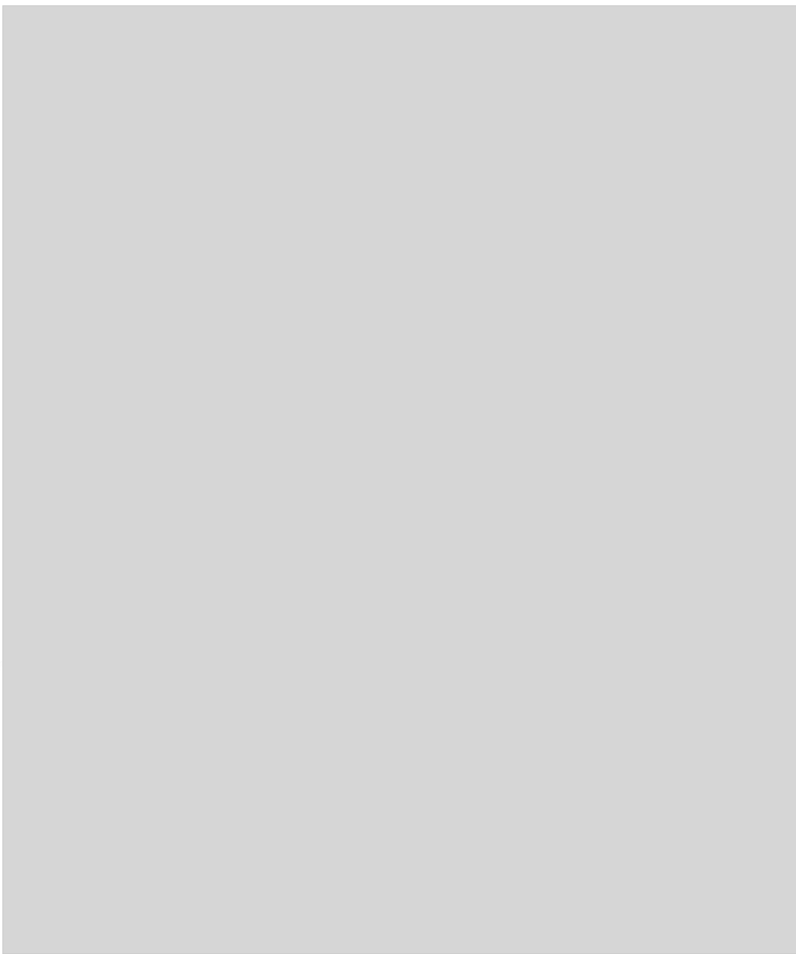


The Dawntreader

047





Glen Trool – Maeve Bruce

We gathered to say goodbye, your six sons, their wives and I,
Your other grandchildren, the rest of the clan,
High on the hillside.
We let you go over the loch, lid off and shook you out,
All that was left of your loved body now cinders,
Fine white ashes thrown to the wind.

We said a few words, a prayer in the old tongue, then stood in
a silent moment, before, against the big rock
of rough grey granite
where the Bruce had leant after the fight, we leant too and drank
to another battle and sang the old songs you
had taught us from the cradle on.

My body lives miles from where we left you in the valley
next to the monument. My boots walk over grass
down south and the air
here does not ring with the imagined clash of steel or feel
in my lungs quite enough. I breathe but my heart is
lost, still in another country.

I think of that day often, fancy I hear our voices
echoing across the glen, feel scrub and thistle
beneath booted feet.

A dram still tastes of your farewell, like rich earth and honey
warm, and my fingers trace in dreams the words of the
chiseled legend carved there in stone.

