

A Midsummer Day's Dream

by

Karl Donaldsson

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Ah, Midsummer. That time of year when everything is in bloom, pollen swims in the air like ... well, you know. It's hot here in Hoosierland, muggy, and generally uncomfortable outside to the thermally well-insulated, such as myself. Sitting around and sweating, while meritorious to some, is just not my idea of fun. I hang out inside, in my house, hoping the temperature will drop soon enough to a more bearable temperature. Interestingly enough, most folks would expect a follower of Frey, like me, to love being outside no matter what the climate. While this is true to some extent, it is not, by any means, the whole story.

The concept of being comfortable seems to be at the core of many of Frey's folk. We like to be cradled, in the lap of relative luxury, financial stability, personal success, and homebodiedness. We curl up in these things like a blanket. Granted, all of this is relative. I feel just at home in a tent on a hillside as I do in my own house. It has to do with personal comfort, not physical location. It has to feel like home. So, where we cannot always be in a comfortable place, we bring along trinkets or other items to remind us of that place. For example, we bring books or plants or posters or whatever to work, placing them around us like a bird making a nest. We wear jewelry (I have more on than most men own -- two rings, watch, bracelet, earring, and sometimes a necklace or two), affect articles of clothing (hats, sashes, or other uncommon things), canes, walking sticks, and ornaments (bells, pins, brooches, etc.). Almost as if we bear the trophies of our personalities about us. Even a simple baseball cap I wear has two pins on it, as if I couldn't leave well enough alone!

This eclecticism has a purpose. It is our home away from home, our security blanket. Yes, I'm afraid that Linus Van Pelt of Peanuts fame is, indeed, a Freysman. Look at him. He's always gentle, kind and nurturing, trying to help out, all while toting this blanket which is, in essence, his MacGuyver's tool. Even Douglas Adams understands the importance of The Towel. Now, when I was a child with my various stuffed animals around me when I went to bed, I also had a "security blanket," which was an old towel. While this may be normal for most children, I suppose many psychologists would have something to say about an 8-year old who had one. While not being an only child (I have one brother three years older than I), I can only guess that the need to nurture was either inherently in me from birth or simply developed from some very early age.

We hide these sorts of things now, of course. Keeping a room or house very clean is a form of nurturing, if you view a domicile as being alive as I do. Kind of like grooming your housewight. The same could be said for people who keep their lawn and landscaping like a golf course. Still others who have clothing fetishes and keep them fastidiously, or perhaps a car freak who keeps his or her car showroom-clean. Regardless of the outward expression, we have to nurture, and it has to be something tangible.

Taking a step backward, it's pretty easy to make the generalizations about followers of certain gods and goddesses of our folk, and I'm sure those people can point out idiosyncrasies amongst the followers of their particular god or goddess much better than I can. For example, I've noticed that many, but not all, Odinsfolk tend to be bookworms. They seem to like research, learning, the general acquisition of information, apparently without any real regard to its content or purpose, but they learn it just in case it comes in handy someday. Many Freyjasfolk seem to be somewhat defensive, not really combative, but definitely indignant about some injustice in the world. And, if you push them, they push back, hard. Tyrsofolk tend to take stances on things that

are way the Hel over my head, and I finally see their point of view via a trickle-down effect -- I ask a question, and it gets answered with the answer for the question I should have asked. Sort of like asking someone if they'd like coffee or soda, and they nod, saying "Cream and sugar." Typically an intuitive step ahead of the game, they seem to look at things so differently from everyone else. Thorsfolk tend to be very stalwart and tenacious folk, hard working, and trustworthy. Definitely good friends to have.

What does this do for us? Well, it allows us to better define who we are by simply observing the sort of person we've become. Sounds rather blatantly obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people get lost in the woods because they never bothered to look around, see where they are, and then examine the path along which they came. When you're a kid, you don't think to pay out twine throughout your life, but if you had, you'd be able to make more sense of your life now. When you get to be around 18, you start really marking things mentally, as to what life was like or how you felt, or whatever, and you don't really mark all the right things for some time. Kind of like putting a chalk mark on the bottom of a rock, and putting back face down. You never really keep good track of what's going on until you get completely screwed by it, and then you never make that mistake again.

So, as adults, we realize that what we thought about as being adults when we were kids is a complete load of bunk. You thought adults were invulnerable, until you realize how scared you are while your kids look at you like you looked at your parents. You thought life would be simpler, and that you didn't have to do anything you didn't want to, until you realize doing anything takes a considerable amount of work and that the bank really owns everything, you just live there. And you don't get anything unless you work for it. I'm sure I think that being retired would kick some serious ass, but I hear your body shuts down pretty much before you get there, so you can't do all the things you've finally earned time to do.

But this is what happens when you study the path. You stick to it. Why? Because it's there? Is that why people climb mountains, because they're there? I don't think many folk would be Asatru if they stayed on the path. So this means, as a group, we have a bunch of really ballsey people or a bunch of real idiots. I'd like to think the former. In any case, the path is not what life is about. Even the Daoists know that -- while there is The Way, The Way is not everything there is to life. Our Web of Wyrd is similar in the sense that it is something that connects everything, but yet it is not the sum of all there is, only the connections between them. It defines nothing other than a moment.

OK, so back to being abnormal. We each express these abnormalities, psychoses, or whatever you want to call them, because they are as much a part of us as we express them. Linus carries his security blanket because he needs it to be a part of him. It is his outward expression of his caring, his nurturing. At the same time, the blanket is his support. His pillow, his tool, his weapon, his means of expression. The blanket is his expression embodied, as well as his way of expressing himself, yet at the same time, it is not all of what Linus is, nor does everything Linus expresses have to do with his blanket. Just like a tattoo or a new hairstyle says something about that person, it is only an expression of them without being everything that is that person.

What this means to us is that any time we encounter some person, who seems to have this or that quirk, this or that fetish, this or that opinion, always remember that the words and deeds they do are always a good indication of what that person is. Nobody can hide from themselves. Our ancestors knew this, and this message is spammed liberally throughout the Havamal. Don't judge a book by its cover, but if you read the book, then you're more than entitled to an opinion. Same way with people -- if you get to know them better, and they strike you as being someone you'd like to know better, then great -- but don't set about being friends until you get to know them better. I'd rather have a foe than a poorly-made friend. Anyway, the point is that we, as heathens, should be more open to new and different ideas, but should also be

willing to share our ideas with others in a decent manner. Denying someone's opinion because they don't agree with yours is childish, and is bound to get you mildly killed. Conversely, you don't need to accept someone's opinion even if they accept yours. The whole key to growth, flourishing, and thriving in the Midsummer sun lies in the willingness of each organism, no matter how close or far apart, to grow in its own environment, and under its own power.