

Bardic Blessing Rite
April 13, 2007, 7:00 pm
Moonstones Metaphysical Haven
Presented by Second Fridays with Sassafras Grove, ADF
Pittsburgh, PA USA

By Diane Lynn "Emerald" Vaughn
(unless otherwise credited)

Purification

Participants wash hands in a bowl of clear water and dry them on a clean cloth as they approach the ritual space.

Musical Signal: Nine knells with sacred dingers.

Opening prayer: *We have come to honor the Blessed Ones! Esto!*

Acknowledging the Outsiders:

To the Titans who stood against father Zeus, and to all forces of Chaos. We acknowledge you as we ask you to leave this work in peace. Take this token as a sign of the peace between us and trouble us not.

Take the token to the threshold or boundary of the space.

Invocation to the Bardic Patron: Orpheus

*Gentle Orpheus. . .
Poet of the Mysteries, Beloved son of Kalliope
The power of your song could move stone, calm the rushing rivers
And coax the trees to dance
Even the beasts of the wood harkened to your lyre.
Father of songs, Companion of the Argonauts,
The glory of your voice silenced even the Sirens' song
And its power could drive the lively Nymphs to weep
For love you traveled to Hades dark realm
To claim your lost bride you wooed even Death
And melted the heart of Persephone Queen*

*Gracious bard, priest and mystic beyond compare
Smile on your initiates, grant us a measure of your power
Infuse our speech with honeyed phrases
Grace our voices with shimmering tones
For us who live a life sweetened by your legacy.
Orpheus, Accept our Offering!*

Make Offering

Honoring the Hearth Goddess: Hestia

Light hearth lamp.

*Queen Hestia, daughter of mighty Kronos,
Mistress of ever burning and peerless fire, you dwell in the house's center.
May you hallow the initiates of this rite.*

*You are the home of the blessed gods, and men's mighty buttress,
Eternal, many-shaped, beloved, and grass-yellow.*

*Smile, O blessed one, and kindly accept this offering,
Wafting upon us prosperity and gentle-handed health.*

**For worshipping at a common hearth, we become one tribe, one people, one Grove* (Hunt after Serith)
Hestia, accept our offering!*

(Orphic Hymn #84 – to Hestia, Apostolos N. Athanassakis, trans)

Make offering

Honoring the Earth Mother: Gaia

*Divine earth, mother of men and of the blessed gods,
you nourish all, you give all, you bring all to fruition, and you destroy all.
When the season is fair you are heavy with fruit and growing blossoms;
and, o multiform maiden, you are the seat of the immortal cosmos,
and in the pains of labour you bring forth fruit of all kinds.*

*Eternal, reverend, deep-bosomed, and blessed,
you delight in the sweet breath of grass, o goddess bedecked with flowers.
Yours is the joy of the rain, and round you the intricate realm of the stars
revolves in endless and awesome flow.*

*But, o blessed goddess, may you multiply the gladsome fruits
and, together with the beautiful seasons, grant us favour.*

Great Mother, we honour you!

(Orphic Hymn #26 to Gaia, Apostolos N. Athanassakis, trans)

Touch or kiss the ground/floor.

Remembering Brigid

*I light this candle in honor of Brigid
The Matron of Sassafras Grove
Through the years you have been midwife
To many changes and new beginnings within our grove.
You foster our hope through good times and hard,
Through challenge and victories*

*You are the source of all our work
The voice in our song
The strength of our arm
The hand that heals discord
The inspiration of all we create
Lady of the Hearth Fire
Lady of the Sacred Wells
Lady of our grove
Remember us as we remember you
(Maria Stoy)*

Ground and Center: Emerald

Statement of Intent

We come together this night to worship together in the ADF way. Each of us has prepared an offering of verbal praise to a specific Deity, Ancestor, or Worldly Spirit in thanks for the role they have played in our lives or in order to initiate or deepen a relationship with that being. Our intent is to not only further our work with the Kindreds, but to deepen our bonds of community by learning more about each other's spiritual path. We also seek to exercise and hone our bardic skills by using them in a sacred setting. May we be so blessed. Esto!

Recreation of the Cosmos

Place the Omphalos Stone in the center of the altar, at the base of the Tree or Sacred Pillar, and say:

I place this stone as the Omphalos, the naval of the world, the sacred center of all the Cosmos. (Pour libation over stone or anoint with oil). Like the sacred stone at Delphi, let this stone be the place where Zeus's eagles did meet to mark the center of the world. Let this stone mark the grave of the Pythian serpent, slain by Delian Apollon. Through this sacred center, let the World Tree grow, plunging deep within the earth to touch the Sacred Waters below and reaching through the sky to embrace the Sacred Fires above.

Make offering to the Well and say:

*I call Flowing Ocean from whom first arose both Gods and mortals,
Sire incorruptible, whose waves surround and encircle mighty Earth,
You are the Father of Earth's pure bubbling fountains,
every river and the spreading sea.
Hear me, Mighty Father
whose waters purify the Divine Powers,
Earth's limit, Fountain of polarity,
whose wide-spreading waves ever roll,
Approach gently, and be forever kind to Your mystics.
(Orphic Hymn #82 to Ocean, Virginia Stewart-Avalon, trans.)*

Emerald asperges all with Waters from the Well and leads all in chanting:

*Feel the ebb
Feel the flow
Filled with the power
Of the waters below.*

Make offering to the Fire, and say:

*Primal Fire, ascend to me with the dawn, and rule the sky.
Glory of the Sun, with burning luster illumine even the silver Goddess Selene.
Aethereal Fire, radiant heat that inspires life,
Light Bearer, Power of Stars,
Cause now the blooming of the iris and the rose,
And to the grain be kind,
Hear my prayer of supplication,
And be thou ever innocent, serene, and gentle to our Land.
(Orphic Hymn #4 to Fire, Virginia Stewart-Avalon, trans.)*

Emerald lights candle from Sacred fire and brings it around the circle while leading all in chanting:

*Feel the heat
Feel the might
Pulse with the power
Of the Fire's light*

All say:

*Sanctified we stand at the Center of the World
In the light of the Fire with the flow of the Well
We now call to Hermes, the Guide of the Gods
That we may open the Ways between.*

Gatekeeper Invocation: Hermes

All stand in a circle and hold hands with eyes closed. Emerald stands in the middle with the sacred dingers.

*Benevolent Hermes, befriender of men
Lending your strength to mortals in need
Kind-hearted god, guider of souls
Hermes, Show us the Way! (All repeat)*

*Gracious Hermes, giver of joy
Passing time in rustic pleasures
Companion of nymphs, traveling the wilds
Hermes, Show us the Way! (All repeat)*

*Glorious Hermes, crafty and quick
Speeding aloft on winged feet
Herald of Gods, Traverser of Realms
Hermes, Show us the way! (All repeat x3)*

Hermes Meditation

*Know in your heart that Hermes is with us. Fix his image fast in your mind. As a citizen of the Western World, his image is seeded deep within your consciousness. Remember. . . the winged sandals. . . the short cloak. . . the wide-brimmed hat. . . the curling hair. . . the golden wand. He may appear to you as a beardless youth or as a man in his prime—the gods wear many faces as it please them. But more than any physical quality, there is one sense of him that seems to define him—a sense of movement. He seems as if he will take-off at any moment, and as the herald of Zeus, the god of travel, and the guide of souls, he is a god in motion. Light on his feet, quick and agile, he is a quintessential guide. And tonight, he is **our** guide. Being in his presence makes you feel the same, light and quick and ready to move as if your feet too bear wings. You know that with Hermes as our guide, we can move between the worlds, traverse the realms, and open the gates. We have the power. And with his image firmly in your mind and this knowledge firmly in your heart, we open our eyes, and we open the ways.*

Gateway Opening

Crouch down and touch the floor or ground with your dominant hand. Draw a clockwise spiral on the floor, and feel the gate the Underworld open beneath you.

Let the Gate to the Underworld be open! (All repeat)

Emerald dings the sacred dinger.

Now stand upright and hold your hands out in front of you, palms facing forward. Pull your hands apart as if you were parting a curtain, and feel the gate to the hidden realms open before you.

Let the Gate to the Otherworld be open! (All repeat)

Emerald dings the sacred dinger.

Now stand up as straight as you can with your non-dominant arm reaching to the ceiling. Place your dominant hand just above the elbow on your up-stretched arm. Bending your elbow, raise your dominant hand straight up so it is parallel with your other arm and feel the gate to the celestial realms open above you.

Let the Gate to the Upperworld be open! (All repeat)

Emerald dings the sacred dinger.

*With Hermes as our guide, we have opened the gates.
From below, from around, from above, the Mighty Kindreds draw near,
Ready to receive our hospitality.
The Gates are open! Esto!*

Invocations and Offerings to the Three Kindreds

Offerings are made to the each Kindred as a whole during the song.

Chorus: *The Waters flow around us
The Fires burn within us
Standing tall we gather at the center of the World
Upon the Earth our Mother
We worship here together
All as One we gather at the center of the World*

*Upon the Land, within the Sea, and soaring through the Sky
The Spirits of this World our home with whom we all ally
We come to offer friendship to the beings of this place
In harmony we dance with them within the sacred space*

Chorus

*The ancient ones of hearth and kin who lived in elder days
Their wisdom, lore and memory inspire all our ways
To Grandmothers and Grandfathers, all our love we bring
In fellowship we honor them together as we sing*

Chorus

*All the Gods and Goddesses of the Sky and Earth
Warriors, healers, smiths and bards; lords of death and birth
We offer to the Shining Ones devotion, love and praise
In one voice we pray to them with open hearts ablaze*

Invocations and Offerings to the Deity(ies) of the Occasion (Key Offerings)

Each person takes a turn coming forward and giving their praise offering to their Worldly Spirit, Ancestor, or Deity of their choice.

[We ended up having a perfect balance of people offering to a deity, an ancestor, and a nature spirit.]

Prayer of Sacrifice

All:
With the aid of Mighty Hermes, we opened the ways

*We have given freely with devotion, love and praise
Here we stand before you with our open hearts ablaze
Holy Ones, Accept our offerings!*

Omen

Diana will take the omen.

Asking for and Hallowing the Blessings

All:

*The Power of the Mighty flows through this place
From below, from around, from above,
Let the Power converge at the Sacred Center
With strength and wisdom and love*

Receiving the Blessings: Guided Meditation

Emerald leads a guided meditation where each person interacts with the being to whom they gave praise.

Remember that Hermes is with us, and once again, he acts as our guide. Reach out and touch him, and together, we travel. . .

We find ourselves in a round room, and we know that it is a sacred place, a holy place. A hearth fire burns at the center, and it is tended by the hearth goddess, Hestia. She is dressed in flowing garments of red, yellow and orange, and her dark hair and eyes shine in the firelight. As you approach, you can feel the comforting warmth of the fire and of the welcoming smile she gives you. But this is not your final destination.

Hermes calls out to those who made an offering of praise this night to one of the Worldly Spirits. You follow him out a back door of this place, into a lush garden. There you find trees of every type, brilliant flowers in bloom, soft grasses, and sparkling springs. And you abide here, waiting.

Hermes next calls to those who made offerings of praise to an Ancestor this night. To the right of the hearth, you see a stone archway. You follow Hermes through the arch, down a flight of curving stairs, and into feasting hall. Cheerful torches line the walls and the long table is covered with every type of good food and drink. You take a seat at the table, and wait.

Finally, Hermes calls to those who offered praise to a Deity this night. You follow him to a stone archway to the left of the hearth, and up a flight of curving stairs. The staircase opens upon a large, rectangular temple, with sides open to the air. The temple is filled with sunlight and fragrant incense. And you wait, expectantly.

Everyone has reached their place. And now they arrive, the ones we honored this night. They have heard our call, and they are pleased. They have come to bestow their blessings. As you interact with

your special one, he or she may give you a word, a phrase, an image, or feeling. Take some time to enjoy their company in this sacred place.

And now it is time to take our leave. You look around, and see each other, but notice that the Blessed Ones have gone, but the blessings they have given you fill your heart. Once more Hermes comes to collect us, and we follow him back to the hearth fire. And once more, we reach out and touch him, and travel.

And we arrive back here, in our own sacred place, in the basement of Moonstones. And when you feel ready, open your eyes.

Affirmation of the Blessings

Emerald passes out the cards and pens (everyone receives their own mini Sharpie as a Pagan free prize), and invites everyone to write down the blessings they have received.

Any Work Yet Undone?

Farewell to the Kindreds

Deities

*To the Deities, Great Goddesses and Gods, Deathless Blessed Ones
We thank you for your many blessings this night
As our bonds of *ghosti grow ever stronger.
Deities, Hail and Farewell!*

Ancestors

*To our Ancestors of blood and hearth, and all our Heroes
We thank you for your many blessings this night.
Our love is yours, as we know yours is ours.
Ancestors, Hail and Farewell!*

Nature Spirits

*Nature Spirits, Worldly Spirits, Spirits of Place
We thank you for your many blessings this night
As we continue to share our world in peace and harmony.
Nature Spirits, Hail and Farewell!*

Closing the Gates

Remember once again the feeling of being in the presence of Hermes Psychopompos, Guide of the Gods. And know that just as we had the power to open the gates, we have the power to close them as well.

Stand up as straight as you can with both of your arms reaching to the ceiling or sky. Bend your dominant arm at the elbow, back to the starting position, and feel the gate to the bright, celestial realms close above you.

Let the Gate to the Upperworld be closed! (All repeat)

Emerald dings the sacred dinger.

Stand upright and hold your hands out to either side of you, palms facing out. Pull your hands back together as if you are closing a curtain, and feel the gate to the hidden realms close before you.

Let the Gate to the Otherworld be closed! (All repeat)

Emerald dings the sacred dinger.

Crouch down and touch the floor or ground with your dominant hand. Draw a counter-clockwise spiral on the floor, and feel the gate to the Underworld close beneath you.

Let the Gate to the Underworld be closed! (All repeat)

Emerald dings the sacred dinger.

With Hermes as our guide, we have closed the gates. Esto!

Farewell to the Gatekeeper

*Hermes Psychopompos, Guide of the Gods
We thank you for your guidance this night
Thank you for helping us to find the power within us
And for granting us a measure of your own
Great Hermes, Hail and Farewell!*

Restoration of the Ordinary

Let the Well be but water, let the Fire be but flame.

Take the Omphalos stone away from the base of the Tree and place it elsewhere.

Let all be as it was before, only better. Esto!

Regrounding/Centering

Take three deep breaths, and feel the powers of Earth and Sky that fill you now recede. Take a moment to reflect on the work you have done and the blessings you have received.

Thanking the Earth Mother

*Divine earth, mother of men and of the blessed gods, we thank you for your support and sustenance.
Earth Mother, we thank you.*

Touch or kiss the ground/floor or any representation you may have of the Earth Mother.

Thanking the Hearth Goddess

*Queen Hestia, Mistress of ever burning and peerless fire
We thank you for your warmth, light, and protection.
Hestia, we thank you.*

Blow out candle.

Thanking the Bardic Patron - Orpheus

*Gentle Orpheus. . .
Poet of the Mysteries
Priest and mystic beyond compare
We thank you for your blessings this night
Orpheus, Hail and Farewell!*

Closing Prayer: *We have honored the Blessed Ones, and we have done the work well. Esto!*

Musical Signal: Nine knells with sacred dingers.

End of rite.