

Metaphysical Times

FULL MOON

ISSUE 11 FEBRUARY 2023

MAGAZINE

Q&A with Nixie:
Answers about Altars

Grace in the Abyss:
Poseiden's Embrace

**Queen of Earth
and Sky**

**What is Sacred
Travel?**

**DEATH AND DYING:
A PAGAN PERSPECTIVE**

**A YEAR IN THE CRAFT:
CREATING A WITCHY VISION BOARD**

Metaphysical Times
FULL MOON
MAGAZINE

Want to write for Metaphysical Times Full Moon Magazine?

Metaphysical Times is always willing to consider metaphysical and pagan themed content for the magazine. We serve a spiritually based audience and support artists in their endeavors to do what they love and thrive by providing this space so they can be seen, connect with the right people, and succeed the best way we can.

What We Want for the Full Moon

Text based interviews with pagan business owners, musicians, artists, and authors are always considered. Visual works of art created by humans, poetry, photography, song lyrics, short fictional pieces, personal narratives, spiritual experiences, book, game, music, and movie reviews. At least loosely based on or connected to the Full Moon is preferred.

What We Don't Want

Political rants or screes, satire, stories blaming your problems on other people, articles involving cruelty as entertainment, anything comparing your life to the holocaust, articles about how everything was fine until X, articles promoting violence against any group.

Please read and follow the submission guidelines

provided on our website's Write for Us page, www.metaphysical-times.com/write-for-us, and submit using the HeyPublisher form or log into HeyPublisher.com, create an account and favorite the Metaphysical Times LLC account. Please ensure you are submitting to the Metaphysical Times LLC account. There are 2 accounts but only the LLC account will come to us.

The Metaphysical Times **Full Moon Magazine** is a pagan print and online magazine made in Northern, Utah bringing news, interests, and services to the pagan community in the US and abroad.

The magazine is printed monthly. This publication is a conduit for connecting people from all walks with practices, information, and entertainment that is relevant to them.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Welcome to Metaphysical Times Full Moon! What a journey it has been to get to this point! We think it should be noted in the first print issue what it has taken to get here. We kicked off the first online issue in April 2022. It was small, but it served a big purpose. Featuring artists of all kinds so artists can gain visibility and traction within a community that fully supports creativity and crafting of all kinds.

We believe that artists have a unique and direct connection to the divine and serve as messengers of information, inspiration, and affirmation from the same. When you see an image that moves you, hear a song that changes your mood, or read a story that changes your perspective, that is divine intervention.

We had a large collection of artistic pieces, when we purchased the newspaper in February 2022, but the newspaper

did not have the room or the purpose to feature and highlight those messages. We had the option to limit the type of content we accepted, but we also had the option to create a space specifically for that type of content and continue accepting it. We created the Full Moon Magazine.

We always intended to print the magazine, but things took a bit of a turn economically, and we had to keep it online only until some options opened up. In December of 2022, we were informed that an option was now available that would work for us, and you are holding the first print issue in your hands.

We are thrilled to be able to make connections. The work you find in this issue is just the tip of the ice berg for the artists you will find within these pages. We encourage you to look them up, follow them, and if you are moved to, purchase or

commission a piece from them, hire them for a gig, or buy a book from them. Share them with other people too.

We do not receive any compensation from artists for pieces purchased. We also don't charge for interviews or publication of the works. We are just here to make sure the message gets to its intended so the artist can survive a bit longer doing what they love. Your purchase does make it possible for us to create the next issue, pay the artist for their submissions, and expand our reach with readers.

We appreciate you. We hope you find the content in these pages, and the pages in issues yet to come, helpful and of value to you. Thanks for picking us up!

♥ Christy 😊

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WHAT IS SACRED TRAVEL?

BY ELYSE WELLES

Experience is more valuable than material goods. More lasting, more thought-provoking, and definitely a better learning experience than simply buying something new. When we invest in our Craft, we become better practitioners, people, and partners. And sacred travel is no different. In fact, it can be a fast pass to spiritual growth.

Travel is a privilege, there's no doubt about that. But it can be easier, cheaper, and more meaningful than you might expect. Travel can be a European getaway, or it can be a walk in your local park. Some people see travel as optional, like playing badminton, or buying another pair of stilettos. But as a spiritual person, you might be surprised that when you start to explore, it becomes the most valuable asset to your spiritual path. Travel is often a gateway into spiritual avenues and

understanding that you might not have expected, or even necessarily set out to find.

Sacred travel is the act of keeping open to spiritual lessons and experiences in new places. When people think of sacred travel, they usually think of only the big sacred sites: Greek temples, the Pyramids of Giza, Stonehenge, The Tree of Life, or Jerusalem. Some sites are even conflated with specific religions over another: Mecca is sacred to Muslims, the Agia Sophia is sacred to Christians. But sacred travel shows you that these are names given by humans to places, and that spiritual power is deeper than any names or labels humans might come up with.

Sacred travel is a spiritual mindset. It's about exploring with the intent of spiritual growth. You can enter a museum with this mindset and feel the spiritual energy of the creativity

in the artwork. You can go to any cemetery and feel the peace and calm of the dead, no longer suffering on Earth. You can enter a church as a witch, and feel the prayers, not the preaching. Sacred travel removes the boundaries of manmade labels and instead focuses yourself back to the energy of the land, the energy we too carry with us as carbon and stardust.

Numina is a word in Latin for "places of spiritual power". It was used to describe Roman temples, then newly built, but also local bodies of water, or groves of trees. The Romans categorized places by the names of the local spirits, the genius loci. Sacred sites can be made by humans, or found in nature. A certain tree on a hilltop at sunset might be a sacred site, vibrating with spiritual energy, just as much as a barn used for Solstice

gatherings can. A temple built by the ancients of India can be just as sacred as a riverside in Mississippi. The commonality is energy: pulsing, spiritual energy. When we travel with a spiritual mindset, we are embracing and exploring that. We are keeping open to what we feel, to the genius loci and elementals we might encounter. And we are listening, not telling or projecting what we want.

Spirit of place is a tangible feeling, an energy we can access and tap into wherever we are. When we travel with a spiritual mindset, our local park, the bus stop, our workplace, the triangle of greenery between the parking lots... these can become spiritual places. Remember: nothing has ever always been a parking lot! Do research on the land spirits around you. There's probably more information on that than you might expect. Who did the native people of your land revere or leave offerings for here? What kind of residual spiritual energy did their rituals leave behind -- can you feel it? Where were their sacred sites?

Sacred travel doesn't always mean retreats to mountaintops, or foreign countries. It is a mindset you bring with you, an intention you set for yourself when you enter a new place, or look at a familiar place in a new light.

Numina are all around us, if only we're ready to listen and keep open.



Numina
(NOO-mih-nah) [Latin]

NOUN
Places of Divine or Spiritual Power

Seeking Numina with Elyse Welles introduces you to spiritual practices from the world's sacred places online and in person through workshops, tours, and retreats in Greece.

Get a **free guide to energy protection** when you visit seekingnumina.com and sign up for our newsletter.

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DEATH AND DYING: A PAGAN PERSPECTIVE

BY ELYSE WELLES

Originally published on Darksome Moon's online blog (now defunct)

As Pagans, witches, and magical practitioners, we acknowledge Death in a familiar way. We find comfort in this relationship. Death is not ignored or euphemized for us – Death is not met with anger. But pain and sadness? Definitely.

Grief affects all humanity. But, if we engage with Spirit, never will we meet Death with the rage of disbelief. In times of intense confusion, as we have been in the midst of, it's hard to keep grounded and move forward.

We are never in control of death, but we are in control of our reaction to it. "Death is scary" some say; instead let's say, "Death has made me feel fear (or anger, or sorrow)". We should, instead of shying away, lean into the feelings it brings upon us.

These emotions feel uncontrollable, but it is because they are strong, and it may have been a long time since we've felt strong emotion. If we feel sorrow, we should cry. We should sob, we should scream into the sky, "this isn't fair!" We can demand answers, beg for this to all be a dream. Let those emotions flow, unmitigated, and do not apologize.

Death is not an enemy, but it is the only surety in our lives. No thing in life is guaranteed except that it ends. Death is so natural, so simple, and so solid that it should be a source of comfort. Globally, It is seen in our varied traditions, and is celebrated as the Circle of Life, the Wheel of the Year, as Ensō, The Sacred Hoop – we accept endings and welcome beginnings.

Emotion is power; Death brings strength. It moves us into the next tier of our lives, equipping us for the next phase of our time on this plane.

Using Shadow Work in Grief

Death is a release: not just for the

sufferer now at peace, but for those on this plane of existence who need to release the emotions they have for that person. I don't mean release as in "let go", but release as in "set free." Live freely with your emotions, as long and as often as you need to. Come back to them when anniversaries or memories arise, however frequently.

Feeling pain is not weakness; working through pain is the biggest strength humans are capable of. Confront pain, name those emotions and ask, "why am I angry?" Allow yourself to fully exist in those emotions, feel why they're there, no matter how messy or uncomfortable they are. The emotions Death leads us to feel are often why we fear death, more than the fact that the person is now lost. The truth is that they are at peace, no matter how they passed, and death is inevitable for us all. That peace is our comfort, whether we believe in an afterlife or reincarnation.

An emotion Death incurs that we don't like to talk about is guilt. "I could have done more," you may think, or "why didn't she call me?", "I had more to say to them", and "If I had known the last time we were going to talk, I would have stayed longer... hugged tighter... said 'I love you'." The good news is that you can still do all of those things. This is the shadow work that spurns a revolution in your life. Regardless of religious beliefs, the energy, soul, or spirit of a person is not dead with them. Their life on earth is one path of the spirit. You give them new life every time they cross your mind.

In recounting stories, memories, journaling, making their favorite food, picking a bouquet to put on their grave, telling the next generation about them, or simply smiling at their favorite soda as you wait in the check out line, it

continues their life. Living true to their memory, responding in your means of personal growth, giving that newfound goal or emotional level back to your living loved ones - that is legacy. A life is a spiral - we come into this world much as we leave it, and through childbirth and injury come back to that place of vulnerability throughout.

The Air and the Flame

A life is not a candle snuffed out and melted down into oblivion. Life is the air the candle flickers in. We are present on this earth in physical form for a time, but we all need to accept that the physical flame is only one form of the air and fire; we will return to the sky and the earth, and be as untouchable as they are for more of our existence than any long life on this Earth.

Actualizing the Hard Truths

The hard truths need to be accepted in life is to really come to terms with Death. Our spouses will leave us, or we will leave them - loneliness is inevitable in the most loving of unions. Our children will bury us - and that is the best case scenario, as otherwise parents bury children. Every person we know will die and become memories and stories, before or after us, it doesn't matter. Death is a comforting truth, and it can bring with it strong emotions. Don't let them be for naught. Use those strong emotions to remind yourself to always say I love you to your friends and family. Stay that extra hour, even when there's work in the morning. If you're "too busy", consider: what does that mean? Why does that matter? What matters to you in this life? What regrets might you have? And choose Joy. Choose Love. Choose what serves you and yours.

Find comfort in those around you. Because Death is a bringer of comfort, not unease. When Death comes for one in your life, accept the emotions it brings with it. For some of those emotions are

good - they bond us closer with those left on the earth. And find comfort that Death is a gift, it is a guarantee in an uncertain world growing stranger by the day. It is a unifier, as we all will

experience it. And it gives us emotional depth like nothing else.

We will only be flames for a brief time, but we will all be the air around the flames for eternity.

Seven Practical Means of Honoring Your Loved Ones

These are ways I have personally learned to honor my ancestors and deceased friends. I often combine these, and some I've done only once. It's all about what works for you and brings you the emotional strength to persist on your Path, while feeling at peace in your relationships with those on the next plane. Practical means of honoring your loved ones include:

Incense

An offering of incense is a great way to connect with your loved ones. A meditation follows that you can do while your incense burns. For your incense, You can prepare wrapped smudge sticks (bundled with burnable twine) or sprinkle these herbs onto a burning charcoal round; or incense of these varieties. Find herbs significant for Death such as:

- Rosemary for remembrance
- Rose petals for love
- Mugwort for communication
- Sage or frankincense for safe passage on/protection
- Basil for holiness/purification

A favorite recipe

Kitchen witches, you know what to do. What was their favorite food? Something you used to share together is wonderful here. Prepare a meal, if possible with a candle burning that you meaningfully charge with the intent of your meal. Taking a moment to share a meal, make up a plate for them as well, light a candle and reminisce.

Play their favorite music

Smile. When you blow out the candle, offer the food to local wildlife. Leaving it out somewhere safe under the moonlight for the evening is an option as well to give your greetings time to be received. If it's not safe to put your food outside, disposing of it with a thankful blessing to the Goddess is ok, too.

Create an altar to your loved one

I made an altar for my Nana using a shelf from 5 Below, a frame from the dollar store, a tea light holder that spoke to me at Goodwill, and two crystals gifted to me by her. I also dried a yellow rose when I was gifted a bouquet, her favorite flower. For \$6.50, plus changing out the tea light every so often (a pack of 12 is at the Dollar Tree!) I have a small, meaningful space for when I want to send her some love. You can bless or cleanse your altar by running each item through the smoke of any of the incenses above, or another favored cleansing incense (palo santo or lavender, broom, or sweetgrass smudging bundles are other popular choices for

ritual cleansing or house smudging.) Sit here or brush a hand on the photo of a loved one when you want a moment with them. PS: Some people say it's bad luck to have a picture of the living on an altar for the dead; I am in the picture of me and my Nana and for me that was fitting, as it's my place to communicate with her. If you're doing seances and pendulum readings at your altar, maybe the superstition could be true; or if the living members on the altar are near death themselves. But as always, follow your instincts in your practice.

Journaling or writing a letter

I burn these letters with my Coven on Samhain to send them to the other side; you could do this at home on the Witches' New Year yourself, or right after you write it. Keeping it as a memento is fine, too. It's the intention - cliché, yes, but it's true!

Burning a candle on the anniversary of their birth, death, or an important moment like an anniversary or child's birthday

Sometimes I do this just because I'm thinking of them, too; there's never a wrong time to honor the dead and remember our loved ones. Celebrating their way for the day adds strength to this. Burn a candle, either as part of a wider ritual like calling the quarters or a deity first, or as a simple moment alone with your loved one. Anointing the candle (lightly) with oil before burning, and/or carving a meaningful sigil or symbol for them onto the candle before burning can be a nice touch. Say a prayer for them and their loved ones, let them know you're thinking of them. Remember that the flame burns down as our lives do, but they burn into the atmosphere as well, becoming a part of the cycle in a new way. Let the candle burn down in solidarity with this understanding of Death.

Meditating Together

This can be the traditional kind of meditation - counting down from 10 and clearing your mind, or having your eyes focused on a picture of your loved one. Some do a scrying technique, a mirror painted black, a flame, a dark-colored bowl full of water with a dime at the bottom.

A Meditation to Honor and Connect with Loved Ones

Get comfortable

I like corpse pose, or try sitting in a comfortable chair you like. It doesn't have to be yogi-style with no back support, the goal is comfort so that you can realize trance, or unawareness of your body. Staying present in the mind, in this moment with your loved one.

Deep breathing in and out through the nose

Square breathing (in for four, hold for four, out for four) or circular breathing (in for 6-8 beats, out for the same count) are great ways to relax your body and calm your mind.

Once you're in your comfortable spot, breathing, relaxed, thoughts calmed if not blank.

Imagine yourself in the same position you're in, in the dark. You have the sensation of a forest around you, though you couldn't say what time of year it was. You're comfortable, but don't hear any wind through the trees. You can't see, so you're smelling the cool forest air. It's loamy and green, like moss, or a clean greenhouse at the start of spring. No humidity, but no breeze, like it's waiting with you for something. It's a joyful anticipation, but you're content to wait here in the open, cool glen.

Suddenly a large torch alights, about 6 feet from you. It illuminates the graceful shadows of leafless trees onto the backdrop of night sky, fading from black just behind the trees, up to an opaque gray overhead. The trees loom around you, the center of the huddle, taking the very shape of the globe and reminding you that you are small.

A shooting star passes through the atmosphere overhead as you take in the vastness of the sky. Your time on this earth is just as short, in the grand scheme of it all. You take a deep breath. Your eyes return to earth and you glance around the circular glen, assessing all sides of their shadowy embrace.

A sound, musical to your ears after such silence, draws your attention behind you. Stepping out of the shadow, appearing through the gentle mist you didn't realize was between the trees at the border of the glen, it's (your loved one... or a Messenger for them; you'll know), smiling, their familiar expression of greeting spurring a wide reaction on your own face.

You gesture for them to sit with you; there's so much to talk about.



KITCHEN WITCH'S CAULDRON IRISH CREAM TRUFFLES

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup Bailey's Irish Cream
- 12-oz bag of semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 2/3 cup egg substitute or four egg yolks
- 2 Tbs butter
- Cocoa powder



Method

In a heavy saucepan over low heat, combine the Bailey's and chocolate chips.

Maintain over very low heat so your chocolate doesn't scorch, and stir until the chips have melted.

Add heavy cream and egg/egg substitute.

Blend until smooth.

Stir in butter, whisking until thick.

Remove from heat, and chill overnight until firm.

Once the mixture has firmed up, use a spoon to scoop it out and roll into 1" balls.

Roll each ball in the cocoa powder until coated.

Depending on the size of the balls — and how much of the dough you eat during prep — you can get a few dozen truffles out of this.

If you like, instead of rolling in cocoa, use powdered sugar, colored sprinkles, flavored coffee powder or chopped nuts.

To make a great gift, roll up a cone of heavy parchment paper, drop some truffles inside, and tie with a ribbon.



from: www.learnreligions.com/recipes-for-the-imbolc-sabbat-4125902

QUEEN OF EARTH AND SKY: WORKING WITH THE GODDESS INANNA

BY ELYSE WELLES

Inanna is the Goddess of Earth and Sky from ancient Mesopotamia. Her priestess Enheduanna is the first published female author in history. Texts of Inanna's worship are among the earliest known written works by any humans – Her power is older than any other deities as far as archaeology can prove. She embodies the Divine Feminine and the aggression of creation as Goddess of fertility, love, procreation, war, and power. Her many aspects are Astarte in Caanan (of the Bible), Ishtar across the Middle East, Aphrodite in Greece, Venus in Rome, Neith in Egypt, Virgo in the stars, and it's been suggested that she is reflected in Freya in Norse mythology as well. Some see her in Hecate's energy, despite her attempts at becoming a psychopomp being foiled by her sister Ereshkigal, the Goddess of the Underworld - but in that story, Inanna attempted to take control of Ereshkigal's domain, and lived to tell the tale. In fact, when Inanna returned to Earth from the Underworld, it was on condition that She find someone to take Her place. She could not find a single human who hadn't mourned Her loss, and she couldn't sacrifice a loyal worshiper. But her husband Dumuzi wasn't happy to see her right away, he enjoyed his power status while the Queen was away. Needless to say, he wasn't seen on Earth again. Inanna is the fierce feminine aggression that tells you not to back down - and you listen. She is channeled in the conquering energy of an intimidating person who will not smile for you. She is the sex worker who loves what she does. Quitting the job you hate and not settling for less anymore - that's Inanna's energy. Traveling alone to a

new country or state. Announcing to your family that you're transitioning - and not caring how anyone reacts. Starting your new business. Pressing charges against your abuser, no more excuses. Inanna's energy means owning your identity, even in the face of disrespect, and not hiding or backing down. Inanna comes to me when I am in my weakest moments and shouts reason at me. And don't worry, you'll hear Her! My first encounter with Inanna was in my second year of practice. I had been weak in ending my relationship at the time. Young and inexperienced, I felt trapped in an unhealthy relationship with a very sick person. I had wanted to dump him for almost 6 months, but he kept convincing me and guilted me and manipulating me... needless to say Inanna was embarrassed for me. She jarred me, shook me out of it. Like a slap in the face when the cold of shock is starting to turn to a panic attack. It's just what I needed. I had dreams of Her, saw Her in meditation, found grey feathers on my walks to class - change was in the air. And then a morning dove built its nest at the window in my dorm, right by my altar. Every tarot card I drew - the Adder, Kingfisher, Balance, The Blasted Oak (I use the Wildwood Tarot) - I knew what I had to do and yet I still procrastinated. One day I got to my room and sat at my altar to meditate on it. I wasn't eating at this point, I was so anxious about getting out of this relationship. As I kept trying to meditate, the morning dove would peck at the window, and sing, and tweet. Pushing me. I draw a card. A snake again - one of Inanna's sacred symbols, a recurring image on

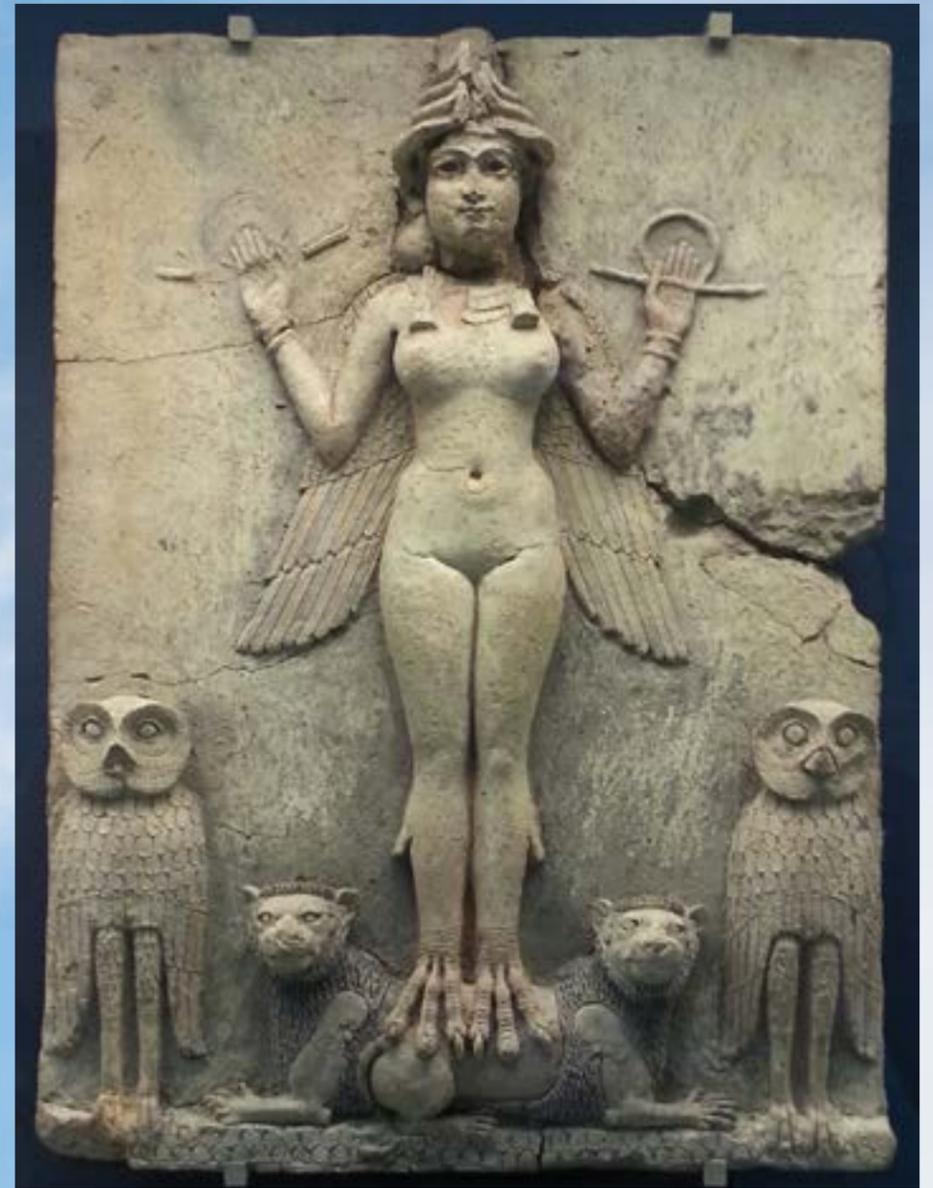
the cards I had been drawing. I texted him right then and there, he came up that next Monday and I finally did it. It was the best decision I had ever made, and Inanna's guidance pushed me in the healthy direction. I hope that Inanna can help you reclaim your power and feel invincible like she does for me. The ways She has helped me since that first meeting are more than I can count. Her wisdom is a mindset if you want it to be.

Ways to Honor Inanna

1. Feed the birds at your local park or in your yard.
2. Donate supplies to women's shelters, and period products and bras to all shelters.
3. Stand up for yourself and trim the fat in your social life. Demand respect.
4. Hike a mountain - a famous tale of Inanna's mythology is her conquering of the great Mount Ebih.
5. Take up lifting, go bungee jumping or skydiving, go to an event or try something you've always been chicken to try - engage in activities that make you feel strong.
6. Don't kill snakes - literally, or by accident. Set your mowers to a higher level. It also saves bunnies' nests and clover, a necessity for bees.
7. Spend the day or afternoon doing something alone and for yourself, just because you want to.
8. Incorporate poetry and song - Inanna's priestesses wrote and performed dances, often quite salacious ones, in Inanna's honor. The poem below is one of pages and pages of verse by Enheduanna:

In-Nin Šagurra - Lady of Largest Heart by Enheduanna

This version of "In-Nin Šagurra", or Lady of Largest Heart, is a compiled poem from Enheduanna's three poems: Inanna and Ebih, Lady of Largest Heart, and The Exaltation of Inanna. It is not my own words, only my own interpretations of Enheduanna's words, and working from Betty de Jong Meador's translations in "Inanna: Lady of Largest Heart". This is a working version - I'll often change or omit a verse every time I revisit it. I've used this poem in personal ritual, and single words or phrases from the 20+ page poems accessible are excellent material for any ritual, prayer, or mantra. As this 5,000-year-old writing is fragmented, and translated multiple times over, I don't think it's offensive or strange to adapt any existing translations we find; they all come out differently in every publication regardless, and the personal meaning behind our veneration and communication of Inanna and Her journeys is what matters. Even just Her honorific title, In-Nin Šagurra (EEn-nEEn shAH-goo-ra) is an excellent choral round or single chant for meditation – pair it with your eyes closed, some burning incense, and gentle swaying and you will feel Her power.



In-Nin Šagurra

Inanna, circling the sky, circling the earth
I attack the mountain at its heart
The Lady came near
The mountain did not fear
Great Lady Inanna
Clad in dread
riding on fire-red power
She goes out
white-sparked, radiant
In the dark vault of evening's sky
Star-steps in the street

Through the Gate of Wonder
Inanna, your torch flames the four quarters of
the Universe
Spreads splendid Light in the dark
May I stand before you
May your eyes shine upon me
Take my measure
Oh my Lady, my Queen
I unfold your splendor in all lands
I extol your glory, forever
You are sublime, you are venerable.

GRACE IN THE ABYSS:

BY ELYSE WELLES

*"I used to command the Rhodian winds
And your regions of the sea
Whenever I'd want to set sail.
Whenever I'd want to stay there,
I'd say to the regions of the sea:
'don't smite the seas with your blows
Lay smooth the brine for seafarers.'
Then every fair wind is raised;
they shut out the blasts, and so, God
[Poseidon],
grant the impassable to be passable."
- Greek Magical Papyri, Hymn 29*



The God Poseidon - God of the Sea, patron of fishers, sailors, and their families - is entreated to for safe voyages, bountiful fishing hauls, and peace for those lost at sea.

But in modern times of human-made climate disasters, Poseidon is called upon for protection and safety in a new way. He is a refuge, and a means to discard our fears. He is reviving in new ways for the new times we live in.

I am a Greek witch, sharing my experiences and meditations at sacred sites on Seeking Numina. On location, I feel the power of these sites in ways I want to bring to anyone who can't go there themselves, and the Temple of Poseidon, the wide embrace of his Sea, the refuge he offers us all, is there for any who need him.

I am starkly reminded of his power in the response he gives to the climate crisis here in Greece.

Wildfires sweep through Greece and her islands every year, and in recent years it is worse than usual, and happening in many in places they have never happened before. In June of 2022, months before the fires are expected, there were 52 wildfires

in a single day. In August of 2021, fires burned for 13 days straight throughout Evia, and across the Athens area, which I call home.

I've seen ridges of mountains blindingly red with fire. I've watched ash wash ashore and coat the sea, something I've never encountered in years of time in Greece. Entire towns and regions have had to be abandoned, and it is likely these areas will be deemed unsafe to build in again.

Regions of Greece that have been inhabited for 10,000 years or more will be abandoned for the first time because of human-made destruction. I won't make this article about the science - that is something you can all research for yourself, and likely have as a follower of a nature-based religion. If this period of record climate extremes on both hemispheres have taught humans anything, if the tropical storms sweeping even inland places show us any harsh truths, it is that our Mother is in dire trouble, and there is no denying that or hiding from it. But what I cling to as a hope, what I can see as pure magick in a world on fire, is the refuge of the sea.

In Greece, since 2021, there have been only 3 deaths during these unprecedented fires. There aren't strong evacuation procedures - many of the towns that burned are isolated in the mountains, with narrow, unpaved roads as the only access points for first responders. Islands don't often have their own hospitals or many response teams. In fact, Greece has firefighters come from France, the UK, Germany, and all over Europe to aid in putting them out. But there have been only three deaths.

It is by the grace of Poseidon that so many lives have been saved, as the people know to run to the sea for safety from the fires. Ordinary civilians in boats arrive in the waters to retrieve the refugees, guided along by Poseidon, his arms protecting and soothing burns, and delivering to safety thousands of lives. For thousands of years he has been listening and watching, ever-present, a constant protector. Today, in an era that often feels very removed from his crumbling temples' heydays, we are reminded of the spiral of time. All that was, still is, and all that will be, has been.

POSEIDON'S EMBRACE

Originally published on Darksome Moon's online blog (now defunct)

Invocation to the God Poseidon

written at the Temple of Poseidon in Sounio, Greece

by Elyse Welles

God of the Sea,
Father of the Naiads,
Protector of Fishers and Sailors,
open your warm embrace to us here in your Temple.

Fill our nets with sustenance,
guide our boats on soft currents.

We ask that you bring calm to those lost in your abyss,
and comfort to their loved ones who will visit your Temple in grace.

We run to you in refuge from the fires of the mountains,
for protection and safety when the heat is too great.

We run for relief and peace,
your lulling waves timeless,
your waters ever-warm,
forever clear even at the deepest depths.

Poseidon is in a time of revival and new power again in the human-caused disasters, as water levels rise and the sea becomes desalinated as glaciers melt into it. He is as powerful as ever, yet tempered by these changes.

As pagans, it's important to be aware of the changes and destruction humans are bringing, the changes that we are a part of. It is our responsibility to do our part to slow it, and do what we can to bring about healing. But we are also now realizing we are likely in a new territory with climate change - what they warned us of has arrived. We are in the era of no return. These disasters will be lasting, and may return every summer season. Our work with deity and land must change as well. Recognizing these disasters and the way they're changing the earth's connection to deity, and humanity's place in the spiral of life, is the vital work we must engage in. Adjusting our relationship with deity, and reassessing our understanding of their strengths and powers, is a large part of that.

This is the meditation I wrote on location at his temple at Mt. Sounio on the mainland in Greece:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4blXWPy7t90

The invocation below ends the meditation, but the text is included here for your use. Feel free to use the below invocation in your practice, adapt and adjust it for your region, and please in your healing works, remember Greece and her lands burned beyond repair. To donate money or time to the fighting of these fires, consider supporting Forest Fires Protection Volunteers of Attica: www.edasa.gr/en. Even when the flames go out, the recovery will take decades.



Answering Altar Questions

With everything in the craft, it takes time to find your own way of doing things, and it takes time to feel comfortable enough to follow your instincts when it comes to your sacred spaces. This isn't a "how to" type article, it's designed for me to answer many of the questions that may arise when you're creating your sacred space. When I first started creating my own altars and sacred spaces, these were questions that I, myself had too.

What is an altar?

An altar is a sacred place where you gather objects that have ritual meaning to you and perform a variety of Magickal working or meditation.

Do you NEED an altar?

In all honesty? No, you don't NEED to have one. However, they can help keep you focused on the magical, spiritual or divination work you're doing.

Does an altar have to be a certain size?

Answer: No, an altar doesn't have to be a certain size or shape. You need to work with the space that you have. I have used a round table, an old TV unit, an old bedside table and a blanket box, shelves and even the windowsill.

Do altars need to be a special table?

No, they don't. As I mentioned above, there is no set type of furniture that makes an altar an altar. You need to look at what you have in your home and decide what is best for you. I currently have an altar in the kitchen on the counter, I have a shelving unit in the hall and a large Welsh dresser.

Do altars have to be in a special place?

If you read any book, they'll have a suggestion on where the altar should be, but sometimes we don't always have the luxury room that we can decorate to match our path. My cat's altar faces North, my main altar faces West and the one in the kitchen faces east. They are facing these directions because I have limited space and put them where I was able to.

Do you need special layouts?

Again, read any book or site and you'll find that they all have suggested layouts...me I follow my instincts...my greatest gift and ally.

Do I need to use special cloths?

No! I use scarves, pillowcases, old bits of fabric, an old cardigan, blankets. There are beautiful altar cloths out there, but I'm happy otch-botching my altar cloths by using what I have on hand, and I mostly use scarves or scraps of cloth that I have.

Can I put an altar outside, in the kitchen or the bathroom?

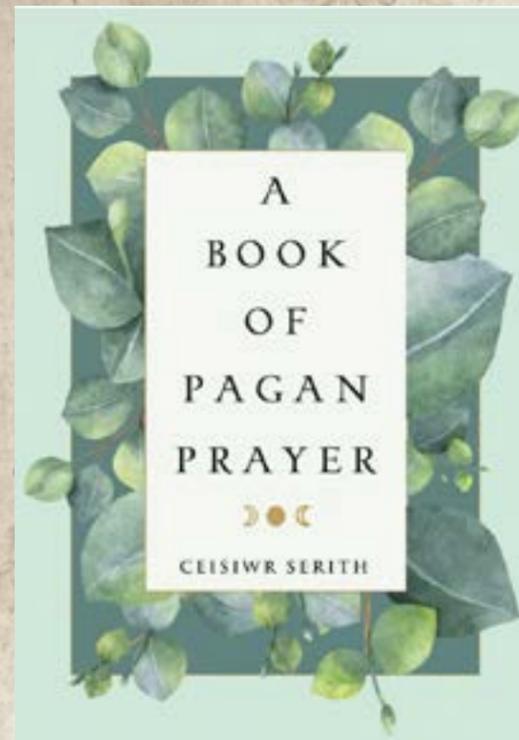
You can put your altar anywhere you want to if it is safe to do so. It's your sacred space after all. My main altar is in the bedroom, my cat's altar is in the hallways as it's a family thing, and my Hestia altar is in the corner of the kitchen counter.

I love your colorful altars; how can I brighten mine up?

It's easy... You can add injections of color with candles, ribbons, crystals and flowers. You can use real or artificial flowers that is up to you. The most important thing about creating an altar is you do what feels right for you, because after all, you aren't creating a sacred space for other people.

)0(Rainbow Love, Light and Blessings *)0(*

BOOK SPOTLIGHT



A Book of Pagan Prayer

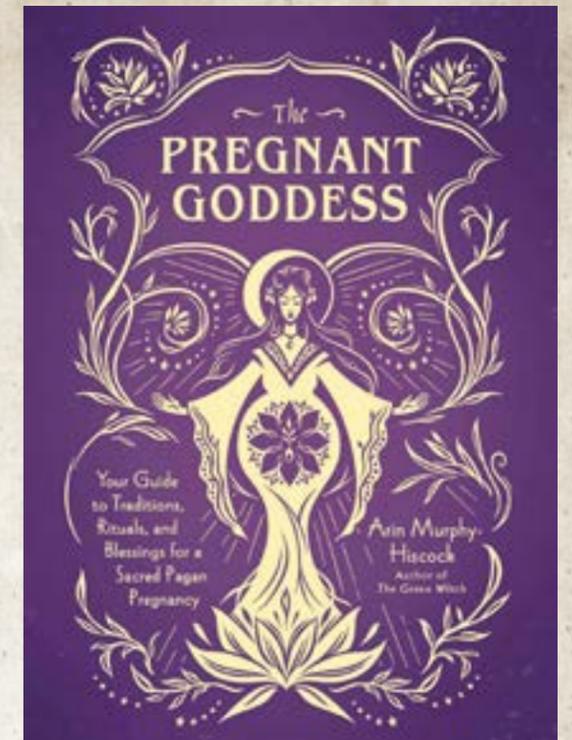
By Ceisiwr Serith

"Steeped in tradition--"Those of us who call ourselves Pagan owe a debt to all those who came before us"--and based on more than a quarter century of research and practice, A Book of Pagan Prayer teaches us to pray in the ways of our ancestors for very modern times and concerns.

Changes to this revised edition include rearranged chapters and prayers and the addition of two new chapters, all of which make the book easier to use. The chapters are now arranged in an order that follows a ritual, and all the litanies have been moved to their appropriate chapters. Two new chapters--"General Requests and Offerings" and "Travel, Protection, Imprecatory"--combine two types of prayers out of the general "Petitions" into one. Prayers have been labeled with the deities to which they are addressed and arranged in logical order within each chapter. Prayers to new deities have also been added. In addition, a major problem with the first edition has been corrected: prayers for Lughnasadh/Lammas and Midsummer, two of the eight great neopagan holidays, have been added.

A unique collection of nearly 500 prayers written to fulfill the needs of contemporary pagans from a variety of traditions, A Book of Pagan Prayer is a book to turn to again and again.

Red Wheel, Language: English, Paperback, 304 pages



The Pregnant Goddess

By Arin Murphey-Hiscock

Embrace the divine feminine power of the Mother Goddess and learn how to spiritually prepare for pregnancy with this guide to Pagan rituals, meditations, and traditions for every milestone over the next nine months!

As you make the transition from maiden to mother, you fully embody the Mother Goddess. Embark on this sacred journey with this complete guide including special meditations, affirmations, and rituals designed to help you attune to the divine energies of childbearing.

The Pregnant Goddess teaches you how to:

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- Conduct rituals to aide in conception, safe pregnancy, and easy delivery
- Practice responsible magic during these critical nine months
- Deal with unexpected delivery developments

The Pregnant Goddess is the perfect companion as you embark on the most magnificent and magical journey of your life!

Adams Media, Language: English, Hardcover, 224 pages

A YEAR IN THE CRAFT: CREATING A WITCHY VISION BOARD

BY ELYSE WELLES

2023 is upon us. The new year has stretched its arms, yawned, had its cup of coffee and is settling into itself. But maybe you're like many, and the new year has felt like a whirlwind already. And like many witches, maybe you're looking for a way for 2023 to be your witchiest year yet, but you're not sure how to get your thoughts, goals, dreams, and wants straight.

Goal Setting is easier said than done. The difference between a dream and a goal is simply a plan, but how to even envision that end product? It's hard to see the forest through the trees, as they say – we're at the beginning of a long road, but we want to make the most of the journey, too. Creating a vision board is a way to connect yourself to your goals holistically, with a visual reminder, and a tactile means of planning it.

A vision board is a visual poster which shows your goals for the year. It is meant to inspire you to stay on track, and try new things in line with your goals for the year. You can use pictures and words, quotes and symbols from the internet, magazines, newspapers, or even that junk mail. Stay tuned for a template at the end, and a 21st century suggestion.

When we create a vision board, we're indulging our inner child. Those days of art class collages come back to us. We can put on our favorite album or witchy playlist, wear our comfy clothes and get crafty (and



Crafty.) When our inner child is happy, our creativity is ignited. We'll find ourselves going off script – adding things we didn't initially plan, drawing when we meant to just write, dancing a bit, bobbing our heads, smiling to ourselves. Suddenly we're excited about our goals, and not the boring adult way: we're giddy, energized. The

font in a magazine might remind you of medieval England, which might remind you of a bonfire, and make you want to do the spiral dance around a fire this year. The best news? You're the adult who can provide that to your inner child! Make a plan with friends and do it! This is your year.

The sneaky scientific part of what makes a vision board effective is that it uses all five senses. It's visual, colorful, and descriptive at a glance. It's tactical to create, solidifying your goals as you write, draw, or paste it together. Read aloud your goals, or even assign a song that fits with your goals as your 2023 witchy anthem. For smell, you can bless it with incense, spray it with your favorite perfume, or sprinkle it with essential oils. Once it's completed, show it to your ancestors, patron deity, spirit guides, or whoever you work with by sharing libation with them at your altar.

Once it's finished, you can leave it on your altar space, or hang it on the wall behind it to continue charging it in rituals throughout the year. Keep it handy and nearby so you don't forget: you want it to be there to remind yourself of your goals. Maybe you draw a sigil on it, and that becomes a symbol you can repeat on other parts of your house or workspace to remind you subtly that you're working towards these goals.

I know what you're thinking. "This isn't a bad idea Elyse, but it is a little time-consuming. And I don't have a bunch of newspapers and magazines laying around, it's 2023! Paper-free, girl!" Well fear not, because I created a vision board template on the next page that you can tear out, print out, or use digitally. You can also simply use the prompts as guides and write

a journal entry responding to each of those. The key here is using all five senses. Looking up photos, seeing them all next to each other, and then creating strategies for the year is visual, and inviting to your other sense. Tactilely write out your reading list and daily practice goals. Drink your favorite tea while you do it, and light your favorite scented candle or incense. Engaging your whole body and mind is the most effective thing you can do.

Regardless of how you make it, a vision board is a fun and effective way to guarantee you won't lose track of your goals in the hubbub of daily life; and looking at it will hopefully remind you of the fun you had in creating it. Take that fun with you as the theme of the year's witchcraft.



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