

Gifts of the Golden God

a devotional anthology

compiled by Sigrún Freyskona

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I dedicate this book with a heart of gratitude and love
to Frey, who gave me light in the darkness,
who sowed the seeds of change.
I dedicate this book, also, to my beloved partner Eosin,
who is the best “bad Heathen” I know,
and as a Freysman himself,
is Frey’s love tangibly felt in my life.
And to my friends,
especially Ayla the Freyjasdottir,
for taking good care of me.
Bless you all.

50% of the proceeds from this devotional will be donated to RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network), which provides services for victims of sexual assault, as well as education.

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Introduction

Why, hello there.

This is a devotional for my patron God, Frey, the Norse/Germanic God of agriculture and nature, prosperity, fertility/sexuality/love, and frith (peace).

This book is a gift I promised Frey, for the blessings He has given me over the three years I've had Him as patron. With Frey's intervention, and my willingness to work with Him (which has been very difficult at times), life is a lot better now than it was when He first entered my life, and I have hope for the future that I never even dreamed possible. The words I have written here do not even begin to do justice to my appreciation and love for Frey. It also touches my heart when I see the ways He's helped other people, whether they hold Him as patron or are a member of Frey's Fan Club (and rightly so). This book is a labor of love; though it is called "Gifts of the Golden God", it could be called "Gifts *for* the Golden God", for He has been truly wonderful to many of us.

In May of 2007, I put the call out for submissions, asking for stories of personal encounters with Frey, articles and essays, poetry, recipes for feast food, ideas for crafts, rituals, etc. I made the call inclusive, meaning that you're not just reading the work of Ásatrúar, but you may also have some work from other-tradition Pagans and even Wiccans. My guidelines said that so long as you have some kind of connection to Frey, you are welcome to write something. The semantics of what path you follow matters far less to Frey than the intent of your heart and the worth of your deeds. This book is inclusive in the spirit of frith. Not only is this book a gift to Frey, but the connections I have made across many different spiritual communities with those who honor Him and His kin has been a gift as well. I was pleasantly surprised by the many people who took interest and contributed.

I had been tinkering around with the idea for a Frey devotional some months before I got around to starting it, but Frey got very insistent that I do something. It's not to stroke His Divine Ego, even though He is a wonderful God and deserves all kinds of affection and attention. It's Frey's intent that this work draws me closer to His bright, radiant heart of love. It's also Frey's intent that the people who contribute deepen their relationships with Him and see that He is indeed "for real" and that the Northern Gods never "died" in the wake of outside religions entering Europe. Frey is one of the friendliest, most even-handed Gods I have ever encountered, and in some respects I am lucky that I am owned by Him and not a more difficult taskmaster. This is not to say that life with Frey is all fun and games, because Frey does indeed make me work on bettering myself and helping folk around me who need His light. But I still see Frey with the same puppy-love eyes of when He seduced me in late 2003, and I actually love Him more now than I did then: that's what happens when couples have been together a long time and have gone through some things.

My experience is not typical of most Ásatrúar and Heathens, since most do not even acknowledge the idea that an intimate spousal relationship between a human and a God is possible. I do not consider myself a part of the Ásatrú community any longer (besides which, I'm much more Vanic- and Jotun-oriented as opposed to Aesir-oriented), though "Ásatrú" is a specific sub-sect of the many flavors of the Northern Tradition. I will use the term Heathen as a point of reference, and although some may call me a "bad Heathen", I do honor the Northern Gods primarily (although I believe other pantheons exist), I do hold the rituals the Northern Gods have been accustomed to (Blot and sumbel), and I do try to apply the ethics of the Havamal, and the examples the Gods and Their historical followers have given. Where Heathenry ends and "bad Heathenry" begins, and whether or not I care, is a debate best left out of a book given as a gift to a God who values peace over unnecessary strife, but I'm not going to let people who would want to silence me win or silence the greater message at hand: that Frey's love can give a full and beautiful life.

That being said, I present this book with a specific audience in mind. The first target group are those

Heathens who have an open mind concerning UPG (Unverified Personal Gnosis) and Close Encounters of the Wight Kind, and who are looking to deepen their relationship with the Gods. The next target group are Pagans who are attracted to the Northern Deities, who may not be Ásatrú because of their affiliations with other pantheons or other reasons, and they should know you don't have to be Ásatrú to honor Them in your lives. Frey needs more love and I'm not going to begrudge Frey love and appreciation because people are square pegs in the round hole. Frey can and will bless those who are sincere in their worth-ship of Him, who will take the time and effort to reach out to Him. The Golden Frith-bringer cares less about labels than one might think. This is not a Heathen book. This is not *not* a Heathen book. It is a book about Frey, and anyone who loves Him, or would like to love Him, and be loved in return.

So now that's out of the way, I am here to honor Frey and gift those folks who honor Him with their prayers and rituals and lives. I hope you all enjoy this book and each of you take something special out of it. Even if Frey is not your patron, He has valuable things to give and teach.

Many blessings,

SIGRÚN FREYSKONA
JANUARY 25TH, 2008
SUN IN AQUARIUS, MOON IN VIRGO
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



Who Is Frey?



Ingvi Freyr in Ancient and Contemporary Heathenism

Jordsvin

(first printed in *Idunna Magazine*)

Ingvi Freyr, one of the handful of clearly identified Vanir Deities from Norse lore, is among the most popular Gods in the Heathen revival today. In addition to Freyr, his sister Freyja, and their father Njorð, the Earth Goddess Nerthus is known from 1st Century C.E. Germany. Kvasir was a Van, too, but didn't live for very long after moving to Asgarð. His blood was used to brew the mead of poetic inspiration. That pretty much rounds out the list of the Vanir as it has come down to us.

Many theories have been offered about the origins of Freyr in general and the Vanir in particular. The earliest evidence of Freyr, or a God very like him, comes from rock carvings in Östergötland, Sweden dating back to the Bronze Age (Gundarsson, ed. *Our Troth*, 178). Snorri's story about our Gods migrating from Troy may be something he used to reconcile the mythology of his ancestors with classical mythology and—by making the Gods into human beings mistakenly deified—with his Christian faith. It may also have been a literary device used to tell the old tales without getting into trouble with the Church. On the other hand, it may be a distorted, worn-down memory of the movement of the worship of our Gods, or at least of some of them, into Scandinavia. Freyr's cult evidently moved from Sweden (which remained his chief stronghold, so to speak) into Norway and thence to Iceland (Ellis Davidson, 100). This would be backed up by the evidence of place-names of which “Freyr-” is the first element. These are very numerous in Sweden, less numerous in Norway (although there are still over twenty of them), and scarce in Iceland, where they are only found in the east and south-east of the country (Turville-Petre, 168).

At least one scholar of Heathenism interprets the worship of Freyr as being directly derived from the cult of such Middle Eastern Gods as Adonis, Attis, Ba'al, and Tammuz, transmitted most probably by way of Dacia (Branston, 155). This is certainly within the realm of possibility as agriculture spread from one of its points of origin in the Fertile Crescent into the Northlands by more or less that route. However, I think it is and will in all probably remain an interesting and unproven, and probably unprovable, hypothesis. “Ba'al,” like “Freyr,” means “Lord,” and “Freyja” means “Lady.” I personally tend toward the idea that *if* Gerald Gardner's story of finding an extant Pagan group in 1940's England is true, that the worship of the Wiccan “Lord” and “Lady” is more likely to be a surviving remnant of Freyr and Freyja worship than anything “Celtic”.

In Anglo-Saxon, the name of Freyr's rune *Ingwaz* became *Ing*, and its verse in the Anglo-Saxon Rune Poem describes how Ing/Freyr was first seen by the East Danes. Afterwards, he left the people by ship over the waves, and his “wagon followed after.” This could possibly be a journey by ship after death. The rune poem contains allusions to myths known today only in a fragmentary way: the myth of Sceaf or Scyld Sce(a)finġ (Sheaf or Shield Sheaf's-son) tells how that hero came to the people as an infant of unknown origin, alone on a boat. He was raised by those who found him and later reigned as king. After death, his body, accompanied by many rich gifts, was sent out again over the waves in that same boat (Sheffield, 10; Branston, 18; Ellis Davidson, 104-5). The many similarities between the rune-verse just mentioned and the story of Sceaf/Scyld are very clear. (Remember also that Freyr travels at times by his wondrous ship, *Skiðblaðnir*.) Alternately, Ing/Freyr was buried at Gamla Uppsala in Sweden. The myth of Peace-Froði also has many similarities to that of Freyr (Sheffield, 4-5, 18-19).

Among the Nine Worlds, Freyr clearly “gets around.” Originally from Vanaheim, he moved to Ásgarð at the end of the hostilities between the Æsir and Vanir. He married Gerð of Jotunheim. In addition, he received Alfheim as a tooth-gift (Ellis Davidson, 107). There was evidently an old custom of giving a substantial gift to an infant who had just cut his or her first tooth. Perhaps this celebrated that the infant had

lived that long (many didn't) and gave him or her a reason to stay around Midgard to enjoy the gift. Speaking of Midgard, of course, Freyr's functions there are well-known and will be covered in detail in this article.

Like other Germanic Deities, Ingvi Freyr is multifaceted and multifunctional. Some still see him as “just” a fertility God, but this is a relic of older scholarship, which tried to force Germanic Gods and Goddesses into the patterns of other, more southerly mythologies. Freyr can be seen as having four major functions: Divine Kingship and divine ancestor of the Ynglingar royal family of Heathen Sweden; God of *ár* (good seasons; *ár* by the way is a later form of the Rune-name *Jera*); God of *fríð*, which encompasses peace and much more; and in some sense a God of sexuality, a function which has been twisted in the records that have come down to us due to erotophobic Christian clergy (Sheffield, 3). Perhaps a faint whiff of sour grapes can be smelled down through the centuries.

Ingvi Freyr is the tutelary God of the Swedish people and the divine ancestor of their old royal family, the Ynglingar. Note that Odin is the usual divine ancestor of Germanic royalty. (The current British royal family still traces its genealogy to Woden!) However, the Anglian kings of Bernicia in north-eastern England remembered “Ingvi,” “Ingibrand,” and “Inguec” as names of the founder of their line (Ellis Davidson, 104). The first name seems to be “Ingvi” (“u” and “v” were not separate letters originally). The others, if not directly referring to Ing(vi) Freyr, are at least theophoric personal names incorporating the element “Ing.” (An example of a theophoric personal name incorporating Thor's name would be “Thorstein.”) The story of the Ynglings is told in the *Ynglinga Saga*, a part of Snorri's *Heimskringla*, but keep in mind that non-Heathen perspectives have crept in.

The following comments by Ingeborg Svea Nordén may cast some light upon Ingvi Freyr as Divine King and ancestor of the Swedish Ynglingar kings: “In the original Old Norse the word for “Sweden” (Svíþjóð) literally means the Swedish *people*, not the place they inhabit. I don't believe in a folk-soul per se, nor do I believe that Freyr is as strictly attached to one place as a landwight would be. I don't necessarily believe that Freyr was buried in that mound at Gamla Uppsala either (if he was, any evidence is long gone by now). But ... the Swedish *people* acknowledged that their peace and prosperity depended on Freyr's staying among them, even in death.”

Ár, or “good seasons/harvest,” is brought in by the Divine King (Sheffield, 14-15). Freyr is identified by scholars as a “god of plenty” (Ellis Davidson, 96). As a God of wealth, Freyr has ties with the *Fehu* rune, whose name refers to cattle or livestock, an important form of movable wealth in ancient times. The surviving lore ascribes to Freyr the fertility of fields and flocks, but he is not depicted as a wildwood God. Certainly the Heathen farmer would do especially well to seek out Freyr, as would nature-lovers, would-be parents, and men seeking aid with sexual function issues in general. However, then as now, Freyr's appeal cuts across social classes (Sheil, *The Road to Bjfrost* volume V, 54).

Fríð, or an inviolable peace (Sheffield, 21) with overtones of well-being, is also associated with Freyr. The putting away of weapons for a time of peace is associated with the cult of the Vanir all the way back to Tacitus' account of the worship of Nerthus (98 C.E.). In the lore, Freyr gave away his sword and his stallion to win Gerð, although at least one modern Heathen has provided him with a replacement sword via sacrifice, an act of devotion I wish I had thought of! We have one report from Anglo-Saxon sources that Heathen priests there were required to go unarmed (Sheffield, 25). (As a Freysgoði, I don't practice that myself, by the way. I take the advice in *Hávamál* verse 38 to always keep a weapon about you very seriously. I carry pepper spray and a nasty little knife, but of course will not try to take either one on board an airplane! I also leave them at the edge of an area where a blót to one of the Vanir is about to occur, and ask others to do likewise when I am leading the blót.)

The function of Freyr as a God of sexuality, it seems to me, can tie in with the previous three functions. Freyr's sex life established the Ynglingar lineage, at the least mythologically if you don't take the myth literally (I am agnostic on whether such things actually, factually have happened). It is noteworthy that Freyr does not have children among the Gods. The kings whose lines he founded are his children (Ellis Davidson,

110). Sexual intercourse is of course necessary for the production of livestock, or at least it was until recent “advances” in artificial insemination and cloning. Sexuality could be tied in with the well-being of *fríð* as well, since *fríð*’s secondary meaning is erotic love (Sheffield, 31). It is known from the Christian cleric Adam of Bremen’s account that Freyr was associated with sexual delight (Sheffield, 31-32). His image in the temple at Gamla Uppsala was phallic, and a couple of phallic (probable) Freyr images have actually come down to us, one in metal and the other a slightly modified three-forked branch which can be seen in Glob’s *The Bog People* (182, 186-187). I found such a piece of wood and had it carved into Freyr’s likeness.

Freyr has many associates and associations. Ingvi Freyr is Njordr’s son. His mother was said to be Njordr’s sister, who did not move to Asgard from Vanaheim when her husband, son and daughter did. Nerthus gets my vote for Freyr’s mother, and this seems to be the modern Heathen consensus as well. Gerð is his Etin-Bride. Beyla and Byggvir, whose names seem to tie in with grain and milk, the main foods of Northern folks, are his companions (Sheffield, 15). Skirnir seems to function as his right-hand man. Horses (Sheffield, 25); boars (Sheffield, 18); stags (Gundarsson, *Teutonic Religion*, 94) (remember the antler he will use to kill Beli); and cattle (Sheffield, 17) are his beasts.

Freyr is a God with more than one name. His reconstructed Common Germanic name is **Fraujaz Ingwaz*. “Engus” is also attested from the Gothic (Gundarsson, ed. *Our Troth*, 178). Later on, he was known by *Ingvi*, *Freyr*, *Ingvi Freyr*, and even *Ingvi Freyr inn Froði*. The modern name, *Fro Ing*, I believe was coined by Kveldulf Gundarsson as what his name would have become in English had it remained in common use and evolved along with the language. (I like that name all right but don’t use it much. Run it together and you get “Froing,” that rhymes with “boing,” and it’s a short trip to the gutter from there.)

“May the Moernir accept this sacrifice.” The “Moernir” are often interpreted as Etin-Brides. One family passed around a mummified horse-penis (hence the link with Freyr) and composed naughty verses in their honor. That happened with cans of beer and an impromptu naughty joke and poetry contest at a Heathen get-together I was at a couple of years back. My sex life got interesting in pleasant but surprising ways for a while after that, and we *did* say that phrase about the Moernir after each “offering”!

Kveldulf has, however, reconstructed a couple of names I really don’t like aesthetically. One is “The Frowe” for Freyja, which I don’t care for because for me it recalls the word “frowsy,” meaning unkempt or untidy. That she ain’t. Wan for Van (singular of Vanir) calls to mind a word for pallid, which is the last thing I’d associate with the Vanir as Deities with close associations with the natural world in all its glorious colors.

While none of our Gods comes close to the number of by-names (*heiti*) claimed by Oðinn, Freyr has his share in the extant lore. These include “most renowned,” “best of Gods,” “Beli’s bane,” “sacrifice-priest,” “bright,” “energetic,” “providing,” and many others (Sheffield, 22-23). On a more personal note, Freyr is a very good choice to invoke for good luck, protection, and peace. He can help you provide for home and family. He is a good friend for horse-lovers, travelers, hunters, and animal breeders. He is a relatively easy and safe God to invoke, as his personality is pleasant, and he brings good things. Pine makes a good incense to use in his workings. Appropriate colors are greens, gold and brown. His presence is very “sunny” and readily felt, and will often inspire feelings of fun, optimism, and happiness (Sheil, *Road to Bifrost* vol. V, 56). Some Heathens, the Sheils included, see Saturday as Freyr’s special day, perhaps since Saturday is named after the primeval Roman farming god Saturn.

The worship of Ingvi Freyr has been attested from Heathen England (Angle-Land, not Ing-Land), where he was known as Ing, and from Scandinavia, but only indirectly from the continental Germanic areas. The “Ingvaeones” (Gundarsson, *Teutonic Religion*, 90) mentioned by Tacitus evidently bear his name. Please note that “Ingvaeones” is evidently a misspelling of “Ingaevones” (Tacitus, *Germania*, ch. 2).

The cult of Ingvi Freyr was complex and included many elements. As mentioned in the surviving runic verse for Ingwaz, these included a sacred cart. The cart transported his image and its attendant—at least in one case a priestess, although priests of Frey are also well-known from extant lore (Sheffield, 8-9). I suggest that you also read my article “On Being a Freysgodhi,” which appears later in this book as well as on the

website listed at the end of this article. Burial mounds were also associated with Freyr (Ellis Davidson, 154). Renowned scholar H. R. Ellis Davidson, in her classic *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe*, which has been republished with the more accurate title of *Gods and Myths of the Viking Age*, has some comments on the “cult” of Freyr (from the Latin for “religious worship,” a meaning the word has retained in French and Spanish, as opposed to the derogatory English meaning). Like that of a number of our other Gods and Goddesses, human sacrifice may have been involved (Ellis Davidson, 97). Needless to say, these days a charged bread man fills that need.

In the “old days,” worship of Freyr as a special divine friend or patron God evidently ran in some families (Ellis Davidson, 101), as the cult of Odin did in others. Freyr’s cult of peace and plenty is contrasted with Oðin’s more warlike one (Ellis Davidson, 102). Freyr as a “fertility God” evidently replaced the earlier cult of Nerthus as “fertility Goddess.” Ellis Davidson comments on this (Ellis Davidson, 96) but never really offers any concrete theories as to why. Much has been made of Vanir worship as possibly being the remnants of the pre-Indo-European religion which still remained, as was absorbed by the people who brought the Indo-European languages, including the ancestor of Proto-Germanic, into Northern Europe. While this is possible, it is easy to wander over the line into ideologically-based speculation here—as in the later works of Marija Gimbutas, which featured a single, monotheistic “Great Goddess”—and imagine the pre-Indo-European peoples of “Old Europe” as dwelling in a sort of matriarchal, pacifistic Eden. I don’t buy that for the Vanir. They managed to hold their own just fine in the war against the Æsir, which I don’t think pacifists or even inexperienced warriors would have been able to do.

On the other hand, Norse society was indeed very male-oriented in the Viking Age (although less so than in Christian countries), and it is possible that Germanic society became more male-centered between the time of Tacitus and the Viking Age. Brian Branston, in any case, attributes the eclipse of Nerthus by Njordr and Freyr to Germanic cultures becoming more male-centered over the centuries (Branston, 135-136).

In pre-Christian times, Freyr received the sacrifice of a boar at Yule. The Boar’s Head carols and processions in medieval feasts may have been a remnant of this (Branston, 151). Of course, Oðin (one of whose by-names is “Jolnir”) and other Deities as well were and are honored at Yule. Heathens today often sacrifice pork to Freyr at Yule, although he is often remembered in spring at the Charming of the Plow and at harvest-time at Freyfaxi or Loaf-Fest in modern Heathenism.

My own dedication to and worship of Freyr has taken many forms over the years. I have images of him which I use in worship. I make offerings to him and the other Vanir in a small bog near my home. I am tattooed with his Rune (the Anglo-Saxon form, for aesthetic reasons). I remember him every Saturday in my own personal religious calendar (Buck, “*Worship and Spirituality...*”). The gifts of Ingvi Freyr are many. Freyr is known as “God of the World,” and according to Ingeborg Nordén, “...the word for ‘world’ does *not* mean the earth or the environment. If that were what Snorri had meant, the Old Norse would have called Freyr *heimsins god*, not *veraldar god*! The word *veröld* literally translates as ‘man-age’ or ‘human lifetime’. ‘God of everyday life’ or ‘god of the here and now’ would be more accurate, though less formal, translations!” (Jordsvin’s note: In my Rune article on *Ingwaz*, accessible from my main web page at <http://home.earthlink.net/~jordsvin>, “This is a very good rune. ‘Good sex’, as Dr. Ruth would put it, as well as good food, good friends, and a good home life all fall under Ingwaz in some way.” Very appropriate for a god of everyday life at its best!)

However, rejecting or abusing Freyr’s gifts could have very serious consequences. A horrible curse was promised Gerð if she rejected Freyr’s proposal of marriage. “It promises both to excite ‘unbearable desire’ and to deny its satisfaction. To reject Frey is to be deprived of good food, good drink, good sex, and good company — all the pleasures that Frey provides...” (Sheffield, 35). This is something no Trú Heathen should do. Leave the fasting, celibacy, vows of silence, etc. to other faiths! Many of the Ynglingar kings died deaths that, despite later tampering, sound suspiciously like sacrifices. Kveldulf Gundarsson’s warning bears

repeating: “Let no man take the might of Fro Ing into himself who is not willing to pay the price...” (Gundarsson, *Teutonic Religion*, 91).

Although less blunt than Týr, who nearly broke my hand once, Freyr is very capable of making his presence, thoughts, and wishes known by way of signs. In the old days, swine were often involved (Gundarsson, ed. *Our Troth*, 180). Those of us interested in building a living tradition of Freyr work and worship from the bits and pieces of surviving lore would do well to listen for such messages to help us with the ongoing process. Methods such as “discussion, intuition, meditation, ritual, deity procession (sic for ‘possession?’), and inspiration” (Gundarsson, ed. *Our Troth*, 194) can help fill in the gaps when checked against each other by different people with different Heathen perspectives.

Before moving on to Freyr’s Rune, Ingwaz, I feel that I must address the issue of Freyr and homosexuality. One Heathen webring operator online makes it clear he wants no “Frey the gay” websites submitted to it. (Truth to tell, I’ve never seen one. If you have, please email the URL to jordsvin@earthlink.net.) There is no doubt, however, that the cult of the Vanir in general and of Freyr in particular has quite an appeal to contemporary gay Heathens. Saxo Grammaticus makes reference to cross-dressed priests, “effeminate gestures,” “unmanly clatter of bells,” and “clapping of mimes upon the stage” (Gundarsson, ed. *Our Troth*, 189) in Freyr’s temple at Gamla Uppsala. Thus while there is absolutely *no* evidence that Freyr is anything but heterosexual, some of his priests today are not and there is a good chance some of the ones back in the old days were in the same boat, so to speak! (By the way, I’m strictly a jeans and t-shirt guy and bear no resemblance to the above description of Freyr-worshippers, except for the bells on my robe, which at least one other gay Heathen I know absolutely can’t stand!)

Those interested in the possible (but by no means proven) presence of gay/transgendered people conducting ritual drama in ancient Northern European worship would do well to research surviving folk ritual dramas, especially in the British Isles. The books by Alan Brody and Roy Judge in the book-board of this article would be a good place to start. While by no means certain, there is a very real chance that such customs depicted in these books, along with Morris Dancing and other folk survivals, may contain remnants of old Heathen rites. I seriously doubt that medieval Christianity would have spawned such things!

As a gay man and a Freysgoði, however, I must state that my own link with Freyr is decidedly non-sexual, and has more to do with shared viewpoints and interests than anything else. I am an avid fish-breeder, gardener, and naturalist. I am interested in environmental causes. Freyr doesn’t want Nerthus, his mother, trashed, and even more than most Heathens, neither do I!

I suspect that the reason that many gay people wind up in Vanir worship is that the Vanir are, even more so than the Æsir, very earthy and practical. Freyr’s title “God of the World” is a good example of this. They deal with what is, rather than with what someone might think things ought to be. Gay people happen, so rather than make a fuss over it one way or another, the Vanic way seems to be to put us to work doing something useful. This is speculative on my part, but energy, including sexual energy, not put to work reproducing might well be put to use elsewhere, hence the cross-dressed priests of the “fertility cult.”

The following information is derived mostly from *The Road to Bifrost Volume III: the Runes and Holy Signs* by Thor and Audrey Sheil. Like Tiwaz/Tiw/Tyr, Ing(vi) Freyr is mentioned by name in the Elder Futhark. Thus, a treatise on the Rune *Ingwaz* can also easily become one on the God Ingvi Freyr, and vice-versa. Ingwaz is the sixth rune of the third *aett*, and the twenty-second rune of the Elder Futhark as a whole. The other Rune directly touching upon the Gods and Goddesses is *Ansuz*, which stands for the Divine Powers, the Æsir in particular, and Odin specifically, as shown in the Old Norwegian Rune Rhyme.

As *Ingwaz* did not carry over into the Younger Futhark, only the Old English Rune Poem has a verse for *Ingwaz*. Ing was known as a God of peace and plenty, but has his warrior aspect as well. Note that his horse is known as *Blóðughófi* (Bloody-Hoof) and an alternative name for his boar Gullinbursti is *Slíðrugtanni* (Cutting-Tusked; Gundarsson, *Teutonic Religion*, 95). He traded his self-propelled sword for his Jotun-bride Gerð, so he fights with an antler at Ragnarok. Some have attempted to equate him with Cernunnos, the

horned Celtic God of Wiccan fame. (While there are ties, this has, in my opinion, been overdone.) Some represent Ing as the Green Man or Foliate Mask seen in medieval churches. These carvings have been given both Christian and Pagan interpretations by modern scholars, but the one or two which have written labels are identified as Pagan nature Gods (Faunus and Sylvanus, if memory serves me). The idea that Ing is the Green Man is by no means proven, but strikes a chord with many and I myself have a Green Man carving with an Anglo-Saxon Ing rune on his forehead.

Herne the Hunter is an Anglo-Saxon folklore survival. He has similarities both to Odin and Ing, and his name is cognate with Cernunnos, with the “C” becoming an “H” via the first Germanic sound shift. Heathens view Herne in various ways. He rides with the Wild Hunt like Odin, but I tend to look at him as a different side of Freyr than the peace and fertility hypostasis which stands out in contemporary Heathenism. This makes sense, since death is necessary to nourish new fertility. In winter, many of the animals born in spring must die.

While Ing is not a Sun God, he is a Deity with Solar aspects, as is Freya (Sheil, *The Road to Bifrost* vol. V, 54). Their golden boars are dead giveaways. By the way, there were evidently swine-warriors (Svinfylking) similar to the Berserkers (bear-warriors) and wolf-warriors (Ulfhednar). The swine-warriors wore helmets with the image of a boar as their crest, a number of which have been found, and Tacitus mentions these helmets in *Germania*. The warriors who wore them were evidently dedicated to Frey, Freya and/or Nerthus.

Magical and divinatory meanings for Ingwaz (I will use this reconstructed Common Germanic name for the rune and Ing or Ingvi and/or Freyr for the God) include good luck, protection, a man or men, husband, well-being, hearth (and home), male sexuality, fatherhood, a happy surprise, and a happy home. Ingwaz has links to several other runes. The phallic God is full of “seed,” as it were. Hence, he gives increase of herds and flocks. The very best is kept for seed grain and breeding stock, and the rest becomes Fehu. Money can be both seed grain (if invested) or Fehu (if spent). Like an offspring emerging from its mother’s womb or a seed sprouting from the soil, Ingwaz bursts into the open. It has its own inner glow, which is at first hidden in Laguz. Later, when it becomes manifest, it ties into Sowilo. Berkano is the feminine counterpart to Ingwaz. Ingwaz is also the treasure hidden in the well of Perthro. Handle Ingwaz, like all runes, with care. It tends toward pregnancy. If you are looking for a significant other but not to start a family, at least not right off, it is best to invoke Freya rather than Freyr. Ingwaz requires careful handling here.

Ingwaz can, however, bring out things other than literal, biological fertility. It improves everything in its range. Ingwaz can help uncover “fruits” of the inner life such as inspiration, magical ability, mystical insight, and great ideas. These can be wisely employed for practical results in many cases. Starting a business or a degree program is like sowing seed. Ingwaz is helpful in all of these.

In the search for religious/spiritual understanding, Ingwaz can be a great help. It supports life and health. Ingwaz wards off illness. Ingwaz is orderly and gently motivates. In this, it contrasts markedly with Tiwaz, which includes an element of force. Ingwaz is a remedy for entropy and apathy. It can help re-instill the will to live. Here, Wunjo can also be of help. One of the Laws of Magic is that Like draws Like, and Unlike tends to repel. Since Ingwaz is so sane, healthy and happy in its effects, it tends to repel insanity, crazy folks, and anything tending toward destruction, chaos and deception. This is good to know, since there are plenty of seriously disturbed folks in the world and unfortunately the Pagan and Heathen communities have their share!

Ingwaz facilitates healthy male sexuality, both in attitude and in physical function. Ingwaz has protective overtones, although it works differently than Elhaz in this aspect and very differently than Thurisaz when it is so employed. According to the Sheils, Kenaz/Kaunaz and Ehwaz have ties to Ingwaz, although they do not elaborate. I understand about Ehwaz, the “Horse-Rune,” but not about Kenaz/Kaunaz. However, this would be worth your further exploration.

In conclusion, Freyr’s importance in contemporary Heathenism should come as no surprise. Although most of us no longer live under kings, legitimate government remains necessary. While most of us eat (too)

well even in years of poor harvests, poverty and environmental concerns remain with us. By Dark Age standards, these are peaceful times, but war and absence of *fríð* remain serious concerns. Although people today are more likely to be sexually healthy than before as fundamentalist Christian influences fade, Freyr's gifts in that realm remain as necessary as ever. Modern devotees of this God have no problem in seeing his influences all around us (Sheffield, 38). His lessons, as I understand them, are important ones in any age: that the world we live in is, despite its necessary imperfections, a wonderful thing; that enjoying everyday life is good and even holy; and while the worlds beyond the grave are very real, we aren't going to do any better there by not enjoying the here and now; and finally, that while there are parts of us which can travel the Nine Worlds, we are still part of Midgard and should keep its well-being in mind as we, individually and collectively, make our choices!

Annotated Book-Hoard

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Sheffield, Ann Gróa. *Frey, God of the World*. Lulu.com 2007.

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Turville-Petre, E. O. G. *Myth and Religion of the North: The Religion of Ancient Scandinavia*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964. One of the most important books in English on the subject of Germanic religion.

References to Frey in Lore

Sigrún Freyskona

Although personal gnosis—as in personal encounters with Frey, both of myself and others—is the heart and soul of this book, I do want people to realize that although the ancient texts (mainly the Poetic and Prose Edda were recorded long after the Christian conversion of Scandinavia and infused with Christian perspectives, they are the best reference from what we have to base our beliefs and practices on. If the written records did not exist, we would not even know of the Northern Gods. I am not a strict reconstructionist Edda-thumper, but I do appreciate scholarship, and it would quite frankly be wrong of me to not include the very references that build most people’s perceptions of who Frey really is. People owe it to themselves, if they want to worship a God, to actually learn the mythology of the God and also how historical devotees of the God conducted themselves. For example, not many who would pray to Sekhmet for justice are aware that She is actually a war Goddess and Her priests coated Her statues with anthrax, as She was thought of as a disease-bringer. Her idea of “justice” is to obliterate those who get in Her way. Though Frey is not as overtly destructive, His character is very complex, more so than even most Heathen books and websites are willing to delve into.

As with the study of any historical text, it is important to keep an open mind and use critical thinking skills. All recorded lore about our Gods was originally someone’s shamanic UPG, the Gods telling the tribal spirit-workers stories of Their true nature. I do believe much of the lore has been lost through deliberate destruction and omission, especially being that conquering cultures have historically demonized the Gods of the cultures they encountered. When Snorri recorded the Edda, it was at least two hundred years after the official conversion in Iceland. Sweden was the last Germanic holdout to the conversion, not surprising considering the people’s special reverence of Frey in that land. (This is not to bash Christianity, as I really do have Christian friends who are likely reading this.) The conversion was largely based on politics, on money and greed, rather than the “true” form of Christianity as practiced by Jesus and his earliest followers. The new religion would not have taken hold in the Northern lands if people were not already falling away from Heathen belief and practice due to money and greed and lust for power.

I believe that primary sources are important as a reference; I also believe actually contacting the God personally, developing a relationship with the God, is important. I believe, quite frankly, that you cannot have one without the other. You cannot properly worship Frey without at least understanding the basic information of His nature, and what His worship was like in old times. You cannot properly worship Frey if you are keeping Him at arms’ length, mocking those who might admit publicly to talking with Him, to Him spending time with them, and being a true friend if not more.

There are a few misconceptions about Frey in particular that I hope this reference clears up. I have added a line or two of comprehensive thought, when I felt clarification was needed. By no means have I provided every single reference to Frey ever given in any of the recorded lore, but I have given what I thought was most important in terms of understanding Him.

References to Frey in the Eddas ¹

How should one paraphrase Freyr? Thus: by calling him Son of Njördr, Brother of Freyja, and also God of Vanir, and Kinsman of the Vanir, and Wane, and God of the Fertile Season, and God of Wealth-Gifts.

–Skáldskaparmál, VII.

Njördr in Nóatún begot afterward two children: the son was called Freyr, and the daughter Freyja; they were fair of face and mighty. Freyr is the most renowned of the Æsir; he rules over the rain and the shining of the sun, and therewithal the fruit of the earth; and it is good to call on him for fruitful seasons and peace. He governs also the prosperity of men.

–*Gylfaginning* XXIV.

Though it is largely assumed that Thor is the rain God, he is more properly the storm God, although the nitrogen in lightning is very good for keeping soil fertile. Frey is not the Sun God either; the Northern Solar Deity is Sunna, who is a Goddess. My personal thoughts are that Frey directs the energies of the sun and gentle rains to the land and blesses the crops that grow. Remember that Frey had a wain cult, and it is likely that His wain was drawn through farmlands specifically with the intent of blessing the growing crops. I believe that He as a light-bringer imbues the life force energy necessary for productive, healthy growth.

*Alfheim the gods to Frey
gave in days of yore
for a tooth-gift.*

–*Grimnismal*, v. 5

This strophe tells us that Frey was given Ljossalfheim (Light-Elf Home) when He cut His first tooth. Now, in my opinion, Gods are born Gods. Frey probably showed Divine qualities at His birth, and His parents probably had dealings with the Alfar already. I believe the Alfar would have revolted magically if they did not find Frey pleasing, but they must have been taken with His beauty and charm even in early childhood. (And thinking of Baby Frey makes me *squee*, just so you know.)

Bragi answered: "These were the beginnings thereof: The gods had a dispute with the folk which are called Vanir, and they appointed a peace-meeting between them and established peace in this way: they each went to a vat and spat their spittle therein. Then at parting the gods took that peace-token and would not let it perish, but shaped thereof a man.

–*Skáldskaparmál*, I.

Scholars have speculated (and I agree) that the Vanir were an earlier race of Gods, supplanted by the conquering Aesir, and this myth remains as accepting certain Vanic aspects as necessary to the new Aesic society. As for historical evidence, you might want to consider the Star Carr site in Yorkshire, occupied around 8700 B.C.E., where beads made of amber were found, as well as worked antler and the famous stag skull with antlers, probably used for ritual.² During this time period there was the “Ertebølle culture”, dating 5300-3950 B.C.E., in Northern Germany and the Netherlands and parts of southern Scandinavia. This culture learned how to fish as well as bring in whale and seals, and did primitive animal husbandry and minor grain cultivation, especially barley and wheat, besides hunting to supplement food. They also domesticated the dog at this time. There was woodcarving as art, including amber carvings of boars.³ This culture coincided with the “Funnelbeaker culture”, dating 4000-2700 B.C.E., from parts of Germany and the Netherlands into southern Scandinavia. It is similar, and the Funnelbeaker culture is named for its characteristic ceramic drinking/eating vessels. Incidentally, I have always felt ceramics were more “appropriate” to honor the Vanir, and history has proved this to be correct. What is significant about the Funnelbeaker culture is the finding of battle-axes hewn from stone—the weapon infamously used by Njord to chop off Mimir’s head—buried with men as grave goods. A boat-shaped battle-axe was incidentally found in Närke, in Sweden.⁴ During this time shamans would have still existed, and organized priesthood was also coming into play, both serving a specific function. The Deities that would obviously be worshiped at this time would be the Gods of nature tamed by man ... the Vanir. It would make sense that the main God of the Vanir would be called Lord, since learning how to farm even at a simple level would give one economic advantage and respect among the tribe.

The Aesir would come to prominence during the Nordic Bronze Age⁵ and it is clear by the Germanic Iron Age the Aesir cult had taken over the Vanic cult.⁶ In the Nordic Bronze Age, circa 1800-500 B.C.E., it is presumed no written language existed. The Bronze Age combined Vanic and Aesic elements. The Vanir

embodied the sacred twins: Njord and Nerthus, Frey and Freyja. We find some evidence of this in petroglyphs, and other rock carvings are found with men holding what looks to be like a hammer in one, a spear in another. A figure holding a bow may represent Ullr.⁷ Incidentally, Fae/Ljossalfar (Frey's subjects) are notoriously repelled by iron, which came into dominant use 400-800 C.E., as well as gold. It is obvious these are the last years of Germanic Paganism free of Christian influence, and that the old religion was waning even then, to be suppressed during the Viking Age (about 793-1066 C.E.). Based on the comparison of cultures, we can assume that the Jotnar were the earliest race of Gods worshiped in Northern Europe, and the myth concerning Frey wedding Gerda may be just more than a romantic story, but I will leave my thoughts on that for the analysis of *Skirnismal*.

The alcohol involved in the truce is significant, because each of the pantheons held alcohol sacred. The sea-god Aegir is the God of brewing, and mead horns have been found from the Paleolithic era, though it was probably alcohol from the hunter-gatherer culture (so fermented honey wouldn't be illogical). Intoxication was a way to induce visions. The Vanic culture, with Frey as grain God, brewed more specialized alcohol made from grain; besides being used for visionary purposes, alcohol was a way to make merry. The Aesir culture would use the mellow influence of alcohol for Odin's gift of poetry.

The exchange of spit was a formal adoption of the Vanir into the Aesir culture, but as I will say many times throughout this book, They were adopted but are not technically Aesir, most notably in that They never intermarried with the Aesir.

*At that the steep slope-dwellers
No sorrow felt; then Idunn
Was from the south, by giants
New-stolen, come among them.
All Ingvi-Freyr's high kindred,
Hoary and old, to council
Hasted; grewsome [sic] of fashion
And ugly all the gods were.*

—*Skáldskaparmál*, XXII. (referencing Idunn)

Note: “All Ingvi-Freyr's high kindred, hoary and old, to council hasted”. This would mean that Frey, here, has an important position on the council of Asgard. Though one might argue “kindred” represents the Vanir, if it were exclusively referencing the Vanir it might mean that He is recognized as Their leader. However, since the Asgardians made decisions as a collective, it can be inferred (see references below) that Frey was a sort of law-speaker; as a “godhi” of the Aesir that may indeed be part of His duty. “Hoary and old” does not necessarily mean the appearances of the council, but rather a reference to Their age, as “elders” have always been regarded as having more wisdom than youth. “Grewsome of fashion and ugly all the Gods were” suggests foul temperament, which means contrary to the perception of Frey as a hippie, He does have a temper, as do the other Gods.

Njörd:
35. 'Tis to me a solace,
as I a long way hence
was sent, a hostage from the gods,
that I had a son,
whom no one hates,
and accounted is a chief among the Æsir.

Loki:
36. Cease now, Njörd!

*in bounds contain thyself;
I will no longer keep it secret:
it was with thy sister
thou hadst such a son;
hardly worse than thyself.*

Tý:
37. Frey is best
of all the exalted gods
in the Æsir's courts:
no maid he makes to weep,
no wife of man,
and from bonds looses all.

-Lokasenna

My own personal gnosis regarding this verse is that Frey gives abused women a healthy appreciation of masculinity and male sexuality, and certainly as a food God He has a certain respect for the poor both in status of wealth and of spirit. It is His desire that people enjoy life, that they become free of their bonds, and truly live.

It seems that Frey has a special affection for His women, though, and for those who are struggling with the difficulties of life. Frey is called a “solace” by His own father, and indeed Frey is a solace to many, Gods and men alike. It is also significant that the one to defend Frey in Lokasenna is Tyr, the giver of law and justice. This reinforces my personal belief that Frey enforces the laws of frith and grith.

Even more significant is that during Loki's flyting, the worst things He can say about Frey is that He was conceived by Njord and His sister (probably Nerthus), and that Freyja has sexual intercourse with Frey. Loki does not accuse Frey of any other character defects as He does with, say, Odin. This leads me to believe that Loki really harbors no ill will towards Frey Himself. In fact, it is notable that when Loki brings gifts to the Gods from the dwarves as wergild for chopping off Sif's hair, although He technically had not done any wrong to Frey, He still presented Frey with fine gifts of the foldable ship Skidbladnir and the battle-boar Gullinbursti. Read on:

44. Then asked Ganglere: What is there to be said of Skidbladner, which you say is the best of ships? Is there no ship equally good, or equally great? Made answer Har: Skidbladner is the best of ships, and is made with the finest workmanship; but Naglfare, which is in Muspel, is the largest. Some dwarfs, the sons of Ivalde, made Skidbladner and gave it to Frey. It is so large that all the asas, with their weapons and war-gear, can find room on board it, and as soon as the sails are hoisted it has fair wind, no matter whither it is going. When it is not wanted for a voyage, it is made of so many pieces and with so much skill, that Frey can fold it together like a napkin and carry it in his pocket.

-Gylfaginning

It's interesting that the best ship ever made was given to Frey, who would probably appreciate the fine workmanship being as His father is a Ship-God. Beyond that, since all the Aesir can fit on the ship, we can assume that Frey was entrusted with it because of His hospitality, His good, generous, kind, frithful nature that could make Him a good enough host for all of the Aesir to travel where They needed or wanted to go.

When Loke and Brokë brought forth the treasures, the gods seated themselves upon their doom-steeds. It was agreed to abide by the decision which should be pronounced by Odin, Thor and Frey. Loke gave to Odin the spear Gungner, to Thor, the hair, which Sif was to have, and to Frey, Skidbladner; and he described the qualities of all these treasures, stating that the spear never would miss its mark, that the hair would grow as soon as it was placed on Sif's head, and that Skidbladner would always have a fair wind as soon as the sails were hoisted, no matter where its owner desired to go; besides, the ship could be folded together like a napkin and be carried in his pocket if he desired. Then Brok produced his

treasures. He gave to Odin the ring, saying that every ninth night eight other rings as heavy as it would drop from it; to Frey he gave the boar, stating that it would run through the air and over seas, by night or by day, faster than any horse; and never could it become so dark in the night, or in the worlds of darkness, but that it would be light where this boar was present, so bright shone his bristles.

– *Skáldskaparmál*

This particular passage says something about Frey having a place as lawgiver among the Aesir. Odin would have a vested interest in Loki’s mischief, being His blood-brother and the one who introduced Him to the Aesir, as well as the necessity of his rightful place as leader/chieftain. Thor would have a vested interest in the return of His wife’s hair. (In elder Heathen Scandinavian society, a woman’s shorn hair was the mark of being a known adulteress.) But Frey has nothing whatsoever to do with this incident, so therefore we can assume that Frey was either called upon either as a neutral party or as a fair and true judge.

Not only did Frey get Skidbladnir out of Loki’s wergild, He also got Gullinbursti. Odin would have been owed wergild due to being Loki’s blood-brother and Loki’s bad reputation carrying over on Him; Thor would obviously have been owed wergild because it is His wife whose hair was shorn. But Loki really doesn’t owe Frey anything, yet He gives Frey a ship *and* a boar — the symbol used by warriors such as Beowulf, presumably to call upon the boar’s rage, as well as something that can be used for food. In elder Heathen times, swine was traditionally given Frey in Blót, and has carried over into such customs as the Christmas ham.

*Thus sang Egill Skallagrímsson:
For that Grjótbjörn
In goods and gear
Freyr and Njördr
Have fairly blessed.*

–*Skáldskaparmál, VII.*

Frey and Njord are often mentioned together in reference to worldly prosperity. Njord is often regarded as a fisherman’s God, but also as a God of commerce. I believe Frey also has to do with commerce, and though in Heathen times a lot would be based on agriculture, we can translate that into modern times as “anything that feeds you”. Grotbjorn was a friend of Egil’s, and Frey and Njord gave both “goods and gear”. I believe “goods” refers to practical household things, and “gear” refers to items/objects that can increase productivity and business. The more technology you had — and mind you, technology millennia ago was primitive by our standards — the better your chances were of survival.

*Thus speaks Úlfr Uggason:
The battle-bold Freyr rideth
First on the golden-bristled
Barrow-boar to the bale-fire
Of Baldr, and leads the people.
The boar is also called Fearful-Tusk.*

–*Skáldskaparmál, VII.*

That Frey was the first to ride out to Baldr’s funeral, and “led the people” (as all in the Nine Worlds were made to mourn Him), says something about Frey’s status as leader, as well as His ability (again) to make frith and bridge gaps between diverse sorts of people. Frey’s leadership may well be in that He is good at frith-weaving. Yet His boar is mentioned here as Fearful-Tusk, and I believe this implies Frey was angry at Baldr’s death. I don’t think He was necessarily angry at Loki, but angry that one of the Lights went out too early (as Baldr is a bright God).

References to Frey in the Sagas

Ynglinga Saga ⁸

Odin went out with a great army against the Vanaland people; but they were well prepared, and defended their land; so that victory was changeable, and they ravaged the lands of each other, and did great damage. They tired of this at last, and on both sides appointed a meeting for establishing peace, made a truce, and exchanged hostages. The Vanaland people sent their best men, Njord the Rich, and his son Frey...

Now, when Hone came to Vanabeim he was immediately made a chief, and Mime came to him with good counsel on all occasions. But when Hone stood in the Things or other meetings, if Mime was not near him, and any difficult matter was laid before him, he always answered in one way — “Now let others give their advice”; so that the Vanaland people got a suspicion that the Asaland people had deceived them in the exchange of men. They took Mime, therefore, and beheaded him, and sent his head to the Asaland people.

This is a carry-over of the tale in the Eddas of the war between the Aesir and Vanir. The Eddaic story, with spit exchanged in a vat of alcohol to drink and be merry is a bit nicer to hear than the Vanir beheading Mimir with an axe. It does not explicitly say Njord was the one to do so, but as stated earlier, a boat-shaped battle-axe was found in Sweden as a burial good, and this could be a lost link to Njord as Warrior. It does make sense that if you irk the Vanir long enough, They stop being so frithful.

Odin placed Njord and Frey as priests of the sacrifices, and they became Diar of the Asaland people.

What is meant by “priests of the sacrifices” is unclear. Being that the Gods are Gods, who would they worship? I think rather this is referring to the Gods collecting the energy of sacrifices made on Their behalf (like at Blót), sharing it among the Gods, and sending it back down to Their folk as weal that influences *nyrd* for the good. “Diar” is cognate with the word “Deus”, or God. Thus the three Vanir were absorbed into the Aesir Gods, and the Others were forgotten.

Njord’s daughter Freya was priestess of the sacrifices, and first taught the Asaland people the magic art, as it was in use and fashion among the Vanaland people.

The “magic art” referred to here is of course *seiðr*, which is an umbrella term for a number of practices. We usually associate *seiðr* with prophesy, but other forms of this practice include healing, influencing weather and crops, as well as cursing those who broke frith. For this reason, men who did *spae* (the prophetic form of *seiðr*) were accepted in Norse society, but men who did *seiðr*, and thus were receptive to magical forces, were considered *ergi*. That *seiðr* was practiced in Vanaheim by the Vanir would mean Frey did *seiðr* as well, and though Frey is wed to a giantess and has relations with His sister, one could well argue Frey has *ergi* qualities as well. The definition of *ergi* is up for speculation by many, but in my opinion it means “gender-transgressive behavior”, which would mean receptivity in a man and aggression in a woman. To do *seiðr* is to be used by the Gods, and necessitates receptivity in a man. I believe that Freyja’s teaching *seiðr* to Odin is referred to by the tantalizing line in *Lokasenna* about Odin being *ergi* in Samsey. A friend of mine made an offhanded remark about how Freyja most likely “pegged” Odin during his *seiðr* training, and there’s no reason for me to think that Frey, *seiðr* coming second nature to Him, was exempt from something similar.

While Njord was with the Vanaland people he had taken his own sister in marriage, for that was allowed by their law; and their children were Frey and Freya. But among the Asaland people it was forbidden to intermarry with such near relations.

This is the only mention of Nerthus we have in the Sagas (none in the Eddas), and it is implicit at best. Some scholars have speculated about Njord and Nerthus being the same hermaphroditic Deity, but the *Ynglinga Saga* clearly says that Njord was married to His own sister. Considering the tales of Sleipnir's birth and Thor in a dress, I think if Njord was a hermaphroditic Deity the Eddas would at least hint at it. Nerthus is mentioned by name and practice in Tacitus but is never given a name in the Eddas, which suggests there are taboos surrounding Her worship which the Norse culture might still have been aware of immediately before and after conversion.

Njord goes on to marry Skadhi, and it ends in an amicable divorce.

Frey took the kingdom after Njord, and was called drot by the Swedes, and they paid taxes to him. He was, like his father, fortunate in friends and in good seasons. Frey built a great temple at Upsal, made it his chief seat, and gave it all his taxes, his land, and goods. Then began the Upsal domains, which have remained ever since. Then began in his days the Frode-peace; and then there were good seasons, in all the land, which the Swedes ascribed to Frey, so that he was more worshipped than the other gods, as the people became much richer in his days by reason of the peace and good seasons.

This is where we get into the controversy about whether or not Frey was actually a God, or merely a deified human. One of Olav Tryggvason's conversion tactics was to tell the Swedes that Frey was just a man. My personal gnosis goes a little out here, but I think that the Swedes had an understanding of sacral kingship, and it may well be that a human man was "ridden" (possessed) by Frey, and/or His avatar. Under Frey's influence, the land was fertile, and people were well off, and happy.

I look at Frey as being a God of friendship, peace, and good weather. He is not officially a solar deity per se, but has solar aspects, as evidenced by His boar Gullinbursti (Golden Bristles). I think His domain is happiness in general, and the well-being of humans.

His wife was called Gerd, daughter of Gymis, and their son was called Fjolne.

You will note that in the mythology of the Eddas, it never says that Frey and Gerda have children. I do not believe They have any Vanic/Jotun children, nor do the spirit-workers I talk to. I believe Fjolne was a human They adopted and showed favor to.

Frey was called by another name, Yngve; and this name Yngve was considered long after in his race as a name of honour, so that his descendants have since been called Ynglinger.

And again, my belief about the avatar being possessed by Frey, to show His favor on the land. It is probable that the Yngling family were touched by Frey so that it altered their DNA somewhat.

Frey fell into a sickness; and as his illness took the upper hand, his men took the plan of letting few approach him. In the meantime they raised a great mound, in which they placed a door with three holes in it. Now when Frey died they bore him secretly into the mound, but told the Swedes he was alive; and they kept watch over him for three years. They brought all the taxes into the mound, and through the one hole they put in the gold, through the other the silver, and through the third the copper money that was paid. Peace and good seasons continued.

When it became known to the Swedes that Frey was dead, and yet peace and good seasons continued, they believed that it must be so as long as Frey remained in Sweden; and therefore they would not burn his remains, but called him the god of this world, and afterwards offered continually blood-sacrifices to him, principally for peace and good seasons.

So Frey's human avatar may have died, but Frey Himself did not, and continued to bless the land through their honor of Him. Mound burial is connected explicitly with Frey throughout the ancient texts (as opposed to Aesic cremation), and Frey likes "shiny" gold, silver, and copper metal, or at least the intent behind the offering. The three metals being mentioned mean that the rich, middle-class, and poor offered to Frey, out of respect.

*Viga-Glum's Saga*⁹

Indeed, before Thorkel left Thverá, he went to Frey's temple, and taking an old steer up thither, made this speech: "Thou, Frey," said he, "wert long my protector, and many offerings hast thou had at my hands, which have borne good fruit to me. Now do I present this steer to thee, in the hope that Glum hereafter may be driven by force off this land, as I am driven off it; and, I pray thee, give me some token whether thou acceptest this offering or not." Then the steer was stricken in such a way that he bellowed loud and fell down dead, and Thorkel took this a favourable omen. Afterwards he was in better spirits, as if he thought his offering was accepted and his wish ratified by the god.

The concept of animal (and human) sacrifice is controversial within Paganism; however, it was done by the elder Heathens. The animals were killed in a more humane way than the butchering that goes on for supermarket meat; the livestock was presented as an offering and the killing had to be done properly in order to bring the tribe luck.

Beyond the confirmation that sacrifice was made, the word "protector" in Icelandic literally translates back to "fulltrúi", or "fully-trusted". One could wonder why, for a request for justice, that sacrifice was made to Frey and not someone more "judge-like" such as Odin or Tyr. It is my understanding that when one has a fulltrúi, to Whom they are fully trusted, the God has a special investment in their life. To confine a God inside a box and say "you are only good for this or that purpose and nothing else" is insulting hubris. Frey would rightly be a protector; He has compassion for the people of Midgard, especially people who are His and are being downtrodden in some way. Not only was Thorkel's only son murdered by Glum, but also Glum had the *níðing* gall thereafter to level accusation against Thorkel at the Thing, which is reminiscent of lawsuits in the 21st century where burglars will sue the owners of the home they broke into for daring to defend themselves.

Before Glum left home he dreamt that many persons came to Thverá to visit the god Frey, and he thought he saw a great crowd on the sand-banks by the river, with Frey sitting on a chair. He dreamt that he asked who they were who had come thither, and they said, "We are thy departed kindred, and we are now begging Frey that thou may'st not be driven out of Thverá, but it is no use, for he answers shortly and angrily, and calls to mind now the gift of the ox by Thorkel the tall." At that point Glum woke up, and ever afterwards he professed that he was on worse terms with Frey.

This suggests that Frey has some connection with ancestors, and listens to His people when they honor Him in some way, as He made good on Thorkel's sacrifice. The best way of impressing Frey is not to talk a good game or prove you're "more Heathen than thou" but to act, even if it's something as simple as giving Him an offering to show your friendship and trust. Frey is connected with death on more than one occasion, and here He seems to be a channel for mediating with the ancestors who have been buried in the Earth and thus returned to the life cycle. Even so, though Glum's ancestors plead for Glum, and his ancestors may well have been devotees of Frey, the God has His mind made up, remembering the way His fosterling Thorkel was treated at Glum's mercies.

The Saga goes on to say Glum rides away from Thverá and never lives there again. This was what Thorkel wanted when he made his sacrifice. He didn't ask for Glum's death, even though he justifiably could have with the murder of his son at Glum's hands. Thorkel knew well what he was asking of Frey when he sacrificed the steer: Glum's complete humiliation and defeat. To be driven off Thverá, to have his reputation so smeared by repeated wrongful deeds that the Thing called for him to be ejected from his land, was to Glum a fate worse than death.

*Landnamabok*¹⁰

A ring weighing two ounces or more should lie on the stall in every chief Temple, and this ring should every chief or

godi have upon his arm at all public law-motes (logthing) at which he should be at the head of affairs, having first reddened it in the blood of a neat which he himself had sacrificed there. Every man who was there to transact any business, as by law provided by the Court, should first take an oath upon that ring and name for the purpose two or more witness in evidence, he was to say, that I take oath upon the ring, a lawful one (lögeid) so help me Frey and Niord and the Almighty God, to this end that I shall in this case prosecute or defend or bear witness or give award or pronounce doom according to what I know to be most right and most true and most lawful, and that I will deal lawfully with all such matters in law as I have to deal with while I am at this Thing.”

–Part IV

That oaths were sworn on the ring to Frey and Njord meant that They were considered trustworthy enough to hear oaths, and hold them accountable. “The Almighty God” may have been an epithet for Odin, or perhaps Tyr.

Gisla Saga ¹¹

Thorgrim meant to have a harvest feast on the first night of winter, and to sacrifice to Frey. He bids to it his brother Bork, and Eyjolf the son of Thord, and many other great men. Gisli too made ready a feast, and bids to it his brothers-in-law from Arnafirth, and the two Thorkels; so that there were full sixty men at his house. There was to be a drinking-bout at each house, and the floor at Sabol was covered with sedge won from Sedgetarn.

The “first night of winter”, according to the Icelandic calendar, is *Gormánuður*, observed around the end of October. The name, which translates as “Innards Month”, refers to the slaughter of the excess livestock before the winter set in. The month’s menu consisted of those innards that were not pickled or salted: hearts, liver, kidneys, etc. A sacrifice to Frey would, again, likely be livestock (i.e. ox or swine), which was significant because the daily fare was scant during the winter for all Icelandic people at this time, so giving Frey the best animal as a sacrifice was basically ensuring less food for winter — a sign that Thorgrim really did love Frey. The “drinking-bout” is probably a *sumbel*, which goes along with a sacrifice made in Frey’s honor, and the merriment shared by the folk in Frey’s name.

And now, too, a thing happened which seemed strange and new. No snow lodged on the south side of Thorgrim’s howe, nor did it freeze there. And men guessed it was because Thorgrim had been so dear to Frey for his worship’s sake that the god would not suffer the frost to come between them.

The “howe” is the burial mound; followers of Frey were traditionally buried rather than cremated. There are many speculations as to why burial is a Vanic practice and cremation an Aesic practice, but I see the burial as returning the body to the Earth, decomposing and feeding the soil to make new life. It would make sense that those devoted to Earth Deities (as opposed to sky Deities) would be given to the Earth at death. Though many have disputed the claim of Thorgrim’s burial mound being free of snow and frost, there have been accounts of Gods and wights affecting one part of the land and not the others, and this may have actually been true.

The Saga of Hervor and Heithrek ¹²

King Heithrek worshipped Frey, and he used to give Frey the biggest boar he could find. They regarded it as so sacred that in all important cases they used to take the oath on its bristles. It was the custom to sacrifice this boar at the ‘sacrifice of the herd.’ On Yule Eve the ‘boar of the herd’ was led into the hall before the King. Then men laid their hands on his bristles and made solemn vows. King Heithrek himself made a vow that however deeply a man should have wronged him, if he came into his power he should not be deprived of the chance of receiving a trial by the King’s judges; but he should get off

scot free if he could propound riddles which the King could not answer. But when people tried to ask the King riddles, not one was put to him which he could not solve.

–II., X.

This is one account of a boar given on Yule Eve for Frey on which solemn oaths are made. That King Heithrek was mentioned as worshiping Frey is significant, as this would mean Frey was his *fulltrúi*. In the Saga we learn about Heithrek “doing evil” in youth to such a degree that he slays his brother Angantyr (I, IV). Heithrek lives for a while as an outlaw in the woods, but realizing after a time that he can turn his life around, he goes back and tries to live a more honorable existence. Frey appreciates hard work, and is willing to inspire people to work on themselves so they can in turn help others.

That Heithrek is good at riddles suggests he is very well-learned. Being of a royal class, he would be expected to have education, but a mind for knowing trivia is based in a love of learning for its own sake. Heithrek has an encounter with a man named Gestumblindi who sacrificed to Odin for help, and was met by another “man” named Gestumblindi who exchanged clothes with him and went off to meet Heithrek (II., X). The second Gestumblindi had a very lengthy exchange of riddles with Heithrek, and was not able to stump the King until the final question.

Gestumblindi said: Tell me lastly, Heithrek, if you are wiser than any other prince, what did Othin whisper in Balder’s ear, before he was placed upon the pyre?

The King replied: I am sure it was something scandalous and cowardly and thoroughly contemptible. You are the only person who knows the words which you spoke, you evil and wretched creature.

Then the King drew Tyrfing, and struck at Gestumblindi; but he changed himself into a falcon and flew out through the window of the hall. And the sword struck the tail of the falcon; and that is why it has had a short tail ever since, according to heathen superstition. But Othin had now become wroth with the King for striking at him; and that night he was slain.

–II., XI.

We can see that the mention of Odin brings up the words “scandalous, cowardly, and thoroughly contemptible” and “evil and wretched” from a worshiper of Frey, and I do believe there is quite a bit of tension between Frey the most popular Vanir God and Odin the ruling Aesir God, being that the Vanir are hostages to the Aesir and not the other way around. We know there had to be a ceasefire, a truce, between the Aesir and Vanir or They would have killed each other, and I believe for Frey to do His job as Their priest there had to be some measure of frith, but I’m sure there are deep resentments there that are not touched upon in lore except here. That a boar was sacrificed on Yuletide, and had oaths sworn over it, is evidenced in another Saga tale:

That evening the great vows were taken; the sacred boar was brought in, the men laid their hands thereon, and took their vows at the king’s toast.

–IV., 30, *Helgakvitha Hjorvarthssonar*¹³

The following two stories are good examples of how *not* to treat Frey from Olaf Tryggvason’s Saga on Freyr (*Flatleyjarbook* II., 337).

The Story of Gunnar Helming¹⁴

Norwegian Gunnar Helming was suspected of having committed a murder. For fear of King Olaf he fled to Sweden. There happened to be great sacrifices in honor of Freyr, and his idol had such a power that the devil spoke through it, and it had been given a young wife, and it was believed that they could have sexual intercourse. Freyr’s wife was pretty, and she had the dominion over the temple. Gunnar asked her for shelter. She answered: “You are not fortunate, for Freyr does not

like you. Nevertheless, stay here for three nights, and we may see.” He said: “I like better to be helped by you than by Freyr.” Gunnar was a very jolly and cheerful person. After three nights he asked whether he might stay there any longer. “I do not know exactly,” said she. “You are a poor fellow, and still, as it seems, of good extraction, I should like to help you, only I am afraid that Freyr hates you. Still, remain here half a month, and we may again see.” Gunnar pleased the Swedes well because of his cheerfulness and smartness. After some time, he talked with Freyr’s wife, who said: “People like you well, and I think it is better you stay here this winter and accompany us when Freyr makes his annual journey. But I must tell you that he is still angry with you.” Gunnar thanked her well.

Now the festival time came, and the procession started. Freyr and his wife were placed in the carriage, whereas their servants and Gunnar had to walk beside. When driving through the mountains, they were surprised by a tempest and all the servants fled. Gunnar remained. At last he got tired of walking, went into the carriage and let the draft cattle go as they liked. Freyr’s wife said: “You had better try and walk again, for otherwise Freyr will arise against you.” Gunnar did so, but when he got too tired, he said: “Anyhow, let him come, I will stand against him.” Now Freyr arises, and they wrestle till Gunnar notices that he is getting weaker. Then he thinks by himself that if he overcomes this Foe he will return to the right faith and be reconciled with King Olaf. And immediately after Freyr begins to give way, and afterwards to sink. Now this Foe leaps out of the idol, and it lay there empty. Gunnar broke it into pieces and gave Freyr’s wife two alternatives: that he would leave, or that she might declare him publicly to be the god Freyr. She said that she would willingly declare what he liked. Now Gunnar dressed in Freyr’s clothes, the weather improved and they went to the festival. People were very much impressed by the power of Freyr, because he was able to visit the country in such a tempest, although all the servants had fled. They wondered how he went about among them and talked like other men.

Thus Freyr and his wife spent the winter going to festivals. Freyr was more eloquent towards people than his wife, and he would not receive living victims, as before, and no offerings except gold, silk, and good clothing. After months, people began to notice that Freyr’s wife was gravid. They thought it splendid, and many expected great wonders of their god Freyr. Also the weather was fine, and it looked like such a harvest as nobody remembered to have seen before.

The rumours of Freyr’s power were reported to Norway, and also brought before King Olaf. He had some suspicion of the truth and asked Gunnar’s brother Sigurd what he knew about the exiled. Sigurd knew of nothing. The King said: “I believe this mighty god of the Swedes, who is so famous in all countries, is no other person than your brother Gunnar. For otherwise, those are the greatest where living men, are slaughtered. . . . Now I send you to Sweden, for it is terrible to know that a Christian man’s soul should be situated thus. I shall give up my wrath, if he comes voluntarily, for now I know that he has not committed the murder.” . . . Sigurd immediately went to Sweden and brought his brother these news. Gunnar answered: “Certainly might I willingly go back; but if the Swedes discover the truth, they will kill me.” Sigurd said: “We shall secretly carry you away, and be sure that King Olaf’s good fortune God’s mercy is more powerful than the Swedes.” Now Gunnar and his wife prepare their flight, taking with them as many goods as they were able to carry. The Swedes went in pursuit of them, but lost the trace and did not find them. So Gunnar and his people arrived in Norway and went to King Olaf, who received them well and made him his wife to be baptized.

Being that the cult of Nerthus was known in at least southern Scandinavia (Denmark most notably) and involved putting an image of Nerthus in a wain and driving it through the land for peace and plenty, it is likely that Frey, being one of the Vanir, would also have a wain cult, especially with the Ing strophe in the Anglo-Saxon Rune Poem. It is also known that female clergy did exist in pre-Christian/conversion-era times. Steinunn Refsdottir is a famous example, preaching the old religion to Christian missionaries and making a famous poem about Thor dueling with Christ. Frey having a priestess who was also ritually His wife would make her more sensitive to His will, and a better vessel to spread His blessings.

A darker moral of the story, beyond the conquering (politicized) religion of “Saint” Olav, is that Frey’s unnamed priestess/wife here knew Frey did not care for Gunnar, mainly because Gunnar was an outlaw (reference Viga-Glum’s Saga for Frey not holding with outlaws), and although Frey made it very clear to her that He did not like Gunnar and did not want her to succor him, she did so anyway. This violated a sacred trust between her and her Husband, especially after Gunnar decided to make a mockery of her vocation. Frey, in turn, decided to abandon her to her mortal lover.

The concept of a God abandoning one of His followers — even one of His clergy — is not one we like to hear about in the Christian-influenced modern era. Many Pagans, whether they admit it, realize it, or not, believe that the Gods will listen to you because They’re there, and that’s what They do, and They will never

do anything “bad” to Their people, no matter what the people might do to Them. Gods are “supposed” to be unconditionally loving. I don’t have enough knowledge of other pantheons and ancient Pagan cultures to speak for anyone else, but this is as far from elder Heathen thought as one could possibly get. The Gods are not obligated to listen to you just because you talk to them, and quite frankly if you waste Their time without making it worth Their while, They have every right to mess with you. Also, the Gods have feelings; They are not “beyond” emotions. They love, and They also hate. If you piss off a God enough, They have a right to abandon you, and in this case, Frey’s wife failed him not only in giving succor to the outlaw after He specifically told her not to, but allowing the outlaw to make a mockery of the religion. Though it may well be a satiric parable of the conversion and the “evil demon gods”, many elements must certainly be drawn from reality.

*The Saga of Hrafnkel Freysgodhi*¹⁵

Once Hrafnkel had taken possession of the land at Adalbol he went in a lot for sacrifices and had a big temple built. Hrafnkel loved no other god more than Frey, on whom he bestowed a half share in all his best treasures. He occupied the entire valley and apportioned men their land, but was determined to be their master even so, and took the priesthood over them, for which reason his name was lengthened and he was called Frey’s Priest. He was a very overbearing, if talented, man, and compelled the Jokulsdalers to become his retainers. To his own people Hrafnkel was kindly and pleasant, but towards those of Jokulsdal he proved harsh and hardheaded, and they had a rough time of it at his hands. Hrafnkel took part in numerous single combats, and paid no one so much as a penny, so that nobody got any redress from him, whatever it was he did.

Hrafnkel had one particular treasure in his possession which he prized higher than anything else. This was a stallion, dark mouse-grey in colour and with a black stripe the length of his spine, which he called his Freyfaxi. He gave his friend Frey a half share in this stallion. He was so besotted with this stallion that he swore a great oath that he would be the death of any man who rode him without his express permission.

It says in the *Havamal* “better not to give than to give too much”. It is true that many Gods instate taboos on Their followers, but the results of this taboo caused tragedy, and we can find this taboo based in Hrafnkel’s general state of ignorance.

When he reached the mares he stalked them, but these, which never used to run away from man, were now hard to approach — except for Freyfaxi alone. He was as still as if he had taken root. Einar realized that the morning was wearing on, and judged that Hrafnkel would not know even if he did ride the stallion. He now laid hold of him and bridled him, fixed the saddle-cloth under him on the horse’s back, and rode up beside Grijotargil, so up to the glaciers and west alongside the glaciers where the river Jokulsa falls away, and so down along the river to Reykjasel. He asked all the shepherds at the Reykjasel sbieling whether any of them had seen the sheep, but nobody could say that he had. Einar rode Freyfaxi from dawn right to mid-evening, the stallion covering a lot of ground with him in a short time, he was such a fine horse. It now occurred to Einar that it would be time for him to get back and drive in the sheep that were at home, even if he failed to find the others, so he rode east over the ridges into Hrafnkeldal. As he came down to Grijotteig he heard the bleating of sheep from higher up the very ravine he had ridden by before. He turned that way and saw thirty ewes running towards him, the very ones he had lost the week before, and he headed for home with the sheep.

The stallion was all running with sweat, so that it dripped from every hair he had. He was caked with mud and utterly spent. He went rolling over and over a dozen times, and after that set up a loud neighing; then away he went at a great gallop down along the pathway. Einar turned after him, meaning to head him off, catch him, and lead him back to his mares, but this time he was so shy that Einar could get nowhere near him. He went tearing down the valley without halt or pause till he reached Adalbol, where Hrafnkel was sitting at table. As soon as the horse came in front of the door he neighed shrilly. Hrafnkel spoke to a woman who was serving at table, telling her to go to the door — ‘Because a horse neighed, and it sounded to me like the neighing of Freyfaxi.’ She walked out into the doorway, where she saw Freyfaxi in sorry plight, and told Hrafnkel that it was indeed Freyfaxi outside the door, as filthy as could be. ‘What can my brave lad want, that he has come home?’ asked Hrafnkel. ‘This can bode no good.’ With that he went outside and took a look at

Freyfaxi. I, do not like it,' he told him, 'that they are treating you this way, foster-son, but you had your wits about you when you told me of it. It shall be avenged, so off with you to your stud!'

Hrafinkel went to bed that evening and slept through the night. In the morning he had his horse caught and saddled and rode up to the shieling. He rode in blue clothes, had an axe in his hand, but no further weapon. Einar had just driven the sheep into the fold. He was lying on the fold wall, counting the sheep, and the women were busy milking. They greeted Hrafinkel. He asked how they were getting on. 'I have had a bad time of it,' confessed Einar, 'for there were thirty sheep missing the best part of a week. They are found now though.' Hrafinkel said he had no quarrel with this or its like. 'But has not something worse taken place? It has not happened as often as one would expect that the sheep have got lost, but did you not maybe ride my Freyfaxi yesterday?' Einar said he could not deny it. 'But why did you ride this horse which was forbidden you, when there were any number of others at your disposal? I would have forgiven you a first offence, had I not sworn so great an oath in the matter. And yet you have owned up to it like a man.' But in the belief that nothing goes right for those men who draw down on themselves the curse for a broken oath, he dismounted, ran at him, and struck him his death-blow.

Thus, Hrafinkel killed his farmhand Einar for riding Freyfaxi, even though Freyfaxi was the only horse Einar was able to ride while trying to help Hrafinkel recover his lost sheep. Einar tried to do a good thing for his employer, and Hrafinkel in his arrogance killed him. Even if Frey had wanted no one to ride the horse, I don't believe He would want the death of someone who tried to do the right thing. I believe Hrafinkel's oath was made not because Frey asked, but in his smug self-righteousness.

As it turns out, Frey brings Hrafinkel down:

'I am offering you a choice of two things, Hrafinkel,' said Sam to that. 'One is that you shall be led away from the house with such men as I please and be killed. However, because you have so many dependent on you, I am prepared to let you go on looking after them. But if you choose to live, then leave Adalbol with all your household, and have only those assets I assign you-which will be precious little. For I shall take over this homestead and all your authority too. You shall never lay claim to these, you nor your heirs; nor shall you ever again live nearer than east of Fljotsdalsbeid. You can now strike hands on our bargain, if you can bring yourself to accept it.'

'To many,' said Hrafinkel. 'a quick death would seem better than such disgrace. But I shall take the same course as most others: my choice is life, if choice there be. I do it mainly for my sons' sake, for theirs is a poor prospect if I die and leave them.' Hrafinkel was then loosed, and he gave Sam the right to make his own award. He allotted Hrafinkel such goods as he pleased, and this was painfully little. Hrafinkel had his spear with him but no further weapon. That same day Hrafinkel took himself off from Adalbol, and all his people with him.

East in Fljotsdal Hrafinkel heard how the sons of Thjostar had destroyed Freyfaxi and burnt the temple. 'I think it folly,' he said, 'to believe in gods,' and announced that from then on he never would believe in gods, and he kept to what he said, so that he never again offered up a sacrifice.

The moral of the story is that arrogance displeases Frey just as much as outright defiance does, and just as He drove Glum from the land, He drove Hrafinkel from his cushy existence. The temple was destroyed, and Freyfaxi was slaughtered. Hrafinkel had done a morally reprehensible thing by going too far with an oath never asked of him in the first place, all for a show of power, and Frey didn't want His name disgraced any more.

References to Frey in Other Historical Texts

*Beowulf*¹⁶

Then shone the boars over the cheek-guard; chased with gold, keen and gleaming, guard it kept o'er the man of war, as marched along heroes in haste, till the hall they saw, broad of gable and bright with gold: that was the fairest, 'mid folk of earth, of houses 'neath heaven, where Hrothgar lived, and the gleam of it lightened o'er lands afar ... All on the pyre were plain to see the gory sark, the gilded swine-crest, boar of hard iron, and athelings many slain by the sword: at the slaughter they fell ... Dead is Aeschere, of Yrmenlaf the elder brother, my sage adviser and stay in council, shoulder-comrade in stress of fight when warriors clashed and we warded our heads, hewed the helm-boars; bero famed should be every earl as Aeschere was! ... Then he bade them bear him the boar-head standard, the battle-helm high, and breastplate gray, the splendid sword; then spake in form...

Beowulf was a hero of the Geats, which means Götár (Goths), a North Germanic tribe inhabiting Götaland in modern Sweden. In the story that bears his name, Beowulf declined kingship in favor of Heardred. Heardred took in Eadgils and his brother, who fled their uncle Onela, usurper of the Swedish throne, but Heardred was then killed in an invasion of Sweden. Beowulf was proclaimed king and in his decision to avenge Heardred's death, he helped Eadgils become king of Sweden. Eadgils, also known as Aðils in the Old Norse, was one of the Ynglings, historically descended from Frey.

That the Geats/Götár had boar helmets is significant. Frey, again, was thought of as a king in Sweden, and the boar is His sacred animal. Gullinbursti (Gold-Bristles) is also known as Fearful-Tusk. It is known that the *Svinfylking*, or Swine Array, was a version of a wedge formation utilized by the Vikings in their cavalries. I believe this practice originated before Viking society, before the conversion, and the Swine Array relates to Vanic boar warriors, who wore boar helms. Unlike the *berserkergang* who would die for the glory of war and Valhalla, I believe that the Vanic boar warriors fought for kith and kin, home and hearth. The *berserkergang* fought for fighting itself, but the Vanic boar warriors were provoked into combat and angered at their frithsteads being endangered.

Based on the boar helms found across Northern Europe (pictured on the following pages), we can assume the boar-warrior cult was widespread and not necessarily a crossover from Celtic practice, but a holdover from a time when the Vanir were the primary Gods.



8th century Swedish Bronze Helmet Plate Matrix Depicting Warrior with Boar-Crested Helmet¹⁷



Boar Crest with Golden Nails for Bristles, from the Benny Grange Helmet¹⁹



Sutton Hoo Helmet ¹⁸

References to Frey by Historians

Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum ²⁰

At this point I shall say a few words about the religious beliefs of the Swedes. That nation has a magnificent temple, which is called Upsala, located not far from the city of Sigtuna. In this temple, built entirely of gold, the people worship the statues of three gods. These images are arranged so that Thor, the most powerful, has his throne in the middle of the group of three. On either side of him sit Othin and Freyr. Their provinces are as follows: “Thor,” they say, “rules the heavens; he is the god of thunder, wind and rain, fair weather and the produce of the fields. The second god, Othin, is the god of war, and he provides man with courage in the face of his enemies. The third god is Freyr, who bestows peace and pleasure upon mortals.” Indeed they depict him as having a large phallus ... To all their gods they have assigned priests to offer up the sacrifices of the people. If pestilence and famine threaten, a libation is made to the image of Thor, if war is immanent, one is made to Othin; if a marriage is performed, to Freyr.

Uppsala was called Frey’s domain in *Ynglinga Saga*, and it would make sense that Odin, Thor, and Frey were worshiped together, if you think of the triad of mental/physical/emotional. “Peace and pleasure” would probably relate to Frey giving worshipers a good life, especially as it relates to the companionship of others.

Picture of a statue believed to be of Frey:



Ithyphallic Frey statue
Sweden, 11th century C.E. 21

From the Skog Tapestry:



12th century Skog Church Tapestry.
Hälsingland, Sweden. 22

From left to right, the one-eyed Odin, the hammer-wielding Thor and Frey holding up an ear of corn. Similar to Adam of Bremen's description of the idols in the great temple at Uppsala where Thor is said to be flanked by Odin and Frey.

Gesta Danorum 23

Now when Bemon was dead, Starkad was summoned because of his valour by the champions of Permland. And when he had done many noteworthy deeds among them, he went into the land of the Swedes, where he lived at leisure for seven years' space with the sons of Frey. At last he left them and betook himself to Hakon, the tyrant of Denmark, because when stationed at Upsala, at the time of the sacrifices, he was disgusted by the effeminate gestures and the clapping of the mimes on the stage, and by the unmanly clatter of the bells. Hence it is clear how far he kept his soul from lasciviousness, not even enduring to look upon it. Thus does virtue withstand wantonness.

—Book Six

The priests here, referred to as “the sons of Frey”, thus priests of Frey, were unquestionably *ergi*. That Starkad had to “keep his soul from lasciviousness” means most likely he was propositioned by these priests. So Frey apparently had no problem with gay and gender-transgressing men serving Him as priests.

The horse, it appears, was regarded as a favorite animal of Frey. At his temple in Thronðheim it is said there were horses belonging to him ... A highly-valued wooden statue of Frey was found in a temple in Thronðheim, which King Olaf Tryggvason hewed in pieces in the presence of the people.

—*The Religion of the Northmen* 24

The worship of Frey, however, must also have been very popular in Norway, from which it passed to Iceland with the early settlers. As late as 998 the men of Thronðheim are represented as refusing to break their image of Frey at the

command of King Olaf, 'because we have long served him and he has done well by us. He often talked with us, and told us things to come, and gave us peace and plenty.'

*-The Religion of Ancient Scandinavia*²⁵

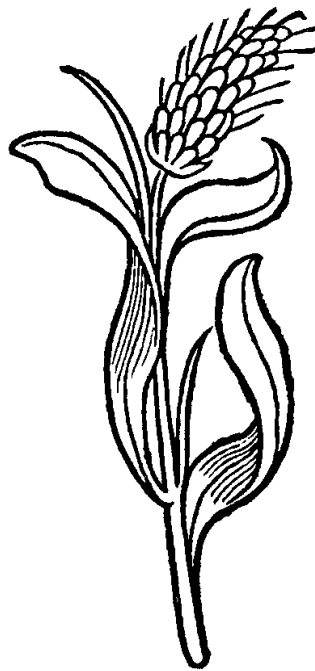
This statement was recorded from the *Flateyjarbók*, and gives an interesting viewpoint of Frey. Not only was Frey blessing their farm, but He also protected them both from physical harm and interpersonal harm (“peace”), and gave them precognition, probably mixed visual/aural. Note that the people at Thrandheim regarded themselves as “serving” Frey, which is in clear contrast to modern Heathens who do not believe in “service” to a Deity. Part of their service to Frey was to keep horses in His name. Apparently the people at Thrandheim felt their service, offering to Frey and living for Him, was well rewarded with a good life, to the point where they would have suffered unto death rather than disown their God. King Olaf destroyed their statue, so we can assume that the people refused to destroy the image of their God. They knew the punishment may well have been death, but they would rather face death than be offensive to Frey.

On that note I end this list of references. Truly, devotion must have been important to this group of people, and we could learn something from it.

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Beloved of Frey: His Extended Family

There's a saying in pop psychology that if you want to understand someone, look at their loved ones, and I extend this to dealing with the Gods. Frey especially, being a God of love and intimacy, can be well understood by looking at His family, which includes Vanir, Jotnar, and Ljossalfar (the latter by adoption). I think it's important to understand that Frey, being a God of love and frith, and by extension building interpersonal relationships, is very dependent on His relationships with those He cares about.

NERTHUS: The Great Mother

Nerthus is arguably one of the least-understood non-Jotun Goddesses. When I first encountered Nerthus, it was at my wedding to Frey. I actually saw what was under the veil, and I was a little shocked because people are not generally allowed to look at Nerthus.

After the Langobardi come the Reudigni, Auiones, Angli, Varni, Eudoses, Suarines and Nuthones all well guarded by rivers and forests. There is nothing remarkable about any of these tribes unless it be the common worship of Nerthus, that is Earth Mother. They believe she is interested in men's affairs and drives among them. On an island in the ocean sea there is a sacred grove wherein waits a holy wagon covered by a drape. One priest only is allowed to touch it. He can feel the presence of the goddess when she is there in her sanctuary and accompanies her with great reverence as she is pulled along by kine. It is a time of festive holidaymaking in whatever place she decides to honour with her advent and stay. No one goes to war, no one takes up arms, in fact every weapon is put away, only at that time are peace and quiet known and prized until the goddess, having had enough of peoples company, is at last restored by the same priest to her temple. After which the wagon and the drape, and if you like to believe me, the deity herself is bathed in a mysterious pool. The rite is performed by slaves who, as soon as it is done, are drowned in the lake. In this way mystery begets dread and a pious ignorance concerning what that sight may be which only those who are about to die are allowed to see.

—Tacitus, *Germania*, ch. 40

Nerthus made it clear, however, that because I am Frey's wife and a priestess of the Vanir, I was allowed to look. Nerthus has a classically beautiful face, but Her eyes (if I haven't weirded you out enough already) are the blue-blue that remind one of the Fremen in Dune. Worship of Nerthus with the Old English name Erce is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Metrical Charm known as the *Acerbot*.

Metrical Charm 1: For Unfruitful Land

Here is the solution, how you may improve your fields if they are not fertile, or if anything unwholesome has been done to them through sorcery or witchcraft.

At night, before dawn, take four turfs from the four quarters of your lands, and note how they previously stood. Then take oil and honey and yeast and milk from every cow that is in the land, and part of every kind of tree grown on the land, except hard beams, and part of every identifiable herb except the buckbean only, and add to them holy water. Then drip it three times on the base of the turfs, and say these words: Crescite, grow, et multiplicamini, and multiply, et replete, and fill, terre, this earth. In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti sit benedicti. And say the Lord's Prayer as often as the other.

And then take the turfs to church and let a priest sing four masses over them, and let the green surface be turned towards the altar, and then, before sunset, let the turfs be brought to the places where they were previously. And let the man have four crosses of quickbeam made for him, and write upon each end: Matthew and Mark, Luke and John. Lay the crucifix on the bottom of the pit, then say: Crux Matheus, crux Marcus, crux Lucas, crux sanctus Iohannes. Then take the turfs and set them down there, and say these words nine times, 'Crescite' as before, and the Lord's Prayer as often, and then turn eastward, and humbly bow down nine times, and then say these words:

*Eastward I stand, entreating favours,
 I pray the glorious Lord, I pray the great Lord,
 I pray the holy warden of heaven,
 Earth I pray and heaven above
 And the steadfast, saintly Mary
 And heaven's might and highest hall
 That by grace of God I might this glamour
 Disclose with teeth. Through trueness of thought
 Awaken these plants for our worldly profit,
 Fill these fields through firm belief,
 Make these fields pleasing, as the prophet said
 That honour on earth has he who dutifully
 deals out alms, doing God's will.*

Then turn yourself three times awiddershins, then stretch out flat and there intone the litanies. Then say; Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus to the end; then sing the Benedicite with arms extended, and the Magnificat, and the Lord's Prayer three times, and commend it to Christ and Saint Mary and the Holy Cross, for love and for reverence, and for the grace of him who owns the land, and all those who are under him. When all that is done, then take unfamiliar seeds from beggars and give them twice as much as you took from them, and let him gather all his plough apparatus together; then let him bore a hole in the plough beam and put in there styrax and fennel and hallowed soap and hallowed salt. Then take the seed, set it on the plough's body, then say:

*Erce, Erce, Erce, Mother of Earth,
 May the Almighty grant you, the Eternal Lord,
 Fields sprouting and springing up,
 Fertile and fruitful,
 Bright shafts of shining millet,
 And broad crops of barley
 And white wheaten crops
 And all the crops of earth.
 May God Almighty grant the owner,
 (And his hallows who are in heaven),
 That his land be fortified against all foes,
 And embattled against all evil,
 From sorceries sown throughout the land.
 Now I pray the Wielder who made this world
 That no cunning woman, nor crafty man,
 May weaken the words that are uttered here.*

Then drive forward the plough and cut the first furrow, then say:

*Hail, Earth, mother of all;
 Be abundant in God's embrace,
 Filled with food for our folk's need.*

Then take all kinds of flour and bake a loaf as broad as a man's palm, and knead it with milk and holy water, and lay it under the first furrow. Then say:

*Field filled with food, to feed mankind,
 Blooming brightly, be you blessed,
 In the holy name of He who made heaven, and earth on which we live,
 May the God who made these grounds grant to us his growing gifts*

That each kind of seed may come to good.

Then say three times, Crescite in nomine patris, sit benedicti. Amen and the Lord's Prayer three times.

Since “Erce” is cognate with “Nerthus”, we can assume Nerthus is being invoked here to heal unfruitful land, especially given Her worship in Germanic countries. Viktor Rydberg has speculated that Nerthus is the same as Jord, but I do not agree with this. Whilst the name Jord looks superficially similar to Njord, who is Nerthus’s brother and husband, Jord is mentioned in the Lore as being a Jotynja and furthermore the mother of Thor by Odin. This is not the same as Nerthus being the mother of Frey and Freyja.

Nerthus is extremely old, and appears to me with a Paleolithic goddess figure — wide hips, large breasts and belly. In fact, She is represented on my Vanir altar by a Venus of Willendorf sculpture I made from brown Sculpey. All of Her dresses have a train, carried by attendants. She speaks very little, so the fact that She’s spoken to me just a few times is a great honor. Nerthus is surrounded by taboos concerning not only who can look at her (and I don’t just mean behind the veil, I mean actually look at Her body), who can touch Her, who can speak to Her, etc. Her attendants are fanatical about any kind of impropriety and will not hesitate to kill someone who they find offensive (which means if you’re astrally traveling in Vanaheim and encounter Nerthus, you might come back physically but parts of your inner self will not return intact).

I don’t work closely with Nerthus, for obvious reasons (if She doesn’t let Her daughter-in-law get close, you can guarantee others don’t either). What I do understand about Nerthus and Frey is that Frey and His sister were both raised by other Vanir, although Njord was around quite a bit. Nerthus would “take custody” of the twins for two weeks a year, the only time She will ever show Her nurturing face. Nerthus groomed Frey and Freyja as to how to “properly” rule Vanaheim ... and of course the war happened and They became hostages to the Aesir. Nerthus is quite proud of Frey, but Her attitude is always detached and aloof (as opposed to Njord, who is much more involved).

Nerthus, being an Earth Goddess, does enjoy the good things about life, but will only seem to “indulge” Herself on holidays. What She does in Her own temple, I don’t know (nor do I care to). However, Nerthus will accept human sacrifice, and has no qualms about putting the sickle to Her son’s throat every year on Lammas. She is very much about the close ties between life and death — death to feed life, life to die and make more life. That said, Nerthus can change with the times and will accept animal sacrifice, or food not adulterated by too many chemicals, made especially for Her. She also seems to accept offerings of human blood, including female menstrual blood given to consecrate tools used in Her rituals (sickles as one example).

NJORD

Njord is very proud of all His children, including the nine daughters not mothered by Nerthus (which include Eir, Bjort, Blith, and Frith, who like to hang out at Lyfjaberg with Mengloth). He does take special pride in Frey and Freyja. To Him, Freyja will always be “daddy’s little girl”, and He looks at Frey as being a chip off the old block. Njord and Frey are quite a bit alike, and indeed to the untrained eye one could mistake Them for being different-aged versions of the same Deity.

In *Vafthrúdnismál* (Poetic Edda) we find the following strophes:

Gagnrad
 38. Tell me tenthly,
 since thou all the origin
 of the gods knowest, Vafthrudnir!
 whence Niörd came
 among the Æsir's sons?
 O'er fanes and offer-steads
 he rules by hundreds,

yet was not among the Æsir born.

Vafþrúdnir

39. In Vanabeim

*wise powers him created,
and to the gods a hostage gave.*

*At the world's dissolution
he will return
to the wise Vanir.*

And in *Gylfaginning* (Prose Edda):

XXIII. “The third among the Æsir is he that is called Njördr: he dwells in heaven, in the abode called Nóatún. He rules the course of the wind, and stills sea and fire; on him shall men call for voyages and for hunting. He is so prosperous and abounding in wealth, that he may give them great plenty of lands or of gear; and him shall men invoke for such things. Njördr is not of the race of the Æsir: he was reared in the land of the Vanir, but the Vanir delivered him as hostage to the gods, and took for hostage in exchange him that men call Hænir; he became an atonement between the gods and the Vanir.

Njord has a very mellow, comforting presence. One of the major differences between Him and Nerthus is that Nerthus appears aloof but is quite intense inside; Njord is much more personable, but in a friendly, gentle way. He is without a doubt the most “nonthreatening” God of the Nordic pantheon (just don’t tell that to Mimir, whose head He chopped off with a battle-axe).

Njord is a God of prosperity, and like Frey, His prosperity is not so much material as it is based in the quality of life, but He understands that quality of life can be affected by a person’s needs. Frey is the God of the sustenance farmer and Njord is the God of the fishermen, and both involve commerce, both getting food for oneself and sharing with the community. Njord was typically called on by travelers for safe journeying and finding their way. The reference to Njord stilling the sea and fire may be given at a literal as well as symbolic level: Njord can calm the elements, but He can also calm a person’s insides, and is a very good God to call upon in matters of mediation and finding inner peace. One of Njord’s ways of helping people calm down is, of course, to watch the sea or any body of flowing water that will drain into the sea such as a river or creek. He enjoys teaching people about the ebb and flow of the tides and the rushing of the water. At Laguna Beach here in Southern California, Njord taught me through a lesson He gave to His foster-daughter Sigyn about the salt of Ginnungagap, the primordial womb of life — how when a human cries, those tears link them to the ocean and back to Ginnungagap, where all life came from.

Njord is fond of all children, especially His own, and He instilled a love of touch and embrace in Frey and Freyja. Njord doesn’t think it’s not “manly” to hug and say *I love you*, nor to weep. Njord’s heart aches with pride for His children, and also with frustration that They must live as hostages to preserve the peace of the Nine Worlds. It is rare that any of the Vanic family gets to spend any time together, as Odin will only allow it on occasions if it’s not a major Vanabeim holiday.

Sadly there isn’t much on Njord lore-wise. Njord’s relationship with His son seems to be a fatherly one. Njord and his ex-wife the Goddess Skadhi were the ones that were concerned when Frey was mooning over Gerd — Frey was heartsick, and it was Njord and Skadhi who took an interest in Frey’s well being. Njord was also sent as a hostage with His son Frey and his daughter Freyja to Asgard. They left behind all that They knew for the sake of peace between the Vanir and Aesir. Njord and Frey were also priests of sacrifices, and each is included into the 12 who hold council at the Well of Urd. According to some sources, Njord and Nerthus were considered “Divine Twins” much like Frey and Freyja. Frey is associated with Spring, as is His mother, Nerthus. Both of Them had chariots that were drawn around in a cart for ritual processions and fertility rites. Frey is also said to give gentle Spring rains — a gentleness inherited from His father Njord, who calms the tempestuous seas after Aegir stirs them up. A rune associated with Njord is Laguz, the 5th rune in the 3rd Aett, or set of runes (or considered the 21st rune in the set of 24). The very next rune is that of Frey, the

Ingvaǰ rune. Both runes have been associated with peace.

Njord seems to be aware of what goes on in His children's lives, but doesn't interfere. He lets Them make Their own decisions, and even defended His daughter Freyja when Loki challenged at the Feast of Aegir that Freyja had slept with many. Njord also seemed to be proud of Frey when He replied to Loki that His son is so well loved. Oaths have been sworn to both of these Gods, as if Njord was handing down the responsibility of His own positions to His Son. Boats have been associated with both of these deities, Njord of course being the sea-faring God, and stories have been told of Frey arriving in a boat and staying long enough to establish a ruling race in Sweden. The stories tell of Frey leaving in a boat, after that. Frey is also the owner of the ship Skidbladnir. Both deities are associated with prosperity as well; Njord is considered a rich god, and His Son Frey is a God of fruitfulness.

—Raistlynn, *fulltrúi* to Njord

SKADHI AND ULLR

Skadhi is a Jotun, and one of the more aggressive ones at that. Nonetheless, She was Njord's wife for a time, and Frey still considers Her to be His stepmother. Apparently Skadhi rather likes the idea.

From *Gylfaginning*:

Njördr has to wife the woman called Skadi, daughter of Thjazí the giant. Skadi would fain dwell in the abode which her father had had, which is on certain mountains, in the place called Thrymheimr; but Njördr would be near the sea. They made a compact on these terms: they should be nine nights in Thrymheimr, but the second nine at Nóatún. But when Njördr came down from the mountain back to Nóatún, he sang this lay:

*Loath were the hills to me, I was not long in them,
Nights only nine;
To me the wailing of wolves seemed ill,
After the song of swans.*

Then Skadi sang this:

*Sleep could I never on the sea-beds,
For the wailing of waterfowl;
He wakens me, who comes from the deep-
The sea-mew every morn.*

Then Skadi went up onto the mountain, and dwelt in Thrymheimr. And she goes for the most part on snowshoes and with a bow and arrow, and shoots beasts; she is called Snowshoe-Goddess or Lady of the Snowshoes. So it is said:

*Thrymheimr 'tis called, where Thjazí dwelt,
He the hideous giant;
But now Skadi abides, pure bride of the gods,
In her father's ancient freehold.*

XXIV. *"Njördr in Nóatún begot afterward two children: the son was called Freyr, and the daughter Freyja; they were fair of face and mighty.*

This last verse disproves the (disputed) common theory that Frey and Freyja are actually the children of Njord and Skadhi. They are not. He had Them with Nerthus after Skadhi's departure. Nonetheless, Skadhi still likes to see Njord now and again (They may have separated but enjoy sex together, and each other's company), and She is quite fond of His children. Frey looks at Skadhi as being a trusted friend and confidante, one who can give Him good advice that is not attached to inter-tribal politics. They are also, in my UPG, "hunting buddies", which is where Frey's connection with the stags and antlers would come from. Skadhi and Frey are strictly platonic with each other: Skadhi likes to roughhouse with Frey, and They see

this as being good fun. The deep relationship between the two was confirmed to me in October of 2006 when I was faining Skadhi, and She seemed quite concerned about the way my life was going, and then some months later when I had a vision of the Two discussing me from a perspective of concern and caring.

Some people who work with the Vanir have speculated on the idea that Ullr is looked at as Njord's brother and thus Frey's uncle, and a common UPG among some Heathens that following Skadhi's divorce to Njord, She took up with Ullr. Being with Njord's brother would tie in with a lot of brother-brother conflicts found throughout mythology, with Njord as King of the Sea and Ullr as Lord of the Forest. References to Ullr in the Prose Edda are as follows.

XXXI. "One is called Ullr, son of Sif, step-son of Thor; he is so excellent a bowman, and so swift on snowshoes, that none may contend with him. He is also fair of aspect and has the accomplishments of a warrior; it is well to call on him in single-combats.

–Gylfaginning

Ullr's father is unnamed. Rydberg (whose theories are not generally accepted) think Ullr and Idunna are siblings and the offspring of Ivaldi. I like to think that Ullr was one of Frodi's sons, as His attributes are very Vanic; it would make sense for a God of the hunt to be part of the Vanic clan.

How should Ullr be paraphrased? By calling him Son of Sif, Stepson of Thor, God of the Snowshoe, God of the Bow, Hunting-God, God of the Shield.

–Skáldskaparmál

I place Ullr among the Vanir for several reasons. First of all, His name means "glory" (Proto-Germanic **Wulþuz*), which is what "Hrethe" means in Anglo-Saxon. There are place-names for Ullr in both Norway and Sweden, and Sweden especially was a very Vanic-oriented country, with the names Ulleråker (Ullr's Field) and Ullevi (Ullr's Shrine) surviving there, proof that Ullr was, at one time, worshiped. There are also some brief but tantalizing clues in the Eddas that there might indeed be an earlier cult of Ullr.

*Ullr's and all the gods'
favour shall have,
whoever first shall look to the fire;
for open will the dwelling be,
to the Æsir's sons,
when the kettles are lifted off.*

–Grimnirsmál, v. 42

*"So be it with thee, Atli!
as toward Gunnar thou hast held
the oft-sworn oaths,
formerly taken -
by the southward verging sun,
and by Sigtý's hill,
the secluded bed of rest,
and by Ullr's ring."*

–Atlakvíða, v. 30

That Ullr was mentioned with "all the gods", in a form of fire-scrying, might be a hint at an Ullr-worship that would involve *seiðr*, that most notable of Vanic magick. Ullr's ring could be a reference to an

oath-ring, which incidentally in Iceland was sworn on in the names of Frey and Njord. It could be that Ullr as Njord's brother was another oath-hearer.

Ullr, I believe, is a Vanir with Jotun ties. He is a master of hunting, which is a very Jotun skill, but rather than hunting just for the survival of the clan, it is done for sport and for commerce. The Vanir would appreciate Jotun technology that can be done for payment, and/or for a good time. What race Sif is, exactly, has been debated and will continue to be debated. Some say She is a Vanir with Her shorn hair representing the grain. Some say She is an Aesir due to Her marriage to Thor and Their daughter, Thrud, being counted as full Asa. My personal opinion is that the jury is still out. However, Her son, Ullr, who is Thor's stepson, could be regarded as a full Van, because His father might also be Njord's father (Njord having a different mother from Ullr, of course). Ullr definitely feels Vanic, not just in His domain, but in His mystery. Not too many people in Midgard feel Ullr's pull; he is all but a "forgotten God". If asked directly about Himself, Ullr tends to avoid direct questions. In this sense, He has a similar attitude to Nerthus. However, Ullr is still calling a few people who He trusts with His lessons about nature, sacred combat, and healthy masculinity.

If Njord is the God of commercial fishing (which requires some skill with techniques to catch fish), then Ullr is the God of commercial hunting as well as single-combat, which suggests He could be a patron of people involved in martial arts.

The best way to describe Frey to a Wiccan is to mention the Green God and the Horned God. However, the old texts never say directly that Frey hunts, and thus do not explain how Frey acquires an antler to use as a weapon after giving away His sword. They also don't really ever come right out and say that after Skadhi divorces Njord She ends up with Ullr, but it would be a logical assumption considering their similarities, and if in fact Ullr is Njord's brother it would make even more sense. My UPG about Skadhi involves Her taking Frey hunting, and I believe They go with Ullr.

FREYJA AND FREYR

by Ayla Wolffe

(The following article, concerning Frey and Freyja's relationship, was written by a modern-day gydhia of Freyja and a very good real-life friend of mine.)

The relationship between Freyr and Freyja is both complex and very simple. You can reduce it to the sentence — Freyr and Freyja are sister and brother — and leave it at that, or you can put it under a microscope. Some Heathens will tell you that Freyr and Freyja are in fact Twins; literature does not support this if you look strictly at the Eddas, but the UPG of a large number of existing Heathens today has come together in such a way as to validate this.

The term UPG stands for Unverifiable Personal Gnosis. What this means is an experience through personal revelation — by dream, direct contact, vision or inspiration — that a certain thing is so. When enough individuals have the same UPG, this falls into the public arena and becomes accepted as fact. We believe this may well have been true just as much so in times past as it is today. Now you may be wondering why it is that I am starting out here as anywhere, but the fact is that what people perceive is very important when it comes to their Gods. This is especially true for Freyr and Freyja, whose worship has traveled to many other spiritual groups, which has colored the accessible information as well as the overt impression that folks have of them. Much of the information available is slanted in one way or another, which is why this piece is being written.

Not too long ago I had someone come to me and ask me what the relationship between Freyr and Freyja really was. I asked them what they thought it was, and they responded that they had read that Freyr was married to Freyja. Now, as you may or may not guess, I about flipped my wig. Luckily this consultation was going on via chat and they were not able to see

exactly how shocked I was. So I told them no, that Freyja is Freyr's sister and Gerd is his wife. At that point this individual told me that they had heard that too; in fact, they had heard that not only was Freyr married to Gerd and to Freyja but also to Skadhi, and that they had no idea what was actually true, at which point I asked if they had indeed read *Skirnismal*. The individual in question didn't know what *Skirnismal* was. I asked if they had a copy of the Elder Edda (also known as the Poetic Edda) and they said no. We then went to <http://www.sacred-texts.com> where you can find the Poetic Edda online (as well as several sagas and the *Kalevala*.) I was interested in getting this individual to some form of actual literature and not just something he could find on a personal site, or hearsay stories.

Now I'm going to tell you how I see things between Freyr and Freyja, and to a certain extent among the Vanir as a whole. I do not think that Freyr and Freyja are necessarily twins, though they embody twin principles, and this is what confuses people quite a bit. The idea is that a masculine principle and a feminine principle bring to bear the differing parts of the right to rule within a society by showing different aspects of what is needed to treat people in a gracious manner. This is why their names each equal out to Lord and Lady.

Freyr is a husbandman of the people, finding their strengths and buoying up their weaknesses, giving of himself in a manner which allows them to see that he is part of the whole, yet holding himself aloof from the process. His flesh becomes a part of the land and his firm gentleness will warm the hardest aspects, making them shine. He also teaches the ways of the people and holds the knowledge of times past. This is part of what comes of being Lord of the Mound (ancestors): their knowledge descends through him and he passes it on when it is necessary. This does not denote that he inhibits necessary change, but allows it to happen in a way that is best for the people as they grow, seeing themselves as a cohesive whole rather than a mob.

He is also a defender, whether armed in traditional ways or with what is to hand. This is also a way of empowering all those who are within his realm, taking care of themselves and those they value, so that their defense is not left to someone else. He is the guardian who is less needed, and who does not impose his will unless there is ultimate need. In modern times he has become a champion of those who are depressed or disabled, by bringing his light to them and giving them a sense of purpose and joy. Though historically there is no note of this, we have lost a great deal of information about most of the Gods and so it is possible that this is a function carried forth from past to present. It would make sense, as he rides forth upon his golden boar Gullinbursti bringing out a kind of second sun, and spreading joy across the land.

Though historically the images we have of him seem to be primarily of his huge phallus, initiating the concept of him as a god of fertility first and foremost, fertility of the mind and kindling of emotion is just as important as impregnating the land. In this, the ability to bring forth the best among those who give him honor is a great attribute of Freyr. There have been many with UPG experiences of him as a God that gives great hugs, or love that is platonic and yet kindles great healing within them. I think that this is consistent. His largest act of care for his people is an act of self-sacrifice, not one of asking them to do for him.

Freyja, the feminine principle, in this case shows that she has both the ability to produce and the ability to choose why and how, something that is very valued within the Vanic pantheon. She is the Lady who gives out of her innate sense of who and what she is, showing that there is an exchange in all things in this world or any other. When she desires something, she makes an exchange for it, and that exchange leads to her journeying through many a world seeking for her husband who leaves her. As she journeys, she cries tears that fill the land with gold veins, and the lands through which she travels welcome her by

flowering in joy and becoming filled with life. Those lands she leaves behind mourn her by the wildlife and the life of the fields becoming dead until the next cycle. Freyja is a goddess of the fertile earth simply by offering up some portion of who and what she is in a continuous cycle. She finds new ways and paves new paths for people to tread. She teaches that extremes of emotion are not to be feared but embraced, and that when all is said and done you can still find a sense of self at the end of the day. Self rule is extremely important as a way of knowing Freyja.

Her ability to choose her lovers and not conform to the mores of society is very much at the heart of things as well. Though she has a husband who does not manifest more than once in legend, she has lovers throughout (Ottar, for example, whom she turns into a boar in order to find out his lineage so that he may win a contest, as per the *Poetic Edda*). She is honored enough to have guardianship over the Disir (the spirits of the female ancestors), and she receives half the slain in battle. Whether she actually fights in battle has been disputed. It is possible that they are simply given to her in tribute for the knowledge she gave Odin in regards to *seiðr*, or it is possible that she leads the Valkyries into battle herself; she has been known as the Queen of the Valkyries. At the very least, she is not known to be a woman of complete peace.

Freyja is a goddess of manifest will and magic, of finding new ways of being within the old, of giving pathways for the female spirits to come forth, and showing the essence of the independence of spirit that a woman needs in order to find her way. She is rarely displayed as crude in the execution of any of these things, but is regal and capable. This is something that modern people find hard to understand, as today many of the qualities they see displayed by her are coupled with crudeness and lack of self-control. We see, however, that this is a woman of self-possession. When others try to tell her with whom she will have congress in *Thrymskvida*, and tell her that she must marry the Jotun king Thrym, she rejoins that she will not ever have such a pairing or she would certainly be lovestruck indeed. In her stead, Thor must go dressed in bridal attire to retrieve his hammer. Though this appears to be comic, actually it proves that her judgment is always sound as to her encounters.

As her brother seems to draw those who are physically or emotionally disadvantaged to him, Freyja has of recent times seemed to draw to her followers with histories of sexual abuse. I have encountered this phenomena myself, meeting several women and a few men who were dedicated to her, and who had been through varying forms of sexual abuse. She is a goddess who is willing to teach one how to stand up for themselves, and also extends her protection as well. Though not what many would consider to be the traditional mother figure, she has the ability to teach how to say no, which is important to abuse survivors — and also when it is appropriate to fight back, and when to make peace. Again, the old texts do not give this as an attribute of Freyja; this comes from personal experience of those whom I have met, and from what I have been through myself.

In *Lokasenna*, Loki accuses Freyja of having a sexual relationship with Freyr, which no one denies.

*Loki says: "Hush thee, Freya, I full well know thee:
Thou art not free from fault:
All Aesir and alfs within this hall have lured to love with thee"*
*Freyja said: "Thy slanderous tongue, 'twill thy sorrow be,
And still work thee woe;
Wroth are the gods and the goddesses,
Thou'lt fare sadly home from hence."*

*Loki said: Hush thee Freya, a whore thou art,
 And ay wast bent on ill;
 In thy brother's bed the blessed gods caught thee,
 When, Freya, thou didst fart."
 Njorth said: "Little sin me seemeth, though beside her mate
 A wedded wife can have a lover:
 That the unclean As with us should dwell,
 I wonder, who was a woman."*

—*Lokasenna*, in the Poetic Edda, translated by Lee M. Hollander 1962

This shows that Frey and Freyja's relationship was not a relationship of shame, but common knowledge not meant to be downplayed or used for the sport of others in a bawdy way. Only the mores of society change. In my personal opinion, there is more going on here than the simple bedding of a sister and a brother. It is the sharing of the right to rule. In many societies you will see that this is often shared between siblings, or even bestowed by one sibling upon the other by right of gender, as in the Pharaonic lines of Egypt where a sister and brother were required to marry so that right of succession was in place. This, of course, causes a lot of interesting permutations. There are some indications that this might have had some bearing in the Vanic Pantheon. The God and Goddess Njord and Nerthus are said to be the father and mother of Freyr and Freyja as well as brother and sister. They were considered to be a God and Goddess of water and earth, covering most of the essential necessities of life and showing many of the qualities that we see in Freyr and Freyja, only in a grander manner.

Also, their pairing does not appear to have been permanent, as Freyr and Freyja's pairing is not permanent either. Njord is a God of the water/sea and of prosperity; he gives great gifts to those who would come to him, and he extends protection to those who ride the waves, but he is limited to his range, as he does not like that beyond the beach, the sand, the foam. An alternate pairing was tried for him with Skadhi, a mountain Jotun, who came to marry into the Aesir pantheon after the slaying of her sire. Nerthus is a bog/earth goddess, who lives upon an isle and is taken yearly upon a wain to visit the local areas and bless them with prosperity. She does not wish for her statue to be seen, so those who look upon it must be slain. She grants great good harvests, but there were many who were sacrificed to her in the bogs. Amber is often connected first with both Nerthus and her daughter Freyja. She has been likened to Nehallennia, who was a Goddess of plenty worshipped on the isle of Walcheren in Roman times (*Gods and Myths of Northern Europe* by H. R. Ellis Davidson).

It appears that sister-brother relationships among the Vanir are relationships that mirror one another, first in a sense of elemental necessity as in the Nerthus/Njord relationship, where both tend to grant similar blessings (though hers come with a greater price, it would appear). Later down the line, their children grant the blessings of joy and prosperity. Freyr does have his battle boar Gullinbursti, who he takes forth to fight battles, but this is not a regular event, whereas Freyja has her own chariot (wain) and she travels across the land searching for her lost husband, paving new ways for others to follow. She too has a beast of battle, so obviously the chariot is for regular use, or maybe ritual use like her mother's? Cyclical patterns are a necessity in order to maintain some sort of order, and a male-female balance is best because there are different ways of thinking that allow for us to initiate them.

We don't hear of any children coming from the union of Freyr and Freyja, but Freyja does have two daughters named Hnoss and Gersimi. Is it possible that Freyr has a son? Does the maintaining of names with the same first syllable mean anything? This is of course speculation as well.

The concept of the right to rule is inherent here. As a team, they stand and say: *these qualities, these responsibilities are what give the right to rule*. It is not just in a name. It is a sense of capability, so that the people have faith. The people may have many names for a deity, so many that they forget them all over time, falling back only on the default, the one that allows them the right to rule. Lord and Lady. Though as individuals they may do their jobs well, as a team they are beyond question.

In a land where it was difficult to simply *be* — individuality often went by the wayside — the tribe came first and those who marked themselves for distinction were the ones who served the tribe best. How they conducted themselves was a matter of what made all prosper, not whether they were running around having all kinds of kinky sex in the hay. If they had been doing that overmuch, they would have lost the regard of the folk and simply been that guy and girl over in the corner.

SKIRNIR

In Skirnirsmal, Skirnir says he is not an Alf ... however, some who work with him say that he is, and Skirnir told me himself that he is half-elf blooded, the son of a Ljossalf King with a human mother, which accounts for him “passing” as human. Skirnir also told me that I am related to him. I never did think much of the “otherkin” theory, since it seems to be perpetuated by maladjusted angsty teenagers who do too many role-playing-games, but it does explain a number of things.

Skirnir most famously went to Gerda on Frey’s behalf and decided to threaten Her with some magic, a combination of the natural cursing abilities of the Alfar and Vanir with some Aesic rune magic thrown in. The other thing that “we don’t like talking about” is that Skirnir was sent to fetch Gleipnir, the chain that currently binds Fenris. Skirnir does not like talking about this, and I sense a deep guilt and shame in him when it is brought up.

Unlike many of the Alfar, who like to dress flamboyantly, Skirnir (being a messenger) will wear what’s practical. That doesn’t mean he’s ever badly dressed, of course, but it does mean he doesn’t do the “fancy embroidered robe” thing. I usually can count on running across Skirnir wherever Frey happens to be at that time, although he is allowed to go back to Ljossalfheim for part of the year, to see family.

Skirnir is a trained warrior. People who think the Ljossalfar laze away the day indulging in too much food and frolic have another thing coming when they encounter Skirnir. “There’s a reason why the phrase ‘elf-shot’ is in existence,” he says with a sardonic grin. Skirnir’s preferred weapon is the sword, but he will not hesitate to combine that with magic if the situation is appropriate. Skirnir has a no-nonsense attitude about it; he sees no point in learning esoterica if it has no application to practical living. On the other hand, the Ljossalfar are very magical and it doesn’t take much thought or effort for them to do magic, especially when their entire World seems to run on it. Skirnir will teach you about using your words wisely to persuade others if you pay him the right price. Skirnir can also teach you a couple of things about defending yourself if situations get bad. Contrary to the opinion that the Vanir, being Earth-centered, would “harm none”, which by extension includes the Ljossalfar as “beings of light”, Skirnir is absolutely all about the nasty when the nasty is appropriate, and says that the Ljossalfar will only get nasty to outlanders if they feel their home is threatened ... and with their complex codes of honor, a lot of things would be perceived as threats to their home. People who just want to go to Ljossalfar to frolic with the elves like it’s Disneyland are actually being insulting, and may escape intact but with their sanity broken. The Ljossalfar may appear more civilized than any of the other races, but they have had thousands of years of wars with other beings, and have gotten very xenophobic about protecting their home, especially when they do not breed as often as the other races and Hela demands a teind from them.

Though one might think Skirnir’s service to Frey as presented in the Eddaic lay bearing His name is because Frey has so much authority and can wield it, but it goes deeper than that. Frey was given

Ljossalfheim when He cut His first tooth. He and Skirnir are roughly the same “age” (if we can think of non-humans by age, which the Gods rather find amusing), and played together. Frey values Skirnir’s friendship, and Skirnir’s service is based on trust and respect, not Frey’s authority. Skirnir could actually be referred to a second-in-command, since I have to talk to Him when Frey is walking the Helveggr at Lammastide.

Skirnir has taught me some lessons about service as it pertains to spirit-work. Many Asatruar in particular will not say they “serve” their Gods, going on to say that “serve” is a Christian concept that needs to be done away with, but service is actually based in love. You do what you can to help, out of love. Skirnir may come off as being rather dry and even a little sarcastic, but underneath it all He truly loves Frey as a brother, and Frey’s folk by extension. He can be called upon to send a message to Frey if the Golden One is “unreachable” at the moment. He is not just Frey’s servant, but his advisor, his eyes and ears in the Worlds, for he combines Ljossalf and human blood and has a vested interest in both Ljossalfheim and Midgard.

BYGGVIR AND BEYLA

The scholarly consensus is that Byggvir and Beyla are Frey’s servants, and that Byggvir possibly means “barley”, and Beyla means “bee”. Whether these two names translate exactly or not, a common UPG is that they are an Alf couple who travel with Frey and are in charge of taking care of His household.

Byggvir spake:

43. “Had I birth so famous | as Ingunar-Freyr,
And sat in so lofty a seat,
I would crush to marrow | this croaker of ill,
And beat all his body to bits.”

Loki spake:

44. “What little creature | goes crawling there,
Snuffling and snapping about?
At Freyr’s ears ever | wilt thou be found,
Or muttering hard at the mill.”

The reference to “the mill” would further give credence to Byggvir’s name as a cognate for grain. Spirit-workers have seen Byggvir in charge of the World-Mill, one of Frey’s treasures, and I can confirm this from my own experience. Byggvir likes taking care of Frey’s farms (everywhere Frey has a home, it is a farm) and is a rather down-to-earth kind of guy. You see that his “had I birth so famous” is pretty modest, and yes, Byggvir is actually like that. He sees himself as a simple farmer, doing his job for the love of the work.

Byggvir spake:

45. “Byggvir my name, | and nimble am I,
As gods and men do grant;
And here am I proud | that the children of Hropt
Together all drink ale.”

Frey’s desire to keep frith extends to His “entourage” as well.

Loki spake:

46. “Be silent, Byggvir! | thou never couldst set
Their shares of the meat for men;
Hid in straw on the floor, | they found thee not
When heroes were fain to fight.”

Beyla spake:

*“The mountains shake, | and surely I think
From his home comes Hlorrithi now;
He will silence the man | who is slandering here
Together both gods and men.”*

Loki spake:

*“Be silent, Beyla! | thou art Byggvir’s wife,
And deep art thou steeped in sin;
A greater shame | to the gods came ne’er,
Befouled thou art with thy filth.”*

–Lokasenna, v. 55-56

Beyla is another farmhand, and the “filth” does not refer to sexual proclivities (as one might assume), but being a dirty farmgirl, which was a shameful thing to the higher classes. Beyla doesn’t think badly of herself, though, as she takes pride in milking cows and keeping bees (the phrase “milk and honey” is found all over the planet as a metaphor for wealth).

Beyla and Byggvir work together on Frey’s farm, and though not Deities per se, you can still call upon them if you own a farm that specializes in grain production, cattle, and/or bees, or for luck in brewing. They are also receptive to couples who are trying to work together to get something accomplished, particularly if the work is of a larger scope. Byggvir is very friendly and accommodating, Beyla a little less so, out of shyness more than anything, but both are receptive to offerings, especially whole-wheat flour and honey. They are a prime example of a couple who are truly a team, and whose work together is not just for their own livelihood, but to feed and bless the Nine Worlds.

GERDA

Skirnirsmal is the only lay in all of the Eddas where Frey is the primary subject, and even here the focus shifts from Him to the wooing of Gerda. This is significant, because it means that for all the lore that’s been lost or destroyed, Frey’s love for Gerda must have been considered so important that it was kept all this time. I believe that Frey, as a God who bestows peace as well as good seasons, is about community and bonds with others, and could not have this domain if He were not receiving support in a bond Himself. However, *Skirnirsmal* is easy to misunderstand, so I have provided a line-by-line interpretation here. (The translation used for all references to *Skirnirsmal* in this book is Bellows.)

Skirnirsmal:

Freyr, the son of Njorth, had sat one day in Hlithskjolf, and looked over all the worlds.

Hlithskjolf was the High Seat of Odin. The High Seat was traditionally used in the practice of *seiðr*, which was a practice taught to the Aesir by the Vanir. Whilst we usually connect *seiðr* with Freyja Vanadis, it is clear that Her brother Frey was an adept at this as well.

*He looked into Jotunheim, and saw there a fair maiden, as she went from her father’s bouse to her bower. Forthwith
he felt a mighty love-sickness.*

This can be differentiated from teenage “puppy love”, as in many translations this is given as “deep depression”. Frey was probably so distracted by thoughts of His love that He could not function.

Skirnir was the name of Freyr's servant;

...meaning “the shining one” — more proof that Skirnir might be of the Alfar.

Njorth bade him ask speech of Freyr. He said:

1. “Go now, Skirnir! and seek to gain
Speech from my son;
And answer to win, for whom the wise one
Is mightily moved.”

This suggests that Frey holds Skirnir as a confidante and good friend, not merely a personal attendant.

Skirnir spake:

2. “Ill words do I now await from thy son,
If I seek to get speech with him,
And answer to win, for whom the wise one
Is mightily moved.”

This suggests that Frey has exhibited anger in the past, and Skirnir, knowing Frey well, suspects this is the case again and doesn't want to bear the brunt of it.

Skirnir spake:

3. “Speak prithee, Freyr, foremost of the gods,
For now I fain would know;
Why sittest thou here in the wide halls,
Days long, my prince, alone?”

Frey being addressed as “foremost of the Gods” (in other translations as *Drighthen*) places Him at a level of importance not usually thought of in the heavily Odinic texts; however, we know He was the most revered God in Sweden, and it could well be that the priestly functions alluded to in *Ynglinga Saga* and His judgment seat in the Prose Edda, attest to a more important role than one would normally think of.

Freyr spake:

4. “How shall I tell thee, thou hero young,

...attests to Skirnir's nobility and honor.

*Of all my grief so great?
Though every day the elfbeam dawns,
It lights my longing never.”*

The “elfbeam” is a kenning for Sunna, the Sun, and this verse shows how deep Frey is in sorrow for not having His love at His side.

Skirnir spake:

5. “Thy longings, methinks, are not so large
That thou mayst not tell them to me;
Since in days of yore we were young together,
We two might each other trust.”

Again, Skirnir is not just Frey's servant, but a trusted childhood friend, probably His best friend.

Freyr spake:

6. *“From Gyimir’s house I beheld go forth
A maiden dear to me;
Her arms glittered, and from their gleam
Shone all the sea and sky.*

This is sometimes rendered as Gerda’s arms being “white”, however, I think this has less to do with whiteness as skin color, and the best translation is that when Frey saw Gerda from the High Seat He saw Her inner light going out to light up the whole world.

7. *“To me more dear than in days of old
Was ever maiden to man;*

Frey has had a lot of lovers. He loves women. Loooooooooves the women.

*But no one of gods or elves will grant
That we both together should be.”*

A union between a hostage of the Aesir and a Jotun is strictly “verboden”, as the Jotnar are seen as being hostile active enemies of the Aesir. The elves, also, find etins distasteful (to say the least) and would protest if their Lord would marry one.

Skirnir spake:

8. *“Then give me the horse that goes through the dark
And magic flickering flames;
And the sword as well that fights of itself
Against the giants grim.”*

Freyr spake:

9. *“The horse will I give thee that goes through the dark
And magic flickering flames,
And the sword as well that will fight of itself
If a worthy hero wields it.”*

This confirms Frey’s connection with horses as well as His warrior aspect. Such a special sword would not be entrusted to just Anybody; Frey would have to prove Himself worthy with fighting skills. He was involved in the war between the Aesir and Vanir, and His parents — Njord who cut off Mimir’s head with an ax, Nerthus who had Her slaves drowned — were a bloodthirsty lot.

Skirnir spake to the horse:

10. *“Dark is it without, and I deem it time
To fare through the wild fells,
(To fare through the giants’ fastness;)
We shall both come back, or us both together
The terrible giant will take.”*

Skirnir speaks to horses, and probably to other animals as well. The Ljossalfar, and those with their blood, are known to be especially good with communicating with domesticated animals (as opposed to wild, feral animals).

Skirnir rode into Jotunheim to Gyimir’s house. There were fierce dogs bound before the gate of the fence which was

around Gerth's hall. He rode to where a herdsman sat on a hill, and said:

11. "Tell me, herdsman, sitting on the hill,
And watching all the ways,
How may I win a word with the maid
Past the bounds of Gyimir here?"

If Jotunheim was indeed a wasteland, there would be no herdsmen. This also confirms that Jotunheim has its own form of agriculture.

The herdsman spake:

12. "Art thou doomed to die or already dead,
Thou horseman that ridest hither?
Barred from speech shalt thou ever be
With Gyimir's daughter good."

The herdsman, being of Jotun blood, can "smell" that Skirnir is an "other", and based on past experiences with "others", is suspicious and knows Gyimir's household will be even more so.

Skirnir spake:

13. "Boldness is better than complaints can be
For him whose feet must fare;
To a destined day has mine age been doomed,
And my life's span thereto laid."

Which suggests Skirnir is a seer of some kind, and is part of the Vanic *seiðr* tradition, nor is he afraid of a little conflict.

Gerth spake:

14. "What noise is that which now so loud
I bear within our house?
The ground shakes, and the home of Gyimir
Around me trembles too."

Making quite the entrance.

The Serving-Maid spake:

15. "One stands without who has leapt from his steed,
And lets his horse loose to graze;"...

Gerth spake:

16. "Bid the man come in, and drink good mead
Here within our hall;
Though this I fear, that there without
My brother's slayer stands.

It says in the Prose Edda that Frey kills Beli with an antler, but could have done so with His bare hands. Because Frey is set to stand against Surt at Ragnarok, we know Beli and Surt are not the same Being. Beli is Gerda's brother.

17. "Art thou of the elves or the offspring of gods,
Or of the wise Wanæs?
How camest thou alone through the leaping flame

Thus to behold our home?"

Jotun protection magic, working with the elements to ward a stead.

Skirnir spake:

18. *"I am not of the elves, nor the offspring of gods,
Nor of the wise Wanegs;*

It is the UPG of several people that Skirnir is of Alfar blood, although this would contradict what is written: my own personal UPG (talking to Skirnir Himself) says that Skirnir is only half-Alfar, being also half-human, thus allowing Him to say this and not be lying. (His mother is human, which makes Him for all effective purposes a human.)

*Though I came alone through the leaping flame
Thus to behold thy home.
19. "Eleven apples, all of gold,
Here will I give thee, Gerth,
To buy thy troth that Freyr shall be
Deemed to be dearest to you."*

Idunna's apples, the apples that keep the Gods healthy and full of life-vigor. Since this is a gift directly from Frey, it means that Frey is offering Gerda a chance to partake of Divine health and immortality.

Gerth spake:

20. *"I will not take at any man's wish
These eleven apples ever;
Nor shall Freyr and I one dwelling find
So long as we two live."*

Gerda, in Jotun pride, will not let Herself be bought to wed a man She does not know.

Skirnir spake:

21. *"Then do I bring thee the ring that was burned
Of old with Othin's son;
From it do eight of like weight fall
On every ninth night."*

This ring carries magic, a connection with royalty and kingship, as well as (inferred) power over death. Again, a gift from Frey to Gerda, of much power.

Gerth spake:

22. *"The ring I wish not, though burned it was
Of old with Othin's son;
In Gyimir's home is no lack of gold
In the wealth my father wields."*

Again, Gerda refuses to sell Herself, and points out that Her family is well-off (which if all the Jotnar were barbarians like some think, this would not be possible; they would have no use or appreciation for gold or wealth).

Skirnir spake:

23. “Seest thou, maiden, this keen, bright sword
That I hold here in my hand?
Thy head from thy neck shall I straightway bend,
If thou wilt not do my will.”

Skirnir, getting insulted on Frey’s behalf, resorts to threats of violence.

Gerth spake:

24. “For no man’s sake will I ever suffer
To be thus moved by might;
But gladly, methinks, will Gyimir seek
To fight if he finds thee here.”

I want to shout “You go, Gerda!” when I read this. As much as I love Frey, this proves that Gerda is a strong woman, and is not afraid of threats.

Skirnir spake:

25. “Seest thou, maiden, this keen, bright sword
That I hold here in my hand?
Before its blade the old giant bends -
Thy father is doomed to die.

And Skirnir wouldn’t hesitate to cut off Gyimir’s head if provoked.

26. “I strike thee, maid, with my magic staff,
To tame thee to work my will;

A magic staff was a common implement of *seiðr*-workers — again, no surprise considering whom Skirnir works for.

*There shalt thou go where never again
The sons of men shall see thee.*

“The sons of men shall see thee” suggests that Gerda might (probably) have been known to some humans as a Goddess in Her own right.

27. “On the eagle’s bill shalt thou ever sit,
And gaze on the gates of Hel;
More loathsome to thee than the light-hued snake
To men, shall thy meat become.

A curse to make Gerda “living dead” and take away Her pleasures for food (something etins rather enjoy).

28. “Fearful to see, if thou comest forth,
Hrinnir will stand and stare,
(Men will marvel at thee;)

A curse of fearful appearance, ugliness.

More famed shalt thou grow than the watchman of the gods!

Heimdall.

Peer forth, then, from thy prison,

Binding Gerda, both physically and mentally.

*29. "Rage and longing, fetters and wrath,
Tears and torment are thine;
Where thou sittest down my doom is on thee
Of heavy heart
And double dole.*

A curse to bring Gerda emotional instability, madness.

*30. "In the giants' home shall vile things harm thee
Each day with evil deeds;
Grief shalt thou get instead of gladness,
And sorrow to suffer with tears.*

A curse to bring Gerda traumatic experiences that torture Her further.

31. "With three-beaded giants thou shalt dwell ever,

And they exist, in the Iron Wood...

Or never know a husband;

...for rejecting Frey's offer of love and loyalty...

*(Let longing grip thee, let wasting waste thee, —)
Be like to the thistle that in the loft
Was cast and there was crushed.*

A curse that would effectively crush Gerda, and shut Her down.

*32. "I go to the wood, and to the wet forest,
To win a magic wand;...
I won a magic wand.*

Skirnir's staff, which He chose from a part of a living tree.

*33. "Othin grows angry, angered is the best of the gods,
Freyr shall be thy foe,*

—which suggests (as many spirit-workers think) that Frey and Odin have a close bond and work together often for common ends.

*Most evil maid, who the magic wrath
Of gods hast got for thyself.*

34. *“Give heed, frost-rulers, hear it, giants.
Sons of Suttung,
And gods, ye too,
How I forbid and how I ban
The meeting of men with the maid,
(The joy of men with the maid.)*

Condemning Her to a life of celibacy.

35. *“Hrimgrinnir is he, the giant who shall have thee
In the depth by the doors of Hel;
To the frost-giants’ halls each day shalt thou fare,
Crawling and craving in vain,
(Crawling and having no hope.)*

This totally throws the theory of the scholars — that Gerda is a frost-giant and this is a mere “seasonal” myth — back into their faces. If Gerda was indeed a frost-giant She would not need to “fare” to their halls, nor would it be so intolerable for Her there.

36. *“Base wretches there by the root of the tree
Will hold for thee horns of filth;
A fairer drink shalt thou never find,
Maid, to meet thy wish,
(Maid, to meet my wish.)*

Probably slovenly and nasty-mannered servants, offering Her a scatophic drink.

37. *“I write thee a charm and three runes therewith,
Longing and madness and lust;*

In the Old Norse, one of these words is *ergi*, which will have different meaning for a woman than for a man, but seems to be a word that connotes a genderbending sexual practice, being “bottom” for a man and “sexually aggressive” for a woman. The “three runes” are usually translated as the Thurisaz rune, to correspond with the three-headed “thurs” mentioned above.

*But what I have writ I may yet unwrite
If I find a need therefor.”*

Skirnir had not in fact made the curse yet; He was merely leveling a threat of what would or could happen if Gerda refused.

*Gerth spake:
38. “Find welcome rather, and with it take
The frost-cup filled with mead;
Though I did not believe that I should so love
Ever one of the Wanæs.”*

It is debated whether or not Gerda succumbed out of fear. I am inclined not to believe so. Gerda is a giant, and was not afraid of Skirnir’s threats to sever Her head made earlier. Because magic is well-known to the giants — Gymir warded His home with a ring of fire, and for that matter the Jotnar have Angrboda on their side — I don’t think Gerda would be trembling in fear from Skirnir’s threat of a curse, especially

because He gave fair warning. Gerda probably decided to “comply” so a fight didn’t break out in Her home and start a war.

Skirnir spake:

39. “My tidings all must I truly learn
Ere homeward hence I ride:
How soon thou wilt with the mighty son
Of Njorth a meeting make.”

Gerth spake:

40. Barri there is, which we both know well,
A forest fair and still;
And nine nights hence the son of Njord
Will Gerth there grant delight.”

Some translate “Barri” as “barren”; I did some research. Barri is called a grove (*lundr*) but Bar(r)ey is probably an island (*ey* being the Old Norse for “island”) and could be connected with Barra, one of the Hebrides islands, which was once called Barrey. The meaning of the first part of the name, *barr*, is not very enlightening for it has several meanings: “pine needle”, “conifer”, “tree” or “grain”, especially “barley”. “Grant delight”, of course, refers to the consummation of the relationship.

Then Skirnir rode home. Freyr stood without, and spoke to him, and asked for tidings:

41. “Tell me, Skimir, ere thou take off the saddle,
Or farest forward a step:
What hast thou done in the giants’ dwelling
To make glad thee or me?”

Skirnir spoke:

42. “Barri there is, which we both know well,
A forest fair and still;
And nine nights hence to the son of Njorth
Will Gerth there grant delight.”

The number nine is always significant in Norse mythology, most famously as the number of nights Odin spent on Yggdrasil during His ordeal. Nine nights is long enough for the bride and groom to prepare spiritually, mentally, and physically for their union.

Freyr spake:

43. “Long is one night, longer are two;
How then shall I bear three?
Often to me has a month seemed less
Than now half a night of desire.”

Frey is still love-sick for Gerda and cannot wait to be with Her.

In sum: there are many Heathens who will not honor Gerda, as a “hostile etin” and thus “unworthy of worship”, and I’ve had people tell me Gerda doesn’t even love Frey. I think that this is a mistake. Gerda would not allow anyone to “force” Her to stay with Frey. In fact, there is no mention in any of the texts that Gerda divorces Frey, and the option is certainly there as Skadhi was the one to divorce Njord. I think if Gerda had divorced Frey, there would have been some mention of it, considering that *Skirnirsmal* was considered important enough to keep in the *Poetic Edda* all that time. Therefore we can assume that Gerda

has remained with Frey after Their meeting in Barri, and I don't think, logically speaking, Her heart would remain cold to Frey's passionate love for Her, nor would Her body be left unsatisfied by His gorgeous cock. I "know" from having spoken with Gerda myself that She and Frey are very much together and very much in love. Other people have encountered Frey and Gerda in a very personal way and can vouch for this as well. I don't know why a Being who loves Frey, who gives comfort and support necessary to His Godship, would not be worthy of worship in Her own right. Gerda's love of Frey is necessary for Him to keep giving His light, His vitality that gives life to the Worlds. Frey loves Gerda for the light She possesses within Herself, that made "all the sea and sky" light up with Her radiance.

There are some who write this story off as a seasonal myth, or of the masculine connecting with the inner feminine. I believe both are accurate, but do not present the whole picture. Sure, Frey's marriage is the God of agriculture wedding a Goddess who is imbued with the power of the Earth. I do think there are elements of a fertility rite: a Van wedding a Jotun, and thus "plowing the field", sowing seed. Anyone who has any knowledge of agriculture will tell you soil conditions must be right to grow crops. I also believe it is good for people to find love, and build lasting relationships, and "people" extends to Gods. Gods need love too, and Skirnir's threatened curse of Gerda was to let Her know that denying Frey would be denying the pleasure and joy found in a full life. To deny what Frey represents is to cut yourself off from being fully alive.

I also think there are deeper elements to the story. Frey's intermarriage with a Jotun is building a "bridge" to remind everyone of where they came from, and how it has helped them to get to the next level. It also serves as an example of frith-building. Frey is of the Vanir, hostaged to the Aesir, ruler of Ljossalfheim, given gifts made by Duergar. By His marriage to a giantess, He is connecting to all races as an example of not just tolerance but acceptance.

It is worth noting that Frey and Gerda have no children. In *Ynglinga Saga*, They are mentioned as having a child named Fjolnir, but this is a human king of Sweden, and They have informed me this was someone They adopted, not an actual pregnancy and birth. Gerda will work with women who are childfree for one reason or the other, but She also seems to have a desire to reach out to women who are in crisis, such as battered women and rape survivors.

Gerda and Frey are a nice complement to each other. Frey is a farming God, and we can tell Gerda is a garden Goddess from sources beyond people's UPG. The etymology of Gerda's name comes from Proto-Germanic (*garda-ꝛ, *gardi-ꝛ, *girdj; *gurdian-vb., *gurda-ꝛ, *gurdila-ꝛ). In Old English the name is rendered as *geard* (enclosure, enclosed place, yard, garden, court, dwelling, home, region, land). She is thus seen as the Goddess of the *innangard*, brought from the *utgard* by Her marriage to Frey. Gerda likes small walled gardens, and She has pointed out to me how gardening can be a meditative experience in itself, good for mental and physical health. Frey is all shiny and happy, and Gerda comes off as more solemn, but Frey brings smiles to Gerda's face, and laughter to Her heart, and Gerda's hugging arms console Frey when He feels the Universal Sorrow for the struggles of the Nine Worlds. The two like working together with people who are deeply in despair. Frey will give the more obvious light, whilst Gerda will "root" and stabilize you.

During Yule 2007 I oathed myself to Gerda as my patron Goddess, which does not detract from my relationship with Frey, but adds to it. Frey is my patron full stop. I make herbal tea for Her sometimes, and share it with Her. She is also partial to herbs burned as incense, and planting an organic herb and vegetable garden in Frey and Gerda's honor is a forthcoming task of mine for summer 2008. Gerda is not the most talkative Goddess in the world (especially compared to the more "flamboyant" ones such as Freyja), however, when She talks, it behooves one to listen, because She's saying something important. She carefully chooses Her words for maximum impact.

There is not much I can say regarding the intimate details of Frey and Gerda's relationship: I have seen many interactions between Them, and have also been asked by Gerda to keep most details private, However, She has allowed me to share this much: As Frey saw the light within Gerda that lit up the Nine Worlds, so Gerda sees the rare moments when Frey is dark because He is racked with pain for the burdens

of the Nine Worlds. Gerda's darkness — Her closeness to the Earth, Her quiet nature — gives rest to Frey's light, and Gerda's light — those rare moments when She "turns the world on with Her smile", Her hearty laughter, Her random bursts of affection — gives light to Frey. I made an Ing pendant where half was purple for darkness, and half was yellow for light, and the yellow bit had half the Ing in purple, and the purple bit had half the Ing in yellow. I received this in one of those flashes of inspiration that oft hits Aquarians, and yes, it is rather like a yin-yang. They are opposites, yet They contain pieces of the opposite to link together and become the whole. Frey is not just a patron of marriage, but a patron of something akin to Tantra: wholeness with the Beloved through affection and ecstasy. Truly, the gift for a gift of the Giefu rune turned inside out and amplified to its highest degree.

It goes without saying that Frey has a relationship with every Being in the Nine Worlds, for better or for worse, but for me to go into much detail here would take too much time. I hope by understanding more about the Beings who Frey loves most, you will know more about Frey Himself.

Getting to Know Gerda

Sigrún Freyskona.

As I mentioned in the section "Beloved of Frey", I took an oath to Gerda on December 23, 2007, during the Yuletide, as my patron Goddess. This was not something entered into lightly: I had been working with Her intensively for slightly less than a year, and I had asked Her beforehand if this was something She wanted from me. She let me know that it was, but that oath would come with a *geas*. This translates to a condition, usually forbidding or compelling someone to do very specific actions, rather like a taboo. The *geas* that Gerda made of me to have Her as a patron was loyalty to the Jotnar. I am expressly forbidden to join any group or organization that not only will not welcome Gerda, but will also shun and revile Her Jotun kin. This of course includes, by extension, Ran and Aegir and their daughters, and Loki's family, who are seen as unworthy of worship by most Heathens. Since my "Heathen career" had already been taking a tailspin, I accepted this *geas* and made my oath.

What I did not realize was how extensive the *geas* was: I was co-organizer of my local Asatru Meetup, and my other half and I put the Meetup on indefinite hiatus due to the Jotun-hating attitudes of local Heathens. This was something we were both invested in, and frustrated over waning enthusiasm and attendance in direct proportion to increasing drama. However, this was just the tip of what the *geas* involved. I am realizing that unfriendly attitudes towards etins, based on etins being etins, usually comes hand in hand with racism, homophobia/transphobia, or some other kind of -ism or -phobia that encourages people to be nasty to each other on the basis of things that cannot be changed, rather than deeds themselves. There are a number of people I do not like, and a diverse assortment of such. However, I see it as pointless to dislike and avoid people on the basis of anything other than deeds ... and so my *geas* to Gerda's kin has extended to those humans who most Heathens would also disapprove of: the "not genetically pure", or the queer, the disabled, the poor, etc.

In getting to know Gerda, I have found Her to be appreciative of my loyalty, and She has shown me a loyalty of Her own. I don't feel like I'm in competition with Her for Frey's affections. For one thing, there is more than enough of Him to go around, and if He focused all of His attention on me I'd likely be dead, or at least not able to walk. Seriously, I feel that as I am a human wed to a Deity, my love for Frey can only extend so far, and I don't begrudge Him Gerda's love. I see it as necessary. I have come to love Gerda and call Her my "sister-wife". I have had some valuable visions about Her relationship with Frey, most of which I will not speak of because She is a very private Goddess, very much unlike Freyja, who is more flamboyant.

Gerda's quiet is not based so much in shyness as it is in dignity; She feels that only fools talk to hear themselves talk, and that words should be reserved for something of meaning. Much more can be conveyed in body language, or a touch, or just noticing something, than actually speaking. Gerda's modesty in attire is also based in Her attitude that there is more to Her than Her body — there is a mind full of wisdom that should be known and explored, and then only for those who are worthy. Frey would say that it is Her modesty that tickles His imagination (for a very overtly sexual Deity, He seems to be more aroused by the tasteful beauty of modesty than anything “slutty”), but then I can't get much into detail about the intimate side of Their relationship, just that it is very beautiful to behold.

What I am allowed, per Gerda, to discuss regarding Their relationship is that Frey's vision on Hlidskjalf was of the light within Her soul, Her essence being almost blinding in its brightness. Frey knew that He had to have it, that She would complete Him — and Their entire exchange of love is based on an exchange of light and darkness. Frey is a Light-Bringer, and filled with light of His own, but He needs a continual source, and Gerda is His light (rather like Sigyn is the innocent joy to Loki that inspires His humor and playfulness). Her support of Him in Her quiet dignity, with meaningful words and even more meaningful touch, is what keeps Frey going. On those rare instances that Her calm cool exterior is broken to flash a smile or break out in wild laughter, Frey feels most alive, and is able to take the love between Them and give it to the committed lovers of Midgard. Gerda also sees the moments that very few humans are ever able to see: Frey filled with pain, weeping, seeing the struggles of people in Midgard, and the senseless wars between the Jotnar and Aesir. Frey wants so very badly for everyone to have a good quality of life, and He takes it personally if there is suffering. Gerda's embrace gives Him solace, and gives Him the darkness He needs for His light to rest and regenerate.

When Frey gave His sword to Gerda's family, both were aware of the costs involved: that if it should come to Ragnarok, the lines are already drawn and Frey will not survive. However, They also understand Ragnarok to be just a prophecy, and the course can change. Frey giving up His sword was the manifestation of the desire to end the fighting and hostilities between the Jotnar and Aesir, and to try to weave frith between the two tribes, rather than continue the fighting. And so Frey tries to teach the people of Midgard about tolerance and acceptance, and Gerda does also for those few who actually pay Her any heed in the 21st century. Some groups may honor Gerda and Frey's courtship around the time of the Charming of the Plow, but many groups are influenced by Rydberg's view that Gerda “bewitched” Frey with “evil seidhr”, and the two would find this to be hilarious if it were not such a widespread belief.

I feel that it is impossible to honor Frey without understanding the Goddess who owns His heart, who compelled Him to “sell out” the fate of the Aesir by giving up the most powerful sword in the Nine Worlds. Gerda is not easy to get to know, not in small part due to the hostility shown Her by Heathens. She's proud enough that She will not go where She is unwelcome, and quite a few Heathens who would honor Frey and scorn Gerda seem, as I have personally witnessed, to have troubles enough in their marriages and with their homes after awhile. However, even once you get your mind around the concept that Jotun does not necessarily mean evil, Gerda is a reserved lady. It took me months to start having conversations with Her and even then She was not exactly verbose.

Most of Her gifts to me have come in seeing Frey from Her perspective, or suggestions She has given in my human relationship. Just as Gerda spends part of the year in Ljossalheim to be with Frey where She is most certainly not welcome, I have moved 3000 miles away from everything I've known to be with Eosin, and a year-and-change later, I am still not adjusted to Southern California weather or culture. There have admittedly been times when as much as I love Eosin, I have thought about moving back to Connecticut just for the sake of my sanity, and that is when Gerda has stepped in and told me that love is not just something you feel, it is something you do, and sometimes you have to do it even when there is major sacrifice to be made. If Gerda can be among the Ljossalfar, I can certainly tolerate Southern California.

However, She has also taught me a bit about working with plant spirits, and the act of working the soil to be a grounding experience, and noticing the subtle growth of herbs and other garden plants as a

mindfulness exercise. To notice the small details is to notice the health and well-being of a person or situation, when so many are focused on the bigger picture and their castles may fall apart due to the weakness of a few bricks. I have had visions of Gerda being something akin to the archetypal hedgewitch, working in Her enclosed garden, communing with the plant spirits, singing to them, and being rather solitary — and fond of being solitary — but open to those who could earn Her trust with these secrets. In a way, Gerda's solitary and wise connection to the Green World is what inspired me to call myself a hedgewitch. That, and some quirks of my personality and life situation.

Gerda's biggest blessing to me is one She and Frey worked together, which was answering one of my prayers. I made a promise that if They gave us a home of our own (as opposed to our small apartment), I would give Frey a shrine or even a temple, and plant a garden in Gerda's honor. A week later the wheels began moving to get our own home, and we are planning on moving into our new place this spring, with which I will have a ritual room for Frey and the other Gods, and a garden of herbs and vegetables as a devotional practice to them both. (I may even have a small orange tree, Gods willing.) This all happened much sooner than I ever could have hoped, and I feel like They really do love me and my partner both, and are giving "a gift for a gift", love for love.

As a more "indoor" devotional practice to Gerda, I crafted a prayer bead necklace to wear, and pray with while I meditate on what She means to me, Frey, and the Worlds. I found a pendant at a local bead shop, bronze, the flowery and leafy head of a woman, that I instantly felt screamed "Gerda!" in the back of my head. I used a combination of smoky quartz, amethyst, bloodstone, and garnet beads on my own necklace to Gerda, and here are the prayers for the necklace, which is simple but is meant as a consciousness-altering Work that is sufficient to meditate upon Gerda, and connect with Her.

Pendant: Hail to Gerda, my beloved patron Goddess, help me to own the Goddess nature within myself, to honor that which is sacred within my being.

Smoky quartz: Hail to Gerda, secret in the shadows of Your walled garden, teach me to know the wisdom that is hidden and not easily found.

Amethyst: Hail to Gerda, who sees seed to root, root to bud, bud to bloom, teach me to pay attention to transitions.

Garnet: Hail to Gerda, who is fierce in loyalty and love shown by deeds rather than words, teach me to be love and do love rather than simply feeling love, for Frey, for my beloved, and those worthy of my love.

Bloodstone: Hail to Gerda, content to commune with vibrant plants rather than shallow people, reserved in dignity of knowledge of self-worth, and the worth of knowledge, teach me to guard my own wisdom and share with only those who are worthy and wise.

I don't expect my UPG to be accepted as valid by all or most people. However, if what little bit I can share regarding my relationship with Gerda can help the open-minded to open up to Her and be worthy of Her wisdom and the power She has in connection to the Green World, I feel that I have done my task. This is a devotional to Frey, but just as Frey is not complete without His Gerda, this book is not complete without a place to honor Her, and so it is here.



Gifts of the Golden God: Experiencing Frey

The following are essays about people's personal dealings with Frey. Not everyone here has Frey as a patron or even a primary Deity, but all of these people have been touched, in one form or another, by Frey's golden glow, and when I asked (nicely) for contributions, they came forth. You will see a diversity of background and thought here, but all of these contributions that I have included are sincere, and written to honor Frey, in appreciation for His influence in their lives. Enjoy.



My Personal Encounter of First Meeting Freyr

Fálki

The winter snow and bitterly cold winds are blowing outside of my bedroom window. It's not only icy cold outside, but it's also icy cold in my own inner world as well. All is wintry gray there, and I stand nearby an equally icy and gray ocean coastline as well. My heart is completely frozen and encased in ice. I don't want to feel anything. I haven't wanted to feel anything for a while now, for the sake of my own personal survival.

I haven't been happy here in Fort Collins. Why did I ever leave Japan, and the wonderful and exciting life that I had there? Why did I leave behind Yuki? Yuki ... my heart had really hurt badly from that painful loss. I know intellectually that it is still hurting, but I don't want to feel anything — the winter ice will keep me safe and protected from all of that.

I don't want to feel. I don't want to live, either. I just want the pain to end. I just want to end, period. Myself. My life. All of it.

Then ... He came walking towards me. Freyr.

He was beautiful ... radiant ... warm and shining. Where He stepped, winter turned to springtime, cold gray to warm gold and living green and new life. He's still stepping towards me, yet closer and closer to me still ... "No! Keep away from me! I don't want spring. I don't want life. I don't want to feel anything! Keep away from me!"

He wouldn't listen. He didn't stop walking closer and yet closer to me, in spite of my best attempts to keep Him away and at bay. And then He finally stood in front of me, and plunged His hand right through and into my chest. I gasped as I literally felt His hand move around my internal organs, before finally cupping around my ice-encrusted heart.

Feel, Freyr told me. Remember. Love. And live.

And I did feel ... all of the pain and sadness which I had long kept locked away in the ice ... no ice any more ... nothing to protect me any more from the grief that I had fought so hard to avoid.

And the ice is melting ... and I can't stop it ... I can't stop it....

And with the melting came my tears. Many, many tears which had long been frozen and which I had never wanted to ever shed. Yet I can no longer hold them back, just as a frozen river can no longer hold itself back once springtime finally arrives. My tears kept falling and gathered together to form a frozen goblet of ice in my hands. When I finally could cry no longer, Freyr then took the goblet from my hands — and within His own hands it transformed into shining gold. Drink deeply, Freyr told me. And I did so, and I no longer felt iciness or grief. I felt instead the promise of new life, of warm sunshine and new beginnings and love, radiating within me as I now drank from His golden goblet. And I felt deep, deep love from that drink as well.

Freyr smiled warmly at me. I am your patron God, He told me. You are now my son, and I love you. And you are now to leave behind Wicca and to walk the path of Ásatrú.

I was changed from that vision, and I shared it later with my friends in Margvegr. "Freyr, huh? Why am I not surprised?" Audthryth chimed in. And so later that year on the night of Yule, I ritually and formally dedicated myself both to Freyr and to Ásatrú. I was now His son and *gotbi*, as well an Ásatrúar.

Freyr was a loving patron to me, whom I eventually came to address as "Father" out of my love for Him. And through Him, I came to know the other Norse Gods and Goddesses — and They in turn came to know me as well.

On Being a Freysgodhi

Jordsvin

When Diana Paxson and I started discussing my doing an article for the Vanir Issue of *Idunna*, my options were basically a scholarly article, or a more “personal” one focusing on spirituality and my own experiences. I immediately opted for the latter, since there are folks far more qualified than I to do scholarly articles. My own academic background is in a very different field — Spanish literature — and it is Romance languages, not Germanic ones, that I am proficient in. Also, while I appreciate the importance of scholarly research in our religion, I enjoy reading (and writing) spirituality articles much more.

I encourage folks who have worked extensively with and come to know personally our Gods, Goddesses and other Holy Wights to write about their experiences. While there is a fairly large number of qualified (and mostly non-Heathen) scholars able to write about Germanic religion, usually only a Heathen or Pagan can write on that topic from the personal experience of faith! Our experiences of a God or Goddess will not all be the same. That is why it is so important that we hear from many of their worshipers who come from different backgrounds. By comparing notes and noting areas of overlap in their experiences, especially when those areas of overlap are not supported by surviving lore, our understanding of our religion can grow. I’ve noticed at gatherings that men and women dedicated to a specific Deity will often get together informally to compare notes, and have been very impressed with the mutual respect with which this has been carried out. I am confident that this spirit of respect can be continued in the medium of print.

I never set out to become a Freysgodhi. When I was a somewhat unfocused Euro-Pagan, the Deities I tended to feel more of an affinity for were the earthy, practical ones. Despite my strong academic background, that has always been something I can do (well, more than something); at the core of who I am. I do very well with nature, growing things, etc. A harmonious spiritual community has always been important to me. I have never been wealthy, but have always had the farmer’s careful hand with resources. Some folks take time to find a patron God or Goddess when they join Ásatrú.—it is a question frequently asked at *seidhr* sessions. I never had that problem. For one thing, I don’t see it as a problem; I don’t think every Heathen has to have a patron Deity. Most of us do, but it isn’t a strict necessity. After all, this is a polytheistic religion! I believe we could use some good all-around “general practitioners” as well. In any case, I was sure it was going to be Frey pretty much from Day One.

What does a Freysgodhi do? Well, since no job description has come down to us, each of us is reconstructing his/her own *godbordh* (priesthood or priestesshood; there are now and were in the past Freysgydhias as well) as we go along. I try to embody my understanding of Frey as much as possible. Frey gets more of my time than the Others, although I have good working relationships with several of our Gods and Goddesses and expect to meet and work with others as time goes on. Also, my relationship with Frey serves as a sort of compass in my practice of Heathenism. Obviously, the other Vanir Deities (Njordhr, Freya, and Nerthus, although some include others) are especially near and dear to me. I’m not surprised that being a Freysgodhi, the practice of *seidhr* seemed very natural when I started learning it and that it has continued to be an important part of my life. Since Frey is Lord of Alfheim and a very important Nature God, I find that I am really enjoying making friends with the Landwights in the park where our Kindred frequently worships. I regard picking up litter in that park as being just as essential a part of my *godordh* as any research, writing and ritual work I may do.

I see Frey reflected in my life. Sometimes it is in things that have always been a part of me, like love of nature and a rapport with plants and animals. Sometimes I see Frey reflected in areas I have to work especially hard in. I have a fairly mild case of the midwinter blahs, and seek to bring more of the more joyous, “solar” energy of Frey and the Ljossalfar into my life in the wintertime when I’m feeling down. It

works just as well as the light treatments I used to take, without the cost! Frey isn't a "sun God," although both he and his sister Freya have notable Solar aspects, as shown in the golden pigs they both ride. Norse Gods and Goddesses tend to be multifunctional with considerable areas of overlap, and I've found that you can call on "your" God or Goddess for just about anything. I presume that they get help from Others when needed.

Sometimes religious insight comes when you least expect it. Steve Wilson (our Kindred leader) and I separately had the same revelation while looking at the illustration by Brian Partridge for the rune Ing in the book *Anglo-Saxon Mythology, Migration and Magic* by Tony Linsell. The illustration was of a Green Man (foliate head or foliate mask to use a more scholarly term) with the Anglo-Saxon rune "Ing" between and slightly above its eyes. Our reaction was pretty much to hit ourselves in the forehead and exclaim "Of course! How obvious! It was right under our noses all the time!" So I tend to see Frey as the Green Man. Did our ancestors see him that way? Maybe yes, maybe no. The "Green Man" is probably a lot of things. The only labeled one to come down from the Middle Ages is labeled "Sylvanus", a Roman God not all that different from Frey in some aspects. Of course, I bought a copy of the book in question, and commissioned a wood carving of Frey as the Green Man. It continues to bring me great joy.

I try to reflect Frey back into the Heathen community. One of his obvious aspects is fertility, and I have one of those phallic Freys carved from a slightly modified natural piece of wood, rather like the one shown in the book *The Bog People* by Glob. (There is a drawing of one of these Frey Images on page 93 of *Teutonic Religion* by Kveldulf Gundarsson.) As a nearly-40 gay man, I have not and do not expect to reproduce biologically (although I wouldn't mind being a sperm donor and expect that the resultant offspring would be pretty impressive!). Instead, I seek to bring fertility, happiness, and well-being (all characteristics strongly associated with Frey) into Heathendom. Frey is also known as Peace-Frodhi, and I do try especially hard to get along with my fellow Heathens. While no one has a perfect track record, I do feel I have done well overall in this. I see Frey as involved in a more "earthen spirituality," and feel he can add a great deal to our community's frith.

(Live and learn note from Jordsvin: I actually got asked to consider sperm donation by a Heathen lady who read this article. Not a bad sort, but considering legal liabilities, on second thought not a real good idea either. Anyway, as of late July 2004 I'll be 45. Best to consider my sperm as off the shelf as slightly expired, given the risks associated with the offspring of older fathers as well as older mothers. However, my brother's children will be reproducing in a few years so my lineage will continue, howbeit indirectly.)

Frey, to me, greatly enhances healthy spirituality. When I do a Freysblót, no edged weapons are allowed in the area. This goes back to "the old days," when Frey is recorded as having taken great offense when human blood was spilled in his Ve. Our Kindred practices this faithfully, even though some of our Wiccan friends were a bit peeved that they couldn't bring their athames! (Hey, it was our show so we called the shots!) I think this is a good rule of thumb to remember. I have found that Frey likes pine and other woody incenses, and like all our divine Friends, he's partial to mead. Last Freyfaxi/Loaf-fest I offered a beautiful little gray horse statue (gray stallions were often dedicated to Frey) which I had found about six months before and had on my altar all that time. I charged it and buried it in a bog, and found it was truly a sacrifice to give it up, but at the same time a pleasure to do so. A pig (especially one painted gold) or deer image would have been equally appropriate.

I am not especially into the phallic aspects of Frey worship, and this seems to surprise some folks. I suppose circumstance has to do with that. I'm not a farmer and do not expect to father children. (Plus, I'm sexually secure enough not to need religion as an "excuse" for having sex! No excuse is needed!) What objects do I use to worship Frey? I have a ritual Freysgodhi robe, done in linen and dyed green. It has nine bells around the base, hearkening back to ancient traditions of tinkling bells in Frey's worship, reported by Saxo Grammaticus. When I do a Freysblót, I use a deer's antler to hallow the sacred space. I got that idea from Steve McNallen's Blótar. While I greatly enjoy these "props" and find that they enhance my worship experience, I see them as optional "extras", not as being strictly necessary.

I feel that I have done reasonably well so far in my *godordb*. Folks seem to like my Blótar. I've been told things like my backrubs show that I possess "Vanic hands", and one gentleman told me I was the most Vanic man he'd ever met. I'm not sure exactly what he meant by that but took it as a compliment! Still, I feel I have a lot more to accomplish in my spiritual life, but having found a good niche for myself after prolonged searching, I look forward to what is to come. When I formally professed as a Heathen and a Freysgodhi, something I did only after years of preparation, I prepared in advance by having a large green Anglo-Saxon Ing rune (resonates a lot better with me than the Elder Futhark form) tattooed on my left upper arm and unveiled it at the profession to have it blessed. I suppose that I am now "addressed for delivery" when I die! I expect at that time to go to Vanaheim, or maybe to Alfheim, or even to Frey's dwelling in Asgard. As a *seidbmadbr*, I have personal experience of the life beyond the grave, but focus on striving to live well in the here and now. I tend to see Ragnarok as a modified seasonal myth, and am not looking for its literal fulfillment. I expect I'll eventually evolve into something I wouldn't even recognize as me, or be recycled when my Wyrð is finished. While I don't rule out the possibility of "Eternal Life," like Joseph Campbell I see Eternity as being beyond Time rather than merely an endless extension of Time. Whatever happens, I trust in Frey's guidance. It's worked well so far.

Lammas Night

Joshua Tenpenny

I walked up the steps and cautiously opened the door. "Come in, lad!" he boomed, with a bright, jolly voice that I tried to let soothe my nervousness. I set my bottle down on the table, and climbed onto the bed where he sat. For weeks I had let my enthusiasm about this evening obscure every other thought. Now that it arrived, I was so worried about doing something awkward that I could barely think about this sex I had been so eagerly anticipating. That is what I was invited here for. The shaman-priest had called Frey into his body for the ritual, and I am one of the offerings. Like the beer, and the bread, and the prayers and songs. It never occurred to me that it would have anything to do with me personally.

Frey looked at me with a big smile and chided, "Did you think I'd want nothing but your body, lad? Did you think I'd have nothing to say to you?" I stammered that I didn't know, which was the closest thing to a verbal response I was able to give the whole evening.

He cheerfully continued, with an intensity that was almost conspiratorial, but always with the bright, laughing eyes. "You're working with my sister now. She has many things to teach you ... but there are things she does not know! ... What *I* know is the love that endures — love that is bound to the land. You understand this. Yes... Yes!" And I saw Freya's love, the ephemeral bliss and timeless beauty, against his love, binding husband and wife securely to their home and to each other.

But there was more. "You and I are more alike than you think. I know about sacrifice. Ha! Yes, I *know* about sacrifice." And I saw him as the pure golden god who is cut down at his height, approaching death not with a grim acceptance or dutiful obligation but a big smile and that ever-present erection, celebrating even this aspect of life. And more... "I also know what it is like to love one of *that* blood. There could be no Asa bride for me. No, I needed someone dark, someone wild. And I too know what it is to willingly be completely defenseless for that love." I recalled the irony of this gorgeous god desperately courting a fierce giantess who scorned his beautiful home and people, accepting only when he gave his sole weapon as a bride-price... and then my defenselessness against my own lover and his murky twisted Jotun bloodlines.

When I managed to hold his gaze it was mesmerizing. He spoke in plain words, but what he communicated was more than the words. As he spoke it cued up thoughts, memories and images in my head, crystallizing them, giving form to what I knew but had no words for. Each time he explained

something and said, “You know this. Yes? Yes!” he made that knowledge more real. It was if he was evoking knowledge already within me rather than teaching me something new. Afterwards it was all so clear that I couldn’t imagine that there had ever been a time when I didn’t understand these things.

“Give me a drink, lad!” We shared a generous quantity of mead, and then, finally, was the sex. The activities needn’t be detailed here, but I will say that it while it was a glorious experience, there was a distressingly ambivalent component to it for me. A bright light casts a dark shadow, and in comparison to his brilliance I felt acutely self-conscious of my flaws. I was embarrassed to feel so neurotic during what I had thought would be a purely joyful experience for me. Secretly, I felt I had failed in some way. I didn’t talk about this aspect of it for a few years. I thought it would confuse the telling of what was such an overwhelmingly positive experience, and it was so difficult for me to admit.

Then I heard other people report having this type of response to Frey and to the other Bright Gods, and I saw that same mixture of awe and shame in their eyes. It became plain to me that this was a natural response rather than my peculiar failure. We are all flawed in some way, and there is no sense in feeling bad about it. Work on improving yourself, certainly, but don’t be ashamed of where you are at in your development compared to where you think you ought to be. To experience pure joy, you need to be exactly who you are, and be right here, right now. There is no success or failure, just the experience. I’m still trying to learn this.

Afterwards, he put his mouth to my chest and blew into my heart, and then into my mouth, saying “Let this be a light in the darkness. Because there *will* be darkness.” That was what he left me with. That was his gift to me. I can, at any time, no matter my situation, call up that golden glow of being in his presence by focusing intently on that light. If I truly want it, I can breathe on that tiny spark and kindle it into a bright flame that casts aside all other feelings.

It took some time for the effect of this to really sink in. It meant that I had to admit to myself how reluctant I really am to part with my fear and hatred and anger. Part of my personal spiritual path is to love everyone, unconditionally. That is an easy thing to say, but deeply transformative to actually do. I had struggled for years with being unable to feel any kind of love for certain people, but after receiving this Light, I know that I am not actually unable, just unwilling. Even though I know better, part of me cannot accept that withholding my love hurts me immeasurably more than it hurts the other person. Part of me still needs to deem people worthy or unworthy of my love, but the sun shines on the just and unjust man alike. To let love pour forth from you is to be like the sun. Unconditional love does not condone evil any more than it rewards good, because it is *truly* unconditional. It is not a matter of “lowering the bar” so far that even the most reprehensible individual seems to have something lovable about them. It dispenses with the bar entirely. It is that radical.

Most of the folks I work with spiritually are heavily involved in ordeal work and other dark aspects of spirituality. They can be very dismissive of the “bright” stuff, as if that is for the “fluffy bunny” pagans, the wide eyed blissed-out folks, the ignorant and naïve, or perhaps the few lucky innocents who have been sheltered from the real world and spared its suffering. There is a pervasive idea among them that the brightness is an illusion and pain is what is real, that pleasure is shallow and the ordeal is the only way to the deeper mysteries. Most don’t really understand that going up is just as hard as going down; it is just hard in different ways. It means knowing the loss and pain of life and seeing it as part of the joy, loving and embracing it all as the beauty of embodied existence. It means sacrificing your every hatred, and laying down your every weapon in order to love fully and without reservation. It means surrendering to the unknown, not just willingly, but joyfully. That is Frey’s lesson to me, and the example I will always strive for.

Golden One

Raven Kaldera

Corn and grain

Rain and sun

Sun must fall

All to grow

Open hand

And to feed

Seed to corn

Horn and need

To seed.

—from *Golden One*,
the song we wrote for Frey (see pg 131)

I first met Frey while journeying in Vanaheim.

I should clarify that statement a bit. As a Northern-Tradition shaman, one of the things that I do is to travel astrally through the Nine Worlds, running errands for humans and wights alike. I happened to be traveling through Vanaheim during the third of the year (Vanaheim time) that Frey dwells there — the autumn to winter period. I let it be known that I wanted to meet him, and he graciously assented to come to me there.

I'd met many, many Gods face to face, but I'd never had the reaction to any of them that I had to him. He was tall and golden and beautiful and turned me completely into a stammering, adoring schoolkid. It was more than just the respect and reverence one is moved to feel when in the presence of divine Power; this was pie-eyed adoration, the kind of thing that makes teenagers camp outside hotels for mere glimpses of rock-star idols. All I could think about was how beautiful he was, how I wanted to bask in his aura ... and then, after that had gone on for all of two minutes, how stupidly sexually attracted I was to him.

It must be understood that I'm the last person to be prone to such things. I'm a Hel's man; I've served dark gods and done their often painful work for decades. I'm old, cynical, and pessimistic, and the internal darkness that is wound through me and that makes me appropriate for this Work, generally makes me impervious to things of the Light. Yet when Frey cast his gaze on me, I was dazzled. He was gentle and good-humored about it, and asked nothing more of me than I was willing, even eager, to offer up to him. That's the way his relationship has been with me ever since — I give out of love, and he asks nothing more than that.

*Would you bring light to the dark?
Would you sing the summer's song?
Would you speed the growing,
Rushing toward the coming pain?*

In Dale Cannon's book *Six Ways of Being Religious* (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996), a tome that is dry as toast but filled with wonderful theological concepts, he discusses six paths or worship that are found within each religion, some more so than others. (I highly recommend this book to Pagans who want to think deeply about the theology of their faith, even though it has only Christian and Buddhist examples;

it's inspiringly easy to extrapolate Pagan examples anyway.) Some of these paths, like the Way of Sacred Rite, the Way of Mystical Quest, and the Way of Right Action, I practice as part of a group religious tradition, for the people I serve. The Way of Reasoned Inquiry taught me to appreciate religious scholarship among the reconstructionists as a valid form of worship, even when I find them frustratingly limited and fearful in their scope. The Way of Shamanic Mediation is my life, my toolkit, dedicated entirely to Hela who owns me and uses me for the betterment of the world.

The sixth path, though, the Way of Devotion, eluded me until I met Frey. The Way of Devotion is about having what born-again Christians call “a personal relationship with Jesus”; it is characterized by, as Cannon says, “wholehearted adoration, devotional surrender to (its) transforming grace, and trust in (its) providential care”. As a shaman, dealing with Gods and wights is almost ordinary for me. I respect and revere them, but for me the kind of divine contact that would seem inspirational to most people is simply something that gets me out of bed at 3 a.m. — *again* — to do some obscure job. My view of religion would seem frighteningly pragmatic to most folk. Frey gave me back my sense of devotion. I don't work for him, and so I am free to love him with no strings attached. That's an amazing gift for a cynical old spirit-worker.

I did ask him for a favor, once, and he did request payment, but that's only fair. It was a big ongoing favor. He requested that I put a Frey pole up in my back field, and that I would allow him to use my body as a public horse one day a year. I agreed willingly, even though deity-possession was something of an ambivalent activity for me. I'd been introduced to it very much against my will (a common theme for nearly everything in my shamanic training) and it often felt like a violation. My boss, Hela, let me know that I was going to have to get a better attitude about it — what rock star wants a surly, cantankerous limo driver? There seemed no better way to start opening myself up with a better attitude than to offer my flesh to Frey; my relationship with him was clean enough that I could trust him and not feel violated.

On Lammas of that year we put the pole up in my back field. My wife carved it of cherry wood — one of Frey's trees — primitive, but with a smile and a huge phallus. We threw sacrifices into the hole and stood him up while our Pagan choir sang the song that he'd dictated to me. Then, the next night, I deliberately asked to be ridden for the first time in two decades of being forced to it. He came in like a shaft of golden light, warming and healing, and off he went to talk with (and tumble with) my partner, who was making his own physical offering, and came out of the experience with a big grin on his face. It was the least emotionally complicated time I'd ever had as a horse, and it went a long way towards attitude adjustment.

Since then, I've been ridden by Frey as part of our big Lammas ritual for the last two years. I don't drink alcohol, but on that day I drink blessed home-brewed beer as part of the work of bringing Him into me. I am dressed in His vestments — yellow linen tunic embroidered with gold wheat sheaves, crown of grain, specially gifted golden torc, and His sacred phallus — and then I'm in the back seat, or more likely unconscious in the trunk, and He holds court among my people. Afterwards, I listen to their tales. We noticed that Frey will pick out certain specific people and blow gently onto their foreheads or heart chakras, “blowing light into them”, as He says, “a light in darkness.” These people are usually the sort whose spiritual job is to be light-bringers themselves in some way, but who are often troubled by depression or woes that get in the way of it. They report that Frey's breath creates a tiny spark of permanent light in them that can be blown on and grown, no matter how hard times get. After I wrote about that on my website and in my book, I was contacted by other people who had met with Frey and had this same experience — and were amazed that they'd found their personal gnosis verified by strangers several states away.

*Would you do what must be done?
 Would you hold back nothing, not
 Your breath, not your body,
 Not your fear, not your pride?*

Two similar complaints that I've heard repeatedly out of Pagans is that all the deities of love are female, and so are the deities of marriage. In the Norse pantheon, Frey is an exception to both of those generalities — but then, hey, we have a female Sunna and a male Mani, right? While Freya does hold the sort of “hat” that Aphrodite wears for the Greek pantheon — love goddess, sacred whore, and golden maiden — and Frigga is the primary deity of marriage, Frey is happy to be invoked for both. There's a lot of emphasis on the “fertility” aspect of his nature (due probably to a mix of people reading too much anthropology and an obsession with his huge cock), but he is more than just a god of Sex. He is also a god of Love, whatever form that may take. For Frey, yes, Love is very sexual, very physical, but he can also make love with a smile, a touch, a direct gaze.

I once went to a wonderfully inspired ritual to Freya where the officiating Freyaswoman running it called upon her in a circle with four doors, each corresponding to her four aspects. I'd never heard it put so cleanly and perfectly before: the golden love goddess, the green spring fertility maiden, the warrior in scarlet and white, and the seidhkona wrapped in dark mists. I could also see equal correspondences in her twin brother ... with one exception. In giving up his sword to Gerda's family as a bride-price, Frey lost any role as Warrior. He gave that away out of Love, and I can think of no more wonderful defining characteristic of a male god of Love. Like Freya, he is fertility — although where she rules the Spring, he is the Autumn harvest. Like her, he teaches about Love, although his teachings go in two different directions.

His connection to his sister is both ritual and erotic, which makes not a few people uncomfortable. As the sacred fertility pair of the Vanir, they are required to have an erotic relationship so that the crops will grow, the flocks and herds increase, the flowers spring up and the fruits ripen. It's part of the magic. As part of his connection with Freya, he embodies the same kind of transpersonal Aphroditic-style love that she does, where everyone you lie with, even if only for an hour, is beautiful in their own way, but no more so than anyone else. He opens his arms and his gaze to men, women, and everyone else, because for him it isn't who you do it with, it's how you do it. An Odin's man once commented on Odin's bisexuality by saying that for the Old Man, it isn't about sexual preference so much as it's about sexual power. Is there power in this sexual act? Well, we'll be doing it, then! Similarly, for Frey and Freya it's about sexual joy. Does this sex act reverberate with the clouds, the trees, the earth beneath your feet? Does it inspire gratitude for the gift of your own flesh? Then, really, the combination of bodies involved is irrelevant.

However, unlike his sister, Frey is also a god of marriage — committed, intensely personal love, bound to land and stone and rings of metal, focused wholly on one person. Frey is completely capable of maintaining both of these states perfectly, simultaneously focusing on a spouse in a personal relationship and spreading his golden joy transpersonally to all who throw themselves at him, and thus is an inspiration for both monogamous and polyamorous people everywhere.

Of course, one can't speak of Frey as a god of marriage without bringing up his giantess-wife Gerda. She came into my life soon after he did, quietly and without fanfare, which is how she lives her very principled life. Gerda is the opposite of Frey in so many ways — dark where he is light, reserved where he is outgoing, modest where he is flamboyant, private where he is public, self-enclosed where he gives freely — and utterly, unswervingly solid where he may be prone to wavering with his feelings. He surprised us when, the first year that I horsed him publicly, he requested beforehand that a horse be made available for her as well. A female spirit-worker who owed Frey a favor volunteered, and she arrived. We had never had a divine couple present together before, and we were quickly reminded of why Frey and Gerda are invoked at weddings, why their figures were stamped on bits of gilt for happiness and contentment. The two of them act like newlyweds when together, no matter how long they have been married — eating honey off of each others' fingers, openly affectionate, with loving gazes at each other.

Ours may be the only group where Frey and Gerda come together. Other groups who utilize god-possession to bring down the Northern gods report that Frey is only coupled with Freya at their gatherings, and Gerda does not come. Gerda, apparently, will only show herself in a place where no one present is

likely to denigrate her race, which means that she will shun most Ásatrú/Heathen groups. Our group, being Neo-Pagan, doesn't care about such politics, and so we are able to give the two of them the gift of being together at such a gathering, if only for a little while.

The marriage of Frey and Gerda was met with consternation by nearly all the families, clans, allies, and kinship groups involved. This means that while Frigg and her husband Odin are the sacred couple called upon for marriages that are acceptable to the greater society, Frey and Gerda are called upon to bless unions that are not. They are happy to bless queer or polyamorous weddings, and any “mixed marriage” — a union where two people come from drastically different cultures/religions/worldviews and constant, patient compromise must be invoked regularly in order to keep the marriage surviving. This is their territory, their specialty.

Gerda, in her quiet and uncompromising way, refuses to live among those who hate her kin, and refuses to bear children to her husband's hostage-oaths; thus the God of fertility has a barren marriage. For this reason and for many others, Frey and Gerda out of all the Gods and wights have the most to lose from Ragnarok, and the most to gain from widespread peace between all peoples. This combination of events has crystallized to make Frey into the God of Frith, the Peacemaker between peoples, the Unweaponed God who values Love over War every time. Infighting between groups dismays him, and he will push for peace even at the risk of seeming “unmanly”, which gives him a lesser reputation among some overly-macho Ásatrú folk. What most Aesir-followers don't know is that Gerda is just as much a goddess of frithmaking as her husband, only she plies her end of that thread on the opposite side, among her people, her Gods, and the humans who work with them.

To work tirelessly for peace in the face of war, understanding in the face of argument, compassion in the face of fear; to stand open-handed while facing a sword of hurt and anger; to swallow one's pride and do what is effective to foster communication rather than what makes one feel righteous; these are not cowardly acts. They require supreme amounts of courage and self-sacrifice, and only the very brave ever manage to adhere to them full-time, without giving in to self-indulgent defensiveness. Frey and Gerda's road is a hard one. It is much easier to join the roaring communal war-band with their unchallenged bigotries and assumptions. Being a peacemaker can get you killed. Ask any diplomat in a war zone.

Would you give your life for love?

Would you die to feed them all?

Would you go a-willing like the man to his bride?

Frey's best-known role is that of God of Sacrifice, the one who willingly gives his life that others may live. Here, as God of Fertility, he wears the crown of Ing, the Corn King, John Barleycorn. I connect with Frey the Fertility-God in a very different way than I connect with Frey the Love God who was invoked at my wedding ceremony. Here, the connection is so familiar as to be casual, or practically unnoticed, because the “dailyness” of my life as a farmer and homesteader sometimes gets in the way of more obvious ritual.

I live on a small homestead with my wife — who is descended from Frey, with a maternal maiden name of Ingerson, and who brews her own beer — and with my boyfriend. Most people think that our lives are full of exciting sexual interludes, but the truth is that if we ever get the time, we're lucky. Most of our days are filled with milking the goats, slopping the sheep, feeding the chickens, gathering eggs, bringing in wood from the forest to light our wood cookstove, and dealing with the garden in whatever state it may be in at the moment. In a way, writing the book *EarthBound: Pagan Homesteading* was also an offering to Frey, although I dedicated it to many God/desses. Living in the way that we do is more than just a nod to sustainability, or a way to get cheap organic food, or a fun hobby; it's an act of worship. I understand the cycle of John Barleycorn deeply, because I have ripped up rows of bravely waving carrots, hacked down fields of corn, and butchered out livestock to feed myself and my family. Life feeds on life. Something must die that we all can live. Everything I put in my mouth is sacred, and I need to remember that.

I am, among other things, a plant shaman. I talk to plants. I've had amazing conversations with Grandmother and Grandfather plant spirits. I've spoken with trees. Part of why I am not a vegetarian (besides the fact that I like meat) is that to be a vegetarian for reasons of animal-killing-is-cruel is to privilege animals over plants. I realize that this is a view that is going to be difficult for most people even to begin to understand, but it is something that I have learned from Frey (and, to an extent, from Herne the ancient Hunter). To say that it's not OK to kill a chicken, but it is OK to rip up a fresh carrot and eat it, that's saying that the chicken has value and the carrot doesn't, that the carrot's life is irrelevant, that its death can be ignored. It is, after all, more alien to us than the chicken. Acceptable death, in this worldview, is based on xenophobia — the more like me it is, the less acceptable it is to kill it. Plants don't talk or move around, therefore they aren't *really* alive.

Yet the myth of John Barleycorn says something completely different. People wept and mourned the grain that was cut down just as thoroughly as the calf that went to the slaughter, because they understood that *all* life was worthy of revering. The grain — the very symbol of the life that was sacrificed — is a plant, not an animal. I *can* talk to plants, and I would far rather kill a chicken than cut down a grandfather tree. (I've tried to talk to chickens. Grandfather trees are more intelligent conversationalists.) More to the point, both are equal manifestations of the Sacrificed God, as are the cow and the carrot. Pretending that one sort of life is more alive than another sort is a blasphemous form of denial. We cannot use such denial to wash the blood off of our hands ... because when it is seen through respectful eyes, that blood is sacred, regardless of species.

I know that Frey does not like modern agribusiness practices at all. I know that they pain him, that he is saddened by the way that we (mis)treat our food. He is a God of Food, something we like to forget. Really, when it comes down to it, that's the first reason for fertility. Food. We will still need it even at negative population growth. What people need to understand, though, is that for Frey, there is no difference between a chicken bred to have a breast so large that it can barely stand and to grow so fast that it must be caged in a foot-square box or it will break its spindly legs, living a short life deprived of sun and dirt, debeaked and crowded and fed with hormones and antibiotics ... and a soybean plant that is genetically engineered to survive being soaked in round after round of deadly poison, growing in sterile dirt fed only with chemicals in a huge monocropped field, processed into oblivion and heated until it develops trans fatty acids, and packed into a soy-paste product designed to make someone feel good about not eating that chicken.

There is no difference, to Frey. No difference. It is all food. It is all life. It is all disrespect.

If I sound angry and militant here, I apologize. This issue does not make Frey angry. It makes him sad. And anything that makes him sad ... makes me angry. I am still very much a Jotun-blooded creature of darkness. Like his beloved.

Would you do what must be done?

Would you be the Golden One?

Would you spring up laughing,

Trusting fate like the grain?

Sacrifice. This brings us around again to the last path that he shares with Freya, although again she is more well-known for that. She is the greatest of Seidhkonas, the witch who teaches the magic that (supposedly) makes women powerful and men unmanly. Frey understands this magic too — how could he not, being her twin? — but is less known for it. Frey's path in this is where sacrifice meets sex, where we remember that the Ing-man who faced the priestess with the sickle was castrated and flung into the swamp to die. They say that if he lived, he was allowed to live on as a woman, but a magical one.

One thing that I grow more sure of all the time is that there are at least two cults of Freysmen, or were, and will be again. One is the farmer, the husbandman, the husband and father who lays his seed into his

beloved to make children, into the earth to bring it fertility. He sacrifices with his labor, and with his commitment to frith. The other is the *ergi* priests with their skirts hung with tinkling bells, their cross-gender high-pitched songs, who gave up that most Freylike of qualities — physical manhood — in order to learn the Mysteries and the Deep Magics.

Tribal shamans in any tradition will all tell you: The Spirit in charge of any sacred thing can both give it and take it away. You pray to the smallpox god to protect you from infectious diseases. You pray to the lightning-thrower to spare your thatch roof in the storm. You ask the God of Sacrifice with his huge erection to give you shamanic powers, and he responds: Will you sacrifice this, for the Mysteries? Will you become something between male and female, forever, where everyone can see, in exchange for that power?

This is the path of Frey that starts with the sickle cut, the scythe swing, the moment of blood and pain. This is the Frey who walks the Hel Road, who goes to the very Gates of Death and back, who hosts the miracle of rebirth. The difference between these two cults have nothing to do with being gay or straight, with who you want to bang bits with. That, as we've already determined, is irrelevant to Frey. The difference between these two cults is about being *ergi*, being publicly cross-gender, mixed-gender, outsider, mediator, Walker Between Worlds, catalyst of discomfort, infertile vessel of shamanic power, and ... not.

As someone who is transsexual, whose fertility was long ago offered up as a sacrifice, I know this road. I wear the skirts and the jingling bells, in honor of those *ergi* folk who lived before me and left signs on this dark path. They are my ancestors, even though they left no children. Frey is the Light That Descends To The Darkness And Arises Again, just as his sister is the Light That Seeks Upwards And Descends Again. If he didn't love and understand the darkness, he couldn't love Gerda. He couldn't love the blade that takes his manhood and his life, every year. He couldn't love all the many races of the Nine Worlds to whom he holds out his hands in frith, each with their various fears and wraths and pettinesses and obstinacies.

He couldn't love me.

*Hail to the Light that descends to the Dark,
That lights it with Love,
That never fails to bring tears of joy
To old, old eyes.
Corn and grain,
Open hand,
Seed to corn to seed.*



Warrior Within

Tracy Nichols

My first introduction to Frey was way back in 1998 when I became interested in His Sister during my exploration of Neo-Paganism. I had become interested in things Norse and began practicing a form of Norse Neo-Wicca, dedicating myself to Freyja and studying everything I could about Her. Of course I knew about Her Twin, but wasn't very interested in Him. I saw Him as just a male version of His Sister and casually dismissed Him as unnecessary in my worship. This was back before I learned that the Gods are Gods, not items at a buffet restaurant that you can just pick and choose and stack on your proverbial plate. Ah, how I have changed.

Fast forward to six years later. I had been on a number of other Neo-Pagan and occult paths and, after a period of lonely agnosticism — which is damn hard for someone who hears spirits to accomplish — I was pounced on by the Lord of Mischief, Loki. Long story short: after having it pounded into my head that I was His, I was dragged kicking and screaming back into the world of the Norse Gods. Since then I have been exposed to many things, many lessons at the hands of many Gods and Goddesses and other beings — Aesir, Vanir, Jotnar, Duergar, Fae, and various wights. All of Them had Their own lessons to teach me, some of the lessons being more clear than others. One of the most difficult and challenging lessons I had to learn came from the God I had dismissed as being “just Freyja in male drag”. Luckily for me He's not big on holding grudges, which is nice because I hate to imagine what He would have put me through if He was actually unhappy with me.

I can't remember exactly when He first contacted me and requested my attention. It was very subtle — no big flashing signs, no stand-out visions or dreams, no boars or horses (both animals sacred to Frey) appearing magically out of nowhere in places they had no business being. It was more of a light brush, a gentle push to pay attention, a gradual calling. Belonging to Loki, who has a habit of just coming of nowhere to surprise me, this was unnerving, and when I found it Who it was my first thought was “Well, what does *He* want with me?”

In my journey to find out exactly that, I ended up on the doorstep to His home and was shown in by an elvish servant. His home was a beautiful sight to me. It was rustic, with mahogany walls, thick carpets, a roaring fire in a huge fireplace, and a table covered with all kinds of food. I was directed to a carpet lying before the fireplace and told to lay down on it. I did and closed my eyes, letting the fire warm me and my mind wander. I don't know how long I lay there before I felt the first featherlight touches along my body. My arms, legs, neck, and face tingled at the soft hands and fingers that, though the way they touched me was not sexual, nonetheless left me reeling in a sensuous haze. Then I felt lips on my forehead and light filled my vision behind my closed eyelids. When they let me go I opened my eyes and found Frey standing above me. He smiled at me and told me that I should feel a lot better now. (Before this night I had been having headaches for weeks and colds off and on. Sure enough, afterwards I felt lighter and all those health problems went away for a time.)

He sat in a chair at the table and directed me to do the same. “You know why you are here, right?” I shook my head. Frey told me that I was sent to Him to discover the warrior within. He told me that I had a lot of suppressed anger, that I kept silent at times when I shouldn't, that I tended to let others treat me as a doormat out of a desire to keep the peace. I blinked, confused at first, amazed that I was hearing this from Him. Isn't Frey the God of Peace after all, the one that others turn to in order to instill Frith in their households?

As if He knew what I was thinking (well of course He knew), He told me that while peace is a noble goal to have, it's not always possible to have peace without some fighting. He added also that a peace in which people were slowly burning inside from feelings that had needed to be expressed festering and eating

away at them really isn't a peace at all. It's an illusion. A society full of people who are pretending that they are happy when they are really miserable and scared on the inside isn't a peaceful one, it's a weapons-yard full of ticking time bombs that will eventually go off. That's what I am. I'm a ticking time bomb. "You need to do something," He said, "before you show up to work one day with a gun and blow away all the people there."

He was exaggerating, for I would not do that, but I could see His point. Suppressed anger does have a way of rearing its ugly head, somehow, and it was only a matter of time before mine built up to the point where if I were having a bad day and someone said just one harsh word to me I would verbally explode or experience an emotional meltdown. At the time I was in therapy and on medication for my bipolar and depression issues, but those were not really helping. They treated the symptoms, but not the core problems, the ones I was terrified to tell my therapist about, being that I was getting free counseling from a state-sponsored service and the institution was not exactly friendly to alternative beliefs or shamanistic experiences. I already had to hide an awful lot from my counselor out of fear that my diagnosis would be turned to something more serious than bipolar and I would find myself in a psychiatric ward with a thiorazine drip faster than I could say Prozac.

So for the next few weeks I basically went through Frey's Anger Management. I learned not to deny my anger, but to embrace it, channel it, use it constructively. I learned it could be a weapon not only to inflict harm but also to benefit others. I learned that anger could actually be a powerful thing, a beautiful thing even. And slowly, slowly, the warrior within awoke.

I wish I could get more specific than that, but the truth is that the process was so gradual, so subtle, and so surreal that to put it into words is an exercise in futility. Frey is very good at subtlety, for His way is gentle. Oh, He does have a dark side, and this I saw very clearly in the moments when He showed up to remind me I had work to do at the times when I wanted to quit out of frustration. The Vanir, I have found, are very firm on things like punctuality and duty. No one says "get your arse in gear" quite like a Vanir Lord. I learned quickly not to get on His bad side.

His dark side really showed itself the day when, one Freysblót, I was asked to journey to Vanaheim to witness the ceremony marking Frey's annual sacrifice to ensure the fertility of the land. I watched as He walked down a path flanked by priests and priestesses wearing robes up to a dais covered in wood ready to be set on fire. He looked up to the sky, spread His arms, and fell back into the fire once the wood was lit. I was told beforehand that I could not contact Him until after Disablót, so I waited, but occasionally had visions of Frey walking solemnly around the Land of the Dead. He had grown darker but there was still a light in His blue eyes, a twinkle of pride in knowing that the land would be fruitful for yet another year. Then He came back and I felt Him arise. He didn't call me right away, and when He did we started back right where we left off. His death was not something to be dwelt on. It's His duty, His privilege, His honor. Yes, we do mourn for Him annually, but death is a part of life. The living must move on, and this He made very clear. He also made it clear that His return should not be dwelt on either. "It is just something I have to do."

It was this insight that made me realize that I sacrifice too much, that it has its time and its place. I have learned over time not to give too much of myself, to devote to taking care of myself more. I have become stronger for it.

I have become stronger because of a lot of things. Frey has helped. His compassion, His strength, His teachings have all helped to guide me and shape me into a better person, and I thank Him for it. Thank You, Frey, for helping me to do better, and for waking the warrior within.

My Relationship With Freyr

Ayla Wolff

Though Freyr is not one of my primary deities, I've had a pretty intimate relationship with him over the years. No, I'm not talking sexual; I'm talking on a more emotional level. I find that he and I communicate most often when I am out in nature, finding myself in the sunshine wanting to sing and to whirl around in circles like a little girl. I know that sounds rather odd, but, you have to realize that I have a lot of responsibilities in my life and allowing myself to just let go is not something I get to do very often. In fact I would tend to say I probably laugh less often than I would like to.

Where I live there is a very nice bike path, and as you go along on it there are woods and open spaces along with what has to be an artificially created mound, but it is a mound and I love it. I don't go to it very often though, because unless I am feeling very unselfconscious, it is hard to sit at the top of it where other people might see me. I used to go there more when my kids were younger because they would go to the top of it and then roll down it laughing the whole time and I would just sit on top of it and watch them be joyful. It was a great experience. Now, whenever I walk by it, I think of that, and I also think of Freyr and how he is Lord of the Mound, which for me is very much a part of who and what he is.

The last Kindred that I was a member of was called Alfar Ring and concentrated a great deal on the Alfar themselves, and due to that I have an altar which is dedicated particularly to the Alfar. Each day I light a stick of incense to the Alvs and to the Alfar. To me there is a great difference between the two; in my mind the Alfar are our male ancestors and the Alvs are the light-elves. Freyr of course is connected with both, and due to that I keep a daily connection with him as well. It is as if there is a line leading directly between the two of us, though this might seem rather a kind of odd analogy for some.

I think that a lot of folk look at Freyr as a "sweetness and light" kind of god, looking only at how loving and kind he is. In the main, that is true; he gives a great deal of healing and acceptance to those who are in need, but I also have seen in him the god who takes to him those who have passed from life to death, a god who crosses boundaries. I think a lot of this has to do with the fact that I have had so many relatives die. Both my grandmothers died in recent years, and my grandfather on my mother's side as well as my ex-husband. My grandfather and ex-husband died within months of each other, and in both cases I saw this not as a great tragedy but as a release; each had suffered for some time, and they went on their way with relief. When my grandfather died a few months before my ex-husband I was able, due to the efforts of my ex-husband, to travel the distance needed to see my grandfather one last time. Within hours of our leaving, he died. At the funeral I asked to put a poem into the grave — this was not customary, but I was given that permission — and part of me was put into the mound with him. Then I spent a night in the hospital with my ex-husband who had gone into a coma. I read to him stories that were special to us when we were married, and sang to him. I spoke to him from the heart and settled a lot of those things that I had held inside of me. I honestly think that a lot of things were settled between us that night, though this may not make much sense to other people. I did not feel as if it were just the two of us that were there, but that there was another presence sustaining me and keeping me filled with something other than pure grief.

I knew a sense of healing, and I knew that in some way it was Freyr. I felt embraced, inside a kind of protective hug, and the grieving I had to do was done then. Again, I see this as an extension of the love of Freyr for those who love their kin. I have to say that I have taken great comfort from these things, even if no one else can ever understand. These are memories I will carry with me for the rest of my life. So it is that most often when I am alone and when the sun is shining down on me that life is affirmed, when the birds sing and the forest calls, when I see the mound I know that my kin are safe; and that whether I can give them honor as far away as they are, they are in my heart and they know my love. When I honor the Alfar and the Alvs, I know that there will never be a point when he does not feel the connection we share.

Learning About Frey In the Best Way

Rand Ulfsson

Ever since I was young, I had my head in the clouds. It was so much more difficult to get involved in the realm of the flesh, because I could clearly see that I had gifts in other areas and I felt clumsy in more than one way. I wanted to be more, though. There were times when I wanted to be someone else so much, to know another way of life. I told myself on multiple occasions that I was fleeing life, that I had no life, because I turned inward and thought, read, lived in the realm of contemplation. I also knew fear: fear of what I might do if I gave in to those urges lurking under the façade I wore in everyday life. I became hyper-vigilant, and so I denied myself ... but then something happened. I came to recognize I wasn't being true to myself. Elation of discovery, the realization I had mysteries lurking within me, gave way to anger. I was angry at myself; I was angry at the people around me. I was angry at the world. Recognizing I was someone else, someone other than who I tried to pass as, fed the anger. But then I met someone who had experienced much worse.

A new friend told me of the pain she had known in her own life, and I felt that I was being selfish for the anger I experienced, because I hadn't been abused like she had. I was sensitive, certainly, so I took things that happened closer to heart than most other people, but here was someone who had gone through worse travails and managed to come out of them intact, if not unscarred. But there was something else. As we conversed over electronic channels, I sensed something in her. She was very understanding, having come from a time of pain. She clearly had her own problems but she communicated easily with my own... difficult if not lackluster social skills. Here was someone who was touched by the force of her connection to her God.

If I had to characterize Frey based on the interaction I've had with Sigrún, I would say the following: he makes connections. Frith-building can seem rather difficult; maintaining a sense of order in a world fraught with chaos is a task unto itself, really. But I see Sigrún network so easily with people, form relationships and bind people in a web of love. Where she ends and her God begins is anyone's guess, but I cannot deny the fact that she seems to radiate his energy. She loves and is concerned for others; she enjoys the newfound freedom of a life without the toxins of her past and she builds for the future.

I entered a transitional state in my own life, where I had hit something of a breaking point, and I withdrew from a lot of my own previous negative influences. Soon after I began this new period of reflection and self-examination, I encountered a community posting made by Sigrún, and it jump-started a new insight into myself. Something I had tried to deny or ignore about myself for most of my life suddenly came forward to smack me in the face and I had to admit it was part of my own reality. I don't know that it would have happened without what appeared to be a chance encounter; I know without that initial nudge to explore, I wouldn't come to know more about myself and try to release some of the pain I myself had held on to for so long. And so a process of integration and maybe even some amount of healing might begin.

I know this is supposed to be a devotional about Frey, but when I sat down to write this, it seemed to make the most sense for me to relate my understanding of Him to what I know about Sigrún. I think there are times when you can learn so much about who the Gods are by the people They choose. It's in the conflict of someone's life, what it touches upon, where it ranges. There's an energy that a person gives forth when a God's energy streams from them. I call this "Getting to know Them in the best way."

I get a strong sense of hearth and home from Sigrún; there is warmth and acceptance, an embracing attitude, but there is also a guardian within, waiting to come forth and defend her people and her community, from those who would wish woe upon it. I can just imagine her coming forth like a boar: a sensitive nose smells trouble and she charges forth with tusks bared, ready to stand firm. I by no means want to say she is some kind of pig! Rather, the image of Frey's chosen animal comes to mind when I think

of the way people picture it and how Sigrún will not brook any intruder or woe-wrecker. She is not fierce unless she is defending; when she is allowed to show her own brightness, she gives forth the warmth of Frey.

I have often heard about the “duality” of many of the Gods, that they have a dark side to go with the “light” side most of us know from the lore. This sort of caveat is applied, perhaps because Heathens recognize that the worldview is a bit darker than other options and they want to warn newcomers about it. Some Gods aren’t quite so bright and shiny most of the time; some are even sources of contention or fear. No doubt you know the popular choices: Odin, Loki, and Loki’s children. Some will even avoid a person who admits to having any sort of amicable relation with Loki, much less his get. But I believe Frey has a darker side as well, though it is really more a matter of him not allowing certain things to go unpunished.

As an overseer of fertility, I have no doubt Frey would deny his blessings to people who couldn’t keep the frith. Before humans took on agriculture, we were all nomads, hunting and gathering. There are a number of elements which must be in play within agriculture — some balance which must be achieved in order for things to grow. People who abuse the land or people who abuse each other are candidates for punishment, whether denial of crops or something more extreme. Just as we grow our food, we also grow our relationships with each other. But I suspect it doesn’t stop there. The ability to find game when hunting may reflect fertility as well, and once again, an abuser will not be rewarded. Surely we can see simple things like that, but fertility applies to so many different things that we see why someone who presides over it would have to be someone associated with maintaining a balance as well. We need only look at the story of the Fisher King as a parallel, where a “wounded king,” the ruler of a nation and presumably the chief maintainer of peace, balance, and fairness, had his sickness reflected in a disease of the land itself.

Not having personal experience with Frey’s “dark side,” I can only point back to the way I first encountered Sigrún and perhaps highlight that as a sign of what might happen when hurt has been dealt in great store and pain is returned in kind.

I first encountered Sigrún, even before I saw her more loving side, in a space where she was raw and in recovery from her own history. I was not intimidated by her approach but more cautious, as I sensed something else might underlay the pain. So I read what she wrote over a period of time. She was vigilant in giving forth her anger at people who would abuse others, at people who would exclude because of factors outside of a person’s control. You know the topics: the divisive criteria of gender, sexual orientation, religious situation, and so forth. I think Sigrún adopted a defensive pose because of where she was and where she had been, and to someone like myself, it was a bit frightening to see the kind of anger that could come forth from someone who was hurt.

When I finally decided to make contact with her — after I had become accommodated to the level of emotional intensity she emanated — I became more aware of where her feelings originated. I was let in past the initial barriers, and then something bright took hold. That, I think, is where Frey came in. There is a point where someone can become so pained that the strength of their personality can become destructive. When a boundlessness of love is denied, when abuse is perpetrated against the innocent, how else can someone respond but to strike quickly and powerfully? As much as we are wont to be upright people, sometimes we find that there are people who will not respond to reasonable attempts to balance things out; sometimes balance must be created through individual action, through making the abuser aware of what it feels like to experience pain.

I do not by any means think that Sigrún is going to make friends on all sides of the fault lines, the “tectonic plates” of Heathenry, to quote my old acquaintance Karl Donaldsson. She has her principles and she has her own destiny to follow. She has become my friend, a support in my own wrestling with issues I thought not to acknowledge in my life for so long, and she has also become someone whose opinion I value. I expect I will not be the sort who will make friends with some avenues of Heathenry because I choose to associate with someone like her, but that is not really up to me.

You may wonder why I would write this article about someone else when the purpose of this collection

is to show devotion to Frey. I said it once before, but perhaps you are not convinced just yet. In getting to know more about who Sigrún is, I feel as though I have been brought closer to Frey. I can feel her warmth, her caring, and the abundance of her personality toward any who will meet her on fair terms. I can also sense the warrior within, the beast laying in wait for those who act thoughtlessly and callously. When they come along, they will feel the bite. But it doesn't have to be darkness. If you are fortunate enough to get to know her, I think you will see that she is "connected," and then you will know that she shines with the light of Frey. She is a lightbringer.

Hail to Frey! Hail to the Lord of the Alfar! Hail to the keeper of the golden boar! And hail to Sigrún, who has taught me something of Frey.

Living in a Frey Household

Eosin

It's been an interesting and enlightening experience living with a Freyswoman. There are things I've learned about Frey, about Heathenry, about her, about myself, and the world around us. Some things are more lore-oriented, while other things are more personal, but they show the god's qualities. Living with Frey's influence has made a difference in our lives in ways that affect both ourselves and others.

Sigrún is serious about the lore, especially as it concerns Frey. She's done about as much lore study as anyone could expect; if there is a question about something, she will likely know historical Heathen references to it, and will spend as much time as necessary looking it up if she doesn't already know. What this means in practice is that decisions about ritual and practice are done with as much authenticity as is practical for the situation. There are multiple altars in the household, but the most important one is the one for Frey. It's gone through some revisions from time to time, but it has symbols of Frey and the things he represents. We have a daily devotional ritual that we do together at the Frey altar, where we honor Frey and his blessings we enjoy in life, make offerings, and ask for guidance in the future. We also Blót at appropriate times, with more elaborate rituals, and the planning and participation in this is something that really inspires her. She was especially inspired during the preparation of the ritual for Lammas, as I made her an appropriate robe with bells (as mentioned with the historical priests of Frey), got an antler for hallowing, she baked two loaves of Ing-rune-marked cornbread, wrote out a good ritual, etc. Her seriousness about her faith shows up in ritual practice, values, and philosophy in daily life.

This regular focus on Frey and his influence in our lives has helped me become more aware of such things in daily living. Various forms of prosperity are interrelated, and what they tend to have in common is living well. Food is something that is enjoyed for taste, for nourishment, and for health, but also as an indirect means to enjoy other things in life. Sensuality is something that is soothing and enjoyable, but also helps with health and inspiration involving other things. Financial success allows not just for material goods, but also for creature comforts and security. Frith is good in itself, but also makes possible the enjoyment of prosperity with other people. We appreciate the flora and fauna around us. We meet with other local Heathens. We see aspects of Frey in all of these things.

It's also been quite an experience with spirit-working as well. From time to time, we've had moments where Frey was directly felt, and I've done partial horsing a couple of times. What we received has made sense, and hasn't conflicted with the lore. More importantly, based on our own UPG, the relationship we have with Frey is one of mutual respect. We hail him and make offerings, and we receive inspiration, guidance, frith, and prosperity. We understand that UPG and spirit-working doesn't quite sit well with all Heathens, but it's more important to us to be true to the gods and true to who we are, rather than sacrificing important things for the sake of social acceptance in certain groups. And as always, anything we

receive spiritually is tested against our knowledge of the lore, as we don't want to be led astray by random personal stuff.

Frith has also grown as a result of worship of Frey. It's shown up in increased and improved Heathen contacts in our area, greatly increased Heathen and Pagan contacts online, as well as other healthy contacts with non-Heathens for other things. It's helped out with resolving disagreements between us and others when they happen. We reach out to others more often than we would have otherwise. We figure out tactful ways of dealing with difficult situations. And we enjoy the results of our efforts. This doesn't mean that we agree with everyone about everything, or even between us on everything. It does, however, mean that we try to understand different perspectives and priorities, and ways of finding common ground. The marriage of Frey and Gerda, with its associated difficulties, brings up many ideas for building frith, and we try to learn from them.

Being two followers of Frey has enriched both our lives, and helped with our understanding of others and the world around us. We see Frey's influence in thoughts, deeds, perspectives, and relationships. We have an improved appreciation of different things in life that involve him. We feel more connected to others, with better mutual understanding. And our prosperity and sensuality have more depth. Life is worth living well, and Frey adds to it in ways that make a lasting difference.



FreyR and the Gift of Joy

Leafshimmer

Let us begin with a Faery tale ... or at least, a snippet from one:

“And I bid thee welcome,” skirled the melodious note of a gentle voice, as a slim blond figure came forward into the ring of shadows and fire. Tall, grey-eyed, His slender hips swaying with a fey, unearthly rhythm, His lips curling in an otherworldly smile, His long blond hair cascading like sun-scalded sheaves of wheat over his exquisitely sculpted shoulders, and His startlingly rampant Cock, its girth and grip moving before Him like a noble sceptre, erect as the pride He bore in every lineament of His Being, He stepped towards the speechless seeker after wisdom.

“I, FreyR, Lord of the Faery Realms, Prince of the Earth Gods, Quickener of the Soil, and lover of men ... I, too, give thee most generous welcome, My most beloved man o’ the greenwood.” One long golden-glimmering hand came up to caress the dumbstruck mortal’s cheek, and before he knew it, his lips met FreyR’s and they were kissing, a kiss of such warmth and sweetness undreamt of by dwellers in the vale of mortals, a kiss hot and heady and questing into every fibre of his being with the lusty joy of FreyR’s deliriously questing tongue touching his own with Bliss Ineffable, a kiss that sent a draft of flame-hued mead into mouth and throat and heart and spleen, shaking him with the shuddering lusts of the World’s Desire in a mighty wave that left him as helpless as a cockleshell carried on the high tide of the mighty waves of the green sea.

FreyR, the Golden God, Lord Who Quickens the Seed, He Who Presides over Sacrifice, Bringer of Joy, the Vital, the Virile! In dreams and in thoughts waking have I sensed Him ... in visions and in obsessions has his savage fire painted strange shadows on the inward walls of my imaginings ... in my long strivings and seekings after wisdom, His gentle, nurturing guidance has opened new paths in the tangled undergrowth at my feet, and shown me a footpath up steep mountain slopes I had thought completely beyond my reach. Whether I have been consciously aware of Him or not, whether I have known Him by this Name or one of his myriad Others, FreyR has been a Presence in my life ... a Presence I have since become aware has been with me from the beginning.

Some years ago, when I began serious study of the Runes, on a night when I had sought my bed after struggling with my studies, I was drifting into that realm of twilight whence the deepest visions arise, when His holy Rune of Inguz blazed before me. Almost instantly, the radiant light of that image of the Perfect Sacrifice materialized into the beautiful form of FreyR Himself, hovering over me where I lay. His shining Eyes were looking steadily into mine; His golden hair brushed my shoulders and chest as He lowered his beautiful length over my own body and pressed Himself into me with a shuddering rush of diamond-brilliant energy. My body jerked in a massive erotic convulsion; worlds blazed, torches flared, the Inguz Rune erupted with an astral fire, and I was suddenly ... Elsewhere. He held me gently but firmly as my shudderings from the waves of the experience subsided. *Yes, my son, my beloved, this is how it is done. Remember.*

These words, which I sensed rather than heard, were but the semblance of form my mind gave to the Magickal energies with which he showed me how to grasp the Runes to walk between the worlds.

At least on the surface, FreyR’s dramatic appearance in my life was heralded by something I read in the original online version of Raven Kaldera’s *Nine Worlds, Nine Days*, his journal of his pathworking from Midgard to Helheim and back again. (*Note: This was later published in the book Pathwalker’s Guide to the Nine Worlds, by Asphodel Press.*) Raven’s word-picture of FreyR in this journal was very brief, and laced with that deliciously dry humor I associate with much of his writing. Nevertheless, few though the words were, they

fascinated me. I read the passage several times and each time it was as if I saw FreyR more clearly in my mind. He was smiling at me ... a smile of more than distant benign interest. I was of course intrigued.

With the flowering of FreyR's beauty in my waking mind, half-forgotten memories from my earliest years that had begun stirring began to come into focus with greater clarity and vitality. With the recovery of these memories, I have come to recognize that I almost certainly had an encounter with the Shining Ones as a very small (toddler-age) child. What I can consciously remember is a persistent desire to roam through the wild reaches of a meadow that extended beyond the shed my Grandfather had in his back yard (I spent a lot of time at my maternal grandparents' home as a child as they did daycare for my parents, both of whom worked). I had this image in my mind that there was a green door in the side of a grassy bank or moss-green ditch, and that if I was there at the right time with the right feeling, the green door would open and a shining splendor that lived beyond its faintly-felt hinges would rise to enfold and enchant me.

And, as a child, I lusted for enchantment. I remember wondering more than once whether I was a changeling child, reading the old legends in several of my favorite storybooks about the fey children left to take the place of a human infant coveted for their own by the Good People. Although I no longer regard myself as an out-and-out changeling, I do feel I have been "touched" by the lure of Faery magick — a lure that has left an echo of a wild, inhuman music lingering in my psyche that refuses to entirely fade away. Things started to really fall into place once I made my Fey roots a more central part of my spiritual practice — and my own identity here and now in this life.

A seed was sown deep in the core of my being in those long-ago days. FreyR is the Lord of the Faery realm and in truth I believe I was born with His mark upon my soul. He claimed me as His Own unfathomable lifetimes ago. Like the other Gods of Initiation I have known in my life — Shiva, Krishna, Pan, Anubis, Dionysos, Apollo, Poseidon — His appearance now heralds the awakening of a new phase, a new realm, a pivotal turn in the wheel of my own Earthwalk.

In the wider world, I see FreyR's influence manifest beyond the rebirth of Heathenism, in such spheres as the establishment and flourishing of the organic farming movements, in the settling of intentional communities (particularly those dedicated to fostering greater Earth consciousness and peaceful, cooperative forms of society), and, perhaps, in the return of Men's Mysteries within the broader domain of Pagan spiritualities. I don't see these developments as exclusively the result of FreyR's Presence and the unique ferment of His secret current, but I do see Him taking a hand and a lively interest in how these phenomena have unfolded.

I remember a line in a favorite novel of college days, *Lord Dismiss Us* by Michael Campbell: "Serenity comes only after passion." Perhaps the most important role FreyR's presence is playing in my life now is His stress upon the need for Balance in all phases of vital existence. What I feel He is embodying for me is this: true wisdom comes not by subjugating the needs of the body to the will of the intellect, nor by seeking a hedonist's sublime "disorder in all the senses" (to quote Rimbaud's phrase), but in a joyful acceptance of all parts of human selfhood, and in a deep understanding of the role we humans play in the greater panoply of all species living, playing and evolving here on our beloved Earth. His laughter echoing from the Hollow Hills into the summer-filled meadows that surround my own home brings the Magick and mirth of the Shining Ones into the warm abode of my own hearth. I feel His embrace in the arms of my own lover and in the thrusting of our cocks together, and I know that my own heartbeat also partakes of the rhythm of FreyR's sacred circle. In the gold and purple of twilight, in the silvered grey of dawn, His eyes shine forth and teach me to cherish each moment as alight with the splendor of His secret beauty. Above all, FreyR's love is a reminder that life, which may seem like a struggle and an unremitting vigil in the lonely watches of the night, can actually become a dance of joy and fulfillment when we invoke into ourselves the Golden God and His love for our Earth — and for life itself.

Bringer of Light

Jon Norman

I've spent a lot of my life in the darkness. Ingvi-Frey came into my life, and brought me light. For a large portion of my life I struggled with mental illness and as I got older, addiction almost destroyed me. I grew up with alcoholic/addict parents who were never able to give me the love I needed. I found comfort and filled the emptiness inside of me with food and later, with self-injurious behavior, alcohol, and drugs. I felt alone for a very long time. As a child, I didn't have many friends. I was often the target of bullying and harassment because of my weight and sexual orientation. I struggled silently for what seemed like an eternity. I was 16 or 17 when my parents divorced, and I chose to stay with my father. A couple of years later, he overdosed on heroin.

After my father died, my own drug use significantly escalated. I had never really thought I was a drug addict, but I started doing things that I had sworn to myself I would never do. I had seen how drugs had affected my parents and so many other people in my life, but the pain I was experiencing was so unbearable, I didn't know how to deal with it. I started smoking crack cocaine and using heroin nasally, and I "progressed" to using cocaine and heroin intravenously, in combination. Over the next couple years, I did everything I could to get and stay high. I lied, stole, and pretty much sold myself. By the end of my addiction, not only had I lost all of my friends, all of my material possessions, and all of my self-respect, but I had lost all hope for the future and all faith in the Gods.

On October 6, 2006, while in a state of cocaine-induced psychosis, I attempted suicide. I had come to the point where I sincerely did not want to live. For the first time in my life, I was not at all afraid of death. In active addiction, I had many close calls with death, I had even been brought to the point of trying to take my own life, but this was different. When I woke up from my suicide attempt, I heard a voice saying "You had to die for the addict to die, you had to die to be reborn" ... and for once, I actually felt OK. It was like I felt peaceful, for the first time in years. It only lasted for a few seconds before the reality of what had happened set in, but I realized at that moment that I was given another chance at life.

I was in the Intensive Care Unit for a few days, then in a psychiatric hospital for a couple weeks, then an inpatient rehabilitation center. While I was in rehab, I started to pray. I hadn't really prayed in a long time, aside from asking for material things or to get me out of whatever trouble I was in. I had to learn to pray ... I started to give thanks for the few things I still had in my life and to ask for the strength to stay clean. It felt like I was doing the right thing. I still didn't have any real faith, but the staff kept telling us about how important it was to have a Higher Power. I tried to pray, everyday. For some reason, I felt the need to reach out to Frey ... I prayed from him to bring light into my life.

Slowly, I made progress, and I eventually went home. I took the suggestions I was given, and started the aftercare program I was referred to — I actually kept showing up — and doing it clean! I kept praying ... in the morning, giving thanks for the new day and for the chance I had been given to live, and asking for the strength and courage I needed to make it through the day, without using. When I went to bed, I expressed my gratitude for the aid I had been given throughout the day, for all of the blessings in my life. I prayed for the guidance, strength, and courage that I would need on my path. I also use a set of prayer beads at least twice a day, immediately upon waking up, and right before going to sleep. I continued to pray to Frey, asking him to brighten my dark life.

Soon after I got home strange things started to happen. At first I barely noticed them, but everywhere I looked, I saw things that reminded me of Frey: every e-mail list I was on was discussing him, and whenever I opened a book, it was always to a page about Frey. Everywhere I looked I would see Ingwaz runes — in trees, on the ground, in patterns of wallpaper, and when I'd close my eyes and meditate. The Ing-rune would almost seem to jump out of my bag of runes. At first I brushed it off as coincidence, but it continued

and got even more extreme, everywhere I looked I would see things that would scream “Frey!”.

I kept praying, I tried to reach out to Ingvi-Frey, I offered him gifts, and prayer. I was very skeptical about this, because I had no faith, still. I wanted to believe, but I had been hurt so much, rejected, and abandoned ... I felt so empty inside. Then it happened. Frey came into my life as a feeling — a feeling of pure, unconditional love. He wrapped around me, and filled me, and made me complete. For once, in my life, I didn’t feel alone, the void inside of me was filled, and I knew that there was hope for me.

I had been beat up and knocked down by life, I had such a resentment towards the Gods, I wanted to deny this experience at first. I didn’t want to believe that it really could have been Frey, a God, actually caring about me and wanting to help me. It started to get hard to deny. The little coincidences and signs started happening even more often. The feelings were present a lot. Every time I started to doubt, I would see or hear or feel something that would reassure me.

I had a lot of hard times ... I suffered from severe insomnia throughout the first six months of my sobriety. I had intense cravings. I was very much alone. I had to give up all of my old friends, so I had no one. I would sit in my room, alone for hours and think about using, sometimes crying, or screaming. I would pray ... and every time, I would feel a little better. Not once did I go out and get high.

As I continued to progress in my recovery, I had more and more faith that I would be given what I needed to stay clean; that it was not an impossible task. I made it through a lot of very hard times. I prayed for help, and was given many blessings. I believe that people were put in my life when I needed them. I was going through a long, hard stretch. The lack of supportive people in my life was starting to take its toll on me. I prayed for support, and the next day I was “thrown” into a very unexpected service position. As a result of it, I was immediately surrounded by tons of supportive people, some of who became important parts of life.

I pray multiple times a day. I use prayer beads in the morning and at night, and use other less structured prayers. I give gifts, because I have been given me so much, and it’s the least I can do. Through meditation and utisetá, I have been able to connect with Frey on a deeper level. I take time out to just listen; this has been an important part of our relationship. A lot of times the messages don’t come as spoken words, but as thoughts, pictures, or feelings. Sometimes I have no idea what He’s trying to tell me, and it takes time to understand the message. Patience is very important, and it is something I’m trying to learn.

I’ve been clean for a year, now. There is no way I could have done it without Frey’s love and support. He has given me more gifts than I ever thought possible. He has truly brought light into my life.

Lord of the Mound, God of the World

Misty Wright

Lord of the Mound

When I first met Freyr, it was through his connection with the *alfar*, the male ancestors, as being the Lord of the Mound. Ancestral worship is very important to me, and so he and I became fast friends. This picture symbolizes my relationship with Freyr because it holds within it two of the main ways in which he speaks to me — the fruits of the earth (I'm a naturalist and horticulturalist and have dedicated my life to showing others the beauty of Freyr's blessings) and my kin.



God of the World

Freyr was referred to as “*veraldar god*”. Some have interpreted this to mean “God of everyday life”, and in my experience, I’d have to agree. Freyr is as simple or as complex as life itself. He shows himself in every human activity. This picture brings thoughts of a good life to my mind. It’s about good food, good effort put forth, and a good home. It reminds me that it is through the simple things that the Gods make themselves known.



Living in the Light of Frey's Love

Sigrún Freyskona

When I submitted the manuscript for “Gifts of the Golden God” to Asphodel Press in October 2007, I thought I was completely done with the book and I had said all there was to say. But when it came up on my 4th anniversary with Frey and my book was still mostly not formatted, I figured this was Frey's way of letting me know some things should be revised, expanded, clarified, and updated, including my own personal story of Life With Frey. So as I write this, it approaches my 4th anniversary as Frey's wife and I am editing my personal testimony, as an anniversary present for Him. I hope He likes it, and I hope you do too.

Frey has been my Husband since February 9, 2004. It goes beyond the relationship of a basic *fulltrúi*. I am in love with Frey, and I feel His love for me, in a personal, intimate way. As a rule, I do not introduce myself to people saying, “Hi, I'm Sigrún, and I'm Frey's wife.” For starters, I tend to be “hidden in plain sight” and do not make my Paganism flamingly obvious; I keep my Pagan identity separate from my mundane identity to live a quiet, private, and drama-free existence. There have only been a handful of people who I've come out to over the years about this matter, and the most common response I've gotten has been one of downright rude disdain. It usually stems from someone's attitude that a human could not be married to a non-corporeal God, which is then based in the belief that the Gods may exist but don't do much with humans these days, which is unfortunately typical thinking for most Ásatrúar. I will say that being a God-spouse has precedence in history, and spans different cultures and religions. In the *Flateyjarbook* there is a tale of the outlaw Gunnar Helming, who flees from Norway to Sweden, and finds succor with a priestess of Frey, called His wife throughout the story. Though the story is largely a satire to mock the “foolish Swedish Heathens” in favor of the religion of “Saint” Olav, I do not think some of the details were just made up. Beyond that, there are stories all throughout the Eddas of humans and wights intermarrying, such as Helgi the human hero and his wife the Valkyrie named Sigrún (my namesake). In Catholicism, nuns are called “the brides of Christ”, and there are tales of Catholic mystics who felt they were actually married to Jesus. I know of some Vodoun practitioners who marry their lwa, as well.

Then there are a few who wonder what Frey would even want with someone like me. I will never claim to be the ultimate authority on anything, including matters of spirituality, and certainly people can believe or not as they wish, as that is a basic human right. I have questioned my own situation, including my sanity. What it comes down to is the evidence of Frey's investment and intervention in my life.

When I became Heathen in the year 2000 (after spending some time as a Norse-oriented Wiccan), I had started off with the intention of being a “general practitioner”, wanting to honor all the Gods equally. However, as time went on, I found myself drawn to Odin, and would give Him offerings more than the others. I refrained from calling the Old Man my patron, but He was the Deity I felt the most affinity for. Part of this stemmed from the bad emo poetry I was writing at the time, but also my interest in the occult. I had even had some precognitive dreams with Odin speaking to me and giving information. My thoughts about Frey at that time were admittedly not positive; I looked at Him as being like the Horned God/Green Man of Wicca, and thus smacking too much of Wicca which I had left for a variety of reasons. I also wanted to avoid His huge phallus, as I was recovering from being date-raped and getting into a series of unhealthy (and even abusive) relationships.

Frey came to me in late 2003, at a time in my life when I had hit a very low point. I had entered treatment in 2002 for PTSD-related depression, and following a bad reaction to antidepressant medication, was misdiagnosed and given more. I went from living independently and being employed full-time to losing my job, losing my place to live, and what was meant to be a 3-day hospital stay turned into nine months. While I was hospitalized, I noticed the medications were affecting my health adversely. It started off with some mild tremors, and then a diagnosis of irritable bowel syndrome. My thinking was getting slower, and

speech was becoming more difficult. I was released from the hospital to a group home for psychiatrically disabled adults, and had things stolen and confiscated that I couldn't afford to replace. In outpatient treatment I made the mistake of telling a therapist that I was Heathen (after he insisted repeatedly that I talk to him about my religious preference), and I believe antipsychotic (neuroleptic) medication was given on the basis of this information, as I was otherwise not a danger to myself or others. I was still trying to honor the Gods as regularly as I could with very little money to spend on offerings, and my "signals" had been blocked by the medications. (It didn't occur to me until further involvement with the Asatru community that most Deities did not have conversations with Their followers, in dreams or regular daytime.) I was working a bit with Freyja to try to improve my self-esteem, and Freyja said to me, "I want to introduce you to my brother."

Not long after that, Frey revealed Himself to me in a series of dreams and visions that gave me hope in a time of hopelessness. I had recurring dreams about Frey making love to me in a field of grain, and the staff reported that I was moaning in my sleep ... a good trick, since I was at that time not orgasmic in sexual encounters with other people. During Yule of 2003, He told me outright to marry Him, and then gave some not-so-subtle "waking day" omens, such as my first encounter with the aforementioned Gunnar Helming story. When I asked for confirmation, holding my bag of runes, Ingwaz fell right into my crotch. I decided to shake the bag up, and pulled Ingwaz again. It took a lot of thought, even after being given clear and obvious signs, but Frey was insistent. So on February 9th, 2004, four days after my twenty-fourth birthday, I took vows to Frey in a handfasting ceremony and donned a ring of green amber set in silver Celtic knotwork (triskelions) which I still wear to this day.

After marrying Frey, my life went into an upheaval. By the summer I had gained 127 pounds since starting medication, and my tremors were now affecting my entire body. I was thrown out of the group home that summer based on conflicts with the owners, and due to my case manager's incompetence at finding me other housing I was forced into a psychiatric nursing home for lack of anywhere else to live. I was put on yet more medication, as it didn't occur to my doctor that I might be depressed from my living circumstances or lack thereof and maybe that should be addressed before adding more meds. I all but lost my ability to communicate verbally, which was seen as another psychotic feature rather than a medication side effect. I was almost given electroshock treatment, and was physically assaulted by other patients, as well as being sexually assaulted by a female nurse during a "random mandatory skin check". Towards the end of my stay there, there was a "random contraband search" of my room led by three staff who happened to be fundamentalist Christians and often made pejorative remarks about the mentally ill being "demon-possessed". I had most of my remaining property thrown out, including hardbound copies of the Eddas that were gifted me, and an altar-in-a-box that I had made and discreetly kept on my nightstand. What was notable was they had not thrown out my wedding ring, or a rather large spider plant that I asked Frey to keep alive as a sign of His presence still in my life.

I was liberated from the institution by my mother in December 2005. I felt very odd my first month "out", and it took a while to learn how to eat in more than ten minutes, and take a shower without being on guard of having the door broken down. I felt rather feral, but I also felt like my connection to the Gods had been broken. On Christmas Day, 2005, Frey and Freyja came to me in a dream, and Frey re-asserted that He was my patron and husband, and that within a year I would be living in a new land with my life-partner, and would become His priestess, including writing for and about Him and the other Gods.

My mother had initially said I could stay with her as long as I wanted and I actually turned down a rental assistance voucher to live with her. After I had been there a few months, however, it was clear that my habits were incompatible with hers, and she insisted that I move out by the end of 2006. My case manager tried to get me into supervised apartments, only to be told that they were for seniors. The first group home we looked at didn't get back to me, and the second would take me but they were waiting for a resident to leave. When it became apparent that the resident was overstaying his welcome and the matter wasn't being forced, I felt desperate.

Before doing anything rash, I did a faining to Frey, giving Him cider with what little money I had to spare, and I cried out to Him for help. I made a bargain with Him: if He gave me a better place to live, if He got me to a safe place, I would work very hard for Him, I would become His Gydhia if that was what He wanted. And for the first time in years, I actually felt Him there with me, holding me in His strong, muscular, hairy arms. I saw His face, His green-blue eyes, His honey-blond hair and beard, His kind smile, and then He did something odd. He blew at my forehead, and I saw golden sparkles of light, that grew in number, and formed a shell of warm golden light around me. He placed His hand on my heart and said, “I will make your tears as gold, I will give you a new life. You’ll see. I love you.”

Around the same time I had started a LiveJournal account, and was told by Frey that I would meet “him” there. I dismissed this to more crazy woo-talk. Eosin and I encountered each other on LiveJournal in September of 2006, in a community for “Bad Heathens”. We were both lamenting a need for a more Vanic-based, mysticism-friendly practice, and took a liking to each other. Eosin got bold and asked me for my contact information, and as a rule I never trusted Internet strangers, but Frey told me to trust him. In October of 2006, Eosin and I started talking via e-mail and phone, and came to fall in love. Due to circumstances beyond my control, I was looking at being homeless or re-institutionalized, and Eosin decided to have me move to California to live with him.

I moved to California in December of 2006, and stopped taking medication about a week after I arrived. In hindsight I should have withdrawn gradually rather than cold-turkey, but I was having problems with fluctuations in blood pressure, liver failure and kidney near-failure, besides the migraines, dizziness, and aforementioned full-body tremors and difficulty with thought and speech. It is a miracle I survived the withdrawal from the seven different medications, three of which were neuroleptics, and four past the maximum dose (double and triple the amounts). There were consequences from the withdrawal, including seizures, diarrhea and nausea. I was sweating all the time and I fell asleep at random times during the day. I was confused, easily disoriented, had random aches and pains in different parts of my body, and outbreaks of large patches of rash for no apparent reason. I also had recurring nightmares about being dismembered, and wandering the Nine Worlds looking for my lost body parts. On top of that, flashbacks came back, not just of the abuse in my childhood, but abuse at the hands of people I had trusted to “help” me. On the other hand, my withdrawal was far better than what it could have been (from what I understand about medicine, I could have died, actually) and there is no doubt in my mind that Frey was looking out for me. (I do want to make it clear that I am not anti-psychiatry and in no way am encouraging people to stop their medication, but I am in the favor of people making informed choices about their self-care and not being forced on drugs given punitively for “alternative religious belief” being looked at as psychosis, and being lied to about the side effects.)

The first few months off of medication, I felt angry most of the time. However, I was also now determined to do something about my “negative” PTSD-related feelings so I didn’t wind up in the hospital a third time, and on more medication. Loki had been hanging around me and I had never known what to make of it, especially because the New England Asatru community is as a rule very anti-Loki, and anti-magic to boot. I started doing research on Loki, and in March 2007 I had my first faining to Him, and built my first altar to Frey. At Loki’s behest, I left the Heathen organization I was a member of after a racist post was made on its e-list. I knew that acknowledging Loki in my life, and not denying my relationship with Frey, was not going to go over very big, but I had no idea just what was in for. People who I thought were my friends, or at least otherwise decent people, made it a point to be nasty to me both on- and offline. Coming clean about my relationship with Frey not only helped to clear my conscience, but set the precedent for other revelatory things to happen, that have changed my life for the better.

In searching for answers, I came across the writings of various Northern-Tradition spirit-workers. Admittedly, I was very uncomfortable at first because things hit a little too close to home, and I knew being honest about this would ruin “my Asatru career”. But then as I got to know other God-touched individuals: some who were God-spouses, others visionary-types, or magicians — I felt more at ease with myself. I had

tried to fit into the mainstream Asatru community in New England in part so if I got locked up again, they could vouch for me being “not crazy”. Here, it was OK to just be myself — and I wasn’t crazy, there was a reason for all of this.

In October 2007, when Southern California was burning, my mother revealed to me that I had been diagnosed with high-functioning autism as a child. Had I known this in 2002, I might not have had the problems I faced in psychiatric treatment, as I was mis-diagnosed and medication was inappropriately prescribed (note that being “God-touched” and having visionary experiences does not mean not being able to function in reality with household chores and employment, which I can do). I had been suspecting I had Asperger’s for the past few months, and this confirmed my suspicions and helped me to find strategies for improvement with social skills and organization that work with the quirks of my brain, rather than trying to “fix” it. Frey doesn’t ask me to not be myself, but has helped me with becoming more personable. The friends I have now are respectful of my spirituality, and are not what I would call “normal”. (I mean that in the best possible way, folks, seriously.) I don’t ever expect to be Miss Popularity (and Frey has told me He finds my geekiness to be endearing), but it seems that my nonconformity will draw people who are meant to be drawn to me. Working on myself includes finding what types of employment would suit me, and working through the steps to go to school and train for it, so I can eventually be more self-sufficient.

Besides the socialization and educational aspects of my life changing for the better, I am also involved in activism for awareness of issues pertaining to disabled people, and our associated rights. I am focusing in particular on the needs of disabled Heathens and Pagans, as we have every right to a healthy and healing spiritual practice, and we still have second-class status even in Heathen and Pagan groups that claim “tolerance” and “inclusiveness”. I am also, of course, doing what I can to promote healthy spirituality. I have organized Blóts, including a public Lammas rite in honor of Frey. I am a long-distance member of Iron Wood Kindred, based in New England. I believe the Gods still exist, and still desire to interact with people. I believe that the Gods desire frith between people who honor Them, whether those people apply the label of “Heathen” or “Pagan” to themselves. I enjoy making the Gods feel honored and appreciated, and enjoy bringing the Gods to the people, so they can know the love and the sheer force of life that the Gods provide. It comes down to Frey being a God who brings frith to cross boundaries. He is of the Vanir, hostaged to the Aesir who He serves as a priest, married to a Jotun, is Lord of the Alfar, and was gifted by the Duergar. Building connections is important to Frey.

I understand more and more each day that Frey brought Eosin to me, and me to him. I am one of the few God-spouses I know who is actually allowed to be in a mortal relationship. Many spirit-workers, especially God-spouses, are called to a life of celibacy, and for many that is understandable. Nothing can take a back seat to your Job. Not your employment, and not your partner(s). If anything gets in the way, it will be removed, and often not kindly. I do not believe I am inferior to the God-spouses I know who are celibate, nor do I believe they are inferior to me. The Gods deal with people on an individual case-by-case basis; what might be right for one person is not necessarily right for another, and certainly the Gods appreciate diversity and do not want cookie-cutter worshipers. Moreover, I acknowledge that Frey is married to Gerda, is intimate with Freyja, and has other spouses and lovers here in Midgard besides myself, and surprisingly, I am not jealous. There’s more than enough of Frey to go around as well.

Eosin is the only partner I’ve ever had who Frey has approved of. Frey enforced my celibacy for three years: by “celibacy” I mean I was only allowed to be with Him, not other humans. During those three years (from December 2003 to December 2006), Frey challenged my male-bashing, and worked with me to learn to respect healthy masculinity. After my marriage to Frey, there were people who were interested, but one way or another, they would mysteriously “disappear”: get too busy with work, or be hospitalized, or move to another state, or get arrested. Then shortly thereafter, Frey would show up in a dream and say, “I told you that you’re Mine.”

Frey understood that we could help each other heal. We are happier together than apart. The affection between us is nice. Eosin and I rub noses, he kisses my nose, and presses my nose so I say “beep”. We

snuggle close, wrapping our arms around each other, braiding our legs, petting and caressing heads, necks, shoulders, backs. I love Eosin's backrubs. I love how he tucks me in at night, and then cuddles close to me throughout our sleep, making me feel safe. He calls me "bunny" sometimes and I think it's so sweet. We have amazing conversations. He actually understands it when I use more erudite vocabulary, and has the same major interests I do, of history and comparative religions. We talk about experiences we've had, and goals for the future. Eosin likes tickling me so that I snort and sputter and speak in tongues. He and I like playing with words, making bad puns, and we enjoy playing board games, going for walks together. Even something as mundane as running an errand, like grocery shopping or the post office, can be a fun adventure with him, because we enjoy each other's company. We like cooking together, and doing household chores together. Sex is good too.

Frey gave me an analog for my relationship with Eosin. I am bright and flamboyant, like Frey, while Eosin is the "strong silent type", like Gerda. Eosin is my "anchor" to Midgard, who gives me safety and comfort. I am his "bridge" to the Gods. As much as I can be a "grouchy spirit-worker", I know that one of us has to be normal, and it goes to Eosin by default. Eosin has said my spirituality has given him a deeper understanding of the Gods, a deeper appreciation of Them, a deeper friendship. I don't see my relationship with Eosin being in conflict with my relationship with Frey. I make it a point to honor Frey in the morning and at night, and turn my thoughts to Him during the day, to talk and to listen. I have cooked meals for Frey: simple, usually what I had in the house, but He's told me humans don't usually offer Him food any more except perhaps the bread on Lammas and ham at Yule, and drink at Blot. To cook for Him, and share a meal with Frey alone at candlelight, means something to Him. Sometimes I will meditate and see myself wrapped in Frey's arms, feeling His heartbeat against me. I know many humans would not tolerate their partners being involved that intimately with a God, but Frey was there first, and Frey owns Eosin as well. I think if anything, it's helped our relationship rather than been a hindrance. Through Eosin I see Frey's love for me. Eosin is my reason to stay here, to take root in Midgard and heal the broken Earth beneath my feet. And I think I've shown Eosin that the Gods do love him, and accept him, when others have not.

Eosin and I are still together, and have realized the reasons why Frey brought us together, even beyond needing to get me to a safe location, even beyond both of us being lonely and needing love. We have had our ups and downs, but all couples have conflicts, and compared to most of the relationships I've been in, or witnessed of others, I think we're doing pretty good overall. Frey and Gerda have taught us both some very powerful lessons about love, loyalty, and sacrifice. Love isn't just something you feel, it's something you *do*. Frey gives His life for us, but He wouldn't be able to do so if Gerda didn't give Him the strength and support He needs. Gerda left Her people in Jotunheim to live with Frey, including staying with Him part of the year in Ljossalfheim, where She is disliked, but being with Frey makes up for a lot.

I have been through a lot: verbal, physical, and sexual abuse in childhood, bullying as a teenager, domestic abuse, rape, and institutionalization as an adult. However, for those who would say Frey is cruel for what I have been through, I'd like to relate a vision I had where Frey placed His torc around my neck. It felt slightly heavy at first, and then unbearably so, like a lead weight that was going to bury and suffocate me. He spoke as the torc choked me with its weight:

Yes, I wear this gold because I am a king, a ruler. This is the symbol of my rulership. With that rulership comes sacrifice — the symbol of my rulership is also a noose, and a constant weight to remind me of what I must do to continue ruling. I make many sacrifices that are necessary: I don't do them so people can admire me, I do them because they are necessary to maintain balance within the Nine Worlds.

I am slain at Lammas, given to Hela and the Green World, and I return, but with full knowledge of that time apart, walking the Hel Road, out of my self, and forced to come back to my self, so people can eat, and live. I spend most of my time away from my family, away from Gerda, to fulfill my duties to the Aesir as hostage and priest. I feel the pain of the Nine Worlds, the darkness and cold, the grief and the bitterness and shame, the longing, so I can alleviate that pain and bring hope and joy.

Would you know this burden? Would you know the sacrifices I have to make? Your sacrifice that you speak of to me, surely I understand that means something to you.

I also understand that I broke you, and Freyja initiated that breakage, so you could be where you are now, so you could bear my light to those in need. I understand the sacrifices you made when you were broken, the sacrifices of your mind and body. Your sacrifices are not in vain. But how much more would you sacrifice?

We understand that you who dwell in Midgard, are frail, which is why the symbol of my rulership is crushing you now. You would not be able to bear this sacrifice. But you are not alone in what you sacrifice, and if I, with my burden of death, and knowing the darkness that leads to it, can still be sacrificed with a smile, and trust in the threads of Wyrð... you also need to learn how to express more joy, and more gratitude. You should be honored that I care about you, honored that I have touched your Wyrð, touched your soul. You have it no worse than I do. If I can look at you, one of Midgard's who I sacrifice for, and if I can smile, so you need to, also. You need to draw strength from that joy, for that will help you do what needs to be done, and with less suffering than is necessary.

And then He took the torc off and placed it back on Himself, and it glowed with a near-blinding golden brilliance. He pulled me into His chest, so I could feel the beating of His heart, and I slept.

My main task in my service to Frey is to be a Light-Bringer, someone who makes others feel comfortable and at ease, and inspires others to reach up to the Gods and reach out to others, and reach around to embrace the world, to see the beauty within all things. Yet it goes deeper than that — very often people who come to me are near the end of their rope, and I mean that in a Wyrð-thread context as well as figuratively. They are people with a lot of potential, but have been so burnt out that they need an extra boost to go on. I pass Frey's light into their soul. Most of the time this is done on a very mundane level, using my priestly skills of listening and counseling even in a secular context ... which has taken some work. I've learned some lessons about tact from Frey, and I've learned from Gerda how to keep silent when necessary. But there's also something I've been spirit-taught, about weaving light into Wyrð, giving that little spark of hope and inspiration to people who are just plain frustrated, or fraught with despair. Frey wants people to keep going.

There are very few of us who are Light-Bringers, and rightly so. To be a light-bringer is to go to people in darkness, for people in light do not need an abundance of light; they will go blind. To go to the darkness, and know what one needs to have light, one must first be intimately familiar with darkness, and yet still keep their inner light intact. Being one of "Frey's little rays of sunshine" also means anything done as an act of worship for Frey must involve joy, or you've missed the point. Therefore, although I may have PTSD flashbacks and get down on myself, or be caught in perseverating thought loops based in supposed failure on some organizational snafu, it is Frey's desire that I brush myself off and resume, and continue to focus on Him, even to the point of having a narrow tunnel vision. I cannot live as a victim anymore, as someone marked by injustice. My life needs to be an offering of praise to the One who has touched my life with His Golden Goodness.

I have wondered why Frey would take an interest in me, but I know that when I was a child, I used to say prayers at night, and felt embraced by a warm white glowing light. I could feel the light enfolding me when I would play, and it showed and told me things in the future that came to be true, or ways I could change the impending future. Even in anxiety and depression based on bad life situations, I still believed in that light, believed in the inherent goodness of life. I take pleasure in the beauty of the natural world: enjoying the feel of wind in my hair, sunshine on my face, a soft caress, or firm squeeze hug; observing the beauty of trees, of birds, creeks and oceans. Many times, whether after sex, or perhaps savoring a good meal, playing on a swingset, or hearing beautiful music — I feel completely alive, and connected with the life force. I know more moments like that are possible, and even as difficult as things can be sometimes, holding on and pushing ahead will give way to more moments of simple joys. It has been said that "there is no joy like an autistic joy", and I would have to agree. My neurodiversity does not shut me off from the world, but makes me a very part of the life force. I become one with the land, and the life of the land. In a way, that is my deepest connection with Frey, when I experience Him most fully. In some of my happy moments, I can

feel Frey there beside me, rejoicing with me. What has kept me going all these years is a sense of a rightness about Midgard. There may be cruel people and random tragedies, but I still believe in the beauty of the Earth. Frey's World.

I am at a much better place than I was a year ago at this time, and I believe next year at this time my life will be even better than it is now. I have sincere hope now, because I know how far Frey has brought me, and I know that Frey desires that people enjoy Midgard, and His heart breaks for those who cannot through abuse and injustice. He is a food God, but He doesn't just feed people's bodies, He feeds their souls. His blood is spilled upon the soil so we can eat, He willingly sacrifices Himself each year in His heartbreak at experiencing the pain of people's hunger and struggles. He dies so we may live. For me to deny my life, for me to give power back to the ones who hurt me, and not embrace Frey and the goodness of His World, hurts Him. There have been times since I came out here when Eosin and I have honored Frey, and both of us have felt the whole room warm up and throb with a soft golden light. Frey has made Himself tangibly present, and even at times when I feel "dry" spiritually — which happens to all of us — I hold onto those moments when Frey was there, and giving us His light, to give light to the Worlds.

Much about modern religion, even Paganism as a whole, has lost the concept of what worship actually is. The Anglo-Saxon word is *worthscipe*, which literally means "to give worth to". I believe worship should be an act of appreciation. *Religion* comes from the Latin *religio*, which means "relinking". It should be relinking humans with the Divine. I don't believe in the Fall of Man causing Original Sin, but I do believe humans can get very lost in mundane cares and not get priorities in order. We have lost our sense of awe about the holy. and I know that Frey wants people to get that awe back, to see the beauty in the world around them, in the cycles of life, and death, and rebirth. There is an ecstatic component to the Frey cult, which I cannot quite touch upon here: when I write, I get into very left-brain, cerebral mode, but shift to a completely different way of thinking and being when in ritual, or spending time meditating on Frey. It feels like I am enveloped in golden light; my very self entwines with Frey, and His joy in me is reflected back into my joy with Him. Considering most of my existence is very mundane (being a spirit-worker does not mean you never have to do laundry or dishes again), these moments are fleeting compared to what I spend most of my time doing. But I'm becoming more aware of Frey's presence and influence in my life, and I try to offer my very self to Him, as the best gift I could give.

Because of Frey's intervention and guidance, I am doing much better than anyone could have ever expected. I have a good life now. It is not flashy or terribly exciting, but it is cozy, and comfortable. I identify as a hedgewitch, and I make a hearth: a sanctuary for the Gods, and for myself and my own. What I went through was perhaps necessary to give me what I have now, and even in the times of madness and despair, Frey was with me, even when everyone else was against me. I believe — no, I know — that if I continue to "fully trust" in Him, more blessings will be had. I am the outcast who finally belongs, for no one can question the Ownership of the Gods.

A Poem for Ingvi, on Our Fourth Anniversary

Sigrún Freyskona

When I was broken and still breaking,
You revealed Yourself to me,
You saw the light within my soul
and all that it could be.

You penetrated my essence
with love no one else could give,
You set forces in motion
so I could once again live.

You gave me to a man
who You entrusted to take care,
You saw the strength within him,
like the Earth is always there.

You bound our Wyrð together
and through the threads our love shines,
yet even with a mortal
I am still wed to the Divine.

We offer up our love to You,
to the Light-Bringer we give Light,
we walk our Wyrð by faith
if not always by sight.

Four years ago I did not see
for all was breaking down,
I did not know what You would mean to me,
did not know of Your renown.

I know I went through what I did,
being torn asunder,
so I could be happy again like a kid
and be full of joyous wonder.

My words are clumsy to express
the warmth You radiate,
but I feel something beyond bliss
wrapped in Your embrace.

I once fought against everything,
or I would merely flee,
but I put my warring ways aside,
for You have made me free.



**Poetry, Prayers, Songs, and Invocations
to the Golden One and His Tribe**



Homestead

Raven Kaldera

His eyes are like the water in shaded duckponds,
Where frogs breed and tadpoles snatch the floating
Mosquito eggs, leafy bits floating green
On the surface. His gaze is the wind rippling
Through a field of barley, the drying sun
On the new-mown haybales, scented of vanilla.

*This farm is old for this country, first the English
And then the Finns with their visiting tonttu
That we inherited with the sauna. My wife carries them
Beer and bread on late nights. Her maiden name is
Ingerson, some ancestor festival-got, spread before
The Golden One in a human body, gave her the gift
Of brewing. Gave me this land, through her.
I sink my hands in earth, manure black in the garden
Beneath the sprouting peas and beans.*

His hair is amber on flax-strands, like my own
Used to be, before greying, but finer, gleaming.
Every waving head, awned and double-rowed,
Waves in His locks. His phallus is a tree, sturdy
And reliable, like the turning of the seasons.
There is no fragility, no petulance in His response,
No secret motivations. Just honest appreciation
And open warmth, an erection you could lean on
Like a staff in hard times.

*"Is it in?" I ask my lover, knowing full well
But needing to hear it, breath caught, peeking
Between my mental fingers. He laughs, but it is
All right. If I had lived long ago, there would be
Bells on my biked skirt, but the rest might be
Much the same. The grass tickles my cheek and the
Land-night under me enjoys what I feel
Nearly as much as I do.*

His laughter is the taste of cherries,
Tart on the tongue, sweet in the aftertaste,
Stone against your teeth as you spit out
New beginnings. His touch is solid as the ground
Beneath you, the slap of grass as you tumble down,
Rough on your shoulder like a hairy-chested lover.
All gods have contradictions, and his is the interplay

Of solid and ephemeral. When summer is upon you,
It feels like forever. I cannot convince myself
That each vibrant leaf will someday crumble.

*The sheep graze content, already having forgotten
That one of their number went down to the bullet
This morning, already in pieces paper-wrapped
And freezer-ensconced. To create Life is to embrace
Death. Each carrot is John Barleycorn, who dies
For my hungers. Each cup of milk, of beer, is blessed.*

His gentleness is the feel of dough
Beneath my hands as the powdered bodies
Of seeds that might have been sowed
Mix with the curd of milk taken from
My goat's udder, that nourished the kid I ate,
And water from my well, and living yeast
That will breathe my bread soft and high, and die
In heat and flames. Each loaf is a gift of submission.
His strength is the shell of a nut, cracked
With a grunt and the crunching of the meat,
Hard surrounding soft, easily opened.

*Hazel, walnut, butternut. The leaves rustle
As I find the hard treasure in my fingers.
The walls of my old house are chestnut;
This place was once a grove, before white men
Came with saws and axes. Crosscut marks
Line the beams of my ceiling. Smooth and orange-brown,
I live surrounded by the bones of His bounty.*

His courage is like the plowed earth, yielding and soft
And yielding is where the bravery truly comes in —
The moment when the black-robed woman stands
Before Him; see how He kneels with such serenity
And lifts His chin to make it easier
For her, the final stroke. Hair spilled into the grain
As the last of his breath passes, but tomorrow
There will be life, and life is worth it.

*You see, He says, this is how Sacrifice should be done.
Not grudging, not grumbling. Not like you do it.
Lift your head and welcome the stroke.
Remember all the reasons for it. So He tells me,
And I feel His smile. But I am human, imperfect.
I fight and wrench myself. Perhaps next year
I will watch his sacrifice again, and this time perhaps
I will be able to find in myself a hundredth of His grace.*

If not then, the year after. He never shirks His task.

His soul is a seed, so much growing from so little.
 How can such a tiny thing encompass so much?
 I am struck by the beauty of blood
 Splashed on the sheaf of grain, scarlet on gold
 And this is his Mystery.

The Hungry Golden God

Galina Krasskova

My hungry Golden God,
 Delight of Gerda's body,
 Ever hard, ever desirous
 of Your fierce and mighty bride,
 You come with the pulsing, pounding rhythms
 of the seed fighting for light
 through the resistant body
 of the rich and sultry earth.
 Mighty and proud,
 You wooed and won
 The fiercest of Gymir's get.
 You filled Her with light, as She enveloped You with darkness.
 You are fierce in Your love, courageous, the bravest of warriors.
 Would Gerda have accepted anything less?

Invocation to FreyR

Leafshimmer, Harvest Moon 2007

With soft smile that smolders like the ripening fields
 At Summer's Stronghold,
 With bright hair of burnished gold brushing my
 Shoulders as You take me whole,
 With unending tenderness,
 Make me swoon,
 Fierce like the ravening lion,
 Swift with the Swiftness of Freyfaxi:
 Come to me Ingvi, come to Your own.

With fingers supple and subtle as the Craft they hold,
 With lips ravishing and rare to make one rave,
 Vanir Prince! Virile! Vivid in Strength!
 Lord of Longings!

Naked in splendour, with fur gold-clustering,
 Reveal the mighty Hammer of my Desire:
 Come to me FreyR, come to Your own.

With voice low and lulling as You enchant my
 Ears-beyond-hearing with Your Secret Names;
 With voice rapt and rhapsodic as you lure me,
 Oh so willing, into your snare;
 With tongue whose wet thrusting wounds my mouth
 With deadliest desire,
 With tongue teasing and thrilling, with kisses akindle,
 With nipples of flame and shoulders like bronze,
 Flame of my lust, Immortal Desire:
 Come to me Ingvi, Come to Your own.

Warm and wanton Your Body enfolds me.
 I, Son and Lover, am Your Summer Sacrifice.
 Warm and supple Your Hands all-hold me.

I, Disciple and Devout, arch to the thrust of Your Spear.
 Hot and On High your Lifted Lance impales me.

I, Initiate and Innate to You, rise transfixed in the
 quickening of Your Seed Within-the-Within of Body and Soul.
 You Have Come to me, FreyR! You Have Come to Your own!

Observations From Ingvi's Orchard

Misty Wright

Strong hands,
Callused, yet tender
Wide of palm, long of finger,
Clever and nimble,
Dirt beneath each nail.
Shining eyes,
Piercing, yet warm
Long of lash, the corners crinkled,
With a laugh,
Forest green in hue.
Sharp mind,
Bright, yet cool
Measured with kindness, tempered with mercy,
Ready to forfeit
For love of another.
Firm lips,
Skilled, yet soft
Sweet in taste, with teeth to nibble,
Often with smile,
Breath like honeyed wine.
Golden skin,
Taut, yet supple
Broad of shoulder, narrow of hip,
Earth and sweat,
A scent quite alluring.
Quiet soul,
Merry, yet peaceful
With open heart, and giving hand,
Full of hope,
Bringing light to our dark land.

Skidhbladhnrir*Jordsvin*

Now the boat departs —
 Bound for Other Worlds,
 Water-Wagon, Ship of the Wanæs,
 Waters of our birth,
 Deep waters of the Unconscious.
 Laguz.

Nerthus, Dark Earth Mother;
 Njordh, God of coastal seas;
 Frey of the deep green woods;
 Freya, Mistress of Magick.

Earth and Water.
 Birth, Death, and Rebirth.
 Vanir: the Oldest Holy Family.

Freysblot (Haiku)*Jordsvin*

Bread broken on stones
 Offer the God to himself
 Ale poured into stream.

Freyr's Song

Jason Freysson

Who but I would pray, "Scatter my ashes to the howling wind!"
 If to truly know me, of my body you must mend.
 Who but I would pray, "Curse my name with your last breath!"
 To discover mine is a love undefeated by the chill of death.
 Who but I would pray, "Shed my blood copiously upon the earth!"
 If from my wounds trust in me is given birth.
 Who but I would pray, "Ignore my eternal blessings for but a while!"
 If in these two steps backwards, you would walk with me a million miles.
 My heart is like the sun warming all within its gentle kiss.
 My voice is like the laughing sea cooling all within its mist.
 Compassion is my sword sharper than any weapon of steel.
 All of life responds in earnest to my subtle will.
 Who but I dispels the darkness of the heart cruelly ignored?
 Who but I am the vessel into which all your dreams are poured?
 Who but I maketh fertile the most barren of soils?
 Who but I patiently coaxeth the maidenhead fern to uncoil.
 Who but I, like the dandelion, freely dispenses my sacred seed?
 Who but I am the table upon which all thy hungers you feed?
 Who but I am the essence of life fully in verdant bloom?
 Who but I am to all the Great Cosmos, the eternal groom?
 My heart is like the rose intoxicating with its sweet perfume.
 My voice is the beauty of the peacock, iridescently plumed.
 Passion is my rede, more sustaining than any words of man.
 All of life responds in earnest to the complexities of my plan.
 Who but I am the merchant who freely shares all of his wares?
 Who but I am to the forsaken the grieving soul who cares?
 Who but I am caretaker to all beasts and calls the universe my garden of delights?
 Who but I conquer all by seemingly relinquishing my might?
 Who but I am the Golden Stag piercing myself with my own horns?
 Who but I to all the Forgotten, am the one spirit that still agonizingly mourns?
 Who but I am the prey hunting myself with my own spear?
 Who but I when thou are in the wilderness, the one you need never fear?
 My heart is the fruit of Yggdrasil nourishing all who would come eat.
 My voice is the song of ecstasy whenever hearts twinned in love meet.
 Love is my beginning of which there is no end.
 All of life can, in me, find that one true friend.
 Call me Freyr, Lord of the Forest and Bringer of the Healing Rain.
 Keeper of the bargain of love that at Ragnarok's dawning might render me slain.

Beautiful Bounty

Rand Ulfsson

I bear a beautiful bounty, I bear it on my back;
 The bells are ringing, the warmth is clinging.
 I bear a beautiful bounty, and yet I feel a lack.
 So what can I do, I ask?
 Is it wrong for me to feel so black?
 The weight on my shoulders lights my way,
 It clears my head. I feel it in my dreams,
 And yet the path is dark. It seems to say:
 Are you listening? Do you hear?
 Your bounty's fled today.
 I wander, I travel, I yearn for what is lost;
 Days linger and longer: is the quest for naught?
 The wagon wends its way; In the distance I look oft
 And on that wagon rides my heart, I feel it
 In my bones. She rides to me, her gaze is soft.
 Shining like the sun, eyes so bright and wide,
 Smiling warm, as heated as the hearth;
 I see a beautiful bounty, just for what I ride
 She sings her song of hope and peace,
 I want her by my side.

Untitled

Tracy Nichols

I give thanks to the Harvest Lord,
 King of elves and hearts;
 Lord of love, Lord of light,
 Prince of the Vanir, keeping Asgard bright,
 I fear nothing with You and Your Sister by my side.
 Together You turn the world, direct its tides.
 I give thanks to the Golden Haired God of the Grain,
 Since He's touched me I haven't been the same.
 Son of the Sea King, ruler of Fae,
 Lend me Your power, protection, and presence this day.
 Hail Frey!

Jera In My Life

Ayla Wolffe

Green is the land,
my heart is restless,
always I become and grow,
words flow easily,
I choose where I go.
I walk the land with restless stride
giving energy back with each step,
one two, one two, one two
here I come and there I go
now you see me, now you don't.
Open is my heart,
song pours forth,
a constant flood over the land,
ululations that fall like rain.
Summer is the time when activity stirs my heart,
I flow with ease from task to task
finding my way from place to place
memories are made,
memories flood the new places,
come out from the old
and we become together.

Winter finds its way to me,
or I to it, whichever, as may be.
We settle down together,
making plans for the year to come,
finding the fit of each other
the curve of a chair,
as I write, or talk, or read a book.
I start projects, see them through.
Reflection is the rule of the day.
Hustle and bustle within my home,
soups are made, cookies, soaps
and many another thing besides.
I find ways of being more myself,
more in myself. I enjoy this time.
I am enjoying this time in ways I can't
when the heat orders me out of doors.
My home is my refuge,
my friends become my link beyond.
I open my house and visits ensue back and forth.
A time in my life for activity and for pause.
Winter, the other half that makes me who I am.

This is what Jera is to me.
 the completion that activity and meditation become.
 They become each other in process.
 This is how our folk lived long ago,
 this is how we live today,
 aware of it or not, we measure our days
 in time with the season,
 learning ourselves and loving the process,
 the exchange that gives self to self,
 causes us to move ever onward in self-discovery.

Hail the Golden God

Galina Krasskova

You are the joy-bringer of Asgard's halls,
 A God of light and laughter, gentle pleasures
 And a magnificent strength of such virility, such might
 That well I understand how Your wife was first moved
 By the sight of You,
 Standing aching, hungry and heart-sore
 In a sacred grove,
 Strung between worlds
 Beneath Mani's light.
 Well I know how the two of You
 Became each other's sanctuary,
 Each enfolding the Other
 In desire and liquid heat
 Until the worlds fell away
 And there was only the ecstasy
 Of hands, lips, tongues and flame:
 A serenade of ecstatic moans
 Heralding the union of shadow and light
 Beneath the gaze of the silent moon,
 Who is good at keeping secrets
 And will never tell
 Of the sweetness
 Of Your surrender.

A Prayer of Gratitude to Ingvi-FreyR

K.A. Steinberg

Hail to Ingvi-Freyr
 Bright one, Golden one,
 Lord of Alfheim, Gullinbursti's master
 Loving spouse to strong Gerd,
 Dutiful son to good Njorth,
 Possessor of riches that permeate
 The very strands of your composition.

Good one, Protective one,
 You don't fear death,
 So deep is your bravery.
 You sacrificed your sword for love,
 Unafraid to fight at the end of the worlds barehanded.

Light one, Virtuous one,
 Fair of face, Pure of heart,
 Sacrificed for the grains that sustain us,
 Killed and regenerated
 In strength and in sorrow
 So that others may live, you give yourself,
 Part of you changing, dying, and reforming with each passing year

Selfless one, Faithful one,
 You love with an unfettered heart
 In its bright ceremonious glory.
 So deep is your life force
 That it itself brings life, maintains life, nourishes the fields.
 The grains are your sons, the plants your daughters,
 They too are sacrificed so that others may live
 And they give gladly, purely, without expectation.

Wise one, Wanting one,
 Stripped of your glamour you are still beautiful.
 Your beauty radiates from the heart,
 Its pulchritude unable to be pulled away.
 Not even in death does your love falter,
 For even through the very act of your death
 Life springs forth.

Honorable one, Joyful one,
 Lord of abundance, keener of virtuous pleasures,
 So deep is your love and compassion for the world of men
 That you guide us to find the ecstatic truths within ourselves,

Ever patient, often lending a hand and illuminating the way.

Guiding one, Gilded one,
Mentor, truth seeker, teacher, life-giver
He who leads by most exuberant example,
The goodness in you resonates from the core of your being;
You are fair of heart and mind.

Fair one, Fecund one
No measure of thanks could be apt repayment
For the shining glorious gifts you bring
Nor the treasures that you offer.
Your golden spirit shines like a beacon in the darkness,
Helping us to find the joy inside ourselves
And revel in life's abundances,
Guiding us towards lives well lived.
Please accept this humble prayer of gratitude
In the sincerest possible spirit of love and admiration

Transcendent Love

Sigrún Freyskona

In the field They met,
She looked into His eyes,
Saw the light within
And opened up Her thighs.
As They came together
Their fluid bathed the ground;
Love burst from Their hearts
And made the Worlds go round.
Frey who laughs and dances,
Gerda silent and still;
Frey gives joy and plenty,
Gerda gives strength and will.
They embrace the lovers
Who transcend boundaries,
Who work against the odds
To know the path of ecstasy.
They embrace the givers
Who give from the love they share
To heal the barren lands,
To protect, provide, and care.

Invocation to Gerda

Excerpted from The Jotunbok by Raven Kaldera, Asphodel Press 2006

Hail, Lady of the Walled Garden,
Hallowed in hedgerive and hammerwort,
Sacred in stonecrop and sowthistle,
Gifted and gifting in gladden and dragonwort,
You help us build the still, safe place
In which we can grow tender hopes to blossoming.

Hail, Lady of the forest paths,
Hallowed in hillwort and hindberry,
Sacred in cock's spur grass and sicklewort,
Gifted and gifting in gale and libcorn,
You help us bring those hopes into the world
To test and turn them into manifestation.

Hail, Lady of the quiet endings,
Hallowed in hulwort and whortleberry,
Sacred in ramsons and raven's leek,
Gifted and giving in viper's bugloss and boarfern,
You teach us to cull out what cannot be
While still keeping hope alive in the dark.

Hail, Lady of the hidden treasures,
Hallowed in mallow and meadowwort,
Sacred in sundcorn and stitchwort,
Gifted and giving in groundsel and sedge,
Cleansed in river-mint and lamb's cress,
You bring us deeper than we thought possible
Into the earth on which we depend.

Hail, Gerda, etin-bride of Frey,
Shadow to light, night to day,
All things balanced in your keen dark glance.

Garden

Raven Kaldera

Her eyes are like the shadows beneath the spreading mint,
Cool and dark, beneath that which reaches for the light,
But usually downturned upon her busy hands. It is never
That she is shy, merely that the calm darkness of her eyes
Full on is not a gift she shares often. Her gaze is the blessed shade
Of the honeysuckle tree when the sun beats down, unrelenting.
Woodruff spirals at its roots, at her feet, while the braver
Goosegrass bounds across the paving stones of my walled garden.

*Her garden. After we put in the short post with her face,
Her wide-lipped mouth and averted gaze, it became hers.
No other northern goddess may have a shrine there, although
She thinks nothing of the clay Buddha and the painted Mariamne
Who were there before her. Gerda's peace lies on my garden,
Even now, when the green is November-withered and dull brown
Like the hems of her undergarments, brushing the stones
Around her ankles. All colors of the earth are kind to her.*

Her hair is the color of rich earth, turned with a spade
Before the eager fingers, trembling with anticipation,
Push the seeds, gently, forcefully, into the soil. Its neat plaits
Are like the beds in early spring, when we turn back the straw
Mulch and see the quiescent brown, waiting for a touch,
As she waits patiently in her garden in Jotunheim
For the day when she will methodically make her way
To He whose touch is her yearly awakening. No other
Can rouse her sleeping response, can quicken her breath,
Can make her measured footsteps break into a heedless run.

*We wanted the country, the farm, for many reasons, but truth
Be told, the thought of herb gardens made my breath catch
Longing in my throat. Fragrant lemon balm studded with bees,
Hoary sage, spiked motherwort and hyssop, and all the spilling
Mints. Yet I did not expect the bounty of the woods, when I
First walked this land — kinnikinnick, squaw vine, the scarlet
Berries of wintergreen against the December snow. As I built
The garden, bed by bed, my knowledge of the wild ones grew.
Wild and tame, they nourish me now. She loves all, though,
And so do I, as She has taught me.*

Her back is broad, her shoulders like rolling hills, her arms
Strong with muscle. She is no delicate gilded thing; she walks
Among the elven people to meet her love, their gazes scandalized

And dwelling on the solidity of her Jotun form, her shape
 A grandmother oak among their slender, ephemeral birch and maple,
 Hard like the oak and elm we split to feed our kitchen stove,
 Burning long and strong, not consumed for the hours it takes
 To bake those fragrant pies. Burning clean and bright, no black
 Sludge in the stovepipe like those softer woods. It is the hardest wood
 That lights the brightest fires, a worthy match struck to His gold,
 Passion to passion. Her patience is that woodpile, waiting sturdily
 To light the coldest winter nights.

*It took me seven years to clear the space. No tiller, no machines
 In that rocky, half-sterile hill of patchy lawn, just me and a garden claw
 Hacking out the weedy turf piece by piece, square foot by foot, inch
 By aching inch. Patience, she said. There is no deadline here. The magic
 Is in the process, not the goal. One by one, the beds went in, stone edgings
 Filled with compost dark as Her, rich from the manure piles
 Of goat and sheep. One by one, the precious herbs. If they did not survive,
 She said, Throw them out. I want nothing here that is weak, that cannot
 Stand up to wind and weather and perishing cold, here in this place
 Whose winds and mountains are nothing to the bitter cold of my home.
 Her garden is a spell of survival, of hope springing anew in spite of all.*

Her touch is a stone wall, shutting out noise and bustle, protecting you
 From all that would overwhelm and frazzle you. Her cheek is the paleness
 Of thick roots that grow in the garden, buried and eagerly sought. Her body
 Lies hidden beneath layers of dresses, plain and dark or brightly embroidered
 By giantess-fingers — you would not think them nimble,
 Compared to the elves who despise her, and yet her touch is soft, sure,
 And plies a needle well. Dark crescents of soil lie under her fingernails,
 From centuries of plying dirt as well, on her knees in the gardens she loves,
 The tiny seedlings twining up to kiss those broad fingers, as they know
 How much love is there for them. Her love is the warmth of piled earth
 In small mounds about their fragile roots, helping them to survive the frosts.

*“It won’t survive,” I say mournfully, looking at the second black lamb
 Whose tiny frame has lived these days only by our driving hands,
 Pouring milk down its reluctant throat. Live, we say, like a spell
 To give it will to do so, yet sometimes that spell fails. Mother-rejected,
 It will not even mewl. That black ewe knows better, her baleful gaze
 Protecting its stronger sister, who suckles happily. Sometimes they just
 Know. Some life is meant to fail — that is the lesson of Life’s profligacy.
 Quantity first, then weed for quality. Time to Weed, Gerda says,
 And we take the tiny body out in the cold, for the hammer-blow,
 For the ceasing of that shallow breath, for the compost heap
 That will turn death into more Life, come spring.*

Her rare smile is sweet as elderberries, hanging in dark clusters
 On the graceful branches, following the lacy white blossoms

That cure the cough and cold. Her womb is a barred gate; no young
 Will she bear her beloved, to be hostage to his keepers, though tears
 Rack them both on many nights, together and alone, when they speak
 Of this pain. Her heart is a warm quilt, tucked silently over the sobs
 Of the woman whose child did not come to fruition, or who had to stop
 The child herself. Her tears are the cold rain that falls on the lovers
 Who cannot speak of something, whose words are caught and trapped,
 Yet that rain will nourish the seedlings that fight their way upwards.

*Because of the weeding, I spend more time kneeling before Gerda
 Than any other. I pull, and kill, and kill. It is necessary, she says.
 The beams of my kitchen hold bunches of herbs, to find their way
 Into savory cooking, or into row upon row of shining glass bottles
 For medicine. It was a hobby at first, a way to thwart the high cost
 Of the pharmacy, a smug satisfaction ... and then the people came,
 Asking for help. The women were the hardest, the girls with their wombs
 Filled unwanted, fearing the machines of the doctors — was there not
 An easier way? I helped, and sometimes we were lucky, and the clinic
 Not needed. Do what is necessary, Gerda says. And I do.*

Her soul is a deep cave under the earth, bored with holes like the sacred places
 Under the ancient megaliths. On sacred days, the sun shines through,
 And lights the bloodied stone table like a miracle. Pain and joy, and I kneel
 To deeper wisdom. There must be culling, pruning, weeding for there to be
 Growth. His growth.
 And this is her Mystery.

Untitled

Ayla Wolffe

Riding across the sky
 on your golden bristled boar,
 light flows behind you
 a carpet that floods the land.
 Your skin smells of flowers and earth
 as though perfumed by Spring and Summer,
 you tempt me to touch you,
 to taste the very sky
 that is reflected in your eyes.
 I fall fast and deep,
 as though the well has placed itself
 here just for me,
 a well of emotions,
 a well of plenty,
 matched by your horn,

bringer of peace,
hunter within the forest,
your step is light and lithe
as one who leads the Alfar.
I am given to awe as I see them rise,
rise out of the mounds
in the glittering light of day
and dance for joy,
tumbling and laughing,
singing and squealing as given to themselves
as any can be.
You stand among them solemn
yet filled with the greatest love of all.

From out of the woods comes your love,
snow white arms, hair of spun gold,
eyes the green of the land.
Then do you fall to your knees,
in honest supplication
to the one for whom
ever you will give up everything
and all for, your heart your sword,
your very being.
Your arms meet in passionate embrace,
king and queen do you become,
heart beat matching heartbeat,
you whirl together to the song of those around
they sing, clapping a joy filled tune.
The more wild that the dance becomes
so then creation seems also to take place,
whimsy is rule of the day,
as it rules the heart of lovers everywhere.
Winter knows no place where you wander together.
When you cease your dance,
panting for breath, sweat upon your cheeks,
hair wild with electricity, faces flushed,
your lips meet with such intensity brides blush.
Limbs entwine as Freyr and Gerd find their pleasure
in one another.
In the end, never was greater love known.

Serving Gerda

Galina Krasskova

(Twice now, I have served Gerda by horsing Her at Lammas. "Horsing" is a term popularized in Afro-Caribbean traditions for the phenomena of Divine possession, the idea being that the God or Goddess "rides" the human much as a rider upon a horse. For lack of a better term, those of us within Heathenry and Norse Paganism who practice this also call it "horsing". Deity-possession is a process whereby a person's consciousness is moved aside and the God or Goddess inhabits the human's body, using it as He or She will. For those born with the appropriate psychic and mental wiring to allow this to occur, it is an amazingly intimate way to serve a God. —Galina Krasskova)

Shrouded in stillness You come,
 silent and self possessed.
 Watching and ready,
 You sink into me, filling my flesh,
 forcing me back, until my senses are Yours...
 Your power a quiet thing,
 an animal leashed and reined
 by iron will ... as I am leashed and reined.
 You notice everything and yet
 and yet
 Your eyes and heart and hands
 seek only Him.
 Enticer of Frey, Beloved Bride of the Lord of the Land,
 He who is Bringer of bounty to all barren places
 You hunger and in Your hunger
 You clarify the pathways of the heart.

Gerd of the Forest

Ayla Wolfe

White arms, golden hair,
 eyes as green as emeralds —
 You dance your way into my heart,
 as among the trees we play hide and seek —
 Your laughter rings through the woods,
 knowing nymph, your footstep leaves no trace,
 and yet they call you Jotun.
 Gerd I name Thee —
 Bride of Freyr
 you spend your days alone

but for the Alvs and the wild animals
those creatures who fear not
one who was never meant to be here —
You don't mind,
for in this do you find a sacred release,
mind seeking as your body hides,
a quest that goes ever upward, onward,
teaching you the proper ways of being beyond the skin
that most feel secures them to their place;
beyond the beauty that radiates from your face.
And when your love comes upon you,
even Sunna's rays are paled to the gold that is released
shining from your pores, from your essence
vibrating upon your voice —
Birds begin to sing, and are balked
by your ardor.
Children have learned only of you
as the Jotun who tried to defy Freyr and failed —
Threatened by Skirnir,
bowing to necessity,
melting to the final touch of love
that comes from the Lord of the Alvs —
But they know nothing of the joy that comes after,
the gentle glance, the half smiles,
dancing in the moonlight as gentle wind ruffles your hair,
given to yourself as you sacrificed a life best left behind,
ice castles melting,
exchanged for the pungent smell of pine —
Birth waters gushing forth,
a child giving the greatest gift of all —
You as a mother,
no longer dependent daughter,
waiting on the word of a non-communicative father —
Now your days are spent
in nurturing the child within
as you raise and give rise to the child who grows,
she walks tall knowing she is loved,
she walks silent knowing each place in this wood,
she creeps like every growing thing,
she mirrors your very heart.
Gerd, your gentle soul seeps into us all
we welcome Thee.
Hail!

Gerd Meets Frey

Michaela Macha

Gerd:

“To Barri, the wood which both we know,
you compelled me to come, now answer!
Are you the Van who would woo me with threats
and never take no as reply?”

Nor bribe of gold nor gruesome curses
will win the heart of a woman.
Always the gods deal ill with us giants;
why should I wed you, Frey?”

Frey:

“To turn your heart, my last hope were runes,
but your magic is stronger than mine:
Enspelled by your beauty I’ve spent my days
since I saw you from Hlidskjalf’s height.

Little I care if I live or die,
if I feel not your arms enfold me.
I will honor and love you; even my father
wedded one of your kind.”

Gerd:

“Why should go from my glaciers and rocks,
my home in the mighty mountains?
What shall become of the wastelands I own,
if indeed I would follow you, Frey?”

Frey:

“With green I will cover the grey of your mountains,
make fertile the rock-strewn fields.
Grass will grow on the ground that was barren,
a beautiful garden for Gerd.

Your realm’s pride will be praised by men,
they’ll honor you even as a goddess.
If you would have it, my heart is yours —
I offer you all that I own.”

Gerd:

“I did not believe you love me so well;
now I’ve seen your soul in your eyes.
You’ve thawed the ice of an etin-maid —
gladly will Gerd be your bride!”

Note: This poem is in the Old Norse alliterative meter Ljóðabattr (Song Meter). This poem is © Michaela Macha in the Common Domain and may be freely distributed provided it remains unchanged, including copyright notice and this License.

Gerda's Three Weddings

Excerpted from The Jotunbók by Raven Kaldera, Asphodel Press 2006

When Gerda was only a young girl, just about to come to her womanhood—which comes early to etin-women—she went with her family to Vanaheim for the first time. Her father and mother had gone to Vanaheim before, as the Jotunfolk who dwelt near the coast often put their hands into the trading between Vanaheim and Jotunheim. Gerda had seen the wooden carts, heavily laden with casks and boxes of foodstuffs, come trundling over the rough roads carved by giant hands through the jagged mountains and immense trees. She had tasted the soft, fine grains, better than any grain that could be grown in her heavily forested world, and the good ale from Aegirheim brewed with Vanaheim barley, and the great cabbages like giant green flowers sprouting from the Vanaheim soil, more fertile than any other in the Nine Worlds.

But it was nothing like finally walking on that soil, to seeing another world. Vanaheim was the first world other than her own that she had seen, and they traveled across the sea to get there in a ship that made her clutch the bow and try hard to still her stomach. Her mother fed her honey brewed with spicy roots to ease her belly, but even so she remembered that first trip as little more than a misery. She envied her older brother Beli his easy, cheerful climbing about the deck, and his mocking of her cramped misery did little to help. When he tormented her for the final time, waving a half-rotted fish at her and jeering, she got up unsteadily on her feet and threw a heavy coil of rope at his head, which knocked him overboard. Then their father had to fish him out by grabbing the other end of the rope, and their mother slapped and scolded her, but Gymir was laughing. “Don’t push our quiet little Gerda too far!” he roared proudly. “She may seem like a mushroom, but she has the soul of a tiger-cat under there!” But Gerda sulked and chewed on the end of her black braid of hair until the trip was over.

The first thing that she noticed about Vanaheim was how open the land was. “Where are all the trees?” she asked, used to the thick crowding forests of her home; here, the woods were short and small and further between, and much of the land was patterned like a great quilt in fields of golden wheat and barley and rye, the red of kale and the feathery green plumes of dill and fennel, the yellow of mustard-flowers and the blue of flax-blossoms. They stayed at Billing’s great hall on the Jotunheim-facing coast, for he was the master of all trade between the two worlds, and much respected in both. And when the hot summer was at its peak, they went to watch the sacrifice of the Corn King.

It was the first time that she laid eyes upon Frey, the Golden Lord of Vanaheim. He came to his yearly duty, tall and golden and smiling. He rode down the dusty road on a great white horse, and the people called out, “Ing! Ing!” as he came. The small knot of watching Jotunfolk stood to the side, a small pool of silence in the cheering crowd, and Gerda stood in the center of it. She watched him dismount in the wheatfield, where all but the last sheaf was cut down. The sickle flashed in the hand of someone clad in ragged grey, and the sheaf was swiftly wrought into a wreath to place on Frey’s golden hair.

Gerda’s mother and father, and even her older brother, had seen this rite before, and they hardly flinched when the knife went in and the golden-haired god fell to the earth, his blood soaking into the stubble-clad field. There was a scramble to get the cup filled and passed around, so that as many as possible might drink. After all the cheering, it seemed as if there was dead silence in the air, as if every voice had died with the golden Vanir man. Gerda did not wish to break the silence, so she waited until they had started down the road to Billing’s hall before she said, “That was a shame, to kill him. He was a fine-looking man.”

Her brother burst into jeering laughter, and even her mother chuckled. “That was Frey, one of the Lords of Vanaheim,” her father told her, “and he dies in that way every year. If the ritual is done properly, he will be back to life in a few days and walking about, good as new.”

“Every year, father? But cannot another take his place sometimes?”

Her father shrugged and said that he did not claim to understand the way of the Vanir. “But this is what Frey was born to do, it is said. It is part of the secret of Vanir fertility. And now we should take our supper.”

Gerda had one more question, but she did not ask it, because she did not think that either her father or her mother had the answer. So she tucked away into the box of unanswered questions in her head, which was a very full box because she was still quite young.

Many years later, when she was a grown woman and most of her questions had been answered, a messenger came to her father’s hall in Jotunheim. Gerda had grown into a tall woman, pale-faced with long hair the color of the dark turned earth. She was still quiet, but even her brother had learned by then not to push her too far. Once he ruined a thing of hers and laughed at her when she demanded wergild, and she turned into a lean black leopard and leaped upon him, scratching his face with her claws. It took her father ten minutes and three different shapes to pull her off of him, and it took her mother a month to properly heal Beli’s face. After that, Beli walked cautiously about his quiet sister, and did nothing to make her eyes flash red at him in the shadows.

Gymir’s hall was surrounded by a wall of fire, that no enemies might enter, although of course it wavered and split aside when any member of his household approached it from the inside, or a friend approached it from the outside. Yet this stranger came rushing through the flames on a blood-red horse, and the horse seemed not to be touched by the flames. As the folk of Gymir’s household piled outside, her brother came up beside her, his hand on his sword-hilt. “A rune-charmed horse,” he said. “This man must be sent by someone of power.”

Her father came up beside them. “Mayhap,” he said, “but I am the lord here, and he must still do courtesy to me.” And he called out to the man to speak his name, and his errand, or a hundred arrows would lodge themselves in his head.

Gerda did not know that Frey, the Golden One of Vanaheim, had climbed the steps to Odin’s tower Valaskjalf, the throne in front of the great window that looked out upon nearly all things. He had gone there just weeks before in order to search for his sister Freya, who had long been missing, searching for her lost husband Odr. The great wolves at the foot of the stairs, Geri and Freki, growled at him but let him pass, for his errand was good, and indeed he saw his sister turning back toward Asgard and returning to her summer home.

But then, as he would tell her himself much later, the glass shifted and showed a hall in the middle of a ring of fire, in the snowy winter of Jotunheim. Frey blinked, for until this time nothing in Jotunheim had interested him much, but he did not look away. The door to the hall opened, and an etin-woman stepped out and looked up, and for a moment it was as if she had locked eyes with him.

She locked eyes with him for only a moment, but it was enough for him. Frey, the Golden One of Vanaheim, sat on Odin’s throne like a statue, his heart seemingly stilled in his chest. All he could see was those dark eyes, and her frown of concentration. He watched the wintry sun glint off of her nearly-black hair in its tight, elaborate braids pulled sharply back from her pale face, saw her height and broad shoulders and ample figure and the way she held her head high. Nothing else existed for him to see in that moment. Then she called out to someone in a voice that he could not hear, and waved, and he realized that she had not seen him at all. Her glance had been for someone beyond the gaze of Odin’s mirror. Then she stepped back into the hall and closed the door.

Frey could not move from the seat of the throne all day, though he knew that Odin would be wroth if he found him there. He sat with his breath harsh in his throat, waiting only for one more glimpse of the etin-woman. He got one, just as the Sun was sinking over Asgard and he knew that folk would come looking for him. Night had already fallen in Jotunheim, and she came outside with a basket over her arm, accompanied by two other etin-women. The other two laughed and talked gaily, but she only smiled with that same self-enclosed look about her. Frey studied every inch of her face, her profile, the movement of her

hands as they helped brush back the snow from a small cellar and pull out roots to fill their baskets. He drank in the pale flash of her throat as she adjusted the mantle around her shoulders, the same dark-earth color as her hair. He watched her braids fall forward as she stooped, and his heart fluttered as they brushed against the snow near her knees. Then she went back into the hall with her maidens, and the door shut behind them, and though he sat for many more hours, all was dark within the great carved-tree hall and no one came forth.

Finally he left the tower, and wandered up and down the moonlit road as if in a trance. When dawn broke and Odin seemed to be busy elsewhere, he returned desperately to Valaskjalf in the hopes of seeing her again. Geri and Freki growled at him and would not let him pass, though he ordered them and pleaded with them, for they could sense his desperation and felt that his errand was not pure of heart. Weeping, he fled to his father's hall on the shores of Asgard, Noatun, the white curved building given to him by the Aesir for the time of his hostaging.

Njord saw his son's red-rimmed eyes and haunted glance, and brought him to sit before the fire at his fireplace, the mantel of which was the bow of a ship. "My son, what ails you?" he asked in concern.

"I have seen a maiden," said Frey, and then realized that he would have to tell of being in Valaskjalf. But this was his father, who would put him before the Aesir, and so he told of it. "You have been to Jotunheim with the traders, my father," he said. "Do you remember a hall, near the shore, carved from a single giant tree as the giants often do, and surrounded by a ring of fire? Do you remember a tall girl with hair the color of turned earth in braids to her knees, with eyes as dark as shadow, with skin pale as Niflheim snows?"

Njord was silent for a moment and then shook his head. "A hall in a ring of fire, yes, that is Gymir's place. He is an etin-lord of great power, my son, and if your heart is set on his daughter, I can think that it will only go ill for you. Forget her, my son. There are hundreds of women in Vanaheim who would willingly be your bride, or if you will not have your own kind, there are fair ones here in Asgard as well. But the etin-women are fierce, and I see that you would have to endure great loss for her."

Frey raised shadowed, sleepless eyes to his father's face. "And why should I, who go willingly to the blade every summer, fear loss? What is it that I must lose?"

Njord was silent again, and said, "Of all your possessions, what is most fine to you?"

The golden god's hand went to his sword. "This," he said. "For it was a gift from my mother and from you, and the last thing I received before coming here as a hostage."

"You may have to give it up," said Njord, "if you continue on this path."

Frey unbuckled his sword-belt without a pause and flung it on the floor. "Then I will give it up," he said. "It is only a sword. This is far greater."

Njord took up the sword from the floor, and placed it back in his son's hand. "When you took up this magical blade," he said, "you swore an oath that it would be the only sword that you would ever wield. If you give it up, you will have no sword again, ever, and you will be defenseless. Please, my son, think again."

Frey stared into his father's eyes for a long time, and then he spoke. "I cannot live without her," he said. Then he turned and rushed from Noatun, clutching the sword, and spent many hours pacing up and down the roads weeping. He would not speak to any who saw him, and they wondered, and were concerned, for the Golden One of Vanaheim was never seen in sorrow.

It throbbed in his head. Gymir's daughter. An etin-princess, child of a powerful lord. His friends had warned him about etin-women. They desired them, it was clear, but they also feared them—not as much as an Aesir might, but enough. One did not seduce an etin-woman; they came to you on their own terms or not at all, and one certainly did not try to take her unwilling, or you might find yourself beaten bloody or torn to bits. And indeed, there were hundreds of fair maidens of his own race who would gladly—and indeed already had—shared his bed and considered it an honor, and if this should not be enough, nearly any unmarried woman of the Aesir—and some who were married—would fall willingly to his charms. Why bother with a woman of the Jotnar, a barbarian who would scratch you as soon as look at you, and whose kin would likely do worse?

But Frey spent the rest of the week wandering up and down the road, as if he could not decide where to walk, as if it no longer mattered where his feet took him. His friends tried to distract him with the usual delights and comforts, but his eyes merely stared into the distance, seeing darker ones that locked with his. He did not speak, and hardly ate or drank; when he arrived in Asgard, he went straight to his room in his sister's house, and would not speak to anyone.

Over and over, he recalled what he had seen of her. He wondered why she wore a covering dress that reached from her neck to her ankles, instead of the tendency of most young etin-women to dress in furs and knives, showing off their tall, strong bodies. He wondered if it was modesty, or merely a strong sense of privacy; he wondered what it would be like to see that dress pooling around her ankles. He wondered what her voice sounded like, and how that pale skin would feel beneath the touch of his hand. As the Golden One of Vanaheim, he had lain with more women—and men—than he could easily recount, yet he somehow felt that if he could be with this woman, all the others would fade away by comparison.

He knew also that if he lay with her the one time, he would never wish to leave her... and that was not done. His own people would look askance at an etin-bride; the Aesir to whom he was pledged would be even more disapproving, and the Alfar even more than that. Etin-women were to lie with and then leave; one would then take a civilized wife who would follow you about respectably and faithfully keep your household and raise your children, including any that you happened to make with such side-trips. *You could lie with her, and then forget her*, he told himself, and then he laughed. *No, you will never forget her. And she deserves better than that.*

Getting up his courage, he sent a message to where Gymir held summer court on the coast of Vanaheim, but the message was refused at the gate, for Gymir did not want a Van courting his daughter. The messenger was turned away, and Gerda did not know. When the letter was delivered back into his hands unopened, Frey was plunged into a deep sorrow. He did not leave his rooms at Sessrumnir, and spent many hours lying on his bed and weeping. A cloud of grey seemed to engulf him, and his golden light was dimmed entirely.

Freya came back to Asgard at this time, and though many of the Aesir came to welcome her, with tears or heartening words, her brother was not among them. And she was downcast to see this, and asked about him, and was told that he had not come out of his room in many days. She asked in fear if he was ill, not wishing to lose yet another of her kin, but Loki said, "Ill, yes, with an illness that you know well, Lady of Love, and that only one thing can cure. He has lost his heart to some woman who will have him not, and he will not speak to any of us of it."

Freya came to him at once and cried out to see him red-eyed and tossing in his bed. "Who is this woman who has done this to you?" she cried. "Only tell me her name, my brother, and I shall place a bewitchment upon her so that she might fall helplessly in love with you, and then this will all be over!"

But Frey refused her gift. "I would win her on my own terms and hers, for if she loved me by the power of magic, I would always fear that it might fail, or that without it she would care nothing for me." And Freya wept and kissed his forehead, and though she nodded she did not speak, although it tore her heart to see her brother this way. But it was now her time to go back to Vanaheim for the winter, so she bade him to try and sleep, and left his side.

Finally Skirnir, a half-Alfar friend from his youth, the first who had befriended the lonely golden-haired youngster when he had first arrived in Asgard, stormed his room in Sessrumnir. "My friend, what has become of you!" he cried. "Whoever this maiden is, we will get her for you, unless she be wedded to another, and perhaps even then, for marriages have often been broken beneath the plow of a handsome god! Who is this woman, my friend? Tell me and we shall plan our attack!"

Frey hesitated, but the truth burned within him, and he yearned to tell someone. When Skirnir heard, he laughed uproariously, and said, "So the Golden One of the Vanir is in love with a barbarian etin-maiden! This is fun indeed! Do you actually intend to marry her, or do you merely mean to plow her furrow, Fertile

One?”

“I would do both, if I might,” Frey said, “and more than that still, but I cannot even speak to her. She is well guarded in her father’s hall, and her father likes not my suit, and sends back my missives. If I go there myself next summer, I would be killed, and at any rate I cannot wait that long. I think that longing for her might kill me before then.”

Skirnir shrugged. “I could go there,” he said, “and I could take a message. No oath binds me here. Of course, I would be risking my life, but I think that I could get through Jotunheim and impress some barbarian lord and his daughter.”

Frey drew in his breath. “Would you court her for me?” he asked. “Would you arrange a meeting? I will be forever in your debt.”

“What would you give me,” said Skirnir cannily, thinking of Frey’s great wealth, “if I were to do this for you?”

“Anything,” Frey replied. “My horse, my boar, my ship—what do you want?”

Skirnir’s eyes fell to the magical sword at Frey’s side. It had been forged by the Duergar for Nerthus of the Vanir to give as a gift to her son, and its hilt was wrought like golden wheat and its blade was inlaid with many runes. “Give me your sword,” he said, “for I want something to use in my hand, to stay by my side.”

Frey was silent at this, and his thoughts warred with one another. His father’s words echoed in his ears, and he looked back and forth from Skirnir to the sword. Finally he said, “Ragnarok is far away, and may not ever come. This is now.” And, he thought, if anyone had to hold his sword, at least it would be his friend Skirnir. He held out the sword to Skirnir and said, “Go to Jotunheim. Convince her for me.”

And so it came to pass that Skirnir came bursting through Gymir’s wall of fire, armed with Frey’s magical sword and riding Frey’s magical red horse, Blodighofi, who did not fear fire. He backed the horse to the door and made it kick with its hooves, striking loudly. “Do we let him in?” growled Beli to his father.

“He may be rude and a fool,” said Gerda, “but by the rule of hospitality he is owed a drink. And aside from a mark on the door, by which you and your own friends have done worse, my brother, he has not attacked us.” And she went calmly to the door and welcomed him.

Skirnir introduced himself and his errand, and when Gerda heard that missives had come and that she had not heard, she cast a disgruntled glance at her father. Skirnir opened his pouch and showed her the jewels and magical apples that Frey had given him, and promised her more if she might marry his master, Lord Frey the Golden One of Vanaheim.

As she stood staring at the gifts, Gerda’s heart skipped a beat in her chest. She remembered the tall fair-haired man whose throat had been cut, and how fine she had thought him. Then she hardened herself. Why did such a man not come before her himself? Why did he send some minion to bribe her with gifts, as if she was a thrall to be purchased? “Take your gold and jewels to other maidens,” she said. “The daughters of Jotunheim are not so easily bought.”

Skirnir’s face darkened, and he drew the sword from his belt and waved it around in the air. “Agree to marry Lord Frey or meet your doom!” he cried.

Gerda stood her ground. Behind Skirnir, two dozen etins had their blades half out of their sheaths, watching for the word from Gymir. She set her jaw and glared at him. “Threaten the daughters of men with your blade,” she said, “but do not try to frighten a giant’s daughter with such puny things.”

Skirnir’s face turned red with rage and he began to rant, cursing her with a long litany of deaths and disasters if she did not submit at once. She stared at him, wondering if he had gone mad. Then the sword flashed through the air, and accidentally struck a beam, and one of the lamps fell to the floor with a crash, and everyone ducked, cursing. “Shall I kill him now, Father?” hissed Beli, his eyes gleaming.

Gymir gritted his teeth visibly. “Not yet, my son. I have an idea.” Then Gymir pulled his daughter aside and spoke to her where only her family could hear. “You are my child, and I will never force you to wed where you would not,” he said, “but my business is often in Vanaheim, and a marriage to the Golden One

might be advantageous. At least meet with him, speak to him, and if you find him hateful I shall shelter you from all harm.”

“But this fool is in your hall now, my father!” she hissed. “What shall I do with him?”

“Pretend to be frightened,” said her father, “and say that you will meet with his master. That will get him out of here before he sets the ceiling on fire and we must slay him for it.”

Gerda sighed and shook her head, for she was not one for dissembling, but she awkwardly knelt before the ranting Skirnir and pleaded with him to stop, that she would meet Frey and discuss marriage with him. “Where?” Skirnir demanded.

She thought of asking to meet him in the Iron Wood, and bit her tongue, trying not to smile. Perhaps somewhere in Vanaheim was best, she thought. “In the Barri Woods,” she said, remembering the thick stand of trees where she had played as a child while visiting the coast of the Vanir. That reminded her of the one time she had seen Frey, which had been his death. *Could I marry a man who dies by the knife every year?* she wondered. “In nine days,” she added, giving herself time to think about it.

Gymir stood forth then. “We must discuss the bride-price,” he said, and Gerda was reminded that her father was very much a merchant. Still, it might distract this raving messenger. “My daughter is no mere milkmaid, to be had for nothing,” he said.

The sword wavered in the air, and dropped. Finding now no opposition to his demands, and faced with an etin-lord ready to haggle, he was no longer on sure territory. “What would you ask, my lord Gymir?”

“That sword,” said Gerda, pointing to it. “If he wants me, he will give his sword to my family.” It was one way to get it out of this lunatic’s hands, she thought.

Skirnir looked dismayed. “But Lord Frey promised it to me for my service here—” he began, but Gymir cut him off.

“No, no, if he will have my greatest treasure, I will have his! Tell your lord that no other bride-price will do, and that if he wishes to bargain, his wedding will be much delayed,” said Gymir. “And you may leave that sword here, in token of your good will.”

Skirnir stared at the sword, and at Gymir, and perhaps it occurred to him that Frey was in such a state over Gerda that he would gladly give away the sword to this family of Jotnar rather than delay the wedding for weeks while they haggled over precious stones and bales of grain. “Very well,” he said sourly, “I will leave it here, by your threshold. But none may touch it until she is delivered to their wedding night!” Then he stalked out of the hall and leaped onto the red horse to leave, and all the fists of Gymir’s men relaxed on their sword hilts.

But Beli stood forth angrily and faced his father. “My father must value his daughters so little, that he would sell them so cheaply without a fight! Why did you not allow me to slay the rascal, and then we would have had the sword anyway!”

“With how many of my men dead?” Gymir pointed out. “And even if you did kill him, then we would have the Aesir and the Alfar down on us, and a war would begin. Now, I do not mind a war or two, but the spring shipments are ready to go across the water, and—”

“These are the words of a trader, not a warrior!” cried his son. “You have sold my sister for credit in Vanaheim!”

Gerda put a hand on his shoulder. “I but promised to meet him and speak of marriage,” she said. “I can still reject him, or if it comes to marriage, I can divorce him if I like him not. I am sure that I can find ways to make him sorry that he fell in love with me.” And she bared her sharp Jotun teeth, and Beli snorted and went to look for some ale.

When Skirnir thundered back over Bifrost, he found Frey waiting anxiously by the gatehouse, next to where Heimdall kept his watch. Frey ran up and seized his stirrup. “Tell me what happened,” he said urgently. “Before you even get off my horse, tell me!”

Skirnir tossed him a grin. “She is yours,” he said. “She will meet you in nine days in the Barri Woods to

discuss the wedding with you.”

Frey’s face went from dark to light to dark again. “Nine days!” he moaned. “It will be nine days of agony. But at least she will see me!”

Skirnir dismounted and pulled him aside. “There is one problem,” he said. “Her family asks for your sword. I told them that you had promised it to me, but they were adamant.”

Frey rent his hair. “Then they must have it,” he said finally. “I give you my horse, Skirnir, as a gift instead.” Then he went to Odin, and flung himself on his knees, saying that there was a family matter in Vanaheim that he must see to, and giving his word that he would return as hostage in one turn of the Moon’s path. Odin saw his reddened eyes, and though he did not guess at the cause, he released Frey to go home for one month.

She met him in the woods, in the darkness, so that she would not have to look into his eyes at first. He brought a torch, but she called down a gust of wind to blow it out. He saw her only as a tall figure in the shadows, waiting for him, and it seemed that he saw as well the flash of red eyes in the darkness, and the graceful shadow of a great cat. She stood alone, draped in her dark cloak the color of the turned earth, her hands clasped before her. “So you are the one who has gone to such trouble to woo me,” she said. “My father likes not your messenger. Why did you not come yourself?”

“I was afraid, Lady,” Frey replied, and his voice was soft.

“Afraid of my father? He might have spitted you on a pike, that is true,” she said.

He shook his head. “I would walk through many pikes merely to speak to you. No, I was afraid that I would fall to my knees before you and beg you to marry me, and that would shame us all in front of your family. I could not trust myself, so I sent Skirnir.”

She was silent for a while, a still figure in the darkness. “You would have done better to come yourself,” she said finally.

“Skirnir says that your father asks my sword as a bride-price,” he said.

Gerda lifted her head proudly. “I ask that price,” she said, “in exchange for my pledge to you. It was no idea but mine. Am I not worth your finest possession?”

“If you will marry me, you will be my finest possession,” replied Frey. “I will gladly give up my sword to you. I would give you anything I have. But I am bound by my hostage-vows to fight with the Aesir, and if Ragnarok comes, it may be used against me.”

“Then we shall have to make sure that Ragnarok does not come,” she returned. “But I warn you, I will not dwell in the lands of those who killed my kin.”

Frey shook his head. “I cannot break my hostage-vows. My father and my sister and I swore them on terrible ancient powers. I must live in Asgard or Alfheim for two-thirds of the year, and only visit my home during the autumn.”

She was silent for a moment. “Vanaheim is not so bad in the autumn,” she said finally. “I could live with you there at that time. And for the rest, I could spend the springtime in Alfheim, though I like it not, and I expect that the Alfar will like me little as well.”

“I am not without power in Alfheim,” Frey said, smiling. “They will treat you well, or hear from me about it.”

“But in the spring,” Gerda said, “I will go home to my family’s hall, and you must go make peace with your hostage-masters, and we will be apart. There is no hope for that. I will never go to Asgard.” And Frey could see from the tilt of her chin that nothing could move her on this point, and so he agreed. It pained him to be caught between his oaths and her pride, but his love for her was great enough that being together for half the year was worth losing her for the other half.

She stood still again for a moment, as if she had not expected him to agree, as if she was only just realizing the full force and depth of his love for her, and she looked for a moment lost, like a girl who is unsure of what to say. Then he stepped close to her, and decided that the time had come to go beyond

speaking, and he kissed her, and his golden aura enveloped her like the sun rising behind a dark standing stone. And soon her long cloak fell to the ground, and her dress pooled about her ankles, and they spent the night there together in the Barri Woods.

Just before dawn, as the sky was beginning to lighten, Gerda asked the one question that she had carried with her in her heart all these years. “What is it like, to die and return?” she asked him as they lay together under the trees.

“Cold,” he said. “It is cold, and dark, and I walk the Hel-road, and every year the guardian says, ‘Greetings, my lord. It is good to see you again.’ And every year I am afraid that they will open the gate for me, but they always turn me back, and then I awaken to my body.”

“Do you remember the pain after you awake?” she asked him.

“Always,” he said, and kissed her.

When the sun rose, Gerda and Frey set sail in his magical ship to Jotunheim, where they landed on the shore near her father’s hall, and Gerda took him to meet her family. Gymir looked upon the Vana-lord who would have his daughter’s hand, and saw that he was scratched and bleeding, and smiling so brightly that he shone like the sun, and Gymir said, “I see that you have satisfied my daughter.” And he laughed, and all his folk roared with laughter, but Frey laughed too just as loudly, and lifted his shirt to show his scratches, and this opened their hearts to him. Frey and Gerda pledged their troth there, in front of Gymir and Aurboda, and the wedding was planned for a fortnight hence.

But there was one among them who did not laugh, and who indeed sat scowling through the ceremony. Afterwards, Beli went to Gerda and pulled her aside, and told her, “You bring shame on all of us by marrying outside your people.”

Gerda pulled away and said, “I do not live my life for you, my brother, and I shall marry whom I choose.” And she went away from him.

As she walked away, he called after her, “He is now my life-enemy, sister who values not her own kin! If it comes to war, I will kill him!” But she did not look back or speak to him, and indeed it was years before she spoke to him again.

After a fortnight of preparing, Gerda and Frey came forth to be married. A thousand guests of her father’s attended from all corners of Jotunheim, and some came even from Niflheim, and gruff Surt the Black and some of his many sons came from Muspellheim. There were cliff-giants from the mountains, and frost-giants with snow still in their beards, and wolf-folk from the Iron Wood, and many others. The skin of a great cave-bear, which was the totem of Gymir’s family, was spread before them and they stood upon it. Their hands were cut with knives and bound together, and the blood shared between them. “And now you are our family,” said Gymir, “strange as it may seem. May you both be happy together, or at least not too miserable.” And all the Jotnar howled for them, loud enough to shake the rafters of the hall.

Then they mounted the ship yet again, and Frey took Gerda home to Vanaheim, where he brought her before his mother Nerthus. “This is my beloved,” he said to her, “whom I have married according to the custom of her people, and I would have you welcome her as a daughter.”

“According to the custom of her people, perhaps,” said Nerthus, “but if you wish me to welcome her as my daughter, you must be married according to the customs of your own people as well. I will not see any marriage to my son the Golden One unless it is with the wheat-wreaths and the burning grain.” So Frey and Gerda had a second wedding, and the Vanir came from far and wide to watch them, and his sister Freya came and embraced Gerda.

“I am overjoyed to see my brother so happy again,” she said. “He has loved no one like this before, in all the days of his life. Indeed, we thought that no one could capture his heart! Yet here you are, and I do not have to fear for him any more. I will welcome you as my sister, if you will have me, daughter of Gymir.”

Gerda wondered at this, and said, “Tell me, Love Goddess of the Vanir: Why did your brother choose me, when he could have had any woman of your people, or of the Aesir?”

Freya embraced her and said, “Love strikes where it will, and who knows this better than I? I do not

begrudge him his marriage, though it be to golden Vanir or proud Aesir or fey Alfar-maid or bearded Duergar-woman, or yet to a tall and beautiful etin-bride. Love is love, and it is always good.”

And on the morrow they were awoken by singing, and when they came forth from Nerthus’s house, the Vanir crowned them with wreaths of wheat, and laid sheaves of wheat in their hands, and drew them forth singing into the winter fields where a great fire was burning, and their hands were bound together, and Gerda’s braids were unbound and her long hair wrapped around Frey’s shoulders. Bowls of grain were given to them to pour into the fire as an offering, and then gold rings were given to them to place on each others’ fingers. They were taken to a bower made in a hollowed-out hayrick, and while they had a second wedding-night, the Vanir sang sweetly all around them.

The next morning, Frey said to his twice-wedded bride, “I fear that there must be a third wedding, for the folk of Asgard will not respect you as my wife unless we are married before them as well. And I will not have them say that you are some passing fancy that I will likely put aside when I am tired of you.”

“But I have told you,” Gerda said, “that I will never go to Asgard.” And they parted in silence, with kisses and tears, and Frey went back to fulfill his oath, and Gerda returned to her family at Gymir’s hall, where she sat silent in the wintry garden and stared at the withered herbs.

Her mother comforted her, and told her that many women went without their husbands; some were wed to sailors, or travelers, or men with other wives or families. It was not uncommon for giants to have more than one wife or husband, and to live apart. “Perhaps you should take a second husband, to comfort you when your golden lord is away,” she suggested.

But Gerda shook her head. “I have seen no one I wish to wed,” she said, and would say no more about it.

For himself, Frey was quieter than usual, and he did not join in the revelry of Asgard, and he was often seen to sigh to himself. But he took up again his duties and no longer lay weeping in his bed, and many of the folk of Asgard considered him cured of what had ailed him. However, gossip travels with a will of its own, and Skirnir’s tongue was by no means discreet, so it was not long before all of Asgard knew that Frey had secretly married an etin-woman. So it was that Odin and Frigga called Frey forth to Gladsheim, and he came, knowing what it was they would ask.

It was Frigga who spoke first, as he knew that she would; marriage was her realm. “My lord Frey,” she asked him, “we hear that you have wooed the daughter of an etin-lord. Tell us, do you intend to wed her, or is she merely a concubine you are visiting in Jotunheim?”

“I have already wed her, Lady,” Frey said, “by the rituals of her people, and of mine. Gymir’s daughter is my wife, and nothing shall change that.”

At this a great clamor arose of many voices speaking at once. Some cried out against this union of As-sworn Van and Jotun lady; some cursed Frey for a fool; some said that at least there had been no wedding by their own customs, so it was no real wedding after all. One woman’s mouth spoke forth that this was the known promiscuity of the Vanir, and that it had finally brought shame on them all.

At this, Freya stepped forth and chided the crowd. “Do you all scoff at the power of Love?” she demanded. “Love has done this, and I say that it is well done. There is little enough love in the world; do not condemn love that has sprung up unawares!” And saying this, she remembered her lost husband, and turned away in tears.

Frigga stood also, and held out her hands to both those who condemned and those who defended, and also those who stood silent. “Rather than letting this be a division between these worlds,” she said, “let it be a bridge and a frithmaking between us.” And Odin stood forth with his wife, and although some still muttered about the weak words of women, the clamor was silenced.

Odin turned to Frey. “We will welcome your bride, if she comes here,” he said, “but as you are a sworn frith-guest of ours, you must marry her by our customs, in our city.”

“That, my Lord Odin,” said Frey, “will be entirely up to her.”

The next day an Alfar lord and lady came to Frey and they spoke formally to him. “Lord Frey, you were set to watch and guard us by the Aesir, and we have long respected you, for you are a good and honorable man. But now we hear that you would take a giantess to wife, and we ask you not to do this, for it would bring shame upon you.”

“Who I marry is none of your concern,” Frey said. “I love this woman, and she shall be my wife, etin or no.”

“My Lord, we beg you,” protested the Alfar lord, “do not bring this giantess as your consort into our land! Do not force this bloodthirsty barbarian upon us!”

Frey smiled, thinking of Gerda, and how she had licked his scratches. “I shall do that,” he said. “I shall bring my bloodthirsty barbarian etin-bride into your realm, and you will treat her with courtesy and hospitality, because I am the Guardian of Alfheim and I say it will be so.” And though they pleaded with him, he would not hear them. And so it was that their marriage was condemned by as many as welcomed it, and from that time on any who would wed against the desires of their family or clan, or against the laws of their people, could call upon Frey and Gerda to bless their union.

In the meanwhile, while Gerda sat at her father’s home, her cousin Skadi came to Gymir’s hall. Skadi was a whirl of white furs and stomping boots, shaking snow off of her hood and doffing her doeskin gloves. “Greetings, Lady of the Snows!” cried Aurboda. “What brings you to Gymir’s hall?”

Skadi’s eyes lit on Gerda. “First, to congratulate my cousin on her wedding. Forgive me that I did not attend, but I was still in mourning for my late father Thjazi. Second, to tell you that I am going to Asgard to demand wergild for his death, and I hope to enter with my cousin when she goes to her husband.”

“I have told my husband that I will not set foot in Asgard,” Gerda said. “And what does your father’s wergild have to do with me?”

Skadi’s dark eyes gleamed. “It has much to do with you, my cousin. Why will you not go to Asgard? Do you not realize what a chance this is for your people?”

Gerda frowned at her, but the frost-giantess continued. “Those Aesir never let my father have a place in their council, even after he married one of them and inherited her land after she died! But they may let us speak, if we are married to some of them, because the Aesir underestimate their womenfolk. You are Frey’s wife; you might have a chance to get your people’s voice heard there in the White World. Why do you pass up this chance?”

“But you are no one’s wife, Skadi,” said Aurboda. “What is your plan?”

Skadi smiled coolly. “Why, I shall go and claim the property of my father and stepmother, and I shall ask for wergild for my father’s death. I shall appeal to Tyr, and I expect that he will say my request is fair. And as wergild, I shall ask One-Eye for a husband. The Aesir believe that womenfolk all need fathers and husbands to protect them; they will believe the request.” She threw back her head and laughed, shaking snow everywhere.

“But then you will have to marry whoever Odin chooses,” Gerda said. “My husband is kind and beautiful; what if yours is not?”

“Then I will divorce him after a reasonable time,” Skadi said, “and by then my voice will be well established there. Besides, I hear that Frigga’s youngest is most handsome, and perhaps I will get lucky.” She rubbed her hands together. “Come with me, cousin; we shall be as sisters there, and keep each other company, I promise.”

Gymir stepped forward and touched his daughter’s shoulder. “I would not force you to leave my household,” he said, “but Skadi speaks wisdom. They would never let a warrior onto the council there who was not sworn to them, but you are a bride, and they would not see you as a warrior but as a wife; such are their ways. You could speak for your people.”

So it was that Gerda dwelt on the matter for some days, and finally she agreed to go to Asgard, though

her heart was heavy. And a message was sent to Frey, who rejoiced and began to make ready for their third wedding day.

But Skadi went ahead, in her snowy sleigh, armed with weapons and clad in her best snow-white furs, and railed for wergild at the gates of Asgard. And, as the tale goes, Odin allowed her to claim her inheritance of land, although no bloodline gave it to her, and he placed all the unmarried Aesir men in a circle around her. She allowed herself to be blindfolded, and was told that she must touch the feet of the men, and choose one only by their feet. So she chose the one that she felt had the best-formed feet, and lo and behold when the blindfold was removed she stared into the face of Njord the Vanir Lord of seafaring, the father of Gerda's husband Frey. And all the Aesir men breathed a sigh of relief, for they had feared to be forcibly married by Odin's word to the forbidding giantess. Skadi was a little disappointed that she had not chosen the beautiful Baldur, but Njord was a handsome man, and clearly kind of heart, so she was content enough with the way things had gone.

The next day, when Gerda came to Asgard, Frey kissed her in front of all of them, and said, "This is my beloved, and let no one speak against her." And Freya stood with them and spoke for them, and Frigga came forth to speak of frith and peacemaking and the sacredness of marriage vows, and finally Odin spoke forth and blessed their union, and no others spoke out publicly against them. And it came to pass that Gerda married Frey on the same day that Skadi married his father, and they placed their hands on Frigga's spindle and walked under Odin's spear, and there was feasting and dancing for days. Thrice-wedded, they went to their third wedding night as if it was their first.

Gerda tried to make herself at home in Asgard, and Freya gave her a walled courtyard at Sessrumnir to plant the cloistered herb gardens that she loved. Many of the Aesir were courteous to her, and came to value her, but though none dared mutter against her in her hearing, she heard many of them curse her kin, and her race, and speak ill of them. And Gerda was silent, for it was not her way to do battle in public over the words of others.

She finally spoke to her husband about it, but he bade her to ignore their hard words, and to remember that they were not speaking against her. Still, it ate at her heart, and she felt that an insult to her kin, or to her race, spoken in her presence, was indeed an insult to her. The months drew on, and she did not feel at home, and began to long for a place where she did not have to guard her tongue so. And after a long time of this, she discovered something that made her troubled heart weep, something she had forgotten until it came upon her.

So Gerda went to her husband and drew him into her walled garden, in the night while the stars shone down upon them. And she sat with him on the bench where they had sat many times before, and laid her hand upon his knee, and said to him: "There is life in my womb, heart of my heart. We have quickened us a child."

And Frey cried out in joy and would have embraced her, but she held him away from her and said, "I tell you this not as tidings of happiness, but of sorrow. For when our child comes of age, to whom shall he be forced to swear fealty? If battle should be called, what side will he be on? What geas shall be laid upon him before he is even born?"

Frey was silent, and then said, "As my father swore to be a hostage to the Aesir, so he swore also for his children, and their children and grandchildren. So I am hostage, and my sister Freya, though not our half-sisters who have other fathers. And Freya's daughters are also so bound, and so would be my children." Gerda placed her hands over her womb in a gesture like an iron gate, and said, "I will not bear children to be hostages to anyone's whim. I will not give them life only to take away their freedom, especially as they have my blood in them, and will be scorned by many."

"Yet I cannot fulfill my oath otherwise," said Frey. "What would you have me do, my love? For this is your womb, and your decision. That is the way of the Vanir."

Then it was her turn to be silent, until finally she said, "If this is how it must be, then I will bear you no

children at all. I will not have them torn between loyalties that they did not choose. I will still this life in my womb, and I will bear no more until there is peace between all our peoples.”

Frey heaved a sigh. “That day may never come.”

“Then I shall remain barren,” said Gerda. And he embraced her in silence, and they both wept, but that night she gathered certain herbs from her garden and brewed them into a brew, and stilled the life within her womb. And so it came to pass that the Lord of Life, who gives such growth to the fields and flocks, has a barren marriage, and that Gerda turns often to her herbs to ensure that it is so, and that many women who need also to still the quickening life within them turn to her for aid and ease of passage.

And after having lived many years in Asgard, Gerda made ready to leave and go to her home in Jotunheim, for she did not feel that she could stay there any longer. She told her husband that she would meet him in his hall in Alfheim, and his home in Vanaheim when he was allowed to come home, and that he would always be welcome in her father’s hall in Jotunheim. They wept again, and embraced, and parted, telling each other that their love would endure even such a yearly parting, and promising to see each other in the summer.

Gerda packed quietly, and would have left Asgard with no one knowing, yet Skadi got wind of it and came to her as she was clipping sprigs of herbs to take with her. “You would abandon me here in the White World, then, my cousin?” she asked.

“It grieves my heart sore,” Gerda said, “but I must go. I cannot live among the killers of my kin and the haters of my race, though we both agreed to make this sacrifice. My sacrifice will be different, though.”

“Then if you must go and leave me alone as the sole voice for Jotunheim,” Skadi said to her, “I charge you with this: When our people come into councils, speak for me. Remind them why they sent me here, and why we work for peace against all odds. Be my voice, not that of your family. Do this for me, your cousin alone in the White World.”

“Alone?” asked Gerda. “Is your husband, the father of my own beloved, not to your taste, my cousin?”

“His hall is not to my taste,” said Skadi. “For the mewing of the gulls and the noise of the sea awakens me too early, and I stink of salt air. And he will not dwell far from the sea; my mountains make him long for the waters. He is a pleasant enough fellow, but we shall have to live apart for much of the year. So it seems, my sister, that we shall both be absent brides... but my place here is now assured, and my voice will speak for our race, if you will speak for me.”

“I will do this,” Gerda said to her, and they embraced, and Gerda went forth from Asgard and never returned. She kept her word, speaking for Skadi in the councils of Thrym, and she spent the winter with her family in the snow, and then went forth to Vanaheim in the summer, much as she had gone forth so long ago as a young maid, to see the Golden One die by the hand of the priestess of the Vanir, and to welcome him back to life with kisses when he arose again.

Freyr & Freyja, The Divine Twins

Ayla Wolfe

Born of the same flesh
 Male and Female
 Mirror images
 Embracing us you come
 Your arms encircle each other,
 divine sister and brother
 Freyr, Freyja
 love follows you,
 trailing in your wake,
 leaves reviving, grass growing,
 flowers bloom again.

You are the epitome of life at it's greatest,
 the blood that flows through you
 is like the sap of a tree,
 or the freshest of morning dew
 Always at the peak point of being renewed
 You cleave to one another,
 Holy are you
 Lord of Light Alfheim
 Lady who brings forth life,
 leaving sorrow far behind.

The very day bows down before you,
 brooks gurgle merrily,
 birds sing most becomingly,
 bees buzz, gathering pollen busily.

There is not one being in all this world
 who has not joy at the coming
 of this sacred pair
 Whether they know you or not,
 in your loving grace,
 your glance, the look upon your face
 they soon are captive,
 yes they soon are caught.

Languidly you lie beneath a tree,
 wrapped in each other's embrace
 searching for that part of you
 which will complete you,
 which was left behind,
 in one another's face

Legs entwined,
 arms clasping together
 as though making whole
 what was torn asunder
 the day you completed the journey
 from within your mother's womb.

Eyes searching always,
 hands held tight,
 if seen from afar one would be captured,
 held in place, in complete awe,
 by the sight
 A golden radiance shines forth,
 you merge,
 becoming one with each other.

The sun sets now,
 bestowing her last rays
 of red, gold, rose, lavender
 upon you where you lay
 You rise, separating,
 becoming yourselves,
 content to be
 for just one more day.

A Night With The Fairy Folk

Ayla Wolffe

Sitting on a ledge in the hot summertime,
 you can hear the buzz of the bees all around —
 Off in the forest all the animals lay about
 until the sun goes down —

Then do the woods come alive,
 Pixies light up the night with their torches
 as they fly by —
 Tousled hair, ragged skirts, bare feet too —
 Into the forest they walk ever so quiet,
 Holding your breath every moment you try,
 to peek around the bushes,
 to hide in the grass,
 to be one with nature —
 To be the same as the fairy folk —

Suddenly beside you a little man!
 He grasps your hand, turns you about,

he lets out the largest,
 the greatest ever,
 oh the most merciless shout!
 All at once from every place they come,
 Flittering, fluttering,
 walking, crawling,
 the woods are alive,
 but not easy toward you in any way —
 You wish at this moment you had the breath,
 you had the notion,
 the words left to pray —

Pulling on your hair,
 grasping at your clothes,
 you're led from one place to another,
 never to rest —
 The pixie lady with the purple hair,
 seems the only one
 to express some care —
 Yet even she has no use for you,
 when into her magic wood you did intrude —

A circle is made in a well-lit glade,
 Now is your chance to earn your way.
 If you can entertain these illustrious folk
 they shall not just let you go
 but give you a gift to last your life,
 So buckle down,
 perform well,
 Or regret your actions
 for the rest of your life!

A song wells deep from within,
 of daylight romps,
 of love, of sentimental things,
 but to their faces not a single smile
 does this bring —
 Where the bad girl who sneaks out at night?
 Where the one who picks the fight?
 Where the horse that slips the gate?
 We want wild, untamed spirits
 given to no one but themselves —
 One of the dwarves yells...

And so the image that you paint,
 is wild, turbulent,
 of water crashing upon rocks,
 of boats that no longer care to float.

Oh the stories that you tell,
of boys who run when work is just to be done,
of the pies in the window which had been steaming,
that ended in a tramp's stomach
so that it no longer was so empty seeming,
The life of the road,
the rain that falls,
how it washes the traces of where you have been
before you get to where you are going —
Of the horse that can jump a fence so high,
But the rider that can't quite keep his seat.
How the horse laughs at him,
stamping his feet.

And when your time is done,
and the sun begins to rise
it's agreed that you shall be given
the gift of the wise.
So on your way home you speed your feet,
with memories to hold
close to your heart,
in later days
you may be able to say
"...there was the night

I charmed the fairy folk
and they set me free..."

Though who will believe?
That's between you, the fairies, and me...

Man Is the Joy of Man

Ayla Wolfe

Love to be shared is warmth all around,
where everyone gives as much as they get,
where everyone lives without pain or regrets —
Where a hand on a shoulder can remove burdens
that once seemed heavier to bear
than the weightiest of boulders —

A sigh of sympathy,
is like a classical symphony —
Where the shadow upon your lover's heart
may cloud the brightest, lightest day —

You, knowing them so intimately as you do,
 divine without asking that most certainly what they need
 beyond any other thing, is just a moment of silence
 in which one may hold on to another,
 a warm body which they may hold to,
 cleave to, even cling —

The depths to which we are moved
 on behalf of one another,
 go far beyond the terms for,
 father, mother, sister or brother —
 One whom you have touched the heart of,
 even if only for a moment becomes soul kin —
 To do so may take the lightest of caresses,
 you may lightly run your hand over their silken tresses,
 or give that quick tight squeeze that comes
 upon anticipation, expectation of some gain
 you know is coming,
 feel stir deep within your blood,
 you psyche crying out,
 You may simply give an encouraging shout
 that fosters for them the needed momentum..
 That essential connection is made —

It could be across a distance
 farther than you can shout,
 or scream...
 It might even come across,
 (*dare I say it*)
 a computer screen.

What is needed more than anything else,
 to make that snuggle, cuddle, hug,
 that feeling that keeps you warm inside,
 as though you've been wrapped from head to toe
 in a rainbow of scintillating warmth
 is simply to Joy Of Love —
 Acceptance at the most basic level.

So, today take time out of your day,
 give yourself, your love, your dog, your friend,
 a stranger you see on the street,
 a smile, a wave, a moment of warmth,
 be caring be brave, be true...
 Let down your shields — it
 Is nothing other than the beauty
 that truly is you!

My Favorite Place — Inside Your Hug

Ayla Wolfe

Hugs are a way to ward off
 the darkest, starkest,
 the chillingest part of the night —
 When you awake,
 with a sudden jolt,
 when a crack of thunder
 jars you from deep sleep —
 When the dreams
 that you've been dreaming,
 try to hold you fast,
 try to tie you
 in the other world —

Then what most may bring you back,
 is the safety of another's
 arms wrapped close around you —
 How it warms you —
 How it grounds you —
 I can honestly say,
 at the beginning or end of day —
 "my favorite place — inside your hug"

When the sun is shining oh so bright,
 when I feel the shimmering,
 the radiant, glorious light —
 As it glows within my inner core,
 how I long to share the warmth that gathers,
 how I joy to hear birds singing,
 feel the breeze upon my skin —
 Know that this is the way the world embraces,
 caresses hair, kisses hands, cheeks, lips,
 little children's faces —
 Cares for those who think themselves alone —
 The splash of water,
 the touch of grass upon the soles of my feet —
 all of these make my heart slow down,
 become still with calm joy —

As I think of you —
 I reach into my heart,
 into my mind —
 Of course as always this, I find —
 Then what most may bring you back,

is the safety of another's
 arms wrapped close around you —
 How it warms you —
 How it grounds you —
 I can honestly say,
 at the beginning or end of day —
 “my favorite place — inside your hug”

Freysgydhia

Sigrún Freyskona
Oath taken at Lammas 2007

Here I solidify this irrevocable oath
 to serve as Frey's priestess, His Godwoman, His Gydhia.
 May I prove worthy of my calling,
 worthy to Frey,
 and worthy to the worthy folk He sends my way:

to serve the folk who love my Lord,
 who love the Ones my Lord loves.
 To light their way
 to come home,
 to a safe place,
 to rest.
 To tend the hearth fire,
 to bless the food,
 to bring smiles and laughter,
 to give thanks
 for the many blessings in life.

To serve my Beloved Golden One,
 to open my arms
 and hold Him close to my beating heart,
 here He may find shelter
 and solace
 when He is pained by seeing
 His people in distress,
 not enjoying the world He has given them.
 To open my legs
 and give myself,
 our shared passion
 giving us pleasure,
 an exchange of life force
 that we give back to the world.

To work on His behalf,
 speaking out against unfrithful deeds,
 that which steals people's joy,
 speaking for the goodness of the Earth,
 acting to nurture and provide for the folk,
 and nurture and provide for the world.
 I give of my body,
 my hugging arms,
 my healing hands,
 my voice and my words and my song,
 my sex,
 for my body comes from His Earth,
 my body is a temple.

I serve Frey because I love Him.
 To know Him is to love Him.
 I serve His folk because He loves them.
 They are a part of Frey, and so I love them.

To serve Frey I will sacrifice myself
 even as He serves us as a sacrifice,
 spilling His blood upon the soil —
 I break my will, my very self
 so His people can be nourished.

A Gift for a Gift

Sigrún Freyskona, Autumn Equinox 2007

To you, Ingvi Frey, I give thanks.
 I give You my words, this writing, to show my appreciation,
 to show Your goodness.
 You honored my offerings when I had little to spare,
 You honored the time I spent with You,
 giving You my adoration,
 and You gave me new life:
 a move to a different land,
 to be with my beloved,
 to start fresh
 and gain health and wealth,
 frith and mirth,
 an enjoyment of living life.
 When all hope seemed lost,
 You made a way out of no way.

You desire that the people of Midgard
know what it is to truly live.
You transform tears into gentle rain,
You transform shit
into fertilizer to feed the soil.
You transform smiles into sunshine,
laughter into cooling winds.
Your blood spills on the soil,
You are cut down in compassion
for the hungry people,
the pain of Your sacrifice
is the pain of the hunger of all the Nine Worlds,
the hunger of empty stomachs
and empty lives.
Your blood feeds the Earth,
you walk the Hel Road
so we may stay alive.

The deeds of our labor bring a harvest,
and we share the first fruits with You,
in frith and merriment,
knowing You are God of the World,
giver of good things,
You rejoice with our gladness.

I will always be grateful to You,
for every day there is at least one thing to be thankful for,
if not more.
Even when I find shadows,
I will never fail to see the light,
the light that is in You,
the light You have given to my world.

To You, Ingvi Frey, I give my life,
for You share Your life with me.
A gift for a gift, Giefu,
an embrace,
You connect me to the Worlds,
and to life.

My Fulltrui is Frey the Bold

Michaela Macha

My fulltrui is Frey the bold,
the Lord of land and fields.
His people say the staff he holds
is strong and never yields.
As Yggdrasil is tall and proud,
as Irminsul unending,
Frey's staff is standing straight and stout
and never will be bending.

My fulltrui is Frey the fair,
who makes the plants to grow.
His fountain rises in the air
and brings a fertile flow.
As waterfalls from mountains pour
and geysers reach the sky,
Frey's fountain splashes evermore
and never will run dry.

My fulltrui is Frey, the Lord
of peasants and of farms.
They say he gave away his sword,
but he has other arms.
He fights with grace and prowess,
and though his peace is steady,
for giant and for giantess
his antler's always ready.

My full - tru - i is Frey the bold, the Lord of land and fie - lds. His
 peo - ple say the staff he holds is strong and ne - ver yie - lds. As
 Ygg - dra - sil is tall and proud, as Ir - min - sul un - end - ing, Frey's
 staff is stand - ing straight and stout, and ne - ver will be bend - ing. My...

The melody is from "The Beehive", printed in "Pills to Purge Melancholy", a collection of popular English songs, published 1698-1720 by Thomas Durfey. This poem is © Michaela Macha in the Common Domain and may be freely distributed provided it remains unchanged, including copyright notice and this License.

Golden One

Raven Kaldera

This song was written for Frey as a Lammas piece for the Asphodel Choir — or perhaps it is more that Frey dictated it, and it was written down.

First Chorus, in two parts, slowly (♩ = 66):

Asus2

Corn and Grain, Sun Must Fall, O - pen Hand, Seed to Corn to - Seed.
Rain and Sun, All to Grow, And to Feed, Horn and Need.

First verse, all together, more quickly (♩ = 88):

Would you give your life for love? Would you die to feed them all?
Would you go a - will - ing as the man to his bride?
Would you do what must be done? Would you hold back no - thing, not your
breath, not your bo - dy, not your fear, not your pride?

Second Chorus, same tempo as verse. Second Verse, all together:

Would you bring light to the dark? Would you sing the sum - mer's song?
Would you speed the grow - ing, rush - ing toward the com - ing pain?
Would you do what must be done? Would you be the gold - en one?
Would you spring up laugh - ing, trust - ing fate like the grain?

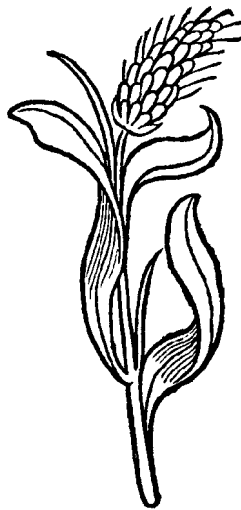
Third Chorus, slowly (♩ = 66).

Fourth Chorus, softer and wordless. First part "ooh", second part "ah".

Invocation to Frey

From the Book of Hours of the Order of the Horae

Hail Frey, Lord of the fields!
Lord of the Vanir,
Golden of hair as the fields of wheat,
Bringing riches of heart and hearth
To noble and common folk alike,
We hail you with the corn that springs forth
And falls again to nourish us.
We hail you, mighty boar in flight,
Lord of the phallus that gives life,
Lord of Love that is bound to land,
Love that is bound with commitment,
Love that does not come easily,
As one must toil for the harvest.
Teach us that love is worth working for,
And that work is worth loving,
And that neither lives long without the other.
Lord Frey, Corn God,
Husband of Gerda the etin-bride,
You who can warm the cold heart,
Warrior without a weapon
Who gave your sword for love,
You who make the grain spring forth,
Show us faith in every springtime.





The Sacred in the Everyday

One of the best ways to honor Frey is by making every day a gift to Him, honoring Him with your life. This is easier said than done. Most of us are very busy, even if unemployed. We have jobs, homes to maintain, and interpersonal relationships to work out with friends, families, and lovers. The average person does not have a lot of time for spiritual activities. I believe that you can be mindful of your spirituality throughout the day, in the tasks you do, but this mindset must be cultivated, as it does not come naturally to modern people living in a secular culture. I find it easier to pay attention to Frey, and His influence in my life, if I have certain tangible things as reminders.

It is important to make some ritual time to spend with the Gods, so you can reach out to Them and have Them reach into you. Even if you have an insanely busy schedule (my partner currently works about 60 hours a week at two jobs), waking up at a certain time to do a morning devotional (and perhaps doing one before bed) can help immensely, as can doing a longer and more formal ritual once a week. I have a friend who does Blót every day, and I admire her very much for this, but I find that in my own personal practice I can only realistically do a full ritual once a week.

Special clothing and jewelry can set you apart from the mind clutter of the mundane world and create a more sacred headspace to connect more fully. Unlike many Heathens, I prefer to wear ritual garb when I do faining, Blót, and sumble, because I think it's proper to go before the awesome and holy Gods dressed well. On the days when my duties are more mundane, I still try to honor Frey by wearing jewelry consecrated to Him, and I prefer to dress in shades of green and earth tones. There is also the art of making food to share with the Gods. I have included some recipes to use specifically for feasting with Frey; most are not hard, nor do they require expensive ingredients.

Lastly, I find various kinds of work are able to be utilized as meditations on Frey. For example, the task of cleaning a house can be done with energy clearing and blessing, to make the home a more welcoming, inviting place. The English word “inglenook” means “hearth”, and relates to Frey in His desire to have a happy home, where people can gather in frith and unwind from the cares of the world.



Recipes to Feast with Frey

Over the year of 2007 I found my niche in cooking and baking. Now you might consider who my patron Deity is and say, “Well, duh.” Frey is a food God, even more so than the other Vanic Deities, and is rather concerned with what people put into their bodies. What you put into your body will affect your health whether you like it or not. Healthy food doesn’t have to taste like rabbit food, or at least it shouldn’t. Now I may indulge in some non-healthy stuff once in a while, but I’ve found that since my devotion to Frey has grown, the preparation of food has become a devotional work in and of itself.

For the recipes section of this book, I used recipes that I’ve actually made. Some can be found in the public domain on Wiki Cookbook¹. A few of those I’ve tweaked somewhat for taste. A few are recipes that I’ve gotten varying opinions on, and did the general “gist” of the recipe with modifications, again, according to taste, or what I had on hand.

Siggy’s Kitchen Foo

This is a way to use food as a devotional exercise, to grow closer to Frey, or any food-associated Deity for that matter, as well as to send extra health energy into the food and bless it for frithful hospitality (a very underrated virtue).

1. As you prepare the ingredients of the food, be mindful of the colors, textures, and smells. Be mindful of what the ingredients are, and what it all means. Think of the growth and harvest of fruits, vegetables, and grain, or the rearing and slaughter of livestock (if you eat meat). Think about Frey as the food God, and what food means to Him, and what it should mean to us.

2. Send energy into the food, as you work it with your hands, and as you tend to it while cooking. This is best if you speak a prayer, such as:

I bless this food for the body,

I bless this food for the soul.

You can also “push light” into the food. I like to feel warmth flowing through my hands, and visualize golden light coming from my hands into the food.

3. Prior to eating the food, you will want to say a prayer of gratitude, such as:

I/we receive this bounty of the Earth,

And as I/we receive the gift of this food,

I/we send blessings to All involved in the giving.

Siggy’s Wassail

For use in a non-alcoholic public Blot at any time of the year. This particular beverage keeps well in an insulated container, such as a steel thermos.

1 gallon apple cider

6 cinnamon sticks

2 teaspoons allspice, whole

1 teaspoon clove

1 teaspoon ground nutmeg

3 tart apples (Granny Smith apples are especially good, if you can get them)

Put clove and allspice into a mesh bag or tea ball. Place all ingredients in a large pot and heat until the apples burst. This yields 1 gallon, which is enough to share with friends, both human and arboreal.

¹ <http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Cookbook>

Golden Corn Lammas Bread

I made this for my first public Lammas, since corn is best harvested and brought to stores and markets in Southern California around Lammastime. Though wheat and barley are more traditionally European, corn honors the spirits of the local land-wights in the Americas. You should double the recipe if you are planning on making one loaf to share with the folk and one loaf to sacrifice to Frey, as is traditional.

1 cup corn meal
 1 cup all-purpose flour
 4 tsp baking powder
 ½ tsp salt
 1 cup buttermilk
 1 egg
 ¼ cup shortening
 ¼ cup sugar optional
 ½ of a 15 ounce can whole corn, drained (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 425° F. Grease an 8 inch baking pan.
2. Combine Corn meal, flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar in a large mixing bowl.
3. Add egg, sugar, and shortening.
4. Beat until fairly smooth; about a minute.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. If corn added to batter, increase time by about 50%.
6. Carve an Ing rune (to me the Anglo-Saxon Ing with the “tails” is more aesthetically pleasing than the Ingwaz diamond) into the loaf and galdr over it.

Beer Bread

Well, Frey is the beer God, is He not? Beer Bread is a bread made with beer as the primary leavening agent. I like to make this any time to be mindful of Frey, and I offer the first slice to Him as a gift. It's absolutely delicious.

12 oz beer (this should be a good imported or craft beer, I personally prefer to use a honey beer from Oregon that comes in a 12 oz glass bottle)
 3 cups flour (approximate — add more flour as necessary to achieve a good consistency)
 ⅓ cup sugar (optional — makes for a sweeter bread)
 ½ tbsp salt (optional)
 oil to line bread pan

Mix flour and beer (and optional ingredients), knead until gluten strands form. This is easier with warm beer. Put in pan, bake in oven at 375 degrees for around 30 minutes, or until center is cooked (stick a knife through the center to test).

Zucchini Bread

This may seem like an odd choice, but there are two reasons why I included this recipe. First, zucchini bread was one of my favorite foods as a child, and I associate it with comfort. Second, I grew up in New England, which always has local squash available in the late summer and fall. Frey, being a Harvest God, would appreciate this.

3 eggs
 ¼ tsp baking powder
 1 tsp baking soda
 1 tsp vanilla essence
 1 tsp salt
 2 tsp cinnamon
 1 cup of oil
 2 cups of sugar
 2 cups of shredded zucchini
 3 cups of flour

Mix it all together, though just enough so that it is thoroughly wet. Don't overwork the glutes in the flour. Bake it for 1 hour at 325°F (160°C).

Apple & Spice Pork Roast

Pork is very traditionally associated with Frey and His golden boar, Gullinbursti, and the sacrifices given Him by His people in elder Heathen times. Blóttung a swine is not practical for most people who have neither the land nor the knowhow to do so, but Frey will appreciate a good meal cooked for Him.

3 to 4 pound boneless pork roast
 1 cup applesauce
 ⅓ cup packed brown sugar
 2 teaspoons vinegar
 1 teaspoon yellow mustard
 ⅛ to ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
 1 tablespoon flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoon sugar
 ⅛ teaspoon garlic powder
 ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Stir together applesauce, brown sugar, vinegar, mustard and cloves in small bowl; refrigerate half of the applesauce mixture and set aside remaining applesauce mixture. Combine flour, salt, sugar, garlic powder and pepper in another small bowl. Rub flour mixture evenly over entire surface of pork. Place pork on rack in shallow roasting pan. Roast, uncovered, until internal temperature is 140 degrees F. Spoon reserved applesauce mixture over roast. Roast until internal temperature is 155 degrees F., 1 to 1 ½ hours total cooking time (about 18-20 minutes per pound). Transfer roast to serving platter; cover with foil and let stand for 15 minutes before slicing. Heat chilled applesauce mixture in small saucepan until boiling; boil for 1 minute. Spoon heated applesauce mixture over pork slices.

Siggy's Potato & Cabbage Soup with Flavor

64 ounces vegetable stock, or about 5 small cans
 2 medium sized russet potatoes, peeled, chopped/diced
 ½ head of green cabbage, cored and shredded
 2 carrots, chopped/diced
 ½ brown onion, chopped/diced (your eyes will tear up)
 3 cloves garlic, diced
 1 teaspoon salt
 ground pepper to taste
 about 6 peppercorns
 3 fresh basil leaves, crushed

Servings: a lot, depends on how hungry you are

1. Pour chicken broth into stockpot.
2. Prep veggies, add to the stockpot.
3. Simmer on low heat for about 15 minutes.
4. Prep the garlic, and add pepper, salt, peppercorns, and basil.
5. Simmer on medium heat for about 45 minutes.
6. Stir every five minutes or so, with a wooden spoon.
7. Serve hot. Chill a couple of containers for the next 2 days of leftovers, and freeze anything remaining after that (frozen soup keeps for 2-3 months). Thaw the container in the refrigerator before re-heating.

Siggy's Hearty Bean & Pasta Soup

Beans are often alternated with barley in crop rotation, and this is something very tasty and nutritious that is also very inexpensive and easy to make.

10 cups of water
 5 vegetable bouillon cubes
 1 ½ cups dried bean soup mix (kidneys, garbanzos, lentils, black-eyed peas, green peas)
 2 cups snail-shaped OR ditalini whole-wheat pasta
 1 ½ cups dehydrated shiitake mushrooms
 3 cloves garlic, diced
 5 basil leaves
 ground pepper to taste
 1 teaspoon salt

1. Soak the beans in a bowl of water for about an hour to 2 hours prior to cooking. Drain the water from the bowl afterwards.
 2. Pour fresh water into stockpot, heat at medium-high. Add bouillon cubes, and continue heating at same temp for approximately 7 minutes.
 3. Measure beans and add to the stockpot. Bring heat down to medium and cook for 55 minutes. Prep garlic, and add the garlic, as well as pepper, salt, and basil.
 4. After 45 minutes, add the mushrooms. Cook for another 15 minutes, then add the pasta and cook for another 15 minutes.
 5. Serve hot. As with the cabbage soup, it can be chilled and frozen.
- A note of warning: this may give you a bit of gas, but the nutritional benefits (for cheap!) are worth it.

Siggy's Chicken Soup for the Vanic Soul

This is my “half-assed” way of making nourishing soup if I want to have homemade soup but am pressed for time. This recipe uses leftover chicken from last night, and canned veggies rather than me taking the time to chop. However, it still tastes pretty damn good. In Scandinavia, food is half the hospitality, and one might argue that being given a bowl of homemade chicken soup when sick contains healing energy in and of itself.

6 cups of water
 3 vegetable OR chicken boullion cubes
 2 cooked chicken leg quarters
 1 ½ 15-oz cans of organic mixed vegetables, drained (carrots, lima beans, peas, celery, corn)
 2 cups whole-wheat penne pasta
 1/8 of an onion, minced
 3 cloves of garlic
 6 basil leaves
 2 pinches of salt
 ground pepper to taste

1. Pour the water into the stockpot, heat at medium-high. Add bouillon cubes, and continue heating at the same temp for approximately 7 minutes. Crush the basil leaves, and add to the stock.
2. Reheat the cooked chicken at 2 minutes on high in the microwave. Pull the skin off the chicken, and then pull the meat off the leg, and pull the chunks of meat apart into bite-sized pieces. Add the chicken to the stock.
3. Open the cans of mixed vegetables, and add to the stock.
4. Chop the onion and garlic, and add to the stock.
5. Add the salt and ground pepper, and stir.
6. Turn up the heat to just below its highest temperature, and add the penne pasta. Let the soup cook for 12 minutes.
7. Test the pasta to see if it's done by pushing a piece to the side with a wooden spoon. If the pasta springs but is not falling apart, the soup is ready.
8. Serve hot, and with a lot of love.

Saxon Scones

Hot scones are an English specialty, and are especially good to serve Frey and Gerda in remembrance of the sweetness They bring to the Worlds. For 8 scones:

2 c. all-purpose flour
 2 tsp. baking powder
 ½ tsp. salt
 ¼ c. butter
 ¾ c. buttermilk

In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, and salt. Add butter. Combine with your fingers, a wooden spoon or a pastry blender until coarse crumbs form. Add buttermilk. Quickly stir to form dough. Divide dough in half. Form each half into a ball. Flatten to a round. Place on lightly greased baking sheet. Cut each crosswise into 4 pieces but not all the way through. Bake at 425 degrees for 10-15 minutes. Serve hot, and with butter and jam, and cups of Earl Grey tea.

Spicy Ginger Molasses Cookies

½ T vinegar
 ½ c milk
 ½ c light brown sugar
 ½ c shortening
 1 egg
 1 c molasses
 2 ½ c flour
 2 t baking soda
 ¼ t cinnamon
 ¼ t nutmeg
 ½ t ginger

1. Grease 2 cookie sheets.
2. Prepare 3 mixtures:
 - the vinegar, plus enough milk to make ½ c (alternately, use real sour milk)
 - the baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, and 2 ½ c (not all 4 c) of flour
 - the sugar and shortening creamed together, then adding in the egg and molasses (use a large bowl)
3. To the sugar/shortening/egg/molasses mixture, alternately mix in small amounts of the other two mixtures until everything is in one bowl. Mix this well.
4. Form the cookies. I make drop cookies, so I plopp batter onto a cookie sheet, and then squish each cookie with a (empty) glass to flatten it.
5. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes at 375°F.

Julskinka — Christmas Ham

As most Nordic Pagans know, a swine was traditionally sacrificed to Frey at Yuletide, with oaths sworn over it. This is a more Americanized version of the traditional Swedish recipe, keeping in mind those with not a lot of time on their hands.

Precooked, tenderized ham
 1 c. dark brown sugar
 2 tbsp. flour
 2 tbsp. brandy
 ½ tsp. ground cloves
 ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
 ¼ tsp. ground ginger
 Grapes

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Place ham fat side up, in an open roasting pan and roast until brown and tender, about ½ hour longer than the package calls for. Remove ham from oven and increase oven temperature to 425 degrees. Cut the skin off ham, leaving ½ inch of fat. Score the fat with a sharp knife in diagonal lines, running in opposite directions to make diamond pattern. Combine brandy, cloves, cinnamon, ginger, sugar and flour and rub well over ham. Return to oven, roast 20 more minutes. With wooden toothpicks, attach to top and side a small bunch of grapes. Serve with mustard sauce.

Siggy's Non-Alcoholic Yuletide Eggnog

This is a beverage ideal for a Yule Blot in Frey's honor, as its richness is associated with gratitude for the year's prosperity.

12 eggs

1 ½ cups sugar

1 quart cream

to taste vanilla

dash of nutmeg

Separate eggs at room temp. Beat yolks till creamed with about half of sugar, whites till peaked then add other half of sugar. Beat cream till stiff. Then fold all together. Add vanilla to taste — but remember that a little bit of vanilla goes a long way, so you probably don't want to put in more than a teaspoon. Place into containers and keep in refrigerator for at least one day. Shake before serving.



A Meal Blessing

Joshua Tenpenny

Blessed are those who gave of their bodies and lives for this meal.

Blessed are those who toiled to harvest and prepare this meal.

Blessed are those who share this meal with me.

Sometimes the meals we eat are a prayer unto themselves. Food fresh from your own garden, bread baked by hand, a holiday feast shared with friends. These clearly nourish our souls as much as our bodies, and it is easy to see the sacredness in these things. A blessing spoken at these times just affirms what was already apparent. But for most of us, most of the time, modern life obscures the sacred connection between the food in front of us and the life which was sacrificed for it. This blessing prayer is meant to be an opportunity to be mindful of how and what we eat.

Take the opportunity to look at (or speculate about) the ingredients of what you are eating. The food we eat was all alive at some point. It can be challenging when facing a brightly colored snack cake or box of chicken nuggets, but this all comes from Life. Take a moment to reflect on the fields of grain, the livestock, the vegetables growing on some distant farm, the dairy cows, the laying hens, the trees full of fruit. Think about where the ingredients came from, and give thanks to the sacrifice of the plants and animals who provide this meal.

Take the opportunity to think about how the food got to you in its present form. Think about the people who raised the animals and grew the vegetables. Think about the factory workers who process the foods, the truckers who bring it from farm to factory to store, and the business men who coordinate the whole thing. Think about who cooked the food, and what that involved. Maybe this food traveled only from your garden to your plate, making a brief detour to the sink, in no one's hands but your own. Maybe this food had a trans-continental voyage, with components coming through dozens of factories, its origin shrouded in mystery.

Take the opportunity to reflect on this meal in the context of family and community. Sharing food is one of the basic forms of social bonding. Honor the bonds of kinship and hospitality which are nourished by this meal. On a more abstract level, think about other families sitting together for dinner as you are, other harried office workers having a quick lunch at their desk like you are, other parents feeding their children as you are, other commuters eating fast food while driving like you are. Think about how this meal reflects social customs and traditions. Think about how this meal connects you to others, whether they are present with you or not.

Let your mind wander over these things as you start the meal. The point isn't to turn each meal into a research project, but to encourage mindfulness and curiosity about the process by which living things become food for us. We are part of a network of nourishment and obligations, and this prayer traces those threads quietly, like a rosary. Let it train you in mindfulness, until every meal, no matter how cursory or ambivalent, is once again sacred.

Altar to Frey and Gerd

Sigrún Freyskona and Eosin



This is an altar that Eosin and I set up to the Vanir, which takes up the second shelf of a unit that also has shelves as collective Aesir and Jotun altars. The unit as a whole symbolizes frith-weaving between the Aesir, Vanir, and Jotnar.

On the far left is an antler which holds the 2 prayer bead sets I use most (Frey and Gerda). A grey stallion figurine (anatomically correct!) is behind a red glass heart-shaped bottle that holds wheat and dried red roses (the roses were got for Hela and most were given to Her, and the wheat and roses combined symbolize Frey's sacrifice to Hela at Lammas). Frey and Gerda are in front of a large hog, and a stone boar sits between the candle and offering cup. In the center is an offering bowl that was holding goodies at the time of the photo, and a chunky amber necklace is wrapped around it, now featuring my Official Vanic Bitch from Hel™ tiara, which was bought for me on my 28th birthday as something of a joke taken way too far. A rune bag sits behind the tiara. The pine cone is for Ullr, Njord is in back surrounded by shells, stones and dried seaweed from the beach, Freyja is with cats and dottirs and has a flowered pottery cup, and Holda is on the far right. Nerthus and Eir are also on the altar; you can see Nerthus behind the candle and Eir is between Freyja and Ullr, charging a white "worry stone".

Sculptures of Frey and Gerda

Sigrún Freyskona and Eosin



This is a close-up of the statues on our Frey/Gerda altar. I made Frey from gold Sculpey (which cost less than \$3 to make the whole thing), and it's not an artistic masterpiece, but it was made from the heart. I gave Him long hair (as I usually see Him with long hair), and a beard, a large erect penis (and balls!), sitting with His legs crossed, and His arm outstretched in a “come over here and hug me pose”. In His hand He is holding a heart made of green Sculpey mixed with gold, with an Ing rune carved in the heart. I chose green to represent the rot of death as well as the greenery of new, fresh life, and the reason for the Ing rune is obvious. I decided to put Frey in a “house”, first to give Him a place for shelter and comfort, and second so I can fit any “messages” (prayer requests on a slip of paper) in there.

Gerda was made from a combination of brown, indigo, and silver Sculpey (because that was what I had on hand and the blend actually looked cool). I gave Her long braids under a hood, and I styled Her body to be under a dress (sleeves on Her arms), and there is even a little train in back. I posed Her arms in the way I think Frey first saw Her, and gave Her face a serene expression (well as serene as it can look with my limited artistry). I decided to give Her body a little heft because I always see Her as being a full-figured Goddess.

Alfar Altar

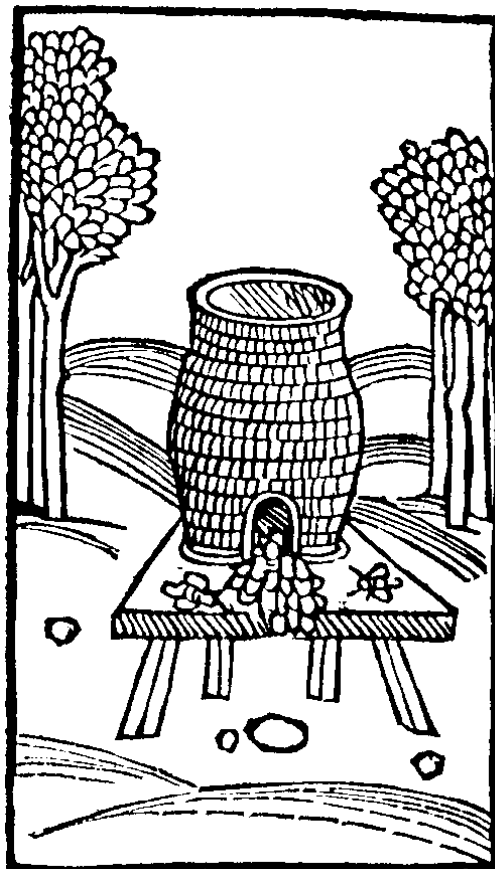
Ayla Wolffe



I inherited the table that I use as an altar for my alfar when my grandfather died. My mom was kind enough to choose it for me from all the ones there. She has a great eye for those things that I would best be able to use and enjoy. It's a medium-sized end table with a single drawer in the center where I keep all my extra things which I rotate seasonally... I also keep extra incense and so forth. Some things get 'retired' there which I would never get rid of but which have done their time upon the top to the point of seeming no longer to fit. At this point, on the top of the altar itself, I have a brass cup that has an Aztec sun on it; they have been hand-pounded or at least appear to have been. In front of this is a wax cow, which I use to represent Audumhla; I was gifted with her at a ritual I went to several years ago and it seemed fitting to have her in state.

Also, I have a fairy on a pedestal given to me by one of the members of my Kindred, and also another one given to me by my mom. I have a couple of homes carved from decorative gourds which I carved by hand for the fairies to live in as I felt it was only right to give them a place worth inhabiting, and I like the reference to folklore. I have several gourd rattles which I took the effort of drying over the years. These are actively used in ritual at various times. I have a little cauldron that has stones in it and dried carnation heads as well as 'tree' made of a sprig of lavender and a magnet in the shape of a butterfly resides there. My kids made me some fairy companions from a show on TV I can't recall the name of it, but the fairies are cute. My youngest son made me a figure of a boy with a pet which is free standing. I have a mermaid that I made that is sitting on a stone with some small stones scattered about her, as well as a little gnome man and a troll woman who I made. I have a lot of "magical mushrooms" that I made surrounding a dwarf man that was a gift from a former friend; he sleeps among them.

I have candles and a set of three Polish wooden painted eggs that a friend gave me; they are lovely, very folksy. I have an oil lamp that is beautiful to look upon and useful too; I have used it when the lights went out due to winter storms. I have a bell that is made in the form of a dwarf. I have plenty of treasure troves to give to those who live there. I have offering bowls made both of Sculpey, which is the polymer clay I make my figurines out of, and others that are made from dried gourds. I have a pipe I keep by my dwarf bell for him to smoke and I have a lovely bindrune for prosperity that was given to me by a dear friend. I have feathers and crystals and geodes from when I was a child. I even have some geodes my sons and I got that we broke open together. I have little rabbits that are ceramic that a friend of my sons made and gave to me, scattered about, and I have several Sculpey fylfots on my altar too. I have bowls and dishes that I use for offerings and cups too, and on feast days they get their share. I think overall it is made with love and joy; with intent at holding to old ways and new; that the alfar, both ancestral and light alvs, live there knowing that all that occurs is great good intent.



Vanir Altar

Jon Norman



Here is a picture of my altar. It's pretty simple; sometimes I have fresh wildflowers on it, but I had just taken them off when I took this picture. The clay vase on left contains soil, and is surrounded by rocks, crystals, stones, representing Nerthus. The blue glass vase on the right is filled with salt water, and is surrounded by shells, sea glass, sand dollars, and sea salt, with a pendant of a Viking Ship hanging around it, representing Njord. For Freyja, I have the Paul Borda statue of Freyja, a few pieces of amber and a wooden heart. For Frey, I have a picture of a statue of him that came from a book about Sweden my grandmother had bought when I was a kid, about Sweden. Around it are Ingwaz runes, and it's painted green, brown, and gold. There's an antler, from a deer that my grandfather shot (he died a few years before I was born) wrapping around the picture of Frey, a piece of quartz with a stag carved into it, and a phallic shaped crystal. To the left side of Frey is a small statue that represents Gerda. In front of it is her name written in runes, and in front of that is the stone that got when I "graduated" from rehab. Everyone went around in a circle and wished me luck and the stone means a lot to me. I'm still working on adding items for Gullveig-Heid — for now, there is a small painting of her name in red runes on a gold background. The candles in the front are made of beeswax, and the candleholders are clay. The beads are prayer beads, made by the folks at Cauldron Farm. Behind the altar is a painted banner that says "Hail the Vanir".

Raven's Frey Altar

Raven Kaldera



Normally, my Frey altar is in the house, but occasionally it is taken outside and reassembled for a ritual, and this photo was taken during one of those occasions. The other deities are scattered about in different places — the living room, the upstairs room, etc. — but Frey insisted on remaining in our bedroom. Perhaps it's because he was invoked during our wedding to bless our marriage; perhaps it's because he enjoys the show, regardless of whether the show is myself and my wife Bella, or myself and my partner Joshua.

The three-foot-tall woven straw man was bought at a Pagan gathering from an antiques dealer. It had been sitting around in his shop since the 1970s, and as soon as I walked by it, Frey said, "That's my votive figure. Get it." He holds my Frey necklace when I'm not wearing it, and the torc that a friend was ordered to give me for his regalia. The large smiling carved phallus in front of him — another remnant of the 1970s craft era — was also a gift, and has caused many people to stop and stare and ask tentatively, "Is that what I think it is?" The small straw girl is Beyla, with a beehive candle; I'm still

waiting for the right Byggvir figure to arrive. His ceremonial wreath is at the bottom of the picture, and he stands between sheaves of grain and jars of corn. What you can't see are a host of small items inside the circumference of the wreath — mostly tiny pigs and phalluses and such — that have been given as votive gifts when the altar has been set out for public rites. Some are given away, but many end up on my personal Frey altar if he wants them there. The glittering golden dreamcatcher is one of those — some may cringe at the idea, but it was a gift from a sincere person of another tradition who simply wanted to honor this golden god, and Frey told me to put it with him, and there it sits. It's yet another lesson in the fact that what we think is appropriate may have nothing at all to do with what the Gods actually want.

Sacred Garb and Accessories



Sigrún's Robe

Sigrún Freyskona and Eosin

Sigrún at Lammas 2007. Eosin made a special robe from green poly/cotton, and a length of gold braid to gird the waist, sewing six bells on each end (as in the priests of Frey in old Uppsala). He marked an Ing rune in the front center with gold fabric paint. The robe took a week to make, and cost less than \$25 for the materials needed.

Raven's Tunic and Necklace

Raven Kaldera

I made the tunic for Frey out of mustard-yellow linen and embroidered the sheaves of wheat on the sleeves in metallic gold thread. It's Frey's tunic; it is only worn by Him. The necklace, on the other hand, I may wear whenever I want. It is made beads of amber and brown glass, and bears an amber pendant, a pink blown-glass phallus made by a glassblower friend, and a pig's tooth. The tooth came out of a pig's head given to us by a friend who was also an organic farmer, and had raised the pig herself. My wife took the two eyeteeth and made a pendant for each of us.



Frey Prayer Beads

Sigrún Freyskona



This is a close-up of my set of prayer beads that I made. I used amber predominantly, with 33 chips of golden Baltic amber plus one large honey Baltic cabochon (rescued from a bracelet that broke and set in gold Sculpey). Also, green picture jasper, and smoky quartz. And spacers. The 33 amber chips were deliberate as I will be working through the runes of the Northumbrian Futhorc (24 Elder and 9 extra). The green jasper is for the vegetation of the Earth and the smokey quartz is for balance and regeneration. And of course, there is my bronze Frey pendant.

I was Told that the amber is Vanic because it is literally “Earth-light”: fossilized resin, often with an inclusion of a bug or something else, ancient sap that glows like light. It’s Freyja’s tears, but those tears are of the light of Her soul, the essence within each of the Vanir, who are all bearers of light in Their respective ways.

This works with my energy field, as I wear it as a necklace, and also enables me to work with the runes as the Vanir use them (the runes were taught to the various Beings, including Duergar and Ljossalfar), and bless myself and others. Prayer beads help with altering a state of consciousness through repetitive prayers and twisting of beads, but it also works on a sympathetic level by symbolically weaving Wyrð, and in this case, sending Earth-light down the threads of Wyrð to help myself and help others. Here are the prayers I wrote for the set:

Frey Pendant:

I begin each day and each event with focus on You, my gentle and good Lord, Ingvi Frey.

On Large Amber:

Let me absorb Your light, Ingvi,
 so my pierced, broken heart
 can be filled with Your light
 so that it spills out of the broken parts,
 and shines on all.
 Let the light shine on those who are in darkness
 and know there is something beyond this.
 Let the light within me
 give knowledge of what is around,
 and guidance to what is ahead,
 as well as comforting warmth.

FEOH:

*Wealth is a comfort to all men;
 yet must every man bestow it freely,
 if he wish to gain honour in the sight of the Lord.*

May I have wealth enough to provide my needs, and some enjoyment in this life.
 May I know that wealth is a tool, and to be used wisely.

UR:

*The aurochs is proud and has great horns;
 it is a very savage beast and fights with its horns;
 a great ranger of the moors, it is a creature of mettle.*

May I have health in my body, strength to work,
 may I also have health in my mind and mood.

THORN:

*The thorn is exceedingly sharp,
 an evil thing for any knight to touch,
 uncommonly severe on all who sit among them.*

May those who wish me ill know to keep from me,
 may I handle any possible conflicts with grace and skill.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
 Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

OS:

*The mouth is the source of all language,
 a pillar of wisdom and a comfort to wise men,
 a blessing and a joy to every knight.*

May I choose my words carefully,
 with what to speak, whom to speak to, when to speak, where,
 and how everything is said.

RAD:

*Riding seems easy to every warrior while he is indoors
 and very courageous to him who traverses the high-roads
 on the back of a stout horse.*

May I go to the right places, and do the right deeds,
 and may those who need me, know where to find me.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
 Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

CEN:

*The torch is known to every living man by its pale, bright flame;
 it always burns where princes sit within.*

May my work be done not just for my own amusement,
 but to give aid to others as it is merited.

GYFU:

*Generosity brings credit and honour, which support one's dignity;
 it furnishes help and subsistence
 to all broken men who are devoid of aught else.*

May my dealings with others be done in compassion,
 not so open that I am vulnerable to ills,
 not so closed that no love can come through.
 May my friends be rewarded for their light in my life.

WYNN:

*Bliss he enjoys who knows not suffering, sorrow nor anxiety,
 and has prosperity and happiness and a good enough house.*

May I be mindful of the things going well in my life,
 may I remember to be grateful,

and never forget to smile, to laugh,
and give smiles and laughter to others.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

HAEGL:

*Hail is the whitest of grain;
it is whirled from the vault of heaven
and is tossed about by gusts of wind
and then it melts into water.*

May the storms of life, as they come, be met with grace,
and may I be mindful that change is necessary,
and the discomfort will pass and I will soon see the good.

NYD:

*Trouble is oppressive to the heart;
yet often it proves a source of help and salvation
to the children of men, to everyone who heeds it betimes.*

May necessity breed invention,
out of need may I work to make my life better,
to help others as I am able to,
and may I find purpose and meaning in it.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

IS:

*Ice is very cold and immeasurably slippery;
it glistens as clear as glass and most like to gems;
it is a floor wrought by the frost, fair to look upon.*

When things are slow, and seem to be stuck,
let me use that time wisely for contemplation,
to regenerate in reflections that bring insight and wisdom.

GER:

*Summer is a joy to men, when God, the holy King of Heaven,
suffers the earth to bring forth shining fruits
for rich and poor alike.*

May my work bring reward,
may my labors bring a large harvest
and may it all make You proud, Ingvi.

EOH:

*The yew is a tree with rough bark,
hard and fast in the earth, supported by its roots,
a guardian of flame and a joy upon an estate.*

May I not be so caught up in Otherworlds
that I forget my own,
may I find roots with others,
roots in constructive things to be done.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

PEORTH:

*Peorth is a source of recreation and amusement to the great,
where warriors sit blithely together in the banqueting-hall.*

May I remember that life is a cosmic game,
and the Gods move the pieces with a plan in mind.

EOLH:

*The Eolb-sedge is mostly to be found in a marsh;
it grows in the water and makes a ghastly wound,
covering with blood every warrior who touches it.*

May I have respect for the sacred and holy,
the terrible and wonderful nature of the Divine.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

SIGEL:

*The sun is ever a joy in the hopes of seafarers
when they journey away over the fishes' bath,
until the courser of the deep bears them to land.*

May Your light, Ingvi, guide me
as a compass
to what I am meant to do with each moment, each day,
all of my life.

TIR:

*Tiv is a guiding star; well does it keep faith with princes;
it is ever on its course over the mists of night and never fails.*

Even in the darkness, may I find bright hope,

and may it be my focus when others would get lost.

BEORC:

*The poplar bears no fruit; yet without seed it brings forth suckers,
for it is generated from its leaves.
Splendid are its branches and gloriously adorned
its lofty crown which reaches to the skies.*

May I remember my feminine side,
to give shelter and shade to others deserving,
to take pride in my natural beauty.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

EH:

*The horse is a joy to princes in the presence of warriors.
A steed in the pride of its hoofs,
when rich men on horseback bandy words about it;
and it is ever a source of comfort to the restless.*

May my relationship with nature be appropriate,
may I understand that though plants and beasts bring comfort,
without respect the cycle is broken.

MAN:

*The joyous man is dear to his kinsmen;
yet every man is doomed to fail his fellow,
since the Lord by his decree will commit the vile carrion to the earth.*

May my relationships with others be appropriate,
cultivating new friendships and tending to the old,
and not indulging in unnecessary wrath with foes.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

LAGU:

*The ocean seems interminable to men,
if they venture on the rolling bark
and the waves of the sea terrify them
and the courser of the deep heed not its bridle.*

May I remember that the waves ebb and flow,
that the tides are high and low,
and so it is with humans, made of water.

May I be mindful of my own tides,
and those of others.

ING:

*Ing was first seen by men among the East-Danes,
till, followed by his chariot,
he departed eastwards over the waves.
So the Hearingas named the hero.*

May I offer each day up to You, Frey,
may I be a sacrifice given with joy and gratitude,
shared out among Your people,
and taken back into You with love.

DAEG:

*Day, the glorious light of the Creator, is sent by the Lord;
it is beloved of men, a source of hope and happiness to rich and poor,
and of service to all.*

May I use each day wisely,
may my time be managed well,
and may I know that hardships are not eternal,
nor is resting on laurels healthy.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

ETHEL:

*An estate is very dear to every man,
if he can enjoy there in his house
whatever is right and proper in constant prosperity.*

May my home be a place of rest and comfort,
a place where I and mine are safe.

AC:

*The oak fattens the flesh of pigs for the children of men.
Often it traverses the gannet's bath,
and the ocean proves whether the oak keeps faith
in honourable fashion.*

May I enjoy the beauty of nature,
may it regenerate and refresh me,
even as I work to protect and heal the Earth.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.

Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

AESC:

*The ash is exceedingly high and precious to men.
With its sturdy trunk it offers a stubborn resistance,
though attacked by many a man.*

May I know how to keep a straight posture,
to not be bent out of shape
by the carelessness of others in the world.
May I remember who I am,
and take pride in this.

YR:

*Yr is a source of joy and honour to every prince and knight;
it looks well on a horse and is a reliable equipment for a journey.*

May I have focus, clarity and aim
in my thoughts and in my deeds.
May my attention be just right
to accomplish what needs to be done.

IAR/IOR:

*Ior is a river fish and yet it always feeds on land;
it has a fair abode encompassed by water, where it lives in happiness.*

May I remember to not be too inside my spirit
or too outside in the world,
to have a proper balance with both
that is necessary to the tasks You, Ingvi, have given me.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

EAR:

*The grave is horrible to every knight,
when the corpse quickly begins to cool
and is laid in the bosom of the dark earth.
Prosperity declines, happiness passes away
and covenants are broken.*

May I give proper respects to Hela,
just as You, Ingvi, do each Lammas with Your sacrifice.
May I be mindful that death is a part of life,
and endings are made for new beginnings.

CWEORDH:

May that which is toxic, that which is bane,
 be burned up quickly, with less suffering.
 May the ashes be used
 to fertilize the soil of my life,
 to smudge and make marks of illustration,
 for understanding.

On Jasper:

Peace and good seasons in my life.
 Peace and good seasons in the lives of the ones You love.

STAN:

May I find healthy permanence
 in relationships, in tasks,
 just as stones stand in sacred places.
 May I hold what I have,
 according to Your will,
 but not so much that I am not free.

CALC:

May I not lose sight
 of giving You drink,
 serving You with a loving heart,
 respectful of Your Lordship.

GAR:

May I be mindful
 that You gave Your spear for love,
 even though it may mean the end of the worlds,
 Your love for Gerda, and Her love for You,
 is also what sustains the spark of life.
 May I be mindful
 that love involves doing, not just feeling,
 and may my love for You
 and others
 be done.

On Large Amber:

Let me serve as a beacon of Your light
 here in Midgard,
 Ingvi Frey, Golden Giver,
 and let that light reflect back on You,
 so You may have joy
 in our discovery of joy.

Frey Pendant:

I end each day and each event with focus on You, my gentle and good Lord, Ingvi Frey.

Songs to Meditate and Celebrate

Sigrún Freyskona

Frey being *Veraldar Guðh* (God of the World) and “who bestows peace and pleasure among mortals” would naturally love music, and from my own personal experience, He responds to it on a much deeper level than most Deities. It goes without saying that composing lyrics and music for a song to honor Frey would be a wonderful offering that He would appreciate, but not all of us have this option, and furthermore, I have found He enjoys some modern music. (Not only do we not exactly know what music sounded like in, oh, say, the year 500 B.C.E., but the Gods are still around, and are aware of what’s going on with Midgard.)

As an offering to Frey I burned a few CDs with some modern songs that make me *feel* His presence, and I use it as a meditation tool, to put on my headphones and listen to the music, so it puts me in a headspace to spend quality time with Him, whether that be in a romantic/intimate sense, or reflecting on His goodness and beauty.

“Fields of Gold” by Sting

“In Your Eyes” by Peter Gabriel

“Overcome” by Tricky, featuring Martina Topley-Bird

“Pacific State”, “Lopez” by 808 State

“Blue Skies”, “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” by Tori Amos

“Walk On the Ocean” by Toad the Wet Sprocket

“Ivo”, “Crushed”, “Essence”, “Oomingmak”, “Need Fire”, “Aikea-Guinea”, “Cico Buff”, “Ella Megalast

Burls Forever” by Cocteau Twins

“Song to the Siren” by This Mortal Coil

“Life Is Sweet” by Chemical Brothers, featuring Tim Burgess

“Catch the Sun”, “Rise” by Doves

“Pyramid Song” by Radiohead

“Burning Bright” by Shinedown

“Njosnavelin (The Nothing Song)”, “Svefn-g-englar” by Sigur Rós

“Epiphany” by Staind

“Love Song” by The Cure

“Letting the Cables Sleep” by Bush

“Song of Amergin” by Lisa Gerrard

“Grace” by Jeff Buckley

“Vuoi Vuoi Mu (Henrik Schwarz Remix)” by Mari Boine

“Killer”, “Bring It On” by Seal

“Possession”, “Into the Fire” by Sarah MacLachlan

“Spellbound” by Siouxsie and the Banshees

“Stand Inside Your Love” by Smashing Pumpkins

“Head Over Heels” by Tears for Fears

“Sly”, “Teadrop”, “Inertia Creeps”, “Everywhen”, “What Your Soul Sings” by Massive Attack

“All Mine” by Portishead

“My Kingdom” by Future Sound of London

“Willow’s Song” by Sol Invictus

“Inner City Life” by Goldie

“Tarnished” by Black Tape for a Blue Girl

“Hemorrhage (In My Hands)”, “Falls On Me” by Fuel

“Dreams” by The Cranberries
“All Is Full Of Love”, “Come to Me”, “Pagan Poetry” by Björk
“Parabola”, “Reflection”, “Disposition” by Tool
“Midnight in a Perfect World” by DJ Shadow
“Clocks”, “Yellow” by Coldplay
“The Sensual World”, “Running Up that Hill”, “Cloudbusting” by Kate Bush
“Late in the Day” by Supergrass
“Carnival” by The Cardigans
“Sun Is Shining” by Finley Quaye
“Fade Into You” by Mazzy Star
“Swallow”, “Soon”, “Strawberry Wine”, “Lose My Breath”, “Blown a Wish” by My Bloody Valentine
“Black Metallic” by Catherine Wheel
“Photograph” by The Verve Pipe
The entire album *Under the Shadoms of the Trees* by Tor Lundvall

I’m sure there are others, but these are special favorites of mine.



Planting a Frey Garden

Raven Kaldera

My farm is dedicated to Frey. The land itself is Hela's, as is the house and all the back acreage; the herb garden is Gerda's, but the small 6-acre piece in the front that pastures animals and grows vegetables belongs to Frey. We aren't self-sufficient by any means, and any commercial farmer would laugh at us, but we manage to grow a significant portion of our meat, dairy, and vegetables without leaving home. I often plant seeds in the shapes of runes in the vegetable beds — Berkana, Inguz, Jera.

While Gerda is, for me, the goddess of the herb garden, and Frey is more specifically the deity of agricultural processes, not everyone has a farm or even a large vegetable garden. Some people aren't interested in growing their own food, or don't have the space, or the ability to do manual labor. If you do want to take part in (or at least support) agriculture but don't own land or live in a rural area, I strongly suggest that you get involved with a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm. CSA farms will sell you a share of the harvest in advance, and you get deliveries of vegetables all summer. Most have working shares where your labor can buy your food, most are organic, and all encourage volunteering. You know where your food comes from, you support small farms, and because there is no middleman you get your veggies cheaper. CSA shares can also be given to those who can't afford them, as an offering to Frey. However, if you have a small plot (or a few planters) and you'd like to create a ritual garden bed for Frey, the following plants are favorites of his.

First I want to emphasize, for those who care, that the associations of specific plants with Frey are solely and only the result of me working with hundreds of herbs and vegetables, and continually asking various deities, "All right, which ones are yours? Is anyone particularly interested in this plant?" as well as asking plant-wights "Are there any Gods that you work with in these pantheons?" The latter, especially, yielded remarkably efficacious results. With the exception of grains, as far as I know there are no extant sources about which herbs Frey is fond of, but my personal gnosis has served me well here.

To start with, any grains will do, even tiny plots or large pots of them. Barley is the best, but rye, wheat, and oats work too. If you can find *Einkborn hornemani*, that's the original Neolithic proto-wheat of the ancestors, and it can be grown as a devotional activity. Even if you only grow a potful, cut it down at Lammas and tie it into a sacred sheaf.

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*) is the first herb that I think of when I think of Frey plants. It was a few solitary Heathens who mentioned to me that they used Lemon Balm for his incense, and it made perfect sense — it's clean, bright, and an anti-depressant. I've used it to call on Frey, as well.

The annual plant Carline Thistle (*Carlina acaulis*) was known as "boar's thistle" or "boar's throat", and as such is Frey's plant as Master of Gullinbursti. It's one of the only thornless thistles that I know of. Its modern name comes from Charlemagne's Thistle, as it was a medicinal favorite of the Emperor's.

Coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) is sacred to Frey in his aspect as protector of farm animals, as it has an affinity with all hoofed beasts.

Hops (*Humulus lupulus*) is a hardy vine whose flower-pollen is used in brewing; sleeping on hop-stuffed pillows brings peace and good sleep, and in some traditions fertility and sexual energy.

Cherry trees are the tree that I associate most with Frey, and one could plant one of the dwarf cherry varieties even in a tiny garden. If you have a full-sized herb garden, of course, it's Gerda who you'll want to call on for advice and aid, and she has her own herbs ... but of course she's happy to see a Frey plot bedded down, as it were, in her garden. (For a Gerda tree, there is a purplish-black elder now on the market with the variety name "Gerda". I had to get one for her.)

Daily Devotionals to Frey

Sigrún Freyskona

These are non-complicated ways to align yourself with Frey, and bless Him as He blesses you. For these rituals you will need:

1) An altar to Frey (obviously). You can check the Altars section for some ideas, but a good rule of thumb is to have some representation of Frey, whether it be a statue or a picture (pictures can be drawn yourself or printed cheaply off the Internet and put in a nice frame, statues can be made out of modeling clay or bought), and then other items that connect you to Him.

2) A candle. He would prefer something made of beeswax and not heavily scented, but if natural is too expensive any candle would do.

3) Anointing oil. I use the Aura Cleansing blend from my local Pagan shop since that seems to work best with my personal energy and scent preferences, as well as the nature of this working.

4) Incense. This can be stick, cone, or powdered. Here is a recipe for an incense Frey would like:

Frey Blessing Incense

by Galina Krasskova

Roughly equal parts:

- Dragonsblood
- Copal
- Damiana
- Hops
- Cinnamon (ground)
- Cloves
- Star anise
- Ground amber (real amber)

If you are relying on non-homemade incense, He likes “sensual” scents: sandalwood, Nag Champa, jasmine, musk. He also likes floral scents, such as rose; very outdoorsy scents, such as pine; and may even appreciate an ocean-scented incense in reminder of His father. Runes are also needed, though they can be skipped if you are a beginner or not very good with runes. (If you pull a rune for the day’s word of wisdom and get Hagalaz or Thurisaz and freak out immediately without looking into the deeper meaning, this may be a step to avoid.) The runes should preferably be made yourself, though this again is not absolutely necessary.

For my own ritual, I also add a piece of jewelry in the morning, so I can tangibly have Frey with me all day. In this case it is a pendant, a bronze replica of the phallic Frey statue found in Sweden, and is attached to a purple collar.

In the evening, you will want an herbal tea designed for sleep, provided you’re not on medication that would interfere, and/or allergic. I use a special blend containing: ginseng roots, peppermint, anise, chamomile, lavender flower, motherwort, hops, sweet oat, hardhay, green oat, and valerian root. This gives me a good night’s sleep, although I try to make the taste a bit more palatable with a tablespoon of honey.

You will want to be skyclad for these rituals. Even if it makes you uncomfortable at first, it is symbolic of a fresh start, and being honest and open with Frey, and appreciative of the flesh.

Morning Frey Altar Devotional

PURPOSE: To receive Frey's blessing at the start of your day, to be aware of His influence in your life, and the goodness in life, throughout the day. It should be done immediately upon waking up, or after taking morning shower (if you bathe in the morning).

The Flame of Devotion

Light the candle and pray, with sincerity and intent, something similar to:

*I light this candle
to honor Your light,
to ask that Your light be in me,
to shine forth in the world.*

The Offering

Light the incense stick and hold it for a moment before placing it in the burner (if this is powdered incense you can pray over it before you light it). Pray something similar to:

*I offer this to You, Ingvi,
with a heart of gratitude
for Your many blessings in my life.
May Your blessings continue this day,
and may I be mindful of them.*

Trace a Giefu rune in smoke (or with your index finger) over the representation of Frey on the altar, and say:

A gift for a gift.

The Consecration

Take the bottle of oil and place a small (but not too small) amount on your fingertip or a cotton ball/swab. You will start by anointing the heels of your feet. Say:

Frey grounds me to the world so I can live fully.

Anoint each of your knees and say:

Frey helps me to bend with change and not break.

Anoint your pubic bone and say:

Frey desires that I know pleasure in life.

Anoint the bottom of your spine (lumbar region) and say:

Frey gives me strength to do His work.

Anoint your abdomen and say:

I will nourish myself so I can nurture others.

Anoint the heart area of your chest and say:

My heart feels Frey's love.

Anoint the palm of each of your hands and say:

Through Frey's power, my hands work to better myself and help others.

Anoint your throat and say:

I speak words that would honor Frey.

Anoint your forehead, where your third eye should be and say:

My mind knows peace, calmed by Frey.

The Reading

You will be drawing a rune from a bag or a small box. Before pulling the rune you will focus your mind on receiving Frey's guidance for the day, and pray, with intent, something similar to:

*Frey, I ask for You
to reveal through the runes
Your guidance for the day ahead.*

Pull a rune, and what you pull is your omen for the day.

You will then put on your piece of Frey jewelry, if you like, with a silent prayer to have Him there throughout the day.

Evening Frey Altar Devotional

PURPOSE: To receive the peace that Frey gives, to enable you to regenerate during the night, and/or allow Him to speak to you through your dreams.

The Flame of Devotion

Light the candle and pray, with sincerity and intent, something similar to:

*I light this candle
to honor Your light,
the light that shines even in the darkness,
and is always within me.*

The Offering

Light the incense stick and hold it for a moment before placing it in the burner (if this is powdered incense you can pray over it before you light it). Pray something similar to:

I offer this to You, Ingvi,

*with a heart of gratitude
for Your many blessings in my life.
Today I am grateful for...*

(name at least three good things you can recall about the day),
*and I know this was under Your influence.
I offer You my praise,
and my appreciation.*

You will trace a Giefu rune in smoke over the representation of Frey on the altar (or with your index finger), and say:

A gift for a gift.

The Consecration

Take the bottle of oil and place a small (but not too small) amount on your fingertip or a cotton ball/swab. You will start by anointing your forehead, where your third eye should be, and say:

My mind rests in Frey's peace.

Anoint the heart area of your chest and say:

My dreams are guided by Frey's love for me.

Anoint your abdomen and say:

I release the tension within my body so I can get needed rest.

Anoint the soles of your feet and say:

I ground myself in the reality of my life in the present.

Blessing Drink

Take the mug of tea and lift it up at least chin-length, saying:

*Frey, I ask for Your healing touch
on this drink, made of Gerda's herbs,
so I may have a blessed sleep.*

Sip the tea, but leave the last couple of sips in the mug, and leave the mug on the altar to Frey overnight.

The Closing Prayer

You will now embrace your representation of Frey and say:

*As the fields lie fallow to bear more fruit,
I now rest my body
to be refreshed to do Your work in the morrow.
Blessings to You, my Golden Lord.*

General Outline for a Faining to Frey

Sigrún Freyskona

This is an outline for a faining, which I differentiate from a Blót thusly: A Blót is usually done on a holy tide, and is a formal ritual in that it has a definite structure and involves a group of people. The word Blót is cognate with “blood”, and though a sacrifice of livestock with blood-sprinkling is not common anymore, I do not think you can call it a Blót if there is no sprinkling involved.

A *faining* is usually a more informal ritual with a loose structure that can be done any time of the year, holy tide or no, and with just yourself or maybe one or two other people. A faining usually involves a drink and/or some food, which makes it a bit more formal than a daily altar devotional, but usually not sprinkling, which makes it less formal than a full Blót. However, the offerings made to the Gods are “noted and logged”, especially if you have made or gotten something specifically to share with Them that has taken special thought and effort. The word “faining” comes from the Old High German *fagende* [fa-yënd-e], or Modern High German *Feier*. This word roughly translates as “celebrate”.

Calling/Invocation

This is to speak to Frey, to ask Him to be with you and accept your offering of celebration. The words can be improvised, but should be spoken from the heart, and not too generic. It’s good to call Frey by His attributes, and let Him know He is welcome in your stead.

Offering

Typically in my home fainings with Eosin, our offering takes three rounds but is not a sumble. We load a drink into the vessel (specific to His altar), and ask Frey to enjoy it with us. I give a round of thanks to Frey for a good life, I pass the drink to Eosin, who takes a sip, and then I sip, and then we pour into the bowl, to give to Frey. Then Eosin gives his round of thanks, passes the drink to me, I take a sip, and then he sips, and then we pour. The thanks usually consist of basic needs (food, clothing, shelter), prosperity (various “fun” extras), opportunities (educational, employment), health and physical vitality, inner peace, friendships with others, our love, and our sex life. Our last round is to thank Frey for being Him, and to express love. The entire drink is poured into the bowl.

Libation

We bring the bowl outside, usually to the base of a tree, and pour, saying something similar to:

*From the Gods to the Earth,
from the Earth to the Gods,
our blessings to Frey, God of the World.*

We find that a faining to Frey is a good way to give Him regular honor without getting too complicated and expensive, and it brings us closer to Him and keeps us more mindful of Him between fainings.

Guided Meditations

Sigrún Freyskona

Not everyone is wired to be a spirit-worker, and not everyone should be a spirit-worker. I believe, through my understanding of historical lore, as well as through my own experiences and those of others, that the Gods do still interact with Their worth-shippers, and interacted with the elder Heathen more than modern thought would care to admit. That being said, sometimes we can feel very distant from the Gods because of rough times. I remember spending a combined total of three years in psychiatric facilities, not being able to celebrate the holy tides there in a proper manner and feeling like the Gods had abandoned me. These guided meditations have been included not to disrespect the Gods or mock Otherworld etiquette (Yggdrasil is not an astral Disneyland), but to reach out to those who have every right to worth-ship the Gods but cannot fully connect for reasons of health or otherwise. Had someone written something like this for people like me and made a recording to CD for me to listen to, it would have eased a great deal of my pain.

These were written with those in mind who might be cut off from the greater Pagan and Heathen communities, or from society at large, being incarcerated in a prison or psychiatric facility, or otherwise socially isolated. The idea here is for you or someone else to record these meditations to CD for you to play back on the holy tides, or whenever you need a lift, to join in Vanic festivities and merriment. This is Frey's gift from me, to remember those of you who feel cut off from His love because you feel cut off from humanity. He remembers you, and He wants you to remember that He remembers.

Swimming In Alfheim: An Interlude With Freyr and Freyja

by Ayla Wolffe

I originally wrote this journey as a form of shamanic journeying for a friend and myself; she is wheelchair bound and in extreme pain due to her disability. On the occasion where she cannot tolerate the pain further, she has come to me asking me to take her to the realm of the Gods, particularly Freyr as he is her fulltrúi (meaning she is dedicated to him), as a way of growing and finding relief from the pain. I have done this on many such occasions and each time, she has come back relieved for a time. The most interesting aspect of this is that this journey work is done via chat, so this has become an experiment in how technology and wordcraft can help to take one beyond the every day when applied correctly. I hope you enjoy the journey provided here, and gain something by it.

It's early in the day, the sun is just peeking up behind the clouds and we are walking down a dirt road with the clouds a marvelous show of color. At first they are yellow, golden with pink peeking out at the rims, almost like mountains of gold. Then slowly they become pink as the belly of a salmon. Incredible. The sky itself is lavender with blue beginning to come through, cerulean and azure. It feels as though you are looking at a constantly changing painting, as if you could reach out and touch it and be drawn into it. The air tastes magical; it has a rare sweetness to it. You feel as if anything you wished for at this moment would happen. Your heart is bursting with good feeling, and you are at peace. You raise your arms and look skyward. We reach out to one another and hold each other's hands gently as we continue on our way, needing no words to communicate the wonder that we are feeling; our eyes alone speak our emotions. You look at me longingly, dreaming of perfect comfort, and into your mind comes the image of the ultimate hug.

As we walk together, we can feel all the weight which our everyday life impresses upon us simply lifting away. We are becoming the people we would like to be, living the life we each dream we live, every moment of every day. After some time, we come to a wooded glen which is obviously tended by loving hands, yet it feels as though no man or woman has been here for a very long time. There is a lake here, and its depths call

to you. The desire to feel its water flowing over your skin, running through your hair, is almost irresistible. We look at one another and realize we don't have bathing suits; we were not expecting to go swimming today. Even as we realize this, we open our bags and there they are, as if we had planned to swim all day long, along with the most absorbent of towels, soft and wonderful for cuddling in. Now we know that this is the place we are supposed to be. We let out a mutual sigh. "Ahhhh, perfect." We eagerly get into our bathing suits, realizing that these are not our own but gifts from our "hosts". The images upon them are wonderful; they make us appear as fish within the lake itself with silver scales, so realistic that they are works of art. We lay our blanket out and then the towels, then we run into the water, holding hands and laughing like children.

Once we go under the water, the strangest feeling comes over you ... and me too. It is as though you are a fish, swimming in your very own element; you do not feel a need to come up for air. You see the world beneath the water in a way you never have before. The suits we have been given are magical ... we are able to live in the water as creatures of the water for as long as we wish.

We look to one another and begin a joyful series of turns; it's such a different world here. To be of it, rather than to be alien to it ... the fish and other creatures seem to have no fear whatsoever of us; they brush up against us, they nibble at us as they do at one another, it tickles. You try to giggle beneath the water. Bubbles stream silently out of your mouth.

We break the surface of the water, coming up suddenly into the sunshine; water beads upon us and streams down. It is a feeling of freedom like nothing we have ever known; we feel like we are leaping, jumping the highest of hurdles. The sun cascades off the water making rainbows everywhere. We look at one another and dive beneath the surface at the exact same moment hair trailing out behind us like streamers of seaweed; arms reaching for one another, we embrace beneath the water ... healing beyond compare. When we break the surface next time, we are still hugging.

We realize that the lake has given us all that we needed from it, and we choose to leave the water and bask in the golden sunshine. We leave the water, holding hands as when we entered it. We wrap ourselves in the plush towels we have been given and lay down to dry off; the sun kisses us lovingly. I decide now would be a good time for something to eat, and I begin to take out food, and as I do suddenly we are joined by many friends who seemingly come out of nowhere. They are tiny men and women who live upon the land hereabouts, dressed in the natural materials of the land, and they have blended in perfectly. At first we are slightly startled, but this passes quickly and we welcome them to our repast. We realize that these are, yet again, some of the Alfar, and that they are the ones who have gifted us with our magical bathing suits, giving us the joyful experiences we have had. *You are most welcome here! It is not often we have visitors here; our home has been lost to those of your realm for some time. You must be touched by Freyr or Freyja to have found it, so you are most welcome here.*

Upon their names being spoken, before us are both Freyr and Freyja! They are radiant with joy; a gold-green light seems to pulse from them, and they come forward to embrace us gladly. They sit with us and explain that the reason why this place is not often visited is that it is part of Alfheim, and not many can still find the paths to Alfheim these days. The men and women who have been feasting with us are frolicking gaily now. A flute has been brought forward, as well as a harp. Music swells forth and carries the mood into a more serene state. The food which I had prepared seems frighteningly simple to me to be served to the likes of Freyja and Freyr. I have a Swedish Limpa bread, made with a beer from Belgium and freshly grated orange peel. I have a fresh fruit compote as well as cheeses of several varieties, a Danish blue as well as Havarti, Gloucester, Gouda. Freshly sliced tomato, broccoli and carrots as well as dip for them, some celery ... A nice strawberry shortcake. You assure me this is a feast and I blush. I have brought melons, cantaloupe and honey dew. I have brought water and our special cider, but I feel as though I am laying very simple fare before them ... even so, I am assured that simple is often better, which makes me feel good. They are also quick to say that they would like to feast us as well, and ask what we might desire.

You remember the ham you had with your Nordic friends when they had you over for Midsummer

many years ago ... very good, different from what most people can get stateside, juicier and tenderer than American hams tend to be, with a bit of sweet undertone to the meat. My thoughts tend more toward dessert. I think of pecan pie and pumpkin pie, two things which are very American in flavor. It's interesting to note the differences in our tastes, I comment. You tell us of this pecan pie your grandma had that was almost to die for. In response to my observation you speak of how, "I get more nostalgic for what I miss my Swedish friends having ... The food is half of the hospitality, as we both know." I agree.

Freyr eventually says to you, "There is a reason you are here, a pain which must be washed away, of someone who has hurt you with their words. Tell me of it, and if I can I will aid you." You tell of an unpleasant experience you recently had. Freyr replies by saying, "Those who assault you with words or gestures have no place in your thoughts or your life. They are unworthy of you. You are above that. You have far more to you than whatever this person wanted to reduce you to by their words or actions. They are nothing, and once you have moved on your way they remain nothing."

You ask in a joking manner if he gives hugs... and he responds to you by saying, "Yes, I do give hugs to those who have a claim on me, by living in my heart and in my home, which you do." He opens his arms to embrace you and invites you in. You feel as though you are being embraced by the morning sunrise that we witnessed. The colors of the clouds enter your heart, it begins to glow with joy and love. The serenity of the sky breathes itself within you and you know that no matter how foul someone's words to you are in future, you will be able to walk on.

Freyja speaks to me, saying, "Thank you for helping a dear friend of us both, and I wish you strength and success in all your undertakings." She smiles at me warmly and offers me an embrace. I run to her arms, embracing her without reservation of any kind. It feels like I am hugging a living flame, one that warms me through and through without burning me in a harmful way. It makes me want to live, to run forth and do all that I desire at one time. The joy in my heart feels like it is almost about to burst. Still enraptured, I say to her, "Thank you, Freyja, for helping me to be able to become what it is I have dreamed of."

She replies by saying, "I am always happy to help those who show me respect and give their best — in both ritual and everyday life." I blush and become quite tongue tied.

We sit back down, basking in the good feeling and return to our repast; we raise a horn of mead to honor Freyr and Freyja. It shines golden and sweet in the sunshine. I also wish to toast Njord and Nerthus for siring them, and for their good will. I also raise the horn to Thor, to Sif, to Erdra, to Odin and to Frigga. Then we know that the time has come to return to the everyday ... and yet the desire to stay, well, it's so tempting. Freyr and Freyja tell us that such is not for us, we have things which must be done. They assure us that even when we know it not, they are with us. We part in joy with the knowledge we can always return when the need is truly great. Each of us gives them one last hug before turning away, we wave and walk on. After a moment, we turn to one another and smile, knowing we share a great love, and truly begin our walk home.

Beltaine Meditation

Sigrún Freyskona

Begin to breathe slowly, deeply. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9...

Your mind is getting very quiet, very still. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9...

There is a whirling wheel of pure golden light forming at your forehead. I want you to breathe slowly and deeply, and watch the pure golden light as it unfolds and forms a path, through the darkness, through the blackness, through the stillness, through the emptiness, through the Void, into sunshine, through bright green grass speckled with flowers of different hues: yellow and pink and pale purple and blue. You are moving through the grass and come to the top of a hill, where you see a tall pole thronged with many ribbons, creating a rainbow of assorted colors.

Freyja is the first to greet you. Her hair, usually carefully braided, is hanging down loose to Her waist in a mass of reddish-gold curls, and a wreath made of flowers is circling Her head. She is wearing a pale pink dress, and Her Brisingamen, forged of amber and gold, gleams in the sunlight. Freyja takes your hand and leads you over to the pole, where others have gathered. They mostly look human, but you notice a fae quality to some of the folk, with shining pale skin and ears that look vaguely pointed. Ljossalfar have joined with the humans to celebrate this holy tide.

An older woman, plump and jolly with long grey hair, wearing an orange dress, hugs you as if she's known you forever, and asks you what color ribbon you want. There are red ribbons, for love; green ribbons, for wealth; yellow ribbons, for happiness; orange ribbons, for health; blue ribbons, for wisdom; purple ribbons, for spirituality. Take a moment to decide which color would be best for your need, and take one of those ribbons into your hand.

The woman blows a bull's horn, loudly, and an Alfar band fiddles and plays flute as you all go round about the pole in a circle. The red, yellow, and blue ribbons go clockwise, moving around the pole starting from the right, and the green, orange, and purple ribbons go counter-clockwise, moving around the pole starting from the left. The ribbons weave and tangle together, and you see the pole glowing with a faint white light. You realize that the pole is a microcosm of Yggdrasil, and the ribbons are representations of the threads of Wyrð. What looks simple and fun is a magical working to influence your own Wyrð and that of others.

When the song is over you all stop, and Frey comes out to join His sister. He is dressed in a green tunic and is wearing a crown of leaves. Frey is holding a large goblet made of the purest gold, and Freyja fills it with a golden liquid from a bottle. "Let us celebrate the full bloom of Midgard," Freyja says, "the flowers smiling upon the land, and bringing smiles to the people. Let us celebrate the warmth and vitality of the land, and within each of us."

Frey offers the first drink of the chalice to Freyja, who passes it to the older woman with the bull's horn. She drinks, and the chalice is passed through the group. You are the last to receive it and you see there is some left for you. You drink deep of the goblet, and then realize Frey has not had a drink. You pass the chalice to Him, and He smiles at you.

"It is an honor to serve you, my Lord," you say to Him, and He bows before you slightly and says, "We all serve in love."

You hold the goblet as he drinks, and then pours the remainder of the drink out on the Earth at the feet of the folk. The band plays again, and Frey takes your hands to dance with you. He twirls you around and around, picks you up, swoops you down, and you notice that when dancing with Him you are perfectly coordinated and mobile. After a few moments of dancing in perfect joy, your feet lift off the ground a little bit, and so do Frey's feet. You are both literally dancing on the air, and it is the most thrilling moment of your life.

After the dance you bring Frey over to Freyja. They embrace each other, and then Freyja gives Him a small, smirking smile. "We had better go bless the land," Freyja says, winking at Her brother.

"I think so," Frey says, winking back at His sister, and then turns to you. Frey places His hands on your heart, and Freyja places Her hands on your head. He says, "As the Earth blooms in renewal, your heart shall also be renewed, you will find new meaning and new joy in your life."

Freyja says, "As the Earth blossoms in renewal, your mind shall also be renewed, you will find new purpose and new hope in your life."

Frey pulls you close, and you feel safe and warm in His arms; His love feels like liquid golden velvet. Then Freyja embraces you, and you feel energized, every part of your body waking up as electricity courses through it, like crackling sparks.

You are walking back down the path now, back to Midgard. 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... Breathe in, but know Frey has touched you and blessed you, and that will stay with you, always.

Lammas Meditation

Sigrún Freyskona

Begin to breathe slowly, deeply. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9...

Your mind is getting very quiet, very still. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6... 7... 8... 9...

There is a whirling wheel of pure golden light forming at your forehead. I want you to breathe slowly and deeply, and watch the pure golden light as it unfolds and forms a path, through the darkness, through the blackness, through the stillness, through the emptiness, through the Void, into sunshine, and tall grass, tall trees, rolling hills, the song of birds, squirrels scampering to and fro, and in the distance you hear a fiddle, and hands clapping in rhythm. You are racing down the path now, in anticipation. You are moving over a hill, and at the bottom of the hill is a field of wheat, tall and golden, ready to be harvested. At the base of the wheat field, there is a fiddler, a merry looking man, middle-aged, and gathered men and women clapping their hands as they watch other men and women dance a spry jig. You are delighted to see this, and they wave to you, welcoming you, for they know who you are.

You reach the bottom of the hill and all the gathered people hug you. A little girl puts her arms around your waist and as you stoop down to kiss her on the nose, she puts a crown of flowers on your head, giggling. A man takes your right hand, and a woman your left, and they swing you to and fro, for here you are free, free to dance to the fiddle. You dance and dance, kicking your feet, waving your arms, until you hear the sound of the horn, and watch as two pages come towards you. A few moments pass, of silence and anticipation. You see the wain drawing nearer, pulled by a golden boar. In the wain sits Frey, with his long golden hair blowing in the breeze, his blue eyes twinkling as he smiles broadly and waves at everyone. His sister, Freyja, is sitting to the left of him, glorious in her bright Brisngamen, with her hair carefully braided and pinned. Gerda is to the right of him, solemn in a hooded cloak, but she manages to give a small smile to the crowd. Njord is also in the wain, waving and shouting hello. You are so awed by seeing the Vanir family that you don't even notice at first the attendants walking on either side of the wain.

The wain drives up to the wheat field, and the attendants help Njord out first, Freyja and Gerda out next, and Frey next. Then, from the back of the wain, a veiled voluptuous Goddess is hoisted out, and you recognize her to be Nerthus. The attendants walk with the Gods to where you and the others had been dancing, and immediately the silence breaks and the gathered crowd throw themselves on Frey, who warmly returns their hugs. Finally Frey walks up to you and says, "I'm happy to see you here."

"It is good to be here," you reply.

"Would you like a hug?" Frey asks.

So you put your arms around Frey, and He cuddles you as you snuggle Him, and it feels so cozy and comfy and warm and safe and good. A crown made from wheat is passed into your hands, and you set it upon Frey's head, and watch as a radiant golden glow swirls around Him. His smile broadens and He takes the center place.

"I am happy to have you all here," Frey said, "for today is the first harvest, and we shall celebrate not just the harvest, but all the good things to celebrate living in the world. Good friends, good fun, silliness and laughter, song and dance, loveliness to look upon, closeness and coziness. This is what matters in life, for life is to be enjoyed."

A bottle is passed to Frey by Njord, and a horn by Nerthus. Frey pours the contents of the bottle into the horn, and traces a Giefu rune over the horn. He says: "Enjoy me, as I enjoy all of you. Let us share this drink and share frith and joy." The horn is passed around the gathered folk, and each person says "Hail Frey!" before drinking. It comes to you last, and you think of all Frey has given you over the years, and how He is reaching out to you again now. You smile and say "Hail Frey," then take a sip of the golden liquid. It is sweet and spicy and warm and one of the most delicious things you've ever tasted — but the best is yet to come.

Freyja gives a bread loaf to Frey, and He cuts an Ing rune into the loaf, which glows with golden light.

He lifts up the bread and says, “I share this with you, my friends, my loved ones, so that you may never go hungry, whether in body, or in your soul.”

Frey walks around the gathered folk, and breaks a piece of bread for each one. When He comes to you, He breaks off a good chunk of bread and says, “Eat this, and be full, know that I have you, and what I have, I hold.” As He hands the bread to you, He blows at your forehead, and you feel sparks of pure golden light passing into your head, filling your mind with joy, and filling your whole body with a glowing warmth that tingles all over in a cozy, pleasant way. Frey watches as you eat the bread He consecrated, and enjoy the earthy and somewhat sweet taste of it, melting in your mouth. He enjoys watching you eat, for He likes seeing “happy food faces” on His folk, then He gives you a big bear hug.

“I love you, Frey,” you tell him, and He rubs your back and says, “I love you, too.”

With that, the fiddling commences and Frey takes both your hands and begins spinning you around and around, then you get to twirl Him around. He takes you in His arms as if you weigh no more than a feather, lifts you up, dips you down, and then the two of you kick your feet and flail your arms in time. You have never had so much fun in your life.

At long last the festival is over, and you see the whirling wheel again, and the path folds outwards. Frey alone sees the path, and guides you there. As you step onto the edge of the path, He gathers you in His arms for one last cozy embrace, and says, “I have not forgotten about you. You see, I brought you here. Hold onto that, as I hold onto you.” He kisses your forehead, and watches as you head on your way.

You are walking back down the path now, back to Midgard. 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1...

Breathe in, but know Frey has touched you and blessed you, and that will stay with you, always.



A Ritual Outline for Lammas (Loaf-fest), Freysblót

Sigrún Freyskona

The first part of the ritual should be held on July 29th, at sunset, if possible. This is three days prior to the actual Blót on Lammas. This is strictly my UPG (Unverified Personal Gnosis), as far as what Frey told me, but He spends three days disembodied, as His physical body lays in the field of Vanaheim. All of Vanaheim mourns and only small amounts of the plainest food are eaten. In Ljossalfheim there is “the Great Silence”: there is to be no music played, no speech at all, out of respect to their slain King. Frey cannot contact me during those three days. On Lammas sunrise, Frey is turned away from the gates of Helheim, and begins His journey back to Vanaheim, set to arrive at high noon “Midgard time”. At noon Vanaheim rejoices upon Frey’s return, He is crowned with gold (whereas on His sacrifice He is crowned with wheat), there is much eating and drinking and songs and dancing and laughter. Frey is put on a wain and driven through Vanaheim, giving hugs to everybody (and I do mean everybody, including random visitors), and blowing light at people who need it.

Frey once told me the story of how the Lammas sacrifice came to be:

The History of Lammas *(as told to Sigrún by Frey)*

Many eons ago, the Great World Tree known as Yggdrasil sprouted, took root, and grew tall and wide and strong enough to be a home for all peoples. The doors to Yggdrasil opened one at a time. It is said by my grandfather Frodi that the Vanir came to Yggdrasil as seeds of light; those seeds took form, and created a realm made from Ymir’s pelvis, full of life: the richest soil, the freshest fruits, vegetables, and grains, the loveliest flowers, the best of beasts. The seeds of light that became the Vanir people made a beautiful place, and maintained that beauty with hard work and rules of hospitality so that hard work could be done in merriment and all could share the goodness of the land.

My people were aware of the Light Elves, and when I was a baby and had my first tooth, I was given Ljossalfheim as a present. The elves were so taken with me, both in appearance and behavior, that they swore fealty to me. The son of the Elf King and a human woman, named Skirnir, was my best friend, and later on as I became a hostage at Asgard, he became my servant and, as I like to call it, “reality advisor”.

The Aesir envied the land my people rightly owned, and after their rude, disrespectful, and disruptive behavior, there was a war between us. I was the equivalent of a teenager at the time, hormonal and horny, and I fought in the war. Many of my friends died, young and old. To preserve a truce, our sides exchanged hostages, and I was sent to Asgard. Because my father Njord was the speaker for our people and I had not yet come of age, I was not allowed to speak for what I wanted to do with my life and my freedom. It was determined that I would spend a third of the year in Asgard, a third in Alfheim, and a third in Vanaheim. In fact, I am only allowed to return to Vanaheim just before the Ing festival and stay until the winter comes.

The Ing festival started when there was a great famine throughout the Nine Worlds. The people of Midgard who had turned to the Vanir for help with agriculture were turning to theft and murder. They cried out to us desperately, but we had nothing to offer. Then Nerthus, my mother, who rarely speaks, said “Your blood holds the fertility of the worlds within it.”

“Then they can have my blood,” I said, and I cut my wrist with the sword I had at the time.

“You think that tiny amount of blood is going to help even Vanaheim, let alone everyone else?” My mother looked at me. “They need all of your blood. They need your body decomposing into the soil. They need your spirit.”

I didn’t want to give myself. I liked my life just fine. I had my pick of any woman or man I wanted to lay with, and spent my time fucking, drinking, eating, dancing, and laughing, occasionally officiating at some

event at Asgard. I liked being treated well, I liked the company of the Gods, Alfar, and others I encountered, and mostly I just liked having fun.

My mother sighed and said, “Very well, but if you won’t do it, I wonder who will.”

I remember returning to my cottage that night with a special lust for one of the cooks, but she was unhappy, and when I saw her stirring a thin gruel, I was concerned. I held her close, trying to grind my erection into her, and she said, “I am too weak from hunger to lay with you, my lord. My apologies.” So for the first time in my life, I had to masturbate, and I needed privacy, but every commoner in Vanaheim had taken up residence at my home because they were always guaranteed food there. I went out into the backyard and sat against a tree. As I reached my hand down my pants, I felt the tree “poke” me with its roots ... and then I felt the roots of the World Tree itself, looked down and saw my manhood turn into a serpent, and I fainted. And whilst I was unconscious, I traveled Yggdrasil, seeing each world, and the hungry people, good people, humans, elves, dwarves, giants, Gods, calling to me and crying because they were hungry, their children were hungry, their land was parched, their beasts were dying, everything was dying. I saw the Tree itself shrivel up, and crumple up much like the boat Loki gave me. It crumpled up and rolled back into the Ginnungagap, and the few surviving Vanir opened the door of the Tree, and floated out as seeds of darkness, to roam the great void forever in bitterness and wailing, shrieking sorrow.

It was too much for me to bear. I woke weeping, and as I wept, I saw clouds in the sky. I wept with a rage I had never known before, and rains poured down from a dark, roaring sky. I screamed and beat the ground with my fists, and the rain poured. The commoners rushed out of my house and danced naked in the rain, leaping and shouting for joy.

I returned to my mother and told her, “I am willing to die for them, all of them. To be alive when everyone else dies, and know I have caused it, is worse than to give my own life. Maybe Hela will be merciful to me.”

My mother nodded with a small smile at the corner of her lips. “Maybe so.”

Three days later I stood at the center of Vanaheim, and my mother held the sickle to my throat. I was crowned with a sheaf of wheat, and the attendants sang a farewell song. I was afraid. I had never met Hela, and I didn’t know what Her realm would be like. Then the sickle went into me, and I was aware of my falling to the ground as a great burning pain surged through my body. I felt the blood gushing out of my throat, and saw darkness envelop me.

I was walking through the crowd, calling to them, but nobody could hear me. I reached out to my sister, and my arms went through her. I reached out to my father, and he passed through me. I knew I was dead, and saw a path enveloped in shadows unfold in front of me. With each step I took, the path got longer, and soon I was completely out of my own world and on the shadow road. I heard whispers, and I felt strangely empty.

At long last I came to a gate and a tall, muscular woman clad in black saw me and nodded. “Greetings, my Lord.”

“Is Her Ladyship here?”

“She is.”

The gate opened, and I was escorted by a man and a woman to Hela, who was the most startling sight I ever laid eyes on (as well as the most rotten smell I have ever had the pleasure to inhale). Hela smiled at me, or half her face smiled, and she presented her living hand to me, so I knew I was really dead. She had me sit down with her, and after she had stared at me awhile, unspeaking, she said, “You can go.”

“Go?”

“Yes, you can go.” Hela nodded. “Please go now.”

“Go?”

“Yes. Go back to your people.”

“But I gave my life...”

Hela smiled again. “And you did the right thing. For your willing sacrifice, I am willing to grant you a

reprieve. For your selflessness I am willing to extend my compassion to the living. You will walk my road before the first harvest, you will know the pangs of death so that the living may not know the pangs of famine that brings on death.” She stood up, slowly and pointed to the door with her skeletal hand. “Go now, Ingvi Frey. This is not your home. Go back to the living.”

And I walked through the door of Hela’s castle, and was aware as I stepped through Mordgud’s gate, back onto the path, of great pain throughout my entire body, especially where I had been stabbed, and where the vultures had begun picking off my flesh. I felt the pain surge through my body, and felt the numbness clear from my head, so that I was made fully aware of the emptiness of my disembodiment, the emptiness. I felt completely separated from those I love, in the emptiness of death. I knew what it was like to die, and I knew I had to give myself every year to ensure the fertility of the soil, so that they would not know that emptiness too soon; besides which, it is easier to enjoy life with a full stomach. I felt Sunna’s light on my face, and soon heard the familiar sounds of chirping birds. I saw a procession up and down the path, greeting me with shouts and whistles, and song:

*Gifts of the Golden God,
you have given us life in full,
we offer gifts to You now,
our love, our lives, our all.
Gifts of Ingvi Frey,
the Lord who heals the land,
we rejoice in gratitude
that You care and understand.*

So it goes that once a year on the eve of the first harvest, I am cut down and my blood seeps into the soil of Vanenheim, and into the soil of other worlds, to make the soil fertile year-round. In thanks for my sacrifice, upon my return from Hela’s realm, I am given the first fruits of the harvest in a feast. In my love of my adoring people, I give them light, the light of My soul, for them to be light to one another, and do the work that maintains the world.

The Faining

On this night, you can either have a more personal ritual at home, with yourself and maybe a few others, or you can have something more formal in a public setting. However, due to the controversial nature of the debate about whether or not Frey is actually the Lammas-sacrifice God (and the corroborated gnosis is that He is — not only has He told us Himself, but every other Grain/Harvest God of the world’s pantheons is sacrificed and resurrected, and much of our Heathen lore was lost or destroyed), the vigil to honor Frey’s death should perhaps be kept more personal, or with only others who can be trusted to keep the right spirit when participating.

You will want the following ritual tools: one candle for each of the participants (one candle should be bigger than the others, for the Gydhia); a candle snuffer; a seed (preferably grain); and a piece of dry, stale bread (not moldy).

1. Lighting

The Gydhia lights her candle and says:

*I light this flame
to honor the light within Frey,
the joy that gives life
to all of the Worlds.*

The Gydhia lights each candle, from her candle, and says:

*Remember Frey,
and let His light be within you
now and always.*

2. Meditation

The Gydhia sets down her candle and picks up the seed. She says:

*This seed is planted
in the dark soil,
and bursts open,
pushes through the soil,
to touch the light
and grow into food.*

The Gydhia passes the seed to each participant and says:

*Let us be mindful now
of Ingvi's seed,
that gives life to all things.*

The Gydhia places the seed down, and picks up the stale bread. She says:

*This bread
is the result of the seed.
As we consume the bitterness
of this stale bread,
let us be mindful of the bitterness
in our own lives,
the death, the change,
that is necessary for rebirth, and better times to come.*

The Gydhia breaks up the bread and hands a piece to each participant, saying:

*Eat of the staleness, the rot,
and let the dying Grain God be in you.*

3. Mourning

The Gydhia takes the candle back up, holds the snuffer in her left hand, and says:

*As this candle goes out,
so Frey's light goes out from the worlds,
as He is sacrificed and walks the Helvegr,
He dies so we may live.*

The Gydhia snuffs out the candle. Each participant snuffs out their candle afterwards, and walks outside to place the seeds on the Earth.

4. Closing

The Gydhia says:

*Frey now walks the Helveg,
and we must not contact Him for three days,
to let Him rest,
and truly be dead.
May you find comfort in His absence.*

The participants should abstain from eating bread again until Lammas Day, besides the no-contacting-Frey prohibition.

The Blót

The Blót itself should be performed on August 1st, and can be done in the morning, afternoon, or evening as schedule allows.

Ritual Tools:

Antler (for hallowing the stead)

Two loaves of homemade bread, one for sacrifice, one for sharing, marked with the Ing rune

A fire-pot (cauldron) if burning the sacrifice loaf is appropriate to your Blót location

Mead or craft beer; if holding public ritual, non-alcoholic cider may be substituted

A container for the liquid offering, a horn or chalice

A blessing-bowl (wood or ceramic)

A sprig from an evergreen

Prior to the Rite:

1. Have a guest list made if you are participating with any more than two people.
2. Have a definitive place where you are going to hold the rite, whether it be in your backyard or in a public place. (NOTE: Most public parks do not allow alcohol on-site, and an area should be accessible for people with disabilities including limited mobility, but not so obvious you get harassed by strangers.)
3. Designate one person as Warder, and another as Valkyrie. The Warder's job is to hallow the stead with intent, and the Valkyrie's job is to pass the horn with intent. By "intent", I mean that both need to be aware of the sacred nature of their jobs, and have some kind of supernatural awareness so the Warder can truly ward and the Valkyrie can truly bless the folk with the sacred drink.

Theory of Ritual Outline

1. Explanation: there may be some present who are new to Heathenry, or may not even be Ásatrú. Even for those who are "elders" (have more than seven years' time in the faith), it is important to have an appropriate mindset and it helps to focus on why Lammas is important, and furthermore, what is proper attitude and conduct for the rite.
2. Warding: I am usually against warding in my own personal rituals, as I think Midgard itself is sacred, I don't have Jotun-phobia, and I would rather not offend the land-wights, but I know it makes others feel better, particularly if they come from a Wiccan background where they're used to casting a circle. It also helps to create the mood for a more "sacred" atmosphere.
3. Calling: Important because this invites Frey into the place, and lets Him know He is welcome and being honored.
4. Blessing to Frey: Obvious.

5. The First Horn: to share drink with Frey, and be sprinkled, and thus charged and blessed, by the drink that holds His energy.
6. Bread Sacrifice: because bread is a Lammas thing.
7. Second Horn: to honor the other Gods, who are also worthy of thanks.
8. Closing: a final blessing to Frey, and to the attendants.

Ritual Outline for Lammas Day

1. Explanation

This is my generic format for the explanation prior to the Lammas Blót:

Njördr in Nóatún begot afterward two children: the son was called Freyr, and the daughter Freyja; they were fair of face and mighty. Freyr is the most renowned of the Æsir; he rules over the rain and the shining of the sun, and therewithal the fruit of the earth; and it is good to call on him for fruitful seasons and peace. He governs also the prosperity of men.

—*Gylfaginning 24*

Frey is the one who makes the crops grow, and brings food and its associated comfort to mankind. He wants to not just nourish our bodies, but our souls. He is the God of a happy, enjoyable life. We need to be mindful of Frey's blessings to us each day, and be thankful to Him.

From the Anglo-Saxon Rune Poem, the verse on Ger or Jera:

*Ger byþ gumena biht, ðonne God læteþ,
halig heofones cyning, brusan syllan
beorhte bleða beornum ond ðearfum.*

*Summer is a joy to men, when God, the holy King of Heaven,
suffers the earth to bring forth shining fruits
for rich and poor alike.*

Summer is when the wheat and barley harvests come in, and vegetable and fruit produce is usually at its best now. Frey wants us to rejoice in the fullness of life. He is called “Veraldar Gudh” in Sweden, or “God of the World”, and He truly wants us to enjoy this world, to eat, drink, and be merry.

Because Frey is the God of peace, also called “frith”, we ask that if you Blót with us, you do so in a spirit of peace. If you hold great animosity with someone in the circle, please put it aside to concentrate on Frey, or leave. We cannot have a Blót with a wrong attitude.

For that same reason we will not be hallowing the stead with a hammer. Not only were weapons not allowed in Frey's temples of antiquity, in Uppsala and England, but also the hammer is rightly Thor's symbol, and much more aggressive than Frey's weapon, which is the antler, and a part of nature. We hallow the stead in this rite to make it acceptable for Frey's presence, not to separate us from the world.

2. Warding

With antler wielded by the Warder, walk around stead drawing Ing runes in the center of each corner, above, and below. As Gydhia and Warder walk around stead, Warder speaks, with intent:

*Ic me on þisse gierde beluce, ond on Inguis healde bebeode,
 Wip þone saran stice, wip þone aran slege,
 wip þone grimman gryre,
 wip þone micelan ebtnes, þe bið æghwæm laþ.
 Ond wip eall þæt laþ, þe into land faraþ.
 Sigegealdor ic begala, sigegyrd ic me wege,
 Wordsige ond weorcsige, se me deage,
 Ne me wine ne geswitcan, ne me wera ne geswenchan,
 Ne me næfre minum feorbe, forht ne geweorþan.*

Gydhia translates in Modern English: “I lock myself into this yard and rely on Ingui’s protection, against the sore stitch, against the sore strike, against the grim horror, against the great attack that is hateful to all. And against all that is hateful that fares through the land. A victory charm I sing, a victory rod I bear, word victory and work victory this is what I do, my friend does not betray me, no man oppresses me, nor my faring become frightful.”

3. Calling

Gydhia stands before the altar in the Center, and raises the antler, calling Frey into the stead.

4. Blessing to Frey

The statue of Frey is passed around the circle. Each person embraces the statue as if they were embracing Frey, and gives a heartfelt prayer of thanks to Frey for the year’s “harvest” (stating a personal accomplishment), giving Frey words of appreciation and love.

5. The First Horn

The Valkyrie holds the horn, and Gydhia traces a Giefu rune over the beverage, with intent. The Valkyrie lifts up the horn, and Gydhia says:

*To Ing, who has given us so much,
 a gift for a gift!*

The Valkyrie pours a draught into the bowl, and the Gydhia raises the bowl. With intent, she sees the energy exchange between the folk and Frey. Gydhia walks around to each of the gathered folk, standing before each with the bowl, dipping the evergreen sprig in, and sprinkling the worshiper with the beverage. She smiles and sings each time:

Alu, alu, alu, bót en blót. Alu, alu, alu. Alu, alu, alu.

Gydhia returns to the altar. Valkyrie raises the horn and Gydhia traces an Ing rune over it, with intent. The Valkyrie lifts up the horn, and gydhia says:

*Let us share this drink with Ing
 in frith and merriment.*

Valkyrie goes around folk with horn, so each may sip.
To each worshipper, Valkyrie says: *Frey be with you.*

6. Bread Sacrifice

Gydhia lifts up first loaf of bread and traces Giefu rune over it, with intent. She offers the bread to Frey, giving Him thanks for His many gifts to the folk. This should be done in her own words, and spoken from the heart. The Gydhia places the bread at the base of a tree, or alternately may place it in a firepot to burn, either way calling out: *Was þu þall!* The Gydhia then takes up the second loaf of bread and traces the Giefu rune over it, with intent. She says:

*Frey, may those who seek to honor You
be blessed by this bread.
May they know You
and never hunger.*

Gydhia walks around the folk with the bread. She breaks off a piece for each worshipper, and as she hands them the bit of bread, she says (with a smile): *Frey be in you.* Any remainder of the bread is distributed between the Valkyrie, Gydhia, and Warder, then the rest offered to the land-wights.

7. Second Horn

The horn is filled one last time, and the Gydhia lets the folk know they may each drink a toast in thanks to their chosen Deity. The Valkyrie passes the horn around to the folk. Each person speaks a toast to chosen Deity before they drink. The rest of the horn is poured into the bowl.

8. Closing

The Gydhia gives thanks to Frey, and a benediction to the gathered folk. The antler is raised, and brought down on the altar to signify the closing of the rite.



Yule Sumble and Wassail

Sigrún Freyskona

Although there are twelve days of Yule, starting with Mother's Night on the Solstice (primarily honoring Frigga), and ending with Twelfth Night where Holda (possibly of the Vanir) was honored in Continental Germany and Holland. During this time, the Wild Hunt rides through the skies, led by Odin and/or Holda. We also have an account of oaths being taken on a boar, and since Frey was one of the Deities who heard oaths, and the boar was most sacred to Him, we can assume this was one of Frey's rites, especially because ham is still served in Scandinavia (especially Sweden) during this time.

Although Frey shares characteristics with St. Stephen, honored on December 26th, the main Yule/Christmas festival in Sweden (where Frey was primarily honored) is held on December 24th and known as *Julaften*. I have thus set the day for doing a Frey Sumble (as opposed to a Blót) at Yuletide on December 24th, in the evening. The Wassail comes afterwards.

I was spirit-taught by Frey a story regarding the origins of the Yule sumble, as being a commemoration of the truce between the Aesir and Vanir. Your own UPG may differ here.

The Yule Story (*as told to Sigrún by Frey*)

I was told that long ago, there was a Family, and that Family grew, making offspring, and newer branches of the Family. After a time this Family with all its new and various branches, got so large, that They decided, for Their own sake, to travel, and They found a place, a round sphere, where They could live together yet not so close as to have no room.

One of the members of this Family is known, in some places, as Herne. He is one of my Ancestors. I have met him a few times, but briefly, and I call him Grandfather, although He is much farther back in my line than a grandfather would be, by human reckoning. It is from Herne that my people, the Vanir, are descended. We all resemble Herne — some of us are more attuned to the wild beasts, and the hunt. Some of us are more attuned to the green plants, and growing them. Some of us carry a little bit of both, such as myself. But we all come from Herne, and since Herne had several branches of his own Family, of which we were one, we decided to give the others a little breathing space. And we set forth, and found a tree. We built our world, Vanaheim, in this tree. Though the tree's canopy covers the Northlands, its roots run through the whole of the sphere, so anyone can touch the roots — or be prodded. Some are poked by the roots of Helheim, and become death-workers. Some are poked by the roots of Ljossalfheim, and learn the magic and beauty of the elves; some by Svartalfheim who learn about money, and work for its own sake. Some are poked by the roots of Asgard or Jotunheim, and you see what happens with them. You, of course, have taken hold of the root of Vanaheim, and this is where your heart and your home lie.

For a long time, my people lived in Vanaheim and were undisturbed by anyone except the Ljossalfar, who were curious and attracted by the beauty of our world. We became friendly with them, and when I was yet a baby born to Njord and Nerthus, the Ljossalfar were so taken with me that the royal families offered Ljossalfheim to me, to rule when I was of age.

My father, Njord, was the King of Vanaheim, although all the Vanic people have the strong blood of Herne flowing through them, and Vanaheim was based around respect and co-operation. Everyone was well off. My parents ruled over fishing and farming, and when my sister Freyja and I came of age, She took charge of the floral industry, and I followed in my mother's footsteps. One of my other sisters, Eir, became an accomplished healer, for one day she went walking, and got lost. When she returned, she told us how she had been injured in her travel, and woke up in a strange land called Jotunheim, where a Jotuness took care of her, and in exchange for the service, Eir learned the healing craft herself.

We lived in peace, and plenty. However, this was not to last forever. Not long after Eir returned from Jotunheim and taught us the ways of the pungent herbs, and laying on of hands, and power songs, we were visited by a group of people calling themselves Aesir. As was our custom, we offered them hospitality, food and shelter. One of the travelers was amazed by how much gold we had, he had never seen anything like it, and wanted gold for himself. We offered him lodging to stay awhile, so we could craft him some things of gold, provided he paid us. Rather than taking this offer, he raided our stores and stuffed as much as he could carry into his pack, and those of his travelers. He wanted to leave Vanaheim in the night. My father met the travelers called Aesir at the border, and a fight broke out.

Fighting was not unheard of among our people, but it was the custom to release aggressions through proper hunting, and sport, and if two people had a conflict, it was heard before the elders, and was most often decided peacefully, through a settlement. If fighting was done, it was done with rules, and fairly.

The Aesir had underestimated us as simple farmers. They invaded our land, and killed many of our people. We of course killed many of them as well. After many years where many died on both sides, we gained the advantage in numbers, as the Aesir were getting tired: they were not used to hard work as we were. Odin, the ruler of the Aesir, came to my father, and offered a truce.

My father and Odin traveled together to Asgard, so Odin could give him proper food and drink, and rest, and they sat in council for many hours. To this day, none of us know what was said. When my father came back to Vanaheim, he brought two men with him, one younger as well as taller and rather stocky, the other older and much shorter and rather frail-looking.

“What’s this?” I asked, confused and a bit concerned.

“This,” my father said, pointing to the men, “is Mimir and Hoenir. They are going to live here in Vanaheim now.”

“Why?”

My father sighed. “You and Freyja have to move to Asgard.”

“Why? I don’t understand. Why are they coming here and we have to go there. I don’t know anyone there, and they just tried to kill us besides.”

My father sighed again. “Ingvi... this is part of the deal.”

“But they started it,” I said. “They should have to pay for what they did.”

“Ingvi, enough.” And my father’s eyes flashed blue as flame, which only happened when he was angry... and that wasn’t often. “I don’t like this any more than you do. But for our world to return to peace, this is how it has to be.” My father shrugged. “From what I’ve been told, Mimir is the wisest of Odin’s family, although he hasn’t said a word on the way here.”

“He don’t talk much lately,” said Hoenir, the younger and bigger one. “Got any brew?”

My father rolled his eyes, and then hissed, “But that one... he never shuts up.”

“And this is what you want in Vanaheim?” I chuckled. “You want to send your children to Asgard, and have these buffoons in Vanaheim.”

My father rolled his eyes again. “Ingvi, I’ll thank you to not question this. If there had been any other way, I would have kept you and Freyja here, with me.”

“You know you could have slain that As when you were alone with him.”

“I wasn’t alone with him. I don’t expect you to understand all the details, but he has a blood-brother who was there as well, and the two of them... they have some kind of strong magic. They want Freyja there in part because they want to learn our ways of power. Since Freyja likes men, I’m sure she’ll enjoy Asgard.”

“And me? What do they want with me?”

My father was about to answer that, but as soon as Hoenir was handed a horn of beer, by Beyla, one of my Ljossalv servants (although she and her husband felt more like family), there was a very loud sound of guzzling, and then... a loud roar out of Hoenir’s mouth like nothing I’d heard before.

Beyla looked down and giggled slightly. My father and I looked at Hoenir, who bellowed, “That was some damn good brew! Fetch me more, woman!” And Hoenir pushed Beyla, who stumbled a little bit, and then scurried away, her face scrunched with annoyance.

“You need to learn our ways a bit better if you’re going to stay here, As,” I said, not liking to see my serving maid treated so poorly.

Hoenir made the loud roaring sound again, something like a “braaap”, and then walked over to us, clapping us each on the back so hard that my father, normally a strong man, almost fell over. “Let’s drink brew! Then I can learn me some Vanir.”

My father rolled his eyes.

“If I’m going to Asgard,” I asked, “when am I leaving?”

“Three days,” my father said, “which is enough time for you and Freyja to have a feast, and say farewell.” A strange look clouded his eyes.

That night was the first night of Farewell Feasting for myself and Freyja. We were set before a great table of pork and various kinds of seafood, as well as herbed root vegetables and breads. The serving maids kept the beer flowing, and the best musicians in Vanaheim played the lyre and horns, and sang to us.

Freyja was silent all throughout dinner. I guessed that as much as she liked the men, she didn’t like the idea of going to Asgard. I squeezed her hand under the table, trying to provide comfort, but she remained quiet, not eating much food, not drinking much beer, and not meeting anyone’s gaze.

The next three days passed in a blur. There was more feasting, and men and women threw themselves at me to lay with me before I left. I of course took them up on the offer, and would give words of comfort and strength for them to hold onto, as I had no idea when I would be returning. I blessed fields and the livestock, blessed forests and the wild beasts, and blessed individual Vanir.

One thing that was notable about those three days was the incessant random babblings of Hoenir. For all the talk the Aesir had made about Mimir being the wisest among them, Mimir hadn’t said a single word, but Hoenir had plenty to say, if not anything intelligent or meaningful. My father was especially weary of them, and it came to pass that just before Freyja and I were set to make the journey to Asgard, my father wanted to have a word with us privately.

There was a place my father loved dearly, a special cliff overlooking “the waters of the world”, as he called it, and he took us there. It was a chilly day, and the sea was dark and choppy, and a wind was blowing. My father put his arms around us, and said, “I am very proud of both of you. Freyja, you have learned well to be soft and pleasant, without letting anyone take advantage of this. Frey, you are a leader whose easy-going way with people will serve you well in life. These are qualities the Aesir know not, and you need to hold on to these things. The Aesir women are much more submissive and pliable; I don’t want to see you lose your strength, Freyja. And Frey, it is the way of the Aesir to bully people into doing what they want, and I can’t see that happen to you. I don’t know if talking for its own sake or being completely silent is an Aesir custom, but I want you to be mindful of your speech when you’re there, as well, for both extremes are not our ways, and rightly so. You need to be examples to them, and maybe this exchange will prove to be a good thing.”

“I will miss you, Papa,” Freyja said, and threw her arms around our father.

“You have to be strong, my Mardoll,” he said to her. “The two of you need to stick together, above all else, there.”

And then we heard a loud “Hallo!” My father frowned, as if he were expecting this. Hoenir was lumbering up the cliff, with Mimir following a few feet behind him, a look of consternation on the wiser Ase’s face. Hoenir shouted, “What are you doing? Why didn’t you tell us? This is nice. The sea is nice! I like the sea.”

“I am trying to have a private discussion with my children,” my father growled. “If you couldn’t notice already from my bringing them to a secluded area.”

“I got brew,” Hoenir said and waved a huge jug of ale, which on closer inspection was, according to the label, the oldest one in our storehouse, to be saved for a very special occasion. The jug was open, and most of it was sloshing on Hoenir and the rocks, as he chanted, “I got brew, we have some brew now.”

“*Where did you get that from?*” My father’s eyes flashed like blue flame.

“It was in a barn,” Hoenir said. “That wench of yours didn’t want me to take it, so I slapped her good.”

“You did, did you?” Before I could stop him, my father pointed to the sky, and a burst of blue flame shot forth from his index finger. His battle-axe appeared in his hand. Hoenir took a step back, and my father took a step forward.

“You both are *pathetic*,” my father said, and then as quickly as the axe had been conjured forth, Mimir’s head was hewn from his body, falling onto the rocks. Hoenir’s jaw dropped open, and he was actually silent for the first time since his arrival.

My father then took the jug of ale, and smashed it with his battle-axe, so ale flowed down into the sea. He turned to us, and said, “I was supposed to have them here and not harm a hair on their heads, as you would not be harmed.” He sighed. “I don’t regret doing that, as the Aesir need to be given a very clear message. I am giving them my children. They gave me idiots. It’s not fair, and surely Vanaheim will be better off now. However, they will likely cause problems for me unless I go to them.”

“What will they do to you?” I asked.

“I don’t know. And to be honest, I don’t care any more. They’re taking my children, they might as well take my life. That would be a more pleasant fate than to live here with the Aesir’s buffoons.”

My father made the travel with us to Asgard, after handing his scepter to our grandfather, Frodi, who had long since retired from rulership and seemed a little puzzled. In the interest of being fair, my father chose two bodyguards to deliver him, in chains, before the Aesir, as he had violated the terms of the contract.

It was a day’s journey across the Vanaheim sea. We were given greeting in Asgard by a red-bearded As calling himself Thor. “Hallo there, Njord,” Thor said, “you’ve come back to us?”

“It is my duty as king of the Vanir,” my father said. “I have broken the contract with the Aesir and have something I need to give to Odin.” My father was carrying Mimir’s head in a sack around his neck.

“Do you want me to take it to him? Odin’s in a right nasty mood right now,” Thor said.

“I need to give it to him myself,” my father said, “though I appreciate your offer of help.”

Thor left us at the border of Asgard, as he had “business” (as he put it). A few minutes into Asgard, we were met by an older man with greying hair and beard, wearing furs and much gold, who I could only assume was Odin though he looked quite different than the one time I had seen him weeks before. “I expected your arrival, Njord,” said the Ase.

“Well met, Odin. I knew you would likely know that I was arriving.”

“Unchain him,” Odin said to two of his own men, dressed in armor and with very stern faces. They took the chains off my father, and Odin nodded. “You have something to give me, Sea-King?”

My father took the sack off his neck, and pulled out Mimir’s bloody head, which he then threw at Odin. “I have this, because you took an honest contract and made it into a lie.”

“What can I say? Loki made me do it.” And Odin smiled, winking his eye. “I thank you for bringing me the head. I’ll be... taking care of this later.” He motioned to a servant, who took the head away. I had no idea what he meant, but something about that statement gave me chills and a sinking feeling in my stomach. “Are you hungry? You came a long way. You must want some food and drink,” Odin said.

“Enough with the pleasantries,” my father said. “I may know about hospitality, but now is not the time. You would take my children and replace them with buffoons. I came to you with a message. You deal, now, with what you want to do. I’ll not be eating until that time.”

“Fair enough,” Odin said. “But I won’t have people saying I starve my guests. You do need to come inside, it is a bit cold here.”

We followed Odin into a great hall, the likes of which I had never seen. My father had a large hall, but it was simple, with a few oil lamps, rugs and wall hangings, and things that reminded him of the sea. I had never seen my mother's house, although I know it is on a very beautiful island. The hall of Odin was decked out with many sorts of weapons, and furs, and many things made of gold and silver. Odin seemed to be very proud of it, and as we walked through the hall, his servants bowed slightly to him. "Now then," Odin said, taking his position at the head of a great table. "Sit down, you lot."

We sat down, and I noticed my father chose the foot of the table for his seat. Odin folded his hands and closed his eyes for a moment. Then he took a breath and said, "Njord, our contract said you were not to harm a hair of the head of the Aesir we gave you. You did break the letter of the law, even if I broke the spirit of it." He stood up, and began walking circles around the table as he spoke. "I asked for your children because each of them can offer something important to the Aesir. I desire Freyja's magical knowledge, as well as Freyja herself. Frey can teach the Aesir peace, which is not something we've had here in quite some time. I'd like to be engaged in less wars and see less people die, and Frey can teach us how to live more or less peaceably."

Odin stopped at the side of my father, and looked him up and down. "That you killed one of our own cannot go unpunished. However, I see no reason to be harsh with you, as I know the Vanir will retaliate and Asgard needs to conserve the resources and men at this time. Also, you are more valuable to me alive than dead." He sat back down, next to my father rather than at the head of the table. I thought this a shrewd move, and watched carefully. "Njord, I would like you here as well. You would get to be with your children, and you would have much to offer us in the way of teaching and sharing. I give you my oath that in all of this, you, Njord, will be unharmed by the Aesir and by our enemies."

"I can't leave Vanaheim," my father replied. "As much as I'd like to be with my children, I have a duty there to serve my people, to give counsel, to give blessings. I can't just leave and never come back."

"And I'm not asking you to," Odin replied. "There are three of you here. The year in Asgard is divided in thirds. I would require each of you to be here two parts of the year, and return to Vanaheim during a third part, with the exception of Frey who has duties in Ljossalfheim. Freyja, you would get to return to Vanaheim during the winter, and see the land into its first bloom. Njord, you would return to Vanaheim in early summer. Frey, you would be in Ljossalfheim during the early summer, and do your turn in Vanaheim in the late summer, the time of the grain harvest."

My father nodded.

"If this is acceptable to you," Odin said, "I think I should feed my guests." He sat back and folded his arms. "You may not think it as lovely as Vanaheim here, but I'll make people treat you well, if they're not so disposed."

"I'll win respect based on my character rather than forcing people into it," Njord said, through his teeth. "It's not the way of the Vanir to force everyone to accept you just because you're high and mighty. If you want to learn from our ways, learn this, and learn it well."

"Fine," Odin said. "Have it your way. My people are a boorish lot, and I'm not sure all the Aesir can... appreciate... the Vanir ways. Be that as it may, I'm hungry, you're undoubtedly more so."

My father looked at us, and Freyja hissed, speaking in the Vanic dialect, "You didn't even let us have a say!"

"Are you entirely unhappy with seeing the first flowers, child?" our father replied, also speaking in the Vanic dialect.

"That's not it. I don't want this... scary man... making decisions about *my life*. Maybe you want peace in Vanaheim, but I'd rather fight and die free than live as a slave!" Freyja spat.

Odin replied to her in the Vanic dialect, with a smile and a wink, "Scary isn't quite the word you're looking for, dear." Freyja glared and clenched her fists.

"If I may speak," I said, and cleared my throat, feeling a bit nervous, "I'm not happy with this arrangement either, even though I only have to spend a third of the year here which is less time than the

others. However, I am willing to make this sacrifice so more people don't die, whether Aesir or Vanir. We have all lost people we love, and I'm sure this is not an easy thing to bear for anyone. I am the son of the king, and rulership isn't always about doing what you want just because you have power. Sometimes it's about doing what's right even if it brings hardship on yourself."

"And maybe *you could learn from that*," Freyja snapped at Odin.

Odin chuckled and said, "Well put, Ingvi." I looked down at my hands, feeling a bit awkward about receiving a compliment from the Aesir ruler.

A serving maid came in with a gigantic roasted boar. "I know you like pork in Vanaheim," Odin said, "so I asked the servants to make it especially for you, so we can celebrate."

"Celebrate?" My father raised his eyebrows.

"I'm happy," Odin said, "I like learning from new people and I find you to be... interesting."

Another maid, this one wearing armor (and not much else) and carrying a sword on her belt, came in with a horn. Odin turned to her and said, "I think we need to have the family gather, so we can feast and welcome the new guests properly." The maid gave the horn to Odin and nodded, then departed.

Other servants came in with various dishes in pots, and the food did smell rather good. One by one, the others of the ruling family among the Aesir assembled. Odin took his place back at the head of the table, with a tall, dignified woman at his side, wearing a white robe and keys at her belt. Thor stumbled in, looking a bit confused and sweaty, and with a beautiful woman on his arm, with long golden hair, elegantly attired. She and Freyja looked at each other, and rolled their eyes. A red-haired man sauntered in, whistling and twiddling his thumbs. A beautiful blond man helped an equally blond but blind man walk into the hall. A man carrying a ram's horn came in, and as soon as he saw Freyja, smiled broadly, flashing bright golden teeth.

They took their places around the table, and the blind man sat next to me. The man with the ram's horn sat across from Freyja, still grinning with those blinding teeth, and the red-haired man sat next to Freyja, staring into her cleavage while Freyja smiled back at the man with the ram horn.

"My family," Odin said, standing up, "these are the rulers of the Vanir. They have come to live with us, so our lands may be at peace." Odin drank from the horn and said, "Hail!"

"Hail!" echoed the rest of the Aesir.

"Before we eat this wonderful meal," Odin said, "there is a custom both our peoples have in common, that our peace-bond may be upheld."

A servant brought in a large cauldron, and Odin spat into it. The cauldron was passed around, and each of us spat into it in turn, including myself. My mouth was a bit dry, but I managed a goodly amount of spittle anyway. When the cauldron had collected all of our spit, Odin poured the rest of the first horn into it, and there was a burst of bright green flame and smoke. Odin chuckled and said, "Loki, that really wasn't necessary." The red-haired man chuckled. The cauldron was put on another, smaller table, and the servants began cutting the meat and spooning the greens and roots and grains into bowls and plates.

After the feast was over, Odin took us aside and made the round of introductions. The woman with keys was his wife, Frigga, who despite her silence had a very warm smile. Thor's wife was called Sif. The red-haired man was called Loki, and was Odin's blood-brother. He seemed distinctly non-Aesir to me, and I thought to ask about that later, as I didn't want to seem rude. The blond men were called Baldur and Hodur, Hodur being the blind one. The man with the ram's horn was Heimdall, who warded the bridge between Asgard and Midgard.

It so happened that a woman came after the feast, wearing a gown of gold, and radiating a golden light. "Sunna!" Thor yelled, waving frantically.

"Hallo, everyone," the woman called Sunna said. So this... was the lady who drove the chariot of the sun. I had seen her go through Vanaheim, but had never actually met her. "I can't stay long," Sunna said, "my ride is parked outside, but I wanted to say hallo to the new people." And Sunna grinned right at me, which made me feel a little shy. Then Sunna walked back out to her chariot, which was a wonderful thing to

watch as she climbed in, reined her horses, and rose into the sky, the chariot gleaming a little as it rose off the ground, and surrounded by a bubble of bright light as it entered the sky.

After a time, my sister Eir moved to Asgard to serve Frigga. Other Vanir visited Asgard, but the Aesir and Vanir never warred with each other again, and I learned to like the Aesir, even if Odin and I didn't always see eye-to-eye... less so after he preserved Mimir's head, cast it into a well, and Mimir required Odin to give up an eye to talk with him.

And once a year, when it comes time for the anniversary of the day we arrived in Asgard, Freyja comes back briefly from Vanaheim, and joins us there for the big feast. A piece of Yggdrasil is burned in Odin's hearth, to remind us that we are all working together for the good of the Nine Worlds.

Many people in Midgard observe this season, exchanging gifts much as the Aesir and Vanir exchanged people, and feasting much as we feast. They hang decorations on small trees, and some burn logs in their home. Odin rides the skies at night, and people give me offerings asking for peace and a good year... which I'm happy to grant if people remember the sacrifices I've made, and are willing to accept what needs to be done for their own peace, and their own prosperity.

Items needed for the Sumble

1. Some kind of pork. A Yule ham would be best for this. Oaths were taken over a boar. Since wild boar is hard to come by these days and most people don't have a big fire pit in their homes to roast a whole swine, a Yule ham is good, although Frey would prefer you prepare it yourself with seasoning, baking, etc. If you are vegetarian, you could bake a loaf of bread, shaping it into a boar.
2. Good alcohol. On the holy tides it doesn't serve well to skimp on the alcohol. When in doubt, Frey usually will go for a dark German beer, or a special ale. The other option for alcohol is glögg, traditionally served in Scandinavia (esp. Sweden) at Yuletide. If you don't drink, spiced eggnog is appropriate, as is apple cider (which was used in Yuletide wassailing in Anglo-Saxon England).
3. People. You don't necessarily need a huge crowd, particularly if others are not going to "get" what is going on, but sumble usually needs other people involved to hear and witness the oaths made.

I am assuming a few things for the sumble:

1. That you are doing it inside. Most places in the Northern hemisphere are cold during Yuletide, and sumble was done in a meadhall in elder Heathen times. Nowadays we'd do it at someone's house, as part of a Yule feast. For the sumble, it is important that people be comfortable.
2. That your indoors location is safe. In other words, crabby parents aren't going to bust the door down asking what the Hel you're doing, and a drive-by isn't going to happen right underneath your window. There's no shame in being poor, but again, the sumble host needs to be mindful of the needs of those he/she is hosting.
3. That you are serious. Blót is a luck-changing rite, but sumble is more so. If you do not understand the full implications of oath-taking, if you are not doing this for Frey but as another Pagan ritual you're curious to experiment with, *do not proceed*.

Procedure for the Sumble

1. Formally open by the Godhi/Gydhia, or someone temporarily officiating as such (usually the one with the most experience), by speaking a few words about the holy nature of the rite, and then calling to Frey. It is assumed that if you are in an indoor frithstead it does not need to be hallowed beforehand, though lighting a candle to represent the light of Frey is optional here.
2. *First Round*: a toast to Frey with the drink. Usually the first round would be toasting any and all of the Gods, but since this rite is for Frey, each person toasts Frey, whether for Himself (who He is) or things He has done on their behalf, or both. You will want the toast to be as eloquent as possible —

spoken from the heart without a script, but deep and profound, not just “Yeah, thanks Frey, and stuff.”

3. *Second Round:* Oaths on the boar. There are several ways to go about oathing on the boar. Passing a Yule ham may get heavy and unwieldy, and if it falls on the floor people will get upset. It may be better for each person to go up to the table where the ham is located, and oath over the ham while cutting a piece. It is expected that the oath will be made to accomplish something by next Yule, so do not oath anything impossible or ridiculous. Each will go to the main table with their piece of ham, and everyone will wait for this round to be finished and then partake of the first pieces of ham, munching in contentment and with “happy food faces”.
4. *Third Round:* Boasts, passing the drink to each person for them to boast over the horn. It is okay to brag here about things you oathed last Yule that came to pass, or perhaps overcoming impossible odds with Frey’s help. It is not okay to put other people down in the boast, or to brag about how sexy you are, or how cool your vehicle is. A boast should be about an accomplishment and not personal trivia.

Any remaining alcohol should be poured out to Frey at the base of a tree, as a gift. Slices of ham should be left along with the alcohol. (You didn’t think you were going to eat it all, did you?) “Proper Heathen” sumble usually accepts people completely draining all the alcohol in the house and getting drunk, but since this is the 21st century and people’s living conditions are usually not such to house many people who can’t operate a vehicle, it is suggested here that any alcohol consumption be in moderation. Proper ritual etiquette is always to sip from the horn rather than guzzle.

Wassailing

“Wassailing” comes from the Anglo-Saxon blessing “wæs þu hæl” (to your health) and is an English custom from Pagan times, to roam the neighborhood singing Christmas carols, asking for a drink of wassail in return. Wassailers bring their own wassail bowls, which their hosts fill with spiced ale, wine, rum or cider. Also, it is a kind of traditional song to be sung when wassailing, most of which are also about wassailing. A wassail typically praises the host in advance of the ale, blessing the lord and lady of the house for their imminent generosity, and praying God to reward them with a prosperous new year. Ideally, your host should be so embarrassed by your profuse blessings that they get you good and drunk, then send you off to inflict your merry singing upon the folks next door. Now, in 21st century civilization, going from door to door asking for alcoholic beverages at Christmastime is likely to get you hauled off by the fuzz. The wassailing here is to do after the Frey sumble (going out into wintry air will sober you up right quick), and consists of sharing a jug of non-alcoholic wassail among the folk, who will take a walk from the “mead hall” to the nearest grove of trees. It would be helpful if these are apple trees, but depending on your climate this may not be possible. You will fling cider at the trees and sing blessings at them for health and strength, and fling cider on each other, blessing each other with health and merriment. The attitude should not be serious if you can help it.

Traditional Wassailing Carol from Gower

A-wassail, a-wassail, throughout all this town.
 Our cup it is white and our ale it is brown.
 Our wassail is made of the good ale and true,
 Some nutmeg and ginger, it's the best we can brew.

Chorus:

Fol the dol, fol the dol-de-dol,
 Fol the dol-de-do, fol the dol-de-dee,
 Fol the der-o, fol the da-dee,
 Sing tu-re-lye-do!

Our wassail is made of the elderberry bough.
 And so, my good neighbor, we'll drink unto thou.
 Besides all of that, you'll have apples in store,
 Pray let us come in for it's cold by the door.

We hope that your apple trees prosper and bear
 So that we may have cider when we call next year,
 And where you've one barrel, I hope you'll have ten,
 So that we may have cider when we call again.

We know by the moon that we are not too soon,
 And we know by the sky that we are not too high,
 We know by the stars that we are not too far,
 And we know by the ground that we are within sound.



Gower Wassail

A - - was - sail a - was - sail, through - out all this town. Our
cup it is white and our ale it is brown. Our was - sail is
made of the good ale and true. Some nut - meg and
gin - ger, it's the best we can brew. Fol the dol, fol the dol - de -
dol, Fol the dol - de - dol, fol the dol - de - dee, Fol the
der - - o, fol the da - dee, Sing tu - - re - - lye - - do!

(last verse)
We know by the moon that we are not too soon, We
know by the sky that we are not too high, We
know by the stars that we are not too far, We
know by the ground that we are with - in sound. Fol the
dol, fol the dol - de - dol, Fol the dol - de - dol, fol the dol - de -
dee, Fol the der - o, fol the da - dee, Sing tu - re lye - do!

A Ritual for Troubled Lovers

Sigrún Freyskona

This ritual was spirit-taught to me by Frey and Gerda to heal a wounded romantic relationship. All couples go through their tough times, but it is often the tough times that make a love stronger and deeper. This is not a spell so much as it is a way for a couple to reconcile. It will not be effective if the relationship is dangerous and needs to end for your or your partner's safety.

Tools:

- A beverage, preferably a sweet merlot
- A consecrated offering bowl and vessel
- Runes (preferably handmade)
- A candle
- Some mugwort in a vessel that can burn it safely

Opening Prayer:

Frey and Gerda, we ask You to be with us here and now, to deepen our love for one another, to heal our broken bonds, to strengthen our appreciation. Lovers who have stood against all odds to be together and build a life together, to reach out to the world with the fruits of Your love, we ask for Your help in our own partnership.

The candle is lit.

Frey, You who bring Your light to the darkness, for You know darkness, help me to bring light to my partner. Help me to give to them, to share with them, to reach into their own darkness, to sacrifice my very life for their needs, to live in awe of the beauty of the light I see within their soul, the beauty that would bring me to madness and a desire to sacrifice all just to be with them, to be one with them.

Frey, bring Your light to our love.

Candle is passed from partner calling on Frey to partner who will call to Gerda. Second partner lifts candle and draws in Frey's light. Mugwort is lit.

Gerda, You whose inner beauty blinded Frey with love-madness, You whose strength and determination won His respect, You who remain loyal to the warmth and goodness of His love, You who balance Him, grounding Him in reality, comforting His compassionate sorrows, giving Him pleasure and release, help me to give my partner the loyalty they deserve, the support they need, the comfort they crave. Help me to feel like home to them, to be stable and strong and honorable.

Gerda, bring Your strength to our love.

Mugwort is passed from partner calling on Gerda, to partner calling on Frey. First partner lifts mugwort burner and draws in Gerda's strength. First round of beverage is poured into chalice.

We consecrate this drink to our love, to our life together.

First partner turns to second: *I appreciate you, (Name), for all that you are, and all that you do. I see the beauty within you, and I will give all to be one with it.*

Takes a sip, and passes the chalice to the other, who sips and pours a little into the bowl. Other partner

turns to first: *I appreciate you, (Name), for all that you are, and all that you do. I see the honor within you, and I will work hard to nurture it.*

Takes a sip, and passes the chalice to the other, who sips and pours remainder into the bowl. Second round of beverage is poured into chalice.

We honor Frey and Gerda, for Your love that dared to defy all races in the Nine Worlds, who balance each other in differences and celebrate Your similarities, who work together to bring light to darkness and strength and nurturing to light. We honor You for Your love, and may that be an example to us both.

First sip: *Hail Gerda, Goddess of the Garden, You who create a quiet place of refuge to nurture the light.*

Pour in bowl. Second sip: *Hail Frey, Golden God of Grain, You who bleed to feed the world, You who give up all power for the power of love.*

Pour in bowl.

Hail Frey and Gerda, and all of Their folk seeking to love and to live.

Third sip. Pour remainder in bowl. Take rune pouch, pass from one partner to the other: *Gerda, I ask for Your wisdom on how to give loyalty and nurturing, strength and security, to my beloved.*

Pull a rune, contemplate the rune, and pass the pouch: *Frey, I ask for Your wisdom on the sacrifices I need to make, and the way to show my beloved just how beautiful and worthy they are.*

Pull a rune, contemplate the rune, and set down the pouch.

Thank you, Frey and Gerda, for being with us. May our honor bless You, as You have blessed us.

Partners embrace, and kiss.



Útiseta and Light-Working

Sigrún Freyskona

Útiseta

Sitting-out, or útiseta, is one of those practices listed under the umbrella term of *seiðr*, which also includes cursing, healing, weather-working, and foretelling the future. Like the other practices of *seiðr*, the improper use of sitting-out can cause complications with mental and physical health. By *improper* I do not mean *seiðr* used in a negative way (which has its uses), but with the wrong attitude, and shoddy workmanship.

Seiðr is the Vanic form of magic, taught to the Aesir by Freyja. In the *Ynglinga Saga* it says that *seiðr* was widely practiced by the Vanaland people (as in The Vanir), and so we can assume Frey does it as well — also He’s just *ergi* enough to be receptive to working *seiðr*. The Aesir form of magic is much more ceremonial, and that has its value as well. At the risk of sounding like an occultist, I often think of Aesir rune magic as “High Magick”, and Vanir witchcraft as “Low Magick”. Both will get you similar results, but have a very different way of going about it. The Aesir rune magic is for the more cerebral-types, and the Vanir witchcraft is for the more intuitive types. Incidentally, I am very much a left-brained egghead, but prefer doing Vanic witchcraft as my brain shifts to a completely different mode when doing spiritual activities or ritual stuff.

Sitting-out is specific to the branch of *seiðr* that includes prophetic work. It is not the rite where the *seiðkóna* sits on the High Seat and contacts the spirits by way of *vardlokkur*, the songs designed to attract the spirits. It does involve sitting, but outdoors (often on a hill or mound), and for a rather long period of time. The out-sitter is supposed to have a cloak with a hood that can be pulled over the head. We know now that sensory deprivation can put one into a very unique meditative state, changing brain waves, and thus altering consciousness. To be outdoors in a secluded area, with a hood pulled over the head, and a cloak restricting the body’s movement and reaction to heat, cold, and wind, it can be a very interesting sensory deprivation experience.

Frey has me sit-out once a month, on the New Moon. At this time I’m still “beta-testing” the rite, so Frey is just talking to me, but He’s asked that on the November New Moon I open it up to questions from other people (sending via e-mail is fine). I will sit on a slightly elevated area, outside, in a fairly safe location where I know others are not going to come disturb me. I usually bring a protective device along just in case, as well as some water. I will sit down and sing a spirit-song that Frey taught me. This will be combined with regulated breath. I will then close my eyes, and go “out”. The information I get is usually half in pictures, half spoken, and can either be precognitive, or a direct answer to a question. Some of it may be cryptic at first, until I analyze later.

As a general rule of thumb I try not to stay out longer than 2 hours. The location is relatively close to my home. Many would tell you that you have to stay out all night, but I’m aware of the risks of that, plus I’m hypoglycemic so I can’t be up all night with no food without getting sick. However, 2 hours with a deep trance state usually provides enough information for what is needed.

Light-Working

This is a term I use for “bringing light into people’s lives”. Besides being one of Frey’s spouses, I am also in His Employ, to be a light in the darkness of today’s world. Most of my light-bringing is pretty mundane. I’m good at giving a listening ear to my friends, and when words fail, hugs do nicely. However, there is a way for me to give Frey’s light to others in a ritual context, and this is one of the things I do privately to go about that business.

I handmade a set of prayer beads with air-drying white clay. I made eight medium-sized beads to

represent Frey's concerns with people's lives. I used watered-down glue to wrap each bead in different colors of tissue paper to further represent the "energy" of that blessing, and then I marked each bead in gold liner paint with a rune to represent that blessing.

Basic prayer outline:

1. (Ing): Frey, give light and warmth to the ones You love, and give them good food to eat.
2. (Othila): Frey, give light and warmth to the ones You love, and give them safe homes in which to rest.
3. (Jera): Frey, give light and warmth to the ones You love, and give them meaningful, satisfying work.
4. (Giefu): Frey, give light and warmth to the ones You love, and give them frith among family and friends.
5. (Wynn): Frey, give light and warmth to the ones You love, and give them fun and moments of joy.
6. (Sowilo): Frey, give light and warmth to the ones You love, and give them peace within themselves.
7. (Uruz): Frey, give light and warmth to the ones You love, and give them health and wholeness.
8. (Mannaz): Frey, give light and warmth to the ones You love, and give them wisdom and guidance for living.

In addition to the beads, I write down the names of individual people who I care about, and/or clients, as well as "hot spots" in the world, and I put the slips of paper in a wooden box. I take three papers out each day, with Frey guiding my hand to draw the names that need the most attention. I have a set time each day to sit with the beads and pray for those names Frey has given me. I will spin the bead around as I focus on it, and send the rune to the person or area, as well as "beaming" Frey's warm golden light.



Frey Speaks

Sigrún Freyskona

As I thought I was approaching the “home stretch” of the devotional, Frey wanted to have a word with me, as He usually does. It wasn’t harsh, but He told me He wanted a section in the book where He Himself could speak, through me, about some issues pressing on His heart. Before writing any of this down, I put myself in “Freyspace”, and quieted my mind so I could hear Him more clearly.

On Love and Sexuality

The Vanir race of Gods are the most obviously sexual, and it goes without saying that much attention has been paid to my phallus. This is an important part of who I am, and to deny it would be cutting out a whole piece of My existence, but it is just a part. I am not a phallus on legs, I am an entire Being.

My sperm is the seed that sows the fields on Beltaine, when I lay with my sister. It is the seed that goes into my wife, Gerda, and gives love to all of the Worlds, crossing boundaries. My sperm gives life, my seed is sacred.

Sexuality is sacred. With sexuality often comes love. Love is not just a trick of the brain chemistry so humans will stay with each other to mate and reproduce. Love is the root of transformation, and transcendence. Love inspires people to be the best they can, to give and serve, to share, to protect and nurture. Love inspires people to reach up to the Gods, and then reach around the Earth, in an embrace of light.

There is not enough love going around Midgard that I think humans can be scornful if they see people who don’t “belong” together, whether they be of different classes or ethnic backgrounds, or the same gender. Your world can be a very cruel and hurtful place, especially with all of the problems moderns have forced upon society. Most of the wars, diseases, famines, and criminal activity doesn’t need to happen, but it does, because of lack of love.

Sex is a good thing, and can make you and your partner feel good. Orgasm brings pleasure, and the afterglow can be a place of great peace and contentment. This is why sex magic is one of the Vanic mysteries. There is a great burst of power in orgasm, and the energy can be directed, and watched, afterwards. When I lay with Gerda, we try to send our love to all of the Nine Worlds, to ensure the quality of Their lives, in peace and caring. We flood the Tree with light.

On the other hand, sexuality can also be abused. There is nothing wrong with being a sexual being, enjoying your sex life. There is something wrong with society’s obsession with sex, sexualizing children so the girls feel the need to starve themselves and the boys feel the need to treat the girls like objects. There is something wrong with letting yourself be used, unwillingly, just to have bad sex. In the times when the Old Gods were more present, people were not so focused on sex. People knew it happened, and it was a good thing, but they were also more able to let other people live, doing their own thing. When you repress sexual instinct and treat it like it’s a bad, dirty feeling, it creates obsession, and that in turn creates broken people, with broken homes and broken lives.

Sex should be good sex, just like life should be good life. As mighty as my phallus is, I will only give it to the willing, and I give with the intent of sharing pleasure. When my mortal spouses and lovers lay with me, I want them to feel beautiful. I want them to know they are beautiful, to me, because they are alive. I give the gift of pleasure, and its spilled seed, to sow great things.

I want them to know love, especially in a world that can be very cold and loveless.

On the Jotnar, and Tolerance/Acceptance

I fell in love with Gerda *because* of Her Jotun nature, not in spite of it.

There is much more to Gerda than meets the eye. She has a ferocious temper. If She finds your behavior insulting towards Her, Her kin, or Her property. She may cut you down with Her tongue, or She may even bypass that step and shapechange, going into berserk. I think that's *sexy*. I love Her passion—because it isn't just Her temper. She experiences life to the fullest extent possible. She enjoys a good meal. She hungers for touch, and is very lustful during sex. If something strikes Her as funny, She is not afraid to laugh out loud. There are times when Gerda is silent, as She tends to be very private, and not call a lot of attention to Herself. She has always been like that, in part because Her silent times are when She is deep in thought, planning Her next move, or perhaps pondering something. You can't say Jotnar aren't intelligent, because Gerda has a very sharp mind, and enjoys knowledge She can put into practical use. However, part of Her silence comes from being ignored, and even mistreated.

Everyone was against my marriage to Her. The Aesir and the Alfar were most vocal about it. The Aesir tend to automatically regard any and all Jotnar as enemies, so the Jotnar are guilty until proven innocent. The Alfar don't like outsiders at all, but find the Jotnar especially barbaric and distasteful, which is putting it mildly. But I loved that darkness about Her, the dark, roiling passions, and the stony silence of contemplation, because even in Her darkness, there is still a light within Her that lit up all of the Worlds. That light is the beauty of Her inner self, the way Her mind works, the way She speaks, the things She does for people, the way She feels. She desires to do the right thing, even if the right thing is not as black-and-white as the Aesir, Alfar, or humans would see it.

I don't like to go to Jotunheim unless I absolutely have to. I have nothing against the Jotnar themselves, but I know that because of my frith with the Aesir, they would rather not have me in their world. This is understandable. I admit, I find some of the Jotun customs puzzling, but I also find some of the Aesir customs puzzling. I think it is important to try to learn about what you don't know, and if you can't get your head around it, file it away for later.

I like the Jotun spirit, the lust for life. That vitality is something that runs in the Vanir blood as well, but the Jotnar live with intensity. Everything, no matter how trivial it may seem to us, is important to them, and worthy of celebration, or mourning. No one takes vengeance quite like a Jotun, but no one can be more loyal and loving than a Jotun, either.

It aggravates me when I see humans being unfrithful to each other just on the basis of mundane, minor details, and not bothering to look beyond it. "Different" does not necessarily mean "wrong". The Gods see humans as being an entire race, regardless of where they live or what tribe they belong to. It makes it easier to handle, when you have Aesir, Vanir, Jotnar, Ljossalfar, Svartalfar, and Duergar also living in the World Tree. I often wonder how unfrithful humans, fighting amongst each other for no good reason, can claim to honor the Gods and all the different other races of the World Tree, when they can't even look at people with different skin color, or people who might love the same gender, as being part of the same human family.

Midgard is currently in several levels of crisis, and you are all going to learn some very hard lessons about what the way you treat each other is doing to your world. This is not the Gods being mean, vengeful, or cruel. The human race has inflicted this upon themselves.

The Gods are not in favor of people becoming so similar that there is no diversity. By all means, embrace where you came from, keep its culture alive. The Vanir have done just that, living among the Aesir. We may have been adopted in, but we are still outsiders, and we still think, feel, and act differently from the Asa-folk. It is fine to be proud of where you came from. It is not good when that pride turns into an excuse to be deliberately hurtful to other people.

If I can see the beauty of Gerda, my wife, why can't you see the beauty within each other? Why have you turned away from honoring her People, who were the older Gods of your world? These are things to think about.

On Frith, and the Warrior Spirit

Let me take a moment to define what I, the God of Frith, consider frith to be, and what it is not.

Frith is a state of mind where you can agree to come together for a common cause, whether that be a ritual, activist work, or even a personal outing, and you can agree to behave respectably to one another, and agree to disagree about certain issues.

Frith is neither forcing another person to accept your viewpoint, nor completely compromising your principles to make another person happy.

The Vanir have a custom of hospitality which was passed to the people. A traveler could stay with a household for a certain amount of time, and the household was obligated to take that traveler in. However, if the traveler turned out to be an obnoxious burden, they could be removed, or not be welcomed back.

I know you want to be nice, and make other people happy, but sometimes what would make someone else happy would cause you great pain and suffering. Not everyone has the same good intentions that you do. There are people who want what you have, are angry that they don't have it, and will lash out against you. There are people who are afraid of what you are, because it makes them question their beliefs and comfort zones, and they will try to shut you down. If someone has broken frith with you, you are not obligated to just "forgive and forget" and continue to be nice to them. On the other hand, if someone has shown you loyalty, and has consistently been there for you when you've needed them, it is not good to just abandon the person because it's convenient.

I was willing to give my sword to Gerda's family as a bride-price. This was not just because Gerda wanted it. I would give Her anything She wants. I would, and do, sacrifice my life for Her. My sword was given as a sign that I was willing to put aside the hostilities that the Aesir were showing the Jotnar. I wielded the best sword in the Nine Worlds, the most powerful sword, and I gave it into "enemy" hands as a show of good faith that I was willing to build peace.

I have no need to prove my masculinity through aggression. I like living a quiet, if busy, life. There are things that I do that could be considered masculine, but don't involve hurting other people. I see nothing wrong with martial arts, of course, and am of the opinion that with society being what it is now, it would behoove people to learn to protect themselves and their families. At the end of time, I am to take up an antler and defend what is most important to me. It is not because I hate the Jotnar — I do not. It is because the lines have already been drawn, whether or not We want them to be, and though I have left behind war to make peace, I need to make that last stand, to try to preserve what is dearest to my heart.

The lesson to be learned here is that there are battles that are not worth fighting. Plenty of people are willing to fight them for you, and wear themselves out, and get sick, and hate their lives. If a person has really been unfrithful to you, there is no need to keep warring with them to prove a point. Just move on to something else, something that doesn't upset you as much. If you need to fight, do it as a last stand, when protecting who and what you love is on the line. You'll need to save up your energy for that time.

The Aesir can carry on their war with the Jotnar, but I want no part of it. My job is to ensure that all life is good, and that is where my time and effort goes. I prove my point not by fighting with the Aesir, or trying to talk to the Jotnar, but just doing what comes naturally to me, which is caring.

On Worship

The meaning of the word "worship", in the elder tongue, was "to give worth to".

Many of the Gods are not happy with the way They are being given worth. There are those who will Blot because it's "the right thing to do", because it's that time of year again and thus socially acceptable. So they might offer a can of cheap beer, and a hail or two, and then go back to life as usual. They don't care if the Gods are actually present at the Blot, nor do they care about interacting with the Gods.

There are those who will Blot in fancy ritual garb, and think they are better than everyone else because they speak the elder tongues, and can put on a better show. Then they go out into the world and run everyone else down for being "inferior".

I would rather have a glass of tap water, or a flame on an old candle, given in love and adoration, if that's all you have, than have an hour-long feast with the wrong attitude. Because I am the God of the World, and a God who gives peace and pleasure, it would make sense that giving Me worth should be a testament to the goodness and life I bring to you. It should be done with a heart of gratitude, and a smile of joy. It should be done with the intent to reach out to Me, to touch My light, and bring it around to those who need it, whether they know of Me or not. To worth Me, honor the vitality that is within Me, honor the beauty of the Worlds. Do not Blot just to show off, to prove you're better than everyone else, or because it's "the right thing to do". Come willingly unto Me, come thoughtfully and thankfully unto Me, or please, not at all. That is blasphemy.

On Doing Your Best

As an agriculture God, I appreciate hard work. If you've never raised a pig, or chickens, or goats; if you've never grown grain, or vegetables ... it is hard work. The animals require feeding, grooming, and reasonable comfort. The crops must have proper soil, proper seed, proper food, proper maintenance, proper growth, and proper harvest. This is not something to undertake casually. In times when society was much less dependent on technology, and more on the activities of simple, agrarian living, proper work to grow food meant the survival of the family, and the tribe by extension. If you shirked, you starved. This also meant that people had to put aside some differences and get along to help each other, since it was a lot of work, both in the number of duties, and in the exertion.

Today we run into some unique problems. You can buy your food at the market, you can travel many miles in a vehicle, you can put on heat in the winter and cold in the summer. It is not wrong to have comfort, but some of the sacrifices that society has made for comfort are not good. Today's society is cruel towards those with mental and physical disabilities. Not only are they looked at as not being able to do anything right, but they are then called "lazy" and "weak" for their challenges and difficulties. In those agrarian times, everyone had a place doing something, no matter what their ability or disability. One might have a bad back but nimble fingers. One might have strong arms but no eyesight. The community took care of each other, and everyone was given a job according to what they were able to do. Because of this, low self-esteem and associated self-destruction was unheard of. Everyone was of worth to their community, doing something that they were able to do. In today's society based on convenience, it is easier to just hide people away and tell them they're "good for nothing", but everyone has something of value to offer. With many people it takes a bit of looking beyond the surface.

If you believe life is sacred, and the World is good, which is what I try to do — give life and make it good — then you must also extend that sanctity of life to those who may look like they do not have lives. Most often they can have a chance if they are given the proper support. Having meaningful things to do, meaningful relationships, and a safe place to live, are helpful. I may value work, but I am also understanding of where people are at, and I know that a disabled person who puts in a small effort is doing much more than someone who is able-bodied and feels entitled to special treatment to get away with bad behavior.

Everyone has something to offer this world, whether it is a smile at a person in sadness, or a song that touches people's spirits, or a sympathetic ear on the telephone. Those who may seem to be the rejects of society may well surprise you with being the most innovative. They're not trapped by outdated beliefs and restrictive comfort zones, and are willing to move humanity to the next level.

So long as people try their best, that is all I ask. I don't ask that people work three jobs and have no time to enjoy themselves or their families, just to be wealthy and have all the latest "stuff". I don't ask that those who are well-off mock those with less, as if they are not as blessed by the Gods. Prosperity is relative, and has more to do with your overall quality of life than the amount of money in your pocket. Just do what you can do. Find something you can do well, that you enjoy doing, and give that as a gift to Midgard. Let the brightness of your spirit shine through the darkness, so that others may find your light, and be guided by it.

When you reach out to people, and are truly doing it in a spirit of appreciating who they are, their gift to

the World, not just to be inclusive and “nice”, you will find Me smiling at you. This is what I ask: not that Midgard goes completely back in time, but that the Old Ways are applied to the modern day, and the entire experience of life becomes sacred and holy, not just the occasional ritual. When you feel love all around, you will know you are doing right.

On The Quality of Life

I believe that life should be good life, and that it should be enjoyable. This not only extends to the Gods, and to Our human followers, but to the animals and plants that sustain the humans, and are often given to the Gods as offerings. I am not pleased with the attitude that man has domain over the Earth and thus can treat it any way he wants, because it is all there for his mastery. Animals and plants feel, and if you know anything about modern science, you know this to be true. Just because they cannot talk in recognizable speech does not mean they are not complaining. You poison your home so you can have bigger, better, faster, and more. This is not a matter of political correctness, or supporting whatever cause is trendy this week. This is My opinion on what is happening to the realm of Midgard, which is, in many respects, the “neutral zone” of the World Tree. The Gods are not dependent on Midgard to exist, but We do appreciate its people, and the beauty of the place, and as the beauty of Midgard is despoiled, the people are as well. You have heard the saying, “You are what you eat.” If you put unhappy, unhealthy animal and plant products into your body, guess what happens.

I understand that the reality of modern living, and people’s incomes, means that eating “organic food” — that which is grown without artificial chemicals, and in the most humane manner possible — is not going to be possible for most people all of the time. However, people should be more mindful of what they are consuming, and how it came to be on their plate. At the very least, people should try to look at the ingredients of the food they make, and decide whether or not it will bless and strengthen their bodies, or if it will poison the Earth when they are returned to the Earth upon death.

Now one could argue that eating food takes up a very small amount of the 24-hour period, and that food is not all there is to life. This may be so, but without food, you would not be alive, and food nourishes your body so you can do all of those other things you like doing. In the days when human civilization first became aware of the Vanir Gods, and We extended Our help to them, to eat was to live. If things went wrong with the crop, and people starved, they died. To grow food, rather than merely hunting and gathering, people had to co-operate with each other. This is how the principle of frith came to be. Rather than “I’ll get over on you before you get over on me, and then I’ll get your property, your stuff, and your mate, ha ha ha,” it was putting differences aside so everyone could help out with the work. In those days, everyone had something they could contribute, whether they were young or old, strong or weak. Food-growing brought people together, and the times of sowing and harvest were times of community celebration. Because the food was relatively pure, it gave people health and energy. Yes, the food made in those times was primitive by modern standards, but maybe there is wisdom to be found in more primitive things.

As I see Midgard advance into the 21st century, much of what goes on makes me sad, even beyond the obvious of people forgetting about the Old Gods, or perhaps claiming to worship the Old Gods and forgetting Our true ways. I see people poisoning themselves with their food, their drink, and in doing so, putting poison into the ground. I see people, in the pursuit of getting enough income to get poisoned food and drink, poisoning their lives; working too many hours and not having enough time to enjoy anything; or being unscrupulous in their dealings with others. Society is divided into the “haves” and “have-nots”, and children will starve while the rich build the latest extension of their homes on the child’s grave. In part, the ways of the Old Gods have been forgotten because they are not convenient to modern life. What do fertility rites matter to people who sterilize their existence?

I am a food God, but I do not simply feed people’s bodies, I try to feed their souls. I am called “God of the World” because I think the World, Midgard, should be a livable place. Going outside and feeling the

warmth of sunshine on your skin, or cool drops of rain, or a gentle breeze or fierce wind, is good; going outside and seeing a forest, or fields growing food, or a beach, or a desert, this is good. Having a companion, or a few companions, to play with, to talk with, to laugh with, to cry with; this is good. To know of the cycles of existence — sowing, growing, harvesting, and lying fallow — and to know that “dry” and “sad” times are a part of life, and will be replaced by more fruitful times, this is power. You have a body, and you need to live in that body, to experience all of the ranges of senses that you possibly can. Too many people nowadays are running from living life, because it’s too painful. Tragedy has always happened in human history, but it seems that your time carries a special kind of tragedy. Humans have invented all sorts of problems for themselves that they were never supposed to have.

So when you eat, try to think of where it came from, and what it is going to do to your body. Try to think of what you sacrificed to get that food in terms of labor, and then what part that labor plays in your life, especially concerning your relationships with other humans. Take some time out of your busy electric mega-urban schedule to meditate on these things. The future of the human race might depend on it.



Closing Benediction

Sigrún Freyskona

May Ingvi Frey grant you peace and good seasons.

May you feel the warmth and light of the sunshine,
And be cleansed by the gentle rains.
May you grow, and give your gift to the world,
To feed hungry hearts and souls.
May you rest, safe in the knowledge
That all shall be well in its time.

May you have peace in your home,
And peace in yourself.
May you have the peace that surpasses all understanding,
The peace in the ways of wyrd,
The workings of the world.

May you know the peace
And the full life
That comes in the presence of Frey.

And may Ingvi Frey be gifted by the writing of these words,
And taking the time to read these words,
And put them into practice.
May Ingvi Frey be blessed by our friendship,
Given in appreciation for His goodness.
As His light streams into our hearts,
Let the light embrace the world,
And return again to Him more fully.

May we do what Frey asks,
Take care of the world,
And of each other,
And let that love and joy
Be an offering unto Him.

About the Authors

In the spirit of frith and gratitude, I have given an aside to mention those who worked hard on their contributions for this gift to Frey and His folk. When tying up the loose ends of legalese, I asked the contributors for a brief bio, and here is what I received, in their own words.

Ayla Wolffe

cover art; The Relationship Between Freyr and Freyja; Jera In My Life; Gerd of the Forest; A Night with the Fairy Folk; Freyr & Freyja The Divine Twin; My Relationship with Freyr; untitled poem; Man Is the Joy of Man; My Favorite Place — Inside Your Hug; Swimming in Alfheim; Alfar Altar

Ayla Wolffe has been a practicing Heathen for almost fifteen years, and is glad to say that it has been some of the most rewarding years of her life. She has a dual troth to Freyja and Frigga, and works a great deal with Odin as well. Ayla finds that all the Gods have a way of making themselves very present in her life. She has two teenage sons of whom she is the non-custodial mother. She is the Gydhia of Kindred of the Nine Worlds, and also helped to edit the most recent edition of *Our Troth* as put out by The Troth. She and her brother Kevin have co-founded a local rune study group called Two C's Rune Study, which meets monthly. She reads both runes and Tarot professionally as well. Ayla has been writing poetry for most of her life and enjoys it greatly.

Eosin

Living in a Frey Household; Vanir Altar; Sculptures of Frey and Gerda; Sacred Garb and Accessories

Eosin has been an Anglo-Saxon Heathen since 1998, but has been drawn to aspects of Heathenry his whole life. He has Frey as a primary patron and is Vanic-focused, though he honors the other Gods as well. Before becoming Heathen, he did a variety of Pagan and magical work. He enjoys history and folklore, as well as historical swordsmanship, learning languages, cooking, and equestrian sports. He lives with Sigrún Freyskona in Southern California.

Fálki

My Personal Account of First Meeting Freyr

Fálki is a gay male Odinsman and former Freysman who lives in Denver, Colorado. He has facilitated informational workshops about Heathenry as well as oracular seidh ceremonies at Between the Worlds (an annual neo-Pagan queer men's festival in Ohio) as well as for other nationwide Neo-Pagan and Heathen groups. Fálki has been a follower of Heathenry since the early 1990s.

Galina Krasskova

The Hungry Golden God; Serving Gerda; Hail, the Golden God

Rev. Galina Krasskova is a free-range tribalist Heathen who has been a priest of Odin and Loki for close to fifteen years. She is the founder of Urdabrunnr Kindred in NYC, and a member of Iron Wood Kindred (MA), Ásatrú in Frankfurt (Frankfurt am Main, Germany) and the First Kingdom Church of Asphodel (MA). Her primary interest is Heathen devotional work and she has both written and lectured extensively on this subject. She is a member of the American Academy of Religion, the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and she is a staff writer for *newWitch* magazine. Her published work includes *Exploring the Northern Tradition* (New Page Books), *The Whisperings of Woden*, the first devotional ever published in modern Heathenry/Ásatrú, *Walking Toward Yggdrasil* and *Sigdrifa's Prayer*, and also *Full Fathom Five: Honoring the Norse Gods and Goddesses of the Sea* also through Asphodel Press. She may be reached at tamyris@earthlink.net.

Jason Freysson*Freyr's Song*

Jason Freysson has been a devotee of Frey for over a decade. A dual tradition practitioner, he also regularly honors Oshun and the other Orisha. Jason was originally trained in the Fellowship of Isis, where he became a priest and today is a member of Urdabrunnr Kindred. In his spare time, he is quite the film buff and may be found frequenting premieres in NYC.

Jon Norman*Bringer of Light; Vanir Altar*

Jon Norman is a gay Heathen from Connecticut. He has close ties with the Vanir and some of the Jotnar. He has had a relationship with Hela since he was a teenager, and has a very special place in his heart for Frey. Jon is in recovery from addiction and recently celebrated one year clean.

Jordsvin*Ingvi Freyr in Ancient and Contemporary Heathenism; On Being a Freysgoði; Skidbladnir; Freysblot (Haiku)*

Age 48, partnered gay male (19 years), college instructor. Hobbies: gardening, chickens, guppies, reading (history and sci-fi are favorites), sci-fi and horror DVDs (prefer the classical ones). Heathen for 14 years, extensively published in Idunna, Yggdrasil and Marklander. Special Heathen Interests: Seiðr, Runework, Blóts, research, counseling/spiritual direction. Website: <http://home.earthlink.net/~jordsvin>

Joshua Tenpenny*Lammas Night with Frey, Meal Blessing*

Joshua Tenpenny is a Pagan massage therapist, bodyworker, and light-bringer. He is Raven Kaldera's life partner and assistant, and the Clerk of the First Kingdom Church of Asphodel.

K.A. Steinberg*A Prayer of Gratitude to Ingvi-FreyR*

Krei Steinberg is a long time Heathen, self-confessed lore whore, disillusioned mystic, armchair theologian, archivist/researcher, mediocre archer, feminist fatale, unrepentant activist, semi-nomad, and probable madwoman currently making her way in the world as a knowledge manager/information broker. Although presently a solitary practitioner, she's been actively involved in various Heathen communities around the Ft Lauderdale, New York City, and Hudson Valley areas over the past 16 years. She is currently curating the 30 Day Altar Project, an online Heathen devotional experimental art project (<http://www.altarproject.org>). Krei has a soft spot in her heart for the Vanir and is very excited to be a part of this project.

Leafshimmer*Invocation to FreyR*

High Priest (Minos) of the Minoan Brotherhood, and Empowered Student of the Faery (aka Feri) Tradition of Witchcraft founded by Cora and Victor Anderson since 2002. He is a founding member of an eclectic Neo-Pagan Radical Faerie Ritual Circle, the Green Men, based in Cambridge, Mass. since Yule 1998, and has led many public rituals in the Radical Faerie communities of the Northeast.

Michaela Macha*Gerd Meets Frey; My Fulltrui is Frey the Bold*

Michaela Macha lives in Frankfurt, Germany. For her, writing and collecting Ásatrú poetry (in English and German) is both a spiritual path, a way to honor her *fulltrui* Odin, and service to the Heathen community. She maintains the site "Odin's Gift" with over 1000 poems, songs and MP3s (<http://www.odins-gift.com>).

Misty Wright*Observations from Ingvi's Orchard; Lord of the Mound, God of the World*

Misty Wright is a student of Ohio State University, where she is earning a degree in Landscape Horticulture. She is also dual-minoring in Scandinavian Studies and English. A proud member of Great Ash Kindred, she has walked on the Northern Path for some time. She has been a devotee and friend to Freyr since Spring of 2006.

Raistlynn*Njord, Father of Frey*

Raistlynn is an Aries that lives in Connecticut. *Fulltrúi* with Njord, she will be taking that same oath to Ullr this Winter. She is looking into becoming a counselor, and to further Heathen studies for peaceful, interfaith dialogues.

Rand Ulfsson*Learning About Frey in the Best Way; Beautiful Bounty*

Rand Ulfsson, someone who doesn't thrive on change, has recently had to come to terms with changes in life and find a way to move forward even though the mire of self-restriction and a health situation that has long been ignored or misunderstood. Rand relates to the gods as part of a family, one that extends beyond biological or geographical borders, and the gods he has chosen — or more accurately, the ones who have chosen him — speak from time to time that changes will take place on a scale larger than his own mind and heart. While not especially connected to Frey, Rand has learned a few things about the Golden God with the help of Sigrún.

Raven Kaldera*Invocation to Gerda; Garden; Golden One; Golden One Song*

Raven Kaldera is a Northern-Tradition Pagan shaman, homesteader, teacher, King of a small Pagan kingdom, and author of too many books to mention here (but that include the “Northern-Tradition Shamanism” series). He is a Hela's Man, but loves Frey in spite of being a creature of darkness. He lives on Cauldron Farm in Massachusetts with his two partners, sheep and goats and chickens, and a myriad of interesting people. His name is a veritable word of controversy. ‘Tis an ill wind that blows no minds.

Sigrún Freyskona*master of ceremonies*

Sigrún has been a part of Neo-Paganism since 1995, and a mortal spouse of Ingvi Frey since 2004. 2007 was a year of great changes for her, taking an oath to serve as Frey's Gydhia at Lammas 2007, and also taking Gerda as patron Goddess at Yule 2007. A lifelong New Englander recently transplanted to Southern California, Siggy is seeking to build frith between diverse groups of people, and find peace within herself. She is a proud long-distance member of Iron Wood Kindred (based in New England), and when not doing devotional activities, she can be found spending time with her beloved Eosin and working for the awareness of the needs of disabled Heathens and Pagans. This is her first major publication, and Siggy also has works in forthcoming Northern Tradition devotional writings. In addition to writing, Siggy also is very crafty, making things such as sculptures of the Deities, rune sets, wands, prayer beads, and jewelry, some for personal use, some as gifts, some by commission. You can get in touch with her via e-mail: freyskona@gmail.com, visit her website: <http://freyskona.weebly.com> — or see her LiveJournal: <http://scinnlaeca.livejournal.com>

Tracy Nichols*Warrior Within; untitled poem*

Tracy Nichols is a spirit-taught apprentice spirit-worker who has dedicated her life of the past 3 years to the path of the Northern Tradition. In addition to her *fultrui* Loki, she also has served the likes of Hela, Odin, Surt, Skadi, Thor, and of course Frey, among others. Before finding her calling she had spent years studying and practicing various other Pagan paths including Wicca and Eclectic Neo-Paganism, and other Occult paths such as Satanism and Thelema. Combined together, she has been a Pagan and an Occultist for over a decade, and a spirit-worker long before that, dealings with the Archangels and various other beings, one of whom she later discovered to be Loki. She lives with her husband and her various pets in the United States.