

The Cailleach

by Susa Morgan Black

There is an old weathered cottage hidden
down the twisted path deep in the Caladonian wood.
Racks of herbs are tied to the rafters,
a black cracked cauldron steams in the stone hearth,
brewing spring-picked leaves,
with summer-grown flowers,
autumn harvest seeds,
and winter gathered roots.
The black-shawled, grey-haired cailleach
stirs with an old wooden spoon
Crooning her spells, tasting the broth,
like the herb-wise midwives and
woods-women before her.
Villagers stealthily travel that
twisted path, and ask for boons
both fair and foul.
Healing, wealth, love and curses.
The Cailleach offers all.

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