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Imbolc Meditation 2008

Opening Meditation

Now, I invite everyone to close your eyes, and open your hearts to the powers of earth, sea and sky. Relax your body... stretch if you need to...and quiet your mind.

Now...breathe slowly and deeply. With each breath, allow all the cares of the mundane world to drift away. With each breath, allow yourself to feel more relaxed. With each breath, feel your thoughts settle and converge until your entire awareness is focused on the sensation of breathing...the feel of the air filling your lungs, the rise and fall of your chest, the sound of your breath as it leaves your body.

You are standing in a field, under the open sky. The sun has just set, and the sky has turned that special blue of twilight. The moon is up; a slender crescent, shining brightly, and the stars are beginning to appear, one by one, as the last light of day fades in the west.

The ground is covered with a light sprinkling of snow, and the air is cold, but now and then, a breeze, strangely warm, brushes against your cheek. The playful breeze caresses your face, lifts your hair and whispers softly in your ear. It carries the scent of warm, damp earth, of new green shoots, of clean, fresh rain. You follow the breeze, as it swirls and drifts, calling you forward.

You are approaching the edge of the woods. Tall trees, their branches bare and sparkling with frost, seem to greet you and beckon you in amongst them. As you walk beneath their sheltering boughs, you feel a deep throbbing beneath your feet, like a heartbeat. The rhythm draws you forward, and you begin to feel the energy of the earth pulsing through you. Your movements begin to match that beat, as you continue walking, until you are almost dancing.

Your friend, the breeze, has not forgotten you. The playful spirit returns, carrying the scent of wood smoke and fresh baked bread. As you breathe deeply, you can also smell the sweetness of mead and the clean scent of incense burning. You follow the breeze, as you find yourself upon a moonlit path. You continue to follow it, until you see the light of a fire in the distance. Now, the throbbing in the ground has changed into drumbeats, and you can hear a pipe being played and a wordless song being sung.

You emerge from the trees upon a clearing. In the center is a bright bonfire, around which a great celebration is taking place. There are many gathered here. Some appear to be human in form, but some wear fur, and some feathers. Small beings that seem to be made of light fly about the fire like multi-colored sparks, laughing and singing.

A hand reaches out towards you, and you grasp it in your own. Suddenly, you are swung into the dance! Your feet move of their own accord, following the rhythm of the drums, the rhythms of the earth. The pipe is louder now, and the stars above you seem to dance and spiral in response to its

music. The light of those stars seems to fill you, making you feel light as air and full of fire.

A loaf of bread is passed to you, and you break off a piece and pass it on. It melts on your tongue, and you know that no food has ever tasted this good. The cup makes it way to you, and you drink deep of the sweetest nectar you have ever partaken of. As you pass the cup along, you notice something odd about the fire.

As you have been dancing, you've hardly noticed it, save to appreciate its warmth. Now, you pause in the dance, to stare at the flames, only to see that the other dancers have done the same. The fire burns white-hot at its center, and a figure begins to emerge. You watch her as she steps out of the fire, her shapely form that of a woman made of flame.

She approaches you, the flames of her hair fanning out in all directions. She reaches out with a fiery hand and gently touches your cheek. The flame of her fingers does not burn, but leaves behind warmth that no cold can take away. As she touches you, visions explode in your mind, filled with wonder and joy.

The fire-maiden travels round the circle, and when she is once again standing before you, she raises her arms, and drifts into the sky, dissolving into a shower of sparks that dance about, then fade into the night.

You suddenly feel tired, and sink to the ground, content to sleep beneath the stars, near the warmth of the fire. You are wakened by the cold, when the fire dies down. You realize that you are now alone, and the fire has been reduced to ash. As you get up, you see the sun rising beyond the trees. You stretch and move and prepare to face the coming day, filled with energy and purpose. The wind has turned cold, and you wrap your arms around yourself as you prepare to return home. Placing a hand to your cheek, you savor the warmth left by the goddess' touch.

Breathe slowly and deeply, and allow the image of the forest to fade. Allow your consciousness to return to the present. Feel the floor beneath you, feel the presence of your brothers and sisters around you. Allow yourself to return to this place, this temple, the beginning of our journey and the end.

Breathe deeply and slowly, and when you are ready, open your eyes.

Closing Meditation

Now, once again, I invite you to close your eyes, and reach out to the powers of earth, sea and sky to which we have attuned ourselves.

Breathe slowly and deeply. Feel the energy that we have raised together with the aid of the Kindreds, filling this place, filling our spirits. With each breath, savor the feel of that power and strength and it soothes and heals, cleanses and inspires.

Know, in your heart of hearts, that this power is always there, waiting to be tapped. Know that you can reach it always, in your hour of need.

As you continue to breathe slowly and deeply, allow the excess energy to recede, flowing slowly, gently, back into the earth. Hold on only to that which you need right now, confident that you can replenish your strength at will. Allow the fiery light that fills and shines through you to dim to a soft, gentle glow. Feel the flames die back to warm, glowing embers.

As the energy flowing through you comes full circle, grounding itself at the source, be aware of the renewal that it leaves behind. Feel refreshed, rejuvenated and ready for the spring to come.

Breathe deeply and slowly, and when you are ready, open your eyes.