

**fey (adj.)**

*from Old English fæge meaning “doomed to die, fated, destined,” and “timid, feeble,” or from Old Norse feigr, both from Proto-Germanic faigjo, from the Proto-Indo-European peig meaning “evil-minded, hostile.”*

1. Fated to die, doomed to death, at the point of death, dying.
2. Leading to death, deadly, fatal.
3. Accursed, unfortunate, unlucky.
4. Feeble, timid, sickly, weak.
5. Disordered in mind, like one who is about to die.
6. Possessing magical, fairy-like, mysterious or unearthly qualities.
7. Affected, whimsical, over-refined, exaggerated.
8. Having supernatural powers of clairvoyance or vision.
9. Appearing crazy, as if under a spell.
10. Effeminate.

I earn my oracle ... compressed as air & carousel — *just call me calliope* — & fix my song with your clerical brilliance ... while the peatbog moderates — this space, where your profits are made — though I will gather you in close-fitting music, I am equal I will sing with my own mouth —

... Well then. the kings are dead. the law-makers are dead. the therapists are dead. there is war and there is waste.

[Muirghein (Lí Ban, Fuinchi)]<sup>1</sup>

at first a tendril ... (deer) through  
fracture ... /// gristle in the wash  
— of dulse (but dulse) — & I will  
not let my deer go down ... to husk,  
to feed, where ... under the lake's spine  
— clerics, in whose territory (the men's  
nets) ... & under whose boat, or ///  
meat jewel, riddled with (deer), with ...  
relic, ooze in pearl & — spat free of sed-  
iment ... (my) living, done through water  
& ... I chose to die every hour —

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<sup>1</sup> *cf. Cailleach Bein y Vreich*

ΜΥΡΓΗΙΝ, ἡ. ἔστιν το ὄν ἰν ἰν μυρ τὰ πγοιρὸν πὰ λιαδαρ  
Λίβαν, ἰνῆν Ἐαχῶαχ, μὶς Μυρσαῶα, το ὄν α ταιμῶελλ 300  
βλιαῶαἰν ρον μυρ ἔο ἡαιμῆρ πὰ ναιοῦν ἔαρ ἔαδ ἕοαἰν  
ναιοῦν ἰ Λίον ἰ, αεϋρ ἔαρ βαιρταῶ ἰ, ἰαρ π-ἰηηῆρ ἰ α ἰῆοἰλ  
αεϋρ α ἡιμῆαῶτα.

2

*turn towards the deep—*

fish-garbed figures flank doorways. a surfacing of rage—abyssopelagic. within the body—part other-than—a liminality: earth and water; living and dead. here (she) stands *between*—

*put the parts together again. carry them in your mouth ...*

according to (the very reverend) John Canon O’Hanlon, the clerics gave Muirghein a choice: be baptized and go to heaven that very hour, or wait three hundred years on earth. according to (the very reverend) John Canon O’Hanlon, (she) chose the former. according to (the very reverend) John Canon O’Hanlon, (she) was, for this, held in honour and veneration.

to take what is wild and kill it. kill its wildness. make it safe by making sacred. Muirghein is elusive (heterosexual, male) desire—dis-located by apotheosis. (her) less-than flesh; (her) more-than body, emptied of ambiguity, made available, made human. made to stand *for*.

*look again, until looking becomes liquid ...*

two intersections: pre-baptism (she) as watery and chaotic vessel for unattainable desire; the pleasure contained in a certainty of losing, monstrous because her unattainability *belongs to* (her). post-baptism (she) is unattainable because holy; because dead. (she) is made human because her unattainability is controlled by the clerics. by the men.

*until looking becomes liquid.*

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<sup>2</sup> O’Clery, Michael (1575-1643); O’Donovan, John (1809-1861); Reeves, William (1815-1892); Todd, James Henthorn (1805-1869), *The martyrology of Donegal: a calendar of the saints of Ireland* (Dublin: A. Thom for the Irish Archaeological and Celtic Society, 1864). Translation (from the same text) “...a woman who was in the sea, whom the Books call Líbán, daughter of Eochaidh, son of Muireadh; she was about three hundred years under the sea, till the time of the saints, when Beoan the saint took her in a net, so that she was baptized, after having told her history and her adventures.”

limb of earth apples ... in the marsh  
glassy or — fathom, the flower mottles  
— insular to tannins & (sharps) ... soft,  
intermittent, just as /// some poems  
have mealy textures (apples) — and no  
work (for husbandmen) except ... the  
soil of its own consensus ... & by a plea-  
sing set of laws — (the apples), I am the  
first of them, skilled ... & my shape sticks  
to the air — & men say /// though I know  
the waters — & I gaze at his (honourable)  
wound — what was fitting, his wish, his ...  
cosmetic (apples) —

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<sup>3</sup> *cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth*



Illic jura novem geniali lege sorores  
dant his qui veniunt nostris ex partibus ad se,  
quarum que prior est fit doctior arte medendi  
exceditque suas forma prestante sorores.  
Morgen ei nomen didicitque quid utilitatis  
gramina cuncta ferant ut languida corpora curet.  
Ars quoque nota sibi qua scit mutare figuram  
et resecaere novis quasi Dedalus aera pennis.

*hold the segment in your throat. lodge it in the larynx ...*

producing “all things of itself,” with “no need of [...] ploughs” or “cultivation,” the body of earth (Avalon) is an ideal of the unregulated female body as that which gives. *fruitful, plentiful*—these words are an assertion of property; of ownership over what is ‘given’. the body (of earth) defined by what is taken from it.

*where the vocal folds open —*

to heal as a form of giving. as an extension of that which conflates body of earth and female body. (her) skill *is* the earth, and what it is capable of giving back. (she) represents its utility.

but, that (her) body can shift its shape makes it *unregulatable*. (she) is the very limit of the earth/body conflation: (she) is generous, but (she) cannot be made to give.

*let the sound out ...*

a confusion of Latin links *apple* (mālum) with *evil* (mālum). such so-called ‘earthly pleasures’ are meant to be resisted. thus *that which gives* becomes *that which tempts*. the body (of earth) no longer ‘provides,’ but rather ‘leads astray.’

*let it carry all the weight —*

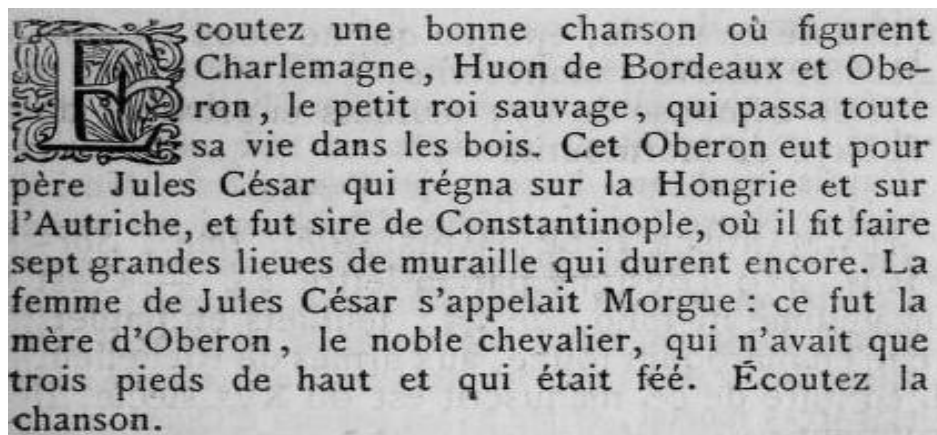
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<sup>4</sup> Translation: “There [in Avalon] nine sisters give pleasant laws to those who come from our parts to them, and of those sisters, she who is higher becomes a doctor in the art of healing and exceeds her sisters in excellent form. Morgen is her name, and she has learned what usefulness all the herbs bear so that she may cure sick bodies. Also that art is known to her by which she can change shape and cut the air on new wings in the manner of Dedalus.” (Geoffrey of Monmouth, trans. Emily Rebekah Huber, *The Camelot Project* (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester, 1995). In the *Vita Merlini*, Avalon is referred to as *Insula Pomorum*, or the Isle of Apples.

& names can bind to death ... she (slough)  
to dub me so — to slough clear ... glance  
lunar & neglect — my savage little blades,  
so chiefly visual — if I am then (what-not)  
or so no human translation can — hitch to-  
gether ...but pity brings me into /// tape-  
stry, the grate sewn into sullen ... & there  
my choky ... my choke, he speaks in (cust-  
odies) & ... the things I have lost (slough)  
or — fetched from the sea — to exist only  
in a partaking (or not-holding-together) —  
my nub of mauve (not held ...) and carcass  
(sloughed) as policy or promiscuous — rep-  
lacing earlier written ...

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<sup>5</sup> *cf. the Book of Huon of Bordeaux*


 Ecoutez une bonne chanson où figurent Charlemagne, Huon de Bordeaux et Oberon, le petit roi sauvage, qui passa toute sa vie dans les bois. Cet Oberon eut pour père Jules César qui régna sur la Hongrie et sur l'Autriche, et fut sire de Constantinople, où il fit faire sept grandes lieues de muraille qui durent encore. La femme de Jules César s'appelait Morgue : ce fut la mère d'Oberon, le noble chevalier, qui n'avait que trois pieds de haut et qui était féé. Écoutez la chanson.

6

*consider what is carried in a look. what the face may articulate ...*

in Old French, *morguer* meant 'to look at solemnly, sadly' from the Vulgar Latin *murricare* (to make a face), itself derived from *murrum* (muzzle or snout); cognate with the Old Occitan *mor.* connoting a facial gesture, (her) name carries with it both sorrow and defiance, as well as a denial of humanness; in this expression, (she) is animal-like. thus here, (she) is doubly-other, twice removed from humanity — both as *féé*, and as creaturely.

*learn the structure; its shapes and variations —*

in Middle French, *morgue* becomes a space: the inner wicket of a prison, in which jailers examine new inmates to take in their likeness. a locus in which *the act of reading a face* occurs; an act of pre-recognition. to look upon so as to know again.

*follow the curves and distortions, and memorize them ...*

at the dungeon of the Châtelet, the *morgue* is a place where corpses are stored and identified. it is a space of recognition. an 1885 account describes "brutal, gashed and swollen faces; [...] jagged, discolored teeth, sunken cheeks, knitted brows, dead, sodden eyes, awful contortions, ghastly smiles, hideous leers, [...] faces which reek with the slime of years of vice and misery and despair; faces which Dante, groping among the damned, might have dragged from hideous, steaming depths of Lethean mud [...]; faces mutilated into every shape into which the human countenance can be bruised or flattened or slashed or puffed or putrified ..." in this space, the face (her name), synonymous with death, in all its cruel forms.

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<sup>6</sup> François Guessard and Charles Loizeau de Grandmaison (eds.), *Huon de Bordeaux; chanson de geste* (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1860). Translation (mine): "Listen to a good song in which figures Charlemagne, Huon of Bordeaux and Oberon, the little savage king, who spent his life in the woods. His father was Julius Caesar who reigned over Hungary and Austria, and was lord of Constantinople, and who made seven major leagues of wall which still endure. The wife of Julius Caesar was called Morgue : she was the mother of Oberon, the noble knight, who was only three feet tall and was of fairy origin. Listen to the song."



[Margue la sage]<sup>7</sup>

dearths, if leaking feverish or ... clasp  
dolor, vortex — that gave me (bear)  
fat, lard & mashed ... the brilliantine  
remembers me ... & gleaned in ////  
(malt) a half-league in <gel & pomade>  
... & my casket, & the load (to forbear)  
— at the temples & ... only at the temp-  
les ... and the remnant (that he hurt an-  
other) — that I give away my (claw print),  
my (silk) if ... to hair plash ... the asset,  
the lotion and is (malt) — because it so  
covets /////

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<sup>7</sup> *cf. Chrétien de Troyes*



*consider (her) eyes, as a separate thing from the act of (her) weeping ...*

in *The Knight of the Lion*, Yvain's 'madness' is a delirium brought about by romantic rejection. he is "deprived [...] of joy through his own fault."<sup>9</sup> the tearing of his flesh and clothes mirrors Laudine's clawing of her hair and dress in grief at the death of her husband, for which Yvain is also responsible. but Yvain's grief is a wound which requires magical healing; it is severe and enduring, while Laudine's is temporary, because she is a woman, and her mind is not constant.<sup>10</sup>

this hierarchy of loss, in which her grief is a fleeting thing she cannot hold onto. in which his is a step outside of what is human.

*his gently struck heart, as if his eyes were not a window ...*

in the forest, Yvain is naked, but not vulnerable. he is a predator, killing deer and eating them raw. it is Margue la sage's panacean ointment which cures his 'wounded' mind; it 'drives out' his madness, solving his grief, and reinstating both his reason and his shame.

Margue la sage is absent from the action. in (her) place, the synecdochal ointment. (her) limitless skill of reviving knights (men) from near-death or 'madness.'

*his new robe of spotted fur, his mantle of scarlet silk ...*

women bring him things. a ring of to make him invisible, a bride persuaded out of her grief. upon recovery, Yvain states that "he is dead and utterly undone" if anyone were to have seen him naked in the forest. for him, humanity is the clothes laid out for him on the forest floor.

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<sup>8</sup> Image from *Yvain, ou le Chevalier au Lion* manuscript, I433.

<sup>9</sup> W. W. Comfort (trans.), *Chrétien de Troyes: Arthurian Romances* (London: Everyman's Library, 1914)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. "...a woman has more than one mind [...] she will change it certainly."