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11506 NE 113th Pl., Kirkland, WA 98033

Issue 47, Yule 10,009/10th year of the Goddess

(Winter, 2009/10)/

The Beltane Papers exists to provide women with a safe place within which to explore and express the sacred in their lives, to educate, empower, encourage and entertain, to inspire, support and reinforce their perception of reality. Published 3 times annually. All rights revert. ISSN # 1074-3634.

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Guiding Goddess: Winter Crone, you are Atropos, she who cuts the thread. You are the inevitable end to life. You reach out to us with your bony hand and willingly or not, we must face our death. You are the end, yet also the beginning. For there cannot be life without death and death without life, they are the two sides of the same coin that ever turns. As you cut the thread, it is done with love, in wisdom, because even as winter is so dark and cold and it seems there is no life, the spring will come again with life renewed

Disclaimer: The opinions and ideas of the contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff members.

The Beltane Papers

A Journal of Women's Mysteries

Yule (Winter) 10,009/10th (2009/10) year of the Goddess Issue 47 - \$3.00



"Winter Crone" by Michelle Maiden

About this issue...

My personal life has been busy with people coming and going. We have had a few visitors over the summer. My youngest son went to Dakar, Senegal in Africa for a month long volunteer position, and now he will be flying back and forth between the coasts to interview with medical colleges all autumn long.

On a darker note, I've had some sad partings as well, my father-in-law, mother-in-law and my best friend died within months of each other. True to Joni Mitchell's song, "You don't know what you've got till it's gone", I'm feeling it. We have also lost a beloved leader in our community, Marion Weinstein, teacher, radio-show host, comedian and author of *Positive Magic: Occult Self-Help* published in 1978. For many this was their first introduction to earth-based religion and philosophies. She is loved and missed by many.

Coincidentally, the content of this issue is also a little on the darker side. The Goddess is not always about love and light. There are times when we must invoke the darker side, when we must call on Kali to help us defend ourselves, and all women, from the violence and even utter annihilation. Not to minimize it in any way, but the rape that Z addresses in her article is nothing compared to what is going on in other countries. There are such horrific things done to women in Africa that I cannot even bear to repeat them, such atrocities that it will make you sick to your stomach. I have rarely used this spot as a soapbox, but I am today. I've included an ad for Eve Ensler's *V-Day* project. Please read through her site, each project has a way for you to get involved. I urge you to get involved, even if that just means telling someone else that this is going on. By doing at least that, you can help raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups. Attend a benefit performance of *The Vagina Monologues*, *A Memory*, *A Monologue*, *A Rant* and *A Prayer*, and screenings of *V-Day's* documentary *Until The Violence Stops*. If you can donate money, do. If you have a website – link to their site, if you have a publication, give them a free ad. If each of us does a little, it can add up to doing a lot. There but for the grace of the Goddess goes any one of us.

This is the Yule issue of TBP. We are proud to get it out in time for holiday shopping. We have some wonderful advertisers this issue, supporting them helps to support TBP! We are holding our own barely. We have a great back order sale, this helps tremendously, so those of you with incomplete sets, purchase your missing issues! 3 Issues @ \$18.00 - 6 Issues @ \$30.00 9 Issues @ \$40.00 - 12 Issues @ \$50.00. I may be able to put together two or three complete sets, from issue 1 of 1992 though the current issue for \$150.00. This is a fantastic deal as it works out to be a little over \$3.00 per issue!

As always, we are grateful for the support of the community of our readers, contributors, volunteers, and advertisers. This

is what TBP is all about, community. It's been a long time since we could afford space for letters, but the one we received from Lori DeMarre, an original Brideswell Collective mother, reminded me that it is about community, about connecting and sharing our experiences, our fears, our pains, our joys, and what we've learned from it all. Letters like this complete the circle. I will reserve space in each issue for letters and will place them on the website. .

Lisé Quinn

Dear TBP,

I received issue 47 and I want to thank you for this issue since the horse is not only an archetype, but a physical teaching for me right now. When I first started my own journey with the horse there were not a lot of books out about the horse/heart/spiritual connection, yet now there are quite a few which is great! I have *Horses and the Mystical Path* by the McCormick sisters on my shelf along with their first book also *Horse Sense and the Human Heart*. I greatly admire their work and was delighted to see their names gracing this issue of TBP! This issue has made me reflect on my own recent journey with horses and how it's lead me to this amazing life I am living now.

About four or five years ago, I closed my business, Inner Essence, due to complete and total burnout of running a business. The work I did with photography as a healing way was my passion in life, yet the business side of it squelched that very fire. It was hard to walk away from because it had been not only my business but my spiritual path from the very core of my being. Even though it had been a successful business in always providing those unique clients who needed my services, it was not always consistently successful in paying the bills that I needed to cover. Along with that, I suffer from depression, which no amount of positive affirmations, shamanic healings, energy work, herbs completely cure. When I finally relented and found a good anti-depressant that helped me feel "normal", I felt very guilty, since I was a practitioner in the healing arts for goddess sakes! Since then, I've discovered many of us in the healing arts need to integrate the medical model into our lives and in doing so has taught me to humble myself and my big ol ego that wanted to completely live and prove my chosen ideology of natural practices. However, I've never been very good as a fundamental anything and thrive more as an interdisciplinary person. So . . . life's lessons continue. Humility.

Artist Bio is unavailable at this time. Michelle Maiden's work can be seen at <http://www.elfwood.com/~faeriemaiden> and <http://dark777fairy.deviantart.com/> and you can purchase items with her artwork on them at http://www.cafepress.com/mystic_fairy

So I found a day job counseling people who are in the process of quitting smoking via telephone, therefore I still got to work from home and choose my hours, while still using my skills I'd developed as a therapist which still let me sit with another's pain. I thought I'd try to work at a day job, while doing my passion on the side versus making it my business. Even so, there was no fire left for creating art that was once my passion and business.

I was in that void place—the end of one thing and the beginning of another yet not seen. Stumbling around in that place, I noticed that I had started creating a lot of horse images in my visual journal. As part of my business, I taught visual journaling for a couple of years at Cancer Lifeline in the Healing Arts and loved working with a medium that brought the inner world of symbols into the outer world to be seen. I was so busy teaching and creating a safe space for others to experience this; I hadn't really sat back and worked with my own images in any depth. One piece in particular was created from a dream I had of three wild horses that I was afraid of while I was hanging off a cliff. They got scared and ran away; however, one dirty white horse came back to where I was to wait for me.

I also was using, repeatedly, an image from an old photograph from the 1930's, of a Mongolian woman running fast on her horse with a look of joy on her face. Even though, I started to work with the image symbolically, I thought to myself, "I used to be passionate about horses when I was a girl, maybe I should actually take some horse-back riding lessons".

Through a lot of synchronicity and persevering, I found a place to take lessons at a Natural Horsemanship Center outside of Seattle. And lo and behold, my teacher was Tom, a dirty white horse and his human partner, Terry. Learning to ride naturally was certainly a different style than I learned in Montana as a child. In Montana, we got on the horse, kicked it hard and said Giddy up! And off we went.

This time I was taught that horses were our partners and in being an effective human leader, it was important to be polite and respectful, yet firmly asking what we wanted in horse language by using body language, mental images and energy and the release of the energy. All of the sudden, I had a practical application of many different techniques I had learned over the years, such as mindfulness, energy work and many other awareness through the body techniques.

I started looking for books about the spiritual aspects of people's connections with horses and found *The Tao of Equus*, *Riding Between the Worlds* and *What Horses Say*. But mostly, I just tried to stay in the present with a beginner's mind with my new experience. It was a relief to just be in the moment, not caught in the past or trying to envision the future for a change.

After a year of lessons with Tom, my intention was to sub-lease a horse since I wanted to start riding more than just at lesson time. Terry always told me her horses always found her. She would buy or rescue the horses everyone thought were cast offs or no good and let them heal on her land, while teaching them a kinder way to play together with humans. In fact, her goal was to open a nonprofit that put together emotionally injured horses and humans together in a safe environment as a healing process for both. I saw these so called "throw away horses" thrive under her care.

There was Bill, whom even though he was one of the famous Secretariat's line, he was a 'throw away' because he was considered crazy and un-trainable. And there was Abbey, who was one step from the glue factory, yet ended up being one of the lesson horses for kids and now is owned by a young woman who fell in love with her and vice versa. Timothy, who we all pitched in money for, was neglected in a pasture close by and was full of lice, overgrown hoofs and tangled mane. He was too un-trustful of humans to load in a trailer, so Terry actually led him by rope on foot back to the farm. Alice, a goat, also followed behind. Unknown to everyone, but Timothy, Alice and Timothy were close friends and Alice wasn't going to be left behind. So Terry had to do some extra cajoling to buy Alice too.

When I first arrived at the ranch, Terry introduced me to Rebecca, a big beautiful chestnut mare who she had rescued a number of years back. She told me Rebecca could be my horse to hang out with and love. No one could ride Rebecca because her knees had dropped down to her feet, but I spent many hours with her grooming her, going for walks, hugging her and talking to her. She was a beautiful gentle yet strong spirit. Rebecca was Mother Earth herself.

Since I wanted more horse time, it made perfect sense to co-own or sub lease a horse, not only because of the expense involved but it would give the horse more attention and love since most of us borders only had a limited amount of time to spend with these special animals. I asked around, spent time with and considered a few possibilities until Terry had me meet a chocolate colored Rocky Mountain mare named Dimanche', which means Sunday in French. She felt Dimanche' was unhappy with her owners because she didn't get a lot of time and attention with them and when she did she was ridden hard and quick. Her owner had a hard time catching her every time she did show up. At first, Dimanche' didn't really leave any kind of an impression one way or the other on me. Plus, the very last thing I planned on was purchasing a horse. The owners, however, were willing to let me sub-lease her until they sold her since their daughter was going to college and didn't have any time for her any more.

I started playing with Dimanche' using natural horsemanship methods. Which meant I only used a rope hackamore verses a mental bit and leather bridle. And I started

playing the seven games that is taught through the Parelli method of Natural Horsemanship. What I liked about this method is that you do all of your getting to know your horse on the ground for safety. For a 50 yr old out a shape gal such as myself it was perfect!

Getting to know Dimanche' wasn't exactly easy. I spent hours in the field trying to "catch" her by just standing there being patient (which I'm typically not) until she became more curious (which she really wasn't). A horse whisperer I wasn't. Yet, with perseverance and a little slipping back into the 'traditional' go after her and get her we started our relationship. The sense I got from her was irritation . . . no, actually . . . disgust for the whole human race in all of their idiocy. Which to tell the truth, I really didn't blame her because I was pretty cynical at that time in my life also. I had completely lived my "Inner Essence" life with a 'follow your bliss' and 'do what you love and the money will follow' way of life for many years. These days, since I had an actual J.O.B., I was sort of looking that way of thought as sort of a crock of you know what! So here were these two crunchy creatures being brought together just because Terry had some kind of a sense that we should be.

When I'd finally get Dimanche into the grooming area or arena, she was wild eyed and spooked at everything. She looked like she was going to dart at any moment. I would tentively groom her with utmost 'mindfulness' since she'd try to kick or bite every so often. It was difficult to get her to settle down enough to get on her and when I did she'd try to bite me. However, there were times when she did settle down and showed a deep sweetness by lowering her head and letting me pet her and talk to her. We slowly progressed by moving through the seven games, which gave us both a chance to go very slowly. Along with that, I also even more time, just hanging out with her with no expectations the same as I would with a dear friend. I'm sure that was a very new experience for her.

Needless to say, against my better judgment, and with realizing that I was stark raving mad to even consider being a horse owner, I bought her with my partner's help. Deborah, supported it since she saw how being around the horses helped my mood lift tremendously after I came home from the ranch. It's not easy being with someone who has a depressive disorder and the horses forced me again and again to get out of the house and into nature. Besides nature, it also provided me with a mental focus, included a physical activity, while incorporating non-violent methods of learning leadership within another's species language.

It gave me a "chop wood carry water" discipline to follow. It was a year before I ever felt comfortable enough to ride Dimanche' out of the arena. She was still a spooky sort, but we had both gained some confidence and settled down quite a bit. I also gave her another name, because everyone--including myself--pronounced her name differently. And

when we did say it, it was in a stumbling halting manner. I thought maybe that's why she's been so invisible in the past. So I named her Luna, since she's dark and moody with the tides of the moon, yet also a warm bright light in the dark. Luna Dimanche'. With the name Luna, people did start to notice her essence and could greet her and talk to her more confidently. Now when I say Luna, she picks up her ears and looks at me with curiosity.

In hindsight, Luna has changed our lives in so many ways. We went from living in Seattle for 10 years to moving out in the country. And now, we live surrounded by pastures with horses, which are up against the beginning of hundreds and hundreds of miles of forest. Luna is boarded only two miles away at a much more humble and small boarding place, where I muck her stall and spend just about every day with her. She is a different horse from the wild eyed spooky girl who would try to bite. She is my faithful and trusted companion. When I get out of my truck and am walking up to the barn or pasture, she knickers hello if she sees me. Now I can step into the pasture and holler, Luna, and she comes to me. We stand and hug and greet each other and she helps me put on her halter for whatever adventure is before us. She and I have both gained a lot of confidence by riding in the wilderness behind her pasture. Sometimes, as we glide through the green tangled forest dappled by sunlight, I think to myself, 'How on earth did I get here? Thank-you, thank you goddess for stepping in and guiding me, when I hadn't a clue.'

Now that I am coming to the other side of that void, I am thankful, I got out of my way enough to allow my life to develop in such richer ways than it was in the past. I had allowed my ego and my vision to become very limited and tied to restrictions of what I thought was bliss. By allowing myself to shed what I thought identified me at the time, which I thought I lost, life had so much more in store for me. In fact, riches and a depth that I couldn't have envisioned for myself since it wasn't even a concept at the time. It was a lesson in embracing the Mystery on a whole other level in a whole new way. By shedding my identity that I had created, only then was I able to follow the complete unknowing by embracing the Fool. Now I'm playing with some visions of incorporating my "Inner Essence" skills with my new sense of self with healing and horses. However, I'm taking it slow . . . very slow. And . . . art is starting to give me pleasure once again.

Thanks again, for sharing this issue with me. You do a great job in keeping TBP alive.

Warmly, warmly, warmly,

Lori DeMarre,
(original Brideswell Collective TBP mother)

SHE'S BACK!!

(With a vengeance)

by Aryll Argon

Artwork by Michèle Heidi Sutton

She has been known in ancient times and continuously throughout history even up to the moment by names too numerous to mention. She predates Christianity (who adopted her names, her liturgy, her holidays, her rites, and her places of worship) by thousands of years. Remains of her temples and her images have been found on every continent and in every country the world over. For the last two thousand years, she has been abused, misused, maligned, and cast out by those "in control." Her worshippers have suffered rape, the rack, nail screws, stoning, skewering, stampedes, flaying, quartering's, burning, drowning, disembowelment, and any number of other unmentionable tortures in the quest to rid the world of her influence. Yet she lives on, not in our memories as a quaint fertility object from a distant and barbarous past, but as a living, breathing, regenerating entity upon which all humans reside. She is Gaia (Gaea), the Great Earth Mother. She is also the triple Goddess: maiden, mother, and crone, or creator, sustainer, and destroyer. She is the virgin and she is the sacred whore. The Goddess is back (although she never left), and she is seeking retribution for the sins of the fathers and the sins of the sons back seven generations.

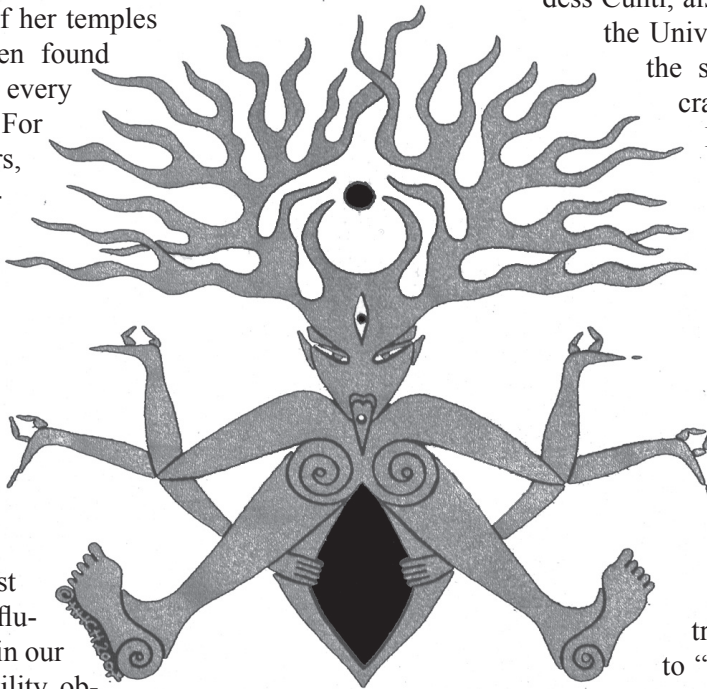
To understand the defilement of the Great Mother, we need only look to the language of our times. As children, we are instructed not to say certain words, because they were "bad words." "Cunt," "bitch" and "whore," are representative of those words. Yet when we investigate their etymology, we find not words of debasement, but words of honor and names of the Great Mother.

Bitch: The Bitch Goddess of antiquity was known in all the Indo-European cultures, beginning with the Great Bitch Sarama⁽¹⁾, who led the Vedic dogs of death. Artemis-Diana, leader of the Scythian Alani or "hunting dogs," was another such Bitch Goddess⁽²⁾. Harlots

or "bitches" were identified in the ancient Roman cult of the Goddess Lupa, the Wolf Bitch, whose priestesses (the lupae) gave their name to prostitutes in general⁽³⁾.

Cunt (Kunda): Derived from the Oriental Great Goddess Cunti, also known as the Yoni (vulva) of the Universe. Other words coming from the same source are "cunabula," a cradle or first abode; "Cunina," a Roman Goddess who protected children in the cradle; "cuntipotent," having all powerful cunt-magic; "cunicle," a hole or passage; "cundy," a culvert; also "cunning," "kenning" and "ken," meaning knowledge, learning, insight, remembrance and wisdom. In ancient writings, the meaning of the word was synonymous with "woman." Kunda Saharan, Goddess of the Kuntahs, a tribe who traced their beginnings to "the cleft of the Goddess." Kundas were children begotten out of wedlock, considered divine gifts of the Goddess Kunda⁽⁴⁾.

Whore (Horae): Known in Persia as "houris," "Ladies of the Hour,"⁽⁵⁾ and in Babylon as "harines"⁽⁶⁾. Semites called them "whores" after Hor (meaning a hole), who was the ancestress of the Horites. In Greece, the Horae were Aphrodite's celestial nymphs, who performed the Dances of the Hours, acted as midwives to the Gods, and inspired earthly Horae (harlot priestesses) to train men in Sexual Mysteries. The dance the hora was based on the priestesses' imitation of the zodiacal circling of "hours." Time keeping is known as horology because of the systems devised by these ancient priestesses of the Goddess. The Horae were called "fair ones, begetters of all things, who in appointed order bring on day and night, summer and winter, so as to make months and years grow full."⁽⁷⁾ The Vestal Virgins serving in the temples of Vesta and Hestia in Greece and Rome were originally harlot-priestesses⁽⁸⁾. A thousand sacred harlots served the temples of Aphrodite at Eryx, Corinth, and Cyprus apiece. The promiscuous priestess-shamans of Japan were called Holy Mothers. Every Babylonian woman prostituted herself



in the temple before marriage. The original meaning of the word prostitute is “unmarried woman” ⁽⁹⁾.

The words “cunt,” “bitch” and “whore” are not slang, a dialect, or any marginal form, but are, rather, true language words of the oldest stock. Words are not evil or good; they simply are. It is the connotation that society gives them that labels them “bad.” In the case of these Goddess-related words, it was society (now ancient society), indoctrinated by pagan-hating, religious hierarchy, who sought to defame the feminine in all forms. It is time we reeducate ourselves to the true meanings of language and seek to reinstate the Great Mother on her rightful throne of authority, wisdom, and knowledge.

In all things, there is polarity and the polarity allows balance. White is to black, day is to night, male is to female, positive is to negative, up is to down, in the same way that virgin is to whore, or creator is to destroyer. We do not judge the day as being “better” than the night, nor black as being more powerful than white. We only experience day because it is balanced by night or summer as balanced by winter. Who are we, then, to judge a whore as being less righteous than a virgin? When we understand that, all is balance; all has an opposite pole. We can even make peace with the atrocities of the dark ages, for they were balanced by the strides made in the Renaissance.

One of the most revered and most powerful Goddesses of all time is Kali. Her worship and unbroken Hindu lineage stretches back into antiquity. She is the Great Goddess in her destroyer aspect, balanced and counterpoint for the Goddess in her creator aspect, yet she is also the three in one. In her emanation as Anath, she ruled the Middle East back to Neolithic times. In Central America, she is the Lady of the Serpent Skirt, her skirt an apron of severed phalluses ⁽¹⁰⁾. Lorena Bobbitt is her modern day emanation.

Kali is depicted with black skin. She wears a necklace of skulls, carries a knife to cut through illusion and a mirror of reflection, and drinks from a skull cup of blood. She stands above her disemboweled lover, phallus erect, and his blood feeding the earth. Her visage is terrifying. She is loved and feared for her destructive powers, for she is both womb and tomb simultaneously. It is upon Kali’s destroyer aspect that the angry, punishing, castrating Father God was based ⁽¹¹⁾. Yet how much more terrible does she seem than her watered down male version?

It is confusing to think simultaneously of the Goddess as virgin and the Goddess as whore. Yet even in Christianity, both Marys were adopted in their respective positions. The virgin/whore split into two aspects of the same divine feminine. In truth, prior to Christianity the temple virgin was the temple whore (Isis the woman in red, she of the red apparel, veiled Isis), two sides of the same coin. This can only be true because the Great Mother herself ordained the sacred

prostitute. The divine feminine does not seek to condemn sexuality but to raise it to its true place as an act of spirituality. In ancient times, the temples of the Goddess served as healing and cleansing centers for warriors returning from battle. Only by lying with a sacred prostitute (who became the earthly incarnation of the Goddess), could a man cleanse himself of the acts of violation committed in war and be reborn through the Mother into society. Women as keepers of the secrets and mysteries of sexuality are the teachers and must reclaim their rightful place as the path to the Goddess.

The founding church fathers understood the power inherent in sexuality. They understood that to repress and suppress the populace they needed to control the very act of sexuality. They accomplished this by condemning it, and women along with it, as diabolical. The church said, “Women are without souls” and, thus, no better than demons. Women became “the fall guys” so that a handful of clergy could hold power, authority, and the purse strings in their ever-widening grasp. The word “devil” comes from the word “deva” ⁽¹²⁾. The original devas were the nature spirits of the early Indo-Europeans. The church took all things sacred to the Great Mother and made them profane, even profaning the Earth herself. She has been raped, plundered, and torn end to end. In her death throes, she coughs up poison gases (in the form of volcanoes) in resistance. She shifts and quakes, grinding her plates in tectonic activity trying to rub the burr from under the saddle of patriarchal oppression. She is not giving up easily, but her struggle is apparent. And through all this sickness and pestilence, we see rising signs of repentance.

As in the days of the Christos when the sacrificial gods Tammuz/Dumuzi were consorts to the powerful Ishtar and Innana, men seeking to honor the Goddess by entering the priesthood performed self-castration as an act of contrition. To become closer to the Goddess they emasculated themselves in an attempt to be more like women, having a hole instead of a phallus. Later the church fathers emulated the attire of women by adopting robes as an emblem of their “holy” office ⁽¹³⁾. Today, the numbers of men seeking to have sex changes is growing as men protest the rape of the Great Mother and seek to emulate femininity. Oftentimes they take jobs working in sex clubs or find themselves on the street as “outcasts” of society who now “service” the men they themselves no longer wanted to be. Patriarchal traditions, so long upheld as “the only way,” are falling apart as the foundations of society collapse, heralding the new millennium. In some cases, the sex-changed men become dominatrixes, stylistically punishing “establishment man” for his acts of control and domination in the outside world. The controlling men (lawyers, company presidents, high profile businessmen) seek ritual debasement and submission to purge their day-to-day guilt. These scenes recall the flogging of early devout monks and nuns beating themselves into a frenzy of zealous ecstasy.

Continued on page 16

Hexing the Enemies of Women and Peace

by Z Budapest

Some women shirk from fighting back. Too many years have passed since the heroic age of the seventies, when everything new started. We used to have self-defense classes, repair our own cars classes, women's studies about who we are as women and what women have done in Herstory that we are not aware of. Gathering our treasures and our tears.

Still, we live in male-centered societies. Males often rule by violence and rape, and the everlasting wars. Not by law. Too many rapists have gone free, too many murderers as well. White-collar thieves live long and hardly ever fall into the hands of justice.

But something has happened here in the San Francisco Bay Area that tripped the "that's enough!" wires for me as a witch. A lesbian was viciously gang-raped by four men. Then, they kidnapped her, and continued their assault for another 45 minutes. She was brutally beaten to within an inch of her life for being a woman, for being a lesbian. Then, they stole her car and left her naked in the chilled winter winds and pounding rains, daring her to survive.

She did.

I have not hexed anybody since the Trailside Killer (still in jail) in the 80's, but something turned inside me when the crime came this close to my life. I'm much older now at 68 and somewhat incapacitated with artificial hips. I gathered enough courage to call to arms all those women who considered holding a hexing circle in defense of our lives a worthwhile effort.

13 women answered the call. It was a magical number. I went ahead.

As always, we document all hexes, so there could be NO doubt that we are not calling on the devil.

I contemplated the situation and carefully chose the Lady of Guadalupe as our Queen of all Americas to be the center. I asked a friend to get me some large banners of the Lady. She sent us two large banners, glorious in her appearance, the Lady in her full queenly glory. Thank you, Karen!

Next, I gathered the all-important occult supplies. Yes, you can cast successful spells without anything, just praying, but when you are up against a rape culture, violence of this hate crime magnitude, it's good to have some mandrake root with you, and other secret baneful herbs to burn in your cauldron.

I represented the lives of the rapists with red thread, and over the smoking cauldron, praying to the Queen, I cut their luck into many small pieces. The only man who came to our hex, Lez, helped to put them all into the burning cauldron of change. This was important. Men must stop rape. Men must come over to the women's side and fight for us.

Rarely ever happens.

To the Queen who we invoked as grandmother (her old name used to be Tonatzin), we asked her to help us and to bring these men, and ALL rapists down with Unluck. We cut their luck into tiny little pieces, their luck now gone.

Next, I hexed them so nobody would hide them. Hexed them that their own family would give them up. Hexed them that they would turn on each other. Hexed them that the youngest one would talk.

Then, we went home. I lay down on my couch and let the new year arrive. Thought it would be a little while until this spun out its necessary wheels.

By Wednesday, the news was on the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle. Three of the men had been arrested. The younger one's family gave him up! And then he talked, as the hex had requested. Then, they arrested two more, and by Thursday, the fourth criminal had turned himself in. Blessed be, Tonantzin!

Sisters of the Susan B. Anthony Coven Number One participated with us globally in this incredible fast Justice. In Orange County, in Southern California, and elsewhere, the women gathered to support this hex. All could see the success of their labors. Enough is enough!

On the same day the arrests began here, a serial rapist was caught in Columbus, Ohio ... No luck for rapists! Justicia rules! So now I have allowed myself a little victory toe-dance. Yeahh!

What I hoped would result from this experience is a nationwide hex on ALL rapists and similar gender-initiated violence. This would take place annually, on the dark moon at the end of every year.

But the real change can only come from a change of consciousness: a mind change that would see women differently, not as meat, not as holes, or whores, but as sisters and mothers and citizens with rights.

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WHΘ IS HECATE?

by Helena Domenic

Artwork by

Joanna Powell Colbert

INSIGHT INTO THE GΘDDESS ΘF THE WITCHES

Who is it that we think of when we think of the Goddess Hecate? Is she the Goddess to whom the three Wyrd sisters in *MacBeth* cry? Is she a fearsome creature who aids in cursing like Medea? From Appolonius Rhodius we get this description:

“.... Hearing from the utmost depths, the dread Goddess approached ... all entwined with fearsome serpents and leaves of oak, amidst a shimmering blaze of torchlight, while all around her chthonic hounds bayed shrilly, all the meadows trembled at her footfall and the nymphs of the marshland and river cried aloud.”

A review of all the literature surrounding Hecate yields very conflicting images. Sources from as early as the seventh century BCE present a very different Hecate than the one described by Appolonius Rhodius. In Pre-Classical Greece, she was portrayed as a young woman in a long robe holding burning torches. Later, we find the triple formed statues – three female figures back to back. These statues were found at temple entryways and crossroads – facing three different ways so she could see in all directions.

Evidence from nearly every century can be found that presents a much gentler image of Hecate – a beneficent Deity who guarded gateways, acted as divine attendant to Persephone, one who presided over birth and death as well as personal interaction between humans and deities. In the Chaldean oracles, Hecate is viewed as being synonymous with Soul and considered the Savior of humanity as she acted as intermediary between humanity and the Divine in the crossover point between life and death.

The earliest references to Hecate can be found in Hesiod's *Theogony*, where she shares special honors with Zeus,

and in Homer's Hymn to Demeter where she hears Persephone's abduction from her cave and assists Demeter and Persephone both.



Somehow through time, Hecate has received a very bad rap. One thing that can be said for Greek cosmology is that if a Deity presided over a particular area – say birth and death – then they presided over all aspects – positive and negative – of that area. If a Goddess could heal, then it followed that she could also curse. All of the attributes associated with Hecate evolved through time from the Pre-Classical era into the late Classical era, and now she has been adopted once again by modern Neo-Pagans.

One theory of Hecate's origin places her in Karia – actually in the hinterlands of Asia Minor and the homelands of Hesiod's family. One theory of Hecate's preeminence alongside Zeus in the *Theogony* is that Hesiod created her importance and prominence for personal reasons (from the research I've done, I disagree with this). Hesiod actually only mentions Hecate once – perhaps there may have been no special

attachment to her, and he only placed her in the *Theogony* to acknowledge his own origins.

The *Theogony* was not written until the 8th century BCE – knowledge and worship of Hecate was not prevalent until the 6th century BCE. Looking closely at all the evidence – both literary and archeological – presents us with a very complex Goddess of incredible depth.

As I've noted, there is a great deal of debate over Hecate's true nature, from her nation of origin to her genealogy. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, she is, among other things, the daughter of the Titans Asteria and Perses; she is honored by Zeus above all others, is invoked at every sacrifice, and bears the title of “Kourotrophos” – nurse to all living beings. This version of Hecate does not bear great resemblance to later versions of her, and the absence of better-known traits, such as torch bearing and guardianship of the crossroads, has led

some scholars to believe Hesiod fabricated the whole thing for his own ends (i.e., bringing favor and honor to his hometown Karian Goddess). Bacchylides has her as daughter of Asteria and Zeus, Euripides says she is a daughter of Leto, and Thessalian legend has it that she is the daughter of Admetus and a mortal woman.

In the Chaldean oracles, Hecate has many interesting attributes that are only now being fully explored by Classical scholars. According to Sarah Iles Johnston, “[s]he ensouled the Cosmos and the individual men within it, forming the connective boundary between man and god as could lead eventually to the individual soul’s release. She was celestial and potentially beneficent, rather than chthonic and threatening.”

These changing attributions are what make Hecate so interesting; whether in reference to her origins or her magical aspects, she changed as different regions and groups adopted her worship. No Greek clan or tribe ever claimed descent from Hecate, which makes good the case that she originated outside of Greece.

As mentioned before, it is likely that Hecate came from Karia in southwest Asia Minor, and she was incorporated into Greek mythology around the 6th century BCE. Hecate has also been connected with the Egyptian frog goddess Heqit. In pre-dynastic Egypt, the matriarch and wise woman of the tribe was called the “Heq” which echoes the later attribution of Hecate to childbirth. An Asian name which may have been confused with Hecate is Hekabe – the wife of King Priam of Troy. Aristophanes and Euripides have both connected her with Hecate.

Perhaps more likely is a connection to a Goddess named Hapat. Hapat was a major Goddess of the Hurrians, a Bronze Age people of eastern Asia Minor who would have had contact with the Karians.

Hecate’s name also has several possible meanings. Among them ‘She who works her will’ is most commonly accepted, but also the ‘far off one’ or ‘far darting one’ are also suggested. She has had a variety of titles attached to her name which seem to amplify its meaning:

Antaia: to whom one makes supplication.

Propylaia: Guardian of Gateways – Aischylos writes of ‘Lady Hecate, the one before the doors.’ Aristophanes refers to “just as a Hekataion is everywhere before doors.”

In this form, the boundary serves three purposes: 1) to establish a boundary and to protect inside from outside; 2) to help travelers setting out or returning; and 3) to oversee the actual transition marked by the entrance.

Apotropaia: Averter of evil.

Kleidouchos: Key holder.

Kourotrophos: Nurse, possibly referring to a nurse of child rearing, not necessarily involved in childbirth. Many

Goddesses who bore this title were specifically associated with a city. Hecate is the oldest known Kourotrophos, which is where the association ‘nurse of all living things’ comes in. There is also a possible connection with this title to marriage, as Hecate presided over transitions, and marriage most definitely is a transition.

Goddess of roads: protector of travelers at crossroads where her statues were erected.

Goddess of transitions: Hecate helps people cross difficult boundaries of all sorts, where the significance or risk lies in the crossing.

In the *Theogony*, she is the intermediary link between the mortal and immortal worlds during sacrifices. Hecate is present at Persephone’s abduction and leads her back from the Underworld. She is also associated with young women who fail to make the transition to womanhood.

Hecate Propolos: guide and companion. In the Hymn to Demeter, Hecate becomes Persephone’s guide. She appears in this role on a number of artworks and vases, usually bearing torches. She may also have served an initiatory role in coming of age rituals for women.

Hecate Phosphoros: light bringer, torch bearer.

Hecate as Moon Goddess: She was sometimes paired with Helios, a Sun God, and her torches show the way at night.

Hecate Soteira: Hecate as savior of both the cosmos and the individual souls within it. This will be examined in more detail below.

Another derivation of Hecate’s name, “Most Shining One,” can be seen in depictions of her as a young beautiful Goddess who carries torches and wears a headdress of stars. She has been associated with both Helios and Apollo – and Apollo sometimes bears the epithet Apollo Hekatos.

Although the Olympians adopted Hecate after defeating the Titans, she never lived among them. They dwelt on Olympus. She, on the other hand, was considered a chthonic deity – that is, of the earth. In the *Theogony*, Zeus gives her dominion over Heaven, Earth, and Sea, and with Zeus, she had the ability to grant or withhold gifts to humanity. Interestingly, in the Demeter/Persephone myth cycle, Hecate is always the Maiden, Persephone the Wife or Mother, and Demeter the Crone. This is just one example of Hecate’s function as a Triple Goddess. There is evidence that points to her being honored in the Rites of Eleusis – possibly in her aspect as guide or nurse.

Hecate’s best-known role in Greek myth is in Homer’s *Hymn to Demeter*. After Persephone is abducted by Hades, Hecate reveals the truth to Demeter, and together they try to rescue Persephone. Homer says of Hecate, “Hecate, with the bright headband, who heard from her cave.” Once Persephone’s fate is determined, it is Hecate who acts as her guide

between the worlds. This is very much a different image from the one that later developed.

In the fifth century BCE, we begin to see a new, frightening side to Hecate. She is associated with restless, violent spirits, with sacrifices of dogs and offerings of food left at the crossroads at the full moon. Now she is Hecate Chthonia. Chthonic means “of the Earth”, as opposed to the Olympian Gods who lived on Mount Olympus. In this aspect, we see the use of low altars on which offerings are made into the earth as opposed to the air, also the sacrifice of whole animals. Chthonic deities would have been associated with fertility, childbirth, crops, fate and death.

Another later aspect is Hecate Enodia, Hecate at the crossroads. How did Hecate begin to be associated with the darker aspects? It is possible that there were so many images of young, maidenly Goddesses that some artists felt compelled to depict her in a different way – hence the three Hecates back to back, which we see in the Hekataion statues. It was also not unusual for Greek Gods and Goddesses to have many inconsistent qualities.

The stories of Medea may have propagated a negative image of Hecate. In Euripides’s version of the tale, Medea was a priestess of Hecate; she had helped Jason get the Golden Fleece and was subsequently dumped for someone younger. She kills their children in revenge. A misogynistic concept around witches and women, and around Hecate, was built up through these stories.

Another story associated with Hecate is that of Iphigenia, a young woman sacrificed by her step-father, Agamemnon, at the outset of the Trojan War. Young women who died before their time were associated with Hecate, and Iphigenia is said to have been transformed into Hecate by Artemis. Hecate governs the souls of these young women who die too young.

An epitaph from the Roman era reads, “I lie here, the Goddess Hekate, as you see. Formerly I was mortal; now I am immortal and ageless. Julia, daughter of Nikias, a great hearted man.” Perhaps because of her association with dead young women, Hecate became associated with the restless, angry dead.

As an aside, Greek mythology can be confusing in that deities can be both Chthonic and Olympian. Hecate is actually both – she hears Persephone’s abduction from her cave, after all – as are Hermes, Demeter, Zeus, and Gaia.

In later Classical times, Hecate became associated with a practice known as curse tablets. These were lead tablets inscribed with curses, which were to be taken by the dead souls to deities such as Hecate and Hermes. Most of these tablets are associated with Hermes, but Hecate is also called upon by some of them. Interestingly, her name never appears alone on these tablets – it is always in association with Hermes.

The rise of thought involving Hecate as a savior figure came during a time when philosophy and religion were finding more common ground than previously, and Neo-Platonists became involved in discussions of theurgy, philosophy and magic. In her identification of the Platonic Cosmic Soul, some scholars have interpreted Hecate’s presence in the Chaldean oracles as an omnipotent Goddess.

Hecate as Cosmic Soul comprised what the Platonic philosophers called the “Sensible World,” the world of the Gods and the Cosmos, and the “Intelligible World,” the world of humanity; as such, Hecate was able to cross both boundaries at will. It was thought that the Cosmic Soul generated the physical Cosmos. (Although not stated explicitly in any literature I have come across, this aspect of Hecate does suggest a Creatrix of some sort at the very least). This ability of Hecate’s to cross easily between the world of the Gods and the world of humanity does connect well to her earlier association with crossroads.

Platonic thought placed the Moon at the crossroads of life and death; that is, when humans died, they were thought to enter the Moon as an intermediary place before going on to their ultimate destination – either re-birth or joining with the godhead. Chaldean thought placed Hecate as being on or in the Moon as part of that intermediary process; she was called the Mistress of the Moon. Again, in this particular connection between Hecate and the Moon, we see her association as intermediary between humanity and the divine. Plato saw the Moon as Hecate’s “lot,” in other words, the place in the Universe most suited to her. The Moon’s role in Platonic thought was to receive and nurture and then send forth souls.

Hecate was also connected to the race known as “Daemones,” not demons as we know them today, but a golden race somewhere between the divine and humanity that watched over humans. Traditionally, daemons were understood to be the souls of humans who had not had proper burials, and as such, wandered between the worlds – an attribute they shared with Hecate. These souls were assigned the task of watching over the recently dead and guiding them to their proper resting places. These souls, along with Hecate, could either aid the ascent, or force the descent of the recently departed.

Another interesting component to Hecate’s worship during this time was the use of the “Hecate top,” or iynx wheel. This instrument was used in magic to aid the working at hand. A Hecate top was actually more like a bullroarer, and the sound it made while being operated was considered crucial to the success of the operation.

Iynges might also be found hanging from the ceiling around a king’s throne to symbolize man’s separation and subordination to the gods, as well as the division of the universe into human and divine portions. The revolutions of the iynges represent the turnings of Hecate herself; the whirling

and sounds of an iynx served to symbolize and strengthen the sympathetic magic invoked by the theurgist.

Hecate was involved in three major mysteries: at Eleusis, Samothrace, and Aiginia. By their nature, little has been revealed of what went on in the mysteries, but given the role in the story of Demeter and Persephone, Hecate may have been a guide to initiates. At Eleusis, thick nails were driven into the ground or altar, piercing through a piece of parchment rolled into a flattened tub, on which was written the name of someone to be cursed – most commonly politicians. Hecate was to be invoked as the parchment was ritually burnt. Hecate had a great deal more associated with her than curses, however. There were a variety of animals that were sacred to her.

The animal most commonly associated with Hecate was the dog. In the later Hellenistic and Roman works, Hecate's approach is heralded by the barking of dogs. Dogs have a bad reputation in Greek mythology – they were considered polluted and impure, symbols of shameless behavior. There may have been an old belief that souls of the unburied dead could appear as dogs. Dogs were sacrificed to Hecate in purification rituals. A female dog would be sacrificed to aid in childbirth, in the belief that dogs gave birth with ease. The image of these sacrificed dogs may explain the later picture of ghostly dogs accompanying Hecate.

The image of dog as guardian – a much more positive association – echoes Hecate's role as guardian. Plutarch wrote that dogs, as well as Hecate, were credited with excellent night vision. Aeschylus and Plutarch both wrote about dogs barking to frighten intruders, coupled with their loyalty and love toward those they protected.

There were also herbs attributed to Hecate. Aconite (also known as Hecateis, Monkshood, or Wolfsbane) was a highly poisonous plant sacred to Hecate. According to myth, the plant sprang up where drops of saliva from Cerberus fell to earth when Hercules dragged the dog beast from the Underworld.

Hecate appears as a daughter of Zeus and Hera in later myths. Hecate was sent to the Underworld after incurring the wrath of Hera for stealing a pot of rouge for Europa, one of Zeus's lovers. Hecate fled to earth and hid in the house of a woman who had just given birth. In late Classical Greece, childbirth was impure, so Cabiri plunged Hecate into the Underworld River Acheron to cleanse her. From then on, Hecate remained in the Underworld. There may be connections between the red rouge in this myth and the red henna used by worshippers to stain their hands and feet.

In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas travels to the Underworld with the Sibyl of Cumae. It was Hecate who originally took Sibyl there and showed her all the punishments of Tartarus. Hecate gave Sibyl the power to control the Avernus Wood, the passageway to the entrance of the Underworld. To allow passage for Aeneas, Sibyl sacrificed four black bullocks to

Hecate, who then allowed Sibyl and Aeneas passage through the entrance and across the Styx.

In the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, Hecate is invoked by Dido. Aeneas had left her heartbroken, so she called upon Hecate to curse the Trojans before she flung herself on her dagger. Her curse was effective; not only did the Trojans wander around for many years, when they finally reached Rome, Aeneas was killed in the fighting.

Athenians were especially respectful toward Hecate and she was often invoked in midnight rituals. Her worshippers gathered at crossroads at the New Moon to share Hecate suppers and then placed leftovers outdoors as offerings. Honey, black female lambs and dogs were sacrificed to her.

The yew, cypress, hazel, black poplar and willow are all sacred to Hecate. The leaves of the black poplar are dark on one side, and light on the other, symbolizing the boundary between the worlds. The yew has long been associated with the Underworld. It is the longest living creature in Europe and naturally resurrects itself – as the central trunk dies, a new tree grows within the rotting core.

As can be seen from ancient writings and modern scholarship, Hecate is a many-faceted Goddess indeed. She is much more than the dark, dreaded “Goddess of the Witches” that we see in some television accounts of Wicca, and indeed, she may be older than the Greco-Roman origins she is usually attributed with.

However modern media may choose to paint Her, Hecate is indeed a true “Goddess of the Witches,” a complex and interesting Goddess with many stories and rituals yet to be told and created.

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Helena's artwork has appeared in publications such as Faerie magazine, Green Egg, Sage Woman, and other publications. In addition to teaching at Cheyney, Helena has taught at The University of the Arts, Rutgers University, the Tyme Gallery, and a variety of conferences and festivals around the country. Helena has organized art exhibits for the Cheyney University campus and her work has appeared in art galleries around the world.

Helena currently lives in Chester County, PA with her partner Sean and three cats, Bella, Piper, and Cassandra.

Artist: Joanna Powell Colbert is an artist and writer known internationally for her Goddess portraits and mythic art. She is an origi-

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RAVENS AND CROWS

by Annie Forsyth

Crows and ravens are the creatures of the otherworld, and are portents of omens, magic, witchcraft, death, regeneration, and prophecy. In truth, anything black was considered a creature of the devil. Black dogs, for example: the howling of a dog was the announcement of death, and dogs have had a long, deep association with death and the otherworld. Even as recently as 1922 in Somerset, the black cat was considered to be a creature of the devil, but to own one was regarded as having a lucky talisman – showing the duality of the folklore. Black horses can symbolize death, as do black birds of most types, such as magpies. A pair of crows was called a “corbie (Scottish) coupling,” from the Latin word for crow (Corvus). The powerful omen of the crow has marked inaugurations; one cawing on the roof of a church in St. Andrews, Scotland, during the 16th century inauguration of Patrick Adamson as archbishop was said to have been saying “Corrupt! Corrupt!”⁽¹⁾. The crow is still linked to agriculture, as we have scarecrows, and the folk art of the crow always with the harvest; even in modern France there is an agricultural festival dedicated to this bird. Anyone who has lived with crows knows them as more than mere birds; some call them “feathered humans” because of their ability to speak and bond with humans.

Travelers would look to see a raven to foretell a fruitful journey, or one of ill luck or death. In 40 BCE Virgil writes in his Eclogue IX, “[i]f a timely raven on my left hand had not warned me at all costs to cut short this last dispute, neither your friend Moeris nor Menacles would be alive today.” Consider also the familiar saying, “as the crow flies” in relation to describing distance and time relations.

Using the bird’s gifts of omens and prophecy was against church law in the middle ages. The 12th century Bartholomew of Exeter’s “Penitential,” writes, “[h]e who believes that anything comes out favorably or unfavorably because of the croaking of a young crow or raven ... shall do penance for seven days.” In 1748, Smollett wrote in Roderick Random, “... [a]s this creature is reckoned in our country a common vehicle for the devil and witches to play their pranks in, I verily believed we were haunted, and, in a violent fright, shrunk under the bed-clothes.” Although the Church condemned the bird in the beginning, St. Paul the hermit was fed by a crow⁽²⁾. Before Noah sent the dove from the Ark, he sent out a white raven to test the waters.



Instead of returning to the Ark, this bird “kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth” (Gen 8:7).

In 1652, Gaule’s Mag-astro-mances writes about bod-ing, “good or bad luck from a crow lighting from the right hand, or the left.”

And let us not forget the very old rhyme:

*“One for sorrow,
two for mirth,
three for a wedding,
four for birth,
five for rich,
six for poor;
Seven for a witch,
I can tell you no more.”* ⁽³⁾

These creatures were seen as omens for many generations for one reason or another.

In America, to “eat crow” comes from the war of 1812, from an altercation between the British and Americans, when the trespassing American shot a crow, and the British officer forced the trespasser to eat the bird he shot⁽⁴⁾. It’s a phrase referring to humiliation, such as “eating your own words”, or “eating humble pie”.

Corvids are monogamous creatures, who are very social and loyal to their flocks. They mate for life, and rooks stay with their flock all year round. Ravens are the largest of this family of birds, and their intelligence and adaptability has been noted for generations. Modern scientists are realizing the immense intelligence of this bird, as it’s been seen to have the intellectual capacities of a three-year old child

in its ability to reason, comprehend, and even communicate using a vocabulary that would make any African-Grey parrot envious. Many humans have bonded with these birds; some sit on their shoulders, while others venture into their houses and share lives as members of the family.⁽⁵⁾

There are other aspects to this bird, such as its “funeral,” when one of the “murder” dies. I myself had the honor of seeing this humbling and solemn event, and this is how it went: The entire flock or murder gather, and caw very loudly in a chaotic mass of noise. Then suddenly silence, and the mate of the crow (or so I imagined from my observations) caws alone, and there is a long silence, the one I witnessed lasting fifteen minutes. Then suddenly they just fly away, leaving the corpse to the elements, and I did not see them return to the body – it was a very emotional experience that certainly opened my eyes to these complex birds.

Many have noticed the community feeling with crows and ravens, and have witnessed crows in the garbage cans or dumpsters, with one or two as “look-outs,” as the others rummage. One even watched a crow figure out how to carry four cranberries in its beak at once, which amazed the woman at its impromptu thinking skills. My own birdbath has been soiled by the food of crows, as they dampen the food to bring nourishment and water to the nest, in one trip. And of course, where there’s food, there are crows.

There are many gods, and goddesses associated with this supernatural bird. Such deities as Eriu have connections to the raven, as does Odin, with Huginn meaning “memory,” and Muninn meaning “thought” on his shoulders (apart from telling Odin of the happenings of the world, they represent thought and memory). Also, Sucellos, Lugh, Badb, Nantosuelta (always pictured with her raven), Morrigan, Anu and even the Cailleach Beara, are all associated with the raven.⁽⁶⁾

Throughout mythology, the raven is the great shapeshifter, the bearer of prophecy, and metamorphosis. It knows the laws of magic, the boundaries of the otherworld and heralds when a spirit has left its body (only when the raven landed on his shoulder did Cuchulainn’s enemies believe the mighty warrior was dead). In the Mabinogion, the great king of the second branch is Brân the Blessed, or “blessed crow.”⁽⁷⁾ Being able to find nourishment from even the most foul of carcasses was an act of the supernatural in itself – turning death into life, linking it to regeneration. The raven isn’t the totem of the warrior but of the supernatural itself.

The raven was the symbol of prophesy, and was the messenger of the Gods in Irish and Welsh mythology. In the Welsh stories, Afagddu, the son of Cerridwen, was also known as “Sea Raven,” or “Raven of the Sea.”⁽⁸⁾ Crows and ravens are the masters of magic, life and, of course,

death. Finally, ravens are also linked with sovereignty; at the Tower of London, Charles II’s decree that there always be six ravens in residence, lest England fall, is still enforced today.⁽⁹⁾

Dearg Corra, a figure from the Fenian cycle of Irish literature, has a black bird (which many have speculated to be a crow or raven) sitting on his shoulder. In the lore it tells of Dearg being found by Finn after banishment from the camp due to Finn’s jealousy. Dearg was sitting on top of a tree, with the bird on his right shoulder and a bronze vessel in his left hand, eating nuts, giving half to the bird and eating the remainder himself. At the base of the tree, stood a stag who shared an apple with Dearg Corra. Finally, the stag, the black bird, and Dearg drank together from the bronze vessel.⁽¹⁰⁾

In Native American Inuit mythology, the raven is “Tulugaq,” and in his own myths he brings the alternating periods of day and night, after hunting down a whale-like beast that lived in the dark primeval waters off the coast of Alaska. The raven in many Northwestern coast tribes was the trickster hero, using magic to win the day through cunning and guile. Also in native myths, the raven brought fire to man, as well as daylight. Raven also stole water and created rivers and lakes according to Haida myths.⁽¹¹⁾

In other myths around the world, Greece listed the crow as the animal symbol of Apollo and Athene, and the Romans believed that the crow’s cry was “cras,” meaning “tomorrow” in Latin, and was a prophecy. Also, crow (formerly the daughter of a king) tells her story to raven right before Aesculapius is born. Poseidon fell in love with crow and attempted to force himself upon her; the king’s daughter cried out to the gods for help and was transformed into a crow by Athene, after which she served the goddess as her attendant.⁽¹²⁾

In China the crow is shown on the solar disc with three legs, as an imperial symbol. It was said to be black because of its close relation to the sun, and even the rising and fall of the sun was said to be where a crow was. And in both China and Japan, the raven was a symbol of family unity and love. Shinto has the crow, with its role as the messenger and oracle. Africa has the raven, as a guide, who warns of dangers to people and their tribes.⁽¹³⁾

Crows and ravens have a complex folklore, but too many only focus on one or another aspect of them – when it’s a supernatural creature, which can encompass and possess many talents and gifts, thus many gods and goddesses were partial to them. They are no more evil than black dogs, black cats, owls (also a portent of evil, death, and conflict in folklore), or black horses. They are no more one thing than another, and it is in this light that many are missing the big picture. The crow or raven is a fascinating and multi-talent-

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A CEREMONY FOR THE DARK MOON OF NOVEMBER

by Valerie Worth

For this ceremony, the altar must be covered with a plain black cloth of dull texture. Upon it set a single black candle, a large, flat, dark stone, a stick of white chalk, an incense burner containing some sharp-scented incense unlighted, a box of ointment having a similar scent; and, finally, the whitened bone of an animal, this wrapped in a piece of black velvet. All garments worn must be of black entirely, with no adornment or decoration save for an amulet, bearing a death's-head, about the neck. A black shawl or hood should cover the head and shoulders of every person present.

At midnight the ceremony shall begin. First light the candle, then say these words:

The year grows dark

In the dark of the moon:

The mind grows dark

In the dark of the moon:

Nihil stat

Nihil stat

Nihil stat

Even the night is dead

Now at the dark of the moon:

Even the demons are dead

Now at the dark of the moon:

All who once lived are dead

Now at the dark of the moon:

Nihil stat

Nihil stat

Nihil stat

What shall remain?

This shall remain!

The bone should be quickly unwrapped and raised in both hands, to be contemplated in silence for several moments. Then these words are spoken:

Beneath the earth, behold the kingdom of the dead:

The place of darkness where no word is spoken,

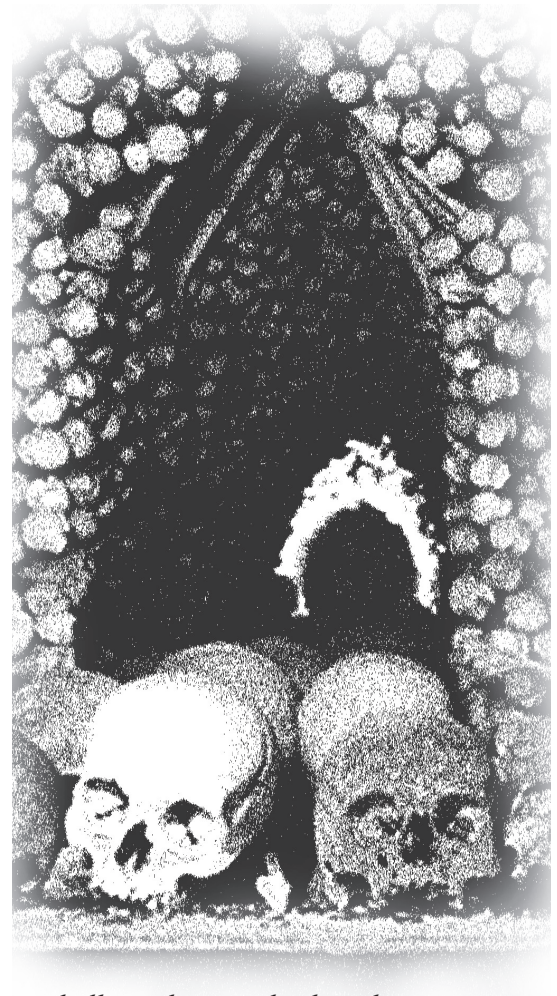
Nothing moves:

And there the queen of death sits always

On her carved black throne,

Sits there silent and unmoving,

forever, and forever,



A ruler never challenged, never disobeyed:

A figure carved from bone, her face the face of silence,

Carved of death's own substance which is bone,

Her eyes black shadows of silence, empty caves of bone.

She sits unmoving, while she rules absolutely by her silence

The vast hordes of the dead, those silent docile hordes

Ranked endlessly beneath the earth,

Silent figures of obedient bone.

Only one law rules their kingdom:

And it is carved deep upon the throne

Where sits eternally its maker and enforcer:

A single law, and one that is not broken

While the queen of death rules silently forever and forever:

Carved in the stone above her silent and unmoving head,

These words:

Thou shalt not live.

The stone should then be raised by one celebrant for all to see, while with the chalk another shall write these same words upon it: Thou shalt not live. Then all shall chant this song of mortality:

*Nor shall we live,
we who still live:
How shall we live
Where she is law?
Our life is death,
A downward path
Into the earth,
Where every breath
we dare to breathe
Is a farewell:
Is a farewell:
Is a farewell.*

The stone should now be replaced upon the altar, and the incense lighted, with these words:

*Let us then praise thee, death,
For thy law which is law,
For thy power which is proven,
For thy silence which is unbroken.
Thou art past all sorrow and remorse,
Thou art past change, and challenge, and failure:
Thou art perfect, as darkness is perfection,
Thou art perfect, while light may only flaw,
Thou art perfect, as all else is imperfect,
As even mighty madness is imperfect--
Which we have learned, having ourselves been mad
And sun and moon are only flaws
That flare and fade upon the perfect sphere
Of thy eternal space and time:
Let us then praise thee, death,
Let us adore thy flawlessness
Which shall become our own perfection
Who are imperfect now,
Who shall yet become most perfect in thy law.*

The candle should now be anointed with the ointment, and the hands of all present anointed also. Then say:

*Shall we now put out the candle?
Shall we now put out the candle?
Shall we now put out the candle?
There is nothing left to light,
Now at the dark of the moon,
Nothing to praise but death's kingdom,
Death's perfect universal dark,
Where there is no need for light.
And there we shall be made perfect,
There we shall learn all things,
Where there is no need for knowledge:
Nor, need we speak a single word again,
Not even ever more farewell:
Not even ever more farewell:
Not even ever more farewell.*

The candle should then be lifted from the altar, and blown out. Thus this ceremony is ended, as here the death of the year is made final and manifest.

Excerpted from *Crone's Book of Charms & Spells*

Author Valerie Worth was a prolific writer whose work included numerous books of children's poetry and fiction for both young people and adults. In 1991, the National Council of Teachers of English honored her with their Poetry Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children. Her Poems are vivid observations of the quiet rumblings of everyday objects.

Continued from page 7 "She's Back"

How do we make sense of such seemingly alien behaviors? We must search our own closets, basements, attics, and backrooms for clues. As we are still products of our parents, many of whom were dominating, controlling, and abusive; we have within us an ingrained sense of guilt for wrongdoing, imagined or otherwise. The abused child becomes the child abuser. When there is no sense of love, acceptance, warmth, or forgiveness, what might pass for feelings of "love" may in fact be those of the opposite pole. If our parents always yelled at us and hit us (saying, "I'm only doing this because I love you."), we may now experience "love" in a raised voice and a violent touch. By submitting to dominating behaviors, are the dominators (of patriarchal society) simply trying to tap into the "love" feelings of their childhoods? Only by going back to the source and finding the point of departure can we seek to heal the rift that separates so many abused from a conscious awareness of what real love is, rather than simply what feels like "love" because that is what is remembered.

Exploring the “shadow” within ourselves is not a “bad” thing, nor is it something to be feared or condemned. It is simply an opportunity to experience the polarity of the light. The Dark Mother is calling us to witness her death and destruction at the hands of the tyrant. We are a microcosm within a macrocosm. By taking such paths and finding where they lead, we can better walk the 180 degrees around the circle and reemerge into the daylight. The return of Quetzalcoatl, the winged serpent who unites the power of sexuality with the purity of spirit, taking both to a higher level, is eminent. By “becoming” our dominating parents, we can understand, forgive, and heal their behaviors so that we do not perpetrate “insanity” on the next generation. We see the light only because we experience darkness. The cycle is endless as is the Great Mother in her many guises and rotations. It is up to us to find the balance point, to seek to raise conscious awareness, to find and found a new Earth-centered religion that seeks to honor the Great Mother in all her forms and guises, to honor the feminine and, most of all, to reclaim our sacred sexuality. It is time to reinstate the sacred “prostitute” to a place of honor, for through her we reach the Goddess within ourselves, a Goddess who exists within men as well as women.

Author: Unusual, unique, one of a kind. These are words which define Aryll. As a feisty and free spirited Sagittarian she traveled the world before settling in Los Angeles where she finally felt “at home”. There she nurtured her creativity by becoming a professional artist working in many different mediums.

Aryll’s sacred sexuality was first ignited by The Goddess Isis on a trip to Egypt for the Harmonic Convergence in 1986. Isis continued to follow Aryll through a seven year initiation appearing to her in dreams, visions, with the help of healers and channeling through poetry. As a result of her exploration of Tantra, Aryll made the agreement to “work” for Isis following the path of sacred sexuality.

Aryll has four books in progress and has been published in the November 96 anthology, “Famous Poems of the 20th Century”.

Artist: I am lucky to live here in Pen Llyn, Wales where nature as Goddess has become the focus of exploration in my work. Motivated by curiosity, colour, smell, taste, touch, dance, music, love; life’s gifts inspire me to create. The marvellous adventure of discovery as the work evolves and gradually reveals it’s secrets, is a constant source of pleasure and excitement.

In a world where eroticism has come to be associated with obscenity, I seek to challenge and confront the hypocrisy of sexual stereotypes, reclaiming sexuality as sacred, celebrating the source of creativity itself.

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Continued from page 8 “Hexing the Enemies”

Male gods’ religion didn’t help at all. Thousands of years and the societies are still not civilized. The male gods remain the Lords. They have holy books full of violence and trashing of women. Switching back to Goddess culture and appreciation of life is what would help everyone see women in the loving light.

After all, we are the doors of life. We birthed everybody. Where is the gratitude? Why the rage against us?

I hope that women ‘grow a pair’ and learn not to be fear driven, to stand up for themselves and each other. Learn SISTERHOOD again!

Maybe it’s time that the ‘Take Back the Night Marches’ that I started back in the 70’s, become an annual hexing ritual done by sisters and brothers alike, a hex on all enemies of women and peace. Maybe that will make the difference! It has to begin somewhere!

Video of parts of this hexing ritual are on my DU website: <http://wicca.zbudapest.com> and on my blog: <http://blog.zbudapest.com>. (Editor’s Note: The ritual is also available on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTbpsIW5V-0>.)

Z Budapest is the author of eight books about Women’s Spirituality, and the Goddess. She teaches online at the Dianic University to the new generation of spirit-powered rebellious women. For more information about Z Budapest, Psychic – Wiccan – Author, please see these websites: <http://www.zbudapest.com/> and <http://wicca.dianic-wicca.com/>, <http://blog.zbudapest.com/>.

Continued from page 9 “Who is Hecate”

inal Brideswell Collective TBP mother. Her artwork and writing appears often in the magazines The Beltane Papers, SageWoman and PanGaia as well as many other alternative publications. Amber Lotus Publishers call her one of “the most accomplished and well-loved artists in the Goddess-spirit community.” her newest endeavor is the The Gaian Tarot deck & book which will be

published by Llewellyn Worldwide in September 2011. A special collector's edition will be published and released in Spring 2010. Sign up for the Gaian Tarot Newsletter and be the first to get the inside scoop on the release of the Deluxe Limited Edition as well as the Llewellyn edition of the deck.

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Continued from page 13 "Ravens and Crows"

ed creature, capable of being taught; its talents called upon to do just about anything, from talk, to unlocking puzzles (and in the country, doors and windows too!), to cawing and alerting to "unkindness" of danger, as well as many other things. They are extremely adaptable, social, even with humans, and other animals, and badly misunderstood. So the next time you see a crow or raven, remember a local superstition from my small town that has crows hanging on the telephone wires, making them sag, which says: give them a bit to eat, and the act will bring good luck.

Author bio not available at this time.

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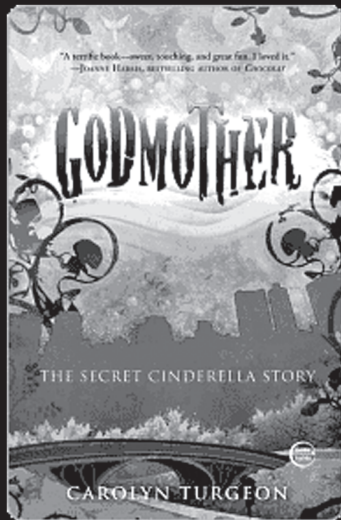
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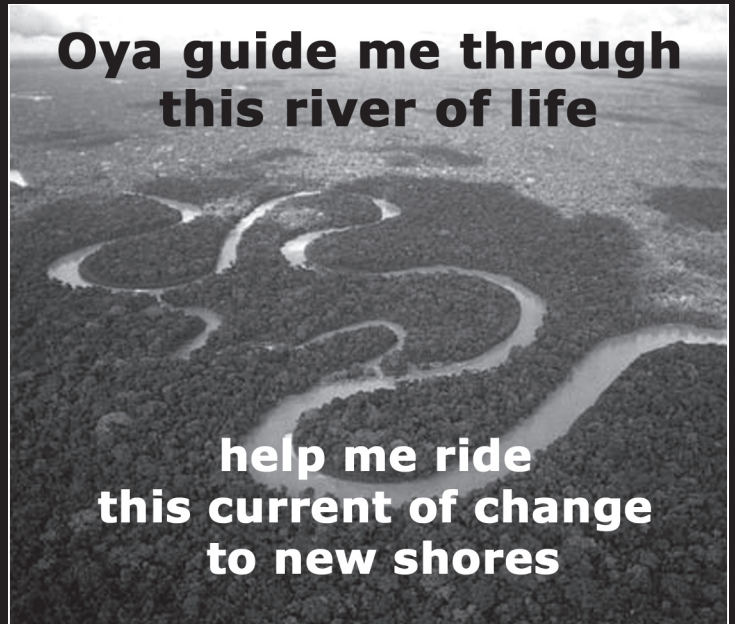


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