

SerpentStar

A newsletter for members of
The Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids
in the Southern Hemisphere.



Artwork by Louise Hewitt

Ankh, the Heart - Imperishable Life

Beltane 2014

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Greetings

Greetings, and firstly a huge thank you to Wyverne for all the love, artistry and time that she has dedicated to Serpentstar. I have adopted her style and format and made only a few changes.

One new aspect to Serpentstar is that I would love to feature an artists work each edition. Thank you to Louise Hewett for jumping in this time.

Beltane is a time of celebration and the uprising of life, fertility, fecundity and creativity. Dancing, fire jumping, wicker men and rites of sacred marriage call us to embrace life. Can we say: I choose life!

In the face of another 'eve of a mad world' still investing their creative powers in war technology, and weaponry, may our celebrations, community feasts and personal ritual life draw light and the fire of enthusiasm to creating 'livingry' and technology of health and transformation. Let us all join in on the mystical battle for life.

Peace and love from the grove of She Oaks

Martin



Featured Artist- Louise Hewett

Under two years of age I drew a picture of an owl on the back of a letter my mother was writing to my grandmother. My owl medicine, concerning vision and imprinting itself on a letter between my female ancestors, had arrived. I have always made visual art - trying to describe and interpret my world in visual image. At the age of eleven I won an Art competition at school and with the five dollar prize bought a book about dinosaurs. I was made a fuss of at primary school because I was "good at art" but I was a shy and sensitive person and rather than encourage me, this treatment drove me further into myself. I could never express what I saw with my inner vision and one day someone would criticize me and - well, we probably all know this story or some version of it.

I did matriculation art in 1983, shied away from Art School, and apart from the odd sketch here and there, I stopped drawing and gave myself to writing instead. Marriage, children, and a spiritual crisis that mapped my return to earth-centred spirituality consumed me for the best part of thirteen years, but finally when my daughter was three, I began to draw again.

I produced several drawings of men and women describing mythic energies that I was working with at the time: Arianrhod, Blodeuwedd, and Diarmuid ua Duibhne. I completed a cycle of thirteen drawings exploring symbolism that humans have held meaningful since the Paleolithic (Ancient Mother Series). I was commissioned to do CD covers: Epiphany (Circe's Tryx 1999); Magick (Spiral Dance 1999); Through A Sylvan Doorway (Spiral Dance 2012); and an image for the single The Wicker Man (Spiral Dance 2014).

In 2012 I was invited to participate in an exhibition with the late LynneSinclair-Wood of drawings/interpretations of the Shelagh-Na-Gig. I was challenged very personally in considering how to depict this image if the Great Mother and evoke reference to understandings of female power in the world. My work was extremely well received and I felt that I'd crossed a threshold as an artist.

The images and concerns that I seek to share through my art and writing are connected to the

transformation of my perception of the erotic life-force and how it has affected my life, how it can heal my life. My understanding is that all spiritual practices come out of an urge to experience and strengthen our awareness of our interconnectedness with all existences, and to reconcile the cycles of birthing, living and dying that occur in very real and ordinary ways within all life and particularly within human culture. In many of my current drawings I am creating new mythic images of manhood as a part of my personal healing process. I purposefully reject the use of the word warrior when I am invoking ideas of bravery, strength, sexuality, self-responsibility and self-awareness. I try to depict manhood thoroughly engaged with the world in life-sustaining and non-violent ways, manhood in compliment and accord with womanhood. This is an internal process projected into my art.

Bealtaine seems a fitting time of the seasonal cycle to honor and invoke such co-creative ideas and images. I share with you some of the drawings I feel appropriate to this season.

Minoan Snake Priestess - Eros 1998

Yabyum - Union 1998

Ankh, the Heart - Imperishable Life 1999

Eagle Shelagh na Gig - Balancing the life, death, rebirth cycle 2010

Antler Braves - Livers in the quest for self knowledge and service of life 2013

The Priestess and the Gardener - Ecstasy 2013

The Green One - Present with the Land 2013

All drawings are made with Prismacolor Pencils.

For more of my artwork, please visit Egg & Serpent Studio on Facebook.



Greetings from Philip Carr-Gomm

Well what a year it's been! Since you are in the Southern Hemisphere you'll know you're the most important lot, and so Steph and I paid homage to this fact and travelled down to Aotearoa on 26th December last year to be in New Zealand in time for the opening of the Order's Golden Anniversary Year. There we were on the Coromandel Peninsula gazing out to sea on Jan 1st and holding some workshops on Druidry at the wonderful Prana New Year Party. And then on the 4th we were up on a high point of Waiheke island, helping to build a stone circle with fellow OBOD members.

A little later we were down in Pukerua Bay, just north of Wellington, for the annual summer camp of the Grove of the Summer Stars. What a gathering that was – with so many old friends, new friends, and special guests the author Juliet Marillier and Professor of astronomy Richard Hall, who helped grove members plan out the stone circle they want to build on the hill above the Woolshed.

A few weeks later we were at the annual OBOD Australian Assembly in the magical Binna Burra forest. We shared our time with the tiny wallaby-like Paddymelons, and dear Morticia, a black widow spider a friendly ranger introduced us to...



Can you laugh too much? I'm afraid you can. We found that out on the Eisteddfod nights at both gatherings.

And what a heart-warming feeling it gave us when we were celebrating the Golden Anniversary in Glastonbury a few months later in June, to be reunited again with friends who had managed to come over to the UK. I know it's a cliché, but it really does feel like



we're building a great family, a heart-felt community of fellow human beings who feel and think in roughly the same way. I say 'roughly' because the last thing we want is uniformity! Let's not agree on everything! ("I disagree!" I can hear you shouting!)

And now this amazing year is moving towards its close. My next job is to write the Annual Review which gets published in Touchstone. It takes me about 2 days to write it – first putting down everything I have noted or can remember on a mind-map and then asking others whose memories might



be better than mine if I've left anything out. Each year it becomes harder to write because more has happened.

And then I go into the grove and have a chat with Nuinn. In some ways, being so involved with the Order feels like a constant surprise – Stephanie and I were in an altered state for four days at Glastonbury this year, surrounded as we were by 400 OBODies from 19 countries, in glorious weather, with all sorts of events happening around us. But then in another way it feels completely ordinary and completely natural. And that, I guess, is what we are striving for: that being in the Order, following the course, being a member, feels both extraordinary and ordinary, utterly remarkable and yet completely natural at the same time.

Looking to the future, we are really looking forward to returning South. Just a thought: how about a South Pacific Gathering - a joint Australian/New Zealand camp for say 2018 (plenty of time to save

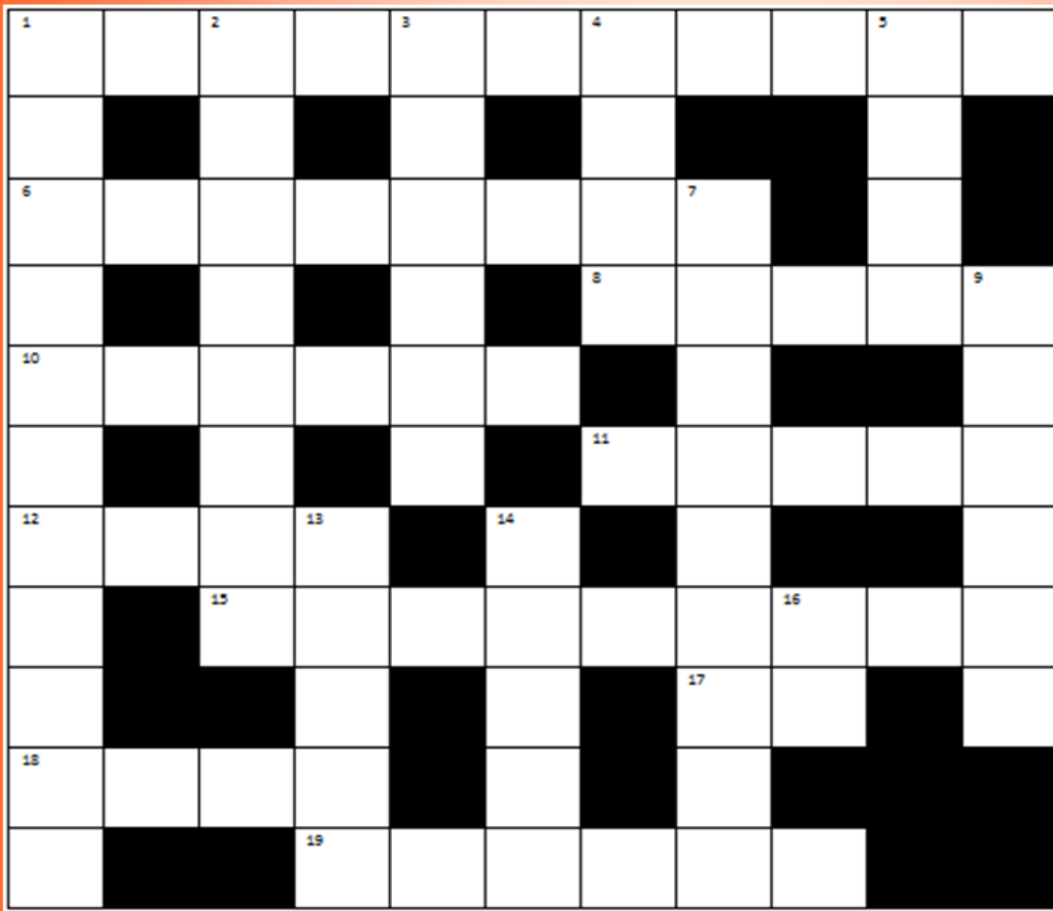


and plan)! I'd recommend the Prana Centre in Coromandel. I've seen lots of centres over the years, and I can honestly say it is the most wonderful – my favourite in all the world. And then a 'return match' in Australia a few years later!

I hope we can make it your way again soon, and in the meanwhile thank heavens we can all meet in the inner world – in the Sacred Grove!

And many thanks to the outgoing editor, Wyverne, for all her great work, and to Martin as he takes on the editorship of Serpentstar!

With much love and many blessings,



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. When day and night are equal. (11)
- 6. The queen's daughter. (8)
- 8. Small mammals. (5)
- 10. Wound. (6)
- 11. Prophet, seer and healer. (5)
- 12. Make less difficult. (4)
- 15. Irregular example. (9)
- 17. Identity. (2)
- 18. The Red? (4).
- 19. Preparing to play music. (6)

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Is sentient. (11)
- 2. Cosmos. (8)
- 3. Metal. (6)
- 4. Ready money. (4)
- 5. Capable. (4)
- 7. Deliverance. (9)
- 9. Observing. (6)
- 13. Precise. (5)
- 14. One more than six. (5)
- 16. The instinctual self. (2)



FRAGMENTS OF FORMER WORLDS MUSEUM OF FUTURE MEMORY.

By Caitlín Matthews



In every age, fragments of former worlds are alive within the nesting generations alive at one time, from great-grand parent to great-grandchild. As successive generations grow older and die, some of these fragments are forgotten, while others stick out like markers, leading to who knows where. There is nothing more poignant than the detritus of those who were alive and have been gone for some time, just as archaeologists find who dig up items whose use has long been forgotten, hazarding a guess as to their purpose so as to compose a label for a museum.

What fragments of former worlds are you hosting? Not just granny's biscuit barrel or the neolithic hand-axe you dug from your garden while laying the foundations for shed, but the deeply embedded fragments within your consciousness that are the gifts of memories not yours. For there is a department of our psyche that is a true museum - a word originally meaning 'a place dedicated to the muses.' Within that museum of the soul, we carry ancestral memory, the blueprints of knowledge and skill, the atavistic remnants of what once blazed glorious with life but which is now merely dust waiting to be reborn. These remnants often lie dormant until such time as we add a liquid ingredient that reconstitutes memory in a remarkable way: this happens in infinitesimal moments, triggered by a scent, the line of a poem or the view of a landscape. Then, hologramically, the memory stirs back into life and you are suddenly living a memory you can never have known in your present form.

It is almost as if you were part of a set of Matryoshka Russian dolls, nesting one within the other and you are resonant with someone before or behind you. The fragments of former worlds stir and reconstitute themselves in your soul. These ancestral memories come in many forms: sometimes as true knowledge, sometimes tinged with apprehension, at other times with a neutrality of vision that doesn't quite develop into understanding. Yet when we give this fleeting impression the time and space to reveal itself, we find we have a window that opens wider.

We think of ancestors as only being human, yet we have ancestry and kindred that

go back through every single living being, right back to the protean stars whose remains were once so quaintly labelled in the Natural History Museum in London. When we begin to consider this prospect of our wider ancestry, then the Matryoshka doll effect changes shape. Embedded and encoded within us is not just the matter from which universes were and will be made, but also the memory of those universes also, past and to come.

When we begin to think of ourselves as museums of the future, not just of the past, we gain a very different way of considering the world in which we live, and maybe we shape our behaviour in different ways. While our present fashions and customs will undoubtedly seem out-moded by our descendants, there is that within you that they will find of value in times that we cannot yet imagine. When you are dust, your prayer for them can still be revolving, waiting for that moment when their need, or their lack of vision, requires something that only ancestry can provide. Those precious fragments of knowing or understanding that you have hosted, can leap beyond the generations to become living guidance that shapes worlds yet to be.

Recognize your companions and give them honour,
For they stem from the same source as yourself.
Out of every generation we have been called as seekers, as children of wisdom.
It is right to remember how your quest began, the books that you read,
The wise words of the teachers that replied to your simple questions.
But books and teachers are not the only guides. In the silence of your heart,
In the watches of the night, you have closed your eyes and discovered
That your companions, your sisters and brothers, have been praying with you eternally.
Now that you are one in understanding,
You can make the journey and achieve your quest.

- adapted by Caitlín from *the Hermetic Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth, Corpus Hermeticum*



DAMH THE BARD 2015



SPONSORSHIP FOR DAMH THE BARD

Plans are afoot to bring Damh the Bard and Cerri Lee back to Australia in October 2015.

There will be a Sponsor's only concert in Adelaide on Monday 5th October 2015


We are looking for 120 people to donate \$50 each so if you would like to be a 'Damh the Bard' sponsor and be part of bringing this amazing couple back to our Great Southern Land you can either donate via Paypal or direct debit.

Paypal login address for sponsorship is
sponsordamh@spiraldance.com.au

or

email us for direct debit details

info@spiraldance.com.au



**The 14th
OBOD
Southern Hemisphere
Assembly**

Friday 1 - Tuesday 5 May 2015

**Mt Hyland Wilderness Retreat,
Dorrigo NSW**

Send inquiries by email to
druid@druidryaustralia.org
or post to
P.O. Box 156, Monbulk, VIC 3793

Creating Our Healing Story

Mythical Forest- reclaiming our stories.

Fairy-tale Forensics

From the beginnings of time people have been spellbound by the magic of stories and the subtle and evocative power they hold deep within. Celtic myths were templates for examining our struggles, achievements, trials and tribulations with heroes, heroines, monsters and magic galore!

Master storyteller Alan Garner reminds us: 'We have to tell stories to unriddle the world.' Stories take us into that mythic place of wonder where wisdom arises and nourishes our souls. Myth is where our world can be re-made and refreshed; stories free us all from the past and the dread of the future.

Instead of living by a story often written by others and history we can retell and recreate a new story, walking different paths and journeying to new places.

Stories are medicine and they hold both the sadness and joys of our life but often we only see the fragments and not the entire story and we can become caught in this replayed "stories" so much that they direct our life in the here and now.

By exploring and discovering

Our old story,

Plots twists,

Hidden characters , guides guardians

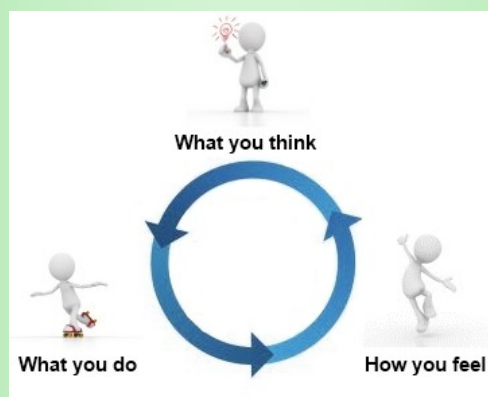
Un fulfilled "quests" and the themes

We can begin to reclaim our story for ourselves and change the outcomes.

Why are stories so important?

To understand why first we need to take a short "scientific break" and understand modern advances which explain this ancient and archaic wisdom.

In the diagram below the connection between our thoughts, feelings (physical and emotional) and actions are inter related .



We store our life in images, sensations and behaviours , our short term conscious mind can only hold so much information so it "files" habits into the unconscious.

This unconscious is our internal "story board" which directs our present day thoughts, feelings, experiences and actions, most people aren't aware of what the story they are living by actually is so automatically relive it daily.

If we have a selected amount of characters, plots, outcomes, and script we can keep repeating the old "story line" and this is when we need to find a new script and actors!!!

These stories or mini movies actually change the structure of our brain forest and the paths through it also change. This is where we enter the Mythical Forest and begin to tell our life and history in the form of story, then we can begin the quest of a new story and become the hero/ine in our very own healing world.

For more information and support on this magical and healing work please visit my website for contact information. <http://carolinewilliamsnz.com/>

A Journey of Pagan Music

On the Road with Spiral Dance and Damh the Bard

When my band Spiral Dance was first formed way back in 1992, I never had any idea what an amazing rollercoaster ride it would be and how the music and songs that were in my head and heart would lead to such an incredible journey of the soul for myself and many others. Music has that magic; it stirs our senses and evokes our emotions. Music also has the magic that connects us with magical people.

August this year saw Spiral Dance venture to the UK again to play a series of concerts with Damh the Bard as well as the Mercian Gathering's 10th Anniversary.

<http://www.merciangathering.com/merciangathering.htm>

I will never get tired of the mystical town of Glastonbury. Every time I go there I get a rush of excitement and I just want to splash water from the Chalice Well on my face and go running up that hill. So playing our music there is even more special! Our first show was at Karen Kaye's Labyrinth Faery Ball, one of many events that happen in Glastonbury throughout the year. A night of music, dance and fey frivolity in the Glastonbury Town Hall sees the whole town swell with enchanting energy from the faerie realm. The costumes are really quite something to behold and it was lovely meeting fantasy artists and illustrators Brian and Wendy Froud who were also guests of the evening.

<http://www.faeryevents.com>



So after a great first UK gig, we spent the weekend drinking too much good beer and cider with the wonderful Candia and Tony from Goth Pagan band Inkubus Sukkubus. Then, after a gentle journey around the Cotswolds to a few of the well-known Morris villages, we headed back to Glastonbury to meet Damh the Bard for another concert, this time at the Glastonbury Assembly Rooms. I have a soft spot for this venue as this was the place of Spiral's very first UK concert in 2012 and it will always hold a special place in my heart. Glastonbury Assembly Rooms was the home of the first Glastonbury Arts Festival in England, held in August 1914, and was organized by producer and director Rutland Boughton. He invited such noted celebrities as George Bernard Shaw, Alice Buxton, Thomas Hardy and T.E. Lawrence to take part. So being there for the 100th anniversary added to the energy of the night. The concert had sold out weeks before and the room was packed to the rafters. The energy was electric and the audience was fantastic. Happy Spirals and happy Bard!

The next day we said our farewells to Glastonbury, it's magical Tor, and to friends old and new and in brilliant sunshine we wove our way along lush green hedgerows and past patchwork fields and made our way to Norwich for our next concert at the 'Norwich Puppet Theatre'.

The Puppet Theatre is a truly unique venue; a Medieval church which still includes many original features, but now houses a large family of puppets. This was Damh the Bard's first time in Norwich as well as ours so we were all very excited and a little nervous! Playing in Norwich was also special for Paul, our accordion player, as Norwich is the town he lived and worked in before coming to Australia. It's where Paul first danced the Morris and began playing the accordion. I suspect in those days, he never dreamt that he would one day be playing on a Norwich stage with an Australian Pagan Folk/Rock band, with old mates sitting in the audience egging him on to play faster!

Touring with Damh the Bard is such crazy fun, and sharing gigs and the stage with him is brilliant. This was our 5th tour with The Bard and we are already planning the next adventure for 2015!

Our final gig was at the Mercian Gathering, held in the Midlands on farmland amid beautiful hedgerows and fields. Organised by Anna Franklin and the Hearth of Arianrhod, the Mercian is a pagan camp, a coming together of people from all paths. It's a spiritual gathering with talks, workshops and rituals to honour and thank the old gods and the land, and to celebrate the harvest. And, of course, there is music! With over 1000 people on site the energy was wonderful and the whole band found the Mercian Gathering to be a truly magical event. The general feeling is gentle and laid back with everyone respectful of each other's paths. Friday night saw the opening ritual with everyone gathered on the field where the hearth fire was lit and would continue to burn all weekend. There was the Harvest dance to activate the labyrinth and a giant dragon dancing in to mark the beginning of the festivities. A concert with Damh the Bard followed along with the most brilliant of Druidic folkies Kate Fletcher and Corwen Broch of Ancient Music. If you haven't heard these performers check 'em out at:

<http://www.ancientmusic.co.uk>



There are so many workshops to choose from and countless wonderful and knowledgeable folk with whom to chat. Kristoffer Hugh's workshop 'Death, Dying, Bereavement and Paganism' was a highlight for me. Kristoffer is Chief of the Anglesey Druid Order, a Mount Haemus Scholar and a member of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids. He is a teacher, writer, workshop leader, and guest speaker at Pagan conferences, camps, and festivals throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. Anyone that has attended Kristoffer's workshops or know him will be well aware of his talents as an engaging speaker; he

can weave a spell around you as he talks and transport you to other realms. He can take you from rolling on the floor with laughter one moment to weeping with heartfelt abandon the next. I adore Kristoffer and would love to get him to Australia at some future stage for a series of workshops. I think all the Druids of Oz would love him!

<http://www.kristofferhughes.co.uk>

During the day at the Mercian when not attending workshops, people spend time around the figure of the Wicker Man, pinning ribbons and offerings to his lower frame. He stands proud does this wicker man, exuding male energy, his phallus fully erect, waiting to be burnt later in the night.

On Saturday evening the Labyrinth was lit and there was much whooping, dancing and joy as we all traversed the fiery pathway leading in procession to the area where the Wicker Man waited to be fired and sent to the gods. Music was provided by the musicians of the Morris side 'Witch Men' and had the whole camp dancing and moving through the labyrinth and up into the field where a group of archers stood with bows raised and flaming arrows aimed at the Wicker Man. Prayers were said to the land and thanks given for the Harvest, then the flaming arrows were let fly at the giant effigy, covering him with flames and he was sent to the gods amid much cheering and chanting... Burn, burn, the Wicker Man!



As a band, Spiral Dance has been sharing and performing songs and music of magic, myth and legend for over two decades to both pagan and many non-pagan audiences such as those at folk festivals and various events, but I have to say there is no audience quite like a pagan audience. Pagans really listen to the music and the lyrics – not just hear it – and it shows in their response and how they engage with us as a band. The Mercian was no exception; in fact the roar of the crowd just about bowled us over. We were giving our music and our energy to the most remarkable crowd of wonderful folk who took it in, made it build and sent it back to us in waves of love. I kept giving thanks to my gods for the opportunity of doing what I love doing the most in life; singing my songs to people to whom I know my lyrics will speak.

I came away from the Mercian Gathering not only with my imagination fired with the things I had experienced there, but also with a deep gratitude for my band Spiral Dance and the band members who have journeyed with me, who have given birth to my songs and helped me realize a dream; a dream that a spiritual path or belief can be expressed in songs and music and then shared with a worldwide community. I also came away giving thanks for the inspiration that has been sent to me over the years, enabling me the gift of song writing and the steadfast belief in the music of Spiral Dance.

Music is one of the most powerful ways to connect us to our spiritual nature and to each other, and we certainly felt that with the wonderful audiences who came to hear our music in the UK.

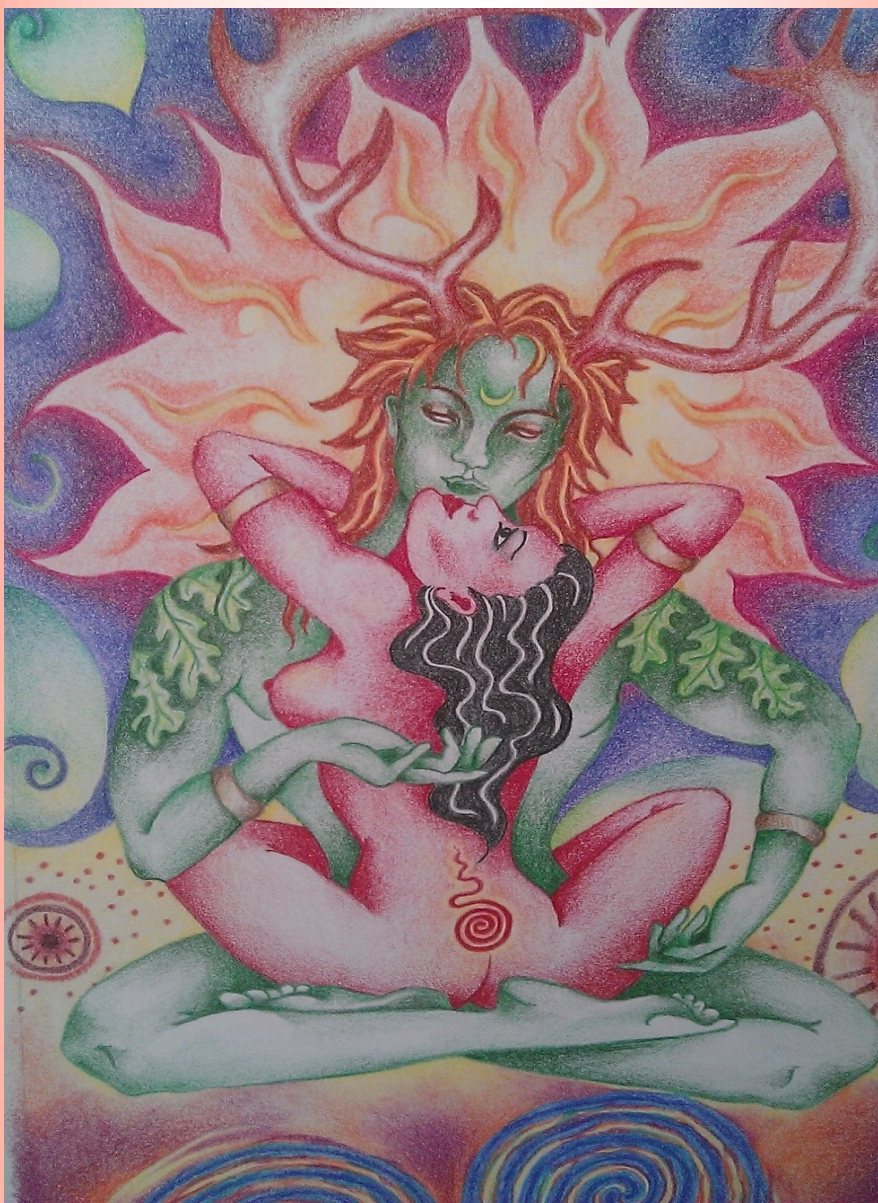
Bright Blessings

Adrienne

Spiral Dance



Crossword



¹ E	Q	² U	I	³ N	O	⁴ C	T	I	⁵ A	L
X		N		I		A			B	
⁶ P	R	I	N	C	E	⁷ S	S		L	
E		V		K		⁸ H	A	R	⁹ E	S
¹⁰ R	E	E	L	E	D		L			E
I		R		L		¹¹ O	V	A	T	E
¹² E	A	¹³ S	E	¹⁴ S		A				I
N		¹⁵ E	X	C	E	¹⁶ P	I	O	N	
C			A		V		¹⁷ I	D		G
¹⁸ E	R	I	C		E		O			
S			¹⁹ T	U	N	I	N	G		

Answers

Happy



2014
Belitane!