

Episode 28: Bardic Hills
Written by Jarod K. Anderson
www.cryptonaturalist.com

Noticing the poetry in nature is great practice for noticing the poetry in yourself.

Welcome to the CryptoNaturalist.

[Theme Music]

[This episode is written as a series of Shakespearean sonnets]

Into the bardic hills we found our way
Beyond the path that skirts the willow wood
South of the Blueridge mountains green and gray
Where verse and oak in ranks like soldiers stood

There, Cassandra and I found a shady stand
Of trees whose leaves could speak in rhymes of green
A poem in dappled sun and dark woodland
Whose words, like falling petals, could be seen

There is a creature known to haunt the place
Whose very nature shifts our thoughts and words
And forces sonnets old and out of place
To leap from lips like flights of startled birds

Into this lyric place I made my way
And from my thoughts all prose soon slipped away

My friends, these mysteries that haunt the wild lands
Entreat me with their songs so strong and sweet
Unanswered questions seem to grasp my hands
And thrum within me like a new heartbeat

So through the bardic hills I found a path
Where birds and beasts all laughed in metered rhyme

The sun and wind all breathed syllabic math
And something crept between my place and time

I smelled a smell that mingled flesh and wood
And felt a creep of wrongness on my skin
And down the ground receded where I stood
Until the hill stood bare and I within

Listener, in that dark place I saw much more
Yet now we pause to hear some hidden lore

Hidden Lore:

The Shadow
By Leslie J. Anderson

There is a thing that lives beneath my feet.
I feel it move against the rubber of my shoe.
Gentle does it rise beneath the peat,
and once I saw its feathers, pink and blue.

I told you of the thing on one spring day,
drunk on honey mead and your embrace.
You laughed my sweet and tipsy words away,
but must have seen the earnest in my face.

So feeling much more bare than in your bed
I stood upon my toes on that bright day.
You gave a single gasp to my great dread
then silence seemed to peel the world away.

“Grab the thing” I said “if it is there!”
Your voice, it shook like leaves, “I wouldn’t dare.”

Now, there’s a poem that I can understand
In light of where my day led me to go

Beneath the bardic hills and daylight land
Where daring feet can trace the false moon's glow

For in the hollow earth I saw a sight
A second sky that shone beneath the hill
A violet night of wind and strange starlight
Gleamed down on dim lilac and daffodil

The place was full of furtive twilight sound
Beneath that sky that had to be a lie
Where I stood still and rooted to the ground
And focused on my wary weather eye

I felt the night had breath and watchfulness
And from that dark new life might coalesce

I heard the bardic walker's steps approach
And soon I spied a fearful silhouette
'Twas twice my height and dressed beyond reproach
Bedecked in hose and ruff and gray doublet

The creature was a singular strange sight
Elizabethan garb in Tennessee
Its head like branching coral tall and bright
A bouquet of hands drowned in a phantom sea

I grinned and nodded to my poet host
With thoughts of love and ghosts and prince of Danes
It towered there and stood still as a post
And muttered sounds that were both rich and strange

And while its face was not a face to me
Its eyeless gaze spoke of serenity

It moved with swift and sure iambic grace
And plucked a wing quill from a swooping owl
I saw it write upon the empty space

A pack of nouns that glare and verbs that prowl

Now from the darkness lines of flowing light
Cast shadows on the earth as on the page
I felt my body rising through the night
And knew that I was exiting the stage

There on those bardic hills I blinked my eyes
And heard the walker's whispers 'neath my feet
I'd left that hollow hill and kept my prize
Which like most knowledge tasted bittersweet

Now back from dark and false moon's glow
To home and friends and Winnebago

Ah.

There now.

We've put some space between us and the bardic hills and I think I'm getting my prose back.

Yes.

Well.

I know we'll chat again when the fates permit.
We're creatures strange, so act like it.

[End]

Show Notes: Episode 28: Bardic Hills

When a landscape chooses a rhyme scheme, we must join in the poetry.

Hidden lore by Leslie J. Anderson

Credits

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