

# Deep Autumn

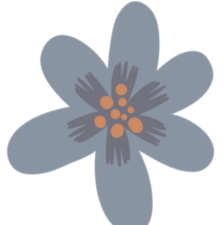
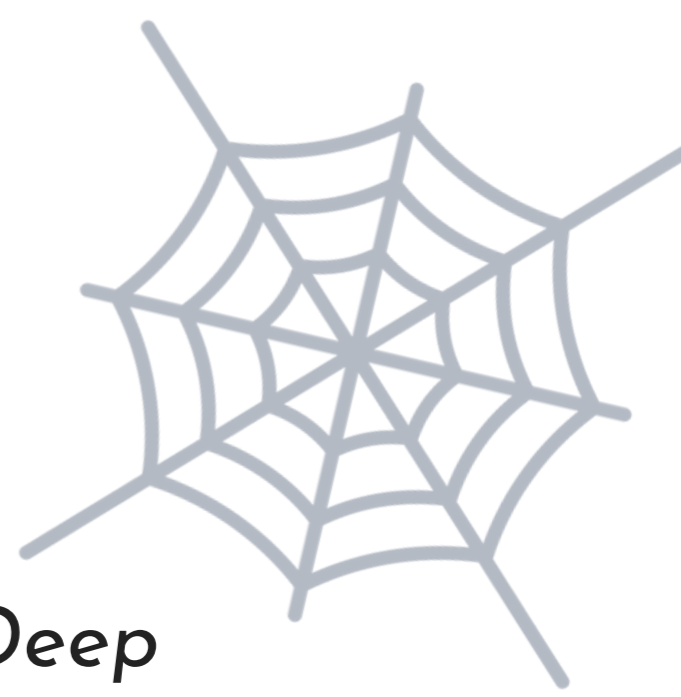
## Festival of Ancestors



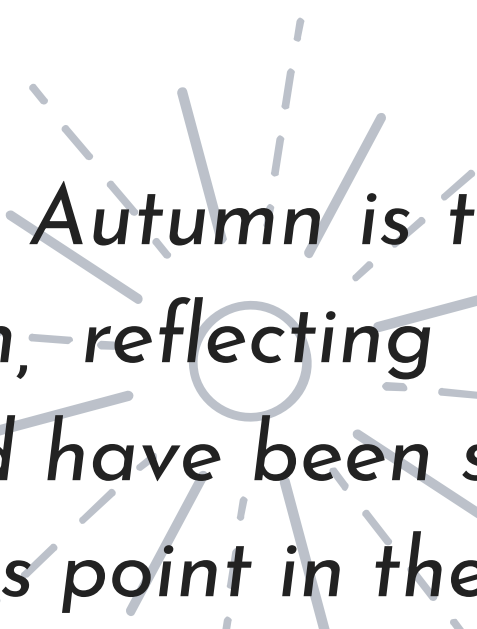


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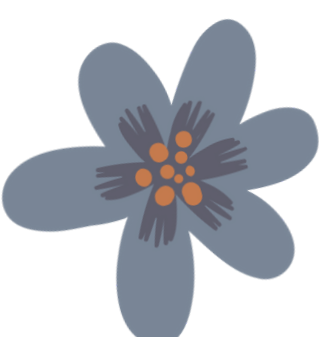
Its neo-pagan name is Samhain, pronounced SOWen. Deep Autumn is the festival celebrating the midpoint between Autumn Equinox and Winter Solstice. Traditionally it falls on 30th April in the southern hemisphere.



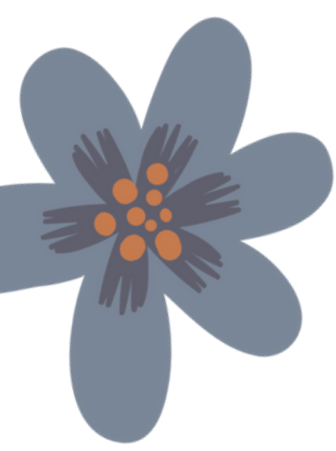
Deep Autumn is the final harvest festival and speaks of symbolic death, reflecting the perceived death of trees and plants that would have been seen by people living in the northern hemisphere at this point in the seasonal cycle.



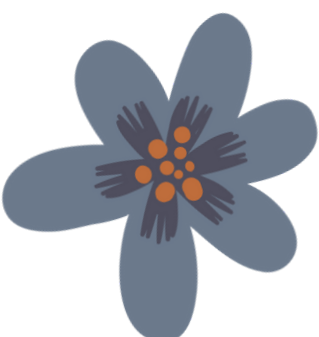
Irish samhain (Gaelic samhuinn), from Old Irish samain, literally means "summer's end," from Old Irish sam "summer" and fuin "end." It marks the start of winter and of the new year.




While we celebrate Samhain, and the retreat and descent from outer life, the Northern Hemisphere is celebrating springtime resurrection. All of us stand between the depths of the Earth and the celestial heavens. We are the conduit of both. As The Wild Matryoshka says, "Push, push, push on up little sprouts! Sink, sink, sink fearless roots. It's not a one over the other. It's a both and. Don't blink you might miss the truth that nature sings." During Spring and Summer we stretch our branches up to the sun, it is a period of creating, outward growth, but our tree selves will not be stable unless we've grown our roots deep and wide. Samhain and our descent into the nourishing, deep dark allows us to do that: resting, dreaming, renewing.



Samhain also celebrates our ancestors, those who dreamt us into being. The ancients believed that the veil between our world and the spirit world thins at this time of year, allowing ancestors to walk with us again.



A person is shown from the chest down, sitting cross-legged on a grey cloth. They are holding a lit candle in a glass holder with both hands. The person has several rings on their fingers and bracelets on their wrists. The background is dark and textured, possibly a wall or a large piece of fabric. The lighting is dim, with the primary light source being the candle flame.

Sit for a moment and listen to  
the heartbeat of the earth  
beneath you. If you have a drum,  
you could use this to sound that  
heartbeat - feel how it connects  
all life. Then in silence, feel your  
ancestors, guides and loved ones  
enveloping you with their  
presence and love.

The power of quiet is great. It generates the same  
feelings in everything one encounters. It vibrates  
with the cosmic rhythm of oneness.  
It is everywhere, available to anyone at any time. It  
is us, the force within that makes us stable, trusting,  
and loving. It is contemplation contemplating.  
Peace is letting go - returning to the silence that  
cannot enter the realm of words because it is too  
pure to be contained in words.  
This is why the tree, the stone, the river, and the  
mountain are quiet.  
~ Malidoma Patrice Some



# Celebrating *DEEP AUTUMN*

*Samhain is a good time of year to work on communicating with the spirit world. Reach out to your ancestors, and see what they need you to know.*

Host a dumb supper (no-one may speak from the time they enter the dining room), set a place for ancestors. In the silence, the spirits are far more likely to show up.

This is a perfect night to do some divination. Why not try scrying to see what's in store for you. Scrying is the practice of looking into some sort of reflective surface to see what sort of metaphysical messages appear. You can make a scrying mirror to keep handy for divination any time of the year, or use fire, or even a bowl of water under a moonlit night.

Celebrate with foods that celebrate the final harvest, and the death of the fields by making soul cakes, soups, pumpkin spice cheesecake, and baked apples.

It was believed that ringing a bell on Samhain kept away evil spirits.



Burying animal bones in front of your house on the night of Samhain will keep evil away, according to some legends of eastern Europe.





# Celebrating *DEEP AUTUMN*

*This is a good time for us to look at wrapping up the old and preparing for the new in our lives. Think about the things you did in the last twelve months. Have you left anything unresolved? If so, now is the time to wrap things up. Once you've gotten all that unfinished stuff cleared away, and out of your life, then you can begin looking towards the next year.*

'You are not too old and it is not too late to dive into your increasing depths where life calmly gives out its own secret.'  
~ Rilke



## DECORATIONS

Pumpkins  
Squash

Black Candles  
Cauldrons

Autumn Leaves  
Skulls

## INCENSE + CRYSTALS

Sandalwood  
Sage  
Obsidian  
Onyx

Patchouli  
Rosemary  
Bloodstone

Sweetgrass  
Dragonsblood  
Smoky Quartz

## FOODS

Apples  
Cider  
Potatoes

Pumpkin  
Root Veggie

Squash  
Grains

Turnips  
Stew

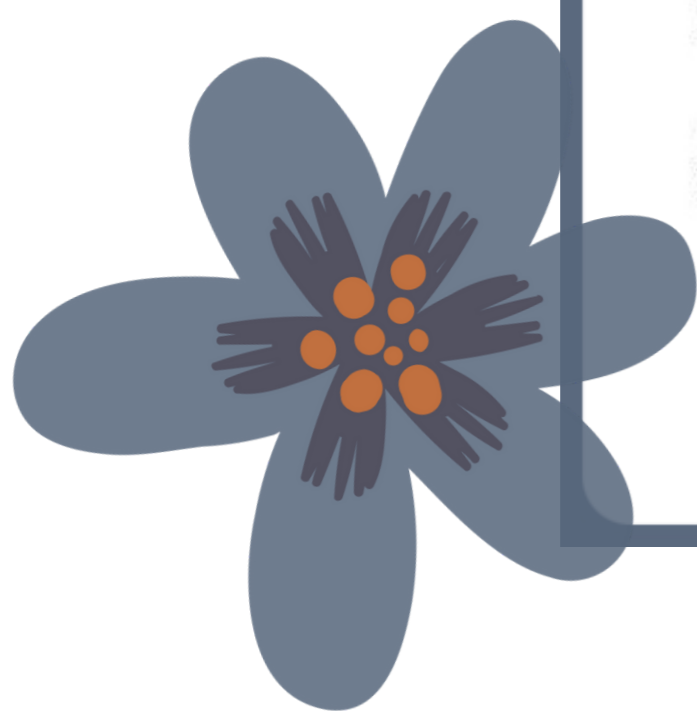
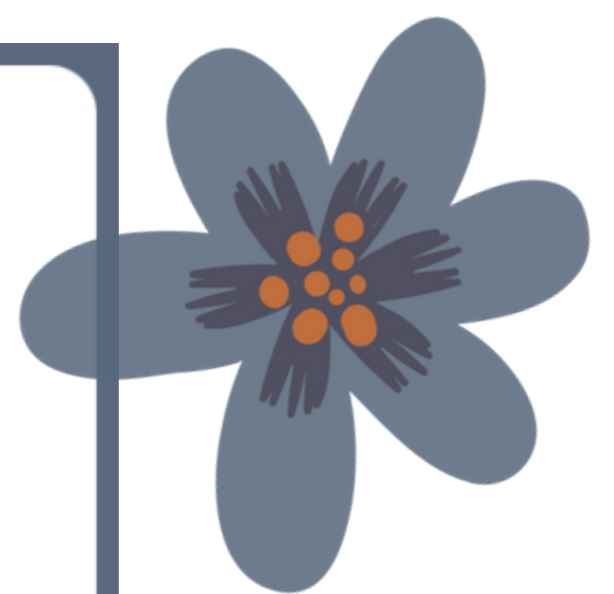
## SPELLWORK

Divination  
Banishing  
Honoring the dead

Clarity  
Past Lives

Endings  
Protection  
Getting rid of bad habits

Releasing  
Letting go







# Ritual for *DEEP AUTUMN*

## The Ancestor Necklace

- extract from [OBOD](#)

### Ritual

For this ritual you will need a length of red cord, three 'hag stones' (those that have a natural hole running through the stone), three crow or raven feathers and an apple. Take the length of cord; hold it up and say,

This is the thread of life that connects me to all that once were, to all that are and to those yet to come.

Take the three hag stones. These represent the stony endurance and wisdom of the Crone, the wise woman who watches over our endings and midwives our beginnings, initiating the cycles of death and rebirth that link us all. Hold up the stones and say,

These stones are the strong and enduring links to all those that have gone before me and all those that follow after.

Take the three crows/ravens feathers. These represent ancestral wisdom and knowledge; the power of mystery, transformation and healing. Hold them up saying,

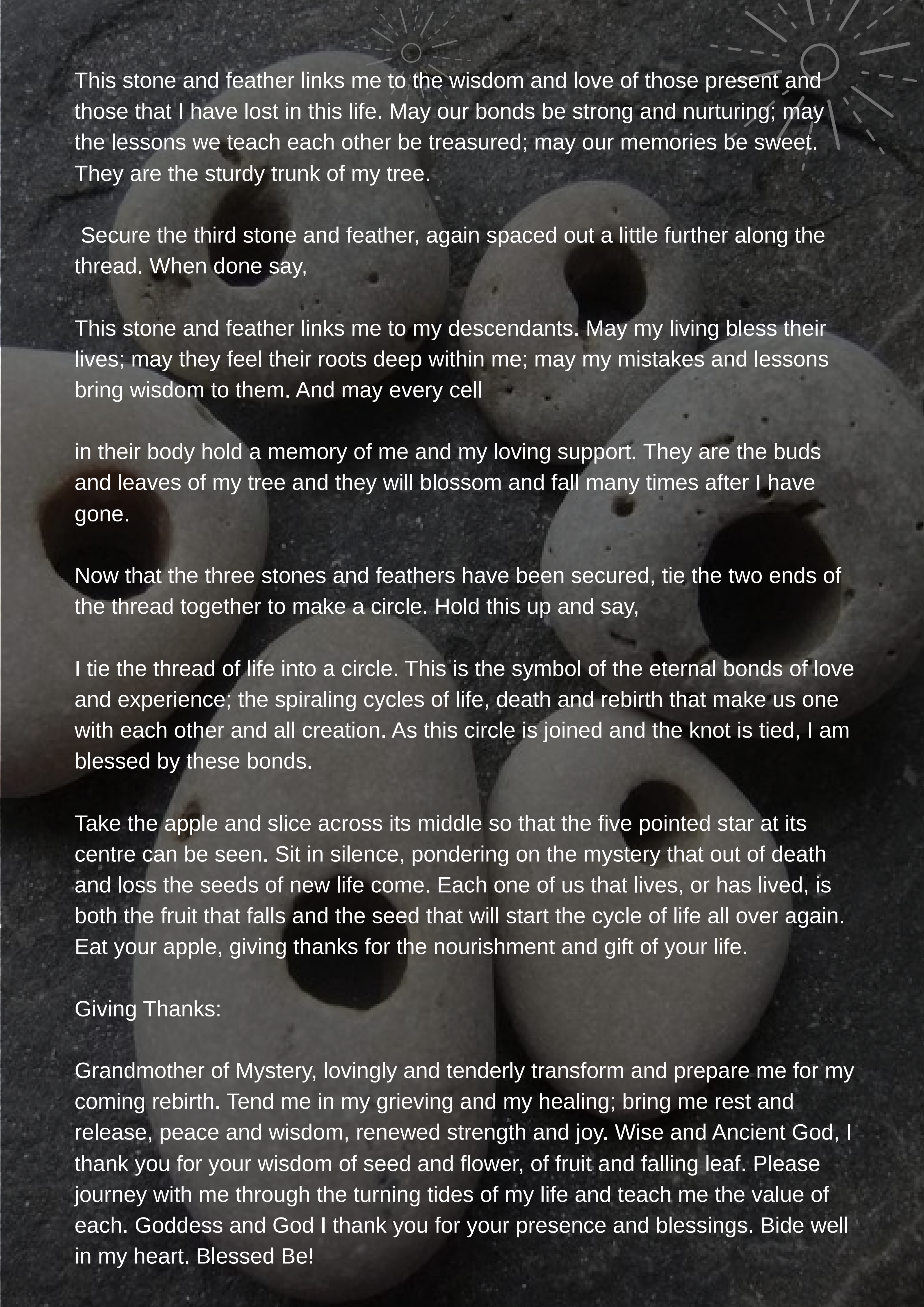
These feathers remind me that I am only the flap of a wing away from those I love and from those that guide and protect me.

Thread the chord through the first hag stone, looping and tying it to secure the stone. Slide the feather's quill end into the knot to secure it next to the stone. Double knot if you need to. Now say,

This stone and feather links me to the wisdom and love of my ancestors. May I feel their gentle guiding presence; may their experience and knowledge bless my life. They are the roots of my tree.

Do the same with the second stone and feather, spaced out a little further along the thread. Then say,





This stone and feather links me to the wisdom and love of those present and those that I have lost in this life. May our bonds be strong and nurturing; may the lessons we teach each other be treasured; may our memories be sweet. They are the sturdy trunk of my tree.

Secure the third stone and feather, again spaced out a little further along the thread. When done say,

This stone and feather links me to my descendants. May my living bless their lives; may they feel their roots deep within me; may my mistakes and lessons bring wisdom to them. And may every cell

in their body hold a memory of me and my loving support. They are the buds and leaves of my tree and they will blossom and fall many times after I have gone.

Now that the three stones and feathers have been secured, tie the two ends of the thread together to make a circle. Hold this up and say,

I tie the thread of life into a circle. This is the symbol of the eternal bonds of love and experience; the spiraling cycles of life, death and rebirth that make us one with each other and all creation. As this circle is joined and the knot is tied, I am blessed by these bonds.

Take the apple and slice across its middle so that the five pointed star at its centre can be seen. Sit in silence, pondering on the mystery that out of death and loss the seeds of new life come. Each one of us that lives, or has lived, is both the fruit that falls and the seed that will start the cycle of life all over again. Eat your apple, giving thanks for the nourishment and gift of your life.

Giving Thanks:

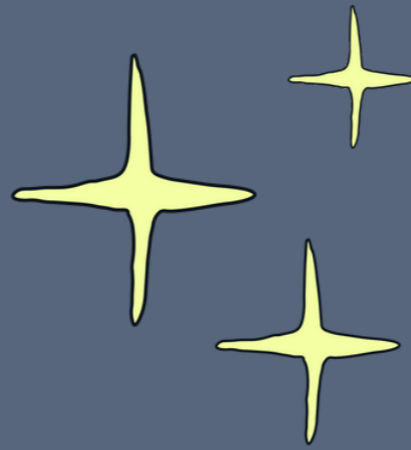
Grandmother of Mystery, lovingly and tenderly transform and prepare me for my coming rebirth. Tend me in my grieving and my healing; bring me rest and release, peace and wisdom, renewed strength and joy. Wise and Ancient God, I thank you for your wisdom of seed and flower, of fruit and falling leaf. Please journey with me through the turning tides of my life and teach me the value of each. Goddess and God I thank you for your presence and blessings. Bide well in my heart. Blessed Be!

# folklore

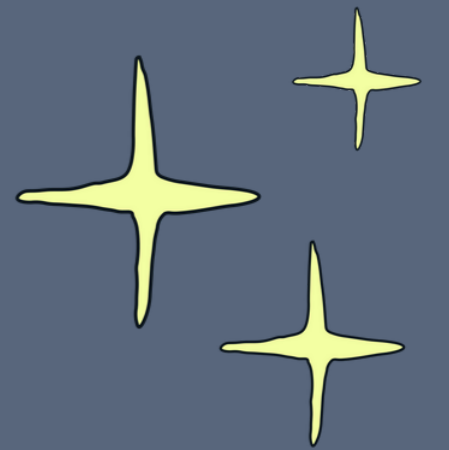
Some people believe that if you see a spider on Samhain, it harbours the spirit of a dead ancestor, watching you... so don't squash it!



If the bats come out early on this night, and fly around, it means good weather is coming.



People were often cautioned that if they heard footsteps behind them on the night of Samhain, they shouldn't turn back because it may be a spirit following them.



By Glenys Livingstone...



*The story of old tells us that on this night, between the dead and the born, between the old and the new, all is possible; that we travel in the Womb of the Mother, the Dark Shining One within, from which all pours forth, and that we are the seed of our own rebirth. The gates of life and death are opened: the dead are remembered, the Not-Yet is conceived. We meet in time out of time, everywhere and nowhere, here and there ... to transform the old into the new in our own bodyminds.*



# folklore



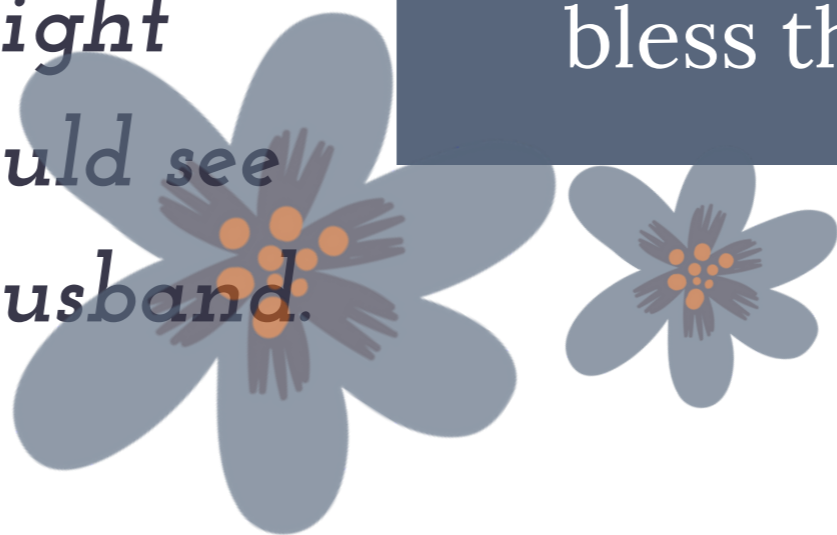
*Even though this festival isn't traditionally associated with love, it still features in a number of practices related to matters of the heart..*

*Keep a sprig of rosemary and a sixpence under your pillow on Samhain night, and you'll dream of your future spouse.*

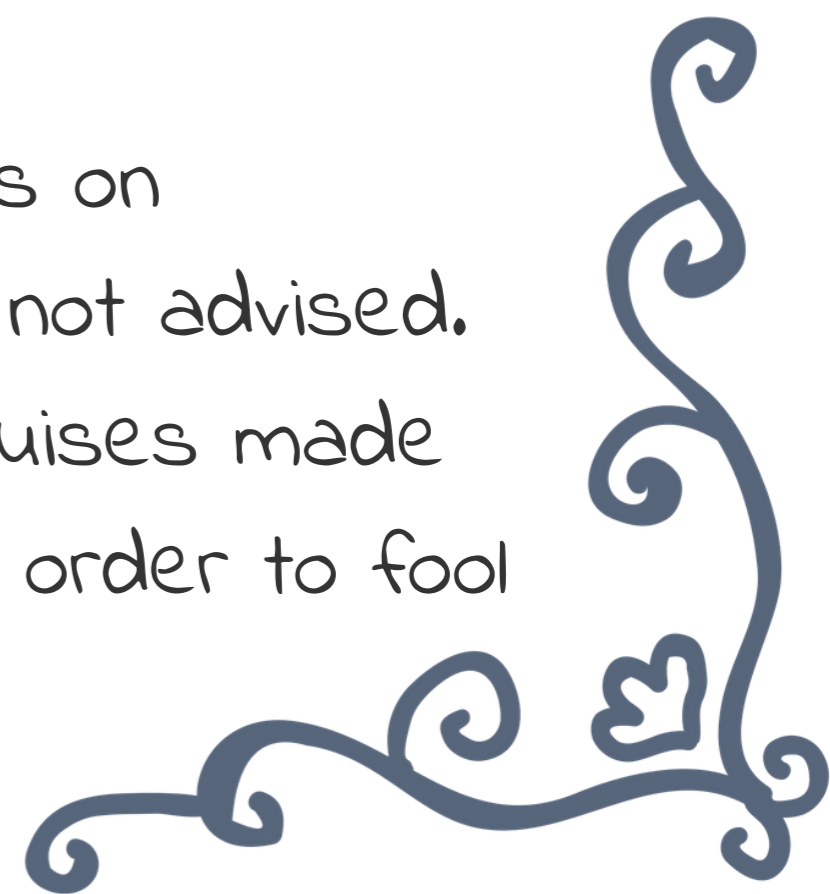
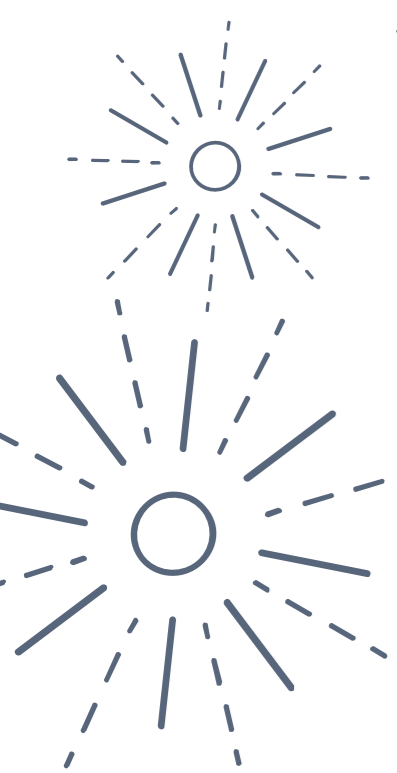
*Ever go bobbing for apples at a Halloween party? In England, everyone knows that the first girl to successfully retrieve an apple will be the first to marry!*

*In parts of England, it was believed that if a maiden carried a lantern to a well on this night and held the light above the water, she would see the reflection of future husband.*

This was also the time that the cattle and other livestock were slaughtered for the ensuing winter months. Any crops still in the field, berries or fruit still unpicked on this date were considered taboo, and left as offerings to the nature spirits. Bonfires were built, (originally called bone-fires). Named so because, after feasting, the bones were thrown in the fire as offerings for healthy and plentiful livestock in the New Year. Stones were marked with peoples names, and then thrown into the fire, to be retrieved in the morning. The condition of the retrieved stone foretold that person's fortune in the coming year. Hearth fires were also lit from the village bonfire to ensure unity, and the ashes were spread over the harvested fields to protect and bless the land.



The wee folk became very active - pulling pranks on unsuspecting humans. Travelling after dark was not advised. People dressed in white (like ghosts), wore disguises made of straw, or dressed as the opposite gender in order to fool the nature spirits.







# Indigenous Wisdom

On Gumbaynggirr land we are approaching the end of Yarrawirrga. In June we move into Magurr (cold).



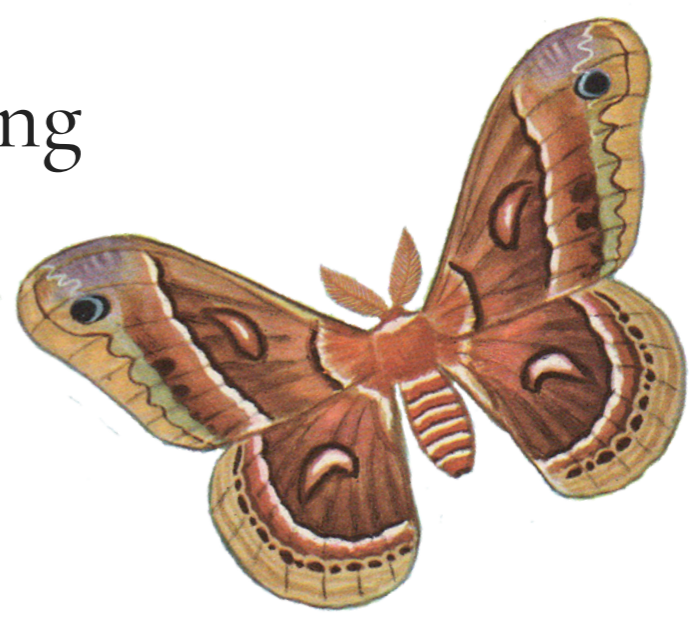
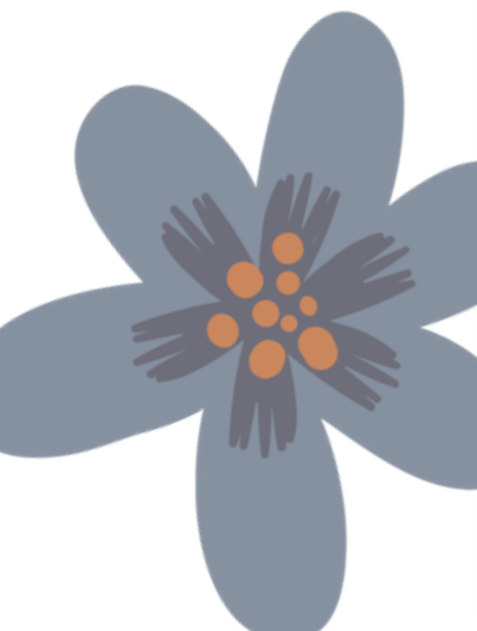
The Gumbaynggirr Seasonal Calendar mural design was completed by students of Bellingen High School with Nellie Gallop and is based on the work of Chels Marshall, Ricky Buchanan, Uncle Tony Perkins and Arrawarra Cultural Centre. The inspiration came from a similar (coastal) work created at Scotts Head Public School.



Kangaroos and Waterholes  
by Justin Ronberg Japarula

In her description of the Creation Dreaming Minmia describes how the Kangaroo was prepared to sacrifice herself to save another creature. The Kangaroo is able to control her fertility and does this with responsibility for the environment and the seasons. She will sacrifice a part of her that she loves to ensure the continuance of the species. When we are on a spiritual journey we are asked to make sacrifices; Kangaroo understands and supports us in this. Samhain and the remembering of the Ancestors is a good time to meditate on the Dreaming of the Kangaroo as she manifests sacrifice. – Seasons of the Goddess, Dr Tricia Szirom



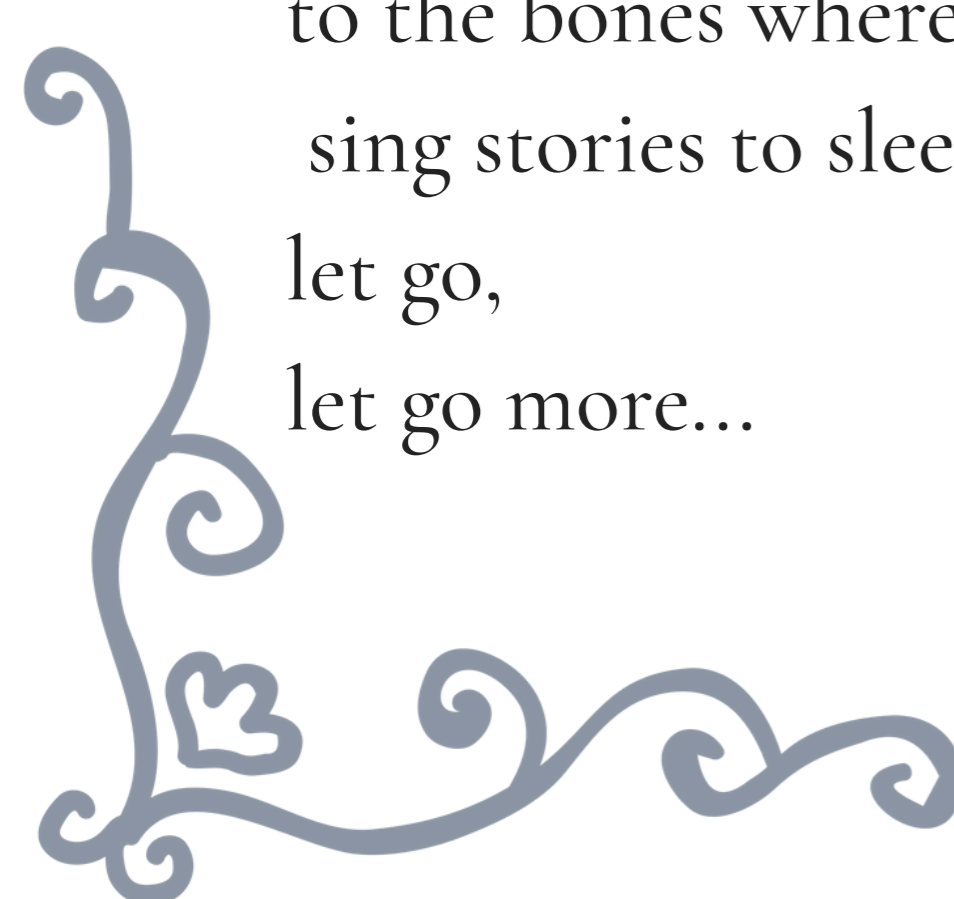


*An Autumn Prescription:*

Root gently, softly into darkness.  
become one with soil, soul  
night. dark night.  
release the stories, the old stories  
to the roots  
and depths  
to the bones where ancestors  
sing stories to sleep  
let go,  
let go more...

to silence to moth time,  
to undying flame  
until there is no more story to story  
until there is no more darkness  
because the light burns bright.  
shining, hermit's lantern streaming  
from within  
chemistry embodied (after all, we  
are stars,  
from the beginning  
and to the end)

A poem by Stasha Ginsberg





# Introduction To A Goddess

Valkyrie, The Bird Goddess is one of the most ancient goddesses, both a life-giving creator and a goddess of death and regeneration. The Valkyrie, a northern European goddess, is a representation of this goddess as death wielder. The bird guise of the Valkyrie is that of the raven, long associated with death and magic. The name Valkyrie means "chooser of the slain"; the face and form of the Valkyrie are the last thing a person sees before death. Valkyries are psychopomps who led the soul to the afterworld. For ancient people, death was part of a cyclical process leading again to rebirth; black was a positive colour, a symbol of fertility and



Artist: Jynette Tigner

abundance. The Valkyrie represents that part of us that is unafraid of the dark places; she can lead us into and through them. She reminds us that seeds germinate in the darkness, that sometimes we need darkness in order to grow. - Goddess Knowledge Cards.



## Gardening Goddesses

If you're lucky enough to be blessed with green thumbs and garden space then here is a list of vegies, herbs etc. to plant now in the mid north coast of NSW area. This list is not exhaustive, and there are many other fabulous plants you could add to it. Remember that much of the region is on the cusp between temperate zone and sub-tropical zone, so you may need to experiment if you don't already know where the warm and cool parts of your garden are situated. Have fun and good luck with your gardening.







# Pansies & Violas

Vibrant violas and the prettiest of pansies – It really is hard to resist these delightful little plants!

Viola is the botanical name for pansies and violas, and both will flower from autumn, through winter, and continue into spring. These flowers bring a vibrant charm to any garden and have so many colours to choose from. Find them in singular colours such as white, cream, yellow, orange, red and purple, or get the best of both worlds with two-toned doubles. Some even have etch-like markings that look like cat whiskers, and their sweet little faces are very endearing.

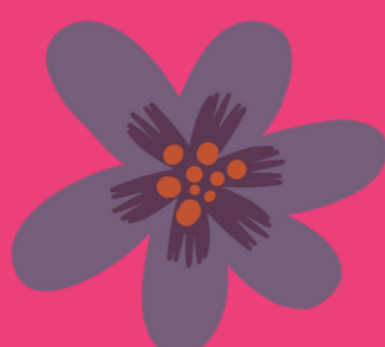
Plants like these used to be sold in punnets and called bedding plants because you would plant a whole garden bed filled with wonderful colour. Now they're called bloomers and sold in packs of six or ten, a perfect amount for a pot for instant colour.

Pansies have large bold blooms and a taller upright habit, whereas violas have smaller more prolific flowers, a spreading habit, and tend to be a little more tolerant of frost and partial shade. Whichever you choose, give them plenty of sun and they'll bring so much joy to your winter. – Gardening Australia

- Beetroot
- Broccoli
- Caraway
- Carrots
- Coriander
- Chervil
- Cornflower
- Garlic
- Hollyhock
- Hyssop
- Kale



- Leeks
- Lettuce
- Mustard
- Onions - spring
- Pansy
- Parsnip
- Radish
- Silverbeet
- Spinach





Artist: Adam Oehlers



# Revering the Darkness

The idea of descending into the darkness can be scary for those of us brought up with the idea of living in the light, and with a theology that conflates darkness with evil. However, in the darkness is where the seed germinates, where the child gestates, where dreams show up.

In the darkness of depths there is peace, embrace, rest, and renewal. Finding time on the dark moon to withdraw from the world is an incredibly nourishing thing to do. In a world that celebrates do do do, it is a rebellious and revolutionary thing to stop, breathe, go within, bring your energy back home to you, holding it to yourself like a cloak; a boundary that isn't so much about keeping the outer at bay, with a hard line drawn, but about embrace, remaining present, staying with yourself. Samhain is a time for slow down, exploring that which is liminal within us, bringing forward those things that we have hidden away that might be treasure. How can we use this period of turning inwards in order to understand and integrate our shadow qualities and parts? - By deepening our understanding of, and nurturing compassion towards, our internal darkness - By honouring ourselves as a mosaic that includes parts of all those who have come and gone in our lives, and all the different people we've been, the roles that we've played. In this way we can continue meeting the future seasons with both grace and grit.





# Pumpkin Soup

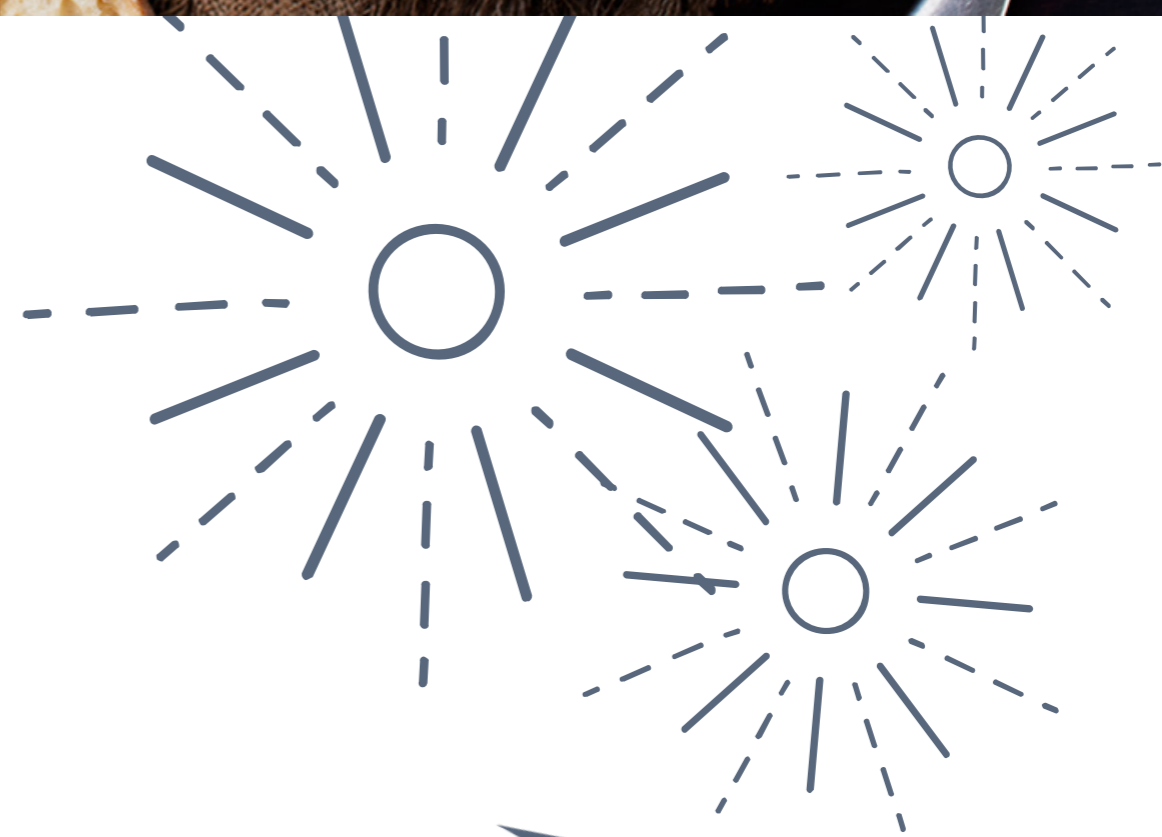


## Ingredients

750g Butternut pumpkin  
2 large onions  
250g potatoes  
3 chicken stock cubes or equivalent  
4 cups of water  
pinch of cumin or curry powder  
1 cup of cream  
salt and pepper  
handful of parsley for garnish

## Method

Cut up the pumpkin, onions, potatoes into chunks and place in a deep saucepan, add the water, stock cubes, and cumin. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat and simmer until vegetables are soft (approx 25 minutes depending on how small you've cut the veggies) Puree in blender or food processor. Return to pan and add cream (be careful not to boil it again as this will make the cream separate. To avoid this happening add the cream to individual servings). Add salt and pepper to taste. Serves 4 big bowls. Garnish with parsley.







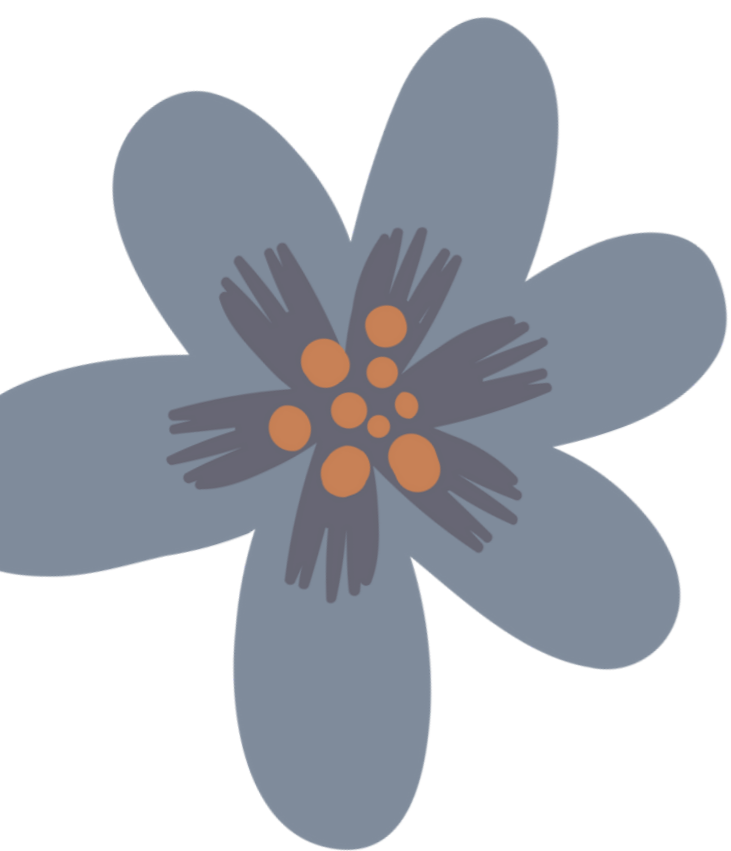
# Music for the Season



L'automne

By Artesia

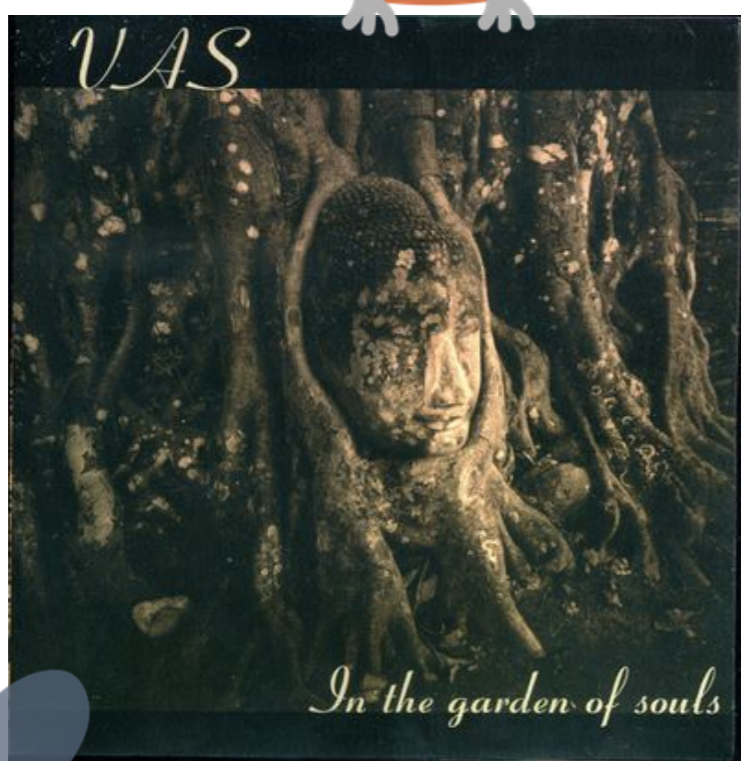
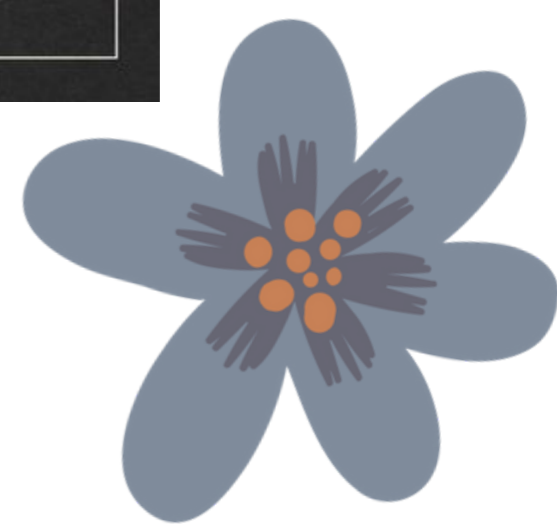
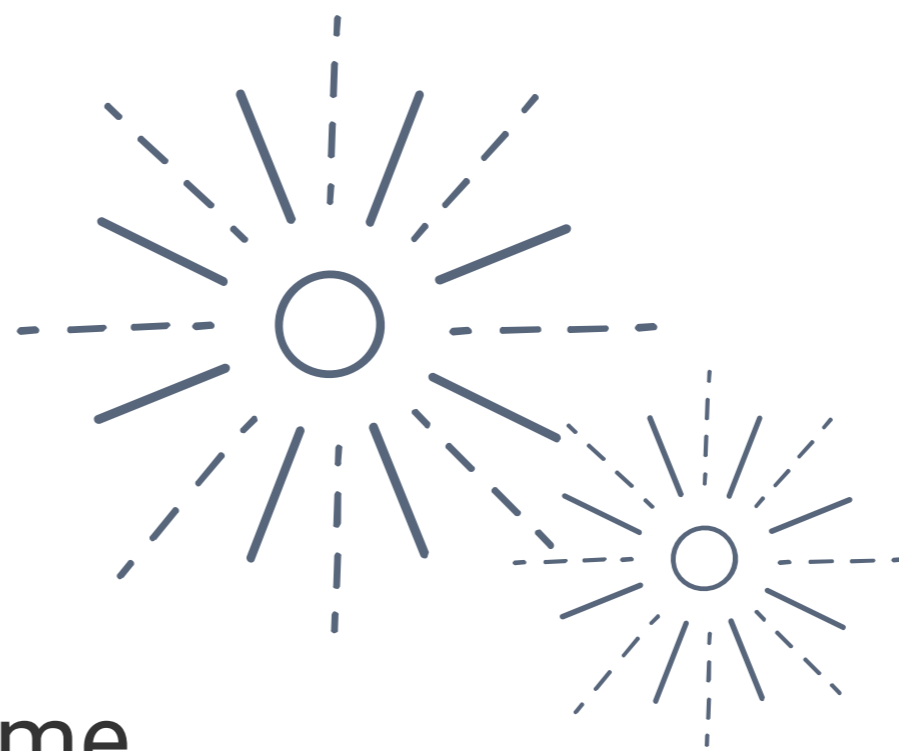
From album *En cette fin de jour*



Tröllabundin

By Eivør

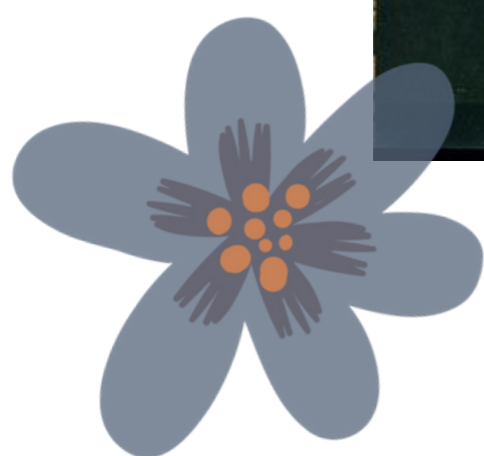
From album *Slør*



Unbecome

By Vas

From album *In The Garden of Souls*







# Mulled Wine



## Ingredients

1 apple

8 cloves

1 lemon

3 cinnamon sticks

225g of light brown sugar [this amount may be a little sweet for some palates]

1.75lt red wine [Shiraz is perfect]

150ml brandy

lemon slices to serve

## Method

1. Cut the apple into 4 and stud with cloves

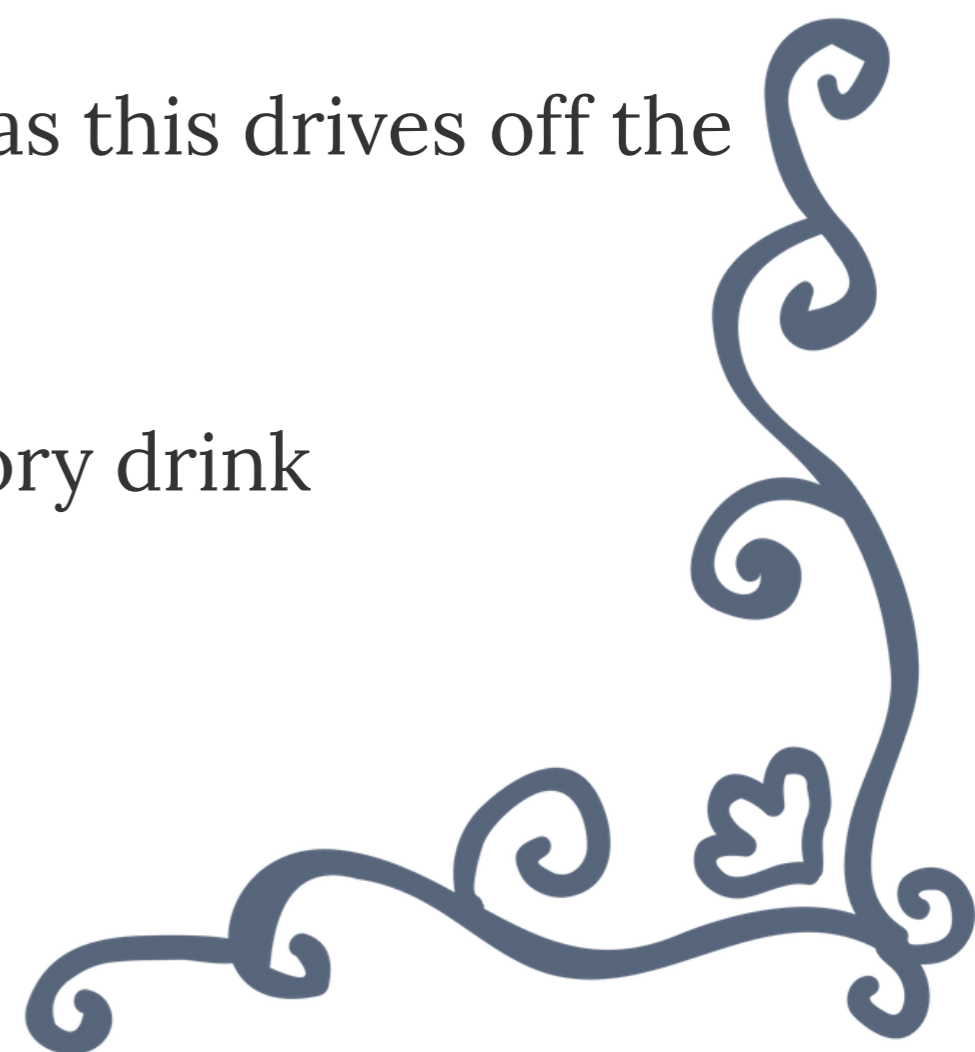
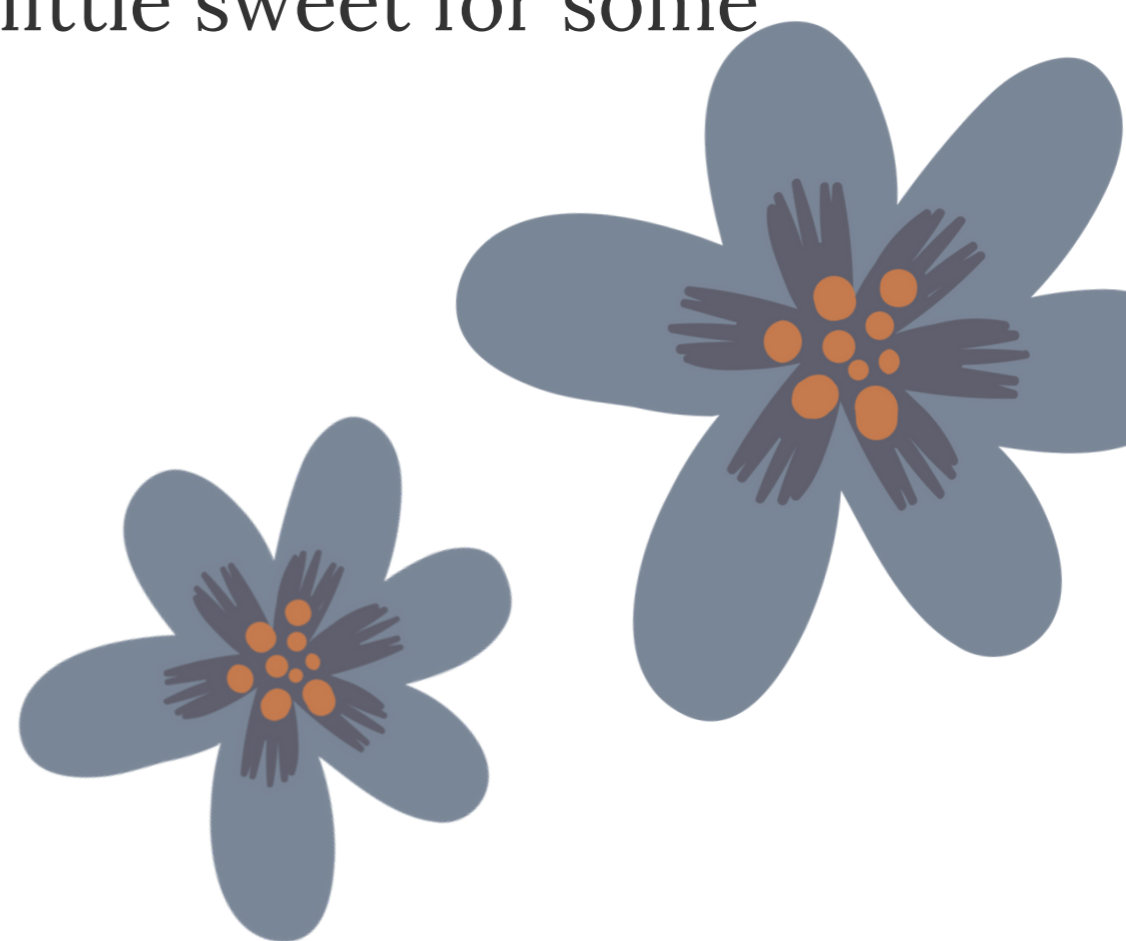
2. Remove zest from the lemon

3. Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and gently bring to the boil. Simmer for 2 minutes - no longer.

4. Strain and serve hot with slices of lemon.

\*Mulled wine should never be simmered for long as this drives off the alcohol.

P.S. Keep this recipe for the perfect Yule celebratory drink





## Last Word

This is one of my favourite times of the year. I can feel the quietness, the settling of nature; the gentleness and peace.

I love to gather around the fire-pit with our drums, enjoying Pumpkin Soup, and toasting our ancestors with Mulled Wine - recipes inside. Whatever your plans for this season, we wish you well.

'Til next time, blessed be!



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