Reel the names a-way aural sliding into slip-shod Anglo Saxon history, away, like iconic eastern dolls they recede, expanding into distant pasts the way a-way, they remind us of the blue-grey layers of Dartmoor’s mists and tors.

The last of these - later, Queen of our Lands, Aelfhryth, weaving her own fairy-tale - left following the before-day, a way day beside her mother’s recent grave at the abbey on moor’s western edge, stole away for a lange day and another from the place of her birth, pursuing yole-ways to seek new tracks - criss-crossing paths to the north, lych-ways on the tracks of the forking droves.

Up past the cleave, over Bellestam she took up with Tola, daege, on the summerlands at the gentle green coll - churned milk plashing to pail - at dusk, sleek cows slumbering, they eat meatonastick, sleep in the hut raised from earth under stars on a green-rush and black-sedge floor.

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Sun up, up and a-way early
Aelfhryth leaves the cows on butter-hill's
dew-covered down
wanders along drift-lanes
gathering seedsofgorse
beside purple-heather and green-
light fern, crosses

up as far as the Winter Tor,
she climbs

as far as
Steeperton then
uphetop
to Whitehorse Hill
near where her mitochondrial mothers came
from the highest, wildest moorland tors.

Knowing her true destiny
is far a-way
from here,
she's come to bid farewell
to her ancestor,
foremother,
on the White Hill,
she who went to ground a
thousand years or more,
the stories they tell
round these moor parts,
a legend passed on by word of mouth
down the daughters' line -
the procession,
waiving in the wind.

Hands opening high to sky
they brought her here
fall of the year when ferns
waved like arms of fear,
laying their Bronze Princess
gently on the pyre to rest
decked
in her bedazzled dress
amber bead bling fixed at the nape of neck.

After fire's embers died a-
way,
wailing,
they swaddled her ash
within the pelt of bear
bound up with
a knotted woven sash
then, *on agnysse min*, laid her
beside the basket,
nested inside it, a cow-hair band,
the rings, still glistening tin,
two spindle-wood studs once hung from her ears.
At the time of setting sun,
they settled her in the cist.

***

When sun's down,
Aelfhryth
turns west,
leaves

*by way of the peat pass*
*at Taw and East Dart source*
*as far as the great lime tree*
*over Black Ridge Way*

blue graze of sea in the distance
granite-clitters
spilling down
over the descending
fringe of moor

she

*skirts the bog*
*by the right side of the stream*
*at the bondstone*

marking the two Great Hills,
crosses

*stepping-stones by the Lyd*

climbs over Nodden,
finds

*the Chi-Rho stone,*
*& the ancient L stone,*
*by Bridestowe boundary, *

then, fairy-tale settling with her again,
before the next day
of the fresh path of her new life a-
way in faraway lands, reaching the Green vale
Aelflryth looks down to where is the *Way of the Dead*
and her own home, from on the High Down above the Olde town.