

SISTER PATRIKIA



SHEPHERD'S
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ORTHODOX LOGOS PUBLISHING

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Sister Patrikia

(Greek Monastery of Saint George “Karaiskaki”)

Translation by Anthony Pevear

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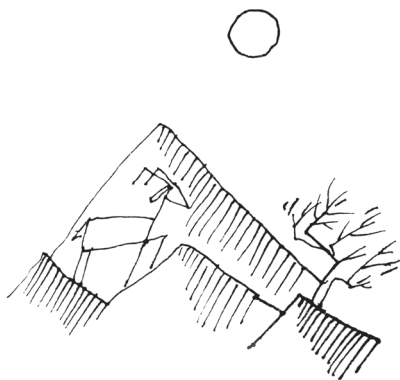
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– *Father, who are the poor in spirit?*
– *Those whose treasure is in the heart of another.*
Arch. Dionysios



MELPOMENE

She bellows in the midday oak woods, and her bray speaks of the trumpets of war, hunger, heroism, the destruction of cities, of the horrors of the desert, and of distant lands, but there is no need to look up to the skies, ready to burst open: she most likely has nothing in mind other than the crackers in your hands. Meni is a sweet nickname, but her name is Melpomene, which in this country is as common as her being a donkey. When her owner grew old and tired of her lonely life, she moved to the capital to live with her grandchildren, but the donkey did not go to Athens. As is the case for any member of an extinct profession, there is no one to take care of Melpomene. The grass underfoot is plentiful, the neighbors feel sorry for Meni, but not enough to take responsibility for the old donkey.

A small monastery, lost in the Pindus, had once sheltered rabbits, and everyone here now knows of the evil black fleas. Dogs were abandoned, and the puppies later died of an infectious disease. The monks were given goats for temporary housing, and they had nightmares of bald, bumpy, swollen sheep muzzles, devoured by scabies. Nobody wants new animals from an unfamiliar farm, much less a homeless vagabond donkey.

The nun Augustini could find a marble worker, a dermatologist, an archaeologist, a futurologist, a farrier, a knife-grinder, a house painter, a local historian, an oceanographer, a halva

maker, the owner of an olive grove, water mill or pomegranate garden. When she announced that some acquaintances from Mavrommati were asking if the monastery could take in a donkey with a complicated life situation, we said no, of course.

Three times it was said that the donkey was not welcome.

There is a person walking this earth, gathering the forsaken, those with unfulfilled expectations, those who missed the essential thread of the story. That person takes them by the hand, walks along with them, leads them out of the shining and illusory world of human achievements, pretty dresses, career growth, expert opinions, fashionable thoughts. Becoming real is more painful than a toothache, than losing all the people who speak your language, it is more exhausting than being a dog in training or going from being a promising young man to a simple laborer. It is generally unpleasant to be born.





This book presents a series of simple yet profound stories that seek to illuminate how the first gentle rays of the Kingdom of Heaven – and its celestial inhabitants – are revealed to young souls who have embraced the monastic calling.

The author, Sister Patrikia, is a nun of the Greek Monastery of Saint George “Karaiskaki,” nestled in the forested heart of Thessaly, central Greece.

The delicate illustrations that accompany these stories were created by Sister Kyriaki.

