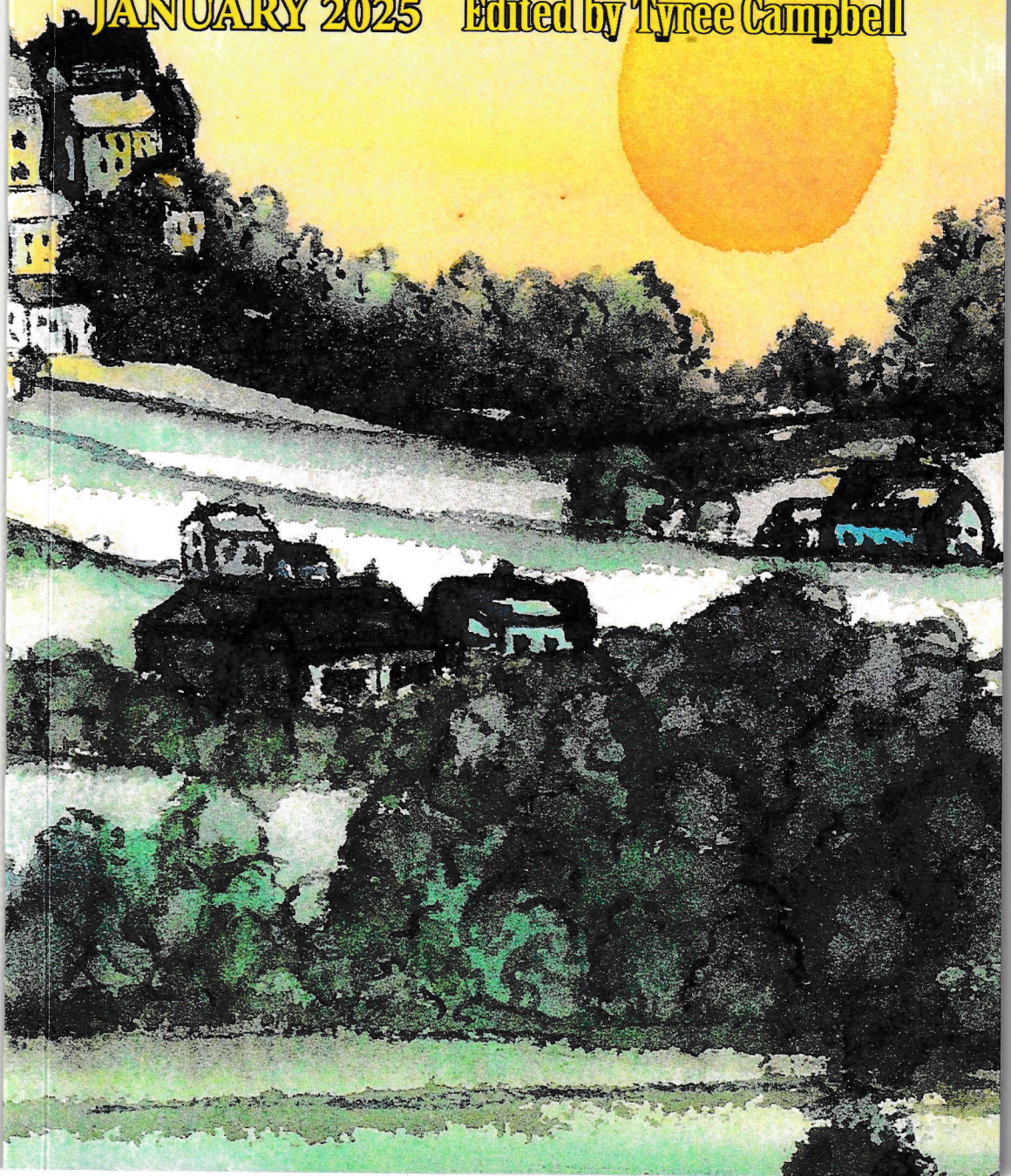


SHELTER OF DAYLIGHT

JANUARY 2025

Edited by Tyree Campbell



Shelter of Daylight

January 2025

Short Stories

- 6 The Wolf Who Cried by Maureen Bowden
- 20 The Ugly Fairy by Matias Travieso-Diaz
- 29 Rover by Gustavo Bondoni
- 40 Shoebox by Sandra Siegienski
- 63 On Holy Ground by Mitchell D. Kowitz

Flash Fiction

- 59 The Caged Bird and the Fairy by Matias Travieso-Diaz

Poetry

- 26 Eadon by Lee Clark Zumpe
- 27 let there be worlds aplenty by Lee Clark Zumpe
- 58 trailblazers and visionaries by Lee Clark Zumpe

The Ugly Fairy

Matias Travieso-Diaz

*Someday you will be old enough
to start reading fairy tales again.*

C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Florandel became convinced she was the ugliest fairy in the world. This was perhaps an unusual concern, for fairies are hazy, shapeless clouds of diffuse matter with just a small, better-defined nucleus where their essence resides. They lack any color and resemble pulsating, featureless bursts of gas. Yet, once Earth became ruled by humans, fairies found the need to interact with the smart apes and began to assume more distinct shapes that would be pleasing to the men and women with whom they dealt.

Her doubts about her appearance arose one spring morning when, as the mists dissipated, Florandel was hovering over a field of just opened roses and admiring their delicate shapes and aromas when a human girl, barely five or six years old, came out of her dwelling holding a watering can and stationed herself in front of the flower patch. She was beginning to sprinkle water on the roses when she noticed Florandel, shrieked, and ran back home.

Florandel became upset at the incident. Traditionally, in areas populated by humans, a fairy would make itself appear small and not intimidating; it would mask its shimmering nature by adopting a delicate form along the lines of that of a human female clad in transparent, flowing robes, and appeared endowed with large, colorful wings that made the fairy more pleasing to the human eye.

What went wrong? worried Florandel. *Is there something about me that draws humans away?* She floated over to the stream that ran by the woods, gazed at her "human" image in the clear waters, and compared it to the looks of other fairies. After long consideration, the fairy

enough
again.
wardrobe

ugliest
concern,
er with
essence
sating,
tled by
e smart
es that
m they

spring
del was
miring
an girl,
dwelling
t of the
on the
an back

cident.
y would
would
e form
ciad in
ed with
sing to

s there
floated
at her
t to the
e fairy

concluded that her looks were deficient. Her ears seemed unusually large, her nose a bit crooked, her skin somewhat bluish instead of the pearly white displayed by other fairies. Since she looked different than the other fairies and they were accepted by the humans she, Florandel, must be ugly.

Florandel and a group of other fairies dwelt in a vast forest, having only limited contact with each other and with the human population. The fairies, however, gathered occasionally to consult about matters felt to be significant. In those encounters, they often took counsel from one fairy, wiser perhaps than the rest, Gloriana, whose advice was almost invariably followed.

It was to Gloriana that Florandel carried the misgivings about her appearance. As they met in Gloriana's underground dwelling, the sage listened attentively to Florandel's tiny energy discharges that serve for words among the fairy folk. Gloriana was bemused: "Your concerns are unfounded. You can assume any appearance you choose, and can be as fair as you desire, and as beautiful - however you measure it - as any of your sisters."

"Not so, Mother," replied Florandel, utilizing the form of address that the fairies in this community chose when "speaking" to Gloriana. "As you know, we fairies must adopt a certain appearance when making ourselves visible to humans. This appearance may vary depending on the skills and physical characteristics of each one of us. Thus, we all appear to a human as if we have a face with eyes and a nose and a mouth, and limbs and a body, but what they see when they look at us may be different for each fairy. I just experienced that, when a human of tender years looked at me, her face became distorted in disgust or fear, and she ran away. However, I have observed how, when they see Oriande or Luminaria, young humans smile and their eyes widen with excitement."

"So, you are judging your beauty by the reaction of humans when they meet you?"

"We have no other standard by which to judge. Appearing before a horse or a rabbit yields no results."

"My daughter, there are two flaws in your self-evaluation. First, we cannot read the minds and feelings of humans, and therefore cannot use their facial expressions, or even their words or actions, as measures of the opinions they form of us. Second, and more important, you are letting the judgment of inferior beings be used to assess your worth. If you are really concerned about what you call your beauty, you need to measure it yourself."

"But how can I do that?"

"It so happens that the issue has come up before, in another situation. Let me show you something." Gloriana glided to a dark corner of the cave and returned holding a thin gold necklace from which hung twenty-eight bezel-set colorless gemstones. "Put this around what, in your human form, would be your neck, and wear it continuously through one complete cycle of the moon."

"What does it do?"

"Each morning, as the moon sets, one of the gemstones in this necklace may become shiny like a diamond or turn dark red like a ruby, or maybe none will change. At the end of the twenty-eighth day, look at your reflection on the stream that runs past the waterfall east of here. The image that you see will be your true self, and you will be able to determine whether you are indeed beautiful or ugly."

"What does the coloring of the gemstones mean?"

"A gemstone turning bright like a diamond means that you have become more beautiful than the previous day. One gemstone turning dark red warns that your beauty has decreased. A day in which no gemstone changes color your beauty has remained the same."

"Do I have to wait a full lunar month before I can learn the results?"

"You can gaze at your image on the stream as often as you wish, but the true result, containing the necklace's final judgment on your beauty, will only be reached on the final day."

"Seems like a cumbersome way of finding out what a mere glance should reveal."

"You would depend on things that are not yours. It depends on things that happen to any event, this is not a fair way of discovering a fair judgment of humans."

That afternoon, after several more rounds of the board game, the human settlement, arising from a hole in the ground, noticed that a fairy was wailing in pain. The snare was open and the fairy was bleating to evince its need for a fairy for its rescue.

Nothing else happened, but the following day, the waters of the stream, which heretofore had appeared to have no gemstones hanging from them, shined brightly.

The second day, there were no changes in the necklace's condition. The children ran into a gaggle of birds near one of their play trees. A fairy, which suddenly appeared, Florandel turned and caught the bird, catching metallic in its throat, and began to dance above the heads of the children.

Several of the children saw the bird, who was flying away just enough to escape it. The chase was over, luring the kids far from the stream. While the chaser

our self-
feelings of
facial
measures
and more
beings
concerned
measure it

g before,
nothing.”
returned
twenty-
around
and wear
moon.”

e of the
y like a
none will
at your
fall east
self, and
e indeed

mean?”
and means
previous
that your
gemstone
e.”

ore I can

as often
necklace’s
ed on the

out what

“You would be surprised how much true beauty depends on things that can change in very short order. In any event, this method is a far more accurate way of discovering a fairy’s beauty than relying on the reactions of humans.”

That afternoon, as Florandel was making her rounds of the border between the forest and the adjoining human settlements, her attention was caught by cries arising from a hollow in the terrain. Approaching, the fairy noticed that a fawn had been caught in a snare and was wailing in pain. Florandel moved swiftly to force the snare open and rescue the animal, which limped away, bleating to evince relief, or perhaps to give thanks to the fairy for its rescue.

Nothing else of any significance happened that day, but the following morning as she bent over the clear waters of the stream, Florandel noticed that her ears, which heretofore had been – in her estimation – too large, appeared to have shrunk slightly. Also, one of the gemstones hanging from the necklace was shining brightly.

The second day went by without incident, and there were no changes in the fairy’s reflected appearance or the necklace’s condition. On the third day, however, Florandel ran into a gaggle of boys who were playing wheelbarrow races near one of the farms. The children were so intent in their play that they did not notice the presence of the fairy, which suddenly felt a bit upset at being ignored. Florandel turned herself into a hummingbird, an eye-catching metallic green speck of feathers with a bright red throat, and began whirring its wings rapidly as it flew above the heads of the children.

Several of the children were drawn to give chase to the bird, who would fly tantalizingly close and then move away just enough to let them come near and almost touch it. The chase went on for quite a while, with Florandel luring the kids farther and farther into the forest. After a while, the chasers got tired and began dropping out of the

pursuit, but one towheaded, freckled faced seven-year-old persisted and went on and on, chasing the elusive bird, until they reached a remote corner of the woods. There, the hummingbird hung high in the air, forcing the boy to stop. He then realized, for the first time, he was in totally unfamiliar surroundings and had become lost.

Florandel's initial impulse was to guide the boy back to safety, but then the fairy reflected: "Boys should learn not to chase after little creatures and possibly harm them." She flew away, leaving the boy alone. He became increasingly afraid as the afternoon wore on and night approached.

The fairy came back hours later and, after some searching, found the boy sitting on a fallen log, whimpering disconsolately. She realized the prank had gone a bit too far and, changing back into a human-like appearance, approached the terrified child and greeted him: "What are you doing, young man, sitting by yourself in the dark?"

The boy was too scared to answer, and Florandel asked again: "Would you like to go home?" This time, the boy managed to reply haltingly: "Yee... ah, ye...aah, pleeease!!"

Florandel led the boy back to the meadow where they had first met. It was later discovered that he had developed a permanent stutter.

Florandel also learned, the morning after this encounter, that one of the necklace's gems had turned dark red, her ears had gone back to appearing unusually large, and her nose was more crooked.

The days advanced in quick succession, sometimes holding new adventures, others passing uneventfully. Florandel had several opportunities to be helpful to humans and beasts, extricating a cart stranded in the mud, shining a guiding light that allowed a traveler to find his way out of the forest, leaving a pot of fresh milk at the door of an elderly couple, guarding a sparrow's nest against a marauding murder of crows. The fairy was also mischievous from time to time, pinching cows to set a

stampede that interrupted into an elaborate maze imitating the growls of away, stealing eggs from window to cool.

At the end of the enchanted necklace diamonds, seven dark gems. As for the fair aspects of her looks bright green, the curly the hair shone like gold now longer, the nose acquired more of the hue Florandel favored, alter the overall balance which seemed to be so

Bitterly disappointed Gloriana's cave. "Look necklace is worthless! the same that humans

Gloriana smiled not that different from when they look at you not meant to improve true self. The colors reflect your character compassionate, but performing pranks to all creatures, a mixture thankful that the good you make a positive co

"But..."

"No more buts. your true beauty will

"I don't want to

"Sorry about the Now be gone!"

ten-year-old
sive bird,
ods. There,
the boy to
s in totally

le the boy
ys should
sibly harm
He became
and night

after some
fallen log,
prank had
human-like
and greeted
by yourself

Florandel
time, the
ye...aah,

ow where
at he had

after this
ad turned
unusually

sometimes
eventfully.
helpful to
ed in the
ier to find
ilk at the
ow's nest
was also
to set a

stampede that interrupted their grazing, luring a passerby into an elaborate maze where he would linger for hours, imitating the growls of ferocious animals to scare hunters away, stealing eggs from a chicken coop and pies left on a window to cool.

At the end of the lunar month, Florandel's enchanted necklace sported over a dozen sparkling diamonds, seven dark stones, and some dull, colorless gems. As for the fairy's reflection on the stream, some aspects of her looks had improved: the eyes now shone bright green, the curvature of the lips was more perfect, the hair shone like gold. On the other hand, the ears were now longer, the nose more aquiline, and the skin had acquired more of a bluish tinge than the hue Florandel favored. Overall, the changes did little to alter the overall balance of the fairy's human appearance, which seemed to be sort of pretty, but not outstanding.

Bitterly disappointed, the fairy paid another visit to Gloriana's cave. "Look at me!" Florandel complained. "This necklace is worthless! The image of me it shows is almost the same that humans see! Am I that ugly?"

Gloriana smiled. "Perhaps your true inner being is not that different from the outer image humans perceive when they look at you. Do not blame the necklace, for it is not meant to improve your appearance but reflect your true self. The colors of the gemstones in the necklace reflect your character. You tend to be helpful and compassionate, but at the same time cannot resist performing pranks that are hurtful to others. You are like all creatures, a mixture of good, bad, and indifferent. Be thankful that the good predominates, and that on balance you make a positive contribution to the order of things."

"But..."

"No more buts. Lead your life the best you can, and your true beauty will shine through."

"I don't want to be better, just more beautiful."

"Sorry about that. You are beautiful enough as it is. Now be gone!"

And Florandel realized it was time to accept her looks, such as they were, and disappeared in a cloud of mist to float around the forest.

Eadon

Lee Clark Zumpe

It's said Echu Tirmcharna, king of Connacht,
and great-great grandson of Dauí Tenga Uma,
encountered you on Brí Léith,
just this side of the Otherworld,
dutifully washing from a silver vessel
alongside the edge of a well.
In retrospect, his enthusiasm seems suspect.

When Midir of the Tuatha Dé Danann
took you as his wife, jealous Fúamnach
orchestrated a sorcerous response,
transforming you into a scarlet fly;
rebirth did not improve your fortune –
Midir reclaimed you in a game of chance,
as if your affection was a reasonable payout.

I wonder if I might find you there,
celebrating Lughnasa at the base of Brí Léith,
or wandering the streets of nearby Ardagh
carrying a bucket of bilberries;
I wonder if you still visit the Otherworld,
call on the Tuatha Dé Danann,
and inspire dreaming poets.

let there be
Lee Clark Zumpe

let there be worlds aple
full of vistas undreamt
shorelines uncharted,
landscapes untamed,
and fantastical cities u
all yearning for discove
beyond the wall of slee
amidst the invented pr
scattered across our in

let there be worlds aple
full of sites so extraord
spectacles so unfamilia
topography so strange,
and civilizations so alie
all yearning for discove
across the Milky Way,
and amidst countless g
scattered across the co