



# A Sestina for May Eve

Lawrence Wilson

another ordinary April day  
the weekly shopping done, the laundry folded  
some sun, some cloud-shadow—it may rain tonight  
no invitations, nothing in the post of interest  
a pot of tea, perhaps a walk to the bluebell woods  
and another chapter of that novel read

but in my heart's mind and memory, a risky day, red-  
lettered on the calendar, a day  
perhaps, to walk warily in the woods  
a night, perhaps, when strange dreams might unfold  
so slip sideways, catch no one's eye or interest—  
we're halfway 'round from Hallowe'en, and the fairies ride tonight

a laughing host in silvered silks, wrapped in night's  
dimmed colours under a waning moon. A dream. Perhaps I read  
about it when I was a child—always been interested  
in such folklore—or perhaps it was a tale told at end of day  
by a loving granny—kiss on forehead, enfolding  
hug to keep me safe when walking in the dream-woods

“the apple is always your friend—holly is a chancy wood  
avoid the elder-tree, especially at night”  
whose tongue whispered this? Whose wisdom, folded  
into child-sized bites? I've always read  
fairy-stories, but all this curious advice—by day  
faintly ridiculous, nothing to interest

a logical adult—yet I am interested  
cautious—fearful, even, sometimes. Wonder-struck. I would  
never assume that you think this a special day—

not the same books, not the same granny—so tonight  
you'll probably leave no bowl of milk outside, no red  
berries on your lintel, no eyes folded

sensibly shut while the cavalcade passes, enfolded  
in mist and shadow... You're not really interested  
are you? Not for you the iced golden wine, the rare red  
meats of dream and battle. If I tell you that the woods  
breathe danger from their roots tonight  
you'll laugh—easy enough to do by day

but when the last day of April falters and folds  
when eyes in the night open wide, and watch with hungry interest  
then clutch your charm of rowan-wood and remember what you've read

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**Lawrence Wilson**