

Introductory Note

The following is a brief essay by Tony Kelly, first published in 1971 in the British edition of *The Waxing Moon*, under the title "Pagan Movement." Since then, it has been widely circulated in the U.S. As a member of the Selene Community in Wales, a group studying ancient goddess religions, Tony Kelly was a pioneer of the Pagan Movement. The author has granted permission for the republication of this essay, on the conditions that proper credit is given, and the information in parentheses in the last line is included.

Pagan Musings

by Tony Kelly

We're of the old religion, sired of Time, and born of our beloved Earth Mother. For too long the people have trodden a stony path that goes only onward beneath a sky that goes only upwards. The Horned God plays in a lonely glade for the people are scattered in this barren age and the winds carry his plaintive notes over deserted heaths and reedy moors and into the lonely grasses. Who knows now the ancient tongue of the Moon? And who speaks still with the Goddess? The magic of the land of Lirien and the old Pagan gods have withered in the dragon's breath; the old ways of magic have slipped into the well of the past, and only the rocks now remember what the moon told us long ago, and what we learned from the trees, and the voices of grasses and the scents of flowers.

We're Pagans and we worship the Pagan gods, and among the people there are Witches yet who speak with the moon and dance with the Horned One. But a Witch is a rare Pagan in these days, deep and inscrutable, recognizable only by her own kind, by the light in her eyes and the love in her breast, by the magic in her hands and the lilt of her tongue and by her knowledge of the real. But the Wiccan way is one way. There are many; there are Pagans the world over who worship the Earth Mother and the Sky Father, the Rain God and the Rainbow Goddess, the Dark One and the Hag on the mountain, the Mood Goddess and the Little People in the mists on the other side of the veil. A Pagan is one who worships the goddesses and gods of nature, whether by observation or by study, whether by love or admiration, or whether in their sacred rites with the Moon, or the great festivals of the Sun.

Many suns ago, as the pale dawn of reason crept across the Pagan sky, man grew out of believing in the gods. He has yet to grow out of disbelieving in them. He who splits the Goddess on an existence / nonexistence dichotomy will earn himself only paradoxes, for the gods are not so divided and nor the magic lands of the Brother of Time. Does a mind exist? Ask her and she will tell you yes, but seek her out, and she'll elude you. She is in every place, and in no place, and you'll see her works in all places, but herself in none. Existence was the second-born from the Mother's womb and contains neither the first-born, nor the unborn. Show us your mind, and we'll show you the gods! No matter that you can't for we can't show you the gods. But come with us and the Goddess herself will be our love and the God will call the tune. But a brass penny for your reason! for logic is a closed ring, and the child doesn't validate the Mother, nor the dream the dreamer. And

what matter the wars of opposites to she who has fallen in love with a whirlwind or to the lover of the arching rainbow.

But tell us of your Goddess as you love her, and the gods that guide your works, and we'll listen with wonder, for to do less would be arrogant. But we'll do more, for the heart of man is aching for memories only half forgotten, and the Old Ones only half unseen. We'll write the old myths as they were always written and we'll read them on the rocks and in the caves and in the deep of the greenwood shade, and we'll hear them in the rippling mountain streams and in the rustling of the leaves, and we'll see them in the storm clouds, and in the evening mists. We've no wish to create a new religion for our religion is as old as the hills and older, and we've no wish to bring differences together. Differences are like different flowers in a meadow, and we are all one in the Mother.

What need is there for a Pagan movement since our religion has no teachings and we hear it in the wind and feel it in the stones and the Moon will dance with us as she will? There is a need. For long the Divider has been among our people and the tribes of man are no more. The sons of the Sky Father have all but conquered nature, but they have poisoned her breast and the Mother is sad for the butterflies are dying and the night draws on. A curse on the conquerors! But not of us, for they curse themselves, for they are nature, too. They have stolen our magic and sold it to the mind benders and the mind benders tramp a maze that has no outlet for they fear to go down into the dark waters, and they fear the real for the One who guards the path.

Where are the Pagan shrines? And where do the people gather? Where is the magic made? And where are the Goddess and the Old Ones? Our shrines are in the fields and on the mountains, in the stars and in the wind, deep in the greenwood and on the algal rocks where two streams meet. But the shrines are deserted, and if we gathered in the arms of the Moon for our ancient rites to be with our gods as we were of old, we would be stopped by the dead who now rule the Mother's land and claim rights of ownership on the Mother's breast, and make laws of division and frustration for us. We can no longer gather with our gods in a public place and the old rites of communion have been driven from the towns and cities ever deeper into the heath where barely a handful of Heathens have remained to guard the old secrets and enact the old rites. There is magic in the heath far from the cold gray society, and there are islands of magic hidden in the entrails of the metropolis behind closed doors, but the people are few, and the barriers between us are formidable. The old religion has become a dark way, obscure, and hidden in the protective bosom of the night. Thin fingers turn the pages of a book of shadows while the Sunshine seeks in vain his worshipers in his leafy glades.

Here, then, is the basic reason for a Pagan Movement; we must create a Pagan society wherein everyone shall be free to worship the goddesses and gods of nature, and the relationship between a worshiper and her gods shall be sacred and inviolable, provided only that in her love of her own gods, she doesn't curse the names of the gods of others. It's not yet our business to press the lawmakers with undivided endeavor to unmake the laws of repression and, with the Mother's love, it may never become our business for the stifling tides of dogmatism are at last already in ebb. Our first work, and our greatest

wish, is to come together, to be with each other in our tribes for we haven't yet grown from the Mother's breast to the stature of the gods. We're of the Earth, and sibs to all the children of wild nature, born long ago in the warm mud of the ocean floor; we were together then, and we were together in the rain forests long before that dark day when, beguiled by the pride of the Sky Father, and forgetful of the Mother's love, we killed her earlier-born children and impoverished the old genetic pool. The Red Child lives yet in America; the Black Child has not forsaken the gods; the old Australians are still with their nature gods; the Old Ones still live deep in the heart of Mother India, and the White Child has still a foot on the old Wiccan way, but Neanderthal is no more and her magic faded as the Lli and the Archan burst their banks and the ocean flowed in to divide the Isle of Erin from the land of the White Goddess.

Man looked with one eye on a two-faced god when he reached for the heavens and scorned the Earth which alone is our life and our provider and the bosom to which we have ever resumed since the dawn of Time. He who looks only to reason to plumb the unfathomable is a fool, for logic is an echo already implicit in the question, and it has no voice of its own; but he is no greater fool than he who scorns logic or derides its impotence from afar, but fears to engage in fair combat when he stands on his opponent's threshold. Don't turn your back on Reason, for his thrust is deadly; but confound him and he'll yield for his code of combat is honorable. So here is more of the work of the Pagan Movement. Our lore has become encrusted over the ages with occult trivia and the empty vapourings of the lost. The occult arts are in a state of extreme decadence; astrology is in a state of disrepute and fears to confront the statistician's sword; alien creeds oust our native arts and, being as little understood as our own forgotten arts, are just as futile for their lack of understanding, and more so for their unfamiliarity. Misunderstanding is rife. Disbelief is black on every horizon, and vampires abound on the blood of the credulous. Our work is to reject the trivial, the irrelevant and the erroneous, and to bring the lost children of the Earth Mother again into the court of the Sky Father where reason alone will avail. Belief is the deceit of the credulous; it has no place in the heart of a Pagan.

But while we are sad for those who are bemused by Reason, we are deadened by those who see no further than his syllogisms as he turns the eternal wheel of the Great Tautology. We were not fashioned in the mathematician's computations, and we were old when the first alchemist was a child. We have walked in the magic forest, bewitched in the old Green Thinks; we have seen the cauldron and the one become many and the many in the one; we know the Silver Maid of the moonlight and the sounds of the cloven feet. We have heard the pipes on the twilight ferns, and we've seen the spells of the Enchantress, and Time be stilled. We've been into eternal darkness where the Night Mare rides and rode her to the edge of the abyss, and beyond, and we know the dark face of the Rising Sun. Spin a spell of words and make a magic knot; spin it on the magic loom and spin it with the gods. Say it in the old chant and say it to the Goddess, and in her name. Say it to a dark well and breathe it on a stone. There are no signposts on the untrod way, but we'll make our rituals together and bring them as our gifts to the Goddess and her God in the great rites. Here, then, is our work in the Pagan Movement; to make magic in the name of our gods, to share our magic where the gods would wish it, and to come together in our ancient festivals of birth, and life, of teeth and of change in the old

rhythm. We'll print the rituals that can be shared in the written word; we'll do all in our power to bring the people together, to teach those who would learn, and to learn from those who can teach. We will initiate groups, bring people to groups, and groups to other groups in our common devotion to the goddesses and gods of nature. We will not storm the secrets of any coven, nor profane the tools, the magic, and still less, the gods of another.

We'll collect the myths of the ages, of our people and of the Pagans of other lands, and we'll study the books of the wise and we'll talk to the very young. And whatever the Pagan needs in her study, or her worship, then it is our concern, and the Movement's business to do everything possible to help each other in our worship of the gods we love. We are committed with the lone Pagan on the seashore, with he who worships in the fastness of a mountain range or she who sings the old chant in a lost valley far from the metaled road. We are committed with the wanderer, and equally with the prisoner, disinherited from the Mother's milk in the darkness of the industrial wens. We are committed too with the coven, with the circular dance in the light of the full moon, with the great festivals of the sun, and with the gatherings of the people. We are committed to build our temples in the towns and in the wilderness, to buy the lands and the streams from the landowners and give them to the Goddess for her children's use, and we'll replant the greenwood as it was of old for love of the dryad stillness, and for love of our children's children. When the streams flow clear and the winds blow pure, and the sun never more rises unrenowned nor the moon ride in the skies unloved; when the stones tell of the Horned God and the greenwood grows deep to call back her own ones, then our work will be ended and the Pagan Movement will return to the beloved womb of our old religion, to the nature goddesses and gods of Paganism.

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