

A Perennial Course in Living Druidry

by Bobcat, Emma Restall Orr

WHITE LADY MOON

(April - May)

White Lady Moon is the name I use for this the moon of Beltane. The first moon of summer, and the goddess of the moon is reflected in the white blossom of the hedgerows: the stark white blackthorn giving way to rosy hawthorn, which in turn gives way to the heavy sprays of elder, and beneath in the grasses the myriad delicate flowers of the cow parsley.

What would be a name for this moon that expresses the nature of own home and your own soul song?

Festival : Beltane

Beltane, Calan Mai, marks the place of this moon, sitting calendrically at the beginning of May. What is the history of this festival and its names? How do you think our ancestors celebrated this time?

In some Pagan traditions, it is a celebration of sexuality, and often this is represented through the coming together of a gender polarity: the male (sun) and female (earth) dance the magic of sexuality, expressing nature's fertility and the exuberance of growth. Is this an appropriate story for you to work with this year? If love and sex are in your life, it can be a powerful reflection and source of empathy and celebration.

Sexuality and gender are important forces to work with, but not the only way of experiencing this festival. Regardless of gender, consider what it is that comes together to inspire creativity in the natural world around you and in your own life, eg. sunshine and mud, moonlight and water, rain and vitality, love and hunger, experience and wonder ... What else?

How can you most beautifully and effectively honour and celebrate these powers in your life?

Season : Summer Waxing

In this landscape of my home, this is the first moon of summer, the first signs of summer's songs in the environment around us. If this is the case for you, what are those signs? How do they make you feel? What do they inspire in your soul?

Druidry teaches us to live in harmony with the tides of nature, moving with instead of against their flow: how can you adjust your life in order to live in tune with the energies rising in the environment within and around you?

Element : Fire

As the season changes, let us shift our focus to the element of fire during this moontide. In Druidry, fire is seen to be transformative, purgative, cleansing on a spiritual level. Many in Druidry perceive fire as deity, or revere gods who are seen as controlling the forces of fire.

How would or do you honour a deity of fire? Does a fire deity reflect a

gender, being a god or goddess, and why?

The least predictable of the elements, ravenous and devouring, it is dangerous and yet critical to the course of human evolution.

Spend time considering how the power of fire would have been to your ancestors of 3,000 years ago, of 500 years ago, to your grandparents, and to you. Can you make fire without matches?

Think of electricity. Do you understand it? Just how much has it replaced the blaze of a fire?

How can you be more conscious of these forces, honouring their power and all they allow us?

Perception : Listening

During this moon, focus on listening.

Most of us don't listen well. Think first about conversations you have with others: are you hearing their story or waiting for a chance to tell your own?

Are you listening to the unspoken words or filling the gaps with assumptions?

Listening is a fundamental part of learning the craft of the Bard, for without first fully listening to a story or song, we have no hope of telling or singing it ourselves. Yet it is not only mythology we must fully hear: all of nature is filled with stories. Tales of our ancestors exist in the bones of our children, in the stones of our cities; where else? How can we hear those tales?

It is not only with our ears that we hear, for we pick up sound vibrations with every part of our body. Dedicate time to this, focusing on one thing (wind, bird, tree, person ...) for a few days or more, then another thing, simply listening, opening yourself to hear its present, then its past.

What do we mean by the 'song' in Druidry?

Self : Passion

What inspires energy in your soul? This moontide is one of rising energy, of passion: the trees are coming into leaf, the world once again pouring itself into lush green growth, but what do those words mean in your own life?

Like fire, passion can be unpredictable and dangerous; how do you express passion, and how do you suppress it?

Many would acknowledge a deity of passion, honouring this force that is so powerful in human lives. What would be the effect in your life of creating an altar to a god of passion? What gifts could you offer such a deity?

We can justify passion or its suppression with rational arguments, both for honourable reasons and as a way of defending ourselves from hurt. Often it is that other wild emotion - fear - that holds us back. How can we express our passion more fully, celebrating its gift of vitality? How does honesty fit into this, and what of respect?

If the subject seems too big to handle, take one relationship and/or one medium of your own creativity in which there is not enough (or too much) passion expressed. How can this be improved? Allow fire to teach you.

Environment : Vibrance

You may wish to explore the willow during this moontide, as many associate this time of year with those trees. In my valley, the willow is softly green, drawing in the waters of the spring's long rains. Its energy is gentle compared with the humming vibrance of much of nature at this time, each spirit lifting out of the cold into summer's first warmth in a celebration of life. Which trees and plants are singing most loudly at this time in your environment? What is the predominant colour of the flowers in the wild? Are you seeing butterflies, birds with their first clutch of fledglings, toads or bats? Are there summer migrants starting to arrive yet?

Creativity : Muse

During this moon cycle, find a muse. In other words, be awake and aware of who inspires you. That muse may be a human being, but as likely it may be the moon, the river that runs through your town, the sweet chestnut in front of your house, the bluebells, the daisies, the first bumble bees.

How can you find a muse?

To be inspired, we need to be receptive. Just as it is possible to listen to a song and not truly hear it or perceive its value, so we can wander through life and find nothing that inspires. Opening our hearts, our minds, our senses, we learn to be awake to hear the beautiful, to hear what nourishes us, to hear something powerful with which we can empathize. We learn to recognize what is of profound value, the divine energy of life, the potentially creative touch of another.

Being open, however, can make us feel vulnerable. It takes trust. What else does it take? How can you be open enough to find your muse, to be inspired?

Humanity : Intimacy

Partnerships are the focus of this moon, and particularly those through which we express (or long to express) our passion. These may be loving, sexual, spiritual, or creative in other ways, but they always hold a measure of intimacy: we are open to the other person, feeling their creativity and life energy, giving our own.

What is the value of such relationship? Why are they a part of human nature? If you have more than one intimate relationship in your life, address one at a time, watching how honestly and fully you pour your passion into the connection.

What holds you back? How can this relationship be improved? Are you listening to the other person sufficiently to hear truly what they are asking, needing or long for themselves?

If you have no intimate partnerships in your life at the moment, broaden the scope and look beyond the reach of human relationship. With what powers of nature are you able to express your passion? How can these be improved?

And how can you learn from it the lessons which would allow you to create as deep and nurturing a relationship with another human being?

Ethics : Sexuality

Sexuality is so fundamental a part of our human soul, yet too often it is complicated. Emotions such as jealousy, fears about rejection and wounds that disallow easy trust, make physical intimacy and sexual relationships a part of our culture heavily regulated by social rules. Yet, many of those rules are constantly being broken, animal passions kicking through boundaries, leaving tangles of lies, frustrations and hypocrisies. What are these social rules? What is your experience of these complications?

Druidry is a spiritual tradition that beautifully guides us through these issues. Primarily acknowledging a being's soul rather than their body, the physical gender of individuals within a sexual relationship is not important. Placing value on respect and honesty, rather than on obedience to rules or convention, allows us to create unique relationships that suit the individuals involved.

How much is your sexuality tangled up in convention? As a society, how can we craft relationships founded on loyalty, honesty and acceptance of our individual needs, strengths and desires? What are the dangers? How can you do it for yourself? What would freeing up your sexuality do for you? What steps can you take towards that?

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?