

The Fairy Tale Not Yet Told

Poems inspired by
artist Mari Saxon's
photographs



**Worcester County
Poetry Association**
Growing Poetry Since 1971



Song
Irena Kaçi

She picked all the apples
red red red
she danced through the orchard
and fed.

She tore through the village
green green green
they called her the wolf-hearted
queen.

She bled as she drank herself
yellow to yellow
she broke every bone in her
fellow.

She cried but was never that
blue blue blue
So be warned, my darlings,
be true.



Dear Mother,
Karla Okala

A house is not a home
because you call it one,
and the tie that binds may be
a lifeline or a noose.

You insist those dark woods,
outside these walls
are full of snares
or savage beasts.

But a beast could be
an ogre or a prince.
A snare could be
an end or a beginning.

This room of treasures
is not a gift but a bribe,
and your Love
is not a cloak but a shroud.



Sister
Cassandra Mayer

Time is a merciless thief,

All of the dirty uninhibited femininity I wish for you to reflect back,

Crystalized, ice cold into me

The future a mirror, only your eyes with the softening of years have grown capable to see

If I push pins into my hair, cut the tops of the shoulders off my shirts, hang beads from my ears

Will the depth of my intention be realized and clear?

Under the moon swallowing the stars of syllables dripping from your mouth

The woman growing inside reached for you blind

Sissy, listen my baby you say,

Growing up is a crime

Womanhood is a wicked trap, be weary or it will ruin you in due time.

Selves: A Series
Dina Fulconis

Present

Who are you, pale and shadow-less?

I am the trunk, but
I do not know you

What have I forgotten?

My sap flows from my trunk
to my branches

Those dirty, sun-less things?

I do not need my roots to grow

But without sun
I will pale and wither

I do not know you
I did not come to you

Why do you need me?

So you do need sun

And what do you bring me?

So you protect me from
drought and wind?

I'll keep giving you sun
if you don't hold me too tightly

Past

What is this bark you have covered us
with?

I am yours, the roots from which
your branches sprout

You have grown from me and
you have forgotten

That from which your sap flows

Your sap flows from your roots

I do not need the sun to see

Without roots, you will
fall and shrivel

Then what have we both left
but to wait and die?

But you did come from me
And I need you

Without your sun
I will surely die

I admit, not to see, but
to stay fed and strong

I bring you water
and hold you in the ground

As best I can if you keep me fed

I want to see you grow but please
don't forget you know me



I find a way to exorcize the stupid stuff

Brett Jarrobino

I find a way to exorcize the stupid stuff
It leaves my body with a cartoonish veneer
All tawny and flaxen and amber
An ectoplasm plastic halo of angry film
Wobbles with giant, bubbly physics
distorting through translucent sheen
Wistful, restless, vengeful, Scooby Doo spirit

I am an expert in itemizing stuff that is stupid
And in need of removal
Stupid like the black hole where my mojo
should be
Where ambition clashes with dirty dishes,
Putting the shoes away so the attic stairway
Doesn't trip the dutiful trudge of people
I plead to come up and help console me,
Stupid like I'm afraid of creating
As I hide behind a highly effective cocoon
I've spent more time molding out of insults,
Imaginary and real but woven together so
tightly
It all becomes indistinguishable.

I manage to drag this stupid stuff out of me
Knowing it will also bring my tethered love
ones relief,
Suspecting they will bring me flowers,
Transform their apathetic stares into rictus
joy and approval,
Hold tight to the ribbons that keep us
together.

My fingers thumb through grimmeries
For the stupid stuff exorcism spells,
Stumbling through self-help tomes
Books of the Dead for those perfect Latin
phrases
And dusty bottles filled with hydrating
potions
To finish the job and get these parasitic habits
And avoidant curses out of my system.

Someday, I will triumph.
And the trophy for the Stupid Stuff Expulsion
Contest
Is crowned with a little plastic-gold finalist
Who looks like all my little league handouts
Who looks like a shimmering, perfect
automaton
Who looks like all the times I sucked in my
torso
Who looks like what I know I will become
And be known for
As soon as I finish hauling, shoving, scaring,
screaming, begging
all the puke-textured copper-colored stupid
shit

Untitled

Corey

Pulled by one's own face and connected to the one you love by a fraying thread. Why wait?

Pull it off

and break your face or lose your love.

Pulling away

pulling away

Nothing to stop the light but a plastic shield

Vulnerable.

Angry.

Done.

I'm not dressed for this

I'm not a mistake for this

The escape hatch leading to vast dead space is closer to you.

You're closer, you're closer. It's closer to you.

Fairy Mother
Irena Kaçi

When she looked at them,
they saw only her face on fire
when she kissed them,
they felt only her smarting burn.

She was their attic dragon,
all brilliant scales and cinder fumes
she was their backyard mermaid
mournful, drowning in her well.

She was something to behold
from within a mirror, her powers
tempered by its gilded frame, she
said she loved them
in her own scorched way

Even as they ran from her, they knew
she waited behind every door,
even as they wept, they knew she
drank of their despair.

And even the air they breathed
was only her recycled breath.



WTF (A Triple Tautogram)

Paul Szlosek

What wonders wrapped within wacky weirdness!

Waving, writhing, wriggling worm-like wagglers

Wordlessly writing witchy wisdom

Woven within wickedly warped webs.

This timeless tableau, this triple tautogram

Tries to tantalize, telling these terrific, tumultuous tales;

Twisting talons twirling & tumbling, trembling & thrashing,

Triggering trillion traumas, threatening terrifying turmoil..

Frenzied flexible fingers fluidly fanning, flapping & flailing,

Foretelling fabulous fortunes & frightening freakish fates,

Forecasting far-fetched fatalistic fascist futures, forbidden fleshy

Fantasies formed from fanciful Finnish fairy & folk fables forever fulfilled.



Roots
Cassandra Mayer

Underneath the earth they reach to realize the depth of each other's intention
To love obtusely is to remain eternally suspended in the gaps of one's affection
Outside of a dream they met swaddled in closets of ribbon, green, shaded under botanical canopy
There is no narcissism or vanity not but for the visceral desire to be
Above ground tall, alike entities, shedding leaves with ease seasonally
Attractive, unexceptional accessories lining cobb-webbed cobblestone streets
The roots wrestle for stability beneath the old oak trees, disappearing inside of themselves,
desperate to stay in fertile ground, moist before cracking through the old concrete
Heads turned down like a radish, toes disjointed in the autumn breeze
Three distinct bodies, wooden neurons of matching species sown from the same seed.

Untitled
Corey Lehman

Will the kids who flounder ever return?

The ones who explore, who get into trouble
and get their heads stuck in closets or the
clouds. And the answer to their woes is right
behind them the whole time.

I say GAH! Are you made of helium? All
anyone can see is your feet! Tarantino
would love this!

Catherine Wheel

Kate McIntyre

My lung collapsed so I began to collect legs. Beside my going out dresses and my dress up dresses and my darling dresses behind a moth laced curtain I keep my legs. At first I didn't know the purpose, which is always the way with collection. But the legs, which I've found wedged in sewer grates and propped on park benches and high in a tulip tree in my ex-boyfriend's front yard, aren't a collection. They're tools. Breath rasps in the collapsed lung as I weld together a Catherine wheel, the legs spokes. When I put my body to the wheel, I will no longer walk but spin. The upside down times shall relieve the collapsed lung. Does my suffering make me a saint? No. My suffering makes me. Without my suffering then—



Selves: A Series
Dina Fulconis

Future

Have you, too, heard that eyes are the window to the soul?

Come, peer into mine, what do you see?

It is large, no?

It beckons. Yet it blocks the window.

Eyes can lie, too.

If I look at you, do you remember me?

If I say “don’t forget you know me,” do you remember me?

What lens do you need to believe me?

The concave lens of shame that shrivels?

The convex lens of pride that withers?

Do you need glasses to see the truth?

Or will you trust what’s in front of you, and bend to your own senses?

You do not need to see to know.

Trust not your eyes or mine.

Trust what’s in front of you:

an eye, asking you to peer closer,

a lens, forested with cracks,

an egg, ready to hatch,

a fruit, ready to bear,

and a bottle.

Drink with your gaze, **Present**, drink with your gaze and see.

God Blessed

Joe Aguilar

With her large eye she sees the past and with her small eye she sees the future. Like god. I like god. God bless god. I like the sound of god bless. In god bless the word god is dry, contained, whole and holy. Bless spills from its first dry consonant *b* over the slick gate of the tongue *l* to waterfall its sibilant gush of *ess* over whatever you'd like. Anyone can wield god's blessing. What do you want to soak in blessing? Yes, you. God bless you. God bless your hands. God bless dogs. God bless death. God bless her little eye. God bless the future. God bless the train.. God bless Dan. God bless god blessing.



Evergreen
Cassandra Mayer

The clown in me growing from the clown in you

Two big parents

Far sillier too

Than the girl who stands on their shoulders,

8 years old going on 22

Strike a pose, smile big and wide

Carry your mother's pride and don't let your father see you cry

Keep your head held high

Now wipe that damn smirk from off your eyes

Suspicion creeps in where trust and joy will grow only to die

Collect every flower given to you, let them dry

Even fallow fields will eventually become fertile and spry

Green to the world, run as fast as you can to the nearest playground

Roll down the hill in hand me downs

The girl clowns herself queen of the clowns as the crickets gather round and the sun goes
down

Green in envy she will leave them, eyes locked staring in a wonderful frown

"You never grew up and I too refuse! Your wrinkles and gray hairs are just a ruse. I shall
grow taller than you, eternally encased in wonder, ever-green, never blue."

Shelved
Irena Kaçi

No one had remembered the invisible kitchen elves, who had been fastened to their high chairs since last winter, and left to gaze with a tedious kind of horror at their own imaginary reflections in the smooth leaded looking glass.

It doesn't matter, either, that their story had been a happy one until that day, because whatever happiness they had experienced didn't *belong* to them. Instead, *they* belonged to the story and their lives had been devoted to moving someone else's story forward. The prince's exploitation closed around them just snugly enough to feel like affection, as they were drained drip by drip of all magic, robbed in broad daylight of their powers, and blithely led toward their own obsolescence.

And even though it was elf magic that powered the pumpkin that drove the prince and princess back to their marital home, all that would ever be known is that the prince and princess lived—in the end—happily ever after.

At the Pajama Party the Week Before Her Father Dies She Learns Her First Lesson

Karen Elizabeth Sharpe

All around the table my friends
from sixth grade sing happy birthday.

Lights dimmed, curtains drawn
we lick the dark shape of want

the chocolate frosting from our forks
the crumbs of yellow cake baked

from a box of Betty Crocker.
We crack open like nesting dolls.

Green winged fledglings. O the famish
of us. Of me. Lord, if only I knew

how much I would eventually
devour. That night we rolled out

sleeping bags, spread their
gaping mouths under

the dining room table. Truth
and dare. Tongues and all.

We took turns pretending to be
boys, making out with each other.

The sad and lonely aches
of our bodies. The doors of

our painful pleasures opening
the things we would never talk about.



Malevolent Plans

Irena Kaçi

are my bread & butter,
on which I stay fed.
You might call me crone or witch
but I know who I am:

plucky and unbound by
the constraints of mankind's unkind men
by the ties that bind soft-hearted folks
into the tangled web of fairy lies
into the devastating mush
of crushed dreams and aspirations

I have brought nations to their knees
without once uttering *please* or *thank you*
or *good day*

so you can say your worst,
and you will only magnify my lore
things stay more or less the same
a rose or thorn by any other name
will still adorn or sting

or love and leave you like every other thing
that ever was, so make me evil queen
rather than peasant

and never find me pleasant.



Untitled
John Garton

In tenebrism
night's catechism,
"who makes the dark and the light?"
Warm chin, cold noses
hour-glass poses
heavy the lidfall of night.

"Dolly stay awake!"
you must stay awake!"
finger pulls at the pupil.
"Why are you quiet?"
She tugs the barrette,
the attic still and rueful.

A looping big eye,
with shadows decry,
Molly and Dolly all stone.
She looks at the doll,
who barks in a squall,
"Mommy and Daddy aren't home!"



I love you like a dog

Cassandra Mayer

As she instilled an appreciation for the comfort of beautiful domestic objects, slowly she became one. Particularly a jewelry box of dark wood containing a singing swallow, suspended on a thin springed coil surrounded by slim jade bracelets and ancestral gold, releasing a tune as angelic as it is guttural; a melancholic melody that made our pain feel so romantic. She said that I loved her like a dog, but she surely trained me as one... To run wild and free in fields of yellow weed flowers, carefully picking the burrs from my fur. I chase my tail running after her again and again. Perhaps having a pet pleased her until the night the veil thinned, spiritual psychosis or something like that, all of those beautiful objects becoming symbols and texts. The dark afternoons, the thunder arriving soon evoked memories from before I had been tamed, furiously feral again. Her mercy became ambivalent... The logic of our secrets died, her calls became commands to rub my nose in the mess that I had made. All of the mundanity extinct and all of the objects jostled out of place, scattered into porcelain pieces. Like a dog my love remains, loyal, like her to her vanity.



Regret in the Land of Amusements

Christine M. Quirk

If I could wish a wish
I would be as Mother Ginger
And you my Polichinelle
I would store you in my ample dress
Feed you through the bodice
Fruit, or bread and milk
And keep close track

Because the world is frozen in
Shards of ice that slice
Shattered dolls with limbs askew
Even the mice have swords

And when the children ran out from under her skirts
She smiled, joyous, but there

Was panic beneath her painted face
As they ran away like little ants
Chasing crumbs of individuality

I could be as Mother Ginger
In my polka-dot dress
And you would be forever
Safe, untarnished
Like an acorn under its little hat
Snug as when you rested inside me

to be fair
Kayti Burt

they had never pretended
not to claim what spun from her head
not to covet the finery it could be woven into
calling it wealth, which meant it would be theirs

to be fair,
she had been the one to play, pretend
hiding the persons she was hungry being
the ideas she was growing inside
slow to lift her veil
for fear the world around her
would still be cast in red

to be fair,
they boiled her last
inside a blood-white cocoon
stories still in her belly
on her fingertips
in her veins

they boiled her last,
mouth still sweet with mulberry,
and assured her it was fair.

Untitled
Therese Clare

Three women two are hidden under a printed dress. We regroup.
Our mother gave birth to two her mother to three
Thirty toes walking towards the future

We can propel backwards. We survived the valley and the rains
Only rain no sun for thirty days. Our skin turned green with moss. We were fertile gardens.
Algae grew from the ever present ponds between our toes.
We sloshed through the soft sandy landscape like a giant eight limbed spider

Our mother wore the dress as a fortress. With blocking arms.
A fortress to protect us from harm.
Two stood beneath a polka dotted sky.

We are courageous. We avoid danger. Her dress served as a safe place.
Red orange mist around our mothers head. Visions of the dead.



Selves: A Series

Dina Fulconis

Past

I've moved away from the glass.

I've shrunk into seed since
I last saw you, and
you've grown away.

Future faces away and can't see me.

Will you forget your roots again?
Will you remember me?

Present

|Your reply here

Untitled
Renee Slovic

If you want to see who you are
Have a child

They'll tell you
Even when you don't ask

In their simplest gestures
A turn toward or away
In the tone of their voice
Higher, lower, uncertain, fixed
In their eyes
As they watch you tell them
What to make of the world

The intricacies of your face
Every bit as important
As the sounds you say

The placement of your brow
The tension of your jaw

Magnified

That moment
You wish
You could
Take back
A huffed response
Patience run out
No more rope
And grasping
To just get
Through

It moves through
A vision ahead
Of the person
You want to be
Not perfect
But full of imperfection

Never right or wrong
Just always looking



Hiding inside myself
Irena Kaçi

is my favorite way to disappear

To passers by, I am a two legged
mirror,
no one can see

anything other than him or her
self

Self. What a lonely word!

Loneliness is a kind of home too,
a better home than say-
thunderclouds, or tears that pelt you

either with lighting's fire
or desolate ice

Isn't it nice?

To sit like this inside the room and outside the room as well?

They'll look for me, but I'll never tell.

Looking Glass

Renee Slovic

A portal opens

Legs parted

For something

Out of nothing

Safe passage from

An unknown origin

Into the room

In which

We all live

There is space

For the life around us

Light to mark the way

Things to have

And hold

Even if the disarray

Does not

Make sense

It waits

Unseen

Bits of limbs

The place you came from

Forgotten

Invisible

Even in your

Reflection

The mirror

Does not lie

About emptiness

It only shows

What is no longer

Not what will be



Dollemma

Emma Couillard

- I. As a girl I took my dolls and joined them with my body
So my two companions were perpetually clinging on

Their acrylic eyes were bluer than mine
Watering and blinking

Their hearts whisper beat
Neatly against my little frame

Their mouths always awkwardly agape
Telling the edgy jokes for me

Acting as cushions when I fell down
Cracking instead of me

Being a host to parasites seems quaint when you're a kid
Sustaining life is easy when something is made of vinyl plastic mix

- II. But what happens when I outgrow
Children sucking at my youth?

I am forced to snap the seal
I twist and peel

The suction breaks and my twins expire
Leaving gaping wounds behind

- III. Now their heads are shriveled
Faces mushy and deformed

Forgotten pieces of my naive symbiosis
Obligate and dusty

I hope they'll find a new girl
Who will want to fuse them with her flesh and bone

Though now they're locked away
Screaming for a mom