

## Sacred Silence

Welcome and housekeeping.

Honouring of spirits of place / land acknowledgement.

### Introduction

Today we're going to be focusing on silence and its place in polytheist practice. Paganism / polytheism can often be loud and it is only since coming to polytheistic monasticism I have come upon quieter contemplative practices.

When I first started leaning towards polytheistic monasticism I read *The Book of Silence* by Sara Maitland in which I found a number of interesting ideas that really resonated me as an autistic person with an aversion to noise.

She notes that 'noise' shares the same root as 'noxious' and 'nausea'. This felt like a really good explanation of why noise, whether physical or virtual, makes me feel overwhelmed and leads to me feeling crushed and sick.

She goes on to speak about how silence often has negative connotations as 'the absence of sound' or 'a state of not speaking or writing'. She writes of how, as a Christian she experiences and defines it as, 'not a lack of language but an otherness different from language. Not an absence of sound but the presence of something which is not sound... God is silence'.

Maitland goes on to say our 'desire to break the silence with constant human noise is... an avoidance of the sacred terror of that divine encounter'. It is a flight from 'the Great Chthonic Terror'. We have attempted to defeat silence not by magic but 'our rules – our own laws not the gods... enshrined in language.'

Our patron God, Gwyn ap Nudd, is usually associated with the loud noise of the Wild Hunt - the baying of hounds, the roaring of the wind, with the storm. With the sound of fairy music and with mead-soaked celebrations of the feast.

Yet, more recently He has revealed Himself to me as the calm in the midst of the storm, as the silence. I've heard others say this about other Gods of storm and revelry such as Odin and Dionysus in the blogosphere too.

My Gods have been encouraging me not only to be quiet in terms of not speaking and of not writing but of quieting my thoughts. To listening in

silence. As someone who was a performing poet and prolific blogger this wasn't something I found easy at first but it is becoming easier and more enjoyable the more I practice... and it is a practice that needs lots of practice.

### **Discussion**

Does anything in the introduction resonate with you?

Does silence have a place in your practice?

Have you experienced any of the Brythonic Gods as connected with silence?

### **Meditation**

20 minutes in silence.

Sharing.