



witches

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SPELLS // CRYSTALS // TAROT // HOROSCOPES

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W E L C O M E EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear witches, wanderers and wild ones,

Springtime is upon us again. I cannot believe that *Witches Magazine* has been running for four years now! Thank you to you all for your continued support— it is very much appreciated.

Releasing from the grips of winter, coming out of hibernation, spring offers rebirth, rejuvenation, renewal and regrowth. It is the time when Mother Earth warms and plants begin to grow and thrive. Birds and animals raise their young, a time of new beginnings and of life emerging further from the slower pace of life which winter brings. Daylight hours are now lengthening and days are full of promise.

Increasingly, we find more people are turning to witchcraft in the modern world— both in its teachings and its approach to life. It is a healthy response to a denatured and materialist society, where people are better able to connect to nature, their roots and their ancestors. It enables them to feel more in control and supported in a lonely and out-of-control world. Witchcraft is about celebrating nature, spirituality, empowerment and, of course, magic.

It is a reminder for us all to recognise the magic in every day and create our very own magic in life. Its promise is that if you choose the simple treasures, life and living need not be so hard. So, go celebrate life and new beginnings this season. Enjoy every precious moment and grow into the human you were destined to be. But also, don't forget to have a lot of fun along the way.

As always, a huge thank you to all those who have managed to make this edition as magickal as the last: writers, photographers, artists, our editors, subscribers, family and friends. The magazine would not exist without the fabulous commitment and support of those who contribute, sharing their world with ours. We welcome our new contributors in this spring edition, new members to our community, helping us to grow and evolve. So, if you are a budding writer, have witchy photos, artwork or would like to get involved, get in touch. You could be looking at your work in the *Witches Summer 2023* edition, issue seventeen. Let us know if you would be interested in advertising in our *Witches Noticeboard* in Summer 2023, too!

Laura X

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So, witches, whether you're new to witchcraft or have been a witch for decades, we can never know everything there is to know about our craft, as there is just so much to learn.

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The season of spring is ripe with possibilities and the energies are nudging us toward the desire of creation— that of manifesting. Use these spells to help energise and cleanse yourselves, and fuel your passions with our fire spell for self-love.

SPELLS OF THE SEASON

SPRING ENERGY CLEANSING

BY LUCA VOLPE
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Spring is the time of re-birth! Flowers, colours and as days are getting longer they start to make us feel an incredible energy, but we need to make sure we prepare ourselves to embrace these changes.

The following ritual is a mixture of meditation and energy cleansing which I do the first days of spring to “get in the zone” and for balancing all my energies.

The crystals I use are:

AMAZONITE, which if used has a soothing effect on the nervous system, and since our nervous system controls our emotions, this stone is great to balance all our feelings.

MOLDAVITE is a very powerful crystal; not everyone can cope with its power, but it is worth trying it. It is a fantastic stone to clear any blockage in the heart chakra and can move stagnant energy in your body.

MOONSTONE. I personally LOVE this crystal, it is really magical! It is a stone related with re-birth and renewal, and it helps to energise and balance the emotional and physical body.

CLEAR QUARTZ is the master healer, a stone that can be used for anything. It is a great balancing stone and can align all chakras.

Now it's time for you to follow this simple ritual.

Lay down on your bed (I personally lay down on my yoga mat after a session of yoga) and place the crystals in the following places on your body.

The moonstone on your crown chakra (between your eyebrows).

The amazonite on your throat chakra.

The moldavite on your heart chakra.

And place two clear quartz stones, one in each palm of your hands (you are laying down with the palm of your hands facing upwards).

Now take four deep breaths and slowly close your eyes. Imagine a colourful wave of energy coming from the universe and slowly entering into your body from the centre of your head.

Imagine that this stream of colourful energy goes to the first crystal on your crown chakra, energising it; feel the moonstone pulsating energy to you. Once you get this feeling, imagine that from the moonstone the colourful stream of energy is descending to the amazonite crystal. Imagine and feel the pulsating of this energy from this crystal. Once you feel it, imagine that this stream of energy is now moving towards your heart chakra, inside the moldavite crystal. Feel this energy in your heart.

Now imagine that from the heart two streams of energy are moving through your arms directly into the palm of your hands, energising the two quartz crystals. Feel now the energy pulsating in the middle of your palms.

At this point you should feel this energy moving all around the body, connecting all the crystals together. Take your time, this is a fantastic sensation, you will actually feel embraced by this stream of energy.

When you feel that the energy is slowly dissipating, gently open your eyes and slowly stand up (do not rush to stand up, otherwise you will feel dizzy). Drink a glass of water and enjoy the feeling of re-birth!





IMAGE: ANDRÉW ROSE, @_andrew_rose_ MODEL: DARCEY ROSE

BELTANE FIRE SPELL

SELF-LOVE

BY RIEKA MOONSONG
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Beltane is the midpoint between the Spring Equinox and the Summer Solstice, celebrated on May 1st in the Northern Hemisphere. Mother Earth and the Green Man have come together in union. The energy of this Sabbat is heady with sexuality and fertility—the evidence all around us in nature with mother animals heavy with pregnancy or baby animals already scurrying about. Like Ostara, Beltane also holds powerful energy for manifesting.

“Beltane” comes from a Gaelic word meaning “bright fire” and is typically celebrated as a fire festival. Fire is often seen as a form of destruction, but it also serves to fuel our passions; with fire comes inspiration for our desires, and in this case the desire for deep self-love. When we truly love ourselves, self-care becomes second nature to us.

Beltane Fire Spell for Self-Love

Supplies:

Several dried pink rose petals
Jasmine flowers or essential oil
Cinnamon powder
Pink candle
Fireproof dish or cauldron
Clear alcohol (Everclear burns the cleanest)
Lighter or matches
Pen and paper

Place the candle and the cauldron or fireproof dish on your altar.

Spell:

- Cast a circle.
- Invoke deity if you are comfortable (Brigid is a

good choice or any other fire goddess, including Pele).

- Light the candle and say the following: “I love myself fully and unconditionally. I treat myself with love and respect. I make positive choices for myself.”
- Pour about 1 teaspoon of alcohol into the cauldron.
- Sprinkle in rose petals and jasmine flowers / oil (clockwise motion) and repeat the above self-love phrase.
- Sprinkle in cinnamon powder (clockwise motion) and repeat the above self-love phrase.
- Write out the entire self-love phrase on a piece of paper three times, saying it each time you write it.
- Light an edge of the paper and VERY CAREFULLY place it in the cauldron so that the ingredients inside catch fire as well. Let it burn out completely.
- Once the fire in the cauldron is out, snuff the candle.
- Light the candle again for three more nights and each night say the self-love phrase, letting it burn down completely on the third night. This gives you an intonement total of the sacred number nine.
- Bury the spell ashes on your property to ensure it stays close to you for long lasting changes.

Working with the fertile energies of the spring is a powerful way to manifest our desires. When self-care is part of those deep desires, the benefits we receive can change our lives in the best ways. Remember that self-care is not selfish, but necessary. We cannot pour from an empty cup.

THE POWER BEHIND THE AMETHYST

BY RICARDO AGRASO
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Most people in the witchy or spiritual community use quartz for meditating, setting intentions or even clearing the energy in their surroundings. There are a couple of quartz that are a must-have for most people, these being rose and clear quartz, and normally they are most commonly used by the people that interact in and out of these communities. Even if you do not follow a certain practice, you may have crossed paths once or twice with one of these famous crystals or stones.

The amethyst is a big member of the quartz family, also classified as a semi-precious stone and crystal. It is commonly recognised by its violet and lilac colour. It is also frequently used in jewellery, because people find amethyst a beautiful and unique stone; without even considering or knowing about the properties she offers as something valuable for their well-being.

Many authors and crystal healers define amethyst as an “all purpose” stone, similar to clear quartz.

However, the amethyst is a protective stone that helps to relieve stress anxiety, and the symptoms that accompany it namely: headaches, fatigue and anxiety.

But it is also commonly used as a tool to activate and sharpen your intuition. There are some exercises that some people find useful, such as putting the quartz under your pillow to encourage you to have lucid dreams during your sleep, and putting the amethyst in front of you while meditating to channel the messages from your higher self.

For me, amethyst has a different meaning. For me, the amethyst is all about transition and transformation.

I used to think that this crystal would allow me to feel less drained of energy, from constantly taking action in different environments with all different kinds of people and energy. It used to be tiring to keep on moving along with such a dynamic.

However, while growing up and finding more mature purposes, I have come to realise that all I needed was to not release stress or anxiety in my life, but to be more mindful of the energy of other people in my surroundings.

Making sure I am surrounding myself with empowering and more nurturing energy for my well-being, so I could keep on growing and learning without worrying about the ground I am standing on.

My mom used to have issues with setting boundaries, and she used to allow her energy to be drained easily by the people she worked with. She wouldn't disconnect herself from the problems her friends would tell her whilst asking for advice. She would take all the issues home, and sleep on them while injecting all the poison into her dreams. She wouldn't rest nor sleep well for nights. She would try to do so during the afternoon but she wouldn't be able to rest successfully because she would worry about the future and she would need to keep herself busy to fade away her preoccupied state of mind.

Years ago, I gave her an amethyst pendant so she could wear it as a necklace. I told her that all she needed to do was to activate the properties of the quartz by setting an intention, and cleansing the crystal in a way she finds more resourceful— and so she did. Once the amethyst was charged under the power of the full moon and the sun's rays, she started wearing it.

My mom would wear the amethyst every single day, she would put it on before going to work and she would only take it off when it was time to take a shower.

The necklace would lay on her nightstand next to her during the nights, and as she used to believe, it would allow her to sleep better and to balance all the highs and lows she had to face during the day. My mom had such a superpower that most of us forget we have, whether we are in or out of this community that believes in the power of the universe. Her superpower was her belief system. She would deeply believe, and she would allow her energy to interact with the properties the amethyst is designed for to happen and be notable in her daily routine.

When my mother passed away at the beginning of August 2022, I found myself broken. I found my world torn apart, and I found myself left with no purpose nor light at the end of any tunnel. My whole life became a cave filled with darkness and tears to pour. It was so rough for me that I still am wondering how I managed to survive.

One day, my older sister came to my room and gave me the amethyst pendant my mother would leave by her nightstand every night before going to sleep. At first, I didn't understand why, but all my sister was able to say was that she considered it needed to be me who wears it from now on; and so I have been doing so since.

I have been able to not only allow myself to feel more connected with my mother, but to also cleanse the energy in my surroundings by allowing myself to be comfortable where I stand. I now understand a lot of stuff I didn't before, like the reason the people interacting with me are truly loyal to their word instead of sticking the knife in my back. I do not allow myself to be at a crossroads, nor stand on a ground filled with uncertainty, but authenticity. My mother gave me the opportunity to not only release stress and anxiety in my life, but to release all that no longer works for me so I can start living a life full of prosperity, joy and abundant love; and so it has been ever since.



LOVE AND PRACTICAL MAGIC

BY GABRIEL LOPEZ
@_concentratedmess

I remember growing up watching *Practical Magic* almost every weekend. Grabbing the popcorn and Milk Duds that my mom stashed in the back of the pantry, I would snuggle up on the couch and watch the movie, singing along to the songs played by either Stevie Nicks or Faith Hill. My favourite scene, which in turn showed just how different I was to most of the boys I knew, would set me apart from the rest. You know, that one scene where Sally Owens runs into the arms of her future husband at the market, her aunties looking at her race from the garden with vigour and passion, meeting her one true love. I thought to myself as a kid, *I wish I was her!* Running into the arms of the man that I'd love forever.

Growing into the gay man that I am today, vivacious and full of life— at least after a cup or two of strong Cuban coffee— I still reminisce on that love story, a union between a witch and a mundane person. Love is a fickle energy, never truly being grasped by someone fully unless flown into the wind. Love is about the faith and trust of one's heart for another, letting their walls crumble to reveal the beautiful unique soul that each and everyone one of has within our hearts.

Love was something I grew to fear in my later years, unfortunately. Seeing the history that my own mother went through, I told myself in my early '20s that I would shy away from it all, just as Sally did when her mother died of a broken heart. I would focus on my life, my beautiful witchy life. However, even a witch can get a little lonely.

I felt I was missing something. I would watch as my friends would settle down, buy their first home, and have their partner next to them in the process of it all; waiting for the right moment to post a picture of the engagement ring. As much as I was happy for each and every one of them, deep down, I wondered when my prince would come, even if I was terrified of the day of when he would come.

So, in a magical sense, I did what Sally Owens did when she was a kid, by creating a true love spell, believing that the one who I would love, would come. Some rose petals, dried of course, hibiscus, a white and pink candle, and a little bit of mystery, I laid out the materials on a full moon in February, the Snow Full Moon, praying to the moon goddess Selene to bring me a man with the bluest and greenest of eyes, a man strong enough in all sense of the word, in mind, body, and spirit, and someone who would understand me. In doing so, she interceded, but not in the way I thought.

A man did come into my life, one with the bluest eyes, and someone who I thought was strong in every sense of the word, and someone who wanted to understand me. However, that's the kicker; I wanted the *thought* of someone strong, not the actual action and determination of the concept. To add a layer to that, it was the fact that he tried to understand me for his benefit, not for ours. In doing so, to be frank, he broke up with me.

I pleaded with Selene, asking why she took away the man that I loved, someone who I gave my heart to so quickly at that time. Crying and begging for Selene to take away my pain, asking why this happened to me. Having the sense of "am I the wrong one for people?" or "am I unlovable?" Things that Selene knew weren't true. What she did show me was that even in life, the right one will come, just as I did the true love spells months before. I would lay in bed wondering, *am I enough? Am I able to be loved? What was wrong with me... Would I end up like Jillian and be alone? Going after guys who were terrible for me? Or would I end up like Sally? Living with a broken heart when her husband died in a freak accident thanks to the Owens curse?*

To be frank, it took me a while to even get out of bed, looking at myself for who I was and who I wasn't, feeling the emotions, but also wondering if I would be able to survive from the heart break. None of my ancestors answered me, and Selene was silent, still as the moon in the winter months.

Taking the time over the next several months, I worked on myself, living for myself to see who I could and can be. The work was brutal, and I didn't think I would be enough for anyone. But Spirit and Selene had a plan, one that I didn't expect. I thought the true love spell didn't work, since I was left heartbroken. Or, it also meant that it wasn't quite finished.

In the middle of May, I came to an understanding that by being my authentic self would ultimately bring me to the one that would love me forever, and the one that I would love with every fibre of my being, but I wasn't in a rush.

I knew that love took time, seeing the feverish way I would end up with men and then leave after just a couple months, putting me in a spiral. I also began to understand that I had to let love in, when for the longest time I didn't think I deserved such a feeling. I associated love with pain, when in the big scheme of things, it is the complete opposite.

Love is kind, love is compassionate, and love is understanding. When I began to understand the concept, I brought that into my very being. In doing so, Selene saw, and she answered. This allowed for the true love spell to take effect. In the mix of it all, when I least expected it, she sent me someone that had the bluest and greenest of eyes, someone who was strong in every sense of the word, and someone who deeply understood me and vice versa.

What she also did however, was add in a few extra tidbits that I saw myself forgetting in the spell. Someone who was kind, compassionate, sensitive, easy going, but most importantly, someone who was my best friend in this journey we call life, allowing ourselves to be our true and silly selves that bring balance and love in each step we take.

So I'll leave you with this. Just like how Sally Owens represented herself fully as a person, and as a witch, she didn't hide anymore. She allowed the person who was right for her to come into her life when she didn't expect it.

That is true with love, you never know when it'll come. But be prepared to be your authentic self, because in doing so, the right one will come along with such grace, that you'll see the divinity that is you.

A CHANNELLED MESSAGE: SPRING FREQUENCIES

BY ANDREA RAMIREZ
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Spring starts like any change of season.

But this time, it's not just a change of weather but also a change of heart.

The stars in the skies are changing too and likewise you are shining a new light in a space in your life you didn't know you had to look into. Life is taking on a new energy, picking up a new vibration.

This spring talks about revelations. What is the seed that you planted during winter that is now about to sprout?

Spring brings about new gifts from the soul, from within yourself. The activation of your vision, the intuition, that lighter sense of existence, that tuning of your inner fork.

You must pay attention to what you are investing your energy in to keep the vibrational being that you are shining bright. You can do this by taking care of not only the foods you eat but also of your environment, the conversations you choose to participate in, the songs you choose to listen to, the information you choose to read and even the TV shows you choose to watch.

In spring, the veil between you and the higher realms of soul, spirit, energy and vibration will become thinner. So that means that the subconscious will be very active and protective of you.

For this, you must nurture yourself with the things that nurture you from within, from your subconscious.

Look for beauty when the world around you seems filled with sadness and darkness. Look for the light. Go to nature. Look at a flower.

Be amazed by the stars in the sky and attune yourself to nature. Nature is here and nature is resilient.

Nature will help you stay balanced because everything blossoms in spring, so those hidden seeds and your soul's wishes will start sprouting during this time.

But sprouting doesn't mean the harvest is ready; the sprout needs nurturing to grow and thrive. If you have a project, or if you want to change something in your life, that change has to start first from within, following a change of lifestyle.

Tune, change and clip those dead tips off of your little sprouts, water them with attention and love, and give them a bit of fertilizer whenever they're feeling down and droopy.

It's very important where you put your attention. Put your attention on the gifts of life. Put your attention on gratitude for all the good things happening in your life— starting from the air that you breathe and the capacity of breathing that you have naturally, and nurture yourself in gratitude.

Then watch the magic happen and see for yourself that the more grateful you are, the more what you wish for in your life will show up.

Open your eyes to the beauty of the world you're living in, and open your eyes to the beauty of your inner world, to the beauty of who you are.

It's a spring of revelation; it's a spring of opening your eyes to a new vision of the world.

Not the vision pushed by the media, but a vision that blossoms from spirit, the greater spirit of existence tuning in with you.

Connect with the soul, connect with the spirit, and let it guide you these days of spring.

Ask the divine, ask the spirit to show you where you should look outside or where to look inside of yourself to bring into blossom that higher vibrational part of you.

As a means to develop and continue to grow in your life, attract better circumstances, opportunities, people, and places, continue to grow and evolve and finally harvest the fruits of working your way towards what you wished for.

Harvesting the sweet fruits, the sweet nectar of all the work you have done to improve yourself, your life and your circumstances.

Last year we had the summer of truth; this year, we have the spring of revelation that will lead to a summer that might change lives, a summer that might change the world.

But for that, you must be tuned to the highest vibrational energy possible, which doesn't mean removing yourself from reality, but observing reality from the eyes of the spirit.

Beware of negativity, especially in the form of information and news you hear and the words you choose to talk to others and yourself. The key to balancing, healing, thriving, nurturing, growing and harvesting the sweetest fruits of your efforts comes from tuning yourself to the right high vibrational energy. Start by observing nature.

Experience gratitude through your inner child, in love with the gift of being on this earth. We send our blessings, we send our love, we send our gratitude, we send our power and support to you. Call upon the highest vibrational energy to come to you and help you, to give you a clearer mind and vision so that you can soar through the skies of life.

We thank you, and we bless you.



IMAGE: DANIEL APODACA, unsplash

THE CURIOUS MULLUMBIMBY

BY ELLEN O'ROURKE
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Mullumbimby, a small town in the northeast of New South Wales, Australia, is a very curious place.

Described as being small but big in personality, Mullum, as it is affectionately known, gives the words 'hippie' and 'alternative' a whole new dimension. I haven't seen as many shops selling natural hemp clothing per square mile before. Strolling down the main street is a delicious assault to your senses; incense, turmeric, fresh organic fruits and pot.

Tarot readers line the sidewalks, offering answers to questions we're all aimlessly searching for. I peruse organic cotton dungarees, health shops brimming with natural remedies, and resist the urge to cram my carry-on luggage full of quartz, amethyst and citrine.

I'm perched on a three-legged wooden stool, overlooking the main street with my signature oat latte in hand. I've become an avid people watcher since I started travelling, as when you travel solo, silently observing humankind becomes much like a partner opposite you at the dinner table. It brings comfort, polite smiles, and the occasional raised eyebrow.

I flip through a copy of the local newspaper, discarded on the table by its previous reader. The edges are frayed and worn, although it's only a few days old. It's easily in the high twenties already, the sun beaming down steadily from above.

I'm the first to admit that I quit my corporate lifestyle and traded it in for an Osprey backpack because I was searching for something. Leaving Gatwick Airport on an overcast September morning, heading off into unknown worlds, I was unsure of what I would find. But perched on this three-legged stool in Mullum, smiling at strangers with tattoo collections even more extensive than mine, listening to the gentle melody of Tibetan meditation rhythms, I realised that all I was really searching for was freedom. Not a prescribed lifestyle or version of myself—just pure, simple, freedom.

Sitting here, three months post-corporate breakup, with my nervous system finally able to regulate itself and my anxiety at an all-time low, I began the long journey back to myself. I realise now that I was playing a part in my former life; using meditation, yoga and tarot readings purely as a band aid to a much bigger internal problem—I wasn't happy with the life I had built for myself. Relentlessly asking the same questions of my tarot cards and somehow expecting a different answer. Is that not the definition of insanity?

What I know now is that my soul is at its happiest when it feels free. Travel has taught me I must actively listen to the wild wolf within me who was crying out to roam, not remain stagnant.

Living life on my own terms was always within reach, I just had to be brave enough to reach out and grab it.

MAGIC THROUGH MOVEMENT

YOGA FOR WITCHES

BY BETHANY HUTSON
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I walk down the stairs slowly, yawning loudly and still half asleep; the morning light is beginning to break through the curtains.

It's not most mornings you'll find me the first to rise, but today I find my soul overwhelmingly drawn to the sacred space found just off our living room. For thirty minutes of my day, I become lost in the movement and in my breath; matching each asana for every inhale and exhale.

The Earth beneath my hands is grounding, rebalancing my mind, while the fire I create through my practice and pranayama reenergises my spirit.

It is here in my little sacred space, on my beloved and well-worn yoga mat, that I am able to create Magic Through Movement.

The word 'Yoga' derives from the Sanskrit word 'yuj', meaning to unite, with the practice of yoga aspiring to create a beautiful balance between mind, body and spirit.

Although yoga itself has evolved and transformed over the thousands of years it has existed, the crucial understanding of this practice is that through this union we possess the ability to shift and alter our energies and consciousness.

In the first yoga class I ever attended, I very vividly recall being encouraged to set an intention, an intention of something I would like to bring onto the mat and something I would like to take away from the space. It wasn't until my personal Yoga Teacher Training that I began to explore the deeper relationship and connections between Yoga and Witchcraft. The correlation between these two ancient practices run deep and true; both require an honesty of heart, the releasing of egotistical notions, and a connection with the world that surrounds us, a world we can see with the naked eye and a world we see without.

It can be daunting to begin a yoga journey, especially when trying to intertwine your spiritual beliefs alongside a physical practice. Below are some simple, but soulful ways to explore your own magic through movement:

Moon Flows

A witchy way to honour the lunar phases each month is through movement; many witches use yoga in their rituals and base that particular flow on the influence of that particular moon. For example, working through a healing restorative practice during the New Moon and a dynamic power flow during the Full Moon is a simple way to harness all the energies that Mother Moon brings us.

Connect with the Elements

A foundation for many styles of yoga is through the connection with the elements around us—Earth, Air, Fire and Water— and this is a fantastic way to energise your spellwork. If you feel yourself particularly drawn to the elements, then why not explore Mandala Vinyasa Yoga, a form of yoga that draws its inspiration from elemental energies and harnesses their power during the flow.

Setting Your Intentions

As with your spellwork, the most crucial aspect is coming into the space with 'intention', and the same is done with yoga. Often during the opening moments of a class, the teacher will offer an opportunity to 'set yourself an intention for the flow ahead', whether that be something you would like to release or welcome in, an affirmation or even a feeling you would like to take off the mat with you. This is a beautiful way to remember that yoga isn't simply a physical practice, but more importantly an emotional and spiritual one too.

The Eight Fold Path

When beginning your yoga practice, the magic is found in what you take off the mat rather than the shapes you create on it. The 'Eight Limbs of Yoga', also known as 'The Eight Fold Path', is a series of pathways found in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras that help guide the way to liberation, the freedom from anything and everything that has been holding us back. These pathways include: Niyama, the pathway to how we treat ourselves/others, and Yama, the pathway towards transformation of the mind through moral discipline and restraint. Being inspired by these pathways can transform the way you move through day to day life and inspire how you view your spiritual path.

Finding your Coven

We each come to the mat for different reasons—for healing, for an escape, for a little self care. Although our motivation is unique and personal, there is a sense of community and togetherness knowing that the person beside you is looking for something, too. When you attend the same class each week, with the same teacher— whether that be in person or online— the class often takes on the feel of a coven; as a group of people each looking for an escape on the mat, you learn to support, encourage, and be inspired by those around you.

Remember, everyone's journey— both in witchcraft and in yoga— is personal and unique. When exploring your pathway, keep your mind and heart open, knowing that you collect anything that resonates with you and leave anything that does not. Most importantly, however, enjoy your journey and embrace your magic!

SPRING SEEDS: MEDITATION AND MAGIC

BY SARAH ROBINSON
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The Magic of Meditation

"Magic teaches us that things that seem to be impossible can become possible. Things that have become separated, blocked or broken, like people and energy, can be re-joined. We can find the light, find space, and empty cauldrons can be refilled with time and love."

I wrote these words for my second book, *Yin Magic*, and I believe the exact same words apply to meditation, as well.

There are so many reasons to meditate, not least the connection to a certain magic when we cultivate a regular meditation practice. Any time spent in stillness can be an opportunity for meditation and reflection, both on one's self and the world. Great transformation can happen in these moments, like in a chrysalis, before something new and beautiful emerges. Every moment of stillness is an opportunity to learn and grow.

Taking time to observe and notice your thoughts can help you nurture a more profound sense of presence and well-being. A regular meditation practice teaches you to be able to observe and accept any thoughts and emotions that arise without judgement.

In the story of yoga, the union that is yoga can only happen when the mind becomes quiet—which is essentially what meditation is. Mental stillness is found by bringing the body, mind and senses to calm, which, in turn, relaxes the nervous system.

Meditation is used to focus the mind and enter a state of consciousness different from our daily awareness. Meditation can be used to contemplate something affecting us inwardly or outwardly. During this altered state of consciousness, you may feel you can contact your inner self or communicate with the Divine/Universe/Spirit.

While meditation is more commonly associated with yoga and Eastern religions, it is also a core part of magical practice. It is the starting point for other techniques and practices such as astral projection, manifestation, shamanism and 'hedge riding'.

Spring Seeds Meditation

The sun has returned, and the days are growing longer. It's time to begin to unravel and unfurl. Just like seeds in the springtime, we can take in that which nourishes us so we can expand and grow.

This is a short and sweet spring meditation to start your process of growth.

Allow yourself to settle into the safe place you have chosen for your meditation. Make sure you are warm and comfortable. Begin to relax into this place, and gently close your eyes. Taking a nice deep breath in. And exhaling. Easeful inhales. Easeful exhales.

As you begin to slow the breath and bring your attention inwards, let a feeling of calm and well-being spread throughout your body. Know that you are safe and allow yourself this time to settle and surrender into the Earth. Now, as you rest in this place, in line with the spring season, I want you to envisage that you are a seed: small and shining, full of possibility.

As your seed self, you have been planted into the Earth, nestled in the soft ground. As this seed, you have been sleeping, resting through the dark winter. You have been dreaming about the plant that you will become; it might be a beautiful flower or healing herb, a fruit bush of bright berries or a great tall tree of the forest. Allow yourself to visualise this plant, whatever it may be.

The time has now come for a new cycle to begin, the season of spring beckons with open arms and rosy fingers. It is time for you to start a journey to awakening. You may visualise the light of the spring sun and begin to feel gentle energy and warmth moving through you. You may begin to gently reach out, breaking out of your shell.

Visualise sending roots down deep into the Earth so that you can draw in what nourishes you. These roots travel downwards into grounding, giving you strong foundations, drawing in nourishment and feeding your journey of growth. Now you also begin expanding upwards. Unfurling, stem and stalk reaching upward to the sun. Your first green shoots, your first green leaves appear. The growing light and warmth of the spring sunshine gently draws you, guiding you to reach skywards.

You and the elements of sky and earth, above and below, entwine in harmonious rhythm of drawing in and expanding out. Drawing in what nourishes you. Unfurling, unravelling, growing more leaves, deeper roots, rising in growth. Drawing in and reaching out, breathing in and breathing out. Taking up space, feeling into expansion. As you continue to grow and rise, you are in a process of becoming— becoming who you are or who you wish to be.

Let yourself stay with this this feeling of growth. With every breath, you are taking in what you need, expanding and growing. You can stay here as long as you wish.

This process does not need to be quick— we grow and bloom and blossom in our own time as our own beautiful spring shoots. Just when you feel ready, you may open your eyes.

You may spend a few quiet minutes here to reflect or write down what nourishes you, what it means to you to draw on deep roots, and what growth means to you. Or even create a picture of the plant you wish to become.

RELEASE THE SHAME:

EXPRESS YOUR WITCH'S HEALING GIFTS

BY NICOLE BARTON
@iamnicolebarton

For us witches, spring is a season of moving from dark to light as we rebirth. Based on years of being an archetypal medicine woman and working with many witches to reclaim their healing magic, I've learned we really do have a penchant for gobbling up darkness and alchemising it into light, far more than other magical ones (and definitely more than the mundane world). This often takes a deeper conscious choice, so this is the invitation I make to you this spring around healing the witch's core wound: *expressing her gifts*.

There is one wound that the witch, very innocently, avoids alchemising, and it lurks in the shadows—largely because it is unconscious. This is the wound built into our DNA and felt through every cell of our body, as every magical soul's deepest fear: the ancestral 'witch wound'. The fear that if they are their true selves, they will be chased out of the village with a pitchfork, tortured, persecuted and killed. Like all the witches that have come before us.

"We are the granddaughter's of the witches you could not burn."

It is thankfully not the case where witches are killed for their gifts any more, yet they unconsciously hold onto ancestral shame, fear and guilt of being seen as a 'charlatan'.

It is this fear that has witches unintentionally becoming 'secret witches'—witches who hide and shame their healing gifts because of the deep fear of expressing their true selves. This fear often unconsciously manifests as us magical ones suppressing our healing powers and voices. Sadly, in the false belief that you will not be welcome, your inner 'secret witch' shadow unwittingly dilutes your potency as you unconsciously fit your medicine into a more 'palatable' mundane box that society approves of.

When witches suppress their inner medicine witch like this, believing that they will be rejected, my heart breaks a little—because in today's modern world, the collective *needs* your witchy gifts more than ever.

Whilst you believe no one wants your gifts (the common 'old story' witches tell themselves is "I can't create a business from my magic"), it is actually not *that* which causes pain.

The truth is, it is your fearful hiding and suppression of your unique 'soul remedy' that has you in pain— you've hidden your true healing gifts (likely even from yourself). It's not that people don't *want* your remedy, but those who *do* want it, can't find it because it's been so diluted.

This leaves magical witches trying to create magical healing businesses where it appears that no one sees you, that you aren't magnetic, and you sell your soul to get clients through the door. Worse, it leaves you burned out, exhausted, in scarcity and lack, and back in the very energetic state you started your healing journey from in the first place— exhausted.

It is time to stop fitting your magic into a mundane box. It is time to let go of being grateful for anyone taking your healing. It is time to express your soul's remedy *fully*, so you can become the medicine witch you were *born here* to be.

You can express your fire and create a magical business as an abundant healing flame. Your sensitivity, fiery emotions, open heart, your true, natural expression— all of these are your superpowers. Your fear can be healed and integrated into gold, especially harnessing spring's energy. If you consciously choose to self-heal and love the young parts of your wounded inner child and ancestral fear, you will see that souls catch light from other burning, radiant souls willing to walk into the fire and shine brightly.

It is time to become your whole-souled archetypal medicine majesty.

How do we reclaim her? It is time to go inwards— and self-heal your own witch wound.

As a witch with medicinal gifts, you have likely explored all the healing from a place of trying to fix yourself (and others). And yet, the deepest work, which I call 'woo deep' (as opposed to 'woo lite'— which isn't intrinsically lite, it's how it's interacted with from a 'fixing' place)— is learning to lovingly self-heal your witch wound. We can't dose our medicine without doing so.

This is the call this spring. It starts by allowing yourself to go fully into the darkness so you can reveal your light. Start with self-healing enquiries; light a candle, grab some blankets and your grimoire, and spend time in reflective meditation on the following prompts.

Place a hand on your heart and belly, and breathe. Ask yourself:

1. Where in life does your fear of being your true self show up?
2. What pleasures do you get from hiding your voice— where do you benefit from not showing up?
3. How long are you prepared to hide— and how does that cost you?
4. Which parts of you need love to release your fear and shame? Close your eyes, connect with your medicine queen (visualise yourself as her, noticing how she looks, feels, moves). Breathe love into your fear, acknowledge parts of you that feel scared, and make a conscious choice to release and move forward.
5. Connect to your inner medicine witch's deepest longing and vision. What is it— and what is one, small aligned action that will help express it?

The deepest work for all witches is learning to love and tend our secret witch so we can illuminate and fully express our magic.



SPRING EQUINOX RITUALS

BY MIRANDA COOK
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If, like me, you spent most of mid-winter eagerly observing tree branches and flower beds for signs of budding life, you'll be excited about the spring equinox's arrival, when the day length equals the night, and then from spring to midsummer, the days get brighter, warmer and longer.

The equinox falls this year on March 20th and is officially the first day of spring. It's also the astrological new year, marking zero degrees of Aries, the newborn lamb of the zodiac. In the pagan wheel of the year, the equinox is celebrated as Ostara, after the Germanic goddess of spring and dawn, for new beginnings, fertility and the easter bunny.

Yes, that's right— for anyone wondering why we have chocolate Easter eggs and why a cute rabbit brings them, we only need to look at the tale of Ostara (or Eostre) and the bird she rescued from death by turning it into a hare. This hare then shows its appreciation by laying coloured eggs for her in gratitude. Granted, this story is a long way from the Cadbury's aisle, but it's a part of the spring rituals which came before Christianity, and why decorating or eating eggs on the equinox became popular.

But what about a few easy rituals to celebrate the world becoming abundant once more?

Baking a celebratory feast is one simple way— include honey cakes and hot cross buns (representing the four cardinal directions).

Decorate your space or altar space with daffodils, violets, primroses and dandelions, or branches of ash and birch. Dried thyme, lemon balm or marjoram can be incorporated into your cleansing rituals, too, or burned for smoke cleansing purposes.

Some crystals I like to place around me or carry on the equinox are usually heart-centred colours such as pink, green or pale yellow, which all signify new growth and opportunity. I have green aventurine on hand for balance; it is calming, soothing and gentle, but it does also possess a little frisson of spring energy— the beginnings of all things new, homes, relationships, projects or jobs can be helped along by including aventurine in your manifestation workings.

Moss and tree agate are also helpful healers and also strengthen our connection between our lives on the earth and the spiritual plane.

It's a great grounding stone and can remind us that we are part of nature's great oneness ourselves. But of course, not to forget rose quartz, the old faithful, for expanding our capacity for love and compassion is a must in the springtime.

A nice candle magic ritual could involve burning black and white candles of equal length, to signify the equality of masculine and feminine energy and night and day, and bring that power to your intentions for the forthcoming season. I usually journal my thoughts before a ritual so I can connect more deeply to what I want to bring into the world in the springtime.

Using the tarot is an essential part of my daily practice, and I also involve it in my spring equinox ritual. I usually complete a short elemental ceremony in the garden with fire, feathers symbolic of air, water, and for soil I bring a pot with some earth. I then meditate on my intentions for the next period of time, calling in my ancestors and guides, and plant a seed or seeds in the pot and sprinkle them with the ceremonial water. I then draw a tarot card for the energy I have to work with in the spring, and place it inside on my altar. That will be the card I will work with until the solstice.

Other ways to involve tarot in the spring equinox is to create a personal spread with places to represent what is left behind, what is growing, what needs to be more balanced and a message from your higher self/ancestors/deity. Don't forget to record it in your journal so you can reflect back in midsummer.

The spring equinox has to be one of the most joyous events on the calendar. Not summer solstice, when the days are inexorably sliding into more darkness, not winter solstice when we still have a fair way to go in the dark. Even the autumn equinox, although pleasant, does not have the same optimism and air of newness as spring. So be blessed, and however you choose to mark the occasion, may you experience it with the joy of new beginnings.



ILLUSTRATION: MAEVE LILLIAN MOONBIRD

CREATIVE WAYS TO CELEBRATE OSTARA

BY MAEVE LILLIAN MOONBIRD
@creativepriestess

This pagan sabbat of Ostara celebrates the Vernal Spring Equinox. On this day there is equal day and night. Then the days will be waxing, growing longer with daylight until the Summer Solstice, Litha on the 21st of June.

Ostara is named after the Germanic Spring Goddess Ostara or Eostre. She is often depicted as a maiden goddess associated with the Spring Equinox.

Ostara represents renewal, rebirth, balance, and fertility of the spring season. This is also a time of cleansing and purification of your home, altar and self.

Some creative and inspirational ways to celebrate Ostara are:

- Decorate boiled eggs for your Ostara altar. You can use natural dyes and paint symbols on your eggs. The eggs can also be eaten at your Ostara meal.
 - Sew a costume or dress up in a way that celebrates the Spring Equinox for you.
 - Make a delicious, celebratory meal for Ostara. Foods associated with Ostara are salads filled with spring greens, eggs, honey, lemons, chocolate and local seasonal fruits and vegetables.
 - Journey with an animal guide associated with Ostara such as rabbits, horses, bees, baby birds, robins and butterflies. Create a piece of art or write about your journey.
 - Write in your journal reflecting on the Ostara themes of renewal, rebirth, balance and fertility. You can also light a candle and write your intentions and wishes for spring.
 - Plant seeds in your garden and focus on your spring intentions and wishes.
 - Work with the Fae creating fairy art or crafts in honour of them. You can create a fairy door to place in your yard, garden or altar, for example.
- Some colours for the sabbat to decorate with are pink, lavender, yellow, peach, light blue and grass green. You can also focus on your intentions and wishes for spring while you boil your egg. Then write these on the egg, and either place on it your altar or bury it in the ground, planting your wishes.
- Paint, draw, craft or write about the Ostara sabbat. Some images you can work with that represent Ostara are the Goddess Ostara, as well as the Green Man, spring flowers, rabbits, baby birds, robins, eggs, horses, honey bees, butterflies and faeries.
 - Take a local nature walk and collect flowers. Press them in a book. Learn about the flowers' magical associations.
 - Create a flower crown from real or craft flowers to wear on Ostara.

LEGENDS OF THE CELTIC FAERY

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The word faery comes from the Old French, *faerie*. This is a word that has evolved over the years into 'fairy'—describing the fairies of modern literature. But the word originally meant something very different in folklore deriving from Germany, Slavic regions, in England and from the lands of the Celts.

When you think of a fairy, you'll most likely see a tiny being with glowing wings, much like the fairies in children's stories. Fairies are often seen to have some kind of magical power like "Merryweather" in *Sleeping Beauty*, who changes Maleficent's curse from death to sleep.

But the modern fairies that appeared between the 18th and 20th century originated from oral tradition first, before they were transmitted into writing.

Fairies are supernatural beings like the Greek *daimon*, which means 'spirit', and are neither mortal nor divine.

The earliest form of a faery can be found in the mythical beings in Greek mythology, such as the *nymphs* (divine female nature spirits), *satyrs* (divine woodland spirits), and *sileni* (a horse like satyr) which all existed as early as the time of Homer, who wrote *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

In Roman religion and mythology there were the guardian spirits, the *penates* who are divine household spirits and *lares*, which are divine guardian spirits. In Norse mythology, fairies were described as a wide variety of elves known as the 'dísir' that exist in the Teutonic traditions.

It was during the time of Queen Elizabeth I of England that William Shakespeare popularised fairies in English folklore. In his play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the characters Oberon, Titania and Puck are fairy beings. Earlier still, Chaucer mentioned that the land of Britain was filled with fairies before the time of King Arthur. In the Arthurian legends, the divine or fairy figure also appeared in abundance. Morgan Le Fay, often shown as King Arthur's half-sister, was a great sorceress and healer; 'Fay' means 'Fairy', enhancing notions of her otherworldly origins.

Fairies in folklore

In folklore, the fairy ranged from a helpful spirit to a hostile mischief maker. Some were beautiful to look at, whilst others were hideous. Fairies came in all shapes and sizes and were not always depicted as tiny winged creatures. Different fairies also had different magical powers, as well as different appearances.

The origins of the fairy

Deities existed in Celtic religion, the worship of which was crushed during the Christianisation of the British Isles. These deities were then reduced to the status of fairies in Celtic mythology.

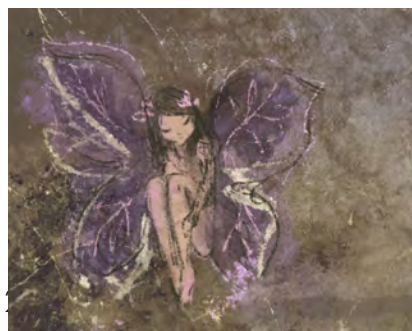
In Ireland, the Gods of the Tuatha De Danann were demoted to the role of fairies. Similar demotion of the Gods occurred with old deities in Wales, Scotland and other surviving pockets of Celtic kingdoms (such as Cornwall, Brittany and the Isle of Man).

These earlier Celtic traditions of fairies— the former Irish or Welsh deities, were also not fairies in the usual sense. They looked similar in size and shape like human beings, except that they had special magical powers and they seemed to be eternally young; they were also wingless. The Dananns, or their Welsh counterparts, were usually seen as a race of fair people. They could die just as mortals can, but their lives could last hundreds or even thousands of years. Sadly, Christian authors have often turned fairies into beings who served the Devil, and created the notion that fairies were actually demons.

These medieval fairies are different from the common folklore and fairy tales of today. The Tuatha de Danann is nothing like the brownie, leprechaun and goblin of later traditions.

Much information about Irish fairies comes from the 19th century poet, William Yeats. In his book *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*— it is not only a description of fairies, but a collection of works, poems and prose from other distinguished authors of the time. In this work, he divides fairies into two categories: 'trooping fairies', or social fairies, and solitary fairies.

Social or trooping fairies are those who live in large communities, like in a clan. The Tuatha de Danann who lived in the Sidh, ruled by a king and sometimes a queen (or both), can be considered social fairies. They were often seen feasting, singing and dancing. They have been known to be either benevolent or hostile towards humans. The solitary fairy usually avoids large gatherings.





There are many types of solitary fairy such as the banshee, leprechaun and brownie.

Generally, they could be recognised by the type of jackets they wore— the social fairies wore green jackets, whilst the solitary fairies wore red ones.

Scottish fairy folklore can also be divided in a similar fashion of solitary and social fairies.

Another writer, William 'Wirt' Sikes, wrote in *British Goblins* (1880) comparing the Welsh fairies with that of Norse/Teutonic fairies.

Sikes says that there are three types of fairy in the Norse tradition: *elves*, *dwarves* and *trolls*; *nisses* and *necks*; and *mermen* and *mermaids*. While in the Welsh traditions there are the *ellyllo* (the elves), the *coblynau* (the mine fairies), the *bwbachod* (the household fairies), the *gwragedd annwn* (the fairies of the lakes and streams), and the *gwyllion* (the mountain fairies).

Here the classification of Welsh fairies distinguished household fairies from that of the mines, lakes and mountains. Like the Irish tradition, the Welsh can be further divided into solitary and social fairies.

The Welsh name for fairies is *y Tylwyth Teg*, which means 'the fair folk', and these folk lived in *Gwlad y Tylwyth Teg*, known as 'Fairyland.'

Examples of fairies from Celtic mythology

Banshee

Originally in Irish literature, *banshee* actually means 'woman of the fairy mound' or just simply a 'fairy woman.' *Ban* or *Bean* meaning 'woman'. The various spellings or pronunciations of the word for fairy mound referred to the otherworldly realm, which the Irish referred to as *shee*, *sid*, *sidh* or *sidhe*.

It was only in later Irish and Scottish Gaelic folklore traditions that *banshee* came to mean a female wraith or spirit whose keening foretells the death of a person in the household.

Elf

The elf or alf was derived from Teutonic origin. Descriptions of elves varied from author to author and from one period to another. The elves were introduced into the Celtic folklore in the later tradition.

According to the Norse myths, there are two groups or tribes of elves; the light-elves, known as *ljásálfar*, who lived in the world called Alfheim, where the Vanir god Freyr ruled.

The light-elves were seen as fair. The other group of elves were the dark-elves, *dokkálfar*, living in Nidavellir, and the black elves, *svartálfar*, living in the world called Svartalfheim.

There seemed to be a difference between dark-elves and black elves. The dark elves were described with a complexion 'blacker than night' and were short like the dwarves.

The dark elves, also like the dwarves, were known for their invention and craftsmanship.

To the Norse tradition, the elves were spirits or minor deities of the woodland or household.

In later Germanic folklore, the elves had changed, becoming more diminutive in size, much like the Celtic counterpart of the fairies.

Brownie

In Scottish Gaelic folklore, the brownie was a household elf who would make sure the home was tidy at night whilst the family were sleeping—like Dobby in *Harry Potter*.

Failing to reward the brownie for his service would result in either the brownie leaving the household, or at worse, mischievously causing havoc in the house, such as breaking dishes, spoiling milk and chasing away cattle or other animals from the property.

The brownie is comparable to the German kobold, which had, more or less, the same function as the brownie.

Changeling

According to folklore, a fairy would secretly exchange a mortal infant with that of the fairy kind. A fairy baby was called a changeling. Sometimes, the stolen babies were returned to the families, especially when a person exposed the true nature of the changeling. The changeling existed in all folklore and fairy tales.

Usually the fairy babies were sickly. One way to recognise them was to place them on a fire and chant a formula. If it was a changeling, it would leave by climbing up the chimney. According to Yeats, the stolen baby would live in a place full of 'good living with music and mirth.'

Leprechaun

Of all the fairy people, the one that most people today are familiar with is the leprechaun. However, the leprechaun statuettes that we see in people's garden have been seriously misrepresented.

In Irish folklore, the leprechaun was one of the best known male solitary fairies. They have a lot in common with two other male solitary fairies—cluricaune and far darrig. Like these other two fairies, they are mischievous and known for playing practical jokes upon mortals.

They dressed in homely style clothes that looked very ordinary compared to other solitary fairies. The leprechaun is a shoe maker who is a tiny male figure with an old, withered face. Yeats says that he was a one-shoemaker, because he was only seen making a single shoe. They also have hidden many treasure crocks.

So the legend of the fairy is far more complex than we may have at first realised, with many fairy beings dotted throughout folklore and history. Next time you see Tinkerbell at the bottom of your garden, be careful that she's not a mischievous brownie who will trip you up or send you to fairyland when you least expect it.

You have been warned!

THE WITCHES GARDEN

BY JAYNE CRAIG
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Imagine that it's early morning and you step outside into the fresh spring air...

You inhale deeply and look around you, admiring the small bursts of greenery pushing its way eagerly through the rich earth. You smile with satisfaction, knowing that in a few months time (with a bit of love and care), you will be harvesting these beautiful plants to create delicious healing teas, beautiful scented smoke bundles, handmade flower essences and topping up your bottles of stored herbs for spells and rituals... all of this is possible when you create your very own witches garden!

If you are short on outdoor space, or live in an area subject to harsh and changeable weather, you will be pleasantly surprised to learn that most plants can be easily grown in pots on a small patio or indoors. As long as the plant's basic needs are met, most will happily thrive no matter whether grown indoors or out, in pots or a big garden plot.

Although you can pretty much grow anything you desire in your witches garden, if you are new to gardening it can be helpful to draw up a list of plants you may wish to start off with.

Herbs are a great place to start, because most can be used in spells, medicinally and/or for use in flavouring your cooking.

So let's have a little look at some common (and not so common) herbs and plants that are wonderful additions to the witches garden.

Please always remember to do your own research to ensure any plants you use/consume will not cause any allergies or medical contraindications.

Mint, Mentha x piperita

Although this is common mint, there are all sorts of mints to suit your taste buds— spearmint, apple mint and chocolate mint to name but a few. Mint will grow vigorously in the garden and easily spread, so it is a good one to keep contained in a large pot. Mint makes a delicious tea that helps settle digestive issues, reduce headaches and improve clarity. It is also wonderful for when you get a bout of a cold or flu, as it helps relieve congested sinuses. Because mint grows so abundantly, it is thought to bring prosperity into your life, as well as give your clarity of thought. Magically, mint is wonderful for money and abundance magic.



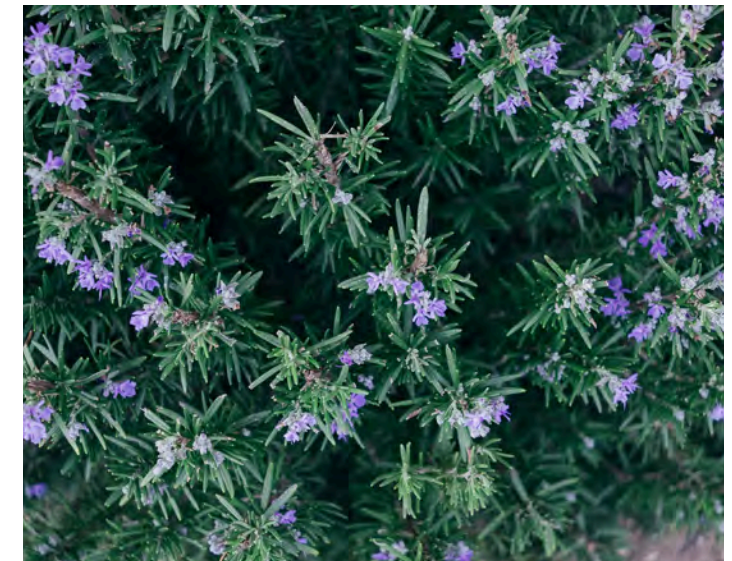
Lavender, L. angustifolia

Lavender has a wonderful calming scent. She is also extremely useful and medicinal. A great plant to grow if you suffer from headaches or bouts of irritation, you can go outside and run your hands through the stems and flowers of the lavender bush and get a little free aromatherapy! You can also harvest the heads of lavender to use in soothing baths, or dry them to place under pillows to help lull you into sleep. Lavender has long been used in rituals for healing, purification and protection. You can also add dried lavender flowers to a jar of sugar to infuse your baking with some lavender magic!



Rosemary, Salvia rosmarinus

This beautifully fragrant plant is associated with memory and can be very helpful to have around the house if you are studying. Simply pick a sprig and crush its leaves as you study to bring clarity of thought and focus. You can then use the scent of rosemary to help you recall the information you have studied at a later date. Rosemary is also a plant of remembrance and protection. You can use rosemary in teas, infused to add flavour to vinegars. Or simply dry sprigs of rosemary, using the leaves to flavour your cooking and saving the sticks to bundle together for a smoke cleanse.



Elecampane, Inula helenium

You can grow this herb and use it in multiple ways. The flowers can be used in magic to draw in happiness and to symbolise the power of the sun. The root can be harvested, roughly chopped and then dried to be added to a pot of honey, gently simmered on the stove to infuse for a medicinal honey that can be added to teas or taken by the spoonful, to help relieve and soothe coughs and asthma. Or you could finely chop the root and dry, to be used as an incense to help connect with the fae.





Ladies Mantle, Alchemilla

Lady's mantle is a beautiful ground cover plant that has long been used medicinally for menstrual problems. It also has a fascinating history of being linked to both Druids and alchemists, who collected dew and rain from the plant's leaves to synthesise magical remedies. You could do the same, collecting the water to make your own flower essences, add to moon water, or homemade aromatic sprays.



Rose, Rosa rubiginosa

Magically linked to self-love, romance, healing a broken heart, honouring the goddess and protection. Rose petals can be dried and used as incense, or its petals can be dried and added to flavour sugar and/or honey. Fresh rose petals can be added to water and gently simmered to make antioxidant rich Rose water— used for its skin soothing properties. Her thorns can be carefully snipped off and collected for protection magic. Rose also helps you get in touch with all facets of the feminine, both in physical and spiritual form. She is wisdom, sensuality, softness, strength and fierce protectiveness all rolled into one.



Sunflower, Helianthus annus L

This is one of my favourite flowers, just looking at it invokes a sense of cheerfulness. Sunflowers can be grown in the garden, or in pots or enjoyed as a cut flower. They symbolise loyalty, friendship, confidence, joy and longevity. Because you can enjoy the bloom of the sunflower and eat and plant her seeds, the sunflower is also linked with nourishment and abundance. Sunflowers also have the ability to draw toxins out of the soil and still produce a beautiful flower, which reminds us that we, too, can draw upon our toxic or rough experiences and still create a beautiful abundant life.



Borage, Borago officinalis

Borage has a rich history of being linked to courage; because of this, its flowers make a fantastic flower essence to help soothe fears and boost confidence. Or you could add the flowers and leaves to a magical pouch/amulet to also soothe fears and project confidence. You can also add the pretty star shaped flowers to salads or freeze in ice cubes to add to your gin and tonic, to impart a light cucumber flavour.

These are just a few ideas of plants that you may want to use; there are so many more herbs, flowers, trees and vines, with fantastic medicinal, edible and magical properties that you may want to consider for your garden space. The magical thing about a witches garden is that it can be adapted to suit ANY kind of witch!

If you are not a fan of growing herbs and flowers, a magical garden of aloe and cacti or succulents could serve as a protection barrier for your home. You could also add protective sigils painted onto pots or stones to add to the garden to enhance the garden's protective powers.

Or perhaps you love working with the moon in which case a moon garden filled with plants that release their scent at night (think brugmansia, tobacco, petunia, wisteria or star jasmine) and have white blooms or silvery foliage that will stand out in the moonlight would call to you more.

Those who are comfortable working with baneful magic might like a garden filled with more toxic but beautiful plants, such as nightshade, datura, henbane etc. Just be sure to keep this type of garden safely out of the way of pets and small children and well-labelled for any inquisitive adults.

If you have little witchlings around, you might want your garden to be filled with plants that have bright colours to draw in insects, or leaves of different textures to encourage touch and flowers that you can smell and taste.

When planting your seeds or seedlings, consider adding a bit of extra magic to your garden space by writing an intention you wish to see manifest in your world on a small piece of paper, and then burying it with the seed or under the root ball of the seedling. As you water and tend to the plant, you can envision you are tending and taking care of your dreams until they are ready to be made manifest in the world.

There is no end to the magic you can create with your witches garden... even the simple act of touching the soil helps to ground your energy and put you in touch with soil bacteria, mycobacterium vaccae. Which according to research, triggers the release of serotonin in our brain, so it really does lead to happy gardening!



IMAGE: HELENA MUNOZ, unsplash

THE ILLUSTRIOUS POWER OF CASTOR OIL

BY KATY NEWTON
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Many years ago, my longtime hairstylist quit without warning, and when I showed up for my appointment I was greeted by an unfamiliar face. They assured me that they would take good care of my long, light brown highlighted hair. Maybe it was because I was caught off guard, but for some reason I instantly became uneasy. I felt like I was being led to the gallows as they showed me to their station. The hairs stood up on the back of my neck when they snapped on the black nylon cape. Something in the pit of my stomach was telling me to leave, but I stayed stuck in the chair, imprisoned by my unwillingness to offend a person I hadn't even known existed until moments ago.

I wish I had listened to what my gut was telling me that day, but I was a baby witch and disconnected from the power of my intuition.

"Let's go blonder!" they excitedly exclaimed, as they applied lightener to seemingly every strand of my hair, the smell of bleach so strong it made my eyes water. My scalp was starting to itch, and I was relieved when they announced the last foil was in but then confused when they signalled for me to follow them to the dryers. My previous hairstylist never used the dryers. Again, I ignored the nagging feeling as they sat me down, pulled the hood over my head and turned on the heat full blast. *"I'll be back to check on you in a few minutes"*, they said with a wink.

So I waited, but soon the itch became a burn. Then the burning had become nearly unbearable; it felt like a million fire ants had taken residence on my scalp.

I lifted off the head of the dryer and saw, to my surprise, that all the stations were clear of clients and I couldn't spot my stylist anywhere; in fact, I didn't see *any* stylists anywhere, just the girl at the front desk cashing out the register. Addled by bleach fumes, I approached her and asked for my stylist. Without glancing up, she replied coolly that they had left for the day. I must have made some pathetic, inaudible sound, because she lifted her eyes to meet mine. Her face flickered from annoyance to confusion, and then to panic as the realisation dawned on both her and I simultaneously. The stylist had forgotten about me.

The girl quickly ushered me to the shampoo sink, rinsed out the bleach and then ran to get the owner, who emerged apologising profusely. In stunned silence, I watched my reflection in the mirror as she combed out the tangled, over-processed mess. Clumps and chunks, fistful of hair, fell to the floor. My hair, the crown I never took off, formed a sickening, pale yellow half moon by my feet. I burst into tears. Still murmuring apologies, the owner escorted me to the door, graciously waving the fee for services.

After a few days of wallowing in self pity, I stumbled upon a small salon that could correct my colour and cut. I booked an appointment for the next day.

The stylist was so kind as she gently lifted up sections of my fried broken hair and told me *"not to worry, it will grow back"*. She then disappeared for a few seconds and returned with a small bottle.

She put a few drops on her hands and began massaging it into my scalp and onto my hair. *"Castor oil"* she said, *"it will help your hair grow back"*. She gave me the bottle and instructed me to massage a few drops onto my scalp and hair a few nights a week and then wash it out in the morning.

I was sceptical but willing to try anything, so I became diligent about my hair oiling regime. Immediately my scalp stopped itching and my ends looked healthier. After four weeks, I had baby hairs sprouting up all over my head and a few months later I had two inches of regrowth. I started using it on my eyelashes and eyebrows with fluttery and fluffy results. After a year of regular use my hair completely recovered. I have been using this magical oil as a part of my wellness routine ever since.

Castor oil is the world's oldest herbal remedy and has been used therapeutically for thousands of years. Derived from the seeds of castor beans, castor oil is packed with ricinoleic acid and vitamin E, both of which are beneficial to the skin and hair. Massaging the oil into the scalp increases blood flow to hair follicles, promoting hair growth and nourishing dry, damaged hair. Consistent use of castor oil on the scalp encourages healthy, glossy hair.

When applied topically, it can increase circulation and oxygenation of the skin, which speeds up cell regeneration and encourages healing, making it an ideal natural treatment for sunburn, abrasions, acne scars and stretch marks. Castor oil is loaded with antioxidants, and in addition to being super hydrating and soothing on skin, it also protects against free radical damage, making it a powerful anti-aging treatment. It absorbs quickly onto the skin and can be used as a gentle moisturiser and barrier builder on delicate areas, such as under the eyes and on the lips.

While the uses and benefits of castor oil as a wellness and beauty remedy are seemingly endless, its magical properties don't stop there. Often associated with cleansing, regeneration and good health, castor oil has long been used in spiritual rituals and practices.

Try anointing candles and the third eye with castor oil to help manifest the resolve of a toxic situation or to invite in a fresh start. To clear negativity from your aura, warm up castor oil and rub it all over your body, then take a shower and envision the oil pulling out any malevolent vexations and washing them down the drain, leaving you fresh and glowing. Soak crystals in warm water mixed with a few drops of castor oil to cleanse and brighten.

If you use castor oil in your practice or as part of your beauty routine, it is important that you use organic 100% pure, cold pressed castor oil. Some brands combine mineral or other vegetable oils with the castor oil, so always check the ingredients. If you are using castor oil on your skin or scalp, then I recommend doing a spot check and applying a small amount behind your ear near your hairline to ensure there is no reaction. It is very rare, but castor oil could cause a reaction on sensitive or reactive skin.

This ancient, multi-tasking super oil is a powerful tool for those seeking wellness and spiritual development. A mystical tincture derived purely from nature, castor oil's versatility and properties make for infinite possibilities. Experiment and explore the magic of castor oil; you won't be disappointed.

Rosemary and Castor Oil Elixir

Castor oil is a relatively thick oil, and I suggest mixing with a carrier oil to help thin it out. I typically use fractionated coconut oil for an added boost of moisture. Rosemary has its own magical properties, and all together this is a powerful elixir to use on skin and hair.

Combine a few fresh sprigs of rosemary and 2 cups of water in a small pot; bring to a boil and then turn on low and simmer for 20 minutes. Let cool and set aside rosemary.

In a large bowl, combine 1 cup rosemary water, 4 tablespoons Castor oil and 2 tablespoons fractionated coconut oil. Use a whisk or a large fork to blend. Add back in small pieces of rosemary (optional). Store in a dark bottle and shake before use.

LANDING DEEP IN THE EARTH WITH SACRED WOMEN'S DRUM CIRCLES

BY MELONIE SYRETT
@thedrumwoman

Wow— where to begin? That was my first thought as I sat to write this article. My intention was to share the utter magic of drumming and to invite others to find spaces to drum as a tribe, a community.

Because I have found that is where deep LOVE lives!

I run four regular drum circles and run training for women to create the same magical spaces. My vision is of so many women who regularly come together, filling up their cups together by drumming, singing, laughing, crying and so much more.

So where to start?

I guess, other than feeling what I feel deeply when I drum, it's the words from others who join the spaces that remind me what power drumming has.

Many women share how transformational the Sacred Women's Drum Circle space has been for them. That they have found 'tribe', 'sisters' that perhaps they had been calling out for. The drum circle brings forward the space to be you, truly. To let your authentic expression, your truth find its way into your life. Because many of us wear the hats and masks of daily life— whether that be the work hat, the mother hat, the wife hat... or the mask of 'I'm fine' hat. In the safe space of the Sacred Women's Drum Circle, we can let go of these.

So what might it look like?

We start by landing in a safe space where the permission is permitted for you to be YOU! To drop the masks and roles and allow yourself to BE. We ground and connect-in with each other. For many, this deep grounding provides such sanctuary. It's like stepping out of the 'regular world' and into the earth.

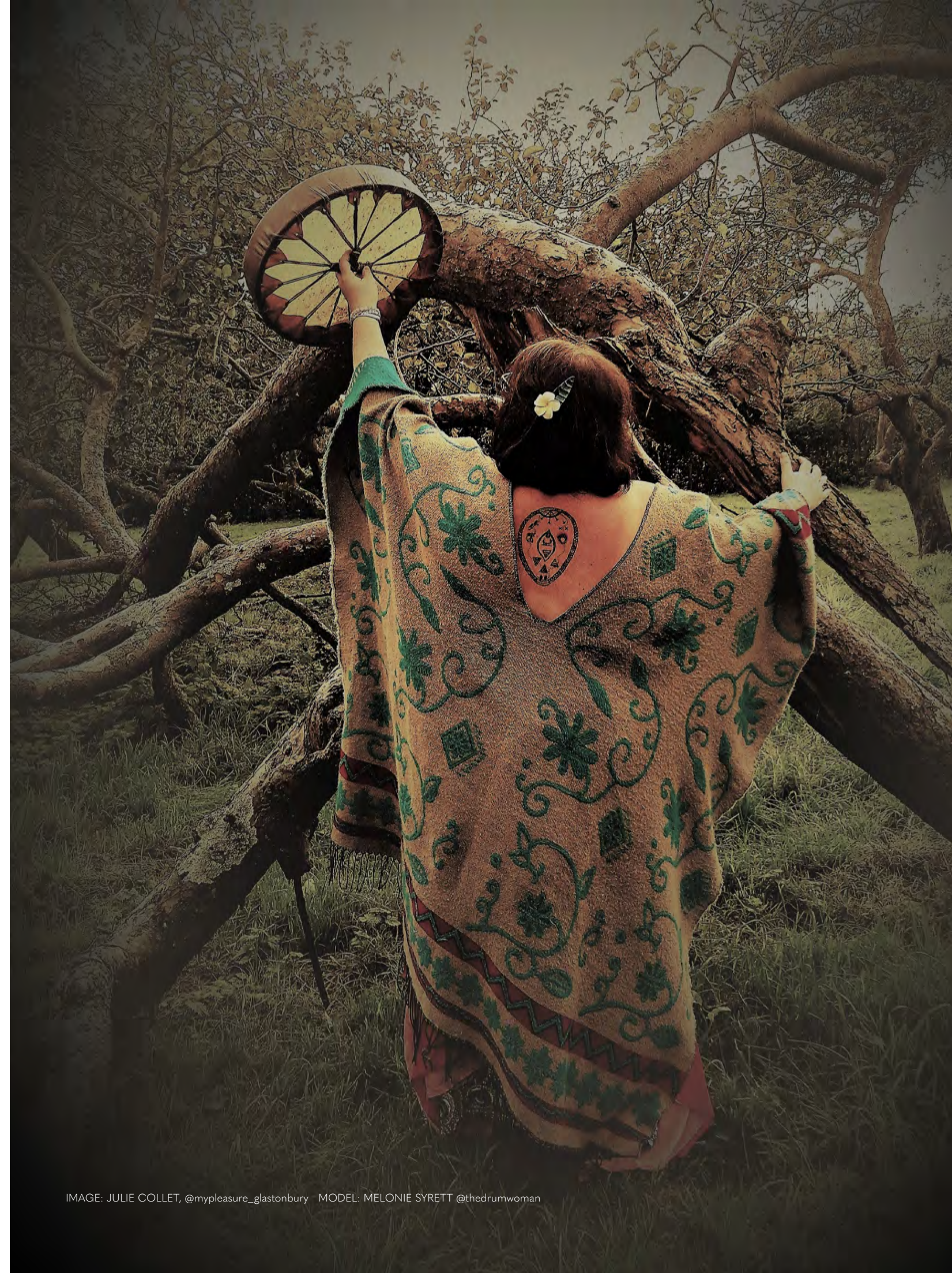




ILLUSTRATION: ANNA PAYAN, @annapayan.art

Then we share. We actively give space to hearing each other, being a witness as each woman takes up space just for her. It can be so hard sitting in a circle like this, as we rarely get an opportunity to truly show up and say, 'Hey, my name is (x) and today I feel like crap. This is happening and that is happening and I'm wondering why me?' without anyone else jumping in and saying 'Hey, me too, when that happened I did (x) and still I felt (y)'.

To be actively heard in a non-judgemental space, without interruption, and full permission to let out whatever needs to be said and any emotions without someone saying 'Oh don't cry!' is massive! It's beautiful, it's releasing, it's shoulder-dropping and tension-lifting beauty.

It is a necessary way to start these circles, as it provides space for us to reach into our first intention for drumming as a group after our share, after we step into how we truly are and we can start to consider what we need.

As a group we then would consider the things that would really help us right now and turn that into the first intention for drumming— we speak that intention aloud.

From then on, when we drum and sing there is the invitation to continue to show up as yourself, to follow what YOU want, to sing how YOU want, and to drum how YOU want to.

When the beat starts, you then would follow along when and however feels right of you. The beats move into a wave of energy and frequency, transporting us into different spaces.

Some experience other realms, some find themselves and just their beat, some feel everyone's sounds, some see things, some hear or feel things. Everyone's experience is individual, but there are often shared elements, too! What can come from this experience is deep healing. It can crack us wide open, it will fill our empty cups and it will let you BE here, now, utterly present. It is joyous!

The most wonderful thing about such a space is that no experience is needed. There are no rhythmic pieces to learn. You can show up, having never drummed before and leave 'a drummer'!

Over time, the trust builds in you to let go of 'mind' and its chatter about 'am I too loud?' or 'I'm out of tune', and you can just let go to the sound, to the hand and heart, which ultimately know how to drum!

I have had the great heart-warming privilege many times to watch this happen. To welcome people who have no idea why they are there, they just say they like the sound of drums or 'drums do something' to them, and then watch the unravelling magic of sound take them over.

Within my circles, we sing. We sing because sometimes the energy of the space needs changing— perhaps after some particularly heavy releasing with the drums, we need to build up the joy again or bring us down after a particularly buzzy session. And we sing because sometimes the song adds to the energy the drumming has brought in.

We can all sing and in a group everything sounds wonderful. You can follow my tones or take yourself off harmonising. But what I love to watch most is how the energy of the song lives and the sound moves and shifts and becomes 'alive' with the women bringing themselves into the rendition. It's glorious! Sometimes it speeds right up and sometimes it becomes a slow whisper, sometimes there are many drums accompanying and sometimes just a single rattle.

It is magic. These spaces are spaces of alchemy. It's like we step in around a cauldron and add the ingredients and 'woah!', smoke and mists unfurl around us.

If you have never drummed, I would encourage you to try it! And if you've drummed but not in a circle just made up purely of women, give that a go, too. It's a wild and loving space to land.



MOTHER EARTH; THE UNFAILING

BY ALEXANDRA DE ANGELIS
@reiki_and_rocks

Who is it we speak of in the New Age revival of Mother Earth? You can walk into most spiritual shops and see statues of her— perhaps painted green with a swollen belly or holding the earth in her loving arms. But do we really understand her true essence, or are we now so accustomed to minimising deities into idols of human likeness?

A revival in remembrance points to a mass yearning to reconnect with her wisdom, guidance and medicine. We fall sick when we forget her rhythms, when we take from her without giving back, and because of this we are paying the price. In longing for her, we are remembering the importance of our connectedness to the land at a time when it is more crucial than ever.

She goes by many names; Gaia, Brigit, Pachamama, Jörð, Terra Mater. Her essence mirrors the characteristics of the land we find ourselves living upon. She is, and has always been, intrinsic to the survival of humankind.

Here in the British Isles, tribes of settlers throughout history— from the Romans to the Normans— have fought to settle and establish kingdoms. This land is kind, generous, fertile and it is abundantly life-giving. That in and of itself carries the essence of our great Mother.

In his 1st century book titled *Germania*, Roman historian Tacitus remarked that “The noteworthy characteristic of the English to foreign eyes is that they are goddess-worshippers; they look on the earth as their mother.”

It is clear that Pre-Christian traditions of these isles have always honoured our Mother Earth. The Celts, Britons, the Pagan Anglo Saxons and the Vikings were those who established Danelaw and farmed vast swathes of these isles. They lived by the old ways and found great reward in their own reverence to her.

When the Anglo Saxons slowly converted to Christianity from the end of the 6th century, they carried forward the idea of Mother Earth. For hundreds of years they partook in fertility rituals which were carried out to remedy poorly yielding soil. This field-charm, or *Ærcebot*, was more like a full-scale, day-long ritual in which fields were blessed by priests who mixed soil, seed, honey and milk with prayer, and planted the enriched earth on four corners of the field. A plough would also be anointed with a blessed mix of oil, frankincense, salt and fennel, and the field was ploughed with a chant which began by calling out ‘Erce, erce, erce, Eorþan modor’, *Holy, holy, holy Earth Mother*.

This fertility ritual symbolised Mother Earth becoming pregnant with divine seed and was carried out up until the 11th century. In fact, for centuries all over the British Isles, both Christian and Pagan ideas coexisted. Remnants of this transition can be found in stonework such as the Bewcastle Cross of Cumbria, bearing both runes (the language of Mother Nature) with her images and Latin with images of Christ and the Apostles (a cast of this 4.4m high cross can be seen in the V&A museum in London).

It is a reminder of how old ideas merged into new ones and whispers hope that the old ways of connecting to our Mother Earth were not ripped away from us, as is easily assumed, but absorbed and carried forward in our own footsteps from our ancestors.

Echoes of Mother Earth are still found in our springtime folk festivals— the May Queen tradition, where a flower-crowned maiden is paraded through the streets by horse and cart. This tradition is rooted in Germanic Paganism and the worship of *Nerthus*, who is an almost lost Earth Mother and the sacred goddess of the Germanic Suebian tribes of which the Anglii, ancestors of the Angles (the English), belonged.

A representation of *Nerthus* was placed on a ceremonial heifer-drawn cart and covered by a sacred cloth which only priests and priestesses were allowed to touch. Like our May Queen, she, too, was paraded around lands in fertility rituals and was met with reverence by all. May Day festivals of modern times usually culminate with dancing around a maypole, and this tradition again derives from the old Germanic fertility god *Ing*, who is usually depicted with a giant phallus. It may come as a surprise that the maypole itself represents the old god’s phallus and is placed into the soil to impregnate Mother Earth with its divine seed.

It is a comfort for nature-loving folk that the old, almost forgotten gods and goddesses are still here, guised in folk tradition and place names. We speak their names every day during the week. But underlying everything and above all the noise and confusion of the New Age, the great life-sustaining Earth Mother presides. She is our home and heart. It is she who has called to us through the ages and calls out once more with pleas for help and allyship amid eco-doom.

Despite centuries of patriarchal religions, washing populations clean of their goddess-loving roots, her memory is woven tightly into the fabric of our being. We may crave long walks in the park or seek solace in the wilds, we may have our own sacred groves in which we feel connected to her healing and wisdom. She is always willing to hold us in our need and to give back. The question we should perhaps be asking ourselves is; *what are we willing to do for her in exchange?*



ILLUSTRATION: LADY OF THE MOON BY ANGELA FERREIRA, @magicpaintings

SPIRIT OF PLACE

BY MOONHARE

hareintheheather@googlemail.com

Many moons ago, I took a walking holiday in Cornwall, one day walking from Polperro to Looe. The scenery was breathtaking. I walked the cliff path up and down the underling path that dipped down to sandy coves and beaches then rose 100 feet above sea level. I had a picnic with me and after walking a couple of hours, I felt hungry and in need of some lunch. I walked on until I found a place that was just right to sit and eat. The scenery was all perfectly beautiful, but I was looking for that place where I belonged, a place I felt at home... a sort of marriage between person and place.

Each of us has stumbled upon or found places that possessed an almost magical sense of 'rightness'— a feeling that is hard pressed to explain.

There is a phrase in Latin that captures this condition perfectly: *genius loci*. In classical terms, '*genius*' means '*spirit*' and '*loci*' means '*place*'. It was understood that distinct spirits or demigods inhabited special or sacred places— these spirits and gods, one was at pains to please and one with whom it was unwise to anger. In Roman mythology, the *genius loci* was often depicted as a snake.

The ancients believed places had souls. The soul or guardian spirit of a place summed up in the special characteristic of the location and a proper relationship with the *genius loci* was necessary for a person to dwell there responsibly. In return, the *genius loci* would nurture and protect the people of place. Isn't this wonderful? This is all about respecting Mother Nature, which we come back to time and time again.

Indigenous peoples like Native Americans have a similar belief system. Still today many Aboriginal cultures are particularly concerned by the spirits that inhabit a place. They are explicitly recognised in the Japanese Shinto religion, Hindu tradition, Buddhist and Tibetan cultures.

These civilisations and religions recognise, honour and still hold sacred the distinctive and cherished aspects of the spirit of place. Often it is glorified by great artists or writers but also in oral and traditional histories, religious/sacred festivals and popular celebrations. It is rooted in the intangible culture (stories, folklore, memories, craft and beliefs), as well as in the fabric of the place (monuments, rivers, forests, pathways and architecture). And it is about the people who live or lived there (societies, families, clans, tribes and such).

Spirit is everywhere... spirit is being. If it exists, there is spirit. If it has action, there is spirit behind that behaviour.

Even in the modern world, the basic truth of this ancient relationship holds true. Places that are accorded the respect we have traditionally given to souls are better places as a result. And the people who live there have better lives because places that have long been loved, respected and cared for take care for those who dwell in them.

The plain fact is that some significant aspect of 'home', that part we might call 'spirit of place', is beyond reason. It exists in the realms of the senses. If we fail to understand what gives meaning and value to a magical place, we stand a very good chance of losing it. We cannot protect, care for, attend to and love a place if we do not know what is there.

As individuals, we may not have the power or the opportunity to alter the pace at which change is predicting such facelessness in Western Society, but we do have the opportunity to honour, preserve and care for the *genius loci* where we know them to be, be it ancient sites, stone circles, sacred places, picnic areas, woods, by rivers, churches or cliff tops in Cornwall.

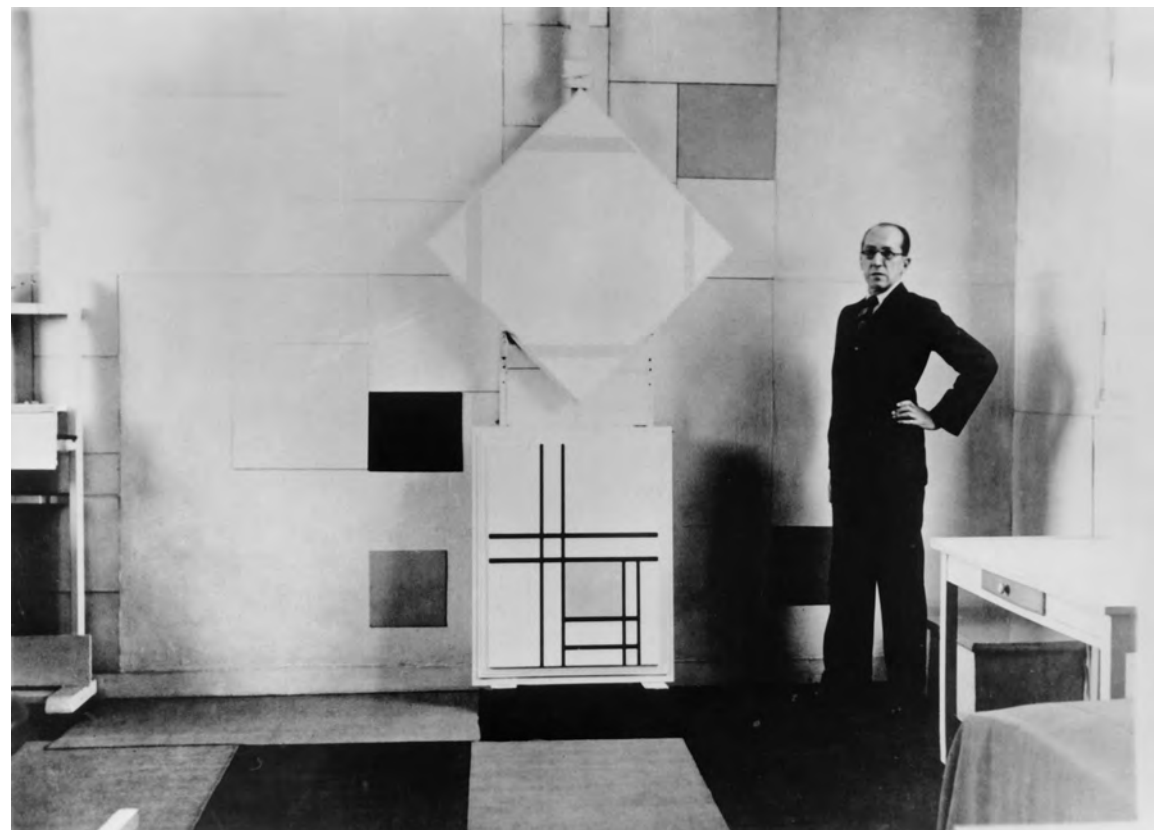
THE SPELL OF HILMA AF KLINT & PIET MONDRIAN

A JOURNEY INTO THE WORKS OF TWO MYSTIC ARTISTS

BY RYAN KURR
@ryankurr

Art and witchcraft are strikingly similar paths; the soul of a witch soars when they allow themselves to dive into the rich airstream of the infinite ether, where one can collect a multitude of inspirations from the vast abundance of spiritual influence, and return to interpret and transmute messages,

images, and feelings into words— or even art. However, this abstract style of discovery isn't limited to only those who identify as a witch or practice witchcraft; one of the greatest parts about mysticism is the ability for any and every one to be able to conjure, if they choose to.



Left:
Charles Karsten, Piet Mondrian in his studio with (top) Lozenge Composition with Four Yellow Lines, 1933 (B241) and (bottom) Composition with Double Lines and Yellow, 1934 (B242), Paris, October 1933. Collection Nieuwe Instituut Rotterdam/ KARS, e3.238

Right:
Hilma af Klint in her studio at Hamngatan, Stockholm, c.1895. Photo courtesy of The Hilma af Klint Foundation

In any form, art can transcend every vernacular, it can be a language beyond words, introduce new ideas and shed light onto old perspectives. Art can also be a way to experience and showcase the way one sees the world with all the kaleidoscopic tools of abstract art. For some who luxuriate in this creative space, the results can be profound— a positively complex and mysterious reward for all those who experience it, like watching a collection of photographs slowly develop in a pool of chemicals under the crimson light of a darkroom, all from a roll of film found in someone's dusty attic.

There are certain things in life that one must feel in their body, and communicating those feelings and emotions can sometimes take a method beyond words for someone to understand, feel or empathise with. For artists Hilma Af Klint and Piet Mondrian, creations can look and feel like abstract art, but their inspiration and origins are very much rooted in nature. Their art might suggest divine message, in addition to shedding light on themselves, but it might foster one to discover something new about one's self, as well.

Artists become inspired by experience, and inspiration can strike at any time or at any place. Inspiration can be found in the root of a tree, or the bottom of cup, a bustling street, or the lines of a birth chart.

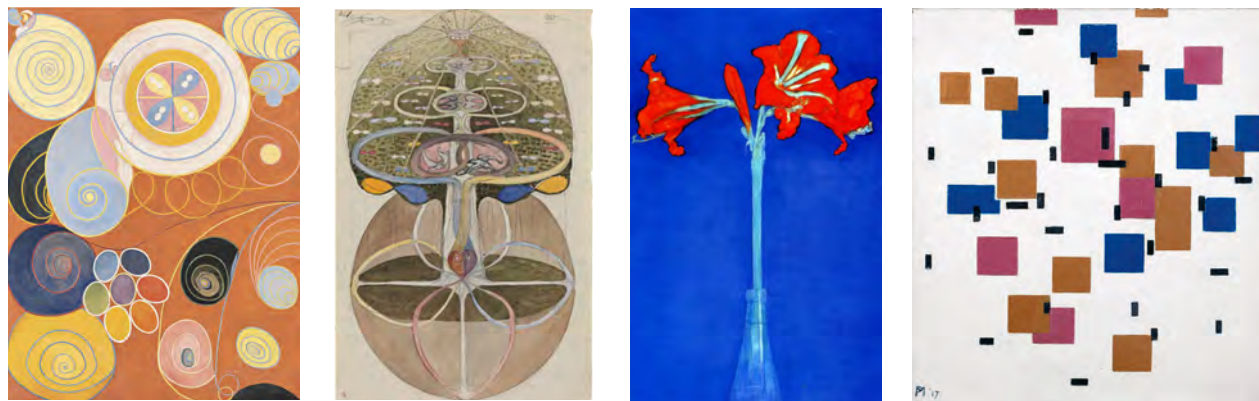
Mysticism, witchcraft and the occult have myriad muses for someone to draw inspiration from. Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, widely known for his geometric abstract art, found inspiration in the esoteric as he endeavoured to make sense of reality by echoing that there was a mystical slipstream to life, one that existed far above and beyond the constraints of logic.

Mondrian had a very Calvinist upbringing, which reinforced the authority of God and the Bible, and that the Almighty had a plan for every one of us and we do not get to stray from that by the choices we make— everything has been pre-ordained. It was 1912 when Mondrian had his horoscope drawn by astrologer Adrian van de Vijssel, marking a dramatic shift in how he chose to live his life.

His horoscope proved to be more than a piece of astrology, but a map that illuminated all the ways to navigate through life. It encouraged a new pattern of thinking for him, where he constantly sought to strengthen his spiritual self by blending elements of philosophy, science and spirituality.

Art, for him, was the crop that he produced to be harvested, to be consumed, to grow and expand and comprehend the wild forces of nature that existed beyond logic, influencing art and styles beyond abstract painting and bleeding far into the worlds of design, architecture and fashion, where the boundaries of reality have always been pushed through colour, shapes and imaginative concepts.





Images left to right:

First row:

1. Piet Mondrian, Composition with red, black, yellow, blue and gray, 1921. Kunstmuseum Den Haag
2. Hilma af Klint, Botanical Drawing, c.1890. Courtesy of The Hilma af Klint
3. Hilma af Klint, The Swan, The SUW Series, Group IX, No. 19, 1914-1915. Courtesy of The Hilma af Klint Foundation
4. Piet Mondrian, Metamorphosis, 1908. Kunstmuseum— bequest Salomon B. Sljper

Second row:

1. Hilma af Klint, The Ten Largest, Group IV, No. 3, Youth, 1907. Courtesy of The Hilma af Klint Foundation
2. Hilma af Klint, Tree of Knowledge, The W Series, No. 1, 1913-1915. Courtesy of The Hilma af Klint Foundation
3. Piet Mondrian, Red Amaryllis with blue background, 1909-1910. Private Collection
4. Piet Mondrian, Composition in colour A, 1917. Collection Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, the Netherlands

Third row:

1. Piet Mondrian, The Red Cloud, 1907. Kunstmuseum Den Haag
2. Hilma af Klint, The Evolution, The WUS/Seven-Pointed Star Series, Group IV, No.15, 1908. Courtesy of The Hilma af Klint Foundation
3. Piet Mondrian, Composition with Grid 3 Lozenge Composition with Grey Lines, 1918. Kunstmuseum Den Haag

Fourth row:

1. Hilma af Klint, The Swan, The SUW Series, Group IX, No. 19, 1914-1915. Courtesy of The Hilma af Klint Foundation
2. Piet Mondrian, The Gein: Trees along the water, c.1905. Kunstmuseum Den Haag
3. Hilma af Klint, The Ten Largest, Group IV, No. 7, Adulthood, 1907. Courtesy of The Hilma af Klint Foundation

Diving deeper into the intersection of mysticism and extraordinary art introduces us to the amazing and preternatural art of Hilma Af Klint—a Swedish artist and medium. As an artist in any medium, it can be frustrating and somewhat disheartening to have tools of your medium in front of you, be it words for a writer or singer, or a set of twelve colours for a painter, because many times the feeling or emotion behind the theme that the artist is trying to express exists beyond the confinement of structured systems.

Hilma Af Klint rose above this by stepping on the pedestal of the natural world and tapping into the realm of spirit. Her paintings often contain patterns and schematic-like diagrams with alchemical symbols, whirls, spirals and botanical forms that alone do not qualify as sacred geometry, but are a sacred spiritual creation all their own, and not unlike what one might find decorating the inside pages of a grimoire. They have an art-witch type energy about them that whispers, “I had to be made”.

Hilma didn’t work alone; in fact, she was a member of a spiritual group called “The Five”, which included four of her friends. It functioned much like a coven or even a Bible study group would— they met frequently and would recite from sacred books and engage in prayer—but it was the element of the séance that was most uncommon.

Hilma began her journey into mediumship to cope with the loss of her sister, attending seances to reach and communicate with her. Hilma would connect with spirits, as well as channel spirit guides directly, and as a result she produced a collection of ethereal works and automatic drawings that were bespoke by spirits. The art produced was never haphazard or arbitrary; they were a part of something greater, a collated visual language that was the direct result of their spiritual and philosophical studies. Her art is magnetic and alluring, all the while being elusive and just beyond comprehension.

She was a visionary, and she embedded her crystal visions into her works of art, waiting for the right moment in time for them to be of most use, a time that perhaps she could not predict. Now, here we are in the middle of the most technologically connected, yet disconnected period in history, a time that one might reckon is the perfect moment to explore the messages contained within these works of art.

The purpose of The Five was always to pursue the greatest gift of the universe— knowledge, a gift of divine secrets and unthinkable surprises that could be accessed, unlocked and taught by communication with spirits. It wasn’t about how the art would be received, but the idea that it needed to be made. I felt this very same thing when I sat down to write three fantasy novels, the Esoteric Alchemy series; I wrote a story about witches for witches, something that I felt needed to be told regardless of how it was received. Perhaps you’ve felt something like this in your life too? Did you follow that urge? Did you ignore it? What would happen if we chose to listen to that voice when we hear it, or act upon that gut feeling when it hits? Hilma and

The Five created because they needed to, out of desire for something to be gained from it. In essence, they searched how to utilise the greatest aspects of the divine feminine, to better understand birth, creation, connection, growth and oneness in the world. The very goal of The Five was essentially to rethink what it means to live a human life, to reprogram our minds by connecting to a world apart from the one we know, to consider that we might be wrong and have more to learn; we as artists, witches, writers, creators, humans always do have more to learn.

In life, these two wonderfully talented artists, way ahead of their time, never crossed paths, yet they are connected, intertwined, almost entangled in a way that feels and seems impossible, if only you discount the power of the ether.

Explore the art of Hilma Af Klint and Piet Mondrian in the new exhibit at the Tate Modern in London, 20th April – 3rd September 2023.

ARS TEMPESTARIA & WIND WITCHCRAFT

BY EMILIANO RUSSO
@almanaccodellestreghe

As spring is the season of winds par excellence, I decided to dedicate this piece to Air Witchcraft.

Air Magick

Air is the most invisible element (if we exclude the fifth) and yet so tangible at the same time. It is the liminal element, the veil that separates the divine from the human, that determines birth and death; we come into the world taking our first breath of oxygen and leave it exhaling our last one. Air is the element of inspiration and communication, the element of words. Moreover, the words of witches can unleash storms!

Witches have always had a strong connection with the air, the winds and weather changes. If we want to talk about wind magick and witchcraft, we cannot but start by mentioning some air spirits and some mythological events that allow us to understand how ancient the wind magick is.

The Anemoi

The Anemoi (meaning precisely "Winds") were for the Greeks the divine embodiment of the winds themselves, children of the Titan Astreus, god of twilight, and Eos, the dawn.

They were represented in human form, provided with wings (this is where angels came from) or as horses pulling Zeus' chariot.

There is no definite information on cults dedicated to the Anemoi, but they seem to have had some significance in cities such as Delphi and Athens. The names of the Anemoi are related to the cardinal points from which the wind associated with them blows.

Hesiod names only three Anemoi connected to the three seasons of the Ancient Greek year: Zephyrus, the West Wind, connected to spring and the first summer breezes; Boreas, the North Wind, connected to winter and icy, cold air; Notus, the South Wind, connected to summer, thunderstorms and gales. Reference to a fourth wind, Eurus, he who blows from the East (or Southeast), appears for the first time in Homer's *The Odyssey*.

Aeolus and the bag of winds

It is in *The Odyssey* that we find one of the earliest literary references to wind magick.

Having already spent ten years away from home fighting the long and bloody Trojan War, Odysseus is on his way to Ithaca. Escaping unharmed from his encounter with Polyphemus, his ship arrives at the island of Aeolus, guardian of winds.

Benevolent toward the man, Aeolus gives Odysseus as a gift a goatskin bag in which he had bound "the blustering winds", all except for Zephyrus, the gentle breeze from the West whose task it was to guide Odysseus' home.

Setting out to sea, Odysseus guarded the bag for nine days and nights, never letting it out of his sight, but on the last night, relieved by the sight of Ithaca in the distance, he collapsed into a deep sleep.

At this point, his men thinking that the bag held gifts of gold and silver that Odysseus intended to keep for himself, untied the silver knots that closed the bag, releasing the furious winds contained within.

Odysseus was awakened by a terrible storm that again took his ship off course, driving him once more away from his beloved Ithaca, leading him back to the island of Aeolus.

Again, before the Sovereign of the Island, Odysseus confessed the error of his men and asked Aeolus to perform the same prodigy, but the Keeper of the Winds this time refused to help the man because he saw in his failure to make it home a sign that the Gods were against him.

The furious Medea

Hell knows *no fury like a woman scorned!* If we are talking about storms, winds and witchcraft, how can we not mention the fury of Seneca's "Medea"? In her invocation to Hecate, Medea unleashes all her wrath while summoning a storm, as we read in her beautiful monologue:

"Now, summoned by my sacred rites, do thou, orb of the night, put on thy most evil face and come, threatening in all thy forms. For thee, losing my hair from its band after the manner of my people, with bare feet have I trod the secret groves and called forth rain from the dry clouds; I have driven the seas back to their lowest depths, and the Ocean, his tides outdone, has sent his crushing waves farther into the land; and in like manner, with heaven's law confounded, the world has seen both sun and stars together, and you, ye bears, have bathed in the forbidden sea".

It is interesting to note that to raise the storm, Medea lets her hair loose. There has always been a deep connection between the winds and the witches' hair, which was believed to be capable of capturing the winds by weaving them into their own hair and then releasing them when they loosed them, creating terrible tempests.



ILLUSTRATION: ELEMENT OF AIR BY ANGELA FERREIRA, @magiapaintings

Shaking Shakespeare

The tremendous power of storms is also echoed in Shakespeare's work. In *"The Tempest"*, the magician Prospero and his servant spirit, Ariel, create a storm to wreck a boat on the shores of his island, while in *"Macbeth"* the Three Witches meet amid thunder and lightning and use their winds to create a storm and sink a ship.

What many people do not know is that Shakespeare was inspired by some chronicles of the time for the Three Weird Sisters in *"Macbeth"*, particularly the *"Daemonologie of King James"* published in 1597, which detailed the infamous witch trials in North Berwick in 1590.

Not only had this trial taken place in Scotland (where the Shakespearean tragedy is set), but the witches involved confessed to attempting the use of witchcraft to stir up a storm and sabotage the very boat on which King James and the Queen of Scots were on a voyage back from Denmark.

A storm against Hitler

Great Britain has often been linked to witches who were engaged in wind witchcraft. Perhaps the most famous case remains the famous *"Operation Cone of Power"*. It was the summer of 1940, and the United Kingdom was preparing for the onslaught of a threatened German invasion. In the town of Highcliffe-on-Sea, the story goes, a secret group of witches and spiritual researchers decided to do what they could to defend their country. They are said to have met in an ancient forest before midnight on the 1st August, 1940, on the eve of Lughnasadh. There, they are said to have performed a ritual against Adolf Hitler. In his 1954 book *"Witchcraft Today"*, Gerald Gardner wrote that two invasions had previously been thwarted through the use of wind witchcraft: first in 1588, when the Spanish Armada surrendered after being dispersed by storms, and then in 1805 when Napoleon called off his invasion of England.

Ars Tempestaria

During the Dark Ages, there was a widespread belief in a particular category of witches and sorcerers referred to as *"Tempestarius"*. A *Tempestarius* in the popular belief of the Middle Ages, was a person attributed with the ability to predict, and even cause, rains, storms or hailstorms. In addition, she or he is able to manipulate weather conditions in her or his favour.

As we have already seen, the association between storms and witches is undoubtedly one of the oldest: *Tempestaries* were certainly among the most feared witches of the ancient world, as they were able to control atmospheric forces and damage crops, bringing misfortune and death.

Ars Tempestaria in drops

Calling the Wind:

This is surely the most common and widespread form of weather magick, and has been practiced for hundreds of years by generations of witches. The traditional method of 'calling the wind' is by whistling: depending on the tone and intensity of the tone produced, the witch is able to create a gentle breeze or a whirlwind. If the ability to whistle the wind has not been given to you naturally, you can always make a whistle from an alder or willow branch and use it for this purpose.

Calling a Storm:

There are many ways to call a storm and more simply to bring rain. One of many methods is to pour water into a bowl while sitting outdoors. Then, dip the tip of our finger into the water and slowly draw five circles in a clockwise direction. You can also use a chopstick or pendant, which we will swing above the bowl. While drawing the circles call the wind, asking it to bring a storm by blowing (or whistling) on the surface of the water in your bowl.

Banishing a Storm:

There are multiple techniques to banish a storm. In fact, a storm can be dissipated, which consists of scattering the storm over a larger area, thus minimising its effects. This is done by simply whistling the winds in a certain direction. However, a storm can also be bound, and consists of catching the storm and confining it inside an object (usually inside a bottle or through knots), so that it can then be released gradually by lifting the lid or untying the knots.

Practicing wind witchcraft for a witch is an art that comes to us from our ancestors, and every witch should experience the beauty of this craft. Keep only one word in mind: inconstancy. The winds can be unpredictable, often changing direction without any reason or warning. This can affect the effectiveness of your spell or direct it in unexpected directions. So, as with any form of magick, pay attention.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TAROT - PART THREE

BY SNAZZ STANNARD
@snazzstanners

Within the first half of this four-part series, we delved into the roots and development of the Tarot. We journeyed together from medieval times, through eighteenth century France and beyond. We have tracked the Tarot and marked the pivotal moments of its creation on histories timeline. We followed some of its main players and dipped into their own personal histories in hopes of painting an even clearer picture for ourselves. In this third segment, we will push further on and leave France behind, as the story of the Tarot takes us to Britain.

Last time the author of several occult books, Eliphas Levi, was mentioned briefly, and before we follow the Tarot to Britain, I'd like to discuss his contribution and importance in more depth. He was born Alphonse Louis Constant in Paris in the year 1810 and is considered by some to be the father of modern occultism, though he came from a humble background and did not become famous until after he had died. In the impoverished Paris parish where he and his family lived, he was soon singled out and favoured by the priests there, given a free education and set on the path to becoming a priest himself. He never did reach the end of that path, however.

He got as far as the rank of deacon before he was forced to leave due to an alleged love affair. Several years after his expulsion from the Catholic church, Constant married and had a daughter. Tragically, his daughter would not survive infancy and as a result of this, his marriage also perished.

Devastated from the loss of his child, reeling from his failed marriage and also weighed down by the social and spiritual unrest in post-revolutionary, cholera-ridden France, Constant entered a period of depression. He emerged from this time in the middle of his life as a totally reinvented person, and although he never completely abandoned his Catholic faith, he was now intensely interested in the occult and began to delve deeper into it.

He had become Eliphas Levi: The Magus.

Levi was also a talented artist and was the author of many pamphlets on social injustice, which he illustrated himself. He illustrated the images within his books on magic and the occult, and the famous image of Baphomet, or The Goat of Mendes, is said to be his. This is very similar to the image of the devil in the Tarot, which is still widely used today.

Levi never actually designed a Tarot pack himself, despite having the talent and the knowledge to do so, but he did leave behind notes explaining how he felt the Tarot had become corrupted and describing how it could be rectified. His books, notes and drawings were all very much on-trend and of their time and would go on to influence many occultists for years after his death.

We will now hop across the channel to Britain and fast-forward to the year 1887. A document written in code was discovered. There are many variations on the story of how exactly this document was found, each more vague than the next. But the most common was that it was found hidden between the pages of a book on the occult and happened completely by accident. Occultist historians believe the document to have originally come from Germany, but there is little to no proof to support this theory. Once decoded, the document was found to contain vast amounts of information and instructions for setting up a new esoteric order. But it also included a hefty amount of information on the reformation of the Tarot.

This theme of reverting the current Tarot back to its original form is a popular one throughout the entire history of the Tarot, and the ideas and instructions from this deciphered document were no exception. It not only wanted to build on the idea of the Tarot as Eliphas Levi saw it, it wanted his ideas to also be corrected.

The secret esoteric order also described within the document was to be called *'The Hermetic Brotherhood of the Golden Dawn'*. It was to be open not just to men, as had always been the rule for orders of its kind, but to women, too. The document detailed rituals and knowledge lectures, and reportedly taught its members 'real magic'. *The Golden Dawn* attracted eccentric people to its ranks, including occultist celebrities of the time, including the infamous Aleister Crowley, who commissioned his own version of the Tarot, known as the Thoth Tarot.

Though most interestingly, one of its members was the poet Arthur Edward Waite, who commissioned the Waite Tarot deck. The Waite deck is still one of the most widely used Tarot decks to this day.

Both Crowley and Waite were heavily influenced by the works of Eliphas Levi, and the Tarot itself is completely and fully integrated into the teachings of *'The Hermetic Brotherhood of the Golden Dawn'*. A rather large and substantial book from the Golden Dawn exists as proof that at the time the order was in action, the Tarot was completely worked into its practices and teachings. *'The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic'* shows the Tarot as a system of occult philosophy, rather than the game it had been all those years ago in France.

Within this book, the 22 trumps of the Tarot (21 trumps plus the Fool) correspond to the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, just as they did in the day of Antoine Court de Gebelin. The 22 trumps of the Tarot correspond to the 22 paths on the Kabbalistic tree of life; they correspond to astrological signs, planets and the elements. The Golden Dawn, therefore, can perhaps be identified as a catalyst in the timeline of the Tarot.

The Tarot were no longer just cards, they were signifiers, a complete system of occult philosophy as detailed within the book of teachings from this super-secret esoteric order. Clearly, an important part of the development of the Tarot as we know it today were the occultist men and women who were inspired by the ideas of those who came before them and continued to build and morph the Tarot into what it would finally become.

Next time, in the fourth and final quarter of this brief history of Tarot, we will journey together again, making our way from the *'Hermetic Brotherhood of the Golden Dawn'* through the late nineteenth century, and finally on to the modern age.

THE HIGH PRIESTESS AND THE EMPRESS

BY FIONA DOWSON
@storiesforwinter

Tarot is about balance—the red and the white flowers of The Magician, the wild wolf and the tamed dog of The Moon, both sides of the scales are equally weighted.

At the beginning of The Fool's Journey, The Fool meets two strong female figures.

The High Priestess represents water energy, while The Empress is very earthed.

The High Priestess relates to the moon; she is linked to goddesses like Isis and Artemis, the twin sister of the sun god, Apollo. A woman alone without a consort, she is pure female energy.

The High Priestess gives us the independence of Artemis, who rejected a male-centred society to live in the wilderness, and the spiritual introspection of Isis.

When she appears in a reading, The High Priestess indicates that this is a time of spiritual growth and development. If she appears as your querent, she suggests that this person is deeply spiritual or intensely emotional.

The High Priestess may be saying that opportunities will present themselves for the next stage of your journey. The notice about a yoga class, the advert for a Reiki healing workshop, the invitation to a crystal day, the poster for a Mind Body Spirit Fair. They are all messages from spirit about the next step on your path. You are your own Priestess.

It is time to embrace the gentle light of the moon, to explore your own spirituality.

The High Priestess may also say that you are neglecting your own spirit. We feed our physical bodies but seldom pay as much attention to our spirit, which, of course, needs to be fed and nurtured, too.

Conversely, your querent may be living too much in an esoteric realm. There is a point at which spiritual development can tip over into self-indulgence.

In yoga there is an aspect known as royal yoga, which is service to others or perhaps to the Earth. Giving some of your own energy freely and without asking for reward is also an aspect of spiritual life. Living with one foot in the world of spirit (or the land of the Fae) is a wonderful thing in many respects, but we also need to meet our earth needs.

In a mens reading, the High Priestess often represents a life partner. Deeply caring, she can be an excellent soulmate, but some men may find her emotionally needy.

The High Priestess is likely to be artistic and caring. She will work doing something which rewards her in ways far beyond money. Financial rewards are just not as important as doing something of value. She will often be faced with the dilemma of how to make a living from her chosen path.

It is notoriously difficult to earn a good living from care work or from anything which can be called artistic. The challenge for the carers, the musicians and the healers is how to put bread on the table.

The Empress has no such worries.

The Empress is the archetypal Earth mother figure. Often portrayed as being pregnant with a cornucopia overflowing from her lap, she gives limitlessly.

The consort to The Emperor, she rules her own empire. She is very much in command; she is a ruler but does so in a way which nurtures others and distributes power rather than draining others' energy.

Dame Anita Roddick ran a multi-million dollar Empire, campaigned against animal testing, promoted fair trade, and by running a franchise system empowered other people to run their own businesses. Anita Roddick is a great representation of The Empress. This is female energy taking charge, stepping out of the moon shadows and leading from the front.

The Empress often represents a self-employed woman. An Empire can be something as simple as running a micro business from home, or as complex as climbing the corporate ladder and making it into senior management. The Empress retains her femininity. The power dressing suits of the 1980s with the androgynous look are not for her. To take charge doesn't mean having to take on a male persona.

If The Empress is a character in your querent's story, the reading may be saying it is time to challenge her to take back her own power. She may, of course, represent a literal mother figure. Many people have issues with their own mother (or mother-in-law) well into adult life.

As a partner, she can be challenging. The Empress is often the consort of a man whose strength equals her own. Two very strong people together can make for a rewarding relationship, but one which will always be hard work. It's fortunate then that work is part of The Empress' reason for living.

The High Priestess and The Empress represent two very different aspects of feminine power.

In future Tarot discussions, we'll be looking at the cards of Strength and the four Queen cards.



YOUR VERY OWN TAROT READING

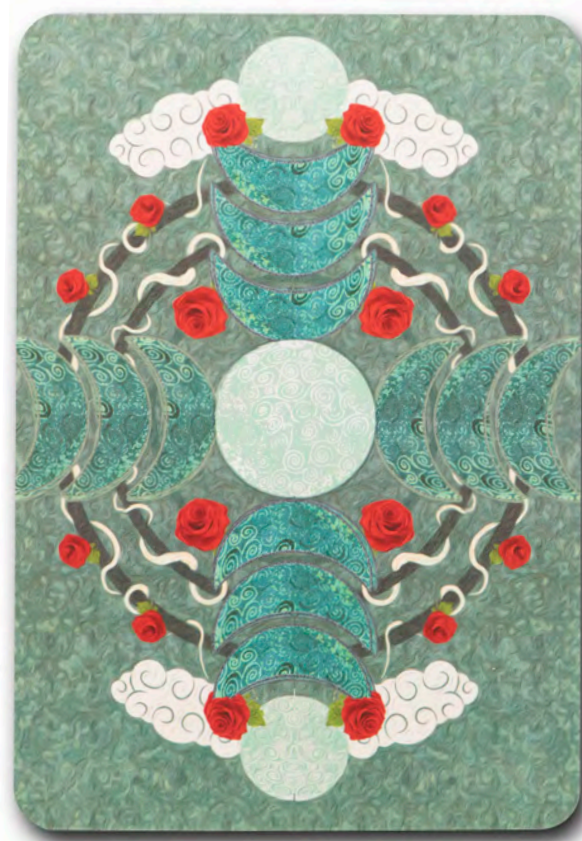
BY GENETTE
@genette_ellis

Genette says, "This season is set to be a powerful period with big changes happening. The question is, how can you seize the opportunities that come your way?"

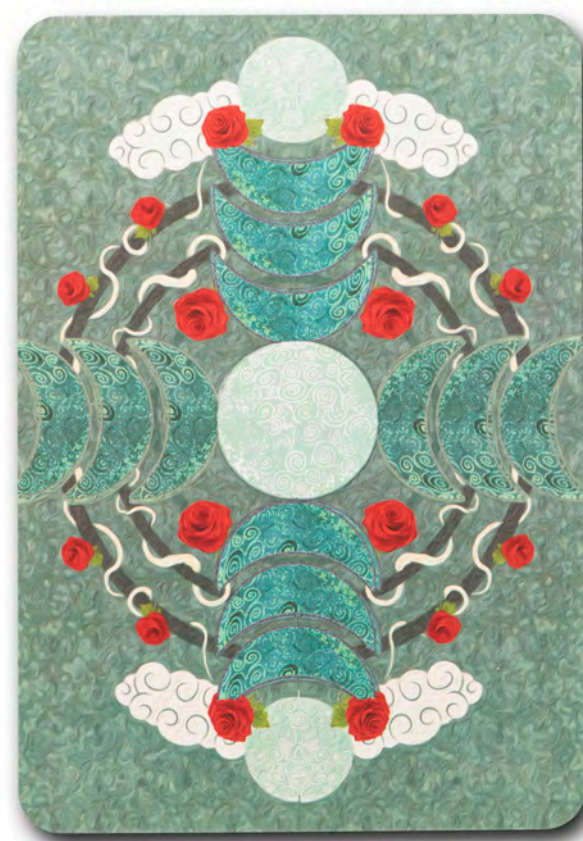
With one paw in the world of catnip toys and belly rubs and another in the world of stalking prey and disappearing into the landscape, cats exist in a liminal space between domestic and wild, captive and free. They are mysterious shapeshifters, loyal familiars and self-appointed rulers over humans they deign to grace with their company— and many of us will happily submit to their rule for a few cuddles.

From scrounging alley cats to well-fed fat cats, and hairless cats to giant puffballs, Grimalkin's Curious Cats Tarot is a pawsitively purrfect deck for any cat lover. Each of the Rider-Waite-Smith style cards in this deck depicts cats along their own furry Foo's journey— the good, the bad, the graceful and the goofy. We're so pleased to be sharing this new deck with you. Cover art by MJ Cullinane and available via Hay House Publishing.

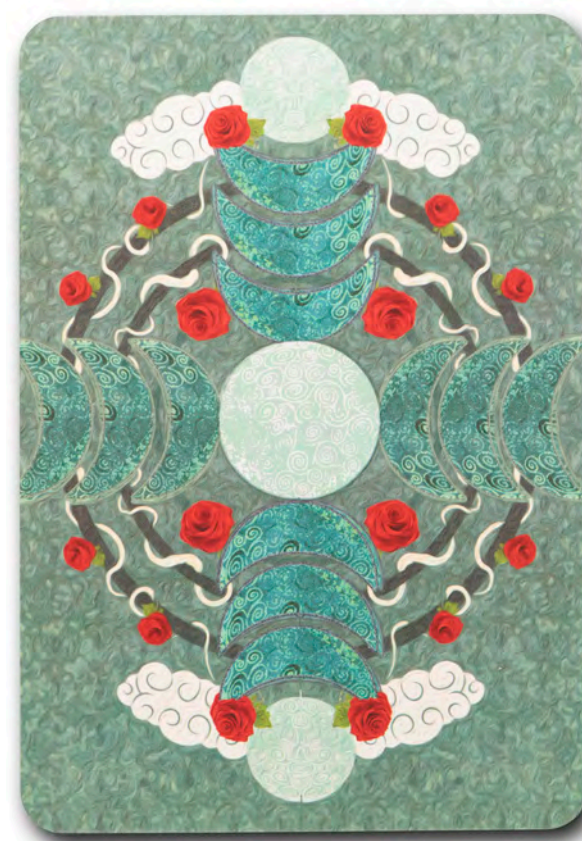
So witches, think about your question: What's been troubling you? What do you need some insight on? Breathe, count to five, allow your mind to fill with your question: don't just ask yourself, ask the universe. You're in no rush. When you're ready, pick a card. Which number calls out to you? Which do you think calls to your current situation? Turn the page to discover which card is yours.



1



2



3



4



KING OF WANDS

CARD TWO - THE QUEEN OF SWORDS

Is all that armour really necessary? Having a strong shield, protecting yourself and standing strong in your opinions are all admirable traits, but has this tipped over into isolating yourself or becoming unapproachable?

By all means, protect yourself, but if this is leading to you missing out on opportunities, feeling lonely or causing friction with friends and family, take a deep look into yourself and ask yourself whether your responses are truly appropriate or based on fear. Is there room for a centre ground? Have you really listened to someone else's viewpoint and tried to understand? Perhaps you're feeling lonely because your trust in people is buried under the scars of old wounds.

If your responses are proportionate, that's fine. Stay as you are with that particular situation, but maybe look for another route to achieve emotional fulfilment in that area. If you're ready to open up a little, it's okay to take it slow. Dip a toe in and see how it feels to lower your guard and welcome opportunities into your life.

CARD THREE - THE KNIGHT OF WANDS - IN THE REVERSE

Are you feeling burnt out, overloaded or held back in life? The Knight of Wands in the reverse is your sign to focus and adjust your path towards a more fulfilling route. All that energy and creativity bubbling away inside of you is building up pressure, so it needs to be let out before it blows!

If your energy does blow up in the form of frustration or anger, be careful to watch your words and check your behaviour because you could make the situation worse. How much of your situation is because you have procrastinated about taking action, not spoken your truth or allowed a situation to continue unchecked? Have you sought out opportunities for change? Or have you been held back by fear and other people's opinions?

What really sparks a fire in your soul? Have you always wanted to start a business selling handmade art? Or perhaps you've always dreamed of being your own boss? What is stopping you? Draw out a plan for overcoming those hurdles. Be realistic, make the goals small and achievable, and you'll surprise yourself with how much you can achieve this season. You are capable of making big changes if you truly have the passion for it!



KNIGHT OF WANDS

CARD ONE - THE KING OF WANDS

The King of Wands burns bright and fast. He is mesmerising, intelligent, passionate and flexible enough to roll with the punches, but that power can be easily abused.

This season there will be temptation to push boundaries and see what you can get away with. Be careful with your words and actions when chasing your goals or seeking to avoid responsibility for your actions because you might end up hurting someone else in the process.

Remember the maturity of the King court cards and recognise the impact of your own power. Ducking and diving is fine when needed, but be careful not to get drawn into telling lies or stepping on other people to get what you want, because what you put out will determine what you get back. Due to the power of the season, losses could be great so ask yourself, is it worth the fallout? Ultimately, it might be you that ends up getting burned in the end.



QUEEN OF SWORDS



XVI. THE TOWER

CARD FOUR - THE TOWER

There's a reason The Tower follows the Devil in the major arcana. The Tower usually comes up when we've been avoiding dealing with the things we need to do.

It's easy to turn to the comforts in life, stick your head in the sand and overindulge in our vices to avoid a situation that needs our attention, but if we avoid it for long enough, eventually the universe will force us to deal with those things. This is when The Tower pops up to remind us that we have a choice. Either we take control of the situation and manage it appropriately, or we continue to ignore it and deal with the fallout when it happens. The unspoken truth being that the longer you ignore this, the worse the fallout will be.

It's easy to catastrophise when The Tower comes up and I've heard it described as "the scariest card in the deck". However, it serves as both a warning and an opportunity to take control of the situation and minimise the impact. Think about how you would like to resolve this situation and what you need to do to make it happen. It's time to put your big pants on and do the hard thing.

POETRY & ARTS



A WITCH I SHALL BE

BY ANDREA HAMILTON
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Why does everyone want to be a witch, and can I be one too?
Forget princesses and fairies— how boring.
Though, fairies bite and kick ass, so I am told.
No, I want black, long and flowing,
A stream of allure in obsidian darkness.
Silver rings that sparkle and glint, as a crow's eye.
I want to be powerful, know thyself they say.
I want to feel part of a secret society,
The unknown women's society.
With quiet knowings, a sly look, and a wink.
Freemasons of women, for women.
I want to run free, hellishly dancing as I choose.
No restraints, no constraints, no, no, no.
I want a hat, pointy and tall, that warns of danger.
Shadowing my face in mystery, as a widow's veil might.
Pointy shoes, ever so dainty with Victorian heels,
Clicking upon marble floors, with an air of authority.
I want a black cat, that purrs in my ear,
A familiar comfort, watching with feigned interest.
Tarot cards to shuffle,
held in my hands, as a devilish spread.
And a wand to wave, as a sword in battle,
Made by a gypsy for a silver charm.
I'll need a grimoire, all witches do,
I shall write spells in oak gall ink,
And draw Sigils from angel's wings,
I'm sure they won't miss a feather or two.
So, mote it be, is what I shall say,
Three times a day,
A witch I shall be
A witch I shall be
A witch I shall be

BETWIXT BETWEEN WINGS AND DREAMS

BY KATIE KALYANI
@katie_wild_yogi

"My mind became a basket that spilled into an ocean, filled with a potpourri of emotions. Caught in a spider's web that spun me into oblivion. My body was fragile, pale as a snowdrop, wintery, like a corpse in a grave." - Katie, aged ten.

The doctor told my mother that I didn't want to come out. An oracle told me when I was twenty-two that I didn't want to come back. Straddling between thresholds, I was born a caesarean child on 11th of October during the balsamic waning crescent— a stoic, sanguinary wound of light. A child betwixt the harvest and hunter's moon— a violent birth of a soul embracing the hymns of the beautiful deep, dark blue. It is no coincidence I was named 'Katie', of which the origins derive from the goddess Hekate. I have been walking through crossroads ever since the day I was plucked from the womb to save my life in this body. They say that those born almost on the brink of death carry with them the energy of the other side for the rest of their lives. I am a voyager of the shadows and dreams, with one foot on the sands of time and the other in the oblivion of the ocean— I was a little girl walking the shoreline of life and death with a knowing and a grace beyond my years.

When I was five, I dreamt of being in an abandoned train station— my mother was crying and I was confused. My grandmother was on the platform, waiting in her big blue coat, smiling and smelling of peppermints. I said "Nanna, where are your suitcases?" She said, "Where I'm going, Poppet, I don't need my things; it is time to say goodbye, but I'll always be with you."

And with that, she walked on the train, and as the doors closed behind her I knew she wasn't coming back. Waking up distraught, I said "Mummy! Nanna is leaving us!" She told me, "Don't be silly, we are seeing her this afternoon." My grandmother died a month later.

I'm eight and it is my holy communion; an auntie is curling my hair and placing the tiara on my head as my mother takes photos. I say, "I wish Nanna was here". My nanna would have been very proud because she was a devout Irish Catholic. Upon saying those words, a huge wood pigeon flew into the window with a thud; holding onto the wooden beams of our Edwardian town house, it peered in with deep set, sad eyes. I knew those eyes. I knew it was my grandmother. Ever since then, during times I feel alone in my life, I always find a lone wood pigeon watching over me from a tree, rooftop or railing.

When I was fifteen, I dreamt I was walking along a beach hugged by a forest and the ocean. I saw a woman standing on the rocks, her orange and red robes dancing in the breeze with damselflies. She appeared to me with a soft smile and azure eyes and said, "Your grandmother couldn't make it today, so I am here to deliver you a message. I've loved you and been by your side for many lifetimes; know that we're with you, we will all be together one day soon, but I have to leave you now with a gift, and you won't know what that is until you're older." I woke up smiling with tears in my eyes.

Last November a friend took her own life weeks before her thirtieth birthday. I was in Tenerife at the time when I got the news.

Heartbroken, I performed a small ritual to her by the ocean and left an altar of flowers and a candle on the rocks. Every morning, without fail, a butterfly would fly around my chair, circling me in a rush of delicate colours before disappearing into the sky.

Recently Grandfather Greywolf passed at the age of 86. Back in 2014, he decided to 'adopt' me as a granddaughter, and he taught me to work with runes and the shamanic drum— he encouraged my witchiness! Days before his death, I was strolling through Regent's Park in London and a robin pitter pattered around me and followed me into the rose gardens. In my heart, I knew it was Grandfather. I messaged his wife and said, "Is Frank ok? A robin was following me!" She rang me within seconds to tell me he had died a few days ago. At the funeral, his wife gifted me the first shamanic drum Frank had ever made, telling me it was to be passed on to me. A week later, I went into my local woods to be in ceremony with his drum, and a robin flew over to watch from a rose bush.

I survived an ectopic pregnancy a week before Christmas 2020. I lost my six-eight week baby and fallopian tube. Since then, I keep having the same dreams almost every night of following a hummingbird moth into a garden filled with golden light. I see my grandmother standing in the wildflowers holding my baby. She says gently, "Poppet, I promise to look after your child, she will grow up here in this world. We are always with you."

This summer, as my partner and I had a picnic in the local park, I brought my shruti box and I sang the Hebrew Angel prayer like a lullaby, and with that a hummingbird moth fluttered over and nestled on my knee.

My poetry and writing are portals to that place of a waning memory at the farthest reach of the creative void, where angels hold our hands and usher us gently to the doorway of rebirth, dropping us off like children on our first day of school. They wait for us, ready to guide us back home, through the passage of death, at the gateway of the great sleep. I am a keeper of keys, a vessel in communion with the holy language of despair, death and grief— I walk the world of the living, but a piece of the world of the dead came back with me. I decode messages from souls crossing over in my dreams and from the symbolism of wings.



ILLUSTRATION: ERIN E EWER, @liquidfaestudios



JACK IN THE GREEN

BY JOSEPH AND EMMA GHOST
@josephghost and @themuseumofghosts

Birthered within the soil,
Beneath the moss and limbs of trees,
The February breeze echoes the forests,
Narcissus, Pansy, Celandine.
Moss and Hawthorns budding leaves,
The Sun, cloaked by mist,
Calls the eyes of the green;
Nectar creatures hum for thoughts of the mind,
Goblins, Sprites and earthen magic,
Speaks to those who hide,
For Spring returns and grows with us,
Of all from which has died.

POETRY CORNER

KNOTS IN TIME

BY TONIANN ASTUTO
F: ToniannAstuto

I stand on the precipice
with wolves at my side
and elm in my hand,
forging my own path ahead.
The spirits of my ancestors
are around me, along with the shards
of all those I once was—
fractals of the whole I will always be.
The mist dissolves in the sunlight,
warming the rocks beneath my feet.
The earth rises beneath me,
supporting me in every step.

We are a cord passing through creation
from the beginning until the end.
As we move, we create knots—
moments where our paths change.
But what was left behind
is still carried forward,
creating loops in the timelines
that must be cut, sheared through,
so we can move ahead unhindered.
The rope passes from hand to hand,
generation to generation, along with
our legacy, our challenges, our fears,
our strengths, and our resilience.
The beating of thousands of hearts
have led to your own.

BELTANE

BY MOLLY RONAN
@MollyRonanTarpist

I smell the flowers today.
Gentle they flow,
Delicate they sway.

Pushing through darkness and earth,
They fight.
Chasing tender worth.

Serene in beauty,
They stand tall.
Stately creatures of graceful sprawl.

May is filled with exquisite delights,
Summoning them forth
In the hazy daylight.

I breathe in the floral gales,
And wonder how life
Moves forward in small details.

Never before have I wondered so much,
Pondering everything
From my tremulous touch.

The grasses flow softly on my fingertips,
And I balk at the calmness,
As my creation is eclipsed.

Docile in nature,
Beauty does not go unnoticed.
Etching itself in the sweetest paper.

Days become warming and pleasing,
Shadowing night mildly,
While slowly unfreezing.

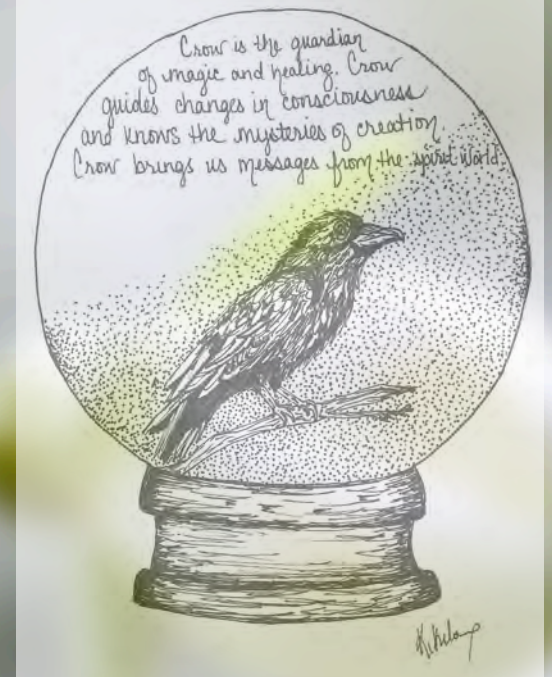
Spring has arrived so soon,
Enrapturing the world
In its delicious cocoon.

As I sit in the waking world
Peace finds me here.
Echoing out Beltane,
Has arrived anew this year.

RITUAL FOR ROMANCE

BY SUSEN JAMES
@evanstonianwitch

This should be done when the New Moon is 24 hours old,
during the Witching Hour 3-4 am.
Soak in a cleansing bath filled with roses
for at least 20 minutes.
Light a red candle and turn out all other lights.
Be naked or wear black to blend with the night.
Listen to Ignazio Boschetto sing E Penso a Te on repeat.
Anoint yourself with patchouli.
Lie supine on the floor with your arms and legs spread
wide Radiate.
Love.
Place both hands on your heart.
Imagine what you wish to happen next.
Your mind is a powerful magickal tool,
your hand a wand.



MINX MONOLOGUE

BY ASHLYN JURENA
@ashlynynnj

- Lighter or Matches
- One candle
- An object of significant meaning
- Radio

At night, light the bright candle
Tune up the volume handle
Do pray with the trinket in the palm of
your hand
It's for the best,
Though not too much to drift off into
your well-deserved rest
You're now ready to begin,
Recite the "Minx" thrice daily before you
sleep:

Out with the old,
In with the new,
O courage come to thee
So the world will see
A star meant to be
Take away the pain;
Thy heart out of thy stake
And set me free
So I can become the star I'm meant to be

EZEQUIEL

BY MICAÉLA
@bloodspell

Love makes itself known,
beckoning to me from behind her dark veil:
"Come to me," she whispers,
"Come to me, without shame or remorse,
and lay yourself bare upon the crest
where everything bleeds and cries,
disfigured by the bloom."

She gathers my long hair,
knotted with seeds of longing,
"Come to me," she sighs, with softness of tongue,
"and I will leave you ripened with tenderness,
swollen with life."

Love,
this Love,
makes itself known
and I am made different by it.

SIDEREAL HOROSCOPES

SPRING 2023

BY DAVID PETRUSICH

@davidpetrusich

We've finally reached the season of renewal in the Northern Hemisphere, while our friends in the Southern Hemisphere are now entering the season of release. With Saturn's big transition into Aquarius this past January and Eclipse Season occurring in April and May, this season is full of new energies! Beginning last April, this is the third and final round of Eclipses within the Aries-Libra polarity; So, mark your calendars as 13th April – 12th May will be a deeply transformative time for everyone.

In my last column, I began to discuss the astrological house system— the oracle that's used to interpret the messages of the stars and planets. Astrology can be an overwhelming divination system to learn at first, but a lot can click into place as soon as you understand that the narrative of the houses follows the flow of the Zodiac: The 1st house is connected to Aries, the 2nd, Taurus, and so on until you reach the 12th house, which is connected to Pisces.

Just like the rich symbolism of Earth's seasons, you'll find a cyclical story of evolution, resignation, and renewal in the 12 houses. So, grab your birth chart and follow along as I break down the meaning of the houses, which I categorise into four zones.

The zone of self-awareness, marked by the AC (Ascendant):

1st House – The sector that follows the Ascendant (rising sign) and represents our sense of self, identity, and physical attributes. Planets and signs in this house show us how we relate to ourselves through time and the ways we express ourselves to the outside world.

2nd House – The area that symbolises how we acquire energy in our lives, specifically within the material realm. Planets and signs in this house illustrate our relationship to money, possessions and resources as well as the concepts of abundance and scarcity.

3rd House – The house that describes our cerebral processes, mindset and belief systems. Planets and signs in this house can show us what stimulates our mind, how we connect with others intellectually, and the ways we perceive the world.

The zone of self-development, marked by the IC (Imum Coeli)

4th House – The domestic sector of our chart that represents our sense of family, home and security. Planets and signs in this house narrate the deep needs we have, how we construct our private lives and our connection to maternal relationships.

5th House – The “house of the present”, where we come to know our heart's will and the ways we can engage it to create or thrive in the world. Planets and signs here show us how we connect with pleasure, creativity and our inner-child.

6th House – A house of structure, discipline, and duty that represents how we show up to our daily lives and to the needs of others. Planets and signs here connect to our disciplines, routines, physical health and sense of purpose in the world.

The zone of self-expansion, marked by the DC (Descendant):

7th House – The sector that follows the Descendant and represents our most intimate relationships with lovers, best friends, business partners and soulmates. Planets or signs here can help us navigate romance, collaboration and interdependence.

8th House – The area that symbolises how we utilise both material and immaterial energy in our lives for transformation. Planets and signs in this house show us how we relate to death, taboos, sexuality and other people's money or possessions.

9th House – A space of growth, expansion, higher knowledge and travel. Planets and signs here show us what can set our soul on fire and enlarge our worldview in the process. Additionally, we can understand what's outside our comfort zone via this house.

The zone of self-resignation, marked by the MC (Midheaven):

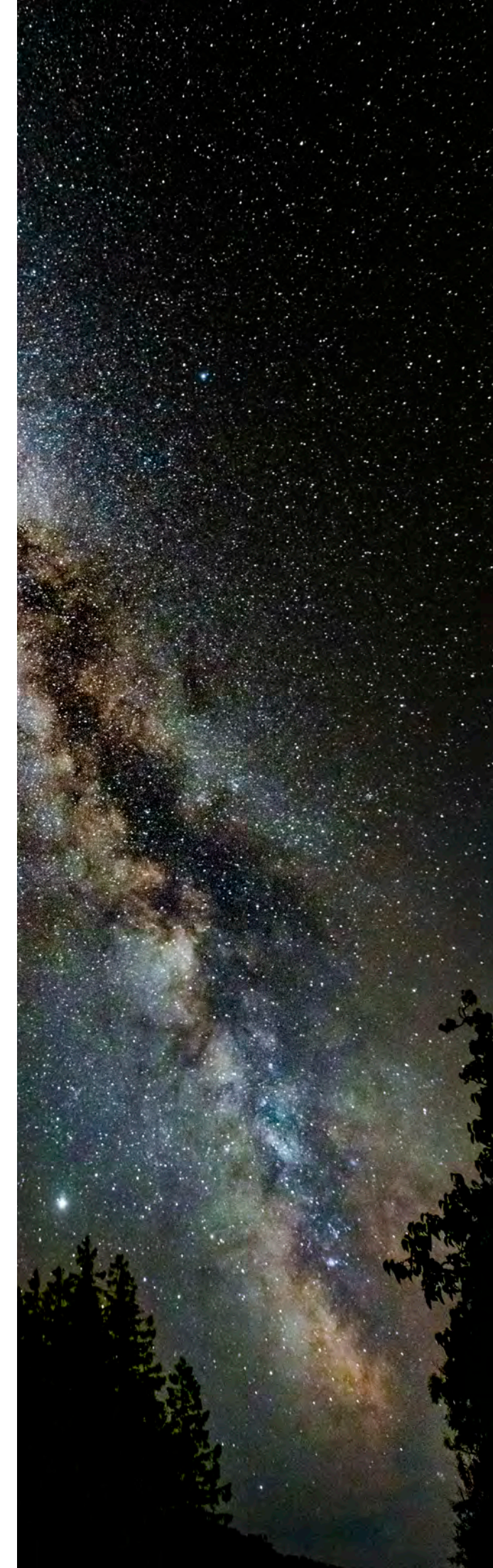
10th House – The public sector of our chart that represents our achievements and career. Planets and signs in this house can show how much we value social status and recognition, as well as indicate the types of careers we'd succeed in.

11th House – The “house of the future” that contextualises our ever-changing values and where they are leading us in life. Planets and signs in this sector can indicate the way we form friendships or subscribe to ideals and technology.

12th House – The last sector of the chart that symbolises “the eternal return”: a place where the past, present and future all exist as one. Planets and signs here connect to spirituality, the subconscious and past lives. Immateriality rules this house.

Through these 12 houses, we can empower ourselves or others with the medicine of the cosmos. It's important to remember that the 12 houses don't exist out in space but are a 2-dimensional oracle that we project over the 3-dimensional relationships of the celestial bodies and stars. Even if you don't see planets in one of your houses, consider how there is never an “empty house”, and depending on the software you use you can see asteroids, stars and even hypothetical planets. Space is infinite; therefore, Astrology is infinite as well.

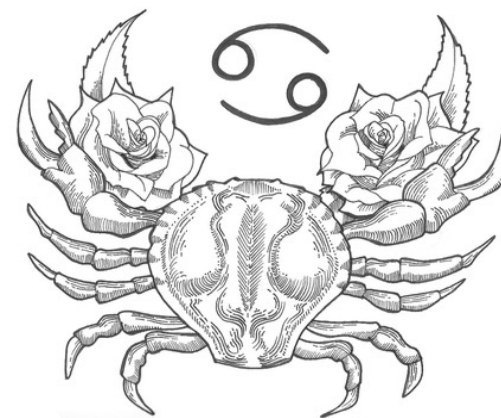
As always, the Horoscopes below are assessed upon the Ascendant and written for your Sidereal rising sign— If you're unfamiliar with your Sidereal chart, work with an Astrologer or utilise one of the many resources on the world wide web.





ARIES

In May, Mars (your ruling planet) will enter your 4th house— a time where matters of your domestic life will come to the forefront, while your career may naturally rest on the back burner. With Mars in your 4th house, there's even great potential for a major life change like moving house or new family dynamics. During Eclipse Season, it's important to remember that the vitality of your relationships is dependent on the quality and consistency of your self-love and self-devotion. Always tend to your needs first before fuelling the flames of another, Rising Aries.



CANCER

Over the last year, each Eclipse Season has occurred in your 10th and 4th houses— areas of the chart that can certainly feel unstable during Eclipses. Similar energies are likely this season, but good things are coming, trust me! Prior to Eclipse Season, the Moon and Jupiter will make an exact conjunction in your 9th house on 22nd March. Jupiter is known as the "great benefic planet" and with the Moon alongside it, this is quite a favourable time! Lunar-Jupiter conjunctions in the 9th house are often major blessings, so live with the expectancy that the Universe is always supporting you.

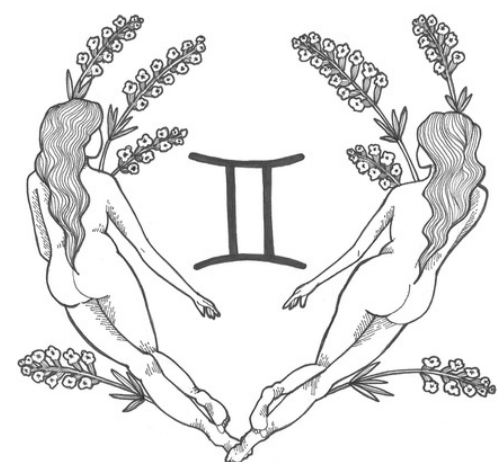
TAURUS

As this season begins, your personal magnetism will be stronger than ever as your ruling planet (Venus) will enter your 1st house during the Full Moon of 6th April. Venus is known to bring things into life, so you may find that people and opportunities gravitate towards you at this time. Eclipse Season is likely to bring a major chapter in your life to a close as it occurs in your 6th and 12th houses. Fear not, as this change is long overdue and has likely been in the makings since April of 2022. Use that magnetism and invite in new energies during the dark Moon of 19th May.



LEO

I can't celebrate your growth this past year enough, Rising Leo! I hope you see how far you've come and give yourself credit where it's due. A lot of this growth is due to all the Eclipses this past year occurring in your 3rd and 9th houses areas of the chart that push us beyond our edges of comfort and into realities we didn't even know were possible. So much rapid growth requires consistent rest and rejuvenation, things that a fire sign like you doesn't often prioritise. The Full Moon of 6th April or the New Moon of 19th May are excellent times to pause, reflect, and restore. Make room for rest.



GEMINI

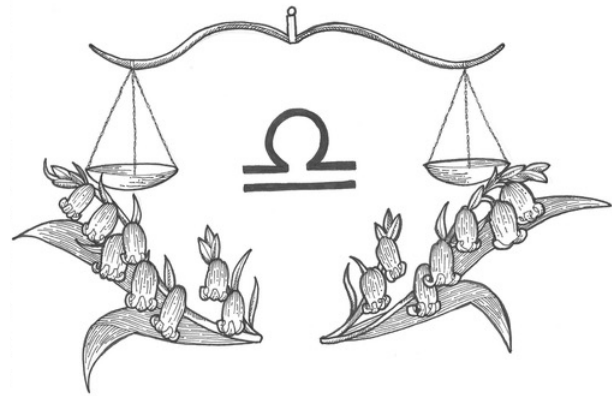
Don't listen to the mainstream fear around Mercury retrogrades, because they are a total time of empowerment for you, Rising Gemini. A planet is the closest to Earth that it can be in its orbit during a retrograde, which heightens its archetypal power. Since Mercury is your ruling planet, this means you receive an extra "oomph" 3 more times a year than any other sign... lucky you! Lastly, the Solar Eclipse on the 20th will be right alongside Mercury in your 11th house, so expect some breakthroughs in the way you relate and connect to others.



VIRGO

The previous season sure seemed to have its hurdles but know that you're almost to the finish line! The Solar Eclipse on April 20th will occur in your 8th house of transformation— the same place that your ruling planet (Mercury) will begin its retrograde a day later, working its magic there for several weeks. The 8th house is known for its depth and mystery, so when an effervescent planet like Mercury transits this space, it often "bubbles things up" to the surface to be understood and integrated. Don't be afraid of the unknown, Rising Virgo... this is a very empowering time for you. Embrace the shadows.

LIBRA



This season is sure to be quite a visible time for you, Rising Libra, so start preparing yourself for the extra attention. This is because Venus (your ruling planet) will be making its way through the top of your chart from the 7th house in late March all the way into the 10th house by late May. Venus is the planet of receptivity and often brings energy or opportunities into the houses it transits. There's a sense of achievement and mastery in the air for you this season, and you can expect a lot of rewards or recognition within your career by the June's end.

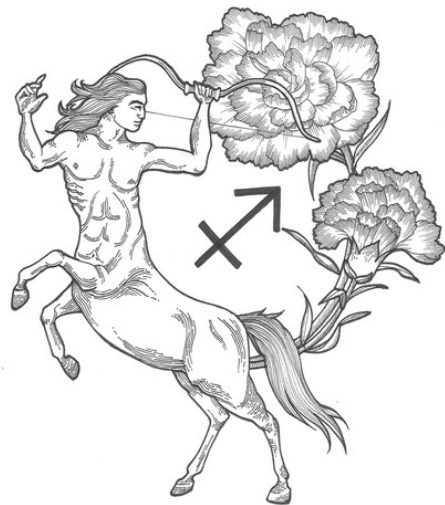
SCORPIO

Mars has been in your 7th house since August of last year, where it has emphasised one-on-one relationships and brought the dynamic's needs to the forefront. And with Mars here, you may have entered a serious romantic relationship this past season. Mars will finally enter your 8th house on the March Equinox, so don't be surprised if the said relationships enter a new era. Regardless of being romantically committed or not, this season is all about devoting and surrendering to the true needs of your spirit, and the Eclipses in your 6th and 12th houses will solidify that.



SAGITTARIUS

I really want you to cultivate and sustain your sense of awe this season, Rising Sagittarius. There are times that we won't be able to "figure it all out", but with those comes infinite opportunities to connect to our loving awareness for what is already mastered, or what is still a mystery. Since last April, the Eclipses have occurred in your 5th and 11th houses— the spaces that govern our connection to the heart, its values, and its purpose. With the final Eclipse happening in May, you're transitioning into a very different way of seeing the world than how you used to see it 12 months ago. There's so much to be in awe of.



CAPRICORN

A lot has shifted for you since January of 2020, and although the world has gone through so much collective change, you are really living in a different paradigm as compared to back then. This is because Saturn (your ruling planet) entered your 1st house in January of 2020, where it restructured your methods of self-reliance, self-expression and self-awareness. With Saturn's shift into Aquarius this past January, it will slowly begin to support your 2nd house over time, refortifying the ways you receive, resource and connect to material values. Maturity is the theme of your year, and you're doing a great job.



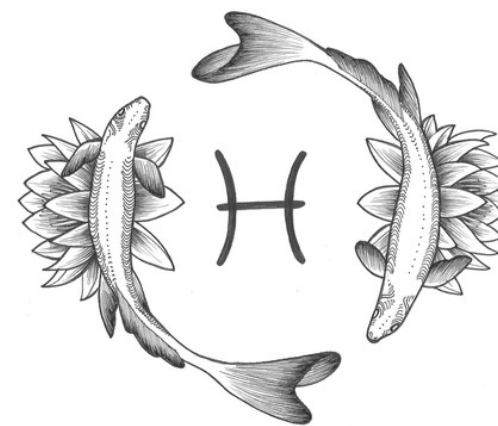
AQUARIUS

Don't be afraid to really go for it this season, Rising Aquarius. Whatever you've been putting off or have been hesitant to begin is eventually going to materialise whether you're ready or not, so consider this to be an invitation. This Eclipse Season will finalise the year-long lessons you've had within your 3rd and 9th houses— the areas that really test our limits and reshape our beliefs. If you've been feeling insecure about "what's next", trust that life is unfolding exactly how it needs to and consider working with the New Moon of 19th May to plant the seeds for that next big thing.



PISCES

Excessive contemplation will get you nowhere this season, so please trust that Piscean intuition of yours and empower your choices with confidence! With Neptune back in your 1st house, this is likely a time where you're learning to trust yourself more while embracing vulnerability and asking for help when you need it. Mark your calendar for 21st March as the New Moon will occur in Pisces just a day after the Equinox. With the Moon making a conjunction to Jupiter on the 22nd, this is a potent time for your psychic abilities— so let them shine and most importantly, let yourself trust them.



FOOD FOR THE SOUL

BY RYAN KURR
@ryankurr

BELTANE SALAD

If Samhain kicks off the dark time of the year, then Beltane is the other half, the dawn of the light. Beltane involves all the wonderful elements of spring: beautiful, sweet-smelling florals, sprouts, busy bees and the abundance of budding greenery. When one cooks and eats with the seasons, they consume the energy of that season. Spring, the lively *amuse-bouche* in the menu of seasons, a time to explore all things fresh. This salad is packed with nutrients and a healthy dose of protein to help you energise for the season.

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients

Shallot vinaigrette:

6-7 tbsp olive oil
3 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 g shallot, minced
2 tsp lemon zest
Salt
Pepper

For the salad:

2 cups vegetable stock (500 ml)
2 ½ tsp salt
1 cups red or black quinoa, rinsed
¾ cups English peas
¾ cups cooked cannellini beans
1 cup young pea tendrils/sprouts
¼ cups fresh dill, torn
¼ cups fresh mint, chopped
½ cups watercress
¾ cups waterlemon radish, shaved thin
½ cups feta cheese, crumbled (65 g)

Method

- In a medium saucepan, bring the stock and a little salt to a boil. Add the quinoa, lower the heat to a low simmer, cover and cook for 15 minutes. Once the quinoa has absorbed the stock, transfer to a large bowl to cool, about 15 minutes.
- In a medium saucepan, bring about 3 cups of water and a pinch of salt to a boil. Blanch the peas in the water for about a minute. Drain and immediately submerge the peas into a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking process.
- Make the vinaigrette. In a small bowl, whisk together the salt, vinegar and the shallot and let stand for 10 minutes. Whisk in the lemon zest and then the olive oil until the vinaigrette is emulsified. Taste and add more salt or vinegar, if needed. Set aside.
- In the large bowl of cooked quinoa, add the peas, dill, mint, watercress, radish, vinaigrette, and toss well to combine all. Garnish with feta and serve at room temperature or chilled.





LEMON BALM POACHED SALMON WITH CUCUMBER SLAW

When the weather shifts and the energies brighten, what I choose to eat also tends to shift. I swap out the hearty stews and roasted root vegetables for lighter soups, salads and fresh fish. In this recipe, I apply the concept of magical layering to my cooking process, and that is how you build layers of flavour to a dish. Just as you would steep a page in a tea or elixir before using it in a spell or to write upon, I poach the salmon in lemon balm tea to infuse the flavour into the fish. Try using different poaching liquids and teas such as ginger, orange peel, grapefruit, mushroom or fennel, and come up with something that is truly unique.

Makes: 4 servings

Method

Ingredients

Cucumber Slaw:

- 1 seedless cucumber, thinly sliced
- 1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3 tbsp cilantro / fresh coriander
- ¼ cup fresh dill
- 1 tsp salt
- ¾ tsp freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp pink peppercorn, crushed

Salmon:

- 1 shallot, halved
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 red onion, sliced thin
- 1 lemon, zested in strips
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 3 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp lemon balm tea (4 bags)
- 4 6 oz. portions of salmon

- *Make the slaw.* In a bowl, toss all the ingredients together and set aside to macerate (soften).
- *Make the poaching stock.* In a medium saucepan, combine 6 cups of water, the shallot, red onion, lemon zest, salt, fennel seeds and butter, and bring to a boil. Reduce to a low simmer and cook for 15 minutes. Add the lemon balm tea, turn off the heat and let steep for another 15 minutes. Strain the liquid into a deep skillet.
- *Poach the salmon.* Bring the liquid back to a low simmer over medium-high heat and then immediately remove from the heat. Season the salmon with a little salt and pepper. Place the salmon in the pan with the hot broth, cover and let cook for about 10 minutes, depending on how thick your salmon is. Check for doneness; salmon should never be overcooked, as this will result in a dry fish. It should be tender and flaky and the centre should be a translucent-pink. When you press down lightly with your fork, the fish should flake. Remove the fish from the poaching liquid and serve with the slaw.



IMAGE: HEATHER HILLS BY AMANDA CLARK @amandaclarkartist



witches

SPELLS // CRYSTALS // TAROT // HOROSCOPES