

Tin King

There's a shining path
where kings used to ride.
Now the magpies are fighting
for their tin crowns
and the trees will reach out
to caress a walking traveller's face.

There's a golden mare
that used to carry tin kings;
Now it's grazing in the shadow
of the giant oak,
while the scurrying fox
wears his mangy, glowing coat with pride.

The mare pricks up her ears
at the remote, distorted sound
of rusty fanfares.
The trees shrink
at the distant dance of
gregarious tin hooves.

Still, the yellow-eyed fox
yaps a freedom tune
punched by the
magpies' raucous cries,
backed by the traveller's
forlorn, defiant song.

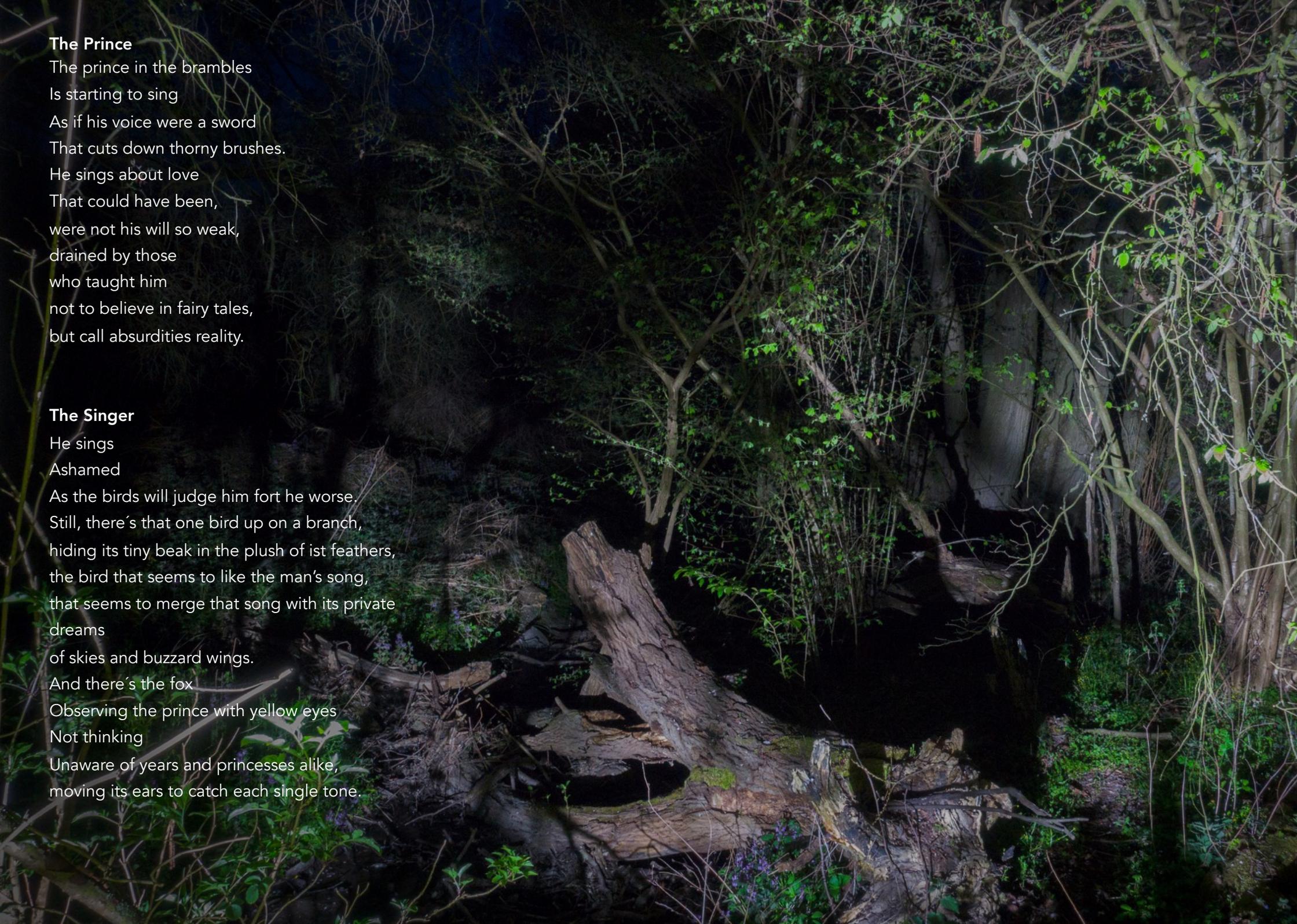


The Prince

The prince in the brambles
Is starting to sing
As if his voice were a sword
That cuts down thorny brushes.
He sings about love
That could have been,
were not his will so weak,
drained by those
who taught him
not to believe in fairy tales,
but call absurdities reality.

The Singer

He sings
Ashamed
As the birds will judge him for he worse.
Still, there's that one bird up on a branch,
hiding its tiny beak in the plush of its feathers,
the bird that seems to like the man's song,
that seems to merge that song with its private
dreams
of skies and buzzard wings.
And there's the fox
Observing the prince with yellow eyes
Not thinking
Unaware of years and princesses alike,
moving its ears to catch each single tone.



The Child

Everyone pretends not to see him,
everyone glances at the water
as if noone was there,
as if there were no fruit hanging low
enough to be picked.
His head, his sparkling eyes,
his dripping lashes,
his laugh at the current
that used to carry gold, they say,
powder gold to be covered by sand,
Just to know it's there,
the child says,
speaking at last to those who dare listen.
Just to know where it came from
To feel it under my feet,
to know it's what people kill for,
to know it's not worth an apple from that tree,
to know all that
and not care.
Don't you see,
the child asks,
my feet aren't getting wet.
It's my head that gets dry.
Let me save you,
says the child in the water.
I can see you are drowning.
He reaches out
But doesn't touch my hand.



Illiterate

When that bird fell
It threw a verse to me:
It's here in my hands,
feathery warm, linked with silken thread.
But I'm illiterate
I cannot read the words

When that tree broke,
it dropped a poem
at my feet
It's here in my hands
coarse and strong, smelling of bees.
But I'm illiterate.
I cannot read the words.

When that cloud broke,
Its message rained on me.
It's here on my skin,
warm, anointing, flowery smell.
But sorry, I'm illiterate.
I just can't read the words.



The 1st Woman

What about that woman
When she meets
all these believers-in-themselves,
she covers her ears and eyes
for fear of all those question marks
she adds to people's statements,
though she still remembers
touching cold stone,
even the cotton fur of a rabbit child.
She's squinting at a distant light,
way behind that horizon of hers,
that closes in on her.
She wants that rabbit to show her
a way out of the valley
and teach her
rabbits can talk,
leaves can talk,
skies can talk,
stones can talk,
even she, herself, may be able to talk
one day
if she remembers the nature of sound.
What about that woman
with her hands in the air
gripping nothing-ness
out of the void.



A low-angle photograph of a large tree with white blossoms against a clear blue sky. The tree's trunk and branches are dark and silhouetted against the bright blue sky. The upper right portion of the tree is covered in numerous small, white, five-petaled flowers. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

The 2nd woman

What about that woman?

Do you trust her?

Did you not see that her eyes are like stolen jewels?

Her metal words tune

into the buzzing of the undergrowth,

electric words

meant to shock living creatures away.

I know I cannot touch her.

She's like a spiderweb.

She will cling invisibly to your skin.

What is she waiting for?

Time does not count for her

her shadow neither grows nor shrinks,

The winds dare not touch her wispy hair.

Insects shy from her frozen skin.

How can we tell her to leave?

How can we make her leave?

She may choose to vanish in a second,

she may choose to stay.

We will learn to live with her frigid gaze,

her timeless silence.

Anyway,

the moon wasn't there.
Just some veteran satellite
passing at exaggerated speed.
Someone dared
light a housebroken fire,
someone else hummed
a common tune.
The wine was too cold and we
sat too far apart.
Each of us entwined
in petty conversation
and jokes laughed at
a hundred times.

