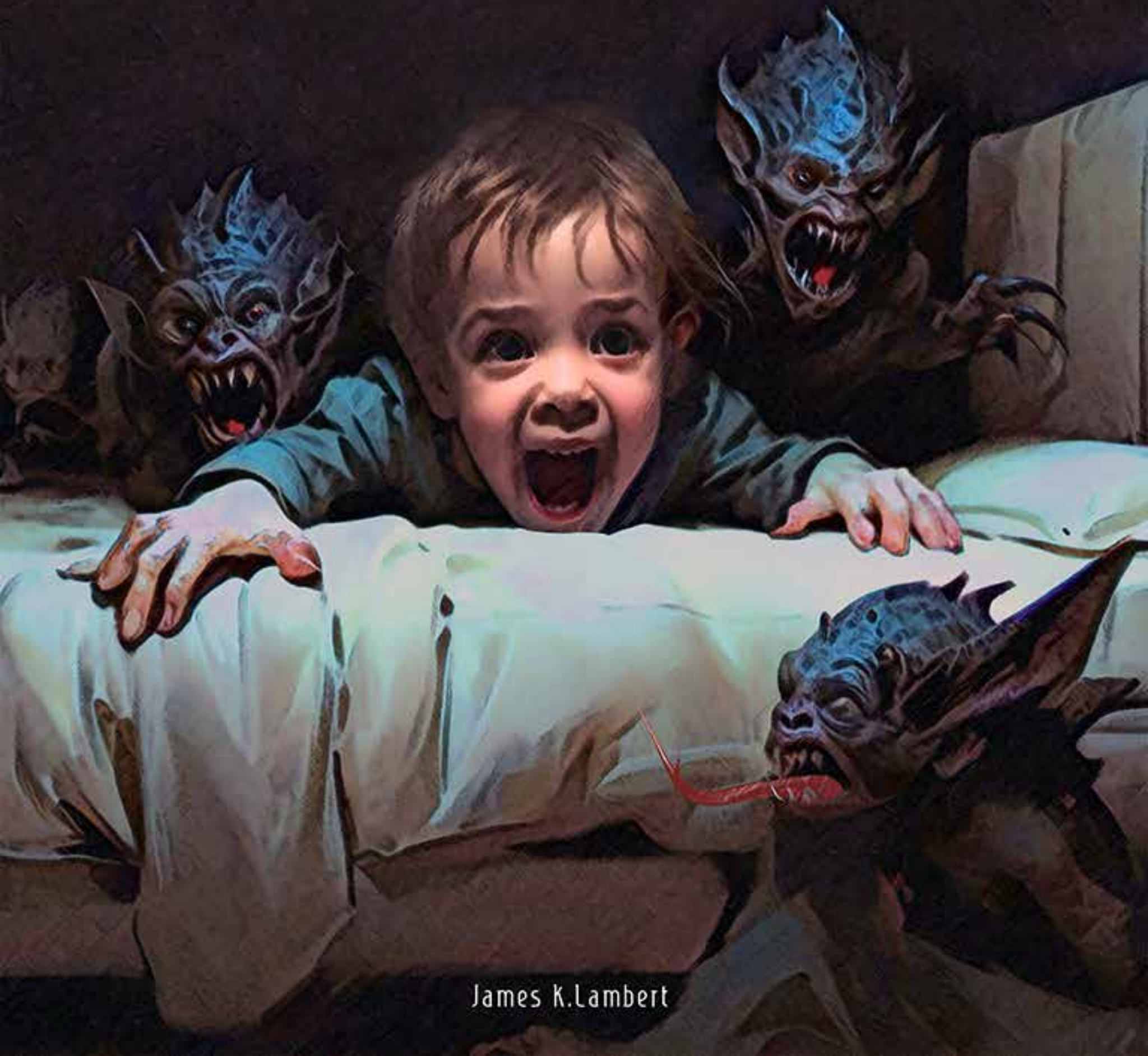


Things that go BUMP in the night

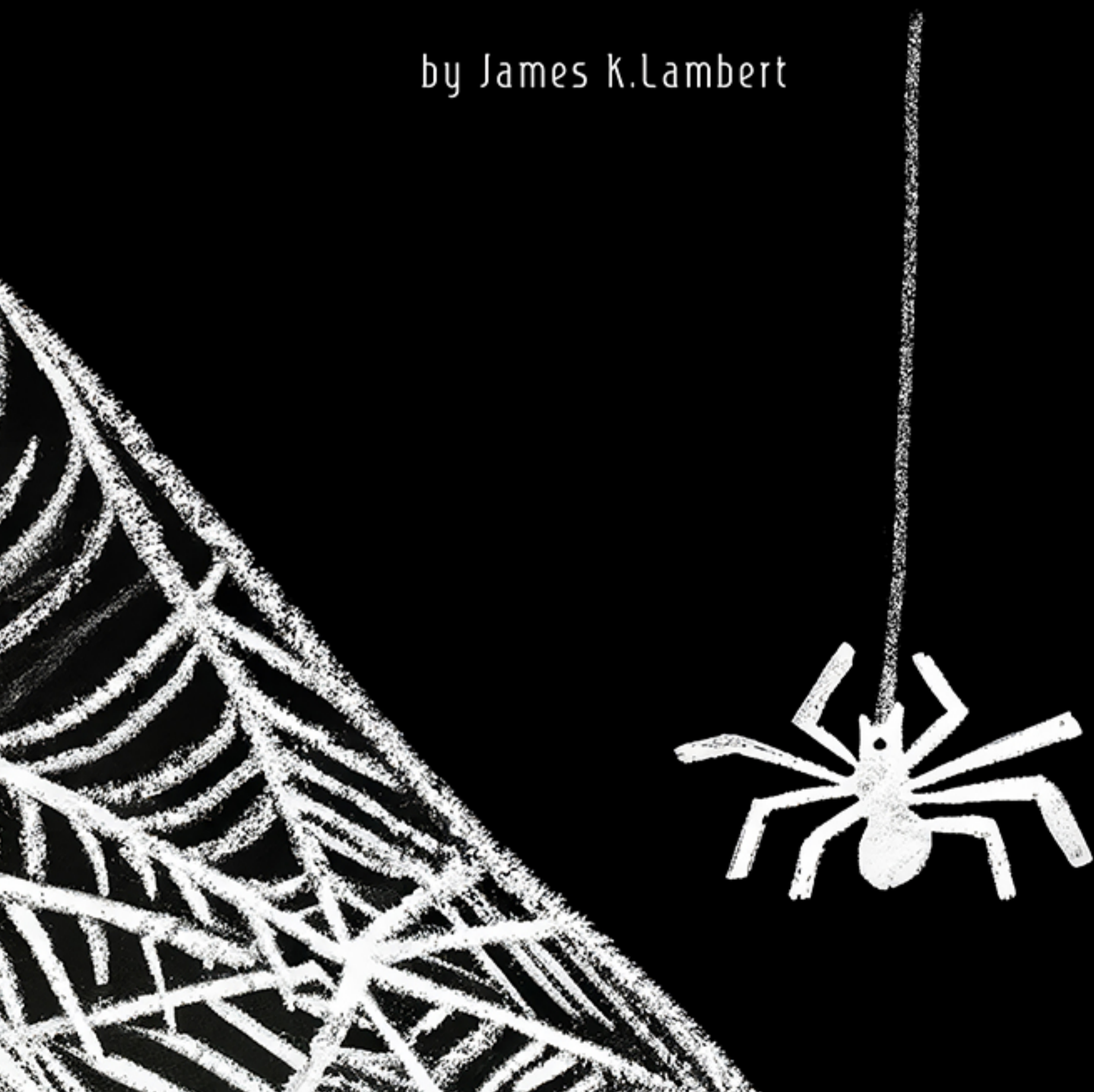


James K. Lambert

Things that go BUMP in the Night

a literary experiment

by James K. Lambert



For the music makers and the dreamers of dreams.
The world losers and world forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams.

FROM GHOULIES AND GHOOSTIES,
LONG-LEGGETY BEASTIES, AND
THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT,
GOOD LORD, DELIVER US!



The Magic
Casement:

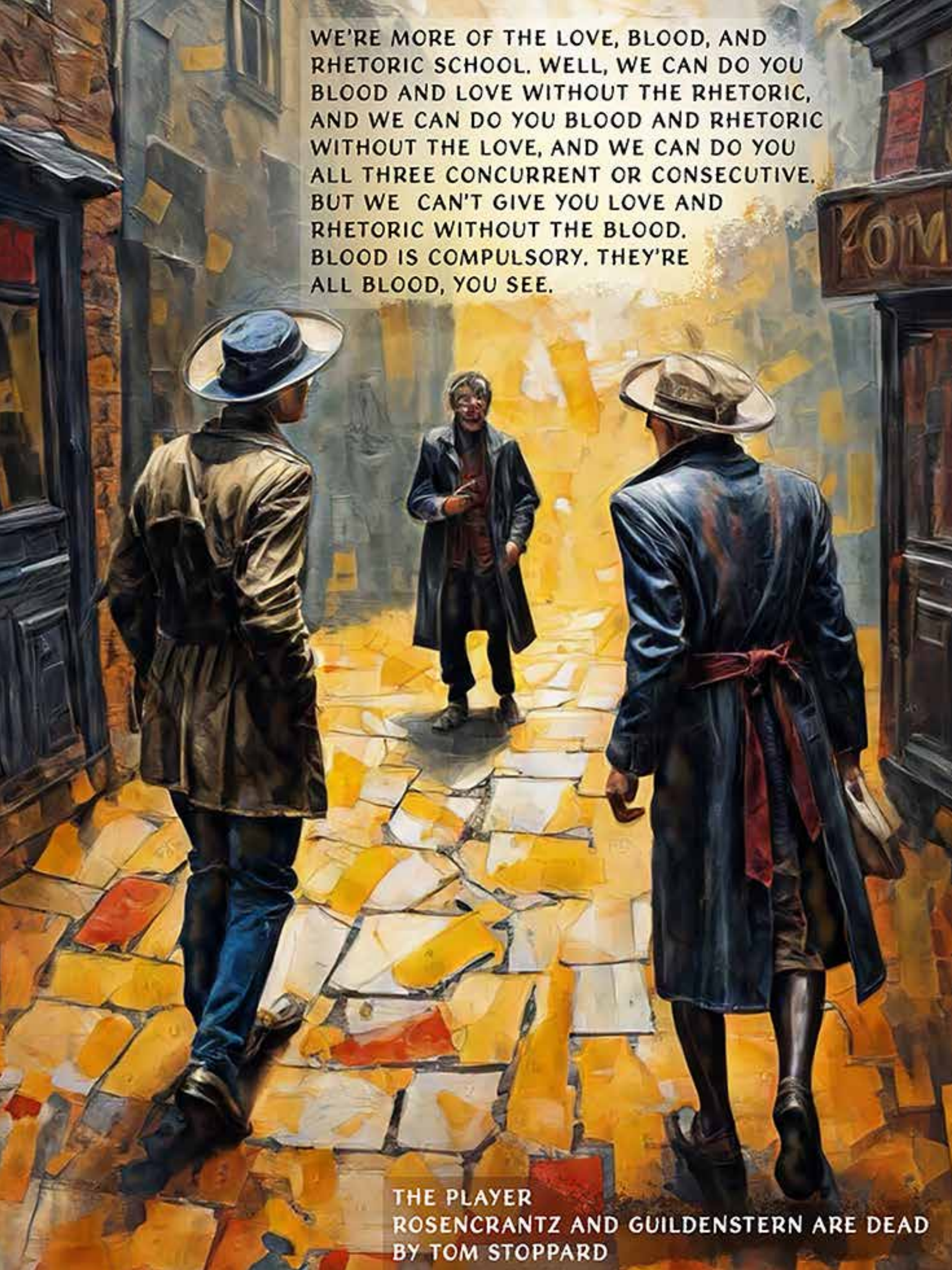
A book of faery poems
giving glimpses of
the world beyond
the casement Arranged

by Alfred Noyes

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WE'RE MORE OF THE LOVE, BLOOD, AND
RHETORIC SCHOOL. WELL, WE CAN DO YOU
BLOOD AND LOVE WITHOUT THE RHETORIC,
AND WE CAN DO YOU BLOOD AND RHETORIC
WITHOUT THE LOVE, AND WE CAN DO YOU
ALL THREE CONCURRENT OR CONSECUTIVE.
BUT WE CAN'T GIVE YOU LOVE AND
RHETORIC WITHOUT THE BLOOD.
BLOOD IS COMPULSORY. THEY'RE
ALL BLOOD, YOU SEE.

THE PLAYER
ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD
BY TOM STOPPARD

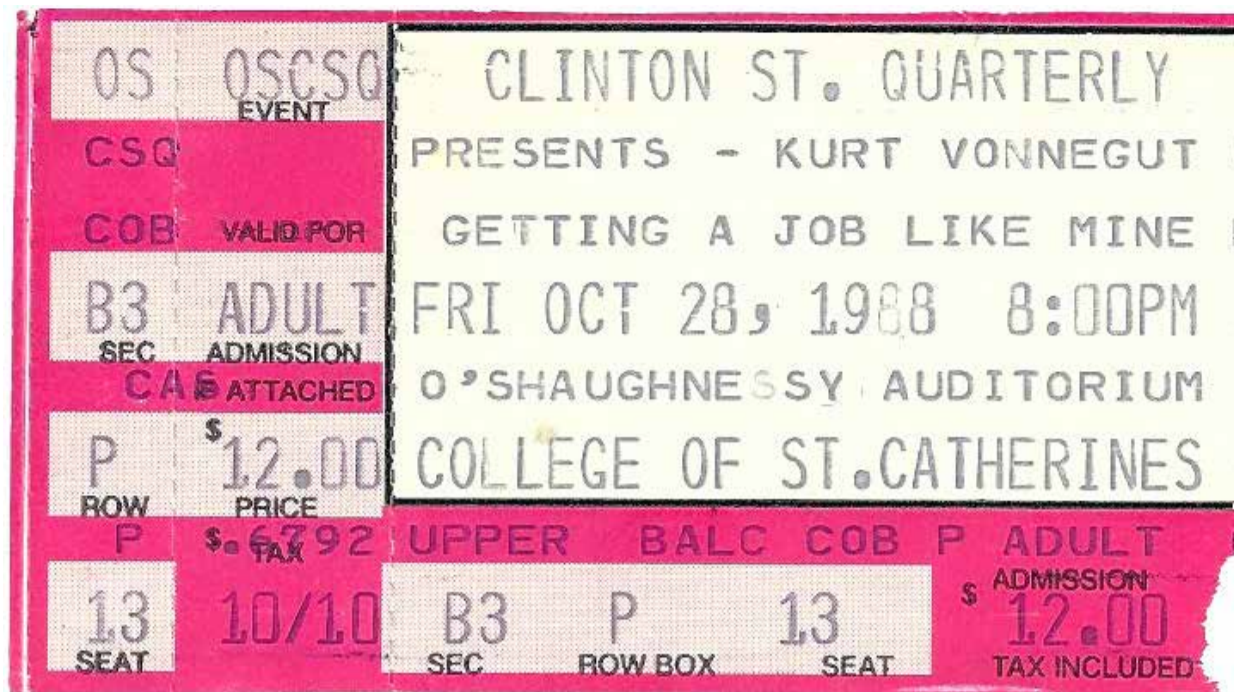


Borrowing from other people's work and reinterpretation are essential parts of storytelling, of all art and culture. Most of Shakespeare's plays were adapted from previous plays, stories, poems, and historical accounts. But less direct and obvious connections are everywhere.

Have you ever used an "un" word? Unhappy. Unkind. Unwell. Unlikely. If so, you're borrowing from Shakespeare, who created the "un"-concept. Have you ever spoken of "pandemonium?" You can thank John Milton for that one. In his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, Pandemonium is the Capital of Hell. The literal meaning of its parts being: pan, from Greek, "all," and daemonium, from Latin, "evil spirit." Pandemonium is where all the evil spirits dwell.

Over the years, I've had many ideas related to borrowing, reinterpreting, and playing off established elements of the cultural ethos. These projects always seemed too time consuming, expensive, or otherwise impractical before the explosion of powerful AI models to assist me in everything from sorting through material and reorganizing it to kicking around ideas and making the accompanying images, or translating English into and out of Old Norse. This volume, my first AI-assisted literary experiment to come to fruition, is focused on magic, imagination, horror, and blood. The compulsory element of drama, according to some.

Many years ago, when I was in high school. Myself, a few other students, and our English teacher went to see Kurt Vonnegut speak. He made us laugh when he said that he still wrote on an old typewriter, not even a word processor, let alone on a computer. He did this because he was afraid that the machines were going to take over and he wasn't going to do anything to assist them in that process.



It's funny to me how much AI has become an ominous figure of horror and disdain in the last couple years. I am willing to concede that some of the arguments about the dangers that AI poses sound a lot more sensible than Vonnegut's apprehensions, but they still seem overblown, most of the time. AI has become a paranormal force — the ghost in the machine — lurking in the digital shadows of the mysterious cloud lands, growing in strength and biding its time, as though it were Sauron or Satan. I can't help but think, "Lions and tigers and bears. Oh my." Perhaps I should not be so dismissive and this will all turn out to be a Faustian Bargain, but I hope you will enjoy my work in the meantime.

What bothers me is the contempt that this new tool and its users frequently receive. "AI isn't real art," say the critics and pontificators, as such people once said of photography and many other art forms. "It's not real writing," they claim, as adapting other people's work, particularly through the cut-up method that is used generously in the last story of this volume, has been dismissed as unreal writing. These are knee-jerk reactions masquerading as thoughtful discourse. While it is easier to take a photograph than spending years studying painting, and hours painting an individual subject, this in no way devalues photography. It is how you use a tool, not the capabilities of the tool, that matters. Art is about intentionality and execution of that vision, no matter the medium. What made AI a game changer for me is the fact that it doesn't care if I want to work on something at 3 a.m. or if I tell it that something it did is stupid and completely wrong. It doesn't get tired. It holds no grudges. It doesn't actually think or feel; it only facilitates me doing these things better.

The stories that follow are drawn from fairy tales and folklore that have been retold and altered for centuries, except for the last, which is based on a historical event. Some, like “The Boy Who Went Looking For Fear” and “The Juniper Tree,” came to me as fresh discoveries, while others have been with me for as long as I can remember. But they all reflect the enduring power of stories to help us explore and understand who we are. I’ll leave it to you, dear reader, to decide if you are unfamiliar with any of these stories and want to know more about them before jumping into my interpretations. Either way, the heart of these tales remains a human one; bound by the same ancient forces of love and hate, desire and greed, good and evil, wrapped up in our blood.

MONSTERS ARE REAL
AND GHOSTS
ARE REAL TOO
THEY LIVE INSIDE US
AND SOMETIMES
THEY WIN

Stephen King

WITCH
OF
THE
WOODS

