

Slavic Spring Ritual

Written by Michael Talvola and Mia Šerić

Sources: Raven's Cry Grove ritual archives, especially

Summer 2013 ritual – invocations written by Anya

The Early Slavs : Culture and Society in Early Medieval Eastern Europe, Paul M. Barford

Slavic Faith Deities & Commandments, Dmitriy Kushnir

For Ritual March 21, 2015

Parts:

Leaders – Ken and Mike

Warrior – Fiery Heather

Earth Mother - Lisa

Inspiration - Pamela

Two Powers - Lisa

Fire - Sonjia

Well - Brit-El

Tree - Robert

Gates - Ariel

Ancestors - Russell

Nature Spirits - Angela

Shining Ones – Addy

Fire woman - Heather

Russell - Omen

INITIATING THE RITE

Procession and Purification

Mike: Druids! Welcome to the Slavic Spring - Proljetni Ekvinocij [*Prol-yet-nee Eck-vee -no-see*] {*ol as in old*}- ritual of Raven's Cry Grove, ADF!

Release the cares of your mundane life. Take a deep breath in and allow your mind to be still. Thoughts outside of this time are released. You are here spiraling ever forward in the present.

Ken: Feel the pull of our sacred space, calling you, whispering on the wind. In this space we create our sacred realities. We can become all the Kindreds believe us to be. Purification allows us to transform into our sacred selves. Please come forward, be purified, and attune yourself to mythic time. Let go and cross the divide.

Mike: By the light of the fire and might of the water, may this grove be made whole and holy.

Form the Procession – at least two druids form an arch (branches, wheat, corn stalks, etc.). Everyone walks under and is censed/aspersed as they exit the arch.

Purification Chant

*Fire in the Heart, fire of the mind
Fire on the wind, fire out of time*

*Fire of the night, fire of the soul
Fire pure and bright, fire make us whole.
(Repeats until finished)*

Guardian

Here we stand now, gathered in the nemeton. Warrior, call a guardian for our rite!

Heather: *[standing at the entrance]*

Mighty, Perun [**pay-roon**], thunderer!
Keeper of the axe and lightning bolt,
You who protects your people from all harm,
We stand in your sacred grove of Oak and Mighty Trees,
We call upon you for assistance.
We call upon you and your daughter, Mara,
Mistress of Death, Rebirth and Renewal,
To guard us from any energies or forces,
Known or unknown, that do not uphold our rite.
Oh great striker, Perun,
Keep these baleful forces at bay,
Allow us to enter our sacred space in safety and peace.

Offering of wine

Neka bude! [**nay-kah boo-deh**]

Mike: Here we open the roadway to the sacred center. Warrior, mark this space that the outdwellers shall not enter.

Warrior draws a line at the entrance.

Heather: Perun [**pay-roon**] - we ask you to watch this threshold.

Outdwellers

Mike: Druids, as we prepare to make offering to the Outdwellers, please avert your eyes so as not to form a relationship with them, and also look to the Outdwellers in your own hearts. This is a celebration of love. All that we carry into the nemeton today will flower. Take only that which you wish to root, grow, and flourish.

Warrior! Make offering and appease the Outdwellers who do not support our ways.

Heather:

Mighty spirits of chaos,
dwellers of the outer dark,
who have stood against the gods.
You who care not for our ways,
known and unknown to us as Other.
Ancient dark ones,
take this offering in honor and respect
and trouble not our working here this day.

*Warrior makes an offering of **whisky** to the Outdwellers, pouring*

Neka bude! [**nay**-kah **boo**-deh]

Welcome

Mike: *ring chime 3x3 times saying:*

Ancestors! (*chime 3x*)
Nature Spirits! (*chime 3x*)
Shining Ones! (*chime 3x*)

We have crossed the threshold into sacred space. Please reconnect with the sacred cosmos as we prepare to open the gates to the otherworlds, the place where the kindreds will reveal themselves once more.

HONORING THE EARTH MOTHER

Kaila: Majko Zemljo [**My**-ko **Zem**-lyo] {o as in old}, Earth Mother,
Our lives are nursed from your bounty.
You are the food that nourishes us,
The wealth the enriches us,
The ground upon which we walk.
As spring's fires grow, banishing the dark of the winter,
You are awake and alive and dressed in radiance.
Great Mother, we honor you now,
Thanking you for your abundance.
Earth Mother, bless and uphold our rite!

Majko Zemljo [**My**-ko **Zem**-lyo], Prihvati našu žrtvu [*pree*-**h'vah**-tee **nah**-shu **zheh**-tu]
Earth Mother, Accept our Sacrifice!

Neka Bude! [**nay**-kah **boo**-deh]

*offer **corn meal** in the offering bowl and say:*

Earth Mother, accept our offering.

All: Earth Mother, accept our offering!

Statement Of Purpose

Mike: Today we gather between the Earth and Sky.
To worship and honor the Kindred as one people.
To sing their praise and make our sacrifice.
As we seek their blessings in return.

Ken: We are here to celebrate the coming of Spring – a day of equal light and dark, as our Ancestors did for generations before us, and as our children will do, generations hence.

Mike: As our ancestors did and our children may do, so do we now: we are here to honor the Old Bargain between mortals and the Kindreds. So let us join together as one folk to make our offerings in joy and reverence.

Neka bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]!

All: Neka bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

Inspiration

Rhythmic drumming to accompany the inspiration invocation

Ken: Zora! Great goddess. We ask you for inspiration for our rite!

Pamela:

Zora [*zoh-rah*],
Glorious and beautiful morning star,
First to rise at dawn, the very spark of inspiration.
May your light shine down on us,
Bringing us your gifts of illumination,
Quicken our wits and our tongues,
Sharpen our minds and open our hearts.
May our words be true and our songs pleasing to you,

Offer olive oil

Zora Utrennaya [*zoh-rah oo-TREN-nah-yah*],
Prihvati našu žrtvu [*pree-h'vah-tee nah-shu zeh-tu*]

Zora [*zoh-rah*], accept our sacrifice!

All: Zora, accept our sacrifice.

Neka bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

Establish the Group Mind

Lisa: [Two powers meditation]

RECREATE THE COSMOS

Mike: Druids, let us now re-establish the Sacred Center of the Worlds.

The Three Realms

The waters support and surround us.
The land extends about us.
The sky stretches above us.
And the center burns a living flame.
Let us pray with a good fire.
May all the Kindred bless us.
May our worship be true.
May our actions be just.
May our love be pure.
Blessings and honor and worship to the holy ones.

Well, Fire, and Tree

Brit-El:

Cauldron of the Underworld and Chthonic Ones, Portal to the Ancestors, Dark churning waters of mystery, chaos, and wisdom, we sanctify you here with reverence.

offering of silver (Remain standing at well)

Sonja:

Fire of the Heavens and Shining Ones, Portal to the Gods, Bright tongue of inspiration, order, and will, we sanctify you here with reverence.

offering of oil (Remain standing at fire)

Robert:

Ancient World Tree, Portal to all the worlds, Sturdy keeper of the Land, of history and time, we sanctify you here with reverence.

offering of water (Remain standing at tree)

Brit-El:

(Still standing at well) Sacred Well, flow deep within us!

All: (Repeat).

Sonja:

(Still standing at fire) Sacred Fire, burn bright within us!

All: (Repeat).

Robert:

(Still standing at tree) Sacred Tree, grow strong within us!

All: (Repeat).

Ken:

The fire, the well, the sacred tree,
Flame and flow and grow in me!
In land, sea and sky,
Below and on high!
Thus is the sacred grove claimed and hallowed.

Neka bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

All: Neka bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

OPEN THE GATES

Ariel:

Veles [*Vell-ess*], God of the Deep,
God of the Underworld and the Waters,
You who are rich with cattle and wealth,
You of lowlands and pastures,
We call on you to open and stand guard at the gateway,
This portal between worlds.
Wield your mighty magic to hold these gates,
Use your cunning to allow no harm to pass.
So that our words may be heard through all the worlds.

offering of oil at each of the hallows as each are addressed

Veles [*Vell-ess*], join your will with ours.

Let the fire be opened now, as a gate to the Shining Ones.

Let the well be opened now, as a gate to the Otherworld,

Let the tree stand as an connector of the ways,
to serve as a path to all the Worlds.

Open as a road to our voices so that they may be heard by the kindreds.

Veles [*Vell-ess*],

Neka vrata budu otvorena, [*nay-ka vrat-a boo-doo oat-voh-ray-na*]

Let the Gates Be Open!

Neka Bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

Ken: Druids, we are now at the center of the cosmos. We are woven into the sacred

fabric of the universe. Here, the Kindreds can hear our thoughts and know our hearts. Let there only be truth here.

INVITING THE THREE KINDREDS

Mike: Druids! Make our offerings to the Kindreds – the Ancient Ones, the Noble Ones, and the Shining Ones.

Ancestors

Ken: Now, we will make our offering to the Ancestors.

Russell:

Ancient Ones, Drevni [*drev-nee*] You who lie deep within this land, you whose memories hold it, and whose hearts are tied to its very essence; tribes of old, we offer you welcome!

Grandmothers and grandfathers, our beloved dead, kin of blood and heart, ancient tribes whose legacy is in our veins, we offer you welcome!

Elders and wise ones, you who guide the people, wise men and women of ancient days, we offer you welcome!

Mighty Ancestors, Drevni [*drev-nee*] we would give you honour and praise, and we would ask that you join us here today!

offering of oil

Ancestors, accept our sacrifice!

All: Ancestors, accept our sacrifice!
Neka bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

Ken: Druids, close your eyes, take a moment, and feel the Ancestors as they join us here.

Allow a few moments

Nature Spirits

Ken: Now, we will make our offering to the Nature Spirits.

Angela:

Noble Ones, Plemeniti, [*pleh-men-ee-tee*]

Spirits of the land, hear your friends and companions!

Our kindred of stone and stream, rock and fertile soil, kin of the earth, we offer you welcome!

Our kindred of green, herb and flower, the smallest shrubs and the mightiest trees,
roots and stems and fruits; Green kin, we offer you welcome!
Our kindred of fur and feather and fin, our kindred who walk or fly or swim or crawl,
Plemeniti [*pleh-men-ee-tee*] we offer you welcome!

offering of flowers

Nature Spirits, accept our sacrifice!

All: Nature Spirits, accept our sacrifice!
Neka bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

Ken: Druids, close your eyes, take a moment, and feel the Nature Spirits as they join us here.

Allow a few moments

Shining Ones

Ken: Now, we will make our offering to the Shining Ones.

Addy:

Shining Ones, Svijetleći [*svee-yet-leh-chee*], your children call out to you, hear us
eldest and brightest!

The first children of the mother, our wisest and mightiest, loving and comforting, gods
and goddesses, we offer you welcome!

Gods and goddesses of this place, ancient and powerful, known or unknown to us,
gods of this place, we offer you welcome!

All of the deities of those here gathered, with whom we worship, you who bless our
lives, our patrons and matrons, we offer you welcome!

Svijetleći [*svee-yet-leh-chee*], , we would give you honor and praise, and ask that
you would join us here this day.

offering of silver triskele

Gods and Goddesses, accept our sacrifice!

All: Gods and Goddesses, accept our sacrifice!
Neka bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

Ken: Druids, close your eyes, take a moment, and feel the Gods and Goddesses as
they join us here.

Allow a few moments

Praise Offerings

Mike: Druids, as the spirit moves you, come forward and make praise offerings to the

Kindreds or your Patrons. You may offer at the well, fire, or tree, sing songs, recite poetry, dance, would bring pleasure to the Kindreds.

Folk make offerings as they will

KEY OFFERINGS

The story

Mike: Jarilo [*yaw-ree-low*] was a major male Proto-Slavic deity of vegetation, fertility and spring, also associated with war and harvest. He was a life-death-rebirth deity, (re)born and killed every year. His mythical life cycle followed the yearly life of various wheat plants, from seeding through vegetation to harvest. Jarilo was a son of the supreme Slavic god of thunder, Perun, his lost, missing, tenth son, born on the last night of February, the festival of Velja Noć [*Vell-yah knowch*] (Great Night), the pagan Slavic celebration of the New Year. On the same night, however, Jarilo was stolen from his father and taken to the world of dead, where he was adopted and raised by Veles, Perun's enemy, Slavic god of the underworld and cattle.

The Slavs believed the underworld to be an ever-green world of eternal spring and wet, grassy plains, where Jarilo grew up guarding the cattle of his stepfather. The land of dead lay across the sea, where migrating birds would fly every winter. With the advent of spring, Jarilo returned from the otherworld, that is, from across the sea, into the living world, bringing spring and fertility to the land

Ken: The first of gods to notice Jarilo's return to the living world was Marzanna [*Mar-zhah-nah*], goddess of death and nature, and also a daughter of Perun and Jarilo's twin-sister. The two of them fall in love and court each other through a series of traditional, established rituals. The divine wedding between the brother and the sister, two children of the supreme god, is celebrated in a festival of summer solstice, today known by various names in the various Slavic countries - Ivanjski krijesovi [*ee-vhan-yis-kee kree-yes-o-vee*] in Croatia, which we celebrated two years ago.

Invocations of the Deities of the Occasion

JARILO

Mike:

Jarilo, White God of Spring!
Horse God, Son of Mighty Perun,
You have emerged from the Underworld from Veles' grasp,
Victorious and ready to seek your bride.
Where you walk the fields grow fertile and green.
Your arrival is announced by the singing of birds,
The scent of flowers blossoming,
The taste of fruit ripening on the vine.
The earth has greened and the pulse of life has quickened,

Prihvatite našu žrtvu, [*pree-h'vah-dee-tay nah-shu zheh-tu*] cheerful Jarilo,
Celebrate with us in this rite!
Neka Bude! [*nay-kah boo-deh*]

Slavic Spring Traditions

Eggs previously prepared with yellow and gold colors are passed to all. A selection of small decorative stickers with traditional symbols are passed around for all to decorate their eggs. Then the eggs are exchanged with neighbors to take home.

Drowning of Winter – associated with goddess Marzanna
A corn dolly is thrown into the fire, symbolizing leaving Winter behind.

Bards: [*Offertory song*]

PRAYER OF SACRIFICE

Ken:

O Noble, Ancient and Shining Ones!
Incense have we offered to Your shrines!
Offerings have we made through the Well, Fire and Tree!
Kindreds! All this we give to You in the name of Hospitality.
May our Piety increase Your magic!
May our Courage increase Your Power!
And may our Fertile Spirits show the world Your abundance!
Mighty Kindreds, accept our sacrifices!

PIACULAR OFFERING

Mike:

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 as recompense,
And know our hearts and our intent are pure.

OMEN

Ken: Seer, what blessings and wisdom do the Kindreds offer us in return?

Russell: *takes the omen*

Ken:

Druids, all our offerings, all we have done so far in our rite, have led to this moment. This is magic time! We have made offerings to the Powers, and now we shall ask for their blessings in return. Visualize the blessings that each of you desire and need from the Kindreds. See it clearly in your mind's eye. And when we ask for the Waters of Life, when we say, "Give us the Waters of Life", see the blessing you desire descend into the upraised cup like a mist, filling the cup. And when we drink of the Waters, you will receive your blessing. So close your eyes and take a moment to visualize your needs, and the needs of our Grove, that we may all receive the blessings we desire.

Allow time for the people to meditate on needs and desires. Mike pours Croatian Wine into the cup and holds it.

Ken: O Ancient, Noble and Shining Ones! We have offered to you, so we ask for your gifts in return.

Mike *elevates the Waters.*

Ken: Hallow these waters! Bless our lives with Magic, Power and Abundance as we drink of your essence. Kindreds, we ask you, **give us the waters of life!**

All: Give us the waters of life!

A pause...

Ken: Behold the waters of life! Druids, drink of the waters of life!

Song: *Pour the Waters one time, then drumming and music etc.*

AFFIRMATION OF THE BLESSING

Mike: We have drunk of the Waters of Life! The Powers have given us true and wondrous blessings. We affirm the gifts of our Kindreds and acknowledge their power in our lives.

Druids, do you accept the gifts of the Gods?

All: We do!

THANKING AND CLOSING THE GATES

Mike: The Mighty Ones have blessed us! So as we prepare to depart, let us give thanks to those who have aided us.

Pamela: Zora!, inspiration to us all.
Zahvaljujemo! [**zah**-vol-ee-yem-oh] We thank you!

All: We thank you!

Ken: Gods and Goddesses of elder days; noble Spirits of the Land; mighty Ancestors; our Kindreds, we say, Zahvaljijemo! [**zah**-vol-ee-yem-oh] We thank you!

All: We thank you!

Heather: Mighty Perun, Guardian of our Rite tonight, For your Watching and Warding, Through magic and arms, we say, Zahvaljijemo! [**zah**-vol-ee-yem-oh] We thank you!

All: We thank you!

Mike:

Veles, Keeper of the Gates between, we say: Zahvaljijemo! [**zah**-vol-ee-yem-oh] We thank you!

Once more we ask you to join your magic with ours and aid us as we close the gates.

Now let the fire be flame

Let the well be water;

And let the tree be but the very heart of us all that we carry forth from this place!

Let all be as it was before.

Neka vrata budu zatvorena [**nay**-ka **vrat**-a **boo**-doo zawt-**vo**h-ray-na]

Let the Gates now be closed!

All: Let the Gates now be closed!

THANKING THE EARTH MOTHER

Lisa: Majko Zemljo [**My-ko Zem-lyo**] {o as in old}, Earth Mother... We give you all remaining offerings, for what comes from the Earth may return to the Earth.

Pour remaining cup to the ground

For upholding the world and granting us Your blessings, we say:

Primi Zahvaljujemo! [**pree-mee zah-vol-ee-yem-oh**] We thank you!

All: We thank you!

CLOSING THE RITE

Ken: Once again, we have continued in our traditions, honoring the Gods, Ancestors and Nature Spirits, just as in times of old. We have made offerings to our Kindreds and received their blessings in return.

But great energy has been raised within us this day! Let us be grounded once more.

lead final grounding.

Mike: *rings the chime 3x3*

Walk with wisdom, Druids. This rite is ended!
Neka bude! [**nay-kah boo-deh**]

All: Neka bude! [**nay-kah boo-deh**]