

Let Us Lift Up Our Hands



I am about to crest the hilltop. It was a steep climb from Pena Creek, where I spent the day. I stare into the setting sun which is partially hidden behind an oak tree. The tree has an interesting structure. Its trunk rises straight up for about twelve feet, then bifurcates into two arms which stretch out horizontally as far as the elbows and then bends sharply upward again. It looks like a woman in prayerful petition. She is clad in an elegant evening gown; a satiny, form-fitting garment of moss from which only her mid forearms and hands extrude.

She is no less reverent in her gratitude to the *setting* sun than she was in her supplication at its *rising*. I had seen her in the winter of hibernation when she had no leaves for photosynthesizing sunlight. She was equally grateful then. For hers was not the mindless sleep of a Christmas uncle with arms folded across a bloated bellyful of turkey and ham at Yuletide. She managed to maintain a witness consciousness, even in her slumber, silently awaiting the first subtle signals of Spring.

Tonight, sans sun, she will continue to give thanks. And when tomorrow dawns, she will bend to her task again, with gratitude in her very core. Leaf by leaf, she will accept information from the sun and convert it to carbon. She is a bodybuilder, but she will trade carbon to the dark-dwelling fungi hidden within the earth at her roots; and, in return, she will be given nitrogen. It is one of the oldest free trade agreements on the planet.

A few yards away lies the body of her neighbor. He has donated his body to science - the science of Life. Humans are quick to dispose of a discarded spacesuit. It is an offense to the eye and nose and it conjures up fear of mortality. So we bury or burn it. In the world of flora, there is no embarrassment; rather the ecosystem takes its measured time to recycle, molecule by molecule.

The funeral rites of the plant kingdom are exquisitely choreographed because they are not celebrating the *end* of life but the *seamlessness* of life. The neighbor oak is not dead; he is reclining at the eternal banquet of the Cosmic Eucharist. Sometimes we are the *guests*. Sometimes we are the *hosts*. And sometimes we are the *food*. No role is privileged above others. When I learn to play any role mindfully, it will land me an Oscar; the Oscar of channeling love, light and life into the theatre of incarnation.

Namasté,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Seán". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Namasté,".

Tír na nÓg
May, 2015