

A Ritual of Memories

This is a ritual designed so that, whenever you need it, you can follow along with it, and focus on your connection to some of the many stories that have led to who or where you are today.

Memories are perhaps the most powerful things we will ever have. Memories are what allow us to learn, and they allow us to share our experiences with one another.

When all else feels gone, or out of reach, we are held by our memories. And in those times, good memories can be a protective force more powerful than any talisman, any charm or sigil - they are the things that give us hope, and courage.

I want you to find a wide space, maybe on your floor, maybe your bed. It should be somewhere you can spread things out on safely, and somewhere you can be comfortable.

Next, I want you to take whatever time you need to give yourself the freedom to spend as much time as you would like in your space. Take care of what your body might be asking of you, and give yourself permission to take a proper break from whatever errands or duties you may have. Come back when you're ready.

The next thing I would like you to do is to go and find any objects, any at all, that hold good memories of Beltane, and bring them back to your space. Perhaps the masks hanging on the wall, the steel toe cap boots on the shoe rack, the sticks on the shelf, the half-finished tub of face paint in the drawer. Perhaps the ticket stub, the tattered flier, the photographs. Perhaps the shoes you last danced in, the top you chose for that first open practice, perhaps the camera you filmed on, perhaps that page of scribbled meeting notes from a couple of weeks ago. Go find as many as you like, take whatever time you need, and come back with them to your space.

Sit in your space with these objects, and arrange them around you.

Pick one up.

Hold it in your hands, notice how it feels under your fingers.

And ask yourself why this object was the first one you picked up.

How did this object come to you?

Do you remember when it was made?

And how it was made?

Do you remember the first time you used it?

Do you remember the last time you used it?

Can you remember using it and realising that it no longer felt weird, or awkward, but felt right?

Do you remember what the world around you was like when you used it?

What did you see, and smell? What did your heart do? What did your body do?

Can you remember who first saw you use it?

Can you remember what those people were using, while you were using it?

Can you remember who last saw you use it?

Allow yourself to wipe any dust off your object, and look at the colours underneath.

What colours does it have?

Did you choose those colours?

What led you towards those colours?

What stories can you see upon its surface?

Can you see marks on it?

Are there stains of face paint, or grass, or mud?

Or is it immaculate, and carefully kept?

Does it show the marks of use - the dents where the stick hit the drum, the rips where the stitches came apart, the scorches, the creases, the smudges of soot?

Can you remember how it got each of those marks?

Can you remember the last time you held it, the moment when you placed it into wherever you kept it before now? Would you change that place? Would you keep that place the same?

Each of these objects around you is held by your memories, in so many different ways.

Consider each object in turn. Hold each one in your hands, and wander through all the stories each one holds. Think of what each one taught you, and what it meant to you then. Think of what each one means to you now. Take all the time you need.

Look at the objects around you, all together, and consider how their stories weave into one another, and how they weave into you. Each one, however cherished or treasured, is ephemeral. Their power lies in the memories you have of them.

Not in their paper, their fabric, their wood, their paint.

It lies in those stories.

And it lies in how those stories connect inside you.

Consider the memories that you are making, right now. And consider the memories that you are about to make.

Where do these objects belong, now? In new places, or old? Would you rather keep them close to you, for now? Do you wish to send them off into the world, making space for a new story? Do you wish to share your space with them, and the stories that weave through them, on Beltane Night?

Take some time to find the right places for each of your objects, in whatever way “right” means to you, and once each is where it’s meant to be, come back to your space.

And the last thing I would ask you to do is just to take a moment to breathe, and to sit with the memories that held you in this space. Breathe slowly, and deeply; in, and out. Feel the space around you - the ground underneath you, the air on your skin.

Take these memories with you as you go, and know that there are so many more memories to be made.