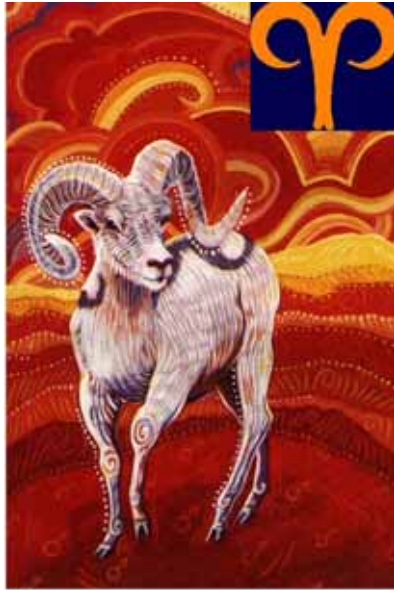




At 18.25 hours on 20th March the sun's declination passes zero as it leaves the sign of Pisces and enters Aries.



Spring Equinox Celebration Monday 20th March 2006



For I will pour out water on the thirsty soil,
streams on the dry ground.
I will pour my spirit on your descendants,
my blessing on your children.
They shall grow like grass where there is plenty of water,
like poplars by running streams.

Isiah, 44:3-4

To feel alive, important, and safe, know your own waters
and hills, but know more.
You have stars in your bones and oceans in blood.
You belong to infinity.

Alla Renee Bozarth

Personal Meditation

Friends! Let us be mindful here of the presence of God.
Since we have neither bread, nor wine, nor altar, we will raise ourselves
beyond these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself. We, your
people will make the whole earth our altar and we will climb up in spirit to
the high places, bearing with us the hopes and labours of our mother, the
earth.

There is communion with God, and a communion with earth, and there is
a communion with God through earth.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Why Are We Here?

We are here to mark the spring equinox which will occur at 6.25 this
evening. But also we have chosen the theme of water and March 22nd of
every year is World Water Day. Which this year is being guided by
UNESCO under the theme 'Water and Culture.' The following is taken
from the World Water Day web site.

We plan our cities near water; we bathe in water; we play in water; we
work with water. Our economies are built on the strength of water
transportation - and the products we buy and sell are all partly water, in
one way or another. Our daily lives are built on water, and shaped by it.
Without the water that surrounds us - the humidity of the air, the
roughness of the river's current, the flow from the kitchen tap - our lives
would be impossible. In recent decades, water has fallen in our esteem.
No longer an element to be revered and protected, it is a consumer
product that we have shamefully neglected. Eighty percent of our bodies
are formed of water, and two thirds of the planet's surface is covered by
water: water is our culture, our life.

Sacred, water is at the heart of many religions and is used in different rites
and ceremonies. Fascinating and ephemeral, water has been represented
in art for centuries - in music, painting, writing. Each region of the world
has a different way of holding water sacred, but each recognizes its value,
and its central place in human lives. Cultural traditions, indigenous
practices, and societal values determine how people perceive and
manage water in the world's different regions.

Poem

My help is in the mountain
Where I take myself to heal
The earthly wounds
That people give to me.
I find a rock with sun on it
And a stream where the water runs gentle
And the trees which one by one give me company.
So must I stay for a long time
Until I have grown from the rock
And the stream is running through me
And I cannot tell myself from one tall tree.
Then I know that nothing touches me
Nor makes me run away.
My heal is in the mountain That I take away with me.
Earth cure me, Earth receive my woe.
Rock strengthen me.
Rock receive my weakness.
Rain wash my sadness away.
Rain receive my doubt.
Sun make sweet my song.

Nancy Wood

Blessing (say together)

May the blessing of light be on you,
light without and light within.
May the blessed sunshine shine on you
and warm your heart
till it glows like a great peat fire,
so that strangers may come
and warm themselves at it, and also a friend.
May the blessings of the rain be on you,
the soft sweet rain.
And may the blessings of the Great Rains be on you,
may they beat upon your spirit and wash it fair and clean,
and leave many a shining pool where the blue of heaven shines,
and sometimes a star.

He said, 'That is the Land of Freedom.'
 She said, 'How am I to get there?' He said, 'There is only one way, and one only. Down the banks of Labour, through the water of Suffering. There is no other.'
 She said, 'Is there no bridge?' He answered, 'None.'
 She said, 'Is the water deep?' He said, 'Deep.'
 She said, 'Have any crossed already?' He said, 'Some have tried!'
 She said, 'Is there a track to show where the best ford is?'
 He said, 'It has to be made.'
 She shaded her eyes with her hand; and she said, 'I will go.'
 And he said, 'Take this stick; hold it fast. In that day when it slips from your hand you are lost. Put it down before you; feel your way: where it cannot find a bottom do not set your foot.'
 And she said, 'I am ready; let me go.'
 And she stood far off on the bank of the river. And she said 'For what do I go to this far land which no one has ever reached? Oh, I am alone! I am utterly alone!.'
 And Reason, that old man, said to her, 'Silence! what do you hear?'
 And she listened intently, and she said, 'I hear a sound of feet, a thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, and they beat this way!'
 He said, 'They are the feet of those that shall follow you. Lead on! Make a track to the water's edge! Where you stand now, the ground will be beaten flat by ten thousand times ten thousand feet.' And he said, 'Have you seen the locusts and how they cross a stream? First one comes down to the water-edge, and it is swept away, and then another comes and then another, and at last with their bodies piled up a bridge is built and the rest pass over.'
 And she said, 'And, of those that come first, some are swept away, and are heard of no more; their bodies do not even build the bridge?'
 'And are swept away and are heard of no more - and what of that?' he said. 'And what of that...' she said.
 'They make a track to the water's edge.'
 'They make a track to the water's edge...' And she said, 'Over that bridge which we shall build with our bodies, who will pass?'
 He said, 'The entire human race.'
 And the woman grasped her staff.
 And I saw her turn down that dark path to the river.

Olive Schreiner.

Chant

Air I am,
 Fire I am,
 Water and Spirit
 and Earth I am.

Reading:

Water.
 Lakes and rivers.
 Oceans and streams.
 Springs, pools and gullies.
 Arroyos, creeks, watersheds.
 Pacific. Atlantic. Mediterranean.
 Indian. Caribbean. China Sea.
 Arctic. Antarctic. Baltic.
 Mississippi. Amazon. Columbia. Nile.
 Thames. Sacramento. Snake.
 Seine. Rio Grande. Willamette. McKenzie. Ohio.
 Hudson. Po. Rhine. Rhone.
 Rain. After a lifetime of drought.
 That finally cleanses the air.
 The soot from our eyes.
 The dingy windows of our western home.
 The rooftops and branches. The wings of birds.
 The new light on a slant. Pouring. Making everything new.
"He Na Tye Woman," by Paula Gunn Alien

Litany of Water

Let us remember the presence of Creator Spirit through water.
 Your spirit moves over the waters at creation.
All: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
 You form new life in the waters of the womb.
All: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
 You renew the Earth with winter snows and spring rains.
All: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
 You share life-giving water with your creation.
All: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
 You dance your people through water to promised lands.
All: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
 You weep with us over the violence creation experiences from abusers.
All: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
 You water our gardens to bring forth food.
All: Blessed are you, Source of Life

Ritual

One by one we dip our hands in Dartmoor water.

Water flows over these hands
 May I use them skilfully
 to preserve this precious planet.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Chant:

The river is flowing, flowing and growing,
 The river she is flowing, down to the sea.
 O Mother, carry me, your child I'll always be,
 O Mother, carry me, down to the sea.

Poem

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under,
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
 And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
 The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
 From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
 Over a torrent sea,
 Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
 The mountains its columns be.
 The triumphal arch through which I march
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,
 When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
 Is the million-colored bow;
 The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
 While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
 And the nursling of the Sky;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
 I change, but I cannot die.
 For after the rain when with never a stain
 The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
 And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
 Build up the black dome of air,

I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
 And out of the caverns of rain,
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
 I arise and unbuild it again.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Celebration of the Directions

Hear me, four quarters of the world – a relative I am! Give me the eyes to see and the strength to walk the soft earth, a relative to all that is!

Black Elk

Say Together

All our relations!

We look to the East, place of beginnings and of hope
 – and give our thanks.
 We look to the South, place of warmth and connectedness
 – and give our thanks.
 We look to the West, place of the heart and of intuition
 – and give our thanks.
 We look to the North, place of being and of wisdom
 – and give our thanks.
 We look down to the earth, place of life and human compassion
 – and give our thanks.
 We look up to the sky, place of clean air and freedom
 – and give our thanks.

A Story.

And I awoke; and all to the east and to the west stretched the barren earth, with dry bushes on it, and the heat beat fiercely. I looked up through the thin branches of the tree at the blue sky overhead. I stretched myself... And I fell asleep again, with my head on my saddle. And in the fierce heat I had a dream.

I saw a desert and I saw a woman coming out of it. And she came to the bank of a dark river; and the bank was steep and high. And on it an old man met her, who had a long white beard; and a stick that curled was in his hand, and on it was written Reason. And he asked her what she wanted; and she said 'I am a woman; and I am seeking for the land of Freedom.' And He said, 'It is before you'.

And she said, 'I see nothing before me but a dark flowing river, and a bank steep and high, and cuttings here and there with heavy sand in them.' And he said, 'And beyond that.' She said, 'I see nothing, but sometimes, when I shade my eyes with my hand, I think I see on the further bank trees and hills, and the sun shining on them!'