

Samhain 2009
Trout Lake Abbey
By Rev. Kirk S. Thomas

Initiating the Rite

Processional:

Chant, *Come We Now as a People*, is sung while walking to the Outdwellers area before the bridge to the Sacred Precinct.

Come we now as a People
To gather at the Sacred Well.
Come we now as a People
To gather in the warmth and the light of the flame.
(repeat as necessary)
(By Ian Corrigan)

Outdwellers:

Just before the bridge, the Orator offers to the Outdwellers:

Children of Earth, please look away as we offer to those
who are not aligned with our ways.

Ancient Spirits, dark or light
You who care not for our ways
Outdwellers, we know Your might!
Your forbearance we'll repay.

Sacred ground where You can stay
We do now establish here.
We ask You kindly to stay away
And in return, here, have some beer!

(Beer is poured on the ground)

Bíodh sé amhlaidh! (BEE-uh SHAY Ow-LEE) So be it!

Purification

Children of Earth, there are also Outdwellers within ourselves,
Those feelings of negativity that need to be let go.
Come forward and be purified.
You will be asked if you release ill will.
Please respond that you do.

The Orator and one volunteer cense and asperge the company, asking the question about ill will. All proceed to the chairs surrounding the firepit.

The Orator and volunteer circle the Fire, censing and asperging the Fire, the Well, and the ritual area, saying three times:

By the might of the Waters

And the light of the Fire
This Grove is made whole and holy!

Musical Signal

The Orator rings the bell three times, saying:

Ancestors!

The Orator rings the bell three times, saying:

Spirits of the Land!

The Orator rings the bell three times, saying:

Shining Ones!
We will meet You in the Sacred Center
When we open the ways to the Otherworlds.
Bíodh sé amhlaidh! (BEE-uh SHAY Ow-LEE) So be it!

Honoring the Earth Mother

The Orator kneels and places his hands upon the ground, saying:

O Goddess of the warm, moist Earth,
O holy Mother Danu!
O Mother Earth, unfold Your arms that in Your warm embrace
We'll know Your endless love.
Earth Mother, we show You honor!

All kiss the ground.

Offerings we make to You
O greatest of them all!
We offer oats, the grain of ancient Eire,
And corn, the fruit of this new land.
Earth Mother Danu, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers oats and corn meal to the ground.

Building the Fire:

Orator lights the Fire, saying:

We build our Fire upon Your bosom,
Re-claiming this place as our own.

While the Fire kindles, all sing the *Earth Mother* chant:

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!
(Anonymous)

Orator says:

Now let us pray with a good fire!

Statement of Purpose

Orator says:

Children of Earth, we come together here at the Feast of Samhain,
The Hinge of the Year, when veils between the Worlds are thin,
And the Otherworlds grow close.

The days grow shorter and the nights grow longer,
Winter approaches, and summer is ending.
Let us honor the Final Harvest.

We shall call upon The Daghdá, the Good God this evening.
We shall also call upon The Morrighan, Lady of Ravens.
These Two are Life and Death.

We shall also call upon our Sacred Dead,
That we may know and see Them once again!

So let us join together as one Folk
And make our sacrifices in joy and reverence.

Bíodh sé amhlaidh! (BEE-uh SHAY Ow-LEE) So be it!

Re-Creating the Cosmos

The Well:

The Orator goes to the Well and stirs the water with his hand, saying:

Sacred Well!
I connect you to all the Wells of all the World,
That you may connect with the Waters of the Earth,
The Waters of the Underworld,
The Powers of Potential!

Sacred Waters `neath our feet
Unformed Powers of the Deep
Fountain upwards now to fill us!
Sacred Well, flow within us!

The Orator offers silver to the Well.

The Fire:

The Orator offers oil to the Fire, dripping it on the flames in a clockwise motion, saying:

Sacred Fire!
I connect you to the stars in the Heavens,
That you may connect with the Fires of the Skies,
The Shining Home of the Gods,

The Powers of Order!

Sacred Fire, light of Heaven,
Power of our transformation,
Create Order out of Chaos,
Sacred Fire, burn within us!

The Mountain:

The Orator faces the Great Mountain in the North, holding burning sage and a bowl of Holy Water, saying:

Sacred Mountain!
You are the Axis Mundi, the joiner of Worlds,
You dwell in the Midworld but reach high and low!
Let Your roots grow down into the Underworld!
Let Your summit reach high to the Heavens!

Axis Mundi, joining all,
Digging Deep and standing tall,
Carry prayers with success,
Axis Mundi, grow within us!

The Attunement and Two Powers:

The Orator says:

Children of Earth, sit comfortably and close your eyes.
The fire is warm upon our faces and we can feel a slight breeze.
And we can see all the tension that has built up inside us.

And breathe for a moment. In, out, in, out. Breathe. Breathe.

Now feel all the tension in your head just release and drop down
Through your body and down into the Earth.
See it break up into fragments. Hear the muscles as they release.

Feel the tension in your neck and shoulders release and flow down, down, down.
It just slips down into the Earth our Mother. Don't worry, She can take it.

Now feel the tension in your back and chest also release, sliding down into the Earth.

The tension in your lower back and stomach now releases, like light flowing from the sun.
See it flow, feel it drop through you, down, down, down into the Earth.

Now feel the tension in your hips and legs release, flowing down,
Leaving you calm and relaxed.

Children of Earth, send your mind's eye down deep into the Earth,
Past the soil, past the rock, deep, deep, deep,
Until you come upon the Waters of the Earth,
Flowing dark and cold beneath us.

Deep beneath us, see the waters rise up, coming up through the Earth
Like a fountain.

Hear the waters as they approach. Feel their coolness as they reach your feet.

*O Waters of the Earth, deep and dark,
Arise, primeval powers,
Fill us now with all your wondrous possibilities
That through the Earth our Mother
We may ground and join as one.*

See the Waters as they fill your body,
Rising up and filling the Cauldron of your Loins.

The Waters overflow and rise up higher in your body now,
Filling and overflowing the Cauldron of your Heart.

Now see the waters completely fill your body,
Filling and overflowing the Cauldron of your Mind.

Hold your hands out, palms up, Children of Earth.

See the Waters of Potential as they fill you from your feet
And flow out of the palms of your hands, and back into the Earth,
Creating a full circuit.

Now cast your minds eye up into the Heavens!
There you will see a star, a moon, a sun, directly over your head.
And as you breathe, you see a column of light descend
Towards you out of the Heavens,
And it bathes your head in warmth.

*O Fires of the Sky,
O brilliant light!
Descend and crystallize within us now
That spark of Order on which life depends,
That through the Sky, our Father,
We may shine and share as one.*

As you breathe, Children of Earth,
The column of light fills the Cauldron of your Mind,
Warming the Waters within, with a sparkling energy.

Breathe deeper, and the light descends more deeply within you,
Warming the Waters in the Cauldron of your Heart.

Breathe some more, and the light completely fills you,
Warming the Waters in the Cauldron of your Loins
And all the Waters within.

See the light, the Power of the Heavens, as it enters your head
And leaves again through the palms of your hands,
Flowing back up into the Heavens,
Making another full circuit.

*You Powers dark and light,
You liquid Fire,
Conjoin and blend this mixture volatile*

*That Powers great will blend within ourselves,
Connecting all the Worlds,
So that the Axis is complete.*

(pause)

Children of Earth, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Opening the Gates

The Gatekeeper Invocation:

The Orator takes whiskey to the Fire and says:

Manannan mac Lir!
We call to You, great Lord, we pray that You will join us here!

Lord of the Gates, Lord of Wisdom,
Ride your sea chariot and come to us,
Aid us in opening the Gates to the Otherworlds,
Take us with You to the Lands of the Dead!

Manannan mac Lir, accept our sacrifice!

Orator pours whiskey on the Fire. All sing the Gatekeeper song:

Gatekeeper, open the Portals
Between the Gods and Mortals!
Power freely flows
As our magic grows!
(By Sue Parker)

Opening the Gates:

The Orator leads the People in chanting:

Open the Gates! Open the Gates! Open the Gates!

...while moving counter-clockwise around the circle, and then spinning in place counterclockwise, ending with:

Let the Well open as a Gate!
Let the Fire open as a Gate!
Let the Mountain connect the Worlds!
Osclaítear na cómhla breac! (OS-kluh-tir Na Kove-la-breck)
Let the Gates be open!

The Orator pauses for a moment and then says:

Children of Earth,
We are now woven into the fabric of the Otherworlds.
The Kindreds can hear our thoughts
And know our hearts,
So let there be only truth here.

Inviting the Three Kindreds

The Orator says:

Let us now honor and sacrifice to our Kindreds, the Shining, Noble and Ancient Ones.

The Shining Ones:

The Orator says:

Who calls to the Gods and Goddesses of Elder Days?

A volunteer invokes the Deities with either their own invocation or they may use the one below. If there are no volunteers, the Orator will do the invocation.

The Children of Earth call out to the Gods and Goddesses of all our Peoples!

We call to you in the Heavens, shining in the skies!
We call to you in the Midworld, striding across the land!
We call to you in the Underworld, guiding and guarding our Dead.

Shining Ones, come to us, we pray!

Let our love bring you to our Fire!
Let our devotion bring you to our Well!
Join us, that we may give to You as You give to all.
Let there be peace between us,
And let all prosper in our warm friendship.

Shining Ones, accept our sacrifice!

Whiskey is offered to the Fire.

Everyone sings "*Hail All the Gods*"

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!

Hail all the Gods!
Hail all the Goddesses!
Hail all the Holy Ones
We dwell together!

(Words: First verse, Paul Maurice; Second verse, Richard Mac Kelly; Bridge section, Gwynne Green. Music: Paul Maurice, Sean Miller, and Gail Williams)

Orator says:

Close your eyes, Children of Earth.
See the Gods and Goddesses, fully 60 feet tall,
As they come and join us here!
Hear their laughter on the wind and feel their heavy footfalls
As they walk upon the ground.

Shining Ones, we welcome you.

The Land Spirits:

The Orator says:

Who calls to the Spirits of the Land?

A volunteer invokes the Deities with either their own invocation or they may use the one below. If there are no volunteers, the Orator will do the invocation.

The Children of Earth call out to all those Spirits who share this world with us.

We call to the Spirits of Motion – You who crawl, who run, who swim, who fly.
We call to the Spirits of Place – You Trees, You Rock, You Plants.
We call to the Spirits under the Mound – You cousins of the Gods,
You mightiest spirits of the Midworld.
We call to our Spirit Allies – You who aid us in our work.

Noble Ones! Come to us, we pray!

Let the Waters of the Earth our Mother rise up and guide You with its gurgling voice, and quench
Your thirst.

Let the Light of the Heavens, burning in our Fire, guide You with its glow, and give you warmth.

Join us, and renew the old bargain,
Let there be peace between us,
And let all prosper in our warm friendship.

Land Spirits, accept our sacrifice!

Seeds and grains are offered to the ground.

Everyone sings, "*Nature Spirits Call*"

Fur and feather and scale and skin,
All ye Spirits are welcomed in.
Leaf and stone and fairy, too,
May we seal our pact with you!

It's the stream of life that flows through us all.
The babbling brook is Nature's call,
Interweaved through the web of life are we.
Come back to the Sacred Tree!

(By Nora Ford)

Orator says:

Close your eyes, Children of Earth.
See the Land Spirits as they approach,
Their strange faces turning our way.
Hear them as they crawl, swim and fly to us here.
Feel the wonder in their hearts.

Land Spirits, we welcome you.

The Ancestors:

The Orator takes pork, beer and apples to the Fire, saying:

The Children of Earth call out to our human kin who came before.

We call to our Ancestors of blood – without you we would not be here.
You are our parents and grandparents from all generations.

We all to our Ancestors of heart – you whom we have loved and lost,
And whom we hold dear in our lives.

We call to the Ancient Wise – you Mighty Dead of fame and skill
Who smile upon us and aid our ways!

Mighty Ones! Come to us we pray!

Rise through the Waters of the Earth our Mother and join us at the Well.
Bask once again in the heat of our Fire as in elder days.
Join us, and whisper true wisdom in our ears, that we may shape our lives.
Let there be peace between us,
And let all prosper in our warm friendship.

We offer you Pork, the food of the Gods!

Pork is offered to the Fire.

We offer you Beer, the drink of heroes!

Beer is poured out by the Well.

And we offer you apples, the fruit of Tir na nOg, the Isles of Youth,
The place of rest and recovery between lives.

Apples are thrown in the Fire and beyond the circle's boundary.

Children of Earth, let us now remember all those dear to us who have died this year.

Let me start by remembering all of our warriors who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan,
And all the innocent dead.

Orator says:

Warriors, we remember you.

The People respond:

Warriors, we remember you.

Orator says:

Does anyone else have someone that they wish to remember this night?

Everyone is invited to call out a name. As each name is called, everyone responds with,

"Name, we remember you."

When all the People have finished naming names, the Orator says:

Ancestors! Accept our Sacrifices!

Everyone sings "Mothers and Fathers of Old"

From far beyond this mortal plain,
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!
(Words by Sable)

Orator says:

Close your eyes, Children of Earth.
See our Ancestors, all whom we have called,
As they come to the Well.
Hear their whispers and feel the love that they have for us.

Ancestors, we welcome you!

Key Offerings

The Lore:

Orator says:

Children of Earth, long ago, when the Gods ruled in Ireland,
A great war was about to be fought. The enemies of the Gods,
The Fomoiré, wished to rule Ireland once again, and take it from the Gods.

The Good God, the Daghdá, went to spy on the Fomoiré,
And after many adventures there, where he ate so much his belly grew vast,
He returned to Tara, the home of the Gods,
To prepare for the battle.

On the way, however, he spied a woman at a ford of the river Unius.
A woman washing blood off of armor at the ford.

She was washing the blood off the armor of those about to die in coming battle!
And the Daghdha felt lust for her.

Life, lust and appetite met there with war, death and destruction.
A fitting couple, wouldn't you say?
And Morrighan lusted for Daghdha as well.
And they coupled at that ford.

An ally of the Gods was found that day.
An ally strong and wild.
In satisfaction of their ride she promised him there
That she would fight on the side of the Gods.

And in time the battle was won.

This ends the tale of the Daghdha and the Washer at the Ford.

Orator says:

Let us now invite our other, special guests!

Morrighan:

Orator says:

Great Morrighan! Hear our call!

Dark Lady,
Fearsome Bird of Death,
Spell Caster!

Battle Crow,
Washer at the Ford,
We call upon You now!

Transforming Goddess who burns away the Old
That we may be reborn,
Fly to us in Raven form
And join us by our Fire.

Prophetess!
Slake Your thirst with whiskey –
We offer it to You!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire.

O Phantom Queen, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire.

The People say:

O Phantom Queen, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire and says:

Children of Earth, close you eyes.
See Her as She approaches!
Her jet black hair cascading down her shoulders,
A bloody sword in her hand,
A severed head hanging from her belt.

But she is not frowning at us. Rather, she looks intrigued.
Our hair stands on end, her smile is terrible,
But she is pleased to be asked.

(pause)

Morrighan, we welcome you.

The Daghdha:

Orator says:

Good God Daghdha! Hear our call!

Most learned Daghdha,
Great of appetite and of Lore,
We call upon you now!

Cauldron-keeper, Great Club wielder,
Holder of the Harp of Seasons,
Come join us by our fire!

Druid God, Your wisdom great
And fertile ways
Protect and grow the Folk!

Sky Father, War Father, Fertile Father,
Come celebrate tonight.
Great Father!
Slake Your thirst with whiskey –
We offer it to You.

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire.

And when the Rite is over, we will grieve to see You go.
Great God Daghdha, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire.

The People say:

Great God Dagda, accept our sacrifice!

Orator offers whiskey to the Fire then says:

Children of Earth, close your eyes.
See him as he approaches!
He's grand and happy, his dick dragging upon the ground.

He can hear the sound he makes as he slaps his belly and laughs!
You can feel the ground tremble under his feet as he walks!

He's happy and pleased to see us!
Daghda Mor, we welcome you!

The Orator then sings:

Here he comes, Morrighan,
Take that big Daghdha man,
Ride that swell all through the night!
Ba-dum Ba-dum Ba-dum Ba

(repeat as needed)
(By Elizabeth McDonald)

Praise Offerings

The Orator invites the attendees to take the wreath and make any offerings of praise or gifts they wish to make to the Ancestors, the Morrighan, or the Daghdha.

Prayer of Sacrifice

When all have finished their offerings, the Orator takes the wreath to the Fire and says:

Oh Great Morrighan! O Holy Daghdha!
O Mighty Ancestors!

We have made our sacrifices to you all!
We have filled this wreath with our love and our praise.

The Orator throws the wreath on the fire, and adds oil to the offering, saying:

Mighty Kindreds!
Morrighan, Daghdha, Ancestors!

Let our piety increase Your magic!
Let our courage increase Your power!
And let our fertile spirits show the world Your abundance!

All sing the "*Sacrifice Song*":

Let our voices arise on the Fire!
Let our voices resound in the Deep!
Let the Kindreds accept what we offer
As we honor the Old Ways we keep!
(By Anthony Thompson and Ian Corrigan)

Piacular Sacrifice:

Orator takes oil to the fire and says:

If out of ignorance or faulty memory,
If we for any reason have offended You,
O Kindreds of our People,

Hear us now.

Accept this offering in recompense
And know that our hearts
And our intents are pure.

The Omen

The Orator says:

Now let us see what wisdom and blessings the Kindreds
Offer us in return for our sacrifices.

The Orator takes the omen bag and mixes the wooden disks with his fingers, singing softly:

Ancient symbols, speaking to me,
Ancient symbols, speaking through me,
It's your wisdom we're receiving,
Words unspoken, whispered now.
(By Nora Ford)

The Orator pulls three disks and pronounces the Omen.

Calling for the Blessing

Orator takes the Blessing Cup in his hands and says:

Children of Earth, now the flow of sacrifice turns, and it is time for us to receive.

Great Morrighan! Holy Daghdha! Mighty Kindreds!
We have made our sacrifices to You, and now we call for Your blessings, in return!
We ask You!
Give us the Waters of Life!

The People say:

Give us the Waters of Life!

Hallowing the Blessing

The Orator circles his hand over the cup, saying:

Kindreds! We call on You to hallow these Waters with the powers of (first omen stick)!
Fill these Waters with the powers of (second omen stick)!
Infuse these Waters with the powers of (third omen stick)!

Orator raised the cup high, saying:

Mighty Kindreds! Hallow these Waters!
Bless our lives with magic, power and abundance
As we drink of your blessings!

Orator slowly lowers the cup, exhaling loudly as he does so, and says:

Behold, the Waters of Life.

Affirming the Blessings

Children of Earth, this cup contains the blessings of the Kindreds for us to drink.
Is it our wish that this be so?

The People say:

It is!

Orator says:

Then be it so!

The cup is passed to the People while everyone sings, "*Pour the Waters*".

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.
(by Ian Corrigan)

The Working

Trance Journey To Visit the Isles of the Dead A Celtic Trance by Rev. Kirk Thomas

The Orator passes a basket of apples to the People attending. These are to be held during the trance working and may be eaten afterwards or taken home for the home altar.

The following is to be read out loud by someone not taking the journey, or into a recorder for playback at a later time. A *pause* lasts about 3 beats, based on the speed of the reading. A *long pause* lasts about twice as long as a pause. There is also one very long pause of at least a minute in duration. Read this gently, slowly and deliberately.

Orator says:

First of all, make yourself comfortable. Loosen your clothes and either sit or lie down, and close your eyes.

(long pause)

Now, I want you to breathe slowly and evenly. Breathe in – breathe out. Breathe in – breathe out.

(pause)

And while you are breathing, imagine all the tension in your body flowing down and out, into the floor.

(pause)

Feel the tension in your head and neck flow down and out. Let Mother Earth absorb it all – She can take it.

(pause)

As you continue to breathe slowly and evenly,

(pause)

Feel the tension in your shoulders drain away, down and away. And now the tension in your chest and stomach and back just drains away, down through the floor into the earth.

(pause)

Feel the tension in your hips drain away,

(pause)

and the tension in your legs and in your feet drains away, down, down, deep into the earth below us.

(pause)

And while you are breathing, in your mind's eye, you are aware of a mist coming out of your mouth as you exhale.

(pause)

And as you breathe, this mist grows thicker and thicker, until you are completely surrounded by the mist. This mist is warm and bright, and glows gently.

(pause)

Now you can feel yourself floating in the mist, gently floating, with no sense of movement or of direction. Let yourself float for a while, gently enveloped by the warm mist.

(long pause)

Now, as you float in the mist, you can just feel ground beneath you, and you can hear the sounds of the sea, of waves gently breaking upon a beach.

(pause)

And as you listen, you are aware that the mist starts to thin, and as it thins you can see that it is a warm, sunny day, with blue sky filled with the sounds of seagulls, calling to and fro.

(long pause)

Looking out over the sea, you can see a fog bank out over the water, and then, out of the fog bank, you see a small, round boat approaching the shore. And on this boat there is a man.

(pause)

As the boat comes closer, you can just make out the figure. He is dressed in a blue robe, and he has long, white hair and a white beard. There is a small bag tied to his waist, and you can just make out his face. He is young, and very good looking. And he seems very tall.

(pause)

You suddenly realize that this is Manannan mac Lir, God of the Gateway to the Otherworlds, and he is coming to meet you.

(pause)

The boat approaches the shore, effortlessly, with no visible means of propulsion, and it comes to rest on the beach. The God looks at you with a smile and extends his hand.

(pause)

You slowly approach the boat and take his hand. With his help, you manage to get up into the boat.

(pause)

You find yourself standing in the prow of the boat, with the God behind you. And then you can feel the boat move backward, keel scraping on sand, as it then floats freely on the water once again.

(pause)

The boat turns around, and you are heading out to sea, towards the fog bank ahead.

(long pause)

The fog is cold and darker than you thought it would be, but the boat goes on, slapping the waves as it moves.

(pause)

And then just as suddenly, the boat breaks out of the fog and is filled with bright sunshine, the sun in your eyes directly in front of you. The boat moves faster and faster over the waves, and you can feel the ocean spray on your face and the wind in your hair.

(pause)

The sun is sinking towards the horizon ahead of you, and you can just make out a few islands in the distance. The one you are heading for is larger than the others, and has a mountain at its center. As you approach, you can see waves breaking on the beach, and trees beyond.

(long pause)

And you realize that these are the Isles of the Blest, the land of the Holy Dead.

(pause)

The boat comes to rest on the sand, and you see a path leading through the trees and up on to the mountain. You turn around and see the God staring at you. He gestures with his hand towards the path, and you know you must go there.

(pause)

You climb out of the boat

(pause)

...and walk across the sand, feeling the hot sand beneath your feet, hearing it crunch as you walk. You look back, and see the God standing in the small, round boat. He gently gestures to the path once again.

(pause)

You turn back to the path and begin the climb through the trees, hearing them gently sighing in the wind as you go.

(pause)

Beyond the trees, the path starts up the slope, and you climb, going higher and higher.

(long pause)

Now you stop and look back. You can just make out the boat on the beach, the God still standing in it, watching you. Beyond the beach you can just make out the fog bank far to the east.

(pause)

And you return to your climb.

(long pause)

You are now at the top of the hill, and before you there is a small meadow surrounded by trees on three sides. And in this meadow there is someone standing with their back to you.

(pause)

Could this be one of your sacred Dead, an ancestor of heart or blood standing there? You approach, and stop a few feet away from the person.

(pause)

And then the person turns around and faces you.

(long pause)

And the two of you begin to speak with one another.

(very long pause – this should be for a minute or two in length)

You suddenly realize that the light is starting to get dim, and the person smiles at you and turns to go. You look back towards the path behind you, and then when you turn back towards the person you met, you realize that they have gone.

(pause)

So you turn around and head back down the path, more quickly than when you climbed it.

(long pause)

You find yourself on the beach, and the boat is ahead of you. The God is still there, and he gestures to you to join him.

(pause)

You climb on the boat, and no sooner are you onboard than the boat pulls away from the beach, turns around, and heads back toward the fogbank, now glowing orange in the light of the setting sun behind you.

(long pause)

The fog is as cold as before, but the boat is going so fast that it seems like only moments before it breaks clear of the fog...

(pause)

...and you see the beach ahead of you, growing dim in the dying light of day.

(pause)

The boat comes to rest on the sand, and you get out, turning back to face the God, and to give him your thanks.

(long pause)

As you watch, the boat with Manannan mac Lir pulls away from the sand, turns around, and heads for the fog bank, quickly disappearing into it.

(long pause)

You are suddenly very tired, and you lie down on the sand and as you breathe, you see a mist begin to surround you, and thicken deeply.

(pause)

And once again you are gently floating in the warm mist, floating in comfort and in silence.

(long pause)

And now you feel the floor underneath you once again. The mist begins to clear, and you are once again where you started.

(pause)

Take a moment to get your bearings, and then open your eyes.

(pause)

Welcome home!

Thanking the Beings

Orator says:

Children of Earth, as we prepare to depart, let us give thanks to those who have aided us.

Manannan mac Lir! You have taken us to see our Sacred Dead, a great honor!
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank you!

Mighty Daghdá, Good God, You bring life and good times to us all!
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

Dread Morrighan, transformation is what You bring,
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

Mighty Ancestors! We remember You, we long for You, and we welcome You wisdom.
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agaibh!* (GUR uh MAH-gev) We thank you!

Spirits of this Land! We hold the old bargain, bringing prosperity to the Land.
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agaibh!* (GUR uh MAH-gev) We thank you!

Shining and Chthonic Ones! You brighten our lives with blessings and joy!
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agaibh!* (GUR uh MAH-gev) We thank you!

Lady Brigit, once again You have graced us with words of beauty.
And so we say, *Go raigh maith agat!* (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

Manannan mac Lir! You have joined Your magic with ours to open the Gates to the Otherworlds.
We ask You once again to aid us as we close these Gates! And for all Your aide we say,
Go raigh maith agat! (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

Closing the Gates

The Orator leads the People in chanting:

Close the Gates! Close the Gates! Close the Gates!

...while moving clockwise around the circle, and then spinning in place clockwise, ending with:

Let the Fire be flame!
Let the Well be water!
Let the Mountain return to the Midworld!
Dúntar na cómhla breac! (DOON-tar Na Kove-la-breck)
Let the Gates be closed!

The People say:

Let the Gates be closed!

The Orator says:

Children of Earth, we are safely back in the Midworld once again.

Thanking the Earth Mother

The Orator kneels and puts his palms upon the ground, saying:

Earth Mother, without you we could not live. Teach us the ways we must live
In order to heal You and keep you safe.
For upholding the World and granting us Your blessings, we say,

Go raigh maith agat! (GUR uh MAH gut) We thank You!

Closing the Rite

The Orator says:

Let us all stand and hold hands in a circle around our Fire.

The Orator rings the bell three times three, and then says:

May the Blessings of the Gods, our Ancestors, and the Spirits of the Land be upon us all.
Walk with wisdom, Children of Earth, this rite is ended!

All sing, "Walk With Wisdom":

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 you lover, until we meet again!
(Words and Music by Sable)

Analysis:

The structure of this rite is standard Core Order, and I have attempted to divide it up according to each of the 18 steps of the COoR. In some cases, these steps were subdivided down into small segments, but each is in its proper place.

The ritual flowed very, very well, in my opinion, and based on the comments of the attendees, I would say they all thought so, too. It was brought to my attention that since there were so few people attending, we could have gone in rounds for the personal offerings for our own Sacred Dead, and this is a good idea. This was the first time I'd performed this rite for such a small group – in Tucson I usually had 50-100 people attending. And the structure of this part was based on that experience.

We were also aided by the weather, I have to say. It was chilly so that the large fire I was able to make was quite welcome. And the sun set beautifully in a partially cloudy sky, followed by the immediate rising of the full moon on the opposite horizon, both lending an extra magical quality to the rite.

My main purpose for my Samhain rites is to allow the attendees a chance to honor their own Dead and to take us all on a journey to meet with them. The journey portion went well, I feel, and everyone had a good opportunity to meet with loved ones who had already crossed over.