

Quand les Occidentaux se mettent à l'autel des ancêtres **ANCESTORS ALTAR**

By Amanda

<http://amanda-athome.blogspot.com/>

This year has brought many changes for our family (as every year does). With the ebb and flow of friends in and out of our community, the practice of Druidry has slowly come trickling into our lives in a time when finding a name for years of feelings, beliefs and emotions is widely welcomed.

Both Matt and I have been practicing much of this nature based religion without realizing it. Our lives are very much connected to the seasons and the nature surrounding us and we have really noticed it since we bought our little farm in 2008.

I have always been a bit leery of religion, but felt a need for some spirituality. Since my mother's death in 2007 I have had the desire to make an altar for her. Something small with a few items that she loved, a candle or two and some flowers. Occasionally when trying to fall asleep at night I would think about this altar in my head. What it would look like and where I would put it. I've never made one and don't know why.



October 31 and November 1st marks the Druid holiday of Samhain (Sow-in). It is a time to recognize and honor ancestors in your family. Some make altars, some attend rituals, some just acknowledge this within. I chose to do all three.



Last weekend I attended a Samhain ritual put on by our local ADF Druid group, Cedarsong Grove. Though not my first ritual with this wonderful group of people, it was by far, the most powerful for me. Yesterday, the boys and I made an ancestors altar. Last night we lit candles inviting our ancestors spirits to come home, as this time of year when the dark takes over the light and the human world is the closest to the spirit world. I know this sounds like a bunch of hokey crap and there are probably a number of you rolling your eyes at the thought of a spirit world and such.

However, I invite you to make an altar for your ancestors in a visible place in your home. Put photographs of them surrounded by items that they loved or owned and offer them the foods and drink they loved. Walk by this altar every day, look at them and think about them. Light candles for them at night.

Do this for even a couple of days and then be honest with yourself and disregard what others think and ask yourself if you feel closer to your dead loved ones than you did a few days before. I see no harm in this ritual. I needed this. I needed to feel close to my dead, loved ones and I needed my children to feel that too. And we are.

Sharing our family stories and memories, whether they are from when Matt and I were young children or from last week, has been really good for our minds, bodies and souls. Arlo seems to be most interested in all the process and discussion. I am excited for my sister to see it and I am happy to be able to share with my family all over the country through image. I'd like to keep the altar for most of the month of November and remove it just as Thanksgiving arrives.

In the mean time, if you are in the neighbourhood, please come and have a look, add something or not.

