

PRAYING AGAINST SAMHAIN, October 31st

The West displayed a dying harvest sun.
The East was reddened by a growing fire.
Most villagers were flocking one by one
Before the festive sacrificial pyre.

He propped his scythe against an aging oak
And left the field, but tread a different track. . . .
She hung to dry her final, hand-washed cloak
And left her hut, crowds chanting at her back. . . .

They, meeting, signed a cross upon the breast.
Then both stole deep into a quiet wood
By secret twists and turns to join the rest
Who in a hidden, shallow clearing stood.

The reaper and the washer hailed the band.
All soon began to sing a sacred psalm.
They shared the Loaf and Chalice, hand to hand,
Then kissed and knelt encircled, palm in palm.

“Protect us!” prayed the reaper, elder, priest.
“Thrice blest, Thy Name! Thrice blest with safety, we
Prepare to enter battle with the Beast
Whose reign too long has cursed our land and Thee!”

While strong hymns rang from voices all in tune,
And words of Scripture left their lips with might,
Far off, their neighbors danced beneath the moon
With masks and garlanded brows to greet the night.

A white-robed druid, in wolf-like masquerade,
Brought silence with the waving of his knife,
And with the proper incantations made,
Called forth the victim who would lose her life.

Her mother, staring blankly, held her up.
They stripped the baby, while observers raved.
A warlock's hand was waiting with a cup
To catch the deed the ceremony craved.

The frenzied druid, with demon lust insane,
Raised up his dagger. Both arms froze on high!
The knife caught fire! His hands turned white with pain,
Then plunged the burning blade into his thigh!

The tiny band of warriors on their knees,
Just pausing when the long, inhuman scream
Resounded from the "bone" fire, through the trees,
Resumed their closing "Alleluia" theme.

Though sixteen centuries have come and passed,
Young children still are offered to the Beast.
But where are Christians now, who'll pray and fast
To quench the evils of the Samhain feast?

— *David L. Hatton, 10/26/1993*