



Stand in Your Sovereignty: *A Homecoming to Tara*

By Candice Marie Sage

As a Canadian woman in my mid-fifties, I am in the process of reinventing myself, as the traditional roles of Mother, Wife, Homemaker fall away in this “second spring” of life. I liken it to being a caterpillar who has travelled and grown from the earth but must enter the crystal stage, reduced to primordial ooze and DNA, waiting to be reconfigured for flight. It is a time of reflection on what has been, what is, and what could be.

In Celtic pagan cultures, the Triquetra, or Celtic Trinity Knot, symbolizes the Triple Goddess and time as counted by Moon cycles - the life phases of Maiden (childhood/waxing moon), Mother (fertility/full moon), and Crone (wisdom/waning moon). Reconnecting with my pagan Celtic roots has helped me to better navigate this new phase of my life - making meaning of who I am, where I have

been, and what the future holds.

Reconnecting with my European ancestry (German and Irish) is a journey that started in 2022. In June of 2024, I embarked on my first pilgrimage to Ireland - something I had been planning since I was 17 years old.

My time in Eire began at a seaside resort in County Dublin, followed by a Goddess Retreat in County Meade - culminating with the Summer Solstice. I then enjoyed some horseback riding in County Mayo.

Since my childhood, I have been fascinated by fantasy literature and what lies beyond the Veil. Tara’s mythical creatures - Fairies, Leprechauns, Pookas, and Banshees - still capture my imagination. The trip was as magical as I could have hoped.

My first stop after landing in Dublin was Port Mearnóg (Portmarnock, County Dublin) where I delighted in a dawn-lit swim at



Candice and Big Charlie

Muir Éireann (the Irish Sea). Irish skies seem to be perpetually in motion, the sea breezes animating the clouds, changing the light, and the mood as they do.

“*The land was lush with summer, and the waves welcomed and whispered to me, “We have been waiting for you.”*”

I had the privilege of being chosen as one of eight women of Irish ancestry to participate in a unique retreat - the Call of the Sovereignty Goddess with Irish cultural leader Aoife Lowden and Irish American Circle Facilitator Tara Brading. We focused on the history of goddesses within Irish mythology in the five counties (including the Kingdom of Mide - Meade). Lowden also introduced us to the plant medicines of the Irish woods, including Mugwort - the grandmother wort that reconnects us to our essence through Druidic remembrance of female knowledge and bloodline. Lowden spoke in Irish as well as English, and we explored the beauty of the language as we experienced the woods and the sacred historic sites of the River Boyne Valley.

We travelled the Hill of Tara and the Womb of the Gods (and Goddesses). This revered burial place, according to the tradition of Ancient Ireland, was the fifth province and royal centre of Mide, which means ‘middle kingdom’. It was the home of Dagda, Chief of the Tuata Dé Danaan, one of the most important gods in Irish mythology who controlled life and death as well as the sea-



Newgrange

sons and time. It was the inauguration site and seat of the High Kings of Ireland. Ancient lore speaks to how the king of each of the five counties also wedded the goddess of those lands, a significant symbol of how the health of the people was tied to respecting and living symbiotically with the lands, waters and skies. The goddess of Mide is Eiru (Mide, Middle - goddess of kinship, Womb of the Gods). The other goddesses and their respective counties include:

- Adeen / Brigid
(Leinster, East – goddess of prosperity)
- Anya / Aine
(Munster, South - goddess of music)
- Maeve / Medh
(Connacht, West - goddess of knowledge)
- Morrigan / Macha
(Ulster, North - goddess of battle)

The River Boyne feeds the sacred ancient wells of Mide. Boann is the goddess of the river. We visited the Well of the White Cow, which is also tied to the astronomy of the region as a star formation that shines above the river. Orion, Taurus and Sirius the Dog meet in this Milky Way of the White Cow and the site serves as a Star Temple and observatory. Goddess Boann is a mother archetype who is also the protector of the well of knowledge, which is fed by the river.

Being there during the Summer Solstice (June 21, 2024) is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will never forget. We visited Newgrange, a 5,200-year-old neolithic tomb, often referred to as the Womb of the Gods. The structure was built to honour the summer and winter solstices. Inside the dark of that ancient and sacred place, we witnessed the morning sun illuminate the passage leading to the central chamber, and the wonder that countless generations before us had felt paying homage to the new season to come. It is said to be the place of the conception and birthing of Angus, the god of divine love, on the day that the Sun stood still to allow for his coming.

After experiencing the rich culture and beauty of County Mide, I sought out more experiences with nature. I had wanted to

reconnect with “horse medicine” for some time - the joy of riding and creating beautiful bonds. My quest took me west across the country to the Horse Back West Equestrian Centre in Killadoon, County Mayo on the Atlantic coast.

“The scenery is spectacular, with rolling green hills dotted with the white teeth of rock outcroppings as well as sheep.”

The clouds billowed in blue skies above the surf of the ocean. Upon these Atlantic golden sands, I felt the spirit of Epona, the Celtic goddess of horses and a protector of the land, as my faithful companion “Big Charlie” and I galloped along the Atlantic shore. It was a terrific way to conclude my first trip to Ireland.

A key exercise undertaken by the women of retreat was to reflect on and discover our Dán - our life’s purpose and the gift we bring to the world. It is tied to our identity and sovereignty. Mine was the ‘disrupter’ - a person who reveals the truth. It shall be born out in my writing, and I hope to continue exploring the lessons of this adventure in Eire.

My pilgrimage to Tara was a homecoming to self-identity through my roots. The lore of the goddesses reconnected me to my sovereignty as a woman, as a person whose purpose is to keep exploring the old traditions in order to pave the way for others, my children, for the descendants of Ireland. As I took the train across the country back to Dublin, I left with a whispered promise to return and explore more of the country’s magnificent scenery, its rich historical cultures, and to reconnect with the power of Tara’s land and sea.

