

Beneath Dark Hills

by John Engle

Caverned beneath dark hills in the cool damp
of unending night, there is a warm stone
with a heart that flares like a nova
being nudged from the black womb of space.
It throbs and pulses coded signals—
making park rangers and tourists wonder
what's causing the static on their cell phones,
making cave bats chatter in alarm
as they re-tune their sonar; making
the tour guide wonder why his flashlight flickers
each time he passes near a certain place.
But you and I will never need to wonder,
because we share the secret of the stone
and are interlinked forever with its lore.
The three of us have jointly aroused
dozing awareness into wakefulness.

On a subterranean night within a night,
needing to share wisdom gleaned from centuries
of silent meditation, the stone drew us
with wordless invitation and became
our cuddling couch as we traded our heat
for its help and infused it with our feeling.

Other tourists, puppets on scientific strings,
leaned willingly toward the fixed formalities
of gloomy geology, while you, the stone,
and I exchanged ages of urges—
learning that nothing is inanimate,
that everything retains the stuff of stars,
and that if we but touch the edge of Truth
we will regain the glory and the glow.