

## Chariot Duel

Enemies all around  
cheering for my death  
the horses snort,  
pawing at the ground  
eager to run

Two of us will race  
only one of us  
can win

to the victor goes their life  
Begin!

## Warped

I only wanted to protect you  
And grow stronger.

So you –  
Pushed me over the edge  
Brought me to the brink  
Of death, said

“Look. In order to protect me  
You must become a monster.  
Are you sure you want  
To keep doing this?”

Your tears fell soft as  
Rain drops on my face  
As I smiled and said  
Yes.

## Call of the Haunted

Ominous premonition  
creeping raw danger  
an unseen enemy, breath of shadows  
here  
for me

calling, "You were never  
meant to belong. I will steal your last breath, your life  
To fill the nothingness in me."

Storm clouds consume the sky  
rain pours  
thick as tears  
the heavy burden  
of the past  
crushing me  
impossible to fight

Shadows wait, calling,  
taking over me –  
I'm so – tired  
jaws of the monster open wide –

Confrontation.  
A friend, here, to catch the  
gnashing head of teeth  
and drive away the enemy –  
at a price.  
Blood spills, thick and red.

"Fool," she whispers, "never fight alone."  
now we're both on the verge of defeat  
the monster roars  
furious and hungry for  
memories of despair

her cold hand slides  
the leather wrapped hilt  
of a sword into mine

Last chance for life

A blaze of will ignites the crying sky

Call of the Haunted, pg 2, new stanza

Emergence of a new warrior  
Compassion for the eaten ones drives  
Defeat into the heart of the monster  
Shadows part  
Life is never peaceful.

## The Trampled Flowers

Enter the silver gate of flowing water

Climb the twisted marble stair

Half cast in shadow, half in white

A chanting choir turns

Your blood to ice

*Go back,*

*Go back*

Still, you press on

At the top, a marble arch

Festooned with deep red poppies

The air is heavy and sweet with their scent

Walk into the sunlit garden

And begin the duel.

The challenger awaits

Calm and ready as a heron

Behind him floats a castle

Spinning like a dancer

Balancing on tip toe

Slow as a dream

The Trampled Flowers, pg 2, new stanza

You draw your blade  
Petals swirl all around you  
Light and delicate as wishes

The challenger responds  
Your swords meet  
Clashing steel rings  
Soon the green grass  
Drips with red.

The question remains  
If you win the duel  
Will you enter the castle?  
But  
What is the point of this fight?  
The shed blood  
And trampled flowers?

Up high in the tallest tower  
The prince is sleeping.

Will you wake him?  
Or let him dream?

## Chains

I am haunted by chains.

The weight of them,

Heavy

Cold iron, pulling down wrists

Restraining, alive

They hiss and clink across the floor

Jeering at the prisoner,

“You will never escape us.

You will never escape.

Never. Never.”

I am haunted by bars

The bars of a dungeon cell

Locked in a cage or a room

A prisoner for all sorts

Of reasons.

Yes, when I close my eyes

I see chains and cages

Yet I’ve never been a prisoner

Except what I imagine inside

My own mind

And why that recurring theme –

Chains, pg 2, continue stanza

prisoners and chains

always returns,

I can't say

Except to ask

What is freedom?

What is liberty?

Until it has been taken away

The door is locked, it is heavy

You can't leave

You can't get out

Chains

Like a pair of hands

Closed tight around

Wrists and ankles

Jerking the prisoner back

When they come to end

Of their restraints.

Hands impossible to break

Unless you have the key.

The days crawl by in misery

So long, so boring, stuck in

One place, nothing to do until



Chains, pg 3, continue stanza

Yes! You are out, you're free!

Free to move, to do to see

To breathe the outside air

Everything is glorious

Everything is beautiful

No matter the weather,

The time of night

Or day

The smallest acts are valuable

Being able to step through a doorway

And back again

Whenever you wish

Is a victory.

Yes, that is why

I think of chains

Imprisonment, torture, and pain

That is why, so often

My characters are captured, restrained

Unable to speak

Chains, pg 4, continue stanza

Until they escape

Until they are free

Only with liberty is life

worth living again.

And so I think of chains.