

7-15-2019

In Baba Yaga's Garden

Janet Brennan Croft

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Recommended Citation

Croft, Janet Brennan (2019) "*In Baba Yaga's Garden*," *The Mythic Circle*: Vol. 2019 : Iss. 41 , Article 23.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mcircle/vol2019/iss41/23>

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Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien
Albuquerque, New Mexico • Postponed to: July 30 – August 2, 2021



In Baba Yaga's Garden

by

Janet Brennan Croft

"I see no reason for you to be so sad, my dear," the therapist smiled.
"You're both making *such* progress," she said. Why, in today's session alone
Your husband has learned ten new ways to torment you.
"When you are a little down, you must simply think of your happy place
And go there. Promise me you will do that." They both beamed at me.
Do not think, do not think, do not think
of the inescapable *fact* of him. Do not rage. Go to your happy place instead.

"My happy place, yes," I murmured. "I *will*."
The high hedge of bones and thorns is prowled about
by snakes, owls, hedgehogs, cats,
familiar and protectors out of the old tales.
Soon I'll go down and tidy away
those ragged red and white ribbons flying from it so gaily,
the ones the ravens sport with.
But the breeze is too lovely right now.
I sit on the high veranda, sipping wine,
adrift on the light dappling the leaves below.
Behind me in the house, peace and order,
rest and useful work, time and space,
room to breathe, light, silence,
what *I* will.
The house shifts a bit on its legs;
cauldrons and knives settle back in their accustomed places.
On the fencepost far below, his skull bleaches;
crows picking it clean, clean, finally all clean.
I think idly about what I shall build of his bones.
I may need more.

"I *will* make sure there's a place there
where I can come and talk with you, Doctor.
And thank you for all you've done."

Can you feel the house move?