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Editors' Introductions

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Online MidSummer Seminar 2025
More Perilous and Fair: Women and Gender in Mythopoeic Fantasy
August 2-5, 2024

Via Zoom and Discord

<https://www.mythsoc.org/oms/oms-04.htm>



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Editors' Introductions

Greetings, Subscribers, Contributors, and Readers, All, and welcome to the 2022 edition (issue #44) of *The Mythic Circle*, the creative writing publication of The Mythopoeic Society. With this issue, we continue our 44-year-old tradition of offering our members and the general public a selection of fiction, poetry, and images that develop, extend, or recapitulate the mythic concepts used by J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, and the other Inklings, and also by mythic storytellers from pre-literate antiquity to the modern world.

This issue begins with the proper publication, in its intended form, of a poem that was misrepresented in issue #43, due to a tragic interruption to the editing process. Dr. Gaydosik here offers a sincere apology to Sarah Berti for getting her poem so wrong last year. With any luck, this year's presentation of her verse looks the way she expects it to.

Our stories this year include the first-ever serialization of a longer work, *A Circle of Dragons*, written by A. J. Prufrock, and illustrated on our cover by Molly Kantz. Hilda's tale of using her story-telling skills to entertain dragons for tea will continue next year and the year after.

Quite a few stories this year focus on the challenges that women face: Kalessia must connect with her true love in "Kalessia's Dance," and Echo must remember her teacher's advice in "Terra Supreme." In the narrative poem "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight," the lady of the title gets her heart's desire and then must cope with the consequences, in an unusual twist. In "Juice," the modern pick-up scene is unexpectedly tinged with mythic elements. "Ashes," a re-invention of the Cinderella story, begins in pagan antiquity and bridges it to early-modern Christianity through the Cinderella character and her magical helper. Tragedy strikes in "The Marble Princess" and in "Nuru and the Doves," and yet each protagonist finds her way.

But young men also face challenges. Romance and duty collide for "The Soldier and the Yellow Woman"; a young man out hunting encounters a goddess—always a fraught situation—in "The Hunter"; a man on a quest beyond the morning must wake up the dawn in "The Pale Beyond"; and a death at sea spreads tragedy to land in "A Bard's Sorrow." And more!

Our poems this year include examinations of water creatures in "Nereid" and "The Mermaids Keep Their Own Counsel," and another sea-oriented study in "The Sunken Shore"; a tour of famous fantasy locations in "Itinerary" (how many of them have you visited?); and, a study of a mystery man in "Enigma," and a call for more exercise of imagination in "Multiverse," both by our very long-time contributor, David Sparenberg.

Many of the images in this edition were provided on short notice by Franz Klug and Meg Moseman, and we thank them whole-heartedly. Like Old Mother Hubbard, when I looked into the image cupboard, it was nearly bare. A call to them for any extra images they could provide enabled the issue to take on a more extensive visual dimension.

One of the expanded recent features of *The Mythic Circle* has been the archiving of each issue on the Digital Commons (<https://dc.swosu.edu/mythsoc/>), where all of the periodical publications of The Mythopoeic Society are now housed, and the provision of audio files presenting recordings of oral performances of our stories and poems, free to be listened to online or downloaded one year after publication. Thus the stories and poems of issue #42 (2020) have been freely available for the past year, and almost all of them have an audio file associated with the printed text. Hundreds of copies have been downloaded all over the world. Issue #43 (2021) will be freely downloadable after September 14, 2022, and each story or poem page will have an audio player to present the oral reading. And this issue (#44) will be visible in the archives when it is published, then freely available for downloading after mid-September, 2023. At that time, we will also present the entire novel of *Gott'im's Monster 1808*, by S. Dorman, as an audio file. The opening chapter of the book is excerpted in this edition under the title "The Monster Appears."

Many thanks to our proofreaders, Ben Dressler, Phillip Fitzsimmons, and Diane Fitzsimmons: hard (and productive) work in a short time frame. You are the last-minute heroes of the whole process!

And now, enjoy your reading!