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# Stories from the other Shore

With a Forward by  
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Translated into English by  
LETIȚIA GOIA



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MOTTO:

*From that time forth Poseidon,  
the earth-shaker does not indeed slay  
Odysseus, but makes him a wanderer  
from his native land.*

**HOMER**

- ✓ She appears in dictionaries and anthologies.
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## Angels

The cave was large and round, like a mouth, or the womb of a woman with child. And she had her corner in the round cave, a small spot, narrow and pointed, where she would always try to stay eyes wide open. Everyone had a corner there in the cave, and there was a fire in the middle. The fire belonged to everybody. Under its light they found out how the beginning started to flow. She liked hearing about angels the most. The old people knew best. Some voiceless beings with wonderful wings, that would always, always fly beyond, those were the angels. Voiceless and wonderful.

When the first hunter offered her a soft, warm chunk of meat, she refused. She refused the second one as well. And then the next. She new that beyond were the angels.

The shadows and half-lights of time were passing and she seemed matured at the light of the fire in the eyes of the father of the cave. He offered her a soft warm chunk of meat. She refused. She closed her eyes and heard the angels.

It was night and she was cast out.

Respect p She was glad. Beyond, they were waiting for her.

It was dark. Some voiceless beings with wonderful wings were always, always flying, beyond, coming back in flocks on the ceiling and the walls of the entrance to the cave.

## The modelling clay board

The little boy with the girl's hands had just finished modelling the legs and started to stick them to the rest of the body, and then admired his work (it took almost nine minutes and nine seconds, without counting the time spent imagining how the little figurine would look like) and he eventually placed it on the board, by the other modelling clay figurines. This last one, brand new, of the finest red clay, immediately stood aside. It was, for that matter, the only red clay figurine on the board. The little boy tucked his legs under himself in front of the board, gazing lovingly at his figurines.

The new figurine could barely stand on its still soft legs. Its eyes were not accustomed to blinking yet, let alone to watching, and it was afraid that if it used them too much, they would roll down on the board. They were soft and delicate, and they could easily get out of shape. So, it started to have a good look around with eyes half open. There were all sorts of figurines around. They were all shapes and colours.

"Look! A girl!" said a dry voice behind her.

"Oh, well! Maybe next time it will be a boy".

It turned around and saw two figurines that, judging by how dry the modelling clay was (they were almost bent over), were old and their colour had faded.

"Oh, well, a red girl... Right under this beautiful apple tree".

The figurine learnt that she was a red girl and that it was more acceptable to be a boy, preferably not a red one. She would have liked to be a boy or an apple tree, but as she was told, she was a red girl.

"Let's take her home, what to do, parents are still parents".

The red girl found out who those two figurines were. And from them, she found out who all the other figurines on the board were: women old and new, of all colours, green, yellow and even brown trees, men, old and new, of all colours as well, beautiful and ugly houses, big and small cars, dogs, cats and mice, good and bad, grass, useful and useless. There was a collection of figurines and on her way home, she met a part of them, of all colours, and shapes and names. And even though there were so many and so varied, each clay figurine on the board knew exactly what to do and how to behave, according to the name received. Therefore, once home, actually on her way home, the only red

figurine on the board started to behave as she was told: like a red girl.

"And take care of those eyes, lest they fall and you lose them somewhere. They are so soft", said one of the figurines called a parent. So, the red girl always kept her eyes half open, so as not to lose them.

They reached the figurine her parents called home. Actually, they called it a small and poor house. And all the figurines that lived there (there were lots of figurines called brothers and sisters) behaved as you were supposed to if you lived in a small and poor house. It wasn't hard at all, all you had to do was make yourself small and a little crooked. The red girl noticed even on her way home that almost all the figurines, except for trees and cats, were a little crooked. This was probably something that pertained automatically to most of the figurines and then, happy that the modelling clay she was made of was still soft, she bent a little as well.

The days in the small and poor house passed one by one, as their name said, as in a small and poor house. There were always many figurines made of shabby plasticine, in faded and dusty colours, that were called relatives and acquaintances.

The red girl used to play a lot in the courtyard, with other, newer figurines, like her, called children, while the parents were shouting at her not to play

like a boy, but rather take a needle and thread, like the girl she was.

"How I wish I were a boy or an apple tree", sighed the red girl.

"I wish I were a white figurine, like snow", said one of the brothers.

"I wish I were a yellow, yellow figurine", said one of the sisters.

"I will be a tree", said a child from the neighbourhood, and everyone burst laughing, hearing such words.

The days on the clay board passed one by one. The red girl noticed that the clay was dry by now, even if it made moving somewhat more difficult, she was not in danger of falling anymore, of losing her eyes somewhere or of straightening her back more than it was necessary. The same thing happened to the modelling clay of her brothers and sisters. The only strange thing was happening to the child of the neighbours that wanted to be a tree, because he wasn't drying, on the contrary, he became green.

One day, in the small and poor house stepped a huge figurine, round and black, full of violet and blue beads. The parents immediately called it a turkey, and the turkey puffed up and started gobbling. He needed what was called a wife. As all girls needed to be called wives eventually, the red girl was called that day a red wife and, of course,

from then on, all clay figurines would call her that. She understood she was supposed to behave like a wife, a turkey's wife especially.

On their way home, the turkey husband noticed that the red girl behaved like a red wife. Then he ruffled his feathers and doubled his size, and told her that, actually, she would be called a turkey hen, like any turkey wife that lived in a coop in the poultry yard. She would even be called a red turkey hen, so as to be more easily distinguished from the other turkeys. And he also told her to behave like the turkey hen she was, beginning that very moment, on the way home, so as not to shame him in the whole yard.

A blue butterfly flew to them.

"Don't you want to be a butterfly?" whispered the butterfly, fluttering its wings by the red girl's ear.

"I would, but I am a red turkey hen", she said, and she suddenly started to grow red feathers, and the blue butterfly flew away.

A white pigeon flew near them.

"Don't you want to be a pigeon?" whispered the pigeon fluttering its wings by the red girl's ear.

"I would, but I am a red turkey hen", she said, and instantly her hands turned into heavy wings.

A golden sunbeam floated by them.

"Don't you want to be a sunbeam?" whispered the sunbeam floating by the red girl's ear.