

Anthesphoria

The Festival of the Flowers
A Hellenic Spring Equinox

“Before we begin, let us expel that which stands to distract us and block our purposes.”

Outdwellers:

“Outdwellers! Titans who stood against Zeus! Spirits of Khaos and Discord! Those who would detract from this rite, those with ill intent in their hearts, I ask you now to accept this token. I give freely to you that you harm none on this day. Accept this! And leave us in peace to do our work. (Offer apple)

“As we appease the Outdwellers, so must we also leave behind the thoughts of the mundane world that stand to distract us from our work today. Breathe deeply. As you exhale, push out the stress and negativity that may have built during your day. Bard, prepare ye the way to the gods...”

Opening statements:

“Greetings to all gathered here! We have come to honor the Theoi in the ways of Old. Today, we celebrate Anthesphoria, the Festival of the Flowers. It is now that we welcome Persephone back from the Underworld and into the Middleworld above. As she walks among us, flowers fall from her feet, and the tears of joy from her Holy Mother, Demeter, bring the sleeping greenery to full wakefulness. Spring is come! Let us rejoice in the light half of the year!

Honoring the Hearth and the Earth

“Fiery Hestia, Sacred Hearth Flame! Hear us this day! To you, O virginal Goddess, the center of our homes and our communities, we offer always the first sacrifice. Hestia! Accept our Offering!

“Gaia, Mother Earth, from whose womb all creation has sprung forth! Creator and sustainer of all, Divine Mother, we honor you. Earth Mother, accept our offering!”

Inspiration

“I call on Apollo, God of Music and Inspiration, and the Muses, who taught him well, to guide our voices during this rite. May they carry the praise of our hearts to the gods with words that are worthy of their ears. Apollo, grant us divine inspiration. Muses, put a song in our hearts. Apollo! Muses! Accept our offering!” (Offer wine)

Establishing the sacred center

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“Let us now establish our sacred center”

Place Omphalos stone at the base of the tree.

“I place this stone as the Omphalos, the naval of the world, the sacred center of the Cosmos. [Anoint stone]

“Like the sacred stone at Delphi, let this stone be the place where Zeus’ eagles meet to mark the center of the world, and through this sacred center, let the World Tree grow, plunging deep into the Earth to touch the Sacred Waters below and reaching through the sky to embrace the Sacred Fires above.” –Emerald Vaughn

“The Portal Song” -Ian Corrigan

Eos Meditation: Grove Attunement

Visualization and Opening of the Gates:

“Close your eyes. Breathe deep. Breathe in and breathe out. Take in the positive energy around you. Push out the negative energy within you.

Above you, around you, below you and before you....all is darkness. Nyx, the Goddess of Night, has taken control of the world and all is consumed in her eternal blackness., broken only on those occasions when Selene shows us her Moony face. Blackness....

You suddenly realize this blackness is no longer absolute. Images and shapes begin to swirl before you, slowly becoming shadowy impressions of the world around you. You see the faintest hint of a tree or a shrub. Looking around you, you realize that these shapes are gaining definition; details are becoming more and more clear.

Dawn. Eos has awakened. As she stretches her rosy fingers across the sky, she gently caresses Nyx toward to West, making the way clear for Helios in the East to begin his frantic and fiery journey across the sky. This is our Gatekeeper. Eos, Liminal Goddess of the Dawn, with the strength to coax back night itself and the very Sun at her heels.

Eos! Goddess of the Dawn! Bringer of light in the darkest of night! We honor you in the Old ways. Accept our sacrifice and in return, join us! Add your powerful magic to ours and aide us in opening the gates! Eos, Accept our Offering!

Open the gates, open the gates, open the gates..... (folk chanting)

Eos! Below you stands the gate to the Lower Realm! Throw back the door to the Underworld! May the Well open as a gate!

Liminal Being of the morning! Before you stands the gate of the Middleworld. May the tree open as a gate!

Holy Goddess of the Dawn! Above you stands the gate to the Upperworld, to the Heavens where all the gods and goddesses are free to roam! May the fire open as a gate!

Eos! May the Gates be open! Esto!

Calling the Kindred:

“We stand, now, in the presence of the gods. They hear our thoughts and intentions. Meet them with purity and devotion.”

“Kindred, the Children of the Earth have need of you. Come forth as you are called and accept the gifts we have brought for you!”

“Shining Ones, Theoi, Gods and Goddesses on high! First Children of the Mother! We honor you today.

To the Khthonioi who rule below,

to the Titans who stood with Zeus as allies,

to the Apotheothenai, Heroes among our Ancestors, promoted to Gods, and above all, to the Mighty Olympians, be welcome in our midst.

Theoi! Accept our offering! (offer oil)

“Nature Spirits! Noble Ones! Guardians and guides of this realm! Spirits of fur and feather, of scale and skin, those who we see and those hidden from sight and unnamed, hear us! Worldly Spirits! Spirits of Place! Beloved allies, we honor you. Nature Spirits! Accept our offering! (offer bread/grains)

“Beloved Ancestors! Mighty Dead who have gone before! Honored Heroes! Grandmothers and Grandfathers of blood! Ancestors of spirit, I call to you! Those of Hearth and those of Heart, hear me now! Those who have stood where we stand, passed to the other side and now hold the secrets of birth and death, we honor you. Ancestors! Accept our offering!” (offer coins)

Offerings to the Kindred:

“Have the kin brought praise?”

“We have.”

“Come forward now with your offerings. Esto!”

Deity of the Occasion:

[Insert story: Persephone’s Garden, about Persephone as she returns from the Underworld: A story of two children who happen upon the Goddess when she returns and are in awe tinged with fear because of her time with Hades. Lesson: Since our ancestors are not to be feared, those Gods and Goddesses who choose to dwell with

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them are not to be feared, either. In return for caring for her garden, Persephone bids the children make wreaths of flowers to bless the farm equipment that their Father's plots may prosper. Reward for piety and perseverance.]

"Persephone, Daughter of the Sky Father, Zeus and the Earth Goddess of Growing Things, Demeter, Beloved Queen of the Underworld! The time is come for you to resume your reign as Queen of the Spring! The world wept and all went cold and barren in your time of absence. You return now, to your sacred gardens, reminding us that loss is inevitable, but sorrow is temporary. As you walk upon the earth once more and flowers fall from your feet, we are reminded that all things have cycles, life and death and rebirth are the part of the world that is constant when nothing else is. The time of rebirth has come!

"Furthermore, you teach us that when faced with a difficult situation we can either **'perish in the pits of Hades** or become the Queen of the Underworld' for a time, rise **above our difficulties and turn our faces to the sun as all circles 'round.** Through your strength to overcome hardships, you teach us the importance of making the best out of difficult situations and finding the good around us. You remind us to be ever vigilant in our tasks and to move forward without complaint. As a pomegranate seed binds you to your station, so too are we bound to follow the Elder ways. Still, you reward us for our piety and for our perseverance. Beloved Persephone, Mighty Queen! Accept our offerings! **Esto!" (offer** dried flowers and wine)

"Have the folk brought praise?"

Open up offering time for the folk.

Final Sacrifice:

"We have come before you with praise and offerings. We have given freely of our hands, of our spirits, and of our hearts! May our deeds and words be accepted. Kindred, accept our sacrifice! **Esto!" (offer** whiskey)

Omen

Return Flow

Is it the will of the Kin to receive the blessings from the Kindred?

It is!

Join me in drawing down that which is our due.

"The Power of the Kindred flows through this place
From below, from around, from above,
Let the power converge at the sacred center
With strength and wisdom and love.

Drawn down from above and up from below,

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In return for the offerings we make,
Pour forth your blessings into this cup
The folk here wish to partake!" -Emerald Vaughn

"Blessed Kindred! We have gathered and given freely, from our hearts and from our hands. Having accepted our offerings, the bonds of Hospitality require that a gift is due in return. You have promised (omen), and I call on you now to fulfill your promise. Lift first pitcher.

"Shining Ones! Shower down your blessings; fill this cup with the bounty of your wisdom and inspire our hearts. Fill this vessel from the Cup of Inspiration!

"Shining Ones! Give us the Waters! (Pour a portion into second pitcher.)
Shining Ones! Give us the Waters!

"Noble Ones! Infuse this cup with the light that shines forth and renews our spirits!
Grant us the blessings of the spring of renewal!

"Noble Ones! Give us the Waters! (Pour.)
Noble Ones! Give us the Waters!

"Mighty Ones! Pour forth your blessings of knowledge gained through your infinite experience! May the waters in this pitcher be infused with the Waters from the Well of Wisdom.

"Mighty Ones! Give us the Waters! (Pour.)
Mighty Ones! Give us the Waters!

Put down first pitcher.

"Children of Earth! This cup is filled with the blessings of the Kindred!
Lift the second pitcher above you.

"Behold! The Waters of Life!

"As the cup of blessings is shared, please hold your portion and take a moment to internalize the omens. (List omens) What do these mean to you? Once all have been served, we shall partake as one."

Wait for the waters to be distributed.

Chant: Blessings, flow through us, sustain us, renew us. Behold! The waters of life! -
MSB

Song: Earth Mother, Blossom Lifter

"Children of Earth! You hold before you the Cup of Inspiration, infused with the Blessings of the Kindred! Hold high your glasses!

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May all assembled here be granted the blessings promised to us, each in his or her own way, and as we drink, may the blessings flow through us and spill out into the rest of our lives, that all whom we meet will know we are blessed.
Esto!"

Workings: Wreaths to bless the tools of the garden.

"During this awakening of the Earth, we see the flowers peeking their heads bravely above the ground, greeting our Lady of the Spring as she passes by. These first flowers awakened by the magic of the Goddess are now used to spread that magic to the gardens 'round our hearths.

"By Persephone's charge, we place these flowers upon the tools of the trade. May they be blessed by her hands. May they be blessed by her mother's hands. May they bless the hands that hold them.

"Persephone, may the gardens touched by these instruments that tend the Earth be ever fruitful, healthy and hearty. May the plants grow large, the blooms grow larger and the fruits droop to the roots. All things that grow are blessed by your touch. Persephone, grant us plenty this growing season. Esto!"

Thanking the Kindred:

"And now let us begin our departure..."

"Persephone! We honor you. Your return allows the Earth to Fruit once more, through the hand of your blessed Mother, Demeter. May your continued and growing presence in our realm be ever on our hearts and minds as it is evident all around us. Persephone, Returned Maiden of the Springtime! Hail and farewell!"

"Ancestors! Those of Music and Theater, those of Hearth and Spirit, and those of blood, we thank you. We are grateful for your knowledge and learn from your experiences. Thank you. Hail and farewell!"

"Nature Spirits! Noble Ones, Allies, Spirits of Place. We are grateful for your guidance, and we thank you. Hail and farewell!"

"Theoi! Shining Ones! Your intervention has saved many of us more than once, and we thank you, for your guidance and your wisdom, for your mercy and your strength. We thank you. Hail and farewell!"

Closing the Gates:

"Eos, we honor you, and we thank you for your continued awakenings, for illuminating our paths when they are the most dark, and for the many things you do that are unseen. We ask you to join your magic with ours once more this day and close these gates, leaving behind the imprint of the work we have done today."

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Close the gates

Remove Omphalos

“Let all be as it was, only better.”

Thanking the Deity of Inspiration

“Apollo! Muses! Our words have been true and our hearts have been touched. For your gifts of Divine Inspiration and Eloquence, we honor and thank you. Hail and Farewell!”

Thanking the Earth Mother

“Gaia! Earth Mother! Without you, there is nothing. You gave us life, you sustain us, and when we die, you assume us back into your body. We honor and praise you. Earth Mother, we thank you. Hail and farewell!”

Thanking Hestia

“Hestia of the Hearth Fire, Sacred center of family and society. Just as you are the first and last born of your Mother, so do we honor you first and last. Hestia, we thank you. Hail and Farewell!”

“We have honored the gods, and we have done it well. This rite is ended! Esto!

Woot!

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Open Rite

-Outdwellers: Skarlett

Opening Statements

-Hestia: Anna

-Gaia: Shawneen

-Apollo: Irisa

Omphalos

-Portal Song

-Attunement: Mike

-Gates: Mike

Calling the Kindred

-Gods: Seamus

-Nature: Paul

-Ancestors: Anna

Open offering to folk

DotO

-Persephone's Garden

Open offering to the folk

Final Sacrifice

-Omen: Seamus

Return Flow

Working: Bless the Tools