

Lords of Gossamer & Shadow

Gossamer Worlds: Poetica Mundi



by Matt Banach





Rite Publishing Presents:

Gossamer Worlds: Poetica Mundi

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Poetica Mundi

*“Stairs descending,
The tower of boiling brass,
A room, simple, clean.*

*White walls, a white Door,
Wafts of steam thick with meaning,
The doorknob – flat black.*

*Opening a Door,
A flood of words run rampant,
Promising bliss, pain.*

*The world beyond,
A single step to reveal,
Poetry as life.”*

- Yaeger's Travelogue

Description

*There once was a gossamer realm,
With poetical force at the helm,
In delicate prose,
They spun weals and woes,
And nursed every ash, oak, and elm.*

*The waves and the wind and the hills,
Shift as pentameter spills,
These lyrical words,
Sing brightly as birds,
A manifestation of wills.*

*Sometimes it is madness, be sure,
Banality's bane is its cure,
When poetry's pouring,
Never tis boring,
Wide wonders drip wet with allure.*



*It isn't all mindless depravity,
There're reasonable poems about
gravity,
But should a tongue waver,
And lose lyric's favor,
This sweetness... something something...
cavity? **Damn.***

I had the rhythm going for a while, but I lost it. Tough to keep up. You see, I'm in Poetica Mundi while composing this entry, so I've got to play by their rules. Everything has to be a damn poem here. Even thinking in not-poetry is taxing, like the gossamer reality itself is rejecting the... **Ow.**

*Worry years chip off my life,
Prose has brought nothing but strife,
It's kinda sing-songy,
But just play along-y,
Words are as sharp as a knife.*

Better...ish. My limericks are shaky. Maybe quatrains or tercets or... **Ow.**

*I really need to find a Muse,
Before more language I abuse.*

*A rhyme about beer will make everything
clear; gossamer hears and my brew now
appears! With cool suds a-drinking, my
poet-brain's thinking, my artistry barely
less stinking.*

Rough, but enough.

~~~~~

*A land of beauty – verdant, lush,  
Forests sleep with pregnant hush,  
Hillocks kissed by sunset's blush.*

*Kingdoms of pastoral bliss,  
Split twixt counties of that and this,  
As poets dream and reminisce.*

*Green and rolling County Brook,  
With miller's grist and shepherd's crook,  
As roosters crow and farmwives cook.*



*County Moon*

## What is Poetry?

Poetry comes in many forms: ballads, concrete poetry, couplets, doggerel, epics, epigrams, free verse, haiku, iambic pentameter, limericks, octaves, odes, pastoral poetry, quatrains, renga, rhymes, riddles, rondeau, slams, song lyrics, sonnets, tanka, villanelles, and many more. Research and use as many styles as suit your game – but above all, have fun with language and be expressive and creative, not restrictive.

*Dark and brooding County Callow,  
Homes sit dark and fields lay fallow,  
Pining o'er fresh graves too shallow.*

*Twisting twilight County Grable,  
Realm of elves and faerie fable,  
Witching hours black as sable.*

*Spring eternal County Grace,  
Where lovers twine in fond embrace,  
Flowers shroud each trysting place.*

*Cheery, lofty County Moon,  
Castles float like bright balloon,  
Breezes sing a children's tune.*

*Weird and wicked County Zeem,  
Astronauts and men of steam,  
Their future wonders whir and gleam.*

*Shifting borders sift like sands,  
Ephemeral and changing lands,  
Evolving as the verse commands.*

### **Typical Denizens**

*The Poets populate this rhyming realm,  
Their words and songs upon the world's  
helm.*

*Within each county stirs a beating heart,  
Who stokes the flame of poetry's fine art.  
As man, or fey, or beast with speaking  
gift,*

*These dukes let not their shape define  
their drift.*

*Be ye a knight, or sprite, or biting thing,  
Tis vim and verve with verse what makes  
a king.*

*So oft the captain of a land entire,  
May be no more than humble, humming  
squire.*

*But hark, when humble voices speak their  
words,*

*Ascend the stars, and sing again sweet  
birds.*

*Ensnconced in lives their musing habits  
made,*

*Few Poets ply their skills in war or trade.*

### **Poet Power**

*Poets – denizens of Poetica Mundi with the innate ability to shape reality with their poetry – come in all shapes, sizes, and species. A Poet may have the qualities Mold Gossamer Matter [1 Point], Mold Gossamer Creatures [2 Points], or Mold Gossamer Reality [4 Points], and the most powerful Poets some may have Superior- or Paragon-level Attributes, as well as their own lesser forms of Sorcery or other Powers.*

*A simple life, in hamlets blessed by peace,  
Content souls rest ere tranquil beauty  
cease.*

*Should any raise alarm – the hue and  
cry,*

*Let slip the dogs, as tongues will lash and  
lie.*

*Their verses weave the goss'mer strand,  
To call the falling stars and seed the land.*

*So heed the bard or witch who rhymes a  
hex,*

*For those who guard the realm, the realm  
protects.*

*Not all who walk and talk a Poet be,  
Seems some are merely poems roaming  
free.*

*In living, laughing Poets do create,  
The world, its turns, and what shall be  
our fate.*



*A Poet & His Muses*

*The Muses fuel the mind and heart like flame,  
 Swift inspiration stoking poet's fame.  
 Their forms are many – creature, thing,  
 and place,  
 Yet all do speak, though some may lack a face.  
 Consider all the lovely birds who sing,  
 And with sweet singing, tender poems bring.  
 Behold the mighty mountain who doth loom,  
 And urge poor awe-struck souls to murmur doom.  
 Then ponder 'pon the babbling brook so pure,  
 That all who drink, their thirst forever cure.  
 Keep dear the locket holding lovers past,  
 For sure as ghosts these memories do last.  
 A golden sunset glowing in the hills,*

### *Quite A-Musing*

Muses are living (though sometimes inanimate and/or ephemeral) founts of power in Poetica Mundi, and enable Poets – and others versed in the ways of shaping gossamer reality – to mold gossamer matter with strength and ease. Muses may have the qualities Connected to a Power [1 Point], Linked to a Power [2 Points], or Integral to a Power [4 Points], depending on what type of grand works they inspire; particularly valuable Muses may have these qualities with respect to multiple Powers, or all Powers, as they enable all great things.

*Can speak as well as people when it wills.  
 These Muses more than humble spirits be,*

*For by their gifts they set great power free.*

*To Poets they impart inspiring thought,  
Each like an engine churning, burning hot.*

*Sustained by what their Poets say and do,  
So thrive the Muses ever strong and true.  
The Mora knight shall find a page and horse.*

*Adventures great the knight may earn in spades,  
But as the verses cease his substance fades.*

*So too the mice who scamper cross the floor,  
Til Poets mind them not and speak no more.*

*Has each a soul, or dream of lives gone past?*

*Tis hard to say, for few are long to last.  
Like fleeting flowers in their seasons bloom,*

*An end is just an end, and not a doom.  
Though living, laughing, loving Morae be,*

*Their fates weigh less than foam upon the sea.*

## **Threats**

*Mary Fair, of Copper Hair,  
Once did wander 'pon the Stair,  
What humble hamlet whence she came,  
Ne'er would fate return her there.*

*A thousand years her power grew,  
She learnt the names of what was true,  
In wrighting wrought a gallery,*

*Then opened Doors, and locked a few.*

*Her lover Sven long by her side,  
A bear of a man, too coarse to hide,  
That he walked slower, stumbled more,  
One day beside the path, he died.*

*Song and verse her treasured arts,  
Mare combed the Stair in all its parts,  
Looking for the words eternal,  
A single key to all realms, all hearts.*

*Then through Door with rhyming lilt,  
She found a way which soothed her guilt,  
Amongst a realm older than stones,  
With poetry a kingdom built.*

*Mary Fair, of Copper Hair,  
Now rules this world of lyric flair,  
A gracious queen – no tyrant she,  
But be polite, and foes beware.*

## **Mary Fair, of Copper Hair**

### **Attributes**

Psyche – 55 Points  
Strength – 20 Points  
Endurance – 40 Points  
Warfare – 5 Points

### **Powers**

Invocation [20 Points]  
Master of the Grand Stair [35 Points]  
Wrighting [30 Points]

### **Artifacts & Creatures**

*An Allusionary Anthropomorphic Army*



### *Mary Fair, of Copper Hair*

[42 Points] – Bobbins large and mountains small, creatures wide and whimsies tall, these agents of great Mary Fair are all about and everywhere. Of any form and any size, sharp their claws and keen their eyes, never to forsake their duty, they slay her foes and guard her booty.

- Double Vitality [2 Points]
- Hardened [1 Point]
- Superior Stamina [1 Point]
- Resistant to Normal Weapons [1 Point]
- Regeneration [4 Points]
- Mold Gossamer Matter [1 Point]
- Limited Shape-Shift [4 Points]
- Horde [x3 Points]





*Fractalox*

*The Looking Book* [6 Points] – Thoughtful Mary keeps a book, within its pages she can look; full of folks she knows quite well, the pages hold sly wrighting's spell.

- Set of Icons [2 Points]
- Able to Speak [1 Point]
- Psychic Sensitivity [1 Point]
- Resistant to Firearms [2 Points]

**Stuff**

*Good* [+3 Points]

~~~~~

Fractalox fly free,
*Beings of poetic math,
 Shapes, lines – such beauty,
 Angles of order without,*

Chaos theory lurks within.

*Polygon tendrils,
 Two dimensional bodies,
 Raw geometries,
 Their gleaming eyes unblinking,
 Their strange minds inscrutable.*

*Like odd jellyfish,
 Fractalox float and observe,
 Silent as the grave,
 Pondering deep equations,
 Variables to be solved.*

*Beware their numbers,
 Asymptote spines razor sharp,
 Toxic remainders,
 And dire bounding function,
 Whose lines imprison the soul.*

*Single eye burning,
Its gaze is pure white death,
An unbroken line,
No hatred taints its null heart,
No pity stays its cold deeds.*

*Motives unspoken,
For ages they have wandered,
Seeking and searching,
From whence came the Fractalox?
What role the Annunaki?*

~~~~~

**Orange** is a vile and mystical pox,  
A bright, itchy rash from your head to  
your socks,  
You can't think of rhyme and you can't  
think of song,  
Every word flounders and just comes out  
wrong.

*Orange is the color of hex and affliction,  
A sure sign your luck will despair with  
your diction,  
Voices turn hoarse as poetry stumbles,  
Pustules form and gossamer crumbles.*

*Those with the Orange become outcasts  
and lepers,  
Scratching their blisters and smelling of  
peppers,  
No one wants any of what they have got,  
Tis better to burn them then catch the foul  
rot.*

*We don't know if Orange is the symptom  
or cause,  
Of rhyming afoul of these gossamer laws,  
Even if no one for miles does scratch,*

## Mathematical Monsters

Fractalox exist in a multitude of sizes and variations, each with different abilities and power levels, but here's a strong one:

Hexagonal Green Fractalox,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Standard Deviation  
Animal Vitality [1 Point]  
Engine Speed [4 Points]  
Tireless Stamina [4 Points]  
Combat Reflexes [2 Points]  
Deadly Damage [4 Points]  
Resistant to Firearms [2 Points]  
Psychic Barrier [4 Points]  
True Name is Warded [2 Points]

This Fractalox also has innate abilities equivalent to the Sorcery spells Immobility, Invisibility, Barrier (force field plane), Bolt (laser eye-beam), and Teleport.

*With too many foibles the Orange you  
can catch.*

*No one's immune to this terrible ill,  
Heroes and villains alike it can kill,  
Sapping your vigor 'til willpower breaks,  
Fever bring madness and chills bring  
the shakes.*

*Poor souls who perish from Orange's  
curse,  
Don't just pass away – oh no, it's far  
worse,  
Zombies of umber and pumpkin-hued  
ghasts,  
Shamble the land as their agony lasts.*

*Curing this sickness takes lots of hard work,  
If friends rhyme your name then your health it will perk,  
Surest of all is poetic oration,  
Bolstered with Power of true Invocation.*

*Speak with great care when discussing this plague,  
Its name springs a trap if you can't keep it vague,  
Nothing's so sure to infect you with Orange,  
Than ending a rhyme with... it.*

**Sh\*t.**

### *Notable Locations*

*Meadowland, sweet pastoral paradise  
rolling hills  
marshy swales  
shady vales  
afternoons of velvet, verdant green.*

*Meadowland, grass fit for a queen  
golden sheep  
happy dogs  
lazy shepherds  
Mary Fair's perfect pasture palace.*

*Meadowland, a motley court convenes  
puffing poets  
talking beasts  
singing kettles  
in many voices such strange chorus.*

*Meadowland, where Muses bend to sip  
power springs  
burbling streams*

*clear ambrosia  
a long cool drink renews the spirit.*

*Meadowland, the cornucopia  
knowing apples  
honeyed words  
pregnant pauses  
poems read well-fed prolonged in season.*

*Meadowland, jewel of County Brook  
paths crossing  
signposts swaying  
hamlets drowsing  
a Door opens in farmhouse quiet.*

~~~~~

*Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town,
Madness Lurks inSide it,
Saner Minds deNied it,
County Zeem does Hide it,
True is False and Up is Down,
Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town.*

*Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town,
Clockworks Doomed to Disgrace,
Really Not a Nice place,
If you Show a Flesh-face,
Well-deServed its Fell reNown,
Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town.*

*Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town,
Backwards Clockmen Tickle,
Gizmos Clack and Clickle,
Cranky Androids Prickle,
Fractured Futures Wear a Frown,
Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town.*



Delivery for Captain Penelope - County Zeem

*Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town,
Shiny Metal Spires,
Burning Barrel Fires,
Poets Bound in Wires,
Robots Bleeding Rusty Brown,
Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town.*

*Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town,
Hanging Morae Dangle,
Killer Cyborgs Mangle,
Put the Fang in Fangle,
Hopes in Acid Oceans Drown,
Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town.*

*Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town,
Whispers As the Wind blows,
Where the Secret Heir goes,
Mary Fair – oh She knows,
Here there Hides a Second Crown,
Higgledy-Piggledy Newfangle Town.*

~~~~~

*Caesura's void // the space between all things,  
Step back as empty chasm parts the sand,  
Give pause // for in such silence absence sings.*

*A gulf no bird can cross upon its wings,  
Beside its edge the gods must wait and stand,  
Caesura's void // the space between all things.*

*Down canyon infinite no echo rings,  
Realm's meat split down to bone by Shadow's hand,  
Give pause // for in such silence absence sings.*

*No Poet can weave rhyme to pull its strings,  
By rivers shifting whim it carves the land,*

*Caesura's void // the space between all things.*

*An ordered verse this halting border brings,  
Lest fancy run amok as bards demand,  
Give pause // for in such silence absence sings.*

*Across eternity Caesura springs,  
A breath perchance by breathing understand,  
Caesura's void // the space between all things,  
Give pause // for in such silence absence sings.*

## *Final Thoughts*

*Poetry made real,  
recited with such zeal,  
great beauty and appeal,  
coax even jaded hearts to feel.*

*So up or down the stairway climb,  
pause to have a lovely time,  
luxuriate in verse sublime,  
but keep your wits and know your rhyme.*

*~ Yaeger Zane*



## Poetica Mundi Domain Table

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|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Technology</b>               | Variable (but most commonly Medieval)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Level:</b>                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Magic</b>                    | Magic is Commonplace                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Level:</b>                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Security:</b>                | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Type:</b>                    | Primal World [4 Points] (current owner: Mary Fair)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Control:</b>                 | Control of Time Flow [2 Points]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Influence on the Powers:</b> | Eidolon – Powerful<br>Umbra – Powerful                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Special:</b>                 | Wrighting – Easily Used                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                 | <i>Poetry in Motion*</i> – Poetry is the very fabric of this world, and that fundamental truth controls this gossamer reality as surely as any system of physics or magic. While the definition of “poetry” should be expansive and flexible – not everything has to rhyme – characters inside the world should be required to obey the following laws: |

- Poetry is both the spiritual substance of the world and the motive force behind all forms of creation, destruction, and change.
- All communication, whether it be spoken, written, or conveyed telepathically, shall be in poetry.
- Any important action (e.g., battling a dragon, searching for a treasure, building a house, embracing a lover) shall be accompanied by the recitation of a poem describing the activity. This includes any exercise of a Power.

Gamemasters should enforce these strictures; not by declaring non-poetic things impossible, but by emphasizing how the gossamer reality resists and rejects them. Non-poetic speech falls flat and sounds offensive, sure to raise the ire of the natives. Non-poetic actions are less likely to succeed and are burdensome to carry out, requiring escalating tests of Endurance. Non-poetic information brought in from other worlds corrupts and warps so as to become unintelligible. Gamemasters should also incentivize players to participate in this surreal reality. Enthusiastic (not necessarily good) poetry may be rewarded with positive outcomes, lucky breaks, Good Stuff, or even bonus advancement points, as suits the game.

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## How to Use Poetica Mundi

- We're always saying the infinite cosmos is populated by strange realms governed by bizarre natural laws beyond the ken of physics and sense. This is one of those worlds, so put your multiverse where your mouth is and embrace the weird.
- The quirks of Poetica Mundi make it a great disruptor of outside hierarchies. Rivals who are hopelessly mismatched elsewhere may find themselves on even – or oddly uneven – ground when the fight comes to a land where poetry is power, and one side has a knack for verse and the other does not.
- Mary Fair (of Copper Hair) makes for a valuable ally or mentor. She once wandered vast stretches of the Grand Stair and still recalls a great deal of very useful information; with her ability for Wrighting, she can be just a picture and a poetic response away from providing characters with riddling insights.
- An ally of the characters in Poetica Mundi has contracted the vile pox known as “the Orange”. A garbled half-rhyming distress call implores the characters to come to the rescue – a rescue possible only through the restorative power of poetry.
- Despite – or perhaps because of – its odd qualities, Poetica Mundi is a primal world brimming over with power, where the shaping of reality is frighteningly easy. A rival of the characters selects this gossamer realm as a base of operations for the next step of a master plan, and suddenly its worth becomes evident.
- Encourage poetic speech as much as possible by players while the characters are in Poetica Mundi. Not everything needs to be a Shakespearean epic – basic rhymes and quoted song lyrics will do. Have fun!

