

DEAR ANAM CARA APPRENTICES,

Welcome to Month Six of the Living Celtic Myth track. We are now between Imbolc and the spring equinox, this six week season of early growth when we might begin to look at what seeds we've planted in our own lives, and where the first signs of change or new growth might be making themselves known.

This month we are looking at the archetype of the Destroyer, and at how the Creator and the Destroyer may be two aspects of the same energy or archetype. Through the figure of Macha, the mother whose babies die through the pride and disregard of powerful men, we can examine our own relationship to abundance and responsibility – how well do we honour our blessings and how do we respect and take care of the world around us?

We will be learning about dream tending, engaging with our dream figures in a new way and asking 'who is visiting here?' We will also be looking at some practices to help us engage with climate grief and anxiety.

Month 6: Macha's Curse

Reading Assignments

Awakening the Heroes Within: Chs 11 & 13 The Destroyer and The Creator

The Salmon in the Spring: Ch 3 The Fomorian Eye; Ch 4 Tuatha De Danann Vision; Ch 5 Imbolc pp 109-111

Dream Tending: pp24-47 (pdf)

Active Hope: pp1-42 (pdf)

Dream Assignment

This month we will be looking at dream tending, meeting our dreams in a spirit of attending to them, rather than interpreting them. This approach is based on the work of Professor Stephen Aizenstat. Our practice will be that of asking 'who is visiting now?' and 'what is happening here?' – attempting to meet the dream on its own terms.

Nature Assignment

This month's assignment asks us to look at our feelings around the climate emergency. Please engage in the seven question reflective exercise as provided on pp41-42 of the Active Hope pdf, based on the work of Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone.

Our inner practice will be the reciprocal breath practice taught by Michael Kearney in his book *Becoming Forest*. When you are out in nature, find a plant or tree to connect with. Realise that as you inhale oxygen, the tree is exhaling oxygen. As you exhale carbon dioxide,

the tree is inhaling carbon dioxide. The tree is supporting you and you are supporting the tree. Spend some time breathing with the tree and becoming aware of this reciprocal connection and support.

Dyad Assignment

Please arrange a one-hour Zoom meeting with your Anam Cara partner during the month. Share your experience of the webinar, and the month's assignments. How does this month's story impact you? Please note any insights or questions that arise that you might wish to include in your paper. You may also wish to engage in the reflective process around active hope together during your meeting – this exercise works well with a partner.

Journal

We suggest that you journal throughout the month on your reading and experience of this work – noting questions and difficulties as well as insights. You might also wish to reflect on the dyad meeting for the month as part of your journaling.

Reflection paper

Your reflection paper should offer some insight into how you are engaging with the practices and material for the month, as well as your sense of your larger personal journey through the year. It doesn't have to be long (1-2 pages) but should include at least one insight from the month and one question that arose for you based on the readings and/or practices. If you are journaling throughout the month, this will help you in writing your papers.

This month and in the months ahead, we'd love to hear how your final project is progressing and please feel free to contact us if you need any help or guidance.

Optional resources

Books:

Stephen Aizenstat: *Dream Tending* (Spring Journal Books, 2011)

Bonita Eloise Ford: *Embers of Hope* (LivinghEARTH.net, 2020)

Michael Kearney: *Becoming Forest* (All Night Books, 2023)

Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone: *Active Hope* (New World Library, 2012)

Articles:

Global Dream Initiative: About Dream Tending

<https://www.globaldreaminitiative.com/about-dreamtending/#>

Deb Powers: "9 Important Terms to Understand the Meaning of Dreams"

<https://dreamtending.com/blog/most-important-terms-meaning-of-dreams/>

Ariel Hudnall: On Jungian Archetypes – The Creator

<https://arielhudnall.com/2015/06/28/archetypes-creator/>

Psychology Today: Searching for Hope on the Dark side: The Destroyer

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-novel-perspective/202005/searching-hope-the-dark-side>

Audio:

Candlelit Tales Podcast Episode 4: The Curse of Macha

<https://soundcloud.com/candlelittales/episode-4-the-curse-of-macha>

Insights at the Edge Podcast: Dreamtending. Interview between Tami Simon and Stephen

Aizenstadt <https://www.resources.soundstrue.com/podcast/dream-tending/>

Videos:

Interview between Bonnie Bright and Steve Aizenstat from the Earth, Climate, Dreams Symposium, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrdy6Wyz5W0>

David Blum: Interview with the Wise Old Dog

Online resource:

Chris Johnstone and Joanna Macy offer free online training on "how to strengthen your ability to make a difference in the world" with particular reference to the climate crisis:

www.activehope.training