

Witches & Pagans

Earthwise Spirituality for Today



Paranormal Paganism

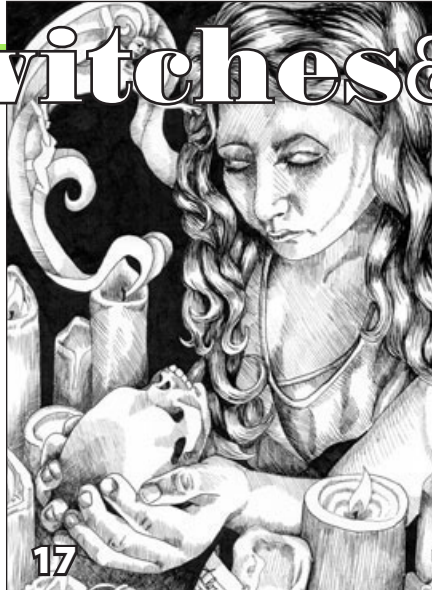
**Psychic Skills for Beginners • The True Story of Hugin Raven
The Ghosts We Live With • Forgotten Land of the Grail Goddess
Are All Witches Psychic? A Conversation with Cat Gina Cole**

ISSUE 40

PARANORMAL PAGANISM



6



17

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29

In this issue: Paranormal Paganism

6 Are All Witches Psychic? An Ancestral Witch on Folk Magic, Witchcraft, and Walking in the Old Ways. Join **Phaedra Bonewits** in a conversation with witch, author, and psychic **Cat Gina Cole**.

11 The Ghosts We Live With: Pop Paranormalism and Modern Pagan Practice. Walk with **Lucinda Bennett** as she explores how we can create relationships with the dead. *With original artwork by Natalia Bystrianyik.*

17 See Yourself in Everything: Psychic Skills for Beginners. Psychic, author, and teacher **Shannon Yrizarry** describes how anyone can learn psychic skills. *Original art by Melissa Pandina. PLUS 7 Tips for New Ghost Hunters by Heddy Johannesen.*

People, Place, and Practice

23 Fallow Time: The Ebb and Flow of Personal Magic. **DeAnn Bell** teaches us to read our own magical cycles. *Original art by Melissa Pandina.*

25 Mam Tor: Forgotten Land of the Grail Goddess. **Seren Bertrand** is our guide to ancient sites and lore of Northern England.

29 Do You Hear What I Hear? The True Story of Hugin Raven. Wildlife rehabilitator **Angela Luna Grano** shares what she learned in her relationship with a very special raven. *Original artwork by Aurora May.*

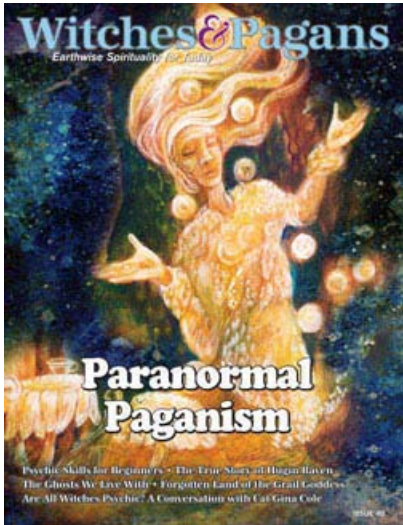
33 Under a Waxing Moon. Join **Derëka Bennett** in discovering the secret life of a famous Northern California magick store: Ancient Ways.

37 Group Therapy: Creating Community through Divination. **Eileen Troemel** shares how tarot can build trust. *Original art by Kathy Crabbe.*



33

PARANORMAL PAGANISM



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Departments

- 3 **CONTRIBUTORS** Meet our authors and artists.
- 5 **CALLIOPE'S CORNER** Pagan poetry by Lorraine Schein, Erik Ekvitki, and Jenne Micale.
- 67 **SPELL IT OUT** Reviews with moxie. Plus *Bespelled* mini-reviews.
- 77 **INSIGHT** Personal editorial by Kat Nicholls.
- 79 **GIVE & TAKE** Letters and short articles from our readers.
- 84 **MARKETPLACE** Products, Goods, & Services.
- 86 **BENEDICTION** Letter from the editor.

Teachers & Mentors

- 39 **BY LOVE, WILL, AND WISDOM** *Christopher Penczak*
The Three Wyrd Sisters.
- 43 **CONNECTIONS** *Archer*
Sex and the Sacred.
- 45 **LOOKING FOR TROUBLE** *Hecate Demetersdatter*
Eight Sabbats for political witches.
- 47 **HERBAL JOURNEYS** *Jamie Della*
Healing with calendula and comphrey.
- 49 **SPINNING THE COSMIC WHEEL** *Diotima Mantinea*
Psychic gifts of your Moon signs.
- 51 **SECOND STAR TO THE RIGHT** *Ivo Domínguez, Jr.*
What do witches think of ghosts?
- 53 **EXTRA-SENSORY WITCHCRAFT** *Mat Auryrn*
Meditation – a tool for psychic awareness.
- 55 **UNDER A HOODOO MOON** *Stephanie Rose Bird*
Hant or No Hant? Hoodoo and the Paranormal.
- 57 **DITCH WITCH** *Sara Amis*
The paranormal is business as usual in the American South.
- 59 **ASATRU PLUS** *Erin Lale*
7 Days of Heathen Rituals.
- 65 **WINDOWS INTO WITCHCRAFT** *Deborah Blake*
Talking to the Dead.

CONTRIBUTORS the people who make the magic happen

LISTED IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

FEATURED ARTISTS

Born in New England, **NATALIA BYSTRIANYK** (artwork for “The Ghosts We Live With”) is best known for deeply layered intuitive paintings, allowing ideas to develop freely rather than be concerned with end results. Natalia’s nontraditional creations are imbued with life by her regular practice of mindfulness, yoga, and meditation. She is a firm believer in following the path that brings you the most joy, and is deeply connected to her ancestral homeland in Ukraine. Follow her on TikTok, Instagram & Facebook @talby.art, natalia@talby.art, www.talby.art and find her work for sale at www.etsy.com/shop/nataliabystranyk.



A chronic illness led **MELISSA PANDINA** (artwork for “See Yourself in Everything” and “Fallow Times”) to delve into animism. Her work centers on bringing folklore to life. She primarily works in oil, pen and ink, and watercolor. She is working on an Oracle Deck. Find her at www.etsy.com/store/deshriaiillustration.



AURORA MAY (artwork for “Do You Hear What I Hear: the True Story of Hugin Raven”) lives in Medford, OR, with her husband, 11-year-old son, and mother. Aurora puts her emotions and tactile impressions into her acrylic paintings.

RavenSpeak was intuitively painting immediately after reading Angela’s story. Highlighting Angela and Hugin’s bond, the Law of Contagion, and a sense of magic pulled the experience together. Find Aurora at <https://auroramay.portfoliobox.net/>

KATHY CRABBE (artwork for “Group Therapy”) experienced an awakening of her intuitive gifts at age forty when she found herself creatively blocked. She switched to using her left hand which inspired her to create the *Lefty Oracle Deck* and become a professional soul reader and astrologer. Since then, she has written and illustrated five oracle decks. Find her at kathycrabbe.com



WRITERS & INTERVIEWERS

A practicing psychic, witch, ritualist, and ceremonial magician for thirty years **PHAEDRA BONEWITS** (interview with Cat Gina Cole) is an early co-conspirator and a former national officer of CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans).



Librarian, cat lover, history buff, oracle, second generation witch and tarot reader, **LUCINDA BENNETT** (“Ghosts We Live With”) wears many hats and juggles them all. Her practice has no name, and a circle of close friends and family constitutes an eclectic and informal Pagan practice. She goes where the wind takes her and and happily serves her community in Baltimore, MD.



SHANNON YRIZARRY was lucky to find a spiritual path when a friend brought her to a bookstore in San Diego. After studying different modalities of energy healing and intuition development, her greatest joy is helping people find their connection to their intuition which offers deep purpose and self assurance even in the rockiest of waters. She is the author of four books, has been a full-time clairvoyant, reiki healer, astrology teacher, and manifesting guide.



DR. DEANN BELL has been a practicing witch for the best part of 20 years. She runs the North Wales Pagan Moot Group and is a member of the Pagan Federation, UK. She is a teacher, writer, and historian who loves coffee, cats, and all things related to magic and creating art through words. Find her at deannbell.com.



A midwife of feminine consciousness, **SEREN BERTRAND** (“Mam Tor: Forgotten Land of the Grail Goddess”) has been a visionary leader in women’s empowerment for over two decades. She is the co-founder of The Fountain of Life feminine mystery school and co-author of *Womb Awakening: Initiatory Wisdom From the Creatrix of All Life*.



A twenty-year veteran as a federally licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator and a newly appointed Animal Control Officer, **ANGELA LUNA GRANO** runs Three Feathers Farm, a small rescue operation in the woodlands of Connecticut. She loves bluegrass and proudly wears a Hugin tattoo. Find her on Instagram @moonmama_xox

DERËKA BENNETT (author and photographer “Under a Waxing Moon”) is a professional witch, photographer, documentarian and reporter based in San Francisco. Her credits include *Cal Matter* and *NBC Bay Area News*. She also runs her own platform called “Tales from the Witch,” both on Instagram and TikTok, where she shares visual stories and weekly tarot readings.



Author of *Moon Affirmations* as well as poetry, novels, and short stories, **EILEEN TROEMEL** enjoys telling a good story. An eclectic witch, Eileen shares her experiences through her articles and her books. In addition to her work, she loves to read, crochet, craft, research genealogy, and spend time with family.

WELCOME OUR NEW COLUMNIST

ERIN LALE (“Asatru Plus”) is the author of *Asatru: A Beginner’s Guide to the Heathen Path*, which is an updated and expanded version of *Asatru for Beginners*. She has been a *gythia* (priestess) since 1989. She published *Berserkgangr Magazine*, reviews books for *Eternal Haunted Summer Magazine*, manages the Asatru Facebook Forum, leads American Celebration Kindred, and writes the Pagansquare blog “Gnosis Diary: Life as a Heathen.”



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS. We are currently accepting articles, interviews, and poetry for #41 “Solitary Spirituality,” #42 “Glorious Night” and #43 “Transformation and Rebirth.” Contact editor, Anne Newkirk Niven, sagewitchniven@gmail.com to submit your work.



Do All Pagans Have Powers? Magic is a wonderful part of witchy and pagan culture. But it isn't a sign that we are unique.

I'm old enough to have first learned about "witches" from a kitschy tv show. All the way back in 1964, a little sit com named *Bewitched* helped define the pop culture image of witches and their craft. Portrayed as spooky non-humans (mostly females) "witches" were depicted as being naturally endowed with inherited paranormal gifts. Having "powers" defined these near omnipotent beings, in contrast to the hapless "mortals" in whose midst they lived. Underneath the high jinx and secret identities was a nagging sense that witches (or aliens, or djinnis, or talking horses for that matter) were dangerous (even monstrous) beneath their masks of banal servility.

Fast forward a half-century, and pop culture still loves its Otherworldly romances. These days, there is occasional lip service paid to the concept of devotional witches (often termed "Wiccans") but witchcraft is still portrayed as being predicated on having a magical bloodline.

There's advantages for real life Pagans in this trope. It is, after all, far better to be an object of fascination and awe as an otherworldly being than persecuted as a devil worshipper who gains power from a pact with Satan. But at the heart of the idea that Witches are born with power is the notion that the world is divided into two camps: the "Magical" and the "Muggle." By assigning magic to a special class (or race) of beings, this concept essentially disenchant the world. In such a paradigm, either you have Powers (which you earn by virtue of being born into a magical bloodline) or you don't, and an ordinary person can't become a witch. The source of magic is in blood, not the world itself.

Fortunately, contemporary Paganism doesn't generally promulgate this elitist idea. Instead, most contemporary theories of magic posit that the source of magic is Nature itself, and that learning to wield it depends not on genetic quirks, but on cultivating the skills needed to connect with the universe. By this theory, those of us who practice magic — and I am happy to count myself as one — aren't savants, but rather, seekers. Practicing magic is therefore, logically a *practice*, which implies knowledge, skills, and determination.

Of course, there *is* something to the idea that magic runs in families. Just like other talents — such as abilities with music, art, or affinities for specific jobs or professions — can propagate across generations, a tendency towards paranormal senses or abilities can follow family lines. While there may be some genetic predispositions to specific magical sensitivities, the most important reason for talents that pass down through generations is the effect of family (or community) culture of teaching us about magic.

This is especially true today. In our post-modern, hyper-materialist world, believing that the unseen world *exists at all* is a pretty big ask. But if one is raised in a culture that accepts the reality of the uncanny — even a culture embedded in a theological paradigm that assigns all "powers" to the realm of evil — it is far easier to accept that magic is real. This is one reason for the presence of so many ex-Christians in Pagan communities, and also helps explain why the paranormal enthusiast communities are so heavily dominated by Christians, especially those from evangelical and charismatic Christian faiths.

It's not such a huge step from admitting the non-material world exists to wanting to engage with it. Happily, magical education — once accessible to only a fortunate few who knew a local teacher — is now widely available. This radical democratization of occult knowledge has made the task of magical exploration much easier for people of all cultures.

Happily, there's such a wide range of magical talents — ranging from divination to communication with spirits to sensing complex weather patterns, to name only a few — that there's pretty much a style of magic suited to anyone looking to put the energy in. However, the need for discernment — the ability to discriminate between magical gems and utter fool's gold — has never been more valuable.

There is one more essential concept to contemplate when considering how our magical abilities intertwine with our Pagan identities. *Magic knows no boundaries*: not those of race, class, gender, orientation nor political inclination. There's no barriers of religion, either. The desire to tune in to the unseen connections that weave through the universe is just that: universal. Throughout the years, there have been people who use magic (yes, for good or ill, and that's a discussion for another day) of every creed and culture. Working with magic isn't limited to Witches and Pagans: it's just a glorious part of being alive. ✦

ANNE NEWKIRK NIVEN is the Editor of *SageWoman* and *Witches&Pagans* magazines, and the *PaganSquare.com* community blogosphere. She lives near Portland, Oregon.

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