



## The Divine Child through the Year

This version from Michael Freedman

Essaier XXXI

Now let me sing of Demeter, with bountiful harvest,  
and Kore, her daughter with beautiful feet,  
whom Hades carried far away from her mother.  
Zeus who sees far was the one who allowed it.  
Kore was far from her mother by the side of the Ocean,  
picking roses and crocus and beautiful violets.  
In the lush meadows were iris and hyacinth,  
and especially narcissus, grown to lure the maiden.  
Grown by the Earth as a favour for Him Who Takes Many,  
its brightness was wonderful,  
astonishing all who beheld it,  
both gods the immortal, and men who must die.

Up from its roots, there sprang hundreds of heads  
and fragrance rose from it that made the sky smile.

Now Demeter's daughter was rapt by its beauty  
and stretched out her hand for this wonderful flower.  
But the earth opened up! And out rode He Who Takes Many  
with his undying horses and chariot of gold.

He took her though she was shocked!

He took her though she screamed loudly!

But nobody heard her,

not one of the mortals, no one immortal,

but aged Hekate, alone in her cave,

and bright shining Helios, the Sun who sees all.

While Kore saw stars and while she saw ocean,  
She hoped for deliverance; she looked for her mother.

But Darkness covered all from her terrified eyes.

Again her cries rose to the echoing peaks.

And far from the opening earth and the captive,

Demeter, Mother and Goddess, heard clearly.

Pain seized her heart and she soared like a bird,  
searching land, sea and the air.

Nine days and nine nights did Demeter search;

And nobody told her the truth.

No man, not a woman, not birds in the skies,

brought to her news, news of the virgin.

Dawn rose into day, a tenth dawn became day,

when Hecate came to her, bearing a lamp:

"Demeter, Goddess of bountiful harvest,

I heard her voice cry, but I could see nothing.

Then the immortals rose up to front Helios,

Helios the Sun who sees all from the skies.

Grief-laden Demeter, Mother and Goddess,

Asked the All-Seeing for news of the virgin.

Demeter, Goddess of bountiful harvest,  
Zeus the King, gave her to Hades to take for his wife.  
Pain strikes the Mother, struck down in her grief,  
Grief takes the Mother as He took her daughter.  
She abandons her place in the home of the gods;  
Disguising her beauty, she roams through the world.  
Until in Eleusis, they build her a temple,  
Where she stays hidden from gods and from men.  
She mourns with deep longing the loss of her daughter;  
This is a terrible year through the world.  
The earth takes no seed, nor nourishes the fruit.  
Demeter weeps but the skies give no rain.  
Kore, Persephone, has gone into darkness,  
Seized by the Dark Lord, By He Who Takes Many.  
Demeter, Mother and Goddess, have mercy  
on mortals who long for thy bountiful harvest

### **Barley Cakes**

Within the Guardians, it has been customary to eat barley cakes or bread dipped in honey, followed by wine, mead or ale.

Fortunately, our local supermarket has regular supplies of Barley and Sunflower Seed bread, which is ideal ritually as it acknowledges both the Great Earth Mother and the Lord of the Sun, for whom the Guardians of Grace Blessing and Sustenance® hold a special reverence. On special occasions, special barley cakes are made which include honey, so avoiding the rather messy business of people dipping their bread into the honey before eating it.

Demeter is the name of the Great Mother Goddess of the Earth. Her name, in classical Greece pronounced 'Dey-meyter' which literally means Earth Mother and was originally spelled 'Gh.Mhthr' and pronounced 'Gey-meter'. Demeter was the goddess of the fruitfulness of the Earth and therefore of every kind of crop, but she was particularly the goddess of barley. Some

scholars, including Robert Graves and Goblet d'Aviella, derive her name from the Cretan goddess name, Barley Mother.

Barley is one of the oldest grains known to humankind. It can be successfully grown in a wider range of climates than any other grain. It was the basis for beer or ale, the oldest known fermented drink. The Saxon word for barley was 'bere' and it seems quite natural that from this comes the German word bier, the French 'bire' and the English beer. Another name for Demeter is Ceres, and it is from this name that the general name for all types of edible grains, cereals, is derived.

The legend of Demeter includes the foundation of the Mysteries of Eleusis. They were the most famous of the ancient Mysteries. The Eleusinian Mysteries were unusual among the various mysteries of the ancient world, in that they were open to both men and women, unlike those of Cybele, the Good Goddess, which were open only to women, or of Mithras, the Lord of the Sun, which were open only to men.

In the temples of Demeter, the offerings to the Goddess were 'Fireless sacrifices that is, in their natural state, for example: honeycombs un-spun wool, un-pressed grapes and uncooked grain. Demeter embodied the principle of natural, rather than artificial production.

However, among the common people, the offerings left for the Earth Goddess Demeter in those groves, caves and other places which were believed to be sacred to the Goddess were usually barley cakes and honey.

### **Traditional Guardian Recipe for Barley Cakes**

The following recipe has been found successful. It combines all the elements of nature. While preparing it, the cook should meditate on the Barley Mother and her bountiful fruitfulness.

Ingredients: (the Elemental Correspondences are in brackets)

1, cups barley flour [Earth]

1 cup self-raising wheat flour [Earth & Air]

1 cup milk [Water]

1 egg [Spirit]

1 cup liquid honey [Spirit]

Pinch of salt [Fire and Earth] (Note: Fire is also provided by your oven)

Sift the flours and the salt together. Mix in the milk and egg, stirring the mixture. Liquefy the honey by heating it in a double boiler then add it and continue to stir. Preheat your oven and oven tray to 215 degrees C. Drop a spoonful of the mixture on to the tray, leaving space so each spoonful can spread out. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes. These cakes are not usually very brown in colour.

The quantities above will make a couple of dozen cakes. After baking, keep the barley cakes in a tight tin, as the honey tends to absorb moisture from the atmosphere.

Barley flour can be purchased at some health-food shops. We have a grain grinder, so we buy pearl barley in our local supermarket and grind it ourselves. Because barley contains little gluten, an elastic protein, it cannot be used to make flour that will produce the porous bread with which we are familiar. It can be used to make a flat or unleavened bread-cake, or you can do as we do and mix it with some ordinary self-raising wheat flour in which the air producing substance is included.