

## IN THIS ISSUE: TRANSFORMATION — THE FIRE OF CHANGE

### DO PAGANS NEED AN AFTERLIFE?

A Pagan chieftain once famously told the Venerable Bede that one's life was like the flight of the sparrow through a hall: from unknown darkness, through light and life and back out into the unknown again. Pagans don't usually agree, finding little virtue in a certainty that devalues this world and robs the darkness of its mystery. *By Archer, artwork by Chris Beetow... 22*

### SHOULDN'T YOU BE IN CHURCH?

There are three structural paradigms adopted by most faith-based groups, regardless of religion. The small group (for Witches, the *coven*), the medium-sized group (we will use the term *fellowship*), and the large formal group (which, for lack of a better term, we will refer to as a *church*). Somehow, and sometimes without even realizing it, covens are beginning to grow into congregational churches. *By Jay Stewart and Holly Burt, artwork by Chris Beetow... 29*

### QUEER DEITIES

Not all god/desses walk the straight and narrow. Here's a few to investigate if you are looking for Someone outside the box. The following deities are gods and goddesses of homoerotic magic. Though the names of many of these deities may be familiar, parts of their stories may not.

*By Chris Penczak, artwork by Chris Beetow... 35*

### THE PROBLEM OF LOKI

Loki has always been a troubling character. He doesn't play by the rules, doesn't respect our comfort zones, he just doesn't *fit*. Loki exists betwixt and between: neither fully part of the world of the giants nor fully part of the world of the gods. Surprisingly, a careful examination of the relationship between Odin and Loki reveals that Loki's disavowal of the rules actually enables Odin to consolidate further power and maintain his supremacy over Asgard.

*By Galina Krasskova, artwork by Chris Beetow... 41*

### ENCOUNTERING THE SACRED

Sometime last year, I realized that I had been ritualizing in a way that was contradictory to my deepest beliefs. I have been ritualizing the belief that I create Sacred Space. But *can* I create sacred space? I love the process of grounding, casting a circle, and speaking to the elements; but I am appalled at how easily I accept the idea that I can, with my human rituals, "create" sacred space.

*By Cynthia Jones and Jennifer Wilson... 45*

### THE WARRIOR'S BRAID

It is not currently popular to honor courage and sacrifice in combat and, to many, it is no longer seen as laudable to revere those who shed their blood in battle. But in many traditions, such a thing is sacred and most worthy of respect. Warriorship is not a matter of taking up arms and killing, but of having a spirit and will of steel; a spirit that will not allow one to shirk one's duty no matter how unpleasant. *By Galina Krasskova... 48*



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## FICTION THE WHITE GESE

I first saw Robert in Reseda Park seven years ago. His hair stuck together in greasy, brown spikes. He wore a drab army jacket whose shoulder seams hung halfway down his arms and faded blue jeans that hadn't seen the inside of a washing machine in quite some time. He was skinny as a rail, had serious, dark-brown eyes, and was wiser than a body should be at twelve years old.

*By Debbie Smith, artwork by Chris Beetow... 52*

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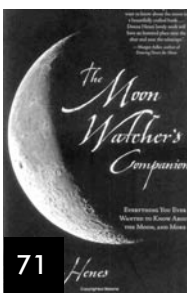
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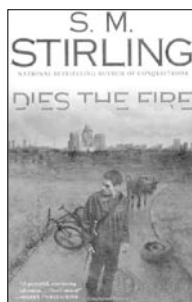
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## ABOUT OUR FEATURED ARTIST

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