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The girl Ariadne lost not only her lover Theseus, but her difficult family as well, waking up on the island of Naxos alone.

She noted it was a still morning with a misty sun. She watched a brown forest pigeon poised for flight; her feathers that seemed purely brown at a distance were flecked with gold, and also a shimmer of metallic blue. Over the eye and above the beak was a crescent of gold. A long trembling tail.

The icy shadows returned as she lay there, the fear, that nameless anxiety. This fear is the heart of the matter, made up perhaps of many strands, many irresolutions and doubts leading to this moment. She listened to the inner river of blood, and the dawn wind in the tree. A rearrangement of the mind, finding some instinct that can answer back to those fears, perhaps that's what the girl is doing, so that if the epiphany arrives, like the sudden apparition of a god, she can at least recognise it.

Her family has been cast aside by her love for the interloper Theseus. Ariadne betrayed her brother the Minotaur in order to win Theseus. She deserted her poor mother Pasiphae (the 'shining one') who had been made subject to unnatural lust for the glorious bull sent by Poseidon as a revenge for breaking the rule of sacrifice. Her mother Pasiphae's divinely caused desire had to be assuaged—it stormed through the world as a burning hollowiness, consuming mind and reason, destroying family order. Daedalus the great contriver and craftsman made a wooden structure, a cow, in which Pasiphae could creep and be mounted by the bull. Daedalus must have recognised the inevitability of desire running its course, as he himself dreamed of flying, a seemingly impossible dream.

Ariadne remembered that moralists suggested that Pasiphae must have been bitter and ashamed, but in fact she truly loved that white bull, a form often taken by the gods in those days, and was intensely relieved to have her desires met, and to have borne the baby Minotaur. Ariadne had seen images where the baby with the bull's head is seated on his mother's lap looking loved and comfortable. Yet, the myths say, the consequences of disordered desire would echo down through generations in betrayal and violence.

The old stories continually acknowledge the centrality, and the terrible pain and consequences of Eros. The woman who loves the wrong man, or even the wrong species, Ariadne thought, is incompetent at the most ordinary aspects of life, absorbed in her feelings, her

perceptions and not in the outer world; she is like an artist. She will dress for her lover in expensive couturier clothes, hair, make-up, nails all impeccable, will sit and talk in a certain way, and won't eat in order to fit into an extremely slender pair of trousers. The heroes of the Theseus type put duty first, and are driven by a need for fame and success, concealed beneath respect for authority and custom. The mistress who has given up everything hasn't much of a chance.

Ariadne had helped the hero Theseus through the Labyrinth, had given him all her secret knowledge of the guiding thread, had supported his enterprise to kill the beast even though it was her own brother. She departed from Crete in Theseus' boat, leaving the entirety of her known world. But the important hero, sensing his destiny, left her sleeping on a silent rock on the overnight stop at Naxos, and sailed away to his public glory in Athens.

Ariadne was abandoned, and before the next lover came, she wept unrestrainedly. She knew that love leads to metamorphosis, but meanwhile, it was unbearable. Her task was to change shape, to meta-morph. Gardening helped; she planted parsley and found the mignonette planted a few days earlier had come up, tiny divided leaves, a faint smudge of green on the earth. She planted gypsophila, baby's breath, and sunflowers.

She learned the comfort of those repetitive small tasks that always need attention, the mending of wreaths and masks, fixing clothing torn and covered with stains of salt after a flight in a tarry wooden ship. And discovered a new way of making pomegranate salad: Break the pomegranate into berries and scatter in lettuce leaves with a dressing of balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, mustard and olive oil.

Was it the salad? The unimaginable retinue of Dionysus appeared, swooping down out of the sky in a chariot drawn by panthers, cloaks fluttering, some piping maenads and goat-footed satyrs, to request the sister of the Minotaur for his own. The god of forgetting and passageways overcame her longing.

Theseus' father was waiting on the cliffs of Attica, and saw the black sails of the boat, sails that Theseus in his hurry to leave Naxos had forgotten to change. In great grief his father hurled himself into the ocean. For Theseus the timing of his arrival in Athens was bad, it could not have been worse. He too had forgotten that Dionysus with his music may be just over the hill, behind the jacarandas.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Diana Wood Conroy.*