

Sixfold

Poetry Contest

ARS GRATIA ARTIS

Poems:

Nightmares

Before the ER

Reflections

Hovering in the Sky

Nightmares

Run

A four-legged monster chases me
Gray, red eyes, saber-toothed and long claws
It's night, and all the ways out are blocked
The maze is my school
The windows should open
The doors should open
They're locked

Run

It chases me, a Predator, firing lasers
I reach the elevator
The door closes slowly
It approaches quickly, glowing eyes behind a mask
The door shuts, I go up, but the hunt isn't over
It's down the hall when the doors open, and I press down again
No matter the floor, I can't get away

They stop, block, I stop

Point my head at the ground, and keep the hate off my tongue
I don't look them in the eyes
Keep calm, stay alive
They have power and guns, and I don't matter
I just want to go, but they won't leave me alone
I didn't do anything wrong
They want to know who I am, where I live, but I'm homeless

Now I'm dead in a coffin, black and silent

Now I'm naked in my room, stepped out of the shower
Want to get dressed, strangers enter
They want to buy my curtains
Why me, why now?

Run

I can't shake the demon
I go up to a roof, and jump
Should wake up before I crash, I don't
My bloody broken body is on the street

Now the python has me in its coils, I'm being eaten

In the Matrix

Tubes pierce my body, so it can feed the machine
Mind trapped in a world I know isn't real
Playing basketball, but the game is rigged
Score even from half court, but I never lead
The refs are bought, my limits are set
Can't complain, have no voice
I take the L, and rich men go home
They bet against me
Wake up to reality, and the tubes come out
Fall into a pool, where I'm left to drown

Now I sleep in my car, when a man holding a knife passes by my window
Pop
For no reason, he stabs my driver side tire
I wake up and sit up, as he walks past me and
Pop
Punctures my rear left tire
Air whistles out of rubber
I exit my car in a rage, and grab a baton I keep for protection
I confront him, and he cowers
I curse, shout
I want to hurt him, kill him
I give in to my beast
I am not the nice guy
He drops the knife, but I hit him anyway
He's on the ground, I keep striking
Blood stains the baton, and the parking lot
I wake up

I hear her voice, on and on she calls me out
And as the light of evening fades to welcome night
We start to fight
She wants to rage, I tell her no, leave me alone
I didn't start this, I'm staying home
You go away
But she doesn't listen, she won't obey
She won't give up, her noise doesn't stop
It tears me apart, and I can't shut her up
I try to fight the coming change, but the rising sun is hours away
And I know I won't be able to delay the transformation for that long
The more I fight it, the louder she gets
Her words shake me until I forget
Everything else but the pain in my head and muscles
My whole body burns like my blood is acid
And I feel like my organs and bones are melting
I pray, but no good comes out of it

The beast comes out, she has broken through
There is only one thing I can do
Push her away, leave, slam the door
I buy some booze, walk until I find a tree, and sit
O' silent wood, I drink with thee
With a heart so full of misery
To drown in the waters of the past
I had with her whose love is like tides
Coming, going, rising, falling
In your darkest shadow let me lie
Until the salt of her tongue subsides
Until the pain flows away like waves beneath the wind
And her face evaporates from my thinking
And the memory of us together is but a cloud
Whose rain has already fallen and whose life has floated by
In your darkest shadow let me weep
Until my tears my mind won't feed
I wake up
Don't drink, and I don't have a wife or girlfriend, what the hell?

Now I'm in a train
I'm alone in a cabin when two men enter
They sit together, opposite me
They say hi, I say hi, we start talking
They're pleasant, nice suits, good looking
They flirt, and I welcome it
I'm nervous and excited, first time
One comes over to my bench, and begins
One kiss leads to another, one thing leads to another
They're mine, I'm theirs
All the way
I wake up
I like girls, always have, always will, what the hell?

Memories rise up as I roam towns and cities I wish were home
Scenes playing out in the night resemble moments of a life lost long ago
I remembered as I stalked this man walking home with his wife and son
Being lifted by my father's arms, wrapping my own around his neck
It was late, I was tired
I rested my head upon his chest, safe I closed my eyes and slept
I remembered my mother dragging me home
Watching a woman pull her child from a store
I remembered enjoying women day and night
Spying on a man playing with another one's wife
I remembered the woman I loved
Before he came to bite and change the man I was into what I am

All these people gone, taken by old age, war, disease, famine
Drank some of them, they are no more, because I showed up at their door
Or lured them in with words and glances, and then fed on them, alone and concealed
In a room, in the woods, in a ditch, in an alley
It was like sinking in quicksand really
The first nights I fought it successfully, I thought
But the lust for blood pulled me in deeper as the dark ticked away
Until I could hear heartbeats
And smell the signature scent of each body beyond my walls
Until the sound of liquid rushing through veins like fast river currents
Pounded my brain like a river rupturing a dam
Until all I could feel was kill
Fighting who I am only quickened my descent into madness
It drowned my sense of self
But it, like I, cannot die
I resurfaced to witness the carnage I inflicted on the town I lived in
While my humanity rested
I awoke with my canines in the neck of a young woman
And I saw then the horror of what I am
Bodies on the ground, faces I had seen all my life
My neighbors and friends now leftovers for maggots, worms, flies, rats and ravens
And I begged to die, I cried out to the Gods above and below to let me go
But they did not respond
And so I tried to take my own life, or whatever it is drives me now
I waited outside for the colorful rise, but then I changed my mind
I would not lie in the sun and dry out
I would not give them the satisfaction of my suicide, or whatever it would have been
Wake up
No more going to bed after watching Interview with the Vampire

In neutral, my thirty-year-old car reverses at a construction site, and rolls over a man
But he's okay
I wake up, got it, I need a new car
But my brain should know I can't afford one

Living on an island, and it just got bombed
Bright flash of light, heat, dust, mushroom cloud
Teleported my lover to a safe spot before impact, to his surprise
A hot young guy, long hair that shines, why?
And then teleported other people to my fort
A woman rips open the envelope with my paycheck and steals it
No good deed, as the saying goes
Wake up, I get it, I'm not in control

I'm an immigrant living in an immigrant community
Most of us know each other

Under cover I counter
I crash the chopper with lightning blasts, aku soku zan
And bury the men by destroying the earth beneath them
Coward, why didn't I do this before those women and kids were shot?

I'm driving, when strangers enter my car after I stop at a red light
They want me to give them a ride like I'm an Uber driver
I'm not
I'm driving with my sister in the passenger seat, same thing happens
I wake up,
Not the worst nightmare I have had
People feel like they can use me, I understand

I scream outside
Sound ears surround me but no one hears
Frustration mounts castaway on my island of pain
Still hope beats my heart
I await the day when the sun shines on the cell where my flesh rots away
I'm lost, God help me find the stars outside my mind
I look, I must be blind
Help me while I still have time
I'm a dreamer, save my dreams
My reality is a frozen screen
Without a reboot, within this shell I can't stay
I press my hands together, and pray in silence
I press my hands together, and my prayers echo
I reach out, King of Kings
Show me I'm right to believe
My words, I know you can hear them even when whispered within
Nothing
My demons crawl up through the cracks and start calling God
But they hear no reply
My angels fall, heaven is too high
They flap hard, but the savior denies
Wake up
Had another bad day yesterday, and the rest of the week looks cloudy

Now I walk a tightrope across a canyon, and the wind is blowing
Mind, you don't have to find new ways to tell me what I already know!

Before the ER

I'd rather be lying on a bed of snakes
My head resting on a pillow of rusted nails
Eyes wide open, I see nothing
I scream, no sound
I'm falling?
Floating?
Going up and away?
Moving sideways?
Standing still?
I don't know
No point of reference, no time
Just blackness all around me
It engulfs me, blinds me, everything is black
There is nothing, no light, nothing solid

I was six or seven
Living with my parents in an apartment in Lyon
I remember I locked myself in an old refrigerator on the ground floor
Playing Hide & Seek with friends
The fridge was in a storage room
The lights were off
The air was stale
Perfect hiding spot
Won the game, wasn't found for a while, even by grownups
The darkness in that refrigerator was brighter than this
The silence there was louder than this
And I still felt a part of the world

What is this emptiness—this bottomless pit—this starless universe?
Where am I?
If I'm dead, where is the light—the brilliant tunnel?
If I'm not good enough, where are the demons, the lost souls, the Devil?
I want out
I'm trapped in a fucking color

Reflections

I remember sitting on the beach
My back on a coconut tree
Father swam so far
He became a dot on the horizon
And Bobbi went with him
My best friend
My canine companion
Paddling by his side
Determined to keep up
Like a racer going for a win
Mother can't swim
She just walked in the ocean
With waves lapping her waist
My younger brother was there too
I can't recall what he was doing
He was wearing shorts
We both had towels
So I guess he swam
Such a tease my brain
It lets me taste the past
But never serves me a full meal
Bits as sweet as mangoes
Others as sour as Brussels sprouts
Moments in time
Distorted by time
Reflections on a river
I have a memory of sitting on a beach
My back on a coconut tree
Smelling the salt
Feeling the grains
Hearing the song of wind and sea
I was a boy then
Didn't know a thing
So innocent
And Bobbi was still with me

Hovering in the Sky

As silent as the dead
As black as a shadow, but for three beams of light
Hovering in the sky like a triangular cloud
Observing the alien wildlife?
Watching our TV shows?
Listening to the radio?
Perhaps examining your past?
Hovering in the sky
I raise my hands to you like I'm praying
I want you to take me, and show me your side of life
A whole new world
Another time
An alternate reality
My childhood dreams coming true
My spaceman escape from normal
I've waited so long for this
I'm not afraid
I'm ready to serve you
I'm ready to be transformed by you
Hovering in the sky
I'm just below you
Do you see me?
I'm volunteering
I'm yours, just look down
Hovering in the sky
Ignoring me, rejecting me
Hovering in the sky
Mocking me
Hovering in the sky
Dark and silent like a thief in the night
Looking like the tip of an arrow
Hovering in the sky
And I can only watch you from down here