POETRY DESK

Elizabeth Scott Tervo

Haшa Ариадна [Our Ariadne]

She picked her way across the stones and sand and trailed her steps along the baby waves the sun was still high and bright

away on the horizon she sighted the tiny ship she charged into the hurrying waves deeper and deeper the waves swept past like skirts they broke over her head and rolled her back to shore they hid even the topmost sail

she crouched in the wet sand

She turned inland along the setting sunbeams and found a strange table among the treetrunks an immense stump of worn down rings loaded down with plates and platters an endless variety of food and drink it cast its own circle of warmth and light like a room among the trees.

Badgers, hedgehogs, foxes, and other forest creatures greeted her arrival with more toasts round after round in acorn cups

To this meeting to this occasion to our friendship and to those we miss, who are no longer with us.

We used to gather there every evening to share small news of groves, and dens, and creeks and Ariadne became one of our company. For us, exalted with wine and vodka

© 2023 THE WHEEL. May be distributed for noncommercial use. www.wheeljournal.com our table came to represent all tables, the banquet at the edge of Time our faces loomed over the world's horizon like gods

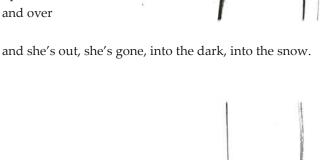
Late night when our party would break up, each to his own home, she had her own home too now, a nest too big for one in a high tree it swayed in the cold and wind

One creature only saw and knew:
her cavalier the badger
who every time waited at the door
and helped her on with a badger's coat.
He never spoke.
That immovable snout
that mug
showed no emotion.

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Just once he muttered at her shoulder, "He must come back, he'll come."

and it's one sleeve the other sleeve up and over



Glasnost Belle



Every day, every hour, from afar off, these thoughts: I am Freedom, I am Democracy, I am Youth, I am Virginity, I am Beauty, I am Dulcinea, I am the Unattainable Woman, I am a Dream. I am an Idea . . . but I could become Real.

In the frozen forest we strolled on a frozen lake. I chopped and dragged a small dry fir and set it on fire on the ice.
We warmed our mittens and were not afraid.
The ice was a meter thick.

You had a secret. I asked and begged and begged and nagged till you showed me: a raw octopus, bigger than me, you kept in a box of ice. One tentacle slipped over another: the thing was still alive. Two empty saucers glared up at nothing.

I pointed, and you told me, *It only looks inward*.

Follow me into the darkness for a moment down the track your own thoughts have worn in my mind: You are Delusion, You are Destruction, You are Madness, You are Dishonor, You are Jealousy, You are Grief, You are crawling home alone.

It was never meant to be.

Our own hearts told us that long ago.

Illustrations by Alla Kanareykina Do not let your quick heart freeze to the ice. Do not be like Lot's wife, forever looking back.



Elizabeth Scott Tervo's poetry and stories have appeared in St. Katherine's Review, the Basilian Journal, Eye to the Telescope, the New Haven Review, and Waystone Press's anthology Visions of Paradise: Eucatastrophe. Her memoir about the end of the Soviet period, The Sun Does Not Shine Without You, is forthcoming in the republic of Georgia. She is also co-coordinator of the Doxacon Seattle writers' group for Christianity and Science Fiction/Fantasy.