

Editor’s Note

Myths are not lies. They are the stories that shape and reflect belief systems.

According to artist Minas Konsolas, myths are the truest form of history because they are the stories a culture tells about itself—stories often repeated in oral tradition before the printed word. Konsolas, born on the Greek island of Karpathos, has read and listened to such stories his entire life. He knows that even though a myth can be manipulated as a method of control, truth of the tale will be found in its universal symbolism.

Regarding universal themes and symbols, Native American poet Edgar Silex reminds us that we have identified “some ninety-plus essential human stories” retold in multiple time periods and places. Why do the peoples of the world tell such similar stories? Theories range from very predictable—the influence of migration—to fantastic speculation about star seed or genetic hot-wiring. For Silex, who is a mythology scholar and teacher, similar stories evolve from our shared human experience—causing symbols and themes to be “engrammed in the universal subconscious.”

Stories and poems in this issue echo ancient works even as they search for images and narratives applicable to current events. Readers share the “drunken joy” of kings, madwomen, slippery gods, and mermaids. They witness crusades, war, persecution, and discrimination on multiple continents. They are privy to the pain of infertility, insecurity, addiction, and other human conditions. They are invited into city apartments, suburban garages, and the roots and branches of trees where the occupants live between heaven and hell in conceptualized beauty, sexuality, or even reality.

Some of us may be able to read present, past, and future in the entrails of a crow. Many of us will remember that the world remains the same even as it changes: snakes are still some of our favorite shapeshifters; apples can be poisoned in many ways.

Thank you, Little Patuxent Review staff and contributors, for sharing this “mythic” adventure. It takes the experience and stories of a village to make a journal happen.

—Patricia Jakovich VanAmburg