



# An Atheopagan Hymnal

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

by Mark Green

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

# General and Non-Seasonal

## An Arrival/Presence Affirmation

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

## An Arrival/Presence Meditation

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **An Atheopagan Pledge of Allegiance**

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

## **A Benediction/Ritual Closing**

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

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

## **An Atheopagan Meal Blessing**

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

## **My Planet is a Rock**

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

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.

## Translation (poem)

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **The Journey** (Song; still needs a tune)

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

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

We are the women courageous and strong  
We are the men who know beauty and tears  
We are the love that binds families together  
We carry love for the World, all our years.

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

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

## Blessed—a Benediction

I am among the blessed.

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

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

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

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

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

Like a chocolate mango, like Beethoven ice cream,

Moaning our joy with each sweet bite.

## An Atheist's Prayer—another Benediction

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

Praise to Time, enormous and precious,  
And we with so little, seeing our world go as it will  
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  
Praise and thanks be a wave  
Expanding from this tiny temporary mouth  
This tiny dot of world a bubble  
A bubble going out forever  
Meeting everything as it goes:  
All the great and infinitesimal  
Gracious and terrible  
All the works of blessed Being.

May it be so.  
May it be so.  
May our hearts sing to say it is so.



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

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

*Chorus:*

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Boiling Up (The Complexity Song)

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Boiling Up (The Complexity Song)'. It consists of four staves of music in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts at measure 8 and ends at measure 15. The second staff starts at measure 6 and ends at measure 13. The third staff starts at measure 11 and ends at measure 18. The fourth staff starts at measure 16 and ends at measure 17.

Boil - ing Up Boil - ing Up Boil - ing Up from what came be - fore The Un - i -  
verse - is mak - ing - some thing new Boil - ing Up Boil - ing Up Com - plex  
struc - tures from sim - ple forms Gal ax - ies and stars and plan - ets, me and  
you

## *Chorus:*

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

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

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

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

# The Seed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Seeds that float on darkness,  
Seeds blossoming in stone.  
Earth will send her children  
To grow themselves new homes.  
And when we meet the others,  
Seeds drifting from afar,  
We'll join them in their mission  
To take root amongst the stars!

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

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

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

*(continues on next page)*

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

# Chasing Patterns by Raymond Arnold

Melody at <https://soundcloud.com/raymond-arnold/chasing-patterns-v7>

Chasing patterns in the sky  
Trace the line from star to star  
Look around and wonder why  
Where we going? Who we are?

Vernal flower, summer breeze  
Cricket wings and autumn leaves  
Fractal patterns, golden mean  
Whispers of a world unseen.

Open eyes and open mind...  
...gonna find a way  
Open eyes and open mind...  
...gonna find some day, find some day, find some day  
...gonna find some day, find some day, find some day  
Hey, hey hey

Chasing patterns in the sky  
Feeling lost, alone and small  
Birds depart and crickets die  
Frost encroaching, winter falls

Track the omens, year by year  
Fit the pieces, best you can  
Tell a story they can hear  
Something we can understand

*(continues next page)*

Open eyes and open mind...  
...gonna find a way  
Open eyes and open mind...  
...gonna find some day, find some day, find some day  
...gonna find some day, find some day, find some day  
Hey, hey hey

Chasing patterns in the sky  
Seasons turn and stories change  
Weather vane and satellite  
Rising tide and hurricane  
Spiral Arm and Golden Mean

Trace the line from star to star  
Seeking worlds yet unseen  
Where we going, who we are?  
Where we going, who we are?

## **Green Earth Below—a ritual chant**

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

## **We Are the Cosmos, Knowing Itself**

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

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

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

## **More Than Enough—a ritual chant**

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

(Repeat, with):

This life is more than enough

My loved ones are more than enough

This fire is more than enough

These hearts are more than enough



## **Ain't No Sorrow in This Life—a song**

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

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

(Repeat, with):

Ain't no worry

Ain't no grieving

## **Better Kinder Sweeter Wiser—a chant**

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

## The Acorn Carol

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

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

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

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

# Gimme a Godless Religion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# The Black Box

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## An Atheopagan Rosary

Make a bead string of 3 courses of 13 beads, with the 13<sup>th</sup> 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 rituals

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

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

Almost Home (Mary Chapin Carpenter)

An Unfinished Life (Kate Wolf)

Blue Boat Home (Peter Mayer)

The Chemical Elements (Tom Lehrer)

The Galaxy Song (Monty Python)

Imagine (John Lennon)

Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning (trad. spiritual)

The Red-Tailed Hawk (Kate Wolf)

Science is Real (They Might Be Giants)

This Little Light of Mine (trad. spiritual)

This May Be the Last Time (trad. spiritual)

What a Wonderful World (Louis Armstrong)

# Yule

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

## **Axial Tilt** (Tune: Silent Night)

Axial tilt

The way the world's built:

Sun is north, then sun is south.

Axial precession makes seasons occur;

Sometimes bikinis and other times fur.

Insert metaphor here!

Insert metaphor here.

Evergreen tree

Holly berry

Stuff that stays alive, you see.

Meanwhile freezing and darkness reign

We'd much rather have fun than complain.

We are still alive!

We are still alive.

We're so hoping

Soon will come Spring

Meanwhile let's eat, drink, and sing!

Friends and family convene by the fire

Cold and darkness don't seem quite so dire.

Pass the gravy please!

Pass the gravy please.

*(repeat first verse)*

## **Oh Darkest Night** (tune: O Holy Night)

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

## **Tonight We Sing** (tune: Deck the Halls)

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

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

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

(repeat first verse)



# **O Little Creatures of the Earth** by Nels Olson

(Tune: O Little Child of Bethlehem)

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

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

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

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

## Mulled Wine (poem)

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

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

And those who couldn't.

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

World without end amen.

# Riverain

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

## Invocation for Riverain

O Fog

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

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

O Fog, O Rain, in your green ardor  
Come

*(I am calling you, I am calling you)*

Come kiss my face.

## Vigil (poem)

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

Long, long.

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

## A Riverain Blessing (poem)

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

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

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

# High Spring

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

## A Spring Chant

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

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

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

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

## Another Spring Chant

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

## Spring Laughter (poem)

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

# May Day

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

## May Morning (poem)

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

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

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

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

*He is risen*  
*He is risen*

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



# Midsummer

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

## **Midsummer Carol** (Tune: Deck the Halls)

Mow the lawn and trim the yew hedge! ! Fa la la la la, la la la la!

Break, and have a frosty beverage! Fa la la la la, la la la la!

Mount the chaise lounge 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!

# Summer's End

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

# Harvest

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

## **The Apple Tree Wassail** (English Traditional)

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

*Chorus:*

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

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

*Chorus*

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

*Chorus*

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

*Spoken:*

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

# Hallows

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

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

The image shows a musical score for the song 'This Ae Neet'. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system covers the first four measures, and the second system covers the next four measures. The lyrics are: 'This ae nicht, this a - e nicht, ev - ery nicht and all. Fire and fleet and can - dle licht and Christ re - ceive th - y soul.'

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

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

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

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

*(continues next page)*

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

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

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

## **Mystery—a poem cycle**

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

### **I. Wail**

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

### **II. Dark Road**

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

Nothing mattered. *(continues next page)*  
Dust became the clotting of everything, and the sweet

Temple scent of myrrh, lavender, lotus, the dimness  
Of candleglow became a comfort:  
Easier to stay, lay the long bones down,  
Light a lantern, walk the dark road too.

### **III. Pulse**

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

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

### **IV. Grace**

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

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

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

## V. Hole

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

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

## VI. Kyrie

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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