

# Mysterious Ways

A Cyberzine for Queer Pagan Men.

Summer / Fall 2023  
Volume 4, Issue 2

**Theme this Issue:** The Power of Names

Welcome to the latest issue of Mysterious Ways!

I generally promote Mysterious Ways as a cyberzine for Queer Pagan Men. Queer is more concise than saying “gay, bi, and trans men” and more inclusive of other related demographics beyond those three. Queer also has countercultural connotations. I can’t really use the more common LGBTQ+. With the focus on men, the “L” really doesn’t apply. Pagan is more concise than naming “Wiccans, Witches, Faeries, Druids, Heathens, Asatruars,” and all the other paths that fall under the umbrella term we call Paganism.

A while back someone challenged me in a “gay” Pagan, Wiccan, or Witches Facebook group over using the term Queer. I don’t remember which specific group. It was obvious from his comment that the term “Queer” held negative connotations for him and meant people radically different from himself. While concise terms can be debated, really though, I just want Mysterious Ways to be a melting pot for the ideas and thoughts of those Pagan (whatever their path) men (by birth or identity) who are not 100% heterosexual or at least don’t hold to traditional heterosexual male values.

(Continued on Page 2)



The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt remembers those lost to the AIDS epidemic.

For more information on the Quilt, please visit: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NAMES\\_Project\\_AIDS\\_Memorial\\_Quilt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NAMES_Project_AIDS_Memorial_Quilt)

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Image from Pexels.com

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## Special Thanks

Special thanks to all who contributed articles, poetry, and art this issue.

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Alternative and countercultural views are welcome and will often be presented, but more general views on topics related to gay, bi, trans+ men; the various Pagan paths, and men's space and men's issues in general. are also welcome. That all said, there really isn't any room for conservative views. I would suspect that very few "Queer Pagans" would espouse a conservative viewpoint anyway. This is also not a place for promoting hate or conspiracies.

The theme of this issue is "The Power of Names." What's in a name? How do we label ourselves? How do we name others? Do names and labels have power? Can we and should we reclaim names and labels that others have used against us? What are the various names and labels we have as Pagans? What are the names and labels we use to identify our sexual and romantic attractions? Are names and labels important or do they box us in? What are the ABCs of LGBTQIA+? Do labels help us find our tribe or do they just further divide us?

— Mel Mystery

## Events and Gatherings

### Brotherhood by the Bog Retreat 2023 was a Success Despite One Rainy Night

By Mel Mystery

The Brotherhood by the Bog (BBTB) retreat for Pagan men returned as an in-person retreat this year the weekend of April 21-23, 2023. The last time the retreat took place in person was in 2019. The retreat was cancelled in 2020 due to Covid, and was held virtually in 2021 and 2022. In person retreats, take place at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The in-person retreat tends mainly to draw local folks, but we have had attendees from other parts of Virginia, as well as North Carolina and D.C. The retreat tends to be very affordable and the smaller crowds allow for greater conversation and bonding among participants. BBTB is open to Pagan men of all paths, backgrounds, and orientations.

This year's theme was "What Place for Pagan Men." Discussions and panels included topics of where Pagan men fit into what is traditionally considered a feminine, Goddess-centered spiritual path and how men fit into specific Pagan paths. One topic that got somewhat heated was whether men's groups and men's events are inherently sexist. The overall consensus was that it's okay for various groups and demographics in a pluralistic society to meet over shared experiences and concerns. The line is drawn when such groups start espousing hate or inequality.

The role of men's rites of passage was also discussed. It was felt that rites of passage beyond marriage and death ceremonies are often neglected in the Pagan community. Rites beyond these include ceremonies welcoming young men into puberty and adulthood, recognizing the birth of a first child, vision quests, eldering, and so on. There is a need to educate the community on rites of passage as these help ease one's transition from one stage or role in life to another. Many in the Pagan community aren't even aware of the possibility of rites of passage. Pagan leaders, especially, should be interested in this topic. The general Pagan community will be more interested by seeing Rites of Passage being performed than by going to workshops on the topic. There isn't a great deal of information out there about how these work, and what information there is tends to be scholarly anthropological works.

Diversity and allyship were also discussed. As part of our efforts to support women and various marginalized communities, the topic of diversity and allyship were discussed. This included a conversation on "mansplaining" and "straightsplaining." Mansplaining is when a man explains something to a woman in a condescending manner. An example of "straightsplaining" was given from a previous retreat



Photo from Brotherhood by the Bog 2023.

*(Continued from page 2)*

where someone was trying to work out their sexual orientation. The straight men at that retreat had made suggestions such as “watch porn and see if you get an erection” and various other not-so-helpful suggestions. Meanwhile, there was another gay person in the group who had actual experience coming to terms with his sexuality who tried to talk, but was drowned out by the straight men in the group.

Other activities included a Bog Trivia game with prizes. Due to rain on Saturday afternoon and evening, the nature hike and main ritual were cancelled. Our drumming host moved forward with an evening drum session beneath our canopy tents. The relaxed and subdued drumming under the canopy tent in the rain was met with positive reviews. Overall, the retreat was a success despite abundant blessings from the rain gods on Saturday evening. Next year, Brotherhood by the Bog is expected to be held virtually the weekend of April 19-21, 2024. The theme will be announced soon.

With the success of the virtual retreats, it has been decided to alternate between virtual and in-person retreats every other year. The virtual retreats drew attendees from across the U.S and even attendees from the UK and Portugal. Our virtual retreats are free, though donations are always welcome. In person retreats require a registration fee to help cover costs.

**For more information on Brotherhood by the Bog:**

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

## Virtual Arcadia to focus on “Otherworld Spirits,” November 3-5, 2023

*By Mel Mystery*

The first ever Virtual Arcadia retreat will be held the weekend of November 3-5, 2023. There have been two previous in-person Arcadia retreats. The first was held in October 2019 prior to the Covid pandemic and the second was held in October 2021. Our virtual theme this year is “Otherworld Spirits.” The idea actually came from the theme of the last issue of Mysterious Ways. It seems there is much potential content and interest in this theme.

The virtual retreat is free and open to Queer Pagan men over the age of 18. As much of the content of this virtual retreat is not specific to one’s sexual orientation, we will also welcome open-minded and respectful straight Pagan men who would like to attend. We may even try to offer a workshop on Allyship. As a Queer men’s event, we will still try to ensure there are some workshops, activities, or discussions specific to the Queer Pagan men’s experience.

Specific details including schedule, presenters, workshops, and so on will be announced on the Arcadia web page as details become available.

We expect to return to an in-person retreat in Fall 2024, and plan to alternate with a virtual Arcadia again in Fall 2025.

For more information:

<https://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia>

## **Virtual Brotherhood by the Bog A Retreat for Pagan Men April 19-21, 2024**

**Theme and guest presenters to be announced.**

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

## Honor Our Ancestors at Sacred Kin Samhain

By Julian Crosson-Hill

Join us this October 27 - 29, 2023, for the Sacred Kin Samhain retreat at Oakwood Retreat Center. Sacred Kin Samhain is a spiritual retreat for gay and bi men who want to experience deeper connection and community with other like-minded men. It is open to men of all spiritual paths with a lean towards Neo-Pagan practices. It is organized and facilitated by ICF-certified spiritual life coach Julian Crosson-Hill, ACC.

We will build an altar for our queer ancestors during Sacred Kin Samhain. Our queer ancestors are those queer trailblazers who have gone before us and are no longer living. They continue to inspire us, and we continue to benefit from their work. Some examples of queer ancestors include:

Harvey Milk  
Larry Kramer  
Oscar Wilde  
Vito Russo



We will honor our ancestors during the retreat through drumming, dancing, singing, chanting, and ritual. We'll offer an optional Utsetta experience. Utsetta is a Norse practice of sitting out in nature to commune with the spirits of ancestors. There will also be workshops and community-building activities.

Oakwood Retreat Center is located in Selma, Indiana. The retreat registration includes lodging at Oakwood and meals.

Learn more about Oakwood Retreat Center at <https://www.discoveroakwood.org/>.

Julian Crosson-Hill, ACC, is an ICF-certified spiritual life coach, RYT-200 yoga instructor, meditation teacher, and human design specialist. He has been facilitating festivals and teaching workshops for over 20 years. He was the co-founder and co-facilitator of the Between the Worlds Men's Festival and the founder of the Coph Nia Festival.

You can learn more about Julian and his work at <https://www.queerspirituality.net>

Registration for the retreat is \$517 for a shared room. A limited number of private rooms are available for \$579. Payment plans are available with no additional fees or charges. Simply select "partial.ly" when checking out. Payment plans must be completed by October 20, 2023.

Registration for Sacred Kin Samhain is available at <https://www.queerspirituality.net/work-with-me/sacred-kin-samhain/>

## Stone and Stang 2023 Explored Magic of Self

Review by Mel Mystery

Stone and Stang was held again virtually this year. The virtual retreat was held by the Initiates of the Unnamed Path the weekend of May 19-21. The Unnamed Path is a Pagan spiritual path for men who love men. The theme of this year's retreat was "Magic of Self: Purpose, Truth, and Empowerment." Much emphasis was placed on the Upper World and how to become whole as a person. The virtual retreat drew an international audience including attendees from the U.S., Canada, Berlin, and Australia among other countries.

Presenters included Lance Demuth who led a workshop titled "Three Souls, Three Ancestral Roots, Three Cauldrons, Three Worlds. In this experiential workshop, Demuth guided participants through a guided meditation practice to help align their three souls, three groups of ancestors, three worlds of the cosmos, and three cauldrons (energy centers of the body) with their animal bodies.

Marc Leger led a workshop titled "Reclaiming the Golden Shadow."

Many of us are familiar with the Jungian concept of "shadow" – those parts of ourselves that we detach from and avoid because of fear, guilt, and trauma. The Golden Shadow includes those parts of our higher selves we have trouble claiming. This includes when we downplay our worth, when we fear our own success or putting ourselves out there, when we feel we don't deserve good things or that we're asking for too much; when we fear that others will be resentful or punitive if we stand out. Leger pointed out that we have a collective Golden Shadow as queer men. We have learned to censor and hide parts of ourselves throughout our lives to fit in and to protect ourselves from a homophobic world. The Golden Shadow blocks us from experiencing our Higher Self and developing our own unique gifts and talents.

Raine presented a workshop on "The Other Mysteries." The Unnamed Path focuses on the tribe and ancestors of men who love men. Through guided journeys Raine explored what other tribes and ancestors might be out there for folks of other sexual and gender variations including Sumerian Transgender Priests, Lesbian Saints, Asexual Greek Champions, and Gender Fluid Deities.

Durgadas Allon Duriel presented "The Mind as Wand." This is the power of the mind to generate and channel magickal energy. Much of how we experience the world around us is based on how and what we think. Not only is the mind influenced by the outside world and our reactions to it; the mind can also influence the outside world. Duriel was careful to distance himself from law of attraction terms and concepts and the victim blaming that sometimes comes within that framework. Rather than trying to remain positive all the time, Duriel suggested being compassionate with ourselves and our thoughts. Focusing our thoughts is often difficult in modern times where our minds are so cluttered, overstimulated, and distracted. Fear, doubt, and worry can obstruct our ability to manifest what we want in our lives. Specific practices to cultivate include affirmations, questioning our negative self-talk, regular cleansing and banishing rituals, detaching oneself from outcome, and working in incremental "baby" steps to reach your goals if the big goal is too emotionally charged.

Matthew Sydney led a workshop titled "Spirit Guides and the Upper World." He discussed Afro-Caribbean influences on the Unnamed Path and Afro-Caribbean approaches to working with spirit guides. He talked about concepts of spiritual hierarchy, spirit commissions/divisions, and a spiritual court that we all have. He suggested there are many divisions of spirits including the Ancestors of Men Who Love men, witches, gypsies, African slaves, Jewish Rabbis, Amazons, Angels and Archangels, and many others. He ended his workshop with an Upperworld path working where participants were led to discover their spiritual court.

Saturday evening featured a "Circle of Sight" where all participants were led on a journey to the light realm and two Unnamed Path Initiates channeled the Light God and answered questions put forth by folks in the audience. A divination was also taken.

Stay tuned to the [Unnamed Path website](#) and [social media](#) for information on the next Stone and Stang to be held in 2024. There was some talk that the retreat may return to an in-person retreat next year.



## From Across the Pond



Antinous as Dionysus-Osiris, Vatican Museum

### From Across the Pond Dionysus.... And his cult in ancient Greece *by Anarion (writing from Portugal)*

In this latest article, I wish to look at the Greek god Dionysus and his cult. It is thought that Dionysus originated in ancient Thrace and was imported into Greece. Indeed he may have been thought of as a foreigner in Greece and was sometimes referred to as "the god that comes" ( I will leave the connotation there to your imagination ). Rather confusingly, he was also known as Bacchus in Greek times, but this name is most commonly associated with the god in Roman times. Dionysus is the god of wine, wine making, orchards, fruit, and vegetation on the natural side. He is also the god of fertility, festivity, madness, religious ecstasy and theatre. You may think it strange that madness is included but his festivals were often wild affairs and many later writers considered them insane or that they inspired drunken madness. As it is, wine was central to his cult and rituals. This wonderful fluid (as I know all too well) inspires happiness and a sort of divine madness. It also reduces pain and suffering (at least, that is, until the morning after!).

So, what did his cult involve? Well, it seems it was one of absolute pleasure. Satyrs are often associated with the cult; those well-endowed nature spirits which were often the focus of comedic plays in ancient Greece. A satyr named Silenus was the tutor to the young Dionysus. Satyrs always have a large penis and were often involved in masturbating or bestiality. So, they exemplified total abandonment of control. Other symbols of the Dionysus cult were bulls, snakes, leopards, ivy and of course wine.

At least in Athens, the main festivals held in honour of Dionysus were the Dionesia and Lenaia. The Dionysia was held at different times of the year according to whether it was in city or rural settings. In rural locations it was held in winter (in the month of the winter solstice). Phallophoroi (or Phallus Carriers) paraded large model phalloi made of wood or bronze in procession. Apparently, this was to honour the wild sexual nature associated with the god Dionysus. The other participants in the procession, the Kanephoroi, were young girls carrying baskets with bread and fruit. Interestingly a phallus theme has carried on until today in festivals in various parts of Europe, including a very conservative and catholic village in Portugal, combining the two participants of the ancient festival by devout christian women making penis shaped breads and cakes. The City Dionysia was also known by the name of the Great Dionysia.

Held at the time of the Vernal Equinox, it also had a procession, although in Athens this not only involved the penis and basket holders, but also a large statue of Dionysus Eleuthereus which was processed to the Theatre of Dionysus on the southern side of the acropolis. On the following day the title of plays which were to be performed in the theatre were announced and judges selected by lot. After sacrifice of a bull at the theatre, to purify it, tradition was followed in that the first play performed was always a tragedy by the playwright Thespis (from whose name we get the word Thespian). By the fifth Century BCE, the festival was five days of merriment, three of which were dedicated to tragic plays. Three playwrights each put on three tragedies and one satyr comedy on successive days. All of these were watched by the judges. The other two days were devoted to comic poetry. On the final day another procession took place and the winners selected for both comic and tragic plays. Each winner got a wreath of ivy. Many of these winning playwrights are still known today.

The other main Athenian festival dedicated to the cult of Dionysus was the Lenaia. This was held around January but little is known about the ritual of which it was composed. What is known is that it was in honour of Dionysus Lenaios, god of the wine press or the vintage, which seems very proper to me!



The phallus seems to have been closely associated with Dionysus. As mentioned above, the Phallophoroi were literally 'phallus carriers'. The photograph to the left is of what was, originally, one of two penis monuments, both symbols for the god, to be found on the island of Delos, in the ruins of the Stoibadeion: a temple to Dionysus. Much imagery to do with Dionysus is explicit in nature! Of course, there are ample connections between the phallus and fertility, but in a gay context there is one legend that supports the thought that Dionysus was happy having sex with either women or men (or whatever !!!).

At one point Dionysus had to travel to the Greek underworld Hades to rescue his mother Semele. In order to do this, he was rowed to the middle of a lake, where the entrance to Hades was to be found, by a fisherman called Polymnus. The payment the fisherman required of Dionysus was the right to make love with the god. However, when Dionysus returned from Hades he found that Polymnus had died. In order to fulfil his vow, Dionysus went to the tomb of Polymnus, took a branch from an olive tree and shaped it into a phallus with which he then carried out Polymnus' request, presumably by fucking himself as though it was being done by Polymnus. It is thought this is one of the reasons the phallus was subsequently used to represent Dionysus.

However, Dionysus also had other male lovers. Ampelos, the son of a satyr and a nymph, was 'beardless' meaning he was a youth. In Ovid's *Fasti*, this boy was *'loved by Bacchus [Dionysus] on [the] Ismarian hills. He trusted him with a vine hanging from the leaves of an elm; it is now named for the boy. The reckless youth fell picking gaudy grapes on a branch. Liber [Dionysus] lifted the boy to the stars.'*

Actually the sexuality of Dionysus was very questionable. He is often mentioned by classic writers as being effeminate or androgynous. Indeed this all fits in well with his festivals where wine induced a total lack of restraint and must have led (bearing in mind all that phallic symbolism) to an abundance of sexual abandonment, both heterosexual and homosexual. One modern writer has compared the androgynous nature of Dionysus with The Rocky Horror Show character Dr. Frank N. Furter. In this article, Amittai Aviram draws the similarities between the rock musical and the famous play by Euripides called 'The Bacchae'. This rather bloodthirsty Greek tragedy tells the story of King Pentheus of Thebes ( Greek Thebes that is ) and his mother Agave. Dionysus had been slandered by his aunt Agave and her sisters putting it about that he was not the son of Zeus. Also, Pentheus was refusing to allow the worship of Dionysus at Thebes. Dionysus wreaked revenge by instituting his cult in Thebes despite the king's objections. The result was that Pentheus was torn apart by the women of Thebes, his own mother raising his head on a pike. Nice family!

This then is but a very brief examination of this fascinating god and his rites. For all gay Pagans he is worthy of study, because, perhaps more than any other god in the Greek pantheon, he exemplifies a freedom we all, as gay people, wish to live by. And in this ever increasingly conservative and restrictive world, his festivals offer a glimpse of a world where sense was balanced with divine abandonment.

Anarion ( Boetia@protonmail.com)

# The Power of Names

## Names Have Power

by Mel Mystery

### Personal Names

Our personal names include our given names, nicknames, our magickal or craft names, and our “true” names.

Our given names are names that were given to us by our parents and include our first, middle, and last names. Different cultures have different conventions for naming, but in most cases there is an individual name and family name which is a connection to our ancestors. Family names are usually passed down patrilineally on the father’s side. A few cultures pass down names matrilineally such as some Native American tribes like the Cherokee, Choctaw, Hopi, Iroquois, and Navajo. Certain cultures in parts of India, Africa, China, and some other parts of the world also use matrilineal naming systems. Some Scandinavian cultures, such as that of Iceland don’t pass down family names at all, but instead pass down a name that identifies one’s father or sometimes one’s mother. For example, Leif Ericson was literally Eric’s son. If Leif had been female, his last name would have been Erics-dottir. In the past, family surnames might be derived from membership in a tribe or clan, or by occupation. Bowman, Hunter, Taylor, Mason, and Gardner are a handful of names describing a family’s occupation. In the past, children often trained in and carried on the family business. Generally we didn’t have any hand in choosing our personal or family names, but there are other types of names we might have more control over.

In addition to our personal names, we are sometimes given nicknames by family or friends, or we may have chosen nicknames for ourselves. Nicknames can be a variation on one’s personal or family name, they may relate to some individual quality, or they may be something descriptive or even something ironic like calling a large man “tiny” or a tall man “shorty.”

Magickal and craft names are often taken by people involved in a magickal order or who practice solitary magick. This can be a pseudonym for protecting one’s privacy, a name chosen to express one’s path or religious devotion, or it may be given upon initiation into a coven or magickal order. Magickal names also help protect one’s given name as knowing this can give others power over you. I’ve heard that it’s best to be careful when taking on magickal and craft names associated with deities, major mythological heroes, and even mythological creatures. Doing so, while not wrong for everyone, may bring on both good and bad strong energies, responsibilities, and life circumstances that you aren’t ready to handle.

True names, also known as soul names, are names, sounds, or vibrations that our souls are known by throughout our cycles of reincarnation and between incarnations. This is a name or sound that resonates with us at our deepest levels and reflects our truest nature. Soul names are sometimes discovered through meditation, trance, working with higher guides, near death experiences, and so on. These names are not always knowable or accessible to us within our lifetimes. True names have great power and are believed to contain information about our past, present, and future incarnations, and our true purpose in life and our life lessons. Knowledge of someone’s true name is supposed to give one ultimate magickal power over them.

### Group Names

The names we call ourselves as groups and tribes and the way we identify ourselves also carry objective and subjective meanings – both to ourselves and to those outside our social groups. While we all fall to one degree or another under the larger umbrella of LGBTQIA+ people, how we identify ourselves within the dominant sub-culture is directly linked to our identities and also how people see us and react to us. How we identify our sexual orientation often reflects not only our sexual tastes and gender orientations, but also our views on culture and politics. Some folks identify by standard labels like gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Others identify as “Queer.” Queer is actually a formerly derogatory term that was reclaimed by gay rights groups in the 1980s, notably the group





Queer Nation. Queer is an umbrella term for men, women, and those in-between of varying non-heterosexual sexual identities. Queers tend to be widely inclusive, liberal, and sometimes even radical. There are a wide variety of other terms we can call ourselves that reflect our sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as our cultural, political, and spiritual alignments. These terms carry with them personal meanings and come with positive and negative connotations to ourselves and to those outside our groups.

Within spiritual paths, how we identify ourselves also affects our identity, how people see us, and the assumptions they make about us. Are we Pagan, Christo-Pagan, Wiccan, Witches, Druid, Shaman, or a follower of the Norse gods who might call themselves Heathens, Asatruers, or Odinists? Are we Hellenistic, Dianic, Discordian, Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Reconstructionist, Ceremonial, or Eclectic? Some male witches have reclaimed the term “Warlock,” while others prefer to distance themselves from this term. The path and terminology one chooses may reflect one’s cultural or family heritage, as well as what resonates with us, our interests, values, views on life, and beliefs about our place in the universe. Our paths are sometimes chosen as a rejection of other paths that didn’t work for us.

### **The Names We Call Others**

The names we call others carry power and can serve to marginalize those folks or to raise them up. Calling people their preferred names, labels, and pronouns is the polite thing to do. Certainly, one should strive to avoid calling others names that are outdated or offensive. Trans folks have a term they call their “dead name.” This is the name they were known by, usually given at birth, that aligns with the gender they were given at birth. Once a Transgender person has adopted the name of their preferred gender, it is considered rude to call them by their dead name.

As LGBTQ+ folks many of us understand first-hand what it is to be called names – like fag or the derogatory queer among others. While I’m confident that most of my readers are enlightened enough not to call groups of people derogatory names, I wonder how many of us are prone to other types of name calling.

It’s been said more than once that the gay community, and here I use the term gay in its wider use as an umbrella term.... It’s been said more than once that the gay community is often hardest on our own – whether it be a general bitchiness seen in certain segments of the community or the terms we use for those who don’t fit our social or sexual types. Gay men, especially, can be cruel. The names we call others within our own community can sometimes come with a bite. Many are unrestrained in their name-calling and disdain for overweight people, older people, younger people, drag queens, bisexuals, those we consider too feminine or too masculine, and the like. As I said before, the names we call people can build people up or tear them down. The names we use can hurt people and damage their self-esteem. Hurtful names can perpetuate negative cycles that some people have lived with for significant portions of their lives. Sometimes the names we call people can even damage their reputations.

As Pagans we know the power of words and the names we use whether our individual names, group names, or the names we call others. We know the power of names and words in naming the properties of people and things, in working spells, in invoking and evoking deities and other spirits, in affirmations, in exercising the law of attraction, in creating our own unique version of reality, and in affecting the larger reality. We know that names have power.

**“The words we use are strong. They make reality.”**

— Wang Chung

## **Between the Worlds**

**A Spiritual Gathering for Men Who Love Men**

**August 8-13, 2023**

**Pomeroy, OH**

[www.betweentheworlds.org](http://www.betweentheworlds.org)

## MEN WHO LOVE MEN

*By Sawyer Massie and Adam Black*

The Unnamed Path is a spiritual tradition for Men Who Love Men. We strive to uncover, live and share a distinct energetic current that embraces our unique experiences as men and male-bodied persons within the Male Mysteries. But what does "Men Who Loves Men" mean? Who does this refer to? Men Who Love Men is a multifaceted term that encapsulates our collective identities within the LGBTQIAP+ community, recognizing and celebrating the diversity in our experiences. It reflects our sexual, intimate, and/or romantic expressions of love and connection.

There is no singular way to be a man who loves men. We transcend spatial and cultural boundaries, existing in every culture and coming from all walks of life. Many terms and identities, claimed and imposed, have been used to describe the nature of our love. We are - and have always been - more than one experience. What connects us is not restricted to blood or identity, but rather a shared context in which we engage and experience the world through our love. This often includes discrimination, violence and hatred, but also our journeys of self-discovery and coming into our own power.

When we speak of love between self-identifying men this usually evokes images of intimacy and sex. It can be something carnal and/or deeply emotional. When men love it is a powerful current that connects two beings. In the Unnamed Path that current is taken to a deeper and higher level simultaneously.

We embrace this connection not only on a physical and emotional level, we elevate it to a spiritual one. Though this love can take many forms, including spiritual, it does not have to be. Though there is an inherent spiritual element to Men Who Love Men, this love does not intend for you to live a solitary spiritual life of exclusion. The energy current of Men Who Love Men taps the Male Mysteries in a way akin to the Fertility Mysteries and presents as an aspect of the reclaimed Gay Male Mysteries. Men Who Love Men includes all self-identifying men including those in the non-binary and trans community.

We acknowledge that men have loved men throughout history, even going back to pre-recorded history. These men lived and loved, and in so doing created a current of love that travels to us today. In the Unnamed Path we tap this current of love to revel in it. Men Loving Men is empowering and sacred. It creates an energy that is undeniable and palpable. This current runs through all self-identifying Men Who Love Men, whether physical or emotional. Tapping into that current can give us power, community, connection and immense wisdom of all that came before us.

In the Unnamed Path this love is not limited to the men around us, or even the men all over the world. This love transcends time and place. We love all Men Who Love Men, those who came before us, those we share our existence with, and all those who will be in the future. This energy, our love as Men Who Love Men, can be tapped and worked with to bring healing, magic, prophecy and wisdom. The term Men Who Love Men honors the inherent sacredness in our existence as gay / queer men. You are seen. You are accepted for who you are. You are loved.



*Image from Cotton Bro Studio on Pexels.com*

## Bear Terminology

By Mel Mystery

Modern gay bear culture celebrates large, hairy, masculine men. Bears might be chubby or muscular, but either way they are large. There's also an overlap between bear culture and the leather community.

Bears are further broken down into sub-categories, many that reference types of bears and other animals. Grizzly bears are extra-large or extra hairy.

Polar bears are older bears with white body and facial hair. Black bears, Panda Bears, and Koala bears are bears of African, Asian, and Australian descent respectively. Otters are slimmer or less hairy bear types of all ages and wolves are slimmer bears that are sexually assertive, sometimes even aggressive. Cubs are younger or smaller bear types.

The term "bear" was coined as a type for gay and bisexual men in the July 26, 1979 issue of **The Advocate** magazine in an article titled "Who's Who at the Zoo?" The term was later popularized by Richard Bulgar and Chris Nelson in their founding of **Bear Magazine** in 1987.



## Fairy Facts

Among Native Americans, the Two-Spirits of many tribes often gave children and adults lucky names and spiritual names.

The Radical Faeries have a variation on this where they sometimes confer Faerie names to people. I've been told that receiving a Faerie name is quite an honor.

### **Sacred Kin Samhain**

**A spiritual retreat for gay and bi men.**

**October 27-29, 2023**

**“Honor Our Queer Ancestors”**

[www.queerspirituality.net/work-with-me/sacred-kin-samhain/](http://www.queerspirituality.net/work-with-me/sacred-kin-samhain/)

## Uranian and Other 19th Century Terms for Homosexuals

By Mel Mystery

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century German writer and pioneering homosexual rights activist, Karl Ulrich coined the term Uranian to describe a third sex which he believed was “a female psyche in a male body.”

Ulrich himself was homosexual and remembered wearing girls’ clothes, playing with girls, and wanting to be a girl as a young child. He later had his first homosexual experience with his riding instructor at the age of fourteen. At the age of 37, Ulrich’s came out to his family and friends and began writing about homosexuality and homosexual identities. He even publicly petitioned the German Congress to repeal anti-homosexual laws. As a result of his activism, he lost his job as a legal advisor and also was in constant legal trouble – not because of his actions, but because of his words.

Ulrichs called for the inalienable rights (as established by nature) of homosexuals to live and love without persecution. The only things he felt should be prohibited were the seduction of male minors, the violation of other people’s civil rights, and public indecency.

Ulrichs wrote a total of twelve books on the topic of homosexuality. In those books, he came up with a number of terms to describe sexual orientation and gender identity. These terms were inspired by the ancient Greek work Plato’s Symposium which discussed two kinds of love – heterosexual love born from Aphrodite Dione (the Greek goddess of love born of a female) and homosexual love born from Aphrodite Urania (the Greek goddess of love born from a male). Ulrichs coined the terms “Urning” to describe men who loved men and “Dioningin” to describe men who are attracted to women. He later came up with terms to describe homosexual women, bisexuals, and intersex people.

**Below is the list of the terms he coined:**

**Urning** – A biological male with a female psyche who is attracted to men

**Urningin** – A biological female with a male psyche who is attracted to women

**Dioning** – A biological male who is heterosexual and masculine

**Dioningin** – A biological female who is heterosexual and feminine

**Uranodioning** – A biological male who is bisexual

**Uranodioningin** – A biological female who is bisexual

**Zwitter** – Someone who is intersexual having the biological organs of both sexes

(continued next page)

### Help Us to Help You and Our Tribe of Queer Pagan Men

Where else can you find a publication geared toward your unique interests and experiences as a Queer Pagan man?

Submissions to Mysterious Ways are not only encouraged, they are vital to provide several voices to the content of this Cyberzine.

I usually start sending out requests across various social media about a month before the submission deadline, but you don’t have to wait for my request to get your articles in. The submission deadline for the next issue is always listed in the current issue and I’m always happy to receive submissions anytime during that six month period. Mysterious Ways is published semi-annually. While there is usually a specific theme for each issue, submissions of a general nature are welcome too.

Please consider sharing your voice by sending in your articles, book reviews, event reviews, poetry, art, or anything else that might be relevant to Queer Pagan men. Don’t forget to share information about your Queer Pagan Men’s groups and events!!!

**Submission deadline for the next issue of Mysterious Ways is December 15, 2023.**

## Ulrich further subdivided his terms for male sexuality:

**Manning** – A masculine homosexual male interested effeminate men

**Weibling** – A feminine homosexual male interested in masculine men

**Manuring** – A feminine heterosexual male

**Zwischen-Urning** – A homosexual male interested in adolescent males

**Conjunctive** – Homosexual men with tender and passionate feelings for other men

**Disjunctive** – Heterosexual men with tender feelings for other men, but who are sexually attracted to women (think of this as a Victorian term for “bromance”).

**Virilisierte Mannlinge** -- Homosexual men who have learned to act heterosexual

**Uraniaster** or **Uranisierter Mann** – A heterosexual man who engages in situational homosexuality when females are not available

One thing I find interesting about this list is that Ulrichs had no terms for masculine homosexual men interested in other masculine men or for feminine homosexual men who are interested in other feminine men.

## The ABC's of LGBTQ+

A heavily abbreviated list of modern terms for gender and sexuality from the book by Ashley Mardell.

**Agender/genderless:** Someone who is without gender, gender neutral, and/or rejects the concept of gender for themselves.

**Ally:** Someone who does not identify as LGBTQIA+, but actively supports the community.

**Androgynous:** Possessing qualities which are traditionally associated as both masculine and feminine, neither masculine nor feminine, and/or in between masculine and feminine.

**Asexual:** An umbrella term, or stand-alone identifier, for someone who experiences little or no sexual attraction.

**Bicurious:** Someone curious about having sexual/romantic attractions and/or experiences with more than one gender.

**Bisexual/romantic:** Being attracted to two or more genders.

**Cisgender/Cis:** A person whose gender identity is the same as their sex and/or gender assigned at birth.

**FTM:** Acronym for “female to male.”

**Gay:** This label can refer specifically to men who are attracted to men; it can refer to people who are primarily attracted to the same or similar gender as their own; or it can be an umbrella term for anyone who is not straight.

**Gender confusion/Gender f\*ck:** A person who deliberately seeks to cause, or enjoys when they create, confusion in regards to their own gender.

**Genderfluid:** Having a gender that changes.

**Genderqueer:** Someone whose gender exists outside of or beyond society's binary concept of gender.

**Heterosexual/romantic a.k.a. Straight:** Being attracted to the other binary gender.

**Homosexual/romantic:** A person who is attracted to the same or similar gender(s) as their own.

**Intersex:** A sex category that includes people whose anatomy does not completely fit into either of society's typical definitions of male or female.

**LGBTQIA+:** Stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, sexual/aromantic, and plus for other identities that are not straight and/or not cisgender.

**Masexuality/romanticism a.k.a. Androsexuality/romanticism:** Attraction to men and/or masculinity.

**MTF:** Acronym for “male to female.”

**Non-binary/nb:** Existing or identifying outside the sex/gender binary, being neither a man nor woman, or being only partially or a combination of these things.

**Pansexual/romantic a.k.a. Omnisexual/romantic:** Capable of being attracted to any or all gender(s).

**Queer:** An umbrella term or identity taken on by some LGBTQIA+ people to describe a sexual and/or gender identity that falls outside societal norms. This term has a history of being used as a slur. Although it has been reclaimed by many LGBTQIA+ people, not everyone is comfortable using it.

**Transgender/Trans:** An umbrella term for anyone whose gender identity does not match their sex and/or gender assigned at birth.

**Trysexual/romantic:** Someone who is sexually and/or romantically open to experimenting.

**Womosexuality/romanticism a.k.a. gynosexuality/romanticism:** Attraction to women and/or femininity.

## The Deviant's Pocket Guide to Outlandish Sexual Desires Barely Contained in Your Subconscious

Book Review by Mel Mystery

I saw the **The Deviant's Pocket Guide to Outlandish Sexual Desires** several years ago in a bookstore and vowed to buy it. Several years later in 2023, I finally ordered the book online. The Deviant's Guide is a handy little book about many of the different types of fetishes out there. The book is easy reading and can be quite humorous. The book is grouped into the main categories of: Pretty Pain; Bodies, Parts, and Functions; Inanimate Objects, Fantasyland; Flora and Fauna; and Costumes and Play. For each individual fetish, its names and related names are given; a brief, often humorous, sentence is given to summarize the fetish; along with useful items needed to explore it; a funny description is given about what the fantasy looks like then an objective description; possible psychological origins of the fetish are presented; final considerations about safety; and the section usually ends with a bit of trivia related to the fetish. Fetishes range from the common BDSM to Nasophilia (sexual attraction to noses) to Plushophilia ("The preference for soft and cuddly sex toys) to Spectrophilia (sexual attraction to ghosts) to Dendrophilia (attraction to plants) to superhero and robot fetishes. The list goes on.

One of the big takeaways from this book are the sections on the psychological origins of each fetish. Most fetishes can be traced to childhood fears and traumas or even current fears and traumas. Do you have a clown fetish? Maybe you were afraid of clowns as a child and now that fear takes on a sexual edge. While not specifically mentioned in the book, it appears that most sexual fetishes are related to our psychological shadows—those parts of ourselves that we fear, feel guilty about, or that relate to trauma of some kind. In some cases, too, it is exploring something you are not—such as a strong, confident man exploring the passive and vulnerable role in BDSM.

The list of fetishes is not comprehensive by any means though many additional fetishes can be extrapolated from those listed. Some of those fetishes not listed included puppy play, sounding, CFNM, and CMNM. These would, of course, be extensions of BDSM, cuckoldry, and medical fetish which were described in the book.

***In line with the rest of this issue of Mysterious Ways, I'm going to include a short list of the fetishes listed in this guide down below. The list is by no means a complete listing of fetishes from the book, but a small sampling.***

**Agalmatophilia** — Sexual attraction to statues or to people turned into statues (such as by Medusa).

**Balloon Fetish (aka "looners")**— A fetish for balloons and sometimes popping those balloons.

**BDSM** — "The pleasure of the right kind of pain."

**Coulrophilia (clown fetish)** — "The desire to fit as many sex partners as possible into a tiny car."

**Cuckoldry** — "The desire to have another man take your wife. Please take her."

**Dendrophilia (plant/tree fetish)** — "The overwhelming urge to get some wood."

**Doraphilia** — Sexual attraction to fur and leather.

**Fursuit Fetish (aka "Furries")** — "The desire to do it like a couple of cute and furry anthropomorphic animals."

**Macrophilia** — A fantasy fetish for sex and domination from giant

people or being a giant doing the domination oneself.

**Microphilia** — A fantasy fetish for sex and domination of tiny people or being shrunk and dominated oneself. .

**Maschalagna** — Armpit fetish.

**Medical Fetish** — "The prescription for specialized loving care."

**Podophilia** — Foot fetish.

**Pony Play** — Treating your sexual partner like a horse—grooming, training, riding, etc.

**Robot Fetish** — "He's so cute. So hard, and strong, and shiny."

**Schediaphilia (aka Yiff)** — A sexual attraction to cartoon characters.

**Sitophilia** — Combining food and sex.

**Superhero Fetish** — "The pursuit of truth, justice, and a huge erection."

# Poetry and Art



*"Selfie" (left) and "Free The Faerie" (right)*  
Artwork submitted by Konata Stallings  
<https://www.deviantart.com/konataartonline>  
Instagram: KonataArtOnline

**Virtual Arcadia 2023**  
A Retreat for Queer Pagan Men

**November 3-5, 2023**

This year's theme is "Otherworld Spirits."  
This year's virtual event is free!!!

[www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia](http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia)

# Queer Pagan Resources

## Queer Pagan Men's Groups

**Brotherhood of Cernunnos** -- A Brotherhood of UK Gay Pagan Men.

FMI: <http://www.brotherhoodofcernunnos.org/>

**Cern'osia** -- An eclectic Neo-Pagan faith which focuses exclusively on the veneration and worship of the Celtic Horned God, Cernunnos. Although it could be adapted by anyone who worships the Horned One, it was designed primarily with the needs of a solitary Pagan man in mind.

FMI: <https://cernosia.webs.com/>

**Ecclesia Antinoi** — Devoted to the worship of Antinous, the lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Antinous was deified after his death and is worshiped by modern practitioners as a god of gay spirituality, youth, and beauty.

FMI: <http://www.antinopolis.org/>

**Gay Druid Brotherhood** — An international network for homosexual and bisexual men on the Druidic and Keltic inspired Pagan paths.

FMI: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gaydruidbrotherhood/>

**Green Faerie Grove** — A brotherhood of queer men in Columbus, Ohio.

FMI: <http://greenfaeriegrove.org/>

**The Minoan Brotherhood** — A men's initiatory tradition of the Craft celebrating Life, Men Loving Men, and Magic in a primarily Cretan context, also including some Aegean and Ancient Near Eastern mythology.

FMI: <http://www.minoan-brotherhood.org/>

**Radical Faeries** — Generally we are gay men who look for a spiritual dimension to our sexuality. Many of us are healers of one kind or another. Our shared values include feminism, respect for the Earth, and individual responsibility rather than hierarchy. Many of us are Pagan (nature-based religion).

FMI: <http://www.radfae.org/>

**The Unnamed Path** — The Unnamed Path is a shamanic path for men who love men. The path focuses on four main parts—Magic and Prophecy, Shamanism, Energy Healing, and Deathwalking.

FMI: [www.unnamedpath.com](http://www.unnamedpath.com)

**Submission deadline for the next issue of Mysterious Ways is December 15, 2023.**

**Please consider sharing your articles, reviews, poetry, art, events, and announcements.**

E-mail these to Mel at [knightsofmatrix@gmail.com](mailto:knightsofmatrix@gmail.com). Please put "Mysterious Ways" in the subject line.



## Upcoming Retreats and Gatherings

**August 8-13, 2023** — **Between the Worlds: A spiritual gathering for men who love men** at Wisteria in Pomeroy, OH.

FMI: <http://www.betweentheworlds.org>

**September 2023** — **Gay Spirit Visions Fall Conferences** at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC.

FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/>

**October 27-29, 2023** — **Sacred Kin Samhain** at the Oakwood Retreat Center in Selma, IN. Spiritual retreat for gay and bi men who want to experience a deeper connection and community with other like-minded men.

FMI: <https://www.queerspirituality.net/work-with-me/sacred-kin-samhain/>

**November 3-5, 2023** — **Virtual Arcadia Retreat for Queer Pagan Men.** Theme is “Otherworld Spirits.” Free online event.

FMI: [www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia](http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia)

**January 2024** — **Gay Spirit Visions Winter Meditations** at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC.

FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/>

**April 19-21, 2024** — **Virtual Brotherhood by the Bog Retreat for Pagan Men.** Theme To Be Announced. Alternates between Virtual and In-Person retreats. 2024 is virtual.

FMI: <http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

**Stone and Stang** — 2024 dates and theme have yet to be announced.

FMI: <https://unnamedpath.org/stone-stang/>

## Blogs and Podcasts for Pagan men who love men

**A Path through the Woods** — Blog by a gay, Pagan, polytheist who lives in Chicago — <https://www.adrianmoran.com/>

**Discovering the Male Mysteries** — Official webpage for Mel Mystery and the Discovering the Male Mysteries podcast for gay and bi Pagan men. — <http://www.melmystery.com/>

**Enfolding.org** — A blog by Phil Hine to discuss interests including Tantra, Queer Theory, Gender, History, and Occult Practice. — <http://enfolding.org/>

**Faehaven** — Based in Harrisburg, PA the community is forming in order to create a space where queers and their advocates can explore spirituality of all sorts and have a safe space to share among like-minded independent individuals.

— <https://faehaven.wordpress.com/about/>

**Walking the Unnamed Path** — Discusses the teachings and techniques given to us by their Ancestors of MWLM, and laid out by their late founder Hyperion. They also discuss topics and ideas pertaining to queer Pagan men in general.

— <https://unnamedpath.org/podcast/>

**Witches Betwixt** — Witches Betwixt is a collective of queer witches representing a wide variety of magical practices and spiritual paths. We release a 45+ minute episode bi-weekly in which we discuss various topics relevant to the experience of a queer witch.

— <http://witchesbetwixt.buzzsprout.com/>

**Looking for a speaker for your next gathering, retreat, or other event?  
Check out the Queer Pagan Speaker Directory online!**

<https://www.melmystery.com/queer-pagan-speaker-directory/>

## Mysterious Ways

**The Mysterious Ways Cyberzine is produced and published by Mel Mystery.**

Mel Mystery is host of the Discovering the Male Mysteries Podcast for Gay and Bi Pagan Men. He is also author of the book, "The Gay Guys Guide to Werewolves and other Man Beasts" and he has a few other books in the works

You can find out about Mel, listen to his podcast, and find out more about his books at: [www.melmystery.com](http://www.melmystery.com)

Archive copies of this newsletter will also be kept on the site.

## We need your support!!!

This paper is a community-based project. We're not charging for subscriptions. We're not accepting paid advertising. Those writing articles are not paid for their work. This paper is for the Queer Pagan Men's community and by the Queer Pagan Men's community.

If you think this paper is worthwhile, please consider helping us to thrive. We need folks to submit articles, artwork, poetry, reviews, and other content. We need folks to share this in Queer Pagan groups and social media groups. We need folks to print copies and share them in LGBTQ and Pagan spaces in their local communities.

Thank you for doing your part!!!

## Next Issue: Shapeshifting and Animal Totems

In the next issue we'll talk about shapeshifting and animal totems. How does shapeshifting fit into various Pagan paths? What were traditional means of shapeshifting? How does one go about finding his animal totem? What types of experiences have folks had with shapeshifting and animal totems? Is there a link between shapeshifting and homosexuality in ancient warrior cults? What about gendershifting deities and spirits?

Any or all of these topics, and topics of general Queer Pagan interest, are suitable for submission to the next issue of Mysterious Ways.

Please send articles, reviews, original poetry, and other submissions to Mel at [knightsofmatrix@gmail.com](mailto:knightsofmatrix@gmail.com) by December 15, 2023. Be sure to put "Mysterious Ways Submission" in the subject line.

### Submission Guidelines:

1. All submissions should be of interest to Queer Pagan Men and fit at least two of the criteria—Queer, Pagan, and Men.
2. All submissions (especially photography and artwork) should be rated PG-13 or less. Since this newsletter will be shared in social media groups and in Pagan shops where minors might have access, we'd rather err on the side of community standards—not that we necessarily agree with them all.
3. Most articles should be a typewritten page or less. We may consider longer articles based on relevance and content.
4. You retain ownership and/or copyright of any articles or artwork you submit. We are only providing a venue to share your work with the world.
5. We reserve the right to refuse any content for any reason; to make minor edits such as spelling, grammar, and formatting; or to send the content back to you for revision.
6. We will not accept content that is explicitly racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist, body shaming, or that otherwise spreads hate, negativity, or misinformation about any population or subculture of people.