

## **When you Wish Upon a Stalactite**

By Jennifer Priest Mitchell

Walt Disney rests most peacefully, many miles away,  
dreaming of his magic worlds and another day  
when citrus groves willingly fell  
giving way to a brightly colored spell.

Pre-amazon and Walmart fame,  
Disney created the first game  
of casting a net for dreamers,  
enticing families and business schemers.

But in the summer of 2020,  
I read about a world with plenty  
of mystique and mystery,  
more impressive than manmade history.

An accidental, enormous find  
in Arizona's southern lines,  
there rests a secret, cavernous trail  
promising adventure without fail.

I waited an entire year  
to bring my little family here,  
where we descended steps of stone,  
and I imagined a man alone,  
lighting his own secret path  
not knowing if there was some wrath  
awaiting him as he gradually found  
a second world without a sound.

Rock formations grow from the ground

while others slowly grow on down  
from the cave's marvelous ceiling  
igniting new, unsettled feelings  
in the souls of all who come,  
perhaps even frightening some.  
In the summer of 2021,  
I came and was among  
the fortunate who strolled the path  
forged by two friends in the past.  
I saw the lighted Kubla Kahn,  
whispering of days far gone,  
glowing in a cave so deep  
no one spoke or dared to creep  
beyond the path created for us  
to walk and be just close enough  
to sit and stare and understand  
the work of Mother Nature's hand.  
To dream for just a moment or two  
of all that's possible for me, and you,  
to gaze and simply know there is  
so very much to see and give,  
to oh-so-slowly realize  
much more exists than most our eyes  
and souls can even comprehend,  
but if we try to just extend  
our beliefs in true earth magic  
and suspend our worry of the tragic,  
welcome thoughts of what's ahead,

guided by hope instead of dread,  
we will start to see tomorrows  
filled not with human sorrows,  
but with discovery and hope  
of what's beyond where we can grope.

This column growing in a cave  
inspired me to believe, behave  
in a manner that lights the way  
for people on another day.

The Kubla Kahn gave me ambition  
to improve my own condition,  
to continue with extending  
my work, my goals so there's no ending  
to what I can reach and who I might help,  
to think a bit beyond myself.

I carry in my heart today  
belief that there's a better way  
to overcome life's challenges  
and find new boundaries, balances.

I thank the mighty Kubla Kahn  
for inspiring me to move on  
beyond any difficulty before me,  
to make my own true history  
because there will always be  
more than my own eyes can see.

Dear Kubla Kahn, you give me hope  
to continue to work and cope,

knowing that when life must slow,  
there will still be places to go  
where we can imagine growth and progress  
beyond what today's events may suggest.

For one whole year I planned to come  
and see just what has become  
of this delicate and strong formation,  
giving way to civilization,  
continuing to stand and tower  
reminding me of the quiet power  
that lives in earth and in each man,  
suggesting that we always can  
overcome and endure  
anything difficult or impure.

I take away the joy of a day  
spent with precious dears  
on a cold and dark pathway,  
letting go of fears,  
taking in majestic sights  
holding close, today, tonight,  
the calming knowledge of the work  
beneath the trees and common dirt,  
inside a cave that showed to me  
all that I - that we - can be.