

A BIT OF A
ONCE UPON A TIME



poetry by
Kelli Anna

A Bit of a Once Upon a Time

An offering of story poems.

Here we enter into the realm of fantasy, whimsy, and storytelling.
An escape into a world where anything is possible and sometimes
things aren't always what they seem.

A story land of dark and light.

Enjoy your stay!

Offerings

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Iridescent Sleep

Thank You for reading this small offering of poetry

Spoondrift

If we were tiny we
could drift down a stream
in the curve of a plastic spoon.

Just us two, lazily
swirling into a dream
by the light of the autumn moon.



image created by Kelli Anna from various photos from PixaBay

Blue Balloon

a blue balloon
drifting, drifting
into the blue of
a blue afternoon

an escape
or a wish
floating, floating
as long as the helium lasts

to a distant sunset
someday destination

a blue balloon
away, away
into the blue of
a blue afternoon

Ann Married the Mailman

Ann
married
the mailman.
We all noticed
that her mail never came late after that.

We glared as packages arrived early
to her doorstep,
delivered
with a
kiss.

Daylily Daydreams

She wanted to be a daylily
growing in her place along the white picket fence,
welcoming the same hours in the summer sun
before the same feet passed through her gate each evening.

A beautiful flower rooted in well fertilized soil
never needing much care.

Until the day of the dragonfly.

The most delicate of feet landed like imagination
onto her open face, impossible lacework resting
just for a moment before darting back to the sky.

An oil slick needle piercing the afternoon.

Piercing her daylily daydreams
with the wish for a winged heart, to be lifted by the roots,
out of the well drained soil and into the summer air.

To love not just her faithful lilies
beside her along the fence, but to land like a dream
on other soft petals, on other faces open to the light.

The well weeded soil began
to feel like cement pulling her under,
her roots like hands holding her fast by the stem.

Her petals felt heavy, so heavy
drooping as the evening feet came through the gate.

Her heart had become a lacework of transparent desire,

but the sky was so far away,
so far beyond the the reach of the place
she called home along the white picket fence.



photo by Kelli Anna



Little Robin

there came a little robin
and he said to me
which way to the arctic
which way to the sea

I said to the little robin
how confused you must be
there are no robins in the arctic
there are no robins in the sea

Sit next to me little robin
while the wind blows free
let me tell you about the arctic
let me tell you about the sea

So we spent the afternoon
the little robin and me
telling stories about the arctic
telling stories about the sea

Awake

The sun lights the fallen leaves
then the branches bare,
before settling on the pagoda
and the Buddha resting there.

Filters through the waters
of a still mountain lake,
catching fish in its beam,
rainbow bubbles in their wake.

Gently awaken fairies, asleep
in the mushroom glade.
You've slept away the early
morning, hidden in the shade.

Twirl over the fallen logs,
greet a ray of light,
in a blur of swirling color
from your petal dresses bright.

The flower heads awaken,
shaking off the night
that held them tightly closed
until the goddess lit the light -

that fell upon the canopy,
the surface of the lake,
upon each mushroom, the pagoda,
and the Buddha wide awake.



photo by Kelli Anna

He Asked the Sunrise

The mountain rose,
shook his foundation,
and greeted the day
with a tip of his
cloud-form hat.

What will you hold
he asked the sunrise.
What will you will
he asked the wind.

A rockslide to change
the face of things.
Mountain goats for company.
Maybe a gentle wash
of afternoon rain.

What will you hold for me?
asked the mountain of the sunrise.

The steady warming of the rock
was the sun's only reply.



photo by Kelli Anna, Red Feather Lakes, Colorado

The Leaf that Plans the Autumn

In a forgotten park
at the edge of a city
we've all heard of,
a maple tree grows.
At the very top,
closest to the sky,
is a leaf that plans
the coming autumn.

A leaf that turns from green
to brown and back again,
but never lets go.

A small leaf that decides
the exact shade of
red the maples will turn,
on what day the first leaf
will begin to yellow on the
tallest tree in Saskatchewan,
precisely how many acorns
will fall all over the world,
and how many will be found
still wearing their hats.

The small leaf whispers
it all to a robin on
the hottest day in July.
The robin tells the birds
who fly from tree to tree
with the song of autumn
on their beaks, and soon
the trees begin their preparations.

All while we walk on paths
listening to the birdsong,

never knowing we are
hearing the coming autumn
on a summer breeze.



photo by Kelli Anna

Feathers of Sunset

I let the weight fall
off of my own shoulders
onto a phoenix tail,
where I thought it would
land softly on sunset feathers.

Steeped in myth and imaginings,
I expected to be relieved of the
sorrow I wore as a cloak of night
by the radiance of her sunlight.

I longed for my longing to
be healed by a single tear.

But the phoenix was tired.

I didn't notice the nest
built of cinnamon and myrrh.
I didn't notice the beautiful
sorrowful song filling the air.

I didn't notice that the phoenix
carried the weight of her own years
on feathers thinned and faded.

I wanted to offer apologies
for the weight of confession,
but they had no place here
in these last moments
of a life on the edge of immolation.

Engulfed in flames born of the sun,
I was warmed by the radiance
of a thousand years
laid to rest in aromatic ash.

the phoenix will rise
the phoenix will be reborn
the phoenix will give hope
to all who wear their years
as the weight of empty night.

I did a little extra research on the phoenix to see if there was something beyond rebirth from flames. The main things I learned from the mythology of the phoenix that influenced the poem:

- *they were said to build their nests from aromatic herbs, mainly cinnamon and myrrh before death*
- *the phoenix is said to symbolize rebirth, immortality, grace, the sun, fire*
- *the beautiful bird sang with an equally beautiful song*
- *in one version of the myth, the phoenix comes to the mortal world at the time of its death, looking dull and haggard after 1000 years of life*
- *because of its own immortality, the bird was said to have regenerative powers, especially the tears of the phoenix*
- *I made the phoenix female due to the belief that the myth of the phoenix may originally come from the Egyptian goddess Bennu who symbolized rebirth and the flooding of the Nile every year.*

A Bit of a Once Upon a Time

Shall I tell you a bit of a once upon a time?
A story from another age, when heroes
galloped across the mossy land and
kept their longswords sharp and close at hand.

When maidens were asked only to grow
a rose in their garden and upon their cheek.
To offer them both before the fight,
into which, for the kingdom, rode the brave knights.

Alas! Not the strong maiden of this fable.
She grew no rose and offered no kiss, but
by the light of scattered constellations,
she pushed a dragon to ever higher elevations.

On impossible wings, they owned the night.
The dragon brought summer on his breath,
his mouth held the fire of armageddon.
But with no wish to fight, he lived well hidden.

A massive, kind soul, old in human years,
he had once been friendly with melancholy
until he met the Wyvern Heart Maiden,
silver in hair and armor, who loved the gentle dragon.

Perhaps you should have the tale end there
for the stories of man aren't for a tender heart.
Cruelty comes to what they don't understand -
remember, the king's men kept death close at hand.

Arrows striking deep, another and another and another,
until the weeping sky could no longer hold them.
spiraling through constellations turned crimson,
victory this time, not for our heroes, but the villains.

Moonlit Mermaids

when you sleep do you dream of mermaids
just living their lives feasting on seaweed salad
beneath the waves of the ships you sail

do you dream of the full moon dangling
in a blackberry sky calling them to the surface
to bathe in the reflection of yesterday's sun

tails slapping water as they dive
before your ship their voices nearly lost
to the wake and the wind teasing at moments
you would never regret if only you had gills

but did you forget that you are asleep
in this poem we're only talking dreams
when you wake certain a soft voice

lingered in your ear you'll rush to the deck
where you will see nothing but moonlight
the blackberry sky and the almost invisible flip
of a disappearing tail { a dolphin maybe }
being quickly swallowed by the white capped sea

Coffee Spoons

The ticking of the clock echoed
behind her while the whole world slept.
The earth sounds were quiet,
the coffee spoons waited,
in the drawer where they were kept.

A little tarnished, a little bent,
hidden away in their wooden vault,
they whispered of sugar grain
mornings, of fresh cream,
and secrets they learned from the salt.

As the clock ticked on, the girl giggled
with the birds on the edge of night,
listened to their plans to
gather the things of man
into a giant nest of avian delight.

That she can scheme with the birds,
hear the murmur as the hours unwind,
that she can laugh with the spoons,
and gossip with the salt,
keeps her lost in her own mind.

In the Darkness There

I thought I heard you lightly stepping
stepping on the stair.
I thought I heard you faintly breathing
breathing in the darkness there.

Was it your step, was it your breath
I heard faintly on the stair?
For the light revealed only dust
stirring in the darkness there.

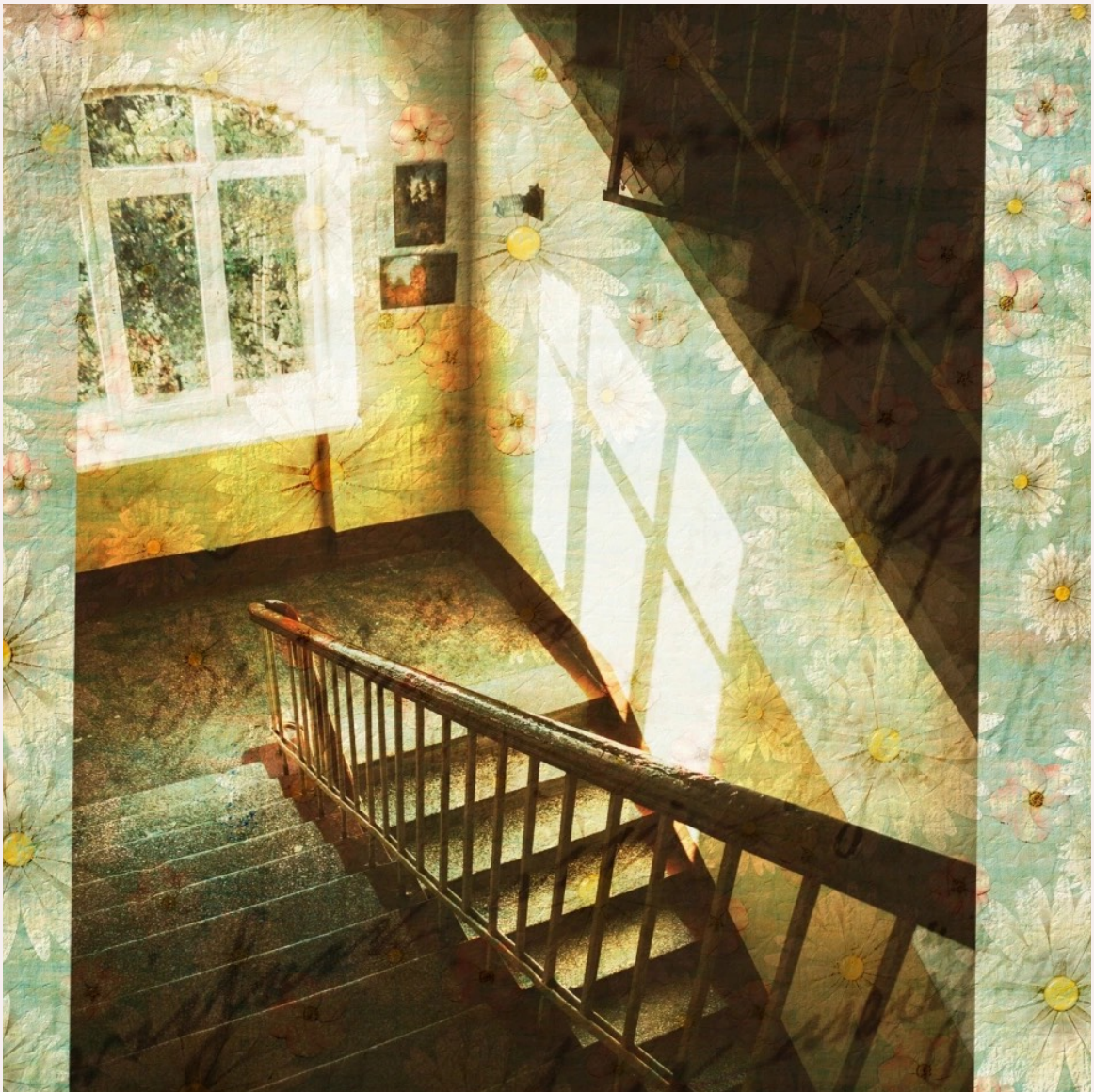


image created by Kelli Anna from various photos on Pixabay

Bone and Glass

We don't know when the witch discovered
the way of the plant and the glass,
when she found the stone that opened truth.

Only that she held us in her palm.
Only that our necks were sticky with sweat
in horror of the thoughts she divined

out of silence and suspicion.
She only needed to hear the quiver
of a voice to know that a spell would
soon spill off her tongue and into
awaiting cochlea, into cerebrum,

and that our words would spill
out of shaky limbs in hysterical laughter.

when did she discover the ways of bone and glass
when did she discover our weakness for confession

Garden of Shadows

I only garden by moonlight
when the soil is black ink,
the flowers steeped in night shade.

{ where the night creatures sing }

I grow lady's slippers in pink and white
behind the sweet potato vines,
trapped so they can't dance off just after dawn.

The day belongs to the botany of the bees,
to the hum of the cicada,
to the children that play too close to the garden gate.

{ where the black belladonna berries grow }

I only pull weeds by moonlight,
my hands covered in black ink,
my senses steeped in night shade.

{ where my touch decides life or death to what grows
in my garden of shadows }



photo by Kelli Anna, The Flower Moon

The House of Larimer

What's the snow hiding
up on the hill, in the far north,
behind the house of Larimer?

What secret is being buried
inch by frozen inch?

The first snow on loosened ground.
The first snow on a held tongue,
hiding holes filled with sorrow

where the apologies are buried
and meant to stay unspoken.

No one will be missed
when no one seemed to exist
in the old house of Larimer.

In the spring with the fresh grass
and a dandelion blanket,
no one will even think to ask
what might be hidden on this
perfect picnic hill, in the far north,
behind the abandoned
house of Larimer.



image by Kelli Anna, Red Feather Lakes, Colorado

Strawberry Stones

Beyond the grove of wistful delight,
on a hilltop all alone,
sat the cottage of desolation
where strawberries grew through stone.

Stone walls set in sorrow
the color of wet cement.
The door was impossibly heavy
and anyone coming in, soon went.

For in the corners waited madness
trapped in spider webs,
reaching out in the humid air
as laughter of the dead.

“Tear it down,” they all said.
“Forget what happened there!”
But the walls bore the sweetest fruit
rooted deep in murderous despair.

So the cottage was left to stand
alone on a strawberry hill,
where the berries are so irresistible,
for a taste some may even kill.

*There is a greenhouse in Japan, at the base of Mt. Fuji, that grows strawberries
between stones.*

We Lived in a River House

We lived in a river house
with barely room for two.
Though there were more,
stacked like bunk beds
with ladders to our dreams.

When the night called us
from the tiny space
we always went to
where the damp permeated
the rotting wood steps
with the tears of generations.

The mosquitoes
filled our ears with
the hum of the past,
but it was always the moon -
full even when a sliver,
that hung a lamp to dream by.

When it hung low between
the weeping trees, illuminating
the river bank, we believed
in the magic of escape.

A single bed in a room
of our own, and the moon
promised it would be ours.

For some of us, it is,
but some nights,
when the moon is overripe for wishing,
our toes still curl at the

memory of the damp step and
our ears still hum with
the songs of ancestors.

The Disappearance

The universe had not been notified
about the disappearance.

No space agency was dispatched
to the inner core of the central star system
to alert the high command.

No day of grief was organized.
No eulogies were composed and
fed into intergalactic translators.

No one woke up on the edge
of space and wept
for the billions of dreams
that died suddenly, or for the
few that lingered a little longer.

No one wept
because
no one knew.

On a pale blue dot*, near
an inconsequential star,
in a galaxy no one had heard of,
a last breath was released.

And the universe
stretched on
without a care.

**special thanks to Carl Sagan for all he taught us about our rock he called The Pale Blue Dot*

Golden Moon of Patience

A hushed galaxy
waits
for an immortal satellite
to circle
the golden moon of patience.

A light year spent
hidden
from the black hole
swallowing
every new arrival.

Stretched
infinitely into strands
of what once was.

A green nebula,
magical
with starlight, began
a healing spiral around
an old space capsule.

Guiding
it down to the
golden moon of patience.

Showing
her how it had once
been called
mother.

Iridescent Sleep

The dreams began with the old woman
tucked in her cryo-chamber,
a botanist from another time altogether.
Dreams of young green tendrils wrapping
around her chilled wrists and ankles while
she slept the iridescent sleep of the edge of galaxies.

The dreams spread to the surgeon,
kept at 32 degrees Celsius in the pod next door.
Dreams of his own bronchi shrinking while
his heart beat the time of infancy, his skin
bathed in the luminescence of the bio-scanner,
while he was held in the hearts of love long dead.

The dreams finally came to the futureonaut,
the one who mapped light years,
the one who sketched colonies,
the one who slept frozen in his
first shot at immortality.

Dreams of ultraviolet light and newborn
stars ripping through his frontal cortex,
replacing objectives with cosmic gas and
colors that shifted at precarious angles.

They had arrived at the pillars in the heart
of the nebula, birth place of stars and creation.
7,000 light years from an earth frozen by a spent sun.

It was the pillars that brought the dreams of iridescent sleep.

It was the pillars, the creators of stars, that welcomed
her children home and bathed them in colors long dead.



image made from a photo of "The Pillars of Creation" from Nasa.

Thank You for reading this small offering of poetry

If you would like to read more of my writing, you can find me here:

[By Kelli Anna](#)



I hope you enjoyed this collection. Story poems are my favorite poems to write. They can tell any kind of story in such a tiny amount of space. They allow the imagination to wander and fantasy to become reality just for a moment. I hope it allowed you a moment of escape from reality.



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