

Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall

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Mirror, mirror, on the wall
Who's the fairest of them all?
My number-scientists can't agree
With complete and utter certainty
"What is beauty, after all," they say.

Mirror, mirror, on the wall
Who's the fairest of them all?
Are you the one that I should ask--are you the right one for this task?
What is your stance, your take, your bearing?
How'll you judge our beauties' fairing?

Mirror, mirror, on the wall
Who's the fairest of them all?
You'll tell the story of their struggle,
Or capture the essence of lives-a-muddle,
Or saturate yourself with babes galore...

Mirror, mirror, on the wall
Who's the fairest of them all?
Perhaps you'll weave a cultural view,
Or see them case-by-case anew,
But when you're done, who will the fairest be?

Mirror, mirror, on the wall
Who's the fairest of them all?
How will you collect your data?
And then decide what really matters?
How will you present all that you know?

Mirror, mirror, on the wall
Who's the fairest of them all: prey tell, what will your work be really worth?
Can qualitative stuff be valid?
Will all this work be really valued,
Without universal comparability?

Mirror, mirror, on the wall
Who's the fairest of them all?
If you'll describe with rich conviction,
Or photographs, or skillful diction,
All it is you've seen, and feel, and know...

Then I will trust you, dear researcher,
And know your words are true:
You see, you go where I can never go.
You bring to light so many causes,
In shadows dark—so many closets,
You see, you go where I can never go.

You go to field to see and measure,
How they feel—their pain, their pleasure,
You see, you go where I can never go.

You collect and code and graph it all,
With skills I do not know at all,
You see, you go where I can never go.

You then decide what's critical,
Interpret so it's plausible,
You see, you go where I can never go.

And in the end, if truth be told,
I know you'll be both strong and bold,
Because you go where I can never go.

Beauty must be felt not measured,
Its impact is both pain and pleasure,
This I know that you will understand.

So now, that you've been through them all,
Please go ahead, and make the call.
I trust you...

Mirror, Mirror,
On the Wall.

Author Note

Brad Howey is currently a PhD candidate in Education at the University of Idaho. He is an award-winning author and an active performer. After receiving his M.M. in saxophone performance at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York, Brad returned to his home state of Alaska where he taught high school music for eleven years. While there, Brad founded the Sitka Jazz Festival, bringing artists such as John Clayton, Steve Turre, Paquito D'Rivera, Bill Watrous, and many others to the island community of Sitka to teach, inspire, and perform. Brad Howey PhD, 906 Park Avenue, Lewiston, Idaho 83501; Telephone: (208) 948-0276

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