

THE CAVE

On the morning that we emerge, blinking, from winter,
the cave opens its eye.

The turning woods unfold their sides just enough
for early rays to seep into the valley
And find the moss-encrusted
stone socket of secrets.

The sleeping king in the mountain,
An Arthur or a Fionn MacCumhaill, waiting for the sun,
buried with the warrior tribe, earthbound, ready
to wake, to rise, to overcome.
Or some other red-headed hero,
Gilgamesh or Erik the Beserker, will lead our expedition inwards,
our assault on the bursting walls of our imaginings.

We seek him at this liminal place, this opening by the ferns;
deeper inside, the unseen fists
of fear or danger, death or panic sprout through the sides of the passage
like painted animals in a flickering light
or red silhouettes of hands on ochre,
a hallway, a stairwell, grabbing as we crawl.

Ghosts of the untouched, the soup-eaters
walk grounded in their time below the stone-soil,
whilst we float just above it, walking on air, feeling movement in dark and light,
inside and out, in time present. Time past sings in polyphony,
time future is above us, silent as the trees.

In memory, the redwood groves protected us,
their tops reaching higher than the sky,
the openings in their timeless trunks, invited us like a hug,
with the presence of friendship, strong and good.
A cave in a tree. The trees by the cave,
insistent with growth, are doing fine
in the green-ness of dreams, the dream-ness of the grene wud,
the Green Man, holding foliage and vines.
The hairy Woodwose, Enkidu, grunting, bending earthwards a cherry branch,
skeletal, not yet in bloom, waiting for spring, for words
to sprout with feeling through the threads of light
where there is defence and attack, the spell advances,
where the red man and the green man, the animals and birds
kneel to the fairie queen, sit beside the lady bright.

We seek safety underground,
warmth of the home-cave, rituals, a fire, a drum,
we want a song, a dance, a gathering, a touch...
we need a sleep, a dream, a sunrise and a going down.