

# The Witchtower

Pagan Network Magazine

Yule 09 / Imbolc 10



# The Witchtower

Yule 09 / Imbolc 10

Published by Pagan Network  
www.pagan-network.org  
Email: witchtower@gmail.com

ISSN 1741-5683

## Staff Details

Co-Editor - Twilightgirl  
Co-Editor - Andy Norfolk  
Assistant Editor - Beith-ann  
Reviews Editor - Julia Oakmoon  
Layout/Design - Twilightgirl

## Contributors:

Andy Norfolk  
Twilightgirl  
Beith-ann  
Stilly  
Isauria Winter  
Lupa

All articles are © of the member who submits them.  
Opinions expressed by members do not reflect that  
of Pagan Network or its management committee

## In This Issue...

### 3 Alphabet Soup

*Its all in the way you write*

### 5 Ancient Circle

*A Shakespearian look at the planets*

### 6 Out of the Shadows

*The 9th Path*

### 7 Walk Between Worlds

*Are you doing your bit for the earth*

### 10 Enchanted Earth

*Stilly's Potting Shed*

### 11 Timeless Tales

*Creation Stories*

### 13 Stir the Cauldron

*Chicken Bone Soup*

### 14 By Candlelight

*Travels with the Snow Queen*

### 19 Ancient Wisdoms

*Exploring Animal Totems*

### 20 Book Reviews

*Journey to Enlightenment and Spiritual Tattoo: A Cultural History of Tattooing, Piercing, Scarification, Branding and Implants*



## Editorial

Welcome to the Yule 09/Imbolc 10 edition!

Once again we are entering another exciting year for the Witchtower magazine and I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the magazine over the last year.

This year we are introducing a new series called Timeless Tales. Timeless Tales will cover myths and legends from various cultures. We kick off this series with creation stories. I hope you enjoy it.

Also make sure you have a pen handy too whilst you're reading, so you can take part in the "Are you with Stupid" quiz, which is part of Andy Norfolk's article about Pagans and The Climate.

Don't forget that if you'd like to contribute an article to the magazine just drop us an email at the witchtower@gmail.com

Enjoy your reading!

*Twilightgirl and the Editorial Team*



# A L P H A B E T

# S O U P

Magic - how does it work? Well much of it, whoever does it and no matter what their system may be called, seems to be about symbolic representation of a desired outcome. You get this picture in your head of what you want to happen and then make a pattern in the here-and-now of how it should be. That pattern can of course involve actions and spoken words, but it will often include a written or drawn component. This isn't anything new. People have been doing this stuff for millennia.

Of course that may make it difficult to be precise in setting down what is meant. A progression from simple pictures would be hieroglyphics in which the individual elements in a script represent something far more than just a literal interpretation - an ear of corn isn't just that but could mean harvest, for example. This fits neatly with the ideas of The Doctrine of Signatures that the spiritual or magical essence of something is represented by its form. However the writing that has become

spondences that would otherwise be missed. (Not my idea of fun) Some early magical alphabets, such as Theban first recorded by Johannes Trithemius in Polygraphia published in 1518 and Celestial invented by H C Agrippa in 1531 were derived from the Hebrew alphabet. These appear in early grimoires and later books such as, for example, Francis Barrett's book The Magus published in 1801. I wonder though how much magic there is in simply substituting one symbol for another in a text,

but no doubt the extra concentration required to write out the transliteration helps focus magical intent.

It used to be said that what made people different from animals was the use of tools, but now we know of many animals who use twigs, rocks and other things to get food. Perhaps it is symbolic thought that really makes humans different? People have been making drawings for thousands of years, and that is remarkable. Even more remarkable is that people have been using small inscribed, drawn or carved marks for at least the last 7,000 years, some say 20,000 years, to represent things in a much more abstract way and that writing was invented in at least four different places.

Writing was seen as something wonderful by those who first used it. In many mythologies it had a divine origin having been invented by a deity; Thoth in ancient Egypt, Enlil in Sumeria, Ogma in Ireland or Odin - though he of course dredged the runes from the Well of Mimir so in a sense they already existed. Most people have lost their wonder at the strange way in which written language can express or record thought or be used to create thought - it's worth stopping to think about that again. Who is the god of the text message? We all know the power of names and words in magical terms - could the next Pagan best-seller be a book on text-message magic?

The first writing was probably ideographic, that is based on pictorial representations of things. It may also have been a good representation of the true nature of what it portrayed. A simple graphic image can also have many subtle shades of meaning associated with it.

universal is phonetically based and in its letters represent sounds in a spoken language, though that might be hard to see in some languages like English, and this is a more abstract way of recording concepts..

In some languages letters were used as substitutes for numbers, until these were invented later. This accounts for the strong association between numbers and letters in the Hebrew alphabet, which makes it possible to find the numerical values of words and find corre-

lations that would otherwise be missed. (Not my idea of fun) Some early magical alphabets, such as Theban first recorded by Johannes Trithemius in Polygraphia published in 1518 and Celestial invented by H C Agrippa in 1531 were derived from the Hebrew alphabet. These appear in early grimoires and later books such as, for example, Francis Barrett's book The Magus published in 1801. I wonder though how much magic there is in simply substituting one symbol for another in a text,

The drawback with a merely phonetic system is that letters are no longer seen to have an intrinsic meaning. What for example is the symbolic meaning of the letter "A" in the standard Western alphabet? In Greek, alpha has the meaning of a bull or more generally cattle. In other writing systems these associations also exist, for example, in the runes where the letter A, ᚦ means ash and Odin and in ogham A, ᚏ now said to be a fir tree (and silver fir wasn't introduced to Britain until about 1603 so it can't be that!) in both cases with other complicated associated concepts. This means that brief strings or combinations of runes, bind runes, can contain complicated ideas as magical sigils - of course the true meaning may only be obvious to the person who wrote the sigil. What for example is the meaning of the Bluetooth logo? It combines the runes G, X and B, ᚷ of which one

interpretation could be the gift of safe childbirth! Could this be a subtle bit of protection against possible concerns about the effects of electromagnetic radiation? A bind rune is a form of sigil - a symbol created for magical purposes constructed from various letters, symbols or geometric figures. This can be seen as condensing the magical power of many component parts. These sigils are then charged with magical power in the usual ways, such as meditation, ritual or sex magic. There are examples of sigils in many of the grimoires



such as the Lesser Key of Solomon and I've often wondered if some of the squiggles on them are debased Arabic script.

It's a general truism that there is power in words. From a Pagan perspective this goes far beyond the mere ability to affect the opinions of others. The right words used as part of a ritual can be transformative. The right words written down can, in theory, be very magical. It probably helps if they are written in a way that shows that this is something out of the ordinary. If you are the sort of Pagan who likes to work magic then choosing your words carefully and then setting them out in a magical script should result in a greatly increased intent and, in theory, potency.

This can be taken a step further by using your written wish to construct a sigil. Austen Osman Spare, who died in 1956, was a wonderful artist and also practiced his own form of magic which included making sigils in this way. He would start with a "Sentence of Desire" - a brief, positive, precise and unambiguous statement of what he wanted to achieve.

The next step is to remove all repetitions of letters. Those that remain are then combined into a sigil. This method and indeed much of Spare's work has influenced later groups, such as the Temple of Psychick Youth, and chaos magic. TOPY's American website says that a common belief among their members is in the magical power of language and that changing everyday phrases can break an automatic loop of speaking without thought.



So deliberately being quite explicit in what you write for magical purposes, using a different alphabet, or creating a sigil are all ways of breaking out of everyday constraints.

By Andy Norfolk.

## Shops supporting the Pagan Network Full Members Discount Scheme

### **Halcyon Daze**

55 Wellfield Road, Roath, Cardiff, CF24 3PA Tel: 02920 454432

### **Halcyon Daze (little shop of calm)**

1 Westgate, Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan Tel: 01446 771166

### **Hippypottermouse**

15 Boar Lane, Leeds, LS1 6ED

Website - [www.hippypottermouse.co.uk](http://www.hippypottermouse.co.uk)

### **Liminal Threads**

(online shop only)

Website - [liminalthreads](http://liminalthreads)

### **Madeline Rose**

121 Kirby Road, Leicester, LE3 6BE

Tel: 0116 2536320

### **Moonshadows Realm** (online shop only)

Website - [www.moonshadows-realm.co.uk](http://www.moonshadows-realm.co.uk)

### **Pentacle Magazine**

For those in the UK, you can obtain a subscription to Pentacle Magazine for just £12 (instead of £14)

Website - [www.pentaclemagazine.org](http://www.pentaclemagazine.org)

### **The Gem Tree**

Ground Floor, Indoor Market, Leicester, LE1 5HG

(Open Tuesday to Saturday 9-5)

Website - [www.thegemtree.com](http://www.thegemtree.com)

### **The Green Cross Toad**

(online shop only)

Website - [www.greencrosstoad.co.uk](http://www.greencrosstoad.co.uk)

### **Thirteen moons Trading Post**

(online shop only)

Website - Thirteen moons Trading Post

### **Witchcraft Ltd**

10 Benedict street, Glastonbury, BA6 9EX

Website - [www.witchcraftshop.co.uk](http://www.witchcraftshop.co.uk)

# Ancient

# Circle

## A Shakespearian look at the planets - in four parts

*.....Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful  
history,  
Is second childishness and  
mere oblivion;  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans  
taste, sans everything."*

Dear Reader, I have to admit that this last part takes an amount of explanation and a certain stretch of the imagination but I will try to explain it to the best of my ability.

The Planets as far as Saturn were all observable with the naked eye to the ancients. They still are if we have a clear and dark enough sky. It was only with the invention of the telescope that Uranus, Neptune and Pluto were discovered. Even then, the discovery of Neptune came from not observing the planet but the fact that it had a gravitational pull on the orbit of Uranus.

The Outer Planets have existed as long as the rest of the Solar System, we were just unaware of them until we had the technology that enabled us to observe them. Thus they have always symbolised in part, the subconscious. They are the generational Planets that link us to the peer group and the shared experiences of the generation in which we were born.

If you look at the essence of the Outer Planets individually and what they mean, it is something like this:

Uranus - Ideas of the collective and the revolution that would bring those ideas in to being; new ways of thinking and the technological impact. It is the wider application of Mercury, a higher resonance if you like

Neptune - IDEALS of the collective and the spiritual drive of the generation. It is also that which connects us to the collective unconscious and collective love. A higher vibration of Venus

Pluto - It is important to realise that Pluto was discovered around 1930 and whatever they say about it being a minor Planet these days, it had an Astrological impact all the same. At the same time as the Planet's discovery, the atom was split and Freud developed psychoanalysis. Pluto is about higher striving of the collective, the dark and light, higher vibration of Mars.

Therefore, all the personal Planets have a link into the outer Planets.

The last scene in Shakespeare is the path towards death, and for those of us who believe in an afterlife, our Journey towards the Otherworld, the Summerlands, Heaven, Nirvana or to the waiting and resting area between lives.

We can read Shakespeare's words as the descent of the body and mind back towards a new childhood, preparing it for another birth; the setting Sun and waning Moon. Although the words don't describe it as such, the intimation is there for anyone who wishes to see it. The link between the last stage of Shakespeare's Ages of Man and the outer Planets is that it describes the final part of the journey to the doorway of a New Dawn and a higher vibration as described by the essences of the Planets.

That completes our exploration of the Solar System using the words of Shakespeare.

I do hope this series of articles have given you something to think about even if you don't agree with some or all of the

premise. I also hope you have enjoyed reading about it as much as I have enjoyed exploring and writing about this sideways look at Astrology

By Beithann

By  
Beith-ann

## Donate A Book Scheme

Do you have a Pagan book you no longer want (or were given by that well meaning relative!)?

If so The Witchtower Magazine would be happy to receive it to review. It doesn't matter if it's an old or new book, or whether its Pagan fiction or non fiction.

Unfortunately we are unable to buy the book from you or pay the postage cost, but we would be happy to mention that you donated the book to The Witchtower Magazine for review, and you will get your name mentioned in the magazine, along with a PDF copy of the magazine that your book appears in!

If you do have any books you wish to donate please email us at the [wichttower@gmail.com](mailto:wichttower@gmail.com) to let us know and we'll tell you where to post it.

Don't forget you can always submit your own reviews for publication too!



# Out Of The Shadows

## THE 9TH PATH

I've recently read an article which got me thinking about something that may be missing from the average Pagan toolkit. In the November 2009 edition of *Time and Mind*, "the Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture", Yulia Ustinova's article "Cave Experiences and Ancient Greek Oracles" explains why enclosed spaces were used for inspired prophecy. These oracles contacted gods and nymphs and were inspired by them, or possessed by them, and in this altered state of consciousness gave enquirers divine guidance. The Greeks used the term *entheos* for having the god/goddess inside one - hence the term *enthusiasmos* for divine possession, which was quite different from mania that described ordinary madness. In some cases a person might be possessed by Pan leading to divine inspiration, a state known as *panolepsy*, quite distinct from the state of terror known as *panic*. Nymphs also gave divine revelations when



a person fell into a state of nympholepsy. The variety of terms for the states involved and the number of oracles that existed in the ancient world at caves, some of which were artificial, shows that this was a wide-spread and highly regarded part of everyday belief and practice.

Oracles inspired by the gods were a

fundamental part of Greek religion. People sought truth from the oracles. Ustinova says "The quest for the ultimate truth is the kernel of inspired prophecy. For the Greeks, its knowledge belongs to the gods alone, and could not be perceived by the limited human mind, held back by mundane thoughts." It was not just the professional oracles who got inspired by the gods and had revelations. Ordinary visitors to some caves were prepared and also had mantic experiences. Plutarch described how a visitor to the *Triphonium* spent two nights and a day in the cave and entered a world in which he flew over an ocean with shining isles and in a state of ecstasy was told by voices about the mystery of reincarnation and told that he was about to die. Being in this enclosed space brought on an out of the body experience passing from darkness to bright light, feelings of flight and unearthly happiness, visiting a blessed land, and a gift of truth from disembodied spirits.

Being in an enclosed dark space is a sort of sensory deprivation. When the mind is cut off from normal external stimuli strange things begin to happen. Modern researchers have reported that sensory deprivation results in dreamlike or trancelike states, in which there are meetings with celestial beings and divine guardians. There may be subjective experiences of being in huge limitless spaces and of becoming limitless oneself. People still have experiences like this in caves, prehistoric chambers and passages.

Of course Ustinova who is an Associate Professor of history at Ben-Gurion University sees the visions and so on that people experienced in ancient Greece as merely the result of sensory deprivation and also in many cases, hallucinations brought on by inhaling ethane, methane and ethylene which leak from natural rock fissures. However the first

two would simply cause asphyxiation, if they didn't blow you up first, the last is the only one to produce euphoria and psychological effects. She does not even hint that she might consider there really are spirits inhabiting caves and no one would expect her to. This is one of the problems with much psychologically based research into spiritual and religious experiences. It is always assumed that something that triggers an altered state of consciousness explains away all that may be experienced as being an internal process of the brain. From a Pagan perspective it would be seen that an altered state of consciousness enables easier contact with the divine or spirits, which exist as an external reality.



In the UK, Mother Shipton seems to be our equivalent of an oracle. Carole Bohanan the new witch of Wookey doesn't count I'm afraid. The temple to Nodens at Lydney may also be a British example of an oracular site, though here apparently the sick received visions in their dreams. Maxine Sanders' account of her initiation, at somewhere that sounds suspiciously like Alderley Edge, in "Maxine, the Witch Queen" could be an account of just such an out of the body experience triggered by sensory deprivation. This book is however a tad dubious, starting with the quote from *News of the World* on the cover! Although the association of witchcraft with Alderley Edge seems to only date back to 1962 when Alex Sanders coven appeared in a newspaper article this area. However this place does have a reputation for being otherworldly. Alan Garner wrote of it as being a place of wonder, a place of dreaming where the Otherworld could be accessed. I suspect he meant within the Bronze Age mining tunnels.

In Pagan traditions throughout the world people have used various forms of sensory deprivation to reach communion with spirits and the gods. The priests of the Kogi from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta are kept in darkness. The initiation of aboriginal medicine men seems to involve just such an out of the body experience which involves the use of a cave and feelings of flying in a bright space. Back home Celtic seers would be tightly wrapped in the hide of a freshly killed bull in the ritual known as *tarbh feis*, which enabled them become divinely inspired with *awen*. No doubt you can easily think of many other examples. Of course travel through a beautiful and bright land feeling euphoric and being given otherworldly guidance is also a classic part of stories of visits to the world of the fair folk, who coincidentally usually live underground.

The Gardnerian *Book of Shadows* describes the Eightfold Way or paths to the centre and says that these 8 are all there are. It mentions meditation and trance, but says that meditation is forced by concentrating on what is desired and that trance is projection of the astral. It seems to me that the value of enclosed dark spaces has been largely overlooked by most Pagans. (I do however have a particular fondness for such places and am lucky enough to be able to visit ancient sites with them close to home.) I assume that the state of altered consciousness that the use of the 8 paths are supposed to achieve, described by Vivianne Crowley in "Wicca" as transpsychic reality, is the same as that achieved by Greek oracles and perhaps by Mother Shipton and Maxine Sanders. I vote for the more formal recognition in the accepted Pagan toolkit of the use of caves and similar enclosed spaces to achieve contact with the divine.

By Andy Norfolk

# Walk Between Worlds

I'm shocked. I'm shocked by the nonsense being spouted on some web sites by Pagans about climate change. Climate change is not a swindle or a hoax - it's real - it is happening and we as Pagans should care about it deeply and perhaps in ways that non-Pagans don't.

My own Pagan path has always been related to concern about the environment. This has shaped what I believe, how I live my life and indeed how I earn my living. I've been involved in various environmental campaigns since the end of the 1960s. I've read a great deal about environmental matters in that time and along the way got an MSc in landscape ecology. In 1980 I gave some evening classes in Canterbury about environmental issues. I talked in them about climate change. The idea that humans have been messing up the world's climate is not new. Indeed this idea has been around since at least the 1960s.

In 1970 Oberon Zell, well known American Pagan and founder of the Church of All Worlds, gave a lecture based on a revelation that he had about the unity of all things. This was reprinted in Green Egg magazine in 1971 as "Theogenesis" and in it he set out the first published version of a Gaea theory. Subsequently he has rethought some of his ideas, but not the fundamental underlying premise - all living things ultimately derive from a single cell and are therefore all directly related and form a single organic being. The entire planetary biosphere is the largest living organism on Earth. This entire Gaea concept springs directly from Zell's Pagan beliefs.

Later in the early 1970s James Lovelock published his more scientific take on the same idea. The world works as a complicated sys-

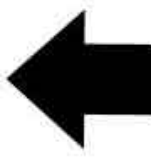
tem in which all parts depend on each other and modify and mitigate each other's effects. That should be a concept that fits easily into

University of East Anglia? Don't they show there has been some sort of cover up and lies about climate change? Doesn't this undermine the whole hypothesis? Frankly no they don't. How could they? This whole area of research has involved many hundreds of scientists over decades. A few emails misrepresented, spun and misquoted do not and cannot undermine all that research and the solid consensus that has built up in the scientific community in that time. Bluntly - the people who deny that climate change is happening

are most likely to be driven by selfishness, whether this is on the part of states that have large reserves of coal that they still want to burn, like Australia, or individuals who think they have a personal right to have everything they want whenever they want and hang the consequences.

**Not Pagan Stupid?**

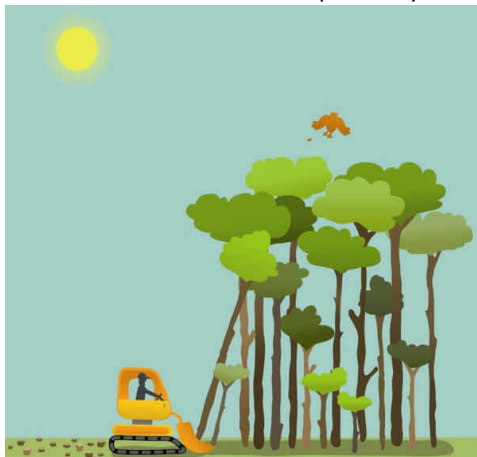
**I'm with Stupid?**



Pagan beliefs. We generally accept that what we do has consequences and that we should take responsibility for them. I hope most of us also have a basic understanding of how habitats work in the natural world as components of Gaia. Each habitat is made up of a complex web of relationships between all the plants and animals within it and of course the soils and so on which they live. Damaging one part of an ecosystem can have catastrophic results destabilising it and potentially causing its collapse. As Pagans I hope we also take into account the spirits who we may see as part of that system.

In January 1972 the Ecologist magazine published a special edition, "The Blueprint for Survival", in which human produced rises in CO2 emissions were identified and a global temperature rise as a result was predicted. This is not a new idea. It has been discussed and researched by a very large number of scientists over decades. The scientific evidence for climate change is now overwhelming.

The Pagans I know and spend time with are concerned about environmental issues. It is possible that they are unusual in that respect, but I don't think so. I've been identifying myself as a Pagan since 1970 and since then have spoken to a very large number of other Pagans. Of course we do not all believe the same things and it seems to me that it really is true that for the vast majority of Pagans their beliefs really are nature-based and closely related to the natural world and its natural cycles. What else are our 8 festivals all about if not a direct and deep relationship with the planet? So what about the emails that were stolen from the Climatic Research Unit at the



In some ways the scientific community lags behind pagan thought. There is recent branch of ecological philosophy called deep ecology which considers humankind as an integral part of its environment. Well, hey guys, we could have told you that!

So why on Earth are some Pagans against the idea that climate change is happening? I don't know. No matter what some say most Pagan paths, whether they want to be known as nature-based religions or not, inevitably have a fundamental relationship with the natural world which is the corner stone of their beliefs. We have gods and goddesses and spirit beings who inhabit every part of the natural world which is seen by some to be based on a World Tree and for many the Earth is our primal mother. We mark the changing seasons and see divinity as immanent - in every natural thing.



We should surely be concerned that we are affecting this natural order that we base our beliefs upon and may be in the process of destroying it. It is not surprising that many Pagans are actively involved in campaigning for the environment generally or that many were at the recent Copenhagen conference on climate change. Perhaps the next time all the countries in the world get together they will actually agree to do something.

Wake up - read the real research and not the crap put out by people with their own selfish agendas for denying that climate change is real and that humanity is responsible - and do something about it. It shouldn't require any thought for a Pagan; it should be instinctive and fundamental to your beliefs.

Start at  
<http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/actonco2/home.html>

Oberon Zell's article is at  
<http://original.caw.org/articles/theagenesis.html>

By Andy Norfolk



## Are you with Stupid? Climate Change Quiz

### 1. What can you do to reduce your CO2 emissions?

- a - Buy a big expensive running car
- b - Fit loft insulation
- c - Go fishing

### 2. What should you consider when buying a car?

- a - That it is the pretty colour that you want
- b - Check the colour-coded fuel efficiency label
- c - Check that there is room for your furry dice

### 3. How can you save water in the home?

- a - Make sure I run a full bath every day for everyone in the family
- b - Don't leave taps running when washing up or brushing your teeth
- c - Have a water butt in the garden but only so the birds can drink from it.

### 4. What's the best sort of barbecue charcoal?

- a - The cheap stuff from the garden centre
- b - Locally grown hard-wood charcoal from a well-managed native woodland
- c - The left-overs from the last ritual incense extravaganza

### 5. What sort of margarine causes least environmental damage?

- a - The cheapest supermarket own-brand
- b - The one you see most in the TV ads
- c - One that contains no palm oil

### 6. How does your garden grow less CO2?

- a - By using the best peat-based compost for everything
- b - By using compost made with bark
- c - By making your own compost

### 7. How should you light your home?

- a - Buy up all the old incandescent light bulbs you can find and keep using those.
- b - Use those nice cheap nightlights everywhere for that Pagan feel
- c - Use energy saving light bulbs

### 8. How would you save money and CO2 on washing?

- a - Use a 30° setting and only wash full loads
- b - Use the high temperature setting to get things cleaner so you can wash them less often
- c - Put the washing machine on every time you need to wash a shirt

### 9. What's the best way to keep your house warmer for the least money and the quickest payback?

- a - Burn more coal, turn up the gas fire, or use a higher setting on your electric fire or central heating
- b - Get cavity wall insulation installed.
- c - Set fire to it.

### 10. How can you get cleaner electricity with lower CO2 emissions?

- a - Use the cheapest supplier
- b - Make sure you get yours from a supplier that runs nuclear powers stations
- c - Go onto a "green" tariff so that all your electricity comes from renewable sources

See how well you scored on the next page.



# Are you with Stupid? Quiz Answers

## Q1 - Score 1 point for A, Score 2 points for C, Score 3 points for B

Did you know that fitting loft insulation to the recommended amount (270mm) could save you up to £100 a year. Even if you already have insulation, you could still save up to £30 a year. More information can be found here <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Home-improvements-and-products/Home-insulation-glazing/Loft-insulation>

## Q2 - Score 1 point for A, Score 2 points for C, Score 3 points for B

Most new cars in a car showroom have a colour-coded fuel efficiency rating like fridges and washing machines. The coding is from band A to band M, with bands A and B representing cars that emit the least CO2, as well as having lower car tax. The lower the emission band, the lower the tax you'll pay. The label is also a guide to the running costs you can expect for that car over 12,000 miles, so you can compare how much different cars cost to run.

From November 2009, the fuel economy label became available for used cars as well as new cars, so look out for it in showrooms. The used car fuel economy label applies to cars up to two years old, though data will be available back to 2001 for dealers who choose to label older cars.

## Q3 - Score 1 point for A, Score 2 points for C, Score 3 points for B

Every minute a tap is running it uses around 6 litres of water. When doing a large load of washing up, keeping a tap running all the time for washing means that a lot of clean, hot water will disappear down the plug hole unused. And that means higher energy bills, and if you have a water meter, water bills too.

Instead, there are several ways to wash dishes without constantly running the tap, just fill

a washing up bowl full of water instead. You can calculate your water savings using the calculator here <http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk/actonco2/home/campaigns/save-water/calculate-your-water-savings.html>

## Q4 - Score 1 point for A, Score 2 points for C, Score 3 points for B

Maintaining local woodlands helps them keep locking up carbon. Much imported charcoal is made from mangrove cleared for prawn farming on the coasts of Africa and south-east Asia. This releases CO2 as the mangrove is cleared and stops it absorbing more. Don't buy this charcoal and think carefully about where your prawns come from

## Q5 - Score 1 point for A, Score 2 points for B, Score 3 points for C.

Palm oil production has been directly linked to irreversible environmental damage including deforestation and peatland destruction, threatening species such as orang-utans and an increase in CO2 emissions. Unfortunately there is no credible certification for sustainable palm oil production and most foods contains it - even though it may be innocuously labelled as vegetable oil. Try and avoid processed foods.

## Q6 - Score 1 point for A, Score 2 points for B, Score 3 points for C.

Peat bogs are a vast natural reservoir of organic carbon. By one estimate, the bogs of Europe, Siberia and North America hold the equivalent of 70 years of global industrial emissions. Destroying peat bogs releases huge amounts of CO2 and we should not encourage it by buying peat based products.

## Q7 - Score 1 point for A, Score 2 points for B, Score 3 points for C

These new light bulbs only use about 75-80% of what the old ones used. Cheap nightlights

are likely to be made of paraffin which is derived from oil and is relatively inefficient as a light source. Soy based nightlights aren't a great idea because deforestation is being caused by the expansion of soya bean growing and of course this releases yet more CO2.

## Q8 - Score 1 point for C, Score 2 points for B, Score 3 points for A

Washing at 30 degrees C as often as you can rather than higher temperatures uses around 40% less energy. Dry clothes outside as often as possible. Look for an Energy Saving Recommended model of washing machine when buying a new one - it can save you around £11 a year compared to a 10-year old machine.

## Q9 - Score 1 point for C, Score 2 points for A, Score 3 points for B.

Cavity wall installation typically costs about £250 but will save you about £115 per year on heating, so it pays for itself in about 2 years. It will save about 610kg of CO2 per year. It can also help reduce condensation inside a house.

## Q10 - Score 1 point for A, Score 2 points for B, Score 3 points for C

You can get a green electricity supply from most suppliers and if it comes entirely from sustainable sources then you save all your CO2 emissions. However there's a potential catch. Some suppliers are talking about using biodiesel made from palm oil which would be directly linked to deforestation, CO2 emissions etc. Check what you are buying. Nuclear power may emit no CO2 directly, but a lot would be emitted during construction of the plants and of course there are other problems with this power source

# So what does that make you?

## 0 - 9

Mmmm.. you have heard of Global Warming right and you know that when we are talking about going green we're not talking about the incredible Hulk? Look this is the only planet we've got. If you as a Pagan feel part of it and think it matters on a spiritual and religious level perhaps you'd like to do more on a material level to make sure our descendants can also be Pagans and enjoy the natural world as we can. Please read some more about what you can do to help save the planet by visiting the CO2 website.

## 10 - 14

You are now a Gaia Trooper - Okay, your making progress. Even if you find some of the bigger things daunting to tackle, you could easily do a few more small things to reduce your environmental impact. Take a look at the Act on CO2 website for more information and helpful tips. Remember even doing just small changes in the way you live your life can have a big impact.

## 15 - 25

Your on your way to becoming a Tree Hugger - You're trying to save the planet and you obviously care about the "beauty of the green earth" and want to help keep it that way. Still we could all try a bit harder and try not to become lax about it. Keep working on it and the next thing you'll know you'll be an Eco Hero!

## 25 - 30

So your aiming to be an Eco Hero eh? - Well done with getting this far! You are entitled to feel a bit smug. You seem to be doing the best you can to save the planet, Gaia really appreciates all your work, but remember you can always go that extra mile, so how about driving a bit less, turning off more lights when you aren't using them and not leaving electrical appliances on standby...





# ENCHANTED EARTH

## Stilly's Potting Shed

Well hello again, caught me just tidying out the shed, looks like I've got mice. Probably came in out of the cold, can't blame 'em for that though, only thing is they have eaten most of my seeds.

Well things haven't been too bright lately; every time I want to get up here it has either been far too wet, too frosty, covered in snow or the Missus has other plans. Well I have made it at last and although the ground is still far too wet for digging, and I have lost 4 panes of glass in the greenhouse due to the high winds, there is still plenty to be getting on with.

What you ask? Well let's see:

**Chitting Potatoes** - buy your seed potatoes now and place them in an old egg tray rose end up, (the end with the most eyes). This needs to be done about 6 weeks before planting and gives them a head start before getting in the ground. When planting potatoes I've found that I suffer from scab (well not me personally but the potatoes), this is not a problem but does affect the ability to store them, so I'm giving them a sulphur compound recommended by another plot holder to see if that cures it or at least reduces it.

**Peas** - Get an early pea such as Feltham First and plant in 3ft sections of guttering filled with compost and leave in the greenhouse until about 2-3 inches high, this will give them a good start and will stop them being eaten by mice, mind you keep them covered with netting when you have planted them out as the Pigeons will eat the new shoots as well.

**Carrots** - If the ground is dry enough to get on, then an early carrot such as Nantes can be planted from mid Feb onwards, as can beetroot (Boltardy or Detroit), but make sure they are covered with either a cloche or horticultural fleece.

**Onions** - onion seeds need to be planted now. or alternatively look at getting sets as they are easier and you will more or less be guaranteed a crop. Onion seedlings take a lot of looking after, but can be worth the effort. Spring onions can be planted now under cover and garlic can be started off in pots before planting out later if it is cold or if the ground is frozen, if not then they can go straight into the ground. Remember to separate the cloves from each other before planting as each clove will give one bulb of garlic.

**Sweet peas** - These can be started in pots ready for planting out in April, start them off in 3" pots 3 to a pot, and leave them on a warm windowsill to sprout. Once they have sprouted move to a greenhouse or cold frame and harden off.

If you are lucky and the ground is dry enough, start your trench for runner beans by digging a trench about a foot to eighteen inches deep and fill it with garden waste. This will retain water and help with nutrients for the plants when they are planted out in mid-May. You can also do this with a large tub. You will need a tub about 3ft in diameter, a plastic one is fine, fill it about 1/3 of the way with a mixture of compost and topsoil. Then place kitchen waste to a depth of 6 - 8 inches, then cover with more compost/soil mixture to the top of the container and leave for about 6 weeks. You can then plant runners directly into the tub. If you have a conservatory or sheltered frost free place you could do this in April and have early runners in June.

All the vegetables can be planted in pots or troughs, but you must

remember to water regularly and that will mean at least twice a day when the weather is hot and dry (if only). Some of the best veggies grown in pots and containers are salad leaves, lettuce, carrots, tomatoes, chillies, spring onions and radishes as these are quick crops and can be grown in relatively small areas. Potatoes can also be grown in either old plastic sacks or special growing bins.

For any root crops make sure the container is deep enough to take a full grown root, so for Nantes carrot sticks they rarely get above 6in long. For salad leaves you can use the cut and come again varieties or small lettuces such as Little Gem and Tom Thumb. Any radishes will grow well but I grow Scarlet Globe and White Icicle. For spring onions, it's hard to beat White Lisbon.

You will also need to mix topsoil and compost to ensure that the soil can retain moisture. You can mix in a water retaining gel as well but there are some issues to exactly how green it is. Another aspect is feeding plants grown in containers; plants may require extra feeding and this will depend on your conscience and if you wish to be organic or not. You can use an all purpose fertiliser such as Growmore. This is an artificial fertiliser and will produce excellent results, but it is NOT organic, there are organic fertilisers available such as Bradfield Organic Veggie 2-3-6 ([www.bradfieldorganics.com](http://www.bradfieldorganics.com)) that will do the job just as well.

One thing I intend to do this year, which I have been promising myself for years is to finally sort out my herb garden. I have allocated the front border for this and it will contain as many herbs as I can squeeze into a 3yd by 1 yd plot. I will give you an update and hopefully pictures as well in the next issue.

Good Digging  
Stilly

# Timeless Tales

Please note that all information provided here is from the view point of an interested amateur.

## Creation Stories

We all want to know our "creation story", to explain how we and the world around us came to be. Different cultures have different explanations for the creation of mankind and the world we live in, and many creation stories and other myths have powerful messages about how we should live our lives.

Over the next few issues we will look at the creation stories of different cultures, starting this issue with the Native American.

There are many Native American tribes, each with their own creation stories. However, many of these creation stories share a common theme. Animals also play a large part in Native American creation stories, as well as many other stories and myths throughout their culture. The Native Americans are well known for their myths and legends, which were passed down orally from generation to generation in order to explain everything around them.

Many of the creation stories of Native Americans, consist of a large body of water where no land exists. Then an animal or several animals attempt to swim far under water in order to find mud, which is then transformed into land. These creation stories are often referred to as Mud Diver or Earth Diver creation stories. Below are several Mud/Earth diver stories.

### From the Crow Tribe

When the world began, it was a dark world and there was nothing but water everywhere. The Old Man of the Crow People came into the world and shouted out "is there nothing in this world but water?" Then the Old Man saw in the distance two ducks swimming along. He shouted out to them and they came to him to see what he wanted. The Old Man asked the ducks whether there was anything more to this world than water. The biggest and eldest duck said that he had never seen anything but water in this world. He also said that deep in his heart he felt that there was something more underneath the water. The

Old Man asked the smaller and youngest duck to dive down under the water to see if he could find something below the water. The young duck went searching deep below the water and was gone for a long time. The Old Man thought that the younger of the ducks had drowned and said so to the elder duck. However, the elder duck explained to the

Old Man that ducks are able to hold their breath for a long time and not to worry. Eventually the younger duck came bobbing up from below the water with a piece of root in his beak. He presented this to the Old Man who declared that if there was root then there must be earth as well. He asked the elder duck if he would dive down to see if he could bring back some earth. After another very long wait the elder duck appeared with a ball of mud in his beak. The Old Man took the root and ball of mud and put them together. He then blew on the mud and root three times. Every time he blew on the mud it expanded and grew in size, until it became land alongside the water and on this land grew plants and animals. From this day on, ducks are able to live on water, land and in the sky for they helped the Old Man create the world for the Crow Tribe.

### From the Cherokee Tribe

Once there was just water, no earth existed that could be seen. All the animals lived in the sky, however the sky was becoming crowded and the animals began to wonder what existed below all the water that was spread out below them. The water beetle volunteered to explore below the water. He discovered that below the water there existed a lot of mud. He carried a little bit of the mud to the surface of the water, once there the mud then began to expand in size and spread out and upwards until it became the earth we know. When this happened, the animals in the sky above attached the sky to the four ends of the land with four strings. The earth at this point was still flat and too soft to live on, so the animals decided to send a bird down to the earth to see if it had dried out enough for them to live on yet, but each time the bird returned saying that the land was still too moist to support them. They then sent Grandfather Buzzard. Grandfather buzzard had a lot of land to cover and he grew tired. Every time his great wings hit the ground, a mountain or valley formed on the flat land. The animals then decided that the earth was too dark, so they asked the sun if he would like to travel along a path over the earth so that they could see the earth that had been created. The sun agreed and now travels on a path from east to west.

Creation myths often contain the Mud/Earth diver story but some also involve singing the world into being. Below is an example.

### From the Lakota Tribe

Before the world we know today, there exist-

ed another. In this world the people did not behave themselves or follow the Creator's rules. So the Creator decided to destroy the world. He sang several songs in order to bring the rains. The more the Creator sang the stronger and harder the rains poured until eventually the earth split apart and water flowed everywhere until no land could be seen anywhere. All the animals and people drowned apart from the crow. The crow grew tired of flying and pleaded with the Creator to make him a new place where he could rest. The Creator heard the crow's plead and decided it was time to create a new world. The Creator pulled forth his pipe bag that contained everything needed to create a new world, including every type of animal and bird. Firstly the Creator selected from his pipe bag four animals who were known for their ability to remain under water for a long time. Each of these four animals would retrieve a lump of mud from below the waters. The first animal to venture under the water was a loon diver. But the loon diver failed in its task. The next to go was an otter, followed by a beaver. Neither of these creatures were able to bring back the lump of mud needed in order to recreate the land. The last animal to swim deep beneath the water was turtle. Turtle was under the water for an awful long time, so long in fact that it was thought turtle had drowned. But then suddenly turtle surfaced carrying with him mud between his feet, claws and in the cracks between his shell. The Creator was very pleased with turtle and began singing the power song whilst molding the mud into the shape of the land on top of the water. When the land was big enough to hold the Creator and the crow, the Creator took two eagle feather wings and used these to spread the mud out further as he continued to sing the power song of creation, so it created a large body of land that became the earth. However, the earth was dry with no water other than the oceans that flowed at the far edges of the land. The Creator was sad at this and cried. Where the Creator's tears hit the dry land they became streams and lakes that flowed over the land and kept it fertile. The Creator called the land the Turtle Continent in honor of the turtle. The Creator then pulled forth from his pipe bag the animals and birds of many varieties and spread them across the land. From the red, white, black and yellow earth he made men and women. The Creator told the people the story of those who had lived there before and gave



to the people his sacred pipe and told them to live by it in peace and harmony with each other and the animals, warning them that if they did not they would face the fate of those before them.

Creation stories involving several different realms or levels are also popular. Again part of this myth contains the mud diver theme.

**From the Iroquois Tribe**

The world was covered in water and only inhabited by those animals who could survive without land. In the sky above was a different world that was inhabited by beings who were similar to humans. Between the water world and the sky world there was a very special tree that those who lived in the sky world called the Tree of Life. The people in the sky world were forbidden to tamper with the Tree of Life. However, one heavily pregnant woman grew curious about the tree and persuaded her brother to uproot the tree. Underneath the tree there was a great big hole. The extremely curious and pregnant woman looked over the edge of the hole but couldn't see much, so she leaned over further into the hole, gripping the earth either side of the hole to help balance her, but she lost her grip and tumbled down through the hole with earth from the sky world still in her hands. As she fell down towards the water world she cried out in distress. The birds from the world below saw her fall and heard her cry. They quickly responded and many of the birds gathered together in order to break the sky woman's fall. Once they had caught her they carried her to the back of the great sea turtle. The creatures of the water world discussed what they were to do with the pregnant sky woman. They believed that as the sky woman had fallen with earth clutched between her fingers that she must need earth to live on. So those who could dive deep enough all tried to bring back mud from the bottom of the water bed. However the muskrat was only able to bring back a small amount of mud in his tiny paws. From this bit of mud Turtle Island began to grow. Eventually the pregnant woman who fell from the sky gave birth to a daughter on Turtle Island. The sky woman's daughter grew tall and fast. As there were no men on Turtle Island, the daughter married a being known as the West Wind. The daughter soon found herself pregnant and gave birth to twins. The first twin born was called the Right Handed twin. The second twin born was called the Left Handed twin. The Left Handed twin caused his mother to die during his birthing.

After the death of her daughter, the sky woman placed the earth that she had grasped from the sky world when she fell onto the grave of her daughter. This earth from the sky world carried within it special seeds that nourished the earth over her daughters grave. From this grew Sacred Tobacco, strawberry and sweet grass. As the twins grew they both had special powers. The

Right Handed twin had the ability to create flowing hills, beautiful flowers, streams, brooks, butterflies and many other wondrous creatures and plants. His brother the Left Handed twin, had the ability to create thunder, lightning, thorns on rose bushes, snakes, scorpions and other darker things in order to balance out all the wonderful things his brother creates. The Right Hand twin believed in diplomacy and conflict resolution where as the Left Hand twin believed in conflict as a resolution.

When their grandmother the sky woman's time came and she passed away, the twins fought over her body. They pulled her body apart, throwing her head into the sky where it remained to shine down on them to this day as Grandmother Moon. The twins eventually decided that they were unable to live together without fighting, so they agreed to dwell in different realms. The Right Handed twin lived in the daylight and the Left Handed twin lived during the night.

Even today, songs are thought to be powerful and are seen in many rituals and ceremonies of the Native American Indians. Below is a creation story involving singing forth the earth and its inhabitants.

**From the Pima Tribe**

Darkness was all that existed as far as the eye could see. Darkness and emptiness. The Earth Doctor drifted across the darkness with nothing to do. Eventually he decided to make the darkness and emptiness more comfortable, so he thought to himself that he needed a plant and there before him appeared a creosote bush. He set the bush upright but it fell over. He set the bush upright again and again it fell over. After the fourth time the bush stayed upright. The Earth Doctor then took a little dust from his breast and flattened it into a small round shape. He then started singing a creation song and danced upon the small round shape made from dust. As he did this he created a termite which worked with the dust shape, expanding until it grew larger. The dust shape became a flat world that stretched out on all sides. The Earth Doctor then sang his magical song and created a round sky cover to fit over the world. But the earth began to shake and the Earth Doctor decided it wasn't stable enough, so he made a grey spider who spun a web around the edges of the earth and sky in order to hold them together. When this was done the earth stayed solid and was stable. Next the Earth Doctor made water, mountains, trees and plants whilst he sang his creation song. But the world was still in darkness. The Earth Doctor made a dish and poured crystal clear water into it. He gently blew on this water and it became ice. He then threw this block of ice as far north as it would go and it landed at the place where the earth and sky were woven together by the grey spider's web. But the ice disk didn't stay in the sky before sliding back down. The Earth Doctor threw the ice to the West and South where each time the ice slid back down. Only when the Earth Doctor threw the ice disk to the East did the ice stay in the sky for any length of time and shine brightly before slowly sliding down to the other side. We now know this as the sun. The Earth Doctor did the same again with another block of ice. In

each of the directions the ice disk slid slowly down, until the Earth Doctor threw it into the East, where it shone brightly (although not as brightly as the sun) before sliding gently down. We now call this the moon that follows the sun's path. The Earth Doctor decided that more light was needed in the sky in order to dispel the darkness. So as he sang his creation song he took a little water in his mouth and blew it out in a spray pattern across the sky, thereby making the stars.

Then there are creation stories where beings or creators wish for something to be in existence and it is!

**From the Winnebago (Hotcák) Tribe**

In the beginning there was nothing other than the Earth Maker. The Earth Maker became conscious of this and began to wonder what he should do. He became sad and began to cry. As the tears flowed from him and landed below they began to sparkle. The Earth Maker noticed this and looked below him to see what was sparkling. The Earth Maker's tears had become oceans. The Earth Maker thought to himself, "if I wish anything, will it become as I wish, just as my tears have become oceans". So the Earth Maker wished for light and light surrounded him. "Ah", he thought, "it is as I thought. Whatever I wish for comes into existence". So the Earth Maker thought of an earth and it appeared, but the earth moved around with the oceans and rivers and made a lot of noise. So the Earth Maker made some trees and grass but these did not make the earth quieter or still. So the Earth Maker created some mountains, rocks and stones and threw them down on to the earth. The earth grew stiller but was still noisy. Next the Earth Maker created four winds who took the forms of four large beings, each wind being belonged to each of the four directions and acted as Island weights at each corner of the earth. Despite this the earth did not get any quieter. The Earth Maker then created four more large beings and threw them down onto the earth. These beings pierced through the earth with their heads eastward. They became snakes and then the earth became quiet. The Earth Maker was happy with the earth now. It was then that he decided to make a being in his own likeness. So he took a piece of clay and made it into a form that looked like him. When he tried to talk to the form it didn't answer him as it had no mouth, tongue or soul. So the Earth Maker gave the clay form all these things. When the Earth Maker next tried talking to the clay form it spoke to him but the words were intelligible, so the Earth maker breathed into its mouth and the clay form was able to breathe and talk coherently.

Whereas some of the myths above include the creation of the sun, moon, stars and mankind, there are also many separate myths that cover these. I am sure that we will explore these myths and others in more detail as this series continues.

By Twilightgirl

# Stir the Cauldron

## CHICKEN BONE SOUP

As I am writing this there are several centimetres of snow lying on the ground outside and my thoughts have turned to something warming and hearty. Chicken Bone Soup has long been a family favourite when there are cold winds outside and sniffles inside. This recipe uses the bung-it method. There are no measurements and many variations depending on what you have in your cupboard or fridge.

After a roast chicken dinner, strip any meat left on the bird and put to one side. This can either be used for sandwiches or preferably put back into the soup. (If you don't have a roast chicken carcass to hand you could always get some thighs and drumsticks to make the stock from and then strip the meat from them after the stock has been made - I have done this quite successfully)

Put the carcass of the chicken into a large saucepan or stock pot and cover with cold water.

Add to it the following:

- A carrot or two - cut in halves or even broken
- An onion or two depending on the size, leave the skin on it adds a lovely colour to the soup
- A couple of sticks of celery
- A few cloves of garlic, whole and unpeeled
- Some peppercorns
- A couple of bay leaves

These are the basics but these can be changed to your taste.

Bring to the boil, put a lid on the saucepan and simmer for at least 45 minutes.

In the meantime, dice the following to whatever size you like

- Carrots
- Onions
- Garlic
- Celery
- Potatoes

Any other veg you might have going a bit limp in the bottom of the fridge

Strain the stock and discard the bones and the rest of the stock ingredients EXCEPT the cloves of garlic. (If you don't like waste you could always peel the onion and purée it along with the rest of the stock veg to add as a thickening later on)

In the saucepan put a little oil or other preferred frying medium and fry off the onion and garlic until transparent. Don't forget to add the garlic a bit after the onion so it doesn't burn. Add the other diced veg, sauté for a couple of minutes and then pour the stock onto them - now comes the fun bit

Remember the garlic cloves you saved from the stock? If you squeeze them, mushy garlicky loveliness comes out of them; put that in the soup too. Add any other tastes that take your fancy.

My favourites are:

- Salt and pepper,
- Dried mixed herbs
- Worcestershire sauce
- A pinch of dried chilli flakes - I just like a warming tingle, but you could put more in if you like

Anything else I have in the store cupboard that I think might go - you have to keep tasting here, I have come up with some 'interesting' concoctions in the past.

Finally, for unctuous texture, a handful and a half of pearl barley, depending on how much liquid you have. You could use pasta or rice, but I love pearl barley!

Simmer for about 45 mins to an hour or until the pearl barley is tender. At this point I add the chicken meat back into the soup and some frozen peas for even more texture. Bring back to the simmer and make sure that the chicken is thoroughly reheated, check the seasoning.

Serve with huge chunks of nice bread.

For Veggies, leave out chicken.

by Beith-ann





# By Candlelight

Stories gathered from all corners of the land

## TRAVELS WITH THE SNOW QUEEN

Part of you is always travelling faster, always travelling ahead. Even when you are moving, it is never fast enough to satisfy that part of you. You enter the walls of the city early in the evening, when the cobblestones are a mottled pink with reflected evening light, and cold beneath the slap of your bare, bloody feet. You ask the man who is guarding the gate to recommend a place for you to stay the night, he looks you over with a smile and suggests his own bed, but you can't, not until you find Adam. You travel along the alley that leads to the Golden Goose. The Inn that the guardsman reluctantly recommended, although he still insists his own bed would do you the world of good. And even as you are falling into the rented bed at the inn, the bed that has been warmed and scented with roses to encourage you to relax and stay longer, you are dreaming about the road again, about the long dusty distance that still lies before you. While you sleep your feet have healed again.

Your destination is North. The map that you are using is a mirror. You are always pulling the bits out of your bare feet, the pieces of the map that broke off and fell on the ground as the Snow Queen flew overhead in her sleigh. Where you are, where you have come from and your final destination would be impossible to read if the map were made of paper. If it were that easy then everyone would be a traveller. You have heard of other travellers whose maps are breadcrumbs, whose maps are stones, whose maps are the four winds, whose maps are yellow bricks laid one after the other. You read your map with your foot, and behind you, somewhere there must be another traveller whose map is the bloody footprints that you are leaving behind you.

There is a map of fine white scars on the soles of your feet, these tell you how long you have been travelling. When you are pulling the shards of the Snow Queen's looking-glass out of your feet, you remind yourself, you tell yourself to imagine how it felt when Adam's eyes, Adam's heart were pierced by shards of the same mirror. Sometimes it is safer to read maps with your feet.

\* \* \*

Ladies & Gents... Has it ever occurred to you that fairy tales aren't easy on the feet?

\* \* \*

So this is the story so far. You grew up, you fell in love with the boy next door, Adam, the one with the mismatched eyes who brought you bird feathers and pebbles, the pebbles were smooth to touch. Occasionally he

brought you little skulls, from animals such as birds, mice, all of whom he told you had reached a natural end. You thought he loved you, maybe he thought he did too. His mouth tasted so sweet, it tasted like love, and you thought you were destined to be together, that fate had smiled upon you both. But three years and exactly two days after you moved in with him, you were having drinks out on the patio. You weren't exactly fighting, and you can't remember what he had done that had made you so angry, but you threw your glass at him. There was a noise like the sky shattering.

The leg of his tight black jeans got splashed. There were little fragments of glass everywhere. "Don't move," you said. You weren't wearing shoes. He raised his hand up to his face. "I think there's something in my eye," he said.

You looked at his eye but couldn't see anything, but later that night when he was undressing for bed, there were little bits of glass like grains of sugar dusting his clothes. When you brushed your hand against his chest, something pricked your finger and left a smear of blood against his heart.

The next day it was snowing, Adam had gone to the corner store for something, you can't even remember what for now and he never came back. You sat staring out the window, watching as people struggled by in the snow, waiting for Adam to walk up the path to the front door and into your waiting arms. The snow continued as darkness fell, fluttering down in a never ending spiral. You stood on the step by the front door, shivering in the cold, still waiting for Adam to return.

The next day the man at the corner store said that he saw your lover get into a long white sleigh and that driving the sleigh was a beautiful woman. He said that thirty white geese pulled the sleigh along. You went back to your home, which now felt so empty without Adam. You decided to wait to see if Adam would return, after all where could he have gone, and who was the beautiful woman in the sleigh.

Two months went by and Adam didn't come back. You could no longer stand to be in the empty house, the house that was once filled with the love and laughter you and Adam shared. You decided that if Adam wasn't going to come back to you, you had to find him. You were going to travel for love, without shoes, or cloak, or common sense. This is one of the things a woman can do when her lover leaves her. It's hard on the feet perhaps, but staying at home is hard on the heart, and you weren't quite ready to give him up yet. You told yourself that the

woman in the sleigh must have put a spell on him, and he was probably already missing you. Besides, there are some questions you want to ask him, some true things you wanted to tell him. This is what you told yourself anyway.

The snow was soft and cool on your feet, and then you found the trail of glass, the map.

After three weeks of hard travelling, you came to the city.

\* \* \*

No, really, think about it. Think about the little mermaid, who traded in her tail for love, got two legs and two feet, and every step was like walking on knives. And where did it get her? That's a rhetorical question, of course. Then there's the girl who put on the beautiful red dancing shoes. The woodsman had to chop her feet off with an axe.

Then there are Cinderella's two stepsisters, who cut off their own toes to try and fit in that glass slipper and the Goose Girl's maid got rolled down a hill in a barrel studded with nails. Travel is hard on the single woman. There was this one woman who walked east of the sun and then west of the moon, looking for her lover who had left her because she spilled tallow on his nightshirt. She wore out at least one pair of perfectly good iron shoes before she found him. Take our word for it, he wasn't worth it. What do you think happened when she forgot to put the fabric softener in the dryer? Laundry is hard, travel is harder. You deserve a vacation, but of course you're a little wary. You've read the fairy tales. We've been there, we know.

That's why we're here at Snow Queen Tours have put together a luxurious but affordable package for you, guaranteed to be easy on the feet and on a budget you can afford. See the world by goose drawn sleigh, experience the archetypal forest, the winter wonderland; chat with real live talking animals (please don't feed them). Our accommodations are three-star: sleep on comfortable, guaranteed pea-free box-spring mattresses; eat meals prepared by world-class chefs, we promise there will be no poison apples. Our tour guides are friendly, knowledgeable, well-travelled and trained by the Snow Queen herself.

Special discount for older sisters, stepsisters, stepmothers, wicked witches, crones, hags, princesses who have kissed frogs without realizing what they were getting into, etc.

\* \* \*

You leave the city and walk all day beside a stream that flows gently and looks refreshingly cool and clear. You wish that your map was water and not broken glass. At midday



you stop and bathe your feet in a shallow place, as you do ribbons of red blood curl out from your feet and into the crystal blue water.

Eventually you come to a wall of briars; it is so wide and high that you can't see any way around it. You reach out to touch a rose, and prick your finger. You suppose that you could walk around, but your feet tell you that the map leads directly through the briar wall, and you can't stray from the path that has been laid out for you. Remember what happened to the little girl who was your great-grandmother, in her red woollen cape, she strayed from the path and had a nasty encounter with sharp teeth. Maps protect their travellers, but only if the travellers obey the dictates of their maps. This is what you have been told.

Perched in the briars above your head is a raven, black, sleek and proud. The raven looks at you with all knowing eyes and you look back at it. "I'm looking for someone," you say. "A boy named Adam."

The raven opens its big beak and says, "He doesn't love you, you know."

You shrug. You've never liked talking animals. Once your lover gave you a talking cat, it was black and white with piercing blue eyes, eyes that seemed to know everything. You were secretly glad when the cat ran away, it talked far too much about things it shouldn't know. "I have a few things I want to say to him, that's all." You say to the Raven. You have in fact, been keeping a list of all the things you are going to say to Adam. "Besides, I wanted to see the world, be a tourist for a while."

"That's fine for some," the raven says. Then he relents. "If you'd like to come in, then come in. The princess Briar Rose just married the boy with the boots that squeaked on the marble floor."

"That's fine for some," you say. Adam's boots squeak and you wonder how he met the princess, if he is the one that she just married and how does the raven know that he doesn't love you. What is it that this princess has that you don't have, besides a white sleigh pulled by thirty geese, an impenetrable wall of briars, and maybe a castle. She's probably just some bimbo!

"The Princess Briar Rose is a very wise princess," the raven says as if reading your thoughts, "but she's the laziest girl in the world. Once she went to sleep for a hundred days and no one could wake her up, although they put one hundred peas under her mattress, one each morning."

This, of course, is the proper and respectful way of waking up princesses. Sometimes Adam used to wake you up by dribbling cold water on your feet. Sometimes he woke you up by whistling.

"On the one hundredth day," the raven says, "she woke up all by herself and told her council of twelve fairy godmothers that she supposed it was time she got married. So they stuck up posters and princes came from all over the kingdom."

When the black and white cat ran away, Adam put up flyers around the neighbour-

hood. You wonder if you should have put up flyers for Adam or reported him missing to the police. "Princess Briar Rose wanted a clever husband, but it tired her dreadfully to sit and listen to the young men give speeches and talk about how rich and sexy and smart they were. So she fell asleep and stayed asleep until the young man with the squeaky boots came in. It was his boots that woke her up".

The raven continued... "It was love at first



sight. Instead of trying to impress her with everything he knew and everything he had seen, he declared that he had come all this way to hear Princess Briar Rose talk about her dreams. He'd been studying in Vienna with a famous Doctor and was deeply interested in dreams."

Adam used to tell you his dreams every morning. They were long and complicated and if he thought you weren't listening to him, he'd sulk. You never remember your dreams. "Other peoples' dreams are never very interesting," you tell the raven.

The raven cocks its head. It flies down and lands on the grass at your feet. "Wanna bet?" it says. Behind the raven you notice a little green door recessed in the briar wall. You could have sworn that it wasn't there a minute ago.

The raven leads you through the green door, and across a long green lawn towards a two-story castle that is the same pink as the briar roses. You think this is kind of tacky, but exactly what you would expect from someone named after a flower. "I had this dream once," the raven says, "that my teeth were falling out. They just crumbled into pieces in my mouth. And then I woke up and realized that ravens don't have teeth."

You follow the raven inside the palace and up a long, winding staircase. The stairs are stone, worn and smoothed away. Slivers of glass glisten on the worn stone, catching the light of the candles on the wall. As you go up, you notice that the pattern on the walls seems to be moving. Multitudes of colour changing before your eyes, sometimes you can make out the odd creature or two (especially when they have the head of one creature and the body of another), other times there seems to be just a mishmash of shapes. You begin to wonder if you've suddenly fallen down a hole and ended up in Wonderland, just

where is that white rabbit! You stop suddenly, nearly knocking the raven over in the process. "Do you see those?" you ask the Raven. "yes, haven't you ever seen dreams before?" The raven goes on to explain that these creations are the princesses' dreams and they have come to pay their respects to her new husband.

At the top of the staircase is a wooden door with a silver keyhole. The dreams pour steadily through the keyhole and underneath the bottom of the door. When you open the door, the sweet stink and cloud of dreams is so thick in the Princess's bedroom that you can barely breathe. Some people might mistake the scent of the Princess's dreams for the scent of sex; then again, some people mistake sex for love.

You see a bed big enough for a giant, with four tall oak trees for bedposts. You climb up the ladder that rests against the side of the bed to see the Princess's sleeping husband. As you lean over, a goose feather flies up and tickles your nose. Princess Briar Rose rolls over and laughs in her sleep, but the man beside her wakes up. "Who is it?" he says. "What do you want?"

He isn't Adam. He doesn't look everything like Adam. "You're not Adam," you tell the man in the Princess's bed.

"Who the fuck is Adam?" he says. So you explain it all to him, feeling horribly embarrassed. The raven is looking pleased with itself, the way the talking cat used to look before it ran away. You glare at the raven and wish he would fly away.

After you've finished telling your story, you say that something must be wrong, because your map clearly indicates that Adam has been here, in this bed. Your feet are leaving bloody marks on the sheets, and you pick a sliver of glass off the foot of the bed so everyone can see that you're not lying. Princess Briar Rose sits up in bed, her long mushroom coloured hair tumbling down over her shoulders. "He's not in love with you," she says, yawning.

"So he was here in this bed! You're the icy slut in the sleigh at the corner store who picked him up, you're not even bothering to deny it," you say.

She shrugs her pink-white shoulders. "Four or five months ago he came through, I had just woken up," she says. "He was a nice guy, okay in bed. She was a real bitch though."

"Who was?" you ask.  
Princess Briar Rose finally notices that her new husband is glaring at her. "What can I say?" she shrugs. "I have a thing for guys in squeaky boots."

"Who was the bitch?" you ask again.  
"The Snow Queen," she says, "the slut in the sleigh."

\* \* \*

This is the list you carry in your pocket, of the things you plan to say to Adam when you find him, if you find him:

1. I'm sorry that I forgot to water your herbs while you were away that time.
2. When you said that I reminded you of your mother, was that a good thing? You always

called your mother the wicked witch....

3. I never really liked your friends all that much.

4. None of my friends ever really liked you.

5. Do you remember when the cat ran away, and I cried and cried and made you put up posters, and she never came back? I wasn't crying because she didn't come back. I was crying because I'd taken her to the woods, and I was scared she'd come back and tell you what I'd done, but I guess a wolf got her, or something. She never liked me anyway.

6. After you left, I didn't water your herbs on purpose. They're all dead.

7. Goodbye.

8. Were you ever really in love with me?

9. Was I good in bed, or just average?

10. What exactly did you mean, when you said that it was fine that I had put on a little weight, that you thought I was even more beautiful, that I should go ahead and eat as much as I wanted, but when I weighed myself on the bathroom scale, I was exactly the same weight as before, I hadn't gained a single pound?

11. So all those times, I'm being honest here, every single time, and anyway I don't care if you don't believe me, I faked every orgasm you ever thought I had. Women can do that, you know. You never made me come, not even once.

12. So maybe I'm an idiot, but I used to be in love with you.

13. When you went out, I broke your wand pretending I was a fairy godmother, but you didn't know as I glued it together again.

14. My feet hurt, and it's entirely your fault.

15. I mean it this time, goodbye.

\* \* \*

The Princess Briar Rose isn't a bimbo after all, even if she does have a silly name and a pink castle. You admire her dedication to the art and practice of sleep. By now you are growing sick and tired of travelling, and would like nothing better than to curl up in a big feather bed for one hundred days, or maybe even one hundred years. She does offer to loan you her carriage and when you explain that you have to walk, she sends you off with a troop of armed guards. She explains that the forest is very dangerous due to thieves, wolves, cannibalistic old women and princes on quests, all lurking about, so the guards will escort you through the forest. The guards politely pretend that they don't notice the trail of blood that you are leaving behind. They probably think it's some sort of female thing.

It is after sunset, and you aren't even half a mile into the forest, which is dark and scary and full of noises, not to mention a giant beanstalk. Suddenly your escorts are ambushed and slaughtered, so much for them being armed guards out to protect you. Before you stands a wizened old woman, who obviously must be stronger than she looks, although she smells like she needs a bath or two, and when she comes closer her breathe smells like rotten eggs. You think to yourself that she really needs to take a look in a mir-

ror once in a while and invest in a toothbrush. The old woman yells delightedly at the sight of you. "You're a nice plump one for my supper!" she says, "I haven't had a really good meal for so long, not since that plump boy Hansel. I would have eaten his sister too, but she's too good at keeping the cottage clean". She draws her long knife out of the stomach of one of



the dead guards and is just about to slit your throat as you stand there, politely pretending not to notice the blood that is pooling around the bodies of the dead guards that is now obliterating the bloody tracks of your feet. Just as the old woman raises her knife to you, a girl about your own age jumps onto her back, pulling hard at her hair as if it were reins.

"Don't kill her," the girl shouts, and you realize that she means you and that you were about to die a minute ago and that travel is much more dangerous than you had ever imagined. You add an item of complaint to the list of things that you plan to tell Adam, if you find him.

The girl has half-throttled the old woman by this time and she has fallen to her knees gasping for breath. "She can be my sister," the girl says insistently. "You promised I could have a sister to help me with the cleaning and I want her. Besides, her feet are bleeding."

The old woman drops her knife, and the girl drops back onto the ground. "Very well" the old woman grumbles, "I guess I'll just have to make do with one of these dead guards instead for supper, although they're a bit on the lean side" With that the girl grabs your hand, pulling you farther and faster into the woods, until you are running and stumbling, her hand hot around yours.

You have lost all sense of direction; your feet are no longer set upon your map. You should be afraid, but instead you are strangely exhilarated. Your feet don't hurt anymore, and although you don't know where you are going, for the very first time you are moving fast enough, you are almost flying, your feet are skimming over the night-black forest floor as if it were the smooth, flat surface of a lake. "Where are we going?" you ask the girl.

"We're here," she says, and stops so suddenly that you almost fall over. "You'll be safe here for a while, this is where I come when I want some peace and quiet from her snoring, you know she snores terribly after eating someone" You are in a clearing, and the full

moon is hanging overhead. You can see the girl better now under the light of the moon. She looks like one of the bad girls who loiter under the street lamp by the corner shop, the ones who used to whistle at Adam. She wears black leatherette boots laced up to her thighs and a black, ribbed T-shirt and grape-colored plastic shorts with matching suspenders. Her nails are painted black and bitten down to the quick. She leads you to a tumble-down stone hut, which is as black inside as her fingernail polish, and smells strongly of dirty straw and animals.

"Are you a princess?" she asks you. "What are you doing in the enchanted forest? Don't be afraid. I won't let her eat you."

You explain to her that you are not a princess. You tell her about the map and about your search for Adam. When you finish, the girl puts her arms around you and squeezes you roughly. "You poor thing, what a silly way to travel!" she says. She shakes her head and makes you sit

down on the stone floor of the hut. You show her your feet and explain that they always heal and that really your feet are quite tough, but she takes off her leatherette boots and gives them to you.

The floor of the hut is dotted with indistinct, motionless forms. One snarls in its sleep and you realize that they are large dogs. The girl is sitting between four slender columns, and when the dog snarls, the columns shift restlessly, then a branchy head appears above the girl. It is a hobbled reindeer. "Well go on, see if they fit," the girl says. She pulls out her knife and drags it along the stone floor to make sparks. "What are you going to do when you find Adam?" she asks.

"Sometimes I'd like to cut off his head," you say. The girl grins and thumps the hilt of her knife against the reindeer's chest.

The girl's feet are just a little bigger than yours, but the boots are still warm from her feet. You explain that you can't wear the boots or else you won't know where you are going. "Nonsense!" the girl says rudely.

You ask if she knows a better way to find Adam and she says that if you are still determined to go looking for him, even though he obviously doesn't love you, and he isn't worth a bit of trouble, then the thing to do is to find the Snow Queen. The girl speaks to the reindeer, "Bae, you mangy old useless thing, do you know where the Snow Queen lives?"

The reindeer replies in a low, hopeless voice that he doesn't know, but he is sure that his old mother does. The girl slaps his flank. "Then you'll take her to your mother," she says. "And mind that you don't dawdle on the way."

She turns to you and gives you a smacking wet kiss on the lips and says, "Keep the boots, they look much nicer on you than they did on me. And don't let me hear that you've been walking on glass again." She gives the reindeer a speculative look. "You know, Bae, I almost think I'm going to miss you."

You step into the cradle of her hands, and



she swings you over the reindeer's bony back. Then she sees through the hobble with her knife, and yells "Ho!" waking up the dogs.

You knot your fingers into Bae's mane and bounce up as he stumbles into a fast trot. The dogs follow for a distance, snapping at his hooves, but soon you have outdistanced them, moving so fast that the wind peels your lips back in an involuntary grimace. You almost miss the feel of glass beneath your feet. By morning, you are out of the forest again, and Bae's hooves are churning up white clouds of snow.

\* \* \*

Sometimes you think there must be an easier way to do this and sometimes it seems to be getting easier on its own. Now you have boots and a reindeer, but you still aren't happy. Sometimes you wish that you'd stayed at home. You're sick and tired of travelling towards the happily ever after, wherever the fuck that is -- you'd like the happily right now. Thank you very much.

\* \* \*

When you breathe out, you can see the fine mist of your breath and the breath of the reindeer floating before you, until the wind tears it away. Bae runs on.

The snow flies up, and the air seems to grow thicker and thicker. As Bae runs, you feel that the white air is being rent by your passage, like heavy cloth. When you turn around and look behind you, you can see the path shaped to your joined form, woman and reindeer, like a hall stretching back to infinity. You see that there is more than one sort of map, that some forms of travel are indeed easier. "Give me a kiss," Bae says. The wind whips his words back to you. You can almost see the shape of them hanging in the heavy air.

"I'm not really a reindeer," he says. "I'm an enchanted prince."

You politely decline, pointing out that you haven't known him that long, and besides, for travelling purposes, a reindeer is better than a prince.

"He doesn't love you," Bae says. "And you could stand to lose a few pounds. My back is killing me."

You are sick and tired of talking animals, as well as travel. They never say anything that you didn't already know. You think of the talking cat that Adam gave you, the one that would always come to you, looking very pleased with its self to inform you when Adam's fingers smelled of some other woman. You couldn't stand to see him pet it, his fingers stroking its black and white fur, the cat lying on its side and purring wildly, "There, darling, that's perfect, don't stop," his fingers on its belly, its tail wreathing and lashing, its pointy little tongue sticking out at you. "Shut up," you say to Bae.

He subsides into an offended silence. His long brown fur is rimmed with frost, and you can feel the tears that the wind pulls from your eyes turning to ice on your cheeks. The only part of you that is warm are your feet, snug in the girl's boots. "It's just a little farther," Bae says, after what feels like you have been travelling for hours. "And then we're home."

You cross another corridor in the white air and he swerves to follow it, crying out gladly, "We are near the old woman of Lapmark's house, my mother's house."

"How do you know?" you ask. "I recognize the shape that she leaves behind her," Bae says. "Look!"

You look and see that the corridor of air



you are following is formed like a short, stout, petticoated woman. It swings out at the waist like a bell.

"How long does it last?" "As long as the air is heavy and dense," he says, "we burrow tunnels through the air like worms, but then the wind will come along and erase where we have been."

The woman-tunnel ends at a low red door. Bae lowers his head and knocks his antlers against it, scraping off the paint. The old woman of Lapmark opens the door and you clamber stiffly off Bae's back. There is much rejoicing as mother recognizes son, although he is much changed from how he had been.

The old woman of Lapmark is stooped and fat as a grub. She fixes you a cup of tea, while Bae explains that you are looking for the Snow Queen's palace. "You've not far to go now," his mother tells you. "Only a few hundred miles and past the house of the woman of Finmany. She'll tell you how to go, let me write a letter explaining everything to her. And don't forget to mention to her that I'll be coming for tea tomorrow; she'll change you back then, Bae, if you ask her nicely."

The woman of Lapmark has no paper, so she writes the letter on a piece of dried cod, flat as a dinner plate. Then you are off again. Sometimes you sleep as Bae runs on, and sometimes you aren't sure if you are asleep or waking. At last you come to the house of the woman of Finmany, and you knock on her chimney because she has no door.

It is steamy and damp in the house, and you have to climb down the chimney, past the roaring fire to get inside. Bae leaps down the chimney, hooves first, scattering coals everywhere. The Finmany woman is smaller and rounder than the woman of Lapmark. She looks to you like a lump of pudding with black currant eyes. She wears only a greasy old slip, and an apron that has written on it, "If you can't stand the heat, stay out of my kitchen."

She recognizes Bae even faster than his mother had because, as it turns out, she was

the one who turned him into a reindeer for teasing her about her weight. Bae apologizes, insincerely, you think, but the Finmany woman says she will see what she can do about turning him back again. She isn't entirely hopeful. It seems that a kiss is the preferred method of transformation. You don't offer to kiss him, because you know what that kind of thing leads to.

The Finmany woman reads the piece of dried cod by the light of her cooking fire, and then she throws the fish into her cooking pot. Bae tells her about Adam and the Snow Queen and about your feet, because your lips have frozen together on the last leg of the journey, and you can't speak a word.

"You're so clever and strong," the reindeer says to the Finmany woman. You can almost hear him add and fat under his breath. "You can tie up all the winds in the world with a bit of thread. I've seen you hurling the lightning bolts down from the hills as if they were feathers. Can't you give her the strength of ten men,

so that she can fight the Snow Queen and win Adam back?"

"The strength of ten men?" the Finmany woman says. "A lot of good that would do! And besides, he doesn't love her."

Bae smirks at you, as if to say I told you so. If your lips weren't frozen, you'd tell him that she isn't saying anything that you don't already know. "Now!" the Finmany woman says, "take her up on your back one last time, and put her down again by the bush with the red berries. That marks the edge of the Snow Queen's garden; don't stay there gossiping, but come straight back. You were a handsome boy, I'll make you twice as good-looking as you were before. We'll put up flyers, see if we can get someone to come and kiss you."

"As for you missy," she says. "Tell the Snow Queen now that we have Bae back, that we'll be over at the Palace next Tuesday for bridge. Just as soon as he has hands to hold the cards."

She puts you on Bae's back again, giving you such a warm kiss that your lips unfreeze, and you can speak again. "The woman of Lapmark is coming for tea tomorrow," you tell her. The Finmany woman lifts Bae and you upon his back, in her strong fat arms, giving you a gentle push up the chimney. You are dying to ask why she doesn't have a door like normal people do.

\* \* \*

Good morning ladies, it's nice to have you on the premiere Snow Queen Tour. I hope that you all had a good night's sleep because today we're going to be travelling quite some distance. I hope that everyone brought a comfortable pair of walking shoes. Let's have a head count, make sure that everyone on the list is here, and then we'll have introductions. My name is Isobel, and I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you.

\* \* \*

Here you are at last, standing before the Snow Queen's palace, the palace of the



woman who enchanted your lover and then stole him away in her long white sleigh. You aren't quite sure what you are going to say to her, or to him. When you check your pocket you discover that your list has disappeared. You have most of it memorized, but you think maybe you will wait and see before you say anything. Part of you would like to turn around and leave before the Snow Queen finds you, before Adam sees you. You are afraid that you will burst out crying or even worse that he will know that you walked barefoot on broken glass across half the continent just to find out why he left you.

The front door is open so you don't bother knocking and just walk right in. It isn't that large a palace, really, you expected some grand building. It's about the size of your own house and even reminds you of your own house, except that the furniture, Danish modern, is carved out of blue-green ice, as are the walls and everything else. It's a slippery place and you're glad that you are wearing the girl's boots. You have to admit that the Snow Queen is a meticulous housekeeper, much tidier than you ever were. You can't find the Snow Queen and you can't find Adam, but in every room there are white geese who, you are in equal parts relieved and surprised to discover, don't utter a single word.

"Isobel!" Adam is sitting at a table, fitting the pieces of a puzzle together. When he stands up he knocks several pieces of the puzzle off the table and they fall to the floor and shatter into even smaller fragments. You both kneel down and start to pick them up. The table is blue, the puzzle pieces are blue, Adam is blue, which is why you didn't see him when you first came into the room. The geese brush up against you, soft and white as cats.

"What took you so long?" Adam says. "Where in the world did you get those ridiculous boots?" You stare at him in disbelief.

"I walked barefoot on broken glass across half a continent to get here," you say. But at least you don't burst into tears. "A girl gave them to me."

Adam snorts. His blue nostrils flare. "Sweetie, they're hideous."

"Why are you blue?" you ask.

"I'm under an enchantment," he says. "The Snow Queen kissed me. Besides, I thought blue was your favourite colour."

Your favourite colour has always been yellow. You wonder if the Snow Queen kissed him all over. All the visible portions of his body are blue. "If you kiss me," he says, "you will break the spell and I can come home with you. If you break the spell, I'll be in love with you again."

You refrain from asking if he was in love with you when he kissed the Snow Queen. Pardon me, you think, when she kissed him. "What is that puzzle you're working on?" you ask.

"Oh, that," he says. "That's the other way to break the spell. I have to put it all together, but the other way is easier. Not to mention more fun. Don't you want to kiss me?"

You look at his blue lips, at his blue face and you try to remember if you liked his kisses. "Do you remember the black and white cat?" you say. "It didn't exactly run away. I took it to the woods and left it there."

"We can get another one," he says.

"I took it to the woods because it was telling me things."

"We don't have to get a talking cat," Adam says. "Besides, why did you walk barefoot across half a continent of broken glass if you aren't going to kiss me and break the spell?" His blue face is sulky.

"Maybe I just wanted to see the world," you tell him. "Meet interesting people."

The geese are brushing up against your ankles. You stroke their white feathers and the geese snap gently at your fingers. "You had better hurry up and decide if you want to kiss me or not," Adam says "Because she's home."



When you turn around, there she is, smiling at you like you are exactly the person that she was hoping to see.

The Snow Queen isn't how or what you'd expected. She's not as tall as you -- you thought she would be taller. Sure, she's beautiful, you can see why Adam kissed her (although you are beginning to wonder why she kissed him), but her eyes are black and kind, which you didn't expect at all. She stands next to you, not looking at Adam at all, but looking at you. "I wouldn't do it if I were you," she says.

"Oh come on," Adam says. "Give me a break lady. Sure it was nice, but you don't want me hanging around this icebox forever, any more than I want to be here. Let Isobel kiss me, we'll go home and live happily ever after. There's supposed to be a happy ending."

"I like your boots," the Snow Queen says.

"You're beautiful," you tell her.

"I don't believe this," Adam says. He thumps his blue fist on the blue table, sending blue puzzle pieces flying through the air. Pieces lie like nuggets of sky-coloured glass on the white backs of the geese. A piece of the table has splintered off and you wonder if he is going to have to put the table back together as well.

"Do you love him?"

You look at the Snow Queen when she says this and then you look at Adam. "Sorry," you tell him. You hold out your hand in case he's willing to shake it.

"Sorry!" he says. "You're sorry! What good does that do me?"

"So what happens now?" you ask the Snow Queen.

"Up to you," she says. "Maybe you're sick of travelling. Are you?"

"I don't know," you say. "I think I'm finally beginning to get the hang of it."

"In that case," says the Snow Queen, "I may have a business proposal for you."

"Hey!" Adam says. "What about me? Isn't someone going to kiss me?"

You help him collect a few puzzle pieces. "Will you at least do this much for me?" he asks. "For old times' sake. Will you spread the word; tell a few single princesses that I'm stuck up here? I'd like to get out of here sometime in the next century. Thanks. I'd really appreciate it. You know, we had a really nice time, I think I remember that."

\* \* \*

The girl's boots cover the scars on your feet. When you look at these scars, you can see the outline of the journey you made. Sometimes mirrors are maps, and sometimes maps are mirrors. Sometimes scars tell a story, and maybe someday you will tell this story to a lover. The soles of your feet are stories, hidden in the black boots. If you were to take your boots off, you would see reflected in one foot-mirror the Princess Briar Rose as she sets off on her honeymoon, in her enormous four-poster bed, which now has wheels and is pulled by twenty white horses.

It's nice to see women exploring alternative means of travel.

In the other foot-mirror, almost close enough to touch, you could see the girl whose boots you are wearing. She is setting off to find Bae, to give him a kiss and bring him home again. You wouldn't presume to give her any advice, but you do hope that she has found another pair of good sturdy boots.

Someday, someone will probably make their way to the Snow Queen's palace, and kiss Adam's cold blue lips. She might even manage a happily ever after for a while.

You are standing in your black laced boots and the Snow Queen's white geese mutter and sidle up against you. You are beginning to understand some of what they are saying. They grumble about the weight of the sleigh, the weather and your hesitant jerks at their reins. But they are good-natured grumbles. You tell the geese that your feet are maps and your feet are mirrors. But you tell them that you have to keep in mind that they are also useful for walking around on. They are perfectly good feet.

*Original Story By Kelly Link under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 2.5 Generic License*

*This story by Isauria Winter under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 2.5 Generic License*

# Ancient Wisdoms

## THE PIG

You might be surprised to hear that Pigs are very clean and organized little creatures. They don't like to have things moved within their territory and you will be left in no doubt of their dislike if this happens. If Pig is your totem, you will be one of the tidy organized people in society, whose motto is most likely, "a place for everything and everything in its place". You may even be a little bit on the compulsive side with routines and you may feel the need to feel that you are in charge of your surroundings at all times, otherwise you will be vocal about it if you feel you're not. If your routine is disrupted it may result in causing you stress or illness and we certainly don't want that do we?

You also expect people to be dependable and woe betide anyone who has an appointment with you and they are late. Because you expect people to be dependable, you may be too

## Animal Totems

trusting of them, or you may not trust anyone in your immediate environment due to being hurt previously. A pig will become aggressive if their safety is threatened and you too may behave in this way. However you need to remember that not every perceived threat is one.

Pigs are intelligent creatures and have excellent listening skills as they use sound vibrations. You too may find that you learn more by listening to others, especially if you listen to what they do not say. It may be that you experience some clairsentient and clairaudient abilities.

If pig has only just appeared in your life it may be that he is here to teach you how to stay focused and how to become more self reliant. Or it may be that you are ready to take a stand against people letting you down and let them know about it.

## THE WOODPECKER

Its time to dance to your own rhythm and embrace the earth mother's natural rhythm. This is one of the messages that Woodpecker has for you if he has flown into your life. Woodpeckers are natural drummers in nature and can hear the earth mothers heartbeat. If you are female there may be a change in your menstrual cycle as your body's rhythm aligns with that of the earth mother.

Because Woodpeckers are so good at drumming, they can teach you how to travel between dimensions/realms easily by learning to listen to your inner drum.

Woodpeckers also tap their way through trees, revealing the deep layers of the tree as they go. This is often associated with the psyche and its shadow side. Because of this, those with Woodpecker as a totem may find themselves in jobs such as psychiatry or other jobs that involve the mind or psychoanalyst. Or you may have a strong interest in how the mind works and a belief in self help or self discovery.

Woodpeckers travel at incredible speeds, so those with Woodpecker as a totem may tend to rush through life, situations, love, jobs etc or they may be very active. Remember you'll burn out if you continue, so you need to learn to maintain a slower pace at times and learn how to balance your life. Not only do most people with this totem live life in

the fast lane, they may also find themselves on the outside of society because they hear a different rhythm to everyone else and live their life to this. They have their own inner strength and truth. Remember being unique is a blessing, not a curse. Woodpecker is telling you to continue to live your life with your own rhythm.

## THE BUTTERFLY

Creatures of beauty that undergo an amazing transformation during their short lives. If the butterfly has shown up in your life as a totem, it may be that you are facing a transformation somewhere in your life. This could be physical in the sense that you are planning a "make over" of how you look, or maybe you are undergoing a change in your physical body (maybe even pregnancy!). The transformation may also take place in the mind and the way you think/your attitudes to life or it could be a transformation that is part of your spirituality. Maybe you have decided to make more of yourself and have started expanding your horizons with further education or a different job, or maybe you are moving forward on a more spiritual level. If you take a look at your life, there are many areas of transformation that take place. Butterfly may be fluttering around you to inform you which one of these areas of transformation you need to take note of.

Because butterflies undergo such dramatic transformation they are associated with shift shifting. This may be an area you are interested in or maybe you have even experienced shape shifting and are ready to now move to a deeper level with it.

Those who are born with Butterfly as a totem will experience a lot of spiritual growth during their childhood. This often comes about through hard life lessons learned as a child. There may also be a tendency for clairvoyant abilities.

Butterfly may also be fluttering around to remind you that you are free to fly away from any situation in your life that you feel trapped by. Butterflies indicate joy and remind you not to take life so seriously. Butterflies often inspire creativity.

By Twilightgirl



# Reviews

By Lupa  
<http://paganbookreviews.com/>

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

Reviews

## Journey to Enlightenment by Ross Bishop Blue Lotus Press, 2008

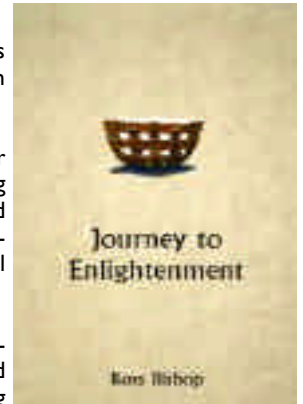
I'll admit that when it comes to anything that's more New Age than Neopagan, I'm a tough crowd. Ross Bishop, happily, has presented a book that got through my cynicism and gave a wonderfully balanced approach to healing internal wounds. I am quite pleased to have had the opportunity to read this book.

A good bit of Journey to Enlightenment centers on healing the traumas (no matter how seemingly small or supposedly unimportant) from childhood. It's not just a matter of blatant abuse, but of simply not being understood, or having to deal with the bad conditioning your parents may have had that may have affected how they raised you, even if they never meant to hurt you and loved you dearly. However, Bishop also touches on a number of other issues that people may have unhealthy relationships with, such as finances and social skills.

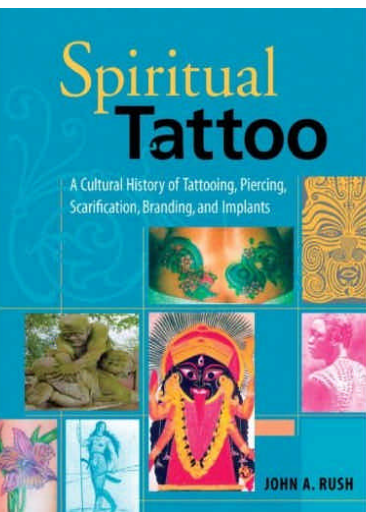
The thing that makes this book valuable is that Bishop gently guides the reader into facing his traumas head-on, without guilt or shame, and without too much pressure. He offers a set of thirteen principles that build upon each other as the book progresses, which form the core of a system for going into the self, confronting the issues and getting in touch with the inner child, and bring about healing for all aspects of the self, past and present. Guided meditation is used as a tool to further this process, though a lot of the book is brain food, things to get the reader really thinking about the issues, rather than a book full of rote, stock meditations and exercises. It's a nice balance of things to think about and things to do.

If you're expecting traditional shamanism à la Siberia and the Amazon, you won't find it here. However, Bishop manages to bring elements of shamanic practice into 21st century postindustrial terms in a way that channels much-needed lessons and healing to an audience that can benefit from it. He never claims to be descended from eighteen Native American shamans, or attempts to frame his experiences in anything pretentious; he is down to earth, and strikes a good balance between (neo)shamanism, and healing psychology.

The writing style is pleasant; Bishop is a good writer, and conveys his concepts with thoughtfulness and depth. He has good research, too, and is well-grounded, something that more of the New Age should pay heed to. He proves that one can have a solid footing and still explore spirituality without floating off into the ethers. Other than a few typos, it's a really good read structure-wise, and the layout far exceeds that even of some larger presses.



## Spiritual Tattoo: A Cultural History of Tattooing, Piercing, Scarification, Branding and Implants by John A. Rush Frog, Ltd, 2005



I think I was expecting something a little more image-heavy when I picked up this book, perhaps a pictorial exploration of body modifications throughout history. While it ended up being something different, it certainly didn't disappoint. Spiritual Tattoo is a fascinating, light-academic exploration of body modifications for spiritual and cultural purposes, both modern and historical, in cultures around the world.

While Rush admits that discussion of some of the earliest deliberate modification, including among Neanderthals, is based on a good bit of conjecture, he raises some interesting points on body modification as it relates to universal human experiences. However, further in the future he's able to stand on more solid ground, with plenty of evidence and illustrations that draw a firm line from spiritual and other life-shaping experiences to body modification. He also intelligently discusses the modern use of body mods, particularly in postindustrial societies. Rather than painting every modern person who gets a tattoo, non-ear piercing, or other modification as an immature rebel or otherwise maladjusted individual, he instead gets to the heart of the reasons why people have these things done, even in a culture where it's still often frowned upon.

Rush balances an academic level of research with an accessible writing style. He organizes the material creatively, and not always in a strictly linear fashion. Instead, the chapters are arranged by themes in spiritual body mods, exploring each one in depth and with care.

Overall, this is an excellent read. Some of it may be preaching to the choir when it comes to the already inked and pierced and so forth, but it's also a valuable text when demonstrating that there's more to body mods than rebellion—that in fact these fill in the gaps for the meaningful rites of passage that are lacking in American cultures, among others. Rather than being a recent counterculture phenomenon, Rush shows us that body modifications and spirituality have gone hand in hand in very consistent ways for millennia.

Reviews Reviews Reviews Reviews Reviews