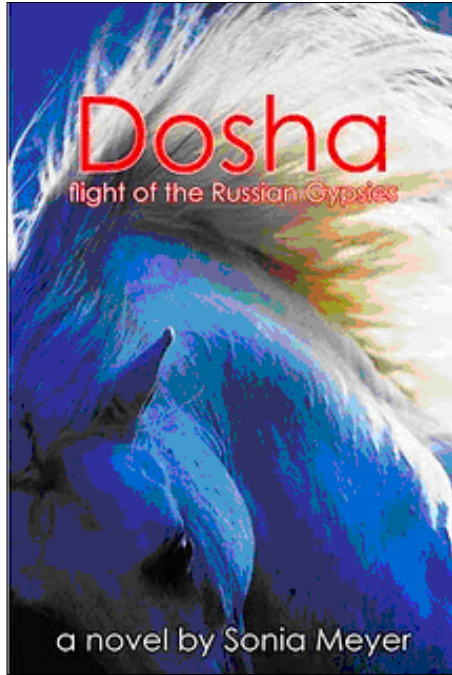


**Dosha, Flight of the Russian Gypsies by Sonia Meyer**



Dosha, Flight of the Russian Gypsies  
Sonia Meyer  
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*Review by Rene Schwiesow*

The atrocities inflicted upon cultural groups have existed for centuries. Roma have been hard hit by the full impact of prejudice and persecution. From pre-Third-Reich Germany to Stalin's reign of terror, to the illusion of Kruschew's thaw, Rom and Romni have been captured, tortured, left for dead or murdered. Still today, Roma are faced with torment. Sonia Meyer, author of "Dosha: Flight of the Russian Gypsies," knows the threat of persecution first-hand. At the young age of two, Sonia fled with her parents from the Nazi regime, taking refuge with

partisans and Gypsies. By the age of 7 she knew no other life beyond that of war and death. Sonia grew up reassured by the howl of the wolf, for at that moment she knew that she was safe, that the forest could, once again, awaken to its own sounds, following the cacophony of bomb droppings and the crack of gunfire.

From the memories of the nomadic life Meyer was forced to live hiding out in forests, abandoned houses, inns and barns during and post World War II, the story of Dosha, Russian Gypsy, has been given Roma wings to fly. And "Dosha: Flight of the Russian Gypsies," does soar from its pages, each of its three parts a mixture of action, intrigue, and romance blended seamlessly into harmonious balance.

While the story of Dosha as a Lovari woman is fictional, the historical perspective of Russian Gypsies on the run from the Nazis, from Stalin, and from Kruschew's Roma round-ups has been successfully and accurately woven through the book with a deftness that slips around factual ennui as silently and mysteriously as the Roma navigate their beloved woods. This is the beauty of Meyer's ability to bring to life the way of the Roma amidst war and post-war oppression.

In 1941 Dosha is a small child facing life in a war-ravaged country. Days, months, years lived on the move, sharing family around campfires, sleeping soundly in caravans, and becoming one with her horse courses through her veins. It is a life that captivity can never truly separate her from. Later, drafted by the Soviet government as a horsewoman, she and her stallion are trained in Russian dressage. Employed by the State behind the Iron Curtain, Dosha knows the constant pull of longing to be

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free again, the ever-present threat of death, the inevitable entanglement of lives ordered into service, frightened into silence.

Meyer has put pen to the page in a lyrical movement of literature with a European flair. Her personal knowledge of gypsy life and the time spent in historical research have served this story well. There is richness to her images, depth in her characters, and fluidity in her narration. The swish of a Gypsy skirt, the camaraderie of the Gypsy men, the laughter of their children, and the Roma's ability to understand and intuit the hidden forces of this world will stay with you long after the last word of this story offers its hush to your soul.

Rene Schwiesow is a Massachusetts poet and writer, co-host of Plymouth's Art of Words, she thrives on bringing words to life behind an open mic.