

# Mysterious Ways

A Cyberzine for Pagan men who love men.

Winter / Spring 2022  
Volume 3, Issue 1

Welcome to the latest issue of Mysterious Ways! In this issue, we'll be talking about how we "chart our own paths" as Queer men within Paganism. How do we incorporate our queerness into our path? Why should we or shouldn't we blend our spirituality and our sexuality? Paganism is one of the most LGBT-affirming religions in the world, but is it inherently heteronormative? How do we find or create our own Queer Pagan men's spaces?

— Mel Mystery

**Theme this Issue:** Charting Our Own Paths



We can be proud both as LGBT folks and as Pagans.



**Make more gay magick!**

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## Special Thanks

Special thanks to all who contributed articles , poetry, and art this month.

# Events and Gatherings

## Arcadia Review

*By Mel Mystery*

Arcadia took place the weekend of October 9-10, 2021, at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach, VA. This year's theme was connecting and reconnecting. The theme included reconnecting during Covid, making personal connections in the real world and online, connecting with your "tribe", and connecting with deities, spirits, and ancestors. The patron deity for this year was Hermes. This was only the second ever Arcadia event. The first event was held in October 2019. The 2020 Arcadia event was cancelled due to Covid.

The 2021 event was not without its challenges. The event had to be quickly relocated after it was initially announced last spring as there was a conflict between the Pagan sanctuary where the event was to be held and their county over zoning for camping events. Due to the change in venues, the retreat was condensed from four days to three days and we had to limit the number of camping spaces available. Arcadia is still building its core audience and the Delta variant Covid surge last summer did little to increase confidence in attending live events.

At least a few of those attending the retreat felt that this second ever event should have had the numbers and quality of other events they've been to that have been around for decades. It rained the weekend of the retreat, but at least it was not a heavy rain and we had one canopy tent for shelter. Since we were camping outside, the rain and other factors like timing our cooking over an open fire frequently put activities behind schedule. To top it all off the weekend took place during a Mercury retrograde.

Despite these challenges, we did have some positive highlights. Friday evening, we ventured to the beach after dark. In a spontaneous moment, we connected with both nature and with each other. Our main ritual included "weaving" a huge cat's cradle of connection by tossing a ball of yarn across the circle to each other — sometimes we even caught the ball of yarn when it came careening toward us. As the retreat took place in October, one of the activities was carving Jack-o-lanterns, and at least a few folks created somethings magickal.

As there was not a dedicated guest presenter this year, most workshops were in the form of interactive activities and discussions. There was a guided activity for folks to determine what areas of their life they were seeking connection; we combined a hike with a discussion on connecting with one's spiritual and magickal guides; and we talked about roadblocks to connecting with each other. Of course, there was a workshop on connecting with this year's patron deity, Hermes, and he was included in our main ritual. We had planned for a social with Halloween and Pagan themed music around the campfire complete with a disco ball. At that point in the evening, discussions turned serious. Given the small crowd and the need to adapt, these discussions took precedence over our planned disco fire circle.

We have decided to take a break from the Arcadia retreat in 2022 and hope to return in the spring of 2023. Hopefully this time off will give us time to get past Covid or at least be at a point where people are comfortable going to live events again. We also hope to find a better venue for our next event. Ideally, this will be a private Pagan sanctuary or campground with spaces to shelter from inclement weather. We will also be looking for one or more potential guest presenters for the retreat.

**For more information on Arcadia:**

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia>



An outdoor altar to Hermes at the 2021 Arcadia Camp Out.

## Between the Worlds cancelled for 2021

Between the Worlds gathering for queer pagan men was cancelled in 2021 due to Covid. The event was originally scheduled for the week of September 20-25, 2021. According to the announcement on their website, they are considering another virtual event similar to the one they held in 2020. No further information about the possible virtual event was available at the time of this writing.

According to their website, the 2022 Between the Worlds is scheduled to take place the week of August 8-13, 2022. Registration will begin on March 1, 2022.

For more information: <https://betweentheworlds.org/>

## Virtual Brotherhood by the Bog to be held April 22-24, 2022

by Mel Mystery

Following the success of last year's virtual Brotherhood by the Bog event, the Bog Brothers have decided to host a virtual retreat for the second year in a row. The online retreat will take place the weekend of April 22-24, 2022 and this year's theme will be "Strange Magick: Off the Beaten Paths." The idea for the theme is to highlight paths, practices, and religions beyond the more familiar paths such as Wicca, Witchcraft, Druidry, and Norse Paganism. Within the scope of this is room to highlight some unique paths taken by Queer Pagan men. The retreat itself is open to Pagan men of all paths, orientations, and backgrounds. The event is **free** to all respectful seekers who wish to attend.

The format of the event will include afternoon workshops and presentations, evening discussions and forums, a daily ritual, and nightly entertainment. There will also be an "after hours" social each night for folks who simply want to socialize.

In order to respect the privacy of those attending and to provide a virtual space for communication, the event will use a private Facebook group for communication and the workshops, rituals, entertainment, and other activities will take place over Zoom.

There is no news yet on when Brotherhood by the Bog will return as an in-person event. The last in-person Brotherhood by the Bog retreat took place in April 2019. The 2020 retreat was cancelled due to Covid and the 2021 retreat was virtual.

### For more information:

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>



Sage Haver, one of the Bog brothers, cooking at the 2019 Brotherhood by the Bog.

When I attended my first Coph Nia spiritual gathering for gay and bi Pagan men in 2014, I felt like I had finally come home. I'd finally found my tribe. It was an incredible opportunity to be with other like-minded folks who think outside the box, who aren't fettered by mainstream attitudes, people who understand the countercultural significance of the LGBT movement, and those who aren't restricted by puritanical views about sexuality. Sadly, the event disbanded the following year. Since that time, I've attended a similar gathering—Between the Worlds—once, and I hope I'm able to attend again in the future. I've also been trying to get the Arcadia event going for folks who might be looking for a Queer Pagan men's event on the East coast and mid-Atlantic region of the U.S.

— Mel Mystery

# From Across the Pond

## Charting the Rough Seas

by John Pead (writing from Portugal)

Having read Mel's request for articles about 'pioneering and charting our own paths as queer pagan men' I thought I would write of my own thoughts on this as one who has tried and failed to promote interest in a brotherhood where gay male pagans were front and centre.

Paganism often is a solitary path unless you are part of a coven or grove. Homosexuality can also be a solitary path if your ability to 'come out' to your family and friends is either prevented by fear of rejection or, if you have come out, there is a sense of 'Okay so you have told us but we really do not want you going on about it'. Many gay men are lucky enough to be accepted by both family and friends, and in their community, or, have moved to another location where they can express their gay persona fully (as many gay men do in Portugal where families and villages are deeply conservative).

However many men seem to regard their sexuality and faith paths as separate and become uncomfortable when someone suggests combining the two. Unfortunately this has its roots, even if unconsciously, in past christian dogma, and so many of us are infused with this, whether we are brought up christians or not. Why? Well, most countries in the west have ethics, laws and moral codes which are based upon christian dogma. This is a historical thing. And when you travel further east, other mainstream religions have just as much influence on the ethics, laws and moral codes in their regions. So, on the whole, we have all been indoctrinated with non pagan ideas and this impacts the way gay men approach both their relationships, physical desires and taboos, and also their eagerness to embrace a faith/gay compact. This was not always the case.

Ritual sex was a feature of some pagan pre-christian religions both in the near east and Europe. For instance in Babylonia there was a practice whereby a woman had to give herself up to any stranger for sex once in her lifetime. A man entering a temple, and casting a coin onto her lap, had the first right to sex with her. Temples were known to employ sex in rituals and male initiation and fraternal rites often involved sex between males. So what changed? The rise of mainstream religion regarded orthodoxy as paramount even within their own ranks. We all know how pagan festivals, deities and holy places were christianised and any non orthodox aspects of pagan faiths outlawed as sin. So it was with sex as part of religious practice. As time went on homosexuality was, at least in dogma and public, demonised, it could have no place in worship or in same sex fraternities of a homosexual nature. Of course gay sex went on behind the scenes, and still does to this very day (just look into historic, sexual practices in the catholic church for instance).

The pandemic and climate change issues have focussed many on whether the basis of moral and ethical codes in western society are still valid in a multi-faith era where pagan beliefs are on the rise once again. Should we, for example, stick to christian sacramental institutions such as marriage? Should we, as pagan men, revisit what should be the basis of the standards by which we live our day to day lives? It is a question which may gain more importance in a post Covid and Trump era. We are now fully aware of the lies and hypocrisy in society at all levels. Our trust in leaders (civil and religious) is at an all time low because so many preach one thing and do another. The 'sound bite' era has arrived, fuelled by social media and misinformation. It is, indeed, a time for those of us who adhere to a pagan path, with its fresh view on the nature and the world, to take breath and discuss these things.

But how? Well, even though many gay pagan men are solitary in their faith practice, there is a case for getting together and discussing our take on the basis of our pagan faiths, worship and living life as pagan gay men. The ancient Druids had gatherings called Gorsedd for instance. Being gay men gives us a unique perspective on life as we identify neither with a macho nor feminist point of view. We, as male gay shamans in both the Druid and Native American worlds, are bridges between two sides of a river. We are the ships that ply the rough seas of society and our views should be taken more into account.

At one point I conceived the idea of a male gay pagan brotherhood. It failed as few were interested. However I strongly feel it is now when just such a fellowship is needed, not only to thrash out how we can blend our homosexuality into our pagan faith and worship, but also to refresh ethical and moral codes so they are based upon a foundation of reason and reality rather than blind



*Groups, covens, and events for Queer Pagan men can be like a beacon in the stormy seas for those looking for a place to belong and like-minded men to explore and practice their magickal paths.*

*Image: A Rough Sea at Berwick Pier*

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adherence to past repressionist religious and/or class/racist/sexist societal norms. I therefore throw it out to you, the readers of this article, to consider and put forward your own views on this whole subject. Try considering the following few questions as a focus for thought:

1. How are my society's ethical and moral codes grounded in christian/islamic dogma or my own class/racist/sexist society norms ?
2. If gay sex was part of my pagan path, would this enhance or detract from my core pagan beliefs, and, most importantly, why? When analysed, is this because of my own societal preconditioning ??
3. In this present, pivotal, time for the life or death of our planet, is it not a good era to foster better fellowship amongst gay pagan men and to further a fresh approach to everyday life?

*{I would mention that some feel that making inclusive gay male pagan fraternities, excludes lesbians, bisexual and straight men. However common sense reality shows that discussion must have its own peer groups where all are the same and so can perceive a common background view on matters. It is not an exclusionary thing as such groups are forums of type. Such fraternities have no discriminatory agenda. They do not seek to persecute other groups. They are simply there to share mutual experience. So please do not approach this article in order to attack it. Try rather to approach it with a view to understanding.}*

**John ( Alaethar ) Boeotia@protonmail.com**

## **Pão Cacete and Penis Shaped Bread in Portugal**

*by John Pead*

In Portugal the term used for a stick loaf (like a French stick) is Pão Cacete. However this has an amusing off shoot. In European Portuguese, 'Pão' just means bread. However 'Cacete' translates as either stick, cudgel or bludgeon. In Brazilian Portuguese, 'Cacete' translates as to beat someone up or to fuck. 'Pra Cacete' translates as fucking. So when bread is made sometimes in the shape of a penis in mainland Portugal it is a pun on the 'bad' word in Brazilian Portuguese (see pic below left - note he knows just how to hold the bread).



There is a very conservative and devout town in the north of Portugal called Amarente. However at festival time this town is famous for making penis shaped cakes (see above right) and festooning the town with penis shaped bunting. The cakes are called Bolos de São Gonçalo or Doces Fálcos (phallic sweets). They represent a long standing fertility rite which most likely stems from pagan times in this country. You may have read in [a previous Mysterious Ways](#) of strange 'cock like' standing stones in Portugal, and so it seems that the Celts here were very much a sensual people who had no hesitation nor embarrassment in displaying male genitalia in their art and religion. Diodorus Siculus writes of the Celtic warrior class as having more desire for sex between men than with women, so it is possible that such male sex symbols were less about fertility and more about gay love and sex in that era. Anyway these traditions have passed down the centuries, seemingly bypassing christian prudery. Long may it last !

# Charting Our Own Paths

## Honoring our Unique Needs as Queer Pagan Men

by Mel Mystery

There are a myriad of reasons why gay, bisexual, transgender, and other queer men might want or need to come together in a magickal community of other queer Pagan men or decide to follow a decidedly queer magickal path.

We are unique in many ways. We are men within what is often considered a feminine, Goddess-centered religion. We are queer within a larger society that is predominantly heterosexual. We are a religious minority in a society that is largely influenced by Christianity and other Abrahamic religions. The values of those religions are often antithetical to sexual and gender differences, sexuality in general, and our Pagan beliefs and practices. Within the Pagan community, we are a minority for being queer. Within the LGBTQ community, we are a minority for being Pagan.

As men, we are often the minority within Paganism. Overall, Paganism draws many more women than men. Many Pagan women form all-female covens and emphasize Goddess worship over the veneration of any male deities. Many have been hurt by a patriarchal system or are running away from the worst aspects of the Christian male deity. Others are seeking the bonds of sisterhood within their spiritual path. Many of us Queer men have been hurt by the heterosexism within our society and by fundamentalist Christian beliefs about homosexuality. We too are seeking something more than what is offered by society at large and mainstream religions. As men who love other men, it is okay for us to seek out the company of other Pagan men to share our experiences and our magick, and even to create paths, groups, and events that cater to our unique needs and sensibilities. It is okay for us to explore our masculinity and our femininity, and even our sexuality as part of our spiritual paths. It is okay for us to venerate and seek wisdom from male, female, gender fluid, or even decidedly Queer deities, spirits, and guides. It is okay for us to bond with other men in a spiritual and magickal context.

As queer men, we live in a larger society that often caters to heterosexuals, their sensibilities, and their idea of what a family should be. While things have gotten better for each generation, we're still often treated as second-class citizens. We're expected to play by mainstream heterosexual rules and values – even when these don't always suit us. We can lawfully get married (in a way mimicking heterosexuals), but not other forms of marriage such as polyamorous marriage. We can still be discriminated against in many places. We can be harassed. We may grow up in families that don't accept us. Our worth as human beings is often called into question – especially by those of certain political and religious persuasions. Some of us may still hide who we are to avoid confrontation. Some of us are subject to violence or even murder for who we are. This is especially true of the Transgender community. There are various victimless sex crimes still on the law books in many places. Isn't it time we stood up for our own people, our own needs, and our own queer sensibilities? One way to do that is to band together and to raise awareness and consciousness.

“We all wanted something that we didn't have and we desperately wanted it, but we didn't know what it was... When I first 'came out,' I experienced this rush — 'I can finally love, I can finally have sex, I can finally express myself.' But in many ways the gay culture did not serve my needs. I felt that, in many ways, it was an oppressive parody of straight culture. It takes place primarily in bars, where music is loud and people are not encouraged to talk, or form bonds or care for each other. It imitates the worst of heterosexual culture. I found I had to become a different person to get laid, and I didn't like that at all. I became ashamed and I wondered, “Is this the best we have to offer?”

“When I arrived [at the second faerie gathering], I knew I was home. This is my culture. These are people who don't become someone else in order to make love. They live their sexuality in a way that is very connected to the earth.”

— *from Jody, a gay man who attended an early Radical Faerie gathering*

(Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and other Pagans in American Today, p. 341)

As Pagans, we live in a society that is largely influenced by Christian and Abrahamic values and customs. The early Christian Church sought to destroy the Pagan religion, homosexuality, gender variance, the rights of women, and to subdue nature. A disturbing number of fundamentalist Christians are still waging their war against Pagans, homosexuals, transgender folks, women, and Mother Earth. A number of our laws on sexuality are based on Christian ideals of purity. There are also laws in many places against Pagan practices such as fortune telling. Many of us Pagans are in the “broom closet” and many have an insular view that somehow we are separate and distinct from the rest of society. We keep to ourselves. Yet we seem surprised when, for example, someone is [fired from a certain popular restaurant for being Wiccan](#), or when a [certain shop in western Virginia is discriminated against for offering tarot readings](#). There are many folks out there who also have misguided information about what it means to be Pagan. Some folks equate Paganism with Satanism, sacrificing children, and cults. If we don’t speak up for our own values and our right to exist, who will?

Just as many LGBT folks have internalized homophobia from living within a heterosexual dominated world, many Pagans (including queer Pagans) have internalized the ideals and values of a Christian dominated society. We may have hang-ups about certain sexual or magickal practices. We may think less of ourselves or that we don’t have a right to stand up for ourselves. We may just accept the beliefs and ideals that society feeds us without thinking deeper about where these beliefs came from or whether they serve us as Pagans. If we come together for honest and frank discussions, we might come up with better models for the world. Certainly, mainstream culture can learn from Pagan ideals including our tolerance for a wide array of spiritual and religious beliefs; our respect for folks from various backgrounds and heritages; and our respect for nature and the environment.

While Paganism is considered largely accepting of LGBT folks, that doesn’t mean that every Pagan is without prejudice. It also doesn’t mean that Pagan spirituality and even some paths within Paganism aren’t immune to homophobia or heterosexist ideas. Within Wicca, the Great Rite is essentially about heterosexual consummation, and some paths of traditional Wicca and Witchcraft enforce an idea of gender-polarity in that magick is supposed to be practiced between male-female pairs. Queer folks have pushed back on that idea with our own takes on polarity such as the idea that gender is more than what sexual parts one has or by offering up our own theories of magickal resonance among same sex practitioners. Some queer folks have gone further and suggested that homosexual magick is better – whereas heterosexual sex and magick often goes into procreation, the energies involved in homosexual sex and magick can be focused on creative pursuits. This idea actually has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy. Within Norse Paganism, there is this idea that “ergi” (effeminate, receptive “unmanly” males) were held largely in contempt in Norse society. But that doesn’t necessarily explain how the Norse God Odin was venerated when he was known to sometimes cross-dress and also to practice a feminine form of magic called “*seiðr*”, nor does it explain the importance of a caste of effeminate male priests who served the Norse God Freyr. Many queer Pagans have embraced the traditional Pagan paths with all their heterosexual wrappings and imagery. Other queer Pagans have sought their own unique paths, or at the very least to make the traditional paths more friendly to queer folks. Mythology and human history are full of examples of queer role models, queer heroes, queer deities, and queer spirituality if one only looks deeply enough.

Within the LGBT community, Pagans are a minority. Pagans are often invisible and underrepresented at LGBT events. LGBT folks aren’t immune to the misinformation that is out there about Pagans. When we come out as Pagan within the LGBT community, we may be the token Pagan in the room expected to stand as an example of what all Pagans are like. We may also have to challenge misinformation and misguided ideas that people have about Pagan folks. We need to realize that as queer Pagans we are part of the LGBT community too. We have just as much a right to a place at the table as anyone else.

Because we are a unique niche of both the Pagan and LGBTQ communities, because we are marginalized and discriminated against for being both Pagan and Queer, because we have our own unique needs and our own unique things to offer, and for a whole host of other reasons, I believe in the need for Queer Pagan men to join together for groups, events, and magickal practice.

As any Queer practitioner can attest, there is a definite shortage of Queer-specific models that encourage the strengthening of ourselves as whole beings. In many Neo-Pagan Witchcraft traditions, we are told simply to adopt the pre-existing (and heterosexist) magickal modalities of polarity and fertility. In the Feri tradition we are given certain tools that enable us to have healthier relationships with our Divine natures, devoid of any such baggage.

— Storm Faerywolf, The Amethyst Pentacle, May 8, 2005.

## Queer Paganism: Embracing Your Magic

by Casey Giovinco

Chief Elder of Gala Witchcraft

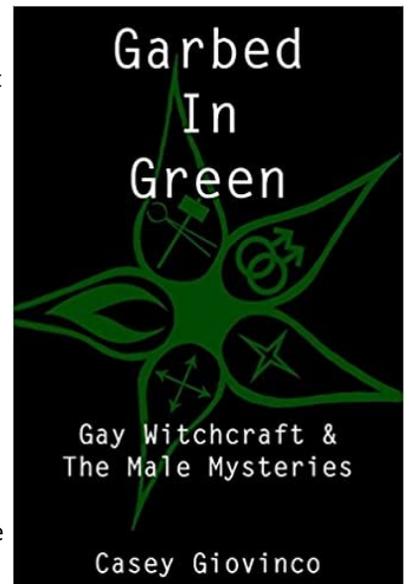
[www.caseygiovinco.com](http://www.caseygiovinco.com)

Around the Winter Solstice this year, I found myself asking questions about authenticity and how to let my own light shine. Both Gay men and witches are adept at this glamour, so, technically (being a Gay male witch), I should be an expert at it myself. Yet, sometimes, I wonder. It just always feels like it's all been done before, that there's nothing new under the sun.

Do you ever struggle with thoughts like that?

Sybil Leek once said that the greatest spell a witch can cast is to find their place in this world.

Queer people are in a prime position to cast that spell. One of the primary obstacles to our success with that spell is that we, as a community, suffer from a case of *weltschmerz* so cumbersome that it is almost back-breaking. Like Alexander the Great facing his own prospects after his illustrious father's successes, many of us often feel like every action or effort is futile, that there's no place for us to be ourselves. Even worse than that, though, is the sober realization that many people in mainstream society might actually want to erase our existence entirely. Whether these concerns develop around finding love, feeling at home with family and friends, getting ahead at work, or just feeling comfortable in our own skin, it can often be quite difficult to embrace our own unique paths. That journey can just feel so isolating sometimes.



This is where alternative spiritualities, like witchcraft, come into the equation. As I pointed out in my book *Garbed In Green*, our Pagan ancestors valued Gay men and gender non-conforming individuals as spiritual authorities and magical workers in nearly every ancient culture you can name. It's as if we were born to adopt the mantle of the witch and to embrace our own unique magic. Our ability to balance opposites within ourselves was fascinating to our ancestors. It made us special and somehow closer to the gods of the tribe. This power wasn't something to be ashamed of or ridiculed. Rather, it was something to be celebrated. Our society today has replaced that reverence with homophobia, and it has tried to convince us that our strength is really a weakness. It is not.

As a witch, I have found tremendous resources for embracing and modernizing our Queer ancestors' legacy, which does seem somehow secluded from the rest of society. Fortunately, methods for dealing with that isolation are woven into the very fabric of witchcraft. There is plenty of occult wisdom that talks about how the wiser witches and other occultists get in the course of their spiritual pursuits, the more alone they can feel. By acknowledging that one simple fact instead of ignoring it, there are also prescribed methods within those spiritual systems for adjusting to that reality. Whether we're talking about universal laws, precepts, axioms, or simply a different worldview, witchcraft provides witches with the ability to stand in their power as they walk their own unique paths. This is one of the reasons why witchcraft is such a healthy spiritual path for Queer people. It directly addresses and reframes that sense of separation, which could justifiably be considered one of the more traumatic aspects of modern Queer life.

If you are personally struggling with your own journey to reclaim your uniquely sacred place in this world, here are some simple strategies to get you started:

1. Find a set of tenets or principles to guide you. This sounds simple, but it's often overlooked for the more flashy parts of a magical path, like proficiency in conducting ritual or casting spells. Find a core set of values that you can hold firm to when times are tough, and work to ingrain them in your life before you need them. For me, those principles come from the tradition where I was initiated into witchcraft. If you're looking for your own set of values, an excellent place to start your search is Sybil Leek's *8 Tenets of Witchcraft*. I can't tell you how much they have helped me over the years.
2. Embrace the archetype of the wounded healer. Turn your own pain into a source of healing for others by embracing an attitude of gratitude and service. We all go through hard times. That's part of life, but the difference between healing or being crushed by that suffering is the approach we take to coping with it.
3. The final strategy is easy. Read. That's it. Read everything you can get your hands on. I can't stress how important it is to read as a witch. Don't just read occult books either. Some of the most profound occult wisdom I have ever received came from mundane texts. Philosophy, literature, science, even fan fiction—read everything. We may want to express our own uniqueness. We may want

to find our own way, but no one is an island. We all stand on the shoulders of someone else. It's an unfortunate truth, but there really is nothing new under the sun. However, that fact does not have to become stifling. It can actually become quite liberating with a change of perspective. Though it has all been done before, it hasn't all been done before BY YOU. The simple addition of your own, unique energy into the equation changes everything. Your creative genius will see things differently than others have seen it in the past. Your unique life experiences, your current perspective, your preferences and aversions, how you combine thoughts, images, and impressions in your mind—these things make all the difference. This one simple shift in perspective opens up a world of possibilities.

He who understands you is greater kin to you than your own brother. For even your own kindred may neither understand you nor know your true worth.

-- Kahlil Gibran

## Gay Gods and Spirits

### Freyr

by Mel Mystery

Freyr is one of the most important, popular, and handsomest gods of the Vanir in Norse paganism. The Vanir gods are frequently associated with fertility and prosperity. Freyr is a god of earth, light and sunshine, vegetation, water, eroticism, love, magic, family, the weather, self-sacrifice, and peace. Freyr is a phallic god, and some have called Freyr the Norse Green Man. Freyr is Lord of the Light Elves and he rules Alfheimr, the realm of the elves.

Freyr rides the shining boar Gullinbursti who pulls his chariot and he possesses the ship Skíðblaðnir which always has a favorable breeze and can be folded together and carried in a pouch when it is not being used. He also carries a magic sword that fights on its own "if wise be he who wields it."

Freyr is married to the giantess Gerðr and is not known to have any homosexual encounters, but he was served by gay or transgender priests. According to the Saxo Grammaticus, these male priests dressed in feminine attire, employed effeminate gestures, behaved rather "wantonly", and used bells. They also appear to have participated in a hieros gamos, or a symbolic coupling, which may have involved homosexual acts, in order to ensure a fruitful and fertile growing season.

Freyr's worship may also have included shamanistic elements. His sister Freya employed a shamanic practice called Seidr and shamanistic practices were considered to be feminine in nature. Men generally practiced galdr, or runic magic, which was considered masculine.



A 9th century statue of Freyr with erect phallus.

*From the Wikimedia Commons*

## Between the Worlds

A Spiritual Gathering for Men Who Love Men

August 8-13, 2022

Pomeroy, OH

[www.betweentheworlds.org](http://www.betweentheworlds.org)

## What unique events are available for Pagan men who love men?

### **Between the Worlds Gathering**

Between the Worlds takes place annually in Pomeroy, Ohio each fall. Due to Covid, there were no in-person gatherings in 2020 or 2021. They did hold a virtual gathering in 2020. The in-person camping gathering typically takes place over the course of six days. The gathering provides a “safe space for men who love men to explore alternative spiritual practices and paths, to empower themselves, and to plant the seeds of spiritual renewal within the gay community.” The event includes workshops, a drum circle, vendors, socials, rituals, and other activities. A meal plan can be purchased or you can provide your own meals at your campsite. The event was founded in 2002 and is hosted by Green Faerie Grove. The next Between the Worlds is scheduled for August 8-13, 2022. To find out more, <https://betweentheworlds.org/>

### **Stone and Stang**

Stone and Stang is a gathering hosted by the Unnamed Path. The event is “a spiritual gathering for men-who-love-men of diverse pagan and alternative spiritual paths.” The gathering takes place every two years. Due to Covid, their 2021 event was virtual. In-person gatherings initially began in California, but have since moved to Eustace, Texas. The first Stone and Stang took place in 2013. The event usually takes place over four days, and includes workshops, rituals, and other activities. For more information, visit <http://stoneandstang.com/>

### **Gay Spirit Visions**

Gay Spirit Visions holds winter, spring, and fall retreats and conferences in the mountains of North Carolina. Unlike other events listed here, Gay Spirit Visions takes place at an indoor lodge and conference center rather than camping. While open to Pagan men, their audience includes men of all spiritual paths – both from alternative and mainstream religions. To find out more about their upcoming events, visit <http://gayspiritvisions.org/>

### **Arcadia Camp Out**

The Arcadia Camp Out is a relatively new event for Queer Pagan men held in Virginia. The very first event was held in October 2019 in Cumberland, Virginia. The 2020 event was cancelled due to Covid, and the 2021 Arcadia was held in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Arcadia is striving to fill a gap for affordable camping retreats specifically for Queer Pagan men on the East Coast and Mid-Atlantic Region of the United States. Activities include workshops, rituals, discussions, and social activities. The next Arcadia is expected to take place in the Spring of 2023. Further details will be forthcoming. For more information, please visit <http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia>

### **Brotherhood by the Bog**

Brotherhood by the Bog is the brother retreat to Arcadia. The event has been around a little longer and is open to Pagan men of all paths, orientations, and backgrounds. Planners and attendees are gay, bi, straight, and sometimes even trans. The event takes place at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach. Sometimes the retreat is a camping retreat and other times the retreat takes place in one of the cabins at the park. The retreat usually takes place in the spring over the course of a 3–4-day weekend. Due to Covid, the 2021 event was virtual and we are expecting to host another free virtual retreat April 22-24, 2022. To find out more <http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

In looking back over the whole, bloody debacle, it’s clear that the biggest mistake we made was “asking” rather than “doing.” See, my buddy Sphinx and I thought it might be fun to start a social/discussion group for gay male Pagans in the Houston area, so what we should have done was chosen a date, time, and place, and then sent out an announcement. Instead, we decided to see if anyone else was interested before we started moving forward, and so we posted an inquiry on a local Pagan listserv.

Like the historic invasions of Ireland, the responses came in waves.

First Wave

Condemnation. By expressing the intent to form a group for like-minded individuals with common interests and experiences, we were being divisive and separatist. And we were actively destroying the community. Demons, the both of us.

— quoted from [Phallusmagoria](#) on Patheos.com by Thumper Forge

During my first visit to Four Quarters Sanctuary to attend Stones Rising, I was asked how I found the camp for the Radical Faeries in the dark. I responded that I figured I was in the right place when I saw a huge suspended disco ball with Maglites trained upon it.

— Nightshade

## What makes a Queer spiritual path?

By Mel Mystery

Is a spiritual path “queer” just because Queer people take part in it or does it take something more? Here are my thoughts on what makes a spiritual path truly “queer.”

1. First and foremost, a Queer spiritual path acknowledges and honors your sexual orientation and/or gender expression as a part of your spirituality. It respects you as a whole person and doesn't seek to suppress or compartmentalize parts of yourself in an effort to make your path seem “respectable” to non-queers.
2. A Queer spiritual path seeks out heterosexist, homophobic, and anti-sex biases within the paths that we may follow. It challenges, adapts, and transmutes these biases into something that better reflects the existence and experiences of gay, bi, trans, and other queer people within that path.
3. A Queer spiritual path acknowledges and honors Queer deities, heroes, ancestors, guides, and other spirits. Many of these deities and spirits are homosexual, bisexual, transgender, gender fluid, androgynous, or have other Queer aspects. Many Queer myths and deities were lost, written out, or censored due to the biases and prejudices of those who eventually wrote these things down. It is up to us as Queer spiritual seekers to rediscover them.
4. A Queer spiritual path can include solitary, partnered, or group expressions of sexuality including real or implied sexual acts. It is up to the individual to determine what is best for him. A Queer spiritual path honors sexuality as something sacred, not a source of guilt or shame.
5. A Queer spiritual path can blend queer sensibilities, defining elements of the queer community, and queer historical aspects within one's spiritual practices.
6. A Queer spiritual path can be undertaken alone, but it doesn't overlook the need to participate in and give back to our greater Queer and Pagan communities. Nor does it neglect our need to periodically band together with other Queer Pagans to practice and create our own unique forms of magick.

## Brotherhood by the Bog

A Virtual Retreat for Pagan Men

### Strange Magick: Off the Beaten Paths

April 22-24, 2022

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

## Profiles and Reviews

### Arthur Evans: Pioneering Author and Activist

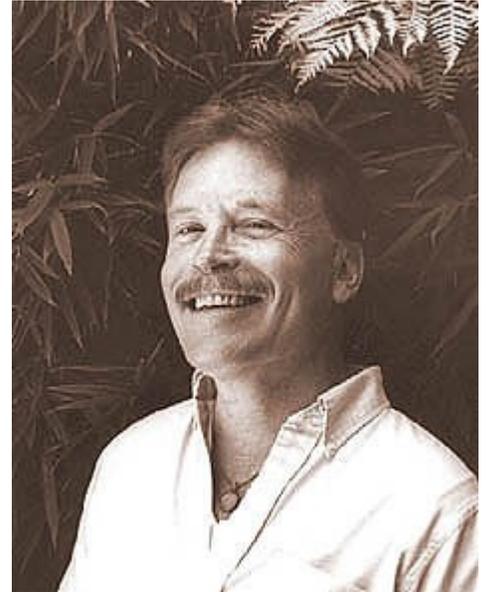
by Mel Mystery

Arthur Evans was born on October 12, 1942, in York, Pennsylvania. He graduated high school in 1960 and went on to study at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. In college, he and some friends formed the atheist Brown Freethinkers Society which protested Brown's mandatory weekly chapel services. Evans switched his major a couple times from chemistry to political science to philosophy. He ended up moving to Greenwich Village, New York in 1963, and completed his degree at the City College of New York in 1967. He went on to pursue his doctorate in philosophy, focusing on Greek philosophy, at Columbia University. While at Columbia, Evans joined the Student Homophile League on campus.

Evans was involved in a number of protests in the 1960s including protests against the Vietnam war. He was not at the 1969 Stonewall Riots, but they did inspire him to join the Gay Liberation Front and to eventually form the Gay Activists Alliance, an early gay rights group. He withdrew from Columbia University in 1972 and moved to Washington state with his lover. They purchased 40 acres of forest and set up a homesteading collective living off the land. They called the land "New Sodom." He spent his winters in Seattle researching the history of the counterculture with a special focus on its sexual history. A "counterculture" refers to a subculture whose values and norms vary significantly from those of the mainstream culture. The counterculture of the 1960s was prominent from around 1964 to 1974. Both witchcraft and homosexual subcultures have countercultural roots.

The homestead wasn't the success he'd hoped it to be, so in 1974 Evans and his partner moved to the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. He opened a Volkswagen repair shop called "the Buggery." Then Evans began writing his book on the persecution of homosexuals during the Middle Ages. Evans formed an early Faery Circle in San Francisco in 1975. This Circle brought together "gay sensibility, neo-paganism, and a sheer Whitmanesque celebration of the body and of sex." Evans' Faery Circle went on to inspire and influence the Radical Faeries which was founded by Harry Hay and Don Kilhefner. Beginning in 1976, Evans also presented a series of public "Faeries" lectures at the San Francisco gay community center. These lectures were based on his research into the historical origins of the gay counterculture. In 1978, Evans published the book **Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture** (see review on next page).

Evans continued his involvement in gay activism. In the late 1970s, he became involved in the Bay Area Gay Liberation and the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club. After the AIDS epidemic hit in the 1980s, Evans became involved with the San Francisco chapter of ACT UP. Evans died September 11, 2011, in his Haight-Ashbury apartment.



### Arcadia 2023

#### A Camp OUT for Queer Pagan Men

We're taking a break in 2022.

Arcadia will return in the Spring of 2023.

[www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia](http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia)

# Review: Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture: A Radical View of Western Civilization and Some of the People it Has Tried to Destroy

by Mel Mystery

Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture by Arthur Evans was a pioneering book that made connections between witchcraft and homosexuality. The book was published in 1978. While print versions are expensive and hard to come by these days, a Kindle version is available for a reasonable price. Free PDF versions can sometimes be found if one searches hard enough. As the writer passed away in 2011, some folks have made an effort to make this groundbreaking book more widely available.

In Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture, Evans shows how the Gay rights movement is interrelated with Witchcraft and also tells the history of witches from an LGBTQ standpoint.

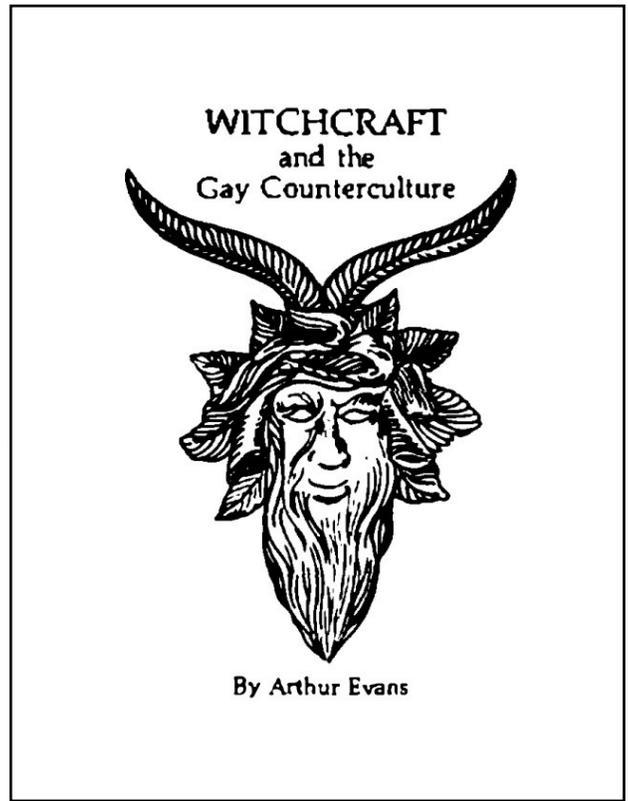
In the Introduction, Evans criticizes both the “conspiracy of silence” where by LGBT folks are left out of the news, history, and narratives of mainstream culture, or even worse LGBT folks have been largely represented in negative terms – being judged on heteronormative values. He felt that “we will have to write our own history,” and his book is his attempt to correct some of the omissions of LGBT folks from history.

Evans starts with the story of Joan of Arc who was both a heretic and a crossdresser. He also talks about her friend and bodyguard, Gilles de Rais who was widely known as both a homosexual and a sorcerer. Ms. Of Arc considered the wearing of men’s clothing part of her religious duty directed by God. If that weren’t heresy enough, she may have had relationships with other women or even spent time with prostitutes. She was a strong, bold, and outspoken – traits that weren’t acceptable for women at the time. Evans goes on to say that Joan was worshipped like a Pagan deity by peasants wherever she went—as a divine “Maiden.” Judges questioned whether her beliefs may have been Pagan and whether she associated with “fairies.” While the courts initially tried to charge Joan with witchcraft, it was her insistence on wearing men’s clothing as a religious duty that got her burned at the stake for heresy. As for Gilles, he was executed, and a fountain was built on the spot and the fountain became associated with fertility rites.

Evans makes the argument that cross dressing, and wearing animal costumes, is strongly associated with the Pagan ritual practices and Pagan holidays that had gone underground at that time in history. He further relates that the witches of the time were often called “fairies” and “fairies” later became a derogatory term for gay men. Another derogatory term, “faggot,” initially referred to the logs used to burn witches, but later became a slur against homosexuals.

In later chapters, Evans makes the link between cross-dressing shamans and homosexuality; he talks about homosexual and bisexual initiations and rituals; the sacred nature of semen; sacred prostitution; Celtic homosexuality; the Horned God; Goddess worship, and Greek and Celtic mythologies - among other things. He relates how the old religions were driven underground by negative propaganda put out by the Christians of the time. The Pagan Horned God became associated with Satan. Witch hunters obsessed over the sexual nature and rites of witches. The old gods and goddesses were diminished to the status of fairies and demons.

Evans links the fall in the status of homosexuality to the rise of military societies and Christianity. He relates the early Greek veneration of homosexuality and how the status of homosexuals (and women) declined with the militarization in Roman culture and with the rise of Christianity which was largely an ascetic religion. Christianity even absorbed a military ethic emphasizing “discipline, organizational order, and obedience.” While early Pagan religions were largely tolerant of other religions and not centrally organized, Christianity became strongly organized and sought to wipe out those other religions. Christianity grew to become a state sanctioned system of power and wealth. Christianity largely railed itself against earlier Pagan beliefs which included gay priests, sexual rites, cross-dressing, and pederasty. Pagans and homosexuals were “rounded up in large numbers, tortured, and burned.” The Witch



Trials of the Middle Ages furthered this genocide against those who subverted Christian “values”. Those who worshipped the old gods and goddesses, those who practiced healing arts, those who went into trances, those who practiced old folk ways, and those who didn’t subscribe to Christian views on sexuality all got lumped together as “witches” even if they didn’t identify as such. Paganism, sexuality, and homosexuality were all intimately entwined. “Like the pagans of antiquity, they did not make a distinction between sex and religion. For them, sex was one manifestation of religious power. In the eyes of patriarchal Christians, that was here-  
sy and the same thing as worshipping the Devil.” (p. 102)

During Medieval times, Witchcraft and Paganism were countercultural to the Christian mainstream of the day. Paganism is polytheistic. Pagans venerated women and Goddesses. The Horned God was associated with animals, sexuality, and homosexuality. Rites took place in the countryside with feasting, dancing, crossdressing, sexual orgies, and trances brought on by hallucinogenic drugs. Pagans celebrated sensuality, sexuality, and worldliness, while the Christian church tried to suppress these things. Pagans sought to live in harmony with nature, while Christians sought to subdue it.



Burning at the stake was one of the methods used by Medieval Christians to wipe out those with different beliefs. The logs used to start the fires were called “faggots.”

*Image from openclipart.org.*

Christians sought to stamp out competing beliefs (both religious and scientific) through the Witch trials, the Crusades, various Inquisitions, and the like. They were not above torture, killing, and war to achieve Christian supremacy. They seized money, land, and other property to increase their power. “The Christians hunted down heretics and witches for fourteen hundred years, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their aim, which they accomplished, was to annihilate an entire culture. For the most part, the old religion and the heresies it inspired were wiped off the face of the earth.” (p. 125)

When Christian nations began colonizing the New World and other places, they continued their efforts to wipe out competing beliefs and cultures, sexual practices that differed from their own narrow views, and certain native people who threatened their worldview such as shamans, crossdressers, transsexuals, and homosexuals. Slaves from Africa were brought in to perform manual labor. Their culture and beliefs too were overridden by the culture and beliefs of their Christian masters.

As the U.S. grew, it developed its own military, and then the CIA and FBI which were then used to enforce “American values” rooted in Christian “values.” During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these agencies were used not only to root out socialists and radicals, but also to condemn and convict homosexuals, crossdressers, and transsexuals. During the Civil Rights era, these agencies also infiltrated and worked against Black rights organizations and any organizations deemed a threat to the “establishment” – basically middle-class and professional white, straight people. Increasing industrialization brought its own system of power that further supported establishment aims and values.

In the book’s final chapter, Evans makes an argument against “liberalism.” He sees liberalism as a continuation of establishment values through the lens of an educated, middle-class lifestyle. Liberalism seeks to reform within the established system that exploits lower class people, non-whites, women, gay people, and “Mother Earth.” He also argues that “Gay liberalism has encouraged Gay men to mimic the behavior of upwardly-mobile straight professional types” in an attempt to be respectable and to assimilate into the “American dream.” He claims that such types “would have all of us become Straight-Identified-Faggots (or STIFFS, for short).” (p. 205) Such an attitude continues to oppress those who “can’t or won’t fit into the mainstream.”

Evans explores both capitalist and socialist industrial systems and finds both coming up short as both have been exploitive, misogynistic, racist, and homophobic. In the context of the 1970s counterculture, Evans believed the answer to these shortcomings was to

*(Continued from page 14)*

come up with a “new socialism” that includes “Gay people, women, and ancient Third World cultures.” He goes into detail about what this would involve.

Among the features he proposes, Evans believes that Gay people should migrate back to the countryside and learn to live in collective groups “cemented together by magic.” By moving back to the country, we can learn to reconnect with nature, its spiritual powers, and with each other. Evans calls for a stronger feeling of Gay identity and Gay spirituality. He feels that magic is essentially a collective activity featuring “group song, dance, sex, and ecstasy.” Our magic will help hold our collective groups together, and it will also challenge patriarchal industrialism and its values that are antithetical to nature, sexuality, and human difference. He calls for “a genuine counterculture that affirms the magic of human life...” Such a culture would “reestablish women’s mysteries and men’s mysteries as the highest expression of collective Gay culture and sexuality.” It would “regain our ancient historical roles as medicine people, healers, prophets, shamans, and sorcerers.” We could come out as “Gay people, as animals, as humans, as mysterious and powerful spirits that move through the life cycle of the cosmos.” This society is not created by reforming existing culture or by assimilating into it. Instead, we must band together to create collective magic, revolution, and counterculture.

## **Return to the Dark Ages?**

By Mel Mystery

When reviewing **Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture** I was struck by how little seems to have changed since the Dark Ages. The religious right is still fighting against the rights of women, still trying to suppress homosexuality and other forms of sexuality, still trying to enforce strict gender roles and norms, still anti-science, still against trance inducing drugs, still out to suppress any religion that threatens Christian supremacy, and still out to subdue the environment. If you look, you can see the blending of Xenophobia, racism, and militant Christian nationalism growing out of the fringes since their craziness was legitimized during the last U.S. presidency. We like to view these as extreme fringes of society, but what we sometimes fail to acknowledge is that they are organized, they have the voice of popular news and media platforms (like Fox News), and they have entrenched themselves (and continue to do so) in political and religious narratives. They are loud, persistent, vigilant, and organized. They hold some degree of power in our culture and they’re not afraid to use that power to achieve those ends listed above. Their ends are still power and the annihilation of those different from themselves. Yes, I know the religious right doesn’t speak for all Christians and not all religious conservatives are extremists, but the pendulum does seem to be swinging in that direction.

There is also still a “conspiracy of silence” even today where those who are minorities are marginalized and left out of the narrative at best and demonized at worst. We are still subject to negative propaganda both for being queer and for being Pagan. While the LGBT community has made strides in challenging anti-LGBT stereotypes and misinformation, in the Pagan community we often intentionally exclude ourselves from the narrative. There is this notion that if we stand up for ourselves and our values, or that if we seek visibility and representation that we are somehow “evangelizing.” And if we organize, then we risk becoming a dogmatic religion. Why else would anyone want to be visible, stand up for their beliefs, or organize in any kind of way? We don’t want to be like the Christians, and we certainly don’t have to be. The Pagans of old were largely tolerant of other religions and lacked any type of central organization. When faced with organized, militant, and vigilant religious extremists with power and money, the Pagans of

In an article in RFD called “A Sprinkling of Radical Faerie Dust,” Don Kilhefner writes that the dilemma facing gay men is “our assimilation into the mainstream versus our enspiritedness as a people... There is a reality to being Gay that is radically different from being Straight... It is real. We can feel it in our hearts and in our guts.” But where does one find role models for such a person?

(Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and other Pagans in American Today, p. 344)

*(Continued from page 15)*

old were annihilated and those who survived were driven underground. Their beliefs and magick did not save them, nor will our beliefs and magick alone save us from misinformation and discrimination today. Only by challenging lies and misinformation about us can we hope to live in peace and harmony with everyone else. Our only other choices are hiding in the broom closet and accepting a second-place status in society.

And our Pagan values are needed in this critical of history. Some say we are near or may have even passed the tipping point of climate change. As Pagans, we speak for the Earth and for nature. We are living in an era of increasing intolerance. As Pagans, we stand up for tolerance and respect of those different from ourselves (so long as they aren't harming others). This includes tolerance of other religions, and also understanding the diversity of life, sexuality, and gender in nature and within ourselves. At this time, the rights of women are under siege. As Pagans, we recognize the value and autonomy of women. To stand up for these values is not evangelism. It is participating in our civic responsibility as humans and trying to swing the pendulum in a positive direction.

We must remain vigilant and speak up. There is no guarantee that our democracy will survive the onslaught of religious right extremists. There is no guarantee that the Supreme Court will continue to uphold abortion rights, same-sex marriage, or another other law or institution we hold dear. There is no guarantee that the U.S. won't slip into civil war. There is no guarantee that climate change and pandemic won't adversely affect the lives to which we've become accustomed. As we've learned from recent politics, pandemics, and other crises, things can change unexpectedly and in an instant. The religious right wants to take us back into the Dark Ages. Will we as Pagans and as Queer folks just stand by silently and let them?

One important impulse behind the notion of radical faeries was the idea that there had to be something beyond assimilation. Just as radical feminists wanted to go beyond women attaining equal rights in a man's world, toward a notion that feminism implied a totally different reality, a different language, a different attitude toward power and authority, this group of gay men saw their own movement as implying a totally different view of the world, with different goals and different spiritual values than the "straight" world. Harry Hays is said to have once put it something like this: "People who are trying to be accepted by the 'straight' world pander to the straights, saying, 'We're really just the same as you, the only thing that is different is what we do in bed..' No," says Hays, "the only thing we do the same is in bed."

(Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and other Pagans in American Today, p. 343-44)

## **Help Us to Help You and Our Tribe of Queer Pagan Men**

Where else can you find a publication geared toward your unique interests and experiences as a Queer Pagan man?

Submissions to Mysterious Ways are not only encouraged, they are vital to provide several voices to the content of this Cyberzine.

I usually start sending out requests across various social media about a month before the submission deadline, but you don't have to wait for my request to get your articles in. The submission deadline for the next issue is always listed in the current issue and I'm always happy to receive submissions anytime during that six month period. Mysterious Ways is published semi-annually. While there is usually a specific theme for each issue, submissions of a general nature are welcome too.

Please consider sharing your voice by sending in your articles, book reviews, event reviews, poetry, art, or anything else that might be relevant to Queer Pagan men. Don't forget to share information about your Queer Pagan Men's groups and events!!!

**Submission deadline for the next issue of Mysterious Ways is May 15, 2022.**

# Poetry and Art

## The Passing Thought

My eyes wander over the yellow to blue,  
A haze shifting my sight of mind.  
I see a man.  
As I look he begs me for a morsel -  
To aid his beleaguered state.  
I reach out. Too late !  
The winds carry my sight through him,  
and over him, but by him.

Steadiness returns.  
I see the man again -  
A carcass surmounted by  
a dry parchment of a skin.  
His eyes behold me,  
His arms rise a little toward me,  
His lips, chapped and dry, whisper one  
word.....

Water!

The wind blows again  
and my water jug falls to the sand,  
The greedy, yellow rock swallows all.  
The man lowers his head  
and turns to powder.

But the winds of time sweep me back,  
back to my supper,  
to my plate and jug over full.  
For I am in England.  
And the man ?  
Who knows where,  
For the winds of our own busy,  
time consuming lives,  
blind us with a fleeting thought of pity.

© John 1978.



## Frost Feathers

In the moon of rivers freezing,  
and cold winds calling  
through the mountains  
feathers of the wise one,  
Great Horned grey  
on the morning frost,  
call out to me.

Reach, they say,  
save us from this chill,  
bring us to your breast,  
and you shall know the heart  
of the one you seek,  
as we once knew  
the warmth of the summer's wind.

– Jim O.



Photo and painting by Rob.

# Queer Pagan Resources

## Queer Pagan Men's Groups

**Brotherhood of Arcadia** — The Brotherhood of Arcadia (BOA) is a spiritual organization created from the fusion of Hellenist and Pagan beliefs and practices with an emphasis on queer and sexuality positive beliefs, practices, and deities. BOA membership is open to men who love men regardless of whatever personal labels one chooses, and who are also over the age of 18. No one – male, female, or trans – who feels called to join will be turned away.

**FMI:** <http://www.melmystery.com/index.php/brotherhood-of-arcadia>

**Brotherhood of Cernunnos** -- A Brotherhood of UK Gay Pagan Men. **FMI:** <http://www.brotherhoodofcernunnos.org/>

**Brotherhood of the Phoenix** — A Neo-Pagan order for Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender men who love men. We celebrate the Spirit of the Divine within and build community with men who seek positive transformation of self, community, and the world. Together we work to weave the magick that changes lives.

**FMI:** <https://fellowshipofthephoenix.org/>

**Cern'osia** -- An eclectic Neo-Pagan faith which focuses exclusively on the veneration and worship of the Celtic Horned God, Cernunnos. Although it could be adapted by anyone who worships the Horned One, it was designed primarily with the needs of a solitary Pagan man in mind. **FMI:** <https://cernosia.webs.com/>

**Ecclesia Antinoi** — Devoted to the worship of Antinous, the lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Antinous was deified after his death and is worshiped by modern practitioners as a god of gay spirituality, youth, and beauty.

**FMI:** <http://www.antinopolis.org/>

**Gay Druid Brotherhood** — An international network for homosexual and bisexual men on the Druidic and Keltic inspired Pagan paths. **FMI:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gaydruidbrotherhood/>

**Green Faerie Grove** — A brotherhood of queer men in Columbus, Ohio. **FMI:** <http://greenfaeriegrove.org/>

**The Minoan Brotherhood** — A men's initiatory tradition of the Craft celebrating Life, Men Loving Men, and Magic in a primarily Cretan context, also including some Aegean and Ancient Near Eastern mythology.

**FMI:** <http://www.minoan-brotherhood.org/>

**Radical Faeries** — Generally we are gay men who look for a spiritual dimension to our sexuality. Many of us are healers of one kind or another. Our shared values include feminism, respect for the Earth, and individual responsibility rather than hierarchy. Many of us are Pagan (nature-based religion). **FMI:** <http://www.radfae.org/>

**The Unnamed Path** — The Unnamed Path is a shamanic path for men who love men. The path focuses on four main parts—Magic and Prophecy, Shamanism, Energy Healing, and Deathwalking. **FMI:** [www.unnamedpath.com](http://www.unnamedpath.com)

**Submission deadline for the next issue of Mysterious Ways is May 15, 2022.**

**Please consider sharing your articles, reviews, poetry, art, events, and announcements.**

**E-mail these to Mel at [knightsofmatrix@gmail.com](mailto:knightsofmatrix@gmail.com). Please put "Mysterious Ways" in the subject line.**

## Upcoming Retreats and Gatherings

**January 14-16, 2022 — Gay Spirit Visions Winter Meditation** at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC. FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/>

**April 22-24, 2022 — Brotherhood by the Bog** for Pagan men of all paths, backgrounds, and orientations. We're going virtual again this year. Theme is "Strange Magick: Off the Beaten Paths." **Free online event!** FMI: <http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

**May 13-15, 2022 — Gay Spirit Visions Spring Retreat** at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC. FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/>

**August 8-13, 2022 — Between the Worlds: A spiritual gathering for men who love men** at Wisteria in Pomeroy, OH. FMI: <http://www.betweentheworlds.org>

## Blogs and Podcasts for Pagan men who love men

**A Path through the Woods** — Blog by a gay, Pagan, polytheist who lives in Chicago — <https://www.adrianmoran.com/>

**Discovering the Male Mysteries** — Official webpage for Mel Mystery and the Discovering the Male Mysteries podcast for gay and bi Pagan men. — <http://www.melmystery.com/>

**Enfolding.org** — A blog by Phil Hine to discuss interests including Tantra, Queer Theory, Gender, History, and Occult Practice. — <http://enfolding.org/>

**Faehaven** — Based in Harrisburg, PA the community is forming in order to create a space where queers and their advocates can explore spirituality of all sorts and have a safe space to share among like-minded independent individuals. — <https://faehaven.wordpress.com/about/>

**Horns** — A NSFW magazine where erotica meets Queer occultism and Paganism. — <http://www.hornsmagazine.com/>

**Transfaith** — An online journal for Trans spirituality. Includes a Trans Pagan section. — <https://www.transfaith.info/pagan>

**Walking the Unnamed Path** — Discusses the teachings and techniques given to us by their Ancestors of MWLM, and laid out by their late founder Hyperion. They also discuss topics and ideas pertaining to queer Pagan men in general. — <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/walkingtheunnamedpath>

**Witches Betwixt** — Witches Betwixt is a collective of queer witches representing a wide variety of magical practices and spiritual paths. We release a 45+ minute episode bi-weekly in which we discuss various topics relevant to the experience of a queer witch. — <http://witchesbetwixt.buzzsprout.com/>

**Looking for a speaker for your next gathering, retreat, or other event?  
Check out the Queer Pagan Speaker Directory online!**

[www.melmystery.com/index.php/links/queer-pagan-speaker-directory](http://www.melmystery.com/index.php/links/queer-pagan-speaker-directory)

## Mysterious Ways

The Mysterious Ways Cyberzine is produced and published by Mel Mystery.

Mel Mystery is host of the Discovering the Male Mysteries Podcast for Gay and Bi Pagan Men. He is also author of the book, "The Gay Guys Guide to Werewolves and other Man Beasts" and he has a few other books in the works

You can find out about Mel, listen to his podcast, and find out more about his books at: [www.melmystery.com](http://www.melmystery.com)

Archive copies of this newsletter will also be kept on the site.

## We need your support!!!

This paper is a community-based project. We're not charging for subscriptions. We're not accepting paid advertising. Those writing articles are not paid for their work. This paper is for the Queer Pagan Men's community and by the Queer Pagan Men's community.

If you think this paper is worthwhile, please consider helping us to thrive. We need folks to submit articles, artwork, poetry, reviews, and other content. We need folks to share this in Queer Pagan groups and social media groups. We need folks to print copies and share them in LGBTQ and Pagan spaces in their local communities.

Thank you for doing your part!!!

## Next Issue: Visibility and Representation

Are we visible as queer and as Pagan? Do we seek invisibility to avoid discrimination and prejudice? Is it okay to be visible for our sexuality and not our spiritual path, or vice-versa? Does following a Pagan spiritual path automatically imply we should remain hidden from the world at large? Does visibility foster role models and connection for those seeking what we've already found? What are the benefits and costs of being visible and represented in our larger communities? Are "Queer" closets and "Broom" closets the same or different?

Please send articles, reviews, original poetry, and other submissions to Mel at [knightsofmatrix@gmail.com](mailto:knightsofmatrix@gmail.com) by May 15, 2022. Be sure to put "Mysterious Ways Submission" in the subject line.

### Submission Guidelines:

1. All submissions should be of interest to Queer Pagan Men and fit at least two of the criteria—Queer, Pagan, and Men.
2. All submissions (especially photography and artwork) should be rated PG-13 or less. Since this newsletter will be shared in social media groups and in Pagan shops where minors might have access, we'd rather err on the side of community standards—not that we necessarily agree with them all.
3. Most articles should be a typewritten page or less. We may consider longer articles based on relevance and content.
4. You retain ownership and/or copyright of any articles or artwork you submit. We are only providing a venue to share your work with the world.
5. We reserve the right to refuse any content for any reason; to make minor edits such as spelling, grammar, and formatting; or to send the content back to you for revision.
6. We will not accept content that is explicitly racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist, body shaming, or that otherwise spreads hate, negativity, or misinformation about any population or subculture of people.