



## WHAT LIES BENEATH

By Wayne Visser

You see me –  
and seeing, you think that you know me.  
But you do not know me,  
any more than you know the mysteries of a galaxy  
from seeing its image projected on a screen.

What you see is not an illusion,  
but neither is it the full picture –  
for it lacks colour, and depth, and movement.  
What you see is a dull facsimile of me,  
a spark of fire extinguished to grey ash  
in the act of capture.

For I am so much more than you see –  
and also so much less.

I walk around with a hurricane of thoughts  
swirling and flashing in my head;  
yet not a single hair  
will you see out of place.

I climb and swoop across skies of ecstasy,  
gliding on wings of beauty;  
yet all the world will see  
is the steady plod of my feet.

I stumble blindly in tunnel mazes  
of grief and self-loathing;  
yet I will greet you with a smile  
on my sad-clown face.

I radiate with love so bright  
that I must have swallowed a supernova;  
yet the world will never be scorched  
by the sun of my desire.





You hear me –  
and hearing, you believe that you understand me.  
But you do not understand me,  
any more than you understand the secrets of elephants  
from listening to the trembling air.

What you hear is not a lie,  
but neither is it the whole truth –  
for it lacks history, and nuance, and narrative.  
What you hear is a distant echo of me,  
a burst of song faded to a faint pulse  
in the moment of listening.

For I am so much more than you hear –  
and also so much less.

I weave stories so enchanting  
they would leave generations spellbound;  
yet you are treated only to the silence  
of my vellum-bound heart.

I ache with pain so buried  
that screams cannot penetrate the abyss;  
yet the world will never eavesdrop  
on the black well of my loss.

I sing melodies that spontaneously erupt  
into a million iridescent butterflies;  
yet you will not sense even a flap  
of those winking wings.

I translate the noisy babble of nonsense  
into sacred books of wisdom;  
yet the world will never whisper the words  
on the pages of my soul.

You see me –  
but if you would know me,  
only look in the mirror.





For your covert storms and boundless firmament,  
your dark tunnels and explosive love –  
these are a truer reflection of me  
than the mask I wear for all the world  
(and you) to see.

You hear me –  
but if you would understand me,  
only listen to your heart's song.  
For your magic spells and silent screams,  
your winged symphonies and wise parchments –  
these are a clearer intonation of me  
than the script I voice for all the world  
(and you) to hear.

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