



An Atheopagan Hymnal

Songs, Poems and Liturgy for Ritual Use and Fire Circle Singing

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.*

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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 was river. Which was ocean. Which was comet.

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.

An Atheopagan Prayer (Susan Paterson)

Wondrous universe, all-that-is, of which I am an inseparable part,
I rejoice in you, and in my brief but expansive life.
I celebrate and respect my place among all things,
and among all peoples, human and non-human.
I pledge myself to the balance and protection of the natural world,
and to the pursuit of peace among its members.
I look ever forward to new knowledge, new experiences, and new creations,
and strive ever to be a positive influence for the world around me,
until the day comes that I make my last gift of myself,
matter and energy,
leaving a legacy of my actions in the world and in the hearts of those I love.

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 African-American spiritual)

All voices in unison
mp

The image shows a musical score for the song 'My Planet is a Rock'. It consists of three systems of music. The first system starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a tempo marking of 'mp'. The first staff is for the vocal line, with the instruction 'All voices in unison'. The second and third staves are for the piano accompaniment, with the right hand in the treble clef and the left hand in the bass clef. The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The third system concludes the piece with a final chord in the piano part.

My Planet 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.

Behold, There is Magic All Around Us

(Abbi Spinner McBride)

Voice

CHORUS: Be- hold there is mag- ic all a- round__ us, Be-

hold there is mag- ic all a- round__ us, Be- hold there is mag- ic all a-

round__ us, A- wak- en, re- joice and__ sing.

1. I am the Air a- round__ you, I am__ the breath of life with- in__ you,
2. I am the Fire a- round__ you, I am__ the spark of life with- in__ you,
3. I am the Water a- round__ you, I am__ the pulse of life with- in__ you,

I am__ the wind blow- ing through you, I am all that I am. Be-
I am__ the flame burn- ing through you, I am all that I am. Be-
I am__ the ocean flow- ing through you, I am all that I am. Be-

*Behold there is Magic all around us
Behold there is Magic all around us
Behold there is Magic all around us
Awaken, Rejoice and Sing!*

I am the Water around you
I am the pulse of life within you
I am the ocean flowing through you
I am all that I am

I am the Air around you
I am the breath of life within you
I am the wind blowing through you
I am all that I am

I am the Earth around you
I am the heartbeat within you
I am the ground below you
I am all that I am

I am the Fire around you
I am the spark of life within you
I am the flame burning through you
I am all that I am

Sweet Surrender (Sophia)

Voice

We are o-pen ing up in sweet sur render to the lu minous love light of - the Earth. We are
o-pen ing up in sweet sur-ren - der to the lu-min ous love light of - the Earth. We are
o - pe - n - ing, We are o - pe - n - ing. We are
o - pe - n - ing, We are o - pe - n - ing.

We are opening up in sweet surrender
To the luminous love light of the Earth
We are opening up in sweet surrender
To the luminous love light of the Earth
We are opening, we are opening
We are opening, we are opening

We are rising up like a Phoenix from the fire
Beloved kindred spread your wings and fly higher!
We are rising up like a Phoenix from the fire
Beloved kindred spread your wings and fly higher!
We are rising, we are rising
We are rising, we are rising

We Are the Rising Sun (Rayvn Stanfield)

We are the rising Sun
We are the change
We are the ones we've been waiting for
And we are dawning

We are the rising Sun
We are the change
We are the ones we've been waiting for
And we are dawning

A lovely chant to sing as the Sun is rising after an all-night ritual

Prepare Yourself (Abbi Spinner McBride)

Slowly

Voice

The musical score is written on seven staves of a treble clef in common time. The lyrics are: "Pre - pare your - self, O - - - pen the wa - y. Pre - pare your - self, O - - - - - pen the wa - y. Breathe now, be now, O - pen the way. Breathe now, be now, O - pen the wa - y." The score includes various musical notations such as rests, beams, and slurs to indicate the slow tempo and phrasing.

Pre - pare your - self, _____ Pre-

pare your - self, _____ O - - - - pen _____ the

wa - y. Pre - pare your - self, _____

Pre - pare your - self, _____ O - - - -

- - pen the wa - y. Breathe now, be now,

O - pen the way _____ Breathe now, be now,

O - pen the wa - y.

This makes a good song for a processional to the ritual site or fire circle

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.

Let the Way Be Open (Abbi Spinner McBride)

Musical notation for the song "Let the Way Be Open" by Abbi Spinner McBride. The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of two staves. The first staff starts at measure 1 and ends at measure 5. The second staff starts at measure 6 and ends at measure 10. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: Gmaj, Fmaj, Cmaj, Gmaj, Gmaj in the first staff; Cmaj, Dmaj, Gmaj in the second staff. The lyrics are: "Sing through my voice. Play through my hands. Let the way be open." The lyrics are placed below the notes.

Sing through my voice
Play through my hands
Let the way be open

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
Ruing, 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! (Melody: Battle Hymn of the Republic)

The image displays a musical score for the song 'Curiosity and Courage!', which uses the melody of the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic'. The score is written in treble clef, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The music is organized into six staves, each beginning with a measure number: 1, 3, 5, 7, 11, and 14. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and dynamic markings like accents and slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the sixth staff.

Galileo made 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 framed 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!

Free Your Mind (Abbi Spinner McBride)

Voice

The image shows four staves of musical notation for the song 'Free Your Mind'. Each staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The first staff contains the lyrics 'Free your mind from judge- ment,'. The second staff contains 'Free your heart from fear,'. The third staff contains 'Re- leas- ing ex- pec- ta- tions'. The fourth staff contains 'Bring- ing Pre- sence here'.

Free your mind from judge- ment,

Free your heart from fear,

Re- leas- ing ex- pec- ta- tions

Bring- ing Pre- sence here

Nothing Gonna Take My Love from Me (Wendy Colonna)

Melody: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsMMWKAj4>

Nothin's gonna take my love from me no no
Nothin's gonna take my love from me no no
Nothin's gonna take my love from me
Not fear, not greed, not jealousy
Nothin's gonna take my love from me no no

May my eyes be bright
May my heart be light
May my hands be filled with grace
When the shadows fall
Let me light them all
Let me smile in trouble's face

I Will Be Gentle With Myself (Ivo Dominguez, Jr.)

Voice

I will be gen-tle with my-self, I will love__ my-self,
I am a child of the u-ni-verse Be-ing born each__ mo-ment. I will be

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef with a common time signature. The first staff contains the lyrics 'I will be gen-tle with my-self, I will love__ my-self,'. The second staff contains the lyrics 'I am a child of the u-ni-verse Be-ing born each__ mo-ment. I will be'. The notation includes various note values, rests, and a repeat sign at the end of the second staff.

Prayer (Susan Paterson)

Wondrous universe, all-that-is, of which I am an inseparable part,
I rejoice in you, and in my brief but expansive life.
I celebrate and respect my place among all things,
and among all peoples, human and non-human.
I pledge myself to the balance and protection of the natural world,
and to the pursuit of peace among its members.
I look ever forward to new knowledge, new experiences, and new creations,
and strive ever to be a positive influence for the world around me,
until the day comes that I make my last gift of myself,
matter and energy,
leaving a legacy of my actions in the world and in the hearts of those I love.

Come and Hail the Holy Cosmos

(Alex Rhodes, lyrics; Melody
Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing)

The musical score is written for a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in the key of D major and 3/4 time. It consists of six systems of two staves each. The first four systems contain the main melody and accompaniment. The fifth system features a more active melodic line with sixteenth-note runs in the upper voice parts, while the lower parts provide harmonic support. The sixth system concludes the piece with a final cadence in all parts.

Come and Hail the Holy Cosmos,
As we stand beneath the stars,

Eyes of gas and noble fire,
Stare with awe back into ours.

Let the Cosmos see Her beauty,
 For through us She'll live and know,
 Just a moment of Her wonder,
 Before back to Her we'll go!
 Come and see the gorgeous Sunrise,
 After waking up at dawn,
 Hail the King of radiant power,
 Till our view of Him is gone!
 We're the sailors of the Star-wheel,
 Sailing 'round Him year by year,
 Holy Sun of awesome wonder,
 Wheel of fire, you bring us cheer!

Come and bask in Holy Moonbeams,
 Which illuminate the night,
 Sister of our living planet,
 The Moon reflects Holy Light! Watch
 Her harness mighty tidal waves, See Her
 phases, how they change!
 Holy Moon, we nightly praise You,
 As You guide us through the strange!

Come and learn that Earth is sacred,
 For She is our only home,
 Let us strive to help and heal Her,
 Precious world on which we roam,
 Praise the source of all life's wonders,
 Praise the Ancestor of All!
 Sacred center of devotion,
 Pale blue dot, so very small!

Come and greet these living beings,
 Which surround us every day,
 Little Ant and Ancient Oak Tree,
 And the Mushroom in the hay,
 Truly these are our own family,
 Though the lineage stretches wide,
 Could we gain gentler relations?
 We won't know until we've tried!

Come and Love the Human Family,
 All who live throughout the Earth!
 Every Child from every nation,
 Ought to know their sacred worth!
 Let us strive for global Justice,
 And wage Peace throughout the world,
 The we'll gaze upon our Cosmos,
 Sacred moment now unfurled!

I Am Love (Samina Oshun Pitrello)

Voice

I am love, I am lov- er, I am free- dom, I am free, I am
 part of the beau- ty that is all a- round me, My feet are firm u- pon the Earth, My
 hands raised to the sun, I am strong in my po- wer and with all I am One.

Of time and rivers flowing
The seasons make a song
And we who live beside them
Still try to sing along
Of rivers, fish, and us
And the season still a-coming
When she'll run clear again

So many homeless sailors
So many winds that blow
I asked the half blind scholars
Which way the currents flow
So cast your nets below
And then the moving waters
Will tell us all they know

The circles of the planets
The circles of the moon
The circles of the atoms
All play a joyous tune
And we who would join in
Can stand aside no longer
Now let us all begin

Boiling Up (The Complexity Song)



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 to 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.

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 shooting 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.

25

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

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

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 kindred let's go down,
Let's go down, come on down,
O kindred 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.

The Earth is Turning—a ritual round

ENGLISH FOLK SONG

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems of a treble and bass clef. The first system contains three measures: Measure 1 (labeled '1') has the lyrics 'Round and round the'; Measure 2 (labeled '2') has the lyrics 'earth is tur-ning'; Measure 3 (labeled '2') has the lyrics 'tur-ning al-ways'. The second system contains three measures: Measure 1 (labeled '3') has the lyrics 'in-to mor-ning'; Measure 2 (labeled '3') has the lyrics 'and from mor-ning'; Measure 3 (labeled '3') has the lyrics 'in-to night.' The score includes a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature of 4/4.

Round and round the Earth is turning
Turning always into morning
And from morning into night

More Than Enough—a ritual chant

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

(Repeat, with):

This life is more than enough

This fire is more than enough

These hearts are more than enough

There's No Sorrow in This Life—a song

There's no sorrow in this life
There's no sorrow can hold me down
There's no sorrow in this life
'Cause where I walk is sacred ground

There's no trouble in this life
There's no trouble can hold me down
There's no trouble in this life
'Cause where I walk is sacred ground.

(Repeat, with):

There's no worry
There's no grieving
etc.

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

Gimme a Godless Religion (humorous)

Give me that old time religion

US traditional

Gimme a godless religion
 Gimme a godless religion
 Gimme a godless religion
 That's 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.

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

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

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.

The Black Box *(poem)*

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 my heart be happy
May my mind be at ease
May my body be healthy
May I know peace today
May those I touch know kindness
May the Cosmos be honored
May the good Earth be revered
May my heart be grateful
May I act with integrity
May I know that I am loved,
That I deserve love.
That all deserve love.
May all I am and do, be of love.*

Last course of 13:

*My heart is happy
My mind is at ease
My body is healthy
Peace is with me today
I am kind to those around me
The Cosmos fills me with wonder
The good Earth is generous
My heart is grateful
I act with integrity
I am loved,
I deserve love,
All deserve love.
All I am and do is of love.*

(repeat)

Traditional and Popular Songs for Use in Rituals

Good ritual music usually shares some commonalities: it is easy for a group to learn, emotional in tone and often 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. African-American spiritual)

The Red-Tailed Hawk (Kate Wolf)

Science is Real (They Might Be Giants)

This Little Light of Mine (trad. spiritual)

What a Wonderful World (Louis Armstrong)

On the Sunny Side of the Street (Louis Armstrong)

Material for the Sabbaths: Midwinter

Axial Tilt (Tune: Silent Night) (humorous)

9

14

20

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)

Light is Returning (Charlie Murphy)

Voice

Light is re - tur - ni - - - ng,
 Let's keep it bur - ni - - - ng,
 One pla - net is tur - ni - - - ng,
 Ev - en though this is the dark - est hour,
 Cir - cles keep on the light path of hope a - round the sun,
 No one safe can ho - - - ld
 Make Earth mother our is cal - - - ur - - - ney
 Her Back Through the ren dawn. storm. home.

Light is returning
 Even though this is the darkest hour
 No one can hold back the dawn

Let's keep it burning
 Let's keep the light of hope alive
 Make safe our journey through the storm

One Planet is turning
 Circle on her path around the Sun
 Earth mother is calling her children home

Oh Darkest Night (tune: O Holy Night)

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and consists of five staves. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with guitar chord diagrams positioned above them. The chords are: C, F, C, G7, C, F, C, Em, B7, Em, G7, C.

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.

O Little Creatures of the Earth (Nels Olson)

(Melody: O Little Child of Bethlehem)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The second staff includes a first ending bracket labeled '1' and a second ending bracket labeled '2'. Below the second staff, the text 'W.L. solo (or unis.)' is written. The third staff continues the melody. The fourth staff includes a second ending bracket labeled '2' and the text '2x - parts' below it. The fifth staff includes a first ending bracket labeled '1 - Repeat to Verse' and a 'Drum fill' section. The sixth staff includes a first ending bracket labeled '1a' and the text 'more energy, SD groove' below it. Chord symbols are placed above the notes throughout the score, including Eb, Ab/Eb, Db/Eb, Eb, Eb/sus, Bb/D, Cm, Gm7, Fm7, Dm11, G7(b9), Cm9, C7(b5), Fm9, Eb/Bb, Fm7/Bb, and B/D#.

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 solstice 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 Apple Tree Wassail (English Traditional)

Melody at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vh7JbVKwJjk>

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!

The Brightening/Riverain

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season: *Riverain* Singin' In the Rain; Old Man River; Here Comes the Rain Again; Have You Ever Seen the Rain; *Brightening* Here Comes the Sun; Good Day Sunshine.

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.

Three Percent: 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 green trees and 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; I Can See Clearly Now;

Sumer Is Icumen In (medieval English round)

Sv-mer is i-cu-men in. Lhu-de sing cuc-cu. Gro-weþ sed and blo-weþ med and
springþ þe w - de nu. Sing cuc - cu. A - we ble-teþ af - ter lomb. lhouþ
af - ter cal - ue cu. Bul-luc ster-teþ. buc - ke uer-teþ mur - ie sing cuc-cu.
Cuc - cu cuc - cu wel sing-es þu cuc - cu ne swik þu na - uer nu.
Pes I: Sing cuc - cu nu. Sing cuc - cu.
Pes II: Sing cuc - cu. Sing cuc - cu nu.

Translation:

Summer is a-coming in, loudly sing cuckoo
Blows the seed and grow the meads and springs the wood anew
Sing cuckoo!
Ewe bleats after lamb, lows after calf the cow
Bullocks start and bucks vert*
Merry sing cuckoo!
Cuckoo, cuckoo, well sing you cuckoo
Never stop now

*Verting refers to the growth of furry “velvet” on the new horns of the bucks. Or it could mean farting. There is debate.

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; Let the Sunshine In;

A Suburban Midsummer Carol (Tune: Deck the Halls) (humorous)



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/Summer's End

Traditional/Popular songs usable for Atheopagan rituals for this season: 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.

The Barley Mow

(English traditional)

The musical score is written for two voices and guitar. It consists of 15 measures. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The lyrics are: "Here's good luck to the quart pot. Good luck to the bar - ley mow. Jol - ly good luck to the quart pot. Good luck to the bar - ley mow. It's the quart pot, pint pot, half a pint, gill pot, half a gill, quar ter gill, nip per kin, and the brown bowl. Here's good luck, good luck, good luck to the bar - ley mow! Mow, mow, mow!"

Here's good luck to the quart pot

Good luck to the Barley Mow

Jolly good luck to the quart pot

Good luck to the Barley Mow

Here's the quart pot, pint pot, half a pint, gill pot, half a gill, quarter gill, nipperkin and the brown bowl

Here's good luck, good luck to the Barley Mow!

Add: the half gallon, gallon, hogshead, half-barrel, barrel, drayer, brewer, miller, miller's daughter, company

John Barleycorn Must Die

(English Traditional)

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It begins with a guitar introduction in the key of G major, with chords A, G, D, and Em. The first line of music is labeled '(Guitar)'. The second line shows two first endings: the first ending leads to the start of the first verse, and the second ending leads to the start of the second verse. The first verse lyrics are: '1. There were three men came out of the west, their fortunes for to try. And these three men made a solemn vow: John Barleycorn must die. They've plowed, they've sown, they've harrowed him in, threw clods up on his head. And these three men made a solemn vow:'. The second verse lyrics are: '2. 3. 4. 5. See additional lyrics'. The score includes various guitar chords such as G, D, Em, A, G, D, Em, G, D/F#, Em, G, A, B^{sus}, B, B^{sus}, B, Am/E, Em, G, D, and Am. A note at the bottom states: '* Opt. Guitar capo 7th fret, and play in "D".'

There were three men came out of the West
 Their fortunes for to try.
 And these three men made a solemn bow
 John Barleycorn must die.
 They've ploughed, they've sown, they've harrowed him in
 Thrown clods upon his head
 And these three men made a solemn vow
 John Barleycorn was dead.
 They've let him lie for a very long time
 Till the rains from heaven did fall
 And little Sir John sprung up his head
 And so amazed them all

They've let him stand till Midsummer's Day
Till he looked both pale and wan
And little Sir John's grown a long, long beard
And so become a man

They've hired men with the scythes so sharp
To cut him off at the knee
They've rolled him and tied him by the way
Serving him most barbarously
They've hired men with the sharp pitchforks
Who pricked him to the heart
And the loader he has served him worse than that
For he's bound him to the cart

They've wheeled him around and around the field
Till they came unto a barn
And there they made a solemn oath
On poor John Barleycorn
They've hired men with the crab-tree sticks
To cut him skin from bone
And the miller he has served him worse than that
For he's ground him between two stones

And little Sir John and the nut-brown bowl
And his brandy in the glass;
And little Sir John and the nut-brown bowl
Proved the strongest man at last
The huntsman, he can't hunt the fox
Nor so boldly to blow his horn
And the tinker he can't mend kettle nor pot
Without a little Barleycorn

Harvest

Miri It Is While Sumer Ilast

(The earliest surviving English secular song—c. 1225)

Mi-ri it is whi-le su-mer i- last_ with fu-ghe-les song oc nu ne- -heth win- -des
bla-st and we- -der strong E- i e _ -i what this niht_ is long And_ i _ -ch with wel
mi- -chel wrong so- -regh and mu-r n and_ fast

Miri is it while sumer ilast with fugheles song

Oc nu neheth windes blast and weder strong

Ei-ei what this nicht is long

And ich with wel Michel wrong

Sorregh and murn and fast

Translation:

Merry it is while summer lasts with birds' song
but now, near, the winds blast
and the weather is strong
Oh, oh, I exclaim, this night is long
And I also am done much wrong.
Sorrow and mourn and starve.

Joan Zinfandel Must Die (Mark Green)

A little filk for the grape harvest, to the tune of *John Barleycorn Must Die*

There were three menne of the West County, their fortunes for to trye
And these three menne swore upon an Oaken Tree
Joan Zinfandel must dye
They've planted, trellised, and shorne her limbs
And left her bare abed
And these three menne swore a solemn vow
Joan Zinfandel was ded.

They let her lye for a very long time, 'til the rains from hev'n did fall
And little Dame Joan sprouted out bright buds, and so amazed them all
They've let her stand 'til Harvest Day 'til her arms were greene as grass
And little Dame Joan's borne some full round fruit: a fulsome, ripened lass

They've hired menne with their knives so sharp to cut her fruit from her arms
They threwe her into a wagon then, and rolled her unto the barn
They brought her to the crushing floor where they crushed her to a mash,
Squeezed her blood into fermenters, and added yeast: a dash.

They racked her to a barrel of oak, where dark and coolness dwell
And there they made a solemn oath on poor Joan Zinfandel
They've hired men to load her high with mighty lifts of forke
And the bottler he has served her worse than that
For he's bound her behind a cork.

And little Dame Joan in the crystal cup and she's brandy in the glass
And little Dame Joan and the crystal cup proved the bravest lass at last
The good folk they can't cook nor serve, nor live this life so well
And the merchant he can't seal deal nor debt without a little Zinfandel

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.

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.

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

Though this neet thou art not alive
Every neet and all
By tales and memories shalt thou survive
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.

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 Supper", wherein a place is set for the dead.

This May Be the Last Time—African-American spiritual

♩ = 30 (A light, steady foot tap throughout)

Soprano
 This may be the last time... This may be the

Alto
 This may be the last time... This may be the

Tenor
 This may be the last time... This may be the

Bass
 This may be the last time... This may be the

Piano
 This may be the last time... This may be the

4
 S. last time chil - dren.* This may be the last time... It
 A. last time chil - dren.* This may be the last time... It
 T. last time chil - dren.* This may be the last time... It
 B. last time chil - dren.* This may be the last time... Well it

*close to the n

Remainder of music on next page

Subsequent verses:

May be the last time we sing together, dance together, join together, etc.

T. Solo

1. *p* Well it

2. *p* may be the last time, I don't know. I don't know.

p may be the last time, I don't know... I don't know...

p may be the last time, I don't know... I don't know...

p may be the last time, I don't know... Well I don't know... *mf*

1. *p* *mf*

2. *p* *mf*

10

T. Solo

may be the last time we all walk to - ge - ther. (talk)

mf May be the last time,

mf May be the last time,

mf May be the last time,

mf May be the last time,

mf May be the last time,

mf

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.