

Issue 1: Samhain 2008

Contents:

Holy Days

Samhain, Danu Gray Wolf

Goddess Work

Erishkigal, Artemisia

Ritual Work

Samhain Ritual, Moonwater

Gardening with the Goddess

Lying Fallow, BellaDonna Oya

Sacred Sites

Sacred Places of the Dead, Ajna

OWM Awareness

OWM Happenings, Nessa

The Bardic Soul: Poetry and Song

Looking for a gnome, Lisa

Duality of the Mother, Mystic Amazon

The Call of the Mists, Mystic Amazon

Samhain

Samhain is considered to be the last harvest. In some traditions we will sadly say goodbye to the God, the wonderful consort to our Goddess, and in other traditions, we will be sending Persephone off to the Underworld and comforting Demeter as she misses Her blessed daughter. In both traditions, the cycle will continue and we have a treasured hope that they will return. This is a time to reflect on our lives; give gratitude for our abundance; and look forward to peaceful rest and restoration for our souls. We also have the opportunity to honor those who have transitioned this year and prior years; to give them our love and to commune more clearly with them. This is a time of divination and of connection to our part in the circle of life.

Many of us choose to work with our Crone Mother Hecate during this time. One beautiful way to give honor to Her is to make a place for Her at your table. Fill Her plate, and when you have finished your meal, go to a crossroads and leave Her meal there. Return to your home without looking back.

No matter how you choose to welcome Samhain, whether through ritual or passing out trick or treat candy to the little witches and goblins, honor this time of year by being mindful of your inner soul and your connection with Goddess. Here are some suggestions:

1. Take a ritual bath and honor your physical body.
2. Light a candle for those you love who have transitioned this year.
3. Think of one little way to nourish your spirit and do it.
4. Prepare for the winter months by beginning to build your immune system.

5. Honor the Divine in you through dance, enjoying art, or simply laughing.
6. Honor the Divine in others by letting your friends and family know they are loved.

Great website to visit:

[Samhain: Goddess of the Underworld](#) is a fascinating web page that lists the different Goddesses that correspond to Samhain and their myths/history.

Danu Gray-Wolf is an adept of [Order of the White Moon](#) through Sisters in Celebration.

Isis Samhain Ritual

Items needed:

white altar cloth (new beginnings)

3 black candles (past/present/future, maiden/mother/crone)

sweet-grass oil

Native Smudge incense

large scrying bowl with water

bowl of acorns (promise of rebirth of the God)

bowl of saltwater

tarot cards or other divination tools

table set for potluck feast

Ritual:

Set up the altar, placing the candles in a semi-circle around the bowls, but far enough away that they won't reflect directly in the scrying bowl.

Anoint the candles with sweet-grass oil and carve an ankh onto each one.

Purify yourself and the space with incense.

Cast the circle, sprinkling saltwater to mark its boundary.

Call the directions, emphasizing their remembrance associations:

*"I call upon the guardian of the North, the elemental of Earth,
to join me within this sacred space,
that I may remember all who have walked upon the land before me.*

*I call upon the guardian of the East, the elemental of Air,
to join me within this scared space,
that I may remember all who have breathed the air before me.*

I call upon the guardian of the South, the elemental of Fire,

*to join me within this sacred space,
that I may remember all those who have felt the passion of the Goddess
burn within their veins.*

*I call upon the guardian of the West, the elemental of Water,
to join me within this sacred space,
that I may remember all those who have shed tears of love.*

*I call upon the guardian of the Centre, the elemental of Spirit,
to join me within this sacred space,
that I may remember all those who have crossed the veil."*

Blessed Isis

*Queen of the Earth
And the Heavens,
Mistress of Magick,
High Priestess to us all,*

*I ask that you join me
Within this sacred space
That I may mourn your loss
With you and celebrate
The promise of Light's return.
Blessed be, Glorious Mother!"*

Light the candles saying:

*"Light that shone in days of old
Light that burned with love so bold
Light snuffed out shall be reborn
As the mighty oak grows from the acorn."*

The Mourning of Isis

*My beloved was taken from me
His body in pieces, not to rise again.
Yet Ra's light shines within me,
So I shan't rest till Osiris rises again.*

*As hawk and swallow I will scour
Across the land for my love's pieces.
None shall stop me, I'll not rest an hour,
Till Osiris is whole, my search never ceases.
Reborn to me, my love shall be,
Osiris my love, my blessed king.
By the turquoise sky and the lapis sea,
The land shall rejoice and my heart will sing.*

Meditate on those you have lost, remembering them fondly and wishing them well, but also remember those who have wronged you, seeing any lingering hatred fade away, replaced with compassion. If there is anything you wish to ask your ancestors, departed loved ones, or spirit guides, ask them freely, then seek your answers within the scrying bowl (or with whatever divination tool you are the most comfortable with).

Thank the Goddess.

Thank the directions.

Open the circle, saying "The circle is now open yet never broken. May all who have gathered go in peace, harming none.

Blessed be!" Snuff out the candles or move them to your feast table.

Celebrate the promise of rebirth with friends and family, setting an extra place at the table for your ancestors.

© Moonwater, August 2008

Poetry in this ritual was written by Jennifer Runham-Stark

© August 18, 2008

Moonwater is an Initiate studying with the Sisters In Celebration. She is a writer and reiki master/teacher in Central Ontario, Canada, and has been a solitary Eclectic Wiccan practitioner for over ten years

Erishkegal

This dark time of the year is always my favorite. It's when I do shadow work for healing with the dark goddesses. The dark goddess I've worked with most recently is Erishkegal. I journeyed to visit her, and she had some powerful messages she wanted me to share with you.

Ancient Mother

Erishkegal said she is the Ancient Mother behind Inanna and Lilith. They are her "front ladies", and my dedication to Inanna is to her as well. She said to sing the lyrics to Ancient Mother differently when it's sung to her. She said sing it this way:

Ancient Mother, I hear you calling

Ancient Mother, I hear your song
Ancient Mother, I feel your sorrow
Ancient Mother, I taste your tears

Spread love and end suffering

Erishkegal takes our suffering into herself. She suffers for us. She said that anything to spread unconditional love and ease suffering is the duty of her children. Especially for oneself first of all. She advised that her children must treat themselves splendidly well to heal and become whole, but also to create the vibrations around themselves to uplift and attract people in their lives who do the same for themselves and each other. Treat oneself and others with much love, respect, gentleness and care. She said that feeling love is not enough. Choosing to act lovingly is the next step.

Stripping away illusions when you've had enough

Erishkegal said she is the one who responds when you cry "Enough". She is Who cuts through illusions and brings truth. Be careful when you ask that you are ready to see the Truth. Often the truth about oneself is painful. It sure was for me when on Beltane I begged for help and clarity. She said she was the one who had stripped away the illusions and brought about this new path.

Erishkegal gave me instructions on how to heal

Erishkegal said pain and discomfort is a message from the body about love. She said to listen to your body and trust your instincts. She said it is our duty to listen and heed.

She said when you feel pain or discomfort to:

1. STOP
2. LISTEN
3. RESPOND WITH A LOVING ACT.

She the ancient mother also said: Release the suffering stored in your body .Love yourself immensely. Always trust your body and your instincts. Check that feeling in your gut. Eat well. And LOVE, LOVE, LOVE YOURSELF.

Artemisia is a High Priestess in the [Order of the White Moon](#) and co-founder of Sisters in Celebration.

Lying Fallow

In the Spring, gardens go from dead and sleeping to awake and full of life. New green shoots come up out of the earth, buds and leaves swell on branches and stems, baby birds and animals are born, and the crisp, cold air does its best to wake us up from our winter sluggishness. Gardeners run around frantically, preparing the ground, sowing seeds, digging up the old and transplanting the new.

Summer finds some things blooming, while others wilt and shrivel in the heat. This includes people; some thrive in hot weather, while others (like me) just want to crawl under a rock and wait for cooler days. Planting and transplanting in hot weather is never advisable, so for many, Summer is mainly a time of watering, pruning and weeding to keep things looking decent.

Fall brings the harvests; the fullness of Mother Gaia is showered on us. Corn, wheat, fruits, vegetables, the weight of them making stalks and branches sag and groan with abundance. We also feel the fortunate weight of our blessings at this time, as we reap the profits of the hard work we have done during the year.

The end of the harvest signals the beginning of Winter, which is ushered in by rain, winds, and sometimes snow. No planting is done while the ground is cold and hard. This is the fallow time of the year, when the earth rests and regenerates, building up its resources for the year to come. It looks dead and bare, but new life is generating, slowly but surely, far beneath the surface.

Every so often in our lives, we have periods of fallowness. We may think we are stuck in a rut; nothing seems to grow or progress. Sometimes it seems as though time has stopped, and we wonder if we will stay forever in the same dreary place. It may even feel as though the Goddess has forgotten us.

But She hasn't. Because we NEED those fallow times, to rest and regenerate, to build up our dwindling resources, to sleep and to dream... Eventually, we'll begin to notice new energy, new ideas, and new opportunities popping up around us, and we'll remember with surprising gratitude the time of fallowness just past.

"Mother Gaia, I am grateful for the fallow times You send.

Help me to remember they eventually will end.

Let me rest and dream and heal,

Until the Springtime sun I feel."

BellaDonna Oya is a Level II Initiate of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#), and is currently working on Level III.

Sacred Places of the Dead

In this time of Death and Dying, our thoughts often turn to our own mortality on this physical plane. We think about friends and family who have departed this mortal coil with sadness and longing. All too often in Western Culture, we take the view that death is something to be feared, shunned, avoided at all cost. This is irrational, everything dies, we know this intuitively, yet our egos create elaborate illusions to counter this terror we feel. We cling tightly to our beliefs, to religious dogma, to life itself. And yet, by these very acts, we stop living in the present moment, worrying only about the future or regretting the past. How can we nourish the cycles of birth-death-rebirth within ourselves?

One way to rediscover a reverence for death is to seek out those sacred places of the dead. How many of us spend time among the gravestones and mausoleums of our local cemeteries? Unless it is for a funeral or to commemorate an anniversary, we rarely give a second thought to those places where the spirits reside.

Many cultures throughout history have nurtured a deep reverence for deceased ancestors. Returning them to the Mother's womb, covered with red ochre, allowing vultures to eat the flesh so that the glistening bones, cleansed and purified can be interred. Many cultures throughout the world continue the tradition of honouring the dead by visiting the grave sites of deceased ancestors, cleansing the bones, lighting incense, leaving offerings and praying to the ancestors for intercessions.

Death is not an ending, rather it is a continuation of the cycle of birth-death-rebirth. Ancestors who lived on in the afterlife could speak with the Gods on one's behalf. The Mexican Dia de los Muertos, Day of the Dead, is one such Holy Day. This is a celebration for deceased ancestors, and people gather together to remember the dead with feasting, dancing and sweets. Skulls of all kinds are very popular during this festival. Scholars trace the origins of the modern holiday, dating back thousands of years, to an Aztec festival dedicated to the Goddess Mictecacihuatl ("The Lady of the Dead"). This festival is increasing in popularity throughout United States and Canada as indigenous peoples from Central America migrate North.

A newer tradition here in Nelson, British Columbia, one which I hope will become an annual event for years to come, is the Festival to Honour the Dead that takes place at Taghum Beach on November 2. At sundown, a candlelight procession winds through the park but there is nothing somber about it. Drums and bells, rattles and whistles, songs and chants, howls and laughter provide a noisy invitation to come join the party. People dress up in costumes, usually white, to honour the spirits of the ancestors. The procession heads down to the beach where huge bonfires are set up. A large altar is available for people to place candles and say prayers for the deceased. There is music, dancing, acrobats and fire eaters. For those in need of quieter contemplation, a labyrinth, lined with candles, provides a hauntingly beautiful sacred space. How very different from my first experience with the dead.

I still vividly recall my first visit to a cemetery. My mother took us on a picnic to the old abandoned cemetery outside of town, the dread rising within me as she casually pointed out the grave of a friend who died in childhood. We did not discuss death in our family and I was left with this horrible fear of death for much of my life. I returned to that old cemetery many years later, and experienced it with a new awareness. I asked the spirits of the place if it was alright to enter, a gust of wind was the response, whistling through the willows and surrounding me. I laughed as I

entered the gates and communed with these ancestors. I felt peace here, the trees stand like guardians, protecting the ancient bones, the river meandering lazily past.

I have visited many cemeteries and graveyards since then. I still recall the great excitement I felt as I walked through Mount Pleasant cemetery in Toronto, seeing the grave markers of great Canadian figures. These men and women I read about in history books, they really existed and their bones lay beneath my feet. It made history come alive for me. I also recall the sadness I felt at one historic site in New Mexico. A lone grave outside the main cemetery, a man not baptized a Christian, and therefore doomed to a life of Hell, an outsider for eternity. It is comforting to know the Goddess is not so choosy, She accepts all Her children back into Her loving embrace at death.

The Salem Witch Trials Memorial in Salem, Mass., though not technically a graveyard, maintains the somber aura of any cemetery. The Memorial Park is set back from the bustling sidewalks, filled with noisy, laughing tourists and pretend pirates. One is struck by the quiet desperation and rage that permeates the park. As I walked past the engraved stones, bearing the names of the tortured, murdered men and women, I felt an oppressive weight bearing down upon me. As though I too, like Giles Corey, centuries ago, had the life pressed out of me as stone after stone was piled upon my chest. When I left the park, I was met with an onslaught of noise as I returned to the bustle of the city. I felt the weight lift from my chest and I breathed deeply as I thought to myself, never again. We must become more reverent toward our ancestors.

New Orleans has a unique feature to its cemeteries. When people first began to populate the area, they buried their dead in coffins. However, due to the low water table, the coffins rose up to the surface during rainstorms. Stones were placed in the coffins to weigh them down, but this did not help, the dead continued to rise up. Above ground mausoleums were established, family crypts house the bones of deceased ancestors. After two years, the remains are lovingly placed in a bone bag

and moved to one side of the crypt. The coffin is burned and the crypt is prepared for the next corpse. Many of the crypts and mausoleums look like miniature houses, complete with picket fence. This has led to the nickname "Cities of the Dead". When wandering through the Cities of the Dead, you may come upon the grave of Marie Laveau, the Voodoo Queen of New Orleans. They say that if you turn around three times, knock three times and make a wish, it may come true. Leave an offering of Hoodoo money or light a candle as a thank you. When visiting these areas, try to stay with a group or a tour. You have nothing to fear from the spirits, however, the living can be a different story.

Death has become a commodity, to be bought and sold. Death is big business, we pay the church to hold the mass, pay the funeral home to hold the wake, pay for the cremation, the casket or urn, pay for the plot and on and on. The resting places of the dead famous and infamous have become a cottage industry, complete with tour guides and GPS to locate particular graves. Celebrity grave sites have become popular tourist attractions, two of the more famous ones being Westwood Memorial Park (Marilyn Monroe) and Cimetière du Père Lachaise, Paris (Jim Morrison).

Cemeteries are often the only large green space in a grey city of concrete and steel. It is not surprising that they are now being marketed as parkland. You won't find the dudes tossing Frisbees between the headstones, but you may come upon a family riding their bikes along the quiet roads, having a picnic under a tree, or even teaching their children the cycle of birth-death-rebirth in a gentle and loving way. Take some time during this Season of Death to honour the ancestors in your local cemetery. Spend some time communing with your personal ancestors. If you no longer live near family graves, you can adopt one that appears neglected. Clean it up, light a candle, say a prayer and leave an offering of flowers. As we honour the deceased, we move closer to our own mortality on this plane, but we also move closer to understanding the immortality of spirit.

<http://www.salemweb.com/memorial/memorial.shtml>

<http://www.experienceneworleans.com/deadcity.html>

Ajna DreamsAwake is an Initiate of [The Sacred Three Goddess school](#). She is an eclectic Pagan, rediscovering Her Visionary Goddess Gifts.

OWM Happenings

In the July 2008 board meeting, the board positions were voted upon. The OWM Board for 2008-09 is:

President- Diana

Treasurer-Nessa

Secretary-Artemisia

VP for Membership – Kelly

VP of Ordinations- Kerritwyn

Assistant VP for Ordination – Tranquility

VP for Outreach (Web Coordinator) – Kelly

VP for Advertising – Wahine

Care Fund Coordinator – Diana

VP of Events- Etain

There was some discussion in the board meeting that May 09 is the 10th anniversary of the White Moon tradition's roots. Discussion to begin planning anniversary Gathering will begin at Board meeting in October. There was also

discussion about the Vision of the Order. Embracing sustainability, stability, and cultivating foundation as our vision for 2008-2009.

More exciting news!

It is with great honor and joy that we announce that Luna Phaedra completed Level IV in August and was approved by the Ordaining Council to become an Ordained Minister and High Priestess of the Order of the White Moon!

Our newest Lifetime Members of the Order of the White Moon; As't Nethbet, Moonwater and Lady Zephyr. We welcome them with great sister-love!

We also welcome High Priestess Fleur De Lune !

Nessa

Nessa CrescentMoon is a High Priestess, an Ordained Minister, General VP of the OWM, a founder of Sisters in Celebration- a branch and affiliate of the Order of the White Moon

Looking for a Gnome

*Magickal moonlight pulls me outside,
I dance in the cold dew underneath a starry sky.
The soft white face of the moon makes my witch-blood sing,
My doubts far away from me I do fling.
I open my mind to the wonder of the night,
I pray to the Goddess that she would open my sight.
It is the elemental beings that I seek,
Into the Other World I long to peek.
I open my heart to the magick of the night,
On the soft wings of darkness my imagination takes flight.
I see the Gnome, and he offers his hand,
I take it and we walk through the tree and into the Other Land.
Then – Poof! My eyes are open and the Other World I no longer see,
Just my dog, who wonders what has gotten into me,
To sit out here alone in the dark and the chill,
Trying to cross worlds by the force of my will.
With the Great Mother's eyes my dog looks into mine
And I know that eventually what I seek I will find.
The night music grows still and the magick softly fades,
But the dream remains of the doorway we made.
And I sit alone in my circle of trees,
Just me, my dog, and the chill night breeze.*

Lisa is studying with the Moonlit River School.

DUALITY OF THE MOTHER

I see two halves in one woman...
One is golden, with amber hair
And has in her hand a flame;
The other pale blue with azure hair
That holds a knife made of ice.
One is a flame to burn away
The illusions and deceptions of life;
One is a knife to freeze and cut
All cords and attachments
That hinder our Higher Self.
She dances, and as she does
The world forms and re-forms.
She dances, the skies change color
She laughs, and the Earth shakes.
Her flame erupts the volcanoes,
Her ice sends hail down upon us.
She claps her hands together,
And the steam forms the clouds.
Rain comes from her
In the form of nourishing waters,
Or instead, in rivers of blood.

*She drops to Earth in Spring,
To see flowers and baby animals.
So many facets has Our Mother!*

© July 7, 2008

Beth Clare Johnson

(Mystic Amazon)

THE CALL OF THE MISTS

*I came for you,
from the Land of the Mists...
But you were not waiting.
I searched for you,
Raising my torches high.
You must come with me,
Learn our healing,
Learn our ancient magicks.
Many times you came close
Almost at the portal,
But would not pass farther
To join us in Avalon.
Sisters and Priestesses
Are there, and waiting for you
But you look away.
You cannot see what comes,*

*Your head is held down
And you pine, for your heart
Has become empty and sad.
Look up! We are your teachers.
We will send our fairy boat
That needs no boatman
To bring you here to Avalon.
You will eat our juicy apples
And grow strong again;
You will swim in our lakes
Talk with the water faeries,
Sing with our birds,
Learn the history of our kind...
It is your story, too.
Let our Queen, Morgana
Tell you stories of heroines,
And of how the goddesses
Return once again to the lands.
You were not meant to pine!
You are close to the Otherworld,
As all women are.
Be proud, be beautiful and strong,
For you are one of us...
Our Mists are calling you home.*

Beth Clare Johnson

(Mystic Amazon)

Mystic Amazon is currently working on her Level 3 training with Sisters in Celebration. Her hobbies include writing, folk art, folk magick, Reiki, and reading.