



An Atheopagan Hymnal

Songs, Poems and Liturgy for Ritual Use by Earth-Honoring Atheists

Collected by Mark Green

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*Cosmos, I am a whirl of conceits
Saying “I” when I
Am only a moment of You.*

General and Non-Seasonal

An Arrival/Presence Affirmation

We are sentient beings of Planet Earth, present in this place, this moment. The Cosmos is above us, the Earth is below us, and Life is around us. Here the wise mind unfolds. Here the playful child creates. Here the wondering human gazes out to view the vast and mighty Universe. We are here, and together.

An Arrival/Presence Meditation

Breathe this air. Remember that as you breathe, this grass and you, the trees yonder and you are blurring one into another, becoming something larger than either of you alone. You are giving each other life, one to the other.

Feel the sun on your head and your back. Feel the heat that beats against the insides of your clothes, the insides of your shoes. Remember that you are a controlled burn of food made of sunlight, that you and the sun are burning to live, to give the light that you make for the tiny time you can.

Remember the water you drink, the shower you took this morning. More than 80% of you is rain. Which is river. Which is ocean.

Feel the ground now, pressing on the soles of your feet, gravity pulling you close, each of us drawn down to stand the way iron filings stand on a magnet. Know that below us, the layer we call topsoil is made of the fertile bones of all that has come before us, the tiny and the mighty, and that they are all feeding us now.

Remember where you are. *[Insert qualities and landscape features of area where ritual is being held]* Remember how good it is to be in this place.

Open your eyes. Look around, and remember that you are alive. Many of you know one another, and many do not. All the moments of your life have brought you to here, to this instant. Be joyous in this moment. Welcome.

An Atheopagan Pledge of Allegiance

I pledge my service to Life on Earth
And the greater joy of Humanity
And for the Cosmos of which we are part
Awe, wonder, honor and reverence
So long as I am gifted this life.

A Benediction/Ritual Closing

To enrich and honor the gift of our lives, to chart a kind and true way forward, by these words and deeds we name intent: to dare, to question, to love.

(Unison all celebrants): May all that must be done, be done in joy. We go forth to live!

An Atheopagan Meal Blessing

This food, swelling from the Earth by the breath of the Sun, is brought to us by many hands. May all be honored. *(unison:)* We are grateful to eat today.

Prayers Before Bedtime

“Thank you Air for each breath today; thank you Fire for lighting my way; thank you Water for the life that you give; thank you Earth for a safe place to live.”

“I am loved, I am safe, I am good, I belong.” -Stephanie Anne

"I've laughed and I've listened, I've learned and I've played. It's time to tuck in tight so that we may welcome another day. This day was a good one, perhaps it was grand; now I shut my eyes and dream of a far off land." -Sommer Low

"May the sun bring you new energy by day. May the moon softly restore you by night. May the rain wash away your worries. May the breeze blow new strength into your being. May you walk gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of your life." -Nadia Colman

"It's time to rest our body, it's time to rest our brain
Tomorrow is a new day, we'll try it all again.
Try, try, try, try
Tomorrow is a new day we will try it all again. " - Heather Louise

"May my dreams be kind
And my waking happy.
May the sweet Earth enfold and protect me
Until I return to the waking world" -Mark Green

"Now it's time for me to snuggle, just like other animals cuddle
May my dreams take me away, until I wake with the Sun's ray" - Jon Cleland Host

"Our Mother, who art the Earth, sacred be thy soil, thy air be pure, thy waters clean, as they were in the beginning. And let us not hurt you, but love and revive you, for you bring us the springtime, and the summer, and the autumn, and the winter that brings us rest." - Eileen Driscoll

My Planet is a Rock

(Tune: My God is a Rock—traditional spiritual)

My Home is a rock, and it whirls in space,
It whirls in space, oh it whirls in space.
My Planet is a rock, with a sweet green face
The miracle where I was born.

My Sun it is a star, burning in the sky,
Burning in the sky, oh burning 'way up high.
My Sun it is a star, burning in the sky,
The nourisher of all we know.

Translation (poem)

It sounds cold
But when I see trees moving in wind, or
The spreading rings of waves across a pond I think
Math. And my heart swells with it:
Drawing curves limned by constraints, by limits and boundaries,
Describing topographies as they
—fractals themselves—
Arc and swoop, dance the happy energized air about them.
All the words we have feel small and steel:
Plotting. Geometry.

Why not say instead,
The language of Creation sings in numbers:
The Voice of Being deeming
IT IS in song ephemeral and exquisite
Graphing its beauty across the sunset sky.

This is the Place (Song; still needs a tune)

This is the place
This is the place, oh yes
This is the place my life has led me to.

This is the time
This is the time, oh yes
This is the time to do what we must do.

This is the moment
This is the moment, oh yes
This is the moment, right here, right now.

The Journey (Song; still needs a tune)

We are Cro-Magnons who flew to the Moon
We are the Parents of those yet unborn
We are the Makers of wonders unseen
We are the Delvers into the unknown.

Here in this world fraught with wonder and terror
We are a species of beauty and horror
We choose a way, that we may all be better
Our path is grateful, and humble, with honor.

We are the women courageous and strong
We are the men who know beauty and tears

We are the love that binds families together
We carry love for the World, all our years.

It is so beautiful
It is so beautiful
It is so beautiful
Hard though it is.

It is so generous; it is so generous; it is so generous
Living on Earth.

Blessed—a Benediction

I am among the blessed.

I am of the kind who leaves the glaring tube, remembering
And goes to watch the moon rise silver through the trees
Breathing purple and chill, stinging pine. I am

Among the blessed: I know the acacia, the first daffodil,
The irises unsheathing cream and violet labia in the green wet of May.
I tune for the new music on the radio: I turn it up.

I am among the blessed: I drink wine by firelight, clothes rank with
smoke,
Bright silver twisted through my lobes. I know secrets;
They are tattooed on my body where the sleeves can cover them,
They read

Blessed, and only if we are lucky enough, you and I, courageous enough
To shed our clothes together will you read them. Seeing scarlet leaves
drift down,

Perhaps, with ice around the moon, or the steel bones of the oaks
against Orion,
Knowing we are among the blessed, that we miss nothing, that we will
eat this life

Like a chocolate mango, like Beethoven ice cream,

Moaning our joy with each sweet bite.

An Atheist's Prayer—another Benediction

Praise to the wide spinning world
Unfolding each of all the destined tales compressed
In the moment of your catastrophic birth
Wide to the fluid expanse, blowing outward
Kindling in stars and galaxies, in bright pools
Of Christmas-colored gas; cohering in marbles hot
And cold, ringed, round, gray and red and gold and dun
And blue, pure blue, the eye of a child, spinning in a veil of air,
Warm island, home to us, kind beyond measure: the stones
And trees, the round river flowing sky to deepest chasm,
Salt and sweet.

Praise to Time, enormous and precious,
And we with so little, seeing our world go as it will
Ruining, cheering, the treasured fading, precious arriving,
Fear and wonder,
Fear and wonder always.

Praise O black expanse of mostly nothing
Though you do not hear, you have no ear nor mind to hear

Praise O inevitable, O mysterious,
Praise and thanks be a wave
Expanding from this tiny temporary mouth
This tiny dot of world a bubble
A bubble going out forever
Meeting everything as it goes:
All the great and infinitesimal
Gracious and terrible
All the works of blessed Being.

May it be so.

May it be so.

May our hearts sing to say it is so.

Curiosity and Courage (Tune: Battle Hymn of the Republic)

Galileo had a telescope he pointed to the sky
And he saw the planets moving in a way that did deny
That the Earth was at the center of all that we can espy
And Science goes marching on!

Chorus:

Curiosity and Courage! Curiosity and Courage! Curiosity and Courage!
And Science goes marching on!

Isaac Newton had conviction that all Nature works by laws
He worked out the mathematics, and made calculus because
Any theory made without it would be riddled through with flaws
And Science went marching on!

Charles Darwin understood that by selection life evolved
And the theory on which biology was based was solved
Once again, it's not humanity 'round which the world revolves
This Science goes marching on!

Marie Curie was a chemist with an active fascination
For the heavy kinds of isotopes that give off radiation
Nuclear science has since delivered us both awe and conflagration
Its Science goes marching on!

Albert Einstein saw the Cosmos in space/time dimensions four
And he proposed Relativity and opened up the door
To the Quantum world we'd never had a clue about before
Whose Science goes marching on!

As the theories of our Universe are sharpened year by year
We are learning mighty truths that scientists would have us hear
It's a simply wondrous Cosmos and magnificent Earth here
As Science goes marching on!

Boiling Up (The Complexity Song)

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Boiling Up (The Complexity Song)'. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff (measures 1-5) contains the lyrics: 'Boil - ing Up Boil - ing Up Boil - ing Up from what came be - fore The Un - i -'. The second staff (measures 6-10) contains: 'verse - is mak - ing - some thing new Boil - ing Up Boil - ing Up Com - plex'. The third staff (measures 11-15) contains: 'struc - tures from sim - ple forms Gal ax - ies and stars and plan - ets, me and'. The fourth staff (measures 16-17) contains: 'you'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Chorus:

Boiling up, boiling up, boiling up from what came before
The Universe is making something new
Boiling up, boiling up, complex structures from simple forms
Galaxies and stars and planets, me and you.

It's funny when you think about it, but simple things tend to combine
Assemble in surprising ways and new
Two clear gases make up water; billions of cells you and I
Since the Big Bang that's what matter has to do.

Particles combine in gases, burn in stars to metal ash
Metals form in planets as years pass
Stars collecting into galaxies which superclusters form
At every scale these nesting structures make our home.

Tiny microorganisms join in colonies to grow
Specializing then they grow as one
Over millions years' evolving, diverse life is what we know
We're descended from those humble cells begun.

The Seed (by John Boswell for the SolSeed Movement (<http://solseed.org/SolSeedSong>))

Melody at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bapoh1WT9SQ>

It's hard to reach out for the stars
From the inside of my cell.
Trapped in my head, drifted so far
From the story my heart wants to tell.
It's a story of kinship, a story of roots
And a glorious family tree.
It's a story of passion, wings in the sky,
Possibilities yearning to be!

I'm a seed - hidden deep yet reaching for the sun.
I'm a seed - invisibly my journey has begun.
I'm a seed - I will find a way across the night.
I'm a seed - another world is growing toward the light.

I must join my tribe, and join hands around the fire.
I must find the ones who naturally call me higher.
We must dance as one, and open our eyes and move together.
We are kindred and will be forever.
A dance of compassion, a dance to inspire,
To climb up toward the world we desire!

But each footprint we leave on the Earth
Is a wound we don't know how to heal.
We try to step lightly, but cannot be sure
That our world will survive this ordeal.
So it's time to rejoin the great pattern
And learn wisdom as old as the sun.
Then our cities and farms will be friends to the forests and seas

And we'll flourish together as one!

(continues next page)

I'm a seed - hidden deep yet reaching for the sun.

I'm a seed - invisibly my journey has begun.

I'm a seed - I will find a way across the night.

I'm a seed - another world is growing toward the light.

I must join my tribe.

Seeds that float on darkness,

Seeds blossoming in stone.

Earth will send her children

To grow themselves new homes.

And when we meet the others,

Seeds drifting from afar,

We'll join them in their mission

To take root amongst the stars!

I'm a seed - hidden deep yet reaching for the sun.

I'm a seed - invisibly my journey has begun.

I'm a seed - I will find a way across the night.

I'm a seed - another world is growing toward the light.

Down to the River to Sing (Tune: Down to the River to Pray)

Moderato ♩ = c.100

As I went down to the river to sing, Feeling a part of ev-ry-thing

8

And what should I see but a red tailed hawk Oh Earth beau-ty to-day

a great os- prey
a leap- ing fish
a shoot- ing star
the set- ting sun,

17

O sis - ters let's go down, Let's go down, come on down,
O bro - thers let's go down, Let's go down, come on down,
O fa - thers let's go down, Let's go down, come on down,
O mo - thers let's go down, Let's go down, come on down,
O sin - ners, let's go down, Let's go down, come on down.

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O sis - ters let's go down, Down to the ri - ver to sing _____
O bro - thers let's go down, Down to the ri - ver to sing _____
O fa - thers let's go down, Down to the ri - ver to sing _____
O mo - thers let's go down, Down to the ri - ver to sing _____
O sin - ners, let's go down, Down to the ri - ver to sing _____

I went down to the river to sing

Feeling as one with everything
And what should I see but a red-tailed hawk
Oh Earth, beauty today

O sisters let's go down,
Let's go down, come on down,
O sisters let's go down,
Down to the river to sing

As I went down to the river to sing
Feeling as one with everything
And what should I see but a great osprey
O Earth, beauty today

Oh, brothers let's go down,
Let's go down, come on down,
O brothers let's go down,
Down to the river to sing.

As I went down to the river to sing
Feeling as one with everything
And what should I see but a leaping fish
O Earth, beauty today

O fathers let's go down
Let's go down, come on down,
O fathers let's go down
Down to the river to sing.

Yes I was down at the river to sing
Feeling as one with everything
And what should I see but a shooting star
O Earth, beauty today

(continues on next page)

O mothers let's go down,
Let's go down, come on down
O mothers let's go down
Down to the river to sing.

I was down at the river to sing
Knowing I'm a part of everything
And what should I see but the setting sun
O Earth, beauty today.

O children let's go down,
Let's go down, come on down,
O children let's go down,
Down to the river to sing.

Green Earth Below—a ritual chant

Green earth below
Bright sky above
Let me live
My life for love

We Are the Cosmos, Knowing Itself

We are the Cosmos, knowing itself
Forged from stars now long gone by
We are hearts who look above
And greet the starry sky with love.

We are the Planet, knowing itself
Generations long gone by
We are hearts who look below
To our sweet Earth, and fill with love.

We are Humans, knowing ourselves
Years and trials long gone by
We are made a circle now
A circle bound and filled with love.

More Than Enough—a ritual chant

It's more than enough to me
More than enough, oh children
It's more than enough to me
This world is more than enough.

(Repeat, with):

This life is more than enough

My loved ones are more than enough

This fire is more than enough

These hearts are more than enough

Ain't No Sorrow in This Life—a song

Ain't no sorrow in this life
Ain't no sorrow can hold me down
Ain't no sorrow in this life
'Cause where I walk is sacred ground

Ain't no trouble in this life
Ain't no trouble can hold me down
Ain't no trouble in this life
'Cause where I walk is sacred ground.

(Repeat, with):

Ain't no worry

Ain't no grieving

We Believe—a chant

We believe in a better world
We believe in justice
We believe in a better world
We believe in peace
We believe in a better world
We can heal our planet
We won't bow down
We won't bow down

Better Kinder Sweeter Wiser—a chant

Better, kinder
Sweeter, wiser
I'm gonna wash my Self clean

The Acorn Carol

The acorn, the acorn
Both food and hope true
We raise high our glasses to compliment you!
To eat of your bounty, or shade 'neath your tree
The gifts of the acorn are the finest that be.

The acorn, the acorn
Whence hawks and rooks roost
We raise high our glasses to compliment you!
For never has there been a mightier tree
Than the oak that the acorn is destined to be

The acorn, the acorn
O beauteous tree
All manner of creatures depend upon thee!
For how could a flicker or woodpecker be
If not for the seeds of the mighty oak tree?

The acorn, the acorn
Let all of us dance
She'll live on for centuries if given a chance!
A hope for a future magnificent tree
The gifts of the acorn are the finest that be.

Gimme a Godless Religion

Give me that old time religion

US traditional

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a C7 chord and an F chord. The second staff includes F7, Bb, F, C7, and a first ending with F and C7. The third staff starts with a repeat sign, followed by F, C7, and F. The fourth staff includes F7, Bb, F, C7, and a second ending with F and C7.

Gimme a godless religion
Gimme a godless religion
Gimme a godless religion
That's good enough for me.

It's good enough for a skeptic
Whose reason is antiseptic
But whose needs are still eclectic
So that's good enough for me.

It was good enough for Sagan
Who was certainly no Pagan
He made science a contagion
And that's good enough for me.

It's not good enough for Dawkins
With his babe-bathwater squawkin'
How I wish he would stop talkin'
That'd be good enough for me.

For progressives it is favored

For it has no biased flavor
Yes, equality we savor
And that's good enough for me.

We do rituals 'round the Focus
It's a symbol-laden locus
So dispense with hocus-pocus
It's good enough for me.

In our rituals we seek Presence
And a sense of pure transcendence
For the Earth is filled with pleasance—
That's good enough for me.

The Black Box

We're glowing, the Focus is glowing, we're knowing
Connection with all and with everything growing
All Presence, no thinking, we move to the beat
Alive, filled with wonder, a deep truth and sweet
So what is it? This thing that makes ritual power
And honeyed love flower, that slows down the hour,

It's not esoteric, it's not hard to find;
The black box isn't magic: it's your mind.

We're dancing, the fire is dancing, we're chanting
We're stamping and prancing and chanting and trancing
All Presence, no thinking, moving to the drum
And each of us family, each of us come
To this life unique. What is it? That so
Makes our pulses beat, helps us to grow

It's not esoteric, it's not hard to find
The black box isn't magic: it's your mind.

We're singing, our bodies are singing, the ringing
Of bells and the booming of drums is the pinging
Of Life in our bodies, of joy in our living
Of gratitude for all the Cosmos is giving
What is it? The secret ingredient here
That fills us with Presence and strips away fear?

It's not esoteric. It's not hard to find
The black box isn't magic: it's your mind.

It's real, it's all so incredibly Real, this moment
Of sharing and dancing and focus and foment
And humans have known it, since thousands of years
We do this: we're human, our laughter and tears
Cry, what is it? What makes this so moving and real
That fills us with such deep permission to feel?

It's not hocus pocus or gods, you will find:
The black box isn't magic: it's your mind.

An Atheopagan Rosary

Make a bead string of 3 courses of 13 beads, with the 13th always being recognizable as the last of a series. Use beads you find attractive, that feel good in the hand. You can keep the rosary on your Focus when it isn't in use.

To “say” the Atheopagan rosary, speak or think one line for each bead. Repeat the meditation 3-7 times (3-7 repetitions of the 3 courses).

I drew the meditation for this rosary from Buddhist sources cited in a mindfulness class I took, as well as the 13 Principles of Atheopaganism as I practice it. You can write your own, of course, and I may write different ones for seasonal sabbaths or other uses. But the main point is the use of repetition to reprogram your brain to embrace the qualities in the meditation: to make a better world for you, for those around you, and for all of us.

NOTE: If you're like me, be ready for a lot of internal chatter disputing these statements—that's why they're powerful. With time, that fades, and you start to experience the meditation's statements as true.

First two courses of 13:

May all I am and do, be of love.

May my heart be happy

(repeat)

May my mind be at ease

May my body be healthy

Last course of 13:

May I know peace today

My heart is happy

May those I touch know kindness

My mind is at ease

May the Cosmos be honored

My body is healthy

May the good Earth be revered

Peace is with me today

May my heart be grateful

I am kind to those around me

May I act with integrity

The Cosmos fills me with wonder

May I know that I am loved,

The good Earth is generous

That I deserve love.

My heart is grateful

That all deserve love.

I act with integrity

I am loved,
I deserve love,
All deserve love.
All I am and do is of love.

Traditional and popular songs for rituals

Good ritual music usually shares some commonalities: it is easy for a group to learn, emotional in tone and usually with a compelling, driving rhythm. There are exceptions, of course: polyphonic chant is great ritual music, and has none of these characteristics.

Here are some traditional and popular songs which will work well in Atheopagan rituals:

Almost Home (Mary Chapin Carpenter)

An Unfinished Life (Kate Wolf)

Blue Boat Home (Peter Mayer)

The Chemical Elements (Tom Lehrer)

The Galaxy Song (Monty Python)

Imagine (John Lennon)

Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning (trad. spiritual)

The Red-Tailed Hawk (Kate Wolf)

Science is Real (They Might Be Giants)

This Little Light of Mine (trad. spiritual)

This May Be the Last Time (trad. spiritual)

What a Wonderful World (Louis Armstrong)

Yule

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals: wintry non-religious songs such as Sleigh Ride.

Axial Tilt (Tune: Silent Night)

Axial tilt

The way the world's built:

Sun is north, then sun is south.

Axial precession makes seasons occur;

Sometimes bikinis and other times fur.

Insert metaphor here!

Insert metaphor here.

Evergreen tree

Holly berry

Stuff that stays alive, you see.

Meanwhile freezing and darkness reign

We'd much rather have fun than complain.

We are still alive!

We are still alive.

We're so hoping

Soon will come Spring

Meanwhile let's eat, drink, and sing!

Friends and family convene by the fire

Cold and darkness don't seem quite so dire.

Pass the gravy please!

Pass the gravy please.

(repeat first verse)

Oh Darkest Night (tune: O Holy Night)

Oh darkest night, the stars are brightly shining
It is the night of the dawning new year.
Here in the dark, for sun and warmth we're pining
But we are cheered by our friends and family here.
The cold bright stars: a trillion worlds above us
As here on Earth we gather loved ones near.
Raise up your eyes, and see the Cosmos' wonder
Oh Night sublime
Oh night, oh darkest night
Oh Night sublime
Oh night, oh night sublime.

Tonight We Sing (tune: Deck the Halls)

Tonight we sing, the old year passes! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Celebrate ye lads and lasses! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Wonder, family and presents! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Wassailing like olden peasants! Fa la la la la, la la la la!

Celebrate critical thinking! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Stuff your face, then do some drinking! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Gather ye Atheopagans! Fa la la, la la la, la la la!
Starry night and brimming flagons! Fa la la la la, la la la la!

See the raging Yule log 'fore us! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Hack the lyrics, join the chorus! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Awe and merriment in measure! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Gather close in Yuletide pleasure! Fa la la la la, la la la la!

(repeat first verse)

O Little Creatures of the Earth by Nels Olson

(Tune: O Little Child of Bethlehem)

O, little creatures of the Earth,
How wondrous are our lives!
From dust of stars far beyond Mars
Somehow were cast our dies.
Now in our precious time here,
Our consciousness brings light
To all that happens, near and far,
With meanings we define.

With care for what sustains our lives,
We watch our world in awe
And gratitude for all the warmth
That pours down from our star.
Its periodic movements
From our perspective here
Give cause for celebrations
Each season of the year!

O, shining star in solistice time,
Your radiant hours are few.
You turn and strike the New Year's chime--
We owe our lives to you.
These darkest days of winter,
We miss your warming rays.
But every year this hemisphere
Returns to brighter days.

Since olden days the human race
Has feared your warmth would die.
The evergreen is ever seen
As hope we will survive.
With ancient drums still beating,
But superstitions dropped,
We send our heartfelt blessings
For peace, goodwill to all.

Mulled Wine (poem)

It begins where the smoke hits your eyes: smouldering peat,
Mutton stew on a broad iron hook,
Deep snow. How can it ever have been summer?

Apples wrinkling and mice in the barley—
With so much to fear, thank the gods for company!
We'll tell our tales, remember how we passed the cold
Last year, and the year before.

And those who couldn't.

The grape leans across
The seasons, clasps the hand of summer's
Dried rind, dreaming the new fruit,
Calling the sun back,

World without end amen.

The Brightening/Riverain

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season:
Singin' In the Rain; Old Man River; Here Comes the Rain Again; It's Raining,
It's Pouring; Have You Ever Seen the Rain; Love Reign O'er Me;

Invocation for Riverain

O Fog

Dragging your cloak, setting sudden claws, come
And wrap a winter's mystery 'round this house.
Rise soft in hollows. Open hushed roads.
Make the world a soft and pliant place
Fertile for dreams. Fertile.

Rain, thundering oak

Pounding the roof as you walk,
Come pour your seed, green Earth's round body
With all that will and can be.
Please us with streams' laughing
And the hope of something new.

O Fog, O Rain, in your green ardor
Come

(I am calling you, I am calling you)

Come kiss my face.

Vigil (poem)

Winter stands in the corner of my garden,
Rounds her shoulders, tucks her chin, draws tight her cloak of stars and ice,
Razor moon and rain. Spare and erect, gaunt in the darkness,
Bark-peeling with moss predation, slick and black she nods,
She waits, she leans,
The sky shows her jewelry, vents its wet moods. Death litters
The paths with bones and brown rags. Secret life skulks then like a thief:
She finds mushrooms between her toes, grows green and furry slippers.

Long, long.

Until one day the clearwashed air grows sweet and yellow
With acacia, and her memory stirs with the taste
Of a near-forgotten lover's scent, feels again the warmth of his regard,
And she stretches,
Stretches to find him again,
Turning up her daffodil face.

A Riverain Blessing (poem)

Three percent is all they say
The sweet water of a water planet
Three percent
The cool drink, the soft rain
Rare as blood, rare as luck, rare
To our wet hands, shining.

From the far sky, adrift in curds and blankets
Whips and knots, anvils towering thunder hammers
Rain the hand of kindness down
To our fields, our mouths, the dancing springs
And cold rivers, snaking the glens of Earth to the sky again.

Do we take you for granted, O three percent?
Do we curse you for flooding, pop our grumbrellas
On a wet walk to the office?
Not I.
Not when puddles leap for joy and silver makes the sky
A treasury. I tip my face to you, and appearances be damned
This gift is too precious: oceans' breath, sky's milk
Rivers' song falling drop by drop
To my waiting skin.

High Spring

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season:
April Showers; Here Comes the Sun;

A Spring Chant

It's coming! It's coming!
The light is returning
The leaves and the flowers
The oaks and green bowers

With bright purple crocus
To lay on the Focus
And warm days and bright
To bring us delight.

It's coming! It's coming!
The year is returning
The birds will be nesting
And we will be festing!

Go cold! Go dark!
The growing year's bright spark
Says Hello, Hello, Hello!
And round we go
Round we go
Round we go to the summer!

Another Spring Chant

These seeds, these eggs
Sprouting roots and limbs and legs
These days, these rites
Bringing forth a future bright
These hands, these hearts
Hopes and plans and works and arts
These hearts, these minds
Loving sharing humankind
These notes, this tune
March and April, May and June
This Earth, these stars
What a wonder, world of ours!

Spring Laughter (poem)

It begins with a giggle:
The tiniest white tendril reaching from the secret soil
Like a child's laugh, the purr of a cat and then
Raising, greening leaves peal across the meadows,
Carpet even what was once severe, sere,
Frowning brown in summer's dry thatch,
A deep belly rumble of soaring chlorophyll
Spreading wanton leaves, dangling perfumed sex
Climbing to nod and wave come and get me,
These meadows,
Brazen to the skip of children gathering posies
Bees lumbering slow in the crisp morning air
You, and I, perhaps, gone down to the stream
To lay down in that place, screened by waving rye
And the laughter of the stream gurgling out like a baby's delight
Playing with our playthings as we do, exploring
The whole world green and gripped with the howl of it:
Spring come at last.

May Day

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season: :
Hal an Tow; Abbott's Bromley Horn Dance; Sumer is Icumen In; I Can See
Clearly Now; Let the Sunshine In;

May Morning (poem)

Fresh as the day the world was made,
This morning: dew-spattered through feather fans
Of foxtail and wild rye. Mars is low on the horizon, for once. Still
As a caught breath, the day, hushed,
Holds for a slow-golding time, the rose hints
Of bold and bright to come, of music
Yet to be made, dances old as the village, new as tomorrow's milk.

How can it be, four billion, five hundred million years, the old
and battered Earth,
Veteran of ice and fire, meteor, petroleum, stupidity, avarice, ignorance
How can it be, this innocence: ryetops waving hello, good morning,
Beads of crystal dew filled with beauty wash*,
The bright face of the Golden One coming,
Bringing suit to his blue lover again,

And Earth meeting him with an armload of flowers
As if all the grief were undone, as if
(As it is)
The sorrows and losses don't matter, really,
Not in the face of this coming morning

When Earth says Yes
Sun says I Am Here
The great rounding of things stately in its time,
The lone bird calling to a lightening sky

He is risen
He is risen

*It is an old European tradition that dew gathered on May Day morning will enhance beauty.

Midsummer

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season:
Summertime; Summer Breeze; Good Day Sunshine

Midsummer Carol (Tune: Deck the Halls)

Mow the lawn and trim the yew hedge! ! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Break, and have a frosty beverage! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Mount the chaise longue and the hammock! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Toast the year with gin and tonic! Fa la la la la, la la la la!

Dive the cooling pool before us! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Dance the sun down with the Morris! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Sizzling food is on the Barbie! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Maybe play a game of bocce! Fa la la la la, la la la la!

Hit the road for a vacation! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Now's the time for recreation! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
Time for folly and adventure! Fa la la la la, la la la la!
'Fore we return to indenture! Fa la la la la, la la la la!

The Dimming

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season:
John Barleycorn Must Die (various versions); The Barley Mow; Hammer and
a Nail (Indigo Girls);

GIFTS OF A PROBLEM SABBATH (poem)

Hidden, you spring upon us from the calendar: ah!
The Marblemouthed Holiday is upon us again!
What shall we call it? Lammas, or Lughnasadh how on Earth
Do you pronounce that, but worse, what does it mean?

Behold the midpoint, the blazing furnace of August.
Ritual? Indoors, perhaps, but not under that Sun.

Rather, let us go to the places of water to bask,
To where berries hang heavy among the thorns,
Knowing it all starts now: the cascade of food pouring
From the good Earth. Break
A stalk of barley, saying *this is my heritage* this
Is emmer wheat is einkorn is the tough grass of the Fertile Crescent
Bred to bake my loaves. And bake one then, a crusty yeasty rosemary
Dome for tearing with the hands. Eat warm with butter or oil,
Feel the Life milling in your teeth, and swallow:
This good life sprung abundant from the collision of Earth's magic,
Time and art and science. We are a making people. Our hoes and lore
Midwife the coming of apples and squash, peppers, tomatoes.
The Great Gathering begins now.

Harvest

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season:: Miri It Is; John Barleycorn Must Die;

The Apple Tree Wassail (English Traditional)

O lily-white lily, o lily-white pin,
Please to come down and let us come in!
Lily-white lily, o lily-white smock,
Please to come down and pull back the lock!

Chorus:
(It's) Our wassail jolly wassail!
Joy come to our jolly wassail!

How well they may bloom, how well they may bear
So we may have apples and cider next year.
O master and mistress, o are you within?
Please to come down and pull back the pin

Chorus

There was an old farmer and he had an old cow,
But how to milk her he didn't know how.
He put his old cow down in his old barn.
And a little more liquor won't do us no harm.
Harm me boys harm, harm me boys harm,
A little more liquor won't do us no harm.

Chorus

O the ringles and the jingles and the tenor of the song goes
Merrily merrily merrily.
O the tenor of the song goes merrily.

Spoken:
Hatfulls, capfulls, three-bushel bagfuls,
Little heaps under the stairs.
Hip hip hooray!

Hallows

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season:
Angel of Bells;

This Ae Neet (Tune: the Lyke-Wake Dirge: Yorkshire traditional)

Lyke Wake Dirge *Traditional*

This ae nicht, this a - e nicht, ev - ery night and all.

Fire and fleet and can - dle licht And Earth receive thy bones

This version based on the first verse as sung by The Young Tradition

The lyrics are adapted from Aubrey's manuscript version of 1686.

The tune was noted by Hans Fried, who heard it from an old Scots lady, Peggy Richards.

THIS ae neet, this ae neet,
Every neet and alle,
Fire and sleet and candle-leet,
And Earth receive thy bones.

O thou whose time on Earth has passed
Every neet and all
With silent supper we break your fast*
May Earth receive thy bones.

Thy cold clay limbs with shroud we entwine
Every neet and all
And thy bright face will live in our minds
Though Earth receive thy bones.

If e'er thou had ought cause to despair
Every neet and all
All debts and sorrows now have repair
May Earth receive thy bones.

(continues next page)

Though this neet thou art not alive
Every neet and all
By tales and memories shalt thou survive
May Earth receive thy bones

This ae neet, this ae nicht,
Every neet and alle,
Fire and sleet and candle-leet,
And Earth receive thy bones.

Notes: ae: one; neet: night; sleet: salt; leet: light. * Refers to the Pagan Hallows tradition of the silent or “Dumb Supper”, wherein a place is set for the dead.

Mystery—a poem cycle

(For Pat and Jeff Winters, in memory of their son Braggi)

I. Wail

Encompass this: as an egg snake
Swallowing a jagged, broken stone would unhinge,
Unhinge and stretch
But cannot swallow without blood and scar.
Stretch your mouth until the howl is your dark heart's blood
Poured on the floor of the world.
Tear the words from the walls of your body:
Never. Never. Forever.

II. Dark Road

Without notice, he turned from us,
Not a backward glance, and lit a lantern to walk
Into that dark country. We could see his light awhile.
It grew far and faint, then gone. We followed seven steps,
As far as bloodwarmed feet could take us. Time changed.

Nothing mattered.
Dust became the clotting of everything, and the sweet
Temple scent of myrrh, lavender, lotus, the dimness
Of candleglow became a comfort:
Easier to stay, lay the long bones down,
Light a lantern, walk the dark road too.

III. Pulse

The world's insistence thrums in the body
And denies surrender: the mouth craves food,
The ear speech, the eye color. My loves,
Yet living,
Called me to set the long pendulum swinging again,
To retrace my steps from the dark:
One, another.
A month from now, perhaps two more.

The seventh, though, will never return.
One foot, informed,
Remains upon the track he left
When first he turned his face from us.

IV. Grace

In the stark room at her center—
The innermost coffin, alabaster still,
Without which howl the ten thousand bereftitudes—
In that most private chamber comes a grace
That is the knowing of what must be.

Here no wars are fought with what is.
Here there is only knowledge.

She finds her love there, opens her hands,
Knowing what must be done.

V. Hole

And so it is seen, gazing down to the bottom
Of that forever hole, that our world,
Seeming so substantial, is yet hollow, a crust
Thin and fragile and subject to sinkhole
Without notice or reason. The hollow world holds us,
A bubble of clay above the falling darkness whose mouth
We mark with stones and flowers.

In the bottom is a dark mirror. Dimly, through a smoke
Gaze of averted eyes and cobbled tales we speak
To ease the awful finality of it, comes a face: mine.
Yours. All of ours, all we love, in time:
And not much of it. To look down where the flowers,
Where the swathed limbs make the shape of living
And yet are not, will never live again
Is the seen truth, the known pattern of all precious and guarded things.

VI. Kyrie

O dark and odious inscrutable Force
Whose disembodied Name we cannot know, but fear:
Hear me.

My pious acceptances are a tissue of flimsy thoughts.
I hate and fear You utterly.

I plead, though you give no thought to mercy,
For mercy.

I pray, though You show no sign of kindness,
For kindness.

Midnight Stair (tune: Going Home on the Morning Train)

I'm going down that midnight stair
I'm going down that midnight stair
I'm going down that midnight stair
When your time comes, you're going to join me there
All my pain's been taken away
Taken away.

You must carry on, must carry on
You must carry on, must carry on
You must carry on must carry on
You must live though I am gone
All my pain's been taken away
Taken away

I'm gone away, won't be back again
I'm gone away, won't be back again
I'm gone away, won't be back again
Remember me, remember when
All my pain's been taken away
Taken away.