

A Spring Blot to Nerthus

By Lisa Wilson

written 1995; revised 1996

Cover harrow or stalli with natural linen cloth. Place a black silk cloth over that. Then set up Nerthus image, green candle, tine, blessing bowl, gandr, bread man (the bread man should be given a different name each year), strangling cord, two wood skewers, drinking horn in holder, vessel containing a good ale, recels in seashell, and recels burner with smoldering charcoal. Recels for this blot can be made up of lavender flowers, crushed juniper berries, and myrrh powder: they should be floral with an earthy undertone. If possible, gydja should wear a torc. If indoors, place cauldron filled with earth and fresh water on the floor to represent a bog. If outdoors, try to perform blot by a lake or creek (if you can't be by a bog). Harrow/stalli should face west.

It is important that all persons attending this blot leave their knives (and any other weapons) outside the stead.

HALLOWING: Gydja charges recels with the ELHAZ rune galdor. She then circles the harrow/stalli three times sunwise with smoldering recels. She returns to harrow/stalli, and greets the aetts sunwise, beginning in the west, drawing a ELHAZ rune in each aett:

ELHAZ, HELGA VE THETTA OK HINDRA ALLA ILLSKA!

Standing at the harrow/stalli and facing west, gydja stands in ELHAZ, holding gandr overhead:

I HALLOW AND MAKE HOLY THIS HARROW (STALLI) AND STEAD TO THE

SERVICE OF NERTHUS, BANISHING ALL WIGHTS BANEFUL TO OUR WORK

HERE TONIGHT. AS HAMA BRIGHT WARDS BIFROST BRIDGE, MAY THIS STEAD BE LIKEWISE WARDED FROM ALL BANEFUL THINGS!

INVOCATION: Gydja stands in ELHAZ facing west:

ERDA, ERDA, ERDA, NERTHUS, EARTH MOTHER, SISTER-WIFE OF NJORDHR,

MOTHER OF INGVI-FREY AND FREYA, DEEP MOTHER, GODDESS OF BOGS,

BRINGER OF NEW LIFE AND NEW GROWTH WITH THE SPRING, FROM YOU

WE ARE BORN AND TO YOU WE SHALL RETURN. EARTH MOTHER, EXTEND

YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS TO YOUR FOLK GATHERED HERE IN WORSHIP, AS

WE DID IN THE DAYS OF OUR FOREFATHERS. WE STAND IN GOOD STEAD

WITH YOU AS KIN, NOT AS SLAVES OR FOLLOWERS OF THOSE WHO WOULD

DENY YOU JUST WORSHIP.

All the folk greet Nerthus with gydja:

HAIL NERTHUS! HAIL NERTHUS! HAIL NERTHUS!

REDE: Gydja faces the folk and says:

**IN THE DAYS OF OUR FOREFATHERS, WE WOULD GATHER IN THE
SPRING**

**AND GIVE WORSHIP TO NERTHUS AS SHE ENTERED OUR GARTH IN HER
CATTLE-DRAWN WAIN, ACCOMPANIED BY HER GODI OR GYDJA.**

DURING

**THIS TIME, NO WEAPONS WERE CARRIED, AND PEACEFUL FRITH
EXISTED**

**UNTIL SHE LEFT. IN THOSE DAYS, MEN WERE GIVEN TO NERTHUS IN
SACRIFICE; THEY WERE FED A LAST MEAL OF MANY DIFFERENT
GRAINS**

**AND HERBS, THEN STRANGLER WITH A CORD, WHICH WAS LEFT
AROUND**

**THEIR NECKS. THEY WERE THEN GIVEN TO A BOG HOLY TO NERTHUS,
AND USUALLY PINNED DOWN WITH HOOPS TO KEEP THEM
SUBMERGED.**

**NOWADAYS, CUSTOMS HAVE CHANGED: WE NO LONGER GIVE LIVING
MEN**

IN SACRIFICE.

**OFFERING: Gydja picks up bread man and carries him sunwise, presenting him to
the folk. She then returns to harrow, holds up bread man, and speaks:**

**NERTHUS, ACCEPT THIS BREAD MAN, BORN OF MY EFFORTS AND THE
GRAINS**

**OF YOUR HARVEST, AS A PROPER SACRIFICE. I HAVE NAMED HIM
"OSWALD." HE HAS HAD HIS LAST MEAL OF COOKED GRAINS AND
HERBS,**

**AND STANDS READY AS A WILLING SACRIFICE TO YOU, NERTHUS, SO
OUR FIELDS WILL YIELD GOOD HARVESTS IN THE FALL TO COME.**

**Gydja hands "Oswald" to assistant. She places the noose around his neck and
"strangles" him. (If the blot is taking place outside, gydja will then lead the folk to
the bog or stream.) Gydja then holds "Oswald" up in the air:**

ACCEPT "OSWALD" INTO YOUR DARK WOMB, NERTHUS!

**Gydja then takes "Oswald" and gently places him into the cauldron, or lays him
gently into the bog. Taking the two skewers, she pins him at the neck and groin.**

**Gydja will then wait until she feels sacrifice is accepted. The folk and gydja will then
return to harrow.**

BLESSING: Gydja pours ale into the horn:

**NERTHUS, YOU HAVE ACCEPTED OUR SACRIFICE OF "OSWALD." POUR
NOW YOUR MIGHT AND BLESSINGS INTO THIS ALE, SO THAT WE MAY
GROW**

CLOSER TO YOU AND EACH OTHER BY SHARING IT AMONG US.

**Gydja draws BERKANO rune or NERTHUS bind-rune over horn, then places her
hands over it. When she feels that the ale is charged with Nerthus' might, she should**

place tine in blessing bowl and pour a small libation over it. With tine, sprinkle harrow on all sides, then sprinkle each of the folk:

I GIVE YOU THE BLESSINGS OF NERTHUS!

Gydja then picks up horn and offers it to each person, refilling as needed. The horn will make three rounds. On the first round, as she offers the horn to each person, she will say:

DRINK THE MIGHT OF NERTHUS!

As each person takes the horn, they should reply:

HAIL NERTHUS!

To begin the second round, the gydja says:

HAIL THE VANIR AND THE AESIR!

As each person takes the horn, they should also say:

HAIL THE VANIR! HAIL THE AESIR!

The third round begins with gydja saying:

HAIL THE HOLY, ALL-GIVING EARTH!

Each person should reply in kind as they take the horn:

HAIL THE HOLY, ALL-GIVING EARTH!

After all toasts are drunk, gydja returns to harrow/stalli and drinks any remaining ale.

CLOSING: Gydja faces the folk:

**OUR SACRIFICE IS ACCEPTED, AND NERTHUS' BLESSINGS RECEIVED.
THIS BLOT IS DONE. MAY IT STRENGTHEN OUR BONDS OF KINSHIP AND
TROTH BETWEEN OUR GODS AND OURSELVES, UNTIL WE BE
GATHERED
TO THE GODS.**

Gydja stands in ELHAZ, facing west, holding gandr high:

**NERTHUS, EARTH MOTHER, AS YOU WITHDRAW YOUR
CONSCIOUSNESS BACK**

**WITHIN YOUR DARK DEPTHS, ACCEPT OUR THANKS FOR YOUR
PRESENCE**

HERE TODAY. HAIL NERTHUS, AND FAREWELL!

Gydja will turn, starting in west, to face each aett with gandr, sunwise. The folk will repeat with her:

HAIL NERTHUS, AND FAREWELL!

After the blot, if it is held indoors, take cauldron and "Oswald" to a lake or creek or other body of water and give "Oswald" to it (and the ducks!).