

The Fairy Reel

by Neil Gaiman

If I were young as once I was,
and dreams and death more distant then,
I wouldn't split my soul in two,
and keep half in the world of men,
So half of me would stay at home,
and strive for Faërie in vain,
While all the while my soul would stroll
up narrow path, down crooked lane,
And there would meet a fairy lass
and smile and bow with kisses three,
She'd pluck wild eagles from the air
and nail me to a lightning tree
And if my heart would run from her
or flee from her, be gone from her,
She'd wrap it in a nest of stars
and then she'd take it on with her
Until one day she'd tire of it,
all bored with it and done with it.
She'd leave it by a burning brook,
and off brown boys would run with it.
They'd take it and have fun with it
and stretch it long and cruel and thin,

They'd slice it into four and then
they'd string with it a violin.
And every day and every night
they'd play upon my heart a song
So plaintive and so wild and strange
that all who heard it danced along
And sang and whirled and sank and trod
and skipped and slipped and reeled and rolled
Until, with eyes as bright as coals,
they'd crumble into wheels of gold

But I am young no longer now,
for sixty years my heart's been gone
To play its dreadful music there,
beyond the valley of the sun.
I watch with envious eyes and mind,
the single-souled, who dare not feel
The wind that blows beyond the moon,
who do not hear the Fairy Reel.
If you don't hear the Fairy Reel,
they will not pause to steal your breath.
When I was young I was a fool.
So wrap me up in dreams and death.

The Day the Saucers Came by Neil Gaiman

That day, the saucers landed. Hundreds of them, golden,
Silent, coming down from the sky like great snowflakes,
And the people of Earth stood and
 stared as they descended,
Waiting, dry-mouthed, to find what waited inside for us
And none of us knowing if we would be here tomorrow
But you didn't notice it because

That day, the day the saucers came, by some coincidence,
Was the day that the graves gave up their dead
And the zombies pushed up through soft earth
or erupted, shambling and dull-eyed, unstoppable,
Came towards us, the living, and we screamed and ran,
But you did not notice this because

On the saucer day, which was the zombie day, it was
Ragnarok also, and the television screens showed us
A ship built of dead-men's nails, a serpent, a wolf,
All bigger than the mind could hold,
 and the cameraman could
Not get far enough away, and then the Gods came out
But you did not see them coming because

On the saucer-zombie-battling-gods
 day the floodgates broke
And each of us was engulfed by genies and sprites
Offering us wishes and wonders and eternities
And charm and cleverness and true
 brave hearts and pots of gold
While giants feefofummed across
 the land, and killer bees,
But you had no idea of any of this because

That day, the saucer day the zombie day
The Ragnarok and fairies day, the
 day the great winds came
And snows, and the cities turned to crystal, the day
All plants died, plastics dissolved, the day the
Computers turned, the screens telling
 us we would obey, the day
Angels, drunk and muddled, stumbled from the bars,

And all the bells of London were sounded, the day
Animals spoke to us in Assyrian, the Yeti day,
The fluttering capes and arrival of
the Time Machine day,
You didn't notice any of this because
you were sitting in your room, not doing anything
not ever reading, not really, just
looking at your telephone,
wondering if I was going to call.