

# ENCHANTED LIVING



ISSUE NO. 63 SUMMER 2023

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— THE YEAR OF THE WITCH —  
*The* **SUMMER WITCH** *Issue*

# Whimsical Witchcraft

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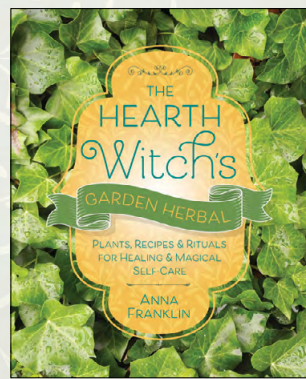
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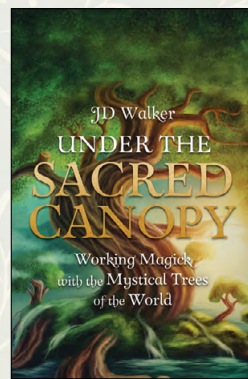
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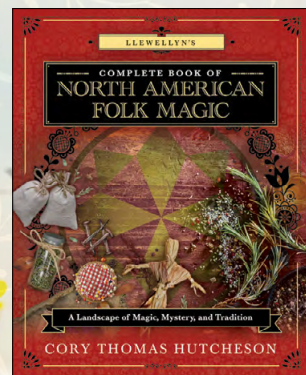
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The Garden of the Hesperides (1892), by Frederic Leighton



For this second issue in our year-long homage to witches, we wanted to celebrate summertime in all its wild, overgrown, bright-hot abundance. We wanted to celebrate meeting—and dancing!—around massive bonfires with your friends and sisters, lying in the fresh grass as the fireflies sparkle around you, wearing flower crowns and straw witch hats and drinking wild berry elixirs and performing solstice charms that can teach you all about true love. Summer is the best time of the year, Alice Hoffman says (page 9), and Midsummer’s Eve is a time to “open your windows and make a promise to give back to the earth with gratitude for all she has given to you.”

Gratitude, abundance, love. Yes, please.

We’ve filled this issue with summer delights and more than a hint of *Midsummer Night’s Dream* magic and moonlit Titania-esque bowers alongside all the sweet charms and spells and celebrations of badass female artists. We wish we could add the scents of jasmine and honeysuckle and join you for a sea-witch gathering like the one Tricia Saroya describes (page 56), or the fire ritual Gina Spriggs lays forth (page 82). But regardless, we hope that you’ll think of this issue as bearing the scent of just-bloomed flowers and imagine that we’re holding hands in an enchanted wood while the moon turns the trees silver.

In her cover shoot for this issue, Natasha Wilson wanted “to create a women’s gathering on the Pacific Coast with close friends, artists, musicians, and creatives alike. My aim was to capture an authentic moment of feeling fully supported and carefree, surrounded by a supportive community.” We feel like you can almost step into those photos; you can almost hear the sparks shoot up from the bonfire as your sister witches twirl and laugh.

We hope the following pages give you a touch of that summer bliss too.

Love,

*Carolyn Turgeon*



# ENCHANTED LIVING

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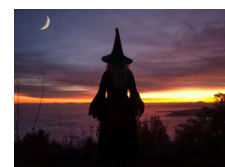
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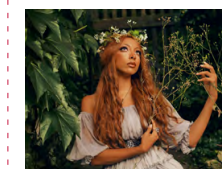
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## CONTRIBUTORS

Enchanted Living's Summer Witch Issue



**Jamie Addington**

Jamie Addington is the lead millinery designer and co-owner of Evercrumbly & Witch. She's been hand-making hats for more than ten years and is known for her witchy, over-the-top designs. When she isn't pouring her heart into her hats, she is probably in her garden or tending her bee hive. "Magic feels truly alive in the summer, and that's when I feel the most witchy!" she says. "My soul feels truly free when I'm listening to the birds, or smelling the sweet honey scent that comes from my hive, or feeling the grass under my feet!" She lives with her husband Fred (Evercrumbly's other co-owner) and two black cats in a witchy Victorian house in Massachusetts.



**Alice Hoffman**

Alice Hoffman grew up believing in magic. She's the author of more than thirty works of fiction, including *The Book of Magic*, *Magic Lessons*, *The World That We Knew*, *Practical Magic*, *The Rules of Magic* (a Reese Witherspoon Book Club pick), the Oprah's Book Club selection *Here on Earth*, *The Red Garden*, *The Dovekeepers*, *The Museum of Extraordinary Things*, *The Marriage of Opposites*, and *Faithful*. Her new novel, *The Invisible Hour*, will be published in August by Atria Books/Simon & Schuster. She's written many original fairy tales and pieces on magic and witches for *Enchanted Living*, including for our 2017 *Practical Magic* issue.



**Lena Lenard**

Lena Lenard is a hereditary witch, artist, and cat breeder living in Poland. She's a European traditional and folk witchcraft practitioner and studies the old ways of people across the continent, especially those from Celtic and Slavic traditions. Creativity is her second name; she can't go to sleep peacefully if she hasn't done anything creative during the day. As she's a hedge witch, she loves bringing her visions from different realms into the mundane world with her art. When she doesn't have her nose in a book, she can be found crafting, hunting for unique vintage treasures, or redecorating her enchanted house.



**Aiysha Sinclair**

Aiysha Sinclair is a Caribbean-American mixed-media artist, storyteller, and the author of the children's book *Brown Sugar Fairies: Saroja's Quest*. She was born in Brooklyn, New York, to Guyanese and Trinidadian parents and then moved to Southern California, where she began her career in the performing arts. Her upbringing was deeply rooted in family tradition, spirituality, and Caribbean culture, all of which helped shape her artistic lens. Her work focuses on Black history, folktales, fairy tales, and folk songs—themes that have been an intricate part of her personal studies and career in film and stage for more than twenty years.



**Jess Starwood**

Jess Starwood—herbalist, forager, and chef—creates an innovative yet traditional approach to wild foods and connecting the community with the local natural environment. She was recognized as one of the most creative chefs in Ventura County by *Edible Ojai & Ventura County* magazine and has foraged for several top Michelin-starred chefs to bring nutritious yet flavorful wild foods to the table. Through the Wild Path School, she helps students cultivate an intimate, sustainable, and connected relationship with the land. Her first book, *Mushroom Wanderland: A Forager's Guide to Finding, Identifying and Using More Than 25 Wild Fungi*, is available at all major booksellers.



**Yiaz Yang**

Yiaz Yang is a traveling fine art fantasy photographer based in Oklahoma. Growing up in a family of eleven siblings, she learned to adapt to her surroundings, but creating a world of her own was her escape. Her main focus is empowering people to be who they truly are at heart—be it a princess, fairy, elf, warrior. During her time off she likes to dabble in the world of magic and other arts like writing, painting, and the culinary. For this issue, she photographed artist Aiysha Sinclair. "I was in awe of how graceful she was in front of the camera," Yang says. "Her movement in the wind was a calling to the waves, and in unison it was like watching a slow dance."

# CHARMS FOR SUMMER

by Alice Hoffman

**I**t begins with the pink moon in spring. It begins with fireflies in the hedges and falling in love for the first time.

It's passion, but it's also revenge. It's fire and water. It's everything you dreamed of and every regret. It's what you lose and what you gain. It's the time of year when you find a love letter that's not addressed to you right there on your bureau. You tell yourself not to read it, but you do. What's done cannot be undone, unless you make it so. You walk through the dark and listen to the cicadas calling. There are frogs on the dirt road and you're crying. All the leaves are green. You feel the green inside of you, twisting through you like a vine.

You remember old curses and a spell your grandmother taught you. You would need coriander and black string. You would need a black candle and sage. You remember that your grandmother warned you to be careful. Revenge always comes back to you in unexpected ways. She said that if someone betrays you, he might be doing you a favor. They're setting you free. The birds outside the window are singing. The birds remind you that you're alive. How can you ignore summer, your favorite time of the year? How can you not rejoice? What's done is done, what is to come is unknown. All around you the world is beautiful. Sorrow is unavoidable, but this is the time of year to start over. Make a crown of flowers. Celebrate the light. Let go of the darkness. Wear citrine and carnelian for energy, warmth, and strength. Wear silver for protection, and passion, and love.

A summer night is the best time to let go of what you've lost. Say the betrayer's name three times. Look for black feathers on the road. Swim in a pond of dark water and look up at the stars. What ends will begin again. This is the season of roses, the time of year when the wild grass grows so tall you disappear into it as you walk into the meadow. It's the time of the year to paint, or write a story, or dance under the moon. It's the time to be brave in all that you do. Summer feels like a waking dream. You sit on the front porch, you drink lemonade, you look over at

your neighbor who you've never noticed before. In the morning you find he's brought you wild raspberries. Love begins this way in the summer. A glass jar of sunflowers left on your front steps. A note left taped to your door. You find yourself drawn to someone you've been acquainted with for years but have never really known. It's the time of unexpected happenings.

On the hottest night of the year, when you can't sleep, you walk through a garden filled with ten varieties of tomato plants, you receive a phone call from someone you used to know and talk until dawn. This is the time of year when you visit places you've never been before. You wear long skirts and the earrings your mother gave you for luck. When you were a child, summer lasted forever, but now you know how precious these days are.

Do all that you can to make it last. Put out bowls of water for the birds in your yard, go to the sea, sit by the shore of a deep blue lake, be grateful for all that you have. Read books in a hammock, leave your shoes at home and go barefoot, collect shells in a dish that you keep by your bedside so that you hear the ocean in your dreams.

By midsummer you no longer remember what was written in that letter you found on your bureau. That's what happens when you live day by day. You take the paper and the envelope and place them in a bowl. When you pour water over the ink it runs off the page and disappears. It's summer and you're starting over. It's the best time of the year. There's rosemary growing outside your door. You've planted what you know you'll want in autumn—squash and pumpkins—but don't rush through the days. Say a blessing for slow afternoons, for Saturdays when you have nothing to do but lie in the grass, for long conversations with your oldest friends. On Midsummer's Eve open your windows and make a promise to give back to the earth with gratitude for all she has given to you.

Blue skies, the birds in the trees, your own beating heart. That's all you need.



OUR COVER STORY

# NIGHT *of the* WITCH



BY SUSANN COKAL  
*Photographer/Creative Director* NATASHA WILSON

## Our Cover Story

Susann Cokal

It begins in places of shadow, in woods and on the east sides of mountains, the far side of the beach's sand: The air is getting softer, velvetier. The hard white light of afternoon is relaxing into gold, and darkness is starting to assert itself in a tapestry of pink and teal and Prussian blue, spangled with stars, lit again by the mirror of the moon—and then by elemental fire, a wheel of it, a blaze, a bank of candles.

This is Midsummer's Eve. And you're probably dancing by now.

Maybe you've already been dancing all day, skipping as you weave long ribbons and flower garlands around the tallest tree or wooden pole within reach. But now it's time to let go of the ribbons, gather your magic into both hands, let it make its bright way into the night. Tonight even the kindest witch has a wild heart. So take off the apron; let down your hair. Your sisters are waiting.

The quick night falls amid the northern hemisphere's longest days of the year. In the third week of June, as medieval poets described it, the jewel of the sun rests overhead and beams down on Earth.

We expect to go a bit mad in the sun—drunk with light. But Midsummer's *Eve*, the shortest night, is even more intoxicating than the longest day, because witches thrive on imbalance. What throws ordinary mortals off kilter, confuses them, makes them lose sleep—all this only increases a witch's power and sense of possibility. Forget the equinoxes, so tidily divided between light and dark; the imbalance of solstice gives us something we can really work with. And with so little darkness around, its magic is concentrated, palpable to any with the gift to recognize it.

So let's dance till we're giddy, and then dance even wilder. Share light within our circle of kindred spirits. Pluck a bride on her way to her wedding and make her dance till she forgets she ever felt any other arms around her. Conjure flames from the ground and use them for curing—or cursing, if we need to. We'll fan the bonfire's flames with our skirts; we'll sing of the old gods and goddesses, and roar at mortals' acts of daring. This is a night of courage and conjuring, summoning the power deepest within us and using it to call down the stars.

In the hour of the witch, in the night of the witch, in the season of the witch, the flames belong to us.

Fire is transformative, and taming it is one of the witch's first tasks. If it leaps beyond her control, it will gobble everything in its path. But in her wise-woman hands, it can burn off useless dead growth. She can rise from the ashes stronger than ever.

It is fitting that elemental fire has been a part of Midsummer at least since Celtic times, as if some canny celebrants wish to prolong the light, and enlightenment, even further. Or as if some are afraid of the brief night's intense power.

If you are a practicing pagan, your solstice celebration, Litha, has its origins in the battle between the Oak King's light and the Holly King's darkness. Tradition might have you jumping over or through flames for good luck, or rolling a wheel of fire down a hillside. But you could take a quieter contemporary approach and find a spot for meditation, then join a spirit gathering. Hold a handfasting ceremony: In the pagan calendar, this is a fortuitous day for plighting your troth. Love is a form of light.

We know the science of solstice, of course. As our Earth travels its elliptical path around the sun, it wobbles and tilts on its axis. So around June 20 or 21, the northern hemisphere receives the sun's rays at a 90-degree angle. This is the sun's zenith, its highest and proudest, most powerful point. In Latin, the *sol* (sun) is at *stitium*—a standstill—as if it can't bear to travel on; it must gaze down on the beloved Earth.

Ah, but I'm leaning to poetry again. The simplest fact is these are the longest days and the shortest nights the northern hemisphere experiences all year.

But solstice is not quite the same as Midsummer's Day—not according to modern recordkeepers. That date is officially June 24, coinciding with the Christian feast of Saint John the Baptist. *Officially*. This calendar isn't fooling us. We know that the summer solstice and Saint John's have deeply entwined roots, just as the winter solstice (December 20) and Christmas are at heart one and the same. As the terms have been used since the 10th century, Midsummer, Saint John's, and solstice are interchangeable.

If we dig deep into the pre-Christian past, we find only two seasons: summer and winter, the times of warm light and cold darkness. Giving equal space on the calendar to the months in which leaves generally spring up from the earth or fall down into it—that's just some newfangled imposition of mathematical fairness—perhaps to sidestep the fact that the moments of imbalance are the poles that structure our year.

You cannot bury a witch's power in the grid of days and weeks that hangs on the wall. Visit Stonehenge and watch the shadows trace out the old solar calendar. They'll place Midsummer firmly between planting and harvesting.

Growth is one of the deepest mysteries of all.

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And speaking of poles, people who dwell above the Arctic Circle may not see nighttime at all when their patch of the Earth has tilted directly beneath the sun. Meanwhile, in Antarctica it's winter—nothing *but* night, for days, even weeks. For your next Midsummer, travel to one of those extremes and let yourself fill up with light. Or darkness. It will be an experience like no other.

Lucky is the spellcaster who lives in the tropics, where Midsummer reaches wide to embrace two heavily enchanted moments, usually in May and July. There, the Earth's wobble makes the sun reach its zenith twice.

In this double Midsummer, objects that point straight up cast utterly no shadow. Stand at your tallest then, and you are alone ... or you are at one with everything. In ancient Hawaiian, the term for this interlude was *kau ka la i kā lolo*, “the sun rests on the brains,” and it was considered a time of immense possibility, when your *mana*, your power and prestige, surged to join with the universe. Any wish could come true—you could pluck it out of thin air and make it real.

These days, people call the phenomenon Lāhainā Noon, meaning “cruel sun.” But you can always choose to use your *mana* in benevolence.



Wherever you observe the solstice, Midsummer's Eve and Day are a potent time for healing. You might spend the night

gathering certain herbs, or grinding and burning what you already have, to work a cure during the day. This was the practice in the Middle Ages, when a healer might use solstice powers to cure blighted cattle, for example, or blindness, or melancholy.

One little spell is easy for anyone to work. Bright yellow Saint John's wort blooms at this time of year and got its name from the belief that harvesting it on his feast day gives the flowers and leaves special potency for treating depression and physical cuts and wounds. You don't have to ingest it to reap the benefits for your mood. Decorate your home with the yellow blossoms; toss a handful into your fire to bring happiness.

If you crave revelation tonight, take a star bath—lying as close to naked as you dare, letting the starshine soak into your skin. The stars' wisdom will become yours for the year. Or if you want to make a simple statement of joy, light some sparklers and fireworks. You've already sensed that the Fourth of July is a historicized Midsummer. The same goes for the French Bastille Day, July 14. This is the time of year to celebrate overturning the old rule and re-creating the world. By torchlight.

To honor history's rebels, you might tie a straw manikin to the mast of a raft and set her on fire, then push her out to sea—no, wait, that's what the *hygge*-loving Danes do every Saint John's Eve, as they try symbolically to rid their shores of witches. Or,

fine, as they (in a gentler explanation of the tradition) *respectfully commemorate* the witch burnings of the 1500s and 1600s, when the witches really were given this sort of Viking sacrificial rite. Nowadays, the fires help the *hekse* fly to Bloksbjerg, Germany, for a grand gathering of their kind.

While the rafts celebrate the marriage of fire and water, neighbors drink beer, eat herring, and sing. Meanwhile, true flesh-and-blood witches stand along the pebbly shores and spit toward the flames to make them flicker. They laugh at anyone who ever thought that burning a doll could chase their magic away. They leap onto ancient dolmens, the stone tables that mark passageways to 5,000-year-old graves, and they remark, *Doesn't the coastline look pretty with so many rafts ablaze?*



It's after midnight. The rafts have sunk or burned themselves out. The townspeople go home, brush their teeth, go to bed, safe from bewitchment for another year. Truly?

They don't know that down on the beach, we are dancing again.

---

*Susann Cokal has tempted fate in four witch-forward novels so far. Visit her online at [susanncokal.net](http://susanncokal.net).*

#### A NOTE FROM COVER PHOTOGRAPHER NATASHA WILSON

Lately I've been inspired by movie stills that capture intense moments in the middle of a film. I pulled examples from films like *Suspiria* and *Midsommar* to simulate at our bonfire. It was captivating to go back and forth between different emotions with all the women, most of whom were strangers to one another at the start. I directed them over the sound of the waves as the sun set, and then, once it was dark, our friend Mack brought out her guitar. By the end of our gathering, there were definitely new bonds forming.

What I didn't realize was the impact that these images and videos would have once I shared them. It seemed to ignite a creative burst; I was receiving tons of shares and reposts of my series and attached to them were powerful, elevating words. As women around the world face a pivotal moment in history, I am grateful that these images can play a small but influential role in bringing women together, embracing community and vulnerability.







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## THE WITCH IN SUMMER by Theodora Goss

Summer is here. The sun shines through the windows of your house, through the lace curtains woven with a pattern of leaves, casting a shadow forest over the wooden floor. It shines on the garden, where your herbs are growing—hyssop and angelica, calendula and yarrow. The roses are blooming—the old-fashioned roses that last only a little while, albas and gallicas and damasks, with petals like ruffled silk. A wild rose clammers into the apple tree, where little apples are already growing—small green apples that will turn red in autumn. They are bitter now, but they are gathering all the sweetness of summer, and when you pick them in September, they will taste like honey. Now it is June, and the air is as soft as the rabbit that comes and nibbles your cabbages. Sometimes

you get mad at him, but how can you stay mad at a bit of brown fluff, no matter how large its appetite for your vegetables?

You are as busy as a bee, in your gardening apron with capacious pockets, wearing your hat—not the pointed hat you wear for fun on Halloween, but a proper gardening hat to protect you from the sun. That is a witch's hat too, because it helps you make magic. Instead of a black robe embroidered with stars, you are wearing worn blue jeans and a cotton blouse that you dried on the lavender bushes, and your sneakers are dirty. But anyone can see you're a witch! After all, there you are in the garden, listening to whatever the bees are buzzing at each other (epic poetry, probably—bee epics are long and sonorous). You are doing what witches do—the important work of being out in



## The Witch in Summer

Theodora Goss

the world, taking care of plants and animals and people, your neighborhood and town, lakes and mountains, even the beautiful planet itself. And there is so much to get done! As squirrels and foxes know, summer is the season for *doing*.

First, there are herbs to gather and dry, because customers are waiting for your packets of organic chamomile (for stress and anxiety), lemon balm (for headaches), valerian (for insomnia), and Saint John's wort (for depression, although you also recommend chocolate and a good therapist). They are waiting for the spells you write, each individually composed for the customer, half recipe and half poem, because the universe speaks in verse.

"This is to be recited during a long walk," begins one, "during which you must listen to the songs of the birds, make yourself a crown of maple leaves, and skip a stone across a pond until it bounces three times." This is a spell for grief, for a man who has lost his father.

"Take half a pound of mushrooms and make a really good pasta sauce," begins another. That is a love potion, although it is most effective, you have found, at making a customer fall in love with herself. It should be perfect for the woman who ordered it on Etsy.

And a third, "Greet your reflection in water (a puddle will do). Apologize for not having gotten together in so long." That is a basic spell, useful for almost anyone and infinitely customizable, because we all need to have a good talk with ourselves sometimes.

Then, of course, there is your spearmint astringent and rose-petal face cream, infused with charms for beauty, health, and the optimism of a kindergartener. There is so much to compound and package! You are, after all, a businesswoman, and you have orders to fill.

Meanwhile, the bees are busy among the salvia, and your familiar is rubbing up against your legs, wanting attention. Is it Cordelia, the tortoiseshell tabby, who considers herself the mistress of your house and insists on a dinner of salmon once a week—for both of you? Or Sebastian, the border collie, who herds the chickens when he's bored and likes to sing along with your Loreena McKennitt CDs? You've never told him that he can't carry a tune.

But now it's noon and the sun is right overhead. It's time to go into the cool shade of the house, where there are emails to answer, bills to pay. Later you will have an online meeting with your reading group. They are scattered all over the world—Adelaide in Scotland, Rutendo in Zimbabwe, Kristiina in Estonia, Priyanka in Singapore, and Noeline, the oldest member of your group, in New Zealand. After all, there are witches everywhere—there always have been. Of course you could astral-project, but everyone is so busy right now that it's easier to just meet on Zoom. Should you read Alice Hoffman or Maryse Condé next week? It's always so hard to decide!

But first, there are errands to run. The seamstress has finished altering the dress you want to wear to a conference next month, sponsored by the Association of North American Witches, on magic in the 21st century. This fall you will be teaching a course at the local community college that you have called Thoroughly Modern Magic, and you want to make sure you're prepared. You need to check out the new Catrin Welz-Stein tarot cards at the local bookstore, next to the coffee shop where they serve a magical brew called *cappuccino*. And you need to bring fresh basil from your garden to your neighbors, a retired baker and her husband, who has the magical power of restoring antique furniture—she says she can't make her focaccia without it.

At some point, you will have to take your broom out for a flight—it needs exercise, just like Sebastian—and check on the ghosts in the attic. You haven't heard them bumping around since last Tuesday, and you're getting worried. And you really should dust the crystals in your cabinet, so the rose quartz and amethyst don't get dusty; research spells for rheumatism, because Noeline is starting to have problems with her hands; read that new book on how to foretell the future from natural signs, like the patterns clouds make against the sky or lichen makes on a tree trunk, or the movements of earthworms; write a letter in support of legislation to protect a local nature preserve where ducks and geese stop on their yearly migrations ...

Oh, for Mother Night's sake! Being a witch doesn't mean you have to do everything all at once. Slow down for a minute. Make yourself a cup of tea. Sit at your kitchen table and watch the lace curtains swaying in the breeze, while the shadow forest shifts on your kitchen floor. Look at Cordelia, dozing in the sunshine. She opens a lazy eye and says, "If you keep going like that, you'll wear yourself out."

Remember that you can't save the world if you don't take some time for yourself.

Outside, the bees are buzzing their interminable epic. The robins are gossiping, as usual. The linden trees are talking to each other in low voices about their favorite topic, arboreal philosophy. The scent of lavender and roses floats through the window and mixes with the minty scent of your tea. Breathe it in deeply—that's also a kind of witchcraft.

It's summer, and the whole creation is busy *doing*, but take some time to feel the warmth of the sun on your skin. It feels like the best gift in the world, the love of a mother for her child—as though she is telling you, "Daughter, you have my blessing."



*Theodora Goss is the World Fantasy, Locus, and Mythopoeic Award-winning author or editor of eleven books, including the short-story and poetry collections The Collected Enchantments and Snow White Learns Witchcraft, as well as her trilogy that began with The Strange Case of the Alchemist's Daughter and ended with The Sinister Mystery of the Mesmerizing Girl. Follow her on Instagram @theodoragoss.*



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The Willow and the Vine

# AT HOME: SUMMER WITCH STYLE

by Rona Berg

**D**esigning a beautiful environment, one that reflects how unique you are and how you feel most at home, is a deeply personal act. The summer is the perfect time to strip the layers down to their essence—fewer clothes, a brighter palette, lighter textures that dance in a soft summer breeze. It may be easier to see the magic around us in the summer, when the bright sun shines and helps clear the mind. There's no better time to hone in on our personal witchy style.

“Life itself is magic,” says Ally Sands, author of *Plant Magic for the Beginner Witch*. “You work with the moon cycles, with the changing seasons, with flowers and herbs—with nature itself. Every single moment is an opportunity to celebrate the magic around us. Making tea becomes a ceremony. Taking a bath becomes a ritual. You appreciate the small things around you so that you can be one with the divine.”

All we need to do is set the scene—and then enjoy it.

## Man in the Moon Lamp

Whether your favorite is a full moon, a crescent moon, or a pink moon, you'll love this handmade Man in the Moon Lamp (pictured above) from the Etsy Wicked World shop in Athens, Georgia. The Man in the Moon orb is cast from resin and is perched on a separate lighted base. You may have a difficult time deciding between this and the Fortune Teller Lamp—just saying. [etsy.com/shop/wickedworld](https://etsy.com/shop/wickedworld)

## Here Comes the Sun

Speaking of the moon—and the stars!—these beautiful suncatchers are designed by Ectogasm on Etsy. They are made of silver, with translucent enamel for a stained-glass effect. We especially love the boho Moon Roses Stained Glass Suncatcher and the Eight-Point Star, and we carry the Bat in our Enchanted Living shop. [ectogasm.net/collections/suncatchers](https://ectogasm.net/collections/suncatchers)

## Witchy Vibes

Tinas This & That, a family-owned witch shop in Toms River, New Jersey, is a kindred spirit, and it even carries your favorite magazine, *Enchanted Living!* We are loving their candles right now, and to throw some light on the subject, the Emotional Balance Candles—studded with beautiful dried flowers and herbs—have been charged and blessed to rebalance your emotions and help you stay calm when a situation is stressful. The Hecate Spell Candles, inspired by the goddess of witchcraft, the moon, and magic, are rich-looking and perfect for any woman warrior. [tinasenchantedmoon.com](https://tinasenchantedmoon.com)



## Hello, Deer

Handmade in the U.K., the Jewel Wild Deer Pillow is printed on luxe velvet with a filling made from recycled PET bottles and a black cotton velvet back. The image of the wild deer in the forest is one of peace and strength and brings a bit of nature indoors. Trimmings include gold tassels and black pompoms. [wolfandbadger.com/us/the-jewel-wild-deer](https://wolfandbadger.com/us/the-jewel-wild-deer)

## The Art of Guinevere von Sneed

You may have seen the work of Guinevere von Sneed in these pages and coveted it. Based in Scotland, Von Sneed lives in a valley in the hills of the Lowlands, which is where she creates beautiful, whimsical watercolors and prints featuring outdoor scenes of spirited women and nature, especially hollyhocks, roses, and larkspur. If you find you must have one of your own—and we totally understand—you can visit her Etsy shop for a lovely selection. [etsy.com/uk/shop/guineverevonsneed](https://etsy.com/uk/shop/guineverevonsneed)

## Crescent Moon Wreath

This delicate Summer Moon (opposite page) is made by The Willow and the Vine (a.k.a. Brenna), who creates each unique, one-of-a-kind piece out of a variety of metals, twisted papers, dried flora (most of which she forages and dries herself), gemstones, grapevines, dyed mosses, vintage doilies, and sari silks. She uses found and upcycled materials in her creations and is rumored to dabble in hat making and fairy-wing construction. [etsy.com/shop/thewillowandthevine](https://etsy.com/shop/thewillowandthevine)

Follow Rona Berg on Instagram @ronaberg



# VERONICA VARLOW

## *Life of a Love Witch*

If your eyes are reading these words, this was meant for you. Take my hands, breathe in the fragrant blooms of the summertime air, feel the sweet sun warming your skin, and wriggle your bare feet as they touch the lush earth. If you have arrived here at this moment, I was meant to deliver a message to you. Are you ready to receive it?

You, my enchanted darling, have your very own unique charms within you. Without question, your magick has always been there and it belongs to you.

When you and I are here together in these moments, and when we do rituals or spells together, when we journey together side by side each season, my greatest hope is that you *remember* the magick within you. It lives there in your bones, in the story of your being, through the whispers of your ancestors and through former lifetimes. Your very being is a secret enchanted library, and when you work the old rituals or magick spells, the stories of your soul will open.

Let's envision the two of us soaring through the air on our brooms, side by side. Imagine that we have a greater perspective about our world and our lives from looking at everything from above.

What do you want to create in your beautiful world? What dreams do you wish to manifest? What are you passionate about that you want to bring more of into your life? You can tap into the radiant daydream powers of summer to create your own world. Hang onto your broomstick, because we've got some world building to do!

Our summer witch initiation is inviting in your very own inner Love Witch! When you take the time to honor who you are, you cast a love spell on your own beautiful self, and when you are living in that life-affirming, juicy, abundant state, you will automatically cast a spell on the world around you and magnetize the very best things that are meant for you.

The enchantment of summer is that the world is abundant and teeming with life. Fireflies are flickering their night symphony of light over fields of wildflowers. The music of crickets chirping moves hypnotically through the warm summer night air. The leaves dance green and vibrant on the branching arms of the trees. Flowers bloom and bubbling rivers curve through lush beds of moss.

Here's a vital and vibrant tip about harnessing the radiant power of summer: Engage in the power of *world building*. What does that mean? Well, I'm glad you asked! Witches are world builders, and that means that we envision what we would like to

manifest and then we craft spells and take action to turn those dreams into our reality. Why is summer such an ideal time for this world-building practice? Well, when we were little, do you remember how much we would adventure and daydream in our summer months off from school? We can tap into that memory in the core of us and harness it to charm those daydreams into our real lives!

Let me introduce you to three very important aspects of the process of witchy world building:

### VISIONING

Just like Stevie Nicks sings about her crystal visions, we all need to honor our inner Love Witch by allowing time for summer daydreaming and play to tap into a deep magickal energy within us. Don't have any time for play or daydreams? I'm guessing your time spent on social media will say otherwise! Dip into actively building and creating your own real life story instead of endlessly scrolling through other people's stories. You must honor your own self, your story, your time, and your magick. Dedicate between a half hour and an hour a day—and make it non-negotiable—to journaling, to lighting your candle, to singing, to staring at the clouds, and to thinking about what you really want to create in your life. Let your imagination wander. Daydreams can be a powerful indicator of the life you want to build.

### MAGICKAL MINDSET

Engage in wonder! Call in your inner child to come and help you. Open your eyes to all the beautiful things surrounding you right now in this very moment. The news media and outside forces have trained us to focus on the fear and the negative. When you shift your focus to the gifts, the good things, and the joys, it magnifies those things to you. You can muster your deepest and wildest Love Witch energies when you look at the world around you with heart-shaped glasses! *Remember, your passion is your power!*

### RITUAL AND ACTION

Honor your magick by setting aside time for a ritual with intention (we will do one together below) and take action on this world you want to build. Let others know about what you desire, because you never know when someone could help you. Take daily actions to bring in the love of friendship, of doing what you love, of community, of your sacred practice, and of romantic love and watch your world bloom like the lush days of summer!

## THE SUMMER WITCH INITIATION RITUAL



Here's what you need:

### For your brew:

*A cauldron (any size) or heat-safe bowl*

*A charcoal tablet for incense*

*A lighter*

*1 teaspoon (my Grandma Helen referred to teaspoons as a "pinch") copal resin*

*1 teaspoon dried rose petals*

*1 teaspoon orange peels*

*1 teaspoon lavender*

*1 teaspoon mugwort*

*Note:* If it is hard to purchase herbs where you live, you can substitute a yellow or orange candle for the brew.

### For the Ritual:

*Grapefruit oil*

*4 fresh red roses*

*A special ring or necklace that you can charge with intention*

*A plate (I love using an antique plate with roses decorating the edge that I found in a thrift store)*

*A white outfit (anything that you feel good in—I personally love old vintage slips)*



### TO PREPARE FOR YOUR SUMMER WITCH INITIATION

**Time:** You will perform this spell between the new moon to the full moon of June, July, or August in the prime summertime months.

**Place:** If the weather permits and you can safely do this spell outside, go for it! If not, you can do this spell indoors. If possible, do this spell near an open window so you can connect with the outside world.

**Dress:** Adorn yourself in white and take your shoes off so you can have your bare feet on the ground.

**Setup:** Put the cauldron or heat-proof bowl in the center. Place one charcoal tablet inside the cauldron. Place the herbs and copal resin between you and the cauldron. Place the grapefruit oil to your right side. Place your ring or piece of jewelry that you wish to charge with the creative, passionate energy of summer directly in front of you. Place the four red roses to your left.

**To Begin:** Take the charcoal tablet out of the cauldron and hold the lighter underneath it until it starts to spark, then drop it in the cauldron or fire-proof bowl. If the charcoal tablet is lit, you should see smoke coming out of the cauldron.

Take the petals of one rose and scatter them upon the plate in front of you. Gently place your adornment object (ring or jewelry) onto the rose petals of the plate. This charges your adornment object with the love vibrance of rose petals.

Say this incantation while you place the copal, lavender, rose, orange peels, and mugwort into the cauldron:

*A pinch of copal to stir up my supernatural powers,  
With a dash of tranquility from lavender flowers.  
Scatter petals of rose as a foundation of love,  
Orange peels for joy and the summer sun above.  
Mugwort for the dreamtime and magick moonlight,  
I claim myself a Love Witch in this sacred rite.*

## Life of a Love Witch

Veronica Varlow



Take your adornment object from the plate of rose petals. Hold it over the delicious smoke brewing from the cauldron. If you're working with an orange or yellow candle as a substitute, you can hold the adornment object inches above the flame.

*I charge my adornment with passion and fire,  
I create the beautiful world that I desire.  
Over the spiraling smoke, my talisman I hold  
To charm, to empower, beloved and bold.  
I stir up my passion and call love that is mine,  
I adorn myself to sanctify my own divine.*

Place your adornment on you.

Take the grapefruit oil and rub it into your palms. This is a Romani-Czech tradition of bringing sunshine to the story of your life. My ancestors were palm readers, and they believed that our life stories are held in the lines of our palms. Therefore when you anoint your palms with grapefruit oil (or oil from any citrus fruit that grows in the sun, like orange, lemon, or lime), it brings the sunshine into the lines of your life. This indicates a new beginning of growth, happiness, joy, and love.

Stand tall and take the petals from two of the roses and hold them in your palms by your heart. Imagine that at the bottoms of your feet, you are growing strong roots deep in the ground. The earth is nourishing you and making you strong. As you feel

the energy of the earth moving through your body from your feet to your head, slowly lift the rose petals in your cupped hands skyward like an offering.

*From the deep roots of a tree to the stars up above,  
Anointed with grapefruit and two roses of love,  
I lift the veil for all to see  
Eternal love resides within me.*

Hold the rose petals right over the crown of your head now and shower yourself with them. Take this divine moment to feel the petals falling on your head, down your face, and all around your body. When you are done, gather the petals and tape some into your magickal grimoire with this spell. Take a few others to sleep on tonight (like the Love Witch you are!), and put some petals in your underwear. This will help remind you what a goddess you are, and when you take off your clothes at night there will be another rose-petal shower! This is truly honoring your divine self.

Take the last remaining rose and hand it to a stranger you pass during your day, who you have a gut feeling needs that beautiful gift at that moment. Allow the beauty of love to multiply!

Happy summer, Love Witch!



Veronica Varlow's best-selling book *Bohemian Magick* is now available everywhere—packed with secret spells and rituals passed down from Grandma Helen. Read more about it, as well as about her *Witch Camp* and *Love Witch Tarot School*, on [lovewitch.com](http://lovewitch.com). Find her on Instagram @veronicavarlow.

# Kupala Night

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY LENA LENARD





**K**upala Night begins with lighting the “holy fires” in forest clearings as well as on the banks of rivers and lakes. Participants strike fire from ash, birch, or oakwood. In sacred places, they drive birch pegs into the ground and place ash hubs on them—that is, wheels with spokes wrapped in tarred straw. They spin the wheels so fast that the friction causes them to burn. They roll the burning wheels to nearby piles of wood and straw—symbols of home and hearth—and flames burst into the sky, sparking and roaring, symbolizing a new, clean home and hearth. At the same time, there’s singing and dancing. Women collect magical herbs and flowers. They weave wreaths and gird themselves with wormwood.

It’s a night of celebration and erotic awakening, with all-night revelries among the smoke of bonfires and the intoxicating smells of a summer night outdoors. In the past, marriages were arranged by the head or the elders of the family and matchmakers... but for the young women who had not yet been engaged and wanted to avoid the usual form of mating, here, among the flame and flowers, was a chance to win a loved one. A boy might even “kidnap” a dancing girl from around the fire and try to woo her.

In some traditions, young maidens release their previously woven wreaths to the waters of rivers and streams in a collective ceremony with singing and dancing. The wreaths might have a candle stuck in them, so that the beloved one can more easily find the right wreath in the dark. Downriver, boys stand ready to jump into the water to pick out the wreaths of their beloveds. Anyone who does so returns to the celebrating crowd to find the lucky (or not) owner of the retrieved wreath. A quick retrieval of a girl’s wreath meant a quick marriage. If the wreath swam further before a bachelor found it, the maiden would marry ... but not so soon. But if the wreath was burned, sank, or became entangled in the rushes, she was likely to become an old maid. Wreaths in hands, the bachelors might invite their beloveds for a romantic walk in search of a magical fern flower, and then together they might walk into the darkness of the forest ...

Kupalnocka, Sobótki, Ivan Kupala, or Saint John’s Eve, as it’s often called today, are the names of this joyful yet mysterious



pre-Christian Slavic holiday that traditionally fell on the astronomically shortest night of the year, around June 20 or 21. Kupala Night was the culminating celebration of the Slavic summer holidays and, unlike other holidays, pushed agrarian elements into the background. Instead the ancient cults of fire (a symbol of love and family life) and of water (a source of health, purification, and life) came to the fore in an exuberant and often dazzling celebration.

The roots of Kupala Night are deeply anchored in Slavic culture, and in the rural folk tradition, the holiday is still alive—slightly transformed, of course, but recognizable nonetheless. Christian influence assimilated the holiday under the name of Saint John, after unsuccessful attempts to completely eradicate

the rite of the old faith. The name was a reference to the ritual baths performed that night as a form of baptism—like those performed by John the Baptist. The holiday also moved from the summer solstice to the birthday of John the Baptist, June 24. A similar thing happened in East Slavic rituals: The Orthodox Church called the holiday Ivan Kupala, which is mainly celebrated in Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia on July 6, according to the Gregorian calendar, or June 23 and June 24 according to the Julian one.

But where does the name Kupala come from? In Ruthenia, Kupala was mentioned already in the 13th century as *kupalija*, and in the 14th century *Ivan Kupala* appeared as a name of both the holiday and the ritual effigy used in the ceremony. That effigy might be the figure of a mythical god of the summer sun, marriage, and the earth’s fertility, though not all experts confirm this. More certain is that a puppet called Kupala was used in rituals by eastern Slavs. People gathered around the fire and jumped over it, carrying the puppet with them. According to old Russian and Bulgarian testimonies, the name was derived from the ritual bathing in the river for the first time in a year. The word Sobótka was a Polish name for the massive fire that was burned during holidays and celebrations. Christians later associated the name Sobótka with “sabbath”—as they considered the fire celebrations to be devilish.

The summer festival occurred during the full bloom of nature and the hottest month of the year, which probably contributed

## Kupala Night

Lena Lenard

to this full-scale awakening of passions and feelings among the community that led to a symbolic discharge of excitability. This, in turn, became the reason for the Catholic Church's strong opposition to Kupala Night as a "satanic practice." As a result of these actions, Kupala Night celebrations gradually began to disappear or get distorted as Christian beliefs took over, but the Renaissance era brought a return to and longing for nature and old traditions.

People began to rediscover these old customs, and to celebrate them.

Today, the ritual and symbolism of the holiday have a joyful character and it attracts many young people hoping to get closer to their chosen loves... but in Slavic Rodnover circles,

where practitioners reconstruct and follow pre-Christian Slavic religions, Kupala continues to be a deeply important religious holiday.

In these modern celebrations, sacrifices (*obiaty*) are still made to the sacred fire for Swarozyc, Swarog, Dazhboh, Jarylo, Mokosh, and others, and are believed to give people fertility and abundant harvest in return. It is also a farewell ritual to the spring god Jarylo. The Rodnover priest (called *Zherts*) who presides over the rite raises toasts to harvest, fertility, gods, and ancestors, and then throws the offerings into the fire for the gods. People gird their loins with wormwood and jump through the fire, in pairs or singly, and the sacred fire is thought to purify them and protect against evil. People also lead their cattle through fire to protect against disease and pestilence. Fire jumping is the most common ritual in the entire Slavic region, while the best preserved rite in Ukrainian, Belarusian, and Russian folklore is the custom of burning a straw effigy of Kupala (or Mara in Belarus), or a horse head or cow head decorated with flowers. Girls throw bunches of flowers and herbs into the fire to ensure health, fertility, and reciprocity of feelings with their chosen ones. Burnt herbs (thyme, wormwood, mugwort, mullein, burdock) are supposed to cleanse souls and bodies and protect against spirits with dubious intentions.

The fire is also used for prophecy, with the behavior of the



flame predicting the weather and abundance of the harvest. If the flame is high and even, it heralds a rich harvest of fruit. If sparks jump out of the fire, it means a successful harvest.

The release of wreaths is an inseparable element of Kupala Night, but this holiday is also a time of searching for the legendary, mystical fern flower. The peculiarity of this mythical plant is that it was believed to bloom only once a year, during the shortest night of the year, at midnight.

According to legend, the fern flower shone with an extraordinary glow and was believed to point the way to hidden treasures, and wealth and abundance. To those who found it, the flower revealed all the wisdom of the world and provided

wealth and happiness, especially in love. According to botanists and ethnographers, on the other hand, the legend of the fern flower probably originated from the custom of women smearing themselves with Adder's-tongue fern leaves (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) during the celebration of the holiday, which was supposed to magically increase their attractiveness. Of course, many types of plants found in wetlands and wooded areas were collectively referred to as ferns, many of which grow and bloom in June.

Water and bathing also played and continue to play a huge sacred role. In some regions, it was forbidden to bathe in rivers, streams, or lakes during Kupala Day, but at night the water became a healing element belonging to the moon and could then cure various ailments. Only after the climax of the summer solstice did the power of various water demons weaken under the influence of incantations and rituals; water then gained salutary properties of healing and purification, even allowing for spiritual rebirth. The Slavic Rodnovers re-create all these ritual elements with an incredible attention to detail, based on source documentation, during the fully religious Kupala holiday—all against the background of beautiful songs, joyful dances, colorful processions, and fortune-telling by the fire.

Follow Lena Lenard on Instagram @lena\_fox\_art.

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# Lughnasadh Wild Berry Margarita

by Susan Ilka Tuttle, a.k.a. Whisper in the Wood



**S**ummertime is a season that gifts us with plenty, a bounty born of the seeds planted and nurtured—both the actual seeds of plants and the more figurative, personal seeds. It's harvest time, love! A time to enjoy and celebrate the fruits of your labor. Lughnasadh—also referred to as Lammas—is the first of three harvest-themed sabbats that occurs August 1 and 2 (followed by Mabon and Samhain). Lughnasadh is the age-old Gaelic festival that honors the Celtic sun god Lugh through feasting, libation, athletic games, and creative storytelling. This holiday is also a time to rejoice over the ripening and harvesting of the first grains and other bounties, especially wheat, corn, and berries, which are abundant at this time. Lughnasadh invites us to focus on sentiments of hope, thankfulness, blessings, abundance, and sacrifice—all attributes that center on agriculture and harvest.

There are lots of simple ways to tap into the harvest energy of this pagan holiday, to make it a meaningful, personalized celebration. As a green witch and herbalist, I find that summer plants from the garden and wild play an important role in my observance of Lughnasadh. I forage for them, co-create with them to make botanical body-care preparations, and incorporate them into culinary delights to be honored and savored at this harvest feast. The wild blackberries and raspberries are ripe, plump, and juicy on their canes this time of year. I enjoy walks through nature, picking bucketfuls, tasting and savoring their warm, tarty-sweet juices as I harvest. My family and friends look forward to my wild berry margarita, a festive and fruity libation that makes a great addition to any Lughnasadh feast. It provides refreshment in the hot weather, is a satisfying way to celebrate the summer yield of berries, and can be used to make a toast acknowledging the rewards of harvest time. (I also supply a non-alcoholic alternative below.)

## Start by making a wild berry simple syrup:

Combine 1 cup of sugar with 1 cup of water in a saucepan and simmer it on the stove, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves into the water. Once the sugar has dissolved, add 1 cup of wild berries to the mixture and simmer for 20 minutes. If you don't have access to wild berries, store-bought ones will work just fine. Remove your preparation from the stove after 20 minutes and allow it to cool some. Strain out the plant matter using a fine mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth. Allow the syrup to further cool. While mine is cooling, I like to gather summer flora from my gardens and from wild spots on my property to adorn my altar and feast table. I especially like to gather orange and yellow flowers, as the two colors are associated with Lughnasadh.

Once the syrup chills, it's time to make the margarita ...

## Ingredients (for one):

2 ounces tequila  
¾ ounce wild berry simple syrup  
Fresh juice of ½ or 1 lime

## Instructions:

Swipe a wedge of lime over the rim of your glass and dip the edge in a plate of kosher salt. Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice, shake, and strain into a pretty glass. Garnish with a lime wedge.

## Non-alcoholic version:

Mix this wild berry simple syrup and lime with soda water for a delicious non-alcoholic alternative.

Cheers! Have a blessed Lughnasadh!



*The Orchard* (1912), by Franz Dvorak

Susan Ilka Tuttle is a green witch, herbalist, spirit medium, author, and photo artist living in rural Maine. Enjoy her book *Green Witch Magick*, where she explores thirteen essential herbs for the witch's cupboard through herbalism and magic-based projects. Visit her botanicals shop at [inthewoodbotanicals.com](http://inthewoodbotanicals.com), learn about her spirit mediumistic readings at [susanuttlespiritmessenger.com](http://susanuttlespiritmessenger.com), and follow her on Instagram @whisper\_in\_the\_wood.



# A SUMMER NIGHT'S RITE

## *Under the Flower Crown*

BY SUSANN COKAL

“Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it?” asks Daisy Buchanan, Jay Gatsby’s great love. “I always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it.”

With all due respect to the divine Ms. B., *we* would never make such an error. We watch for the longest day ... and then celebrate it. With cakes and flowers, candles and crowns. Spellcasting, fortune-telling. Camaraderie.

You see, Daisy (if I may), Midsummer—and summer in general—*mean* something to us: Magic. Because this is the season of the unexpected.

In summertime, rules are relaxed; vacations and weekends and gorgeous weather spirit us away from the rigid rules of the rest of the year. In particular, the summer nights are as full of possibility as a party in West Egg. To give just a few examples, Midsummer’s Eve is the night on which animals speak and when eating a snail will keep devils away for the rest of the year. It’s when we can say our names seven times into a mirror and possibly meet our own future ghosts.

This is also the time to act on our dreams, because whatever we wish for will likely come true. So we might sleep through the heat of the day and go roaming at night, to meet each other by star- and candlelight. We gather in a field, a forest, on a beach, on a mountain, and we prepare: scatter flowers (Daisies, anyone?) for the blossoming of friendship and magic, candles to illuminate the best parts of our selves.

And so the rites begin. We clasp hands and feel a new energy running through ourselves and around the circle. Sitting or standing, we have just created a separate space, and with a few words, perhaps a song or a first taste of summer fruit, the everyday boundaries are gone.

A sort of gentle chaos takes over. There are no leaders now, no queens and kings, because if everyone wears a crown, everyone’s royalty. A diadem of flowers and leaves twines you into the cycles of love, fertility, and eternity. It asserts that you are a child of the universe and a natural spirit, in touch with the green magic of growth. Even a simple meal together can become a sacred rite as we share the same foods: a sip of elderberry juice, a pinch of sweetness from an annular cake.

There will be no competition tonight. Games have no part in this magic, because a game is designed to declare one winner and set someone up as superior. A game makes the heart race, makes the players taunt each other, sometimes creates hard feelings. It can be great fun—but it’s not right for tonight.

What is right: the magic of transformation.

Who doesn’t change a bit in the balmy season of pleasure? Escaping the everyday rules makes this the ideal time for

discovering a secret self. Because here is a lovely paradox: By trying out a different persona, we learn more about who we are at heart. So you might channel the old gods and archetypes or call on the natural spirit in all living things—whatever you’ve wondered about, whatever lures you.

Maybe you’ll shape-shift into a flower or plant, something close at hand, lush, calm. Or become a frog and collect a few hopeful kisses, or a fairy-tale beast, then see who recognizes the rosy prince in you. In many traditions, including Norse and Native American mythologies, this is a good time to turn into a bear. They are not only strong and fierce; they are excellent mothers and protectors, and their hibernation cycles identify them with rebirth and transformation itself.

The simplest spell requires only that you keep an image in mind of the being you want to become—but a token such as a petal or a tooth may help a lot—then chant your command. Use the friends in your circle too; they will make the spell stronger: “Daisy, become a bear. Daisy, become a bear ...” What you do when it works is up to you.

Transformation into a donkey has a rich tradition too, and it carries a couple of cautions. In one of the oldest pieces of prose literature, Apuleius’s *Golden Ass*, we find a case of spellcasting gone wrong. Lucius, the hero, begs a young lady to turn him into a bird, but she misspeaks and he ends up an ass—and one who is frequently stolen from his apparent owners. Lessons learned: You’ll want to be careful about who casts your transformative spell—and keep plenty of flowers on hand, because for Lucius, at least, eating a fresh rose is the way to break the magic.

Then again, if a fairy king puts a donkey’s head on your shoulders, you might want to go with it. There’s a chance that you’ll get to make love to a fairy queen.

At the very least, and even at a humdrum gathering of mortals, you can become someone new. Try out a foreign accent. Wear your godmother’s jewelry; switch clothes with a stranger. The subtlest change can awaken you to a side of yourself you’ve overlooked.

Maybe some little part of your night’s transformation (or a big part, who knows?) will go with you into ordinary life and be part of who you are now. Maybe a new friend will come too, someone you’d never have met in other seasons—wolf or fairy, elf or beast.

In summer, even the shortest evening might seem to last forever. Perhaps it does; we don’t know the true nature of time. We might still be together now, hands clasped tight.



Visit Susann Cokal online at [susanncokal.net](http://susanncokal.net).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIE FLORO

@julie\_floro

Dress Designer: Mariah Lynn Designs @mariahlynndesigns Florals/Crowns/Table Styling: Dark Horse Botanical @darkhorsebotanical

Models: Brittany Ann @brittanyann\_pa\_ Pilisa Mackey @cutiepiepichan Veronika Lutsenko @\_veronika.lutsenko\_

Katie Eigenbrod @statefossil Tessa Wilder @summerloveletters

*“There are no leaders now, no queens and kings, because if everyone wears a crown, everyone’s royalty. A diadem of flowers and leaves twines you into the cycles of love, fertility, and eternity.”*





Artepics / Alamy Stock Photo

Titania and Bottom by John Anster Fitzgerald

## THE INSPIRATION

by Julie Floro

This photo shoot was first inspired by a unicorn head. My mom was infatuated with unicorns and had made this incredible papier-mâché unicorn costume complete with a head-mask part and kept it all these years. When I recently pulled it out of storage, it sparked memory of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, mostly because of how Bottom's head becomes transformed into a donkey's. I thought, How cool would it be to do a shoot loosely inspired by that and the fae realm but put a full fantasy twist on it and make it a unicorn instead of a donkey?

From there, the shoot spiraled in the direction of fairies and fantasies and late summer evenings that seem to last forever and all the warm magical feelings that encapsulate that fleeting season. As a kid, one of my favorite movies was the 1940s version of *Fantasia*. I always loved the scene most with the centaur girls picnicking in the glen, weaving flowers through their hair, enjoying good food and friendship, just dripping in flowers and so much beauty. I wanted my shoot to feel reminiscent of that—of fairies and sisterhood and lush

never-ending summer evenings full of good food and fellowship (with, of course, a little twist of Shakespeare!)

My team was amazing—everyone met as strangers but left that day like sisters. That's just the magic of fantasy photo shoots if you ask me. It's impossible not to have so much fun that you forget you're doing a photo shoot, and all of the sudden it just feels like you are really living this impossibly magical life. It was *so* much work pulling it all together, making sure everything perfectly matched my vision. It was a long, exhausting day, but when I stood back at the end and saw them all from afar in the dark, sitting around the table with candles flickering, sharing sweets and laughs and just hanging out enjoying each other's company, it was just such an aha moment: This is exactly what I'm supposed to be doing. Making dreams a reality, bringing people together, rekindling imaginations, and creating so much beauty in the process. It really doesn't get much better than that!

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# Midsummer LOVE CHARMS

by Susann Cokal  
Photo by Lena Lenard



*Midsummer's Eve is one of the most potent nights of the year—certainly for predicting where and with whom you'll find love. If you can't wait to find out who your lover will be, try these tricks some night around the solstice, between June 20 and June 23.*

- ♥ For the patient witch, a powerful conjuring: Walk backward through a garden and pick a rose without looking at it. Put the rose into a bag (cloth, paper, or otherwise) and sew the mouth of the bag shut. Then put the whole thing into a dark drawer and *do not look* at it till the next solstice, around December 20 or Christmas. Take the preserved flower out and pin it to your chest. The first person who comes up to you and asks for the rose—or who simply takes it without asking—is destined to be your lover.  
Remember that if someone simply takes rather than asking, you still have a choice: You can dump Grab-Hands before the relationship really begins.
- ♥ For the hungry witch: The same trick that works with apple peels on Halloween can work with any other fruit skin at Midsummer. Peel a peach, for example, in one long curl, then throw the peel over your shoulder. It will form the first letter of your forever love's name; now you just have to figure out who C or L or W might be.
- ♥ For the gambling witch: Take an ordinary deck of cards with which you've already played several games. Shuffle the deck while thinking about someone who might become a lover; if you have no one already in mind, let a name come to you while you shuffle. Then, with the name on your lips, deal the cards face up one by one. Your prediction arrives with the first face card that appears. Everything depends on the suit to which that face belongs.
  - If the suit is a heart, you have found the name of your true love and joy.
  - If it's a diamond, the two of you will be wealthy—at the very least, rich in love.
  - If it's a club, the name belongs to somebody who will work hard to win you.
  - If it's a spade, your lover will try to dominate the relationship.This divination will work even better if you use a secondhand deck that has passed through many other hands.
- ♥ For the unclothed witch: When you retire to bed, turn your undergarments inside out and hang them over the back of a chair. At midnight you should see the spirit of your future life partner turning your skivvies right side out.
- ♥ For the sweet witch: If you already fancy someone, write that person's name and yours together on a slip of paper. Twist the slip and bind the edges together in a circle, then drop the paper ring into a honey or sugar jar. Be sure to sweeten your food only from that jar until it is empty. By the time you've swallowed the last of it, the person whose name you have conjured will have fallen in love.
- ♥ For the witch who loves mystery: If you don't need a name right away, you can simply draw love toward yourself. For this, all you need is a new pink candle. After you light the wick, sit with the candle until it burns out. You've put your intention out into the world; now love will find you.



# FORAGING THE *Summer Garden*

BY JESS STARWOOD

**W**ith the abundance of summer energy comes the abundance of weeds in the garden. Instead of fighting them, why not eat them? One of the mildest and easiest-to-identify weeds is the common garden mallow (*Malva neglecta* and *Malva parviflora*). A related species in this family of plants, *Althaea officinalis*, was originally used to make the sweet treat marshmallows. Despite their edible and culinary uses, they often are not desirable in the garden.





## SPICY MALLOW CHIPS

1-2 pounds fresh mallow leaves, the largest you can find  
½ cup tahini or cashew butter  
¼ cup tamari, soy sauce, or Bragg's liquid aminos  
¼ cup nutritional yeast  
2 teaspoons garlic powder  
1 teaspoon smoked paprika  
½ teaspoon chipotle or cayenne (optional)  
1 to 2 lemons, juiced

Wash the leaves and pat dry. I sometimes leave a few inches of the stems attached for aesthetic reasons and to move them while coating.

Mix all the ingredients for the seasoning. If it's too thick or paste-like, thin with about a quarter to a half cup of spring water. Taste, and adjust spices if necessary.

Coat each leaf generously with the seasoning mixture. Place each leaf separately onto dehydrator trays and dehydrate at 120°F for 4 to 6 hours or until crispy. If you do not have access to a food dehydrator, an oven on the lowest setting can be used instead.

This recipe also works well with other weedy leaves such as dandelion (*Taraxacum officinalis*), stinging nettle (*Urtica* sp.), sow thistle (*Sonchus* sp.), and many other possibilities.

## QUICK PICKLED CHEESE WEED CAPERS

½ cup cheese weed seed pods, immature  
¾ cup rice vinegar  
¼ cup water  
1 teaspoon salt  
3 to 4 garlic cloves, sliced  
½ teaspoon chili flakes  
½ teaspoon black peppercorns  
¼ teaspoon mustard seeds

Rinse the cheese-weed seed pods—lightly, as they can fall apart with any vigorous washing—and set aside.

Combine the rice vinegar, water, and salt in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the salt.

In a clean mason jar, add the cleaned seed pods and remaining ingredients. Pour the hot liquid ingredients over the seed pods and close the lid. Shake gently to mix everything together. Make sure that the seed pods are completely submerged in the liquid.

Allow the seed pods to marinate for at least a day to infuse the flavors. Serve as a garnish for charcuterie, cheese, salads or anywhere you would use a pickled ingredient. These cheese-weed capers keep fresh in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.



Follow Jess Starwood on Instagram @jess.starwood.

### How to Identify

Round, palmate leaves that resemble geranium, with a toothed margin. Mallow family plants have a red spot at the cleft where the stem meets the leaf. The small, sometimes inconspicuous flowers produce a seed head that is segmented like a cheese wheel, each seed being wedge-shaped when pulled apart. Mallow is also known as “cheese weed” because of these seeds. This plant is widely common across the U.S.

### When to Harvest

Spring and early summer. Collect younger leaves for fresh salads, and older leaves for making chips or thickening soups, broths, and sauces. Seed pods are best collected when still young and green before they harden into mature brown seeds.

### Preparation and Uses

Use fresh in salads. Large leaves can be used as mini tortilla-like wraps or stuffed like grape leaves. Batter and dehydrate large leaves to make mallow chips.

Use cooked with other greens or in soups and stews to help create a thicker texture. Its mucilaginous quality means it can be used like its relative, okra.

The green seedpod “cheese wheels” can be eaten raw while they are still young or pickled. They add a nice texture to salads.





SPICY MALLOW CHIPS



QUICK PICKLED  
CHEESE WEED CAPERS

## Green Cloth, Inlaid with Wild Flowers: Magical Summer Wear

by Sara Cleto and Brittany Warman

Enchanting clothing for the modern witch or fairy has gotten far easier with the internet—especially with trends like “whimsigoth” and “witchcore” on TikTok and the Daily Faeshion Facebook group giving you all kinds of ideas. But it’s still hard to know what to wear in the summer. For example, many of the suggestions involve velvet, dark colors, and tons of layers, which are all pretty much the last things you want to wear if it’s sweltering outside!

In the 1810 ballad collection *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, editor R.H. Cromek wrote that Scottish fairies tended to wear “mantles of green cloth, inlaid with wild flowers” and “green pantaloons, buttoned with bobs of silk, and sandals of silver.” Though the ballads included in this collection are of dubious origin (many were likely the work of poet Allan Cunningham), Cromek’s description of fairy clothing is pretty spot on, traditionally speaking, and we think it makes great inspiration for magical summer wear.

To start, embracing the color green in summer works well no matter if you lean more toward the witch or fairy side of dress. Summer is the time of vibrant green grass and tree leaves—it is the color of life thriving everywhere you look. Folklore frequently associates the color with the fae, but you can make it witchwear too if you go for the hedge witch aesthetic: Lightweight fabrics in the color and leafy, mossy accessories are good places to start.

If you’re thinking you still want to embrace some layers, we recommend white lace. White is also a common fairy color, and it will keep you much cooler than layers of other colors would.

If your witchy heart says *No, thank you—all black, all the time,*



Photo by Priscilla Hernandez

we get it—we’re frequently in the same boat ourselves. Lightweight black cotton and black lace are great summer staples. Go for short styles or tea-length rather than floor-sweeping hems to survive the heat, and create texture and visual interest with jewelry instead of adding more fabric or layers.

Next, while it may be a little bit difficult to create garments “inlaid with wild flowers,” you *can* embrace wearing flowers in other ways. Fantastical prints, floral jewelry, and even a flower crown can evoke the magic of both spring and summer. We tend to like the brighter, bolder colored flowers in the summer—we’re talking sunflowers, hibiscus, marigolds, phlox, coneflowers, and zinnias.

Last, we highly recommend those silver sandals Cromek talks about. Sandals are made for the summer, and having some with a bit of shimmer,

shine, and glitter can take your outfit from mundane to magical instantly. If silver’s not your thing, pretty much any metallic color can work. We’re especially fond of the ones that wrap a bit up your leg—they always seem a little extra ethereal!

During the time of year that most people want to dress lightly for comfort, you don’t have to sacrifice your magical style. What do you have in your closet already that might add that little spark to your summer wear? Be creative—you never know what you might come up with when you keep your most enchanted self at the forefront of your mind.



*Sara Cleto and Brittany Warman are folklorists, authors, and teachers, as well as co-founders of The Carterhaugh School of Folklore and the Fantastic, which you can read more about at [carterhaughschool.com](http://carterhaughschool.com).*





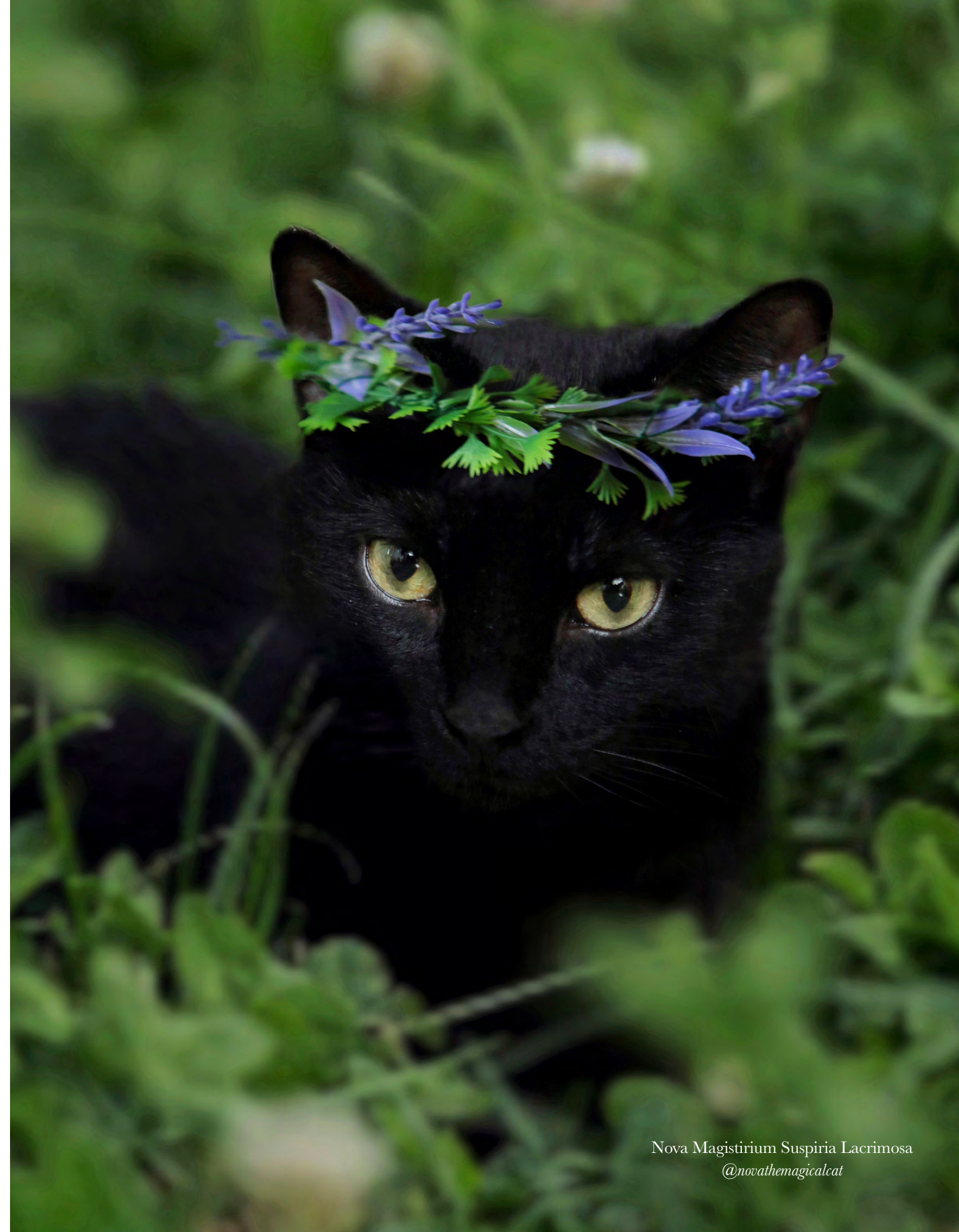
*5 Signs  
You Might be a*  
**MIDSUMMER  
WITCH**  
*by Marisca Pichette*

1. Each evening you find a black cat on your doorstep. It doesn't meow or paw the screen or beg for food. It sits facing out, away from the house, as if watching, guarding, protecting.
2. You decide to name the cat Clive.
3. Your compost pile is a haven for mushrooms—almost every species you know and a few you don't. You gather some—just the two species you're sure of—and make risotto at sunset. Passing the brush pile, you notice the cuttings from your garden are covered in thriving nightshade. Purple flowers flutter in the breeze, blushing yellow as evening falls.
4. You offer Clive some risotto. He ignores you but doesn't run away. You scratch him gently between the ears.
5. You wake up at midnight every night. The moon is always shining (except when it's new as can be). At your bedroom window, you look out across the yard. You see the compost pile, a hundred fruiting bodies glowing pale, calling to insects to taste their flesh, carry their spores. Awake, you wonder what stirred you. (Clive is nowhere to be found.) As you stand—not tired, but calm, rested, waiting for you don't know what—you fancy you hear a tune, a humming like the lowest note on a cello. It sounds almost like a chant, a summoning. Each night, it becomes clearer, until at last you can make out a single word:

*Arise.*



*Marisca Pichette loves all things broken and mended. Her debut poetry collection, Rivers in Your Skin, Sirens in Your Hair, is out now from Android Press. Find her on Instagram as @marisca\_write and Twitter as @mariscapichette.*



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Courtesy Wikimedia Commons

## *The Eternal Wisdom of* **SAPPHO** *by Kirsty Stonell Walker*

According to the Ancient Greek poet Alcaeus of Mytilene, “No man sings like a Lesbian singer.” A very progressive statement for 600 B.C., but he was actually speaking of the magic and beauty of the lyric poets of the island of Lesbos and, more particularly, of his contemporary Sappho. Possibly the most heralded singer-songwriter of pre-Christian times, Sappho is mainly remembered today for her love of the ladies, as so little of her poetry survives. Yet for a woman who literally gave her name to a euphemism for female gayness, she wrote an awful lot of lust poems about men as well and even apparently threw herself off a cliff because a man didn’t love her. All this complication leads me to Sappho’s unexpected heyday, the 19th century, where this magical Greek poet by necessity became all these things and more.

Let’s start with who Sappho was. As someone who lived around six hundred years before Christ, she didn’t leave a lot of personal information, but we know that she wrote lyric poetry that was intended to be sung with accompanying music and that her work was so popular that she was christened the “Tenth Muse.” Much of what we know about Sappho is inferred from her poems, as the earliest biography of her wasn’t written until nearly 800 years after her death. Most of her poetry is now lost, however, with only fragments and one complete poem, the famous “Ode to Aphrodite,” surviving. But such was the power of her reputation and the lines that were discovered that she remained in the canon for centuries. Then along came the Victorians, for whom she would personify all aspects of womanhood. Do you want a talented poetess whose work has transcended centuries? Do you want a decadent lover, whose queerness knows no shame? Do you fancy a suicidal, spurned tragic heroine? A love witch with incantations for her errant lovers? There is a Sappho for every occasion—but how many of them were figments of the 19th century imagination?

The Victorians loved the classical period. Painters joyously placed wistful figures on cold marble benches, draped in flimsy fabric. In Sappho, they found the perfect subject onto which they could project all the ideas of the civilized intellect that the homogenous “classics” evoke. In *Sappho at Mytilene* (1876), Pierre Coomans shows bevvies of classical beauties listening to Sappho while offering her laurel crowns. Similarly, John William Godward’s 1904 *Sappho of Lesbos* shows a buxom woman wrapped in diaphanous fabrics, sensibly sitting on a fur rug—I’m guessing marble is a tad cold, especially first thing in the morning. In Lawrence Alma-Tadema’s 1881 *Sappho and Alcaeus*, the painter, well-known for his classical scenes, places the two

poets together, with Sappho leaning forward in contemplation as she listens to her contemporary’s song. These images are like corporate portraits: Sappho at work as an intellectual, among her peers who respect and celebrate her. It’s unsurprising that poets such as Felicia Hemans, Katherine Bradley, and Edith Cooper (who wrote under the male pseudonym Michael Fields) wrote in praise of their sister poetess.

Not that there weren’t scores of male poets who also aligned themselves with Sappho. Most famous among them was Algernon Swinburne, whose extremely florid verse envisaged “the Lesbians kissing across their smitten / Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-strings.”

Possibly what Swinburne was imagining in “Sapphics” (1866) was an 1864 painting by Simeon Solomon, *Sappho and Erinna in a Garden at Mytilene*. In this work, Sappho is not kissing her beloved Erinna across her smitten lute; she has instead sensibly put her instrument to one side. No one wants a lute awkwardly poked in their ribcage during an embrace.

Solomon in turn was apparently inspired by Swinburne’s earlier poems about the life and loves of Sappho, including of her fellow poet Erinna. In Sappho’s own poem “Ode to Aphrodite,” the poet calls upon the goddess to make the girl she desires fall in love with her. In return Aphrodite recites an incantation, some love magic that will win her heart: “She who shuns love soon will pursue it, / She who scorns gifts will send them still: / That girl will learn love, though she do it / Against her will.” In Solomon’s painting, it’s noticeable that Sappho seems far more enamored of Erinna, leaning in, eyes closed. Erinna, by contrast, just sort of sits there, not really getting involved. It is tempting to think that Sappho was calling for help from Aphrodite because Erinna was just not that into her. Here, however, we encounter the main problem with Erinna and Sappho’s relationship: They never met. Erinna played very hard to get by being born a few centuries after Sappho’s death. Sappho undoubtedly sang to Aphrodite about the love of a girl, or possibly a few girls, but who they were remains unknown.

Another problem with the well-known Lesbian is that she also wrote about her love of boys. In my favorite of her fragments, she foreshadows Charli XCX’s 2017 lyrical ballad “Boys,” telling her mother she can’t possibly do any weaving today as she is busy thinking ’bout boys ...

I can’t take the shuttle in hand,  
There is a boy, and lust  
Has crushed my spirit ...

# Sappho

Kirsty Stonell Walker

This bisexuality could well have come from some overzealous translators correcting Sappho's "mistake" of putting *girl* where she obviously meant *boy*. There is a fair amount of back and forth in the translations, as some poems could be interpreted as a boy speaking of his love of a girl, and some feature boy lust that leaves you too weak to weave. All of these could be said to have a narrator who is not Sappho but a character. But when Sappho names herself in the poem, such as in "Ode of Aphrodite,"

there is no mistaking that she is asking for the love of a girl. Then the obvious conclusion is that Sappho fell in lust with everyone. No wonder she had no energy for weaving.

All this rampant queerness startled some of her more conservative translators and readers, and so another myth of Sappho came to take the artistic world by storm: that of a tragic leap to her death. According to legend, Sappho fell in love with Phaon, a boatman who had been made young and beautiful by a magical ointment given to him by Aphrodite. His newly found hotness turned him into a very unpleasant chap indeed, and when he mistreated Sappho, she threw herself off the Leucadian cliffs to cure herself of her love for him.

But this is rather spurious, as Phaon was entirely mythical. For Sappho to die for his love would be a bit like me falling into despair because Sherlock Holmes won't call me back. Yet the idea of the poetic, lovelorn Sappho atop a cliff became a recurring theme for such artists as Charles Mengin. In his *Sappho* (1877), the poet is so distraught in love that her boobs have fallen out of her frock. Similarly, Miquel Carbonel Selva's *The Death of Sappho* (1881) shows the poet casting aside her lyre and preparing to plunge into the tumultuous seas below. Charles Lenoir goes a step further in his 1896 painting, showing the drowning Sappho sinking beneath the water, clutching her lyre, completely naked. Unrequited love seems to make all your clothes fall off.

My favorite take on this motif must be Lawrence Koe's 1888 masterpiece of Sappho, naked on a rock, clutching her lyre. It's hard to work out if she's dead, mad, or just having a bit of a tough day, but there are shades of Ophelia about her. While



*Sappho and Erinna in a Garden at Mytilene* (1864), by Simeon Solomon

we have no proof that Sappho hurled herself off a cliff for the love of a feckless man, there are shades of that torment in her poems, such as "In all honesty, I want to die," where Sappho and her lover say that despite everything they have been through, they can't help but remember the good times, and it is hard to say goodbye to that.

The poetry of Sappho, more than 2,500 years old, has a magic that is eternal. This fact was apparent to Sappho herself, who says to us in a fragment: "I declare / That later

on, / Even in an age unlike our own, / Someone will remember who we are."

For previous eras, she spoke openly about love in all the different shades and flavors, how she loved those that did not love her, how she was parted from those she loved and learned to love again. The reason the Victorians were drawn to her work was partly because of the discovery of more fragments in archaeological digs, but it was also that her free discussion of love chimed with the decadent aesthetic period. Feel your feelings and love your loves!

Yet the myth of the suicidal Sappho also serves as a warning against such behavior: Too much love will be the death of you. A woman in full pursuit of a lover will never be successful; let that be a warning to you. Despite that, the Victorians made her beautiful and uncompromising even in death.

When I see the paintings of Sappho sitting on a marble bench looking thoughtful, I don't believe she is having the intellectual thoughts the artist probably intended. Instead I imagine her thinking one her poems: "May you bed down, / Head to breast, upon / The flesh / Of a plush / Companion." Our girl Sappho spoke the eternal truth that everybody needs a bosom for a pillow.



*Kirsty Stonell Walker is a writer and researcher whose passion is bringing forward the stories of women who might have otherwise vanished in history. She's the author of Pre-Raphaelite Girl Gang and Light and Love and Stunner, a biography of Pre-Raphaelite superstar Fanny Cornforth. Visit her on Instagram @kstonellwalker.*



*Sappho of Lesbos* (1904), by John William Godward



Photography by  
**YIAZ YANG**  
[www.yiazyang.com](http://www.yiazyang.com)



## *The Magic Within* by Aiysha Sinclair

**M**agic can be a powerful tool for finding courage. It can empower us to believe in our own strength and to take risks that we wouldn't normally take. The feeling of being able to tap into our inner power to achieve our goals and move forward in life is an inspiring one. With the help of a little magic, we can access the strength and determination to take on life's challenges and make our dreams come true.

For me, finding the magic within has been a journey of self-discovery and growth. After being diagnosed with an illness that demanded all my attention, I was flooded with so many emotions that still try to take over my day-to-day. I must be careful not to get swept up in the anxiety of what-ifs but instead lean into the experiences of what I can do that enlivens my spirit.

When I first found out that I was sick, I needed to be still and breathe positive energy into the reality of what I'm living with. It helped me gain an understanding that this is not a story of survival, like so many had told me, but of living a life of wholeness the best I can. The illness had given me an awareness that I needed to replenish, nurture, and heal the parts of myself that I let go of. The calm within washed over me and started to show its presence on my face and body with some clarity and wisdom. I have earned every dance forty-three times around the sun, and I am still going.

I wanted to spend time with family and my fairy friends in their enchanted healing gardens. I wanted to connect with the elements. So when fantasy photographer Yiaz Yang put out a notice on Instagram that she was going to be in Southern

California, I thought about how much I would love to have a photo shoot with her. I reached out and explained what I was going through. I told her I wanted to feel beautiful and powerful for a fantasy fairy shoot that represented my essence. She replied quickly: "I can definitely do that!"

We met up on a sunny day in Laguna Beach. As Yiaz gathered her things, I said a silent prayer, trusting in the universe and my magic within to be courageous and to continue creating memories like that special day, but most of all to have kindness and grace with myself, allowing light and love to take root. Yiaz adorned me with an elaborate crown of feathers and beads and a gown evoking the fiery energy of the sun. We set up on the beach and allowed the wind and water to lead the dance of the elements.

The tides were high, and the waves crept close, forcing me to be immersed within the water. I felt a sense of connection to the divine, my ancestors, and the water goddess who came to greet me. It was an overwhelming feeling of pure gratitude as the waves crashed against the blazing gown we had chosen. I hadn't been to the ocean since my return to California for treatments, but I am a Scorpio, so water is my element. It was also a day before my birthday, so I felt truly blessed by their acknowledgement that I finally made it to the shore.



Learn more about Aiysha Sinclair's work at [aiyshasinclair.com](http://aiyshasinclair.com) and [brownsugarfairies.com](http://brownsugarfairies.com).

# *The* **SEA HAG**

*Text and photography by Tricia Saroya*



The sea hag for me embodies all the earth's elements, unified into a beautiful whole. She has ocean water in her veins, sandy beaches at her feet, and abundant plant life to play with, from seagrass above water to the kelp forests offshore. She works with animals, from the mammals and fish swimming in the ocean to birds like osprey and seagulls and a myriad of shoreline critters. She can create fire with driftwood and conjure magic that sparkles like sea spray in the sun.

She also has an exceptionally powerful connection with the moon, as the ocean tides are a constant reminder of our celestial goddess's pull on the earth, including the water in her own body. The face of the ocean mirrors back the phases of the moon, creating beautiful reminders of the cycles of our lives.

The term *hag* has often been used as a form of disparagement, to refer to an ugly old witchy woman. I prefer Sharon Blackie's idea of *hag* as a term of empowerment and affirmation. She speaks about the second half of life being one of the most powerful and beautiful times of life, if we allow it—a time where we come into the full knowing of who we are and what we are about, unafraid to use our powerful, wise voices. Gone are the days of being a caretaker, of conforming to the stereotypical idea of what we should be or look like. Instead of declining into old age, now we can get our “hagitude” on and choose to be our most powerful authentic selves!

In my opinion, this hagitude is not only for women in their later life. I view it as an aspect of the feminine archetype, one that all humans can embody as part of the makeup of who

we are. She is that part of you that is wise, centered in your knowing of who you are despite what society's norms may say. She is connected to the elements and channels the magic of the universe.

Often the business of living can tear us apart, disconnect us from our true miraculous essence. In our growing wisdom as we get older, we can choose to own and make peace with all the different aspects of ourselves. It feels to me that this is what true wisdom is, becoming whole and accepting ourselves in all our glorious messiness. Hagitude, for me, embodies this. Thank you, Sharon Blackie!

#### THE PARTY!

Throw a sea-witch gathering with serious hagitude for your nearest and dearest! For this salty spread, I had the privilege of being able to set the table on the beach itself, but if you do this, be sure to check the tide schedule. If you're not near a coastal area, find a river or stream or even a beautiful pool. A water witch can work with her favorite element in all its forms.

To achieve this look, I layered multiple cloths, starting with a base cloth of white, then a layer of sand-colored linen and mosquito netting over that, swirled messily like sea foam. I used a hanging netting like you would use over a bed and hid the canopy and rings under the decor in the center.

The ocean's offerings made up much of my tablescape. I found an unusual-looking long piece of driftwood for the center and then used beach rocks to build areas of differing height.



# The Sea Hag

Tricia Saroya

Then I found lots of seaweed to drape around. Now before you say “ugh,” fresh seaweed actually doesn’t have a strong scent at all. Dried ropes do, however, so I don’t recommend using them! After that, I brought out my myriad shells, some of which are coated with gold sparkles, and set them on absolutely everything. I found some beat-up pedestal candle holders at the thrift store and glued shells and pearls to them. The distressed look of the holders evoked a coral-reef feeling that came to life with the shells. To suggest ocean bubbles, I used clear and pearl essence Christmas balls ordered from Michaels piled together in groups around the rocks and nestled in the driftwood. Take the top hanging part off, and point that end down. You could even glue them together in clusters if needed, but make sure to use clear drops of glue so it doesn’t show.

Have fun and create little nooks and crannies as you would find in an actual rocky coral-reef area. I found clear glass terrarium pebbles at the dollar store and sprinkled them everywhere for lots of sparkle. I also added some watery-looking fake flowers I found at Michaels, which gave the effect of an ocean plant and will be something I can reuse for other

projects later. I filled old wine bottles partway with sand and pearls and covered them in dripping wax. Then I brought out all my beautiful crystals. Some crystals, like selenite and calcite, will dissolve in water, so be careful not to get them wet. I used my crystal balls for an even more magical atmosphere.

If you want your table to reflect more of a woody river feeling, eliminate the seaweed, shells, and driftwood and go for more pebbles and rocks and moss-covered branches. You can even tuck in some wildflowers and ferns and have gazing bowls of water set here and there. If you’re in the South, a wonderful way to get a swamp-witch feel is to add in strands of Spanish moss hanging from upright branches. I almost added them to my table to evoke seaweed, but the fresh kelp was perfect. Using a color palette that reflects the look of the environment you’re in adds to the beauty. For a woody decor, choose shades of forest and moss greens and brown and caramel colors of rich earth and tree bark.

For party favors, I wanted gifts that could be used as part of the gathering or for personal full moon rituals:

## MESSAGE-IN-A-BOTTLE WISHES

Provide each guest with a small, corked bottle and a piece of paper. Invite them to write their wish on the paper, scroll it up, and pop it into the bottle. And then, as they hold their intention in their heart, they immerse the bottle in ocean water to “cast” the wish into the universe. They can later set the bottle on their altar at home. I added dry sand and a little glitter into the bottle for a magical feel.

## SEA SALT BODY SCRUB

This is a heavenly concoction made with simple healthy ingredients. It is made entirely by your intuition, so don’t worry about measuring. In a large washable bowl, combine large chunky sea salt and dried edible sea kelp crumbled into small pieces. Mix with small amounts of coconut oil and add a few drops of essential oil like lavender and vanilla for a sweet smell or eucalyptus for a refreshing stimulating feeling. Find a beautiful bottle or a short

mason jar and decorate the outside with shells, pearls, or beach glass.

## CRYSTAL AND DRIFTWOOD MAGIC WAND

I glued a selenite rod to a narrow piece of driftwood and then wrapped the crystal to the wood with sinew and a few shell beads. You could use almost any crystal, as long as it is long, narrow, or pointy. Again, keep in mind that crystals such as selenite and calcite dissolve in water, so be sure not to get them wet. Clear quartz crystal is a perfect choice if you have some. I used an inexpensive wood burner to “carve” mystical symbols on the wood for added mystical potency and beauty.

## HAG STONES

I also had collected some precious hag stones, also known as adder stones, which were perfect gifts for a sea hag party. These are stones or pebbles with naturally occurring holes in them and are purported to have healing and magical properties. There’s a tradition

that says if you look through the hole, you can see fairies and peer into magical realms. The stones can easily be strung onto a necklace with beads or shells for an even more beautiful offering.

## OTHER FAVOR IDEAS

- ★ Shells filled with wax and crystals buried inside for magical candles.
- ★ Essential oils for anointing that reflect the environment you’re in. Use sage or eucalyptus for the bracing ocean scent, or florals for the woods.
- ★ River stones or shells that guests can write their wishes on and cast into the water as part of the party activities. Use clams and sand dollars for ease of writing, and be sure to use water-soluble markers.

Whether you call yourself a witch, wizard, hag, or some other mystical name, channel your magical self, connect with the water, and welcome your wise powerful self to the party of life.

Tricia Saroya calls herself a “creatix,” an out-of-the-box artist that imagineers beauty in a multitude of mediums. For more creative magic, follow her on Instagram @triciasaroya or visit her webpage at triciasaroya.com.



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*“In our growing wisdom as we get older, we can choose to own and make peace with all the different aspects of ourselves. It feels to me that this is what true wisdom is, becoming whole and accepting ourselves in all our glorious messiness.”*

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*Moonbeams on the Atlantic* (2021),  
by Gayle Madeira  
Oil on linen panel

## THIS YEAR'S ENCHANTED LIVING AWARD WINNER

We're thrilled to feature the second of the two winners of the special Enchanted Living Award in the Art Renewal Center's 16th International ARC Salon Competition: Gayle Madeira's *Moonbeams on the Atlantic*. (Find out more about the competition at [artrenewal.org](http://artrenewal.org).) After choosing this stunning piece, we wanted to find out more from the artist herself.

### **Enchanted Living: Can you tell us about your work generally? What fascinates and inspires you?**

**Gayle Madeira:** I'm fascinated and excited by the three-dimensional, sculptural aspects of oil paint, the way light passes through its layers and bounces off brushstrokes. I love the way this can create a feeling of the painting dancing or moving as you view it from different locations, how oil paintings must be seen in person to get a full sense of their three-dimensionality. I'm inspired by the play of light on any object or scene and by beauty, especially the kind that makes you gasp and fall silent.

### **EL: How did *Moonbeams on the Atlantic* come about?**

**GM:** My boyfriend Tioma's parents always spend the winter in Florida, where they have a little condo across the street from Paradise Beach on the Space Coast. They wanted to

go during the pandemic in November 2020, but we were concerned because they are at very high risk for illness. We decided that since we could work from anywhere, we would drive them there, stay with them, and help them do whatever they needed done, and drive them back to New York City. The most wonderful thing about the trip was that I had so much time to paint the ocean and, in particular, the ocean at night.

Tioma and I are entirely nocturnal—we go to sleep around 4 a.m.—so we had a lot of quiet beach time when I could focus on painting the moon over the water. That particular night was quite cold and windy, so I had on my entire New York City winter outfit. The wind was blowing hard, so I went behind the lifeguard station for protection and worked quickly to try to capture that moment of the clouds, sky, moon, and water. The

overall feeling was very dramatic—like a performance: It all had to happen very fast because of the cold, the wind, and the constantly shifting light and clouds. In those moments, all my years of training need to come out at one time, with extreme focus. The moon I was painting was the January wolf moon of 2021. Tioma snuck up behind me and took this photo of me painting that night.

### **EL: What did you mean to capture with this image?**

**GM:** The magic of the moon on the water. I have tried hundreds of times to capture this incredible sight—really more of a feeling than a sight. The moon on the water looks so different every single night. I've tried to log all the permutations I can, then take them home, and make bigger paintings with even more nuance.

### **EL: Can you tell us a bit about your process?**

**GM:** I love to paint both inside the studio and outside in the landscape. When I paint inside, I usually take much longer and do many layers. Often those paintings are a lot larger and have more subtlety and nuance. When I paint outside, I paint alla prima, which means all in one go, and plein air, which is a fancy term for painting outside. *Moonbeams on the Atlantic* was painted alla prima plein air. It's small, only nine-by-twelve inches, which is a great size for painting quickly. I have since taken all my outdoor moon paintings and started to make more complex,

much larger moon paintings in the studio, and I'm very excited about this next phase.

### **EL: Given the theme of this issue, what do witches mean to you?**

**GM:** For me, witches are the people on this planet who understand and harness the energy flows between all beings and the planet itself. Before I transitioned to full-time painting, I was a dancer. I started out in New York City as a ballet and modern dancer, then in 2006 transitioned to Argentine tango. In 2008, I won the U.S. tango championship with a female leader named Lexa Roséan, who is an American Wiccan high priestess, an initiated neo-Gardnerian Minoan witch, a dancer, and a writer also known as the Supermarket Sorceress. I have learned many things about witchcraft since then from Lexa, and although I've never been initiated, I received the highest honor of having Lexa say that she considers me to be a witch!

### **EL: And, finally, how do you stay enchanted?**

**GM:** Making art, playing music, dancing, and remembering to utilize all the easy-to-find-in-your-kitchen ingredients that Lexa lists in her books in order to smooth my path. And of course, gazing at the moon—always gazing at the moon in all her phases and moods, especially over the water.



See more of Gayle Madeira's work at [gaylemadeira.com](http://gaylemadeira.com).



Photo by Tioma Maloratsky

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# SUMMER WITCH HAT TIPS

by Jamie Addington of Evercrumbly & Witch

Now that the weather's warm and we're trading in our felted, velveteen, and otherwise weather-inappropriate headwear for straw .... we thought we might need some tips for putting our best feet forward. We asked our friends at Evercrumbly & Witch, alternative millinery extraordinaire (and beloved by witches everywhere), for some summertime fashion advice! Owner and designer Jamie Addington lovingly obliged.



- Summer has arrived! It's time for sundresses and picnics by the lake! Don't take your hat decor too seriously. Summer is about fun. How about some faux berries or a cluster of colorful silk wildflowers?
- Trim the dead weight! A fancy formal hat can have all the bells and whistles, but when choosing decor for your summer hat remember to choose lightweight pieces. You don't want a heavy hat while you frolic through the flowers!
- Summer also means beach days. Consider a tie to secure your hat from those pesky summer breezes!
- Keep your cool! Natural fibers and open weaves will always be cooler than artificial. Keep nature in mind when choosing your hat.
- Try something new. Sometimes a new color, or a style you don't usually wear can make you feel like a whole new person. It's summer. Go for it!
- Summer adventures can be messy! Remember to give your hat a good brushing with a soft bristle brush (I recommend boar bristle or similar) after your adventures to keep it clean and looking new for years to come.

Follow Evercrumbly & Witch on Instagram @evercrumblyandwitch or visit evercrumblyandwitch.com to see their latest creations.





# A FAMILIAR *for* TWILIGHT

BY MONICA CROSSON

**T**here once was a witch who lived a quiet life near the edge of a forest. She was not quite in the realm of mortals, who were oblivious to her pretty cottage and the smoke rising from its chimney as they passed on their way to the village. Nor was she in the magical realm of the otherworld, where animals spoke and the fae dwelled among the trees whose leaves danced for the songs the west wind offered. She was somewhere in between, longing for the kinship of others.

Most mornings the witch could be found in her garden attending to the plants that kept her nourished and that filled her apothecary with the ingredients for medicine and spell work. In the afternoons, she made up songs as she ground her herbs to form magical charms—rose and lemon verbena for love, fennel and cowslip for healing. And as shadows fell over her quiet cottage, she sometimes cried herself to sleep.

But over time, she found that during those between times when the clock stood still for the briefest moment and magic tingled at her fingertips, she could indeed touch the worlds around her. At dawn, as silky strands of light broke through the darkness, she placed notes within small charm bags and tossed them through the misty veil into the mortal world. She could just make out the silhouettes of the villagers who would find her bags. Sometimes they opened them and found her affirmations of love, kindness, or gratitude written on flower petals. Some villagers responded by looking around, confused, because they saw nothing but the entrance to the forest. Others quickly tucked the charm bags into their pockets and continued on their way—and still other villagers only kicked the small bags off the path.

When the clock struck midnight, when one was neither in one day or the other, the songs of the fae floated softly through

the thinning veil straight into her room. She would run to her window and join in with their melodies about the delights of love. She knew they heard her because they always stopped to listen as she sung a line or two on her own, before scattering a line or two on her own, before scattering into the folds of their magical landscape.

On one especially lovely twilight, when purple and orange hues seeped through the trees and fireflies lit up the corners of the garden, the witch felt a twinge of an especially potent magic fill the air.

“Hello,” a low voice called from behind the frond of a fern near the edge her pond.

“Hello back.” The witch was giddy. It had been so long since someone had talked to her. She gently lifted the fern frond and squatting in the mud was a large, brown toad. “Wherever did you come from?” she asked.

“I come from beyond the misty veil of the forest. The faeries sent me to see what kind of witch you are.”

The witch laughed. “Not a very good one, I suppose. I seem caught up in this liminal space and can’t seem to find my way out.”

The toad croaked, and through the veil appeared many animals who call the twilight their home. Bats and owls, frogs and moths, surrounded the witch.

“Shall you fetch the tea?” a large spotted owl asked.

The witch smiled wide. She knew this was the beginning of a wonderful friendship.

As time passed, the witch always looked forward to twilight, when her garden came alive and bats began to flit and swoop, tree frogs chirped, and the large spotted owl haunting the shadows called out, “Hello, friend, it’s our twilight hour.” But it was the toad that she held in the highest regard. He was the one who sat with her whispering the secrets of transformation. And listen she would. Before long she had

learned how to cross the veil. And in no time, as dawn’s lighted fingers reached above the eastern mountains, she would walk among the villagers of the mortal world, making friends and handing out her charms. And as the clock struck midnight, she would slip into the forest and dance and sing with the faerie folk under a dark, velvety sky.

So dear witch, as you walk your garden during the twilight hours, when it is neither day nor night, be on the lookout for those magical creatures who call this time their own—the lumbering toads and moths who flit near porch lights, the bats who dart and swoop under an azure sky, and the owl who watches from the shadows. And if you’re lucky, fireflies will light up your garden space with a magic all their own. Be quiet in their presence and listen to the wisdom they share. Because as any witch knows, the most potent magic can be found when we are neither here nor there.

## ATTRACTING ANIMAL ALLIES TO YOUR GARDEN

### BATS

This misunderstood creature of darkness has been given a bad rap and is more loathed than loved by many homeowners. But bats play an important role in the garden as they consume insects, including many pest species.

As magical creatures, bats in your life symbolize change and transformation. They signify the promise of rebirth and power gained through transition. To attract bats to your garden:

\* **Use Flower Power:** Plant plenty of fragrant and evening blooming plants that entice nocturnal insects, which in turn attract the bats.

\* **Shelter:** Buy a small bat house (online or at any garden center). Mount their new home on the side of your house at least fifteen feet high. Never mount

✦

*“So dear witch, as you walk your garden during the twilight hours, when it is neither day nor night, be on the lookout for those magical creatures who call this time their own ...”*

a bat house on fence posts or trees as these can be easily accessed by predators.

\* **Water:** Bats can lose up to 50 percent of their body weight in water per day, so having a water source nearby is very important to enticing bats to your garden. A bird bath or fountain will do.

### TOADS AND FROGS

Seeing a toad in the dusky light of twilight reminds us that transition must happen in order for us to grow. A toad begins its life in the water, where their eggs are gelatinous clumps, but once hatched, an amazing metamorphosis begins that is all at once complex and beautiful.

As magical creatures, toads and frogs are symbols of metamorphosis and reminders of our own creative power.

Toads in the garden are beneficial: They eat thousands of pesky insects and provide you with the pleasure of hearing their soothing, throaty song as evening approaches. To encourage toads (and frogs) into your garden, supply them with:

- \* **Water:** Toads and frogs are amphibians, so they need water in which to lay their eggs and transition from tadpoles to toads.
- \* **Shelter:** To protect them from the elements and predators, provide leaf litter under shrubs and a small hollow piece of log or an upturned terra-cotta pot with an opening large enough for them to enter.
- \* **Avoid Chemicals:** Using chemical pesticides or fertilizers in your garden will kill beneficial frogs and toads. Use organic mulch and let the toads and frogs take care of the pests.

### LUNA MOTHS

I have never encountered a luna moth—they are not indigenous to my region—but if you live in southern Canada or the eastern half of the U.S.,

you're in luck, because the hardwood forests in these regions are the places these magical creatures of twilight call home. Luna moths cocoon for two to three weeks before emerging as adults. They have no mouth or digestive system, so they do not eat; instead they spend their seven-day lifespan seeking a mate and laying their eggs.

As magical creatures, moths are masters of the mysterious realm of shadow. They teach us to have courage in change and to always seek the light.

In their larval stage, they eat from the leaves of many fruit or nut trees. To attract them to your garden, consider planting such trees as chestnut, black cherry, sweet gum, and hickory. And not to worry: The caterpillars pose no harm to the trees.

### OWLS

One of my favorite sounds to hear as I stroll through my garden at twilight is the hoot of an owl from the forest that borders my property. Owls are not a common backyard bird and require more than a handful of seeds to entice them. These mysterious raptors are not active during daylight hours but hunt at night. They are excellent for rodent control, but that being said, they will also eat other birds or small mammals. Smaller owl breeds are excellent for insect control. As magical creatures, owls are harbingers of magical wisdom, omens, and visions.

To attract owls to your garden:

- \* **Nesting Boxes:** Owls prefer to nest in hollow trees, but nesting boxes, which can be purchased or made, and hung in trees at least 10 to 20 feet high, are a great substitute.
- \* **Provide Perches:** Make a naturalistic section of your yard or garden, including a few unpruned trees to provide perches.
- \* **Water:** Owls obtain water mostly from their prey, but if you live in a hot climate, provide a water source in a

secluded part of your garden.

- \* **Switch Off the Lights:** Owls hunt more effectively in darkness. Keep exterior light limited.
- \* **Kitty Curfew:** Most important, if you have cats or small dogs, make sure to bring them in during the evening when owls are hunting.

### FIREFLIES (LIGHTNING BUGS)

As magical as it is where I live, fireflies are not a part of my landscape. The species of beetle in the *Lampyridae* family that lights up is not typically seen west of Kansas. A few years ago, when my parents took a long road trip across the U.S. to the east and then down south along the coast, my mother sent me beautiful pictures of an evening landscape that seemed lit up by thousands of tiny faeries. Her message was “I thought of you.” I was smitten.

These magical creatures show us illumination when we are feeling lost and are a powerful vehicle in faerie magic and are associated with fire magic.

To attract fireflies to the garden:

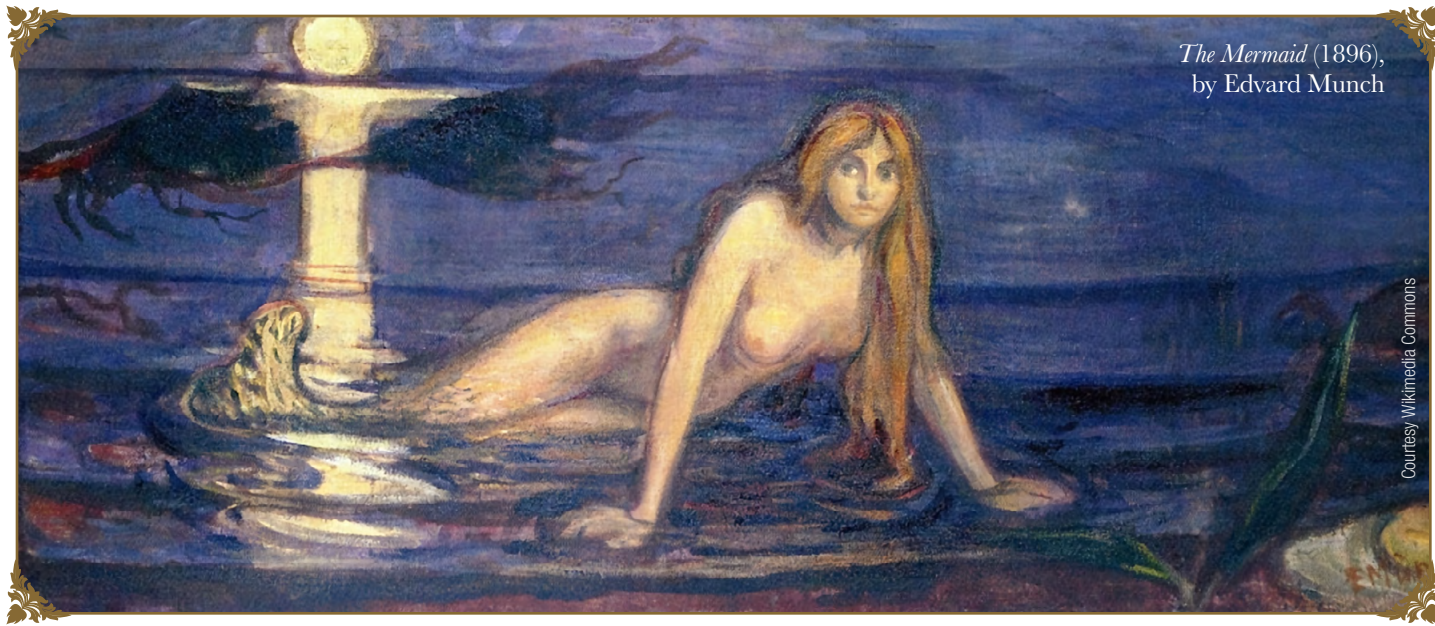
- \* **Water:** Fireflies like to gather in moist areas such as marshes, near ponds or pools, or near standing water. By adding a fountain or other water feature, you can better entice them to your yard or garden.
- \* **Naturalization:** Encourage fireflies to your garden by choosing native trees and shrubs to add to your landscape, leaving leaf litter or conifer needles under trees to provide nest material. Add a downed log or stack of firewood for nesting and to attract soft-bodied invertebrates to provide a food source for fireflies' larvae.



Monica Crosson's latest book is *Wild Magical Soul: Untame Your Spirit & Connect to Nature's Wisdom*. Follow her on Instagram @monicacrosson.

*The Toadstool Dance*  
by Annie Stegg  
gallerygerard.com





*The Mermaid* (1896),  
by Edvard Munch

Courtesy Wikimedia Commons

# MISSIVE FROM A SEA WITCH

by Blythe Summers

Most of you know me as the one who left behind her fish tail, her voice, and the sea. The tale goes that I so longed for a man that I traded my voice to a sea witch in exchange for legs and the chance to gain a man's love. There are other tales told of my people—tales of shedding our pelts—usually for the love of the landfolk.

The errors in my story never bothered me before. They are your stories to tell and say more about what matters to you. I suppose now, at the end of my life, I wish to share something of myself with the folk among whom I've lived for so many years. I've grown fond of you, my legged cousins.

It is true that when I was young I longed for the love of a man. I saw him on his ship, and one glance was all I needed. He was fine to look upon, strong like the rocks where my sisters and I would perch amid a wind-tossed sea. I was desperate to feel the harbor of his arms. I left the sea for him. And for a while we did share something special. Then he broke my heart, or perhaps I broke my own.

But I have not yet told you of how I made my first journey out of the sea, and that is what I wish to explain. I write this now on my last trip to land. I am relishing the feel of dirt between my toes, the jolt of land reverberating through my body as I walk, the warmth of the fire. These are fine things, but they are nothing like riding an ocean current as deep and dark as the night sky.

I remember once, during one of my land adventures, swimming in the sweet water of a mountain lake and suddenly feeling homesick, beginning to cry. The salt of my tears eased the ache. I asked my friend if her tears tasted like the lake or like the sea. When I learned that she too had salty tears, I felt a wash of pity learning of this small remnant of the sea you carry

behind your eyes, released only during moments of sadness.

I see the way some of you gaze at the sea and long for something without understanding what you wish for or why. When the ebb of the tide beckons and the stormy cauldron summons, when a briny mist fills your lungs and you almost remember how to breathe water, I see the way you carry the ocean with you even now, how the moon pulls on the waters of your body—a tiny tide within your every cell, an ebb and flow that moves you along with the ocean. To me, it's so clear both what you have lost and what you have kept. It helps me see why, when telling my story, you gave all my power away to a sea witch.

I do not know all the creatures that dwell in the deep, nor what bargains they make, but I needed no one else to gain my legs. Like all my people, I was born knowing how to shed my sea-skin. In the dark, early morn of the newest sliver of the moon, I found a tidepool. My sisters gathered around me to lend their support and witness my change. Into the rippling surface of the pool, I whispered words to the water. I spoke of who I believed myself to be and who I wished to become. In that way, I gave my voice to the sea.

My people know that water carries the memory of sound—from the calls of whales to the screams of the shipwrecked. When we swim, we feel the vibrations in our bodies. This is how we know our ancestors' thoughts and dreams. The ocean is our history book.

You on land have not forgotten this altogether. I don't just mean the healers or the wise ones. I mean you who give toasts to celebrate your loved ones. You speak your wishes and your voice is captured by the wine. You drink from your glass and take the wishes into your body to hold them close. You know this spell.

How I performed the rest of my transformation is a secret of my people. What I want you to know is that many years later, when I came stumbling back to the shore, the ocean sang my song and I followed the refrain back into her inky depths. She remembered me and knew me as hers.

There are different endings of my story: That I died, dissolved into the sea because I failed to win a man's love. That I won the love and lived happily ever after. Or that after many years, I rediscovered my skin and returned to the sea. All and none are true.

When I lay down this pen and return to the water, I will be done with this life. I will become the foam of the tide—the same way you become soil. I do not trouble myself with where my spirit will go, because where else would I rather be than part of the beautiful ocean I call home? In gratitude for my many wondrous years on land, my parting gift to you is this bit of sea magic:

Remember who plays the sea witch in your story. Your voice, your singing spirit, your skin—it is all yours to keep or change. Own your becoming and the sea will help you. The ocean, in her relentless, tumultuous, nurturing way, is nothing if not honest. She knows well how to remember and reflect.

No matter where you live, all water eventually returns to the sea—every river, every creek, every storm drain, every tear. Speak your truth to the water and it will find the ocean. It will find me. I will listen for your song and I will sing it back to you.

## A SEA SPELL FOR BECOMING

- A journal
- A bowl of water
- Sea salt
- Any other sea-related objects you wish—shells, sand, driftwood—to help focus your attention

First, be clear about who you are and what you wish to change or manifest. Think or journal about this. Ask yourself: Is this change coming from within to fulfill my true self?

When you're ready, arrange any sea-inspiring elements nearby or on an altar. Sprinkle a small bit of sea salt into a bowl of water. As you do so, share your hopes and dreams for yourself with the water. You may speak words, sing a song, hum—whatever feels right for you. Ask the water to hold and remember your dream and to take it back to the sea. When you are done, you can pour the water into the ground or down a drain. Think of your words traveling to the sea where they will be held and cherished, and you will always be known.

*Blythe Summers is a writer, artist, and librarian. She lives in the Pacific Northwest where she wanders in and out of forests and fairy tales. Read more at [blythesummerscreations.com](http://blythesummerscreations.com).*

# THE CAGED MOON

by Siolo Thompson

If you plan to travel to Mexico City, you will likely be cautioned, both by the internet and well-intentioned people, about the many perils of that metropolis. They may tell you not to stray from “tourist approved” neighborhoods or not to travel alone at night. People will warn you of poor water quality and pickpockets. You’ll hear stories of kidnappings.

These, in any case, were the things I was cautioned against. Being bitten by an ugly squirrel during an earthquake drill was not on that list. Yet here I was, nary a kidnapper in sight, pockets unpicked, watching blood well up from a puncture wound in my left hand. I was standing on sunny Avenida de la Reforma, having just been evacuated from the Museum of Modern Art. Perched on a nearby tree branch was the offender—a scrawny, dung-brown creature who chattered triumphantly. While I tried to remember if my rabies vaccine was up to date, he taunted me with flicks of a tail that looked as though it had been pulled from a shower drain. Meanwhile people surged around me, thousands of them, moving in quiet, orderly waves while helicopters rumbled overhead. Traffic on the streets had been stopped, and emergency vehicles, enacting disaster-preparedness drills, sped through the unobstructed intersections with lights and sirens running. It was a spectacle to behold, balletic and bizarre.

It was suitably surreal, given the circumstances that brought me to Mexico City. I had come because I had become bewitched with the work of Leonora Carrington, a Surrealist artist and writer, after reading her novel *The Hearing Trumpet*. A friend gave me this strange little tome, filled with naive and mysterious drawings, as I was leaving the Pacific Northwest for Europe. I had a wedding to attend in England, and family

to visit in Austria. But mostly I needed to reconnect, to be with my oldest and most trusted friends there whom I hoped would be able to help me find my way forward. I’d had a difficult year that had left me feeling untethered. My relationship of fourteen years had come to an end, and my ex-partner had moved on. My son finished university and was now a full-fledged adult with his own life to live. Then I fell completely and imprudently in love, a brief, dramatic relationship that ended in heartbreak.

Suddenly, I simply couldn’t recognize the person I had become: someone who cried a lot and was pining like a middle schooler. What happened to that independent, productive, strong person whose identity was not completely based on romantic relationships or motherhood? For years I had traveled on my own, had my own friends and interests, and I’d never minded doing things alone. But I’d always had a home to come back to—not a place so much as the people who were waiting for me. Where is home if no one is waiting for you? For the first time in my life, I couldn’t imagine my own future. I wasn’t sure who I was or where I wanted to be. Without the anchor of motherhood or a stable relationship, I was adrift.

In Vienna, I saw my brother and his family and spent time with old friends. During a midnight ramble along the Donaukanal, a dear friend turned to me and said, “You need a project. Go somewhere you haven’t been, sketch, write, do research. It’s what has always pulled you out of a slump.” As I traveled to England for the wedding, her advice continued to percolate. I remembered a project I’d always wanted to pursue, writing about the witches from the *Odyssey*—Circe and Calypso, of course, but also Helen, Penelope, Scylla, the Sirens. I decided then that I would go from England to Greece.

But as much as I thought I should be studying maps of Athens and reading Homer to prepare, I found myself turning more often to the pages of *The Hearing Trumpet*. The protagonist of the story is a delightful though possibly senile ninety-two year old woman unwillingly relegated to a bizarre old-folks home. It was refreshing to read a story in which an older woman is more than just a main character’s grandmother or elderly neighbor or rich aunt. The book, and Leonora Carrington herself, began to take over my life. Small connections and coincidences drew me away from Homer and ever closer to her work and the story of her life. At the Tate Museum in London, I searched for a particular artwork referencing the monster Scylla but found a piece by Carrington instead, exactly where I was told Scylla was supposed to be. Later that night, I met a friend for drinks at a bar that turned out to boast a collection of original Carrington works.

That evening, I sat down at my laptop and began to research her life further. In 1942, at age twenty-five, Leonora Carrington left Europe for Mexico City. She settled in a neighborhood called Colonia Roma, where she spent the rest of her life, nearly six decades. There she formed deep collaborative friendships with two other artists, Kati Horna and Remedios Varo, who, it turned out, was the basis for a character in *The Hearing Trumpet*, the protagonist’s best friend. Carrington drew from Varo’s paintings and illustration for many of the settings and buildings of the novel’s old-folks home as well.

They were not the only artists to settle in Mexico City. The city has a gravity that attracts. The sheer size of the population, more than 10 million, attests to that. Some undoubtedly come for school or work or for the climate and the culture,

*Celestial Pabulum* (1958),  
by Remedios Varo



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Illustration here and facing page  
by Siolo Thompson



but the city also has an undercurrent of magic, vibrancy, and strangeness. During World War II, Mexico City experienced an influx of artists (including Surrealist André Breton) who found that the city was not only was conducive to *their* work but that a lively local group, including Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, were already there working with the uncanny, the subconscious, and the mystifying. The poet Luis Cardoza y Aragón vividly captured the allure of the place in a letter to Breton: “We are in the land of convulsive beauty, the land of edible delusions, a place for the mutable, the disturbing, the other death, in short, a land of dream, unavoidable by the surrealist spirit.”

But what brought Carrington specifically to Colonia Roma, where her life was to become entwined with such kindred spirits as Horna and Varo? It made me wonder if there was some special gravity to that particular place. Why else would these people that leaned so heavily toward magic, the subconscious, alchemy, and witchcraft all end up in the same neighborhood? The three women artists became

known locally as *las tres brujas*: the three witches. It was approaching midnight as I sat wondering if I should change direction. Were *these* the witches I should be writing about?

I looked at the photo on my screen—a picture of Carrington taken by Horna. Carrington’s eyes are dark and hooded, her face angular, cheekbones high; she’s serene and serious and very beautiful. Under the photo the caption read, “Born 6 April, 1917.” I looked at the calendar. It was April 6. “Oh come on!” I exclaimed out loud. Just then, my email pinged with a promotional offer for flights to Mexico City. It seemed inevitable, inescapable. I made new travel arrangements.

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When I arrived in Mexico City in early April, it felt like a perfect summer afternoon. In the Plaza Río de Janeiro, one of the squares in Colonia Roma, I reveled in the sunny equatorial warmth and tried to imagine Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, and Kati Horna upon their arrival during World War II, and what they might have felt. All three women had lived within blocks of this plaza, where a full-scale replica

of Michelangelo’s *David* graces the central fountain.

I’d been to this spot several times since arriving, though not deliberately. Usually when I set out to do one of my projects, I make fairly detailed plans, create a budget, a timeline, and an agenda of places to visit, make appointments with local scholars, draft a list of where to find the best fatty snacks. But this journey was unplanned, and I didn’t quite know what I was looking for. Why had these artists chosen this of all places to spend the rest of their lives? Why had they decided that this place, where they were conspicuously branded as witches, was home? Could I find my place the way that they had?

I decided to explore the neighborhood organically, using “psycho geography,” an experimental method I had read about in grad school and had always wanted to try. It was developed by the French theorist Guy Debord and was based on his concept of the *dérive*—French for “drift.” Debord defined this as “a mode of rapid passage through varied ambiances, usually urban, in which participants drop their everyday relations, and let themselves be drawn by the



Garden of Love (1951-1952), by Remedios Varo

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attractions of the terrain, and the encounters they find there.” One just walks through the city without an agenda, allowing themselves to be pulled to places that attract and avoiding those that repulse.

This seemed like the sort of process that would have pleased Carrington, Varo, and Horna, who were famous for their playful, off-kilter social experiments ... like, for example, having dinner parties for which they’d pick random guests out of the phonebook. But it also seemed to suit where I was at too. I felt like I was drifting through the map of my own life, allowing coincidences, characters from books, and random encounters to dictate my direction. Having abandoned myself to the drift and entering Carrington’s world, the coincidences had continued to mount and become more uncanny. In *The Hearing Trumpet*, one of the primary characters has a malformed eye. Two other characters, both nuns, suffer eye injuries. En route to Mexico, I sustained a vascular injury to my left eye, which didn’t particularly affect my vision but did look quite dramatic. With each passing day I felt more resolutely tied to the book that had brought me there.

The Situationists took elaborate notes during their *dérives* and tried to create maps based on their interactions with the city rather than the facts of its topography. I wanted to try something similar, enlisting local artists—some I knew from Seattle, some from online—as well as a bartender I’d met the night before. When I explained the project, he volunteered, saying simply that he had the day off and liked weird stuff. I was curious to see if there were certain places that we consistently gravitated toward or that we all avoided, but my experiments were not particularly informative. I learned that people are attracted to taco stands and that one bakery, Panaderia Rosetta, had truly excellent pastries. But

*“Words like witchcraft and magic may conjure fear for those who associate witches with dark and malevolent mysteries, but another tradition links those words with community, nature, and power not based in misogynistic binary culture.”*

a few places had a documentable draw, including the Plaza Río de Janeiro, and more specifically, Edificio Río de Janeiro, a looming brooding red-brick structure at odds with the verdant exuberance of the surrounding neighborhood.

The building is often referred to as *la Casa de las Brujas*, or House of the Witches, a name inspired by the witch-hat-like dome that tops one of its towers. The building has been mired in scandal and had moments of splendor. It has been featured in films, novels, movies, and plays and, according to the internet, has been the site of several murders. Carrington, Varo, and Horna never lived there, but over the years it has housed several famous witches, most notably Bárbara Guerrero, a.k.a. *Pachita la curandera*, a talented healer who for a price would also curse your enemies or political opponents. Pachita is one of many ghosts reported to have been seen in the halls of Edificio del Río. It is not the most spectacular or beautiful structure, but it has an undeniable gravity. I wondered if I could capture that weight in a sketch.

In the plaza, local vendors bantered cheerfully as they set out a flea-market jumble of wares. Vintage clothing and antique knickknacks were on offer alongside stacks of used books and the kinds of thing one expects to buy off of a blanket in a park: woven leather bracelets, crafty earrings made from wire and beads, cheap sarongs. “Some people come to sell a few days a week, but Sunday is the best,” a young woman wearing overalls and a large gold ring in her nose told me. She hummed something upbeat as she set out secondhand lamps and clocks on a folding table alongside a few art books

and cheaply framed posters. One of the items on the table caught my attention, a reproduction of Remedios Varo’s painting *Garden of Love*. I had come across it a few days before when researching her work, and the image had stayed with me. It rankled.

Something about this particular painting had troubled me, and it was uncanny to see it again.

The painting features a ghostly pale woman standing inside a terracotta structure that at first seems small, nothing more than a vestibule. Around this building, which though externally diminutive seems to contain a labyrinth, is a forest of elegant, spindly trees, with bright orange birds in the branches, looking more like fish than fowl. The woman stands at the window, hand outstretched toward an elegant figure with the head of a blackbird. Although the door to the structure is open and the woman can reach through the window, there is a sense of confinement, a feeling common to many of Varo’s paintings.

This was not the only work of hers that I found troubling. In another piece, *Celestial Pabulum*, the moon is held in a cage inside of a tower surrounded by clouds. A somber woman is feeding the captive moon with a spoon. These captured elements felt to me like metaphors for womanhood, the prison of the body, of domesticity, but I also felt like I was missing something vital about them. Perhaps I hadn’t quite understood the work, and I turned it over and over in my mind.

As I filled in my sketch of the tower of *la Casa de las Brujas*, I thought about the enduring draw of the building and of Colonia Roma. I’d found the word witch, *bruja*, to be part of the neighborhood’s vernacular, used openly and not as a pejorative. I found it comforting. I came across many cafés, market stalls, tarot shops, esoteric bookstores, and other businesses that cater to those who tarry

## The Caged Moon

Siolo Thompson

with the liminal. On the ground floor of the building was a popular bar called Las Brujas, with witchcraft-inspired décor and a cocktail menu of drinks named for female activists. Witches and witchcraft are part of the fabric of the place, and it is easy to see why these artists who were so obsessed with mysticism, alchemy, and magic would choose to live here. I felt comfortable in the neighborhood as well. Words like *witchcraft* and *magic* may conjure fear for those who associate witches with dark and malevolent mysteries, but another tradition links those words with community, nature, and power not based in misogynistic binary culture. This duality is ever-present in Carrington, Varo, and Horna's work. They often used objects or themes that could be interpreted as sinister or benevolent, dark or light, welcoming or repelling—all depending on the viewer's perspective. Carrington often painted solitary figures in towers, cages, or caves, as did Varo. I had been seeing these aspects of their work one-dimensionally, as symbols of confinement, but from a different perspective, they could be protective spaces. I thought about the ghost woman in the terracotta house, the caged moon.

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The morning I was unceremoniously bitten by a squirrel, the sun was shining brightly as I made my way through Chapultepec park toward the Museum of Modern Art to see an exhibition of Varo's work. The entrance where I entered the park was, at that time, guarded by a stuffed panda bear the size of a three-story house. It seemed entirely within what I had come to know as the spirit of Mexico City: absurd, playful, surreal.

Inside the museum, the Varo exhibit not only featured a generous collection of her paintings and drawings; but it also displayed ephemera from her personal life, including her correspondence with Carrington, Horna, and other figures of their social circle. Several sections of the exhibit were dedicated to her

commercial work—magazine covers, editorial pieces, advertisements—which I, as a commercial illustrator myself, especially appreciated. It was a joy to see her draftsmanship and techniques, the precision of her drawings, the clarity of the colors and compositions, the materials she used, like gouache on Masonite, the chalky matte finish ideal for reproduction. In the “fine art” section of the exhibit was one of my favorite works of hers, *The Creation of Birds*, as both a drawing and an oil painting. I thought about how long it had been since I'd attempted an oil painting or showed work in a “fine art” space.

As an illustrator, I had divorced myself from the word *artist*. There is a division between the two, a schism that separates “art” from “craft,” as the Varo exhibit showed in how it displayed the magazine covers and advertisements separate from the paintings. At times, especially when I compare myself with other artists, I feel embarrassed about my work, as if I were just a craftsperson rather than an “artist” because I gave up oil painting to make tarot decks and illustrate books, to draw strange animals and make comics. I had come to believe that I wasn't good enough to be a “fine artist.”

But the work in that room, the paintings, illustrations, advertisements—the very spirit of Varo, Horna, and Carrington—cast things in a new light. Suddenly I felt that I had been unfair to myself. These women too made tarot decks and paintings of magical things. They made commercial work as well as “fine art.” They invented games and were obsessed with strange animals. They were *artists*. And they were also women, mothers, lovers, wives, friends. They were silly and complex and playful. And all those things are in the work, the pain and heartbreak as well as the joy.

It occurred to me that I would never feel at home until I made some peace with all the pieces of myself. A small sketch of *Celestial Pabulum* and its caged moon caught my eye. In English, the

painting is generally titled *Star Maker*, but Varo had deliberately titled it in Latin. I didn't know the word *pabulum* and had to look it up. It means “something bland” and generally refers to writing or speech but it could also refer to a kind of nutritive porridge, something you would feed to a sick person. It brought me back to the ambiguity of the figures of confinement. Was the woman a caretaker rather than a jailer? The cage a place of refuge? The stardust a restorative porridge?

I slowly looked around the room and began to see all the paintings quite differently: the confined spaces as protective, the isolation as peaceful. Maybe kindness, gentleness, self acceptance—ordinary yet magical things I have always struggled with—were the “pabulum” that I needed. Perhaps I could reclaim the word *artist*. Maybe it was time to paint again.

That's when the alarm began to sound. The earthquake drill had begun, we were told, and the whole city was participating. A woman in an orange vest ushered me and a few other museum visitors down the stairs and out into the parking lot. A man in a hard hat with a lovely baritone voice gave a short speech in which the victims of prior earthquakes were acknowledged. We were released to return to the museum, but instead I lingered, marveling at the sheer number of people moving through the streets. It was then that I saw the squirrel eating potato chips in a nearby tree. I made another fateful decision to offer it some trail mix.

And so it was that some time later I found myself filling out paperwork at an urgent care clinic. But when I reached the line that asked for my profession, I hesitated only for a moment before writing down one word: *artist*.

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# FINE ART.



# FINE CHOCOLATE.

*Midsummer Eve* by Edward Robert Hughes, 1908

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## Self-Care for the Summer Witch

by Grace Nuth

We have entered the season of sweat beading on fire-hot skin. Sticky sweet ice cream cones melt as quickly as they can down your wrists as you lick trails of sugar cream. Summer may start as softly as a rose in full bloom, but her furious days of scorching heat can be just as intense as a midwinter snowstorm. In the frigid cold of February, we tend to contract into tight balls, huddled under blankets on soft couches. In the dog days of summer, we instead expand, not wanting a single limb layered over another limb, collapsed on the floor in front of a fan. It is the opposite response but every bit as intense. Summer is most certainly not always gentle, which means that we have to be all the more soft with ourselves during her fiercest months. Here are some ideas for self-care.

Remember what it felt like as a child to stand at the edge of summer vacation? Perhaps you could borrow a child for a day, if you don't already have one at hand in your home. Approach the day as one of mutual sharing and learning. You can teach them some of the basics of magical practice. They can teach you to remember wonder, what it was like when everything was brand new.

Spend some of the day with your young friend making a fairy house or a fairy door (from biodegradable materials). Bring a marker or a pencil to write messages to the fairies on fallen strips of bark and toss them into hollow trees you might find. Give to them out of love and gratitude, with no expectations in return. They do love a good offering.

Another idea: Pack a picnic and take it to the wood's edge. Dress for the occasion. Make or buy your favorite treats and share some freely with the ants that crawl onto your blanket, those brave tiny explorers. Even if you're alone, nature is all around you, joining in your banquet. Leave an offering for her and for her animal children.

While you're in the forest, bask in the shade of the trees. Celebrate *komorebi*, the beautiful Japanese word for the dappled light that falls through the leafy canopy to the floor below. If you sit for a while and stare at the shifting patterns made by the layers of leaves above you—the blending and contrasting shades of green as the sun filters down—you may find yourself starting to breathe more deeply, slipping into an awareness of your place in the ecosystem of the natural world, both a humbling and honorable experience.

A strong witch is still permitted to have struggles with confidence. If you don't love all the parts of your body, at least try to begin with your skin. It is truly such a wonder to think that our vessels are covered with this layer of incredibly sensitive, easily bruised or broken epidermis that can cause intense emotional reactions from the smallest of brushes: the touch of a hand, the tickle of a cat's fur, a breath of wind. Focus on this part of you that is hidden away in armor against the cold all winter long. Wait until night, then open a window and take off your clothes in the safe embrace of the dark. Stand for a while, letting the air drift against you. Don't you dare focus on what might wiggle or droop. Your skin is your emotions made raw and vulnerable on the outside of you. Let yourself be raw and vulnerable back. Show some gratitude and bask in what it is to be alive in this moment.

Let your body meet a rainstorm. Don't just go out wearing rain boots and splash in puddles. Take your shoes off and run around the driveway. Focus on the slap of your feet against the pavement. Lie on your patio or deck or in your yard and let the raindrops hit your skin one by one. Jump a little bit each time one strikes you in a place you didn't or couldn't expect. And laugh, deep from your lower belly—laugh at this ridiculous world and this ridiculous moment and how everything can be heartbreaking and hopeful all at the same time.

Speaking of water, be sure to drink some as well. Hydrate, and feel free to make it a luxury. It's incredible how many things you can infuse into water: Lilac, rose, cucumber, strawberry, mint, watermelon, orange, and so many more delicious flavors are waiting for you as you take care of your body. Pour some of your infused water into an ice-cube tray and see how it can interact with the taste of your coffee or other favorite drinks. Host a garden party and charm the guests with ice cubes dotted with fresh (edible) flowers.

Fully immerse yourself in water. Long and luxurious baths seem to be on every list of self-care suggestions but with good reason. In the summer, however, you are not limited to your bathroom. If you're blessed with an outdoor bath, by all means, use it! Sprinkle more of those petals in the water, maybe even one or two of those ice cubes, and let the sweat of the hot and

sticky day slip off your skin as you close your eyes and lean your head back, relaxing every tense muscle in your body. If, however, you have no clawfoot vessel installed on your patio, you can also go a simpler route: Haul out the hose and fill an inflatable or hard plastic pool with cold water that shimmers in the sunlight and remember what it felt like as a child to put on your bathing suit and jump into the water with neighborhood friends. Finally, if you have no outdoor space, or none of these suggestions are an option, turn on a fan in your bathroom and play the sounds of summer nature as you fill your tub to the brim and dip down into the cool, clean water.

If you happen to live somewhere with fireflies, aren't you so incredibly lucky! I didn't even realize until I was sixteen that there were parts of the U.S. where they didn't twinkle through the night for just a few short weeks beginning in June. It is so easy to take them for granted or to forget how magical they can be, but they are so wondrous. And their numbers are dwindling. Perhaps you could make yourself a promise that when you see your first flashing light in the twilight, you will spend the rest of your evening (or the whole evening of the next day) technology free and electric-light-free. Light a new candle, set aside your devices, and stand outside for a little while, trying to follow the meandering paths of the fireflies around your yard.

Plant enough flowers to be able to take some into the house for yourself. I'm guilty of struggling with this. The blooms look so beautiful in the garden that I feel bad shortening their lives for my own pleasure. But one of nature's miracles is how it keeps giving. The cut flower will often regrow, sometimes healthier than before. Gently shake out your bouquet before you bring it inside to avoid traumatizing any intrepid travelers who are hitchhiking on the petals. Press some of your flowers as well, and dry some of them to use for (witch)crafting later. They'll bring reminders of your languid summer days to the gray winter months. If you have no garden, this is a perfect excuse to visit that fairy bazaar that appears only in warm-enough weather: a farmer's market. As you purchase your bouquet wrapped in butcher paper and tied with twine, ask the seller what sorts of flowers are included. And make note of what a wide and wonderful variety of blooms can grow where you live.

Finally, give yourself permission to retreat. We wouldn't judge someone in winter for staying indoors during a blizzard, but there seems to be an expectation of participation even on the hottest days of summer. If you need to close your blinds and stand by your air vents thanking the goddess for air conditioning on a day that exceeds ninety degrees, then, dear one, you are no less of a nature witch for needing this self-care. Summer is a wicked beauty. Love her, but know when to take your leave for a while and let her blaze fire-bright on her own.



*Grace Nuth is a writer, artist, and part-time dryad living in central Ohio with her husband, black cats, and a garden full of faeries. She is the co-author of The Faerie Handbook and is currently working on several short stories as well as a Sapphic novel about a selkie and a cursed woman. To follow her work, please visit [gracenuth.com](http://gracenuth.com)*



# AN ORGANIC FIRE RITUAL

BY GINA SPRIGGS

For me, summer comes with the childhood nostalgia of weeks filled with fun, freedom, fireflies, and stargazing. I clearly remember searching the night sky for shooting stars, making wishes, and daring them to come true. It was a magical time for me, and the magic continues.

As an adult, I use this time of year to celebrate growth, healing, love, and nature. I integrate my celebration with friends and a nighttime firepit ritual in the untamed wild of my backyard. Under the stars in a fun, loving, and supportive environment, we celebrate summer while holding space for each other's healing and growth. I'd like to share my ritual with you, so you can create your own version or borrow mine!

Before I move on to the ritual, I'd like to share something with you: Several years ago, during one of my summer celebrations, we caught a glimpse of the fire goddess pictured here. Since then, each year, I have paid respects to her and petitioned for her continued support.

Although fire is often viewed as a masculine energy, she also has a feminine aspect. Around the world, people call the fire goddess many names: Oya in West Africa, Agneya in India,

Ankhiale and Hestia in Greece, Chantico in Mexican and Aztec traditions, Darago in the Philippines, Pele in Hawaii, Brigid in pagan traditions, Feronia in Rome, and Sekhmet in Egypt. Since the fire goddess's appearance, my women-only ritual specifically honors the divine feminine aspect of the *fire element*, which encompasses warmth, passion, and fierce warrior retribution.

My annual ritual is the first weekend in August. It coincides with Lughnasadh, also known as Lammas, typically celebrated in early August, between the summer solstice and autumn equinox.

Numbers are the language of the universe, so when doing any ritual, I incorporate the topic of the ritual with the number corresponding to it. For example, if I want to bring about change, I may invite five friends or use five ingredients because the number five invites change. The perfect number for growth, healing, and love is six, so my ritual includes six ingredients.

Effective rituals require reciprocity. In life, we are accustomed to saying "thank you" *after* something was done for us, but in magic, you offer gratitude while making your request and *before*

your desire comes to fruition. Making offerings is a standard practice for those of us who work with ancestors, elements, and different energies or entities. For example, I provide my ancestors' daily offerings of incense and coffee just because, but special requests may come with money, meals, flower bouquets, sweets, or libations.

Healthy relationships require an equitable energy exchange, so when performing any ritual where you are petitioning the support of an entity or energy, I suggest you provide offerings.

We initiate our ritual with an offering to each element before making our offering to the fire goddess. A simple prayer of gratitude is said into a bowl of water, then poured into the earth as an offering to both elements. A stick of nag champa incense is burned, and gratitude is expressed to the air element for assisting us. We then move on to creating the fire. The best part is that the offering (dead branches and dried leaves from my yard) also assists the fire in being born. The fire will have more to consume, as you will soon see.

In my store Curio, Craft & Conjure, we are fond of telling our clients, "Always clear before you call." Our logic is simple: If you want something you don't already have, there must be an energy, belief, or other obstacle standing in the way. "Only an empty bowl can be filled" is a wise old expression that coincides with a quote from Aristotle: "Nature abhors a vacuum." We start our ritual with a releasing ceremony.

Releasing with fire is a powerful and beautiful way to let go of what is holding you back. Here is how we do it:

- Write down what you are ready to release. It may be thoughts, ideas, or beliefs. Or you may have a picture of you and the ex you are now ready to disconnect from.
- If you're part of a group, allow each person to take turns stating aloud what they are ready to release while walking counterclockwise around the fire.
- After saying what you're ready to release, fold your list or picture away from you five times.
- After folding your list, toss it into the fire, take a moment to watch it burn, then move on to the next participant.
- When everyone has had a turn, toss a few sticks of palo santo into your fire to clear any residual unwanted energy—while keeping the desired energy.

We keep the flame going to call in our desires. Each person now lists what they would like to invite into their lives. It may be an improvement on an existing situation or something completely new to them. And it can be a whole list of things or just one. *Note:* If you do have a list, your release list should have identified what you perceive as the obstacle for each item on your desired list.

Next, I offer each participant a pinecone that I save specifically for events like this so they can write each wish on a

slip of paper and tuck it into the crevices of their pinecone. I believe in the power of writing your goals, dreams, and wishes—even more than a vision board. Something happens between the body and the brain as you imagine your desires coming to fruition.

Each person blows lightly on their wish-filled pinecone. "Spirit" and "breath" are the same word in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. When we put our breath into something, it takes on part of our spirit.

Finally, we all throw our pinecones into the fire and toast to the fire goddess! We'll sit and gaze at the night sky, looking for shooting stars—our sign that our wishes are being well received.

Before the flames go out, I'll toss dried rose petals into the firepit to carry the energy of love, then borrow the final flame from the firepit to light a yellow or orange seven-day candle for my altar to keep the energy going.

However you choose to celebrate the season, invite the magic of warmth, passion, joy, laughter, and light into your celebration. And maybe if you're lucky, you will get a glimpse of the fire goddess too.

Gina Spriggs is an author, master tarologist, holistic intuitive, mentor, and owner of Curio, Craft & Conjure, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Follow her on Instagram @ginaspriggs.



# The Pickety Witch

BY CAROLYN TURGEON

You may recognize her sweet, witchy designs from Instagram or our own enchanted shop: baby goats flying on broomsticks or learning to summon; witch boots bursting with mushrooms and flora; all manner of witch hats decorated with sunflowers and peonies and pumpkins and apples and leaves; jack-o'-lantern teapots; ravens with autumnal headdresses; kitties in garden hats; starlit fawns and owls and rabbits; and much more. There are also cute enamel pins to add a witchy touch to your ensemble, not to mention T-shirts (your editor in chief is prone to wearing a learning-to-fly baby-goat one), plushies, poppets, and other goodies, all conjured by one lady witch from her lair in North Carolina. Below, we ask her some nosy questions.

**Enchanted Living: So tell us who you are and how you became the Pickety Witch.**

**Rachel:** I'm Rachel, a twenty-nine-year-old artist, practicing witch, and huge animal lover. The Pickety Witch embodies my love for goats—as you can tell from my work!—and folklore, witchcraft, nature, and the occult. I love to create “spooky cute” designs, juxtaposing cute baby goats and kittens with occultism and folklore.

I grew up in a small farming town in New England, and I was obsessed with everything spooky and magical from a young age. My dad got me my first tarot deck when I was twelve, and I still use it today.

My college years were crazy as I tried to navigate what I wanted to do in my adult life. I went from studying filmmaking in Boston to a semester abroad painting in the south of France to finishing school at a community college while working as a barista.

In 2017, I started my business on Kickstarter with a small enamel pin of a witch's hand called Evil Eye, and by 2020 I had gone full-time as the Pickety Witch. Business boomed, and by 2022, I realized I'd grown too big for just lil' old me and my garage. This year, I made the exciting transition to a new warehouse and fulfillment center.

**EL: What does being a witch mean to you?**

**R:** You know that feeling when everything just sort of makes sense and you feel like your most authentic, comfortable self? That's what being a witch is to me. Maybe it's being introduced to witchcraft by my family when I was so little, or maybe it's my Welsh and Scottish ancestry, but it's always been a part of me that I've never questioned. It's funny trying to explain it, because things like celebrating the winter solstice with bonfires and going to Salem, Massachusetts, every autumn were just things we always did as a family. Throughout the years, I've learned to appreciate witchcraft as a celebration of nature and the old ways, as well as a form of individual empowerment and strength. I'm grateful to be able to express witchcraft through my designs and that I've been able to connect with such a wonderful community of witches through my business!

**EL: Can you tell us about your Midsommar collection?**

**R:** This collection has cute products to welcome spring, but with a folklore flair. I love folk horror movies, and the film *Midsommar* was such a beautiful tribute to older films like *Wicker Man*—the 1973 version—that I was instantly in love with its imagery. These designs adopt parts of that film and mesh them together with more inspiration from Beltane celebrations, with symbols like goats, flowers, runes, and the *Midsommarstång*, or maypole. It's a fun blend of colorful, spooky, witchy, and cute that I love to use to express the different traditions of witchcraft around the world.

**EL: Please tell me about your goats.**

**R:** If it wasn't obvious already, I really love goats! I owe a lot of inspiration to the film *The Witch* and its infamous goat Black Phillip. I like to joke with people that that movie changed my life because it introduced me to the world of goats. Since I saw it, I've volunteered and worked at a couple goat farms nearby. The best part, of course, was baby-goat season, and I've definitely shared a handful of videos online of baby goats falling asleep on me! I even “adopted” my own baby goat that I named Winnie. I've taken so much inspiration from the goats I've worked with over the years, and you can see their fun antics in all the mischief my drawn goats get up to. It's my dream to one day have two adorable black pygmy goats of my own.

**EL: How do you hope people wear your pins?**

**R:** This is me getting a little sentimental, but my absolute favorite thing to hear from my customers is when they use one of my pins as a talisman. My husband's uncle pinned my little flying goat in his car as a protection charm. I've gotten messages from folks saying they wear their Brigid's cross pins to honor Brigid with pride. I've had customers purchase my bunny pin as a tribute to a lost pet. It's fulfilling to hear how much each design means to every individual. But ultimately I love when folks buy and wear my products because they make them happy and give them the ability to express themselves.

**EL: Any advice for summer witches?**

**R:** My advice would be to try to get outside as much as possible.



Pin photos: Jaime Fellis  
@ofpagesandpinecones

# The Pickety Witch

Carolyn Turgeon



The magic of summer is in nature: the vegetables and herbs you grow, the water in the ocean's waves, the birdsong, and the frogs and toads that visit your back porch at night. Try to take a step back and breathe. Go strawberry picking and bake a pie from scratch with intention. Tend a garden or a plant with love as if you were tending and taking care of yourself for a little self-love magic. Witchcraft honors the old ways, and summer tells us to get outside and off our phones to soak in the wonderful little things nature provides. And don't forget to look up at the moon and stars on these warm summer nights!

**EL: How do you stay enchanted?**

**R:** My favorite types of magic are plant and kitchen magic, so I try to work little things into my life like growing vegetables from seeds and baking pie from scratch. I also love growing herbs and using them in cooking, drinks, and simmer pots. They're simple but little magical methods to manifest and stay enchanted.



See more of Rachel's work at [thepicketywitch.com](http://thepicketywitch.com) and find her on Instagram @[thepicketywitch](https://www.instagram.com/thepicketywitch).



Clothing photos: Maya Holt  
[@mayapologies](https://www.instagram.com/mayapologies)

Models: [@chephrena](https://www.instagram.com/chephrena),  
[@dapperdabber\\_](https://www.instagram.com/dapperdabber_), and  
[@heatherrae](https://www.instagram.com/heatherrae)

# MAGIC *by* MOONLIGHT

by Kim Malinowski

The sun was directly overhead but would soon bow to the moon. She was preparing the garden. All the moonlight blooms and a few poisonous ones locked away behind wrought iron gates would dazzle at nightfall. Shasta daisies, snow-in-summers, white lavender, and gardenias, all in luscious whites, would be perfect by candles and moonlight. There was a tableside herb bed for plucking leaves to crush fresh onto the various foods and drinks. There were candles all around, visible in the day, but enchanted and glowing in darkness. More important, they were there to blow out at the end and cast her and her guests' dreams to the wind.

She placed freshly braided flower chains and crowns of buttercups and dandelions to keep the youth within her friends. They needed freedom and mirth tonight. A release of the old and fresh gasp of new into them. She shook her head, staring at the heaping pile of lemons. No tincture had ever held so many, she thought, as she began slicing and squeezing them, the juice sluicing into the pitcher as much as over her fists. She smiled at its stickiness and its racy odor that smelled of summer. She set aside the peels and took a purple tincture. She opened it, and lavender shivered over her. She poured in the liquid, and instantly the yellow shimmered with purple. As she poured in fresh spring water it was clear that the potion was meant to show the turning point of the sun giving way to the evening of the moons. There would be peppermint leaves to crush and slide over the top of the elixir.

She placed the pitcher into the ice chest and took out the violet liqueur. Only a few sips and each guest would be adrift in violet haze, bathed and ready for perfect moon magic. She had scones with love folded into the butter and all types of cookies and candies ready to represent sunlight and moonlight mixing. She tasted a cut strawberry rolled in sugar, the crystal grit melting on her tongue and the whipped cream ready to be dolloped nearby. There was never a more sensual or simple dish, she thought.

Each place setting was perfect. The flowers were arranged as best as she could. Rose and lavender sun tea was brewing, and it was time for her own magic rituals. A salt soap and rose-petal bath waited for her. She re-emerged near sunset. The sun had flown so quickly. The waxing moon was ascending in all her glory, taking her rightful place among the heavens. She stood

shimmering in the lightest lilac shift that pooled at her feet as no goddess's could.

Her guests began arriving, each one in fanciful bangles and gowns, each ready to get out of the evening what they needed. She promised a respite. With gossamer all sitting around her table, she placed ice in the elixir and the violet liqueur into small glasses. Soon the candles were glowing, and the gardenias were practically lit as well. As each guest sat, they found a silvery package. They were quickly instructed not to open them until later.

Everyone donned their flower crowns and necklaces and laughed as they celebrated children and children yet to be—and their own continued childhood. The moon radiated over them when at last they were finished eating and could undo their presents. Each guest found a box wrapped in a silver scarf. They immediately placed the scarves around their shoulders. In each box was parchment, a small candle, and two lavender-dipped matches. She passed out pens with instructions of what to write. Some wrote their deepest desires, others limericks with laughter. She wrote, "I want intense, deep partnership and friendship and the creativity to cast us into the stars."

She showed them how to make their parchment into boats. She added a few flowers to them as she saw what they needed. Rose and lavender for love and peace were the most necessary. A pinch of black salt in hers for protection. There was hush as they went to the stream. She helped each one strike their matches and sail their boats down the stream where they pooled at a crevice. The boats soon lit on fire, and everyone gasped, knowing their dreams were released into the universe.

On their return to the garden, her guests were greeted by fireflies and knew that even their most extravagant wishes were twirling out right now in the cosmos. They finished the night with ice water and moonlit strolls through the garden—with giggles and giddiness. They wrote their names with sparklers and with newfound lightness. There was a silver shimmer over their hair that grew as the night went on. As each guest left, she blew out a candle. No snuffing them for her. Let the smoke take dreams into the wind. Finally she was by herself. The dishes could wait until morning. She blew out the last candle. This wish was hers.



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*Kim Malinowski is a lover of words. Her collection Home was published by Kelsay Books, and her verse novel Phantom Reflection by Silver Bow Press. Her forthcoming books include The Fool's Journey from Vraeyda Literary in summer 2023; Buffy's House of Mirrors from Q, an imprint of Querencia Press in summer 2023; and the verse novel We Could Be Lovers from Nightingale & Sparrow Press in 2024. She writes because the alternative is unthinkable. Find her online at [kimmalinowskipoet.com](http://kimmalinowskipoet.com).*



Photography by  
PRISCILLA HERNANDEZ  
Instagram @yidneth

# *The Making of a* HYDRANGEA WITCH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SABRINA L. GREENE

Photographer Sabrina L. Greene was driving by her local dentist's office in Waynesville, North Carolina, late last summer when she was struck by the beauty of the massive strawberry vanilla hydrangeas out front. Frost was quickening the next week, so she decided to save them. After contacting the office for permission, she and her husband spent an entire week harvesting and preserving the blooms. It took them a whole week of work in the evenings to hang them to dry, and they ended up with more than 630 flowers.

Meanwhile, in Maryland, artist Brenna Mills was also gathering and drying hydrangeas. When the online friends realized their mutual obsession, they hatched a plan for a photo-shoot meetup. Mandy Tweed of Mountain Flower Fantasies agreed to create a fae-worthy gown, and after hand-dyeing and cutting fabric, she mailed remnants to Mills for her to use in creating "a Southern-garden-style witch's hat that would make Aunt Frances and Aunt Jet proud." Inspired by Kirsty Mitchell's amazing photography, Mills (and her late grandfather's glue gun from the 1980s) created the hat seen here, with dried hydrangeas spilling forth and over the brim.

In the midst of this hydrangea madness, Dallas and Andrea Eubanks imagined summer bursting from a fireplace as a summer witch longed for the season and nature rewarded her by blooming indoors. Summer blessed the witch's hat and adorned it with flowers.

And so this Hydrangea Witch was born.



*Photographer:* Sabrina L. Greene Photography @sabrinalgreenenc

*Photographer Assistant:* Sara Cline

*Model/Hat Design:* Brenna Mills @thewillowandthevine

*Gown Design:* Mandy Tweed of Mountain Flower Fantasies @mountain.flower.fantasies

*Venue Host:* The Yellow House Bed & Breakfast, Waynesville, North Carolina @theyellowhouseenc

*Set Design/Makeup:* Dallas & Andrea Eubanks @dallaseubanks and @you\_can\_call\_me\_dre









# Seed Packet Sugar Cookies

by Lauren May a.k.a. Must Love Herbs

What summertime witch isn't well acquainted with the sound of a rattling seed packet? It's like they're filled with magic and possibility. Want to make your own? Below is a recipe for floral-infused sugar-cookie seed packets with royal icing and, if you want to be extra about it, some chocolate sprinkle "seeds"!



## For the floral-infused cookies, you'll need:

*3/4 cup butter or butter-flavored shortening*  
*1 cup white sugar*  
*2 eggs*  
*2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour*  
*1 teaspoon baking powder*  
*1/2 teaspoon salt*  
*1/3 cup mixed dried edible flowers*  
*(such as rose, lavender, butterfly pea, calendula, or cornflowers)*

## Directions:

In a small bowl combine the flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.

Add the butter and sugar to the bowl of your stand mixer. Cream together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs in one at a time. Mix until fully incorporated. Stop and scrape the sides of the bowl. Slowly add in the flour mixture and dried flowers. Again, mix

until fully incorporated.

Cover and chill dough for at least 1 hour, though 4 to 8 hours is ideal. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Set aside. Dust a work surface, your rolling pin, and rectangular cookie cutters (or a knife) with flour. Roll out dough to a quarter- to half-inch thickness. Cut cookies into a roughly 2-by-4-inch rectangle, then cut out a window in the middle bottom half where the sprinkles will go.

Roll out the extra dough and continue to cut cookies until you run out of dough. Place cookies an inch apart on the parchment-lined baking sheet. Chill for an additional 30 minutes. While the cookies chill, preheat oven to 400°F. Bake cookies until they are lightly browned, approximately 6 to 7 minutes. Allow cookies to cool on the pan for 5 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

While the cookies cool, you can begin on the royal icing.

## For the royal icing:

*4-5 cups powdered sugar (sifted)*  
*3 tablespoons meringue powder*  
*10-12 tablespoons filtered water*

## For the seed packets:

*Chocolate sprinkles or actual edible seeds like sunflower or poppy seeds*  
*Gelatin sheets*

Directions:

Add the powdered sugar, meringue powder, and 10 tablespoons of water into the bowl of your stand mixer. Using the whisk attachment, beat

the ingredients on high speed for 45 seconds to 1 minute. Remember, the longer you whisk the icing, the thicker and stiffer it will get. The icing should disappear back into itself after 5 to 10 seconds when drizzled from the whisk. If it is too thin, add more sugar. If too thick, add more water.

Once the cookies have cooled, and with a piping bag fitted with a #1 tip, use the royal icing to make an outline around the backside cutout of the cookie. The icing will serve as glue; place a gelatin sheet onto the royal icing and allow it to dry. Flip the cookie over to the front side. Place a sprinkling of chocolate sprinkles (or edible seeds) inside of the cookie and atop the gelatin sheet. Then add another outline of royal icing around the cutout on the front side of the cookie and place another small gelatin sheet down on top. Allow it to dry.

Then neatly outline your cookies around the outer edges and around the window with more royal icing.

Now, it's time to color inside the lines! "Flood" the cookie surface between the outlines with remaining royal icing. You can use a toothpick to help move the icing across the surface or remove bubbles. Remember to have fun!

They're going to be delicious no matter what! The cookies will take a minimum of 2 hours to dry.

Once the icing has dried, you can decorate with dried flowers, more icing, or edible markers or paint.



Follow Lauren May on Instagram @mustloveherbs and visit her website, mustloveherbs.com.





*Luminous Locks*

# LANGUID BEAUTY

*by Alise Marie, The Beauty Witch®*

When the solar rays embrace us in their abundant warmth, a spell has been cast on our bare flesh, so alive with sensations and endlessly caressed by nature. Naked limbs, deliriously lazy with delight, receive every sultry breeze with pure pleasure. It is a time of basking in the vibrancy—the pure, unleashed *freedom*—of summer, in all her voluptuous beauty. Our vernal seeds have been sewn, spells cast, and actions taken. And now we heave a luxuriant sigh in this leisurely pace of reveling in our good fortune. The ripened fruits and coy flowers will take their leave before long, seducing us with their immense opulence before they depart. Can we possibly take it all in? Bask in it, bottle it, and be thankful, *mes amis*, because this season of seduction is as lush as she is fleeting. We must store all this life force within us, this potent virility, to carry in our hearts when the wheel of the year once again turns.

In a joyous fête of midsummer allure, the triple goddess of beauty arrives to sprinkle golden stardust on your heavenly body, taking the form of exotic flowers for your sybaritic pleasure—think oceanside bathing, glistening skin and hair, sipping a high-vibration libation! All three are feminine energies ruled by water, to heighten your feminine powers of intuition, creativity, and sensuality. **Orchid** graces us with her Venusian delights and *potent* love magic, while feeding our skin and hair with vital minerals and compounds that hydrate, reduce fine lines, and boost the skin's immunity to signs of premature aging. She also adds significant moisture to heat-stressed hair and protects it from UV/UVB damage. **Camellia** casts her lunar gaze with money magic and a particular knack for restoring damaged skin and hair (including wrinkles, breakage, and chemical damage). She is noted for promoting new collagen production and forming a protective barrier against environmental damage. **Wild pansy** is another major love flower, who joins us for her powers of quelling eruptions on the skin, such as seasonal breakouts, acne, psoriasis, and eczema. When added to a hair potion, she alleviates dandruff and calms an itchy, dry scalp.

Conjure and enjoy these potions at Litha, the summer solstice, to bring forth the vibration of abundance, love, and prosperity for the seasons to come—but don't let that distract you from the reverie of *now*. It's just all too decadent, too sublimely hedonistic to miss out on!



Voyage Exotique

## VOYAGE EXOTIQUE

### Facial Masque

*Conjures 2 treatments*

*¼ cup fresh cucumbers, chopped*

*1 tablespoon aloe vera gel*

*1 teaspoon orchid extract*

*1 teaspoon camellia seed oil*

*1 teaspoon sunflower seed oil*

*1 teaspoon wild pansy extract*

Chop the fresh produce and place it in a food processor to purée. About three pulses should do it. Then, in a pitcher or measuring cup, combine the oils (and aloe for the facial) together and slowly pour them into the top opening of the food processor while blending, allowing the mixture to become a bit thicker and take on a creamy consistency.

Apply the masque to clean skin, including neck and décolleté. If you can,

apply some to the back of your hands too—they get overlooked all too often! Allow it to remain on your skin for at least 10 minutes, but really you can leave it on as long as you like. Rinse well with cool water, pat dry, and apply crème and sunscreen as needed. Your skin will dazzle with vibrant health, looking smoothed, firmed, and positively glowing!

**Sunflower** joins both topical potions for a balance of masculine fire energy, bearing gifts of good health, creative potency, wisdom, and wishes granted. He also is a gorgeous oil rich in healing vitamin E, which moisturizes deeply. Moon-ruled **cucumber** brings more healing energy as she cools summer skin. Rich in vitamin C, she stimulates new cell growth while firming and hydrating. Soothing, lunar **aloe** firms and hydrates as she offers protection magic and a bit of luck!

**Beauty Witch's Secret:** Add a few drops of jasmine or ylang ylang for even *more* love and beauty magic, as well as the scent of earthly delights.

## LUMINOUS LOCKS

### Hair Masque

*Conjures 1 to 2 treatments*

*½ cup ripe papaya, peeled, seeded, and chopped*

*1 tablespoon orchid extract*

*1 tablespoon camellia seed oil*

*1 teaspoon sunflower seed oil*

*1 teaspoon wild pansy extract*

*Note: The papaya works best if it is very ripe and soft. If the papaya flesh is still slightly too firm, add a small amount of water as you blend it to soften and create the creamy consistency you're after.*

In the same style as you concocted the facial, pulse the chopped papaya, then add the oils.

Apply to dry hair, from roots to ends, massaging in the magic and thoroughly savoring the sweetness of gently rubbing your scalp. Let it sit for 10 to 20 minutes or even longer. Rinse well, then wash with a light botanical shampoo. If your hair is fine or you've left on the masque for too long, you may wish to give it a second shampoo. Finish with a light coating of your favorite daily conditioner, then rinse well. Dry and style as you like. Your hair will be beautifully shiny, smooth, defrizzed, and teeming with radiance!

**Papaya** makes a guest-star appearance here for her tropical charms and her lunar love magic. She strengthens the hair shaft, repairs damage, and feeds your mane with nutrients.

**Beauty Witch's Secret:** Lusty papaya has aphrodisiac sorcery, so be sure to nibble the rest of the fruit with sensual pleasure, and offer some to a potential lover. The sweet flavor, succulent flesh, and rich nutrients will spark some interest and give you the energy for ... anything.



Cocktail à la Mer

COCKTAIL À LA MER

Beauty Cocktail

Conjures 2 cocktails  
 2 tablespoons cut licorice root or three wands of whole root  
 1 tablespoon whole star anise  
 1 to 2 teaspoons raw coconut nectar  
 1 cup spring water  
 Sparkling water

A magical take on the classic pastis transports you to a balmy Mediterranean café, quenching your formidable thirst

with more of Venus’s youthful charms, lusty passion, and a dose of protective energy.

Prepare a tea base by steeping the licorice root and the star anise in hot water. Lightly crush the anise pods first to release the oils in the seeds—this adds to the flavor and aroma. Add the coconut nectar, stir, and allow the tea to steep for 20 minutes. Let it cool completely. Fill a half cordial or cocktail glass with the tea blend, then top with sparkling water. *Santé!*

**Coconut** nectar is a non-glycemic syrup used as a sweetener. It has the

texture of honey and pairs well with fruit or herbal flavors. The best part? The magic of coconut that heightens spirituality and intuition.

**Beauty Witch’s Secret:** Fancy an even more decadent delight? Try swapping the coconut nectar for a teaspoon of pure fig jam—*oui!* It will add a richer, albeit slightly different, taste. Then savor the Jupiter-ruled abundance (not to mention the sex drive) of fiery fig!

Alise Marie is the author of *The Beauty Witch’s Secrets: Recipes and Rituals for the Modern Goddess* available wherever books are sold. Find her at [thebeautywitch.com](http://thebeautywitch.com) and on Instagram @[thebeautywitchofficial](https://www.instagram.com/thebeautywitchofficial).

In a Rose Garden (1890), by Lawrence Alma-Tadema



“Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.” —Henry James



ummer may not be the most spellbinding season for beauty. Heat and humidity can drive the oil glands crazy and cause breakouts, while exposure to the sun, salt air at the beach, and air conditioning can overdry the skin.

When the hot, sultry air wraps itself around you like a warm blanket, the best way to cool down the skin is with lots of water and tropical fruits and vegetables. In general, it makes sense to switch to a lighter moisturizer and sheerer makeup, exfoliate the face and body regularly, and shampoo less frequently to keep the hair and scalp from drying out. Masking once a week will help keep the skin and hair hydrated. Focus on plant ingredients like papaya, coconut, and aloe, which contain a lot of water and help refresh the skin.

**PAPAYA**

Papaya grows in tropical climates around the world, where it is mashed and used in face masks to nourish and moisturize the skin. The enzyme papain exfoliates dull-looking dead skin and evens out skin tone. It’s especially good for oily or older skin and adult acne.

**Alpyn Beauty Plant Genius Creamy Bubbling Cleanser**

This brand, based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, relies on a certain amount of ingredients foraged in the Grand Tetons. A great daily exfoliating cleanser—with papaya, pomegranate, glycolic acid, and lactic acid—it also contains moisturizing hyaluronic acid and ceramide. It leaves skin soft and silky, and Alpyn Beauty gives one percent of all sales to environmental causes.

**Living Libations Green Papaya + Lime Mask**

Loaded with alpha hydroxy acids from papaya, pineapple, lemon, and lime enzymes, this brightening mask exfoliates the skin and hydrates at the same time, leaving skin looking radiant.

**COCONUT**

With its small molecular structure, coconut oil absorbs easily into the hair and skin, which makes it an amazing moisturizer. If your skin is oily or prone to breakouts, it may clog pores. In Southeast Asia, coconut oil (a.k.a. Monoï oil) shampoos are a traditional way to keep hair lustrous and shiny.

**RMS Beauty Raw Coconut Cream**

A raw, organic coconut oil that helps protect skin against free-radical damage and the signs of aging. Coconut oil is antibacterial, antimicrobial, great for nourishing skin and hair, and lovely to apply.

**Conscious Coconut Organic Coconut Oil**

Ready for travel, this organic multitasker is 100 percent cold-pressed coconut oil. It soothes dry skin and adds shine to hair. For every tube sold, Conscious Coconut donates a meal to a child through Feeding America and plants a tree.

**ALOE**

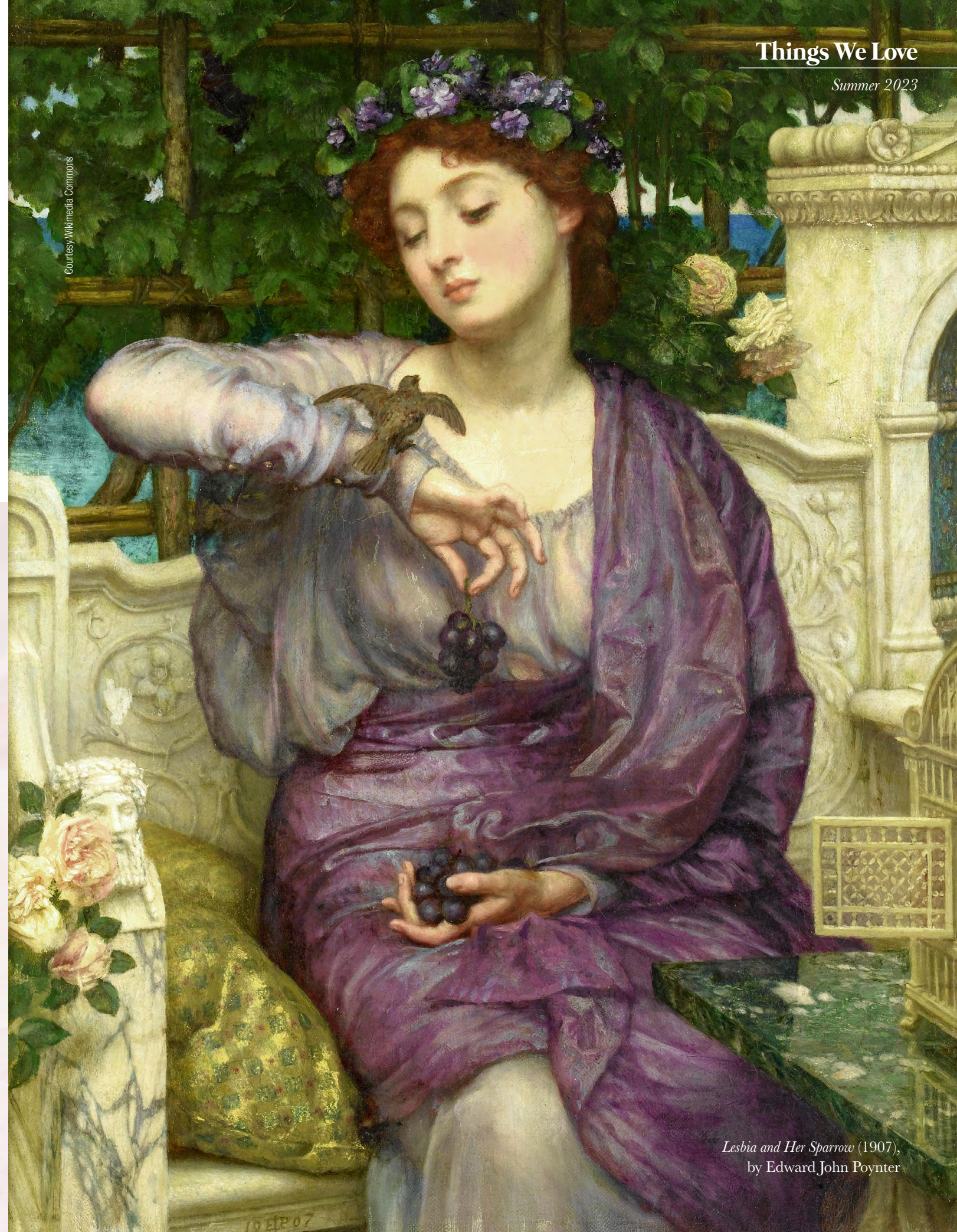
Aloe vera gel is 99.5 percent water, which is why it feels so good on the skin. It also contains vitamins, minerals, and enzymes that are great moisturizers and anti-inflammatory agents. Aloe soothes sunburn and temporarily tightens the skin, making it a great mini-mask to apply before a night out.

**Rahua Aloe Vera Hair Gel**

This brand gives back to native people in South American rainforests by providing them with a steady income. The gel—with organic aloe vera, cucumber and sugarcane—is great for styling and also adds shine and softness.

**Babo Botanicals After Sun Soothing Hydrating Gel**

With aloe vera gel, green tea, witch hazel, arnica, and eucalyptus oil, this precious tube leaves skin soft, smells great, and leaves no tacky feel behind. Perfect after sun exposure!  
 —Rona Berg



Courtesy Wikimedia Commons

Lesbia and Her Sparrow (1907), by Edward John Poynter

# Around the Fire

## WE ARE ALL WITCHES

by Briana Saussy



Summer is close. It is not quite here yet on this spring evening when I am penning these words, but I can feel it. More to the point, I can smell it. It's a Sunday evening about a month and a week before school will be out for the summer, and we've decided to have an impromptu cookout. The boys are delighted, as are we. And I can smell the arrival of summer on the waves of its smoke billowing over our back

courtyard: fragrant pinion smoke emerging from the crackling fire in our star-studded fire pit. While I encourage my students to open themselves to the seasonal and elemental affinities that naturally arise (for many magical traditions water is most associated with summer), I must say that for me, summer magic is fire magic, and fire magic fills up our summers. I find this to be true summer after summer in at least three different ways.

The first is found in the humble act of barbecuing. Firing up the grill, smoke pit, or open cook fire is a cue all across America that summer has begun. Usually we kick things off on Memorial Day—an honoring of the dead during a season so full of the living—and in my home state of Texas, barbecuing is akin to religion. We are more right than we know.

Having a cookout may seem like the pinnacle of bourgeois American life, but in actuality it is one of the oldest devotional rites we have. It has been passed down in relatively unbroken form through the millennia. Start with Homer, whose stories were themselves based on much older ones: Some of the greatest scenes in *The Iliad* really boil down to beach barbecues, where offerings of ox fat wrapped around thigh bones were grilled over open flames while libations of wine, barley, and sacred herbs were thrown into the fires, all in an effort to persuade the fickle Olympian gods to grant victory to the warriors.

Then, go back further: Evidence found in Neolithic sites like Göbekli Tepe indicate that our earliest religious experiences occurred not in stationary, permanent temples but were rather more like festivals, with people converging at a single point from many different directions (and cultures) to sing, dance, pray, and, yes, barbecue.

From a practical point of view, the barbecue is an ideal occasion for dovetailing the sacred and the profane. We come together in a spirit of revelry and joy, we cook together, and then we fill the air with sweet aromas as smoke rises up to the sky. Sacrifice, congregation, incense: Some of the key components in ritual and ceremony around the world are the fundamental building blocks of every good cookout. Add prayer and magic, and you have the capacity to be in deep ceremony—just like your ancestors.

The second place that fire magic and summer magic show up is in the grandmother of the humble cook fire, the bonfire. Bonfires appear throughout the year at different seasonal junctures, but in the summer, after a day of swimming in the cool green waters of a limestone spring or as night falls over the desert and a cool wind picks up, there is something about having a large fire beside which we can warm our toes, toast marshmallows, and tell stories together that makes for a certain kind of magic.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the celebrations to commemorate summer solstice or Saint John's Eve. The span from solstice (usually around June 21) to Saint John's Eve (June 23) is regarded as some of the most magical nights of the year. Ostensibly celebrating the year's longest day and the birth of Saint John the Baptist respectively, these days are marked by feasting, festivals, celebrations, fortune-telling—and bonfires. The fires are large and usually close to the top of mountains, places traditionally believed to be gathering places for witches to cast their evil enchantments. The fires of Saint John's Eve were seen primarily as protective, shielding against malevolent forms of magic.

Meanwhile, magic of a more healing sort would also be made, as this was traditionally a time when women and girls

would harvest medicinal plants for use throughout the year, including fennel, rue, rosemary, lemon verbena, mallows (like marshmallow, hibiscus, hollyhock, globe mallow, and okra flowers, laburnum, elderflowers, foxglove, and, of course, Saint John's wort). These all have magical as well as medicinal properties. Gardeners and herbalists often do a great deal of their harvesting around this time of year, as it is believed that the plants are more vital in these heady days of midsummer. In the light of the bonfires, gifts would be exchanged and left for fairies, and all kinds of magic—especially love and sex spells—were highly sought out. Although the fires' long shadows over the mountainsides were supposedly to keep the witches away, it seems that something else was happening: In fact, everyone gathered around a bonfire finds a bit of a witch in themselves. It is almost as if the flow of the flames draws it out of us.

The third place I find fire magic in the summer is in the dark. Specifically, under inky black skies and fleecy blankets as I look up at the stars shining with their own fire, lighting up the heavens. The Perseid meteor shower, which usually begins in July and culminates in late September, is something most of us can catch if we try. Star gazing, learning constellations, and perhaps most important, telling stories about the stars we see in the sky are some of the oldest magics we have. Any would-be witch would know at least a bit about the stars, their patterns and seasons, and the way that they can describe events down below from their vantage point above.

Soon it will be summer. At sunset, I'll place crystal jars full of spring-fed water alongside the leafy green herbs in my garden, letting the waters be kissed by starlight and moonshine, working with those potions just as I will with all the herbs we harvest on solstice. I'll hold the hands of my sons as we dip our toes into cool pools, and I'll teach them to make wishes on the backs of the silverfish that live in those green depths. We will wander mountainsides finding interesting rocks and butterflies, and we will settle down on baked earth to talk and gaze into ever-changing flames. The question is not where you can find magic in summer but rather where you can't. Catch the scent of smoke, feel the warmth on your face, utter the words "once upon a time," and weave your spell, for around the fire we are all witches.



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## FOR THIS ISSUE, WE ASKED, “WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE SUMMER RITUALS?”

My favorite summer ritual is celebrating the summer solstice itself: sitting out under the stars the night before within a great ring of amber glass candles, enjoying a wonderful fire, feeling the still cool night wind, knowing that soon that coolness will be replaced with heat, both day and night, listening to the frogs and the night birds, and then rising to greet the sun, offering up yellow candles and yellow flowers, and enjoying a simple spread of early summer fare.

—Melody

Every year when summer approaches, the air becomes unbelievably hot and humid in Alabama. The only escape is the water! My friends and I gather at this beautiful spot on the river. You have to walk to get to it. It has an enchanting gnarly tree and stone-covered coast. We bring a picnic and our sketchbooks and settle by the river's edge to enjoy the refreshing breeze. The river water is cooling on our feet. As we stuff ourselves with juicy watermelon and sandwiches, we imagine a magical kingdom of animal fae that live in the forest and draw their kingdom. Gazing out at the shimmering water, we spend hours in the shade of the forest, and thank the fairies for sharing this special place with us.

—Lesley

I love making flower crowns in the summer. To me, it's a really fun way to capture the wild, carefree energy of the season. —@shoplovelykallie

Favorite summer rituals include Midnight Margarita parties, moonlight dancing, stargazing 'til dawn, and swimming like selkies to cool off. —Steph

My favorite summer rituals are collecting lilacs for lilac sugar. Making fairy cookies to share with loved ones. Hiking to find the perfect creek spot to put my feet in. Being wherever the trees are tall enough to kiss the sky and thanking them for their company.

—Shannon Hughes

On the summer solstice, I take my grandkids out to the woods and garden to spread angel food cake for the fairies who work for Santa. Treating the messengers is the best way to get one's deepest heart's desires met at Christmas.

—Gwen Buckingham

I love lying in the grass inside our stone circle watching the Perseid meteor shower. It's magical!

—@royalhouseofwhimsy

I gather a book and a bottle of flavored water, taking them to my hammock. There, I can stretch out and be still until the birds land on the hammock and me. —Johanna Haas

My favorite summer ritual is to go out to the desert, create a magick circle out of found objects such as stones and sticks, and spend time with the sun god and the earth goddess. Afterward, I invite my husband into the circle for cakes and ale! —Vanessa Sumner

I love walking the trails next to my house and talking to the flowers, harvesting leaves from my native plants, and foraging for serviceberries. —Marlie S.

Filling ice cubes with edible flowers! —Sandy Hensley

As the summer sun dances in the sky, I'm drawn to the timeless art of eco-dyeing, a ritual that celebrates the beauty of nature and its transformative power. From the gathering of blooms, buds, and bark to the rolling, bundling, and dyeing of fabrics and papers, every step of this process is a celebration of the natural world.

As I wander through fields and forests, I search for treasures to bring home and lay them out in intricate patterns. The colors and textures of these gifts from nature are breathtaking, and I revel in the opportunity to create something unique and meaningful.

But the magic truly happens when the dye is set and the fabric is unwrapped, revealing a stunning tapestry of imprints and patterns that reflect the beauty of the world around us. It's a reminder that we are all connected—to each other, to the earth, and to the ancient civilizations that possessed such excellent dyeing rituals. —Shelley Novotny, Shakti Artist

Hedgerow foraging is most definitely our favorite summer thing to do. The elderflowers make wonderful cordial and wine, hawthorn flowers can give a little touch of almond flavor to a salad, and of course nearby there's usually a plentiful amount of wild chamomile for a relaxing tea. —@betty\_and\_heather

Watching as many sunsets as I can, as long as I can. —Schaeffer Tolliver

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of the Witch*

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