

Here are some of the submissions from our sixteenth Invite to Write
inspired by the following dragon image:



*St. George piercing eye of dragon held on leash by princess.
By Paolo Uccello, ca. 1465 CE.*

Winged Things

You never cease to amaze me
How you give me just what I need
We are all on the same page
We all bleed

I've been battling with my dragon
And cuddling it close at night
He gave me wings
And also keeps me dead inside

Like an old T.V. clicking
Instantly off
My energy fades
When he is aloft

Who is he protecting
I have no hair to climb
I don't live in a tower
But he makes sure I am high

High enough outside myself
That others can't get in
It's not really him
It's me

I protect them
From what he has to say
Because I know it's not OK

The only knight that's gonna'
Stab him in the eye
And blind his false beliefs
Is the one that's driven
By the way the stardust speaks

I've been waiting in this cave
For more than weeks

Notice how the horse rears up
But I remain close
I'm not afraid of what
I know most
I've been his lifelong host

This dragon was a pillow
To cushion my head
In the cool damp cavern of night

The true light is revealed
When I recognize
He deserves to elicit a fright

-Beth F

“Here be dragons”: On Paolo Uccello's *St George and the Dragon*

for Gisela, my ideal reader

~

About suffering, they were never wrong, / The Old Masters

- *W H Auden*

1

An early dew-strewn amble through the woods,
my young mistress holding me softly on a leash.
A brash young man, armour-plated, mounted
on a white stallion he can scarcely control
prances from the shadow of towering trees.

I cower subserviently at the chivalric lance's steel
but he persists in plunging it deep into my mouth
triumphant at the sudden spilling of my blood.
He claims he is here to defend her, eager to dispatch
the wicked beast. He is captivated by delusions
of misguided heroism. Still bleeding amply, I rear up
more from pain than temerity. Incarcerated in his full
metal regalia, he cannot evade my breath's heat. He
retreats to earn a dismissive wave from my mistress,
who takes me home to heal.

2

Mythologists have never understood dragons: we
are too grotesque to be evil. Wickedness must be
gorgeous, seductive, irresistible or it would be ignored.
Our size might make us seem "powerful, chthonic
and regressive" but we are feeble compared to those
vicious fantasies championed by disciples of folly:
power, wealth, material possessions at last possessing
their possessors. Adrenalin-driven heroes are the epitome
of evil, enraptured by the age-old fallacy that heroism
demands violence and the killing of innocents. The Old
Masters commemorated suffering with their grotesqueries
of agony, brutality, and dying. They were evil's apostles
and its celebrants too. Little wonder they were never wrong.

Tony Ullyatt

The quotation in lines 19-20 come from James Hollis's book, *Tracking the Gods: The Place of Myth in Modern Life*.

Delusion Of One In A Lunar New Year

Born: Year of the Dragon.

Horoscope: Today's the lucky day.

Luck, you say? OK. Once.

In a small town on a snowy road,
the scenery spinning round. When
it stopped you were pointing toward
a good place - Home. The message:

Go back.

You can decide again to
begin again or stay warm there:

Wombtown. Population: 1.

No Lions Club or local Jaycees.
No chocolate bars and brooms
for the blind. Free room and board.
It's kick and dream, kick and dream
and cleanliness more efficient than
a space suit. Talk about luck?

You're here aren't you?

Don't say good or bad.

It's no accident the year's the Dragon's.
Chinese or no, the year has a tail long
as a river. Peel the scales behind the
ears, you'll still roar for pain o roaring
boy spinning in the world, the recurring
dream of vortices whirling pink and
red, a large mouth with teeth spitting

you into an even muddier river.

You'd fish it if you could. More likely
you'd dam it at the source. The occasional
catch is more likely snag in undertow.

It's undertow that matters.
The real power's there.
Ask the undertow, you'll get answers.

Don't say need. The bottom's filled
with old cars, tin cans, bad seed.
All you'll ever want. Get lucky.

This is the day. The glass on the window's
steamed. Outside's a blur. What's that gone by
spinning with rustling wings, roaring like wind,
glint of mirrors hurling down?

You'd swear there was a splash.
Something's pointing,

Go back.

-Warren Falcon

Dream Of An Old Married Woman

I stand in open fields.
In dreams of a fairytale world.
The sky's blue with swirling energies.
The princess within comes forth
dancing, prancing, ready for romancing.

Clothed in long gown, I smile warmly,
meant to encourage a young knight,
destined to win my heart.

The stage is set for bravery to explode.
For blue knight to take center stage.
and dragon to be lured from cave
to meet his doom.

Arrows fly, moments unfold,
to bear witness with applause.
For princess to release heart,
and fill seat on white steed.

Across open fields of light, we travel.
with my prince from Sutton Place.

A prince, who lays sleeping in our bed,
as day break comes
and love is whispered.

-Star Blossom

Things We Don't Tell Our Children

I am folding piles of warm clothes
from the dryer. My son sits cross-legged
on the floor, fingering the braided rug.
He has been quiet a long time. And now
he tells me how sunlight was streaming
through his bedroom window, when
suddenly—
a low-crawling cloud, black with fear,
entered his room without warning.

He wants to know: *Am I crazy?*
I want to say, we are all of us mad.
He said it felt like evil. I say:
where there is light, there is shadow.
So it's not me? he asks.
No, I say, not you, but a force that lives—
in each of us the same. It lies in wait
for a tiny crack in the fragile egg.

He says he is afraid. I say, that's good.
Respect its power, its animal energy.
But put down your sword; you cannot kill it.

Shine a light on it, it wants to be seen.
And then—and never forget this part—
give thanks for the center that holds.
He complains I have not made him feel better.
I say, I know.

—Diane Croft

In the Curve of the Serpent

Last night
I curled against a serpent
We folded, coiled ourselves
entwined ourselves
around each other
through the hours that it takes to fall:
 from this world into that
 from promise into truth.

-Alexandra Fidyk