

A Perennial Course in Living Druidry

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WHITE WAKING MOON (January - February)

Moon : White Waking

White Waking is the name I give to this moon. Spend time with those words each evening as the moon waxes, each morning as you rise to the waning moon of this tide: What is the power within them at this time? As you do so, be wakeful, too, to your environment through this moon's cycle and allow your own name to emerge - one that speaks of your own relationship with nature at this time.

Festival : Imbolc

Imbolc or Gwyl Fair is the name given to the festival we celebrate on or around February 2. Research the meanings of those words, the roots of the festival, and what it is most poignantly celebrating.

What is the point of a festival at this time? Whom does it serve? Only when we know this can we begin to find a way to celebrate the rite that touches our own soul and is of value to others.

Choose three things (just three) with which to make a simple ritual to honour the powers of nature pertinent at this time, and make your ritual in such a way that its expression is also in harmony with the moment in time.

Season : Waxing Spring

Imbolc can be seen as the first festival of spring, when we call to the divine forces of spring, the first of whom is now quietly but surely beginning to move through the landscape. Who are the gods of spring? How do you personally empathize or relate to these energies?

The landscape and air is still heavy with cold and dark, but the first glimpses of new life are beginning to show. Take yourself out and explore the environment as nature breaks through the frozen earth. It may take an effort, warm clothes and determination to do this regularly through this moontide, but it is worth it. Witness the power of these forces, allowing them to touch your soul. How does their touch affect you?

Perception : Dance

As the light returns, days now growing noticeably longer, the clear energy of a new cycle is starting to rise. Feel it and, witnessing this dance of new life, let yourself move, too. Break through the frozen constraints of winter's cold; find your first movement, stretching and waking.

This is not something to try only once, but an important part of staying in pace with the season and, day by day, letting a new cycle begin within. Dance its emergence, yet in doing so with a wakeful awareness of your own truth emerging. Break through the frozen crust of your own fears and inhibitions.

If you find it hard to dance to the sounds of emergence, begin by finding your dance to human music. Find a piece of music, of whatever style, that you feel most closely sings the songs of this part of nature's cycle. As you let go, move your body with the music, not to the music. Once you have found your freedom to move, allow yourself to dance into and with the simplicity of spring's emergence.

Element : Breath

In this moon, it is the air that we honour, air as breath, the first breath of a new life.

Put aside time each day for stillness in which to be more conscious of your breathing. Learn how to breathe more deeply, into your abdomen (find a teacher who will show you how), and feel the difference that depth provokes.

Be aware of the breathing of others, including animals. How do birds breathe as they fly? How do trees 'breathe'? With a tree that invites your company, breathe together.

The word 'inspiration' speaks of breathing in. What are you breathing in? Focus on this through the waxing half of the moon. Remember that growth cannot be pushed but happens when we are relaxed, in the exhalation. As the moon passes its fullness and wanes again, allow your focus to rest on this process of growth through relaxation and release. How does this understanding relate to other areas of your life?

Humanity : Children

As we look at new life in the environment around us, let us find it, too, within our community. At this time when children are too often stuck inside, find the child within yourself and explore these relationships, finding ways to play again, being conscious and respectful of a child's ability to learn, to feel wonder, to discover new and amazing moments.

Whether you have children or know some, or are working simply with the child inside yourself, let go of some more of that tired cynicism; use this moontide to find wonder and the art of play.

Environment : Snowdrops

Some consider the rowan to be the tree of this moon: who and why? Do you have rowan (or mountain ash) in your landscape? What is the connection to this time?

What are the first plant and the first tree to show signs of new growth in your home environment? We speak of snowdrops, and in some places these are the first flowers, but are they native and wild or cultivated plants? What of other snow-hardy plants, bulbs and wild perennials? In my garden the lungwort are the first to flower, reminding me of the first fresh breath of spring.

What of insects and other wild creatures? If you are near sheep farmers, is this the time when their ewes are lambing?

Watch for every hint of new life, and see how it dances and breathes its life into being.

Self : Dreams

As we acknowledge and honour with wonder the energy of new life, how easy is it to allow this force to inspire regeneration and hope within your own soul? What will naturally and easily regenerate for you within the cycle of the year ahead? What will take more effort and hard work? Hope is a complex feeling; what hopes do you hold within your soul? Hope is based on a measure of possibility, or even probability.

In Druidry, the breadth of potential is always kept much wider, and dreams are therefore an important part of our own power of creativity. They can be realistic, but at Imbolc realism is not as important as imagination.

What dreams do you have for this year? Write them down, paint them, dance them, using any media of playful (skilled or unskilled) creativity to explore them more deeply.

Creating an altar to spring and new life, honouring the gods of emergence, is a powerful way of not limiting potential. It need not be complicated: a simple table with items on it that remind you of this divine power. There is no right or wrong; let the altar be very personal, expressing your own vision and understanding. What would be an appropriate symbol of your dreams? Place this upon your altar.

Creativity : Giving it Breath

As this moontide is focused upon breath, now is the time to begin to tell the story you have learned. This is not about sharing it broadly to an audience, not about performance - not yet! In this moon, it is simply about quietly and surely giving the story breath, your own breath. In doing so, find its rhythms and movement. Find its voices, feeling how those ancestral voices move through your own breath.

So to whom do you tell the story? Begin by telling it to the spirits who have inspired you to learn this tale. They may be spirits of darkness, or wind, of fire, of motherhood or mud, or ancestors.

As you give the story breath, be aware of how others have shared it through breath and sound before. Be aware of those who will tell the story in generations to come. You are part of a continuity of life, intimately connected.

Ethics : Voice

Your voice is a powerful tool. During this moontide allow yourself to be poignantly aware of how you use your voice, how you communicate with others, your tone and emotion, your reason or passion; how much damage can be caused by words spoken, and how much love expressed? Be particularly aware of this in any relationship that is not clear, productive or inspiring.

Your voice is also important in terms of provoking change: Use your voice, protesting where this is needed, with letters, emails and simply by finding the courage to share a little more truth, ever conscious of the power of your own voice.

Here again that word arises : responsibility.

Review :

In the last few days of the moontide, when the moon is dark, consider what you have achieved through the cycle. What have you learned, changed, understood, and given in exchange?