

Meeting Brigid

Here is an original meditation for the Imbolc festival (can be used at any time):

It is a lovely spring day. The air is fresh with the fragrance of green plants preparing to bloom. The sun's radiance bathes you in comfort, perhaps the first warmth you have felt in many months. You sense that you are in Ireland, because it is green and everything feels clean and alive. The landscape is timeless and magical. In the distance, you hear birds singing as they welcome the unexpected warmth of the day. Inside you, happiness begins to bubble and dance, very quietly at first. It feels almost like anticipation, but it puts a smile on your lips as well.

You are walking up a slight hill, not steep enough to tire you but just enough to sense that something wonderful can be seen from the top. As you walk, the grass is already tall enough to brush against your lower legs. You know you are in a wild place where Nature flourishes.

Towards the top of the hill, you see a dolmen - two standing stones and a large stone across the tops of them, like an arch. You wonder why you didn't see this dolmen sooner. It is as if it appeared when you were just twenty feet from it. Does it mean something? Is it real? You do not pause to wonder, but keep walking towards it.

As you walk between the stones, you notice carvings and symbols on the sides of the dolmen. Some of them are lines and hash-marks, which you suspect are an Ogham message. Others are just symbols, which you will return to look at, another day.

As you pass through the dolmen, you feel an invisible curtain

brush over
you gently. In the space of a blink, it is a clear, crisp night. The
stars are above you, brilliant and twinkling. You know the
moon is
behind you, but you do not notice its light because there is a
sparkling
fire just ahead. There is no breeze, but the evening is chilly as
you
would expect when Winter is still in the air.

You pull your clothing more closely around you, as you
continue up the
hill. You are eager to reach the warmth of the fire, which is
bigger
than you thought at first. In fact, it is a bonfire and you realize
you
have arrived at Imbolc.

You run the last few steps to stand next to the fire pushing your
hands
towards it, to capture the heat from a safe distance. Tall yellow
and
white flames seem to warm you inside and out. You pause to
look at the
sky again, and savor the moment.

Looking across the flames, you suddenly realize that you are
not alone.
You can see the top of someone's head, and you aren't certain if
you
have intruded on a private ceremony. Slowly, you walk around
the fire,
and your companion stands up from the rock she was sitting
upon. She is
a tall, strong woman, with long hair so light you cannot tell if it
is
blonde or white. She looks like the Queen of Pentacles in a
way, with
an ageless sense of knowing and accomplishment. She wears a
long gown
and an embroidered cape, yet you can see her bare feet peeking
out from
under her skirt. You know she is someone noble yet without
artifice.

Without a word, she stretches out her hands to take yours in
welcome.
You know, as if you've known her all your life, that this is
Brigid.
This is a special and sacred moment.

She welcomes you to her fire, which will burn tonight and every night,
for Imbolc is her festival and her fire is never extinguished.

You sit down next to her, on large flat rocks that are warm from the fire, and very comfortable. She begins to explain to you the meaning of Imbolc, and its promise of a fresh beginning--not just to the plants and animals, but also to everyone on Earth who chooses to permit Imbolc into their lives.

She helps you to remember your past dreams, especially the ones from your childhood which began, "When I grow up..." And as you recall these fantasies and goals, you realize how many of them were left behind with your childhood, yet how many are still alive in what you do each day, today. *This is not a sad realization as much as it is a recognition*

that you can start afresh now. Every one of those dreams is still with you.

Brighid reaches to her side and picks up a fallen twig from a nearby yew tree. It looks like any other twig, in the firelight. However, when Brighid places it into the fire, the bark on it sparks and flames like a sparkler, giving enough heat energy to set the twig burning brightly. *Without saying anything, Brighid is showing you how even a small spark will set alight your oldest and most neglected dreams.*

The lesson was simple, but vital. Now it is time to return to your own world. As you stand, Brighid offers you a cup of clear water, which you sip. *The sensation in your mouth is unique. There is a kind of life-giving energy, that is Spring itself. You take a large swallow of the water, and feel your entire body respond to that water with a vitality that--like your forgotten dreams--you had almost*

forgotten from
childhood.

After returning the cup to Brigid, and then a quick embrace,
you stride
purposefully around the fire and back to the dolmen. Passing
under it,
you emerge back into the daylight and the warm air and clear
sunshine of
an early spring day. You know you have not merely learned the
meaning
of Imbolc, but actually experienced it in your soul. From now
on, every
time you sip fresh water, or see twigs and branches burning in a

bonfire, you will feel Brigid's presence, and be reminded of
the
fire--and dreams--that burn within you, too, and will never be
extinguished.

With best wishes for a glorious Imbolc,
Cogar niMhorrighan

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