

The Painted Forest

poems inspired by living at Steward Wood

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THE DROPPING OF THE SUN FROM HINGSTON

Bye bye now
Sunset now
It's the dropping of the sun

In the northwest
Betwixt Imbolc and Equinox
Venus marks the spot
Then she mysteriously disappears

Jess is enjoying himself so much
It's great, it;s great.
Pant, pant.
Doggy happiness suffuces his expressions.

Pastel oranges are spread like marmalade and solar margarine
over the toasted surface of the moors
Airplane trails add an artist's touch
To the bluey canvas

Bye bye now
Sunset now
It's the dropping of the sun

Brown, pallid smoke revives
Sight of an engine on the Moreton branch line.

Spring.....spring.....spring.

Slowly, with chilly temperatures
descending to sit over the land,
it becomes more and more of a certainty
that the solar game is over....until tomorrow.

Bye bye now
Sunset now
It's the dropping of the sun

Bye bye now
Sunset now
It's the dropping of the sun

2001 – this became a favourite around the campfire!

THANKSGIVING FOR THE DREAM

or

CELEBRATING MY PLACE

“This is Your Place, Your Land”

Quoth Bear to Me

After joyous flight

As we stood upon Hingston Rocks

Looking down

Over the woods and the illuminated landscape.

My place, my home

Where my energy is rooted

Where my tribe is.

Where the Earth calls me to be

Where I have chosen to be.

A Devonshire man, I am. I am.

Washed by the waters of Steward Wood

Cloaked by Larch, Ash, Elder

Fanned by the breeze that comes from near and far, from the sea, over the Moor

Drenched by the fertile rain

My hands sink into the luscious soil.

I say hello to the birds, the woodants, the buzzards

To all my friends, sharing this Place

Enjoying this Place

On the Earth Mother's sensuous body

Crowned by Father Sky

I thank you Great Spirit with my heart wide open

For the blessing you have bestowed upon me and mine kinsfolk.

April 2001

SWAN'S FLIGHT

Spring is here, dancing May Queen
Following dreams, like stepping stones
Following downstream, white swan floating
And still, so very still
That it kills all the darkness away

Gentleness like a light wind
Comes to her over magic waves
Berries & thorns, mighty Holly tree
And light, so very light
That it shines all the darkness away

Bear & Swan together
Cross the Beltane fire
Moon is higher in the sky
Darkest earth brown
Against the whiteness
Of her breast
Still trying to be free

Bear is strong in his own land
Standing tall with the trees
Roaring like thunder, shakes all mountains
And strong, so very strong
That it fights all the darkness away

Swan in flight, left in wonder
Her cage was never there at all
The sunsets behind her, Sky God's laughter
So free, so very free
That is why
They laughed all the darkness away

Bear & Swan together
Cross the Beltane fire
Moon is higher in the sky
Darkest earth brown
Against the whiteness
Of her breast
Still trying to be free

THE TEMPLE OF CREATION

I stand
Strong, straight and true
Facing the North
My ochred countenance marking a Warrior of the Earth.

The Spirit of my Father, of all my ancestors,
Stand behind me
And in front those who will come after me.

I give my weight to the Mother
My bare feet caress her browned golden leaves and dark fertile soil
I feel my roots penetrating deep.

I am here to die
And to reawaken
For all my relations;
Preparing for procreation.

I work with the Earth's abundant resources
(She provides for all her kin unceasingly)
Fine tuning to my surroundings
To what is within me.

I love myself
I love this land
I love my camp
Set amongst the ancient ones of this forest.

I become one with the squally wind and rain, with the chattering birds, with a leaf drop,
with the fruiting mycellium;
Everything is flow;
The cascading stream refreshes and cleanses.

I am sensitive and sensitised;
I am stronger and wiser;
The purity of this place has seeped into my bones.

I am love, lover and beloved
Beauty within and without
Divine.

This poem was written shortly after doing a Vision Quest over Christmas 2007 in some woods nearby.

CRYSTAL HEART

From the heart of the crystal
Love cries.

I have fashioned my Arrow and chosen my Bow.
The time has come.
I draw the bowstring, load the arrow with my intent and love, aim well.
And release, let go. She flies.

I surrender, knowing that in the end there is no choice.

Two days in the Dart Valley fill me up.
I am learning to find the riches that lie beyond my comfort zone,
Remembering who I am,
Returning to my natural place.
I feel the love of the Universe in the heat of the fire, the rain on my face, in the
sustenance of the plants, through all creatures, the rocks, the stones and
the crystals.
I am never alone.

I draw on the strength of all the Circles I touch.
I take my place with pride, adding my support, love,
presence, wisdom, willingness to show and be myself.
The power of the Circle is infinite and timeless.

Every moment dies.
That's the beauty and sadness of life.
And each moment is eternal.

Here I am at this place. HERE NOW.
The roar of the sacred river fills my senses.
A fox reflects the peace and the agitation within me.
Nature is a mirror of what's true for me in the moment.
Perfect!

I give my crystal to the waters so that I can and do
thoroughly nurture and nourish myself.

I pray for obedience to Spirit.

I pay attention.

I develop and follow my passion.

My vision, my being expands and softens.

So that our people may live.

I return to the world renewed, remade.

I return as Earth Warrior, with immense gratitude for
what I receive and what I can give.

Resting in the heart of the crystal.

*This poem was inspired by a Vision Quest I did in the Dart Valley with 40 other people in
June 2008.*

THE PAINTED FOREST

Ancient Mystery
Radiant Forest
Sparkling with Life.

We live amongst the trees
Forest dwellers
Recreating our ancestral ways
In these cuspal times.

Behold -
The birds & beasts
Respond in movement & song
Imbuing our senses, our being
With beauty, with medicine, with magic, Mystery.
The web of life that Grandmother Spider has woven glistens in the sunlight.

All that is in the forest is simply present;
The trees, the plants, the stunning bugs draw us into ourselves;
Deep Peace.

Death into Life
Life into Death
Never ending.
Yet the formless one life
Lies behind this tapestry of form.
The painted forest, the complexity of light, colour, shade, fills the canvas,
The essence of all.

This poem came to me shortly after the planning Public Inquiry took place over 3 days in April 2009, in which we needed to justify why we were living at Steward Wood and should be allowed to continue to do so. Happily, we were granted planning permission for another five years shortly afterwards.

Great Spirit
I have thrown away my power
I have not taken responsibility
I have failed to live fully as the authentic me
I have broken my vows a thousand times
But it doesn't matter
In this moment, I take refuge in presence
I come to you
And all is well.

August 2009

Dad, where art thou?
Gone from the temporal
Into the universal
And yet I still hear your breath
Still feel your warm presence
From a wiser place.
You and I are healing together
Helping each other transform.
We are both light
Radiant on either side of the divide.
You are now eternal
And yet you still have shape.
Please help me with my pain;
Please support me in remembering who I am;
You and I are one.

2009

I am poet, lover
Transcendent Beauty.

I am forlorn, broken,
mended and repaired,
then torn asunder once more -
constantly being refashioned,
pain wrenching and joy flying -
finally understanding deep within me
"The cure for the pain is in the pain"
Simple, profound, liberating...
The story of me loses its hook,
The ego-created conflict within dissolves,
As I stand simply and purely in presence.

January 2010 - The quote is from my favourite poet, Rumi.

Lovers dance,
Their touch tender
On each other's body;
Love opens, lifts and unites -
Why was it ever not thus?
Soon their embrace,
Full of sexual charge,
Stimulates understanding,
Compassion,
Patience,
Laughter,
Heat.
These lovers know the value of presence
And celebrate their coming together in the Now.

January 2010 - Partly inspired by a brief encounter at a dance workshop.

EVOLUTIONARY STIRRINGS

We stand at the 11th hour,
Nay – at the last minute of the 11th hour
Waiting....
What will the choice be?
Love or fear?
Presence
Or a search for happiness in the world of form?
In some ways, it doesn't matter.

My choice is Life.
Self-destructive tendencies and craving are material to generate consciousness –
Space.
So I rest in that emptiness
And draw my power from it,
Just as Grandfather did.

January 2010 – the Grandfather is Stalking Wolf (Lipan Apache elder).

The cure for the pain is in the pain
Learn from God's messenger this alchemy
Accept what he brings to you
And when the envoy grief comes to your house
Welcome to your breast like an old friend.

Once the blossoms are gone, the fruit becomes visible;
When one fades away, the other starts growing.
How can bread give strength without being broken?
How can the grape give wine without being crushed?
Oh, Beloved, reconcile me with destruction
No-one can triumph before being destroyed.

Why do I say me or him
When he is myself and I am he?
Why do I seek? His essence speaks through me.
I have been looking for myself.
I have been knocking on a door trying to get in;
I have been living on the lip of insanity, knocking on a door trying to get in;
The door opens - I have been knocking from the inside.

– *Jelaluddin Rumi*

To breathe is an act of supreme courage -
To be purely and simply with the breath;
Allowing whatever's there
To be.
Enjoyment then follows
And joy is not far behind.
It takes courage...
Especially when so many around are completely in their addictions
Totally lost in the world of form.
I feel that pull and neither resist nor go with it.
I breathe,
Saying hello to each moment, each mood.

This is what the ancients speak of
- Buddha, Rumi, Jesus -
and the modern masters -
Eckhart, Amma, Krishnamurti.

Resting in the present - that's it!
The paradise of this Earth, this Body
Then becomes clear.

February 2010

Mother –
You who gave me life,
Who fed me, clothed me, provided shelter & comforts;
And loved me, nurtured me, taught me;
I thank you for this and more from the depths of my heart.
You enabled me to grow into who I am today.
Thank you for all your love, for all your hard work, for wiping my bottom countless
times, for picking me up when I fell, for working to pay for school and university.
There is only one Joy Mills.
Our connection is eternal.

March 2010

MAGORIA

I love this land.

A band of warriors
With open heart
Came to listen, to receive
And thus to give.
This land welcomed them as Warriors of the Earth,
Taking them in with her kindness,
Into her mighty and soft embrace.
The warriors deepened their roots
And grew a little more towards the stars
That graced their vigil.

A week has passed:
I visit the place of their questing;
The land vibrant in sunshine,
Greening at Eostre's beckoning.
These men have touched this land;
Their gentleness and strength still lingering;
Their stories echoing in the landscape;
And the land, touched so,
Responds with quiet aliveness.
This is how it should be between the Earth and her children.

Written in April 2010 a week after co-facilitating a Men's Initiation Weekend comprising a circle of eleven men, in which we undertook a 24 hour Vision Quest.

SNIPPETS OF STORIES

Snippets of stories fill my head:
A soaring kite;
A sparrowhawk resting in a tree with perfect awareness;
A slug to be studied, slowing down to its pace;
A buzzard swooping down on a rabbit soon to be its feast;
Bucks and does galore in the landscape;
Geese honking through;
Runes springing out;
Tracking the Moon through the firmament;
Hearing the hum of modern life;
Bee visitations....
Many, many stories;
Messages from the dreamworld.
We sing the land and its inhabitants into life.

Time immeasurable
Everything always complete
Indigenous awakening.

Anger, frustration, fear, excitement, wonder, stillness -
Whatever arises in the moment is perfect!
There is no failure.

Spirit sends a sign through the straw: X
Gifu - the gift;
Our journey round the wheel is complete.
Thank you to Bat, Frog, Mars, Jupiter, Pluto, to all our spirit allies.
Welcome to the new Me, the new You
Embodying more deeply the Warrior.

This is a second poem written shortly after a Vision Quest in March 2010 with eleven men over the Men's Initiation Weekend.