

Samhain 2005

A musical signal is given for beginning the ritual, and the folk process to the ritual area singing:

All: *We approach the sacred grove
With hearts and minds and flesh and bone
Join us now in ways of old
We have come home*

AT: *Tá muid anseo leis na Déithe a adhradh.* (Tah mweed un-show lesh nah Day-hi uh ow-ruh)

All: *We are here to honor the gods.*

DQ: *The days grow shorter still, and night comes fast upon us now. In this time of darkness we are here to welcome in the last harvest, to enjoy the final fruits of our labor before the coming harshness of Winter. In elder days the Folk knew that spirits were about this night, and they made offerings that the sprites might be gentle. They knew that on this night the Dead are with us and must be given their due, lest they reward our arrogance with mischief of their own. So on this night let us remember our Ancestors and all our Honored Dead, let us celebrate with the Nature Spirits around us, and let us honor the Shining Ones, so we may enjoy the Kindreds' blessings through the darkness of Winter.*

Honoring the Earth Mother

KB honors the Earth Mother: *O Earth Mother, our lives are nursed from your bounty.
You are the food that nourishes us, the wealth that enriches us, even the very ground we walk on.
O great mother, all joy and prosperity comes from you, and it is you who sustains us.
Earth Mother, we honor you now to thank you for the bounty you bestow upon us.*

All sing **Blossom Lifter** (1x):

*Earth Mother, Blossom Lifter
Bloom with the wheat,
Bloom with the rye
Bloom with barley
And bloom with all grains
Earth Mother, Blossom Lifter
Bless what we eat,
Bless what we drink,
Bless what we harrow,
And bless what we sow
Earth Mother, Blossom Lifter*

*With all these things, let us rejoice
We give to you, and you give to us*

KB makes an offering of corn meal on the ground and says: *Earth Mother, accept our offering.*
All: *Earth Mother, accept our offering!*

Grounding and Uniting in the Grove Meditation

(**AT** leads grove meditation.)

AT leads the folk in the **Unity Chant** (1x):

All: *We are one, in our grove,
upon the earth, within the sea, beneath the sky.
We are joined, to send our call,
to the honored dead, to the spirit folk, to the blessed gods.
We praise thee, in one voice, in our sacred grove.
We are one.*

Establishing the Sacred Grove: Fire, Well, and Tree

Fire

KB: *O sacred fire that consumes and transforms,
True and holy light of the Shining Ones,
Be blessed with our offering! O sacrificed and sacrificer,
Let holy flame warm our spirits and our lives.*

The Fire Maiden (**KB**) adds wood to the fire and makes an offering of incense.

KB: *I kindle the sacred fire in wisdom, love, and power.
Sacred fire, burn within us.*
All: *Sacred fire, burn with us.*

KB censes the site and the folk.

Well

BC: *O sacred waters that flow and swirl beneath all being,
Well of ancient wisdom, keeper of deep riches,*

*Be blessed with our offering! O great source of all,
Let us know the elder depths within ourselves.*

The Keeper of the Well (**BC**) pours waters from the Well to blessing cup, offers silver to Well.

BC: *In the depths flow the waters of wisdom.*

Sacred waters flow within us.

All: *Sacred waters, flow within us.*

BC asperges the site and the folk with a branch and water from the Well.

Tree

DQ: *O sacred pillar, boundary of all worlds,
Stand at the center of the sky,
Stand at the center of the sea,
Stand at the center of the land on which we dwell.
Let us be deepened in your depths,
Raised to your heights,
And strengthened in your strength.*

The Tender of the Tree (**DQ**) dresses & censes the world tree.

DQ: *From the depths to the heights spans the world tree.*

Sacred tree, grow within us.

All: *Sacred tree, grow within us.*

The consecration of the space is completed with:

AT: *The fire, the well, the sacred tree,*

All: *Flame and flow and grow in me!*

AT: *In land, sea and sky,*

All: *Below and on high!*

AT: *Thus is the sacred grove claimed and hallowed.*

All: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!* (“bee shay ow-lee”)

AT: *By the cleansing of water and fire, let all ill turn away from me and mine.*

All: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!*

AT calls to Manannan, god of the sea and the misty ways leading to the Otherworld:

AT: *Oh Manannan, powerful son of the sea, holder of the magics of the crane bag, we ask you to hear our call. Oh Lord of the Otherworld, bearer of the silvered apple branch, join with us this day so that you may guide us safely in our workings. Mist-shrouded rider of the maned waves, accept our offering and open the gates between our realm and yours.*

AT makes an offering of apple to Manannan and says: *Manannan, accept our offering!*

All: *Manannan, accept our offering!*

All: *We invoke Manannan, opener of every gate*

We invoke Manannan, opener of every gate

You will reach us, you will teach us, and reveal our fate.

You will reach us, you will teach us, and reveal our fate. (3x)

AT: *Let the fire open as a gate, let the well open as a gate, and let the tree connect all the worlds as Manannan walks with us in all ways. Osclaítear na geataí!* (os-kluh-TEER na GA-thay)

All: *Let the gates be opened!*

Outdwellers Appeasement

Outside of the ritual space, **DQ** gives soda to the **Outdwellers**, saying:

DQ: *You who come from the outer dark,
You who stood against the gods and man,
You who are cold of heart and cruel of mind,
Take this and trouble not our work.*

Bardic Inspiration

KB invokes **Brighid**, goddess of bards, healers, and smiths:

KB: *Bright Brighid, Daughter of the Daghdha, Flame of Inspiration,
Maker of metal, Maker of good health, Maker of song,
With you as our mother we need fear no sickness,
With you as our mother we need fear no dull swords,
With you as our mother we need fear no empty words.
Our tribe is triple-blessed, O shining light of the hearth,
and we your children ask you to alight in our hearts,
Alight in our heads, and alight in our voices,
That we may give praise to the gods with good skill.*

All sing (3x):

*Birghita, Birghita, goddess of the flame
Birghita, Birghita, call her by name
Awaken the flame within our beings
Awaken the sacred song within our beings*

(BUR-gee-ta)

KB makes an offering of oil in the Fire to Brighid and says: *Brighid, accept our offering.*

All: *Brighid, accept our offering!*

Honoring and Inviting the Three Kindreds

Ancestors

DQ: *Hear us, Old Ones, our ancestors and kin,
You whose blood flows in our veins.
From you we spring and with you we will grow in health.
Ancestors, remember us as we remember you.*

DQ makes an offering of bread to the ancestors and says: *Ancestors, accept our offering!*

All: *Ancestors, accept our offering!*

All sing **Mothers and Fathers of Old** (3x):

*From far beyond this mortal plane, mothers and fathers of old
We pray that you return again, mothers and fathers of old
To share with us the mysteries and secrets long untold
Of the ancient ways we seek to reclaim, mothers and fathers of old*

Nature Spirits

KB: *Hear us, Spirits of the Land,
You of stone and stream, of beast and herb and tree.
From you we learn to live in harmony with our world, and ourselves.
Nature spirits, aid us as we aid you.*

KB makes an offering of bird seed to nature spirits and says: *Nature spirits, accept our offering!*

All: *Nature spirits, accept our offering!*

All sing **Fur and Feather** (3x):

*Fur and feather and scale and skin,
Different without but the same within.
Many of body but one of soul,
Through all creatures are the gods made whole.*

Gods

BC: *Hear us, Shining Ones of eld, you who uphold the worlds.
You who guide us and protect us, O patrons and matrons,
In you we grow in wisdom, strength, and purity.
Honor us as we honor you.*

BC makes an offering of oil to the gods and says: *Gods and goddesses, accept our offering!*

All: *Gods and goddesses, accept our offering!*

All sing **Hail All the Gods** (3x):

*Hail all the gods,
Hail all the goddesses.
Hail all the holy ones,
We dwell together.*

*Powers of the sky,
Powers of the sacred earth,
Powers of the underworld,
We dwell together.*

*Hail all the Gods!
Hail all the Goddesses!
Hail all the Gods...and Goddesses.*

Meditation of Merging the Energies and Re-Centering

(**AT** leads meditation of merging and re-centering.)

Ritual Purpose, and Honoring the Spirits of the Occasion

DQ: *In this time, when the Otherworld is near and the ways between are freely traveled, we honor those who have come before, the Dead and the Powers who guide them, and we ask for their guidance and blessing in return. As the tree grows tall and strong from the foundation of the great Earth, so too do we grow wise by listening to the words of the Ancestors. All we are arises from all they have been. On this night of Samhain, let us hear the whispers of the Wise, let us walk the Old Ways well, and let the Spirits ward us tonight and through the rest of Winter.*

Honoring Donn

DQ: *In the season of darkening, the Lord of the House of Death receives the Spirits in his Hall. He is Donn the Dark One, the First Ancestor, the Torc Bearer, The Guardian of the Cauldron of Plenty.*

Hear us now, Horned One, Dark one, Receiver of the Dead, Granter of Rest, Patron of the Feast in the Land of the Dead. We your children pray you to come in, to let your gaze fall upon this Sacred Ground, to indwell our rite and give us your blessing. We make due offering to you. We give you...

(silver offering made into shaft or offering bowl.)

Silver, that you grant the wealth of the Underworld, Source of All Potential.

(oil offering made to the Fire)

Oil, that the richness of the Land be renewed as my own life is renewed.

(horn offering placed at the foot of the Tree)

Horn, that those who know you may bless us in the Season of Hunting.

DQ: *Be welcome with us, Dark One; Donn, accept our offering!*

All: *Donn, accept our offering!*

Honoring Cailleach Baere

AT: *As the Earth falls into sleep the Hag of Baere is wielding her scythe and cutting the green corn down, to sow it again in the late winter's night. She is the Cailleach, the wise and cunning old woman, who passed into seven periods of youth while her husbands passed away behind her, grandmother to peoples and races of the Earth. Her eyes are keen and sparkling like the cold river stream, her hands are gnarled like the twisted roots of ancient trees, and her skin is old and wrinkled like the scattered leaves of autumn.*

When the Cailleach calls, deep within the forest, deep within the land, we can feel it in our bones, like the roots of old. It is time to come home, into the darkness of the woods, where the old hag will cut us open, and we will grow new again, our frailty and weakness cut down like the corn.

Hear us now, Cailleach Baere, Great Ancient Grandmother, Lady of the Deep Forest, Old Witch of the Roots and Cauldron. We your children pray that you be with us, that you look kindly upon our holy rite, and that you come into our Grove and give us your blessing.

We give due offering to you. We give you...

(stone offered into the shaft)

Precious stone, that the Bones of the Earth may be clothed again in life.

(whiskey poured into the fire)

Whiskey, that the Waters of Life May flow in us and Spirit indwell flesh.

(bone place at the base of the Tree)

Bone, that the old and unnecessary fall away into peaceful rest.

AT: *Be welcome with us, Great Grandmother; Cailleach Baere, accept our offering!*

All: *Cailleach Baere, accept our offering!*

Honoring the Ancestors

DA: *On the feast of Samhain the veils between the worlds are thin. We call to our Beloved Dead, the blessed Ancestors, to join our feast and receive due offering.*

Come to the Gates, honored ones; hear our call, we your children who remember. We offer you our worship, our reverence and our love.

You who fill the empty womb, you who cause the seed to spring, you who fill the breast with milk, receive now these offerings, made in your honor:

*Apples, the Fruit of Life and Death.
Pork, the flesh of the Sacred Sow.
Hazel nuts, concentrated meat of wisdom.*

We offer these...

(apple offering made)

To the ancient heroes of the Pagan World; those men and women who did the bidding of the Gods for the good of the folk.

(pork offering made)

To the honored Dead of the passed year; those women and men of my folk who inspired and guided the whole world.

(hazel nuts offering made)

To our own Beloved Dead, Grandmothers-and-Fathers, family and friends who have gone ahead, we honor you and grieve for you.

To all of you we give these fruits and meats that you may feast in joy in the Land of the Dead. Ancestors, accept our offering!

All: Ancestors, accept our offering!

Offerings to the Kindreds and Spirits

DA: *Have the Folk brought praise?*

All: *They have.*

DA: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!* (“bee shay ow-lee”)

DA conducts three rounds of praise offerings: Ancestors, Nature Spirits, and Gods.

All: *Let our voices arise on the Fire,
Let our voices resound in the Deep.
May the spirits accept what we offer,
As we honor the old ways we keep.*

AT: *Shining Ones, Noble Ones, and Mighty Ones, we have given you praise and honor! A gift calls for a gift, and we pray to you as we offer up these sacrifices. Accept them, open our hearts, and give to us of your blessings.*

An Omen for the Blessings is Taken and Shared

While **AT** takes the omen with the runes, **DQ** distributes individual blessing cups and the folk sing Speak to Me (as often as necessary):

All: *Speak to us,
Speak to us, Goddesses.
Speak to us,
Speak to us, all the Gods.*

When the omen is taken and the cups are distributed, the Diviner reveals the omen to the folk.

Receiving the Blessings of the Gods and Spirits

DQ: *Children of earth, we call for the blessing of the Ancient Ones.
Together we cry...*

All: *Shining Ones, give us the waters!*

DQ: *We join our hearts, that each of us be blessed. Together we call...*

All: *Shining Ones, give us the waters!*

DQ: *And as we are blessed, let all the worlds be blessed.
Together we pray...*

All: *Shining Ones, give us the waters!*

DQ pours water from the Well into the blessing cup and says:
We draw water from the well of wisdom, pouring the ale of inspiration.

DQ holds the blessing cup aloft and says:

O Mighty, Noble and Shining Ones, we have given to you, and now we ask you to bless us in turn, as a gift calls for a gift. Hallow these waters, O holy powers. Grant us the blessing we seek. Let the wisdom, love and power of the Gods, Dead and Sidhe flow in this cup of Blessing. Seo iad uisci na beatha! (“shee ahd ishka nah bah-hah”)

All: *Behold, the Waters of Life!*

The waters are passed and drunk, and as this happens the folk sing (as often as necessary):

*Pour the waters, raise the cup,
Drink your share of wisdom deep.
Strength and love now fill us up,
As the elder ways we keep.*

Thanking the Kindreds and Spirits

KB: *We have called upon the Kindreds and they have answered us! With joy in our hearts let us carry the magic from our sacred grove into our lives and work. Each time we offer to the powers they become stronger and more aware of our needs and worship. So as we prepare to depart let us give thanks to those who have aided us.*

AT: *Donn, Go raibh maith agait!* (“gor-uh mah-agit”, singular)
All: *Go raibh maith agait!*

AT: *Cailleach Baere, Go raibh maith agait!*
All: *Go raibh maith agait!*

BC: *Gods and Goddesses, Go raibh maith agaibh!* (“gor-uh mah-ageev”, plural)
All: *Go raibh maith agaibh!*

KB: *Nature Spirits, Go raibh maith agaibh!*
All: *Go raibh maith agaibh!*

DQ: *Ancestors, Go raibh maith agaibh!*
All: *Go raibh maith agaibh!*

AT: *Manannan mac Lir, Go raibh maith agait!*
All: *Go raibh maith agaibh!*

KB: *Brigid, Go raibh maith agait!*
All: *Go raibh maith agaibh!*

KB: *Aine, go raibh maith agait.* (“AN-ya”)
All: *Go raibh maith agaibh!*

Closing the Gates and Ending the Rite

BC: *Now by the keeper of the gates and by our magic we end what we began.*

Let the Fire be flame, (gesture to Fire)

Let the Well be water, (gesture to Well)

Let all be as it was before.

Dúntar na geataí! (DUN-tar na GAH-thay)

All: *Let the gates be closed!*

AT: *We have done as our ancestors did and as our children will do and the Gods have answered!*

Let us go out into the world secure in the knowledge that our offerings have pleased the gods and that we go forth under their protection. The ritual is at a close. Bíodh sé amhlaidh!

All: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!* (“bee shay ow-lee”)

The musical signal is given to signal the end of the rite. (grove waters recombined)

Materials List

Branch from local area for asperging, dressing the tree, etc. – Anyone
“Tree” (pole-like object) – unnecessary, using tree in ritual area

Water bottles for the Well, for drinking, and putting out fire – All
Individual blessing cups (will also have paper cups) – Dan (put near blessing cup before ritual!)
Individual praise offerings – All

Firewood and matches or other lighting implement – Dan
Bird or other seed for nature spirits – Dan (and/or Kristin)
Incense, charcoal & censer (if nec.) – Dan
Outdweller appeasement (some form of soda) – Dan
Bread for ancestors – Dan

“Well” and grove waters – Anthony
Fire extinguisher (for safety) – Anthony
Blessing cup – Anthony
Musical signal maker – Anthony (chimes)
Runes/ogham for omen – Anthony
Corn meal for Earth Mother – Anthony
Silver-like object for well – Anthony (shiny quarters)
Oil for offerings (lots) – Anthony
Bowl to hold oil for offerings – Anthony
Ladles (2) – Anthony (one for the Well, one for offering oil)
Paper towels to wipe oil bowl down – Anthony
Spade for digging offering hole – Anthony
Bottle opener – Anthony
Apple for Manannan - Anthony
Highlighter (for people re: their ritual parts) – Anthony
Pamphlets for guests – Anthony
Tray for individual blessing cups – Dorinne

Silver, oil, and horn for Donn – ?
Stone, whiskey, and bone for Cailleach – Anthony
Apple, pork, hazel nuts for the Ancestors – Dorinne

Pre-Ritual Setup

Dig or uncover the offering pit, if necessary.

Gather wood/kindling for the Fire, if necessary.

Mix grove waters and new waters together in the Well.

Set up the Tree if necessary, and light the Fire.

Pre-light any incense being used (charcoal or stick).

Blessing cup, ladle, branch, and “silver” object should all be near Well. Individual blessing cups should also be near the center, but don’t need to be near the Well (they’ll be redistributed in rite).

Offerings should be gathered centrally, folks should note location of their offerings:

- Earth Mother, Gatekeeper, Bardic Inspiration, Outdwellers
- Kindred offerings – ancestors, nature spirits, gods
- Key offerings – deity(ies) of the occasion
- Individual praise offerings

Pre-ritual briefing for new folks:

- Outline the rite, esp. individual praise offerings, “circles”, etc.
- Teach/review songs and chants
- Review foreign language bits’ pronunciation
- Review order of processional
- Answer any questions