



Fable of the Pack-Saddle Child

Mia Leonin

Nereida Garcia Ferraz, Illustrator

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Like angels and unicorns, fables have made themselves scarce of late, but leave it to the land and language of magic realism to bring forth a bona fide specimen. A gorgeously illustrated, book-length poem of masterful prose, there's not much in way of comps to describe this breather, but take our word for it. Mia Leonin is the author of three previous collections. Her poetry has appeared numerous top journals, and Miami-based Nereida Garcia Ferraz's art has been exhibited in several US and Mexico museums.

Three weeks after the birth, Micaela's mother's body deflated to its previous shape, never again to grow round or to reveal even the slightest stretch or sag. Three weeks after that, Micaela was a sturdy package. Her mother changed from her black clothes to a borrowed violet dress. She washed the incense and litanies from her hair, wrapped Micaela in a blanket like a tamale, and dropped her into the deep cotton hammock of her shawl. With Micaela in the crook of one arm and a suitcase beneath the other, she marched off to the nearest distant city, never to return. Her enormous family was too hungry and too disgraced to be anything but relieved.

MATT SUTHERLAND (May/June 2018)

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