

NAPOWRIMO

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Time for the annual poetry challenge. :) Let's see if I last the whole month.

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0 - chasing lights 04-01

I'm done with chasing will o' the wisps,

I tell myself –

No more sparks that die too soon.

I'll stick to drinking the warmth of day,

Or schedule my waning like the moon—

But the fairies laugh if I try to withhold

From following,

From sweet, pale roaming.

They have all the power

Of a golden hour,

Or shadow fingers,

Or storm-purple gloaming.

And my muse's half-siren,

Half kitten-at-play,

And she'll toy with my heart until I stay.

1 - crowd-music

A shrill small yip,
An old tenor laugh,
Two women's coffee-bar conversation
Rise above the rumble,
The thrum,
The hive-buzz and
Crowd-music.
A low, drawling growl
Of work and politics
Makes strange harmony
With a young family,
Television fancies, or theology.
I am silent in the choir,
Too distracted not to hear,
Too confused to more than listen.
But I can listen
To the cadence,
Group noise roar,
Spoken-word themes,
Falling and twining and rising.

2 - touching times

I can hear voices from across the world
And in the future.
Two hours, five hours, half a day away.
It's a magic trick I know—
Morning and evening, sunshine and rain,
Toffee and tea or coffee and chocolate—
Clicking buttons, standing on bridges,
Touching any corner of the globe
With lighting and binary and satellites.
I could play Lady of Shallot forever,
Stitch together what I see in a mirror darkly,
And still find this magic a delight.
But I'm leaving my tower, crossing the bridges,
Being more than code and love and hope
In electric bursts, someday.

3 - heartflame

Light a spark in me.
If I listen I can hear the crackle of a raging, waiting fire.
I want to smell smoke,
Huddle close for warmth,
Bask in a red and gold glow;
I want to be all wings and beak and light
But also me.
I want to fly in both our worlds
And melt down walls
And glow in window-panes,
Roar dragon's breath
And croon a phoenix song
And burn, slow burn.
Just touch my wick and
Light a fire in me.

4 - tired morning

I'm just so tired.
A head full of bleary morning light,
Yellow lanterns not yet dark,
Clouds rolling in a stubble field,
Or foggy morning spectacles.
I need to hold fast the last strands
Of a new-old idea
From a dream of a memory,
But still fight awake
Far enough to function in a
Tick-tock, scribble-scrabble,
Workaday world.

5 - Haikus Trilogy (For Ramandu's Daughter)

Daughter of the stars
Leaves the only coast she knows,
Lights her new way home.

Queen of men and beasts
Rules as Seafarer's right hand,
Far from Silver seas.

Mother of the prince
Doesn't see who slithers slow
On a Maying day.

6 - sunshine in the "rabbit park"

Pale and clear and new
Below the hill,
I've watched you coming
To announce the day.
I've held my father's hand and felt a thrill
As your pink and yellow banners banish gray.

But sometime in the noon I'd like to come
On a picnic or a lark,
Holding hands with friend or love,
When the air is bright and blazing blue
And there's no trace of dark,
And bask in the warmth of your eye above.

Or in the evening I could tread alone
Among deep shadows tiger-striping gold,
And drink the light which gilds both tree and stone,
And wait on that hill for the day to grow old,
The moon to show a face of bone.

7 - Green Witch's Lute

Is this all?

—Is this the flight before the fall?

——Or am I waiting on the edge of something more?

————I want to be wrong, if it means I can soar.

—

No empty shells, and no dry wells.

No hollow cicadas on the tree.

(Just let me be.)

If the sky won't break, clouds part overhead,

If we mold stones and bones out of dry bread—

(And let me see.)

—Is there anything to see?

—

The sun, my lamp.

A yowl or lone miau a roar.

And down into the underdark we'll go

(if you will let me go)

And wander

(And I'll seek and find,

In truth or only in my mind)

For whatever battles are worth the fighting

And treasures are worth the torch I'm lighting,

Whether a coffin's the final score.

8 - bake your heart out

Someone once told me,
"The final ingredient is love."
I wonder how many other feelings
Go in along the way?
Playfulness in peanut-butter,
Curiosity with cocoa,
A touch of anxiety—
Dismissing perfectionism—
With half-chopped pecans.
And hope, again and again.
I hope it's as good as the plan in my head.
I hope they like it.
I hope it brings much joy.

9 - For Luna's Exile

Did ever it come to pass that I wake
From in this cold and broken silver sphere,
And fall amid rejoicing stars to take
Ahold of worlds which circle, trembling, near—
Would *you* defeat and hinder me again?
Could ever you kill? Or would I dethrone?
Could you tame me? Join our old refrain?
Or would I ascend—but listless, and alone?
I've lost sight of who I am, and could be—
But know I would see you if I were free.

10 - Trust (Haiku)

The moat has vanished.

With you, there are no stone walls.

We let in the light.

11 - For the Storyteller

My lady of possibility
Weaves new patterns around a master's story.
She pushes her fingers deep in the world
And her hands come out gleaming gold.

My lady of possibility
Recolors the lines, brings new to old--
Breaks stone for mosaics, breathes banners unfurled,
Binds struggle to hope to winged whimsy.

12 - Rich

I heard your voice, and wondered where you are—
In ear's reach, or beyond the farthest star?
Has your voice changed—the voice which plucks my strings?
Do you still write such music as gives me wings?

13 - To the victor the spoils

You beat me to the finish line,
At your own pace, determined and earnest.
I tell myself that I am fine,
I haven't failed by not leaving the nest,
Not having a sheepskin,
Not making a living wage.
But it's still a beautiful world we're living in,
Even if we're not living on the same page.
And it'll be a wonder, to watch you shine—
Watch you learn to fly.
I'll smell the roses on this slower path,
Wave at you and the clouds as you drift by.

14 - White Stag Spring

“Follow me, follow me,”
The White Stag cries
To every beast which creeps and flies,
“Into the light—along the hill—
When there’s spring in your bones,
And sun on the rill,
And the fog swirls out from tree to tree
Concealing the path’s next mystery—
Follow me, follow me.”

And they come—they come—
With hoofbeats falling,
Paws padding, wings flexing,
And voices calling,
And hope in the air
And green in their eyes,
And the forest repeating an old surprise
In the tracks of a wish they can’t yet see—
A White Stag murmuring,
“Follow me.”

[Inspired a little by Narnia, and a lot by a watercolor painting by Stephanie Pui-Munn Law]

15 - Waiting room

I'm sitting in a sunbeam,
Waiting for your music to begin—
Waiting for the waiting room to come to an end,
The curtains to rise, and a new act to begin.

I'm listening to the footfalls in a long hall,
And the echoes of the actors on before your curtain call.
I see stars upon your shoulders,
Silver hidden in your hair,
The feast not yet ready
And the table bare—
But
We've brought you a sunset in a vase
To light up the evening at your place.

16 - With one still away

Absence is—

An empty bed next door to mine,

A name on a high scores list

(The only word from you so far this month)

A piano bench full of our mother's grading

(The keys missing your fingers),

And no glow in the air

At odd hours of the morning,

And next of my own when life's too loud

To hide in, and hear the sound of my breathing.

17 - Stumble (haiku)

Bent and broken notes
Rise victorious again
Continuing songs.

18 - In good company

Staying in my own corner of the world
With you,
Listening to reinterpreted history,
Grabbing scraps of language I may never learn,
Pretending we really are alone.
You make ideas sparkle.
Make the clock tick differently;
Draw my eye to light and shadow
And possibility,
Share the same pages,
And read the same stories.
For the moment, all that matters
Lives inside a fort a child could breach,
A circle of chairs,
A bubble of sunshine.

19 - A toy adventure

There once was an octopus plush
Who wanted to cross the sea-
And it was sure if it only could see other shores,
It would be happy as could be.

The problem with this plan,
As I'm sure you can understand,
Is that Oktopus knew
If it stepped in the blue,
Its stuffing would bloat with water and sand.
And how could a toy in such a state
Swim itself to a new estate
Without meeting a briny end?

It made friends with a child one day,
Who learned its fondest wish,
And gave it to a kind man to fly
Pocketed safe across the sky,
Where it looked down on the cold blue sea
As it journeyed to England from Germany,
Without seeing a single fish.

20 - Acrostic I

For the sake of a world where no one has to flee,
And every family's love is unconditional.
To the heart of all hearts, a prayer and hope and plea:
Heal soon, bring life, and make the broken whole.
Every broken child deserves to mend.
Ready the fathers to turn their hearts again.

21 - Library

I'm sitting in the hub of a wheel,
White spokes reaching in towards to clouds and light,
And the rim a flicker of shadow and green.
It turns so slowly that we can't see.
It rolls the world forward for hearts and minds.
There are cats and cartographers and carnivals
In the light through the spokes,
Elephants and egrets and enchantments
Tracing the rim, filling it up to the brim,
And a new imagination breathed alive
For every full turn,
Every laughing "open sesame" at the opened doors.

22 - Protection

(Narnia, Silver Chair)

“They said there was stars’ blood in her veins.”
It was no rumor. That blood defends her son,
Relieves enchantment’s thrall, returns him kindly pains
Of memory, of home and her face and his father,
Of all that is lost or to be won
If by a miracle he should flee, or his lady’s enchantments falter.
Bound by silver and miles of earth,
Battered in soul by poisoned fire,
And schemes of conquest, and the lips of a liar—
Still stars’ blood is proving its worth,
Singing the songs of Eastern light,
And destiny’s dance,
And clean, pure light.

23 - If

If
I loved you, could we still be friends?

If
I told them, would I lose their trust?

If
I had a place of my own,
Would I be more free or lonely?

If I turned back the clock,
Would life move differently?

24 - not as it could be

Tell me I'm grasping at straws,
And it might be true.
But tell me whether you've written a clause
To show me what else I should do.
I thought I'd have it mapped out by now—
That's sure a laugh!
There are only so many inches of light
For every step on the path.