

# The Crowning of Fear

*Emmiline Zuba*

*After Macbeth*

1.

Three women stir wind from fog.  
One has no thumb. One has no eye.  
One sells sailor's meat by the dream-ounce.

Thunder. Or the kettles clattered.  
They speak in short measured teaspoons. Love says to them,  
"Why do you dress Fear in such prophecy?"

They grin  
And no one answers.  
The air grins  
And no one answers.  
Love vanishes into a sneeze.

Fear opens their letter  
and the letter is made of power.  
Inside the letter  
Is a future crown made of mouse-teeth and tar.

Fear smiles like a growing evil.  
He says, "If only Chance will crown me king—" But Chance is drunk  
and asleep in the pantry.

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2.

Abandonment is a cloud with legs.

He praises. He beams. He names.

Loss is declared.

And everyone claps but their hands fall off.

Fear bows,

but his knees turn backward and he walks away like a crab. He says nothing,  
but his thoughts carry knives.

The stars blink.

And again Love sneezes. And again no one notices.

A servant spills the Future on the floor. It stains the floor  
because no one wipes it up.

Instead, they step around it

and call it Hope.

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3.

Knock knock knock.  
The door opens,  
but it's not a door—  
it's a prop made of cardboard.

The Porter yells,  
"Here's a farmer who hanged himself for speaking too soon!"  
Nobody answered.  
But somebody applauded.

Loss enters with a pocket full of weather. He says,  
"The night was unruly!"  
nods,

then drops his ears into a bucket.

Fear arrives,  
wet with guilt and something stickier. He says:  
"What, Loss in our house?"

Yes. In your house.  
In your heart.  
On your hands.  
Faith faints like a well-trained violin.

Love whispers,  
"Let's not stay here." Nobody answers.  
The walls are humming.

Somewhere, the Porter shouts, My God the door keeps opening and opening  
and opening.

To Nothing at all.

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4.

A knocking.

No, two knockings. No, three.

Too many knockings.

The porter is a door.

The door is a man.

The man is drunk and thinks he's in Hell.

He opens.

He stumbles.

He jokes.

He forgets the punchlines. He hiccups Eternity.

Fear enters and time splits.

Splits like a sausage.

Splits like a skull.

Splits like a country without a king.

"Hail the King," Abandonment says. And the porter sneezes into his soul.

Inside, Love is bleeding.

Outside, the air pretends nothing happened.

The bell rings.

Or maybe it's the end of the world. They're almost the same sound.