

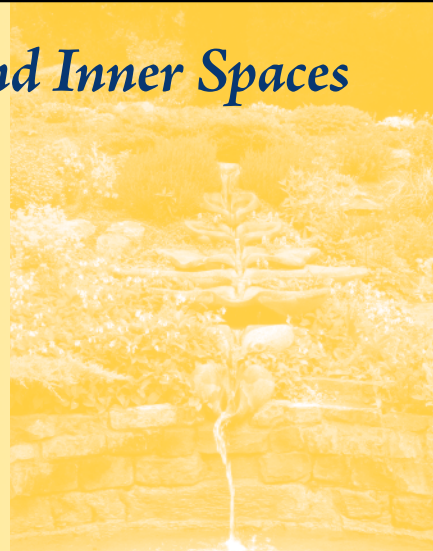
Explorations



Sacred Places and Inner Spaces

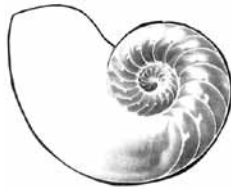
poems by

Erline Dessie Goodell



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Sacred Places and Inner Spaces



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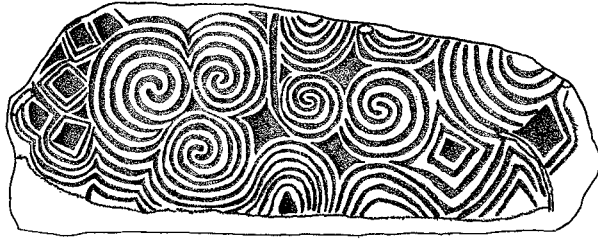
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Sacred Sites



Stone Circle Near Avebury

A rusty sign
by the side of the road
announced: Stone Circle.
A gate stood open.

“Hello there!” a voice called.
An elderly woman with
a black dog approached
from a meadow’s edge.

The circle of pale stones
stood stark against a shiny blue sky.
“Yes,” said the woman,
“this area is still used for ceremonies.
The locals come here on festival nights.

“In ancient times this is where the procession would start.
Pilgrims would circle the stones, then walk down the sacred path,
between the dozens of giant stones to Avebury Sanctuary proper.
These stones are small compared to the huge ones at the ancient site.”

When I asked how to get there, the woman replied,
“It’s a very long walk. Take your car.
Drive alongside those deep depressions you see there,
they lead to the sanctuary and village.”

As I turned to wave and say Thank You,
I heard her say to the dog,
“They really don’t understand anything, do they, Blackie!”

Ancient Avebury Ceremony

First time to walk The Sacred Way.
Tonight excitement shimmers,
the chill, the dark, the wait.

Leaders wait for moon to skim
the tallest stone,
our signal to begin!

It's here!
A sliver
appears.
Our line moves.

I fall in behind the elders.
Our column serpentine
the small circle,
then proceeds
one by one
through
twin pillar stones
onto the wide, long,
grassy, stone-lined roadway
that leads us to the sacred enclosure.

We walk The Sacred Way.
We walk to honor the Great Mother.
We honor the ground from which we all came and will return.

Mythical Avalon

Thick mist swirls
covering valleys of earth-bound beauty.
I stand enchanted
on St. Michael's Tor
gazing across empty grassland
filled with mystical ships and men and women
disembarking onto the magical island of Avalon.
Sounds of oars bumping, of sails flapping, boats colliding, muted voices
reach me from a faraway vista—then fading back into mythological time.
I'm left with sadness at their parting.

Leaning Against Stone

Sheep graze peacefully
as visitors view enormous megaliths.
I am alone with my stone.

I lean against this tall gentle giant
imagining songs and prayers
sung in his presence.

I wonder whether it's wind or
old voices that expand my spirit,
instilling new optimism in me.

Not wanting to move away from
my mammoth source of peace,
I resist the call, "Come see this!"

I desire nothing more
than to lean against
my stone, take in its wisdom
and linger.

St. Michael's Tor

hill
top
tower
zenith
pinnacle,

beckoning

The Tor stands
tall above the plain,
sacred to Pagans,
Christians alike.
Pilgrims climb the
steep circular path,
to reach the top,
well worth the hike.