

Imbolc 2006

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

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

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

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

DQ: *This is the time of year when our ancestors looked to nature for signs that darkness was waning and light was growing stronger. Renewed and fertile, the land would soon be able to provide for the coming year's planting—after winter's long sleep, there would soon be new life.*

Though we are not as attuned to the land as our ancestors were, at this time of year we can still feel the signs of life within us and within the land. And as our ancestors did, we too share the joy of Nature's awakening. We gather to celebrate the coming of spring and we call to the gods now hoping that this year will be fruitful.

Honoring the Earth Mother

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

All sing **Earth Mother Chant** (1x):

*Earth Mother, we sing to your body,
Earth Mother, we sing to your bones,
Earth Mother, we honor your spirit,
Earth Mother, we honor your stones.*

KB offers corn meal in the offering bowl and says: *Earth Mother, accept our offering.*

All: *Earth Mother, accept our offering!*

Grove Attunement

(AT leads grove meditation.)

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

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

Establishing the Sacred Grove: Fire, Well, and Tree

Fire

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

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

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

All: *Sacred fire, burn with us.*

KB censes the site and the folk.

Well

BC: *O sacred waters that flow and swirl beneath all being,
Well of ancient wisdom, keeper of deep riches,
Be blessed with our offering! O great source of all,
Let us know the elder depths within ourselves.*

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

BC: *In the depths flow the waters of wisdom.
Sacred waters flow within us.*

All: *Sacred waters, flow within us.*

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

Tree

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

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

DQ: *From the depths to the heights spans the world tree.
Sacred tree, grow within us.*
All: *Sacred tree, grow within us.*

The consecration of the space is completed with:

AT: *The fire, the well, the sacred tree,*
All: *Flame and flow and grow in me!*
AT: *In land, sea and sky,*
All: *Below and on high!*
AT: *Thus is the sacred grove claimed and hallowed.*
All: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!* (“bee shay ow-lee”)
AT: *By the cleansing of water and fire, let all ill turn away from me and mine.*
All: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!*

Opening the Gates Between the Worlds

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

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

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

All: *Manannan, accept our offering!*

All: *We invoke Manannan, opener of every gate*
We invoke Manannan, opener of every gate
You will reach us, you will teach us, and reveal our fate.
You will reach us, you will teach us, and reveal our fate. (1x)

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

All: *Let the gates be opened!*

Outdwellers Appeasement

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

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

Bardic Inspiration

KB invokes **Oghma**, the god of eloquence:

KB: *O Sunfaced one, Oghma Granainech,* (“gran-ahn-ekt”)
Son of Danu and Ethniu, brother of the Dagda, (“en-yuh”)

Oghma Cermait, Honey-Tounged hero, (“kehr-maht”)
Creator of the Druids' script,

Oghma the Eloquent, Orna-stealing sword-cleanser,
Scholars and poets praise your skill,

Golden chains link your tongue to all ears,
Hearts open with your radiance, shining like the Sun,
And your words soothe and bring us together as one.

O great Oghma, mighty Impressive One,
We call upon you to lend us your gifts,
To strengthen our speech and sweeten our tongues.

Oghma, be here with us this night,
Accept our offering and grant us your grace,
And let our words be pleasing to the Kindreds now and forever more.

KB makes an offering of oil to Oghma and says: *Oghma, accept our offering.*

All: *Oghma, accept our offering!*

Honoring and Inviting the Three Kindreds

Ancestors

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

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

All: *Ancestors, accept our offering!*

All sing **Mothers and Fathers of Old** (1x):

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

Nature Spirits

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

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

All: *Nature spirits, accept our offering!*

All sing **Fur and Feather** (1x):

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

Gods

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

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

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

All sing **Hail All the Gods** (1x):

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

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

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

Meditation: Re-centering and Merging

(**AT** leads meditation.)

Ritual Purpose, Key Offerings

KB: *Imbolc is the time of the hearth fire, and of the thawing and stirring of earth's waters. It is a time to make oaths and take omens, a time when the milk begins to fill in the cattle in preparation for the births of spring, and when farmers begin preparing for spring planting. Many of the Folk, too, make commitments to each other and themselves at this time of year, hoping to reap the benefits of seeds sown now.*

First we will offer to the Dagda, the red god, the hungry god, the best of the gods, and then we will offer to Brighid, the high one, the eternal flame, the great goddess mother of inspiration.

Honoring Dagda

DQ: *Dagda most honored
To you we make sacrifice
Oats from our bounty we freely give
To Eochaid the All Father
You, the Fire Beneath the Cauldron
Hear us, Old Giant, God with the Great Staff
Ruad Rofessa, Lord of Perfect Knowledge
Fire of the Sacrifice, Great in Appetite
To you we do honor, Excellent God*

*Mate of the Great Queen
Fergus, the Mare's Son
Chieftain of Danu, Bountiful Giver
Flame in the belly that sustains Life,
Flame in the loins that continues Life,
Flame in the eye that comprehends Life
Be in us as we are in you
Kindle in us as we make our offering
Oats of the Stallion we give you
Boiled in the Cauldron
Upon the Sacred Fire
O Harper of the Seasons ,
Taker of Sacrifice,
Druid of Oak and Hazel
Dagda Mor, Great Good God,
Let your bright eyes alight well upon the Folk this night.*

DQ: *Lord of secret knowledge, Master of all powers, wisest and mightiest of the Tuatha De, we invite you to our fire. Dagda, be welcome!*

All: Dagda, be welcome!

DQ offers beer, butter, and porridge to the Dagda and says: *Dagda, accept our offering!*

All: Dagda, accept our offering!

Honoring Brighid

AT: *Behold the lightener of the stars
Brigid of the mantels
She comes on the crest of waves
With harpers of the sidhe praising her
Arising in splendour
From the mighty one below
Brigid of the auguries
Song and the voices of the Bards for her
Brigid of the waters
Brigid of the kindling
Brigid O source of joy and life
Healers and artisans honor your spirit
Brigid, woman of wisdom
O mid-wife of sweet wisdom
Of bright beauty shining like stars
Joy it is to those who behold you*

*O Brigid the skillful
O Brigid of the triple spirit
O Brigid who comes in light and shadow
Thrice blessed be your flaming path.*

DQ uncovers the bed of Brighid and **KB** brings the brideog into the ritual space and places her in Brighid's bed. **BC** places a wand of birch next to her, **DA/AT/BC** light 9 candles around the bed.

AT: *Lady of the hammer and forge, Goddess of healing and lore, Shining One with graceful words, we invite you to our fire. Brighid, be welcome!*

All: *Brighid, be welcome!*

AT offers beer, milk, and fire water to Brighid and says: *Brighid, accept our offering!*

All: *Brighid, accept our offering!*

Praise Offerings

DA: *Have the Folk brought praise?*

All: *They have.*

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

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

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

All: *Let our voices arise on the Fire,
Let our voices resound in the Deep.
May the spirits accept what we offer,
As we honor the old ways we keep. (1x)*

An Omen for the Blessings is Taken and Shared

AT: *Now with the Kindreds duly praised let us seek an omen for the blessings of return.*

All: *A sacred grove, and all is hallowed,
Gifts, given and received,
The seer's eye turns into shadow,
The will of the gods revealed.*

- 1. Begin song**
- 2. Omen/cups**
- 3. End song**

While **AT** takes the omen, **DQ** distributes individual blessing cups. **AT** then reveals the omen.

AT: *These are the blessings of the gods. Bíodh sé amhlaidh!*
All: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!*

Induction, Receiving the Blessings

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

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

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

1. Induction

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

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

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

DQ pours water from the Well into the blessing cup and says:

We draw water from the well of wisdom, pouring the ale of inspiration.

2. Pour

DQ holds the blessing cup aloft and says:

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

All: *Behold, the Waters of Life!*

3. Blessing

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

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

4. Sharing

Magical Working: Dedicant Oath

AT: *Now with the blessings of the gods flowing in us, let us turn to the Work at hand. Is there one present who would make an Oath as a Dedicant of Ár nDraíocht Féin?*

BC: *There is.*

AT: *Then what oath would you swear before the Gods and Folk?*

BC makes her Dedicant Oath.

AT: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!*

All: *Bíodh sé amhlaidh!*

(“bee shay ow-lee”)

Thanking the Kindreds

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

KB: *Dagda, Go raibh maith agait!*

(“gor-uh mah-agit”, singular)

All: *Dagda, we thank you!*

KB: *Brigid, Go raibh maith agait!*

(“gor-uh mah-agit”, singular)

All: *Brigid, we thank you!*

KB: *Gods and Goddesses, Go raibh maith agaibh*

(“gor-uh mah-ageev”, plural)

All: *Gods and Goddesses, we thank you!*

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

All: *Nature Spirits, we thank you!*

KB: *Ancestors, Go raibh maith agaibh!*

All: *Ancestors, we thank you!*

KB: *Manannan mac Lir, Go raibh maith agait!*

All: *Manannan mac Lir, we thank you!*

KB: *Earth Mother, go raibh maith agait.*

All: *Earth Mother, we thank you!*

Closing the Gates

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

Let the Fire be flame,

(gesture to Fire)

Let the Well be water,

(gesture to Well)

Let all be as it was before.

Dúntar na geataí!

(DUN-tar na GAH-thay)

All: *Let the gates be closed!*

Affirmation of Continuity, Ending the Rite

AT: *We have done as our ancestors did and as our children will do and the Gods have answered! Let us go out into the world secure in the knowledge that our offerings have pleased the gods and that we go forth under their protection. The ritual is at a close. Bíodh sé amhlaidh!*

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

Recessional

The musical signal is given to signal the end of the rite.

All sing while recessing away from the ritual area:

Walk with wisdom from this hallowed place.

Walk not in sorrow, our roots shall ere embrace.

May strength be your brother, and honor be your friend,

And luck be your lover until we meet again.

(grove waters recombined)