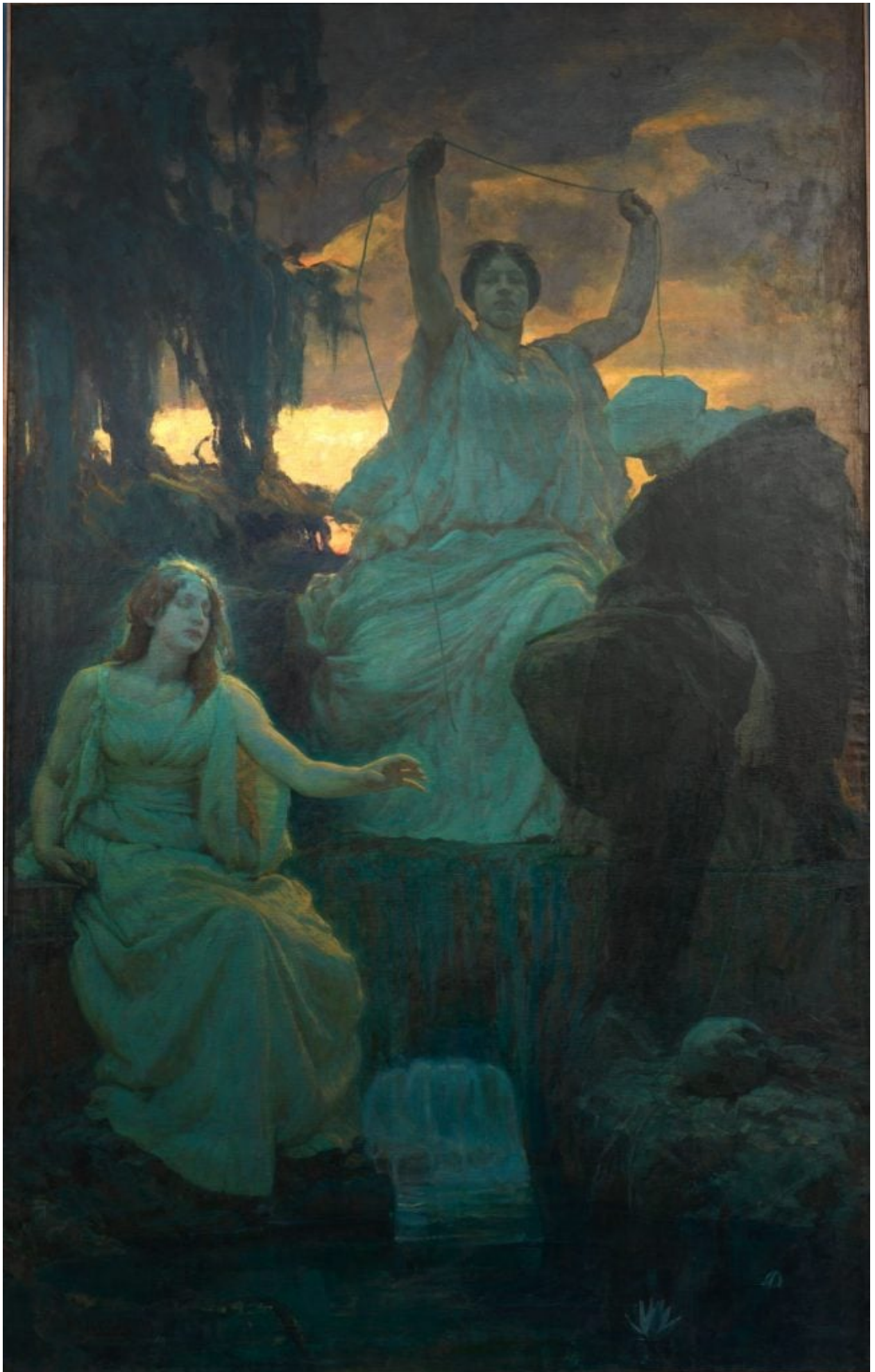


Dice

A Villanelle

by [Cristina Nehring](#) (August 2024)



The Norns (Alois Delug, 1895)

To the gambler gods we are but dice,
Playthings for three minutes or four or five,
To roll in each direction no matter the price.

To toss into a corner, to lose along a roadside;
Whatever our pertinent complaints:
To the gambler gods we are but dice.

Save a life here, expunge one there,
No matter what we do, the playful pieties will continue
To roll in all directions no matter what the price.

We order and order a life from disorder,
We plead and we plan, we stomp and we strut, but nevertheless
To the gambler gods we are but dice.

We imagine, what hubris, our destiny to us,
But neither will nor character shall stop those daemons above
To roll in any direction no matter the price.

Full of sound and fury is our comportment;
Full of prayers and poses and insults and assaults.
But to the gambler gods we are but dice:
They roll in any direction whatever the price.

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Cristina Nehring's most recent book is *The Child Who Never Spoke: 23 1/2 Lessons in Fragility*. She is also the author of

A Vindication of Love which made the front page of the *New York Times Book Review* as well as two books in French. She writes for *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. She lives in Paris with her daughter.

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