

The Celtic Owl

Winter 2007

A Newsletter of Celtic Faeries and Celtic Christian Spirituality

David and Carol Swing have been in daily contact with members of the Celtic Faerie tribes for many years. Among the Faerie Folke, they are known as Merlin and Ealilthea (Lili). Their first book, *Gnomes in the Garden: Celtic Faerie Teachings*, contains teachings and stories told to them over the years by the Faerie. *The Celtic Owl*, a quarterly newsletter, offers readers many additional new articles on Celtic and Faerie topics. Some of these articles come directly from the Faerie Folke, written down by Merlin just as they are told to him. The newsletter also features artwork by Lili. Her portrait of Charlie, a Green Cap Gnome, can be found in this issue.

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Imbolc—The Holiday and Its Meaning for Us Today

David {Merlin} Swing

Imbolc, celebrated this year on February 2nd, is a day of celebration to honor the birth and rebirth of life. Our tribal ancestors, dependent on the renewing life cycle of Nature, gratefully watched the birth of lambs and the flow of milk from ewes. The birth of the lambs and the flow of milk from their mothers meant life for the tribe. Those members of the tribe who had suffered greatly in illness during the

harsh cold days of winter now had a chance to survive, thanks to the natural immune properties of the ewe's milk, which saved many of the sick and enabled them to live another year. The word Imbolc also means ewe's milk, which is the very essence of life between a mother and her newborn lamb. Therefore, Imbolc is a day to honor both the new life of the newborn and the newly born life of those saved from illness and death. Imbolc is a time to pay honor to the hope found in the renewing life cycle of Nature.

What meaning does Imbolc have for us modern folk today? We have no fear of the cold, dark days of winter. Most of us have a nice warm house and a ready source of food in our refrigerators. If we get sick, there are plenty of doctors who will hand out miracle drugs to cure us and hospitals that can bring us back from the brink of death. We do not even need the other members of the tribe to comfort us or a tribal storyteller to keep us entertained during the dark winter days and nights. Instead, television is now our tribe, and, through that twisted storyteller, we are kept entertained no matter how harsh the weather conditions are outside. We are truly blessed to live in this modern age—blessed and cursed as well, for these modern conditions have separated us



from the natural cycle of life and have, in many ways, made our long lives shallow and without root in Nature.



Perhaps on this day, for a brief time, you can turn off the television. Turn your back on the comforting fullness of your refrigerator, leave the warm coziness of your home, and go outside. Out under the cold gray skies, outside into the cold day you will travel, in order to pay

tribute to the ancient sacred day of Imbolc, to honor birth and rebirth, better known as a new life for us older folks. Outside you will go to honor the birthing of innocent lambs and the flow of milk, which is the essence of life between the mother and her child. Perhaps long ago it was one of your ancestors whose life was saved on this day by ewe's milk. Perhaps that very ancestor, down through the generations, was directly responsible for your birth, and if she, or he, had died that day, you would never have been born.

So, to honor their life and your life and the very gift of life, step out into the cold. You might consider taking a small saucer of cream with you and a small loaf of bread. In the cold outdoors, as your breath lifts up before your face in small white clouds, say your prayer of thanks.

You might consider thanking God, the Creator of all Creation, for the renewing cycle of Nature. Thank your Mother Earth for giving you a place to rest your feet, to build your shelter. Thank her for feeding you and for providing the material for the bone, blood, and flesh of your ancestral grandmothers and grandfathers, your mother and father, and you and the other members of your family. Think of, and thank, your animal cousins, tree cousins, and the other green cousins of the soil, your rock cousins, water cousins, and sky cousins, which include the sun, moon, and stars. Think of, and thank, all of your cousins of Creation for their lives and for the quality of life they bring to you.

When you are done with your prayer of thanks, hold your small saucer of milk above your head and give thanks for your life, for in thanks for your life, you give back the gift of life to your cousins of Creation. Place your saucer of milk on the ground. Hold the bread above your head, and state that, for the gift of life through the harvest of Mother Earth, you give the gift of the harvest back to your cousins of Creation. Then take the bread, and break it into very small pieces for your cousins. When you are finished, you will perhaps take a moment to think on what you have done. Wait in silence to see if Mother Earth, or any of your Cousins, have a small message to give to you. Perhaps their message will be a simple silent thank you, or a loud bark, chirp, or squawk to leave the area, so they can partake of your feast. Do not be offended at their table manners. Your small gift will be noticed by God, appreciated by your Mother Earth, and enjoyed by your cousins.

Ostara, Spring Equinox, and Easter

David {Merlin} Swing

It is at the time of Ostara that our beloved Mother Earth gives birth to the bright buds of Spring. Her little seed children, who have lain slumbering in her rich soil, have now awakened and poked their small buds up from the dark earth into the sunlight above. Grandmother Winter pauses to gaze fondly at her new grandchildren and then silently withdraws her mantle of snow and ice until next the year.

Ostara, or the Spring Equinox (celebrated this year on March 20th), is the sacred time during which the day and night share equal duration upon our Mother Earth. Then the day slowly overcomes the night, and the days grow longer and warmer. The light overcomes the darkness. Life wins over death.

Easter, too, is a celebration of life over the power of death. Following Jesus' crucifixion, his body was laid in a dark tomb within the womb of Mother Earth. Three days later, in the early morning, there was a blinding flash of light, which knocked the Roman soldiers who were guarding the tomb to the ground. An

angel appeared before them, and the Roman guards scattered in fear. Later that morning, Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene; and Martha spoke to Jesus face to face. With great joy, they went to tell the other disciples that Jesus, the Lord of Life, had overcome and conquered death.

In nature, we see the birth of children, of animals, and the buds of green things. We see them go through the fullness of life in the Spring and Summer; the slow, glorious, golden fading away in Fall; and the passing away in Winter. Yet all of us are reborn in the Spring.

God made Creation ever to renew itself. Life always overcomes death in the end. Jesus showed that he is the ultimate Green Man, the Lord of Life, for in Springtime he overcame death and rose again in life. Nature loves to follow God's ways.

Imbolc and Spring Equinox are holy days to celebrate life through birth and rebirth. When possible, it is helpful to have a good midwife attend a birth or a rebirth. A good choice would be the Goddess Brighid, who later became Saint Brighid of the early Celtic Christian Church. Celtic legend has it that Brighid was the midwife to Mother Mary at the birth of Jesus. Brighid is also known as the foster mother of Jesus. Brighid is the guardian of the eternal flame, from which the inspiration of poetry, wisdom, and blacksmithing are born. Brighid is also the guardian of the well of wisdom and healing. Here, too, is found the Salmon of wisdom, who has grown very wise from munching on magical hazel nuts. Brighid is the pure reflection of the Mother Creator, with her wisdom, compassion, and love for all Creation. Brighid is always available to assist in the healing and rebirthing of shattered Souls and shattered lives.



There is an ancient story of Saint Brighid, which shows her compassion for shattered lives. Saint Brighid was at the time visiting a powerful Celtic King. During his welcome to the beloved saint, a slave dropped the king's favorite drinking cup, shattering it on the floor of the king's hall. Enraged, the king commanded that the man be beheaded before

him and the saint in retribution for his clumsiness. The slave was terrified and fell to his knees in dread. Saint Brighid begged the king to spare the slave's life, but the king was determined to kill the poor man at that instant. Brighid humbly asked that the pieces of the cup be brought to her. She wagered with the king that if she could fix the cup, the king would spare the slave's life, and he would be set free into Brighid's keeping. The king, being a typical Celt who could not pass up a sure bet, accepted the wager. Brighid took the cup's broken fragments into her lap. Speaking a prayer, she wove them back into a solid cup. The king, awed by Brighid's power, immediately repented of his rage before her and ordered the slave's life to be spared and made him a free man. The former slave followed Saint Brighid back to her home and became one of her many loving and devoted disciples. We will revisit Brighid later in this newsletter to help us in our rebirth and the healing of our shattered Souls.

Connecting to Our Soul Garden

David {Merlin} Swing

Within the center of our Soul grows a beautiful garden, planted there by God at the beginning of time. Due to the individuality of our Souls, each of our gardens is different. In my garden grow massive ancient trees, a primordial forest church of root, trunk, bark, limb, and leaf. Massive tree trunks are the columns of my ancient church. The giant limbs and leaves form a stained glass ceiling of shimmering green sunlight.

To find your garden, you first must find God. Where does one find God? You will find God within you and within your loved ones, be they human or animals. God dwells within your neighbor and within the people of distant lands. God is found within your most trusted allies and within your most hated enemies. Seek out God in nature, for God dwells within wild animals of paw and hoof, fur and feather, skin and scale. God's spirit lives within the trees and flows with the wind through the tall

grasses. The beauty of God is within the flowers and also within unloved weeds. God's peace is found in the high mountains, the low hills, and the shadowed valleys. The stillness of God is within the stones and slumbering seeds within the rich soil of Mother Earth. God rests in the still ponds and swims in the fish-filled lakes. God flows gently as a leaf along the streams, shoots the rapids in the fast moving rivers, and rides the roaring ocean wave. Within each raindrop that falls from the dark cloud dwells God. God lives in the bright flash of lighting and speaks in words of thunder. God comforts us in the pale light of Lilith Moon and with the soft twinkle of the stars. God is found in the blinding light of the sun, and by its fire, God warms Mother Earth and her children.

God is never separate from Creation. Rather, God is interwoven in every strand and every fiber of Creation. Without God's presence, we would all unravel into nothingness. God lives within our hearts and in between our heartbeats. With each breath we take and each breath we release, there is found God.

Jesus expressed all of this when he, in the first commandment advised us, "to love God with all your heart, and all your Soul, and with your mind, and with all your strength." In the second commandment, he further advised us, "to love your neighbor as yourself."

In order to find our sacred Soul's garden, we must first love God in the manner of Jesus' words. In love, we learn to better understand God and to find God hidden, and yet not hidden, throughout Creation. This is not about a religious doctrine or a religion itself. God is far greater than all of human understanding. What is your religion? Are you Christian or Pagan, Moslem or Jewish, a Native American on the Red Road, or a Hindu? We could name religion after religion, but doctrine and religion are merely tools to help us better understand God. Yet doctrine and religion are not God alone. For some of us, God is our Father. For others, God is our Mother, and for yet others, as Jesus, God is our brother. Perhaps you yourself have some other understanding of God. Our relationship to God is our own personal road to God, just as our family and friends are on their own personal journey with God, as is the rest of Creation on

its on personal journal with God. Worry about your own journey, and let family and friends worry about theirs.

If we seek God in tiny, trusting baby steps, God will run to embrace us. It is through the loving embrace of God that we find our Soul's sacred garden, which God originally planted in each of us upon the birth of our Souls. In our own little unique Soul Gardens, we learn that our gardens interconnect with the other many gardens of Creation. After a time, we learn that our own little Soul Garden is really part of the one large garden of God.



When we were born, God planted good seeds of destiny in each of our gardens. The lucky Souls know to tend their gardens, and, in nurturing love, allow the seeds to sprout and grow. When we do this we find our true purpose in life, and we are happy. If we do not tend

to these seeds of the Soul, our garden withers and, after a time, becomes the wasteland of our outer lives.

In our lives, we are born as innocents. The gifts we bring to our new parents are the gift of wonder, the gift of the promise of a wonderful life to come, and the gift of unconditional loving trust of those around us. All we ask in return from our new family are those same gifts freely given back to us.

Sadly, some parents no longer have these small gifts stored in the treasury of their Souls. At some point in their lives, someone they loved and trusted stole these small treasures from them. All they have left to give to their children are the offspring of the bad seeds that were first given to them. In our early childhood, these bad seeds are planted in our own Soul Garden, first by our parents, and then, as we grow, by others we come in contact with, until finally, we ourselves become the collectors and farmers of these bad seeds. It is these bad seeds that we plant and tend that later become a harvest of mortification for us. These are the seeds of lies told about us, the hurtful false myths about us given to us by others, the chain of broken promises given to us, and the deep painful

sadness of the loss of trust, which results in our isolation from God and the rest of Creation. It is these thorny tares in our garden that we use to whip ourselves in shame or use to whip others to feel shame with us. It is then that our inner Soul Garden becomes a terrible place to visit, a dark, best-forgotten place of pain. This forgetfulness does not heal our Spirits, but only increases the darkness of the wasteland of our outer lives.

How do we save ourselves and our world from the wasteland it has become? Where do we find God's Holy Grail of light and renewal that will chase away the darkness within us and revive our Soul's inner garden? Perhaps the first step would be a time for a rebirth in our lives. How can we be reborn to regain a sense of our lost innocence? Well, perhaps we can turn to God for help. Surely if God created the blazing sun to warm us, the stars to guide us, the moon to comfort us, Mother Earth to birth us and feed us, the trees to shelter us, the stones to protect us, and the animals to be companions to us, then surely God can pull off a little miracle of rebirth in us? It does not matter how old we are or what our experiences have been in the past. In God, we can become little children again.

Let me stress once more that this is not about what religion you are, what church doctrine you follow, or how you view God. This is about your rebirth and return to the garden of God, the garden of your Soul. This is about tending your God-given seeds of destiny, of happiness, of fulfillment, and being a blessing to Creation instead of a curse. It is about having a personal relationship with God, which will lead to healing your Soul Garden and turning it from a withered wasteland to a lush, green, healing environment.

We could all become like Green Men and Green Women, with leaves woven through our hair. Our inner gardens would become so alive that the light of God would spill out of us, like sunlight passing through green leaves or a shaft of soft light touching the forest floor through the trees. The thriving green garden within us could then spill out from us and connect to other Soul Gardens. Finally, even our hard concrete and steel industrial world would

return back to the original Garden of God. If you are interested in this possibility, please read the next article on rebirth among the birch trees.

Journey to Rebirth Among the Birch Trees

David {Merlin} Swing

To be able to begin this journey, you must first use the key of imagination. In these modern times, we pay little honor to the key called imagination. If we encounter an amazing, unexplainable experience in our lives,



and there is a hint of imagination involved, then we discount the entire experience, no matter how beneficial and life-changing the event could have been to our lives. Imagination is a key to the spirit world. It is a key to

the doorway used by the shaman side of our mind, which helps us to access the hidden, the unknown, the vital spiritual experience so needed by us in this modern industrial age. Imagination is the means we use to communicate and listen to God.

Before we begin, please close your eyes. Say your own individual prayer to God that you will succeed in your quest in returning to your own personal Soul Garden. Pray from your heart. It can be a simple or a complex prayer. Tell God what you would really like to gain from this journey. Pray whatever you wish, as long it is from your heart. Do not worry if you do not have any words to say. Your Spirit knows what is needed, and God knows what you truly need, even if you have no words to express it.

When you finish your prayer, with your eyes closed, take three deep breaths of Awen, also known as the breath of inspiration. With the first breath, you feel your mind and body completely relax as it brushes against the soft curtain of the dream world. With your second breath, you feel your body engulfed in the world of dreams. With your third breath, you find

yourself standing before a stone wall that surrounds your Soul Garden. Within this wall is a round, wooden doorway. The doorway may be simple in design or quite complex. For your first journey you may wish to keep it simple, so you do not get stuck at the gate of your Soul Garden. Place the flat of your hand against the wood of the door, and push. Do not be worried. The door will always open for you. Enter through the gate and close it behind you.

Welcome to your garden. Is your garden lush with colors, filled with flowers and trees? Is your garden healthy or in need of watering and tending? Again, do not be worried at the condition of your garden. You are here now, and everything will be all right. Take the time to walk around your garden. Notice the flowers, the trees, and the green grass. Perhaps you have a pond in your garden; perhaps not, but whatever you decide is fine. This garden is your own special, sacred place, where you will always find rest, inner peace, and answers to all of your questions. Here is one of many places where you can commune directly with God.



When you are done exploring your garden, realize that it is much vaster than you expected. When you are ready, notice a pathway leading into a grove of trees from the entry area of your garden. Note the types of trees you pass as you walk along the pathway. See the ancient trunks rise high above you on both sides

of the pathway. See the beauty of the sunlight or moonlight filtering down among the trees as shafts of comforting, soft light. Let the trees protect and shelter you as you walk down the pathway. Hear the gentle wind as it sighs through the softly swaying, creaking branches. Listen to the music of the leaves as they rustle in time to the breeze. Notice how the sound can also seem like peaceful, ocean waves, approaching and receding from the shore. Be

sure to listen to the songbirds that sit in the trees, watching you as you pass below them.

At some point, and when you are ready, notice that the trees on both sides of the pathway are now beautiful, delicate, silvery white birch trees. The smooth bark is shimmering like the feathers of a white dove or the glimmering softness of moonlight. Take time to watch the branches and leaves dance in the gentle breeze. After a time, you come to a circular clearing among the birch trees. Before you, in the center of the clearing, you see a stone structure, about waist high. Approach this structure, and, as you come upon it, you will see that it is an uncovered well.

Look down into the water. See that the water is clean and clear in appearance. You hear the soft tread of someone approaching the well. Looking up, you see a beautiful young woman with golden red hair. Her complexion is fair, with a light dusting of freckles on her nose. Her green eyes express joy and compassion upon seeing you at the well. Looking into her eyes, you notice that they have an appealing upward tilt. The sunlight or moonlight softly highlights her red golden hair. You also notice that her slender ears have a point to them at the ends.

May I introduce to you Brighid, Goddess and Christian Saint, Guardian of the holy well of living water. She was midwife to our Mother Mary, foster mother to Jesus, and, by the grace of God and if you so choose, she can be a Faery goddess midwife to your own rebirth. Her voice, ever musical, will communicate to you what you need to know. What she says to you is between the two of you. Listen carefully to her compassionate, loving words. When she is ready, Brighid will take a cup and dip it into the well, filling the cup with living water to its brim. She will then offer the cup to you. This is your cup. It appears as you envision it. You will be taking this cup with you when you leave the well. It will always be available to you when you need it. Thank Brighid for the drink and for the cup. With reverence, drink from the cup, and do not worry about drinking too much. The cup will always refill itself, and you can always find your way back to this well when you need to.

As the clear, cold, sweet water flows down your throat, feel its life flow through you, healing your Spirit, your body, and your mind. Feel the sweetness of the water within you. Feel your Soul Garden become lush and green, filled with delightful colors and scents. Remember to thank Brighid for this miracle. I suggest, but it is up to you, that, with Brighid, you say a prayer of thanks to God, the loving Creator of your Soul Garden, of Brighid, and of you. Let Brighid guide you in this matter.

When you are ready, bid goodbye to Brighid for now, but remember you can see her whenever you need to. Take with you your new cup, which is ever full of living water. Return to your outer garden by the gate, and water the flowers, the trees, or whatever you wish to water. Understand that if you water one small part of the garden, through enchantment, all of your garden is watered. This is one way that you tend your garden and bond with your garden.

Please consider visiting often this sacred place within you. It is here you can meet wonderful, amazing beings who can help you. You can learn to talk to Nature, like the trees, for example, and hear their reply back to you. You can learn the language of animals. You can meet the Faerie Folk. Understand, nothing bad can enter your garden. There is no one here who will ever hurt you or say bad things to you. You are always safe in your garden. If you encounter someone or something that does not belong here, remember it is YOUR garden. Send the intruder packing, and they will be gone!



There is one more part to this journey. In your garden, you will easily find an area that has been tilled and is waiting for planting. Next to this tilled patch, you will find a bag of magical seeds. These are the seeds that God gave to you at the birth of your Soul. This is what God wants for your life, and, even though you may not understand it right now, God's will in your life is what you really want, also. These are the seeds to a joyful, interesting, fulfilled, and blessed life, that blesses not only you, but all of Creation. Empty

the seeds from the pouch into your hand; move the seeds about your hand; and ponder on what these seeds, these gifts, these talents, these seeds of destiny may be. Gratefully thank God for the ones you know of, and ask to be shown what the unknown seed talents are. When you are ready, plant the seeds in the freshly tilled soil, and ask God to help these seeds to grow and prosper, that someday you will have a wonderful harvest in your life. Water the magical seeds with your cup. Keep praying, talking to God. A prayer is really just a conversation, so just speak from your heart. Watch the green sprouts come up from the soil.

Keep an eye on the seeds as you return to your Soul Garden. These small seeds may turn into a field of flowers, and, within the flowers, you will see your gifts, your talents, your destiny set before you within the center of the bloom. Perhaps the seeds will grow into beautiful trees, where, in the hollow of a tree, you will see your life's purpose. I once saw a bit of my destiny by peeking through a window of a hollow tree. There was also a door in which I could enter my tree. Remember, it is your garden, so let your own garden direct your vision.

I hope that you visit your garden often, and, in visiting, your Soul Garden thrives. Like the Green Men of old, may your garden flow out from you to connect with all of us and all of Creation, so that our gardens join together in the green healing of all Creation.

Finding Fellowship with the Faire Folke Around You

David {Merlin} Swing

Within the heart of Nature's beauty always dwell Faire Folke. The Shining Folk can be found in the depth of the unspoiled forest and within our own backyards. A healthier, natural environment results in more abundant and happier Faire Folke. Keeping this thought in mind, it would be best not to use any type of pesticides or unnatural garden products in your yard. To do so is not very welcoming to the Faeries. It is also not healthy for the wildlife

that visit your yard and will, in the end, actually poison your land. This is obviously very bad for you and your family, which many times include children and pets. The Faeries have told me that they see the use of pesticides as an act of hostility by humans against Mother Earth.

Much smaller groups of very brave Faeries roam the large metropolitan areas of our world, watching over and tending whatever small plot and bit of greenness they find struggling to survive within city boundaries of concrete and steel.



Whenever you see a bit of grass or a flower struggling to grow and thrive through a crack in a sidewalk, know that this small child of nature has a Faery companion lovingly whispering to it to hang in there, to try to survive against all odds. If the grass or the flower cannot survive due to lack of water, or being constantly ignored and stepped on by mobs of humans, then their Faery friend gently sings them out of their dying body and home to the Spirit Lands. There, in the beautiful lands of the Mother and Father Creator, the grass or flower can grow and thrive in love and beauty.

The more parks and green spaces there are in a city, the more that city is blessed by the presence of Faire Folke. The near, communing presence of the Faeries strengthens the spirit of the grass, flowers, and trees, so that they can grow and thrive, becoming lush and abundant.

Animals and Faeries also have a close bond. Together, animals and Faeries socialize and live in harmony. Due to the immortal life span of a Faery, many generations of animal families have had the same family Faery companion, generation after generation. Birds, squirrels, and the many other animal families in Nature have wonderful tales to tell of their Faery companions, tales that are passed along from generation to generation. Each new generation adds their own new stories of their Faery companion encounters. Like plants, animals can count on having their Faery companions singing a gentle song to release them from their dying, sometimes broken, bodies and helping to guide them safely home to the Faerie Lands.

There have been instances when human families have had encounters with the same Faery for generation after generation. In many cases, the Faery may be a banshee, crying out to warn of the impending death of a specific family member. There have also been other happier encounters with the Faire Folke that resulted in a marriage, children, and a blessed family line. Some royal families actually claim a Faery in their lineage.

I have just been told by a Sprite to inform the reader that, in reality, all humans have Faery lineage in their blood. The royal folk are just more vocal about it.

What does the limited Faerie/Human connection mean for us today? Well, it may not need to be so limited after all. The improvement of the relationships between the human and the Faery would also benefit Mother Earth. To connect to the Faery, you must first connect to Nature, and to connect to Nature, you must first connect to God. Without repeating myself, this discussion of connecting to God can be found in the earlier article entitled, "Connecting to Our Soul Garden." I think, however, that the best way to discuss how to connect with a Faery is to hear it from a Faery.

How to Pique the Interest of a Faery

Charlie of the Green Cap Gnomes

Please welcome Charlie, a Gnome of the Green Cap Tribe, to our discussion. First, let me give you a description of Charlie.

Charlie is a Green Cap Gnome. The Green Caps are the Gnomes who deal most with Nature in our polluted, human, industrialized world. The Green Caps are Gnomes who are on the front line of defense against the threat of the modern wasteland we are attempting to make of our Mother Earth. Charlie says he stands about 3 feet and 4 inches tall in his bare stocking feet. This does not include the height he gains from his pointed green cap. Charlie has curly black hair and brown eyes. Today he is wearing a green waistcoat with a gray tunic, complete with a black belt made from giant

leaves. On his belt are pressed images of oak leaves and owls. He is also wearing gray trousers. Charlie's feet are kept warm by plush gray stockings and green pointed boots that come up to his calves. Charlie is blessed with both a beautiful wife and a beautiful little daughter, each of whom may be introduced to you in later issues of *The Celtic Owl*, but (by their own request) not in this one. Following are the words of Charlie.

Well, if I understand rightly, our topic of today is how to meet Faeries. Meaning no insult, but a better understanding would be, how to make yourself agreeable enough, so that the Faeries want to meet you. You see, you big folk have been stomping around for such a long time, cutting down our trees, stomping on small defenseless green things and animals, and chasing after us for our pot of gold . . . well, so you see why we are a bit leery of making your acquaintance. I personally have nothing against most humans, but, as a Faery and especially as a Gnome, I am one of the few Gnomes to have any good encounters with the big folk. Lili and Merlin are two of the big folk that I consider a part of my family and whom I love very much. To be honest, though, to me they are more Faery than human, but still they are also part of the big folk world.

I suggest that the way to begin to get to know us is to begin to get to know your own backyard, or—for some of you poor unfortunate humans without a yard—get to know your houseplants, or just go outside!

In order to do this, then, you need to turn off the Evil Story Teller, which you know as the TV, and go outdoors.

While out in nature, you can learn about the types of plants and trees you have growing around your area.

I suggest you find a quiet place outdoors, and have a conversation with a tree. Be patient.

Trees are slow to trust and may want to get to know you first. The best way for a tree to get to know and trust you is for you to tell the tree about yourself. Trees are wonderfully polite listeners, even if you are boring. After a time, and it may be a long time or a short time, the tree will be sensing your good intentions, and it may speak back to you. Usually this starts as a voice in your head. You may think that the tree talking to you is all in your head, and you would be correct. It is in your head, but, with sincere patience, you will learn the difference between your thoughts and the tree speaking to you. Trees are great sources of knowledge and lore about your area, and, though your neighbors may notice you talking to



your trees, so will we. And if you keep at it, that will bring us around to your door soon enough.

If you want faster communication with a green cousin, then speak with the flowers or other plants, for they are usually chattier and more open to flattery.

Another way to peek our interest is if we notice you chatting with the birds that visit your yard. Out of politeness and sincere intent, first put out the best of bird food. Birds are great gossips and will spread the word about you having the best bird food in town. They will also be sure to tell us about your wonderful bird banquet table. You will not have to wait long for bird visitors.

Sit out in your yard, and watch the bird antics. Be aware that the birds are watching you, even as you are watching them, even if they are pretending not to. If you notice a bird that seems to take a great interest in you and boldly approaches you where you are sitting, then it may be one of us that has shape shifted into a bird. It may also be just a bold bird, but time and experience will help you decide that.

After a time you may try quietly, and ever so gently, to speak with the bold bird. If the bird

talks back to you, or gives you a wink, then it is one of us. Please though, do not make any sudden moves, or raise your voice in excitement, or ask us for our autograph, or ask us for a pot of gold, for we are very touchy about that. Give us time to know your intent first and to see the sincerity of your Soul. Then we can have a decent conversation.

We may also shape shift into a squirrel, or a cat, or a dog, or another animal. You will know it is one of us when we do something completely unlike an animal. For instance, if a squirrel were to ask you for a cup of tea and a cookie, that would most likely be one of us.

Another good Faery greeting card is a saucer of cream outside your door. We may, or may not, drink the cream, but one of our nature cousins will, and we will see that as a sign that you want to talk to us.

Another good way to peek our interest in you is to play music outside, but not with a machine, please. Play an instrument, or just sing us a song. We love music. You might try asking us to join in.

To help you better bond with us and, more importantly, with Mother Earth, please consider building an altar outside. A simple altar is wonderful. It should be made of natural materials, taken with permission from Mother Earth. Daily tend the altar with prayers and little gifts of ribbons or shiny things that will not hurt our cousins in Nature or our Mother Earth.



A good sign that you want to contact us is the placing of Faery images in your yard. When we see a yard filled with Faery garden statues, we think to ourselves, what is this person all about? Perhaps they

are Faery friendly, we think to ourselves. So we keep a curious, but friendly, eye on your yard and on you.

Oh, we also notice how you treat your animal companions. You refer to them as your pets, but they are your free companions, or at least that is how we of the Faerie see them. If

we see you treating your dog or cat or any other animal companion with the same unconditional love they give you, then we might think you could be someone we might like to know.

These are just some of the ways that you can start a relationship with a Faery. One last simple way is just to go outside and talk to us, even if we are invisible to you. Trust me, we are out there. We may at first be speechless with surprise and perhaps with a little suspicion, but, if you have good intentions, we will after a time warmly respond to you. You might just put a sign in your yard that says, "Hello, Faeries. I am friendly." That may win us over for the boldness of it.

I have been asked by Merlin to share with you some signals that show we are making contact with you. I would think appearing in front of you in our own bodies and speaking to you is a good signal that we are open to conversation. Of course, we may appear to you in bird form or other animal form just to test you. We may play hide and seek with you in your garden or politely peek into your windows and quickly disappear when you see us; again, just to see how you act during the encounter. I promise we will not peek in on you during your private moments. We are much too civilized and polite for that; plus, we have our own private moments that we find more interesting than yours.

In closing, please remember—those of you with good intentions will meet the good Faeries and hopefully build a warm, long lasting friendship with us. Those of you with bad intentions—I ask that you find another interest! My Faerie kin have had too long of a bad history with you already, and we want nothing more to do with you, unless you finally listen to Mother and Father Creator, and change your heart towards them and all the rest of us.

All I am saying is that I know that the Faeries in your area will be pleased to begin some sort of relationship with those of you that are pure of heart. I am not saying perfect of heart, but pure of heart, and also with those of you who have a sincere wish to be a blessing to our Mother Earth (who, if you would please remember, is also your Mother).

The best of luck to you all, and I hope you succeed in your quest for Faerie friendship.

Slightly trusting,
Charlie of the Green Cap Gnomes

Portrait of Charlie by Carol {Lili} Swing

Send Us Your Experiences

David {Merlin} Swing

Lili and I have been aware of our Faerie Family for ten years now. We speak to them daily during our mornings when we sleepily stumble out of bed. They, of course, are already wide-awake, cheerfully bright, and full of conversation. (Well, actually, so is Lili.) During work hours, they quietly whisper in our ear when they wish to draw our attention to an interesting office situation. Our Faerie Family shares our dinner with us, but only when it is vegetarian. At night, they tuck Lili and me into bed, as we fall into an exhausted sleep. Lili and I can truly say that our Faerie Family has been a wonderful blessing to us.

Will you have such a relationship with a Faery? I do not know, but in the Faerie world of enchantment, anything is possible.

I hope what you have read in this issue of *The Celtic Owl* has been helpful to you on some level. If, because of this newsletter, you have a Faery encounter, or if you have had Faerie encounters in the past, we would like to hear about them. I hope you will allow us to publish your experiences in our newsletter, for your experiences could be of interest to us and to our readers. Your experience may also help us and others gain insight into our own Faerie encounters. I leave the decision to share your Faerie adventures with us up to you!

A Peek at Upcoming Issues

- Beltane: A Celebration of Light, May Poles, Faerie Feasting, Faerie Romance, and Faerie May Queens
- Faerie Romance and Courting—a Talk by a Real Elven May Queen
- How to Lure Faerie Gardeners to Your Vegetable and Flower Gardens (Gardening the Faerie Way)—a talk by Ban of the Red Cap Gnomes
- Litha/Summer Solstice: Celebration of the Sun in its Blazing Might
- Attending Your Own “Midsummer Night's Dream” (A Faerie Feast)—a talk by Sol of the Satyrs
- Adding Faerie Enchantment into Your Life—a talk by Gwladys of the Red Cap Gnomes
- Faerie Tales from the Faeries
- Faerie Tales of Wonder: The Sharing of Faerie Experiences

A Few More Details

You can learn more about the Faire Folke at www.CelticWisdom.net, where you can also purchase the book, *Gnomes in the Garden: Celtic Faerie Teachings*.

Carol Swing is Editor for *The Celtic Owl*.
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