

Poetry - Open workshop

Mena Kerslake

Ghosts in the Present

I cross the threshold and enter the shadows.

An ancient place of mystery
where long fingered arms of the beech trees
stretch over crouching holly.

A susurrus of rustling caught in the breeze
conjures ghostly flying arrows from battles long past
wind-whipped leaves become swirling swords.

sunbeams break through: they recall me to the present
Here, battleground has become playground
families joke and jostle, make dens and lick ice creams.

The mystery continues in our own time.

Tree-lined tunnels to secret stairs
Ancient oak and spreading beech catch me unawares.

Views over rooftops to far-away hills
Factories and farmland, rivers and mills.

Place of ancient battles, burials and blood
Sanctuary and mystery, safe from any flood.

Birds sing, insects throng, sunbeams dappled fall
Squirrels scamper overhead, children play at ball

I come here for space and tranquillity:
It's not quiet: birds sing, children play, traffic passes.
But I'm left to myself as I walk dappled paths
And look out at the views all around.

It wasn't always peaceful here:
A place of refuge and defence
A place of battle
Screaming arrows, thundering horses.
A place of death.

But the years and the rain have washed away blood and sorrow,
And I come here for peace and tranquillity.