Otherworld

Anthony Etherum
I.
Fairytales
QUARANTINE (Sonnet)

Her eyes were red.
Her flesh and hair were thin. The air was thick with dread.
No hero led by love was there to scale that bare and fragile thread.
For better truths, our stories lied:
a broken flower,
the sickly youth Rapunzel died inside that tower.

RAPUNZEL (Beau Présent)

A purer, upper pearl;
a paler, lunar azure—
    reappear,
a puzzle:
lure an unreal leap.
    Pull up an earl,
    per a rarer reel.
BEGIN BELONGING (Tautogram in Be)

Bestowing beautiful belongings—
bedclothes, begonias, beads, bejewelled bear skins—
Belle's beastly benefactor behaves benevolently,
before begging betroth ment.
   Belle begins besieged, becomes becalmed.
      Beauty betrays beast,
          before, bereaved, becoming besotted:
   Beneath beaten belvederes,
becursed beastliness beholds Belle,
belatedly beloved.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (Palindrome-by-Pairs)

Remove lore.
Your sped, blue, clear beauty,
one fire to me,
instead be a drug.
(This thug, dread beast in me!)
   To refine you,
      tear,
         be a clue bled.
             Spur yore.
                Love more.
SPELL SLEEP (Five-Letter Words)

Young Briar Rose’s wheel spins sleep, there, under rage’s faery curse….
   Until, years later, noble birth
   seeks Briar Rose’s cheek,
   she’ll dream among bleak death,
   where omens creep.
   She’ll enter lands
   where ruins speak….

BRIAR ROSE (Palindrome-by-Letter)

A repose taut never,
a fallen kiss ended
a jar of sun or air.
   Bet a freer fate, Briar, on us—
   for a jadedness
   I knell afar
   eventuates opera….
EVER AFTER (Ottava Rima)

One sister cut off all her toes,
the other split her heel, to fit
the slipper, so the story goes.
A flock of doves would blind them. It
would find them lost, among the rows
and cobblestones, their failure writ
upon the cracked and crooked street
by searching hands and butchered feet.

CINDERELLA (Palindrome-by-Letter)

Won, kill a hymn in me—
Loss.
A will.
A ball.
It tore boot, too.... Flee!
Hot, stuck, sat one cinder’s burn.
   Ella frets, is a fire he’s in.
   Go, certify, so care; play:
   O, royal, per a cosy fit, recognise her.
If a sister, fallen, rubs red, nice not,
ask cuts to heel, foot too—be rot.
   Till a ball,
   I was solemn in my hall,
   I know.
SPINNING GOLD
(Aeindrome, palindromic in the Decimal Expansion of the Golden Ratio: 16180339887498948482)

So dreamt,    
spin—     
gold carats made….

A thread, then, is me—  
thus, reason  
enabled  
the imp Rumpelstiltskin.

Wed is misery!

She prods,    
awakes a war;    
stakes awards.    
Awry,    
she promises kin….

We dispel,    
    stilt,    
the imp rumbled,    
as one name,    
thus read,    
then,    
is made a threat.

Scars pin gold to dreams.
RUMPELSTILTSKIN
(Anagrammed Lines)

Purest skill, mint
sun. Kept mill, stir
smitten silk, purl
lit-up links.... Terms
turn, kill imps. Set
links, lips mutter
(slim kin splutter):
‘Rumpelstiltskin.’
Interlude

OTHERWORLD (Triolet)

I have not left, nor have I stayed.
The Otherworld has taken me.
I've slipped between the cracks we made;
I have not left, nor have I stayed.
Someday, you'll find me in the glade—
we'll meet beneath the knotted tree.
I have not left, nor have I stayed;
the Otherworld has taken me.
II.
Folklore
THE BANSHEE’S SCREAM

I. (Sonnet)

This banshee seems
to know your home:
a duller chrome,
she crawls the beams.
A paler cream,
she drags her comb
across the dome
and through your dreams.
She glides to you.
Her claws are black
and stroke your cheek.
Her lips are blue,
but sharply crack—
to wail and shriek.

II. (Palindrome-by-Letter)

Suss, or call, a fine model:
I awe bogeymen.
I pillar, evoke, emote…
I reel.

I give, now, one vigil:
Eerie to meek, over all, I pine.
    My ego bewailed omen,
I fall across us....
THE GREEN CHILDREN OF WOOLPIT

I. (Anagrammed Lines)

The Green Children of Woolpit
glow here, in the top cornfield,
fleeing their own, old crop: The
long, fine, epic Otherworld: The
dwelling, orphic to free, on the
lone perch of Eden or twilight....

II. (Homovocalic Lines)

The Green Children of Woolpit:
Here, their flesh grows too sick.
Here, the skies glow too bright.
See the fields bloom to spring!
Here, the innermost world joins
the sphere in the cosmos of light.
KELPIES

I. (Beau Présent)

Sleek isles….
Kelpies kill, like spies.
   Sleepless skies
       spill lipless kisses—
       lilies slip,
       else peel like silk.

II. (Palindrome-by-Pairs)

So alone,
  madly,
lies a kelpie:
   Lakes’ lily—
      a demon also.
GODIVA

I. (Palindrome-by-Letter)

Avid ogles made no garb….
I met sadness, elated a rapid idyll.
A colt—eyed, untied—ordered no wit.
I wondered, rode it nude,
yet locally did I parade….
   …Tales send a stem, I brag—
   One damsel: Godiva.

II. (Anagram of Palindrome-by-Letter)

A dare adds revolution….
   Immodest or lowly,
I am legally loosed, in protestation.
   I ride a city,
undressed on a steed—gadded, geed….
   I discredit a levy,
   demanding a law and a debt be repealed.
AVALON (Anagrammed Palindromes)

I. (Palindrome-by-Pairs)

As a Lancelot, a vine hot,
Oberon’s lie, removed, thus repays.
    Pains—
    King Arthur’s cure recurs….
    Hurt, gain skin.
    Pay:
    Spare us the dove,
    Merlin’s robe,
    to hone vital ocean, alas.

II. (Palindrome-by-Letter)

No lava rose, birth supine.
Vary, eke no grail.
Meet so.
    Ah, Celt: Sacred art.
    Punish onus, sun.
    Oh, sin up, trader!
    Castle….
    Chaos, teem, liar gone….
    Key raven,
    I push tribes—or Avalon.
Five of poems in this chapbook are palindromes by letter, while three are palindromes by pairs of letters. In the case of “Avalon”, a palindrome-by-letter and a palindrome-by-pairs are perfect anagrams of each other.

The poem “Spinning Gold” is an aelindrome—a palindrome whose unit of palindromism varies according to a premeditated sequence (e.g. the phrase “Melody, a bloody elm”, is aelindromic according to the sequence 1-2-3-4: [M]₁[el]₂[ody]₃[ablo-]₄[ody]₃[el]₂[m]₁). “Spinning Gold” is aelindromic in the decimal expansion of the golden ratio.

“Otherworld” is a triolet in iambic tetrameter.

Two of the poems in this collection are beaux présents: lipograms that use only the letters present in their titles—in this case, “Rapunzel” and “Kelpies”.

“Begin Belonging” is a tautogram, tautogrammatic in the letter pair “be”, and thus featuring only words that begin with those letters.

“The Green Children of Woolpit” features both a poem whose lines are perfect anagrams of each other and a poem of “homovocalic lines”—that is, lines that use the same vowels, in the same order, while varying consonants.

Also included are two dimeter Petrarchan sonnets, a tetrameter ottava rima, and a poem consisting solely of five-letter words.
Anthony Etherin is an experimental formalist poet. He founded Penteract Press (www.penteractpress.com) and he invented the aelindrome. For more of his poetry, find him on Twitter, @Anthony_Etherin, and via his website: anthonyetherin.wordpress.com

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