

The Protection of the Plum Grove Tunnel

Many animals make their homes in the low-lying brush. The calls of pheasant, quail and grouse you might hear as you walk the trail come from their safe spaces within the tall wild grasses of the prairie. Think of rabbits camouflaged in their brown summer coats and white winter coats. Consider the ways in which children often love to burrow into blankets, under beds, into the nooks of trees when they are allowed. This need for safe protective places is an inherent part of all life.

If you have the ability to walk and duck through the entire plum grove tunnel, go ahead and do so. If not, get as close as you comfortably can to the tunnel so you can feel the ways the overarching plum branches wrap the area in a safe and magical manner. Whether you walk the tunnel or stay at the opening, find the spot here that feels right and gives you permission (as you learned to ask with activity #1 so you will always ask with each place) to be.

Now, sit with your eyes closed and breathe. See if you can feel, rather than see, the way in which the tunnel provides sanctuary. Listen to the sounds around you. Does this place feel familiar? New? Safe? Unnerving? Pay attention to what you are noticing and if you ever feel overwhelmed, just open your eyes and take a good look around. Let the senses you know best inform your other senses as well. The same way a parent will turn on the light for a child who is scared in the dark and point out the rustling sounds of a curtain in the wind and shed light on the shadows so that the dark becomes familiar and safe once again, let yourself acclimate to this place until you can feel the way in which the tunnel creates a safe haven for you and many other living beings. If you cannot feel this sense, that is also ok. Consider what things are coming up for you. What other associations you are having that prevent that sense of safety? Just notice. There is no right or wrong way to feel or do this activity. The point is to be able to reflect on what you are feeling and why in relation to the space you are in. Perhaps, for your animal being, this is not, in fact, your safe sanctuary. If that is the case, walk out from the tunnel and walk around until you DO find the place that provides sanctuary. Ask permission to sit and be in that area instead.

Whether you find sanctuary in the Plum Grove Tunnel or find it in another place, contemplate how it feels to be held safely by nature. Think of other animals that might share this same sense of safety in space. Breathe in that sense of sanctuary until you feel full and whole and ready to write about your experience.