



Pooka's Page for Grown-ups

In the last issue, feeling a little burned out after 10 years of writing & illustrating this magazine, I asked some Facebook friends for help...and they came through with flying colors.

You can't imagine how delighted and grateful I was and the resulting issue of Pooka Pages was loaded with articles, coloring pages and fun stuff for kids to do.

And now, these same intrepid writers and artists are back again...ready for round two in this issue. What a brave and dedicated bunch they are! Fiona, Wendy, Nathalie, Evelien, Deanna, Sally & Connall – I can't thank you enough.

We also have a few new authors: Hummingbird, the teenage author of the beautifully written blog "Hummingbird's Pagan Place", graciously gave permission for us to share here "Corn Dolly" instructions with you.

It seems we're getting more and more wonderful submissions by young folks! Mathew Two-Shoes is another teen author from our last issue who, this time, along with his mother, Christine, has come up with a delicious recipe honoring the traditional Berry Harvest of Lughnasadh.

Although Rayne Storm is the usual author of our "WitchCraft" page, this time it's her 10 year old son taking the helm with his "PomPom Dragons"...and your kids are going to love them!

Kyrja, author of the famous "Rupert, the Rabbit's Wheel of the Year Tales", has written a little story exclusively for Pooka Pages! If you don't know about this wonderful lady yet (and if you don't, where HAVE you been?), I urge you to gather a child in your lap and visit her on youtube http://www.youtube.com/user/kyrjarocks?feature=results_main (or just go to youtube.com and type in "kyrja" as a search word). You will find an endless parade of songs, poems & stories for pagan kids – all created and performed by this very magical lady.

If you're enjoying this expanded version of Pooka Pages, take a moment to write and let us know! (Pooka, especially, loves getting mail from kids.) Meanwhile....

A very Happy Lughnasadh!

From

Lora and Pooka





Also known as Lammas, Festival of First Fruits, First Harvest - This is the first of the three harvest celebrations. Earth's bounty becomes ripe for gathering. The first loaves of bread are baked from this year's grains. Fruits, such as lemons, berries and peaches, are ready to be canned or made into pies and jams. In the midst of all this activity, people still find time to gather at County Fairs that are today's version of the ancient Lughnasadh Festivals.

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The Storybook Chair



Weeds & Magic



Pooka lay sprawled beneath the tomato vines in his friend's garden.

"Come on!" he said, slapping his tail impatiently against the dirt. "We could be fishing right now!"

"I can't," sighed Nathan. "Not until these weeds are pulled. Grandmother said so."

The cat rolled lazily onto his back and waved his paws in the air. "Shady trees....a cool stream," he yawned teasingly. "Those fish are probably pretty hungry by now..."

The boy stabbed his trowel into the earth and yanked out another green offender. "Don't remind me," he growled.

Pooka stood up and strolled over, peering down at the little pile of rapidly wilting plants on the path next to his friend. "You'd better get those in some water," he said knowingly. "They'll die in this heat."

"That's the idea," said Nathan as he pulled another from the ground. "They're weeds."

"What are weeds?" asked the cat.

Nathan straightened up and mopped the sweat from his forehead with the back of his arm. "They're umm... you know... Weeds! You pull them out so the other stuff can grow. Otherwise the stuff you want to grow gets crowded out."

Pooka just blinked at the boy. He clearly didn't understand.

"Come on, Pooks! Don't tell me you and Elsie don't have any weeds in your garden!"

The cat thought carefully. He couldn't remember Elsie ever pulling plants out of the ground like this and then just leaving them to die in the sun.

"I don't think so," he said.

"Sure you do!" insisted Nathan. "Every garden has weeds! Go ask her. Besides, this will probably take me all day," the boy added with a sigh. "Maybe we can go fishing tomorrow."

"Okay," Pooka agreed sadly. He'd really been looking forward to a shady afternoon by the stream with Nathan .. not to mention the prospect of some fish for dinner. But, instead, he returned along the forest path that led home.

A little bridge crossed the stream that flowed in front of the gate leading to their cottage and, as he padded across it, Pooka spotted Elsie. She was sitting in the garden and singing. The cat's paws picked up speed and he galloped toward her.

But as he approached, the witch turned, put a finger to her lips signaling for him to be quiet, and then continued her song. Pooka noticed a sad little lavender plant in front of her. Its leaves were dull and drooping. Elsie had drawn a circle in the earth around plant and a small crystal was nestled against its main stem.

When she was finished her song, the little witch stood and dusted off her apron. "You look like a kitty with a question," she smiled.

"Elsie, do we have weeds in our garden?" asked Pooka.

The girl's eyebrows rose in surprise. "In the garden? No. Weeds aren't allowed here. They grow over there," and she pointed to a sunny patch of green between the trees on the other side of the stream beyond the gate.

"Why are they growing over there?"

"Because I told them to," said Elsie. "Every Spring I have a talk with any new ones that pop up and then move them over to that little area. I don't mind if they grow there."

"That's it?" asked Pooka.

"Pretty much," shrugged Elsie.

The cat looked up at her. "Is it magick?"

Elsie's eyes twinkled and she said. "Love is always magick. But the weeds know I love them better when they're over there and not in my garden!"

Pooka nodded. This made sense to him. He then turned his attention to the plant in front of Elsie. "So, what are we doing here?" he asked.

"This new little lavender isn't feeling very strong, so I'm singing to her to give her more confidence and help her to be happy and grow big," the witch said.

"You're singing to the plant?" asked Pooka skeptically.

Elsie smiled. "They like it," she told him. She turned and headed toward the cottage. "Now, how about some fish for supper?"

Pooka sprang to his paws and trotted after her. It was as though she'd read his mind!

The next morning, the little cat wandered out outside to play. He stopped short when he saw the little lavender bush. Its gray-green leaves were pointing straight toward the blue sky and it seemed almost twice as big as the day before! It was definitely Happy!

A little while later, back in the cottage, Elsie was washing the dishes from breakfast when suddenly she heard the most horrible wailing! It sounded like a cat ... one that was either dying or, at the very least, in some sort of terrible trouble!



She dropped her dishtowel and the bowl she'd been drying clattered to the floor as Elsie dashed to the door. She flew down the steps, calling, "Pooka? Pooka! Where are you? What happened?"

She saw him hunkered in the middle of the garden.

"Pooks!" In a panic, she rushed over and knelt down to check him for injuries, but the little cat brushed her off impatiently.

"I'm fine, Elsie," he said, adding sternly. "But you disrupted my spell!"

"That was a spell?" the witch exclaimed, rocking back on her heels in astonishment.

"Yes," Pooka told her. "I was singing to my catnip. I want it to grow really big and strong!"

Elsie didn't know whether to laugh or cry in relief. Instead, she gathered the cat in her arms and hugged him. "What if we do a *different* growing spell for your catnip? Your song may be helping

your catnip, but it but it almost gave *me* a heart attack!"

A Little Book of Shadows



Elsie's Spell for an Ailing Plant:

Place a small crystal next to the plant, then draw a circle in the dirt, clockwise, around them both to hold the energy. Pour a potion of fish emulsion mixed with green tea at the base of the plant. Hold out your hands and imagine your energy pouring into the plant as you sing:

*Little plant, Lift your head
The Sky's your pillow
The Earth is your bed.*

*Little plant, Grow up strong,
The Magic you seek
Is here in my song!*

THE LITTLE KITCHEN WITCH



Lughnasadh is the time when berries become ripe, and what better way to enjoy them than in these yummy cookies from Christine & Mathew Two-Shoes?

Blueberry Cheesecake Cookies

- 2 boxes Jiffy Blueberry Muffin mix
- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 1 stick butter
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C. brown sugar, firmly packed
- 2 eggs
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ C. white chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Cream together butter, cream cheese, and brown sugar.

Add eggs one at a time until blended.

Combine muffin mix with the butter mixture and mix well.

Fold in white chocolate chips.

Chill for at least one hour.

Scoop by tablespoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet.

Bake for 14-15 minutes or till light gold brown around the edges. Cool on cookie sheet for 1-2 minutes.

Transfer to wire rack until completely cooled.

And, for something refreshing on the side, how about:

Cool & Creamy Cantaloupe Soup

- 1 cantaloupe
- 1 cup orange juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon lime juice

Seed the cantaloupe and scoop the flesh out. Put this and all the other ingredients in a blender and whir until smooth & creamy.

Ladle into bowls and garnish w/ sprigs of fresh mint.



The Goddesses First Aid Kit



By Evelien Roos

Have you ever accidentally stung yourself on a stinging nettle, and consequently wondered why the Great Goddess ever created such a vile weed? Well, She made no mistake there. Stinging nettle is actually a very Useful herb! When dried and steeped in Vaseline, it provides a very healing salve for eczema, hives and other rashes and irritations of the skin. If used as a herb tea, it is helpful with gout and inflammations in the joints, and provides iron and vitamin C to help boost your immune system. Never the less, a sting is a nasty thing to get.

But again Mother Nature has provided, because where she allows nettles to grow, she also grows cures for their sting like Plantain, and in Europe the white deadnettle. But since this is mostly read by people in the USA and Canada, I'll make this issue about:

Plantain

(Please note that plantain - the banana-like fruit, is completely different and not related to the plantain "weed" we are talking about!)

Basically there are two types, one with broad leaves and one with slender. Both types have the same basic effect on your hurts.

This is a very sturdy little plant. If it gets stepped on, or even trampled by a horse, it will recover. The leaves have strong ribs, and when I was a kid (yes, I was, way back when) I used to take these and braid them into bracelets, which lasted for up to 3 days. So a little step will not hurt the plantain!

The Native Americans call this plant "white man's foot" because it cropped up everywhere the white man came. Bruise a leaf and put it on your nettle sting, or cut and/or bruised skin. Even allergic rashes and wet and itchy eczema will be eased. It's very cooling and stems bleeding. It is also mildly antiseptic, meaning it helps to clean wounds. Make a poultice from the bruised and warmed leaves and put that on the infected or badly mending wound. It will help the healing process and softens the skin.

If you get bitten by a spider or an insect, the juice from a leaf of plantain will give instant relief.

Tea brewed from the leaves will help with cold sores and fever blisters. Use it as a mouth wash. The tea will also help with troubled breathing and strengthen the lungs. So you see, this strong little plant is another of Mother Nature's super medicines. Well, that's it for this issue. See you in the next Pooka Pages! And remember: *Any weed can be a healing herb!*



Lotions & Potions

By Sally & Connall Echternach



Creamy Lughnasadh Bubble Bath

Ingredients:

- A small jar or bottle
- A small funnel if using a bottle
- a spoon or spatula for mixing
- ½ cup Liquid Castille Soap (we use the one for babies)
- ¼ cup Sweet Almond oil
- 1/8 cup Honey
- 1 Tablespoon Vegetable Glycerin
- 2 Teaspoons White Sugar or Powdered sugar
- 3 Teaspoons Vanilla extract (optional)
- 10 drops Sandalwood Essential Oil (optional)

You must start this recipe 24 hours before you want to use the bubble bath.

Combine all ingredients together in a small bowl except for the essential oil. Once all of your ingredients are thoroughly mixed, add your essential oil and mix well. Your bubble bath will need to sit for 24 hours to cure. You will find that some of it separates. That's ok. Just shake it up to remix. This will last for 2-3 month if kept in the refrigerator.



Blessing for Bubble Bath: Close your eyes. In your magickal imagination, move your energy into the bubble bath. Say:

*Oh Goddess, Mother Divine,
Bless these bubbles
For Sacred bath time!
Blessed Be!*

Go enjoy your bubble bath. Play with your bubbles. The Goddess loves to see Her children happy!



Lughnasadh Pótion

You will need:

A potion bottle (we get our for about \$1 a piece at the local craft store)

1 Blackberry leaf

1 Strawberry leaf

1 Rose petal

Focus on your task. Keep in your mind what this potion is for. Place your ingredients into your potion bottle. Fill with water and cork. To charge your potion, close your eyes and concentrate. See your potion in your magickal imagination. Send your energy into your potion. Tell your potion it is going to help you say thank you to the Earth.



The Rítual

You will need 4 pictures. You can print them, draw them, or even cut them out of a magazine:

Bear(North)

Eagle (East)

Tiger (South)

Dolphin (West)

Also:

A bowl of Earth

Lughnasadh Potion

To cast your circle, we will call the Quarters. These are the Elements or Four Directions.

Begin in the North. Hold up your Bear picture. Say:



Spirit of Bear
Protector of Earth
Please join our circle!
(Or for really young ones:)
Bear, North!

Turn to the East and Hold up your Eagle picture. Say:

Spirit of Eagle
Protector of Air
Please join our circle!
OR:
Eagle, East!



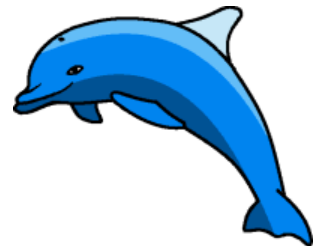
Turn to the South. Hold up your Tiger picture and say:



Spirit of Tiger
Protector of Fire
Please join our Circle!
OR
Tiger, Fire!

Turn to the West. Hold up your Dolphin picture and say:

Spirit of Dolphin
Protector of Water
Please join our circle!
OR
Dolphin, Water!



On your bowl of Earth, sprinkle your potion and Say: Thank you Mother Earth!

Sprinkle your potion again and Say: Thank you Father Sun!

Sprinkle again and Say: Thank you Brother Wind!

Sprinkle once more and Say: Thank you Sister Rain!

Thank the Quarters for coming to open your circle.

Hold up the Dolphin and say: Thank you Dolphin!

Hold up your Tiger and say: Thank you Tiger!

Hold up your Eagle and say: Thank you Eagle!

Hold up your Bear and say: Thank you Bear!

Now take your bowl of Earth, run around your yard wildly tossing it back to the Earth while yelling THANK YOU!!!

Blessed BE!!



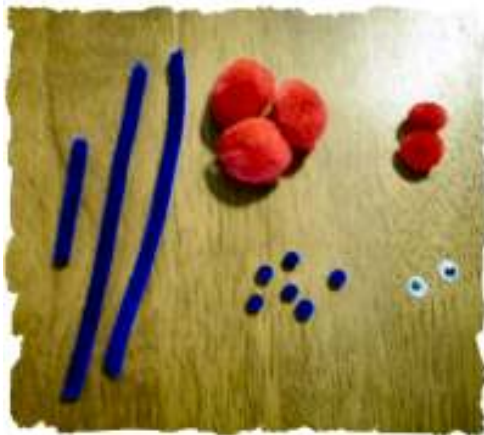
Connall is making a Potion!

Witch Crafts

Pom-Pom Dragons

"Never run, ride or drive faster than your guardian dragon can fly..."

by White Stag (10 year old son of Rayne Storm)

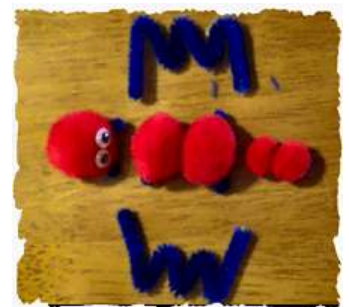


YOU'LL NEED:

- 3 LARGE Pom-poms in Color Choice 1
- 2 MEDIUM Pom-poms in Color Choice 1
- 6 TINY Pom-poms in Color Choice 2
- 2 small/tiny googly eyes
- 1 fuzzy stick in Color Choice 2 ((using a pair of wire cutters cut 2" off the end of your fuzzy stick. In the remaining longer piece of the fuzzy stick... cut it equally in half.
- Bottle of Clear Tacky Glue

WHAT YOU DO:

- Glue 2 of the 3 LARGE Pom-poms together. Use plenty of Glue. Squish together. This is the Dragon BODY.
- Glue the 2 MEDIUM Pom-poms together. Use plenty of Glue. Squish together. This is the Dragon TAIL.
- Using 4 of the 6 TINY pom-poms add legs to your Dragon BODY.
- Using the last LARGE Pom-pom –AND- the last 2 TINY pom-poms... add the 2 TINY pom-poms to the LARGE pom-pom. Use plenty of Glue. These are your dragon's ears.
- Now add your googly eyes just below your ears. Use plenty of Glue. This is your Dragon HEAD.
- Using the larger 2 pieces of fuzzy stick, fold each one into a sort of 'W' shape ... then fold each of the ends up about ¼" – that's where you will apply the glue later. These are your Dragon WINGS.
- Using the small 2" piece of fuzzy stick, make it into a circle, no need to twist the ends together.
- Generously glue the Dragon TAIL and the DRAGON BODY together.
- Now, glue the fuzzy stick CIRCLE to the other end of the Dragon BODY and then glue the Dragon HEAD to the Circle.
- Now you can add glue to your dragon WINGS and attach them to your Dragon BODY! Using whatever you can find, prop up your Dragon WINGS and HEAD, and let him sit for 24 hours – so the glue has time to take hold and set.



OTHER OPTIONS:

- Add a sticky backed magnetic strip – so that your Dragon can guard the Fridge and Kitchen
- Add a sticky backed VELCRO strip – so your Dragon can protect you while you're in the car.





Corn Dolly

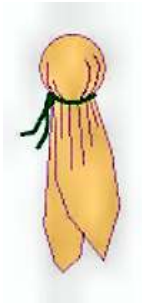


by Hummingbird

How many of you ate corn on the cob for the 4th of July? Come on, raise those hands... I know I did, and as such, I had a big bag full of leftover corn husks afterwards. Why waste those precious husks on the garbage can? A compost bin is a good place to begin, but a good number of those husks can be saved and turned into corn dollies, which make great decorations for Lammass, Mabon, and even Imbolc! So go on, grab a hand-full of them. I'd recommend having 20 or so on hand, per dolly. You probably won't use all of them, but having extra is better than not enough.

If you don't have any leftover cornhusks on hand, it's okay. Most megamarts carry dried corn husks that can be used instead - just soak them in some water for about a half-hour first.

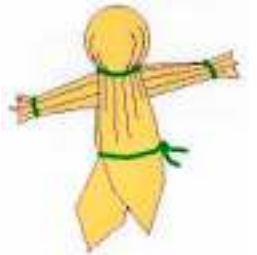
You will also want a pair of scissors, some cotton balls (two or three per dolly), and a skein of yarn. I chose red, but the color is really up to you.



Head: Take a single husk and place a cotton ball or two in the middle. Fold the husk in half and twist around the cotton balls to form the head, then tie in place with yarn.

Arms: Take 2 or 3 corn husks and lay them on top of each other. Fold them in half lengthwise and then in half again. Tie off both ends of the husks with yarn to make the arms.

Slide the arms between the front and back flaps of the head piece. Tie in place with yarn, wrapping around several times.



Skirt: Begin layering husks around the waist of the corn doll, pointing UP. (Yes, that's right. It ought to look like your corn dolly pulled a Marilyn Monroe.)

Once the skirt goes all the way around the doll, still flipped up, tie the husks to the torso tightly.

Begin pulling the husks down over the top of the yarn, so that her skirt appears normal, and conveniently hides some of the yarn.

Extras: At this point, it's up to you. You could use some yarn, leftover husks, raffia or other material to give her hair. Using glue and some beads or just a marker, you can add a face. A dress is easily made by taking a length of fabric twice as long as the body, folding it in half, and cutting out a circle for the head. Slide the fabric over the head and consider tying off with ribbon or more yarn. Or, just leave the dolly as-is. You be the judge.



*Hummingbird is the teenage author of **Hummingbirds Pagan Place**, a delightful & well-written blog where you will find tons of information and fun stuff. She's graciously given permission to share her article with you on Pooka Pages. You can visit Hummingbird at:*

<http://hummingbirdspaganplace.blogspot.com>

Make a Natural Orange Candle



Ask for a grownup's help with this project.

Cut through just the peel of the top 3rd of an orange, then carefully remove it so that the natural stem/wick stays intact.

Pour some olive oil into the bowl that's formed, leaving a bit of the "wick" sticking up. Add a few drops of orange oil, if you like.



Then light your Orange Organic Candle!



Elsie says: In magic, Orange, whether using the color, the scent or the fruit, is for attraction... pulling something you want into your life. Can you think of a way to turn this fun project into a spell? Remember: You'll want to use your Magical Imagination and picture in your mind what it is you want.

(Photos from **Our Green Planet** www.facebook.com/ourgreenplanetocks)

SCENTS & STONES

by Wendy Fischer



CITRINE

Citrine is a type of quartz crystal that has a yellow or gold coloring to it. It's a wonderful stone to wear because it doesn't hold bad energies. In fact, it changes bad energies into good energies! It also attracts and helps to maintain wealth, helps you have good feelings about yourself and is a very calming stone! They are very easy to find anywhere that sells gemstones and in jewelry stores and not expensive.



LEMON

This little yellow fruit is a wonderful, energizing, fresh, sharp scent. Everyone knows to squeeze lemon and drop some slices into an ice cold pitcher of water and sugar for a refreshing summer drink. But did you know that lemon also helps you to think clearly and energizes your body just by smelling the scent? The smell of lemon can also help ease nausea and motion sickness. When you feel rundown or yucky take a whiff of a lemon for an instant pick-me-up!





Rupert Learns more about Lammas

By Kyrja

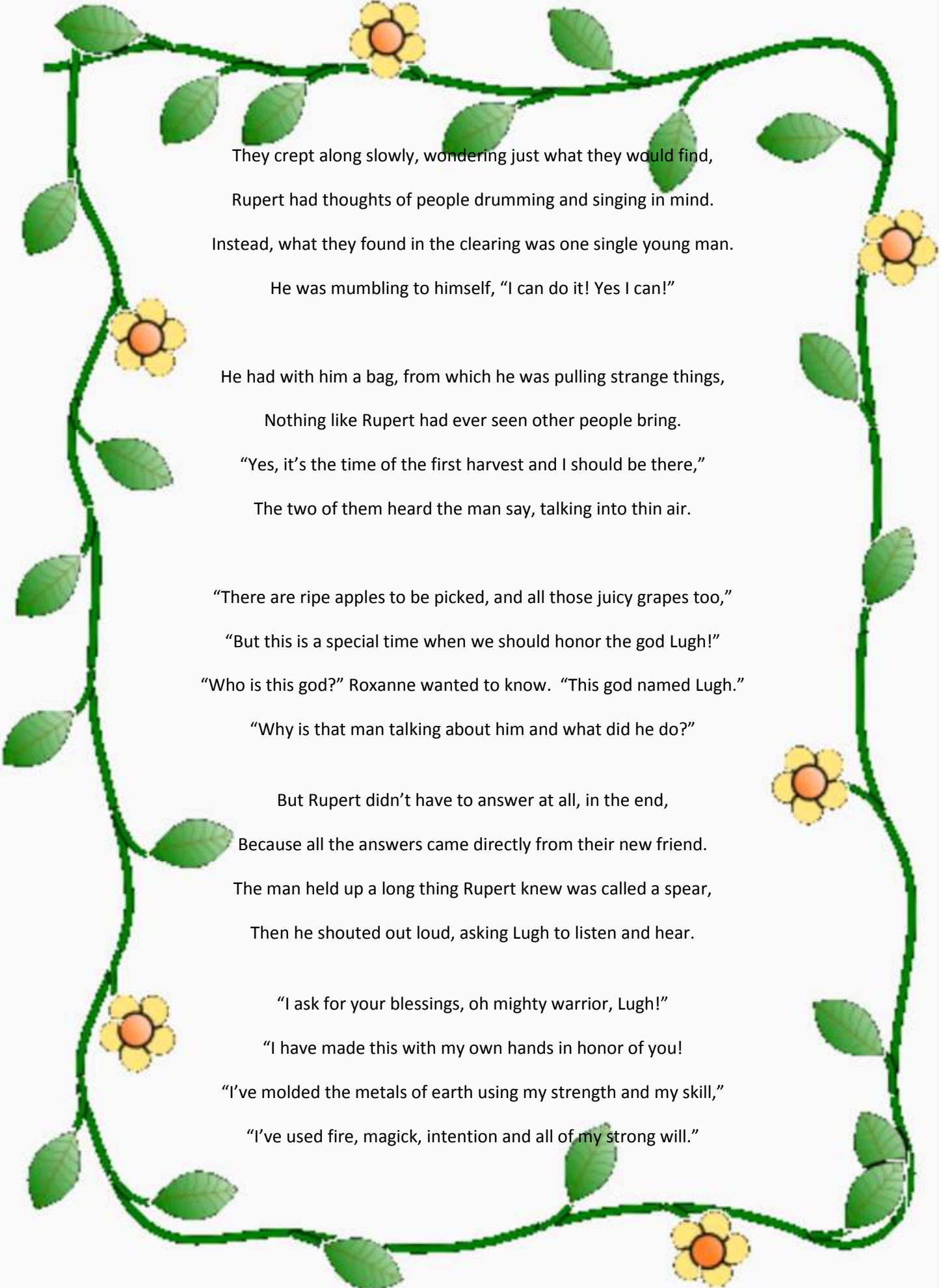
Rupert illustration by Tonia Bennington Osborn

(Note: Kyrja is the author of the famous "Rupert's Tales" Wheel of the Year books. She wrote this little Rupert tale exclusively for Pooka's friends. Thank you, Kyrja!)

Rupert the rabbit knew the year's first harvest was near,
And soon now, the people would come to the forest, here.
So he listened more carefully, and kept a close watch out,
For Roxanne, this would be a new experience, no doubt.

She wasn't used to seeing people, wasn't used to their ways,
Their arrival might be any time, or it might still be days.
Roxanne was his very special friend, the one who stole his heart,
If he had his way, they would stay together and never part.

The two of them were out and about for a walk through the trees,
Through all the elms, oaks, birch and cypress, with their long, knobby knees.
That's when he heard it, that first sound of people nearby,
He gave Roxanne a knowing look, winking one brown eye.



They crept along slowly, wondering just what they would find,
Rupert had thoughts of people drumming and singing in mind.
Instead, what they found in the clearing was one single young man.

He was mumbling to himself, "I can do it! Yes I can!"

He had with him a bag, from which he was pulling strange things,
Nothing like Rupert had ever seen other people bring.

"Yes, it's the time of the first harvest and I should be there,"

The two of them heard the man say, talking into thin air.

"There are ripe apples to be picked, and all those juicy grapes too,"

"But this is a special time when we should honor the god Lugh!"

"Who is this god?" Roxanne wanted to know. "This god named Lugh."

"Why is that man talking about him and what did he do?"

But Rupert didn't have to answer at all, in the end,
Because all the answers came directly from their new friend.

The man held up a long thing Rupert knew was called a spear,

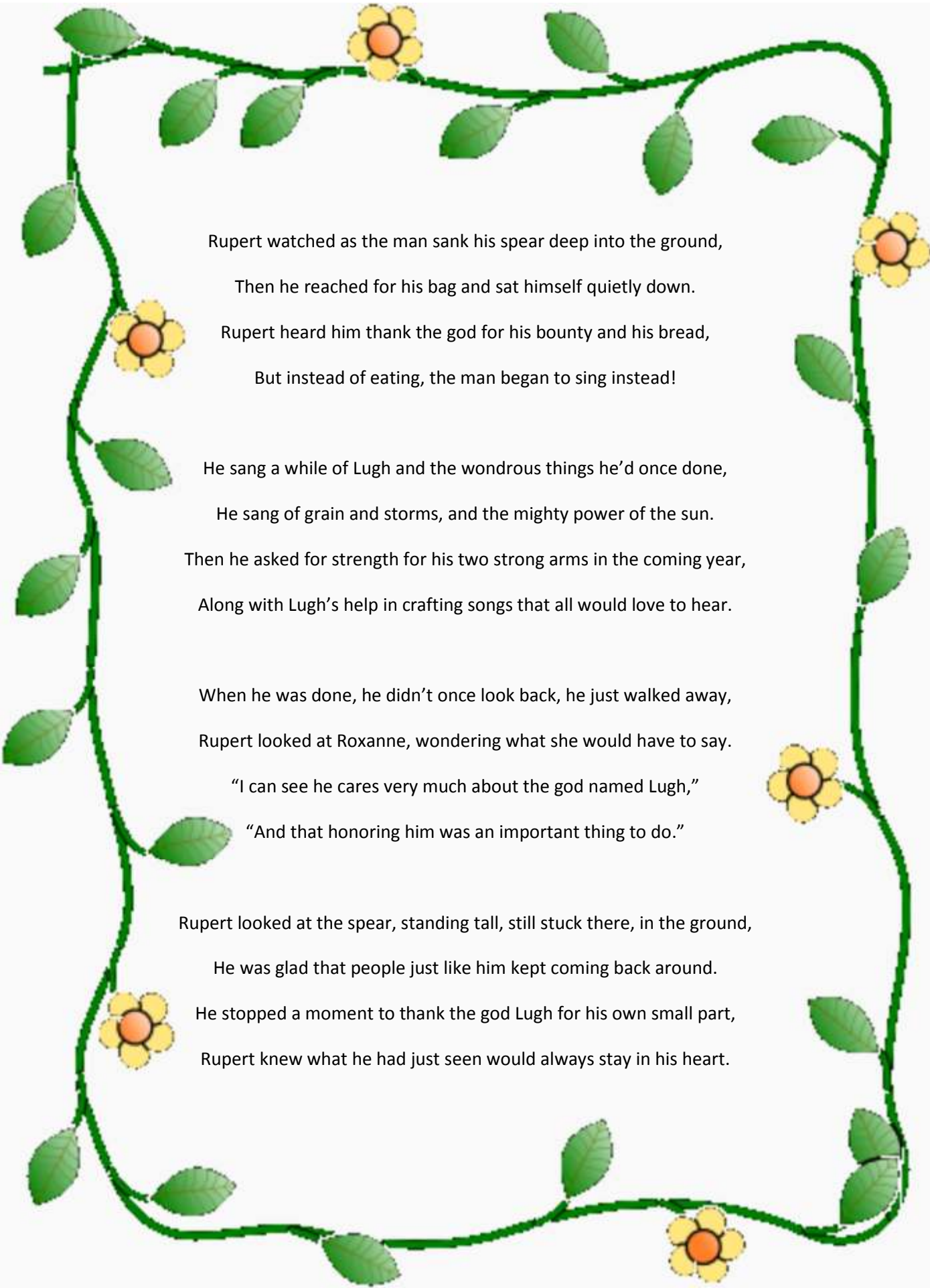
Then he shouted out loud, asking Lugh to listen and hear.

"I ask for your blessings, oh mighty warrior, Lugh!"

"I have made this with my own hands in honor of you!"

"I've molded the metals of earth using my strength and my skill,"

"I've used fire, magick, intention and all of my strong will."



Rupert watched as the man sank his spear deep into the ground,
Then he reached for his bag and sat himself quietly down.
Rupert heard him thank the god for his bounty and his bread,
But instead of eating, the man began to sing instead!

He sang a while of Lugh and the wondrous things he'd once done,
He sang of grain and storms, and the mighty power of the sun.
Then he asked for strength for his two strong arms in the coming year,
Along with Lugh's help in crafting songs that all would love to hear.

When he was done, he didn't once look back, he just walked away,
Rupert looked at Roxanne, wondering what she would have to say.

"I can see he cares very much about the god named Lugh,"

"And that honoring him was an important thing to do."

Rupert looked at the spear, standing tall, still stuck there, in the ground,

He was glad that people just like him kept coming back around.

He stopped a moment to thank the god Lugh for his own small part,

Rupert knew what he had just seen would always stay in his heart.

LUCHNASADH



Coloring page by Nathalie Dussault. Original art by Amara Karuna, used with permission.



LUGHNASADH

By Nathalie Dussault



Pooka's Lesson

...in Circles

Elsie and Pooka had just finished doing a ritual and closed their circle. Now, the little witch was carefully putting away her tools.

Pooka sat on the altar and watched, but the tip of his tail was twitching and the cat was deep in thought.

Finally he spoke: "Elsie, why a circle?"

Elsie straightened up from her magical storage chest and looked at him curiously. "What do you mean?"

"Why do we cast a circle when we do magic?" the cat asked. "I mean, why not a square or a triangle for instance?"

Elsie smiled. "Well, when we do magic, we're raising and moving energy, right?"

Pooka nodded. "Right."

"And one reason is that energy moves more easily in a circle."

"Why?" asked Pooka.

Elsie scrunched up her face for a moment as she considered how to explain it to him and then said, "Maybe it would be easier if I showed you."

From the chest she took a piece of chalk and on the floor she drew 3 X's marking out a fairly large triangle. "Okay," she said. "I want you to start at one of the X's and run around the triangle as fast as you can from one X to the next."

This would be easy! Pooka positioned himself over one of the X's, crouched down and wiggled his rump. "Say 'Go'," he told her.

"Go!"

The little cat raced as fast as his legs would go, but each time he hit a point on the triangle, he found he had to stop, turn, then run again. After a few times around, he was pretty tired!

"Okay," he said. "But would a square be easier? It's bigger."

"Let's see," smiled Elsie. She drew 4 X's in a square about 4 feet apart and Pooka got ready.

"Go!" said Elsie.

Pooka ran fast as he could....but had the same problem every time he came to one of the corners. After a few laps, he was exhausted and frustrated.

"Okay, now let me draw a circle," said Elsie...and she did. "Try that," she told him.

"Where do I start?" asked Pooka.

"Anywhere," the witch told him. "Part of the magic of a circle is that there is no beginning and there is no end."

Pooka picked a spot and began running. This was easy! He didn't have to slow and stop and turn anywhere. It was one continuous, glorious loop and the little cat ran faster and faster and faster.

"Okay, you're just showing off now!" laughed Elsie.

Pooka slowed, then stopped and licked the base of his tail which felt a little tingly. "That was a lot easier!" he said.

"That's because your energy was able to flow smoothly this time," Elsie told him. "There are several reasons witches work in circles, but that's one of them."

Pooka had to agree that was a pretty good reason.

Try Pooka's experiment for yourself!

Mr. Wizard's Magic of Science Question: How come you can only blow soap into bubbles? (In other words, a sphere or 3 dimensional circle like witches use.) Why can't you blow soap squares or soap triangles?

Research & find the answer...and then you'll know another reason why witches cast circles when doing magic!



A Letter from Scotland:

Dear Little Witches,

Pooka said he enjoyed hearing the story about the Fairy music and that he has some family in Ireland and Scotland. He told me that is where his name comes from. Pooka asked me to tell him something about how Lammas is celebrated here. I thought you might like to hear about Lammas too.

Lammas is more often called Lughnasadh (say *loo-nass-ah*) in Scotland and Ireland. It is the time of the first harvest and, in the old days, all our ancestors would be out in the fields gathering in the crops that would feed them and their animals through the coming winter. *Násadh* means ‘feast’, so Lughnasadh is the ‘feast of Lugh’. Lugh is an important Celtic God and a long time ago he held a big feast and games at this time of year. These games were a little bit like the modern Olympics, where the strongest and the fastest showed off their skill. Cats didn’t take part in these, Pooka – because they already knew they were faster and stronger than any human!

However, there is a lot of work to do before a harvest party. People were very happy if the harvest was good and they showed this in a lot of ways. Some of these ways still happen. When people cut the first corn, they leave the last sheaf in the field. Once the corn is cut, people get ready for a party, build a bonfire and then the last sheaf is cut. This sheaf is made into a corn dolly and is decorated with ribbons. The dolly is the luck of the harvest and she is walked around the fields to show her to the land. This is so she will give the earth good luck in growing a new crop in the next year. The new corn dolly is kept in the house for a year, until next Lughnasadh.

The old corn dolly from the year before is burned on the bonfire and once they have cooled down, all the ashes from the fire are spread on to the fields to say thank you for the harvest. The ashes make a lovely mess; it’s not just the fields that get covered in them: people and animals used to be covered in them as well. I expect Pooka’s ancestors liked the ashes too. Cats like playing in ashes and leaving dusty footprints everywhere. I expect Pooka’s family had a lovely time at Lughnasadh!

Perhaps you could make your own corn dolly and keep the luck of the year in your house? (**Pooka’s Note:** *Instructions for an American Corn Dolly are in this issue!*)





You know that water is special and some places are magical? A well is a special magical place and a well in a wood is wonderful. It is a place where the water fairies live. There are a lot of special places like this in Scotland and Ireland.

Another way that Lughnasadh is celebrated here is by visiting a magic well called a Cloutie Well. (*Cloutie* is Scottish for cloth.) The wells and the trees around them are decorated with pieces of cloth and silver coins are placed into the running water. Both are gifts for the well. Lots of wells can heal and this is why people left the cloots and the coins, to ask the water to make them better and to keep sickness away.

These photographs are from a well on the Black Isle in Scotland, near where I live. It is a very old well indeed and lots of people have left cloots tied to the trees. You could try this too at a special place near to you where

there is water. The best cloots to leave are made of cotton, linen or wool, cloth that is made from plants.

One of the best – and the strangest way - to celebrate Lughnasadh is at the Puck Fair, in Killorglin, Ireland. It is a horse fair and there are lots and lots of horses. People buy and sell them at the fair but it is also a three day party, with lots of music and theatre in the streets of the town. Maybe that's not so strange and maybe you have been to fairs a bit like this?

The strange part is the King and Queen of Puck. Having a King and Queen of a fair is not that strange, I don't suppose. A little girl is crowned Queen of the Puck. That's not so strange either. What *is* strange is the King of the Puck. He's not a boy – oh no!

A few days before the fair, the men of the town go into the hills and capture a wild goat. This goat is then crowned King of the Puck. He is raised onto a platform above the town square where he rules over the fair. It's hard to tell how interested King Puck is in all of this, he tends to chew on grass and look a bit puzzled by all that is going on below him. And it is not a good idea to walk underneath his majesty's platform either – sometimes the comments King Puck makes are a bit smelly and land on you from a great height!



There are lots and lots of things for children to take part in, such as dancing, singing, circus workshops and music workshops. People have a wonderful time and they come from all over the world to see King Puck being crowned and to take part in his party. At the end of the fair, King Puck is released back into the wild and off he goes to tell the other goats how he ruled over the humans for three days.

All these things are ways of celebrating Lughnasadh as a time of harvest. Making bread is another way of showing how happy we are that we have food for the coming winter. **Soda bread** is special bread that doesn't use yeast, is quick and easy to make and it tastes lovely! **You will need:**

6 oz of plain flour (about 1 1/3 cups)

6oz of self-rising flour (about 1 1/3 cups)

½ pint of milk or buttermilk (1 cup)

A teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)

½ teaspoon of salt

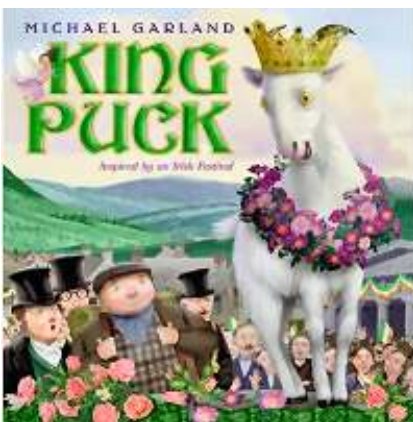
A grown-up to help you with the fiddly bits and the hot oven

Put the flour, soda and salt into a bowl and mix it all together. Add the milk and beat it into a dough (you might have to add a little more milk if it is too dry, but don't let it get too sticky.) Put your dough onto a floured board and knead it. Shape it into a ball, put it on a greased baking tray and bake it in the oven at 400 F or 200 C for 30 minutes, until it sounds hollow when your grown-up taps the top of it.

Leave a piece of it outside for the fairies, then eat and enjoy the first fruits of the harvest!

I'd love to know what you do to celebrate Lughnasadh. Perhaps you could write to Pooka and he will tell me.

Till the next time, *Fiona Tinker*



A book you may enjoy: **King Puck** by **Michael Garland (Author, Illustrator)**
Set against the backdrop of Ireland's oldest and most unusual fair, *King Puck* is a jig-reeling, kid-appelling tale of friendship and fun. Experience the power of the fairies' magic through radiant illustrations by Michael Garland. With affection and skill, he captures the lushness of the Irish landscape and the cheer of the King Puck festivities. (*And don't forget to find the fairies hidden throughout the book!*)

Available new & used from Amazon.com

Lammas and The Little Red Hen

by Deanna Anderson

Lammas or Lughnasadh (loo-nah-sah) is a festival celebrated on August 1st. The word 'Lammas' means "loaf mass" and originally was a day when wheat harvests were ready and the people used the grain to make loaves of bread. Sometimes the bread was blessed and it was considered a main food of the people a long time ago. Bread was so revered as a sacred food that it was believed it could work magic and sometimes the first bread would be broken in four pieces and placed in the four corners of the barn for protection. Bread is also used in paganism as part of the Bread and Ale (or Cake and Ale) that is performed in rituals. Lammas is honored today as the first of the harvest festivals with Mabon (September 21) and Samhain (October 31) being the second and the third of the harvest festivals.

Lammas always reminds me of the story of the "Little Red Hen". The story teaches the virtues of work ethics, harvesting and reaping what you sow which, to me, is also the purpose and meaning behind Lammas or Lughnasadh.

Here is the story (retold by the author of this article):

The Little Red Hen



One day the Little Red Hen was walking around the place where she lived and she found a few grains of wheat. She knows that these tiny grains will grow into a wheat stalk and that from the stalk she can grow enough wheat to later grind into flour, and with a few other ingredients, she can make bread. With the bread she can make sandwiches and have enough food to last her a long time. She picks up the grain and smiles, knowing what can be gained from these few kernels of grain.

She walked back to her house holding the grains and soon she passed her good friends Little White Duck, Big Brown Dog and Calico Cat.

"I found these grains of wheat. Who wants to help me plant them?" Little Red Hen asked, holding out her wing to show the grains of wheat.

"Not I." Said Little White Duck.

"Not I." Said Big Brown Dog.

"Not I." Said Calico Cat.

"Then I will do it." And Little Red Hen went home to plant her grains of wheat by herself. Soon enough the wheat sprouted, and then it grew tall, tall, tall until it was ready to be picked. Little Red Hen's friends laughed at her as they saw her tending to her wheat as it grew, pulling the weeds and watering the stalks, and they laughed at her again as they saw her outside admiring her wheat.

Little Red Hen turned to her friends, “Who wants to help me cut the wheat and take it to the mill to be ground to flour?”

“Not I.” Said Little White Duck.

“Not I.” Said Big Brown Dog.

“Not I.” Said Calico Cat.

“Then I shall do it myself.” Said Little Red Hen, and with that she promptly cut the wheat and tucking it under one wing she set off for the farmer’s mill.

Her friends all laughed at her as she strutted down the road with the wheat tucked under her arm. When she came back to her house they were all still at her fence, watching and waiting for her to return.

“Where’s your wheat?” Asked Big Brown Dog.

“It’s ground into flour,” she said holding up the sack, “now who will help me bake the bread?”

Their answers were the same.

“Not I.” Said Little White Duck.

“Not I.” Said Big Brown Dog.

“Not I.” Said Calico Cat.

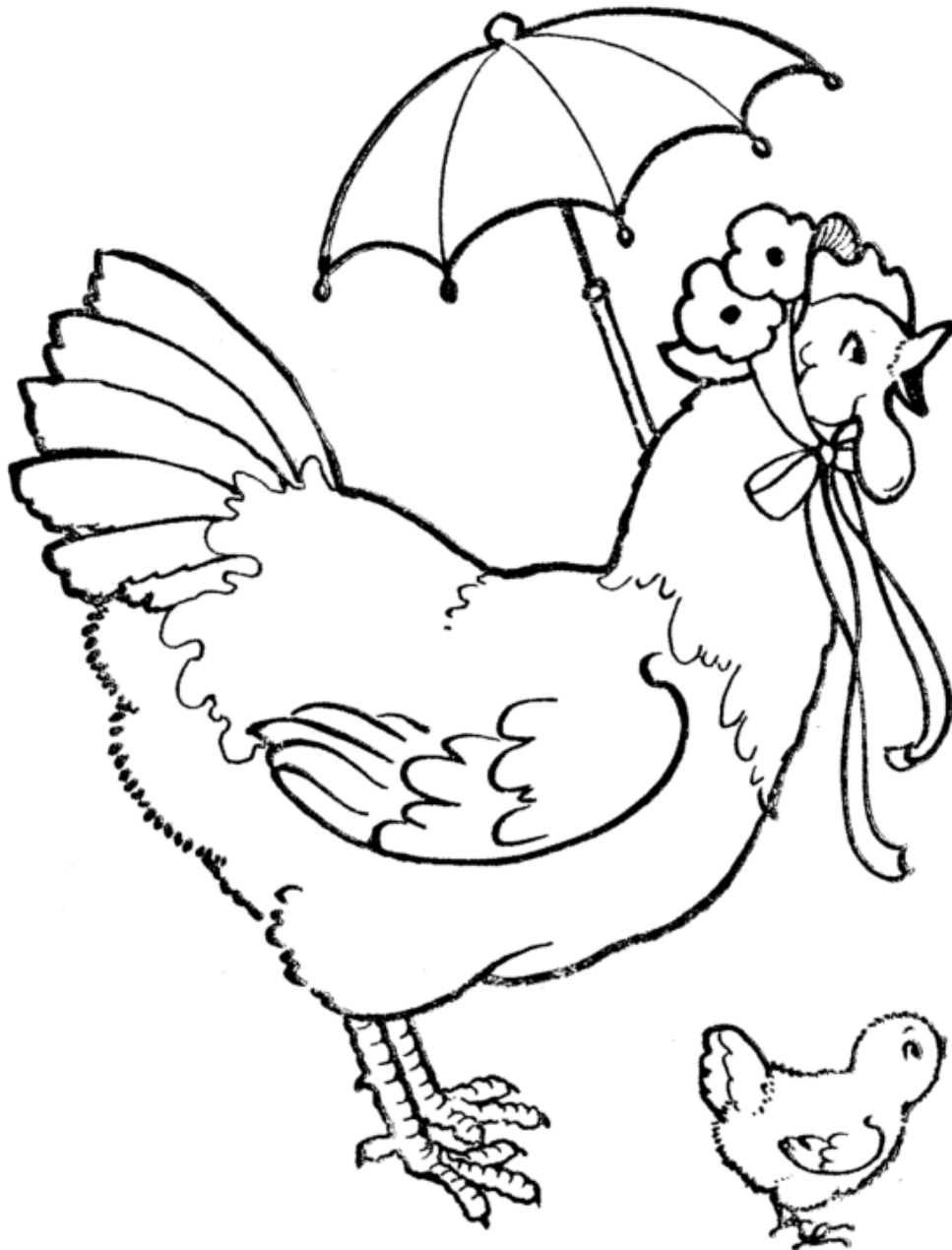


“Then I will do it.” And Little Red Hen went into the house and baked her bread. As the smells of the baking bread started to meander outside Little Red Hen’s friends started to get hungry. Soon they were all at her window peeping in and hoping for a slice of fresh warm bread. But, when the bread came out of the oven Little Red Hen remembered that no one had helped her to plant the wheat, to tend to the wheat, to grind the wheat into flour and no one helped her to bake it. When the time came to eat the bread she didn’t even ask her friends, but she promptly sat down and ate a slice of warm bread with strawberry jam and took pride in the work she had done.

While many people feel that maybe Little Red Hen should have shared with her friends, it is a story that teaches us the moral that we all need to work together and help each other. There is a saying that one should “enjoy the fruits of their labor” which means that when we work for something it is more meaningful than if we didn’t work for it. Imagine getting an award you didn’t earn, or taking praise for cleaning your room when you didn’t do it. When we work hard for something we enjoy the rewards afterwards. This is what Lammass is about. Not just real harvests of fruits and grains, but also of the other things we do in life that we get rewarded for or that make us feel good.

Think of things you have done this year that you can be proud of and think of other things to do or how you can do more. Maybe help mom in the kitchen or dad in the yard. See if there is a charity you can help out with or ways to help your community or school. Don't be like Little Red Hen's friends who didn't do any of the work but expected a reward just the same. Instead be like Little Red Hen and work hard for what you do have and help others when you can.

THE LITTLE RED HEN



Anderson is the author of "Magick for the Kitchen Witch" and "Magick for the Elemental Witch", both are part of a series known as "The Copper Cauldron" with tentative future titles being "Magick for the Nature Witch" and "Magick for the Divinatory Witch." She is also a Tarot Reader, a mom, a wife, a 3rd Degree Pagan led the coven "Gaia's Children" as High Priestess for a year. In her spare time she enjoys spending every minute in nature and exploring the wildflowers in her area. She is a member of the South Carolina Native Plant Society and owns the "South Carolina Wildflowers" group on Facebook. You can find out more about her on her website <http://andersondeanna.weebly.com>.

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Letters to Pooka

By Wendy Fischer & Pooka

Dear Pooka,

Happy Midsummer. Are you having a good time?

I have a little brother just like Grimalkin. And he can be very annoying to me. He likes to climb all over me.

We celebrate a lot of holidays just like you and Elise.

From Brie, 8

P.S. From Brie's Daddy - Brie and I look forward to reading your stories every Sabbath.

Dearest Brie,

Happy 4th of July! I am having a wonderful summer, I love to chase the bugs (but not hurt them)! Are you ready for the fireworks tonight? They're a little loud for my ears but I like the sparkles in the night sky.

Yes, little brothers can be annoying at times but Grimalkin and I have a lot of fun together too. He likes bugs also!

Elsie and I like our holidays and can't wait for Lammas. I hope you enjoy the Lammas issue of Pooka Pages when it comes out!

Happy Hotdogs!

Pooka

P.S. Brie's Daddy, I'm so glad you enjoy our adventures!

Dear Pooka,

I really like the stories of you and Elsie in Pooka Pages, and I liked the Litha Lion Sun picture. Can you please put a blank one in the Pooka Pages for me to color?

Your Friend,

S'ymoni, age 5

Dear S'ymoni,

Thank you for writing me, I'm so glad to hear from you! I love that picture too; I'm related to Lions you know! There is a blank one for you to color on Page 19 of the Litha issue. Once you color it, I would love to see it. Maybe an adult can help you send me a picture of it?

Have fun!

Pooka

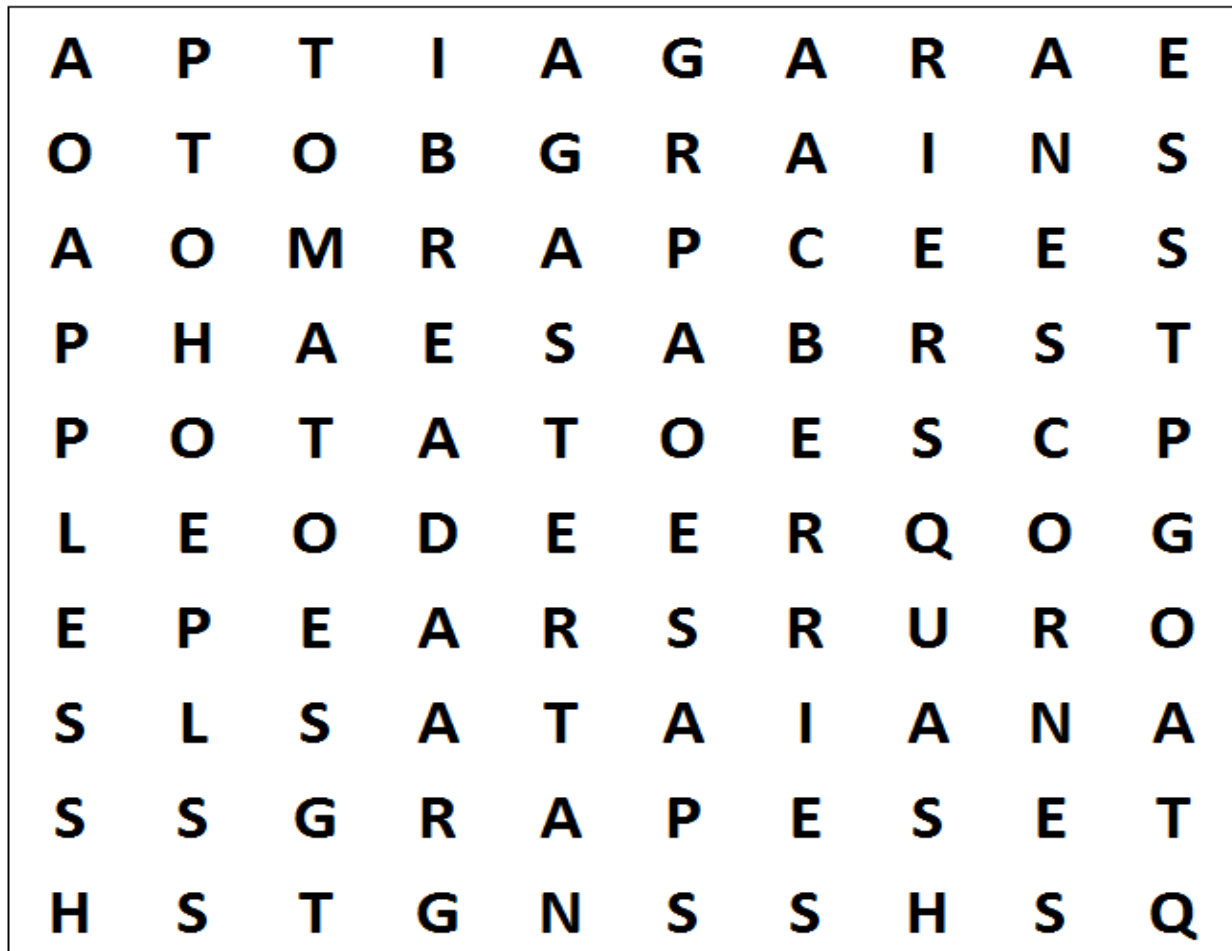
Pooka LOVES getting mail!

Is there something YOU'D like to ask Pooka or tell him about? You can write to him at: dearpookah@gmail.com Then look for his response in the next issue!



Foods of Lughnasadh

Here are some of the different foods associated with the celebration of Lughnasadh. Find the words hidden in the puzzle, going forward and down.



APPLES

SQUASH

BERRIES

TOMATOES

BREAD

GRAPES

CORN

PEARS

GRAIN

POTATOES

