

*70 tips*

FOR WRITING POEMS

BASED ON FAIRYTALES

AND MYTHS...



# WRITING POEMS INSPIRED BY FAIRYTALE AND MYTH:

## 10 FREE TIPS

There are many routes into writing poems inspired by fairytales and myths. Included in this booklet are ten suggestions to get you started. For more information why not tune into episode 5 of The Poetrygram podcast at <http://helencoxbooks.com/poetrygramfive>.

**TIP ONE:** Make a list of your favourite fairytale ingredients. Set a timer for ten minutes and write down as many as you can. Try and include the elements that really speak to you. Are you a particular fan of magic mirrors? Winged beasts? Enchanted swords? It can be a list of things you have seen in previous fairytales or a list of things you wish you had seen in previous fairytales.

**TIP TWO:** Now that you have your list of fairytale ingredients, look for opportunities to include some of these ingredients in new poems that you write. Just make sure the image is a fit for the tone or theme of your poem. Read Carol Ann Duffy's poem 'Hour' if you would like to view a model on how this approach can work.

**TIP THREE:** Write a poem about a particular moral or theme addressed in fairytale or myth. For example, do you agree that true love does conquer all? Write a poem explaining your ideas. What do you think true bravery is? Is it all about fighting mythical beasts and reclaiming your land? Try and write a poem explaining how a particular myth got it right or wrong.

**TIP FOUR:** Write from the point of view of a fairytale or mythical character and change our opinion of that character. Make the hero into a villain, or vice versa.

**TIP FIVE:** Write from the point of view of a magical object. What do they see / learn / understand about themselves and their journey?

**TIP SIX:** Write a poem about a real life magical moment and make it clear to the reader why this moment seemed to stretch beyond the usual boundaries of reality.

**TIP SEVEN:** Give the power in the story to the character who usually doesn't get the power. For example, what would Cinderella read like if the mice had magical powers? Or what would a particular myth feel like if the gods were stripped of their immortality?

**TIP EIGHT:** Is there a particular fairytale stereotype of old that annoys you? Write a poem about that character rebelling against their stereotype. What would that look like? How would the world react and why?

**TIP NINE:** If you are writing a narrative poem in an attempt to rewrite an old fairytale consider using either the prose poem as a form or using stanzas like paragraphs so that each new stanza signals a new unit of action.

**TIP TEN:** Above all else be playful in your writing. Myth and fairytales are quite playful genres where anything can happen. Lean into that and don't be afraid to experiment with unlikely combinations of characters or events — these stories largely rely on making the impossible possible.