

The Global Goddess Oracle

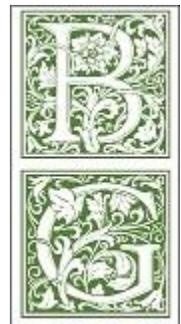
Fall Equinox 2015

Welcome to Autumn Equinox

We find ourselves at the middle point of the harvest season at another point of balance. But to me the world is out of balance. Worldwide violence fills the news this year. You cannot turn on the television or listen to the radio without hearing of senseless acts of violence. It saddens me to my soul. What needs to change in the world for the violence to end? No one knows the answer. You would think in this day and age we would have advanced beyond violence to solve problems but that isn't the case. May we all grow stronger within so we can be stronger without. And let's pray someone finds the answer to end violence.

This is the time of year we begin to see the results of our manifestations we created earlier in the year. If you are like me you start (or plan to start) so many things but never seem to finish all of them. I always start the year off with good intentions but after a few months other things get in the way and plans change. This year has been a rollercoaster ride for me regarding my health. Every time I think I am on the road to good health something jumps in the way. It has been disheartening to say the least. But I am resilient and am overcoming all my obstacles one at a time.

At this time of year I always turn inward and look at my soul. I try to see if I am the woman I want to be. This year I am closer to the goal. Through the hurdles of the year I have grown stronger, not just physically by emotionally and spiritually too. I spend time just being me and enjoy it. I find I like myself and that is a good thing. I am returning to my roots and looking at my life through a different perspective. I am not living to please others first. I realized that I cannot make anyone else happy if I am not happy first. I am finding things I love and have missed.





Writing the herb of the season column has shown me what I was missing for so long. I decided to reopen my soap and body products business. My website is almost finished and I have inventoried my supplies. We made our first batch of cold process lavender soap and the house smells wonderful. I also renewed magazine subscriptions I let lapse.

As I write this, the rock tumbler is tumbling blue glass. I cannot wait to see how the different shapes will look and what creations they will become. My witchy side is growing stronger every day.



For me the results of my manifestations have been opposite of what I wanted. It is more about what I needed instead. I needed to find myself again. So, this second harvest for me is about being thankful and living with gratitude. My acupuncture doctor says she lives with an attitude of gratitude. I completely agree with her. It just took me the long road to find it.

A year or so ago a friend of mine showed me how to do Zentangles. At the time, I was reviewing a book on intuitive drawing. She showed me different patterns and how to draw a string to begin a tangle. It has been more than a year but I decided to try it again. I had a few books on my kindle with different patterns. So armed with my Sakura pens and plain white cardstock I drew a tangle. I thought I would incorporate the drawing with gratitude. I began by writing the word on the paper. Then I drew a string around the word and another string further out. Now came the hard part. I had to decide which patterns to use. There are so many to choose from and I found I was engrossed in the search. I probably looked at more than 50 patterns before I ever put any ink on the page. I thought I should have a sample page with some patterns so I could narrow down the choices. Once I began, the image slowly revealed itself to me. I decided to draw another string further out and added more tangles. I found the process truly relaxing. I read Zentangle was a form of meditation and I believe it. This is my finished drawing.



My husband read me an article today about the ten things happy people don't do. The first was not to take anything for granted. That message has been beat into my head this year. The article reminded me about the book, *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz. It has been a while since I read the book so I went in search of it. I think everyone needs to remember the four agreements.

- Be impeccable with your word. If you don't keep your word no one will trust you or have faith in you.
- Don't take anything for personally. This can be hard to do especially when you feel the world is out to get you.
- Don't make assumptions. Most things are relative based on a person's experience. Always be open and ask questions so there are no misunderstandings.
- Always do your best. Your best will change with the days and weeks. Just because you weren't able to do something you were able to do before doesn't mean you are lazy. It means your best changes depending on you – your mind, body and spirit.



They are more than the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would like other do unto you. If you haven't read the book, I highly recommend it. It may change your outlook. May you all be blessed with a bountiful harvest.

Dawn

Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas is a High Priestess and Elder of The Apple Branch, a Dianic Tradition. She is the editor and book reviewer for the Oracle and was the Treasurer for The Global Goddess, a non-profit organization. She recently graduated from the University of Florida fulfilling a lifelong goal of completing her college education. She has been published in several magazines for her paper crafting designs. She is the owner of Belladonna's Garden and makes homemade soaps. She is an avid gardener and lives in Florida with husband. Other book reviews can be found on her Blog:
<http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>

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Ask Your Mama by Mama Donna Henes

***Ask Your Mama™**

The What, When, Where, Why, How, and Who of Ceremony

By

©Donna Henes, Urban Shaman

Dear Mama Donna.

Recent political events have pushed me to the point of despondency. I am completely crippled with feelings of helplessness and inadequacy. There is so much that I want to see improve in our country and in the world, but I don't know where or how to begin. What is a girl to do?

Depressed in Dallas

Dear Mama Donna,

I attended a candlelight ceremony for racial justice on the beach in Florida yesterday — only 30 people but hey, it is the South and I've signed two petitions today as always, and hope to be at the demo tomorrow. What more can I do?

Frustrated in Florida

Dear Mama Donna,

We, here in Europe, watch the current events with horror and wonder with despair where are the States going? What can we do? Not much, watching from the sidelines. Maybe you have some ideas.

Disillusioned in London

Dear Depressed, Frustrated, and Disillusioned,

First of all, don't be. Depressed, frustrated and disillusioned, that is. Know that you are doing what you can and that it counts. Every single solitary thing that we each do and say and, especially, think really does count. More than we can ever believe.

Some might argue that we don't have any choice in this upside down dangerous world and that we can't effect what will happen. But even if we can't immediately alter the course of human

events on the world stage, we can certainly create change in our own lives and in all of the lives that we touch. And our thoughts are the seeds of that change.

Dr. Christiane Northrup writes, "Use your thoughts wisely. Understand their power. Thoughts have a tendency to become their physical equivalent. This is one of the fundamental laws of the universe. Another one is the law of attraction, which states that 'like attracts like.' Because it is consciousness that creates reality, the kind of consciousness you hold — your vibration — actually creates the kind of life you're living."

So our first order of business must be to stay positive. To entertain only positive possibilities. To imagine only affirmative alternatives. To surround ourselves with wholly uplifting, life-affirming people and influences. To align ourselves solely with the greater good so that our actions will be born of only the finest of our best intentions.

**Far away there in the sunshine are my
highest aspirations. I may not reach
them, but I can look up and see their
beauty, believe in them, and try to follow
where they lead.**

—Louisa May Alcott

What we all have to do from now on is to stay alert, stay centered, keep connected and most important of all, keep talking. Talking, writing, protesting keeps the light of truth and tolerance shining upon the hidden agendas of governments, industries, institutions and individuals. Silence, like the dark of night, shelters nefarious deeds. Silence forgives violence.

I have been haunted recently by the words written by a Protestant minister after the downfall of the Nazi regime. "First they came for the gays. I am not gay, so I didn't say anything. Then they came for the Gypsies. I am not a Gypsy, so I didn't say anything. Then they came for the Jews. I am not a Jew, so I didn't say anything. Then they came for the Catholics. I am not a Catholic, so I didn't say anything. When they finally came for me, there was no one left to say anything."

Be bold.

Make a statement.

Make a stand.

Make a difference.

In light of the widespread oppression, manipulation, intimidation that surrounds us today, we most certainly need to say something. We need, in fact, to talk to everyone who we meet, actually engage on a human level with those who we encounter as we make it through our day. Not just our families, friends and colleagues — those of presumed like-minds — but the shoe repair guy, the waitress at the coffee shop, the post office clerk, the bag boy at the super market.

A good example is Dianne, one of the wonderful people who regularly attend my healing circles. She not only prays for the homeless men and women who live on her block, she calls them each by name. I am so impressed and inspired by her personal outreach to the "untouchables." Everybody is, after all, somebody.

If we ignore, exploit or patronize those people whose lives intersect with ours, how can we expect international relations to be more civilized? We need to walk our talk wherever we go, whatever we do, remembering always, that by doing so we *do* make a difference. Let us each be a sun, sending our caring energy out into the world, shedding light wherever we go. You never know whom you might touch with the radiance of your warmth.

I have an outgoing message on my answering machine that doesn't even say, "Hello." It just starts right in with, "You know there really *is* still a chance for peace and that chance will definitely increase if we each do our piece. So let's make peace — in our homes, in our own hearts, in our relationships, in our communities, in all of our dealings and in the world. Peace be with us all."

Much to my surprise, the very people whom I never would have thought would respond favorably, have. The overwhelmingly positive reactions that I have received from workmen, telephone solicitors and service personnel has been an important lesson about the necessity to reach out beyond the boundaries of our biases, assumptions and expectations.

A few weeks ago, I came home to a message from the plumber who was making an appointment to fix my sink. After listening to my taped pep talk, he answered in his gravelly Brooklyn brogue, "Yeah, what is this war all about, anyway? Why are we fighting those people? They never hurt us." This, from someone I would have assumed to be a proponent of the war.

The electrician, another guy who really shocked me, loves the message and calls in daily just to hear it! Once I was here when he called and when I picked up, he complained. "Let me call back again," he implored. "I want to hear the message. It makes me feel good." The reason, he explained, is that it is not political. It is personal. And it touches his heart.

But why was I surprised? People are just people, after all. When you think about it, all people are of a like-mind when it comes to living a life unthreatened by hatred and violence. The urgency for war only seems enticing when it is waged elsewhere. Ask anyone. "Do you want bombs and missiles to blow up your house?"

Every parent has the right to put her/his child to sleep each night without any risk of that child being shot, trapped in the midst of some hostile crossfire — be it in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chicago, or East L.A. No one wants to live and work in a war zone — in Palestine, Syria, Zimbabwe, or Ferguson.

So, buck up and say what is on your mind. The more you do so, the more empowered you will feel.

**We become just by performing just actions,
temperate by performing temperate actions,
brave by performing brave actions.**

—Aristotle

xxMama Donna

*Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more. Send your questions about seasons, cycles, and celebrations to CityShaman@aol.com.

Donna Henes is an internationally renowned urban shaman, ritual expert, award-winning author, popular speaker and workshop leader whose joyful celebrations of celestial events have introduced ancient traditional rituals and contemporary ceremonies to millions of people in more than 100 cities since 1972. She has published four books, a CD, an acclaimed Ezine and writes for The Huffington Post and UPI Religion and Spirituality Forum. Mama Donna, as she is affectionately called, maintains a ceremonial center, spirit shop, ritual practice and consultancy in Exotic Brooklyn, NY where she where she where she offers intuitive tarot readings and spiritual counseling and works with individuals, groups, institutions, municipalities and corporations to create meaningful ceremonies for every imaginable occasion.

www.DonnaHenes.net

www.TheQueenOfMySelf.com

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donna_Henes

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Autumn Equinox and the Ogham tree letter “Eadha” by Mut Danu

Comparing our human life with the mythic lifecycle of the Goddess, the Autumnal Equinox signals maturity and middle age. As in the “Song of the Poplars” by Aldous Huxley this is the time when we must decide if it is with sorrow or joy that we lift our individual song.

As a transformative experience, Eadha offers us the opportunity to be honest with ourselves. Now is when we begin to evaluate in earnest our life harvest up to this point. In the past, not so long ago really, but up to the mid-twentieth century, this was the age when human bodies began to show serious signs of wear and tear; the age of retirement and the beginning of decline and death. It is now possible to live longer and healthier.

For much of the Western world, longevity has increased due to better knowledge and the practice of hygiene, of medical technology and, I suspect, the manifestation of our desire to hold onto the limber, strong bodies of youth. We live longer because we believe we can! Our time of ripeness is prolonged, as is our possibility to create and shift our awareness of the planetary consciousness forward in the direction of life-death-rebirth, rather than the dominant culture of consume-waste-kill in which we currently live.

Eadha is the age of ripeness. We are fully mature, but our usefulness is not over. We have decades in front of us. So many interesting things remain to be created from our ripe maturity. For those people whose biological age corresponds with the message of Eadha, this may be a time when you are ready to change directions, follow a passion or rediscover one. Perhaps you will decide to bring a dream into reality and see what you can create with the talents you have been ripening in preparation for this moment.

Regardless of our biological age, the beauty of the Wheel of the Year is that we can relive the lifecycle of the Goddess over and over each year, learning and discovering something new. No matter what your age, as you pass through each Season, seek the messages most valuable to you at this place in your life. Deepen your experience.

If you feel that you have lost your youth, rediscover the joy of playing with no goal other than having fun. Appreciate the harvest of whatever creative work you have grown and nurtured over the course of the year. Let go of something you no longer need. Turn inward and rest. Relax and make plans for a new season of growth.

To make the energies of Eadha available to you, it is necessary to understand the dominant messages of the season. Harvesting, and the very act of sorting this from that, of cutting away what is unnecessary, of adapting to a body that is continuing to evolve with time...these are events that bring some uncertainty to life, and thus anxiety and even fear. Finding the courage to honestly look at oneself, to see aging as a messenger bearing gifts rather than bad news, this is the life passage represented by Eadha. Befriending your fears is the challenge.

- Excerpt from “The Tree Mothers” by Mut Danu

Autumn Equinox: Incorporating the Energies of the Season into Your Life by Mut Danu

Celebrate the Autumn Equinox with a real Second Harvest festival. Invite your friends and their families, and serve foods of the season.

Skim through the journal you have kept this year. You will probably find journal entries about events or dreams you had completely forgotten. If you were going to give this year a name or a theme, what would it be? What do you feel is your personal harvest for this year?

Is there something you can do with this harvest of work, talents and creativity to nourish yourself or someone else? How do you feel about volunteering? Is there something you feel so passionate about that you would do it for free? Have you ever tried preserving food? It has become a lost art. Why not learn about it and then try making some vinegar, cider or sourdough bread? Have fun!

Excerpt from "The Tree Mothers" by Mut Danu

Going Underground: Messages of the Aspens by Mut Danu

Search the area where you live for poplars or aspens, and if possible, do this meditation while under the living trees. Sit quietly and ground yourself. Let your breathing slow, and feel the energy from your spinal column that descends and takes root in the earth. Push your roots deeply, slowly, feeling your way amongst the clumps of soil and rocks. Feel yourself taking root, and as you do, become aware of other root systems that touch your own, gently passing on nutrients.

Open your spirit to become aware of another method of communication, one that is based on the sharing of water and nutrients. Now bring your attention up to your center, and feel your spirit rise out of the earth in which you are grounded like a young shoot that follows warmth and seeks sunlight. Let your consciousness rise now above you, following the trunk of a young tree, upwards to the level of branch and leaf.

Open your Third Eye, your sensitive, intuitive, imagining eye and see the quaking silver and dusty green leaves high overhead. The sky is deep blue and the setting sunbeams are rosy and gold, with the light catching the rim of each leaf. You are laying in the midst of a stand of quaking aspens, each seemingly an individual, and yet, beneath the surface each is part of a whole. All are connected and the communication between the trees passes both above and below the ground. Part of your spirit is below the ground, among the web of roots.

What are the gifts you have received so far in your life? What have you been given that gives nourishment to your soul on this journey? Take a moment to taste these gifts, to fully remember

and appreciate them. If any sad or bitter tastes arise, reminding you of gifts that were taken away or lost along the way, permit the taste to arise, but do not hold onto it. Suck deeply of the sweetest sap only, the sweetest gifts to your soul.

Now rise with the sap. As the tree sucks the sap upwards to nourish its upper body, you rise with it. Rise until part of your spirit is among the leaves, listening to the rustling voices of the many. Listen with no other goal than to be inside part of the great conversation. Relax and let their vibrant, friendly voices fill your spirit.

Listen deeply to the exchange of the aspens, combing every sound for a message. You have contemplated your harvest of gifts up to this time in your life, so what do you want to do next?

The act of harvesting is not about picking fruit, putting it all into a basket and then leaving it to rot. We harvest in order to nourish ourselves or someone else. So what do you want to do with your harvest?

Listen to the murmur of the leaves. Feel the messages coming from this collective spirit that is both above and below the ground. Remember.

Relax again, breathing deeply and smoothly. Slowly, oh so slowly, begin pulling your consciousness out of the leaves and into the branches, down the trunk and into your own body. And at the same time, gently, gently let your roots slide away from the other roots, pulling them back into your own body.

Now breathe and feel the energy of Eadha inside you, the individual you. Stretch, open your eyes, yawn and rub your shoulders. Remember the experience with the Aspen colony and write in your journal. What were the gifts you remembered as your personal harvest? What do you want to do next?

- Excerpt from "The Tree Mothers" by Mut Danu

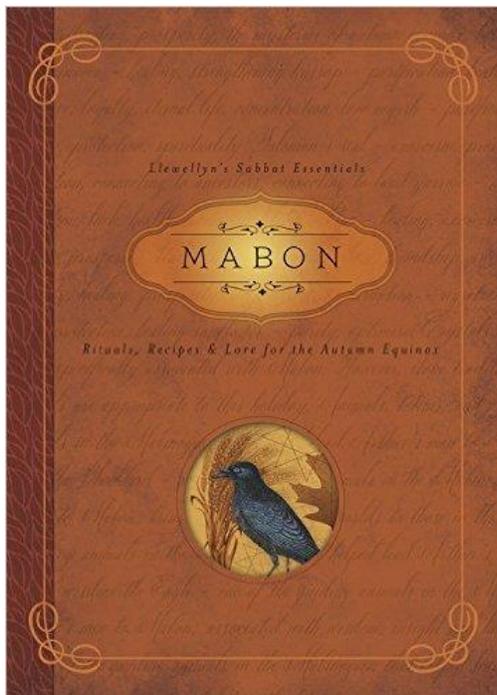
[Book Review – Mabon: Rituals, Recipes & Lore for the Autumn Equinox](#)
by Diana Rajchel

Review by Dawn Thomas

240 Pages

Llewellyn Publications

Publication Date: July 1, 2015



This is another book in the Llewellyn Sabbat Essentials series. Mabon is another name for the Fall Equinox or Autumnal Equinox. It is one of four solar festivals divided throughout the year. This is a celebration of the second harvest. A point of balance where the day and the night are equal. The book has the following chapters.

The chapter "Old Ways" discusses the history and lore of Mabon. The theme for Mabon is to celebrate harvest, sacrifice and survival. Astrology of the Fall Equinox is also included. The author explains how the Autumn Equinox got the name Mabon. There is a section about James Frazer's research from *The Golden Bough*.

The chapter "New Ways" explains how modern Pagans celebrate the sabbat. The author explains why not all Pagans celebrate Mabon, however many do participate with the largest celebration in the world: Pagan Pride. Different traditions have their own ways to honor the equinox. The modern Druids celebrate the equinox as *Alban Elfed* and Heathens celebrate *Winter Finding*. There is also a discussion of other modern harvest festivals along with Jewish holidays that occur within September. The chapter ends with a variety of activities and ways to celebrate the harvest.

The chapter "Spells and Divination" gives seasonal examples. The first spell is to find a lost object. I could use that spell almost every day. There are several spells specifically for the community. In the section for divination and lucky-charms I had to chuckle. There is a divination which involves drinking wine, beer or water to tell your future. There is a very impressive tarot spread to help your energy where it needs to go.

The chapter "Recipes and Crafts" provides ideas for decorations and crafts to celebrate the season. It also includes recipes for seasonal dishes. Since this is a harvest celebration, there is a theme of gratitude and thanksgiving. There were several interesting recipes and one I had not heard before was Beetcake. I cannot wait to try the recipe for Apple Chips. They look easy to make and sound very delicious. In the section on crafts, there were several ideas using parts of plants, seeds or other dried plant material. This would be a great project for children. The author shares the story of Guatemalan worry dolls. I especially liked the Gratitude Journal idea.

The chapter on “Prayers and Invocations” has prayers for ritual or meditations. There are invocations to several gods and goddesses associated with the harvest. Giving Thanks is the last section in this chapter. There is a lovely gratitude prayer along with a prayer for the harvest.

In the chapter Rituals of Celebration there are three rituals depending on the number of people attending. The author begins the chapter explaining how Mabon is a time of gratitude and reflection. There is a solitary ritual for outside with a less messy version for inside. Next is a ritual for a couple. The theme of this ritual is to honor and give thanks to each other. The last ritual is for a group preferably at a picnic area. The ritual begins with a guided meditation.

The books in the Essential Series are excellent resources for each sabbat. If you have not read any of them I highly recommend you try this one.

Book Review – *Sleeping Solo* by Audrey Faye

Review by Dawn Thomas

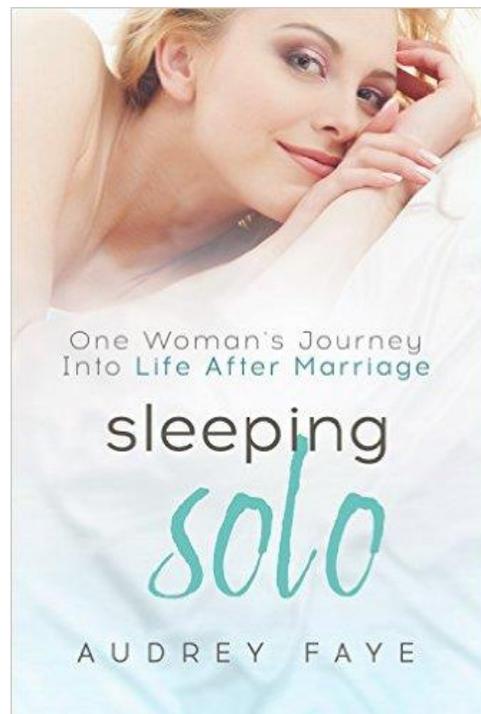
49 Pages

Publisher: Fireweed Publishing Ltd

Published: September 7, 2014

This is the story of one woman’s journey after her marriage explodes. Audrey’s husband of 12 years created an environment in which she could not live. She was hurt and numb but knew she needed to begin a new life. She also talks about how the changes affected her two children. She has a ‘tween daughter and an autistic son who does not speak.

She described how her body felt after the nuclear explosion of her marriage. She found it difficult to breathe and knew she needed to do something so she could move forward. She learned to listen to her ribs and gained ability to breathe as she began to find herself. She learned to enjoy the small things in life and saw her children blooming. She covered a variety of topics from making friends to sex. She tried to describe her life in one word and discovered “solo.”



She described her difficulty in writing about loving families while hers fell apart. I have read her *Modern Witch* and *Witch Central* book series. I could understand her decision not to continue writing more in

the series while going through this emotional time. I enjoyed her book series and hope one day she reaches a point where she can write about these characters once again. The story is short and divided into small topics. Anyone who has gone through a divorce can sympathize with her and her feelings.

The Dark Country by Katy Ravensong

I am being held prisoner
In a country from which
There seems to be
No escape.
Several times I thought
I had broken through to freedom,
Only to find myself bound again.
It is always night.
It is lonely and scary.
I even tried to dig under the walls,
But the foundation
Goes all the way to bedrock.
There have been many who escaped,
Soarin' to freedom
On newly found wings.
But my time is not yet.
The most unbearable thing
About this country
Is that there is no music.
There is no music.
I cannot live without music.
When someone eludes our captors
And finds the way out,
Here in the remote corners of this abyss
Are heard faint echoes of a symphony ~
Strings, horns, a drumbeat,
And the laughter
Of a soul re-entering the light.
This realm where I am imprisoned
Is only a heartbeat away
From the world of madness.
It robs me of lengths of time
Then laughs at my confusion.
But I must remain here

Until I, too, regain my wings.
Then I will fly out of this pit
Toward the sun,
Into light and music.
The resulting melody
Can be appreciated fully
Only by those who have been here.
I will be free!

© Katy Ravensong

Everyday Enchantment by Molly

Trees

*To my lips
a prayer comes
thank you,
I see.*

In June and July I taught a [Womanrunes Immersion course](#) online. While I expected to participate in my own photo prompts for the course, I didn't really expect or plan to fully *experience* the course myself, personally. I am so familiar with the Womanrunes that I guess I didn't know they still had more to share with me! As I developed the course, I kept saying to myself, "I guess this is *my immersion!*" When I described it as an "immersion" course, I meant it for the participants—to have daily contact with the symbols, to uncover their own truths, and to be alert for this work and magic in their own lives—but to develop the course materials, I had to be immersed in it myself for several months. Then, as I read my own words as they arrived in each daily lesson/prompt, I found the immersion continued and I still had more to uncover.

Something the course kept uncovering for me is a desire, no, a *need* to reconnect and re-establish meaningful practices and contacts that I have let fall away since my baby was born last October. I also need more gentleness, patience, and grace when faced with the unexpected (which pretty much happens every day). I received strong messages that I need to tend



my relationships. *And*, at the same time, I felt the tickles of multiple additional course ideas and possibilities, and exhilaration and excitement of inspiration. I often feel as if my work comes *through* me, like I am a channel for it and this fire of inspiration just wants to burn through me...to be expressed and birthed into the world. It is an intense experience and it can lead me to be a little skewed in my personal life—to burn and burn and burn with “just one more thing! I’m almost finished!” rather than heeding my body’s call for rest or food or hugs.

In response to my own prompt for [the Pentacle](#), Rune of Protection, I took a picture through my roses at the woods leading down to overlook where I wrote the [Womanrunes book](#). I love this place so much.

I was then enchanted by the raindrops on the rosebuds and by my baby’s face, enjoying the light drizzle.



In the last few weeks, I’ve been delighting in harvesting various plants. I made a rose elixir and started a plantain infusion for salve. I finished drying raspberry leaves for tea and some chocolate mint leaves as well. I made four sage smudge sticks from sage that grows in front of our house in the flower boxes. I have *so much fun* lately with herbal craft. As I mentioned, one of the things I’m recognized as I worked through the course myself is that I really want to move these self-care, nurturing connections and practices up in my daily priority. While much of my work takes place online and I am grateful for that, I simply *must* cultivate more time to be offline, restoring my soul.



I’m also remembering to consciously center in my heartspace to consider what is actually required in each moment. What task actually needs my attention and what is self-generated, self-imposed busy-ness. And, I implemented a daily, one minute grounding practice after being inspired to do so by [Enchant Your Everyday](#).

- Open arms to the sky.
- Touch the rock/earth.
- Place one hand on belly and one on heart and take a deep breath (“belly, bones, and blood,” I usually say in my head)

- Touch my spiral goddess pendant and say: *Initiate yourself. Initiate yourself. Initiate yourself.*

While I was walking in the driveway on our nightly walk, I came across a gigantic frog. I'd never seen such a big one and it was the perfect reminder of how this very same patch of ground upon which I spend all my days *still* finds new ways to surprise and enchant me!

One of the Womanrunes course participants then shared this with me:

Frog spirit animal associated with water:

*"Cleansing
Renewal, rebirth
Fertility, abundance
Transformation, metamorphosis
Life mysteries and ancient wisdom."*



Molly is an ordained priestess who holds MSW and M.Div degrees and she is currently writing her dissertation about contemporary priestessing in the U.S. Molly and her husband Mark co-create original birth art jewelry, figurines, and goddess pendants at [Brigid's Grove](#) and she is the author of [Womanrunes: a guide to their use and interpretation](#). Molly has maintained her [Talk Birth blog](#) since 2007 and writes about theology, nature, practical priestessing, and the goddess at her [Woodspriestess blog](#). Her online [Red Tent Initiation program](#) began August 29 and her next [Womanrunes Immersion ecourse](#) in October.

From Belladonna's Garden Passionflower by Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas

(Passiflora incarnate)

Folk names: Passion Vine, Granadilla, Maracoc, Maypops

Planetary Association: Venus

Element: Water

Deity Association: Flora, Feronia and Venus

Gender: Feminine

Parts Used: leaves and stems

Powers: Peace, Sleep, Friendships

One day, while walking through a garden center I saw the most unusual plant. I had seen pictures of it before but I had never seen a real one. I hurried back inside and found the plant. The fragrance of the flowers was so sweet. I told my husband I needed this plant. He said, "If you are going to get one you should just get two." He is such a great guy. I loaded the second plant into the cart and we went home to plant



them. We noticed the small vine grew like little hands looking for something to attach to. I couldn't believe how much it grew overnight.

Little did I know we were planting a butterfly host plant. Within a few weeks, I noticed large holes in the leaves and these orangey brown caterpillars with black spikes. They looked poisonous so we left them along. I watched them for several days and saw one walking on the wall. I thought it was looking for a place to make a chrysalis. I saw the "j shape" caterpillars develop right before they begin the chrysalis. Later I went out to check the progress and I saw what looked like a dried leaf. I had to wait almost a week to see what came out of it – a beautiful Gulf Fritillary from the Nymphalidae family of butterflies.



Last year we saw another butterfly laying eggs on the passionflower. This one was a black and yellow Zebra Longwing, which is Florida's state butterfly. I was lucky enough to get a picture of a female laying eggs on the vine. When they are flying they flap their wings very fast, which makes taking a photo

challenging. If you look closely behind the top rear wing you will see the small yellow egg she laid.

Biological Information

Passion flower is native to the southeastern parts of the Americas. The vine is a fast growing perennial with three lobed-shaped leaves. The vine can climb to 32 feet in length. The flowers are white or purple with yellow centers. Some vines produce a yellow or purple fruit which is smaller than an apple called a maypop. They resemble pomegranates with fleshy seeds.

Medicinal Uses

Passion flower has several medicinal uses. Passionflower is used to relief insomnia and anxiety. It is no surprise passion flower helps in lowering blood pressure since it reduces stress. There was a study in 2010 for the use of passion flower and menopausal women.



The women took supplements for six weeks. The menopausal symptoms were less noticeable. The women had less insomnia and headaches. I found passion flower tea bags and the tea was very tasty. I noticed I felt calmer and sleep better after drinking a cup before I went to bed. As with all herbal remedies, consult with a physician before using passion flower.

Passion Flower Extract

Ingredients

Passion flower leaves and stems, chopped and dried
Vodka

Directions

Fill a jar with dried passion flower. Pour in the vodka to cover the dried herbs. After two weeks strain the liquid and store in a dark place. To use the extract put 40 drops in 2 ounces of water. You can do this during the day to relieve stress or before bed for a more restful sleep. You can use the extract three to five times a day. You can purchase it already made.

Passion Flower Tea

Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon dried herb (leaves and stems)
- 1 Cup of boiling water

Directions

Place the dried herb in a cup. Pour boiling water over herb and let steep for 10 minutes.



Folklore and History

The passion flower got its name from the Spanish conquistadors. Cieza de Leon was the first to describe the flower in Columbia in 1533. Its original name was "La Flor de Las Cinco Llagas which means the flower with the five wounds. Italian historian, Jacomo Bosio went into a more detailed description of the passion flower. He associated the number of petals to the number of disciples present at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He counted 72 fringes on the flowers and declared they were the same number as the crown of thorns. Spaniards used passion flower when they explained the crucifixion to the Indians.

In Florida Native Americans ate maypops along with other fruits and berries. Archaeologists found maypop seeds in Tallahassee. At Lake Jackson in Florida the passion flower grows prolifically. The lake has an Indian mounds.

Magical Uses

To attract friends, place passion flower in your pocket and say, *"May I be open to receive friendship."*

To find love, place dried passion flower in a red bag and say, *"My heart is open to love."* Carry the bag with you.

To bring peace and serenity to a house, place passion flower in rooms where people gather then say, *"Bless this house with peace and serenity."*

To bless a new house, add dried passion flower to an herbal infusion and sprinkle in all the rooms while saying, "*Bless this home with happiness, peace and love.*"

To attract a lover, bathe in an infusion of passion flower for five days.

To bring restful sleep, place passion flower in a cloth pouch under your pillow.

Consider adding passion flower to incense you burn when celebrating the Autumn Equinox.

Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas is a High Priestess and Elder of The Apple Branch, a Dianic Tradition. She is the editor and book reviewer for the Oracle and was the Treasurer for The Global Goddess, a non-profit organization. She recently graduated from the University of Florida fulfilling a lifelong goal of completing her college education. She has been published in several magazines for her paper crafting designs. She is the owner of Belladonna's Garden and makes homemade soaps. She is an avid gardener and lives in Florida with husband. Other book reviews can be found on her Blog: <http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>

Moon Schedule Fall Equinox to Samhain

By Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas

(Times are Eastern Time)

Full "Harvest" Moon – September 27th: 10:51 p.m.

Lunar Eclipse – September 27th: 10:47 p.m.

4th Quarter – October 4th: 5:06 p.m.

New Moon – October 12th: 8:06 p.m.

2nd Quarter – October 20th: 4:31 p.m.

Full "Blood" Moon – October 26th: 8:05 a.m.

Moon Void of Course Schedule

Date	Starts	Ends
September 25 th	12:02 a.m.	3:43 p.m.
September 26 th	12:32 p.m.	September 27 th 3:29 p.m.
September 29 th	3:45 a.m.	2:57 p.m.
October 1 st	6:44 a.m.	4:03 p.m.
October 3 rd	1:18 p.m.	8:22 p.m.
October 5 th	7:04 a.m.	October 6 th 4:31 a.m.
October 7 th	5:10 p.m.	October 3:50 p.m.
October 9 th	6:12 p.m.	October 11 th 4:45 a.m.
October 12 th	8:06 p.m.	October 13 th 5:38 p.m.
October 14 th	8:58 p.m.	October 16 th 5:18 a.m.
October 18 th	4:48 a.m.	2:52 p.m.
October 20 th	4:31 p.m.	9:38 p.m.
October 23 rd	12:22 a.m.	1:18 a.m.
October 24 th	7:18 a.m.	October 15 th 2:22 a.m.
October 26 th	8:25 a.m.	October 27 th 2:07 a.m.
October 28 th	11:20 a.m.	October 29 th 2:24 a.m.
October 30 th	10:52 p.m.	October 31 st 5:09 a.m.

Planting Days

September: 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 26th, 27th
 October: 1st, 4th, 5th, 14th, 15th, 23th, 24th, 27th, 28th, 31st

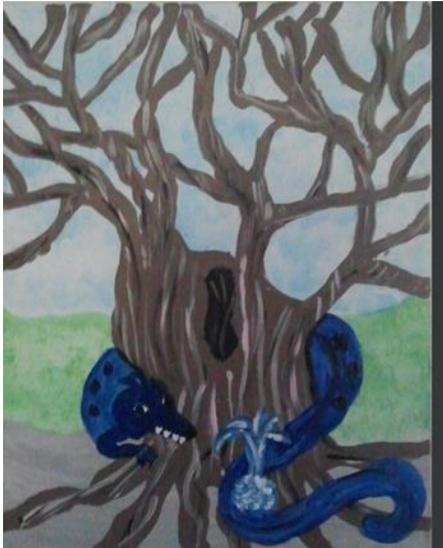
Harvesting Days

September: 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th, 28th, 29th
 October: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th, 29th, 30th

Níðhöggr by Deanne Quarrie

I am a student of Northern European/Old Icelandic Seidr. What I find particularly fascinating in my studies are not the deities but rather the creatures living on the World Tree along with the Primordial Giants who predated the gods.

One such creature is Níðhöggr, the “Derision Striker.” Níðhöggr is a great dragon who lives at the base of Yggdrasil, the World Tree. She gnaws on the roots of the tree, stimulating new growth. Her home stretches from icy Niflheim, near what is called the “Roaring Kettle”, the sacred well of all the rivers of Niflheim, all the way to Dead Man's Shore in Helheim where she devours the piled corpses.



Níðhöggr embodies the principle of rot, which is that all things must decay to make room for those things that are new. It is Níðhöggr's job to clean up the mess! She is involved in acts of undoing. She reminds us of the impermanence of life and that eventually, all that is must become undone. It is important to know this so that we can prepare for unexpected or difficult changes in our lives.

Níðhöggr is there to devour nasty things in one's self, both physical and emotional. She is there to take away anything that no longer serves us, as long as we are willing to give it to her. She also is there to help anyone working to clean up the environment,

especially from our own pollution.

Many fear Nidhogg because of the job she must do but without this part of the life cycle there would be no cycle at all. We make every effort to hide things that are unpleasant to us. We flush our human waste into our water supply instead of simply giving back to the Earth where we can restore it and use it as nourishment for new life. Menstrual blood is hidden away as if somehow shameful. We hide all that is ugly or that which makes us uncomfortable. And so it is too, with creatures and characters in mythology. Somehow in our dualistic world, the lines between good and bad, negative and positive are clearly drawn. So often those things we suppress, hide and call negative are actually, what save our lives. They are the things in our basic natural spirit that propel us forward into becoming better human beings.

Níðhöggr also serves us as a moral agent, reminding us of our own cruelty, especially harmful acts that undermine another's sense of self. Bullying behavior is a good example. She reminds us that our actions always have consequences to the energy of the whole, not just our own lives.

Her work is much like that of the vulture, a bird so ugly it is beautiful. I have always thought of vultures as the great recyclers, returning what is lifeless and no longer useful back to the Earth to make ready for new growth.

She is truly all about roots, and keeping them clean. As that, she reminds us that real strength is found in one's roots.

In her story, at the end of days, Níðhöggr chews through a root and upends the World Tree. Clearly if this were the root upon which all else depended, the mighty tree would fall. Perhaps this would represent our own failure to clean up after ourselves, both in our own lives as well as here in this place we call home, the Earth.

Deanne Quarrie. D. Min. is a Priestess of the Goddess. She is the author of five books. She is the founder of the [Apple Branch](#) where she teaches courses in Feminist Dianic Witchcraft, Northern European Witchcraft and Druidic Shamanism. She mentors those who wish to serve others in their communities. She is also an Adjunct Professor at Ocean Seminary College and is the founder of [Global Goddess](#), a worldwide organization open to all women who honor some form of the divine feminine.

Oceans Within by Amy Martin

For nine long months you rested, in the warm salty water of the amniotic sack in your mother's womb, rocking gently in the waves of her motion. It was dark and quiet, with only the rhythmic pulsing of her heart to break the silence. This was the ocean within, the salty sea of your origins, where you grew from a one-celled organism into a many-celled wonder. You and the water were one. When your heart formed and began to beat, it beat along with your mother's, their two rhythms in perfect sync. Once you had eyes to see, they stared open and trusting into nothing but darkness, the darkness of deep water.

You were formed in darkness, born of water, immersed in rhythm. Darkness, rhythm and water are at the very core of who you are. Even now you remain 70 percent water, the same amount of water to solid as this blue planet we call home. When the Moon is waxing toward full, its gravitational powers pull our internal tides along with the oceans, urging us upward into the silver light and into the consciousness within.

The genesis sea of our creation formed when hot tumultuous gases in the atmosphere cooled and condensed to form water. An epic rain fell for thousands and thousands of years, quelling the volcanic fire of a still-forming planet, filling the basins and crevices until salty, mineral-rich water spread across the face of the Earth. The primordial ocean

rested, still and dark and deep. Then the orbital pattern of the Moon and that of the Earth began to sync up, like your infant heart with your mother's.

From this rhythmic interplay, tides arose in the ocean, stirring the seas to their depths. Molecules mixed together and complex diverse life forms developed, from single-cell plankton to wriggling invertebrates. The rocking of the primordial ocean spread this living water onto the shores where tidal pools arose. In the warm shallow basins along this dynamic edge, the intersection of liquid and land, breathing beings came to be and spread across the Earth.

Water is our origin, from the amniotic sack to the genesis sea. All the water that will ever be is right now. No more will ever be created. It is the lifeblood of this planet, rivers and streams like veins through its body. Eventually, writes Norman Maclean, "All things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs."

Within yourselves are the waters of the world, stirred by rhythm of the Moon above just as they were millions of years ago. Feel the flow, immerse yourself into what water has to offer. Dissolve the barriers that create the illusion of separation. Feel the oneness of the waters. Let your tears be the ocean and your laughter its waves. Return home to the water tonight.

[Pagan Every Day The Camenae by Barbara Ardinger, PhD](#)

October 13th

The Camenae ("foretellers") were early Italian goddesses of wells and fresh water springs who were later identified with the Greek Muses. The Vestal Virgins drew water for their rites from the spring of the Camenae, who were also worshipped at springs and wells throughout the countryside. Their festival, the Fontinalia, was celebrated by tossing wreaths of flowers into the springs, wells, and fountains.

We know the names of some of the Camenae. Antevorta, Postvorta, and Prorsa aided expectant mothers who prayed to know the outcome of their pregnancy and the fortune of the newborn child. Carmenta was a goddess of prophecy, midwifery, and magic. Egeria ("of the black poplar") was an early Italian goddess of wisdom and prophecy who may be an earlier form of Diana.

The Porta Capena is where Egeria and Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, met. Egeria married him, taught him wisdom and piety, and gave the city its first laws. Numa

was also favored by Mars, who was originally a god not of war but of agriculture. Mars caused a shield, upon which was written a prophecy concerning the fate of Rome, to fall from the sky and land on the Palatine Hill. Recognizing the importance of this sacred shield, King Numa had eleven matching shields made. These were the *anciliai*, the sacred shields of Mars, which were carried in procession each year by the Salii priests. When Numa Pompilius died in 673 B.C.E., Egeria is said to have changed him into a well in the forest of Africa. This well was sacred to Diana in later times.

Reader, what do you want to know about your future? Toss a flower into a spring, well, or fountain and ask for a sign.

Pagan Every Day Themis by Barbara Ardinger, PhD

September 30th

Themis, daughter of Gaia and Uranus, is a Titaness who survived in full power into the era of the Olympians. The Greeks saw her as the embodiment of absolute justice, which is perhaps the law of karma or the psychological principle of meeting the natural consequences of our actions. Themis is shown blindfolded and holding the scale of justice in one hand and a sword in the other.

Jane Ellen Harrison traces her history and position as an advisor to Zeus, whom she married before Hera arrived on Olympus. Their daughters include Dike (Justice), who carries the sword but not the scale, and/or Astraea, who holds the scale but not the sword. Dike's sisters are Eirene (Peace) and Eunomia (Order). Some sources say that Themis is also the mother of the Moerae, or Fates, who spin, weave, and cut the threads of our lives. Themis is also said to be the inspirer of the oracles at Delphi. Her daughters are thus forces of justice and natural law.

In my first book, when I made some sweeping comment about justice, the copy editor asked if justice was the same for all people. That's a good question. As I'm writing this, just is much in the news. The people in Rwanda are still trying to come to terms with the slaughter of 1994. The trial of Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic dragged on until he died. The Israel and Palestine are still bombing each other's civilians.

People who have survived terrorist attacks, tyranny, and ethnic cleansing want justice, but when does justice tip over into revenge? In Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, Shylock has reason to seek revenge. He's been cheated and his daughter has run away with a Christian. Portia pleads with him for mercy. Reader, is justice the only solution? Is mercy a better answer? Should we prefer mercy or justice?

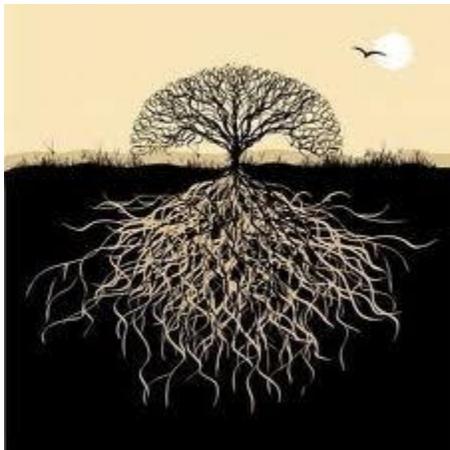
Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her new book, **Secret Lives** is a novel of magical realism about elderly women, younger women, good men, and mythological characters including the Green Man and the Norns gone mad in a modern world. Her earlier books are *Finding New Goddesses*, *Quicksilver Moon*, *Goddess Meditations*, and *Practicing the Presence of the Goddess*. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don't want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of *Finding New Goddesses*, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net

Reincarnation In Jewish Mystical Thought Today by Rabbi Allen S. Maller

Every human on earth has 8 great grandparents and 16 great-great grandparents. Each of these 24 individuals contributes an equal amount of genetic material to their descendants. Nevertheless, siblings who share the same 24 ancestors do not have identical genomes. Unless they are identical twins their physical, mental and personality traits always differ, sometimes greatly, from their siblings who share the same physical genetic heritage.

This difference is the result of both the unique physical combination of genes that occurs at conception; and the unique human soul that enters the body during the first or second trimester.

Every year, many hundreds of people find out that one or two of their 24 ancestors might have been Jewish. For most of them this discovery is an interesting fact of little significance. For many of them it might be an embarrassment to be ignored.



But for some of them it becomes a life changing discovery. They feel drawn to Jewish people and seek to learn about Jewish music, food, literature, culture and religion. They feel more and more attached in some mysterious way to the Holocaust and the struggle of Israel to live in peace in the Middle East.

Many of these people eventually are led to become Jewish either by formal conversion or by informal reversion within Reform Progressive synagogues.

These people provide a rather unusual form of evidence for reincarnation that comes from the Jewish mystical tradition; the Kabbalah. Unlike Buddhism and Hinduism,

Kabbalah does not teach that reincarnation (gilgul) occurs over the course of hundreds of millions of years to millions of different sentient species.

According to Kabbalah, only the souls of self-conscious moral creatures like human beings reincarnate, and they reincarnate only when they have not fulfilled the purpose of their creation in their current lifetime. These esoteric Kabbalistic concepts from the 12th to 17th centuries; were popularized and spread throughout Eastern Europe, especially in Poland and Ukraine, by the Hassidic movement in the last half of the 18th and 19th century.

Since Judaism is an optimistic religion, most Kabbalists teach that most people can accomplish their life's purpose in one or two lifetimes. A few souls may take three to five lifetimes or more. The bright souls of great religious figures like Abraham and Moses, or Sarah and Miriam can turn into dozens of individual sparks that can reincarnate several times over many centuries.

The tragic souls of Jews whose children have been cut off from the Jewish people, either through persecution or forced conversion to another religion, will reincarnate as one of their own, no longer Jewish, descendants. These non-Jewish descendant souls will then seek to return to the Jewish people.



A majority of people who end up converting (or reverting) to Judaism and the Jewish people have Jewish souls from one of their own ancestors. Thus, the Jewish mystical tradition claims that the souls of most converts to Judaism are the reincarnated souls of Jews in previous generations who were cut off from the Jewish people either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Through conversion to Judaism they feel they are coming home. Sometimes these souls are descendants of Jews who were part of whole communities that were cut off, like the Marranos of Spain and Portugal, or European Jews in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust and then the decades of Communist oppression. Other times they are descendants of individual Jews who married non-Jews and did not raise their children to be faithful Jews.

An example of the later from England is recounted by Rabbi Barbara Borts: "One of the most touching conversions I ever did was a young girl of 11, brought to me by her mother, to discuss Judaism. The mother was a widow, living back at home with her

mother and her father, who was a minister. This girl had done some research on Hanukkah for her school class, and in the process both loved what she learned and discovered that her late father's grandfather was a German Jew.

I asked her mother why she would support this. Her response was that her two daughters were no longer going to church, and she was delighted that one of them had found a religious home. When I said that I could not imagine doing what she was doing if the positions were reversed, she said, "It's different for Jews, after the Holocaust and all."

So, the girl started Hebrew school classes, and attending services. I moved a couple of years later, and bequeathed her to the next rabbi. Some years later, we met up again when she was in University. She had converted, changed her name permanently, was an active member of a Jewish student organization, and planned to become a Rabbi; she may even now be in rabbinical school."

Most of the time people who become Jewish do not find out that they have a Jewish ancestor until years after their conversion. According to a mystical 14th century Kabbalistic teaching found in Sefer HaPliyah, those non-Jews who do feel this powerful attraction to Jewish things and Jewish people, have Jewish souls that are reincarnations (gilgulim) of one of their own Jewish ancestors from three to seven generations in the past. That explains why they react to the discovery of some Jewish heritage in such an unusual way. It also explains why many people who do not even know that they have Jewish ancestors follow a similar path, and only discover a Jewish ancestor years after they have returned to the Jewish people.

The Hebrew word for reincarnation is gilgul which means recycling. Many people are born with new souls who are here for the first time. Others have a soul that has lived on this planet before. Most people do not reincarnate after their life on this earth is over. Most people who end up becoming Jewish, especially now after the Jewish people have experienced several generations of assimilation, marriage to non-Jews, hiding from anti-Semitism and outright genocide, are descendants of people whose children, in one way or another, have been cut off from the Jewish People. Among their non-Jewish descendants a few will inherit a Jewish soul (gilgul) that will seek to return to the Jewish people (Sefer HaPliyah).

The following introspective personality and character test can help people who never had or have left their own childhood religion; discover some hints that they may have a Jewish soul from generations past.

- 1- People who like to ask questions especially about religion; but when they asked them as a child, you were told faith is a gift from God and you shouldn't question it. This never satisfied them, although others in their family didn't question this answer.
- 2- The Trinity never made any sense to them even as a young child. They prayed to God the Father more easily than Jesus, the Son of God, even though they were told to pray to Jesus. They never could believe that people who didn't believe in Jesus couldn't go to Heaven.
- 3- On first learning of the Holocaust they reacted more emotionally than their friends or other members of their family. They also feel some sense of connection with the Jewish struggle to defend the Land of Israel.
- 4- They have an attraction to Jewish people, or to Judaism and Jewish culture. They have always been more open to people who were culturally, nationally or religiously different from their own family, or than their friends or class mates.

If a person answers yes to three of these four items, he or she might have one or more Jewish ancestors. Many, but not all, people who answer yes to all four items will be interested in learning more about their Jewish roots. One who becomes very interested in studying Judaism might have a Jewish soul.

If the following item also applies to non-religious, non-Jews who study Judaism; then they must have a Jewish soul.

- 5- When they start to learn about Judaism: the ideas and values seem reasonable to them, the traditions and heritage are very attractive to them, and the non-Jews around them, as well as they themselves, are surprised that they slowly come to feel they are coming home.

Rabbi Maller's web site is: <http://www.rabbimaller.com/>

Solitary Autumn Equinox Ritual by Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas

For the altar:

1 yellow candle

1 orange candle

An apple

A cup of wine or juice

A small cluster of grapes

Some vine (real or artificial – to honor the Muin Moon cycle)
Fall flowers or fall leaves

Set up your ritual area. Light the candles and arrange the grapes, the vine and flowers or leaves on the altar.

Casting the Circle

Take the apple and hold it in both hands. Feel the wisdom and love of the Goddess. She is generous.

"The apple is an ancient symbol of the Goddess with Her great knowledge and power of healing. It holds Her wisdom and provides a gateway into other realms. Sacred is this space filled with the riches of the Great Mother."

Call the Quarters

"Hail to the Spirits of the East, Element of Air, knowledge, and wisdom. Bless me with your gifts during the season of fall. Please join me tonight."

"Hail to the Spirits of the South, Element of Fire, brighten my days. Bring illumination and passion in many ways. Please join me tonight."

"Hail to the Spirits of the West, Element of Water, come to this circle of mine. Add love, peace, and intuition in this place and time. Please join me tonight."

"Hail to the Spirits of the North, Element of Earth, bestow strength and success. Please join me tonight."

"The circle is cast as above and so below."

Call the Goddess

"The Autumn Equinox is the harvest of fruits and late grains. I ask the Goddess of Grain, Demeter, the Lady of the Harvest and bountiful earth. Bless me during this autumn season. I also ask Pomona, the Goddess of Apples to join me. Please share your sacred orchard with me.

At the autumn equinox a time of equal light and dark hours occurs. Help me to find balance and harmony within. Guide me with your wisdom and remind me to be thankful for all of the blessings that I have in my life.

It is now time to pass from summer into the dark of the year. On this day of the equinox, this day of balance, it is the threshold where light begins to fade. As the nights grow longer, it is a time to cultivate inner wisdom."

Meditation and Giving Thanks

"I raise my chalice in thanksgiving for what the Mother Earth has given me this year."

Think of these questions and answer honestly. What is my personal harvest? What have I brought into manifestation this year? What can I do to honor the generosity of the Earth that sustains me? How might I thank my loved ones and acquaintances who have supported my creativity this year? How can I best acknowledge and celebrate myself for hard work completed this year?

Releasing the Goddess

"I thank you Demeter and Pomona for joining me this night. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be."

Releasing the Elements

"Spirit of the North, Element of the Earth, thank you for lending your strength and stability this night. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be."

"Spirit of the West, Element of Water, thank you for blessings me with loving emotions so right. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be."

"Spirit of the South, Element of Fire, thank you for your passion and illuminating light. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be."

"Spirit of the East, Element of Air, thank you for the winds of change that swirl within my life. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be."

Open the Circle

"The circle is open but remains unbroken.

Blessed be!

Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again."

What is Gratitude? By Dawn Thomas

When you wake up in the morning are you grateful for the day? So many people take their life for granted but not me. There have been several instances when my life was in danger. Each instance made me realize there was something important for me to do.

When I was 17 I was in a car accident. I fell asleep at the wheel. I woke up and saw I was going off the road on the right so I pulled the wheel hard to the left which cause the car to go into a spin. After three revolutions my car struck an electric pole. I knew I had to do something for someone to find me. I pulled my leg out from between the steering wheel and the seat then reached around the steering column for the horn (I always thought it was a strange place for the horn). After a few minutes a man came to my window and told me he would call for help. I am not sure how long it took for the

rescue team to arrive but the man stayed with them and waited. He talked to me and kept me calm.

Once the ambulance and fire engine arrived the men worked on getting me out of the car. They used the Jaws of Life to open the door. I don't remember any of this but they told me I walked to the ambulance. All I remember was being very cold. At the hospital the nurses were very kind and went to the lockers to get me extra socks since I was still complaining of being cold. The doctors told my family I might not make it through the night and to get the family together. I proved to be stronger than they thought. After nine days in intensive care, then a regular room, the doctors released me. From that moment on I realized there was more for me to do.



Every now and then we have reminders of who we are and what we have. It should not take a near death experience for this to happen. Years ago I heard a story about gratitude stones. Lee Brower always carried a rock with him to remind him what he was grateful for. He put it in his pocket every morning and took it out at the end of the day. One

time when he was in South Africa he dropped the rock. A man asked him what it was and he explained. The man exclaimed, "Oh, it is a gratitude rock." A couple weeks later the man emailed Lee. He said his son was dying and could Lee send three gratitude rocks. Lee said to himself they were just rocks he found along the stream. There wasn't anything special about the rocks. He told the man he would send the rocks. Lee then went to a stream and found three rocks and mailed them. About four months later Lee received another email. The man's son was better and they had sold about 100 rocks for \$10 each. All the money raised went to charity. Lee reminds us we need to be in the attitude of gratitude.

Shortly after watching Lee's video in *The Secret* I stumbled across a rubber stamp with the word Gratitude. I told myself I would find a nice piece of paper and use the stamp. Then I would find a place to hang it where I can see it every day. A year or so later I found a silver heart charm engraved "Gratitude." I carry it in a pocket or my purse. Anytime my fingers touch it I say I am grateful.

I hope you find ways to be grateful. Be thankful for everyone and everything you have in your life. Develop a mantra to repeat in the morning and again at night. Or be like Lee and place a rock in your pocket and live with the attitude of gratitude.

Photos by Dawn Thomas

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