

'The Changing Seasons'

A Descriptive Essay by Tom Haran

The rolling hills during spring are a sight to live for. There is no parallel. Countless shades of green interacting, mingling with one another. It is truly a view to behold. A soft breeze blows through, moving each blade as they dance to silent music. Innumerable flower heads begin their growth and bloom. They stand stiff against what seems to be a never-ending wind. Every colour imaginable culminating on this one mound of dirt, creating a wonderful scent. A mixture of honey, lavender and freshness fills the air. This unmistakable aroma is life to some. Here comes a soft mixture of black and yellow to gather pollen. Its purpose so simple yet vital. A familiar buzz that can cause panic or calm. A stinger to cause pain but it chooses to remain peaceful, unencumbered by worry, unencumbered by stress.

A trickle can be heard. The crystal blueness and a shocking cold join to form a quaint stream. The very sound relaxes and the sight pleases. The stream travels through a cobbled courtyard. High walls surround it. They once stood to protect, now they lie crumbled, broken like a sentinel whose duty has halted and who now rests. On the remnants of these defences grows new life, ivy growing without any signs of stopping. Magic keeping the plant stuck to the stone, creating a contrast of living and dead, moving and stationary, vibrant and dull. A glorious sight. A bovine hoard are released into a field of ignorant grass. A

soothing sight as calves frolic and jump from one area to another, their mothers watching from a safe distance, witnessing pure innocence. All of this in the spring.

As summer rolls around, the heat does too. A blanket of warmth shrouds the land as if a comforting fire has been lit. The green shades of the hills are amplified by the clear weather and the stillness of the air. Viewing the scenery through shimmers as if seen through a screen of water, this soothing and unforgiving heat creates a sense of security. The flowers are now fully developed, reds, blues, yellows and lilacs sit undisturbed, patiently waiting for a notable event to rouse their interest. It never comes. A hard worker flies around, collecting food for the queen and basking in the sun. No rest, but no complaints.

The stream has gotten heavier, as if growing and aging with time. It now possesses the strength to carry rocks as it flows downstream, never stopping and never beginning. The castle is alive with an olive green, no grey in sight. The fallen guardian now at rest, knowing all is safe; a wave of ivy taking his place. The calves, now mature, no longer leap like salmon from water; a sorry sight. Still, there is no lack of joy, the herd roams and ambles, stopping for food and rest. This is all they know, this is all they want during the summer.

As autumn falls, so do the leaves. A layer covers the rolling hills, a layer of every possible colour. A canvas of browns, reds and yellows

replace the flowers in patterns that Picasso inspired. A homage to a legend. A traveller crosses the painting with satisfying crunches and clumsy stumbles as the leaves mask hidden inconsistencies in the land. He remains unperturbed as he presses on in the search for something. The unforgiving heat is replaced by the sounds of wildlife. As the days grow shorter, so do the disturbances of man, as animals are given free rein to do as they please. No limitations. The cry of foxes as they seek a mate, the call of birds of prey searching for a victim, the thumping as hares bound back to the safety of their warren. Not a more tranquil scene could be found.

The water now runs slower. A season of hard toil has taken its toll as the streams relax. As the sun sets, the courtyard becomes shrouded in darkness. An eerie feel arises as the shadows consume the now dying ivy. A long history haunts this place, forbidding any visitors from contemplating without interruption. No cows are permitted to leave their stale, brown barn. It is too dark. It is too cold. They wouldn't go out in the autumn anyway.

As the winter arrives, so too does the cold. A bitter, hateful cold that holds and grips warmth, forcing it to submit and dissipate. The weather is now unpredictable. The sun shines, the rain soaks, the hail batters and the snow floats. Through this horror, there is a comfort. An unforgettable sight is engraved in the mind as one sits and watches a white cover placed over the land. The cold is invasive but is dismissed

as the importance of the present springs to mind. All sounds suppressed, as are issues, when one enjoys the snow. There is no movement, there is only stillness. Blissful stillness.

The stream is now frozen over, stationary, silent. Nothing moves within it and it has adopted a white tinge as the bubbles get caught as they rise to the surface. It cannot sustain life until it thaws in the spring and a trickle can be heard. As the carved earth is followed, a castle is reached. Hardly recognisable, the stone has no grip; walking through the courtyard is treacherous. The walls have lost their distinctive blandness as they are covered in ice and snow; cold to the touch and painful as it sticks to any moist skin. The walls stand defensive and dangerous until new life grows once more. Nothing can be heard from the pens as new life awaits the spring so they can frolic once more.