



BLACK BIRD

M A G A Z I N E

*Wake the
World*

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Snowbird - Poetry by Fäun

Apartment 506 - Short Story by Dan Happe

Photography by Alysha Kaitlin

Plus Artwork by Michelle Morlan



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Snowbird

By Fäun

The rapid purr of small wings;
Brown toes curling round a branch.
Bright, berry eyes peek this way and that,
Through the bare, snowy boughs,
From nook to crook he hops,
A downy coat, this little fellow
Didn't need to bring a scarf.
He needs no other wraps, his cheerful soul
Melts the ice around him.
He's a kindly forest spirit,
Clever and quick.

He blends with the snow below,
Save the black berries of his eyes
And the blush upon his breast.
His feathers shiver
in a breath of wind
He clings to an upright twig
Basking for a moment
in a stray sun ray,
Hipping, hopping, back an forth,
Fluffing up to keep the warm in.
Tucking a stray feather in here.
Flicking off a piece of frost there.

When the wind blows cold he
Ruffles up that feathered coat of his
And snuggles up; deep in his down,
Clicking his beak thoughtfully.
Suddenly, he opens it wide
to hurl out his joyful woodland song:
Clear as water, pure as snow.
Crisp like leaves, bright like rain.

His music rings out through the wood.
He kindles the forest to life with his song,
The stream gurgles more musically beneath the ice,
The snow begins to melt,
Squirrels romp on a stump below,
And a wanderer pauses below the tree to listen,
Shivering and ragged, stained by the road,
Poor and hungry, Worlds from home,
but in that single moment his eyes brighten.
He looks up, and then he smiles.



Geese A Laying
Michelle Morlan



Folk Flowers
Michelle Morlan

THE STREAM UNDER THE BRIDGE

Nicholas Sharland

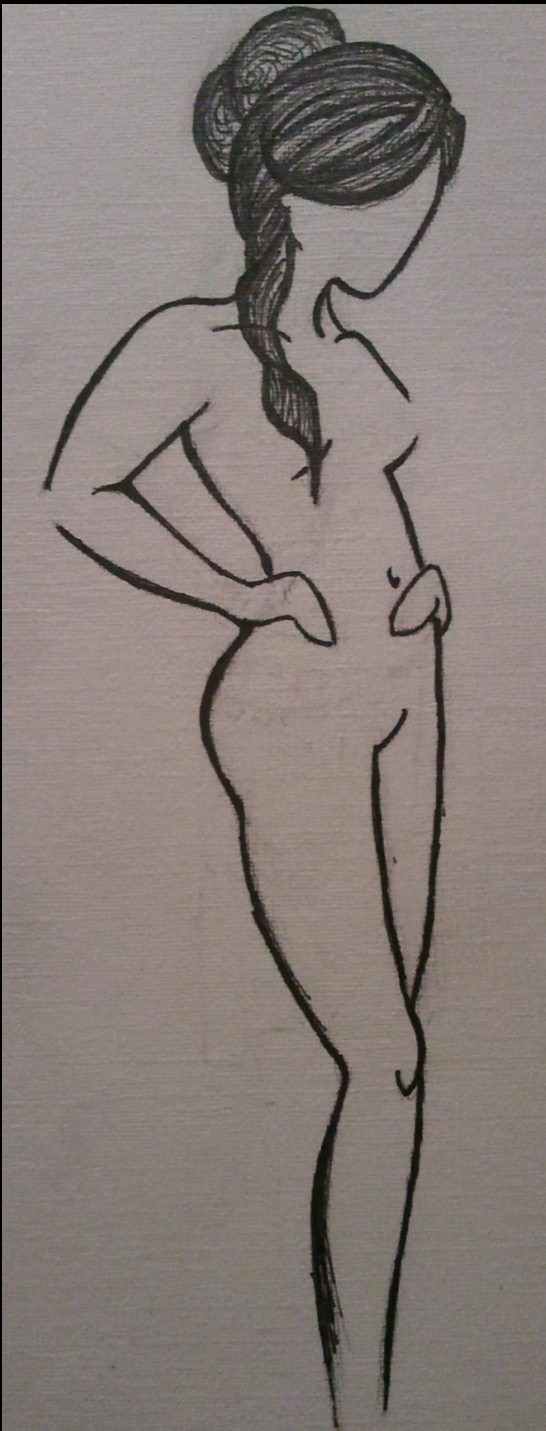
Almost unnoticed, the stream under the bridge
 Patiently goes about its business,
 Does its natural duty to the hedge
 And the river into which it splashes
 Momentarily, then doesn't exist.

The path it was poured down is followed
 Immediately and the forgotten
 Moment, when the water flowed
 As silently as a whisper wrapped in cotton
 Past that point under the bridge could enlighten

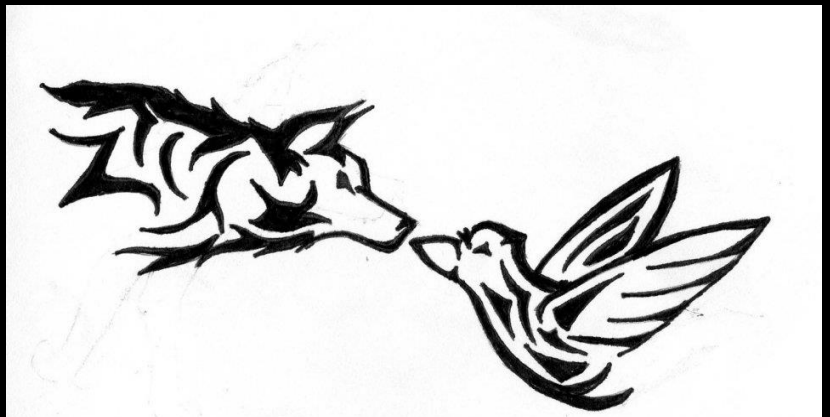
Any poet who has claimed inspiration
 From any mighty roaring river:
 Are the highlights or the limits of creation
 In the outworn arms of the archetypal lover,
 Or in the rivers peopled bridges are over?

A city's river, closed by stone on both sides
 Is seen and talked about and taken home
 To districts where the populace resides;
 But here, where few will see who ever come,
 My river trickles in the milky sun.

My river, as I clamber through the gate
 And down to the water's side to kneel
 And watch the tiny birds that flit
 On the branches passers-by would call
 Perfectly picturesque, lifeless and still



Just a Simple Woman
 Kat Taylor



Raven and Wolf
 Cassandra Shilander

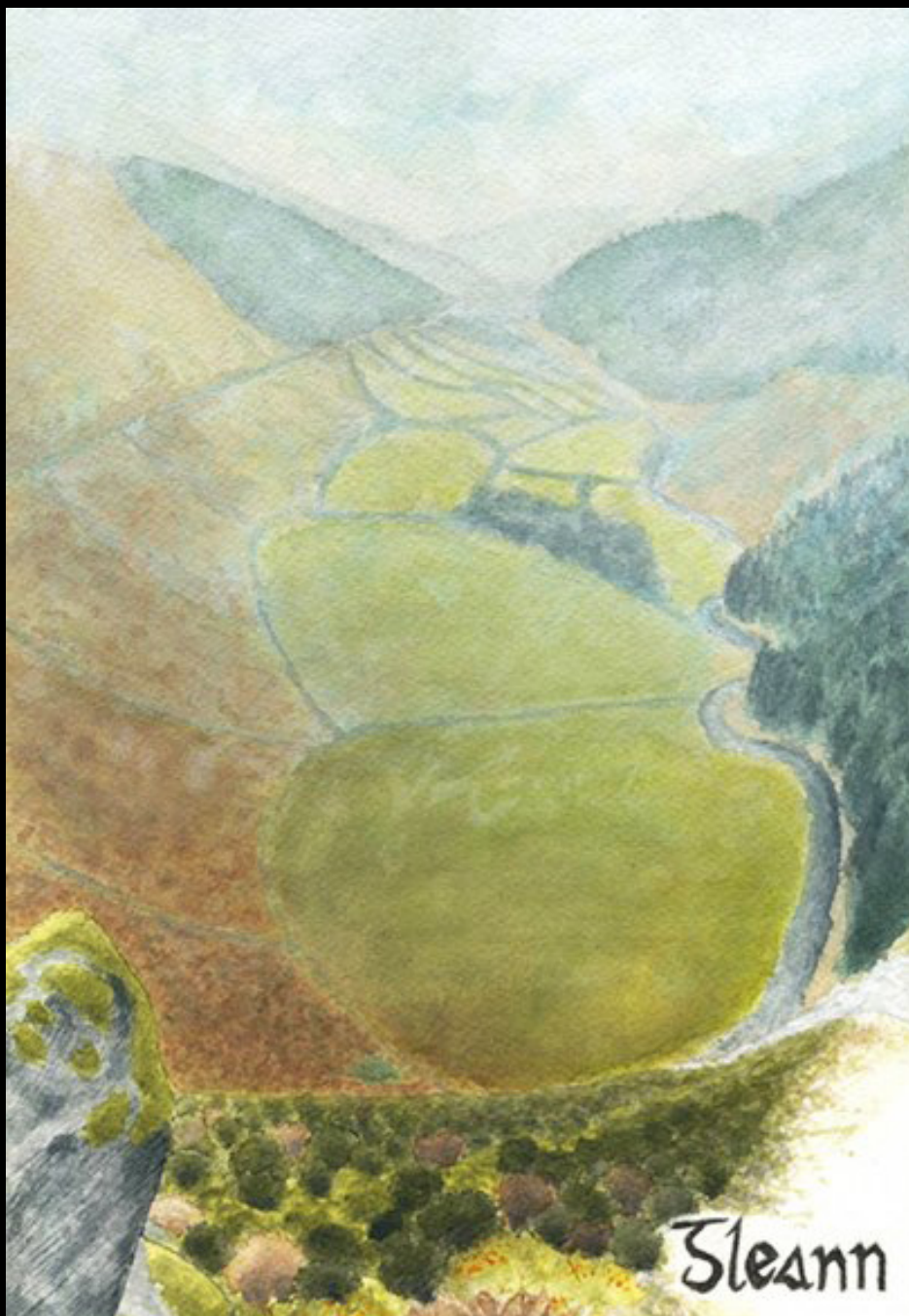


Egg and Paintbrush

Michelle Morlan

Gleann

JG ODonoghue



Gleann is essentially a glen or valley, interestingly, according to P.W. Joyce the English word 'Glen', also used for valley, does not derive from the Irish Gleann, or vice versa, that it was previously in Anglo Saxon and was in Old Irish far before the coming of the Normans. My guess it could be they are both from Welsh, since in Welsh it's Glyn or perhaps they all share an indo-European root or another possibility it come from the influence

of Irish missionaries christianising the Saxons, in other words, who knows! According to Joyce there are over 600 places in Ireland with the name Glan or Glen (which he points out are the anglicisations of Gleann) and the name is found in every county throughout the land.

The Gleann shown here is 'Glenmacnass' or in Irish ' Gleann Log an Easa' which according to Room translates as 'Glen of the hollow of

the waterfall'. This Gleann is often mentioned in Geographic books as its kind of the epitomy of a U-Shaped Valley. You can see clearly when you are there, the U shape of the Glacier that cut its way slowly through this gleann, previous to that it would have been what they call a V shaped Valley, which are created by rivers. This one was probably created by the river shown here on the right, which derives its name from the Gleann, as its known as 'Glenmacnass River'. Placenames are part of our identity, part of a living landscape, as Patrick Sheeran has said, if we were to visit Ayers Rock in Australia, it would seem like a nice geographic feature but not much more. But to the Aboriginals each area, each gap or rock has a name, knowing them conjures up stories and myths in their minds. The same would have been true here in ancient times, as Tim Robinson points out for the Celts, each gleann, forest, or mountain was inhabited by wonder and myth. Similar would have been true for the later Gael as Daniel Corkery puts it: "Those O'Connells, O'Connors, O'Callaghans, O'Donoghues, all the Gaels were one, it may be maintained, with the very landscape itself... to run off the family names connected with one of those houses was to call to vision certain districts hills, rivers and plains; while contrariwise, to recollect the place-names in certain regions was to remember the ancient tribes and their memorable deeds." So one can see how placenames are tied to a peoples sense of place and even further, they are part of their identity and the living landscape which they inhabit.

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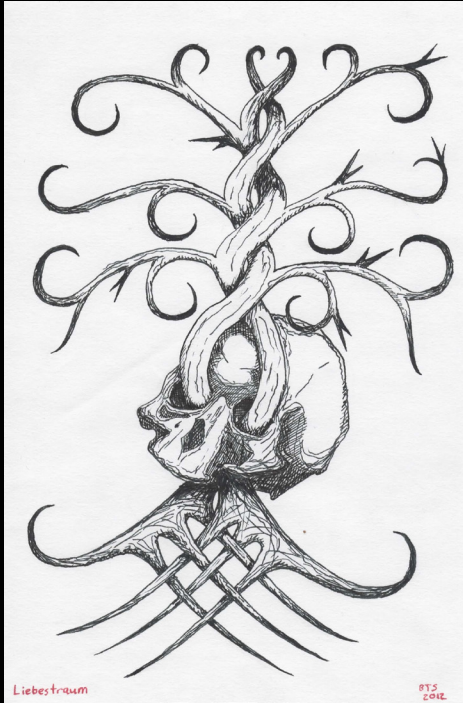
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Hamills Joker Card--
A tribute to Mark Hamill's
phenomenal voice work
as the joker. Arguably
the best portrayal of the
character. Definitely the
longest running.
- Mark Rothweiler

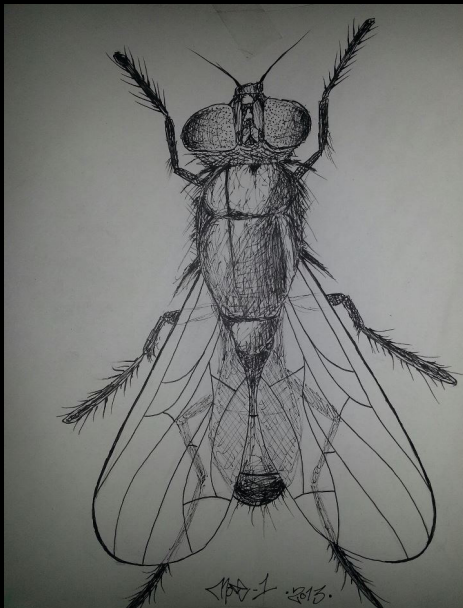
'This is the Queen of
Hearts' Husband' and
'Queen of Hearts'
- Michelle Morlan



Liebstraum
Benjamin Spick



Gravediggers
Mimi Chakrabarty



Fly
Joe Adams



Leaf's Moth
Michelle Morlan

Apartment 506

Dan Happe

"Jessie, we're leaving," called a voice from across the balcony. My heart sank. I had finally worked up the courage to talk to this girl, and within fifteen minutes she had to leave. "You heading out?" I instantly regretted asking such a stupid question.

"Yeah, I'd rather not miss my ride and walk ten miles home," Jessie replied. She downed the rest of her drink and smiled.

"But you seem like a pretty cool guy or whatever, so here's my number."

I grinned as she rifled through her huge purse to find a pen. She scrawled seven digits onto the back of a receipt and winked as she handed it to me. Before I could say anything else that made me sound like an idiot, I quickly told her I'd give her a call soon. We said our awkward just-met-you goodbyes, and she disappeared into the party crowd. As I watched her leave, some guy slapped me on the shoulder—a little too hard, considering how well

I didn't know him.

"Jesus, Tommy boy, I didn't think girls went for dirty hippies like you!"

This guy laughed loudly at what he thought was a solid line. I hadn't even thought of a place to tell him to shove it when somebody started yelling near the edge of our balcony, which stretched out a bit further than the others above. I couldn't make out any words, but the voice clearly belonged to one of my roommates, Jon. When I talked to him about thirty minutes earlier, he had already done some serious damage to a bottle of Old Crow.

People stepped away from him

as I walked over.

"What the hell's going on, man?"

I asked.

Tiny flecks of alcohol-laced spit flew everywhere as he yelled, "Someone just pissed on me!"

I wasn't really sure how to respond to that. I looked up and mumbled, "Damn..."

I noticed a dark spot on his U.S. Marines t-shirt, covering most of his shoulder and chest.

"I'm going up," he said, suddenly too calm for the situation. He shoved a few people getting back inside the apartment. I hesitated for a fraction of a second and followed him. I don't know

"Jesus, Tommy boy, I didn't think girls went for dirty hippies like you!"

why I did. I mean, I'm not the one who got pissed on. I knew he was going to start something with the people that lived above us though, and I couldn't handle letting him go off drunk and alone into a brawl.

As we broke free from the mass of people and got inside, I spotted Dustin and Nate, my other two roommates. They were standing near the door to the hall, having a friendly but heated discussion about the existence of the North American Wood Ape (better known as Bigfoot). I tapped Dustin on the shoulder and told him to come with me. His smile disappeared. He had

seen Jon pass by a moment ago and suspected something was up. The three of us chased Jon into the hall and up the stairs. A few years of hard conditioning gave him a pretty good advantage over a few stoners who rarely did much more than longboarding and frisbee golf.

"What's going on?" Dustin asked as we jogged up the stairs.

"Jon seems to think someone in 506 pissed on him," I panted.

"That's not good," he said, a little louder. "He's gonna try to start shit."

I stumbled a little as I responded,

"Yeah man, that's why I grabbed you guys."

We lost sight of Jon as he entered the fifth floor from the stairwell. I heard shouting within seconds of when the heavy door swung shut after him. When we ran through the

door, I saw Jon getting into some urban cowboy's face. I don't like their style, but I know for a fact I don't want to fight one.

The gravity of the situation hit me like these cowboys' fists were about to. Jon was arguing with five of these redneck-resembling guys (had we had a class or two with them?) as we stopped next to him. I hadn't seen him this angry since we took the tires off his car and made him late for work. The rest of us just stood there, not particularly mad about anything. If Jon hadn't been peed on by these guys, we might actually have gotten along with them pretty well.

Unfortunately, they had, and Jon wanted revenge. I didn't think it was that big of a deal, but that's probably just my wimpy mind trying to justify my wanting to run from a fight.

This argument was going nowhere. The cowboys eventually pushed past us and started walking downstairs. My terror left with them. My moment of relief was short lived though—Jon followed. I should've known; Jon isn't exactly famous for letting things go. My legs felt weak as we walked back down the stairs. No one was saying anything, and that was really freaking me out.

The throng of angry people and I passed by the door with the black stenciled number two next to it, and I thought about going back to the party. I still had a few beers left, and I could text that cute hipster chick I had met. I even heard that one catchy song that's on the radio; the sound was coming from our apartment. I'm sure they wouldn't notice if I left. They'd probably wake up in the hospital and not remember anything, especially my whereabouts during their ass-kicking.

"But they would back me up," I thought to myself. Damn it. As we walked, the trip felt like it would never end. Now that we were squaring off in the alley next to the building, it seemed like all of it had taken only a second or two. I clenched and unclenched my sweaty hands. I hoped no one noticed the way my left leg was shaking. It wasn't too late for me to turn back though. Maybe they would follow. I would be praised the next day

for being so rational. The same thought kept coming back to me: I'm a lover, not a fighter. This was the last thing I thought before everything started happening. The biggest cowboy (who had apparently done the pissing in question) said something I didn't hear clearly. He swung at Jon, and it connected. Dear God, did it connect! My fear drained from my body like water from a sink. I can't explain how it happened. It just left me, and something had to take its place. It was straight-up rage. I didn't think about my beliefs about violence or war or anything; I just struck out with pure animal instinct. I became a caveman defending my cave village full of my caveman friends. I felt nothing as my fist hit this guy. He was already off-balance because he had thrown his first, heavy punch. I have to say, I'm proud of myself for knocking his hat off and sending him sprawling backwards (admittedly, it was a bit of a sucker punch, but hey, I need every little advantage I can get). Everything went downhill from there.

The next part is sort of fuzzy. It was just like the walk down: drawn out while it happened, but impossibly fast after the fact. I saw the other cowboy turn, then I saw the alley twist as I fell. I got up just as fast as I went down though. I felt no pain because I was still mad as hell. I lashed out a few more times, but nothing happened to this asshole. He probably thought the world was created in seven days and that Ronald Regan rode into office on a golden chariot surrounded by flames.

My weak punches just made

him angrier than I was. He tackled me, and hit me over and over again. That's pretty much my entire experience with the fight. One cowboy was laid out (because of me, thank you very much), one was busy trying to murder me, and the others were still fighting my friends.

"Little bitch," muttered the cowboy who had tackled me as he got up. He spat in my face. Who does that? He had already broken my nose by then, and probably a few ribs as well. I lay there for a second, squinting up at the stars. I felt great for just a moment because of all the adrenaline (and the booze), but getting the crap kicked out of you is sort of a buzz kill.

The pain kicked in though, and I felt like crying out. I eventually mustered up the strength to pick myself up and crawl to the side of the brick building, to sit against it. My roommates all managed to stumble over and sit down by me. Nate passed around a few cigarettes and we all lit them in silence. We smoked silently for a while, but Nate eventually broke the silence.

"I really hope that was actually piss," he coughed, as he tried to blow a smoke ring. "Because a beer getting spilled from a few floors is not worth a royal ass-kicking like this." We all laughed hesitantly, still trying to figure out what the cowboys had left intact. I spat out some blood and decided that going back to the party would've been a mistake. No matter what tough guys have to say about losing a fight, it was worth it. Plus, I still had Jessie's number. And she thought I was a pretty cool guy. Or whatever.

"Passion is what portrays the style and outcome of my work."

I'm a photographer, artist, and musician. Life inspires me. Music inspires me. Talking to someone can inspire me. Basically anything that makes me think or feel something inspires

me. I take that inspiration to be expressive and create a photograph that leaves an impact. Whether it's putting feeling and emotion into my work, or coming up with a creative idea, I always try to separate myself from other photographers. In my photo shoots I also do all the hair and makeup. I've been taking pictures since I was 16, and later got my associates of art degree in professional photography. It's about seeing things differently, and finding ways to stand out. Passion is what portrays the style and outcome of my work. I love what I do, and I love people.





I'm interested in shooting fashion, modeling, CD covers, musicians, commercial work and anything artistic. I've also had experience with weddings, seniors, families, maternity, kids, and photojournalism type work.



www.alyshasphotography.com Find me on Facebook at: *Alysha's Photography alysha_kaitlin@hotmail.com


Winter's cold
 and loneliness weakens walls
 We set ourselves up to fall
 And we **sleep alone** at night

With aching in our hearts
 and music in our ears,
 we take what we get, and we
sleep alone at night

Singin' sad songs
 and rememberin' what we've lost,
 we call upon each other
 but **sleep alone** at night

I hurt myself to breathe,
 You drink to find release
 Our sighs are heavy,
 then we **sleep**
 alone

You'll lie awake at night
 and turn to face pictures from your **past**
 Maybe you're not sure exactly
 what **happened**
 But tonight you'll
sleep alone

I'll hold you **close** when you're miles away,
 my body grows cold in all this space
 I can't find the words when there's no reply
 and tonight, I'll

sleep alone

Sleep alone

Mae Nichols

Michelle Morlan

• Carve



BUTTER MOLD COW



BUTTER MOLD EAGLE



BUTTER MOLD FLOWER

Little wren (Song of a serf)
Paige Rothfus

Brown feathers
trimmed her collar,
and she wore a blue dress, had
eyes green as a dollar
A little hipster hat,
and a tiny, buttoned purse;
she carried in it a little cat
On tiny legs, she ran here and there,
on errands for her master
She had many a care,
knew not very much laughter.
Day and night she ran about,
her dress all full of holes
By day, she walked the roads
By night, minded the coals
She had a secret love:
writing; her mind always at play, and
people said she had
a way with words;
she'd write stories in her head all day

She scurried down the street
wearing clicky black boots,
stopped to peek in all the shops
Bought a crepe and some fresh fruits,
Paid with pennies from her purse

Tried on dresses before the mirror
Wasn't any better for it,
but wasn't any worse for wear
Bought a paper-bag full of pretzels,
six lickable stamps,
a posy of violets, and
a pot of gas to light the lamps

On the way home,
she saw a little bird
Blew it a little kiss,
whispered it a little word
Stopped by a little pond,
skipped some silver stones
Wished a little wish
that to her heart was fond
When she got home,
and the washing was done;
when the doors all were bolted, and
the spinning was spun,
a moment for herself had she, so
she made herself a cup of tea,
felt an aching in her head
Climbed into her little bed, she did,
and dreamt of being free.

Fred Johnstone :graffiti art:



What You Wish For

Muriel Spence's office was spacious and beautifully appointed with cherry-wood furniture and ornate objets d'art.

"It's good to see you again, Mr. Bridges," she said, from behind an imposingly large desk.

"Thank you," I responded. "How did we do?"

"Very well, very well; you are going to be pleased. I promise you that."

"Great, I have the check with me if you—"

"No rush on that; you can leave it with Trudy on the way out. Thanks."

She gazed down at the legal-sized document before her and, after a moment, she turned it to page two.

"Okay, okay," she said to herself.

Anticipation moved me to say something, anything.

"You surely have a nice office, Mrs. Spence."

"You said that last time," she reminded me. "All right, let's get started. You'll forgive me if we go out of order."

She opened her desk's top drawer and began laying items before me. She described each one as she did so,

Edward Palumbo graduated from the University of Rhode Island (1982). His fiction, poems, short stories, and journalism pieces have appeared in numerous periodicals, journals, e-journals and anthologies, including *Rough Places Plain*, *Flush Fiction*, *Tertulia Magazine*, *Epiphany*, *The Poet's Page*, *Reader's Digest*, *Baseball Bard*, *Dark Matter*, and *poemkingdom.com*.

"She gazed down at the legal-sized document before her and, after a moment, she turned it to page two."

"Now, we have a white gold, high-school ring from 1978 that you sold to a jeweler when you were twenty-four years old and short on cash, a Reggie Jackson rookie card that a bully took from you in your backyard when you were eleven, and a wallet you left on a bus in 2004. There are 107 dollars in the wallet and a

Wish
page 1

which, I am pretty sure, has expired.”

“I have more coupons,” I assured her.

“Good. Moving on, according to your notes, in 1997, you traded in a Chevrolet and left a Hogan nine iron in the trunk. Is that right?”

“Yes.”

“It’s in the umbrella-stand near the door,” she said as she pointed to the very spot.

“You are amazing,” I enthused.

“Yes, I am.” She rose and disappeared into the back office and, shortly thereafter, wheeled out an orange three-speed bike.

“And, this,” promised Mrs. Spence, “is one of your old bicycles. This is the one your mother donated to the Saint Kevin’s Church when you were eight.”

“She never even told me she was going to do it.”

Mrs. Spence took a seat behind her desk.

“You don’t see a lot of orange bikes around any more,” she noted.

“No, you don’t,” I agreed, “and it’s a pity. However did you pull off this task?”

“You must remember, Mr. Bridges, I have been doing this for forty years.”

“But how do you even begin to locate the articles? What’s your jumping-off point?”

“Our methods are a secret, always have been.”

“Understandable, you don’t want the competition in on this. I don’t suppose you had any luck on the sixth item.”

“The sixth item...that would be Marcy, your high-school sweetheart?”

Wish
page 2

"I'd hardly say we were sweethearts. We only went to a one dance together, but I sure was crazy about her."

"What happened?" Mrs. Spence asked, the way a good friend might.

"She just didn't feel the same way about me. That's all."

"I suppose nearly all of us have a story like that," she said, after a sigh.

"Yes, anyway, did you find her?"

Mrs. Spence leaned forward a bit. "Mr. Bridges, Marcy passed away four years ago."

"My goodness," I uttered lowly, as my soul burned inside me. "What— what happened?"

"Pancreatic cancer. My medical friends tell me that the diagnosis of such a disease is not a death sentence, but it's near enough. She didn't suffer long."

"I've never felt so sad or so old, Mrs. Spence." I rose to leave. "I want to thank you for an admirable effort. The fact that you have come through on five of my six requests is remarkable, and I am truly very grateful."

"But we have come through on all of your requests, Mr. Bridges, as we always do, and as I promised you two weeks ago."

"I hardly see how that's possible," I countered, "...unless you have the late Marcy Wilt lying somewhere in that back office."

"No, no," said Mrs. Spence, with a quick smile. "She is standing behind you."

Wish
The End

Michelle Morlan



4 AM: A song of sleep

Fäun

My warm cloak is gone;
 I was awakened from the dream
 by a bitter wind
 My skin crawls cold
 4 AM knocks with no warning, I
 curl up to hold the warm inside
 Nowhere safe for me to hide,
 catching flowers falling
 into my eager hands
 My cake is almost gone,
 the wine drained
 I smelt the green forest,
 and I knew that it'd rained.
 There's a corner of the world I always
 visit
 to feel safe
 But it's no good;
 I know they'll come for me
 I sing of a frozen forest,
 my heart buried in snow
 Shoes worn down,
 they are full of holes
 Elves are scarce, no luck there
 See? It is just as I feared;
 This life, this sleep, there's no escape

 I am ready, I am ready, I am ready
 I am to fly
 My eyes aren't strong enough
 to witness the day
 I grasp the bottle neck,
 swallowing poison;

Falling like a feather
 into the endless grey,
 into the endless
 grey
 What endless stillness is this?

 Stomach aches, bitter taste
 Can I shake off this mortal shell?
 The wreckage of my breakfast tells of
 the haste
 with which I ate
 I am hollowed out,
 I find myself so very, very old
 Catching flowers falling
 into my shriveled hands
 My cake is gone,
 and the wine went dry
 I smelt the forest flowers
 and began to cry
 There's a corner of the room
 I always used to go to,
 to feel safe
 and to sleep
 To dream a quiet little dream
 But they came and woke me from my
 sleep, so
 I dreamt of a frozen forest,
 my heart buried in snow
 Shoes worn down,
 they are full of holes
 Elves are scarce, no luck there
 See? It is just as I feared;
 This life, this sleep, there's no escape.

Sans / Dulp

Blake McGee

Truth

We get our doses of fruit
in between

volleys of AD-Vertisements
and heaps of dialogue deemed inadmissible

NON-STICK COOKING SPRAY!

EASY STAY-AT-HOME SOLUTIONS!

The actors and backgrounds

seem so

artificial,

like

plastic humans

I

almost feel

embarrassed

for them.



The commuter

Nicholas Sharland

I feel myself plunging, falling, being flushed
to different depths of mediocrity, unrushed
by
worldly worries, time, or troubled
dreams, or gangs of children doubled
up on
pavements, knives in their young guts.

It should affect me, but my mind erases
the scarlet spurts, soaking
shades of grey left staining the way to Woking,
where I catch the train and read of death
in papers, all while chewing mints for fresher breath.

New leaves turn over: more of the same
from The Sun to The Times
The rain's
a bugger as I'm shoved from Waterloo
by senseless masses. Now I'm wet through and through.

How harsh is this world we live in! How insane!



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