

The Seraph and the Six of Swords

(a rondeau redoublé)

My seraph, enter. Here's the deck you bade
Me fly beyond the Gates to fetch. We'll kneel
Beneath this verdant tree's unstinting shade,
Unearthing all your heart desires. Let's deal.

I've drawn your future card. Does this reveal
Some truth to you: this Six of Swords I've played
That paints a boatman on a blade-pierced keel?
My seraph, enter. Here's the deck you bade

Me burnish to a shine. You've always stayed
Our cosmic course, but now you wish to steal
Away by sea upon this ship you've made
Me fly beyond the Gates to fetch? We'll kneel

Beseechingly before His judgment's steel
For this infraction. Think before you trade
Celestial wings for shawl. Return to heel
Beneath this verdant tree's unstinting shade.

What's that? This passenger, the mortal maid
Our card depicts, denotes your soul's ideal?
And tedium's degraded our crusade,
Unearthing all your heart desires? Let's deal

Then with the Throne when need decrees. Conceal
Your downcast head; pin back your wings arrayed
In fear. I'll steer this vessel's rigid wheel
And whisper, when we reach the port portrayed,
"My seraph, enter."

—Mindy Watson

White-Nose Syndrome

Coked-up vampires,
failing to heed smartwatch alarm,

dissolve like snow
in the nosebleed colors of dawn.

—Robert Borski