

Denali

Lane Community College • Winter 1996



Denali

Love doesn't make the world go 'round.
Love is what makes the ride worth while.

—Franklin P. Jones

Cover Artwork by Justin Tindel

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From the Editor

Welcome to the Winter 96 Fantasy and Romance issue of *Denali*.

First, I would like to thank all of the writers and artists who submitted to this issue. It is because of people like you that *Denali* has become what it is today.

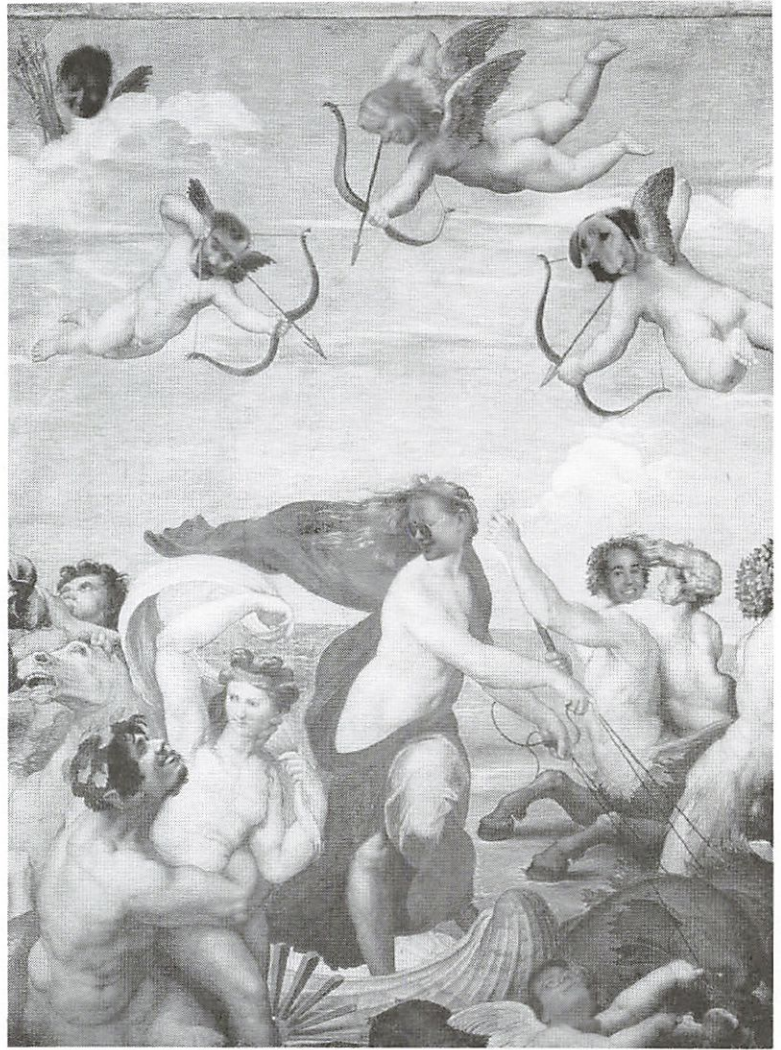
The submissions for this issue were all wonderful and varied. I have to say it was a tough decision for the board to make.

Due to the lack of funds, I was not able to publish a larger issue, so a few very good pieces had to be cut. You can read one of them in the March 4 issue of *The Torch*.

Denali has no money to print a spring term issue, but I am confident that I can raise the money needed by press time.

The theme for the spring issue is: International Humor. The deadline is May 3, 1996 at 5pm.

In case you have a problem in deciding what to write, here are a few ideas: anything you think is funny; limericks; something funny that may have happened to you. International and foreign students may want to write a story about their more humorous experiences here in America. All submissions will be considered. Once again, I would like to



The Nymph Galatea painting by Raphael via Web Museum

Clockwise from upper left: Joanna Chappell, Peter Jensen, Dorothy Wearne, Coogan Charles, Justin Tindell, Dan Ball, Dee Mentzer, Barret Werk

encourage all you artists and photographers out there to submit. The best way to show your support for *Denali* is by submitting.

You can pick up submission forms at *The Torch*, located on the second floor of the Center Building, or on the door of the *Denali* office located on the fourth floor of the Center Building Room 479F. If you have any questions, or would like to join our staff please feel free to contact me at the *Denali* office or call 747-4501 extension 2830.

I look forward to next term.

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Fifteen

I linger on the edge of the sidewalk
Peering to the sky to see the winds twist
Looking down the street to find you
You come as you always do
anxious to feel me close to your skin
The motorcycle growls at my penny loafers
I climb on the back of the deathmobile
I breathe in the scent of exhaust and aftershave
My nerves tingled knowing you are the Bad Boy
Knowing my mother cringes at the sight of you
Your wet hair, black leather, and my pleated skirt
Your many earrings, beer buddies, and my sweet expression
We pull into the deserted cemetery and run over the bodies
This is my life with you, good boy gone wrong
behind the headstones you taste my skin
You look me in the eyes and tell me what you think you know
"I love you..."
Will it last? My voice screams inside as I kiss you
My mother's voice chides me
"You are too young, a baby!"
But I wrap my arms more firmly around your shoulders
You lift me up into your arms
At this moment you control my existence
Gently you set me on the motorcycle seat
And this time we fly together, my skirt flying
along with my spirit.

— *Sarah Steadman*

The Awakening

Our ancestors left their mark upon the land.
Hear the deafening roar of humanity's
first breath
See humanity grow and thrive in peace.
Watch the mother singing softly to her babe.
This is peace, life eternal.
Time passes, oh so slowly time passes.
Hear again the roar of humanity, the clash
of cultures struggling to survive against prejudice.
See the blood spill forth over the differences
of humanity.
Is it different color, the blood? No blood is
the same red blood in us all, lives are lives,
despite their little differences.
Peace settles once again upon the ancestor's
land.
The roar of humanity is now silent, sleeping peacefully.
Time passes, oh so slowly time passes.
The roar of humanity again awakens, bringing death and
changes of culture yet again.
Humanity, ever changing yet the same upon the
land of our ancient ancestors.

— Dan Ball

Home

Let me speak of my problems.
Please, pretend as if you cared.
Love seems to have passed me by.
Some might say that I've been spared.
I wish that I had a girl;
Someone that I could call home,
'Cause I'd be home with her,
And without her I would roam.

I long to love and to be loved,
But no one likes me that way.
When trying to court someone
I never know what to say.
Don't get me wrong; I've had girls.
Each relationship soon ends,
When she inevitably says,
"I think we make better friends."

— Mike Anderson

Terra - Luna Romance

Peter Jensen

One night, the Earth fell in love with the Moon. It's difficult to know what led up to this stars-in-the-eyes event. Some experts say it all started when an object almost the size of Mars struck the Earth. They say it crashed into Earth in the Pacific Ocean pushing the ocean aside and diving underground. Perhaps this blow created the opening for that gigantic, tractor convection current down there in the mantle and even the core. This weakness in the Earth now helps drive continental drift, and, as a planetary flaw, it could be likened to Jupiter's Great Red Spot, but I like to think of it as a pump or even Earth's heart.

Lover, this ancient wound was opened one night long ago as that huge object fell like another planet through the atmosphere, shoved the ocean away with a wave, and embedded deep in the Earth's mantle sending up a molten splatter so high, it went into orbit around Earth at a distance much closer than the current orbit of the Moon.

Way back then, the whole Earth was melted again by this blast, and it had no time for regarding its new rings or the molten Moon. The Earth itself had just successfully cooled and condensed its seas when this explosion sent almost everything back to start over. This collision even threatened Earth's existence as a single planet. Earth had to resolidify and think over this setback. There was no time for love. Love had not even been invented!

It took a long, long time for Earth to heal. But when it had time to look up into the skies that had taken such a long time to clear, it could see that the Moon had grown to a larger size by gathering up all the splatters in its orbit and by slowly moving off and gathering up more splatters that had formed multi-flavored, sherbert rings around Earth. In fact, Earth was a little annoyed that the Moon had attracted all of its colorful rings and was moving off with them like a talented juggler on a bicycle riding along a high wire. At this point, the Earth and the Moon grew cool toward each other.

It is very difficult to say when the Earth's feelings toward the Moon changed. There was so much hard work to do on Earth, there was no time for love. There was an odd, on-going event — a kind of circus really — called life, a ragtag parade of goofy, self-replicating, single cell jelly blobs, and this riotous parade kept growing into more and more delicious blobs and bigger, more armor-plated blobs, until more huge objects (some of them ripping down with them arcs of close-by rings) fell from space and set back or maybe even wiped out life on an almost regular basis.

But then, much more recently, maybe Earth got a break from major collisions (perhaps it was able to hide behind the aegis of

Jupiter's huge gravity shield). Perhaps the Moon in its outer orbit also took many of the incoming hits aimed at Earth. Look at the Moon! The poor thing looks as if it has been regularly bombed! The Moon's suffering may have given the Earth time to work.

So Earth worked really hard and started to make much larger blobs. These movable life jellies filled up large skins and became dinosaurs, a very complex and successful series of fine-looking monsters. And just when Earth decided that these monsters were due for a raise (in consciousness), another damned rock the size of a city fell into the Caribbean near the tip of the Yucatan Peninsula and wiped out all the big, hot-blooded monsters.

After a long night of groaning and dying monsters, Earth's dusty atmosphere once again began to clear, and there was the Moon, almost in its present position and looking saucy and important as if it were equal in size to the Sun, obviously a temporary illusion, but very sexy, if you happen to favor the art form of the total eclipse.

Earth was extremely busy mourning and burying its dinosaurs. Soon after, however, Earth was distracted from its grief because its face was crawling with the usual insects as well as new birds and finally, lots of small, furry mammals. These miniature blobs were cuter than dinosaurs, and the Earth chuckled while watching their antics. The circus was in town again!

Birds broke out of eggs and learned to fly all over. Some birds forgot how to fly, grew long legs, and ran around like velociraptors. Only in the Western hemisphere, as if its jungles were very special, hummingbirds learned to fly standing still and backwards and even upside down as they raced ahead of the bees and kissed flowers for sugar water.

But it was the furry mammals that turned out to tickle Earth the most. They progressed quite nicely for a while. Some of them grew larger than dinosaurs; some of them, we think, grew smarter. Like a sheep with sharp teeth, the whale decided it had had enough of life on dangerous, dry land and went surfing into the sea to sing its own new tunes underwater. Left behind, the wolf learned to sing at the Moon. Apes tried to learn to talk for the longest time but couldn't say beans. But then, some very clever ape-men and ape-women finally lifted their knuckles off the ground, looked up at the Moon, and cried, "Mama!"

It was quite a while before these dawn people began to realize their mistake and jog toward the horizon. Earth spent quite a bit of time observing these people. They flattered the Earth and themselves with many intricate but flimsy theories about who they were and why their planet had made them. They soon talked

so much and at such a pitch, they distracted Earth, and before Earth knew it or could slow them down, these talkative primates had car keys and atomic weapons.

Threatened with extinction, the planet's other great primates gave up speaking only their Ape talk and learned human sign language, so they could signal their worries and their knowledge back to humans as well as to their babies. I don't wish to give anyone future shock, but I must say as a college teacher, I have been told it will only be a matter of time before chimpanzees and dolphins and orcas show up in my classes demanding access to the Internet.

Earth began to worry about its people, those flat-nailed, plucked walking birds with atomic warheads on missiles that one day might fly up like prayers and come back down like meteors. It was at this time that people began to worry, too, about going broke, and they suddenly figured out that Earth was mortal. Through them, Earth learned that one way or another — fire or ice or fire and ice — the Sun would die and kill the Earth. But before that, other huge objects (with more than the power of all their hydrogen bombs) were destined to fall from space and perhaps even wipe out life again.

Most important for our romance story, they all learned that the Moon would continue to fall away from Earth and might some day migrate like a wild goose looking for a solar orbit of its own or another planet to crash into or circle. All of this knowledge was upsetting to Earth and caused quite a few of the usual earthquakes and volcanic explosions.

And that is, I believe, when on a full Moon night in June while listening to a loon on Spirit Lake sing a tune, Earth looked up and fell in love with the Moon, and I mean fell hard! The Earth fell in love with the Moon the way a twelve year old falls in love with a sixteen year old lifeguard. The Earth began to act like a boy

hiding beneath his first, fiery pimples and wrestling to control his first hard-ons. The Earth began to act like a girl painfully aware of the flatness of her bathing suit top and mortified by the first blood stains in her shorts.

Moreover, when Earth realized how far away the Moon had fallen, Earth's love pangs became ever more severe. After all, as a planet, Earth was not limited to human emotional responses. Earth began to feel like a newly mature, male Lion, so hot with lion lust that it would kill off its own older, male relative and his cubs and begin a round of love making so prolonged that the new Lion King might not survive. Earth began to feel like a Lioness with twin cubs, with her lust for life so strong that when a pack of Hyenas attacked, she would seek out their Alpha female in the dark and break her neck. For some dark reason, Earth began to love the lifeless Moon so hard and so passionately that many objective observers began to fear for Earth's very ability to support life.

Meanwhile, the Moon had no idea what was going on on Earth, until little American, kangaroo men in white space suits landed on the Moon, and teenage Earth, near the end of the 1960s, yelled and jumped up and down and wolf-whistled, and the Moon finally realized it was adored from afar, not that it did the Moon any good. In fact, the little men brought back Moon rocks to Earth, and this was celebrated as one of Humanity's greatest achievements. And the Moon rocks were touted, during a long war in Southeast Asia, as proof of our love for the Moon. So maybe that was the beginning of real love on Earth.

Some wise people still maintain that love is a passing, pubescent, essentially hair-producing form of lunacy, but the example of the Earth and the Moon suggests to me that love is born from a recognition of future loss, and we cannot help but love what we cannot possess.

Little Peaches

I never know just what you feel
or even if you're there and real
sometimes I think you're just a dream
and why did I rip at the seams of our love
I want you, I need you
but you're so far away
I love you, I hate you
don't treat me this way
but you're so damn beautiful
that I just can't believe
that you could leave
I am burning inside
and I'm trying to breathe
please don't leave

— Bianca Mercedes Proudfoot

Rama's Soliloquy

Look how beautiful this night!

The warm wind bending over gently
the rice on the Sawah.

Yon coconut oil lamps casting flickering
shadows upon geckos clinging to rattan walls;
all mouth; fingers; and toe as those noisy lizards.

Listen how wondrous the laughter of
the old duck sheperds drinking kopi and arak
down at the warung.

Not one hundred Rupiah among the lot,
and less than a score of beetlenut-stained teeth,
but nevertheless, the most joyous men alive this night.

Ah, but here...the scent of Frangipani
blossoms heavy on the breeze...how they lift my spirit:
like a sip of cool water caught on a banana leaf trapped
between earth and the lapis sky.

Where is my lovely Sita tonight? How I love her gentle movements.

Bare feet step so delicately the grass springs back
without a trace of her passing.

Truly I am near the navel of the Universe.

I am utterly content.

I'll lie here a while longer and
watch these stars...

— *Matthew Hovelman*

Untitled

here you are growing inside me
like I've swallowed a pumpkin
seed. My round belly getting
rounder as the squash ripens.
I am terrified of you
of me
of us
but I've already looked through
that terror and into your
little fingers
pink
needy
on loan to me
to hold
to guide
to love
Until they're too big and strong
and mine are weak
again
and it's the other way around
You haven't even kicked yet
and I don't know who
exactly
it was that put you there
(although I have my suspicions)
and I'm already
thinking
about growing old with you
about
living my forever
with you.

— Jen Clason

Love

Love
the emotion
that is the spoiler
of all that isn't
meant to be.

Love
the emotion
that comes between
the man you love
and
the man you love
to hate.

Love
the emotion
that rocks the boat
and
doesn't know
when to stop.

Love
the emotion
that if I had a choice
I would choose
not
to participate.

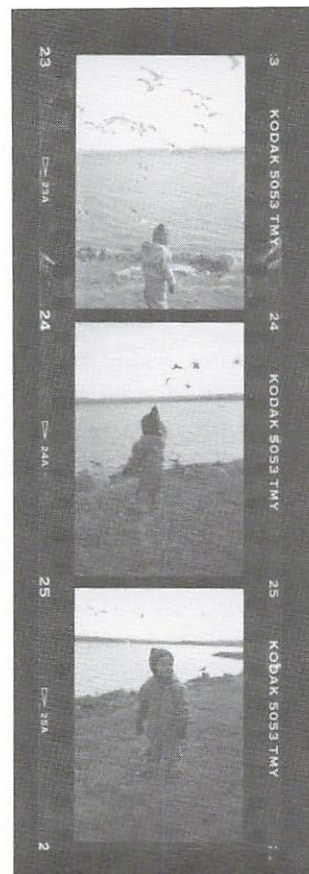
— Dee Mentzer

Morning Beauty

roll over and open my
 eyes;
 a feast.
 your back turned from me,
 i watch you
 first your shirt
 revealing
 lightly browned skin, protruding
 shoulder blades
 and partially defined
 muscles framed by three thin
 straps of your bra
 next pants — i enjoy each button
 being unbuttoned then
 wait for my next spectacular sight;
 the sharpness of your hips in
 contrast with your slim tummy, round bottom
 and womanly upper thighs
 sliding down to thickly muscled
 lower thighs, troubled kneecaps
 and gracious calves.
 i imagine each foot and toe as it
 comes through your pant leg
 pants aside
 you reach up behind your
 back to unhook your bra
 arm twisting and bent, you
 reveal to me unknowingly, the
 remainder of your fine back
 finally you gingerly take either
 side of your underwear
 and slide it down your
 butt and legs
 toss it aside on the floor.

 your entire body uncovered,
 bare
 and so mirror-like to my own
 i long to touch, kiss it
 to feel the warm skin
 under my soft caress
 divinity certainly
 you step into the shower,
 i roll over and
 fall back asleep.

— Davin K. Yannick



DREAMS OF FLYING PHOTOGRAPHY BY LIESL STEIN

Smell Of Life

That smell.
 That sweet smell of life that,
 Sticks,
 To my fingers, as part of me,
 And filters through my nose,
 To forever satisfy my senses.
 I salivate,
 To breathe it deeper into my soul!
 I push it hard against my lips.
 The greedy desire burns them.
 So I let it go.

— D. Starr

The Dark Muse

Karl Foster

Chocolate. No writing of romance, no thought of fantasy, can even be contemplated without the Dark Muse of the Cocoa Bean. Her power is sublime, yet strong. I refer to her as a "her," because the pull she puts on me, the way she entwines herself around my soul, seduces me like an erotic, pagan goddess of primal urges.

Does this reference to chocolate surprise you? Does it offend you? Or even shock you by its earthy tone? Perhaps, there are those who will ever desperately cry out for a familiar, yet exotic, kind of love and never receive it. But, those of you who have also been seduced by the Dark Muse, those of you who know the taste, those of you who have answered the song; know what I mean.

I will not ask in what form "she" comes to you in. The form she takes for her lovers is as varied as the likes and dislikes of her admirers. But, for those of you who have allowed yourselves to be seduced by her, you know of the bliss of which I speak.

Chocolate is a grateful lover. All she asks of me is a moment of my time. And she in return, gives me pleasures that no ambrosia besotted god can experience. The way she fills my mouth. The way she feels on my skin. The shock of her body in mine. It is not without anticipation, or eagerness, that I unwrap her divine, dark form. I will not go into detail here on what joys we share together. You others who have also shared yourselves with her know what I am referring to. For those who do not know; I can only offer you my sympathies. The Dark Muse is selective about who she shares her passions with.

There are other flavors she grants to her admirers. A more relaxed and satisfied outlook on life. A refreshment of the spirit. A renewal of the soul. And an enhancement of the

creative energies that cannot be rivaled by any other chemical. Indeed, a lover of the Dark Muse is a more passionate and expressive lover to others, as well. The benefits of listening to the Dark Muse's song are grand and endless. If you happen to be in doubt as to what I say; just seek out one of her many lovers, and they will wholly agree with what I say. If not expound upon it!

You will also find those who are not friends of the Dark Muse. They are a sad lot, really. These people are in a state of perpetual self denial, not accepting any of the joys that the Dark Muse offers to those who would only listen to her. These people are easy to find. They often deny themselves many other kinds of pleasures in life and suffer all the more for it. Even worse, are the lovers of the false Muse. It's called: "Carob." A blasphemy against the very laws of nature. With false promises this lying seducer takes in the expectations of those who are yearning for the one and only Dark Muse. After being loved and adored by them, this temptress leaves her victims empty and unsatisfied. Woe to them! Some of these lost souls forever swear against the blessed Dark Muse, so enslaved by this... this Carob.

But, this will never happen to me. I have received too many gifts and blessings from my times with the Dark Muse to give her up now. I look expectantly to our times together. I am never dissatisfied with her. Always, she finds new ways to thrill me. I never go unfulfilled. Chocolate will always have a special place in my heart, for as long as I live. For those of you who have not experienced the rapture that I and others have had, come join us. It is easy. Just take her body in your hands, unwrap her exquisite dark form, and you, too, will hear her song.



"TRICK OF THE LIGHT," HE SAID ARTWORK BY SONYA SCOTT

Dancers

Here hands are
weaving shadows out
of darkness as we spin
together

in this
music — like some hot, tumultuous, primal blanket covering
our heads.

Bouncing bodies draped in black
light, patterned in strobe
like silver sequined mannequins, waiting
to melt within coordinated linkings
of guitar hair strings.
Her flesh: vogue pressed within a flash.

Then, another
spark
& she is free again to sway within my smile —
like a blunt needle coruscating in
the gloom, having
plucked that blood

of long dead curfews, penetrated
skinny thimbles of time,
& we tuck away the patterns,
when the tie-dyed dawn in sky shines bright;
wearing nakedness,

barely shrouded, beneath
these thin
layers of
cloth.

— *Shadow Sky*

Going Home

Dee Mentzer

Jordan let the car roll down the street. That was the Walker's house, where they'd had taffy pulls, and across the street were the Hargraeves, with the swing still hanging from the big maple tree in front.

She came to a stop in front of her old house. The new owners had painted it green, and there was a garage where her father's garden used to be.

She drove past three more houses, pulling into the driveway at number 96. Olivia's parents hadn't moved to Florida or Arizona like the others.

Jordan sat there looking up at Olivia's window, remembering all the hours she and Olivia had spent sprawled on the floor, imagining what their lives were going to be like. And now they were actually living those lives. She in Hartford, Olivia in Santa Barbara. But they'd kept in touch, and Olivia hadn't hesitated when telling Jordan about her impending marriage: "I want you to be my maid of honor, Jordan."

Jordan was sure it was going to be the first thing Olivia said to her — "Where's Calvin?" And she'd been practicing her answer: "Calvin and I are taking some time away from each other. It's no big deal."

She took a deep breath and got out. There was a note taped to the front door: *Last minute errand. Make yourself at home!* Jordan had forgotten that some people could actually leave their houses unlocked. When she stepped inside, she was 11 years old again. She went into the kitchen, and on the counter sat a plate of cookies with a note: *Help yourself.* She carried a handful out into the backyard to the giant maple tree. She remembered when she'd been perfectly content with a cookie and a summer afternoon. But that was a long time ago. Before becoming a top ad exec in Hartford. Before meetings that lasted until midnight. Before Calvin.

She looked up, trying to find the branch she and Olivia used to perch on. She dropped the remaining cookies into her pocket and began to climb. This tree was a cinch. She went up until she came to the wide limb they'd picked out as theirs. She settled onto it. There was something about being up so high. It felt as though she'd left all the bad stuff with Calvin at the bottom of the tree. "I think, Calvin," she said out loud, "I might just be able to live without you after all."

Then the back door banged shut, and there were the sounds of footsteps and murmuring voices coming towards her.

"Why do you always have to turn these things into an argument, Fred?" a woman's voice said.

"Cindy, 'these things' happen to be family occasions. *My* family."

Jordan could hear them talking right under the tree, but she couldn't see anything through the thick leaves. Fred was Olivia's older brother. The one who'd also left home to go after a successful career in the city. The one she'd had a crush on. And Cindy was his girlfriend, the one Olivia couldn't stand.

"Why did you even come at all if you're going to be so critical?"

"I'm not being critical," Cindy said.

"Well, what do you think describing the bridesmaids' dresses as 'unimaginative' sounds like?"

"Oh, c'mon, Fred, they're not exactly *haute couture*."

Unimaginative? Cindy thought the dresses she and Olivia had spent six months choosing were unimaginative? Who was this woman, anyway? Just then the cookie Jordan was holding snapped in two and half of it fell straight toward Cindy and Fred.

"I mean, really Fred, it's no sin to have outgrown your family."

For a second, Jordan wished it had been a brick instead of a cookie aimed for Cindy's head, but the cookie either never made it through the tree or simply wasn't noticed. She let out the breath she'd been holding.

"Look," Fred said, "this isn't getting us anywhere. Could you at least act like you're having a good time? I'm going to pick up my tux. Do you want to come?"

"Definitely," Cindy said. "What *else* is there to do?"

There was only silence from Fred.

Jordan waited until the back door slammed again. Then she waited a little longer until she heard a car start up and drive away. She climbed down, and was walking in the back door when Olivia and her mother walked in the front.

"Jordie!" Olivia threw her arms around her and hugged her hard. "Well, where is he? Where's Calvin?"

"Well, we've decided . . ." She bit her lip. She never could slip anything past Olivia. "It's over," she said. "He's buying a co-op with someone named Amanda."

"Oh, Jordie," Olivia hugged her again.

Mrs. Jameson patted her on the shoulder. "Anyone who'd let you get away, Jordan, isn't worth even one damp tissue."

That night at the rehearsal, Fred showed up alone. "Headache," he explained when Mrs. Jameson asked about Cindy.

"You remember Jordan," Olivia said. "You tried to kiss her behind the garage."

Jordan felt her face redden. "It was a dare," she said.

Fred looked at her and smiled. "It wasn't a dare. I just told you it was."

"Oh," she said, wondering how the kid she remembered could have developed such wide shoulders.

"Did your significant other have a headache tonight, too?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I have no significant other."

He frowned. "I thought . . ."

"It ended."

"I'm sorry." He looked at her then, and she remembered why she'd had a crush on him. It was his eyes. They were greenish brown and seemed to see right into your soul.

They sat together at the rehearsal dinner, and caught up on everything from high school graduation on. Everyone left, but Fred and Jordan stayed. Finally, the maitre'd came over. "We closed half an hour ago," he explained.

After the wedding, everyone left but Jordan. She asked Mrs. Jameson if she could stay on a few days. "It's so calm here," she said.

"You sound like Fred," Mrs. Jameson said.

That afternoon, she climbed the tree and sat thinking about how some relationships end and how some never have a chance to start.

"A penny for your thoughts," someone said from above.

It surprised her so much, she let out a scream.

"Sorry," Fred said, climbing down and sitting beside her.

"Didn't you guys ever know I was up there?"

"You spied on us?"

"Sometimes it happened by accident. Like with you the other day."

She looked at him. "How did you know it was me?"

"Because you dropped a cookie on my head." Then he smiled. "The Connecticut plates in the driveway helped, too."

She smiled back. "How come you're still here?"

"Maybe because you are."

"What about Cindy?"

"She went back alone. Me, I'm thinking about staying and buying the house. Mom's anxious to move someplace with warm winters, and I'm anxious to move someplace where my future kids can climb trees." He glanced over at her. "I'm hoping you'll come and visit. I think we still have some things to catch up on."

She smiled into those incredible eyes, and they sat up there until Mrs. Jameson came out onto the back steps and called them in for dinner as though she'd known exactly where they were the whole time.

Where We Belong

The love we share is special and true,
Specially designed for me and you,
There's no others that know its feel,
I look in your eyes and know it's real,
It can be seen in your smile,
I hope it's forever and not just a while,
When you cry I'll hold your hand,
When you're mad I'll understand,
I'll walk with you in the rain,
Wondering if we're really sane,
I'll wrap you in my arms and hold you tight,
We'll make love all through the night,
When you close your eyes and go to sleep,
I'll pray to God you're mine to keep,
When I wake and see your face,
I'll know in my heart I'm in the right place.

— Anna Miller

A Rendezvous with Romance

by Dee Mentzer

Mary Milo is a romance writer who lives in the hills south of Eugene.

DENALI: Did you grow up here in Oregon?

MARY: No. I grew up in Los Angeles and moved up here in 1965.

DENALI: Was it a culture shock?

MARY: No. I really wanted to come to Oregon. I always loved the country and country life and I wanted to get out of Los Angeles, and this place is beautiful, cultured and rural, so it might have been a shock, but it was a good shock. I mean it was everything I've dreamed of.

DENALI: When did you start writing?

MARY: In the fourth grade.

DENALI: Have you had any formal training with regards to writing?

MARY: Yes. I went to the U of O. I was going to get a degree, and I realized right away that I didn't like being a student. I took a lot of writing courses at U of O including courses from Ingrid Wendt and Ralph Salisbury and from a lot of really good mentors throughout the years. But none of them were involved with these projects. I came to a point where I decided that classes weren't going to help and that I'd have to just get out there and do it.

DENALI: How many books have you written?

MARY: Two. *A Bird in a Box*, and *A Different Music*.

DENALI: *A Different Music* was set in an Oregon town?

MARY: It was set in a mythical Southern Oregon town, that in my mind was sort of maybe like Roseburg.

DENALI: And was *A Bird in a Box* set in Oregon, too?

MARY: No. It was set in a mythical town about an hour's drive north of Berkeley.

DENALI: Do you only write romance or have you tried other genres?

MARY: I never categorized myself as a romance writer, but I guess that's how my writings were considered. If someone would have said, "What do you write?" I would have said "stories of women finding themselves" or something like that. I mean the focus in both books is someone who is emotionally troubled and comes to a place that is appealing. I guess that is a romantic idea.

DENALI: When did you write your last story?

MARY: You mean when was it last in print?

DENALI: Yes.

MARY: (Looking at the inside front cover) 1980. I told you it had been a long time, and you could possibly find someone more recent.

DENALI: Where do you get your ideas? It is something that comes to you or do you really have to think about it?



"I never categorized myself as a romance writer."



MARY: It's something that really just comes to me. It comes to me as an idea, and then I start writing and more ideas follow, but I've never had a "oh... this is what's supposed to happen next." You know the great thing about writing is starting your story thinking about one thing and along the way something else happens, like in the first book, *A Different Music*, it was going to be about a woman who was unhappily married, and I was married at the time. I was going to have her and her husband come to a better understanding and live happily ever after, but it turned out that after a while, it was impossible. They weren't going to work it out, so I had to create other characters who show up and have a romantic time.

DENALI: Do you find yourself in any of your characters?

MARY: Absolutely. In fact that's about all that interest me, really! Maybe not myself but someone that I can relate to, or is sort of like me, or the situation is similar to something I've been in and I wanted to explore.

DENALI: Is it disguised enough so that anyone who knows you won't know the situation is about you?

MARY: Anyone who knows me knows it's about me. Actually *A Bird in a Box* is mostly fictional, but when there's a character's I really care about, they generally have quite a bit of basis in the people I know.

DENALI: Do you have any plans for another book?

MARY: Yes! I do, but it's not really a planned idea. A lot of thoughts on paper with no real order. I have piles and piles of notes. Boxes. I just don't know if they translate into any thing real concrete right now.

DENALI: How long, once you have the idea, until you have a solid book in your hand?

MARY: When I wrote those books I was married and a stay-at-home mother, so I had a lot of time. One of them took about a year and a half to write, and the other one about a year, but I don't know how long it would take now because I have to work forty hours a week. If I ever really get started on it, I don't know how long it will take. I think it's fun to write. It's like any art — you've got to have freedom, usually, to explore and create an energy and if you're working a lot, it kind of robs you of all that.

DENALI: What do you consider as the big payoff?

MARY: Probably the pleasure of the creativity.

DENALI: Is there much money in publishing?

MARY: Not in publishing paperback novels. Some people are making a lot of money. A writer I'm really impressed with right now is Ellen Gilchrist. She seems to be putting out a new novel at least every year. She's a really good writer although I don't really relate to her characters but I certainly like her style. And I am assuming she is making a living by writing

books. She would be the exception. I think most people do it as a hobby or something like that. I was told after the second book that if I wanted to write another book and if I came up with a proposal they could possibly get me an advance, but then I got divorced and busy and stuff like that, so it didn't happen. Publishers will give people advances and they can get you grants or find some way to raise the finances if they're really determined.

DENALI: Is there a writer that you would classify as a person who sparked your interest into writing?

MARY: You mean prior to being published the first time?

DENALI: Yes.

MARY: Oh... there were tons of writers. Jack London, Charles Dickens, Ernest Hemingway, I don't know, I was a real reader. All the books I have were to make up for the loss of education. I went out and got all the books I would have had to read had I stayed in school. I was a voracious reader.

DENALI: How many times did you have to edit and rewrite your manuscript?

MARY: For my first novel, *A Different Music*, I sent what they call the query letter with few chapters to Avon and asked if they wanted to read it. They said okay and sent it back saying it had some good qualities, but it's not long enough, there's not enough sex and violence, rewrite it, and we'll look at it again. So I did, and that's when I changed a lot of things. Then I sent it back, they said okay, and now I have a book. I didn't have an agent. At the time my book was published, Avon was publishing twenty-four books a month which only have a six week shelf life. Then they publish twenty-four more books. When the new books come out, they push the past month's books to the back, and they become buried treasure. When I worked with Avon, the first book, *A Different Music*, needed a lot of editing, and I had a lot of help in editing. Then my editor went to Balentine. The second book was published by Balentine. It was almost a done deal for the second book due to the fact that they liked my first book so well.

DENALI: Where can we buy your books?

MARY: They're not available at the book stores anymore. The last copy I bought was at Smith Family Bookstore. The U of O has a collection of books by Oregon writers, and it may be there, or you can try the library. The first book sold about 78,000 copies with the second book only selling about 28,000, and this was all over the United States. I've signed copies for people I know and when I come across a book I buy it. When I get home, I look in the front cover and say oh... Judy got rid of her copy. If you look around long enough, you'll find one.

Never Say Never

Mary Milo

In spring, the lucious Southern California spring, where shining new grass dazzles in luminous green, exotic trees explode with fragrant blossoms, bright orange poppies and purple lupine decorate the roadsides, I fall in love for the first time.

I am eight, an independent adventuresome tomboy who has secretly vowed never to be tamed, and she twelve — a red roan mare named Smartie.

Some might call our relationship mere fantasy, childish infatuation, a young girl's fascination with the equine species, but no, it is romance in the best sense of the word, an ardent emotional attachment characterized by a high level of purity and devotion.

My beloved appears on a Sunday afternoon, drowsing beside a walnut tree on the lot next to ours where she is tied while her owner repairs the fence. As I approach she turns her head to greet me. I encounter a wise dark eye, notice the contrast of her large size and seeming docility, how mixed red and white hairs create her roan color. She has a red mane and tail, four white socks, and a wide stripe down the length of her face which I later learn is called a blaze. Then she swivels her body around. I see the other side of her head and a wild blue eye, the one that holds all the secrets.

I move closer, taking in her beauty. And power. The power of her beauty. She watches me, ears pricked forward. "You can pet her, but keep away from her rear end," her owner shouts. He's using baling wire to fix the fence holes.

I stand by Smartie's head. I breathe her in; I breathe her out. I absorb the sweet smells of grass broken in her mouth, the earthy horse odor. I sense the miles in her, places traveled by a far reaching stride, the fires of spring. Even the pile of droppings behind her perfumes the air. Delight rises in my chest.

When I pull up grass to offer, she makes a small noise and accepts my gift with pleasure, nodding her head while she chews. I experience the joy of feeding another as she consumes all I can pick for her and waits expectantly for more. Over her eyes, deep hollows dip in and out.

I lay my palm on the side of her jaw; the muscles work under my hand. I pat her throat, neck, and the flat surface of her shoulder. When our eyes meet again, I know a sense of recognition, reunion. The blue eye marks her as a maverick, outside the pale, makes us kindred. I've hungered for such symbols, longed to be meet by sweet mystery and meaning, waited for this moment.

Her owner approaches the tree. "Wake up, now," Ross

directs, bringing Smartie to alert attention. He's much older than my dad, a balding, paunchy man dressed like a cowboy with pointed-toe boots, jingley spurs, Levi's, a creased western hat.

I linger as he saddles the horse, wanting to ask him for a ride. It doesn't seem as if he'll offer; I know I'll have to ask. I just don't quite know how.

He confirms she'll be living in the field for a while. "It's all right to pet her over the fence, just don't ever let me catch you in the pasture, son," he orders.

He thinks I'm a boy! I don't set him straight about his misconception, believing it increases my chances of getting my wish. If only I can ask.

She's saddled and bridled, he's bundling his tools, the space of time in which to frame my request narrows. "Any chance I can... can... you know — have a ride?" I spit out at last. He looks me over, considering.

I do my best to resemble a boy who's been on many a horse before. He turns away. "Stand," he commands, swinging into the saddle. He takes up the reins. I'm red-faced, still hoping. "Come on then." He extends his hand, offers an empty stirrup. She's a big animal. I scramble up as if I know what I'm doing, impressed by my own audacity.

Sitting behind Ross in the western saddle I experience the mare in a whole different way, as Smartie half jumps, half dances in anticipation of movement. I grip the saddle strings. Far from the ground. I'm riding. Yes, I'm really riding. I treasure the powerful feel of her rump muscles beneath mine as we lope across the pasture, weaving through the orchard trees.

All that spring and summer Smartie lives in the lot next door. She becomes a most satisfying friend, always whinnying a greeting in response to my call, trotting to the fence like a pet dog, anticipating my special treats: sugar lumps, apples, cookies, pancakes, bread crusts, whatever I can find in the kitchen.

I offer her the food on my flattened palm, and as her large teeth delicately slip it from my hand, I know she will never hurt me on purpose.

I ride her one other time, several weeks later. It happens the same way. I stand around hoping; I frame the words; I finally ask.

Now I know better. As soon as I'm on her back, I notice the barely restrained excitement in her body, as if she is slightly crazed. I realize it must be Ross, his presence in the saddle, that creates this behavior. He's impatient, speaks harshly,

jerks on the bridle, prods her with spurs. She responds by being almost out-of-control.

Understanding this increases my awareness of her sensitive spirit. I believe I know her in a way no one else seems to. And she knows me.

During summer, I often take a book outside and sit in the shade near where she stands swishing flies. At certain times I raise my eyes from the novel I'm reading and get "the look" from her blue eye that shows me she's aware of what I think and feel.

From Smartie I learn how to "act like a horse," to snort and stomp, be wild and playful, run for the pleasure of it, and to be gentle, to listen, to communicate without words. From her I learn I am lovable.

In the moonlight I meet her, and in the early morning, up before anyone, carrying my strange dreams to share. *We are the same spirit. This is my destiny.* I exalt in the luck that brought her into my life, the taming of an intractable heart.

My family takes our usual two week vacation in the mountains in August. The trails in the wilderness make a perfect place to be a horse. I am most often a mustang stallion,

spirited, wild, free. My parents perceive this all as "a stage," luckily, and let me be.

"I swear, she's half horse," my mother says as I gallop past, deep in my horse body/spirit, not knowing it's the best compliment she could pay me. The fact that my name — Mary — can be shortened to Mar (mare) gives me great satisfaction, especially when Dad calls me that sometimes.

When we return home after our vacation, not only has Smartie disappeared, but no one knows where she has been moved. The lot next door has been sold and construction begun on a new house. For a while, I continue to go over there, imagining I can feel her presence, but that notion fades.

Later I discover other pastures, other horses. I take riding lessons, eventually becoming a good rider with a strong seat and some ability to sense a horse's next move from the attitude in its ears and neck.

My romantic interests change from horses to humans (who are far more tricky, I discover).

Yet over forty years later, I continue to remember the mare Smartie — that first highly charged connection, our tender involvement, her brilliant horse spirit.

The Light Of Love

As dawn's early rays begin to flow,
Warm light streams through a thick fog.
The kingfishers watch a fish's show,
A flying angel is victim of a quick frog.

Like the flower on a cold lily pond;
We all wait for someone to share a love.
As affection blooms we are only fond.
Why can't we be like two wild grey dove?

Then, the tide goes out from the shore.
A cool wind pulls us far, oh so far away.
Before you leave you seem so very bored.
Sunsets, tears fall, there's nothing to say...

— Jack Armstrong Jr.

Love Poem

an explosion of pain,
sweet and hot
leaves me wondering if perhaps
my heart has been removed
instead of merely
spoken to.
Time passes.
The lighting bolt that
was our chemistry
cools.
I feel less and less like I've
been sprinkled with cayenne
instead of not being able to
wait for a bed
instead of jumping you
just when you come home from work
coat and all
instead of that,
I notice the way your lip curls
when you talk about my cats.
The way your fork always has to be on
the left,
That you won't go for a walk
for walkings' sake
You have to be going somewhere
That you fold your underwear
neatly
in half
instead of wadding them up in the
bottom of the basket, the way I do
which probably drives you nuts.
Now just so you don't go thinking
that you've ruined me forever
or talked my heart deaf
or something like that,
just so you know —
I can't wait to feel all of that
again.
I can't wait for that explosion of recognition
for that desperate can't-get-enough
feeling.
I can't even wait to see some
other man's lip curl when
he talks about my
cats.

— Jen Clason

Come As You Are

Come as you are
with me to the cherry tree.
carve your name.
& I will love you
for the still point of the sun
& the dark side of the moon.

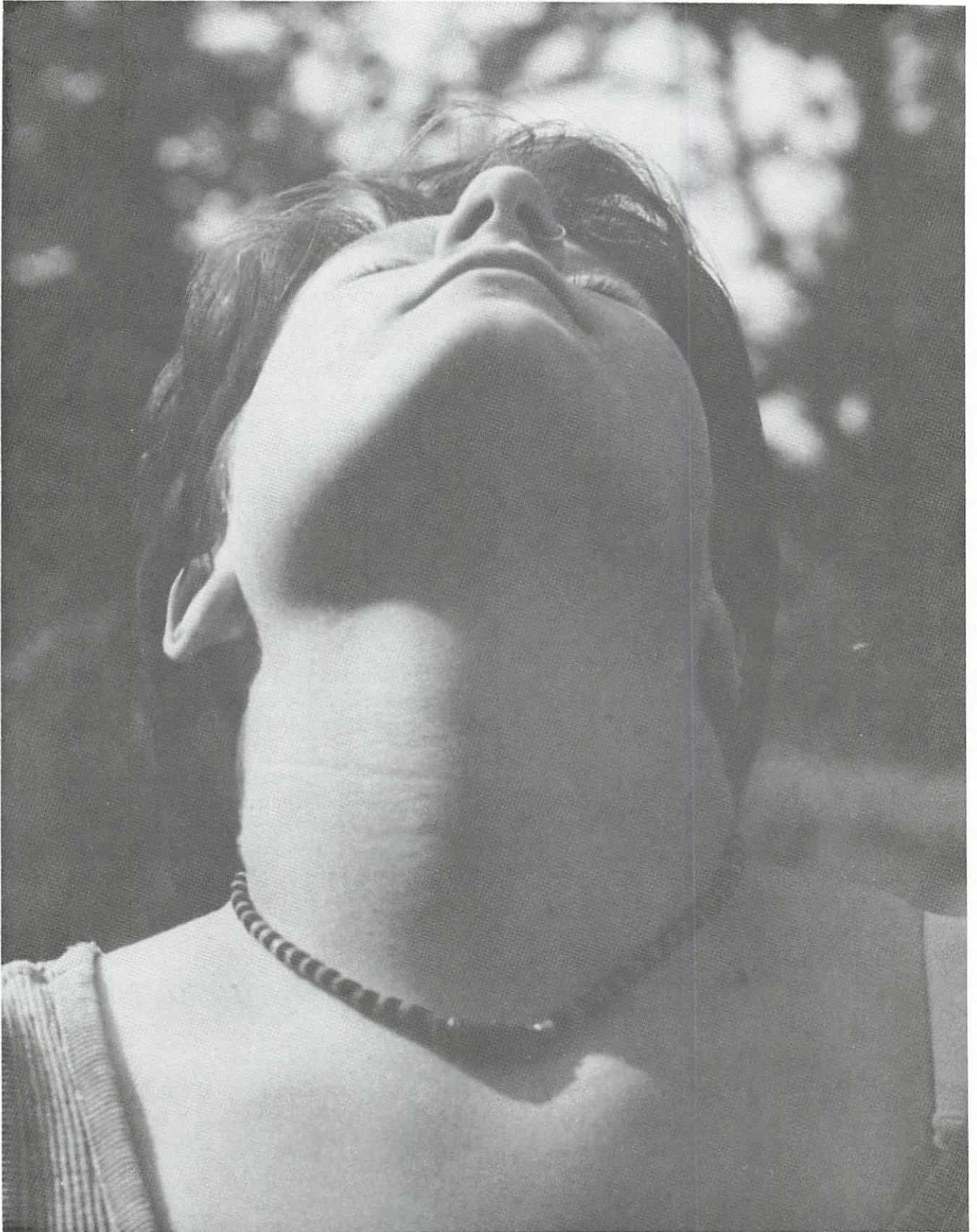
Tumble in the grass with me
down the steep and windy hill.
Giggling and falling, lie on our
backs and spin the sky crazy;
Come as you are.

Walk with me to a
deep cave,
stand on the edge
and peer inside.
I will take your hand.
Enter the cave, stumbling inside
deeper and deeper
shallower and shallower
deeper and deeper, dark
& remember to feel your
pinkie
for I will keep it
intertwined with mine.
Come as you are.

Come as you are
with me to the cherry tree
& carve your name on my spirit
through the blinding darkness
& I will love you.

Come as you are
through the (cold) caves of anger and
the fields of summer
with me to the cherry tree
carve your name next to mine
& I will love you still.

— Davin K. Yannick



THROAT PHOTOGRAPHY BY CORKY DAVIS

A Circle of Lights: A True Romance

The medieval maskers came down from the hills
to ring a stage of fire in the village square.
Candles flared in sacks and cairns of stone
filled with sand, until the glimmering footlights
drew the gawking, hungry faces near.
I, myself, stood among that crowd, hawking
what I knew of happiness, attracted to
the drama of love the beautiful actors mimed
behind the uncrossable line of their tiny flames.

Time rushes through tunnels and emerges,
slows, turns to hear a tune or watch
a play. Inadvertent tourists pole
dark boats to the local pier and join
the festive crowd milling on the green,
On any given afternoon I've seen
Homer there, and Cleo incognito:
masks time compels to view the dance
the mummers spell out in silence on the stage.

When you arrived, I had my face to the west
where against a bloody sun the tale was tragic,
and did not see your ship let her gold
sails down, and you yourself disembark
to view the late dusk offerings of our town.
I felt the ghost hairs rise along my skin
when you resined up, then bowed your violin,
calling me out of darkness with that magic;

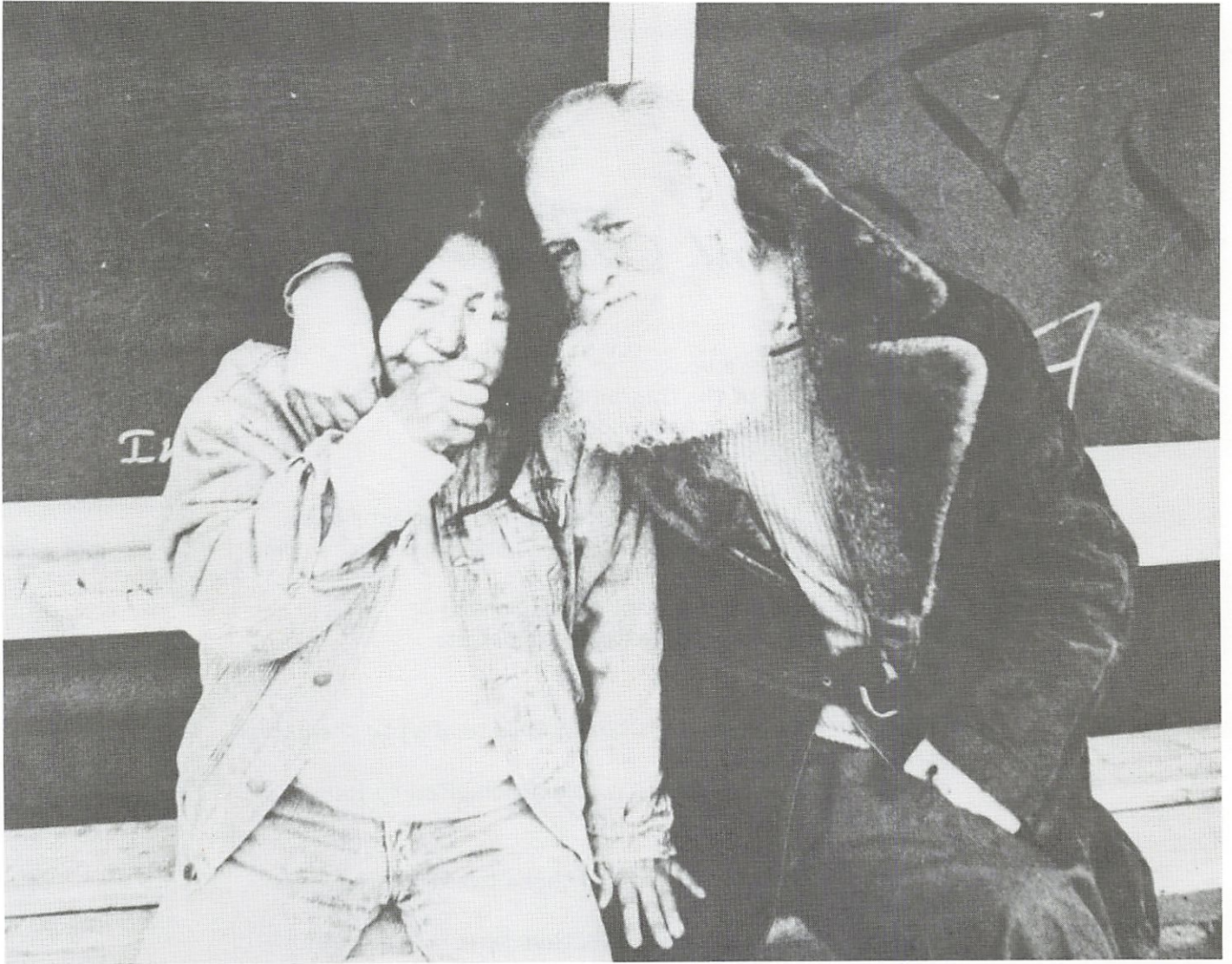
like a story that revolves, I came to rest.
We married in the Renaissance and still
the players came as always from the hills
igniting torches, sweeping across the boards
acting out old stories from their hoard.
Carrying lilies, gold against my gown,
my part was written deep within the plays
that lovers reenact on wedding days.
You stepped with me behind the crown of fire
and we became the actors I admire.

One year on, my heart is still in trance
within the bright circumference that you've thrown —
a limelight that protects the lovers' stage.

Hero and lady, our costumes change with time
as we find our places, think about our lines,
choose what tale we wish to tell the world.

Today, I want to speak, but like the foolish
mummers, I am mute. I wave and sign,
knowing you will know and mouth the words
that gently script our lines and make us dance
within this tender comedy-romance.

— *Sandra M. Jensen*



HOMELESS IN COPENHAGEN PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANNIE MASAOKA AND BARRET WERK

Slow Motion

The arch of her body
The sway of her hips
The unbelievable smile
The tempting lips
The perfect white teeth
when she opens her mouth
to lick the grape...
it disappears
into the unbelievable warmth
of her mouth,
A smile appears

when she discovers
the ripeness
and juiciness,
the smile again
before it disappears
along with
everything else,
it was just an image
in the coldness
of reality...
A fast moving world.

— Megan Duncan

Fragrant Flower Of ...

Reaching for last term's book
I remember the smell of the fragrant flower
how overpowering the fragrance was
urging the on-lookers to gobble you up.

But the smell as well as the look "eyes" of the fragrant flower
are only to lure ignorant creatures to their inevitable doom.

The twinkling eyes of you, fragrant flower, echoed
come on; I'm as good to taste as to look at.
I'm free.

I watched you all term, fragrant flower, while tending to the garden
I tried to stay away
seeing the other on-lookers become enchanted by your...
the inevitable happened.

The smell of you, fragrant flower, and those twinkling eyes
kept coming towards me.
I was one of the last on-lookers, that term
I too was hypnotized by the echo of you,
Fragrant flower.

Some on-lookers feel and could not return to the garden;
Others reached inside and denied you had
the fragrance or the twinkling eyes
echoing them on...
I laughed at my foolishness and
wrote this poem.

—*Elisia Quick-Chastain*

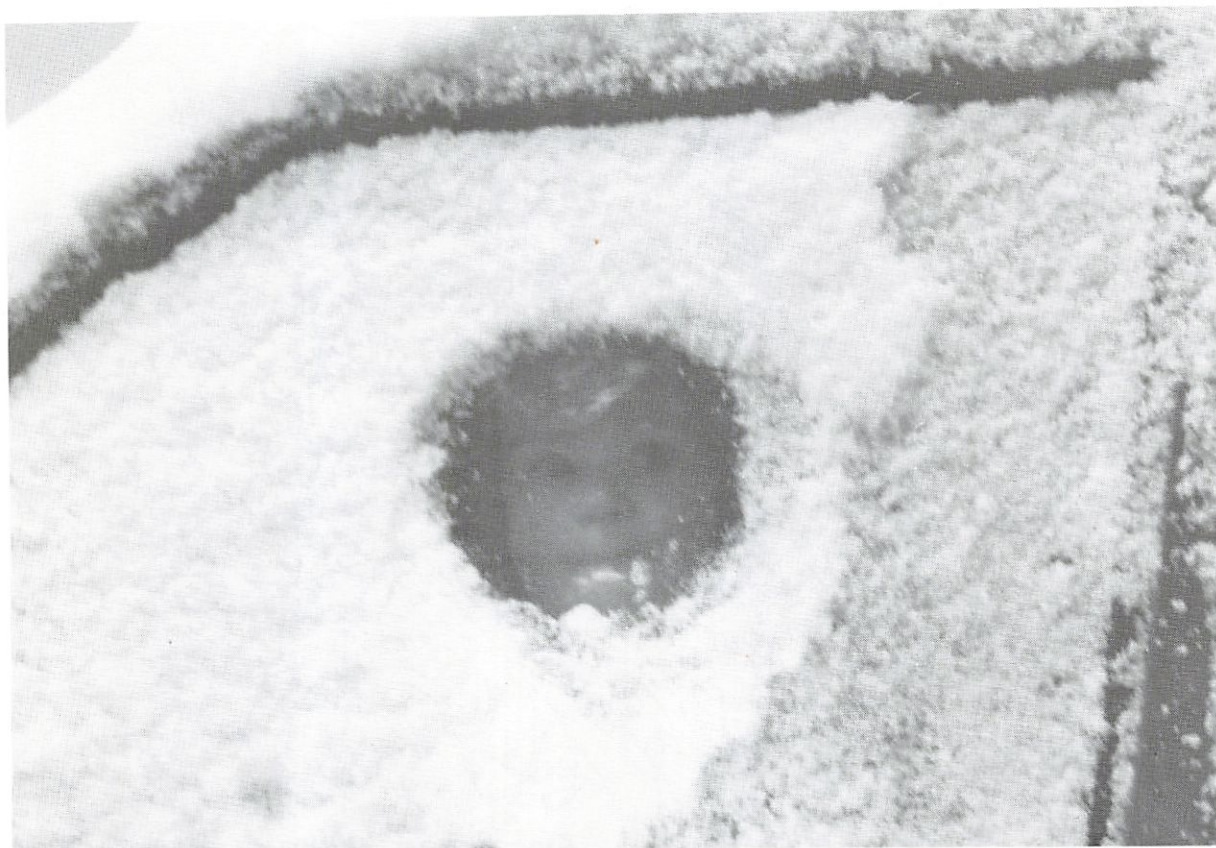


ORGANICA ARTWORK BY KYRA KELLY

Love's Theatre

Blissfully devoured by your vampiric darkness,
I breathed
I inhaled
your anxious, slowly cooling rapacity.
I demanded to believe your promises.
Souring siren, my sad Circe,
in God's names I commended
my soul
my lifeblood
to the service of your failing hungers' feasts.
And forcing your wicked wanton-weary dogs down my throat
availed me naught but private primacy.

— ABE



WHEN IT SNOWS PHOTOGRAPHY BY LIESL STEIN

A Miracle

Experiencing your birth
is worth
all the pain
I have gained.
You are my child,
and I am wild
over you, you cute little guy.
We will go and buy baby clothes and toys
for you, our little boy.

You are our miracle, yes indeed
and we will come to your every need.
You will not have cause to worry,
or go through life in a flurry.
You are our child,
and we're wild over you, you cute little guy.
We will go and buy
baby clothes and toys
for you, our little baby boy.
We will always love and care
and teach you to share.
We will stand by your side,
and try not to hate your hide.

— *Dan Ball*



THE PERFECT BIRTH OF JORDAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY LIESL STEIN

To Close Yet

Gail L. Clarno

Roxanne awoke with a feel of pressure on her body. It was hard to breathe. She felt as if the lifewere being pressed out of her body. Her heart raced as she opened her eyes and looked to the right. Nick was asleep. She looked to the left and the blue-gray cat, curled next to her, was sound asleep. Goose bumps rose on her skin as she looked up and there, floating just below the ceiling were two dark gray forms, vaguely human.

Roxanne couldn't move. Panic was there, but her body would not respond. Her arms and legs felt like lead. She was filled with a deep chill even though she lay on the warm waterbed with several blankets over her.

She lay there for what felt like an hour, watching the forms float. Roxanne finally managed to move an arm. She forced the heavy arm to touch Nick's arm. She opened her mouth to call his name. At first nothing came out but finally, "Do you see that?" This was all her dry, hoarse throat could rasply whisper.

"What...Where?" Nick looked at her, then to the ceiling. "I don't see anything."

Just as Roxanne began to whisper, the apparitions started to dissolve. "They're gone now. I couldn't move. It felt as if I had a rock on my chest. The figures just melted away, along with the pressure." Roxanne was wide awake now. She couldn't sleep, so she just lay in bed staring at the ceiling.

Roxanne woke up every night with the feeling something or someone was watching her. Night after night she would wake up and look around telling herself to go back to sleep. For more than a month every night she would wake up to see and find nothing.

...

"We need to send a probe in, something that can come back and give us more information about the other dimension. Concrete proof that we can present to get more financing and do this right."

Phil was beginning to feel like a tape recording. He had given this spiel to anyone and everyone who would listen, "We used a dual holographic image visualization system this time, but we needed more."

"O.K., we have seen it, so the next step would be a probe. I'm sure the board will approve. They just wanted someone to verify your findings," Howard, the department head, had seen something. What it was we couldn't tell, but it was something. Things looked blurred, out of focus on the screen. A probe could get a clear view.

"The probe will need to be able to send pictures, sound

data, analyze air, take atmospheric pressure, and we'll need to be able to control the thing." Phil's mind was working at its maximum, planning for the probe.

It took the department about a month to have what it needed ready to go. Everything they requested neatly fit into a black eight inch box.

...

Roxanne had become used to waking up every night. She wasn't as afraid as she had been before, but she awoke one night to find a black box floating near the ceiling. She lay in bed for quite some time just watching it. "Am I dreaming or is this real," she thought.

Smoke started boiling from the bottom of the box. It looked gray to white as it crept up the side of the box like a thunderhead just before a storm.

Roxanne watched until she began dozing off...

...

"Something's coming in now! Sharpen it up some. There... Turn on the recorder. It's a room. Turn to the right, slowly. This looks like a window or a picture. Turn back left, just a little. Shelving, and a reflection of the probe. More...There's a doorway. Then more shelving with things on it." Howard said pointing to the view screen.

"Quick, I saw something move, turn right. O.K., zoom in," Phil said excitedly.

"We're overheating," Howard was turning knobs, pushing buttons, and flipping switches trying to compensate for the overheating elements. "It's going to shut down."

Phil maneuvered the probe into a position to reenter his dimension, but it was already burning and just evaporated somewhere between the two dimensions.

"Did we get much recorded? Analyze what we've got and bring me a report in two days," Howard told Phil as he walked from the lab.

Phil ran the auditory back. The hum of some kind of motor and rhythmic rumble that increased and decreased. That's about it.

Sensor report: Temperature, about 65°; humidity, around 75%; air: it's loaded with oxygen and not much helium. This can't be right! How could a species live, he asked himself.

All that's left now is the visual. Rewind the tape and play it back at half speed.

Phil looks steadily at the film as it moves across the screen. Searching for that movement he saw.

Clearly this was a room. Things look similar to here. There goes the camera. The screen started to look snowy, and was

slowly turning black as it continued to worsen.

"There! Stop the film, freeze frame." Phil inspected the screen. "There it is! Arms, legs, head, body..."

On the viewer in front of him was a woman. She was lying on a bed. A small animal was to her left and a covered form on the right. This form must be her mate.

Phil gazed at the woman. All he could see was her head, shoulders, and arms. The rest of her was covered.

Her complexion was fair. She had very long, black, sensuous hair cascading down the pillow and flowing beside her arms. As he zoomed in on her, he could see she was looking right at him with large blue eyes. She didn't look afraid or even concerned.

Phil sat gazing at that face for a long time. He felt close to this person from another dimension. He wanted to remember every minute feature of that face.

The next probe will have to stand higher pressures. It will need more delicate sensors, too. The board wants more information about the life forms and their dimension.

This time we used a ball form. It had several types of sensors and analyzers. Each function was behind a different colored light. These could be easily replaced if they became damaged, so we could reuse the same probe for other entrance point observations. Everything was contained in a titanium case.

...

It had become a nightly event, waking, looking, going back to sleep.

One night Roxanne had a bad dream. She was walking down the street when suddenly she fell limp on the gray cement. An unseen force picked her up and pitched her in a heap about seven or eight feet farther down the walk.

It didn't hurt, but she felt as a rag doll must feel being tossed onto the floor. Twice more she was tossed. She woke with a start. Eyes wide open, heart beating hard, fists clinched.

There, above her, floating in the air was a ball with lights on it. The lights twinkled, and the ball hummed softly.

She watched the ball float and turn. The hum was relaxing to her, and she felt a light tingling sensation. Roxanne looked around to make sure this wasn't just a dream. Nick was asleep. His breathing was deep and regular. The cat was curled up between her knees. All was well, and she was awake. The sensation was very relaxing. The ball began to float out of her vision, and she fell back into slumber.

...

Phil had been analyzing the data already gathered. He just couldn't get the female out of his mind. He analyzed and dissected every aspect of the last contact. He kept seeing her on the street, in restaurants, and in his dreams. Every time he turned around, he saw her although she wasn't really there.

The time came to initiate Probe II. The team and equipment were all primed. "Initiate launch sequence, all recording equipment on and recording." Howard started the launch in motion. The ball began to fade into the other dimension.

"Here comes the image now," the tech said as he busily fine tuned the picture.

"We seem to be at the same position as Probe I was," Howard stated as he watched the viewer.

"All is as before except much clearer. There is the window. The shelves, door, now back up to the bed. Scan the animal." Phil directed his attention to the scan. "Heartbeat, skeleton and... Look, the animal went nuts. Turn the analyzer to a lower setting," Phil told the tech.

"Continue scanning," Howard directed.

"Scan the mate," Phil added.

"Heartbeat, breathing, skeletal... Yes, it's male."

Phil was looking at the woman. She lies there so quietly, sleeping as he watched. Her breathing was shallow and regular.

"Now, scan the woman. That's good. Steady," Howard was directing the tech.

She just lay there. Still... She opened her eyes and looked right into his soul. He just stood there staring back at her. Phil tried to implant the view of her in his mind. Capturing her where he could recall her vision at any time.

The information was all being recorded as Howard continued viewing the area. The ball went from room to room. Recording everything it could. Slowly turning as it floated with lights twinkling.

By now Phil understood there was no way for him to ever be in her dimension or her to be in his. There were just too many major differences.

The differences in the air and in the atmospheric pressure would be unbearable for him in her world and for her in his. He felt his secret hopes drift away. Phil had fallen for this female from the other dimension. She had been in his thoughts and dreams since he'd seen her with Probe I. He felt the empty place in his heart at once. His secret desires all gone...

...

The cat screamed, jumped off the bed, and ran screeching through the house. "The cat's just nuts," Nick mumbled on his way back to sleep.

...

Phil left after the probe was retrieved. It was a complete success. They had compiled a large amount of data. Success, yes, but he felt as if he had lost something.

He left early that day. He just couldn't shake the feeling. Phil walked out the door just as a blue-gray cat brushed against his legs. He watched as the cat ran up to a woman.

Her long black hair fell around the cat as she leaned down to pick it up. The cat nuzzled her as she drew it close. Her eyes sparkled as she talked to the cat.

"Excuse me," she asked him, "can you tell me where the probe lab is? I'm the new tech for the team."

Phil looked up into the face of the woman of his dreams. A breeze ruffled the long hair that framed her face as she set down the cat. Her blue eyes sparkled, and she blushed as she realized he was staring at her. "Do you know?" She asked trying to avoid his eyes.

"I'll take you. I'm part of the team. My name is Phil."

Romance

What is this
this thing called love?
the pursuit of insanity
the burning flames of hearts and candles
the bittersweet tears and chocolates
books, T.V.'s, and movies are reeking of it
5'7", 115 pounds, blonde, for a good time...
Well maybe the long walks on the beach make me tired
and the ocean tickling my feet is too cold.

What is this
this thing called love?
The white weddings reveal little
of the years to come and go
how many roses are grown for the forgiveness
of the cheaters and the beaters?
The old story: many nights sleeping together, but alone
Thinking what could have been
It could be this, it should be that, not the other.

What is this
this thing called love?
That cupid (the thief!) has stolen my heart
now bombarded with flowers, chocolate, and kisses
holding hands is now longer, a sweaty deal
What is the matter? This couldn't be me!
smiling and laughing on that beach
But it is true, and now I am an actress
for the Theater of the Absurd.

— Sarah Steadman

I Love You

"I love you," I say
When you call me at night
When you kiss me good night
When you turn out the light.

"I love you," I say
As you look in my eyes
And you whisper my name
As my hopes start to rise.

"I love you," I say
When you come and you go.
My heart tells me yes
But my mind tells me no.

"I love you," I say
As you walk out the door.
It used to be true
Now our love is a war.

"I loved you," I say
Those words are no crime,
As I kiss you good-bye
For the very last time.

— Dee Mentzer

Contributors

Ray W. Armstrong — an “over 40” student beginning college again after quitting 20 years ago. I enjoy art, photography, editorial cartoons, and have served as part of the photo staff at the Torch. Being here is really a challenge every day.

Mike Anderson — knows all his poems by heart.

Dan Ball — has been in LCC for three terms now. He loves to write fiction and poetry. Dan is currently working on a novel.

Elisia Quick-Castain — was left in the box again.

Gail L. Clarno — is a Native Oregonian, mother and grandmother. Main interests are children's literature and Native American cultures. Enjoys movies, playing and listening to country music, photography, and critters of all sizes and shapes.

Jen Clason — loves to write poetry but has disappeared off the planet.

Corky Davis — Vampires aren't all bad...

Megan Duncan — I'm a total romantic. I'm a 20 year old student studying acting. I love to write stories and poems and I love to read.

Aaron B. Erhardt — Poetry is my conversation with myself.

Karl Foster — is a computer student at LCC and a fledgling writer. He lives in Eugene with a wife, two children, and three cats. He reads science fiction and fantasy books, watches Japanese animation, classic Warner Brothers' cartoons, and Adams Family reruns.

Peter Jensen — watches the moon with his new telescope from his back porch and teaches romance writing at LCC and LBCC.

Sandra M. Jensen — Doesn't have the sense she was born with.

Kyra Kelly — loves to squish mud between her toes and eat rhubarb with wild honey

D. Starr — is a student, father, husband, friend, enemy, leader, follower, and a wanna-be poet.

Annie Masaoka — I guess I'll see you later unless I see you first.

Contributors Cont'd

Dee Mentzer — "I wasn't really naked; I simply didn't have any clothes on."

— Josephine Baker.

Anna Miller — Has lost herself in a pile of Denali submission forms

Bianca Mercedes Proudfoot — got in by the set width of a story

Sonya Scott — I have always believed that creativity is the key to a fulfilling life. Get with it while you can, for soon it may be gone.

Sarah Steadman — wants to learn to think like a rainbow.

Liesl Stein — I am sick of rain!

Justin Tindel — Love for me has always been an elusive butterfly fluttering just out of my reach. I never seem to be able to catch it, but I still stumble clumsily along chasing it from flower to flower. Maybe I should get a net!!

Barret Werk — SWM 6'1" 160lbs
wookn' pa nub.

Lorenzo Shadow Sky-Gonzalez — is a mixed-race Zebra "Native American/mestizo/Puerto Rican" and former gang member. Born and raised in inner-city Denver. He recieved his M.A. from Oregon State University (which is virtually useless) in 1995. He has been published in several magazines including the Ashbury Literary Journal, Struggle, Son of Slam, and Soundings. He has work forthcoming in Puerto Del Sol, was one of two poets who opened for MTV's Spoken Word Tour on its single Oregon performance, and was a winner of the Associated Writing Program's (AWP) 1995 Intro Award for poetry. He makes his home in Portland, OR. where he currently works for TV HOST magazine pushing the evils of television on the masses (once a dope dealer, always a dope dealer, I guess).

Davin K. Yannick — One morning when I was a small child, I awoke and decided to write a poem. Poetry has been a great passion of mine ever since.



IN CHARACTER ARTWORK BY KYRA KELLY