

PLAYING WITH FIRE

In the deepening gloom,
A man kneels and prays,
Before an altar of twigs,
His body shakes and sways.

The night is ever-darker,
The wind grows ever-strong,
Distant thunder rumbles,
He has come to right a wrong.

He lights a fire to help him see,
Vengeance is his need.
A true friend has been murdered,
Leaving him bereaved.

He mutters words of power now,
The flames glow in the dark.
He hopes his plea will reach his god,
Summon spirits face to face.

His knife is out to cut his arm,
Blood runs down to his hand,
It mixes with some pungent herbs,
To scatter 'oer the land.

A flash, a cry and a shape
Forms slowly in the blaze,
The man steps back, frightened now,
Anger gone and mind a haze.

A spirit comes in black and red:
'Tis the Fire Witch he has called,
Coal-black hair with scarlet jets,
Blazing eyes of molten gold.

“You summoned me for your revenge?”
She speaks with a hissing tone,
Words of heat etched in the air,
The man nods, with a groan.

“I am not a killer”,
The fearsome spectre goes,
Her fiery fingers grasp the man –
All his body glows.

“My powers are for good, not ill”,
The Fire Witch hisses at him,
Her burning hands release their hold,
And her figure starts to dim.

The Fire Witch leaves the dying flames,
In the dawn of another day,
The man gets up, surprised to find
His vengeance burned away.