

# Winter Solstice 2008

5:30 AM, 21 December 2008

*A meditation that began with Kathleen Glennon's winter solstice ritual  
(Heartbeat of the Seasons: Earth Rituals for the Celtic Year', The Columba Press, Dublin, 2005, p 30f.)*

*Preparation : no preparation : the time has simply come.*

*Materials : no materials : only the hour glass, this desk, this pencil, this notebook, the view of the night lit by streetlamps from the front bedroom window – the usual things of a night meditation.*

*Chants : no chants at this hour, in this place  
no hymn, no dance – but maybe the silent yogic movement for the Our Father learnt from Peter Bowe.*

## THE RITUAL

Opening

We...

“We?” just myself here  
pausing  
pausing at this moment  
pausing at this nadir of the seasons  
at this ending of the year

just myself  
but recalling good friends  
friends who know this season better than I  
friends who celebrate it together  
at Pairc a' Tobair  
at Bru na Cruinne  
in Donegal  
in Cork  
in Antrim  
in Portumna  
in Dublin  
near the Broken Bridge  
in Sligo  
in Castleblaney

so not just myself  
I think of them with love  
wish myself with them  
hope that they have me and Anne in their hearts

not just myself and friends I know  
there are others I do not know  
    who have travelled  
    who have gathered  
    who have come to greet the dawn this special day  
        at Avebury  
        at Newgrange  
        at Stonehenge

and there are other lone souls  
    who remember this time  
    who celebrate this moment  
        overwhelmed by a forgetting culture  
        its outward manifestation at this time  
        an orgy of meaningless Xmas glitz

but I hold in my heart these others who are wiser  
    who celebrate this earth season  
    who rejoice in a birth to a destitute mother  
        the birth of one who came to be known as  
            *G[od]rescued* or *Rescuer*  
            [Jesus has this double meaning in Aramaic]  
        for he found hope and gave hope to desperate persons  
        he found a way and a confidence  
        for himself and for others to embrace life and to share all

\*

At one with these friends and with those I do not know  
    who gather at this time  
    or who pause alone  
I bring to mind our human ancestors who have gone before  
    thankful especially for the ones I knew  
    and who contributed directly to my wellbeing  
        parents who brought me to birth and who nurtured me  
        teachers who taught me  
        friends of my childhood and young adulthood

and I bring to mind the myriad of ancestors I never knew  
    without whom I would not be here  
their contributions to who I am now are gifts in the truest sense :  
    gifts received unwittingly  
    gifts never ever precisely identifiable  
    gifts never ever fathomable  
        gifts    from donors I will never meet to thank  
        from donors I will never properly appreciate

and this is a time to bring to mind our larger ancestry  
the wider mystery of giving  
the work of the predominant more-than-human  
that have brought us to this moment today

this now is a moment for silence  
this place so ordinary, is a sacred place  
this point a namasté point

my breathing in a gift from all the ancestors  
my breathing out my blessing on all who live now

my breathing in a communion with all the living  
my breathing out my gifting of all who are

my breathing in a receiving of gifts from all who were  
my breathing out my giving to all who will be

this now is a moment for Gaia consciousness  
I was born at her breast  
I am borne in her embrace  
She the mother of the ten thousand things  
on whom I depend ineluctably

breathing in I show my dependence  
breathing out I share myself  
breathing in and out  
I show interdependency and experience interdependency

\*

this now is the moment of my responsibility  
if the air I breath in is polluted, I suffer  
if the air I breath out is polluted, others suffer  
the air I breath is gift received  
gift given

what I am able to do is a result of gifts received  
what I actually do is gift given – for good or ill – to others

thankfulness to ancestors cannot be expressed to them in words  
for they cannot hear what we wish to say  
for their ears are long gone  
thankfulness to ancestors can be expressed in the things we do now  
with silence  
with consciousness  
for what we do now is our gift for those coming after  
for we will be ancestors to those who follow  
for our living now and the effects of our living now  
accumulate into our ancestral gifting to Gaia