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### 3C #14 “Not My Best Side” by U.A. Fanthorpe

**Term:** Symbol—an image loaded with significance beyond literal definition.

**Example:** “I quite took to the dragon . . . the dragon got himself beaten by the boy.”

**Function:**

In Fanthorpe’s poem, “Not My Best Side,” the pessimistic tone towards men portrays them as monsters—arrogant and heartless. Demonstrated through three contrasting perspectives-- a dragon, a princess, and a prince--, dramatic monologues come through as each one shares their story. This symbolic story centers around the expected plot of a brave prince who slays a monstrous dragon, rescuing the damsel in distress. The title introduces the honesty from each position (“not my best side”). “The artist didn’t give me a chance to pose properly,” the dragon pleads and asks “why should my conqueror be so ostentatiously beardless, and ride a horse with a deformed neck and square hoofs?” The woman or princess, the focus of the whole story, doesn’t even know if “she wants to be rescued . . . (she) quite took to the dragon.” Like any other girl, this “princess” wants to be loved—but she wants to be loved by someone she knows and not by some “prince.” She doesn’t desire to be saved—only loved, and not by the knight in shining armor whose face conceals itself behind hard metal. “What was he like underneath the hardware?” she inquires. The monster and prince represent the two lovers she has caught herself between, but treats the problem dismissively as she flippantly makes her decision. The way the monster “looked at me, he made me feel he was all ready to eat me. And any girl enjoys that.” However her man in shining armor, the “prince,” delights in the killing of this beastly dragon. He begins to brag saying, “I have diplomas in Dragon management . . . my horse is the latest model, with automatic transmission . . . my spear is custom-built . . . I’m qualified and equipped . . . You can’t do better than me at the moment.” Through this pride, irritation gets the better of him: “What, in any case, does it matter what you want? You’re in my way.” This conversational free verse demonstrates a typical love triangle through the symbolism of a monster, a prince, and a damsel in distress--each speaking with their own voice.