

witches & pagans

Earthwise Spirituality for Today

A Witch at
Large: the
Broomstick
Adventures of
**M. MACHA
NIGHTMARE**

the **MAGICK** *of* **AIR**

Making Sense of Magickal Learning · Guide to 22 Online Schools
The Girl Who Found a Feather: How Birds Changed My Life
Companion Birds as Familiars · The Power of Breath · Air Cooking
The Enchanted Music of Kelliana · Old World Witchcraft

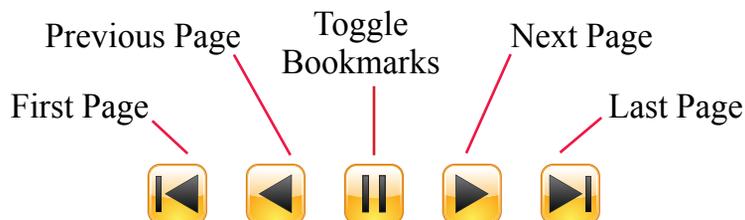


Magazines that feed your soul and liven your spirits.



Navigation Controls

Availability depends on reader.



witches & pagans

Earthwise Spirituality for Today

features

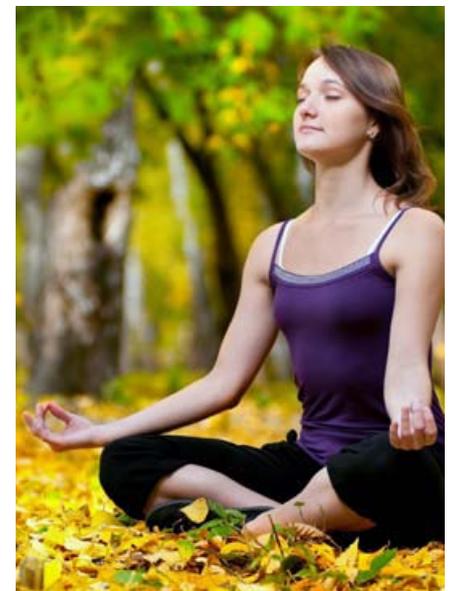
this issue: elemental magick of air



32



26



52

people

32 **A WITCH AT LARGE: M. MACHA NIGHTMARE**
Michael Night Sky catches up with the indefatigable Witch, activist, author, educator, and interfaith pioneer **M. Macha NightMare**.

place

45 **SEEKING WISDOM: MAKING SENSE OF ONLINE MAGICKAL LEARNING**

The world of online Magickal Schools can be confusing; let **Kira Nuit** help you find your way. PLUS 22 online academies, seminaries and schools.

practice

19 **THE GIRL WHO FOUND A FEATHER**

There's a tribe of very ancient, deeply magical, and powerful spirits flying above our heads. **Sarah Lawless** tells us how they transformed her life.

26 **FEATHERED FAMILIARS: COMPANION BIRDS**

Avian companions can be great magickal partners; **Aynia Torres** shows us how to bring them into our circles.

40 **THE TEACHER WILL APPEAR**

Christine Hoff Kraemer and **Sierra Black** journey through the world of magical education and discover how this rapidly-changing environment is serving the needs of students and teachers alike.

52 **THE POWER OF BREATH**

Want to super-charge your magic? **Diotima Mantinea** teaches us to extract energy from the Element of Air in the most fundamental way: by breathing.



45

witches&pagans

Earthwise Spirituality for Today



55



63

departments

- 3 **EVOCATION** Letter from the editor.
- 4 **CONTRIBUTORS** Meet our writers!
- 5 **GIVE & TAKE** Feedback from readers.
- 11 **CLIO'S CORNER** Pagan poetry.
- 13 **THE WITCHES' SPOON** Crafty cooking.
- 15 **INSIGHT** *The Snake and the Panda* by Eric Scott.
- 55 **SPOTLIGHT ON PAGAN MUSIC** A visit with **Kelliana**.
- 85 **SPELL IT OUT** Reviews with moxie. Plus *Bespelled* mini-reviews.
- 94 **MARKETPLACE** Products & Services.
- 96 **MY PATH** In this issue, "Dying into Life: My Path to Hellenism"

teachers & mentors

- 59 **THE CRAFT** *Tess Whitehurst*
- 63 **OLD WORLD WITCHCRAFT** *Raven Grimassi*
- 67 **CONNECTIONS** *Archer*
- 71 **LOOKING FOR TROUBLE** *Hecate Demetersdatter*
- 73 **BEYOND THE CIRCLE** *Ashleen O'Gaea*
- 75 **WYRD WAYS** *Galina Krasskova*
- 77 **RITE BEHAVIOR** *Kenaz Filan*
- 79 **FIGS & HONEY** *Ruby Sara*
- 81 **MAGICK ON A SHOESTRING** *Deborah Blake*
- 83 **THE CRAFTY CURMUDGEON** *Fritz Muntean*

witches&pagans

(ISSN 1546-2838) is published 3-4 times yearly by BBI Media, Inc., P. O. Box 687, Forest Grove, OR 97116, and at additional mailing offices. Periodicals postage paid at Forest Grove, OR 97116 and at additional mailing offices. 4-issue subscriptions: in U.S. \$23, Canada \$33, elsewhere \$38. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *witches&pagans*, P. O. Box 687, Forest Grove, OR 97116. Editor: Anne Newkirk Niven; Art Editor, Design and IT Support: Alan Niven; Editorial Assistant: Arthur Niven; Proofreader: Oma Ryan; Office Deity: Andrew Niven. Cover image © 2012 Richard Man <http://richardmanphoto.com>

Office: BBI Media, *witches&pagans*, P. O. Box 687, Forest Grove, OR 97116 · USA · Phone 888-724-3966 or (503)430-8817.



Office hours 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Pacific, M-F. Contents copyright ©2012 BBI Media, Inc. Printed by Ripon Printers, Ripon, WI.

www.witchesandpagans.com · email form: www.bbimedia.com/email · Order online at <http://bbimedia.com/store/>. On facebook.com ("like" *Witches and Pagans*), and on Twitter <http://twitter.com/WitchesandPagan> ("Pagan" is singular not plural).

Unless otherwise noted, all photography included herein are of professional models, for illustrative purposes only and do not represent any person(s) affiliation with Paganism, Wicca, or other magical practices; or their participation in any activities or professions other than as photographic models.



An “Airhead” Comes to the Goddess

From the breath in our lungs to the towers of academe, Air affects us all.

The element of Air has a wide range of associations in modern neo-Pagan usage: it is the element of new beginnings, of flying/feathered creatures, and of the mind. In my personal West-Coast eclectic practice, Air is also associated with the direction of the East. Above all, to me, Air represents the qualities of all things ordered and classified by the intellect. Its emblematic tool is the athame — the ceremonial black-handled, double-bladed, unsharpened ritual dagger of Wiccan regalia — which represents the “sharpness” of the well-disciplined mind.

As a native “Airhead” (my sun and Mars are both in Libra, with my moon in Gemini) religion has long been an intellectual obsession. Even as a child, my tendency to argue and joust over points of theology got me into trouble. (In fact, my first skirmish with fundamentalism happened in third grade, when I got my whole family bounced out of a church for arguing theology with my Sunday School teacher.)

This fascination with religion led me on a merry chase from middle-of-the-road Protestantism through C.S. Lewis-influenced Anglicism to the progressive wing of the United Methodist church. That was where the Goddess found me, deep in the bowels of the Graduate Theological Union library on “Holy Hill” in Berkeley in the fall of 1985.

Although I discovered contemporary Paganism while cataloging obscure occult magazines (Fate, thy middle name is Irony), I was swept up into the embrace of the Goddess, not through my mind, but through my senses, emotions, and intuition. The Paganism I encountered, both in literature and face-to-face was rich, juicy, and filled with more “smells and bells” than any High Church Mass. I quickly embraced the trappings of the new convert: daily spellwork, an obsession with divination (which I used for even the most trivial decision), constant listening to Pagan music, and attendance at every ritual I could find. I was, in a word, infatuated.

Like any new lover, eventually my ardor cooled and the relationship mellowed. One of the first things to go was my desire to meet with other Pagans in circle, and as a result I’ve been mostly solitary for the past quarter-century, communicating with the wider Pagan community at a distance. Postal letters and phone calls have gradually given way to email and social media, but the underlying

pattern has remained: I work and play with others at a distance. This self-imposed exile cuts both ways (in true athame-like fashion), and I often worry about whether I’m out-of-touch with the wider Pagan community. Fortunately, the God/dess seems to appreciate my work, and sends us myriads of material that ensures I’m constantly kept in touch with what is bubbling up in our myriad communities.

This issue is a case in point. When I announced a four-issue series based on the classical Wiccan elements, I had a pretty good idea what would comprise the Fire and Earth issues — but was flummoxed about Air and Water. (Hear that, potential contributors? “Water” is still wide open!) But to my delight the offerings that our dedicated contributors offered up for this issue are a wonderful smorgasbord of the myriad aspects of Air, ranging from academic pedagogy to the simple act of breathing. What a delectable feast!

Beginning at the end, **Monte Plaisance** relates the epiphany and initiation that led him to Hellenistic polytheism in “Dying into Life.” His unalloyed joy at finding his true path touches the core of intuitive “rightness” that characterizes the experience of so many of us who convert to Paganism as adults. This same sense of “coming home” is reflected in the loamy, grounded richness that **Sarah Lawless** brings to her account of finding her avocation — collecting feathers and honoring the spirits of the birds that give them — in our first feature article “The Girl Who Found a Feather.” Enthusiasm for the winged denizens of Air likewise fills **Aynia Torres’** tale of how companion birds influence her practice in “Feathered Familiars.”

Moving from the literal aspects of flying to the metaphorical ones, I am thrilled to present **Michael Night Sky’s** interview with **M. Macha NightMare**. Macha, who has been “on the broomstick circuit” for the better part of thirty years, is known for her unmatched networking and organizational skills as well as for her leadership in the progressive, politically-active forms of Paganism characterized by the Reclaiming tradition. I’ve been trying to nail down an interview with Macha since 2007 (!) but until now, the Fates conspired against it. I’m happy to say that They finally relented, and Macha’s piercing intellect and willingness to speak truth to power comes through in this captivating interview.

Also crossed-off my to-do list with this issue is a topic so large it’s taken us seven years to complete: online magickal learning. Tireless reporter **Kira Nuit** contacted dozens of schools, students, and faculty to research “Seeking Wisdom: Making Sense of Online Education.” Kira adroitly outlines the complexities of this ubiquitous form of education, plus offers potential students a directory of almost two-dozen schools, academies, and seminaries.

Moving from the point-of-view of the student to that of the teacher, **Christine Hoff Kraemer** and **Sierra Black** delve deeply into the many modes — personal, coven-based, community, and online — of magical pedagogy with “The Teacher Shall Appear.”

An oft-overlooked way of interacting with the Element of Air is revealed by **Diotima Mantinea’s** discourse (with helpful exercises to put into practice) in “The Power of Air.” We’re also featuring the first of four articles on the elemental magic of cooking by chef **Dawn Hunt**, a rollicking tale of an unusual festival encounter by **Eric O. Scott**, five poetic evocations of Air, a visit with chant mistress and musician **Kelliana**, and an Air “makeover” from **Tess Whitehurst**. Plus **Archer** meditates on the practice of spiritual veiling, **Ashleen O’Gaea** and **Kenaz Filan** advise us to look to children for wisdom, **Galina Krasskova** reminds us of the power of the elemental nations, **Ruby Sara** muses on the magick of weather, and **Deborah Blake** teaches us simple ways to connect with Air.

As Air is the element of new beginnings, I’m very excited to introduce new columns from three of the most captivating people on the Pagan scene. I was introduced to inveterate trickster, Craft pioneer and Pagan scholar **Fritz Muntean** on an e-list. One thing led to another and pretty soon I had roped Fritz out of semi-retirement and into our pages. Fritz is one of West Coast Paganism’s true originals, and we are pleased to share his wisdom with our readers with his column, “The Crafty Curmudgeon.”

Prolific author and lecturer **Raven Grimassi** and I have been working on a column since the days when *PanGaia* and *newWitch* were still separate magazines. Many of our readers tell us that they are looking for a more rooted, earthy spiritual practice: less flash and glitter, and more “dirt” magick. With “Old World Witchcraft” Raven delivers the goods with an uniquely valuable resource in these chaotic times.

I've also been a fan of **Hecate Demetersdatter** for some time; her cogent, lyrical, and level-headed commentary on current events, politics, and earth religions from her perch near the Potomac so charmed me that asked her to write for us.

In response to my request, she not only offered us her new column "Looking for Trouble," but she also became one of the first writers to join our newly-launched network of bloggers at PaganSquare, a gathering place that is part of our newly-reinvigorated *Witches&Pagans* website. At both *WitchesandPagans.com* and *PaganSquare.com* we are hoping to present dozens, even hundreds, of Pagan, Heathen, Wiccan and polytheist voices from around the world. Now *that's* what I call a project worthy of the mercurial, fascinating, element of Air! I hope to see you there. ANNE NEWKIRK NIVEN. ✦



AZURE GREEN.NET
 PO Box 48-SWM PHONE: 800.326.0804
 MIDDLEFIELD, MA 01243-0048 FAX: 866.663.2156

BOOKS, CANDLES,
 JEWELRY, INCENSE,
 HERBS, OILS, GIFTS
 AND MORE!

CONTACT US
 FOR A
FREE CATALOG
 OF OVER
 7000 ITEMS!

Reclaiming Quarterly

- witchcraft
- magical activism
- personal growth
- community
- humor
- Reclaiming and other pagan news

free download and much more at
www.ReclaimingQuarterly.org

WRITERS AND INTERVIEWERS

AYNIA ("Feathered Familiars") lives in Northern California with her Mate and menagerie of animal children. Her Paganism has been a personal journey since she was ten winters, eclectic by her very nature, and she has always embraced being different. Difference makes you who you are, and life would be terribly boring without it.



SIERRA BLACK ("The Teacher will Appear") is a Witch, a Priestess, and a teacher in the Reclaiming Tradition of Witchcraft, and participates in magical activism with the Pagan Cluster and in her community near Boston.



A religious studies scholar specializing in contemporary Paganism, sexuality, literature, and popular culture **CHRISTINE HOFF KRAEMER, PH.D.**, ("The Teacher will Appear") chairs the Theology and Religious History department at Cherry Hill Seminary, where she has recently taught courses on Contemporary Global Paganisms and Pagan Theology. Her current project is a book exploring a Pagan theology of touch. Christine lives in the Boston, Massachusetts area.



Chef, writer, and entrepreneur **DAWN HUNT** ("The Witches' Spoon") is the founder of Cucina Aurora Kitchen Witchery in Salem, New Hampshire. She teaches classes on Kitchen Witchery and food Magic locally and gives workshops all along the East Coast. She is the author of the *Cucina Aurora Cookbook* and *Tastes of the Temple*. She and her husband, Justin, live in the Merrimack Valley in Massachusetts. For more information visit Dawn at www.CucinaAurora.com.



"The Witch of Forest Grove," **SARAH LAWLESS**, is an artist, storyteller, wild witch, and amateur ethnobotanist and folklorist living on the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada.



Interviewer **MICHAEL NIGHT SKY** ("A Witch at Large") is a Witch and student of Magick, Red Priest with the Circle of the Heartbeat's Drum, and a longtime contributor to *Witches&Pagans*. He lives near San Diego.



DIOTIMA MANTINEIA ("The Power of Breath") is an astrologer with a path rooted in the Western mystery traditions, the principles of Yoga, and a profound connection with the natural world. Find her at uraniawell.com and *PaganSquare.com*.



KIRA NUIT ("Seeking Wisdom") is a witch and writer living in the heart of Central Texas. She writes about mindful parenting at Earth Mama Prime (<http://earthmamaprime.com/>) and spiritual pregnancy at Pagan Families (<http://paganfamilies.com/>).



Interviewer **TIM SCHNEIDER** ("Kelliana") is a Northern Tradition shaman and priest. His passions include writing, martial arts, and sustainable living. See his blog at Sarenth.wordpress.com.



ERIC O. SCOTT ("The Snake and the Panda") writes fiction and memoir about second-generation paganism. He is a Contributing Editor to *Killing the Buddha* and blogs for *PaganSquare*. ✦

