

“The King of Winds” is a classic-style fairy tale in meter and verse that is grounded heavily in the second half of Romans 8. The idea sprung from the fact that Hebrew and Greek use the same word for “wind,” “breath,” and “spirit” – the seed of the idea came from using various “winds” to represent spiritual powers.

Specifically, “The King of Winds” plays with the idea of Christians holding onto hope of Christ’s return in part through the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives – not always easy to discern and invisible to non-Christians, but very real to us. Any Christian who has suffered knows the comfort of the Spirit praying with us and for us - I wanted to explore that in poetic-narrative form with this fairy tale, because I also like fairy tales.

Any other biblical references or themes that may arise in “The King of Winds” are a happy bonus.

- Joseph

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An icy northern island

Sustains a stranded boat,
Eight rows of beans and onions, and
A flock of shaggy goats.

The North Wind makes his home there,
That ship unfit for sail.
Her rooms are cramped and gloomy, and
Her beams are rather frail.

When he comes home, his airstream
Makes all the timbers freeze,
And all the cabins' walls to groan
Like old, arthritic knees.

The North Wind holds three sisters

Washed to him by the waves;
Three orphan-girls, he kept them to
Tend house while he's away.

"I'm hungry!" North Wind bellows,
"Who made the evening meal?"
Amelia says, "I cooked it all!
My work, and my idea!"

Alexa laughs, "How dreary;
I stole away and played!"
While Anna sets the table, no
Attention sought or paid.

The triplets' eighteenth birthday,

The North Wind sat them down.

"I've given you my roof, my food;

"It's time the buck comes 'round!

"I've sent abroad for suitors

Among my friends and kin;

Each stays a week through this next year

And hopes your hearts to win!

"You're beauties all, three treasures:

A nice bride-price you'll bring.

At end of year, you'll marry off

And I'll live like a king!"

So suitors came a-courting

Unto their lonesome isle.

They brought their wits and charm and gifts,

The girls' hearts to beguile.

Each caller's breeze alighted

The day before he came;

Its sight and feel and scent inspired

The girls to guess his name.

Calima brought a dry spell

And filled the ship with dust;

Monsoon had dank and humid air

That made the timbers must.

Here long two girls had favorites,
A suitor each preferred:
Amelia chose the mild Chinook
Who heaped on flatt'ring words.

Alexa liked Bayamo:
Wild, puckish, debonair.
But Anna let them all blow through,
Unswayed by each new air.

North Wind cried, "There's no more!" when
The last prepared to leave.
"I won't be stuck with some old maid.
You'll choose, I swear, or grieve!"

But on the foll'wing morning,
A warm draft filled the rooms
With sound of rustling leaves and scent
Of cherry-trees in bloom.

The timbers put forth branches!
The tables, fruit and flow'r!
The North Wind's mood turned black; he growled
More foully by the hour.

"An uninvited guest!" he said.
"All haughty, full of scorn!
Girls, mind me now and spurn the boy
Who comes tomorrow morn!"

When next day's sun had risen

And pinked the grazing clouds,

A young man knocked and introduced

Himself with civil bow.

The North Wind yelled, "Intruder,

Begone! I'll tan your hide."

Unfazed, the young man said, "I've come

In hope to find my bride."

"Fat chance of that!" said North Wind,

But didn't block the lad.

The young man took the guest-room, though

His host was frothing mad.

The boy intrigued the sisters,

But soon their judgments fell.

"He's rude," Amelia said, because

He didn't praise her well.

"He's boring," said Alexa

(He wasn't wild enough:

He tilled the rows and milked the goats

And didn't boast or bluff).

But Anna and the young man

Grew closer by the day.

They talked and laughed and strolled the isle,

Which made the North Wind rage.

Five days North Wind harassed them;
They had no time alone.
But night six, Anna dreamed she walked
A wood so bright it shone.

'Twas grand as a cathedral;
Its trees were thick with fruit.
The boy stood there in crown of vines
And silver wedding-suit.

"This is my father's garden,
Where only sorrows end."
"Who is he?" Anna said. The boy
Replied, "The King of Winds."

Thy keeper hates my father,
For they both know the truth:
He has no right to sell you off;
He doesn't own your youth.

"You're free, but I would marry.
I love you, root and bough."
"I'm yours," said Anna, "All my life."
To wed, they made a vow.

"Betrothal means my father
Adopts you as his child;
His love is yours, his privileges--"
Her door slammed open wide.

I saw his trick!" said North Wind;

"He'd steal from 'neath my nose!"

He kicked the prince's door down, and

Took hold of hair and clothes.

He carried to a cliff's edge

The son of nature's king;

Then, with a roar of fury, flung

The boy into the sea.

Poor Anna screamed and sprinted

To where the North Wind stood.

The prince was gone beneath the waves,

Devoured in the flood.

That's finished, then," said North Wind;

"The meddler won't come back!

We'll hide out from his daddy dear;

I'm like a fox to track."

He raised the ship with tempests

And flew to colder clime.

A darker, duller isle they found

Whose ground was sealed in rime.

"We'll hide here 'til the wedding,

Then I can disappear!

Now Anna, choose a husband new;

We'll bring a suitor here."

But Anna grieved unceasing;

She could not be consoled.

The ship walls seemed to groan afresh,

With misery untold.

'Til finally the North Wind

Pulled Anna from her bed.

"You've cried enough!" he said, "Some work

Will quickly clear your head!"

He piled her up with labors,

And screamed if she would halt.

Her sisters didn't help her, 'cause

They said 'twas all her fault.

The evening of the fifth day,

She lay awash in tears.

When suddenly her room grew warm

And birdsong kissed her ears.

"My prince?" said Anna softly,

As sleep swept her away.

She found herself again inside

The King of Wind's domain!

"What is this?" Anna wondered;

"O cruel and lovely dream!"

But then she saw the Prince of Winds:

How solid, real he seemed!

Please, taunt me not," said Anna,

"This dream I cannot bear!"

"This is no dream," the prince replied;

"I live, as you are fair!"

"I drowned, but Father found me;

He brought me back from death.

And now –" but Anna squeezed him tight

And squished out all his breath.

"If I'm still yours," the prince said,

"We'll marry, as we vowed!"

"I'm yours, you're mine," glad Anna said,

"But can't you find me now?"

For justice' sake, we must wait

Until the wedding-day;

I've sent my wind to give you strength –"

Then Anna popped awake.

"Please, not a dream!" said Anna,

"Oh, let it have been true!"

A warm breeze brought the scent of flow'rs!

Her joy took root anew.

The chores that day were crushing,

But Anna's heart flew free.

She sang, which made her sisters ask,

"This change, how can it be?"

She told them of her vision,

But they declared her daft.

When she stood firm, they told North Wind,

Who challenged her in wrath.

“What lunacy!” he shouted.

Said she: “He will return.”

“You fool!” he said. “You’ll sweat until

This nonsense you unlearn.”

So Anna labored harder,

With dishes, goats, and soil.

Her back was bent, her fingers cracked;

She groaned beneath her toil.

At times, she couldn’t bear it:

Was her hope even real?

How easy it would be to take

The North Wind’s offered deal!

The wind, though, kept her trusting

The prince was still alive.

It warmed her room and sighed along

When she grew weak and cried.

Thus Anna’s heart turned sturdy;

Her soul grew tough with joy.

Though suffering, she could endure

When she thought of her boy.

So month trudged after month, and
The wedding-day drew near.
The North Wind decked her sisters out
In gowns and festive gear.

To Anna he gave nothing.
He said, "I'll fete you too,
If you just marry from my friends!"
But Anna still refused.

"I'll take your life," said North Wind,
"For spitting on my will!"
But Anna said, "My prince will come;
I'm waiting for him still."

Her sisters' grooms soon joined them,
And all were put to work.
Amelia roared, "Stir this! Fetch that!"
In stress, she went berserk.

Alexa ducked her labors
And hogged the vanity.
"With perfect moves and clothing,
All eyes will be on me!"

And Anna wrestled doubting,
And clutched at faith like rope.
He will come back, she told herself,
And staked her life on hope.

The chosen day, the party

Woke to a startling sight:

Their frosty isle had put forth oaks

And lilies overnight!

The North Wind's face turned ghastly;

He sputtered without speech.

A silver star streaked through the sky

And landed on the beach.

The Prince of Winds! And with him

The King in glory came.

"I'll bless this wedding," said the King,

"And seal it by my name.

I'll guide the rites; attend me,

Your covenants to make."

He led the couples through the vows

That only death should break.

Amelia's vows seemed warnings;

Alexa, bored, droned hers.

But Anna and the prince near sang

Their oaths in rhyme and verse.

With solemn words, the Wind-King

Three couples new declared.

Each husband whisked his bride back to

The home he had prepared.

The years went by for Anna,
In joy that never passed;
In paradise and perfect love,
Each one outshone the last.

They visited her sisters
On every even year.
But both the girls had married ill:
Their lives were void of cheer.

Alexa and Bayamo
Fought fiercely every day;
Amelia nagged Chinook until
He spent most time away.

When Anna asked her sisters
To join her and the prince,
They both refused; though bitter, they
Were too proud to repent.

In self-dug pits they wallowed;
So Anna let them be.
And North Wind disappeared: he ne'er
Again was heard or seen.

But Anna's life abounded;
In bliss her family grew.
The King's land yielded endless charms
And pleasures ever new.