

a man of wisdom

“the inner herald of dreams” \*, all seeing  
he holds the weight of time steadily and his foot is light

many named, though the word is carried in whispers

*Merlin*

he is here in all his guises -  
he watches with softened eyes the broken seasons, the harsh sunrise  
and he hears the rush of water over rocks  
like the steady beat of his heart

will he tell me of days gone by?  
when time did not hold sway  
and children played into the night, breathless, smiles full of wonder -

adventurous boy,  
balancing, rickety under foot

and watching the veil lift -

fields of emerald green and cut-glass lakes and the dancing sun  
on the hair of faeries; the silken gowns of princesses  
flitting and switching, clasping, and climbing -

what a cold wind, to return to this world  
of empty halls and abandoned homes -

where we search for meaning in the vastness -

he runs his hand through tangled hair  
and he tells me  
of gold and soft moss and honest words  
that do not land in blunt thuds,  
but seep gently into the skin -

he watches me, lets me move closer  
“are you willing to learn, to adapt?”  
I reply  
“yes -  
but I’m not sure anyone else is”

he turns to the windows, letting the air in, the doors flung back -

a place built from devotion; stone layered on stone  
a sister’s love -

the night is dark and like a cloak over our heads,  
trammelling us in, bringing our breath out in shivers

“I see it,” he says softly,  
like a head resting on a loved one’s shoulder -  
a crying child, held -  
“and I cannot tell you any different -  
only that they *will* listen -  
you must *make* them listen”

my voice cracks, spilling fear  
into open hands

“I will”

his words are clear -  
“go, go now – do not hesitate - “

and so, I run  
the dawn is breaking -  
he watches me from his observatory,  
and lifts a hand in farewell

yet  
I will see that face again

perhaps in the glint of a fox's eyes  
or in the matted fur of a sleeping cat  
or in the touch of a stranger's hand -

here,  
or in distant, waiting lands.

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*\* Matthews, C, Matthews J. (1990). The Arthurian Tarot. London: Element Books.  
(From the reading for 'Merlin', p.15.)*