



Spiritual Ecology Deck Ritual

This is a Spiritual Ecology Ritual that you can do (mostly) on your deck or in your backyard.

- 1) **Letting Go/New Emergings.** Think of something you've recently lost and create an intention of honoring that lost thing, person, or mammal.
- 2) **Wandering.** Like many other ground altars, you look outside for stones, leaves, cones, flowers, natural objects that could play a part in the creation of such an altar. Don't go much further than a few hundred steps of your house. Go where pulled or in the direction forced by conditions on the ground. The closer to your house the better because by slowing down you can see just how many wondrous things are near the place where you walk almost always without noticing them. Gather things when they catch your eye, when you have a sense they could play a role in your ground altar and when you feel that they want to do so. Most items are found on the ground.
- 3) **Polarities.** Once gathered, in a pocket or bag, bring the items to a place on your deck or backyard in this season of loss. (I write this in autumn, but it could be used at any time of year for loss.) An intention can be set with incense, but you want to be sure that (as with any fire) it burns safely. You may state what your intention is when you light the incense if you choose to light incense. If not, simply state your intention for the ritual and move to the next step, creation of a ground altar or mandala or sculpture-like temporary piece of art. (It could even be tiny, in the dirt of a small pot outside.) There should be two discernable sides to this altar, one that shows the bad of the situation and one that shows the good. These categories are as you define them

in the moment. If the loss is especially deep, consider using your own hair as part of the altar construction, but cut it with a clear intention.

- 4) **New Beginnings.** Once you have used all of the elements you've collected, or at least all the elements you believe work in this construction, step back and discover an intention of how to move forward in the wake of the loss of this person, pet, plant, situation that has been lost. It should be intuitive and feel like a "fresh... and more satisfying way of relating to the world around you."

- 5) **Rooting.** To finalize the moment, record it with a cellphone video or photo, or postcard poem to someone you love and document the new consciousness. Get a sense of how to move forward with this new consciousness. What are tangible steps you can take to make this so in your life, to make it mythic, to remember it and to insure that it will be part of you from here on out? Journaling about the event could help. Making notes once you finish could be helpful. Have something tangible and devise a method to come across your notes, or photo, or video, or poem, or whatever documentation you've done. Then, be sure to take a look on your deck, or in your backyard at the construct and note that nature has other ideas besides permanence. What does the ground altar look like? Maybe take photos every few hours, or when you think about it. You can even set alarms, or google calendar notifications to remind you to look at the ground altar and see, as The Band so deftly put it years ago, "The Shape I'm In."



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Casa del Colibrí

Thanks to Gary Ferguson and Katherine Wall for the ritual steps from
Rites of Passage from which the steps of this ritual were taken.