

# The Fairy Reel

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 Fäerie 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.

Neil Gaiman

*I've always loved Neil Gaiman's stories and poems, they've influenced many a song before. This is the first time I've used one of his compositions unchanged; the guitar came first and the vocal melody demanded this poem!*