

The Feast of Hallowtide

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Winken, Blinken, and Nod disband—
the Pumpkin King is nigh at hand
with bulbous cheeks and knife-cut eyes,
his soulless smirk affixed breadth-wise
across his ochre grooves of skin,
a grotesque, grinning mannequin
tinged with green and clinging earth,
perdition's fire disguised as mirth.

The Pumpkin King a-souling goes,
in search of bread and prayers and clothes.
A hallowed night, this spirit time,
magic and mayhem in pantomime:
the banshees and the beasties roam,
seeking out inviting homes
where charity begins and ends
with food and ale for weary friends.

Winken, Blinken, and Nod this night—
no twinkling foam or spangled light,
no singing moon or herring fish—
puffing on pipes of Cavendish,
adrift on ruffled waves of dew
within their rocking wooden shoe,
remember well the Pumpkin King
with toothless flicker marshaling

ancient whispers of song and dance
and priestly words of clairvoyance.
Crisp leaves scatter in the chill
and frost along the windowsill
creeps ever closer to the hearth;
departing rays—too soon a dearth—
tease the bones of skeleton trees
that creak and moan upon the breeze.