

Yule Ritual 2016 with Treibh na Tintean

[Pre-ritual setup: Sharon and her crew teach both chants (“Runa, Raidho, Raud,” and “The Dark I Will Not Fear”)]

After dinner, reset the space to have chairs in a big circle, and gather everyone into that circle (with “Runa, Raidho, Raud”?)]

Covenant

[Either Sharon or Scott presents the Ballard poem with powerful voice and energy.]

Main ritual follows:

[Dave] Welcome to the 2016 Yule ritual with Treibh na Tintean. Tonight, we will go on a journey. Hear now the words Runa, Raidho, Raud.

Runa—the mystery, the unknown—that which we head into with blind faith.

Raidho—the journey, the extended travel that enables us to discover and acquire that which we need to move forward in life.

Raud—our counsel and advice, the wisdom by which we develop our plans to move ahead.

Calling in Sacred Space

[Shae] As we are working with the runes tonight, it is only fitting that we call upon their energies to hallow our sacred space.

For Spirit, we look to Eihwaz. Eihwaz, the yew-tree rune, speaks to us of the up-reaching connection between this earth and the gods. By the [growing/fertile/?] of Eihwaz, be rooted. Sink your roots into the ground; be in the present moment now.

For Earth, we seek Berkana. Rooted deep, we call on the fertile, nurturing energy of Berkana, rune of the high-helmed birch, close to the sky, that we may stretch our branches out tall and wide.

For Air, we look to Ansuz. Reaching out, we call on the breath of Ansuz, rune of communication and of knowledge. The wind in the crosstrees, that we may set our sails to catch the fair breeze.

For Fire, we use Kenaz. Sails set, we call on the fire of Kenaz, rune of transformation and of the beacon flame. The torch by which we steer, that we may sail through the darkness without fear.

For Water, we look to Laguz. Torches lit, we call on the water of Laguz, rune of the ocean and the tides flowing faithfully out and in, that we may weigh anchor and let our voyage begin!

[While one is reading this, the other is casting while walking in a circle with a candle, hopefully in Sandy's lantern. We will keep this candle burning in the circle so we can use it to push the circle out to the grove. It is the "torch" that will be thrown into the Yule fire.]

[During the meditation, a few people sing "Runa Raidho Raud" throughout, very quiet!:. Scott, Sandy, Via, and Denise, maybe? Elizabeth and Danny drumming]

Meditation

Our circle is cast, and it is time to go on a journey within. When it feels right to you, close your eyes. Imagine yourself at an ocean harbor, where your ship awaits in the night. Torch in hand, and with the wind at your back, you board your ship and your crew greets you. Who is on board with you? Your Gods? Goddesses? Ancestors? Guides? *[Pause]* Now all of your crew has gathered, and it's time to weigh anchor and cast off.

As your ship moves away from the harbor, you place your torch at the bow of your ship to light your way. As you enter the open sea, you look back to shore, amazed at how far you've already gone. Raising your eyes to the sky, you marvel at the sight of stars and planets bright and shining. One star in particular catches your eye; you realize this is your guiding star. It too is a torch. Its light shines down on you, surrounding you, soaking into you. This starlight is your circle, your sacred space—it protects you.

You've sailed forth for a while. Now you see a port ahead and give orders to put in to harbor. As you leave your ship and wander through the streets, you see many places with opportunities to acquire resources and tools to further your journey. Which tools do you choose? What resources do you need? What does your crew suggest? *[Pause]* Once you've gotten what you need, you bring it on board and cast off again.

*This leg of your journey is busy, storing your new acquisitions, planning, and working with your crew. You have traveled so far already and have further yet to go. Now it is time to put into harbor again to rest and relax. The local people welcome you and your crew. As you feast with them, they regale you with their insights into the mysteries of this life and the next. Which insights speak to you? What do you wish to carry forth with you? *[Pause]* When you feel ready to travel onward, you graciously thank your hosts for their hospitality and head back to your ship.*

The next leg of your travels is fraught with challenges. The seas are choppy, and the stars that have led you thus far have dimmed, obscured by the clouds of an approaching storm. Finally, you see land and find a quiet cove to put into. Relieved to be back on solid ground for the time being, you look for shelter and find a network of caves surrounding the cove. With your torch in hand, you choose a cave and enter. Moving in, you discover it is not empty. You encounter someone you did not expect to see, someone whose wisdom and counsel you trust. Who is it? *[Pause]* Your host bids you welcome and invites you all to sit and relax.

As you sit, your host shares guidance and information to help you in your way forward. Take a moment and listen. [Pause] As you have trusted your crew so far, you look to them for reassurance on what you have heard. They nod in assent and you smile.

How do you feel about what you have been told? How might you use this wisdom in your life after you've returned to your home port? [Pause]

Your host advises at last that it is time for you to go. As you return to your ship, your crew shares their insights with you as well. What do they say to you? [Pause]

On board again, you cast off for the last time on this journey. As you sail home, the seas calm down and the skies clear. Your star is still guiding and protecting you. A fair wind fills your sails, and the distant lighthouse beacon beckons you with its bright, welcoming beam.

Sailing into your home harbor, everyone comes together to tie down the ship, unload the things you have gathered on your travels, and finally disembark. You thank your crew for their faithful company and assistance. Each in turn gives you one final piece of advice. [Pause] They then turn and leave, fading into the crowds. You at last take your torch from the bow of the ship and walk down the gangplank, smiling when your feet touch home ground.

[Chanting and drumming stop here.]

It has been a journey to remember, but it is not yet entirely over. The torch you carry from your ship must join the Yule bonfire that is burning in the not-too-distant wood. As you move towards the huge blaze, remember that every step on the path is on sacred ground and is to be respected accordingly.

As you open your eyes, look to the star in the center of the circle. It blazes as the torch at the prow of your ship. Use its light now to extend our sacred circle out to the grove, where we will carry it to the Yule fire.

Chant while walking to Covenant Woods

“The dark I will not fear / I embrace the longest night

The Sun's time is growing / And I revel in the light.”

When all are gathered at the fire:

This Yule fire represents Dagaz, the rune of dawn and day. With it we cross the threshold from the cold and confusion of the dark into the hope of the new and life-giving light. You have been carrying the torch from the prow of your ship. Throw that torch into the fire now and say welcome, Yule!

In Northern Tradition, once space is hallowed, it stays hallowed. With that being said—return now to your center and to Eihwaz, rune of the yew tree—that you may climb to the crown and keep your horizons broadened. Hail! And farewell!

=====

Poem- “Seasoning” by H. Byron Ballard

I peel the myth away, / smelling the acid in the air, / feeling the oily leavings of the peel.

It is easy—the work of a moment.

They lie in my open palm, / the segments of story and lore / that guide the culture’s heart into this / darkening season.

I poke the cold segments with my fingernail and see here a Baby move, / there a Winter Queen, yonder the oak and holly fret / as my Ancestors cut the sycophant mistletoe from / the tender apple branches.

In the middle of this mess of legend / there lies a curled and spiky ball.

When it is gently prodded, it / kicks free of the sickly sweet pieces / and shows itself to be a star....

The star.

Leading us into ourselves and out again, / Dancing the carol.

The star of wonder. The star of renewal. / Sol Invictus!

The reason, long-known and sometimes forgotten, for the season.