

*. . . she barreled  
into somebody  
coming the other  
way, his nose down  
in a paperback.*

“I’m always doing that, my daughter Abby says.”

The big man with a baggy heather fisherman’s sweater and amiably craggy eyebrows laughed and looked at her more closely. “Abby? Not Abby Farquhar?”

“Yes—why? How do you know?”

“I didn’t recognize you in those ordinary clothes.”

Theo Ruskin remembered Dinah’s Papagena plumage, the brilliant-colored dress, the bright aura she’d cast the gloomy afternoon she came by with Abby to pick up one of José Saramago’s novels from his stark office in the Language Department.

They talked some more and laughed at the coincidence of their meeting, both lost in wayward thoughts, and Dinah told him of the cloth she’d stenciled with petroglyph suns in shades of parakeet and mint and seafoam, guided by his friend Eileen the textile artist whom he’d come by chance to drive back to Soquel after his day prowling used bookstores in Pacific Grove and Monterey.

\* \* \*

And when they became friends, and more, and were married at Sand Rock Farm in Aptos, where the Grateful Dead were said to have jammed with Santana in an old barn in the sixties, what Theo loved most about Dinah, always, was the brightness she carried with her—sometimes a Roman spoon, sometimes a Vivid Violet Crayola for jotting down shopping lists, sometimes a bowl of fragrant bright-green soup she often made on gray days from a family recipe, which had turned up inexplicably inside a tattered old tortilla warmer in a cupboard by the sink the evening of the day Dinah had almost run him down,

he’d tell people, laughing, with his kind, rumbly chuckle. The day she’d hit him like a feather-fletched arrow, sharp and decisive, piercing him straight through.

## CORDA EBY

*Plums Stones Olive*, 1994  
Oil on Panel, 7 1/2 x 9 in



**Christie B. Cochrell** is an ardent lover of the play of light, the journeying of time, things ephemeral and ancient. Her work has been published by *Tin House* and *New Letters*, among others. She has won the Dorothy Churchill Cappon Prize for the Essay and the Literal Latté Short Short Contest. Once a New Mexico Young Poet of the Year in Santa Fe, she now lives and writes by the ocean in Santa Cruz, California.

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