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Abstract: *Nabokov Studies*

Nabokov's Mermaid: “Spring in Fialta”

Presented through the nostalgic prism of her absence, Nabokov's heroine is a poetic vessel of a male character’s journey. Barely trusted with any lines, not to mention internal monologues, she is essentially mute. In the best tradition of the Russian mermaid fairy-tales and films, she seems to have traded her voice for human form in order to be close to her beloved, but, misunderstood and unable to fit in his world of mortals, she ends up leaving forever, as he mourns the loss of his one chance at happiness. As if in return for such an arrangement of circumstances, Nabokov’s mermaid-like woman is granted a brief access to the otherworldly dimension, which she in turn feminizes and charges with her presence. This magical, if hardly fair, exchange can be observed in "Spring in Fialta.” The first part of the article traces the русалка -mermaid watermark through Nabokov's creative work. The second reads “Spring in Fialta” through the lens of the русалка belief and the Russian folk wedding lamentation ritual (“свадебное причитание”) -two intertwining motives, each carrying funereal overtones, which so far have been left unexamined by the critical literature.