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Editors' Introductions

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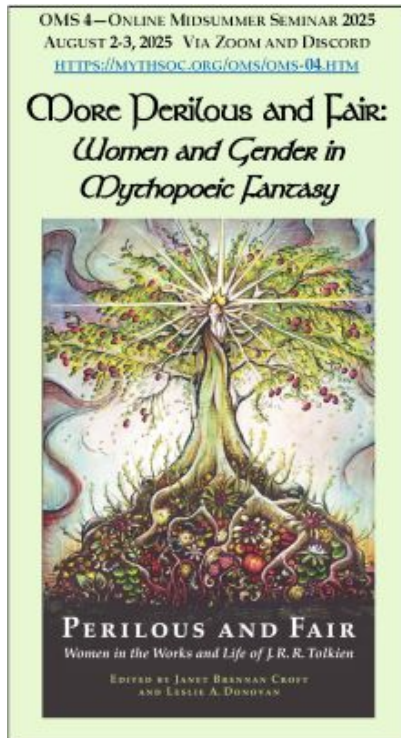
Online MidSummer Seminar 2025

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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Additional Keywords

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Editors' Introductions

by Victoria Gaydosik, with Nolan Meditz

Greetings, Subscribers, Contributors, and Readers, All, and welcome to the 2023 edition (issue #45) of *The Mythic Circle*, the creative writing publication of The Mythopoeic Society. With this issue, we continue the 36-year-long tradition (since 1987) of providing *The Mythic Circle* as a publishing outlet for members of The Mythopoeic Society and for writers and artists in the general public (we've published 45 editions because in the early days, the journal was a quarterly publication—but those days are gone, probably forever).

The Mythopoeic Society's history of creative writing publications extends even further back, to 1971, just four years after the founding of the Society, in the pages of *Mythril* (1971 to 1980, with some gaps) and *Mythellany* (1981 to 1987, also with a gap). Copies of those early publications are freely downloadable from our archives at <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythsoc/>. In fact, all issues of *The Mythic Circle* are freely available there except the current year.

Those early publications came forth in the era of mimeographed zines (if you're as old as me, you probably remember those pre-computer, pre-desktop publishing days) that were spun out, manually collated and stapled, stuffed into envelopes, and shipped out through the U.S. Postal Service. There was no e-mail for quick communication between editors and contributors: there were letters, and there were landlines. There was no internet for instant fact-checking, and there were no archives—how did we live through those deprived days?

Today, submission invitations are announced online, and aspiring contributors send their work electronically in a form that makes editing the journal easy compared to the extensive Herculean labors imposed on the early editors. A fair number of fantasy writers and artists are repeat contributors, but new voices and visual works are welcomed every year.

For this year's edition, it fell out by chance that several submissions contained, celebrated, or made passing reference to dragons, and so for the first time in my experience, the journal includes a special section devoted to these works. The front and back covers of issue #45 feature dragons from, respectively, Hannah Seakins and Molly Renee Kantz, who also contributed line drawings for the journal's interior. Hannah's work had never before been included in *The Mythic Circle*, but I am glad she was able to provide our striking front cover art work. Another artist, a local freshman at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, had never published any image anywhere, but after chatting with our archivist, Phillip Fitzsimmons, Oscar Cuellar Mendez sent in several line drawings that worked very well with our content. Daniel Edward Thompson submitted pencil drawings relevant to J. R. R. Tolkien, the source of inspiration (along with the other Inklings) for The Mythopoeic Society's existence. Our archivist once again submitted photographs of stained-glass panels he has made (and a carved piece as well). And finally, Yiming Zhou provided an illustration that is incorporated into a poem. This mix of new and past contributors enriches and enlivens the look of the journal.

Similarly, the poems in this year's edition present new voices, such as those of Emma Wilson-Kanamori, Elizabeth Scott Tervo, and Christian Dickinson, as well as the familiar names of

Joe Christopher, David Sparenberg, and Holly Day. And we received poems from writers I have known primarily as fictionists: Kevan Kenneth Bowkett, Geoffrey Reiter, and Andoni Cossio have previously provided works of fantasy fiction for the journal, but they have also shown another side of their creativity in this year's edition. And in subject matter for the poems selected for this edition, you will find a wide range of topics, from mystical evocations ("The Gathering," "ODE to JOY or The Way of Eloquence," "West of the Moon," "Silver lining," and "SHE—We—Eucatastrophe,") to life celebrations ("All of the Notes," and "Some of the Reasons Why") to mythic reinterpretations ("Orpheus and Eurydice," "Mara," and "Gweir the Warrior") to tragic laments ("The Penultimate Dodo")—and even a joke ("A Great Strength of Time")! Andoni Cossio gives us a formal representation of a metrical device admired by Tolkien in "A Forefather of Fantasy—An Alliterative Appreciation." Read it out loud to enjoy the repeated sounds.

The fiction selections for this issue begin and end in speculations of transcendence ("Walking," by Llewellyn Issel, and "I Have Guests," by Russ Bickerstaff), approached in very different ways. Two stories will offer language challenges: in "The Lark Mirror," by Angelisa Fontaine-Wood, poems and songs are in French, though the story is not incomprehensible to the non-French-speaking reader. And, in "The Book of the Dragon," Sandy Feinstein (another author new to this publication) creates much of the story in characters suggestive of Old English. How else would a dragon tell its story? We have tragedy in our re-presentation of "The Marble Princess," by Lawrence Buentello, a vivid but ultimately sad story. In contrast, in "Under a Horned Red Moon," by Kevan Kenneth Bowkett, the young man's quest turns into triumph. And there are many adventure stories in tones of desperation, witty humor, sacrifice, and risky mercy.

Putting these disparate materials together is always a delight—a puzzle that doesn't know what it is until all the pieces fall into place and make a unified whole. We are very appreciative of the talented writers and artists who send their work to us for the recompense of a free paper copy of the journal. Please continue to support us with your creativity, and spread the word to other writers and artists of your acquaintance. Keep in mind that it is the policy of the journal to give preference to the members of The Mythopoeic Society, although we also accept submissions from the general public. Membership is affordable at \$15.00; those wishing to join can make arrangements at <https://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>. The Society's annual conference has been held in the summer for more than 50 years, and if you love fantasy and the works of the Inklings, you will find like-minded devotees there. This summer, our conference will be digital for the second time, in the form of the Online Midsummer Seminar: its theme is "Fantasy Goes to Hell," and registration (\$20.00) is available at <https://www.mythsoc.org/oms/oms-2023.htm>.

And don't forget that subscriptions to *The Mythic Circle* (still only \$8.00 plus shipping) are only available at the society's webpage, <https://www.mythsoc.org/mythic-circle.htm>.

Until next summer, happy myth-making!