

EveryDruid and the Nine Virtues **Ritual Drama**

The theme for the 2009 Sassafra Grove member retreat was “Ritual in Theater/Theater in Ritual.” On Friday night Maria Stoy led a blessing rite dedicated to deities or other beings who inspire members to explore their bardic and magical, transformative skills. At that rite, nine grove members randomly chose a virtue from a hat. This was the virtue they would portray in the Saturday evening rite.

During the day on Saturday, Diane ‘Emerald’ Bronowicz and Maria presented workshops on the ritual origins of theater and Medieval Mystery plays, structure of plays and ritual, theater techniques that can be applied to ritual, discussed the various opinions on memorization versus scripts and improvisation versus written text in a ritual context.

Our ritual play was loosely based on the ideas found in the Medieval play *Everyman*.

Ritualists portraying the Virtues wrote or improvised their own roles, so each person had a chance to express their creativity and connection to their Virtue in their own way. The parts of Brighid (Maria) and EveryDruid (Emerald) were scripted and performed (mostly) “off book.”

Costumes and Props

The usual ritual gear and offerings are required

Brighid and the Virtues each wore a cord woven of nine strand of different colors.

Each virtual had a single piece of yarn, one of the colors from the cords, to present to EveryDruid.

Brighid wore a blue dress in an early Celtic period style, but her costume can reflect the tastes of the individual grove.

EveryDruid wore white

The Virtues were asked to wear their best ritual garb, reflecting their own style and comfort level. Some wore robes, ren-faire garb or modern dress. The Virtues are timeless.

Ritual Drama

Ground/Center Merge

9 knells

All sing *Comes We Now as a People* as they process to the ritual site. *Brighid leads the procession and goes directly to the central fire which she feeds with pieces of peat. Other ritualists and participants form a “horseshoe” “downstage” of the Hallows. Brighid’s circle and the Hallows are “upstage.*

Purification with fire and water, elements of Brighid

Outsiders -Volunteer

You amongst the living and the dead
Who stand against the gods and men
Immortal beings not of our ways
And all spirits who would do us harm
Take this and stay beyond our light
And trouble not our work this night

EVERYDRUID (*enters Brighid's circle. Brighid stands to greet her*)

Hail Brighid, patron of Sassafras grove.
Through the years you have stood beside us
Guided and protected us.
Lady of poetry and song
Bless us once again with your gift of inspiration.
May the spark from your Sacred Fire ignite our hearts
That we might speak with passion
May the waters of your Holy Well flow through us
That we might speak with wisdom
May our songs be sweet
May our actions be just
May our love be pure
May our worship be true

EveryDruid presents Brighid with a gift of flowers.

BRIGHID SINGS: (Bardic Invocation)
*Sing with my voice, play through my hands
Let the way be open. (Abbi Spinner)*

BRIGHID –
Welcome, Druid to my hearth. Let us begin our lessons.
Among all the Blessed Ones, Who is first and foremost in our worship?

EVERYDRUID-
First and foremost in our worship is The Earth Mother

BRIGHID
As children of Earth, let us honor our mother

EVERYDRUID- *leads the folk in singing, kneel and touch the Earth*
Earth Mother we honor your body, Earth Mother, we honor your bones
Earth Mother we sing to your spirit, Earth Mother, we sing to your stones

BRIGHID-

Why have you come here today?

EVERYDRUID- (Statement of Intent)

I have come to honor the ancient ways, learning the mysteries of what every Druid needs to know to walk in balance upon our Mother Earth.

BRIGHID –

Then as our ancestors before us we create the world anew in the midst of chaos
And we ask the Questions
Who are we, from whence do we come, what is the story of our people

EVERYDRUID (Creation Myth/Recreating the Cosmos)

Not Hard...

A great misty cloud had gathered together in the void
Swirling and spiraling; spiraling and swirling
Drawing ever-in upon itself.

At its center a radiance shone forth (*Brighid makes offering of oil to the fire*)
And drove outward the surrounding cloud
Gathering the waters together here below. (*Brighid makes offering of silver to the well*)

And so it was that the stuff of creation drew apart
To form the Fire Above
And the Waters Below.

The Solar Fire warmed the Cauldron of Creation
And stroked upon its waters with thunderbolts
And begat upon it Life.

And the Life begat the Creatures
And the Creatures begat the Ancestors
And the Ancestors begat Us; the Living People.

Upright, like you, Great Tree (*Brighid censes Tree with incense lit in the Fire and
We bear upon us the mark of Creation sprinkles it with water from the Well*)
Then, now, and for all time.

Rooted in the ancestral waters of the World Below,
Spanning this Middle-World of form
And reaching ever-upward to embrace the Fire Above.
Sacred Tree grow within us

The Well; the Fire; the Sacred Tree...
Flow and flame and grow in m ! (all repeat)

(Creation Myth by Earrach of Pittsburgh)

BRIGHID

Sanctified we stand, one with the new creation at the center of the world
The light of heaven warms and inspires us, the sea whispers secrets in the depths
I call now to the Lord of the Sa
Son of Lir
Wave rider
Keeper of the Goblet of Truth
Manannan, Accept my offering! (*Brighid makes offering of oil to the Fire*)
You who open the ways between land and sea
You who open the ways between known and unknown
You who guide travelers across perilous ways
Join your magic to mine
Let the well open as a gate,
Let the Fire open as a gate
Let the tree open as a gate
Let gates be open that we may see the path
Let the gates be open that we may travel the ways
Mannanan, Let the gates be open.

The ways between are open to us.
Our voices arise on the fire
Our voices resound in the deep
Our voices echo in all worlds How shall we proceed?

EVERYDRUID

We call upon our Kindred dwelling in the three worlds and make offerings to them in
thanks for their gifts. Through our worship, may they be increased!

BRIGHID

So be it. Who among the Wise comes forth to call on the Worldly Spirits with whom we
share our home?

VOLUNTEER 1

Worldly Spirits, from across the veil we call to you!
To all the creatures of water, wood and wind
Essence of flower, seed, cone and spore
Powers that flow through shell, stone and sand
You who hold court just beyond our mortal sight
You of spring, grove, and hill and all the holy places
You who come to us in dreams and guide us in the other worlds

You spirits who share our lands and our homes
And you who claim the wilds as your own
Whether you fly in the skies, swim in the waters, or dwell upon the land
Worldly Spirits, be welcome at our fire!

BRIGHID

Who among the Wise comes forth to call on the Ancestors without whom we would not be?

VOLUNTEER 2

Ancestors and Honored Dead Across the ages we call to you
You who gave us flesh and bone that we might walk in this world of form
You who adopted, fostered and nurtured us when our blood could not
You who first taught us right from wrong
You who told us the stories of your past and of ours
And gave us the traditions we still hold dear in our own homes.
You who worshiped our gods before us
You who walked the lands that gave them birth
You who kept the old ways alive despite the encroaching darkness
Your ways inspire our ways.
Ancestors and Honored Dead
Be welcome at our fire!

BRIGHID

Who among the Wise comes forth to call on the Deities, Shining and Cthonic ones, creators of all that is?

VOLUNTEER 3

Deities, from across the worlds we call to you!
Thunderous gods of judgment and might, rulers of the skies and seas.
Goddesses of sovereignty, ladies of the land, keepers of keys and defenders of cities
You of the wilds, primal and dark, enflaming our passions and inciting catharsis
You who watch over field and flock, bestowing upon us the wealth of the earth
You who keep the hearth's fire, and you who are the fire itself.
You who protect travelers of land, sea, and sky and help us to travel between the worlds
You who ground us in courage and wisdom, yet open our eyes to visions and dreams
You who inspire the words on our tongues, the work of our hands, and the love in our hearts
Whether you shine on high, abide below, or dwell with us in the middle realms
Deities, be welcome at our fire!

BRIGHID

Breathe...In you mind's see the beings gathered at our fire, above, below and all around us. Are you prepared for your lesson

EVERYDRUID

I am

BRIGHID

The answers you seek cannot be found in the comfort of my bosom or the safety of home. You must seek your answers elsewhere. When you have learned what is needful to know, return to me.

EVERYDRUID

I will

EVERYDRUID leaves the hearth and approaches each virtue in turn. Each virtue reveals their mystery to EveryDruid in his or her own words. Once they have finished speaker they give EveryDruid a single piece of yarn. Once she has spoken to every Virtue, EveryDruid returns to Brighid.

BRIGHID

You have travelled long and far among the Kindreds and the Folk. What lessons has this journey taught?

(Brighid uses this time to untangle and straighten the cords EveryDruid has received from the Virtues)

EVERYDRUID

Explains in her own words what she learned from each Virtue. When she finishes explaining the lesson, she questions the meaning of the cords

BRIGHID

Each of these virtues taken alone speak lessons to your head
Hear the lesson meant for your heart.
Too much pride in yourself leads to ego
Ego brings false courage and boasting
Hollow boasting blinds you to the truth

Falsehood keeps you from moving forward
Flaunting you piety brings
burden and jealousy

Fertility unchecked leads to excess
Moderation, misused,
brings only want and denial
And with denial comes regret

(Brighid holds on end of the threads and hands the other end to EveryDruid. The separate, each holding an end and begin twisting the strands into a cord during Brighid's speech)

Let my lesson of wisdom work through your heart and head
Weave fertility and hospitality with moderation
Let vision guide your courage
And your oaths, that you may speak the truth and live by your word
Offer what is needed, that the gods may know your heart
Though the path is difficult,
Let each day bring new wonder, let each day bring joy
As we bind these threads, we bind the virtues, one to another
Not one lesser or greater than another
Bound eternally in the sacred pattern
In all that you are and all that you do.

Brighid and EveryDruid move together, allowing the strands to twist into a cord

Do you accept this work? *(Brighid holds the finished cord out to EveryDruid)*

EVERYDRUID

I do

BRIGHID

Then be welcome among the wise!

(Brighid places the cord around Every Druid's shoulders and embraces her)

Now that you have learned the mysteries of the virtues I have given, we ask now for the wisdom of the Kindred. Who comes forth with these messages?

OVATES

Gives omen by fire scrying, a message from each kindred

BRIGHID

We have been given many blessings this evening. Children of Earth, Circle of the Wise, is it your will to receive the blessings? *(Wait for response)*.

Bring me the waters.

EveryDruid brings the vessel with the waters, Brighid hallows with the blessings received from the Kindred in the omen. Brighid hands the vessel to EVERYDRUID who walks the circle, sprinkling the folk. Brighid leads the folk in singing:

Power of the spirits...
Flowing through me...
Shining in me...
Growing with me (words and music by Ian Corrigan)

EVERYDRUID

Let us share these blessings with grovemates, friends and family who would share in our work, but who could not be with us this night
Let the Earth carry these blessings to those whose hearts are open to receive them.

(EveryDruid pours the remainder of the Waters onto the Earth)

BRIGHID

Reflect, oh wise ones, on the journeys taken, the lessons learned and the blessings bestowed
Now it is time to offer thanks to those who aided our work this night

VOLUNTEER 3

Thank the Deities

VOLUNTEER 2

Thank the Ancestors

VOLUNTEER 1

Thank the Worldly Spirits

BRIGHID

Manannan
Son of Lir
Wave rider
Keeper of the Goblet of Truth
I thank you for your guidance on our journey
For the ways you have opened
And your protection on our path
Manannan We thank you
Once more I ask you aid my magic
And let the tree close as a gate
And become again a simple tree
Let the fire close as a gate
And be once more just flame
Let the well close as a gate
And be but water once again
Let all be as it was before but bettered by our work

EVERYDRUID

Let us offer our thanks to the Earth Mother – do that

EVERYDRUID

Thanks to Brighid

BRIGHID

As it was done in the past, as we do it now and likewise as it shall be done in the future

We have once again forged a link in the chain of tradition.

Long live the tradition!

NINE KNELLS

ALL sing-*Walk with Wisdom*

Written by Diane ‘Emerald’ Bronowicz and Maria Stoy; *Creation Myth* by Earrach of Pittsburgh