

Imbolc Full Moon: Scrying in Ice and Fire

by Adam Sartwell, founder and Virgo lead minister

In some stories the Cailleach and Bridget are one in the same. The Cailleach rules the winter. Her name means “blue faced woman,” supposedly from all the cold that she makes. She has a staff or blasting rod to control the winter storms. Where she walks snow falls and mountains rise. The Cailleach was the goddess who controls the seasons and the weather. She gets a bad rap because she represents forces of great power. She is called on for justice, wisdom, weather working, cursing and banishing. She is also reported to be a triple goddess. In her own stories she is an old woman who dies and comes back as a young woman, which ties her further to the story of her Imbolc transformation into Bridget.

Bridget is the goddess of healers, midwives, childbirth, poets, animal husbandry, music, smiths and fire. She is so popular the Christians have her as a saint because they couldn't remove her from Irish culture. She is said to be a goddess you can call on for just about anything. The story goes that she becomes the Cailleach during the winter, roaming the world bringing storms until the day of Imbolc. Then she casts off the persona of the Cailleach and becomes the young and beautiful Bridget again. Many take this time to cast off and purify themselves of unwanted aspects just like Bridget does during Imbolc.

This story reminded me this year of the story of ice and fire from the northern myths. Before we had the idea of the four elements people believed in two forces that shaped the world. These were fire and ice. Ice was the power of contraction, calm, formation, confinement, creation and destruction. Fire was the power of expansion, heat, energy, passion, freedom, creation and destruction. Fire and ice met in the void at the beginning of the world and they began the creation of the world we live in now. It is said that when they begin to become chaotic again they will bring the destruction of this world. It is their dance that creates our seasons and shapes our world. The classic elements of the Greeks and Romans are just the phases of these two titanic forces. Earth is the most like ice for it is solid only because it has not been heated. Water is the middle realm between ice and fire for water is just heated ice. Air is formless in shape but still has substance and thus closest to fire. Fire is fire. It effects all other things by either its lack, ice, or its abundance, flame. Ice and fire, either literal or symbolic (candle and water or clear quartz) are placed on opposite sides of a surface used for rune readings so that the reader can use their interplay to bless the reading.



You will need a bundt pan, a cookie sheet with a turned up edge, water, a lighter or matches, incense, a small votive holder and a votive to go inside it. You may want to have your usual ritual tools on hand if you feel they are necessary. I like to keep Imbolc simple when it comes to tools. I sometimes use a staff at this time because of the Cailleach being associated with them but that is more a personal choice. I like honoring this time with fire, ice, and words because of their primal creative power. This ritual takes some prep time, you will need 12 to 24 hours to freeze the water in the pan. Depending on the weather where you are you can freeze it outside or in your freezer. You will need an altar space that is at a level you can scry at from a chair and that has room enough for the cookie

sheet. When your ice bundt is frozen all the way through bring it to the altar space with the cookie sheet on it. Tip the bundt over on top of the cookie sheet. The cookie sheet protects your altar from ice melt. Place within the whole of the bundt the glass votive holder with candle. I used white because it is associated with Bridget.

Cleanse the room with your incense.

Cast the circle with this poetic casting or one of your own.

Circle Casting

In the Cailleach and Bridget's name

By ice and fire, by frost and flame

This circle I now cast

It's boundary cannot be passed

I conjure it a sacred place

liminal in time and space

Guardians hold fast the energy within

fur and feather, scale and fin.

here and now the spirit reign

The highest will is sovereign

By the power of the Goddess three

this circle is cast so mote it be!

Quarter Calls

To the north, I call to the earth below me, I call to the sacred cow bringer of nourishment. Hail and welcome.

To the east, I call to the fire within me, I call to the fire-drake keeper of passion. Hail and welcome.

To the south, I call to the air above me, I call to the wise raven bringer of perspective. Hail and welcome.

To the west, I call to the water around me, I call to the blessed salmon keeper of knowledge. Hail and welcome.

Calling to the Goddesses

Over the ice bundt.

I call to the Cailleach, Goddess of winter. Blue faced crone, Keeper of the staff of storms, mountain maker; To be present within this circle and guide me to wisdom. Bless this ice so I might see true. Hail and welcome.

Scrying

Light the candle in the center of the ice.

I call to Bridget. Goddess of fire, Healer, poet, inspirer and smith, Keeper of the forge to be present in this circle.

Bless this fire so I may be illuminated to new inspiration. Hail and welcome.

Count your self into a meditative state. Open your eyes but keep them relaxed and gaze into the ice luminary you made. If you have a question pose it now in your mind. Then let it go and clear your mind. As you gaze into the ice allow what ever comes to come. It doesn't have to make sense now just observe, you can analyze later. When you feel you have gotten your answer you can pose another question in the same way. I usually don't go more then three questions. Some sample questions: What do I need to heal in my life? Where is my inspiration leading me? You can also just use it as a time to get messages from the goddess.

When you are done, count yourself back up to ritual consciousness.

Do a circle of healing to ground out some of the energy raised.

Give thanks to the Goddesses in your own words

Release the Quarters

To the north I release the earth below me and thank the sacred cow. Hail and farewell.

To the west I release the water around me and thank the salmon . Hail and farewell

To the south I release the air above me, and thank the raven. hail and fare well.

To the east I release the fire within me, and thank the fire Drake, hail and fare well.

Release the Circle

In the Cailleach and Bridget's name

By ice and fire, by frost and flame

This circle is now undone

by turning of the wheel and sun

release now the energy within

by fur and feather, scale and fin.

as a wave of healing for us all

be we great or very small.

by the power of the goddess three

as I will so mote it be!