

A Different Place to *Be**

A stately white building
 through the wall opening
 Brings the lushness of green
 and hidden
 meandering paths
 Of spiritual journeys
 gone by and going on.
 Rustic warm-red brick lodgings
 Shelter body and soul
 in Quaker worship's
 space.

Placed on lawn's expanse –
 beside a prayer-shaped lake –
 the flowered beds thrive in
 breadth and height.
 Even a walled garden from the past
 Now serves food to the body and soul
 in rhythmic plots
 designed for thought.
 No formality here –
 Nature reveals the place, form and pace.

All this amidst much singing of birds –
 A multi-voiced and textured chorus
 of joy in be-ing –
 Not only in this place,
 but also in life.

*for Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham, England

Beyond this walled Garden of Eden,
 the muffled sound of traffic –
 Almost respectful as it passes by.
 Trees lushed with green
 and gnarled with long-lived life
 Give strength to those who
 sit
 beneath,
 nearby or
 at a distance.

Winding paths seek hidden points,
 Join each to each
 to return
 to constant beginnings;
 Places to sit – some hidden from view
 until one's path emerges –
 Like life....

A spirit-filled, human-made Eden
 Whose lifescape consultant is God!

A different place for me to *be*....

M.L. Stewart