

possessions. Except for a large painting of fireflies that hung above Jenny's bed, the room could have belonged to anyone. Walking back out to the hallway, she softly closed the bedroom door.

Several months later a parcel from overseas addressed to Jenny arrived at the retirement home. Having just returned from her brother's in England, Jenny assumed it was the books she had shipped from a delightful antiques store they had found in the countryside just before her departure. But when she opened the box there were no books. Instead, a collection of photographs spilled out into her lap along with Cassie's picture and a small pink envelope. Jenny crossed the room and settled before the fire before opening the letter. Her eyes lit up with excitement when she saw the fine gold chain with a delicate firefly made of diamonds lying among the pages and she began to read. "Dear Jenny..."

Living with her dog in rural Northwestern Ontario, Linda Kmet is a writer and hopes one day to inspire others with her voice. Her extensive work as a crisis counselor for women and children has influenced her stories about the triumphant survival of the human spirit.

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PATRICIA KEENEY

The Art of Friends

I know them best, these lifelong friends
in their late incarnations
long after children and men.

Melissa of the sad song
falling line dropped
like a plunged hook
from sky to sea

letting the sharpness
ferret and grab, tug at her
never looking down
never taking dark
bird eyes and streaming hair off
the far horizon, a dance
of flute and drum.

The foreign feast she craves
waiting for her, always
out of reach
and only now admitting
her joy in the going
knowing it can never be

except in dream, ringing
the bell of herself, soaring
from sight and sound
making music with those
who can

finally free of the lie
living in the flight she takes
after soap opera and self-delusion
hovering in new air

feather-tipped, quick
as a humming bird
aerodynamic miracle
a fin around the globe

a streak of beginnings.

*

Tough and tender
Katia finds herself
in paint
white birch
and blue lake, the burn
of autumn leaves
rosy colour storming
rough water.

All the ferocious fighting
and loving alive in this
without pain.

A personal mirror pulsing with light.
Fine bones fleeing up, sunk
firmly in mulch, her nature
buried and free.

And AH sunflower
boldness on a stalk
gold with an earthy heart
her own tournesol
back-blocked when fed up.

Azure islands in mist and fading light
she sits magnanimous among her scenes
face forward, a sheen of satisfaction
rounding her out, in age, the flaxen hair
of a careless child

that says: here

I am.

*

Marti, poet princess
a flare of hair
the fate that crowns her
writing into and out of love

flying underwater
swimming through stars

moonwalk and sunburst

partnered with desire

tethered to the dialogue
of love

where I glimpse
her other lives.
Tantalizing, this new Niagara
grand expanse of lake
spilling south

walking through the house
(past Italian rococo
gothic with grapes)
into waves and sky

girl-shaped pure light

landing me back at Simcoe
sculpted white
watching the huts rise
way out on cloudy snow
feathered pink, stained purple
packed and pale

fishing with the icemen
far and coldly down

the only way I've left to go

*

meeting them all
in deep space
where the words
hold us

up.

Patricia Keeney is the author of nine books of poetry and a picaresque novel entitled The Incredible Shrinking Wife. Her Selected Poems, published in 1996, contains an introduction by the distinguished Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Her poetry has been translated into French (winning the Prix Jean Paris in 2003), Spanish, Bulgarian, Chinese, and Hindi. Her latest poetry collection, Frist Woman was published by Inanna in 2011. Keeney is a professor of English and Creative Writing at Toronto's York University and makes her home in a 160-year old log heritage house near Lake Simcoe, north of Toronto.