

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

The Leaf

by Janie Reynolds

To the South and the West
The North and the East
Within the Great tree.

Whose roots reach to the skies
And, as far, to the earth's core.

My journey never ends, as
Grasp I must,
Beyond the veil
For what I know I know,
and with this yearning
to be home,
yet at the same time
to be free.

Standing on the axis of the Earth,
the soft grass curls
beneath my feet.
Here in the Middle realm,
Primrose Hill
And the River Thames,
My birth allies,
Align.

As autumn sheds,

A leaf falls,
Reminding me
I must first die to be reborn.

Then deep into the trunk I hurl,
A bore of root vines swirl,
The smell of damp earth fills my head
As I fall and twist and slide.

And land,
in a clearing,
where my great friend Jaguar
Awaits,
to lead me to a cave,
And tear my body apart.

When it is done,
I thank him,
and Huascar appears
Holding the lamp
That lights the path
to the gates of the Underworld,
a Chamber of Wounds,
Where crawling stories,
And escaped parts of the soul
Harbour in bubbling pools
into which I lunge blankly,
For darkness is
no place for epithets.

And when I surface,
I bring nothing back.
The heavy stays below
Where it belongs.
I emerge,
Light.
Clean and calm and kind.

If a Christian were to see me
They would say that
I'd done wrong.
That only devils, demons and witches
Lie below.
And to beware!
Only a Priest
can exorcise such horrors.

But I would tell them
No, there's no such thing as the devil.
And there's nothing to be scared of
But oneself.
And I am no more
Meeting witches and beasts
Than were I to lie
On a Jungian's couch.

But they would say
I wouldn't go to heaven
If I first chose to delve in Hell.
But I would say that
I wouldn't get to heaven
If I didn't.
The gatekeeper would turn me away,
With such a heaviness within,
and send me back to Earth
To lighten up.