

Flight of Pegasus

The wind hummed
a waltzing tune.
Dervishes of dust swirled
across the arid plain.
A lark
warbled paeons of praise
to the sun.

A witch,
mumbling dark words,
clapped them all
into her kettle.
She stirred, brewed,
and intoned
until a mass formed,
clay to her hands.

Wrapped in black smoke
and sulfur fumes,
she rolled, pounded, shaped,
and exhorted.

Body, head,
feet, legs, mane, and tail
emerged, obedient to her hands,
in sleek and flowing lines.

She added the heart of a lion,
the wings
of a great snowy owl.



As she blew into the flared
nostrils,
she pumped the chest
of her inert form
until it quickened,
roused, rose to its feet,
stood.

She commanded:
"Pegasus, stand. Walk."

He paced in a circle,
snubbed to the reins
in her hands.

When he lifted his wings
as if to test them,
'No, Pegasus. Obey.'

Wings lifting,
he shook his head.
Her whip bit down,
the hornet of leather
stung his flesh.

He reared, plunged,
broke free,
soared into the heavens.

Snapped reins
falling slack in her hands,
the witch
muttered futile
incantations.

--Vera Joyce Nelson



Illustrations by Cinda Quigly

