



Coming to the Edge of the Circle: A Wiccan Initiation Ritual (AAR ACADEMY SER)

Nikki Bado

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Imagine yourself sitting on the cool damp earth, surrounded by deep night sky and fields full of fireflies, anticipating the ritual of initiation that you are about to undergo. Suddenly you hear the sounds of far-off singing and chanting, drums booming, rattles "snaking," voices raised in harmony. The casting of the Circle is complete. You are led to the edge of the Circle, where Death, your challenge, is waiting for you. With the passwords of "perfect love" and "perfect trust" you enter Death's realm. The Guardians of the four quarters purify you, and you are finally reborn into the Circle as a newly made Witch.

Coming to the Edge of the Circle offers an ethnographic study of the initiation ritual practiced by one coven of Witches located in Ohio. As a High Priestess within the coven as well as a scholar of religion, Nikki Bado is in a unique position to contribute to our understanding of this ceremony and the tradition to which it belongs. Bado's analysis of this coven's initiation ceremony offers an important challenge to the commonly accepted model of "rites of passage." Rather than a single linear event, initiation is deeply embedded within a total process of becoming a Witch in practice and in community with others.

Coming to the Edge of the Circle expands our concept of initiation while giving us insight into one coven's practice of Wicca. An important addition to Ritual Studies, it also introduces readers to the contemporary nature religion variously called Wicca, Witchcraft, the Old Religion, or the Craft.

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