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Children of the Earth

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Children of the Earth

BELTANE

#6

P.O. BOX 584, PETERSBURG WV 26687

\$5/4 issues

@CotE 1982

FINALLY! Sorry this one's so late, folks. I won't waste time and space with the excuses, just get on with the typing. Happy Midsummer. Send COPY! Please!
Blessed Be! Hestia

Hope everyone can read this with the reduction printing. Y

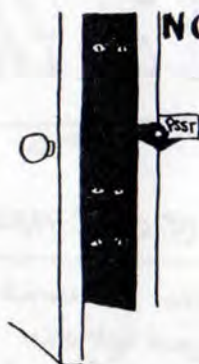
Dear CotE--

I enjoy your publication very much. We are a Pagan family with three young ones at home (8, 4½, and 3) plus 4 adult half-siblings living on their own, one of whom is a Pagan also, our 18-year-old daughter. Living in a California town where one sees many different lifestyles and beliefs, we don't have to be quite so secretive as other Pagan parents in different parts of the country. Which is good, because the two youngest can be quite outspoken at nursery school and other places. When they saw the angel cookie cutter they were to use for play-doh, they both said "The Goddess!" They love all the various books the library has about witches, most of which present a fairly bad image. So we have explained that witches are not really like that, that we are witches, etc., that witches are strong and magic people who care about the earth and do circles like we do. In trying to figure out what is real and what isn't, Skye asked me, "Mom, is there any such thing as a bad witch?" Good question!

We've had a lot of fun changing traditional Xian holidays back into pagan ones -- it's so easy! Some of your articles have been very useful to us, some of the rhymes, the candle-making, etc. I am fortunate because there is a public alternative school here near us and at holiday times they have explored various other traditions, including Native American, African, etc. At Yule I went and did a short candle ritual with some interested children. My eight-year-old (Swan) is free to call himself a Pagan and to share his beliefs and feelings.

The other day I was walking by a Catholic hospital with my two Youngest. We saw a statue of Jesus from the back with very long hair. Skye (4½) said, "Is that a god or a goddess?" I said "That's Jesus." On the way back, Lela (3) said "There's the Goddess!" but Skye told her wisely, "no, that's the son of the Goddess!"

--Kathleen, Calif.



NOTES FROM THE BROOM CLOSET

HOW THE YULE COLUMN CAME TO BE WRITTEN AND
WHAT COMES NEXT

by Cloud

It's half-past September, and I'm on deadline for CotE. Not that there isn't a column on file, but my article and Jenny and Arne's pictures are ready to go and there's room in the envelope, and the gremlin-muse in charge of such things whispers "You really OUGHT to do something for Yule". I've been reading Kimberly's acrostics, but they're not in my head when the first unplanned lines of the Yule column poem

come out on paper. Rather, I'm thinking of Jenny and Kimberly in the follies; of a beautiful five-year-old who participated in the women's mystery at Lammis; of another beautiful child, once mine, now seven, whom I haven't seen in several years. Does she still talk to the birds, I wonder. I wonder too, last September, where my current kids will be in another summer (it's March as I type this, and I'm still wondering) and what will come of my shining new relationship (half a year later the wondering is over, and the wonder has barely begun). Half my head is full of the poem: summers, children, Yule, renewal, death and sunshine. The other half worries. El Salvador, as I recall, is Big. So is the Middle East; the ERA looks doomed. What will they think of next, I wonder, and shortly after I mail that column I am answered with the Family Protection Act, from which may the gods protect our families.

As I write that column, which has brought loving responses from those of you who know where to write and at least one who doesn't, I'm beginning to realize something that now seems so clear I wonder we didn't all see it years ago.

We're parents. We can't help concerning ourselves with the future; we change its diapers and send it off to school every day. We tell each other what we want for the future, in these pages and elsewhere, and what we tell each other boils down to CHOICE. Options: the right to choose, each for himself, to be urban, rural, solvent or not, straight, gay or other, married or single, religious or not and what kind, foodfreaks, junkjunkies, homebirthed or obstetricked, all or none of the above. We want our kids to choose their own paths, make their own decisions, keep their options open. Terrific goal. But we forget, from time to time, that we stand here espousing it in America, an authority-based culture where someone always knows What's Best for You and becoming more so every day, in a world of different but also authority-based cultures coming close to extinction. When, from time to time, we do remember

the kind of world in which we are saying we want our kids to live free, or even just live to grow up, the rest of what most of us remember to do about it is to get the coven together and do a hefty spell. Folks, I want my kids to be free too, and I magick about it, but I can't bet on that being enough - not with the future rubbing jam on the television in the next room. When I learned kitchen magick, I learned that you can do all the love spells you want, but if you won't take a bath they plain won't work. It's the same with anything; a good spell must be followed up with mundane action.

If we want our kids to have the opportunity to make the choices we want them to be capable of making, we are asking for a world in which choice is possible. We are asking for change in every area of human life. We are asking for equality, both of opportunity and of the means to take advantage of it. We are advocating recognition by every human on Earth that every single way of being a human on Earth is beautiful and worthy of respect, and that there is no such thing as a second-class citizen, a minor nation, or a ludicrous idea. We are asking for a world in which "An it harm none, do what you will" is truly law.

What we are advocating is a revolution, not just in government, but in THOUGHT, FEELING AND ACTION, because that's what it will take to make the world we want; and where great changes are concerned, more than anywhere else, ritual must be followed up or it's so much wishful thinking. Many of us seem not to remember that; we say we're apolitical, and we mean by that that we do spells for a better world but we don't join causes. I want to ask you to reconsider that. I want to ask you to think that the line between the political and the religious, in a religion that stands for every being's right to live and grow, is as blurred as the line between the religious and other areas of the personal. Wherever our survival and that of the planet is involved, circle work is no longer, if it ever was, enough.

WE ARE ADVOCATING A REVOLUTION. What kind, and what cause best suits each individual's style, time and skills, I leave in good Pagan fashion to each individual. If nothing else comes to mind, call your local NOW chapter and find out how you can help protect your family from "Family Protection". But this year let's each go and find something, and follow up on our workings for peace and freedom with mundane world WORK. We WILL be able to "parent for freedom" when true freedom exists. So mote it be.



Book Review

THE OWL'S KISS by Mary Q Steele. Greenwillow Books, 105 Madison Ave, N.Y., c. 1978

This book contains 3 stories, told as folktales. One is about a girl who wants to be a Witch, another about a girl who speaks with owls, and the third of a great snake whose head contains a magic crystal. Very enjoyable reading for all.

Dear Cote-

WHAT ABOUT ADAPT CHILDREN?

A good Pagan publication like Children of the Earth covers a lot of ground on the parent and child scene. There is, however, one topic I haven't seen touched on as yet, and I would like to hear how others may have handled this situation.

How about the children who are born with or develop strong occult talents very early in life? I am not referring to the very psychic. That is not what I would consider a problem, but is a blessing.

Let me relate a few cases I am personally familiar with. My daughter by the age of 7 was into astral projection. She did it while asleep and was sometimes aware of the trips and sometimes not, but had no control over doing it. She wasn't scared. That would have been an easy thing to explain. But, she would drop in on friends of mine and visit them at odd hours of the night. The problem was that she was VISIBLE and if she spoke, they could also hear her. Can you imagine trying to explain this to Pagan friends, let alone non-Pagans? It ain't easy, friends. The worst part of it was that she usually appeared as a floating, disembodied head that spoke and smiled. Finally at about the age of 12, she got control of it and no longer drops in unannounced.

Then there was the case of my son who could not be stopped from casting spells to get even with people who had hurt his feelings and they always worked. One night while a bunch of us were sitting around the dining room table chatting, we all started hating each other for no reason. All at once everyone in the room turned hostile. Something led me upstairs to his bedroom and I checked his altar. On it was a small wax figure of a vampire. I can't explain why or how this had caused our problem. I never have gotten an answer to that problem, but the minute I removed the figure all the bad vibes flew out the window. I replaced his wax figure with a statue of Isis and there were no more situations like that one. I still have the vampire and I keep it as a reminder of what can happen. Over the years I have had a lot of things like these happen with my children. Fortunately, as they grow up they can be taught to take responsibilities for their own actions.

One more case was the child of a woman I knew very well. She was a student of mine and although familiar with magick, she was no match for her baby daughter. The little girl could levitate her toys about the room, turn on the music box from across the room, and conjure up very "strange" (animal and otherwise) friends before she was a year old. This child could also talk to anyone who was psychic in their head before she could talk. These mental chit chats were in perfect adult English. She could also sit on the unaware lap, or her mother's, and drain off all your energy. What a vampire!

O.K., so we have all seen the TV program Bewitched, but what do you do when you have one of these real live breathing Tabathas in your home? Has anyone else had these experiences and if so, how did you handle it?

--Lady Qusil

and another letter from Lady Qusil

I have been reading your newsletter and several others lately who have been printing letters and articles on the evils of circumcision. I find the points made to be in vast error on this subject. I am not saying that people don't have a right to feel that they don't want circumcision, but they keep saying it is a terrible thing brought on by Doctors and not in keeping with the natural Pagan way of things.

In the first place, almost all ancient Pagan countries had Rites of Passage for both boys and girls. The girl's rituals consisted of (among other things) the taking of their virginity with sacred objects of wood, stone, or bone. This was done by the women to open the girl up and make it easier on her and whoever the man in her womanhood would be. For the boys the ritual was in part a circumcision. This being done by the men as an act of manhood. In some cultures it was done with a clam shell while others used stone, bone, or other sacred knives. These rites were done at about the age of 9 to 15. Some used drugs to dull the pain, some didn't. For those who didn't --- Oh, the pain!

I am NOT suggesting we go back "the way it was" and do this to our children today. Today's mental culture would not make this a good experience for our children. But let us face it, this was the old Pagan way in Egypt, Norse lands, Africa, South America, American Indians, Greece, Italy, and some of the Celtic nations.

In addition to this, I would like to add that I had my sons circumcised when they were 3 days old and for one of them I was with him when it was done and he never even flinched. There is also the fact to consider that some parents are embarrassed about talking about sexual areas of the body with their children and never teach their sons how to clean themselves properly. For these unfortunate young men there is the problem of dirt, infection, and smell. As far as cleanliness and sexual sensitivity, I really think these 2 factors have more to do with the individual than whether he has been circumcised or not. I have known men who have gotten themselves circumcised in their 20's because of sexual problems which the operation cleared up. The pain was terrible in these cases, but they have all stated that it was worth it in the long run.

In closing, let us remember that circumcision was the way they used to tell the Jews (and other beliefs) from the Christians. The Christians were not circumcised.

This letter is just an opinion...not an absolute pro or con.

Blessed Be.

Lady Qusil

Announcements and Contacts

Charlene Deering, 24 Highland Ave., Waverhill MA 01830
would love to hear from other Pagan parents.

Church of Seven Arrows' Women's Ceremony - Motherhood,
is available, #1, in booklet form. Very nice. 4385
Hoyt St., #201, Wheatridge, CO 80033.

SABBATS WITH CHILDREN

Charlene Deering

Our children ~~are~~ our future. Do we want a future of guilt trips, or one of understanding and acceptance? As parents, it is our responsibility to recognize the uniqueness of our children. As Wiccans it is our hope that they will share our religion of attunement to nature's cycles. This is done easily by including the children in seasonal activities adapted to their level.



Some suggestions for each Sabbat follow.

SAMHAIN Stories from folklore, explaining why the Goddess appears as a crone at this season, a guessing game (good practice for precognition, often high in kids), or making things from fall leaves collected during a walk.

CANDLEMAS Of course, making candles. Things needed to do this are some wicking, a milk carton, ice chips, and melted wax. Fasten the wicking at the bottom of the milk carton. Pack the milk carton with the ice chips. Pour the melted wax in. Put in the refrigerator to harden. When set, peel off the carton. Melting crayons into the wax produces colors.

BELTANE Telling the story of the Goddess' return with the flowers, making traditional May baskets, planting a flower seed the child can nurture and grow themselves, or a maypole dance complete with flowers.

LANMAS Making arrangements of dried flowers, simple "first fruit" ceremonies, again related stories, a harvest picnic, a harvest clean-up outdoors. Work can be fun!

The things the children ~~make~~ will have more meaning to them if they know their parents will take them into the circle for the Sabbat. This is a useful unifying link between the generations.

If the child is old enough, the equinoxes and solstices can be explained. If not, stories of spring, summer, fall, and winter are useful. Children enjoy being involved in what is important to their parents. Wicca is more than a religion, it is an entire lifestyle. It is a natural environment conducive to raising children. The important thing is to include them, keeping some of the activities at their level.

It is a good feeling to share Wicca with the children. To feel that part of us, full of wonder, that is always a child, impulsive, carefree, and enjoying living, free of fears. In this way, children feel the understanding acceptance they crave.

Don't forget to listen to the children. Their ideas often indicate how they view the world. Although not always adequately thought out, with a little feedback, their ideas can be clearly formed and useful. Furthermore, knowing how to listen to the children is always an effective tool in parenting.

Blessed Be!
Charlene

PARENTING THE CHILD WITHIN: ALCOHOL, ABUSE, AND
THE PAGAN PARENT

by Dana

At a Pagan Festival, a Pagan parent gives hir 1-year-old child a full cup of especially potent wine to "taste", and finds it humorous when the child finishes it. At a Sabbat, a teen-age boy sits in the corner doing a private tranceworking when his father throws a book at his head (and connects) to "catch the dummy's attention". In a private home, a Pagan parent alternates drinks with beating hir child and wondering why the child has problems relating to hir.

Fantasy? Don't I wish! However, since alcoholism (however rare) does occur in the Pagan community and amongst Pagan parents, it's an issue worth examining: specifically the abusive alcoholic parent. Some definitions are probably in order here.

ALCOHOLIC: One whose drinking is out of hir control; substance abuse. Best indicated by an endless supply of excuses, and a consistency to the drinking pattern not found in social drinkers.

ABUSE, PHYSICAL: The process (or threat, in some cases) of doing physical damage to another human being, usually spouse or child. Results in physical and/or emotional scarring in the victim, and (usually) self-loathing in the assailant.

Please note that we are NOT here referring to wine at rituals or drinks on occasion as alcoholism; we are speaking to the very specific problem of substance abuse, with the substance in question being alcohol.

Some facts:

- * Scientists have now established that there is a genetically inherited predisposition to alcoholism. When that is environmentally reinforced, the child is almost always an alcoholic adult. The tendency to abuse is environmentally transmitted, from parent to child.
- * Alcoholism in the father increases the child's chances of being born with either mental or emotional handicaps including but not limited to mental retardation, emotional and/or learning disabilities.
- * Alcoholism in the mother tends to lower infant birth weight and produce physical abnormalities. A birth weight that is too low makes the infant less viable (likely to live). Such children are sometimes born prematurely, adding yet another complication. (Fetal alcohol syndrome. -ed.)
- * There is a tendency for the chronic alcoholic to neglect everything but the alcohol; sometimes 'everything' includes rent, food, or medical care. Who knows how many children suffer for their adults' indulgences?

It remains, as always, for the alcoholic or abusive individual to make the changes in hir life. Alcoholics Anonymous, while Christian in outlook, has some very good results. In most communities

and every county there is a Mental Health Service to counsel the abuser. I would hope that that individual would give the effort to change his pattern at least as much energy and will direction as s/he would give a spell. After all, you don't magick half-way, do you?

It remains for the family and friends, coven and community to be aware and supportive of the individual's efforts to change. Sometimes, especially in the cases of child abuse, it may be necessary to go to the authorities to have the child removed from the home for the child's protection. (Knew you'd love that idea!) But really - one of the tenets of wisdom is knowing what you can't do. As a last resort, it's a really poor option, but better than nothing. And under most conditions the child will be returned to the family as soon as a. the alcoholic is dry, and/or b. the abuser receives counseling. In the long run you may be aiding another in the quick and (relatively) painless resolution of his karma.

If you are hesitant to become involved, ask yourself one question. "If I died in the next minute, how would I answer in the afterlife for my action or inaction now?" Then act in accordance with the dictates of your conscience, higher self, or whoever you perceive as having answered you.

I tend to question alcoholic and/or abusive folks who claim to be Wiccan and still disregard the Rede ("An ye harm NONE....") so blatantly. But whatever action you do or don't take, decide in a spirit of Love.

No matter how terrible their actions may seem, remember that these people are still PEOPLE even under all their problems. Revenge won't get anybody helped, but a positive and loving attitude might. Most alcoholics are (badly) 'adapted children', playing a game and trying to please and gain acceptance. Most abusive parents were abused children themselves, needing reeducation about child-raising, and needing to re-parent their own child within. Both need Love, and any help they can accept or you can offer.

This has been a terribly difficult column for me to write. It must be nice to sit behind a typewriter and tap out words that never relate to you personally; I can't do that, I've been there. I welcome your comments or suggestions for other topics, and sincerely hope that the pain that this one put me through will do somebody, somewhere, some good.

May the Gods of your choice smile on you.

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THERE IT IS, PAT! I REMEMBERED.
CAN I COME OUT NOW?

GROWING UP PAGAN

by Goldie Brown

Raising a child the Pagan way is often difficult, but the joy of seeing them approach adulthood reflecting this upbringing is worth every effort.

There was never any question as to how I wanted to raise my daughter, since I was brought up by strict Christian parents and suffered from their well-intentioned restrictions, especially in adolescence. Born with six planets in Scorpio, Cancer rising, and a Pisces midheaven, I knew my child was going to be deep! Surrounded by magic and witchcraft from birth, I'm watching her begin her teen years now, growing into the Future. Here are some notes on those earlier years, to inform and encourage parents of younger children.

Since growth and change are accepted as natural and inevitable in the Craft, one virtue of a Pagan childhood is developing adaptability. It is good to provide as stable an environment as possible for any child, but when the changes do occur, they are not as traumatic to the circle-raised youngster. These changes encompass everything from their own physical growth to the death of loved ones. This is not to say that Pagan children are taught to be stonefaced amid crises, but being ever aware, even at very young ages, of the certainty of change, they can be reassured by knowledge of the circle. The round of the seasons is especially comforting and they learn that change is ever-present throughout life. This helps them to adapt in later years in dealing with the changes within themselves and others. Life is not a straight line - it is a spiral, and this is seen in all of Nature.

Imagination is a trait that Pagan children seem to enjoy in abundance. In this world of bland conformity, creativity should be cherished and nourished. Not only does it help in art class, but it will aid them in their growing-up years to make creative solutions to problems they meet. Being able to think independently and come up with alternative methods is something many adults would like to do but are too hemmed in by their own set thought patterns.

The biggest mistake, and the easiest, is forming prejudice against Christians. Coming on too strong against them is not in the spirit of love so essential to the Craft. Sometimes it is hard not to strike back in anger when emotionally charged phrases like "devil worship" and "black magic" are applied, but it is better to keep calm and forgive their ignorance.

Pagan children should know about Christ. It can embarrass them if, when suddenly questioned, they don't know who Jesus is. With children, rather than being a social outcast, the one who doesn't know will most likely just be considered "dumb". It is healthy for a child to have at least a vague education about other religions, especially Christianity. One viewpoint could be that Jesus was a witch - he worked magic and healed. (but it's advisable that this be "secret" information!) An assortment of Bible stories wouldn't offend even the staunchest Pagan, and would make the child feel more at ease among Christian friends if the topic turned to religion.

As I see the next generation of witches coming up fast, I'm full of hope, as I watch the tincts we love grow in the strength and enthusiasm of their youthfulness.

NEO-NATAL NOTES

PANDA'S FAVORITE FOODS
BY ROBIN

I can't believe people actually buy baby food! When my sweetie, Pandora Isis, started grabbing for food at 5 months, we started by letting her suck tasty treats (like mashed potatoes and spinach) off our fingers. She never cared for anything creamed or pureed. Now, she eats her foods either coarsely ground or broken up with a fork. These are her very favorite recipes. All of these may be blended for a smooth texture.

SALAD SUPREME

Grind together: raw carrot, $\frac{1}{2}$ cucumber; add one T. rice and a pinch of dill weed (dill alleviates gas). Add 1 tsp. of melted butter. Don't peel the vegetables; the vitamins are in the skin!

SCRAMBLED LUNCH

Beat 1 egg (or 2 yolks) with 2 tsp. cottage cheese, a pinch of salt, 2 drops onion juice, and 1 tsp. grated cheese (any kind). Scramble in 1 tsp. butter.

CHEWY FARINA

Cook farina (or cream-of-wheat) in usual manner, then add 2 - 3 crumbled whole wheat graham crackers and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. honey or molasses. (Editor's note: the American Beekeeper's Association cautions against giving honey to children under 1 year due to the danger of infant botulism)

GARLIC MASHED

Cook 1 whole small potato, mash with pinch of salt, 1 tsp. butter, 2 T. milk or soy milk, and $\frac{1}{2}$ clove pressed garlic or 2 drops of garlic juice or $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. garlic powder.

ZUCCHINI ATHENS

Boil $\frac{1}{2}$ sliced zucchini, mash with fork and add the pulp from 2 slices tomato. Add a dash of dill.

SPECIAL SPINACH

Mash together 1 small sweet potato and $\frac{1}{2}$ C. cooked spinach. Add 1 T. milk and 1 dash salt.

PANDA'S BANANAS

To 1 mashed banana, add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp each honey and creamy peanut butter.

FRUIT TREAT

Grind together 1 raw apple and $\frac{1}{2}$ raw carrot. Moisten with 2 T. pineapple juice.

RICE ISIS

$\frac{1}{3}$ C. cooked rice, 1 egg yolk, pinch salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. nutmeg, $\frac{1}{3}$ C. soy or skim milk, 1 T. honey. Combine ingredients, bake 15-20 minutes at 350° till liquid is almost completely absorbed.

SOUPER SINKERS

$\frac{1}{2}$ C. whole wheat flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, dash garlic powder, and just enough water to make a thick, goopy batter (about 2 T.). Drop mixture by $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. into rapidly boiling vegetable or chicken broth.

PANDA'D EGGS

Hard boil 2 eggs. Mash yolks and add 1 tsp. mayonnaise, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. grated celery, pinch paprika, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. tomato pulp or grated cucumber. (If desired, egg whites may be ground and added.)

PANDINKY'S PEAS

To $\frac{1}{2}$ C. cooked mashed peas, add 2 T milk, 1 tsp. butter, 2 drops onion juice, and dash salt.

CHARMING CHICKEN

Grind together $\frac{1}{2}$ C. cooked chicken, $\frac{1}{2}$ cooked carrot, 1 cooked stalk celery, salt to taste, and moisten with 4 T. chicken or vegetable broth. Then add 2 T. rice or whole wheat alphabet noodles.

NURSERY RHYMES by Ellen

In a summer breeze one day,
A sylph invited me to play.
She tried to teach me how to fly,
And she giggled and she chuckled and so did I!

Salamander, salamander, burning bright
Thank you for your heat and light.
Salamander, salamander in the flame,
Aren't you glad I know your name?

The Maiden is my sister,
The Lady is my mother,
My grandmother's the Crone,
And all of them are me!

Greetings, to you, Brother Tree!
You're a lovely sight to see.
When I grow, I hope I do
Grow to be as strong as you.



LOLLABYE by Hestia

Close your eyes, go to sleep,
While I sing you this tune,
You are watched by the Lady
Whose light is the Moon,
She will watch o'er your dreams
'Til the new day's begun
And you cheerfully wake
In the light of the Sun.

BEDTIME PRAYER

Mother Earth and Father Sky,
Bless the bed where I will lie.
Mother Moon and Father Sun,
Guard me till my sleep is done.
Blessed be.

MORE NURSERY RHYMES

by Hestia

3 LADIES

I took a walk one Summer's day,
I met three Ladies on my way,
One was young with beauty blest,
One had a baby at her breast,
One was old and wise and grey.
I met them on a Summer's day.



MAY DAY

King of the Wood, Queen of the May,
Dance about the Pole today,
With the ribbons intertwine,
Fruit will grow on tree and vine.

Robins in robins-nests,
Foxes in lairs,
Worms in the garden,
Rabbits and hares,
Young maidens dancing,
Kings wearing crowns,
Ever the Circle spins
Round and around.

← Round dance
↓ games



Round and round, spin and spin,
Ring the bells, Ring summer in,
Spin and spin, round and round,
Ring the winter from the ground.

Lady in the Springtime
Hunter in the Fall
Summertime and Wintertime
Their love surrounds us all.

SPRING CLEANING RHYME



Fire, water, earth and air!
House is dirty everywhere.
Water, earth, air and fire!
Get it clean before we tire.
Earth, air, fire, water!
Scrub it well in every quarter.
Air, fire, water and earth!
The house is clean and filled
with mirth!

Lance, the Lonely Unicorn

by Maiden Isabel (Age 12)

There once was a lonely unicorn. Why was he so lonely? you ask. It all started when Lance was little. His mother told him to never go near the human villiages. Then his mother died. Without his mother, Lance was lonely, he got lonelier and lonelier as the days dragged on and on. He tried to play with the little creatures of the forest, but he would hunt them with his long horn. Then he met a big jack-nabbit who had been a close friend of Lance's mother.

Jack taught Lance how to get food and hunt, what berries to eat and not to eat. What grasses to chew when he was sick. Lance would spend his morning hunting for food, but his afternoons were spent laying by the stream talking with Jack. They would play and chase each other around.

Lance would always remember what his mother told him. He was curious about the human world, but he never went near. One day a human came into the forest, it was hunting season. As Lance and Jack were running through the forest a loud sound was heard. Lance saw his friend Jack shot and laying on the ground. He saw the human take Jack back to his village. Seeing this, Jack was more determined than ever to stay away from humans. His curiosity was replaced with fear.

Every day seemed longer for Lance without his friend Jack. Lance would miss playing in the forest with him. Lance would never go back to the place where Jack was shot.

One day a beautiful woman came to the forest. Se was wearing a long beautiful white gown, and a necklace with a star on it. She was so beautiful, but Lance was afraid to go near her. Lance saw her make a cave into

her home. There she lived for many days. Lance would watch her gather food for herself, and take baths in the waterfall.

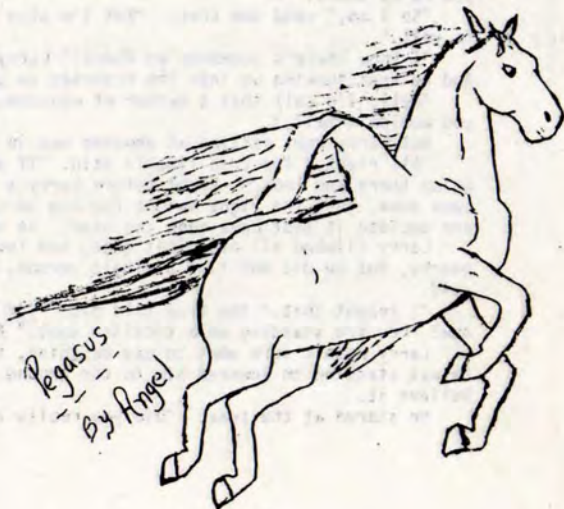
One day while the woman was taking her bath, Lance was curious and started poking around in her cave. When the woman came back Lance was still in her cave. The woman saw Lance as she came into the cave. Lance was scared to death. But the beautiful woman put out her hand in friendship. Lance accepted the offer and moved closer. She patted him on the head. Lance was not lonely anymore with his new beautiful friend. He would let the lady ride on his back some days. Lance would do everything with the woman. Lance still lives in the forest with the woman. But nobody knows where.

The End

SPINNING WHEEL

Anita, age 12

As the wheel spins round
It leaves dust all about
But when it stops,
And it will,
Everyone
Will just stand still
To see when the wheel
Starts spinning again.



LARRY A

Once upon a time there was a little boy who thought he was alone. The little boy's name was Larry, and he thought he was all alone, which is not at all the same thing as being by yourself. Being alone is not being connected to anybody, not being part of anything or any one.

Larry had only recently come to live in the wood, all by himself. He hadn't made any friends yet, so he spent a lot of time in the wood, alone.

He hadn't always felt he was alone. Only a little while ago, he had been part of a family. But his parents had gotten on a plane, and something happened, and they left this life for another one, leaving Larry here, alone.

He lived with his aunt and uncle. They tried to be nice to him, but Larry wanted his own Mother and Father. If he couldn't be part of his own family, he wouldn't be part of theirs. Besides, his aunt looked so much like his mother that whenever he looked at her, he was reminded that his mother was gone.

One this particular day, he was wandering through Wonderwood, thinking how alone he was. There wasn't anything in the world he was part of. It was a terrible way to be.

He sat down, leaned against a tree, and thought about being alone some more. It was very quiet there, and feeling sorry for himself made him very tired. The breeze made the tree leaves rustle. It was a strange rustling, almost as if the trees were talking. He wondered what they were saying. He listened very carefully. Very, very carefully. If he listened hard enough, maybe he would hear what they were talking about. It sounded like one of them said, "Seymour."

"Seymour?" he said out loud.

"You called?" said the tree he was leaning against.

Larry jumped right up. He ran around the tree, peering up into the leaves to see who was up there. He couldn't see anybody, but he was sure they were there. Trees don't talk. "Come on," he called out. "I know you're up there."

"So I am," said the tree. "But I'm also down here, and there is no need to yell."

"I know there's somebody up there!" Larry yelled. "Trees don't talk." And he kept looking up into the branches to see who was there.

"Well, I'd call that a matter of opinion," the tree said. "I do wish you wouldn't yell."

But Larry kept yelling at whoever was in the tree.

"All right," the tree finally said. "If you won't take my word for it, go up there and look." Right before Larry's eyes, one of the tree's branches came down, just the right height for him to climb. He jump back, stared, and decided it must have been the wind. He began to climb up.

Larry climbed all over that tree, and looked hard at the other trees nearby, but he did not find a single person. "There's nobody here!" he said.

"I resent that," the tree told him. "I'm here. Do you want to get down now? You are standing on a ticklish spot." And the tree giggled!

Larry wasn't sure what to say or think, so he just nodded. The limb he was standing on lowered him to the ground. At last, he just had to believe it.

He stared at the tree. "Did you really talk to me?"

ILL TOGETHER

by Ellen

"You talked to me first, you know," answered the tree. "You called my name. If you started the conversation, you could at least have the courtesy to believe I could answer. It was terribly rude of you not to."

"Oh," said Larry, thinking about what he'd said. "Is your name Seymour?"

"Right!" said the tree, happily. "Seymour the Sycamore at your service. Wouldn't you be more comfortable sitting down?"

Larry thought he would be, so he did.

Seymour said, "I liked it when you leaned on me, but it felt like you were very sad."

Larry admitted that he was. He explained to Seymour about his mother and his father going away to another life, and leaving him behind in this one, and about not belonging to anybody, anywhere.

Seymour was very sympathetic. "You can belong to me," he suggested.

"People can't belong to trees," said Larry, disustedly.

"Trees can't talk either," Seymour reminded him.

Well, Larry thought about that a long while. Maybe he could belong to a tree. It was better than not belonging to anybody. "How?" he asked.

"Easy," said Seymour. "Take this leaf," and a branch leaned down bearing a tiny, baby leaf. "Put it in your mouth." Larry did. "Now, hold it there, leaned back." Larry leaned back. He sat between two roots, and could feel the tree against his back, the roots along his legs. Two branches came down and crossed over him, holding him gently, blocking his view of the rest of the wood.

"Now," Seymour instructed, "close your eyes and say 'I hold the tree within myself. The tree holds me within itself. I am the tree. The tree is me.'"

Larry closed his eyes and said the words. He began to feel very strange. He kept repeating the words as Seymour told them to him. "I am the tree. The tree is me. The tree and me are we. We are the tree and me." Over and over he said the words. Soon he and Seymour were saying them together.

Larry felt himself getting bigger and bigger. He couldn't feel the tree against his back any more. He couldn't feel the roots against his legs. Bigger and bigger, Larry grew, growing, stretching, farther and farther. His arms reached up to the sky. He could feel the wind on his arms and his face. He felt himself sway in the wind, back and forth.

"Open your eyes," said Seymour, and the voice seemed to come from inside his head.

Larry opened his eyes, and oh! He was so high! He could see right into the branches of the next tree. He could see over some of the shorter trees. Larry looked down. The ground was very far away. He wondered how Seymour lifted him without his knowing it. The wind blew, and Larry swayed with it, waving his branches. Seymour chuckled inside his head. "I didn't lift you, silly. You are me. We are we."

Larry was a tree! He and Seymour were both the big sycamore tree.

"Now, we belong to each other," said Seymour. "How do you like being a tree?"

Larry thought it was wonderful. He liked the way the wind felt. It swayed him, and cooled him, and made him feel fresh and alive. Larry wiggled his littler branches, reaching waaaay out to the side. He tossed his upper branches.

"I'm not alone any more," he thought. And Seymour laughed. They didn't even need to talk anymore, because they were the same thing, and each one knew what the other one was thinking. He liked not having to talk. It was hard to find the right words, sometimes.

Larry enjoyed swaying in the wind for a while, and then he began to notice other things. He felt his roots stretching way down into the Earth. He felt the food he needed coming into his roots from the Earth. When he was thirsty, he felt water coming into his roots.

He thought about his green leaves. He felt the sun on them. He felt the cells in his leaves...growing in the sun. He remembered from science class--leaves take in carbon dioxide, and put out oxygen. The Sun makes all this happen. He tried to remember the word his teacher had used. Photo---photo-synthesis, that was it. It was happening right now in his leaves.

A blue bird landed on a small branch. Larry smiled at it. He liked the feel of its little feet on his branch. Somewhere else, he felt a sort of tickly feeling. A squirrel had a little nest inside him somewhere. He thought about the squirrel. It hid its store of nuts there, and slept there. It had its babies there, and raised them. He didn't even mind that they tickled.

The wind blew, and Larry swayed. His leaves touched other leaves as they swayed. It was like dancing with the other trees.

How wonderful to be a tree, he thought. Trees are not alone. They are part of everything. The sun is part of me because it makes me grow. The air is part of me because I breathe it in and out. The earth is part of me because I get food from it, and hold onto it with my roots. The stream and the rain are part of me, because I can drink the water. How wonderful to be a tree and not be alone.

"How wonderful to be a boy," thought Seymour. "Boys can run, and boys can laugh. Boys can splash in the stream whenever they want. They don't have to wait for rain to feel the water on their bodies.

"No," thought Larry. "Boys are alone. Trees are part of everything. Trees are even part of people, because people breathe out the air that trees take in. And trees breathe out the air that people take in."

"Hell," thought Seymour. "If trees are part of people, then aren't people part of trees?"

"I guess so," thought Larry. "But since I'm a tree, I just feel more like part of everything."

"That's because you're paying attention. Pay attention some more."

So Larry kept still and paid attention. The wind cooled him, the earth held him and fed him, the bird sang on his branches, the squirrel busied herself in her home.

He thought about his roots stretching down into the earth, feeding him and holding him. All the other growing green things in the whole world had their roots in the same earth. All the other green growing things on the Earth felt the same bright Sun, making their leaves grow. All the other green growing things breathed the same air in and out. They were all together.

Larry swayed in the wind. Down near the stream, a rabbit came to drink. It sipped the water, nibbled on a nearby green leaf, then sat drowsing in the sun. We drink the same water, Larry thought. The leaf is part of the bunny now, and the leaf came from the Earth I have my roots in. The Sun makes the little rabbit grow, too. Larry felt together with the rabbit.

How wonderful to be a tree, he thought. I am part of all green growing things. I am part of the Sun, and the Earth, and the wind, and the stream. I am part of the bird on my branch, and the squirrel in my middle, and the rabbit dreaming in the sunlight.

Larry swayed in the wind. A little fox drank from the stream, and sat near the rabbit, warmed by the Sun. Larry was together with the fox.

A little girl came up to Larry and Seymour. She sat between their

roots, reading a book, warmed by the sun, touched by the breeze. Larry felt together with the little girl.

Larry swayed in the wind. The little girl read for a long time, resting against his trunk. Then she left. The little rabbit and the little fox left too, to carry on whatever business they had. Larry thought he would feel lonesome, since they'd been together and now they were gone. But he didn't. They were still together, for they were still on the same earth, under the same sun, touched by the same breeze.

"Oh!" thought Larry. "Could it be that--was it possible? If the rabbit and the fox and the little girl were still with him, were still part of him, and if he could be together with the green growing things clear on the other side of the world, then maybe--just maybe, he was still together with his mother and father. "Am I, Seymour?" he asked.

"We are all together," Seymour answered. "Once you are together, you cannot be apart."

Then Larry thought about his aunt and his uncle. They loved him, and they tried to be together with him. But he had shut them out. Could he be together with them? "You are," Seymour told him. "You just weren't paying attention. We are all together."

"I have to tell them," said Larry. But then he felt sad. He and Seymour couldn't move to go tell them. Would he have to wait until they came to the wood?

"You can be just Larry again," said Seymour. Then Larry felt sadder! He didn't want to leave Seymour. He didn't want to be alone again.

"Seymour?" he thought.

"We are all together. We were, we are, we will be all together."

"Then, can I be a boy again?" asked Larry.

"Close your eyes, and think 'I am Larry, by myself. Not alone, but by myself.'"

Larry thought over and over, "I'm Larry, by myself." He felt himself shrinking, smaller and smaller. He felt his roots drawing up from the Earth. He felt Seymour's trunk against his back, Seymour's roots against his legs, Seymour's leaf in his mouth. He opened his eyes. He was a boy again.

For a moment, he was frightened. Was he alone again? "Seymour?" he whispered.

"We are all together," Seymour whispered back, and Larry knew he wasn't alone. The Sun warmed him, the stream talked to him, and the wind touched him.

Larry laughed and began to run. He ran through the wood, and was together with the wood as he ran. He laughed all the way.

He ran out of the wood. His house was nearby. He saw it, and was together with the house. He called out to his aunt and uncle. They ran outside to see what was wrong, but when they saw Larry's smile, they smiled back.

Larry ran to them and hugged them, laughing. He looked at his aunt. It didn't hurt that she looked like his mother. And he loved the part of her that didn't, because it was her. He looked at his uncle, and loved him too, because he was himself. Larry laughed and hugged them both. They looked surprised, but so happy!

Larry could tell they didn't understand, so he explained to them the best way he could. He said, "We are all together!"

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