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BELTANE: LIVING CONTACT



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## Part 1 - The Turning

# FROM PATTERN TO CONTACT



I do not remember first encountering May Day as anything other than delight.

Not as doctrine. Not as symbol. Certainly not as something requiring interpretation. It arrived as colour before it arrived as meaning — ribbons bright enough to hold the eye, music just uneven enough to feel alive, and a peculiar sense that something important was happening without anyone needing to explain what it was.

There was always a slight absurdity to it.

A pole planted upright in the ground, dressed in colour. Children — or those only just beyond childhood — circling it in patterns that seemed at first glance chaotic. Ribbons crossing, slipping, tightening, loosening. Laughter when someone misstepped. A moment of confusion when the pattern tangled, followed by the quiet, collective correction that brought it back into order.

And always, nearby, the Morris dancers.

I did not understand them, not then. There was something in the stamping that felt out of place alongside the colour — too deliberate,

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too forceful. The bells, the rhythm, the repeated striking of the ground. It carried a seriousness that sat just beneath the surface of what was otherwise presented as celebration. Not sombre, not heavy — but insistent.

Even then, I think, I knew I was watching something that did not belong entirely to the moment in which I was seeing it.

At the time, it was simply enjoyable. A day that felt slightly removed from the rest of the year. Less contained. Less governed. The sort of day in which the usual rules seemed to loosen their grip without anyone needing to declare that they had.

It was only much later that I began to notice the pattern.

Not the obvious pattern — not the circling, not the colour — but the structure beneath it. The way the ribbons did not move freely for long. However loose the beginning, they always began to organise. Each pass around the pole altered the whole. What crossed once would cross again, but differently. What hung slack would tighten. What appeared decorative revealed itself as necessary.

Nothing was incidental.

The movement did not disperse. It gathered.

And the pole — which had seemed at first like little more than a focal point — revealed itself as something else entirely. Not simply the centre, but the condition around which everything else made sense. Remove it, and the pattern collapses into nothing. Leave it, and even the smallest movement begins to contribute to form.

The dancers, too, changed in my perception.

What had seemed quaint became precise. The striking of the ground was not emphasis; it was contact. Repeated, measured, deliberate. Not an accompaniment to the dance, but part of the same structure. Where the ribbons crossed and enclosed, the dancers marked and tested. Above, movement gathered. Below, something answered it.

It is easy — too easy — to look back on these things and retrofit explanation. To assign meaning that was never present in the experience itself. But that is not what this was.

The shift was not interpretive. It was recognitional.

At some point — I cannot say exactly when — it became impossible to see it as mere celebration.

The wrapping of the ribbons was not arbitrary. It was not decorative. It was an act of enclosing. Of taking hold from multiple directions at once. Not movement toward a centre, but movement around it, over it,

through it — until what had been open space became structured, held, made into something that could not simply return to its previous state.

We are taught to describe reproduction through penetration — as though that is the act itself, and as though it moves in a single direction. That language is so familiar that it begins to feel like the whole truth.

It isn't.

Because what meets that movement is not passive.

It does not simply receive. It encloses. It grips. It draws in and around. It acts — with force, with intention — shaping what enters and determining what remains. There is action on both sides. There always has been. It is only our perception of it that has been one-sided.

Standing within that pattern, it becomes impossible to pretend otherwise.

Nothing in that space was still.

Even what appeared fixed was being engaged, crossed, tightened against. The pole did not move, but it was not untouched. The ground did not rise, but it was not inert. Everything present was involved in the forming of the pattern.

And once formed, it did not simply vanish.

The dance ended. The ribbons were unwound. The pole stood as it always had.

But the knowledge of what had taken place did not disperse so easily.

What I had taken for play was already instruction.

Not symbolic. Not metaphorical.

Practical.

This was not the beginning of growth.

It was what happens when growth is no longer content to remain potential. When movement meets something that can hold it. When what surrounds and what is surrounded cease to be separate positions and become, instead, parts of the same event.

Beltane does not arrive as abstraction.

It arrives as contact.

## Part 2 - The Grove

# A FIELD ALREADY IN MOTION



Before I began the blend, I allowed the space to settle.

Doors closed. Movement stilled. The room given time to hold itself.

I anointed my wrists and throat with Aonta Talamhainn, already complete, already carrying its full weight.

The scent did not open.

It was present at once — close, grounded, carrying the impression of something that did not require introduction. The air shifted slightly in its relation to me.

I left it as it was.

Breath adjusted of its own accord, drawn a little deeper and held a fraction longer before release.

There was a moment — unmarked, but clear — when the space no longer felt neutral.

The materials waited on the altar.

Then I sat.

I became aware of the grove as one becomes aware of warmth.

Not as a place entered, but as a condition already present.

Air carried weight. A density gathering and remaining. It settled across skin, altering the sense of space without obscuring form. Light moved differently — slower, steadier — held within the grove rather than passing through.

My breath adjusted.

Drawn slightly deeper, held a fraction longer before release, the body recognising the change before thought caught up.

The ground answered each step.

My step met firm ground, yet something beneath responded. Contact registered and remained for a moment longer than expected, the land acknowledging each movement across its surface. The rhythm of walking altered without instruction. Pace shifted. Weight settled with greater intent.

Leaves brushed lightly at knee height as I moved. Branches leaned low enough to narrow the path, guiding movement without resistance. The air carried a green, sap-thick scent — fresh growth held close to the surface.

A faint tension gathered across skin.

Not yet sensation, but readiness. Fine hairs along my arms lifted slightly; the back of my neck tightened, registering the air with greater precision.

Movement threaded the space.

At first peripheral, then gradually apparent. A shift through undergrowth. Paths crossing without cancelling one another. Motion layering, returning, altering what followed.

A disturbance passed through the brush further off. Brief. Then still again.

Flidais gathered within that movement.

Not separate from it. Within it. My eye followed, trying to trace her line, to hold her shape — yet each time form suggested itself, it slipped just beyond clarity. A curve glimpsed and lost. Presence carried in fragments. Enough to know she was there. Never enough to fix her in place.

My vision strained, pulling at the light to take in more of her form.

Breath deepened again.

Not from calm, but from demand. The chest expanded further than habit allowed. Air drawn in and held, then released more slowly, the body attempting to match a rhythm only just perceived.

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Something passed along my arm.

Light. Precise. Almost not there. Enough to provoke response. My shoulder followed — a suggestion of pressure, then gone. Near my ear, a trace of warmth that drew my head toward it before the sensation could fully resolve.

The contact did not settle into a fixed point.

The body completed the movement.

A slow ache gathered low in my sacral space.

It deepened into a steady, insistent throb. Breath drew downward into that centre, anchoring weight through it. Each pulse held a fraction longer before release, a rhythm recognised rather than chosen.

Movement continued through the grove.

Crossing. Circling. Pressing outward and through.

The space carried that motion without loss of coherence.

Cernunnos became perceptible through that stability.

His presence settled into the grove. Air carried it. Ground bore it. That presence extended through everything already there, and through me with it.

It entered without crossing.

Not a single point of contact, but saturation. A sense of being filled through rather than met from without. Breath drew it inward without effort. The body recognised it without needing to reach.

It carried more than vitality.

Strength was present. Desire too, and the same current that drives life toward continuation. Beneath that, something steadier. A weight that supported rather than pressed. A sense of care extending outward as far as the grove itself.

A presence that bore what was there.

The body responded differently.

The ache did not disappear. It settled into form within that field. What had risen remained, now shaped rather than diffused.

The pattern clarified.

The vertical that anchors.

The crossing that gathers.

The rhythm that confirms.

Here, the pattern stood complete.

Awareness shifted.

Strain eased. Presence settled into relation with what was already active. Breath, sensation, and awareness aligned within the same field.

The space widened.

Movement, contact, and pressure receded just enough for the wider grove to return to view, still part of the same field, no longer demanding full attention.

It was then that I noticed the altar.

Stone, broad and grounded at the centre of the grove. Its surface carried the same quiet density as the land beneath it, rising from the earth rather than placed upon it.

The materials rested there.

Glass catching the low light held in the grove.

Oils settled in their vessels.

Glass droppers laid with quiet precision.

Flidais passed near the altar.

Her movement continued, yet attention gathered there for a moment — enough to register, enough to mark the arrangement.

Cernunnos followed.

His gaze settled. Measured. Each element fixed more clearly in relation to the others. The space around the altar drew inward slightly, defining its place within the field.

There was a moment.

A small inclination of the head, and alignment held.

Flidais turned first.

The movement that had traced the grove gathered around her once more, drawn into a clearer line as she crossed the space. It followed her easily, belonging to that direction.

She passed close to where he stood.

He was already there as she reached him, the space around him steady, carrying the same quiet strength present throughout the grove.

Their hands met without ceremony.

The contact lingered.

Recognised. Familiar. The same current that had moved through the grove now shared between them, settling into something that required no confirmation.

The field shifted with them.

Completion settled across the space.

Together, they moved from the centre of the grove.

Their movement softened as it receded, carrying coherence with it as it passed beyond sight. What remained retained shape, weight, and quiet readiness.

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The grove remained.



## Part 3 - The Practice

# STANDING WITHIN



Prepare the space before you begin.

The air should be still, with doors closed and windows shut, so that what is released into it is able to gather and remain.

Place the oils so that both can be sensed at once.

Two burners work best, set slightly apart, with enough distance between them that you can stand or sit within their reach—not directly over either one, but between them, where the scents begin to meet and move through one another.

Light them and leave them.

These oils need time to build, and it is worth allowing that process to unfold fully, as the warmth carries them outward and the scent deepens, settling gradually into the space until the room itself begins to feel different.

Do not rush this.

There will be a point where what had been neutral begins to shift, not dramatically, but enough that it registers.

That is where you begin.

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Take your position between them, upright, and allow your attention to settle without directing it.

The grove forms around you gradually, not as something constructed, but as something recognised.

Trunks stand at uneven distances, some close enough to narrow the space between them, while low branches cross and overlap, breaking the line of sight so that nothing extends too far in any direction.

Underfoot, the ground is not even.

Roots press up through the soil, and leaf litter shifts slightly as your weight settles and adjusts, requiring just enough attention to keep you present within it.

Ahead, the space opens into a clearing held within the trees, and at its centre a low stone altar sits, broad and grounded, as though it has always been part of the land itself.

You are already within it.

The scent begins to move differently.

What had been separate begins to cross and return, each passing through the other without losing itself, changing subtly as it does so.

If you remain with it, that movement becomes easier to follow—not as something fixed, but as something that draws your awareness into it.

From there, other movement becomes apparent.

Not fully seen, but present in fragments: a curve that almost holds, a line that gathers and slips, a suggestion of form that never settles long enough to be fixed.

If you choose to follow it, let your eye move with it.

You may begin to recognise something within those fragments—a shape, a presence, a way of moving that feels familiar.

You do not need to name it, but you may, if you wish.

Your body will already have begun to respond.

Breath deepens without effort, the chest expanding slightly further than before, while the skin sharpens, registering the air with greater clarity.

A trace of contact may begin to form, passing along the arm, across the shoulder, near the neck—never fully held, but enough to draw your awareness into it.

Allow that contact to remain incomplete, letting the body meet it without trying to define it.

At the same time, something else becomes apparent.

Not through movement, but through presence.

Less visible, yet more pervasive, carried through the same air and through the ground beneath you, extending through the space you occupy and through your body with it.

Breath draws this in without effort.

You may recognise this differently—not as something glimpsed, but as something that surrounds, supports, and enters without crossing.

You may name this also, or remain simply with the sensation of it.

Both remain available.

One drawing you outward, through movement that never fully resolves; the other settling through you, steady and continuous.

You may find yourself moving toward one while allowing the other to deepen within you, or receiving one while reaching toward the other.

There is no fixed direction, and no need to decide.

Let the relationship form as it does.

A slow gathering may begin low in the body, an ache that deepens into a steady pulse, drawing breath and attention down into it without needing to be directed.

Stay with that as it develops, allowing it to remain part of the wider field rather than isolating it from the space around you.

If your attention begins to narrow, allow it to widen again, so that the grove, the altar, the breath, the skin, the scent, and the presences all remain within the same field of awareness.

And then, without forcing it, allow the movement to change.

What has gathered does not need to be held in the same way.

The pressure that has built begins to ease, not by diminishing, but by no longer being contained.

Breath follows.

What had been held within the body releases outward with it, not lost, but no longer requiring form or focus.

The grove remains.

The space does not close.

But your place within it loosens.

When you step away, allow the space to settle without you.

No effort is needed to hold it, or to take anything from it.

## Part 4 - The Accords

# THE ACCORDS IN THE SEASON OF CONTACT



**Aonta Talamhainn** and **Aonta Fás** were made for Beltane not to represent the season, but to meet it at the point where containment gives way to contact.

Scent does not ask permission.

It moves through the air, through the body, and through the space between them before thought has time to follow. What follows here is simply a way of recognising how that movement takes shape.

If Beltane is the moment where pressure becomes encounter, then these accords do not unfold in sequence.

They meet.

Aonta Talamhainn does not open.

It establishes.

There is no lift, no gesture toward attention. Presence is immediate, close to the body, carrying weight without needing to announce itself. The effect is not heaviness, but inevitability — the sense that something

## The Accords in the Season of Contact

has always been there, and that everything else adjusts in relation to it.

Juniper moves first, but only to prevent collapse — a clarity that does not rise, only steadies. From there, the woods and resins gather, not in stages, but in accumulation. Cedar draws structure through the air, oak settles it into continuity, and vetiver presses downward, ensuring that nothing disperses too easily.

The field deepens, carrying shadow and time, marking the land as worked, inhabited, and real.

There is no sweetness here.

No softening.

The scent behaves as the forest floor behaves — complex, dark, and unmoving in its authority. It does not invite attention, yet attention adjusts around it. Distance recalibrates. The body recognises something that does not move to meet it.

This is not fertility.

This is the condition that allows fertility to occur.

Aonta Fás does not announce itself either, but it is immediately in motion.

Where Talamhainn gathers, Fás circulates.

The scent does not settle in a single place; it spreads, crosses, returns, giving the impression of something that cannot be contained without losing its nature. It moves across the skin rather than anchoring to it, carrying warmth that develops not as weight, but as fullness.

A green vitality threads through first — vital and slightly untamed — followed by a softness that feels closer to flesh than to flower, where warmth sits close to the body.

From there, the woods and resins expand rather than accumulate. Sandalwood opens the space, generous and continuous, while cedar and oak hold just enough structure to prevent the movement from dissolving into formlessness.

Depth builds within the field, adding body and persistence, while warmth binds so that it does not scatter.

There is no spectacle.

No sudden brightness.

The absence of a top note removes the need for arrival.

The scent is already in motion.

It suggests life not as something presented, but as something worth following.

When the two accords meet, they do not resolve into one another.

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They cross.

Talamhainn does not soften in the presence of Fás.

Fás does not override the authority of Talamhainn.

One holds.

One moves.

Each remains intact.

The result is not balance in the usual sense.

It is tension held in relation.

Movement that does not dissolve structure.

Structure that does not prevent movement.

In the air, this is experienced as pressure.

Not imposed, but generated — the same gathering described in the grove, where contact does not arrive from one direction, but forms between.

As they continue, that pressure does not build indefinitely.

It changes.

What had gathered no longer needs to be held in the same way. The space between them opens, not by losing intensity, but by releasing the need to contain it.

The accords do not fade.

They loosen.

The air feels less fixed, though nothing has been removed from it.

This is Beltane.

Not the bloom itself, but the moment in which holding gives way to meeting, and meeting gives way to release.

## **Beltane: Living Contact**

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London, United Kingdom

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Cover design by Terence Frelander  
Illustrations by Terence Frelander

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