

21st Century Winter Solstice

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Light. More than that—*sunlight*. Bright apple of Heaven's eye. Clockwork star. Stealthy god who slinks on all fours. Shy, sly bridegroom. Sturdy silence of Brugh na Boinne.¹ Wisdom has a body sleek and quick as salmon.² Catch it if you can. Spirit flicker in the dank well of winter. Finally, solstice light arrives. Faint breath at your shoulder. Burnished amber, dissolving in muslin. Fields daydreaming with sheep. Tree crowns subtly aflame.

Newgrange. Seed of life struck alive on the hammer stone. No wonder women adore this place. Quartz womb of Heaven. Spiral code engraver. Lens of birth focused with celestial precision. The spilled milk midnight a river carrying gods back home. The barrow an earthy, perfect mirror. Portal to afterworlds. How the bones ache for home, the further away. Forget what you've been told. We are not alone. Never have been, from the beginning.

And men too stand dumbfaced before the marvelous architecture of the womb. Some might say, fearfully, in these nostalgically fascist days. Careful—the evil eye is recording you—in digital HD. Twenty thousand apply, cast their lots as generations have done. Few are the seeds chosen for her chamber. The ritual may have changed but the outcome is the same. Or is it? Have we learned in five thousand years?

Newgrange. Like so much of 'civilization', even the name is emptied out. Leaves us only the shell to suck out. Desperation dance of shadow Cucullens,³ slide rule slaves. Fixated on the particle even as they stand on the rainbow bridge. Never quite able to make the ancient leap. Or did the gods forever close that portal when they left? Scoop up the fairy dust to the last grain? Carry off the white gold grail?

Collective unconscious, or tribal memory? Or the forced amnesia of official history? Are we a degenerate empire, or a new species? A dagger for ripping apart worlds? Or a questing spirit, opening outward? And what unites these people to stand in the damp grey dawn, waiting for the

blessed event? What flicker warms the chilled hands, melts fences and flags? Forget light years. Think sliding staircases of time.

A curtain of sparrows coughs itself into river mist. Apes in chain mail drive out the shapeshifters of light. Tuatha de Danann⁴ escape in heartbroken battalions. An iron darkness descends. Through furtive ages they reappear, cross the veil. Escort the blessed into that kingdom under the sod, the city beneath the waves. *“Only the pure in heart shall see God.”* But finally the black-robed priests have their way. And Tir na Nog⁵ clangs shut with a sickening groan.

What celestial navies sank us in battle? When will we finally see their faces? Is there anything more dangerous than fear? Star sparks struck from the anvil of creation rise up, ready: Boudicca, Arthur, Joan of Arc, Lennon, the Mahatma.⁶ The spectral metal of rebel messiahs rattle in Atlantic thunder and gale.

Carpet of sun dust spread at your feet. King or commoner, mortal or immortal, all kneel here. Here, the stupefying fog lifts. For 17 immortal minutes, draconian dark is beaten back. Millennia made ageless. A serene spirituality—a superior science—reigns. Heaven is drawn down again to the womb. And another century offers us a ten-thousand-to-one chance.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Brugh na Boinne: the bend of the Boyne River in County Meath, Ireland, that lies below the Newgrange megalithic site.
2. The salmon was considered by the ancient Celts to be the wisest of animals, represented by the god Llyn Llyw.
3. Cucullen, or Cuchulainn, the legendary Irish hero from the ancient tale of the Cattle Raid of Cuilaigne (Cooley).
4. Tuatha de Danann: the ‘first nations’ of Ireland, fairy people who are said in Irish mythology to have been the Emerald Isle’s first inhabitants.
5. Tir na Nog: Land of Youth, said to be a place of eternal youthfulness
6. All historical characters who in some way resisted the dominant and often unjust order of their day, some with violence, some without.