

Beate Sigriddaughter
Fortune

She fingers through old fortune cookies in a small ornate bowl on her table, a golden dragon circling its rim. Will she ever again open an empty one, and take this as a message that anything is possible? She hopes so. With her luck, the one she might open now would read that not every ladder needs to be climbed. She decides against opening any fortune today, just deal with what comes. Besides, the cookies might be stale by now. A memory makes her laugh. A man stood in a hallway by his open door, waiting for something to happen. As this was on the seventh floor, anything that came would arrive with considerable effort, so he felt safe in concluding that whatever came—or whoever, for that matter—would be in his favor. She herself was tempted at one time. Instead, she ended up fluttering around restlessly in the stairwell, all the while wondering where she had left her wings and where those wings might have taken her. For her part, she now keeps dreaming of a fairy tale prince on a golden road who, thinking of her, would not even notice the magnificence of the gold. The possibility of damaging all that opulence wouldn't even occur to him. She often finds her world an odd one, where folks, as proof of their intelligence, would rather surround themselves with serious and thoughtful ugliness than with sentimental beauty. She reaches for a sugarcoated dragon and slips home into her own being.

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Moments of Farewell

The last hour of the fair, the last burnt almond,
lights blink red, blue, green, white.
One more ride on the sidewinder.

Next morning one hundred and twenty dayflowers
electric blue by the kitchen door.
Winter will come soon.

On the highway trucks depart the fairground, piled
with colorful metal and plastic, yellow bumble bee seats,
on their way to elsewhere.

I wake up once that night. The sky is pink.
Later that morning, it is full of rain.
Time to revert to the familiar.

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Stairway

I remember a stairway
by a river, fourteen white steps
curving up to nowhere.
There it simply stopped.
I loved that.