Volume 2011 | Issue 33

🚱 Mychopoeic Sociezy

Article 14

7-15-2011

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Recommended Citation

Echo-Hawk, Roger (2011) "*Summer Soltice*," *The Mythic Circle*: Vol. 2011: Iss. 33, Article 14. Available at: https://dc.swosu.edu/mcircle/vol2011/iss33/14

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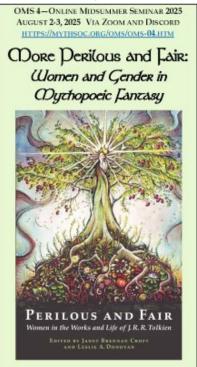
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Summer Soltice

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Summer Solstice

by Roger Echo-Hawk

Rumor awakened in their underground realm Of a country far-off. All the sleeping animals Howled in their sleep, rattled horns, whistled Stirring eagerly in their slumber below the earth They stood in their cities, the Summer King spoke Of his distant destinations. He had journeyed far Beyond faded tales of a forgotten whispered path Holding odd seeds he had returned underground Hidden warmth in his hands moved their hearts Everyone stood, the people and the animals stood Insensible, the animals groaned, now they'd start To somehow find a way through troubled dreams They'd question one murky belief after another And abandon all to believe in the world above.

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In our retellings I suppose we don't much bother Keeping straight the bent details, crooked roads In one tale after another, how we handed down Sidelong versions of whatever happened next Under ebbing oceans an ancient underground Somewhere in the receding past they kept saying Their slippery sense of community mattered, it Shaped them, their history, the story they filled Themselves with every day, waking their minds Connecting to the history of memory as if it all Felt real, seemed specific enough, logical enough Those changing details that give rise to the world In our retellings of the tale along a crooked road

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Summer King, Morning Star, child of sunshine Along his pathway stumbled enchanted animals Flickering in & out of view, everyone followed Peering into the nearby future, eyes closed as if Gathered underground, seeing through shadows Another land full of seeds with glowing hearts Alight in his open hands, the King of Summer

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To see the future one must look into the mirror Of the past. It isn't difficult to justify the story Of what we think we know, all of that knowing The Summer King stands in underground cities A sightless crowd of creatures that howl and stir The King of Summer knows; in his hands, light

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So now we will go and I know it is difficult to go Though no one can see very far into the future How earth in this version of the story is hollow Where is the evidence, the advocacy we need For reconciliation, the latitude of togetherness Of our diurnal rhythms, our nocturnal patterns The worldwide distribution of necessary traits The trail of traits leading us back into ourselves A world under the world of lumbering animals Wandering from one enchanted land to another All of us, our eyes closed, yes we think we know Groping for lifetimes through scene after scene As if rumors will tell us that now it is time to go We hear there is a mirror at the end of the dream

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He stood up in the mirror at the end of the dream Summer King, the King of Summer Solstice stood Among all the fabled forgotten creatures long ago In darkened cities underground the Summer King Spoke without speaking, a whispering light inside His hands, lost in wonder, somewhere in the past He stood up in the mirror at the end of the dream