

## **Samhain Celebration**

### **Altar**

Four directions: candle, incense, water bowl, stones

### **Centering**

### **Invocation**

#### **Samhain Invocation**

*The Faerie Ride*

By Ella Young

Forget the hearth,  
Forget the roof,  
Set the wheel aside:  
Leave your weaving,  
Warp and woof,  
Steal out to us this Samhain-tide.

Steal out to us, our tossing hair  
Sets sun and moon and stars aflare.  
The racing winds are hounds beside  
The cloud-maned horses that we ride.  
Come ride with us, have heart to dare  
The plunging steed, the steeps of air;  
The swirling, high tumultuous flight,  
The faery hooves – this Samhain Night.

### **Chant: Earth My Body**

### **Circle Cast**

### **History**

#### **Samhain History**

In Scotland, Samhain ushers in the reign of Cailleach Bheur, whom we met in February as the hag queen who rules over the winter season until the return of Bride in early spring. Her name literally means the “Veiled One,” an epithet often applied to those who belong to hidden worlds. She is the weather spirit responsible for the gales that lash the northeast, and local fishermen gave her the ironic epithet “Gentle Annie.”

On the threshold of the dark half of the year, the Cailleach has much to teach us about darkness. Beltaine, the other great gateway of the Celtic year, initiated us through light, bringing sunshine and communion. Samhain is the ying to Beltaine's yang. At Beltaine we learn through relationship; at Samhain we learn through separating and allowing to die that which is no longer useful in our lives. Having harvested the kernels of our soul's growth this year, we now begin clearing our inner fields of leftover stalks and stubble. By doing so, we align ourselves with the cosmic cycle of death and rebirth.

### **Honoring The Beloved Dead**

Place a food that was special to the Beloved on the altar. Say a few words about the beloved and the selected food.

### **Song: Sunrise, Sunset**

### **Letting Go: A Banishing Spell**

Ask yourself the following and write a list for each:

1. What old habits, patterns and ways of being no longer serve you and your relationships?
2. What things from the past adversely affect your family's or your community's well-being and would best be forgiven and forgotten?
3. What does our planet need less of to make it more healthy?

Choose one item from each list that you genuinely wish to release.

Now take a piece of yarn, string, or cord and make three knots in it, one for each issue. As you make each knot, visualize each situation clearly, and imagine every aspect of it being firmly bound in the knot. Bury the knotted cord where sun, wind, and rain cannot touch it, and let it rot away.

### **Song: Turn, Turn**

## Story: Tam Linn

O I forbid you, maidens all  
That wear flowers in your hair,  
To come or go by Carterhaugh,  
For young Tamlin is there.

### Janet of Carterhaugh

- Riding across stream bordering Carterhaugh woods
- Remembers father's words
- Remembers maids warning
  - Tamlin knight of the Faerie Queen
  - Demands fee of maidens: gold ring, green mantle or maidenhead

### Well in Carterhaugh Woods

- Janet picks stem with twin roses; Tamlin challenges; Janet asserts ownership; fee
- TL takes J thru woods to bank of moss; bodies entwine like twin roses

### Castle

- J pregnant; locked in tower; father seeks husband; J escapes in late October

### Well

- J picks rose heads, petals fallen; TL appears and hugs; J asks if child's father human
- TamLin: grandfather's hunt, pony fell behind & stumbled; fell onto faerie mound, queen captured
  - 7 year tithe due devil this night
  - breaking spell: let ride the black & brown steed; stop the white; hold on thru transformations; cover naked man with cloak

### Well: frosty stars

- J hides; awaits faerie host; grabs reins of white horse; pulls TL into arms
- TL becomes adder, bear with noxious breath, hot iron bar

- J holds on; falls into well; TL naked man; covers with green cloak
- Faerie Queen:

Then up spoke the Queen of Faeries  
 And an angry woman was she,  
 She's taken away the bonniest knight,  
 In all my company

- Host retreats beneath lightening sky

Samhain teaches us about our Shadow: all the fears, blind spots, negativity, and unresolved issues about ourselves and life in general that must be recognized, accepted, and reclaimed before we can become whole. Much of the power of Celtic spirituality lies in this willingness to embrace our dark side. Rather than insisting that we turn ever toward the light, as certain New Age spiritual paths would have us do, the Celtic dark Goddess takes us down to bring us face-to-face with our own hidden darkness.

The Cailleach, the Morrigan, and all Hag aspects of the goddess play the role of the Dweller on the Threshold, the figure who guards the entrance to the inner planes. She is the Queen of Air and Darkness, who embodies our darkness in a fearsome manner, yet she is not evil in herself; she is merely reflecting back to us our own weaknesses, illusions and fears.

The story of Tamlin teaches us about facing our Shadow on the way to achieving the unity of self required for spiritual work. The heroine, Janet, dares to defy her family and rescue her lover from his Underworld bondage to the Faerie Queen, an aspect of the Dark goddess. Love gives her the courage to hold onto him even though he shape shifts into some terrifying forms. Because she holds him tight, however much it hurts, the Faerie Queen is vanquished. Tamlin can be seen as Janet's hitherto unintegrated masculine side who emerges from the well of her subconscious when she does a bold, courageous act. In the original ballad version of the story, they marry - her feminine and masculine sides unite - and Janet's child, her true Self, is born.

## **Meditation**

It is midnight. You are standing at the foot of a mountain in the North Country. A glimmer of starlight reveals huge boulders strewn over a rocky landscape of cliffs and ridges. It is very cold as you stand there breathing in the icy air, and you can see the vapor of your breath as you exhale. The silence is profound, but every now and then it is broken by the sound of the wind as it blows down from the peaks.

As your eyes grow accustomed to the dim light, you discern a white trail switchbacking through the rocks ahead, and you know this is your path. You begin the steep ascent up the forbidding slopes, following the faint white ribbon in front of you, passing an occasional cairn of stones marking the way and showing that others have gone before you. And after a long time, or a short time, or no time at all, you are aware that the path has led you to a huge pile of stones in the shape of a chair, carved with many spirals and concentric circles.

It is the Hag's Chair and she is sitting there, looking down at you from an eye in the middle of her forehead: a huge Old Woman with a face of midnight blue in which her one eye shines like a star. Frost white hair falls down like snowdrifts about her body. Two iron claws emerge from her midnight blue robes; one holds a great iron hammer. On one shoulder perches an owl with unblinking topaz eyes; at her feet lies a long, gray wolf, asleep.

As you approach her, she slowly stands, and it is like a mountain rising. She motions you to follow her, and she leads you over starlit rocky ground to a high cliff top. There she tells you to lie down on your stomach and peer over the edge. You find yourself gazing into a deep, dark boiling whirlpool out of which an image arises...the image of your Shadow self – a part of you that you usually keep hidden. Your Shadow self may personify your anger, jealousy, pride, or any part of you that you find hard to accept.

Look closely at this figure.  
Observe what feelings arise within yourself as you do so.  
Now tell your Shadow honestly how you feel about it....  
And now give your Shadow a voice and let it respond....  
Ask your Shadow what it wants from you....  
Again, listen to its response....  
Why does it want that?  
What does it have to offer you if you meet its needs?  
Dialogue back and forth in this manner until the two of you reach an agreement.  
Once you have reached an agreement, look at your Shadow again and notice if it  
has changed in any way....  
Thank your Shadow for this meeting and watch as its image slowly dissolves back  
into the whirlpool.

You stand up and take a step back – and see that you are now no longer looking at a mirror but into the one deep, pool like eye of the Cailleach as she sits before you on her stone chair. And as you continue to look into that eye, it is like gazing into the vast reaches of the midnight sky itself, illuminated by countless shining stars... You are filled with a sense of calm, peace, and well being that seems to last a very long time. Gradually you become aware that you are indeed gazing into the starry sky, and the Old Woman is no longer there. Her stone chair is empty and the owl and the wolf are gone, and you stand alone on a wintry mountainside, with the wind blowing about you. As you walk back down the narrow white trail, you gradually become aware that you are lying in *this* room, in *this* time and place, and when you reach the foot of the mountain, you open your eyes and return fully, feeling wide awake, calm, and relaxed.

**Circle opened**