

# A Scattering of Rivals

*by* Beate Sigriddaughter

Peace isn't easy. Especially in fall when red leaves float down.

My first rival was my father, by far the favorite child in the family. The rest of us were easily eclipsed by his colorful tantrums. At breakfast over honey rolls, mother explained she had deliberately chosen him. We were more accidental.

I couldn't wait to grow up. I planned to go to the ends of the earth to avoid rejection.

I had a date for the prom in February. In April he fell head over heels for Nola, lead actress in the senior musical.

"I'll still go to the prom with you," he nobly offered.

"No thanks," I said and imagined them dancing.

My best friend with Joan of Arc hair and violet eyes was summoned to bed by the man I wanted as we were sitting at the foot of the stairs, talking of immortality and oranges and a certain fairytale fox. They left me with moonlight and Green Chartreuse.

A husband left for a long-legged creature on the brink of first bloom.

An old lover's new love already swept his front porch as I walked by.

My favorite T-shirt is yellow and tattered: a wanderer, a woman, walks on a mountain bridge. I dream of the inside of gold lit windows I sometimes see at dusk.

I have come full circle. I am grown up now. My young son is already more important. Earth has no end.

