

1. Hannah O'Flanagan

a.

The room was dark. Moonlight trickled through the window, like ripples of water. The eyes stared back through the glass, yellow and wild, hungry, smiling with malice. The child stepped from his bed and opened the pane.

In the morning, a leaf that shimmered silver was all that remained.

b.

Bare branches grasped at my clothes, skeletal fingers trying to hold me back. But the light meandered in front of me, the music echoed in my ears, and all I could see in my head was their face. I must dance with them again. I must.

c.

You said you were my godmother. You said I was beautiful, your dear child. You promised me power, you said you'd protect me.

Yet here I sit. Alone, in a mound that once teemed with music and laughter and colour.

I'm cold. I'm so very cold, godmother.

d.

There, at the edge of the water, where sea meets sand. I could see it. A strange, shapeless lump. I crept closer, reaching out. My fingers brushed seal skin. My heart thudded against my ribs.

The shape behind me, unseen, unheard, until she let out a howl of pain.

2. Kristof Smeyers

I am made lighter by hunger, lighter still by the lack of light. A landscape flatter than any, without features but the heavy fog. It's been days – I think. Wordless had been her guidance, and here there is nothing. Ever lighter, I float deep under soil.

3. Emma Fleming

Once again enamoured of an ass?

Elf shot? Pixie led?

Realising this isn't your bed?

Listen.

While they're brewing tea or boiling eggs – gather your clothes. Turn them inside out, slip them on. Slip out. Find the path.

Next time, don't accept that drink. You'll dance yourself to death.

4. Marthe-Siobhán Hecke

"Finding out true names has become tricky business in recent centuries as most people no longer know them, their inner magic forgotten. But the beautiful souls that transgress the boundaries of gender know their true names. So I make coffee for trans queens, non-binary royals, and feminine kings, and I take their names by trickery and I use them...benevolently of course..."

5. Sarah Fisser

There is light and grass and green. There
is song and dance and fire. There is fairy mist and food. A traveller enters
the clearing, struck by sound and light and smell. All is joy, all is
mystery,
all is laughter. Is all of this a dream?

6. Caroline White

a.

'Thank goodness they made it back,' said Penny, the group leader. 'I was about to call mountain rescue.'

Robin forced a smile. *How had they returned given his nonsensical directions?*

'And Enid found the way!' Penny laughed. 'Dotty Enid who can't even wear her anorak the right way round!'

b.

Grandmother had told her never to touch the harp but she plucked a string. The plaintive tone made her shiver, yet she ran her hand over the odd little faces carved in the wooden frame. She cried out, recoiling sharply. Blood glistened on her finger tips. The faces grinned.

7. Anonymous

I was so comfortable, not happy, sat in the moonlight listening to the waves, dissolving gently back into the water. But without thinking I called you by name and you came and now what? Wait for the dawn and the changing of the tides, but who will follow who?

8. Sarah McPherson

a.

We are not little men, impish revellers, dwarven hunters. We are the knot in the tree trunk, the crooked root bursting from the earthen bank. We are the rocky walls of a mountain path. In the air. In the glen. Up and down, up and down, we see you.

b.

I clutched at the berries on the branch, not caring how the thorns tore my fingers, crushed the fruit into a soft mess and pressed it to my mouth. Bitter. Sour. Tears streaked my face as I searched for that elusive sweetness, tasted once in a dream.

9. Bryan Brown

The shriek bolted us awake. Of course it couldn't be. The damn foxes, that's all. But always just at the edge, what if? She was gone. We knew she was. Months had turned to years. But there at the window, something darkly playful frolicks.

10. Debbie Freeman

In dark twilight spaces recessed between moon silvered leaves, hiding behind the unseen, they are waiting. Shadow or light? Insect or... other? Watching from leafy gaps. Do not move for if they see you, your curious soul may never find its way home.

11. Greta Colombani

"You've been changed", he says with fire on his mind, and I pray his words come true. People of moonlight revels and twisted games, will you come and spirit me away? Snatch away my soul with your fingers sharper than sorrow, for his mind is burning and won't burn alone.

12. Richard Grant

Norman practiced his mindfulness in the garden when the weather was fair but must have slipped up somehow for the mind-things got out. Most fluttered away harmlessly, but a few gathered in a rowan tree and an especially mean one shouted, "Dance!" And fuck all, he danced.

13. Catherine Spooner

(The Green Child is inspired by a medieval fairy encounter, 'The Green Children')

The Green Child

I come from the mid-place between light and dark. I lost my way and you found me here, in a strange land. The sun stings my eyes. Your skin is too pink. Your outlines shimmer. I want to touch you. If I touch you, can I return?

Gaslight Fairies

The stagehands try to look up your skirt when you're not looking. Saucy beggars, winking in the flies. They fix the limelight so the moon shines out of our behinds. Screw them, I say. They get a glimpse of our drawers. But only we girls get to fly.

Moth Wings

In the dark house, a flicker of a flame. The light leaves traces on the retina; I am not sure what I have seen. Is it a woman or is it a monster? Her hair falls down over her breasts. The flame singes her wings.

Paper Fairies

Into the tangle of briars I go. Wings flicker like paper, like a camera shutter. I open the door and step inside. I could sleep for a hundred years. Outside, the world moves in stop motion. When I wake up, everything will be different.

Godmother

I spent my days in dust and ashes. But then you came, asking only for a cup of water. You saw everything differently. There was magic in your eyes and fingers. With one touch, the world changed. Here I am, in a dress the colour of starlight.

14. Lucy McGranahan

They flood the nights with discordant song, howling hymns of forgotten gods. These heralds of nature, cunningly careful, beguilingly bitter. This eldritch lullaby will lure even the most frozen of hearts to their hallowed hearth whereupon their merriment will murder intruding men. Victims' voices cry as they are stolen forever.

15. Kimberly Bea

Better to be over the hill than under it:
But I grow pixy-led by my own mind—
A wizened imp; changeling in reverse
With no means to rest my head
And my gold turned to leaves and blown away.
When the elflord beckons, "Come away," I must say, "yes."

16. Amanda Potter

A rustling, chirruping sound. She pulled back the leaves. Gently. The nest was there. Standing on her tiptoes she looked inside. No blackbird. No chicks. Just broken eggs. And a tiny green figure. Red and yellow slime running down its face. It smiled. Pointy teeth. Then it jumped out.

17. Michaela Hausmann

At night she sometimes calls to me
and beckons me to have a taste
Of her intoxicating majesty
I answer her with breathless haste

Once my lips feel her first kiss
I'm lost in her sweet crimson deep
My dreams – a bow'r of bliss
In her red-robed arms of sleep.

18. Madelaine Sacco

We met under a full moon on a road that bit my feet. She wore a dress of spider-silk, her head bowed, eyes dark and deep. I called for help, fear following behind me on the street. I cried when I saw her beautiful grin full of sharp little teeth.

19. Steve Dempsey

The crowbar slides under the old tall stone, prising up the mossy rock. My breath a mist in the cold light of dawn. And lo, soft music from under the hill and lights and laughter, wings and chattering and eyes. They drag me in with claw and tooth.

20. Brittany Warman

When she came on stage, the room went silent. Her dark eyes, her long hair, it all seemed to blur, to shimmer and change even as she caught us in her dream. She whispered her song, something about death and the stars, but we were no longer truly listening.

21. Kate Harvey

“Too long have the Faefolk enslaved us, or slaughtered us for mere pleasure.” The Bat Queene looked at the gathering, of fur and feather and flesh. “We must peck at their eyes and tear at their wings.” Many eyes regarded her, fearful yet resolved. “We fly. To war.”

22. Anna Clifton

Darkness lay thick across the shore - heavy, like a velvet cloak, oppressive, smothering. The white horses hissed in voiceless protest, as if articulating thousands of bodiless fingernails, scrabbling, trying to find purchase in the fickle sand, before being dragged back into the fathomless deep.

On a lone promontory, she sits. She waits.

She is hungry.

23. *Ivan Phillips*

A bedroom's never quiet, not really. It's never really still or dark. Do you feel the fluttering in the air? There, again – yes? Something sits on your chest, a slight pressure that feels immense. There's an extra darkness over your eyes. A tickle at your lips. Don't be afraid.

24. *Kyria van Gasse*

"The fairy giggled, laying down the last yellowing leaf from the already withering tree. The blushing face of the newborn still visible underneath it.

'Those demanding humans,' she muttered. 'Never happy with what they get.'

She pulled out a glittering dagger, heaved her arms in the air and struck down."

25. *Nell Aubrey*

Blood looks black on roads, especially under headlamps, but it shines like silver under moonlight. As I lay there, on the freezing ground wreathed in wraiths of steam from the outpourings of blood, that horrific gory scene took on rather the picturesque and peculiar of the fairy tale.

26. *Daisy Butcher*

I have taken the geode we found in the stone circle to my tent. The others say it's just a lump of quartz. ... Once I applied heat it cracked open - jagged swirls of silvery purple and - I must be dreaming - I've hatched a fairy

27. *Rayna Rosanova*

The moon was shining bright behind the branches of the trees, catching at the air with their crooked fingers as if to snatch something. All of a sudden a dark cloud obscured the moon and tiny fluttering, flickering lights appeared amid the woody fingernails of the old oak. A brighter light descended from the cloud and the wood was ablaze with blinding light.

28. *Alex Carabine*

Faerie-stained, I corrupt what I touch with enchantment. My hands leave a trail of charms like the slime of a snail and, syncopated, I walk one beat before - behind - beyond. There's a hollow where my heart should be, filled with the shadows of leaves.

29. Skye McAlpine-Walker

Knee-deep in the fetid water, her hood fell forward and all was night. A true night, a night without the reprieve of her lantern-bright face, ancient, pock-pockmarked, but beautiful nonetheless to all who walk abroad or harvest the last of autumn's corn. There was only the shining of Their teeth.

30. Saba Razvi

Wishing Well

They say the fairy circle is the short way home. What they do not say: you are undone. Around you, mushrooms sprout with the silver of your wishing, wine on your tongue and willing what is leaving. Only your echo in the moonlight finds its way beyond stone.

31. Taylor Conti

Once, stained glass would have filled those gaps. Greens and reds that would have polluted the moonlight that now slipped through to pattern itself across the covered grass like oil across the surface of a puddle. The pale marks it now made instead, though troubled by the uneven earth, looked almost like black lace. The best kind of game is to try and step only in the light spots, as if the illuminated spaces were any safer than the nearby shadows. There were stories of who this structure now belonged to, or indeed who it had belonged to far before the church's construction or ruin. It was the fault of those stories, really, that anyone came seeking them. The warnings against it were the best kind of lure, anyone with sense would know that. Where was the excitement of staying in the light if there were not shadows nearby to highlight the difference? The rules of the game are this: Let slow steps create a playful false sense of security, of control, and wait patiently for the dark to move closer.

32. Ashleigh Sullivan

His jagged wings unfurled, iridescent in the moonlight. She had never seen someone, something so... The words escaped her. He was not of this world and the language she possessed could not incapsulate the wonder, the horror, her fear, her desire...

33. Lucy Henderson

They flood the night with discordant song, howling hymns of forgotten gods. They are the heralds of nature, cunning and careful, beguiling yet bitter. This eldritch lullaby will lure even the most frozen of hearts to their hearth whereupon they shall feast, 'till only silence remains.

34. Morgan Daimler

The glittering swirl resolved into dancers, eldritch and unearthly, gossamer clad. Their movements were like the wind, their feet barely touching the earth in the circle they danced in. She stepped forward, knowing it was her doom, but unable to resist that beautiful throng...

35. Holly/ Monty

One winter's evening after teatime, mummy and I muffled up and went to the ford near our house to see the full moon and stars that glisten in the night sky. The land was bathed in magical light. As we stood in the forest near the stream, a swirling ball of yellow light appeared, sucking the neighbouring objects into the abyss. A sound like crackling thunder filled the air, as a bright flash of electricity sped furiously from the sky towards us. The air felt heavy and we couldn't breathe. We soon stood by a river, or were we smaller by the stream? We must have been in the Otherworld. Luckily we knew not to eat any food, including those glamorous berries, and we eventually found a portal home. But It was 3am when we got back and there was no time to sleep. Then we realised...

...Time goes quickly in the Otherworld. Very quickly!

Monty age 9.

36. Monica Germana

Just below the water surface, their dark shadows dance around in a circle, speeding towards and retreating from a body dropped from above. Frenzy of excitement cloud the water with the rhythm of their dance until no more bubbles come out of the body.

