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White Wand: Ruminations, Meditations, Reflections Toward a Feri Aesthetic

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A hand with the index finger pointing upwards is centered in the lower half of the frame. The background is a dense, soft-focus shower of pink and white rose petals falling from the top. The lighting is bright and ethereal, creating a dreamlike atmosphere.

the
white wand

toward a ferí aesthetic

anar

*the
white wand*

*ruminations,
meditations,
reflections
toward a
Feri aesthetic*

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*I dedicate this book to my Goddess-parents,
the Grandmasters*

Victor and Cora Anderson.

*Their great gift to me was to provide
access to the Divine, in word and in deed.*

I am proud to pass on this living heritage.

Foreword
by Cora Anderson

This book is written by April who is a student of Victor Anderson and she explains Feri very well. She has a very good idea of art and the old time religion. April was a very good student of Victor's and much of what she wrote comes directly from his teachings. She is reliable and comes to see me every week which I appreciate very much.

I remember when she first came to visit. I made a lunch for her and Renee. We became instant good friends that day. I also remember us working on a Tree of Life quilt. Everyone that sees it likes it. That was when I taught her the sewing magic. I enjoyed working with her on it very much.

The contents of this book is good and is very straightforward.

Vertigo

by Anaar

*A Night Mare's foal,
Fractured planes of form,
Stamping hooves, brocades of color.
Color swirling, twirling...
Like Vertigo.
Palette bleeding, pulsing, dripping,
Gallop ing hooves kicking up
Tornado forms of color.
Lightning crashing web of line,
flashing through the waves
of Vertigo.*

Ruminations, Meditations, Reflections

Writing this introduction is an act of magic. I was to wait until the body of this work was finished before writing this. Thinking, why write an introduction until I understood completely what form this book would take? I'm coming to many dead ends, thinking perhaps I don't really have much to say. Then it occurs to me, that waiting is an upside down approach. Why not use the art of writing to create the writing? By this act I hope to set the parameters of my thinking, to order them if you will. It is a spell, a cauldron for my Emi, to brew my thoughts and experiences into a bright thing.

My artistic tradition stem from my religious tradition. The work I do, and the way it is done is a direct result of my training as a priestess. As children we played a game with string. Holding the string we wove a web between our hands. Like spiders spinning their universe, between our hands fell a web of magic. Mimicking the Star Goddess, we held a web of power. I dive between my partner's hands to lift this net, forever changing it's shape. And she dives into mine, changing it again. Artists, like children are weaver shamans creating a world between their hands.

My process has been described as an exploration of the intersection of Feri and the arts. It is the process of creation, and is central to my intimate connection to God Herself. These meditations come from personal practice; some are a gift from the Goddess, in dream and memory; most are from the teachings of the Grandmaster Victor Anderson.

The ground of this work is the blood source of our Feri ancestors, running in our veins. The expression is our lore, the awesome power of night and day.

The source is the sensual ritual of The Star Goddess, manifest in our bodies. The language of Feri is the language of poetry, of art, of ritual. The foundation of this language is our intimate communion with God Herself.

This is a collection of reflections, ruminations, and meditations on the White Wand of the Feri Tradition. It is not my intention to provide the final word on Feri. I hope only to continue this lifelong dialogue. Many ideas within this book are so familiar to me that I cannot access the original source. They are in fact so familiar and set within my mind that I may believe the source is within. If you find that I have failed to acknowledge a mentor, please contact me and I will rectify the situation immediately.

It is not within the scope of this book to teach the basic principles of Feri. For this I would refer you to "Fifty Years In The Feri Tradition" by Cora Anderson. For a beautifully poetic understanding of Feri read "Thorns of the Blood Rose" by Victor Anderson. There are many other books and several websites available as well.

In order for the non-student to fully appreciate this work, some common knowledge on the subjects of The Star Goddess, the Triple Soul and mana must be introduced. And what book on occult art is complete without a Creation Myth? Following is a retelling of the Feri Creation Myth: The Great Unfolding. ¹

He is rocking back and forth, a small man with eyeglasses nearly overpowering his face. Behind the huge misty lenses lie brightness. Hunched over his lap, feet bulging from his house slippers, the fingers of his great hands twirl upon itself, the poetry of that hand is entrancing. His rich honeyed voice is singing the great magic now. He sings to me:

"Darkness is older than Light. The sun and each star is surrounded by a vastness of dark. The universe

began as a very small tiny seed egg. The seed egg was in the womb of the Natural Mother of the Universe. She is not a necessary cause of creation, the Blessed Virgin of the Outer Darkness needed no help. Creation was just as natural as bringing forth a child in your womb from a fertilized egg. Only in this case, the Blessed Virgin of the Outer Darkness did not have to have any help, because She was the Natural Mother, the natural extension of the universe, just as we are the natural extension in Nature when we bring forth a child.

She is a feminine being, with all the power and potency of Nature, including the Male. Star Goddess, Holy Ghost. She is the Aumakua of the Universe so mine is a part of Her. She is Virgin because She needed no other to create. Her companion the God is brought forth from Her because the male is mutated out from the female. The Goddess took unto Herself Two Bright Spirits and perfected them into God with Her birth. These Spirits are with Her at all times, but we speak of either one of them as the God because they are exactly alike! Identical Spirit Twins, the Bright Dual Consort of the Blessed Mother.

I think that will go far in answering your questions.” He twists in his rocker, turns his head, smiling. The warm drowsiness of his song nearly overtakes me, I rub it out of my eyes and sit up, also smiling.



In the story Victor mentions the Aumakua. The Aumakua is a Hawaiian term for the High Self, which makes up a portion of our etheric anatomy. The soul is not contained within our body, but surrounds it. Our dynamic soul is made into three parts, but cannot be considered separately. All three parts are entities in their

own right, but are also sharing the same consciousness. For greater understanding, listed below is a chart for some of the names for our Triple Soul.²

FERI	HAWAIIAN	JEWISH	ARABIC	VICTOR
Vivi	Unihipili	Nephesh	Noph	Animal Self
Emi	Uhane	Ruach	Ruch	Human Self
Ori	Aumakua	Neshama	Sirr	God Self

One of the roles of our Vivi is to create and store mana. Vivi is also the first to create emotional states and can be impulsive. For example, Vivi is the first part of the Triple Soul to fall in love. It is the container of what we call the subconscious. Recorder of memory, both in the present and past lives, Vivi is sometimes referred to as the “sticky one.” It is animal like, shaped like the physical body and extends about 2 cm beyond it. The innermost layer is electric pink and hugs over the body and blends out into a silvery blue. Sometimes, when the Vivi gets a complex, it will split off and steal energy. If this happens, Vivi will tell you false things, and give false memories.

Emi is the speaking, thinking self, with the majority of the reasoning power and can direct it like the wind. It is the most pronounced and maintains the strongest presence in our consciousness. Emi comprises the true aura, an oval or egg shape following the outline of your body. Colors associated with an individual Emi is dependent upon the character or personality of that Emi. Upon death, Emi will scatter or dissipate and rearrange itself upon rebirth. It continues the new arrangement throughout the current life.

Ori is the Kami self, the Star that dwells at the top of the aura. Ori is the self parent. It has the blueprint or template of what you personally are to be and must do. When your spine tingles, and your sexual energy is up, you've made contact with God Self.

Before we humans were fully evolved in our present form, there came a class of Gods which became our Ori. After a long period of our evolution many ancestral souls became our Godselfes. This is the root of ancestor worship and it is our destiny to become an Ori after our last incarnation. After a certain number of incarnations above rather than in our body, the Ori goes back into Po, the region between the stars.

The health and vitality of our Triple Soul is greatly, but not entirely, due to our ability to draw mana. Mana is the term the Feri use for energy. There are many manifestations of mana, as there are many manifestations of light. Light is largely responsible for our perception of our surroundings.

Within the visible spectrum of light, are the colors red, orange, etc. These colors shape our visible world and gives us a valuable way to access it. There are other spectrums of light and they are deadly to humans. For example the X-Ray spectrum, easily accessed in our current technological era, is used with great caution and only by qualified professionals.

What is sometimes referred to as Blue Fire is but one manifestation of mana, as visible light is but one manifestation of light. Handling the Blue Fire is a Black Art. It must be handled with care and only by experienced sorcerers.

There are many ways to draw mana. The most common methods to draw mana in our "visible spectrum," is through food, light, movement, sex, sound, sleep and breath. Vivi stores mana by taking in one of the above mentioned methods and sends it out upon

your command. One method is no more effective than another in this spectrum. They do vibrate on slightly different levels, just as red vibrates differently than blue. More than one method can be used at one time. But even these methods can be abused. Many of us have the experience of eating too much, and who among us have not complained of being groggy with too *much* sleep?

God is Self, Self is God, and God is a Person
Like Myself

Feri Is...

*Feri is the language born on the wind,
Feri is the yarn a raconteur spins.
Feri is the lash upon my cheek,
Feri is the color that I speak.
Feri is the hunger in my belly,
Feri is the cave which is my dwelling.*

Feri is a subversive faith. All may receive spiritual revelation directly from the highest spiritual sources. If everyone is their own authority, there can be no monopolistic religion/business based on privileged access or right to interpret the words of a few official prophets or holy books.

The same could be said of art. The artist may receive theoretical or stylistic revelation if they have the methods. The artist will endeavor to achieve first with a period of training under certain masters, but then must set out on their own. Even in traditional academic training, the art student will eventually be informed that they must “forget what they know.” This is not meant to undermine their training, but to encourage the artist’s own personal discovery.

Each individual may gain a level of authority and hence responsibility. We must teach all who are willing to learn such techniques, both Art and Spirit, for in Feri one cannot exist without the other. The witch’s contract with the spirit world demands a contract with the

physical world to act on or express information given.

Both the witch and ritualist work and live within a community and the powers they raise belong to the community. It is the community which is the source of their power. Our sense of power is defined by our capacity to put it to use. The conventional artist attempts to obtain power by the manipulation of art materials and exhibiting it for others to merely observe, or to partake of vicariously. For practitioners of sacred art, the term art is a *verb*, an active principle that by its very definition demands an act, the doing of.

Art, like magic, is a natural process, not separate or in any way special. Some say it is a gift from the Gods and so it is. But why suppose that the Gods are stingy with their gifts? From the dawn of our natural consciousness we see evidence of the human expression of the divine. Witness the naturally sublime renderings in caves, the sensual curves of the first icons, the tribal power objects used for adornment. These works of wonder were made at a time when there were no distinctions between artist and self. Ancient wonders of beauty were made by untrained practitioners of art. The Gods are *generous* and the true gift is life itself. By the very fact that blood pulses through us, it is our natural inclination to be gifted. It is our responsibility to use it.

The creative act here on earth is a mimic play of the cosmic creative act, the Great Unfolding of the Star Goddess. The Feri shaman is born not through the more common means of death, dismemberment, the swallowing of our ego and concomitant return from death. Our shamans are born from our direct identification with the Star Goddess and Her creative principle. Therein lies our power. Not in death, the swallowing of our individuated ego, but in Her first impulse. All the Arts reveal our link with Cosmic Creative Power. The Feri

Shaman delves our hand deep in the ecstatic womb of The Goddess. And in Her love and in Her ecstasy, She reveals Herself through song, poetry, dance and color. Her divine breath washes over and drives through us and in this identification, we create. We divine the universe with our hands riding on waves of Her passion.

This creative impulse is one of our sources of mana, and creative endeavors activate this mana. It is at once the source and result of mana. Creative action merges into myth. The creative act is simultaneously the creative ground.

All the arts are of the same source, God Herself. There are three phases of the moon, not three moons. There are three phases of the Goddess, they are the phases of God Herself. There is only one Self, made of three parts. Observe around to notice Nature working in threes. There is the Light, the Dark and the Ordering of Light and Dark. It is through our Fey identification with the great Creatrix, the Star Goddess, that we too become Creatrix. "God is Self, and Self is God, and God is a person like Myself." The nation of Fey is the nation of creators.

In Feri, a white wand witch is the bard of the coven, the artist witch. They are our poets, ritualists, musicians, as well as the visual artists. Their work is to provide the coven with ritual guidance which includes, but is not limited to music, dance, the making of tools and icons, as well as spellcraft. White wands are also gardeners, since this is the wand of blooming. It is their place to infuse the coven rites with awesome beauty. They are those who inspire that reflex action, the sudden intake of breath.

It can be difficult to describe the Fey and their workings. One can be a valued experienced priest, yet somehow be unable to express in linear academic terms their own ecstasy. Much like an artist, unable to fully

explain their muse, their inspiration. How can you tell if a work is Fey? Primarily by reflex actions. Emi oriented critique is not necessarily useful, though it should not be completely discarded. (See appendix.) Fey work is not beautiful in the conventional sense. It can be bizarre or even ugly to the uninitiated. The instantaneous reaction is most useful in determining if a work is Fey.

Search deep within your body and learn to recognize these reactions:

- sudden intake of breath
- tingling sensation at the top of the head
- strong sexual urge
- raising of the hairs at the back of the head
- goose bumps
- shivers
- queasy stomach
- wincing, or a sudden drawing back
- a sudden opening or closing of the eyes
- rise or fall in temperature

These are but a few of the most common reactions displayed when a thing of sublime beauty awakens us.



This exercise was given to me by Victor Anderson and can be practiced by anyone, regardless of skill level.

Find a magazine picture or photograph of something you like. It can be a person, place or thing as long as it is something you truly like, something that truly excites you. If you choose a photograph, get a color

photocopy. Also get some color drawing material that will easily go over the image. Oil pastels will write over most glossy paper and is great for expressionistic studies.

Light a candle in honor of the Star Goddess. Breathe in slow but natural breaths. Do not attempt pranic breathing for this exercise. Clear your mind of all distractions including sound and other images. Imagine you feel the presence of Vivi in your hara. The hara is located about two or three fingers below your navel. Vivi has a lot of substance and should be relatively easy to feel.³

Continue to breathe naturally while contacting Vivi. Take time to engage and feed Vivi with the image. Gaze upon the picture and ask Vivi how it would like this picture to be. Draw over the picture with what the Vivi wants. Do not attempt to engage Emi with analysis or critique. You are drawing what the Vivi wants and this may bear no relation whatsoever to the picture. Take as long as it takes.

When Vivi is satisfied, place this picture in some secret spot for a few days, but no more than a week. At the end of this period, take the picture out and observe your responses. That is, check your feelings, the clearest indication of power. Ask yourself, "Is this work Fey?" Allow Vivi to respond.

Transmission of the Message

Lying in bed, looking at my cottage cheese ceiling, I begin to relax. Light from the fixture scatters across the ceiling, illuminating the lumps and bumps. Darkness sinks within the cracks and crevices. Slowly the darkness forms into varying lines. The lines of darkness begin to shimmer with an unearthly light. The light appear to move and shift, taking shape. The shapes coalesce into things I don't quite understand. The shapes of darkness and light appear and disappear quickly, leaving me only chance glances. Slowly my eyes begin to flutter and drag themselves downward.

I am descent, I am ascent, I am in between times. The Deep Ones begin their circular dance of color. The color of neon, translucent, shimmering, pulsing, throbbing with sensual delight. The pulsing photic animals jet away from me, trailing tentacles of light, swimming in a mass of star filled velvet. Deep within their bodies is a deep rich dark mandorlic central core. The mandorla lightens, brightens, and growing within are sepia toned pulsing still pictures. Pictures of things, places and times I know little of where they belong.

For the shaman the primary goal of their craft is the transmission of the message.⁴ For the modern artist the transmission of the message takes place within a formal point of view. When artists speak in formal terms, they are discussing abstract theories, such as color, space, perspective, and their formal academic relationship to each other. These theories also include proper technique.

In Feri magical art, the transmission of the message is in rendering the voice of the Gods. It is to make contact with Her Divine Lust. In trance, we are wrapped in Her argent web. Dancing to the drumming of Her heart, we dream our ritual, the mother art. Like the

Star Goddess, spinning out planets from Her core, from ritual come spinning all of our arts.

We create the world anew by creating a contemporary iconography which, because it is also ancient, penetrates the psyche. Such magic must be placed in the here and now for it to be powerful, or even to be understood. This is how the Feri artist must stand, between the worlds, the ancient and the contemporary. To blend what we know with what we can dream. Working our magic to dream a new art, a new world which is the same as the primal art, the primal world. Such experimentation is the groundwork of Feri art.

Fear is the deadly enemy of Feri arts. There is a saying that "Where there is fear, there is power." Yes, but only if you can forge ahead, in spite of fear, in spite of ambition, in spite of Emi. Often fear only serves to dampen power, to create a barrier to your Ori, eliminating all references to your authentic self. The art becomes hollow, derivative, safe. To pass beyond fear is power.

Art as magic is an intervention in reality with the aid of symbols. Although we use symbols, Feri art is neither representational nor symbolic, it is naturalistic. That is, it places into form the actual living entity whether that be a deity or Their attributes. For the Gods are real, They are not merely symbols or imaginings. They exists in our world as naturally as we do.

Abstraction, and therefore symbolism, is the natural result of our vision. The Gods appear to us in the guise They choose, much as a parent would appear to their child as Santa Claus, fulfilling a certain purpose and expectation. They put on Their party hats, if you will. This in no way diminishes Their power or our relationship to Them. These visions are actual occurrences in Nature and are as real as we are.

Symbolism in Feri is not the same as in other tra-

ditions, where one thing may stand in place of another. One thing actually is another. It is not arbitrarily based on a system of beliefs. If it has not been directly observed in nature, it cannot be directly correspondent to a thing in Nature.⁵ The Iron Pentacle does not represent, Sex, Pride, Self, Power, Passion. It actually *is* Sex, Pride, Self, Power, Passion.

What we normally call “personal style” is actually achieved by aligning your true authentic self, that inner space where only honesty can prevail, to the Star Goddess. She is the Ori of our Ori. Style is a direct result of years of process.⁶ An accomplished Feri artist is one who can communicate power from that authentic place, no matter how beautiful, or often how seemingly ugly.

Feri art has a physical and powerful basis. It is in the prolonged sensual dance of the Star Goddess. She is complete within Herself, She needed no other to create. We sit upon Her throne, the lap of the Mother and suckle at Her breast. Her lap is Her womb, the source of all being and knowing. And in this trance, we receive Her blessings. Her cord binds us to Her creative center and it is through this cord that Her breath reaches us. From this ecstatic union come Her inspiration.

The Bardic Arts

Cerridwen's Brew

*My name is like the mist
Floating upon the deepest water,
My voice is the echo of a dream.
My breasts are the eyes of life:
From My iris pour forth the stars.
Behold, the Incantation has ended....
Now we are between the worlds.
Another time, another space.
The incantation begins again,
(Feri Goddess Mudras)⁷
Drink the Brew and be healed.
But will you walk the fire,
Walk the fire...*

...

Feri bards are the priests of our ancient tradition, the warriors of our sacred Goddess. We wage our war not with weapons of steel upon a bloody field, but upon an unseen field, with tools of magic and weapons of song and deed. Vocal organs, ritual gestures, our bodies moving in dance produce a flow of mana which become magical acts. The mana emanates from within by the dynamic movement of Vivi, sending it to Ori and raining down upon us again.

Within ritual lie a direct and active link to the Goddess. It is the psychic center for consciousness, just as the altar is the physical center. Eroticism and play is its dominant theme. This is not art in any conventional

sense. It is instead an energetic process providing ecstasy and it is this ecstasy that binds the Feri tribe. Ritual is a structure within which you can be creative, erotic and spontaneous. It is the cauldron of the arts.

Ritual is not theater but a dynamic source of power. There is no passive audience, all members of the ritual circle actively participate. The lending of mana to a working is the primary motivation. Ritual is never done *to* you, it is done *with* you. That inclusiveness is extended to create and sustain mana in a dramatic and indissoluble way. In public ritual, the achievement of shared meanings and shared emotions is the goal, not private individual goals.

In ancient cultures, during the sacred story telling, the entire tribe literally transport themselves into the story. Each individual lent their mana, by breathing, chanting, and drumming. By simply being a part of a circle, you help form the circle. Thereby in ritual all must act with power, magical power. Each member magically helps to create and sustain the ritual. Ritual is seeing and literally experiencing the drama of the Gods. It is the unfolding of the mystery of Nature, the cycle of life with all it's glory and doom. The ritual magical art brings it to our consciousness with full impact. This is so primarily because we are *involved*, we choose it.

A full ritual working is not complete without trance. Repetition is vital to trance. One of the keys to magic is the ability to entrance as well as become entranced. True trance states are founded upon a profound state of relaxation, no matter how vigorous the rhythm. It is the long (this often takes hours in many cultures) repetition of that rhythm that produces the relaxed state. One may jokingly say that the gateway to trance is boredom. In other words, trance is initiated by first lulling Emi, through repetitive driving

rhythm, to favor Vivi and Ori.

The ultimate goal of all trance work, and all Feri work, is to become Self Possessed. That is, to have all three souls straight within. The repetitive, rhythmic activity of ritual by some sonic, photic or visual driving rhythms lead to these trance states by switching out of a resistant channel, the Emi, to an unoccupied channel, the Vivi and Ori. This process has the power of magical incantation and is an excellent vehicle for meditation.

For example, weaving can be considered ritual. Due to its repetitive nature, it lends itself to a meditative state of mind. Using the body in a repetitive motion we start at the center of a basket and spiral our way around, creating a circle. Like a chant, a dance, or drumming, basket weaving and it's spiraling action makes quiet all aspects of Emi so that Vivi can be opened. As the body goes round and round one enters the trance state, filling Vivi with intention. An accomplished magician can send this intention to Ori in a single breath. The basket itself becomes sacred space and its devotional use as a mandala is the exploration of this space.



Sacred Space

One of the most important considerations in ritual is the creation of sacred space. Ritual is unconventional and subversive in that it does not rely on theatrical or institutional space. It is our power to choose our space based on its energy. Often this space is surprising and unusual. This space is set apart from the mundane, it is the center of the web. Some say the sacred circle is a protective device, but it is not so among us. Its primary purpose is to act as a lens, a focal point for the energy

work. Its protective properties are secondary, but useful.

When we are in sacred space we are in the belly of the Goddess. Like a womb, a vessel, the sacred circle is a container. Within this container, this cauldron, the elements of ritual provide the impetus for transformation. It is a place in which we may nourish our spirit. Like the womb it is a place for growth. The circle is the cave of the ancients, it is a place of transportation and initiation.

Sacred space is also the house of the Gods. It is where They dwell, where They come to do Their workings. Within this circle you may call Them, and They will answer. Sacred space is a place of power and beauty, reflecting the mystery of the universe. The sacred space need not be a monumental temple, a great power spot within the landscape, it could simply be the altar, a spirit jar, the human temple, or even a power object. Sacred space is where the working takes place.

The cultic ornaments, areas which are considered especially powerful, in the landscape are not treated as isolated artworks but are incorporated into spiritual activities and rites as organic components of them. Temples (permanent and temporary) are created in keeping with the harmony of it's surroundings. Most witches prefer to conduct our rites outdoors, but any consecrated space will do.



The Body Poem

Ritualists and shamans understand that the body, not the mind, is the locus of transformation. The body is the clearest, purest, most vital and honest expression of self. It is that aspect of self, the body, that changes

before the mind or spirit change. Central to ritual is the awakening of Vivi, with your Emi, connecting to your Ori. In ritual, in this new heightened state of awareness, we embody and activate the Goddess. Ancient images of power, of transformation, of harmony flow through us. Ritual is often able to awaken and stimulate the participant's body, to open us up to this new knowledge, to see and understand via the body. We become a mirror of Her Divine Self.

In another telling of The Creation Myth, we speak of the Star Goddess looking into the curved mirror of space. There in Her reflection, She begins Her sexual play, feeling Her body in the warm dark velvet of sensual ecstasy. From this union of Self to Self, from this great passion, the worlds were born. This myth is central to Feri ritual in *process* as well as in fact. It is from our sexual union with the Star Goddess that we derive our creative powers. The swaying of the hips, snake-like, coiling movements recall the Star Goddess' initial impulse. It is the human embodiment of Her sensual Creation.

The body is the 'prima materia' of ritual. Body art empowers us by affirming our bodies as instruments of communication, not alienation, with the Goddess. A ritual that doesn't run mana, that doesn't provide transformation, isolates the performer as an exclusive object of attention. Without communal interaction, without acting with power, the witch becomes the object, not the subject. Rather than a ritualist, a communal facilitator, we become instead a star, a thing separate from the community. If it does run mana, even within a theatrical sense, then the formal importance diminishes in our awareness. What is left is the power immanent within us.

Duende is a Spanish word often associated with Flamenco. It is not entirely translatable, but many take

it to mean “ghost possession.” Duende is the passion of the Moorish Rom, their defiance and pain. The mana run by these musicians and dancers is evident. The music and steps demand a shift of consciousness, a settling of Emi in favor of Vivi and Ori. Masters of this form of passion run so much mana that even a modern audience is transported by it. Though not ritual in a religious sense, the audience nonetheless share this passion, they grieve with the dancers and musicians, they participate.

Dance is more than a prayer, more than a play, dance is important magic. In this way ritual magic is used to create states of ecstasy, union with the Divine. It is one of the oldest and is the most elemental form of religious expression. This dance has efficacy when the ritual is founded upon myth and implies a re-enactment of the original space and time when the action was first performed. If the ritual follows the original action, it taps into the accumulated energy of all prior actions related to this original action.⁸ The dancer learns to move or bend this energy to the original action. Dance is the body poem of the Goddess.



The Sound Poem

As important as body poetry is, it simply cannot exist without the sound poem, that is music and poetry. This is the ground from which we move, the structure of ritual. Without the sound poem, there is no impetus for movement, no body poetry. Therefore, it is the musicians and poets within a coven who are given pre-eminent status. The priests who dance can only do so under the power of meter.

Music is the song of ecstasy. The heartbeat of

the Star Goddess provides the driving rhythm, Her breath provides the rich dark melody. Through music, the Goddess whispers to us Her desires. Music is a meditative act of discovery and is an excellent vehicle to transport an entire coven to Her realms.

Word poems are the concrete emanation of divine love. It is a love so deep the poet literally becomes Her sexual lover. As Victor Anderson says "Every poem is a love letter to the Goddess." Poets are the diviners of Her lust. It is they who are most able to lift Her veil, the unfolding mystery of Her nature. This lust is the source of all poetry, regardless of the form.

The luminous often paradoxical nature of the Gods is often difficult to describe without the use of sound, the manifestation of Her breath. Music and poetry are not inventions of art but the reception of divine inspiration and possession. The sound poet achieves this through an intimate, orgasmic relationship with the Goddess, through the slow hand. The slow hand that caresses Her etheric body as it caresses our own physical body, climaxing in inspiration. Our bards are the keepers of this Divine mystery.

Like Cerridwen nourishing Her magical brew, through rhythm and verse, our bards are charged with keeping the magical lid upon the cauldron of power, the working. It is they who provide the trance map for the shaman's journey. It is the sound poet's responsibility to guide the slow hand of the coven, to slowly work the coven to ecstasy, as your lover, as your Goddess. This is what Feri witches mean when we speak of the cone of power. An experienced sound poet can sense this cone and at this ecstatic point, will lift the lid, releasing the roiling steam. The experienced bard can not only read where the shaman must go, but can also provide the description of where they have been. And it is this description, this retelling that forms the basis

of our ritual and leaves us inspired to do more.



Here is a body poem meditation that will raise mana through slow, repetitive, relatively easy, and yet unusual movement.⁹

This movement has four steps:

- 1: Extend your right foot to the side, sway the hip to the left.
- 2: Bring the left foot alongside the right, sway the hip to the right.
- 3: Extend your right foot to the side, sway the hip to the left.
- 4: Bring the left foot alongside and slightly above the right and touch.

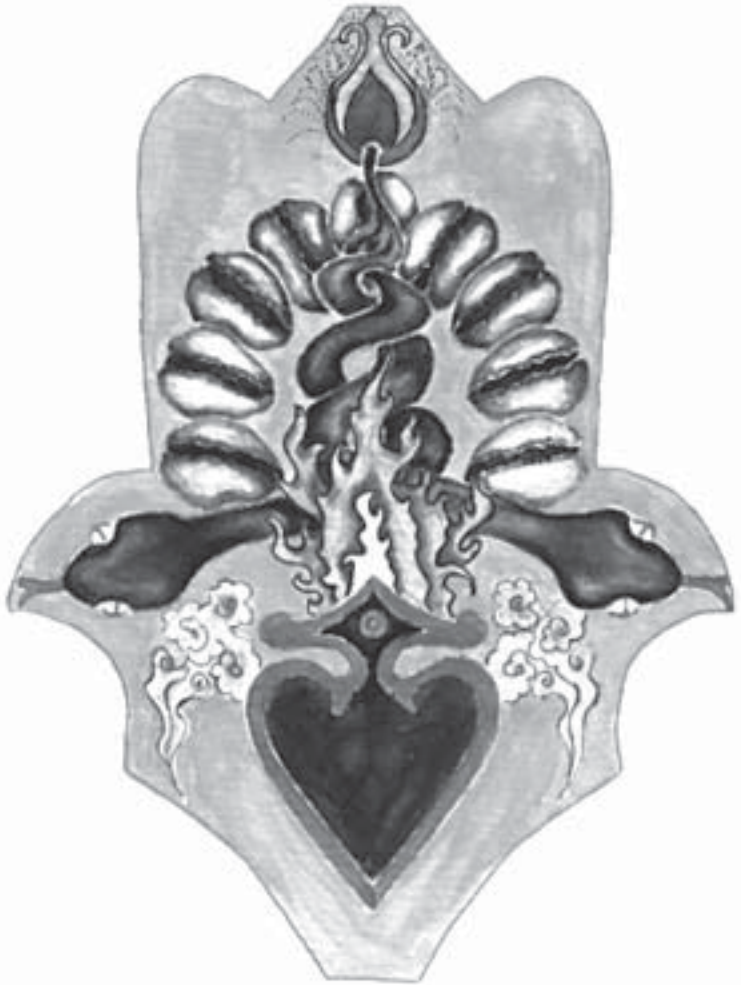
Repeat starting with the left foot.

Practice the step for a few minutes, become comfortable with it. Allow Emi to work it out so it does not interfere.

In your own manner, create a quiet safe space and clear your mind of distractions. If you have the strength available raise your arms in a Goddess posture, either to the side or above your head. This may cause fatigue and result in pain. The object is to lull Emi, not activate it with worries concerning your body. You may instead place your hands on your hips and begin the movement described above. Once you are comfortable with the step, chant the Flower Prayer: "Who is this flower above me, and what is the work of this God? I will know myself in all my parts." Continue for as long as possible.

Music can be an aid, if it is long enough. Short

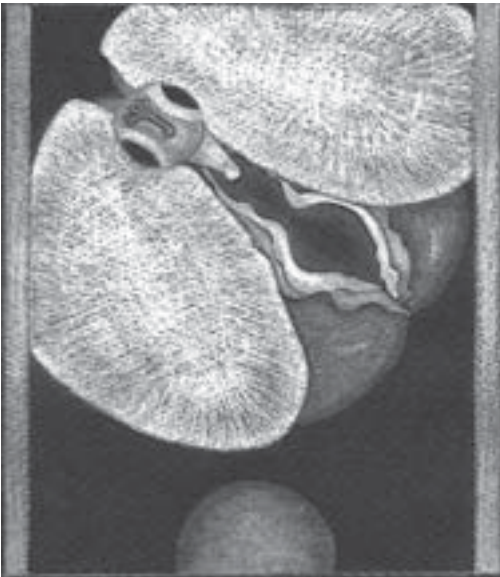
tunes, will undermine the process. Look for trance music that is at least 20 minutes long. If this is not available to you, it is better to do this meditation chanting the Flower Prayer alone.



Feri Hamsa. A play on Middle Eastern and American Folk tradition. The shape of the hand is derived from the Hamsa, also known as the Hand of Fatima. The Black Heart of Innocence hearkens to the Heart in Hand motif found in North America. Two snakes culminating in a stylized peacock feather refer to the Divine Twins. Cowrie shells for the Nine-fold Muse. Earth, Air, Fire and Water are represented. Watercolor and ink on paper.



Guardian Study. This guardian figure came to me while meditating on the Eastern Guardian in a self possessed trance. Charcoal on paper.



StarFinder. The finished drawing of StarFinder as I see Him. Notice the finished drawing differs little from the meditative study. Pastel on paper.



Feri ritualist The Painted Fan. The Painted Fan is a bardic dance troupe. Clockwise from the right: Willow Moon, Thorn Coyle and Anaar. Costuming adds “glamour” to the rites. Photograph by Kalessin.



Corona. A hairstick is a simple device to draw down the Peacock Lord, emulating the corona of the peacock. Peacock eye and sword feathers, wood, copper.



Shining Flame. Spirit Jar, made in circle with the Andersons. In Feri, Spirit Jars have an opening to allow the loa to come and go as they please. Through this jar, one may access the loa within .''



Daily meditation, for grounding and centering. This meditation is done without thought and with eyes closed. The circle is drawn in one sweeping motion. With a little practice, this can be achieved by anyone.



Portrait of Anaar. Anaar is a Persian word for pomegranate. I chose this name to invoke fertile creativity within me. Rather than painting a conventional self-portrait, this was painted after I had chosen my name. While painting this portrait, I meditated on my desire to be creative and fertile in my endeavors. I imagined myself bursting forth with many seeds. It was then tattooed on my back, to seal this spell I cast over myself. Ink and watercolor on paper.



Several leis for ritual and meditative use. From the top: Pagan Rose Wreath, glass and pewter, design by Cora Anderson; Amber and jet mala, icon purchased from Nina Designs; and Feri Decagram, pearl, hematite and silver.

The Devotional Arts

I find myself awake lying in a dank cave, the closeness of it envelopes me, nearly chokes me. The heat is immeasurable, my brow is streaming with sweat. The heat and dampness weakens me, forcing my head to droop and jerk. I fight to stay alert, but the pressure of the environment keeps me drowsy.

From a distance, rounding a corner, light from a ritual fire streams onto the ochre stained walls. Flickering lucent strands illuminate the gross curves of the Mother. Barely able to perceive my own breath, I am able to capture the elegant shapes of life and magic drawn above me. Images of animals, hunted and human come upon me like flash photography.

A freshly killed hide is lain over me, still bloody and sticky from the hunt. Between my legs, lie the Goddess' hunt, bloody from the Moon and sticky with desire. In my sweaty slippery hands I hold this animal's horn, given to me by my priest, my new lover.

From the distant source of light, I hear the voices of the other priest's, their song urges me on. As their poems rise I see the scene painted above me glide and move, instructing me. My body is heavy with the bloody hide, and I can barely control the horn in my hands. Carefully I bring it upon me, piercing my womanhood.

As the priests weave the rhythmic pattern of the song, I follow with the horn. Pulsing and working it into me. As the tempo begins to build the horn slips from my hand and pierces my thigh. I cry out in sorrow and anger, but the song of the priests only rises, urging me and my hunger.

Again the song rises, the pattern of it becoming ever more complex. I hunch over myself and grip the horn with both hands. I begin to gain control over it, commanding it to integrate with the song. My hair clings to my face, my breathing becomes faster, shallow and I begin to sing.

My voice rises to match my frenzy, meeting with the priests own frenzy. The song is frenetic now, a rare screeching howl. I fight to keep it, to hold it for eternity. But in that instant with one final thrust of the horn, the howl of the priests brings my body to burst forth. Points of light explode from my pleasure, spiraling away from me in rolling waves of heat and color.

My breathing slows as awareness returns to me. Again I notice the pressure of heat and damp. As I come down, I see the horn and rise it up to me. I find it is no longer a horn, but a wand formed by my slow hand in the realm of magic, consecrated by my own holy body and the sacred natural act of the Goddess.

A devotion is an act of religious observance or prayer. A devotional artist creates icons not for religious prayer, but *as* a prayer. Icons made by the devotional artist are not merely commercial and decorative. These icons, through magical process, are imbued with the power of divinity and are meant to be used as tools of power. Feri art is a prayer, a direct communication with, and full participation in, the sacred realm.

The Fey artist rebels against the current optic tyrant. Our aims are not concerned with design principles such as perspective, but is a naturalistic depiction of the sacred and informing of the luminous nature of the divine. These arts are descriptive and aim for a *complete* description. The Horned God has two horns and a phallus regardless of the point of view.

Remember the beauty of animals drawn in the magical hunting ground of the ancient caves. The ground of the painting is the ground of the actual earth. What is painted on the walls of these caves became a reality here on earth. Our ancient ancestors painted arrows on the animal they meant to hunt,

sometimes actually throwing spears on the image for greater magical effect.

In primal cultures art is never made for merely decorative purposes, it is always utilitarian. The beauty of an object is derived directly from it's value as a thing to be used. Art was functional, serving religious, social and practical purposes. It is insurance for a beautiful and prosperous life. Art is not a thing to be collected but an action to be performed. Product in contemporary terms is of little consequence, save that the object created can be used as a permanent mandala.

One important utilitarian purpose that our culture has entirely forgotten in all aspects of our lives is the practicality and utility of magic. The Fey artist make tools of magic. In these ancient caves, lie paintings of great wonder. Surely these were sites of ancient ritual, powerful magic. That primary art, ritual and it's accompanying arts, were magical acts conducted for the benefit and prosperity of the community. This magic had purpose; the continuation of life through the Hunt, the continuation of spirit through magic.

We know that what is placed on a page actually exists. This is a basic homeopathic principle. It is rendered there for a magical purpose; a spell to release, or in some cases, to hold power. If you place an image of self as wealthy, it is a spell that will eventually become an actuality. It is not a decorative portrait of self, but it has a practical purpose, functioning as a spell.

In today's Western culture, we have the opposite situation. Art is simply "art for art's sake." Art with any utilitarian value is labeled craft. By this labeling, it is denigrated as being somehow below serious effort. Art made for a purpose has been placed

in a cultural ghetto.

There is also a split between a primarily intellectual art making process and a primarily body oriented art making process. The latter (with some exceptions, most notably Jackson Pollack and Joseph Beuys) is relegated to the same cultural ghetto as craft and neglected. By the same token, craft, through it's desire to be accepted into the mainstream, has by large measure given up it's utilitarian value, and has oriented itself to mere design.

The devotional arts is a daily practice, one which is a form of worship, healing, play; an interaction with Nature, and magical insurance not only of life, but of life worth living. Practitioners of magic know that to make magic or raise power without purpose is wasteful. Magic is always made toward some purpose, to create a thing is to make change.

A Fey artist is accomplished in the use of what is known as the "strong eye." The strong eye is the natural ability of the shaman to view an object's essential nature. In peering into stone the strong eye magician can see it's etheric energy, pulsing and swaying with beauty. The Fey artist will carve that stone to accentuate it's natural power. Rather than work against it, the Fey artist will use an object's natural energy to increase it's power. An artist, who is in complete harmony with nature, can actually create the power object the stone *wants* to be.

The devotional artist must learn to bend their will into the art object. This is crucial to the Fey artistic process. This object will hold that power, the witch's will, within it. Meditate to create, and the creation will become the meditation. The meditative object, idol, or mandala holds this power increasing further meditation.

A devotional idol, or mandala can hold a por-

tion of the God it represents. It does not hold the God, but the spirit of the God, or loa of the God, and is treated as that God. It is also a kind of psychic battery or generator of the specific power attributed to that God. One may tune into that energy through the devotional object.

There is a mana emanating from the natural material itself and mana can be transferred into that material by the witch who makes creative use of it. A master artist will precisely hone or refine that power to a specificity. For example, lava is specific to tikis and tikis are specific to Polynesian deities. Each of these deities are specific to a certain power and their traditional attributes. Likewise, wooden totem poles are specific to the deities (totems) of the nations of the Northwest Coast, etc.

To imbue the devotional item completely, the witch will draw down the power of the loa of the God into the item. Then the part, that is the devotional item, is connected to the whole, the loa of the God. The Gods respond to contact or communication, through ritual and prayer, with the devotional item. These rituals are many and varied according to the traditions in which one practices. Most Feri's use several idols and mandalas from many different traditions.¹⁰

The Feri artist may make use of fetchers in the shape of the devotional image that is possessed by the loa, ancestor or nature spirit. The artist will bring the mana of a particular God under the control of the keeper of the devotional item. The power of the loa will enter the idol or mandala, through the artists' will, and generate mana for the keeper. This devotional item may be made of anything, it may be a painting, a sculpture, the bones of an ancestor, or the body itself may be dedicated to a powerful God in

the form of possession.

If the devotional item is well fed, it will do many powerful and useful things. If neglected it may wreak havoc upon it's keeper. However, if the devotional item's mana proves ineffective it may find itself abandoned for one of greater power. Should an idol break, even small chips of that idol will continue to contain the mana of the greater part of the idol.



I offer up this ritual for your understanding:¹¹

Materials needed:

- black votive candle
- ink stone
- grinding palette
- brush
- paper

Find a nice quiet contemplative place where you can settle yourself and raise power. Since you will be painting, it is helpful to have a smooth surface before you. Light a candle in honor of the Star Goddess. Breathe in slow, natural breaths. Take a few moments to connect with your Vivi and Ori. State your creative intent to Ori and ask Vivi what it would like. Using your favorite method, fill your being with mana.

Place a few drops of water in your grinding palette. Take the ink stone and begin grinding into the water on your palette. Concentrate the mana and feel it begin to move down your arm, down your hand, and into the inkstone. Bend your will and

charge your mana to magically change, to transform the water into ink.

Continue to breathe in slow and natural breaths. Slowly move the grinding stone, up and down, back and forth, until you can physically feel the ink shimmer with power. Now pick up your brush. Feel the mana going into the brush as well. Take the time to allow this to happen, to fill the brush with power. Be sensitive to any throbbing motion. If you sense this, slow the movement of power.

Continue to breathe in slow and natural breaths, continue to keep contact with Vivi and Ori. Dip the brush into the ink. As you see the brush absorb ink, see also the mana from the ink being absorbed into the mana in the brush. Now close your eyes. Draw in one sweeping motion, using your entire arm, a circle. Bend the mana into the pattern of a circle. Release the mana within the ink and brush into the paper by way of a circle. Again dip the brush into the ink, and without thought, place a mark in the center of the circle.

Thank the Mother for the mana, thank the ink stone, palette and brush. Any throbbing motion is an indication of too much power being run too quickly. The object is to learn to control the power. It is important that the mark in the center be done without thought. This is a visual indicator of your center.

Sacred Adornment

*Breath in, see color,
Breath out, take shape,
Open eyes, take a stitch,
With each stitch, weave a spell.
I make magic.*

Artist Statement 1995

Adornment is the mirror of the authentic self, a reflection of our inner being. A person who consistently wears lush, drippy fabric may be revealing an essentially sensual being, while a person who wears T-shirts and jeans may be revealing an essentially practical being. Color, fabric, gems, all are reflections of mood and being. Our choices are a revelation to others of our identification with the Gods. A person consistent with their adornment is one who is self possessed, a trendy person or one who dresses primarily for fashion is more susceptible to change.

Having said that, there are times when one may wish to use a magical technique known as glamour. Glamour is a spell cast over oneself to change one's appearance. This is most often achieved through the use of charms and adornment. Glamour magic can be as simple as a velvet cloak, or as complex as a period costume. Behind these charms and adornments must lie intent. The will to change your appearance for a specific purpose must underlie all costume and makeup effects. For these things alone are just that, an effect.

Glamour is often used to make one appear greater than they are, but can be used to downplay one's physical appearance. For instance, if you find yourself

in a tough neighborhood, you may wish to make yourself appear tough and unapproachable, or perhaps invisible. In a friendly crowd, you may wish to make yourself appear desirable and beautiful. Glamour is most often used in the latter fashion, to appear beautiful.

It is not vanity which compels us to self beauty. It is the Black Heart of Innocence. Beauty is like a plant reaching for the light, or a child tugging at an earring, not because the child means us harm, but it is the natural inclination to reach for the bright shiny things in life. It is our natural disposition to reach for beauty. Self love and respect compels us to self beauty.

One of the greatest advances our ancient ancestors made was the creation of personal adornment. Together with the making of icons it marked a change from their predecessors. While there is small evidence of special adornment within Neanderthal sites, it is with the coming of our direct ancestors, Cro-Magnon, that we notice an explosion of personal adornment. There is something inherently beautiful within our human minds and we reach for this beauty as we reach for the stars.

While we cannot state with perfect certainty what these jewels and adornments meant to the ancients, we have learned from contemporary primal societies that these adornments have certain meaning and can serve a magical function. Take for example the mirrored cloth. If you are a natural beauty, people will naturally gaze upon you. This gaze can cause envy and be disruptive. The wearing of a mirrored cloth will deflect said envy. In fact, in many cultures, the use of a shiny object, eye forms or the color blue is used to deflect what we commonly call the evil eye. The evil eye is the result of envy and one can be envious of us for many reasons.

To choose the elements for sacred adornment it is helpful to look to Nature. See how the material natu-

rally acts and responds in the natural environment. A mirror is naturally inclined to reflect. It is natural to use it to reflect evil back upon the one who sends this evil, whether it is sent consciously or not. To choose to use it to absorb energy is going against it's natural inclination. One may try, but it is tough going. It is much easier to use it in harmony with it's actual nature. Purpose follows Nature.

The body is a natural canvas and when treated with respect and love it is in perfect union with the Divine. The Feri body acts with the outer self to be in harmony with the inner self. Feri practitioners make frequent use of Vivi to determine what one likes. Vivi will send sensual pleasant feelings to Emi at the sight of beautiful things. If these sensual feelings are sent to Ori one may create a state of harmony and physical identification with the Gods. That is what one means by the term charisma. A divine power, a type of mana generated by the alignment of the three souls on the body canvas.

True beauty depends of this reception of sensual energy. Feri beauty is not dependent on current trends and we do not look to the media to be the judges of our beauty. Nor do we hand our power to manufacturers of petty products. This may appear odd to the world at large. But within the nation of Feri, one look tells all. We communicate the love of our loa, and consequently ourselves, with the dress of the Gods.

We look to the Gods for Their inspiration. Find the loa upon your head and live in close identification with these loa.¹² Complete physical identification with the loas upon our heads will bring out the natural beauty within you. This is the charismatic beauty of a harmonious being. As the Gods wear certain raiment determined by Their personality, so one in identification with these Gods will choose similar adornment.

There are many examples of sacred adornment from many cultures. Masks, ritual clothing, tattoos and other body art are just the tip of the iceberg. The amount and diversity of these adornments are so numerous it is impossible to cover all aspects of sacred adornment in this short book. Instead, let us focus on three special adornments that may be of interest to the Feri ritualist; the crown, the veil and the girdle.

The Crown

“Jack fell down and broke his crown....”

The crown signifies our connection to the Ori via the top of our head. The crown is a signal of divine power and a mark of our own sovereignty. It has a relationship to kingship and authority. Like the witch’s coned cap, a crown describes our ability to raise certain power and direct it according to our will. Placing a crown upon our head during a rite is to draw down the power of the deity for whom the crown was made. The wearer of a crown becomes godlike.

Observe one of our prime deities, the Blue God in the form of a peacock. Peacocks have a fan shaped crest on the head, forming a type of crown. It is a natural formation and the crown we wear may be of natural origin. “Who is this flower above me?” The use of flowered wreaths for the top of the head is a sure sign of the deity upon your head. In Rome there were many wreaths for various deities. There was a wreath of wheat for Ceres, laurel for Apollo, and reeds for Pan.

Here are a few suggestions for crowns for the Feri deities:

Nimue: fragrant white flowers, fruit blossoms

Mari: roses, evergreen foliage

□nna : rose hips, seed pods

Divine Twins : peacock feathers, snakeskin, horns

The Star Goddess is crowned in stars.

The Veil

The origin and use of the veil comes from Cora Anderson. Veils are a reminder to us that though we don't always see the Goddess, She is always present among us. It marks a boundary between the mundane and mystery. Just as we speak of the veil of mystery becoming thin at certain times, so the veil of the Goddess can be pulled back to reveal that which we do not yet know.

The wearing of the veil is to be like a cauldron. Within the veil is mystery and power. When you are placed within the veil you are a being of great mystery and power, not representative of power, but a conduit *for* power. When pulled back your mystery is revealed. If possessed by Her loa,¹³ then the great light of Her being is revealed. The pleasure of the veil belongs not to the one who wears it, it is for the others within the circle. They are the recipients of revelation.

In Feri, veils are worn at specific times for specific purposes. Here are the veils used in our rites and their designations:

White: For Flowering rites as in a wedding or menarche.

Black: For Croning rites and as an alternative to Anna.

Lapis: For ceremony as the Star Goddess or Anna.

Red: For initiation, men may wear the veil when accepting initiation, but it is not necessary.

All other colors are generally used in trance and ritual

situations to protect the priest or to signal the end of possession.

The Girdle

Since the earliest time of the modern human animal, we have evidence of stringed belts or skirts, suggesting a pronouncement of the sexual nature of the Goddess. The movement of a woman's walk, causing the string to sway in harmony with her hips, calls attention to our sacred sexual nature. It is meant to be provocative.

Many dancers use a fringe hip scarf with a downward pointing triangle. Sensual carvings in India mark beautiful girdles worn by the Devi Dasi, temple dancers. The addition of bells and tassels announces to all who may see and hear them the presence of a fully sexual being. Twisting the fringe into a net may have announced a woman ready to harvest her sexuality.

Any circular adornment may be considered a girdle. All the powers normally ascribed to the circle holds true for the girdle. The red cingulum is a common adornment in many Craft traditions. It signifies the witch in full command of their powers.

Some girdles may be worn around the neck, making it a power tool and may have protective properties. There is a wealth of lore concerning leis and their symbolic meanings. Malas and rosaries are devotional adornments which act like a yoke, a spiritual discipline. For example amber and jet necklaces are the rosary of the Goddess. Malas are special adornments that act with purpose and power.

These adornments are most effective when made by an artisan who has the full capacity to bend magical

purpose into the object worn. They move beyond mere adornment and become sacred objects if the Fey artist has imbued the adornment with the powers of the Gods.



Here are instructions for constructing a special type of girdle, the metie' belt. This lore was first presented by Victor Anderson, and is slightly modified for convenience.

Measure the length of your waist. Take a sturdy red cloth about 3.5" wide and add 1.5" to the length of the waist. Cotton or wool works best, silk is not recommended for this type of belt.

Using a half inch seam allowance sew around the belt leaving an opening a few inches long. Stuff the belt with sacred herbs of your choice. The choices may depend on the loa the belt is dedicated to, or the purpose for which you may use the belt. Slip stitch the opening to hold in the herbs. Use your preferred method to close the belt, snaps or a belt hook and eye works well.

While the belt is perfectly useful plain, feel free to decorate it as the Gods will. You may even take the time to embroider the cloth before sewing it. Another alternative is to hand sew natural objects, sacred to your purpose, on the belt.

The metie' belt, unlike a cingulum, is to be worn underneath clothing while doing ritual or spells. It's purpose is to act as a spiritual protective device. Good spirits will see it and keep evil at bay while you work.

Creation and Tradition

One final word on Feri and the arts. That is the nature of tradition vs. creativity. Where does one end and the other start? If we are to base Feri entirely on individual creative interpretation, disregarding the practices of our elders, then there can be no tradition. For the very definition of tradition is the passing of custom from generation to generation. Repetition of rites and practices are inherent in tradition.

Yet, for those who practice Feri, we find that tradition and practices vary from coven to coven and individual to individual. Creative, spontaneous acts cause change. Feri students begin by mimicking their elders, but upon initiation a curious process occurs. They inevitably bring their own creative impulse into the tradition thereby changing the tradition. Perhaps our close identification with the Star Goddess demands this. For if She is the great initial creative impulse, and we are possessed of Her, then perhaps it is our tradition to be creative, thereby creating change.

The problem in Feri Tradition, is to balance this great unyielding creative impulse with continuing tradition. I believe this can be accomplished by being acutely aware of the process and structure of creativity. It is in our internal creative shamanic process and in the set structure of Feri ritual and mythology that we find tradition. We are a dynamic nation, bound by the old ancient ways and inspired by ecstatic union with the divine. It is a good bargain with the Gods, and I hope that by these writings, I have in some way continued this process.

Our material culture is a mirror reflection of our spiritual nature. Antecedents to our culture may look back upon our works and get a clear idea of the nature

of our worship. They will easily determine our mystical, sensual and yet steely nature. This work we do now will lay the ground for further investigations and experiments.

Though the Fey arts may differ in individual style, the common thread underlying all of them is the shamanic process. It is not so much what we create, but how we create them. Creation is our top value. And our top value is revealed and evidenced not so much by *what* is created, but in *how* it is created. Next to creation itself, our top value is our love of the Gods and it's revelation through divine sensual ecstasy.

This vision is worth any price. Let none interfere with our sacred work. Though they ridicule, diminish and even punish, keep the work going. It is our link to our ancestors, to the Star Goddess Herself. Continue to keep our tradition, this vital tradition of sacred art and it's central position in our worship. Pursue this with courage and a Black Heart. For the artist cannot lie, we can only reveal.

It's never been clear to me which occurred first, my becoming an artist or an ecstatic. Though the knowledge of witchcraft as religion did not come to me early in life, I always knew that I was an artist. At age seven a dragonfly blew by me, and I experienced a profound sense of awe. I was told by my Godself that "I will always sign my art with a dragonfly." My association of art has always been accompanied by an ecstatic experience. I can never separate the two, they have become my personal Divine Twins.

Much later I realized I was a witch and I should seek out other witches. Upon reading *Drawing Down the Moon*, I came across Adler's account of Victor Anderson. My mind in the area of the medulla oblongata literally opened up a small space, a hole, ready to be filled. It was then I realized that I was Feri, I could

feel it in my body. I found a religion of art, an ecstatic tradition built on the sublime beauty of the Goddess, of Nature. Making art is ecstasy, a deep love, a state of self possession. I am home. Evohe, Blessed Be.

Anaar

appendix:
notes
on critique
interview with Victor Anderson

Notes

- 1: There are many beautiful tellings of this story, I elected to pass on the oral transmission I received from Victor Anderson.
- 2: For the sake of clarity, the Feri terms will be used throughout the book. Victor said these terms are Feri, though they are derived from Africa.
- 3: Remember that this is not the actual etheric location of Vivi. I don't know why, but it seems very easy for the beginning student to locate the Vivi in their hara.
- 4: A term garnered from a lecture by Mark Levy at John F. Kennedy University on Nov. 17, 1993.
- 5: "One must observe Nature and build your beliefs around that. Most people have a belief system and try to force Nature into it!" Victor Anderson.
- 6: Technical prowess can be important in that it serves to bypass anxiety. If you no longer have to worry about technique, you can focus on process. Having said that, the more technique one can master, the larger your vocabulary, the stronger your process.
- 7: These are sacred mudras given to me in trance.
- 8: Levy, *The Javanese Puppet Play As A Model For Performance Art*, pg. 3
- 9: This is a Hula movement known as Kaholo.
- 10: It should be pointed out that to merely lift out foreign symbols without understanding the cultural impetus, or taking it out of context, is basically cultural theft. Also it may not work, or even be dangerous due to the lack of understanding of the basic cultural underpinnings. Some symbols or ritual gestures may be too foreign. There needs to be a commitment to the understanding of the context of this symbolism. How far are we willing to commit to these cultures? Are we

willing to go as far as to speak their language? What can we reclaim from the past? How much can we borrow without assaulting another culture? In this regard, it is extremely important that we proceed with caution. With regard to ancient cultures, it is true that we may learn much from them, but again a note of caution and respect is important here.

11: This ritual is not specifically Feri, it is a Japanese ritual learned as a child and probably Buddhist in origin.

12: Loa can be inherited, gained through a personal obsession with a deity, or a deity decides it has an affinity with you. In the latter case, you may find that the loa “chases” you.

13: The veil may interfere with possession, and protect you from it. It will block access to your Ori and close the fontanel area that is still sensitive psychically. Creating an opening at the crown may prevent interference.

On Critique

It is imperative for artists to receive good, well thought out critique. It helps guide our hand. Critique will allow the artist to understand both their strengths and weaknesses. It can point to new directions for us. It can also show us our dead ends.

Many of us never bother to give a good critique. We just say “I love it!” if we really do, or “Oh, that’s nice.” if we don’t. In the latter case, we are simply being polite. But in the former case, we may not have the vocabulary to state why we like a certain piece of art. Understanding art is the key to enjoying art. And if you truly do not relate to a piece, then it is a service to the artist to point out why.

However, as stated we want to be polite. It is understood that an artist will spend a great deal of time on a single piece, and simply stating that you don’t like it is hurtful. A sincere and well thought out critique is not painful to an artist, but much appreciated.

Here are some guidelines for giving a good critique:

1. First and foremost understand the artist and what their work is about. Once you dialogue with the artist, your appreciation of their work will often grow.
2. The first few statements one can make should be generally positive. Point out what elements are working in the piece. Do you like the color? Or perhaps you are drawn to the symbology, or use of space. Take a few moments to really understand what is good in the piece.
3. When encountering elements that simply don’t work, start your statements with a question such as “What if.....” For example, “What if there were more contrast

between the two figures? I have trouble seeing the second figure.” This approach is non-threatening to the artist and offers alternatives. It empowers the artist with knowledge and a chance to make choices.

4. Be careful in making comparisons with other artists. It is best to simply focus on the art on their own merits.

5. Finally, offer encouragement. Restate the elements that are working. Create a dialogue, involve the artist in the critique. Be open to changing your mind once the artist has stated their position. If a change of mind does occur, tell them.

Interview with Victor Anderson

This interview was conducted in the Summer of 1993 as research for my Master's thesis in Arts and Consciousness. It remains intact, with no effort made to edit his response.

1) What draws you to creative activity in the arts?

The Arts are just shadows of your life. It's what you put into it. It's already there, but you express it. You grow into it.

2) Why do you think others are not so drawn?

They're mistaken in their ego. They try to make form without the life in it. They express a false ego in their work. People need to realize that they are art. Every idea that is strong enough will seek a form.

3) Under what special circumstances would you not be able to be creative?

When you decide that all matter, form, is dead solidity. But it's really energy and when you understand that you are free to be creative.

4) How would you overcome that block?

By meditation. Take a simple object and meditate- enter the Mu state. A place of pure, clear consciousness. It is not a 'no mind' it isn't nothing. Nothing is thrown away. An atom of gold is still gold. Passion is energy, you have to live life, before you can express it.

5) How do you respond to those that feel that because you are creative, you are somehow special; apart from others?

All life must be respectful. We must all be respectful of one another. You are special, but you do not have to separate yourself from the universe to be special, you

grow into it.

6) What do you say to those who say "Oh, I could never draw, paint, write poetry, sing, etc.?"

Stop limiting yourself! There's no use arguing with them. Just say "you don't say?" or "What are you afraid of?"

7) How do you show others that they too can be (are) artists?

You can't show them beyond their limitations. If they aren't suited for it, don't push. Just say "Go-Live!"

8) Do you feel that you have made any sacrifices for art?

You should not make sacrifices. If you feel the Gods and contribute to the Kami, it is joyful. But never harm yourself. The universe doesn't like to suffer. If you give up too much for Art, you are making a mistake.

9) How do you compare (relate) art making with religious, magical practices?

Realize that Art and Magic are two forms of the same thing. Look at cave art, it is both a prayer and art. Art really originates in Magic. Art is making pictures of what you do.

10) Does Art heal?

Yes it can heal, and it should.

Victor Anderson (1917-2001) is a poet and shaman. He is author of *Thorns of the Bloodrose* and is Grandmaster of the Feri Tradition. His work is known throughout the world and he has been very influential in the Craft.



Root and Eye. Often when in trance, I am urged to take up pen or pencil. I never have any idea of what I am about to draw. The results are often surprising and give me a spring-board to develop full scale drawings. Pen and ink

