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Sibling Rivalry

Adrienne Rie

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Additional Keywords

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Sibling Rivalry

I
Following the pebbles
through the velvet
night

Mother looked at
Gretal
with eyes of
green fire.

It was inevitable
she'd try
again

and

when the second
chance occurred,
she must
have raked
the courtyard with
a feather
to leave
no stones....

II
In the dark, ancient
trees,
it was Gretal
who found
a way--

drawn by
the siren call
of
like to like--

and I,
as always,
followed.

III
Gretal
would have
stayed
forever.

She was used
to the work,
and gathered stray
spells
in her spare
time.

She would stand
before my cage
and mutter to herself,
glancing my way
with a speculative
eye.

IV
Days flow
like rivers--

swift with
emotion

or

sluggish with
ennui.

I lived a
lifetime

behind the witch's bars
alone with
thoughts and
sweetmeats.

Gretal
grew strong

as I
grew stale.

I think she even
came to like
the old woman--
witch or no.

V
I had never
seen my
sister
happy,
until I was
imprisoned.

She sang
her way
about
the kitchen
as she
made my meals--

and over her
shoulder
loomed
the oven.

She goaded me
to join her
songs--

But, being for
the cookpot,

I couldn't take
things
as lightly...

and all my
songs were
dirges.

VI
It wasn't easy
to persuade my sister
to her duty.

Her loyalty
to kin
was always
loose
at best,

learned
as it was
at Mother's knee.

Ambition warred
with what
little love
was left.

Only promised
futures
convinced her--

not shared
pasts.

Left to her own
will,

I think she would have
sucked the marrow
from my bones
like wine.

And left my skull
for the crows.

-- Adrienne Rie