

Stonehenge, Wessex Chalklands, July 21, 1997

A GIFT OF THE JOURNEY

Magical megaliths. Stonehenge. Sun mask. Druid dance.
The hand brushes the obelisk — mossy green and grey,
cold for a summer's day — dragging fingertips across
the texture. Braille for a pulse? We want to touch
the mystery of this place, even as the mind's eye squints

for a glimpse of deeper meanings, sequestered in time
and cultural distance, some of which seem to be murmured
in the eclipse of stones at dusk and dawn. But the magic
does not reside in the stones themselves. It is embedded in
the reading, the immersion of self in place, and the puzzle

of the circle that only gets more puzzling when spotted
by the eye of the sun. Like the morning dew, this Druid
magic is tied to a clock of nature. It emerges from nowhere
and disappears just as mysteriously with the heat of midday
— or too much inspection. The poet who would see this clearly

must chase the beams gently, introspectively, as they refract
on the traces of magicians and astronomers who have danced
through the bosom of these stones in patterns and rhythms
we hope are coded within us all. The experience steps us
into another reality and with all the power of ritual turns

day to dream, taking us out of ourselves for a while to show
us something about ourselves — about how we have been
and where we think we used to be — a kind of mythopoeic
archaeology. The best poets still know how to do it. Magic,
it seems, is a gift of the journey.