

Diane Stepro

Mr. King

Pick up artist hustler pulling the golden fleece over your eyes
blinding you with that shower of gold trinkets,
cloaking my ugly duckling soul with the Snow White
feathers of a swan.

I'll sing you to sleep with somebody else's song
You're so beautiful like—

Babydoll, you woke up on the staircase
with nothing, not even those glass slippers
and no one looking for you at all. And baby,
You're as ugly as a fistful of snakes. You should feel lucky
I took a second look.

Diane Stepro holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Indiana University and has published in *The Cincinnati Review*, *The New Laurel Review*, and other places. All of that was several decades ago, as she stepped away from publishing due to family issues, but never stopped writing. She has been working on a collection of poems that interrogates the ways in which community mores, grief, and trauma all conspire to keep people from talking about and reporting rapes. Each poem is a dramatic monologue spoken by one person, often a character from mythology.