

MIA KAROLYS

THE EMPRESS

THE MAGAZINE FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Samhain

THE THIN VEIL & THE
WITCH'S NEW YEAR

Hecate

QUEEN OF THE
CROSSROADS

The Grimoire

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DARK SEASON

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READING THE CANDLE
FLAME

Arcanum XIII

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Horoscope

ALL TWELVE SIGNS,
READ IN THE TAROT

rites of the dark season

THE VEIL ISSUE

Where the living and the ancestors meet

MIA KAROLYS
THE EMPRESS

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ISSUE 02 · THE SAMHAIN ISSUE

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Editor-in-chief & writer: Mia Karolys. The rituals and readings in this magazine are offered for spiritual guidance and reflection, and are not a substitute for medical, legal or financial advice. Always practise fire safety.

The Keeper of the Threshold

Welcome to the second issue of *The Empress: the Veil* Issue. In July we spoke of sovereignty, of claiming authority over your energy, your space and your future. October asks something deeper of us.

As the light withdraws and the nights grow long, the old traditions tell us the veil between the worlds grows thin. What is hidden rises. What is unfinished asks to be finished. What has died asks to be honoured, and released.

This is the season of the witch. Not the green-faced caricature in the shop windows, but the wise woman: the keeper of herbs and fire, the one who stands at the crossroads and is not afraid of the dark.

In these pages are the rites I practise at my own altar: the ancestor altar, the reading of the flame, the respectful approach to Hecate, and five rituals for protection, remembrance, love and abundance. Your horoscope is read through the tarot, because this month the sky is as dramatic as the season: Venus and Mercury both turn retrograde in Scorpio, the sign of death and rebirth.

Light a candle. Close the door. Let these pages be your threshold.

With love from the altar,

Mia Karolys

THE EMPRESS OF TAROT & MAGIC





FEATURE · THE SEASON

The Thin Veil

Samhain, the witch's new year, and why the dead draw near at the end of October

Long before costumes and carved pumpkins, the Gaelic peoples of Ireland and Scotland kept Samhain (say SOW-in), the fire festival that closed the harvest and opened the dark half of the year. It began at sunset on 31 October: the Celtic day began at dusk, and so the new year began in darkness, as every seed does.

Samhain was a crack between one year and the next. In that crack, the old stories say, the boundary with the Otherworld grew thin. The *aos sí*, the spirits of the land, walked abroad and the ancestors came home. Hearth fires were put out and relit from a communal bonfire. Places were

laid at the table for the beloved dead, and food was left at the door. Modern witches keep Samhain on the Wheel of the Year as the third and final harvest, after

Lughnasadh and Mabon. It is a night for divination, remembrance and release. The question of the season is not "What do I want?" but "What must die so that I can live?"

This is the territory of Arcanum XIII, Death, the card of Scorpio. The work is not morbid; it is honest. We honour those who came before, we compost what no longer serves, and we enter the dark trusting the return of the light.

This year Samhain night falls under a waning Moon in Cancer, the sign of the home, the mother and the bloodline: a beautiful sky for ancestral work.



THE WITCH'S REFERENCE

Correspondences of the Dark Season

What to gather for your Samhain altar and spellwork

COLOURS

Black, orange, deep red, gold

OFFERINGS

Apples, pomegranates, bread, red wine, pumpkin, honey

DEITIES & SPIRITS

Hecate, the Morrígan, Cerridwen, Persephone, Anubis, your own ancestors

ELEMENT & DIRECTION

Water and earth; the west, where the sun sets

THE MOON

The Hunter's Moon, full in Taurus on 26 October

HERBS

Mugwort, rosemary for remembrance, sage, bay, cinnamon, mullein

STONES

Obsidian, black tourmaline, smoky quartz, onyx, carnelian

TAROT

XIII Death, XVIII The Moon, IX The Hermit, XX Judgement

PLANETS & SIGN

Pluto and Saturn; Scorpio

THE WORK

Ancestor veneration, divination, banishing, protection, shadow work

A WORD ON FIRE

Never leave a candle burning unattended. Use a heat-proof dish, keep the flame away from hair, fabric and dried herbs, and put candles out completely before you sleep. Respect the fire and it will serve you.

GODDESS OF THE MONTH

Hecate

Queen of the crossroads, keeper of the keys

Hecate is one of the oldest and most misunderstood goddesses of the Greek world. The poet Hesiod, writing around 700 BCE, praised her above almost all others: Zeus honoured her with a share of earth, sea and the starry sky.

Later she became the goddess of crossroads, thresholds, torches and keys, who lit the way for Demeter's search for Persephone. She is shown as triple, three faces on three roads. In Athens, shrines called *hekataia* guarded the doorways, and on the dark moon families left the *Deipnon*, Hecate's Supper, at a crossroads to cleanse the home and feed the restless dead.

Hecate is my guardian. I never call on her lightly, and I never call on her to harm. She is the goddess you approach when you stand at a crossroads in your life and need to see in the dark.

HOW TO HONOUR HER THIS MONTH

- I On the eve of the new moon, 9 October (and again on 8 November), clean your home from back to front and sweep the dust out of the front door.
- II Prepare a small plate: bread, garlic, an egg, honey or sweets. Leave it at a crossroads or your threshold, and walk away without looking back.
- III Light one black or white candle with a key beside it. Name the road you stand before and ask for her torchlight.
- IV Her sacred animals are the dog and the serpent; her plants include garlic, yew, mugwort and lavender.

The Ancestor Altar

A ritual of remembrance for 31 October to 2 November

Every one of us is the living answer to a long line of prayers. An ancestor altar is a way to say thank you, and to invite the wisdom of your bloodline into the year ahead.

YOU WILL NEED

A white cloth · photographs or written names of your beloved dead · one white and one black candle · a glass of fresh water · a sprig of rosemary, the herb of remembrance · an offering they would have loved: bread, fruit, coffee, a little wine, a favourite sweet

- 1 Choose a quiet surface in the west of your home, the direction of the setting sun. Cleanse it with incense smoke or salt water.
- 2 Lay the cloth and the photographs. Include only those you knew as loving, or those who came long before: this altar is a place of peace.
- 3 Set the water at the front, with the rosemary beside it. Change the water every day.
- 4 Light the white candle for the ancestors of light, and the black candle to close the door to anything that is not of love.
- 5 Speak their names aloud. Tell them about your life, and ask for one thing: guidance, protection or a sign.
- 6 Sit in silence for nine breaths. Notice what comes: a memory, a scent, a song.
- 7 Keep the altar until All Souls' Day, 2 November. Then return the food to the earth and give thanks.



"To remember is a form of magic. What we name, we keep alive."

The October Grimoire

Five rites for protection, memory, love, abundance and renewal

Each rite is written the way I write my own grimoire: intention, timing, ingredients and the working. Read it through once before you begin, gather everything first, and work only with a calm mind. Magic follows focus.



I Black Salt of the Threshold

A ward of protection for your home

PURPOSE

To seal your home against envy, heavy energy and unwanted visitors.

BEST TIMING

A Saturday under the waning Moon: 3 October or Samhain itself, Saturday 31 October.

YOU WILL NEED

Coarse sea salt · the ash of a burned bay leaf or incense · a pinch of black pepper · a glass jar · a black candle

THE WORKING

Light the candle. In the jar, mix three spoons of salt with the ash and the pepper, stirring anticlockwise to banish. Say: *"Salt to guard, ash to bind, nothing enters but what is kind."* Sprinkle a thin line across your front threshold and along each windowsill. Keep the rest of the black salt in the jar beside the door.

TO CLOSE

Snuff the candle. After seven days, sweep the salt out of the front door and renew the ward whenever the home feels heavy.

II The Samhain Ancestor Candle

To receive a message from your beloved dead

BEST TIMING

Samhain night, Saturday 31
October, after sunset

YOU WILL NEED

A white or orange candle · dried
rosemary · a pin · a pomegranate ·
paper and pen

THE WORKING

With the pin, carve the name of an ancestor down the candle and roll it lightly in rosemary. Open the pomegranate: its seeds are the food of the Otherworld, the fruit Persephone tasted. Set six seeds on a saucer before the candle. Light it and write a letter to the one you miss. Read it aloud, then write, without thinking, whatever comes to you in reply.

TO CLOSE

Let the candle burn while you sit with it, or snuff it and relight it each night until 2 November. Bury the seeds and the letter beneath a tree.



III The Apple of Avalon

A rite of self-love while Venus is retrograde

BEST TIMING

A Friday, the day of Venus: 9, 16, 23 or 30 October

YOU WILL NEED

A red apple · a knife · honey · ground cinnamon · a
pink or red candle

THE WORKING

Cut the apple across its middle to reveal the hidden five-pointed star of seeds, an ancient sign of the goddess. Drizzle honey into the star, dust it with cinnamon, and speak aloud three qualities you love in yourself. Light the candle beside it. Eat one half slowly, tasting the sweetness as your own.

TO CLOSE

Offer the other half to the earth, or leave it outside for the birds. Let the candle burn down safely while you rest.

IV The Hunter's Moon Abundance Rite

To bless your money and your work at the full Moon in Taurus

BEST TIMING

Monday 26 October, the Full Hunter's Moon in Taurus

YOU WILL NEED

A green or gold candle · three coins · a bay leaf · ground cinnamon · a small pouch

THE WORKING

Write your financial intention on the bay leaf and place it beneath the candle. Set the three coins in a triangle around it with a pinch of cinnamon on each. Light the candle by a window where the moonlight can reach it and say: *"By the Hunter's Moon, what I seek is seeking me."* Hold the image of your intention as already accomplished until you feel it in your body.

TO CLOSE

When the candle is spent, gather the coins, the leaf and a piece of the wax into the pouch. Keep it in your wallet or cash box until the next full Moon.

V The Cauldron Cleansing

A ritual bath before the witch's new year

BEST TIMING

Any evening in the last week of October

YOU WILL NEED

A pot · 2 litres of water · rosemary · three bay leaves · a cinnamon stick · a handful of sea salt · the peel of one orange

THE WORKING

Simmer everything for twenty minutes, stirring anticlockwise to release and clockwise to bless. Let it cool until comfortably warm, then strain. After your usual shower, pour it over yourself from the neck down while you name what you are leaving behind.

TO CLOSE

Air-dry, dress in clean clothes and pour any leftover water outside your door.

Never use hot water on the skin. Patch-test first, and skip this bath if you are pregnant or your skin is sensitive.



Pyromancy

The art of reading the candle flame

Fire has been read since antiquity. In pyromancy the flame is not the message; it is the messenger. Read the candle as a whole: flame, smoke, wax and what remains.

TALL AND STEADY

Strong energy. Your intention is clear and the work is moving.

LOW AND WEAK

Resistance, or energy moving slowly. Repeat the work or strengthen your focus.

DANCING OR FLICKERING

A presence near you, or a situation still in motion. Ask a clear question and watch.

CRACKLING OR SPARKING

Interference or gossip. Speak plainly and cleanse your space.

BLACK SMOKE

Heavy energy is being burned away; the work is clearing an obstacle.

WHITE SMOKE

Blessing and purification. Your prayer is being received.

LEANING TOWARDS YOU

What you asked for is coming to you. Leaning away: it is going out into the world.

WAX RUNNING DOWN ONE SIDE

One part of the situation needs attention before it can resolve.

GOES OUT BY ITSELF

The work is complete, or the timing is wrong. Do not relight it for the same wish that night.

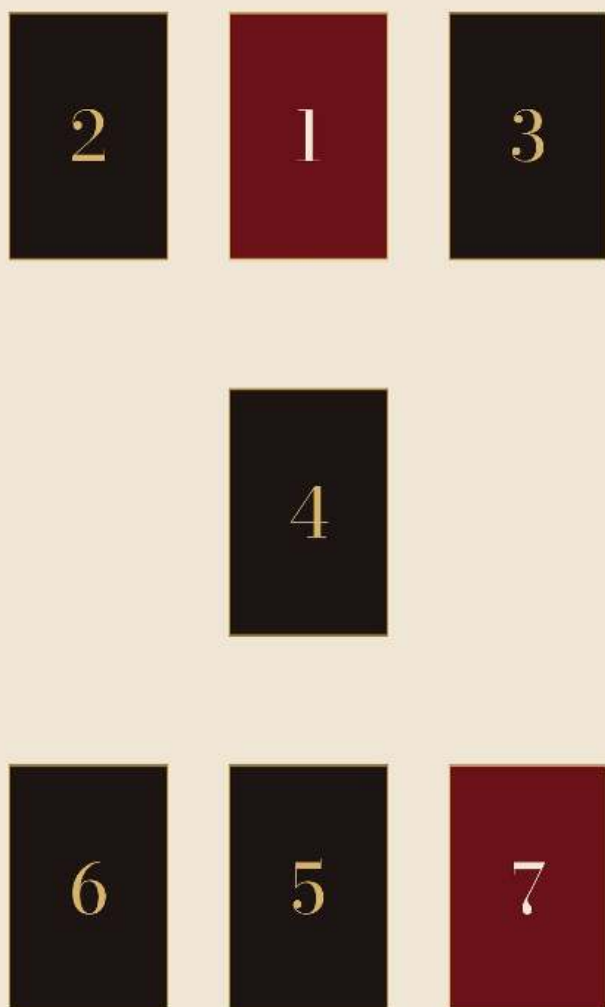
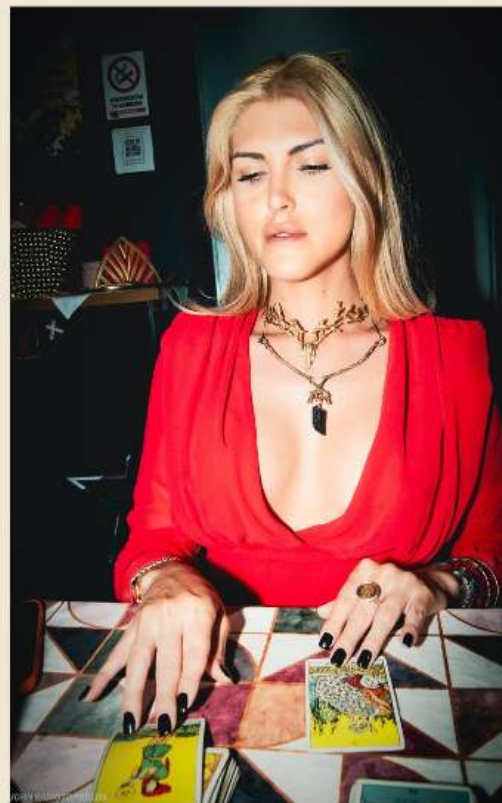
Before you read, close the windows and trim the wick to about 5 mm, so that what you see is the spirit of the working, not the wind.

The Veil Spread

A seven-card reading for the witch's new year

I created this spread for the night when the veil is thinnest. Work by candlelight, with your ancestor altar lit if you have one. Shuffle slowly and ask aloud: "What does the veil wish to show me?"

Lay the seven cards face down in the shape of a keyhole, then turn them one at a time, from the first to the seventh. Read the Torch last: it is the light you carry into the new year.



- 1 THE VEIL
What stands between you and the truth now
- 2 THE ANCESTOR
The gift your bloodline gives you
- 3 THE SHADOW
What you have refused to see
- 4 WHAT MUST DIE
What to release before the new year
- 5 THE SEED
What is being born in the dark
- 6 THE CROSSROADS
The choice in front of you
- 7 THE TORCH
Hecate's guidance for the year ahead

XIII Death

The card of Scorpio, and the secret of transformation

No card frightens beginners more, and none is more misunderstood. In a reading, Death almost never means physical death. It is the great transformer: the end of a cycle so complete that something entirely new becomes possible.

In the Hermetic system of the Golden Dawn, whose teachings shaped the Rider–Waite–Smith deck, Death is given to Scorpio and to the Hebrew letter Nun, the fish: life moving unseen in deep water. On the Tree of Life it is the path that joins Tiphareth, the heart and higher self, to Netzach, desire and feeling. To walk it is to let old desires die so the true self can rise. Its secret title is *the Child of the Great Transformers, Lord of the Gate of Death*.



Look closely at the card: a skeletal rider on a white horse, a fallen king, a bishop in prayer, a maiden and a child who do not turn away. Behind them the sun rises between two towers. Death comes for everyone equally, and still the sun rises.

NUMBER	SIGN	LETTER	ELEMENT	PATH
13	Scorpio	Nun	Water	24

IF DEATH APPEARS FOR YOU THIS MONTH

Ask: *what is already over that I keep trying to keep alive?* Release it with gratitude. The Sun enters Scorpio on 23 October: the season itself is your initiation.

The Cosmic Shift

The October 2026 sky report

The sky this October is a cauldron. By the end of the month Venus and Mercury are both retrograde in Scorpio. The universe asks us to look back before we move forward: to finish, to forgive and to reclaim.

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| 3 Oct | VENUS TURNS RETROGRADE IN SCORPIO
Love, money and self-worth under review until mid-November. Old lovers and old debts return. |
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| 10 Oct | NEW MOON IN LIBRA
Plant intentions for balance, beauty and partnership. The eve is Hecate's Deipnon. |
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| 15 Oct | PLUTO TURNS DIRECT IN AQUARIUS
The power you rebuilt in the dark begins to move outward. |
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| 23 Oct | THE SUN ENTERS SCORPIO
The season of the occult, of death and rebirth. Intuition sharpens; secrets surface. |
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| 24 Oct | MERCURY TURNS RETROGRADE IN SCORPIO
Messages from the past and second chances. Back up files, reread contracts, listen more. |
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| 25 Oct | VENUS MOVES BACK INTO LIBRA
Relationships ask for an honest renegotiation. |
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| 26 Oct | FULL HUNTER'S MOON IN TAURUS
Harvest what you planted in spring. The night for the abundance rite. |
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| 31 Oct | SAMHAIN UNDER A WANING MOON IN CANCER
The witch's new year. Honour the ancestors and let the old year die. |
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The Fire Signs

Aries

21 MAR – 19 APR

CARD · THE SUN | POWER DAY · 16 OCTOBER

The Sun shines on your relationships. The New Moon on the 10th brings joy and visibility to a partnership or collaboration, and you are seen for who you really are. Venus retrograde in your eighth house asks you to clear old debts and old jealousies so the light can stay. Say yes to warmth, but reread every contract after the 24th.

Ritual · Light a red candle and write one boundary you will no longer cross.

Leo

23 JUL – 22 AUG

CARD · THE WORLD | POWER DAY · 26 OCTOBER

The World brings a cycle to completion. A family matter or a chapter of your past closes as Venus and Mercury retrograde through your fourth house: let it end with grace. The Full Moon on the 26th crowns your career with recognition for years of quiet work. Celebrate, then choose your next horizon.

Ritual · On a Sunday, light a gold candle and speak your ambition aloud.

Sagittarius

22 NOV – 21 DEC

CARD · THE STAR | POWER DAY · 31 OCTOBER

The Star brings healing after a hard year. With Venus and Mercury retrograde in your twelfth house, hope returns quietly, through dreams, prayer and rest rather than action. The New Moon on the 10th sends the right friends your way. Trust that you are guided, and let the Full Moon on the 26th renew your daily routine.

Ritual · Lay the Veil Spread on page 12 on Samhain night.



The Earth Signs

Taurus

20 APR – 20 MAY

CARD · THE DEVIL | POWER DAY · 26 OCTOBER

The Devil asks what is holding you in chains. Venus, your ruler, is retrograde in your house of partnership: an attachment, a habit or a person from your past tests you, and the temptation is to return to what is familiar. You hold the key. The Full Moon in your own sign on the 26th shows you clearly what you are ready to leave.

Ritual · Perform the Hunter's Moon abundance rite on page 10.

Virgo

23 AUG – 22 SEP

CARD · THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE | POWER DAY · 10 OCTOBER

The Wheel of Fortune turns in your favour. The New Moon in your house of income on the 10th starts a new money cycle: an offer, a raise or an unexpected opportunity. Stay flexible. Your ruler Mercury turns retrograde on the 24th, so double-check messages and plans, and watch for luck that arrives through an old contact.

Ritual · Keep a bay leaf inscribed with your money intention in your wallet.

Capricorn

22 DEC – 19 JAN

CARD · THE HIGH PRIESTESS | POWER DAY · 10 OCTOBER

The High Priestess asks you to trust what you know before you can prove it. As the New Moon on the 10th opens doors in your career, your intuition is your best strategist: say less, observe more. Venus and Mercury retrograde bring an old ally back with information you need. The Full Moon on the 26th awakens romance and creativity.

Ritual · Lay the Black Salt of the Threshold on page 8 to protect what you are building.





HOROSCOPE TAROT · OCTOBER 2026

The Air Signs

Gemini

21 MAY – 20 JUN

CARD · THE HERMIT | POWER DAY · 10 OCTOBER

The Hermit calls you inward. Your ruler Mercury turns retrograde on the 24th in your house of work and health, so slow down, finish what is open and protect your energy. The New Moon on the 10th still brings a spark of romance or creativity: enjoy it quietly. Time alone this month is not loneliness; it is where your answers are.

Ritual · Keep a dream journal beside your bed from the 23rd.

Libra

23 SEP – 22 OCT

CARD · THE CHARIOT | POWER DAY · 10 OCTOBER

The Chariot puts you back in the driver's seat. The New Moon in your sign on the 10th is your personal new year: set your direction and move with willpower. Your ruler Venus is retrograde, so steer carefully around money and self-image, and save big makeovers for after mid-November. Discipline now becomes victory by your next birthday.

Ritual · On the New Moon, write twelve wishes and burn the paper safely.

Aquarius

20 JAN – 18 FEB

CARD · THE HIEROPHANT | POWER DAY · 15 OCTOBER

The Hierophant brings a teacher, a tradition or a sacred commitment. Pluto turns direct in your sign on the 15th, and your private transformation is ready to take form in the world. The New Moon on the 10th favours study, initiation and spiritual learning. With Venus and Mercury retrograde in your career sector, an old mentor returns with an offer.

Ritual · Light a white candle and ask your spiritual guides for one clear teaching.



The Water Signs

Cancer

21 JUN – 22 JUL

CARD · THE EMPRESS | POWER DAY · 31 OCTOBER

The Empress, the card of this magazine, is yours this month. Home, family and beauty flourish: the New Moon on the 10th is perfect for blessing your space or nurturing a new project. Venus retrograde asks you to receive love as generously as you give it. Samhain falls with the Moon in your own sign: your ancestors bless your abundance.

Ritual · Build the Ancestor Altar on page 7.

Scorpio

23 OCT – 21 NOV

CARD · THE HANGED MAN | POWER DAY · 23 OCTOBER

The Hanged Man asks you to pause. Your season begins on the 23rd, but Venus and Mercury both station retrograde in your sign: this is not the moment to force anything. Surrender, look at the situation from a new angle, and the answer will come. The Full Moon in Taurus on the 26th reveals which partnerships deserve your devotion.

Ritual · Write a letter to the self you are leaving behind, and burn it safely on Samhain.

Pisces

19 FEB – 20 MAR

CARD · THE TOWER | POWER DAY · 26 OCTOBER

The Tower shakes what was built on illusion. A belief, a plan or a structure in your life falls this month, and with Venus and Mercury retrograde in your ninth house the truth arrives suddenly. Do not fear it: lightning clears the way. The New Moon on the 10th rebuilds shared finances, and the Full Moon on the 26th brings a clarifying conversation.

Ritual · On Samhain night, scry in a bowl of dark water by candlelight.





FOR THE WITCH'S NEW YEAR

A Samhain Blessing

*Blessed be the ones who came before me,
whose names I carry in my blood.*

*Blessed be the dark that holds the seed,
and the fire that keeps the watch.*

What is finished, I release.

What is true, I keep.

*At the crossroads of the year I stand unafraid,
and I walk on with the torch in my hand.*

Mia Karolys



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