

CC Hart
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55 lines

On Lunar New Year St. Brigid Considers an Upgrade

Did the plodding gait
make her crazy?
The tedious clomp of hooves
trodding bog and fen for centuries,
is that what did her in?
Perhaps the constant lowing
wore her down, or, maybe,
the gaze, pained and doleful
bored through Brigid,
bled out her last drops of bovine love,
and smothered her oath of holy duty.

On lunar new year,
the queen of keening was done with cattle.
She pined for a sleek animal
to stalk the counties on her feast-eve.
A feline, feral and terrifying,
a tiger for the the light bearer,
a tiger for Brighde,
a striped tiger
for the candle blesser,
for the patroness of poetry.
What a pair!
Together, they would conjure a fierce spring,
garland their necks in stinging nettle
prickly as the big cat's paw,
crown themselves with odorous leeks,
steal lambs newly sprung from winter paddocks
and slaughter them in the pasture,
suck marrow from their frail bones.
No bland colcannon for this duo,
they'd rip hens from their roosts
devour the flock chicks and all, then

gorge on eggs, letting ribbons of yolk
drip from their chins.
Stuffed, they'd nuzzle together
in a bed of ruined nests,
her face pressed to burnished belly
where Brigid would dream of bannocks
laced with butter
delectable, yellow,
oozing from oat cakes,
potatoes laden with clabber,
a porridge of whey and barley,
a calming soup of sorrel and milk.

What reverie, what work of the fairies
to make one wish a trade:
sturdy heifer for surly cat,
salted butter for the tang of blood,
fresh cream for rent flesh.
An Irish goddess has no time for tigers
when she's blacksmiths to protect
and shawls to bless and
bards wanting for sweet words and
and a cow to walk at her side
this cold February night.