

In Sleep's Cape

Some nights she's a woman  
in a house made of logs wedged with mud  
seated fireside, piecing a dress  
of quail wings and air  
tender leaves and milkteeth  
needle piercing in, out  
catches, scatters light

Sometimes she becomes a butterfly  
folds herself, settles on a branch in warm sun  
or she scissors the air open, closed  
at night clings to a cave shared with a bear  
her feet perceive root, stream, berry  
in his musty fur

Next she's a man  
diving into a body of water  
the cold, a blade, seizes  
turns him into a bearded angelfish  
red with black-ribboned fins  
he hovers for prey

By a kitchen window, a widow  
muddles moss, ashes, wizened grasshoppers  
mutters words pearled with hurt  
spinning a wand she lands, binds a wish  
entangles a hazel-eyed, shuttered lover

Some nights, she wakens buttered with wonder  
Others, the precipice calls her name  
voice laced with longing



## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“In Sleep’s Cape” is crafted from “Snow-White and Rose-Red” in *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889) by Andrew Lang. About her process of composition Karen says:

I browse the source documents and select words I enjoy the sounds of, or those that suggest intriguing ideas and/or images, writing those words on a lined 8 x 10 tablet in columns according to parts of speech. I then pair a word in one column with a word in another column, for example, a noun with a verb, until images surface and begin to connect to other images, until a narrative forms. It’s an intriguing, magical process for me.

Karen L. George is the author of *Swim Your Way Back* (Dos Madres Press 2014) and *The Fire Circle* (Blue Lyra Press 2016); she is also one of the co-authors (with Donelle Dreese, Nancy Jentsch, and Taunja Thomson) of *Frame and Mount the Sky* (Finishing Line Press 2017). Her work has appeared in *The Adirondack Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *The Louisville Review*, and *3Elements Review*. A retired computer programmer, she is the fiction editor for *Waypoints*, and she reviews poetry and interviews poets at *Poetry Matters*. She lives in Florence, Kentucky. Online at [karenlgeorge.snack.ws](http://karenlgeorge.snack.ws).

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