

Best supporting actress

by Britta R. Kollberg

Returning from the place of *exile from exile*
she took a sharp stone,
the Midianite woman, on the way to Egypt.

She was a true daughter of Sarah,
her husband's keeper
in Midian, the camp, on the way to his call.

With her bloody deed, his fight was won
and his leading role
was secured: She took a sharp stone

and touched the man's feet in obedience
to the covenant and his life,
the Cushite woman, like Sarah—in Egypt.

Rebuked by her in-laws for being
part of the journey,
her skin a sharp stone, cutting into their

laws of belonging, of black and white:
stubborn opponents—
We are the Midianites, we are the refuge

married to men in exile, on their passage
to end the slavery
of their people. We are sharp stones

thrown against their oppressors. We are
acts to save their hide
and their face: almost lost on the way
if Zipporah—if we hadn't taken the stone.

A spell

by Britta R. Kollberg

only when Rapunzel
loosened her hair
and let it flow
to caress her cheeks,
fall along her neck,
rest on her shoulders,
float down her back
and around her arms
as she opened the window—
only then could he see she was beautiful,
and by her hair she dragged him up
floor by floor,
loophole by loophole;
pebbles like promises rolling off with small clicks
as he rested his feet against the tower wall

The tortoise waves her head left and right

by Britta R. Kollberg

You thought I'm just slow, my legs are too short. But I arrived before
you even started, Achilles.
I saw these delicious flowers along the way,
and I marveled at them,
sniffed,
and I shook the earth crumbs and pebbles off the soles of my feet
—you might not see it but I have very delicate skin
below these cloddy green legs,
and I touched the warm soil on the sunny spots of our track. The race...
You arrived at the goal,
and nothing
was there: no fanfare,
no trophy,
not even you.
And not me... as I was far ahead, still—shuffling, sniffing—
on my way.