

## **To Live in a Soft Land, Ireland by Ashley O'Neal**

**To live in a soft land  
where the ghosts touch you daily  
where the winds tells you how to live  
and where the wren nests in your heart,  
by way of the thorn trail.**

**Listen,  
listen  
there is black dove in this land  
there is a swallow's nest in the old  
shed holding  
all the secrets  
of a people's tears.  
Gulls cry  
for the sun's sorrow  
and the moon's  
ecstasy sits upon the  
lips of the innocent's  
smile of young love**

**Sweet days of time upon  
an island untethered to the earth  
Walk me to the place  
where Cú Chulainn sleeps  
Tell me the story of  
the oak that grows in the nave.  
Tell me why the yew still stands  
where the saint wept.  
Tell me of the royalty  
of the rose,  
of the lily.**

**Walk me to the den  
of the bear and show me  
his hieroglyphs  
Show me the valley where  
the last wolf howled so that  
I might touch the darkness  
of truth.**

**Let me move my body  
the way the river moves.  
Let me hold the tide  
in my heart awhile so  
that saltwater might make  
my blue eyes see the true land  
Open the door of the lakes's edge  
Show me how to hold  
the hand of the aged and vulnerable  
So that I might know  
How to live  
How to die  
How to breathe  
How to love  
Slow me down to the pace  
of the heron's stillness  
So I can see the heaven's  
embrace of a people  
who hold the gentleness  
of the whole world.**

