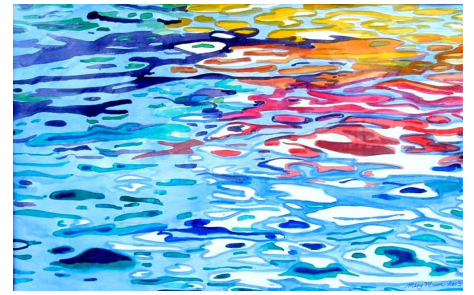




Galaxies Evening Service 16 March 2008

Service by Pete Cowley
& Fergus Collinson



Welcome:

Welcome to our service tonight

Tonight's service theme is : **Autumn Equinox: Dying to be reborn.** Reflection on the slow death of summer with the nights drawing in and sunrise becoming later. The leaves of the deciduous tress are starting to turn gold and yellow and other wondrous colours.



Late autumn colours – who said death can't be glorious?

Call to togetherness and sharing:

Leader: We are all part of the rhythm of life.

As we gather together to share of ourselves and our journey, may peace and love be with us.

All: May we be makers of the peace and givers of unbounded love.

Passing the Peace:

Leader: Now that we are reminded that God the free Spirit shares itself with us, we can share our peace and love with one another.

Let us feel the power of the earth that holds us together.

Let us celebrate our gifts in song and dance.

Let us all rejoice in our power and our beauty.

All: We open our hearts to the miracle of birth and the mystery of God's love in all Creation. We carry in us the divine spark. The gift of love, which we share tonight, deepens us as people, deepens us as sisters and brothers.

Each person shares hugs, or whatever you are comfortable with, with those around them.



Notices

Reflection

There is a sense of calm around autumn equinox as the fine weather lingers on with seductive steadiness, making winter seem far distant. Yet shadows are beginning to lengthen and sunbeams slant under verandas, shafting in under low windows.

It is a time for cutting, gathering and storage. In Britain bracken was cut as it turned bronze and yellow, and was left on the hillsides to dry. Later it would be brought into the lofts and used for storing the apple crop. In Aotearoa, raupo was cut in March when it was at its best, and the leaves used for thatching. In both countries it is still berry time; in Britain blackberries, cranberries, red and black currants would be gathered for jam and wine-making; in Aotearoa karaka berries were gathered, soaked and hangi-steamed.

At autumn equinox, light and dark come one more into balance. It is time to give thanks and make offerings, to acknowledge the power of seeds to carry life during their time of gestation over the dark months. This is the moment of time to tune into the mystery of the changeover, knowing that what appears to be dying is really part of the movement forward into renewal and rebirth. This is the moment to hold faith that the darkness will bring forth new life at the spring equinox.

Mabon

Autumn Equinox

Alban Elfed

Approx: **March 21/22**

(Minor Sabbat - Solar Festival)

The Second Harvest

1st Day of Autumn

Day and Night of Equal Length

Sun reaches 0 Degrees in Sign of Aries

Gender: Masculine in nature



"Hoof and horn, hoof and horn. All that dies shall be reborn.
Corn and grain, Corn and grain. All that falls shall rise again."

Even though Mabon is ruled by the young Holly King, the Oak King is still holding His Earthly Crown. There is a fusion of counter masculine energies and the nature of the Twins and their Oneness is prevalent at this Sabbat. There is a switch in the paradigm though, and that can be sensed as the Oak King makes way on His journey towards the Underworld through the Sacred Womb.

We honour the dark as being another part of the light and light as being part of darkness. The two halves of one whole, neither being, in actual fact, good nor bad but a necessity of and for life.

Today, all things are in balance, but after tonight darkness will once again overcome the light as the nights become longer and the days shorter.

At this time, the dying God of the Sun is preparing for Winter by readying Himself for His last breaths, and His passage into the Underworld at Samhain. This is a time to reflect on those who have passed over and events that have been and will be.

The Goddess laments Her dying God. Her own youth is fading and She is now maturing into Her Wise Crone aspect. But She holds great joy, for deep within Her Maiden aspect She carries the impregnated seed of Her consort, who will be reborn at Yule. She also knows that She herself will once again be young Maiden as the Wheel of the Year turns further on.

The full moon closest to this festival is called the Harvest Moon; and a time for gathering inspiration from past experiences and past lives. A time to try to understand one's self and to grow spiritually. A time to be oriented in the present, to remember the past, to live for today and to believe in the future.

Mabon is a time of reflection, a time of gathering, a time of balances and the struggle to remain in balance. As Autumn moves into Winter the Goddess slowly leaves the land to rest in the Underworld, awaiting the birth of Her child at Yule, and as She goes, the land echoes Her departure, evident in the changes of nature around us.

At this Sabbat, take a moment to reflect upon your life; this past year, your joys, your sorrows, your disappointments, your triumphs. Look back upon the year just passed, and when looking at the full Harvest Moon, realise in Her reflection is the sum of all of our experiences of the previous months.



Christian: harvest

No major Christian festival became attached to autumn equinox. Why was this? It would appear that there was no answering resonance in Christianity to the stories of the descent into the underworld of Mabon or Persephone. The closest Christian festival came a week later at Michaelmas. This was held in honour of St. Michael, the chief archangel who expelled Satan from heaven, and in the northern hemisphere this fell on September 29. It was the traditional time to eat goose, the bird had grown aft on corn stubble left after harvest, and it was also thought to be bad luck to eat blackberries on or after this day.

In many countries around Britain, harvest rites survive in various customs enacted at the cutting of the rye, wheat or barley crop.

The practices go back to neolithic cultures where the last ears of the grain would be tied to the top of a mound to signify the umbilical cord, connecting people with the womb of the Goddess inside the earth. Throughout ancient Egypt, Greece and all over the grain growing lands of Europe, people made corn dollies. In Greece the corn seed itself was stored in pots near the hearth to remind people of the dead, known as the Demetrioï - the people of Demeter the Grain mother - who were at rest in her womb and would be resurrected in spring.

The Church readily absorbed the old Pagan practices of harvest celebration, welcoming it in with ringing of bells. People brought their wheat and bread to be blessed, and even hung a corn dolly over the chancel arch. However, none of this survived the zeal of the Reformation; it wasn't until Victorian times that the Harvest Thanksgiving service was revived, and people could once more bring the fruits of the harvest into the church to be blessed. This revival is believed to date from 1843, when Rev R.S. Hawker invited his parishioners to come and receive the sacrament 'in the bread of the new corn' at his church in Morenwenstow, Cornwall."

Walking to the Fall Equinox by Rafael Jesús Gonzáles

One morning the bedroom
fills with rainbows --
the light slants golden
& fall has come.

For one brief moment
day & night dance in balance
& the time is come
for the pressing of the grapes.

A personal perspective - Fergus Collinson.

pEOPLE mISS THE tRAINS

if they're late

Toll Rail have cut their ticket box people.

Poles fall off trolley buses in Willis Street

and they can't get going...

At the station

there are no train timetables I can see in the pockets under the bus ones on the wall.

Merde!

I wanted to see when the units leave Upper Hutt

I don't want to be freezing my balls off there waiting and waiting...

Eventually they open up the doors on the left hand unit under the direction board

past Japanese business women and men filming.

Are they getting (thanks Nest) ideas for angrypanthus to accessorise the Tokyo subs?

They're non-directional

I can't decide

After a while I notice through my RH peripheral vision

people getting out

and onto the other unit, the one with the doors open

If I want to be worried about our pathetic crawl along the harbour, I would be -

but I love this train ride

The gulch of trees along the straight to Trentham

Every week they change

Seeing the Wellington and Manawatu Railway

coke dealer den high up windows

diner carriage at Wallaceville isn't rotted away ...

Now we Jack London anywhere in the world single track retro-bang

salmon jump

moose howl

Taita bridge rattlesnakes writhe

The station toilets are padlocked

Not family train/ bus interchange friendly at all

Thank you God that I'm not busting, that my irritable bladder has quieted down

Theres no time to find if they have timetables anywhere -

I've gotta run

"Getting my ears syringed out is the best orgasm a man can have, since Pliny"

big Mickael, Nest's twin mustache mate from Athena says

I have to meet him... but when, where, how?

"I've got 18 minutes contemporary urban edge Upper Hutt downtown...?"

"Yes, of course!
You can get coffee nearby," Ann Maree tells me
I don't smell any
I'm 7 minutes down - I'll shop ecologically, responsibly at Sally Arm
YES they have trampers hats

Two
The worried normal man, bad skin, bakelite glasses, white with didymus green underneath
but theres a romantic orange Princess Margaret one
that will be perfect for wearing with Mr Jeff Jeffs HAPPY post Otago Boy's High
tombstone thigh orange pants...
if he gets bored with them

"Ritalin gave Douglad Wright instant erections -
I want some too please?"
"Fergus, I'll get you to bend over
I'm going to check your prostate...
Its a bit squashy, but I'm pretty sure you don't have prostate cancer.
I'm double-checking
Take this in for the antigen levels blood test"

I think theres a unit back at either 5.00 or 5.10...
After that - whatever
I don't want to wait

Whew! Up ahead is the gleam of the unit headlights dock siding
swing into
and on 5.08, double headlights, the
big train of the night to Masterton
Perhaps it only breaks down on the way to work
Here it is careening in
all seven recycled South Island Limited 1937-42 tin belly carriages, and 1976 Japanese van
Oh... ultimate luxury
theres a big window airconditioned Trans-Scenic one on
We're about to go
I can't quite see if New Zealand's last flip-over seat carriage
the one I rode in, with Petrus, from Gisborne to Napier New Year's Eve is still on

The new train carriages on the 6.20 are beautiful
The windows look much bigger than the ones on The Capital Connection
Jeremy doesn't think so
Next time I'm trainspotting I'll take my William Nees measure tape with me
"I thought they were going to have
a wee bar with Sassy Blonde and Emerson's Porter"
He's showing me where the timetables live
Behind the swing back door into Enquiries
People who run redlights should be able to see the hunky lunging stripes

unless they're blind
or suicidal

Those poor poor people!
Getting home way after 10
Somebody was
at the Featherston Creek crossing
Theres a Jack London photo in The Dom Post of them trudging along to the buses

Cancer runs on Dad's side of the family, heart disease on my Mum's
I'm immensely grateful for the pure healing there always is in my GP's saying
"Fergus, I'm sure theres nothing wrong
and heres a list of things I want you to check out at the lab
The miracle of feeling up, instead of uncertain, anxious
What are some of the things on our peripheries that worry us, scare us?
Its liberating learning to trust our mates enough to start trying to talk about the
unknown

Now and again we're talked about where *Galaxies* is going, tried fresh ideas
to stretch our numbers, continue our ebullient buzz of exploring, enjoying
One comment from a couple of years ago, I remember very clearly -
Thank you Judith!
It was a very Easter thing to say
You said
"It may be that *Galaxies*, as we know it
has to die, to be reborn
as a mens group."

I don't think any of the rest of us were enthused
We love the liveliness of our lesbian input, and miss it
But I'm finding it is stale only having 3 or 4 of our core people who always try to turn up
the continuing uncertainty, because of our small number
because unexpectted things occur
of not knowing whether anybody else will be there
when we step out of the car outside Saint Andrews

Sometimes a visitor
But I sense they're disappointed there aren't more of us
(as in, except for you, Jeremy, not coming back)

Lady Autumn (by Deirdre Akins)

Lady Autumn, Queen of the Harvest,
I have seen You in the setting Sun
with Your long auburn tresses
blowing in the cool air that surrounds You.
Your crown of golden leaves is jeweled
with amber, amethyst, and rubies.
Your long, flowing purple robe stretches across the horizon.
In Your hands You hold the ripened fruits.
At Your feet the squirrels gather acorns.
Black crows perch on Your outstretched arms.
All around You the leaves are falling.
You sit upon Your throne and watch
the dying fires of the setting Sun
shine forth its final colors in the sky.
The purple and orange lingers
and glows like burning embers.
Then all colors fade into the twilight.
Lady Autumn, You are here at last.
We thank You for Your rewards.
We have worked hard for these gifts.
Lady Autumn, now grant us peace and rest.



Blessing

"Dear Mother, we gather in ancient rite for renewal of spirit.
Let there be sensitivity and belief of the spiritual reality behind what we refer to as "Nature
and Humanity.
Let us share a sincere love of Earth Herself and a desire to communicate with all of Her
children.
Let there be a belief in, and love for, the individual lives of this planet."
Author Unknown

Blessings for Humanity - Blessings for the Earth
Blessings for the sacrificed and those that mourn
May the Wisdom of the Ages clear the vision of those blinded
May Love be sown and respect be propagated
May understanding and compassion flow as the waters of our Mother Earth
May the winds take our prayers and our wills drive the change
May we find strength within
May we learn and may we grow
Blessed Be
~ Tara