

Maria Campbell, *Eagle Feather News*, May 2017

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Ach begorra, in another life I must have been Irish

I am in Dublin, Ireland tonight. Tomorrow I come home and although I am looking forward to seeing my babies, planting my garden and doing all the work that has to be done, there is a part of me that doesn't want to leave this beautiful place.

There must be a hundred shades of green here, another hundred each of lavender and grey and everywhere, the intoxicating smell of flowers and the sea. If there is such a thing as reincarnation then I was here for sure in another life.

Maybe a long, long time ago I was one of those Irish people whose land was taken away by the Reformed armies of an English Empire. Maybe I fought back, was killed and reborn in Canada to a people who were also displaced and dispossessed by the same empire.

I spent most of my time in West Cork, which was like stepping back a hundred years. The landscape was very different from my childhood home but everything reminded me of homeland, my old people, aunties and uncles, history and stories. It was amazing how similar so many of the stories were to those we tell here.

For instance, I was told that when the English armies came to Ireland, led by Cromwell, they brought with them chain laden surveyors who conducted the "first detailed land survey on a national scale anywhere in the world."

Ireland was measured, the Irish booted off and the land distributed to adventurers, English soldiers, and others thus securing the "planting" of new settlers and dispossessing a people.

Their language and cultural things were forbidden and for a time the language was almost gone, but, like here, the old people hung in, never gave up and today Irish is spoken almost everywhere. There is a wonderful play written by Brian Friel called *Translations*, that tells of the Irish people teaching, in secret, their language to their children. So much sounds so familiar.

The people are warm, friendly and generous. They are storytellers, singers and dancers and again, these things are familiar. I am also sure it is the most magical place on earth. Seriously, I would not blink an eye if a Leprechaun, or as we call them here, a Memequaysees (little person) stepped out of a hedgerow with a fiddle, played a wild song and expected me to jig.

Anyway I love it here, I made good friends and I am coming back. If you're looking for a holiday place go to Ireland, I promise you will love it.

Now I am back home at the Crossing, chasing the mice out of the house, scrubbing floors, washing windows and getting ready to move in and it's so great to be here. I can hear geese overhead, Coyotes were singing last night.

And today those darned squirrels are greedily watching me as I walk around my garden and flowerbeds all, I am sure thinking, "What good stuff is she going to plant for us this spring. Mmm we can hardly wait for it to come up so we can pig out."

“Well guess what you nasty critters, I have a cage and I am catching you and displacing you all. Like I am taking you up the highway to PA and you can live there on the road allowance!”

OMG I can't believe I just said that. So much for being full of history, spirituality and revolutionary zeal but what can I do to get them to leave my garden alone? Does anybody know?

I can't shoot them; I tried. I sat for an hour I am sure with squirrel in sight but just couldn't pull the trigger. My higher self wouldn't let me do it so he and his family ate up all my egg plants.

Oh well, I guess I will put tobacco down again and tell him about my neighbor's great garden and ask him to please relocate, maybe, just maybe, he will listen, take his family and go.

I also attended the SUNTEP graduation on Saturday evening, 13 graduates, what a beautiful and handsome bunch! Congratulations to all of you, we are so proud of you, and congratulations to your families and the people who supported you. I know you are all going out there with your heart full of dreams to make a difference and to build a good road for future generations.

They told me in Ireland when I was leaving, “may a gentle wind always blow on your back,” and so that's my wish for you. If you're ever in my territory stop in I'll always make you a cup of tea and if you're lucky I might even have some galette, if you have time, I will whip some up for you.

Have a good spring everybody and if any of you has any advice on squirrels I'll be happy to try it