FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Ariadne's Egg
Chrystal Wing
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In this carefully written, often wry and surreal, episodic first novel, the heroine realizes that she is so rarely herself that she fears she will become “this other person full-time.” Ariadne must recover herself without the aid of definitions that no longer speak to her restive condition.

The author mirrors this search for new definitions by asking questions of genre. She blurs the boundary between novel and prose poem, producing a rich, image-driven form that progresses in short chapters full of metaphoric occurrences-an ear that empties out seeds, beads, rice, and finally a barking puppy, or a dead father who floats through Ariadne’s room to hunt for cigars and sigh sadly. Each titled chapter is a successful bit of magic with its own revelatory moment. In one half-page chapter, nothing more happens than a spider crossing a towel rack, “testing each step with a delicate leg.” Wistfully, Ariadne approves its theatrical finesse.

Ariadne occupies center ring in this little circus of a novel. Her closest companion (besides Harriet, a treelike redhead she meets at the end of a trail of dental floss) is her cat, who is the incarnation of the Virgin Mary. Ariadne’s worldly adventures include bumping people on the street to jolt them into an awareness of their own “desolation” and “sorrow,” or climbing on the conveyor in the checkout line to be touched by gentle, healing hands.

When it seems that Ariadne lacks the will to take her final steps towards herself, Wing puts her on the moon where she is ignored by a group of old women playing gin. In a wading pool, naked under a pea-green raincoat, Ariadne places a long distance call to the spinning blue planet she longs to rejoin. “I can’t seem to get back,” she says to Harriet, who is her challenge and destination. Harriet arrives to water Ariadne. “Take off your raincoat, honey,” she says. “You’re going to have to get wet.”

Wing, who has an MFA from Goddard College and is a founding member of the Goddard Clockhouse Writers’ Conference, teaches writing in Portland, Maine. In *Ariadne’s Egg* , she presents an existential story, delicately balancing the fantastic against the real estrangement and pain that comes from suppressing one’s essential self. She examines the courage it takes to nurture the egg-like soul within, and invents a form to guide readers through this risky terrain.

Bonnie Blader