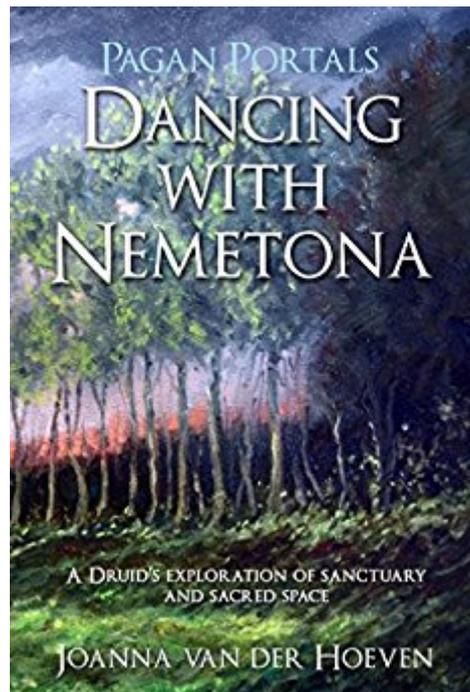


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Pagan Portals - Dancing With Nemetona: A Druid's Exploration Of Sanctuary And Sacred Space



Synopsis

Nemetona is an ancient goddess whose song is heard deep within the earth and also deep within the human soul. She is the Lady of Sanctuary, of Sacred Groves and Sacred Spaces. She is present within the home, within our sacred groves, our rites and in all the spaces that we hold dear to our hearts. She also lies within, allowing us to feel at ease wherever we are in the world through her energy of holding, of transformation. She holds the stillness and quiet of a perfect day; she is the stillness at the end of it, when the blackbird sings to the dusk. She is the energy of sacred space, where we can stretch out our souls and truly come alive, to be who we wish to be, filled with the magic of potential. Rediscover this ancient goddess and dance with a Druid to the songs of Nemetona. Learn how to reconnect with this goddess in ritual, songs, chants, meditation and more.

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Customer Reviews

The sanctity of the "sacred space"™ is an integral part of the majority of pagan beliefs and this celebration of the Celtic goddess Nemetona offers a Druid™s-eye view of the concept. In "Dancing With Nemetona"™, Joanna van der Hoeven explores the influence of this little-known deity who was probably introduced into Britain by Celtic/Gallic mercenaries serving with the Roman

legions. The name is derived from *nemetona*, a term designating Gaulish religious spaces and nemetons, or sacred groves and sacred spaces, can be located throughout the Celtic world by that name. The author gives an identity to that strange, otherworldly feeling we experience when coming upon a sacred space, whether spiritual or temporal, with which we can all identify regardless of the Path we travel. Endorsed by many of the leading lights in contemporary Druidry, *Dancing With Nemetona* is a singularly compelling book for those of any pagan persuasion who wish to identify with that unexplained feeling often encountered on both the inner and outer planes. I particularly liked the author's honesty in stating right from the beginning: "With what little history we have, it is up to us to seek Her out and find Her again, making our own connections. Within these pages are ways in which I have come to know Her, and in which you may as well, if you have not already met with Her. What is found in these pages is not long-standing tradition, but my own journeys of discovery with this goddess that I wish to share with you." • Recommended reading Melusine Draco, Coven of the Scales and author of *Magic Crystals, Sacred Stones*

With an ease and lightness of touch, this book reflects on the sacred in relation to physical and subtle space, relationships and boundaries, safety and risk, liminality and letting go. Sacred time too " I liked the author's definition of ritual as "taking a moment, taking time out, to celebrate or honour a specific moment of time". A modern Druid, Joanna van der Hoeven uses her personal journey to illustrate her themes and suggests practices to explore them " within the home, within the forest and within the inner world. These practices, and the book as a whole, are accessible to beginners or non-aligned seekers as well as those already grounded in Druid and Pagan tradition. This is helped by the careful arrangement of the book in six chapters: Lady of Boundaries and Edges; Lady of Hearth and Home; Lady of the Sacred Grove; Lady of sanctuary; Lady of Ritual: Lady of Everything and Nothing. The last chapter opens the way to reflections on personal identity and the no self/true self paradox of Zen and other non-dual traditions. To enter into immersion into the entirety of being | to be at one with existence, to truly experience life, there seems to be a necessary letting go of our customary self-sense and a finding of true self through being in the moment, returning to the core. In this way the book continues the journey of the author's earlier and well-received *Zen Druidry*.

I've never had a book ruin my day before, but this one did. I was so looking forward to it, and after the perfunctory etymology lesson, giving examples of why nemeton is in so many place names, she goes on to say it's actually your aura. I'm not kidding. Take out "nemeton" and put in "aura" and

you'll have the same book written five thousand times by every elementary metaphysicist on earth. Even the "information" on the alleged goddess is completely devoid of any semblance of reason or evidence, much less the ring of devotion. I couldn't go on. My brain wanted to vomit, but couldn't (on account of being a brain). Given the previous writing on "Zen" Druidry, I think this one should more accurately be titled *Druidry for People Who Like The Word and Don't Really Care about What They're Appropriating*.

I've just been introduced to a new goddess. Actually, she's a very old goddess, but one I had only heard of in passing, in discussions of Druid groves. Joanna van der Hoeven's marvelous little book, *Pagan Portals Dancing with Nemetona*, explores the human relationship not only with this goddess but also with the concepts of sacred space and boundaries. Known as the Lady of the Sacred Grove, Nemetona teaches us that we are each a kind of living, moving sacred space, and the way we interact with other people, animals and the places we visit affects us (and them) at a very deep level. Like the other titles in the *Pagan Portals* series, this is a fairly short book but it's full of valuable information and exercises - a touching house blessing, a visualization of your own inner sacred grove, and more. I love the way Ms. van der Hoeven dovetails the layers of sacredness in our lives, from our 'insides' (mental and physical), to the people we interact with, the world at large and the deities that inhabit it. I also love the idea of the micro-retreat - what a great way to maintain your sanity in an increasingly insane world! - and the collection of essays that depict other people's experiences with Nemetona demonstrates that she is not only ancient and worldwide, but also fully relevant today.

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