

Mystical Faery Folk: Look for the Signs

Joy Lynette Smith

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Mystical Faery Folk: Look for the Signs, by Joy Lynette Smith, is a lovingly crafted book of poetry designed to help the reader see and experience faeries as the author does herself.

Smith, who states in the foreword that she has been able to see and interact with faeries all of her life, takes her inspiration from nature. Each poem attempts to capture the essence of the faery folk Smith says she has felt and seen in magical locations. Specifically, the places shared in the book are those that are unspoiled, though not necessarily untouched, by humans. Smith also includes full-color photographs of each place so the reader can catch a glimpse of the magic she is describing.

The author never strays from her chosen theme of faeries in sacred places, and she covers a wide range of nature's beauty, from specific trees and flowers to streams and caves, even including an ancient well, the forest around a castle, and a potted orchid. Some of the passages are evocative and lovely, and they will transport the reader with ease:

Holly is the ruler of the white realm, the winter
King of the dark half of the year
When all else is dormant, the Holly works hardest
Brightly verdant against the white landscape

At other times, the poems lack rhythm, and rhymes seem forced and awkward with words that stutter across the page:

A glowing green orb is sent to earth
To passers-by who've asked the right
This shines on the path to the right
And the petite Yew shines with all its might

There is a single poem on each page with a full-size photograph on the facing page. A section of each poem is repeated in a circle around the image. This layout is clean and allows the reader to enjoy the author's view of her chosen locations. The font, however, is decorative but uncomfortable to read over long periods. A variety of colors for both the script and the page background compound this discomfort. It is often difficult to focus on the flow and meaning of the poetry when the words are difficult to decipher.

With this collection, Smith successfully expresses her own emotions through her poetry, but the average reader may not have a strong response to the material presented. Individuals who want to share in the author's encounters with the faery realm, however, will appreciate this book.

CATHERINE THURESON (June 27, 2013)

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