

palaver

Summer 2013

Folklore



palaver

/pəˈlævər/

n.

A talk, a discussion, a dialogue; (spec. in early use) a conference between African tribes-people and traders or travellers.

v.

To praise over-highly, flatter; to cajole.

To persuade (a person) to do something; to talk (a person) out of or into something; to win (a person) over with palaver.

To hold a colloquy or conference; to parley or converse with.

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Thanks: UNC Wilmington's Graduate Liberal Studies Program for letting us crash on your couch this summer. Dr. Patricia Turrisi for always being willing to palaver. Our Staff Readers—thank you for sacrificing some of your beach time this summer to give your valuable responses and opinions! Jamie Joyner and Lauren Evans for being MLA goddesses—may Time never tarnish the Beauty of your perfect punctuation. Ashley Hudson for not only being the inspiration of our obsession with folklore and fairy tales in GLS, but also for answering e-mails at 2 a.m. And UNC Wilmington for creating a campus that encourages its students to explore and experiment and engage, and for fostering our love for academic enlightenment.

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Note From the Editor |

Sarah E. Bode

You might think we've given you the slip with this special Summer issue, but we couldn't help ourselves. Perhaps it's not wise to start this note with the cliché — we were chomping at the bit to do another issue — but that's how I remember ruminating about this themed issue of *Palaver*. We were just feeding off the elation and enthusiasm that pulsed from our Spring issue.

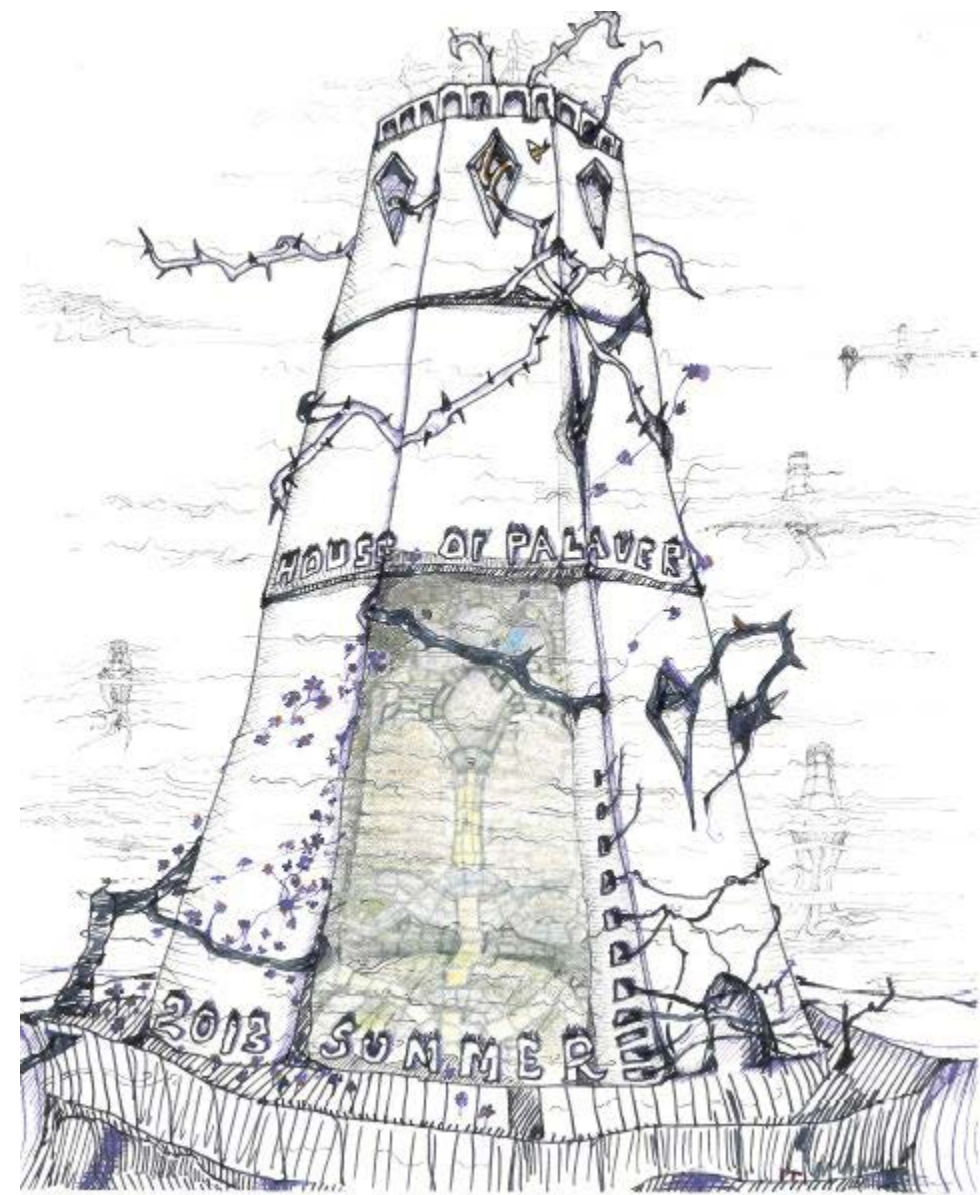
The theme for this Summer 2013 issue was born from a popular Graduate Liberal Studies course offered at UNC Wilmington. Ashley Hudson's course, "Grave Robbing for a Wedding Gown: An Exploration of the Contemporary Fairy Tale," is one that breeds students' childhood imaginations with their adult love for literary studies. This culminates into a classroom experience like no other. Having personally taken the course, Hudson's curriculum takes your childhood memories of fairy tales and doesn't wholly dash them into oblivion, but she tactfully allows for the academic fairy tale regards to fester in your psyche. And when you come up for air, your childhood memories have meshed with a newfound horror of the classical fairy tale. It is then fostered by a look into the contemporary fairy tales of authors like Joyce Carol Oates, Angela Carter, Alissa Nutting, and Kate Bernheimer. You walk away with a new perspective on fairy tales — classical and modern, literary and film. You walk away with distaste in your mouth with how ignorant the Disney films of your childhood made you to the reality of the classical fairy tales. You walk away with the power to utterly destroy a child's fairy tale innocence and whimsy.

Folklore — like fairy tales, fables, myths, tall tales, and legends — is often a child's first encounter with literature and storytelling. This is perhaps what makes folklore such an important part of our world culture and collective histories. Folklore tells us of our beginnings, our first loves, our first sacrifices. It allows us to connect with others through hardships, struggles, triumphs, and new wisdoms. The act of storytelling itself is also one to be revered — whether around a campfire, tucked in bed, framed by a velvet curtain, or splayed out on a screen — there is connection in every word.

It was this connection, this fostering of development in all respects — literary, creative, academic, historical, mythological, humanistic — that made this folklore theme a perfect fit for *Palaver*. And Issue 2 has morphed into a truly amazing beast — one that culminates all sorts of folklore into an adventure from cover to cover. We begin with the conviction-filled voice of Jessica Jacob and her academic essay that shatters the common stigmas of stepmother characters in the classical fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. Brian Caskey continues the classical fairy tale vein, bringing us into the modern with commentary on the 2012 film *Snow White and the Huntsman*. Photographer Matthew Johnson shows us the innocence to which many fairy-tale-scholars hope to cling to and cast aside when studying tales such as Little Red Riding Hood. From the classical, we switch to the canonical — the biblical Elijah, in an essay by Anna S. Klein. Poet, Karen Comstock jumps the Atlantic and melodically guides us through some Native American-themed images. We travel south into Bolivia — diving deep into the mines to dance with the devil with featured artist Charlene Eckels. Then we bounce over the Pacific to Korea, reminiscing through the labyrinth of our ancient Greco-formed memories. Rob Wells tramps through the Mediterranean with Dido and Aeneas and into the present, tying the gossip themes present in *The Aeneid* to the common practices of modern media. Artist Heather Jo

Divoky's markers blend together our ancestor's commentary on time and beauty, causing us to perhaps take a look at our modern perceptions of such conceptions. Kathryn Barber brings us 'round closer to home, to the Appalachians, with an interview with novelist Amy Greene.

I hope you enjoy every breadcrumb on the trail of our second issue of *Palaver*, and I hope it inspires a palaver between you and the pieces found here. —S.E.B.



It is no secret that fairy tales have been used to perpetuate social standards, gender constructs, and modes of identification for centuries. Through the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, in particular, young boys are continuously pummeled with narratives encouraging them to take what they want and to proudly perpetuate patriarchy, while young girls are frequently conditioned to fall into the role of the archetypal “good girl,” who remains passive and silent, and is defined by her worth to her male counterparts.

The female protagonist is often comatose or may be locked away in a tower somewhere. She is usually sexually objectified, and in many instances must await the arrival of an over-eager prince (or king) before she is freed from one prison and is immediately consigned to another—typically a loveless marriage and generally without her consent. However, the passive protagonist represents only one of two archetypal female roles within the Grimms' tales. Standing as her binary opposition is the active antagonist—the infamous evil queen or the wicked stepmother. Even the cannibalistic mother-in-law plagues the pages of several “children's” tales.

Interestingly, after several revisions of the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, or *Children's and Household Tales*, the biological mother, when she appears at all, is rarely portrayed as vile or hostile. It appears that, of the multiple maternal roles depicted within the pages of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, the biological mother is the only figure who is immune to the trepidation of children. While these long-prescribed character roles may appear to be harmless—perhaps even comforting in their familiarity—the wicked stepmother stereotype has not only survived (for centuries) within the fairy-tale genre, it has also permeated popular culture and engendered an otherwise fallacious stigma.

Although “the existence of the wicked stepmother theme can be traced back as far as the ninth century,” the most widely known examples of wicked stepmothers have appeared within the last few centuries (Christian 29). Some of the most infamous and lasting evil stepmothers in literature have come from the Grimms' fairy tales. The vile stepmothers of “Cinderella” and “Snow White” are likely two of the most widely recognized villains in the fairy-tale genre. Nearly as notorious is the contemptible stepmother of “Hansel and Gretel,” who is “driven to abandon the children by brutish self-interest” because “their needs jeopardize her own survival” (Tatar *Classic Fairy Tales* 180). However, the infamy of these villainesses does not directly correlate with the intensity of their iniquity. In fact, some of the most grisly transgressions enacted by stepmothers remain tucked in the pages of the Grimms' lesser-known tales.

Perhaps the worst such instance appears in

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“The Juniper Tree,” which details the mistreatment of a young boy by his stepmother after his “beautiful and good” biological mother “die[s] of joy” upon giving birth to him (“The Juniper Tree” 144). The boy is physically abused by his stepmother throughout his life, until he comes home one afternoon and his stepmother prompts him to retrieve an apple from a chest: “[w]hen the little boy bent down, the devil prompted her and *bam!* She slammed the lid down so hard that the boy's head flew off and fell into the chest with the apples” (“The Juniper Tree” 145). The stepmother proceeds to tie the boy's head back onto his neck using a kerchief in order to trick her own daughter (Marlene) into slapping the boy: “So Marlene gave him a slap, and his head went flying off” (“The Juniper Tree” 145). Soon after, the wicked stepmother cooks the boy in a stew and brazenly feeds it to his (biological) father. And while there are, admittedly, not many transgressions that rival the combination of murder and conniving cannibalism, there is no shortage of wickedly portrayed stepmothers throughout the tales of the Brothers Grimm.

Among the very first words of the tale “Little Brother and Little Sister” are the following, spoken aloud by the boy to his sister:

Since the day that our mother died, we haven't had a moment of peace. Our stepmother beats us every day, and when we try to talk to her, she just gives us a swift kick and drives us off. All we get to eat are crusts of hard bread...Our mother would be turning over in her grave if she knew what was happening. (“Little Brother and Little Sister” 25)

In fact, this particular stepmother (who turns out to be a witch) is so wicked that she finds and kills the girl in her adulthood. The tale “Mother Holle” describes a girl who is mistreated by her stepmother after her father's death, and is made to be “the Cinderella of the household”—each day spinning until her fingers bleed (“Mother Holle” 86). The girl is eventually made to jump into a well, where she loses consciousness in an attempt to retrieve the spindle she has dropped (while washing it clean of her own blood).

The abuse enacted upon children by their stepmothers has made them some of the most feared villains in the genre:

[s]tepmothers stand as an abiding source of evil in countless fairy tales, and it is no accident that they rank among the most memorable villains in those tales. Folklorists would be hard pressed to name a single good stepmother, for in fairy tales the very title ‘stepmother’ pins the badge of iniquity on a figure. (Tatar *Hard Facts* 141)

In “The Six Swans,” even the children's father is wary of his new wife, and worried for his children's safety: “[h]e was afraid that the new stepmother might treat them badly or even harm them, and so he sent all of them out to a solitary castle deep in the woods” (“The Six Swans” 156). With the evil nature of the stepmother constantly being emphasized, it is hardly surprising that her evil seems to command its own staying power.

The prominence of the wicked stepmother within fairy tales undoubtedly elicits the question: why? Why do fairy tales portray stepmothers in such a negative light? To begin to answer this question, it is necessary to consider that the biological mother once filled the role of the stepmother, both in reality and in the plots of fairy tales. For instance, in the Grimms' earliest version of “Hansel and Gretel,” the plot to abandon the children was devised not by their stepmother, but by their biological mother and father. The removal of the biological mother as a coconspirator can likely be attributed to the changing family climate of nineteenth century Germany. According to some critics,

Wilhelm Grimm may have made the change in order to align the tale with the realities of nineteenth-century family life, but, more likely, he transformed the mother into a stepmother simply because he could not bear to pass on stories about mothers so intent on surviving a famine that they are willing to sacrifice their own children. (Tatar *Classic Fairy Tales* 180)

But while the Grimms may have been actively working to protect the image of the mother, the tactic likely did not work to allay the fears of every child reading their tales. As it was certainly plausible for women to die during childbirth, stepmothers were a very real part of family life in the nineteenth century.

It would stand, then, that the frequent inclusion of the wicked stepmother might actually have a negative effect on children whose fathers have remarried. In fact the stepmother joins the ranks of “bears, wolves, giants, ogres, [and] witches” as “the most frequent representations of evil” (Dainton 93). What this signifies, according to Marianne Dainton, is that “fairy tales suggest that stepmothers are the equivalent of wild animals and supernatural beings—entities that children have very little chance of facing in real life—in their wicked treatment of children” (93). The proximity of the stepmother to the children—her active role in their lives—is what, in the eyes of the children, presents the threat.

The role that the stepmother attempts to fulfill should also be considered—that of the displaced mother. According to fairy-tale scholar Maria Tatar, “[t]he many faces of maternal evil in fairy tales represent the obverse of all the positive qualities associated with mothers” (*Hard Facts* 140). Psychoanalysts, such as Bruno Bettelheim, are inclined to agree due to the Oedipal implications involved in the relationship between children and their mother. In fact, Bettelheim believes that “the fantasy of the wicked stepmother not only preserves the good mother intact, it also prevents [the child from] having to feel guilty about one’s angry wishes about her” (qtd in Tatar *Hard Facts* 144-45). Tatar agrees, posing the question “[w]hat easier way is there to depict maternal abuse of children and at the same time preserve the sanctity of mothers than by turning the evil mother into an alien interloper whose goal is to disturb the harmony of family life?” (*Hard Facts* 143). Portraying the stepmother negatively seems not only to have been an easy avenue, but a popular one as well.

Now, centuries after stepmothers were first depicted as evil, the stepmother stigma still pervades nearly every genre of fiction. Movies such as *Parent Trap* (released in 1961 and remade in 1998), and *Stepmonster* (1993) portray the stepmother as evil, hateful, and, in the latter, as an actual monster. Even movies that do not directly pertain to relationships between stepmothers and their children illustrate the negative connotations surrounding the stepmother figure. For instance, the 2012 film *Pitch Perfect* demonstrates the main character, Beca, conversing with her father: “How is the step-monster?” she asks. As her father attempts to reply, she interrupts, stating, “Oh no Dad, I don’t actually care. I just wanted to say step-monster” (*Pitch Perfect*). And while some films, such as *Stepmom* (1998), attempt to veer away from the negative stereotype associated with stepmothers, the basis of the film hinges upon the popularity of the stereotype.

In fact, a film study conducted in 1998 revealed that “over one-third of the stepmother

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summaries portrayed them as murderous or abusive’ and even more portrayed them as ‘money-grubbing or as unwanted’” (qtd in Christian 29). In the popular television program *Once Upon a Time*, the Evil Queen doubles as the adoptive mother of Henry, the biological son of the main female protagonist. And while *Once Upon a Time*, like *Stepmom*, eventually aims toward the redemption of the wicked pseudo-mom, the program directly pits the boy’s biological mother against his adoptive mother. Not surprisingly, Henry’s biological mother plays the part of the protagonist (and Henry’s decided favorite), while his non-biological mother repeatedly tries to destroy the important people in his life. The perpetuation of the wicked-stepmother stereotype has clearly reached current pop culture. Tatar suggests that “[u]ltimately it is the stepmother’s disruptive, disturbing, and divisive presence that invests the story with a degree of fascination that has facilitated its widespread circulation and that has allowed it to take hold in our culture” (*Classic Fairy Tales* 79-80).

Even news outlets across the world have been known to include headlines incorporating, and thus perpetuating, the wicked stepmother standard. In one particular headline, *ABC News* compares banks to evil stepmothers, asking, “Since When Did Banks Become Our Evil Stepmothers?” The article then suggests that, like wicked stepmothers, “instead of taking care of their children, [banks] prey on them...” (Levin). To conclude the article, the author writes: “our mothers do what they do to protect us, not profit from us—that’s what evil stepmothers do” (Levin). The “hold” that this stigma has on our culture is important; because, while the evil depiction of the stepmother began (and, indeed, still exists) as a form of fictional entertainment, its effects have spilled over into reality.

As researchers have explored the relationships between stepmothers and their stepchildren, it has become clear that the stepmother stigma is more than just a fairy tale. In fact, “[o]ne group of researchers found that the role of stepmother elicited more negative connotations than any other family position...specifically, stepmothers were perceived as less affectionate, good, fair, kind, loving, happy, and likeable, and more cruel, hateful, unfair, and unloving” (Dainton 94). While these perceptions clearly stem from the infamous stepmothers of fairytale fame, their consequences manifest in the lives of real women. Dainton suggests that “[m]yths represent a way of viewing the world that embodies a culture’s beliefs, regardless of whether

these beliefs are accurate” (93). It is these oft inaccurate beliefs that drive stepmothers to create online support groups in order to reassure one another that they are not, in fact, wicked or evil (Christian 28).


Interestingly, many studies suggest that stepfathers do not suffer the same stigma or difficulty that their stepmother counterparts do (Christian 30), and are often wholly embraced by their stepchildren—even referred to as “another dad” (Martin 1). And, as one might expect, “[t]he continued perpetuation of

the myth that all stepmothers are evil, wicked, greedy, or selfish has significant consequences on the stepmother’s self-esteem as well as her family relationships” (Christian 27). With the stigma associated with stepmothers dominating the way they are perceived, their strained relationships are likely to continue to sustain the stereotype.

Critic Christy Williams, in an attempt to illustrate the move toward breaking the stereotype, introduces Robert Coover’s 2004 novel *Stepmother*, which she suggests “challenges the static, predetermined roles of fairy-tale characters” (257). Moreover, Williams argues that Coover is successful in performing “the struggle undertaken by feminist writers who try to re-

shape the gendered narrative patterns entrenched within the genre without losing the wonder that makes the stories the fairy tales to which we keep returning” (257). However, the actions of the characters are cursed to fit the “predetermined roles” that they have been assigned: “The characters are bound by their roles, and as they struggle to change their predicaments, they are only further embittered by the trappings of the fairy tale” (Williams 269). But while the characters might be “trapped by the plot,” Williams contends that “the reader is shown how complex fairy tales can be and is led to question the authority of the popularized conventions” (270).

This complexity can also be seen in the aforementioned *Once Upon a Time*, which attempts to redeem the Evil Queen by demonstrating that, although her actions might be wicked (because, as Williams suggests, she is trapped in her prescribed role), her intentions are good. Though outlets such as these are working toward shattering the stepmother stigma, the “good” stepmother remains a scarcity in all areas of entertainment.

With the growing rate of stepmothers — “there are now more stepfamilies than first families in the U.S.” — the group of women affected by these fabricated stereotypes is becoming larger and larger (Martin). As Dainton suggests, “[f]airies do not exist, and witches do not exist, but stepmothers do exist, and therefore certain fairy tales are harmful rather than helpful to large segments of the population” (93). Furthermore, with no visible end to the perpetuation in sight, the relationships between stepmothers and their stepchildren will continue to be strained, causing tension and emotional upheaval for the stepmother and the children alike. Additionally, as fairy tales (both classic and contemporary) continue to shape the minds of the children reading them, young girls will continue to be exposed to only two archetypal female figures. By imposing the “good versus evil” binary and suggesting to girls that their only options are to either be “good” and powerless or to have power and be “evil,” the fairy tale genre continues to champion patriarchy. 

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Snow White and the Huntsman: Modern Reinterpretation or Anti-Feminist Statement? | Brian Caskey

In 2012, at least two film adaptations of Snow White appeared on movie screens in wide-release, indicating to many critics that there was a renewed cultural interest in the tale. While the family-oriented *Mirror, Mirror* features a somewhat liberal re-interpretation of the classic tale, *Snow White and the Huntsman* takes the heroine to a new level — re-imagining the main character as a Joan of Arc-type heroine who must fulfill her Messianic destiny. But does the high-tech, darkly violent film represent a fresh and culturally relevant take on a classic story, or is it a reactionary backlash against what some critics see as a creeping feminist tendency in modern culture?

Of the folk tales that were collected by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm during the early 19th century, Snow White quickly emerged as one of the most popular. Its story of beauty, death, and resurrection, along with the pervasive theme that “jealousy is the root of evil” (Luthi 63) has captivated readers and audiences since well before printed versions first appeared, and is a cultural reflection of the popularity of fairy tales that continues into the present day (Zipes “Cross-Cultural” 849).

The first version to be published by the Brothers Grimm appeared in *Children and Household Tales (Kinder-und Hausmärchen)* in 1812, but the story has been manipulated, duplicated, and revised countless times since then — with perhaps the most famous and well-known version being Walt Disney’s 1937 film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Ulaby).

Disney’s stylish, animated version was groundbreaking, not because it re-told the Snow White story, but rather, because it did so while taking advantage of new cinematic technologies that immersed the audience in color and song. The commercial success of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, according to fairy tale historian and author Jack Zipes, “revolutionized the fairy tale as institution through the cinema” (“Breaking” 343) and allowed it to overshadow other versions of the tale completely (Tatar “Introduction” 74; Tatar “Snow White”). Disney proved that fairy tales could be heavily monetized, and this realization gave filmmakers a ready source of material, along with a heavy incentive to create films that are based on fairy tales.

While many details were changed and updated for twentieth-century audiences, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* retained key ideological features that roughly aligned with the story that had been passed down by the Brothers Grimm (Zipes “Breaking” 348) as well as to more ancient tales going back to the Greeks and Romans. According to Zipes, these tales:

“[H]ave the motif of jealousy and envy of a woman that one character wants to kill. In any of the Greek myths that involve female goddesses, you see the same thing: Who’s more beautiful? Who has more power than the other? These themes — jealousy of the mother or stepmother regarding the beauty or power of a younger, mortal woman” are critical to the Snow White story. (qtd. in Smith)

In the Snow White tale types, there is a focus on Snow White’s flawless beauty and a benevolent male attitude towards her because of her physical attributes and childlike docility, the characterization of the Queen’s strong female character as boundlessly jealous and evil, the imprisonment of the Queen in her looking glass and Snow White in her glass coffin, and

the eventual redemption of Snow White by the prince (Tatar “Introduction” 74; Grimm and Grimm 89). All of the core elements of the Grimms’ story remained intact in Disney’s version.

In *Snow White and the Huntsman*, however, the story has been modified so heavily that it scarcely resembles either the Grimm or Disney versions. The queen is presented as a supernatural monster named Ravenna, a woman who tricks Snow White’s father, King Magnus, into marriage and then murders him on their wedding night. She imprisons Snow White in a cell, high up in a tower overlooking the grounds of the castle (neither the instance of mariticide, nor the imprisonment of Snow White are faithful to the Grimm or Disney versions of the tale).

Ravenna, who has “lived twenty lifetimes” and ravaged many kingdoms, justifies her actions by saying that, “Men use women and then cast them aside” (Sanders). Her obsession with staying young and beautiful leads her to constantly question her magical mirror, asking it, “Who is the fairest of them all?” (Sanders). The mirror, which functions almost as an advisor to the Queen rather than a simple method of determining her beauty, takes a human shape while composing its answers. In one of the film’s pivotal scenes, Ravenna notes that her power is fading, and the mirror answers, “My Queen, on this day one has come of age fairer even than you” (Sanders). When she discovers that Snow White is sapping her power, Ravenna demands her immediate death. The mirror further advises the queen to, “Take her heart in your hand...you will never again weaken or age” (Sanders).

This sequence differs significantly from Grimm and Disney, where there is no mention of immortality or of Snow White holding the key to eternal life. In both Grimms’ Snow White and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the queen simply wants Snow White to be taken out into the forest, where she will be killed by her agent, the huntsman. *Snow White and the Huntsman* contains an elaborate escape sequence, where, after nearly being raped, Snow White overpowers her captors – retaining her virginal status – and escapes into the deep, dark forest, where the Queen “has no powers” (Sanders).

After Snow White’s escape, Ravenna enlists the Huntsman, a man who can track down and kill Snow White. He resists, but she tells him that she can bring his dead wife back to life, if he will agree to complete the errand. While this is seemingly a small creative addition, it represents a dramatic departure from previous versions. The Huntsman in both the Grimm and Disney versions were employees of the queen and somewhat complicit in her manipulative schemes. In *Snow White and the Huntsman*, the queen is so blindingly evil that she seemingly cannot be granted assistance by anyone of their own free will. The queen has been assigned the familiar archetype, according to authors Susan M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, of the powerful and degenerate fairy tale female, a character who is “maddened, rebellious, witchlike” (292). This is not a new phenomenon, as Zipes notes, since this characterization of the queen is one of the “stereotypical products of the Western male gaze and mass-mediated manipulation of the images of women that date back to the Christian church’s demonization of women” (Simon).

However, in *Snow White and the Huntsman*, Ravenna has taken the repulsive and witchlike, haggish, and wicked stepmother role that is traditionally assigned to powerful females, and elevated it to a new extreme. Ravenna dines on the organs of birds, sucks the life out of virgins, bathes in mysterious white liquids, and occasionally morphs her body into blackbirds, or into slick, black oily substances. She is a supernaturally horrible sorceress of such incredible iniquity, that it is impossible for anyone to sympathize with her or to provide her with help unless they are compelled to do so.

The Huntsman agrees to find Snow White and is successful. He locates her in the forest, and instead of killing her, he simply agrees to help her escape the malicious queen. There is no attempt to deceive Ravenna by showing her a wild animal’s organs and claiming that they are Snow White’s, as might be expected from a story that derives from Grimm, or Disney, or both. The element of subterfuge on the part of the Huntsman has been removed from this

new thematic version, and shockingly, his character simply becomes an agent of good. Bruno Bettelheim argued that the Huntsman’s character appeared in the traditional Grimm Snow-White story as a “surrogate for the King” and for patriarchal order (Gilbert and Gubar 294). This subtlety has been removed from *Snow White and the Huntsman*, with the result that the male characters – with the exception of the queen’s brother, who also possesses superhuman characteristics and is not easily identified with by the audience – are seen as mostly pure and good and heavily oppressed by a strong, desperate, and wicked queen.

Ravenna’s vile nature is so evident that proximity to her reveals a scarred, muddy and dead landscape. It is only as the protagonists venture deeper into the forest that they begin to see a more vibrant terrain, complete with animals, trees, and beautiful iridescent butterflies. It is during this flight into the forest that the Huntsman and Snow White encounter eight dwarves (a departure from the normal seven dwarves, but remedied when one of them is sacrificed during a battle scene). The dwarves wax eloquent on Snow White’s messianic mission and supernatural abilities, stating that, “She is life itself. She will heal the land – she is the one” (Sanders). There is no mention of this religious, supernatural aspect in either Grimms’ “Snow White” or *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. It is quite unique to *Snow White and the Huntsman* and goes largely unexplained.

While Snow White is in the company of the dwarves and supposedly enjoying safe haven in the forest, Ravenna appears to her. She assumes the form of Snow White’s childhood friend, the prince, and convinces her to bite into a poisoned apple. After Snow White falls to the ground, seemingly dead, Ravenna’s false prince disappears. The Huntsman and the real prince come to her rescue, and the prince kisses her in an attempt to revive her, but nothing

happens. This is obviously a dramatic departure from the more traditional Grimm and Disney versions of the tale, since the intervention of the prince usually redeems Snow White. In this instance, it is not until her body is removed to a church – and she is kissed by the Huntsman – that she miraculously comes back to life.

Snow White, the Huntsman, the dwarves, the prince, and an army of the common people gird themselves in armor and then storm Ravenna’s castle, killing her and restoring peace to the kingdom. It is notable that, in *Snow White and the Huntsman*, Snow White chooses neither the Huntsman nor the Prince. There is instead an ambiguous and completely non-traditional ending that implies that Snow White alone can heal the fractured land and its people.

It can be said that the ending of the film quenches 21st century audience expectations for an action-laden finish (Simon), but other critics argue instead that the film and its end-

ing reflect an anti-feminist reaction. In an interview for *National Public Radio*, Harvard professor Maria Tatar said that fairy tales have traditionally allowed us a way to work out our cultural anxieties, and that the traditional story of Snow White remains particularly relevant for modern audiences. Snow White’s poisonous relationship with her stepmother and the story’s embedded focus on beauty, “has caught our attention with so many women trying to

“To my mind, it’s part of what I call the backlash against feminism. Whether it’s done consciously or not, if you look at these films, they really say something pretty terrible about women. These films are so reactionary. They react to the fact that women have asserted themselves for more equal rights and great progress has been made.”—Jack Zipes

remain youthful now” (Ulaby). She goes on to say that with so many fairy tales available to filmmakers, the fact that Snow White continues to appear in the public’s consciousness could represent a new “Boomer anxiety” regarding the increasing numbers of females in the workplace (Ulaby).

Jack Zipes agrees, saying in an interview with *Metro*:

To my mind, it’s part of what I call the backlash against feminism. Whether it’s done consciously or not, if you look at these films, they really say something pretty terrible about women. These films are so reactionary. They react to the fact that women have asserted themselves for more equal rights and great progress has been made. (Patalano)


In a key scene in the film, Snow White and her enabler, the Huntsman, enter the deep, dark forest, and it’s clear that Snow White is terrified of her surroundings. The trees reach out for her, clawing at her dress; the fog swirls around her and chokes her; even the soggy ground tries to pull her down. The Huntsman says, “The forest draws its’ strength from your weakness,” and then tears her dress, revealing that underneath, she is wearing pants (Sanders). From this moment on, Snow White becomes a more active participant in her own destiny, shedding her fear along with her dress and donning the persona of a virgin warrior.

Brian Sturm, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, says that scenes like this one in *Snow White and the Huntsman* reflect “a desire to do a role reversal” (Hesse). Sturm has noted that many contemporary fairy tale revisions have, in an effort to promote a feminist agenda, swapped the roles of the protagonists. For instance, in Robert Musch’s *The Paper Bag Princess*, gender roles are simply reversed, creating a story in which a strong Princess Elizabeth character saves the weak, passive Prince Ronald from a dragon, and then decides to reject his marriage proposal. Sturm says that this strategy of gender role reversal is misguided, and that it is “unfortunate for women to revise these fairy tales with the sole intention of disrupting the binary gender construction. The simple reversal of gender roles does not result in a feminist fairy tale, but rather a fractured fairy tale” (Kuykendall and Sturm 39). He goes on to say that:

Real men and women are not the stuff of fairy tales, completely good or completely evil archetypes. They are complicated. Real men and women play roles beyond the traditional gender-defined positions depicted in canonical fairy tales. For feminist fairy tales to meet the needs of a society of children in want of fully realized, complicated characters (regardless of gender), feminist writers need to move beyond straight role reversal. Children see through these fractured fairy tales and do not identify with their one-dimensional protagonists. Feminist fairy tales must be stories in which the main character is empowered regardless of gender. (Kuykendal and Sturm 40)

Brian Sturm, a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, says that scenes like this one in *Snow White and the Huntsman* reflect “a desire to do a role reversal” (Hesse). Sturm has noted that many contemporary fairy tale revisions have, in an effort to promote a feminist agenda, swapped the roles of the protagonists.

It is clear that *Snow White and the Huntsman* adds to the long legacy of a re-imagined Snow White, and presents a version that is darkly different and visually vibrant. However, the film engages with so many of the old, tired fairy tale stereotypes that it is difficult to view it as anything other than a film that differs only in the details. Strong female characters, such as Ravenna, are still despised. They are ugly and horrible, because they are powerful. Snow White is still unbelievably beautiful, and this attribute is what makes her special, hated, and desirable. She is empowered, once again, through the intervention of a man and takes much of her vibrancy from him.

A successful and culturally relevant retelling of the Snow White story would reflect issues that women face in society today. While the fairy tale has traditionally been subject to thematic revision, manipulation, and adaptation (Zipes “They’ll Huff”), versions that appear on film are subject to the same evolutionary modifications. A meaningful interpretation would allow for a multi-dimensional point of view and real engagement with feminist issues, rather than a male-dominated obsession with Snow White’s raven-dark hair, milky skin, ruby lips, and compliant nature. 

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Adjusting the Focus on Innocence: Little Red Riding Hood | Matthew Johnson



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Folklore and fairy tales are passed down generation after generation. With each turning of the story, the listener is given the chance to make their own interpretations. As children, we find ourselves captivated by the fantasy and magic that each story holds and are entranced with the characters that are displayed for us in our bedtime stories.

Little Red Riding Hood was a story that had always interested me as a child and beyond. Looking back on the story now, the hidden meanings of “not talking to strangers” or “listening to your parents” are much clearer to me as an adult. With these themes in my mind, I decided in my session with my daughter, that I wanted to see the tale again as I did as a child. So in our photo session, I aimed to see the Little Red Riding Hood tale through my four year old daughter’s eyes.

Before we took the photographs, I read her the story to refresh her memory, and then asked her some questions about it. She spoke only of the wolf and the “poor little girl.” She never once thought about the idea if that if Little Red had stuck to the path and not talked to the strange wolf, she would have made it safely to her grandmother’s cottage to deliver the basket of goodies.

My daughter only saw the innocence in the character of Little Red juxtaposed by the bad portrayed in the wolf.

I decided to try and capture that innocence in my daughter, and I felt the best way to do that would be through her eyes. If you can catch the eye just right in a photograph, they can tell you everything you want to know about the subject’s emotions.

I still see these stories in their simplest form, because of my daughter. She keeps that child-like want of make believe lands and characters alive in me. I’m just glad that I have her to let me display and showcase my inner-child with my photography.



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A Search for the Divine: Elijah and His Spiritual Journey from the Religious Serial Killer to the Ethical Model | Anna S. Klein

*Jewish mystery...begins in the Bible – Caspi I
Elijah comes in through the heart, not the door! – Kotsker Rebbe*

Regardless of the culture in which he lived, man has been always driven toward the awareness of the divine. Intangible and evanescent, this supreme realm was felt as an intrinsic, almost real, part of man's life. Jews, as other cultures, sought to establish contact with that realm, and it seems that at Mount Sinai, led by Moses, they finally seized their elusive deity and bound Him\Her with a deal.

The deal—the Covenant—appeared fair. They received a list of dos and don'ts, with the most important demand to revere their God, for which He promised to save them. The formula was simple: He will be their God and they will be His people. However, it soon turned out that it was not an easy contract; the children of Israel experienced difficulties adhering to it, even in the very time of Moses.


Elijah appeared in another difficult time of the covenant breach, in another point in Israel's religious history. Just 50 years after the split between the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms, the Omride dynasty brought a challenge to Yahweh's reign. Omri, called the David of the North by some, created a splendid, economically prospering monarchy with great political alliances (Wiener 4). However, this generated a threat to the people's religious identity. His son, Ahab, married a strong-headed Phoenician princess, Jezebel, who sought to impose on Israel her devotion to Baal and Astarte and replace the awkward, invisible non-entity that they called God. Worshiping foreign deities was not an unfamiliar inclination in Israel (even if condemned), but this time it became a state-recognized practice (a temple of Baal was erected in Samaria) seeking the extermination of the original tradition, the very basis of the people's *raison d'être* (5).

Elijah, appearing as a meteor at the age of seventy-five, manifested himself as a fearless fighter for God, an angel of the Covenant, the Lord's sword. This one-man special-operations-unit, possessed by the words of Yahweh, showed his fervent devotion to God in the severity of his actions—mostly by killing idolatrous forces (several hundred men). Elijah's actions were not unusual in the biblical realm, where religious and political extermination were rather a common practice. It was only in the later tradition that his over-zeal, neighboring with fanaticism, caused uneasiness among the rabbis. Would this rabbinical moral discomfort prompt the radical transformation of this hero, which we witness in the later Jewish tradition? How did this inflexible, furious, critical towards Israel, merciless fighter become a darling in the rabbinical, folk, Kabbalistic, Hasidic and even today's liturgical tradition?

To answer this complex question I will first review the historical situation in which Elijah operated and then, his literary appearances in the successive Jewish writings.

As with most of the early biblical figures, we assume Elijah's historicity which was embellished and transformed into a myth. As Raphael Patai intimates, in spite of the loss of historical accuracy, the event undergoing such alteration gains immeasurable longevity, as well as the power of influencing individuals and groups (Wiener 30). But why did Elijah undergo the transformation to such mythical extent—a unique phenomenon in the Bible. Even Moses's few miracles, Daniel's wondrous escape or Samson's super-human power cannot compare.

A Note from the Editor

In selecting artwork for our folklore issue, I was struck by Johnson's series of Little Red Riding Hood (LRRH) photos. LRRH has morphed throughout history from a cunning and capable trickster (the oral tradition and "The Story of Grandmother," the first documented by Paul Delarue) to a helpless lass in need of rescue (found in a plethora in versions written by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm) to even a sexually-charged naïve nymphette (Angela Carter's "In the Company of Wolves" and the 2011 film *Red Riding Hood*). Johnson's photos mirrored this transgression of the history of the tale; the first is bright and full of hope, the second shows the progression of the light slipping into the darkness and the third is where darkness suffocates innocence. Johnson's photos speak to that idealized innocent—the lost child—captured here in a sort of saintly pre-journey photo shoot, before the wolves come calling. 

Let me first emphasize the historical situation in which Elijah lived. The Omride dynasty threatened not only the Northern Kingdom's religious survival, but its menace spread to the neighboring Judah. The daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Athalia, married Jehoram, the king of Judah. After the death of her husband and her son, and after her killing of all Davidic descendants (or so she thought), Athalia, the ardent worshiper of Baal, became the Queen of Judah, the only woman-monarch in the Israel/Judah history. The survival of the Omride dynasty in both kingdoms would certainly mean the end of the Davidic story, the end of Judaism as we know it, and probably non-appearance of Christianity. Elijah and his disciple Elisha were actively involved in the defeat of the Omride dynasty, and therefore were saviors of the religious identity of the people of Israel, and probably the saviors of Judaism.

Something remarkable did happen during the Elijah/Elisha prophetic time, and it deeply influenced the consciousness of the people and the further development of Judaism. The fiery miracle on Mount Carmel, the encounter at Mount Horeb, and the spectacular ascent to heaven were all expressions and manifestations of the important historical events, struggles, and fears present at that time. Elijah's prophecy took place sometime between 920-850 BCE, then, was interpreted, mythologized, and finally edited 100-150 years later (Wiener 1). It was that biblical account, and not historical Elijah, that impressed people's consciousness so much, and became the subject of remarkable further interpretative development.

Elijah's legacy must have stayed alive in the biblical times since it appeared and reappeared in multiple Jewish writings. Four hundred years after Elijah's prophecy, and about two centuries after his story was written down, his name was evoked in the prophecy of Malachi.

Malachi lived 100 years after the return from the Exile, when Judah's religious and national unity faced a similar danger to that in the time of Elijah. Moral lapses existed, social justice suffered, ritual observance deteriorated, the danger of idolatry emerged again, and the very worship of the Lord was questioned. Malachi complained about the lack of human kindness, about the Levites who needed to be purified, about tithes and offerings, which were not adequate, and, in short, about everything Israelites should do and did not. He threatened that God would come to His Temple suddenly and that the guilty would be burned (as happened with Elijah at Mount Carmel). Malachi evoked the authority of Moses and that of Elijah and menaced people with the great and terrible Day of the Lord – great because of God's coming, terrible because of the judgment (Malachi 3). Elijah will be called before that day to address the problem and purify the people's spirit, but if he is not successful, the Lord will smite the land with utter destruction because of Israel's sins.

This is a very important utterance in the development of Elijah's image because its consecutive interpretations pronounced him a forerunner of the Messiah, the herald who will announce His coming. How that happened? The most direct, contextual analysis of Malachi would rather interpret his words as describing the situation relative to his time. His criticism addressed the very specific circumstances existing in the post-exilic Judah, and the ensuing punishment was inflicted upon sinful people of Judah at that time. In addition, the passage describing Elijah's action before the Day of the Lord: "He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Mal 4:5) can be translated as the act of turning the hearts of the fathers together with the hearts of the children to God (Wiener 35). We talk here about the reconciliation between Israel and God, the same mission as in the time of Elijah's prophecy. This translation would be more consistent with Malachi's entire message.

In spite of the clear logic of the contextual explanation, this passage, as often happens with biblical writings, acquired additional interpretations. The notions of the Day of the Lord and of the terrible judgment expended their meanings. They evolved together with the ever-changing concept of the Messianic Age.

Messianic Jewish theology is a very complex belief, never uniformly defined. It developed originally as a national dream of the restoration of the once unified Davidic kingdom. In different times it embraced different ideas such as: the return from the Exile, the reunification of the Twelve Tribes, the development of the country, the deliverance from foreign rule or the rebuilding of the Temple. Furthermore, the national character of Messianism expended to spiritual and universalistic dimensions. It was redefined as: the redemption of Israel, the redemption of the world, the resurrection of the dead, the divine judgment, God's kingdom on earth and the End of Days.

In one of his next appearances in Ecclesiasticus, written between 200-150 BCE (Wiener 38), Elijah is hoped to restore the tribes of Jacob in addition to turning the hearts of the fathers unto the children (Ecclesiasticus 48:1-10). The restoration of the Tribes was one of the aspects of the Messianic concept; therefore this addition helped connect Elijah's image to Messianic ideas. Once associated with the Messianic notion, Elijah became a subject to a parallel evolution.

The next Apocryphal writing, the IV Book of Ezra, written around 100 BCE, mentions Elijah's prayer for rain and resuscitation and further prophesies that the men who have been taken up, who have not tasted death, who will change the hearts of the inhabitants and convert them to a different spirit (unmistakable allusions to Malachi's image of Elijah) shall appear before the coming, presumably, of the Messiah (Wiener 40). With this imagery, the IV Book of Ezra stimulated further connects of Elijah's character to the Messianic concept.

In further writings, the Messianic ideas and the concept of redemption developed toward more apocalyptic and ethical dimensions (Wiener 41), to the extent that at the dawn of the Christian era Jewish people expected the return of Elijah as a herald of the numinous Messiah who would come from the house of David.

The next transformation of Elijah's image took place in the Aggadic literature of the Talmud and of Midrashim. First, it consisted of the reinterpretation of the biblical texts. The writers attempted to explain the origin of Elijah (was he from the tribe of Gad, Benjamin or Levy? (45)), and his psychological profile. The rabbis felt uneasy with his extreme personality and tended to add more human aspects to his actions. These rabbis added conversations with God and pleas to change his stubbornness and to make him more open to God's mercy and love. Rabbis emphasized Elijah's own transformation following the revelation on Mount Horeb: his openness to human relationship and his readiness to encounter with God. His all-embracing transformation, according to the rabbis, was completed after his ascent to heaven.

It seems that the most pronounced development of Elijah's image, took place after a national catastrophe: the destruction of the Second Temple and the downfall of the nation, when the very continuity of Jewish people's existence was at stake. The preservation of the Law became the primordial sustaining factor. The times called for the extraordinary measures, for an adamant fighter for God's Law; the times called for Elijah. He appeared in the Talmudic writings as a timeless personality – half human, half angelic, a spiritual leader, a teacher, a guide with a heavenly knowledge, but who would also understand (finally!) the painful human existence and its moral struggles. His zeal for God transcended into a zeal for man. From the keeper of God's biblical law he became the keeper of Talmudic law, especially its ethical component. After all, as the Messiah's herald, sometimes even identified with the Messiah (or seen together with the Messiah as redeeming aspects of God (Wiener 70)), he had to be committed to a peace-making exemplary existence.

The Talmudic stories about Elijah, which date between 200 and 800 CE, reflect the rabbinic culture: they emphasize rabbinic principles giving insights into their world (Lindback XV). Lindback describes three types of Talmudic stories:

1. Elijah appears disguised as an old man, an Arab, a horseman, a Roman official, even as

a harlot, or in dreams to save those in trouble. All these stories were set in the pre-Talmudic times.

2. He stops appearing as a punishment for unethical behavior.
3. He becomes a teacher, answers questions and supports rabbis in their interpretations of law, (XIX)

In all his doings, Elijah acts as a super-version of the rabbinic sage, encouraging the relationships with the Divine.

The Talmudic period ended with the dissolution of Babylonian Academies, in Sura and in Pumbedita in 11th CE. This might have been a time of spreading Elijah's stories in a folklore tradition. He became the most popular hero in Medieval Jewish folklore and later tales. The folk stories used the same Talmudic motifs, but common people replaced rabbis and Elijah became a material benefactor, ending up as an "all-purpose fairy godmother" (Lindbeck 147). It is worth noting that folkloric elements were used in Talmudic tales earlier but they were elaborated on by rabbis in order to express their points.

This was also the time when angels were slowly eliminated from the religious consciousness. Christianity replaced them with saints and martyrs, and Jews eliminated them in the rabbinic literature (Lindbeck 61). Elijah was a perfect replacement; he became a mediator providing a sense of connection with God without compromising God's divine image. He was unpredictable, appeared on his own volition, could help and protect to some extent, but would always promise a reward to the pious and was a guide to redemption. In the ever-threatening reality, Jews longed for a divine mediator who could offer them a sense of physical protection (even if illusory), as well as a spiritual lead toward unity with God.

Each generation envisioned Elijah differently through the lenses of their reality, hoping for his help in solving their problems. As different as these problems could be—from marriage to foreign women, the reunification of different Jewish sects, the agreement of interpretation of laws and peace among men, to union between man and God—they were all seen as Malachi's troubled relationships between fathers and sons, and solving them was a precondition to the Messianic Age.

Each party focused on a specific aspect of Elijah's phenomenon:

- Rabbis focused on the interpretation of law and its ethical component
- People on his benefactory aspect
- Kabbalistic mystics elaborated on his close encounter with the divine (a still small voice), on heavenly secrets only he could reveal, such as the hidden spirit of Torah
- The 18th CE early Hasids (Hasidim) saw Elijah as a "psychic factor" helping them to deepen their contact with God and approach divine illumination (Wiener 160)
- Elijah is present in the Muslim tradition
- Christians saw him in John the Baptist and he is mentioned in the New Testament nearly thirty times; he became a patron of the Carmelite order
- He is present in Jewish liturgy at every Passover, every circumcision, every Shabbat and in every grace after the meal; in all these events he is expected to come.

Elijah became a timeless, omnipresent element of Jewish reality.

Elijah has been subjected to an extraordinary time-travel experience in which he attained eternity. He underwent multiple transformations following the ever-evolving religious reality of his devotees. In his journey he became the prototype of the wandering Jew. He was one of the most powerful biblical figures, a "man of God" (one of only a dozen

men in the Hebrew Bible deserving this title), and helped preserve Israel's national identity and Judaism as we know it. With his name expressing his devotion to Yahweh, he committed himself to rescuing monotheism. But he did much more. He developed its spiritual aspect; with "the still small voice" of silence that he encountered at Mount Horeb, Elijah created the inner dimension of the religious experience.

The mystery of Elijah, his liminality and his connection to the mystical Messianic future, always fascinated people. Elijah gave them a taste of heaven, a feel of the wondrous world to come.

There is one story of Elijah that I find particularly fascinating: Elijah appears to Rabbi Joshua Ben Levi and sends him to meet the Messiah and to ask about His coming (Lindbeck 124). The Messiah sits at the gates of Rome (the symbol of enemies) among the poor and the sick (an image of suffering Jew). They all change the bindings of their wounds, but he does one wound at the time, in order to be ready at a moment's notice. When asked, the Messiah answers that He will come today, but He doesn't. Elijah explains: He meant today but only if we hear His voice.

Elijah, the expert at close, intimate encounters, makes us attuned to this "still small voice."



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Salt Fever | Karen Comstock

One

Don't pity the desert
for her sharp tone and pale color.
Don't pity the dwellings for blending
with the stone
nor the creatures for hiding
under rocks.

We come here to feel
the stark dry humor
and petition the sun
to peel the wounded flesh
from our bones.

Don't pity the seekers
who wander in endless spirals
thirsting for water,
thirsting for fruit.

They only deeply miss
the ocean for the breeze
and the salt left high on rocky points
sparkling like opal flats,
diamonds winking
at the splash of distant fish
and stars that wink back
in the night.

Don't pull your hand
from the fire so quickly.
Burned flesh is food
for broken hearts
and wandering souls
never resting
in sand paintings
left spiraling
on ancient desert cliffs.

Don't end your shaman's dance
before the vision comes.

Let the dizzying heat
splinter the green wood
from your weeping branches.

Let the wise elders rock you
in their leather arms.

Let the sunrise cool your face
in pink hues and pale color.

Let the memory of the desert be your dream.
And let the prick of the spiny plant
wake you from your sleep.

Two

Hearts beating to the drum beats.
Shallow breaths on bloody feet,
thick and dusty sweat lines
paint your face and chest.

Fainting ponies may slip
on the steep walls you climb
but you ride desperate
needing the juice of greedy cactus
and the sting of prickly heat
as the scorpion dances
up and down your spine.

You edge
your way
along the ridge
your quest for water
makes the bridge

appear

and then it's gone
you fall
into the cool water
breathless.

You and the pony both go
to drink long from deep water.

You and the pony both go
to sink back into the dream,
to sink back into the night

where stars wink
at the splash of distant fish,
where seaweed arms
wrap you in black shawls,

where elders' tears drop and spark
the embers that surround you
in the last dizzying spiral
of your shaman's dance.

And the vision comes long—
long after sand bleached bones
broken by drum beats blind you,

long after ash and sand
mix in the wind miles away,
long after foamy waves
lap the shore clean
of your shuffling dance.

Three

Only you know all the whale songs by heart.
Only you know how the verses change

here and there,
where the road goes through
and where the dead end meets you
in a deep sand dune
at the boney feet
of thirsty roots.

Only you will honor the empty shell,
the blackened stick at the fire pit,
the remains and the long road home.

Only the diamonds
of dreams distilled
high on rocky points
sparkle and guide you.


Only a salty diamond
dream remains.

Only the sun rising
on the backs of leather turtles,
and a misty breeze spiraling
on pink hues in the sky

floating above the high song of eagles
and humpback whales rumbling
beneath the waves
of daybreak
and nightfall,

guides you.


“Salt Fever” is a poem that came in whole form during a routine walk and marked for me the end point of my time living in the desert. I am certain it was a Spirit Guide talking or a telepathic transmission from my wolf-dog, Tortuga, who may have been a nagual. The poem is deeply rooted in Yaqui culture and the landscape of southern Arizona, Sonora Mexico, and the Sea of Cortez. Many of the images in this poem continue to shimmer in my dreams and in my writing almost as if they possess me, especially the “salty diamonds” and “the blackened stick at the fire pit.”

True to the Native American tradition, this poem waited until now to take on a proper name. Born a complex and mysterious child, she kept only the “One,” “Two,” “Three” subtitles through her early years—counting on the tribe, trusting the trail. She was then given “Desert Poem” as a nickname at adolescence, after a minor revision that added games of punctuation and the second half of the third part. She has only chosen the name “Salt Fever” now, for *Palaver!* 

Reflection on “La Diablada” | Charlene Eckels

A mask, in any culture is a symbol and expression of identity. Cultural identities are subject to the continuous *play* of history, culture, and power. Identities are the names we give ourselves within the narratives of the past.

I am part Bolivian (maternal) and part American (paternal). Both connect me specifically with my past and present; therefore, I bring to my art a quality which is rooted in the culture of Bolivia and expanded by the experience of being American. Bringing together folklore and historical memory, I try to illustrate the complexities of cultural identity, and acknowledge my personal experience of being a hybrid. The masks I paint represent my cultural heritage in a contemporary style. To me identity is more than just the mask we use to represent ourselves to others, but also what it's protecting from others by the mask we exhibit. This mask, *La Diablada*, tells a history of what happened to the Bolivian people during oppressive colonial rule and the folkloric stories being told to this day.

Masks like this are made for the Diablada (Dance of the Devils). The richly made uniforms, music, and dance are all part of the annual carnival celebration in Oruro in the Bolivian Andes. This dance celebrates and pays honor to the Patroness of the Miners, the Virgin of Candelaria/Socavon (the Virgin of the tunnels). Its origins are a mixture of the Andean religious ceremonial dance in honor of the god, Tiw (protector of mines, lakes, and rivers), and the Catholic faith brought in by the Spanish Conquistadores. The Diablada was inspired by native Bolivian tales of Tio (the devil) in the mine, who embodied the life-giving but dangerous power of the inner earth. After the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century, the local inhabitants were forced by their conquerors to work in the silver and tin mines where they faced great hardship and danger. The miners made offerings to Tio to avoid accidents and to help them find rich veins of precious metals. Their conversion to Catholicism did not remove their fear of Tio, but through their misery brought them hope in the Virgin. To pay honor to the Virgin del Socavon they created the dance with fantastic costumes with the highlight of the costume being a mask of the devil. It is worn to hide its wearer from the view of the devil as the dancer pays homage to the Virgin, for protection in the mine and by not upsetting Tio, since he is the owner of the mine and can give riches or take lives. This dance is performed in all the artistic and folk expressions of Bolivia. 



The Labyrinth |

Thomas Dylan Cohen

I look through jaundiced eye and speak through coffee-stained teeth, no wonder loneliness breeds a lugubrious race of wanderers and ponderers.

O! God of peregrinators of both land and mind! Cherubs of island gardens and subterranean tunnels, help me, do not betray my story.

It was a frigid January, my first, and every person carried the thermometer upon their coats, blindly walking, the street before them weaving a snowdrop-glazed path home. My girl walked with me, arm in arm, legs marching two by two, and we braved the day's frost. The oriental winter we were guests to starved us of sun, so we trudged onwards, depending on the other for warmth. Dodging somnambulists, addicts, and wildly urban animals.

When I was young, my father left my mother and me. He was a wanderer too, and perhaps too much for any one woman. My mother didn't miss him and raised me alone. However, his absence was a boulder upon my youth. He knew that wanderlust is inherited and left me to lift this boulder too. I would have been a hero of my generation, if I had not fallen off this same cliff. Fate's travels lead me to the east. To an island in the middle of the world—at the center of nothing.

In my travels I had met a beautiful girl, utterly pure. There is no way to begin except in admiration. Sculpted and soft, lovely and watery. Her eyes were large enough to cause a strange multitudinous effect—seeing everything. Her narrow lips fluttered and fell like hollow-boned birds. She often laughed but without sound.

She was a seamstress, living with her extended family in one of those great patriarchal homes of the old east. Together we searched for chaos in a methodological and marble city. This proved difficult and fatiguing for the wind turned us around and around. Dizzying heights and canyons of sidewalks and curbs. She reeked of ennui, wealth, and holi-

ness. My swiveling head fastened to her on streets of heels and lace stockings.

After another failed attempt to find fame, we went outside and faced another chaplipped afternoon. Our leather boots pointed toward the yawning and hungry subway entrance. The cavernous subway in this great capital vibrates an arrhythmic heart beat—a labyrinth confusing even the light of day.

Well-lit, miles below glass and steel towers, it hums continuously with halogen tints and the millions who ride pale faced and frozen. The lights illuminate but do not warm. The ceiling low and metallic. This particular ride was characteristic in its lack of space and persecution of the senses. A wanderer's love of air and room is unrequited in the Orient. My girl and I held each other closely and leaned against the glass door, making room each stop for more people entering than exiting. I played with a cobalt thread unweaving itself from her coat. The string a mysterious comfort and guide in this subterranean alien environment.

We decided to share music, using a headphone splitter, uncoiling the cable carefully to not tangle or damage it. The thin white tether of our headphones uniting us in the bluish and antiseptic light. Keeping us sane in the tunnels. Our trip across the city was long and seemingly circular. The Green Line runs a ring around the city, orbiting various major organs and connecting the other arteries and veins down town. We travelled clockwise and southbound. Station after station falling into a catenary arc, effortlessly strung together like a sentence by Joyce.

A young girl next to us with amaranthine lips and short hair listened to her own mu-

sic, playing absently with the chord and gazing out the window into the near emptiness. Metro riders are partial to whatever privacy their phones can provide and usually avoid all contact with anyone. The boys and girls of the underground wear the same clothes in an infamous androgyny. However, this effeminate girl noticed us and smiled shyly.

A few minutes later, this young nymphette dropped her phone, which clattered apart on the tile floor. Battery and screen separated in a crash muffled by the electric hum of the train. My girlfriend stooped to help retrieve the daidala's pieces. The purple smile reappeared on her lips. The nymphette's whole countenance glowed in contrast to her silky dark hair that webbed lazily across her forehead. A subtle energy of adolescence radiated and warmed us as if we had drunk good wine.

Brightened by this encounter, we felt cheered and brave in the cold bright lights. The last sunlight slipped behind the horizon; the train bolted over a river, southward. The mute, starless night sky flecked with a glimmer of Mars rising in the East.

When the train departs a station it leaves its sky tracks and slips again into the earthen darkness. The concrete-lined tunnels arching back and forth under the frozen ground as people aboard the train avoid eye contact with foreigners. Which is why I was startled when two jet coals struck with force. Only a moment of contact before it was broken by the crowd balancing in the twisting train. Turning, I felt nauseous and strange. A peculiar double taste arose in my mouth. The icy itch of adrenaline and metal.

Facing my girl, I was unsure which face to show. It seemed hours since we had breathed fresh air and the train was rank with cigarettes and salt. I swallowed back my lunch and shut my eyes tight. She noticed the change in my health, and concern filled her face.

What? she mouthed to me.

I didn't know, and still don't, but even writing this story, I see the frosted coals that pave the seventh layer of the Inferno. They

follow wherever I look: like the phosphenes and phantom colors that come from rubbing tired eyes.

I whispered to my girlfriend that I needed some air, then asked her if she saw anything peculiar at the other end of the train. She rocked forward onto her toes; stretching to see above the crowd before replying that there was nothing strange about an electric train ride through a labyrinth.

Curious, I looked again and saw a man with immense shoulders rippling under a diaphanous shirt. A two-pronged mohawk reached for the bright fluorescent above, his black leather coat absorbing and destroying its bluish light. He looked into my skull. His gel-hardened hair bound up with the very night itself.

The train car sucked warmth through my wool coat as stalagmitic icicles grew between the columns of my vertebra. Shivering under layers of wool and fear.

I must have looked sour and sick because my girl slid her arm around my waist and drew close.

"What is wrong?" my mistress and guide in the Labyrinth asked.

I turned and said nothing, my soul frozen and immobile.

Being held by love and warmth, I soon returned to myself, and realized how silly I must have looked. With each successive exit, the car opened and deepened in volume and temperature. Standing together I still felt chilled and alienated, wanting to forget the creature's stare. My closed eyelids carved with this brutish countenance.

Unexpectedly, the young girl who had dropped her phone miles before held out her two hands and offered small colorful lollipops. The best kind with bubble gum encased in the center.

She smiled kind and with love. Her white headphones danced around her thread-ed scarf as her eyes smiled unabashedly. It was wholesome and reached from her lips to ours, gentle and glowing. We took this touching offering. My girlfriend unwrapped hers immediately, her already sweet mouth

further sweetened by sugar. We grinned and blushed in thanks. Youth's dimples overflowing with altruism and innocence.

The train slowed for our stop. Without a word we departed, glad to be free of ataraxia, and now drunk on our autonomy. Love rekindled in its entirety by body heat, oxygen, and lollipops.

Though long ago, and the memory already fades like newspaper in the sun, certain sensual details of those encounters permeate and float to the top of my bobbing consciousness: earthen warm clothes, hastened cold breath, and the taste of my then love's lips and tongue after eating a lollipop all resist being forgotten. But many more have disappeared, more all the time. The warm seamstress, too, gone from my life. I last saw her

sleeping on a beach, my wanderlust carrying me away, to, and from other desires. Doing to her what my father had done to me.

However, unsure of who or what I encountered that night, in passing or in eternity, has kept me awake. The jet eyes still trace my steps between street lights on boulevards empty and crooked. With luck, I won't meet them again. Probably, it was nothing but my own foreignness betraying us to unkind stares and random acts of hospitality. But flickering, always flickering, behind my green eyes and between the rational thoughts which allow us to live every day, burns the blue-black flame of belief and ignorance, marking the disputed border of myth and reality.


The tale of Theseus and the Minotaur has been preserved in Western canon for millennia. It is a mixture of historical fact and mythological fiction that continues to enchant and elude. The archaeological excavations of Crete in the last two centuries have demonstrated the historical truth behind mystical figures such as Minos and his capital of Knossos.

This retelling is an interpretation that reconfigures the Labyrinth of Minos as a modern subway line. The inspiration for this is the infinite and interweaving lines of Seoul—Korea's metro system. This maze was projected onto a fictional island. In the story, Theseus unravels Daedalus' complicated labyrinth using a simple ball of thread. He defeats the monstrous Minotaur by slaying him with a sword that Minos' daughter Ariadne gives him.

Modern archaeology has uncovered many folkloric cities in Asia Minor and the Mediterranean. Ruins of Troy and other Bronze Age cities, once thought to be purely fictional, now see sky again for the first time in thousands of years. Archaeologists discovered several frescoes and objects on Crete that demonstrate the Bronze Age civilization's fascination with the bull. The historical palace of Knossos was built around 1900 BCE and was abandoned completely by the beginning of the first millennium BCE. Excavations have also uncovered several written languages that appear to be related to Proto-Greek and Indo-European. One of the languages, dubbed Linear B, has been deciphered and demonstrates the administrative and written capabilities of ancient Minoan/Cretan civilization.

Other mythological figures have remained more mysterious. Homer mentions Daedalus from *The Odyssey*. His name in Greek (Δαίδαλος) means "clever worker." Both Ovid and Pliny refer to Daedalus as a master inventor and craftsman. James Joyce named his literary alter-ego, Stephen Dedalus, after him.

The story of Theseus is the story of a young man who searches for his father, a hero's life, and the love of a girl. Many wanderers empathize with my main character's vainglory. Theseus is used as a protagonist and hero by Euripides, Shakespeare, and Racine. These authors do not write about the story of the Minotaur, but Theseus' rule of Athens.

The stories from Ancient Greece have become immortalized in Western literary canon. The cities and languages demystified and uncovered from millennia of dust and decay. However, there are mysteries in folklore that cannot be unraveled with modern science. The story of the Minotaur will continue to haunt the modern's psyche. 

Rumor and *The Aeneid* |

Rob Wells

Rumor, called "the swiftest of all evils," plays a disturbing role in Virgil's epic poem, *The Aeneid*, providing some chilling lessons about human nature. Virgil portrays Rumor as a "filthy goddess," born of mother Earth, spreading a mixture of fact and fiction to cities. Rumor conveys word of highly sensitive, personal news—such as the romantic affair of Queen Dido of Carthage and Aeneas, leader of Trojan refugees and the poem's hero. Her words are devastating. In *The Aeneid*, Rumor sets in motion events that lead to burning cities, suicides, and wars. Rumor even riles up the gods.

Why does Virgil use this ominous character and what is he trying to say about human nature and how we communicate? Rumor, in many cases, incites rage, a central theme throughout the *The Aeneid*. Rage drives humans in war. Rage defines turning points in history and relationships between nations. But what causes that rage? Virgil shows several accounts where goddesses such as Rumor cause or inflame the rage in otherwise peace-loving people. What's perhaps most frightening is Rumor doesn't seem to have a particular agenda, so the grief she causes to humans appears random. There are few things more frightening than random violence. As such, Virgil uses Rumor to provide a perspective on evil and how it operates in society.

Like evil, Rumor is a force in the world, one far beyond control of humans. Further, this evil fulfills a basic need in human communications. Rumor fills a void of information, providing human beings with an explanation and a sense of order in the world around them, even if it is a false or distorted version. Human beings have an innate curiosity about the world around them, one that separates them from other animals. Aristotle, in *Metaphysics*, suggests the quest for philosophy was a human response to seek order in a disorderly world (Aristotle, 982 b20). Rumor can satiate that thirst for information, and her distortions can provide an explanation. Rumor also panders to an aspect of human nature: it's easy to believe the first thing you hear, and it is much harder to investigate the veracity of a rumor.

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Through Rumor, Virgil offers a universal insight into human communication, one that resonates in today's Digital Age. The goddess Rumor helps us see how false information can devastate lives, and in the case of leaders, contribute to their personal destruction and the downfall of societies. As such, Virgil's poem, some 2,000 years old, remains highly relevant. Rumor's speed and omniscience also appear similar to today's instantaneous news delivery systems, such as Twitter or cable television. Virgil's epic poetry provides an unsettling reminder for today's journalists, policy makers, and leaders about the consequences of basing decisions on mere rumors and the need to diligently sift fact from fiction.

Virgil provides little information about Ru-

mor's origins and motivations, which in some respects seems entirely appropriate. The nature of a rumor is ambiguous; Webster's dictionary defines rumor as "general talk not based on definite knowledge." Sometimes you can't figure out a rumor's origin or motivation, and this is the case with Virgil's goddess of Rumor. So, in a sense, her form fits her duty.

Virgil describes Rumor as a goddess of the Earth, not one from Olympus or on high. We see the most extensive description of Rumor in Book IV—a dark story about the growing insanity of Queen Dido of Carthage, her unrequited love for Aeneas, and the fall of her prosperous city. The portrait of Rumor is vivid and ugly: "Fast-footed and lithe of wing, she is a terrifying and enormous monster with as many feathers as she has sleepless eyes beneath each feather (amazingly), as many sounding tongues and mouths, and raises up as many ears" (Virgil, IV.236). Despite this elaborate visual description, the human characters in *The Aeneid* do not see Rumor, but instead learn of her reports through unspecified means. She seems everywhere and nowhere at the same time—a presence without a physical substance.

Also known as Fama (Latin for "fame" or "reputation"), Rumor is the sister of Coeus (son of Earth, one of the titans) and Enceladus (son of the Earth, a giant). The references to the Earth are significant since Rumor is not from Olympus, the realm of the heavens, but instead closer to the gods of the underworld, such as the Furies or Harpies, which I discuss below. Further, it seems Rumor may be on bad terms with the king of the gods, Jupiter. The appendix to the Mandelbaum translation of *The Aeneid* provides some important family history. The brother of Rumor, Enceladus, attempted to dethrone Jupiter, and was punished and buried under Mt. Etna. As a result, we might suspect Jupiter would distrust or dislike another member of Enceladus' family, Rumor.

Despite her ambiguous origins and motivations, Rumor makes her first appearance in *The Aeneid* in a forceful manner by spreading a report of a love affair between Dido and Aeneas:

She sang of what was done and what was fiction, chanting that Aeneas, one born of Trojan blood, had come, that lovely Dido has deigned to join herself to him, that now, in lust, forgetful of their kingdom, they take long pleasure, fondling through the winter, slaves of squalid craving," he writes. "Such reports the filthy goddess scatters everywhere upon the lips of men (IV.251).

We can assess Rumor's accuracy by comparing her report to the narrator's account. Some basic facts are accurate. Dido and Aeneas have sex in a cave, and Dido calls it a marriage. Time comes to a stop in her kingdom of Carthage. "Slaves of squalid craving" could be accurate, since Dido has been without her husband for several years, and Aeneas has been without his wife for at least seven years.

What Rumor omits, however, is the considerable involvement of the gods in making the rendezvous happen. The queen of the gods, Juno, arranged for the cave rendezvous, a critical part of the episode; earlier, Venus sends Cupid to charm Dido. As a result, Aeneas and Dido were not acting fully on their own free will; the deities played a significant role in arranging their tryst. Other parts of Rumor's account don't seem accurate. "Fondling through the winter" seems a stretch since the reader is told of one affair on one day. While the phrase "squalid craving" could be accurate in one basic sense, it trivializes the human feelings that underpinned the affair. Dido is lonely since the murder of her husband, Sychaeus. She has had many suitors, yet none resonated with her. She feels immediate attraction to Aeneas on several levels; he, too, is a leader trying to build a society after the tragic loss of a spouse. Aeneas is a kindred spirit. Rumor includes none of this. To be fair, we don't know how Rumor obtained her information, or whether she knew of the gods' intervention. The reader assumes Rumor is aware of the gods' role given that she is the first to spread word of the secret tryst. Her account

leaves the reader with a one-sided and sordid spin on the Dido-Aeneas affair, suggesting they were indulging in a mutual lust, on their own free will.

Rumor's version is distinguished by omission of key facts, which otherwise would "water down" her tale and its sordid appeal. This brings back the notion of Rumor as both form and substance. Rumor's reports contain significant omissions; her identity and being also contain omissions. We don't know who controls her: an omission of agency. People don't see her: an omission of presence. We don't know how or why she selects her victims: an omission of intent. Seen in this light, omission expands Rumor's power and reach.

It's worth noting that Rumor "sings" her account of Dido and Aeneas; the poet is telling us her reports are a form of art rather than literal facts. Virgil is telling us Rumor is a performer and we shouldn't consider her to be a source of traditional news. In conventional terms, this would be the difference between watching a Hollywood-produced docudrama and a standard newscast in network television.

If Rumor delivers a type of performance, it is one with grave consequences. Virgil shows us how Rumor's distortions lead to rage in humans and personal tragedy. We see Dido slip

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into insanity following Rumor's tale; she eventually commits suicide and her prosperous Carthage burns. This underpins an historic feud in subsequent generations between Carthage and Rome. Of course, Dido's insanity owes to several other contributing factors: she was stricken with a blind love for a man who was fated not to stay in Carthage.

We see Rumor incite rage within King Iarbas, a spurned suitor of Queen Dido. Iarbas, angry at the Dido-Aeneas affair, complains to Jupiter, and this in turn upsets the father of the Gods. Jupiter then sends a message to Aeneas: end the Dido affair and continue his voyage to fulfill his destiny and establish a new homeland for the Trojan refugees. Jupiter's order to Aeneas to leave Carthage, in turn, results in that city's downfall. Rumor was able to sway heaven (Jupiter) and earth (Iarbas). Clearly, Rumor is a major force.

Virgil shows us Rumor's reports can crowd out more logical explanations of events. Aeneas, ordered by Jupiter to leave Carthage, breaks the news to his lover that he must move on to fulfill his fate. Yet Rumor first gives Dido a report that Aeneas was packing up, which enrages the queen. We don't know what Rumor says but it helps trigger Dido's insanity: "Her mind is helpless; raging frantically, inflamed, she raves throughout the city" like a Bacchante (IV.405).

We see Rumor causing strong reactions elsewhere in the book. Rumor delivers word of the death of Euryalus, one of Aeneas' allies. The reader is not told exactly what Rumor says to Euryalus's mother about her son's death in battle, but we see the woman driven to a type of insanity by the account: "At once the warmth abandons her poor bones...Wretched, she runs out and, with a woman's wailing, tearing her hair and heedless of men's presence and the darts and danger, mad, she races toward the walls' front lines" (IX.628).

All of this chaos and discord is stirred up by a character with ambiguous origins and motivations. Rumor is like a "lone wolf" terrorist or a suicide bomber, a source of random

violence. This is in contrast to other gods and goddesses in the poem: Jupiter directs Mercury; Juno unleashes the Furies. These powerful forces are unleashed by some authority figure; no such authority visibly controls Rumor. Virgil portrays Rumor as form of evil that exists in the human realm. We can't exactly pinpoint its source, but evil—like rumor—is an unpleasant and dangerous fact of our existence.

We do not see Rumor motivated to gain power or influence. In modern society, people can use rumors to gain advantage by tearing down an opponent's reputation or undermining their business. In politics, one notorious example involved the 2000 U.S. presidential primary, where an anonymous person or group spread the rumor that Sen. John McCain (R.-Ariz.) had fathered an illegitimate black child. The rumor contributed to McCain's defeat in the South Carolina primary election (Barr, "Karl Rove denies role in John McCain rumor in South Carolina"). Rumors might be a weapon in modern politics, but Virgil's Rumor does not overtly gain power from her deeds. This aligns with the notion of evil in the world; it exists, but who benefits?

Virgil's decision to dwell on a rumor involving two leaders—Dido and Aeneas—is significant. It plays into our perverse tendencies to reduce our leaders to human scale. Rumor's distortions place the listener in a position of moral superiority to Dido and Aeneas. A king and queen reduced to "slaves of squalid craving" makes them just like us, mortals with lustful desires. The phrase equates our leaders to mere slaves; the highly successful Queen of Carthage and the heroic Trojan leader, a man born to a goddess mother, are mortals after all. If the rumor "knocks them down a peg," does it lift us up? Perhaps this inversion in roles can help explain why rumors involving our leaders resonate with us. By denigrating our leaders, we feel empowered.

Rage is a theme throughout *The Aeneid*, and we see how other powerful and sinister female characters create rage like Rumor. The poem begins with Juno being enraged at the Trojans and the treatment of Helen. (Helen was either kidnapped by or escaped with Paris, the Trojan prince, and held in Troy; this mythical event triggered the Trojan War.) Juno appears throughout *The Aeneid*, and her "savage ... unforgetting anger" makes her the main antagonist to Aeneas. The queen of the gods recognizes Aeneas is fated to found a new society in Italy on the banks of the Tiber River, but she vows to make the journey as bloody and painful as possible. "If I cannot bend High Ones, then I shall move hell," Juno says (VII.412). Juno directs many of the evil female characters, such as the Harpies and Furies, monstrous female beasts that sow discord, confusion, and filth.

Juno is important since Virgil portrays rage as an external force on the humans, who by and large seem to be trusting and good-natured until the gods intervene. For example, King Latinus initially receives Aeneas' men with great hospitality (VII.360), just as Dido shows great generosity to Aeneas and his crew when they first land at Carthage (I.805). All of that changes when external force—Rumor, Juno, Allecto and the Furies—incite rage in humans and ignite destructive forces. Through this, Virgil is

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commenting on the nature of evil.

Examine Turnus, the king of the Rutulians and Aeneas' rival for the Latin Princess Lavinia. Turnus initially resists the evil goddess Allecto. She is one of the Furies, guardian of the underworld, sent by Juno to push Turnus into war. Turnus tells Allecto: "Your task: to guard shrines and images of gods. Let men run war and peace: war is their work" (VII.585). The goddess then casts a spell of rage over Turnus, "fixing a firebrand within his breast," which drives him insane and leads him to war. One clear message: Turnus is wrong. Virgil tells us war is also the work of the gods.

Rumor seems similar to the Harpies, the menacing half-bird, half-female creatures that terrorize Aeneas and his men during a feast in Book III. Like Rumor, the Harpies are other-worldly, ugly, and dangerous. "No monster is more malevolent than these, no scourge of gods or pestilence more savage ever rose from the Stygian waves," he writes (III.281). The main Harpie, Celaeno, delivers a dark prophecy to Aeneas. The Trojan hero and his men will not settle into their new homeland of Italy until they experience hunger so severe that they will gnaw on their tables, she says. This declaration greatly upsets Aeneas' men, much as how Rumor's reports upset Dido, King Iarbas, and others. While the Harpies frighten Aeneas and his crew, they do not instill the same rage as does Rumor.


Allecto surfaces later, and again spreads rage and insanity. At Juno's behest, Allecto poisons King Latinus's wife, Queen Amata, in order to upset the planned and fated wedding between Aeneas and Lavinia, Amata's daughter. Allecto puts Amata into an insane rage, one similar to the insanity Rumor inflicts in Queen Dido. While we don't know who controls Rumor, Virgil draws many parallels between Rumor and these Juno-directed goddesses. As such, Virgil shows how Rumor is as powerful as Juno's evil goddesses, but with a twist. Rumor is an aspect of evil no one seems to control or direct. Further, Rumor is a goddess of the Earth, so she is present among us. Since she doesn't sleep, she is potentially around us at all times. Through these images, Virgil suggests Rumor can be present in our daily lives. He also shows how Rumor plays a role in human communication, perhaps a necessary role, by filling an information void.

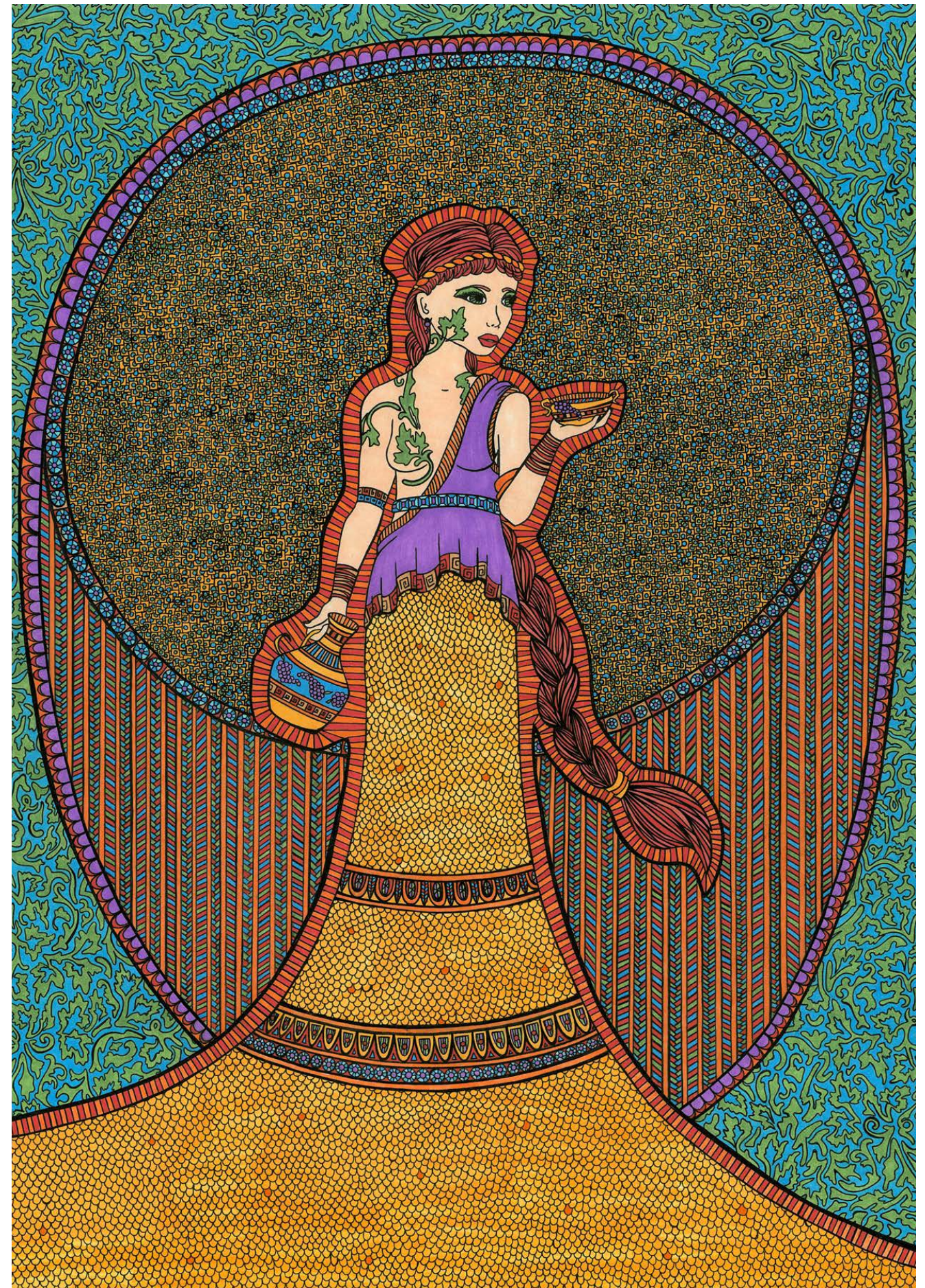
We tend to believe rumors in cases where we aren't getting reliable information, or any information, from other sources. Consider Aeneas and his candor, or lack thereof, when he speaks to his troops in Book I. Aeneas gives a pep talk to his men after enduring a terrible storm provoked by Juno. Aeneas withholds his true reservations about their adventure. "Though sick with heavy cares, he counterfeits hope in his face; his pain is held within, hidden," Virgil writes (I.290). Here, Aeneas doesn't tell his people the whole story. We see Aeneas again trying to cheer up his men but withholding his true feelings in Book VI (VI.250). Aeneas emphasizes to the Trojan refugees that they are on a fated mission to found a new society. Yet as the crew lingers in Carthage, what do they see? The men see that Carthage has stalled; construction stopped (IV.113). They see their leader wearing a purple robe, a gift from Dido, and looking to settle into new houses. What do Dido or Aeneas tell the men about their relationship? Nothing. Rumor swoops into this information void with an account of the Dido-Aeneas affair. Rumor's account seems right since Aeneas is acting like he is preparing to stay. The image of our hero assessing new houses in a purple robe provided by the queen makes him appear to be a king in waiting—or a kept man.

Imagine the anxiety and confusion of Aeneas' men. How do they reconcile Aeneas' speeches describing their fate to settle in Italy with their observations of Aeneas stuck in a romantic fog? Rumor's account of Aeneas in a sordid affair seems right and feeds this anxiety. This is why we see such a sense of relief when Aeneas commands the men to pack up and leave. We read the men were glad to receive orders to leave Carthage: "They race to carry out the orders of Aeneas, his commands" (IV.395).

Consider some of the broader questions Virgil asks us. If Rumor is a performance, why do we believe her even if she is harmful? Perhaps because we rely on rumor out of necessity, out of convenience. It takes time to investigate a rumor and you don't always get to the bottom of the matter. In our busy lives, it's easier to believe the first thing we hear, and sometimes we simply do not have any time for further investigation. Recall how King Iarbas, one of Dido's suitors, was enraged after hearing Rumor's tale of the Dido-Aeneas affair. Without looking into the facts, Iarbas complains to Jupiter about the injustice of the tryst. "Incited by that bitter rumor" (IV.270), Iarbas acts on the information as if it were true. Virgil is making a broader point about human communications: we find it cumbersome to investigate such reports. Like it or not, rumor is part of human communication.

How does Rumor differ from the legitimate stories or news reports? In several accounts, there is little distinction between the two. In Book VI, Aeneas encounters Dido in the underworld, and this is the first time he's faced with actual evidence that she committed suicide. Earlier, the reader is told Rumor spread word of Dido's suicide throughout Carthage (IV.915). Aeneas probably learned of Dido's death from Rumor; he seeks to confirm what he learned when he encounters Dido. This is where the ambiguity of Rumor arises. Some parts of her reports are accurate, others not, which only emphasizes Rumor's danger. You don't exactly know if you are dealing with pure evil or a slight distortion.

A modern reader will see parallels to Rumor in our contemporary society. Virgil's depiction of Rumor with her "sleepless eyes...many sounding tongues and mouths, and raises up as many ears" describes a creature that gathers information night and day. Is this a type of news-gathering organization – a tabloid newspaper, a sensationalist cable news show, or gossip blog? Like these organizations, Rumor is omniscient and fast: "Rumor, whose life is speed, whose going gives her force," he writes (IV.231). Rumor's speed is an antithesis of careful, contemplative thinking. She is first with a story or an account of an event, but is not always accurate. "She holds fast to falsehood and distortion as often as to messages of truth," he writes (IV.249). Think how similar this is to the gossip and half-truths blasted around the world on Twitter and other blogging services. The world saw the destructive force of rumors propelled on Twitter and Reddit in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing, as individuals posted messages falsely implicating innocent people of the horrific crime (Gayomali, Kang). It's hard to see how Virgil could have anticipated such a parallel, since even the printing press would not be invented years later (1041 in China and 1450 in Germany). What Virgil did see, however, is how human beings have to navigate evils such as Rumor in their daily task of understanding the world around them. 



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Personifying Time and Beauty in China, Egypt, and Greece | Heather Divoky

Beauty and Time have forever been intimately tied together: the perception (especially in Western Culture) that Youth equates to Beauty, and alternatively that as we age, our beauty becomes less. This line of thinking is nothing new. Past civilizations expressed their vanity in a number of ways—including the manner in which they dressed and beauty treatments that would give their appearance a *fresh*—and therefore, more beautiful—façade. Three of the most prominent ancient civilizations—China, Egypt, and Greece—went as far as to personify the idea of Time and Beauty within the parameters of their own religions.

China, for instance, has a goddess associated with Taoism that personifies both Beauty and Immortality. Hsi Wang-mu is the goddess of the West, and is considered the most beautiful goddess of the Taoist pantheon. She wears a crown of peaches, which grow in her orchard found in her mountain palace. The peaches themselves granted any who ate them the gift of immortality. Hsi Wang-mu encapsulates eternal Beauty in her Youth (*fresh as a peach* is) and is unaffected by Time's menacing tyranny.

Renpet is both a hieroglyph and a deity from the ancient Egyptian civilization. As a hieroglyph, Renpet represents Time in the most fundamental form. She is not a goddess when written in hieroglyphs—she is a symbol for Time. As a goddess, she wears a palm shoot and is depicted with Youth. Through this Youth, she represents Time—becoming a personification of it rather than a symbol.

Perhaps the most well-known example of the connection between Beauty, Youth, and Time is the Greek goddess, Hebe. She is iconographical—laced with ivy and is the cup bearer to the gods and goddesses of Mount Olympus. She brings ambrosia and nectar to them, renewing their vigor. Hebe is also the goddess of Youth. As such, in art she is often shown as a beautiful, young woman who, of course, never ages.

Each of these goddesses celebrate Beauty and Youth, so long as Time is suspended. They voice the human desire to stay young, fresh, and to fight time. This sentiment remains today. As a testament to how strong it has become, we now have medical spas that are dedicated to making the human physical manifestations of time go backwards. They sell Botox injections and permanent makeup to create the illusion that the women receiving these treatments look younger. I was approached by one such spa and commissioned to do several pieces—these three art pieces are the result. Placing these three pieces in that environment is, as I've been told, a bit tongue-in-cheek. I prefer to think of them as the ultimate goal to which the customers of the spa are aspiring to.

Unraveling the Origins of Folklore and Legend in

Bloodroot: An Interview with Novelist Amy Greene | Kathryn M. Barber

The first time I met Amy Greene, she was reading from her debut novel, *Bloodroot*, at the university I was attending. As I listened to her read from the text, I remember feeling like I was in a trance. The book and its characters sweep you away into the heart of the Appalachian Mountains, and you can't help but become caught up in the magic and mysticism Greene drips onto each page. The novel chronicles three generations of a family whose lives are all impacted (or destroyed) by the wild and free-spirited Myra Lamb. From the curse of the haint blue eyes to the devouring of a chicken's heart due to an old superstition, both the characters and the setting of the novel are absolutely haunting.

After the reading as Amy signed my copy, I asked her if she might have time to answer an email with a few questions regarding her writing process—instead, she ripped off a piece of paper and gave me her phone number. Since then, she has graciously allowed me to pick her brain on several occasions, the most recent being for a paper I wrote on *Bloodroot* for a graduate seminar. She let me pound her with questions for over an hour, but the most intriguing parts of the conversation, for me at least, were when she began to explain the roots of the folklore and magic she uses in her novel.

Kathryn Barber: *Bloodroot* Mountain itself seems so eerie and magical to me. It's almost like it becomes its own character. Do you feel like the setting in the book, particularly the

mountain, can function as a character?

Amy Greene: The landscape definitely became another character for me. That's the way I feel about where I grew up. I knew that land so well—every nook and cranny of that hill behind my house where I would play and explore. There's a real love there, and because that's the way that I feel, I think my characters feel that way about *Bloodroot* Mountain. That's the way Byrdie feels about Chickweed Holler and the way that she misses her family. She's always thinking about going back there.

The book and its characters sweep you away into the heart of the Appalachian Mountains, and you can't help but become caught up in the magic and mysticism Greene drips onto each page.

KB: Byrdie and her family all have these supposed magic powers. Were there stories like that when you were growing up that influenced these characters in the book?

AG: Oh, yeah. Growing up in the Hollers of Appalachia, those stories are a part of your life. Those legends and the folk magic... You wake up, and the sky is blue, and there's a haint in the holler. There's a specific story that makes me laugh when I think about it. My mom one day got a phone call, and she was talking to a friend who lived in Dire Holler, and the friend told Mom matter-of-factly that they were moving because there was a haint in their house. It was haunted. This was all practical; they just had to go away. No one raised an eyebrow about it. It was just a fact that if your house had a haint in it, you just got out of town. My mom was always telling me stories about how she had a great aunt who could take off warts by rubbing stones

in a circle around each one and throwing the stones away. I know I've told this story, I tell it all the time, but when Clifford blows down Byrdie's throat to heal her thrush, that's kind of a common gift that some people are supposed to have to this day in the mountains. My dad was the first one to tell me about it because my dad took his baby sister to the man who lived in their neighborhood to the man who could heal the thrush. So you know, I grew up with so many stories, so many ways of life, and magic was talked about in a completely normal way. When I started writing, it was interesting, because I didn't feel like I was purposefully doing anything. I was telling a story of a place as I knew it, and it wasn't until after it was published I realized just how unusual those things are. They make the book seem mystical and magical, but for me, they were just the practical truth of where I was from.

KB: Were there other people in your family that had kind of these gifts that Byrdie and her family have in the book?

AG: I have an aunt that was supposed to have been able to lay her hands on people and heal them. My grandmother on my dad's side was supposed to have been able to levitate tables. There were people in my family who were said to have had "the touch." I don't think they were even seen as unusual. It was seen as that's how it is.

KB: In your novel, the characters are obsessed with the curse of the haint blue eyes.

Lou Ann curses the family and says they will remain cursed until a child is born in the family with haint blue eyes. What is the significance of the haint blue?

AG: This goes way, way back, all the way back to Scotland and Ireland, with our ancestors. They brought these stories across the water. Haint blue is this blue that looks like watery, like an aquamarine color. Spirits aren't supposed to be able to cross water, so haint blue is supposed to scare them away. If you drive around still to this day, where

I come from, and probably anywhere in Appalachia, you'll see doors and windows on old houses with this flaking aqua paint, this funny color blue. It was a common practice to paint the doors and windows to seal them to keep out evil spirits. Haint blue eyes were something that came to me, knowing about haint blue. That was my own invention. But haint blue itself is a known color that wards off evil.

KB: Most all of the folklore in the novel, then, is based on actual legends?

AG: Yes, even the horse, Rose, was kind of this familiar and kind of Myra's spirit in a way. That was my own invention, just a way I felt Myra's spirit could survive and go on, even though her spirit was so broken. It was the spirit of the land that keeps going and rides out of the land without being broken, or tamed, or changed or touched in any way.

KB: What other legends did you grow up

with? What about the chicken heart Myra eats?

AG: I can't remember where I heard about the chicken heart, no one in my family did that, but it was a striking story. You could swallow a chicken heart, and that would bring you love. It was supposed to bewitch the person you loved and bring that person to you.

KB: It's interesting that these characters seem to be spiritual, but they are so connected with magical ideas and superstitions. There's another part where Myra feels like a chickadee she's watching is her mother's spirit, and she and Doug discuss the idea of reincarnation. Were there beliefs in the area about spiritual reincarnation?

AG: It's interesting how rigid and strict religion is, how Christianity and that folk magic exist side by side here. It's because they were both brought across with our ancestors, and because those early settlers couldn't read. What they were told is what they believed. Myra insinuates that reincarnation might be possible, and Doug tells her, "You better not let the church people hear you say that."

I wanted to bring up that paradox. There's a freeness and mysticism spiritually, but there's another side that's very strict and practical. You have to believe the right way, or you don't go to Heaven, type thing. It's an interesting conflict, and there's still a heavy superstition here, but at the same time, there's a conservation and specific way that you have to believe in these churches and be right and go to Heaven. That's one of the paradoxes about living here. There's a beautiful, free spirituality along with this

stricter, hard shell mentality that's really interesting. Like I said, the only thing I can figure is that's a part of our heritage too. Those things have existed alongside each other and somehow don't conflict, even though they're conflicting ideas. The same person who thinks you can take off warts with a stone, throw the stone away in a bag and they'll go away, also has rigid beliefs about where you go when you die and how you have to get there. That's a conundrum I don't have solid answers for; other than to say, it's just something passed down.

KB: Myra is such a complex character in the novel. There seem to be so many symbols that represent her spirit. Which do you feel like are most important to understanding her as a character?

AG: There is her closeness to nature. She embodies the spirit of the land when she's young, and of course, there's Wild Rose—a major symbol of her and her spirit. Even really the bloodroot flower at the center of the book, she's connected to that. She's a paradoxical person. There's this need to protect her that everyone feels, but without meaning to, she destroys all of their lives. She's this

beautiful, almost innocent seeming person who is actually a destructive force in the lives of other people. The bloodroot flower and other themes in the book are definitely embodied in her as a character.


KB: I was thinking about the bloodroot flower. I don't think it struck me as much the first time I read it—

how they compare and how the flower represents her. I know some about the plant, but how is it significant as a symbol in the book?

So you know, I grew up with so many stories, so many ways of life, and magic was talked about in a completely normal way. When I started writing, it was interesting, because I didn't feel like I was purposefully doing anything. I was telling a story of a place as I knew it, and it wasn't until after it was published I realized just how unusual those things are. They make the book seem mystical and magical, but for me, they were just the practical truth of where I was from.

It's interesting how rigid and strict religion is, how Christianity and that folk magic exist side by side here. It's because they were both brought across with our ancestors, and because those early settlers couldn't read. What they were told is what they believed.

AG: Bloodroot is a delicate, white flower. It's actually very beautiful, and it grows in Appalachia. I've noticed it a lot where there's shade or on a hillside or along a body of water. When you pull it up, the root is thick, fleshy, almost fingerlike, and if you break it or cut it, it bleeds a red sap that looks like blood, hence the name. That sap can be used to treat all kinds of things. They even grind the root into a powder to try to treat cancer or gingivitis or ringworm or other skin diseases, but if you ingest too much, it can poison you. It can be deadly. When I was looking for something to name the mountain that my characters lived on, was when I discovered

bloodroot. It was something I had heard of from my mom, and I knew it grew nearby our house, but I had never seen it. I read a little about it, and I was so struck by that paradox of this plant that has the power to poison and heal. I thought about that complexity and it reminded me of Appalachia, where we come from. It gave me clarity, so it became this center for the book that I kept coming back to. Bloodroot as a symbol and it became the title. It was really important, the paradox that the plant embodies. One way or another, it's all inspired by real legend and folklore. 

Horoscopes | Sarah E. Bode—your fairy-tale, star-gazing guide



This season is a thrill ride—some of the fire and brimstone kinds of thrills. Don't resist the urge to be the hero this season—you are needed, even if sometimes not wanted. But don't worry, there are plenty of others in your future you will aid who will reciprocate your overwhelming nature—some of which might grant you tokens of their favor.

Suggested Reading: "Little Red Cap" by Brothers Grimm and "The Company of Wolves" by Angela Carter

Make sure to let your flag fly this season and be your unique self. A chance encounter will lead you down an unfamiliar path—keep your wits about you. And don't feel bad when your friends and family tell you they told you so. You will gain much from this encounter, but also lose something irreplaceable.

Suggested Reading: "Little Red Riding Hood" by Charles Perrault and "The Little Girl and the Wolf" by James Thurber



This season you will find yourself giving in to your curiosities. This could prove hazardous, but don't worry all will be well with time. Make sure not to get distracted by some frivolous dreams you'll have, your time to shine is coming up—the big-white-wedding-dream is on the horizon. It's about time; you've waited long enough for it.

Suggested Reading: "Sun, Moon, and Talia" by Giambattista Basile and "Brier Rose" by Brothers Grimm

Someone will misunderstand you this season, but be steadfast and wily. Others will come to your aid when you're in need—when your dreams are most jeopardized. Don't get caught up in housework or the day-to-day necessities, you are soon to find who you've always been looking for.

Suggested Reading: "Cinderella" by Brothers Grimm and "A Case Study of Emergency Room Procedure and Risk Management by Hospital Staff Members in the Urban Facility" by Stacey Richter





Don't inhibit your curiosity this season—it will take you somewhere special. Hold onto your mischievousness, you'll need it when challenged and your dreams are threatened. You'll come up for air in due time. Remember your "happy ending" is not like the Taurus.'

Suggested Reading: "Fitcher's Bird" by Brothers Grimm and "The Mermaid in the Tree" by Timothy Schaffert



You'll find your desires howling within you this season. The chance meeting of an interesting party, will have you playing a part. Don't worry, you'll reveal yourself in time, allowing you to continue the uncomplicated and fulfilled life you yearn for. After gobbling up some fun later, you'll wish you hadn't and see the need to come up for air.

Suggested Reading: "The Story of Grandmother" as tr by Paul Delarue and "The Girl, the Wolf, and Crone" by Kellie Wells

Abandonment strikes deep this season—many will attempt to dupe you. Be wary and know you've got a handful of Plan As and Plan Bs in your pocket. An intimate helping hand will threaten your identity and pride, but remember safety is key. Unfortunately, this intimate helping hand is not of the romantic kind.

Suggested Reading: "Hansel and Gretel" by Brothers Grimm



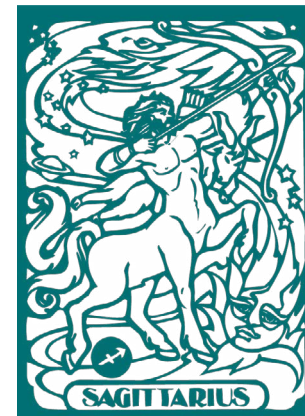
Survival is key for you this season—not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually too. Your ability to play the part will allow your wisdom to tread water. Your hard work in a relationship will pay off in your favor this month, putting you in charge.

Suggested Reading: "Blue-bearded Lover" by Joyce Carol Oates



Attractiveness is always on your mind, and this season is no different. Pride will force you to question your surroundings. Be prepared for difficult and uncomfortable answers—some might feel like they set your soul on fire. Know you shine when you are plotting forward towards your goals. Someone will recognize you for it one day.

Suggested Reading: "Snow White" by Brothers Grimm and *Snow White* a novel by Donald Barthelme

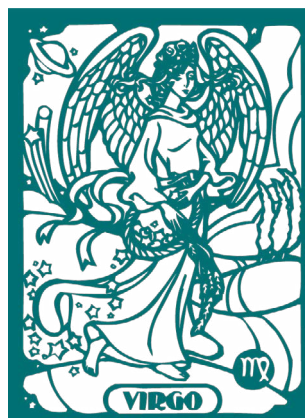


Keep your mantra "anything is possible" in mind this season. Trials and tribulations are headed your way. Try to keep warm as things might cool down for you. You might experience an unexpected resolution, but your next stop is certainly a better place.

Suggested Reading: "Little Match Girl" by Hans Christian Anderson

Helping others has been your everything for a long time. This season you will deviate from that, but don't worry—your sense of self will improve on this path. A new energy will aid you. Meeting someone special is on your horizon—but don't be impatient! Keep in mind, they will like you for being down-to-earth, but your love is written in the stars.

Suggested Reading: "The Cat Cinderella" by Giambattista Basile and "Cinderella; or, The Glass Slipper" by Charles Perrault



Your fortune will lead to interesting developments this season. A special someone will betray you, but you will quickly find another to take their place. They will surprise you, even though you wish to surprise them. Surrounded by friends and family, later in the month, will prove to have an unexpected ending. Don't worry, your achievements will not be forgotten.

Suggested Reading: "The Robber Bridegroom" by Brothers Grimm and "Bluebeard's Egg" by Margaret Atwood



Notes on Our Contributors |

Spring 2013

Kathryn M. Barber | Kathryn is currently pursuing her Master's in English at Mississippi State University, where she also teaches freshman composition courses. She spends her time reading books, writing papers, making up stories, and scheming to run away to Wilmington, North Carolina for good. Her stories and poems have appeared in four issues of Carson-Newman University's literary magazine *Ampersand*.

Brian Caskey | Brian is currently pursuing his MA in Liberal Studies at UNC Wilmington. He lives in Asheville, North Carolina, where he and Stacey, his wife, own a tutoring and test prep business. Brian's favorite writers include Fred Chappell, Nikki Giovanni, and Robert Penn Warren.

Thomas Dylan Cohen | Tom recently returned from teaching English in Seoul, Korea. He is now starting his masters at Dominican, while also working for a local newspaper in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Karen Comstock | Karen Comstock is an artist/entrepreneur completing the MA in Liberal Studies at UNC Wilmington. She received her BA in Spanish with a minor in Creative Writing from the University of Arizona in Tucson. She has owned and operated both domestic and international companies offering full-service project management and Spanish translation for K-12 education publishers. Karen is the founding director for Casa Tortuga (www.casatortuga.org) a non-profit organization supporting grassroots sea turtle conservation through the Boats for Biologists program and international collaborations. Karen is a classical guitarist and professional dog trainer.

Heather Jo Divoky | Heather graduated from Appalachian State University with a BA in Art History. Although she loves the history of art and considers herself a scholar, Heather also is an active participant in the art world as both a traditional artist and a graphic designer. Her aesthetic philosophy is often informed by history, past and current, though she maintains a whimsical, magical style uniquely her own. With bursts of color and incredible detail, Heather's inspirations are varied and often (though not always) include Mesoamerican Art, Outsider Art, and the Art Nouveau period. Currently, she is exploring the use of wire, textiles, and looking into the shoe making process, and integrating it into her marker, pen, and colored pencil practice. Her favorite food is a good, homemade macaroni and cheese, and she would never turn down a hike in the woods. Heather is currently in Leiden, Netherlands obtaining a MA in Art Business from Leiden University.

Charlene Eckels | Charlene Eckels is a Bolivian/American artist. Born in Jacksonville, North Carolina and raised in Wilmington, North Carolina, she aims at promoting a Bolivian agenda that includes social and cultural heritage through art. By demonstrating the themes and stories of the Bolivians she hopes to create a dialogue and give some insight into this Latin American culture. Charlene is currently studying at UNC Wilmington, but has also taken time out of her formal education schedule to gain life experience. She lived and studied at the National

art school in Bolivia, South America, to experience her Bolivian roots. While there, she taught art to children in orphanages. She even survived a airplane crash in the Amazon jungle. She also lived in London, England, and worked with a British government program to assimilate Muslim women into British culture. Charlene has also travelled to Bahrain. Recently she went on a study abroad program and exhibited in Ireland. She incorporates her experiences into her artwork. She specializes in Bolivian themes with a rich and brilliant palette in various paint and ink media. She also enjoys showcasing the colors and culture of her Bolivian heritage. She hopes to enjoy a long art career as she continues to travel the world and experience the bright colors and varied palette that life has to offer.

Jessica Jacob | Jessica Jacob is currently participating in the Master of Arts program at UNCW for English Literature and Composition. She is a member of Sigma Tau Delta- International English Honor Society, and is Co-Chair of the Graduate English Association, as well as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. As an undergraduate, Jessica studied abroad in Wales and participated in a Wentworth Travel Fellowship in Greece and Italy in an effort to expand her knowledge of both literature and the world's cultures. As a graduate student, Jessica participated in a second Wentworth Travel Fellowship to study the cultural effects of Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm's collected folk tales. Her interest in folk literature has led Jessica to publish "Food, Flowers, and Femininity: Masculine Dominance in The Twelve Brothers," in the spring 2013 edition of *Palaver*, and to present "A Silenced Presence: The Role of Women in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*" at the 2013 conference for the Philological Association of the Carolinas. She will travel to Boston in November 2013 to present "Deconstructing the Disney Delusion: Exploring Rerendered Representations of Grimms' Fairy Tales in Secondary English/Language Arts Classrooms" at the National Convention for Teachers of English. Ultimately, she hopes to continue to pair travel with literature to broaden the boundaries of her intellectual curiosity.

Matthew Johnson | Teaching had always been the plan for Matthew, until an opportunity in retail management presented itself. Matthew has been working in that field for ten years, but for the past two years, he has been using photography as his creative outlet. He has even been able to build a regional photography business out of it. He loves creating themes in his personal photography and breaking out of the ordinary shooting styles.

Anna S. Klein | Anna S. Klein, a native of Poland, graduated from the University of Lodz, Poland, with a MA in Clinical Psychology. In Belgium, she explored different vocations opting for computer programming. In the USA, she engaged in substance abuse counseling, followed by her latest passion – interdisciplinary studies with a focus on religion, history, and philosophy, thanks to the wonderful program of Liberal Studies at Duke University.

Rob Wells | Rob Wells is doctoral student in journalism at the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism. In August 2013, he earned an MA in Liberal Studies at St. John's College in Annapolis. A veteran financial journalist, Wells teaches business journalism at the University of Maryland and was a 2012 Reynolds Visiting Business Journalism Professor at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. Prior to his academic career, Wells was Deputy Bureau Chief of *The Wall Street Journal/Dow Jones Newswires* in Washington, D.C.; he has also reported for *Bloomberg News*, *The Associated Press* and newspapers in California. He and his wife, Deborah C. St. Coeur, live in Crownsville, Maryland.

Kathryn M. Barber | Brian Caskey | Thomas Dylan Cohen |
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