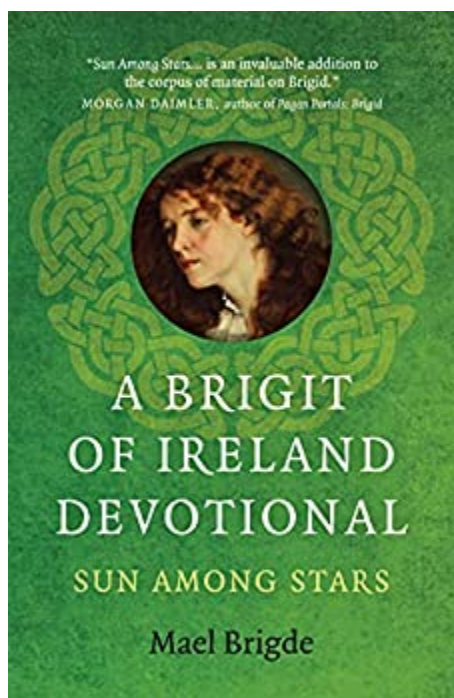


## A Brigit of Ireland Devotional

[Reviewed by Lyri Ahnam]



**Title:** A Brigit of Ireland Devotional

**Publisher:** Moon Books, 2021

**Author:** Mael Brigde

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Praise poems, prayers, and meditations inspired by the Irish goddess Brigit (and the Catholic saint of the same name) comprise the heart of *A Brigit of Ireland Devotional*. The entries are wide-ranging, but all heart-felt and lyrical, making this book a delight to be savored in multiple readings. Some offerings are suitable for Imbolc rituals, others more conducive to private contemplation. You'll find explorations of Irish lore tangentially connected to the goddess Brigit, poems drawn from Saint Brigit's life and mythology, and prayers born of modern concerns.

"The Pig Addresses Brigit" is told from the perspective of Manannan Mac Lir's magical pig who was slain each day, then returned to life the next day, only to be slain again. In this delightful poem, the pig escapes and joins Brigit's herd of pigs. In the pig's words: *let me mingle with your pig herds/ let me end my days/ in peace/*

Another standout is "Hungry," which explores the more challenging aspects of the goddess, including Brigit's *hungry teeth ready to snap in two/ our pretty dreams of you/*

Some of the poems are charmingly personal, such as "Invitation": *come visit Brigit/the cat will yield you the comfy chair/* "Hearthfire" also has a vivid personal tone: *Brigit/your flame enfolding mine/burning low and gentle/till sunlight breaks the dark/*

The introduction provides an excellent overview of the Irish goddess (or goddesses), and the traditions and writings attached to Saint Brigit, both of which inspired the collection. The author embraces Brigit's liminal aspect as both god and Catholic saint, and also provides extensive endnotes on many of the poems further illuminating her original sources.

The history and current understanding of Brigit's legacy are explored more deeply in the "Reflections" section following the poems. A number of modern misconceptions about Brigit are also debunked. The endmatter also includes suggestions on creating a daily devotional practice, based on the author's own experiences. The book also includes a glossary for readers unfamiliar with Irish mythology and history.

The author, Mael Brigde, is the founder of the Daughters of the Flame, which has tended Brigit's perpetual fire since Imbolc 1993. She publishes a general interest blog, Brigit's Sparkling Flame, and a Brigit poetry blog, Stone on the Belly. She teaches courses and webinars on Brigit, including Journey with Brigit, Goddess of Poetry, an intensive class that explores reading and writing poetry as a sacred act.