



MAY

Sex & Death



Please note that I use feminine pronouns throughout, but I am addressing you, whatever your gender.

Your PDF for April included the quote: "...for behold, all acts of love and pleasure are my rituals.", which comes to us from *The Charge Of The Goddess* by Doreen Valiente. It also included the quote "Sex is kicking death in the ass while singing." from one of my favourite mystic warrior poets, Charles Bukowski.

This month, we're going to focus on two of the most universally 'held as sacred' mysteries, and sources of power - sex, and death - and explore how they are related, how they impact our lives (creative and otherwise), and how we can come into 'right relationship' with them in order to continue in our endeavour as art witches to 'make all things sound'.

First, A Request.

If you are a survivor of sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, rape, or anything relating at all to boundary violations to do with sex and sexuality, including bullying or shunning due to sexual orientation (LGBTQA) or alternative lifestyle choices (poly, kink, etc.), or if you have deep fears or anxieties around death, or are currently grieving a loss, please be extra gentle with yourself as you explore these topics, and ensure that you have good support in place in case you find yourself triggered. You should also be mindful that I deconstruct some Christian concepts in this document, and you may find your beliefs challenged. Please don't shoot the messenger.

The Descent Of The Goddess

In traditional Wicca, this legend is a central mystery that teaches Wicca's adherents that without death, there can be no love. It is death that creates in us the ability to pair bond. It is grief that allows us to experience attachment and joy. It is pain that allows us to seek and appreciate pleasure. There is also a promise in this mystery, that we share the same cycle of life, death and rebirth as we see playing out in our seasonal year.

Below is a version of the legend for you to read yourself, and [here's a link to a 'discourse' on it](#) that I find quite helpful in understanding it. (Please ignore the kitschy 1990's web design. Despite that, this writing is quite good!).

Legend of the Descent of the Goddess By Gerald Gardner

"Now the Goddess had never loved, but she would solve all mysteries, even the mystery of Death, and so she journeyed to the netherlands. The guardians of the portals challenged her, "Strip off thy garments, lay aside thy jewels, for nought may ye bring with you into this our land." So she laid down her garments and her jewels and was bound as are all who enter the realms of Death, the mighty one.

Such was her beauty that Death himself knelt and kissed her feet, saying: "Blessed be thy feet that have brought

thee in these ways. Abide with me, but let me place my cold hand on thy heart." And she replied: "I love thee not. Why dost thou cause all things that I love and take delight in to fade and die?" "Lady," replied Death, "'tis age and fate, against which I am helpless. Age causes all things to wither; but when men die at the end of time, I give them rest and peace and strength so that they may return. But you, you are lovely. Return not; abide with me." But she answered: "I love thee not." Then said Death: "As you receive not my hand on your heart, you must receive Death's scourge." "It is fate, better so," she said, and she knelt. Death scourged her and she cried: "I know the pangs of love." And Death said: "Blessed be," and gave her the fivefold kiss, saying: "Thus only may you attain to joy and knowledge."

And he taught her all the mysteries, and they loved and were one; and he taught her all the magics. For there are three great events in the life of (hu)man -- love, death and resurrection in the new body -- and magic controls them all. To fulfill love you must return again at the same time and place as the loved ones, and you must remember and love them again. But to be reborn you must die and be ready for a new body; to die you must be born; without love you may not be born, and this is all the magic."

This is a contemporary version of many other 'descent' related myths and legends, including the tale of Inanna's Descent to the Underworld, the Persephone and Demeter mythic cycle, Ishtar's descent, and there are also contained within it echoes of many other mythologies that center around 'dying and rising' agricultural gods.

The point of all of these stories is that death is an initiation, not an ending. All of these stories share the 'rebirth' mystery. Death leads back to life again through birth, which leads to sex, which is another initiatory experience, which leads birth, which leads to death. Degrees of initiation, with a lot of co-mingling within and between them like so:

When you are conceived, you immediately begin the march towards death. Instantly. You come into being, and boom. You are dying. Your entire life between your first and last day is death-flavoured. You may not think about it overly much, but much of how you respond to attachment, love, desire, pleasure, work, time, etc. is all related to the inevitable end of your life, and the lives of those you love. Furthermore, and food for thought (see what I did there?), your very existence depends on death. You eat life. All the life you eat must die in order to feed you (even if you're vegan!). You are *made of death*. And you are ultimately, made for death.

When you become sexually mature, you are both coming to life as a biological adult, and dying to your childhood. In order that you may fulfill your biological purpose (which is to create progeny) your child self must die in order to make room for the child you will bring to birth. When you become a parent, you have fulfilled your biological purpose, which is to guarantee that you will live 'forever' through your genetic material, which you have passed on to your child. Congratulations! You can die any time now! And your death will feed life, either literally (as maggot food, or compost for a new layer of soil and plant growth, as life giving nourishment for bacteria and other critters) or spiritually (as in, you must die in order to be reborn).

Unlike other species, we (mostly) do not die off shortly after we have allowed the next generation to come into being through us. We have these enormous brains that require years and years of development after birth, so we must stick around to take care of our progeny until they are ready to produce progeny of their own. Thankfully, this means that most of us get to have a lot more life after we've fulfilled our biological purpose, and this is why our lives are not merely centered around keeping the planet populated. We have all this *time* to live, to explore, to *become* in contexts that have nothing whatsoever to do with procreation. And it is also true that not all of us procreate at all, either by choice or by chance, but we can have deeply fulfilling and meaningful lives despite that.

These stories about birth, sex, love, descent, death, and rebirth can be applied to other acts of creation in addition to the literal 'human child producing' ones. When we talk about 'conception' and 'creation', we are not talking strictly about child bearing. We're talking about anything we bring into being through our own awesome creative powers.

Sex & Sin

In most Western spiritual modalities, especially 'New Testament' modalities, sex is a necessary evil. Unless it is used in very tightly controlled ways - between a male and female, and only for the purpose of procreation - it's 'sinful' and according to the new testament, 'the wages of sin is death'. In this modality, we are screwed. We must have sex to procreate, which is commanded by the deity in question (Be fruitful and multiply!), and we were given the biological wherewithal to really enjoy it, to desire it, and to want it even (and sometimes especially) outside of the context of procreation, but we'd better not!

Because our 'sin' is inevitable, (it is, in fact, built into our biology) there must be a perfect sacrifice made in order to redeem us and bring us back into the good graces of the deity who gave us the sinful urge to begin with. This perfect sacrifice comes in the form of a Man God who was conceived without sex (and is therefore untouched by sin), born of a woman who never had sex, and who went on to become an adult who apparently never had sex himself.

What?

In other words, our ideals, our icons, our moral standards are based on characters, (if we take them literally) that we can't possibly relate to because we are biologically wired to seek pleasure, including sexual pleasure. The denial of pleasure is seen as moral. The seeking of it is seen as immoral.

Adam And Eve

The origins of all of this 'sinful' nature begins in the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. They are created (Adam first, of course, of clay, and then Eve from his rib, and given everything they needed to survive. Eventually, though, Eve ruined the whole thing by first letting herself be 'seduced' by a snake, and then by 'seducing' Adam. The whole thing ends with them being banished from paradise, and cursed to experience pain, hardship, and death.

A literal reading of this story has led us to where we are with regards to the treatment of women, and the shaming of our entirely wonderful, beautiful, natural sexuality, the disenchantment of our lives, and our divorce from nature.

A mytho-poetic reading of this story in the context of our evolution as a species might go something like this:

We were children for a while, completely innocent, living from instinct born of millions of years of evolution. We had no real concept of 'right or wrong'. We just did our thing - eating whatever was around, sleeping, fucking, child bearing. We had no concept of death, or of the hereafter.

But our brains continued to develop as we evolved and we started to think about things more deeply. We lost our 'innocence'. We became aware of our own mortality. We created tools to make our lives easier, giving us more time for the thinking. We started wondering what happens when we die and 'stop being'. We began burying our dead with grave goods meant to take to the 'next world'. We erected gods in our own image. We developed agriculture which meant we didn't have to keep moving from spot to spot as we depleted the resources. We had less work. We had more leisure. We started telling stories. We started feeling a separation between our selves and nature (since we were now masters of it). We started marveling at and reaching for the stars.

Another mytho-poetic reading of this story in a more personal context might go something like this: We are born helpless, and utterly innocent. We have no concept of right or wrong. We are completely dependent on our 'god' who provides for our every need (if we are lucky). We remain dependent for many years, and as a result of this dependence we act in accordance with the will of our caregivers. As we grow and develop, we begin to rebel a little here and there, testing the waters, asserting our independence. We attain puberty. We begin making our own decisions. We become peers with our caretakers, and gods to our own progeny, creating for them a garden of Eden which they will eventually leave in search of work, life purpose, love, and for some of them, a new garden, and progeny of their own.

The way we treat sex (as a moral issue, as something we must tightly control) is echoed in the way we treat pleasure. Maybe you've noticed this, too, that we are supposed to feel naughty about our pleasure seeking. We have 'guilty pleasures'. We use terms like 'hedonist', or 'pleasure seeking' as insults, as moral judgments. We are suspicious of sexual women, and a little uncomfortable with displays of unashamed sexuality. We use terms like 'no pain, no gain'. We make work more important than play, and reverence more important than mirth. We make striving more virtuous than simply *being*. We must always be rising above our desires in order to be better people. We don't just let ourselves be human. We don't just let ourselves enjoy our lives. And if you're beyond this already, congratulations! You're ahead of the curve!

But pleasure is essential to our well-being. And seeking it is a biological imperative. Play is also essential to our well-being and doing things that aren't about end products, but merely about how it feels in the moment to be doing them is a big part of what gives life its zesty flavour. Those mindful moments of simple pleasures are what make life and its hardships worth living. There is enormous power in those moments to refill our depleted bodies and souls. We need them. We deserve them.

Sister of Bone, Or Sister of Clay?

There is also an ancient myth about Adam's first wife, whose name was Lilith. She was created of clay, and not made of her husband's bone. They were *equals*, created at the same time, given the same powers. The story goes that sex between them was super hot, but Adam got tired of being 'on the bottom'. He didn't like what that said about her power over him. Lilith balked at the idea of submitting to his will, and she cut him off. Adam complained to God that Lilith was a pain in the ass, and he wanted someone a little less up-pity, so God gave Adam someone he could more readily master - a woman created from his own bone. Lilith, meanwhile, was banished and demonized, and went on to become a succubus who ate babies for fun.

I love this story, and it makes me feel very uppity every time I read it. If you asked me if I were a sister of bone (descended from Eve) or a sister of clay (descended from Lilith), I would proudly tell you that I am a dirt girl, all the way. I recognize in this story a story about the decline of the Goddess and the rise of the patriarchy. I recognize in this story a personal theme, too, wherein when I have been banished, I have actually been *released*. I have actually become pretty bad ass in response. I recognize the gift of being 'too much' for some. I recognize that being driven from favour sometimes means time and solitude in which I may do my own work, seek my own pleasures, make my own choices, live my own life.

To me, being a sister of clay means that I am my own, no matter who I chose to align with. It means that I am in charge of my body. It means I am owned by no one, 'virgin' in the ancient sense of the word. It means that pleasure is my birthright and sex is a sacrament, not a sin. As a sister of clay, I get to choose what I bring to birth, *if* I bring to birth. As a sister of clay, I use my body any way I like, in my own service, and do not surrender it to anyone else's service unless I so desire. As a sister of clay, pleasure and pleasure seeking is virtuous and spiritual. As a sister of clay, my flesh is holy, and whatever I chose to do with it is sanctified by that awareness.

Living Like We're Dying

When we do not acknowledge our mortality, or sweep it under the rug to think about some other time, we can live with a kind of aim-lessness and a de-motivating sense of having all the time in the world. When we acknowledge that all life must eventually pass through the veil into death, we can become anxious & fearful, or we can become ever more intent upon getting as much out of our incarnation as humanly possible. I choose the latter.

While unbridled hedonism isn't out of the question as an appropriate response to death, (kicking death in the ass while singing) I prefer to be moderately hedonistic, balancing mirth and reverence, partaking in as much good work as good play. My goal as a witch is to enjoy all the pleasures life has to offer me without making it a 'moral' issue, or embracing self-deprivation as some kind of virtue. Life is for me, and I am for it from the day I am born until the day I die. Every day should hold something in it *for me* to enjoy.

Pleasure is my birthright. I am made with all sorts of pleasure receptors and hormones that flood me with a sense of pleasure. I have organs that are designed specifically for the creation of the sensation of pleasure in my body. My senses exist both to act as an early warning system and as a portal through which pleasure may come. All acts of pleasure are her rituals.

Including sex. Including feasting. Including the intense satisfaction derived from any act of creation, including the creation of art. Including the joy derived from love. Including the awe derived from a deeply intimate relationship with nature. Including the satiated feeling after feasting. Including the enjoyment of leisure and play. Including the ah ha moment, the eureka, or the lightening strike of inspiration. Including the happy feeling of accomplishment at the end of a productive day. Including all the indulgences, big and small, that we 'allow' ourselves to enjoy.

Creativity is Sexual

And here we finally get to the 'art witch' part of the equation. Creativity is spiritual, yes, and it is also sexual. The urge to create is sexual. The act of creation is sexual. There is a reason why, in the mixed media art world, we talk about things making us feel 'juicy', about wanting to 'lick' spreads that give us pleasure. I sometimes use the term 'artgasm' when I am creating something that feels really 'in the flow'. It gives me life to channel my creative energy in this way, like sex gives life. Sometimes when I'm working on something that is going especially well, I *literally* become aroused. I feel an opening up happening in the root chakra that buzzes throughout my entire body. This state of creative arousal is very powerful, and its one I've come to seek out, and trust.

The birth of a new thing from your effort as offering is sexual. Your works of art are your babies, brought forth into life from a marriage between your skill and your imagination. They are also marks upon the time line of your life that say "I was here". They are a way of leaving something behind, of documenting this one human life, and all that happened between the day of our birth and the day of our death. The act of creation is a celebration of our power to bring into

being before we must inevitably move on. It is also a way to tell our stories, and bequeath them to those who will come after us. nto being before we must inevitably move on. It is also a way to tell our stories, and bequeath them to those who will come after us. Our art is a part of our legacy. Our pieces of art are the bones upon which other art may come into being, even if we only share it with a very tiny, chosen few.

Literal Sex is Important, Too

But highly triggering for some of us, so I'm only touching down very lightly on it. If you have sexual conundrums due to trauma, it is the work of the witch to unravel them. It is the work of the witch to know her own body, to find her body's own way of channeling that most powerful of energies. It is a witch's work to learn to ask for what she wants and needs from her sexual encounters, to honour sex as the gateway to life and pleasure. Healthy sex, whether partnered or solo, and learning how to have it without shame, is a part of 'making all things sound'. Sex is how life arises. It is a sacrament. It is holy. And wherever you are on your journey, healthy sex is also your birthright. It doesn't matter how 'beautiful' you think you are, or what shape or size your body comes in. It doesn't matter if you conform to modern beauty standards. It doesn't matter if you are 'seen' as sexy or sensual by others. It doesn't matter if you 'aged' or even 'old'.

Sex is yours to explore, if you want to. Whatever you need to do to go get it - therapy for trauma, or unraveling your ideas about sex and sin, or grappling with how sexy you feel vs. how sexy you think you 'look' or 'seem', or seeing a doctor about the things that are holding you back (painful sex, for whatever reason, should be explored with a doctor), or having uncomfortable conversations with your partner(s) about what is lacking, or what you'd like more of - do that thing. Go get it. It belongs to you. It is your birthright.

That Being Said, Not Everyone *Is* Sexual In The Ways We Understand 'Sexual'.

Some of us are asexual, which means that sex just isn't a thing for us at all, for whatever reason. For Aces, pleasure comes in different forms, none of them sexual. And that's legit. Some of us are demi-sexual, which means there needs to be an emotional attachment before the sex organs engage at all! This eliminates casual sex from the equation, and it's not about shame or not wanting to be 'slutty'. It's about sex just *not working* without some kind of emotional connection in place *first*. (I'm a demi, by the way, so I speak from experience. I legitimately do not experience sexual arousal towards someone unless I have a preexisting emotional connection.) And I'm sure there are ways of being sexual (or not sexual) that I'm missing here. These ways do not mean that sexual energy isn't present. It just means it is expressed in different ways.

So if you're not sexual right now, for whatever reason, that is legitimate. That is also a way of being in the world. No shame! None! My challenge to you, though, is to discover where your sexual energy is present. Where do you experience that 'juiced up' feeling? What makes you swoon? What makes you feel fully and truly alive? in the flow? Your sexual energy will most likely be found hidden there.

You are made from life, and you are ultimately made *for* life.

Go Get It, Art Witch. All Of It. It's For You.

Exercise: Pleasure Seeking

Make a list of all the pleasures (guilty or otherwise) that you enjoy. Cross reference this list with the 'wants' list you compiled earlier this year. How many of your wants are about pleasure? How many are about 'personal development'? Create a new list that includes at least an equal number of pure pleasures in the mix.

Journal Prompts: How often do you seek pleasure? What is your relationship with pleasure?

Art Prompt: Paint and letter a pleasure list. Be outrageous if you can. Be saucy, too. Include sex if it feels right and good to you.

Exercise: Before I Go

Create a 'bucket list' of things you'd like to do before you die. Be really outrageous with this one. Nothing is off limits. If you were given a year to live, what would you want to do with that time? Cross reference this list with the new 'wants' list that you compiled in the exercise above. Make a note of which items are on both lists, and which aren't.

Tweak accordingly.

Art Prompt: Paint, collage, or 'vision board' your bucket list if you like.

Exercise: I Was Here

Write your own epitaph. What would you want said about you at your funeral? Cross reference this with any personal work you are presently doing, including the intentions you are setting each new moon, and the intention you began with at the beginning of this year. Are your intentions in alignment with how you want to be remembered?

Art Prompt: Create a spread that represents your ideal life as you wish it was. Include symbols for your desires. Do this in sacred space as a kind of 'wishing spread' (especially powerful to do on Beltaine), and as a way to plant seeds for future manifestation.

Art Witch Primer

This is a collection of lore, practices, books, quotes, dates, ideas, prompts, and correspondences that you may use as you see fit. Remember that while we have specific group practices on New Moon and Full Moon (to be discovered as we go), you are encouraged to do whatever you want on your own in the 'between times'. Suggested activities and art prompts are meant to be enjoyed 'buffet style'. Remember the power in picking at least one thing that really resonates, and another that makes you feel rebellious or resistant. Resistance and resonance are equally fertile. There is an 'art witch primer' worksheet below this document in your classroom meant to be engaged on your own. For best results, combine your own resonances with any of mine that feel 'right' for you.



The Names Of The Moon

Flower Moon, Merry Moon, Bright Moon, Planting Moon

Suggested Activity: As we did last moon, sit with these names and contemplate what they might mean for you. Compare and con-trast these names with what's happening in your environment. Use your powers of seeking (Google-Fu!) to research the names and lore associated with this month of the year. Note anything that resonates with you. Farmer's Almanac is a great place to start with regards to the names of the moon, and where these names come from. I tend to work with the day before, day of, and day after as being the 'peak of the moon'. Having this window of time instead of one day gives me some peace of mind that no matter what's going on, I can fit in some moon time. Journal Prompt: What name would you give a full moon in May? Why? What does May 'feel like' to you? What does it remind you of? What memories or traditions do you associate with this month? Which of these would you like to discard? Which would you like to keep? What spiritual significance do they or could they have?

Art Prompt: Create a spread or painting that incorporates the feelings or images that arise for you when you sit with any of the tradi-tional moon names. Alternatively, create something inspired by what you would name the full moon in May.

Tree Calendar

Check the listings for new moon and full moon (found in the INTRODUCTION or in your own moon phases app or planner) to see where they fall in the tree calendar this month and next month. Note that there will always be overlapping

signs in this calendar. Workings can include art journal spreads that explore the energies associated with these trees, finding these trees (if you can) in your neighborhood and sketching them, looking up what they look like in all their life phases, working with the symbols associated with these trees in your art journal or in meditation, searching for quotes about them, or poems or stories that include them, etc.

Willow

April 15 - May 12

Good for workings associated with healing and growth, intuition, and protection.

Journal prompt: What needs to be healed within you? What areas of your life are calling you to personal growth?

Art prompt: Create art that focuses on what needs to be healed within you. Alternatively, focus your imagery on 'growth'.

Hawthorn

May 13 - June 9

Good for workings associated with sex and fertility, masculine (go get it, active) energy, conception, and contact with faeries/the fey.

Journal prompt: How creative are you? Is your imagination fertile? What do you want to *go get* or do this month? What do you want to begin?

Art prompt: Create art that represents yourself as a 'go getter'. Use imagery and symbols for the things you want to 'go get' or 'begin'.

May Correspondences

Sourced from a variety of references, this list is a great jumping off point for your own explorations.

Colours: Green, brown, pink

Herbs/Plants: Dittany of Crete, elder, mint, rose, mugwort, thyme

Flowers: Rose, yarrow, lily of the valley, foxglove, magnolia

Scent: Rose, sandalwood

Stones: Emerald, malachite, amber, carnelian

Animals: cats, lynx, leopards, doves, swans, swallows

Nature spirits: Faeries, elves

Season: Spring (Hawthorne in the Southern Hemisphere)

Tree: Willow/Hawthorne

Element: Air

Workings: Sex, fertility, intuition, contact with the fey/faeries, ancestral connections.

Celebrations: Beltaine/May Day (Samhain in the Southern Hemisphere)

Symbols: May pole, wreaths, floral arrangements, seeds and soil, feathers/bird imagery, images of faeries, The Lovers tarot card, erotic imagery of any kind.

As usual, if a correspondence feels particularly resonant for you (example: the colour 'pink'), makes sure and research it as well so you can deepen your understanding and insight. Exploring correspondences ('things like') is a great way of seeding your subconscious so you have an ever ready well of inspiration to draw upon in your workings. As you read through this list, ask yourself how it might in-form or enhance your creative practice. What if you put a drop of sandalwood essential oil in your paint water? What if you researched the psychological or magical associations of the rose?.

As always, remember to gut check all of these associations, and add your own. May may come with a particular scent, sound, colour, or taste for you. Include those correspondences in your personal lists.

Other references may include lists of deities to work with. If you are compelled to work with specific deities, lore, or stories, do that, but please avoid 'plugging in' to deities you have no prior relationship with. It is polite to develop a connection with a particular arche-type or being before you ask them to assist you in your work or lend energy to your desired outcome.

This Month's Altar

Your flower moon altar can include feathers, spring flowers, seeds & soil (perhaps something you've planted as a wish), images of God and Goddess pairings (or LGBT friendly God and God pairings, or Goddess and Goddess pairings). A branch of willow or haw-thorn. New, green shoots, and sprouts, offerings for the fey/faeries (milk, honey), any seasonal foods, especially fruits, stones that are associated with the month/season. Boudoir shots of yourself if you have any (consider taking some if you don't!). A print out of your favourite erotic image, poem, or story. An image of a may pole (or create one in miniature). Statues of felines. Images of ancestors, especially those you'd like to be in contact with, or who you feel might want to come back through into incarnation (if you believe in reincarnation). Offerings to the ancestors for whom you feel a sense of gratitude. If you do any of the exercises for this month (sensual painting, body painting, etc) consider including prints of those experiments as well.

Sensual Painting

When you want to connect with pleasure in your creative practice, try sensual painting. This is very similar to intuitive painting, in that you don't necessarily begin with an end product in mind. Pour a glass of wine (or whatever works to loosen you up a bit). Use colours, textures, symbols, and techniques that feel really 'juicy' to you. Try something new. Think of the session as 'making love' with yourself. Light candles. Burn sexy incense (rose, patchouli). Put on something that feels really good on your skin. Create a playlist of music that throbs in your body. Paint yourself into a happy, frothy, sated after glow.

Body Painting

This can be done solo or with a partner. Using non-toxic paints, adorn yourself with colour and symbol. As you adorn yourself, consider the sensual pleasure of touch. Pay attention to what feels really good, and what feels not so good. What kind of touch lights you up? What kind makes you contract? I like to use Caran D'ache Neocolor II crayons, because they can be dipped in water, and used directly on the skin. Mendhi cones are also a good option, but be mindful that the ingredients do not include industrial dyes. The ingredients on your Mendhi paste should include henna, some kind of oil, and perhaps, scent, but nothing more.

You can also have someone trace your body on a large sheet of paper, and then paint that any way you like. The point of this is to honour the creative power inherent in your body. No matter what shape you are, how 'pretty' you think you are, how 'youthful' or 'aged' you are, you have the power of creation within you.

Sexy Selfies & Boudoir Photos

Alone (with your phone camera and a mirror, or a good camera with a timer), or with a partner, capture your sexy or sensual self. These photos need not ever be shared anywhere, so be as outrageous as you can be. Capture the parts of your body that you're really happy with, that feel good to you. Capture your hands as tools of pleasure. Capture your lips, your thighs, your cleavage. Dress up for this if you like. Think slutty - which is a word I've reclaimed, and use to mean 'sexy as fuck'. Think 'siren'. Think 'sultry'. Put on a smoky eye and some lipstick.

If you are working with a partner, make sure it is someone you are really comfortable with. This partner doesn't need to be a lover. Explain that you are trying to capture your sensuality, your sexuality, and ask them to be super gentle with you. Be super gentle with yourself when you look at the shots that you've collected. Remember that 'pretty' is not the rent you pay to exist. We are all sensual. We are all sexual, regardless of our body shape or size, regardless of how well we 'live up' to modern beauty standards. Delete any photographs that upset you. Keep only the ones that make you smile. Use filters, use black and white (which is very forgiving). Note that this is totally optional, but my inner sexy witch dares you to give it a try.

These photos are fantastic art journal fodder, so keep the ones you like as digital files that you can print and use whenever you like.

Activities and Ponderings for May

Investigate fertility spells, and adapt them so that you are inviting in creativity in whatever form you wish.

Ask yourself which of your art journaling techniques or mediums feel 'expansive' to you. Which juice you up, make you feel 'in the flow'? What textures, colours or shapes feel 'sensual' to you?

Ask yourself what colours or palettes make you think of the power of sex/sexual connection/arousal.

Paint what pleasure feels like in your body.

Use a sexy selfie or a boudoir/glamour shot in an art journal spread.

Create a sensual painting. Play with colour and texture. Finger paint. Paint to sexy music.

Create a 'pleasures' spread and list everything that feels like an indulgence to you.

Study Georgia O'Keefe's work. Study Frida Kahlo's work.

What is your relationship with your own sexual/sensual self? How can you foster more intimacy?

Moon bathe, even if only through an open window. Sit in silence and bask in moonlight, whatever phases the moon is in. See how it feels. Make notes. Art it out after if you feel so inspired.

May 1st is Beltaine (Samhain in the Southern Hemisphere). Do some research and ask yourself if this festival is one you'd like to include in your own spiritual practice.

What other holidays have observances in May? Do you feel a resonance with them? Which ones would you like to adopt?

May Recommended Reading

[Women Who Run With The Wolves](#) by Clarissa Pinkola Estes

[Ecstasy & The Craft](#) by Storm Faerywolf

[How To Cast Spells With Your Orgasms](#) - Web Resource

[Warrior Goddess Training](#) by Heatherash Amara

[Witches, Sluts, Feminists: Conjuring the Sex Positive](#) by Kristen J. Sollee

[OMGyes.com](#) - Web Resource on the science of women's pleasure.

Quotes And Wisdom Sayings

Where there is a witch,
There is a way.

-Unknown

A single twig breaks,
but a bundle of twigs is strong.

-Tecumseh

Wolves and women are relational by nature, inquiring, possessed of great endurance and strength. They are deeply intuitive, intensely concerned with their young, their mate and their pack.

-Clarissa Pinkola Estes

The Summer Day by Mary Oliver

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean—

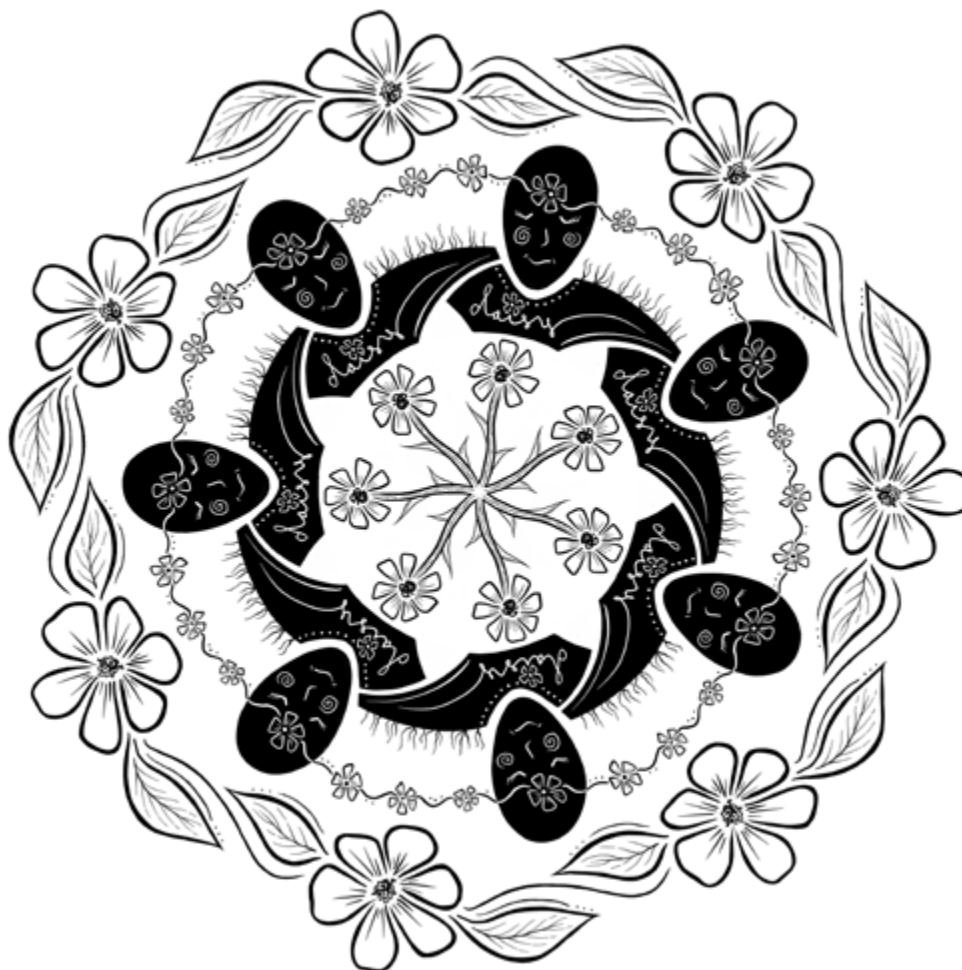
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes. Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face. Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields, which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

Mandalas By Tina Stanley

May 2024



[DOWNLOAD TO PRINT & COLOUR](#)

More About Tina:

Artist, photographer and creative tinkerer.
Finder of inner truths and seeker of things unknown.
Mom of 3, Nani of 7... and a full time student at 51 years young.

Guess what? I've only just begun... there is so much more out there that I want to sample.

Essential Oil Of The Month

With Kimi Bois



Vanilla is a resinoid, called an oleoresin and is extracted by solvent extraction, with further extractions occasionally produced called absolutes. The characteristics are rich, sweet, and balsamic. Vanilla tintured in alcohol is used as flavouring. There is a big difference between a vanilla flavouring in the kitchen, and the essential oil of vanilla. Vanilla flavouring is a tincture of the vanilla pod using alcohol. Essential oil of Vanilla is a common ingredient in perfumery, widely loved and used. I find it really gives a sense of warmth and comfort. It's considered a base note in perfumery, and helps to extend the life of the blend that its in. This said, we can use this to help enhance the good and soothing things that bring us comfort during trials and troubles.

Recipes

New Moon in Taurus: Tranquil

- 1 drop jasmine
- 2 drops vanilla
- 3 drops patchouli
- 1 drop cardamom

This blend is soothing and protective. A reminder to find our tranquil place amidst turmoil. Self care with flair.

A great blend for the bath or a roller bottle to apply to your pulse points.

Other oils you can use: fennel, thyme, benzoin, lavender, eucalyptus, rose, ylang ylang, oakmoss, magnolia, gardenia, honeysuckle

Never Ingest Essential Oils.

Full Moon in Sagittarius: Seeker

- 1 drop myrrh
- 1 drop frankincense
- 1 drop dragons blood (or mix patchouli and vanilla with some benzoin or labdanum)
- 3 drops cedar
- 2 drops vanilla
- (Optional – 1-3 drops orange as needed for extra optimism)

With this blend, play with the ratios depending on where you need the most comfort, myrrh and frankincense to slow things down, dragons blood and vanilla to warm things up and cedar for clearing blocks and negativity that could get in the way (this also adds a bit of "spice" to the blend.).

Sagittarius loves to search for things that feel safe, like a goal or a mission with optimism and hope. This blend encompasses soothing protection with adventurous power. I think I will be diffusing this blend all over the place. Or carry it in a roller bottle, choose the way that gets you breathing deeply each time.

Substitutions for dragons blood can include clove, vetiver, extra vanilla, benzoin, oakmoss.

Other oils you can use: anise, clove, sassafras, orange, pine, sage, vetiver, juniper, black pepper, geranium, tea tree

More about Kimi:

My name is Kimi Bois. I am a practicing aromatherapist. I studied at the West Coast Institute of Aromatherapy and have been researching and experimenting with essential oils, herbs and other ingredients for 20 years. I am a practicing pagan, making magic everywhere I go. I am fascinated by symbols, associations and magical connections and where scent can really help us focus on what our intentions are.

[Facebook](#)

Herb Of The Month

with Airmid Wylde

Unfortunately, Airmid is not able to join us with her musings for this month, but we do have a botanical for you to research and colour!

Woodruff

We decided on woodruff for May because it is common practice among contemporary pagans to make and serve May Wine, which is made with woodruff and strawberries for Beltaine!

My suggestion to you for our herb of the month is to do your own research as you would with any other aspect of witchery, and see what you come up with!

Check Out These Writings On May Wine.

[May Wine Recipe: It's Easier than you think!](#)
[Magickal May Wine for Beltane May Wine](#)



[Download, Print & Colour](#)

Botanical is © AIRMID WYLDE

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May Tea

Sunshine Solar Plexus Tea

3p Nettle
2p Burdock root
2p Calendula
1p Lemon Peel
1p Rose hips

This sun-shiny tea is a burst of warmth for your core -both physical-ly and spiritually. Nettle and burdock root are both nourishing to the body and the solar plexus, with calendula, lemon and rose hips giving a burst of personal power and energy.

More About Airmid

Airmid is part hippie, part geek, part rocker chick with some serious Dolly Parton sass. She blends self-love + herblism + art + spiritual musings with kickass empowerment + a hell-yeah attitude. She has a fierce passion for helping womxn discover their unique beauty + strength + truth...especially through plants and creativity. Find her on [Instagram](#), and in her Facebook Group, [Wildness Unleashed](#).



[Download, Print & Colour!](#)

Stone Of The Month

with Rachael Caringella

Vanadinite

Encourages us to express ourselves. It boosts creativity and allows energy begin flowing. Helps balance and restore sexual energy and vitality. Grounds the physical body and sparks your curiosity. This stone revitalizes and awakens you by activating the sacral chakra and the solar plexus. Helps give you more energy to get things done. Vanadinite is like having an extra battery pack with you

More About Rachael

Rachael is a multi media artist, creatrix and mystic explorer. Currently located in the magical valley of Taos, she spends her days in her plant covered art studio painting portals to new dimensions, opening gate- ways to hidden realms and crafting mystic creatures from the ethers. Having been a tarot reader for 10 years and an artist for as long as she can remember, it is her goal to bridge the gap between the mystic and the mundane.

[website](#) | [facebook](#) | [instagram](#)



05

MAY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Beltaine (NH) Samhain (SH)	2	3	4 Live Activation 1 p.m. EDT
5	6	7 New Moon In Taurus Paint & Sip	8	9	10	11 Waxing Moon In Moonchild
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Full Moon In Sag Paint & Sip	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

TO DO

NOTE

WEEKLY PLAN

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

NOTES

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN
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TODAY'S FOCUS

- TOP PRIORITIES
-
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

- SELF-CARE
-
- _____
 - _____
 - _____

- TO-DO LIST
-
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

NOTES, IDEAS & INSPIRATION

MONTHLY RESEARCH WORKSHEET

for the month of _____

THE NAMES OF THE FULL MOON

Full Moon is on: _____ in the tree sign of _____
in the zodiac sign of _____.

Good for workings related to: _____

New Moon in on: _____ in the tree sign of _____
_____ in the zodiac sign of _____.

Good for workings related to: _____

Other Dates Of Significance (eclipses, blue moons, celebrations, holy days, etc.): _____

Intentions, goals, wishes, and dreams: _____

Oracle Cards for this month: _____

TREE CALENDAR

Check the listings for new moon and full moon (found in the INTRODUCTION or in your own moon phases app or planner) to see where they fall in the tree calendar this month and next month. Note that there will always be overlapping signs in each month.

Tree Name: _____ Active from: _____ to: _____

Good for workings related to: _____

Tree Name: _____ Active from: _____ to: _____

Good for workings related to: _____

MONTHLY CORRESPONDENCES

Colors: _____
Herbs/Plants: _____
Flowers: _____
Scents: _____
Stones: _____
Animals: _____
Nature spirits: _____
Season(s): _____
Element(s): _____
Celebrations: _____
Symbols: _____
Birthdays/Anniversaries: _____

Personal Associations: _____

New Moon: _____

Results: _____

Paste an image of your working here.
(journal spread, altar layout, oracle reading, etc.)

WISDOM SAYINGS

NOTES



ABOUT EFFY WILD

Hello, and welcome to my corner of this portal of light we call the Internet. My name is Effy 'Bird' Wild, (she/her, INFJ, Libra with Libra rising and a Cap moon, soul number 9, in case you were curious) and I am an artist, writer, and teacher who plays around in the realms of mixed media art, book binding, art journaling, and creativity as a spiritual portal. I believe I was put on this earth to hold space for the part of you that yearns to be creative, and through creativity, come into alignment with what best serves your soul. Find me at effywild.com for art classes, musings and more.



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