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Fairy Tale

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Fairy Tale

Everyone knows
who the witch is.

We've seen her
dropping her kids off at daycare.

She's the anesthesiologist
who hires a British au pair.

She's the teacher
who gave you a D.

She's the woman
who isn't smiling.

A lovely young thing
into cigarettes and barbiturates
failed at suburban housewifery.
Her children ran off
with their grandmother.
Her husband swam in his own pool of gin.
Their cottage creaked open
like a Cape Cod beach shack.
It moaned, "Love me, love me,"
on summer mornings.
In the winter, it stayed in a trance.

The witch is mad.
 She's fruit-loops.
 She's ding-dong nuts.
 Besides, she's not the brightest bulb
 in our poetic chandelier.
 She can't remember anything.
 She's been alone too long
 in her red nightie.

In the old days,
 she bedded the milkman,
 the mailman, the guy from UPS.
 Witches drive men crazy.
 Then witches drive men crazy.
 "Love me, love me,"
 on summer mornings.
 In the winter, a trance.
 She's grown lonely as a flasher,
 as a sheep rancher,
 as an underpaid parlor maid.
 She has been dreaming
 of the flashy disappearances
 of sister-witches,
 how they clawed their way
 to that moon.
 She types out her own death warrant:

A boy and a girl,
brother and sister,
two pumpkin seeds,
jog into the forest
with seven finger-puppets,
a bottle of their father's homebrew,
and a number of questions.
Little Ingrid and Petrovich
punch each other's stomachs
with the puppets sewn
by their put-upon stepmother.
They throw their golden bottle
through the witch's window
though no glass shatters.
There is no glass.
The damn bottle lands in her lap.
Petrovich pokes his head in.
Mr. Inquisitor.

The witch is lean
as an ex-model,
her smoky growl theatrical.
She takes him into her starving arms
and calls him Little Richard,
sweet gherkin,
my final folly.
She diddles his pizzle
and asks him to rock away

on top of her,
a boat lost at sea.
He does what he's told.
He's a good boy.
He plants his seed.
Yet her uterus is blessed with emptiness.
There's no way around this.
She's in her forties.
She writes fourteen poems for him
when he leaves her
to sleep off the beer buzz.

The witch tongues another Valium,
ocean eyes on the moon.
"I'm a circus freak," she says.
"God's little Jesus."
"Love me, love me,"
Ingrid pipes up,
taking her turn.
"Love me, love me,"
the witch moans into her cold soup.
Ingrid nestles into her neck
until the witch cuddles the girl,
feeling the matching fingertips,
mother-of-pearl rosary,
and ruby nipples,
then finds the peach-divide
of her daughter's body,

and eats the child out
of the woman,
her rival,
her devotee,
her replacement.

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