

Mysteries of Artemis and Dionysos at the Fall Equinox Time of the Sacred Year (from Sept. 2 to Sept. 29.)

Now the stream beds of most southern ravines are entirely dry. In some of the damper spots, perhaps where the Faeries have banked up the watershed, the wild grapes of California climb over strange trellises of dead Oaks, assembled there for their ascent. Straying into these oases of sweetness, out from parched thickets of sage-soaked canyons, presents intimations of wildness beyond description.

Short summer storms roll flashing about the sky. The first rains - ineffable blessings! - resurrect delectable concentrations of stored aromas from the powdery dust. In prancing gratitude, the bare feet of the Faerie folk kick up wet, scented dust to clairvoyant nostrils. Unseen in the brakes, herds of deer, wild horses and sacred quail startle off in all directions.

Artemis and Dionysos climb the Hill of Autumnal Ecstasies to begin the vintage of cultured grapes. In rhythm with the wooden beat of big hollow logs, the Faeries of the Vine pluck the luscious black and golden clusters, and load them into baskets. With these, they continue the ascent of the West Equinoctial Hill. Others rise through yellow draws of redolent Laurel, to gather the pungent leaves. At the summit of the evening pilgrimage, the grapes are heaped in mammoth vats. The virgin crescent moon of the equinox sunset sees the orgy of the clear grape nectar. Out of the granite vats, juices pour into alabaster basins from under rapturously churning feet and limbs, stained dark as dappling shades of autumn twilight.

At length, the delirious paroxysms of Dionysos are consummated. Through arcades of

venerable Cedars, arranged as a giant labyrinth, towards the heavy-scented Laurels at its center, the blissful Fauns and Faeries tread a stately saraband for Queen Artemis. Their dance follows the topocosmic figure for in-winding the sacred year. Yellow leafed in darkness at the eye of the tree maze, Artemis chooses the "Brauronia," or Little Bear. She is a wiry, forceful little girl who next year will take her First Communion of Holy Pubescence. It is she, who as Ivy Girl and New Moon of the Yonic Season, with her paramour as Holly Boy, will lead the maenadic races next month. But this month, she will solemnly preside over the opening and cleansing of the House of the Double Axe, wherein the Great Lady Artemis prepares to descend into the underworld for winter. With a glittering silver crescent, the Goddess demonstrates that Her belly is now protrudent like Her summery breasts. Surely, She is pregnant with the God of the coming year, and the assurance of continuing plenty.

She holds aloft yellow leaves of Maple, Aspen, Poplar and Laurel as the signs of annunciation.

In a grand and ineffable gesture, Queen Artemis crowns grave little Callisto Brauronia with the oddly shining crescent which has vouchsafed the measure of opulence in Royal Hips and Belly. With happy weariness, the assembly of the Fall Mysteries drops into an enchanted slumber.

The next day, the Fays open the Great Halls of the Double Axe to the sceptre of King Dionysos. Callisto, the Lunar Coronet serenely surmounting her brow, enters the gloom and lights the first torches since the foregoing winter. The God carries the Goddess over the threshold. Thus He solemnizes the Rites of Harvest Home.

Dionysos breaks the arcane seals on the doors to the “Apple Holes,” or fruit storage cellars. Chanting, the Fays begin to haul the harvest in to the Aval Basements of the Faerie Hall in readiness for the coming winter.

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