

**A Morning Stroll to Derwentwater, through the Fields**

Old gods of stone and light stand obdurate at Castlerigg;  
 trees naked as penitents await the flare of canopies;  
 stoic ewes with lambs at foot watch strangers with a wary eye;  
 young rabbits play hide-and-seek among the sandstone tombs.

Derwentwater shimmers with the images of violet crests,  
 the auburn bracken on their flanks, last year's heather  
 dark as peat; a red hound bounds about our feet,  
 eager to retrieve a stick. What did the Norsemen think,

before their axes felled the trees? Did they wonder if  
 the fly agaric was deceiving them, making them hallucinate  
 this glimpse of paradise? I sense that I've been here before,  
 and that I shall return. I take a sliver of green slate,  
 leave a lucky coin.

*Jena Woodhouse*