to watch the pan for a time. As Fionn sat watching, the frying salmon spattered and three drops of hot grease fell upon his thumb. Putting his thumb in his mouth to cool it, he received all the magic of the Salmon's Wisdom. From that time forward when Fionn required knowing a mystery he would put his thumb in his mouth and bite it hard, and the knowledge would be his.

Trained by Priestesses and filled with wise magic, Fionn became the leader of the Fianna, the woodland war-bands of the High King of the Isle. Though Fionn was not the strongest, or fastest, or most deadly with a lance, he was reckoned the wisest, the greatest poet, the most gentle and generous of men. Thus, he became the greatest of all the heroes of the Fianna.



### **Mongan, Mog Ruith, Tlachtga & Mongfind**

The historic 'Dark Ages' of Erin provide several examples of magical Heroes who might be proper for veneration by moderns.

The most notable of these is certainly Mongan, a prince of the Dal nAraidhe in the 7th century. He was said to have been the son of Manannan Mac Lir, and the reincarnation of Fionn, born covered with hair like several legendary seers. He is the hero of many tales of enchantment and of the Sidhe, where he is said to have walked freely. Like other Celtic Heroes, Mongan was said to have been fostered in the Land of Promise by his divine father, Manannan.

A character similar in his magic, but a figure of the common people, is Mug Ruith—The Servant of The Wheel. Uncouth and wild, he was the bane of the

missionary, Padraig. Yet it was Mug Ruith's daughter, Tlachtga, who was most greatly reviled by the early Christian authors. She was referred to as a witch, and later gives her name to one of the great ritual centers of Ireland, where the Samhain fires were lit.

Another female magician associated with the Samhain feast is Mongfind. The monkish writers said that the peasants made sacrifice to her on Samhain, calling it Mongfind's Night.



## **The Tribes of the Sidhe**

Throughout Celtic legend we meet a variety of beings who are plainly not Deities, nor yet spirits of the human dead. These beings appear in many forms, some lovely, some unlovely but humanlike, some shaped out of nightmare or fantasy. In later times these were all called ‘fairies’ in English and European countries, but in Ireland they were simply called the ‘gentry’, i.e. the Noble Ones. They are also called the Daoine Sidhe—people of the mound—after the ancient earthworks in which they were said to dwell.

The Noble Ones, the Tribes of the Sidhe, are not elementals in the sense understood by some kinds of esotericism, though they do have affinities with various physical and natural conditions and locations. Sidhe folk dwell in pools and streams, in trees and meadows, in places of wilderness and in cleared places. There are Sidhe of the animals, some of whom are great Heroes and well disposed toward humankind.

Perhaps most important are the High Sidhe, the Noblest and Most Lovely, who appear as the glittering courts and eldritch knights and damsels of the tales. All of these may choose to interact with mortals in various ways, even intermarrying with us.

All of these beings command natural powers of magic to one degree or another. All can be shapeshifters and though many have limited forms, many do not. Many can control the behavior of beast and plant and almost all are able to enchant a human being in some way, if she is not properly protected.

All of this makes the Noble Ones perilous as well as wondrous. When the Druid makes contact with them, he must be strong in his own power, well warded, and preferably under the care of a mighty deity. Even then it may take all of his cleverness to get the good of a denizen of the Otherworld. The magician is wise to seek carefully, and find those beings that are well disposed toward humans. The Druid will, in fact, seek allies among the Nobles, under the patronage of the proper Gods.

When Sidhe beings are angered they can make a terrible enemy. Yet, the Sidhe have worked with mortals who honor the God/desses, and who respect the power of stone and wood and water. Perhaps as those tribes come to understand that magic is awake in mortals, they may relent somewhat in their dislike.

There is a complex and riddling set of rules that bind human relations with the Sidhe. While it is imperative that one keeps one’s promises to the Nobles,

such promises may be interpreted in many clever ways. Some of the Sidhe cannot abide the sun's light, or iron; others have other taboos.

Breaking these taboos may cause the being to vanish, or bring more active penalties. In the many faerie-lover tales, the mortal partner is enjoined against ever striking the Noble woman, or against seeing her naked by day, or bathing. Such misbehaviors always result in the loss of the lover, often along with the wealth and good fortune that they brought.

It is impossible in this kind of book to give a detailed list of the Faerie tribes, or the many individuals and types. Instead I will describe various general categories, and give a few examples, from various Celtic cultures, of each.



## **The High Sidhe**

The Noble kins that are most like humankind in appearance and demeanor are the Daoine Sidhe—the High Court under the Mound. They are wild and wise, yet can be as capricious as the slightest fey. They are those who sit at the High Table, near the Gods in the Banquet Hall of the Isle of Apples. While they may appear to mortals as glittering visions of beauty, they are great shapeshifters. They can appear to mortals as pools, trees, beasts or other natural things.

The Daoine Sidhe can be understood to be the hundreds and thousands of offspring of the Tuatha De themselves. Over the centuries many have held the throne of these Noble Courts. Finvarra is their king in our time, a mighty warrior and a much-desired lover. The Queen of the Daoine Sidhe is called Oonagh; loveliest of any whom are not Gods, the light of the eye of every beholder. The Druid will have little reason to deal with the King and Queen of the Sidhe, except to honor them from afar. To petition the aid of the Noblest Ones would be to risk their whim and desire, and they do not care much about the well being of common mortals. Instead, the Druid finds her own ally among the Nobles, with whom she builds bonds of mutual trust and through that ally, may perhaps approach the higher Nobles.

The Daoine Sidhe commonly appear as beautiful, and garbed in the finest, most dazzling apparel. While they are the most attractive of beings, they can also present a terrifying and appalling aspect to those whom they wish to frighten or destroy.



## Forest and Animal Sidhe

Deep in mysterious woodland dwell the Nobles of forest and glen. Like the ancient Irish forest itself (and the modern North American forest...) the woodland dwellers can offer great treasure and luck, as well as great peril. The **Fir Darrig** is a tree spirit prone to imposing grotesque shapes on its victims. The **Leprechaun** is a woodland dweller, a craftsman and a treasure-keeper. Closely related is the **Clurichaun**, who emerges from the forest to raid ale-kegs and wine cellars. The trees themselves are alive with power, especially the greatest trees in any wood. Such Noble Ones care little for humans, who come with axe and fire; they look after the beasts and lesser spirits. Often the Sidhe-women of the trees enchant those who enter the forest, robbing them of their wits and leading them astray.

Animal Sidhe often accompany the High Ones in their hunts and raids. The **Hounds** are most often mentioned, described as white with red ears and flaming eyes. This color scheme is common to many Noble beasts, including the **Cattle** of the Sidhe, and the **Magic Bull** that appears in many tales. Equally prominent is the **White Stag** that leads hunters into the Otherworld's wildwood, and the **Boar** who guards treasures.

Many of the Gentle Clans are partly of a beastly nature. Most famous of these is the **Phooka**, a mischievous half-goat or half-horse, common to all the Celtic isles. The **Glaistig** are women with the legs of goats, while the **Selkies** may be either human or seal. High Sidhe are also likely to appear in animal forms, such as swans, stags or eagles.

In all, it seems to have been the animal realm that the Celts associated most closely with the Gentry. This seems to recall a time when the spirits of the beasts, that provided sustenance, wealth and beauty, were placated and welcomed to the Magician's fire.



## Water Sidhe

Among the most common of Sidhe-dwellings are lakes, pools and rivers.

To the ancient Celts such places were often sites of great magical power, often associated with the cult of a Deity. Even lesser pools and streams had strong spirit guardians, who were placated with gifts. The **Leanann Sidhe** are High Sidhe of the forest pools who bring great inspiration and wisdom to the mortals with whom they ally, but can be vampire-like, draining vital energy. The **Bean Nighe**, the Washer Woman of the Ford, appears to tell of impending death. These are the echoes, or the Sidhe messengers, of the Deities who are worshipped through water.

Lesser water-folk abound. The **Aughisky**—the Water Horse—is a terrible being that drags mortals under the waves to drown them. Such drowning spirits are common, often as hags with names such as **Jenny Greenteeth**, or **Peg Powler**. The **Glaistig** and **Selkies** are water-folk in animal shape. The **Urisk** is a lone pool-Sidhe who craves human company and may ally himself with mortals.

The best known of the water-folk are the **Merrows**, whose name comes into English as ‘mer-man’ or ‘mer-maid’. They are the sea people, whose women are lovely and dangerous while their men are hideous and friendly. These and the **Selkies** are saltwater beings, but the Sea is mainly the realm of the **Fomor**, a desert of water filled with deadly danger.

The Nobles of water are of various natures, some well disposed toward mortals but many more inclined to harm. When the Druid has reason to deal with such beings she should be certain to employ every protection at the outset. Many harmful beings can appear in a pleasing way, and none should be trusted fully until they are clearly understood. Yet when the water-folk are truly friendly, they can be of great service, and bestow many gifts on mortals.

### **Earth and Hearth Sidhe**

Many Noble folk are associated with the plowed field and/or the home’s hearth. These beings are friendly to humankind, and almost easy to deal with, though temperamental. They may simply vanish if offended. These sprites are commonly named **Boggies**, **Boggles** or **Bocs**, throughout the isles. They seem closely related to forest Sidhe; they might be thought of as woodland folk who choose to dwell among the life of human settlement. The **Boggles** will work hard for their friends, increasing fertility, creativity and luck.

On the Isle of Man, this sort of being is called **Fenoderee**. He is small, wizened and brown; like most Earth-Sidhe, he shuns clothing. He will work like ten men, but any offer of clothes will insult him, and cause him to vanish.

Spirits of this sort can reap a field in an hour, make cream come in the churn and keep bread in the oven from burning. These homely beings can turn as well to productivity in business or craft, when the modern Druid works with the Earth-Sidhe.

Contact with the Earth folk is centered at the home's hearth, or on a corner of land that is never cultivated, but left to grow wild. At these places, the traditional offerings of milk, bread, strong drink and porridge are made.

Another sort of Earth being are those that dwell in mines, and under the land. These folk are often friendly to mortals, though more stern and hard than the Nobles of field or hearth. Those who seek treasure in the earth must be sure to gain the goodwill of the Sidhe-folk, who may already claim it as their own. The Sidhe are also the finest of artisans, who taught mankind how to work the stone, metal and wood that are the gifts of the Earth-folk. They are often jealous of their materials, though they respect skilled mortals and respond sometimes to friendly offerings.



This is a very simple description—really a selection of hints—of the many kinds of beings who inhabit the Celtic Otherworld. Like most religious models there is some degree of hierarchy among them. Of course the Deities are the highest, the First Children of Mother Danu. The greatest of their descendants—ladies and lords of the Noble Court—share a place with the greatest of Heroes, the Honored Dead. All these may be imagined as the High Table of the Great Feasting Hall in the center of the Worlds.

Around these we can imagine the rest of the Noble Ones and the Mighty Dead, interfacing with the common realms of our mortal earth. Within and between these realms, using ritual trance and virtue, move the mortal Wise Ones and Magicians—the Druids.

## Part Two



## Gathering Power

## Preparing for the Work

Druidry is the work of power. By power we mean, essentially, ability. We have whatever power we are able to effectively wield. Celtic lore teaches us about two kinds of spiritual power: **bri**—that which is intrinsic in us, and **bua**—that which we acquire and store up.

Each of us comes to the work of Druidry with just as much **bri** as we have. We come into the world with the patterns made by our own **Dan**—the Song of our Fate. We grow into our lives with talents, strengths and inclinations in unique balance in ourselves. It is the Celtic way to seek to grow in strength and wisdom and love, whether of body or spirit.

In the same way, we all learn to identify and obtain **bua**. We learn to increase the flow of the Powers of the worlds in us, gain **bua** by deeds and victories, and make alliances with the other beings of the worlds. We store up power to be used when we have the need.

### Self-Knowledge

The first step in seeking magical success is, as always, to know yourself. Every student of magic should begin by resolving to observe herself, her motives, and her inclinations. Traditional exercises such as journaling, contemplation of personal history and making lists of personal strengths and weaknesses provide a good foundation for personal understanding.

Magic, and all spiritual work, is a human skill that is not different in basic nature from music, carpentry or chemistry. Those who wish to use a talent effectively must study the related skills, practice them in detail and, eventually, make them second nature. When we approach a new set of skills, it is not uncommon to have a period of exploration and confusion. If we set out to learn music, we may try piano, guitar and clarinet before we discover the means of expression that best fits our individual talents and preferences. It is the same with magic.

As you learn magic, you should make an effort to work your way through the various skills of the magician. In the early stages of the work every student should make an honest effort at the full spectrum of magical skills. Your **bri** will incline you toward some skills above others. You should certainly work to develop those skills that seem to ‘come naturally’. It is however, almost more important to work hard to develop those skills that come less easily. Focusing only on skills that seem natural can result in unbalanced growth, and deprive

you of valuable resources. As you begin your training, focusing on skills that initially seem secondary will develop pockets of hidden strengths. If your bri includes the potential for divination, or for poetry, or woodworking, you will find it only by experimentation.

As you begin to put your skills into practice you will naturally find combinations that work well for you. These will become the basis of your personal magical style. Like any skill, we begin by imitating classical forms and exercises, and develop personal style as we gain in skill.

You can seek a basic balance in the work between the Power of Shaping, the Power of Vision and the Power of Speech. Learn enough craft to shape some of your tools, and work to increase your skill in those crafts. Practice meditation, vision and seership. For many people these may seem to be the most difficult of the magician's skills, but the work does not proceed without them. Learn to make poetry. Again, many people emerge from schooling with little confidence in their poetic talent. Private ritual offers a setting in which you can create and speak without risking the judgment of others. In private ritual you can find your voice and build your skill.

You will naturally discover your key strengths and competencies as you practice the basic works of magic. By working deliberately to develop weaker areas you will be able to grow in a balanced way, and develop a variety of magical strategies for reaching your goals.

### Knowledge of Lore

In a Celtic context, magic is driven by knowledge. Whether it is the knowledge of the properties of herbs and stones, knowing the local spirits of the land on which you work, or knowing the names and tales of the Gods and spirits, the magician is never more powerful than she is in knowing.

Make it your business to learn the tales of the old Celtic cultures. The stories of the Book of Invasions, the Tain Bo Cualgne, the Dinnsenchas, the Mabinogion and other sources provide the best glimpses available of pre-Christian Celtic ideas. However, we must remember that these stories are not the actual mythology of Celtic Paganism. They are not faithful or complete retellings of the stories that Celtic Pagans would have told. The medieval manuscript sources were the efforts of Christian monks who wished to preserve the history and fame of their people, but had no interest in preserving the religion or magic of their Pagan forbearers. To round out your understanding, it is valuable to study the myth, lore and ritual of other Indo-European Pagans and



their near neighbors. The patterns of the Norse and the Balts, the Hellenes and the Brahmins can teach a great deal about what Celtic Paganism might have been.

Celtic lore remembers that, at one time, works of magic were accomplished directly by the telling of tales. Celtic tales of weddings, births, battles and other events were told with the intention to aid humans in similar endeavors. While the majority of the tales used for this sort of magic have been lost, we can consider how we might use the stories we know, or create new tales, to work for specific goals. Stories have their greatest magical power when they are recited aloud. A story begins with the Power of Vision, and is created by the Power of Shaping, but only achieves its full reality when it is told aloud and heard by another. Make it your business to know at least a few tales by heart, and to tell them aloud. Even if your audience is made up of spirits, speaking the tale aloud will add the greatest power to the work. Such storytelling might especially be used as preparation for other work.

### **Meditation and Austerities**

One of the universals of Pagan Indo-European magic is that spiritual power can be acquired by successful acts of deliberate personal will. Ancient wisdom teaches that the human body-mind complex is like a team of horses. Our hungers, thoughts, fears, ideas and emotions drift loosely, driven by whims and impulses that arise from the interaction of the self with the random events of life. Our selves are divided and unfocused like four horses wandering in a field.

When we wish to accomplish a goal we must bring those horses together and place them all in a single yoke. Under the direction of a skillful driver such a yoked team becomes a useful engine. Mind and body, talent and skill all come together under the direction of the conscious will.

This core formula applies whether the work is religious, a personal spiritual work, or a spell to bring money. Spiritual works require this unity of the self perhaps even more than more material efforts. Spiritual tasks must work with the most elusive and commonly unmanaged portions of our selves. The work of mental discipline, of the yoking together of body, mind and emotion is taught in traditional methods of meditation.

In general, we will use the term ‘meditation’ to refer to any willed direction of mental states. The term may be used synonymously with the term ‘trance.’

(This usage is likely to offend a variety of folks who hold to some specific doctrine of what defines ‘true’ meditation. We will sidestep those discussions and use the term broadly.) The core skills of trance are relaxation, concentration, and visualization. Every system simply applies these skills within its own symbolism to produce the sort of states the system requires. In this work, we will use several basic sorts of mental state:

1. Willed deep relaxation and withdrawal from bodily awareness.
2. Willed detachment of attention from emotional and mental events
3. Willed control of the flow of spiritual energies in the self.
4. Willed use of vision and imagination.

With these basics we work several mythic and symbolic forms, based in the symbolism we’ve discussed:

1. **Basic Trance**—managed breath, with a relaxed and focused mind-body state
2. **The Two Powers**—managing the flow of the Underworld Waters and the Heaven’s Fire in the self.
3. **The Vision-Eye**—seeing the symbolic and inner reality and meaning of common events and things. This may be accomplished by:
4. **Passing the Mist**—sending the vision, or the Vision Body, through the curtain of mist into the nearby portions of the Otherworld.
5. **The Inner Grove**—a visionary locale that serves as an inner temple and launching point for further Otherworld work.

In this grimoire we assume that students have learned the basics of relaxation, focus and detachment. We will attempt to teach techniques that will support each of the above forms. We will especially focus on using the Two Powers, and on the work of the Mist and the Inner Grove.

We use meditation to gather power in two ways. First, by taking willed control of the self we learn more about our own bri, and grow in core strength. Regular, steady practice of the core skills, of the sort one might do at a home shrine, is the key to that effort. Secondly, the skill of willed control of spiritual energy offers a means of drawing bua into the self. The techniques given in the Book of Fire and Water are intended for that purpose.

In addition to meditation, willed rulership of the self has often involved feats of oath keeping. The most famous of these are the sort of austerities attributed to monks and yogis—prolonged fasting, assumption of tortuous poses, immersion in icy water, vows of silence and the like are all strenuous

means of testing and challenging the body and the mind. In a Christian context, such efforts were often meant to ‘mortify the flesh,’ but that motivation is mainly absent from more Pagan austerities. In Pagan context, these austerities are always described as producing great spiritual power for those who perform them.

Modern Paganism has shown little interest in asceticism or austerity. We have worked to learn to love our bodies and to listen to the body’s wisdom. Even in such a model, the body must also be trained to serve the will, and the use of simple austerities is a fine way to promote that training. Such methods are usually employed as preparation for a specific ceremony. Fasting from certain foods, from alcohol, from all food but water, or bread and water, periods of silence and prolonged periods of meditation can all be used to focus the mind and bring the self under the will.

### **Attunement to the Land**

It is always the magician’s business to know the land on which he dwells, and on which he works. We all live on the land by the sufferance of the Other Kins—the beasts and birds, bacilli and viruses, trees and stones and, of course, the land-wights who dwell there.

Attunement to a piece of land always involves spending real time on the ground of the place and the making of offerings, and opening of awareness, to the Land-Beings. While it is easy to imagine this process in a rural setting, it is equally valuable when you work in a city. There is no substitute for time spent in quiet observation of the local environment and its beings. With a quiet mind, and with the Two Powers flowing gently in you, simply watch the land. With body and thinking mind relaxed, allow the raw images, sounds and scents of the place to enter your senses without focusing on anything in particular. Seek to remember the flow of the place without analysis—let the perception enter you whole.

Within that silent perception you may be able to discern the local patterns of *bri* and *bua*. What is the core nature of the place? What is its native power or its special requirements? Such things arise from the land’s *bri*. Upon this *bri*, layers of *bua* may have been laid. When you work in a city, almost every block will be thick with the stories of that place. It is important to seek places where the *bua* is in tune with your intention, or to be sure to purify and clear your places of working. Even in settled rural areas you should try to be aware of the patterns

of idea, belief and story that have been woven in the ground.

As you pursue that work, evidences of the indwelling spirits may come to you. Be alert for the small omens that can point you toward the local beings. Even in a first approach to a place you will do well to bring a small offering and speak a small word of honor before you sit to open your eyes and heart.

It is common for a magician to have one or two natural places where they have a long-term communion with the land and its spirits. Often our childhood or young adulthood includes places where we have truly felt the wonder and delight of the earth. If we can capture that intimacy again in a piece of land in our current lives, that contact can become a pathway to other natural contacts. The magician learns to tap the *bri* and *bua* of such places even in distant magical work—perhaps through the use of a *Clach Talamh*.

Finally, this process of attunement can be used to discover outdoor locations that are favorable to your own magic. Even in cities, such places can be found in public parks, cemeteries, even in your own backyard if you take the time to make it happen. Public sites should, of course, be carefully chosen not only for the power and friendliness of the place, but for privacy and ease of egress, if required.

### **Preliminary Rituals**

The first step in gathering power through ritual is as simple as attending your local seasonal rites and getting a good blessing. The magician should be in generally good relations with the Gods and Spirits. Keeping the regular round of Holy Days is the basis of that relationship. If you are fortunate to live near a working Celtic Pagan grove, temple or public circle this may be a relatively simple matter. Attending the sacrifices and opening to the blessing with skill is a fine source of *bua*.

If you don't have that sort of access, you will have to work on your own to construct your relationship with the Gods and Spirits. You will need to observe the round of seasonal sacrifices in your own way, using your own worship hallows or hearth, working rites for yourself or perhaps a small family group. Even if you can go to a public grove you will need to have your home shrine, and keep your regular round of home offerings and observances.

In addition to keeping the round of seasonal blessings, the magician should take up the work of the Home Shrine. Personal Pagan religion is more often done in one's own home than in temples or forests. You should create a

permanent working shrine in a corner of your home, where you will keep your Hallows of Worship. Some students may need to be able to make and take down a shrine setup quickly, while others will be free to create permanent places in the home. In any case you will need to have easy, sometimes daily, access to your place of worship and magic.

Common Pagan shrine-work often focuses on the Three Kindreds, on honoring the gods of one's house, one's ancestors, the spirits of one's land. All of these things are important for practical magic, but it is also important for magicians to take up the cult of the Inner Divine. We know that within us is the very Fire of the Druids, the true Holy Well. The very powers by which the Gods make and nourish the world are ours to use, according to our strength, wisdom and skill.

This power—the Divine in Us—is worthy of our worship. It is our own magic—*Ár nDraíocht Féin*—by which we work our will in the world. Such worship can easily be added to the work at one's home shrine. The work of the Two Powers, while meditating on the Fire and Water, combined with a bright focusing on the Divine in You can serve as a basic practice.

Anyone who wishes to master magic within a specific spiritual system needs to have the skills of a priest or priestess of that system. You will find that you need to be able to work all the rites of sacrifice to the Powers, home ceremony as well as formal offerings. The magician will often seek the aid of one or many of the Gods and Spirits. The skilled execution of basic works of religion teaches core skills that are the foundation of practical magic, and the skills of magic deepen and empower the work of religion.

When you plan a specific magical working, you should prepare with a round of preliminary offerings to whatever powers will be invoked. Again, the skills of a priest are used in service to magic. Offerings should be made, and omens taken to be certain of the participation and blessing of the spirits you hope to have as allies.

In a Celtic context, we will approach the many spirits as though they were beings with specific existences, minds of their own, and agendas as well. It is common to attempt to approach the deities and other allies as 'flavors of energy,' as though we need only 'plug in' to the power and 'use' it. In this we work we will, instead, act as though the Powers are free-willed beings, with whom we must join by friendship or some other sort of alliance. We do indeed 'plug in' to the Two Powers, dark and bright. Yet even these are said to be

persons in some way, ancient Danu and Bel.

## **Druidic Rites of Worship**

We begin our exposition of the ritual work of Druidry with the intentions of our rites, both the limited and specific goals of any one rite, and the greater meaning present in the Order of Ritual itself. Every rite performed in this Order partakes of three ‘meta-programs’ of spiritual intent.

The Veil Between the Worlds is strong, and mortal minds see the Inner only dimly. In order to draw the attention of the God/desses and Spirits and to travel in their lands, we use the skills of Magic—ritual, sacrifice and trance.

Ritual is the combination of proper speech, proper gesture, proper thought and the knowledge of the meanings and powers of natural things, times and seasons. The Wise learn the potencies of herbs and stones, woods, colors, sounds and scents and all. We train our mind and memory, our body and emotions, so that every faculty can be focused on the work. We create our Holy Places and Hallows—the Tools of Druidic Ritual. We learn to craft poetry, song and Inner Vision, all in accord with our goals.

In every work of Magic, the Druid must know her goal and know the skills of Magic. He must dare to seek the goal, risking failure or error. She must use all her will to pursue the goal and she must keep silent about the work, never displaying the Secret Art before fools.

### **I: The Spiritual Intentions of Druid Rites To Rectify and Empower the Souls of the Worshippers**

The most consistent and personal result of sincere participation in ritual is the creation or strengthening of the patterns of our spiritual cosmos in the souls of individual worshippers. Whether this pattern exists innately in all people or whether we must create it there through our work, it is strengthened and deepened by repeated meditation and ritual acknowledgment.

The lore of Indo-European Paganism assumes that the Inner Worlds, Otherworlds or Spirit Lands reflect and are reflected by our manifest world. By making our simple physical images of cosmic order, our Sacred Grove, we draw these Inner realities closer to the manifest world. When we in turn meditate on these symbols, recreating them in vision in ourselves, they become a kind of map that allows a clearer, more ordered understanding of the contents of our minds and hearts.

Druidry is not focused exclusively on ‘the Light’ or ‘the Heavens’, nor do we value the Inner or Spiritual world more highly than the manifest world or the

contents of our souls. We understand the Inner to be integral with the physical, and the physical to be as holy as the Inner. We use ritual to manifest the Powers of the Inner in our common world. By using our art, craft and skill we create physical and spiritual events that reflect and manifest Inner realities.

When a Pagan successfully integrates these patterns, they act as a kind of realignment for the mind and heart. Even if we assume that these patterns are inborn in us all, it is clear that the stresses of everyday life in our secular culture can leave us uncentered and disoriented. Thoughtful, intentional participation in ritual is one of the answers that Paganism offers to this modern alienation.

### **To Serve the God/desses and Spirits**

In contrast with much of Paganism, our Druidry tends to adopt a theology that views the many Powers described in tales and lore as independent, living entities. We reject, in general, theories that view the Powers as projections of our own minds, or as thought-forms created by human worship or as archetypes in the collective unconscious. Instead we prefer the traditional understanding of the nature of the God/desses and Spirits and of humanity. We can describe this understanding as having three parts.

First, the members of humankind are Powers in and of them (our) selves. We have innate abilities to shape thoughts, words, and things just as do the Powers, and are capable of magic even without their aid. The greatest of us can be the equal of nearly any being, and all of us are able to exercise a degree of spiritual authority according to our talent and skill. Second, we know that while there are many Spirits that may be weaker than us, there are many that are vastly more powerful. Many of these Mighty Ones are connected with the very maintenance of the life and health of our land and ourselves. So, third, in order to live well, we need the blessing of these great Powers. This is obtained through worship, sacrifice, and attunement. By thus bringing ourselves into contact with these beings, we allow them to be reflected to some degree in our own souls, bringing their blessing into our lives.

All traditional Paganism says that it is proper to give gifts of our own skill, art and substance to the Powers. The ancients offered carefully crafted objects of precious metal and wood as well as fruits of labor, food and drink to those they worshipped, and it is proper for us to do the same today. We must assume that the Spirits want and need these gifts just as we need their blessings. So by our rites of worship we feed the Powers and acknowledge our mutual



interdependence with them.

This worshipful approach can help us avoid the inflation of the personal ego that has been the besetting error of the Western Magical Tradition. We do not teach that we are ‘God’ or identical with God or the Universe. Rather we acknowledge that each of us is one free dancer in the great dance of being. If we are skilled and talented we may come to a very great spiritual power and understanding, perhaps even becoming a God/dess. Yet even the greatest of the Powers worships and sacrifices to the other God/desses and Spirits. The web of mutual obligation never ends nor would we wish it to, for it is the thing that sustains all existence.

### **To Bless the Folk and the Land**

Our Druidry is neither meant to be humble, one-sided giving to the Powers nor vague, feel-good spirituality. Pagan religion hopes always to provide real benefit to the community it serves. In traditional lore this is often expressed as three great goods—health, wealth and wisdom. Again, Paganism does not reject the things of this material world in favor of spiritual things. Every human life needs a balance of physical well-being, sufficient goods and mental and spiritual growth. We expect our religious rites to be practical aids toward these goals.

The Order of Ritual contains several intrinsic benefits for all who join in wholeheartedly. First, as mentioned, is the establishment or strengthening of the Cosmic Patterns in the soul making us more firmly grounded and more effectively centered. Second is the deepening of our contact with the God/desses and Spirits. As Pagans we work to establish personal relationships with individual Deities, members of the Faerie Tribes and with our own Ancestors and the Elder Wise Ones. When we participate in the offerings to the Three Kindreds we have the opportunity to call to our own allies among the Powers, thus strengthening our personal magic. The third source of blessing is, of course, the Blessing itself (the ‘return flow’ of the ritual power). The worshipper should formulate carefully what she desires to receive from any rite, and everyone should expect real results, real life-changes from the blessing and drinking of the Blessing Cup in seasonal ritual.

As modern Pagans, we have a special duty to heal and defend the land itself. We have been separated from the spirit of our Holy Earth by centuries of loveless abuse, and it should be part of every Druid rite to appeal to, waken, and honor the land that upholds our work. Our Order of Ritual gives us several

opportunities. The first is at the Earth Mother Offering, when the local Goddess of the land, and/or the EarthMother of the chosen pantheon is honored. The second is at the Nature Spirits Offering, when the tribes of Spirits who enliven the area are worshipped, and the third could be at the Blessing itself, when a portion of the Blessing might be poured on the Earth, so that the land may share in the results of the work.

### **Concerning Sacrifice**

Sacrifice is the giving of gifts to the Powers in their honor, and in return for their aid and blessing. The Wise know that our offerings strengthen the Powers as their blessings strengthen us. We offer freely of our wealth and skill in honor to the God/desses and Spirits. The sacrificial relationship between mortals and the Gods and Spirits is the core of Pagan religion. It is the web of mutual obligation that binds the worlds together.

There are three kinds of Druidic ritual sacrifice. Offerings to the Fire are most proper to the Deities, and for goals needed immediately. The simplest Fire-sacrifice is the Fire itself. If candles are used for the ritual fire, they should always be allowed to burn to their sockets. Pressed oil or clarified butter is given to outdoor fires, while essential oil is proper to offer into burning charcoal in indoor rites. Stick or cone incense can always make a simple sacrifice. Offerings made to the Well (i.e. offering shaft or bowl) are the most proper for the Ancestors and for goals based on long-term changes. Silver is given to the actual Well at the opening of every rite. Ale and bread are good offerings to the Dead. The third type of offering is made to natural things when we ask for their aid in Magic. A bit of ale or honey or milk or the Druid's own blood is given to a tree or a patch of herbs, or whatever, when some of its substance is taken for Magic.

Every full ritual requires several types of offerings. As a bare minimum, clean water can be used for all offerings, but it is best if every Power is given their proper gift. Flour, cornmeal or cakes are offered to the Mother at the opening of the rites. Silver is offered to the Well. This can be a special piece of the offerer's Magical jewelry or, if possible, a piece that will later be given permanently to running water. Olive oil, essential oil or clarified butter are proper offerings for the Fire. If a candle and censer are used, essential oil is offered onto charcoal. Ale or other drink can be offered alone to the Three Kindreds. For a full offering, ale is given to the Ancestors, herbs to the Nobles

and oil to the God/desses. Enough drink must be present to fill the Blessing Horn. Offerings are given to the Patron Powers of the rite as is proper for the specific power. Drink and oil can always serve, along with flowers and/or food.

## **II: Practical Considerations**

Having discussed the theoretical bases of our work we may now examine practical considerations in choosing your intent and goal for a Druidic rite. We consider these under two headings: Choosing a Pantheon and the Occasion of the Rite.

### **Pantheon and Patrons**

The primary outer purpose of most Druidic ritual is to worship the Powers, the Deities and Spirits. In much of the Pagan revival, Powers from a variety of cultures and systems are often worshipped together. While this sometimes happens in Druidry as well, we encourage the choice of a single cultural pantheon for each individual rite, and the work of this book is focused entirely on a Celtic perspective. This gives focus to the rites, ensures that the Powers are in harmony and encourages the gaining of real lore about ancient Pagan cultures.

Of course the strongest element in this choice will be your own interest in and dedication to a particular pantheon. If you are working alone you can simply use your own first choice of pantheon, but groups will need to reach a consensus. Choosing a single cultural paradigm allows a group to deepen and strengthen its magical connection with those Powers, while experimentation broadens experience and encourages research, so the choices are yours.

Once you have determined the pantheon for your rite, you must also choose the particular Powers to whom the central offerings and callings will be made. This will be based on the occasion and the magical intent of the rite. Almost always these Patron Powers are a pair of Deities, a Goddess and a God, though rites can also be offered to the Ancestors or the Spirits of the Land.

Those working alone, or in a small group that shares a focus, may find a desire to worship only one or two Deities from a single pantheon—that is, personal Patron Deities. This is fine, but it is important to include the broader company of Powers from the pantheon from which these Patrons are drawn. Our Order of Ritual requires offerings to several categories of Deity in every case, reducing the problem of focusing on personal Deities alone, but you should be sure to thoroughly research the whole cultural pattern from which the

Powers are drawn.

### **The Occasion of the Rite**

This topic divides into Seasonal Rites, Rites of Passage and personal needs.

**A. Seasonal Rites:** Modern Druidry has mainly adopted the modern NeoPagan calendar of eight seasonal holy days. These are, of course, the four astronomical days i.e. the Solstices and Equinoxes, combined with the so-called Fire festivals of the Celts—Samhain, Imbolg, Beltaine and Lughnassadh. The form and content of each is up to you, though we will provide scripts from which you may draw inspiration. Again your own research and meditation will be the best guide to the proper symbols for each feast.

We must acknowledge that it may never be possible or desirable to revive, in full, any of the ancient Pagan religions of the cultures we study. We must base our work on authentic ancient lore and effective modern magical and religious technique, realizing that we are creating a new religion for ourselves as moderns. Thus we use the standard dates and core symbols of the modern Pagan calendar, fitting Celtic traditions into this pattern. While those who wish to keep only a strictly Celtic system might choose not to observe the astronomical days, especially the equinoxes, there is some merit in conforming our work to modern patterns common in our Pagan communities.

**B. Rites of Passage:** As in any religion, Pagans hallow the important occasions of our lives with ritual. Births, Child Blessings, Comings of Age, Religious Vocations, Weddings and Funerals can all be proper occasions for our rites.

**C. Personal Magical Work:** This Order of Ritual has been evolved mainly for public worship with medium to large groups. Using the Order for small and individual workings is quite possible, but will require some variation. In later sections we will provide adaptations proper for solitary worship and magical work.

### **The Core Cult in Druidic Rites**

In any polytheistic culture, the Gods, Goddesses and Spirits arrange themselves into families, alliances and patterns that clarify and deepen their meanings for the worshippers. Often this results from or is reflected in the order of the ritual of the folk in which these patterns reside. Our Druidic ritual outline now contains a clear constellation of Deities whose work is primary to

the creation and maintenance of sacred space.

It must be said that I am not in any way proposing a dualistic or even tritheistic model for Celtic or Druidic religion. This pattern is just one of many that are inherent in a polyvalent theology. Nor are the gender categories that I propose absolute. There are good mythic bases for the following model, but equally good ones for very different ones. This is presented not as dogma, but as a practical theology that can be tested by each worshipper, adapted and customized at need.

Our Order of Ritual has grown to reflect core ideas about the origin and nature of the spiritual cosmos. These ideas are pan-Indo European but have deep Celtic resonances. For the purposes of this book, I will mainly refer to these primary powers by their generic titles—The Mother of Waters, the Fire Father and the Gatekeeper.

### **The Mother of All**

The first power called on in our order is the All-Mother. In many tales the first Being is a Goddess from whom or of whom are the primal waters. From those waters rises the land, the holy earth, also called a Goddess from who all living beings are born. This sea/land concept can be understood also as space—the starry sea, and our island Earth. For the Children of Earth, the Mother of All is the Earth Mother, who sustains our lives.

In several mythic systems, the Primal Water Mother is connected with the principle of wisdom, of far reaching knowledge and insight. She is sometimes the Mother of a monstrous primal king who is overcome in the creation of the cosmos. In this form as the Primal Waters, the Mother can be conceived of as the All-Mind, the underlying power of awareness that connects all individual beings. From this ocean of mind arise the island-selves of the individual minds.

For these reasons, the Mother is often connected with the waters under the earth. It flows throughout, rising into the root of every life and sending forth sons and daughters, the springs and pools upon the earth. So we are all connected deeply at the roots of our souls by the mind of the Mother. One of the core goals of mystical work is to expand the personal awareness into this vast reality and even to realize the identity of the individual with the all.

As with any key cosmic symbol, the cosmic waters are not exclusively one gender. There are many sons of the waters as well. But in our liturgy, the primary connection is between the All-Mother, the cosmic waters and the living

Earth. It is this complex that we invoke both in the Earth Mother offering and in honoring the well.

### **The Power of Inspiration**

To the Pagans of the ancient world, the power to create poetry, song and art was considered a crown of the human kindreds. The truest and most clear expressions of spirituality are often made by the grace of poetic inspiration. So we acknowledge and invite this power to every major working.

The nature of this power is expressed differently in various European cultures. In some it is seen as a draft of spirit ale or mead that produces poetic intoxication. In some it is a breath of wind that blows in the poets' voice. The lore preserved by the medieval Gaelic poets gives us another key image.

In Celtic magical poetry the poet draws inspiration from the sudden impact of light upon darkness. Actual practice involved prolonged meditation in a darkened room or cave. In this "incubation," the poet would lay motionless, contemplating the material of the desired poem. After the required length of meditation, the poet was brought forth to gaze at the light of the morning sun or sacred fire. In this sudden light, the final form of the poem was revealed or coalesced.

This complex implies a connection between the power of inspiration and the sacred fire. To return to a primal level, it is the heat of the sacred fire that dries out land from the world ocean. It is the gravity of suns that coalesces planets out of the sea of space. It warms and defines the sacred grove in the midst of the nighted forest.

So we can confidently connect the fire with the power of inspiration and with the primal Father, in the most simple and archetypal sense, the Fire Father appears in the midst of the sleeping Mother Ocean. The heat and light of the sun draws life out of the moist, dark Earth, draws the individual being out of the universe's matrix.

Again, there are important female and Goddess symbols of this power. The Celtic Goddess Brigid gives the clearest example, combining in herself the whole complex of water, fire and inspiration. Yet we may choose to honor the first Father both as the power of inspiration and as the sacred fire.

### **The Gatekeeper**

Druidic lore teaches that the power of the Otherworld arises most strongly

at borders, where places and categories meet and mingle. Crossroads, shorelines, river fords and bridges, borders, sunrise and sunset all partake of this “betweenness.”

On the cosmic level this liminality is embodied in the World Tree or pillar. In many European myths, a tree that expresses the connection between the underworld and the heavens occupies the center of the worlds.

In every I-E mythos, this power is also embodied in a Deity, usually but not exclusively male. This Deity is associated with roads, travel, magic and commerce. He is often a guide and mentor to heroes and may be the inventor or teacher of writing, poetry and art. We offer to this power to ask for clarity and openness in our communication with the spirits.

In the Celtic pantheons we often invoke the Gatekeeper as Manannan Mac Lir. He is counted as one of the Tuatha De, but is named for his father Lir, the Sea God. Manannan is the core of the wizard archetype—the young ancient who keeps the Isle of Apples. He is the bearer of the Silver Branch that he carries between the worlds. He keeps the crane bag that holds the treasures and Ogham wisdom. His cult has lasted into the modern era as a God of the sea, of sailors and commerce. Manannan looks kindly on those who seek the Old Ways, yet he may set a stern lesson at need.

So then, in these three powers we can see a primary triad of Druidic Deities.

- **The Mother of All** is the ground of being, the all mind, the earth Goddess from which all are born, who upholds all things.
- **The Fire of Inspiration** is the manifestor, the Father of the Child that brings the individual out of the matrix of reality. The fire brings the poet’s voice, and opens the seer’s eye.
- **The Gatekeeper** is the teacher of magic, the mentor of the wise. He is the doorkeeper of the Otherworld who makes possible commerce with the spirits.

Those who wish to grow in Druidic wisdom will do well to develop a deeper involvement with these three. In fact, contact with and understanding of this primary triad of powers can be seen as a pattern of initiation for our Druidism.

### **The Threefold Cult as Initiatory Pattern**

First, all Pagans can make contact with the Mother. We all give primary

worship to the Earth or land Goddess and we can all receive the blessing of the Earth's unconditional love. On a deeper level, by learning the skills of meditation and trance, we can learn to pass beneath our common awareness into the inner waters of the all-mind. There, in the matrix of the Mother we come to know the God/desses and spirits of our way. If a Pagan seeker does no more than this she can accomplish a great deal.

A sort of 'next step' is the kindling of a personal fire of inspiration in the soul. When this flame appears in a spirit saturated with the all-mind, it produces crystals, gems of vision, of poetry, even of prophecy. Each individual Pagan will have different responses to kindling the inner fire. Some will become healers, some diviners, some able to manifest their visions, some to move into their dreams.

Some of these will feel drawn toward the work of moving between the worlds. They will find their skill in mediating states of awareness, in spirit journeying and spirit contact. Perhaps it is these folks who are best suited to keep our groves and work as ritual priest/esses. In fact everyone who hopes to effectively lead group rites must learn the skills that are associated with the Keeper of Gates. The cult of the Gatekeeper brings the Druid into a dual awareness. First the attention is directed inward, through deeper trance and meditation. The Druid learns to pass into the Otherworld in vision, and meets and works with the Gatekeeper Deity directly. Then, when that contact is firm, the Druid turns awareness back to the outer world, to bring the Otherworld power through, and open a gate through which the folk can speak with the spirits.

Of these three, the Gatekeeper is the most immediate and 'human.' Gatekeeper God/desses are usually in close relation with humankind. They are compassionate, humorous and skilled, though they may set stern tests or even be tricksters at times. So we offer to them with honor and seek their wisdom and support.

Those who wish to find wisdom and spiritual power inherent in our Druidic Paganism will do well to take up the practice of this threefold cultus. With the wisdom of the All-Mother, the inspiration of the First Fire and the magic of the Gatekeeper, the Druid can do the work of the priesthood, blessing the folk and the land.

## **The Power of Shaping**



## **Gleasa Draiochta—The Druid's Tools**

As we examine the remnants of Celtic Pagan lore we see no clearly described list of objects or tools of Druidic magic or magic. Tales and folklore do provide a number of hints, but offer little direct evidence. Nevertheless, to construct a modern system of magic we must decide what objects will be regular parts of our work.

### **Druid's Raiment**

The question of what sort of garments the ancient Celts wore in magical or religious contexts has been often considered but never definitively answered. There are a few classical references that describe Druids wearing white robes. This is supported by the well-documented use of white garments in folk celebrations and religious rites across the Indo-European range. Both leaders of ceremonies and, in many cases, those who attend are likely to be dressed in white garments.

However when we look to descriptions of Druid garb in the Irish vernacular literature we find a different image. The tales give us the description of the Druid called Mug Ruith, dressed in a cloak made of a speckled bull's hide, and headdress of multicolored feathers. His dress sounds idiosyncratic and colorful, not at all like the image of druids in white robes. This 'Druid-as-magician' image allows for personal innovation in a way that white-robed uniformity might not.

Ancient Celtic clothing was, in general, a multi-layered business. The basic Irish body garment was a long shirt or tunic called a leinne. It was long sleeved, and fell to the knees. Over the leinne might be worn a vest, coat or over-tunic and over that a brat, or cloak. The Gaelic brat was usually a rectangle of material, folded according to custom and need. The folded brat was the origin of the later 'great kilt' in Scotland.

Even though we cannot know with certainty what sort of gear was worn by ancient Celtic magicians, there is value in creating a garment or set of garments to be worn exclusively during your magical practice. Many systems of magic prescribe the creation of a 'magical robe,' to be worn only when working magic. This valuable technique is a reliable way to send a strong signal to yourself and to the world that you mean to work spiritually. When you include the robe or cloak or garment in every magical work, you reach the point where just putting it on begins the process of turning your mind toward the work. So, I

recommend creating and using a set of magical garments, whether complex or simple.

If you wish to create a full set of Celtic garments for your magical work, you can begin with a simple white leinne. Though later leinnes became more ornate, the basic garment is a ‘T-tunic’ with long, fairly narrow sleeves and a high neck, made about knee length. Patterns can be found from several historical garment companies. This can be belted as you please, left loose or even tucked into trousers.

Over the tunic and breeches any kind of colorful brat can be arranged. Plaid is, of course, very traditional—even the classical writers refer to Celtic cloth woven in squares of bright color. Any multicolored fabric might be used, such as the many fabric items printed in Celtic knot-work and spirals. The important thing is that it be multicolored.

The Irish have a color-word *breac*, which means ‘speckled’ or multicolored. It is used to describe Druidic costume such as Mog Ruith’s feather headdress. It is also used often to mean ‘magical’ or ‘otherworldly’. The implication is that those multicolored garments were symbols of magical power, the mantle of otherworldly color that helps to move the magician toward the spirits.

While clothing of an archaic design may be an evocative aid to capturing the Celtic mood, there is no real requirement for such an elaborate costume. While the public practice of Druidic religion can benefit from the use of dramatic costume and display, magic can function with a much simpler kit. Works of magic are often done on the fly or in situations where dramatic garb is impractical.

The brat alone is a practical and easy garment. A Druidic brat should be of many colors, whether of plaid or a brightly printed or died material. Celtic cloaks were not hooded, but simply draped over the head at need. A cloak can be worn over a more complete Celtic outfit, or over a parka for those outdoor winter workings.

If even a cloak is too much equipment, the very simplest sort of ritual raiment is a *stola*. The *stola* is a simple piece of cloth—a strip a few inches wide, long enough to drape around the neck and hang to the knees. It can be worn simply draped in that way, or fastened across the chest and back as a sash. This simple symbol can be rolled or folded small, put on and removed quickly and will work with any sort of clothing.

It is customary in many magical systems for the student to choose a piece of

symbolic jewelry to represent her commitment to the work. Rings and pendants are the most commonly used, but the Celtic realm offers us a unique choice. The torc is a neck-collar of metal, with an opening allowing it to be removed. Some styles have a permanent opening with decorated finials. Others have clasps of various kinds. Archeology has provided us with many examples of ancient Celtic torcs, from the kingly to the common.

A variety of torcs are available for purchase on the Internet or in specialty shops. It is also possible to make your own torc, using heavy copper cable and decorative finials. Of course applying your own Power of Shaping is the best way to obtain any tool of magic.

The Cloak and Torc are the armor of your magic, the mantle of power that you assume when you undertake to work your will. Choose well, and make certain that they display your spirit in a way that pleases you.

## **Hallows of Worship**

Anyone who wishes to fully work the ways of Druidry should be prepared to function as a priest in her own religious system. Works of traditional magic often require blessings of the Gods, and the magician should not have to depend on the members of any priestly hierarchy in order to have them.

Whether or not you seek ordination in formal priestly work, you should know and be able to work all the key rites associated with whatever Gods and spirits whose aid you might seek. Celtic magic is part and parcel of Celtic Paganism, and the Druid Sacrificer is also the Druid magician.

In this work we will base our ritual forms and tool set on the core Order of Ritual used in NeoPagan Druidism, especially as expressed in the North American order called *Ár nDraíocht Féin*. If your own work is from another system, you will simply substitute your own rites and tools, as you see fit.

Pagan religion is most often done with groups, using fairly large or permanent tools and settings. Even the private rites of a household involve a hearth. If you have access to such a temple or hearth, you may be able to work your magic there, to great advantage. Later we will discuss the process of establishing such a hearth or magical shrine in your own home.

However, magic is often a mobile business. Many works are best done in specific locations, remote from temples and households. So you should develop a set of easily transportable tools that can be easily arranged and taken down.

We will use three core symbols to represent the Sacred Center that

empowers this work—the Sacred Fire, the Holy Well and the Pillar or Stone that stands for the World Tree or World Mountain. These symbols are often writ large in a Druidic temple, and for some works you may need a full-sized ritual fire and large cauldron of water. It is also easy to arrange a small, personal set of tools for these symbols.

Begin by finding two matching cauldrons, if you like, or whatever small vessels you prefer, each not much bigger than your fist. One of these is used to hold the Fire- the Tintean. It must be strong enough to withstand real flame for long periods. The other holds the ritual water, and is the Tobar- the Well.

The third tool is the Bile, or Cloch Nemed, the tree or pillar symbol, or the stone. This object marks the ritual center of your portable nemeton, and should be chosen with all of your insight and intuition. As you come to know your local land, you may find stones and trees that can serve as your ritual center for some works. However, such use should only happen after you have become well acquainted with the spirit of the specific tree or stone. A tree or great stone is a strong, old thing, full of its own bri and bua, and should always be approached with respect.

For personal worship and magic, in which you may need to bring your work quickly into new places, it is useful to create a specific ritual tool that can be carried with you and used in any circumstances. The simplest choice for such a tool might be the Cloch Talamh—a stone found by you on land that you know well, or a stone with special significance to you in some other way. Such a stone brings with it the bri of the land you love, and can be imbued with bua as your skill allows.

Another good choice for such a tool is the Lorg: the Staff or walking stick. The Lorg need not be as deeply personal and symbolic as the Slat, the magician's wand. The staff is a down-home tool, useful for navigating in the forests, likely to become weather-beaten and rough. It should be made of a proper hardwood, oak or ash or, in the new world, maple. While you may choose to carve it, it might be well to use universal and central symbols, proper to the World Tree. The Lorg can be shod in metal if you wish. It strengthens the piece, and offers some symbolic advantages.

The Tobar, the Tintean, and the Lorg or Cloch make the Druid's Hallows. When you are not working magic at an established grove, or at your home shrine, such a portable kit will have the same power for you as the greatest nemeton. Much of the ritual detail in this work will assume that you are using

such a portable kit.

Of course, any but the simplest rites will require additional materials, such as the offerings, and special talismans or images. It is useful to find a reliable chest or basket in which the gear of the rite can be stored and carried. This work does not include the sometimes mentioned ‘crane bag’—our tool kit calls, perhaps, more for the Hamper of Gwyddno than the Crane Bag!

### **The Three Druidic Hallows**

The metaphysical symbols and ritual presence of the Holy Well, the Sacred Fire and the World Tree are the center of Druidic ritual and Magic. They have many levels of meaning, all present in any working. At the deepest, the Fire, Well, and Tree connect with the Primal Powers of the Indo-European cosmos.

**Holy Wells** partake of the Power of the Underworld. This ancient dark is the source of all of the world’s potential. The Waters under the Earth are reflected in the dark, cool magnetic energy of the Earth. Yet these Waters have their font in the Stars, the First Ocean, and the Sea of Space. The Waters flow from the Womb of the Primal Mother, whom the Gaels call Danu, the Mother of Wisdom.

**The Sacred Fire** brings the Sky Power into the Sacred Grove. The Gods and Spirits are enflashed by Fire, the Power that awakens individual Mind. Magical Fire transmits the bright, warm electric current of the Sky. Yet this Flame is also in the heart of the Earth, and in every being it is the source of the Individual Self. Fire is the Power of the Primal Father, who we may call Bel, the Beautiful.



**The World Tree** is the Power of Connection. From its base-root in the depths to its peak in the skies, the Tree upholds the home of every Kindred. The Tree is the Wizard's Road that carries the Two Powers between Earth and Sky, among all beings. It symbolizes the Middle Worlds, where all things have the Bright and the Dark, sustaining and transforming, mixed in various measure. The Tree is the Web of Fate, greater than all the Powers.

These are the Powers of the Center, which are brought ritually into every Druid rite and Holy Place.

### **Ritual Traditions of Fire and Water**

By tradition, the Druid's Fire is fed with the nine Sacred Woods from the old Celtia—oak, hazel, rowan, holly, yew, ash, pine, apple and willow—or with three or one of the woods, according to the work at hand. The student should obtain at least a small amount of each of the woods. These should be ground fine and mixed into an incense of kindling that will bring the forest spirit into the simple home ritual.

When preparing Sacred Fire for indoor work, an actual hearth is best. When no working fireplace is available, a cast-iron pot or cauldron can serve. In the simplest case, a ring of candles or even a single candle will serve, with charcoal in a censer to receive offerings.

Sacred Fire is always lit with reverence at the beginning of any Druid ceremony. Its light claims a place for Holy Magic. It receives sacrifice, is itself sacrificed, and it carries our voices to the Shining Ones.

Natural wells and pools and running streams, even large lakes, are gateways for the Otherworld Powers. Fresh water, especially running water, turns aside all ill and cleanses the spirit as well as the flesh. Druid ritual requires clean, fresh water in every case.

Traditionally, Magic Water is made by combining water from three Sacred Wells and exposing it to the light of Sun, Moon and Sacred Fire (or lightning). Since Wells consecrated to Pagan Powers are hard to find, the water may be gathered from three Druid rituals. This blessed Water may be added in small amounts to ritual water, bringing the Power of the Well into the Sacred Grove.

In smaller rites, when a true Well is not present, the Well is represented by a cauldron or vessel holding the Magic Water.

The Well, like the Fire, receives sacrifices, but in modern times we do not risk polluting clean water, so we follow a second practice of the ancients and dig a narrow shaft into the Earth to receive our offerings. When we work indoors, we use a simple offering bowl to receive the offering, with a special stone to represent the Earth.

The World Tree: In a full Druidic holy place, a large pole is placed in the center, or to the North. This pillar is carved with symbols of the Powers: it represents the Cosmic Axis between the Earth's core and the Pole Star. Sometimes a pole-idol is erected for a specific Deity, but in our rites it is usually a more general symbol of the Ways Between.

The Druid's wand or staff also represents the World Pillar. The magic wand, wielded by a trained mind, creates the link between Earth and Sky and weaves the pattern of the rite. A staff is usually the height of the Druid, and a wand is the length of the forearm from elbow to fingertip. Either one is shaped, carved and blessed to be the Druid's most important magical tool.

In every case the Druid's own spinal column can be understood as the World Tree. Fire, water and the magician's own flesh will always serve to make the Sacred Grove.

## **The Hallows of Magic**

### **Slat agus Coire**

The Hallows of worship are the tools of any basic sort of Druidic ritual. In addition to the Hallows, I propose two special tools of magic or personal, practical magic: the Coire Beannachta and the Slat Draoi—the Blessing Cauldron and the Magic Wand.

Both of these tools are thick with story in Celtic lore. You should make it your business to learn the tales of the wand and cauldron. On a more technical level, they are the presence of the Two Powers in the magician's circle. The Coire is the vessel of the Deep, the Slat the channel of the Light.

**An Coire Beannachta** should be a cauldron-shaped vessel, made of a material that can be kept fit for food and drink. While a classic cast-iron cauldron can be perfect for food, it is nearly impossible for serving ale or wine, as some of our rites require. A vessel of silver would serve admirably, but the most realistic approach might be a ceramic cauldron. The vessel should be round-bodied and three-legged, if at all possible, and either plain or decorated in Celtic design.

The Coire is the vessel into which you will place the ingredients of many works. It is the wellspring of the Underworld Power for the magician, a mirror of seeing, a fountain of healing, and a vessel of feasting. While it corresponds closely to the Well, it is more personal to the magician, and directly serves her will.

Celtic lore offers us the mythic presence of the Triple Cauldron of Blessing. While this combined image never occurs as such in the lore, it has become an important symbol in Celtic NeoPaganism. The Three Magic Cauldrons are the Cauldron of Feasting, the Cauldron of Inspiration and the Cauldron of Rebirth.

The Stallion Father holds the Cauldron of Bounty. As Lord of the Feast his Cauldron gives every person the food they love the best. The Cauldron of Wisdom is the vessel that boils up inspiration and ecstasy. The Lady of Mead, who serves up the Brew of Poetry, holds it. The Cauldron of Rebirth is the funeral vessel, into which our lives go to be boiled. The Red Goddess holds the Womb of Death from which new forms are born.

All of these powerful stories come together in the personal tool of the Coire Beannachta.

**An Slat Draoi** is the scepter of the magician's authority, the director of her will and vision. It is a material focus of your own soul, of the Fire and Water than flow in you. It is the spear, the pointer and the measuring stick of magic.

Celtic tales give us various depictions of wands and their uses. We see several tales in which the wand is clearly the instrument of the magician working his will, such as the tale of Math in the Mabinogion. Celtic heralds were given peeled wands of hazel-wood to symbolize their freedom to cross tribal lands,



and their authority from their king. Wands were the instruments of some sorts of Celtic seership. Druids were said to be able to read the truth about someone by placing their wand upon the head. Also, hazel wands have been commonly used for divining and dowsing—not only the commonly known Y-shaped branch, but by balancing a straight wand on the back of the hand.

We will use the Slat Draoi in all of these ways in our work here. We will use it to direct the flow of our will and clarify our intentions. We will make it our authority, our passport with which to travel the Otherworlds in safety. We will seek to make it a conduit of wisdom and a useful tool of seership.

The Wand should be made by the magician's own hand, out of a branch of a living tree, cut in the waxing moon. When the wand-wood is taken, you must leave an offering in the usual way for taking natural things. The tree should be chosen based on its symbolism, proper to your own magic and general intent.

For a general purpose Slat Draoi, the best woods might be hazel or rowan or oak, or any fruiting tree. Hazel is concerned with poetry and seership, rowan with enchantment and the Sidhe, and oak with law, strength and right action. There may sometimes be reason to make an individual slat for a specific working; it is best to make a personal Wand that is used for general purposes.

The wand-wood must be stripped of bark, dried, sanded and shaped according to your skill and personal symbolism. New students should not cover a new wand with symbols immediately. Symbols should be added to the Slat as you progress in your work, as each new symbol gains meaning and power for you. The Wand can be ready to use by simply stripping off bumps and smoothing overall.

The Slat and Coire are used in this work as core symbols in a variety of spells. Together they offer a specific formula of Celtic practical magic, as well as being useful in many customs and works.

#### Additional Tools

**Clochai**—Stones play a key role in traditional Celtic magic. From great pillars to small crystals, stones are used as sources of power and expressions of will.

Folklore has associated the megaliths of Europe with the Celts. Some proto-Celtic peoples may have been involved in the final stages of megalithic building, and while Iron Age Celts did not build stone circles or passage graves, they did erect monoliths and pillar stones. Some of these they carved, with

symbols or, later, with writing. Such stones were often set at the borders of tribal territories, as Celtic holy places often were. Some of these stones may have served as ritual world-center symbols similar to the posts and bile-trees.

All this allows us to choose to use a small stone as a part of our portable hallows. Such a stone might be called the **Cloch Talamh**—the Landstone. The Landstone should come from a place where you feel a close attunement to and affection for the land on which you live. It must be collected intuitively; the proper stone will ‘present’ itself. You should, of course, make an offering to your gods and the spirits of the place when any such object is collected. Once acquired, the Landstone brings to your portable Nemeton a bit of the bri of the land from which it comes. It links you, wherever you are, with the land that strengthens and inspires.

Celtic lore presents a variety of other magical stones, of a more directly practical nature. Stones are most commonly used either for healing or for cursing. Healing stones are often specific to an illness. There are stones to heal the eyes, to heal specific diseases and to cure the illnesses of cattle. Most often healing stones are used by being placed in water, and the water used for the healing work.

Cursing stones, on the other hand, are often placed in fire to activate their power. Such stones are usually the possessions of specific clans or families, who keep them as a kind of ‘magic sword’ to protect them from ill wishers.

Celtic lore gives no formula for obtaining such a stone. Most often they are inherited objects, their origins lost in time. Often they are said to be gifts from the Noble People of the area. In a later section we will present a speculative method of creating or obtaining a curing stone.

**Sceana**—Knives have become a common tool in NeoPagan magic, through the influence of Wicca and its mysterious ‘athame.’ The Wiccan black-hilted dagger derives from the tools-sets of medieval grimoires such as the Keys of Solomon. In that system it is used mainly to inscribe the basic line of the magic circle, which focuses the ritual and protects the magician.

In the Wiccan system, the ‘athame’ (the word seems to derive from medieval French) serves as a general and personal focus and director of power. It comes to serve the functions of the Wand. Though this has worked well enough, it can’t be said to have any basis or reflection in Celtic tradition. In Druidic ways, the work of directing personal will is clearly given to the Wand.

In general, there seems to be little use for a knife or dagger in a Celtic magical tool-set. A case could be made for using an iron blade to scratch a working circle into soil. Such an action would parallel several Indo-European tales of land claiming. However, we have no specific Celtic example of land claiming, or of folklore circle casting, using an iron blade.

Another basic use for a knife or edged weapon in ancient times would have been for the offering of animals in making food-sacrifices to the Gods and Spirits. The Celts, like all Indo-European peoples, regularly held feasts for their gods in which animals were killed, their carcasses butchered and the meat shared between the Gods and the people. It is easy to imagine that specific blades might have been kept sacred for such tasks.

In our modern work we have abandoned the offering of live animals in ritual. Modern life allows food offerings to be well prepared without killing the main course on-site. If you wished, you might use a hallowed dagger, or even an axe, to lie upon the offerings as a means of giving them to the Gods. Such a blade, however, would probably be a separate tool from that used to cut a sacred boundary.

In general, a knife is not a part of the tool-set with which we will work in this material.

## **The Leabhar gCuimhne**

The Book of Memory is the magician's personal store of ritual and magical art. We know that at some times in Celtic history the Druids taught that sacred and occult matters were never to be written down. While this policy certainly had its economic and social components, it also had its spiritual side. There is no more certain method of making symbols and information one's own than to commit them to memory. From another perspective, the value placed on improvised poetry makes the idea of creating books of ritual, etc. much less relevant.

In a highly skilled magician's work, the order of any ritual, its symbols and traditional forms would all be worked from memory. Specific speech for the work would be *ex tempore*, though in some cases traditional charms might be recited from memory.

Modern students find ourselves beginning our work long before we possess such skills. While we should encourage ourselves to work from memory and improvisation as far as our skill allows, we can also offer a compromise for

beginners.

The Book of Memory is an intermediate stage between finding new information or composing new text, and making it your own through memory. As a ritual item, the Leabhar should be a specific book, which is kept in your own handwriting, or typed by your own hand. In order to have its greatest value it should not be kept only as electronic files. It must contain nothing that is merely copied and pasted. Your own hand, word by word, must enter each article or ritual, story or table of lore. In this age, and for the weakness of our minds, we can allow typed work, though handwriting is an even more somatic, thus more effective, means of making new information one's own.

Let us agree that such a book is a crutch, made for our weakness. Let it be a deed of strength to put your Leabhar into the Fire, having taken all of its contents into your heart. Even so, there is always the next volume to be begun.

### The Druid's Tools

- **Cloak and Torc**—Druid's raiment, as you prefer.
- **The Hallows**—portable ritual Fire and Well, World Tree or Stone, if desired, other offering vessels and items as needed.
- **Wand and Cauldron**—A Portable Cauldron fit to drink wine or ale from. A Wand shaped and finished to symbolize your personal magic.
- **Divination Tool**—many rites require the taking of an omen to determine whether one's work is going well, or will succeed. We will discuss various tools and methods later.
- **Special Tools**—various offering bowls, stones, knives, cups, mirrors, etc., as called for.
- **The Leabhar gCuimhne**—if needed.

## **The Shrine & the Nemeton**

Tradition makes it clear that the awareness and powers of the gods and spirits manifest through the temples and holy places that mortals create on earth. By making beautiful places filled with symbolism proper to the work, and by filling those places with the devotion of our worship, we open a road for the spirits' power.

## **The Devotional Shrine**

The simplest way to begin a home shrine is to place a table or cabinet in a part of your home where it can be private and quiet. There should be enough space for you, and the members of your household that will use it, to sit comfortably for ritual and meditation. You should begin by placing in the shrine symbols of our basic Indo-European Druidic cosmos: fire, well and world-tree or world-mountain. The home shrine can be a sacred grove in miniature, a model of the forces that join to open the gates between the worlds.

The fire might best be present as a triple flame, whether a triple-wicked candle or oil flame or three votive candles. White and/or red would be the best colors, though red, white and black, (or green or blue), have much of Indo-European symbolism behind them.

The well should be represented by a simple bowl of water. This can be in the shape of a cauldron, if you wish, in order to partake of all the rich meaning of that symbol.

The world-center symbol on the home altar can be as simple or elaborate as you choose. It is perhaps most proper for it to be of wood: oak, rowan, ash, or hazel. A tall stone may also serve, or representations of the pillar tree done in metal or ceramic. Your altar tree or stone can be carved or decorated as you wish.

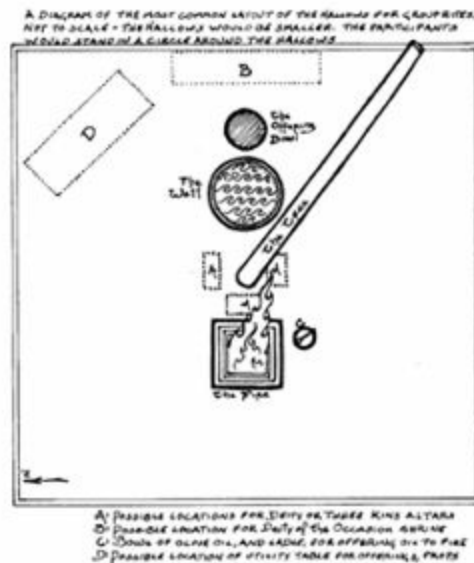
These simple symbols should become the physical and spiritual center of your shrine. European lore does not give us clear instruction for orienting the shrine. Pagan lore favors either placing the altar in the east, the holy place of the rising sun, or in the north, the place of the North Star, center of the sky. The shrine is placed on that wall, so that you sit facing the direction and the altar. Place the tree either against the wall or in the center of the altar area. At its base, place the well, with the fire closest to your seat. To these you may wish to add a censer, near the fire, other candles for light, a bowl to hold small offerings, and perhaps a bell or chime. From this core symbolism, you can

begin to add whatever additional patterns appeal to you; perhaps patterns drawn from an Indo-European culture whose path you are investigating. If you wish, you may represent the three worlds of land, sea and sky, or symbols proper to an ethnic path. Incense for sky, a shell of saltwater for sea, and a small bowl of salt or clean soil, or a stone or crystal, for the land can fill out the picture.

Of course, many or most Pagans will want to include representations or symbols of the gods and goddesses, the ancestors, and nature spirits. These you will probably acquire over time, as your own work grows. In fact, the home shrine will serve as a kind of changing and growing map of your growth in the Druid way. As you build a web of worship and relationship with the powers, you will rearrange your shrine, adding and subtracting symbols. In time, you will have a personal cathedral in a corner of your home, where you can truly commune with the powers and find balance and peace in your soul.

## The Nemeton

The Sacred Groves and Temples of the ancients were called, in the Gaulish language, Nemeton, or, in Gaelic, Nemed. Both mean ‘Noble or Holy Place.’ Wherever the Sacred water rises and the Magic Fire burns is a Nemeton of our Druidry, but for outdoor rites, or larger workings with a group, you will want to construct a larger ritual space.



The Druid will set up her hallows, and the company will stand or seat themselves before them, in a position that offerings can be made to the Fire, Well and all. It is always best for the Fire to be laid out on the Earth, but a small brazier can be used if necessary. The Cauldron represents the Well. For

individual rites the Druid's Staff is placed in the ground as the Bile, or a mighty living tree can center the rites.

In every case, the Nemeton must be clean and orderly, always prepared for sacrifice to the Powers. Whether in a deep forest or an urban bedroom, such a place becomes a gate for power, peace, and blessing to the druid, her land, and her people.

### **The Power of Vision**

The skills of magic require the development of the ability to perceive and move in the Otherworld. Among the Gaels we hear of the Second Sight, which can allow seers to know of distant events, or make prophecies of the future. Other seers are credited with the ability to see and converse with the Noble People, those tribes called the Daoine Sidhe—People of the Mound. The former sort of seership is most commonly seen as a bri power born in the seer, while the second sort is more often described as a power won by skill, or as a gift from the Nobles.

Both of these survived among medieval and later Gaels as remnants of the Old Ways, greatly reduced, as they became the half-remembered remnants of 18th and 19th century folklore. The recent folklore tends to see the Second Sight as an involuntary thing, a gift or a curse. However, in the Old Times such skills might well have been more a matter of training and willed development. As with any such skill innate talent—the bri of seership—will vary from student to student. Patient practice will produce results more surely than mere reliance on talent—as true of the seer's eye as it is of the harp.

The skills of seership are seated in the human imagination. In our age, it is common to think of the imagination as an entirely subjective and personal faculty. Western science has been so successful at manipulating the material world that many have come to believe only in material causes and effects. To the ancients the human mind was understood as a part of the spiritual world. The spiritual world was understood as being in a relationship of mutual causation with the material. What happens in the material world affects the spiritual, and what happens in the spiritual affects the material. This spiritual world is the Celtic Otherworld, so famed in the tales. The Otherworld is the place where stories live, where the Gods and Goddesses move, where the Dead have their halls. It is always near us, yet heroes reach it in far voyages. The

human imagination functions as our spiritual organ of Otherworld perception, as our on-board tool set with which we shape the Otherworld.

We know that the human imagination often responds to purely personal, internal, psychological causes. Many, perhaps most of the things that pass through our vision's eye exist only in the world of our personal souls. Yet the old wisdom also tells us that some ideas, some images come to us from the spiritual 'atmosphere' of the world, like a sound transmitted by the vibration of the air.

Imagination is an expression both of the Power of Vision and of the Power of Shaping. As humans we have the ability not only to receive the images projected by external spiritual things, but also to shape our vision, our thoughts, our dreams, by our own will. The images in our minds are not limited to those we know from memory or experience. While memory and experience provide raw material for creativity, it is our own Powers of Vision and of Shaping that allow us to turn them into new things.

The methods of vision presented in this section begin with the imagination. Using our powers of vision and shaping we will begin by constructing interior events and landscapes. We may assume that such constructs are at first entirely internal and subjective. However, every mind is connected with the All-Mind, rooted in the Waters, crowned at the Pole Star. These events and scenes that we create for ourselves are like temples that we build in a forest. There we do our work, make our offerings, and wait to see what answers come to us from the depths of the trackless wild.

The spaces we make in our minds are connected, as part of our connected minds, with every other mind and with the All-Mind by the currents and eddies of the Deep Waters, by the reflections of the Light. When we have made our inner landscapes well, they become paths by which the mental and spiritual reality of beings other than ourselves can reach us. Just as the deer and birds might emerge from the forest around a temple, so the Gods and Spirits come to the edge of our vision. When this happens, what had been a purely internal and subjective experience begins to show signs of influences from outside the personal mind. New ideas, insights and inspirations become available as the personal spirit opens to the greater world.

In the same way, we can use deliberately constructed environments as a launching-point for journeys in vision as we send our own spirits out on the currents of the Otherworld. These spirit-voyages take us away from our



carefully constructed inner locales, out into uncharted places. While these visions may begin, once again, as efforts of willed imagination, they are also able to lead us outside our common mind toward realms of the transpersonal.

So we begin with deliberate construction of vision and seek to use these constructs as tools of communication with the Gods and Spirits. We will take as one of our primary mechanisms of entrancement and journeying the image of the Wizard's Mist.

Celtic story depicts mist as one of the barriers that separates the common world from the Otherworld. In some tales crossing the sea or descending into the earth reaches the Otherworld. When mortals cross into the Otherworld while on foot or horseback, they are often described as passing through thick mist of the kind that so often rises in Britain and Ireland.

The use of the mist symbol seems also to be a direct description of the experience of passing the boundaries. One of the most commonly reported descriptions of the first glimpses of the inner worlds is of an endless realm of mists in which objects, beings, and locales resolve into vision as they are encountered. So our visions will begin with the image of the Mist of the Between. We will learn to pass through the mist from our common world to the edge of our personal imagination, where we can reach out to the Otherworld and it to us.

As in all the work of magic, it is our own power—our will, our vision—that allows us to reach out into the mist. By our skill we open the Inner Eye, and seek the Road of Vision.

### **Basic Techniques of Trance**

Trance, or meditation, is the willed management of mental states. These mental states are often referred to as 'altered states of consciousness,' but in fact there is hardly any normal state of consciousness. Every day as we go through our lives and work, our state of consciousness changes according to our need. When we read a novel, drive a familiar route, focus on a project, daydream, we enter different mental states. In everyday life we have little control over such states, drifting through them by habit and native ability. When we begin to take conscious control of these states, we enter the realm of magic.

Dion Fortune defined magic itself as 'the art of causing changes in consciousness in accordance with will.' While we may extend the definition of magic beyond that, it is certainly true that successful magic depends on the

ability to reach the state we could call Basic Trance. Several things characterize Basic Trance: a relaxed body, a mind open to input, and a focused awareness. From Basic Trance we can develop many kinds of magical altered states, useful for energy-work in healing, vision journeying, seership, invocation, and spellbinding of all sorts.

These exercises are meant, first, to develop the skills of Basic Trance, and from there to introduce some of the wider uses of Trance in Pagan spirituality and magic. The exercises are mainly arranged in the form of scripts, which can be used to lead group meditations, or recorded in your own voice to be played back at need.

The initial exercises should all be practiced frequently, until the states they generate are familiar and easily reached. At that time, the simple method given as Basic Trance will become usable. Once Basic Trance is easily reached, the techniques of vision and journeying will become available.

The work of trance is work. It responds best to diligent effort, as surely as the body responds to physical effort. Begin with the basics, and the vast inner world of trance, vision, and meditation will open before you.

### **Progressive Deep Relaxation**

- Lie where you are, and make your body comfortable... settle in place... and let gravity do its job... pulling you gently and evenly to the earth...
- Take a deep breath... and let it out... again, breathe deep, in and out... and again... now focus your attention on your feet... feel your feet... move them... wiggle your toes... now clench your feet hard... hold it... hold... and release... and clench... and release... let your feet relax, releasing all the tension...feeling the difference as the muscles relax... and let your attention withdraw from your feet... pulling back... as though they vanish into mist...
- Now focus your attention on your calves and ankles... feel their bones and muscles... move them a little... and now clench them hard... hold it... and release the tension... and clench... and release... relaxing your calves and ankles completely... and withdrawing your attention from them... as though the mist covered them...
- And focus now on your thighs and knees... flex the muscles of your thighs, keeping the rest of your legs relaxed... flex and feel the flesh... and tighten them hard... hold... and release... and clench... and relax, relax completely, withdrawing your attention... the mist covering...

- Your awareness focuses on your hips and loins... the muscles and complex joints, the lowest belly... flex your hips and loins... and clench... and release... tighten... and release... allow your whole lower body to relax... all tension flowing away... awareness pulling back... the mist covering all.
- Now turn your awareness to your hands... move your hands, feeling the bones and tendons... and clench your hands... hold... and release... tighten... and release... feeling your hands relax completely... withdrawing your awareness, as the mist covers them...
- Focus on your forearms and wrists... move and flex them, feeling their structure... now tighten them... hold... and relax... clench... and release, relaxing completely, withdrawing awareness, the mist rising.
- Bring your attention to your upper arms and elbows... flex and move them... then clench... hold... and release... and clench... and relax, feeling the tension drain from them... relaxing as your awareness is pulled back... now the mist covers your arms and legs... warm and relaxed... all tension draining away...
- Turn your attention to your belly and lower back... flex the muscles, and feel the complex of organs... then tighten... hold... and release... clench... and release, letting all tension flow away... letting awareness withdraw... the mist rising...
- As your awareness focuses on your chest and back... move and flex, keeping your body relaxed... feel your chest and back... and clench... hold... and relax... tighten... and relax... releasing tension... and withdrawing your attention...
- Your awareness turning now to your neck and shoulders... feeling the muscles and bones... flexing... and tighten... hold... and release... and clench... and relax your neck and shoulders, letting the mist cover your body... warm and calm... all tension released...
- Now your awareness turns to the back of the head, and ears... focus on them, and flex... and clench... and hold... and release... tighten... and relax, letting your awareness withdraw... the mist rising...
- And focus on your face and scalp... feel the complex of muscles and structures... move your face... then tighten... hold... and release... tight... and relax completely, withdrawing your attention from your head... the mist closing over you...
- And so you are at rest... your body relaxed... centered peacefully in the

mist... every muscle warm and comfortable... From this relaxed place, so many things are possible... it is the door to the mind...

- So remember... remember this feeling... and know that by that memory you may return to this place of comfort... this peace... with ease... when you will... now rest here a moment... and remember...
- So you remember this state... but now you will return to your body... sure in your relaxation... able to easily return to this feeling... As you take a deep breath... let your breath flow through you... and let your awareness return to your body... warm and comfortable... Move your body... breathe deep... sit up... and remember...

### **The Complete Breath**

The Wise know that to control the breath is to control the mind. To begin, sit comfortably, with your spine straight. Your tailbone should be higher than your ankles, your hands resting loosely on your lap or on the arms of your chair. Your eyes may be slightly open, or closed. You then begin a pattern of rhythmic breathing.

Proper breath comes from the diaphragm. When you inhale, your lower abdomen should expand, as though you were pulling air into the bottom of the lungs. Then fill the rest of the lungs, expanding the chest. When the breath is held, do not close the throat. Keep the diaphragm and chest expanded to let the air rest in the lungs. Exhaling reverses the process, emptying the chest then raising the diaphragm by pressing the belly toward the backbone. Again, the breath is held out of the body by the muscles of the chest and belly, not by closing the throat.

Tradition offers several patterns for the rhythm of the breath. Many people like the classic 4/4 pattern—in for four beats, hold for four beats, out for four beats, hold for four beats. The speed of the rhythm is up to you. A little practice will allow you to find a pace that is comfortable, neither too slow nor too fast. Some prefer a pattern with shorter holds, perhaps in—4, hold—2, out—4, hold—2.

If you are beginning meditation, your daily practice can be the practice of the Complete Breath, perhaps practiced as a preliminary to your devotions, until it is habitual and comfortable. You will find that it shades naturally into the core techniques of trance and meditation.

## Simple Meditation

As you sit comfortably, repeat the count of your breath silently to yourself. Let this simple repetition be your ‘mantra.’ Much has been made of mantras and their secret powers. Some of that lore is true, but some is simply sleight-of-mind. For this basic work we can use the simple count as a way to focus and relax the body and mind.

As you sit, breathing and counting your breaths, thoughts will arise naturally, and your body will find ways to become tense. The first goal of the practice is to remember to allow your body to relax. Allow thoughts to arise, float naturally through your awareness and then disperse like smoke. At first the tendency will be to begin ‘thinking about’ your thoughts, your mind attaching to them in the ordinary way. This is what you hope to avoid. By gently returning the focus to counting the breath, common thoughts can be released and allowed to flow away. So count the breaths, and any time you find yourself focused on any train of thought, or find your shoulders or face, etc., becoming tense, simply breath, relax, and return your attention to counting your breaths.

When you have observed your thought for a time, you may choose to imagine that your thoughts are like sparks of light, like fireflies flashing or embers spinning by. You may then begin to will those lights to go out. Extinguish each light as it arises. Feel your body grow settled and relaxed, and your mind grow darker, calmer and more peaceful. The goal is to find a state in which your body is comfortable and relaxed, and your mind is calm and relatively still—at least to be able to allow disturbing ideas to flow easily through, without disturbing other work.

With practice, you will have longer periods in which you sit comfortably, without becoming attached to any thought. In time, you will be able to sit at ease, steady and firm, as the flow of your thoughts goes by. This simple practice of observing the thoughts has great value. It relieves stress and frees the mind from worry. It attunes the body to itself and its rhythms, and brings peace to the soul.

This basic mental poise, this basic state of relaxed alertness, is the blank slate on which we mean to write the ways and patterns of our Pagan paths. It allows us access to our own minds, allows us to build the inner temples and paths that bring us into contact with the Gods and Spirits. It can precede and conclude any ritual, and is the door to deeper trance, vision, and inner devotional work. It relieves stress, frees the mind from worry for a time, and creates an open,

receptive state for worship and magic. It has real value as a practice in itself, but it is also a basis on which other techniques are built. The work of spiritual practice often requires periods of focused awareness, when we hope to maintain specific thoughts and images in our mind. By learning to allow common thought to slide through our awareness we can better apply our will to focusing the mind on the images and invocations of our devotions and offerings.

### **Calling the Two Powers**

Begin, Oh seeker of wisdom, with your breath... breathe deeply, from your belly... in... and out... make your body comfortable... stretch if you need to, settle in place... and focus on your breath... observe your breath as it flows in and out of your body... and with each breath, allow your body to relax... let your breath carry away tension from your flesh.. relaxing your feet and legs... letting your belly soften and relax... breathing away tension from your shoulders and arms... from your neck... relaxing your face and mouth, your eyes... with each breath, your body becoming warmer, comfortable, and relaxed... your mind alert and prepared for magic...

Now, with your body still and calm, imagine that from your feet, or the base of your spine, roots begin to grow downward... roots reaching and growing into the earth, down through soil and stone... deepening and spreading... reaching to touch the waters under the Earth... the Earth current... the dark, cool, magnetic power that nourishes and sustains life... As your roots touch this current, it is drawn in and up toward your body... your breath draws the Earth power upward... into your body... the invisible, magnetic power fills your legs, energizing and strengthening... waters rise from the earth, into your legs... rising... into your loins... and pooling in your loins, a cauldron of Earth power... You breathe the power upward... rising from the earth, through your loins, rising up your spine... into your heart... pooling and filling a cauldron in your heart with healing, restoring energy... power rising from the deep, through your loins, through your heart... rising up your spine and into your head... filling a cauldron of wisdom and vision behind your eyes... and rising still, filling all your body and flowing out again through the crown of your head... through your hands... flowing out around your body and back into the earth... the power under the Earth flows in you... grounding you in the source of life...

Now imagine the sky overhead... The sun and moon and, far beyond them, the stars... Imagine a single star at the center of the sky, shining directly over your

head... the center of your inner sky, your own pole-star...see a flash of light shining down from that star... streaming down between moon and sun... gold, silver, and blue-white light... the bright, warm, electric power of the sky... the light touches your head, filling and illuminating the cauldron like sun on still water... shining from above... filling your head with warm, awakening power... flowing down into your heart... warming the cauldron... shining down through head and heart, illumining the waters... downward to reach your loins... The cauldron shines with sky power in your loins... Tingling, electrical light in head, heart and loins... the light flows downward into Earth, and you are shining and flowing with the mingled powers of Earth and sky... the raw material of magic... the chaos of potential and the world order...

These powers are balanced in you... yours to shape and use... always with you in some degree... But for now, allow the powers to recede... waters to the Earth, light to the sky... knowing that each time you attune to them, you become more attuned, more at one with the powers... breath deep... and allow your awareness to return to your common senses... as you open your eyes...

### **The Nine Breaths Centering**

- *Preparation—find your comfortable seat (or stance), and make your body easy. Take a few deep, regular breaths, perhaps beginning your rhythmic count. When you have taken a few breaths, you begin...*
- **1st Breath**—Draw the Earth Power up into your body, filling the Cauldron or pool in the loins.
- **2nd Breath**—Draw the Earth Power up through the loins to fill the Cauldron in the heart. Feel the cool, nourishing power as it fills you...
- **3rd Breath**—Draw the Power through the loins and the heart, to fill the head. See the Earth Power overflowing from the Three Centers through the whole body. For the rest of the work, each breath moves the Power through the Three Cauldrons and the body.
- **4th Breath**—feel the Sky Power shining down through the whole body, and feel the Cauldron in the head kindle with the fire of the sky.
- **5th Breath**—the Sky Power brightens in the body, and the second Cauldron

kindles in its rays.

- **6th Breath**—The Power shines brighter, and the Cauldron in the loins kindles. The Light fills the Waters, and the Two Powers flow throughout the body.
- **7th Breath**—the combined powers are directed throughout the body, intensified and concentrated.
- **8th Breath**—Turn the palms of the hands upward, and direct the Powers, with the breath, into the palms of the hands. See the Waters overflowing the fingers and the Light or Flame shining up from the hands. (*In many cases, there may be work to be done with the power at this point. Whenever needed, the Powers can now be employed as needed. The 'Ninth Breath', then, comes when one wishes to end. .)*)
- **9th Breath**—Place the palms of the hands together, and allow the powers to recede and re-center, ceasing to flow through the hands.
- **Settling**—take a few breaths to relax again, and allow the powers to calm.

## Memory and Vision

Perform the Basic Trance exercise.

- So you sit, eyes gently closed... breathing deeply... your mind relaxed... the Powers flowing smoothly in you... prepared to focus your attention on the images of our work...
- Now allow yourself to recall a place in nature... one that you know well... a place where you have been comfortable, happy, inspired...
- Allow the memory to come clearly, remember the look of the place... the sounds... the feel of ground beneath your feet, of air on your skin...
- See and feel yourself as though you are present in that place now... see yourself walking into it, by the way that you usually enter... you enter the place, and stand somewhere near its center...
- Standing in the place, remember what would be visible in front of you... what you would see...
- And if you turned to your right... remember what you might see... and turn again, to see the way that you came from... and if you turned again, what would you see...



- Turn again to where you started... and remember the whole place... perhaps you must fill in the blanks... but let it become real to you...
- Now take a moment to explore the place a little... let your point of view roam freely through the area... allow yourself to focus on detail for a moment... then move on...
- You may notice things that you have not seen before. Allow yourself to step past the edge of your memory... into a part of the place that you have never seen before... a broad, flat place in the wild... where you might build...
- But for now, you must return to your common self... Breathe deep, and remember your center... remember your ability to see your mind's images... to experience the contents of yourself... remember your body, now... breathe deep, and feel the calm of your trance... in this place... eyes open, as you return to common awareness, here in this place...

### **Passing the Mist & the Inner Grove**

Our magic requires the discovery or creation of an Inner working space—a visionary locale from which journeys may be begun, and into which the spirits will be called. There are many such methods, but here we give one that is based on seeking the Inner counterpart to the material locales we create for ritual.

### **The Working**

Prepare your ritual space, if possible outdoors, or come before your Home Shrine. Seat yourself comfortably, back straight.

- Work a short blessing of the space, or the full Druid Circle and Gate if you wish—in your first exercises it might be best to work the full opening—renew and strengthen your Earth and Heavens contacts.
- Feel the cool Earth Power and the hot Sky Power meet in your head, meet in your heart, and meet in your loins.
- And in the meeting-places, feel the mingling of the Powers begin to produce the Mist—the streams of vapor pouring out of your Inner Cauldrons, flowing out from the roots of the Tree, where Fire and Water meet.
- Visualize the Mist gathering and thickening, beginning to accumulate. Even as the Powers are meeting in your own body, and the Mist flows from you, you may perceive the Mist approaching from around you, from the Gates in your Nemeton.
- The Mist gathers, growing thicker, and collecting around your feet... around

your hips and loins... around your arms and chest. It grows thick and opaque, and rises, at last, to surround your head.

- With your eyes closed, envision the Wizard's Mist as it surrounds you... See it grey and silver and white, sometimes glistening, sometimes shadowed... growing thicker, warm and comforting.
- This is the Mist of the Between... the place of neither/nor... neither waking nor sleeping, neither in the common world or in the Otherworld... a place where journeying may happen... a place of unknown possibility... rest here for a while... rest in meditation as your mind holds the presence of the swirling Mist of the Border...
- Now, seated in the Mist, it is time to begin... in your imagination's eye... in your Inner Vision... not with your physical body... Stand up... Use your body in vision... brace yourself... and rise up from where you are seated... feel your point-of-view rise with your head... holding your point-of-view behind your imagined eyes... You stand up in your vision body... you take a step forward... and stand in the Mist...
- You may, if you wish, look down at yourself, though there is no need... you feel the presence of your hands... of your body upright... as the Mist swirls all around you...
- Now it is your task to part the Mist and move into the vision reality of your ritual space, upon the land on which you began... bring to mind your goal and your target... let your memory draw it before you... see its shape and color... recall its nature...
- In vision, reach your hand before you, and draw a triskel in the Mist before you... focused on your goal image, see the Mist swirl where you draw... and see it begin to part...
- Now the Mist begins to thin... as though blown by an unfelt wind... now, with memory and will... you see the scene resolve before you... your goal-image, the Nemeton, revealed in its Otherworld form... elements of the same scene that you left when you called the Mist... see it resolve in your Inner Eye... as the Mist clears around you... revealing the Inner reflection of the common world...
- You behold the Inner Grove resolving before you... you see the details more clearly now...
- The Inner World is brighter, but perhaps less 'in focus'... it glimmers and wavers, resolving only when you gaze directly at a scene... sometimes

resolving sharply, all on its own...

- Where you have placed your hallows you may see other forms, Inner forms... a Well... a pillar... the Fire in the Tintean... that Sacred Fire that shines in every world... and the presence of the Gate... the Way Between the Worlds... appearing however it is true and real for you...
- In your vision body, turn and look around you... turn to your right... and to your left... turn at last and look behind you... you are aware of your body, seated in the common world... You take note of its position... as you look at the Inner World around you...  
(If this is your first experience of passing the Mists, or if anything doesn't feel right about the experience, this is as far as you should go. Skip to the return instructions.)
- If all feels well to you, you may wish to walk out into the Inner... For these first experiments, remaining near to your physical body... to the original Inner Grove locale... your Sacred Fire, lit before you, will always be visible to you... always be a beacon for returning... no matter how far you roam...
- So, for a time, explore the Inner Land in which you find yourself... look at the plants and stones... look round to see the presence of birds, beasts, or beings... but for now, do not seek to interact with them... only observe...
- And, after a time, turn and look for the glint of your Sacred Fire... and return to the place where you can dimly glimpse your body...

### **The Return**

- Standing in vision before your body... turn, and step backward into the space where your body is sitting... raise your spirit-hand before you... and make a tuathal triskel in the air before you... sit down into your body... and see the Mist rise around you... renew your center... feel the Earth and Sky Powers meeting in your flesh... as the Mist rises around you... you are again in the place between...
- Remember your body, and as the mist parts again, breathe deep... feel the air flow in your lungs... the blood course in your veins... open your eyes, and know that your spirit has returned fully to your flesh... stretch... and be finished with the trance.

### **A Trance Attunement to the Underworld**

Begin in your meditation seat... renew your center... rooted deep and crowned high... with the earth power flowing in you... the sky power shining in you... as

you prepare to send your awareness out of your common flesh...

Turn your attention to the flow of the earth power in your flesh... feel its source at the base of your spine... like the surface of a wide deep well... imagine that surface... like a round still pool... it is perfectly clear, yet so deep that its depths are lightless and black... Into this pool flows the stream of your awareness...

Imagine now that you are floating in a pool of earth power... drifting at peace... now drifting downward... gently downward... into the underworld, on the gentle, mighty current of the waters under the earth...

Drifting downward in the shaft of the well... you may pass through images of the underworld... stone and root... the beasts that dwell in the earth... worms and beetles that consume the dead... the bones they leave behind... you may glimpse the halls of the dead... the feasting-place of the ancestors... but, for now, allow them to pass by... as you drift in the deep waters...

Drifting downward now... into the deeps... past all images... past all forms... you are now simply resting in the dark depths... your mind alert, yet relaxed...

The pool in which you rest, deep in the earth is a pool in the waters of the all-mind... the waters of the underworld... these waters are the substance of your own soul's depth... yet they also flow through all the world... Just as every tree is rooted in the waters under the earth, so every soul, every being is rooted in the underworld waters of the all-mind...

So resting here, one with the waters, you may reach out quietly with your mind... feel the waters immediately around you... these waters may hold mostly your own mind that surrounds you... but at the edge of those waters, your mind interfaces... it mixes gently with the waters of the all mind... perhaps it has a current; perhaps it carries other awarenesses to you... images, voices, memories... all may drift by you, as your mind mingles with the waters of memory and forgetting... now pause, and listen to the voices of the waters...

Now as you lie in your body of vision... deep in the waters of the earth... remember... remember the voices you have heard in the waters... remember the sensation of the drifting in the waters... and know that you can return to this awareness ...reach for this awareness... when you have need... when you wish to touch the waters of the all-mind...

But for now, remember your body... where it lies calmly connected to your mind by the very waters in which you drift... now breathe deep... and remember your name... and remember what whisperings you have heard... as

you begin to rise through the waters... remembering your body... breathing deeply... as your awareness returns to your body... fully and completely...

### **A Trance Attunement to the Heavens**

Begin in your meditation seat... renew your center rooted deep and crowned high... with the earth power flowing in you... the sky power shining in you... as you prepare to send your awareness out of your common flesh...

Turn your attention to the shining of the sky power in your flesh... feel its warmth as it flows in through the crown of your head... filling your body with light and warmth... as you sit bathed in a column of light... you may feel your mind as still and clear as a blue sky; you can gaze out upon the map of your own spirit...

Imagine now that you are rising into that blue sky... a gust of wind lifts you, and you are rising upward along the shaft of light... not drifting, but rising straight and true as a beam of sun... into the heavens, on the warm strength of the light of the sky...

Rising now over the land, high into the sky... you may pass by images of the shining world... cloud and storm...you may see the flowing rivers of the air... the birds that dwell in it... you may glimpse palaces of light and air... landscapes of cloud... halls of the gods... but for now, allow them to pass by... as you rise into the shining heavens...

Rising upward... into the heavens... past all blue sky and clouds... into the clear light of the overworld... you come to rest at last in a place of pure brightness... your mind alert, and yet calmed and relaxed...

This source of light in which you rest, high above the world, is a center of vision, a vantage for understanding... the light of your own center... of the center of all worlds... the hub of the cosmic wheel... this point of light is your own sacred center, your own spark of the cosmic fire... yet in an important way, every sacred center is but one center... even as each is unique... just as every tree grows beneath a single sun, so every soul has at its center this high seat, this point of convergence... the shining center of the heavens...

So resting here, one with the fire of the heavens, you can behold the light reaching out in all directions... creating a sphere of brightness... of fire... and you can gaze out in every direction from this high seat... and you can see that, all around you, the pattern of the cosmos is dancing...

As you gaze out into the cosmos from your center, you can see the outer

boundaries... the great waters of the outer sea... you can see the many spheres of the manifest worlds rolling in their wheels... each in its place... all rolling together in the great pattern... you may see the gods and goddesses and the mighty spirits in their great circle dance...

So resting here, one with the fire, you may reach out quietly with your mind... you may send a small ray of your light outward, like telescoping sight, to gaze upon a part of the wheeling worlds... you may focus on a single portion, or grasp the whole pattern as you may now pause, and observe the pattern of the worlds...

Now as you sit in your body of vision... high in the center of the sky... remember... remember the vision of the fire... remember the wonder of the dance of lights, and know that you can return to this awareness... reach for this awareness... when you have need... when you wish to touch the fire of the center...

But for now, remember your body... where it lies calmly, connected to your awareness by the ray of soul light... now breath deep... and remember your body... and remember the sights you have seen... as you descend the ray of light... remember yourself... breathing deeply... returning awareness to your flesh... fully and completely...

## **The Book of Fire and Water**

### **Using the Two Powers for Magic**

This is the work of the *Fuinneamh Deach*—the Two Powers of magic by means of the Underworld Waters and the Fire of the Sky. It is magic that is outwardly simple, worked with a will and a word and a gesture. It is a magic worked with the mind, but also with the flesh, for it is in the living body that the Two Powers flow.

First, let the magician be skilled at calling the Two Powers into his body, and at letting them flow into his hands. From that basis, the Two Powers can be increased and accumulated in the self by will, by vision and by breath. Let the magician practice this work, filling his body and spirit with the Fiery Waters.

Seated firmly in your meditation seat, let the complete breath be pump and bellows, each breath drawing up more of the Shadow from beneath, and fanning the Fire in the self. This can be done in sets of nine breaths. The first set of nine accomplishes the Nine-breaths centering. Each set of nine following builds

the strength of the Powers in the self. You should practice this technique regularly, and record your impressions.

The magician should also learn to accumulate each of the Two Powers individually. Using vision, will and breath, fill the hands with the Fire, or with the water. Note well the feelings and impressions produced by each. Every such exercise should start and end with the Two Powers well balanced in the self.

Secondly, let the magician know how to project and build with the Two Powers.

Begin by choosing a location where power can be projected into an empty place, over water, from a hilltop into air, or simply where the first objects are some distance away.

Find your center, and establish the flow of the Two in your body.

Bring the combined Two Powers into your hands. See the Shadow flowing through your fingers to the ground; see the Light dance from your palms.

When you wish to intensify the presence of the Two Powers, or to direct it with will and vision, you may find it useful to employ the ‘Dord Draoi’—the magic chant. The Dord Draoi is an intoning, a buzzing, vibrating call used to move and shape power. Let the breath rise from the belly, making such a tone or drone or buzz as arises by nature. Experiment will find the sound that can be sustained, and which produces the desired feeling of ‘vibration’ in both the body and in the current of the Two.

Hold your hands before you, cupped as though to hold water. Using your breath, and perhaps the Dord Draoi as the driver, begin intensifying the Two in your hands. Let the Waters fill your hands and flow over the fingers, and the Fire kindle as a flame atop the Waters, moving the Waters with its heat. Let the Fire grow so bright that your hands shine, incandescent, making a sphere of flame around your hands. The Waters flow into this Flame, and are turned into mist that flows from the surface of the sphere. Move your hands until you get a feel for how you can manifest and hold this spherical form of the Two.

This Sphere of Power is structured with the Hearth and Font of the Powers in the center, and the Sphere of Fire and Shadow surrounding it.

With the Sphere shining and flowing, fix your gaze on infinity, over the horizon or into the sky. Hold your hands forward, palms or fingertips pointed with the direction of your gaze. Make the Dord Draoi, and by will and vision, cause the *Fuinneamb Deach* to flow out from your hands in a straight ray or beam.

Using the breath and the Dord, make the ray of your power flow and shine out toward the infinity-point. Be certain to maintain your connection with the Deeps and the Heights, so that the Two flow from the cosmos outside of you, through your own form and out, directed by your voice and will and vision. As it flows from your hands you may also feel it flow from your mouth and eyes. In some exercises, you might wish to work with projecting the power from your mouth and/or eyes alone.

Allow the power to flow freely, extending out toward the horizon for a time. When you wish to end, cease the Dord Draoi, and return the hands to the sphere position. Through will and breath, allow the Two to return to balance in you, flowing and shining simply in your palms. Make a sign of ending, and release your awareness of the Two.

By this same kind of skill the *Caber Draoi*, the Druid's Fortress, is made.

Seat yourself for working, and draw the Two Powers into you. Let the Light and the Shadow meet in the Three Cauldrons.

Accumulate the Two in the Three Cauldrons, and intensify the Powers in each, creating a sphere of fire and mist around each Cauldron. See the Spheres grow to join into a single Sphere surrounding your whole self. Conceive the Fire as shining downward from above, through the self, then flaming up around the Sphere. Conceive the Water as rising up from below, then like a fountain pouring down around the Sphere.

With your breath, and perhaps with the Dord Draoi, intensify this dual current as you can and will. Seek, as you did before, that incandescent fire and spreading mist.

It is the Waters that bring the all-potential to the Mage's work. It is the Fire that brings the power to manifest specific goals. At the edge of the Sphere of the Two Powers, the Fire brings shape from the Deep. From this formula, many works proceed.

This Sphere is the *Caber Draoi*, the Druid's Fortress—the inner sanctum, the invisible chapel of the magician's power. It can be enhanced and fortified with sigils that express the core ideas of Celtic magic, and with symbols of the magician's specific work.

Set the sign of the Gate at your heart, the Well in your loins, the Fire in your head. Conceive the Dual Flow through your body to be as the root and branch of the World Tree. This is the first manifestation of the Nemeton of Vision, the Otherworld reality of the ritual space in which magic is made. Into this Fortress



we call what we will, and send forth what we will in turn. From the substance of the *Fuinneamh Deach* we form whatever symbol we wish to use to draw in whatever we will, and to send our will out into the world.

The magician can use the Two Powers to create shields of magical defense. The most basic of these is the Dual Wall. The Mist surrounds the Caher, causing any ill will that approaches to be lost and weakened. Within the Mist is the wall of white-hot Flame that burns away all ill that might pass the Mist. Such a barrier is made strong by the strength of the Two Powers in the self.

Using the power of vision and the will, the magician can form the Mist into other sorts of barriers. The Caher can be walled with stone, or with glass, or with mirror. The surface of the sphere can be made to spin like a buzz saw, or become spiked. All these are a matter of will and vision.

There are two Celtic symbols of protective power that can be set into the Sphere—the Spear of Lugh and the Mantle of Brigid.

Brigid's Mantle is the cloak of stars and space, threaded through with the green of the land. It is the mantle of Peace and Plenty that heals wounds and turns aside ill. The Mantle is envisioned surrounding the Caher on all sides. It is thin as a cloak but deep as midnight over green earth. Any ill that enters it is bathed in love and wholeness, returned to peace and oneness with the land, turned to the good of all.

The Spear of Lugh is the Victory-Brand, the weapon that turned aside the ill of the Demons in the first days. Its fiery power cannot fail to strike its target, destroying all ill. The Spear is envisioned as a mighty weapon, with heavy shaft bound in silver and a flaming steel head, with both point and edge. See it placed above your head, pointing where your eyes see, swift to fly at any ill, to protect the good.

When these two signs are placed together in the Fortress, great protective power is made.

These two signs, and the Blessing of Brigid and Lugh that they bring, are also of use for the healing of minds and bodies. The Mantle may be used along with a material *Brat Brigh*, or without, spreading in vision upon the target of the healing. The Spear may be focused in the Slat, used to drive ill from a target, or to fill it with life.

In using the Two Powers for healing, the Underworld Power is used to cleanse and dissolve ill, to enhance and generally refresh well-being. The Sky Power is used to burn away ill, to fill a target with the power of individual life,

and to restore and preserve natural order. When a target has an identifiable illness, begin by accumulating the Underworld Power in your Caher. Envision the illness in the target and project the power into the illness and into the target's body in general. See the all-dissolving power of the Deep loosen the ill, soaking it soft and loose, disconnecting it from the body and soul of the target. Allow a solid flow of the Deep Power to flow through you, into the target and through the target into the Earth below.

To encourage this flow you may choose to use material water to lave the target, charging the water with the Deep Power. The target might be seated directly upon the soil or, if the work is done indoors, be given a stone to hold to receive the outflow of the Power. Such a Stone is later placed in running water to be cleansed.

Thus, the Underworld Power flows through the target, dissolving and washing away the illness. This leaves the target cleansed, but in a state of openness and receptivity. Into that state we bring the Heaven Fire.

Sometimes it may be that the Fire should be used for further cleansing, or even for an initial cleansing. Some deep infections and ills may not respond well to the Power of Light. The Fire should be accumulated in the sphere, and applied as a beam of concentrated sunlight that seeks out every corner, drawing out that which needs the dark.

The central use of the Light From Above is to restore proper wholeness and order to a system, which has been cleansed and opened. The Light shines into the target from the hands of the magician, filling the target, crystallizing and rebuilding damaged systems, strengthening the core pattern of health by the Power of the World Order.

This work can be facilitated by heating water or tea, perhaps with proper herbs, with the warmth carrying the power of the Fire. The target may be given a small lamp or candle upon which to gaze, or by passing flame along the client's body.

So, by cleansing and softening with the Water and by warming and firming with the Fire, many ills of body and soul may be turned aside.

The *fuinneamb deach* may also be applied to the work of seership.

It is said that the wizards of old could hear the voices of others, carried on the wind. The wind is the child of the Light and the Waters in their play, and the Light and the Waters flow through all beings. Every being's thoughts may drift from them in the mist of their connection with the Two, and also be

carried and echoed in the deeps of the Underworld Waters, and illumined by the Fire.

Find a place where you are open to the wind. Make your seat, and establish the Caher Draoi. Open to a strong flow of the Deep, and let it merge with the Fire to make the Mist of Magic.

Let your mind be present in the Mist. Rise in your vision, in your presence, outside your sphere. This is the Way of the Waters, to merge gently and subtly, flowing in its streams, exchanging all within its cycles.

The skill of this work is to perceive the interface between the mist of your own mind and the strands of others' minds and words as they flow. You seek to hear the murmur of distant minds, to seek, perhaps, a specific stream of a distant voice. This skill may come more easily to some than to others, but practice is always more likely than idleness to produce results.

To access the powers of the Deep-root Waters where the roots of all minds touch, one may accumulate the Underworld Power in a mirror or scrying bowl, or especially in one's own Coire. This spell is given elsewhere.

To use the Light for distant seeing or knowing is, perhaps, a more difficult thing. Even as the Sun and the Moon shine their rays across the vast deeps, illuminating all, so the Sky Power can bear the mind and vision of the magician.

Compose the Caher, and accumulate the Sky Power in your head. This may begin as a Fire in the Head but, through breath and vision and will, that light should be strengthened into a clear, shining center. When this light is allowed to shine freely, in all directions, it leads to a sense of all-awareness. When the Light is focused into a beam, it may be sent toward a target. In this light it may be that distant events can be seen.

When you seek the Fire Seership, you might accumulate the Light within a material flame, in your own Tintean, bringing these skills to the Spell of Fire-Seership.

The work of the *fuinneamb deach* is a primary set of skills for the Celtic magician. When the Gods and Spirits work in the world, they work by will and vision to shape the Two Powers. When we do the same, we draw upon the divine in ourselves, the very spark and spring of power that grants us magic.

## **The Power of Speech**

### **Daily Shrine Charm**

This simple working can serve as a magician's daily 'devotional' at a home

shrine.

The shrine is arranged as you wish, with your Worship Hallows in the central place of focus. There might be images of your Deities, and symbols by which you contact your allies among the Dead and the Sidhe. Placed in some way before your hallows are the Coire Beannachta and the Slat Draoi. In this work those two things stand as symbols of the Divine In You.

*You should also place on the altar any material links with which you are working, especially if you are planning a specific working. These may include long-term links, such as a **clach talamh**, or short-term links used for a single working.*

*There should be incense or oil for offerings, as well as specific offerings for any spirits with which you may be preparing to work.*

*Seated and ready at your shrine, with your Fire lit and Cauldron full, begin by saying:*

**The world is in me,  
And I am in the world  
The spirit in me is the spirit in the world  
By Eye and by Hand and by Tongue  
My will is the will of the world.**

Work the Two Powers, bringing the Fire and Water into your hands, and build the Caher Draoi (as given in the Book of Fire and Water).

Take up the Tobar, and sprinkle yourself with the water, letting the Underworld Power wash through you. Say:

**By the Power of the Deep, let every ill be dissolved and washed away.**

*Take up the Tintean, or incense or smudge from the Fire. Perfume yourself with the smoke as you allow the Heaven Power to shine in you. Say:*

**By the Power of the Fire, let blessing drive out every ill.**

*Returning the Fire and Water to their places, balance the Two Powers in yourself, and say:*

**I dwell between the Earth and Sky  
Rooted Deep and Crowned High!**

*Invoke your Allies—Gods, Dead and Spirit—by a simple will, with a spoken call if that is your custom. You might choose to use the Hosting charm, thus:*

*Prepare the offerings, whether oil or incense or ale for all, or herbs for the Sidhe, food for the Dead and oil for the Gods. Open wide your vision eyes and say:*

**I come before the Druid's Shrine and call out to the Host of Spirits.**

**To the Fire of Welcome I invite the Three Holy Kindreds.**

**Mighty and beloved Dead be welcome at my Shrine** *(make offering)*

**Wild Ones, Nobles of the Sidhe be welcome at my Shrine** *(make offering)*

**Eldest, wisest, Shining Ones be welcome at my Shrine** *(make offering)*  
**Oh Host of the Holy, I call you on the Spirit Road.**  
**By the Four Winds and the Nine Waves,**  
**By the World Tree's root and branch.**  
**By the Four Treasures and the Crown of Don,**  
**By Fire's light and Well's might,**  
**Come to my call, and accept my sacrifice!** *(make final offering)*

*Sit for a while, and open your vision eye to their presence.*

*Reach out with your vision to experience the bri of each of the power objects you have assembled, along with any bua laid by you or by others. Feel each of those qualities integrated in the flow of Fire and Shadow that is your Caber. Envision yourself as containing the Altar of the Sacred Fire, the Deep Spring in the Forest. Begin the Charm of Power, saying:*

**I am kin to the Fire, born of the Waters**  
**My flesh is holy, born of the Holy Union**  
**My spirit is three drops from the Cauldron of Wonder,**  
**Three flames of the Fire of the Gods**

*Place your sword-hand on your forehead and envision all of the powers of your shrine present in your head, say:*

**The Power of Magic is in my head**

*Likewise, place your hand on your heart, and say:*

**The Power of Magic is in my heart**

and with your hand on your loins:

**The Power of Magic is in my loins**

*Join your hands at your heart, and say:*

**I do honor to the Divine in my own soul Deep and Shining power of my power. Hearth of Wisdom Spring of Love Source of Strength I offer the worship that is due to every God.**

*Open your hands wide, once again welcoming all the powers you have gathered, and say:*

**All you Powers of the Worlds Deep,**  
**Middle and High Sea, Land and Sky**  
**Come to my call, answer my will**  
**Join me in my work of magic!**

*If you are taking an omen, it should be done now.*

*If you are preparing for a specific work, you might now state your intention or make any special offerings. This time might also serve for simple works, such as a further charm of*

*Cleansing or of Hallowing.*

*When you are finished, bring the assembled powers again into yourself, and bring the Fire and Water into quiet balance. Say:*

**The world is in me, and I am in the world  
The spirit in me is the spirit in the world  
By Eye and by Hand and by Tongue  
My will is the will of the world.  
Biodh se amhlaidh!**

### **Charms of Centering & Empowerment**

This set of simple rituals is designed to establish the Celtic powers of the personal spirit in the magician. Those familiar with early 20th century occult Qabalah may find the forms of the rites familiar. In these exercises, however, we are not working a 'banishing' of any sort. The work is invocatory, meant to call the principals close, so that the personal spirit may respond in kind.

The work is simple, and can be done with no tools or temple at all, or with only the wand, if desired, but it does require an easy skill in opening to and moving the Two Powers. It makes an excellent preliminary meditation and ritual. It is very proper for use as a daily preparatory rite, when seeking power for greater works. In general, it is meant to both empower and balance the spirit for further work, or for strength and wisdom in daily life.

### **The Kindling Charm**

*Stand facing the East, and raise your arms, upper arms straight out from the shoulders, and forearms at 90 degrees. ('orans' position). Bring the Two Powers quickly into your body, and say:*

**Powers of the Earth and Sky  
Rooted deep and crowned high.**

*Place fingers on forehead, chest and loins in turn, envisioning the Two mingling in each, perhaps in the Cauldrons, saying:*

**Flow and Kindle in my Head  
Flow and Kindle in my Heart  
Flow and Kindle in my Loins**

*Cross arms on the chest, saying:*

**Flow and Shine in every part**

*Feel the combined Light and Shadow overflowing from the three Cauldrons, and flowing*

*through the whole body. If you wish, you can now go on to the Cauldrons and Airts attunements at this time.*

*As a shorter form you might go on to:*

*Extend the arms in a cross, facing east, and say:*

**Before me Bounty, behind me Wisdom**

**On my right hand Magic, on my left hand Strength**

*Hold hands cupped before your body and flow the Two Powers into them, saying:*

**For within me is the Cauldron**

**Of Wisdom, Love and Power.**

*When any work is completed, end by bringing the palms together in a 'praying' position, and balance and quiet the two in your body, allowing the powers to recede into the world. Say:*

**The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree**

**Flow and flame and grow in me.**

## **The Nine Working**

### **A. The Kindling Charm**

*Stand facing the East, and raise your arms, upper arms straight out from the shoulders, and forearms at 90 degrees. ('orans' position). Bring the Two Powers quickly into your body, and say:*

**Powers of the Earth and Sky**

**Rooted deep and crowned high.**

*Place fingers on forehead, chest and loins in turn, envisioning the Two mingling in each, perhaps in the Cauldrons, saying:*

**Flow and Kindle in my Head**

**Flow and Kindle in my Heart**

**Flow and Kindle in my Loins**

*Cross arms on the chest, saying:*

**Flow and Shine in every part**

*Feel the combined Light and Shadow overflowing from the three Cauldrons, and flowing through the whole body.*

### **B. The Three Cauldrons Attunement**

*With the Two Powers established in your body, establish the Three Cauldrons, beginning with your loins. Envision the Cauldron of Warming in the loins, using the Dord Draoi, intone the name of the Cauldron:*

**Goriath**

*Envision the combined Light and Shadow flowing into your Cauldron of warming. As it does, open your awareness to your body, seeking an awareness of your health and wholeness, seeing yourself as hale and well in every part. Envision the Cauldron of Vocation in the heart. Intone the name:*

**Ernmas**

*Let the Powers flow into the Cauldron, and your awareness open to your daily life and work. From the center that is the Cauldron, see the webs of relationship and mutuality that hold your life together. See them made strong, whole, and helpful. Envision the Cauldron of Wisdom in your head. Intone the name:*

**Sois**

*Let the two Powers flow into the Cauldron. As they fill it, open your mind to the sources of divine awareness in your life. Feel your Allies draw close, and the Divine in You shine and flow, filling you with the Mead of Inspiration.*

### **C. The Four Airs Attunement**

*Taking up the Slat if you wish, or using a pointing hand, turn to the East. Make an invoking spiral, spiraling out deosil from the center to the edge of the spiral. Say:*

**East wind blow Bounty**

*Envision a red wind blowing from the east into your spirit, bringing with it awareness of the power of growth and wealth in your life. Feel that wind filling places in your life that might be 'empty' of the power of prosperity.*

*Turn to the South and make the invoking spiral, saying:*

**South wind blow Song**

*Envision a white wind blowing from the south, bringing awareness of wildness and the outsiders into your spirit. Feel that outsider wind stir and shake the order of your existence, bringing new impulse and energy.*

*Turn to the West and make the invoking spiral, saying:*

**West wind blow Wisdom**

*Envision a twilight-gray wind blowing into your spirit from the west, bringing with it knowledge and inspiration. Feel that wind blow into empty places in your mind, bringing cleverness and understanding.*

*Turn to the North and make the invoking spiral, saying:*

**North wind blow Strong**

*Envision a black wind blowing into your spirit from the north, bringing with it strength and. Feel the wind filling the places in your heart that need it, bringing vigor and honor.*

*Face east and hold the Slat to your heart, or clasp your hands. Envision the Triple Cauldron,*



*the Divine in You, enshrined in your Spirit. Say:*  
*Within me is the Cauldron of Wisdom, Love and Power,*  
**And Nine Holy Things.**

**The Fire and the Shadow**

**The Deep, the Height, the Middle World**

**The Plow & Harp, the Wand & Sword**

**The world is in me, and I am in the world.**

**Biodh se amhlaidh**

*End by repeating the Kindling Charm*

## Concerning Hallowing

When we take up the methods of magic, it is proper to create a specific set of tools and support items, and set them aside as sacred to your work. The magician's tools and hallows should be kept only for magical rites, never used for common tasks, or for anything but your own magical workings. They are given a special magical blessing, called consecration, or hallowing.

Everything that is allowed to enter the Druid's Circle should receive a formal hallowing. This includes, of course, the major tools—the Hallows of Worship, the Wand and the Cauldron, your divination tools, etc. These tools should be given a strong hallowing then carefully put in a special place and kept only for the work. You need not bless them again for each working, as long as they are kept sacred. Smaller items—bowls for offerings, platters, cloths, cords, etc.—should be purified and blessed for each working, unless such a set can be set aside purely for magical use.

Simple consecration involves, first, purifying the object with a simple Fire and Water cleansing, and then placing a weaving of bua upon it. The laying of bua onto a purified object is done by the proper visualization and direction of the Two Powers, and by a proper Briocht. Bua is a word whose roots mean 'treasure.' We might employ the visualization of the flow of consecrating power as a 'washing' of the thing with Spirit Gold or Silver, or that secret Noble Metal which is neither and both, distilled and smelted from the Two Powers.

Greater Hallows should receive a more focused blessing, with a Briocht proper to the tool's meaning and power. The Hallows of Worship, the Coire and Slat, your divination tools, your raiment, whether a simple stola and torc or a more complete kit, should receive a proper permanent hallowing. These tools, at least, should be set aside in a private place, or on your shrine, and their use reserved for spiritual practice.

If we were to apply what we know of late Pagan and medieval magic to a Celtic model, we would inscribe our tools with symbols, letters and decorative motifs meant to focus and enhance their power. The use of physical decoration and inscription on the Gleasa brings the Power of Shaping into the work. This can be especially valuable for items that you have merely purchased, allowing you to personalize and claim the tool as your own.

Traditional societies often use their decorative arts in sacred and symbolic ways, so that artistic motifs on pots, clothing, houses, etc. have spiritual and magical power. Despite the richness of the Celtic decorative tradition, we have

no real hints of whether or how the Gaels understood their symbols in a spiritual or magical sense. In another section I have offered some methods of creating magical signs, and analyzed Celtic artistic motifs with an eye to their use in magic. Such ideas must always be measured against your own inspiration.

So, if you wish, you may design a set of signs for some or all of your tools, and inscribe or paint them as you are able. The Ogham or Runes may be used to inscribe lines of poetry from tradition or of your own composition.

Many students will assemble their set of tools slowly, as they work their way through the list. Each tool can be hallowed as it is completed. When you have completed your basic tool-kit, it can be a powerful thing to create a specific ceremony in which you bring them all together for a single rite of blessing the tools and empowerment of the self. Some students will enthusiastically complete a whole set, and be able to give it the initial hallowing in such a rite. Most will undertake a rite of empowerment as a kind of completion and fulfillment of the initial portion of training. I will offer only an outline of a rite of hallowing and empowerment—the work of creating it will help to produce a major part of the power that it will bring you.

### **A Simple Charm of Hallowing**

*The object is brought to the shrine, or into the circle.*

*Sprinkle the object with water from the Tobar. Cause the Deep Power to flow over and through it as you say:*

**By the holy Power of the Deep  
The Waters of the Dark, the secret Well,  
Be free of every ill or every bane  
Washed clean by magic's might, as I do will.**

*If you can, have an open flame in your Tintean, more than just a candle-flame. Make a large offering of incense, hold the object in the smoke, and fill it with the light of the Sky, as you say:*

**By the shining Power of the Sky  
The Fire of Magic, the Heaven's Light  
Let every ill or bane now flee away,  
By my word and will, and magic's might.**

*Bring the Two Powers into your hands, and take up the Wand (or take the object into your hands). Bring into your Cauldrons the substance smelted for the tool from your intention and your power. Pour this Spirit-Metal out from your Cauldrons, and see it flow through your wand (or hands) into the object. See the shining power flow through the form of the object; see*

*it shine in the glyphs or decoration.*

*Speak a Briocht proper to the tool, or use a version of this general charm:*

**Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones**

**Here is my** *(whatever)*

**Offered in service to the work of my own magic.**

**Let the Fire be bright in it**

**Let the Waters be deep in it**

**Let it be as the treasure of wisdom, of love, of power,**

**And may it** *(recite purpose and intention of tool)*

*Draw and invoking Triskelion over the object, saying:*

**By Fire, Well, and Tree**

**By Land, sky and Sea**

**By Gods, Dead, and Sidhe**

**By my word and by my will,**

**Bíodh se amhlaidh!**

*It is best to immediately use the object for its intended purpose, and then put it in its place on the shrine.*

## Concerning Purification

It is important for a magician to attend to her spiritual cleanliness. As you call out to the Otherworld, you may attract the attention of many sorts of beings. Even in a world that is whole and holy, there are dangers and ills that can be avoided with some precautions. A regular round of purification work should be part of your spiritual program.

The Otherworld is a reflection of and a template for the world of material nature. The forests and the deserts, the mountains and the seas all contain incomparable beauty, a wealth of resources and a variety of deadly dangers. Since we know that all things have a spirit, then disease, predators, mudslides, and whirlwinds must have their spirits as surely as an oak or a woodland pool.

Celtic story presents us with a variety of images of the dangers and impurities of the Otherworlds. Spirits that bring children to drown in pools; whirling clouds of panic and fear; the obsession that slays the artist, all the spiritual bacilli that infest, and predators that lurk, all these unseemly beings are noted in the lore.

In this matter, we are not discussing any ‘moral’ issue. It would be a distraction to think of these beings as ‘evil.’ Nature turns as it turns, and today’s hunter is hunted tomorrow, while the worms eat today’s victor in time. So we do not mean that you must be ‘purified of evil’ any more than we do when we wash our hands. While we may use the term in a charm or in common speech, we must remember that it is the evil of the wolf to the rabbit, or the rabbit to the grass.

The simple course of life exposes us constantly to the small dangers and pollutions of our spiritual environment. Human thought attracts the small beings of the Otherworld, who enjoy the spiritual atmospheres that we make for ourselves. When humans indulge in hatred, cruelty or despair, it creates a flow of spirits who thrive in such things. The spiritual agents of decay, of inflammation, and dysfunction are always present, as sleepless as rust. Just as we keep our bodies and homes physically clean, so we must maintain our magical hygiene as well.

As you begin your work in magic, you should work a round of personal purifications. The Ritual Bath formula should be used several times. Your regular shrine work should also include purification, either in the simple formula given in the script, or with the more complex one given below. Water dissolves and rinses away ill, while the smoke of fragrant herbs and gums carries the light

and heat of the Fire. The formula of Fire and Water purification is always to cleanse with water first, then to perfume with incense.

### **The Ritual Bath**

*On a night in the waxing of the moon, prepare a place where you can bathe your entire body. For most people this will be your own bathtub, but a lucky few may be able to find a natural place. On the edge of the bathing place, prepare three flames—candles will be sufficient. Prepare a strong infusion of herbs including vervain, St. John's wort, and mugwort, and allow it to cool, placing it your Coire. Fill your tub and come to the bath naked. Light the flames, with all other lights extinguished.*

*Make such Briocht as your skill allows, to hallow the water with power of spiritual and magical purification, as you pour in the potion. If you wish, you might use this charm:*

**I call to you, Being of Water, by the Fire and Water in me,  
By the Fire and Water that I bring,  
Let the Cauldron pour purification into this bath.  
Let the Firelight bring blessing into this bath.  
That in this bathing, I may be made clean!  
Let no evil here remain, free of every ill or bane  
Holding only good and gain.**

### **Bíodh se amhlaidh!**

*Step into the bath and immerse every part of yourself in the water. Rest in the bath a while, and allow your body and spirit to be refreshed. Call your Sphere of Fire and Water and feel yourself purged of spiritual dirt. Use a natural soap to wash your body. When you are finished, extinguish the candles into the bathwater.*

### **Purification by Fire and Water**

The consecrated Fire and Water of your Hallows can be used in a variety of purifications. When you are bringing any object into use on your home shrine or as a part of your personal magic, it should be cleansed of any bua that you have not laid yourself. Purification by Fire and Water will remove existing layers of bua that grow from the unknown history of objects.

*Sprinkle the object with water from the Tobar. Cause the Deep Power to flow over and through it as you say:*

**By the holy Power of the Deep  
The Waters of the Dark, the secret Well,  
Be free of every ill or every bane**

**Washed clean by magic's might, as I do will.**

*If you can, have an open flame in your Tintean, more than just a candle-flame. Make a large offering of incense, hold the object in the smoke, and fill it with the light of the Sky, as you say:*

**By the shining Power of the Sky**

**The Fire of Magic, the Heaven's Light**

**Let every ill or bane now flee away,**

**By my word and will, and magic's might.**

*Hold the object in your hands and open your vision-eye to its bri and bua, and when you are satisfied, say:*

**Bíodh se amhlaidh!**

This formula can be used in many kinds of cleansing. Your home, land, or vehicles can be cleansed by carrying first the Water, then the Fire around the interior or exterior, while incanting the charm. It can be applied as a gentle exorcism for a person or an animal, as part of a process of driving off spiritual infection.

## **Hallowing the Hallows**

When you have completed the creation of your Fire, Well, and Tree, you should give them a primary purification and attunement to the Two Powers and the Three Worlds. This offers a paradox, since you need Sacred Fire to hallow the Tintean and Holy Water to hallow the Tobar. So we turn to the use of signs, and the powers of natural things.

For the water you should seek to bring together waters from three different consecrated wells or pools. For those of us who live in the New World, this will be more difficult than for those in Ireland or the old country. If you are able, locate the headwaters of whatever river or stream is near your ritual place. If you have a Pagan community in your area, there may already be wells or pools that have been consecrated to the Gods. Even the ritual waters used in the 'wells' of public rites of Druidry can serve. Gather the waters in a waxing moon; combine them and set them aside.

For the Fire, you should obtain wood from at least three of the important Celtic symbolic trees. The ideal choices might be rowan for enchantment and protection, hazel for wisdom and inspiration and oak for strength and justice. If you mean to work out of doors you should gather enough dry wood to keep a small fire burning. You need not have equal amounts of the wood for the whole rite. The fire may, if necessary, be kindled with a small amount of the three woods, and then maintained with other wood.

If you must work indoors or without a functional fireplace, you will need to make a small fire out of fire-starter or other small fuel, kindled with tiny amounts of the three woods, or with the Kindling Incense. If you must use candle-fire, you may burn the Kindling Incense in the censer. If at all possible, try to work this Hallowing of the Hallows in a place where you can have a proper fire.

The Fire should be laid on the figure called the Feasting Hall of Lugh. If you wish you might write your name in Ogham on the lines of the sign. Draw the sign in flour, or by scratching into the soil. If you are working indoors, you might draw the sign on a tile, or fireproof platter, on which you set a small iron bowl separate from your Tintean.

The Water should be brought in a simple ceramic bowl, placed in the sign of the Triskelion drawn on the ground on or a tile or platter. You will need a piece of silver to offer to the Water.

The Fire and Water should be arranged in a place where you are welcome



and comfortable for ritual. The Hallows that are to be blessed—the Tintean, Tobar, and Craebh—Hearth, Cauldron, and Tree—should be present, clean, and ready, set on a cloth to one side. Prepare the work during the Waxing moon and, when all is ready, purify yourself by the Ritual Bath.

### **The Charm of Hallowing the Hallows**

*Begin by working the Two Powers attunement, and establish your Caber.*

*Lift the bowl of Water, and charge it with the Underworld Power. Say a Briocht as you are inspired, or say:*

**By the holy Power of the Deep; the Waters of the Dark, the secret Well,  
Be free of every ill or every bane; washed clean by magic's might, as I  
do will.**

*Place the bowl back on the triskel*

*Strike a single match and kindle the Fire, saying:*

**By the shining Power of the Sky; the Fire of Magic, the Heaven's Light  
Let every ill or bane now flee away; by my word and will, and magic's  
might.**

*Cleanse the three Hallows with the water and smoke, saying*

**By the might of the Waters and the Light of the Fire  
Be you cleansed and blessed! Be you made whole and holy!  
By my word and by my will, so be it!**

*Take up the bowl of water, and place the Tobar upon the triskelion. Pour the water into the Tobar while speaking a proper Briocht, such as:*

**You are the gate of the earth  
The deep way, the holy mouth  
Anu's cunny**

**Chorus: By the ladies of waters  
By the lords of waters  
By the powers under the earth  
I thank you for the sacred waters.**

**You are the eye of the earth  
Mirror of seeing, gate of visions  
Spring of wisdom (repeat chorus)**

**You are the mouth of the earth  
Sustainer of life, receiver of gifts**

### **Giver of blessings (repeat chorus)**

*Using a candle, transfer fire from the cleansing fire into the Tintean, placing the Hearth on the Hall of Lugh, speak as is proper, perhaps:*

**I kindle the sacred fire  
In the presence of the shining ones  
In the presence of the gods of fire  
In the presence of the goddesses of fire  
Without malice, without envy,  
Without jealousy, without fear,  
Without terror of anything under the sun  
And the holy son of the mother to shield me  
Oh sacrificed and sacrificer  
Kindle you in our hearts  
A flame of wit and heart and strength  
To bear my offerings and my words  
To the gods, the dead and the Sidhe  
Oh you who aid us all  
Friend and foe, high and low  
I call you to be in this Hearth  
And bring to me your blessing.**

*Place the Tree or Stone in its place between the Fire and Well, and conjure it with a proper Briocht, such as:*

**Rooted deep within the land, Crowned above the sky  
The tree is planted in my soul, to grow between the worlds.  
Bile, I name you, as of old, Center of All Things  
Boundary of boundaries, Hold fast my work, my soul, my Grove**

*Take a moment to contemplate the whole symbol of the Three Hallows together, and say:*

**The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree, Flow and flame and grow in me  
In Land, Sea and Sky, below and on high, thus are the Hallows  
claimed and hallowed!**

### **A Charm for Seeking Welcome**

When you wish to work magic in a place, or begin to be welcomed by the spirits of a natural locale, this charm can be of use. It is proper to begin by performing this Welcoming at your own dwelling, if you have not made the acquaintance of your local spirits, and for other places you frequent. It is always

well to have the welcome of the spirits of your own home.

*Prepare an offering of water from your own home, including a few drops taken from your own Tobar. It is proper to pour this offering from your Coire if possible, but even that formality can be discarded for an initial arrival. Take a divination tool, as well.*

*If possible, enter the area from the west; carefully survey the place, walking once deosil around it. Look for a spot in which you can be comfortable, and feel in place in the landscape.*

*Open your Eye of Vision according to your ability, and offer the water in three pourings, speaking a Briocht as your skill allows, or use a charm such as this:*

**The world is in me, and I am in the world**

**The Spirit in me is the Spirit in the world.**

**To you, place of beauty, place of honor,**

**To you** *(name and describe place)*

**I bring this offering in peace.**

**From the Deep in me to the Deep in you**

**From my Fire to your Fire**

**A gift of honor, a gift of worship**

**In hope of your welcome**

**That there be peace between us**

**In all things**

**Bíodh se amhlaidh!**

*After you have poured three times, and spoken, stay for a while with your Eye of Vision open. Take an omen to determine whether the spirits of the place have accepted you. If the answer is no, then you must depart, and perhaps try another day. If the answer is yes, then you may proceed to other works in that place.*

This charm can also be used to address things that you hope to be allowed to use, such as a tree from which you seek wand-wood, or a stream from which you seek stones. In that case the scope of the charm is narrowed from a whole area to the specific thing, and the offering poured to that thing in particular. If the omen is good, then you may take the item.

## Concerning the Magician's Name

It is the business of the magician to gather personal spiritual power. It is by increasing our personal spiritual strength, love, and wisdom, our cleverness, compassion, and vision, that we become able to work our will in the worlds. It is by that will that we make alliances with the other beings of the worlds, for our own good and for the good of all. In Celtic Magic we think of spiritual power as *bri* and *bua*—the innate abilities of a thing, and the power that is gathered and stored. It is the magician's business to develop her *bri* and build her trove of *bua*. One of the most effective means of doing so is the creation of a consciously and personally constructed personality. This new persona is grown around a new personal name, which is taken in secret, usually in some ritual of initiation. In western magic this method has been called 'the Magical name' or 'the Magical Persona.' In Irish we might call it the *Fein Draoi*—the Magical Self. The seed and core of the *Fein Draoi* is the *Ainm*—the Name. The magician chooses a new name, by which he will be known among the spirits, and to such mortals as know it.

The tradition of taking a new name in times of spiritual change is widespread and complex. Many exoteric religions provide occasions for the taking of new names, including the taking of saints' names among those baptized in some Christian churches, and the giving of names to those who receive Hindu initiations. Entry into more devoted religious orders often requires a new name as well. Some tribal religions give adults new names upon entry into tribal adulthood. It seems clear that names in the Pagan world were not as fixed as our modern bureaucratic age has demanded. Most Pagan cultures have many examples of multiple personal names, such as the Roman 'cognomen.'

Among accounts of the Irish Druids there is an interesting pattern. The names of Druids are very seldom given patronymics—that is, they are not 'someone, son of someone' as is usual for other characters. They are often clearly symbolic titles, such as the famous *Mog Ruith*, whose name is translated 'Slave of the Wheel.' The lack of familial (and therefore tribal) markers in Druidic names might remind us of the Druidic privilege of crossing tribal boundaries. Perhaps Druids, in order to gain this power and permission, renounced their claims to specific family names, rights, and obligations.

Traditional magic offers us three main reasons that magicians might take new and/or secret names. The first and most obvious is secrecy—the use of a

secret spiritual name allows the magician to conceal her spiritual life and identity from those who might do her harm—especially those in the spirit worlds. Some Pagans choose new names to use publicly, concealing their ‘given’ name within it. A more important use for the technique is to take a new name only secretly, so that it becomes the seed of a new identity, for which one’s given name becomes a mere mask.

The second purpose for a Magical name is that very process of self-creation. The taking of a new name, one that replaces the one given by parents, is a sovereign symbol of the work of building the Fein Draoi. When you take control of your name, you begin to take control of yourself. It is often said in magic that to know the true name of a being or thing is to have magical power over it. When you work magic to take a new name as your own true name, you deny that control to all who have previously held it. You take control of your own spirit, your own life.

A third use for the Magical name is as a banner and a sign upon which to build your authority among spiritual beings. The Ainm becomes a battery, a vessel to contain the bua gathered by your sorceries. When you act ‘in your own name’ you draw on all of that gathered power. In this way you become able to act among the spirits not only by the authority of your spiritual allies, but also by your own Da Fein—the God of Myself.

It is not going too far to say that the magician seeks to become, in herself, a mythic being. By taking a unique spiritual title, you give presence to your own Da Fein among the spirits. In time your deeds, your skill, and your style can combine to become known and respected in the magical worlds. When modern people look back at Pagan cultures, it is simple to find famous warriors who have become heroes, nearly or functionally deified. The filters of mandatory monotheism have made it more difficult to see the same heroic apotheosis among the ancient wise ones. Tales do, however, survive that make some of the ancient wise into godlike figures. The tales of the Munster Druid, Mog Ruith, are among the most notable. When you take a Magician’s Name you begin, in a small way, to make yourself such a hero.

A Druid, a magician, is not a normal human being. To attempt to take control of your world, to act as a personal willed agent in the spiritual realms, requires mental attitudes and life practices that will inevitably set the Druid apart from those who live only common lives. One of the core symbols of this difference is the renunciation of the name which you have worn from your birth

in favor of a name that embodies your own self-power. If the idea of setting aside the name given you by your family is disturbing to you, then you have found a first obstacle to becoming a power in the world. Just as the body resists even the simple discipline of motionless, breath-centered meditation, so the personality resists the efforts of the will to take control over even such a simple thing as the Name.

On the other side of the coin, the technique of the *Ainm Draoi* brings the risk of inflaming the common personal ego. If you make the mistake of assuming that the simple act of taking the Name confers upon you the mythic status we've discussed, you will only begin your work in magic as a fool. You begin as a new-made knight, your wand fresh, and your cauldron shiny. Only the long road and real deeds will develop your *bri* and build a trove of *bua*. It is the mastery of your potentials and the careful acquisition of power that allow you to grow into your Name's strength. In the meantime, a wise balance between earned pride and a sensible humility should be kept.

All of this leads me to recommend that you choose to keep your Magician's Name a secret. At first you should keep your Name entirely to yourself, as you begin to build your work. You may choose to share it with a partner in magical work, or with a life-mate, but be very sure that such confidants will treat the name with the utmost respect. For a long time, the name should not be spoken outside of a specifically magical or sacred environment, perhaps in the light of a sacred fire. As you begin your work, the *Fein Draoi* is tender and young—it must be shielded from fools, from failure, and from all ignorant eyes and ears.

Choosing a Magician's Name is one of the more difficult of the simple tasks of magical preparation. Much has been written about a process that is, in the end, totally subjective. Some magical orders ask members to choose 'mottoes'—whole phrases from lore or scripture—as personal names. There is a tradition of taking the name of a famous magician of history or of one's lineage or tradition. Modern Pagans often take names based on various animal or natural symbols, a tradition that can easily be translated into Irish or other Celtic languages. Of course Gaelic and British culture, tales, history, and traditions provide long lists of possible names.

The process of choosing the Name could involve study, contemplation, perhaps formal divination and certainly an open eye for omens and auguries in the world around you. You seek for ideas, symbols, beings, and history that resonate strongly in your mind and emotions. Quick or slow, sudden inspiration

or gradual conviction, the decision for a specific name comes at its own pace, but almost always accompanied by omens and coincidences. It should not be rushed, or reduced to the arbitrary.

It is useful to design a ritual for the formal adoption of the Name. Such a ritual should be very personal, perhaps unique, though it can be embedded in some larger Druidic working. The degree of complexity, Deities invoked, etc., is at your discretion. If and when you have completed the work of the Three Allies, those beings should be called to witness the Naming, and perhaps be the first to hail you by your *Ainm Draoi*.

Once you have taken a Name, you will begin to use it to build your authority and ability among the spirits. Just as a warrior would stand before his foes and recite his deeds and lineage, making his boast, so you should develop your own statement of your spiritual lineage—your *Druid's Boast*. The magician does not base his work on family or blood lineage. Instead you must compose a *Briocht* or *ran* (rhetorical conjuration) that is, in essence, an expression of your personal power and history and authority. Beginning with your name, you might add connections to the Land from which you draw power, names of your allies (with their permission), deeds and history, as you develop them. Such a *Briocht* will change as you grow in power and deeds. You must be careful to speak only the truth, never allowing poetic characterization to become mere exaggeration. The power of truth combined with the power of beautiful speech is what makes a *Briocht* of this (or any) sort effective.

It can also be useful to render the name and any other relevant personal symbols as sigils or visual symbols of some sort. These symbols can be employed on various tools and hallows—wand, brat or stola, etc. Again they should be kept obscure and personal, their meaning concealed from others.

In this and all the other work of the *Fein Draoi*, the *Magical Self*, your goal is to make your own name a name to conjure with!



## Part Three



## The Book of Sacrifices

### **A Druidic Order of Ritual**

### **As Practiced In Many Groves In The Early 21st Century**

This Order of Ritual, and the Simple Offering that follows it, is a core Druidic ritual form, as developed by Isaac Bonewits, Ian Corrigan, and other Druidic ritualists. It is formal and complete, proper for full sacrifices, and especially for group worship. Some rituals in this book will be presented in this format, while others will be given in the more personal format of Druidic magic that follows. In fact, even the sorcerous forms follow this outline, in simplified form.

### **0: Preliminary Rites**

#### **A) Claiming and Hallowing the Sacred Space**

**The Priest/esses light the fire and bless the other elements for the rite,**

declaring the area 'claimed' for their work.

**B) Preliminary Meditation**

A Bard explains the rite to the assembled folk then leads a simple meditation for the occasion.

**I: The Procession and Opening Prayers**

**A) Musical Signal and Call to the Grove**

The Bard leads the company into the Nemeton in a procession.

**A1) Optional: Purification of the Folk as they enter the Grove**

**B) Opening Prayer**

**C) Earth Mother Offering**

**D) Optional: Prayer for Inspiration**

**II: Opening the Grove**

**A) The Grove Attunement: A grounding and centering to attune to Earth and Sky and join the energies of the folk for the rite**

**B) Statement of Purpose and Historical Precedent: Description of Patron Deities of the rite**

**C) Optional: Purification of the Folk, in two parts:**

**C1) Offering to the Outdwellers: An offering to those powers that might otherwise disrupt the rite.**

**C2) Cleansing by Smoke and Water**

**D) Honoring the Sacred Center: Acknowledging / attuning to the Sacred Fire, the Sacred Waters, and the World Tree**

**E) Optional: Acknowledging / Attuning to the Land, Sea, and Sky, or the Four Winds**

**F) Opening the Gate(s): An offering is made to the Gatekeeper deity, and the Gate is conjured to be open**

**III: Offering to the Powers**

**A) Triad Offerings**

**Offering to the Nature Spirits, Ancestors and Deities (or)**

**A1) Offering to helpful beings in each of the Three Worlds (or)**

**A2) Offering to helpful beings by province or function**

**(Type and number varies by ethnic cosmologies)**

**B) Key Offerings**

**B1) Descriptive Invocations of and offerings to the Patron Powers of the Rite.**

**B2) Praise Offerings: Performances by the folk in honor of the**

## **Powers**

**C) Prayer of Sacrifice**

**D) Taking the Omen**

**Determining the type of blessing offered by the Powers in return for the Sacrifices**

## **IV: The Blessing**

**A) Meditation on the Omen and on group and personal needs**

**B) Calling for the Blessing**

**Group induction of receptivity**

**C) Hallowing the Waters**

**D) Receiving the Blessing**

**The folk drink, and meditate on the acceptance of the Blessing**

**E) Optional: Work**

**Spellcasting or Rite of Passage**

## **V: Closing and Ending**

**A) Affirmation of Success**

**B) Thanking the Powers in reverse order**

**C) Re-grounding and Centering and balancing of excess energy**

**D) Closing the Gates**

**E) Final Blessing and announcement of ending**

**Closing musical signal**

## **The Shrine Sacrifice**

### **A Simple Rite of Offering**

This rite is especially proper for the worship of the patron deities of one's household, but it may be used to entreat any of the three Kindreds—gods and goddesses, dead, or nature spirits. It can also be used as a preliminary rite in which the priest or priestess makes offerings to those powers that will preside at a larger work.

You should have your Shrine completed, and a comfortable seat before it, located so that you can reach the work area. **Materials Needed:** Small bell, fire-pot, or candle & censer with incense (the Tinteann—'hearth'), cauldron with blessed water (the Coire Tobar, or Tobar—'well'), world tree symbol or wand or staff set up as a pillar (Bile—'tree'), images of patron deities, a horn or cup for pouring and drinking, an offering bowl before the Fire if the rite is indoors, offerings (corn meal, silver, incense, olive oil or essential oil) ale for offering and drinking, and a tool with which to take an omen. The oil might be kept in a vial,

from which small offerings are poured, but it is slightly more traditional to use a bowl of oil and a spoon or small ladle to give it to the fire. If one uses incense, then powdered incense spooned on to charcoal gives the same feel. Non-burnable offerings are made into the offering bowl, which is emptied into earth after the rite.

### **The Rite**

Give nine knells on a bell, or other signal, enter basic trance, and bring the Two Powers into yourself. Use the Kindling Charm if you wish. Then say:

**I am here to honor the gods. Be with me, Oh Shining Ones, in my working; forgive any errors, and grant me, I pray, your blessing.**

*Open your awareness to the land on which your Shrine is seated, envision the Earth Mother in whatever way is true for you. Offer a pinch of corn meal into the offering bowl, saying:*

**Earth Mother, I am your child. Mother of all, accept this offering and bless my rite.**

Place your hands on your heart and open to the light of inspiration, saying:

**Power of Inspiration, attend the shrine of my soul. Quicken my tongue that I may work this rite in beauty.**

State the purpose of the rite, saying:

**I have come to do as the wise ancients did, to make offering to the powers and to (state purpose). So be it!**

See the Deep Power filling the Coire Tobar. Offer silver into the cauldron, saying:

**In the deeps flow the waters of wisdom. Sacred well, flow within me.**

Light the fire and incense make a small offering of oil. See the Bright Power shining in the Tinteann. Make an offering to the Fire, saying:

**I kindle the sacred fire in wisdom, love and power. Sacred fire, burn within me.**

Sprinkle and cense the world-tree, wand or self, saying:

**From the deeps to the heights spans the world-tree. Sacred tree, grow within me.**

Sprinkle everything with sacred water, and cense all with incense from the Fire, saying: See the Deep Power flowing in the whole Shrine washing away ill, and repeat three times:

**By the might of the Water and the light of the Fire, this Shrine is made whole and holy.**

Spread your hands, and encompass the whole shrine in your awareness, saying:

**Let the sea not rise, and all ill turn away.**

**Let the sky not fall and all ill turn away.**

**Let the land hold firm and all ill turn away.**

Contemplate the three worlds and the Shrine, saying:

**The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree, flow and flame and grow in me! In Land, Sea, and Sky, below and on high! Thus is the Sacred Grove claimed and hallowed. So be it!**

Offer oil or incense to the fire, saying:

**I make this offering to the Keeper of the Gates. Gatekeeper, Lord of the Between, Keeper of Roads and Opener of Ways, join your magic with mine to guard and ward the gate of this working. Gatekeeper, accept my sacrifice!**

Make an Opening Triskel or spiral over the Tinteann, saying:

**Now let this sacred center be the boundary of all worlds,**

**Let the Fire open the Gate; let the Well open the Gate**

**Let the Tree hold fast the Way Between.**

**By the Keeper of Gates, and by my Will and Word, let the Gate be open!**

Fill the horn or cup with ale and raise it, saying:

**Gods and Dead and mighty Sidhe, Powers of Land and Sky and Sea,**

**By Fire and Well and sacred Tree, offerings I make to thee!**

**To those who dwell below, to those who dwell above,**

**To the tribes of spirits in land, sea or sky.**

**Hear your true worshipper (*your name*) as I make due sacrifice.**

**Old ones, my ancestors, remember me as I remember you!**

**Ancestors, accept my sacrifice!**

Pour a quarter of the ale into the bowl. Raise the horn again, saying:

**Spirits of this land, Aid me as I aid you!**

**Spirits accept my sacrifice!**

Pour a quarter of the ale into the bowl. Raise the horn a third time, saying:

**Gods and goddesses of elder days honor me as I honor you!**

**Shining Ones, accept my sacrifice!**

Pour a quarter of the ale into the bowl and set the horn aside.

Open your heart to the assembled Kindreds, and say:

**Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones, be welcome at my Fire! So be it!**

Make offerings to the patron powers of the rite, as explained in the liturgical notes.

Finally, offer the last of the ale and make an offering of oil to the fire. Now is the time to speak a heartfelt prayer, asking the spirits, especially the patrons of the rite, to grant their blessing, and aid in the goal of the rite. It might include:

**Let my voice arise on the flame**

**Let my voice resound in the well**

**Oh honored ones, (insert names of the patrons)**

**Hear me now as I offer up this sacrifice.**

**Accept my worship and reverence.**

**Grant (*state purpose*) and give me your blessing!**

Take up your divining tool of choice and meditate on the patrons and on the intention of this rite. Cast for a simple omen. Meditate on the omen; seek to understand what blessings the powers offer in return for the sacrifice. Then, compose of all this—the image, the intention, and the omen—into a single gestalt of energy.

Refill the horn and breathe the combined energy current into the drink saying:

**I pour the ale of inspiration; I draw water from the well of wisdom**

**I call upon (*patron powers*) to give to me as I have given to you, as a gift calls for a gift.**

**Oh (*Patron Powers*), hallow these waters!**

**I open my heart to the flow of your blessing, I, your child and worshipper.**

**Behold the waters of life!**

Reverently drink the ale, perhaps sprinkling any object to be consecrated in the work as well. Meditate on the influx of magical current.

If you have any remaining work, such as spells in pursuit of the intention, they should be completed at this time.

When all is done, give thanks, saying:

**Shining Ones, Mighty Dead, Noble Spirits**

**I thank you for your aid and blessing.**

**(*Patron powers*), I give you my thanks!**

**Triple Kindreds, Gods, Dead, and Land spirits:**

**I thank you for upholding my magic.**

Make a closing triskel over the Tinteann.

**Lord of the gates, lord of knowledge, I give you my thanks.**

**Now let the Fire be flame, the Well be water,  
Let all be as it was before, save for the magic I have made  
Let the Gates be closed!**

Re-center and contemplate the entire working, and end, saying:

**To the Mother I give thanks,  
forever upholding my life and my work.  
The fire, the well and the tree  
Flow and flame and grow in me!  
Peace and blessings, the rite is ended!**

### **The Inner Work of the Simple Offering**

In any work of Priest/ess craft and Magic (i.e. Draiocht—Druidry), the words and the actions of the rite must be reflected in the thoughts and attention of the offerer. Most commonly this is done through a series of visualizations. Through concentrated control of the faculty of mental imaging, the Magician directs and concentrates the combined energies of Earth and Sky, allowing clearer communication with the God/desses and Spirits. Here is a sequence of inner work for the Simple Offering.

- 1. Grounding and Centering:** One of the key techniques of modern Magic is the opening to the flow of Earth and Sky energies and the control and direction of those energies in the body. Find your basic trance, and attune yourself to the Two Powers. While this vision (really a tactile imagining) will fade somewhat as awareness is directed toward the rite, it should be frequently renewed.
- 2. The knells,** or knocks, on the ground, Tree, or bell, signal the formal beginning of the work. In all ritual speech, the voice should be simple and clear, graceful and unaffected. The words must be accompanied by real emotion. The attention must be on the content of the speech, not on the cares of outer life. When we are ‘here to honor the Gods,’ we lay aside emotional attachments for a time, in exchange for the love and honor of the Powers.
- 3. The Earth Mother:** receives the first offering, for She is the upholder of all mortal work. The All-Mother of the Patron’s pantheon is visualized, or seen in the surrounding land, and offering is made.

**Establishing the Grove:** These three steps recreate the central Powers of our Magic, and prepare the Grove to receive greater Powers.

4. **The Well:** A cauldron of water represents all the Waters under the Earth. The Well is our connection with the Underworld, the source of all potential nourishment. We offer precious metal back to the giver of all wealth.
5. **The Fire:** The Sacred Fire represents the Light of the Sky. Its flames carry our call upward, receive sacrifices, and are a source of blessing from the activating, transforming power.
6. **The Tree:** The Tree is seen as the Pillar of the Worlds, the World-Tree. By it, both we and the Spirits move between the Worlds. The Tree is always identified with the Offerer's spine, as well as whatever ritual symbol is used.
7. **Purifying the Grove:** As water is drawn from the Cauldron in sprinkling the Earth, Power is visualized as the flowing over the Grove or Altar and all, washing away all ill. As the Incense conveys the Fire, the Sky Power is seen brightening and revealing, and burning away all ill.

*Optional Step:* At this time, the Three Realms of Land, Sea and Sky may be acknowledged by anointing with incense, water and salt or soil while visualizing the Three turning around the World- Tree.

8. **Claiming:** The Offerer renews her center and builds the vision of the Grove:

**Well:** flowing deep in the roots of the Tree and in the loins of the worshipper.

**Fire:** burning all around the Tree, and in the head of the worshipper.

**Tree:** the Two Powers flow between via the Tree, and in the body of the worshipper.

The Earth holds firm as the sky transforms. The Fire's light claims the Grove for the offering as the Well's depths give nourishment.

Around the axle, the three realms of Land, Sea and Sky, can be imagined as though they were a triskelion wheel.

By firmly realizing this vision and by the clear proclamation, the grove is claimed for the offerer's magic.

9. **Statement of Purpose:** This is actually an extension of the claiming, in which the purpose of the work is announced.
10. **The Gate Spell:** completes the connection between the Grove's symbols—Fire, Well, and Tree—and their Otherworld reality. The Well is visualized as fully deepened into the underworld, the Fire as a blossom springing through a rent in our space, and the Staff, or the offerer's spine, as a fully grounded World-Tree. The Gatekeeper deity is visualized overlooking and



supporting the gate and receiving his or her due offering.

11. **Preliminary Offerings:** The priest/ess now makes offering to the broad categories of spirits who support the worlds and our work. In every case, offering should be freely given, of (at least modestly) valuable substance.
12. **The Three Kindreds:** All Otherworld beings fall into the categories of Gods, the Dead, and the Sidhe or Nature Spirits. When we pour offerings to them, we visualize the whole crowd of beings drawn toward the light of our fire, to join in honoring the rite's patron powers.  
**If the offerer is an experienced magician, who has personal contacts among the Kindreds (i.e. the animal-spirit allies, teachers among the dead, patron deities, etc.), they are called to her aid through these offerings.**
13. **Offerings to the Patrons of the Rite:** This may be very individual to the Deity, or may follow a general pattern, for example:
  - A. **Contemplation of the Deity's Image:** If possible, an actual image or symbol of the Power should be present. In any case, a detailed visualization of the Deity form is established.
  - B. **Recitation of Hymn or Invocation:** Traditional words are good, as is original poetry. It should include description, praise and calling.
  - C. **Quickening of the Image:** The visualized image is drawn into the offerer's heart using the breath, and then breathed into the altar image.
  - D. **The Offering:** This must be proper to the Power invoked: flowers, foods, herbs, oils, images, stones, etc. are given to the Fire and Offering bowl along with praises and/or beseechings.
14. **Prayer of Sacrifice:** The offerer gathers up all her love of the Patron Powers, and all her desire for her goal, and offers it along with the final offerings through the fire and well. This prayer should also include a clear statement of the purpose of the work, asking the powers to grant the boon.
15. If you have any remaining work, such as spells in pursuit of the intention, they should be completed at this time.
16. **The Blessing:** The offerer contemplates the omen, and his desire and the energized images of the Patron Powers. He opens himself to a ray of blessing from the Patron Powers and conceives that blessing as manifest in the ale as it is poured. As the ale is drunk, the offerer focuses his attention on his goal or purpose, seeing it as already accomplished. He feels an influx of joy and love along with the ale.

- 17. Using the Power:** With the power of the blessings, the priest/ess now performs any further magical work in pursuit of her goal. If she herself is the target, the drinking of the blessing can be enough to achieve the purpose. If the working is aimed at another (distant healing, for instance), this is the time to work whatever spells are planned. Trance Journeys, devotional meditation, etc, are all proper at this time.
- 18. Closing:** It is of utmost importance to give thanks for the help of the God/desses and spirits. Thanks are given first to the patron powers. This can include the final offering to fire or well. When all have been thanked, the magician then declares the gates closed and sees the earth and sky powers receding from the cauldron and fire. He renews center, then allows awareness of the powers to fade from awareness. She then declares the rite ended.

### **A Group Rite of Offering**

*The Sacred Grove is arranged as described. The celebrants hallow the Grove; the Fire is lit, the Well is filled, the Tree is blessed.*

### **Grove Attunement**

The Druids lead a meditation intended to attune the company to the Earth and Sky powers and to join the company in spirit. This might conclude with an invitation to come into the Grove.

### **Procession**

With singing, arrive and circle the hallows deosil. The Druids complete the sigil, and then give the opening prayers.

### **Opening Prayers**

Druid says:

**We are here to Honor the Gods! Ancient powers, look upon our rite  
with favor, we pray you, and grant us your blessing!**

### **Earth Mother**

All kneel and kiss the earth. The Chief speaks as the Sacrificer makes an offering of grain, bread or flour:

**O beloved Mother of All  
From whose starry womb the green earth springs  
You who are the bearer of all life  
We pray you bless and uphold this rite.**

*All: Mother of all, accept our offering!*

### **Awen**

The Bard invokes, saying:

**Power of inspiration that attends us  
Voice of the fire of wisdom,  
Voice of the well of inspiration  
Come into our hearts' shrine  
Let us ken of every good or ill,  
Guide our rite in the way of truth  
So be it!**

### **Outdwellers**

An offering is made to the south of the Grove, saying:

**Ancient dark ones, we make this offering to you.  
You, whose striving with the Gods made the worlds  
Horrible or lovely, all beings who might stand against this working,  
Take this offering and trouble not our working.  
Likewise we acknowledge in ourselves  
Weakness and perversity, hatred and spite,  
Cowardice and ignorance, and all that might separate us from the  
Gods.  
We contemplate these ills and enemies  
And for this sacred time we set them aside!**

**Statement of Purpose and Precedent** *(as required by the rite)*

### **Fire, Well, and Tree**

Druids or members of the grove make offerings to the Sacred Center. Silver is offered to the well, saying:

**O sacred waters that flow and swirl beneath all being,  
Accept our offering!  
Let us know the elder depths within ourselves  
The source of all, the well of elder wisdom  
Sacred Well, flow within us!**

*All: Sacred well, flow within us!*

An offering of oil is made to the Fire, saying:

**O sacred fire that consumes and transforms  
True and holy light of the shining ones  
Accept our offering! O sacrificed and sacrificer**

**Let holy flame warm our spirits and our lives.**

**Sacred Fire, burn within us!**

*All: Sacred fire, burn within us!*

The Bile is censed and sprinkled, saying:

**O sacred pillar, boundary of all worlds,**

**Stand at the center of the sky, stand at the center of the sea,**

**Stand at the center of the land on which we dwell.**

**Let us be deepened in your depths, raised to your heights,**

**Strengthened in your strength**

**Sacred Tree, grow within us!**

*All: Sacred tree, grow within us!*

### **Purification**

Druids draw water from the Well and light a censer from the Fire. They quickly cense and asperse the company, while the company intones or chants:

**By the Might of the Water and the Light of the Fire,**

**This Grove is made whole and holy.**

### **Opening The Gates**

The sacrificer makes an offering to Manannan, saying:

**O Manannan, Lord of the Gates, Lord of Wisdom, open the ways for us. We walk in your holy ways, we walk the Sacred Road. Share your magic with us, ward us as we walk in safety.**

**Manannan mac Lir, accept our sacrifice!**

An offering of oil is given to the Fire. The Druid then conjures the Gates, making an opening triskel on the Fire and Well, saying:

**Now, lord of ways, join your magic with mine and let the fire open as a gate, let the well open as a gate, let the tree be the crossroads of all worlds. Open as a road to our voices and to the spirits. Let the gates be open!**

*All: Let the gates be open!*

### **Kindred Offerings:**

The druids make proper offerings to each of the kindreds, standing at the fire.

#### **Ancestors**

**The children of the earth call out to the mighty dead.**

**Hear us, our ancestors, our kindred.**

**To all of those whose bones lie in this land, whose hearts are tied to it, whose memory holds it; ancient tribes of this place, we offer you**

welcome.

To all of our grandmothers and grandfathers, our own beloved dead, blood-kin and heart-kin; ancient tribes of our blood, we offer you welcome.

To all those elder wise ones who guide their people, poets and seers, judges and magicians; wise women and men of ancient days, we offer you welcome. So, o mighty ones, we call to you as our kin, in the love of the all-mother, to join in our magic. Come to our fire, spirits; meet us at the boundary. Guide and ward us as we walk the elder ways.

**Ancestors, accept our sacrifice!**

(An offering of food and/or drink is made onto the ground or into a shaft)

### **Nature Spirits**

The children of earth call out to the spirits of this land.

Hear us, companions and teachers.

To all our allies, kindreds of stone and stream, crystal and fertile soil, pools and every water; kins of the earth, we offer you welcome.

To all our allies, kindreds of the growing green, herb and flower, shrub and mighty trees, root and stem and fruit. Green kins, we offer you welcome.

To all our allies, kindreds of fur and feather and scale, all who walk or fly or swim or crawl, we offer you welcome.

So, o noble ones, we call to you as our allies, in the joy of life upon earth, to join in our magic. Come to our fire, spirits; meet us at the boundary. Guide and ward us as we walk the elder ways.

**Land-spirits, accept our sacrifice!**

(An offering of herbs, flowers and/or trinkets is scattered around the nemeton's edge or hung on the tree)

### **Deities**

The children of earth call out to the shining ones.

Hear us, eldest and brightest.

To all the shining ones, first children of the mother, wisest and mightiest, loving and comforting; gods and goddesses, we offer you welcome.

To the gods and goddesses of this place, ancient and powerful, known to us or unknown; gods of this place, we offer you welcome.

To all the deities of those here gathered, you whom we worship, you

who bless our lives; patrons and matrons, we offer you welcome.

So, O shining ones, we call to you as our elders, in reverence and love, to join in our magic. Come to our fire, shining ones; meet us at the boundary, guide and ward us as we walk the elder ways.

**Deities, accept our sacrifice!**

(An offering of scented oil is poured on the fire)

After all the offerings have been made, the druids re-center the company and lead an attunement to all the spirits that have been called, and a proper chant or hymn is sung to the three kindreds.

### **Key Offerings**

(Offerings to the Gods and spirits proper to the rite)

### **Sacrifice and Omen**

The druids prepare the final offerings and say:

**So we have given of our love and our wealth to \_\_\_\_\_. Now let our voices arise on the fire, let our voices sound in the well let our words pass the boundary to the otherworlds. O lord, O lady, we give you our love, our respect, our devotion as we pray you...**

*All: (Powers of the rite), accept our sacrifice!*

All are led to send their energy through the gates to the powers, meditating on the deities and the nobles. Then druid speaks:

**Having prayed to the powers, let us open to them, asking what blessings they offer us in return.**

Omen is taken as usual. The seer then interprets the omen, leading the company to contemplate the things they would ask of the powers, especially as suggested by the omen. Company re-centers in preparation for the blessing.

### **The Blessing**

#### **Calling for the Blessing**

Druid speaks:

**Ancient and mighty ones we have honored you.**

**We pray you honor us in turn, for a gift calls for a gift. Hear your children...**

*All: Shining ones, give us the waters!*

**We thirst for the waters of wisdom, of bounty, of rebirth from the well of wisdom, from the spring of renewal, from the bosom of the earth mother. Hear us...**

*All: Shining ones, give us the waters!*

We open our hearts to the great ones blessing. We stand in pride, honor and friendship with all the powers of the worlds. Hear and answer us now...

*All: Shining ones, give us the waters!*

### **Hallowing the Waters:**

Ale is poured into the horns and elevated. Druid speaks:

**We draw blessing from the cauldron of blessing.**

**We pour the ale of inspiration.**

**Behold the holy cup of magic,**

**The outpouring of blessing from the mighty ones.**

**When we share the draught of the gods we drink in wisdom, love, and strength to do as we will in the worlds, in service to the shining ones.**

**Hear us O (*Patron Powers*); hallow these waters!**

**We, your children, rejoice in your gift. Bless our spirits and our lives with love, magic, and bounty as we drink these sacred waters.**

**Behold the Waters of Life!**

*All: Behold the waters of life!*

The horns are passed and all drink as a proper hymn is sung.

### **Works**

(if and as needed)

### **Final Blessings**

(as proper to the rite)

### **Closing**

When all is done, the druids lead a resettling, and then begin to close the grove, saying:

**The mighty ones have blessed us.**

**With joy in our hearts let us carry the magic from our sacred grove into our lives and work.**

**Each time we offer to the powers, they become stronger and more aware of our needs and our worship.**

**So now as we prepare to depart, let us give thanks to those who have aided us.**

**O (*patron powers*), We thank you!**

*All: We thank you!*

**O gods and goddesses of elder days, We thank you!**

*All: We thank you!*

**O spirits of this land, We thank you!**

*All: We thank you!*

**O ancestors, our kindred, We thank you!**

*All: We thank you!*

**To all those powers that have aided us, we say again...We thank you!**

*All: We thank you!*

The druids go to the center, bearing the wand. They speak:

**O Gatekeeper, warder of the ways, for your presence and power,  
your guiding and guarding, we say...We thank you!**

*All: We thank you!*

Druid makes the closing sign over the hallows with the wand, saying:

**Now by the keeper of gates and by our magic, we end what we began.**

**Now let the fire be flame**

**Let the well be water;**

**Let all be as it was before.**

**Save for the Blessing that we have received...**

**Let the gates be closed!**

*All: Let the gates be closed!*

Druids renew the company's centering once more, signaling the return to common awareness and ease of access to the centered state. Then any unused offerings, return flow, incense, water etc. is given to the earth, saying:

**Mother of all, to you we return all we leave unused.**

**Uphold us now in the world as you have in our rite.**

**We thank you!**

*All: We thank you!*

**Go now, children of the earth, in peace and blessings. The rite is ended!**

Further notes on group performance:

Many portions of this rite can be taken by several members of the company in addition to the main clergy. The Triad Offerings, the Litany of the Waters, and other portions can be assigned to willing members.

This rite is perhaps best for full seasonal offerings, as on the Holy Days. For these works, proper Deities and traditional customs are worked in throughout. Most seasonal customs are most proper as part of the Key



Offerings and/or the Blessing.

For some rites, members of the company can be asked to make personal offerings of song, art, or whatever, after the key offerings and before the Prayer of Sacrifice. These are called Praise Offerings.

For larger rites, again, the company might process into the Nemeton, and be greeted by the Priest/esses who have claimed the Grove.

Notes on the ritual scripts:

The scripts that follow are meant to be used in conjunction with the Script for group ritual given above. Each of the seasonal rites gives only those parts that vary from the main outline.

These scripts should not be treated as scripture. They are, we hope, inspired, but certainly not unchangeable. I hope that the reader will feel free to use these ideas, but also to make changes and new arrangements, as their understanding allows.

## **The Rite of Samhain**

### **Feast of the Dead**

The Night before November 1st, or midway between Fall Equinox and Winter Solstice, or full moon of November.

Samhain is the first and, in some ways, most important of the great Celtic feasts. It is remembered throughout the Celtic territories as the end and the beginning of the year's cycle, and a time when the gates between the worlds stand open. In the agricultural year, Samhain is the season during which herds of cattle were culled. A few were kept for breeding stock while many were butchered to sustain the clans through the winter. Thus the season between Samhain and Midwinter was a time of feasting and plenty.

The change from the light to dark half of the year meant that the powers of the spirit world were especially active. Common folk considered the night of Samhain a time to keep to their halls and seek the protection of the God/desses as they enjoyed the bounty of the passing year. Some tales tell of raiders from the Otherworld who every year burn the hall of Erin's king.

Of course the feast of Samhain was Christianized as the feast of All Saints and All Souls by the church in the Middle Ages. It is commonly assumed that this reflects a Pagan custom of honoring the ancestors and heroes at Samhain that fits well with the agricultural meaning of the season, and is universally accepted in modern Paganism.

Mythically there are several patterns proper to Samhain. One key tale has

the Dagda mating with the Morrigan, their loving creating a fertile river. Another refers to Donn, the first Ancestor of Erin, who gathers the year's dead ones and on Samhain sends them to the Isles of Summer in the West.

All these strands combine in the modern Celtic NeoPagan holy day of Samhain. It is celebrated as Harvest Home, when the year's labor is ended and we enjoy the fruits of our effort. It is the Feast of the Dead, when we honor our ancestors, the heroes, and those who have passed in the past year. It is the gate time, when works of magic and spirit-contact are especially strong. It is New Year's night, when the old passes away and the new begins in darkness.

### **Working the Rite:**

*The rite requires all the usual props for a full ADF rite. It also requires: offerings for the Patron Deities of the rite, as given in the text; a blessing cauldron; a black or red shroud for the cauldron; three small fire vessels or large candles to surround the Cauldron; offerings for the Ancestors, as listed in the rite; a medium-sized wreath, and enough black ribbons to allow each participant to have one, long enough to tie around the wreath.*

The Samhain Rite

Procession

Opening Prayers

Earth Mother

Awen

Outdwellers

Grove Attunement

The Statement of Purpose and Precedent:

**We gather here on the Feast of Samhain, the End and Beginning of the Sacred Year, the Time of Turning when the Dark Time begins. This is the Last Harvest. The fields lie empty, sinking into Winter's Sleep and our larders hold what gain we have reaped from our labors. As our forbearers did, so do we do now, and so may our descendants do in time to come. We are here to offer worship to the Lord of the House of the Dead and to the Queen of Phantoms; to the Gods, the Dead, and the Sidhe; and especially to our honored dead here on the Feast of the Dead. — We offer to Donn the Dark One, the Antlered God who offers hospitality and peace to those bound for the Ancestors' Country. We offer to Morrigan, the Great Queen of Battle and Magic; the Old Woman of Death and the Cauldron of Rebirth. — In this Season of**

**Death we honor the Holy Dead as the ancients did, and we seek the Seed that will wait in the Womb of Winter. Now let us open the Ways Between...**

Fire, Well, and Tree

Fire & Water Purification

Opening the Gates

**Gate Trance** (*after the ritual opening of the Gates*):

With the Gates open, we turn our minds to Magic... make yourself comfortable, straighten your spine, and breathe deep... Renew your center... Earth below and Sky above... feel the currents of light and dark... flowing in your flesh, and in our Grove... feel the presence of our circle... see before you our simple Hallows, the shining Fire, the dark within the Cauldron... the currents of Fire and Water swirling around the Bile... mingling as they flow through the Gates... See, with your vision's eye, by imagination and by will... see rising from the Gates, a mist... silver-grey, warm and thick... rising to swirl around your form... rising around your hips... rising around your chest... rising to enclose your head... filling our Grove with Magic's Mist... the Mist of the Borderland... that separates the common world from hidden truth... feel the mist grow thick behind your back... as Fire and Well and Tree grow clear... your mind is sharp and calm as we make offerings to all the Powers.

Kindred Offerings

Key Offerings

Druid speaks, saying:

**Failte, a Deithe, a Seannara, a Sprideanna, Welcome to the Gods, the Dead, and the Sidhe! To all of you who have gathered here at our fire, we pray you join us in worshipping the patrons of this holy rite, here in our Sacred Grove.**

The Cauldron is wrapped in a black or night-blue cloth, placed on the Shrine altar. The Druids then lead a Trance of Calling, thus:

We begin, O Children of Earth, with the breath... breathe deep, and feel the flow of Light and Shadow in your flesh... breathe deep and feel the Mist around you... flowing in and through and out of the Gates... let the Mist enclose you, turning your mind inward... turning your eye toward the Gates themselves... let

us build a vision in the Light and Shadow of the Gates at the Center... at the Boundary of All Worlds... Close your eyes if you wish, or let them focus into the Otherworld... the vision at first moves quickly... you see glimpses of forests and rivers and the plains of the Inner Worlds... fragments of scenes from visions and dreams... all the while your eye is drawn onward... drawn now downward, into the Earth, passing along tree root and watercourse, down through veins of quartz... into the Deeps... toward the Light... Now the vision resolves... you see before you a portal made of three great stones... two upright and a great capstone, with darkness all around it... yet within it there is light... you gaze through the Gate... your vision focusing into a cavernous room... vast and deep... perhaps a timbered hall, perhaps a corbelled dome of ancient stones... As you enter, moving surely through the door, the Hall seems empty of guests... It is furnished with a pair of thrones before a huge round hearth... a fire burns low in the pit, and the shadows dance on the walls... As you watch the shadows, you realize that every inch of the walls are covered with shrines, images and carvings, all depicting some aspect of the Powers... This is our vision-shadow of the Feasting Hall of the Gods... the image into which we draw the presence of the worshipped... now let us give offering to the Powers of Blessing, that our work may be made strong...

Honoring the Patron Deities

Druid Says:

**On the Night of the Scythe and the Skull, the honor-feast of Summer's End, let us worship the Dark One and the Great Queen.**

The Invocation of Donn

**In the season of darkening, the Lord of the House of Death receives the Spirits in his Hall. He is Donn the Dark One, called Cernunnos the Horned One. He is the First Ancestor, the Torc Bearer, the Guardian of the Cauldron of Plenty. Hear us now, Horned One, Dark one, Receiver of the Dead, Granter of Rest, Patron of the Feast in the Land of the Dead. We your children pray you to come in, to let your gaze fall upon this Sacred Ground, to indwell our rite and give us your blessing. We make due offering to you. We give you...**

(silver given into shaft or offering bowl.)

**Silver, that you grant the wealth of the Underworld, Source of All Potential.**

(oil given to the Fire)

**Oil, that the richness of the Land be renewed as our own lives are renewed.**

(bit of horn or antler placed at the foot of the Tree)

**Horn, that the beings who know you may bless us in the Season of Hunting. Be welcome among us, Donn; Dark One, accept our sacrifice!**

A vision of Donn is established, according to the Key Image of Donn, seen as present in the Hall-vision.

The Invocation of Morrigan

**As the Earth falls into sleep, the Queen of Spirits is choosing those who will go to the Cauldron of Rebirth. She is Morrigan, the Great Queen of Phantoms, and the Chooser of the Slain. She is the Battle Raven, the Red Woman, Mistress of the Cauldron. Hear us now, Red One, Great Queen, Lady of the Reaping, Cauldron-Witch of Magic and Prophecy. We your children pray that you be with us, that you look kindly upon our holy rite, that you come into our Grove and give us your blessing. We give due offering to you. We give you...**

(stone given to the shaft)

**Precious stone, that the Bones of the Earth may be clothed again in life.**

(wine given to the fire)

**Red Wine, blood of the land might be renewed through death and birth.**

(black feathers given to the tree)

**Feathers, that your raven Eye watch over us in the Season of Sleep. Be welcome among us Morrigan; Great Queen, accept our sacrifice!**

The image of Morrigan is established in the vision of the Hall.

Honoring the Ancestors

**On the feast of Samhain the veils between the worlds are thin. We call to our Beloved Dead, the blessed Ancestors, to join our feast and receive due offering.**

**Come to the Gates, honored ones; hear our call, we your children who remember. We offer you our worship, our reverence and our love.**

You who fill the empty womb, you who cause the seed to spring, you who fill the breast with milk, receive now these offerings, made in your honor:

**Apples, the Fruit of Life and Death.**

**Pork, the flesh of the Sacred Sow.**

**Hazel nuts, concentrated meat of wisdom.**

**We offer these...**

**(Offerings made) To the ancient heroes of the Pagan World; those men and women who did the bidding of the Gods for the good of the folk.**

**(Offerings made) To the honored Dead of the past year; those women and men of our folk who inspired and guided our whole world.**

**(Offerings made) To our own Beloved Dead, Grandmothers-and-Fathers, family and friends who have gone ahead, we honor you and grieve for you.**

**(Offering made) To all of you we give these fruits and meats that you may feast in joy in the Land of the Dead.**

The image of the entry of the Dead to the hall is built up.

**A Note on the Praise Offerings:** *While the Praise Offerings are made, a wreath is passed among the people and all who wish tie a black ribbon onto the wreath in commemoration of their own dead. This wreath is then given to the fire at the Prayer of Sacrifice.*

Sacrifice and Omen

The Blessing

(after the omen, the Druid renews center, then leads the company in this trance)

**Now we have called the company of the Powers to our Grove... as they are seated in their Hall, we are seated around our Fire... beside our Well... in the shadow of the World Pillar... here and now it is proper for the Cauldron of Blessing to appear...**

**See now in the vision's eye a shimmering rising from the Fire in the Hall of the Shining Ones... a spiraling flow of Light and Shadow that seems to coalesce, to solidify into a spherical form... the God Donn and the Goddess Morrigan, and all the Dead, and we their Children behold the Cauldron of Blessings...**

It is round and deep... light and dark are so blended in it that none could say if it were gold or blackest iron... its rim is graven with runic emblems and set around with nine huge pearls in silver fittings... it seems to hang in the air above the Fire, supported by the light and heat of the flames...The Light shows that every surface of the cauldron is covered with images, symbols and runes... waiting to be deciphered...It floats just above the eyes of the feasters...the Cauldron in the Inner Grove... from which it is our will that we all draw blessing...

Now let us sing our invocation with skill, with love and longing, to draw this holy thing from its place to ours...

(Single voice begins, then all join on chorus (slowly, roughly to the tune of the chant 'Fly Like An Eagle'):

**Ancient and Mighty, Power Bright  
Cauldron of Blessing, Dark and light  
Cauldron of Blessing, Three times three  
Come to our circle, With us be.**

Bards lead repetition of last verse and chorus as the Cauldron is brought out from the Shrine. When the power is well raised, the bards will end the song. Remove the concealing veil and elevate the Cauldron. The Druids speak, saying:

**Ancient and Mighty, Vessel of Magic  
Mighty and Holy, this we do honor  
We the Earth's Children, hallow this Cauldron  
Out of the Inner, Answering calling  
Dwell in this Vessel, Power of Blessing  
Serving our people as we do the Powers  
By Fire and by Water, beneath the World Tree  
Hallowed be you by the Gods, Dead, and Sidhe  
Come to us Cauldron—and so mote it be.**

Warming the Cauldron

The Druid takes a spark from the main fire and lights each of the three lights around the Cauldron in turn, saying:

**Let this Cauldron be warmed by the breath of Fire.  
Let the Fire come into the Water, let the Light shine in the Darkness  
And the Deeps rise to meet it in the joining of Fire and Water,  
Let the power of the Holy Ones flow forth into our world.**

*(Light the first candle)*

**By this Fire we fill this Cauldron with Healing  
Wholeness of Body, of Mind and of Spirit**

*(Light the second candle)*

**By this Fire we fill this Cauldron with Bounty  
Store of Wealth, power of growth, pleasure, and love.**

*(Light the third candle)*

**By this Fire we fill this Cauldron with Wisdom  
The Poet's Tongue, Fullness of Vision,  
Depth of Understanding.**

**So by the power of Fire and Water**

**And by the Triple Cauldron**

**And by the Power of Donn & Morrigan**

**Choose, O Children of Earth! In this season of magic, you are offered  
a boon! Choose now, and hold this boon in your heart as we draw, at  
last, the Blessing. Let none drink of this Blessing holding ill-will in  
their hearts! Let this cup be the cup of peace and friendship.**

**Do the Children of Earth desire the Blessing?**

*(All respond)*

**Do you come in honor of the Ancient Ways?**

*(All respond)*

**Do you desire that each and all of us be blessed?**

*(All respond)*

Hallowing the Water, and Drinking the Blessing

The drink for the Blessing is drawn in some symbolic way from the Cauldron, as the usual blessings are given.

Final Blessing

When all have drunk, the Druids lead a final meditation:

The Ale of Blessing flows in us, filling us with the magic of Morrigan and Donn. As the year turns, let us welcome the quiet of the Dark. Let the stillness of the land calm and satisfy our spirits, allowing us to receive the Harvest's Bounty. Let the gain of the passing year be ours, to fill our lives with contentment. Let us welcome the Dead who wish to return to the living world,



even as we remember those who depart. May we rest content as we pass the threshold of new beginnings.

Now let us rest in silence, with the Power of the Between in us, and listen for the voices of spirit.

(Silence, for a time)

Now it is time to return to our common world, to leave behind the place of the Cauldron... remember the Hall of Donn... the presence of Morrigan... the shining presence of the Cauldron... remember the Mist of Vision... that brought us to this place... now let the Mist come again... let it rise around us... rise around you... the vision of the Cauldron dims... as the Mist closes around you... remember our Grove... the Fire, the Well, the Tree... your vision returns to the Center of the Worlds, the Sacred Grove where we began... the Mist dissolves again... and we are in our Grove together... returned truly and well to the common world... with the Blessing of the Gods in us all.

Closing

## **The Rite of Imbolc**

### **Feast Day of Brighid**

the night before February 2, or midway between Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox or full moon of February.

Imbolc is the feast of the Goddess Brigid, in her aspect as nurturing Mother and protector. It has special significance in the Scottish Highlands and is celebrated in Erin as the furthest beginning of Spring. In the cycles of the land, Imbolc is the end of the coldest and darkest winter days. The meat and grain stored for the winter are nearly used up, but the land has not yet begun to yield the new year's herbs and roots. So the clans would offer to the Goddess to stave off hunger and illness until the warming of the earth. In Erin the climate often permits planting in February, and the ewes come into milk as they gestate the new herds. Thus the feast is called Imbolc, which means "in the belly." The earth is pregnant with the year's good, but has not given forth.

Imbolc is a feast of home and hearth. The other three Celtic holy days were observed with tribal gatherings, while Imbolc seems to have been a private matter. It was focused on the house, hearth, and land, and on what might be called women's ways.

The mythic elements of Imbolc center around the important Gaelic Goddess Brigid, or Bride. Recorded in Irish lore as a daughter of the Dagda,

one of the Tuatha De Danann, she was the ruling Goddess of the north British Celtic tribe, the Brigantes. She is mentioned in Irish lore as a triple Goddess of poetry, healing, and smithcraft, but in Scots lore she is clearly an Earth Mother, who rules the bounty of the land. She passed in Christian legend as Saint Brigid. In this form she is sometimes called the midwife of Christ, revealing her nurturing nature. In the folkways of this holy day she is asked to grant fertility and growth to land, herd, and clan.

Our modern Druidic holy day combines the worship of Brigid the Mother with that of the Lady of Triple Skills. The Goddess is, in some traditions, put to bed with her phallic counterpart. She appears as the **Brideog** (Bree-Og), a corn image that carries healing powers. In other traditions the child is put to bed, with Brigid to watch over it. She receives offerings of bannocks and beer in prayer for a spring soon to come.

### **Working the Rite:**

*This rite requires altars for Brigid and Dagda, and a BrigidOg—a small corn or wheat dolly, dressed in fine cloth, and decorated with jewelry. Around it is placed the Brat Brighid—a cloak of whatever material seems proper. It is to be placed in a bed before the altars, which must also be made ready. Offerings for Brigid and Dagda are needed, as well as candles for each of the participants.*

The Imbolc Rite

Procession

Opening Prayers

Earth Mother

Awen

Outdwellers

Grove Attunement

The Statement of Purpose and Precedent:

**As our ancestors once did, so we do today, and so our children will do in the future. We are here to pay homage to the Brigid, Lady of Fire, and to Dagda, the All Father, to the Gods, the Dead, and the Sidhe, and to the rising light of the year. Now is the time of stirring when the earth begins to soften and the waters to flow. While frost still bites and winds blow, and the light is growing stronger, and life begins to wake. This is the feast of Brigid, the Goddess of Fire and Water. She is the year's midwife who births the sun. Also we make offering to Dagda, the Lord of Perfect Knowledge. Through the union of fire and water,**

**the ancients, our forbearers, worked magic to call in the spring. So let us join together as one folk to make our offerings in joy and reverence.**

Fire, Well, and Tree

Fire & Water Purification

Opening the Gates

Kindred offerings

Key Offerings

**Imbolc is the time of the hearth fire, and the thawing and stirring of earth's waters. First we will offer to the red god, the hungry God, the best of the Gods, the Dagda.**

The Invocation to the Dagda

**Dagda most honored, to you we make sacrifice**

**To Eochaid, the All Father; you, the Fire Beneath the Cauldron,**

**Hear us, Old Giant, God with the Great Staff**

**Ruad Rofessa, Lord of Perfect Knowledge**

**Fire of the Sacrifice, Great in Appetite**

**To you we do honor, Excellent God**

**Mate of the Great Queen, Fergus the mare's son**

**Chieftain of Danu, bountiful giver**

**Flame in the loins that kindle life**

**Flame in the belly that sustains life,**

**Flame in the eye that comprehends life**

**Be in us as we are in you**

**Boiled in the cauldron upon the sacred fire**

**O harper of the seasons, taker of sacrifice**

**Druid of Oak and Hazel**

**Dagda Mor—Great good God**

**Accept our sacrifice**

Porridge offered into offering bowl

Sound three knells

Invocation of Brigid

**Behold the lightener of the stars**

**Brigid of the mantels**

**She comes on the crest of waves**

**With harpers of the Sidhe praising her**

**Arising in splendor from the mighty one below  
Brigid of the auguries  
Song and the voices of the Bards for her  
Brigid of the waters  
Brigid of the kindling  
Brigid thou source of joy and life  
Healers and artisans honor your spirit  
Brigid, woman of wisdom  
Thou midwife of sweet wisdom  
Of bright beauty shining like stars  
Joy were it to those who behold you  
O Brigid the skillful  
O Brigid of the triple spirit  
O Brigid who comes in light and shadow  
Thrice blessed be your flaming path.  
Brigid accept our sacrifice!**

*Ale is offered into offering bowl.*

**O triple one, Lady of fire and water,  
Goddess of poets, healers and smiths,  
we give you the gift of welcome.**

**Come into our temple and bless our rite.**

The door to the hall opens, and a maiden enters, and carries in the Brideog (Bree-Og), walking it once around the center as a Hymn to Brigid is sung.

Brideog is placed in the bed and bannock offering is made. Surround Brideog with 9 candles. Wand is placed by her side, and she is given offerings: bannocks, milk, beer

Praise Offerings

Prayer of Sacrifice

as usual. Oil, milk, bannock offered

Omen

as usual

The Blessing Cup

is passed and drunk as usual

Receiving the Fire

The Fire is used to light candles, and the candles are passed to each of the folk, as all sing a chant to Brigid's Fire. When all have the flame, the Seer leads a meditation to draw the flame into each of the folk. It might flow in this order:

Feel the presence of the Blessing in your belly. Recall the nature of the omen, and open to the potential for manifestation. Feel the Drink as water, flowing through the whole self. Allow the Flame to be reflected in the water within; reflected in the loins, in the heart and in the head...

This is the Fire of quickening, of warming, of illumination. When it shines into the Water of Blessing, it stirs it, and brings the future out of the winter's past. May it bring to each of us the inspiration of the poet, the strength of the smith, the compassion of the healer.

Now moisten your fingers and snuff this outer flame...  
Draw the Fire into yourself, the warmth of your own heart's hearth...

Take home the candle, and may the Fire of Brigid see you through until spring.

Final Blessings:

A Priestess, or several women of the company, recite the final blessing:

The Descent of Brigid

**Brigid of the mantles, Brigid of the hearth fire,  
Brigid of the twining hair, Brigid of the auguries  
Brigid of the fair face, Brigid of the calmness  
Brigid of the strong hands, Brigid of the kine  
Brigid, friend of women, Brigid, fire of magic  
Brigid the foster mother, Brigid woman of wisdom.  
Brigid the daughter of Danu, Brigid the triple flame.  
Each day and each night I call the descent of Brigid.  
That the power of healing be within us,  
That the power of poetry be within us,  
That the power of shaping be within us,  
In earth, sea and sky and among all Kindreds.  
Kindle your flame in our heads, hearts and loins,  
Make us your cup, your harp, your forge,  
That we may heal, inspire and transform,  
All in your honor, Brigid font of blessing.  
Brigid above us, Brigid below us, Brigid at every airt about us.**

## **Brigid in our truest heart.**

Closing

### **The Rite of Beltaine**

#### **Feast of the Nobles**

Night before May 1st or point between Spring Equinox and Summer Solstice, or full moon of May.

Beltaine marks the division between Celtic winter and summer. As the other side of the year, it has nearly the significance of Samhain, perhaps more in some parts of Celtia. It marks the beginning of the bright, fertile half of the year, and is also a time of open gates, when the Noble Ones go abroad.

In the agricultural year, Beltaine is the time when the new herds are driven out to summer pastures. It is the beginning of the Season of Blossoms, when honey fills the hives and milk is in the udders of the cows. It is the beginning of the summer's labor of caring for crops and cattle, in hope of Fall's bounty. The land is again giving forth its good, but much depends on skill and luck. The stores from the previous year's harvest are spent, and the folk depend on the blessing of the land, on its immediate bounty.

Beltaine is a feast of the greenwood, of the nonhuman powers, of Eros, of the power that draws together, that inspires hearts and fills wombs. It is a time of rejoicing for the returned light, but also of caution and magic to retain and increase the luck of the individual. We hold our power close, and share through loving and feasting, as we sacrifice to the Noble clans.

In folk tradition, Beltaine is remembered as Walpurgisnacht, when the 'witches' gathered for their great revels on the mountaintops. It had the reputation as a time of sexual license, when the folk went abroad in the fields, loving even outside the marriage-bond. Thus it is a time of Outside power, of the Sidhe-folk, and of wilderness. It is on Beltaine that the clans of the Nobles move their dwellings from one hill or tree to another, trooping across the land, bringing weal or woe to mortals as they go. It was on Beltaine that Medb called the armies of the Sidhe from the Cave of Cruachan to hunt the men of Ulster.

The modern Feast of Beltaine is a time of erotic joy, and of magic to secure luck and the blessing of the Noble Clans. We invoke the Land Goddess as the renewing maiden, and she draws forth the strength of the Young Hero. We offer to the Land-Spirits and revel in the joy of the Feast of Love.

#### **Working the Rite**

*The Grove is arranged as usual. In addition, an array of flowers is available for dressing the*

*Well, a small tree or branch to be used as the Fairy Tree, along with enough ribbons for all to tie one onto the tree. Also needed are two vessels to hold small fires, and enough alcohol or other fuel to burn in them for some minutes.*

The Beltaine Rite

Procession

Opening Prayers

Earth Mother

Awen

Outdwellers

Grove Attunement

The Statement of Purpose and Precedent:

*Slainte agus failte!* **Welcome to the offering rite of Bealtainne, the Hinge of Summer, and the Day of Blessings. Now the earth grows green again in fact, warmed by the power of the Sun and the Waters' cool strength. Shoot has become bud and bud is flowering as all life burns with the kindling of love's fire. Now we rejoice in the heat of May, and look forward to the greater heat of summer.**

**In elder days the feast of Beltaine was a day of power and duty, when every fire was extinguished and every clan held fast to its luck for the coming season. The folk left their work and went into the fields and the greenwood. They roved among the blossoms and made love to one another to celebrate the Power of Life. They went into the Groves and made their worship of the Gods and Goddesses that sustained them.**

**As the ancients did before us, so we do now, and so our descendants may do in the future. We are come into the Grove to worship as they did, to offer to the Ancestors; to offer to the King and Queen of the Sidhe clans and all the Nature Spirits; and to offer to the beloved Shining Ones. Today we honor Aine, the Queen under the Mound, the erotic power of renewal. Today we honor the Mac Oc as Aengus the Harper, the enchanting life of the Earth. Today we kindle new flame in ourselves as we dance among the Bealtainne fires. And tonight, may we practice the Rites of Love in whatever way our spirit may guide us, to sustain the Power of Life. *Ta go maith!***

Fire, Well, and Tree

Fire & Water Purification

Opening the Gates

Kindred offerings

Key Offerings

A cloaked woman emerges, stands to the north of the Hallows with head bowed and cloak closed. Druid speaks:

**In elder days, Erin, the goddess, was the mother of clans, called Aine, Queen of the Noble Ones. Aine, the Mighty, mated with mighty men and from them she bore many peoples. As each of them grew old, she would renew her youth and love again. So for us is the living earth goddess, who grows old with the winter and renews her youth in this merry, magical time. With each of her renewings she brings the flowing of new life, the erotic blossoming of every kindred, not just for the continuing of clans, but for the delight and regeneration of all beings.**

Invocation of Aine

**Aine the ancient; Cailleach the mighty  
Bones of the Earth; Answer your children  
Mother to maiden; Winter to summer  
Root into blossom; Answer us, changer  
Flow now the waters; All hearts rejoicing  
Laughter and loving; Bounty and blessing  
Now in the hinge-time; Wise ones are calling  
Show us your wonder; O maiden of May!**

*All: Aine, accept our sacrifice!*

An offering of scented oil is made to the Fire. The woman removes her cloak to reveal a young maiden, erotically dressed.

*All cry: Hail the queen of the May!*

The May Queen speaks, saying:

**Let the goddess of Earth hear our call as I hear it! Blessings upon all who do honor to the shining ones. In this season of renewal we do honor to the goddess of the wells, for the sacred well is the eye of the earth, the giver and receiver, the gate of the Sidhe!**

May Queen holds large bundle of cut flowers, and says:

**Now let the well be dressed, honoring our simple symbol of all the worlds' sacred wells.**



Nine men come forward in turn to dress the Well, surrounding it with flowers. All sing 'Way to the Well.' When all are finished, the Druid speaks:

**Surely it is true that when the maid of May appears in any place or any heart the delight of love cannot be far behind. In Erin, the power of love's joy was worshipped in Aengus Og, the son of the Dagda and Boann. He is the golden harper, whose music wakens longing and fulfillment in mortal hearts. He is the silver voice, calling all to come away from earthly care and join in the joy of May. Now let us welcome the young lord.**

Invocation of Aengus Og

**The young son Maonos  
Aengus the harper  
Son of the Dagda  
Whose staff is the strongest  
Born of enchantment  
The son of the Mother  
Sing, O enticer  
Delighter of maidens  
Sap in the branches  
All making merry  
Bee to the blossom  
Hie to the Maying  
Raise now the May-rod  
Aengus we name you  
Wonder child rising  
Come to our calling**

*All: Aengus Og, accept our sacrifice!*

An offering of scented oil is made to the Fire. The Bile, or other phallic rod, is passed from woman to woman with much merry jesting, kissing of the pole, etc. ... The May Queen then places the pole in the Earth again, saying:

**Awake, O King-To-Be! Enter now the maiden Earth and bring joy and blessing to us all! *Beannachtai!***

Offering to the Sidhe:

The Faery Tree is brought out, or the Druid walks to the Tree (at the South?) Clouts of many colors, sparklies, and amulets are available to hang on the Tree. Druid speaks:

In the elder days, Aine the goddess was a queen of the Sidhe-folk, ruling from her mound in the south of Erin. Likewise Aengus was a king of the gentle people, making the faery music beneath the Brugh Na Boyne. Now we call to them to open the way to the people of peace.

On the feast of Bealtainne the veils between the worlds are thin. Now we honor the noble clans of the Otherworld, the spirits of Earth to join our dance and receive due offering.

Come to the gates, gentle and lovely ones. Hear our call, we, the children of Earth, who remember you. We offer you our worship, our reverence, and our blessing.

You who rule in the wildwood, who give luck or bane, you who teach us the hidden ways and aid the wise, receive now these offerings made in your honor:

The druid will recite the various Powers of the Sidhe, and one of the folk will tie a ribbon or clout or whatever to the Tree for each.

- To the queens under the hill,

Oonagh the Lovely, Cailleach the Ancient, Medb the Mighty and all...

- To the kings under the hill,

Finvarra the Handsome, Bodb the Red, Eochaid the Stallion and all...

- To all the Sidhe-folk of poetry and wisdom,

Inspirers and singers, you who grant sight and hearing...

- To all the Sidhe-folk who are warriors,

wardens and keepers, champions and hunters, wrathful protectors...

- To all the Sidhe-folk of the makers,

iron Sidhe and gold Sidhe, wood Sidhe and clay Sidhe and the folk in the loom...

- To all the Sidhe-folk of the soil,

tillers and reapers, cattle Sidhe and arbor Sidhe and folk of the hearth...

- To all the Sidhe-folk of the Earth,

stone and soil, stream and pool, bird and beast...

- To all the Sidhe-folk of the sea,

merrow and selkie, of sunlit shallows and the deeps...

- **To all the Sidhe-folk of the air,  
trooping sidhe and the voices on the wind...**
- **To all of you we give these gifts and ornaments,  
Asking you to bless us in the joy of the living...**

*All: Noble Sidhe, accept our sacrifice!*

Praise Offerings

The company is instructed that if they do not have a praise offering they may come quietly to the Tree through the rest of the rite and make their offering. The Tree will be planted in the country after the rite.

Sacrifice and Omen

The Blessing Cup

The Fire Blessing

Following the Hallowing and Drinking of the Waters, the Druids work the Fire of Blessing. Druid Speaks:

**Now as we stand filled with the power of our Goddess and God, let us work the spell of the Beltaine fires to drive away ill and bring us luck in the coming summer.**

Two fire-vessels are brought out and prepared. Sacred woods are available as in the charm. One man and one Woman bring fire from the Fire. Fires conjured, saying:

**We kindle these magic fires**

**In the presence of the mighty ones**

**In the power of the lovers**

**By Dagda the fire and by Brigid the fire**

**By oak—grant strength**

**By rowan—grant magic**

**By hazel—grant wisdom**

**Spring from darkness into light**

**Rise as the warmth of summer's sun, this Beltaine day**

**Kindle within each of our hearts**

**A flame of love and wit and might**

**To friend and foe and all beings**

**Bring peace and beauty to the land, as life begins anew. *Ta Go Maith!***

**Now join hands all...**

**Step lightly in the dance and leave your winter cares behind**

**Receive the blessing of the shining ones**

**As you pass between the faery fires  
Dance now, in the joy of May!**

Music is struck up and a line dance led by one of the Druids, dancing between the two Fires, maybe doubling back for kisses. All finally spiral into clump with a roar/om. Druid deepens trance one last time, then speaks:

Final Blessing

**Bless, O great ones true and bountiful  
Ourselves, our kin and our friends  
Our work and our wealth.  
May the Waters of Life sustain us  
May the Fire of Passion enliven us  
From day to day through every turning moon  
From season to season  
Through all the sacred year.  
May the ancestors strengthen us  
May the Sidhe-folk open our ways  
May the goddesses and gods grant us wisdom.  
Let the seeds of spring shoot and bud  
And let our lives blossom with the May.  
By our magic and by the blessings of the old ways  
Let all our blossoms come to fruit!**

*Ta Go Maith!*

Closing

**The Rite of Lughnassadh**

**The Feast of Lugh**

Night before August 1st, or midway between Summer Solstice and Fall Equinox, or full moon of August.

Lughnassadh is the feast of the God Lugh, in his aspect as warrior hero and bridegroom. It is a time of displays of strength and skill, of sacrifices, and of weddings and joinings of households.

Lughnassadh is the time of the early harvest, when the fruits appear on the trees, and the grain is ripening in the fields. The work of summer is done, and the work of the reaping is just about to begin. The land is pregnant with the harvest, and the folk pray that the powers of the storm can be turned away, so that the harvest can be brought in.

In that season, the folk had leisure to travel, and warrior-skill was in its glory. There were also held great fairs and gatherings, at holy places on the Celtic landscape. The great Fair of Tara, held every three years in ancient Ireland, was the most famous of these. There the many clans gathered for 'highland'-style games, contests of music and poetry, exchange of merchandise, weddings, and treaties. In some ways, this was the time of greatest power for the ritual Kings, who drew their power from the figure of the King of the Gods.

Mythically, the feast centers around the great Celtic God Lugh, called Lugos on the continent and Lleu in Wales. Lugh is the epitome of the Young Hero, the wonder child who grows up to become the God who defeats the Demons. His name means, simply, 'light,' and he is called Samildanach (All-Skilled), and Lamfhadha (the Long Hand). In Welsh lore we see his reputation as possessing every craft, and the word 'Lughnassadh' may mean 'wedding feast of Lugh'.

In the central story of Lugh, he is born of an illicit union between a God and a Giantess, grows up in the Isle of Apples, and is admitted to the company of the Gods when he proves that he has every skill. He holds the Spear of Victory, one of the great weapons of the Tuatha De, and defeats the Demon King, Balor One-Eye, allowing the Powers favorable to mortals to claim the world.

The modern Lughnassadh is celebrated with games and feats of strength and skill, and with prayers to Lugh to defend the grain against harsh sun and destructive storm.

### **Working the Rite**

*The Grove is prepared with the Hallows as usual. A spear, symbolic of Lugh, is provided, and a loaf of bread in the form of the one-eyed sun. A corn dolly, dressed in red and gold represents the Morrigan. There are red flowers to decorate the Dolly.*

The Lughnassadh Rite

Procession

Opening Prayers

Earth Mother

Awen

Outdwellers

Grove Attunement

The Statement of Purpose and Precedent:

**The Children of Earth are gathered in the Sacred Grove to keep the rites of Lughnassadh, the First Harvest, the Victory of the Growth, the**

## **Gathering of the Folk in Peace.**

**Now is the beginning of the Time of Ripening, when the labor of the Folk brings the Land to bear, when the Power of the Sun gives itself to the Power of the Earth. We gather in a moment of rest and pleasure, before the labor of the harvest.**

**We come to the Sacred Grove to honor the Lady of Sovereignty, the Great Queen. In this season she is the Earth Woman, the Red Goddess, the Flower Woman whose embrace binds, whose love is Fate.**

**We honor, especially, Lugh the Shining Young Hero, the Sacred King. He is the Master of All Skills, the Holy Champion who turns aside drought and storm, protecting the earth. On this day, the Golden God is wed to the Blossom Goddess, that the earth may come to fruit.**

**As our forebears did, so do we now, and so may our descendants do after us. Now let us keep the Old Ways. Let us honor the Powers and work our Magic that we may gain bounty and wealth in this season.**

Fire, Well, & Tree

Fire & Water Purification

Opening the Gate

Three Kindreds Offerings

Key Offerings

Druid says:

**Slainte agus Failte to the Triple Host of Spirits. Join us now, we pray you, as we call to the Blossom Queen and the Sacred King.**

Invocation of the Morrigan

**Red Woman, Great Queen of the Earth, the Children of Earth offer you welcome. We call to you in the ripening grain. We call to you in the fruiting branch. We call to you by the reddened spear. We call you forth from the beauty of blossom and thorn. We offer you clear water, gentle as rain. *(water poured)***

**Holy One, Raging One, Prophetess, Enticer, Joy and Bane of Heroes, Flower Bride, Lover, Devourer, Great Queen, we call to you. In the season of ripening, you are the fruits and bounty of the land, arrayed in desirable beauty beneath the sun. We deck you in blossoms to welcome you to our Grove... *(Red blossoms are placed in a basket before the Well)***  
**Descend in Beauty, Arise in Might, O Throne of Sovereignty! You**

whose hair is the Golden Grain; you whose flesh is the firm sweet soil, we offer you the Seat of Honor in our Sacred Grove. Bring to our Grove the Blessings of your bounty, and delight.

**We pour red wine for you, who drink up the love of the sun** (*Wine poured*)  
**Great Queen, come into the Grove of the Wedding!**

A corn dolly is brought out and carried once around the ring. Nine roses are used to twine in the corn dolly. A charm for the nine roses:

**Lady, accept this gift of raiment. We adorn you for the Rite of Joining. We robe you in flowers, O Lady of Sovereignty, with garments of red, the hue of life's blood; with garments of crimson, the hue of magic's might; with garments of scarlet, the Rose of Summer's Perfection. We offer you welcome, Queen of the Summer. We offer you welcome, Mead of the Sweetness. We offer you welcome, O Morrigan the Mighty!**

The Dolly is then placed at the foot of the Bile.

Invocation of Lugh

**Thou Lugh the Victorious, We make our Grove under your shield, O Lugh of the White Horse and the Brilliant Blades. You of the Perfect Form, Child of Light and Shadow, Slayer of Balor, be in our midst. Accept this ale in welcome Thou Champion, King of All.** (*Ale poured*)

**We make our circuit in the joy of the Samildanach—The Clever One, the Sure Hand, the Bard and the Smith. May we be at peace under the hand of the Chieftain of Danu, taking joy in the feast of the Wedding Day of Lugh. We offer this bread that the harvest may flourish by the hand of the plowman.** (*Bread offered*)

**By the Sacred Three of Glory, hear now your people's call. By the Spear and by the Raven, come, we pray, among your folk. O Lugh the Victorious, Our Light and our Guide; O Lugh the Victorious, accept this offering of fruit and be present in your strength.** (*Fruit offered*)

**Light of the Sky; come into the Grove of the Wedding.**

A Spear is brought into the Grove, decked with greenery and blossoms. It is carried once round the ring, and then stretched over the Fire. It is held there for a time, then brought out and laved nine times with water. Druid says:

**May the strength of Lugh be over us, May the beauty of Lugh delight us, May the skill of Lugh be upon us. Be welcome, Shining One, and**

behold your bride. Be welcome, White-Silver One, and succor the earth. Be welcome, Hand of Striking, and drive away the hail. In the Grove of the Old Ways, in the ring of your people, in the hearts of all who honor the earth. Welcome, Lugh!

Praise Offerings

as usual. The last praise offering is:

The Tale and the Wedding

**Hail the Sun of Summer—Golden One, Brightest, Warmth of the Green Earth.**

**Hail the Sun of Summer—Crown of Striving, Gem of the Heavens, First among Lights.**

**Hail the Sun of Summer—Father of Earth, Eye of Burning, Fire of Noontide.**

Yet now is the Season of Darkening, the Time of Ripening, when the night and the moon call the earth to fruit. It is the time of the tender goddess, the Maker of heroes, the Old One's Daughter. Who can tell of the fate of the earth?

If the Sun does not die, the green turns to gray.

If the Sun does not die, red turns to black.

If the Sun does not die, the earth will burn dry!

So the God's man mated with a woman of the Giants, in magic and courage. And of their union was born the Child of Light and Shadow—Lugh, whose name means light. Fostered in the Isle of Apples, he learned every skill—thus is he called Samildanach—Master of All Arts.

How like a Spear is the Ray of Dawning

How like the dawn is the Rising Light of Victory

How like Victory is the Joy of Wisdom

So it was that in the last battle of the Gods and Demons it was Lugh who struck down the Baleful Eye of Burning. When the Sun's Fire becomes poison to the earth, when the Maiden of Bounty is imprisoned in the Tower of Day, it is Lugh of the Long Arm who strikes the blow. It is Lugh who struck down the Poison Eye, who defended the Holy Earth against hail and flood and drought and blight.

All chant:



**The Sun must die that the earth may live  
The Darkness rises in its turn  
That the Land may freely give  
Milk and Honey, Ale and Corn**

The Eye Loaf is brought out and a simple 'dance' between the spear and loaf holders leads to the spear being driven into the loaf. The two hallows are brought to the center, and a rope of blossoms is used to bind the doll to the spear, saying:

**Lugh and Morrigan, hear us your children, be present in these images. Thus do we join the Shining Ones' Prince to the Lady of the Earth. By this joining may Lugh be the Ward and Guardian of the earth. By this joining may the Earth be the Throne of Joy and Delight. May the grain, and our lives, grow green and golden as the hair of the Goddess. May the ray of the westering sun be as the Spear of the Champion. May we be blessed by the Blessing of the Wedding of Lugh and Morrigan!**

Prayer of Sacrifice and Omen

The Blessing

as usual, but before the cup is passed, bring out the Loaf on the Spear, saying:

**Bright Lugh, Queen of Phantoms, here is the Head of the Grain, the Body of the Shield of the Sky. Let this be as the First Loaf of Harvest, shared between us and you.**

Half the Loaf is broken and put into the Offering Shaft or Bowl.

**Now Shining Ones, we pray you, hallow this bread. Let it be the bounty of the Earth, the Generosity of the Mother, and the Strength of the Hero to us. Let it be the growth of wealth, the soundness of flesh, the delight of wisdom to us. Let it be the food of our bones, of our flesh, of our lights. Behold, the Bread of Life!**

The Loaf is shared, as the Cup is filled, blessed and drunk as usual

Final Blessing

after the Loaf and Cup, before closing:

**May the Life of the Earth be in us. May the Strength of the Earth be in us. May the Wisdom of the Earth be in us, until the Harvest is brought in!**

Closing

## **A Rite of Blessing For Small Groups**

This rite is composed to be used by small groups, for non-seasonal ritual occasions. Our Grove has used it as a monthly rite of worship and magic. The unique element of this rite is its magical work, in which participants bring candles or other objects to be charged with specific magical intentions. The rite has been done, by our folk, spoken in unison. The ‘Sacrificer’ adds some connecting and directing material, keeps the cups full and makes the simple offerings, usually of incense.

The Grove is prepared as usual for a small rite, with ‘table-top size Hallows. The company sits in a circle around the Hallows.

Opening the Grove

The Sacrificer says:

**Welcome, friends, to this rite of blessing. We gather, as always, to remember the Three Kindreds and to work magic for the good of all gathered here. Let us begin by finding our center and our power, as the bell is rung nine times.**

All work the Two Powers centering with nine full breaths, as the priest/ess sounds nine knells or knocks. All then say the Opening Prayer:

**We come to keep the Old Ways.**

**O Shining Ones, hear us, we pray you, as Children of the Earth. Let our call come unto you with honor and truth, as we work the work of wisdom.**

**Mighty Mother of all, first Goddess, bless and uphold this rite,  
We pray you with love and reverence.**

Sacrificer says:

**Now let us hallow the Sacred Grove.**

The Well is elevated, and the silver offered, saying:

**Waters of wisdom, Waters of love, Waters of life**

**O Mother of All, be present in these waters and in this grove.**

**Sacred Well, flow within me**

An offering is made to the fire saying:

**Fire of inspiration, Fire of transformation, Fire of sacrifices**

**O Light of Inspiration, Be present in this fire and in this grove.**

**Sacred Fire, burn within me.**

The water is carried around the group each sprinkled with the water, as all repeat:

**By the might of the primal waters, this grove is made sacred.  
Let the Sea not rise, and let no ill or bane  
Pass these encircling waters.**

The censer is carried around the circle, as all say:

**By the light of the sacred fire, this grove is enchanted  
Let the Sky not fall, and let only blessing  
Be welcome at this fire**

All join hands, or make contact again, saying:

**The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree  
Flow and Flame and Grow in me  
The Sacred Grove stands firm and true  
In Land, Sea and Sky  
Below and on high  
Let the Land hold fast beneath us.  
Thus is the Sacred Grove  
Claimed and hallowed!**

The Sacrificer says:

**Renew your center, friends, and breathe deep. Feel the Fire and Water  
in your being, and see them here in our small Grove. With all these  
things brought together in this blessed place, it is proper for the Gate  
to be opened.**

Sacrificer makes offering to the Gatekeeper, as all say:

**Gray One of the Borders, Lord of the Isle of Apples,  
Teacher of the Wise, Fosterer of Heroes  
Keeper of Roads and Ways, hold open the way between the worlds, we  
pray.  
Gatekeeper, accept our sacrifice.**

The Sacrificer makes a deosil triskel over the fire, as all say:

**By the Lord of the Borders, and by our magic,  
Let this sacred center be as the boundary between all worlds  
Let the Gate be open!**

### **Kindred Sumbel**

Three passings of a horn of memory and honor; one round for each of the three kins.

I. The priest or priestess, or a chosen speaker, takes up the horn and fills it with

ale. She gives a general invocation to the kindred being honored, or it is spoken in unison.

II. The horn passes sun wise. As each receives it, he may speak in honor of the members of the Kindred. For instance he might honor his own genetic or cultural ancestors, or those heroes that inspire or guide him. She may name animal or plant allies or her companions among the Sidhe. She will name her Patron Deities, and any other God/desses she wishes. After speaking in turn, each drinks.

III. After all have spoken and drunk, the speaker fills the horn again, and/or prepares another offering, and speaks the second section, as given below.

The Sacrificer says:

**Breathe deep, and see the Gate in the Grove, in whatever way is true and real for you... Now, with the Gate open, it is proper for us to give our honor to the Gods, the Dead, and the Spirits.**

To the Dead

**O Mighty Ones**

**Our Ancestors, our kindred**

**We, your children, honor you.**

**You whose life and death creates our lives**

**You whose wisdom upholds our wisdom**

**Hear us as we name you**

**And invite you to our fire...**

The cup is passed and each speaks, or drinks silently. When all have finished, all say:

**O Mighty Ancestors, we honor your presence**

**Offering our love and worship.**

**Be with us in our grove and in our hearts**

**And accept this gift in token of our kinship.**

The offering is made. All cry:

**(Ancestors) accept our sacrifice!**

To The Sidhe

**O Noble Ones, our Allies, with whom we share the worlds**

**You who fill the land with wonder**

**Spirits of Stone and Stream, Red and Green**

**Tribes of Spirits, the Peoples of the Otherworld**

**Hear us as we name you**

**And invite you to our Fire...**

The cup is passed and each speaks, or drinks silently. When all have finished, all say:

**O Noble Spirits, we honor your presence  
Offering our love and worship  
Be with us in our Grove and in our hearts  
And accept this gift in token of our friendship  
Spirits, Accept our Sacrifice!**

To The Gods and Goddesses

**O Shining Ones, our Elders, Goddesses and Gods  
O Wisest and Mightiest  
You who sustain all the worlds,  
First Children of the Mother, the Tribe of the Goddess  
Hear us as we name you  
And invite you to our Fire...**

The cup is passed and each speaks, or drinks silently. When all have finished, all say:

**O Shining Deities  
We honor your presence  
Offering our love and worship  
Be with us in our Grove and in our hearts  
And accept this gift in token of our worship  
Shining Ones, Accept our Sacrifice!**

After all the kindreds have been offered to, the Sacrificer says:

**Now Children of Earth, the Three Kindreds of Spirits are coming, in answer to our invitation. Find your center and your power, and envision the presence of the Grove—the Fire, Well, and Tree, and the Gate, and toward the gate and through the gate come the Spirits. Let us welcome them!**

All say:

**Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones, be welcome at our fire!**

A final offering is prepared, along with the bit of sacred Fire. The Sacrificer says:

**Now let us gather up all that we offer to the Powers—our love and reverence, our awe and wonder, our delight and our honor. Let us join our voices in the Dord Draoi, to bind all this into one true offering.**

All make the Dord Draoi. At the height of the chant all fall into silence, all speak the prayer of sacrifice, and the offering given:

**Now let our voices arise on the fire  
Let our voices resound in the well  
Let our call pass the gate the land of spirits  
Holy kindreds, Gods, Dead, and Sidhe  
The Children of Earth send you love and honor with this gift  
Holy Ones, accept our sacrifice!**

Sacrificer says:

**Breathe deep, and let your worship flow through the Gate, to the Holy Ones! See them draw near, and feel their loving power shining on us, as we divine the Omen.**

All say:

**Holy Ones, we have honored you  
And now, as we prepare our hearts for your blessing,  
Reveal to us now what blessing you offer  
In return for our sacrifice!**

An omen is taken.

The Blessing

Sacrificer or seer interprets the omen, then adds:

**So we are offered this blessing, from the Gods, the Dead and the Sidhe. If it is your will to gain this good, then join us as we say:**

The folk call for the blessing saying:

**As Children of earth, we call for the blessing of the Ancient Ones.  
Together we cry...  
Shining Ones, give us the waters!  
We join our hearts, that each of us be blessed. Together we call...  
Shining Ones, give us the waters!  
And as we are blessed, let all the worlds be blessed. Together we pray...  
Shining Ones, give us the waters!**

The Sacrificer pours the Blessing into the horn, as all say:

**We draw water from the well of wisdom; we pour the ale of inspiration.**

The horn is elevated over the fire or before the Deities saying:

**O Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones, we have given to you, and now we ask you to bless us in turn, as a gift calls for a gift. Hallow these**

waters O holy powers. Grant us the blessing we seek. May the wisdom, love and power of the Gods, Dead, and Sidhe, flow in this horn of Blessing. Behold the waters of life!

The horn is passed, and all drink.

As the horn passes, a meditation is led to attune all to the blessing. One such might be:

**We take up the chalice of Joy and Power,  
The cup of Fire and Shadow that stirs the soul.  
Let us taste the Waters of Wisdom's Well; let us drink the Ale of Inspiration.  
We open ourselves to the Blessing of the Powers.  
Lead us in the Elder Ways,  
Guide our walk through our life's road, through our destiny's song.  
Ancient and wonderful Powers; Shining Gods, Mighty Dead, Noble Sidhe  
Come into us here in our Grove, to share and join in our work.  
May your magic awaken in our blood, for we are all your children.  
Flow in us, Power of Magic  
Shine in our Loins, Shine in our Hearts, Shine in our Heads  
Let there be no part of me that is not of the Gods!**

All meditate in silence for a short time, and then the sacrificer says:

**Breathe deep, friends, and find your center and your power. Feel the blessing in your body, adding its power to yours, flowing through you as the Fire and Water flow in you. With this power in us, let us turn our hands to the work of magic.**

The Spell

Begin by all saying:

**With the Blessing of the Gods in us, we take up the work of magic.  
Let those who would ask our aid in their works, speak now...**

Those who wish will have brought candles, talismans or whatever to be blessed for their personal intentions. Those are now put before the company, as each person makes a simple statement of their need or intention.

All speak the intentions of any candles or talismans they've brought, then the Sacrificer says:

**Children of Earth is it your will that all these things be done?**

All say:

**It is our will that all these good things be done! So, may our magic join with the power of the Gods and spirits, as we sing...**

The company then raises power, usually by a simple, repetitive chant, such as:

*All: We are one, we are one... (repeat ad infinitum)*

*Descant: In this task we've begun, what we will, shall be done...*

This should be accompanied by drums, and build well and strong, as each feels the Blessing in his belly mingle with the energy raised by the chant and rhythm. If desired, each candle or item may be passed round the ring to receive the blessing of each, returning it to the altar after one round.

The Sacrificer gives a signal, and the drums and chant stop suddenly. In the silence, all direct their energy to the altar with imagination and breath. Those with needs visualize their goals, as all join in working for the good of all. The Sacrificer says:

**Now the power flows from us and into us. Breathe deep, and let your power flow into the center. Breathe deep, and draw in all that you need to gain your goal. Envision your goal, shining with the power of the work, and see that power flowing into your candle, as we all say:**

*All say: By the holy power of the Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones, and by our Magic,*

**Bíodh se amhlaidh!**

All re-center in silence for a time.

Closing

The Sacrificer says:

**One final time, find your center and your power. Breathe, and feel the energies flowing in you. The cool Waters... the bright Fire... the power of the Rite's Blessing... With all these things balanced in us, it is proper that we end what we began.**

All say:

**The Gods have blessed us!**

**Secure in their blessing, we prepare to go from the Grove into our lives and work.**

**We go with the blessing of the Gods in our heads, and hearts and loins.**

**To all those who have aided us in this holy work, we give thanks.**

The Gatekeeper is thanked and the gate closed, saying:

**Keeper of Gates, Lord of Ways**

**For watching and warding the ways between**



**We give you our thanks.  
Now let the Fire be but flame  
Let the Well be but water  
Let all be as it was before,  
Save only for the magic we have made.  
Let the gates be closed!  
Then all recite the Great Blessing:  
We offer our thanks to the Mother of All.  
We offer our thanks to the Gods, Dead, and Spirits.  
May the Three Sacred Kins  
Bring joy to all beings, and renew the ancient wisdom.  
To the Fire, Well, and Tree we offer our thanks.  
May Wisdom, Love, and Power  
Kindle in all beings, and renew the ancient wisdom.  
To the Earth, Sea, and Sky we offer our thanks.  
May the ancient wisdom be renewed,  
And may all beings know peace, joy, and happiness  
In all the worlds.  
So be it!**

The Sacrificer says:

**So we end this Rite of Blessing. Go now, with the Blessing of the  
Gods in us all! So be it!**

*All say:* **So be it!**

### **Taking Omens**

One of the core skills of the magician's art is divination—the use of magic to discover that which is unknown. We divine to determine what is unseen in the present and past, and what the pattern of Dan (the Irish term meaning 'song' or 'gift' or 'fate') may hold for our future. In the work of magic we also often divine to determine whether the spirits are pleased with our work, whether our offerings have been accepted, whether our work is headed for a good outcome, and what kind of power is being offered by the spirits.

In this work we will not attempt to teach the sort of divination that allows us to do complex 'readings' of the patterns of Dan. While the simple techniques given here can be used for that sort of 'telling,' there are many books from which you can better gain those skills. Here we will address methods of taking the sorts of simpler omens that are required for the work.

## Sortilege

Sortilege is the taking of omens by the drawing of lots. One takes a bag or bowl of symbols on identical pieces of wood or stone, or on a deck of cards, and randomly draws a few symbols. The meaning of those symbols provides the omen or answer to an inquiry.

In order to divine by sortilege, you will need to draw the letters of the alphabet or symbol system which you are using on identical lots. There is a traditional account that suggests that the lots should be prepared fresh each time you wish to take an omen. There is value in that approach but practicality suggests the creation of a permanent, personal set of divination lots. Our work will focus on two traditional alphabets—the Ogham and the Runes.

## The Ogham

The Ogham alphabet originated in Ireland in the first few centuries of the Common Era. It was used primarily as a simple way of carving inscriptions on grave and memorial stones and border markers. Later the Ogham became a bardic and poetic code, which modern Celtic Pagans have taken up for divination and spell-work. The Ogham is commonly thought of as the ‘alphabet of trees.’ The most famous of the Ogham lists gives ancient tree-names for each of the letters. Irish Ogham lists go on to list Oghams of birds, ships, cities, and many other kinds.

It would be a mistake to assume that the Irish bards meant these lists to be ‘correspondences’ in the sense of the lists used by some kinds of modern magicians. While there is certainly some degree of associative connection between the various Ogham lists, it would be an error to put them in the same class with ‘planetary correspondences.’ Nevertheless, they offer a net of symbols that can be useful both for divination and other work.

Ogham lots might best be made of bits of square dowel. We can imagine a perfect set made with each dowel cut from the proper sort of wood. This is a worthwhile long-term project, but to get started you will probably need to use a commercial dowel. A square dowel allows you to use one corner as the center-line of the Ogham letter. That leaves two sides on which you might write the Irish and English names of the tree-letter.

Here we offer the Tree Ogham with simple divinatory meanings to enable you to begin taking simple omens immediately. The focus of this work does not allow us to spend as much time on the meaning and use of the Oghams as it deserves. Students are encouraged to take the Ogham into mind and heart—

memorize the symbols and contemplate their meanings. The Ogham is one of the most systematic views we have of the early Celtic mind; it is a link to the Celtic core of the magic we seek.

## The Ogham

- ┆ **Beith Birch:** beginnings, new growth
- ≡ **Luis Rowan:** draiocht, protection, enchantment
- ≡≡ **Fern Alder:** support, kingship
- ≡≡ **Saill Willow:** water, goddesses & women
- ≡≡ **Nion Ash:** ancient knowledge, world tree
  
- ┆ **hUath Hawthorn:** cleansing, purity and delight
- ≡ **Dair Oak:** strength and law
- ≡≡ **Tinne Holly:** justice and balance
- ≡≡ **Coll Hazel:** wisdom, intuition
- ≡≡ **Ceirt Apple:** otherworld, nourishment
- ┆ **Muin Vine:** ecstasy, binding together
- ≡≡ **Gort Ivy:** hospitality
- ≡≡≡ **nGeadal Reed:** tools and labor
- ≡≡≡ **Straif Blackthorn:** trouble and protection
- ≡≡≡ **Ruis Elder:** the Sidhe, the Queen of the Mound
  
- ┆ **Ailm White Fir:** future vision
- ≡≡ **Onn Gorse:** wheel, smooth going
- ≡≡≡ **Ur Heather:** earth, the land, the ancestors

- ☰ **Eadhadh Poplar:** speech, communication
- ☰ **Iodhadh Yew:** death and rebirth
- ✕ **Eabhadh Aspen:** ?flow, rising above
- ◇ **Or Spindle:** ?tradition, family
- ☯ **Uilleann Gooseberry:** ?nourishment, land-spirits
- ✕ **Ifin Honeysuckle:** ?binding together
- ☷ **Eamhancholl Witch Hazel:** ?sorrow

## The Runes

The Runes are the magical alphabet of the Norse peoples, a Germanic folk with close blood and cultural ties to the Celts. Both on the European continent and in the British Isles, Norse clans mingled with Celts to the enrichment of both peoples. The Runes are not a Celtic system, but their meanings and context so closely match those of Celtic cultures that they can harmoniously be a part of the Celtic magician's tools.

Rune lots can be made of wooden disks, or of disks of a tree-branch, carefully cut to even thickness and size. Each disk is then graven with one Rune. The most traditional means is to actually carve the Rune into the wood, then to stain it red. Tradition suggests the use of blood for that staining, but a small drop of your own blood in red paint would surely be sufficient.

Again, there are many resources for learning the Runes. If they call to you, there are many references available. Here we will offer only a simple chart of names and divinatory meanings.

Whether making Ogham or runic lots, the wood should be cut to size, and then purified with the Fire and Water Consecration charm, along with any ink,

paint, or tool that you mean to use. The process of inscribing the symbols will place a layer of bua onto them, so do not cleanse and purify them after they have been carved. Your omen tool should be kept on your shrine and treated as an important hallow.

### **Seeking an Omen by Sortilege**

The very simplest method of drawing an omen by sortilege is to draw a single lot. The symbol is then interpreted in light of the nature of the work at hand. The most reliably attested traditional method of sortilege involves drawing three lots. Depending on the apparent answer in the first three symbols, two more qualifying or clarifying questions may be asked.

In a public rite of worship the omen-question is most commonly: ‘What blessings do the spirits offer us in return for our offerings?’ In works of magic, you will need a larger variety of queries. When you are entering a place and seeking the welcome of the spirits, you might ask ‘Is my magic welcome here?’ If you are making a preliminary offering you might ask ‘Will you be willing to join me in this work?’ When you are working a specific rite, you will complete all the preparations and offerings, and then ask ‘What will be the result if I proceed with this working?’

Neither Ogham nor Runes are likely to produce a simple yes or no answer. If the symbols plainly agree with the nature of the work at hand, the omen can be considered good, the answer a ‘yes.’ If it is plainly opposed to the work, then the omen may be considered bad, or the answer a ‘no.’

If you receive a bad omen you may choose to ask additional questions. A series of yes/no or qualitative questions may reveal how you can gain the goal you seek. If you receive a bad omen at a key point in a spell or working, you will have the choice to attempt to improve the omen through additional sacrifices or other efforts, to shut down the rite and await a more auspicious day, or to go forward with the working despite the omens.

## **The Elder Futhark Runes**

### **Freya’s Aet**

ƿ Fehu Cattle, wealth

ᚢ Uruz Bull, strength

- Þ Thurisaz Giant, Thor's Hammer
- ᚠ Ansuz A God, Odin
- ᚱ Raido Journey
- < Ken Torch, Flame
- × Gebo Gift, sacrifice
- ᚢ Wunjo Joy, ecstasy

### Hagal's Aet

- ᚱ **Hagalaz** Hail, protection
- ᚦ **Nauthiz** Need-fire
- | **Isa** Ice, solidification
- ↪ **Jera** Year, harvest
- √ **Eihwaz** Yew, ancestors
- ᚦ **Perthro** Dice-up, merriment
- Y **Algiz** ?Axe, protection
- ᚨ **Sowulo** Sun, victor

### Tyr's Aet

- ↑ **Tiwaz** Tyr, honor
- ᚷ **Berkana** Birch, woman
- ᚰ **Manaz** humankind
- ᚱ **Ehwaz** horse
- ᚠ **Laguz** Lake, water
- ◇ **Ing** Freyr, fertility
- ⋈ **Othila** Inheritance
- ⋈ **Dagaz** Day

## **Augury**

One of the most authentically Celtic means of seeking omens is through augury. The word augury is often used synonymously with divination, but it has a more specific meaning. Augury is divination by the observation of natural things. The flight of birds, the play of fire and smoke, the movement of beasts and humans are interpreted by a combination of personal intuition and by bodies of traditional lore. The details of the traditions of Gaelic augury have been lost to time and to the encroachments of modern culture. Yet some bits have been rescued by folklorists, preserved from the last century in the highlands of Scotland.

The rural Scottish folk referred to one kind of augury as the frith. In the frith seership, the seer makes his charm and then uses the door of a house as a sort of ‘frame’ through which he gazes in order to see what omens may be seen. The things of the world pass by, and they serve as the signs and symbols for the diviner’s interpretation.

Such symbols are traditionally divided into lucky—rathadach, in Gaelic—and unlucky—rosadach—signs. The lore lists that have been preserved are from a strictly rural culture. Some omens called rathadach are: a bird on the wing; a dog; a horse; a duck; sheep (for a journey); a man (especially brown-haired); a person coming toward you; a best rising; a rooster. Some rosadach signs include: a person going away; a person laying down (sickness); a beast lying down (death); a red-haired person; hens without a rooster; a crow; a raven; a cat; a pig going away. It is said:

**A white horse for land**

**A grey horse for sea**

**A bay horse for a grave**

**A brown horse for sorrow.**

Other traditions of augury use a variety of ‘frames’ for augury-vision. A window, a fork in a branch, hands held before the face, a tube made with the fingers of the hand; and especially the hole in a hag-stone or holy-stone can serve as the window through which omens are sought. The hag stone has the



special virtue of aiding the seer to scry the peoples of the Otherworld.

Another way of framing the search for natural omens is by Quartering the Sky. Using the Wand and a proper charm, the bowl of the sky is divided by the four Airs, the directions understood with the meanings of the Four Provinces of Eire: The East for Bounty, the South for Song, the West for Wisdom, and the North for Battle. Omens can then be sought in each direction, according to the nature of the work at hand. This is also a good beginning to augury by the smoke and flame of the Fire.

Obviously, the countryside omens remembered in lore will have limited use for modern work. As we rebuild the work of Celtic magic, we must depend upon our own Imbas, our own intuition and inspiration, to rightly interpret what we see. We should be careful and temperate in our interpretations, especially as we begin to develop the skill. It can be useful to experiment by using augury first to take

omens for simple rites of blessing and worship, before moving on to more complex workings.

## **Charms for Seeking an Omen**

### **Sortilege**

When you wish to take an omen concerning your magic, or the aid of the spirits, or the fate of a person or venture, come to your shrine or Fire.

Take a clean white cloth and lay it before you, then hold your bag of lots in your hands. Make your link with the Two Powers, and extend your awareness into the Water and the Light.

Make a small offering into the Fire, and say:

**Dan of the Gift, Dan of the Song, Dan of Destiny**

**My gift I give to you.**

**Give me the gift, let me hear the song**

**Of the Turning of the Worlds**

*(Name and nature of the beings one is asking)*

**I have offered to you, as I seek (restate intention of the work)**

**Now let the true sight be in me, the true speech be mine,**

**Answer me now, Oh spirits,**

*(State question)*

Shake the bag of lots and let it fall into your lap or onto the cloth. Close

your eyes and clear your mind as you reach into the bag and draw three lots.

Place the three lots in a row before you on the cloth. Carefully identify each symbol, and contemplate the meanings of the signs. Open your heart and listen to your own inspiration or the voices of the spirits to help you understand the traditional meaning in relation to your question.

If the omen seems good then you should record or clearly remember the omen and pick up the lots. You may then proceed to the next phase of your work.

If the omen seems ill or uncertain, or if you wish to clarify some point in the first draw, you may frame a second question and draw a second triad of symbols. Some magicians choose to replace the first three lots in the bag before drawing the second three; others leave the first three before them.

If there is a need you may go so far as to frame a third question and draw a third triad. A nine-symbol reading of this sort should provide sufficient detail to reach a conclusion even in complex questions. Omens taken early in training, especially during active magical working, may well be kept to one or three symbols. New students might experiment with the full ninefold reading in the Welcoming charm, or in divining for yourself or your folk.

## **The Frith**

To seek an augury in the manner of the Frith, you will need a frame of some kind for your vision. If you are divining for a household, you might set your Hallows in the center of their house. The easternmost door will then serve as the frame of seeing.

If you are working outdoors, you will set your Hallows where you deem proper, being certain to know where the Airts lie. Outdoor work requires that you have an augury frame, such as a holey-stone, through which to gaze.

Hold your seeing frame in one hand, and make a small offering into the Fire, saying:

**Dan of the Gift, Dan of the Song, Dan of Destiny, my gift I give to you.**

**Give me the gift, let me hear the song**

**Of the Turning of the Worlds.**

**Vision before me, vision behind me**

**Vision over me, vision beneath me**

**Vision within me, vision without me**

**The Power of Magic leading me to true seeing, without falsehood,**

### **To all that I wish to see.**

Walk three times around your Fire, diesel, and go to the east of your space. Gaze through your frame, find your center and allow your connection to the deeps and the heights to open. Be patient, and calm.

When omens appear it is best to speak them aloud, along with whatever meaning or interpretation seems proper. If the omens are good then you proceed to further work. If it is ill or uncertain, it is, perhaps, less easy to ask additional questions through augury. You must rely on your own wisdom, perhaps seeking clarification through sortilege.

### **Quartering the Sky**

If you wish to work by Quartering the Sky, you should prepare in the same way as for the frith, but have your Slat rather than a vision-frame. Face east, and raise your wand overhead. With the wand, draw a cross that divides the sky into the Four Airs, as you say:

**Dan of the Gift, Dan of the Song, Dan of Destiny, my gift I give to you.  
Give me the gift, let me hear the song  
Of the Turning of the Worlds.  
By the Four Airs I quarter the sky  
East wind blow bountiful, South wind blow song  
West wind blow wisdom, North wind blow strong  
The Power of Magic leading me to true seeing, without falsehood,  
To all that I wish to see.**

Make three circuits of the Fire, deosil, carefully observing in each direction.

Stand in the center and face the quarter that is most relevant to your question. Turn slowly to each quarter and make note of the omens. **Speak your judgment aloud.**

### **The Pendulum Oracle**

One of the most direct, traditional (though not provably Celtic) methods of questioning the spirits is through the use of a pendulum calibrated to your own inner cues. In such a method, the pendulum is allowed to swing freely, so that swinging or twirling one way might mean 'yes,' the other 'no.' More detailed responses may be had by using the pendulum over a letter board, or map, or other symbolic diagram. The pendulum relies on your own inner contact with

the spirit, though it may be enhanced by consecrating the pendulum as a talisman of divination. It uses subconscious muscular movements to allow the pendulum to swing in accord with your own inner perceptions, thus providing answers to queries.

The pendulum may be made of almost any sort of pendant, but preferably one that is symmetrical, that hangs straight and balanced. It can be hung from any sort of chain or cord. While there is a body of pseudo-scientific ideas about the size, type of material and length of cord of pendulums, this can all safely be ignored by the magician. A pendulum can often be improvised at need, but there is value in creating a specific pendulum as a magical tool. When you have constructed or obtained one to your liking, give it a basic purification, and leave it on your altar for a while. It can be stored in a simple small pouch.

The first step in pendulum work is to ‘calibrate’ it—to determine how you and it together will produce yes and no answers. Begin by seating yourself at your shrine and entering a basic state of peace. Find a position in which you can comfortably hold the pendulum steady and motionless. Holding both your hand and mind calm, begin by asking a question that you know should produce ‘yes’ for an answer. Do not try to hold the pendulum still, and do not try to make it move. Ask the question up to three times, waiting each time to see whether the pendulum moves. It may swing forward and backward, or side to side. It may rotate deosil (clockwise) or tuathal (counterclockwise). In the first stages it may move with no clear motion.

Whatever the result, after three times asking, you should change the question to one that you are certain will produce a ‘no’ answer. It does not matter how absurd or obvious the question is. Ask it aloud, or think it clearly in silent words. Wait between each of the three askings to see what the pendulum does. Do your best to avoid any conscious effort to influence the pendulum’s movement.

When the pendulum has begun to consistently answer the test questions, you can begin asking more specific things. Some magicians will be able to use it for what some call ‘psychic’ work—dowsing on land or on a map, finding lost objects, determining the gender of children, or the nature of illness, etc. For others it will be more useful as a means of determining whether an offering is accepted or, in advance, appropriate, or whether the spirits approve of a project and will participate in it. By asking a series of yes or no questions, you can arrive at some detail on matters such as proper offerings, times and locations,

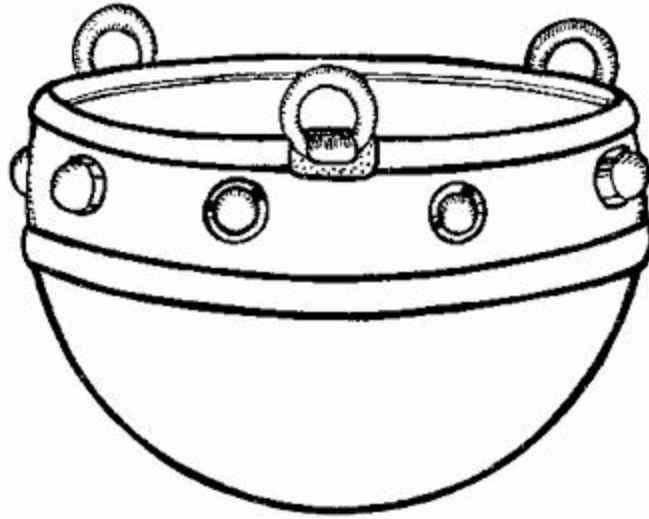
which spirits are proper for your intentions, etc. Those who find themselves talented in this method can use it also to produce more detailed omens. Take your Runic or Ogham lots (or even English letters) and arrange them in a circle. The pendulum can then swing to indicate letters in turn.

Using the pendulum is a matter of talent, patience, and persistence. Some students will have an immediate response; others will need much longer to produce reliable results. When you are able to make it work, it provides a clear channel to the spirits.



A simple chart for calibrating a pendulum: It uses the most conventional movements of the pendulum for the answers—forward and backward for yes, sideways for no, sun wise for yes, anti-sun wise for no. Diagonals may be used to mean ‘maybe, or ‘uncertain.’ If you wish, you may copy this diagram for use as a guide in your work, or create your own, or work without one entirely.

## Part Four



## The Book of Magic

## **The Druid's Circle**

This rite is structured using the same basic outline as the Rite of Offering, but devised for use by a single magician, or a small group working for a single goal.

The Grove is arranged with the Bile at the center, with the Coire Tobar at its foot. The Coire Tinne is placed between the magician's seat and the Lorg. A seat should be arranged within reach of the Fire and Well. The magician should be able to rise and seat herself easily. Beside the seat, all of the offerings and tools of the rite are arranged on a cloth or low table. Water is in the Well, but the Fire is unlit.

Work the Two Powers attunement, and bring the Fire and Water into your hands. Say:

**Mother of All, I am your child. Fire of Making, burn bright in me.**

If it is your custom to offer to Those Outside, do so now.

Make sure that the silver and the oil are at hand, place the silver into the Well Cauldron and say:

**Into the Deep I send my call with bright silver.**

**May my voice be heard brightly.**

**Let this cauldron be the Mouth of the Deep,**

**The Eye of the Deep, the Cunny of the Deep.**

**Rise from the Dark, Waters of Life, and be in this Cauldron.**

The Fire is lit and an offering of oil is given as the charm is spoken:

**Into the sky I send my call, with this good smoke.**

**May my voice be heard sweetly.**

**Kindled for all, with harm to none,**

**To foe and friend and every being, let this Fire be a blessing.**

**Shine in this flame, Fire of the Gods, and be in this Cauldron.**

The Tree is honored with Fire and Water, saying:

**Rooted deep and crowned high, let this staff be the Tree, the Pillar,**

**The Peg that holds fast this circle.**

**By the meeting of fire and water be this place the Crossroads of Worlds,**

**The Sacred Center where the Gods and mortals meet.**

The magician rises and takes up the Well, or dips a bowl of water from it. He walks once deosil around the Hallows, sprinkling the Water and saying, three times:

**By the cleansing Waters  
I claim this place for my work.  
Let the Might of the Sea wash away all ill  
From this Sacred Ground**

Take up the Fire, or light herbs or incense from it, and walk once deosil around the Hallows, saying three times:

**By the shining of my Fire, I claim this place for my work.  
Let the Light of the Sky bring all good to this Sacred Ground**

Return the Fire and Water to their places.

Return to the center, being certain to also cleanse yourself with the Water and Fire. Take up the Slat and again walk the circle, drawing a boundary with the Slat, saying three times:

**East, then South, then West, then North, I claim this place for my work.**

**Let the Life of the Land be strong in this Sacred Ground.**

Turn to the Four Airs and salute with the Slat, saying:

**East wind blow bounty, South wind blow song  
West wind blow wisdom, North wind blow strong**

Return to the center, stand facing east, hold the slat at the heart and speak this charm:

**The Fire, the Well, the Sacred Tree,  
flow and flame and grow in me  
By Land, Sea and Sky, below and on high  
Thus is this circle claimed and hallowed.**

## **The Gate Spell**

Prepare an offering of oil or incense, and enter the presence of the gatekeeper in vision. Make such offering as is your custom, asking aid in the Opening of the Ways.

With the Slat, draw an opening triskel over the center, saying:

**In every place where Triads meet, there is the Center of the Worlds.  
Let this sacred center be the boundary of all worlds,  
That my voice be carried and my vision sees.  
Now let the Fire open the Gate  
Let the Well open the Gate  
Let the Tree hold fast the Way Between.**



**Open as an eye of seeing,  
Open as a mouth of speaking,  
Open as an oaken door, between the circle and the Otherworlds.  
By the Keeper of Gates, and by my Will and Word, let the Gate  
be open!**

Take some time to deepen your trance and open your vision eye.

With this conjuring, the Ciorcal Draoi is cast. Into this place you will call all those spirits and powers that are proper to whatever work you undertake. In many such works it is proper to begin with a general invocation of all the spirits. If you have undertaken the Triple Alliance it is well to bring your allies to your work with this charm, as well.

### **The Hosting**

Prepare the offerings, whether oil or incense or ale for all, or herbs for the Sidhe, food for the Dead and oil for the Gods. Open wide your vision eyes and say:

**I stand before the open Gate and call out to the Host of Spirits.**

**To the Fire of Welcome I invite the Three Holy Kindreds.**

**Mighty and beloved Dead**

**Be welcome at my Fire** *(make offering)*

**Wild Ones, Nobles of the Sidhe**

**Be welcome at my Fire** *(make offering)*

**Eldest, wisest, Shining Ones**

**Be welcome at my Fire** *(make offering)*

**Oh Host of the Holy, I call you on the Spirit Road.**

**By the Four Winds and the Nine Waves,**

**By the World Tree's root and branch.**

**By the Four Treasures and the Crown of Don,**

**By Fire's light and Well's might,**

**Come to my call, and accept my sacrifice!** *(Make final offering)*

Sit for a while, and open your vision eye to their presence.

Closing the Circle

First be certain that all of the Powers that you have called have been properly thanked. A charm for thanking the Three Kins might run thus:

**Blessed beings, Three Holy Kins, I thank you for joining me at my  
Fire.**

**Oh Mighty Dead, I thank you for your strength**

**Oh Noble Sidhe, I thank you for your beauty**

**Oh Shining Gods, I thank you for your love**

**For all your aid, again, I thank you!**

**Go now if you will, and let there be peace between us in all things**

Make a small offering of thanks to the Gatekeeper, saying:

**Now I end what I began.**

**Let me go forth from my Fire**

**With wisdom in me, with Love in me, with Power in me**

**As I work my will in the world.**

Make a closing triskel, saying:

**Now I close what was opened.**

**Closed as a door, closed as a mouth, closed as an eye.**

**Now let this Fire be but flame**

**Let this Well be but water**

**Let all be as it once was, save for the magic I have made.**

**Let the Gate be closed!**

Take up the Slat and turn to the Four Airs, saying:

**Let there be peace between me and the East**

**Let there be peace between me and the South**

**Let there be peace between me and the West**

**Let there be peace between me and the North**

**Mother of All, this work is ended!**

**So Be it!**

## **Concerning Spellbinding**

Spellbinding is the most immediately practical of the skills of Celtic magic. In it are combined all the skills of magic—trance and vision, shaping and making, invocation of the Gods and Spirits, poetic power and the ability to direct spiritual energy. While working spells for practical goals is often referred to as ‘low’ magic, it requires the same levels of skill and accomplishment as any theurgy.

The basic tools and skills of spellbinding (i.e. the working of specific rites for specific personal goals) are the same as those of Pagan religion. You must have your shrine, as well as your portable worship hallows. You must be versed to the rites of invocation and offering to the Gods and Spirits and in the skills of trance and vision, as well as the work of the Two Powers.

Practical magic requires attention to the turning of the Wheels of Time, as we have discussed, with spells timed to take advantage of the rising and falling of the light. You must have your Slat and Coire ready—especially for the Cauldron Spells given in this section. You must have, above all, a clearly defined intention for any work of practical magic you undertake.

## **The Intent of the Spell**

A spell is an arrangement of symbols and practices meant to achieve a specific magical goal. While some spells may seek a purely spiritual goal—for instance in opening an Otherworld Gate—we most often use ‘spell’ to refer to works done for practical, common-life goals. When we undertake a spell, we must begin with a properly defined goal.

There are two common errors in devising the goal of a spell. First of all, one can fail to be specific enough. Sometimes a student tries to ‘get it all’ in one big working. Magic works by tugging gently on the great web of causation, allowing goals to snake toward us without violating the integrity of the flow of event. If you were to attempt a spell with the intention, “Make me happy,” you would be seeking, potentially, such a vast number of changes that you would be unlikely to be able to give it sufficient power. Such a work would simply be unlikely to move the web of fate sufficiently to succeed.

In the same way, the intention, “Bring me the perfect home,” will be unlikely to succeed unless you have clearly specified what ‘perfect’ means to you. Perhaps you have seen a lovely house that seems perfect for your needs. You might choose to work a spell to gain that specific house. This brings us to

the second common error in devising a magical intent—being overly specific.

The ideal magical intent usually works not for the gain of a specific item or situation. It works to fulfill the basic background needs that a specific object or situation might meet. In our example of the new dwelling, we can imagine what might have struck us as ‘perfect.’ It might be the number of rooms (bedroom, music room, temple), the location, the grounds, maybe even that round tower. All of these might be understood to lie behind your idea of the ‘perfect’ house.

The method is always to seek the widest possible set of variables that will bring you and your goals together, while fulfilling the specifics of your basic background needs. This requires a certain maturity. You must be able to examine your own desires, isolate core needs from the impulses of the moment, and be able to hold your center while focusing on those needs.

When you have devised a core intention for your spell, that intention should be expressed as a symbol. One simple way to do that is to reduce it to a sigil by the method given in the section on signs and talismans. Such a sigil can then be enclosed in a circle and the circle used as a center line for an Ogham sentence. If you have the skill to render your intention into the Irish language, then it can be better written in Ogham, or properly sigilized using Fionn’s Window.

In all cases, the purpose of such sigilization is to create an expression of will that cannot be comprehended by the conscious mind. The conscious thinking and talking mind is the mental equivalent of the daily world, the noontide of common life. Just as we work to move past common life into the twilight of the Otherworlds, so we seek to move past our conscious mind into stranger places in ourselves. Ordinary words, especially in written language, are anchors that tend to hold us firmly in our common awareness. The creation of nonverbal symbols gives us a symbol that carries our will but can be taken more easily into inner realms.

Preparation for magic begins with intent. All the rites and symbols of the work mean nothing without the will to enliven them. When you have formulated the intention for your spell and rendered it into a secret symbol, you can proceed to prepare for the work itself.

### **Preparing for the Spell**

In some cases you may need to do spell work quickly, in response to immediate needs. In that case you will shortcut all of these preparations and use whatever materials and power you have stored away. More often a spell will be

a more deliberate thing, decided on well in advance and prepared for by all the usual means already discussed.

You must choose where the spell will be performed. Most often this will be at your own home shrine or personal ritual space. For other works, you may wish to go outdoors, or to places where you have not previously worked. In those cases, you should seek the permission of the spirits of that place, taking omens to be sure that you are welcomed. Be certain that any such place is entirely private and unlikely to offer interruptions. In time, you may develop a short list of natural places in your area.

You must observe the times in which you will work, choosing a sunset or sunrise harmonious to your intent. Once you know when you will work, you should choose a period, three days is customary, during which to prepare for the spell. Begin by divining to be certain that the whole intention is well-omened, or adjust the intent until it is. During the three days you should make simple offerings to the Gods and spirits that you will call in your spell. These can be added to daily devotions, or worked as special rites of offering. Again, use divination to be certain that the spirits are willing to help you reach your goal.

When the time has come, set up your ritual space, or prepare your tools for set up if you will work in a remote location. Take a ritual bath if possible, or at least work a Fire and Water Cleansing on yourself. Then retire to your shrine, or go to your working place and set up your hallows.

### **Working the Spell**

Folklore traditions have mostly lost the idea of ‘opening rites’ in the work of spellbinding. Folk spells usually simply assemble ingredients, observe time and place and jump right in to the core symbolic work. In a setting where magic has the thrill of the illicit such as medieval or early modern Ireland or Scotland, the very act of beginning a spell—a work of forbidden magic—could have triggered the mental states required for successful magic. With modern freedom and psychological awareness, it is better, perhaps, to restore a ritualized setting in which to set the specific work of the spell.

You’ll begin with the rites that establish the Center and open the Gates between the Worlds. The Cauldron spells given here are arranged for the ‘Druid’s Circle’ format, but could be adapted for the Simple Rite of Offering. Opening rites establish your spiritual power in the space and begin the entrancement that will allow you to cast the spell.

Once you have opened the Gate, you will make offerings to the powers that are proper to the intention. It can sometimes be sufficient, and often useful, to make a general invocation to the Three Kindreds, such as the Hosting charm. In most cases you will also invite and offer to whatever Gods and Spirits are specifically involved in the spell. After the sacrifices have been made, a final omen should be taken. If the omen is ill then you should be willing to close down the rite without working the spell. You may choose to return to the work as soon as the next night, if the omens warrant it. In most cases, the Powers will indicate that you may proceed to the work.

In our Druidic ritual forms, we commonly call for the power of the Gods and spirits to join with our own to lay the bua of the spell. When we work a spell it is our own personal will—itsself an expression of our bri, of the Divine Within—that directs the power, but we seek the agreement and aid of the spirits to add their bri to our own. In many rites of Druidic magic, you may choose to bless a cup and drink power in the same way as is common in rites of worship and blessing, then proceed to the casting of the spell. In the Cauldron Spells given below, we judge that a good omen means that the power is flowing to us, and we turn the blessing into the core work of the spell.

In magical work, we often speak of ‘charging’ an object with the energy, and thereby with the intention, of the work. This is a key element of any practical magic rite. The accumulated bri of the working—your own, the Gods’ and spirits’, that of natural things and times, etc.—are shaped into the bua of the rite by your core intention and vision, then attached to a series of symbolic material objects that are used to further direct the bua. This idea of ‘charging’ an object is a complex one, with roots in both science and poetry.

The idea of charging an object with ‘magical energy’ seems to be a metaphor drawn from physical science, in which a magnetic or electrical charge is transferred from one object to another. This is accomplished by a variety of symbolic methods. You can bring the Two Powers into your hands and direct the power to flow into the form of the object while envisioning the key ideas of the rite. This amounts to creating a ‘spirit body’ for the object by your own will and power, making it real in the inner realms by shaping a form for it there.

On another level, to ‘charge’ an object is to ‘give instructions’ to it, to explain to it the ‘mission’ for which it is made. In rites of initiation, the section in which a new initiate is instructed in the symbols, rites, and duties of their grade is called the ‘charge.’ Students familiar with traditional witchcraft will

know of the ‘Charge of the Goddess,’ in which the priestess recites the traditional instructions and advice of their Goddess to the assembled witches. So, when we ‘charge’ an object, we not only fill it with ‘energy;’ we must also fill it with ‘information’, usually by reciting its power, purpose and use in spoken words.

Words are not the only means of conveying information. The third meaning of ‘charge’ comes from the ancient art of heraldry. In the creation of a ‘coat of arms,’ a charge is a symbol which is placed upon a blank shield to display a meaning to all who see it. In the same way, the symbols placed on a talisman’s blank surface are referred to as ‘charges.’ So, when we are shaping the power in an object which we are charging magically, we can understand ourselves to be placing the symbols and sigils of the intent onto the spiritual ‘blank surface’ of the object.

When we work a spell, objects are charged with our intent as we go. The spell-objects are charged with their symbolic meaning, as are the three flames that warm the Cauldron. The contents of the Cauldron are, in turn, charged with each and all of the bri of the components. Finally, the talisman or potion or other blessing is drawn from the Cauldron and charged with the bri and bua—the power, meaning and mission—of the spell.

In the creation of talismans, the final direction and shaping of the magic is directed into the object. In other sorts of work the final information and power is sent directly toward a remote target—for instance in healing, where the patient may be some distance away. In either case the intent of the spell is wrapped into a single, final ‘burst.’ This involves a moment of highly energized, yet relaxed, trance in which the mind is focused on the goal while deeply connected to the Two Powers and to whatever spirit allies have been invoked. This moment of interconnected access has been called ‘gnosis’ in some schools of magic. It is this moment of awareness in which one knows that the Divine in You has creative power, the power to affect the flow and weave of Fate.

In some of the most popular forms of NeoPagan spell casting, this process is often thought of as ‘raising power.’ Some witches conceive of a power raised by a combination of physical exertion and trance, which can carry the information of their will over great distances when it is ‘sent’ by a trained mind. The methods used in ‘power raising’—dance, rhythm, chanting, etc.—can and do induce the gnosis state. Drumming in regular, unchanging pattern, dance, intense breathing, repetitive chanting, even sexual activity can be excellent aids

to reaching the proper sorts of energized trance. Any of these methods can be applied to the works given here, but it may be sufficient, for those with trained skill in trance and energy work, to wrap all the threads of the rite together and activate them with the Dord Draoi. The humming buzz of the Dord can serve to excite the flow of personal power into the spell.

When working with the ‘power-raising’ model, it is important to develop a sense of timing about when to bring the raising to its peak and release it as a sending. In the classical approach of Witchcraft, this is referred to as ‘calling the drop’—the moment when the priestess calls for the dancing or chanting to stop abruptly. When you work alone, you must make that decision yourself. The goal is to bring your flow of power to a full boil and sustain it, then cast it forth—toward a distant target or toward a local object being enchanted—before it begins to flag or lessen. You must seek to send the power at the moment just before you can no longer sustain the full flow and weave of powers and ideas. Changing suddenly from a strong, focused flow of energy to a quiet, relaxed state is a fine method of generating the gnosis. In the moment of silence you are likely to plainly feel the rushing of power, as you hold fast to the words and symbols of the spell.

When you have sent the final casting of the spell, and the new bua has been established, you should make some gesture to seal the work. If the form of the spell is not deliberately sealed, the energy is likely to flow naturally away, returning to its habitual place and form. A simple laying on of the Slat, combined with a simple charm is sufficient. The charm can be as simple as ‘let it be so’ in English or in Irish. Slightly longer forms have been provided in some of the rites.

In any work of practical magic it is important to end the work decisively, and then to put it out of your mind as completely as possible. When you have buried the seed of a working you must not keep digging it up to view its growth. The form and content of the spell should be, as far as possible, forgotten. Even the intent itself should be allowed to fade as you go about your common days so that your magic may grow in secret. To be specific, a magical work in progress should never be spoken about with those not directly involved. To speak of a working is to risk reducing its power.

The skills of practical magic are an expression of the divine will and power in each of us. Just as the Gods and spirits can act to shape the harmonies of Dan, so can we, if in lesser degree. However, the Great Dance of the Worlds



moves on by its own momentum and we must apply our best wisdom when we choose our deeds. In this matter we begin at a great deficit to the spirits, whose vision and perspective must make their choice of when to act and when to wait more clear.

The magician might choose to create for herself a web of spells, of talismans, and wardings in an effort to shape her life and world. If such a web were carefully shaped and balanced, it might be sustained for some long while. More often such efforts come to be strains or impediments to the flow of the world—such things do not last long. When such a web fails, it is unusual for the magician to enjoy the result.

So seek the blessing of the Powers. Live in harmony with the Wheels and Seasons; drink the cup of blessing at the sacrifices. Keep to virtue, and work magic only when your will is in harmony with your wisdom. If you live in harmony the flow of your luck will serve you well enough that you will seldom need to work spells.

### **Concerning the Powers of Natural Things**

The practice of magic has always employed natural things—herbs, stones, and other objects—as sources of bri, of magical strength. The wise teach that the powers of the spiritual world make their mark in the material world, and that all existence is bound together in a web of symbol, meaning and power. Thus, every natural thing partakes in some way of one of the divine powers, whether of the Gods, the Dead, or the Spirits. It is the business of the wise to know these webs of symbolism, in order to bring together a harmonious web of influences for any magical working.

A great deal of effort has been put into creating systematic charts of such symbols, and there are many that are central to traditional symbolism. Yet, in the end, it is the intuition and judgment of any magician that decides what symbols are proper for any working. In order to make such judgments, you must become a student of the nature of things, learning what the world is and how it works, so that you may truly understand the meaning of things as well.

In this work, I can offer only some simple lists of objects that are useful in the sorts of spells I have given. They include all the objects and aids called for in the Cauldron Spells. These lists are mere hints of the body of lore that the Celtic Magician should seek to comprehend.

## Nine Herbs

*The use of herbs for healing and magic is a huge field that will repay a lifetime of study. It is a serious study, and herbs should be used for healing only with a clear understanding of their values and risks.*

**Mugwort**—A powerful magical herb, useful in treating disorders of the womb and female nature; used in works of vision, seership and divination, for protection of the home and for consecration, especially of silver. Used both in incense and potions, and taken internally as a tea.

**Vervain**—The sovereign Druidic herb. It is useful in any magical work. Infused in water, it is used for purification and consecration of holy things, altars, etc. It is visionary, and causes spirits to take visible form; turns aside ill, awakens the spirit, proper for love and affection spells. Gather at Midsummer.

**Mistletoe**—A famous Druidic plant, proper for works of fertility, whether in childbirth, creativity or in ventures. Connected with spiritual inspiration and initiation, it is bound with red thread to make a protection charm. It banishes ill and actively attracts joy. Good for the heart and circulation and against convulsions, but the berries are poisonous.

**Mullein**—An herb of protection and of banishing ill, and especially an herb of the Ancestors, used to attract the spirits of the Dead. The seed-spike, soaked in oil or wax, can be used as a torch by which to summon spirits. Good for the lungs, and good smoked, as well as in poultices for sores, wounds and swellings.

**Lavender**—An herb of the mystery and power of the Gods, it adds strength and permanence to any working; for meditation and invocation, blessing, and the attraction of wealth. The tea calms nerves and headaches, and the herb is applied in a salve for skin sores, joint swelling and pain.

**Plantain**—Called the woundwort, plantain is strong against any wound or scrape or rash on the skin. It should be mashed until juicy, and then applied as a poultice to the wound. It is also taken internally to relieve fevers and cool the body. It can be used in healing charms.

**Chamomile**—A strong herb of healing and calming, it is often used as a tea to calm the nerves and aid sleep. It is also used in charms, for persistence and constitutional strength, to turn aside ill and soothe sorrow.

**Periwinkle**—Called the ‘Sorcerer’s Violet,’ this flower is used to bring protection against ill magic, for healing and spells of love, and for luck-

charms. The flowers are used, often powdered, in charms. It is also a proper offering for the Dead, to bring them joy and peace.

**St John's Wort**—Gathered at Midsummer, this herb makes an amulet that allows the vision of the Sidhe. It protects against lightning, and strong storms; an oil made from the fresh blossoms is good for burns, sores and all kinds of wounds.

## Nine Trees

*The Ogham alphabet offers us a large list of Celtic correspondences and natural symbols. You should make the understanding of the Ogham a special part of your learning. Here I give nine trees that are especially useful in magic.*

**Oak**—for strength, law and all things concerned with lightning and the storm. Male sexuality. Acorns fine for the basis of charms

**Rowan**—for enchantment, magic, and both encounter with and protection from the Sidhe. Tie a rowan cross with red thread for protection.

**Elder**—The power of the Queen of the Sidhe, and protection from the Sidhe; grants seeing of the spirits. Strengthens magic, for good or ill. Elder should not be cut green, nor burned, and should be used with care.

**Hazel**—the tree of poetic inspiration, bardic magic and the Ancient Wisdom in general. Best for wands (and divining forks), along with Rowan.

**Apple**—The Otherworld, Tir Na nOg, and the blessing of the Gods. Works of love and fertility, and the wisdom of the earth.

**Yew**—the power of the Ancestors, and the Dead. Trance and seership, the presence of the Court of the Dead.

**Alder**—fire rising from the water. Counsel and guidance, support and strength. A tree of the Cauldron of Bounty, source of prosperity and joy.

**Willow**—water, night and the moon. Female sexuality. Power of shaping and making, also of service. Seership and divination, night-magic and converse with spirits.

**Birch**—new beginnings, the power of spring and growth. Love and sex, and the maypole. Purification and life's lessons.

## Nine Stones

*Gemstones and semiprecious stones are the flower of the land, among the most powerful of the nonliving allies.*

**Hematite**—Healing of wounds; protection in battle; fame; easy delivery;

conjuring of spirits.

**Crystal**—Vision and seership; source of energy; reception of spirit power; Celts used crystal eggs as spell-stones; worn pierced for protection.

**Amethyst**—Good fortune and good judgment; increase in beauty and affection; pleasant dreams and good sleep; chastity and sobriety.

**Carnelian**—Prevents illness, arrests bleeding; eases fear and brings a cheerful mind; male sexuality.

**Jet**—a stone of the Dead, for mourning, and of the Fire; good against nightmares and spirit-attacks.

**Moonstone**—Night, dreams and visions; peace of mind and emotional security; constancy, success and renown; invisibility.

**Topaz**—Day, warmth and light; wisdom and beauty, loyalty and strength; against ill-magic and night demons, and for courage.

**Amber**—Power of the Fire in the Water; source of great energy for any kind of magic.

**Lapis Lazuli**—cleverness and bounty; protection; spiritual awakening; against melancholy or madness.

## Nine Signs

*Tradition gives us a long list of special objects and aids for the magician. A great deal of such symbolism relies on the intuition and imagination of the magician, aided by traditional knowledge.*

**The Hag Stone**—A stone with a natural hole is a traditional source of several kinds of magic. It acts as a protective amulet, as well as granting the sight of the Otherworld. It can also be used as a peering-hole for the work of augury, or the frith.

**Arrowhead**—The tiny flint arrowheads of the ancient peoples were seen by the Celts as symbols of the weapons of the Sidhe. An arrowhead can be used in charms to remove disease caused by such intrusions.

**Mirror Shard**—Glass mirrors are things of remarkable power. Tiny, round mirrors are useful as cauldron charms for seership, protection and glamour.

**Iron Nail**—Iron has sovereign power to turn aside attack, and neutralize undesired magic. Iron or steel nails are useful in protection charms. They can be blessed and driven into a door or window or into the ground before a door, or used in many other ways.

**Thread**—Thread is a core manifestation of the human Power of Shaping. It

symbolizes and embodies our ability to bind and hold, to bring together and transform. Red thread is used to bind spells of many kinds, as in the old anti-magic charm:

*Rowan wood and red thread*

*Rob the witches of their speed*

Blue thread is also said to be used by Scottish witches in their charms.

**Gold & Silver & Copper**—These three metals are called the ‘Noble Metals,’ the most suitable to decoration, shaping, and for use in trade. Your kit should contain a small bit of gold for charms of prosperity, healing, and wisdom, silver for seership and commerce, and copper if you can’t manage either of those. Of course you should have a bit of silver set aside with which you silver your well.

**Sigil Charms**—It is often useful to give a sigil into the Cauldron as an ‘ingredient’ in a spell. The spells given in this book sometimes call for the eye, hand, or mouth charm graven or written on some substance. It is useful to create a permanent set of such charms, perhaps graven on pebbles taken from running water in a place known to you. They could be graven with a tool, or painted and lacquered.

**Salt**—Salt is the purest and most simple manifestation of the blessing of the Underworld in human life. Whether from the earth or from the sea, salt brings the power of potential, the essential nutrient that allows life. Salt is useful in charms of protection and of banishing ill, of prosperity and healing.

## **Sacrificial Magic**

One of the most common forms of practical magic among polytheist cultures is the offering of gifts and sacrifices to specific Gods and spirits in exchange for boons. The many Deities have their specific powers and inclinations, in many cultures amounting to ‘specializations.’ They like their specific sorts of offerings and will respond with blessings of the kind proper to their natures. This is, perhaps, the simplest form of practical magic, in which the will of the magician is expressed to a powerful spirit and the spirit does the rest. This should not be viewed as mere supplication – in Pagan cultures, the Powers are thought to be bound by tradition and obligation to aid worshippers when we ask in a proper way.

The Gods of the Celtic world are not as specialized as those of some other Pagan cultures. Many of the mightiest of the Shining Ones are transfunctional,

having aspects of the Wise, the Warriors, and the Sustainers. Such beings can be offered to for many purposes. Others of the Gods of the Gael, such as Goibniu the Smith, have functions proper to more specific needs.

This form of spellbinding is remembered in folklore in a variety of ways. Such methods as candle burning, knot and cord magic, even the use of herbs and stones may seem like superstition when viewed as stand-alone elements. When restored to place in sacrificial magic the meaning of such folklore methods become clear.

### **Simple Sacrifices**

When you wish to ask a God or spirit for a boon, choose a plate of a color proper to the Power, and draw the sigil of your intention on it in a complementary color. Place upon the plate the foods, symbolic objects, and a small candle or fire, all of the sorts hallowed to the Deity. The whole is taken to a proper place—a shrine if such a thing exists, or to a place of betweenness, a crossroads, the shore of a body of water, or the top of a high place. It is offered with a proper prayer, the fire lit, and all left to the elements.

This sort of offering can always be made to your personal Patron Deity. Your Patron may be of a specific nature—a smith or a harper—but every deity is entirely able to help their special worshippers in any sort of work. Your regular relationship with the Patron will include regular offerings of incense, oil, or whatever, made at your shrine. When you have a more specific need, you may choose to make a more detailed offering. When you offer to a Deity that is resident in your shrine, you might make the offering at your shrine and leave it over night. In the morning, the plate should be taken out to a shore or crossroad.

To any of the Powers, the offering can include the basics of an honor-meal. Good bread, butter, pork, and clear water are always welcomed by the spirits. To these should be added a small flame, and a bit of incense, and such special items as are proper to the God of the working.

### **Symbols and Offerings for the Irish Gods**

**Danu:** the Lozenge, all kletic symbols, blue and white

**Works:** Cosmic Wisdom, enlightenment, compassion

**Donn-Cernunnos:** The Antlers, coins, black and gold

**Works:** Wisdom, magical/occult knowledge, prosperity and wealth, death and rebirth.

**The Dagda:** Porridge, acorns, whiskey, Cauldron, Harp & Club, red and white

**Works:** magic and priest craft, fertility, bounty, prosperity, poetic inspiration.

**Boann:** Milk, corn, river water, the Salmon, the White Cow white and green

**Works:** Wisdom and intuition, nurturance and love, fertility

**Nuada:** Silver hand, sword image, ale, red and silver

**Works:** Protection and victory, healing of wounds, especially of violence.

**Brigid:** The Brigid Cross, the Triple Flame; Hammer, Harp & Cup; white and red

**Works:** Healing, poetry, artifice; safety and protection from poverty.

**Ogma:** Grain, Honey, Ogham letters, the flail, the sun-face. Gold and green

**Works:** Leadership and persuasion; rhetoric and oratory; feats of strength

**The Morrigan:** spear, crow feathers, bones, red wine, red and black

**Works:** Defense against ill, prophecy, magic and trance, sexual power.

**Lugh:** The sun-disk, eagle feathers, spear, white and gold

**Works:** Victory, courage and skill; wit and artifice; defense and strength.

**Manannan:** Sea shells, apples, fish, Apple's Heart, grey and silver

**Works:** Divination, magic; speaking with the Dead; travel, merchantry and trade.

**Aengus Og:** Harp, birds, hazel and hawthorn, speckled

**Works:** Love & pleasure; art, music and enchantment.

**Aine:** Mead, Gold, breasts, green and gold

**Works:** law and justice, rulership and sovereignty, the Sidhe

**Goibniu:** iron nails, hammer, ale, black and gold

**Works:** Skill and artifice, strength and magic, protection

## Image Offerings

One of the most common methods of communicating one's desires to the spirits is to create simple images of the goal. This was most usually used for healing. An image of the afflicted part, a leg or eye or hand, was made out of clay or wax or lead, and given to the deity. This is entirely adaptable for Celtic work. Making the object yourself adds your own Power of Shaping to the work, and fills the votive image with your energy and intention. Of course whole human body forms can be used in various ways, perhaps engraving them with the sigils of the intent. It is a short leap to demonstrating your intention by working your will on such a poppet, as you make offerings.

Within Celtic tradition, a most proper form for magical idolons is the Magical Head. This can be a clay or wooden form of a head in the Celtic style. You might make the head alone, or mount it upon a stone or pillar. You might make a head to represent the Deity of your intention, thus creating a shrine (at least a temporary one) where you make your offering.

## **Candle Offerings**

The use of colored and specially shaped candles is one of the most common methods of Pagan spell craft. Candles of proper symbolic color and shape are burned to express the intent of the spell. The fact that what is occurring is the consumption of an offering by fire makes this a natural method to adapt to Druidic magic.

There are two basic kinds of candle spells. Simple candle spells involve the selection, blessing, and burning of a single candle that expresses the whole work of the spell. Such a spell is easy to prepare as an offering.

Begin by devising your intent and preparing any sigils. Make a simple rite of offering to whatever deity is proper to the work. Before the Prayer of sacrifice, offer the unlit candle, saying something like:

**Shining and mighty (name of spirit), I bring you this offering of light and flame. See it very well, Oh (name) and hear me as I name my intent.**

Elevate the candle and describe your will

**Aid me, O Eldest and Mightiest, and this offering will be yours. Aid me, O Shining One, and I will give you this flame. Aid me, I (name), and let this fire light my way to my will.**

Make the prayer of sacrifice, but do not burn the candle until you are ready to make the offering.

Compound candle spells use several candles to express the spell. Candles of several different colors or shapes are used to represent specific elements of a spell. Those candles are then moved over the course of several lightings, until the pattern of the candles has shifted to one that represents the goal of the work. In such a case, all the candles can be offered in turn in a blessing rite. Such compound spells are usually worked directly at your shrine, over several days.

## **Knot Magic**



In working magic with a knotted cord, the work is done in two stages. In the first stage, the cord is knotted, each knot charged with the intent of the spell. In the second phase, the knots are released, activating the spell.

The cord can be offered to the Deity and then knotted during the return flow of power – the Blessing. A proper Briocht binds the intent into each of the nine knots. In a spell of this sort, which uses no written component, each knot can be keyed to a verbal ‘sigil’ or ‘magic word.’ That charm-word might be intoned both when the charm is bound, and each time a knot is released and the effect invoked.

A classic cord charm runs:

**By knot of one, the spell’s begun**  
**By knot of two, it cometh true**  
**By knot of three, so shall it be**  
**By knot of four, it’s strengthened more**  
**By knot of five, so may it thrive**  
**By knot of six, the spell is fixed**  
**By knot of seven, the Earth & Heaven**  
**By knot of eight, the Web of Fate**  
**By knot of nine, the thing is mine!**

This sort of transmission of magical intent can be used in several ways. A classic tale tells of the cord used to bind the wind, so that sailors could call it forth at need. Other kinds of knot spells keep the cord as a talisman until the intent is accomplished, after which it is offered into the fire.

### **Formulas for Offerings**

**Oil:** In Druidic rites, it is common to offer oil or butter into the Sacred Fire, ‘feeding’ it in a most literal sense. However it is also fitting to make a more consciously created oil for offering. This formula is meant to be a general offering for any sort of rite. It is possible to make oils specific to specific works, but this one can serve for all.

Begin with hazelnut oil if you can get it, to represent the distilled essence of inspiration and wisdom. Take these herbs, dry them well and grind them to fine powder:

**Vervain: Samhain Power**  
**Mistletoe: Imbolc Power**

## **Hawthorn Blossom or berry: Beltaine Power**

### **St John's Wort: Lughnassadh Power**

To these, add powdered crystal and some dust of silver and/or gold, which can be gotten by filing a piece of old jewelry. All this is mixed together and then perfume and essential oils are added. The scent of the oils is best left to the individual – what is important is that the oils be proper to the work, and pleasing to the Druid and to the powers.

All this is gathered and mixed in the waxing moon, beginning on the sixth night of the moon. The oil is then exposed to the Three Lights – the Sun, the Moon and the Fire, if possible on the evening of the Full Moon, when sun and moon are both in the sky. Then kindle Sacred Fire and speak such words of hallowing as you may know.

This offering can be used as the only offering in personal rites, and makes an especially good offering for the Prayer of Sacrifice in more public liturgy.

**Incense:** If a rite calls for incense, for smoke to be used for enchantment or purification, or if you must work with incense offerings rather than with an open fire, you may take the four herbs from this recipe and pound them together with lavender and orris root to make a pleasant smoke. This can also be additionally scented with oils as you prefer.

#### **Duile Incense**

- 3 Herbs

Vervain—1 part; Mistletoe—1 pt; Mugwort—1 pt

- 3 Flowers

Rose—2 pts; Saffron—2 pts; Lavender—2 pts;

- 3 Woods—combine the 3 into 1 pt

Oak, Rowan, and Hazel

File or grind the wood to powder, and be certain that it is very dry. Pound all together with orris root and moisten it with rose and lavender oils.

### **The Magician's Twilight**

There are many places in the natural world that bear power which can be used in magic. Among the most potent of these, of course, are places of betweenness, where things meet and mingle, the places of neither-nor. Shorelines and hilltops, dawn and twilight, all of these have their potencies. Yet there is a special place of Boundary available to the Celtic Magician.

When the Sacred Fire is lit, its Holy Light extends in all directions. This

creates a zone of twilight between the Fire's light and the darkness of the surrounding night, where the light and shadow are mingled. In this zone, where the Light of the World Order meets the Dark of Outside, the grey of between offers access to the power of magic.

One method of hallowing objects for magical work is to begin by placing them outside the area that will be lit by the fire. Begin the working and proceed as usual, and when it is time to draw the new object in, go to the edge of the firelight and take up the item. Say a charm such as:

**From out of the deeps I draw** *(the object)*

**From out of the Darkness of Potential**

**Into the Light of Existence**

**I make** *(the object)* **real in the Holy World.**

While the object is carried to the fire, a charm of hallowing can be spoken, followed by an affirmation such as:

**From the Heart of the Light I draw** *(the object)*

**Shaped by Will and Word**

**From the Potential of the Deep**

**I make** *(the object)* **real in the holy world.**

This can be done at a fire lit especially for the purpose, or at any hallowed fire of the Druids, whether lit by you or by another. Also, the whole penumbral region of such a Fire's light has magic in it. It is a powerful place from which to begin a journey, or in which to kindle a small fire of one's own, or in which to seek a vision.

### **An Offering to the Tuatha De**

It is proper to offer worship to the greater family of the Tuatha de Danann as well as to the Gods of the seasonal mysteries, and to the personal Patron Deities.

To make this offering, gather wood from three or nine of the cauldron trees i.e. oak, ash, rowan, willow, pine, hazel, apple, birch or yew. This may be in tiny amounts if the offering is to be made indoors. It is best to find a secluded place in a wood beside running water, and there build a fire. The Druid must also bring offerings to pour or place upon the fire. The best offerings are clear pressed oil of hazel or olive, sacred herbs proper to the intention of the offering, bread and/or ale or wine. This work is placed as the invocation either in the simple devotion or the Simple Rite of Offering. When that place is reached, the

offering is raised and the Druid speaks thus:

**To all the Gods and Goddesses**

**In the three worlds or in Tir Na nOg**

**I, *(your name)* make this offering.**

**Join your fire with this fire, and with the fire in me.**

**Look upon me with love, in answer to this welcome.**

**Mighty Mother of all, fount of wisdom, source of waters,**

**Danu, Mother of God/desses, accept my offering!**

*(oil or whatever poured on fire or into shaft)*

**Ancient Bel; Father of Gods and Goddesses;**

**Sacred Phallus; fire of beginnings, accept my offering! *(Pour offering)***

**Golden Child, Son of Light and Darkness, Champion of the Gods,**

**Lugh, the mighty hand, accept my offering! *(Pour offering)***

**Queen of the Earth; Mother of tribes; ever-renewing lover;**

**Aine; breast of the earth, accept my offering! *(Pour offering)***

**Lady of Wisdom; Triple Woman of healing, poetry, and smith craft,**

**Brigid, the fire-daughter, accept my offering! *(Pour offering)***

**Great Queen of Magic and Prophecy; Red Woman; Battle raven;**

**Morrigan of the skulls, accept my offering! *(Pour offering)***

**Lord of Perfect Knowledge; Father of the Tribes; Life-taker and life-giver;**

**Dagda; Excellent God, accept my offering! *(Pour offering)***

**Young Son; Magic Boy; son of the mother; delightful song;**

**Aengus the young, accept my offering! *(Pour offering)***

**Grey one of the Borders; Lord of the Deeps; fosterer of heroes;**

**Manannan, king of wisdom, accept my offering! *(Pour offering)***

**O Shining Ones all, hear the call of your child. Lend me your strength, your love, your wisdom as I pursue my work. Accept these offerings, and give me your blessing!**

## **Four Seasonal Charms**

### **Spells Based On the Powers of the Holy Days**

## **Questioning the Skulls**

This Samhain spell questions the Dead concerning the future. The Druid gathers three skull images with a candle for each, red, white, and black (Skull

candles may serve for both). These are placed in a triangle facing south, and before them are special offerings to the Ancestors. A mode of divination is available, whether scrying or runes or Ogham or whatever. The rite is performed, with this call added to the Sacrifice as the candles are lit:

**O you images of the skull,  
You are the sacred house of spirit,  
Images of the ancestors,  
Immortal crown of life and death.  
Receive now fire from the sacred fire, O sacred head,  
That you may awaken to the voices of the dead.  
Give to us the wisdom of the ancestors,  
The voice of the spirit world**

The candles having been lit; the Druid takes up the runes, or whatever, saying:

**Spirits of the mighty dead,  
Behold your mouth among the living.  
We set before you the image of the house of spirit,  
That you may join us in our grove.  
Let these images be your eyes and voice this night.  
By Dagda and by Morrigan,  
By the signs assembled here  
And by the power of holy magic  
Let your sight be true  
And your counsel clear  
To we who remember you.  
Ancestors, show us our wyrd!**

The divination is performed and the rite concluded.

### **Brigid's Fire and Water**

This Imbolg spell grants purification from ill, and a boon. A washing bowl and towel are ready. The Druids prepare two packets representing those things or qualities they wish to banish and those they wish to acquire. The rite is performed and, at the Sacrifice, adds:

**O wise and beautiful Brigid,  
Threefold muse of poets**

Healers and artisans,  
We approach your sacred fire and water,  
And give you due sacrifice.  
Send into our grove  
A spark of your flame,  
A stream of your purity,  
And send with them your blessing.  
High one, as we have given to you,  
Now accept our offerings,  
And grant us our boons!

The folk cast their packets into the Fire. In the Blessing, water is drawn from the Well into the washing bowl and each washes and dries their hands, saying:

Let the High One's light be in me,  
Eternally alive  
May new life spring in me  
As it does in the world!  
So be it!

### **Dancing With the Sidhe**

The Druid must build a fire of nine woods—oak, hazel, holly, yew, ash, pine, apple, willow and rowan. The Fire is laid and an Offering performed for the Sidhe folk. At the Blessing the Druid invokes:

In the names of Aengus and Medb  
I call the spirits of the living world.  
All that grows or swims or flies,  
All that burrows in the earth  
Or dances in the air,  
And the high ones in their hollow hills...  
*All:* Join us in the dance  
I call you in the power of the ever-young.  
I call you up from the living earth,  
I call you down from the wheeling sky,  
I call you in from the sounding sea  
O noble ones...

*All:* Join us in the dance  
From mountain and tree-root,  
From wind and storm,  
From all waters we call  
The kindreds of the inner worlds.  
Join us, children of the mother,  
Come to us in peace.  
Come to us in the love of May.  
Join us here in our grove;  
Answer our prayers, grant us our boons  
That we may all be blessed.  
As all the dance of life dances together,  
So let us dance!  
**All: Join us in the dance!**

The company begins to dance, to music or chanting as they may. When the ring has been danced twenty-seven times, all stop and drop to the earth. They lie inert, opening themselves to the Sidhe spirits, asking questions or boons. The rite then concludes as usual.

### **Calling the Maiden of Flowers**

The Druid must fashion a goddess figure of straw or wicker, and gather nine kinds of blossoms, which are placed before it in the Grove. The Offering is made to the Child of Light and Shadow and the Maiden of Blossoms and, at the blessing, the Druid recites this enchantment:

**I turn my mind toward the work  
To raise a spirit of the earth  
A loving mate who beckons me  
As Lugh is called by Morrigan.  
Behold in mind's eye now the form  
Of that sweet lover born of blooms  
A sweet reflection of my soul  
A spring of power, light, and love.  
Call up the shape and form  
The scent and feel, the eye and lip  
Of faerie love to fill my heart**

**And grasp my spirit in delight.  
Let this sweet image be for me  
As all my aspiration is  
A symbol of my heart's desire  
As every bloom bears seed at last  
And leads from seed to shoot  
To bloom to harvest!**

The Druids have created visualized images of the Faerie lover. Some of the nine blossoms are offered on the Fire as a bard sings:

**No mortal love may soothe my heart  
But only sprite of magic's art  
Oak and broom and apple flower  
Lead me to the faerie bower.**

Druid says:

**May the flower-lover, blossom of summer  
Bring us joy, magic and wisdom  
In all our works!**

The Blossoms are the placed one by one upon the Goddess image by the folk, each asking a boon if they wish. The rite is completed, and the dolly then placed on or under a tree, saying:

**Let my offering find favor  
With sun and earth  
And bring my blossoms all to fruit!  
So be it!**



## **Druidic Magical Signs and the Talismanic Art**

An important and ancient portion of the magical art is the making of signs of power, and their use in objects of power. From the first carvings in the ancient tombs of the Stone Age, through the symbols graven in gold and bronze, to the scribblings of monks and the knots and spirals of crafts folk, graphic symbolism has always contained meaning beyond words alone.

The simple truth is that we inherit nearly nothing from the ancient Druids about how they used signs and symbols. We do not know whether the swirls and angles of old carvings held magical meanings, much less what those meanings were. If they shaped talismans of wood or metal, we do not know how those looked or what symbols they bore. Even the Ogham letters are obscure, their use in magical writing partially revealed in tales, but still far from clear.

In the effort to create modern Druidic magic, the creation of sigils, emblems and signs of power seems inevitable. In all of our efforts, we are forced to apply various modern magical methods to the bits and snippets we inherit from pre-Christian Europe. These notes are an effort in that direction, an attempt to create ‘sigils’—that is, abstract linear figures that convey magical ideas and powers—that are meaningful in Our Druidry.

## **The Meanings of Celtic Patterns**

It would be lovely if the swirls and knots of Celtic artwork contained hidden meanings, keys to the Celtic Pagan worldview. Unfortunately, history tells us otherwise. Knotwork is just as likely to come into Celtic lands with the church, from Syrian teachers, and from the Vikings as from any more primordial source. And while the vegetal and fractal forms of Celtic art are highly suggestive of Otherworld presences, we know nothing of their meaning, except what we can imagine from gazing on those antiquities.

All that said, it’s possible to make a simple distinction that may be useful in designing Druidic signs and sigils. The flowing, organic patterns of La Tene art might be associated with the Underworld Power, the Waters that flow beneath all being. In complement, the Heaven Power, the World Order that draws pattern out of potential, might be represented by knots and key patterns. Starting from that simple basis, we might be able to design meaningful patterns to decorate and enliven our magical tools and power objects.

## The Sigils

These sigils were designed for a magical working intended to allow a small group of participants to create powerful magical talismans. The working is presented elsewhere in this book as the ‘Gate Rite.’ These signs do have roots in the iconography of Indo-European Paganism, but have been rendered in an ‘occult’ style that is meant to titillate the imagination and inspire the mind. They are offered to the reader in hope that they may be of some use in future Magic work.

### The Sigil of the Cosmos



This sign uses motifs from folk art depictions of the ‘tree of life’ to express core Indo-European Pagan concepts.

The Wheel is the sign of the Sky Powers, the turning, eternal order of the heavens. It is the sign of many sky gods, of the Thunderers, and of the Sun, Moon and Stars.

The Hall of Lugh is the pattern of the Great Hall of the Gods, the symbol of the quartering of the world, of the establishment of the Middle World

The Spiral is the sign of the Underworld Powers, the flowing, unshaped potential of all being. It is the sign of the goddesses of waters, of the whirlpool, of the Deeps.

Together, these signs affirm the Order of the Worlds, a protection from ill and an affirmation of blessing.

### The Sigils of Bel and Danu



### The Gate Sigil



The Sign of the Open Gate. It combines the triliton symbol of the ancient houses of the Gods, Dead, and Sidhe, with the magical sign of the Triskelion. Its power grows from the union of Fire and Water at its base.

### **The Triskelion**



The symbol of all the Sacred Triads—Land, Sea, and Sky; Underworld, Midrealm, and Heavens; Gods, Dead, and Sidhe. It is especially the sign of Manannan Mac Lir, the God of Magic, the Lord of Journeys, Keeper of the Gates.

### **The Sign of the Dead**



The Mighty Ancestors, who watch and ward their descendants, and whisper their wisdom in our blood.

### **The Sign of the Spirits**



The Noble Spirits, who grant us the sharing of the land, and keep the

nonhuman world.

## The Sign of the Deities



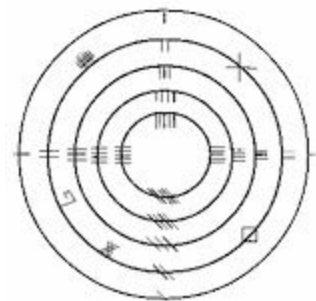
The Shining God/desses, who sustain us and inspire our souls, who bring all blessing to the worlds.

## The Eye, the Hand, & the Mouth

These signs are the power of humankind to work magic. The Eye is the power of seeing, of vision, of wisdom. The hand is the Power of Shaping, of making the world into the pattern of the will. The Mouth symbolizes the Power of Speech, of words to shape the world.

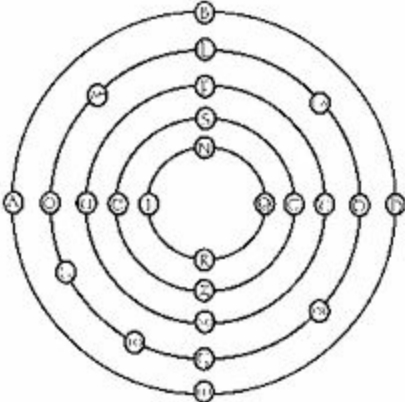


## Fionn's Window



An arrangement of the Irish ogham alphabet. The Ogham is a secret cipher used by poets and magicians. This circular arrangement (which is more properly thought of as a 'smoke-hole' in a traditional cottage) places the 4 'families'—aicme—in a cross pattern, and disperses the newer 'diphthong' Oghams around

the circles. This seems to indicate a series of relationships among the Ogham letters that may repay further meditation and study, but is unknown at this time.



The letters of any Irish name or word can be rendered into a graphic sigil by connecting the letters on this diagram. This produces a linear figure that expresses the name for purposes of magic.



Mog Ruith



Lugh



Mongfind

## Nine Sigils

These signs are more examples of the sigils that can be drawn with Fionn's Window. In these cases they were made from an Irish word that expresses an intent that might be common for Celtic Magic spell work.

Poetic Inspiration—Imbas



Abundance—Imbed



Protect—Immdic



Magic—Draiocht



Strength—Neart



Wisdom—Ecnac



Love—Caraid



Wealth--Indeb



Blessing—Bendact



## Making Sigils

Any magical intention can be easily rendered into a linear figure or sigil. Begin by writing out the simple phrase of the intention, for instance: “This my will, to gain the strength of a bull”. Remove all duplicate letters:

**thismywloganrefbu**

Those letters are then combined as though in one or more complex ‘monograms’, incorporating all the letters.

## Barbarous Words

In much the same way, the intention phrase can be rendered into ‘barbarous names’—nonsense words that can convey the intent in ritual. The above phrase might be scrambled into

**Symith Golawn Ferbu**

## Making Talismans

A talisman is an object charged with the intention or force that it represents. A talisman is conceived through the Power of Vision, made by the Power of Shaping, and is consecrated by the Power of Speech.

**The Primary Charge:** is the main symbol, in the most prominent place on the piece. It should express the core idea of the talisman.

**The Secondary Charges:** are other symbols, representing the Powers that aid and support the work of the talisman.

**The Statement of Intent:** is devised in poetic and shadowy terms, and inscribed on the piece.

## Part Five



## The Book of the Spirits



## **The Three Allies**

### **Working With the Three Kindreds**

All traditional magic relies on the aid of spirits. Modern magic has tended to focus on the use of impersonal spiritual energies, such as our Two Powers. Traditional Pagan magic has always included commerce with spirits, both in the common ways of worship and blessing and in the more specific dealings of magic. When we approach the spirits there are several basic principles that must be considered.

### **Purity & the Center**

When you begin to seek personal contact with the spirits, it is vital that you seek to be fully present in your own center and to maintain ritual purity. The spirits are powerful beings who exert a powerful influence upon humans. We all contain within us the reflection of the Sacred Cosmos in our souls. Our souls respond in the corresponding part whenever the spirits draw near, creating the psycho-spiritual effects that are so often described. Their presence awakens in us feelings, energies, powers and, often, surprises, based on our individual natures in response to the nature of a spirit. This contact and awakening is a major goal of the work of spirit contact, but it carries an attendant set of risks.

The spirits are not material, nor are they bound by the flow of time as mortals know it. Their ways are strange to us, and ours are often unclear to them. When the spirits approach us they can evoke strange and unexpected responses. There is great benefit to be gained by opening your heart and mind to the spirits, in allowing yourself to respond freely to the presence of the divine. Yet in roaming those deep and tangled paths, those high and narrow roads, you must hold fast to your own center.

It is the Divine in You that allows you to hold fast to your own will and center, that allows you to deal with the spirits and win their respect and cooperation. It allows you to bring them into accord with your will, and to find your way back to your common life. So you must be diligent in your practice of the basic disciplines of energy movement and patterning. Regular practice of simple meditation and the Two Powers attunements provides the basis. The flow of the Powers through the Three Cauldrons is a primary symbol of your magical Center, and should be as natural to you as the raising of your hands. When you find yourself pulled into the deeps by a spirit, you must be able to quickly assert your center, and by your center, your will, and by your will, your

mastery of the situation.

In addition to the well-developed skill of Centering, you should work to approach the spirits with your own spiritual sphere, clean and whole. Regular use of the Fire and Water cleansing in your daily shrine work is good basic practice. Ritual baths should be used before any major working.

It is important to bring to spirit-art a mind clear of distraction, calm, and filled with inspiration. Any important working should be preceded with a period of preparation, during which you withdraw from your common life to whatever extent you are able. During this preparation, you will occupy your mind with the study of lore appropriate to the work, with meditations, divinations, preparatory offerings and physical preparations for the rite. You must make your own choices about the length and intensity of your preparation. Traditional practices include austerities such as refraining from sexual intercourse, from alcohol or hemp, or fasting for some period. One might choose to do three days of such preparation, which are to be filled with prayer and invocation of the powers that will participate in the working.

### **Divine Aid**

Most works of magic combine the personal power of the magician with the aid of one or more of the Gods and Spirits. While some works might be done purely by the power of the Divine in You, along with your skill with the Two Powers, or purely by the power of herbs and stones, when we approach the spirits it is wise to go with a strong ally among the Shining Ones.

Be certain to keep your relationship with your Patron Deities strong. Regular offerings at your shrine and meditation on the Deities' form and attributes will help to keep the contact fresh if you are new to the work. If you have had your Patronage for long, it will have become natural and internal to your work, and will need only, perhaps, a special request for aid in any specific work. Those who make magic a regular part of their work will do well to seek alliance with the Gods and Goddesses of magic in whatever Celtic pantheon is preferred. Observance of the Wheel of the Year provides a balanced round of invocations and of blessings from the whole family of the Tuatha De Danann.

Any specific working may require you to call on deities not commonly part of your home or seasonal worship. In such cases you should make a special study of the lore of the beings involved, and make simple offerings and invocations to them at your home shrine. Be sure to seek omens to be certain

of the Gods' willingness to aid you in your intention.

### **The Skills of Vision**

Medieval magic made a point of seeking to evoke spirits to 'visible appearance.' It may be that when you work with some of the Dead and the Sidhe that there will be material manifestations—figures in the smoke, gatherings of light and shadow, raps and bumps. In general such things are irrelevant to the success or failure of the work. It is much more important to have the eyes of your spirit-vision open, to be able to perceive the spirit in the Inner Sight when it answers your call.

The methods given here rely on the visionary construct of the Inner Grove—the Otherworld reality of the magician's material working place. It is in the Inner Grove that your Tobar is most truly linked with the Deep, your small Fire shines with the Sacred Fire. You must be able to fully perceive the Inner Grove surrounding and ensouling the land and objects of your ritual space.

It will usually be in this Inner Grove that the vision of the spirits will appear. From the Mist of the Between they emerge, from the twilight place where the edge of your Fire's light fades into the dark, the spirits come. Sometimes in glimpses, sometimes in protean flux, sometimes in the clothes of fantasy and myth, they bring themselves to us through the channel of our visions.

### **Gathering Your Allies**

In this work, you will begin by making a set of specific alliances among the Three Kindreds. You will seek a Patron among the Gods, one of the Shining Ones who will stand with you in your work. You will seek a Teacher among the Dead, who can guide you in your work, and on the roads of the Dead. You will seek an Ally from among the Land spirits, who will walk with you as your herald and companion among the spirits.

Patronage is a special arrangement between you and one or more of the Deities. If you have been keeping a Celtic Pagan spiritual path you may already be in relationship with one or several of the Gods. If you feel that you have the patronage of a divine being, you might choose either not to do the Patron rite given, or to adapt it to confirm or deepen an existing relationship. Walking with the spirits requires you to keep your center, hold fast to your own power and also to have powerful allies. The support of a God or Goddess is a fine thing to

have when you enter the Underworld, or the Courts of the Noble Ones.

While almost any sort of working will benefit from the blessing of your Patron, you will often find yourself offering to other Powers for specific workings. In a polytheistic system there need be no concerns about addressing Gods other than your Patron. The Gods are not jealous of one another.

The ally among the Ancestors is invoked primarily as a teacher and mentor. As you progress in your work you may make several contacts among the Dead. We begin by seeking one specific spirit from among the Ancient Wise—the spirit of a Druid, Seer, Priestess or Healer—to teach and advise us.

In our usual Ancestor offerings we tend to focus on our blood and lineage, though we also offer to those not of our kin who inspire us. In the work of magic we care little for the ties of clan and kin. The ancient Druids crossed the boundaries of clan territories; they transcended the bonds of those tied to chieftain and territory. They carried in their trained minds the keys that allowed them to work with many clans, the secret signs and language and skills that set them apart from the common folk. When we seek a Teacher among the Dead, we are seeking among the spirits of these folks, among the *Aes Dana*, the People of the Gift.

We approach our efforts to rebuild the ancient ways knowing that we can never be certain of the forms or beliefs of Celtic Paganism. At every turn we are forced to build our work with scraps and snippets of lore, from comparisons with related cultures. Direct contact with a spirit of the Ancient Wise offers us a level of inspiration and access to memory that can be of great value in recovering the ways of Celtic magic. The Ancestral Teacher whispers to the magician's spirit, offering guidance and wisdom, and helping to build skill. Through the voice of the Teacher you can gain access to a sense of memory about the Old Ways. You share counsel with the mind of one of the Ancient Wise. This can produce a sense of intuition about how best to apply and adapt scraps of lore for modern use. The Teacher is your ear in the world of the Dead and the voice of the Ancestors in your own ear.

The Daoine Sidhe—the People of the Mound—is an old Irish name for the tribes of nonhuman spirits. They are the Other Kins, from the small spirits of herb and stone to the clans of the shining courts of the Kings and Queens. These we often call the Noble Ones, to give them their due honor. The Noble Clans are as diverse as nature itself. Some of its beings are inclined to treat with humans, and some of those are inclined to ally with us in our magical work.

Magical traditions from across the Pagan world teach that such helpful spirits often come to us in the form of animals.

In this work we seek alliance with an animal-spirit. Such a being draws out in us our power of wilderness, our connection with the greater realm of nonhuman nature. As with any spirit, their approach to us stirs and wakens a corresponding portion of our own spirit. When we live and work with such a being we gain new insights and understandings, and even new abilities, according to the nature of the spirit.

It is common in NeoPagan magic to speak of ‘totem’ animals, or of ‘archetypal’ powers. Some people speak of ‘Bear’ as though it were a sort of platonic spiritual original, of which any specific bear is merely a manifestation. Such beings may exist, and may be of some value in magic, but that is not the sort of being that we seek in this alliance. We seek to ally with a specific spirit being—*an* owl, *a* dog, whatever—rather than a more abstract ‘Great Dog’ or the like. In practical magic we seek the specific, the manifest, over the abstract.

While some spirit allies have always come to human magicians in the form of beasts we cannot be certain of the true nature of such beings. Celtic lore often makes it clear that the Noble Ones often choose to appear to mortals in animal form. The Animal Ally is our connection with the whole realm of the Noble Tribes, in a form that mortals can understand. The relationship of humans with the beasts is a paradigm of our relationship with the whole nonhuman world, in all its wisdom and foolishness.

Our presence in the world has done great ill to some beings and great good for others. The Noble Tribes, just as the animal species, may be our friends or our opponents. The magician reaches out for a spirit who is prepared to befriend our kind, who is willing to ally itself to a mortal. Through such alliances we human folk can be brought once again into the ancient relationship with the spirits of nonhuman life.

It is common to hear of spirits as the ‘servants’ of magicians and magicians. Let us take a more cooperative attitude. We undertake the summoning with the intention of calling to us a spirit with the sort of nature that is prepared to cooperate productively and honestly with mortals. Out of the many kinds of spirit, we reach out to those who are willing to be familiar with humans, willing to partner with us for our good and gain. In exchange we give the spirit our honor and our offerings; we involve them in realms of life that would otherwise be closed to them. They share in the presence of the Gods at our Fires, and

gain the benefit of contact with our material perception and temporal awareness. The Sidhe Ally can serve as a herald for the magician, a go-between with other spirits. It will reveal its specific talents and abilities in the course of magical work. These can include distant viewing, weather work, aid in healing, magical protection and many other magical goals.

The rites given here should be worked in the order given. Traditional spirit-art always begins with the blessings of the Gods, which both awakens and augments your own bri. The wisdom of the Ancestral Teacher provides depth, power, and skill that allow you to approach the Noble Tribes with confidence. When you have made your alliance with these Three, you will have made a great step toward mastery of magic.

### **A Note on the Trances**

All the rites in the remainder of the book call for specific sorts of trance-work. The rites were actually composed for group work, in which a leading Druid would recite the trance scripts (usually in the second person) to guide the students toward the proper trances. In a grimoire of this sort it has been important to try to render the rites for solo performance. This poses some difficulties in translating the carefully structured trance scripts for solitary use.

The ideal approach is to memorize the sequence of images and ideas, and follow them by your own will, without spoken guidance. This makes performance of the rites entirely smooth and direct. However, the scripts are composed with attention to effective induction and results in trance-work. If you are not somewhat experienced in the Power of Vision, then you may miss some of the power of the rites. You will need a good skill in integrating ritual action with self-directed vision to make this method work.

You might also choose to record the scripts in your own voice, to be played during the rites. This might be the best answer for solitaries in early stages of practice. For this reason most of the scripts have been rendered in the first person.

If you have working companions, you might choose to have a companion read the scripts to you as needed. This has the advantage of eliminating recording devices, and perhaps having a more flexible sense of timing for the work. However, such an associate must be an intimate friend and magical co-worker. In any case the trances are the core of the rites, and care must be taken to work them well if you want to get the most from the work.

## **The Waiting Shrine**

### **A Working to Find a Patron Deity**

*The Grove is set up in a circular form. At an eastern shrine is placed the image of the Mother of All. Before it is placed the Blessing Fire (a small fire in addition to the rite's Fire), with an altar of some sort that can hold all the tokens. Next to the Fire are pitchers of ale and cider. In the center are the Fire, Well, and Tree.*

Opening

Cast the Druid's Circle, and open the Gates.

At the Statement of Purpose, say:

**Hear, my Holy Ones. This is my will, to seek to open my heart and my life to an alliance between me and one of the Shining Gods and Goddesses. I seek the Gods of my Hearth, and the Gods of my heart. Grant me this boon, I ask, in return for this work.**

With the Gates open, work this preliminary trance:

With the Gates open, I turn my mind to Magic... I remember my center, rooted deep and crowned high... Earth below and Sky above... I feel the currents of light and dark... flowing in my flesh, as in the Grove... the currents of Fire and Water swirling around the Ridgepole... mingling as they flow through the Gates... I see, with my vision's eye, by imagination and by will... rising from the merging of Fire and Water, a mist... silver-grey, warm and thick... rising to swirl around my body... filling the Grove with Magic's Mist... the Mist of the Borderland... that separates the common world from hidden truth... The mist grows thick... around loins, around heart, closing over my head... and for a moment I am adrift, in the Mist of the Between...

The mist slowly thins... tatters away as though in a wind... revealing a new vision... carrying me through the veil... as the inner reality of the Grove grows clear... On a meadow in the Otherworld, I see before me the Hallows of the Sacred Grove... in the center the shining Fire, the dark within the Cauldron... the Tree, rooted deep and crowned high... and in the east the Waiting Shrine... a small, square temple with its porch and stone altar... and upon that altar, the eternal flame, that calls to the Gods...

Kindreds

Land Spirits:

**Spirits of this place, all you kins who gather here, I make this offering, and ask you for your blessing. Spirits of stone and stream, tree and shrub and herb, Bird and beast and every creeping thing, wild folk,**

welcome me, I ask, here among your leaves. Look kindly upon this working, all you Other Clans, into whose place I have come. Land spirits, accept my sacrifice!

#### The Dead

Mothers and Fathers of Old, I send my call to you. Hear us, I pray you, all you ancient wise ones; priestesses and priests, best of warriors, cleverest of artificers. I (give your name) a Child of Earth, seek to be the inheritor of your ancient wisdom. All you who, in old times, did keep the old ways, honoring the Gods and Goddesses, honoring the land and the clan, look kindly upon my work, as I seek to do as you have done. Ancestors, accept my sacrifice!

#### The Gods

From the first moments of time, when existence emerged from what was before, it was the Mother of All who was the source of life. Danu the Ancient, Source of Waters, Anu the Mother, many-named, known to all people, she is the First Womb, the Mother of Gods, and to her I send my voice with this call!

First Goddess of Many Names, Danu, Mother of Waters, I set this feast for you. Deepest Pool, Boundless Sea of Existence, I give you this welcome. Here I will light a fire, a beacon of magic, to call to this Gate your children, the Gods that we seek to know. To you, Oh Starry Womb of Every Birth, I appeal, that you open to me the way in my heart, the eyes of spirit, that I may see and know the Gods and Goddesses, in love and honor. Let those who would come to me, come to me with your blessing. Mathair Iomlain, accept my sacrifice!

Shining Ones, Goddesses and Gods, you who are the wisest and mightiest of spirits, I make this offering, and ask you for your blessing. You Gods of my heart, you who stand with me, be welcome in my grove. Gods of this place, known to me, or unknown, I offer you welcome. Shining Tribe of Gods, I offer you welcome, and bring my heart before you. Take this offering, I pray you, and reveal yourselves to me here, in this place at the borders of the worlds. Shining Ones, accept my Sacrifice!



**O Children of the Mother, I call to you. Here I have set this shrine in your honor, here in my Grove, and in my heart. I am a Child of Earth, Shining Ones, and I wish to take up the Old Covenant. I offer you my honor, my friendship and my reverence in return for your presence, Holy Ones. In return for your wisdom, and love, and power, I will make my due offerings to you. Oil I offer you that your fire grow bright. Precious stones I offer you, as clear as my heart for you. Water of life I offer to you, that I may share in the joy of fellowship. Come to me I pray, and accept my sacrifice!**

Prayer of Sacrifice

Power raising by the Dord Draoi, with a final offering of scented oil.

Omen

The Blessing

As you prepare to receive the presence of the Patron, work this trance:

I seat myself firmly ... settle my body... and breathe deep... breathe from the belly, filling my lungs, and emptying them... and with each breath, my body settles and relaxes... my mind focuses... relaxes away from common thought and care... I close my physical eyes... and let my inner sight be open...

See again the inner form of the Sacred Grove... the bright sacred fire... the deep holy well... and in the east, that small temple on the edge of the dark, green, woods... a simple, square building, brightly painted, with a stone porch on which is a simple, square altar... Behind the altar door to the temple is open... the altar is lit by an unconsuming flame, and that flame lights the interior of the temple... On the back wall there is a door that would open into the woodland... on that door is a symbol... on the door that will open in answer to the call... hold this vision, that flame of aspiration, in the heart, and call for the Blessing!

Druid speaks, saying:

**I am a Child of Earth; it is my will to receive this blessing!**

**I am a Child of Earth; I will open my heart to the spirits!**

**I am a Child of Earth; it is my will to make this holy alliance!**

Waters blessed as usual...

Drink the Blessings slowly, saying:

I see again the Inner Shrine... as I drink the Cup of Blessing... let the blessing be in me like blessed rain on the land... the cool water... let it be as cool light...

cool shadow... reaching into the deeps... to draw forth the power that calls the Patron... the heart of a god... I drink deep, and soak up the blessing, letting it mingle with the flow of fire and water in my spirit...

Now, with the power of the Mathair Iomlain in me, with the blessing of the Spirits on me, I become aware of sitting where I sit... or lying where I lie... in my body of vision... my eyes closed... I am present again at the Waiting Shrine... I feel the form of the token in my vision-hand... and by will and vision, I am present in my Body of Vision...

I stand in the clearing... the clearing in that vast forest... where I have stood before... and before me is the Waiting Shrine, where burns the flame of my God... I see it clearly before me... see the altar on the porch, and on that altar, an eternal flame that burns without ceasing... have I left an offering there before?... now it is consumed, and the shrine is lit by the unfueled, ever-burning flame... This is the flame of my aspiration... of my inner desire to know the divine in person... to make a relationship with the person of the divine, with the God or Goddess of my heart, of my hearth...and all around the Shrine in the Forest, the faces and eyes of the Shining Ones, the Powers we have called... now look deeply into the fire... I step forward... with the Light of the fire upon me, make my offering into the flame, giving that stone that I have received... giving back in turn what I have been given, as I will always do... through Mist and half-seen wonder will they come... come forth from the wood to the temple... the divine being who would share my work... coming forth in answer to my offering...

and so, at last, I see the door into the dark green wood open, slowly, wide... perhaps the god or goddess shows herself clearly to me now... perhaps she comes as shadow, or light, or pattern... in majesty or in simplicity he may come, inside our simple vision, or carrying me from it into other places... do I glimpse an eye, a smile, an outstretched hand?... I reach out in turn, open my heart... and call in my soul to the Divine One who has come to my Inner Shrine... and listen, in turn...

(period of silence, until bell rung quietly for several minutes to call back)

I feel the light of the gate behind me... I speak again to the God, sharing my heart... have I heard the God's name? ... I turn from where I am, and begin to make my way to the Gate of our Grove... back from wherever the God of my Hearth has taken me... to the Inner Grove... the Fire, Well, & Tree... with whatever wisdom I have gained...

And now, it is time to return to my common vision... to my flesh, here in this Grove... so, one final time, I make my peace and my alliance with the Shining One... and turn my vision's eye back into my flesh... I breathe deep, feeling my body... I let my inner eyes be closed... resting in darkness for a moment... sit up in flesh... and open my body's eyes... here, present in my flesh... with the God's Blessing in me... beneath these trees, here in our Grove...

Affirmation

After all have returned, the horn is filled, and passed, saying:

**Now, it is fit for me to do honor to you who answered my calling. I take this horn of ale and drink to you, as I pour offering to you, to the honor of the (Shining One that has joined you). Shining One, I remember you with honor!**

Drink and pour

Final Blessing

**By this work I begin a great work, take a step along my path of spirit.  
By this work may I be made stronger in my magic, deeper in my wisdom, more able to work for the good of my own life, and the lives of my people. So be it!**

Closing

## **The Voice of the Fire**

### **Encountering an Ancestral Teacher**

*The Grove is set up in a circular form. At an eastern shrine is placed the image of Donn. Before it is placed the Blessing Fire (a small fire in addition to the rite's Fire), with a bounty of apples. Next to the Fire are pitchers of ale and cider.*

#### Opening

Cast the Druid's Circle and Open the Gate.

With the Gates open, I turn my mind to Magic... I renew my center... Earth below and Sky above... I feel the currents of light and dark... flowing in my flesh, and in the Grove... the currents of Fire and Water swirling around the Ridge-pole... mingling as they flow through the Gates... I see, with my vision's eye, rising from the merging of Fire and Water, a mist... silver-grey, warm and thick... rising to swirl around my form... filling the Grove with Magic's Mist... the Mist of the

Borderland... that separates the common world from hidden truth... I feel the mist grow thick behind my back... as the inner reality of the Grove grows clear... I see before me the Hallows of the Holy Hall, the lovely Temple on the border of the Land of Promise... in the center the shining Fire, the dark within the Cauldron... I am present, in my Inner Grove, my mind sharp and calm as I make offerings to all the Powers...

#### Kindreds

##### Land Spirits

**Spirits of this place, all you kins who gather here, I make this offering, and ask you for your blessing. Spirits of stone and stream, tree and shrub and herb, Bird and beast and every creeping thing, wild folk, welcome me, I ask, here among your leaves. Look kindly upon this working, all you Other Clans, into whose place I have come. Land spirits, accept my sacrifice!**

##### The Gods

**Shining Ones, Goddesses and Gods, you who are the wisest and mightiest of spirits, I make this offering, and ask you for your blessing. Gods of my heart, you who stand with me, be welcome. Gods of this place, known to me or unknown, I offer you welcome. Shining Tribe of Danu, I offer you welcome. Take this offering, I pray you, and join me in the worship of the King without a Throne. Shining**

**Ones, Accept my Sacrifice!**

**I send my song into the west, to the place of the setting sun, to the shore of the Blessed Isle, to the ear of Manannan mac Lir. Let the birds who wing over the wave carry my word to the Mighty One. Mac Lir, I call to you; Son of the Boundless Sea, I call to you; Uncrowned King, I invite you to our fire.**

**Oh Manannan of the Silver Branch, you who nurture the wise, I set this feast for you. Hoster of the Feast of Age, I give you this welcome. Here I will light a fire, a beacon of magic, to call to this Gate, the spirits of the Wise Dead. To you, Oh Husband of the Apples of Emain Ablach, I appeal that you open for me the boundaries of Tir na Marbh, Land of the Dead, that you guide and ward the spirits as they come to me in love and honor. Let those who would come to me, come to us with your blessing, and may your blessings guide only the willing and those of good will to my work. Lord of the Isle of Apples, Manannan mac Lir, accept my sacrifice!**

The Dead

**In the dawn of the world, it was Donn mac Mil who was the first mortal in the world to die. So Donn, Dark One, you are the Lord of the Dead, King in Teach Duinn, the Dark House, the portal between the Many Colored Land and this mortal country. I ask you to open the doors of the way for your people, for the spirits of our ancestors.**

**Mothers and Fathers of Old, I send my call to you. Hear me, I pray you, all you ancient wise ones; priestesses and priests, best of warriors, cleverest of artificers. I am a Child of Earth, who seeks to inherit your ancient wisdom. All you who, in old times, did keep the old ways, honoring the Gods and Goddesses, honoring the land and the clan, I call you to my fire. Apples I offer you, an image of your holy apples. Ale I offer you, image of your holy ale. Flesh of the swine I offer to you, just as the holy swine feed the holy dead.**

**From out of the host of the Mighty Dead, I call to those who see me here. I call to those who know my heart, and who would join with me**

**in love and honor. Three times I call, to you who would join with me, to whisper wisdom in my ear, to aid me in returning the Old Ways to the world of mortals. Come to me, teacher and ally—Mighty Dead, accept my sacrifice!**

Prayer of Sacrifice

Raise power with the Dord Draoi, and make a final offering to Mac Lir and the Dead

Omen

The Blessing

I prepare to receive the blessing of the spirits' voice, for the entrancement... I settle my body... and breathe deep... with each breath, allow my body to settle and relax... allow my mind to focus on the work... to relax away from common thought and care... and let my inner sight be open...

I see again the inner form of the sacred Grove... the bright sacred fire... the deep holy well... and in the center of all, the Way Between... The Gate of the Otherworld... bright and deep... swirling and shining... Now I can see into its depths... glimpse the inner reality of this land... the shore of the isle of Apples... now, with this vision present in my inner eye, I seek the blessing...

Druid says:

**I am a Child of Earth; it is my will to receive this blessing!**

**I am a Child of Earth; I will open my heart to the spirits!**

**I am a Child of Earth; it is my will to make this holy alliance!**

Waters blessed as usual... with reference to the work... prepare for drinking as the trance is deepened.

I see again the Inner Grove... as I drink the Blessing... feel the cool water in me... let it be as a draft of cool light... cool shadow... soaking into my spirit... strengthening my inner vision... deepening my inner ear... I soak up the blessing, letting it mingle with the flow of fire and water in my spirit...

Now, with the power of Manannan in me, with the blessing of the Mighty Dead on me, I turn my inner eye into the gate... my vision passes into the mists... through the light and shadow... and I see the Many Colored Land... the Middle Realm... I see the Mac Lir in the background... high and shining, bearing the Apple Branch...

And I know the presence of the Host of the Mighty Dead... The crowd of spirits, called by my offerings... I see their forms, their way of dress... see their faces, their eyes... a vision, an impression, a shadow, a glimpse... and I open my

heart, my inner eyes wide... with aspiration in my heart, I call out with inner voice... with the blessing bright in me, I ask the spirits which of them will come to me...

I open my heart to hear a whispered voice... perhaps in the crackling of the flames... perhaps in the rustling of leaves, perhaps only in my heart... a face... a symbol... of the teacher who comes to me... carry me to you, if you must, to where the teacher waits... show yourself... to me... Now, for a time, I seek... I listen... for the Voice of the Teacher...

(period of silence as you listen for and to the Voice)

I know that the teacher has drawn nearer to me through this work... in my heart, in my inner voice, I ask the teacher for a name... I ask plainly if this being will join me in my work... I ask one more question of the teacher...

(period of silence as you converse with the Voice)

Now I return to my common vision... to my flesh, here in this Grove... One final time, I offer peace and alliance with (the teacher, say the name)... and turn my vision's eye back through the Gate... Through the shining mists... to my Inner Grove... the Fire, Well & Tree... let my inner eyes be closed... resting in darkness for a moment... and my body's eyes see clearly... present in my flesh... here in the Grove...

Final Blessing

**By this work I begin a great work, take a step along my path of spirit.**

**By this work may I be made stronger in my magic, deeper in my wisdom, more able to work for the good of my own life, and the lives of my people. So be it!**

Closing

## **The Gate of the Sidhe**

### **An Ally among the Land spirits**

*The Grove is set up in a circular form. At the eastern seat is placed the image of Cernunnos. Before it is placed an offering of bread and precious stones, and ale. Next to the image is a drink of ale and cider.*

*In the center are the Fire, Well, and Tree.*

#### Opening

Cast the Druid's Circle, and open the Gate. Seat yourself, and begin the entrancement:

With the Gates open, I turn my mind to Magic... with my body at rest, I remember the Two Powers in me... Earth below and Sky above... the currents of light and dark... flowing in my flesh, and in the Grove... the currents of Fire and Water swirling around the Ridge-pole... joining in my Caher Draoi... and rising, from the merging of Fire and Water, a mist... silver-grey, warm and thick... rising to swirl around my form... filling the Grove with Magic's Mist...

This is the Mist of the Borderland... that separates the common world from hidden truth... feel the mist grow thick around you... and there, in that betweenness, with my body's eyes shut, I open my eyes of vision... I see before me, resolving from the Mist... the spiritual truth of the Hallows of our Holy Grove... in the center the shining Fire, the dark within the Cauldron... the lovely Temple on the border of the Land of Promise.... I am present, in my vision eye, as I open again the eyes of my body... and make offerings to all the Powers...

#### Kindreds

##### The Dead

**Mothers and Fathers of Old, I send my call to you. Hear me, I pray you, all you ancient wise ones; priestesses and priests, best of warriors, cleverest of artificers. All you who, in old times, did keep the old ways, honoring the Gods and Goddesses, honoring the land and the clan, I call you to my fire. Ancient and Beloved Dead, I ask you to look on this work of wisdom with favor, to bless my work and my magic. I give you this offering, Mighty Ones. Come to me, teachers and allies—Mighty Dead, accept my sacrifice!**

##### The Gods

**Shining Ones, Goddesses and Gods, you who are the wisest and**



mightiest of spirits, I make this offering, and ask you for your blessing. You Gods of my heart, you who stand with me, I offer

you welcome. Gods of this place, known to me, or unknown, I offer you welcome. Shining Tribe of Danu, I Offer you welcome. Take this offering, I pray you, and join me in the worship of the Horned One and the Queen of the Mound. Shining Ones, accept my Sacrifice!

I send my song into the south, to the place of the wild country, into the Many Colored Land, to the ear of Aine of the Mound, to the ear of Cernunnos of the Forest.. Let the serpents under the earth, and the winds that move the branches carry my word to the Shining Ones. Fir Ben, I call to you; Mother of All Living, I call to you, Rulers of the Other Tribes, Chieftains in the Wild, I invite you to our fire.

Cernunnos and Aine, Mother and Father of the Wild Places, we set this feast for you. Lord and Lady of the Mound, we give you this welcome. Here we will light a fire, a beacon of magic, to call to this Gate the spirits of the Wild Kindreds. To you, Horned Lord of Beasts and Ghosts, we appeal, that you open for us the boundaries of An Saol Eile, The Otherworld, that you guide and ward the spirits as they come to us in love and honor. Let those who would come to us, come to us with your blessing, Righ agus Banrighan, Fear Ben agus Mathair Iomlan, accept our sacrifice!

#### Land Spirits

Into the wild places I send my voice! Unto the Wild Kins I make my call! I am (Your name and authority) come to the fire of magic to seek you, to open my heart to you, to make these offerings and seek these blessings. By the might of the Mother of All and the wisdom of the Horned One I call to you to come to my fire. Spirits of the land—stone and stream, soil and herb and shrub and tree, all you I call to bear witness to this work, and to receive this offering!

(Portion of offering given)

Now hear me, spirits of the beasts, wild ones. Now I will rise into your land, now I come to seek you. Oh you spirits of bird and beast, of all that flies or swims or walks the spirit land, you Kindreds in the Otherworld, long storied, wise and powerful, I seek your aid. As in old times you came to the aid of mortals, as in old times you made alliances with the wise, so I seek to make that old alliance again.

(Portion of offering given)

**I set the feast for you, spirits—I offer these stones, this wealth, back to the land from which it came. This I pray you that you come in toward this fire, from your far-ranging, as I come forth to seek you. All you who would be my allies, I who rove out, I who seek to do as the ancient wise did, I call you to me. See my heart, spirits, and open your own to me, that you and I may work for the good of all, together. Spirits, accept my sacrifice!**

(Portion of offering given)

Prayer of Sacrifice

Dord Draoi with final offering.

Omen

Now, I prepare to receive the blessing of the spirits' voice, I breathe deep, and settle into my flesh... and with each breath, I enter more deeply into my trance... become more open to vision... I see again the inner form of the sacred Grove... the bright sacred fire... the deep holy well... and in the center of all, the Way Between... The Gate of the Otherworld... bright and deep... swirling and shining... even now I see into its deeps... glimpse the inner reality of this land... see the spirits stirring in the deep green wood...

The Blessing

Druid says:

**I am a Child of Earth; it is my will to receive this blessing!**

**I am a Child of Earth; I will open my heart to the spirits!**

**I am a Child of Earth; it is my will to make this holy alliance!**

Waters blessed as usual... with reference to the work... prepare for drinking as the trance is deepened:

And into this cauldron of Blessing I place these offerings of stone, these precious things. This I do, that one be given to me in turn by the spirits, as a token. Let the stones of magic rise from the waters of the cauldron, to work this spell...

Sprinkle and wash yourself in the waters of the cauldron, as you bring these visions

I settle again, at last, for the vision, the seeking... see again the Inner Grove... I sprinkle my flesh with the Waters of Blessing, I feel the magic fall upon me like blessed rain on the land... I reach into the cool water... a pool of cool light...

cool shadow... reaching into the deeps... to draw forth the token of the blessing... a chip of the bone of the land... I draw the token to my heart, and soak up the blessing, letting it mingle with the flow of fire and water in my spirit...

Now, with the power of the Fir Ben and the Mathair Iomlain in me, with the blessing of the Spirits on me, I remember my body where it is... I remember my body of vision, where it is... the vehicle... formed as I am formed... Now, I sit up in my body of vision... my view, my perspective, rises from where I sit... I feel the form of the token in my vision-hand... and by will and vision, I stand to my feet in my Body of Vision...

With my eyes of vision, I look about... turning once, holding fast to my token... I look out from where I stand, into the wider worlds... The gate in the Center... the Mist flows into and from the gate... and all around me is the vision of the Otherworld that grows closest to where I began... it grows clearer, as the Mist thins... as I stand near to the Ancient Wood that was in this place, and is still present in the Land of Spirits... that Many Colored Land... the Middle Realm, parallel to our own... I see the Gods in the background... high and shining...

I remember, as I rove—I seek to find a spirit that shows itself to me three times... that seems to beckon, to come to me... when I meet the ally I will speak true words to it, and offer it the offering I have brought... if the offering is taken, then I will take the spirit in my arms, and bring it back toward the gate...

Now, in the leaves and shadows, the faces and eyes of the Other Kins, the Spirits I have called... now I will go out into that forest, to seek the ally... I step forth... with the Light of the gate behind me, the light of the gate to be my beacon... now I fare forth into the Otherworld... through Mist and half-seen wonder will I rove... to seek the ally that I've offered to... the spirit being who would share my work...

*(period of silence, until the work is done. the bell is rung quietly nine times to call back)*

The light of the gate calls before me... I make my way through the Gate... through the shining mists... to the Inner Grove... the Fire, Well, & Tree... with the ally... with the wisdom I have gained... I speak again to the ally, making clear what I will give, what it will give...

But now, I return to my common vision... to my flesh, here in this Grove... so, one final time, I make my peace and my alliance with the spirit... and turn my vision's eye back into my flesh... I breathe deep, feeling my body... let my inner eyes be closed... resting in darkness for a moment... I remember my flesh...

and open my body's eyes... present in my flesh... beneath these trees, here in the Grove...

Affirmation

After you have returned, the horn is filled, and the new ally is toasted, saying:

**Now it is fit to do honor to you who have answered my calling. I take up this horn of ale, and drink to the honor of the spirit that has joined me. Hear me (*name of spirit*), accept my honor with this toast.**

Drink

Final Blessing

**By this work I begin a great work, take a step along my path of spirit. By this work may I be made stronger in my magic, deeper in my wisdom, more able to work for the good of my own life, and the lives of my people. So be it!**

Closing

## **Working With the Three Allies**

The core of our method of dealing with the Spirits is through the Triple Alliance. Through the rites given here you can make contact with the Patron Deity of your magical path, with an Ancestral teacher who can guide you in your work, and with an Ally from the Sidhe tribes who can serve as your familiar spirit. There are other ways to discover or create these alliances, and no matter how you may arrive at them, they offer many approaches to practical magic. While the Alliances offer many sorts of spells to the magician, they also have the important core function of opening contacts between the common mind, the personal soul, and the transpersonal in the person of the Three Kindreds. The spiritual insights available to mortals from personal contact with representatives of the Gods, Dead, and Sidhe are important ones—the potential for practical magic is really a secondary matter.

The Three Allies, it should be remembered, are not ‘totems’ or merely ‘aspects of the self.’ They are specific spirits, beings who have been drawn to you, personally, by your call. They have been drawn to you because they have an affinity with you, because your invocation and offerings were (and are) pleasing to them. They are interested in the kind of human being that you are, as you are (though they are willing and able to help you become more than you are at present). Thus we can expect the Allies to work with us, to become our companions and co-walkers, to aid us in doing our personal will.

We might say that in working the seasonal rites of the Wheel of the Year we attune ourselves to the divine, but in working the Alliance the divine attunes itself to us. We experience that attunement through affection, counsel and mutual work with the Allies. We participate together in a kind of mutual education in which the divine experiences common life while we grow with the power of the divine.

The Three Allies should be made a part of your Shrine work. Each of them should be placed in the Shrine in the form of an image, idol or token. Each of the Allies should be known by name, or at least by a descriptive phrase. For each of the Allies you should compose a simple formal Briocht of calling, and know what offerings and sacrifices are proper for each. The Allies are a part of the magician’s direct contact with the divine, and should be given every respect even as they are asked to aid in working her will.

## **Working with the Patron**

Work with the Patron brings us closest to what we might commonly call ‘religion’ of any of the Alliances. The work of the Wheel brings us into contact with a regular round of a pantheon’s deities. Patronage offers the opportunity for a more direct and intimate involvement with the divine. The Patron can come to stand rather in the place of a fosterer, offering both unconditional love and an acceptance of the worshipper as she truly is, as well as an ‘upbringing’ in the ways of wisdom.

The core of the relation with the Patron is that openhearted affection between worshipper and worshipped. It must be said, however, that the affection of various deities varies in its feel and form. It is perhaps true to say that the ‘affection’ of the Morrigan is different from that of Lugh and both from that of, say, Brigid.

### **1. Audience with the Divine**

This exercise is meant to develop a method of direct and personal meeting with the Patron, by providing the Patron with a vehicle in your Inner Grove. You must begin with your personal idol of the Patron, as it exists on your Home Shrine. From that base, you will create an Inner Idol. Into that Inner Idol one can work to call the Patron’s true spirit, and from there link it into the material world through the material idol. It is that process of earthing the power of a spirit that is the core of much of this magical work.

- Prepare the Shrine with an image or contact object of the Patron. This can be an anthropomorphic image, or some other sort of object that is meaningful to you.
- Work a simple Shrine opening, and induce basic trance.
- Rise into the Inner Grove
- In your Inner Grove, compose a place of honor, and fill it with the Inner Idol. This can be a lifelike, oversize reflection of your altar-image, or some other idealized figure of the Patron, though there is an advantage to making it to resemble your altar image. See it lifelike and breathing, if you wish.
- Open your eyes and be present in both locales—the Inner Grove and your Shrine.
- Offer the usual offerings and invocation for the Patron
- Close your eyes and be present in the Inner Grove, in the presence of the Inner Idol. This is the moment of mutual awareness—you see the God, the God sees you.
- When finished, give due honor then return to your common eyes,

contemplate the Shrine image, end the trance and close the Shrine

## **2. The Oracle of the Patron**

The skill of being present with the Patron leads naturally to the opportunity of more direct communication. In working with these Inner constructed images, we seek to bring our awareness out to the edge of our common mind, where we might find an interface with the transpersonal. Once we have developed a standard and habitual Inner locale, we seek those moments when novel material occurs—when things happen that we do not expect, or do not understand. Such input may begin to occur as symbols, snippets, or clear vision, as plain speech or obscure inference.

On one level we may ‘teach’ the Inner Idol to speak, hearing it recite key phrases and charges. Just as we decide to create an inner idol with a scarlet cloak or a sword or a spindle, we can choose to invest it with standard speech. You might choose to have the image recite some basic greeting and blessing to you (perhaps devised after some time of working with the Audience exercise), so that each time you complete your devotions the image replies in that set fashion. If it is important to you to have this sort of direct speech with the Patron, you may choose to ask specifically for the Oracle, and begin to watch for the novel inputs that suggest the contact is being made. You might then begin to ask questions and record whatever messages arise in response. You might choose to use a divination tool, but that’s not really the point of the work. Rather you are seeking to gain the voice of the Deity.

The final development of this sort of work can be to speak aloud, before others, repeating the messages of the Patron. In doing so you take the place, yourself, of the oracle, becoming a voice of the deity in the material world. In this I can only suggest great caution. To undertake to answer the questions of others, to take on the task and potential gain of speaking for the Patron has many risks, most notably the risk of appearing either to be a fool or of attempting to raise your own status to that of the deity.

## **3. The Special Blessing**

The relationship with a Patron brings specific possibilities for practical magical work, according to the nature of the specific deity. This may be somewhat more true of systems in which the deities are clearly defined by function, such as the Hellenic ways, but any personal relationship with the Gods of the Celts will also bring the potential for special gifts, as the personal nature



awakens to the divine contact. Obvious examples might be a gift of healing or poetry under Brigid or a gift of wealth and fertility under Cernunnos. Such a gift may be given to you for your own good, and it may also be given to you as a means by which you can spread the Patron's blessing in the world.

Once you have built a contemplative and/or conversational relationship with the Patron, the awareness of such a gift may arise naturally, or you can ask the Patron to reveal it. The Patron may reveal a form of rite, spell, or charm to be used to give the blessing, or reveal charms, natural objects, or other conditions by which you can increase its power. If the request for the blessing power isn't answered immediately, it may be revealed in a gradual way, as you keep and deepen your relationship with the Patron.

### **Working with the Teacher**

The Ancestral Teacher is the ally from the Dead, a voice from the blood, from the past. The Teacher comes to help us in recovery of wisdom and the elder lore, and to help us maintain good relations with the Mighty Dead. The Teacher brings a voice of advice and counsel, sometimes kindly, sometimes with the kindness of a schoolteacher's paddle. It was said among the wise men of the Greeks that one of their great teachers had a daemon that never told him what to do—only what not to do. The Teacher often functions in that way, guiding us away from ill as we go.

Of all the Allies, it is the contact with the Mighty Dead that may seem the most strange and difficult for moderns. When we look at ancient Pagans, we must admit that they were all very concerned about maintaining proper relationships between the Dead and mortals. The power of the Dead has great influence on our luck and well-being, and the Teacher can act as a guide and support as we gain a proper relationship with the Ancestors. The Teacher becomes a Guide of Souls, who may also play an important part in personal initiation and spiritual growth. The Teacher is what the Gaels have called a 'co-walker,' who journeys with us on our road through life.

## **4. Summoning the Dead**

Each of us is the product of all that has come before us. Our history, the history of our lands and peoples, and of course our ancestry and genetics – our blood—have built us out of the Chaos, called forth by the Light. Our spiritual nature is made of the same stuff as the spirits of our Ancestors, and the Dead

watch us as we live, and wish us to remember and know them still. We must keep our peace with the Dead, and then we can begin to approach them for aid in our magic.

In this ritual working the Teacher is asked to stand as the mediator or doorkeeper in a process by which you are introduced to the spiritual presence of the ancestors and heroes. The form of the rite is based on descriptions of Greek and Roman necromancy, since we have no remnants of what such a rite would have been like among the Celts. The Greeks do describe many of these ideas as coming from the Persians, and the Persian magi were much like the Druids in many ways. The symbols used fit very well with our Druidic ritual system, so I've felt free to make the adaptation.

Here I present an outline of such a rite. If you choose to undertake it, you will have to carefully prepare your rite in accord with all we've presented here, and with your own skill of words. It should be treated with reverence and care, just as one would one's own family.

- Set up Nemeton.
- Set pork to cook in a pan on or next to the fire, or make a separate cooking fire.
- Dig an offering pit if no shaft is present.
- Open the Grove & the Gate as usual.
- Shaft conjured to open to the Dead; water libations around the edge of the shaft.
- Call the Teacher with whatever offering and invocation is customary. Ask the Teacher to stand as warder and aid in the work.
- Invoke the Dead (including the Gods of the Dead, and by the power of your Patron), with offerings of grain, milk, honey, liquor.
- Omen taken to see whether it is proper to proceed.
- The pork is cut into pieces and given to the Fire, with the juices poured into the shaft with a final invocation of the Dead.
- Rise into the Inner Grove, and greet the Teacher.
- Hear the Crowd of Voices.
- Ask the Teacher to bring forward your most recent Dead.
- Work backward through the generations, making offering for each
- Ask the Teacher to bring the ancient wise, and the heroes, as you desire.
- Give a Charge to the Dead, asking them to speak with you and aid you, and promising them due offering.

- Thanks and ending.

## 5. The Well of Memory

Through our contact with the Dead we can seek access to memory of ancient lore and understandings. By a process sometimes called analeptic memory, we can see the recovery of lost ideas, lost pieces of Pagan ritual, religion, and magic. While such an effort could be approached purely in trance, done in the Inner Grove, I have chosen to set it here as a Cauldron Spell, to create a magical drink from the Cauldron of memory.

- Prepare a specific request or intention, a specific sort of lore that you are seeking, and render it as a sigil.
- Set up the Nemeton as for a cauldron spell, with Slat & Coire (See Part 2 for the outline of the Cauldron Spell—all the special adaptations for the work are provided here).
- *Deities Proper to the Work:* The working is done under the name of the Teacher, asking for his specific guidance and the boon of memory, though offering might be made to the Patron, and to Cauldron Deities such as the Morrigan and the Dagda.
- *Three Spell Ingredients:* Sprig of Mullein—for the ancestors; Sprig of Heather—for the land; Hagstone—for seership
- *Three Conjuring Words:* Cuimhne—memory; Musclaim—awaken; Seanreacht—ancientry

*The Charm:*

**The Waters from below arise for me,  
 From out of time through bone and grave and deep  
 Fill now my Coire with true memory,  
 The Holy Wisdom mine to truly keep  
 So from this vessel I will draw the cup,  
 Of clear remembrance of the ancient days  
 The draft of lore and knowledge fill me up,  
 That I may truly work the Elder Ways**

- *The Deed*—Conclude the charm with the Dord Draoi as the Slat enters the Coire. Compose your question in your mind, bring the presence of the

Teacher before you and ask again the question, then raise the blessing cauldron and drink. Open your vision senses and allow the teacher to lead you into a vision that addresses your question.

## **6. The Teacher's Counsel**

While the Teacher is helpful in several kinds of ritual workings, the personal and inner relationship with this ally can be greatly de-ritualized. Ask the Teacher to walk with you in daily life, to see the world with you and let you see the world as s/he does. This daily co-walking is a major source of the mutual education that grows with the alliances.

You might develop a more formal approach to a 'counseling session.' By rising into the Inner Grove, you can face the Teacher, listening directly (the Teacher has a more human and direct voice than the Patron, often). Such a 'counseling session' might include divination as well. It can be useful to develop a yes-or-no sort of divination for this purpose, with the pendulum being preferred by many magicians.

## **Working with the Sidhe Ally**

The Sidhe Ally (or just 'the Ally') is a spirit of the nonhuman tribes that chooses to ally itself with you to aid you in your work. Working with the Ally offers us a core understanding of the nonhuman world, as we travel with the Ally in our work. The Ally comes closest, perhaps, to 'serving,' in that it is willing to carry messages, do tasks and be a general 'familiar spirit' for the magician. For this reason it is especially important to maintain one's relationship of offering and worship with the Ally, calling and offering to it at least monthly. To neglect that relationship is to risk losing the aid of the Ally, and having to begin again. A few such errors will make it much harder to gain the aid you seek.

## **7. The Roving Eye**

Skill in joining awareness with the Ally offers the potential for the magical work of distant viewing. We can approach the effort by using a totem of the Ally as a gate into its awareness.

- Seat yourself at your Shrine or in your Nemeton, with the Ally's totem present. Open the Shrine and your Inner Vision.
- Call the Ally and make whatever offering is customary.

- Greet the Ally, and give it whatever Charge you wish, explaining your will and its mission, and send it on.
- Rise in your vision body before your Shrine, and contemplate the totem of the Ally.
- Conceive the totem growing larger and becoming filled with the Mist of Between.
- In your vision body, pass through the image as though passing through a curtain into the Ally's sight.
- Seek to resolve the vision of what the Ally is beholding or doing as it works to fulfill the charge. Such a vision may be a clear view of the common world, if your own talent of distant vision is strong, or it may appear as a series of symbolic images or clues.
- Return and resolve your awareness in your own flesh, and close the Shrine.

## 8. The Herald

The Ally can serve to carry your voice and your will into the spirit world, or even the common world. This is especially useful in the work of contacting other Sidhe beings, or the spirits in general. It has always been part of the magician's work to evoke the common spirits of the earth, the lesser beings who flock and lurk right next to our common lives.

One of the traditional methods of bringing a small wild spirit under a magician's control is by gaining authority and aid from spirits greater than the ones you might wish to command. This 'hierarchical' model of spirit-art works by invoking the Hierarchy in turn:

The Divine power is the source of any authority over spirits. In this you may rely on the Divine in You, but it is also wise to specifically obtain the aid of your Patron, as well as of any deity that might be proper to your intention.

- *King/Queen*—Gaelic spirit lore suggests that the Sidhe-beings of any local area are ruled by a King and/or Queen. The authority of the divine can help you to gain the welcome and friendship of such beings.
    - *Host of Spirits*—with the authority of the local ruler, you can summon to your Gate the Host of local spirits—that is the collective or corporate presence of the land-spirits. From such a mob you can call:
      - *Individual Spirits*—according to what sort of work and will you bring.
- The Ally can be sent out to a bit of land where you wish to be welcomed for

ritual or other work. Send it to seek the ‘King’ or ‘Queen’ of the local spirit tribes and introduce you in advance. In such a work you may find it useful to open the Roving Eye, gaining the vision of the local Court of the Sidhe. When you arrive on the land to work the Welcome Charm, you will know how things stand, and how to approach.

The use of the Ally to send messages/will in the common world could also be explored. Just as the Roving Eye might be used in either the material world or in spirit-vision, so we can attempt to send the Ally as our Herald to distant mortals. The ability of a target to clearly perceive your intent will depend on many things, but a strong relationship with the Ally only makes success more likely.

## **9. The Defender/Healer**

The Ally can support you in situations of magical strife, carrying your will against an attacker, or deflecting and warning of attacks. While magical attack or combat among mortals is rare in our times, the spirits are not all our friends. Our luck and our well-being may be disrupted by the attacks of spirits of whom we know nothing, unless we are well-protected. Even small spirits often reveal surprising strength in these matters, being ready to inform us of such risks, and to turn aside many, even without our knowledge. The Ally should always be instructed to make every effort to turn away ill.

Traditional ideas about spirit-healing suggest that some illness may be the result of ‘intrusion attacks’ by spirits—called in Gaelic the ‘poc’ or ‘fairy bolt.’ This was symbolized in tales by the tiny stone arrowheads that were seen as the weapons of the ‘Good Neighbors.’ Just as a thorn or a sliver or an arrowhead can get buried in the flesh and bring infection, so these spirit intrusions get buried in the mythic landscape of the target’s soul, causing irritation and disease, and have to be ‘dug out.’

When we seek to find and remove such a cause of illness in a target, the soul can be understood as a landscape, a mythic referent of the reality of the target’s being into which the Ally can be sent journeying to locate the intrusion and help remove it. When the Ally brings such an intrusion out, it can be plucked out at last by the Slat and cast into the dark of the Coire to dissolve into component elements.

## **Concerning the Noble Clans**

This is a book of the tales of the Noble People, the Elder Ones, the Tribes under the Mound, called the Daoine Sidhe. In it will be told some visions of the history and legend of the Noble Races. Let the work given herein be blessed by the Dagda and by Boann, by Finvarra and by Unagh, by Badb Derg and by the Bean Sidhe, that it be only good for all creatures. Whether they are rulers or followers, whether of the Old Ones or of mortal kind, whether they conjure or are conjured, may only blessing be theirs by this book's magics.

### **The Tale of the Elder People**

Here is a tale of the Elder Folk, as whispered to a Bard's heart.

The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, the Old Ones will be. Though the human clans now rule the face of the world, they are not the land's first masters, nor, it may be, its last. Serene and patient, the Elder Rulers dwell in their halls outside the daylight world. There they keep the Old Magic, and hold their courts and revels, while humankind plods through their lives and labors. Where mortals rise and live and fail and rot, the Elder Ones live on through the ages, their memory unailing.

It is that memory that recalls even the Eldest of days, when the great being called Nemed—the Noble One—dwelt on the isle of the World, when, in that day, the land was full and ripe. Yet the Most Ancient Ones drove the folk of Nemed from the World, and they were divided and scattered.

Even in the First days, when Land had not been drawn from Sea, nor parted from the Sky, the Noble Peoples were, and were in conflict with the Outer Ones. From the womb of the All-Mother came the Bright and Noble Tribes, and from the womb of Domnu, the Dark Mother, came the Oldest Ones. These Eldest are those called, by Bards, the Fomoiré—the Giants. From the First Days the Giants have wished to enslave the World, to make every head bow beneath their kings, to take all wealth for their own, and give none to any.

So even in those primal times, the people of Nemed fought against the Eldest ones. Yet in that time the Eldest were mighty, and filled with vile magics. So they drove the Nemedians from the isle of the World, and into the Realms Outside.

As has been told by the Bards, the Children of Nemed divided themselves into three clans. Of the folk of Fergus Lethderg we hear no more. The folk of Starn followed the way of the land, and became the Fir Bolg. They discovered the ways of kingship, and how to make bodies of the earth, and how to make

their pact and peace with the Power of the Land. But the third clan were the children of Iarbonel, the Druid. They were diligent children of the Mother, and of Her children—the Gods and Goddesses, who ruled as their priests, and messengers, and warriors.

As it has been told, the Clan of Iarbonel went into the north of the world. In their ships of spirit they sailed into Realm of the North Star, to the Four Cities of the Sages. To Murias of the Starry Sea across which they sailed; to Falias, the place of destiny and to Findias the bright they journeyed. They came to Gorias of the Warming. In these places they were taught magics by the sages, and learned every secret art.

The greatest of the Children of Danu, the wisest, and most skilled, were as Gods and Goddesses to their folk. They were able to give great blessings, and, in their immortality, they blessed generation after generation of the Elder Ones. They were given great offerings by all the generations of their descendants, and grew mighty in their ageless wisdom.

For, in those days, among the unfleshed children of Iarbonel, the power of the rituals and sacrifices of the Wise were as food and drink to the Elder Race. To come before the Fire of Sacrifice was a glorious banquet. When the priestess of the Elder Folk poured a glass of the Nectar of Offering into the Fire, every Noble gathered there tasted its wild sweetness in their spirit, and was nourished.

Every magical skill was known to the Sages, and taught to the Elder Ones; the skills of mastery of form and aspect, of passing unseen and of appearing in awe and glory, of healing and of withering, of love and of war; the skills of commanding the elements of the World, the waters and the winds, the stones and trees and herbs; the skills of shaping reality out of idea, whether in words or iron or gold or in destiny; the skills of knowing the patterns of the world's thread, of hearing on the wind, of seeing at a distance, of reading aright the signs of time and tide. All these skills they gained, and the vision and wisdom to use them well. Along with these they learned the skills of war, and of law and rulership. They prepared themselves in every way to master the Giants in the Isle of the World.

Yet in that age, as the kin of Iarbonel were learning magic in the north, the Children of Starn the Plowman had chosen to remain in the land. They had driven back the Giants by making a pact with the land. Their King, they wedded to the Spirit of the Land, and by this they made themselves strong against any who might bear ill into their places. So they had established their



own undying kingship, and, in so doing, bound themselves into the forms and nature of things of earth, of stone and tree and stream, with all the delights and perils of natural life. They made a great kingdom, and their people lived in bounty and health and joy. They called themselves the Fir Bolg—which means ‘people of the lightning.’

It is told how the Clan of Iarbonel returned to the Isle of the World on the morning of Beltaine; how their ships of cloud set them upon the highest peak in the land, and how they lit their magical Fire of Claiming. Though they went to war with the children of Starn, it was in that first moment that the battle was won. For when they lit their Fire of Claiming, then they made a secret marriage between their people and the Goddess of the Land. Because they were true still to the All-Mother, their nobles the undying First Children, they called themselves the Tuatha De Danann—Tribe of Danu.

So the Clans of Iarbonel and Starn fought, and the King, Nuada, had his hand struck off. Yet in the end, peace was made between the Fir Bolg and the Tuatha De. They divided the land between them, the Fir Bolg took the greatest of the Tuatha De as their Gods and Goddesses, and they dwelled together in peace. The Fir Bolg lived as mortals, in bodies of flesh, while the Tuatha De lived in bodies of fire and shadow. Together they lit the fires of worship and magic, which nourished the very life of the Tuatha De, and the hearts and spirits of the Fir Bolg. It is told how the Tuatha De defeated the Giants at last. Shining Lugh smote Balor One-Eye, and took his head. From that head, the final secrets of the land were learned, the secrets of sowing and reaping. By the power of the Shining Ones, the Giants were banished from the Isle of the World to dwell outside and beneath the common world in their weird courts.

As it has been told by poets, there came a day when a band of mortals came to the shores of the World. It is not known from whence they came, these Sons of Mil, but they brought with them magics and skills greater than those of the Fir Bolg, perhaps even a match for the Tuatha De themselves.

The Tuatha De turned the Sons of Mil back at the shores of the Isle of the World. Yet the spells of their druid, Amairgin, Son of Mil, won them the shore, despite the magic of the Tuatha De. It is told that the Sons of Mil made their way from that western shore to the Hill called Temair, and how they made there a pact with the Goddess of the Land. Thus they won the favor of the Sovereignty of the Isle of the World.

Here is the mystery that the folk of the Tuatha De contemplate even today,

in their secret halls. They knew not then, nor know they now why the Goddess of the land gave that Sovereignty to Mortals, or why the Shining Ones themselves chose to aid the Sons of Mil. For it became clear that the Gods and Goddesses wished these mortals to rule the isle of the World, wished the Sovereignty of the Tuatha De to end. When at last the Tuatha De sued for peace with the mortals, they were given the dim and secret parts of the world. They were given to dwell under the earth, in pools and lakes, within stones and trees.

So the clans of the Tuatha De, all those lesser than the Gods and Goddesses and their close court, were driven outside the daylit world, almost as the Eldest had been. Yet they were not driven beyond the borders of the World, rather they dwell within and behind it still, and have great influence over fertility and well-being of crops and wild things and all. With the same magic that made them lords of the World, they have built their wonderful, shining halls in the places between. In them the Noblest of the Noble Clans hold their feasts and light their holy Fires. For they worship their Gods and Goddesses still, even as they wonder at the fate that has given the world to mortals.

Ever since that day, when mortal folk drove the Clans from the common world, there has been little trust or goodwill between those peoples. Many of the Noble Clans have a deep resentment of the mortal folk. They observe their lesser beauty, their bodies of flesh like mud, and their mayfly spans of life. They see them grub the land and slay other lives to provide lumps of matter to stuff into their hairy faces to keep themselves alive. By these things the proud Nobles hold themselves higher and more perfect than the mortal clans, and believe that they were the natural and proper rulers of the Isle of the World.

From this come the tales of humans ill-used by the ill-will of the Nobles. Yet we also hear tales of how Noble Ones have aided and done well by mortal folk and families. Their lives have gone on in their secret homes, and seldom do their paths cross those of mortal folk. When they do, it may be for good or for ill.

Yet the Noble clans may have great influence over the lives and well-being of mortals. They can make the field's beasts fertile or render them barren, likewise human men and women. They have magical weapons of disease and ill-luck, with which they smite those who offend them. Yet those who gain their friendship may learn great things. They may reveal the vistas of time, of past, and of future.

Mages and Druids have long sought the keys to making proper relations with the Nobles' clans. Of course, all such dealings begin with the true offerings and worship our folk have learned in their rites. Beyond such basic works of religion—vital as they are to all who hope to deal in safety with the Sidhe folk—there are means by which the Druid gathers personal power. By that power, she is made fit to deal with the lesser spirits of the Nobles, or to turn aside their ills.

### **Concerning the Nobles and the Gods**

It is said that when the Tuatha De Danann sailed their ships of cloud into the manifest world, they were ruled by their first family, who were as Gods and Goddesses to them. It was this family—Dagda, Boann, Goibniu and all the rest—who were most truly called the Children of Danu, for she had been their own mother, while she was but the distant forbear of the multitudes of the Noble Tribes.

These Gods and Goddesses, by their magical power, overcame the terrible Giants, and drove them from the world. Yet when the mortal people came into the worlds, and fought against the Noble Clans, the Great Gods gave their blessing to the mortals. The Goddess of the Land gave them the Sovereignty, and taught them the rites and ways. They learned to make the Sacred Fire and make the offerings that fed the Gods and Goddesses. Even as the Wise Ones among the mortals established the ways of the Gods among them, so some of the Nobles, too, were drawn to the Sacred Fires of mortals.

It is said among some clans of the Nobles that the mortals are, themselves, the descendants of Danu. No tale preserves the origin of mortals, and their spread across the manifest world was, and is, a mystery to the Noble Ones. The Gods accepted mortals as though they were their kin, and some Wise Ones among the Nobles hold that Danu is the Mother of Mortals as she is of the Gods and Nobles.

Thus, many of the Nobles have come to honor the mortal folk, seeing them as the proper rulers of the daylight world, by the will of the Gods. These clans are devout, and keep well the holy worship of the Gods and Goddesses. Other clans still cling to the bitterness of their defeat. They have come to hate and despise mortals, and to wish them ill. It is said that some of these clans have worked in secret, worshipping the Old Giants in their courts Outside, and that together they work to end the sovereignty of mortals and of the Gods and gain it for themselves under the terrible rulership of the Giants. But this is only

legend, and every clan of the Nobles swears public fealty to the Gods, even if they openly hate the mortal clans.

For all these reasons the mortal Druid must always keep the greatest care and caution when dealing with the Old Clans. Those that seem friendly may be so in fact, or they may be dissemblers, concealing their hatred as they seek ways to torment and weaken mortals. Those who seem stern and cold may be despisers, or may be pious servants of the Shining Ones, holding mortals in due honor.

Keep ever the holy ways, that the blessing and protection of the Tribe of Danu be yours, when you go beyond the ways of tribe and hearth, beyond the work of sacrifice and blessing, into the work of magic.

### **Concerning the Nobles and the Ancestors**

It is said by poets that when first mortals approached the Isle of the World, they strove with spells against the Noble Clans. They came in their ships of wood on the World's Sea, and the Nobles, by their skill, turned them back. It is said that in their striving, the eldest son of the king of mortals fell from the mast of his ship and got his death against the southernmost stone of the Land.

Here is a great puzzle to the folk of the Noble Clans. To them, death comes only rarely, and only by violence or magic. When the Nobles die, they know not what becomes of them. They know not whether they survive in some way, nor whence or whether their lives and deeds take them. They do not keep the Cult of the Dead, nor make offerings to those who are gone. When one of the Nobles is destroyed, their bodies and forms soon vanish, and their world goes on without them.

When he who is called the Dark One fell to the stones of the Land, the Nobles were astonished to behold, arisen from the mortal corpse, a spiritual being not unlike themselves. In the coming war it continued. Mortals who were slain rose and lived as spirits, as slain Nobles vanished from the world. The Shining Gods again showed their love for the mortal clans. They took up the spirit of the Dark One, the First of the Slain, and made him very nearly their equal. To him they gave a Hall in the Land, much like the Halls of the Nobles. To this Hall were called all the spirits of the Mortal Dead. There they made their own feast and revel, and from that feast they set forth in ships of cloud, out of the common world and out of the ken of the Noble Ones.

As time passed, the place of the mortal dead became more clear. Mortals

established shrines to the spirits of their Ancestors, and in those shrines they opened the Gates Between the common world and the Halls of the Dead. The Dead came to the offering fires of the mortal clans, and were nourished as were the Gods and the Nobles. The Nobles' Mages learned the roads to the Halls of the Dead, and some commerce passed between them.

So it is in this day. The Druids light the Fire of Sacrifice, and to it come the Honored Dead, the Noble Old Ones, and even the Shining Gods. Let the magician always be certain to make the sacrifices and honor the Dead, to gain their love and support. They are mighty allies, and often have the respect and awe of the Noble Peoples.

It is the Divine in Us that makes us able to speak with authority to the Noble Clans. With our own power firmly established and strongly flowing, we may even dare to command the spirits of the Land. For we can light the fires, make the iron obey us, and survive the failing of our flesh, yet we can journey among the Nobles, learn the magic of the world, and speak with the Gods themselves.

### **The Druid's Work and the Nobles**

The work of the Wise has always included communication with the Noble Clans and alliances between individual Nobles and the Druid. It is the work of the Wise to protect the mortal world from the caprice and malice of the Nobles, to turn aside their ills and to cure their striking. It is our work to be able to win the good will of the clans, to insure the fertility of land, beast, and human. To those ends, the Druid learns to summon individual Nobles and make them his clients, subject to his instructions. She learns to see into the Noble realms, to ken their presence in the world and see their effects.

To accomplish such a work, the student must begin by making herself powerful, gathering her magic. He fills himself with the shining Fire and the dark Waters. He shapes these powers into the adornment and armor of his spirit, righting the Three Cauldrons. She makes the Slat and the Coire, and learns to use them as mighty tools and weapons. She gains the Three Allies, and has their aid. She knows the ways of vision, of sending her eye and hand and voice into the Otherworld.

When the Druid's power is well gathered he begins courting the local Nobles. He seeks welcome among the local court, and proves his respect for even the smallest of the clan. He befriends those that will befriend him, and especially

seeks to know the rulers of the local folk. She learns to call the Nobles to her fire, and honors them with offerings and hymns of welcome.

Thus the Druid comes to be a power among the Noble Ones. He has commerce with them, and uses his skill and strength to ward away the peril that accompanies such work. She learns to summon the lesser spirits of the clans and to employ them in practical magical work. The fellowship and communion of the Sidhe is one of the keys to Druidic Magic. Let him learn it diligently, and use it well, for the good of all.

### **Conjuring the Sidhe**

This is the work of summoning the Spirits of the local Sidhe clans, and the Land-wights, and all such nonhuman kins of spirits. This work is proper to a magician who is well-established in the basics of the work, has learned to work her will, and has made the alliances with the Patron, the Teacher and the Ally. It should never be approached lightly—the Spirits are perilous and strange, and must always be dealt with respectfully, even as your full personal power is brought into play.

The first step in summoning the Noble Spirits is the Rite of Summoning the Host of the Sidhe. The magician calls to all the local spirits of a place, asking them appear en masse. The Host of Spirits is then made to swear to protect the magician and allow no harm to come to him, and specific spirits can be called forth to serve the magician for various specific purposes.

There are many magicians' books that offer lists of spirits to be summoned. Some of these are attempts to present orderly systems of spirits based on some astrological or elemental structure. Others seem more likely to be lists compiled by magicians from their personal experiments, assembled for their students and inheritors. In any case, all such medieval books are based in Jewish and Christian lore, making them of little use in Celtic ways. Each Celtic Magician must assemble a unique list of allies, drawn from the Host of Spirits.

### **The Hosting Rite**

#### **Concerning the Summoning Earth**

First go to a hidden place, where the Nobles are felt to haunt, or where a gate has been known to be opened, or to a great graveyard, on the sixth night of the waxing moon. Bring wood with you, and lay a fire of oak and rowan and hazel, and upon it place vervain and St-John's wort and leaves of mistletoe.

Light this fire at sunset on the night of a full moon and tend it carefully; fan it and feed it lightly, so that all is well burned.

As the fire burns, hold this image in your mind:

High on a mountaintop, beneath the moon, a fine strong fire burns bright. Nine figures tend it, robed forms clad in shining white. Around them tower high, bright indistinct figures that overlook the fire, their heads wreathed in the stars overhead. Around the high peak the world spreads out beneath, all lit by the light of this flame. The Nine pour offerings into the fire, and chant a wordless drone. Listen to their wild voices as you watch the flame transform all that it is given. The flames seem reflected in the hearts of the tall, spectral forms...

The magician should sing or intone, as beautifully as she can, a song to the power of the fire:

**A teine gealach**

**A teine or**

**A teine dearg**

**A teine mor**

**A teine naomh, bigi anseo liom!**

Or repeat what chants she may hear in the envisioning. The fire is carefully tended to ensure that all is burnt to ash, perhaps using a fan to keep the heat high.

These ashes are then pounded well, and to them are added nine drops of the magician's blood, semen or menstruum. The ashes are mixed thoroughly with a large double-handful of graveyard earth, or soil from a burial place of the ancients. This is the Summoning Earth, which is used in various works for the conjuring of spirits.

The Summoning Earth is spread in areas where the magician hopes to gain authority among the Noble Ones. The power of the holy woods combines with the power of our immortal human spirit and the transforming might of fire to create a powerful vessel of magical power.

### **The Signs of Calling**

After the Summoning Earth has been made, take a bit of it and mix it with a fistful of sculptor's clay. Using Triple Water for smoothing, shape the clay into a disk and on it engrave these signs of power:

This disk is set to dry until the first night of the Full Moon, and exposed, as

it dries, to the Three Lights—Sun, Moon and Lightning (or Sacred Fire). If the piece dries whole, without cracking, it is ready for use. If it should crack or fail, the process must be begun again.

This process might also be done with a flat stone a little larger than the magician's hand. The stone is first used as a surface on which to kindle the Fire of Calling, while making the Summoning Earth. If it does not break, the sigils are applied with ochre or woad, and it is hallowed like the disk.

At the Full of the Moon, the disk should be hallowed with a Cauldron Spell, enchanting it to be effective in calling spirits and granting authority among them. It is then wrapped in a red cloth and set away until the working. The Signs of Calling are displayed when the spirits appear, to gain their attention and assert your authority.

### **Sacrifices for the Sidhe**

Assemble all the required offerings for the rite, including the Oil of Offering and Duile Incense, nine fine crystals, nine hazel nuts, nine rowan berries and good whiskey. Prepare a small cauldron of mead, in which flowers of woodruff, vervain and St-John's wort have been steeped.

The fire of the Summoning Rite should be kindled with oak, hazel and rowan. It is good to have a supply of rowan on hand. If you should find yourself in need of protection from the spirits at any time, you can put a piece of rowan on the fire and call upon the Spear of Lugh.

### **The Three Day Preparation**

The Magician prepares her mind and body with three days of meditation, preliminary ritual, and offerings. After the Sigil of calling is created, the Magician must wait one turn of the moon, until the following Full Moon. In the three days leading up to the night of the rite, the Magician chooses to refrain from meat, from intoxication, and from sexual release.

Each day, upon rising, work the Shrine Working, adding a special charm, the Oath of the Rite. This is composed based on the intention of the specific working. The example given is intended for the general Rite of Hosting, but can be adapted for later rites meant to summon specific spirits. It always begins with the recitation of your name and lineage, and then adds an oath stating the intention and swearing to complete the work. At sunset of each of the three days work a Simple Rite of Offering, sacrificing to your own allies, and to the



Gods who will aid you in the work, and divining to be certain of their blessing. For each of the three days there are also specific tasks:

**The First Day:** Compose and bless any sigils or special items or signs. Send your Sidhe Ally to announce your coming to the spirits of the ritual site.

**The Second Day:** Visit the ritual site and work a Welcoming Charm. Divine carefully to be certain of your welcome, even if multiple offerings (but no more than three) are required.

**The Third Day:** Assemble all the components of the rite so that you are ready to proceed with ease. Study the rite and focus on the powers of the work.

On the day of the working you must begin as usual with the Shrine and the Oath, and then be in retreat, focusing on the work. You should speak to no one who is not part of the work, indulge in no common entertainments, and fast as best you can. Spend the day finalizing preparations and reviewing the rite, contemplating its gods and sigils.

### **Working the Rite**

Arrive at the site, and establish your hallows, laying out all the special offerings and items, but leaving the fire unlit.

Just as the sun touches the horizon, light the fire and begin to cast the Druid's Circle.

The Gate is opened with the special conjuring given.

Standing in your Grove, recite your name and lineage, and make again the Oath of the Work. Work a charm for personal divine power, such as the Armoring.

Make proper offerings to the Three Kindreds, and especially to your own Patron, Teacher, and Ally, bringing them into the light of your fire.

Invoke Lugh and Brigid, and make proper offerings to them. Ask them to provide for you the Cloak and Spear, for your protection.

Invoke and offer to Aengus and Aine, and ask them to grant you authority among the Peoples of the Land.

Make a final Prayer of sacrifice to all these powers and do a divination to be certain of their blessing. If the omens are good, then hallow a blessing proper to the work at hand, and drink.

When you have absorbed the Blessing, it is time to call the Host. Take up the Slat and the Signs of Calling, and conjure in a way like to the Call given.

Seated before your fire, with the Slat and the Signs in your hands, strengthen

your Vision, and behold the Hosting of the Sidhe. Hold fast to your own Power, and call upon the Cloak and Spear if need be.

When you have called the Host, and they have gathered, you must confirm your authority among them. Recite the Grand Charge, and secure the oaths of the Host.

Once you have been granted the Safety of the Host you should make a special offering to its monarch, the King or Queen of the local Nobles. You may be given the chance to meet the monarch, or perhaps a herald or envoy, or that may come at a later time. In any case you should make the offerings and speak in their honor.

You may choose to call for specific spirits to come forward and offer to participate in your work. It is unlikely that you will be able to specifically command spirits at this stage of your work. Instead you will make offerings and ask kindly for volunteers from among the Host.

Each spirit that comes forward should be greeted with the Signs of Calling in your left hand and the Slat in your right. Each spirit must reveal to you its name, its nature and inclinations, the sorts of tasks for which it is best suited, and what sorts of offerings are proper to its calling. You should not allow a spirit to entirely dictate the terms of its summoning, but be prepared to maintain your relationship with it even as your own will remains paramount. If any spirit should demand an offering that it is not your will to agree to or to give, then you must tell the spirit so in plain words. You must then ask whether there is another more acceptable offering. If you reach an agreement then each spirit must swear to the individual charge by the Gods of the rite, by their own name and monarch, and upon your own Slat.

The name, signs and power of the spirits should be written down in a small book or scroll kept exclusively for that purpose. It is proper to immediately set each of the spirits to a task proper to its nature. You should avoid assembling long lists of potential allies, treating each alliance as unique and vital. In a first attempt at this experiment it is wise to limit yourself to nine such spirits. You may seek to gain allies who can serve in specific sorts of works, though you may find that other sorts of spirits present themselves. In every case you must consciously choose whether to accept or reject alliance with any specific spirit. Never allow one of the Noble Ones to command you, or demand anything that seems improper to your wisdom and virtue.

When you have finished calling the spirits, make certain that all you have

learned and one has been properly remembered and recorded. When you are finished give the License to depart along with the final offerings. Observe as the spirits depart, reminded of their oath to hold you in safety.

Work the final charm of purification and blessing, then carefully thank all those who you have called, and close the Gate.

### **The Oath of the Work**

**I stand between the Earth and Sky, rooted deep and crowned high. I am a Druid of the Druid's Way, and it is my will to call the Host of the Sidhe. Hear me, all beings and every kindred—by my will and by my skill I seek to know the Clans of the Noble Ones. Let my Fire be a fire of welcome to the Spirits, let them drink clear water from my Well. Let those who would be my allies hear and answer me. These things I swear, to accomplish this work, by my Gods, by my Ancestors, by my place in the Land. Bíodh Se Amhlaidh!**

### **Special Conjuring of the Gate**

**In every place where boundaries meet, where Land and Sea and Sky are joined, there is the Center of the Worlds; there is the place of Magic's Gate.**

**O Manannan Mac Lir, Grey God of the Mists, Lord of the Isle of Apples, Teacher of the Wise, I make this offering to you (*make offering of Offering Oil*). Attend me in this work, Son of the Boundless, as you attended the Tuatha De in their magics. Watch and ward the Ways between as I invite the Host of the Sidhe. Hold open the gates; stretch your sword, Retaliator, over my Fire that no ill may come to me for as long as this gate is open.**

**Now, by the gatekeeper's might and by my magic, let this Fire open as a gate, and let no harm come to me from the sky; let this Well open as a gate, and let no harm come to me from the Deep; Let this Tree be the Crossroads of all worlds, and let no harm come to me upon the Land. By Fire, Well, and Tree, by Land, Sky, and Sea, by Gods, Dead, and Sidhe—let the Gate be Open!**

## **The Grand Summoning of the Sidhe**

(Turn nine times around your Hallows, as you say)

**Nine times round be nine times bound**

**The Poet's binding; the Seer's binding; the Sorcerer's binding;**

**The Oak binding; the Rowan binding; the Hazel binding.**

**The binding of the Gods Above;**

**The binding of the Gods Below;**

**The binding of the Gods of This Green World.**

**In the power of the Gods of the Land and Sky and Sea**

**I call to the Noble Clans.**

**Rise from the soil, I call, from halls beneath stone,**

**From green halls and the pools and wells.**

**Rise with the wind, I call, you who troop and fly and sing,**

**You whisperers and cloud-kin.**

**Rise from the deeps of the sea, you kins of dark waters,**

**You who dwell in Isles of Wonder and in sunlit shallows.**

**Come to my fire, Noble Kins of the Worlds.**

**I call with the voice of the Cauldron of Rebirth; I call with the voice of the Hearth of Welcoming. All spirits of this place and in this place, you of Other Kins, answer this calling. Come without malice, come in a fair form, and come in peace and without any harm to me or to mine, neither in body or mind or spirit, neither in my health or my wealth or my wisdom.**

**To you, O Noble Ones, I make these offerings:**

**Crystal, of the Wealth of the Earth**

**Sweet smoke, of the Beauty of the Earth**

**Whiskey, of the Delight of the Earth.**

**And by these gifts I offer you welcome.**

**By Four Winds and Nine Waves**

**By the World Tree's root and branch**

**By the Four Treasures and the Crown of Don**

**By Fire's Light and Well's Might**

**Come to my call, and accept my sacrifice!**

## **The Greeting to the Spirits**

When the spirits have arrived, having completed the offerings, lay your slat upon the Signs of Calling, and wrap yourself in your Power. In this moment you must display your personal strength and authority to the spirits, by all the signs and allies you've assembled, and by your own might.

**Slainte agus failte, a sprideana na talamh! Hail and welcome, to all those who have come at my call. I am (*your name and lineage*), and you have come to my fire at my will and word, and have taken my offerings. Therefore know me as an ally, and as a Noble One among you. Give to me the Druid's Rights, that I may travel among you and be safe from harm, that I may speak with lawful might among you, and that I may share in your wisdom, love and power.**

## **The Great Charge to the Spirits**

Extend the Slat before you and let the Fire and Water flow plainly in you, as you say :

**Hear me, O spirits of the Land, and let no harm be worked against me or mine, whether in mind, body or spirit, in my health or my wealth or my wisdom; by day nor by night, in winter nor in summer, on land or in the sea or in the sky. Stand with me by these words, all you spirits gathered here, or turn now away! (*Wait a moment, see if any spirits depart*) So be it! I take your presence for an Oath, which you swear to all I have said. Let those who will not swear, depart! (*Wait again, then make an oil offering, saying:*) **Nine blessings upon you with this offering. Now I seek to make pact with those spirits who would aid me in my work, and by my will. By my will and my strength and by my Slat I will call you forth. Let each of you who would give me your name and your nature stand forth when I call.****

Focus your vision and point your slat at a specific spirit. Call the spirit to come to your fire, and make a small offering to it. Ask it its name and what sorts of deeds it cares to do for you. Write down each spirit's name, and a sigil if they give it, what sort of sacrifice it requires, and notes on its nature. This you may do for as many as nine spirits. For **each of these the Individual Charge is given.**

### The Individual Charge to the Spirit

So, O (*name of spirit*), swear to me now to come to my aid when I call, whether before the Sacred Fire, or at any time, to aid me and answer me when I call, whether by a word, or a will or by the magical arte. Swear this now on my wand and my fire and I will make fitting offering to you.

Briochtai

#### The Armoring

I gird myself with the Two Powers  
The Deeps of the World's Chaos  
The Height of the World's Order  
And I, between them, like the World Tree.

I gird myself with the power  
of the Magic Cauldron,  
With the inspiration of the Fire of Magic,  
With love to draw all good to me.

I gird myself with the power of the Spirits—  
The might of the Shining Ones,  
The wisdom of the Ancestors,  
The joy of the Elder Tribes,  
All meet in my soul.

Today I gird myself  
with the Elements of the World.  
The stars behind my eyes  
My thoughts, the clouds  
The sun, my face,  
Cool moonlight, my mind,  
My breath, the wind,  
The sea, my blood  
My hair, the green bounty,  
My flesh, the warm soil,  
Eternal stone, my bones.  
All the world is in me,

And I am in the world.

I gird myself  
With my Goddesses' power to direct me,  
With my Gods' wisdom to bear me up  
Their eyes to watch over me  
Their ears to hear me  
Their voices to speak to me  
Their hands to open my ways  
Their shield to ward me  
From the snares of spirits,  
From peril by Land,  
From peril by Sea,  
From peril by Sky,  
From all who wish me harm,  
far or near.

**Let these Powers be upon me and in me, to make me equal to any challenge, to come between me and all that threatens my body or my spirit; that I may have the wisdom of the Wise, the Love of the Loving, the Power of the Powerful; that I may be known, and with honor, in the Inner Realms. Know me, O Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones, for my name is \_\_\_\_\_.**

Power above me,  
Power below me,  
Power on my right hand,  
Power on my left hand,  
Power before me,  
In every eye, in every ear,  
In every mouth, in every heart,  
My magic is established.

I gird myself with ninefold magic,  
The Fire, the Well, the Tree,  
The Land, the Sky, the Sea,  
The Gods, the Dead, the Sidhe,  
Dwell with me and in me,

Forever.  
So be it!

**A Daily Charm for Power**

By deep Well and bright Fire  
By the World Tree's root and branch  
I come before the Gods  
May I be the Kin of the Mighty Dead  
May I be the Ally of the Noble Spirits  
May I be the Blessed Child of the Shining Gods  
Power be above me  
Power be below me  
Power on every hand around me  
And Wisdom, Love and Power  
In my truest heart.

**A Hymn for the Virtues**

Honor is due to the Ways of the Old Ones.  
I affirm the Way of Virtue,  
to do right and live well.  
I remember the Way of the Wise.  
I seek reason, memory and detachment,  
Yet I seek vision and intuition and compassion.  
I keep the Old Ways, honoring the cycles  
and working the work of my soul.  
I remember the Warrior's Way.  
I will strengthen my body, mind, and spirit,  
And keep my honor bright,  
with true words and honest deeds.  
I seek courage in my heart,  
to stand firm in the face of fear.  
I remember the Farmer's Way.  
Let my hearth be a door of welcome,  
My bounty, the fruits of my diligent labor,  
A blessing to my folk,  
I honor the joy of the land, of the senses, of the flesh.  
The Ways of the Old Ones  
are worthy of honor.



Let all these virtues be in me,  
that I may live well, and do right.

*Bíodh se amblaidh!*

### Call to Manannan

I turn my face to the west, to the place of the setting sun, Mac Lir.  
Over the white-capped waves I send my summoning. Let the steeds of  
the sea hear my call; let the birds that wing over the wave bear my  
words to the Mighty One, Manannan, the judge of the Gods. O  
shining Mac Lir I call you. Son of the boundless sea, I call you and  
offer this cup of welcome. *(Pour the ale)*

O Manannan of the Silver Branch, you who nurture magicians, it is not  
prowess in war that I seek. O Hoster of the feast of age, I do not ask  
for eternal youth. To you, husband of the orchards of Emain Ablach,  
keeper of the Hazel, master of the crane bag, I appeal for wisdom and  
magic that befits a walker between worlds. Come to my fire,  
Manannan, and accept this loaf as your due. *(Give bread offering)*

Here I have lit the fire of worship, by all the proper rites. Here I have  
opened the gates, with your aid, Oh Manannan. Now it is my will to  
(.....). Let this fire be a beacon unto you, Manannan, that you may  
answer my invitation.

Come into my grove, O grey-silver one, and give your blessing to this  
magic and (.....). Come as I call you, and receive this gift of sweet  
fruit. *(Give apple offering)*

Now let my voice arise on the fire. Let my voice resound in the well.  
Let my call pass the boundary to reach the ears of the lord of the ways.  
Manannan Mac Lir, accept my sacrifice. *(large oil offering given)*

### The Descent of Brigid

Brigid of the mantles, Brigid of the hearth fire,  
Brigid of the twining hair, Brigid of the auguries,  
Brigid of the fair face, Brigid of the calmness,  
Brigid of the strong hands, Brigid of the kine,  
Brigid, friend of women, Brigid, fire of magic,

Brigid the foster mother, Brigid woman of wisdom.  
Brigid the daughter of Danu, Brigid the triple flame,  
Each day and each night I call the descent of Brigid.  
That the power of healing be within us,  
That the power of poetry be within us,  
That the power of shaping be within us,  
In earth, sea, and sky and among all kindreds.  
Kindle your flame in our heads, hearts, and loins,  
Make us your cup, your harp, your forge,  
That we may heal, inspire, and transform,  
All in your honor, Brigid font of blessing.  
Brigid above us, Brigid below us,  
Brigid at every airt about us.  
Brigid in our truest heart.

#### Invocation of Lugh

Thou Lugh the Victorious, we make our Grove under your shield, O  
Lugh of the White Horse and the Brilliant Blades. You of the Perfect  
Form, Child of Light and Shadow, Slayer of Balor, be in our midst.  
Accept this ale in welcome Thou Champion, King of All. (*Ale poured*)  
We make our circuit in the joy of the Samildanach; The Clever One,  
the Sure Hand, The Bard and the Smith. May we be at peace under  
the hand of the Chieftain of Danu, taking joy in the feast of the  
Wedding Day of Lugh. We offer this bread that the harvest may  
flourish by the hand of the Plowman. (*Bread offered*)  
By the Sacred Three of Glory, hear now your people's call. By the  
Spear and by the Raven, come, we pray, among your folk. O Lugh the  
Victorious, Our Light and our Guide; O Lugh the Victorious, accept  
this offering of fruit, and be present in your strength. (*Fruit offered*)

#### Invocation of the Land Mother

I invoke the Mother of the land  
Thrice coursed be thy fertile waters,  
Fertile be thy fruit-strewn mountains,  
Fruit-strewn be thy showery wood,  
Showery be thy rivers of waterfalls,

Of rivers be thy deep pools,  
Deep-pooled be thy high holy places,  
A place of tribes for the assembly,  
The assembly of the Fire and Well,  
Fire and Well be the Hallows of thy tribes,  
The tribes of the Children of Earth,  
The Children of the Old Ways,  
Let their lofty fires be blessed  
Blessed land-mother, darkly sung,  
An incantation of great cunning,  
The great cunning of the women and men,  
I invoke the Mother of this Land.

O Mighty Mother of this Land, giver of its fruitfulness, bestower of peace, fount of the waters of wisdom, we offer these gifts to you. Corn we give you, and apples, milk we pour for you, and ale. Fire we kindle for you, flowers we give, and incense. Take these offerings, Mother of All with our love and gratitude. Mathair Ioamlan, Accept our sacrifice!

#### The Bealtainne Blessing

Bless, O great ones true and bountiful  
Ourselves, our kin and our friends, our work and our wealth.  
May the Waters of Life sustain us,  
May the Fire of Passion enliven us,  
From day to day through every turning moon,  
From season to season through all the sacred year.  
May the ancestors strengthen us.  
May the Sidhe-folk open our ways.  
May the goddesses and gods grant us wisdom.  
Let the seeds of spring shoot and bud  
And let our lives blossom with the May.  
By our magic and by the blessings of the old ways,  
Let all our blossoms come to fruit! Ta Go Maith!

#### A Charm for Protection

The Dark King is turned back by the Golden Boy; Evil turn back!  
The Mighty One burst the gates of the Elder House; Evil turn back

The Red Queen is mighty against the foe.  
Evil turn ever back!

### The Aiding

May Brigid shield me  
May the Dagda shield me  
May Morrigan and Lugh shield me  
On Land, Sea, and Sky  
To shield me from all ill  
On Land, Sea and Sky  
To shield me from all ill  
May the Gods aid me  
May the Dead aid me  
May the Spirits aid me  
In Land, Sea, and Sky  
In the Warding of the Hall of the Gods  
In Land, Sea, and Sky  
In the Warding of the Hall of the Gods  
May the One Guide me  
May the Three bless me,  
May the Nine watch over me  
In Land, Sea, and Sky  
To the Apple Garden of the Victorious  
In Land, Sea, and Sky  
To the Apple Garden of the Victorious

### A Charm for Wisdom

Power with me lying down  
Power with me rising up  
Power with me in each ray of light  
Nor I one spark of joy without  
Nor I one spark without  
Love with me in solitude  
Love with me among company  
Love with me among the Gods  
My heart a flame of holy Light

My heart a flame of Light  
Wisdom with me sleeping  
Wisdom with me waking  
Wisdom with me watching  
Each day and every night  
Every day and night  
Lugh with me protecting  
Dagda with me directing  
Morrigan with me strengthening  
Forever and forever more,  
ever and forever more

### The Song of Amairgin

I am a wind on the sea  
I am a wave of the sea  
I am the roaring of the sea  
I am a stag of seven tines  
I am an eagle on a cliff  
I am a tear of the sun  
I am the fairest of flowers  
I am a boar for boldness  
I am a salmon in a pool  
I am a lake on a plain  
I am a hill of poetry  
I am the point of a battle-spear  
I am the God who fashions fire for a head.

Who smoothes the mountains' height?  
Who tells the ages of the moon, and where the sun falls?  
Who calls the cattle from the house of Tethra?  
On whom do the cattle of Tethra smile?  
Who is the troop?  
Who the God who fashions edges?  
What of enchantments upon a spear?  
What of the enchantments of wind?  
The Death Song

You go home this night to your home of winter,  
To your home of fall, of spring, of summer,  
You go home this night to the Turning House,  
To your pleasant rest in the House of Joy.  
Rest you, rest, and away with sorrow,  
Rest this night in the Mother's breast,  
Rest you, rest, and away with sorrow,  
Rest, O beloved, with the Mother's kiss;  
In the Many-colored Land,  
In the Land of the Dead,  
In the Plain of Joy,  
In the Land Beneath the Wave,  
In the Land of Youth,  
In the Land of the Living,  
In the Revolving Castle, the House of Donn.  
Rest in seven lights, beloved,  
Rest in seven joys, beloved,  
Rest in seven sleeps, beloved,  
In the Grove of the Cauldron, Morrigan's Shrine.  
The shade of death is on your face, beloved,  
But the Cauldron of Rebirth awaits you,  
The Threefold turning of your fate  
When your rest has given you your peace  
So rest in the calm of all calms  
Rest in the wisdom of all wisdoms  
Rest in the love of all loves  
Rest in the Lord of Life and Death  
Rest in the Lady of Life and Death  
'Til the Season of Turning  
'Til the Time of the Returning  
'Til the Mystery of the Cauldron

### Saining the Baby

This is the blessing of the Mother on her child  
Protection from death, protection from wound,  
Protection from head to heart.

Protection from heart to foot.  
Blessing of the Three Powers,  
Blessing of the Seven Powers,  
Blessing of the Nine Powers,  
From the crown of your head to the sole of your foot.  
So blessing on your feet.  
Blessing on your (womb) (phallus).  
Blessing on your heart beloved.  
Blessing on your hands.  
Blessing on your mouth.  
Blessing on your eyes,  
And blessing on your radiant brow, O Child of Earth.

From the crown of your head to the soles of your feet,  
To preserve you from behind,  
To preserve you from before,  
To preserve you on every side.  
Be the Light of Wisdom in your eyes,  
Be the warmth of Love in your heart,  
Be the Fire of Strength in your flesh,  
To aid you and shield you all your life.  
Health, wealth and wisdom be yours.  
The Gods' power close to ward you,  
The Spirits' power all around you,  
East to South and South to West,  
West to North and North to East,  
In the whole circle of the world.

#### **An Briocht Slat**

A Slat Draoi, I take you up  
As the Farmer takes his beam,  
As the Warrior takes his spear,  
As the Poet takes his branch.  
Fire is lit by mortal hand,

Wand is shaped by my hand.  
Will is worked,  
Word is spoken,  
Vision is brightened,  
By my hand, by my tongue, by my eye,  
By my Wand, the Druid's Branch.

*(Hold Wand to heart)*

Rooted deep and crowned high,  
A limb of the World Tree,  
Rooted in the Waters of my spirit,  
Crowned in the Fire of my spirit,  
Held fast in my hands.

*(Extend Wand; turn once deosil, saying:)*

Beam of light, bolt of lightning, light of seeing,  
From the Fire in the center, the Light of Power shines.  
A ray in all directions, held fast in my hands,

*(Point wand above)*

A light into the greater light,

*(point Wand Below)*

A light into the deepest dark.

*(Hold wand at heart)*

I stand in the center of all,

I take up the Slat Draoi

Held fast in my hands.

### **The Great Blessing**

I offer my thanks to the Mother of All.

I offer my thanks to the Gods, Dead, and Spirits.

May the Three Sacred Kins bring joy to all beings,

And renew the ancient wisdom.

To the Fire, Well, and Tree I offer my thanks.

May Wisdom, Love, and Power kindle in all beings

And renew the ancient wisdom.

To the Earth, Sea, and Sky I offer my thanks.

May the ancient wisdom be renewed,

And may all beings know peace, joy, and happiness



**In all the worlds!**

## Gaeilge Pronunciations

Gaeilge (Irish Gaelic) is a dialectic language, with wide variations in pronunciation even on the small island of Ireland. Your author's meager skill is influenced by northern (Ulster) dialects. These pronunciations will serve, but the student is again advised to consult a more reliable reference.

In this guide, the letter y is consonantal, and the KH represents a guttural, like the German or Scottish ch. Accents are almost always on the first syllable.

A Manannan, a thiarna na geatai duinn, ta muid ag siul ar do bealach  
*Uh wananan, a hiarna nuh gyatee duhn, ta meej ag syul ar do byalakb*

A teine dearg- *uh chaynuh jayrug*

A teine Gealach – *uh chaynuh gyalakb*

A teine mor – *uh chaynuh wor*

A teine naomh - *uh chaynuh neev*

bigi anseo liom – *beegee ansbo lum*

A teine or – *uh chaynuh orug*

Abred - *abbred*

Aed - *ed*

Aengus Og – *angus ohg*

Aine - *ahnje*

Ainm - *abnum*

Airgetlam – *ahrgetluw*

Airmid - *abrmid*

an da shealach - *un da shyalakb*

An Fuinneamh Deach – *un winyav jakb*

An Gealach – *un gyalakb*

An Muir – *un meer*

An Saol Eile – *un seel elluh*

An Speir – *un speer*

An Talamh – *un taluw*

Anal nathrach, orth' bhais's bethad, do chel denmha

*Anal nabrakb, orth vas behad, do khyel demva*

Annwn - *abnoon*

Ár nDraíocht Féin – *arn reeokht fehyin*  
 Aúghisky - *abwiskee*  
 Badb Catha – *bav caba*  
 Bean Nighe – *byan nee*  
 Bile - *bilya*  
 Bíodh sé amhlaidh – *bee shay owlee*  
 Bith - *bee*  
 Boann – *bob-and*  
 Bodb - *bobv*  
 Breac - *brek*  
 breachad an lae – *brekbad un lie*  
 breacsholas - *breksholas*  
 Bri - *bree*  
 Briocht - *breeokht*  
 Briochtaí - *breeokhtee*  
 Brugh Na Boyne – *broo nuh boin*  
 Bua – *boo-uh*  
 Caher Draoi – *ka-bur dree*  
 Cailleach - *kalyakb*  
 Cermait - *kermít*  
 Ceugant – *keye-gant*  
 Cloch Nemed – *klokch nevem*  
 Clochai - *klokchee*  
 Coire Beannachta – *keeruh byanakht*  
 Coire Ernmas – *keeruh ebrnmas*  
 Coire Goiriath - “ *gobriuh*  
 Coire Sois - “ *sob-ish*  
 Craebh - *krev*  
 Credne - *krednyub*  
 Crioch - *kriokh*  
 Cumhact - *cooakt*  
 Clisteocht – *clish-choekht*  
 Da Fein – *dah feyin*  
 Dagda - *dahgdub*  
 Danu - *dahnoo*  
 Daoine Sidhe – *theenuh shee*

Deisceart - *jeshkyart*  
a Deithe - *uh deb-uh*  
Diancecht - *jahnkekht*  
Dinnsenchas - *dindbenuhkebus*  
Donn - *dond*  
Dord Draoi – *dorud dree*  
Draiocht - *dreeokht*  
Draoi - *dree*  
Druí - *drooee*  
Druidh - *drooee*  
Druidheachd - *drooyakht*  
Duile - *dooluh*  
Edain Echraide – *ehdahn ekbrahjub*  
Eiri Greine – *ayree grehnyuh*  
Emain Ablach – *eevahn abblakb*  
Eochaid Ollathair – *yokhee oblabar*  
Ernmas - *ebrunmas*  
Failte - *fablchub*  
Fein Draoi – *feb-yin dree*  
Fenoderee - *fenOHduree*  
Finvarra - *finvabrub*  
Fir Darrig – *feer dabrig*  
Flidais - *fleedash*  
Fuamnach - *foouhnakb*  
Fuinneamh Deach – *finyav jakb*  
Gaeilge - *geelgyuh*  
Glaistig - *glahshtee*  
Gleasa Draiochta – *glayuhsub dreeokhta*  
Goibniu – *gav-nyu*  
Goriath - *gobriuh*  
Go Raibh Maith Agat – *goruh mahgat*  
Griannach - *greeuhnakb*  
Gwynvydd - *gwinvud*  
Iarthar - *eerhar*  
Imbas - *imvus*  
Iomlan - *imlon*

Iriel Faith – *eeryal fab*  
 Lamfhadha - *lawada*  
 Leabhar gCuimhne - *lahwer cwinyub*  
 Leanann Sidhe – *lyanan sidhe*  
 Leinne - *lebnyub*  
 Lorg - *lorug*  
 Luchtine - *lukhtinub*  
 Lugh - *loo*  
 Lui Na Greine – *looi nuh grebnyub*  
 Macha - *makha*  
 Manannan mac Lir – *MANanan muk leer*  
 Mean Lae – *myan lai*  
 Mean Oiche – *mean eekhub*  
 Medb - *mehv*  
 Midhir - *meeyeer*  
 Mog Ruith – *mug rooee*  
 Mongan - *monugun*  
 Mongfind - *monghind*  
 Nechtan - *neghtun*  
 Nemain - *nevahn*  
 Nuada - *noouhdub*  
 Ogham – *ob-um*  
 Ogma - *ohgmuh*  
 Oirthear - *eerbar*  
 Oonagh - *oonub*  
 Phooka - *hookuh*  
 Righ agus Banrighan, Fear Ben agus Mathair Iomlan  
     *Ree agus ban reeyun, far ben agus mathar imlon*  
 Ruad Rofessa – *rooud robesub*  
 Samildanach - *savildanukh*  
 Sceana – *skeh-ubnub*  
 a Seannara - *uh shanara*  
 Selkie - *selkee*  
 Seo an uisce na beatha- *Shob un wishge nuh bya*  
 Sidhe - *shee*  
 Siochaint agus Beannachtai – *shobkhant agus byanakhtee*

Slainte agus failte – *slahnchub agus failchub*  
a Sprideanna – *uh spridjana*  
a sprideana na talamh – *uh sprijanub nub taluw*  
Slat Draoi – *slot dree*  
Sois – *sob-ish*  
Ta go maith– *tah go mah*  
Tain Bo Cualgne – *toin bo cooulnyuh*  
Teach Duinn – *chakeh doon*  
Tine Draiocht – *cheenuh dreeokht*  
Tine Geal – *cheenuh gyal*  
Tine Naomh – *cheenuh neev*  
Tintean - *chinchan*  
Tir na Marbh – *cheer nub marv*  
Tir Na nOg - *cheer nub nohg*  
Tlachtga - *tlakhtguh*  
Tobar - *tubber*  
Tribhis Mhor – *trivish wor*  
Tuaisceart - *tooascyart*  
Tuathal Techtmar – *toouhl tekhtmar*  
Umhlaiocht – *oolah-okht*  
Urisk - *oorishke*

## **Books & Resources**

### **1. Celtic Resources**

- **The Epics of Celtic Ireland: Ancient Tales of Mystery and Magic**—Jean Markale
- **The Encyclopaedia of Celtic Myth and Legend: A Definitive Sourcebook of Magic, Vision, and Lore**—John Matthews
- **Celtic Myths and Legends**—T. W. Rolleston
- **Celtic Myths and Legends**—Peter Berresford Ellis
- **Carmina Gadelica: Hymns & Incantations**—Alexander Carmichael (Editor)
- **The Gaelic Otherworld**—John Gregorson Campbell
- **Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales**—Alwyn Rees, Brinley Rees
- **The Ancient Celts**—Barry Cunliffe
- **The Gods of the Celts (Illustrated History Paperback Series)**—Miranda Green
- **The Mabinogi, and Other Medieval Welsh Tales**—Patrick K. Ford (Editor)
- **Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries**—W. Y. Evans-Wentz
- **The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe & Early Ireland & Wales**—John T. Koch
- **The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns & Fairies**—Robert Kirk

### **2. Modern Celtic Paganism**

- **The Solitary Druid: Walking the Path of Wisdom and Spirit**—Robert Lee Ellison
- **The Druids' Alphabet**—Robert Lee (Skip) Ellison

- **Magic of the Celtic Otherworld (Llewellyn's Celtic Wisdom)**—Stephen Blamires
  - **Magic of the Celtic Gods and Goddesses: A Guide to Their Spiritual Power, Healing Energies, And Mystical Joy**—Carl McColman, Kathryn Hinds
  - **The Magic Arts in Celtic Britain**—Lewis Spence
  - **The Celtic Seers' Source Book: Vision and Magic in the Druid Tradition**—John Matthews
  - **The Celtic Book of the Dead**—Caitlin Matthews
  - **The Encyclopaedia of Celtic Wisdom: The Celtic Shaman's Sourcebook**—Caitlin Matthews, John Matthews
  - **The Apple Branch: A Path to Celtic Ritual**—Alexei Kondratiev
  - **Ogam: The Celtic Oracle of the Trees: Understanding, Casting, and Interpreting the Ancient Druidic Alphabet**—Paul Rhys Mountfort
  - **Celtic Wisdom Sticks: An Ogam Oracle**—Caitlin Matthews
  - **Power within the Land: The Roots of Celtic and Underworld Traditions Awakening the Sleepers and Regenerating the Earth**—R. J. Stewart
  - **Earth Light: The Ancient Path to Transformation Rediscovering the Wisdom of Celtic & Faery Lore (Celtic Myth & Legend)**—R. J. Stewart
  - **A Circle of Stones: Journeys and Meditations for Modern Celts**—Erynn Rowan Laurie
  - **The Cauldron of the Gods; A Manual of Celtic Magic**—Jan Fries
3. **Useful Pagan and Traditional Magic**
- **The Ár nDraíocht Féin Dedicant's Program**—Ian Corrigan and Elders of ADF



- **Taking up The Runes: A Complete Guide To Using Runes In Spells, Rituals, Divination, And Magic**—Diana L. Paxson
- **Practical Magic In the Northern Tradition**—Nigel Pennick
- **The Way of the Shaman: Tenth Anniversary Edition**—Michael Harner
- **Mastering Witchcraft**—Paul Huson
- **Chaos & Sorcery**—Nicholas Hall
- **Hermetic Magic: The Postmodern Magical Papyrus of Abaris**—Stephen E. Flowers
- **Magical Ritual Methods**—William Gray
- **Initiation Into Hermetics: A course of instruction of magic theory and practice**—Franz Bardon
- **Secrets of the Magical Grimoires**—Aaron Leitch
- **Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century (Magic in History)**—Richard Kieckhefer

### **Other Titles by Ian Corrigan**

Ian has been a teacher of magic and Paganism for more than twenty years. With a background in the traditional Craft (Wicca), he has worked for the past 13 years in the areas of Druidry and Celtic revival spirituality. He has been Vice ArchDruid of *Ár nDraíocht Féin*, and is well-known as a speaker, ritualist, and bard.

### **Audio Workshops**

#### **The Basics of Ritual Worship**

The use of the basic components of ritual worship including centering, the Circle, the Altar, and the Tools, invocation, and Pagan Mysteries. Combining will, imagination and faith to enhance personal contact with the Divine.

#### **Beginning Practical Magic**

Techniques of effective spellbinding presented clearly and straight forwardly. Including the Laws of Magic, targeting your spells and training your mind for Magic. Available as an edited booklet with additional material.

### **The Hub of the Wheel**

Discussions toward self-integration in the Pagan way. The three aspects of Self; using the Magical Persona for growth; Earth Mysticism; Attunement to the God/desses.

### **Sacred Fire, Holy Well**

Basic principles of Celtic Magical and religious ritual. The Two Powers, Fire and Water, examined in their many aspects. The Core Myths; Lore of the Fire and Well; practical and ritual uses.

## **Books**

### **The Portal Book**

Basic teachings of Celtic Witchcraft. The Celtic Wiccan Five-fold Pantheon; the Wheel of the Year; Self-Initiation and Spellwork. Many illustrations by the author.

### **The Book of the Dragon**

A simple, imaginative treatment of Ritual Magic in a Pagan context. Starting with the basics, it leads the student into deeper practices, including a system of spirit contact.

### **Beginning Practical Magic**

Techniques of effective spellbinding presented clearly and straight forwardly. Including the Laws of Magic, targeting your spells and training your mind for Magic. Available as an edited booklet with additional material.

## **Music**

### **Once Around the Wheel**

Ian and friends sing their way through a round of seasonal songs, drawing on the British, Irish and NeoPagan traditions. A lecture-concert format, with extensive notes between each song

### **Songs of the Wheel**

The songs from Once Around the Wheel, without the talk, and with several new items.

### **Ian Corrigan Live At Starwood**

A concert recorded at the Starwood festival.