ELISAVIETTA RITCHIE

Mail Order: “The Ultimate Sportsman’s Knife”

The traditional folding blade is etched with “magnificent line art depicting a majestic ten-point buck.”

The handle is sterling silver engraved with a repoussé stag and his doe by a lake with the requisite mountain and pines.

Such a serene sylvan scene, sibilant as the hiss of bullets, buckshot or shell,

the swish of the blade as it flays leather and fur the color of cattails, punctures bladder, brain, illegible entrails.

The price of the knife is $195 (plus shipping). The price of the life of the deer is also probably high when you consider transportation costs to the edge of the woods, and all the gear needed for life in the wilds as well as weapons and ammo.

Pity a deer isn’t an ape or a chimp with the basic digital skill to turn the tools of his or her own destruction back on the hunter, destroyer.

Pity a deer isn’t a tiger with teeth or a charging rhino, elephant run amok.

You may return the knife to the Franklin Mint within 30 days (presumably used is okay) for replacement, credit or refund.

You cannot return the deer. But it is indeed a magnificent knife and would re-sharpen my pencil.

Elisavietta Ritchie is a writer, photographer, editor, and translator. In addition to seven collections of poetry, she has written Flying Time: Stories & Half Stories (Signal Books, 1992).

PHILIPPA SCHMIEGELOW

Derceto

killer-whales travel in pods
break blue water with black fin

in a black kodiak coast-guard rescue boat we watch these myth-maligned shadows

hang glide beneath us

matrons and matriarchs arc into the air float on the spume of whipped up wave disperse sudden sea silence

a female flotilla

swim alone

you said

i swim alone in waters muddied by memory hang suspended in stagnant pools white lightning sizzles on blackened mountain beneath moon

Derceto swallow me whole spew me out to the indigo sea

Some believe that the whale of the Biblical Jonah myth found its genesis in the Babylonian Sea Goddess Derceto.

Phillippa Schmiegelow was born in Malaysia and educated in Ireland. She came to Canada in 1964. She has an M.A. in English (Women’s Writing) from York University. This is the first of her poems to be published.