

## **The Price of Magic**

by Lynne Sargent

My mother plays fairy—  
tooth, to be precise.

We discuss the going rate for magic:

She splits her \$20 bill,  
burning a quarter of it on the lottery—  
her dream— the simple kind  
of having enough for her and hers  
to erase the worry  
that someday there might be  
a day she feels her bones,  
or her children's, through their skin.

(Do we dream  
what we are trained to?  
Turn fairyland into a lottery  
build in systems of commodifying  
not just the body,  
but growth & joy & wonder?)

The magic of another \$5  
rests under my sister's pillow tonight,  
her childish skull almost empty  
of the particular childhood horror  
of baby teeth.

(& I wonder,  
How long before she is a maker of dreams too?  
Her own always going unfulfilled.  
How long before she plays fairy,  
the magic of pretend siphoned away  
by bills & debts & obligations?)

The magic of the last \$10 leftover  
waits for some potential grandchild,  
accounting for the sure inflation of dreams  
—should we last that long

(And yet, I know  
that even in the wreckage,  
of a civilization once built  
on teeth and coins, now crumbled  
there will be those that play fairy,  
that take gruesome & dying & painful things,  
and make them magic.)