

# The Thin Divide

by Kevin C. McHugh

Near Knocknarea the tourists  
often only see—the surface:  
the standing stones heaved skyward,  
half-hearted, it seems to them,  
amidst the rocky rubble of faery rings  
long since eroded into walls—  
stunted, stone-age aspirations.

What should they expect as they  
leak out from tourbus and from car  
to the quick and thoughtless  
whir and whine and click of camera  
and reduce to dwarven image  
these rough and ageless artifacts,  
gauging them against the gothic giants,  
those spires looming in their minds,  
leaping (they think) forever heavenward  
and straining in infinity to touch  
a divine and distant face?

Ungrounded, they fail to fathom  
the better half: to take on faith the invisible,  
the underground and rocky roots  
that reach deep beneath the thin divide  
to where the spirits linger still.  
From there, within the holy, healing dark,  
the blinding surface world must look foreign:  
an underbelly where only the undersoles  
of shoes appear to skate upon  
the slim, transparent membrane  
that marries earth and sky.

And so near Knocknarea,  
there are no aspiring, spiraling steeples.  
Nor should there ever be.  
For in such a strange ballet as that  
the granite dancers are frozen in futility  
and in their breathlessness  
they can never climb to heaven  
nor hear the whispers in the wind  
as here among these sloping dolmens:  
the call to souls from spirit earth  
to kiss the rich, dark flesh of God.