

## VISIONS

### *A Foul Filled Eve*

Who did I hear walking so near while I next this gravestone knelt,  
Tread of stride, or clip clop footfalls, they were so distinctly felt,  
Wraith or real I could not fathom, imagination rising,  
Skirting forest edge at nearness of dusk, I fain start running.

Sensing menacing breath near my back, I turn to face my foe,  
Tangible, imagined, neck hairs prickle, I had been too slow,  
While path darkens and fades, my soul despairs, a desperate culler,  
Twilight failing swiftly to gray, my spirit sinks toward pallor.

Bristling against fear seeking to hold me, grasping at my neck,  
Quickening my pace, my resolve flickers, sinking as a wreck,  
I hasten toward home, grasping delivery, fearing the bleak,  
Following my glowing pathway, the gatehouse is what I seek.

Behind door locked, braced with stout throw bolt, I rest against my arms,  
Measure of calmness settling my nerves, that wraith no longer charms,  
Yet somber visage creeps through windowpane, unnerving renews,  
Raising my hackles as hound facing bear, tensing my sinews.

What creature, foul and beleaguered, seeks my sanity this night,  
Dares follow to cross my castle moat, then up my stairway flight,  
Scaling parapet, challenging arrows, breaking sturdy hasp,  
Arrows I aim through marrow and heart to staunch its grating grasp.

Rendering cry cleaves the dark, tearing me, wrenching at my core,  
Revealing hidden secrets, broken vows, what I kept in store,  
Antediluvian memories, fires that burned much too bright,  
Foundations, every weakness revealed, splits this very night.

Echoing down my granite walls to cellar the cry prevailed,  
Upturns tables, churns books off shelves, every corner assailed,  
Rage against the demon oppressive, clinging to last hope now,  
Restitution, despite my condition, salvation somehow.

Across my chamber hung a bow, not used for many a day,  
Hunting-tipped arrows, green pheasant quills, beside the fire gone grey,  
Thrusting a missile against nock, stretching taut the fatal arc,  
I let fly that arrow to hit that wraith, long ago forgot.

Alas, I realize too late, as arrow pierces her through,  
I sit shattered, for I have slain, my beloved, it is true,  
This visage feared was none other than forlorn Agnes of Cleves,  
Who followed me from graveside arbor, this most sacred of eves.

## VISIONS

### *Harvesting Moon*

Alabaster orb graces this October eve, beckoning me,  
Brimming over in autumnal splendor, above forest floor,  
Seemingly greater in heavenly scope, growing each moment,  
Ponderously my steps linger as she, grows large, thus does store,  
Reflective energy for coming night, then opening door,  
To recollect tales of yore.

While I watch in quiet wonder, pausing, resting, in my routine,  
Tremulous fears taking over my thoughts, near cold lakeside shore,  
Red-blooded, anger-filled moon strikes my eyes, horrid now the path,  
Freeing fears from dank imprisoned chambers, releasing terror,  
Held in abeyance beneath thick armor, was this guarded store,  
While she rises in splendor.

Fearsome these warriors, readied for combat, sally boldly forth,  
Steadfast their progress, divisive purpose, slicing to my core,  
In a trance my ragged steps do stumble, I have lost the way  
Harried by gross gargoyles and dire demons, I slip close to shore,  
Clear water beckons, reflecting moonrise, while she calls me more,  
“Listen, you, so sorely poor.”

“Hear the tales, give attention, such omens and visions deter not,  
Bandages and salves avail no purpose, such will not close sore  
Cleansing acts cannot replace past errors, nor will empty words,  
Celebrate your futile moments, rejoice, for your broken door,  
Continue behind lies and denials, on splinter filled floor,  
So complete your sentence poor.”

Moon spoke clearly, boldly, simply, while rapt I stood on pathway stones,  
Message forbids any grand delusions, point towards forty-four,  
Years that sprung from foul misapplications, moments I should rue,  
Actions avert payment for what is due, lays debts at my door,  
Reminders that prideful I often stood, on this lakeside shore,  
Creating my fearsome store.

Demeaning every person through my baseless, disdainful stare,  
Clipping them to the matrix, crushing each, though they did implore,  
Malicious comments birthing destruction, complete in its scope  
No derision did I ever eschew, hate grew more and more,  
Compulsion never dissuaded me from slamming down death's door,  
These are my stories of yore.

Red orb reflects the living blood I shed, death was never held dear,  
dark orb permits not judgments forget, brought against the poor,  
Blank orb revealing my innermost thoughts, lays bare to the world,  
Morals mocked openly, tenets disgraced, all I did abhor,  
Destruction was my god, mercy my foe, raging to the core,  
Seeking to settle the score.

Anxious, I silently seethe in disgust, fending off this malaise,  
What reason have I to suffer disgrace, spurn my visage poor,  
What deeds to cause rough judgment's sentence, gavel striking loud

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Raging red orb full-throated charge cries out, “You destroyed the poor,  
No evil you shunned, unkindness you loved, hate was at the fore,  
Shall I mention any more?”

Her onslaught knew no ebbing flow, her condemnation had no bounds,  
Her accusations, as boiling geysers, hot steam scalds my core,  
Visions of churning hydrogen sulfide, pools that burn if touched,  
Intriguing ponds, so clear, so inviting, bring death to my door,  
Preternatural, magical spectrum, portends endless war,  
“You prefer I not show more?”

“Please cease this onslaught,” I pled while crumbling, “the burden is too great,”  
Rough stones scrape my knees and palms as I seek respite by the shore,  
Cedar boughs can’t shield from orb’s indictments, I sink lower still,  
There’s no release from this retribution, no surcease in store,  
Punishment’s gallows hangs over my soul, fire is surely more,  
Likely for garbage filled store.

Never to be quenched, no Lazarus cup, to ease relentless pain,  
Visions of future beneath burning tree, future is so poor,  
Ascetic actions, too little, too late, promise no respite,  
My futile excuses, words cast freely, won’t open the door,  
Hung between thieves, my feet chained to the wall, far away that floor,  
Above fouled waterside shore.

“Gatekeeper’s charge,” chants alabaster orb, “is never to relent,  
There is no release, your judgement is come, you’ve caused too much gore,  
Flailing, you practiced, murder you lauded, evil was your love,  
Actions so blatant will receive judgment, is there any more,  
Destruction wrought on humankind worse, never to restore,  
Everything you abhor.”

Had I known what results I was reaping, would I have changed my course?  
Festering inside was constantly seething, could I care for more?  
Turmoil I craved, while cursing grew greater, awaking my thoughts,  
Satisfaction received from other’s pain, that’s what made me roar,  
In anger, and full of indignation, someone might have more,  
So built up my judgment store.

That moon would not easily release me from dark sentence hanging,  
Foul rough rope dangling, filling my vision, omen waits in store,  
Wound seven times to assure its purpose, surely to fulfill,  
No escape could forestall my sure demise, no ruse anymore,  
Plank-nailed gallows platform somberly waits, a hole in its floor,  
Judgment’s sentence, “Nevermore.”

“Nevermore shall such evil prevail, nevermore shall you so kill,  
Inferno burning, without consuming, always deadly sore,  
Fevered sickness with its dire origin, flames across the brow,  
Like angry welts that rise with scalding, so there is always more,  
Like flood water gushing without warning, bursting through each door,  
So is your judgment in store.”

I plead, “vengeful orb, may not this sentence, evaporate away?”

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May not fervent sorrow, abject sorrow, my poor life restore?  
Is there to be no forgiving witness, to stand in my stead?  
Shall all the guilty accusations pile, burdens more and more?  
Could I be allowed some restitution, some payment in store?  
Or must I pay with my gore?"

That menacing orb did laugh in derision, "Surely you do jest,  
Many nights plotting, you lay on your bed, Evil to implore,  
While during each day you strode boldly forth, robbing each household,  
There were no bars, no bounds to your evil, greater to explore,  
Redemption favors those who seek justice, which you did abhor,  
There is no foundation more."

Struggling I rise from that lakeside judgment, that yon orb did reveal,  
Feet find no footing, hands scabble at rocks, what is there in store?  
Waters rush forward, waves do encircle, weight pulls me under,  
Phaeton appears, transporting me downward, towards Poseidon's floor,  
Jackals growl greeting, viper's hiss chills me, I am at death's door,  
Passage is closed evermore.

## VISIONS

### *Scottish Paean*

Laughter echoes throughout the hour,  
In Loch Awe's rhododendron bow'r,  
Climbing higher still, every hour,  
Scaling Rapunzel's prison tow'r.

Widow is spurned, bookmark flower,  
"Daft crone, is she," so said Adger,  
Achaius, Bruis, and then Calder,  
Adrift, alone, like dried flower.

Bard Rabbie Burns, man of the hour,  
Poet spun exotic flower,  
Found on coastal cliffside dower,  
Remains of widow's reft power,

Lover's trysts of each late night hour,  
Seeking new husband, she did scour,  
Hill and dale, through ev'ry shower  
Spending each penny she should scour.

Her visage sullied, her mien dour,  
Even so, she did not cower,  
Gained strength, pleasure, in darkest hour,  
From Poet's beauteous flower.

From bed arose, facing each hour,  
Widow grew bold, no longer dour,  
Bereft had she been, now in pow'r,  
she sallied forth from prison tow'r.

Seeking life's nectar, found Bard flow'r,  
Penned in coastal cliffside bower,  
Riches she gained, from hour to hour,  
thus reborn, reclaiming power.

Romance was born that very hour,  
Fresh love she found, stalwart tower,  
promises her, greets in bower,  
under a Ft. William shower.

Had he known the words, the power,  
Those lines held forth, their fulsome power,  
Could he fain have written that hour,  
Or eschew such fame and cower.

Now fiddle scrapes, singer does show'r.  
Willow spun lyrics, love's tower,  
Widow celebrates the fest hour,  
Burns created for her shower.

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### *The Scots Thane*

Storm swept Skye, cryptic this shower,  
Of gryphon's screech, or Minotaur,  
Hungry souls, to rip and devour.

Safety inside the Laird's large Hall,  
Outside where skulks terror for all,  
Legions of demons wait in thrall.

Take courage, thane, do not cower,  
Slay the dragon in fearful hour,  
Slay the beast wielding great power.

Don buckler on, answer the call  
Take halberd and horse from her stall,  
Glaive for death's clash with one and all.

Sallied he forth, from out the tow'r,  
Splendidly, through evening hour,  
Until he reached that demon bower.

Gorgon Stheno, he did see crawl,  
And Euryale, the twin dark pall,  
With Medusa, snakes were they all.

With shield up, warding off power,  
Cut through each head in that bright hour,  
Yet new heads grew to scream and lour.

Cried thane outright, "I did slay all,  
What magic is this, they did fall,  
Beneath my sword, wielded to maul."

Stheno in answer, "You need cow'r,  
immortal are we, now our hour,  
so flee, Scot's thane, afor we scour.

Through flesh to thy bone, then withal,  
Soul and sense flee eternal hall,  
and you are nothing, naught at all.

Scorned thane did not flee nor cower,  
Rather spurned his steed, did devour,  
Gorgons with heavenly power.

Now Thane of Skye stands safe and tall,  
Laid ruin enemies of Hall,  
He more than fulfilled the Laird's call.

## VISIONS

### *What May Befall*

Creamy as a Snowy Egret she vanishes in mists of remembrances  
Drifting along, my bark canoe and I lay far from Huron's southern embankment.  
Longing does not cause joy to return, neither do early morning visions bring relief,  
Nor daily ministrations of my oar sweeping this water's crystalline surface,  
Settling into patterns of concentric circles as I drift inconsolably along,  
Serve to bring abatement to strife scolding my soul and chiding my resolution

Rising from a predawn east as Avalon's scepter and Arthur's crown will rise one day  
From misty lake where so long ago they were cast, that sultry summer storm, presaged such departure  
And I, failing to recognize those signs, though versed in ancient imagery and tales of valor,  
Let her slip away. So, what holds me from settling into patterns of concentric circles,  
As I lay adrift from that life compass and anchor which had become too familiar.  
Yes, I let her slip away without raising a voice in consternation or dismay.

If those battlements were scaled and siege lay to temples of ivory and granite,  
Then should victory come to this cripple I became without her by my side.  
Would windows of opportune grace release a burden otherwise so untenable,  
Then could I present victory sweet upon her cheek, kisses of my utmost devotion  
With appreciation, and innumerable four syllable words taken from my treasure store would I  
Receive her back into my canoe where I lay far from Huron's southern embankment.