

# The Henge of Keltia

## Henge Happenings

Imbolc 2012 - Issue 93

### Public Edition

Druidism for the 21st Century™

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# the bard's path

## KILCLOONEY MORE PORTAL TOMB

### Part 2 of 2

by Steward of the Wood

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The deer we saw were so graceful; and as we passed along the track, they looked up. In love and deference, they slightly bowed their heads in silent acknowledgement to their Lord, Spirit of the Buck. At that moment, Steward became aware of the thoughts of the Spirit of the Buck. He thought, "Steward, on a later journey, you will meet Cernunnos, God of Wild Things and Wild Places. Cernunnos told me that, like me, he knew you in past lives and even in your current life, he sees you in the forests of the mundane world. He and his children guide you. He knows your strong desire to meet and learn from him."

After a seemingly brief walk, we arrived in the Sacred Grove. It was about 90 feet across and was encircled by nine enormous oaks. Their crowns touched on the sides yielding a continuous ring of branches and leaves. The soil was level and exuded fertility. Soft to walk on, it was a moist, deep dark brown in color with its top layer infused with leaf mould, surely the home of earth worms and other creatures.

A large stone altar stood in the center and it faced east. The altar resembled a recumbent stone held within a stone circle that Steward had seen in Scotland with one large stone, six feet long, lying on its side and one standing stone on either side of the recumbent stone. The standing stones were about the same size as the recumbent stone. Each stone displayed numerous symbols: circles, wheels, concentric circles, spirals, zigzag lines, and fish.

Finally a well stood on the southeast side near the entrance of the Grove but inside it. There were

nine hazels growing around it in a circle with the crowns touching on the sides and almost touching in the middle over the well. The well itself was about six feet in diameter and the perimeter consisted of a low stone wall about three feet high.

Since Steward was standing at the south-east entrance to the Grove, he could see the well clearly and it too had similar ancient symbols carved on its stones. Compared to the altar, more of the symbols on the well were fish. "Ah, they are salmon and this is the Well of Segais. It must contain the Salmon of Wisdom who feed on the sacred hazel nuts," he thought.

Reading his mind, Guide said aloud, "Yes, Steward, this is the Well of Segais. On a later journey you will meet Boann, Goddess of Springs and Cattle Goddess. But now, we must not keep her waiting. Please enter the Grove and offer your praise as you circle the altar, then she will meet you at the eastern portal."

Steward slowly entered the Sacred Grove. Tentative at first but with growing confidence, he moved deiseil around the altar. "Greetings to you loved ones, Nature Spirits: spirit of the deer, of the trees, and birds; so to you Hidden Ones, the faeries, elves, and dwarfs. I also honor and greet you, Ancestors, my ancestors of this sacred land and Druids of Old. Gods and Goddesses of my people,



Steward of the Wood

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# the bard's path

## Song to the Young Son

By Jenne Micale

Aonghus of the hidden birth  
Aonghus of the flowering  
tree  
Aonghus of the lovers  
doomed  
to meet in the darkness  
secretly

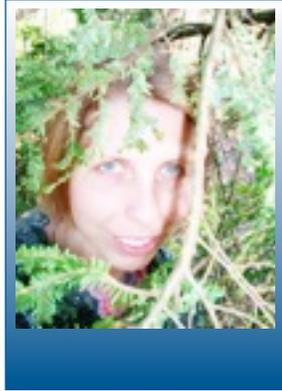
Aonghus of the rising sap  
Aonghus of the green of  
May  
Aonghus of the soaring  
swan  
and the sound of sparrows at the break of  
day

Aonghus of the land of dreams  
Aonghus of the poet's art  
Aonghus of the searching eye  
and the trickster's promise that ensnares  
the heart

Aonghus of the honeyed wine  
Aonghus of the fiery will  
Aonghus of the secret sweet  
that for nine months makes a single day  
stand still

Aonghus of the land of youth  
Aonghus of the gentle friend  
Aonghus with his unseen cloak  
and the heat of the summer that never  
ends

Aonghus of the flowering tree  
Aonghus of the green of May  
Aonghus of the lovers' dance  
and the sound of sparrows at the break of  
day



## The Lone Pine

by Katrillium Horn

A beautiful pine tree stands alone in meadow.  
He calls out to the trees in a nearby forest, but  
they ignore the lonely pine.

And so he stands silently watching a flock of  
geese. He calls out to the geese but they do not re-  
spond. The tree passes the days alone with no  
hope.

Then something wonderful  
happens. A little boy is approach-  
ing the pine. He has a shovel and  
a pine sapling. He digs a hold  
and places the sapling next to  
the lonely tree.



The big tree is delighted.  
He shakes his pine needles  
to and fro. When the boy  
leaves the trees greet each other. They  
shake with happiness. The moon is full i l-  
luminating the meadow. The tree is no longer  
lonely. The trees sleep well. The lonely pine wakes  
up with a new friend.



### Important Henge eMail addresses:

Please use the form at <http://www.keltria.org/emailns2.htm>  
to contact any of the Henge Officers: President, Vice-  
President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Trustees. Also, you may  
contact the Council of Elders: Archdruid, Elders or any of the  
Keltrian Groves or Study Groups via that webpage form.

You may contact the following directly via eMail:

The Henge Office at [Henge-Office08@keltria.org](mailto:Henge-Office08@keltria.org)  
Submissions to Henge Happenings at  
[Submissions@keltria.org](mailto:Submissions@keltria.org)  
Keltria webmaster at [Webmaster@keltria.org](mailto:Webmaster@keltria.org)

# the bard's path

## CONNECTING WITH YOUR ANCESTORS

By Steward of the Wood

What is it that connects people, not only to family but even to total strangers? Of course many things attract us, but one of the strongest is our common bonds. Humans are “pack” animals like horses, wolves, cattle, and many other creatures. In addition to a common need for shelter and food, there is a basic need for social interaction. We need each other spiritually as well as biologically.

Have you ever stopped to think of all the ways that you are connected to other humans, both alive and dead? It is a fact that the DNA in every cell of your body was passed to you by your ancestors. In fact you are carrying exact copies of genes that are tens to hundreds of thousands of years old. No wonder we feel closeness with our ancestors. In addition, our bodies and personalities are shaped by those genes and the family environment in which we grew. When you look at a stranger's face in a crowd, do you sometimes see your own or a close relative's features? There is a reason for that. A simple formula ( $2^n$ ) illustrates my point. For every generation that you go back from yourself, take where n is the number of generations from yourself. For the number of parents,  $n=1$  and you have  $=2$ . For your grandparents,  $n=2$  and you have  $=4$  and so on. Just for fun, let's go back twelve generations, about 400 years, to when the Europeans arrived in the New World. If I did my math right, we would each have 4096 ancestors. Can you imagine? No wonder there is a common bond to others...we are all generally related. Assuming that there are on average three generations per hundred years, how many people were our direct ancestors when the Celts arrived in Ireland perhaps 2500+ years ago, in 75 generations?

Spiritually as Druids, we feel a strong connection to our ancestors as well as to our own spirits from past lives. We believe that the Ancestors are with us at all times; and remember, yours are

there too. Our parents, grandparents and so on back to the dawn of time are with us... and that is a good thing. As you pray to the Ancestors during ritual or at other times, pray to your personal ancestors, call them by name, look at their pictures, hold an object that they owned, visit their home or other place



Steward of the Wood

where they lived or died. If you listen carefully, they will communicate with you. It is exhilarating. Personally, it is more of a “knowing” that an ancestor is with me or perhaps the hair may stand up on the back of my neck or I may feel a little queasy. I am learning to not panic but to just “be with it” and listen with all my senses. By this simple process, I often feel a “leaning or direction” which leads to a solution to my question.

I observed a very interesting phenomenon over my life time, but especially in the past five years as I learned specifically about Druidry. Almost universally, people like to talk about their relatives, their ancestors, and where they lived. As I grew closer to my ancestors, I started making a point to ask others about their ancestors. Almost without exception, someone will tell me about where they grew up and then frequently we begin to talk about the national origin of their family. It is amazing and incredibly powerful.

Usually the interaction starts with a general dialogue. For example, this dialogue could develop sitting next to someone on a plane. With family, friends, and colleagues, the discussion

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# the seer's path

## Ask the Wild Bee What the Druid Knows

By Karl Schlotterbeck – Beekeeper and mead maker

There is, I'm told, an old English saying: "Ask the wild bee what the Druid knows." Maybe it's just a quaint folk saying but, even if it were, we'd need to ask why they said it in this way. Indeed, what were they saying? Of course, we do know of the Celts' fondness for mead, the drink made from fermented honey. In most of the world, it was known that most any liquid with sugars might ferment because of naturally occurring yeasts. [These naturally occurring yeasts, however, (known as "wild yeasts") made a relatively weaker wine than we are used to today because our modern vintners have bred stronger yeasts able to tolerate a higher level of alcohol before it kills them.] Mead, then, is a product of flower, bee sugar and yeast. Mead is an intoxicating, sweet drink named after a queen – sometimes referred to as a queen of Ireland, and sometimes as queen of the Otherworld.

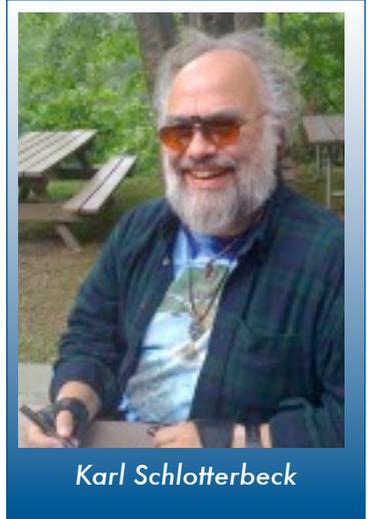
Our quote suggests that Druids know something not known by others, but could be known by bees. Why would bees be the ones to ask if we want to know about the Druid's knowledge, if they did not have something to do with it themselves? They are, after all, the source of honey. It may be the mead itself – product of land, water, flower, and invisible forces that provide intoxication. Or might it be something about the life of the bee and its hive?

Perhaps we might change the question to ask the Wild Druid what the Bee knows. Indeed, what is it that bees know? An English woman recently told me that her gramps told the members of his family that they should always tell the bees their family news. (Curiously, she hadn't heard of the saying "Ask the wild bee what the Druid knows.") Apparently, bees are expected to hold knowledge – maybe even disseminate it as they make their

journeys from flower to flower. Perhaps that's one clue – like traveling Druids open to sources of knowledge that, in their search, also sparks new life in others. I refer here to the honeybee, which is only one kind of bee, but is my favorite.

And then there is the mead. Bees are the source of the basic element of this particular intoxication or inspiration of mead – an alteration of consciousness that can, if used carefully, prompt inspiration, courage, poetry, creative art, love and lust; opening our senses to the world, to possibility and to a freedom that we seldom have in our sober world. That would seem to be enough, but I think there's more.

What does the Wild Druid know about the Bee? Bees are a highly organized matriarchal culture. They may travel miles to collect their riches (pollen and nectar), which are shared with the entire hive; and they recognize no human boundaries. They collect pollen from whatever is available: tree, flower or grasses. They are organized into non-rigid castes or jobs that support the colony: those that attend to the nursery, or attend the queen. There are scout bees that search for sources of food and return to communicate what they've found to others through dance-like movements. There are guard bees that prevent "robber bees" from other colonies from invading their food stores. And all of these workers are female.



Karl Schlotterbeck

Continued on page 22....

# the druid's path

## Let Yourself Be Moved

by Jenne Micale

*Hail to thee, oh Danu of the Earth. Hail to thee, Green Dragon of the land....*

The snow eddies before my windshield, as my car pulls into the road. And the words come, as they do each morning before dawn.

Sitting here, inside and nearly noon, it's nearly impossible to remember the exact words of the litany, even though I recite them each morning on the way to work. They are born of a moment and for a moment: a call to the Kindreds, all the Tuatha de Danann whose names I can recall, with a final prayer to patrons Manannan and Brighid to guide and protect me and all those I love. And the last words, in Gaelic: Bitheadh e mar sin, Bitheadh e mar sin, Bitheadh e mar sin.

Prayers -- simple spoken words, sometimes accompanied with ritual action -- are an integral part of my personal spiritual practice, weaving me into the round of the day. There is the morning prayer, and the prayer for Brighid and Manannan's blessings before I sleep. The "water prayer," the one I make before stepping into the shower, as the water is heating up: Blessed be thou creature of water, may thou heal and strengthen my body, mind and soul. The prayer to Brighid of the hearth, whose candle I light every time I'm in the kitchen: Hail to thee, oh Brighid of brightness. I keep your vigil always in my heart.

There are garden prayers, spontaneously uttered as I head out to weed. The prayer I make when I leave offerings on the sacred stone beneath one of our oaks. The incense-offering I make to the Hindu gods at their altar before I do yoga, a practice which honors them. The prayers I make to Aine, the Sun, and Midhir, the Moon, when I see them sail across the sky. The prayers I offer to nature spirits as animals cross my path, to the spirit

of the stream as I cross the creek-bridge on the way home.

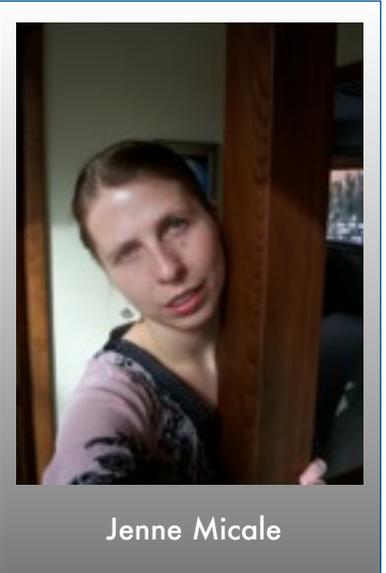
I pray an awe-full lot. It's a spiritual habit, sprung from gratitude.

There seems to be a resistance to prayer overall in modern Pagan faiths. It seems too Christian, redolent of the stereotypical child at the side of the bed with folded hands.

It can seem trivial, grasping: Oh Lord, please help me win the lottery! Or self-abnegating: Oh magnificent Lord, take pity on this poor sinner.... Perhaps it can seem beyond reach; the words do not come, or when they do, they fall way short of inspirational literature. And perhaps it seems too boring; isn't prayer better couched in the language of spells, with ritual implements and color-coded candles, with requests timed precisely to the phase of the moon?

Prayers, however, are the offerings of the heart. They are the kind words you give to those you love in the spiritual realm: Gods and Goddesses, nature spirits, beloved dead. As with all friends, you can ask them for aid when you need it -- keeping in mind that a relationship needs to be more than just gift-giving and solicitation. Prayer is also a way to be a friend to the Kindreds, offering them praise, thanks and kind words for the beauties of everyday life.

Prayers are thread weaving you into the tapestry of both the sacred and daily life. Dawn always comes, but it's no less a miracle; a prayer puts you



Jenne Micale

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# REVIEW

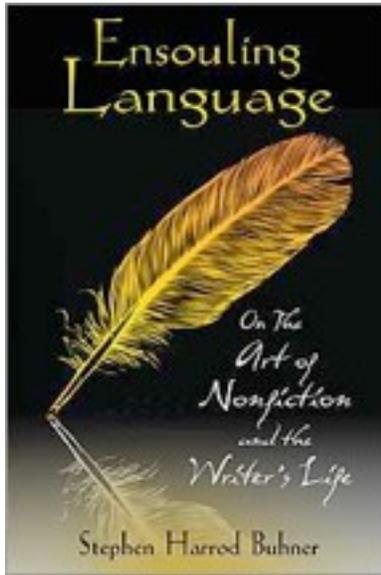
## Ensouling Language:

### On the Art of Nonfiction and the Writer's Life

by Stephen Harrod Buhner

Review by Karl Schlotterbeck

This is a marvelous that is remarkable in a number of ways. I was excited by the title when I first heard about it. When it arrived, I was dismayed at its heft (463 pages); amused at the irony of its cover illustration of a quill; and sorry when I came to the end of it. In the first pages, I was captured by the little story he told so well to demonstrate the affection and meaningfulness of words, books, and experience. My expectation had been of a formulaic how-to book of which we see so many, but it was itself a journey into the place of perception and creativity where words are as alive as we are, and reveal their sacredness as containers of soul and of meaning – and how to get to that place. Buhner pulled me deeper and deeper into the subject – stacking up meaning behind the words like water behind a dam, as he would say.



In fact, *Ensouling Language* called me back into myself, a reminder to write for what might be communicated about the interiority of my subject in its meaningfulness, and in the fact writer and readers' communication occur well beyond (or deeply within) black text on white page, deeper than the dictionary definition of words. Rather, it occurs in the heart of the matter – where creation and some spirit of the nature of things seek to express themselves through the human heart and

tongue and hand, and to result in something larger than either.

I struggle to find a descriptor for what he does. He nudges us out of a little ego's perspective with its petty needs for common currency and approval, out of our humanocentric viewpoint, and out of any illusions of being objective. Perhaps it is this very difficulty in trying to "reduce" his effort to an easy few words that affirms the beauty and depth of his work.

I found him sometimes speaking as a shaman, sometimes as an analytical psychologist, sometimes as a prophet or Druid – and this is the work's most direct relevance for us. For Buhner, words are not just things to be used to fill the space around us, nor are they something we use to avoid our fears by yakking about superficial things. Nor are they a tool to try to bridge our loneliness as human beings; but they have the capacity to take us to a place of discovery, where our fears are created, where our loneliness is rewarded and relationship is intimate – whether that be with a tree, a dolphin, another person's experience or our own. As he says:

*These moments of touch with the nonhuman world are what the ancient Greeks – the Athenians – called aisthesis. The get to aisthesis, those moments when we are touched in return, our nonphysical touching must go deeper than merely feeling the world. It must go to the place where touching travels both ways. And this, very definitely extends awareness a great deal further than our society wants it to go. It involves a living exchange between the human and the nonhuman world, eventually, with the world itself. By engaging in that exchange, we break a very*

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## Kilclooney More Portal Tomb

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my tribe, I honor you and lift you up in glory,” He intoned. As he approached the eastern portal, he saw movement in the forest and then a woman moved slowly into the Grove.

Tall and lithe, she moved with elegant grace. Her long, dark, wavy hair cascaded over her shoulders and down her back, helping to frame the beautiful green gown that she wore. Obviously of fine wool, the gown was covered in Celtic patterns of intricate needle-point. When their eyes met, blue eyes smiled laughingly back at Steward. “So you finally came, Steward of the Wood. I haven’t seen you here since your last life span with us.”

“I have just discovered the portal, Brigid, Goddess of Inspiration, Healing, and Fire in the Hearth,” Steward said. “Somehow I knew it was you who beckoned me when Epona said ‘She has been expecting you.’ I pray to you daily and we speak in my meditations. You are even more inspiring to behold in person. I love you, Brigid, and honor you, dedicating my lives to you.” Brigid smiled and said, “Yes, we are together frequently in spirit and I guide you as requested. I know that you are on the Bardic Path and have a request of you.” At that, Steward slowly, reverently, stepped forward and gently

leaned forward as his hands sought hers, in a gesture to kiss them. With one surprisingly swift motion, she clasped his arms, drawing him to her. Her embrace was strong for one so lithe.

Steward was enthralled in a state of rapture. She enveloped him in an embrace that emitted love, healing, yet enlightening and accepting. When Steward could regain a little of his



senses, he felt that they literally glowed, emitting white, healing light. Inspiration filled his very being...lifting him, skyward.

His spirit soared, banking, climbing, and diving over the forest. He felt like a giant bird, a hawk, and he began to sense his shape. And to his astonishment, he was a hawk...a red-tailed hawk. The rush of the air was exhilarating. He looked down and even though he was 1000 feet in the air, he could see objects clearly on the ground in forest openings. Baking left, he spied the Sacred Grove as the

distinctive circle of the large oaks.

Suddenly, from above, he heard the shrill call of a hawk. As he quickly banked to look up, another red-tailed hawk came screaming, and then laughing, past him in a steep dive. Steward dove following her and then he knew her, it was Brigid! The pair played on the sylphs of the wind, climbing, diving, circling, chasing, and being chased. It was ecstatic, beyond inspiring.

Finally, she slowed and circled to place herself beside him as they slowly soared together, side by side in the crisp, blue sky. Suddenly he could feel her presence inside him, speaking to him. “Steward, is this the inspiration you seek?” “It is, my Lady,” he responded. “Follow me then,” her thoughts

spoke.

At this moment she dove for the earth, the Grove in sight. She circled down in a spiral with Steward following. He could see their bodies on the ground still locked in embrace, flowing in the rapture. Brigid, in her hawk-form with wings spread like a parachute and taloned feet outstretched, approached Brigid in her woman-form and the two merged into the woman-form. Steward followed suit. The approach was swift and scary but the merging of spirits, as his

hawk-form touched his man-form, was quick and effortless.

Back in his man-form, feeling like melted butter in the after-glow of the experience, Steward felt weak but exceptionally good. Brigid held him, less firmly now and more supportive. Sensing his weakness, she helped him over to the nearby well where they sat on the stone wall.

Steward of the Wood was the first to speak, "Brigid, you know my request to you for inspiration. As a Druid and a Bard-in-training, I seek your help."

"I agree to help you. How did you like the first lesson," she asked laughing heartily? "In all seriousness though, this is a hard, yet extremely fulfilling path you tread. After many past lives that you have led, it is now time to move into the Druidic realm. But it is hard at times, joyous at other, and frequently lonely. Remember, now you serve others. It is time that your past knowledge is put to use serving the mundane world and the Otherworld. Past lives as a deer, a hawk, a salmon, a wren, a drop of water, a tree, and many other beings, inform your knowledge. Bring them to bear."

"I understand," said Steward, the words flowing through him like a river. "I sensed the time was right. As long as I can remember, the calling of the Earth

Mother and her children beckoned me. My Grandmother, the embodiment of the Earth Mother, firmly guided and sharpened my desire to know my Ancestors. The Gods and Goddesses called to me and I learned about them in many cultures. Four years ago, the ancient memories of the Celts and my heritage, imbedded in my genes, spoke to me in a clear voice. The memories said, "Come home."

"Listen carefully, Steward,"



the Goddess said lovingly but in a slightly forceful manner. "You are on an ancient search. This search has guided you through many lifetimes, many cycles, and many eras. With your interest in walking the path of Druidry, focus on being a Bard now. Learn those skills. They will serve you well. Your teacher, Wren, will lead you. Give her your full attention. I will work with both of you."

"Now the time has come for you to depart," said Brigid. "Walk with wisdom. I love you and am with you always." At

that, she stood and Steward joined her. They embraced and Steward closed his eyes, seeking to burn the warm, accepting, loving feelings into his brain. "Thank you, Goddess, thank you," he said, the only words that he could muster as he was overcome with deep emotion.

She loosened the embrace and gently separated from him, looking deeply into his eyes... and soul. "I have helped you in other ways in other lifetimes, but in your human lifetime, you and I are bound closely and you can count on me."

"And you can count on me. I dedicate myself to you and this Bardic pathway," Steward replied.

"Go then, but visit me here often," said Brigid.

"I pledge to do so," sighed Steward.

Steward stepped back, bowed slightly to her, and continued the circle deiseil to the entrance on the southeast where guide and Spirit of the Buck awaited him.

Just before leaving, Steward turned to face the Grove. In a strong, clear voice, he addressed it. "Ancient Ones, Wise Ones and Hidden Ones, Gods and Goddesses, and Ancestors, I, Steward of the Wood, your child thank you. I am refreshed as I hope you are by our communion. It is time for me to depart but I will return soon now that I have discovered the portal. I

thank you with all my mind, body, and spirit. I thank the Goddess Brigid, for her love and nurture.”

Then he turned to face outward from the Grove and addressed Guide and the Spirit of the Buck, “Are you ready my dear friends? I cannot thank you enough for your guidance and help.”

“We enjoy your presence, Steward of the Wood. It is a pleasure for us to have you here and we expect to see you often now. This Path can be harsh at times, so prepare for some surprises on future visits,” said Guide. Spirit of the Buck looked at Steward and his thoughts came through to Steward loud and clear, “My son, Steward of the Wood, I have enjoyed your visit. On future visits, you will join me on forays deep into the forests and Cernunnos and his children will join us. Also someone else who you just met will be with you from now on.” At that moment, he motioned upward with his head. Steward looked up to see a large, red-tailed hawk circling overhead. As their eyes met, the hawk dipped a wing to Steward and shrieked!

The journey back to the mundane world sped by quickly for Steward. His mind was swimming as he parted from Guide, Spirit of the Buck, and Spirit of the Hawk as he crossed over the Veil. So much had happened to him but he was well on the Bardic Path now. He thanked Manannán Mac Lir for opening the Veil so that he could pass. “Manannán Mac Lir, I am

so grateful to you for helping me by parting the Veil. Thank you,” said Steward. “Gladly, I part the Veil for a child of Danu. Please come often, Steward.”

“I will do so, Manannán. Walk with wisdom,” said Steward. Then he entered the pas-



sage in the sídhe and journeyed back to the mundane world.

As he exited the dolman, Epona greeted him. “Steward of the Wood, how was your journey? Well, I hope. Did you gain what you sought from Brigid?”

“I did that,” said Steward. “She has agreed to help me in my Bardic path. She will serve as my muse and the source of my inspiration.” At that moment, they were interrupted by a high pitched shriek. Looking up into the blue sky, they saw a

hawk...a red-tailed hawk sailing by. “It is the Spirit of the Hawk,” said Steward. “She is the messenger of Brigid and represents inspiration for me.”

Epona smiled and nodded her head knowingly, then turned the white horse toward the gate.

As they walked, Steward reflected on the events of the past few hours. He had been praying, meditating and seeking guidance and help from the Goddess Brigid as he moved forward as a Bard. Little had he imagined that those prayers would be answered. She had soared with him and now he was firmly on his way.

At the gate, Steward looked up into the face of the Goddess Epona. She was faithful to him and so would he be to her. “Goddess, thank you. You have guided me to the Otherworld and I am eternally grateful,” said Steward.

“I understand and gladly serve my destiny. Please come again, Steward of the Wood. We await your return,” Epona said.

Steward turned from her, the white mare, and the black dog. “Where will my journey take me next,” thought Steward as he walked away from the gate?



## Connecting with your Ancestors

Continued from Page 8

may unfold over a cup of coffee or other libation. At some point, I ask where they “hail from” and then the dialogue and excitement invariably starts. I always encourage them to share first and then I share some of my background. Many times the person asks me how I came to learn so much about my ancestors. I describe the process of starting with living relatives and resources such as family trees, pictures, letters, etc. Then I describe using online resources, both free and for-pay. Usually at this point, I give them the free website of [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com). Two simple examples follow of how this worked for me.

Last summer, my sister and her life partner visited me; and of course during the visit, I engaged them in a discussion of ancestry. My sister’s partner told me her family story and how little ancestry she knew beyond her grandparents. Later that day, I invited her to sit with me at the computer to investigate ancestry together. Before long, we found information on her parents and grandparents and their siblings. Intrigued, I traced her family tree for several hours the next day and pieced together her ancestry to the early 1800’s. She joined me periodically, her eyes glistening and her voice animated. When they left the next day, I presented her with a hardcopy of her family tree dating to the early 1800s. I have known her for over twenty years and cannot remember an incident in which she was so ex-

cited. I gifted her with knowledge and the possibility of connection with her ancestors. Since then she shared her family tree with her brothers and sisters and they also celebrated. What a marvelous gift and it took so little time on my part.

Another interesting incident happened recently. During a phone conversation with a work colleague from Washington, DC, she asked how I liked living in Colorado. I replied, “I like it fine and am comfortable with the cold weather since my ancestors evolved in northern Europe.” She immediately asked me for more details about the origin of



my ancestors. Then she quickly mentioned that her grandparents immigrated to the US through Ellis Island, New York during the 1930s and 1940s. They were Jewish and originated from central Russia. Unfortunately she knew little about the family except their names and origin. I told her of possible resources including websites and how to use them. The power of our conversation fascinated me and her energy and enthusiasm was incredible.

I am called as a Bard and Druid to explore my own ances-

try and to help others discover theirs. Many resources are available today, often on-line at our fingertips. Clearly a worldwide movement exists to learn about our ancestors. Over the years, I watched the increase of the number of individuals listed on [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com) from a few million to tens of millions. The number grows daily...and the website is free. Starting with this article, I will write a series of articles for Henge Happenings. Each one will address a specific aspect of learning about our ancestors. Please join me for each one and I invite you to work along with me. I ardently welcome your feedback through the Henge of Keltria office or the Keltria-L or Keltria-G group sites. The Keltria-G group site is dedicated to ancestry. Whether you are already active in your search or just beginning, we all benefit from sharing what we know or asking questions to facilitate our quests.



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## Ask the Wild Bee What the Druid Knows

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A healthy colony has few (male) drones that hang around waiting for a queen's one virgin flight. After impregnating the queen, they are of no further use to the colony. Individual bees live only a few weeks during the summer (except for the queen) and so the survival of the colony depends on the contributions of all members – each one responsible for a fraction of a teaspoon of honey. The health of the queen is paramount and her condition is broadcast to the entire hive through pheromones. If anything in the hive becomes unsatisfactory – like crowding or an ailing queen – the workers feed some larvae “royal jelly” to make a few new queens. The first queen out of her cell finds and kills the others, and then leaves with half the hive to establish her own colony. Watching a swarming hive is an awesome sight as tens of thousands of bees take to the air, circling around an invisible center making a noise like no other. I've seen them move slowly away like a cloud of hums. And I've seen them cluster on the branch of a tree where, if I'm careful, I can bring them to an empty hive where they make their new home.

We see some parallels here with old Celtic society, where the

health and uprightness of the ruler meant a good relationship with the Goddess of the Land which, in turn, brought prosperity to the tribe. Not only men, but also women were rulers, warriors and workers, and the male ruler's authority derived from the Goddess of the Land. An unfit ruler who lost her or his connection to the fertility of the land could be dethroned and a new one selected. Rulers were,



above all, servants to the relationship between the people and the Spirit of the Land.

For bees, there seems little significance given to individual survival as the bee can make only one strike (sting) – and then she dies. Thus, their champions go out to meet the invader and are ready to sacrifice their lives to attack or drive them off. There is an immediate cost to aggression.

We know that bees are responsible for a tremendous

amount of pollination and thereby our food. In this way, they are truly intermediaries in the fertility of the land as they go about their work. And they are willing to die for the sweetness they produce.

Modern times have seen “Colony Collapse Disorder” where whole hives disappear. Theories abound, but it seems caused by a combination of factors including the stress of moving colonies for pollination of fruit fields, diseases, and insecticide. This sounds like our life today: accosted by stresses that weaken the immune system, diseases becoming resistant to our treatments, and environmental toxicity. Our needs are so similar to those of the bee: safe food, clean water and air, community and a balance of contribution and benefit.

In short, the state of the bees and that of the land (and, therefore, us) are inextricably entwined; the fate of the bees and human food sources are interdependent. It's true: what we do to the land we do to the bees and to ourselves. Disruption of the colony's organized tasks in which all contribute and receive benefit, as well as any cult to an individual, are threats to the survival of the tribe.

That said, we do not have one ruler these days, but rather a collective of people who are charged with making our land prosperous and safe. It's now difficult to see how our "rulers" (legislators, senators, warriors, presidents, oligarchs and mega-corporations, etc.) gain their right to rule from their fitness in the eyes of the Goddess of the Land. These days it seems to be

about the amount of money one can accrue – power for its own sake. And I hear the sounds of discontent, a swarming of people in city after city, objecting to how the benefits of American society are apportioned, perhaps looking for the new queen or champion who will take up their cause and make their lives-in-community worth living again.

It appears that bees do know what it takes to make a working tribe, and they show us what endangers it. So maybe we'd be wise to, indeed, ask the Wild Bee what the Druid should know.



## Let Your Self Be Moved

in the mindset of gratitude and honoring, making the day's start something a tad more meaningful than the prelude to rush hour. A moment of prayer is both intensely private and cosmic in scope: the glue that binds you, as an individual, to the osmos.

While some may disagree, I find the best prayers come unscripted and from the heart: the halting words of a dear friend expressing emotion, rather than photocopying a well-known poem from a book. The poem can make a good offering, too, if it's done in the right spirit, but it's no more precious than your own

words, however inelegant. The heart is all.

Let yourself be moved by the beauty of the dawn, the song of the birds, the warmth of the kitchen – and as you are moved, open your mouth to speak.



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*Bitheadh e mar sin, Bitheadh e mar sin, Bitheadh e mar sin.*

If you'd like to explore Pagan prayer in books, I recommend Ceisiwr Serith's *A Book of Pagan Prayer* and *A Pagan Ritual Prayer Book*, Alexander Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica: Hymns and Incantations*, and Judy Harrow's *Devoted to You: Honoring Deity in Wiccan Practice*. Don't be put off by the last title; the book is a compendium of four essays on spiritual practice, including one on Brighid by Alexei Kondratiev, author of *The Apple Branch*. Get inspired!



## Review: Ensouling Language

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*powerful cultural injunction that is present in many Western cultures. We abandon the view of life that does not allow us to extend interiority to dolphins or trees or stones. (p. 143)*

His writing was, in many ways, watching a deft psychoanalyst pay attention to a person's utterances and what they reveal about the speaker, how they may fall short of their purpose and thereby shows the hidden baggage of the writer. He notes how one's unresolved and unreflected upon personal issues become revealed and how hiding those issues flatten the work. Facing then directly gives depth and richness. It's like my own work as a psychologist: not just listening to what people say, but how they say it in terms of the words they use, the tone of voice, facial expression, body language and context.

Something in me found a home in this book or, perhaps I should say, several aspects of me found a common heart through his writing: Druid, shaman, psychologist, writer, poet.

This is an easy book to recommend for its meaningfulness, its intelligence, depth, and genuineness in practicing what it is prescribing. He challenges the readers' ways of perceiving and relating to the world, meanings put into words, framing of propositions and need to beware of the inevitable hidden baggage. But it's not directly about a philosophy of genuineness, depth and presence: it's a how-to manual (as he reminds us). He addresses the tension between "proper" grammar and writing for impact, dealing with editors, publishers and contracts; getting help and the whole business of delivering one's words to the readers who hunger for them.

This is a book I can **highly recommend**, not only for aspiring writers, but for anyone who wants to engage the world deeply and recognizes the value of words in the exchange.

***Ensouling Language: On the Art of Nonfiction and the Writer's Life***

Paperback: 480 pages

Publisher: Inner Traditions

**Kindle Edition** available!

File Size: 754 KB

ASIN: [B00462RVFK](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00462RVFK)

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the go for your weekly groceries. They feature a bottom gusset and extra long handles for easy carrying.

\* 10 oz heavyweight natural canvas fabric

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On the web at

[WWW.KELTRIA.ORG](http://WWW.KELTRIA.ORG)

**Druidism for the 21st Century™**

## Keltrian Druid Beliefs

1. We believe in **Divinity as it is manifest in the Pantheon**, and that polytheism, pantheism, animism, and pan-polytheism are all valid perceptions of said Pantheon.
2. We believe that **nature is the embodiment of the Gods**.
3. We believe that **natural law reflects the will of the Gods**.
4. We believe that **all life is sacred**, and should neither be harmed nor taken without deliberation or regard.
5. We believe in the **immortality of the spirit**.
6. We believe that **our purpose is to gain wisdom through experience**, and that we may undergo several incarnations to facilitate the variety of experience necessary to gain said wisdom.
7. We believe that **learning is an ongoing process**, and should be fostered at all ages.
8. We believe that **morality should be a matter of personal conviction** based upon self-respect and respect for others.
9. We believe that **evil is not a matter of inheritance but of intent**; therefore, actions are not in themselves evil. Rather, it is through the intent behind actions that evil can manifest.
10. We believe in the **relative nature of all things**, that nothing is absolute, and that all things, even the Gods, have their dark sides.
11. We believe that **every individual has the right to pursue enlightenment** through his or her chosen path.
12. We believe in **honoring the Gods through the cyclical celebrations** of our Celtic ancestors.
13. We believe in a **living religion able to adapt to a changing environment**; therefore, we recognize that our beliefs may undergo change as our tradition grows.

### THE HENGE OF KELTRIA

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