

A Place That I Know

by Averie Basch

Inspired by my visit to Ballynoe Stone Circle, Ireland

There is a place I know
Where time is different.
It's not that my watch stops working,
Or that the earth pauses in its turning,
Or even that the sun shines through the trees in a way
That tricks you into thinking it is not as late as it is.
No.
It's not that at all.
It is something far less simple.
In this place I know,
It is the feeling of time that is different.

In this magical place I know,
There is a tunnel.
Not a steel tunnel for cars
Or concrete for a train,
Or even age-old stone built to make passageways
For dead pharaohs' tombs, deep inside a dark pyramid.
No.
It's not man-made.
It is far more natural,
Because in this magical place I know,
The fairies' tunnel is made from the overhead branches of living trees.

In this quiet place I know,
There is a hidden path.
Not a path for hikers,
Or for finding a career,
Or even for someone who has lost their way and just needs a path
That will bring them back to the road their life is supposed to follow.
No.
It is there for the guests of the fairies,
So that you do not disturb their little houses nestled in the tree roots.
You see, this path I know follows the tunnel through the fairies' woods,
And if I stay on the path, I will not disturb the quiet peace.

Past the woodland tunnel and its path that I know,
There is a field.
Not a field for cows,
Or a field for corn,
Or even a field where little children can play soccer, football that is,
That will keep them active and out of trouble.
No.

It is not a field for those kinds of things.
This is a field for rocks,
And before you laugh at this field I know,
Understand that these rocks, in this field, are different.

Because in this field that I know,
The rocks are special.
They are not rocks for sitting around a campfire,
Or for distracted children to climb on,
Or even for construction companies to find and take away
To use in building some new school or department store.
No.
These rocks, stones I suppose, are not to be moved from where they are now.
They are far too mysterious, far too significant, and far too historic to be used like that.
I guess they are more like boulders, these stones, these rocks,
And they are set in a stone circle from before the age of the pyramids.

Do you understand now,
Why time is different here?
Do you understand why I feel that the fairies' tunnel,
And the woodland path,
And especially the field that is not just a field for standing stones
But a field for ancient magic, or for we don't even know what, are so special?
Listen.
They guard the stones from time.
From time and time's soldiers, humans, who would use the area for cars and trains,
or for soccer, or schools, or stores,
Without a care that this place is different.

Surrounding this place that I know,
Time works.
I can see its influence when I notice the black plastic bags in the other fields,
Or the cars and trucks on the not-too-distant roads,
Or even in the special plate holding offerings
To the fairies, spirits, or whatever people think live here.
Look.
I see coins from around the world,
But those coins are the only human influence I see here,
And they are gifts to those who keep this place safe,
Safe from industry, from people, from time.

When I leave this place I know
I leave gifts.
I didn't know who to leave them for, the fairies,
Or the spirits,
Or the unknown mystery that historians and archaeologists alike cannot uncover,
Because no one really knows what this stone circle was meant for.
Not even me.
But on my way out I left coins for keeping the stone circle untouched,
A sparkling thread for inside the fairies' tunnel,

And footprints as the only proof
That I had borrowed the use of the pathway.

But I will take with me the memories,
A few photos,
An unanswered mystery,
Some ideas of who may have built this,
And the feeling
Of a place that I know
Where time is different.