

DECEMBER 2025



PANEGYRIA

Connecting the Pagan communities through news, voice, and fellowship!

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THE FOG – As Far as I Can Remember, I've Only Died Once.

Moonsmoke Laveau a practicing witch and writer shares with us a remembrance of death and realization as the words are woven with intention and intuition. Page 7



Dying to Know with Diana

While I was studying to become a death doula, I noticed something unexpected and, frankly, concerning. The pervasive death-denial culture had seeped into paganism and was more prevalent than I thought. This needs to change, and I want to help change it.. Page 18



REV. SELENA FOX WAS PRESENTED WITH A LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Last month at the highly anticipated annual Hekate's Sickel Festival's Award Ceremony, Rev. Selena Fox was recognized for her decades of service, leadership, and advocacy. Awarding Rev. Selena Fox with a Lifetime Achievement Award. The event was covered by The Wild Hunt, as well as Panegyria.

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I am one of the luckiest people in the whole world. A lot of rough and bad things have happened in my life, and yet I always seem to find a brighter tomorrow on the other side.

"The world doesn't treat everyone the way it treats you," I have heard people say.

"You have a charmed life," I also hear people say.

And they are correct. I have the best luck in the world. I have some of the best friends a person could imagine. My children are sweet and well-adjusted. My wife is my best friend, someone I look up to and respect, and one of the sexiest women I have ever met. I live in a mountain paradise on a wild, clean river. And my work changes the entire world for the better. I get to wake up every day feeling like the mark I am leaving on the world extends past shipping numbers and computer systems.

I literally live the dream, Kids-Wife-House-Job Fantasy, and these things are the reason I fight so hard every day.

One day, my children will no longer need me, and I will be the one who needs them. My friends will die one by one until they or I are the only one of us left. No matter how hard I love my wife, one day she is going to be taken from me without my consent.



And I am going to be at a loss. Everything I have had will be gone, but I will have had them. I will have had a life so full of magic and stories that no one person will believe them all.

But I don't deserve to have such an amazing life if I don't fight for the rights of everyone else to have the same. As each of my blessings is removed from me, through time and trial, my resolve that others deserve to be happy thickens.

Every one of us deserves a fair chance to be happy.

Freedom isn't free. Happiness isn't built from marshmallows. Happiness is built on a foundation of loss, understanding, and memory. I might not always get everything correct, but I promise to always come from a place that honors our ability to build a future based on love.



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REV. SELENA FOX HONORED



At **Hekate's Sickle Festival 2025**, our community had the joy and privilege of honoring **Rev. Selena Fox** with the Aquarian Tabernacle Church's Lifetime Achievement Award. This was a celebration decades in the making. As one of the most beloved and influential leaders in modern Paganism, she has dedicated her life to ministry, education, religious freedom, and the nurturing of sacred community. Her work has touched countless seekers, shaped national advocacy, and illuminated the path for generations of witches and Pagans.



We are deeply honored to recognize her extraordinary legacy and to celebrate her ongoing contributions to our spiritual family and the world.



Spice up the month of December with some fun activities!

- Gather winter blooms and foliage for your home and altar.
- Decorate a Yule Tree.
- Perform a sunrise ritual or meditation.
- Make an offering to nature.
- Brew up some warm Cider or Wassail.
- Bake star, sun, and moon cookies.
- Make a Yule log or bake one.
- Blend your own Yule Tea.
- Create a magical self-care routine for the winter months.
- Donate to charity.
- Journal for a few minutes every day.



Basic Sugar Cookie Recipe Ingredients:

- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
- Stir flour, baking soda, & baking powder together in a small bowl.
- Beat sugar and butter together in a large bowl with an electric mixer until smooth.
- Beat in egg and vanilla.
- Gradually blend in the flour mixture.
- Cover and place in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
- Roll out on a lightly floured surface to the desired thickness.
- Use cookie cutters to shape cookies.
- Place on an ungreased cookie sheet 2 inches apart.
- Bake 8 to 10 minutes.
- Allow to cool briefly before removing from the cookie sheet.

HAVE FUN DECORATING!

HERBS FOR WINTER TEA!

- Cinnamon
- Cranberry
- Nutmeg
- Orange
- Rose Hips
- Allspice
- Star Anise
- Ginger
- Juniper Berries
- Cardamom Pods
- Vanilla
- Mint



CREATE AN EVERGREEN MANTEL OR TABLE CENTER PIECE GARLAND

Gather and layer fir, cedar, holly, and mistletoe to create a base for dried berries & orange slices. Weave in lights for that magical glow! Follow with a pop of color with silver, gold & red metallic ornaments.



WASSAIL

According to Etymonline, Wassail is used as a drinking salutation that appears to have arisen among Danes in England and spread to native inhabitants. A similar formation appears in Old English *wes þu hal*, but this is not recorded as a drinking salutation.

The sense extended by c. 1300 to "liquor in which healths are drunk," especially spiced ale served in Christmas Eve celebrations. The meaning "a carousal, reveling" is attested by c. 1600.

As a verb, "offer toasts, drink healths," c. 1300. *Wassailing* "custom of going caroling house to house at Christmas time" is recorded from 1742.

<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Wassail>

TRADITIONAL WASSAIL

Ingredients:

- 6 small apples, cored
- 6 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1 orange
- 6 cloves
- 1 cup sugar
- 8 cups cider
- 2 quarts port
- 2 quarts sherry or Madeira
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 lemon, halved



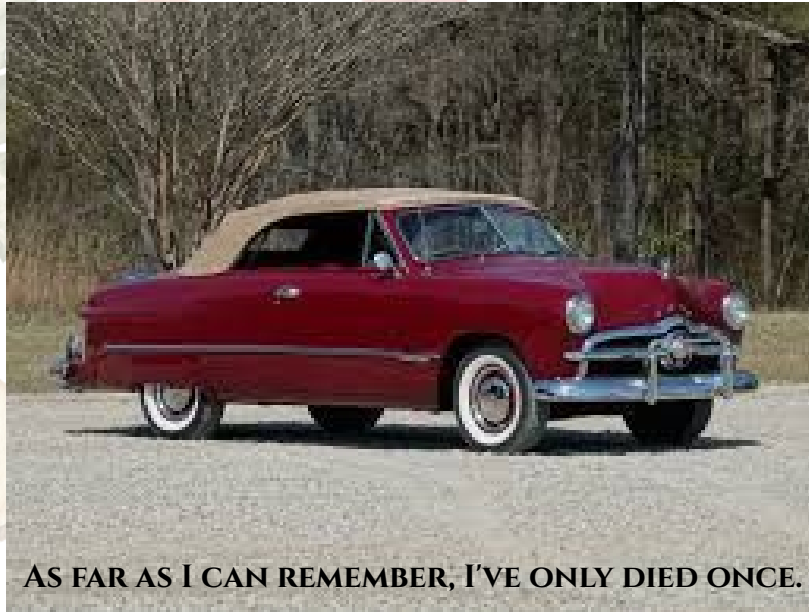
Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Core each of the apples, and place them in an oven-proof dish. Fill each apple core cavity with a teaspoon of brown sugar. Stick the cloves in the orange and place it with the apples. Add a little water and roast in the pre-heated oven for 30 to 45 minutes, or until the apples are soft but still retain their shape.

Cut an orange in half and place it in a large saucepan. Add the rest of the ingredients and the juices from the apple roasting dish to the saucepan and gently heat until the sugar has dissolved.

Bring the mixture to the boil and then turn it down immediately and keep it warm until you need to serve it.

To serve: ladle all the fruit and spices into a large punch bowl and then pour the wassail into the bowl. Serve in warmed mugs or cups. Garnish with lemon slices or fresh mint and enjoy!



AS FAR AS I CAN REMEMBER, I'VE ONLY DIED ONCE.

I remember turning to our friends, Mitchell and Jennifer. They were leaning against the bumper of Georgie's car, kissing. He touched my cheekbone, bringing my attention back to him.

"You got a little too much sun today."

"Well, we won't need to worry about that for long. Do you see the fog coming in, darling?"

"Mitchell!" He called to his best friend and pointed to the Pacific. "Let's pack up. If we leave now, we can make it back to The Valley before we get soaked in."

A frenzy followed as we shoved towels, blankets, and picnic baskets into the trunk.

I didn't notice right away that I'd forgotten my sweater lying in the sand. I didn't notice that until a little later. But now, the sun was setting, and the fingers of fog were grasping at the car. We weren't going to make it to The Valley.

About thirty minutes later, we drove in darkness, wrapped in a thick, impenetrable fog. By then, I'd realized my mistake and was shivering under George's arm, between the bucket seats. It wasn't very comfortable on my bottom, but it was a little warmer!

I was beginning to doze when a bright flash of light brought me awake. I wish I had slept through the cacophony of breaking glass and crumbling steel. The loud noise was immediately followed by pain. It was excruciating, and it radiated out from my center.

I remember watching as Mitchell's and Jennifer's bodies flew over our heads, and I thought to myself that I was so glad they were safe. I felt Georgie's hand grasp mine as the pain in my belly began to fade and the darkness came. There was no more sound, except a soft hum which came from the bright light ahead of me. I walked toward it.

It would be cliché of me to say that I was floating down a long hallway, and it wasn't altogether accurate. The path was for sure a passage, but it felt more like a tunnel made of light rather than filled by it. Whatever. Unless you've seen it, travelled it, you wouldn't understand. The light was so bright that it should have been painful, but it wasn't. It pierced into my brain, but it was more like being filled up with a thick, warm light, which was quite pleasant.

As I drew closer to the source, the mesmerizing hum became more defined. I was now hearing voices, whispers that called me by names I did not recognize. Except one that is. Patricia. That was me, after all. I turned my head to the voice that spoke my name, and then down as my feet touched down upon a soft but firm floor. Nothing seemed to make sense here.

As I looked up from the floor, I was caught off guard as a vision of my deceased mother stood before me. She hadn't aged a single day and might even have gone backwards to a more youthful age.

"Patty." She wrapped ethereal arms around me, and I don't believe I've ever felt a love so pure.

The hum of voices faded into a soft combination of bells, violins, and singing as my mother and I began to walk. I'm not sure how long we talked, but I don't remember much, only that when we reached a lavender door which glowed softly with a different sort of light, I knew I was dead.

"How does this happen?" I asked my mother as we continued to walk, only now, we walked up this seemingly endless staircase. And then we were walking down, and then up again.

"Well, your body stopped its essential functions, and your soul came back home." My mother said with a quirk to her lips.

"Funny," I rolled my eyes, "What I mean is, I thought there was nothing after. That's what Daddy always told me.

'Death is the end. The afterlife is just a hoax to get people to go to church.' That's what he always said."

"I know he did. I used to say the same thing... Until I died." She gestured with her arms to the scenery around us. "But I was wrong. We both were."

"It's so beautiful here."

"It is. And you haven't even seen the best parts yet." She smiled at me so gently.

We continued up again until we came to a landing which opened out to a beautiful meadow of soft grasses and flowers, dotted with full shade trees. I stopped with an awed smile.

"Come, darling, we have an appointment. You can come back here whenever you like."

"Is there a God, like the churches say, Mom?" I hadn't followed her, standing my ground. I had far too many questions to just keep walking.

"Well... without going into too much detail, no. Not like the churches say. That is all I can tell you for now, Patricia. You will learn more when we get to our appointment." She called me to follow again with a wave of her hand.

My mind was racing. This only left me with more questions. No God? Does that mean there's no Devil? This is impossible.

While my mind was racing, so was our journey, I think. We were approaching a low and rounded building. This must be where our appointment was.

"Patricia is here to see Her." Mother was speaking to an empty room.

"There's no one here, Mother," I whispered.

Mother only smiled.

I wondered who she had been referring to as "Her". Was there another woman I would need to speak with to learn about this place and why I was here? I jumped as a voice spoke softly behind me.

"Welcome, Patricia. She will see you now." She smiled at my mother. Thank you, Savannah. We will take it from here."

My mother squeezed my shoulders with a smile and let this woman take my hand, leading me away.

I only panicked a little bit when she walked me through the wall and into a softly lit chamber decorated in darker jewel tones. It was a rest for my eyes, and everything seemed to sparkle.

I was settled on a small pile of soft pillows and told to be comfortable. "She will be with you momentarily."

"Who is She? Doesn't She have a name?" I asked as I finally settled.

"She has many names, Patricia. As does He. But you won't meet Him until later."

"This is insane. You know that, right?"

"It would be normal for you to think so right now. Everything will become clear to you soon. For now, relax and have a bite to eat while you wait." She walked away in silence.

I'm not sure how long I waited. Time seems to pass oddly here. After a while, I started to feel a slight tingle in and on my entire body. My ears began to softly ring, although not like when I was alive. It was kind of like a soft whistle. Maybe more like a hum? Whatever it was, it made me feel like I'd had just a little too much to drink. Had I been drugged?

I rubbed my eyes, and when I opened them, I was sitting across from the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Her skin was naturally golden, as if kissed by the sun, and her hair was a rich, but vibrant auburn with sun-kissed streaks.

"Welcome home, my daughter." She spoke in musical tones, filled with ancient rhythms.

"Daughter?" I asked.

"I am She, who is the mother of all things. I give life to all that has, or ever will, exist. Her voice was so melodic and true.

"So, you are mother to all people?"

"I am Mother to all the universe. Everything has my breath within it. Everything was given a spark from my hearth."

"God is a woman?"

The air shimmered before me, and when I blinked, a man sat before me. My eyes grew wide, and He smiled.

"We are All we are, Patricia. We are female and male. We are life, as well as death. We keep the balance in all things." The shimmer came again, and She was back.

I was confused only for another moment, but then peace settled over me like a warm blanket. I knew this was where I belonged. I knew this was where I began and where I would return with each ending. I talked with Her for what felt like hours. I learned things I hadn't known in life, things I would need soon when I returned to the living.

The cold came like a slap on my bare, wet skin, and I screamed loudly before I was wrapped in a soft blanket and tightly wrapped. The woman looked into my eyes, and a tear slid down her cheek as she spoke, "Emmalynn."

"Mother," I thought.

Moonsmoke LaVeau

Moonsmoke LaVeau is a writer weaving words with intention and intuition. As a practicing witch, MoonSmoke blends ancestral wisdom, ritual, and spiritual study into both creative and academic pursuits. Currently an initiatory student, she explores the intersections of mysticism, literature, and personal transformation, crafting narratives that honor both the seen and unseen. Whether through spellcraft or storytelling, Moonsmoke seeks to empower, enchant, and educate.





Selena "Fox" Ring

In honor of Selena Fox receiving the Guiding Light Lifetime Achievement Award, we present this limited edition ring — a shining silver fox crafted to embody her decades of magic, leadership, and love for the Pagan community.

Forged in 925 Sterling Silver and fully adjustable, it's more than jewelry — it's a wearable blessing, a radiant reminder that the light she's shared continues to guide us all.

Golden Compass

Follow the Star That Was Meant for You

Your goals and dreams are not accidents—they're threads in the great tapestry the Gods wove with you in mind. The dream you carry was placed in your heart on purpose, a star meant for you to follow, no matter how winding the path becomes.

Let this Golden Compass be your reminder to stay aligned with your purpose, focused on your direction, and committed to the destiny calling your name.

Elegant, symbolic, and deeply empowering, it's the perfect talisman for witches, seekers, travelers, and anyone determined to walk their chosen path with courage and clarity.



Winter Robe

Feel confident, proud, and professional in this impressive and beautiful black robe for winter. High Quality, luxurious, lined, breathable fabric that feels great on the skin. This is an Official Pagan Liturgical Robe, ready for wear and consecration.

2 pockets on either side of the skirt that are 12" deep to hold wands, athames, potions, whatever, and a hidden pocket on the inside left sleeve for wands, kerchiefs, money, anything you want to pull out of your sleeve. :)





Freshman Supply Kit

This contains all you need for your Freshman Year at Wiccan Seminary.

- Accelerated Wicca
- Between the Worlds w/CD
- Wheel of WISE
- Hekate Strophalos Bag
- WSTS Pin
- WSTS Patch
- ATC Pen

\$47.00 USD

*Valued at \$97.00

Chakra Box set

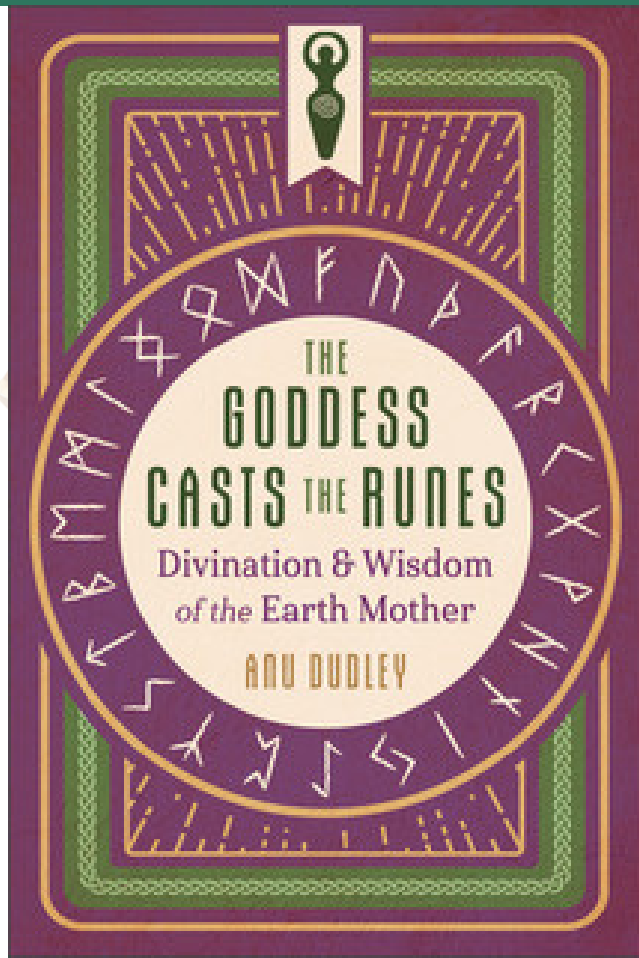
Unlock Your Energy Potential - One Chakra at a Time

What's Inside Each Box:

- Hand-selected crystals and stones aligned with the chakra's energy
- Chakra-specific incense to cleanse and activate your space
- Guided meditation resources to deepen your practice
- Educational materials about the crystal's properties
- Exclusive items you won't find anywhere else



THE GODDESS CASTS THE RUNES



Goddess Casts the Runes: Divination and Wisdom of the Earth Mother by Anu Dudley (Destiny Books, October 2025).

Long before the runes were linked to Odin's hero myths, they spoke the language of the Earth Mother—symbols of compassion, wisdom, and justice rooted in Goddess tradition. In this book, Dudley reframes the Elder Futhark through a feminist and Earth-based lens, peeling back patriarchal overlays to rediscover their original meaning as gifts of the Mother Goddess.

Highlights:

- Fresh perspective: How Odin's myths appropriated the runes, and why it's time to reclaim them.
- Goddess-centered wisdom: Exploring the Triple Goddess—Maiden, Mother, Crone—in the symbolism of the runes.
- Practical tools: Casting techniques and divination methods aligned with eco-feminist spirituality.
- Beautifully illustrated: 35 black-and-white illustrations bring the runes to life.

Rev. Dr. Anu Dudley is a retired history professor, ordained Pagan minister, and longtime producer of the radio show **Earthwise: Reflections on Earth-Based Spirituality**. She brings decades of scholarship and practice to this work.



Excerpt from *Goddess Casts the Runes*

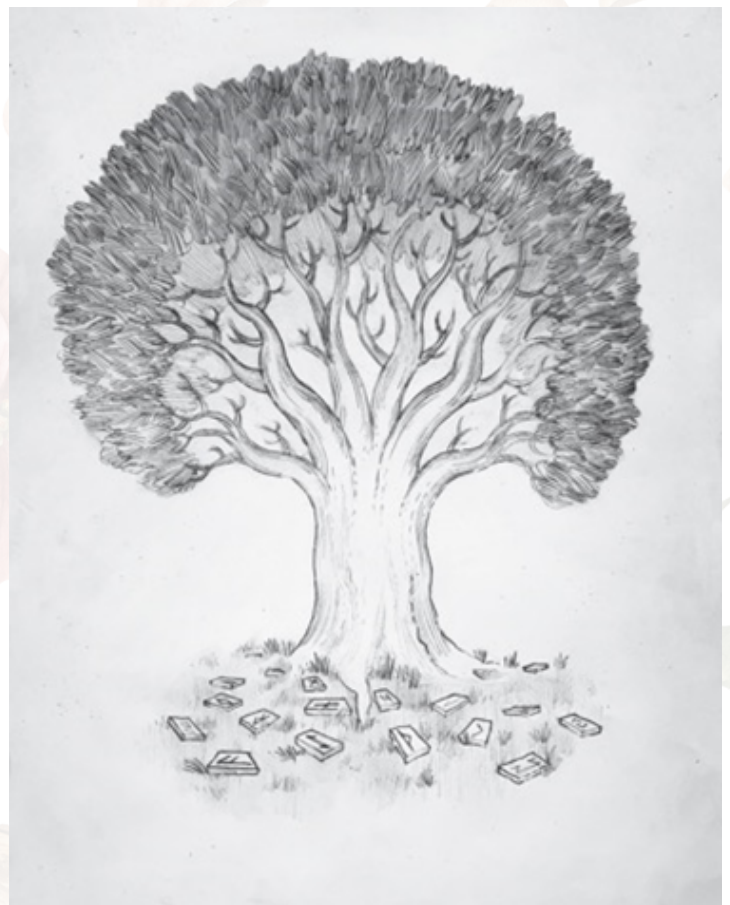
What if the runes, long credited to Odin, weren't really his to claim? In *Goddess Casts the Runes*, Anu Dudley turns a familiar myth on its head, showing how these ancient symbols began as gifts of the Mother Goddess before being seized and repurposed by a patriarchal god. With warmth, wit, and spiritual insight, Dudley invites us to look beyond the old stories and reclaim the runes as powerful guides for our own journeys of wisdom, balance, and transformation.

One morning at breakfast, as I was working on a crossword puzzle, I came across a clue that made me curious about the runes. The clue was "Odin's prize." I was familiar enough with Germanic mythology to know that Odin's prize was the runes. This information is written in the *Hávamál*, a group of poems found in the *Edda*, a collection of Scandinavian myths and legends compiled by Icelandic scholar Snorri Sturleson in the thirteenth century. As I pondered the clue, four questions took shape: First, who was this Odin who had won the runes? Second, how had Odin managed to win the runes? Third, who had the runes originally belonged to? And finally, why did Odin want to win the runes?

WHO WAS ODIN?

Odin is a familiar character in Norse mythology. He is commonly portrayed as a muscular white male with a thick mane of hair and a full beard, wearing an ornate breastplate and a horned helmet and carrying a spear. In this guise, he is God of Battle, Lord of Hosts, Giver of Victory, and God of the Dead. But Odin is also pictured as a black-cloaked traveler with a wide-brimmed hat pulled down over his face, slipping silently among the

shadows. In this persona, he is God of Magic, God of Poetry, and God of Runes, who sacrificed one of his eyes to gain occult wisdom.



Mjotvidr, the Mother Tree, from which the runes ripened and dropped to Earth

Despite his prominence in mythology, however, Odin was a relative newcomer to the Norse pantheon. It was not until the 4th CE that a figure called Odin first appeared, and it was only during the Viking Age, when the Norsemen began driving their waves of conquest 12

over Europe starting in the ninth century, that Odin attracted wider attention. The earliest tales of Odin showed him to be an unsavory character. He was dishonest, untrustworthy and malicious, a swindler and an oath-breaker, and a source of evil who promoted strife among tribes and kinsmen and reveled in discord.

The tale of how Odin stole the Mead of Inspiration is a good example of his treachery. It was the giant, Suttungr, who possessed this magical brew, and Odin set out to steal it so he could acquire its occult wisdom for himself. On his way to Suttungr's stronghold, Odin encountered nine thralls, or laborers, who were reaping hay for Suttungr's brother, Braugi, and he tricked the thralls into killing one another. Odin then sought lodging for a night with Braugi, who complained that he had no workmen to harvest his hay fields. Odin gave his name as Bolverkr—Evil Doer—and offered to do the work of the thralls in exchange for a sip of Suttungr's legendary mead. Braugi agreed to this bargain without consulting his brother. Thus when the work was done and Odin demanded his drink of mead, Suttungr refused.

Suttungr kept the Mead of Inspiration in three great cauldrons hidden within a secret cave. Odin drilled into the cave to steal the mead, but when he entered it he found Suttungr's daughter, Gunnlod, guarding the cauldrons. He set about

seducing her, and after three nights he asked for a sip from each of the three vessels. Gunnlod agreed, but instead of sips, Odin took three enormous gulps and drained all three cauldrons dry. Then he changed himself into an eagle and flew away to Asgard, the home of the Aesir gods. As recounted in the *Hávamál* (stanzas 104–110), Odin boasted, "Gunnlod gave me a drink of the precious mead . . . I let her have ill payment for her loyal heart and faithful love . . . the fraud-got mead has profited me well."

Why would the Vikings elevate such a treacherous character to be their chief god? Perhaps they saw Odin's malicious behavior as a model that validated their own marauding enterprises; he glorified warrior culture and legitimized self-serving activities. Later, under the influence of the new religion, Christianity, Odin's image was cleaned up a bit to make him appear to be a benefactor of mankind and he was subsequently referred to as All-Father. As literacy spread during the Middle Ages, people elevated Odin still further as God of Poetry, the One Who Bestowed Inspiration. After all, hadn't he "acquired" the Mead of Inspiration and made it his own?

HOW DID ODIN WIN THE RUNES?

The *Hávamál* (stanzas 138–39) used Odin's own voice to tell this story:

*I know I hung
On the windswept tree For nine full nights
in all, Wounded with a spear, And given to
Odin, Myself to myself,
On that tree
Of which none know
From what roots it rises . . . I peered down,
I grasped the runes, Screeching I grasped
them, And fell down from there.*

This story is reminiscent of the crucifixion of Christ, who sacrificed himself upon a tree-like cross to save humanity. The story also alludes to the ancient shamanic practice of climbing up an arduous tree-like path to the spirit world to seek help for those in need. However, while Christ and shamans sacrificed themselves to gain salvation and healing for humanity, Odin merely engaged in a self-serving ritual whose only purpose, in my view, was to get the power of the runes for himself.

If we just focus on Odin's so-called sacrifice, though, we miss the significance of the nine nights during which he hung on the tree. Nine is a number sacred to the Mother Goddess: nine equals three times the Triple Goddess of Maiden, Mother, and Crone. Nine is also a number sacred to women in pregnancy, as it takes nine months to grow a new life. Odin hung himself for nine nights to symbolize a period of gestation, and after nine nights, Odin "birthed" his new god-like self. And the fact that Odin hung himself for nine

nights rather than nine days is also meaningful. Hesiod, the third century Greek poet, called night the "Mother of the Gods," suggesting that it was the night that held the mysterious power of creation rather than the day. By counting his ordeal in units of night, Odin symbolically usurped the role of the Mother Goddess as creator.

TO WHOM DID THE RUNES ORIGINALLY BELONG?

After nine nights, Odin looked down, saw the runes upon the ground, and grabbed them up in his hand. This tale suggests a parable of a hero's quest, a hero who was alone in the wilderness, seeking enlightenment. But Odin was not alone. There was also a mystical being—the windswept tree upon which he hung—and it was to this tree that the runes belonged.

In traditional Norse mythology, the windswept tree is called Yggdrasil. But long before Odin renamed the tree Yggdrasil and claimed it for himself, it was known as Mjotvidr (m-YOT-vee-theer), the Mother Tree. Veneration of a Mother Tree is ancient and universal, and can be traced at least as far back as Neolithic times, when she was also known as the World Tree, the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge. Mjotvidr was the fabled Axis Mundi, whose roots reached deep into the Underworld, whose trunk passed through the core of the living world and whose branches stretched into the heavens and were hung with stars.

Mjotvidr becomes an important prop in Odin's hero tale, securing his dominance. At the same time, the Odin myth diminishes the tree's significance by declaring that Mjotvidr was just a tree whose roots were unknown. But Norse mythology had long before established that Mjotvidr arose from three roots which reached out over the entire earth. Humans, the myth tells us, lived under one root, the gods lived under another, and the Goddess Hel, the keeper of the Underworld, lived under the third. Furthermore, Mjotvidr's roots were deeply embedded in the Earth, from which all life, all time, and all wisdom arose, making the Mother Tree a majestic emanation of the Mother Goddess herself.

And what of the runes that lay upon the ground beneath Mjotvidr? They were emblems of Mother Earth's power and wisdom which, like ripened fruit, had dropped to the earth from her branches. The runes symbolized the Earth Mother's gifts to all living beings, and were spread upon the ground so that all who had need of her sustenance, protection, and guidance could have access to them.

WHAT DOES ODIN'S THEFT OF THE RUNES SIGNIFY?

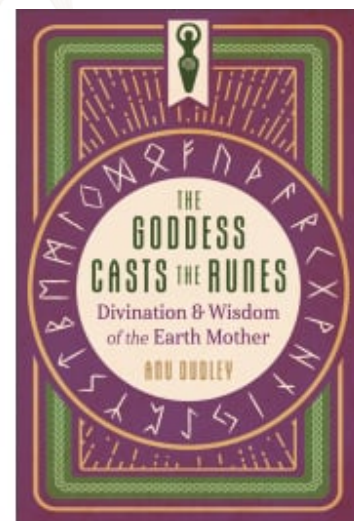
If the riches of life, symbolized by the runes, were freely given to all beings, why did Odin have to hang himself on Mjotvidr to get them? Some might argue that, in typical hero fashion, Odin

sacrificed himself in order to gain the knowledge of the runes. But I think there is another answer that lies in the runes' spiritual, Earth-based, and feminist origins, and which represents a turning point in the human experience.

A few years ago, I taught a course at the University of Maine entitled "History of the Goddess," where we covered the tens of thousands of years in which humans had venerated a Mother Goddess. As historians and archaeologists have discovered, our ancestors appear to have lived in peaceful and prosperous gynocracies—matri-focal communities governed by women—which had modeled themselves on the relationship between mothers and their children. Gynocratic societies distributed their resources to equally benefit all members of the community, not just an elite and powerful few.

Want more???

You can order here:





The weather was just right, not too cold, with a nip in the air. All fourteen of us were waving and wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy Yule as our float approached the old High School in Lake City, Arkansas. We noticed the crowd that had gathered along the Streets was about twice the size it was last year. Since our Church won 1st place last year for "Best Church Float," we were given the honor of being the first float in this year's parade. As we approached the crowd, we heard a few people proclaim, "Here come the Wiccans!" Everyone was waving and smiling and cheering as we slowly rolled by.

When we arrived at the end of the parade at the local fire station, everyone went inside the large hall for fellowship, hot dogs, and prizes. There were about 800 people who attended (which is pretty good for a small town with a population of just over 2000). We didn't win the first-place trophy this year; it went to 1st Baptist Church. Their float was a beautiful creation of Noah's Ark, complete with children dressed up as the animals. In fact, ALL the other churches had upgraded their floats from

the same old floats they had been using for years. The parade had expanded and grown to a wonderful expression of community participation and effort.

A week after the parade, my son and his wife were visiting at the 1st Baptist church for one of their functions. The pastor recognized my son and struck up a conversation with him. He told Zach, my son, "You know, for years I've been trying to get my congregation to upgrade our Christmas Float and get our community more involved in the parade. Last year, when your father and his church showed up with their fantastic float, I said to myself, 'Finally some friendly competition!'"

The Southern Delta Church of Wicca-ATC has been established in our area for years. I have always believed that for the religion of Wicca to thrive and grow, it has to find its rightful place within the community in which it lives. It has taken us quite a while and a lot of work within our church to achieve this goal. By getting involved with our communities, environmentally, socially, and even politically, it helps to educate the public as to "Who we are."

and what the Faith is about. When this happens, Wiccan Churches become more acceptable in communities, because correct information is being disseminated and the misconceptions about Wicca are being re-examined and seen as incorrect.

Wicca is going to continue to grow and evolve and eventually assume its rightful place in equality with all the other major faiths of the world; it cannot unless it engages in an interpersonal relationship with humanity and communities of the world.

There were many different people of many diverse faiths at the Firehouse in Lake City after the parade. We all came together in fellowship for a common purpose, "The Community," and I was proud to say that SDCW-ATC, a Wiccan Church, was a part of it. To paraphrase a prayer from Tiny Tim, from A Christmas Carol, **"ALL the Gods Blessed Us, each and every one!"**



Terry Riley is the founding High Priest of Southern Delta Church of Wicca - ATC in Jonesboro, Arkansas



In June of 2022, we got accepted by the Northeast Arkansas Food Bank, and we opened a food pantry in Lake City. It is Open every Thursday, 10 am-1:30 pm and 4 pm-6 pm

In the Fall of 2022, we applied for a USDA grant to expand our community garden and food pantry. We got accepted and were awarded the grant for 3 years. We have now bought a tractor, a larger garden plot as well, and a larger building for our pantry to operate. We now help hundreds of families each month, and on average, we can give away close to 20,000 lbs of food per month. We hope to be able to keep expanding and getting more and more food to give away and to help the people in our community.



If you would like to assist us in our food pantry mission, financial donations for the day-to-day operations would be greatly appreciated. You can [click here to donate](#) and help us to keep feeding our community.

DYING TO KNOW WITH DIANA

While I was studying to become a death doula, I noticed something unexpected and, frankly, concerning. The pervasive death-denial culture had seeped into paganism and was more prevalent than I thought. This needs to change, and I want to help change it.

Witches keep the balance, and death should not be a taboo topic. However, society as a whole (especially American society) has swept death under the rug so far that you need an extra-long broom to reach it.

So, how do we change something that is considered taboo? How do we make it more acceptable? We do that by talking about it. It is my goal with "Dying to Know with Diana" to shift the death conversation just a little bit from one of death denial to one that is more death-positive.

Since this is Yule and I want to stay on theme, I would like to discuss how the perfect gift for your loved ones is preparation.

Preparation looks different for everyone, and laws vary by area, but it is important across the board. It is even more important if you are pagan. The importance triples if you are a member of the LGBTQIA community, especially if you do not have supportive family members. You want to ensure that your preferred name is on your gravestone and you are buried in clothes that align with your gender identity, regardless of what some family members may think.

To make sure your wishes are honored, fill out your state or province's version of an "advance directive." This document guarantees that your legal next of kin follows your instructions. Make sure to check your area's laws, as it may need to be notarized. Just telling your friends what you want may not cut it. **Write it down and sign it.**

I love advance directives because they give people an opportunity to express their direct wishes for their end of life. This results in less trauma for the surviving family and makes it much easier for them to plan your funeral.

I am not sure if you have ever experienced a great loss, but it can be nearly impossible to do anything amid heavy grief, much less plan a funeral specifically focusing on the source of said grief. (Not always. Everyone deals with grief differently.)

This is where the gift of preparation is most appreciated. It allows your loved ones to feel their grief and other emotions while mourning you, instead of unnecessary paperwork and the potentially stressful decision of what to do with your remains.

You can be as vague or as specific as you want in your advance directive. It is, literally, your funeral. As a pagan, you have the right to have a funeral and body disposition that adheres to your religious beliefs. You always have a choice, especially with your end-of-life decisions. Do not let anyone tell you otherwise.

Thank you for taking the time to read my column! I hope you have a wonderfully blessed Yule!
Your partner in death,
Diana Grace.



Diana Rowan

Diana Rowan is a First Degree Wiccan priestess, specializing in funerary magic. She is a death doula born and raised in Nebraska. Diana holds a Bachelor's Degree from Woolston-Steen Theological Seminary (WSTS) and is a member of Spiritual Psychics Association (SPA), National Home Funeral Alliance (NHFA), and The Order of the Good Death.

DECEMBER SYMBOLISM

BIRTHSTONE:
Turquoise



A love charm! Keeps evil spirits away.
Wholeness, communication, and spiritual growth.

Flower:
Narcissus & Holly



Narcissus: Got its name from a young Greek fell in love with his own reflection now the blooms head droops in the same manner.
Holly: Protection, renewal, and light.

Sagittarius
November 22
thru
December 21



Symbol:
The Archer
Motto:
"Living my life, not anyone else's"

Capricorn
December 22
thru
January 19



Symbol:
The Goat
Motto:
"Be the best and nothing less"

Observation Days For December

- **Dec. 6:** Saint Nicholas Day celebrates the birth of Santa Claus.
- **Dec. 8:** Rohatsu (Bodhi Day) Buddha's vow to sit under the Bodhi until he reached enlightenment.
- **Dec. 8:** Immaculate Conception of Mary.
- **Dec. 10 - 18:** Hanukkah.
- **Dec. 12:** Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- **Dec. 16:** Posadas Navidenas, Mary & Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.
- **Dec. 21:** Solstice, the Earth is most inclined away from the sun, the longest night of the year, the winter king is born, symbolizing the rebirth of the sun.
- **Dec. 26:** Zarathosht Diso, the Death of Prophet Zarathustra.



Upcoming Festivals

YULEFEST – Tampa Bay, Florida <http://allworldacres.org/yulefest>
December 11-14



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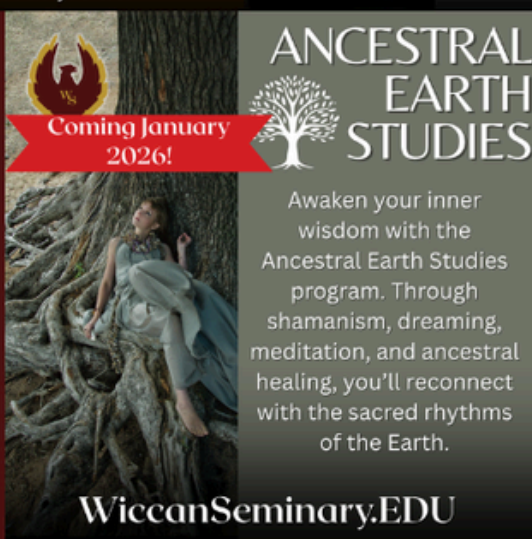


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by Rev. Lilliana Blackstar

This December, in the final days of Sagittarius Season, just before the Winter Solstice, we will have a New Moon in the sign of Sagittarius. This New Moon will be on December 19, with the Sun and Moon making an exact conjunction at 5:42 pm PST (8:42 pm EST)

The New Moon is an ending and a beginning - the end of the last lunar month and the beginning of the next. It is a time when the nights are dark, as the moon and sun rise and set together, so there is no moon illuminating the night sky. At this time in December in the Northern Hemisphere, the nights are very long as we approach the longest night with the Winter Solstice, and these nights will also be very dark thanks to the moon's phase.

For many people, the time of the New Moon is a time to let go of the old and set new intentions and goals with the rebirth of the moon. If we think of it as the beginning of a new lunar month, it makes sense to ask ourselves, "What do I wish to accomplish this month? What are my priorities, and what will my focus be for this month ahead?"

This New Moon marks the beginning of a fresh cycle, with both the Sun and Moon aligning in the same sign, signaling the start of a new journey. Sagittarius, ruled by Jupiter, is the Mutable Fire sign in focus at this time.

Think of Sagittarius as the archer, a fitting metaphor for those who love envisioning their future and targeting their life's desires. What better time to set your sights on personal goals and dreams than during the New Moon in Sagittarius?

This sign, governed by Jupiter, embodies the skilled archer - a symbol of advanced education aiming directly at their desired target. Imagine



an archer on a mountaintop, wise in knowing when to release their arrows and when to hold back. Extensive travel and learning contribute to their broad worldview, aiding in goal-setting and strategic bow release. Sagittarius signifies higher education, travel, the pursuit of masters or gurus, and eventual mastery and teaching. With expanded knowledge, the world unfolds in new and exciting ways; a symbol of seeking, learning, and teaching.

Reflect on your journey this year; you've traversed significant ground and absorbed valuable lessons. Now is the time to apply the wisdom you have gained to craft the ideal future you desire. What do you genuinely want, if you are embodying true optimism? Identify what more you need to learn, see, or experience to reach your dreams. Consider additional education and the guidance of teachers or gurus. Are you ready to step into the role of a student and commit to deeper studies? Or is it time to begin your path as a teacher and mentor others? The New Moon in



Sagittarius encourages learning and gaining new perspectives in order to set your aim towards your authentic desires.

Sagittarius is related to Philosophy, Ethics, and Personal Beliefs. Knowing what you believe and what your personal philosophies and ethics are will help you in setting authentic goals for yourself. For example, you may want to pursue a higher education or pick new books to read - but knowing your personal values, ethics, and core philosophies can help you decide what education path to pursue or what books to find. Or you may find that your philosophy and beliefs are not clearly defined, and you may wish to study, find a mentor, or travel more in order to broaden your perspective and help define your life philosophies.

Reflect on these things as you consider what goals and intentions to set for yourself with this New Moon. Winter Solstice begins in the Northern Hemisphere* just about 37 hours after this New Moon, and you will benefit from having clear goals and intentions set to carry you through the dark, cold days of Capricorn Season.

(*Note: for those in the Southern Hemisphere, you can also reflect on these Sagittarius themes for your New Moon occurring just before the Summer Solstice and the longest day of the year!)

Wishing you all a very Blessed Yule
- may the Moon and Stars guide
you on your journey!

Lilliana Blackstar is a 2nd Degree Priestx of the WISE Tradition, the Maiden of The Ever Green Hearth in Centralia, WA. A professional Astrologer and Tarot reader, with a book coming out soon!

You can learn more about Lilliana at their website:

www.hestiasmuse.net





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