

MOURNING CLOAK



# Reclaiming NEWSLETTER

WINTER 1988

NUMBER 33

\$2.00

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*Reclaiming*  
A Center for Feminist Spirituality  
P.O. Box 14404  
San Francisco, CA 94114

Newsletter Submissions:

The Newsletter encourages people to submit articles, letters, or graphics related to political, pagan or spiritual issues and happenings. **GRAPHICS ALWAYS WELCOME!**

We may edit for length, spelling, punctuation and grammar; we do not alter poetry.

While we are pleased to print letters or articles on ethics, we will not print personal charges or countercharges.

All submissions, whether we print them or not, eventually find their way into our cauldron, so keep copies for yourself. Please do not ask us to return your work.

Submissions are due on or before the deadline, camera-ready if possible (4" columns, justified, 5-space paragraph indentation). The Newsletter staff has sworn off its lamentable co-behavior and will not chase down late submissions. We really mean it this time.

The views expressed in articles and advertisements in this Newsletter belong to the authors and advertisers...not to the Reclaiming Community or the Newsletter Staff. Some of us don't like some of the stuff we print.

**SPRING NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 8.**

**HELP! WE NEED YOUR BLOOD!** If you can donate blood into Reclaiming's account [#1913] at Irwin Memorial Blood Bank (567-6400 for information/appointment), please do so. If you or a loved one need blood for surgery, etc., contact Rose at 821-3336 for transfer. If the Goddess blesses you with good health, please share and give the gift of life. **And many thanks to our donors.**

☞ **RECLAIMING EVENTS LINE** ☞  
**(415) 849-0877**

This phone recording, listed under Reclaiming in Berkeley, carries announcements which come up too late to be put in the newsletter; it's also a phone number to contact us (but be aware that we can't always reply quickly). Call us with events and announcements to add to the message. Messages can also be sent to the P.O. box. Please remember to say where we can reach you with questions, and allow plenty of time.

- The Recording Faerie

This Issue was made to happen by Anne, Karen, Laurie, Macha, Pleiades, Raven, Rhabyt, Rose, Roy, Sara, & Sophia

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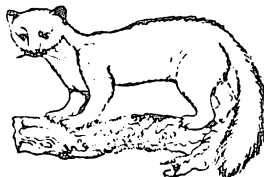
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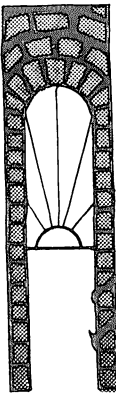
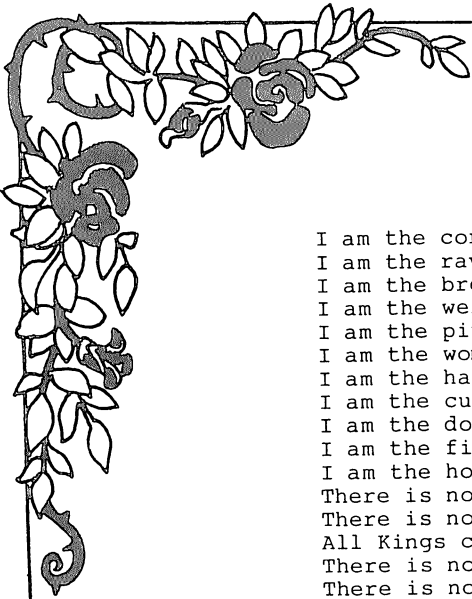
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I am the corpse on the ridgepole  
I am the raven of battle  
I am the breastless virgin  
I am the well  
I am the pit  
I am the woman with the twisted mouth  
I am the hag who sleeps with heroes  
I am the cup  
I am the door  
I am the fire of the poet's brain  
I am the holder of nine cow fetters  
There is no justice but my justice  
There is no courage but my gift  
All Kings call me wife and bow before me  
There is no power without my gift  
There is no terror like to my terror  
And no passion like to my passion  
I am frenzy  
I am drunkenness  
I am the millstone of the earth's root  
Grind your soul in my quern  
And spill from the cauldron of immortality  
As liquor of eternal life.

Sharon Devlin

RED  
KALI

I am COATLICUE, woman of the serpent skirts.  
I am the cave in the misty mountains.  
I bring forth the Sun, the Moon and the stars.  
Garlands of warm, wet hearts surround my body.  
Come to me when your life is done;  
I will enfold you to my bosom so that you may melt once more  
into me and be rested.  
I hold the obsidian mirror of the future.

I am XOCHIQUETZAL.  
I am the marigold.  
I rule the Land of the Dead.

I am the Oldest of the Old.  
I am HECATE, Mother of the Power of the Word.  
I give power to your sacred incantations to guide your  
transformations.  
I am the frog.  
I live in the Zerynthian Caves.  
I am the cauldron of wine and milk and blood and nightblooming  
herbs.  
I am the willow.  
Worship me at the three-fold crossroads;  
I will bestow upon you the mighty energies of a million hearts.

I am KALI MA, Mother Time.  
I am the joyous dancer of the cremation ground.  
I am the Daughter of the Ocean, the Mother born of Anger.  
I am wetnurse to warriors.  
I am black as the petal of the blue lotus at night.  
At the end of the Fourth World I will be there to gather the  
seeds of a new Creation.

I am LILITH, mistress of unbridled promiscuity.  
I am the lily.  
I am the Queen of Sheba, Who tempts Solomon.  
I am the winged sphinx.  
I am the demon of screeching.  
My home is in the Huluppu tree with the Anzu-bird and the  
dragon.  
I am the succuba Who attacks men in their sleep.  
I seduce men to follow crooked paths.  
I am called Serpent, Woman of Harlotry, End of All Flesh, End  
of Days.

I am the Queen of Zemargad.  
I have dominion over every living creature that creepeth.  
I am Leviathan, the tortuous serpent.  
I am the Sycamore.  
I am MAMAN BRIGITTE, loa of death, mistress of cemeteries.

I am ERISHKIGAL.  
I live in a House of Dust.  
My realm is dry and dark.  
I am the Lady of the Great Place Below.  
My capacity is limitless.

M. Macha NightMare  
'84

WEE-H  
M  
AK  
-L-  
W

I am the blossom of bone.

I am the stare that turns to stone.

I am the fang woman.

I am SKADI, Whose icy arrows pierce your sockets, where eyeballs roll.

I am the pitted skull with maggots.

I am MODGUD, with white and bloodless skin.

I am constant snow.

My drink is belladonna, leading to forgetfulness.

My home is a palace of ice.

My quicksilver looking glass turns the wheel.

I am the blossom of bone.

I am a rain cloud.

I am a chrysalis, a white pearl, a seed.

I am the web of fate, that catches returning souls.

I am the egg.

I am foam.

White root tendrils, drinking the crystalline waters of rebirth

The Milky Way spews from My breasts.

My belly is the silver halo of the Moon.

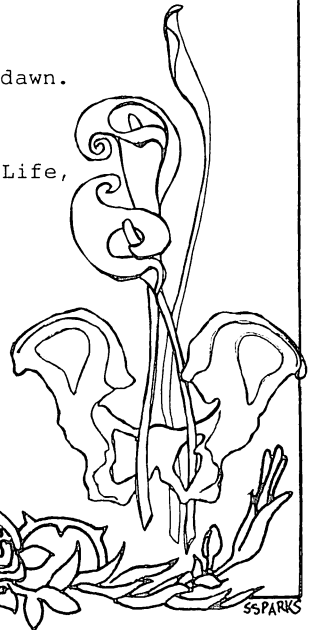
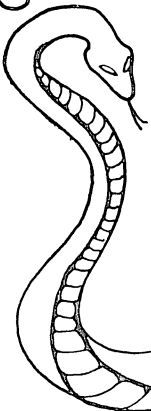
My tears, the dew of the morning star.

My fingers push the crystal light into the sky at dawn.

I am salt.

Taste the amniotic fluid, drink the sweet milk of Life,  
with the remembrance of Death.

Bone Blossom, '84



## A CHILD'S SOLSTICE IN SAN FRANCISCO

by Vibra

A shining tree, mysterious packages, decorated cookies, and a bright red candle that burns all night -- our children's memories of Yule will include all this as we reclaim, embrace and enjoy the oldest of the midwinter traditions, gathering children of all ages for a cookie-decorating, present-giving party to celebrate the Winter Solstice.

This is our children's ritual.

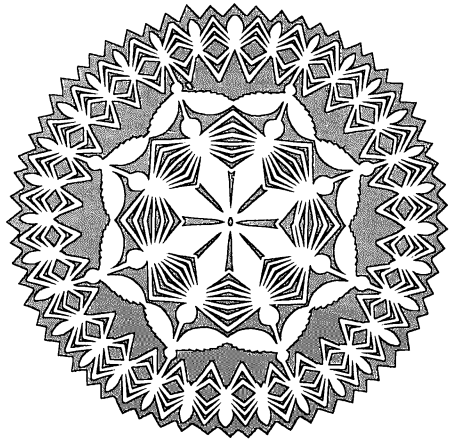
When the kids arrive, they put the wrapped presents they have brought for their friends under the tree standing in the living room, hung with toys and lights. If we're at our house, a white bird is at the top of the tree. Other families might have a doll or a star.

In another room they find a long table filled with plates full of cookies in the shapes of stars, trees, circles, wreaths and Santa Claus, that jolly old elf. The children choose decorations from bowls of raisins, chocolate chips, coconut, colored sugar, nuts and other goodies. With these, plus food coloring and paintbrushes, they adorn and paint the cookies, which have been coated with smooth white frosting.

Each child has one special "sun cookie" to be painted and decorated as brightly as possible and saved to eat on Solstice day. (But nothing bad happens if you eat it now.) The older kids create real works of edible art and the toddlers' eyes shine as they heap treats on their big circle cookies.



When everyone has a plate of cookies finished, we sit in a circle near the tree for stories. These may be old fairy tales or New Faerie tales, or a round-robin adventure we make up together. With luck, somebody has



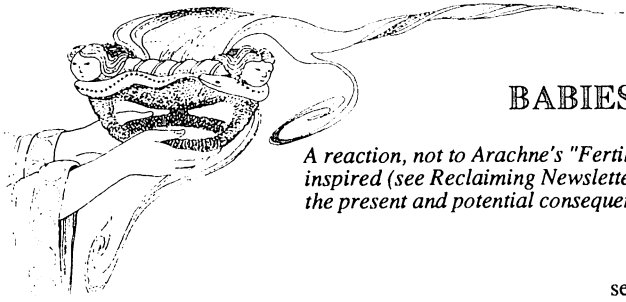
brought a drum or other musical instrument and we sing a song or two.

The kids like to sing Charlie Murphy's song: "Light is returning, even though this is the darkest hour. No-one can hold back the dawn!"

When it's time to go the children find their presents under the tree and each child is given a red floating candle with a sprig of holly tied to it. With these, the children can keep their own vigil on Solstice Eve, letting the candles burn safely in bowls of water while they sleep.

When we go into the children's rooms before dawn on Solstice, their faces glow in the light of their Yule candles. We wake them to come with us, to join our friends on the hillside. Looking east over the city, the bay, and the hills, we sing the sun up together.





## BABIES

*A reaction, not to Arachne's "Fertility Ritual", which is inspired (see Reclaiming Newsletter, Summer 1988), but to the present and potential consequences of fecundity.*

by Sophia Sparks

The advent of childbirth is a time that shines with glamour. Especially cherished by those who love her, a pregnant woman now belongs to the greater community like she never did before she was "showing."

Acquaintances fuss over her; strangers will come up and touch her swelling belly with a familiarity that would offend the "personal space" of anyone else. Added to the social allure of the pregnant status is the "biological imperative" that strikes most women sometime before age forty. Like a drumming in her bones, a woman finds she *needs* a child, her womb writhes with emptiness, each return of her moon blood brings a sense of futility and a renewal of hope. The vision of a child in her life, a spirit/companion who needs to come through *her*, becomes so strong, she will fiercely arrange her life to make room for a baby, whatever that requires.

When her time comes, amid the sweat, blood and hard breathing, the glamour extends to everyone present while she labors; everyone is aglow, intent upon the emergence of a new little body to carry its share of Spirit into the future. For they are all in the presence of Mystery, and all hearts thrill in the wonder, danger and joy of it all.

It was through my own experience of childbirth that I first encountered the boundless power of the Goddess within. While I would wish such a life-transforming divine event on everyone, men and women alike, surely there must be other ways to achieve it. For how many children can Mother Earth bear? Are human babies good for Her? At a time when She can only barely support the humans now living, the arrival of new babies can hardly be welcomed with unqualified joy. It is with dismay that I must raise this issue with the Reclaiming Community, whose regard for Earth is strong, but perhaps not far-seeing enough to realize that this is the wrong time in history to be working fertility magic for humans.

As a naturalist, I can see that we humans share with all life the very natural drive to reproduce. Nature has provided for our continuation by making reproductive behavior irresistibly pleasurable. For some, it may be the *only* pleasure in a wretched life, though it brings children into wretchedness and increases the family's destitution. This is happening on a large scale in many parts of the Third World. In a vicious cycle, the press of human population brings on desertification and the misery of starvation, so the people seek what comfort they can with each other; their babies add to the weight of humans in their land, which increases deprivation and misery.

Elsewhere in Nature, the reproductive drive has its season, and may even be responsive to fluctuations in food supply and other habitat conditions. Other species will breed up in times of plenty, and reduce their numbers during times of scarcity. Their numbers are further controlled by predation. Not so with us. Humans are fertile and horny in all seasons and conditions. Even faced with escalated starvation, we will be fruitful and multiply.

As our vision of a new culture evolves, we may see, like Riane Eisler does in her book, *The Chalice and the Blade*, new life-options opening up for women worldwide. No longer will a woman measure her worth in babies, when motherhood takes a more balanced place as one of many life-choices open to her. A woman who knows her immanent worth can freely control her fertility, freely enjoy her sex.

This awareness is already becoming established among the industrialized countries, where birthrates are low and birth control technology is handy. But the news is not good elsewhere in the world. Carl Haub of Population Reference Bureau, Inc., reports: "For the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, however, the picture is very different. These nations now contain 3.9 billion people [compare to 1.2 billion in developed countries], and fertility levels of five, six, seven or more children per woman are common." These children are born into "those regions of the world that are already plagued by deforestation, encroaching desert, scarcity of additional arable land, and food shortages." This cycle of misery-babies-more misery is sustained by governments and religions prohibiting birth control, and by the people's own enculturated attitude that babies are *the* destiny of women. Babies are the only "pension plan" to provide for the care of elders in some societies, and babies are an essential field labor resource among peasant farmers.

In the competition between humans and other species for living space and food supply, humans always "win." The rush for fuel and shelter materials has undone the vast forests of the world until now Earth-lovers are clamoring to spare the last relics of Old Growth. Rain forests are replaced with beef grazing and coca plantations. The American Prairie is overwhelmed by "monoculture" where food crops and grazing replace the diversity of prairie life, upsetting the balance and leading to the "Dust Bowl" of the thirties. Our cities form a sprawling crust over the land, exuding unmanaged wastes while consuming foods, fuels and materials wrested from The Mother without thanks or return. Through habitat destruction and outright extermination, Earth's other children — the wild herds, the predators, the trees, the whales — are dwindling or gone. Nature allows no other species to unbalance the world the way humans do. Yet She cannot allow humans to keep it up for long...

Monoculture is the cultivation of a single species of plant or animal in great numbers, to the exclusion of other species. While monoculture provides foods, such as potatoes, that make human population growth possible, it also invites opportunistic species, like blight fungus, to spoil the crops and bring hardships like the Great Potato Famine in Ireland. Monoculture is a feast, and Nature always supplies a diner. Though we may use pesticides or shotguns to keep unwanted diners from taking a share of our crops, they will still come.

Humans are themselves the greatest monoculture of all. Large predators are no longer around to take the young and infirm of our species, keeping our numbers in check; even after war, genocide, and famine take their share, the human monoculture is ripe to be harvested. The rate of genetic innovation among the microbes is so high that new strains can and do emerge to live on any plentiful host. AIDS can be viewed as such a pioneer microbe, having found its niche in our monoculture. Other forms of deadly microbes (perhaps an airborne variety?) are sure to evolve. These are the *little* predators, the unconquered ones. We can search for a cure, but we shouldn't be surprised or suspicious that Nature found some use for an overabundance of humans.

Though the birthrate here and in Europe is low, this must not be taken as an excuse to breed up. As ecosystems falter under the load of human impact, it's easy to see our numbers are already too great. Our forests are fast disappearing. Our consumption of wood and fossil fuels is bringing on a global heating trend that will be written in the geologic record. Housing shortages, traffic jams, unsafe air and water, new diseases...you can read the signs. And all this crowding still does not deter us from admitting further population at our borders, or developing technology to promote fertility, exploit new food sources (we're going after krill, now that whales are out of the way), prolong life, forestall the debility of old age, and even freeze our bodies for future revivification. The emphasis is on HUMAN LIFE at any price. Our culture, deadly as it is, resists Death with all its might. By interfering with natural attrition, our culture has

aggravated the population problem, even without raising the birthrate.

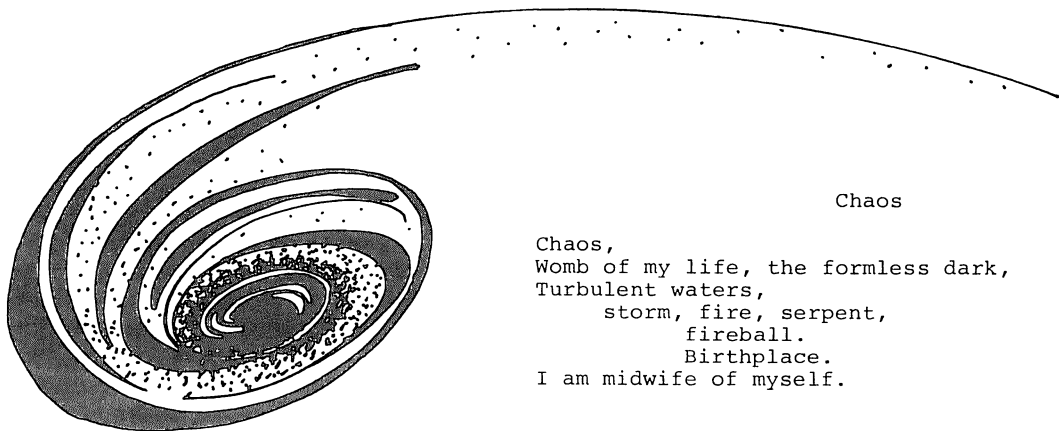
As Witches we value *all* Life, not just humans, and we know that Life is a wheel which includes Death as it turns. We know to allow Death its natural place, to accept it when it comes. We recognize it as a balancer, a feeder of Life. We can move through grief to the great consolation of the One Spirit in which we all share. Thus we can welcome Death's Mystery, let it fill us with its wonder, danger and joy.

The wholeness of the world requires a return to balance for *all* Life, so it is obvious to anticipate, in the ages to come, a die-back of humans as a natural remedy to our burdensome numbers. Disease, starvation and catastrophe may each play a part as agents of a die-back. The Earth has survived cataclysmic change many times during the eons. She will adapt to a greenhouse warming, or even to nuclear disaster, with her usual creativity. Some humans will adapt and survive, with new lessons learned and perhaps a closer bond to the Earth. If we initiate depopulation by reducing births, perhaps we can relieve the severity of Nature's remedies.

This is not oblivion. We need not fear a die-back, nor grasp so desperately for survival in this human form. Like the Sidhe, our spirits may abide in the rivers, rocks and trees.

For today, can we be bold enough to transform the potent urges of our "biological imperative" into fertility magic for the wild things, returning the gift of Life to the Mother? We are one with Her, of the same Spirit. The glamour that surrounds the birth of Nature's other children is as fair and thrilling as our own. We can choose to find fulfillment, and even some hope for future humans, by helping the wild world thrive now. We can work to restore and nurture the wild land where we live, and fight oppressive human impact there. For today, we can cherish the children already among us, and the Child Self within each of us.

Let the Acorn be your seed, the Oak your child. Dance lightly in the sacred grove.



### Chaos

Chaos,  
Womb of my life, the formless dark,  
Turbulent waters,  
    storm, fire, serpent,  
        fireball.  
    Birthplace.  
I am midwife of myself.

# voices

Thinking what I'm not supposed to think  
Saying what I don't believe  
Living a life I don't recognize  
Trying to hard to realize the lie  
Avoiding the look in my own lost eyes

But... there's a lotta nice stuff around here  
more every day  
superabundance of very nice stuff  
the good life, yeah  
floating like a cloud  
right on down Easy Street

Armies of the poor  
are camped in alleyways  
breathing Mercedes fumes  
& battling rats  
& hopelessness  
barely surviving  
the high-rise war  
Never mind  
here, here's a dime  
yeah, have a nice day  
good luck, have a fine time  
just don't get in my life  
Gotta be of a single mind  
To stay on Easy Street

Not thinking what I'm not supposed to think  
not supposed to not to think

CONsummer Crazy  
Lotta nice stuff around here  
more all the time  
more & more  
& more & more  
Nice stuff  
Nice life  
very nice  
quality of life  
gold plated status  
Gliding past shadowed alleys  
Sliding straight on down Easy Street

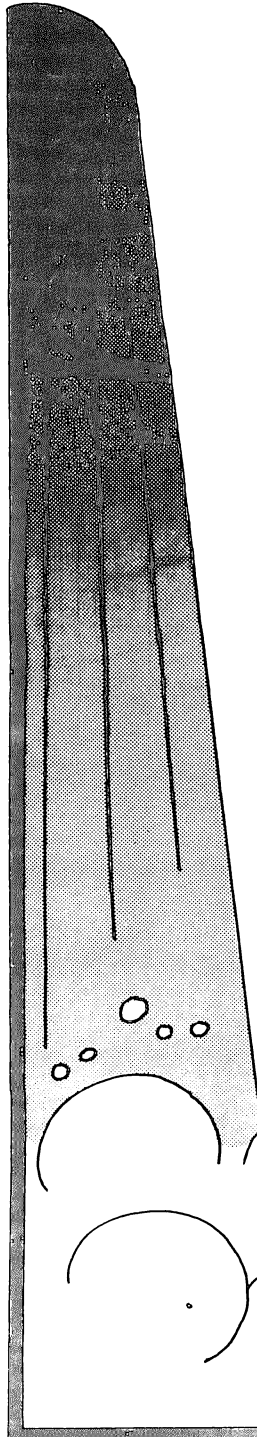
"So, I'm gonna get me a ceramic cowskull  
you know, they're having a sale on 'em at MACY'S  
yeah, put it on my coffee table  
make an alter, yeah  
you know what an alter is..."

"Oh, I know  
and GUMP'S, you know, has such a fine crystal collection  
and high quality epoxy arrowheads just like real from archaeological digs  
from all over the ancient Americas and real skulls with horns from  
Africa & Arizona & the Amazon Oh & real leather medicine shields with  
synthetic eagle feathers..."

"Isn't all this earth stuff great  
Its such a deep connection"

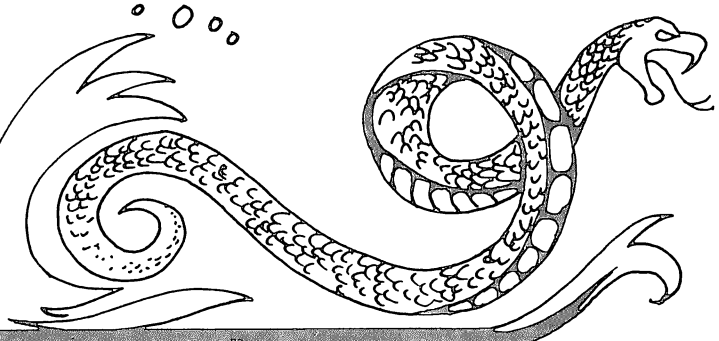


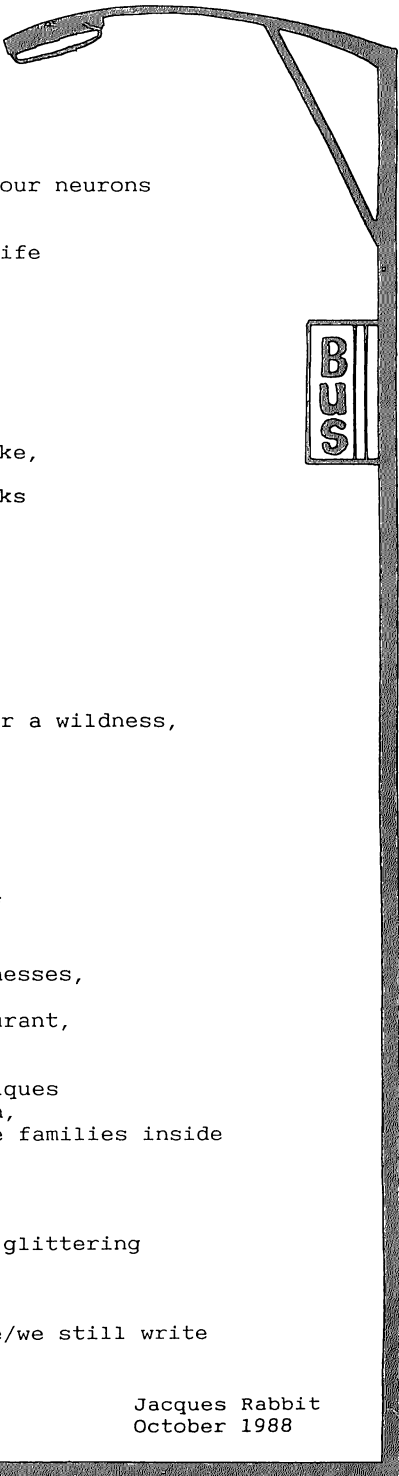
## POSTCARD



The woman standing in the sunlit doorway  
watching the cars crawl by  
waiting for the muni bus  
has wild hair!  
the top of her head  
is the blue part, a wild lake in the high country  
the light hits some waves  
and others stay black, where the deep fish are  
then there's the narrow part,  
and finally a stupendous cascade  
of blonde hair, dreadlocking  
out and down, some flying up  
when it hits the upper rocks  
sending spray like blue angels  
up into the pure air  
and the other part pours down with an incredible power  
the sound like a bus shooshing to a stop  
only more liquid and constant  
and the rose garden authentic mexican cuisine restaurant  
is wild, because of the sheer power of it,  
towers above the falls, a mountain of granite and mica  
catching the sun at 12000 ft  
these people are the deer - how they move,  
so slow and animal  
and those people are the birds  
Note the striking plumage, black against cobalt blue  
occasionally a bird will take your breath away  
out here, each thing's wildness  
contributes to each thing's wildness  
as though life was a snake  
coiling in us and then slithering away,  
into other things, leaving other things  
and sliding back into our open places  
Winds, too, blow the wildness everywhere  
so that the bicyclist is blown into tuolomne meadows  
and the cafe door waves like a young woman  
hailing her friends or the shapes of her desires

I don't know if this wildness  
this look in these people's eyes,  
the sprites and sylphs  
made by mouths during these conversations  
give the redwood trees a dim, thick sensation  
of mutual, impossible understanding  
but i prefer to believe this





also, i can now explain to you  
about the full places and the hollows.  
when we feel exactly full,  
when the space from our innermost heart  
to the smooth surfaces of our skin  
all, in certain moments, is perfectly vast, our neurons  
firing in glittering constellations  
it is the wildness coiling in us,  
helping us live, if for a moment, into the life  
the earth lives, into the living body.  
And sometimes there are certain hollownesses  
just behind the scapula, or in that cavern  
made by the ribs,  
or under the bone arches of the eyebrows,  
hollownesses that do not fill with fear  
Or despair like a bog, but instead  
fill our eyes with tears, pools,  
the knowledge of what fullness might feel like,  
the premonition of a wildness in the wind  
these hollows bear the painful, delicate marks  
of currents once swirling,  
strange, recognizable rivers that coiled,  
millenia ago, between the rock  
leaving furrows, as in a face remembering  
a lover, an act of completion,  
a powerful river.  
even on a city street cluttered with things  
we find ourselves in these places  
transfixed, staring at the rock walls,  
at a cave painting, at images that still bear a wildness,  
like a cascade of blonde hair

and all these things together,  
the stone pool filled and empty  
the feeling of wild completion  
and the memory of it,  
and the hunger of it,  
the granite face, the incontrovertible proof  
that the earth is somehow alive  
these constitute real lives, in every epoch.  
with certain fullnesses, with certain emptinesses,  
one can walk through a single door,  
the door of the rose garden authentic restaurant,  
and see, not the muni bus belching  
and the faced sealed off from the wind  
and the cars crawling by the desperate boutiques  
not the banks on every corner like policemen,  
or the slum housing covering the eyes of the families inside  
with hands of filthy windows  
not in other words, the already dead world,  
not the flies on the corpse of the land  
but the cave paintings in the graffiti,  
the invisible snakes coiling, diamond backs glittering  
the waterfall at the bus stop  
the life that is still possible

even on the backs/of postcards such as these/we still write  
wish you were here

Jacques Rabbit  
October 1988



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## Sexual & Ritual Abuse of Children

---

by Roy King

In the mid-seventies, near the end of a three year period of concentrated inner exploration using primal therapy techniques, I discovered, explosively, that I had suffered incestuous rape at a very young age. The effects of this abuse were devastating and continue to impact every emotional, physical, spiritual and sexual nuance of my life to this day.

Since uncovering the memory of incest, I have worked in many ways to heal from it, alone and with therapists and in groups, but with only partial success. In May of this year I began attending twelve step meetings for recovery from childhood sexual abuse and working, for the first time, with other survivors of incest. A level of safety and understanding is created from our shared experience in these groups far beyond what I could have imagined to be possible, and my healing has tangibly accelerated.

But there is one aspect of what is shared in these meetings that has been very shocking to me - the incredibly high incidence of reported ritual abuse, often labeled "Satanism" or "Witchcraft", and often reporting use of the same symbols and sabbats as we use in the feminist Craft.

The essence of "Satanic"<sup>1</sup> ritual is, of course, exactly opposed to our ritual. The "Satanist's" purpose seems to be, in its extreme, to rob their victims, usually children, of all their natural power and reduce them, through torture and terror, to slaves, to utterly control their wills. Our purpose is to empower and enhance respect for ourselves and each other, to promote freedom and fearlessness in our pleasure and essential unity with Mother Earth.

I have developed a most profound respect for survivors of ritual sexual abuse and torture simply for having survived. And I have become very, very

wary of revealing my pagan spirituality in these groups, for fear of damaging the fragile fabric of trust which allows us to share and heal together. I've never done that before. I usually tell whoever I get to know that I'm pagan. If they can't handle it, well, tough shit. But in these groups, where the level of intimacy runs so much deeper than usual, I became closeted. So what's going on here?

In June of this year there was a conference on ritual abuse sponsored by the U.C. Berkeley Rape Prevention Education Program. A friend who is a therapist, and incest survivor and a witch attended and was extremely upset that some of the "expert" speakers made no distinction between tortuous, sexually abusive ritual and the joyous, celebratory ritual of the Goddess movement. They referred to the whole spectrum of occult ritual as "Witchcraft" and distributed literature which included symbols (pentagrams, etc.) that "Witches" use, implying that everyone using these symbols is practicing ritual abuse.

Shortly after this conference the topic of ritual abuse came up in a Reclaiming collective meeting. I made the mistake of saying that ritual abuse is, in a sense, the shadow side of Witchcraft. The discussion got kind of hot then and someone said ritual abuse has nothing to do with the Craft, but is the shadow side of Christianity. (In pagan circles, Satanism is generally considered to be the invention of the Christian church, which created Satan by perverting images of the horned gods of the old European religions, which were an obstacle to their conquering, single minded, patriarchal movement. Satanism, in a twisted sort of way, filled in the void created by the unbalanced Christian theology, and borrowed form the symbols and forms of Christianity as well as the old pagan religions.) Someone compared the current accusations of ritual abuse in the Craft<sup>2</sup> to accusations by Nazis in

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pre-war Europe of Jews for eating Christian babies. I pointed out that while Jewish baby eating was a total and preposterous lie, ritual sexual abuse and torture of children, now, in this country, is widespread and ongoing. We can no longer deny it totally as fictitious fundamentalist propaganda against the Craft. It is real. Unbelievable, but real.

The statistics are that one in three women and one in six men suffered sexual abuse, usually incestuous, as children. Child rape constitutes a goddamned national American pastime. As the lid is finally being blown off the tightly repressed reality of incestuous child abuse, the reality of ritual abuse, which parallels Nazism in horror and incomprehensibility, is also coming to light. It is widespread, often perpetrated by men and women of high social standing, and may be nationally organized.

As the facts of incest within the typical American family seep slowly into the mass American mind, there's going to be a lot of squirming perpetrators out there, often "good Christian folk", exercising denial to the hilt. And nothing aids and abets denial (the refusal to see painful realities within oneself) like a scapegoat. As the more hideous ritualized forms of physical and sexual child abuse increasingly pervade the media, labeled as "Satanism" and "Witchcraft" (terms already synonymous to the average American), the hoards of repressed and guilt ridden fundamentalist incest perpetrators are going to be laying blame very heavily and very loudly and very directly on "Witches", their old theological adversaries, we who worship the Goddess. And those among them who are not actually guilty of child rape, but only of the sexual repression that leads to it, won't miss their opportunity to strike a potential death blow to the reviving spirituality of the Goddess, which is springing up so strong and righteous all around the land, and which is instrumental in creating the change in cultural climate where sexual child abuse, for the first time in centuries, can be exposed.

Goddess worshipping pagans of every stripe are now being forced to face this issue squarely and clearly to defuse the fundamentalist attack on our community and to inform the general public who we are and what we are about. This is no easy task since much of the joyfulness and sexuality of our spiritual practice may be threatening to "Mr. Jones", who has a vested interest in maintaining control and defending his normally numbed psychic status quo. But given the incest-ritual abuse dynamic that is suddenly emerging, we as pagans are being pulled into the fray whether we choose it or not.

I want to look now at the relation between incestuous abuse within families and "Satanic ritual". Incest sometimes starts at birth and so pervades a child's life as to become "normal". It can be subtle and covert or overt and violent, ranging from inappropriate sexual fondling or verbal innuendo by a parent to brutal rape and isolation and secrecy enforced by death threats. It can be perpetrated by either parent or grandparent, both parents and/or grandparents, and/or one or more siblings, or a whole host of relatives and/or non-relatives. Whatever form incest takes, it is never not devastating. But it is different in each case and much worse in some cases than in others. It is almost always repressed from memory and feeling for years. For many incest victims it never surfaces, but remains an unknown inner source of self-loathing and hatred, shame and guilt, psychological and physical stress, destructive social patterns and drug abuse, debilitating disease and suicide.

Ritualized abuse, from what I've been able to learn about it, is most often organized by the victim's parents or guardians. It usually involves gang rape of all kinds, often includes torture and usually insures silence under threat of death. It often includes child pornography and prostitution. It may even sometimes include sacrifice and cannibalism. To my mind, ritual abuse differs from non-ritualized incest in degree only. It is



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not fundamentally different, only (usually) more brutal, more devastating, more unbelievable, more hideous. I have no doubt that there is a continuous spectrum of incestuous assault ranging from the most "innocent" incest by "loving" parents, all the way to the most tortuous, ritualized violation of children.

Ritual is a form of spiritual practice we in the Goddess movement have in common with the entire pantheon of the occult, indeed with all religions. Ritual technique is a powerful tool, ethically neutral in itself, that can be used for life celebration and healing, or for destruction and sickness. I might even say for good or for evil, for there are some things that human beings do that are purely evil.

Through ritual people are empowered to go beyond their ordinary realm of consciousness, or sensitivity, or action. Ritual enables us to do things, good or bad, that we don't or can't normally do. That's one essential meaning of magic.

Within my experience in the Goddess movement, ritual magic includes poetic and musical inspiration, expressed in invocation and drumming and song, physical inspiration, expressed in dancing and leaping about, trance states not necessarily expressed at all, but experienced inwardly as enhanced connection to my planet, to my friends, to the larger circle of people working to stop the destruction of Earth, and to my deeper, greater Self. Sexual inspiration has usually been limited to flirting, unfortunately, although I have heard tell of "great rites" where people actually fuck in circle. In essence we use ritual to expand beyond our inhibitions or limitations to experience joyous communion with ourselves and our planet, and to engender the courage and commitment to act politically and socially to make this expansion of consciousness reality.

It occurs to me, in pondering the phenomenon of ritual abuse, that "Satanists" use ritual to perform acts

that are too cruel, hideous and morally reprehensible for their ordinary status of feeling and acting. They would naturally invoke and submit to the authority of "evil gods", such as Satan, to release them of their responsibility for the torture and abuse they perpetrate, much as the Nazis used the coming of the "Superman" to justify the evil that they enacted. Where as we use ritual to step closer into the blessed circle of the life of the planet, "Satanists" use ritual to step further out of it. The insulating nature of ritual buffers them from their crimes and allows them to return to "normal" consciousness and resume "respectable" roles in the world.

Although it is essential for all lovers of the goddess to denounce all forms of ritual abuse as publicly as is possible, the general issue of incest is not only an "us and them" issue, it is also an "us" issue. If the statistics are correct, and one in four people suffered sexual abuse as children, few families have been untouched by incest. It occurs in all ethnic and social groups, at all levels of wealth and class standing. It is the product of centuries of distorted thinking, feeling and being under the unbalanced reign of terror of the patriarchy. We were all born into it. And despite the radically hopeful directions we pagans, anarchists and others are taking to reestablish sanity on our planet, we still live in the patriarchy and the patriarchy still lives in us. Change in humans, encumbered as we are in long established and deep reaching social and psychic structures, can be disgustingly slow.

The feminist Craft community is undoubtedly among the safest of human environments in the entire expanse of this post-industrial wasteland in which we live. There may still be a handful of tribal peoples scattered over the planet that have never lost the basic animal ability to care for their children. But here incestuous violation is in epidemic proportions, and the institutions of denial are still insidiously strong. If the pagan community really stands for the liberation of the Goddess within us, as



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we do, then we must find the courage to look also among ourselves and within ourselves. We must be vigilant and we must speak out. We owe it to ourselves, and to our children. We are doing extensive work to eradicate inequitable power dynamics from ourselves and from our community, but we are not yet all free of it in every form.

In living with the Goddess, we honor our sexual pleasure as a sacrament. Sexuality is a form of worship. The lifting of smothering puritanical repression, and the reversal of the slander of sexuality, endemic to modern culture, is necessary to healing the twisted attitude toward life that manifests in so many destructive forms, including the sexual abuse of children. However, at the present level of general social unconsciousness, a religious disposition to "worship" sexuality may tend to attract individuals predisposed to acting out in sexually abusive ways. For instance, in the past twenty-five years or so, since "sexual-liberation" began, groups have sprung up openly defending their right to have sex with their kids, some with legal networks and lobbying power to effect changes in laws protecting children from incest and rape. I hope I'm not sounding paranoid, but its good to keep our eyes open, and not look away in silent shock at signs of possible covert or overt sexual abuse. Many potentially abusive situations can be nipped in the bud by courageous intervention, before real and irreversible damage is done.

In the next few years I expect the issue of sexual abuse of children to rip through American culture like a tidal wave. As more survivors of incest and ritual abuse come together to find healing, an atmosphere of openness grows geometrically. As the extent of the damage caused by sexual abuse comes to light, laws are being written and enforced to greater protect children from abuse. But as with any advance in social consciousness, there's going to

be a backlash reaction. Goddess worshipping witches, already considered evil in much of the mass mind, condemned in the Bible, and sharing the designation "Witchcraft" and some superficial aspects of ritual with perpetrators of "Satanic" atrocity, are in a unique position to be caught in the vortex of this backlash. The crimes of abusers are outrageous and nasty, and the backlash reaction they create will probably be proportionate in degree and in kind.

Incest and sexual abuse of children is among the most loaded and difficult social issues we now face. I expect a storm that will rage on many levels in and around and at our community. Those who will best survive will be those who become best prepared for the change. Denial can no longer provide shelter. The long standing fortress of secrecy is falling. The monster is loose, among us.

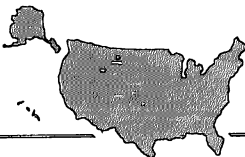
Blessed be

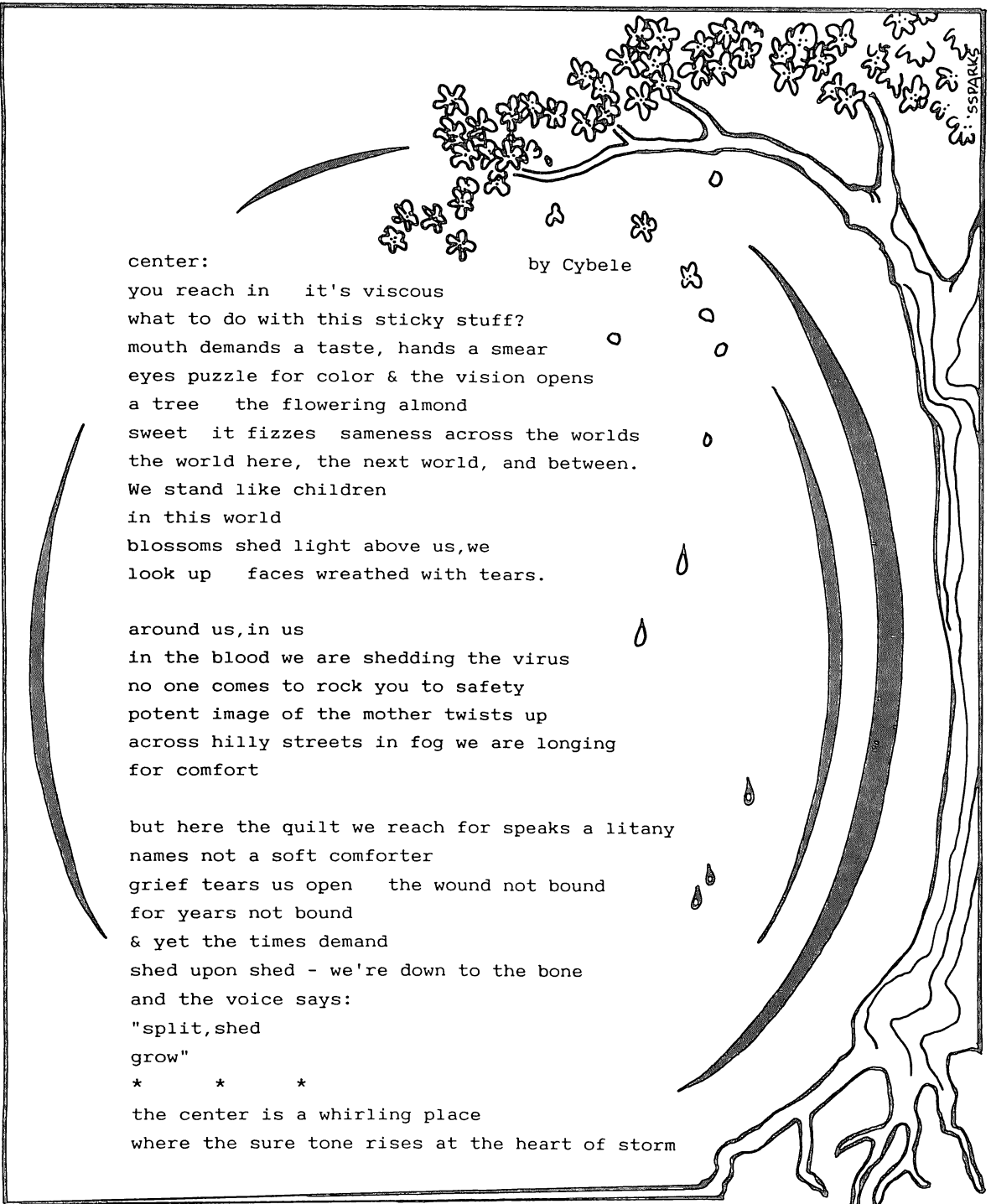
An article that may be of interest for the pagan community, The Ritual Child Abuse Issue, by Morning Glory Zell, appeared in The Green Egg, vol XXI, No. 82. Green Egg, P.O. Box 1542, Ukiah, CA 95482.

<sup>1</sup> I am using the word "Satanic" to refer to abusive ritual, although I am not sure that all Satanists practice ritual abuse, nor that all perpetrators of ritual abuse call themselves Satanists.

<sup>2</sup> Some well known pagan priestesses have been recently accused in national media campaigns by fundamentalists and other political idiots of kidnapping children for ritualistic sexual abuse and sacrifice.

<sup>3</sup> Religious fanaticism is very often a characteristic of incest perpetrators.





center:

you reach in it's viscous  
what to do with this sticky stuff?  
mouth demands a taste, hands a smear  
eyes puzzle for color & the vision opens  
a tree the flowering almond  
sweet it fizzes sameness across the worlds  
the world here, the next world, and between.  
We stand like children  
in this world  
blossoms shed light above us, we  
look up faces wreathed with tears.

around us, in us  
in the blood we are shedding the virus  
no one comes to rock you to safety  
potent image of the mother twists up  
across hilly streets in fog we are longing  
for comfort

but here the quilt we reach for speaks a litany  
names not a soft comforter  
grief tears us open the wound not bound  
for years not bound  
& yet the times demand  
shed upon shed - we're down to the bone  
and the voice says:  
"split, shed  
grow"

\* \* \*

the center is a whirling place  
where the sure tone rises at the heart of storm



## CATMAGIC

Whitley Strieber

Tom Doherty Associates, New York, 1987

Paperback \$4.95

*Reviewed by Mith Woodling*

*Catmagic* is a disturbing, dark fantasy — just a stone's throw from the Stephen King genre of horror.

It's the fictional story of the hero-Witches against the villain-fundamentalists in the small town of Maywell, New Jersey. There's also a mad scientist (supported by one of the Witches) intent on killing a human and bringing her/him back to life. (*Shades of Frankenstein!*) The fundamentalist preacher, incidentally, carries the hand of a murdered girl in his pocket. (*Shades of Psycho!*) Finally, our heroine is pre-ordained to become the next Witchqueen, although she doesn't know it...

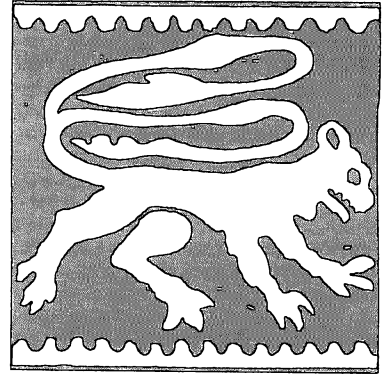
I have some ambivalent feelings about this novel. On the positive side, Whitley Strieber obviously read contemporary Witchcraft/Neo-Pagan books and interviewed people prior to writing it. He writes in the paperback edition:

"The Witches I met in doing research for *Catmagic* were no more evil than Christians or Buddhists or Hindus, or the practitioners of any other perfectly legitimate religion, among which Wicca can certainly be numbered." (pg. 5)

I salute him. The novel gives a strong, steady cry for religious tolerance, an item I find most appealing. The Witches are long-established in Maywell, and co-exist peacefully with the long-established Episcopalians, Methodists, and Catholics. The intolerance of the newly-arrived fundamentalists is portrayed as the great evil.

On the negative side, the books seems rather death-oriented. The Consort of the Goddess, the Horned Lord, is called "Godfather Death;" he's never "Laughing Pan." Many of the scenes from the underworld are quite hellish. Furthermore, in order to be "initiated" as a genuine "shaman," one must go through an actual, not symbolic, death. When the initiate returns to life, s/he has the power of a demi-deity, but someone else must take her/his place in the realm of the dead. (*Shades of Innana!*)

Also, I found that none of the characters were very likeable. Our heroine, Mandy, describes herself as "passive," but she strikes me as naively stupid. With no plan of her own to become a Witch, she is all too easily manipulated into taking a series of dangerous tests to make her the next Witchqueen. When she finally receives "the willingness to ask hard questions," she blithely accepts the pat philosophical answers given her.



Constance, the semi-divine Witchqueen/Pope, is no more likeable. She manipulates her Witches (and the non-Witches) right and left. She sets one character, George, on a series of ethically questionable experiments, and does not try to help him when he begins to exhibit self-destructive behavior. Although the book states over and over that Witches don't lay guilt trips on one another, Constance says to Mandy, "If you had any idea...what sacrifices had been made for you — you would go down on your knees to thank me." The concepts of free will and equality of spirit may be inherent in all the traditions of the Craft, but you don't see them in this story. At one point, Mandy is told only that Constance, the Witchqueen, and Mandy, the heiress apparent, are able to see the Leannon Sidhe (the Queen of the Fairies). Apparently, other mortals are too base to be permitted to do so.

The author makes the Sidhe or fairy-folk into really puzzling critters. They are alternately portrayed as powerful gods, then simply as humanoids evolved from rats. A humorous note appears when Constance explains the nature of the Leannon Sidhe and Tom, the magical King of Cats, to Mandy: "They're a couple of whores. All gods are. They'll be whatever you want them to be, and do whatever you want them to do."

Perhaps the best parts of the book were several good chants, written by Whitley Strieber for the story (they're on pages 191, 325, 336, and 355); and an exquisite re-telling of the "Legend of the Descent of the Goddess" on page 337.

I'm not sure this novel should be recommended to non-Craft people. The plea for religious tolerance is a good message, but I don't think the picture it gives of the Craft is truly in focus. At least, the picture of *Catmagic* is only ill-focused, not purposely false.

On the other hand, if a Witch or Neo-Pagan would like to read a horror novel in which the Witches win against the Fundamentalists, this is the book.



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COMMUNITY/CULTURE: We Have Danced the Spiral Dance...

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Preparations for this year's Spiral Dance ritual began in June when the planning committee started its biweekly meetings. We began the seemingly endless tasks of revising the script and tracking volunteers. We hashed out issues such as:

The number of performances. (One. The performance space had already been rented for the weekend. Thank you Z. Budapest for making it available to us on Saturday the 29th.)

The balance of the Goddess & God invocations.

The number of tickets sold. (269. Limited by the amount of floor space.)

The chorus began to rehearse in late August, and the dancers and instrumentalists in September. Beyond the work, it was a time to make and renew friendships for both children and adults.

Something always seems to slip through the cracks. We'd like to thank Susan North for her singing in "Spirits", "Burning Times", and

"Demeter's Song", and Holly Tannen for her singing in "Through All the World Below" and "Gone, Gonna Rise".

In all, it took 160 volunteers to put together the Spiral Dance.

Although final figures aren't in, our budget finds us \$209 in the red.

There's still a bit of tidying up left from New Year's, which comes as no surprise, looking back on the effort involved.

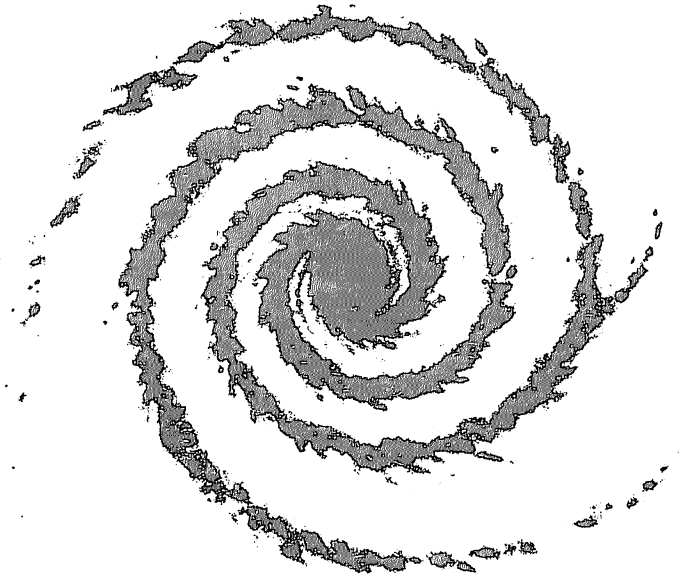
The Spiral Dance is an ongoing community project. We welcome feedback, so drop us a line in care of Reclaiming. The next cast of characters to organize the ritual may be completely different. We'd like to collect any hints, discoveries, solutions, unsolved problems, or particularly flattering remarks you may wish to send our way, so that the next group of volunteers to put on this event can be better prepared.

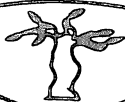
Thank you one and all for making the magic happen!

Blessed be,

Robin & Arachne

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## CHANTS

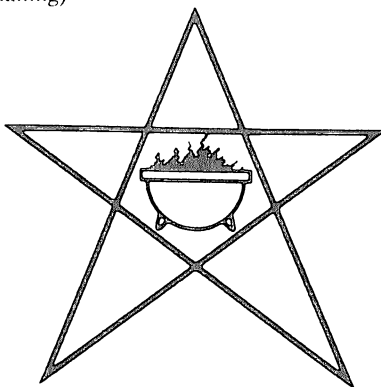
### Ritual Music

a cassette tape from the Reclaiming community

A 40-minute tape of chants and songs from various sources, which are frequently used in Reclaiming rituals. The tape is intended as a teaching tool, and a worksheet is included. We hope that you will sing these chants and songs, use them in ritual, and teach them to others. Proceeds from the sale of this tape help to support the work of the Reclaiming Collective.

**TO ORDER:** Send check or money order in U.S. currency to RECLAIMING TAPE, P.O. Box 14404, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Price: \$10.00 each, including postage (add \$3.00 each for overseas mailing)



#### Side 1

The Beginning of the Earth  
Touching Her Deep  
Air I Am  
Rise with the Fire  
Snake Woman  
    Isis Astarte  
    We are an Old People  
    I Am a Strong Woman  
We Are the Flow (orig. melody)  
Silver Shining Wheel  
Where There's Fear There Is  
    Power  
Hecate Ceredwen

#### Side 2

Return to the Mother  
Born of Water  
Air Moves Us  
Water and Stone  
We All Come from the Goddess/  
    Hoof and Horn  
Kore Chant  
We Are the Flow (folk melody)  
Sun King  
We Are Alive



# RECLAIMING CLASSES

## **EAST BAY -- ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR WOMEN by Diane Baker and Rose May Dance**

With the art of Magic, we deepen our vision and focus our will, empowering ourselves to act in the world. In this class we begin the practice of Magic, Witchcraft, and Goddess spirituality by working with the Elements of Magic: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit. Techniques include: visualization, sensing and projecting energy, chanting, trance, creating magical space, spellcraft, and structuring rituals. Beginning 6-week course, 6 Thursdays, starting Thursday, March 16, 7:30 PM - 10:45 PM, taught in the East Bay. (Women living in East Bay given registration preference.) \$45-\$90 sliding scale, terms available. Call Rose, 821-3336.

## **ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR YOUNG PEOPLE by Starhawk and Vibra**

An introduction to the practice of Magic, Witchcraft, and Goddess spirituality for junior high and high school students. We will learn to use magic to deepen our vision and focus our will, empowering ourselves to act in the world. We will work with the elements of earth, air, fire, water and spirit, and use the techniques of visualization, sensing and projecting energy, chanting, trance, creating magical and sacred space, spellcrafting, and structuring rituals. We hope that this will be the beginning of a series of classes, workshops and other programs for training young people. Written permission of parents will be required, and parents will have an opportunity to meet the teachers before class starts. Six week course, Sundays 10 am - 1 pm, beginning February 5. \$45-90 sliding scale. Call Vibra 221-7142 for registration and location.

## **ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR INCEST SURVIVORS by Cybele and Deborah**

A weekend workshop for women survivors to experience the basics of magical work in a space with other survivors. We will begin the practice of magic, witchcraft and Goddess spirituality by working with the elements of magic: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit. Techniques include: creating safe and sacred space, grounding, purification, visualization, chanting and sensing & projecting energy. Special attention will be paid to Younger Self and her needs. This workshop counts as prerequisite for future Breath and Body classes for survivors or for other Reclaiming Classes. Saturday and Sunday, January 21-22. \$70-120 sliding scale. Call Cybele 648-3908 for details.

## **ELEMENTS OF MAGIC FOR MEN AND WOMEN by Raven and Pandora**

With the art of magic, we deepen our vision and focus our will, empowering ourselves to act in the world. In this class we begin the practice of Magic, Witchcraft, and Goddess spirituality by working with the Elements of Magic: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit. Techniques include: visualization, sensing and projecting energy, chanting, trance, creating magical space, spellcraft, and structuring rituals. Beginning 6-week course, 6 Mondays, starting January 23. \$45-90 sliding scale. Call Raven 334-MOON or Pandora 641-5836 for registration and location.

# CLASSES AND EVENTS



## **rites of passage for lesbians** by Pleiades

The Rites of Passage focuses on dreams, myths and language, using traditional and non-traditional tales and techniques to create a personal rite of passage. Through story-telling, trance, release work and dreams we receive our challenge, meet our helpers, work through our blocks and emerge renewed, reborn. This class culminates with a ritual created by the students. Prerequisites: Elements of Magic or equivalent experience/study. Six Mondays starting January 9, 1989. Call Pleiades 648-3879 for registration and location. \$45-90 sliding scale.

## **Mundane Magic..Spellcrafting** by Raven Moonshadow

In this hands-on class we will discover how the lesser becomes the greater magik. When we gaze at the world around us with starlight vision and discover how color, rhythm, scents, stones, herbs, candles, natural and man-made objects weave a tapestry that is the fabric of existence, we can concentrate on reawakening the child-self. Each week we will focus on a specific law of magik, then apply that law to a working of magik. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic, equivalent experience/study or instructor's approval. 6 Thursdays, beginning February 9 and one Saturday field trip into the "occult world". Call Raven 334-MOON for registration and location. \$45-90 sliding scale.

## **Breath and Body for Women Survivors of Incest & Abuse** by Cybele

This class focuses on your relationship with your body, working with the issues survivors share: shame, self-disgust, fear, lack of boundaries or shutting down/checking out. We will work in sacred space to reclaim our ground, our voices and our boundaries. We will use grounding practices, movement work, body maps and breathwork to continue our healing process. We will connect physical & attention states (contraction and split attention, for example) with emotions and symbols as we move and draw and sing together. Prerequisite: Elements of Magic or equivalent experience/study. Ongoing support (therapy or 12-step program) is strongly suggested. Six Tuesday evenings beginning January 10. \$45-90 sliding scale plus \$10 material/space fee. Call Cybele 648-3908 for details.

## **Tools of the Trade** by Raven Moonshadow

How many of you out there have a wonderful set of tools and just don't know what to do with them? In this new class we will work with the traditional tools of the five elements (Air-Athame, Fire-Wand, Water-Cup, Earth-Pentacle, Center-Cauldron) plus two other tools of the witch's armory, the Besom (broom) and Staff. In each class we will discuss the construction or procurement of the tools, how to bless them, their history and properties, and exercises to open up the world of each element through its key (the tool). Prerequisite: Elements of Magic, equivalent experience/study or instructor's approval. You must have tools of the four elements - Air, Fire, Water and Earth. 6 Tuesdays, beginning January 17. Call Raven 334-MOON for registration and location. \$45-90 sliding scale.





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**EL DIA de LOS MUERTOS Needle Exchange Begins in  
San Francisco**  
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by Hermine Fleet

[The names in this article have been changed.]

During the past five or six years of the AIDS epidemic, I have been working with intravenous drug users (IVDUS), taking life histories, offering sex education, and teaching basic needle hygiene -- don't share equipment, but if you do, clean it with bleach. The users are tested for the AIDS virus, and then I tell them their results, and do follow-up counseling. Although I am encouraging when a client talks of stopping drug use, my concern is saving and prolonging lives, so I maintain a non-judgmental attitude about drug use when I work.

The question my clients most often ask, is "Why don't you pass out free needles if you really want to stop AIDS?"

The answer is not simple. Laws on the California books make it hard to provide this life-saving measure to people who use IV drugs. Many people think that providing needles to IVDUS would encourage drug use, would make it easier for non-users to begin using.

But the slow death and misery I see on the streets and on the job, every day, is overwhelming argument for action. For a year some friends and I have been scheming ways to make needles available to those who may die if they share more needles -- to those who may die, or who may spread AIDS to others: to friends and people in their families, to people they do not know. AIDS threatens our human family and the time to act is passing quickly.

We thought the best idea would be a needle exchange program, run by the Department of Public Health. The Mayor of San Francisco could declare an epidemic -- we have an epidemic, declaration or not -- and empower the DPH to exchange new needles for used ones. Needle exchanges are in place officially in England, Scotland, the Netherlands, Australia, France, Norway, and Germany. In the countries where the programs have run for a while, the statistics show rates of HIV (AIDS virus) transmission to be lower. New

York has started a pilot exchange program (for 200 persons). In Tacoma, WA there is an unofficial exchange being performed, with the blessings of the authorities, by a concerned citizen. A needle exchange in which an IVDU hands in a used "rig" for a new one does not make it easy for a first-time injector to use drugs, since it's unlikely s/he would have an old needle to exchange. Exchange also helps with the problem of discarded, perhaps deadly, needles littering playgrounds, alleys and parks. U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop has said "You do anything in the world you can do... If providing fee needles will stop [AIDS], it is fine with me...".

Unfortunately, the Mayor and the Health Department in San Francisco have not taken any initiative. To get needle exchange started, direct action was needed. My friends and I are experienced in direct action and civil disobedience. This action would be beautifully direct: if I collect a dirty needle from an IVDU and give her/him a clean one, my act directly helps stop the AIDS epidemic, my work saves lives. Still we were hesitant because although we were willing to go to jail for such action, our target population would be, for good reason, far less willing. But the sickest (with AIDS) of our clients encouraged and prodded those of us who work in the field, and it became clear that waiting longer was dangerous.

At Summer's end my friend Spin and I decided to try to stir up some action. Simultaneously Desiree told me she had dreamed we must start needle exchange on the Day of the Dead, and she was ready to organize, despite endangerment to her job. Blondie, a Health Educator, joined, as did Les, with whom I'd worked on the job, on the blockade line and in circle. Slowly we formed an affinity group, which I'll call Getting to the Point. We were, at the time of this writing, 13 souls, some Witches, activists, health workers, social workers, gay and straight, and some of our members carry the HIV virus.

At our meetings we included consultation of the Tarot as a planning

tool. We thought through everything carefully, wrote a leaflet, consulted trusted individuals in the AIDs and drug fields, consulted trusted clients, began building support in the political and spiritual communities. So many people from these groups responded enthusiastically. We knew we were doing the right thing.

Medical workers began to supply us with needles, at the risk of their jobs. Those of us given to Witchcraft began to work magic over the needles. One day as I wandered in an Hispanic Botanica, I found, among the Oricha candles, a red one dedicated to Pancho Villa, bandoleers across his chest, and a prayer on the back asking for courage and success in fighting powerful opponents, asking for help for the needy and the triumph of the poor. The great revolutionary bandit has apparently been enshrined as an aspect of Legba. Perfect! I brought him home and began asking friends to charge the candle with luck for the exchange action.

As the season of Samhain drew near, I made an altar: Pancho Villa, skulls, Muertos toys and foods, clean needles, bottles of bleach, leaflets, memorabilia and ashes of friends who died from AIDS (though not IVDUS, I feel their support for my work). As the Spirits gathered in for Samhain I implored their help, and told them how we wanted to act on their special day, in honor of those who had died of AIDS, and in order that life might thrive.

Our group met shortly before Halloween, and included six new members. We finalized our plans. We would act during evening hours -- in the dark -- in a neighborhood noted for its drug activity and in which many of our faces were known and trusted. We would begin with a low key approach, and imitate the stealth of the streets because our "customers" would be more comfortable with such an approach. We divided into two teams, roving and stationary, and assigned six roles per team: 1) informed consent -- informing the "customer" that needle exchange may not be legal and that there may be consequences to their participation, and explaining that we represent no one but ourselves, even though people may have

seen us working for certain health organizations; 2) supervising the biohazardous waste container into which the IVDU drops the used needle; 3) handing the new needle to the individual; 4) legal observing (from a distance); 5) making sure the team has what they need to work; and 6) sweeping the neighborhood to gather potential "customers". We also chose someone to handle media should we be arrested.

Our organizing done, some of us wanted to make magic for the action. We thought that our friends who are not involved in the Craft or Paganism would want to leave the meeting, as it was late, but they stayed to do magic, which made us happy. We lit Pancho Villa, and surrounded him with all of our needles, arranged in a spiral. We each held the candle and stated our wishes for the action. When it was her turn, Mitzi held the candle and called on her newly-dead (AIDS) friend. "I know my friend Berk would be helpful in this work as he is a very powerful spirit, and I feel he is around." The candle went out and the room was plunged into darkness. We gasped, then laughed and welcomed Berk as our comrade. When all our wishes -- effectiveness, safety, health, life, influence, and the like -- were on the candle, we raised power and held each other. We were ready.

The Pancho Villa candle and a few needles also found their way to the Spiral Dance Ritual, and were charged on the altar there. Many of us were dancing and singing the Spiral that night, and we received courage and spirit for our work. And so when El Dia de Los Muertos dawned, we were ready.

I admit I had great fear, but was grounded. As night fell, we gathered in a public place, raised energy together, and then split into two teams. I was on the stationary team, and we took up our places, with our biohazard waste bucket, near a gathering place for IVDUS. We were careful to stay away from places where drugs and needles were being sold, lest we be perceived as business competition. Desiree began to solicit likely looking passers-by, who were somewhat incredulous. She carefully explained our program, but at first was met with distrust. Helga and I stood



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with the biowaste bucket, twiddling our thumbs, and trying to keep our spirits up, as the hours passed. Finally Crow was successful with his "sweeping", and brought us one customer. I scared this customer, who was rushing mightily on speed, by my method of passing a needle to him, which apparently was similar to the way an undercover cop begins to handcuff a suspect. He jumped away and had to be encouraged to return to me. I asked him how to pass the needle next time and he was very sweet, and advised me. I developed a new method which includes lots of eye contact, casual stance, and clearly telling the person "now I'm going to hand this to you" or "take this out of my hand". We were so delighted to hand out our first needle that we were grinning ear to ear. Soon another customer, a woman we knew, came to us. We were jumping up and down as she left. Alas, it was now the time we had agreed to stop for the evening, in order to rendezvous with the other team. I didn't want to stop.

Desiree suggested we walk back to the cars, trying to do a little "business" as we walked. We walked down a very "busy" sidewalk, brilliantly lit [Note: bright lights do not necessarily deter drug activity], and Desiree whispered our mission to a young man also known to us. He was delighted and began to fumble with his handbag, rummaging for his "rig". We saw several bottles of bleach in his bag. We directed him to drop his envelope in the bucket, and then I beckoned him up against a building. Smiling broadly I told him I wanted to shake his hand, and would pass him a new needle. He returned my smile and it was a little like falling in love. With "Bless you, bless you"s we parted, and he told Crow, behind me, "She is the cutest girl I've ever seen doing that and she did it the best I've ever seen anyone do it." Perhaps I've missed my calling. Perhaps not.

Glowing with accomplishment at handing out the magic number of 3, our team travelled to the meeting place. Our supporters greeted us with the chicken soup of life, and we told our stories to each other. The roving team had had success right away, and had exchanged about 12 needles. They had the best luck in a dark area under some trees, frequented by homeless folk. Their recipients had been grateful and

in need of what was offered. One man insisted on handing them a dollar and then running away. Another gave them a can of pears. We placed both of these items on our Dead altar. We gave thanks, raised energy, and feasted. The Dead gathered around us and feasted too, and we felt blessed and satisfied.

We continued our action the next week, with more customers. It was very hard to say no to the people who had no needles to exchange, but were begging for new ones. But we feel safe doing our action as an exchange, and are committed to staying within the guidelines we have set. We may have attracted police attention the second time, but none of us were interrupted. We hope we build trust in the neighborhood by appearing the same hours, the same night each week. We hope to expand our affinity group and travel to other neighborhoods. We hope to eventually attract the attention of the authorities, force a confrontation, and bring our issue to the eyes of the Mayor and the Health Department. We hope they take over our job for us.

Please: talk about needle exchange in your town. Send energy to the people with the AIDS virus, to help them stay well or ease their suffering, to give them the strength and awareness to use safe practices, so that AIDS may be contained and stopped. Send us your spiritual help. "May life thrive, now, and always."



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## Letter

To my pagan Sisters and Brothers:

I teach magick. Recently, in one of my classes, an important gay issue came up concerning the ritual script of that particular lesson. In the course of the group's dialogue, the class edged towards divisiveness (if not actually falling into it).

I was heartbroken. And outraged.

I'm tired of dualism. As in "I'm a feminist, and you're the other," or "I'm political and you're the other," or "I'm gay, you're the other," or "I'm straight, you're the other."

Historically, women, gays, working class, etc. have been made the "other." As we struggle to change this, why perpetrate the same mistake in our own community? All this does is divide us! I'm tired of competing as to who has the best oppression! I can match oppressions with the best (the worst?), but I don't care anymore. What good does that do me?

I hated men as a group. That's quite understandable, being a woman in this society (which for the greater number of women means having been raped, battered, and/or being an incest survivor). But the same hate immobilized my powers as a witch, kept me from union with all things, and from changing the nightmare state of affairs. I want to fight that which oppresses us all, as opposed to battering the easily available targets - my friends and pagan family. "The Goddess loves men with the same love with which a passionate woman loves men but raised to the power of divinity." So the Goddess, in a vision, spoke to Victor Anderson, and she has said the same to others elsewhere. I had to learn that it is not maleness that oppresses me, but the rotted putrified parody of it called "patriarchy."

Part of the witches' path is to see the shadow as self. Yes, there are plenty of people who would love to kill me because I am a witch/ woman/

feminist/ poor person, etc. But to project my fears onto a scape goat keeps me from facing my inner shadow and causes oppression as well.

This is not a plea to ignore the issues of women, gays, minorities, etc. One student in my class summed it up, a lovely gay man. He said he felt bad because he had no trouble with the ritual script and didn't know whose side to take, the gays or the witches. This felt tragic to me. I told him that there needn't be such a choice, that we didn't have to make a choice. Because to make such a choice was to deny him his humanity, his soul essence. And what are politics and Goddess Spirituality for, if not to help someone realize their full humanity?

Our patriarchal death culture has a skill we had better learn: cooperation with those with whom we differ. Their larger goal binds them. Let our goals do the same.

Goddess, Be With Us in the Union of All Things,

Francesca Dubie



## BLOOD OFFERING

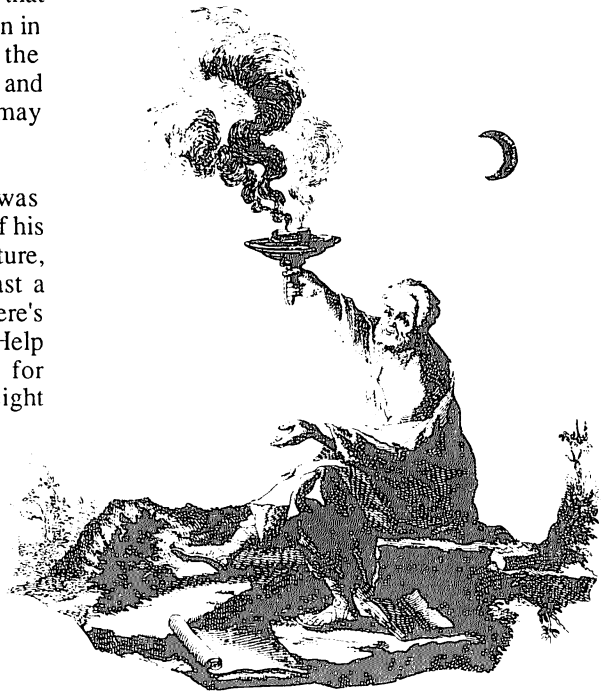
He lay back and forced himself to relax, trying not to think about what was to come. A movement at his side caught his attention and he turned to watch the approach of the white garbed woman. Her smile was calm and reassuring as her practiced hands quickly bound the ligature. His gaze recoiled from the gleam of sharp metal in her hand. A sudden pain, a subsidence, the sullen ache of violated flesh. He hadn't thought he would be able to look, but a perverse fascination drew his gaze to the spectacle of his own blood draining into the waiting container. How odd, he had expected a crimson gush, but instead there was a steady accumulation of purplish-red, like blackberry jam. He remembered the words which had brought him here. An inspiring recruitment speech by the leader of his order. "Remember, blood is life. For some purposes substitutes may suffice, but there comes a time and a cause for which only human blood is acceptable. And years of experience has shown that the freely given blood of healthy men and women in their prime is far more efficacious than the purchased life fluids of the desperate, destitute, and degenerate. Give of your selves that others may live."

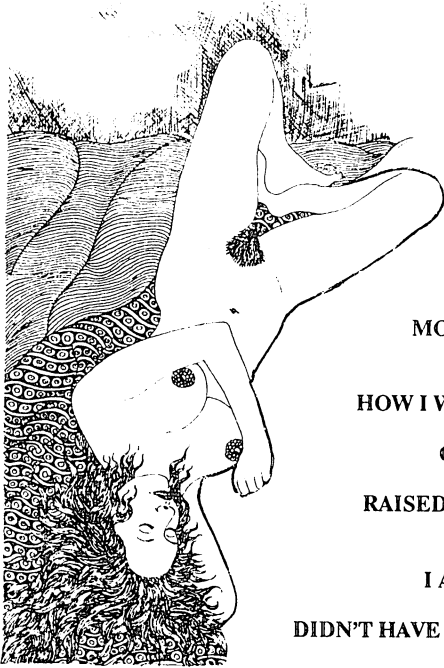
"There, we're all done." His reverie was broken. The technician slipped the needle out of his vein, taped a cotton ball in place over the puncture, and elevated his arm. "Hold it up for at least a minute to be sure the bleeding has stopped. Here's a cup of juice to start replenishing your fluids. Help yourself to juice and snacks. Thank you for donating blood. You may donate again in eight weeks."

"Witches Heal" is a favorite button at large Pagan gatherings, and it is true that healings constitute the major magical work of many Covens. The necessity of secrecy restricts most of us to family and close friends in our healing work. Giving blood is a way that many of us can make a healing contribution to the larger community. The panic surrounding AIDS has caused blood donations to decline, though there is no danger of acquiring any kind of infection by giving blood. Give blood regularly to save lives.

*Ealasaid*

*(Note: The Reclaiming Account is low - please give blood!)*





MORE MOI FROM MOHER\*

HOW I WENT TO THE SPIRAL DANCE  
&  
GOT ALL DRESSED UP  
&  
RAISED LOTS OF CONES OF POWER  
&  
NOW  
I AM STILL DRESSED UP  
BUT  
DIDN'T HAVE THE PERFECT WITCH'S NEW YEAR

Well, in case you are one of those 4000 people out there who couldn't get a ticket to the Spiral Dance and are feeling bad, don't think you shouldn't read this because you might feel even worse. No, actually, reading this might make you feel better. You are not going to hear all about how great it was, how much energy was released, transformed, channeled, etc. No, you are going to feel lucky that you are not like me, wide awake at 5:30 a.m. (actually, I guess it's only 4:30 a.m. because we just lost Day Light Savings Time and my clock fell back). No, it doesn't matter how wonderful the lighting was, the chorus, the dancers, the children, the food. No, the big problem was how great everybody looked -- beautiful to the max! As a matter of fact, there was a new chant going around that is sung to the tune of -- oops, I've already forgotten the real words: "Fashion is the healer. Good looks will open the gates. If you're trendy, they'll let you through." (This from a budding 9-year old pagan-Julie!) Samhain--a time of year we can wear make-up, lace, veils, silk, velvet, feathers, and be politically correct. So what happens, we all look marvelousssss, darling. Now I know that Samhain is about lots of other things because I read the book by that self-described witch who shall remain nameless. But we raised lots of energy, which for some of us can't help but end up lodged in our second (or is it our third) chakra, and bam, **LUST**.

Now, I for one am often in lust but am not necessarily in love. There's a big difference. As products of our Judeo-Christian upbringing, we consciously try to

distinguish between sex and love. We think we may be getting a handle on our sexual ethics, when we then decide we have to know what you do with sex and love in terms of the "R" word--**RELATIONSHIPS**. Please, Goddess, Holy Mary, Mother, and Grace sometimes keep **RELATIONSHIPS** out of my face!

We have been so busy dealing with our **RELATIONSHIPS** or lack thereof, that when AIDS came along we didn't have it (the "R" word) together enough to be able to handle sex, love, relationships, lust, quickies, nooners, one-night stands, biological clocks, nesting, and safe sex. We are sooooo conscious, so scrupulous lately, so responsible, so careful (we might get hurt emotionally!!), that when good old **LUST** inspired by beauty, the Goddess, friendship, fashion, make-up, and the energy we can generate in collective ritual magic, that we reject it! This is no way to have a revolution!

Every time you say "NO" to lust, one night stands, nooners, quickies, or momentary passion as the only point, you are depriving yourself of the following: (1) memories when you are 87 years old; (2) stories to tell your coven; (3) a fantasy to masturbate by on a long, lonely winter's night; (4) something to think about when you are driving, riding Muni, walking, bicycling, or juggling; (5) something to whine to your friends and family about; and finally, (6) a learning/growth experience! Goddess forbid, you may actually have a grand passion and a lot of fun--all at the same time.

I know what you are thinking. "I already did that. I fucked (excuse me, had S E X with) everyone in my college dorm, my workplace, my house, the Diablo Peace Camp, or Santa Rita Jail. But isn't it different now? Don't we know more? Can't we use magic before, during, and after to affect not only the outcome of these encounters, but also our emotional responses? Isn't that part of why we do magic? We can ground our crushes so we don't act like total fools. We can get together with our lustee to do magic about our lust. We can check out our lust in a magical setting. We can measure and feel the "vibes" beforehand by doing a meditation together where we have the opportunity to "walk through" our lust and lovemaking either through words or visualization that we can talk about afterwards. If we can't talk about it, that may give us a clue. Then if we decide with our hearts OR our sex that we can handle whatever happens, we can cast a circle around every act of love and pleasure. Air will help our passion fly. Communication will be like the flight of the hummingbird. Fire will fuel our lust. From the West our juices will flow. The Earth will ground the energy of our lust. We can call in the Goddesses and Gods of love and lust. We can channel and run our orgasms right up our chakras, feeling Kundalini energy rising up our spines into our heads, back through our partner(s)' chakras, into our bodies again, completing and repeating the cycles. Touch the top of your partner's head. Kiss their third eye. The manifest sexual energy is a gift and maybe even one of our duties to the universe. But NO, we can't do that. Why? Because (1) we may get hurt; (2) their biological clock is not ticking; (3) their biological clock is on snooze; (4) they already have a nest; (5) they are a friend; (6) I hate condoms; (7) I hate rubber dams; (8) they hate rubber dams; (9) I hate their friends; (10) they eat meat; (11) they smoke; (12) I don't know where this encounter might go (as if we could predict the future); (13) the timing is wrong (14) the vibes aren't right; (15) they already have a relationship; (16) we don't share a sexual preference; (17) I am too busy (my personal favorite); (18) I am too tired; (19) ??; (20) ??.

Now aren't these just a bunch of excuses--the product of overintellectualization, rationalization, or just plain hang-ups? Sure, Mary Ellen or Joe screwed you over, and you have been messed up for three years because of it. And, yes, we have all had weird and maybe even very terrible experiences shape our response to our sexuality.\*\* But if we allow these feelings to shut off our sexual response to honest lust, that is a victory to the very value system that we hope to expunge from our lives and keeps us chained to our past. I want to say this in such a way that I do not offend anyone, but come on you Pagans, get over it! (My other columns haven't generated any mail. I want to keep it that way.)

Just like there's nothing wrong with eating good food, wearing make-up, taking a vacation, or loving your family who treat you like a weirdo, there is nothing wrong with your feelings of lust. Even though we live in the age of RELATIONSHIP and AIDS, we will experience the "L" word.

Do not be afraid to act on it. Whatever happens, if you act on those healthy feelings within the realm of magic and really good, safe sex, you will survive. (Safe sex is when YOU feel safe about YOUR ability to do what you need to do to protect yourself and your concerns.) And who knows, you may even have a great, fun, hot time. And if nothing else, you will learn even more about yourself.

So what does this have to do with the fact that I am wide awake at 6:00 a.m. (or is it 7:00 a.m.), still all dressed up, with no one in my bed now except my cat? Well, I can't help it, I am an animal, and I have these feelings. I try to behave, to stifle them, or to deny them. But, my fellow Pagans, they just keep coming. This is certainly not the first time I have been rejected because of issues from someone's past that have nothing to do with me. Each time it happens though, I am struck anew by our community's sexual and emotional conservatism. (Obviously, they couldn't be rejecting moi, so it has to be some other reason.) So when my libido is rejected, I go home to lick not only my ego but also my hopes for our future. I can work those feelings off through my workaholism. I can exercise them off through compulsive physical movement. I can write them off in front of my computer. I can talk them off through endless gossip with my friends. I can attempt to make my housemates stay up with me to have some fun. But awakened by the energy of the Spiral Dance, my lust is insomnia demanding to be satiated.

Remember, "All acts of love and pleasure are HER ritual. Surround them in white light and latex." Be thankful that you weren't at the Spiral Dance, some of you. You might be awake too. I hear that next year they are going to have it in a bigger space.

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

\*Apparently, this is the correct spelling of my name in Gaelic, at least according to my mother. Henceforth, More is Moher.

\*\*Please, please, incest survivors, rape victims, adult children of alcoholics, or people in recovery do not think I am denigrating, denying, or dismissing what you have personally experienced. I hope my "bad" attitude will help you heal some.



## Letter

Dear Reclaiming,

I have always been a solo witch. My closest friends know about my beliefs and practices but I have had to keep myself spiritually closed from my conservative family and associates in the name of social harmony. I learned to be good at keeping theological discussions vague enough to avoid suspicion and honest enough to be challenging. My rituals were performed in secrecy and my talismen were excused as being "punk" or "new age" depending on the rest of my attire or mood.

When I moved to the Bay Area this August, I was surprised to find ads for magic classes, occult shops and solstice celebrations in the newspaper for anyone to see. From my experience, this was like carrying the Talmud into a K.K.K. convention. When a friend invited me to join her in group celebration of the hunting moon, my curiosity had to heavily bribe my fear of discovery in order to come.

We met in an outdoor cafe and drank coffee before the moon rose. I had my pentacle and bag of elements tucked under my sweater as usual and was surprised to see the other witches wearing moons, pentacles, and other holy symbols dangling blatantly around their necks. They showed no fear. They held on their faces a sense of confident pride. One man even had a t-shirt proclaiming in large white letters, "I feel like a real witch today!" I admit I was in awe.

When all the pagans were assembled, we marched up the street to a hill where the ceremony was to be held. One man beat a drum while others sang songs to the goddess. I watched the passers-by. Not one pedestrian brought out their thumb screws. No one waved a burning crucifix at our heads and I didn't see a single Chrysler LeBaron swerve to hit us. I was almost disappointed.


We had a beautiful ceremony under the peeking guidance of the goddess and I even found myself relaxing and laughing aloud with the others. I watched the men and women move and dance in amazement. Each had their own style. Some were inward and meditative, others were loud and exuberant and a few were simply feline. There was no conformity, just united community. I felt like part of a spiritual "we" and it felt very good. Everyone was given a role to play in the event and we supported them as they performed their role. Strangers would walk by our circle once and a while and we would acknowledge them lightly. Why shouldn't we acknowledge them? We were a group of beautiful stable people performing natural magic together under the moon. Why should we be afraid?

After the ceremony, I rested with my back to the city below us and watched the other witches as they arranged transportation and future events. "They believe in magic too," I thought to myself. "This isn't just some theory, it's a lifestyle that they have every right to be proud of. They have done spells and received the goddess' blessings as I have. I'm not alone."

I leaned back and started to hum one of the songs I had learned that night. I have learned a great deal about the craft from books and my own personal pursuits but that night I learned something that I will carry with me even if I never meet another witch again: Even in isolation, I am never alone so why be afraid? I'd like to thank the men and women of the circle that met high above San Francisco so bravely that cold October night and the goddess that gave me the initiative to join them.

Merry meet,  
Merry part and  
Merry meet AGAIN!

Sue Silverwolf

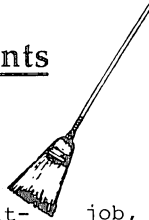






# Hannah's Household Hints

By Hannah Clancy



Now, you all know that I have been writing this column for a long time now, trying to help you in your little daily lives when your mother comes over and you want to hide the candle wax and the funny knives, because even though your mother is just another manifestation of the Great Goddess she works in a temple where they do things a little different, so she gets Upset.

And this is the time of year when your mothers like to drop in from Peoria, and all of you who were Too Busy to write me during the baseball season now have a little time, which you mostly spend asking things like how do you make your one suit look like three, or how do you get your boyfriend to wash the dishes without him catching on that he got manipulated.

Well, Things Are Going To Be a Little Different Here from Now On. I have just learned a new system, which it turns out they had at that nice place I went to in Arizona, when I was so upset on account of the glitter bomb that I couldn't pay attention, but now I am excited to find out that it is Not My Job to give you non-household advice on things that are None of my Business, which I figure pretty much includes suits and boy-friends.

My job is to tell you how to clean your houses in a magical sacred way that brings honor to the Holy Sacred Mother and the little bits of earth within which she chooses to manifest herself, and I don't want to hear anything else from all you readers who want me to Fix Your Lives. I figured it out, you write me for advice, don't follow it, and then tell your mother it was my fault. Nobody writes me and says, what is the best way to use Pine-sol, or how often should I replace my mop. No, I get all these letters from all these people who are willing to listen to any sort of advice just as long as it doesn't involve cleaning the house and they don't have to send me any money.

But even though it is not part of my

job, still my non-household advice is so good that I am not going to stop giving it completely, I am just going to control it, as I never gave that much of it, anyway. My new system is I am going to give that sort of advice marked off like this

#####  
Buy two new suits at the thrift store. Tell your boyfriend straight out it's his turn to wash the dishes.  
#####

and then you will know that that advice is only for those of you who aren't ready for me to stop running your lives, and the household advice, which is for everybody, will look like this

~~~~~  
A reader in New Mexico has sent me a Very Good Spell for Banishing Sacred Objects while Undermining the State, which I am going to pass on to you, as I know that at this time of year many of you are at a loss as to what to do with the spell bags left over from Bridgid that you can't remember what they were for. What this reader did is, when the Holy Sacred Dead Bird given to him by a powerful witch developed weevils, he took it and he put it in a sacred bag which he had procured from the State--he says the best color is a dark green, for the turning of growth forces backwards onto themselves--and added some powerful and sacred items, such as pieces of frail paper containing his bodily secretions, masses of holy coffee grounds from brews made for coven meetings, and bones from holy dead animals which he had eaten in a sacred sort of manner at dinner. Then he took the bag and left it at the side of the crossroads in the dark of night, and walked away and didn't look back. He says the State then comes and takes the bag away and buries it in earth, and the way you know the spell worked is that the weevily dead birds never come back.  
~~~~~

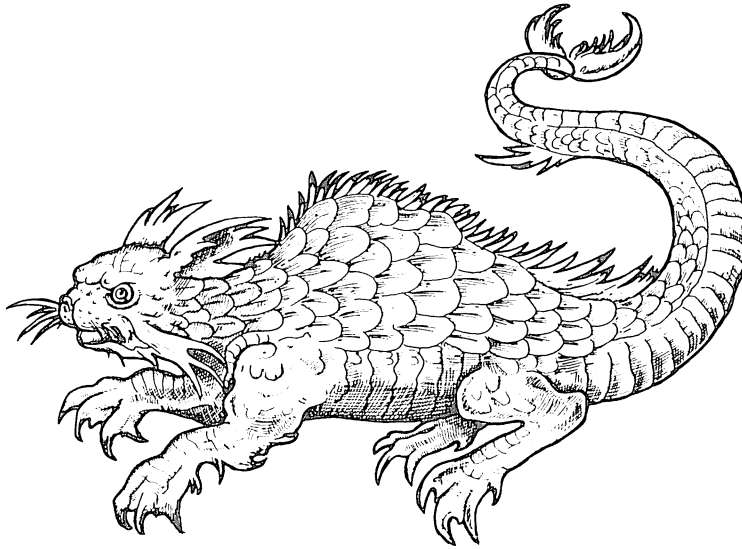
so Don't get Confused and take the wrong advice, because it will Not be my Fault.

I expect that things will be much better now that we have new relationship where we can all be more truthful and clear about our jobs and what is our own business and what is somebody else's, because really my life got much better after I figured out that most everything was Not My Fault, but I have to admit that I knew something was missing, and

now that I know it was that you are all mostly Not Behaving I feel much better. I am very happy about that program in Arizona.

So if you have any questions about the system, just write to me and ask, and if I think it will not bother me I will answer.

Love, Hannah



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## Notes From The East

*correspondence from Craig Stehr  
Black Rose Collective, Boston*

Over the last decade, the radical environmental movement has taken on a magical emphasis.

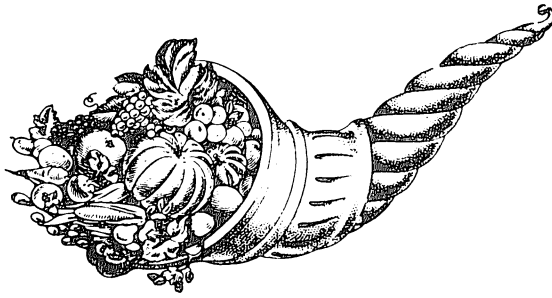
This isn't surprising: the Neo-Pagan/Wiccan movement has grown quickly, and shares a similar agenda, and participates in the same types of demonstrations, direct actions, and bioregional networking efforts. But since 1985, the growing number of "earth spiritualists" engaged in preservation work has begun to change the way we do things in New England:

- Local witch covens have toured the Seabrook nuke plant, working pro-environmental magick.
- Costumed performers creating ecotheater events at major demonstrations have increased public awareness of local environmental issues.
- The Thomas Morton Alliance, a pagan activist group, has actively sponsored Earth healing rituals and other public circles to combat the mindless exploitation of the natural world.
- Recent Northeast gatherings have featured meditations, workshops in the wilderness, tree-hugging, and a general

emphasis on getting away from mundane tactics, as radical environmentalists realize that more creative, intuitive approaches are needed.

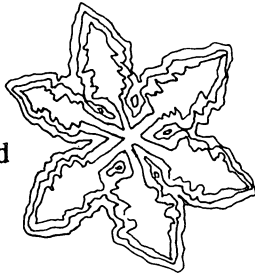
Sensational use of monkeywrenching is on the rise: plugged drains in Boston Harbor, tree spiking in areas designated for clear-cutting, discombobulation of heavy machinery slated for use in roadless areas, and the emergence of a "mole network" of sympathetic utility and corporate employees who are willing to provide information to environmental groups. For example, a few helpful Forest Service employees have given us technical advice on thwarting Forest Service clear-cutting and road-building plans.

The radical environmental movement is growing, though we're getting less media coverage since the Department of Energy rescinded proposed nuclear waste dump plans in New Hampshire and Maine, and Seabrook went bankrupt. The New England enviro-rad network is a component of a larger network that covers the entire eastern seaboard from Maine to Florida. Networking and inter-bioregional cooperation are playing a bigger role, as they do in similar efforts on the west coast. West and east coast issues are different, but an Earth First! approach is the basic *modus operandi*.



## TO AN A&P SHOPPING CART

You once stood for affluence —  
built when america was strong  
flush with our victory over fascism &  
leader of the "free world,"  
riding what was to be "our  
century," the u.s.  
awash with  
food & machines  
to feed a hungry  
world  
with  
our largess —  
& supermarkets spread  
across  
the land  
like a blight.

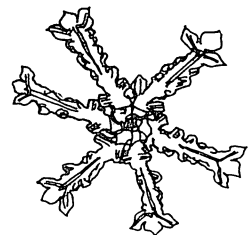


While you, engineering marvel  
wire & chrome & plastic  
accomplice to the  
contagion, your  
swivelling wheels &  
blackhandles at  
belly height pushing  
our offspring in  
their so-cute  
seats  
for mommies to  
teach our children  
how to  
buy & sell,  
the sugar  
at aye level,  
to become func  
tioning adults.

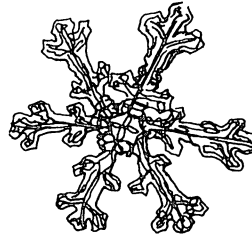
With your bilious insides, chock full,  
wonders of new foods  
produced in  
converted wartime  
factories from k  
rations to processed  
foods in  
the wink of an eye  
to profits  
like a cancer  
eating us  
up from in  
sides.

In the fields your appetite,  
legendary, your trips  
to & from suburban parking  
lots pushed  
tractors across  
the land,  
huge machines to  
harrow &  
harrass the  
soil while test-tube  
killers were poured  
into its furrows,  
& our waters  
were fouled as the creatures  
shivered with  
appre  
hension,

& underneath, the truly big packages gigantic  
& economic family sized  
lay athwart your  
black nimble wheels four  
spinning wonders negotia  
ting aisles &  
other shoppers  
at cross  
pur  
poses each  
against  
all & yet  
how we  
ate!

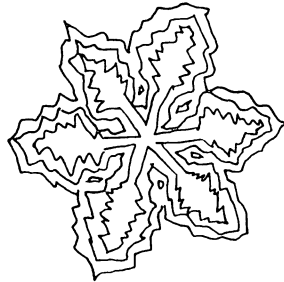


But now another age another time  
 afoot  
 & your wheels  
 cross the gutters streets &  
 alley, your glory  
 gone, your insides filled  
 with the debris of  
 glut — plastic bags, flattened  
 cans, & blanket rolls  
 full of life times compressed  
 into rusted  
 rags &  
 tattered wire  
 strands —  
 the cornu  
 copia unravelling  
 into a  
 nightmare of  
 lives with  
 out  
 homes,



Souls without walls awash in the lean  
 streets floating jetsam  
 down steel & concretized  
 canyons cut  
 loosened &  
 mean,  
 unravaged  
 strands  
 of pathos  
 & the raw courage  
 to meet the  
 ele  
 ments at a  
 place of  
 their choosing.

the new urban camper, prized possession of  
 our citylife, with its promise of  
 mobility to anywhere  
 but hope  
 in the bleak & cold  
 bones damp  
 with mouldering  
 plans & wind  
 cutting through  
 your twisted wire  
 bars to  
 the re  
 maining  
 fragments.



Inside out you've come, not quite  
 full circle for it  
 is broken now  
 & we spiral  
 down  
 ward  
 to what end we  
 know not but  
 the chrome is  
 namibian  
 & the shape  
 of things  
 is full of  
 despair &  
 mys  
 tery.



David Kubrin © 1988



## STYROFOAM By M. Woodling



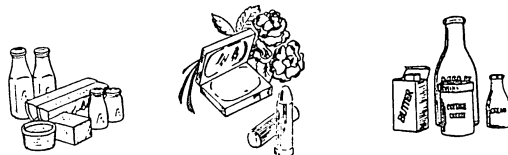
Many people, Neo-Pagans and Witches included, use styrofoam cups and plates while camping, having pot-luck feasts, picnicking or barbecuing in the back yard. You couldn't find a more convenient way to keep cold stuff cold and hot stuff hot. But that convenience has a high price.

Styrofoam is a non-recyclable, non-biodegradable petrochemical product that doesn't go away when you throw it away. It doesn't decompose; it remains as trash on the street, litter floating on the water, or additional volume in overburdened landfills for such a very long time that it may as well be forever. Industry sources claim that, if properly burned, styrofoam breaks down into water and carbon dioxide, but municipal incinerators often burn trash under less than ideal conditions, which could result in highly toxic chemicals, such as the carcinogen styrene oxide, being released into the air.

When not disposed of properly, styrofoam becomes a deadly threat to animals, who smell the food residue on the styrofoam and eat it. Digestive acids cause the styrofoam to break down and form hard, glass-like objects. The objects remain in the animal's stomach, growing larger as the animal consumes more styrofoam, until they block digestion completely and the animal dies. Fortunately for children who eat styrofoam, it takes quite a lot of styrofoam to make a pellet of threatening size, and even then the objects can usually be removed by surgery. Unfortunately, surgery is not an option for Mother Nature's other children, the wild animals.

Unlike many other environmental problems, styrofoam is a problem with a simple solution: Don't use it! Its widespread use and availability make it very convenient, but there are still a lot of convenient, bio-degradable paper alternatives around. As long as we use styrofoam, industry will have an excuse for making it!

If you want to be part of the solution and not the problem, the first thing to do is to pay attention to what you're buying. Is it going into something made of styrofoam? You may be surprised at how pervasive styrofoam use has become: a container for eggs and sandwiches, a peanut-shaped packing material, cups, bowls, plates, cafeteria trays and more.



After you notice it, the next step is to avoid using it whenever and where-ever possible. This plan may not be easy at fast-food restaurants such as McDonald's, which package food automatically without asking the customer's preference. Don't let that stop you. When ordering food, ask the counterperson to wrap it in paper. You don't have to explain why, although this would be a good opportunity to educate others. If they can't handle a reasonable request, ask to have your money back instead. Their competitor across the street may be more cooperative.

I feel we especially should avoid using styrofoam at Pagan gatherings and pot-luck feasts. Any Pagan or Witch donating a bag of styrofoam cups to a group function probably does so that the cup-less Pagans can drink either hot tea or cold juice, and s/he is often ignorant of the environmental effects. As Pagans and Witches, we respect the life of Earth and protect her when we understand her needs. Let's use biodegradable and/or recyclable disposable items instead of styrofoam.

*N.B. For a packet containing more information, contact the Citizen's Clearing House for Hazardous Wastes, Inc., P.O. Box 926 Arlington VA 22216, (703) 276-7070.*

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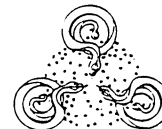
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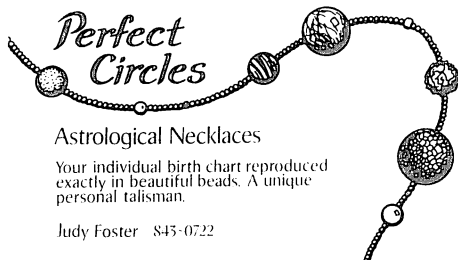


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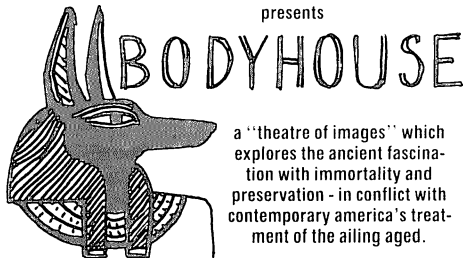
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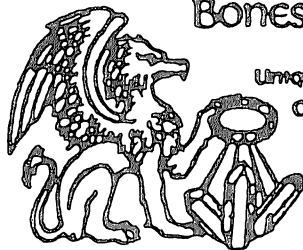
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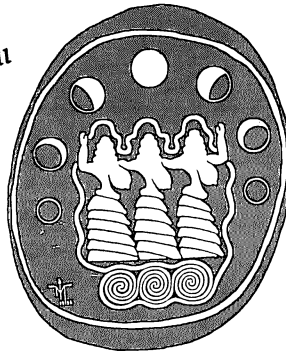
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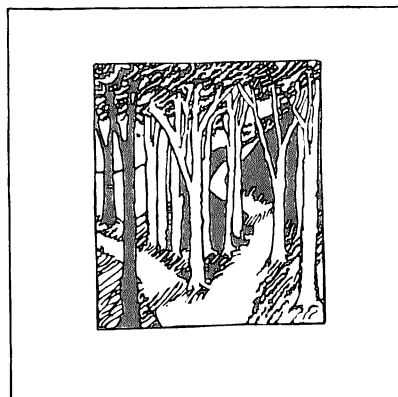
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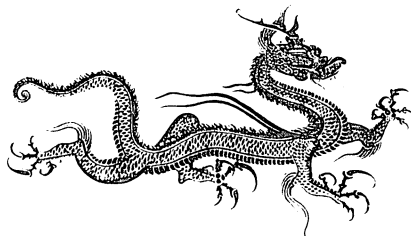
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