



AN AT-HOME BELTANE CELEBRATION

Beltane Offline: Part II of II

Following our May Queen's invitation to engage with nature in the run up to Beltane, this document is an invitation to join with others in our community on Beltane night, remotely, but offline. We have timed our Neid Fire to connect us with our online festival.

This text was written by the May Queen, Green Man, and Blues. Descriptions of the elements are taken from that written for BOnFire. Border by Nate Kelso.

(It should go without saying, but please use your common sense and follow government guidelines with regard to social distancing during this period.)

What you'll need

We invite you to look at the elemental explorations written by our May Queen, in the run-up document. Collect 3 feathers, 3 seeds, 3 stones, 1 candle, 3 matches, a smudge stick or incense, body paint & brushes, water in a bowl, paper & something with which to write (if you're burning incense or smudge, do think about opening a window). Food & drink!

Preparation

Prepare a space for your Beltane night. This could mean cleaning or clearing an area, putting fabrics out, surrounding yourself with old Beltane mementos or meaningful items, or simply having a comfortable space in your home, balcony or garden with as little distraction as possible. Leave enough space for movement or dance, if that calls to you.

If you wish to paint yourself, let your brushstroke flow with the spirit of the aspect of Beltane with which you feel affinity, making your physical and creative connection to the ritual.

If you feel moved to, take a delicate brush, and make a rune on your forehead; one which makes you feel protected and held. Many of us use algiz, the rune at the top of the page.

Take a moment to be still and quiet, to ground yourself, reflecting the quiet focus before the evening begins.

Opening

Light a candle at 19:10, with intention for your own ritual, protection and good intent. This fire represents our Neid Fire, and we are bound together in this act.

Close your eyes, and focus on the image of this shared Neid Fire being passed to you, and to and to all others in our community. Visualise that light being spread amongst us.

May Queen

Our May Queen appears. Her message this year is one of hope. Repeat out loud, or to yourself, these words from her poem:

*She who moves within us as we redefine our place here
Where together we can alter the course of the river, allowing diversity to thrive.
Diversity brings chaos yes, but the resilience that we need to keep us alive.
There are forces acting in this world darker than we have ever known
But a darker night frees brighter light,
May our collective flame be shown.*

She could choose to go back into the darkness of winter, back to the way things were. Instead, She chooses a new narrative; one of wisdom, love and action. Collectively we are facing a rite of passage and this is the first step. Choosing to change, and for things to not go back to the way they were.

Green Man

The Green Man arrives to begin his journey of growth in preparation for the coming of summer. He embodies our reliance on nature and his rebirth signals the coming of the new season. Our Reds cavort with this same passion, this energy.

The light to be found in all of life's challenges can brilliantly illuminate our path to growth. Our Green Man invites you to take grounding breaths and focus on that for which you are grateful. Repeat these words, out loud, or to yourself:

*Like a grain in the earth from darkness it will grow
To the shadows our teachers rich gratitude will flow
Like leaves when open more light we can drink
Growing network sacred souls with love we shall link*

Entering a liminal space

Our Green Man's story of this year is one of finding the gold within the darkness and stepping from shadow into the light. From one world into another. Of accepting our shadows and growing with the learning we gain from them. Lighting a smudge stick (if you made one over the last weeks), or incense, hold the idea of moving from shadow into light, from one state to another. Allow the smoke to drift over a threshold; such as through a doorway, or window.

When we move through the Fire Arch, our Whites keen in release, and to honour those who have left us. It is a moment to let go of grief, of anger, of frustration and fear, of doubts, of disconnection and pain. Is there something which you wish to release, to connect with this moment of keening?

The Elements

We pass through the directions of the Celtic Wheel. What resonates with you about

each element? Imagine each in their healthiest form, and ask these questions:

Without bypassing the reality of this tragedy, what if everything turned out okay?

What if water flowed toxin free every day?

What if we breathed in clear air, what if fire gave fertility and not despair?

What if the earth's vitality was not depleted, and the food we ate went untreated?

Air

Pollution levels are dropping rapidly. From choked and discordant, the air is clearing.

Air clears, vitalises, and harmonises. Reflect on what air means to you. Give your three feathers to the air, to a window or the wind, and release them with an intention for yourself, your community, and the element of air.

Earth

Earth is our nourishing mother, the one who pulls us to her, protectively, grounding us in our bodies and in our roots...She brings hope and a vision of what life is when it is thriving.

Earth nourishes, supports, and holds. Reflect on what earth means to you. Plant your seeds, making an intention for yourself, your community, and the earth element.

Water

Honouring the potential and healing qualities of the element, we welcome water's teaching and wisdom, and embody its cleansing, free-flowing power.

Water cleanses, flows & softens. Reflect on what water means to you. Take your stones and dip into water with an intention for you, your community, and the water element.

Fire

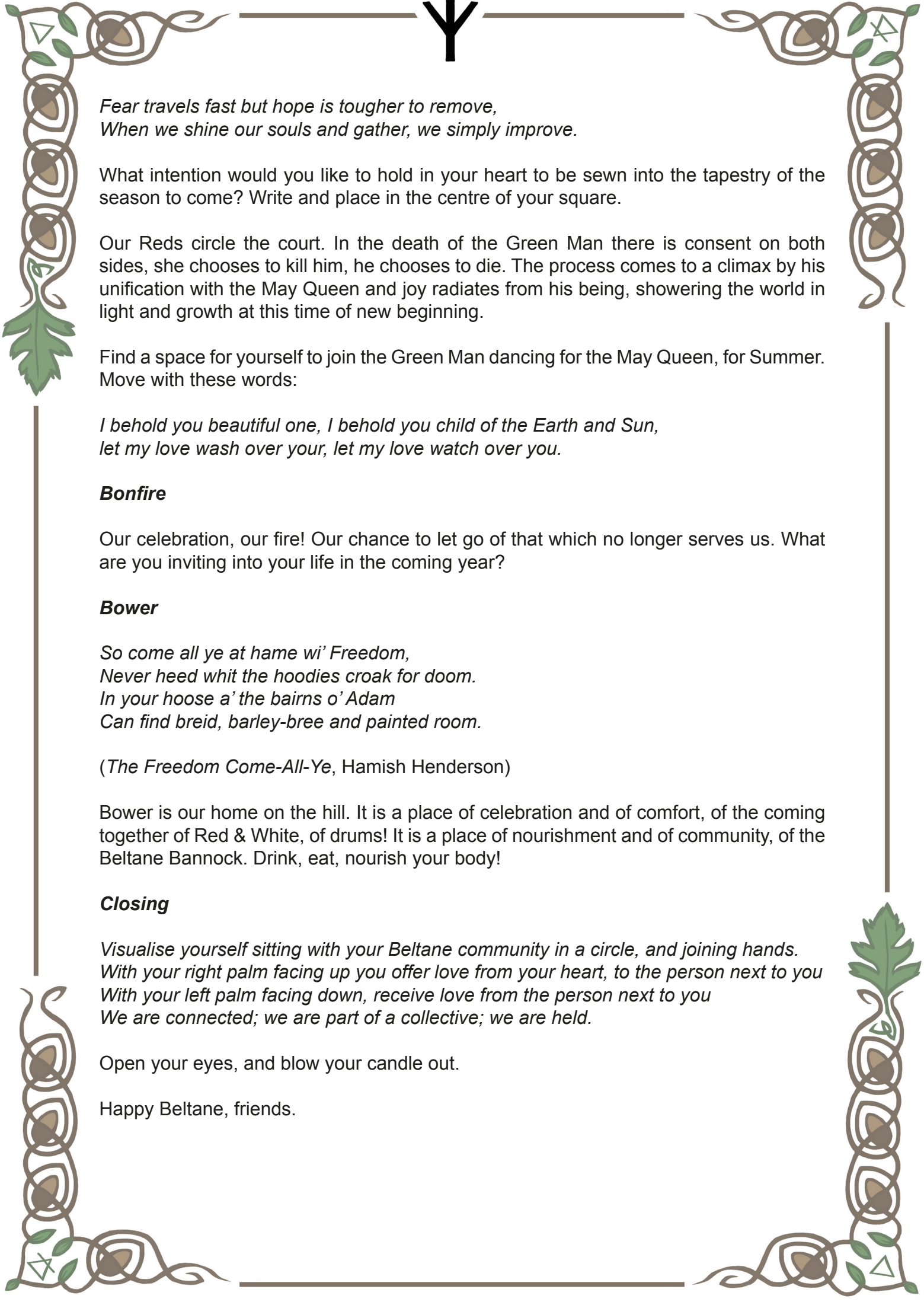
If Beltane is about celebrating the turn of the wheel and the coming of summer, then it is fire which clears the winter away, everything that we no longer need, and gathers the tribe to the hearth. It transforms and transcends.

Fire transmutes, transforms, and simplifies obstacles. Reflect on what fire means to you. Light three matches with an intention for you, your community, and the fire element.

Creation story

The stage is cleansed by the Handmaidens. The May Queen spins and weaves together the elements and energy of the ceremony & community into Summer.

Wash or dip your hands in water, take four scraps of paper, and write or draw something which represents the elements, one on each. Place these in a square in front of you.



*Fear travels fast but hope is tougher to remove,
When we shine our souls and gather, we simply improve.*

What intention would you like to hold in your heart to be sewn into the tapestry of the season to come? Write and place in the centre of your square.

Our Reds circle the court. In the death of the Green Man there is consent on both sides, she chooses to kill him, he chooses to die. The process comes to a climax by his unification with the May Queen and joy radiates from his being, showering the world in light and growth at this time of new beginning.

Find a space for yourself to join the Green Man dancing for the May Queen, for Summer. Move with these words:

*I behold you beautiful one, I behold you child of the Earth and Sun,
let my love wash over your, let my love watch over you.*

Bonfire

Our celebration, our fire! Our chance to let go of that which no longer serves us. What are you inviting into your life in the coming year?

Bower

*So come all ye at hame wi' Freedom,
Never heed whit the hoodies croak for doom.
In your hoose a' the bairns o' Adam
Can find breid, barley-bree and painted room.*

(*The Freedom Come-All-Ye*, Hamish Henderson)

Bower is our home on the hill. It is a place of celebration and of comfort, of the coming together of Red & White, of drums! It is a place of nourishment and of community, of the Beltane Bannock. Drink, eat, nourish your body!

Closing

*Visualise yourself sitting with your Beltane community in a circle, and joining hands.
With your right palm facing up you offer love from your heart, to the person next to you
With your left palm facing down, receive love from the person next to you
We are connected; we are part of a collective; we are held.*

Open your eyes, and blow your candle out.

Happy Beltane, friends.