



*Bringing you news from my author's desk and drawing table*

## **A Full Harvest Moon**

I greet the shining celestial orb in the sky and look back on my summer sojourn in England with joy and nostalgia. The beautiful mandala shown here is from Star Child, a shop of botanical wonders in Glastonbury where the staff observes the arrival of the seasons by making these pictorial offerings of seed, leaf, gums and resins from the earth's abundant herbal gifts.



In my Journal I have shared my reflections on my Oxford journey, going back decades to the choices of my youth and the felicities I have been given to be able to create my work. Then a week in England's countryside brought more marvels, thanks to some wonderful friends who took me to see many standing stones, a tiny Oxfordshire village of my grandmother's grandfathers, and cathedrals and churches of great antiquity, ancient manuscripts and enduring devotions. I came home with nearly 2000 photos.

In this newsletter I also touch on a favorite author, Virginia Woolf, whose work has guided me for the entirety of my writing career.

I was in England at Lammastide, and the harvest continues as we turn the **Wheel of the Year** now at the autumnal equinox.



**25 September**

## **The Ivory Towers of Oxford**

The gate swung open for me in Oxford, its shadow like a lady's fan widening its welcome in the bright morning sun, the ivory towers of the fabled Bodleian Library reaching skyward in the distance.

... "That sweet city with her dreaming spires ..." beckoned me from across the great pond and I flew, eager to be in the magical place of learning.

It was midsummer when the invitation came. Now at the fall equinox, we spill over into the darkening half of the year, and my mind wants to find meaning in the footloose days of my summer travels, distill them into a jewel I can turn over in my hands and store away for the shortening days. ... I traveled alone, but I was never alone. The writers joined me too. "I wonder anybody does anything at Oxford but dream and remember, the place is so beautiful." Memory ran along beside me like a river, occasionally overflowing its banks and flooding me with recognition.

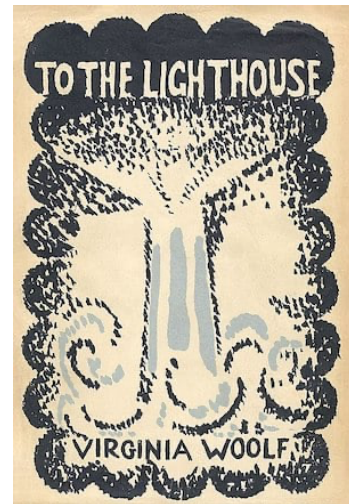
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**A Good Book**

I have returned to an author who has been a lodestone for me from the very beginning of my writing life.

Virginia Woolf's 1927 novel *To The Lighthouse* was a book I studied comprehensively in college, but this time around I apprehend her meanings in a more resonant, tender way. To have read about Mrs. Ramsay at the green age of 22 is far different now that I am on the other side of having raised a family and been in a long marriage.



My experience of the book is also richer for listening to the sound and rhythm of the words, for I have enjoyed it in the form of an audiobook. Read by the altogether consummate Juliet Stevenson, the prose is breathtaking, the changes in point of view deftly written, the slide between the mundane and miraculous effortless, and the loveliest of metaphors heartbreaking.

Pictured is the cover of the original edition, drawn by the author's sister, Vanessa Bell, and published by the Hogarth Press which Virginia ran with her husband Leonard in Bloomsbury, near where I stayed while I was in London. A first edition of this book is listed at \$25,000 on the used book market.

Nothing need be said; nothing could be said. There it was, all round them. It partook, she felt, carefully helping Mr. Bankes to a specially tender piece, of eternity; as she had already felt about something different once before that afternoon; there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out (she glanced at the window with its ripple of reflected lights) in the face of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby; so that again to-night she had the feeling she had had once to-day, already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that remains for ever after. This would remain.

“Yes,” she assured William Bankes, “there is plenty for everybody.”



**Thank you for reading!**



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