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Editor's Notes

Deadline for the **Solstice issue** is June 14, 2010. For Submissions of essays, poems, cartoons, reviews, conferences, events, grove news, articles of interest, etc: Send to mikerdna@hotmail.com



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News of the Groves

A fuller list of the known active Reformed Druid groves is available at www.rdna.info/wheretrove.html <http://rdg.mithrilstar.org/grovelist.htm>

Habitat Grove: News from Quebec

Spring has come and I can walk around without pain outside. My home is bounded by parks, river and bike paths, full of happy playing people. This is good. Now if only I could get out and join them! I attended the city's 40th anniversary of Earth Day and they were planting 40 trees, of which I did 4 myself! The rest of the weekend was spent with my children on a nearby island, strolling the paths. This is good, also.

Another few projects of mine needed to be wrapped up. DANAC contest was languishing and needed to be announced. The unofficial welcome pamphlet needs a facelift, as does my moved website. I'm trying to update the list of Third Orders after 10 years. It's been 5 years without a sweatlodge, and I need one badly. The 50th anniversary of the RDNA is coming up in 2013, and some planning needs to begin. A pile of Druid books to read and review, 2 druid computer games to enjoy. Ah, a surfeit of Druidical delights, but the lack of time to abound in their pleasures, oh cruel irony!



While out shopping, I saw an award shop and thought, hmmm, perhaps I need to get an award for Isaac's lifetime achievement. I went in looked around, and there it was like an omen, a circular award, made of three pieces of glass, separated by two vertical iron bands like a Druid Sigil. Two weeks earlier on a trip to New York, I stopped for directions at a bead store, and there were beautiful copper oakleaves as big as my hand for sale. Sometimes the right things find us, instead of us finding them.

Roserock Grove: News from Oklahoma

Stacey and Delila will be in their truck on Spring Equinox. Their granddaughter Jaiden is sitting up and holding things (and gnawing on them). Their son Jeff plans to be here for Equinox with our friend Eric. Mom has added gout to her arthritis collection, and Dad is needing more naps so they won't be venturing out in the snow for Equinox. Renovation work on their hallway is almost done. Some of us were privileged to see their massive naturalized daffodil display before the snow hit. No one thought to take pictures, though.

Crystal and her friend Jessica are decimating their baskets and searching for eggs throughout the house. Crystal will be in the National Technical Honor Society induction ceremony April 5. She intends to plant a maple tree in our front yard.

I'm doing well. My plans for the Spring Equinox include making sugar cookies, turning the eggs from the egg hunt into deviled eggs, and making coffee for after service.

Hel and Ohagi have decided to get along, and occasionally make a cute black dog/white cat tableau on the futon.

Fred the jade plant is taller than the halfway mark on the kitchen window. There is a debate over whether or not to move him to a bigger pot, which would mean having to move to a hanging pot since he's almost too big for the window sill now. Any advice?

Service will be held in the front yard at 5pm, followed by coffee, hot chocolate, and cookies inside. Due to the weather, this is subject to change.

Hope you are all well and happy.

Yours in the Mother,

Lydia Vandegrift and the rest of the crew at Rose Rock Grove, Moore, Oklahoma.

Awen Grove: News from Alberta

Spring is in the year and some trees are even starting to bud with leaves. It's going to be a few more weeks before we see blossoms, so it is not really Beltane in the traditional sense. (It never is at this time of year) We at Awen Grove are planning on joining another group in our locale to celebrate Beltane outdoors this year since the weather actually isn't too bad for once! (We'll see how it is next weekend!) Our monthly study groups are well attended since we instituted a way of conducting them with Skype. Many of us live quite far from each other, so this eases travel concerns.

Wishing everyone in RDNA a blessed Beltane season!

Athelia /\

Koad Protogrove: News from Ohio

Come the Light

I noticed,
The dawn,
Would appear a little bit earlier
Each day

Almost a forgotten friend,
Long into winter's dark routine,
I welcomed the suspicion
Of the sun's return
With joy,
With expectation,
With a prayer

How deep the somber
State of the season
And the flight of the sun,
The rule of the shadow,
The retreat of life,
The retreat from life

I once thought that each season
But the dark One,
Was safe from loss,
Was free from sorrow
Was ruled by increase,
Forward motion,
And peace

But that was not the case:
Slow slide,
Start from the zenith at Mean Samhradh,
Tumble slightly past Lughnasadh,
Past the thorns and brambles

That I found along
The way,
Leaving me lacking,
Doubting,
Less than I was

I could not understand
How the cycles could be
So lightly delineated,
So poorly defined,
So opaque,
That Nature would operate
In a variable way,
That the cycles we subscribe to
Are not cast in stone

What of the monuments
That channel the Sun on a given day?
What of the alignments
That funnel the Light in a determined way?

Made by men,
With clever hands
With wizened eyes
And careful thought

Yet though the Sun
May be mermerised and coaxed,
By such mazes,
Menhirs,
And stones,
The Earth laughs with delight
At such pleasant agreements
Where Sun traces lines,
Enters boxes
And caves,

And illuminates the wonders
Carved by men's hands inside

Yet, illuminations are not
The providence of men alone:
I watched the hawthorns
As I walk underneath
Their thorns pull away
What of winter remains,
And leaves me fresher,
And newer,
And awaiting the Light

That mischievous Light,
Shine through the haw-thorns
And the patterns emerge
Filtered through thorns,
And branches,
And time
To gather symbols,
And ciphers,
And glyphs,
Cast upon surfaces
Earthen and rare
Shifted by angle
Altered by wind
Seen and unseen
With the secrets of time
Writ by the seasons
And told by the Sun
Conspired in branches
The season begun

I look to the sky when
Arising

Yours in the Mother,
Jon (Jean) Drum Pagano
Koad Protogrove

In thanks
And joy
Almost childlike bliss
I look to the west,
In the late afternoon,
And gifted with further
Warmth and Light
I look to the Spring
So fully in bloom
And dream of the Summer
Coming my way
And feel it will last forever
And that
Midsummer is a lifetime
Away

I dream this dream
In the increasing Light
Young leaves
And new sprouts
That I see on my way
Remind me that I too
Am new once again
And this life continues
For one more day
Then another
Then another again
And one more season
To welcome me in
And once more around,
Another, again

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The 2009 Annual Golden Oak Awards (The second annual "Oakie" Awards)



The Druid Academy Nomination Award Committee (DANAC) consists of a member drawn from six different Druid organizations that share a historical connection to each other and are primarily located in North America. The DANAC members wish to learn more about happenings in their own group, and in other groups, and encourage the best works of modern Druids by acknowledging their annual accomplishments.

The six judges are not official representatives elected by their respective groups, but were actually hand-picked experts by Michael Scharding, because he thought they were extremely knowledgeable famous folk who knew well both their own organization and the activities of other modern Druid groups. Therefore, their votes are therefore only a personal preference, not representative of any endorsement by their organizations.

- Tony Taylor of Henge of Keltria (HoK) tony_taylor@keltria.org
- Skip Ellison of Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF) skip@skipellison.usv
- Michael Scharding of the Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA) mikerdna@hotmail.com
- Ellen Evert Hopman of Order of the White Oak (OWO) www.elleneverthopman.com with the assistance of JC "Craig" Melia in 2009.
- Ellis Arseneau of the Reformed Druids of Gaia (RDG) pendderwydd@reformed-druids.org
- Thomas Harris of the Missionary Order of the Celtic Cross (MOCC) [previously known as Reformed Druidic Wicca, RDW] ra_sput1n@yahoo.com (note the underscore) who was not available for voting in 2009.

In the first round, each judge could nominate up to two entries for each of the ten categories of awards, choosing Druids who belong to any of these six organizations. Naturally, most judged nominated entries from within their own group, which they knew the best.

In the second round, each of the judges could vote for one entry from each of ten categories, but could not vote for their own nominee. If any nominee received two or more votes in the second round, then it was declared a winner. If a nominee received only one other vote, then it was declared to be an "honorable mention". Most winner decisions were not unanimous.

Winners will receive a check for \$33.33, a certificate, and a blessed bronze oak leaf in the mail this summer. Kudos and congratulations to all the entries!

Note: If you wish to enter a piece into the next 2010 Golden Oak Awards of the DANAC committee, then send an e-mail to one of those judges that you know (from any group), listing a work from one of the eleven categories that was first released or completed between December 21 2009 and December 21, 2010. The judges may designate an alternative judge if they would like to not participate in 2010. Different rules or categories may be used next year possibly.

The results of the voting were as follows:

1. Most interesting internal grove project begun or completed in 2009 Non-exhaustive examples include: liturgical design, fund- raising, recruitment, education, development, site-planning, web- development, meeting style, festival/meeting idea, etc.

NO ENTRIES, NO WINNER.

2. Inspiring external project begun in 2009 by a grove or member (s) of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG. Non-exhaustive examples include: activism, ecology, public outreach, legal moves, publishing, charity, civic involvement, interaction with other religious organization, etc.

WINNER #1: Ellen Evert Hopman of OWO. saille333@mindspring.com
elleneverthopman.com

For her Sacred Circle TV interview recorded in June 1999 and released online in August 2009, in 4 parts, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9J7kSImvDbU> as she presents a ritual and discussion of Druidism as practice in England and the United States. These kinds of interviews and presentations on-line is crucial for public outreach.

More on Sacred Circle TV at : <http://AthenaProductions.net>; <http://www.celticheritage.co.uk/Ellen...>
<http://SacredCircleTV.org>

3. Greatest hardship overcome in 2009 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG. Publicly admissible, of course, no gossip please. Non-exhaustive examples included: persecution, financial obstacles, medical impairments, isolation, time constraints, educational restraints, etc.

WINNER #1: Isaac Bonewits (ADF, RDNA, Keltria, etc.) ibonewits@neopagan.net



I'm been loosely following Isaac's health lately, so we're all very concerned for his fight against cancer, and his relentless continuation of Druidism at the same time.

As his website www.neopagan.net states: Yes, it's true, Isaac has cancer in the vicinity of his root chakra. As of December 30th, he has finished what we hope will be the only rounds of chemotherapy and radiation treatments. He seems to be doing reasonably well and we are both grateful for the prayers and donations that are keeping our heads above water in this stressful time. Read our [blog](#) for occasional updates and our [Facebook Fan Page](#) for daily notes and news. All

healing energies sent our way will be gratefully accepted. We are auctioning special autographed editions of our books at eBay to raise money for the cancer bills (search under "Bonewits" and look for books labeled "Cancer Fund".)

WINNER #2: Maudhnait of Keltria Muadhnaith@gmail.com for her many struggles to surmount the obstacles during and after Cody's passing.

4. Best Poem or song released in 2009 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG.



WINNER #1: "The Labyrinth" by RDG Druid Scott Schumacher, scott@northerndruid.net

Come walk with me
Through forests and meadows
We can wind around trees
Turning ever inward
Spinning ever outward

Come walk on the edge with me
Far from everything we know
We can stretch our legs
Run and play
Sit and relax a while

Come walk with me on a spiral path
Returning to people and places we love
We can revel in our greetings
Mourn our goodbyes
Cherish every memory

Come walk with me on a sacred journey
Through the labyrinth of life
We can find the center
Take the final turn
Loving our forever path

WINNER #2: "The Earth Spoke" by RDG/RDNA Druid Jon Pagano, ODAL
mithriljean@yahoo.com

The earth spoke,
As an oracle
In a language
Known only
To the stars
And the wind

It spoke,
And the animals listened,
It sang,
And the trees whispered along,
It dreamed,
And the stones just waited
It watched,
And the sky turned,

From pink to blue to red
It sighed,
And the wind rushed from
One end of the Earth
To the next
In obeisance
It thought,
And the stars twinkled above

The animals paused,
Ears cocked,
Eyes trained on the source of the sound;

The trees mimicked,
Each leaf,
Each branch
Repeated the call;
The stones breathed slowly,
Waiting for their next prompt
To motion;
The sky glowed,
With a message,
Encoded in hues;
The wind heard and understood,
Pondered the oracle,

And went on its way;
The stars saw the message as light,
And the responded in kind

And such is the Way:
The earth speaks,
The wind listens,
The stars shine,

The natural order feels,
And man continues on,
Unknowing

HONORABLE MENTION: Jon Pagano, RDG/RDNA, a poem, "My Own Land",
mithriljean@yahoo.com In the Summer Solstice 2009, www.rdna.info/druidinquirer11.doc

My Own Land

From Koad Grove

Give me my own land,
Where the trees will hold their proper place
As lords and ladies of the land
Standing tall as they reach
For the Gods of the Sky
Standing firm as they commune
With the Gods of the Land
Reaching deep as they seek
The Gods of the Deep Waters

What a beautiful sight,
The sun exalted in blue skies
Singular in its majesty
Arc through the heavens
With nothing obscuring the sight

Yet what a wonder
To see the Bright One
Filtered through the endless leaves
Stream down in Ogham
That plays upon the ground

With each passing breeze,
A different message
With each subtle breath
A new way of seeing
With each moving cloud
A story in telling

The trees have free reign
On this land, free of trespass
The will grow where they will
And flourish as they must
There will be groves that form,
This is natural in the wild
There will be straight pathways,
This too is part of the norm

There will be avenues of arbours,
That calls to the Sun
There will be mazes and mysteries
In this land full of trees

Give me my own land
From here to horizon
Give me my own land
And I will give it away
The Gods will walk there,
Amongst pine, oak, and maple
Stand in the virtue of
Land, sea, and sky

To the new sun rising,
I open my palm,
Breeze and leaf
Murmur and flow

To the bright moon observing,
I hold up my face
To capture the light
Ghostly I walk,
Through the dark and the night

To the quiet forest,
In deepest of darkness
I hold myself still
I raise my own branch
Up to the sky,
I whisper a prayer,
To the deepest of Night:
"Swallow me whole
"In this infinite shadow"
The stars slowly flicker,
Then silence

For the Summer Solstice, 2009
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5. Best work of art completed or released in 2009 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG. Non exhaustive examples: painting, drawing, sculpture, digital art, clay, collage, photography, etc. Dance choreography will be considered if an internet video is provided. Collaborating artists will receive a single prize.

NO ENTRIES, NO WINNER.

6. Best craftwork completed or released in 2009 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG. Non exhaustive examples: leatherwork, metalwork, clothing, needlepoint, moulding, weaving, jewelry, basketry, woodwork, stonework, etc. Food, drink, cosmetics and brewing can't be tested easily enough in disparate parts of the U.S. Collaborative craftspeople will receive a single prize.

WINNER #1 Sebastien Beaudoin (RDNA, Canada)
celticoak@persona.ca

for various further Earthenworks. He was a Oakie in 2008 for some pots. The gallery of three pieces can be viewed at <http://www.raymond.sanderregier.com/UIS/SBeaudoin.html>



7. Best academic book released in 2009 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG. At least 50 pages in length, can be on any subject somehow applicable to "Druidism", modern or ancient, such as history, religion, crafts, art, philosophy, spirituality, ethnicity, language, etc.

NO ENTRIES, NO WINNER.

8. Best novel released in 2009 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG. At least 50 pages in length with a Druidical bent.

WINNER: The Priestess in the Forest by Ellen Evert Hopman (OWO), saille333@mindspring.com elleneverthopman.com



This is the first of two novels, available on amazon.com, following the travails and tribulations of Ethne, a young Druidess called from her contemplative life as a healer into the roiling maelstrom of the royal court life of Ireland in the 3rd or 4th century. Although spared the Roman legions, one of the more aggressive forms of Roman Christianity, had begun making deep

inroads into the courts of Ireland, seeking to unseat the ancient religion of the peoples of Ireland. Various forces for tradition and change struggle for supremacy for the high kingship of Ireland, and with it, the power to tilt the favor towards the forces of the new or old religion. The well-researched historical fictional novel is especially stuffed with bits of herbal folklore and interwoven lore of the change of the seasons; not to mention a passionate romance. The sequel, "The Druid's Isle", was released the following year in 2010, and is also available now.

9. Best short story released in 2009 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG. Under 50 pages in length with a Druidical bent.

WINNER #1 "The Black Crow Calls" by Druid Jeffery Heyer (RDG)

It can be read at <http://druidsegg.reformed-druids.org/newssamhain09-07.htm>

WINNER #2 Imbolc By Jackie Greer, Triple Horse Clan Grove (RDNA)

Imbolc. Awaken from a Winter of cold, gloom and aloneness. Journey in spirit beyond the clouds and fog. See the Bear, hidden all Winter in her cave-den, her heart barely beating and her breath slowed to a whisper.

Ever so slowly, her sluggish body feels the first stirrings of movement. Her heart beats a bit faster. Her eyes open. Her hideaway is still freezing cold, but the rhythms in her body respond to the Earth's first faint trembling. She gradually wakes, stirs and looks around her den, finding all still well after her long slumber. Soon, very soon, it will be time to look for nourishment for her Winter-starved body.

She rests a bit longer, stretching life into her weak, unused muscles. She slowly rises and lumbers to the entrance of her den.

With a start, you realize she is speaking, not with words but heartbeat to heartbeat and soul to soul.

"I wake, not in a rush, not to a jangling alarm clock, but to the gentle voice of the Earth, her perfect heart-rhythm, not a moment before She calls me to wake and not a moment after.

"I wasted away like your Spirit as the golden sunlight and rich bounty of Autumn gave way to the bleak cold winds of Winter. I hid in my cave, sleeping, resting, nursing my wounds.

"Have you nursed your wounds all Winter, locked inside with your hurts, angry at those who betrayed you? Has your soul withered to a shell, a façade that has lost its hope, desolate in the knowledge that it will never grow again? Never feel warmth or beauty again?"

"Yes," you manage to whisper despite your shock at Her insight. "What is left for me but a meaningless, endless procession of same-days, with nothing but grey, lifeless skies reflected in a grey, lifeless spirit?"

"The winter has been long and hard for you too, my Child," she answers gently. "Your soul aches for warmth, for light, for color. I have heard your heart-cry and I am here."

To your astonished eyes, the Bear's brown, shaggy body dissolves into emerald light. A beautiful maiden stands in her place, wrapped in a brilliant green kirtle pulsing with light

from within. Her brow is tattooed with a waxing crescent moon and her young, unwrinkled face shines with the brilliance of sunlight. In her slender hands she holds a bearskin robe, tanned to pillow softness.

Your eyes fill with tears as she wraps the cloak around you and you feel warm and cherished as you thought you never would again.

“I am Bridhe, Lady of the Holy Well that refreshes the Earth anew each Spring until the trees cannot help but blossom forth in joy. I am the Light illuminating your soul even in times of darkness. I am the newborn lamb gamboling in tender new green grass, the bear cub ball of fluff rolling down the hillside in play, the crocus and daffodil that find their way from the Earth’s cold depths to warmth and light and praise the Sun God with color and beauty.

“I have returned, my child, bringing heartfelt tears and spring rains to wash your soul. I bring light to warm your bones, color to refresh your eyes and inspiration to guide you to new insights and new ways of sharing them with your Clan. Your Clan needs you. Wake, dear heart, ask the Trees their names, feel the pulsing energy of the Stones. My Awen, my flame, bring your heart alive again to join the ancient drumbeat of the Earth. “

You bow your head in awe. “Thank you,” you whisper. You look up, and she had dissolved into a million emerald stars that settle gently on the newly-green hillside.

HONORABLE MENTION #1: Battle of the Three Wizards, by Mike Scharding, 3 pages

Viewable at www.rdna.info/druidinquirer10.doc mikerdna@hotmail.com



10. Best "Druidical" essay or article released or printed in 2009 by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, RDG

WINNER #1 Talking about the Elephant , a book of essays, with an essay in there by Jenne Micale of Keltria. dulcimergoddess@hotmail.com

The excellent book is available at www.amazon.com

Her other work can be seen at the music Web site, www.kwannon.net, and a grove blog, <http://whitecatgrove.wordpress.com/>.

WINNER #2 On Raising Children – by Irony Sade of RDNA Doc.Druid@Gmail.com

Viewable in the Oimelc 2009 issue at www.rdna.info/druidinquirer06.doc

HONORABLE MENTION: Two Seasons Three Worlds.... by Ellen Evert Hopman

saille333@mindspring.com elleneverthopman.com

Reprinted in the Druid Inquirer, Beltane 2010 www.rdna.info/druidinquirer16.doc this can be

read there after May 1, 2010 publishing.

11. Best movie or video-clip or instructional video, released or revised in 2009, that advances the positive perception of Druidism in some way produced by a member of ADF, Keltria, RDNA, MOCC, OWO, or RDG.

WINNER #1 Tribeways Podcast (ADF),

A podcast of news, music, songs, poetry and essays by ADF. You are highly recommended to subscribe to their production.

<http://www.adf.org/podcast/subscribe.html>



Tribeways | The ADF Podcast is a selection of recordings broadcast each High Day featuring liturgy, essays, reviews, chants, poetry, music, workshops and celebrations from ADF members. Tribeways was started in 2008 after much discussion on various lists. Jack Cole, Senior Druid for Wild Onion Grove volunteered to take on the challenge of getting the project off the ground. Jack tirelessly worked hard to work out the bugs and put together an operating system and a year's worth of podcast before handing the project off to me. My goal is to continue the work that Jack has started, streamlining some of the process and allowing the podcast to continue to evolve. For those of you who have submitted work in the past a bighearted thank you, for those of you who haven't...what are you waiting for? Much like Oak Leaves the podcast is a reflection of ADF and its membership. The more people are actively submitting material the better the over-all project becomes. My promise is to make the best druid/pagan podcast being produced. I'll do my part—will you?

WINNER #2 Irony Sade (RDNA) with video playing harp Doc.Druid@Gmail.com

<http://www.esf.edu/success/sade.htm> playing and talking about Wire Strung Harps.

HONORABLE MENTION: *Ellen Evert Hopman (OWO) Celtic Cosmology*

saille333@mindspring.com elleneverthopman.com



DVD Review by Rev. Sean W. Harbaugh Senior Druid – Sierra Madrone Grove

Ellen Hopman is one of the leading voices of the Celtic Reconstructionist movement today. Her new video, *Celtic Cosmology*, is a lecture on the fundamental structure of the Celtic cosmos. *Celtic Cosmology* is intended for an audience just grasping the concept of Celtic Reconstructionism, and Hopman delivers a detailed description of the Celtic universe. To paraphrase Hopman, she states early in the video that Celtic Reconstructionism is about taking as much as possible from the Celtic past from scholarly sources, and recreating as much as possible in a modern ritual format. As someone who views himself a Celtic Reconstructionist, I was interested in this video and how Hopman would present Celtic cosmology.

According to Hopman, the Celtic cosmos consists of several divisions: two seasons (summer and winter), three cauldrons, four treasures, and five directions. The Celtic cosmology also consists of the world below the ground (the world of the dead and of water), the fire above, and the tree that connects them. The tree centered universe connecting the three worlds is similar to ADF's cosmology, and the two systems share the water below and the fire

above. The concept of recognizing directions differs from ADF cosmology, although in some ADF hearth cultures, this is done in ritual. ADF recognizes hearth cultures throughout the ancient Indo-European world, whereas Hopman's cosmology centers on Celtic—most notably Irish.

Hopman's gives an easy to understand delivery of Celtic Reconstructionism, and she gives a great deal of detail of the Celtic cosmos. Her delivery is descriptive, and someone who has little or no knowledge of druidry will understand what she is talking about. Hopman also describes the druid order she belongs to, the Order of the White Oak, and how they are dedicated to Celtic Reconstructionism.

The video is informative and easy to follow, but there are a few negatives. The sound quality is poor. Although the opening music was at a normal volume, Hopman's dialog was very low; therefore, I needed to adjust my volume up dramatically to hear her speak. The video was poorly edited, and there are places where the viewer can see where it was paused and restarted.

Beside the audio issues, I was also troubled with several of the statements Hopman makes during her presentation. For example, Hopman states that the Celts invented the sausage, which is debatable. The first historical mention of sausage is in Homer's Odyssey in the 9th century BCE. Other troubling assertions include, "If you're going to do Celtic ritual, you must make offerings to water", "if you are going to be a druid, you must study Hinduism", and "Hinduism is the same religion (as druidry)". Also, Hopman's description of the Indo-European migrations is still hotly disputed in scholarly circles, and she delivers her theories of the Indo-European Black Sea migrations as fact. I also found that her negative description of her experiences of past involvement in the Neopagan druid movement as unnecessary in a video describing the Celtic Reconstructionist movement.

In conclusion, Hopman delivers a very good description of the Celtic Reconstructionist movement, and members of ADF will recognize the similarities in cosmology. The video is geared toward people with little knowledge of druidry. I would recommend this video to those newer ADF members who want a nice explanation of druidry and the three worlds, although at \$20 plus shipping, I believe the DVD could be priced a little more affordable. Hopman's *Celtic Cosmology* is nearly identical to ADF cosmology, and new members starting on the ADF Dedicant Program could find this video useful to help them understand the three realms that both cosmologies share.

Ellen's new DVD on Celtic Cosmology is now available for \$20.00 plus \$4.00 for s/h. (send to POB 219, Amherst, MA 01004). For the same price you can order a VHS (video) or DVD of Pagans – The Wheel of the Year (a look at rituals from many Pagan traditions including songs, chants, original music, and poetry) or a DVD of Gifts from the Healing Earth (hands on herbalism and kitchen medicines).

12. Lifetime Achievement Award

A
to



Winner: Isaac Bonewits,

A unanimous decision, for his 33 years of publications, organizing activity, presentations, wit, humor, research and dedication to Druidism. giant in the field, known by all. May he have another bountiful 33 years inspire and harrangue the rest of us.

He will receive this special engraved trophy, with the beguiling general shape of a Druid Sigil, set in a velvet lined case.

i.



Dr. Druid

A column for medical questions, concerns and confusions
with answers from Dr. Druid.

Submit your questions to:
Doc.Druid (at) Gmail (dot) com.

He hasn't quit, just waiting for you to write him!

Please keep sending the questions and controversies to him.

Reflections of a Physicians Apprentice, Part 1

Irony Sade

April, 2010

This past month I began the last phase of my medical education: Nine months working in a family practice, a small local hospital, and a local Urgent Care clinic. Till now I have worked primarily in the City of Syracuse, an hour from where I live. The chance of meeting anyone I knew was small. I might occasionally recognize a patient, or know them second-hand. This has changed. My nephew and sister-in-law are patients at the family practice. My neighbors both retired from the hospital where I work now. The Urgent Care center is down the road from my daughter's school and frequented by her friends. I am working harder than ever, loving every minute, and feel like I am making a difference in people's lives. At the same time, my responsibilities have expanded, I am never off-duty, and I am becoming a repository for other people's secrets.

In Syracuse I was one of nearly three hundred medical students, working in groups of four or five under half as many residents, overseen by some score of attending physicians. At best we might work with the same doctor for four weeks in a row. As each group of students, residents and attending was rotating on a different schedule, it was more common for us to work with unfamiliar people on each new case. During Neurosurgery, for instance, I never followed the same surgeon twice, and observed procedures through a screen of ever changing residents. No one ever got to know me, my strengths, my weaknesses, my past experiences, even whether I could tie a knot or diagnose a cold. Some of them never knew our names. Now I am working with the same handful of doctors day after day. There are no other students, no residents, and no screen of bodies between me and the people we are treating. The doctors know my strengths, and send patients my way that they know I can treat unaided. They know where I am weak, and challenge me in those areas under supervision. They know I love procedures and schedule patients who need them when I will be around. They interact with me daily and can feed me greater challenges as I master small ones.

This increased involvement has also led to an increased level of responsibility on my part. Being the only student means that I must be more aware and attentive than I was as one of a crowd. The fact that I, personally, am taking care of people makes me, personally, feel responsible for their care. It is no longer "the doctor's" problem that the elderly woman with uncontrolled blood pressure has no primary physician. It is my problem to help her find one. When the man whose toe infection I treated develops hives from the antibiotic the call comes to me- and it is my job to navigate his allergies and find another that will work. There is also pressure to be responsible in my interactions that have nothing to do with

medicine. People see me at work who know me, know my family, and who definitely know other people I might treat. Any word or comment could be propagated through the communal rumor mill with any number of unintended consequences. The girl I treated for an infected eye one weekend works with several of my daughter's friends. Everything from how I am dressed to her own misinterpretations of what I tell her could spread through the high school like a bad rotavirus, impacting my daughter's life much more than my own.

An associated change is that I am never off-duty. When I worked in Syracuse I could come home with stories of patients I'd seen, easily scrubbed of identifying features. I could tell them over dinner while relaxing with my family without fear that anyone would recognize of whom I spoke. Now I cannot take that chance. Simply knowing what and where might be enough for an astute listener to deduce who and why in a town this small. In addition, my own behavior in public has to reflect the advice I give my patients in the privacy of the office. The fellow diner who sees me order a steak and margarita might be a patient I advised to limit his fat and alcohol intake. It feels a little bit like performing music: No matter how quiet or inattentive your audience seems, there is always someone watching, and they notice everything you do. Being known as the doctor has another way of keeping my on duty: just this weekend at a social gathering a friend asked when I would be on duty so she could bring her cough to the ER for personal treatment.

Becoming a rural physician is also a bit like being a priest; I am becoming a repository for other people's secrets. This is awkward, as I am not a secretive person myself. Now I am learning things about my neighbors, co-workers and friends that I cannot discuss. Sometimes I learn them accidentally, when I see an x-ray before I see the name attached to it. Sometimes I learn things perforce, when someone I know comes to the clinic during my shift. Sometimes it is just the routine aspect of providing care. It is a small community, and the personal details I learned about a person's life during a sick visit must be a trusted confidence when I run into them at the bank. As a person used to discussing any topic freely, and with no secrets of my own, it is a new and uncomfortable experience to have stories I cannot share. Holding information in confidence is part of a physician's duty, and one I was expecting. I had not grasped how much information it would be, or how soon it would start to build up. I am only starting to see the potential ramifications as new nets of knowledge assemble in my mind. Learning that herpes or Chlamydia is rampant in the high school would be one thing. Learning my daughter's boyfriend had it and was not planning to tell her would cause me some serious ethical conflict. I have yet to run into a situation this close to home, but already I can feel the secrets starting to pile up. As a person who remembers stories better than names, I feel like I must start now to develop strategies to keep confidences secret in an expanding game of "who knows what?" I remember well the story of a young girl is in counseling because of her brother's suicide- a fact being kept secret from their mother by a distraught father. The crucial question is, will I remember who they are when I meet them all again?

On a recent return visit to Syracuse I was reminded of the most crucial difference that moving out to the community has made. I am engaged, involved, fascinated and providing patient care. My friends following the traditional track remain frustrated by the impotence and anonymity of being one of a crowd in school.

To be continued...

Disclaimer: Irony Sade or "Doctor Druid" is not a doctor- yet. He is a medical student at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY. Previously he worked for five years as a nurse, and as a rural health worker before that. The medical and scientific information in this column is accurate to the best of his knowledge, and he will pester wiser minds than his if your question stumps him. Medicine is a highly individualized field. People may respond very differently to the same disease or treatment. For serious concerns, consult your own doctor.



Green Book Gems: Quotes & Stories on Nature and the Environment

Eight pages of material drawn from the various five Green Books of the ARDA, available at www.rdna.info/arda.html

Collected by Mike the Fool

GREEN BOOK 2

Wisdom of the Gaels

Nature

It costs nothing to see nature's great non-stop show.

It takes every blade of grass to make the meadow green.

Wisdom of the Native Americans

Born Natural

I was born in Nature's wide domain! The trees were all that sheltered my infant limbs, the blue heavens all that covered me. I am one of Nature's children. I have always admired her. She shall be my glory: her features, her robes, and the wreath about her brow, the seasons, her stately oaks, and the evergreen, her hair, ringlets over the earth, all contribute to my enduring love of her.

And whenever I see her, emotions of pleasure roll in my breast, and swell and burst like waves on the shores of the ocean, in prayer and praise to Him who has placed me in her hand. It is thought great to be born in palaces, surrounded by wealth, but to be born in Nature's wide domain is greater still!

I would much more glory in this birthplace, with the broad canopy of heaven above me, and the giant arms of the forest trees for my shelter, than to be born in palaces or marble, studded with pillars of gold! Nature will be Nature still, while palaces shall decay and fall in ruins.

Yes, Niagara will be Niagara a thousand years hence! The rainbow, a wreath over her brow, shall continue as long as the sun,

and the flowing of the river while the work of art, however carefully protected and preserved, shall fade and crumble into dust!

-George Copway (Kahgegahbowh) Ojibwe

Sacred Earth

The character of the Indian's emotion left little room in his heart for antagonism toward his fellow creatures... For the Lakota, mountains, lakes, rivers, springs, valleys, and woods were all

finished beauty. Winds, rain, snow, sunshine, day, night, and change of seasons were endlessly fascinating. Birds, insects, and animals filled the world with knowledge that defied the comprehension of man.

The Lakota was a true naturalist, a lover of Nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth, and the attachment grew with age. The old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power.

It was good for the skin to touch the earth, and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth.

Their tipis were built upon the earth and their altars were made of earth. The birds that flew in the air came to rest upon the earth, and it was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing, and healing.

That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him.

-Chief Luther Standing Bear Teton Sioux

Wisdom of the Africans

Proverbs on Nature

If you want to speak to God, speak to the winds.

If the mouse were the size of a cow, it would be the cat's slave nevertheless.

If plain water were satisfying enough, then fish would not take the hook.

However poor the crocodile becomes, it hunts in the river, not in the forest.

GREEN BOOK 3

Haiku Collection

Autumn coming-
It's almost unnoticed, but
I feel its
Invisible arrival
In the rustling winds. 3.

Rain, hail,
Snow, ice:
All Different, but
They finally meld into
One valley stream. 19.

Over the pond
Every night the moon
Casts its light.
But the water won't be soiled;
The moon won't either. 44.

Nothing seems
So transient as
Human life:
The dew on the petal
Of the morning glory. 64

Should the moon
Distinguish
Rich and poor,
It would never brighten
A poor man's hut. 70.

The wind is you breath;
The open sky, your mind;
The sun, your eye;
Seas and mountains,
Your whole body. 166.

What shall I leave as
A keepsake after I die?
In spring, flowers;
Summer, cuckoos;
Fall, red maple leaves;
Winter, snow. 169.

Everyone admires
Beautiful flowers in bloom,
But the ones who know
Visit them
After they've fallen. 284

Pine trees in the wind
Don't break;
They always scatter
The snow before it's
Too heavy for their branches. 569

Pine winds,
Moonlight on the field grasses
Are all that I have:
Besides,
No visitors. 593

Even in the dew
On the tiny blade
Of some nameless grass,
The moon

Will show herself. 420

While faithfully throwing their
Shadows to the water,
Flirting with the wind:
Willows by the river. 615

No sound is heard
In the creeks where
Waters run deep;
Shallow streams
Always splash. 618

The man
Who's escaped the world
To live in the mountains,
If he's still weary,
Where should he go? 710

The Tao of Pooh

The Cork, The Tao of Pooh pg. 88

The Wu Wei principle underlying Tai Chi Ch'uan can be understood by striking at a piece of cork floating in water. The harder you hit it, the more it yields; the more it yields, the harder it bounces back. Without expending energy, the cork can easily wear you out. So, Wu Wei overcomes force by neutralizing its power, rather than by adding to the conflict. With other approaches, you may fight fire with fire, but with Wu Wei you fight fire with water.

The Gospel According to Zen

Sporting Fishes

If your heart is without stormy waves, everywhere are blue mountains and green trees. If our real nature is creative like nature itself, wherever we may be, we see that all things are free like sporting fishes and circling kites.

Meshing Nets

"As a net is made up of a series of ties, so everything in this world is connected by a series of ties. If anyone thinks that the mesh of a net is an independent, isolated thing, he is mistaken. It is called a net because it is made up of a series of interconnected meshes, and each mesh has its place and responsibility in relation to other meshes." -The Buddha

The Butterflies of Chuang Tzu

Happy Fish

Chuang Tzu and Hui Tzu were strolling along the dam of the Hao River when Chuang Tzu said, "See how the minnows come out and dart around where they please! That's what fish really enjoy!"

Hui Tzu said, "You're not a fish, so how do you know what fish enjoy?"

Chuang Tzu said, "You're not I, so how do you know I don't know what fish enjoy?"

Hui Tzu said, "I'm not you, so I certainly don't know what you know. On the other hand, you're certainly not a fish, so that still proves you don't know what fish enjoy!"

Chuang Tzu said, "Let's go back to your original question, please. You asked me how I know what fish enjoy, so you already knew I knew it when you asked the question. I know it by standing here beside the Hao River."

Look Under Your Feet

Master Tung-Kuo asked Chuang Tzu, "This thing called the Way-where does it exist?"

Chuang Tzu said, "There's no place it doesn't exist."

"Come," said Master Tung-kuo, "you must be more specific!"

"It is in the ant."

"As low a thing as that?"

"It is in the panic grass."

"But that is lower still!"

"It is in the tiles and shards."

"How can it be so low?"

"It is in the piss and shit."

The Caged Sea-bird

Once a sea bird alighted in the suburbs of the Lu capital. The marquis of Lu escorted it to the ancestral temple, where he entertained it, performing the Nine Shao music for it to listen to and presenting it with the meat of the T'ai-lao sacrifice to feast on. But the bird only looked dazed and forlorn, refusing to eat a single slice of meat or drink a cup of wine, and in three days it was dead. This is to try to nourish a bird with what would nourish you instead of what would nourish a bird. If you want to nourish a bird with what nourishes a bird, then you should let it roost in the deep forest, play among the banks and islands, float on the rivers and lakes, eat mudfish and minnows, follow the rest of the flock in flight and rest, and live any way it chooses. A bird hates to hear even the sound of human voices, much less all that hubbub and to-do. Try performing the Hsien-ch'ih and Nine Shao music in the wilds around Lake Tung-t'ing. When the birds hear it they will fly off, when the animals hear it they will run away, when the fish hear it they will dive to the bottom. Only the people who hear it will gather around to listen. Fish live in water and thrive, but if men tried to live in water they would die. Creatures differ because they have different likes and dislikes.

Therefore the former sages never required the same ability from all creatures or made them all do the same thing. Names should stop when they have expressed reality, concepts of right should be founded on what is suitable. This is what it means to have command of reason and good fortune to support you.

Christian Thoughts

Iron in our Blood

Women, *Earth and Creator Spirit* pg. 34

A crucial insight emerges from this creation story of cosmic and biological evolution. The kinship model of humankind's relation to the world is not just a poetic, good-hearted way of seeing things but the basic truth. We are connected in a most profound way to the

universe, having emerged from it. Events in the galaxies produced the iron that makes our blood red and the calcium that makes our bones and teeth white. These and other heavy elements were cooked in the interior of stars and then dispersed when they died to form a second-generation solar system with its planets, on one of which the evolution of life and consciousness followed. In the words of scientist Arthur Peacocks:

"Every atom of iron in our blood would not have been there had it not been produced in some galactic explosion billions of years ago and eventually condensed to form the iron in the crust of the earth from which we have emerged."

Chemically, humanity is all of a piece with the cosmos. The same is true of our genes. Molecular biology shows that the same four bases make up the DNA of almost all living things. The genetic structure of cells in our bodies is remarkably similar to the cells in other creatures, bacteria, grasses, fish, horses, the great gray whales. We have all evolved from common ancestors and are kin in this shared, unbroken genetic history. To put it more poetically, we human beings as physical organisms carry within ourselves 'the signature of the supernovas and the geology and life history of the Earth.'

Living in the present moment, furthermore, involves us in a continuous exchange of material with the earth and other living creatures. Every time we breathe we take in millions of atoms breathed by the rest of humanity within the last two weeks. In our bodies seven percent of the protein molecules break down each day and have to be rebuilt out of matter from the earth (food) and energy from the sun. Seven percent per day is the statistical measure of our inter dependence. In view of the consistent recycling of the human body, the epidermis of our skin can be likened ecologically to a pond surface, not so much a shell or wall as a place of exchange. In a very real sense the world is our body

Various Other Quotes

Earth and Ecology

The Earth is a blessing to those upon her. -Egyptian

Do not damage the earth, or the sea, or the trees. -Book of Revelations 7:3

Men go and come, but earth abides. -Ecclesiastes, 1, 4

We didn't inherit the land from our fathers. We are borrowing it from our children. -Amish belief

You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from a master. -St. Bernard of Clairvaux

He who follows Nature's lantern never loses his way. -German

O Sacred Earth Mother, the trees and all nature are witnesses to your thoughts and deeds. -Winnebago Indian saying

The world is older and bigger than we are. This is a hard truth for some folks to swallow. -Ed Abbey

The essence of deep ecology is to ask deeper questions... We ask which society, which education, which form of religion is beneficial for all life on the planet as a whole. -Arne Naess

When one recognizes the unity of nature, he also perceives the singleness of mankind. -Gus Turbeville

The highest function of ecology is the understanding of consequences. -Planetologist Pardot Kynes, *DUNE*

Eventually all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of these rocks are the timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters. -Norman MacLean.

I'm often asked the question: "Is it possible to do valid rituals alone?" First of all in nature ritual, one is never alone. All the other beings of nature are present: either sun or moon, trees, plants, or animals. To consider that you are alone when you are in nature is simply a remnant of Eurocentric thinking. -Dolores LaChapelle, *Sacred Land, Sacred Sex, Rapture of the Deep*

Nature confuses the skeptics and reason confutes the dogmatists. -Blaise Pascal

A man said to the universe, "Sir, I exist." "However," replied the universe, "the fact has not created in me a sense of obligation." -Stephen Crane

Indeed I now realize that a man requires intimate and solitary contact with the wild places if he is to survive. When he is deprived of this state he begins to withdraw into himself, a prey to inner demons and the psychic wallpaper that passes for his estrangement from any genuine inner life. -James Cowan, *Letters From a Wild State*

If my decomposing carcass helps nourish the roots of a juniper tree or the wings of a vulture, that is immortality enough for me. And as much as anyone deserves. -Ed Abbey.

Earth-wise, we are as altars on which the divine fires can burn. The stone of the Druids is still within our bodies, as it was within theirs; for holy sacrifice or sacrilegious exploitation. -Graham Howe, *The Mind of the Druid*

In metaphysics, the notion that the earth and all that's on it is a mental construct is the product of people who spend their lives inside rooms. It is an indoor philosophy. -Ed Abbey

We shall never achieve harmony with the land anymore than we shall achieve justice or liberty for people. In these higher aspirations the important thing is not to achieve, but to strive. -Aldo Leopold

GREEN BOOK 4

Behold Our Mother Earth (Pawnee, North America)

Behold! Our Mother Earth is lying here.
Behold! She gives of her fruitfulness.
Truly, her power she gives us.
Give thanks to Mother Earth who lies here.
Behold on Mother Earth the growing fields!
Behold the promise of her fruitfulness!
Truly, her power she gives us.
Give thanks to Mother Earth who lies here.
Behold on Mother Earth the spreading trees!
Behold the promise of her fruitfulness!
Truly, her power she gives us.
Give thanks to Mother Earth who lies here.
Behold on Mother Earth the running streams!
We see the promise of her fruitfulness.
Truly, her power she gives us.
Our thanks to Mother Earth who lies here.

This Is My Land

This is my land
From the time of the first moon
Till the time of the last sun
It was given to my people
Wha-neh Wah-neh, the great giver of life
Made me out of the earth of this land
He said, "you are the land, and the land is you."
I take good care of this land,
For I am part of it.
I take good care of the animals,
For they are my brothers and sisters.
I take good care of the animals,
For they are my brothers and sisters.
I take care of the streams and rivers,
For they clean my land,
I honor Ocean as my father,
For he gives me food and a means of travel.
Ocean knows everything, for he is everywhere.
Ocean is wise, for he is old.
Listen to Ocean, for he speaks wisdom
He sees much, and knows more.
He say, "take care of my sister, Earth,
She is young and has little wisdom, but much kindness."
"When she smiles, it is springtime."
"Scar not her beauty, for she is beautiful beyond all things."
"Her face looks eternally upward to the beauty of sky and stars."
"Where once she lived with her father, Sky."
I am forever grateful for this beautiful and bountiful earth.
God gave it to me
This is my land.
- Clarence Pickernell

Native American Proverbs

Ecology

With all things and in all things, we are relatives. -Sioux
Before eating, always take a little time to thank the food. -Arapaho
When we show our respect for other living things, they respond with respect for us. -Arapaho
Creation is ongoing. -Lakota
Be kind to everything that lives. -Omaha
We will be known forever by the tracks we leave. -Dakota
To touch the earth is to have harmony with nature. -Oglala Sioux
We are made from Mother Earth and we go back to Mother Earth. -Shenandoah
All plants are our brothers and sister. They talk to us and if we listen, we can hear them. -Arapaho
Listen to the voice of nature, for it holds treasures for you. -Huron
Mother Nature is always there to watch and care for her own. -Kiowa
When man moves away from nature his heart becomes hard. -Lakota
Everything has a beginning. -Kiowa
Every animal knows far more than you do. -Nez Perce

We stand somewhere between the mountain and the ant. -Onondaga
The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives. -Sioux
Take only what you need and leave the land as you found it. -
Arapaho

Aphoristic Advice

Nature

All animals except man know that the ultimate in life is to enjoy it.
-Samuel Butler

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour... -William Blake

I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose as animal,
I died as animal and I was Man...
Yet once more I shall die as Man, to soar
With Angels blest; but even from angelhood
I shall pass on: all except God doth perish. -Jalalu'l-Din Rumi

All of us are pilgrims on this earth, I have even heard people say
that the earth itself is pilgrim in the heavens. -Maxim Gorky

We have enslaved the rest of the animal creation, and have treated
our distant cousins in fur and feathers so badly that without doubt, if
they were able to formulate a religion, they would depict the Devil
in human form. -W.R. Inge

No great works and wonder God has ever wrought or shall ever do
in or through this created world, not even God himself in his
goodness, will make me blessed if they remain outside of me. -
Theologia Germanica, 9

Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with
doors all shut? Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!
He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the
path maker is breaking stone... Meet him and stand by him in toil
and sweat of thy brow. -Rabindranath Tagore

Man has been endowed with reason, with the power to create, so
that he can add to what he's been given. But up to now he hasn't been
a creator, only a destroyer. Forest keep disappearing, rivers dry up,
wild life's become extinct, the climate's ruined and the land grows
poorer and uglier every day. -Anton Chekhov (1900 C.E.)

Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through Nature, up to Nature's God. -Alexander Pope

Among other things, there is a drying up of great oceans, the falling
away of mountain peaks, the deviation of the fixed pole-star, the
cutting of the cords of the winds, the submergence of the earth, the
retreat of the celestials from their stations. In this sort of cycle of
existence, what is the good of enjoyment of desires, when after a
man has fed on them there is seen repeatedly his return here to
earth? Please deliver me. In this cycle of existence I am like a frog
in a waterless well. -Maitri Upanishad 1,4

By all these I prayed, by the rolling sun, bursting through untrodden
space, a new ocean of ether every day unveiled. By the fresh and
wandering air encompassing the world; by the sea sounding on the
shore - the green sea, white-flecked at the margin, and the deep
ocean; by the strong earth under me. -Richard Jeffries

You never enjoy the world aright, till the Sea itself floweth in your
veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the

stars; and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world,
and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs
as well as you. -Thomas Traherne

Even if they did happen to believe the divinity to be totally present
in some stone or wood, it may be they were sometimes right. Do we
not believe God is present in some bread and wine? Perhaps God
was actually present in statues fashioned and consecrated according
to certain rites. -Simone Weil.

Whatever is well-fitting in you, O Universe, is fitting to me.
Nothing can be early or late to me, which is seasonable to you.
Whatever your seasons bring shall be happy fruit and increase to
me. O Nature, all things come from you, all things exist in you. -
Marcus Aurelius

Some kill animals for sacrificial purposes, some kill for the sake of
their skin, some kill for the sake of their blood...He who injures
these animals does not comprehend and renounced the sinful acts;
he who does not injure these, comprehends and renounces the sinful
acts. Knowing them, a wise man should not act sinfully toward
animals, nor cause others to act so, nor allow others to act so. -
Acharanga Sutra 1,1,6

Theology at 120F in the shade seems, after all, different from
theology at 70F... The theologian at 70F in a good position
presumes God to be happy and contented, well-fed and rested,
without needs of any kind. The theologian at 120F tries to imagine
a God who is hungry and thirsty, who suffers and is sad, who sheds
perspiration and knows despair. -Klaus Lostermaier

The One who, himself with colour, by the manifold application of
his power
Distributes many colours in his hidden purpose,
And into whom, its end and its beginning, the whole world dissolves
-He is God. -Shvetashvatara Upanishad, 4,1

Remember that the most beautiful things in the world are the most
useless: peacocks and lilies for instance. -John Ruskin

What is beneath the earth is quite as natural as what is above
ground, and he who cannot summon spirits in the daytime under the
open sky will not evoke them at midnight in a vault. -Johann
Wolfgang von Goethe

These rivers, my dear, flow, the eastern toward the east, the western
toward the west. They go just from the ocean to the ocean. They
become the ocean itself. As there they know not 'I am this one,' 'I
am that one' -even so, indeed, my dear, all creatures here, though
they have come forth from Being, know not 'We have come forth
from Being.' Whatever they are in this world, whether tiger, or
lion, or wolf, or boar, or worm, or fly, or gnat, or mosquito, that
they become.

That which is the finest essence - this whole world has that as its
soul. That is Reality. That is Soul. That art thou. -Chandogya
Upanishad 6, 10

God is present in Nature, but nature is not God; there is a nature in
God, but it is not God himself. -Henri-Frederic Amiel

If we believe our logicians, man is distinguished from all other
creatures by the faculty of laughter. -Joseph Addison

For everything is holy, life delights in life. -William Blake

Wit and Wisdom of Women

Nature

Aerodynamically the bumblebee shouldn't be able to fly, but the bumblebee doesn't know it so it goes on flying anyway. -Mary Kay Ash

And then it just seems preposterous. There I am, choosing my words so carefully, trying to build this pure, unanalyzable, transparent, honest thing in this dim room with the shades drawn and out there is the world, indecent, cruel, apathetic, a world where the sea are being trashed, the desert bladed, the wolves shot, the eagles poisoned, where people show up at planning and zoning meetings waving signs that say "My family Can't Eat the Environment." That sentence is ill, it is a virus of a sentence, and as a writer, I should be able to defeat it and its defenders handily. With the perfect words I should be able to point out, reasonably, that in fact the individual's family is eating the environment, that they are consuming it with sprawl and greed and materialistic hungers and turning it into - shit. But perfect words fail me. I don't want my words. I want to throttle this person, beat him over the head with his stupid sign. -Joy Williams

For me writing is an incredible privilege. When I sit down at the desk, there are other women who are hungry, homeless. I don't want to forget that, that the world of matter is still there to be reckoned with. I feel a responsibility to other humans, and to the animal and plant communities as well. -Linda Hogan

I'm not a naturalist in the activist sense of the word, though perhaps writing with a feeling of the sacred about a place is a kind of activism. Part of what you're doing as a writer is to make that silent language of mountains and trees and water part of your language. It's speaking all the time and I hear it speaking. -Tess Gallagher

Spirituality necessitates certain kinds of political action. If you believe that the earth, and all living things, and all the stones are sacred, your responsibility really is to protect those things. -Linda Hogan

Wisdom of the Sufis

The Gardens

Once upon a time, when the science and art of gardening was not yet well established among men, there was a master-gardener. In addition to knowing all the qualities of plants, their nutritious, medicinal and aesthetic values, he had been granted a knowledge of the Herb of Longevity, and he lived for many hundreds of years.

In successive generations, he visited gardens and cultivated places throughout the world. In one place he planted a wonderful garden, and instructed the people in its upkeep and even in the theory of gardening. But, becoming accustomed to seeing some of the plants come up and flower every year, they soon forgot that others had to have their seeds collected, that some were propagated from cuttings, that some needed extra watering, and so on. The result was that the garden eventually became wild, and people started to regard this as the best garden that there could be.

After giving these people many chances to learn, the gardener expelled them and recruited another whole band of workers. He warned them that if they did not keep the garden in order, and study his methods, they would suffer for it. They, in turn, forgot - and, since they were lazy, tended only those fruits and flowers which were easily reared and allowed the others to die. Some of the first trainees came back to them from time to time, saying: 'You should do this and that,' but they drove them away, shouting: 'You are the ones who are departing from truth in this matter.'

But the master-gardener persisted. He made other gardens, wherever he could, and yet none was ever perfect except the one

which he himself tended with his chief assistants. As it became known that there were many gardens and even many methods of gardening, people from one garden would visit those of another, to approve, to criticize, or to argue. Books were written, assemblies of gardeners were held, gardeners arranged themselves in grades according to what they thought to be the right order of precedence.

As is the way of men the difficulty of the gardeners remains that they are too easily attracted by the superficial. They say: 'I like this flower,' and they want everyone else to like it as well. It may, in spite of its attraction or abundance, be a weed which is choking other plants which could provide medicines or food which the people and the garden need for their sustenance and permanency.

Among these gardeners are those who prefer plants of one single colour. These they may describe as 'good.' There are others who will only tend the plants, while refusing to care about the paths or the gates, or even the fences.

When, at length, the ancient gardener died, he left as his endowment the whole knowledge of gardening, distributing it among the people who would understand in accordance with their capacities. So the science as well as the art of gardening remained as a scattered heritage in many gardens and also in some records of them.

People who are brought up in one garden or another generally have been so powerfully instructed as to the merits or demerits of how the inhabitants see things that they are almost incapable - though they make the effort - of realizing that they have to return to the concept of 'garden.' At the best, they generally only accept, reject, suspend judgment or look what they imagine are the common factors.

From time to time true gardeners do arise. Such is the abundance of semi-gardens that when they hear of real ones people say: 'Oh, yes. You are talking about a garden such as we already have, or we imagine.' What they have and what they imagine are both defective.

The real experts, who cannot reason with the quasi-gardeners, associate for the most part among themselves, putting into this or that garden something from the total stock which will enable it to maintain its vitality to some extent.

They are often forced to masquerade, because the people who want to learn from them seldom know about the fact of gardening as an art or science underlying everything that they have heard before. So they ask questions like: 'How can I get a more beautiful flower on these onions?'

The real gardeners may work with them because true gardeners can sometimes be brought into being, for the benefit of all mankind. They do not last long, but it is only through them that the knowledge can be truly learnt and people can come to see what a garden really is.

Jewish Thoughts and Words

Nature and Poets

Like a great poet, Nature is capable of producing the most stunning effects with the smallest means. Nature possesses only the sun, trees, flowers, water, and love. But for him who feels no love in his heart, none of these things has any poetic value. To such an individual the sun has a diameter of a certain number of miles, the trees are good for making a fire, the flowers are divided into varieties, and water is wet. -Heinrich Heine

Growing Roots

When our learning exceeds our deeds we are like trees whose branches are many but whose roots are few: the wind comes and uproots them... But when our deeds exceed our learning we are like trees whose branches are few but whose roots are many, so that even if all the winds of the world were to come and blow against them, they would be unable to move them. -Talmud

Christian Thoughts

The Canticle of Brother Sun

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made,
And first my lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.
How beautiful he is, how radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most high, he bears the likeness.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright
And precious and fair.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods,
By which you cherish all that you have made.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night.
How beautiful he is, how gay! Full of power and strength.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits and colored flowers and herbs.
All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those She finds doing will!
The second death can do no harm to them.
Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
And serve him with great humility.

-St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) Franciscan saint.

GREEN BOOK FIVE

Monky Business

The Garden Keeper

A priest was in charge of the garden within a famous Zen temple. He had been given the job because he loved the flowers, shrubs, and trees. Next to the temple there was another, smaller temple where there lived a very old Zen master. One day, when the priest was expecting some special guests, he took extra care in tending to the garden. He pulled the weeds, trimmed the shrubs, combed the moss, and spent a long time meticulously raking up and carefully arranging all the dry autumn leaves. As he worked, the old master watched him with interest from across the wall that separated the temples.

When he had finished, the priest stood back to admire his work. "Isn't it beautiful," he called out to the old master. "Yes," replied the old man, "but there is something missing. Help me over this wall and I'll put it right for you."

After hesitating, the priest lifted the old fellow over and set him down. Slowly, the master walked to the tree near the center of the garden, grabbed it by the trunk, and shook it. Leaves showered down all over the garden.

"There," said the old man, "you can put me back now."

Wisdom of the Internet

Plant Your Garden Today

Plant your garden today
First, plant 3 rows of peas;
Patience
Promptness
Prayer
Next, plant 3 rows of squash;
Squash gossip
Squash indifference
Squash criticism
Then, plant 4 rows of lettuce;
Let us obey the good laws
Let us be Loyal
Let us be true to our Obligations
Let us be unselfish
Finish, with 4 rows of turnip;
Turn up when Needed
Turn up with a Smile
Turn up with a Vision
Turn up with Determination

The Oak and the Maple

By Darren

And one winter day Maple asked Oak, "Why must I bear this snow?"

And Oak replied, "Because you have spread your branches."

And Maple asked, "Then why did I spread my branches?"

And Oak replied, "To catch the wind and sun, those things that give you life. And here, sometimes, the wind brings snow."

And Maple asked, "Then why have I come here?"

And Oak replied, "The winds blew, and you rode them. You liked them then, and laughed at the joy of spinning."

And Maple asked, "Then why did I grow here?"

And Oak replied, "Because the soil is good, between the stones."

And Maple asked, "Then why did the stones not stop me?"

And Oak replied, "Because you knew what you must do."

And Maple asked, "What is it, then, that I must do?"

And Oak replied, "Spread your branches. And bear some snow."

How to Love Nature

by John Burroughs, American 1837-1921

Nature-love as Emerson knew it, and as Wordsworth knew it, and as any of the choicer spirits of our time have known it, had distinctly a religious value. It does not come to a man or a woman who is wholly absorbed in selfish or worldly or material ends.

Except ye become in a measure as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of Nature- as Audubon entered it, as Thoreau entered it, as Bryant and Amiel entered it, and as all those enter it who make it a resource in their lives and an instrument of their culture.

The forms and creeds of religion change, but the sentiment of religion- the wonder and reverence and love we feel in the presence of the inscrutable universe- persist... If we do not go to church as much as did our fathers, we go to the woods much more, and are much more inclined to make a temple of them than they were.

Keeper of the Spring

The late Peter Marshall was an eloquent speaker and for several years served as the chaplain of the US Senate. He used to love to tell the story of the "Keeper of the Spring," a quiet forest dweller who lived high above an Austrian village along the eastern slope of the Alps.

The old gentleman had been hired many years earlier by a young town councilman to clear away the debris from the pools of water up in the mountain crevices that fed the lovely spring flowing through their town. With faithful, silent regularity, he patrolled the hills, removed the leaves and branches, and wiped away the silt that would otherwise have choked and contaminated the fresh flow of water. The village soon became a popular attraction for vacationers. Graceful swans floated along the crystal clear spring, the mill wheels of various businesses located near the water turned day and night, farmlands were naturally irrigated, and the view from restaurants was picturesque beyond description.

Years passed. One evening the town council met for its semiannual meeting. As they reviewed the budget, one man's eye caught the salary figure being paid the obscure keeper of the spring. Said the keeper of the purse, "Who is the old man? Why do we keep him on year after year? No one ever sees him. For all we know, the strange ranger of the hills is doing us no good. He isn't necessary any longer." By a unanimous vote, they dispensed with the old man's services.

For several weeks, nothing changed.

By early autumn, the trees began to shed their leaves. Small branches snapped off and fell into the pools, hindering the rushing flow of sparkling water. One afternoon someone noticed a slight yellowish-brown tint in the spring. A few days later, the water was much darker. Within another week, a slimy film covered sections of

the water along the banks, and a foul odor was soon detected. The mill wheels moved more slowly, some finally ground to a halt. Swans left, as did the tourists. Clammy fingers of disease and sickness reached deeply into the village.

Quickly, the embarrassed council called a special meeting. Realizing their gross error in judgment, they rehired the old keeper of the spring, and within a few weeks, the veritable river of life began to clear up. The wheels started to turn, and new life returned to the hamlet in the Alps.

Never become discouraged with the seeming smallness of your task, job, or life. Cling fast to the words of Edward Everett Hale: "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something I can do." The key to accomplishment is believing that what you can do will make a difference.





Two Seasons, Three Worlds, Four Treasures, Five Directions: the Pillars of Celtic Cosmology and Celtic Reconstructionist Druidism

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As most of you are probably aware, the holiest river of Hinduism is the Ganges. But before the Ganges became the focus of religious belief and ritual there was another river that was likely an equally sacred river. That river was the Saraswati around which an entire civilization, known as the Harappan culture flourished from 2500 BCE to 1500 BCE in the Indus River Valley of present day northwest India and Kashmir. Its major cities were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.

The Harappan culture was highly advanced with writing, mathematics, metallurgy, dentistry, stringed instruments, three dimensional sculptures, urban planning, irrigation and drainage, public baths, boats and canals, and a population that was larger than the two kingdoms of northern and southern Egypt combined. It was a culture that traded widely and lived in peace. Their language was most likely a type of Dravidian. 1.

This culture faced an environmental catastrophe when the climate changed, the rains failed, and their sacred Mother River, the Saraswati dried up. By approximately 2000 BCE the holy river that had run through the heart of this civilization was gone and the Harappan culture began to disperse. What remained of the Harappan culture was absorbed or conquered by Proto-Indo-European or Sanskrit speakers.

Evidence suggests that some of the Harappan peoples moved from Northwest India south into the subcontinent while other Harappans moved northeast into China and Tibet. There is also mounting evidence that yet others of them may have moved west – all the way into Western Europe. What evidence do we have to support this theory? As physical evidence we have the famous Gundestrup Cauldron that was found in a Danish bog in 1891. The provenance for the cauldron is still debated but it was constructed in the first or second century BCE. Despite coming from a Danish bog the cauldron depicts a horned deity surrounded by exotic creatures such as elephants and lions and seated in a yogic pose. The horned deity is Celtic; we know this because he is wearing a torc or neck ring, which is a Celtic symbol of noble status, and holds another torc in his hand. Yet the horned figure closely resembles the Harappan Mohenjo-Daro depictions of Shiva Pashupati, the Lord of the Animals.

In Hindu depictions of Shiva he is often shown meditating with a serpent around his neck to illustrate his absolute fearlessness. Similarly the Gundestrup horned deity is shown clutching a serpent.

A.



B.



Images from my article “Encounters with the Horned God”
in *Bond of Druids: A Druid Journal*, Summer 2008
<http://www.geocities.com/mikerdna/danac/2-bodsummer2008.pdf>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Image-Pashupati.jpeg>

A. is a panel from the Gundestrup Cauldron, B. is a Monhenjo-Daro seal depicting Shiva-Pashupati.

Further parallels can be found between European, Vedic and Indus Valley cultures and I will speak primarily about the Celts because that culture is most relevant to my own faith which is Druidism.

The sacred mother river along which Celtic culture developed called the Danube is named for the Celtic Goddess Danu. The same Goddess gave her name to the Don River, the Dneiper, and others. Danu is also an early Hindu Goddess of the primeval waters. In the Rig Veda she is called the mother of the Danavas, or the Children of Danu.

The Celtic peoples developed a caste system of the “Nemed” or “Sacred” class of Druids who were the equivalent of Brahmins, warriors who were equivalent to the Kshatriyas, farmers and producers, and slaves who did the same menial tasks as the “Untouchable” castes of India. In common with Hindu and Vedic cultures where until the tenth century, one could move up or down the social ladder, advancing in status as one gained education or skills, the ancient Celtic caste system was fluid providing opportunities for advancement and also loss of status depending on education and other circumstances.

The Celts and Hindu-Vedic peoples shared other similarities such as the primacy of triple deities. In Celtic religious thought the most powerful deities were always personified in threes; the triple Brighid for example, who was the most popular pan-Celtic Goddess. She was personified as three Brighid's; Brighid the Patroness of smiths and the forge, Brighid the Patroness of healing and Brighid the Patroness of poets. Similarly there was *Lugh Samildanach*, the God of every art, who was born as one of triplets. The triple War Goddess known as The Morrígan was often personified as three ravens, three crows or three Great Queens named Morrígan, Badb, and Nemain. The Land Goddess of ancient Ireland was a triple deity; [Banba](#), [Fodla](#) and [Ériu](#). In Celtic Gaul the Matronae were the "Triple Mothers" who brought the blessings of plants, food and healthy children to the tribes. Thus the number three implied High Gods, divinity and completion.



Gaulish Matronae from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bibracte_Deesses.jpg

These triple deities can be compared to the Hindu Trimurti; Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu and to the Tridevi; Shakti, Lakshmi and Saraswati.

Druidic religious and philosophical teachings were similar to Vedic and Hindu beliefs as well. The Druids taught the doctrine of reincarnation according to contemporary witnesses and historians. Pomponius Mela reported that the Druids taught reincarnation to strengthen the courage of the warriors. He wrote that; "*One of their dogmas has become widely known so they may the more readily go to wars: namely that souls are everlasting, and that among the shades is another life.*"

Ammianus Marcellinus wrote; "*The Druids . . . declared souls to be immortal*" while Diodorus Siculus said; "*The Pythagorean doctrine prevails among them, teaching that the souls of men are immortal and live again for a fixed number of years inhabited in another body.*"

And in the first century, Lucan addressed the Druids rhetorically with these words. . . "You tell us that the same spirit has a body again elsewhere, and that death, if what you sing is true, is but the midpoint of long life".

We can find yet more parallels between the sacred scriptures of the Celtic and Hindu religion. In "The Song of Amaigen" from the eleventh century "*Lebor Gabála Érenn*" ("Book of Invasions"), a book composed of a mixture of pseudo-history and oral lore passed down through the generations in which the poet declares;

*"I am the Wind that blows across the Sea;
I am the Wave of the Ocean;
I am the Murmur of the Billows;*

*I am the Bull of the Seven Combats;
I am the Vulture on the Rock;
I am a Ray of the Sun;
I am the Fairest of Flowers;
I am a Wild Boar in Valor;
I am a Salmon in the Pool;
I am a Lake on the Plain;
I am the Skill of the Craftsman;
I am a Word of Science;
I am the Spear-point that gives Battle;
I am the God who creates in the head of man the Fire of Thoughts... ”*

This can be compared to The *Bhagavad-Gita* where Sri Krishna says;

*“I am the Self established in the heart of all contingent beings:
I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all contingent beings too...” 2.*

And

*“...Among luminous bodies I am the sun...among heavenly mansions I am the moon...
and Meru among the high-aspiring mountains...of floods I am the ocean...of immovable things I am the
Himalaya...I am the lion among beasts...the Ganges among rivers...I am endless time itself, and the
Preserver whose face is turned on all sides...I am, O Arjuna, the seed of all existing things, and there is
not anything, whether animate or inanimate which is without me...” 3.*

Added to all this is the fact that Celtic religion featured offerings to sacred fire, sacred water and trees, while Vedic ritual involved making offerings to sacred fire (*Agni*), and sacred water (*Soma*) and the use of a pole in their rites. The sickle was also a ritual implement used by both Druids and Brahmanic priests. The evidence is mounting that there is a common Vedic or proto-Vedic thread that runs through Indo-European religious beliefs.

So having explored the deepest tap roots of what I perceive to be our closely woven origins, now I would like to look at the basic principles of Celtic Cosmology as they are understood by modern Celtic Reconstructionist Druids of today.

Two Seasons

The first principle is the division of the sacred year. For the ancient Celts there were only two seasons; summer and winter, or the light half of the year and the dark half of the year. The dark half began at *Samhain* or as it is known in modern times “Halloween” or “All Souls Day” while the light half began at *Beltaine* or as it is known in modern times “May Day”. These two festivals were the holiest days of the Celtic year, acting as portals between dark and light, between one state of existence and another. They were times of chaos and change when Spirits were said to move freely between the worlds and communication with dead ancestors was most easily achieved.

Both of these festivals were centered around the activities of cows. At *Beltaine* the cows were sent to their summer pastures in the hills, while at *Samhain* the cows were brought back to the comforts of their winter enclosures. At *Beltaine* the departing cows were ritually blessed by passing them between two sacred fires as they left the farm. The fires were supposed to be close enough that a white cow passing between them would have her hair singed brown. Cows were thought of as lunar, watery animals that produced the all important liquid called milk that would later make butter and cheese for the tribes. By passing the cows through the fires, water and fire were brought together which

was seen as a powerful form of magic because the ancient Celts believed that the world was made of fire and water and wherever these two elements came together there was the possibility for transformation, creation and powerful change.

In between *Beltaine* and *Samhain* there were two other high festivals. *Imbolc*, which happened in early February, was held in honor of the great Triple Goddess Brigid. It was also a milk festival that celebrated the lactation of the ewes. *Lughnasad* was the celebration of the first fruits of the harvest. It was observed from late July to mid August, depending on when the new grain was ripe. At this festival horses, which were understood to be solar creatures of fire, were ritually cleansed by driving them through living water such as a lake or a stream and once again fire and water were brought together to empower the world. Horse races and other games of skill and competition as well as great fairs and poetry contests marked the occasion. This festival honored the God Lugh who was “master of every art” and his foster mother Tailtiu, who can be understood to represent the Earth Mother herself.

Three Worlds

For the Celts there were three worlds that existed simultaneously and which were intertwined with each other to make up the whole of existence. The world of “Sea” or water was the underworld of the ancestors and the *Sidhe* or Fairies. This world was under the earth but could be accessed through water; hence offerings were dropped into water such as lakes, ponds, wells and streams, as gifts for the Fairy Realms and for the honored dead.

The world of “Land” was the sacred realm of plants, trees, animals, stones and humans. Some of the inhabitants of this world such as stones and trees were especially venerated because a stone could be half underground and half above ground and thus reside between two worlds, while a tree had its roots in the underworld of Water, its trunk in the realm of Land and branches that touched the Sky Realm. Offerings were made to sacred trees and stones to honor their existence between the realms. Deeply rooted trees such as ashes and oaks and stones that projected from the earth were understood to be liminal objects of power that could help a person to travel between the worlds. Rituals were performed in the presence of such trees and stones for this reason.

The world of “Sky” was the domain of the Sky Gods and Goddesses, of Thunder Gods such as Taranis and of the winged raven and crow emissaries of the Triple Goddess of Battle, the Morrigan. Solar deities such as Belenos and Aine were honored with fire offerings. Lugh and Brigid, who were Master and Mistress of Arts and associated with fire, were honored at the forge and at the fire altar. Offerings were made to sacred fires to reach the Sky Realm, because the fires carried the offerings upwards, via the smoke.

For the Celts the symbol that best encapsulated these three realms of existence was a tree, because of the tree’s ability to span the worlds. Every tribe had a *Bile* or sacred tree under which oaths were sworn. Such a tree was simultaneously a church, a court house and a meeting place for elders, tribal leaders and Druids. The health and luck of the community was tied to the tree and the worst thing that could befall a community was to have their sacred tree cut down.

The three realms were also understood to exist within the human form. There were said to be three cauldrons within the human body; the “Cauldron of Wisdom” in the head, the “Cauldron of Motion” in the chest and the “Cauldron of Incubation” in the abdomen.

The Cauldron of Wisdom in the head was said to be born upside down in all people and was gradually turned upright by training and by divine intervention. The Cauldron of Motion in the chest was said to be born on its side in most people. It was the origin of emotions and of poetic art and had to be turned fully upright in order to achieve artistic mastery. The Cauldron of Incubation in the belly was the seat of

warming, sustenance and health. In a healthy person it was said to be upright while in a sick person it lay on its side. This cauldron was turned completely upside down at death. These Three Cauldrons are comparable to three major chakras within the human body.

In the ancient poem “The Cauldron of Poesy”, another composition attributed to Amairgen White-knee, the three cauldrons are described in this manner;

*“My perfect cauldron of warming
has been taken by the Gods from the mysterious abyss of the elements;
a perfect truth that ennobles from the center of being,
that pours forth a terrifying stream of speech...”*

*The Gods do not give the same wisdom to everyone,
tipped, inverted, right-side-up;
no knowledge, half-knowledge, full knowledge --*

*What then is the root of poetry and every other wisdom? Not hard; three
cauldrons are born in every person -- the cauldron of warming, the cauldron
of motion and the cauldron of wisdom.*

*The cauldron of warming is born upright in people from the beginning. It
distributes wisdom to people in their youth.*

*The cauldron of motion, however, increases after turning; that is to say it
is born tipped on its side, growing within.*

*The cauldron of wisdom is born on its lips and distributes wisdom in poetry
and every other art....*

*The cauldron of motion then, in all artless people is on its lips. It is
side-slanting in people of bardcraft and small poetic talent. It is upright
in the greatest of poets, who are great streams of wisdom. Not every poet
has it on its back, for the cauldron of motion must be turned by sorrow or
joy.*

*There are two divisions of joy that turn the cauldron of wisdom; divine joy
and human joy.... 4.*

Four Treasures

By tradition the *Tuatha de Danann* or the Children of Danu, flew in from the north bringing their four treasures with them; the Sword of Nuada, the Cauldron of the Daghdha, the Spear of Lugh and the Lia Fail or Stone of Destiny.

Of The Sword of Nuada it was said that no one could escape it once it was unsheathed. But a sword was not just a battle implement in ancient times. A sword had practical uses such as cutting meat, hacking brush, digging, carving, reaping, cutting and shaping of objects. It was a symbol of wisdom, skill, creativity, honor, truth and discernment. In legends a noble sword uncovered truth and slayed falsehood.

The Cauldron of the Daghdha was said to be a magical inexhaustible container of food from which no one left unsatisfied and Druids were said to be able to bring slain warriors back to life by dipping them into magical cauldrons of healing. Cups and drinking horns were related symbols that held magical and nourishing liquids from the Gods and which were containers for the magical wisdom of the Otherworld and the mysteries of nature. The legends of the quest for the Holy Grail are a remembrance of these mystical objects.

The Spear of Lugh was said to make its bearer invincible, it belonged to the bright shining God who was “Master of Every Art”. While Lugh was a great warrior he was also a magician, a goldsmith, a harper, a healer and many other things besides. His bright spear symbolized mastery of talents, the growth of wisdom, intense focus on a skill or an art, profound intelligence, the fire of Otherworldly inspiration, the fires of thought and the fire in the head.

The Stone of Fal or the Lia Fáil was the magical coronation stone that roared when the true king put his feet upon it. A “Lia” is a worked or inscribed stone, not a rough natural stone. With its base in the ground and its top in the air it is a boundary marker between one world and another just as the true king must be a bridge from this world to the divine realms. The color of the stone is grey, symbolic of wisdom and knowledge and a “Fail” is an enclosure or protective ring that surrounds and guards the kingdom. Thus this stone, which was said to reside at Tara and which was later taken to Scotland (and then purloined by the English crown) is an ancient stone that has been inscribed in a sacred and mysterious way so that it guards the kingdom. When the true ruler, one who is a wise and a true protector of the land approaches it will speak out clearly. Until then the stone will stay silent, holding its secrets and guarding their power for the rightful king who is to come.

Five Directions

There were as many as twelve directions that were recognized as significant by the Celts, we know this because there were twelve winds or “Airts” that were recognized for their unique effects upon the land and the people 5. But for religious purposes there were five major directions that are still found in the myths and stories 6.

The North was the direction of battle and fire; its emblem was the sword and its creature the eagle. It was the direction of warriors and of Gods. Winds from the north presaged strife and conflict.

The East was the direction of abundance and prosperity. Its emblems were wealth of all kinds; good earth, fine clothing, bees and honey, its creature the salmon.

The South was the Goddess direction, associated with water and creative arts such as music and poetry. Its creature was the sow, an animal that roots deep into the dark earth for inspiration and sustenance, bringing hidden treasures to light.

The West was the place of history keeping, story telling, of illumination, of inner fire, and of learning and of passing on the mysteries. It was the airy direction of the intellect. Its creature was the stag.

The Center was the fifth sacred direction that completed a ritual space. Its emblem was the stone, its creature the Mare of Sovereignty who symbolized the Goddess of the Land. It was the place of mastery and of rulership. Five was the number that implied a sacred whole.

These five directions are mirrored in the Mount Meru of Hindu Cosmology where the four continents are said to be arranged around a mythical central mountain whose roots penetrate the same distance under the ocean as its peak rises to the sky.

While Modern Druids of today are actively searching out the ancient proto-Vedic roots that the Hindu religion and the Celtic religion hold in common we are also turning to intact, living Earth Religions such as Native American traditions and Siberian Shamanism for clues as to how to revive the ancient European Earth-centered tribal ways. There are many parallels to be found in Native American fire altars, prayers to water, reverence for sacred animals, plants and trees, and the recognition that women as well as men can be tribal leaders, medicine people and clergy 7. It is an exciting time to be a participant in

the Celtic Reconstructionist effort to reconnect with our ancient tribal ways and to honor the Earth and Her creatures.

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A version of this lecture is available as a DVD from EE Hopman, POB 219, Amherst, MA 01004, USA, for \$20.00 plus \$4.00 shipping and handling

Vist Ellen Evert Hopman online at www.EllenEvertHopman.com where you will find links to her books, videos, articles and Druid blog.

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1.

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5. See this list of Winds in the Early Christian text 'Saltair na Rann', Canto 1, quatrains 12 to 24.

6. For a thorough discussion of these see Alwyn and Brinley Rees' "Celtic Heritage", Thames and Hudson, NY, 1994

7. For evidence on female Druids in ancient times please see "Female Druids" by Ellen Evert Hopman

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For information about modern Druids ~

'The Order of the White Oak' - World Druid Council Ord na Darach Gile - Comhairle Domhanda na nDraoí www.whiteoakDruids.org

Ellen Evert Hopman's home page, books and DVDs www.ellenevertHopman.com

1.



Bardic History and Lore (Pt 3 of 3): Welsh & Irish Bards

By Daniel Hansen

WELSH BARDS

Definition and Scope of Terms

In Welsh, the modern form of the term for a poet is *Bardd* (dd = English soft th), but, at an earlier stage in the history of the language the form was *Bard*. In one of the old Welsh glosses (8th or 9th century) on Martianus Capella the word 'epica' is glossed as *bardaul* (modern Welsh *barddoli*). In the Cornish Vocabulary, "tubicen" is explained as *barth hirgorn* ("the bard of the long horn"), while in Breton the corresponding form *barz* is given in the *Catholicon* as *menestrier* ("a mime"). In Welsh, as in Irish, the term "bard" preserved the meaning, which it had in its Gaulish form. Posidonius, quoted by Athenaeus, refers to the poets of the Celts as *bardoi*, and says that these are poets who utter praises with song. The same writer, quoted by Strabo, speaks of *bardoi*, *vates*, and *druidai* as "three tribes" among the Celts, the bards being composers of hymns and poets." Diodorus also speaks of the bards of the Gauls as "composers of songs," while he further states that they sang accompanied by instruments like lyres, praising some and reviling others. One of these instruments in use among the Britons, as we learn from Venantius Fortunatus, was called *crotta* (Welsh, *crwth*). It will be seen from these references that the bards appear to have had a recognized place in Celtic social life. One of the characteristic features of the development of poetry in Wales has been the close association of the bards and their productions with the satisfaction of certain social needs of a literary character.

The existence of the term "bard" in the same form in both Goidelic and Brythonic branches of the Celtic family shows that it was in use before the separation of these two branches. At the same time it can hardly have been used as a professional term in the period of Italo-Celtic unity, since there is no trace of it in the Italic languages, while the term corresponding to the Latin *Vates*, Irish *Filidh*, and Welsh *gwawd* ('song') appears to have been common to Italic and Celtic in that period. It was probably as the official spokesman in song of the feelings of his tribe on important occasions that the Celtic bard gained his name. He would be the recognized composer for his communities of elegies and eulogies and if need were, of satires. His elegies and eulogies may well have included in their scope not only the recently dead, but also the famous heroes of the tribe or family which he was associated, while hymns in praise of the gods were no doubt from time to time composed by these official interpreters of tribal feelings. Caesar tells us that it was the practice of the Druids to teach their disciples a large body of oral poetry, which they were not allowed to commit to writing, lest thereby their memory should be impaired.

Much of the interest in the evolution of Welsh poetry consists in a study of its correlation with the varying social needs of the Welsh community, and also the gradual growth of a body of poetry,

which, as in modern countries generally, is an individual rather than a social product. It is of interest, too, to note how the poetry of Wales has been expressed, not only in various literary wants of a social character, but also in the thoughts generated by the beauty of Nature and by the vicissitudes of human life. It contains many poems and lines of true insight and real aesthetic beauty, and shows that the minds of many Welsh poets have been attuned to the signal grandeur and charm of the scenery of Wales.

The Bards in the Welsh Laws

In the Welsh laws of Howel Dda (10th century), the bards have a recognized place in the social order, and have official representative in the royal household. The three bardic grades appear to have been (1) Pencerdd ('chief of songs'), or Bardd Cadeiriog ('the throned bard'); (2) Bardd Tautu ('the bard of the house-host or retinue'); and (3) bards of the lowest grade, who were called sometimes Clerwyr or sometimes Oferfeirdd ('superfluous bards'). The throned bard sat next below the judge of the court in the upper portion of the hall, while the bard of the household sat on one hand of the chief of the household in the lower portion, the chief of the household being a son of the king or his nephew, or some other member of the royal blood. One of the duties of the chief of the household, we are told, was to place the harp in the hands of the bard of the household at the three principle feasts (Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas). One of his privileges too was that he could have a song from the bard of the household whenever he might desire it. One section of the Welsh laws enumerates the duties and privileges of the 'bard of the household, ' and among them the following:

'He is to have his land free, and his horse in attendance and his linen clothing from the queen, and is woolen clothing from the king. He is to have the clothes of the steward at the three principal festivals. When a song is desired, the chaired bard is to begin, the first song of God and the second of the king who shall own the palace or, if there be none, let him sing of another king. After the chaired bard, the bard of the household is to sing three songs on various subjects. If the queen desired a song, let the bard of the household go to her without limitation, in a low voice, so that he may not disturb the hall. He is to have a cow or an ox, from the booty obtained by the household from a border country, after a third has gone to the king; and he is, when they share the spoils, to sing the "Monarchy of Britain" to them. When he shall go with other bards he is to have the share of two.

The throned bard, or chief of song, who stood in the highest position of all, has his functions and privileges also described:

"He is to have his land free. He is to begin with a song of the Deity, and next to the king who shall own the palace, or another. The chief of song to solicit, and of the common gain of himself and companions he is to have two shares. He is also to have twenty-four pence from every minstrel, when he may have finished his instruction. He is to have twenty-four from every woman on marriage, if he had not received it from her before. He is also to have *ambyr* ("marriage-fee") of the daughters of the minstrels He is to lodge with the *edling* ("heir-apparent")."

For a bard of unusual skill the term *prydydd* was sometimes employed, and the chieftainship of song was obtained by a bardic contest (*ymrysson*) in the form of a dispute between the two candidates. A *ymrsson* is of this kind (probably incomplete) is still extant.

It is clear from these indications that 'the poet and the minstrel were closely linked together, and may have been practiced, by the same person. The chief of song appears to have exercised magisterial functions over those of lower rank, and also to have been the umpire in bardic disputes. Another function which the Welsh bards (even the pencerdd) exercised was that of the story teller (*cyfaewydd*), and the term *Mabinogi*, representing the oldest stratum of Welsh Medieval narrative appears to be derived from *mabinog*, term found in some of the triads for an apprentice or disciple of a bard, possibly because this body of narrative was committed to memory by the bardic beginner. The men, who composed the medieval vaticinator (*daroganau*), such as we find in the Black Book

of Carmarthen and the Book of Taliessin, were called *derwyddon*. In the *Collatio Canonum*, *dorguid* (or *darguid* = *derwydd*) in a gloss on 'pithonicus,' and means 'seer.'

BARDS OF IRELAND

The earliest poems of the Irish Bards are lost. Although it is not easy to reconstruct for ourselves with any degree of fullness, the functions and surrounding of the pre-Christian poets, we are by no means without data to attempt such recreations. We know in the first place, that the poet was regarded as possessed of power sufficiently supernatural to make even princes tremble, for with a well aimed satire he could raise boils and disfiguring blotches upon the countenance of his opponents, or even do them to death by it. This belief continued until the later Middle Ages and, even down to the days of Dean Swift, the Irish poet who was credited with the power of being able to rhyme at least rats and vermin to death. Again, the early Irish poet was, by virtue of his office, a judge in all cases or tribal disputes and in other matters. He was also, if not a Druid himself, probably closely allied with the Druidic Order and when Christianity superseded Druidism in the 5th century the mantle of Druidic learning seems to have fallen upon his shoulders, and in Christian times he seems to a large extent to have continued the Druidic traditions. His verses prior to the 6th or 7th centuries were not rhymed, but seem to have depended for their effect upon diction, a sort of rhyme and perhaps to some extent alliteration.

The Irish memory, always very tenacious, has handed down to us in some of our oldest manuscripts, several verses said to be the first ever made in Ireland. These are ascribed to no less a person than Amergin, brother of Eber, Ir, and Eremon, the 'three early Milesian conquerors, sons of Milesius himself to whom (or to whose uncle Ith) every free Celtic family in Ireland traces itself back. This is the same as the Teutonic races of Germany who trace themselves back to one of the three main stems that sprang from the sons of Mannus, whose father was the god Tuisco. These verses of Amergin, like all other very early Irish poems that have come down to us, are composed in a kind of rhetoric or unrhymed outburst, called **ros**g by the Irish. There can be little doubt that they were handed down from grandfather to father and from father to son, perhaps for hundreds of years before the Irish Celts become acquainted with the art of writing, which they probably did in the 3rd century. After becoming acquainted with letters through the Romanized Britons, they invented for themselves their curious Ogham alphabet. As it has always been the belief of the Gaels that these verses of Amergin's were the earliest ever composed in Ireland, it may very well be that they actually do represent the oldest surviving lines in the vernacular any country in Europe except Greece:

"I am the wind which breathes upon the sea,
I am the wave upon the ocean,
I am the murmur of the billows,
I am the ox of seven combats,
I am the vulture upon the rock,
I am a beam of the sun,
I am the fairest of plants,
I am a wild boar in valor,
I am a salmon in the water,
I am a lake in the plain,
I am a word of science,
I am a point of the lance of battle,
I am the man who creates in the head (i.e. of man), the fire (i.e. thought),
Who is it that throws light upon the meeting on the mountain (if not I)?
Who announces the ages of the- moon (if not I)?
Who teaches the place where couches the sea (if not I)?

It is only natural that D'Arbois de Jubainville, whose translation of these very different verses is given, should discern in them a strong vein of pantheism, which appears to run through the poem. It may, however, have no such pregnant signification, and may be merely a panegyric; couched in metaphors, upon the prowess of the singer himself. Another poem ascribed to the same Amergin appears to be an invocation of Eire, of which he and his brothers took possession from the Milesians. It is rhymed, has a tendency toward alliteration, and shows a strongly marked leaning towards disyllabic diction, as –

“I invoke thee, Erin,
Brilliant, brilliant sea,
Fertile, fertile hill,
Wavy, wavy wood,
Flowering, flowering stream,
Fishy, fishy lake,”

The Irish annalists themselves have never agreed as to the time when Amergin is supposed to have sung these verses, some dating it as far back as 1700 BCE and others placing it as late as 800 BCE. All that we can say with certainty is that they are very old. In like manner we find preserved the oldest satire said to have been pronounced in Ireland, and other verses of the same nature, all unintelligible, despite the heavy glosses added to them by the Irish of the Middle Ages.

After the general establishment of Christianity in Ireland, which was largely credited to St. Patrick, who commenced his missionary labors about the year 432 CE – though there were Christians in the south of Ireland before this time – we find the poets occupying a very high position. In the preface on the old law the *Senchas Mor*, some of whose tracts in their later form cannot be later than the close of the 6th century, we read that that the Old Law had been reduced to form by the Irish poets long before St. Patrick's time. “Whoever the poet says,” says the text, “who connected it by a thread of poetry before Patrick, it lived until it was exhibited to Patrick. The preserving shrine is the poetry, and *Seanchus*, or Law, is what is preserved therein.” The tract itself begins thus:

“The *Senchus* of men of Erin – what has preserved it? The joint memory of two seniors, the tradition from one be another, the composition of poets.”

Here it is where we probably come upon the real secret of the early poet's importance, which, as we know, placed him next to the prince and rendered his person sacrosanct. This importance arose from the fact that, in an age when writing was not known or used, he, and he alone, possessed the power of throwing law, history, and above all, genealogy, into such forms as could be stereotyped upon the only material then available – the human memory. We know from Caesar that the Gaulish Druids who could write, and who used Greek letters for ordinary purposes, nevertheless refused to commit to writing any of the considerable number of verses, which they were obligated to learn. Caesar seems to think that they did this partly, to keep their lore a secret known only to themselves, and partly to strengthen the memory of their disciples. It is very probable, however, that the Druids' verses, in which, as in the verses of the early Irish poets, laws, genealogy, rights, and prohibitions were enshrined. In Gaul, as in Ireland, long before the art of writing had been diffused, the priestly class, always conservative by nature, had continued to hold fast to tradition, not only in the matter of their learning, but also in their manner of transmitting it. There is no indication however, that the Irish ever imitated them in this respect, or showed any repugnance to committing to writing their own traditional lore, once letters had once become common amongst them.

The schools of the Irish poets subsisted for generations, side by side with the colleges of clergy in Ireland, but they were perhaps less firmly localized, and showed a tendency to attract themselves by the personalities of their master poets and teachers rather than to particular localities. It is also probable that there may have been a certain amount of confusion when the ancient Druid schools began to break up and disintegrate, rather before the “sons of learning,” as the Irish called the students who attended

them, began to specialize, and it is nearly certain that the office of historian, judge, poet, and genealogist were not sharply distinguished from one another for many generations. This will be the more readily understood if we remember that one of the principle tasks of the historian in early time was to preserve the tribal genealogies upon which the holding of land, and indeed the entire tribal system, depended. Both his history and genealogy were preserved in a shrine of poetry, and whoever was master of the contents of this poetry became, naturally and inevitably, the judge, who alone was able, from his own knowledge, to settle the disputes of the tribe and the suits of its individual members. Indeed, the office of poet did once carry with it the office of judge as well, according to Irish accounts, until the reign of Conor Mac Messa, shortly before the Common Era. He it was who first made a law that the office of poet should not of necessity carry with it the office of judge also, for, says the old text, "poets alone had the power of judicature from the time of Amergin Whiteknee, the son of Milesius mentioned above as being the first Irish poet, delivered the first judgment in Erin."

The profession of poet was so popular in early Ireland, that at one time, it is said one third of the patrician families followed the calling. They expected to be supported by the general public, and terrorized the wealthy with the threat of their satire. They constituted an intolerable burden upon the productive working part of the nation and three distinct attempts were made to get rid of them altogether, the last at the Synod of Drumceat in 590 CE, where their numbers were greatly cut down and their prerogatives restricted, though, to counterbalance this, certain endowments of land were apportioned to provide for their schools. These institutions actually continued, with scarcely a break, until the 17th century, when those few who escaped the spear of Elizabeth fell beneath the sword of Cromwell in these schools, which were the lineal descendants of the old pre-Christian Druidic foundations. There still exist fragments of the metrical text books used in these preserved In the *Book of Leinster* (c. 1150 CE) and other manuscripts, and that they date, partially at least, from pre-Christian times seems certain from their prescribing. Amongst other items of the poet's course, knowledge of the magical incantations called "Tenmlaída, Imbas forosnai, and dichetal do chennaibh na tuithe." The poet was also obliged to learn an incantation called "Cetnad," of which the text says:

"It is used in finding out a theft: one sings it, that is to say, through the right fist on the track of stolen beast (observe the antique assumption that the only kind of wealth to be stolen is cattle) or on the track of the thief in case the beast is dead: and one sings it three times on the one track or the other. If, however, one does not find the track, one sings it through the right-fist and goes to sleep upon it, and in one's sleep the man who has brought it away is clearly shown and made known".

Another Cetnad to be learned is one in which one desires length of life and is addressed to "the Seven Daughters of the Sea, who shape the thread of the long lived children." Another curious operation with which the poet had to make himself familiar was the glam dichinn intended to punish any king or prince who should refuse to the poet the reward of his poem. The poet, says the text: "was to fast upon the lands of the king for whom the poem was to be made, and the consent of thirty laymen, thirty bishops (a Christian touch added in latter times to make the passage pass muster), and thirty poets should be had to compose the satire."

The proceedings were weird and terrifying. There were seven grades of poets; of which the Ollamh (ollav) was the highest. The whole seven were to go, "at the rising of the sun, to a hill which should be situated at the boundary of seven hills, and each of them was to turn his face to the different land, and the ollamh's face was to be turned to the land of the king who was to be satirized. Their backs should be turned to the hawthorn, which should be growing on the top of the hill. The wind should be blowing from the north. Each man was to hold a perforated stone and a thorn on the hawthorn bush in his hand. Each man was to sing a verse of the composition for the king. The chief poet to take the lead with his own verse, and the others in concert after him with theirs. Each of them should place his stone and his thorn under the stem of the hawthorn tree, and, if it were they who were in the wrong in the case, the ground of the hill would swallow them. If it was the king who was in the wrong, the ground would swallow him, and his wife, and his son, and his steed, and his robes, and his bounty."

It is evident that these magical incantations and terrifying ceremonies found amongst the remnants of the poets' books are really remnants of pre-Christian teachings of the Druidic schools, which had embodied themselves in the text books of later times. They show at once the superstitious reverence

with which the poets must have been regarded and the extreme antiquity of their schools and textbooks, for it can scarcely be contended that such pieces of obvious Paganism had their origin after Ireland had been Christianized

The Irish poet was not called a "bard" but a Filidh (filla/fili/filid/file). The bard was, in comparison with him, only a rhymester and existed side by side; there was the greatest disparity of status. While the Filidh received his three cows for a poem, the bard only bore away with a calf. The distinction between the Filidh and the bard seems to have come to an end during the long continued wars with the Norsemen, when much of Ireland's internal policy was thrown into the melting pot. There were seven orders of Filidh, and the highest had something like a twelve-year course before he attained a degree. The bards were divided into "free" and "unfree" bards. There were eight classes of each and law the meters of which it was allowed to make use allotted each class. A lower class could not use the meters belonging to a higher class. Whether the Celts invented rhyme seems open to doubt. A Celtic Zeus, the father of Celtic learning asserts they did. One thing is certain: we find the Irish as *early* as the 7th century – that is, long before any other people in Europe made use of it – bringing poetry to a high pitch of perfection. It is no exaggeration to say that by no people or the globe, at any period of the world's history, was poetry so cultivated and so remunerated as it was in Ireland during the Middle Ages, and even down to the 17th century. In the 16th and following centuries the poets fell under the ban of the English state, because as it was noted, their poems were "tending for the most parte to the hurte of the English or (the) maytenaunce of theyre owne lewde libertye, they bring most desirous thereof." The severest Acts were passed against them, and numbers of them were hanged. Not a single poet took the side either of the English invaders or of the Reformation. So thoroughly was all indigenous Irish civilization stamped out under the Penal Laws, that, by the close of the 18th century, there was probably not a single person living who could compose any of the 400 meters practiced by the ancient schools. A new school of poetry arose among the unlearned, and an accentual meter took the place of symbolic poetry, and so continues to this day.

Outside of its marvelous development of metric, the most interesting feature of Irish poetry perhaps its appreciation of nature in all its moods, its love of the sea, the forest, and wild scenery, which it seems to have developed before other European literature.





NEWS: Druids reburial appeal rebuffed

Druids have lost a bid to have an ancient skeleton which was unearthed in Wiltshire reburied at one of the county's most famous stone age sites.

The Council of British Druid Orders told an official consultation that the body of a neolithic child, found in 1929, should be reinterred at Avebury.

The druids contend that the remains which are on display in the village need to be treated with more respect.

But English Heritage, which owns the site, says the bones should be on show.

They say the public interest in viewing the skeleton - which is about 3,700 years old - outweighs the druids' arguments.

Cultural link

The druids say the remains of the child, known as Charlie, should be reinterred within Avebury's stone circle out of respect for the dead.

The Order says it has taken up the case because it feels it has a cultural link with pagan ancestors in the British Isles.

It is not known if Charlie, who was about three years old, was a boy or girl.

The remains were found at Windmill Hill, near Avebury, by eminent archaeologist Alexander Keiller. They are currently housed at the Alexander Keiller Museum.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/england/wiltshire/8606323.stm>

Prehistoric skeleton can stay in museum despite Druid anger

Druids have lost a four year battle with English Heritage to rebury the skeleton of a three-year-old prehistoric child kept on display at a museum.

Published: 7:00AM BST 07 Apr 2010 Telegraph.co.uk

The remains, known as "Charlie", were discovered at the Neolithic site of Windmill Hill, near Avebury, Wiltshire by archaeologist Alexander Keiller in 1929.

The Council of British Druid Orders (Cobdo) called for the remains to be reburied for religious reasons.

But after a lengthy consultation, English Heritage said the bones should remain at the Alexander Keiller Museum in Avebury.

The British Humanist Association (BHA) has welcomed the decision. Naomi Phillips, head of public affairs, said: "We applaud English Heritage's excellent report on their decision.

"The unshared beliefs of people with no more genetic claim over the human remains than anybody else in western Europe should never trump the enormous scientific, sociological, and educational benefit to the public that the historic human remains provide.

"Although this decision does not set a binding precedent, we are hopeful that it will help bodies such as English Heritage to reject any future such requests without such a lengthy and costly consultation period."

Cobdo wanted the remains to be reburied out of respect for ancestors and said the educational aspects of the bones were not as important as their spiritual value.

The group, which unites various druid orders, believes in an ancient natural religion, linking people in the present day to ancestors and to the natural world.

However, English Heritage found that the benefits of having the bones in the museum far outweighed any harm.



Suspect in slayings upset with trial delays

Editor's Note: Chicago case about an accused murderer with a tie-in to his claimed "Druidical beliefs". As the article points out, local Druids have never heard of him.

Christopher Vaughn vents to attorneys before hearing

April 27, 2010|By Steve Schmadeke, Tribune reporter

Nearly three years have passed without a trial in the murder case against Christopher Vaughn, accused of shooting his wife and three children, and the Oswego man is starting to show the strain.

Before a court hearing Tuesday in Joliet, Vaughn let loose an emotional complaint to his attorneys about delays in the case, which now is unlikely to go to trial before 2011.

"I'm done; I'm tired; I'm finished," Vaughn said in a loud whisper to his attorney John Rogers. "I've had nothing to do for the past three years."

When Rogers warned him to watch his language after Vaughn uttered a vulgarity, his client responded by saying, "I'm already in the hole." A Will County Jail spokeswoman said Vaughn is being held in the facility's medical unit.

Once the hearing began, Judge Daniel Rozak denied a motion by Vaughn's attorneys to suppress three search warrants filed in the case, finding that police were justified in taking computers and books on druidism from Vaughn's home.

"I don't think the officers were out of bounds," he said.

Vaughn is charged in the 2007 shooting deaths of his wife, Kimberly, 34, and three children, Abigayle, 12, Cassandra, 11, and Blake, 8. They were found in the family's SUV near Interstate Highway 55 in Channahon Township.

Vaughn, who suffered minor gunshot wounds, blamed his wife for the slayings.

Vaughn told state police that he was having marital problems after cheating on Kimberly while on a business trip to Mexico in 2006. He also said his wife didn't want to adopt his druid beliefs, according to sealed police records read in court Monday.

The leader of a Chicago-area druid group said Vaughn's alleged actions go against the tenets of the polytheistic nature religion.

"We've never heard of the guy," said Jack Cole, senior druid of the Wild Onion Grove [ADF] in Chicago. "It sounds like he went to the Web site and said, 'Aha, I'm a druid.' "

Police later found e-mails in which Vaughn expressed unhappiness with his life and talked of leaving the United States and living in the "Canadian wilderness," said Assistant State's Attorney Mike Fitzgerald.

Police then seized camping equipment after searching Vaughn's home again and an Aurora storage unit, he said.

Vaughn's attorneys on Tuesday asked that the remaining search warrants be sealed and that they be allowed to depose three doctors, 12 police officers and a deputy coroner.

Rogers previewed an argument he may make at trial — that migraine medicine Kimberly Vaughn was taking made her more likely to commit suicide or murder — in asking to depose the doctors.

Assistant State's Attorney John Connor objected, saying that nowhere in Kimberly Vaughn's medical records do her doctors note she was suicidal or had thoughts of murder.

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