



WELCOME TO
GOLDEN FALLS
LIBRARY OF ESOTERICA

A Manifesto and Invitation
by J Penn Wiggins

Consider, if you will, the following question:
Who is the most important heathen in history?

Is it, perhaps, some long forgotten great king? That'd make sense—those guys are directly descended from Odin right? You need kings to have kingdoms, and kingdoms certainly have an outsized effect on the lives of the people that live there. Those great kings may have even individually set things in motion that were necessary for Heathenry today to exist in the form that it does. Or maybe you want to consider a powerful warrior or bold explorer; someone with his own saga to exaggerate his deeds into mythic proportions. Surely the **heroes of the past** had a say in the world we live in today.



But remove a king and another one will take his place. The same can largely be said for warriors. It certainly can be for presidents of the Troth. **History happens regardless**, and time, like the tyrant it is, moves at its own pace. That's not to say history is unimportant. Quite the contrary, it's of the utmost importance. There is much to learn from the past, but before we can learn from it **we have to actually know anything about it.**

The same can be said of the gods themselves. **Who are the gods without the stories we tell of them?** No, it's not kings, alchemists, magicians, or even the gods that have the largest effect on Heathenry—it's the **scribes, story tellers, and historians** writing all these things down so that the next generation has the stories to learn from.

Which I'm afraid means that the most important heathen in history isn't even a heathen at all it's Snorri fucking Sturluson. Because without him, **what would we have** of our gods? Even as his lens on our myths was Christianized, and we have a lot of his questionable takes baked into our stories, if it weren't for **this one weird poet** we wouldn't have any stories in the first place.

So where does that leave us? Because, you're right, that simply will not do. There's a joke within Heathenry that we're *the religion with homework*, as if that is not true of all religions. But in any Heathen group of size, you'll find **reconstructionists, historians, and academics**, and even more people who like to

pretend that they are reconstructionists, historians, or academics. They'll tell you with deep pride **how old** the faith is, and assign newcomers their favorite books—often the same two or three—or else one of a ton of very shoddily researched ones claiming to understand the wisdom of Odhinn himself or telling you unhinged things about the presumably ancient mysteries of the runes. The thing is, I don't know about you, but when I did my homework **I didn't just read things**. I wrote them.

Don't get me wrong—as is evidenced by the second category of books I just mentioned, **history and lore are worth studying and taking wisdom from**. The pride in knowing and studying these things is warranted, at least when there's actual study involved. And as the tech bros love to prove, you can't go about reinventing a thing you don't even understand. Learning about where we have come from is, and will always be, crucial for knowing where we're going. I'm just not certain when we decided history was done, **or for that matter, why**.

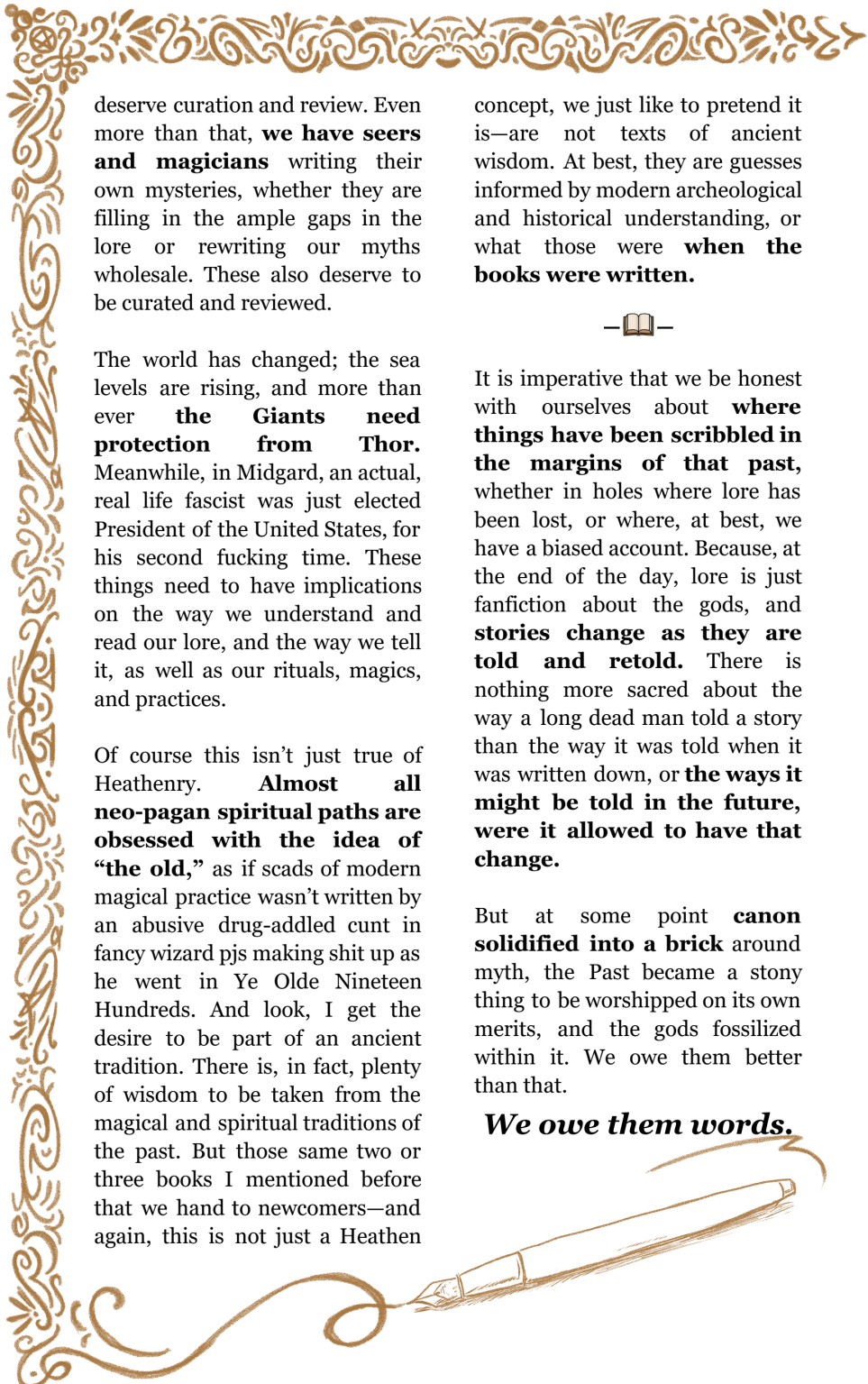
Consider Science for a moment. **Science is a living tradition**, where new things are imagined, written down, reviewed, and eventually canonized. We once understood that our body's health was maintained by the careful

balance of its humors, and **the priest class of Scientists designed rituals and practices around that knowledge**. It was, as time changes everything, challenged and new lore was considered and written down. Certainly not every new thing someone suggests in the name of Science is true, or worthwhile—**there is no context in which curation and review does not improve your results**. But even when Science is wrong, curiosity and the capacity for change is what keeps its rituals working in a modern era for modern practitioners. And sure, systemic access issues mean that, for the most part, only a very elite subset of those who are involved in Science in their daily lives get to be in a place to write new lore, but new lore is still crucial to the faith.

Why is Heathenry different? **Heathenry is a living tradition**—I'm sitting right here alive and Heathen. If you're reading this, you're presumably at least one of those things too. Just as culture suffers when we refuse to consider and collect new works in Science, Heathenry suffers for refusing to consider new lore.

Because even if they aren't the three books we hand newcomers, **we have all those historians and academics** writing works that examine our lore and our past in new ways—books that





deserve curation and review. Even more than that, **we have seers and magicians** writing their own mysteries, whether they are filling in the ample gaps in the lore or rewriting our myths wholesale. These also deserve to be curated and reviewed.

The world has changed; the sea levels are rising, and more than ever **the Giants need protection from Thor**. Meanwhile, in Midgard, an actual, real life fascist was just elected President of the United States, for his second fucking time. These things need to have implications on the way we understand and read our lore, and the way we tell it, as well as our rituals, magics, and practices.

Of course this isn't just true of Heathenry. **Almost all neo-pagan spiritual paths are obsessed with the idea of "the old,"** as if scads of modern magical practice wasn't written by an abusive drug-addled cunt in fancy wizard pjs making shit up as he went in Ye Olde Nineteen Hundreds. And look, I get the desire to be part of an ancient tradition. There is, in fact, plenty of wisdom to be taken from the magical and spiritual traditions of the past. But those same two or three books I mentioned before that we hand to newcomers—and again, this is not just a Heathen

concept, we just like to pretend it is—are not texts of ancient wisdom. At best, they are guesses informed by modern archeological and historical understanding, or what those were **when the books were written**.



It is imperative that we be honest with ourselves about **where things have been scribbled in the margins of that past**, whether in holes where lore has been lost, or where, at best, we have a biased account. Because, at the end of the day, lore is just fanfiction about the gods, and **stories change as they are told and retold**. There is nothing more sacred about the way a long dead man told a story than the way it was told when it was written down, or **the ways it might be told in the future, were it allowed to have that change**.

But at some point **canon solidified into a brick** around myth, the Past became a stony thing to be worshipped on its own merits, and the gods fossilized within it. We owe them better than that.

We owe them words.



And that's where Golden Falls and I come in; Allow me to introduce myself, my Lady, and my library.



I am a dedicant of **Sága**, a Norse goddess about whom we have very little in the way of lore. What we do know of her—that she is counted first among Frigg's handmaidens, that Odin seeks her council, and the etymological implications of her name—point to her as a goddess of **language, and seeing**. As I understand both my Lady and the nature of stories, this makes her a goddess of **magic**—a goddess of the seeking of **knowledge and mysteries**, and of the intentional use of these things.

I had worked with her for some years—in fact, I'll make the claim that she was in my story well before I knew her name, but in 2023 she called me into direct service as her priest.

One significant part of this path for me is the building of a library in her name: a collection of esoterica, educational texts on magic, lore and wisdom both old and new.

At its core, it is what it says on the tin—a **small library of works,**

books, and reference material on the topics of magic and spirituality. My personal spiritual work is primarily, although not strictly, Heathen, but it is not my intention that the library should only or even necessarily primarily be a collection of Norse works—Heathenry is a starting point, not a boundary.

One of the primary functions of the library is to serve as a collection of instructional and educational materials. Skill acquisition books all feel that they need to serve as an introduction to their topic. Peruse, say, the knitting books at your local bookstore and for each one you flip through you'll learn the same things about gauges, swatches, how to cast on, and *don't forget to block!* Then, and only then, will the book give you its content, which, if you're lucky, isn't all just variations on the same patterns that are in the other books, only but vampire themed or something. It makes sense—a publisher wants to sell a knitting book, and the category of knitters and potential knitters is definitionally larger than the category of knitters. But it's a problem for anyone looking to buy their **second book** on knitting.

This is as true for books on magical and spiritual practice as it is for fibercraft. There are endless resources that teach 'Wizard 101'; I even catalog some highlights. But that's not my primary purpose. Instead, the library aims **to curate and foster the creation of new intermediate and advanced educational and instructional material.**

In addition to these texts, a second, equally important function of the library is as **an archive of magical writings and esoterica**: those new stories, understandings, and practices that I keep saying we owe our gods and ourselves. Again, in my role as custodian of this collection, and as a part of my service to Sága, I am available to

help guide people who would like to **create works** in this vein.

Whether works given to the care of the library are simply catalogued and kept for preservation in a private collection, offered only to a specific community, or made more publicly available will be up to the author of the work, and will be discussed upon its acceptance.

The curation and preservation of knowledge and art is one of the most important duties we have to ourselves, to our gods, **and to the stories we become.** We are alive. Our gods are alive. Our myths are swirling around us, and if we don't write them down someone else will. **Or worse, they won't.**

It's time for us to be the most important heathens in history.



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What home can be built for our children on this stolen land?

None but the wealthy own, and heritage is soiled by hate.

But Sága's golden ink spills onto page as knowledge preserved,

And Odin, daily, knows the wisdom of her council.

When I can no longer tell my story, let it be bound in her book

To light the future's path, as stories of the past light our own.

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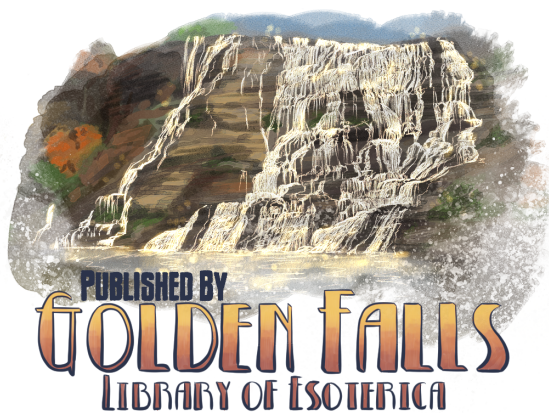
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If you do, Sága won't be mad, she'll just be disappointed.

