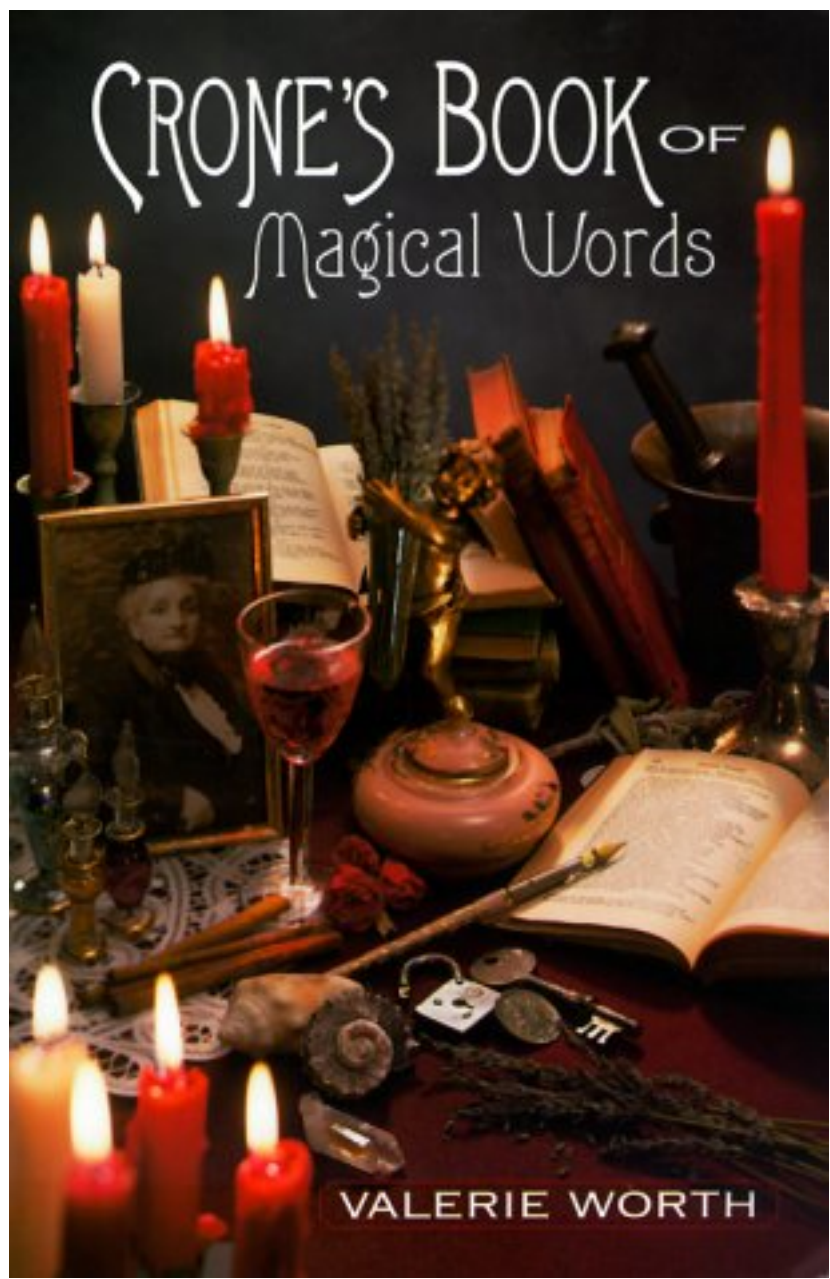


# CRONE'S BOOK OF Magical Words



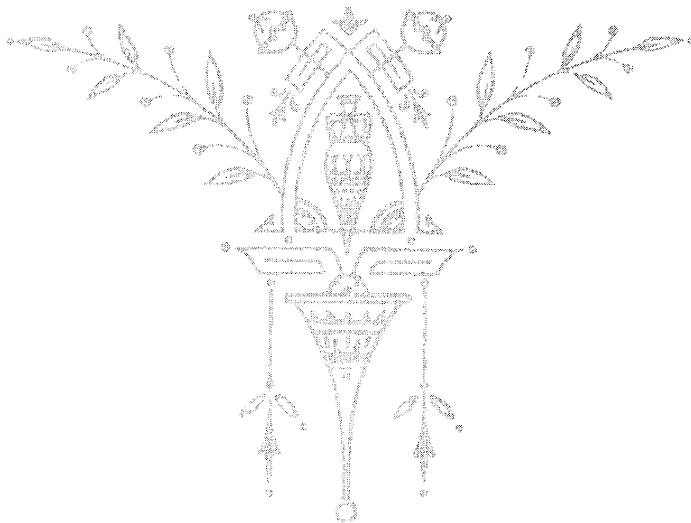
VALERIE WORTH

## About the Author

Valerie Worth was a prolific writer whose work included numerous books of children's poetry and fiction for both young people and adults. In 1991, the National Council of Teachers of English honored her with their Poetry Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children. Her poems are vivid observations of the quiet rumblings of everyday objects. In all her writing, the careful attention to rhythm and sound and her striking images and metaphors make for engaging reading.

Valerie Worth was born in Philadelphia, and as a child she lived in Pennsylvania, Florida, and India. She attended Swarthmore College and graduated in 1955. Afterward, she settled in Clinton, New York, and continued her writing. She had many other interests, including astronomy, gardening, and meditation. Valerie Worth died in 1994. She is survived by her husband, George Bahlke, and three children.





# Crone's Book of Magical Words

*Valerie Worth*

Llewellyn Publications  
Woodbury, Minnesota



# Crone's Book of Magical Words

White as an eggshell,  
White as a bone,  
White as chalk

Or milk or the moon,  
Is the written word  
Of the ancient Crone,  
Who works by wind,  
Sun, water, and stone.

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## Other Books by Valerie Worth

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(Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

*Curliques: The Fortunes of Two Pug Dogs*, 1980

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

*Gypsy Gold*, 1983

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

*Fox Hill*, 1986

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

*Small Poems Again*, 1986

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

*All the Small Poems*, 1987

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

*At Christmas Time*, 1992

(Harper Collins)

*All the Small Poems and Fourteen More*, 1994

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux)




*The Crone's Book of Charms & Spells*, 1998

(Llewellyn Publications)

## A Note from George Bahlke

Valerie Worth wrote these spells out of her great interest in the history of magic and her love of poetry. In rereading them, I have admired their powerful evocation of the spirit inherent in all occult wisdom. At the same time, readers should be aware that some of the charms, among them “To Afflict Another’s Garden,” “To Curse an Enemy,” “To Decrease Another’s Power,” and “A Mirror Cipher for Revenge,” are imitations of older magic; they were composed to be read, not practiced. Valerie would have been distressed if any of these charms were to bring harm to anyone; indeed, she thought poetry and magic should bring us joy and a sense of celebration, for her poetry itself was a ritual, a ritual she endeavored to express adequately and appropriately to the subject of the charm or poem she was working on.

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# Preface

Magic is the product of human intelligence; still dependent on this intelligence, it does not wither away. The old mysteries have only slightly changed, though humankind's regard for them and the means of dealing with them shift from age to age. The cosmos remains as significant and inscrutable as it ever was—birth, love, and death are no less poignant and inexorable; sorrow, pain, fear, joy, hope, and desire manifest themselves to the modern sensibilities essentially as they did to the primitive senses.

Today we are more in peril as a species than ever before; our ideas of salvation center on material and political remedy, while we are in awe of our works to the point that we must seek finally to limit them. These things are true to such a degree that we make a

faith of reason; still, beneath the intellectual control that we assert run the same anarchies, the same primitive, or psychological, reactions to our environment that led first men to create irrational weapons for dealing with irrational phenomena. There have been only minor changes in these phenomena during the instant of human existence on our planet.

Religion has been an elaboration of such weapons, but religion now becomes more reasonable and less effective as it moves closer to the ethical and social problems of our society; stripped of its earlier magic, it abandons us psychologically. Looking to psychology itself, we find essentially the same meagerness, the same strictures upon the imagination. Hoping for a substitute in art, we meet again only a mirror of that rational culture that we have created but whose creations, ultimately, we are not. How, then, shall we confront our demons and our angels? How shall we express what we are, who are more than helpless but less than omnipotent?

It can only seem that we do insist on the unreasonable in the face of all reason; we do pursue, perhaps with laughter or with grimaces, but still pursue, impulses toward the stars of the astrologers, the candle burnings of the elder priests, the ancient magician's cryptic circles, and in such ways, the relationship

between our own involuntary visions and that which is beyond mere routine as a solution to chaos.

This book arises from certain premises: that words themselves are a means to emotional control over exterior phenomena: that magic today is the same weapon that it was, even though we lay hands on it in a new spirit, even though we are uncertain of its uses and wield it unwittingly or even unwillingly; that all rituals, ancient and new, spring from the same vision of a possible order to life, an order that heals and reconciles effectively by its very roots in mental process. The rituals, or spells, or poems—and these names can all stand for the same thing—that are set down here deal with aspects of experience at once too simple and too complex for any other approach.

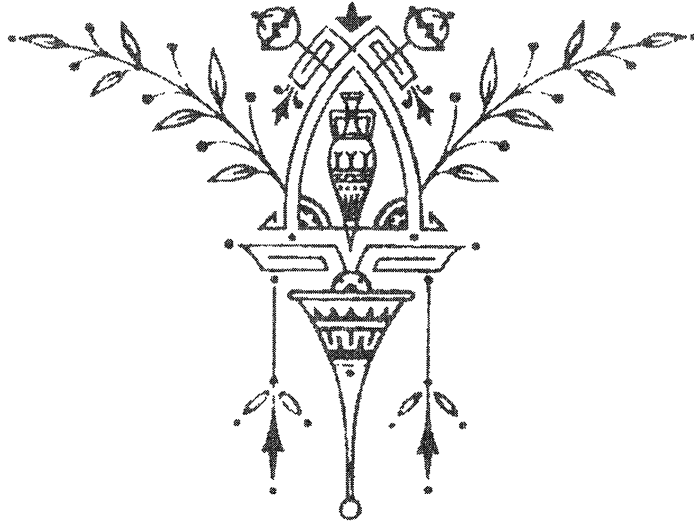
There is a traditional basis for many of these spells; there is a psychological basis for all of them. The past is so close to the present in this realm that it is unnecessary to distinguish between them, but possibilities for dealing with experience by appropriate verbal inventions are no fewer now, when drawn out of the newly convoluted psyche, than when they sprang from the primitive wrinkled brow. The rituals here, whether they are to be only imagined, or to be contemplated, or actually to be performed, are ultimately no more and no less than those of the ancients: rituals indeed, and

therefore means of shaping reality according to the human will.

Whether they are effective or not is a matter of individual circumstance and discovery; but the human will is no petty toy, and the mind has already found itself in possession of forces that are beyond category and analysis. To attempt, through them, to control experience at all is at least to confront those forces and, perhaps, even, to draw upon them.

*Cornwall, Vermont*  
1969

# The Spirit







## For Controlling the Senses

Draw the circle with red chalk,  
Twice three feet from side to side;  
Empower it, inscribe it thus:



Set beyond the outer edge  
In five directions, each of these:  
A lighted candle,  
A ticking clock,  
Incense burning,  
A velvet mantle,  
A goblet of wine.  
Sprinkle within the double rim.

Drops of vinegar, grains of salt;  
Enter the circle, wearing white,  
Stand in the center, on the Sun;  
Say these lines, with eyelids shut:

*I am these five  
Yet greater still;  
I am as others  
Yet unlike all;  
While I spend  
I am not consumed—  
Let them come in  
And be assumed,  
But ever to serve,  
Never to rule.*

Gather the symbols from their places,  
Set them upon the Planets' signs;  
Treat them with honor, yet with strength:  
Blow out the candle,  
Pick up the clock,  
Smother the incense,  
Put on the mantle,  
Drink the wine—  
Step from the circle, walk from the room;  
Do not return until next day's noon.

## An Ablution for the New Year

New time demands new spirit; this purification is required: prepare a basin of snow, or of clear water iced, and scatter over it earth dried in the sun to a fine dust. The hands should then be immersed and chilled, the brow anointed and cooled, and these words said:

*Substance wasted, substance spoiled, now be redeemed:  
seeing thyself in substance undefiled, forming thyself anew  
from this frail substance gathered and revived.*

Thus should it be done at morning, and again at evening: to charge the original chaste intellect, the innocent purpose failed.

## To Dispel Sorrow

When world and fate

Conspire to mark

Your life with lines

And characters dark,

Mold a tablet

Of earth or clay,

Write on it all

You would cast away—

All you regret,

All that you bear,

All that afflicts you,

All that you fear—

Break it and bury it

In the ground,

Saying this charm

To heal the wound:

*Sorrow be dust*

*And dust dissolve:*

*Let all my grief*

*Go into this grave.*

## Against Enemies or Evil

Hang an ash bough  
Over your door,  
Fill your pockets  
With iron nails,  
Carry always  
The mullein leaf,  
But say these words  
Against the worst:

*I stand  
In circles  
Of light  
That nothing  
May cross.*

## To Escape Madness at the Full Moon

Follow these steps  
To guard your wits  
When the round Moon rises,  
The gray Moon gazes,  
The cold Moon crazes,  
The mad Moon amazes:  
Shroud all mirrors,  
Curtain all windows,  
Shut every door,  
Cover your hair,  
Wind red yarn  
About your arm  
And knot it thrice  
While saying this:

*LUNA LUSCA,  
LUPA LURIDA,  
LANA LIVIDA,  
LAC LAPIDIA:  
NON LATRO  
SED LATEO.*

## A Magical Inscription for Endurance

To stand like granite,  
Stout as the planet,  
Mark on a rock  
With a stick of chalk:



Though chalk is frail  
And cannot prevail,  
You shall be firm  
As crystal or stone.



## A Sage Tea for the Mind

The gray-leaved sage  
Stands fresh and fine  
When even trees  
Fall prey to time;  
Pluck its growth,  
Brew an infusion  
Against all darkness  
And confusion;  
Drink its strength,  
With these words:

*Sage make green  
The winter rain:  
Charm the demon  
From my brain.*

## To Become Invisible

Fern seed  
In your pocket  
Will hide you  
From some,  
But to be free  
Of everyone,  
You must go away  
Where water lies  
Quiet, and look  
To find your face—  
Then scatter  
The seeds across  
Your image  
Until  
It departs.

## To Embrace Solitude

Go into your house  
And fasten the windows,  
Block the chimneys,  
Lock the doors;  
Stop up the keyholes,  
Draw the curtains,  
Say these words  
To all betrayers:

*I am my own today,  
Nor any other shall steal me away.*

Drink to your strength  
A glass of wine,  
Then sit three hours  
In silence, alone,  
Before you go forth again.

## To Avert Temptation

If the demon approaches  
And gently beseeches  
Your custom and favor,  
And offers you silver  
Or gold for your weakness,  
Or feasts of great sweetness,  
Or beauty past wasting,  
Or love everlasting,  
Or pleasures unending,  
To buy your unbending,  
Cut from a tangle  
Of thorns a long bramble,  
Twist it around  
To a ring on the ground,  
Pretend you would enter,  
Then spit in its center,  
And turn back his harm  
By repeating this charm:

*DUMUS DIABOLO!*  
*ILLIGO ILLICO!*

## To Reject the Evil Self

The guilt that rests upon your head,  
The evil stain upon your hand,  
May be removed: go forth and cast  
Your shadow dark upon the land—  
Pierce the image with a stake  
And drive it with a heavy stone;  
Let both weapons stay to mark  
The deed you shed, the self you scorn.

## For an Absolution

In a shaded room  
Burn candles three  
Whose wax is black  
As ebony;  
Let incense cloud  
And thicken the air,  
Then write these words  
Against despair:

*DOLOR FUMOSUS  
ANIMUS ATRATUS  
IN LUCTU SUM  
SIGNO SIGNUM*

Burn the paper  
And powder its ash  
In a shallow bowl  
Of polished brass;  
Cover your hands  
With this dark dust—  
Your past will be cleansed,  
Your future blessed.

## To Be Rid of Anger

If the house is infected by a rage that will not be appeased, whether yours or another's, you must find a toad in the garden and shut him up in a wicker basket. Take this to where the afflicted sleeps and set it beneath his bed, letting it remain there through a whole night. In the morning draw the basket out, bear it to a cross-roads, and release the toad with these words:

*Hence, toad,  
Take thy road,  
Get thee gone  
And all thy bane;  
Carry this anger  
To a stranger,  
Bring it never  
Home again.*



## To Sweeten Another's Disposition

Thus turn his scorn to kindest love:  
Steal from him the left-hand glove;  
    With shining sugar fill it full  
    And tie it, that it may not spill,  
With satin ribbons, blue and green;  
Then, when the deed may pass unseen,  
    Hide it underneath his pillow—  
He shall sleep, and melt, and mellow.

## To Enchant an Apple

Pick your apple  
When the Moon  
Has waned three days;  
Breathe upon  
Its green cheek,  
Rub it with  
A scarlet cloth,  
Saying:

*Fire sweet  
And fire red,  
Warm the heart  
And turn the head*

Kiss the red half,  
Put it later  
In another's hand—  
Who holds it  
Shall weaken,  
Who eats it  
Shall be yours.

## A Love Potion

For a potion to excite another's affections, take a gill of good red wine and add to it these: a teaspoonful each of rosemary leaves, of anise seed, of cloves, of clear honey, and of orange rind, with a pinch of ground cumin and three green leaves from the rose geranium. Mix them in a saucepan over the fire and bring all to boiling, then gently stir and simmer them while you slowly count to one hundred. Remove the pan to a cool place until its contents cease to steam; then strain them through a fine sieve, and return the liquid to heat again upon the fire. When sweet vapors rise, pour the potion into a cup and deliver it to the one whose love you would sweeten and warm; it shall not fail, unless performed by one whose heart and household keep slatternly habits.

## To Win Another's Love

Open a bird that is soon to be roasted,  
Draw from its body the shining heart,  
Let it with drops of blood be basted,  
Seethe it in wine and set it apart;  
When it is cool, in your left hand take it;  
Squeezing it tight as your fingers can,  
Say these words to warm it and wake it,  
So to possess any maiden or man:

*My fire is thine,  
Thy blood my wine:  
Thy love, my dove,  
Must soon be mine.*

Halve, with the blade of a silver knife,  
Its yielding flesh, delicious and sweet,  
Then taste it, munch it, swallow its life—  
Next to your own that heart shall beat.

## A Fire Spell for Love

Take twelve candles, white and tall,  
Dress them with sweet-scented oil,  
Set them on a table spread  
With velvet cloth of ruby red  
To form a figure of three sides;  
Light their wicks, then say these words:

*Fire, spirit of the Sun,  
Wax, thou melting flesh of Earth,  
Prove this work that I have done,  
Bring me love, and beggar death:  
Let me be myself consumed  
Not by darkness but by light,  
Warmth, not cold, until I spend  
My final flame against the night.*

Watch the candles downward burn,  
In their sockets let them drown;  
Give the wick-ends to that one  
Whose love must be your Earth and Sun.

## To Enchant a Ring for Marrying

Buy a ring of common metal,  
Plain and narrow, colored gold,  
To fit the wedding finger well;  
Drop it in a vessel filled  
Half with wine and half with water,  
Add one oak leaf, one of willow,  
Two of bay and two of grass,  
And the name of whom you love  
Written on a silver paper;  
Keep the vessel covered tight  
Near a window, in the sun,  
From crescent Moon until the full—  
Then rub the ring and wear it hidden  
On a string around your neck;  
But never tell the name you seek  
Until you take it for your own.

## A Charm to Send in the Name of Love

Fold a white paper  
In half three times,  
On one of the squares  
Inscribe this rhyme,  
In ink like blood  
Or crimson wine:

*Drawn from my hand  
These words run blood  
Or wine, not ink,  
Thy lip to woo:  
So may they spend  
My heart's sweet flood,  
Bidding thee drink  
The love I brew.*

Kiss it, address it,  
And send it away,  
But keep your name secret  
A year and a day.

## To Recall One Who Is Unfaithful

Who turns from you shall yet be bound  
 If signs of him may still be found  
 Within your house—one hair or thread,  
 Fragment or color, scent or word,  
 Or any thing that bears his touch—  
 This spell turns little into much:  
 Seal the relic in a box  
 With seven strings tied round for locks,  
 Each one tight-knotted seven times:  
 Then set on it these seven signs:

Ψ A K ∞ X Ω ⚡

Hide it in darkness, out of sight,  
 Until the next Moon's seventh night,  
 Then send it to the one you seek—  
 He must return within a week.



## To Favor a Marriage

Let two who are wed  
Go into an open meadow  
Before the grass is harvested:  
Each must gather  
As much of the living hay  
As his own left hand can hold;  
Then in the field they shall stay  
And weave of the stalks two figures—  
The woman shall fashion a woman,  
And the man shall fashion a man,  
And together these shall be wound  
With a golden stem of grass,  
Around and around  
And knotted at last.  
Then they shall set these images  
Deep in the ground,  
To be bedded and covered with earth,  
Hidden by grass that is growing still;  
And the couple shall stand  
Facing each other and say:  
*We are grown and gathered and bound  
And the binding is well;  
We are fixed at the hip and the hand  
And the head and the heel;*

*We are planted beneath the land,  
Forever to wheel  
As the Earth and the Sun are wound  
On a golden reel,  
As the ripening grasses stand  
And pale and fall.*

## For Looking into Mirrors

Look to the left,  
Look to the right,  
Look in the glass  
And say these lines:

*Quicksilver*  
*Mirror silver*  
*Show me*  
*My true face.*

Look at the eyes:  
If their black centers  
Be shrunk and small,  
The mirror lies.

## To Be Said When Passing a Cemetery

Knit your fingers,  
Hold your breath,  
Say to yourself  
This verse for death:

*Keeper of bones  
I know thy face,  
But I shall yet  
Outstrip thy pace.*

To Spin Thread into Words  
(an Exercise in Mourning)

Fasten the lock,  
Stop the clock,  
Sit alone  
In a silent room;  
Speak aloud  
To fashion a shroud  
And warm the dead  
With words of THREAD:

*HEAR THE HART  
TREAD THE EARTH,  
HEAR THE DART  
EAT THE HERD,  
HEAR THE RAT  
TEAR THE HEAD—  
AH DEAR HEART,  
DARE DEATH!*

## To Write a Letter to the Beloved Dead

In this manner the letter must be written: first, the ink prepared from soot mixed with pale wine; next, the pen made, shaped from a quill never before cut; then, the paper arranged on a table between two black candles. At the top of the paper this inscription should be set:

*See now, thou who are mourned, the nature of this mourning: as thou knowest even now my sorrow, so on this paper do I doubly affirm it. I write thee my heart here, for thy sight and mine only—that we may be bound by such silent words even better than when our words were spoken. Receive, then, this document as sign and token of my commitment: not to forget thee, nor to cease mourning for thee, until my own life shall be ended.*

Write down then the essence of your grief, the substance of your devotion, and such aspects of memory as you would fix forever. When this has been accomplished, fold the paper thrice and seal it, along with sweet herbs, in a small box which should then be buried in the ground, or burned in a fire of fragrant wood. The letter shall thus be received.

# The World





10/10/10



## To Be Safe from Fires

In wet woods by water  
Find the shy salamander,  
Catch him in a cage of willows woven,  
Bring him home in haste,  
Set him down beside the hearth  
While four sallow sticks, crossed, shall burn;  
Then cast water from a pitcher upon them,  
And when they are dead  
Say this, to bind the protection:

*Salamander, salamander*

*Turn fire to water*

*Under this house*

*And over this house.*

Carry his cage through every room,  
Then let him out and set him free  
Among the lowest foundation stones standing,  
There to hide and be safe  
And keep you well forever.

## To Protect a Garden from Pests . . .

Mix in a vessel of rusted iron  
 Oils of camphor and wintergreen,  
 Oil of spearmint, oil of clove,  
 A spoonful of blood and a glass of wine;  
 Pour them about the threatened ground;  
 Then mark in red on a flag of white  
 This charge, that puts all foes to flight:

*NEPENTHE NEPENTHE  
 DISTINE DEFENDE*

Fix this banner upon a pole  
 Driven deep in the garden soil—  
 Thus it will banish beast or fowl.

## and Against Weeds in the Garden

Under a Waning Moon, break one leaf from the garden's tallest weed; crush it with your teeth, spit the fragments out upon the earth, and say,

*MALUM DESPUO  
 HOSTEM VENENO  
 CAEDO CAEDO*

Cut the stalk off short with a silver knife; spread a handful of salt above the hidden root. All the garden bears witness to this curse, and its enemies must soon withdraw.

## To Afflict Another's Garden

That garden so swollen  
With prizes and pride  
May find its wealth stolen,  
Its boasting belied:  
There, from your own,  
Send failure and blight  
By anointing a stone  
With a paste of these eight—  
The aphid, the snail,  
The slug and the beetle,  
The rust and the gall,  
The mildew, the spittle—  
All smashed in a mortar  
And stirred to a slime,  
Then dried into a powder  
And moistened with brine.  
Hold hidden the curse  
In your hand when you call  
Then think of this verse  
While you let the stone fall:

*Proud flowers here  
Grow sick and sere;  
Foul pests descend,  
This Eden end.*

## To Send Away Mice and Rats

Where the rat or mouse  
Has insulted your house  
With scrabbling paw  
And ruinous jaw,  
You must sprinkle with blood  
The path he has trod,  
Then mark on his walk  
These words, in chalk:

*MUS, MUS,*

*MONEO:*

*MUNIO*

*MORDEO*

*MUTILO.*

So threaten his life  
And bring him to grief.

## To Treat a Leaking House

If humid stain  
Of snow or rain  
On ceiling or wall  
Lets swell and fall  
The watery drop,  
Catch in a cup  
That sorry brew,  
Set it to stew  
Beside the fire  
With garnish dire:  
Dead fly,  
Potato eye,  
Hair long,  
Mustard strong,  
Milk sour,  
Dusty flour.  
Stir to a paste  
This evil waste,  
Carry it there,  
The flaw to dare,  
Saying these lines:

*Now heal, and let  
Thy weakness wane,  
Let water seek  
Its proper drain.  
Or take this plaster  
For thy pain.*

If it remains,  
Smother the spot  
With a poultice thick—  
Then leave it there  
For all of an hour.

## Against the Domestic Demons

All treasures that in your house are found  
Are only demons that dance you round;  
Their shapes like plates and lamps and chairs  
Snatch at your brain and catch it in snares;  
If you would loose the talons that tease,  
And live by spirits more worthy than these,  
Write upon leather, ancient and brown,  
The names of all that grapple you down—  
The Meissen plates, the lamp of Towle,  
The Sheraton chairs, the Sevres bowl,  
The carpet, the curtains, the papered wall,  
The spoons and the goblets—goblins all,  
And countless others that take their pleasure  
Drinking your soul for their daily measure;  
Cast their names in a raging fire;  
Say these words, your strength to inspire:

*Who winds me about  
Go out, go out!  
When I turn round  
I soon shall find  
Mere dust and ash,  
Poor trappings and trash,  
All rigid and dead,  
Their powers fled.*

An Inscription to Be Written  
on a Windowpane . . .

*Darkness lies  
Where it is born,  
But Sun flies  
To light this room.*

and over a Doorway

*Who comes to me I keep,  
Who goes from me I free  
Yet against all I stand  
Who carry not my key.*



## For Reading a Magical Word Square

Write these words on paper:

*TREE*

*ROAD*

*EAVE*

*EDEN*

Read from west to east

And north to south,

Then speak aloud:

*TREE of knowledge,*

*ROAD of pain,*

*EAVE of home,*

*EDEN again.*

If you solve this riddle

Burn the paper on your hearth:

It will keep the house

From sorrow, all year long.

## For Pleasing the Household Spirits

From a golden broom pluck five long straws,  
 Light them as tapers at the fire;  
 Carry them through the house, and cause  
 Their subtle smoke to thicken the air—  
 Then summon good fortune with this spell:

*Wraiths of the house,  
 Take heart and live:  
 To every chamber  
 This light I give,  
 To every corner  
 This breath I send—  
 Approve and favor  
 My willing hand*

If you would please them doubly well,  
 Sprinkle the floor with leaves of tea  
 And orris powder and grains of salt—  
 Then sweep with the broom, until you free  
 Each crack and crevice from speck or fault.

## For Rejecting Fine Clothing

Put on garments never worn,  
Spread on the floor a sheet untorn,  
Stand in its center, light a match:  
While it burns, be still and watch,  
Then blow it out and scorn its fate,  
Putting all vanity to flight:

*The flame is gone,  
Its life is flown;  
Nothing remains  
But ash and bone:  
If noble coverings  
Share my dust,  
Why shall I love  
What must be lost?  
Lust of the loom  
Go forth, begone!  
I stand, I burn,  
I wear the Sun!*

Rend your clothing, rip the sheet,  
Tread them beneath your naked feet;  
Bathe anew, and wear thereafter  
Weeds befitting your mortal fever.

## To Keep Beauty from Fading

When all your face appears most fair,  
 When comets and meteors gild your hair,  
 And in your eyes the Moon and sun  
 Contest, surrender, and burn as one,  
 When ivory Venus smoothes your brow,  
 And Mars recurves your lips' red bow,  
 Make haste to utter this binding verse  
 And hold the stars on their kindest course:

*Figures of fire  
 That shift and change,  
 Planets that move  
 By heaven's hinge,  
 Be signed and fixed  
 Forever here,  
 And close my image  
 Within thy sphere.*

Measure a yard of golden string,  
 Loose from your fingers let it swing,  
 Then tie it in thirteen sturdy knots—  
 Hide it among your scents and pots.

## To Turn the Hair Long and Golden

To spin brown straw,  
Black weeds, red hay,  
    Into a stream  
    Of golden threads  
That wind from the head  
Like enchanted waters,  
    Rushing in torrents  
    Over the shoulders,  
    Curling to flowers  
    About the feet:  
Gather from meadows  
    Still unmown  
    All yellow bloom  
That fits the season—  
*Goat's-beard, mustard,*  
    *Goldenrod, trefoil,*  
    *Buttercup, dandelion,*  
    *King Devil, cinquefoil.*  
Chop them fine  
And crush them down  
    Within a cauldron,  
    Boil in seven  
    Quarts of rain  
From noon to sunset;  
    Cool and strain  
Then rinse the hair  
    For seven days  
    In this gold wine.

## To Keep the Hair from Falling

At sunrise, measure a spoonful each  
And mix in a saucepan all of these:

Thread of saffron,  
Anise seed,  
Root of ginger,  
Apple wine,  
Clover nectar,  
Cinnamon bark,  
Oil of olives,  
Leaves of pine.

Stir them, simmer them, saying this:

*Spirits, conjure  
Phoenix flowers  
From the ashes  
Of the dead:  
Tell each hair  
That touches thee  
To hold forever  
To my head*

Strain them into a gill of milk  
Mixed with an ounce of melted soap:  
Warm the whole until it foams,  
Then wash the hair, and nourish hope.

## A Potion for Youth Preserved

These four, one spoonful each, combine:

Juice of apples freshly pressed,

Cider aged past seven days,

Apple vinegar, tart and brown,

Apple brandy, clear and strong;

Add to these an ounce of honey,

One scant drop of wintergreen;

Stir them, warm them, mix them well,

And take the tonic every dawn,

Saying this to work the spell:

*If I must pay*

*The apple's price,*

*I shall be young*

*As well as wise,*

*Filling my cup*

*With honeyed days*

*And hours as green*

*As Eden's grass.*

## A Pact with a Tree for Longevity

Seek the darkness of a wood  
 Where oak and elm and maple brood,  
 Kneel before the greatest tree  
 That stands among that company,  
 Bury near its roots profound  
 A penny in the yielding ground,  
 Rise, and trace upon its bark  
 This verse, the covenant to mark:

*Ancient tree  
 I offer thee  
 This mortal coin  
 As gift and sign:  
 Guard my fate  
 Both soon and late,  
 And let my rust  
 Grow green at last.*

Seal the burial with a stone;  
 Leave it, and do not return  
 Until one lunar month has passed,  
 Then go and part the fertile dust—  
 If the coin has changed to green,  
 The forest's years shall be your own.



## For Beauty after Death

Fungus, worm,  
And fat corruption  
Feed on the unwary;  
But for a fair corpse,  
There is this potpourri:

*Wrap the body  
In black velvet,  
Sew it tight  
With silver thread,  
Bind it round  
With three gold ribbons,  
Kiss its foot  
And heart and head,  
In the coffin  
Scatter broken  
Roots of flag  
And roots of culver,  
Ambergris  
And civet musk,  
And the leaves  
Of sweet-clover:  
Pack the box  
With petals, then,  
Fallen from*

*The damask rose—  
But do not open  
It again,  
When at last  
The lid you close.*

## A Moon Vow for the Loss of Weight

When the Moon shows cold and slender,  
Stand beneath her starved light,  
Wearing only white and silver—  
Say, to whet her appetite,

*I make my vow to fast until  
This crescent Moon shines round and full;  
While she waxes let me wane:  
I must lose, that she may gain.*

While she grows, take silver wine,  
Silver water, silver milk,  
And bread like snow or linen fine,  
And fish as clear as ice or silk—  
But only these, and less of all  
Than you would wish, to feed her well.

## For the Art of Cookery

Tie up a bunch of these good herbs,  
 Basil, savory, mint, and dill;  
 Drench them in water drawn from the tap,  
 And sprinkle the kitchen—lintel and sill,  
 Shelf and canister, table and stove,  
 Cupboard and wall and window and floor,  
 Crockery, cutlery, napery, all—  
 With drops from the stalks, delicious and pure;  
 Then crush the bouquet in both your hands,  
 Breathe its scent, and whisper this spell:

*Sweeten the oven,  
 Sweeten the pot,  
 Sweeten the cold  
 And sweeten the hot—  
 Summon thy virtues  
 Into this place  
 To teach me patience  
 And skill and grace.*

Make from the leaves a strengthening tea,  
 Drink it, and keep your kitchen well.

## To Defeat the Demon Tobacco

Grasp the poison-breathing weed,  
Give him fire for his greed,  
Taste his sweet and cruel savor,  
Smiling, praise his deadly favor;  
Then when he suspects you least,  
Quick deceive the subtle beast—  
Break his back and crush to death  
His fawning image on your hearth;  
Say these words (and say them ever  
When his downfall you would conjure):

*HERBA MALEFICA*

*ADURO*

*ADEDO*

*ADIMO*

## Against an Excess of Drink

Before those serpent alcohols  
That tempt the tongue and soothe the brain  
Shall rise and wind their glittering coils  
About your feverish fears again,  
Treat them firmly, do not fail  
Before their clear hypnotic eyes;  
Confess their power, yet prevail  
Before they learn to turn and tease:  
Utter this charm, that wit and will  
May stare them down and hold them still:

*Knowledge I have  
While thou hast none,  
I can make songs  
Beyond thy tongue;  
All of thy offerings  
First were mine:  
I keep my spirit  
And need not thine.*

Then raise to your lips a glass of wine—  
Spit in it, empty it down the drain.

## To Dispel Slander

When you are free  
From any deed  
Deserving blame,  
Whoever speaks  
An evil word  
Against your name  
Must be rebuked—  
And all your works  
Restored to fame:  
A length of string  
In melted wax  
Must soon be laid,  
Hung up to dry,  
And now in inks  
Of black and red  
Be dipped and raised—  
Thus drop by drop  
Its stains to shed.

Meanwhile, let this verse be said:

*Blood and rot,  
Blight and spot,  
Touch me not:  
Run to spill  
Over all  
Who wish me ill.*

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Blight and spot,  
Touch me not:  
Run to spill  
Over all  
Who wish me ill.*

## A Hollyhock Spell for Riches

The hollyhock blooms in summer,  
Its seeds in autumn fall:  
Then, in a folded paper,  
Save them, gather them all—  
The loose seeds,  
The brown seeds,  
The dry seeds,  
The round seeds,  
The seeds like tarnished pennies  
That pay for the blossoms tall;  
Bury their rusty treasure  
Next to a southern wall—  
With a mint coin,  
An ancient coin,  
A silver coin,  
A copper coin:  
By spring your wealth shall measure  
Twelve times this sowing small.

## For Success on an Important Occasion

Steep in a bath  
A bowlful of leaves  
From three or four  
Or five of these:  
Marigold, celery,  
Mint and grass,  
Nasturtium, parsley,  
Fennel and cress.  
When the brew is green  
And the steam is sweet,  
Lie in the water  
And thrice repeat:

*I shall bathe  
And I shall be  
As green and strong,  
Good herbs, as thee;  
Draw me favor,  
Draw me fame,  
Draw bright honor  
To my name.*

Rise from the water  
Thrice empowered;  
Wear those virtues  
You have conjured.

## To Obtain a Particular Appointment or Position

When night has fallen fully,  
Raise one candle's fire  
And write on virgin paper  
All that you desire;  
If any man can aid you,  
There inscribe his name,  
Followed by these others  
For power, skill, and fame:

*HELIMAZ*

*FERIDOX*

*SOLADAR*

Brush every word thereon  
With a ragged crust of bread;  
Then shred the paper, soak it  
In water tinted red;  
Wring it, press it small  
As a lump of sodden dough—  
Fling it from the house  
As far as it will go.

## For the Efficacy of an Important Letter

When the letter has been sealed,  
Set it on a table  
Newly covered, with a cloth  
As black as ink or sable;  
Pour around it clean salt  
To form a silver circle;  
Recite this verse of power  
To render it most subtle:

*Words that run  
Before my pace  
And carry me  
Beyond this place,  
Please the eyes  
That greet thee next,  
And work my will  
Within thy text.*

Fold the cloth to cover it,  
And kiss the folds; release it  
Soon to start upon its course,  
Lest jealous hands should seize it.

## Before Flight

You who would dare  
 To journey by air  
 Must first be freed  
 From folly and pride:  
 In sunlight stand  
 And pass your hand  
 Near to the gleam  
 Of a candle's flame;  
 Kindle a feather  
 Within its fire,  
 And when it is black,  
 Smother the wick;  
 Gather soft wax  
 And fill the cracks  
 Under your nails—  
 Then say this spell:

*Too near to the Sun  
 I may not fly,  
 Scorched I should run  
 From his mocking eye—  
 Yet far from his scorn,  
 Below his sway,  
 Let me be borne  
 And spared this day.*

## To Be Said When Crossing a Bridge

In air but not flying,  
Nor on the earth walking,  
Nor in a boat riding,  
Still cross without doubting—  
The way will uphold you  
If you will say boldly:

*Bridge, be strong  
From end to end,  
And let me pass  
From land to land.*

## For a Safe Return

In a small bag  
Of supple leather  
Or brown cloth,  
Assemble these:

*A stone the size  
Of a pigeon's egg,  
A spoonful of ash  
From the morning hearth,  
A chip of bark  
From the tallest tree,  
A pinch of earth,  
A curl of dust,  
A blade of grass,*

All gathered from  
The place you leave;  
Add a lodestone  
Or small magnet,  
Tie the bag  
With a strip of vine;  
Wear it around  
Your neck, on a thong—  
Then do not grieve,  
You must return.



## When Taking Up Residence in a New Place

Sweeten the threshold on that day  
When first you enter the house to stay;  
Anoint the step in front of the door  
With fixatives, balms, and oils rare:  
Combine a drop or a grain of each—  
Castoreum, civet, and ambergris,  
Benzoin, storax, and orris root,  
Lemonwood, sandalwood, bergamot,  
Geranium, lavender, myrrh, and mace,  
Or other pure essence to please your taste—  
Then add grain spirits, pure and fair,  
Stir with a brush of camel's hair,  
And paint this sign where your foot must tread:



Walk there, and let the house be glad.

## For an Improved State of Health

Fold in a scrap  
Of velvet cloth  
These treasures six  
To bring you health:  
Leaves of tea,  
Flowers of lavender,  
Ginger and salt  
And clove and camphor;  
Tie up the charm  
With a scarlet thread,  
Keep it beside  
Your nightly bed;  
Breathe it on waking  
Every day—  
You must be healed,  
And healed must stay.

## A Cider Potion for Strength

If cider is pressed  
When the apples are warm,  
Its russet taste  
Must turn you strong;  
Heat it with cloves,  
With cinnamon long,  
Drink it soon  
And read this song:

*Apple rust  
And cinnamon rust  
And cloves like rusty nails,  
Turn my skull  
To an iron wall,  
My ribs to iron rails.*

## For an Elixir of Honey

When the day approaches noon,  
Hold up honey to the sun,  
That their double gold may run  
Shining together, mixed as one.

Drink three spoonfuls,

Then say this:

*Sun charge me,*

*Gold serve me,*

*Alchemy change me,*

*Honey preserve me.*

## A Horseshoe Charm for the Headache

This iron crescent,  
Brown and old,  
Is worth as much  
As virgin gold;  
Grasp both ends,  
The center hold  
Hard to your brow,  
Heavy and cold;  
Let this healing  
Verse be told:

*Good metal loosed  
From horse's hoof,  
Draw from my brain  
These nails of pain:  
Cast them away,  
Rust them away,  
Keep them away.*

## To Overcome Insomnia

To catch and keep  
Fleet-footed sleep,  
You must prepare  
A subtle snare:  
Lie as if dead  
Upon your bed,  
Stilling his fear,  
Luring him near,  
Then say this charm  
To bind him firm:

*MORPHEUS*

*SOPOR*

*SOMNIFICUS*

*SOMNIFER*

If, even so,  
He would turn and go,  
Repeat this spell  
Until he is still:

*TOLIXA*

*OLIXAT*

*LIXATO*

*IXATOL*

*XATOLI*

*ATOLIX*

## Against Evil Dreams

The nightmare will toss  
Its cold black mane  
And gallop on ebony hoofs  
From your pillow, away  
As far as the Moon, if you say:

*Thou evil thing  
Of darkness born,  
Of tail and wing  
And snout and horn,  
Fly from me  
From now till morn.*

Then think of the fire  
That burns by day:  
Sun in his glistening chariot,  
Drawn by foam-white  
Stallions, out of the sea.

## To Guard Against Poisoned Food or Drink

To render pure  
The plate or cup,  
Do this before  
You dare to sup:  
Hold a walnut  
Against your mouth,  
Set it down  
Upon the hearth,  
Crack its shell  
Beneath an axe,  
Striking six times  
With these words six:

*NUX*

*HEX*

*NEX*

*TUX*

*TAX*

*PAX*

Cast its fragments  
Into the fire—  
They shall burn,  
Your ills to bear,  
Your fate to turn,  
Your life to spare.



## Against Poison Ivy

Those ivy leaves  
With demon tongues  
That lick the hand  
To blister it,  
May yet be tamed  
And set at naught  
By those who will  
By this be taught:  
Learn the spot  
Where jewelweed  
Or touch-me-not  
Or orange balsam—  
One, by three  
Names known—  
Is grown;  
Pluck the plants  
Close to the roots,  
Crush them, spread  
The juices where  
Corruption lies  
Upon the skin,  
Or might lie soon,  
And say this rhyme:

*Jewelweed*  
*Starve ivy's greed,*  
*Touch-me-not*  
*Stay ivy's rot,*  
*Orange balsam*  
*Stop ivy's poison.*

Cover the place  
With further leaves  
And bind them on;  
The evil touch  
Will soon be gone.

## To Cure a Wart

Stamp within a silver cup  
Mullein and houseleek together  
Stir them with a sparrow's feather,  
Let it draw the juices up;  
Twenty times upon one day,  
Brush them over the excrescence;  
Under sunlight dry the essence—  
Soon the wart must shrink away.

## A Fertility Charm

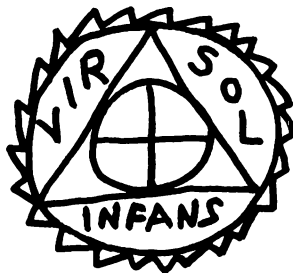
On an egg whose shell  
Is brown or pink,  
Sign these signs  
In grass-green ink:



Bury it deep  
In an earth-filled pot,  
Let this stand  
Where the sun is hot;  
Sow on its surface  
Seeds of grass,  
Water them well  
While nine weeks pass;  
Gather the crop,  
Bind it with thread,  
Let it hang always  
Above your bed.

## For Obtaining a Male Child

Now thus invoke the striding Sun  
To touch the infant in the womb  
And give him flesh of manly flame—  
Gold limb, gold beard, gold seed, gold name:  
On paper mark this secret sign,



Then tie it, scrolled, with golden twine,  
And cast it in the fire's mouth—  
That it may rise, a shining breath,  
To call its words across the sky  
Where Sun's paternal powers lie.

## For a Female Child

To form a daughter in the womb,  
Trace this figure at New Moon,  
On silver foil, with a silver spoon:



Crush the foil to make a sphere,  
Cast it into waters near,  
Whisper in the Moon's white ear:

*O Maiden, feed  
This silver seed,  
In water's lap,  
By water's pap,  
Until its phase  
Grows round with days—  
That I may see  
A child like thee.*

## For Naming the Unborn

When the womb is six months full,  
Carry wine in a silver bowl  
To a place where sun may turn it gold;  
There, on a dozen chips of wood,  
Write twelve names to name the child—  
Male and female, six of each;  
Let them drift upon the flood,  
While, with eyes closed, forth you reach  
And choose the name that meets your hand:  
Draw the fragment out, and stand  
Facing the sun, to read its sign  
Inscribed forever from this time;  
Now draw others, until you find  
The other sex, to match its twin—  
And know that either name is good,  
So given by sun and wine and wood.

## To Use the Herb Motherwort for an Easy Travail

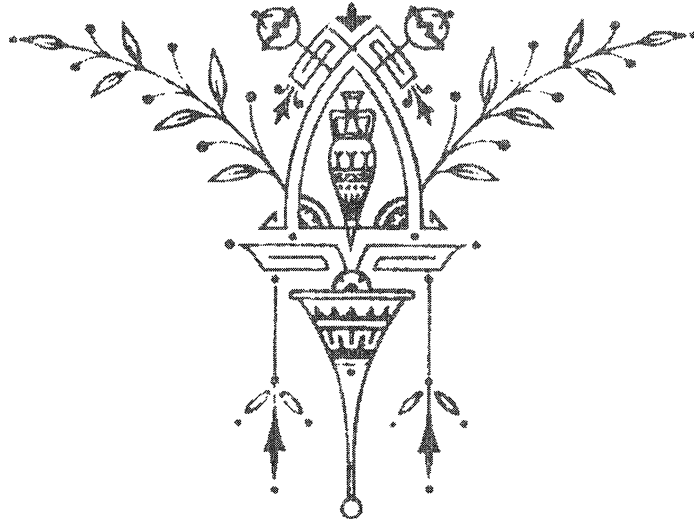
When motherwort, undaunted weed,  
Has sprung and flowered and gone to seed,  
Gather the stalks with heads and leaves,  
Tie them in cords to five strong sheaves;  
Batter their tips against a wall  
Until the seeds, sharp-spined, shall fall,  
And when they are scattered upon the ground,  
These words will render the womb unbound:

*Seeds that wound,  
Husks that bind,  
Leave only peace  
And joy behind:  
Take away pain,  
Let strength remain.*

Untie the stalks and strip them bare,  
Fold their leaves in a velvet square,  
Sew up the charm with yellow thread:  
As soon as the woman is brought to bed,  
See that she hold it in her hand  
For ease, as weeds are born from the land.



# The Conjuror





## To Curse an Enemy

In the dark of the Moon, spread a table with some coarse cloth of dark color, ragged and foul with dust. At the four corners set black candles unlit, and in the table's center an open box made of wood. Now on a small, flat stone inscribe his name, written reversed, whose life you would shadow and starve; spit upon it, set it within the box; then light the four candles with a burning straw or taper. When all is so prepared, cast into the box a handful of bitter weeds, chicory, dandelion, or others, and fix the curse with these words:

*That thou shalt be turned into a stone,  
And that all thy wits shall be turned front to back,  
And that over thy face the loathsomeness shall creep,  
And that as in a coffin thy limbs shall be bound,  
And that light shall be withheld from thine eyes,  
And that thy house and lands shall be impoverished  
and spoiled,  
And that all nourishment shall taste to thy tongue as  
wormwood,  
And that thou shalt be held alien from thy fellow man  
And that these things shall be so until I release thee,  
I spread this table and mark this stone  
And spit upon it and conceal it,*

*And light these candles and apply these poisons,  
And fix this curse upon thee  
In the names of the four fires  
Whose names are RIL, YUT, SAR, and LOD,  
Who shall consume thee as they are consumed.*

Remain watching by the candles until they are burnt out. Then these things may be taken away, but the stone must be buried near your house until the curse is withdrawn.

## To Employ the Spirits of Darkness

To yoke the demons of the night,  
Cut a fork of sapling oak,  
Strip its bark and shake the wand  
To and fro across the dark—  
Send them ranging through the land  
To do your will, by this command:

*LAMIAE*

*LARVAE*

*LEMURES*

*PASSIM, PASSIM!*

## To Control a Malefactor

Take his name  
And mince it fine,  
Weave from his vigor  
A subtle figure,  
Spell him down,  
Across and around:

*MALEFA*

*ALEFAC*

*LEFACT*

*EFACTO*

*FACTOR*

He may not breathe  
Without your leave.

## To Decrease Another's Power

To shrink his lust  
And wither his dust,  
Call the first,  
Diminish the rest,  
Whisper the last:

*NORODAROGOR*

*RODAROGOR*

*DAROGOR*

*ROGOR*

*OGOR*

*OR*

## To Increase One's Own Power

Lie down as dead,  
Then upward waken;  
Raise this word  
Your strength to quicken:

*ON*

*ORON*

*DORON*

*RADORON*

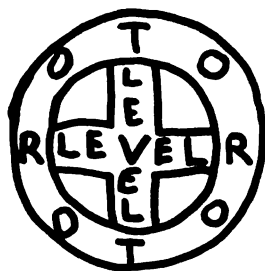
*GORODORON*

*ROGORODORON*



## A Figure for Influence over Another

If with fetters  
You would tame  
The angry foe,  
Or bind with shame  
The faithless friend,  
Draw this figure  
In red ink:



In the corners  
That remain  
Mark four letters  
Of his name;  
Burn the paper;  
Say this charm:

*Circle him round,  
Cross him within,  
Turn him about,  
And cast him out.*

## A Mirror Cipher for Revenge

An evil self  
 May lie within  
 The mirror's smooth  
 And silver skin;  
 Let your darkest  
 Work be done  
 By hands that hide  
 From sight and sun:  
 Make of wax  
 An image small  
 To bind the man  
 Who serves you ill,  
 Cast it in  
 A boiling pot,  
 Then print these letters  
 Close and neat  
 Upon a paper:

*YOTYM MIHWYM*  
*XAWYHT XIMI*  
*TAVTOH YMTAHT*  
*XATYAM TIWYHT*

Hold it straight  
 Before the glass  
 To see his plight  
 (Your hands reversed  
 Will work his fate.)

## For Breaking a Curse

Gather certain fallen twigs:  
One of hazel, one of oak,  
One of elm, and one of willow;  
Hold them to the fire's smoke,  
Say this softly, seven times all:

*Turner be turned,  
Burner be burned:  
Let only good  
Come out of this wood.*

Spit on each and break it small  
Cast them in the fire's mouth—  
The curse will die with the fire's death.

## In Summoning a Ghost

For conversation  
With the dead,  
Attend to ceremony;  
Avoid the grave's  
Annoyance, speaking  
Always gently:

*Earth, bone,  
And winding sheet,  
Let this spirit  
Come to me—  
Yet send it  
In peace,  
Or not at all.*

If it come,  
It should be offered  
White wine,  
Not red;  
And knelt to,  
From pity.

## To Raise the Dead for a Prophecy

In a circle of string  
With twelve knots fine  
On a center of stone  
With a wand of bone,  
Knock at the earth  
And summon him forth:

*Spirit, we call  
From Death's sweet thrall  
Thy barren rib  
And wasted lip—  
Pity our life  
And bring us truth.*

## To Free a House from Haunting

The Presence that stands  
Upon the stairs,  
The unseen hands  
That move the chairs,  
The lights that play  
Across the wall,  
The stains that stay,  
The plates that fall,  
The mist, the chill,  
The wandering scents—  
This gentle spell  
Must speed them hence:  
At midnight, set  
A table neat,  
With cup and plate  
And wine and meat;  
Invite the ghost  
To sit and feast,  
As any host  
Should urge a guest;  
Presently, clear  
The meal away,  
Then open the door  
And softly say:

*Quick or dead,  
Thou art fed:  
Cease to grieve,  
And take thy leave.*

Bid him depart—  
But should he remain,  
Be calm, take heart,  
And feast him again.

## For All-Hallow's Eve

When the white dog is out  
 And trots all about  
 Under the clouds  
 That are over the Moon,  
 And the hag with her broom  
 Rides high on the wind,  
 And the cat on the fence  
 Spits even at friends,  
 Then it is right  
 To conjure a light  
 Against every spirit  
 That shadows the night.

Thus say:

*Let the pumpkin's  
 Candle glare  
 Into darkness  
 Everywhere;  
 Burn all evil  
 From the air!*

When it is dark  
 And the black trees roar,  
 Set Jack-o'-Lantern  
 To watch by the door.



## To Bind Your Shadow

Close all windows,  
Close all doors,  
Utter not  
A word aloud;  
Cast the shadow  
By a single  
Candle, tall  
And black as shade;  
When the clock  
Is striking twelve,  
Take two lacquers,  
Gold and silver;  
Where your shape  
Stands on the wall,  
Paint with one  
And then another;  
Trace the edges  
With your finger,  
Quickly blow  
The candle out—  
Then though darkness  
Fly from day  
The midnight image  
Has been caught.

## For Ink from the Soft-Barked Sumac

For an ink to use in charmed inscriptions, take the Sumac's antlers crowned with leaves and fruit, boil them awhile in filtered rain, add a pinch of iron dust gathered with a magnet or lodestone, and then strain out the liquid, saying this:

*Thicket secret,  
Shallow, airy,  
Horns of velvet,  
Feathers many,  
Green as water,  
Red as flame—  
Shed thy blood  
And sign my name.*

## For Gathering Herbs on Midsummer's Eve

Go in moonlight  
Or, if it be dark,  
Take a lantern  
With a white candle;  
Stand where fern  
Grows under the trees,  
Listen until  
The air is still;  
Then you may speak:

*On Midsummer's Eve  
We hasten to weave  
Fern and leaf  
For every grief,  
Stalk and seed  
For every need.*

Soon gather the fern  
And fern seed; then  
St. Johnswort, mullein,  
Vervain, willow, elder,  
Or what else you seek.

## For Conjuring with Smoke

In an iron vessel burn  
Mullein dried,  
St. Johnswort fresh,  
Willow old,  
Wild lettuce green,  
Apple dead,  
Red cedar new:  
While the living smoke ascends,  
Let it wind about your hands  
And shape it thus:

*Breath and substance*

*Risen twice,*

*Death and issue,*

*Double face,*

*Phoenix fire,*

*Burning feather,*

*Fly and flower*

*All together.*

Set it free and watch it rise:  
Discover fate in this disguise.

## For Seeing with Fire

No card or palm  
Can tell you more  
Than figures  
In the winter fire;  
Work the spell  
Dried from leaves  
Of crocus, rose,  
Chrysanthemum;  
Watch what form  
Or sign may burn  
Upon the air,  
What face or name  
Or number flares  
Within the flame:

*The spire of gold,  
The willow green,  
The silver snake,  
The scarlet king,  
The seven stars,  
The broken chain,*

May all be shown,  
But if two hands  
Wrought blue and thin

Be seen to rise  
And curl and wring  
Together, run  
For water, quick—  
Put out the blaze,  
Then leave it dark  
For seven days.

## To Pass through a Locked Door

Where the lock  
Is filled with rust  
And all the keys  
Have long been lost,  
And time has warped  
The heavy door  
Against the place  
It fit before,  
And no one can  
Remember now  
What joys or sorrows  
It could show,  
Then you must tap  
Its silent boards  
Once, twice, and thrice,  
And say these words:

*Whatever lies  
Beyond this door  
Let me enter  
Without fear,  
Or else with lever,  
Saw, and axe,  
I'll serve the wood  
Until it breaks.*

## To See the Faces of Past and Present

Set on a table by candlelight these tokens: a cup, an egg, a knife, a red cloth, a white cloth, a green leaf, a brown nut, a crystal, and a key. Place in their center some fragment of a looking-glass; look on yourself therein and say:

*In the mirror space,  
 In the mirror time,  
 In my eye the mirror  
 Holding what is mine:  
 In the cup, the key,  
 In the sea, the knife,  
 In the egg, the sun,  
 In the nut, the leaf.*

Wrap the cup, the egg, the nut, and the looking glass in the cloth of white; wrap the knife, the leaf, the key, and the crystal in the cloth of red. Bury the first to the east of your house, and the second to the west. Thus live in peace between bodies remaining and energies acting, between instances reflecting and instants refracting.



## To Seek That Which Has Been Lost

The smallest mote  
Of dust mislaid  
May be recovered  
By this aid:  
Place in an eggshell  
All of these—

The pollen basket of a bee,  
The golden eye-ring of a frog,  
The unripe seeds of violets,  
The pollen of a columbine,  
One mushroom from a fairy-ring,  
A strand of spider gossamer,  
A drop of milk-white milkweed sap,  
A single thread of thistledown.

Shake them gently,  
Spill them out  
Onto a folded  
Colored cloth;  
Their pattern then  
Will tell the spot  
Where you may seek  
The missing thing—

If its panels  
Do not fall,  
Its frame unfasten  
From the wall,  
And show the hidden  
Scene to you,  
You are not worthy  
Of the view.

## To Weave Ropes of Sand

The devil spins  
This task for us  
That he may laugh—  
But do it thus:  
When first Sun  
Shines on the sea,  
Pick up a broken shell;  
Smooth a space  
Where the sands are firm,  
And write these letters well:

R  
O  
R  
O  
P  
E  
S

The words you weave  
Will make him fly,  
For crossed ropes  
Must hang him high.

Yet even though  
You find it not,  
You will have gathered  
Treasures as fine  
As any lost.

## To Become the Likeness of a Bee

Pound in a mortar  
A pint of purple  
Clover flower,  
Pour in honey  
From half a comb;  
Mix to an ointment,  
Spread on the skin,  
And repeat this charm:

*Golden pollen,  
Golden bee,  
Let me shrink  
As small as thee.*

Wings clear as water  
Will sprout  
On your back,  
A yellow velvet  
Will fur you over,  
And all the world  
Grow high  
About your head.

## For Telling Fortunes by Sand

On a red paper  
Spread dry sand;  
Draw with the finger  
A circle there;  
Gather the grains  
Outside the rim  
And let them run  
From the left palm, slowly  
Down to the circle's  
Center, saying:

*Time is truth*

*Time is sand*

*Time run true*

*From my own hand:*

*For love*

*For joy*

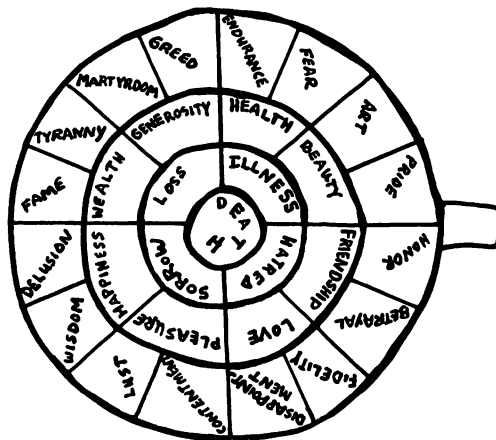
*For pain*

*For death . . .*

Repeat these four;  
When the sand ends,  
In that word  
The truth will rest.

## For Telling Fortunes by Tea Leaves

To see your future, dark or fair,  
Conjure the leaves left in the cup:  
Circle its handle three times round,  
Turn it over and turn it up—  
Read the pattern of joy and pain  
Upon this map, from depth to rim:



## For Naming Familiars

Those pets who abide  
 And watch at your side,  
 Your cause to befriend,  
 Your will to attend,  
 Your arts to approve,  
 Your ills to remove,  
 Must serve and be mute—  
 But give them delight  
 By learning with care  
 The names that they bear:

*Ninx* is the fish  
 And *wix* is the bat,  
*Pibbit* the mouse  
 And *leppin* the rat,  
*Lurit* the finch,  
*Oxpictas* the owl,  
*Scridee* the sparrow,  
*Runipia* the fowl,  
*Quist* is the beetle  
 And *crope* is the mole,  
*Yim* the opossum  
 And *sylog* the snail,  
*Jalp* is the pig,  
*Pronocaspo* the deer,



*Ircis* the otter,  
*Iltorep* the bear,  
*Jubbin* the toad  
And *morling* the frog,  
*Ninkip* the cat  
And *malop* the dog,  
*Smeth* is the fly  
And *sordoxo* the stoat,  
*Galosty* the lamb,  
*Hurathixet* the goat.  
Address them as these  
If their ears you would please.

## For an Astrology Amended and Reversed

Two faults the ancient zodiac bears:

One, that it lags behind the years,

The other, that when its stars mount high

Sun is there too, and blinds the eye;

Thus you must free the signs of fate

And set the wandering seasons straight:

The *Ram* that leapt over hills of spring

Must now run into the *Bull's* round ring,

And thence be led to the other side

Of the year, allowing the *Scales* to ride

That zone where the *Bull* so long has stood

But leaves, to bellow in autumn's wood;

Thus where the *Ram* has left his hills,

The *Fishes* would spawn in freshening rills,

But they must swim to the nether seas

And herald the frost in autumn skies;

Then who shall announce when spring has come?

The *Virgin*, high on her nightly throne

When Sun is hidden behind the world

And cannot enter her zenith cold;

She shall be followed by *Balances* fair,

Then *Scorpius* creeping along the air;

The *Archer's* bow shall learn to raise

Into the firmament summer's days;

Thereafter the *Goat* shall charge the night  
When men grow fierce with lingering heat,  
    Until the *Water-Carrier* quench  
    This fever, and tip his jar to drench  
The course where the *Fishes* attend their spawn,  
And the *Ram* and the *Bull* shall follow soon;  
The *Twins* mark winter, and in their wake  
The *Crab* and the *Lion* their sequence take  
    In angry snow and winds as sharp  
    As claws, to finish the seasons' arc.

    Then as in spring the *Virgin* rises,  
    Loosed from that earlier law's devices,  
    Know her reborn, and take her hand,  
    Follow her through the enlightened band  
Where you may reign in the Sun's old place,  
    And read the universe face to face.



## For Reading a Sundial

Honor the Sun upon its way;  
Stand by the dial at noon, and say:

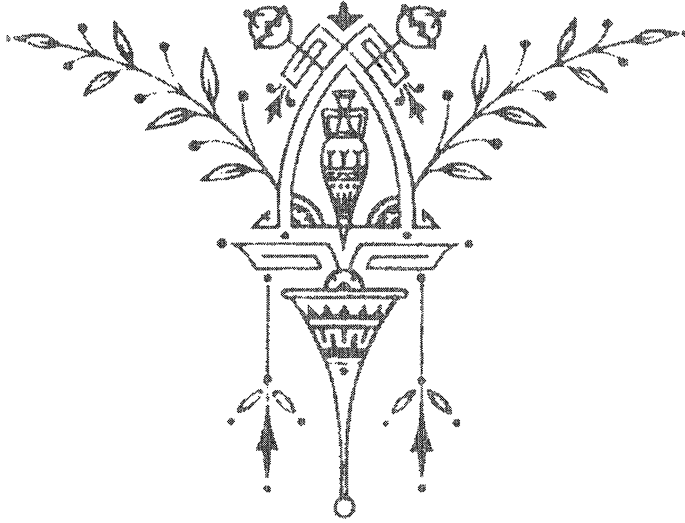
*I am thy Gnomon  
And thy man:  
I mark the circle  
Of thy flame.*

These are the words the dial's face  
Should bear, to follow Sun's long pace:

*MAN TO SUN I BIND:  
EACH ALONE IS BLIND.*



# The Cosmos



## For Sunrise at the Summer Solstice

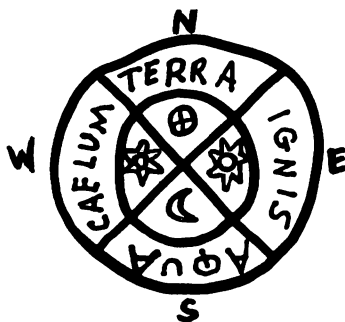
When June is ripe  
And the days are full  
And Sun comes early  
To claim his throne,  
Walk before dawn  
To a silent height  
And set three stones  
In an eastward line;  
Stand behind them  
While his light  
Is rising over  
The distant land;  
When he is there  
In the eastern air,  
Offer these words:

*Sun of the year  
I move this earth  
To greet thy sign,  
And set myself  
To honor thee  
In the earth's design.*



Perfect the stones  
To mark his face,  
Follow their shadow  
Twelve short paces,  
Pluck some leaf  
For an amulet.

## To Enlist the Elements' Aid for a High Cause



Mark this figure on the ground,  
 In its quartered center stand,  
 Face the compassed circle round,  
 Saying this, the world to bind:

*Sun of the east  
 And western sky,  
 Northern lode  
 That guards the pole,  
 Sea of the south,  
 My ancient blood,  
 Points and elements*

*Work my goal:  
 All that I ask  
 Is thy desire,  
 All that I seek*

*Is for thy care;  
My earth is thine,  
And thine my fire,  
Our waters one,  
My breath thy air.*

Then name your favor—if it seem  
An object worthy of this scheme.

## To Conjure the Weather

Say this to greet  
The morning sky  
When early light  
First meets your eye:

*Sun, rain,  
Cloud, snow,  
I rise up  
And over you go—  
To bend  
My way,  
To serve  
My day.*

Then and later  
Must all chill  
Or fiery weather  
Keep you well.

## To Bring Rain

Set upon rocks an iron pot,  
Kindle beneath it a fire hot,  
Fill it half with water new,  
Then add these, to build the brew:

An unbound rope,  
A bar of soap,  
A drop of oil,  
A pinch of soil,  
A buckthorn sprig,  
A maple twig,  
A broken bag,  
A tattered rag,  
A spoonful of salt,  
A rusted bolt.

When these break to a boiling froth,  
Brandish a hammer over the broth,  
Strike it thrice on the vessel's side,  
Calling these words to the weathers wide:

*Hither, cloud,  
And loose thy flood;  
Wither, drought,  
Let rain come out!*

Sprinkle the potion over the grass—  
That which you ask shall come to pass.

## For Reviving the Earth Spirit

When deadly frost has touched the ground,  
And turned its fertile flesh to bone,  
You may bring it to life again:  
Break the soil and spade it fine,  
Gather it, pot it, take it in  
To soften by the fire's flame;  
Anoint it with fresh water then,  
Breathe its breath, and name its name:

*Spirit of Earth  
Arise and live:  
I break the frost  
And open thy grave.*

## To Honor a Tree at the Vernal Equinox

When nights and days  
Are balanced and halved,  
Cut from the branches  
March has saved  
Twelve supple wands,  
All budded and green,  
Twist them together  
To weave a crown,  
And say these lines:

*Summer will come, and the autumn wind,  
Turning and turning the leaves on their stems:  
Then they must fall, but now in the spring  
The twig is bound, and the bud remains.*

Hang the wreath  
From a sturdy limb  
Of oak or maple,  
Ash or elm;  
Thus will the tree  
Live well and long.

## To Be Said in a Thunderstorm

*Thunder my anger,  
Lightning my might:  
I take them in  
I send them out  
Over wind and night,  
To serve me well  
To save me well  
To harm nothing under my sight.*



## To Stop Rain from Falling

If the rain has beaten down  
Seven days without the sun,  
While an ever-blowing wind  
Bends the flowers to the ground,  
And trodden grasses turn to mud,  
The sodden gardens to a flood,  
You must go and stand alone  
On a height of barren stone;  
Take with you an empty sack,  
Hold it open, then, and speak:

*Water, rain,  
And flooded sky,  
Let the weeping  
Earth be dry;  
Wind be silent,  
Black cloud, break—  
Now into my sack  
For Earth's sweet sake!*

Let it billow, full and wide,  
Close it up with air inside;  
Tie it tight with purple, red,  
Green and blue and yellow thread;  
Bury it in a garden bed—  
The sun shall bloom, the storm lie dead.

## For Discovering Tree Spirits

When the Moon is round  
In spring or summer,  
Go to a place  
Where more than two  
But not over twenty  
Trees are growing,  
Measure their bounds  
By silent walking,  
Mark their center  
And in it stand,  
But make no sound;  
Listen and watch  
And you may find  
Green and silver  
Shadows flying  
From leaf to leaf,  
And a noise like water  
Or quiet talking;  
Strike three times  
With a stick of oak  
Upon the ground—  
Then you may see  
In every tree  
The falling streams

Of their silver hair,  
And their hands  
Like silver-flickering air;  
Their frightened emerald  
Eyes will stare  
Until you look away—  
Then though you stay  
For a year and a day,  
You will not see them again.

## Of Poisons to Beware

Take care that none of these,  
 Proud and precious  
 Though they be,  
 For magic and for ornament,  
 Shall touch your mouth:

The Christmas rose and mistletoe,  
 The leaves or twigs of cherry,  
 The rhubarb leaf, the sprig of yew,  
 The oak and elderberry,  
 Potato vine, potato sprout,  
 The privet and the laurel,  
 Narcissus, raw marsh-marigold,  
 Poppy and may-apple,  
 The monkshood, the foxglove,  
 The buttercup and daphne,  
 Corn cockle, cow cockle,  
 Snakeroot, pokeweed,  
 Moonseed, the hemlocks,  
 The nightshades, red or black,  
 Baneberry, larkspur,  
 Horsetail and bracken,  
 Henbane and dogbane  
 And false hellebore,  
 And even certain other names  
 Not named here—

For Earth has her mysteries,  
And if you mock their wealth  
She will offer you  
A deep grave,  
Garlanded with death.

## To Atone for Cutting Down a Tree

Whether fear or foolish thought  
Or mere necessity has brought  
The haughty elm or poplar down,  
For its expense you must atone:  
Face the mourning field or wood  
Or barren space where once it stood,  
And offer penance to the tree,  
Lest blight and sorrow fall on thee:

*Poor spirit hurled  
From proud estate,  
I rue the deed  
I did of late:  
Forgive my axe  
That thee did vex,  
And spare my life  
Thy grievous fate.*

## For Preserving the Sunflower

The Sun must lose his rays  
When autumn bows him down,  
Yet a hundred summer days  
Fill the circle of his crown;  
Hang his image up to dry  
From a rafter dark and high,  
Hold this promise to his eye:

*From winter's greed  
I'll save thy seed,  
But when the snow  
Is gone, I'll go  
And sow it round  
Within the ground  
To raise thy gold  
A hundredfold.*

## For Keeping Dried Grasses

When all the woods are dying,  
 And the mournful geese are flying  
 With a call like distant hounds  
 Past the gray horizon's bounds,  
 And forgotten apples freeze  
 On the ground beneath the trees,  
 And the butterflies, undone,  
 Turn despairing from the sun,  
 And the flowers fall and rust,  
 Curling to a sorry dust,  
 Still the seedy grasses stand—  
 Pale, where they were green and grand,  
 Yet like spears against the air,  
 Shaped as perfect as they were  
 Gather them if you would know  
 How to last the winter through;  
 Set them dry within a jar,  
 Honored as spring flowers are;  
 Keep them all the winter long;  
 Sing for them this human song:

*Immortal grass,  
 Let winter pass  
 So neither leaf,  
 Nor seed, nor life,  
 Within this house  
 May come to grief.*



## To Dismiss Winter Greens

All trees or boughs  
That have been cut  
And kept for luck  
Within the house  
Must not be cast  
Away and scorned,  
But gravely burned  
To dust at last;  
Chop them fine,  
Give them flame,  
Offer this rhyme:

*Forgive our fire,  
Faithful tree:  
Warm us now  
Who have warmed thee.*

## To Say to a Fox

When fox-red suns  
Burn low in the south,  
The cold fox turns  
To famine and death;  
But leave by his house  
Four rats, three birds,  
Two hares and a mouse  
And these warm words:

*Fox run round  
And favor my ground;  
Eat from my hand,  
Fatten my land*

Who feeds a fox  
Should suffer no loss.

## To Converse with a Snake

Speak to the serpent  
With his voice,  
In the language  
Of his race,  
Slow and sliding,  
Softly chiding,  
Sweet and gliding,  
Sly, confiding:

*SITSIP*

*PTISLI*

*TSLSIL*

*TLISSA*

Say it, gazing  
In his eyes—  
His subtle tongue  
Will turn you wise.

## For Hearing the Words of Mice

Enter a house  
Where no one lives,  
Where the key is lost  
To the open door;  
Go at night  
When yellow leaves  
Are heavy with rain  
And a coming frost;  
Take no light  
But a tallow candle,  
Sit in a corner  
Where spiders crawl;  
Smother the flame  
With a shower of dust,  
Listen and listen  
Against the wall.  
Then you may hear,  
Close to your ear:

*Gather seeds  
And gather thistles,  
Quick before  
The north wind whistles,  
Build the nests  
And gnaw the tunnels,*

*Shred the papers,  
Steal the flannels:  
Bring them soon  
And weave them warm,  
Lest we taste  
The bitter storm!*

But if not this,  
Or something like it,  
You will know  
That the mice  
Have found you out—  
Still leave them  
A cloth and a crust  
Before you go.

## For Catching Frogs

Walk the edge  
Of the water  
Back and forth  
Three times, then stop  
And count to three;  
Where the frog lies,  
Gaze at him  
Until he moves—  
Then say to him,

*Frog I see thee  
Frog I hold thee  
To my eye  
And to my will.*

Catch him quick  
In a stout net,  
For if you fail at first,  
You will fail at last.

## To Be Spoken into a Seashell

If the seashell speaks  
To you,  
Then you may whisper  
In its ear:

*The sea  
Has brought thee  
Safe to shore:  
By earth  
And water  
May I, too,  
Be spared.*

But then you must  
Guard it  
Safe somewhere,  
Forevermore.

## For Flying South with Swallows

Wet-gray air from the hills  
Will find the swallows gone.  
If you would go with them,

Rise before the Sun  
When the Corn Moon has waned;  
Kneel in a mown field,  
And write these words  
On a yellow leaf  
With an eagle's quill:

*Swallow, I would fly  
To the southern sea;  
Swallow, give me wings  
To follow thee.*

Stand, then, and cast the leaf  
Into the air above your head:  
If it blow north you shall remain;  
If it blow east you shall be kept;  
If it blow west you shall be bound;  
If it blow south you shall be borne away.



## For Good Fortune in Winter

When the evening fire  
Lies down tame,  
Take twelve twigs  
Of ash or rowan,  
Tied in thread,  
Yellow or red,  
And cast them in,  
Thinking in silence  
Of what you wish, whether  
Love or wealth  
Or gentle weather;  
Watch their flame,  
Do not look away  
Until it dies,  
And you shall have your way.

## Against the Moon's Last Quarter

The Waning Moon  
Flies low and late  
With tainted horn  
And tarnished wit;  
If you would shun  
Its fevered state,  
Go forth and spit  
Upon a stone  
And say these lines:

*Die, old Moon,  
And do it quick,  
Lest I, like thee,  
Grow weak and sick.*

## To Be Said in the Dark of the Moon

Though maiden and matron  
And crone have passed,  
And heavy night  
Must reign at last,  
Never allow  
The Queen to lie  
Quenched in her deadly  
Slough of sky—  
Summon her powers,  
Utter her names,  
And she will rise up  
Again in flames:

*DIANA*

*LUNA*

*LUCINA*

*LUMEN*

*LUMEN*

*LUMEN*

## To Change Pebbles into Jewels

For rubies and emeralds  
To hold in handfuls,  
Amethysts and sapphires  
To scatter in the air,  
Beryls and opals  
To fill your pockets with,  
Paths of diamonds  
To walk on carelessly,  
Gather pebbles as white as ivory:  
Wash some in wintergreen,  
Wash some in wine,  
Wash some in iodine,  
Wash some in vinegar,  
Wash some in almond oil,  
Wash some in milk,  
Then clean them well with soap and water;  
Dry them and keep them  
Dark in a box  
That is lined with silk,  
In a thrice-locked room,  
Until the earth is covered with snow:  
When the winter Moon  
Is rising full,  
And the planet Venus

Lies white in the west,  
Spread them glittering  
Under the sky,  
Steep them in snowlight,  
Moonlight, starlight,  
The whole night through;  
Then, if they do not clear  
And color as they should,  
It is not the spell gone wrong  
But your own flawed eye.

## To Keep a Soap Bubble from Breaking

When you have made  
 The floating sphere,  
 The globe of rainbow—  
 Streaming air,  
 Transparent world,  
 Trembling planet,  
 Shuddering star,  
 Great as your head  
 But thin as a thread  
 That wind can tear  
 From the spider's web,  
 Do not despair—  
 Let this be said:

*That which is whole  
 Cannot be torn,  
 That which is woven  
 Cannot be worn:  
 Shiver and burst  
 On the Moon's white horn,  
 But out of the sun  
 Be ever born.*

Then turn away;  
Follow it not  
With an anxious eye—  
Your words will hold it,  
Though it may fall  
In tears, like meteors,  
From the sky.

## For Possessing a Star

If you will have

*Antares,*

Scarlet sting of Scorpius,

Or count for wealth

*Capella,*

Gold-fleeced goat,

Or *Rigel,* fire

Of sapphire, pivot

To Orion's pace,

Or *Sirius* his dog,

As white as ice, yet

Flashing every color,

Then go and find

The light you seek

Mirrored in water;

Break the wet glass,

Pluck out the star

By its radiant hair—

But do not dare

To look upon its face,

Lest you go blind;

Dig a pit in earth

And cast it in;

Cover it; bear it

Only in your mind.



A Confession of Mortality To Say  
upon a Meteor's Falling

*While I see thee cross the sky,  
To wake and live and burn and die  
All in a flash, eternity  
Watches me fall as swift as thee.*

## To See the Future

When Venus stands the morning star or the evening star, seek her as she rises or sets. Carry with you an orb of crystal, large or small but free from flaw, and raise it up to catch her image: when she lies at its center, gaze there and invoke her thus:

*Thou fire, no fire but the Sun's most silver mirror,  
 Thou star, no star but solid globe like this I bear,  
 Thou disk, thou crescent, neither crescent nor disk but  
 sphere, seeming clear as glass is clear,  
 Thou planet veiled, whose face is a bright cloud more  
 radiant for its obscurity,  
 Thou mystery, whose shadows hide beneath the guise  
 of light,  
 Thou world, whose lands remain unknown while thou  
 shinest most evident of all beyond this world:  
 Reveal now, reveal to me here, all that is obscure and  
 hidden under day's illusion;  
 Reveal to me the nature of all that thou seest, set so far  
 from earthly lands, above earthly sight:  
 Appear to me here in this crystal which is thy likeness,*

*Appear now in the guise of substance beyond this  
day's knowledge:*

*Soften, flow, clarify, reform thyself as the vision which  
thou hidest, which emanates from thee, which partakes  
of thy perspective across darkness; tell and foretell all for  
my enlightenment, as thou*

*art indeed prophetic of the morning and the evening;*

*Give me thy wisdom concerning all things that lie  
before the earth upon its path;*

*Translate thyself to cloud within clarity, clarity  
within cloud, and show me here all that thou seest  
and containest.*

Study your globe in patience, then, for as long as the planet's light remains undimmed; the knowledge you seek shall be made manifest.

## For Reconciliation with the Universe

In the dark of the Moon when stars show clear,  
 Go where no houses or lights appear,  
 Where hills are low and grass grows high;  
 Lie on your back beneath the sky,  
 Fix with your gaze the brightest star,  
 Speak this aloud, to answer its fire:

*Lower than grass  
 My light began,  
 Into the heavens  
 Soon it ran:  
 Here between Earth  
 And space I shine,  
 My fallen dust  
 The twin to thine—  
 Star that I was,  
 Star that I am,  
 Star I shall be  
 My name is human.*

Stand then, and tread the living air,  
 Ascend the vision's open stair;  
 Passing the planets' silent race,  
 Rise and mirror the cosmic face—  
 Infant of galaxies, prodigal Sun,  
 Resume this title: All and One.