

Connecting with the Spirits of Place

AN ESSENTIAL PART of Witchcraft is being in tune with not only yourself, but also with the world around you. That knowledge of the world encompasses not only recognizing physical aspects, but also the more liminal ones—the hidden spirits and invisible threads just under the surface.

Many folks hold a deep mental connection to a faraway land where their ancestors came from or perhaps where their spiritual path originated. This is definitely an important connection to keep in mind, but it can be all too easy to overlook the very ground you live on. If you don't take the time to properly familiarize yourself with the land you reside upon, it can be detrimental to your practice. Not only will there be a sense of disjointedness and lack of foundation, but you're also likely to miss out on vital signs of both physical and metaphysical natures.

Even if your path focuses on the lore and seasons of a country halfway

across the world, a Witch needs to be rooted where they reside. Look at this as three distinct forms to identify: the building in which you live, the land it sits directly upon, and the ecosystem that the land is a part of. You can keep building layers out from there (neighborhood, city/town; state, region, etc), but begin with orienting yourself first with the closest three spirit kinds.

What are the Spirits of Place?

In ancient times, the *genius loci* (plural *genii locorum*) was said to be the protective spirit of a place. Nowadays, the term has expanded outside the sense of a guardian to the resident spirit of a location. Another term is the *numen* (plural *numina*) which is the divine presence found in a place. The spirit of a place can be interpreted as the atmospheric energy or concept of a place, or much more literally as a metaphysical being or



mythic identity. Essentially the Spirit of Place is the identity and conscious energy connected to that location. Whether you're looking at Slavic, Celtic, Icelandic, Italian, Pueblo, or Japanese folklore, you'll find that beings that inhabit wild, sacred, and human-populated spaces all have specific names, characteristics and cultural protocols. So whether you find it easier to connect with specific named beings or more general energy, there is a long history of recognizing the Spirits of Place to draw upon.

Hearth & Home

What is a home? A building is not only a structure that you live and/or work in—it's the collective sum of all of the materials that it is built from, items placed within it, and the residual effects of everyone and everything that has come through its doors. That includes the beings currently living there, as well as possibly those who have passed on or moved away.

When you move into a new place, walk through the entire space, then take some time to be quiet, listen, and get a sense of how the place feels. Calm? Sad? Anxious? Excited? Before moving things and setting up, physically clean everything, clearing out any dust, dirt, or other debris. If possible, the next thing to do is set up an altar space, generally in the hearth or central area, introducing yourself and your intentions to the space. Next if cleansing is necessary (it's not always), do that, then set up protections on the doors and windows. Regularly, check in on the house and adjust as necessary.



Typically when something feels off or there are physical issues, it's either because the place has gotten messy, neglected, or other people have come through. Opening windows, sweeping the floors, and blessing with incense or an herbal spray are great ways to reconnect and refresh the space. If things go missing or mischief is afoot, leave some offerings to appease or do some sterner workings to clear out unwanted spirits, depending on the feel of things.

Land of Foundation & Focus

The land upon which your home rests is the foundation for everything that happens in and around the dwelling. It is affected not only by the house, but any neighboring structures, street and foot traffic, resident flora and fauna, and the weather. Even if you're surrounded by concrete, there's still earth underneath—and everything moving around and on top of it.