

The Tooth Fairy

CHARLES HARPER WEBB

What would a fairy want with all those teeth?
How did she carry them? Where did she keep them?

Did she look like Tinkerbell, whom I ached
to see naked? If I caught her, would she grant

a wish, or lead me to a pot of quarters?
Why a quarter for a tooth? Why not a dime?

Or fifty cents? And how did she get quarters?
Make them with her wand? Turn teeth into them?

I liked knowing that my smile was worth
a Rawlings catcher's mitt, and more than a whole set

of baseball cards; still, a Tooth Fairy wasn't easy
to believe. Each time the quarter gleamed

under my pillow when I knew I hadn't
moved my head all night, I was relieved.

I could see the Fairy then: sitting,
legs crossed, on a white mountain of teeth,

her own teeth sparkling like pixie dust
as she assured me she was real, and so the Easter

Bunny, Santa Claus, and God were too,
and Mom and Dad (who said the quarters showed

“Loss has some compensations”) really would
love me always, like they said, and never die.